



**South Kensington Pedestrian  
Tunnel Design Competition 2014**

A student ideas competition launched by the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 and Exhibition Road Cultural Group to re-imagine the South Kensington Pedestrian Tunnel in South Kensington: an important and much-used public space in London, and the threshold to the area's cultural and educational institutions.

Entries consisted of cross-disciplinary teams of post-graduate students from the academic institutions within South Kensington: the Royal College of Art, Royal College of Music and Imperial College, looking to harness the energy of today's student cohort to create a lively and beautiful space that expresses the spirit of the South Kensington community, and provides a fitting welcome to the area. The competition builds on a tradition of giving local students the opportunity to contribute to public buildings and spaces around South Kensington.

Founded from profits of the Great Exhibition of 1851 to fulfill Prince Albert's vision of "extending the influence of science and art upon productive industry", South Kensington or "Albertopolis" is home to an extraordinary cluster of world-leading organisations generating and sharing knowledge and inspiring the engineers, designers, scientists, musicians and artists of the future. These proposals explore potential application of the latest 21<sup>st</sup> century innovations in way-finding, lighting and design to make this much-loved heritage asset a fitting gateway to the South Kensington cultural quarter.

The exhibition took place Oct — Dec 2014  
from 16<sup>th</sup> — 19<sup>th</sup> December 2014  
with an open evening for local residents  
on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> 2014

The winning design concepts were selected as an approaches that will encourage debate and discussion. It is anticipated that the winning group will work with the Exhibition Road Cultural Groups, Transport for London and other local stakeholders to develop the designs further to contribute to planned improvements to South Kensington station.

#### Competition Jury

**Sir Christopher Frayling (Chair)** – 1851 Royal Commissioner & former Rector, Royal College of Art  
**Sophie Andreae** – Heritage & Architectural Adviser  
**Chris Cotton** – CEO, Royal Albert Hall & Chair, Exhibition Road Cultural Group  
**Louise Fitton** – Head of Content Production, Natural History Museum  
**William Jackson**, Chair of Development Group, Cushman Wakefield  
**Annabel Judd** – Head of Design, V&A Museum  
**Karen Livingstone** – Director of Masterplan & Estates, Science Museum  
**Eleanor Pinfield** – Head of Art on the Underground, Transport for London  
**Professor Alex de Rijke** – Dean of the School of Architecture, Royal College of Art

With thanks to  
Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851  
and Malcolm Reading Consultants



Exhibition Graphics by Marine Duroselle  
Cover photography by Iain Reid

## Competition Brief

South Kensington station is one of the most visited stations on the underground network. It provides the primary gateway to the world-class cultural and educational institutions along Exhibition Road. The pedestrian tunnel provides safe and covered access to the threshold of the museums and is heavily used throughout the day, particularly families and school groups.

Transport for London is developing ambitious plans to transform the operation and environment of South Kensington station. To inform these plans, the Exhibition Road Cultural Group in conjunction with the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 and the Royal College of Art School of Architecture organised a competition giving local postgraduate students the opportunity to feed in ideas to improve the station and its immediate surroundings. This reflects Transport for London and the competition organisers' desire to work closely together to ensure that South Kensington station is developed in a way that reflects its unique cultural and historic setting.

Competitors were challenged to produce designs that express the spirit of South Kensington and provide a fitting welcome to the area and its world-leading museums, educational institutions and cultural venues.

Solutions were sought to reimagine the South Kensington tunnel and pose the question: 'What role can design play in expressing the spirit of the South Kensington community?' The space will be inspiring, elegant, beautiful and permanent, delivering a curated and coherent experience. It will be sustainable, future proof and free of excessive maintenance needs – looking as good, and working as well, in 25 years time as it does on completion. The tunnel and the threshold with the station concourse will create a coherent sense of welcome and orientation. The competition sought proposals that would symbolise the marriage of science, art, technology, design and industry – values inherent in South Kensington's cultural quarter.

The competition invited proposal which would:

- Improve wayfinding and orientation within the tunnel, both from the station and the cultural and education institutions accessed from it
- Be inclusive and welcoming to all, with a focus on step-free access and visitors with mobility issues
- Represent exchange of ideas and methods inherent in the South Kensington cultural quarter and reconnect with the core values of the Commissioners of 1851 – extending the application of science and art to industry into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Introduce and celebrate the area's heritage whilst at the same time reflecting the role this area plays in shaping the future and our understanding of the world
- Help to support and create a coherent sense of place
- Consider connections from the tunnel to the station, cultural institutions and street level along Exhibition Road and resolve existing stepped access
- Not impede the efficient and regular passage of all visitors to the tunnel
- Aim to be maintenance-free

## Jury consideration

The Jury was chaired by Sir Christopher Frayling, and met at the Royal College of Art on 11 December. Each team had 5 minutes to present their proposal to the Jury, with a further 10 minutes for Jury questions. All the teams were invited to sit in on all presentations. The Jury was also able to view models and display boards in the courtyard gallery, with team members present. The final Jury deliberation took place in private. The Jury chair emphasised that the Jury should look for schemes that really addressed the brief; to improve access, wayfinding and create a connection with the area.

The Jury recognised that the brief was challenging, requiring improvements in access, within a confined space which has significant heritage status (Grade II listed), while respecting the listed structure and accommodating both visitors and commuters.

Three schemes stood out for their outstanding clarity and vision: *Connection*; *The Secret Guide to Albertopolis*; and *The Complete History of the Universe*. All three proposed sensitive treatment of the heritage of the tunnel and ideas that related to the identity of the local area. One was strategic, offering a masterplan; one a beguiling installation connecting to the intellectual role of the South Kensington institutions; and one offering texture and expression. Between them they resolved the beginning, the middle, and the end of the tunnel. After deliberation it became clear that all three schemes needed recognition. The Jury selected these three as joint winners and recommended that all three schemes be taken forward for further development. The Jury also commended two schemes: *Parallel Calm* and *Golden Runway*.

### WINNER

*The Complete History of the Universe*  
p.12 — p. 15

The team's design was inspired by the role of South Kensington in developing and sharing knowledge, and sought to capture the tension between building a complete understanding of everything with the impossibility of actually doing so in the modern age. The scheme mischievously defines, mis-defines and re-defines our perceptions of knowledge, space and time. The tunnel is furnished with a continuous sculptural element, a 'handrail', in the form of a timeline that represents human knowledge (or the absence and misunderstandings of it) and thins or thickens according to our understanding of the universe around us.

The jury particularly enjoyed this proposal's concept, giving physical form to South Kensington's role to encourage, develop and pass on learning in a beguiling and engaging way. The jury felt this was a clever thinking through of all the relevant issues and recognised and welcomed the way in which sculpture, narrative and local interest blended. It was also noted the desire to make the proposal a palimpsest to be added and amended as knowledge was gained and clarified. Selection of material was also well-received, approving of the walnut and enjoying the prototypical models. Jury members appreciated the subtle uplighting, highlighting the original tiles and heritage features of the tunnel.

### WINNER

*The Secret Guide to Albertopolis*  
p.16 — p.19

This scheme brings new life to the tunnel through a combination of retiling and imaginative reprogramming. The tunnel floor and walls are decorated with new tile patterns that draw inspiration from the museums and cultural institutions above ground and the rich design tradition and use of tiles on the Underground. The second phase of the scheme links the tunnel with existing

and proposed underground spaces extending further afield within the cultural and educational campus. Based on students' analysis of the use of the tunnel at different times of the day, a range of temporary uses including a pop-up lecture theatre and event spaces are built into the tunnel, and which are concealed within the tunnel's structure when not in use.

The jury appreciated the way this scheme connected with the historic and future relevance of tiled patterns as a medium that all the institutions share. The scheme has durability and beauty. The jury enjoyed the way in which a site specific narrative had been cleverly and clearly brought to life in a clear, fun and engaging presentation. The scheme was playful and charming but very serious in its analysis of the use of the tunnel and proposals for making better use of it, although the jury noted that late-night use would be unlikely to win support locally.

### WINNER

*Connection*  
p.20 — p.23

*Connection* seeks to reconnect the tunnel to South Kensington via a series of dramatic and major physical interventions. The scheme proposed a clever replanning of the station area; connecting the unused platform directly to tunnel and the institutions beyond. The team used the theme of strategic excavation to provide access and circulatory connectivity. By making the tunnel more porous and establishing a clearer physical link with the station, the scheme creates new public spaces that emphasise and celebrate the wealth of amenities and institutions the tunnel services. The proposal addresses physical access and wayfinding along the tunnel's length, and gives South Kensington an opportunity to showcase its rich offer to visitors from their first step out of the station.

The jury was impressed by the proposals that found clever and direct new ways of connecting the tunnel to the South Kensington Station, Natural History Museum, V&A and

Science Museum, and presented a “masterplan” for the whole tunnel space. It also applauded the reference to and extension of the Dixon Jones grid as a means of wayfinding and to encourage movement, along with elegant lighting proposals that enhance the architecture. The Natural History Museum’s grounds are currently being designed by Niall McLaughlin Architects, so this element of the scheme would not be implemented.

**COMMENDED**  
***Parallel Calm***  
**p. 24 — p. 27**

*Parallel Calm* was a reductive proposal of restoration plus an acoustically absorbing rubber floor, creating a sanctuary below the noise of the street above. It offered a subtle and understated series of measures that pick out the tunnel’s existing heritage features and create an environment of calm and serenity. The Jury applauded the simplicity of the proposal that would present a calmness that was successfully displayed in the model. It was considered a bold approach. The choice of a dark rubber floor was debated though it was generally felt this would work well with the lighter walls of the tunnel that would be cleaned and enhanced by uplighting to create a welcoming experience. There was some concern about the durability and maintenance of the floor material (particularly in relation to chewing gum!).

**COMMENDED**  
***The Golden Runway***  
**p. 28 — p. 31**

The jury applauded this scheme for being one of the few teams to tackle the issue of improving circulation within the tunnel and the challenge of propelling visitors to the venues by adding travelators. The travelators sparked some discussion about if built who would then be responsible for maintenance. The signage and wayfinding ‘ribbon’ proposal was also thought to be successful

and sophisticated in the way it integrated lighting. Again this would require updating and ownership, as would all interventions. The jury members admired the ambition to create a new ramped exit point to Exhibition Road, although the proposed siting at Museum Lane would present practical problems with vehicle access into the museum grounds.

***The Light Walk***  
**p. 32 — p. 35**

The jury liked the way this proposal was inspired by the recent Hayward Gallery Light Show exhibition and the way in which the levels of light would respond to the number of visitors and users of the tunnel. Whilst aluminium appears to be the right material this also fuelled discussion around long-term maintenance and how the installation would age. The use of motifs linked to each of the organisations was welcomed although further interpretation might be required for visitors to appreciate this. There was some discussion about the potential acoustic impact of the concrete floor and aluminium skin.

***Red Rooms***  
**p. 36 — p. 39**

The jury felt this may duplicate existing community facilities where there were opportunities for local groups to meet. Viewed as a potential new network established to counter the museums, questions were raised as to whether or not the locals would engage with this potentially new and exciting social platform. On a practical note – whilst the reference to the Greenwich Tunnel was useful it is important to consider the footfall in the Greenwich Tunnel is substantially less than the South Kensington Pedestrian Tunnel and that the Redroom installations may impede access. There was scope to do more to address the challenges of wayfinding and welcome.

***The Climate Change Gallery***  
**p. 40 — p. 43**

The jury enjoyed the way in which this proposal challenged the notion of tunnel as a circulation space and recognised that this has arguably changed following the huge success of the recent above grade works to Exhibition Road by Dixon Jones. Some members queried as to whether or not the tunnel was now redundant, awaiting a new use. Discussions focused on the possible loss of a useful access route for school parties into the museums and if this justified conversion of the tunnel into a destination. Practical issues around water, drainage and accessibility were also raised.

***The Cultural Artery***  
**p. 44 — p. 47**

The jury was impressed by the concept of an artery, and the models that clearly demonstrated what many thought was a vibrant and experiential proposal. Some questioned the choice images selected but that if shortlisted and taken further, say working with an artist, better quality images could and would be adopted. Others loved the elegance of the captured shadows as a way of referencing the world above ground. Again long-term maintenance was raised as a potential issue, this time how to keep the polycarbonate panels remaining free of dust and detritus. It was also felt that a complete masking of the heritage features of the tunnel would create a challenge for planning and local support.

***Liberating Public Space***  
**p. 48 — p. 51**

Liberating landscape spaces with seating to encourage public debating was well received. Whilst the new public spaces were welcomed they were by design a little too complex and stepped, with potential safety concerns. The jury recognised that this was one of the few groups had also considered ramped access and had simultaneously improved

daylighting and circulation. Some of the jury also enjoyed the green screen modelled in the displays but felt there was scope for better integration between the two aspects of the scheme.

***...Interlude***  
**p. 52 — p. 55**

The collaboration with students from the Royal College of Music was warmly received as well as being one of the few teams to consider sound in the space. The jury appreciated the effort of actually testing and make a 1:1 prototype of the proposed acoustic tile. Some doubts were raised about the appropriate nature of the material chosen – silicon – in having the necessary acoustic qualities required to achieve the desired result. While some felt the proposal would not date and would look and function for at least 10 years or more, others felt it would work well as a temporary artistic intervention. The Jury felt there was scope for this to interact with the architectural features of the tunnel to a greater extent than the scheme proposed.

***Beyond the Institution***  
**p. 56 — p. 59**

The jury felt this proposal had a lot of potential with clever lanterns/tree pits. Some concern raised by the thought of tree pits becoming opportunities to collect litter as well as practical and relevant cultural referencing the trees would offer the Exhibition Road. The proposal to improve daylight / ambience below and streetscape above with public seating and trees was appreciated.

This statement approved by  
the Jury Chair, January 2015

**WINNER**  
**The Complete History of the Universe**

'To see a world in a grain of sand and a heaven  
in a wild flower, Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,  
And eternity for an hour.' WILLIAM BLAKE

Holding the universe in the palm of your hand was once possible. Not so long ago, knowledge was general enough that it was conceivable for one person to possess a complete understanding of everything. Yet we live in an age where the advance of specialisation has rendered the art of general understanding useless.

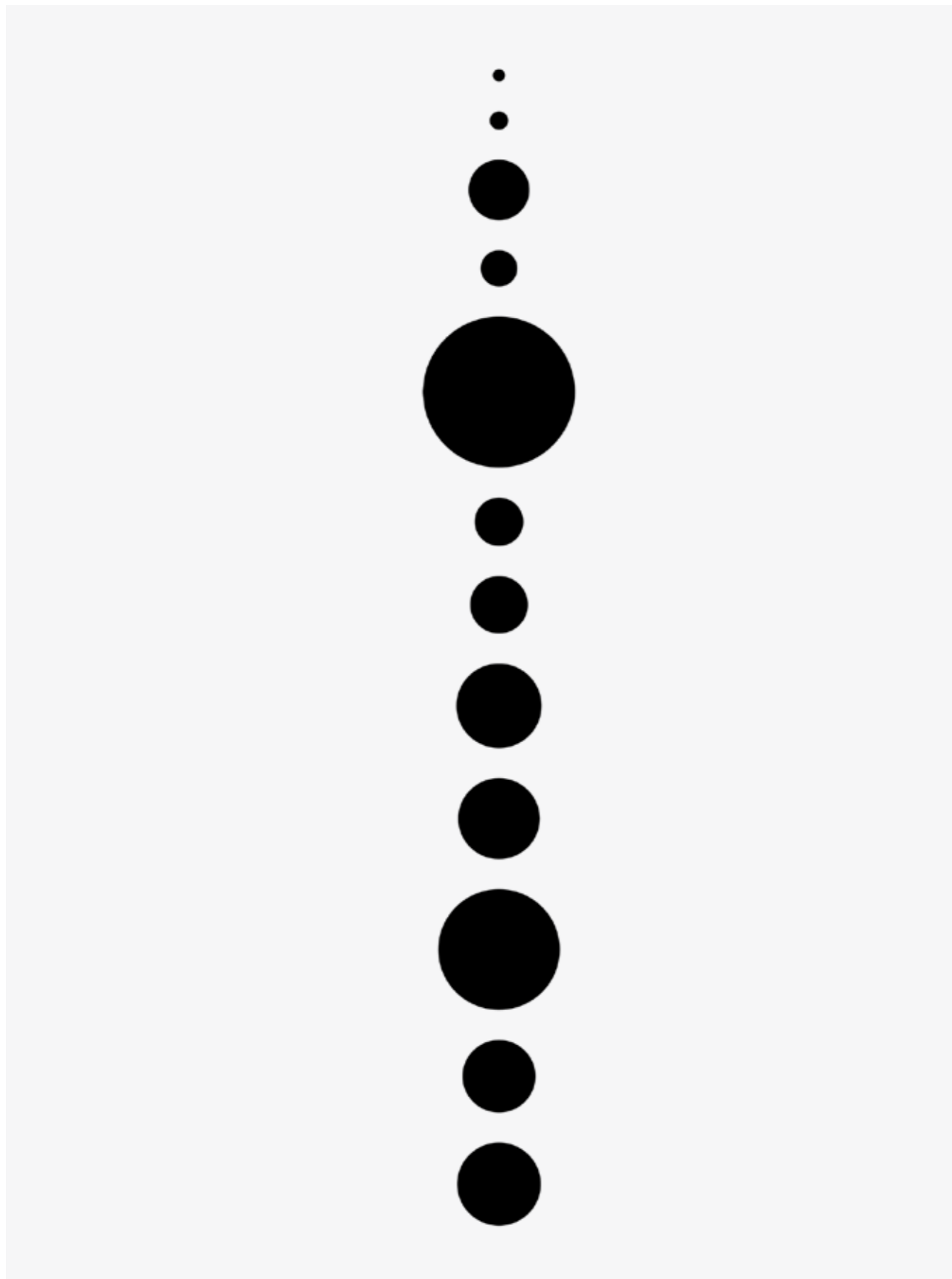
In contrast, the breadth and depth of the artefacts contained within the museums of South Kensington encourages long-term, universal thought. Visitors leave not with a specific, specialised understanding, but with knowledge that is extensive and holistic. The pedestrian tunnel (linking the major institutions in the Albertopolis) is uniquely placed to establish this common ground upon which the different institutions stand, to make clear the very thing that makes South Kensington so special: to be able to hold the universe in the palm of your hand.

As such, our proposal seeks to furnish the South Kensington pedestrian tunnel with a timeline that – in the form of a handrail – embodies the complete history of man's understanding of the universe. However, in its ambition for plenitude and truth, this handrail will, like Jorge Borges' 'Library of Babel', paradoxically contain ideas that are now considered false, superseded or misconceived...

Alexander Ball, Andrew Gibbs,  
Tom Hart, Matteo Mastrandrea  
& Thomas Selby



The major intervention proposed is a handrail whose girth is defined along its length by the accepted age of the universe at any given point in history.



These estimates have varied through the years with such regularity that an undulating, peristaltic form is created.



At certain points along the tunnel's length, the handrail widens to such an extent that it can be walked through and amongst. It also rises above ground to create points of interest and pieces of street furniture along Exhibition Road.

## WINNER

### The Secret Guide to Albertopolis

Exhibition Road provides an axial path directly linking South Kensington Station to Hyde Park. The original role of the South Kensington tunnel is becoming increasingly superfluous.

Beneath South Kensington's institutions lies a network of tunnels. We propose to reappropriate this latent underground network, using the residual framework to reinvigorate Albertopolis, transforming the existing buildings into a newly cultural campus.

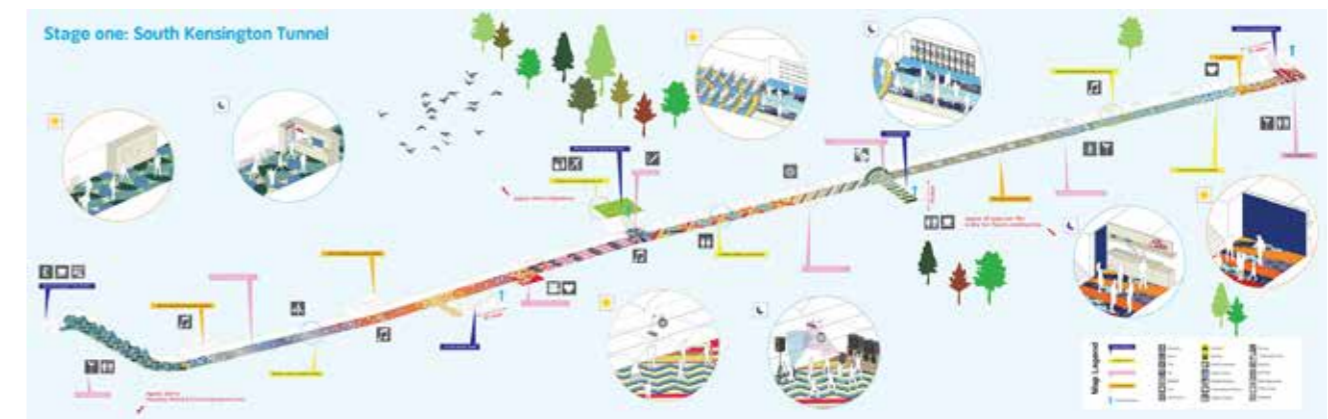
The role of the tunnel is to expand this network to the public. Our proposal promotes invitation for use through the provision of a newly developed guide to 'Albertopolis'.

The campus provides essential subterranean circulation in an overcrowded area, where space-restricted institutions can no longer build outwards.

By improving + inviting new connections between institutions, an educational 'super-village' is created, where increased communication exchange will encourage new opportunities + collaborations between previously isolated institutions.

There is increasing demand for additional facilities outside of typical opening hours, helping make London a 24-hour city. The proposal builds on existing 'Late Opening' initiatives, by increasing after-hours revenue in the area. New facilities + events will generate increased public demand, improving economic opportunities for local businesses.

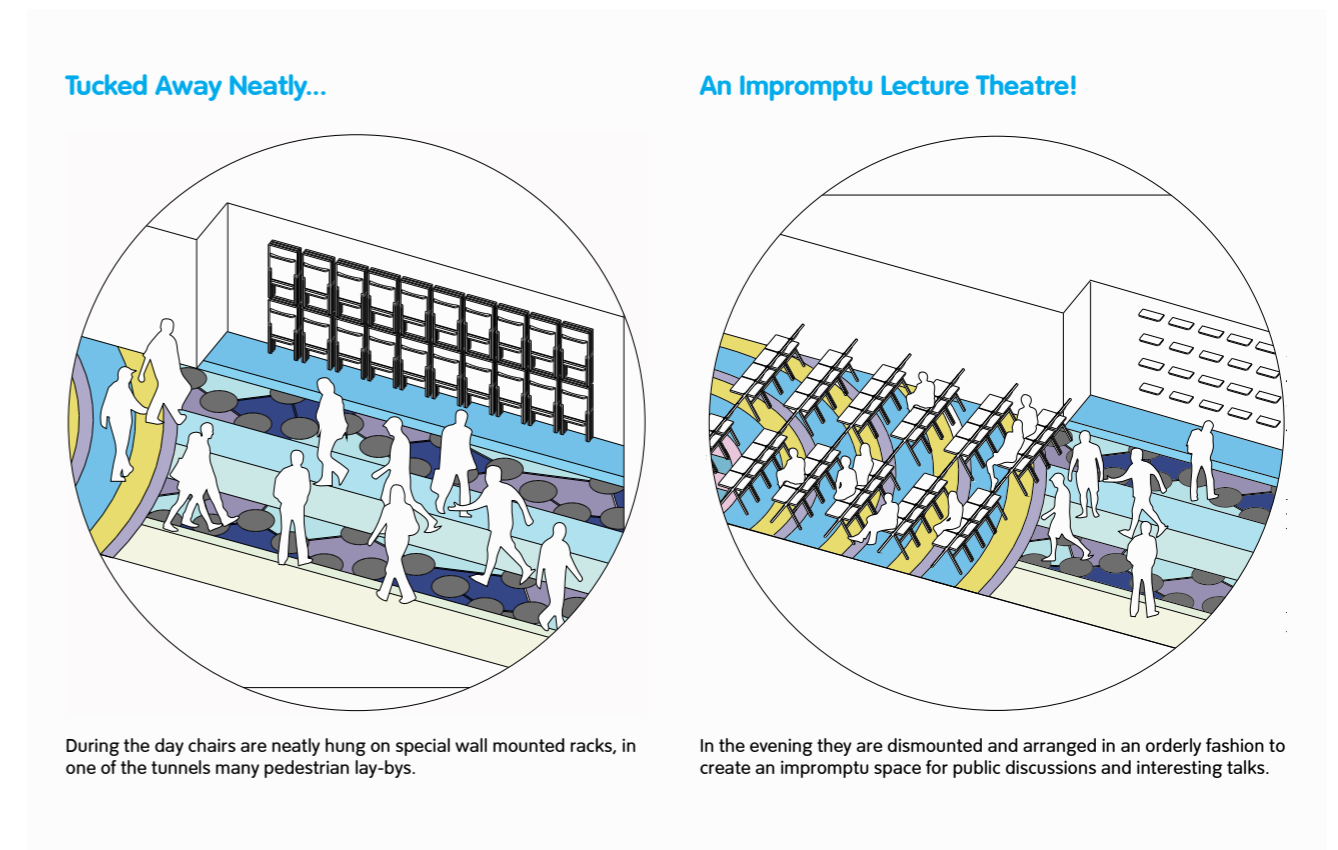
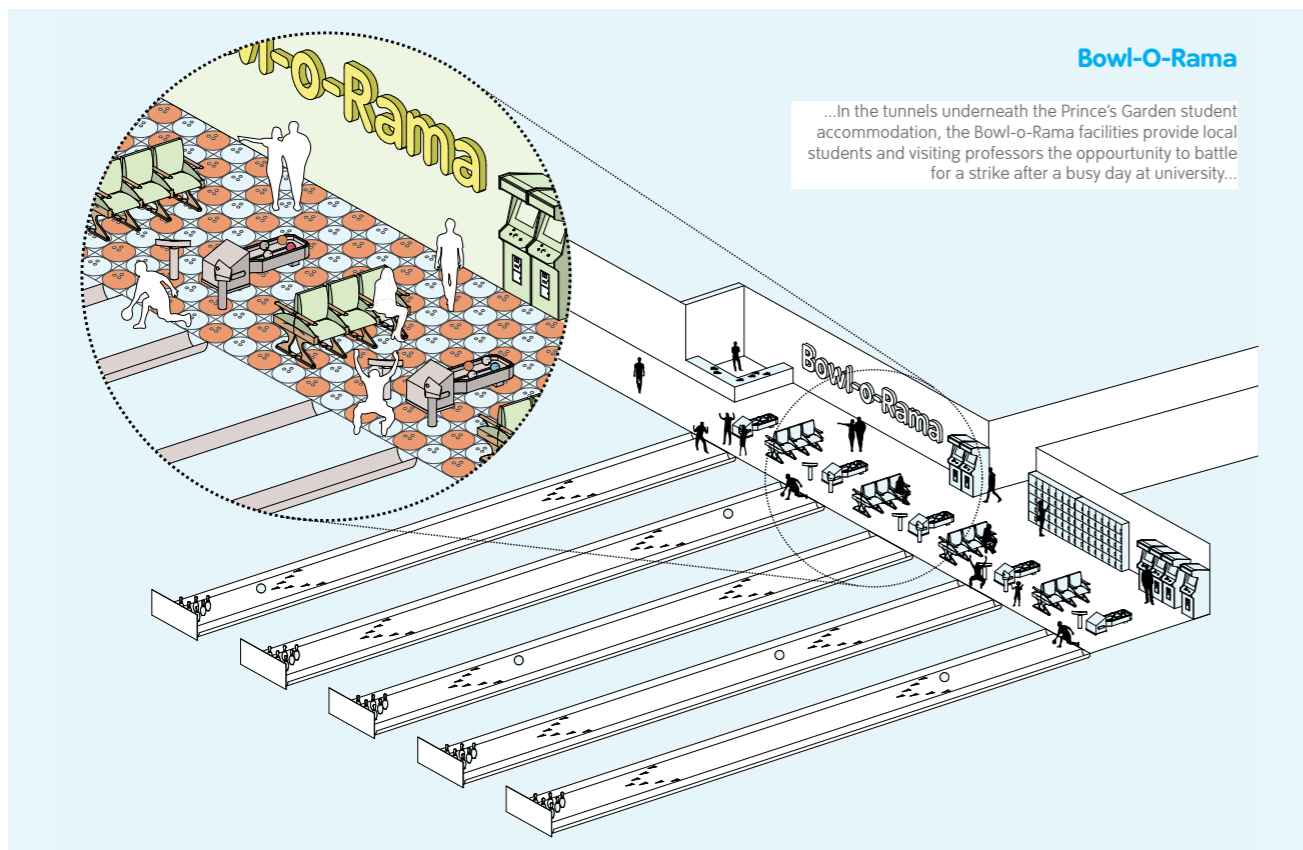
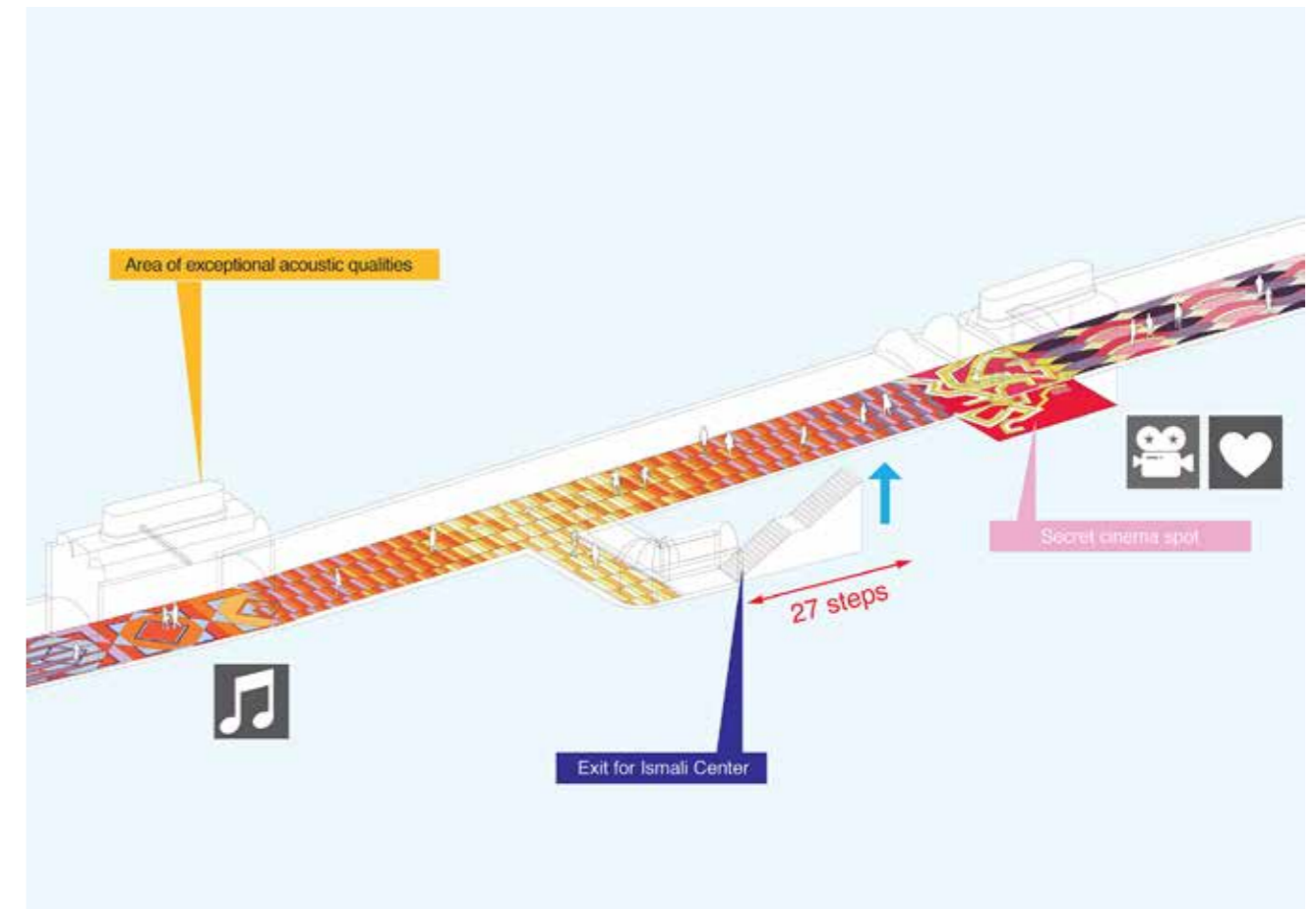
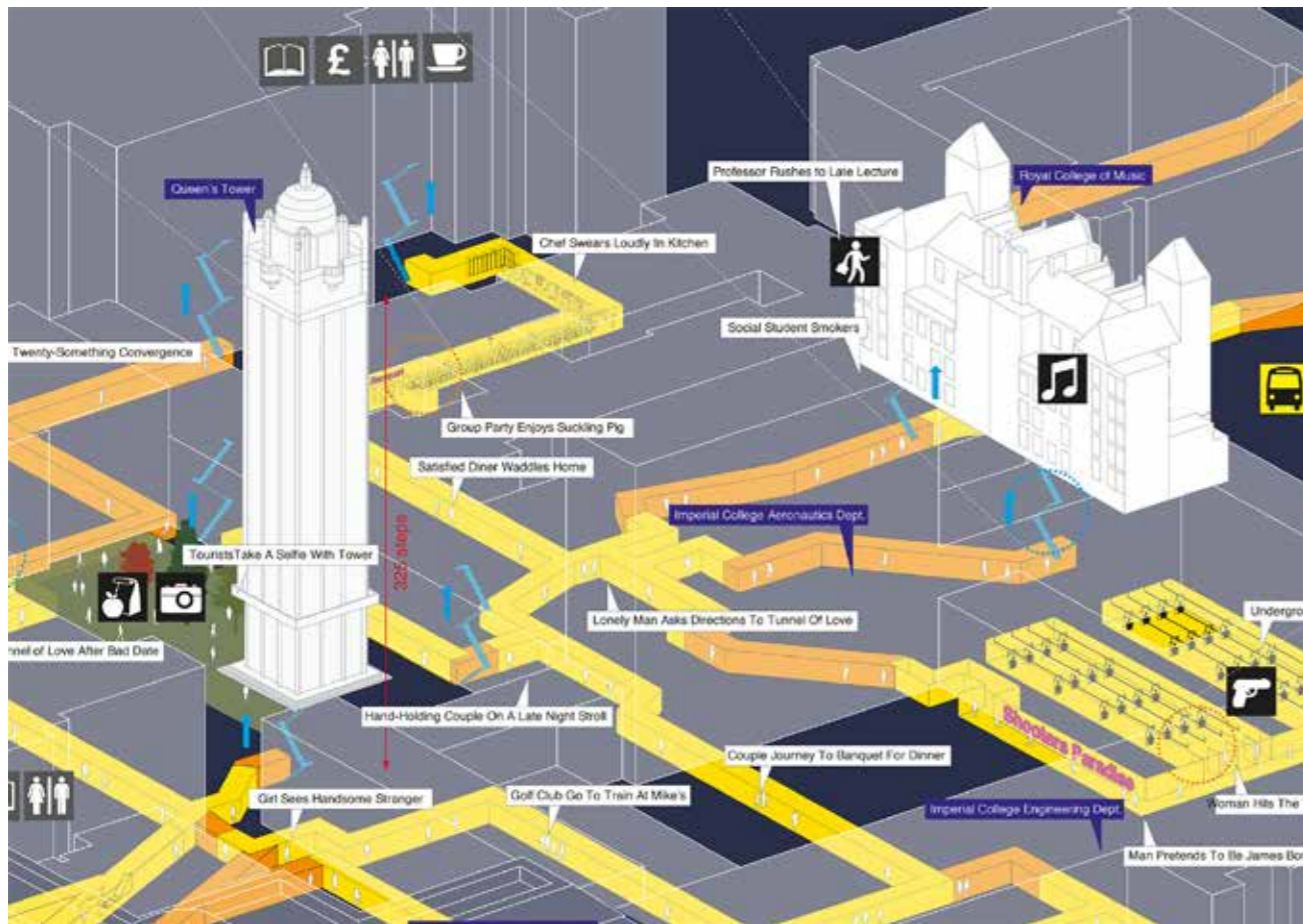
Alex Barretta, Sam Brown,  
Cecily Chua, Roma Gadomska-Miles,  
Ashleigh James, Jess Lyons  
& Cat Mollett



TOP FIG. Tunnel Masterplan Map

BOTTOM FIG. Phase 1 — South Kensington Tunnel Proposal





TOP FIG. Masterplan Zoom

BOTTOM FIG. Bowl-O-Rama — Tunnel activity No. 5

TOP FIG. South Kensington Tunnel Zoom — Proposed tiling

BOTTOM A tucked away Lecture Theatre

## WINNER Connection

“There is light at the end of South Kensington pedestrian tunnel with the news that London’s biggest underground eyesore may at last be in for a facelift”

JOHN WINDSOR, *The Guardian*, 1973

Despite the many attempts, some permanent and others temporary, the issue regarding the tunnel’s disconnection to its surroundings remains. Research revealed that the problems begin before entering the tunnel due to its poorly designed thresholds that only serve to restrict and obscure movement. The resulting user-experience is disorientating and lacks purpose. As a result the answer became far more ambitious than a straightforward facelift.

Our response has been to reconnect the tunnel to South Kensington via a series of dramatic and major physical interventions. We have made the tunnel porous and by pushing up, down and across, our scheme will create new public spaces that emphasise and celebrate the wealth of amenities and institutions the tunnel serves. This proposal will re-establish order and give South Kensington the opportunity to tell its own narrative to the visitor from their first step out of the station.

Emma Alisa Aaltonen,  
Zara Ashby, Lucy Benson,  
Tiphaine Dugast, Mi Ree Kwon,  
Leandro Martinez-Pesce  
& Giulia Silovy



The station previously a series of bottlenecks and congestion, has been re-organised to allow those visiting Exhibition Road a direct route via the restored platform drawing them through the arches to a new underground public square. This begins the narrative for their journey through one of the world’s leading groups of educational institutions.



The courtyard is a new space belonging to Exhibition Road and serving all the institutions along it. The courtyard allows people to be greeted by a grand entrance to the road, whilst also allowing chance encounters and a new destination of activity for the institutions surrounding.



Natural light and physical connections are established through the use of lanterns, cutting through the ground to reveal the world above and below. The light and visual connection throughout the day helps to orientate the users and the light of the tunnel at night allows the tunnel to have a glowing street presence on Exhibition Road.

## COMMENDED Parallel Calm

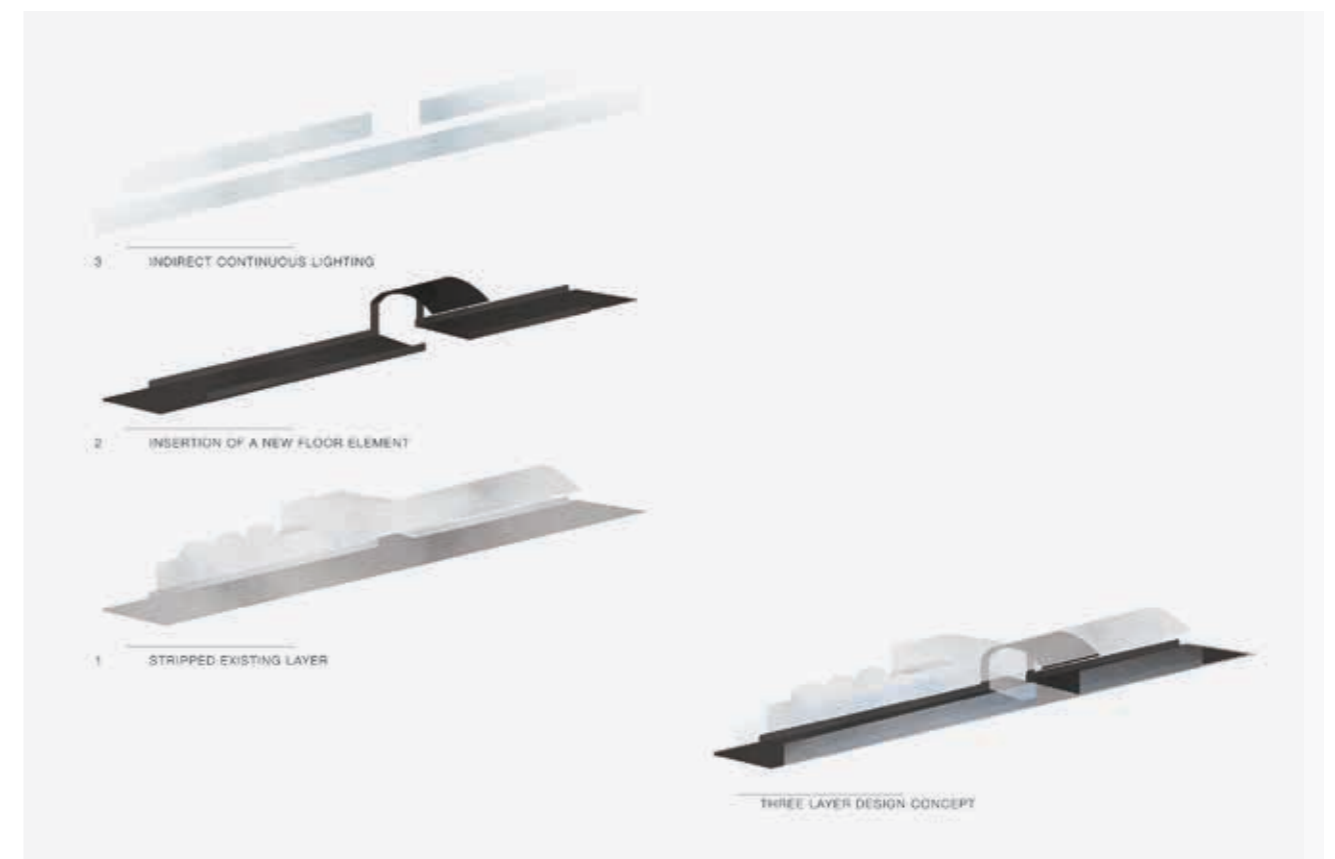
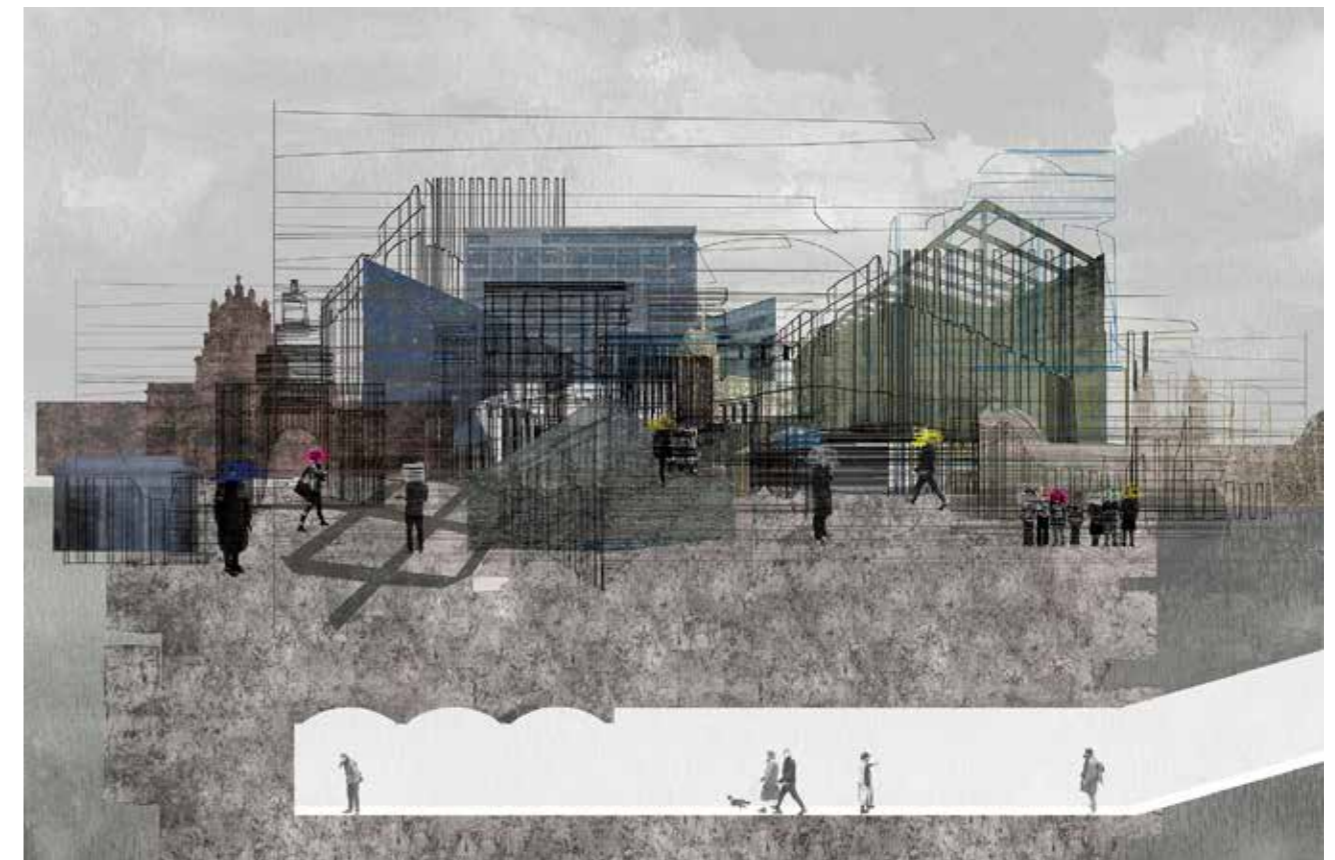
Set amongst vivid cultural surroundings, the Exhibition Road Tunnel, has the potential to be a space of its own right: a space of calm and reflection offering liberation from the omnipresent flood of information above.

The foundation of the proposal is the stripping back of visual noise within the tunnel to achieve a sense of serenity. We approach the tunnel with an eye that appreciates the details – the beautiful moments – that already exist.

We find the given building intriguing – our sole intervention is the insertion of a new floor structure that compliments the existing. This unifying element provides a continuous flow throughout the tunnel and, through its playful interaction with the exits and entrances, creates an intuitive way finding system.

Variances in tactility, materiality and the quality of light will transform the space into an experience that is subtle and understated.

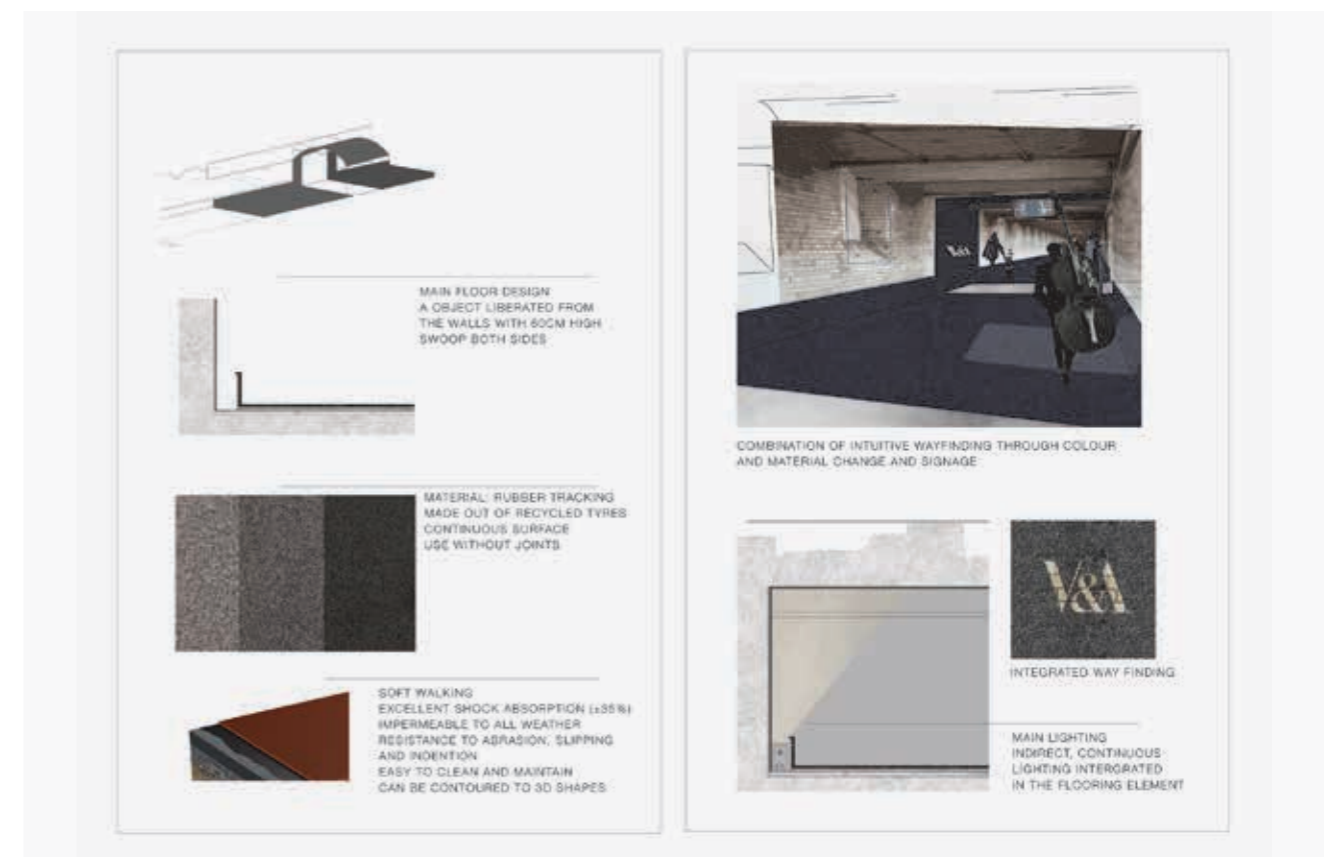
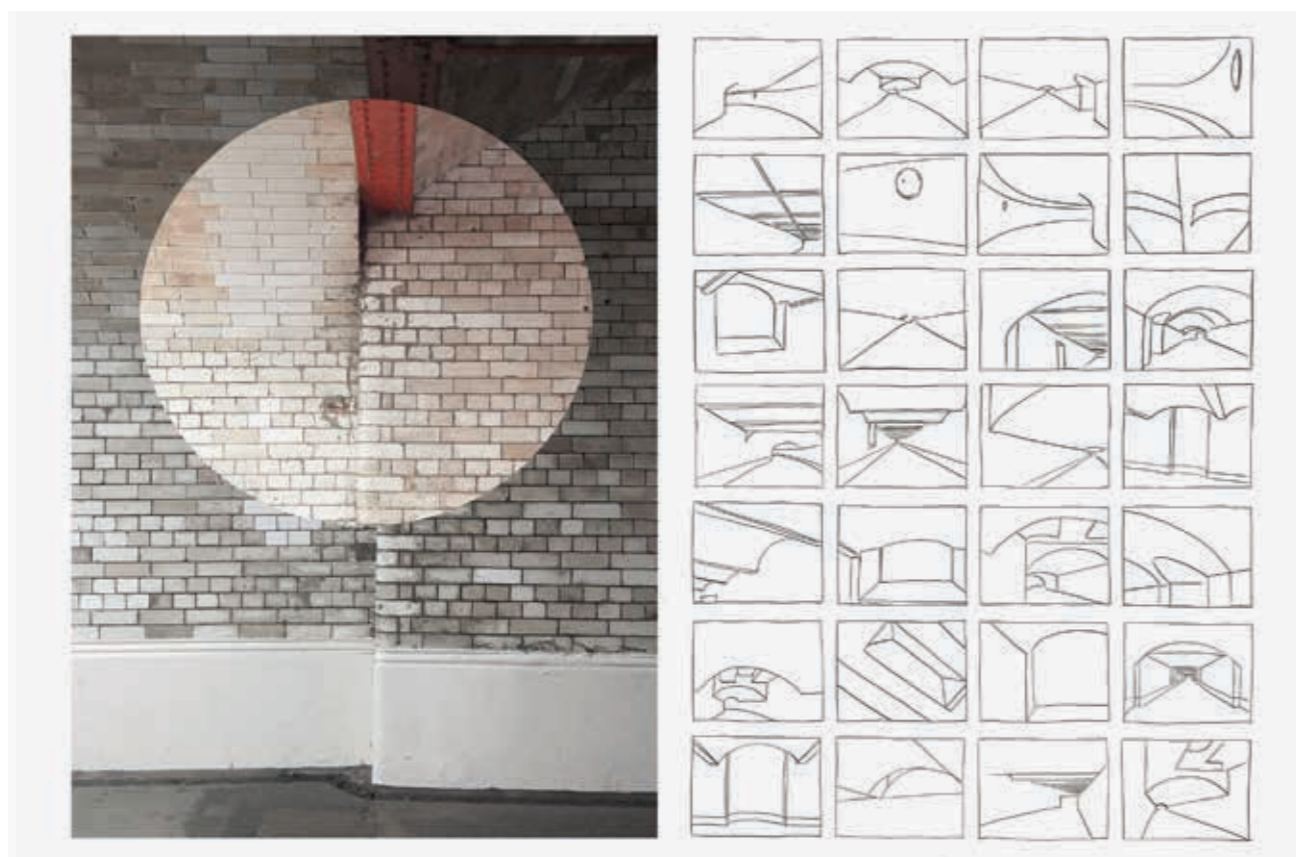
Our purposeful design is intended to cleanse the palate of the mind – we could all enjoy a break.



TOP FIG. Visual mapping of the South Kensington Noise

BOTTOM FIG. Diagram of the 3 design stages

Nini Zhou, Carly Mikkelsen,  
Christina Huber & Greta Hirbu



TOP FIG. Overall colour scheme of the new floor element inserted

BOTTOM FIG. Analysis of the intriguing existing shapes and structures of the tunnel

TOP FIG. Visual of the floor framing the exit

BOTTOM FIG. Explanation of the floors structure, indirect lighting and signage

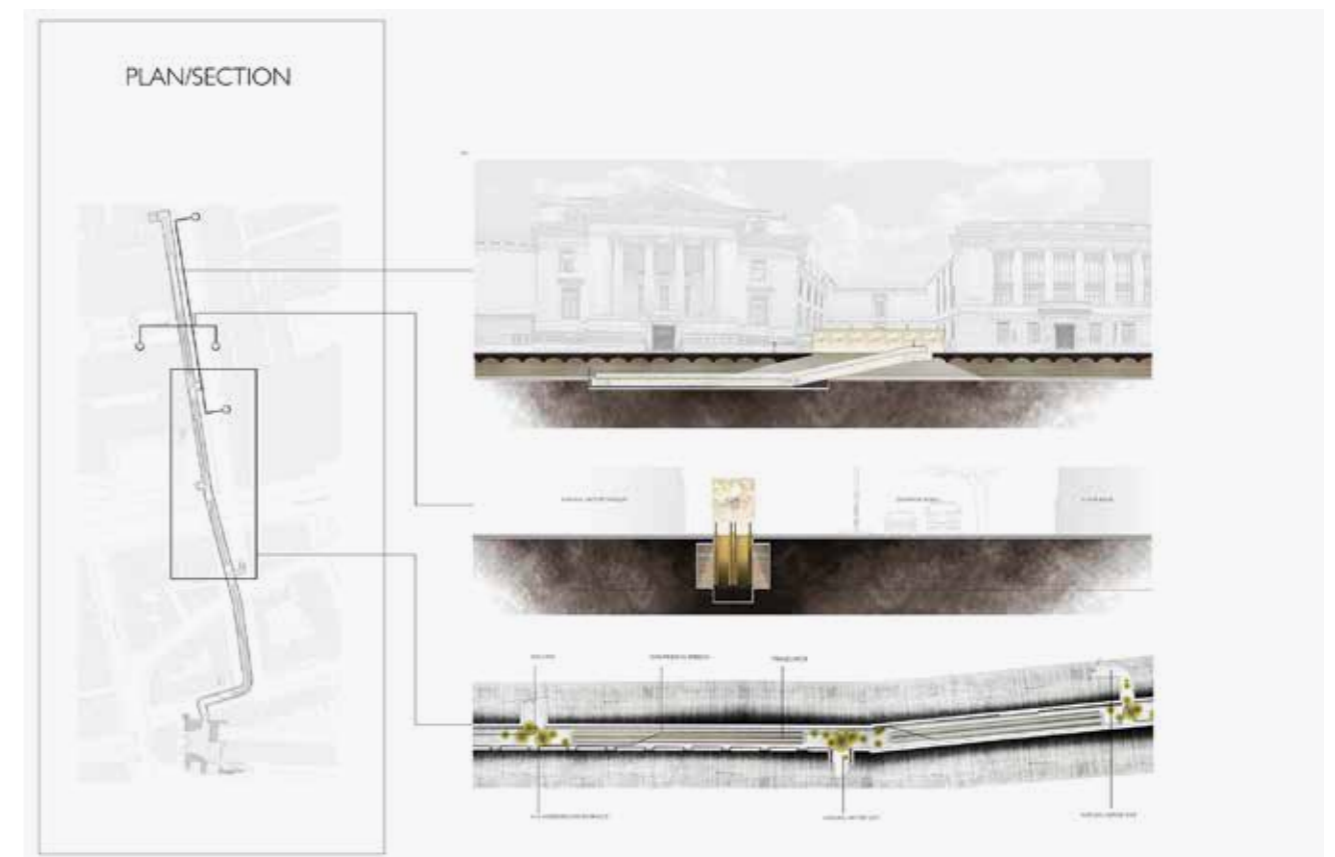
## COMMENDED The Golden Runway

We are proposing a new experience within the tunnel; an appealing space which offers the pedestrian reason to travel below ground. The experience will be elegantly alluring; enhanced by the careful treatment of light, surface materials, way finding, and movement.

With the addition of a series of travelator's, the tunnel will become a passageway which transports the pedestrian effortlessly, offering opportunity to enhance the experience of this new journey. An entrance from ground level to the tunnel at Museum lane will be introduced; the location complimenting access to surrounding museums. The entrance will act as a dramatic gold lantern sitting on the street, transporting the pedestrian down to the tunnel by way of travelator.

Drawing inspiration from surrounding museums, monuments and buildings, gold hues and textures will be used throughout the tunnel. At all entrances, gold tiles will be embedded into a newly poured concrete floor. The tiles will shimmer and reflect the natural light from above ground, creating a series of bright luminous moments throughout the tunnel.

With the introduction of these interventions, the tunnel will become a luminous getaway from the busy road above. An elongated journey that the pedestrian will desire to experience.



Caroline Barske, Hailey Darling,  
Gabriella Geagea, Junseok Moon  
& Paulina Niebrzydowska

TOP FIG. Mosaic tiles (inspiration)

BOTTOM FIG. Layout of the South Kensington Tunnel with proposal



TOP FIG. Proposal for the entry and exit to the tunnel  
 BOTTOM FIG. Proposal for the inside of the tunnel

Proposal for the signage in the tunnel as well as lighting

## The Light Walk

“Light has the power to affect our state of mind as well as alter how we perceive the world...”

*Light Show, Hayward Gallery, 2013*

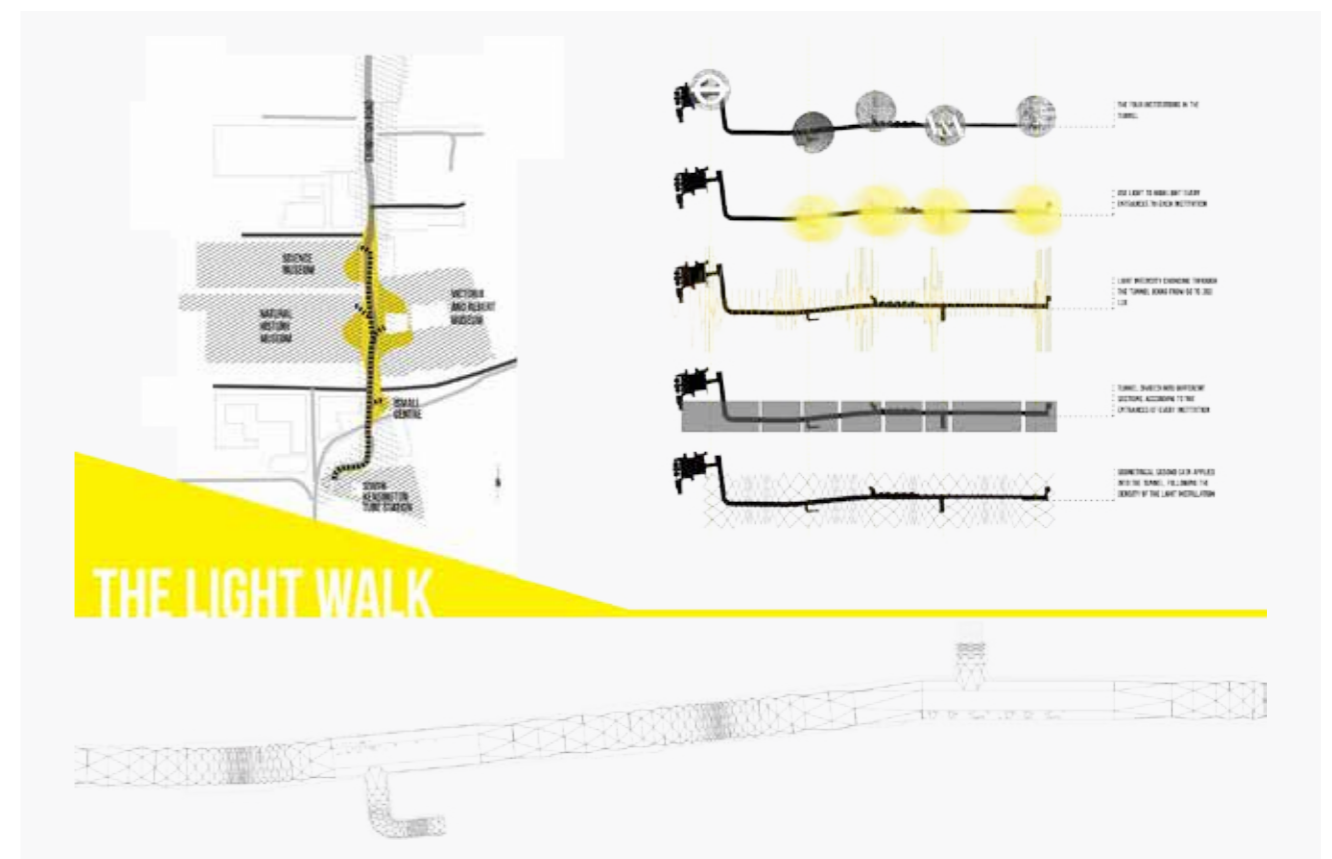
A brilliant, light tunnel that will become a ‘must-see’ tourist attraction in it’s own right – *The Light Walk* builds on the rich culture of South Kensington by enhancing and evolving the present route of Exhibition Road.

Lighting acts as a way finding tool. The dynamic light moves the user along the tunnel through subtle light rhythms. *The Light Walk* connects the diverse institutions making the distance of the tunnel feel somewhat shorter. The narrative of the installation expresses the new as distinct from the existing structure.

The lighting experience allows the urban flaneur and commuter to engage with the spectacle inspired by the collections of DNA Banding patterns found in the surrounding institutions.

*The Light Walk* explores the experiential and phenomenal aspects of dispersion of light – hidden prisms reflect through the perforated skin identifying entrances and institutions. A clear, unifying graphic language and font has been developed to attract people to each institution.

Eve Hoffman, Hania Jneid,  
Katalin Kristof, Lucy Sanderson  
& Jessica Wang



Site plan and sequence of diagrams illustrating the light that is utilized at each institution as a medium for wayfinding. A geometric inspired skin imitates the language of light through the action of folding throughout the tunnel by flattening at the entrances and retracting in between.





A light spectacle at each institution is created by simple prisms placed behind perforations in the skin. Light is dispersed and refracted creating an array of crystal light.

Visitors experience a clear and unifying graphic language and font that offer light spectacles where visitors can admire and interact with. Folding is utilized to express the new as distinct from the existing structure that moves visitors along the tunnel.

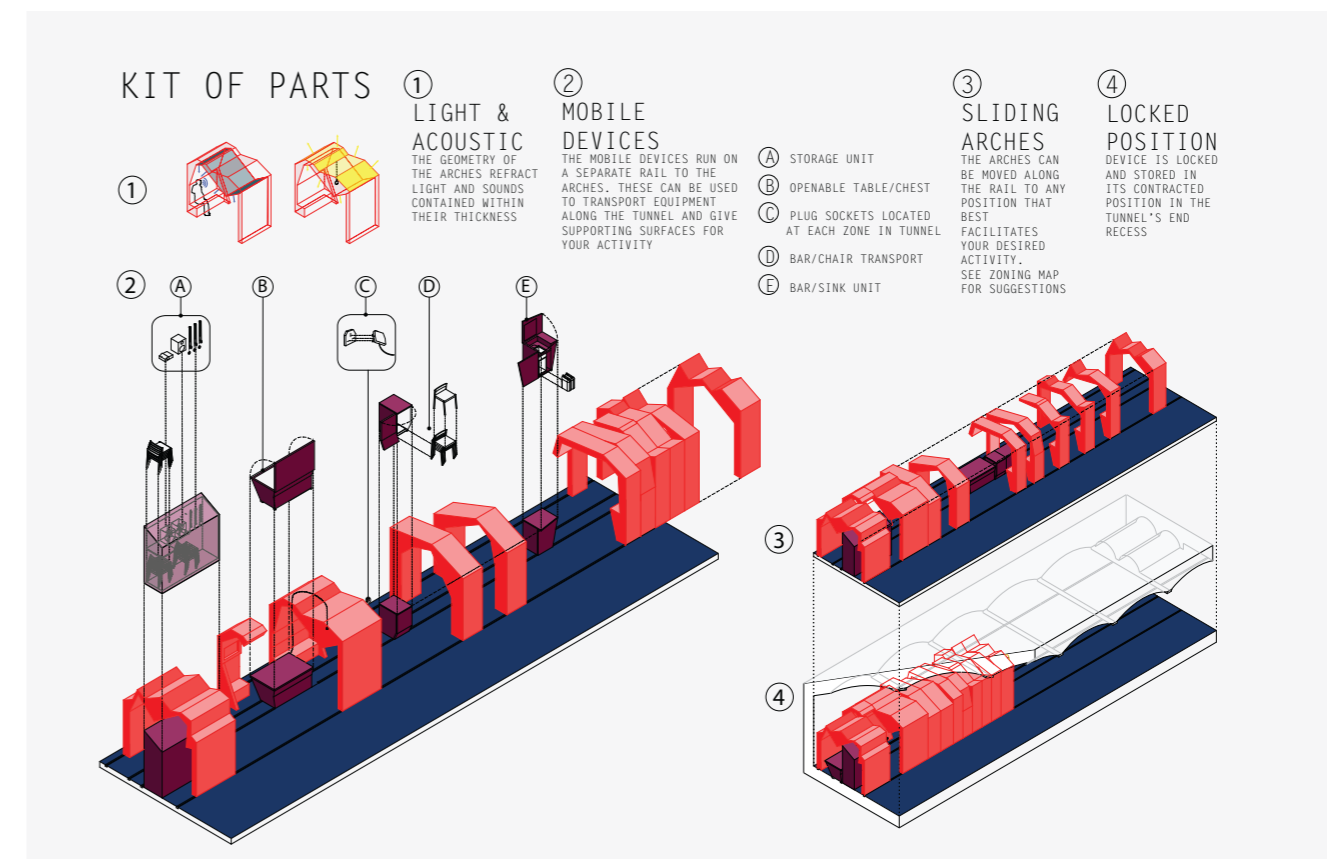
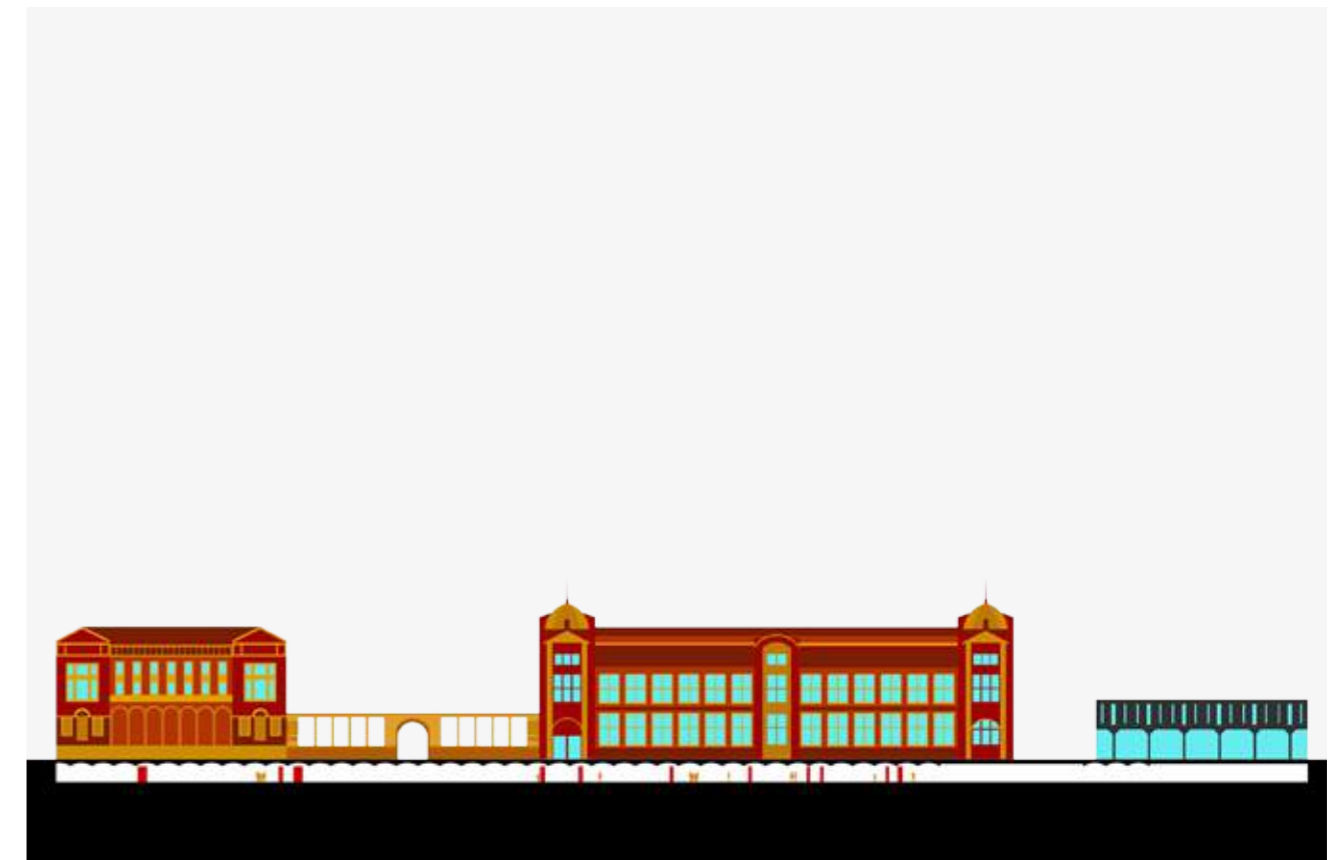
## Red Rooms

The Exhibition Road Pedestrian Tunnel acts as a physical connection between the institutions, yet we argue that it should also be a device for breaking down notional boundaries between them, as well as their relationship to smaller home-grown initiatives and individuals within the wider London context.

Henceforth, we propose a device that lives within the Exhibition Road Pedestrian Tunnel to facilitate hierarchical subversion and cultural democracy within the context of the Exhibition Road institutions. The mobile device acts as a platform to host community based events, providing the space and amenities to enable cultural and political dissemination and discussion.

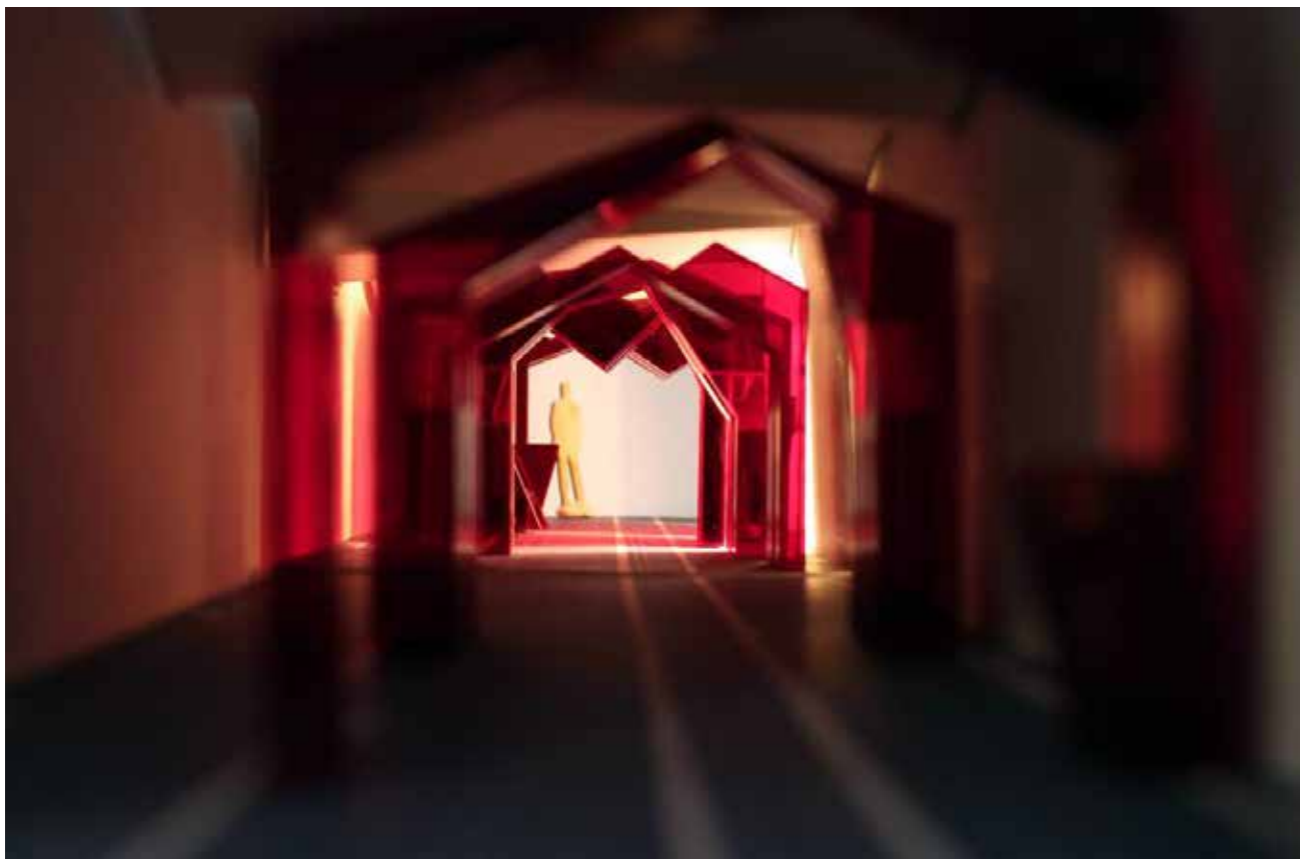
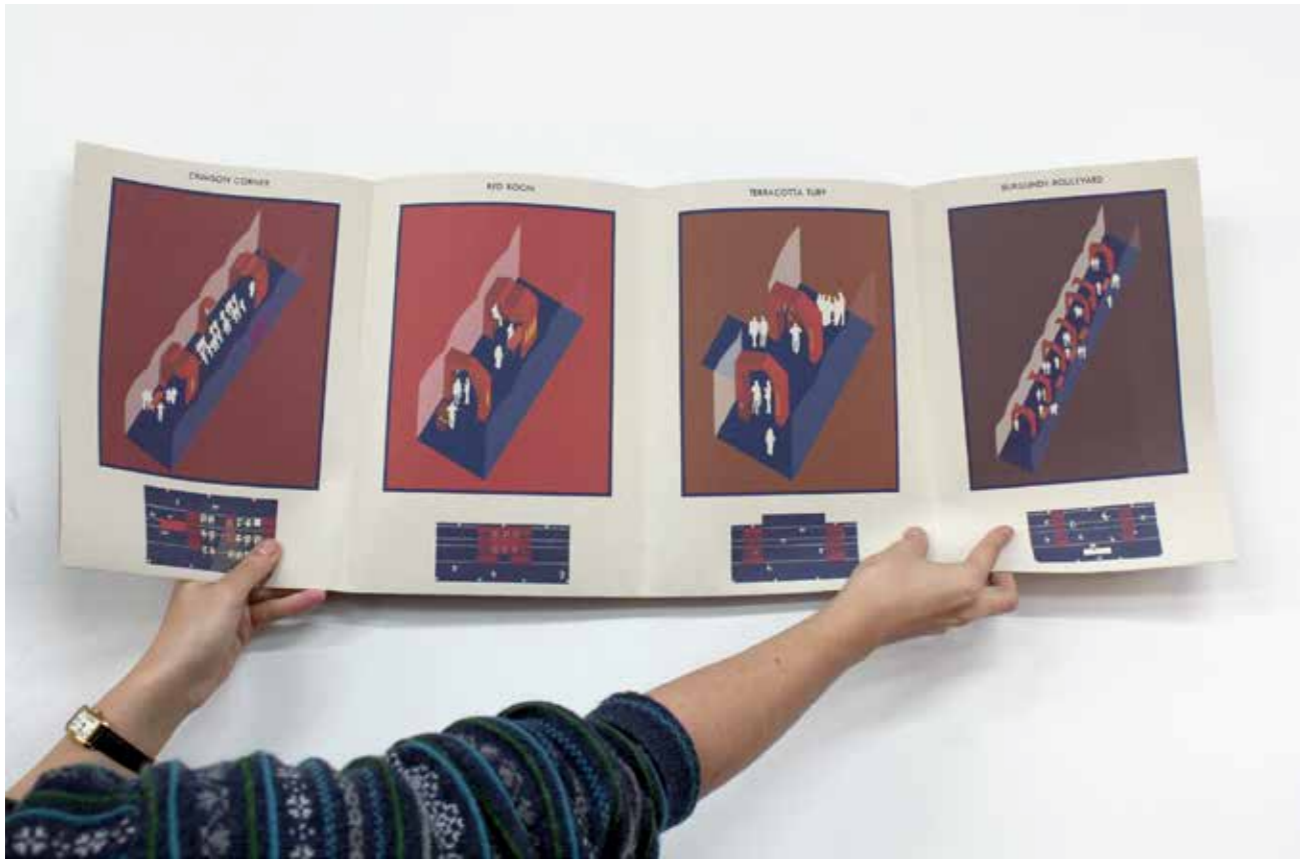
We propose a family of structures that work together in numerous configurations to either frame or shelter various activities. Demarcating the tunnelscape with patterns of tiling suggests a means of navigation and use of space. The mobile device lends itself to an institution in its own right, where its governance develops in dialogue with community members.

Hester Buck,  
Yu-Cheng Chen, Karimah Hassan,  
Luma Ifram, Lisa Mcsweeney  
& Sohanna Srinivasan



TOP FIG. Section through Exhibition Road Tunnel with Red Rooms device below & institutions above.

BOTTOM FIG. The Kit of Parts; how to operate the Red Rooms



TOP FIG. Different uses for different programs

BOTTOM FIG. Model Images of Red Rooms structures

TOP FIG. The How To guide within the public realm

BOTTOM FIG. Presenting to the local groups; the IWW monthly meeting at MayDay Rooms

## The Climate Change Gallery

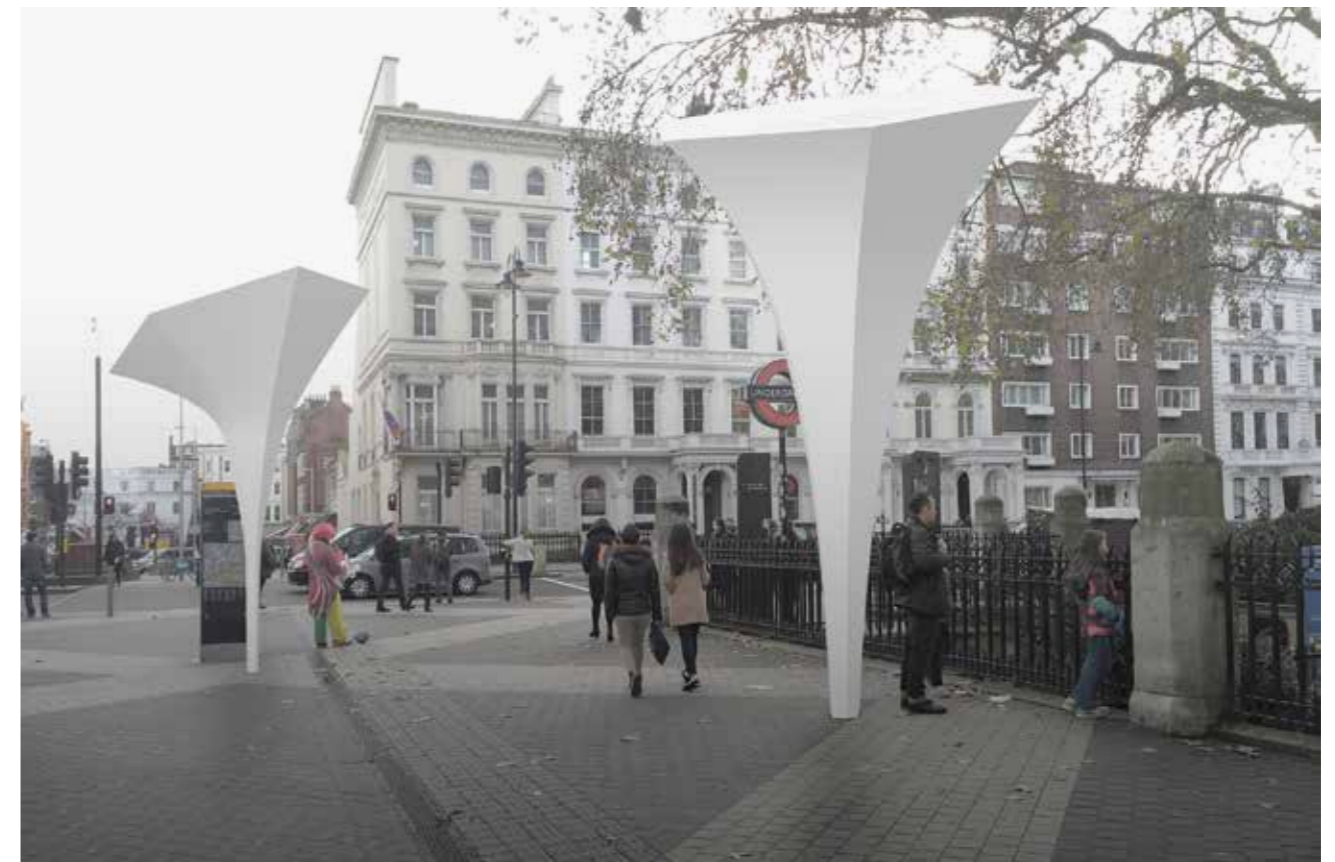
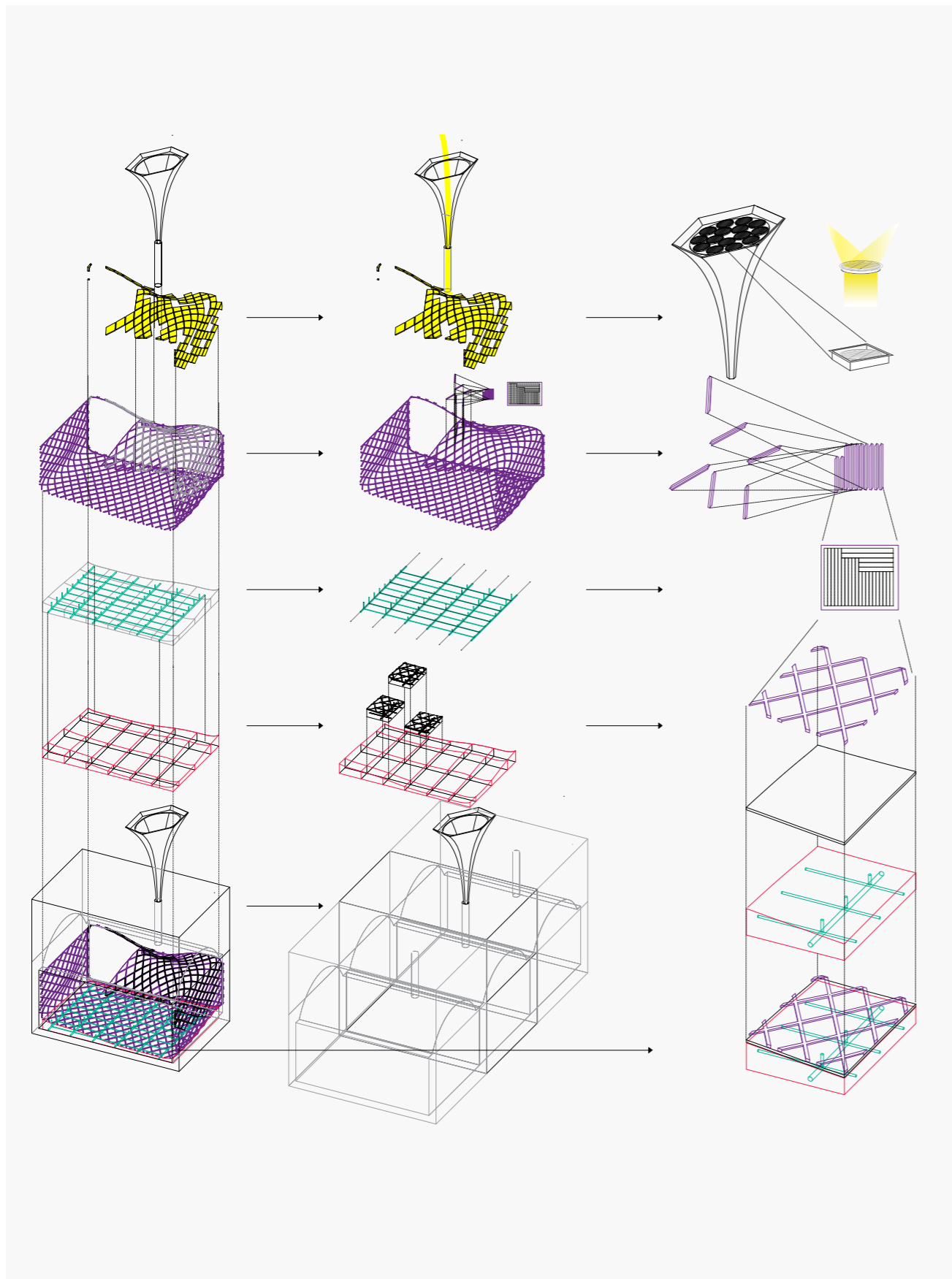
The global crisis of climate change demands previously separate fields to collaborate. The scale of the challenges facing mankind on earth demands an interdisciplinary approach to visualise and understand both the crisis and any potential solution. The crisis is not only scientific, but social and cultural and has seen the arts and the sciences draw nearer.

This proposal, for a new exhibition platform at Albertopolis, offers an underground system for the curation and display of climate change research, art and design. It brings to the fore the constantly evolving relationship of man and nature across the parallel spheres of art and science, in this unique setting of South Kensington and its global institutions.

Isabell Fogden,  
Juan Gurrea Rumeu, Te Alex He,  
Zhihao Huang, Tanya Kramer,  
Johnny Lui, James Smith  
& Adrian Yau



Proposed plan of the tunnel  
as a showcase for Climate Change Art



Diagrams explaining the construction and technical operation of the Ecological Incubator

TOP FIG. Sun-redirecting paraphernalia give the tunnel a new presence on the street

BOTTOM FIG. The tunnel becomes an ever-changing ecology of exhibitions and plant-life

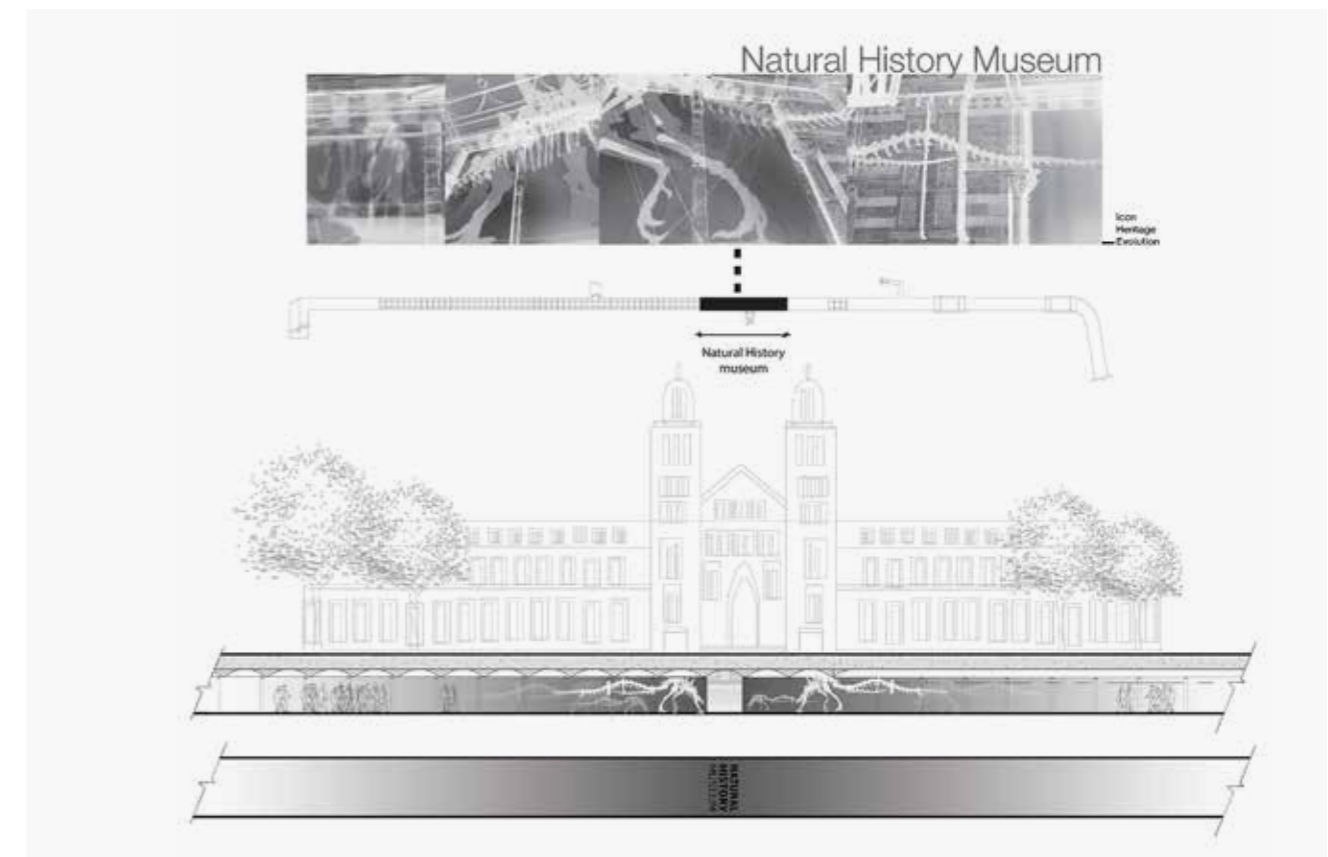
## The Cultural Artery

*The Cultural Artery*, is a streamline tunnel, reflecting an in depth investigation of constricted spaces, such as a blood vessel in the human body. Exhibition Road contains one of the most concentrated collections of art, science and technology in a single place, there-fore the *Cultural Artery* seeks not to compete with the rich culture above but to capture and poetically reinterpret the emotional atmospheres of these iconic British establishments.

Applying the practice of an X-ray machine, which provides a rare look inside a complex system, this proposal emits subtle rhythms of light to guide users to their destinations. A semi translucent skin looks to the future and celebrates the past as light and shadow are used to create images that mimic existing elements situated above.

As the user's journey begins, projections progress from a simple gradient pattern towards more complex compositions. This instinctively guides users to intended destinations in a subtle yet effective manner. The projected images also provide a taste of the adjacent exhibitions, piquing curiosity and stimulating the imagination. The "white canvas" that evolves from the fading images will inspire future generations and simultaneously offer a space for performance and art all the while becoming London's next icon.

Cassie Buckhart,  
Anne Sophie Geay  
& Ruben Van Den Bossche



Natural History Museum —  
a trip through Human History



## Liberating Public Space

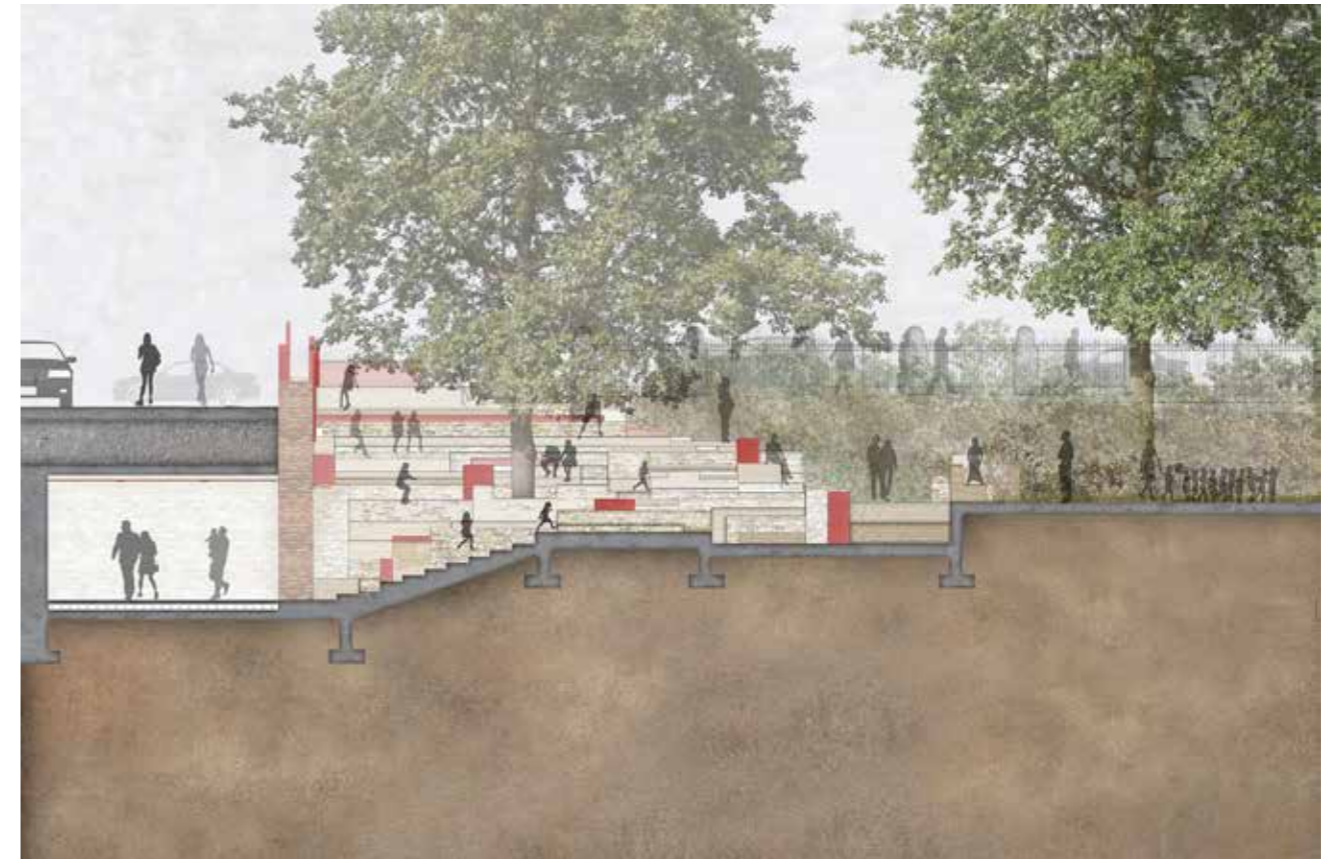
Our design proposal interrogates the definition of the 'Public'. We aim to challenge the regulation of Public Space by providing the infrastructure for the appropriation of the tunnel and the surrounding area.

As an extension of the redevelopment of Exhibition Road, the scheme implements Hans Monderman's notion of 'Shared Space'. This concept removes all M+E, signage and advertising from the existing tunnel, back to the original glazed brick. All services are relocated beneath a suspended floor, thus creating a continuous monolithic surface.

Our design also introduces 'Free Spaces', where intersecting forms of monolithic surface bleed out into the streetscape and the surrounding institutions, merging with Exhibition Road at 3 main entrances to the tunnel. Meeting points, performance spaces and playscapes will emerge from the pedestrian subway, encouraging people to make use of the tunnel at all times of the day throughout the year.

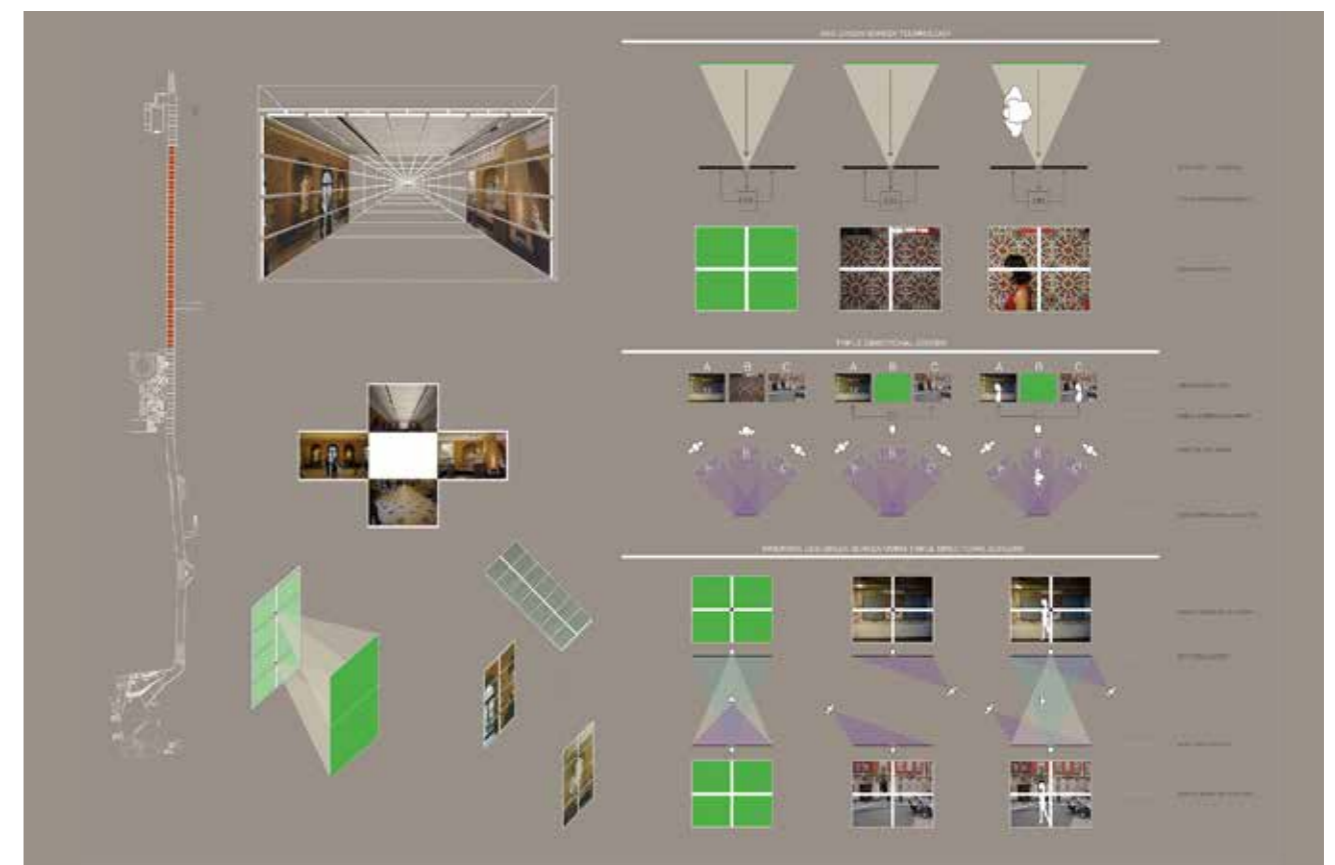
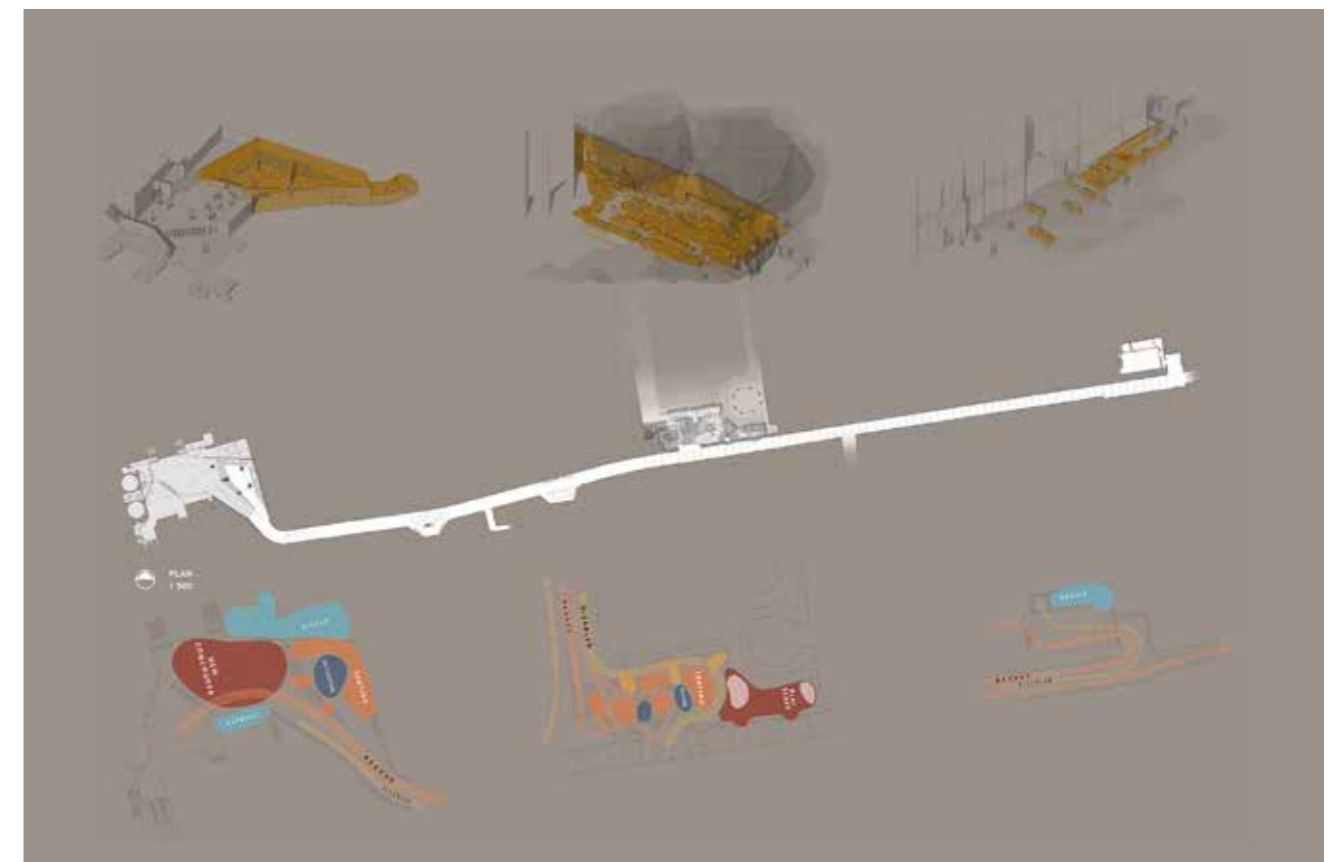
In addition, we are introducing an infrastructure for temporary exhibitions which celebrate the Public. Within the long intervals between main entrances the tunnel transforms into an immersive Audio Visual experience, transporting the user into alternate realities, such as the tunnel at different times of the day, various rooms within the institutions and the city at large.

Philip Buckingham, Joanne Chan,  
Samuel Douek, Tanya Eskander  
& Stiliyana Minkovska



Render and section showing the new entrance at the Natural History Museum which becomes an extension of the tunnel spilling into a new stepped public space.





Early concept collage illustrating our experience of security issues at the tunnel and the use of technology to be incorporated into the scheme.

TOP FIG. Plan of the tunnel showing development to be made on the three major entrances connecting the tunnel to Exhibition Road and the surrounding institutions.

BOTTOM FIG. Diagrams illustrating the technology to be implemented as part of the temporary exhibition.

## ..Interlude

The tunnel is a transitional space; an interlude between the cultural institutions of Albertropolis.

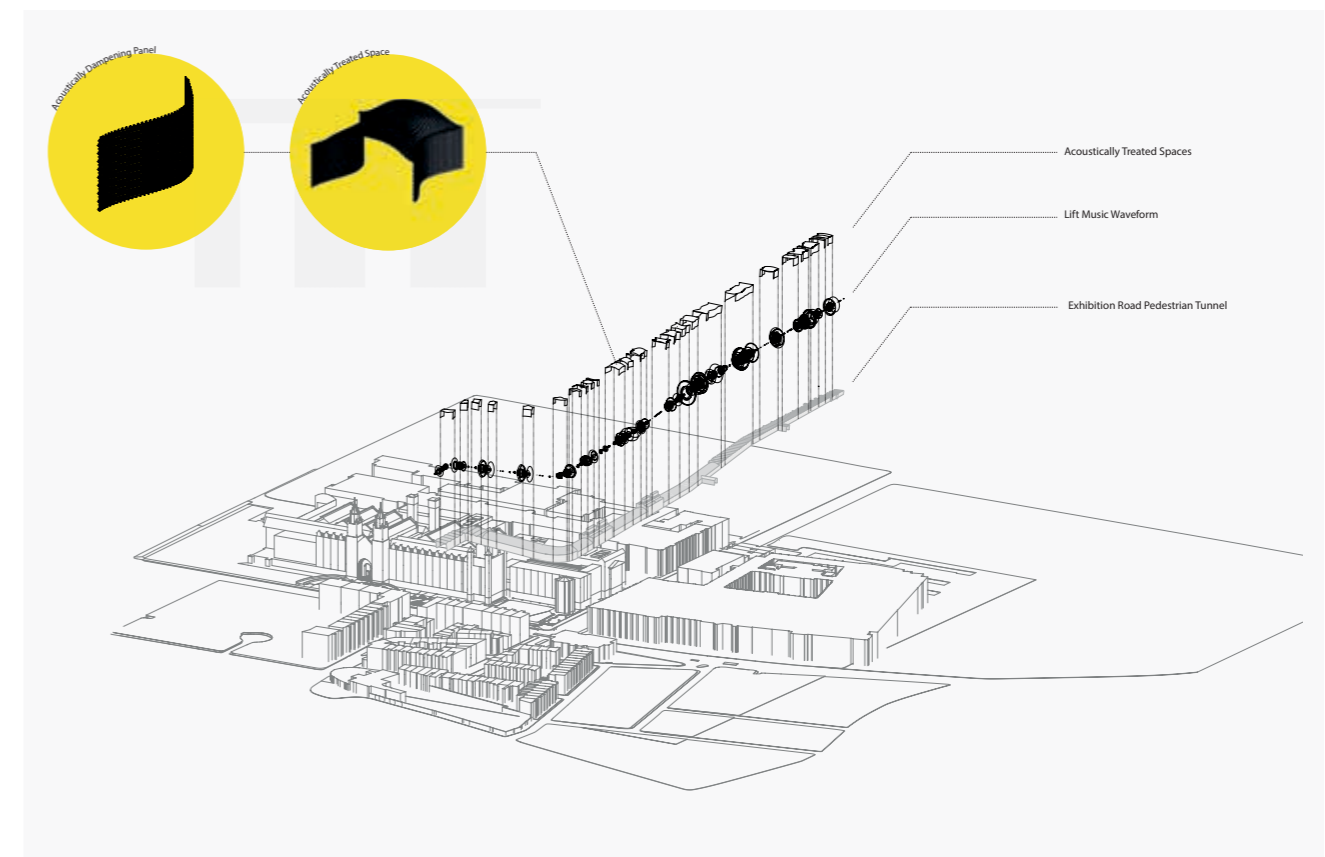
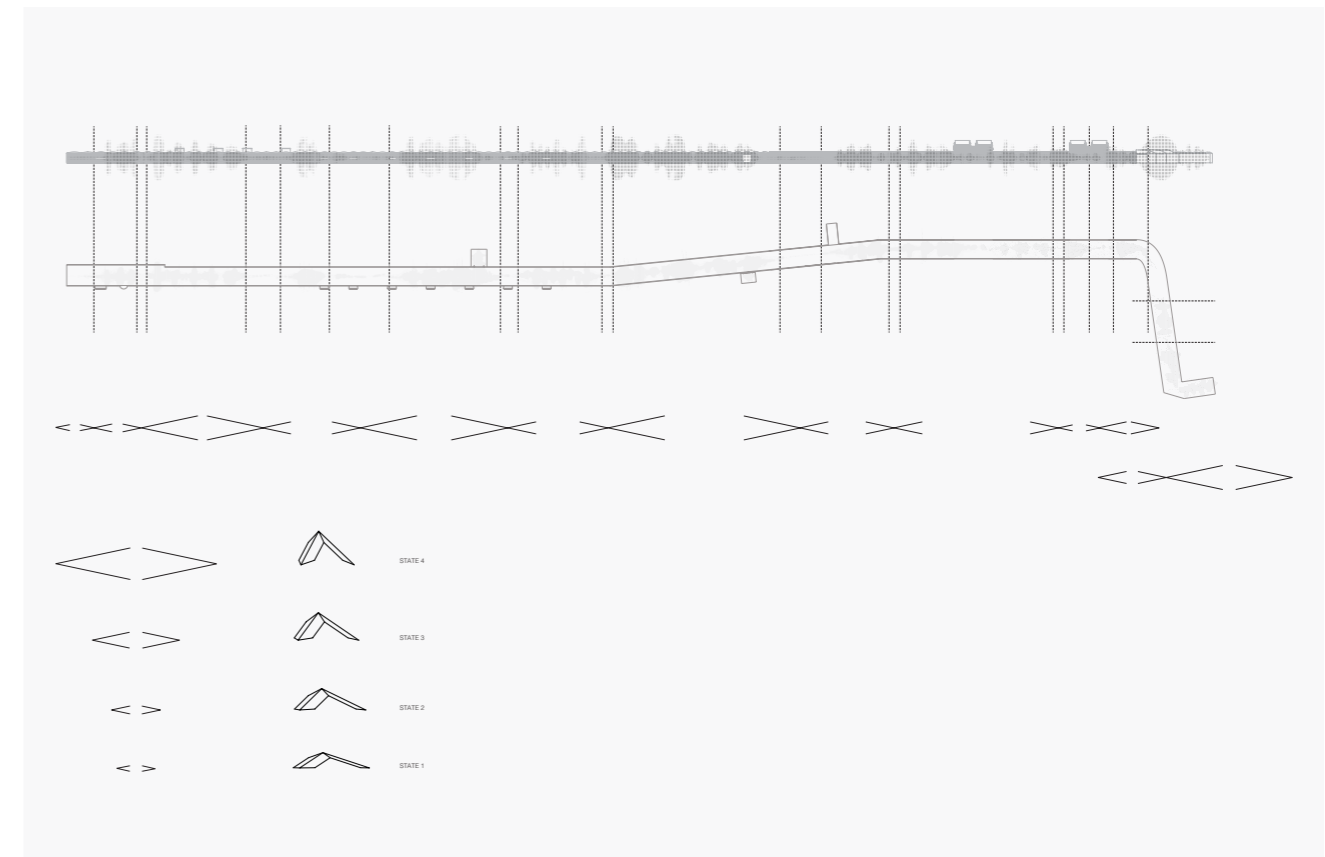
The cultural quarter possesses a rich history and relationship with music. The social conventions and etiquettes to both playing and listening to music have operated very differently over the course of history. The *interlude* has a typology in both the music and spatial realms.

Muzak refers to a type of popular music, often instrumental, that is commonly played in lifts, shopping malls and telephone systems.

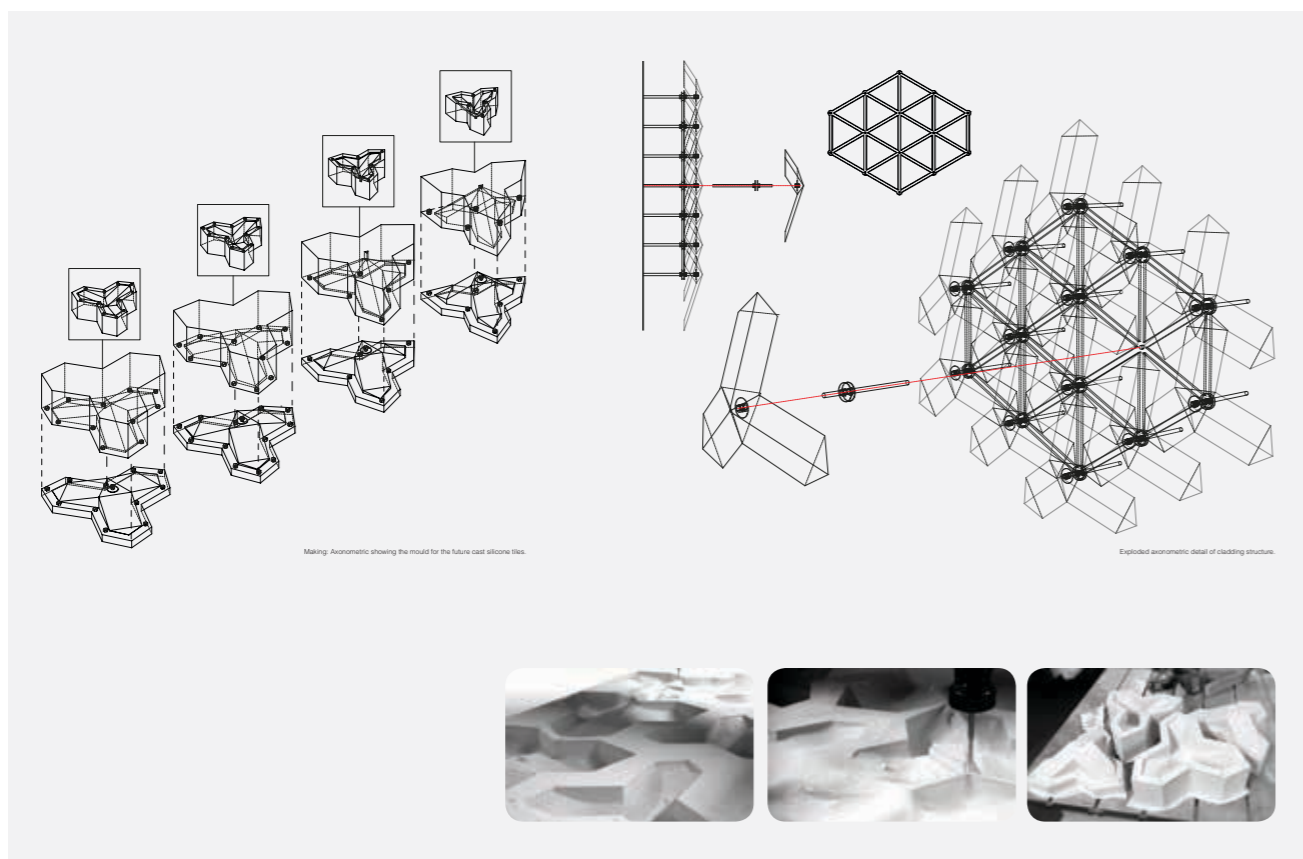
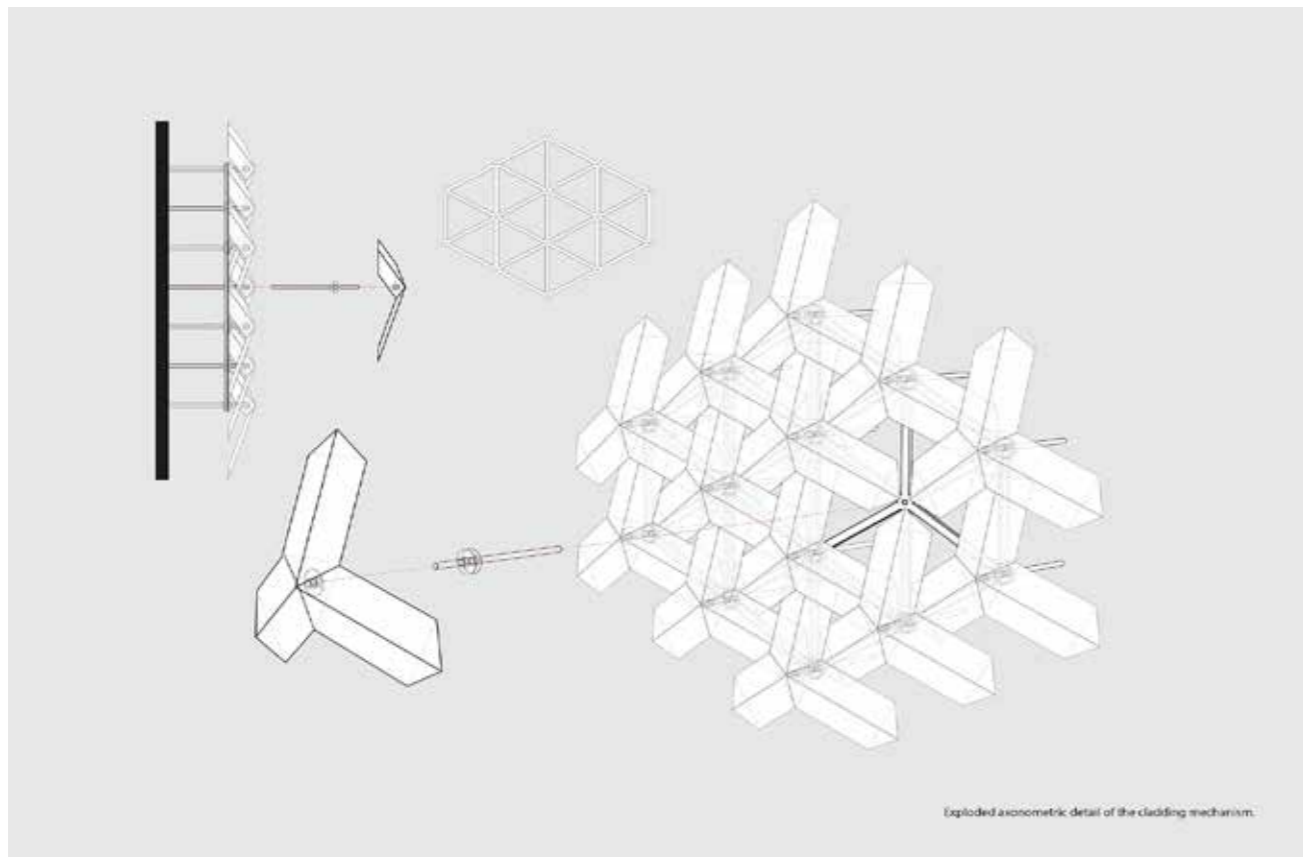
Elevator music is typically set to a very simple melody so that it can be unobtrusively looped back to the beginning. The dynamic range is also normally reduced, so that the highs and lows do not distract listeners. In a mall or shopping center, lift music of a specific type has been found to have a psychological effect: slower, more easy listening music tends to make people slow down and relax.

Our proposition is a play on this theme, through collaboration with the Royal College of Music we seek to create a contemporary version of interlude music using the existing sounds found in the tunnel.

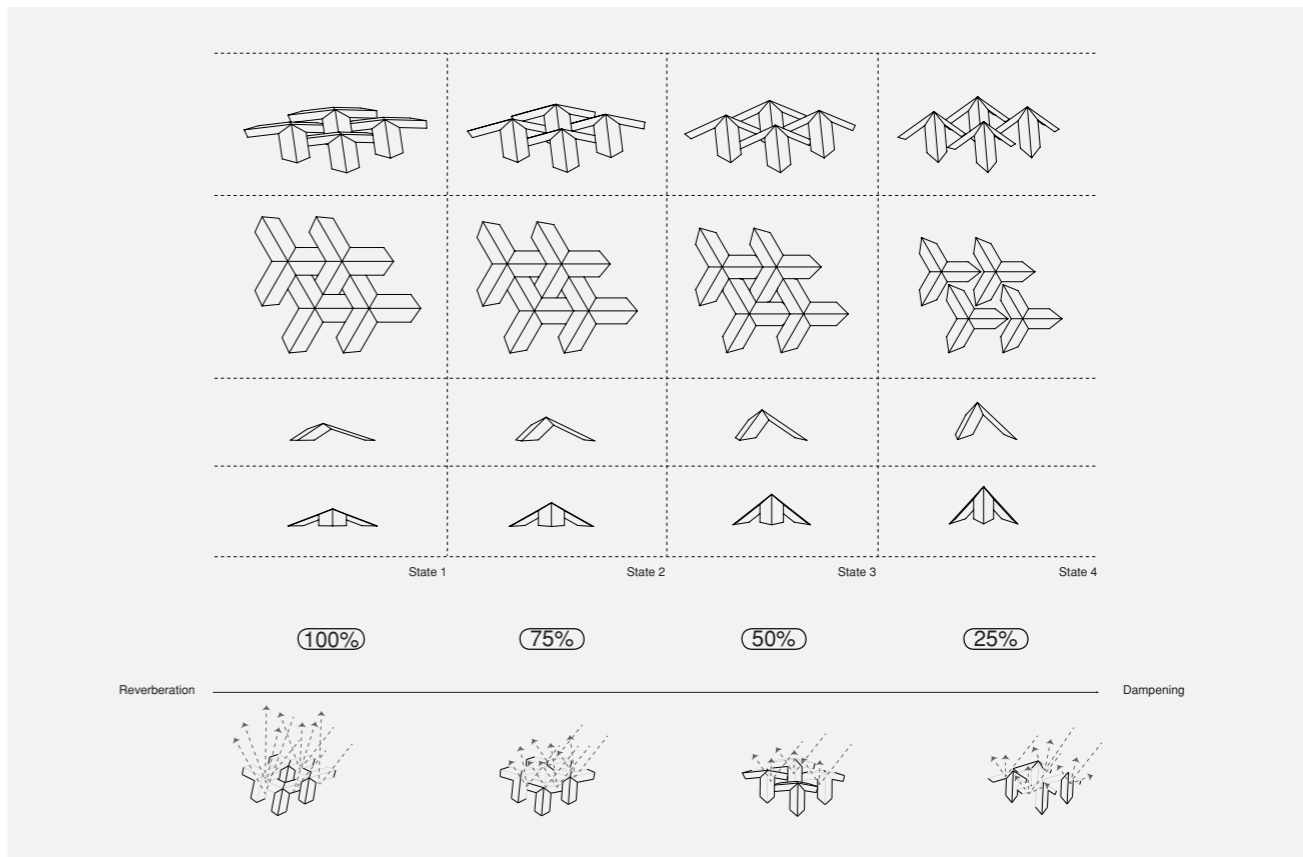
Marina Andronescu,  
Alexander Assael, Alexander Dickie,  
Iain Jamieson, Christopher Kelly,  
Ka Fai Wang, Georgia White  
& Naqeeb Popal



Site plan and sequence of diagrams illustrating the light that is utilized at each institution as a medium for wayfinding. A geometric inspired skin imitates the language of light through the action of folding throughout the tunnel by flattening at the entrances and retracting in between.



A light spectacle at each institution is created by simple prisms placed behind perforations in the skin. Light is dispersed and refracted creating an array of crystal light.



Visitors experience a clear and unifying graphic language and font that offer light spectacles where visitors can admire and interact with. Folding is utilized to express the new as distinct from the existing structure that moves visitors along the tunnel.

## Beyond the Institution

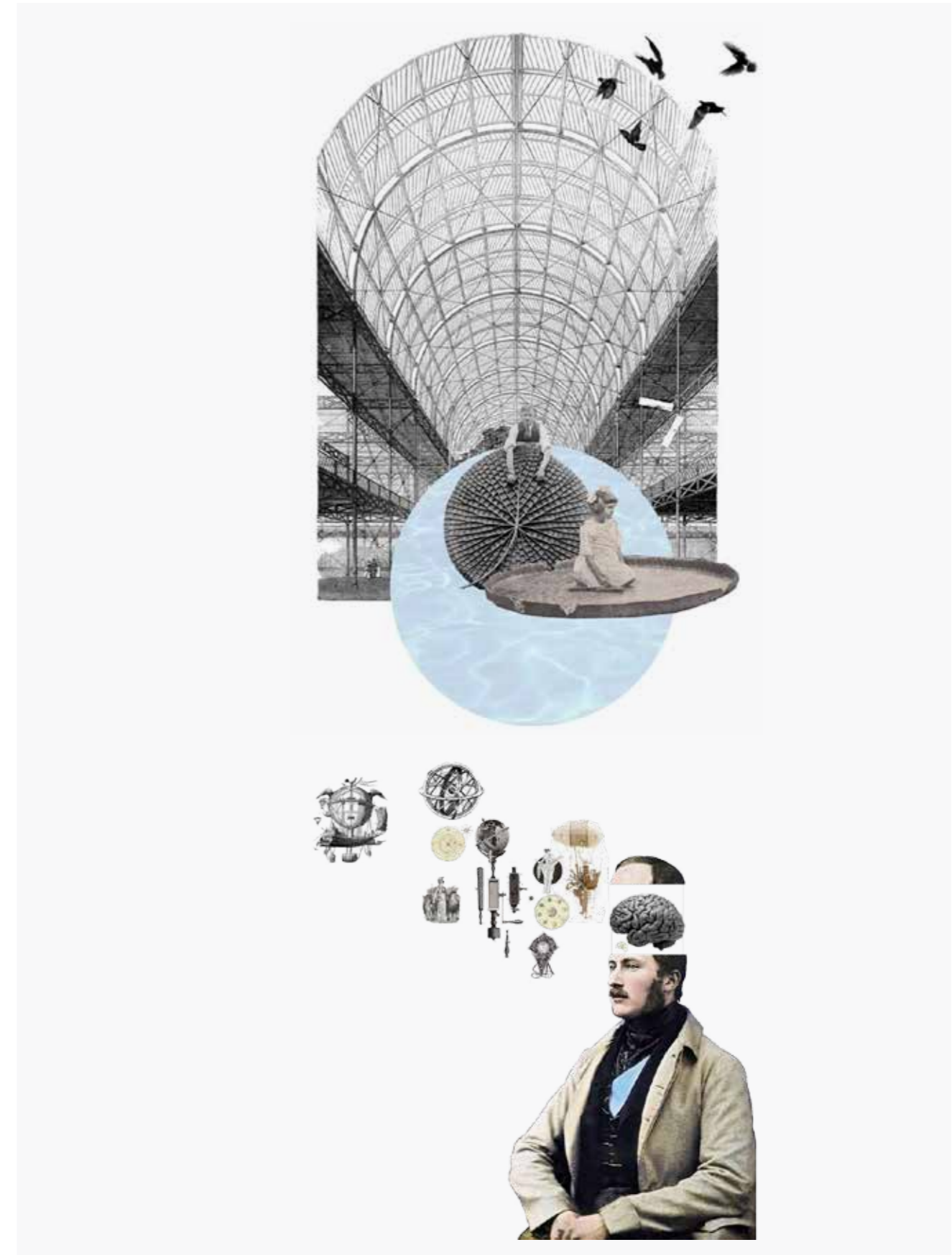
We see the site not as a circulation corridor or piece of service infrastructure but as a neglected monument. We claim this as a fundamental and compelling public space that binds together the institutions of South Kensington with instrumentality.

ADS9s explorations of institutions – see ads9rca.wordpress.com – have revealed the way in which they shape our cities. South Kensington's Albertopolis is an exceptional example of their agency and is testament to an enduring vision.

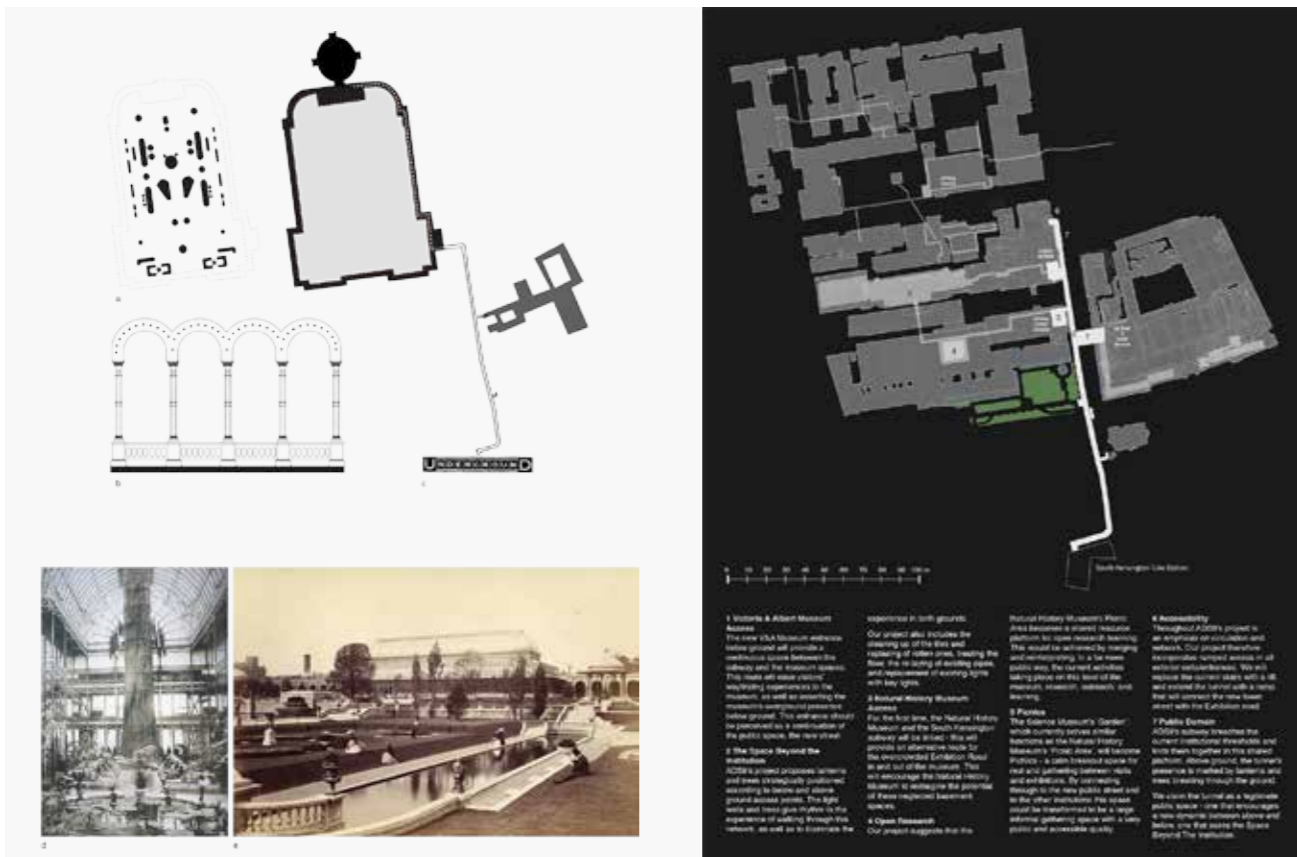
The overlooked victorian subway is in fact a built fragment of an inter-institutional masterplan. ADS9 emphatically seek to reinstate its value, exploit the potential of the space and claim this void as an essential organ of the public realm of South Kensington. This new territory creates a continuous flow and alternative network between the institutions through a merging of their accommodation, games of inversion and direct connections between above and below.

The project looks beyond individual agendas. It calls upon the generosity of institutions to open up the life and space between and through them.

Catarina Brito, Mino Chen,  
Claudia Fragoso, Sahra Hersi  
& Juris Platacis



This project seeks to reinterpret Albertopolis and its rich history. The ghost institutions of the Great Exhibition and the Royal Horticultural Society's lost colonnade are echoed in the trees breaking through the tunnel. They transform the quality of the space below and reinforce the relationship with Exhibition road.



The project's inverse nature - connecting above and below realms - claims this infrastructure as a public space. The new installations improve and consolidate Exhibition Road offering informal occupation above ground. All of the entrances have been reworked to allow for a sense of integration between the levels offering a series of disabled access points.

Our proposal seeks generosity in the institutions by claiming their basements and transforming the tunnel into a place of shared resources. These new lower-level access points would be distinctly public and transform the space from infrastructure to street - a new life between the buildings.

## Live Projects Programme

The RCA School of Architecture has recently initiated a programme of live projects working with industry sponsors to deliver architectural designs and ultimately construct built projects in response to a client written design brief, and a specific client need.

In the first term of the first year of the MA Architecture programme we schedule a one term long live project in which students are invited to produce design solutions in response to a set design brief prepared by the faculty in collaboration with a project sponsor. The brief should afford the opportunity for a post-graduate architecture student to research, experiment and design producing an innovative design proposal that responds to the client brief and the user needs.

Pedagogically our intention is to engage the students with a real design project that has both social purpose and a project user so that students address the role that architecture plays in relation to the needs and aspirations of building users, but in this case developed within an academic context, addressing the most fundamental skill of an architect being given a brief and demonstrating the ability to think freely invent and 'make something of it.'

## Typical Design Selection Process

The RCA MA Architecture programme has approximately 50 students in the first year of study who are arranged in seven vertical studios. Each studio is taught by two to three studio tutors with a particular focus on a given studio theme. Prior to the beginning of the academic year the live project brief is discussed with the studio tutors and developed accordingly. This gives the tutors time to prepare and identify their particular interest in and 'take on' the brief as a pedagogic instrument.

When the academic year commences the studio brief is given to the first year students as the first term's design assignment. Normally the students work individually for a period of four weeks (say) researching the topic and generating initial ideas in response to the brief. After three to four weeks a jury is convened to assess the work produced and select two ideas per studio for further development. At this point the students reorganise in teams of three to four students to work over the remaining four weeks developing the proposals as finished architectural schemes.

By the end of the first term a final selection jury is convened with members from the project sponsor, expert architect advisors and representation from the programme (possibly the school's Dean). All schemes are subject to a rigorous technical pre-qualification to ensure they are buildable and correctly answer the brief. Non-compliant schemes are given a red tag indicating to the jury their non-compliance. After a 5-minute presentation and a short Q+A from each of the fourteen teams the jury begin their public deliberation until a single winning scheme is selected. The open public deliberation forms a centre learning experience for the students. The Senior Tutor (not included in the jury) can moderate the session and keep discussion moving to an agreed timetable. The project sponsor should choose a representative to work with the tutors and Senior Tutor over the duration of the design stage.

## Live Projects Programme

Following the selection of the winning design the depending on the intentions of the project sponsor it is possible that the project is moved into a London based practice for the purposes of contracting a registered architectural practice. In past projects the students from the winning team have been contracted to complete the construction drawings under the supervision of a project architect. This team will be capable of preparing and submitting a planning application and preparing a tender package of drawings for pricing.

Typically construction of projects of this scale will take 4–12 months to complete following award to a contractor. The School of Architecture is developing a Project office capable of managing delivery of these project but larger project may require an executive architects involvement as a 'safe pair of hands'. In any event the architecture programme are happy to assist the project sponsor in seeking further sponsorship and partners in kind, and to work with an executive architect if required. Often we can secure engineering services in kind and depending on the design it may be possible to find material sponsors. The project sponsor will also be entitled to join the RCA Corporate sponsorship scheme in order to use the RCA branding when promoting the project.

## Past Projects and Sponsors

— 2012 Brent Council – Pop down Sq – a 6,000m<sup>2</sup> public realm meanwhile project in Wembley Scheduled for completion November 2014 (subject to a delay in 2013 relating to the lease of the land.)

— 2013 HELIX, RCA/ICL – A pop-up pavilion for the Healthcare Innovation Exchange project conducted jointly between the RCA and Imperial College for a 75m<sup>2</sup> pavilion to sit in Newport Place at St. Mary's Hospital in Paddington.

— 2014 South Kensington Pedestrian Tunnel – An ideas competition to reimagine the South Kensington Pedestrian Tunnel working with local stakeholders including TfL, Art on the Underground, V&A, NHM, Science Museum, Exhibition Road Cultural Strategy Group and the Royal Commission for 1851. Outputs included the design of a public exhibition and strategy document.

### Project 1 – Helix Pop-Up



The HELIX Centre (HELIX stands for Healthcare Innovation Exchange) is a joint initiative between the Royal College of Art (RCA) and Imperial College London (ICL). This pioneering centre will combine the user-centered design expertise and creativity of the RCA with the clinical, engineering and scientific knowhow of ICL in order to optimize healthcare innovation, in collaboration with a range of international partners. The new centre will focus on cost-effective, high-impact, designed initiatives that can transform healthcare both in developed and developing health systems. Critically, it will be based inside St Mary's Hospital, London, embedding a multi-disciplinary team of clinicians, designers, technologists and business specialists in a clinical environment alongside frontline NHS staff. This will enable the RCA to bring design thinking right to the heart of healthcare delivery, and ICL to build upon its extensive network of clinical and technological expertise.

The competition involved 60 student designs of which a group comprising of three took the winning design to planning and detail fabrication. Contract cost is £180K and the building will be completed and open in January 2015. AKTII provided Structural Engineering Services and Gardiner Theobald LLP Cost Control.

### Project 2 – Place Agency Street Installation / Furniture



The Wembley Place Agency is a new initiative by Brent Council, which aims to gather and tell stories about life in Wembley, and to provide information about the regeneration taking place in the area. In addition to being an online resource, it will have a physical presence in a number of sites, starting with Cottrell House on Wembley Hill Road, an empty 1960s office block recently occupied by 'Meanwhile Space', a community arts organization that is running a cafe and enterprise hub on the ground floor. The forecourt – which was originally home to a petrol station – remains empty and is the site for the new Place Agency Street Installation / Furniture.

The winning scheme proposed a series of rotating 'shop windows' that will sit in front of the building, improving the cafe's relationship with the street, and creating a place to disseminate the Place Agency's information. The project will be built in collaboration with local small-scale manufacturers who have so far been excluded from much of the regeneration work in the area and celebrate local skills and crafts. Contract cost is £40K and the building will be completed and open in January 2015. Buro Happold provided Structural Engineering Services and project has been tendered by the RCA who are charged with design and delivery of the Place Agency.

### Project 3 – South Kensington Pedestrian Tunnel

A student design competition launched by the Exhibition Road Cultural Group to re-imagine the South Kensington Pedestrian Tunnel in South Kensington: an important and much-used public space in London, and the threshold to the area's cultural and educational institutions. The ideas competition encouraged cross-disciplinary teams of post-graduate students from the academic institutions within the South Kensington cultural quarter: the Royal College of Art, Royal College of Music and Imperial College. It looked to harness the energy of today's student cohort to create a lively and beautiful space that expresses the spirit of the South Kensington community, and provides a fitting welcome to the area. The competition builds on a tradition of giving local students the opportunity to contribute to public buildings and spaces around South Kensington.

The design brief was prepared by the Royal College of Art to align with their graduate design module. It is anticipated that winning groups will work with:

- Ways to ensure the tunnel reinforces, and is an integral part of, the South Kensington cultural experience;
- Introduce and celebrate the area's heritage while reflecting the role South Kensington plays in shaping the future;
- Help to support and create a coherent sense of place;
- Consider connections from the tunnel to the station, cultural institutions and street level along Exhibition Road;
- Improve way finding and orientation within the tunnel, both from the stations and the cultural and educational institutions accessed from it;
- Be inclusive and welcoming to all, with a focus on step-free access and visitors with mobility issues;
- Aim to be maintenance free.

A jury chaired by Sir Christopher Frayling (1851 Commissioner and former Rector, Royal College of Art) will consider submissions. An honorarium of £1,000 for each participating team will be made, and there will be an overall prize fund of £5,000 – funded by the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851. The winner will be announced on 15 December 2014 before a public exhibition of the design proposals at the RCA Henry Moore Gallery, which will run from 15-22 December. The Royal College of Art is involved in a number of 'real world' projects spanning London and beyond, but it's particularly fantastic to be working on one so close to home. The RCA has long been tied to Albertopolis, and to our neighbours here – what better way to celebrate those relationships than to reimagine a conduit that connects us all!



