

EFFECTS OF MINIMALISM

NTR 897
XIAO LONG

ADVISOR: ERIC RYMSHAW

INTRODUCTION

LITERATURE REVIEW

PRECEDENT

JJOHN PAWSON

CASE STUDY

OBSERVATIONAL RESEARCH

"KEY INFORMANT" INTERVIEW

USER SURVEYS

PROGRAM

BACK GROUND INFORMATION

SITE DOCUMENTATION

SITE ANALYSIS DIAGRAMS

DESIGN STRATEGY

DESIGN PROBE 1: SCALE

DESIGN PROBE 2: EXPERIENCE

DESIGN PROBE 3: MATERIALITY

STATEMENT OF DESIGN INTENT

APPENDICES

PROJECT REFERENCE SHEETS

REFERENCE STANDARDS

TECHNICAL DATA

BIBLIOGRAPHY



INTRO

"Minimal" as a widely used word in the design industry which is difficult to define due to the complexity of human perception. In response to sustainability concerns, with less labor and resources consumed, minimalism has become more than just a "style" of certain kind of art or architecture, but a possible solution to an advanced way of living and thinking. Therefore, it is time to address the vagueness of minimalism and make it more understandable for both those interested in living in a minimal environment and the designers who make it happen. I will discuss how people perceive and respond to minimalist interiors, including their aesthetic preferences and possible psychological and physiological effects.

Introduction

"Minimal" as a widely used word in the design industry which is difficult to define due to the complexity of human perception. In response to sustainability concerns, with less labor and resources consumed, minimalism has become more than just a "style" of certain kind of art or architecture, but a possible solution to an advanced way of living and thinking. Therefore, it is time to address the vagueness of minimalism and make it more understandable for both those interested in living in a minimal environment and the designers who make it happen. This literature review will discuss how people perceive and respond to minimalist interiors, including their aesthetic preferences and possible psychological and physiological effects. I'll start with a brief overview and history of minimalism, then discuss the Gestalt psychology theory of human perception. Combining the two, I will discuss human response to minimalism based on Gestalt psychology.

Historical Development of Minimalism

Most of the time, people confuse Minimalism and the reductionist tendency of European Modernism. For example, Mies Van der Rohe's theory – "less is more" has been all the rage and influenced countless industries and designers¹. His theory has led people to think that minimalism refers simply to reducing forms, colors or anything physically in the space as much as possible. This theory is what first comes to one's mind when talking about minimalism, unfortunately.

Rather, the term "Minimalism" was formulated to describe the work of a group of American artists who developed a new kind of "whole" or serial geometric abstraction during the 1960s¹. As a form of art, minimal art, mainly painting and sculpture, tends to consist of single or repeated geometric forms, industrially-produced or built by skilled workers following the artists' instructions². It removes any trace of emotion or intuitive decision-making in contrast to the abstract expressionist art that preceded it during the 1940s and 1950s. More specifically, yet abstract still, "Minimal art does not allude to anything beyond its literal presence, or its existence of the physical world. Materials appear as materials; Color (if used at all) is non-referential."³

The first encounter of Minimalism happened in 1959 when expressionism had become cultural overloaded. Artists started using anti-compositional methods of symmetrical division, repetition and thick material surfaces as contradiction⁴. The reduction of expressive forms and insufficiency of artistic labor revealed a whole new world of art and caught the public eyes immediately.

Minimalism established itself as a significant new movement between 1964 to 1967 with much more developed theories about minimalist art compared to the European modernism, the basis of which was composition and balance⁵. Frank Stella commented on Modernism: "You do something in one corner, and you balance it with something in the other corner."⁶ In other words, every element in modernism design is relational, while

1. James Meyer (2000) Minimalism

2. Ilka Ruby, Andreas Ruby, Angeli Sachs, Phillip Ursprung(2003). Minimal Architecture

3.4.5.6 James Meyer (2000) Minimalism

Minimal art is “the lack of traces of process, abstractness, non-hierarchical distribution of parts, non-anthropomorphic orientations” (Robert Morris) which summarized as “non-relational”⁷. The core of minimalism is wholistic⁸. Donald Judd gave the perfect definition of this theory: “It isn’t necessary for a work to have a lot of things to look at, to compare, to analysis one by one. To contemplate the thing as a whole, is what is interesting. The main things are a line and are more intense, clear and powerful.”⁹ Susan Sontag described minimalism art as “the sensually experienced by a reader or viewer rather than attempt to decode its underlying meaning.”¹⁰

After the theory was well-established, Minimalism achieved an international profile between 1976 to 1979 and became a leading contemporary movement; yet the artists associated with minimal began to transform their work in concert with such developments as post-minimal sculpture, conceptualism and land art.¹¹ Since then, minimalism art has been transformed the rigid, geometric style of the 1960s in distinct directions. Architecture, product design and fashion industry all started developing their own minimalism.¹²

For the purpose of this literature review, the history discussed has been a summary of the artistic Minimalism. As originated in the United States. Even though the word “Minimalism” originated in the United States, Minimalism exists in every culture though varying slightly.

Scandinavian Minimalism focuses on the possibility of using the least natural materials to make the most functional and affordable design due to their environment.¹³ Comparatively, Asian Minimalism, represented by Japanese Minimalist design, focuses more on the reduction and depressing of the negative side of human desire, mostly greediness and vanity.¹⁴ Though all of them focus on various themes, they still follow the wholistic rule. Materiality Minimalism presents the experience of sureness and rational, while humanity Minimalism presents the experience of introspection and enlightening.

Gestalt Aesthetics

The term “Gestalt” means “form” in German. The Gestalt principles of perception were developed by German psychologists in the early 20th century.¹⁵ These principles describe the different ways the human mind organizes visual elements into groups.¹⁶ The perception of external stimuli occurs in tandem with neural processing and involves a search for familiar patterns and shapes which are considered to present perceptual-neural universals. In fact, the definition of Gestalt in relation to these principles is “unified whole”¹⁷

The principles of Gestalt psychology had an especially incredible influence on the art and design industry. Based on the Gestalt theory, Arthur Wesley Dow, American painter and an influential arts educator, wrote the book “Composition”.¹⁸ In this context, Dow staged the principles of composition among line, Notan (Japanese meaning light

7 Robert Morris (2000) Minimalism

8,9,10,11,12 James Meyer (2000) Minimalism

13 KUKUN. (2017). How to Master the Subtle Magic Of Scandinavian Interior Design -

14 Tom Spector (2006) The morals of modernist minimalism

15,16 Behrens, Roy R. (1998) Art, Design and Gestalt Theory

17 Chou Jyn Rong (2011) A Gestalt Minimalism based decision making model for evaluating product from design

and dark), and color. In the class of these principles, 'Subordination' and 'Notan' are particularly important for Dow, because by varying line and form within the context of variations of dark and light, figure and ground can be created within a composition where the individual parts relate to a dominating element or theme.¹⁹ The end result being a pleasing 'whole' with good proportion and symmetry.²⁰ The idea of creating a 'pleasing whole' relates to what Minimalism pursues. Dow presented valuable elements that should be focused on when analyzing Gestalt theory and these elements composed the Gestalt perception laws including: the law of 'good figure', proximity, similarity, good continuation and common fate.²¹

A 'good figure' means a "closed" figure, which the boundary line has the function of closing. Even the compositional elements are distinct, they shall be perceived as a group after a search for similar patterns, shapes or objects.²² (See figure 1)

The law of Proximity suggests that shapes, objects or design elements located in close proximity tend to be perceived as a group.²³ (See figure 2)

The law of similarity suggests that we tend to group together shapes, objects or design elements that share some level of similarity in terms of color, tone, texture, shape, orientation or size.²⁴ (See figure 3) The law of good continuation suggests that shapes and objects that express lines, curves or planes will be perceived as a group.²⁵ (See figure 4) Figure 3

18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 O' Connor, Zena. (2015) Colour, Contrast and Gestalt Theories of Perception: The impact in Contemporary Visual Communications Design

9 O' Connor, Zena. (2015) Colour, Contrast and Gestalt Theories of Perception: The impact in Contemporary

Visual Communications Design



figure 1



figure 2

figure 3



The law of common fate proposes that groups of shapes or design elements that share a similar orientation, movement or configuration tend to be perceived as a group.²⁶ (See figure 5)

The laws of Gestalt perceptions proposed methods to achieve design, art, fashion, architecture, interior and so on to be easily perceived as a whole, which simply takes us back to the core of Minimalism—wholistic. Therefore, following the laws of perception, it seems that no matter the culture or region, Minimalism is minimal in the sense of organizing and taking care of every shape, form, color, and scale to minimize the process and complexity of human perception, to make everything easier to understand and leave much more space (both physically and psychologically) for human activity. If it is so, then what is the general human response to this in interior architecture?

Human Response to Minimalist Environments – “50 different colors of white”

According Albert Mehrabian (1976), our response to a space is based on the process of environmental evaluation.²⁷ We evaluate it as positive or negative, depending on the rate of how much we are stimulated by the space and whether we are drawn to the space or try to avoid it.²⁸ Mehrabian asserts that our reactions to environments fall

²⁶ O’ Connor, Zena. (2015) *Colour, Contrast and Gestalt Theories of Perception: The impact in Contemporary Visual Communications Design*

^{27, 28} Julie Stewart-Pollack, Rosemary M. Menconi (2005) *Designing for Privacy and Related needs*

figure 4



figure 5



into one of the two general categories --“approach and avoidance”.²⁹ Approach behavior is a positive response to an environment, mainly presents as our desire to be in that environment, to delve into it, to interact with it and with other people.³⁰ People favor approaching environments that perceived as supportive of our needs and performance of activities.³¹ We avoid certain environments by pulling back from them physically, we may respond in a variety of ways when we cannot withdraw physically. For example, we may turn psychologically inward or exhibit other types of avoidance behavior, such as choosing to ignore others, focusing our attention upon a book or magazine, or even closing our eyes to avoid interacting with the environment.³²

To evaluate spaces, generally, we can divide them into “high load environments” and “low load environments” based on the information rates they contain.³³ High load environments provide a great deal of novel, varied, intense, and complex.³⁴ Low load environments have a slower information rate and considered more familiar and less complex.³⁵ Albert Mehrabian (1976) describes the environmental load as a combination of complexity and novelty.³⁶ Complexity is the number of different elements contained within environments. The more different types of elements and changes that an environment contains, the higher the environmental load becomes.³⁷ While novel elements are those which we have had little or no prior experience, the elements that we are not familiar with.³⁸ Familiar elements contribute to the basic human need, safety and security.³⁹ However, novelty balance the familiar environments so that they do not end up being too predictable or boring. What we seek in our environments, the environments that encourage approach behavior, is the balance of novelty and familiarity, the perfect amount of environmental load.⁴⁰

Now, how do we categorize Minimalist environments?

Ostensibly, Minimalism should fit in the low load environments category with the iconic geometric forms, lack of colors, and most importantly, the reduction of complexity to ensure the perception process to be intuitive. In such case, Minimalist environments would be bare and devoid of character, thus lack of novelty and encourage avoidance behavior. However, according to John Pawson, though Minimalism requires reduction and simplification at first, “as you go on reducing, attenuating, and compressing, you come to a point at which you go through a barrier, and pass through into a kind of mirror world, in which you see, looked at with enough clarity, not emptiness, but a sense of richness. You find that there are 50 different colors of white.” Sometimes, to achieve the emptiness and simplicity within Minimalism is extremely complex. It requires a great deal of patience, effort and care to make a space minimal yet beautiful and functional, and all these effort shows in every detail of proportion, composition, light and shadow within the whole experience of the space without any distraction.⁴¹ Therefore, the true environmental load of Minimalist spaces lies in the experience after it presents to users, straight forwardly and elegantly, what the space really is about. It is the balance of familiarity of form and color along with the novelty of exploration and sensual experience.

²⁶ O’ Connor, Zena. (2015) *Colour, Contrast and Gestalt Theories of Perception: The impact in Contemporary*

Visual Communications Design

^{29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40} Julie Stewart-Pollack, Rosemary M. Menconi (2005) *Designing for Privacy and Related needs*

⁴¹ John Pawson (2006) *Minimum*

Conclusion

In the end of John Pawson's article 'Minimum', he said "Emptiness allows us to see space as it is, to see architecture as it is, preventing it from being corrupted, or hidden, by the incidental debris of the paraphernalia of everyday life. It offers the space, both psychological and physical, for contemplation, and the serenity that can encourage meditative quiet and calm, without the jarring distraction of possessions."⁴² The appreciation for the exquisiteness of Minimalism hurts for the sustain consciousness of precision, the perpetual willingness of treasuring detail, strong passion for a graceful and smooth life style and the most important – a space we shall see, stay, experience and find that precision, detail and gracefulness.

42 John Pawson (2006) Minimum

Effects of Minimalism Bibliography

Ruby, A., Ruby, I., Sachs, A., & Ursprung, P. (2003). *Minimal architecture*. Munich: Prestel.

Meyer, J. S. (2010). *Minimalism*. London, England: Phaidon.

Spector, T. (2006). The morals of modernist minimalism. *Harvard Design Magazine*, (25), 84-90.

Behrens, R. (1998). Art, Design and Gestalt Theory. *Leonardo*, 31(4), 299-303.
doi:10.2307/1576669

Chou, J. (2011). A Gestalt-Minimalism-based decision-making model for evaluating product form design. *International Journal of Industrial Ergonomics*, 41(6), 607-616.
doi:10.1016/j.ergon.2011.07.006

Oconnor, Z. (2013). Colour, contrast and gestalt theories of perception: The impact in contemporary visual communications design. *Color Research & Application*, 40(1), 85-92. doi:10.1002/col.21858

Stewart-Pollack, J., & Menconi, R. (2005). *Designing for privacy and related needs*. New York: Fairchild Publ.

Pawson, J. (2006). *Minimum*. London: Phaidon Press.

KUKUN. (2017). *How to Master the Subtle Magic Of Scandinavian Interior Design -*

PRECEDENT

JOHN PAWSON





CALVIN KLEIN STORE

CALVIN KLEIN STORE

NEW YORK
1993-1995

The principal exterior move is the installation of pavement-to-third floor panels of glass between the existing monumentally scaled pilasters, effectively turning the entire building into a showcase. Inside, the new accommodation is inserted without disrupting the handsome proportions of the original lofty banking hall and in such a way as to minimise the visual impact of the structural columns. From the glass vestibule that rises six metres, the immediate impression is of a calm visual field: an immaculate expanse of honey-coloured Yorkstone flags, thick white walls with tight openings and benches that appear variously to float or to extrude from the floor.

All the geometry remains rectangle and contrast with the calvin klein outfit which are designed based on the curve of human body. At the same time, the color remains monochrome for the most parts and do not compete with the merchandise.

CALVIN KLEIN STORE





CALVIN KLEIN STORE

CHRISTOPHER KANE STORE
LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM
2013-2015

Underlying everything here is the idea of atmosphere as the product of the delicately subversive play of contrasting characteristics — the natural and the synthetic, the classical and the experimental, the recessive and the arresting, the reflective and the transparent, the solid and the dematerialised.

Externally the design reinstates elements of the original Edwardian elevations, creating simple, full-height openings, stripped of all extraneous details, with successive portals heightening the experience of entry: the heavy timber leaves framing a second transparent threshold of glass set in Portland stone. Inside permanent gestures that include the attenuated line of steel running through the depth of the floor plan and down the stairs are combined with vocabulary that can be changed and curated from season to season, such as the brilliantly coloured acrylic elements.

CHRISTOPHER KANE STORE



CHRISTOPHER KANE STORE



CHRISTOPHER KANE STORE

FARINI BAKERY & CAFE
MILAN, ITALY
2016 – 2017

Driving the brief for the project was the requirement that these premises in Milan be at once a gallery for bread, a stage for bakers and a gathering place for customers, with its various spaces simultaneously susceptible to the very different disciplines of curation and choreography.

The outcome is a series of refined backdrops for people and objects, with richness deriving from details of form, texture, pattern and the fall of the light. At the heart of the design is a recognisable language of materials and architectural moves — a signature curve, a particular play of recessed and protruding elements — that both feels responsive to the site, but can also adapt to future location conditions.

The whole space applied a creamy color palette. The walls and the floor are warm and the counter and the columns are cold. This subtle change segregates the different elements in the space while keeps them cohesive at the same time. The creamy colors and hard surfaces contrasts with the vibrant colors and various texture and make them more desirable.



FARINI BAKERY & CAFE



FARINI BAKERY & CAFE

PACKAGE-FREE

139 GRAND STREET
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

The store area is about 1,800 sf.

The owner, Lauren Singer popularized the zero waste movement through her blog *trash is for tossers* and is an expert on all things waste. All of the trash that she has produced over the past 5 years fits inside of a 16 oz mason jar. She is also the founder and CEO of the *Simply co.*, an organic, vegan laundry detergent company.

The store offers everything that individual needs to transition to a low waste lifestyle in one place. From toothbrushes to tote bags, they try to provide a solution for those who want to reduce their environment footprint, but don't know where to start.





PACKAGE FREE ENTRANCE



PACKAGE FREE DISPLAY



PACKAGE FREE FLOOR PLAN SKETCH

While observing, the people who were using the space are customers and one store manager.

The customers were wandering around and asking questions about how they get the products out of the bulk containers.

Their design materials were concrete floor, unfinished wood shelves, white painted wall.

The layout is shown in the plan. The whole store only contains retail department. Even the storage space is the shelves on the wall.

PACKAGE FREE DISPLAY



PACKAGE FREE DISPLAY

Key Informant Interview

Name: Anthony

Age: 21

Occupation: Store manager (student of photography and environmental science)

- Their main goal is to educate people about the zero waste life style.
- 200-300 people visit the most per day
The size is ideal
- Customers' age are whole range but most of the customers are in their 20s (24, 25)
- Usually only one staff works in the store
- The space is only for retail, they have an office in another space with their online storage, but not in the store
- They utilize the tall ceiling and wall storage space
- The special equipment is their ladders to access all the stock
- The body care products (moisturize oil, hand soap) are sold in bulks, customers can bring their own jar or purchase a jar in the store. Anthony would weight the jar first then help the customer get the product.
- They always have soothing music on
- Their entry way is through the stairs which is narrow and made of iron. Anthony would like the stair case to be wider and made out of wood to be more welcoming.
- The unused space upstairs should be utilized.
They do actually provide package if customers require for gifts.
- The packages with the products can be recycled by the store if customer requires
- He considers himself a minimalist and he thinks that zero waste life style certainly leads to minimal life style

PACKAGE FREE DISPLAY



PACKAGE FREE DISPLAY

User Survey Conclusion

- The design is unwelcoming due to the materiality and the way they arrange products and storage.
- The lighting combines with the color palette creating a cold atmosphere.
- The finish is too humble and people who are not very ecology aware feel they are not thought through and do not want to shop in the store
- There are boxes stacked in the corner because they don't have a storage space which makes the space look kind of messy.
- The products are beautifully arranged but there are almost exact the same products on both sides of the walls and the table display and they are not categorized in a very logical way.
- The entry is way taller than the floor and walking down makes customers have an uneasy feeling.
- The products are over priced.

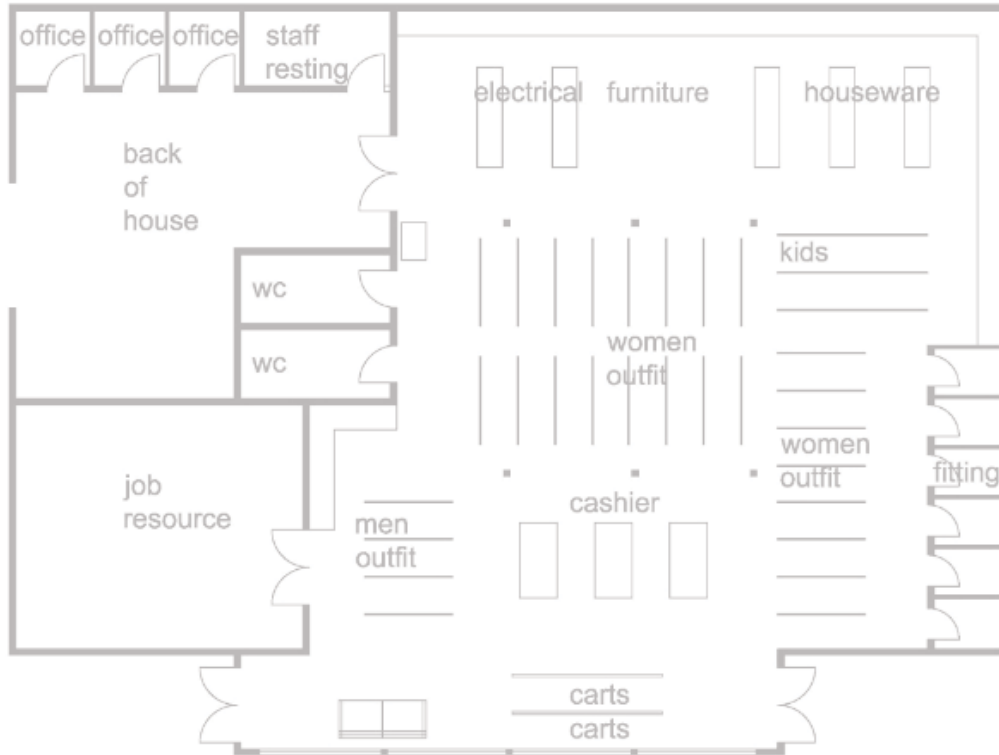
THE GOOD WILL

201 E BALTIMORE AVE
LANSLOWNE, PA

Comparing to package free, goodwill's customer group is mostly low income community, according to their store manager, their customers are mainly older people with an average age of 45. It is approximately 2500 square footage for the front house and 1000 square footage for the back house. They have 40 staff in the store and constantly working, mostly on putting the priced products on racks or moving furniture into customer's vehicles.

GOODWILL DISPLAY





GOODWILL FLOOR PLAN

The merchandise are categorized as men's clothes, women's clothes, kids clothes, houseware, furniture and electrical which is a very clear system and it's easy to find everything with their open floor plan.

There is not much of design involved in the space, but through interviewing, the general opinion of the store is that the size is almost insufficient, the lighting is unflattering and a better organized system for these merchandise could be applied.







Key Informant Interview

Occupation: Store manager

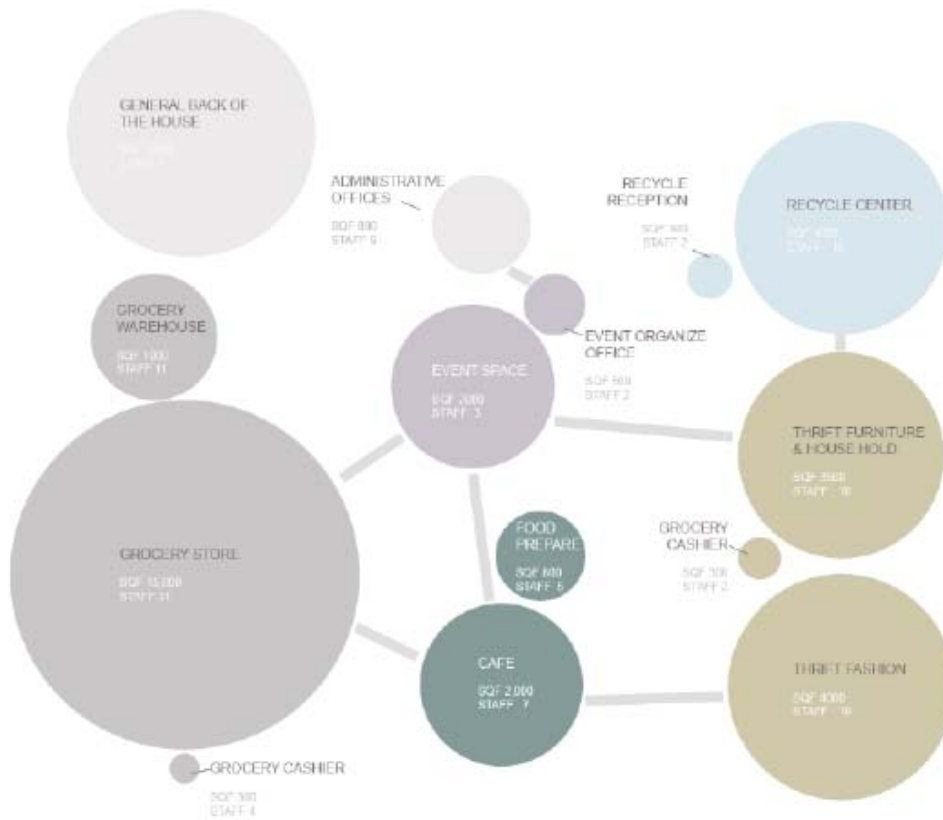
- Their organizational culture is diverse▪ Their main goal is selling to make people happy
- When there is a discount, people will line up in front the store the night before and the number is uncountable.
- The size is small
- Customers' age are whole range but most of the customers are in their 40 & 50s
- Usually 40 staff works in the store
- There are 4 spacial departments in the store - retail, storage and sorting, management, delivery

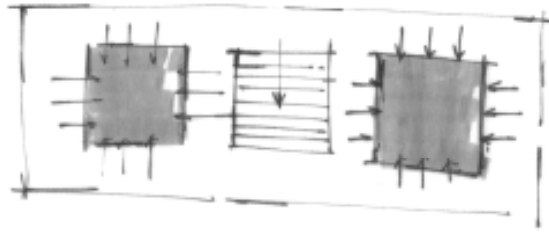
USER GROUP: ECO-AWARE EDUCATED CLASS

TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE: 43,450 sqft (39,500 + 10% circulation)
NUMBER OF STAFF: 107

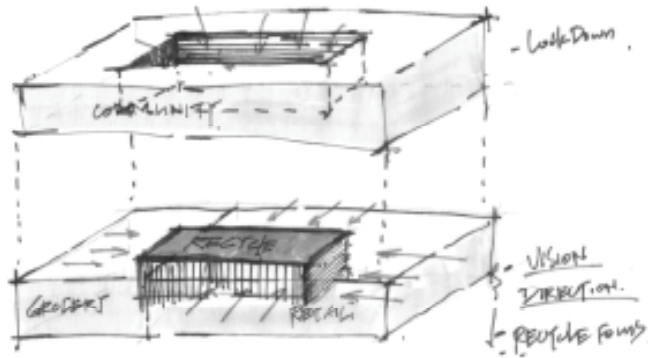
-  GROCERY DEPARTMENT
-  ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT
-  EVENT DEPARTMENT
-  CAFE DEPARTMENT
-  RECYCLE DEPARTMENT
-  THRIFT DEPARTMENT

BUBBLE DIAGRAM





PARTI



3D PARTI

MASTER LIST OF SPACE

	Square Footage	Adjacencies	Public Access	Daylight	Privacy	Plumbing	Special Equipment	Special Considerations
Grocery Store	15,000	2,3	Y			N	Y	Y
Grocery Cashier	300	1,3	Y			N	N	N
Grocery Delivery and storage	500	1,2	N			N	Y	Y
Thrift Fashion	4,000	7	Y			N	N	N
Thrift Furniture	4,000	7,6	Y			N	N	N
Thrift Cashier	300	7,5	Y			N	N	N
Recycle Reception	300	4,5,6	Y	Y		N	N	N
Recycle Storage	4,000	9,10	N	Y		N	N	Y
Recycle Sorting	2,000	8,10	N	Y		N	N	Y
Cafe	2,000	12	Y	Y		N	Y	N
Food Prepare	800	11	N			N	Y	Y
Public Speaking	1,500	11	Y			N	N	N
Offices	600	16	N		Y	Y	N	N
Restrooms	300	11,14	Y			Y	Y	N
Mother's room	200	14	N			Y	Y	N
Total	35,800							

SITE

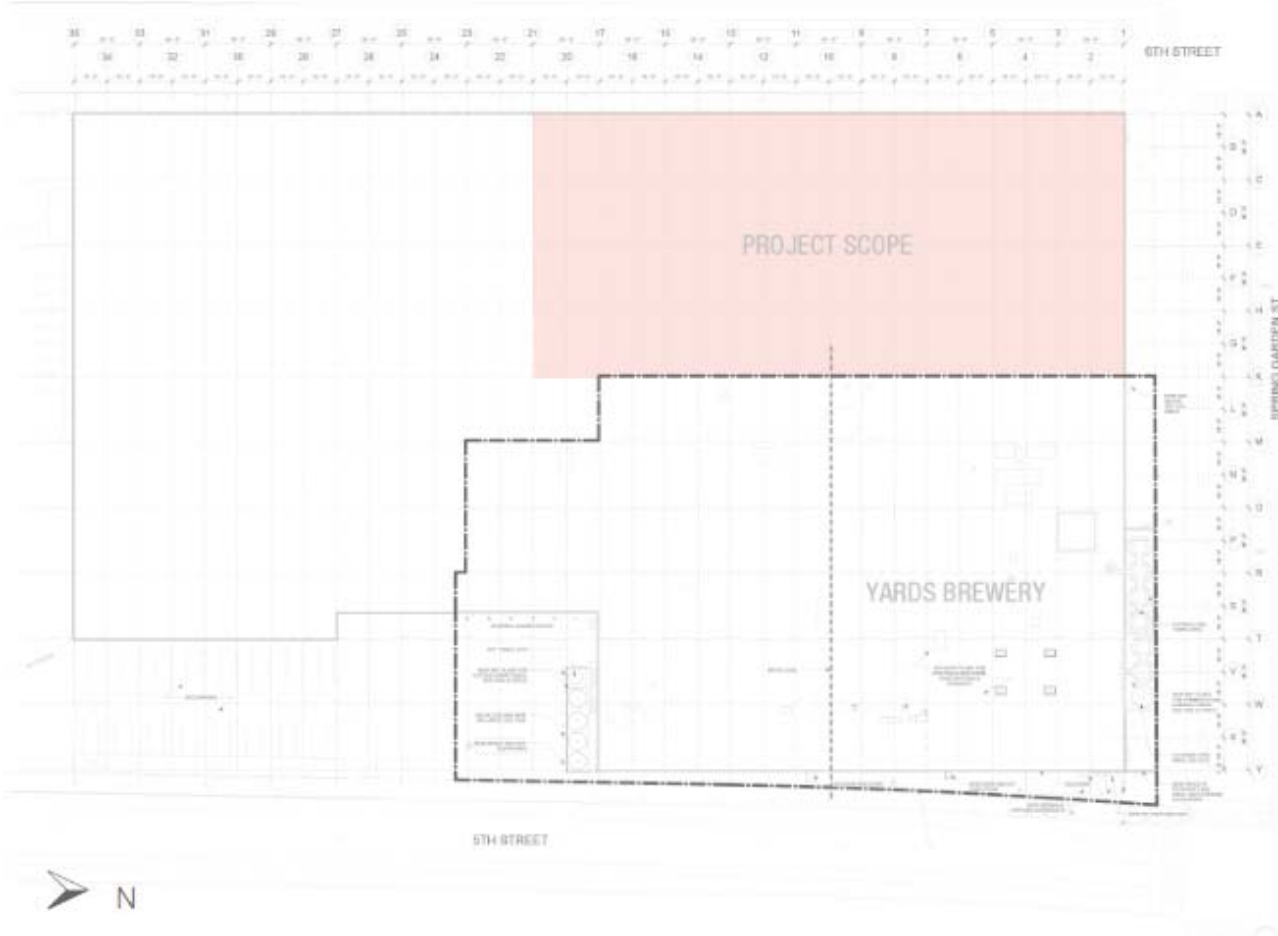
500 SPRING GARDEN ST. PHILADELPHIA, PA





SITE PLAN

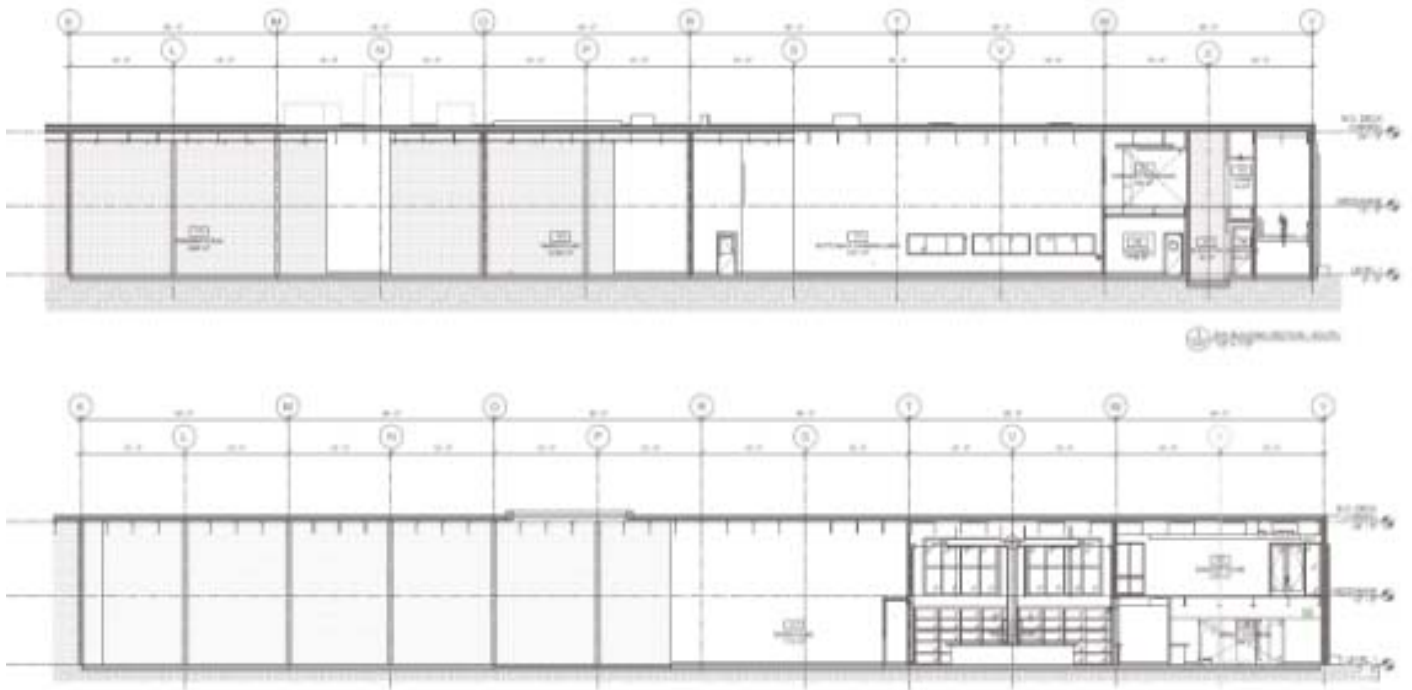
The site I had chosen is at 500 Spring Garden Street, Northern Liberties area. In recent years, Northern Liberties has become a major enclave of young professionals, students, artists, and design professionals, who are ideally the target user groups for the program. Other than that, one block northwest is a residential housing area which provides solid customers for the grocery and thrift departments. Large improvement and revitalization projects have also been undertaken in the area recently. The neighborhood's proximity to Center City has made it one of the city's most desirable development districts, both for commercial and residential real estate. The new Yards Brewery has just successfully renovated the northeast portion of this specific building. The building itself came with a huge parking lot which is easy for customers to drop off the recycling clothes or household, convenient for grocery store to load and unload products. Right on Spring Garden Street, 3 blocks away, there is a subway station providing diverse transportation opportunities.



EXTERIOR SITE PHOTO



INTERIOR SITE PHOTO

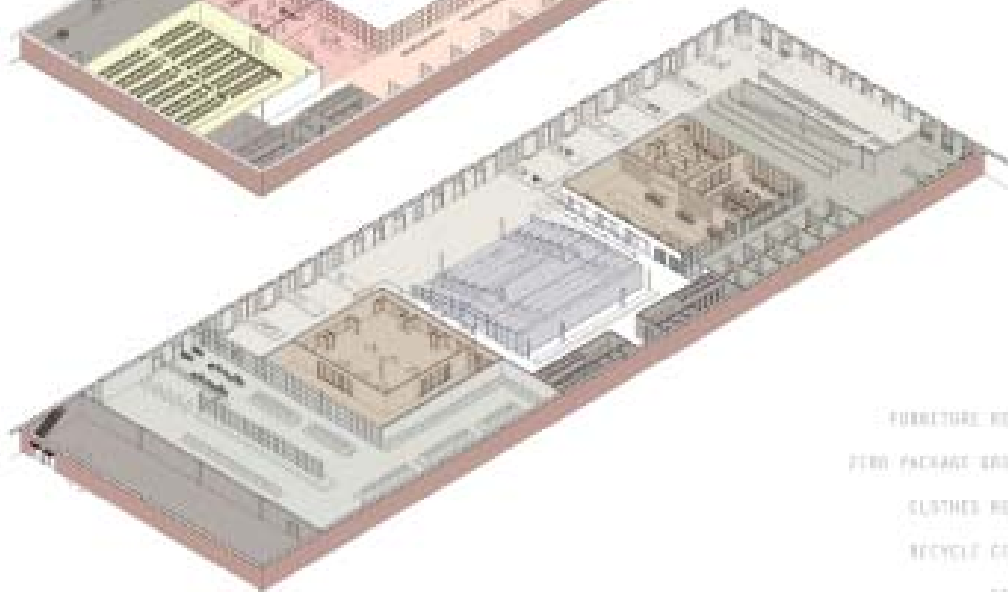
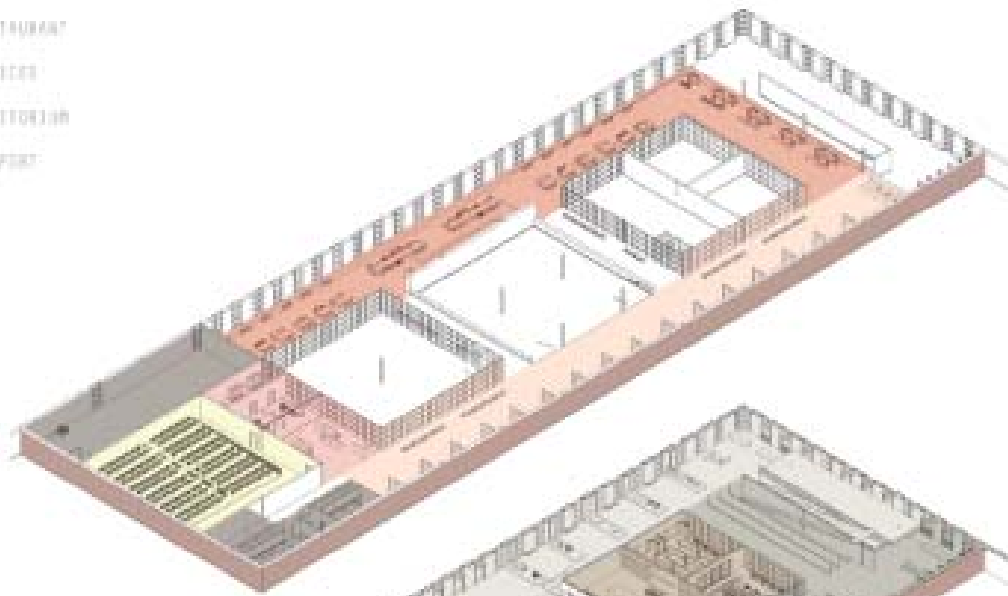


EXISTING BUILDING SECTIONS



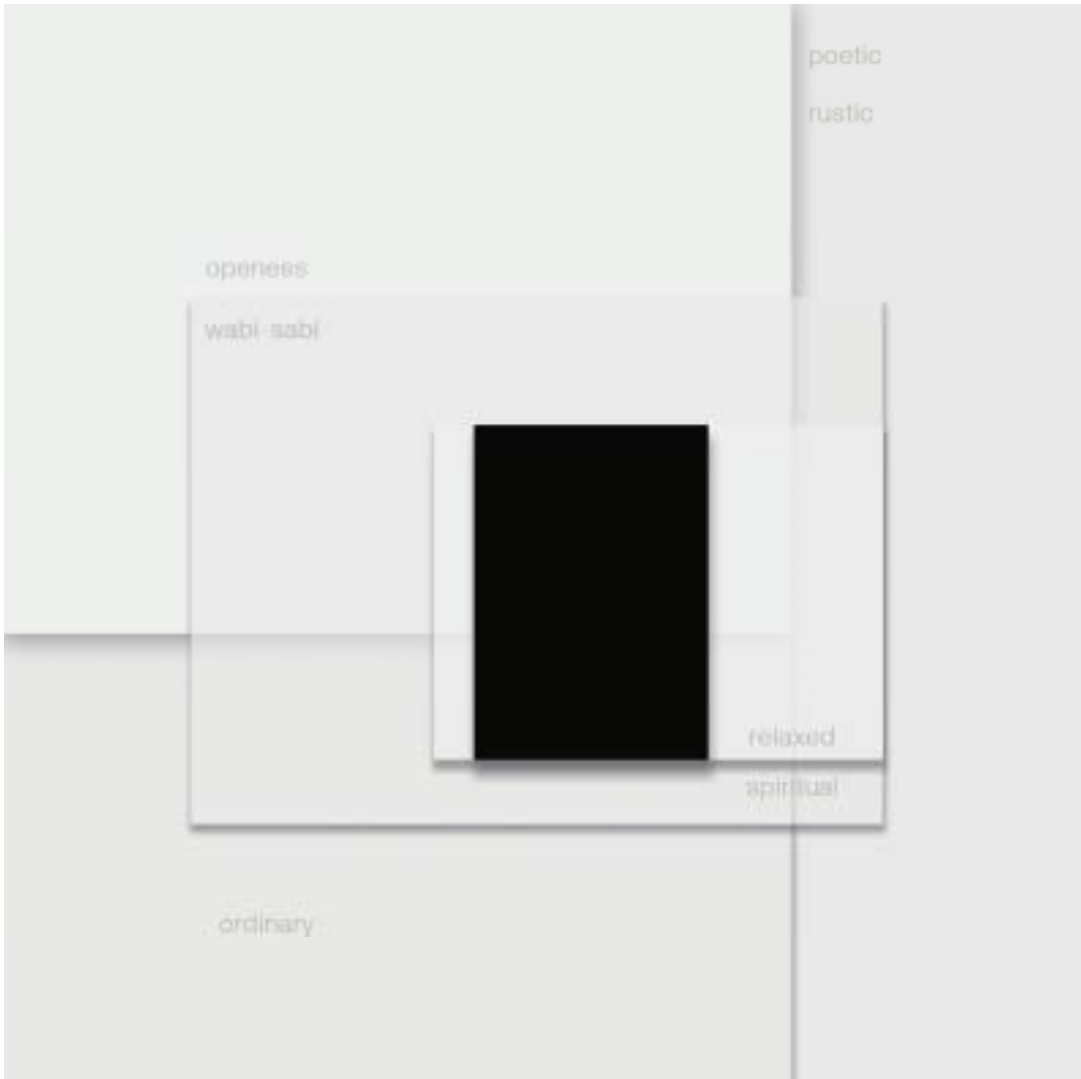
EXTERIOR SITE PHOTO

- COMMUNITY GALLERY
- RESTAURANT
- OFFICES
- AUDITORIUM
- SUPPORT



- FURNITURE RETAIL
- PERI PACKAGE GROCERY
- CLOTHES RETAIL
- RECYCLE CENTER
- STAIRS
- SUPPORT

PROGRAM IN SITE DIAGRAM



DESIGN PROBE 1 - MAPPING

DESIGN PROBE I - MAPPING



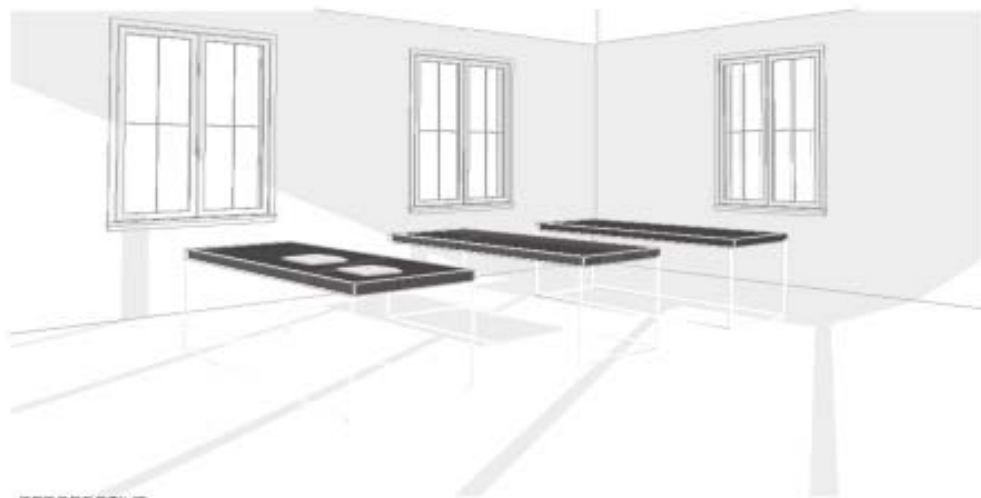
SHORT ELEVATION
SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"



AXO



LONG ELEVATION
SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"



PERSPECTIVE

DESIGN PROBE 2 - EXPERIENCE

Part I:

Interview with Kaz Morihata (owner of Rikumo)

Intro: Rikumo is a lifestyle store in Philadelphia that celebrates Japanese craftsmanship, design and aesthetics.

The store contains 3 flat forms for display and built-in display shelves on the walls. The design focuses on stressing the horizontal elements to represent the horizon between sky and sea.

With such a poetic concept behind, Rikumo utilized a lot of minimalism aesthetic elements to not just showcase but also connect and embrace their products.

This interview was meant to understand how these minimalist decisions were made and how this space is affecting the people in it.

To understand the space, first, Kaz told me the concept of the brand Rikumo itself -- Creativity, Craftsmanship and Communication.



Layout wise, the three mass flat form islands in the space represent these 3 elements in the brand.

The creativity island which was surrounding by the educational display so that people can learn Japanese knowledge in it and the craftsmanship island which is displaying the Japanese craftsmanship products that they are selling are connected by the communication island is a tea bar so that people can have a conversation while they are enjoying the tea.

The color palette in the space is black, gray and natural wood. "I didn't want to over design the space because it might kill the products. The space should be like a background. The product is what's important."

Both the color and the design form (horizontal lines) were inspired by the art of a Japanese photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto, and here is the photograph:



Kaz said that he wants to translate the peace and calmness in this picture to his store. This is the experience he wants his customers to feel so that they can fully focused on the products.

What made me a little anxious in the interview is that Kaz expressed that he is not a fan of minimalism, "Minimalism is too cold. It lacks warmth, texture and scale. I like its effectiveness, its efficiency, but it is losing the meaning of life,"he said. "Minimalism just chips down everything. No detail, no material, no texture, it over simplifies. What does a person do in such space?"

He didn't consider Rikumo is a minimalist space.

But the next 2 questions brings the conversation back: "What made Rikumo the best shopping experience store in philadelphia?" as it is shown on the entrance door of Rikumo, I asked.

"First of all, the fountain at the entrance and the scent created by the diffuser brings a sense of Japanese garden and nature in the store.

The most important thing is the selection if the products is unique. You can't find same selection anywhere else in the world. Even in Japan.

Then it's the stories behind the products. How every product is man made and has its own character and story.

"Do you think Interior design helped to create this experience?"

"The interior design is focusing on the connection between the products and the space. To reflect the craftsmanship in the space. To show the human touch in the space.

To make the space embrace the products, embrace the people. To make them unified."

The rectilinear forms, the open layout, the neutral tone colors, the japanese garden fountain and the hand paint flat display tables, every interior design decision Kaz made was to reflect the concept of Rikumo, was to make people perceive his store not as the separate products and its container, but as one experience, as a whole.

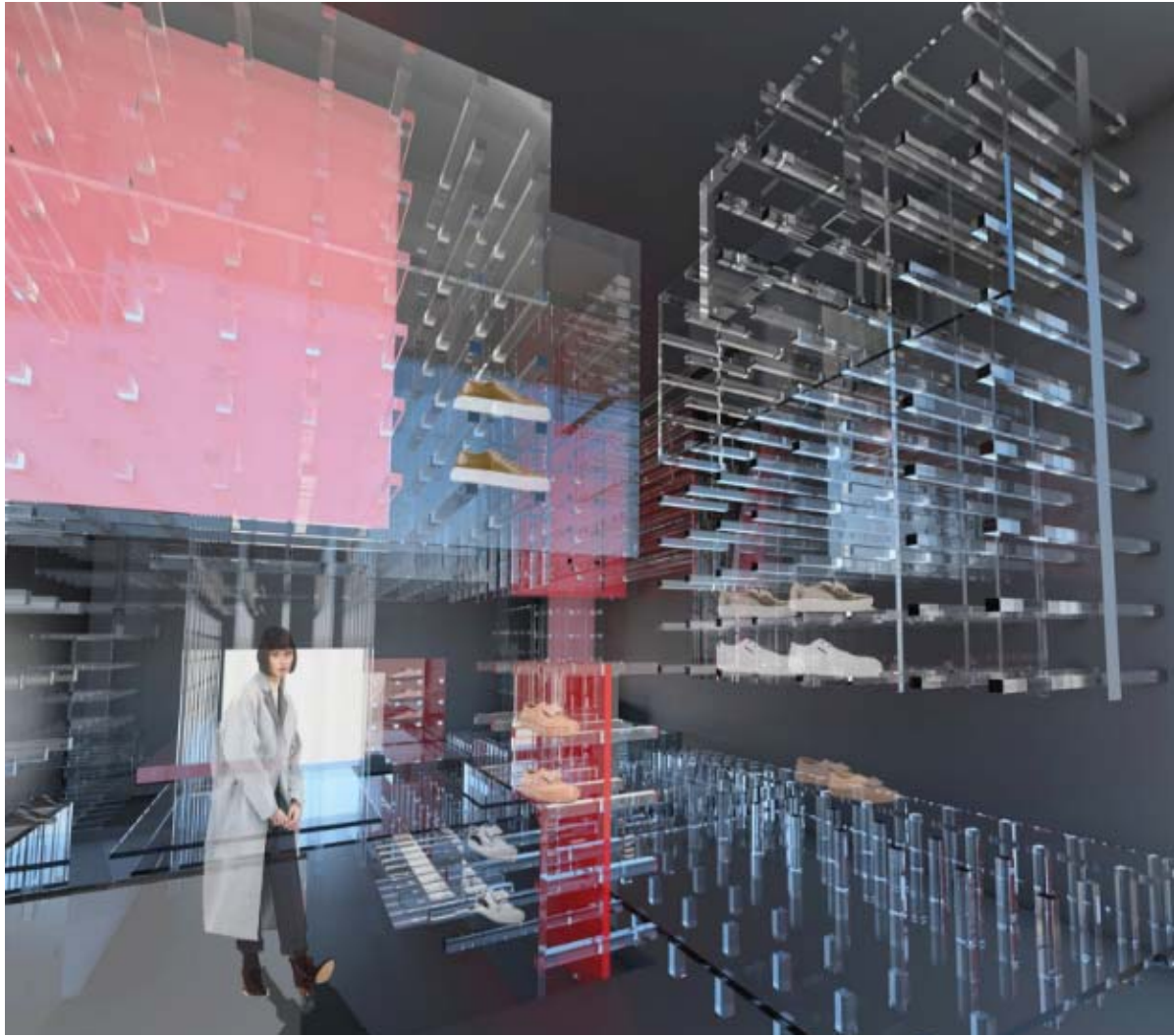
Kaz said he doesn't like minimalism.

I think that he just doesn't know that he likes it.

Part2: A minimalism experience designed based on Mr Morihata's experience

Part of what Kaz said about minimalism is true: it lacks a lot of details that we normally will enjoy. Without all these details, it is hard to express ourselves or in retail design or reflect the brand.

Precisely one year ago, in the Conceptual studio,I designed a shoe repository for a Sweden fashion brand: Acne Studios.



A few weeks ago, when I was interviewing professor Nicole Koltick, she said: "This is a very minimal project to me."

I didn't understand her, "With so much texture and volume changing going on, and that hot pink? No way!"

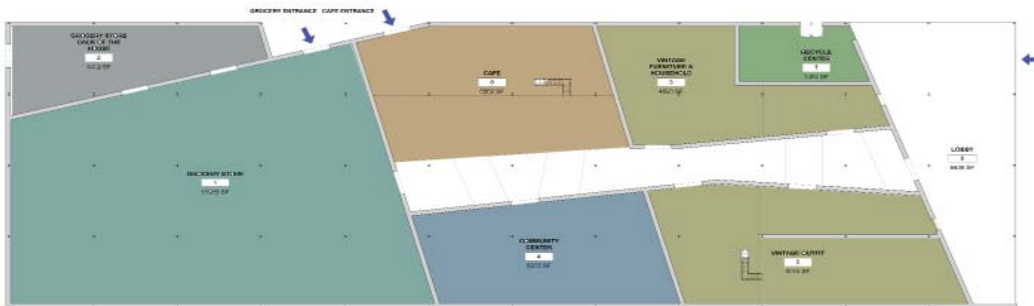
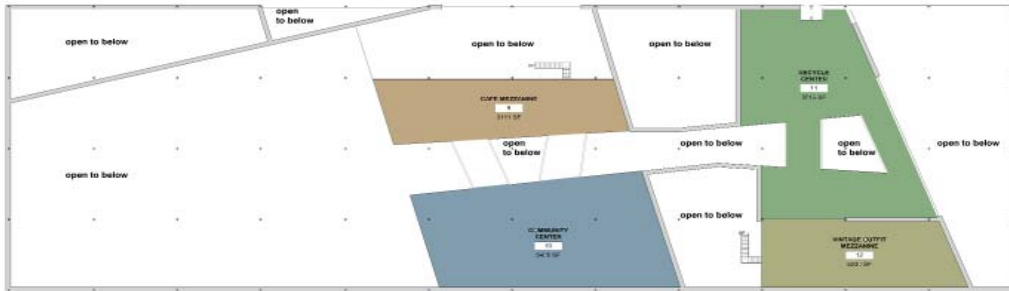
After talking to Kaz, I now see that the hot pink and the texture are essential to connect the brand and the products. The space needs the texture and the color to unify with Acne Studios, to let customers know that this is an Acne Studios store, to let people explore the space and the products as one whole experience instead of shoes and their container.

Like the hand-paint texture on the table at Rikumo, the reason that texture didn't distract people is because the craftsmanship quality in that texture is unifying with the concept of the brand. The hot pink in this design won't distract people from the shoes, because the moment people realize this is an Acne Studios store, that hot pink shiny acrylic board is nothing but the concept of the brand -- "edgy, fresh, unique" in their mind and what they are looking for in the shoes.

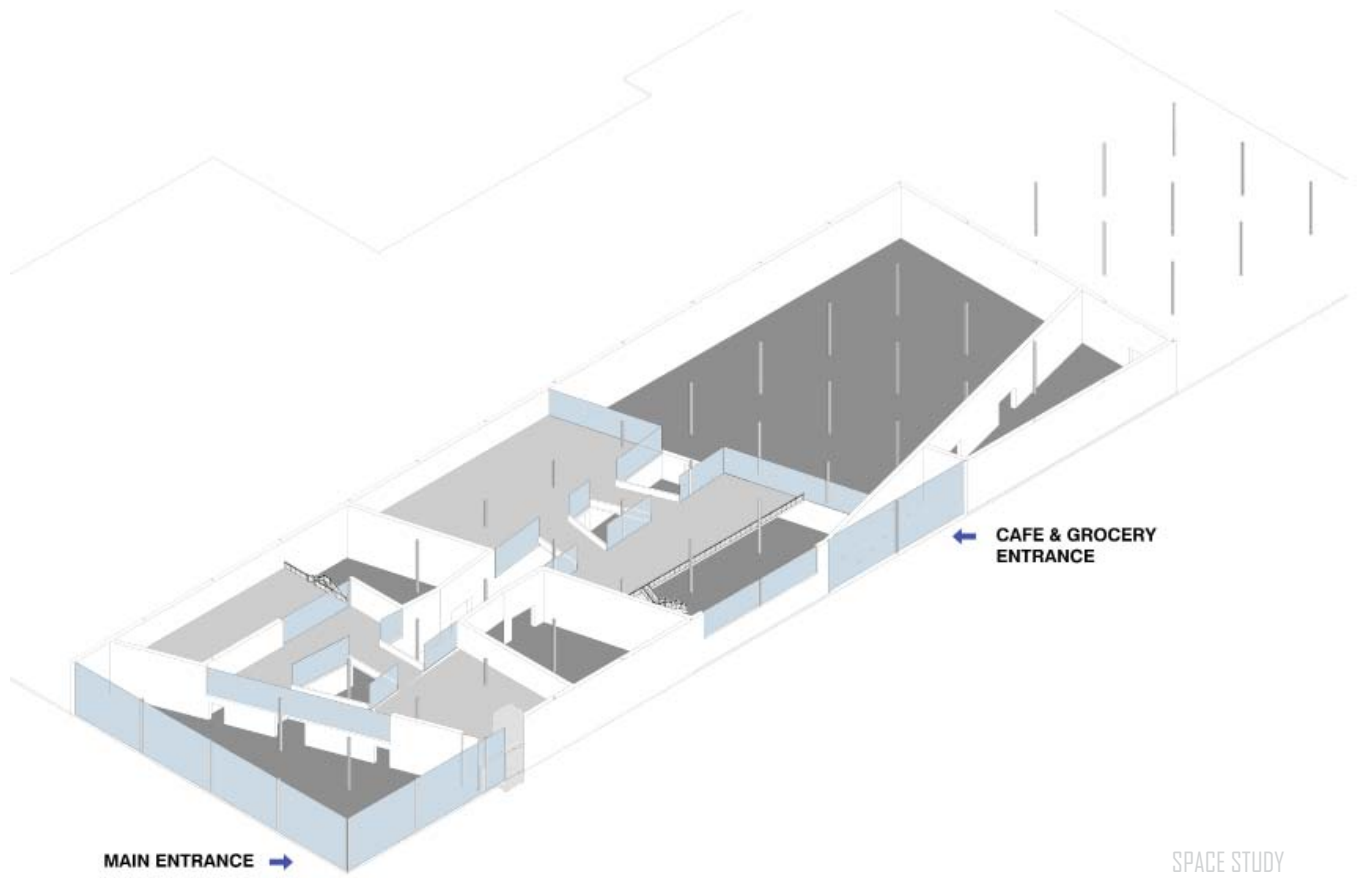
This is not a new design based on my interview with Kaz, but my point of view towards this design has shifted based on the interview. I now believe that this is a design which is both minimal and reflecting human emotion and brand concept, as Kaz thought were essential for a retail.

DESIGN PROBE 3- MATERIALITY



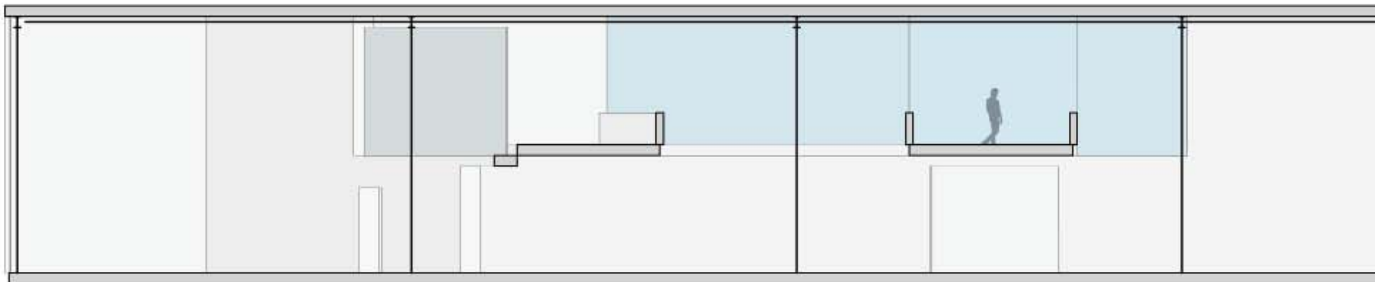


ZONNING PLAN

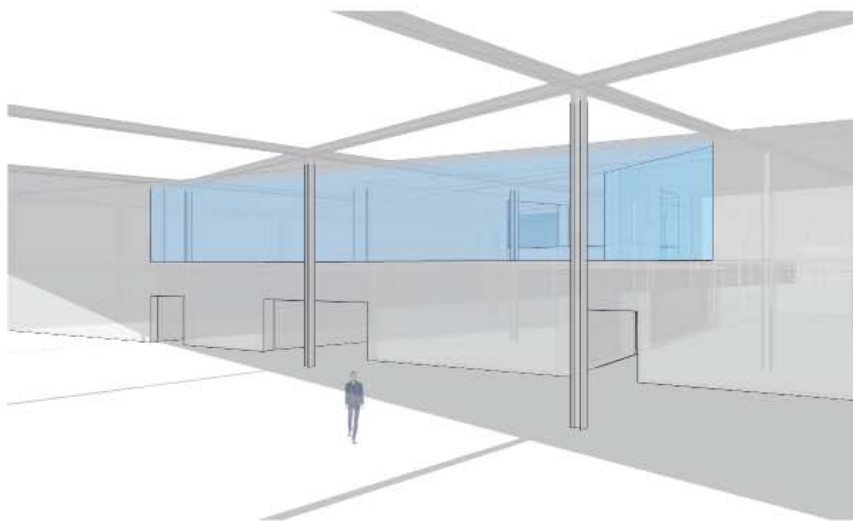




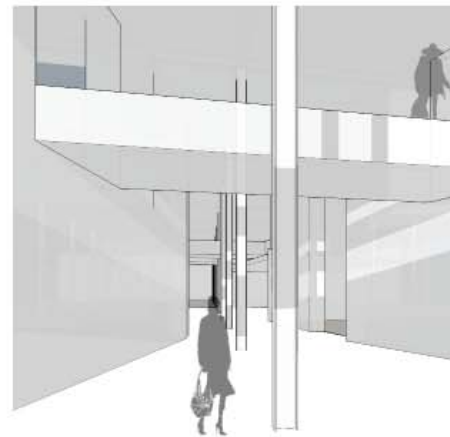
PRELIMINARY SECTION



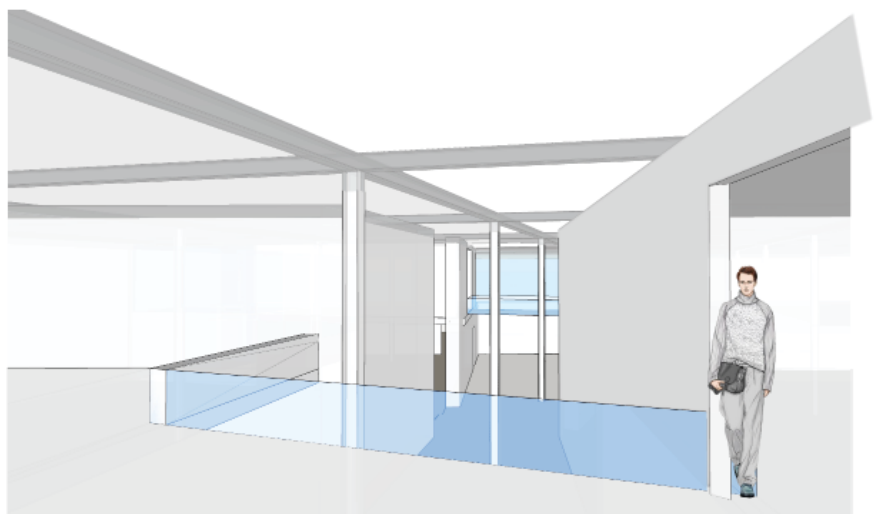
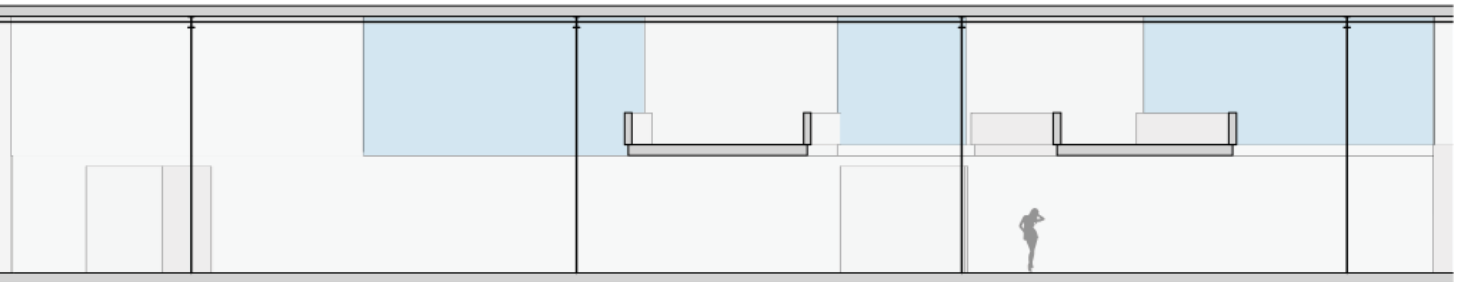
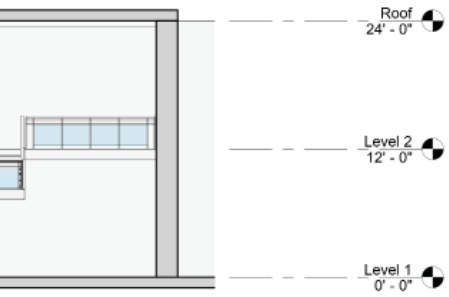
PRELIMINARY SECTION



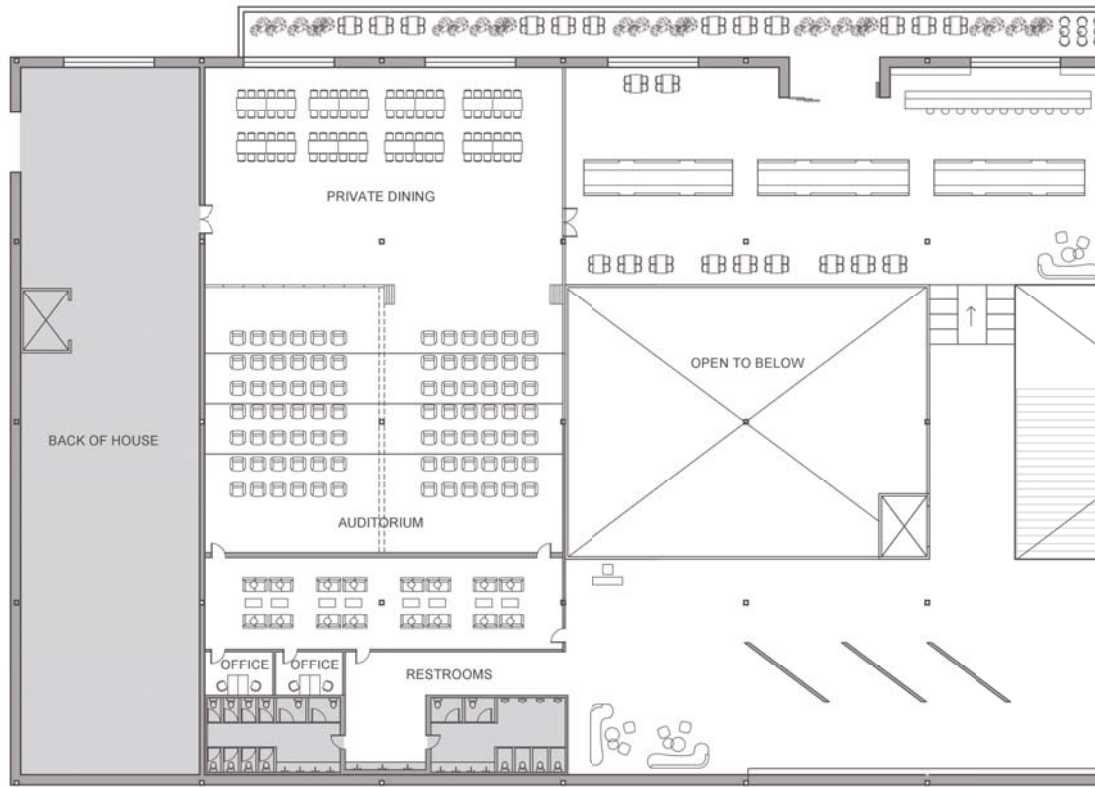
PRELIMINARY PERSPECTIVE



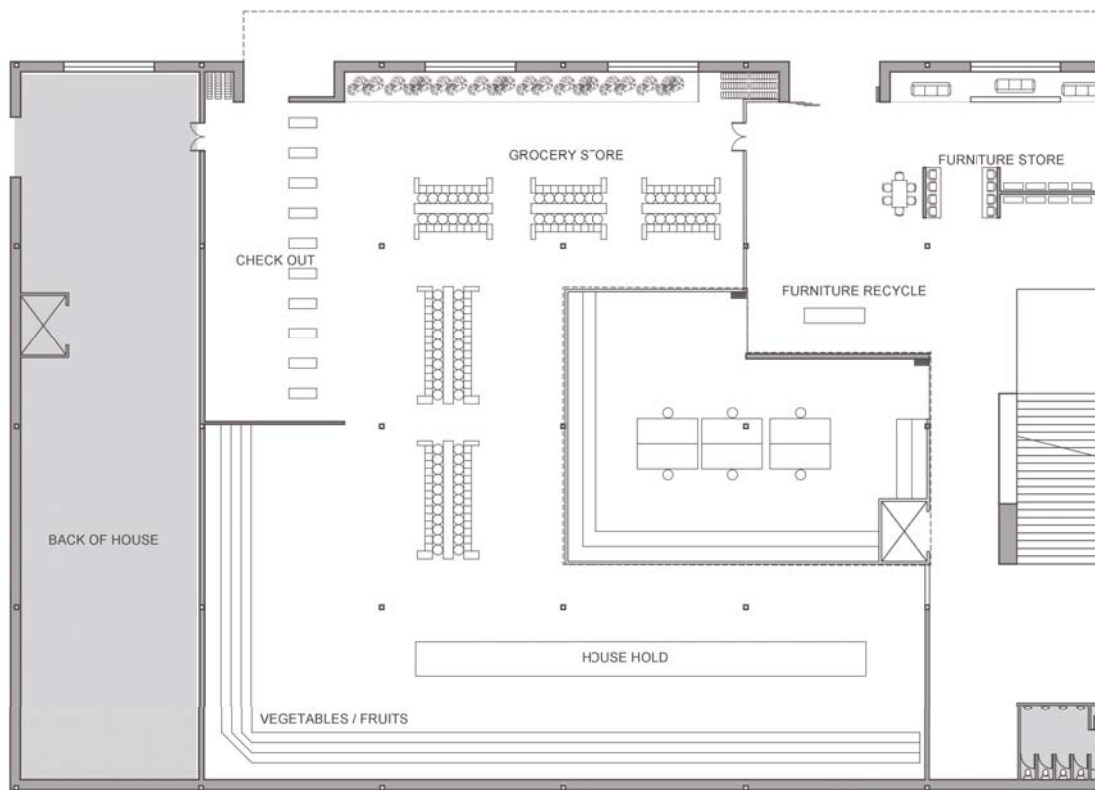
PRELIMINARY PERSPECTIVE



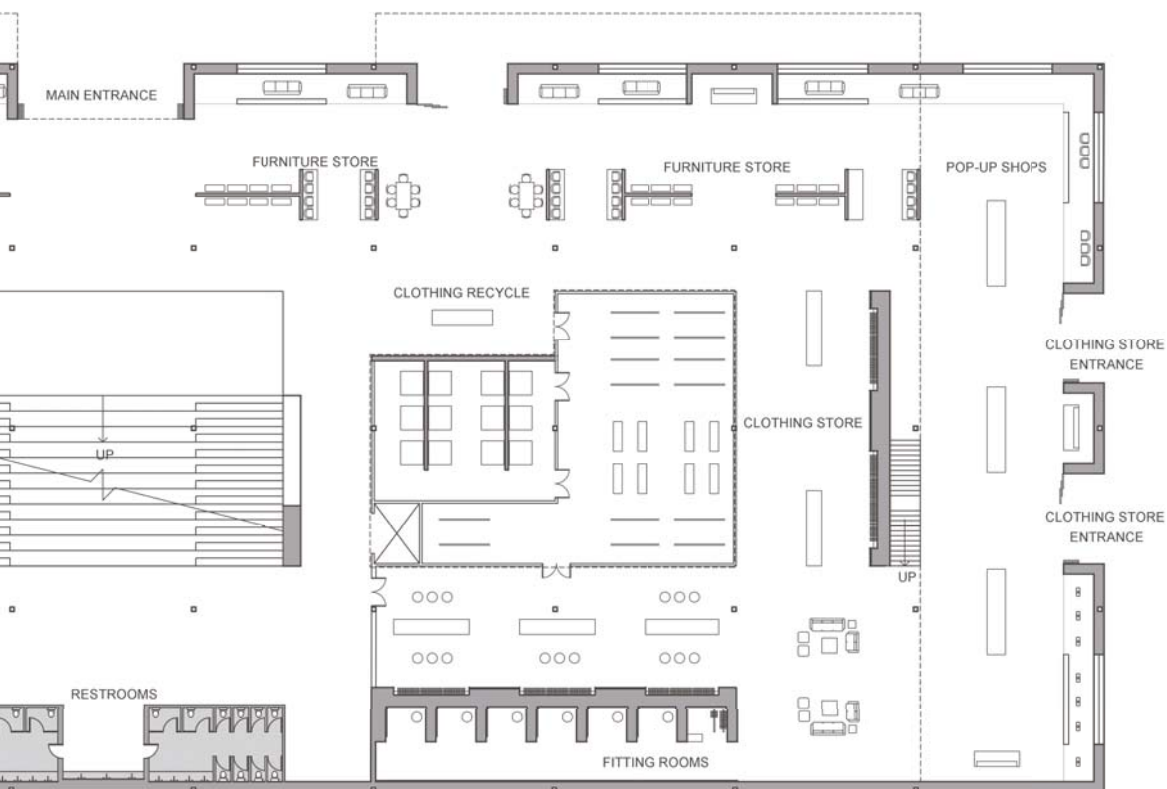
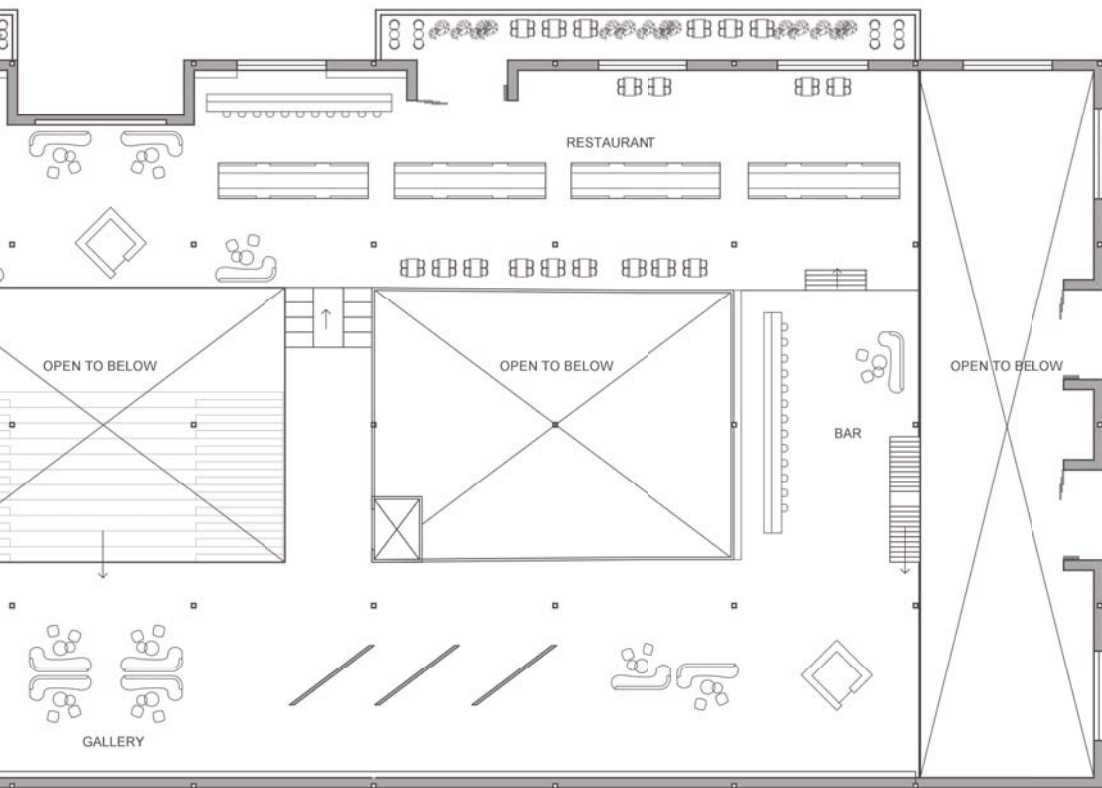
PRELIMINARY PERSPECTIVE

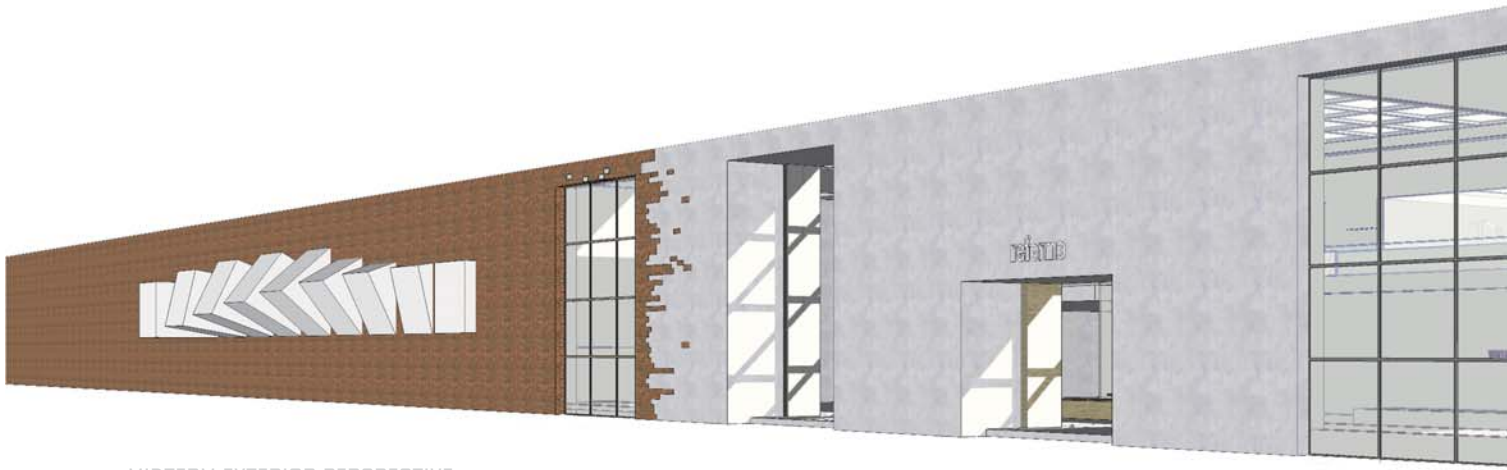


2ND FLOOR SPACE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

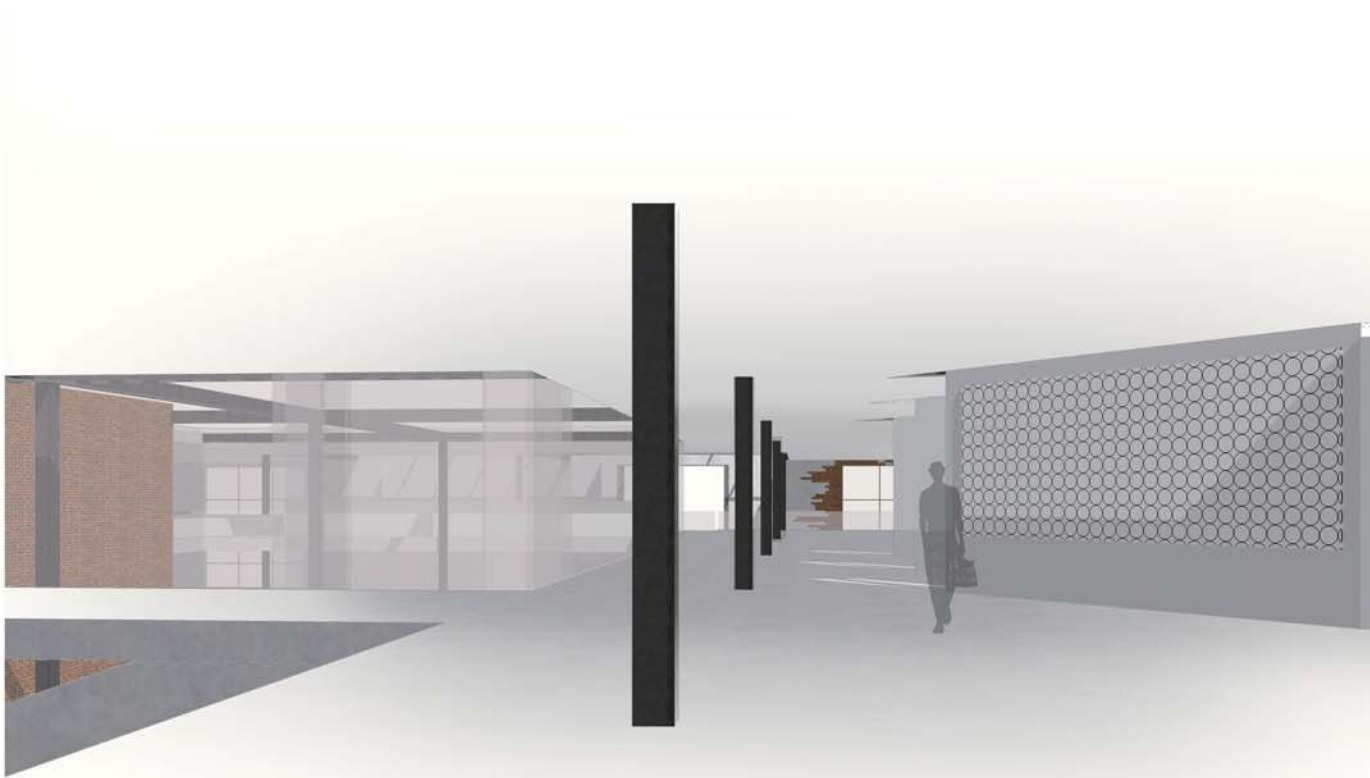


1ST FLOOR SPACE PLAN DEVELOPMENT





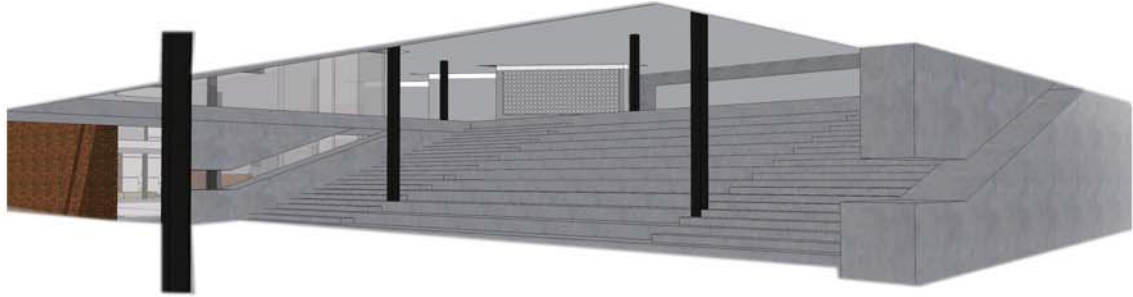
MIDTERM EXTERIOR PERSPECTIVE



MIDTERM GALLERY PERSPECTIVE



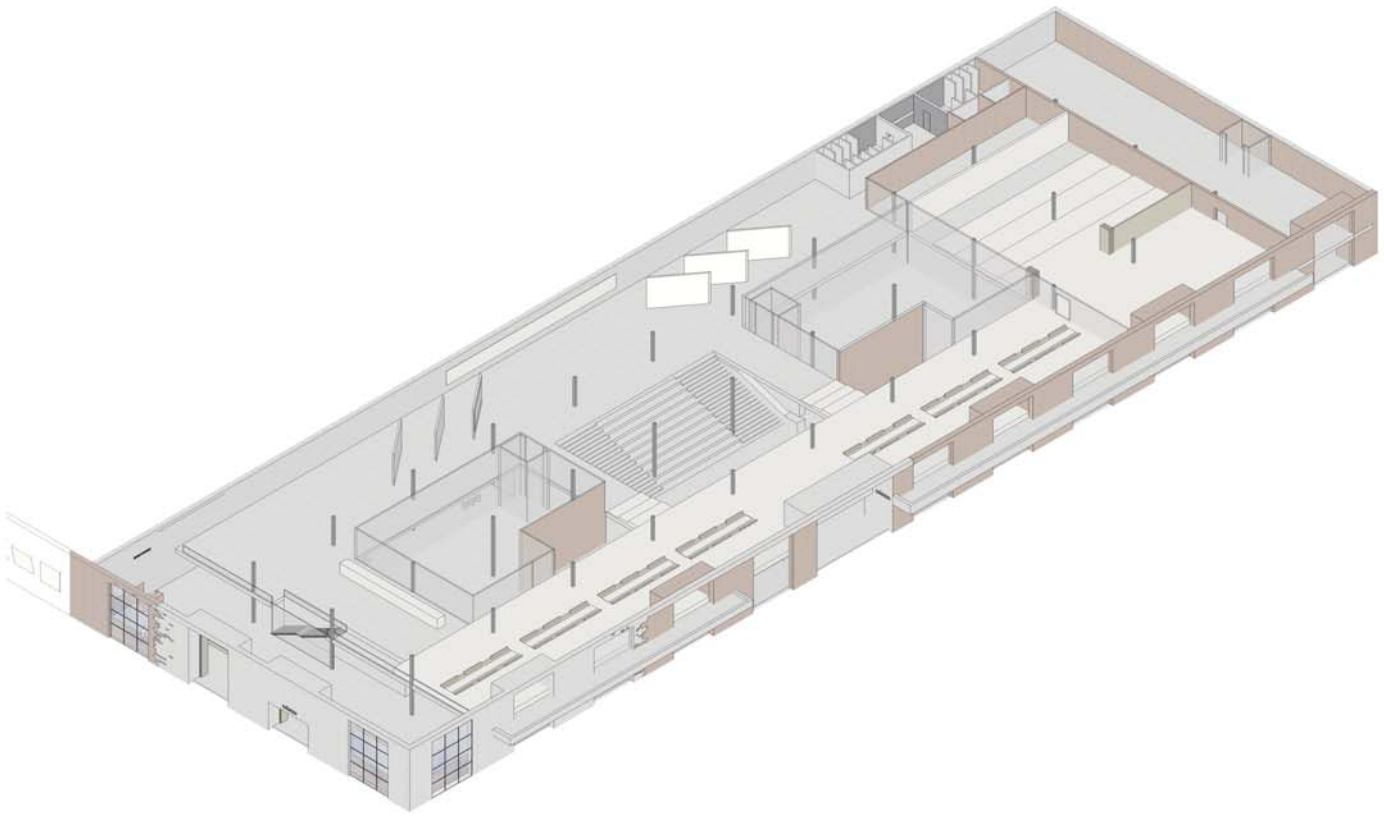
MIDTERM FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE



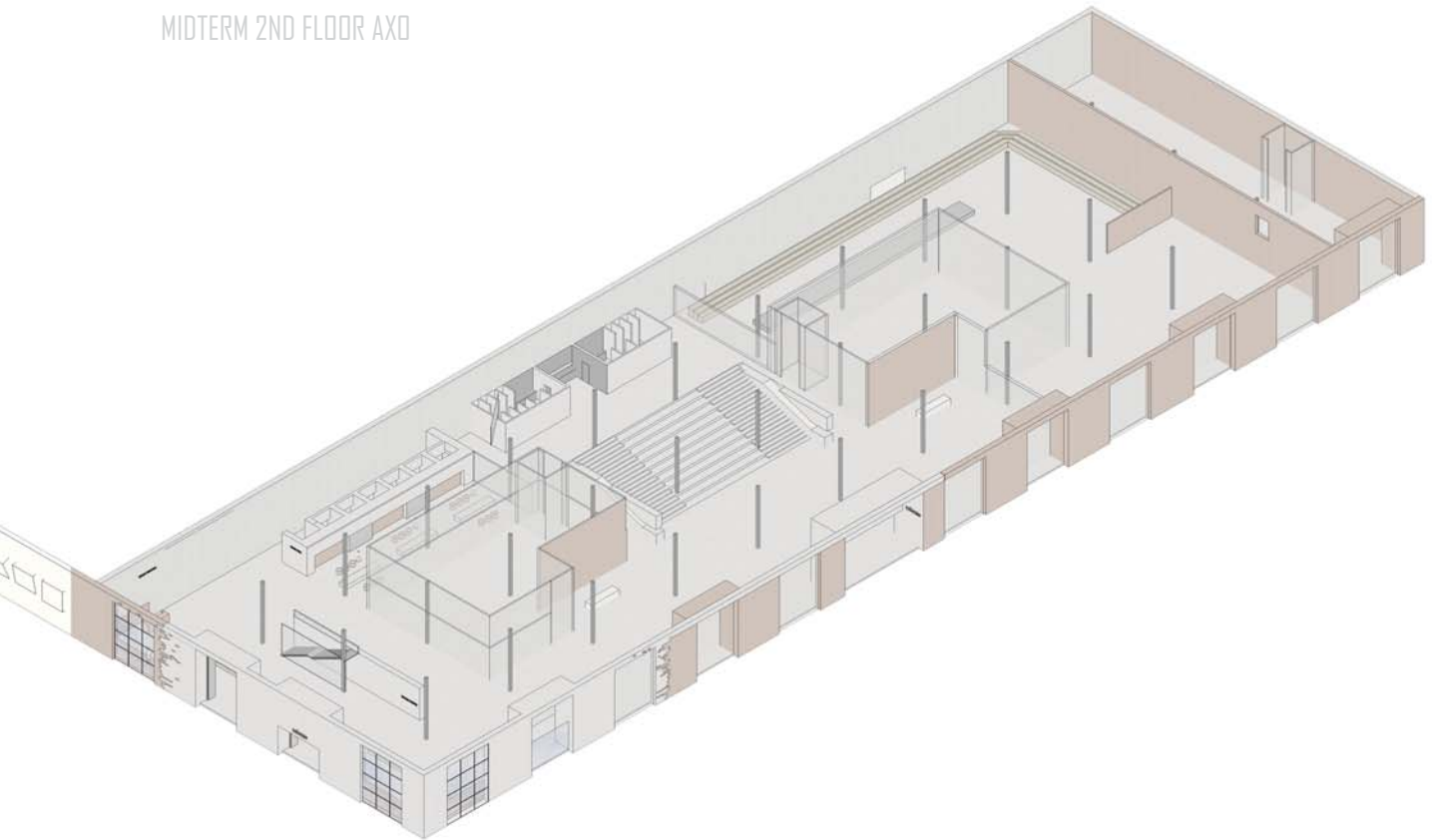
MIDTERM STAGE PERSPECTIVE



MIDTERM FITTING ROOM PERSPECTIVE



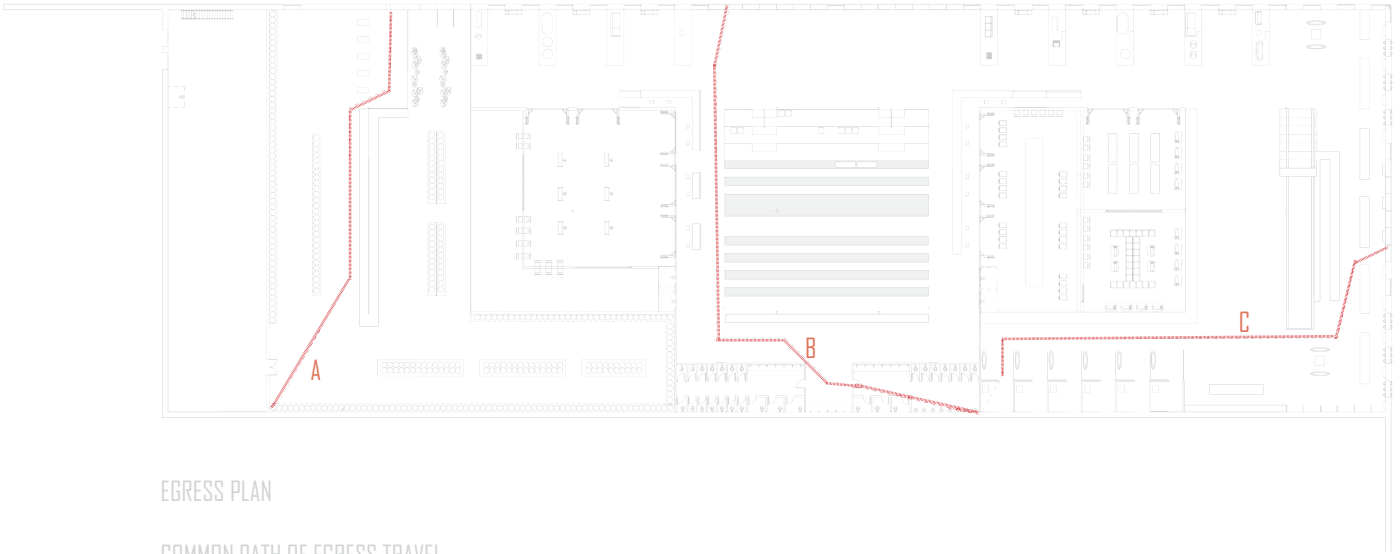
MIDTERM 2ND FLOOR AXO



MIDTERM 1ST FLOOR AXO

CODE ANALYSIS

CONSTRUCTION CLASS OF BUILDING	CLASS 2
USE GROUP CLASSIFICATION	CLASS B (BUSINESS)
PLAN AREA IN SQFT	116,649 SQFT
OCCUPANCY LOAD	743
BUILDING FULLY SPRINKLERED	YES
REQUIRED MEANS OF EGRESS	3
MAX OVERALL DIAGONAL	452'-11"
REQUIRED SEPARATION OF EXITS (1/3 OF OVERALL DIAGONAL)	151'
SEPARATION OF EXITS PROVIDED	3
COMMON PATH OF EGRESS TRAVEL (MAX DISTANCE 100FT)	SEE EGRESS PLAN
LENGTH OF EXIT ACCESS TRAVEL	SEE EGRESS PLAN



EGRESS PLAN

COMMON PATH OF EGRESS TRAVEL

- A: 54'
- B: 100'
- C: 29'

LENGTH OF EXIT ACCESS TRAVEL

- A: 128'
- B: 218'
- C: 188'

PLUMBING FIXTURE

WATER CLOSETS
MALE
FEMALE

19
29

WAYFINDING STRATEGY



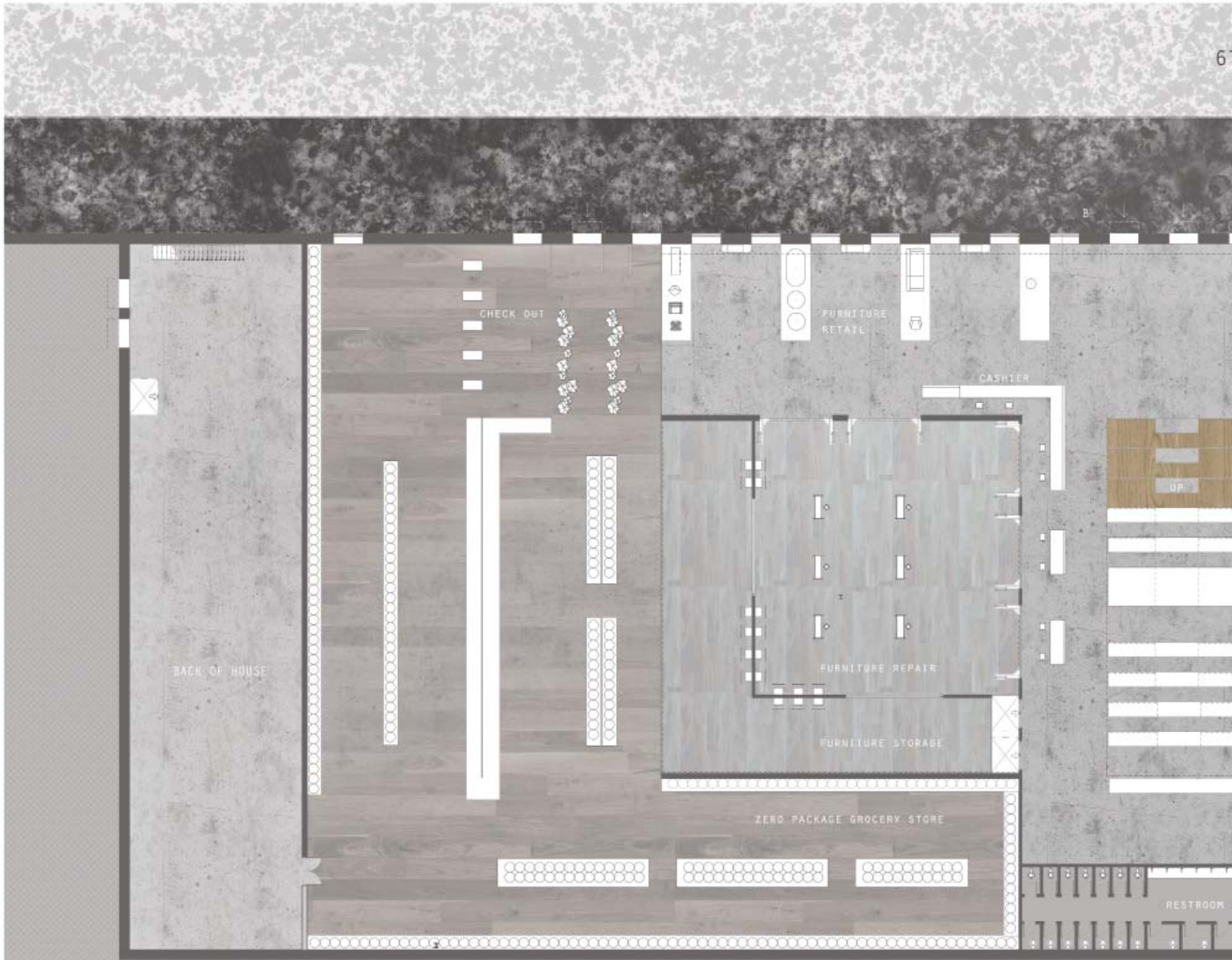
COLORFUL GLASS CEILING PROJECT LIGHT
ON THE FLOOR CREATING FLOOR PATTERN

SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES

1. PROGRAMATIC ENCOURAGING CONSUMERS TO RECYCLE AND REUSE
2. LARGE PORTION OF SKYLIGHTS SAVES ELECTRICITY FOR HEATING AND LIGHTING

MATERIAL SELECTION

BRICK
CONCRETE
MAPLE
GLASS
STEEL

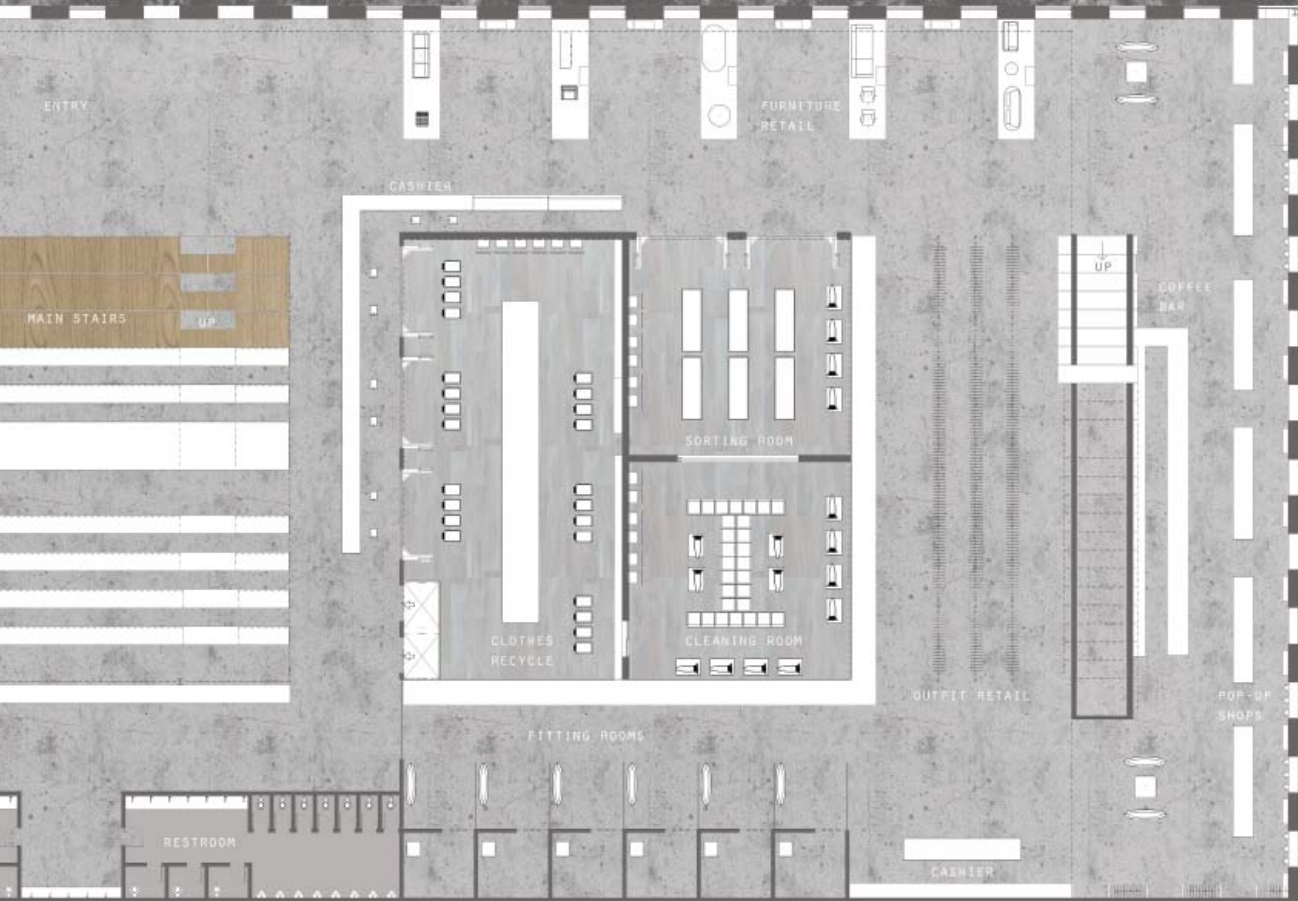


NIC



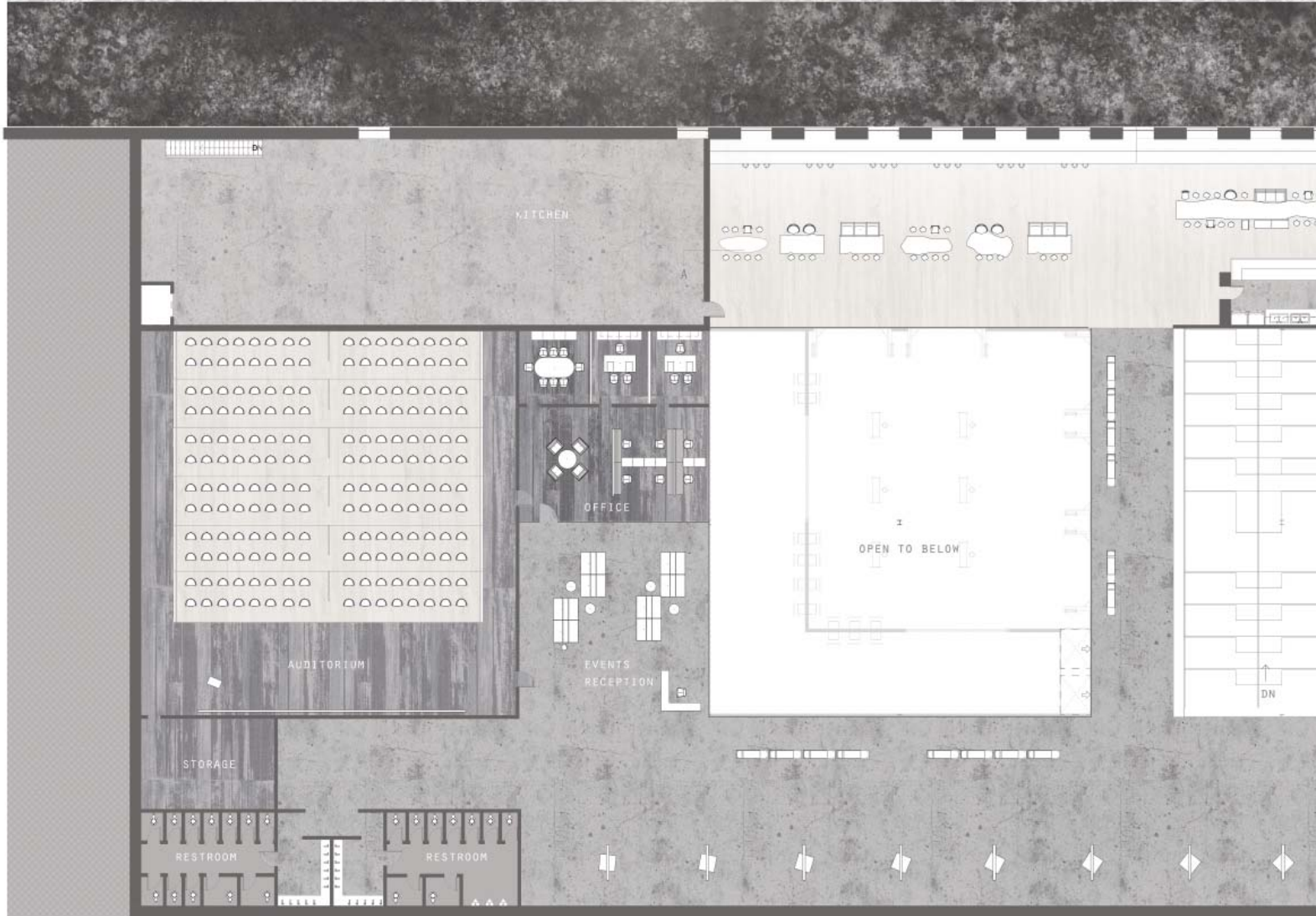
1ST FLOOR PLAN SCALE: 3/32" = 1'

TH STREET



SIDE WALK



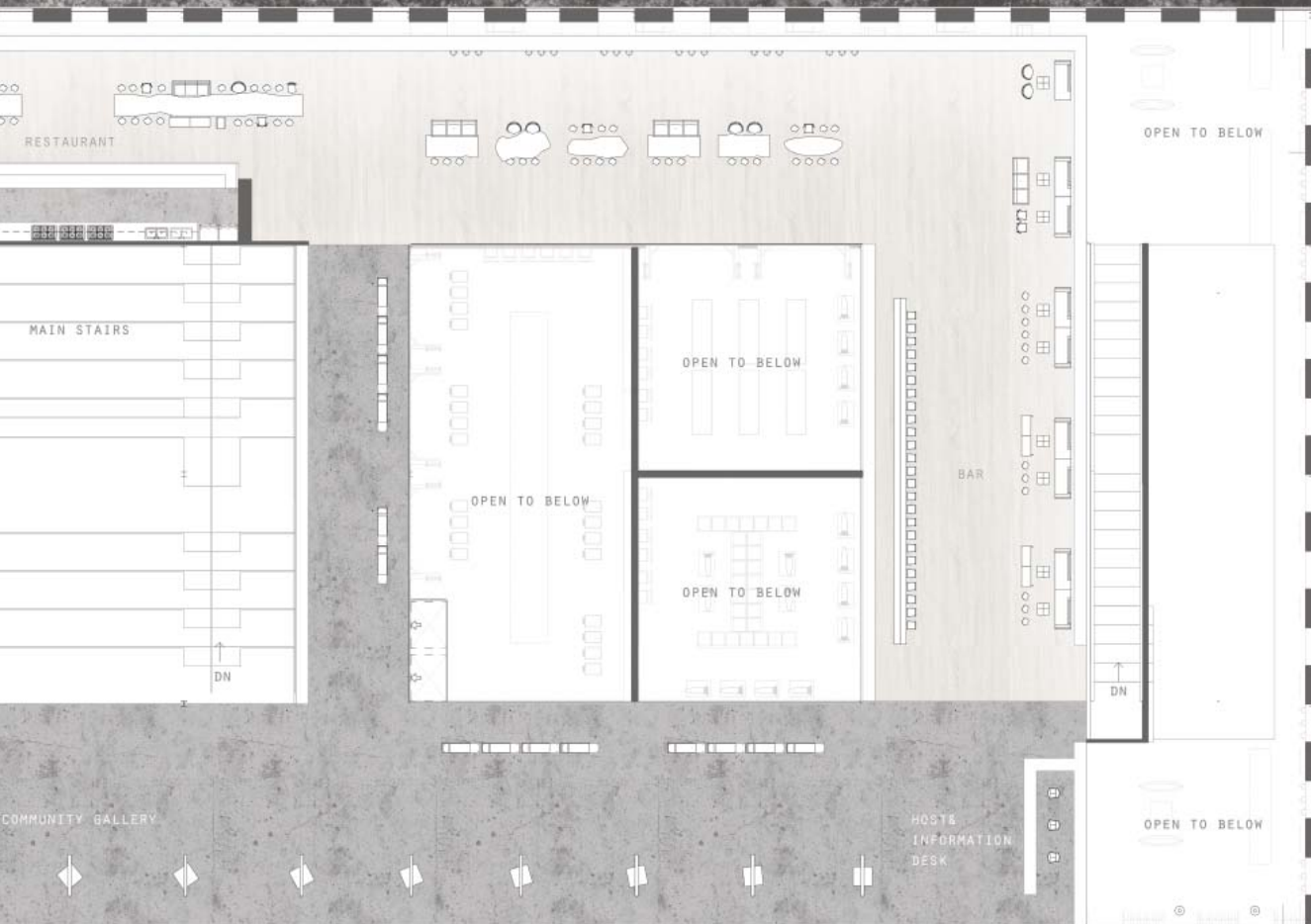


NIC



2ND FLOOR PLAN SCALE: 3/32" = 1'

TH STREET



SIDE WALK





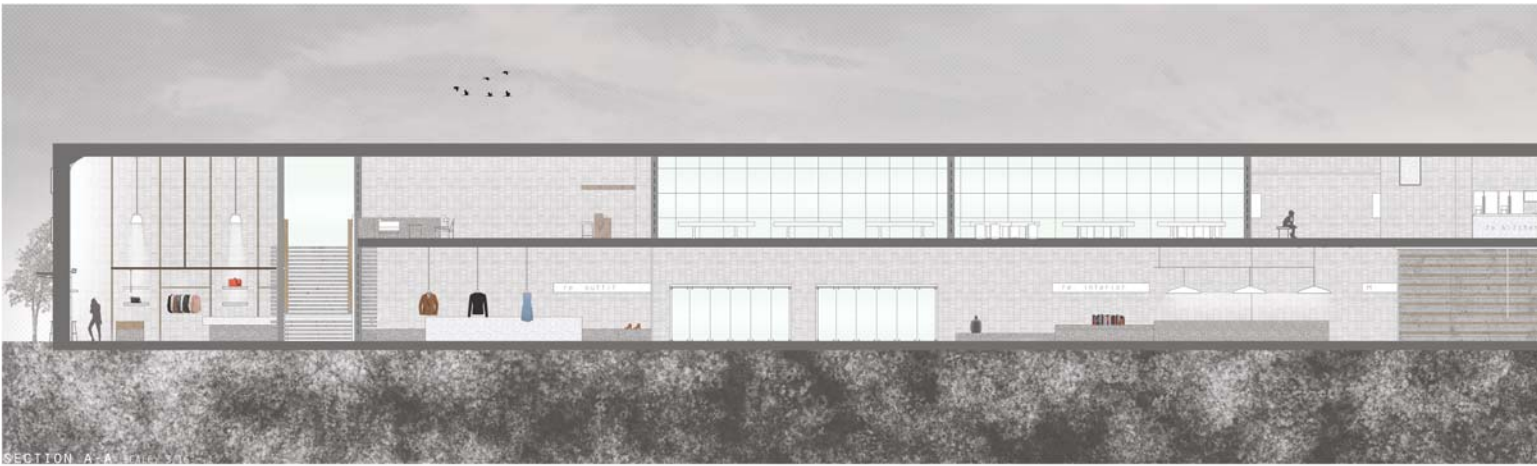
FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE



GALLERY PERSPECTIVE



FURNITURE RETAIL PERSPECTIVE



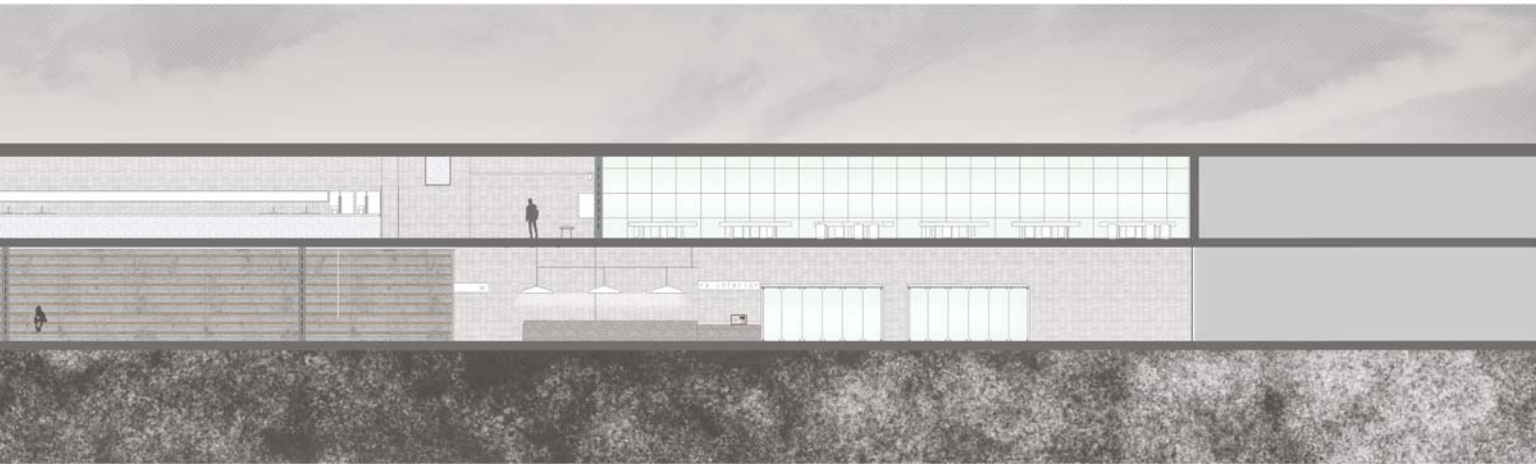
SECTION A - Aerial View



SECTION B - Aerial View



FURNITURE RECYCLE PERSPECTIVE





RECYCLE CENTER PERSPECTIVE



COMMUNITY RESTAURANT PERSPECTIVE

