



# **GAEP. Art Gallery**

Disruption of  
the white cube

# LAYERS

## Strategy

Situated within a dynamic and layered context, the project's strategic approach began with a careful reading and identification of the key premises and identity markers of its surroundings. These contextual layers, together with the foundational principles of an art gallery space, shaped the core themes guiding the architectural concept and intervention.

Though modest in scale, the project aspired to integrate itself with nuance and purpose, bringing added value to the site while subtly redefining the experience of visiting an art gallery in Bucharest.

COMMUNITY



SOCIAL



FUNCTIONAL



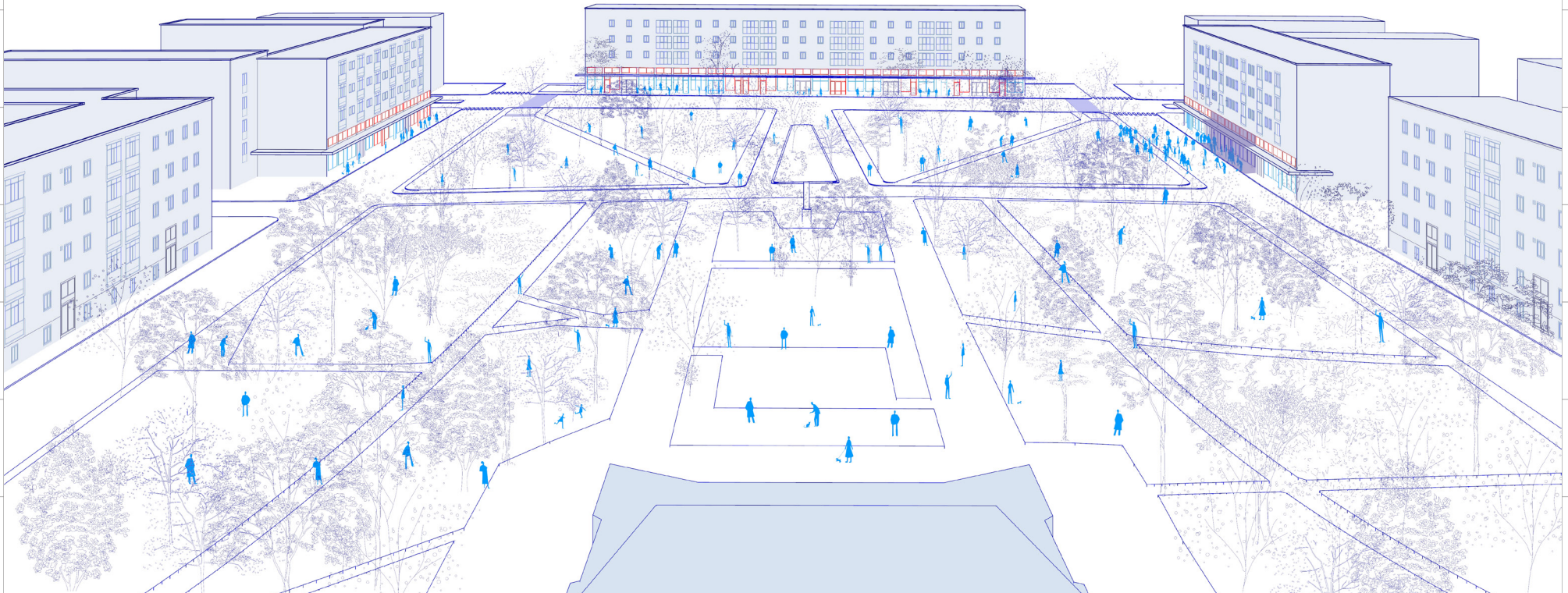
INTERFACE



SITE MEMORY



CULTURAL





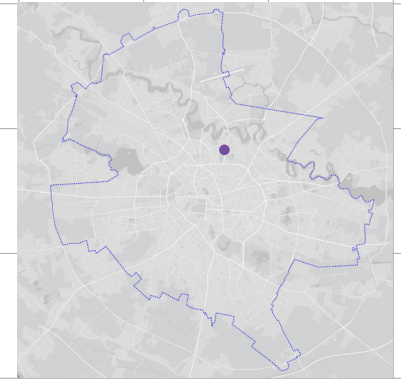
# CONTEXT

History  
Evolution  
Urban dev.

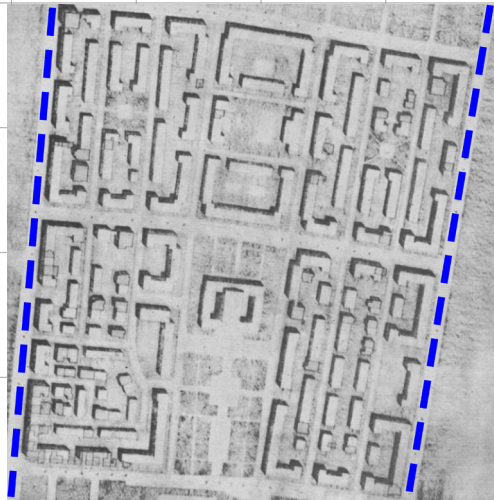


Originally planned in the 1940s by architect Dănuț Marcu as a low-density residential area on the former hippodrome site, Floreasca underwent major transformation post-WWII under the communist regime. Reimagined in the mid-1950s as a medium-density neighborhood aligned with Khrushchev-era housing ideals, it saw the construction of over 1300 apartments, schools,

The district marks the transition from Stalinist monumentalism to a pragmatic, modernist urbanism, integrating collective housing with ample green space.



1938



1950



2025



# CONTEXT

History  
Evolution  
Urban dev.



The transformation of public space in Floreasca illustrates the vision of integrating culture and community into daily life. Ground floors of the residential blocks were designed to include commercial and service functions—shops, cafes and community spaces—particularly around the central park area (now Cinema Floreasca Park). The park and its surroundings reflect a deliberate shift from rigid, symmetrical planning to a more organic and human-scaled landscape.

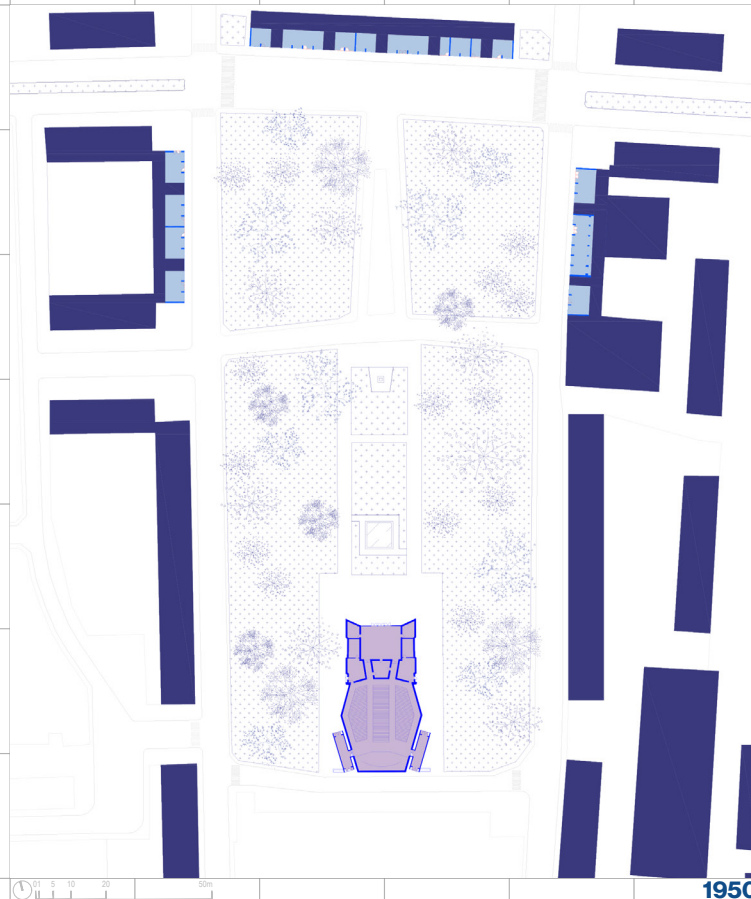


Cinema Floreasca once served as the community's main attractor, its significance emphasized by the building's monumental character and the park designed as a ceremonial esplanade leading to it.

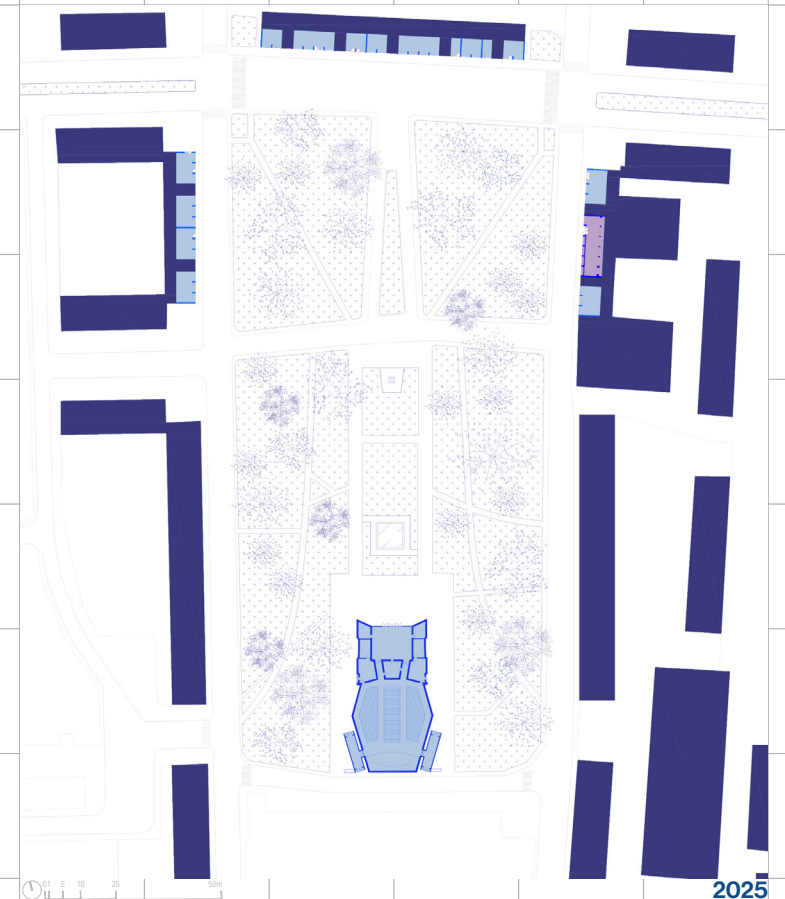


A close reading of the neighborhood's current context reveals that the original urban strategy—part of the site's memory—is still partially present and relevant. Only that now, the old cinema's keyrole in the neighbourhood is no longer valid, the space being now repurposed as privat.

Public spaces and the relationship with the park.



1950



2025

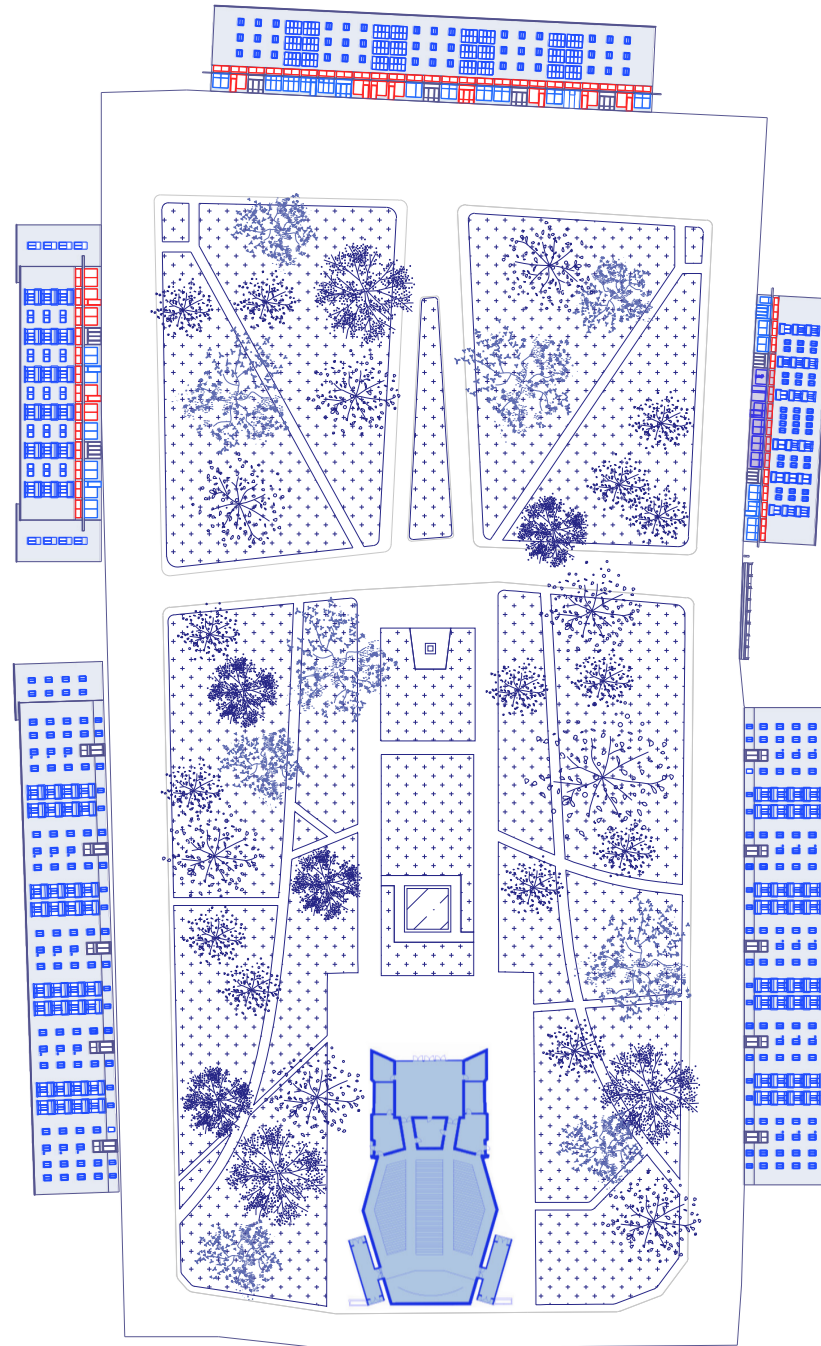


# INSERTION STRATEGY

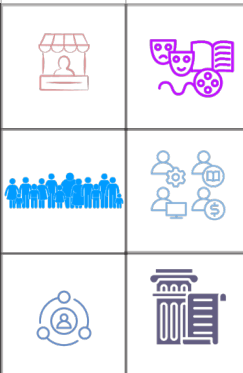


Gaep art gallery project seeks to contribute to this community life, taking on the role of a cultural activator and adding a new layer of **cultural community** to the neighborhood.

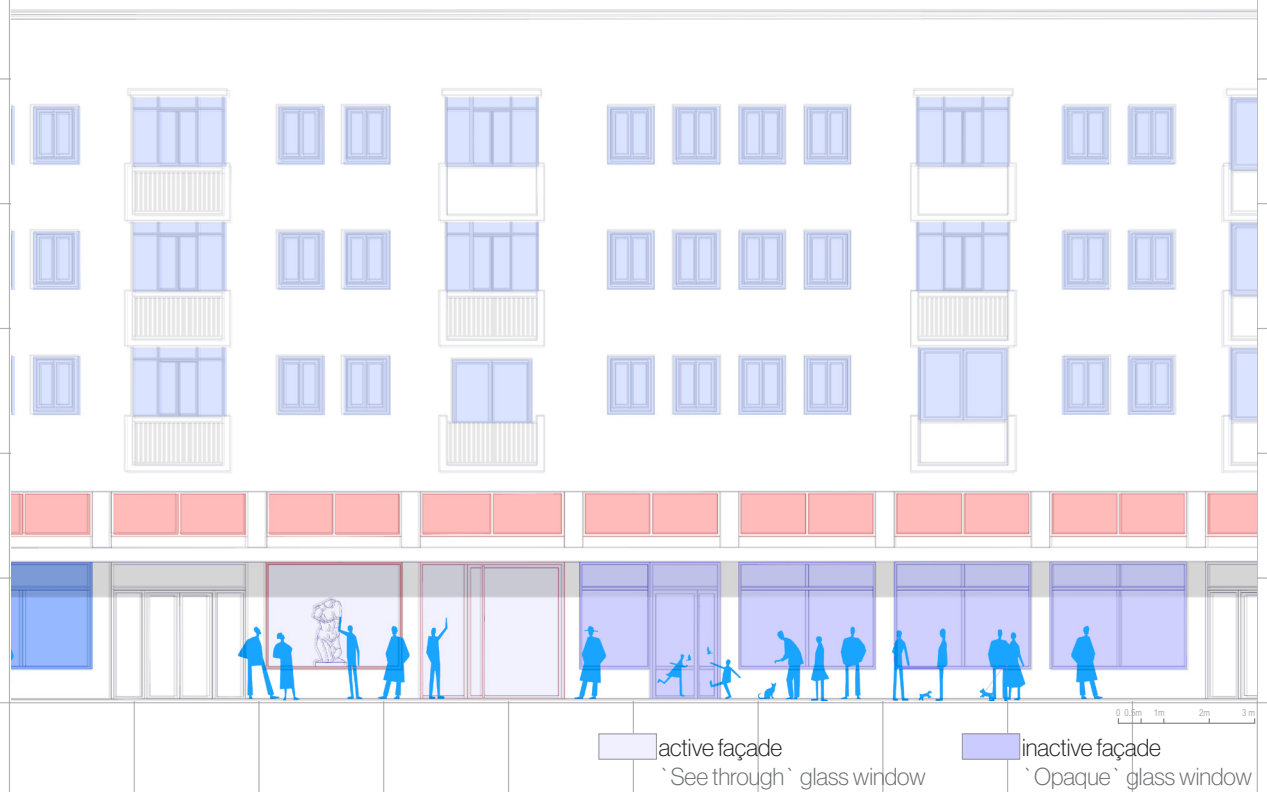
The **storefront** acts as a subtle signal, seamlessly integrated into the rhythm of the street and the urban plinth. It serves as an **active medium of communication**, staging messages that capture attention and invite reflection, while offering a carefully measured preview of the interior world.



# INSERTION STRATEGY

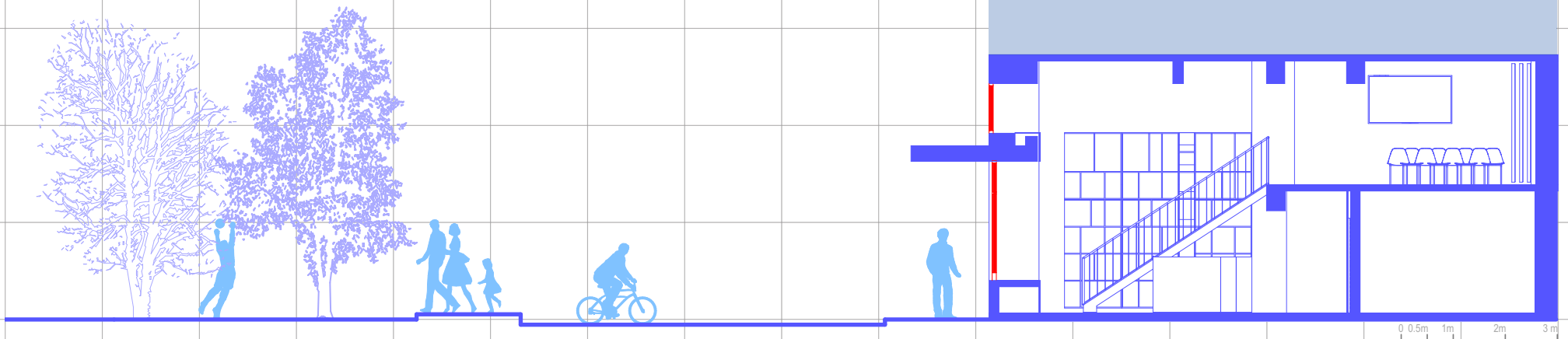
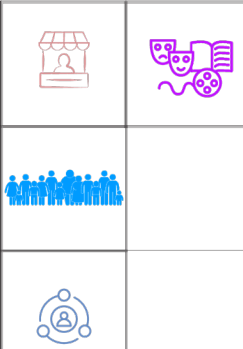


In the gallery project, the storefront reveals only as much as needed, deliberately safeguarding the gallery's inner universe and reinforcing the idea of an **active façade**—aware of its role within the urban landscape.





# INSERTION STRATEGY



From the street, through the large display window, you see the light projected onto the bright white walls and a bookcase filled with art albums.  
A cultural community inviting the passerby to get curious.  
What you can't anticipate is the perspective that opens up to you once you enter the gallery.

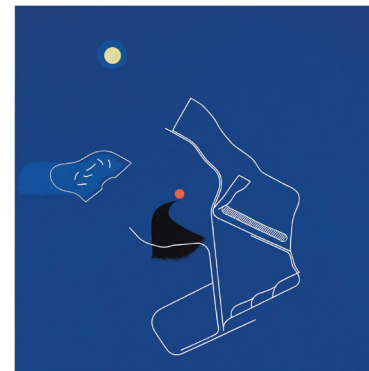
# WHITE CUBE



Today, we are all familiar with the concept of the “white cube”. If you’ve ever been into a contemporary art museum, you’ve definitely experienced it: plain white walls, polished floors, basic furniture, artworks evenly lit from above (with the quiet help of artificial lighting)."

"Brian O'Doherty argued that in these locations, something of 'the sanctity of the church, the formality of the courtroom, the mystique of the experimental laboratory joins with chic design to produce a unique chamber of esthetics' "

\*image reference - Cătălin Pislaru, "Nymphaea Elegy in the Secret Garden #2", 2023





# WHITE CUBE



ZOOM OUT

Translating the "white cube" concept into the local context and its identified layers:

- community - social - functional - interface - site memory - cultural



# WHITE CUBE



## ZOOM IN

Subtle gestures **disrupt** the clinical perfection of the traditional white cube, revealing **traces of the site's original spirit**: textures bearing the memory of the space, exposed installations, original columns encased in steel – all unified under a layer of white.

\*image reference - Cătălin Pîslaru,  
"Nymphaea Elegy in the Secret Garden #2",  
2023

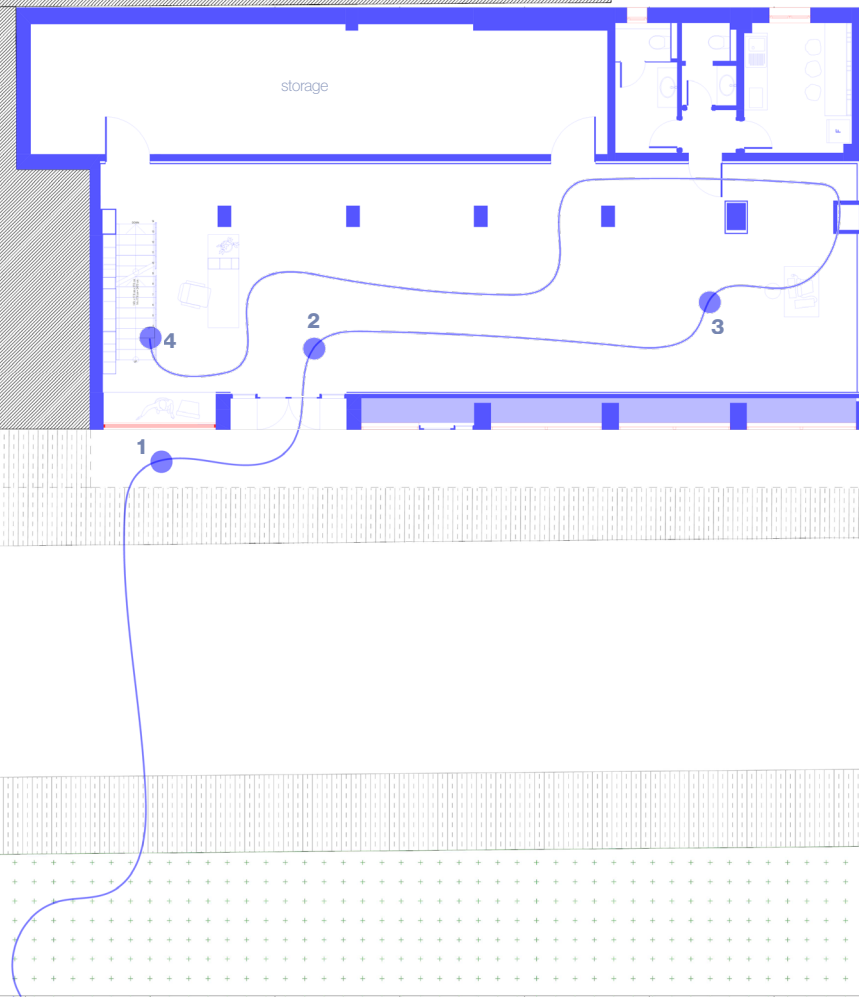




# WHITE CUBE

The gallery captures the passerby's attention through its storefront-as-signal, offering a carefully curated preview of the interior world. Once inside, the ground floor space creates a sense of containment and immersion in the artistic universe presented. The experience remains undisturbed by the outside context, thanks to the absence of additional windows.

The ground floor hosts over 100 square meters of exhibition space, with tall walls on two sides and five lower alcoves on another side.



1. GALLERY WINDOW- Portal
2. ACCESS - Reception space
3. THE WHITE CUBE
4. THE STAIR - Transition

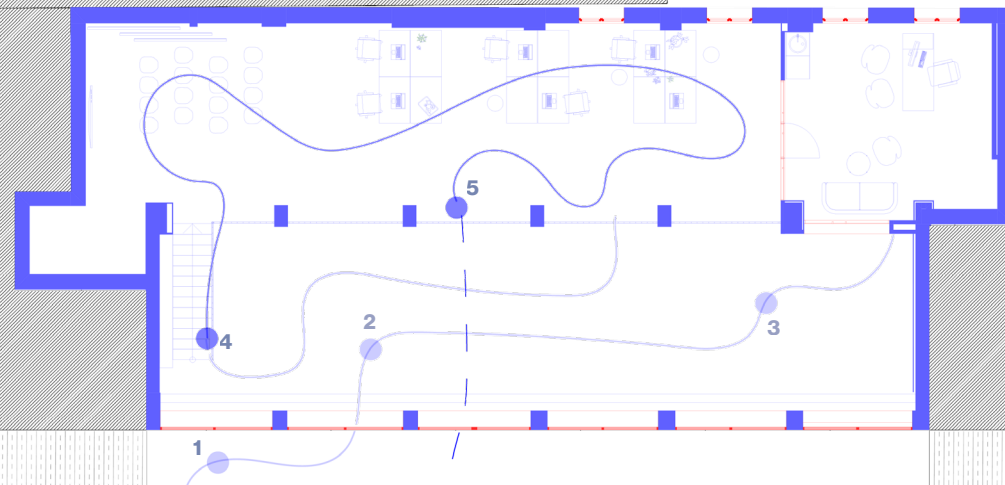
# WHITE CUBE



Positioned strategically within the storefront's line of sight and beside the library, the staircase leads to the mezzanine while unfolding a layered perspective over the scenography of the ground floor.

The mezzanine serves as a multifunctional zone for events and offices, fully accessible to visitors.

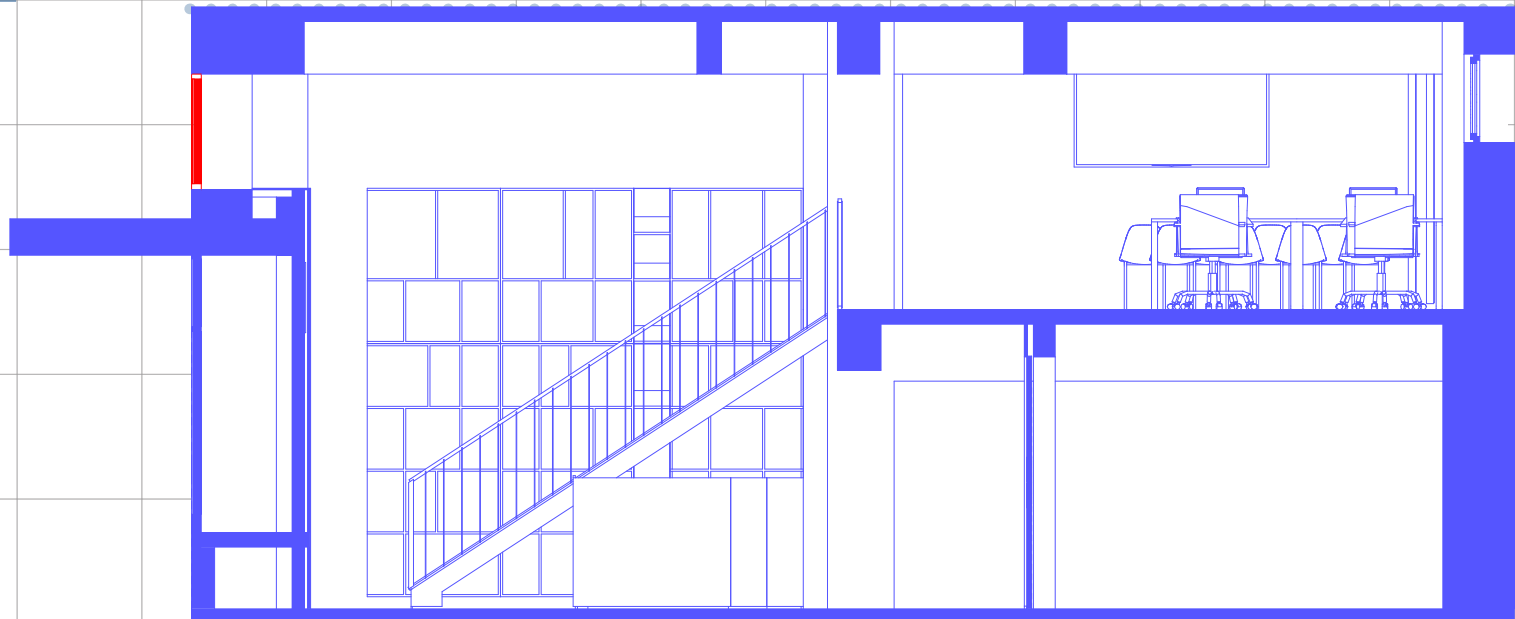
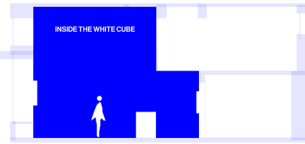
Unlike most galleries, Gaep invites you to explore freely—view the exhibition from above, browse the library, or sit among the team at work.



1. GALLERY WINDOW- Portal
2. ACCESS - Reception space
3. THE WHITE CUBE
4. THE STAIR - Transition
5. UPPER FLOOR  
- Nature rediscovered



# WHITE CUBE



0 0.5m 1m 2m 3m

Space's height and interplay of volumes became defining elements of the project. The 5-meter-high side was dedicated to exhibitions, while the split-level area was used for workspaces.

# WHITE CUBE



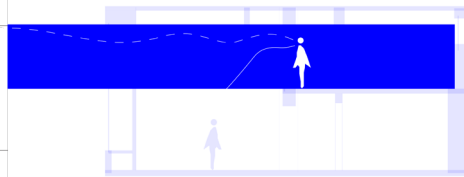
Sebastian Prodan ©

# WHITE CUBE

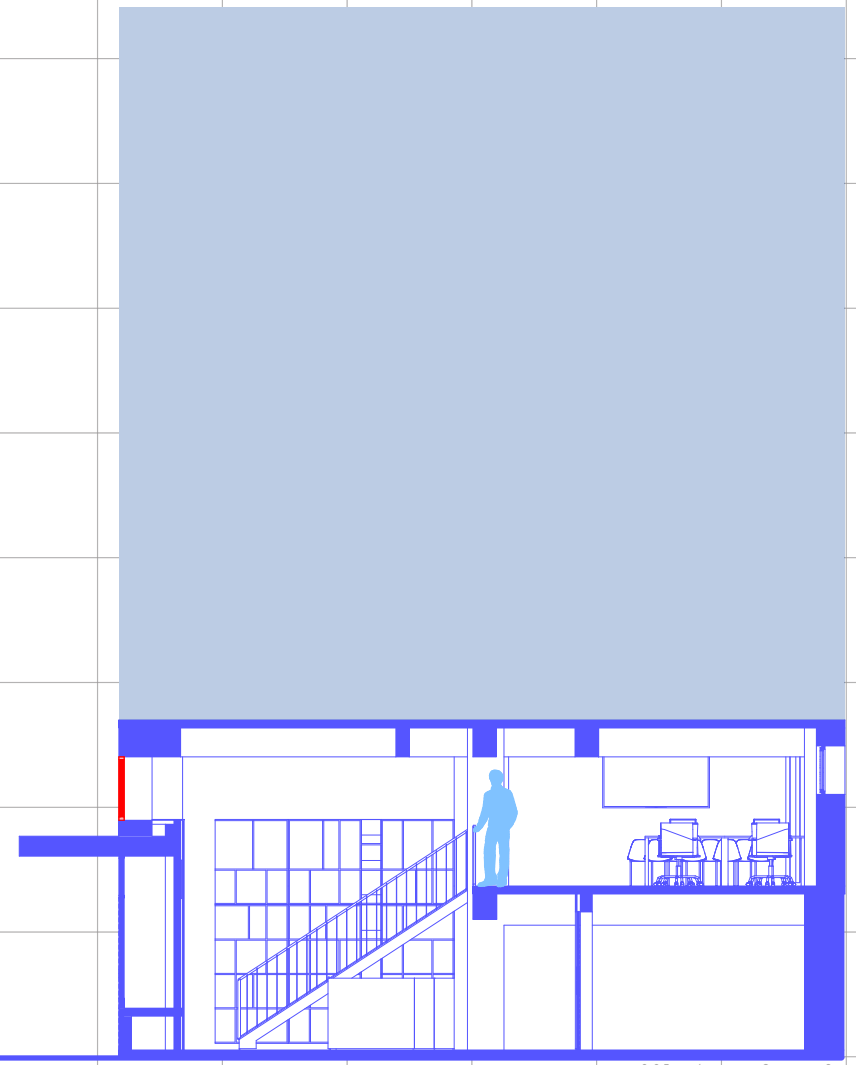
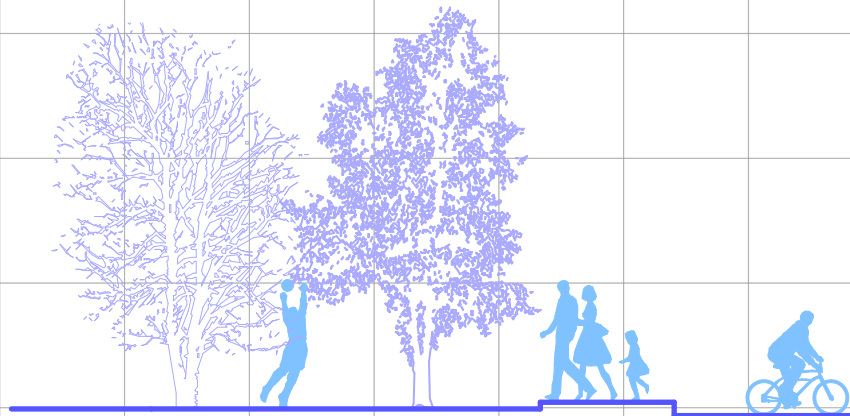




# WHITE CUBE



Reaching the mezzanine, the gaze shifts—art is seen from above, at a distance, while the reopened upper windows frame glimpses of the Floreasca Park and the neighborhood's quiet rhythm, reconnecting the interior scenography with the life beyond.



0 0.5m 1m 2m 3m

# FEEDBACK



Alexandru Paul ©

"When we think of a contemporary art gallery, we consider the relationship between artist and viewer, and the gallery's role in mediating that exchange. As a collector, I expect this dialogue to unfold across all levels — verbal, visual, sonic — and in this sense, the architecture acts as the "operating system" of that conversation. In GAEP's new space, I feel as if I were in a prestigious gallery anywhere in the world — a place where the level of discourse is elevated and enriched by an authentic aesthetic experience."

- Marius Istrate, art collector -

"From my very first visit to this new Gaep space, I felt a sense of familiarity. It wasn't the austere feeling that exhibition spaces often impose — it was something warmer. You feel like staying a bit longer, even after you've seen the artworks. I believe the original architectural elements, so seamlessly "absorbed" into the modern space, helped create an authentic, sunlit place — for us, the visitors — and one that is generous to the artworks. The fact that it's located in an apartment block, yet functions as an artistic venue, speaks to me as a vision of Bucharest's potential."

- Oana Canale, art collector -



# FEEDBACK



"After nine exhibitions held here, it's clear that the space enhances the artistic media we work with most often — drawing, collage, photography, painting, and sculpture — and that it has allowed us to present, for example, large-scale drawing installations (in Ignacio Uriarte's show) and extended "friezes" of works on paper (Răzvan Anton)."

- Ioana Chira, gaep gallery's content director -

"The design of the new space completely changed the way we work in the gallery. The gallery becomes a safe and intimate space for the viewer/collector, while being at the same time an enhancer for the works of art. When one opens our door, one enters an amazing universe. For me, working in the gallery is a true joy and I am so happy to call this space my second home."

- Andrei Breahnă, gaep gallery's managing partner, owner -

# FEEDBACK



Tayfun Kayabasi ©  
Floreasca community event



Claudiu Obreja ©

"I've been working with GAEP from the beginning and have often had the opportunity to exhibit in the old space. I had to choose between fighting against the overly present identity of the place, integrating it through artistic devices, or pretending it didn't exist. In the new space, identity has been invited to exist in an elegant and subtle way — just enough to be easily brought forward and used as part of the experience by artists or visitors. Or it can just as easily be pushed back into the background when direct interaction with the artworks is desired, in a white cube setting. I appreciated that here everything is visible from anywhere, that I'm not limited to a specific route or pace of visitation, and that the entire place feels transparent and fluid."

- Sebastian Moldovan, artist -

"I think this gallery space makes possible the display of monumental works. And it also allows all the artworks to shine."

- Ignacio Uriarte, artist -



