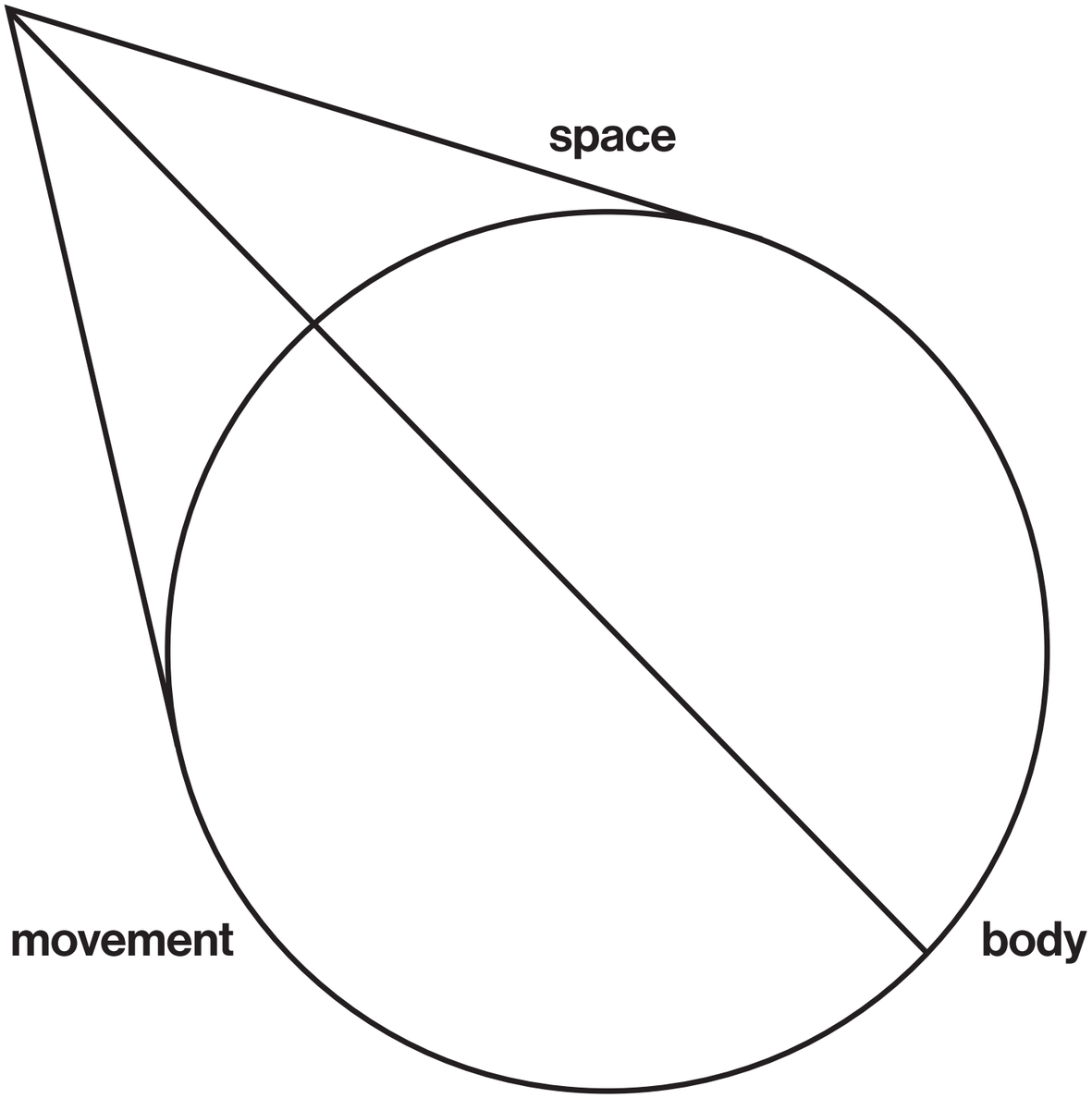
space embodied

the russian art of movement 1920–1930



het nieuwe instituut
12 06 / 12 08 2016

space embodied

the russian art of movement 1920–1930

This document, and earlier versions of it, has been used in the last couple of months to track the development of the exhibition design of Space Embodied: the Russian Art of Movement 1920 – 1930, which will take place in Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, in the summer of 2016. As designers we have been invited to the conversations about this project since the beginning of 2016, by Anastasia Lesnikova, Johannes Schwartz and Linde Dorenbosch.

In the early stages of the process the intention was to show as much original material as possible, which would have to be lent by several international collections. This meant that there would be drawings and photographs, often fragile material that requires special precautions. In parts of the exhibition, light would have to be dimmed, some photographic material needed to be covered (only to be revealed temporarily by the visitors).

These requirements seemed to fit the theme of the exhibition perfectly; the notions of light and darkness, cover and revelation already hint to a theatric environment that not only accomodates the fragile materials on display, but also conjures up space to dance. Perhaps also literally: Johannes expressed a desire to combine the original material with contemporary footage of professional dansers engaging with the experiments and choreographies of the Russian Art of Movement.

The translation of an exhibition space to a performance space offers a lot of starting points. We looked at modern ‘black box’ theatre spaces, often multifunctional and highly technical spaces. Shielding the space from (day-)light we can use black fabric curtains. The floor can be covered with a black vinyl dancefloor. In order to find a way to display material we thought of structures that would fit this environment: some form of stage props or set pieces. The placing of these on a stage is oftentimes indicated by ‘spike marks’, or stage cues drawn with tape. A grid on the floor troughout the exhibition can indicate the temporal placement of these set pieces.

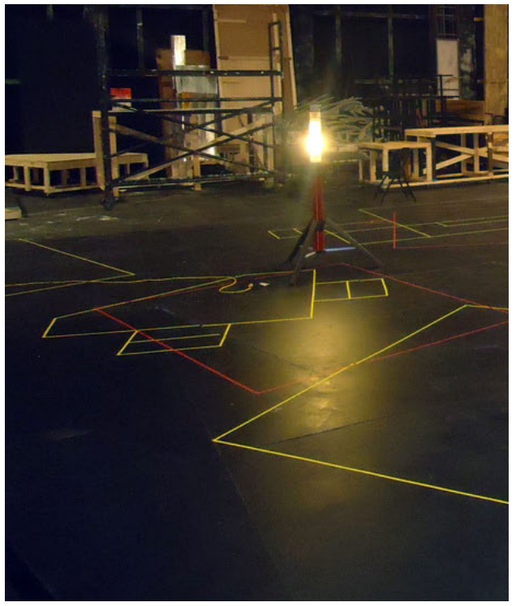
During the following months it became evident that not a lot of original material would become available. Yet the idea of creating darkened spaces stuck; that was when we began speaking about using projected images, next to the already chosen film fragments. On the collection of ‘set pieces’ thematically grouped images will be projected, along with their accompanying texts. A larger projection will show the footage of professional dancers, recorded in situ. In the alternating light spaces the featured material will be shown as printed paper, mounted on the wooden set pieces.

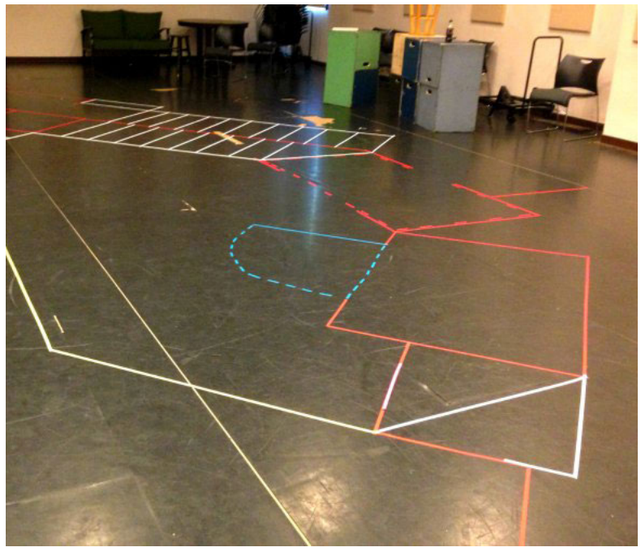
The following pages show some early research material, sketches and final drawings.

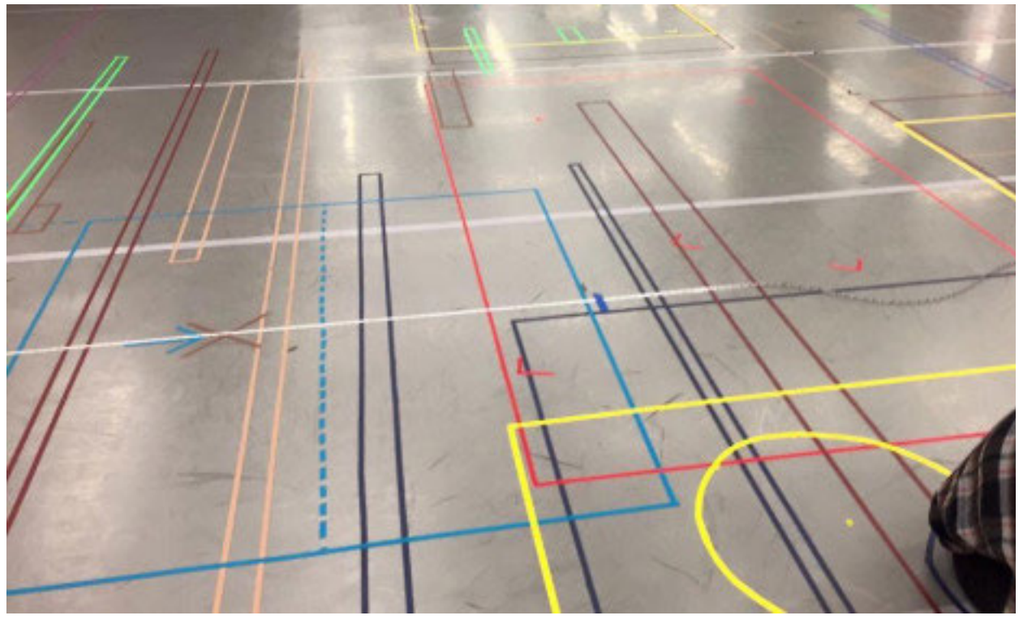
Experimental Jetset
Amsterdam, May 9, 2016

space embodied

dance grid
sight lines

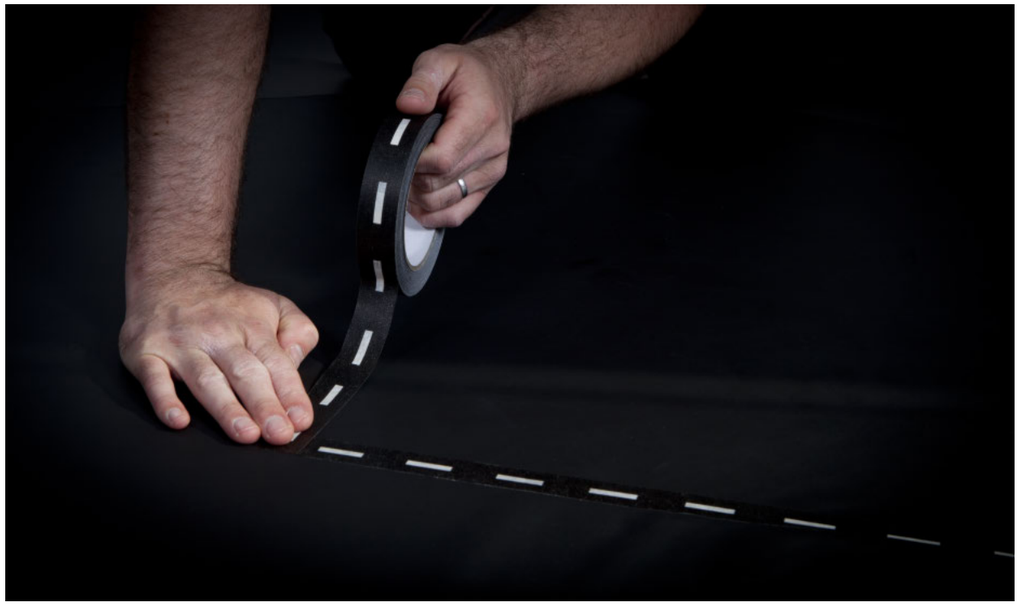


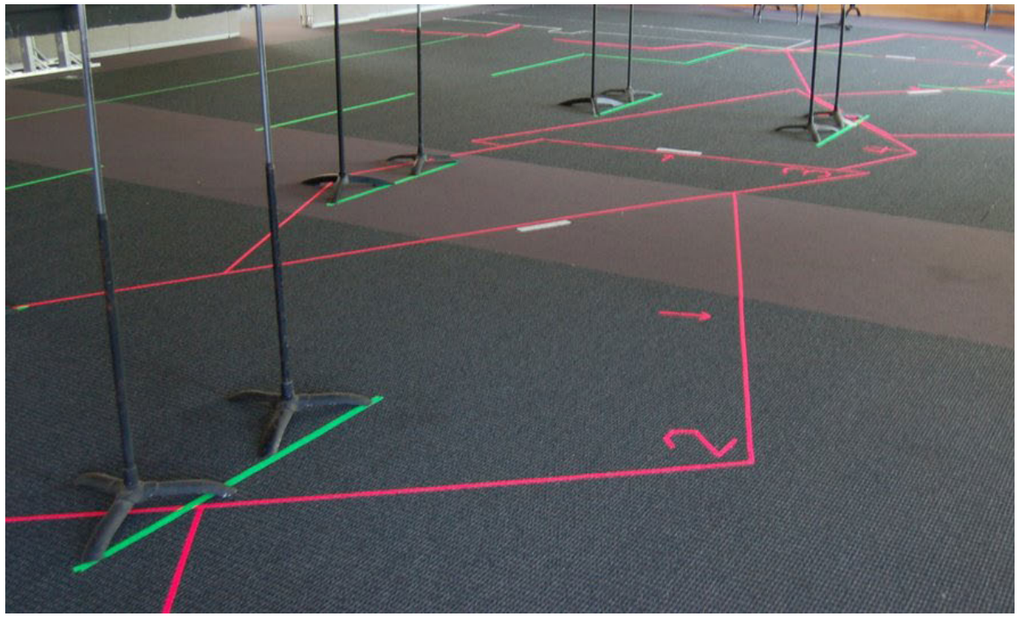




Different color tapes are used for ‘spike marks’. These spike marks serve as a road map to indicate the position of sets, props and performers. They can also indicate sight and visibilty lines.

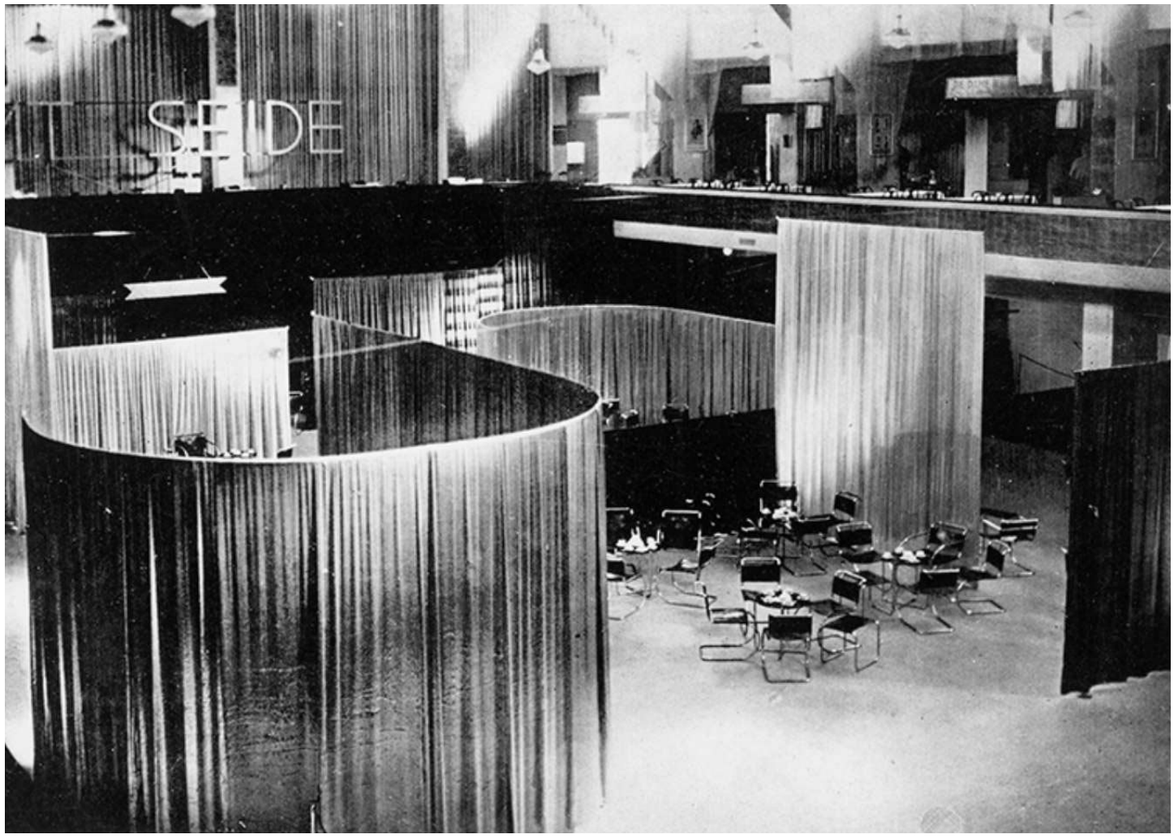
stage cues
spike marks





space embodied

curtains
screen

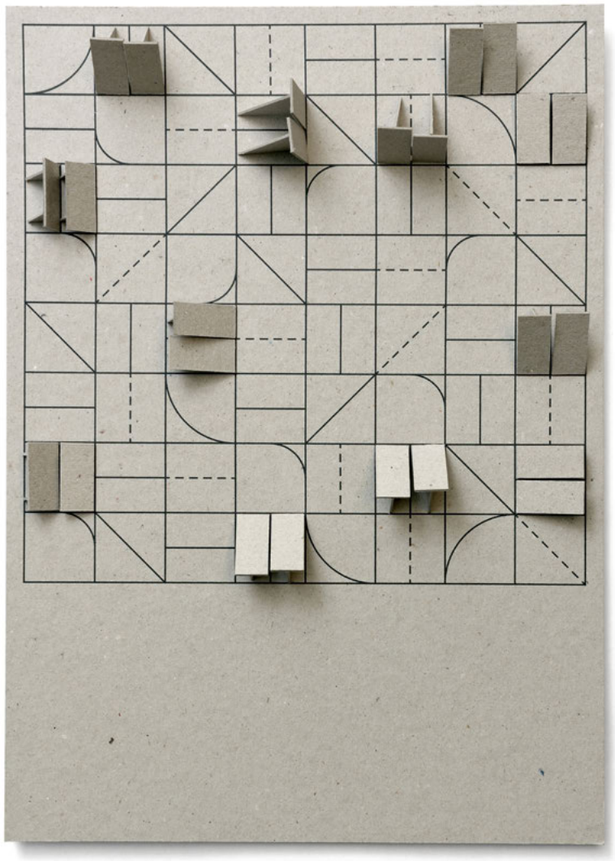


Café Samt & Seide (1927)
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich

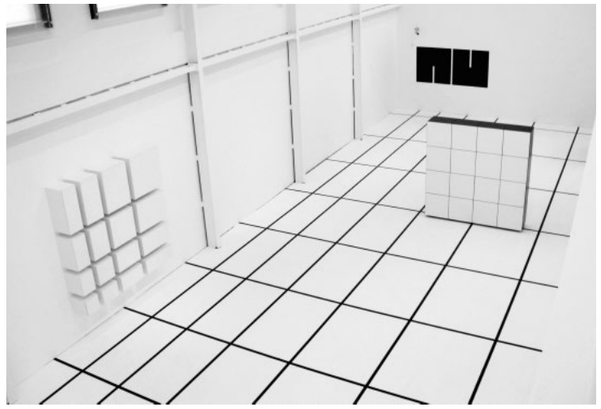


Dance (1976)
Lucinda Childs, Philip Glass, Sol Lewitt

floor grid
division



Exhibition design for *Game Theory*, Bejing (2014)
Experimental Jetset



Nu. 90 years Pastoe (2003)
Experimental Jetset

space embodied

black box
dance floor



Dance Studio (2014)
Telfair B. Peet Theatre, Auburn AL, US

stage grid
black masking

Modern references

The apparent contradiction of modern technical theatre settings and the experimental, improvised nature of much of the material in the exhibition is something we wish to explore. Ideally, the environment of the exhibition should link the Art of Movement to modern ways of studying movement.
By indirectly referring to contemporary ways of capturing movement like *motion tracking* and *match moving* we hope to emphasize the progressive nature of the material, and the plasticity of the pictured bodies.

180-degree green screen stage
MMU University, Malaysia

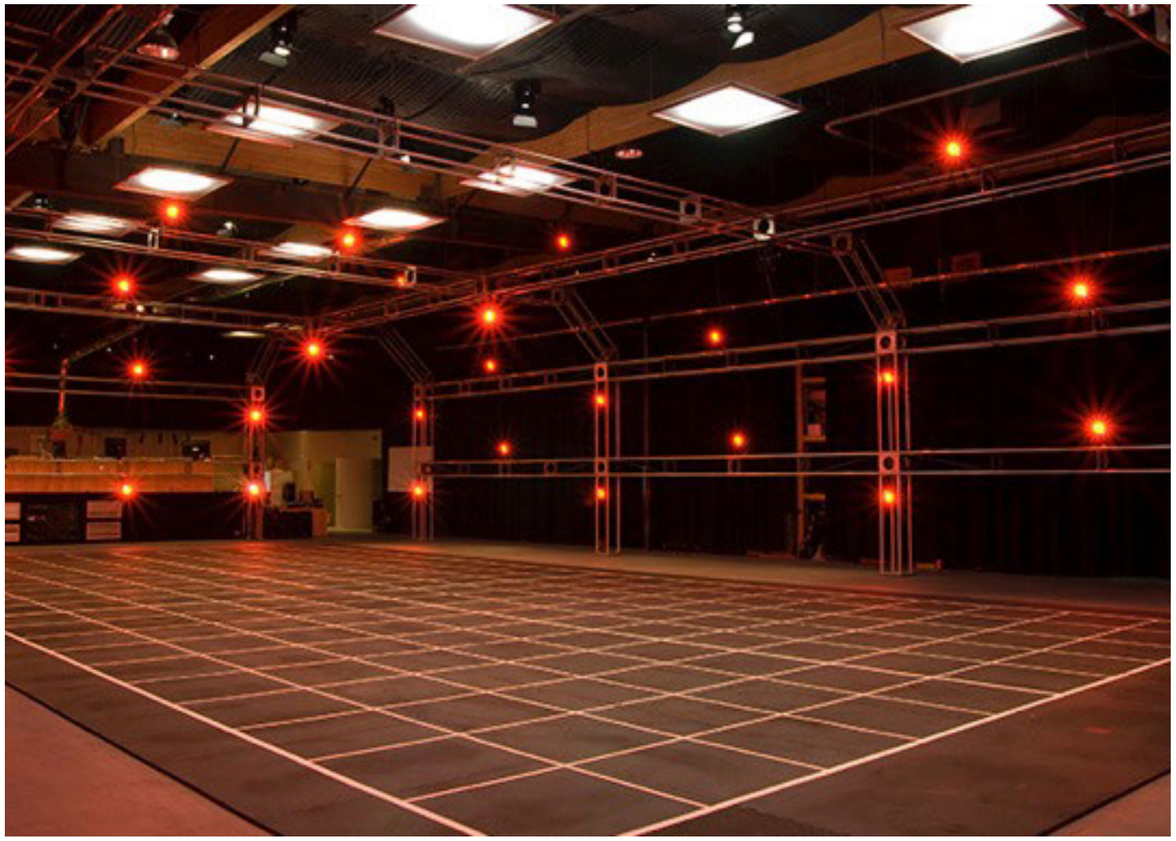




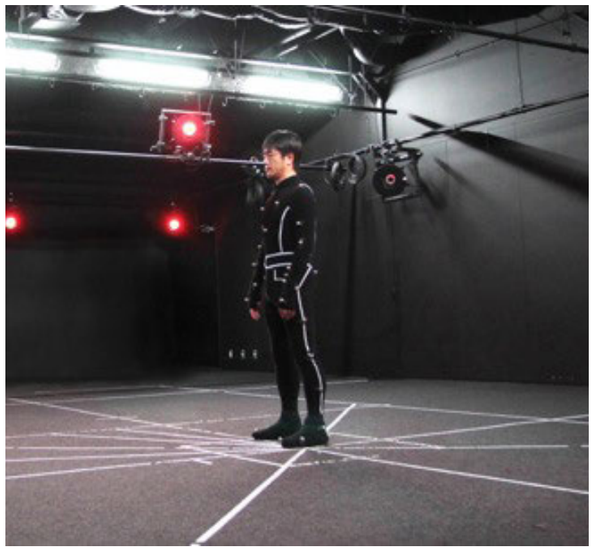
Black box theater space (2010)
Artisphere cultural arts center, Arlington VA, US

space embodied

match moving
motion tracking

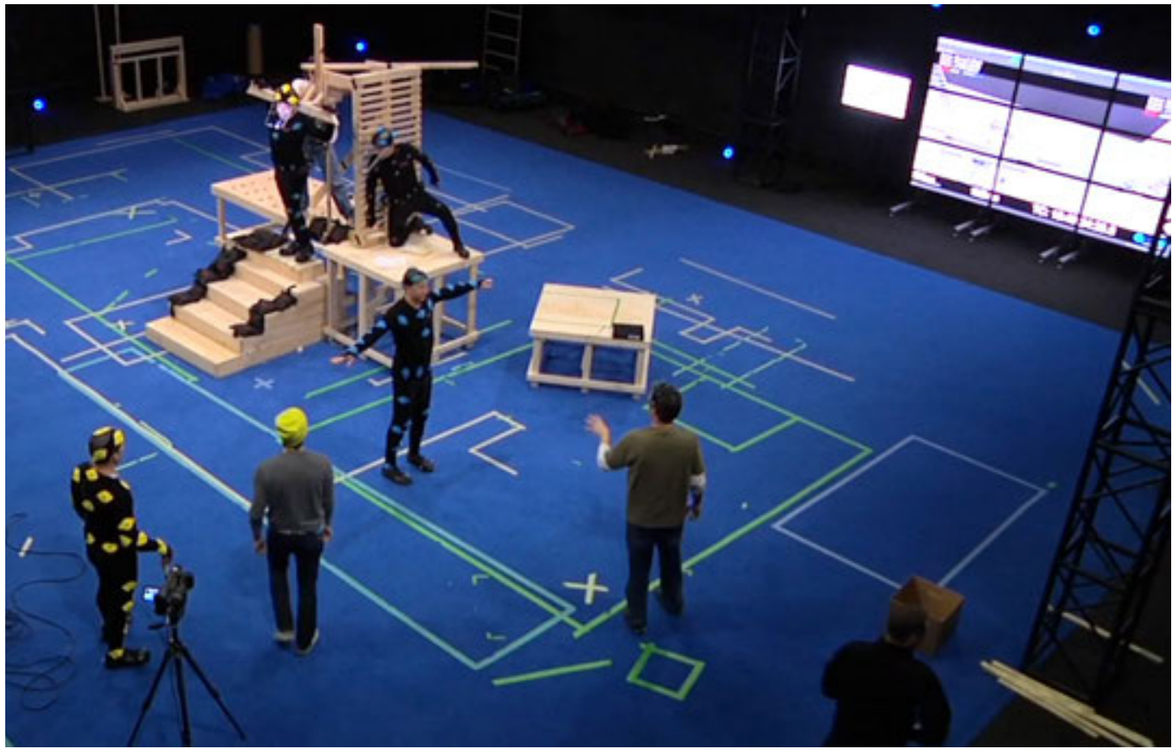


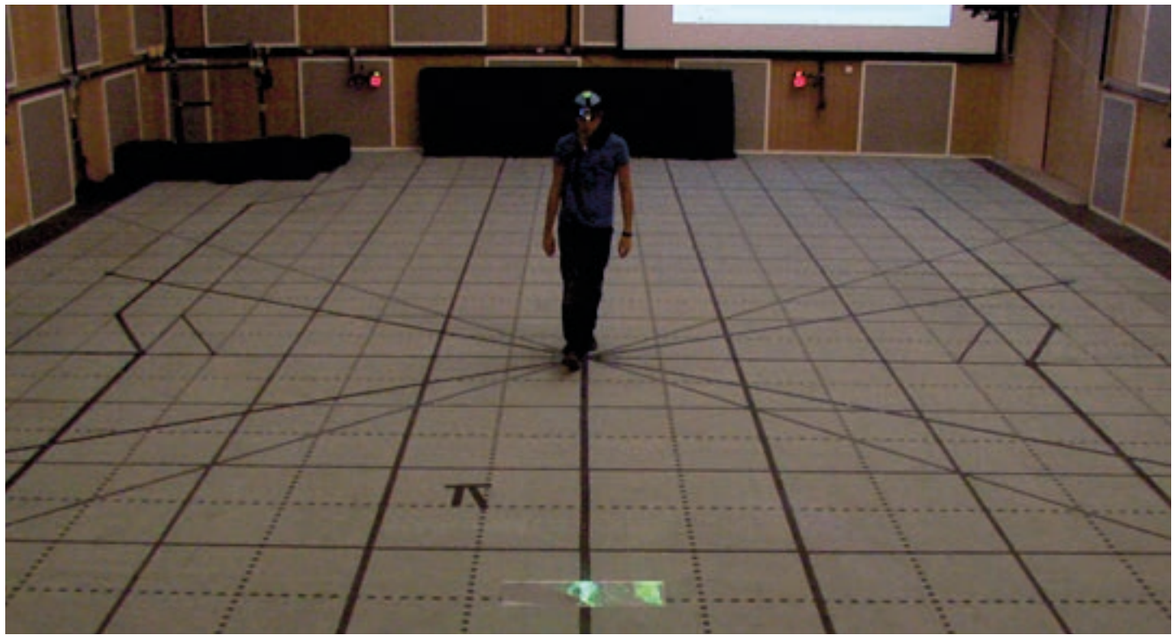




Motion capture / match moving studios

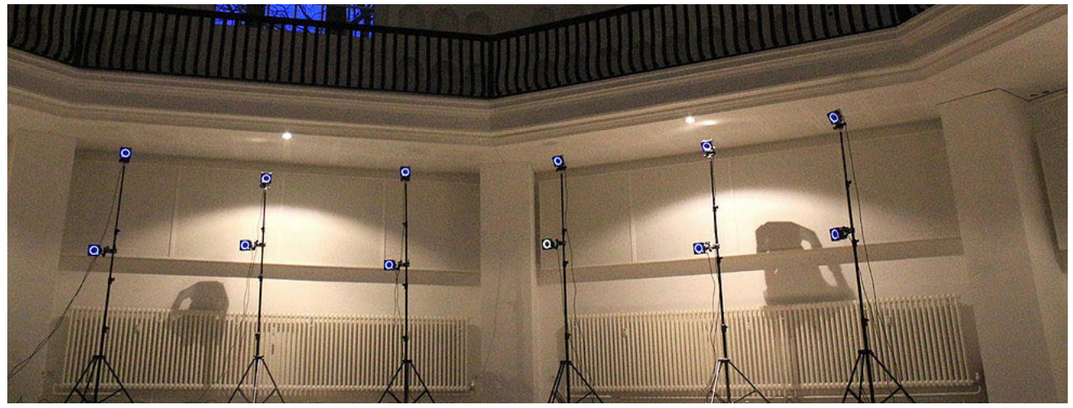
chroma key
static calibration





space embodied

match moving
motion tracking



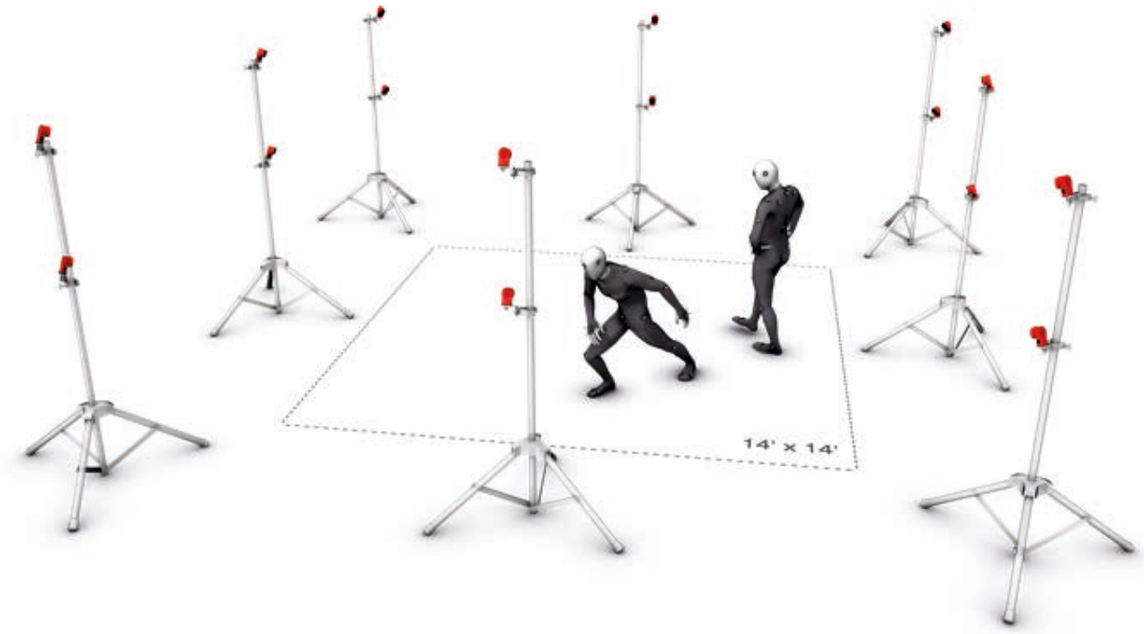
Projectors and tripods

All equipment used in the exhibition will be part of the exhibition design. Projectors will be placed on tripods, and these will become part of the technical set up within the theatric spaces.

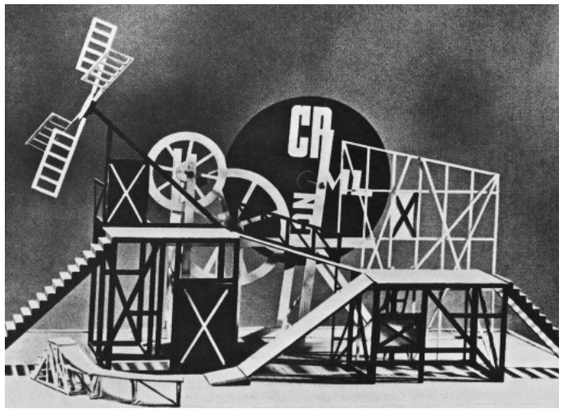


chroma key
static calibration



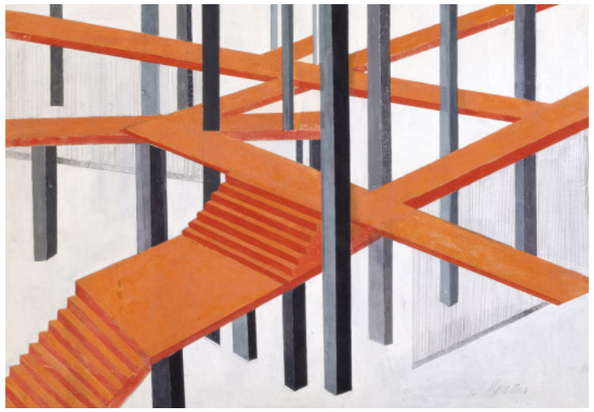


space embodied

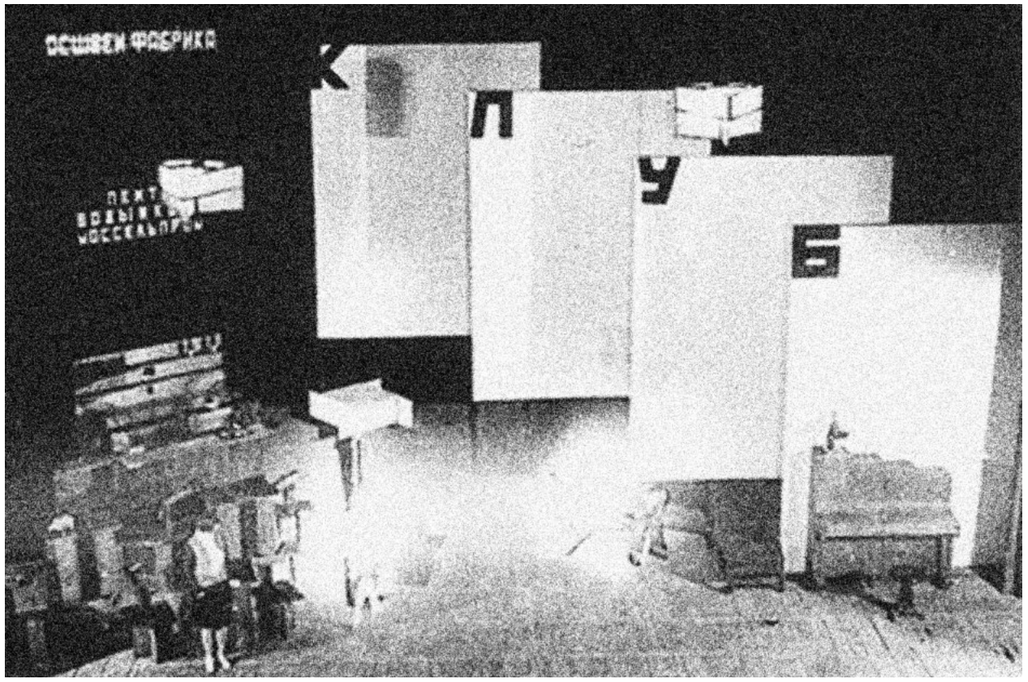


Set design for Vsevolod Meyerhold's production of *The Magnanimous Cuckold* (1922)
Lyubov Popova

panels stairs



Construction for a Tragedy (ca. 1925)
Alexandra Exter



Stage design for *Inga* by Teatr Revoliutsii (1928)
Aleksandr Rodchenko

"*Explaining his participation in the production Rodchenko will emphasize the notion of rationality, the use of foldout (rather than multiple application) furniture (the better to suit everyday living conditions), and his preference for an "abundantly available" material, wood."* (MoMA)

foldable lightweight



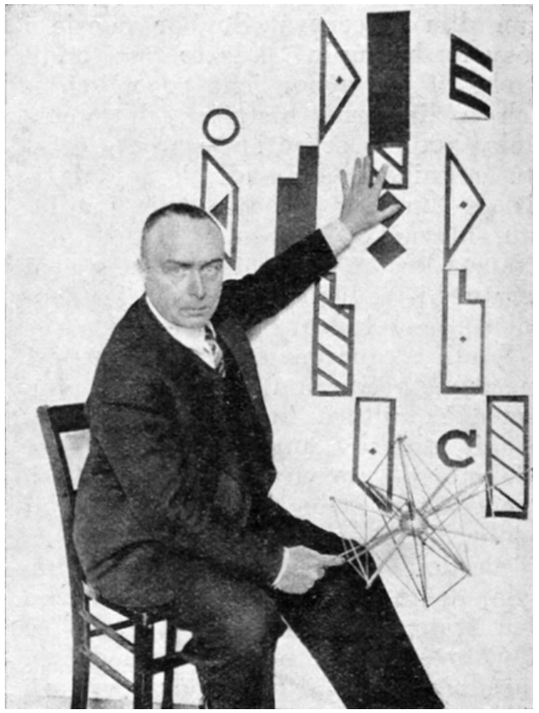




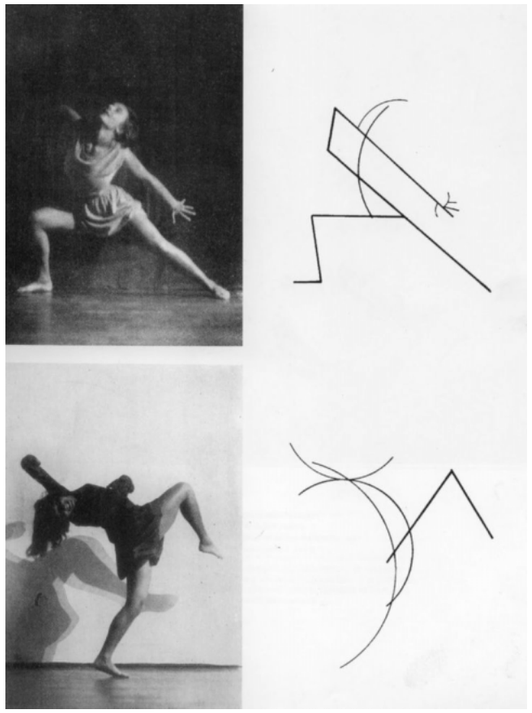


space embodied

choreo/graphic notation



Rudolf von Laban (1879-1958)
and his Labanotation signs



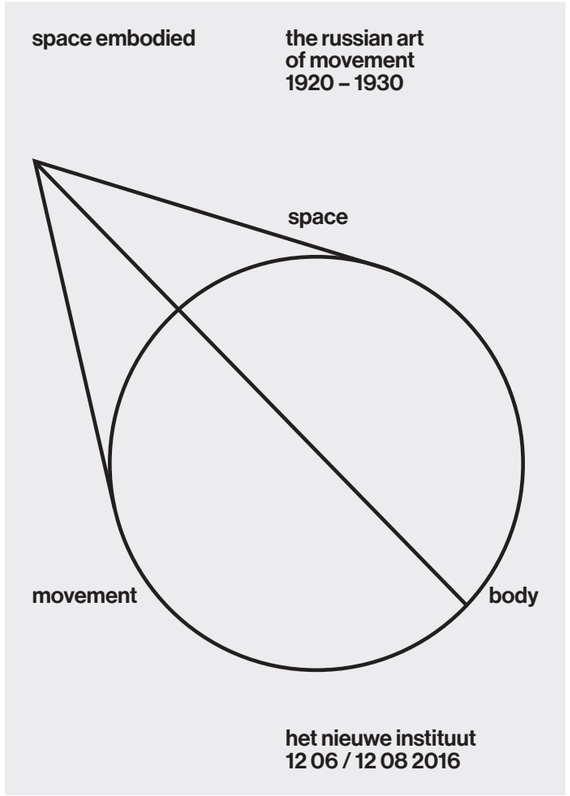
Dance Curves : On the Dances of Palucca (1926)
Wassily Kandinsky

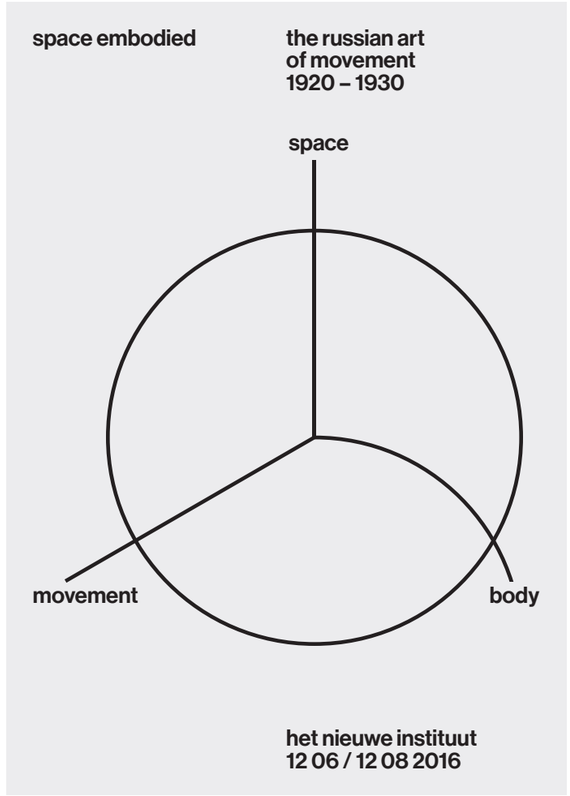


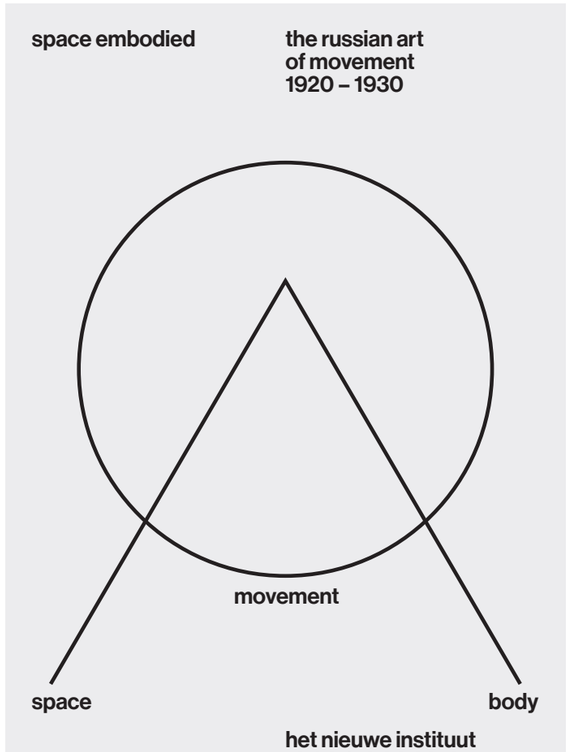
space embodied

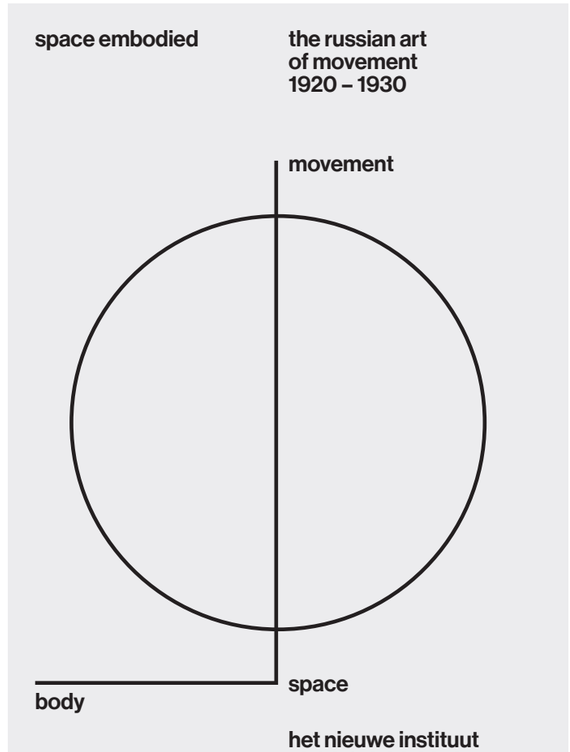
schematics diagrams

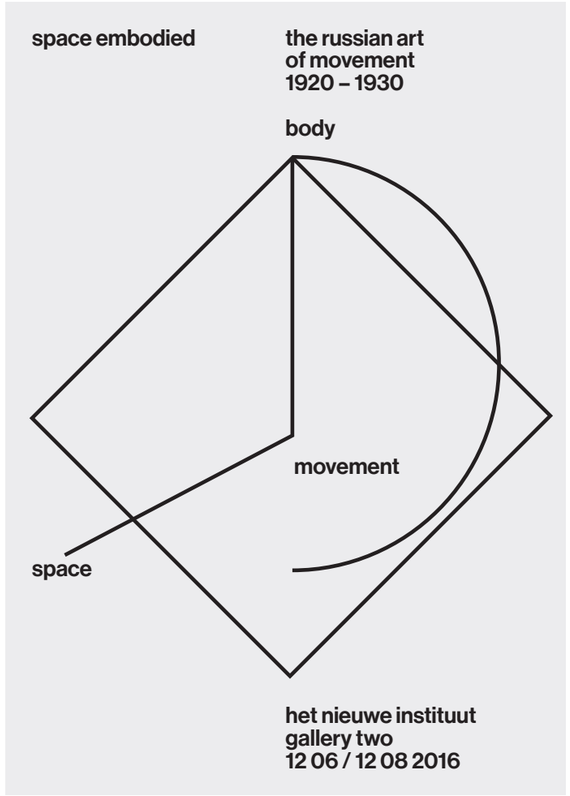
Sketches of schematic diagrams of
the thematic division of the exhibition

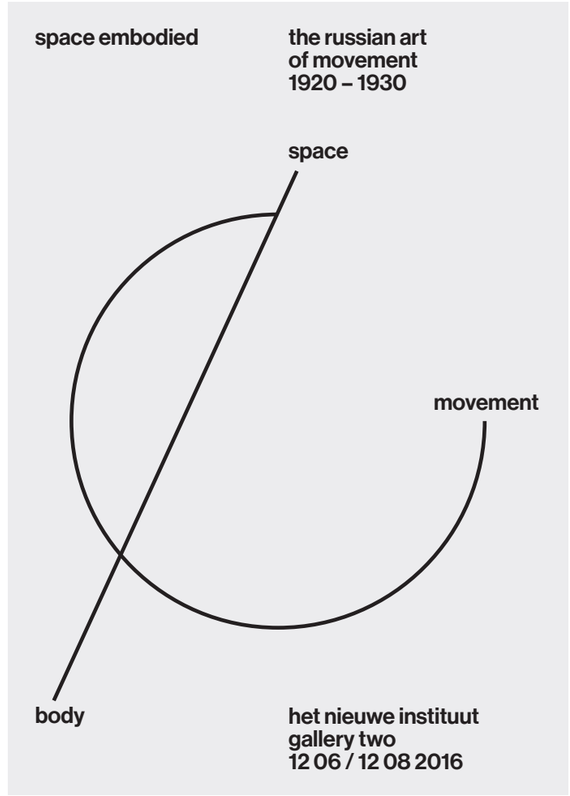






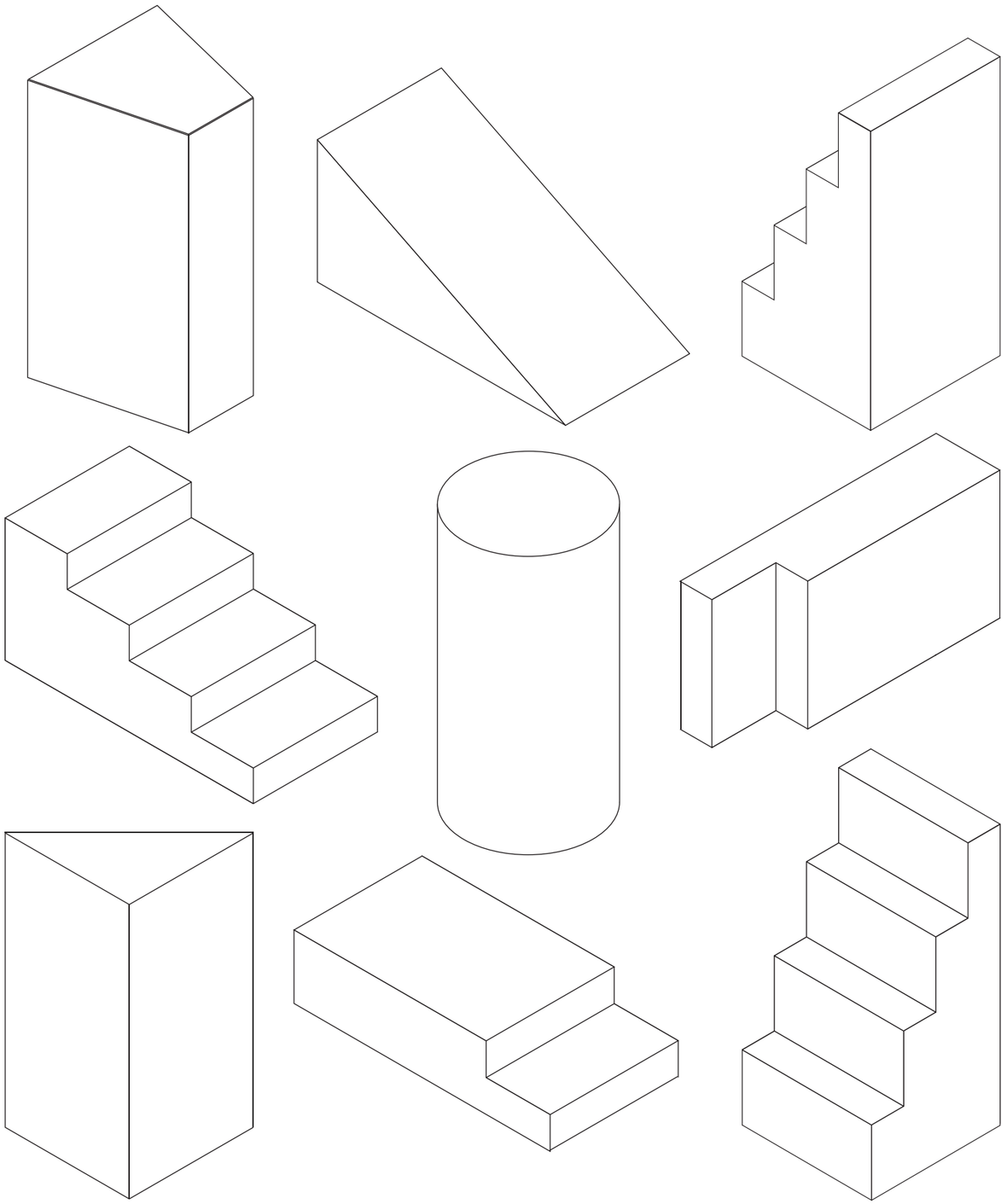






space embodied

volumes
props



life size
reflections



The use of ‘set pieces’ in the exhibition

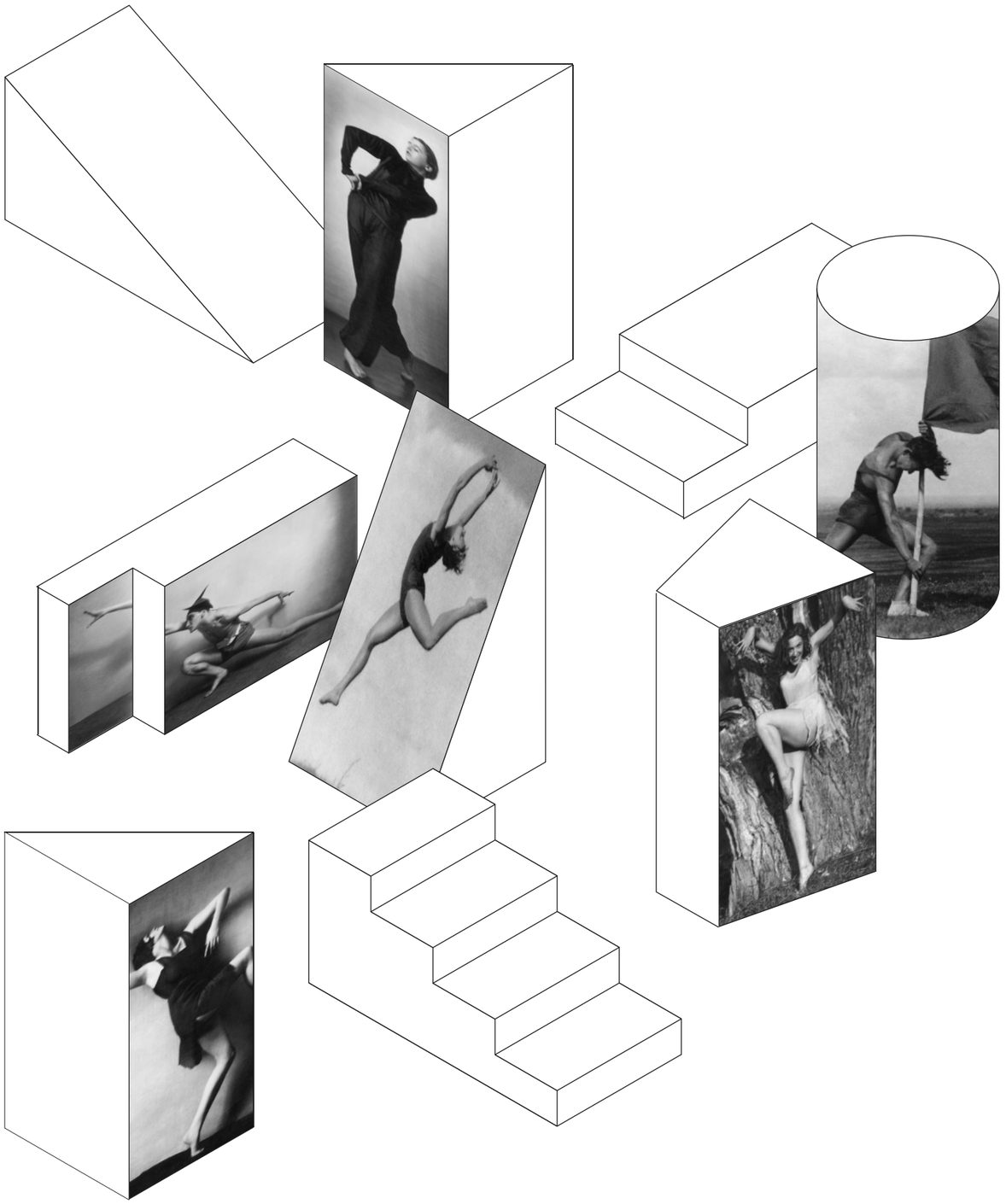
Throughout the exhibition wooden structures will be placed. These structures will be used to display printed material, they will be used as surfaces to project images upon, and serve as pieces of scenery in the theatrical setting of the exhibition.

We would like these structures to be made of lightweight plywood of 18mm thick, preferably pine (vuren). They should look like utilitarian pieces that can move throughout the space, floormarkers indicate possible positions. Because of the possibility to change the position of these shapes, they should be solid (so also have closed undersides). Some of the shapes may need extra internal structure so that it is possible to walk or stand on them.

These wooden ‘set pieces’ measure 90x180 cm. This is large enough to feel life-size, but small enough to move around. They can be used horizontally – as steps or stage segments, or vertically as display stands for projections or prints.

space embodied

the russian art of movement 1920–1930



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part one: space

space
space
space

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the russian art of movement 1920–1930

part one: space

1. Space

New space, new dance

A space for the New Dance was dictated by movements of the body and perceptions of light, resounding with the music of nature and the cosmos. Reducing the stage to a minimum and undertaking performances in the open air became the goal for dancer and choreographer. It was exactly this kind of space, whether structured by Alexandra Exter, Kas'ian Goleizovsky or Lev Lukin, which linked acrobatics with ecstasy, physical education with emotion, outward expression with interior sentiment – and the symbolism of choreographic design with the perfection of physical movement and the nude body beautiful.

The main proponents of the New Dance were dancer and choreographers Isadora Duncan, Kas'ian Goleizovsky, Lev Lukin and Aleksandr Rumnev. But the New Dance also brought dancers and choreographers together with artists. Painters and photographers have

space embodied

the russian art of movement 1920–1930

part one: space

been essential in the creation of the new language of the dance. They were witnesses and interpreters of the new form. It was the designer Petr Galadzhev who expressed and articulated the varied diapason of Lukin's choreographies and exquisite dance manners of Rumnev. Through an emphatic and symbolic use of colour, Galadzhev's costumes conveyed the "luxury and voluptuousness" typical of Lukin's ecstatic dances. Moreover, Galadzhev harmonized the movements of the body with the forms of the costume.

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part two: body

body
body
body

space embodied

the russian art of movement 1920–1930

part two: body

2. Body

Inevitably, the fact that the body, nude or otherwise, was at the centre of the Choreological Laboratory programme did create problems. In 1922, when Aleksandr Sidorov was asked how he could reconcile his academic activities with the "frivolous" study of dance, he replied that his aim was precisely to live the most radical manifestations of dance, its essential nature and artistic expression *par excellence* inasmuch as the material of dance was the "human being, ones own body... the art of the body, the art of the body in movement." Consequently, for all the hype about sophisticated mechanical instruments for recording movement (from the camera to the cyclograph), the principal object of experimentation remained the body – the body which Sidorov regarded as the "static beginning of the dance," declaring that he supported nudity on stage.

These two approaches – the subjective body as the expression of emotion (and hence of eroticism and

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the russian art of movement 1920–1930

part two: body

hygiene (as, for example, in gymnastics and collective work-outs) – had now become the two alternating poles between which the Art of Movement was born.

But the free, if not, anarchical experiments which had been emerging from the private dance studios outside of state control, could not fail to alarm the Soviet authorities. Certainly, by the mid-1920s what the official agenda now required was physical education and the mass parade, not the *danse plastique*. On 26 August, 1924 the Moscow Soviet issued a decree demanding the closure of all dance schools, studios, classes and similar groups, a decree which functioned as a chronological and ideological watershed between the "warm" body of the plastic dance and the "cold" body of physical culture.

space embodied

the russian art of movement 1920–1930

part three: movement

move
ment
move
me

space embodied

the russian art of movement 1920–1930

part three: movement

3. Movement

Inevitably, the fact that the body, nude or otherwise, was at the centre of the Choreological Laboratory programme did create problems. In 1922, when Aleksandr Sidorov was asked how he could reconcile his academic activities with the "frivolous" study of dance, he replied that his aim was precisely to live the most radical manifestations of dance, its essential nature and artistic expression *par excellence* inasmuch as the material of dance was the "human being, ones own body... the art of the body, the art of the body in movement." Consequently, for all the hype about sophisticated mechanical instruments for recording movement (from the camera to the cyclograph), the principal object of experimentation remained the body – the body which Sidorov regarded as the "static beginning of the dance," declaring that he supported nudity on stage.

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space embodied

the russian art of movement 1920–1930

part three: movement

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Sketches of intoduction texts to each of the three parts of the exhibition, and a possible way of fixing these using ‘spike marks’.

space embodied

screens
mirrors



The mirrors that were left of the previous exhibition can partly be recycled to cover the walls of the second part of the exhibtion, with the theme ‘body’ (the first corridor). Folding screens form partitions around these mirrors, where visitors see themself reflected next to life-size historic photographs.

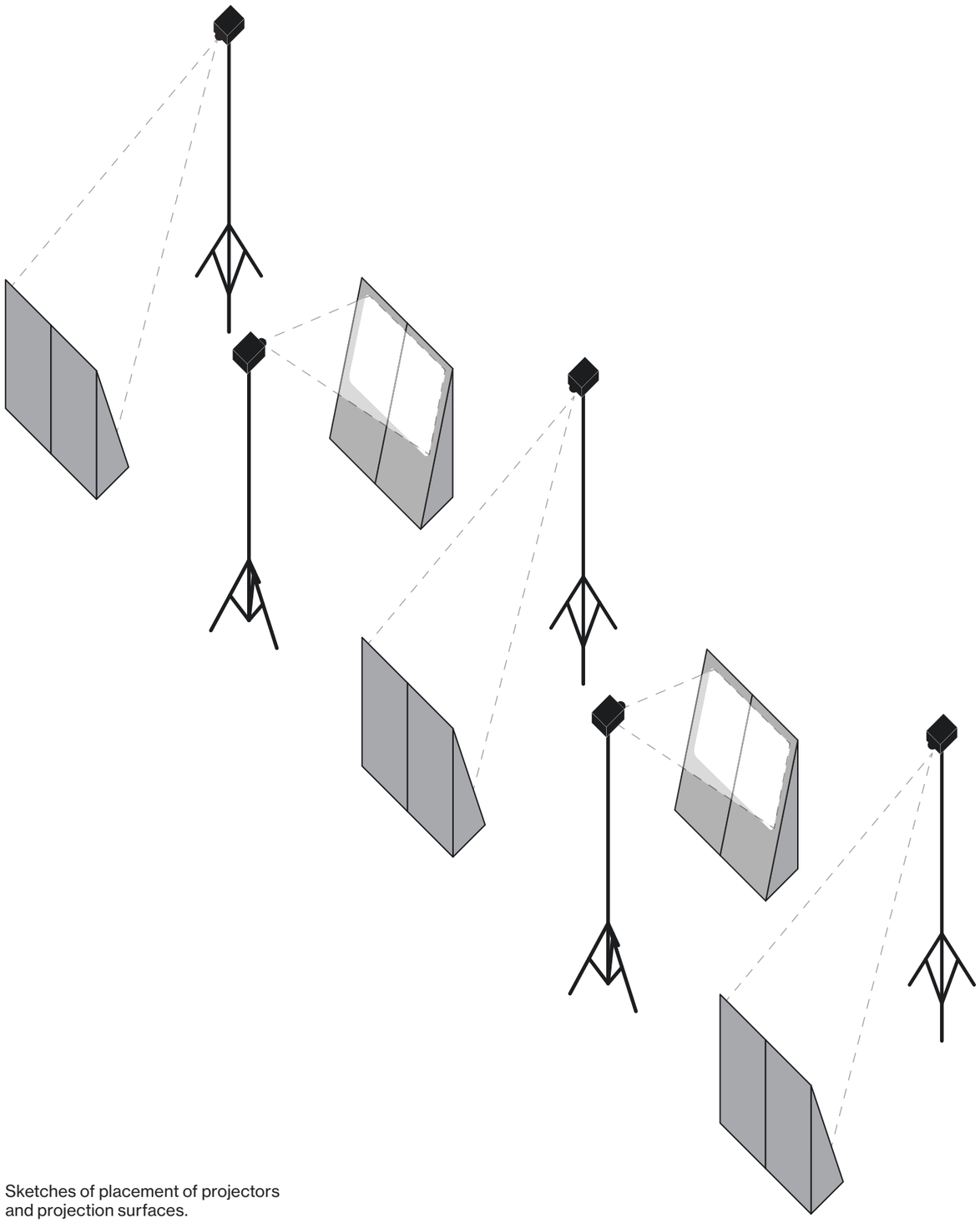
space embodied

screens
prints



space embodied

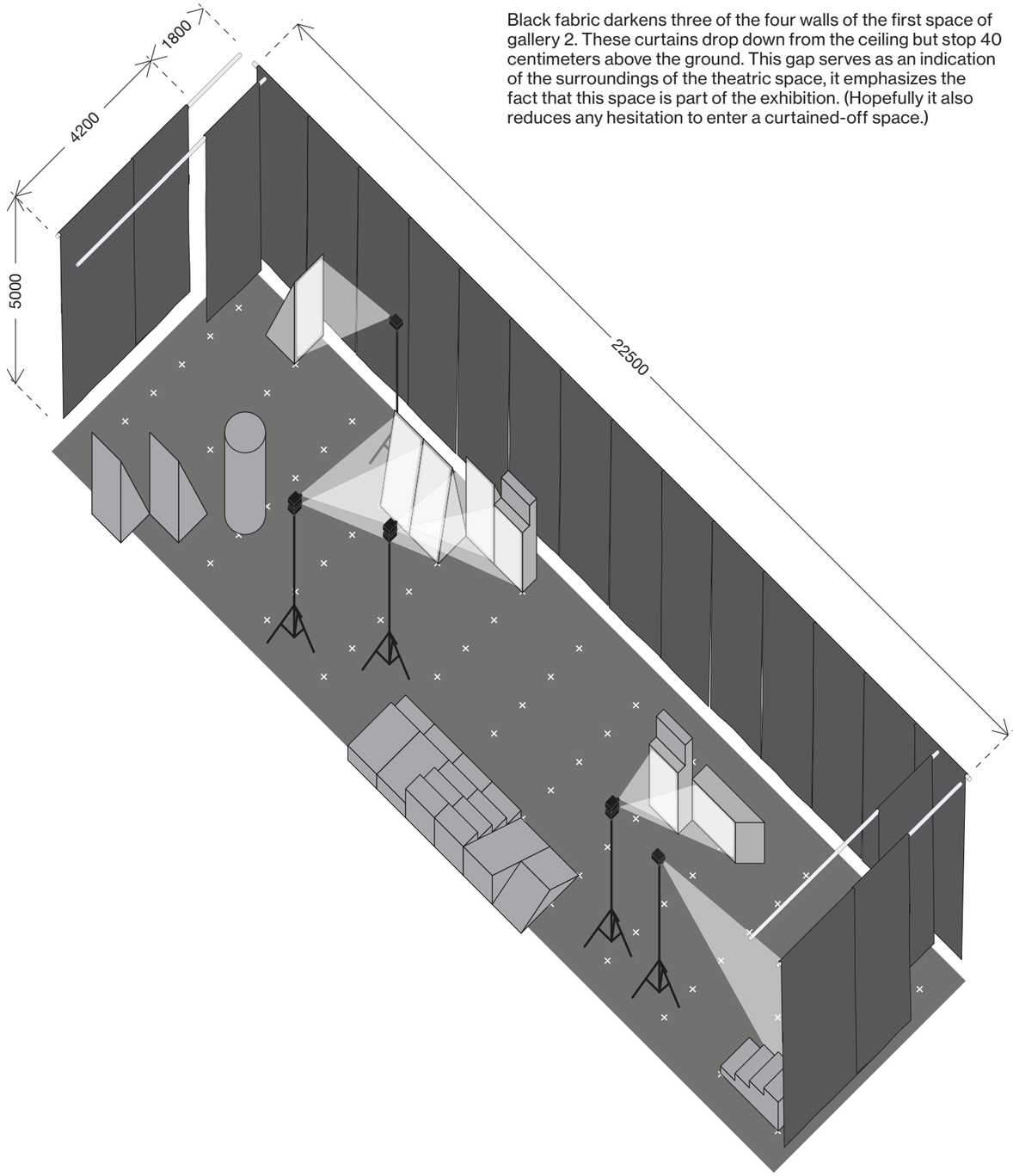
tripods
projectors



Sketches of placement of projectors
and projection surfaces.

space embodied

curtains
screens

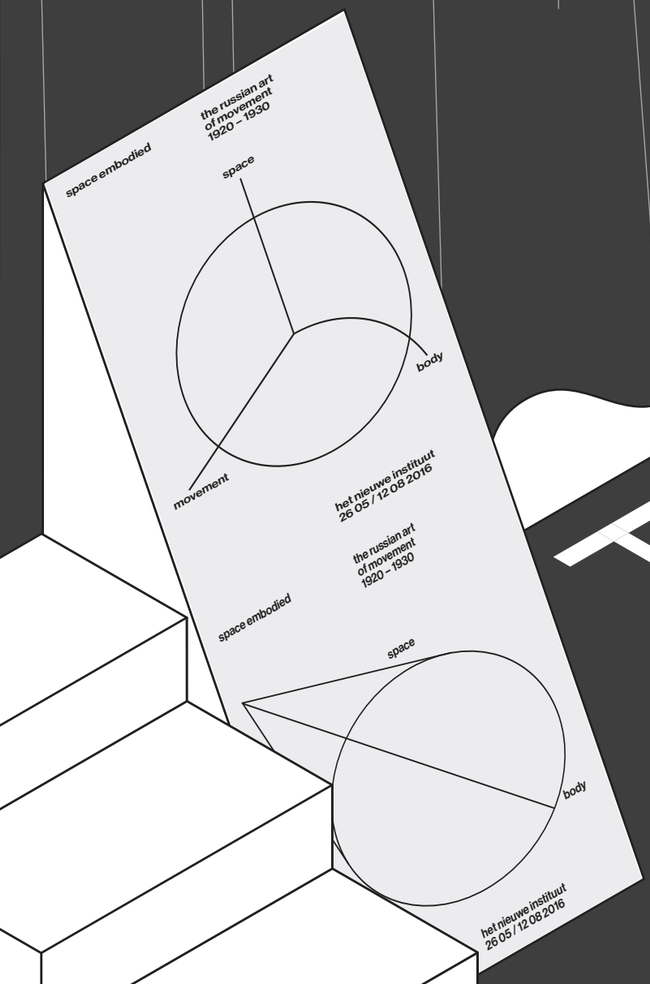


Curtains

Black fabric darkens three of the four walls of the first space of gallery 2. These curtains drop down from the ceiling but stop 40 centimeters above the ground. This gap serves as an indication of the surroundings of the theatric space, it emphasizes the fact that this space is part of the exhibition. (Hopefully it also reduces any hesitation to enter a curtained-off space.)

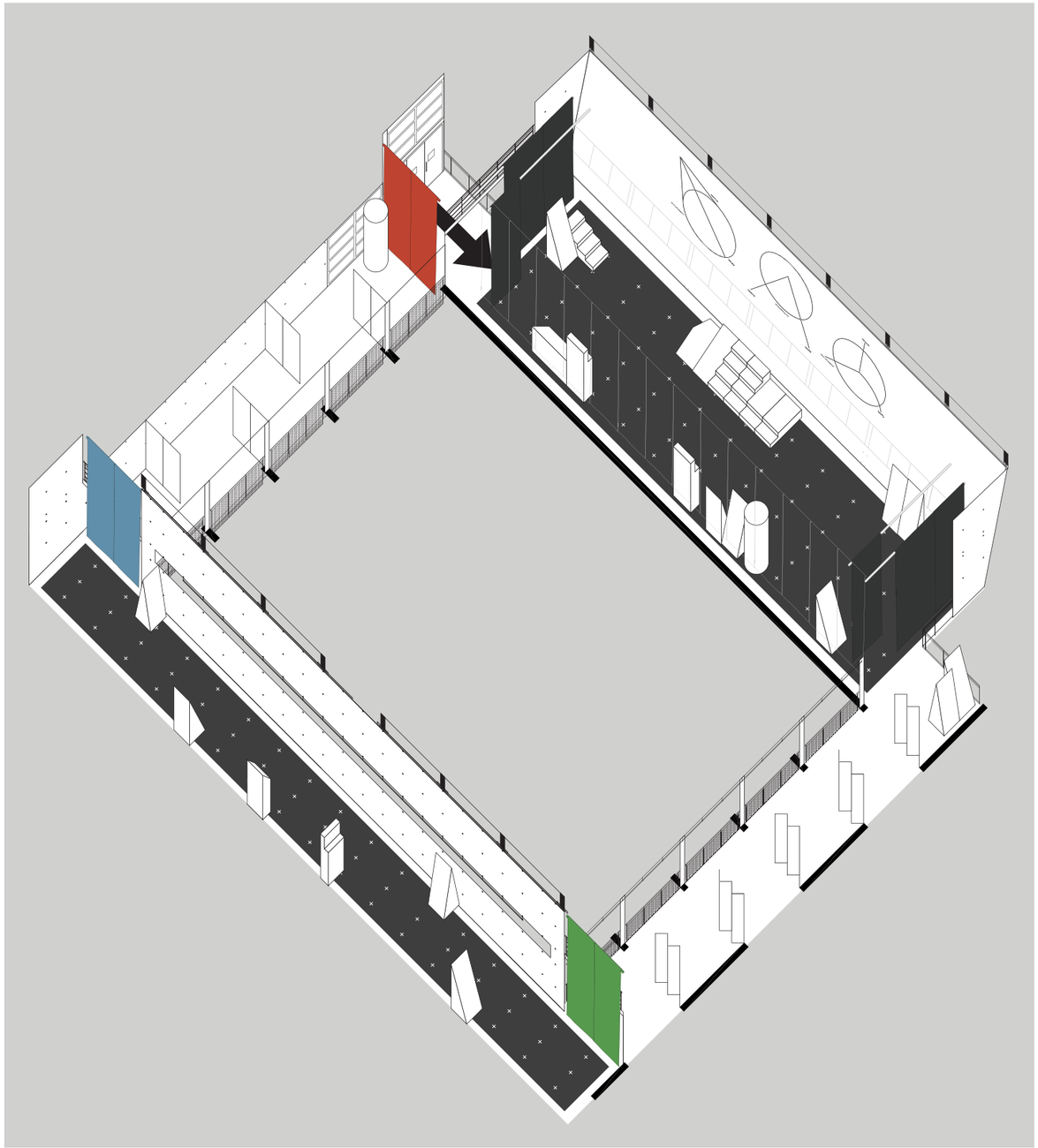
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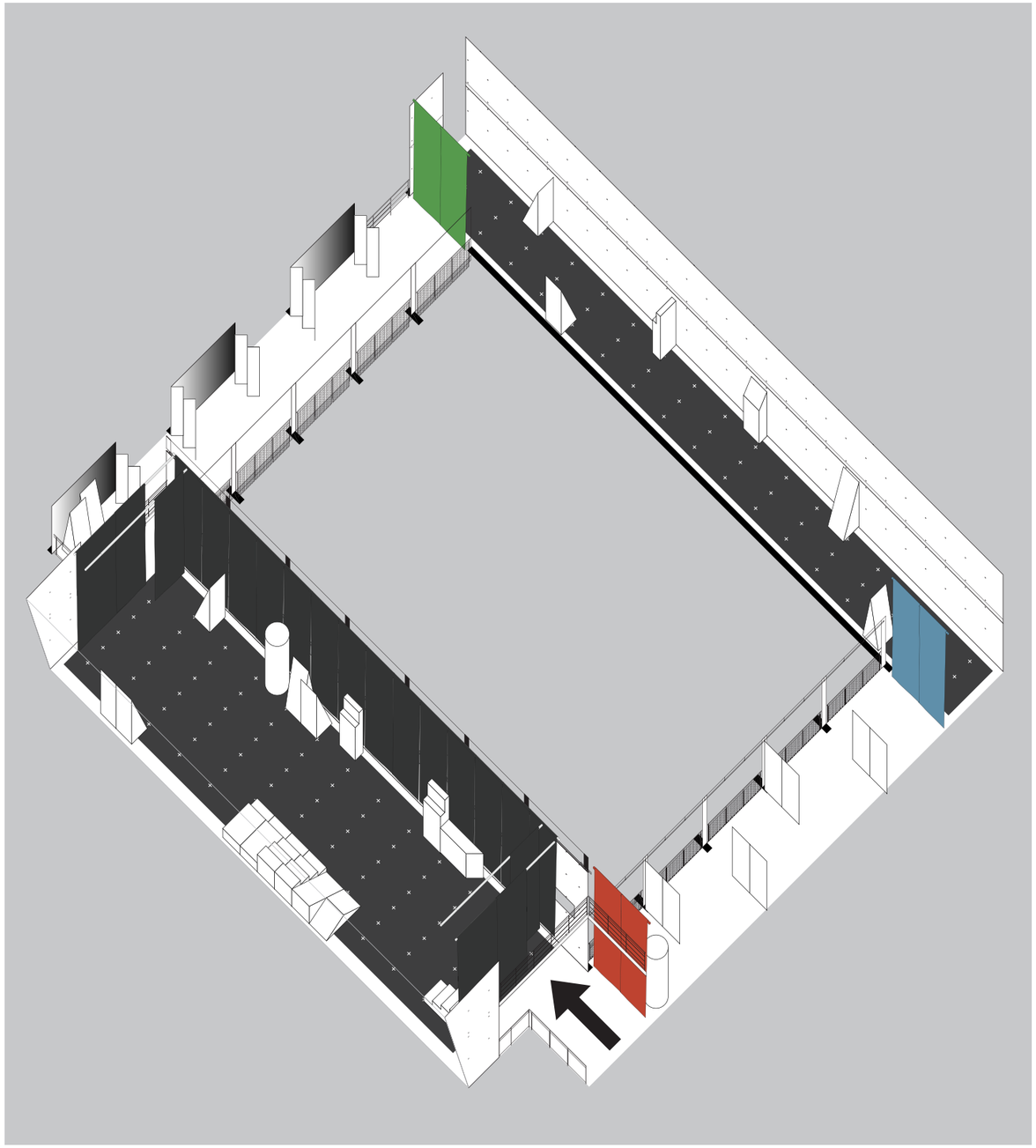


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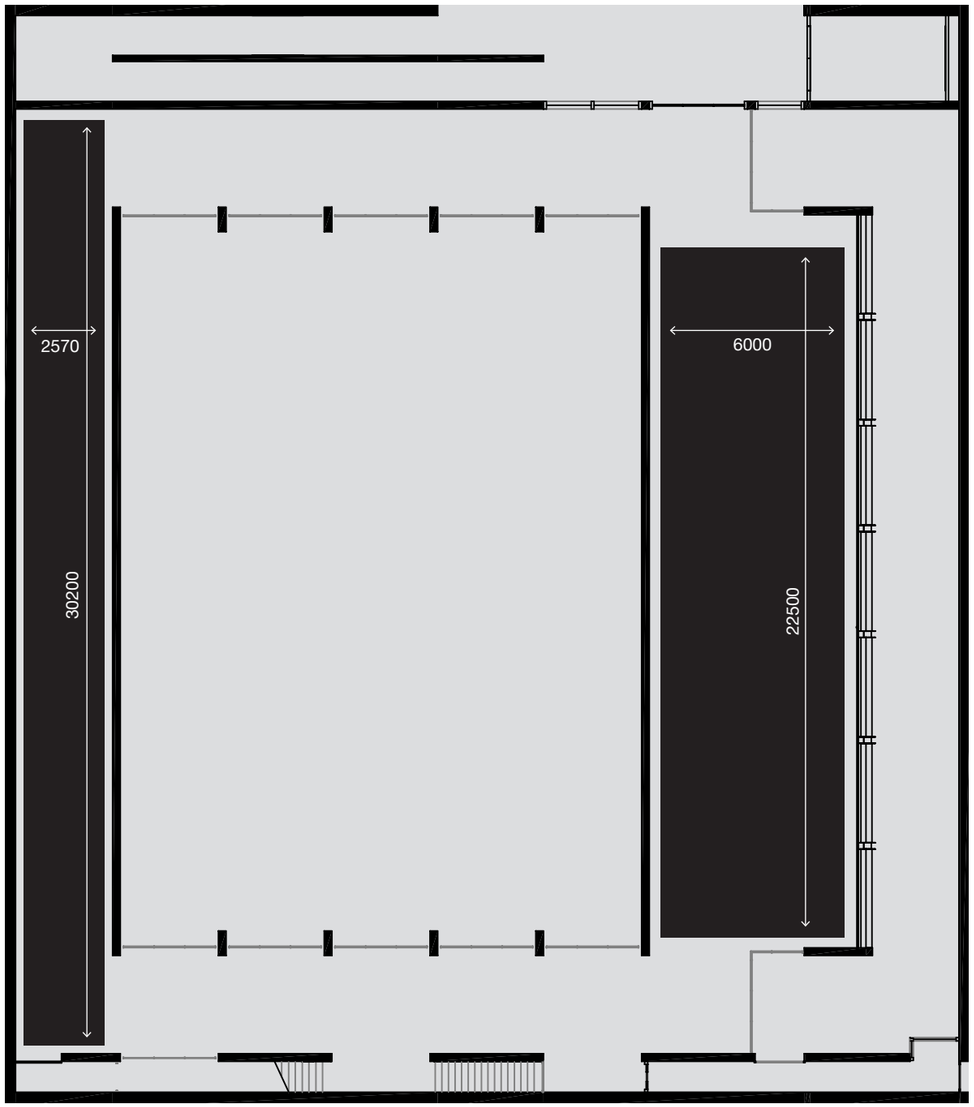
preliminary exhibition setting



Exhibition design sketches
Experimental Jetset, 08.05.2016

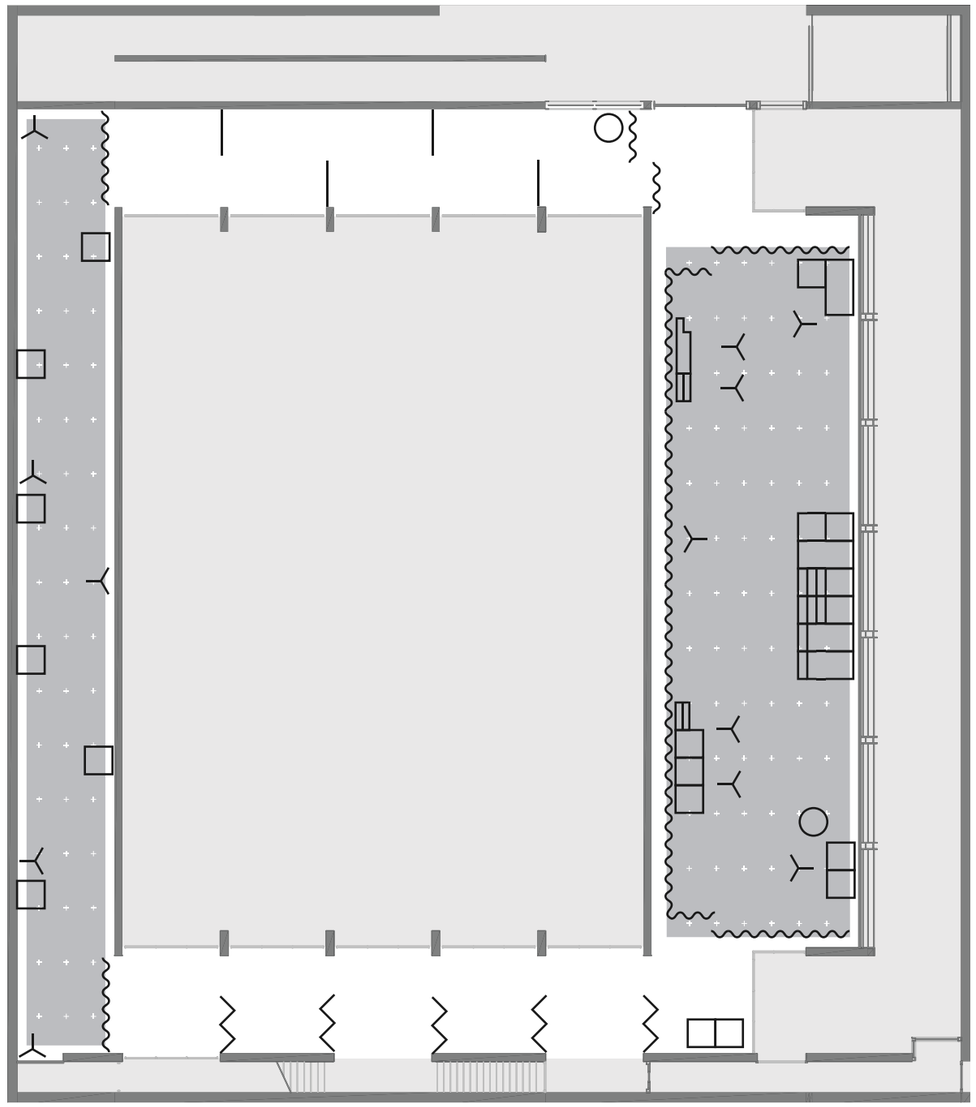
space embodied

black vinyl dance floors



Black vinyl (dance-)floors cover the first and third space of gallery tow. Their measurements are: 22,5 x 6 meters and 30,2 x 2,57 meters There is about 30cm free space around the floors.

preliminary setting



curtain

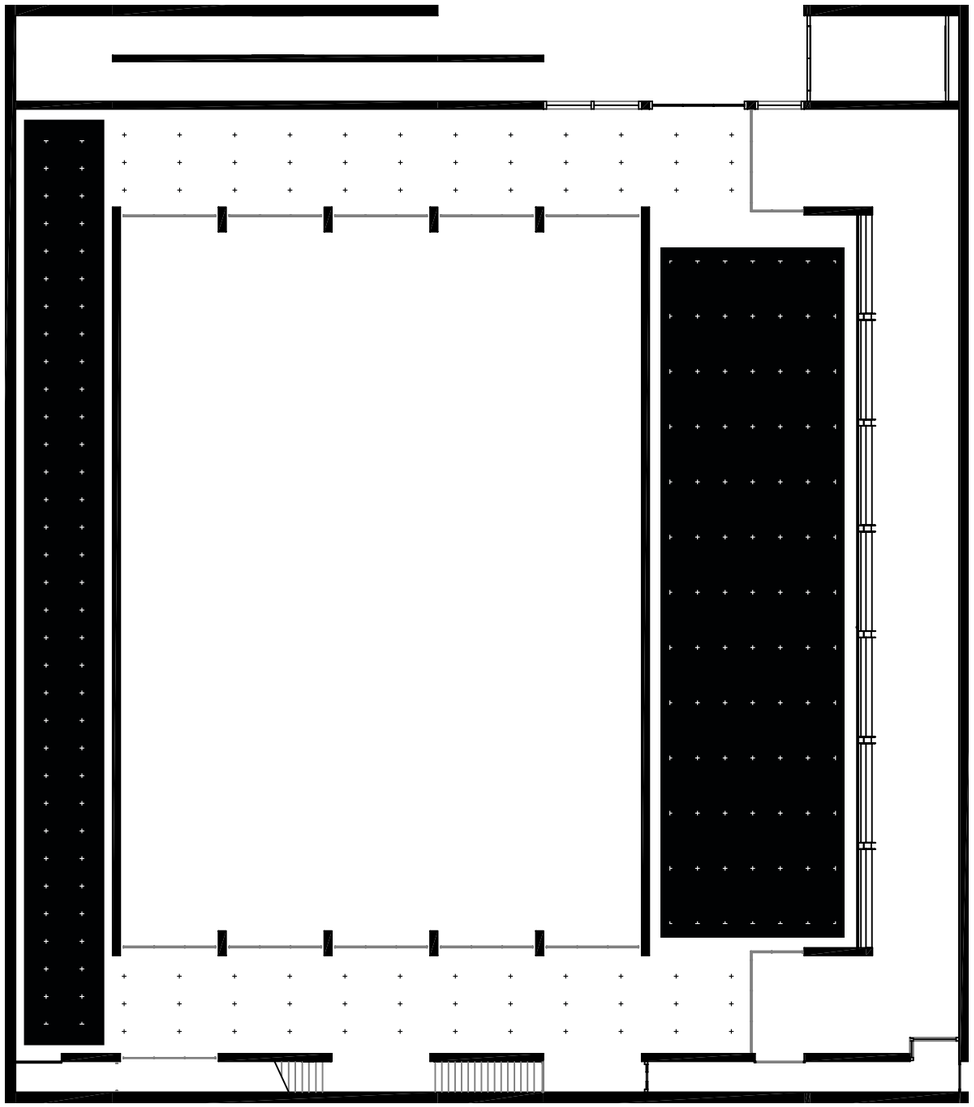
screen/set piece

tripod/projector

Exhibition design sketches
Experimental Jetset, 08.05.2016

space embodied

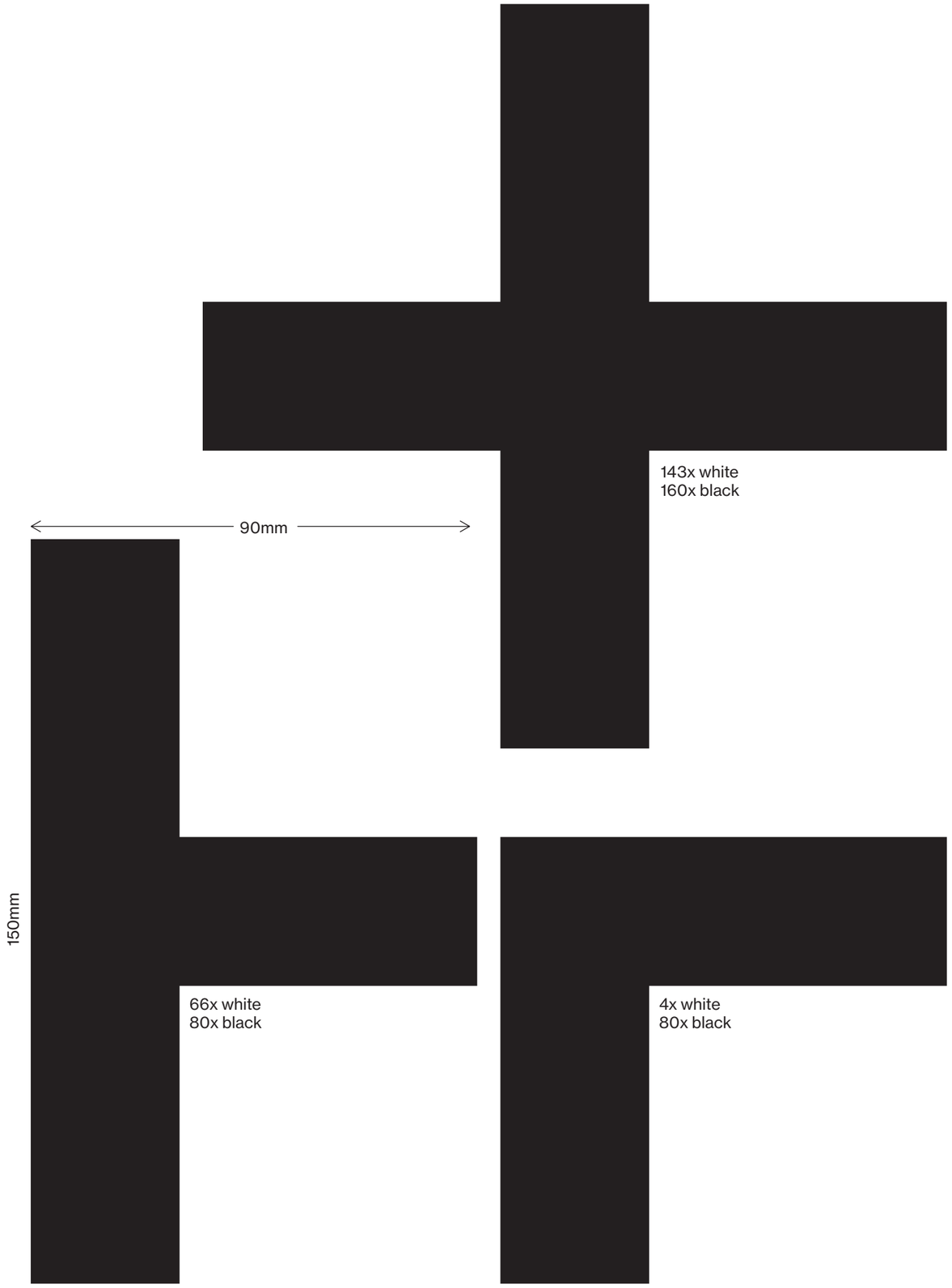
grid markers



A grid of ‘spike marks’ covers the floor throughout the space. These marks indictate (hypothetical) placements of the set pieces.
The same marks can be used to fix and accentuate images and texts, both printed and projected.

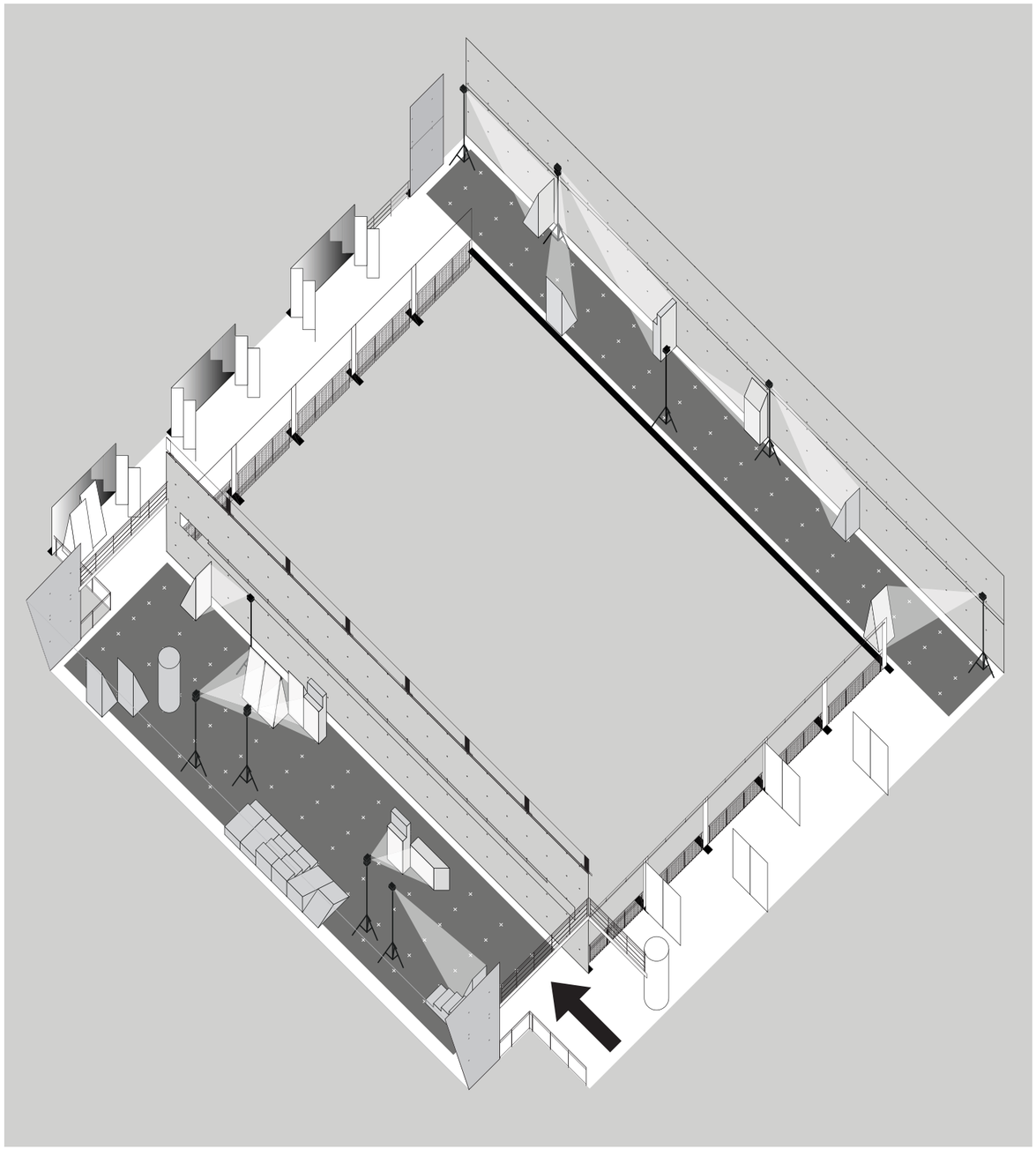
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grid markers



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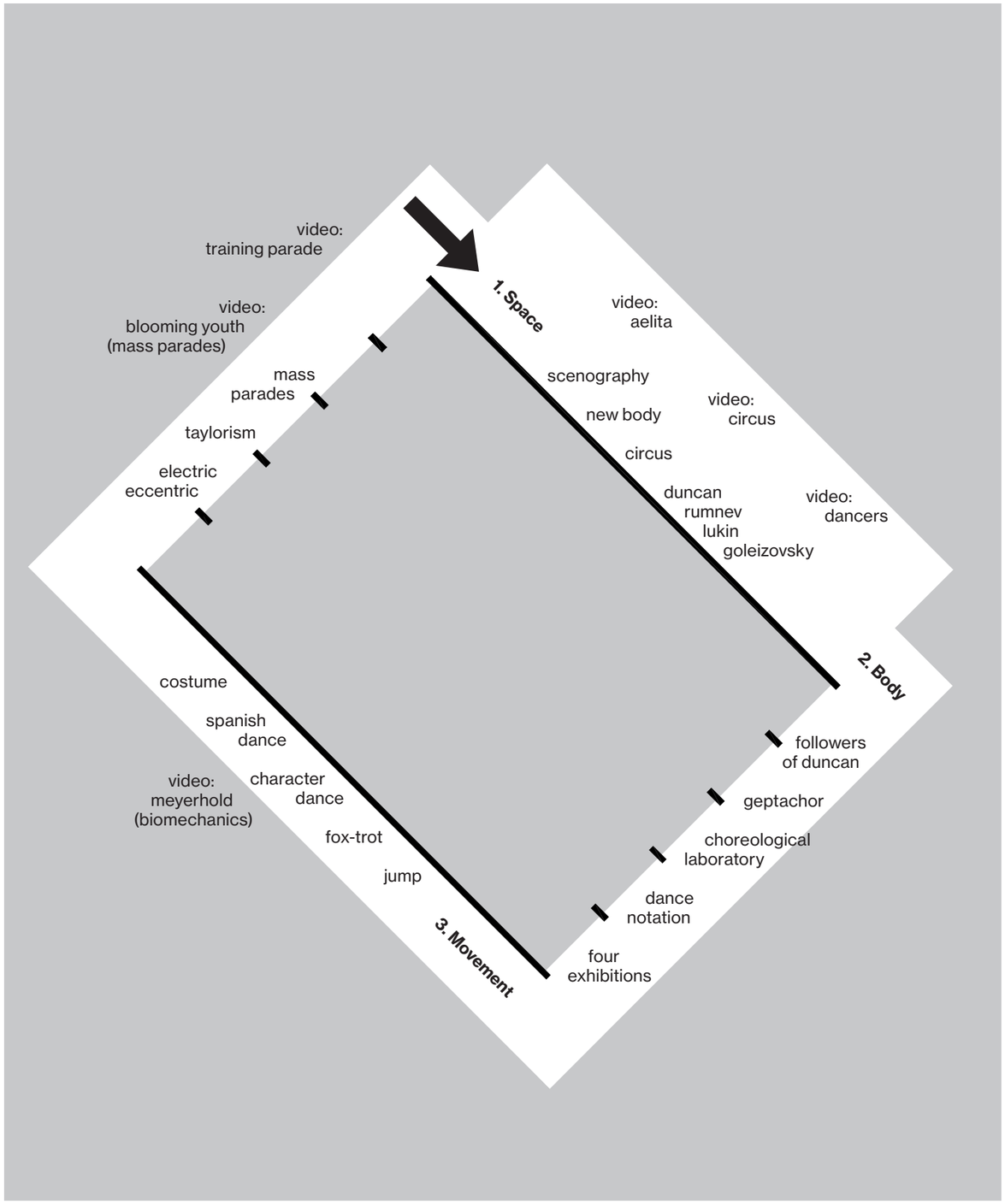
preliminary exhibition setting

The space of gallery two will be divided in four parts, which are alternating between light and darkness. In the darkened spaces images will mainly be projected, and in the lighter corridors images will be printed on paper and displayed on screens and panels.

The first and largest space is devoted to the theme of *Space*. The following corridor covers the theme *Body*. The third space features projections again, this time on the theme *Movement*. This theme extends into the last corridor.

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section: space

Groupings of works in the exhibition
Estimation of number of prints and built structures
Image numbers refer to file: The New Body_1_Space_0305

0. Introduction text				2x A1 print	1 block
Space					
0. New space, new dance				2x A1 print	1 block
1: Scenography					
Group 1:	image 1 – 5:			2x A1, 1xA0, 3x A2 print	1 block
+ film:	Aelita Queen of Mars			projection (1)	1 block
2: New Body (Naked and Dressed)					
Group 2:	image 6 – 9	drawings		projection (2)	2 blocks (1 hor. 1 vert.)
	image 10 – 11	drawings Galadzhev, Engel's, Vlasov			
Group 3:	image 12 – 18	photos Pan outdoors			
Group 4:	image 19 – 24	photos Plastic positions			
3a: Isodora Duncan					
	image 33	portrait		projection (3)	1 block
	image 36	poster			
Group 5:	image 25 – 28	watercolours			
	image 29 – 30	Duncanettes			
Group 6:	image 31 – 32	dance with veil			
Group 7:	image 34 – 35	watercolours			
3b: A. Rumnev					
	image 37	portrait		projection (4)	1 block
Group 8:	image 38 – 45	photos			
3c: Lukin					
	image 47	portrait		projection (5)	1 block
Group 9:	image 48 – 54	drawings from book (with cover)			
	image 56 – 58	3 moments from Sappho			
	image 63	Sappho			
	image 59 – 62	Greek dances			
	image 64				
3d: K. Goleizovsky					
	image 65	portrait		projection (6)	1 block
Group 10:	image 66 – 69	drawings			
	image 70	photo (!)			
	image 71 – 74	drawings orgiastic dances			
	image 75 – 76	couple			
	image 77				
4: Circus					
Group 11:	image 78 – 80	corps de dance		projection (7)	1 block
	image 81	acrobatic exercise			
	image 82 – 84	circus scenes			
	image 85 – 86	drawings			
	image 87 – 89	photos rubber poses			
	image 90 – 95	clowns			
	image 93 – 94	operetta			
+ film:	Circus			projection (8)	1 block
+ film:	Contemporary dancers		(high capacity projector)	projection (9)	on wall

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section: body

Groupings of works in the exhibition
Estimation of number of prints and built structures
Image numbers refer to file: The New Body_2_Body_0305

Body

0. introduction text			2x A1 print	
1: Followers of Duncan				
Group 12:	image 1 – 2	portraits	2 x A1 print	1 panel
Group 13:	image 3– 11	photos Alekseeva	10 x A2 print	
2. Geptachor				
Group 14:	image 12 – 18	(group 2?) colour tables	3 x A1 print	1 panel (2sides)
	image 4 – 8	colour studies & charts (originals?)	10 x A2 print	
3. Choreological Laboratory				
Group 15:	image 19	print salon	3 x A0 print	
4. Dance notation				
Group 16:	image 71 – 75	notation	24xA3 print	1 panel (2sides)
	image 76 – 82	acrobats	6 xA2	
	image 83 – 85	acrobats	8 x A1	
	image 86 – 87	tunics		
	image 88a – 89	poses		
	image 90 – 98	feet (originals?)		
	image 99 – 101	hands (originals?)		
	image 102 – 108	poses, photos + drawings (originals?)		
5. Four exhibitions			8 x A2 txts	2 panels (4sides)
Group 17:	image 20 – 22	first exhibition	4 x A1 print	
Group 18:	image 24	second exhibition	22 x A2 print	
	image 25 – 30	second exhibition		
	image 31 – 32	second exhibition		
	image 33	second exhibition		
	image 34 – 36	second exhibition		
	image 37 – 41	second exhibition		
	image 42 – 45	second exhibition		
Group 19:	image 46 – 47	third exhibition	18 x A2 print	
	image 48 – 50	third exhibition		
	image 51 – 54	third exhibition		
	image 55 – 56	third exhibition		
	image 57 – 58	third exhibition		
	image 59	third exhibition		
	image 60 – 62	third exhibition		
Group 20:	image 63	fourth exhibition	8 x A1 print	
	image 64 – 65	fourth exhibition		
	image 66 – 67	fourth exhibition		
	image 68 – 70	fourth exhibition		
+ film:	wege zu kraft und schönheit		monitor (1)	

section: movement

Groupings of works in the exhibition
Estimation of number of prints and built structures
Image numbers refer to file: The New Body_2_Body_0305

Movement

0. introduction text			2x A1 print	
1: Jump				
Group 21:	image 1 – 16	photos & drawings	projection (10)	1 block
4. Fox-trot				
Group 22:	image 52 – 56	tango	projection (11)	1 block
	image 57, 58	ballroom		
	image 59 – 60	variety		
	image 61 – 64	V. Vasil'eva	4x A1 print	
	image 65, 68			
	image 66 – 67	fox-trot		
5. Character dancing				
Group 23:	image 69 – 72	costumes	projection (12)	1 block
	image 73 – 74	characters		
	image 75	characters		
+ film:	meyerhold		projection (13)	1 block
6. Spanish dancing				
Group 24:	image 76 – 77	costumes	projection (14)	1 block
	image 78 – 80	costumes (as prints?)		
7. Costume				
Group 25:	image 81	drawing (as prints)	projection (15)	1 block
	image 82 – 85	costumes		
	image 86 – 87	plastic dance		
	image 88 – 89	eccentric dance		
	image 90 – 91			
	image 92 – 95	costumes		
	image 96 – 97	costumes		
	image 98, 99	drawings		
	image 100 –103	costumes		
	image 104	drawing		
3. Electric, eccentric				
Group 26:	image 39 – 41	drawings	14 xA2 print	1 panel
	image 42 – 45	costumes		
	image 46, 47	drawing, poster		
	image 48 – 49	mechanical dances		
	image 50 – 51	machine dances		
2: Taylorism				
Group 27:	image 19 – 24	photo experiments (as prints?)	20xA2 print	2 panels
	image 25 – 26	chronocyclography		
	image 36 – 37	photo experiments (as prints?)		
	image 27 – 30	drawings		
	image 31 – 35	posters (as prints?)		
	image 38	portrait of Lenin		
8. Mass parades				
Group 28:	image 105 – 124	reproductions posters	20 xA1, 2xA2 print	1 block
+ film:	mass parade		monitor (2)	
+ film:	blossoming youth		monitor (3)	
9. Credits			2xA2 print	1 panel

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The use of ‘set pieces’ in the exhibition

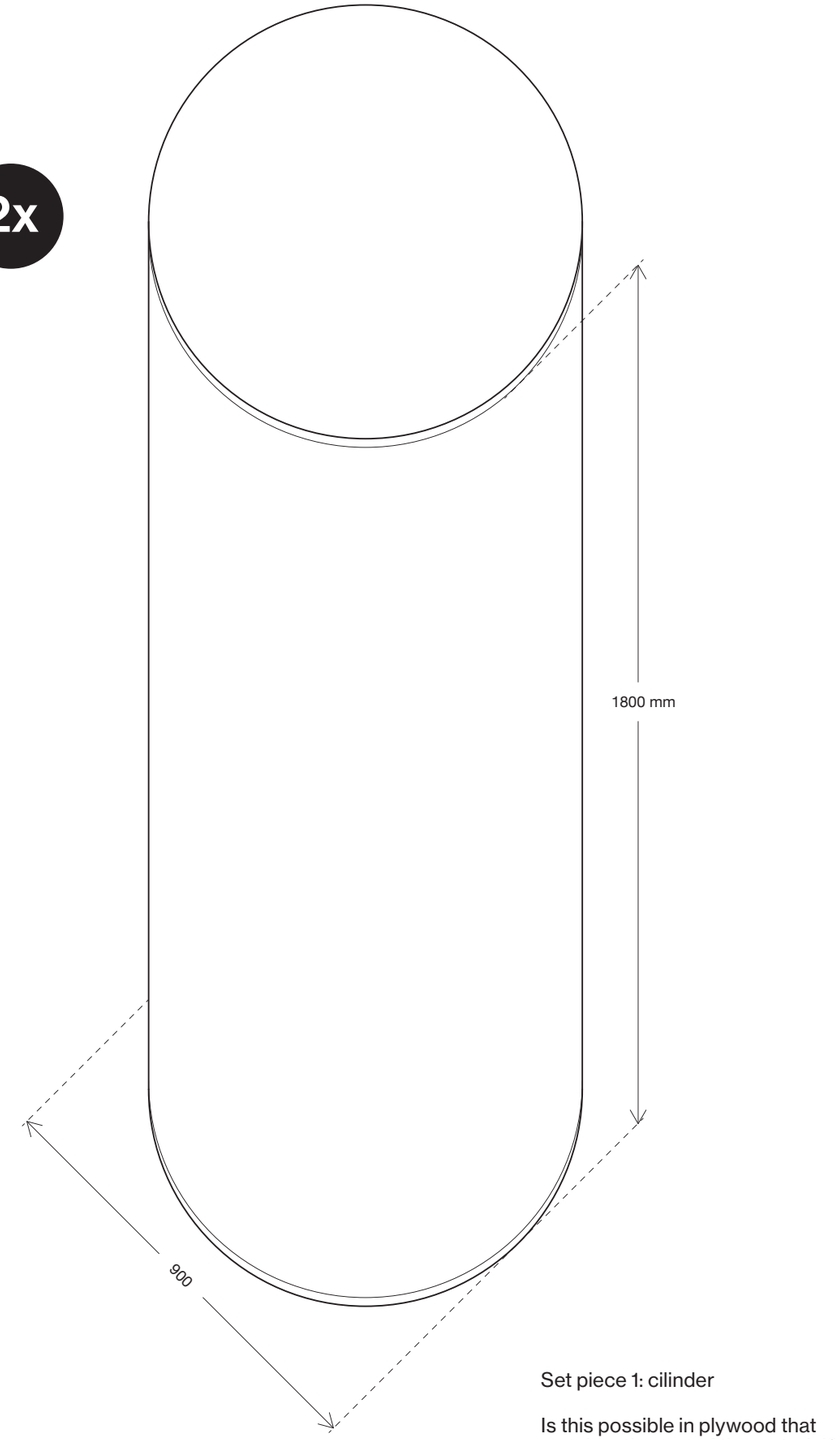
Throughout the exhibition wooden structures will be placed. These structures will be used to display printed material, they will be used as surfaces to project images upon, and serve as pieces of scenery in the theatrical setting of the exhibition.

We would like these structures to be made of lightweight plywood of 18mm thick, preferably pine (vuren). They should look like utilitarian pieces that can move throughout the space, floormarkers indicate possible positions. Because of the possibility to change the position of these shapes, they should be solid (so also have closed undersides). Some of the shapes may need extra internal structure so that it is possible to walk or stand on them.

These wooden ‘set pieces’ measure 90x180 cm. This is large enough to feel life-size, but small enough to move around. They can be used horizontally – as steps or stage segments, or vertically as display stands for projections or prints.

set pieces: cilinder

2x



Set piece 1: cilinder

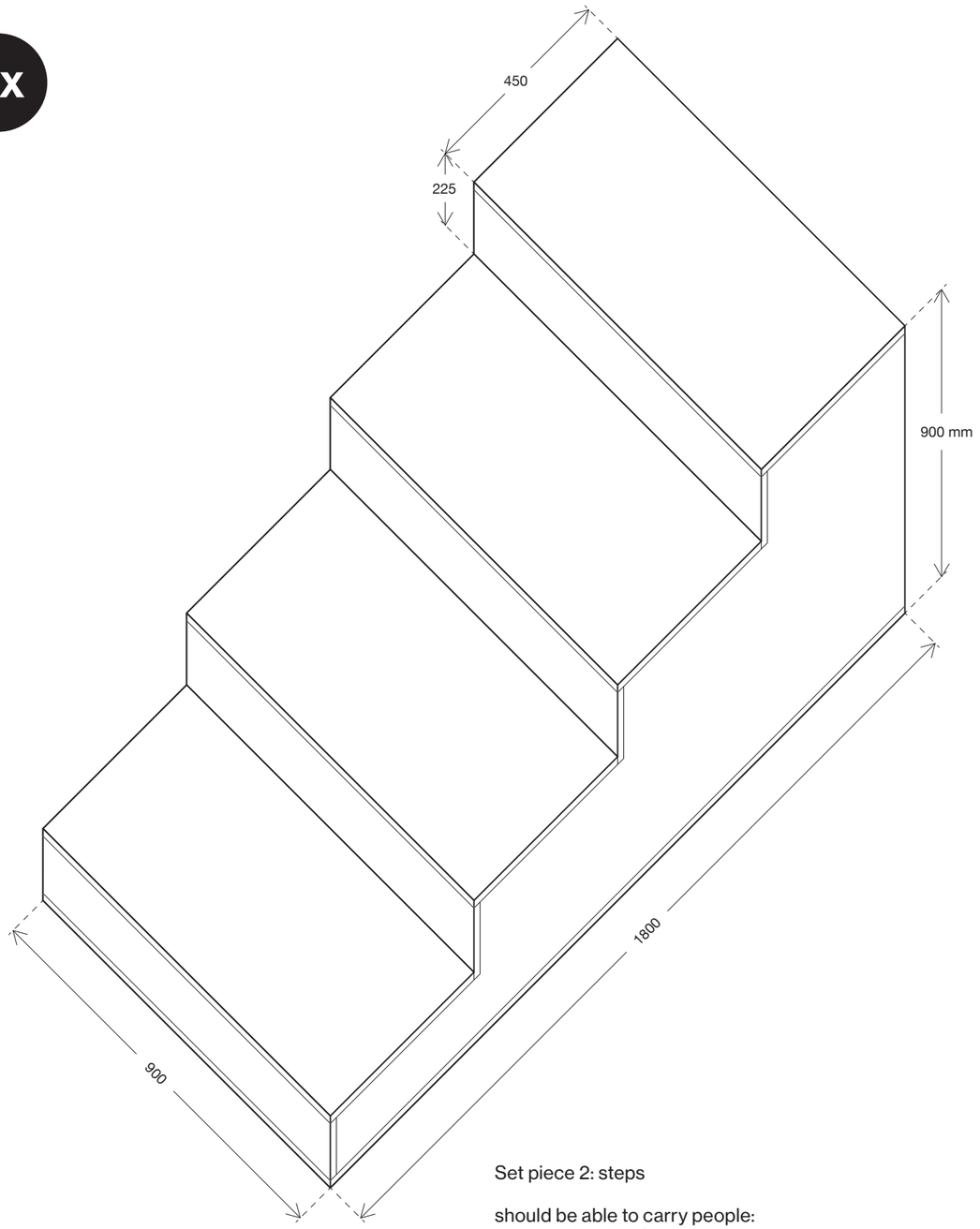
Is this possible in plywood that matches the rest of the material?

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set pieces: steps

3x

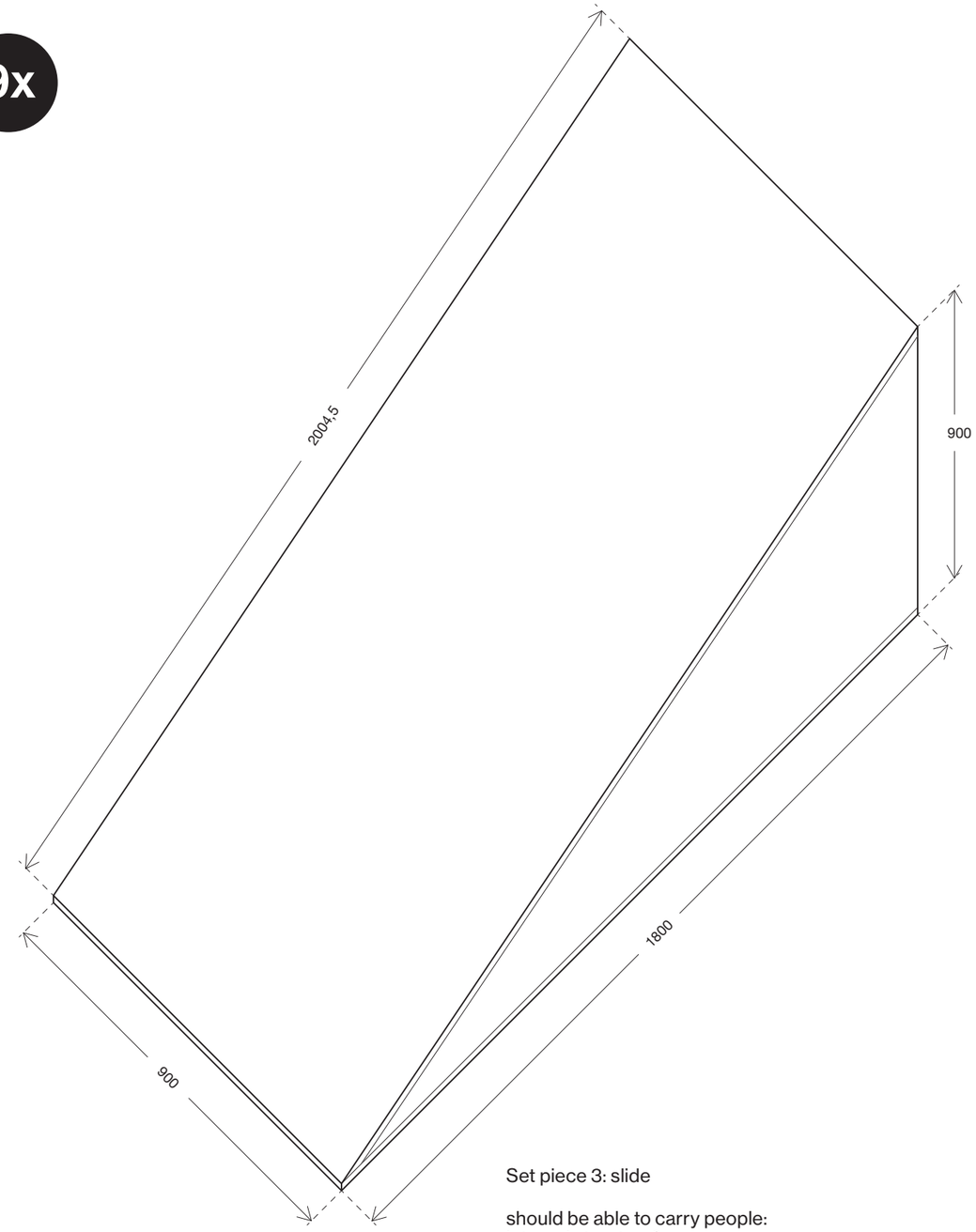


Set piece 2: steps

should be able to carry people:
internal structure?

set pieces: slide

9x



Set piece 3: slide

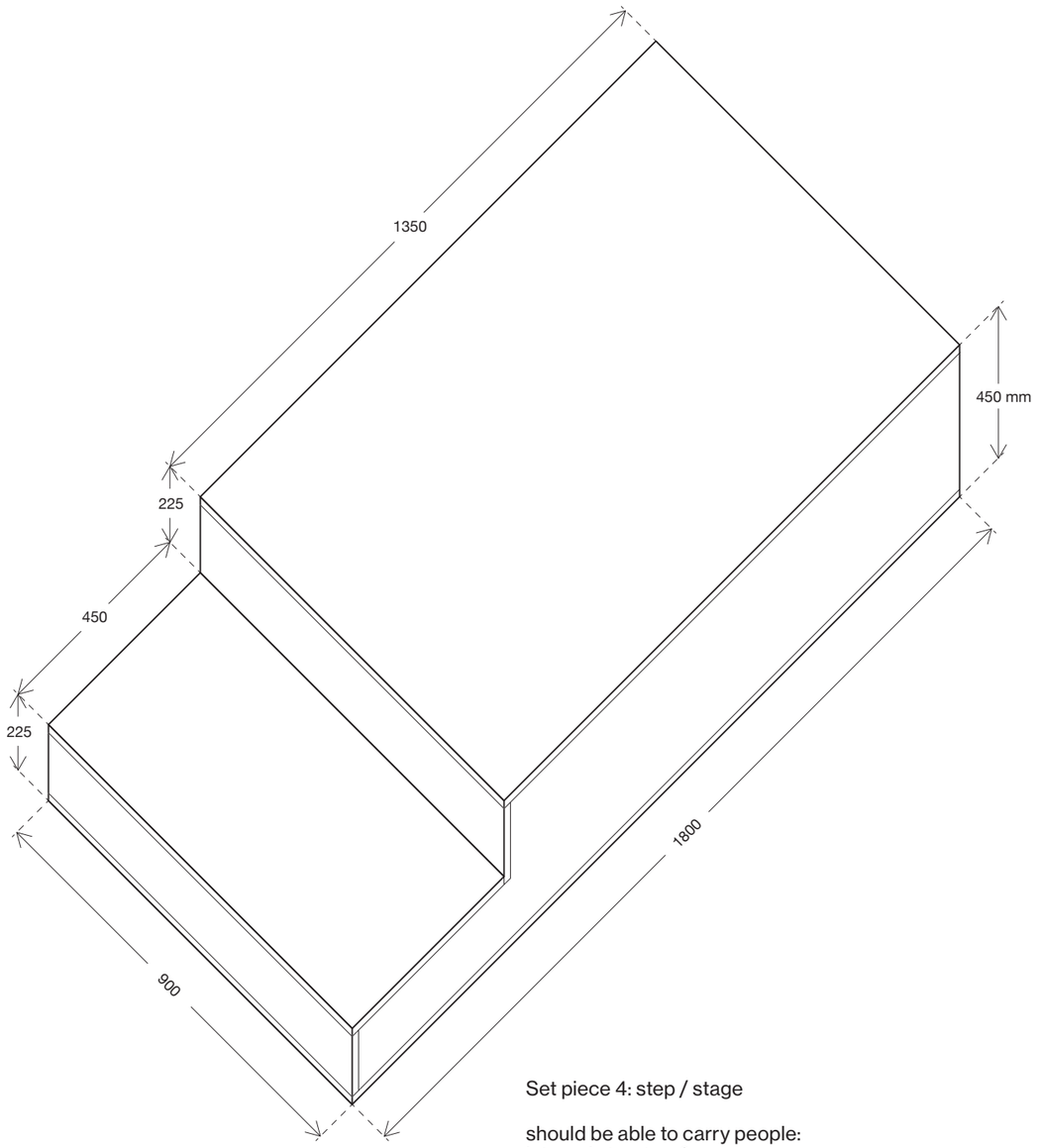
should be able to carry people:
internal structure?

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set pieces: step-stage

5x

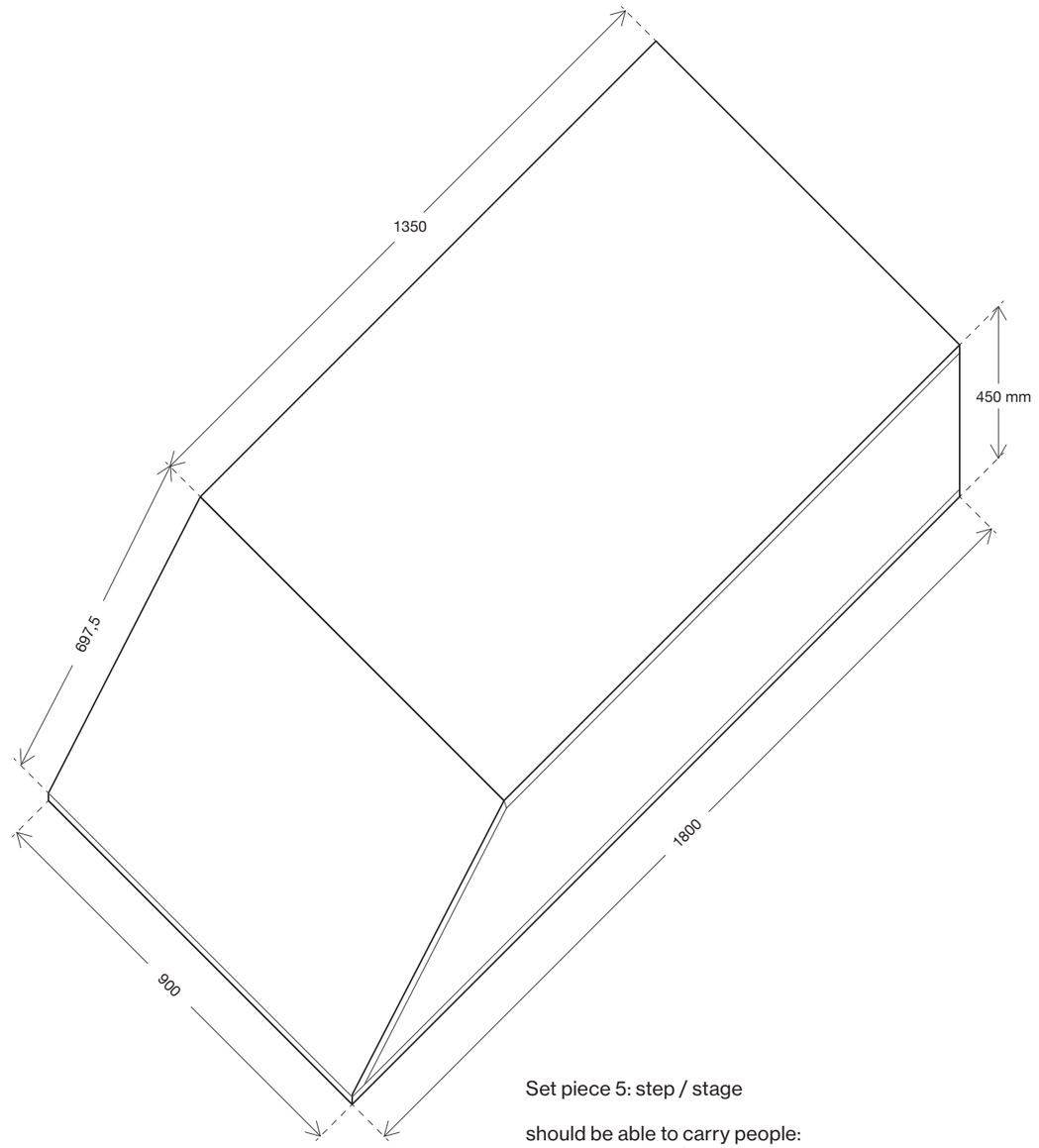


Set piece 4: step / stage

should be able to carry people:
internal structure?

set pieces: slide-stage

2x



Set piece 5: step / stage

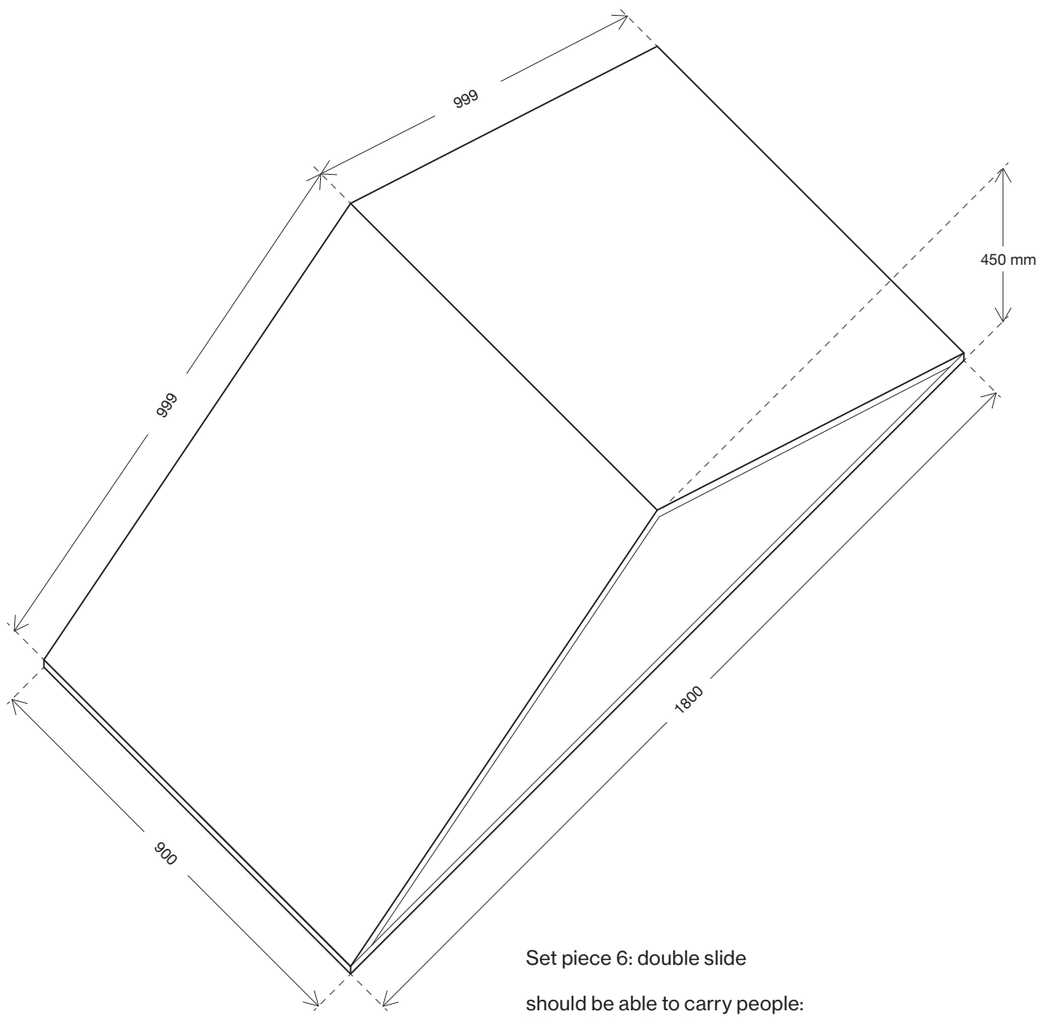
should be able to carry people:
internal structure?

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set pieces: double slide

1x

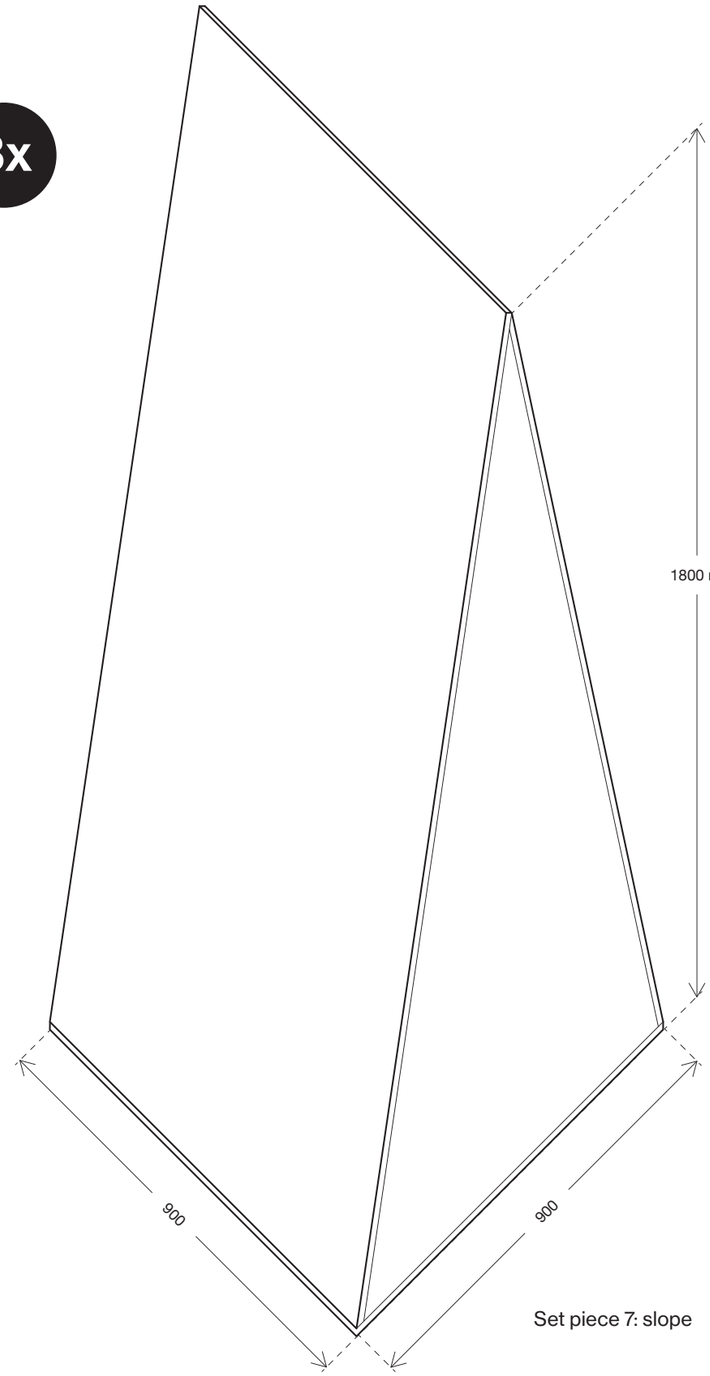


Set piece 6: double slide

should be able to carry people:
internal structure?

set pieces: slope

3x



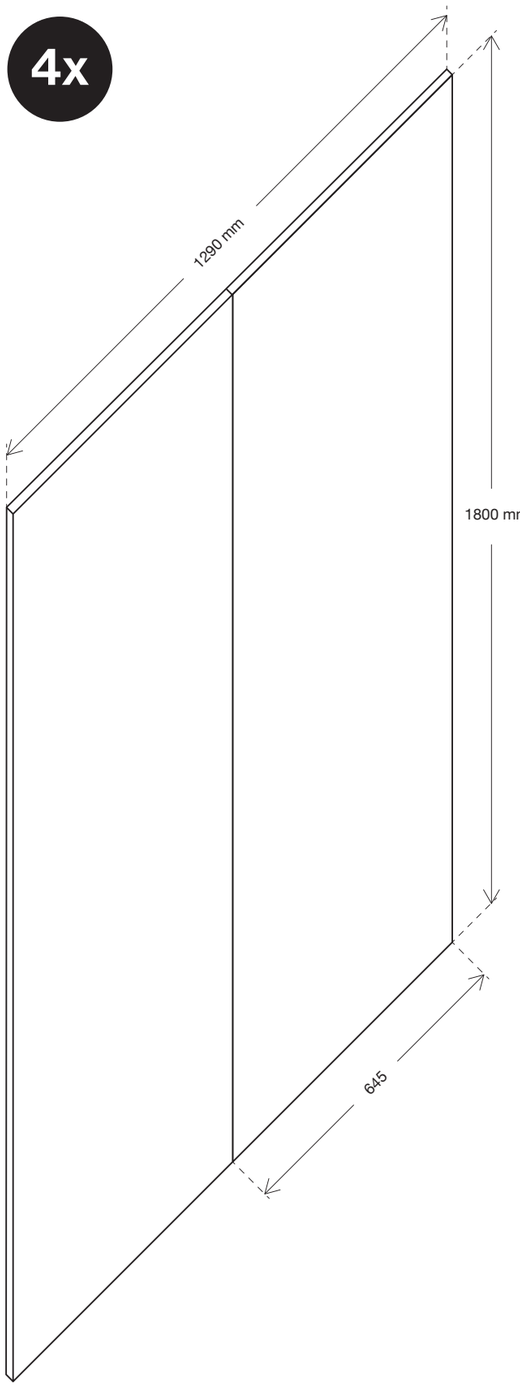
Set piece 7: slope

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set pieces: panel

4x

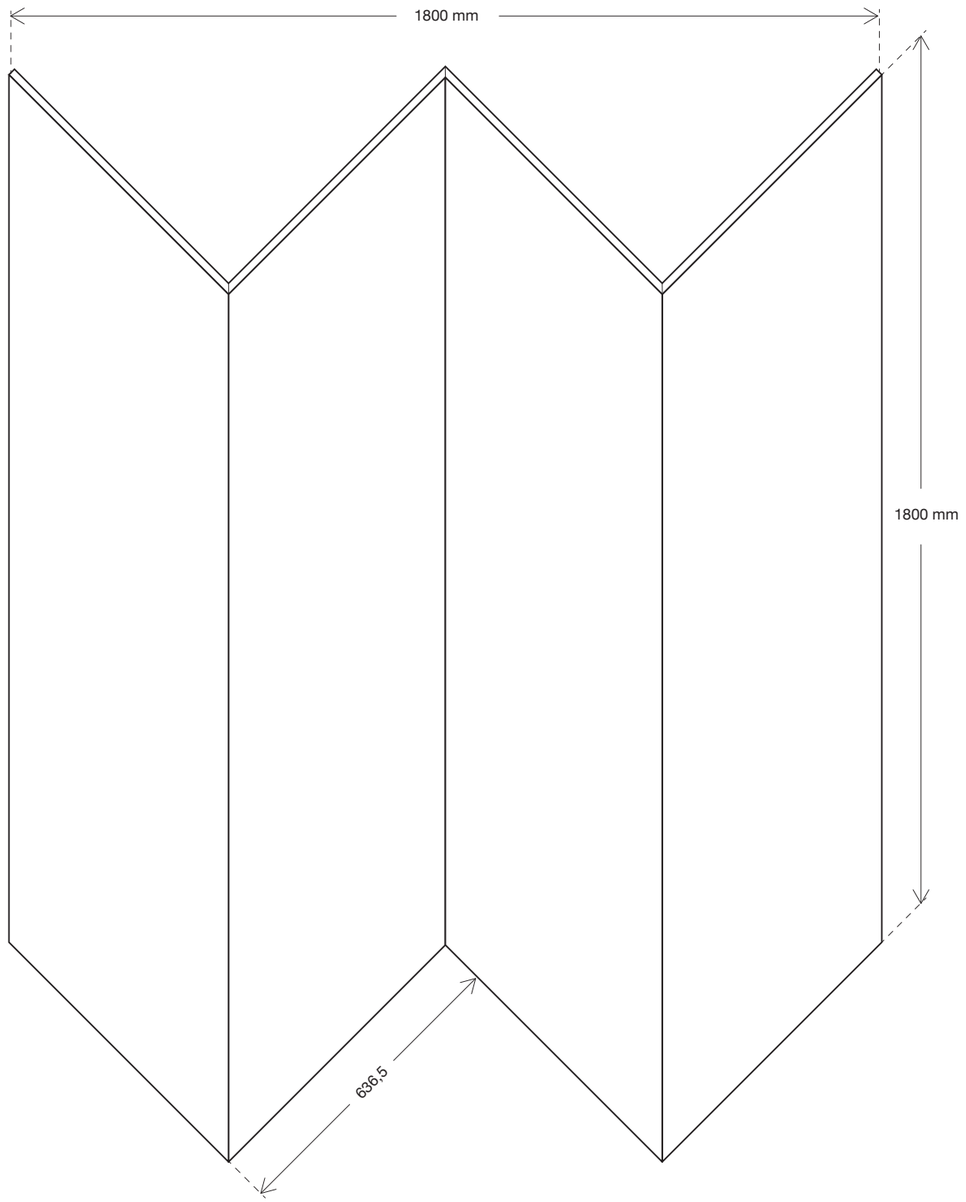


These panels will be used in the last corridor.
We don't know yet how to fix these: can they be hung from the ceiling, free from the floor?
Do they need an internal structure (more like thin walls?)

Set piece 8 : screen

set pieces: screen

5x



Set piece 9 : screen

Exhibition design sketches
Experimental Jetset, 08.05.2016