



DESIGN PROPOSAL: SOFTSITE

"The spectre of resourcelessness looms ever larger on the horizon as we reach the limits of a planet that had once been imagined as an infinite container of resources, now revealed as a finite resource in and of itself. In such a context, focusing on questions of containment and supply in thinking about technology can help draw our attention to the assumptions we make about supply in our own lived world, and to larger questions about sustaining the planetary 'facilitating environment'..."

—Zoë Sofia, "Container Technologies," 2000.

"A leaf a gourd a shell a net a bag a sling a sack a bottle a pot a box a container. A holder. A recipient."

—Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction," 1989.

Everyone (everyone!) is in agreement: The extractive exploitation of planetary resources must cease! Non-extractive alternatives to construction materials, and non-exploitative relations between bodies and environments, are key to future architecture practice(s).

SOFTSITE is an architectural investigation into the speculative storage, collective custodianship, and slow transformation of salvaged materials into objects of value and, ultimately, into architecture, through acts of "making good". Addressing the publics of the Tallinn Architecture Biennale and the Tallinn Baltic Station, SOFTSITE provides a spatial alternative to the intensities of an optimized existence, supporting materials and bodies at rest while taking time to explore the formalizing acts that make stuff a "material" and materials an "architecture."

Performed *on site* and *in public*, the project has three phases: first, a "mock-up/fragment" will be built and used, which takes the form of a SLOW DEPOT, dedicated to exploring techniques of "making good"; second, this structure is to be extended, grounded, and reclad, its contents formalized into furniture and finishes, the program shifting to that of a KIOSK; third, a cyclical and seasonal process of DRESSING UP/DRESSING DOWN will run alongside the other two phases, allowing the pavilion to stage new experiments in line with other rhythms of ritualized renewal.

The architecture discipline has many hang-ups, and what counts as "proper"—what counts as "architecture"—is one of its most contested terrains: When is matter "dirt" and when is it "material"? When is a frame "structure" and when is it "architecture"? When is a project "finished"? What role do concepts such as *container*, *surface*, and *finish* play in such distinctions? Through acts of choreographed metamorphosis, SOFTSITE thus critically investigates the sliding scale between a *provisional architecture* and *architecture proper*.

PHASE 1: FRAGMENT_SLOW DEPOT

Taking cues from reusable containers such as slings, wraps, nets, and carrier-bags, SOFTSITE operates as a SLOW DEPOT in Phase 1, stocked with materials from local second-hand material handlers and surplus from construction sites to be worked on ("made good") and either returned or integrated into the installation itself. In offering shelter and seating, the lightweight, porous structure invites a range of "soft" postures and adjustments related to material encounter—leaning, lounging, stowing, clipping-on and off, slinging, cladding, knotting, hanging.

Self-supporting and able to be built in sections, the SLOW DEPOT stands on the existing plaza without puncturing the surface, and is made of four architectural elements:

(A) THE FRAME, which is made up of THE RACK, a lightweight H-Frame roof with space for overhead storage, and THE WEDGE, a structural container which offers a work surface and opportunities for under-plinth storage. Built from salvaged construction timber spliced together into long members, THE FRAME is, providing both a traditional long bench and an inclined wedge for waiting commuters and visitors to explore varying degrees of repose. The structure stands directly on the pavement of the square without penetrating it.

(B) THE RAIN JACKET is a tailored tarpaulin cover that dresses the lightweight structure. Echoing the way materials are typically stored outdoors, this waterproof layer of recycled, patchworked tarps protect the stored, racked materials and inhabitants from weather.

(C) BAGS AND SLINGS offer a tectonic language of material adjustment. Recycled textiles are woven or stitched together to create seat cushions, hammocks, and lounging-bags. Double-ended bags help to weigh down the rain-jacket roof from the wind. Paracord, clasps, and adjustable knots are akin to hiking gear. When empty, bags roll flat and are easily taken to remote salvage sites for material collection.

(D) MATERIAL DEPOSITS—the pavilion's contents—are stored neatly on racks (dimensional material such as wood, sheet, tile), in bags (loose material such as aggregate, sand, gravel,

tile), and in THE WEDGE (kitchen equipment, tools, cables, and soft seating). Over the course of Phase 1, these deposits are worked upon—"made good"—through workshops that perform the transition from provisional to proper: from bag to cast object, from pile to finished surface, from accessory to furniture.

From sewing circles and repair workshops to the therapeutic, slow finishing of materials that elevate their value, in its SLOW DEPOT phase, SOFTSITE is kitted out for collaborative experiments in circularity. The program would include remote and in-person lectures and be developed in dialogue with the FOR THIS SITUATION curators. A series of workshops would be staged by the SOFTSITE team in collaboration with Tallinn-based designers and international guests (see PROGRAM TIMELINE and PROGRAMMING).

PHASE 2: PAVILION_KIOSK

Through Phase 2, the process of extending and formalizing the pavilion continues and its DEPOT functions give way to those of a more traditional transit KIOSK. SOFTSITE's repeatable structure is extended along the site's edge to accommodate longer-term needs such as a public toilet or WC for transit staff (the WET BLOCK) and additional spaces for public shelter. The extended pavilion maintains a high level of porosity across the site, as the bays can be traversed and the structure entered at any point. In the process of formalization, provisional materials

will be changed out for more permanent ones (in this way, the SOFT DEPOT acts a sketch or DRESS REHEARSAL for THE KIOSK) and foundations established that ground the pavilion permanently on site in an elegant manner that respects the existing landscape design.

PHASE 3: PAVILION+_DRESS-UP/DRESS-DOWN

The pavilion is specifically designed to be able to be seasonally stripped, and THE RAIN JACKET and other accessories modified in anticipation of cold weather, thereby respecting the limits and conditions of a northern winter, including snow loads. As the spring approaches in each year of its lifetime, THE FRAME can be "re-dressed" with new accessories (bags, rain jackets, and other textile awnings or slings) and given entirely new surface treatments. This could be undertaken by the SOFTSITE authors, the FOR THIS SITUATION curators, or by way of a new commission, in collaboration with new publics, giving the project a cyclical future predicated on ritualized acts of ceremonial renewal, redesign, and custodianship. This also allows new expressions of the same structure and variations in fixing systems to be tested out. SOFTSITE operates as an artistic research apparatus.



FRAGMENT_DEPOT: VIEW FROM WEST



FRAGMENT_DEPOT: VIEW FROM SOUTH WEST



FRAGMENT_DEPOT: VIEW FROM NORTH WEST



PAVILION_KIOSK: VIEW FROM WEST



PAVILION_KIOSK: VIEW FROM SOUTH WEST



PAVILION_KIOSK: VIEW FROM NORTH WEST

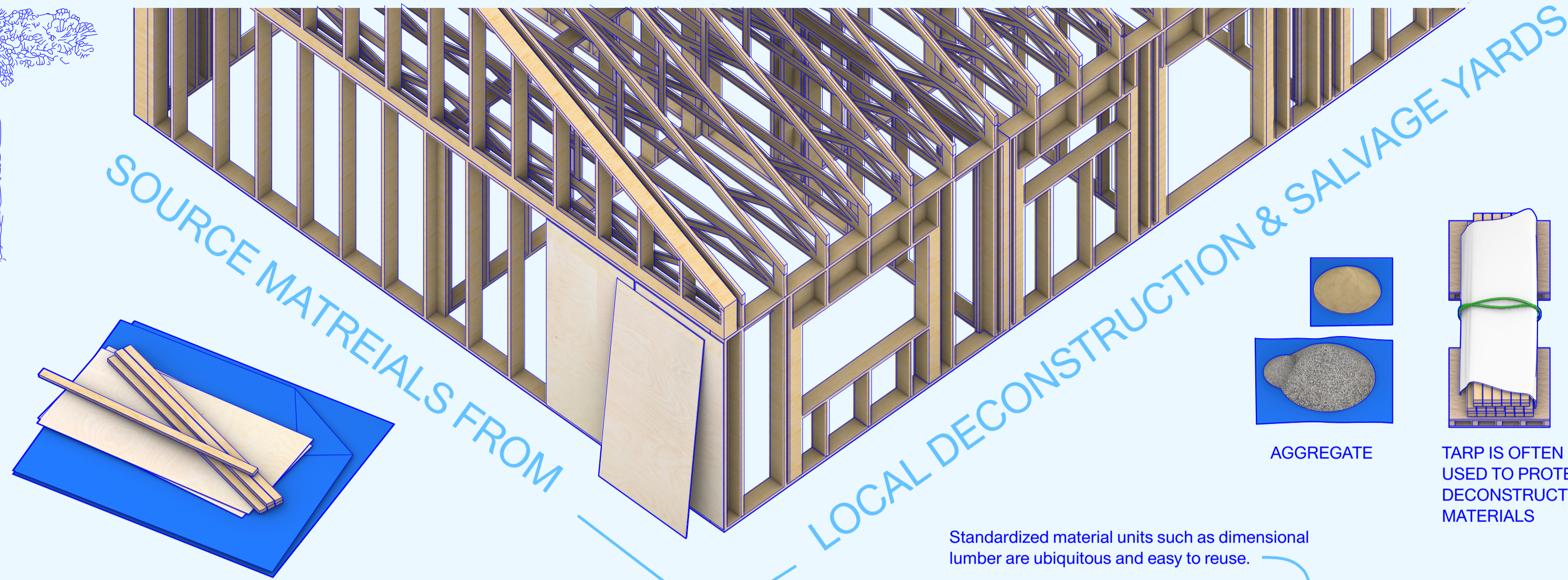
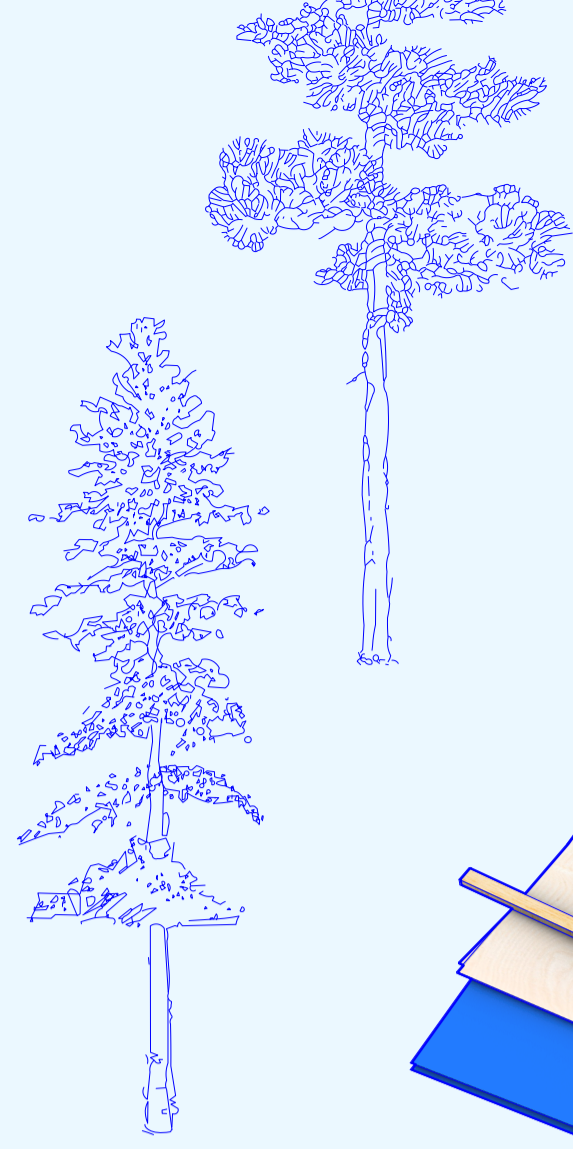


FRAGMENT_DEPOT: PHOTO MONTAGE, VIEW FROM EAST



PAVILION_KIOSK: PHOTO MONTAGE, VIEW FROM EAST

MATERIAL SOURCING + CONSTRUCTION CHOREOGRAPHY



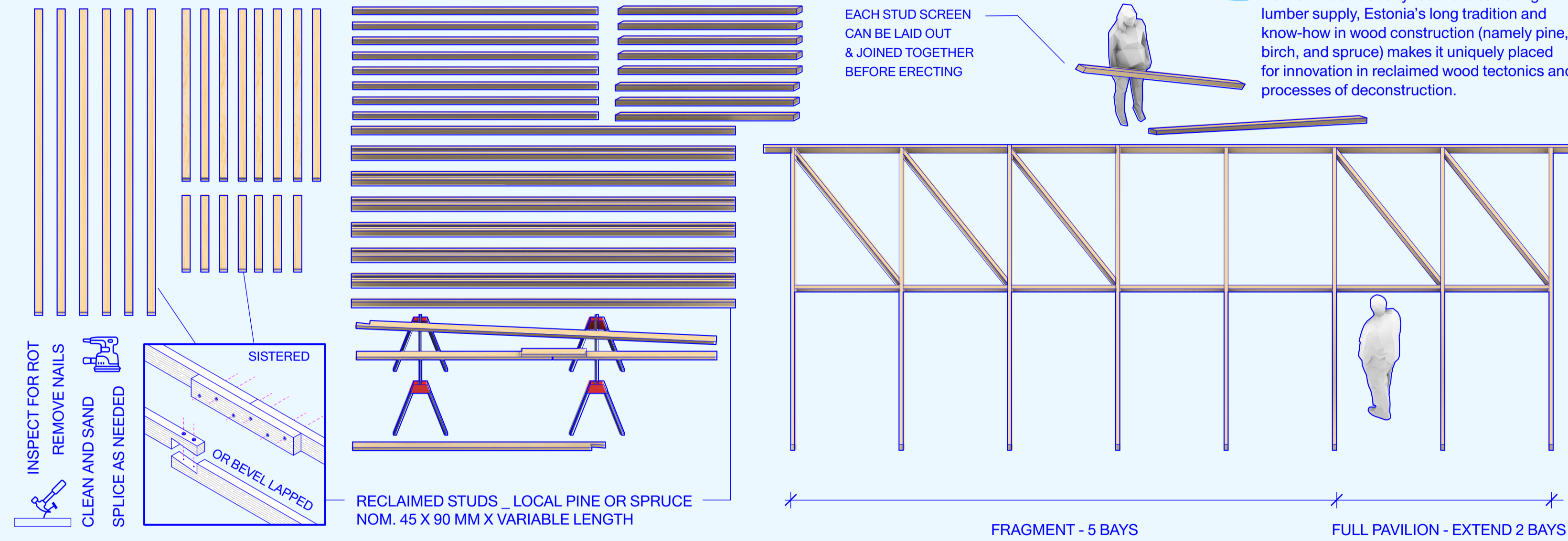
MAKING GOOD: PROGRAM TIMELINE

SOFTSITE is designed to test a new form of temporal architectural practice: **construction choreography**.

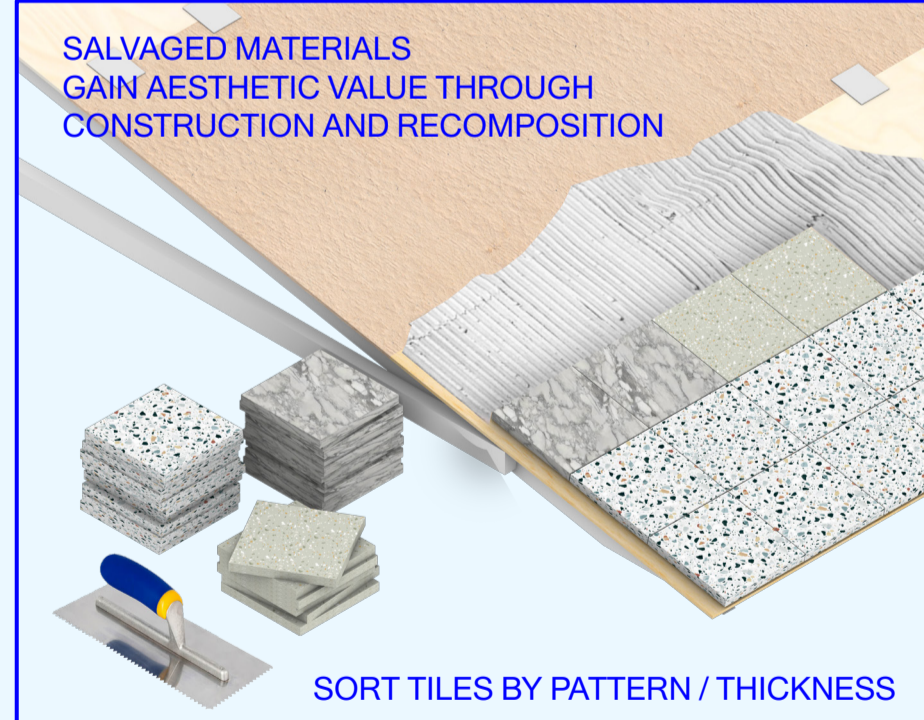
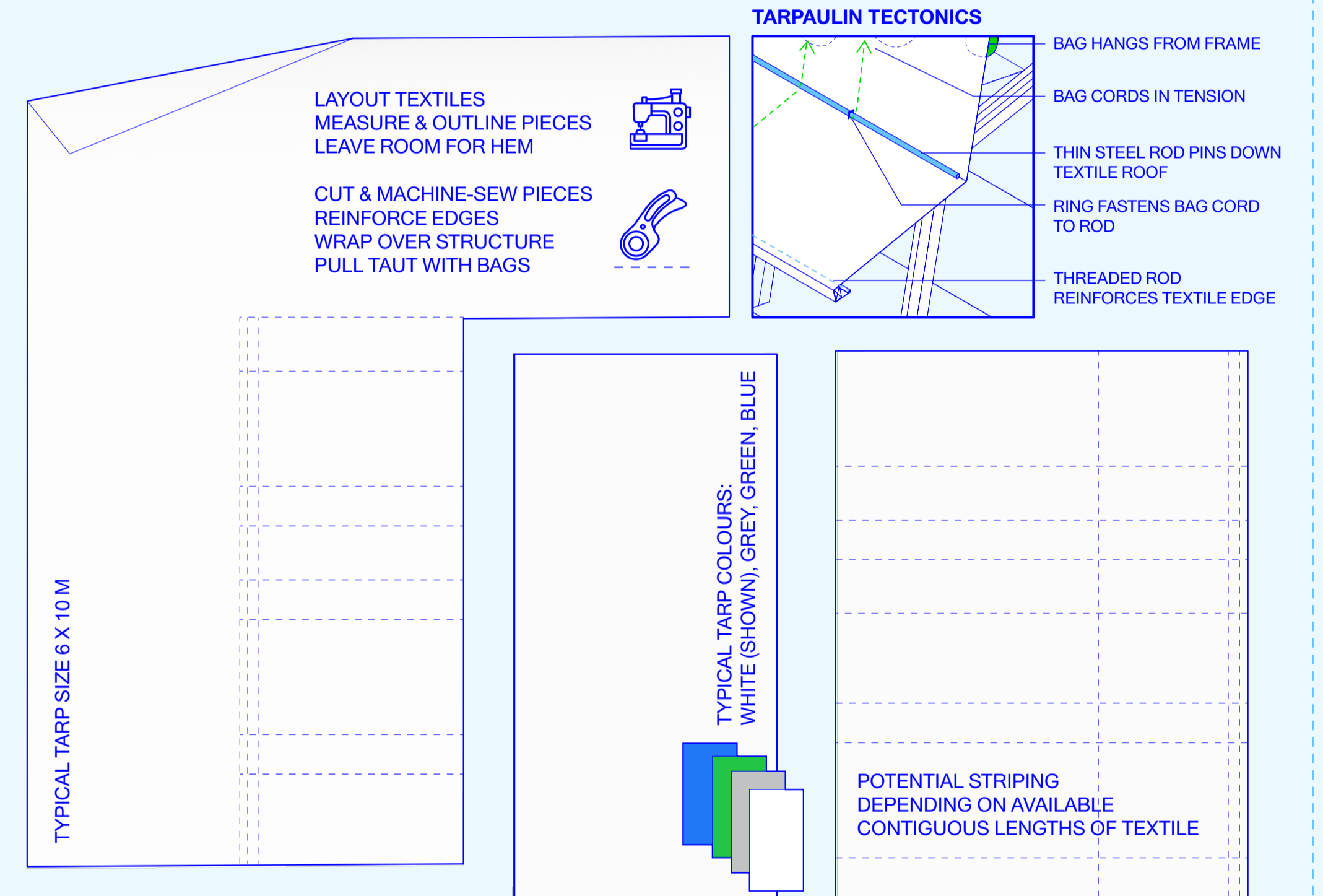
Designing with room for adjustment, flexibility, and iteration over time will be key skills in a circular economy.

CONSTRUCTION	BIENNALE (FRAGMENT_DEPOT)	FUTURE (PAVILION_KIOSK)
<p>1 source & clean</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ recycling centers _ construction sites _ local salvagers _ personal deposits 	<p>3 programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ sewing workshop: make a bag _ construction cooking workshop: use contents of bags _ film screening/lectures: project on tarp 	<p>4 retrofit pavilion for long-term use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ extend the frame by 2 bays and formalize materials _ construct module with public toilet and closet with kitchenette & locker amenity
<p>2 construct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ bags made offsite _ 2 weeks on site 	<p>4 custodianship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ lockable storage under wedge _ media equipment attached to structure _ 24/7 public bench and lounge surface 	<p>5 reclaim structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ potential for ceremonial recladding with salvaged and regenerative materials each year _ tarp rainjacket redesigned more intentionally with locals' input, quilted with preferred colors & patterns

RACK_FRAME STRUCTURE



RAINJACKET_TEXTILE SKIN

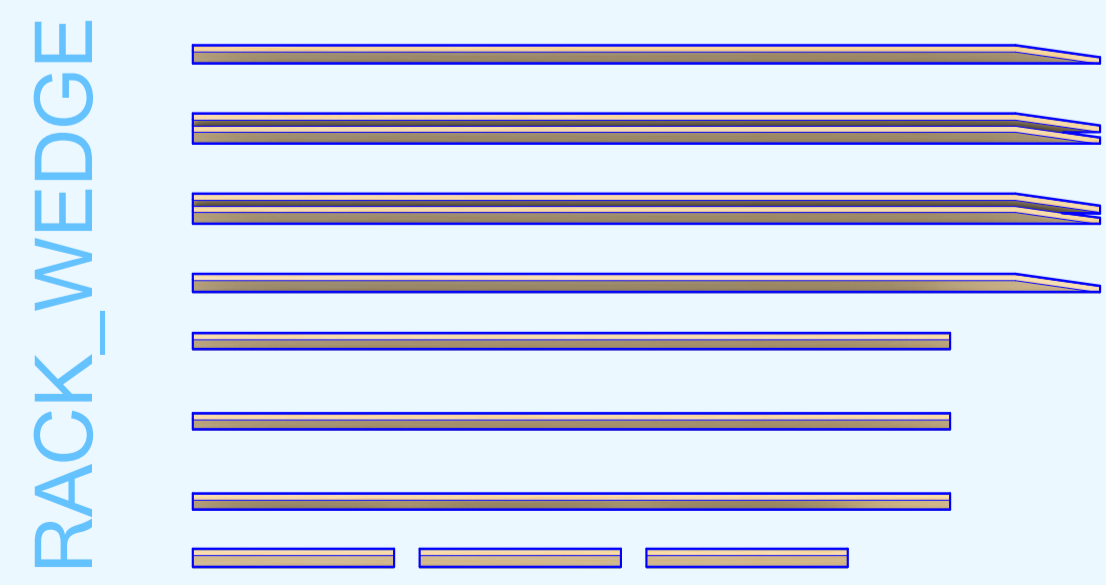


BAG_COUNTERWEIGHT AND STORAGE

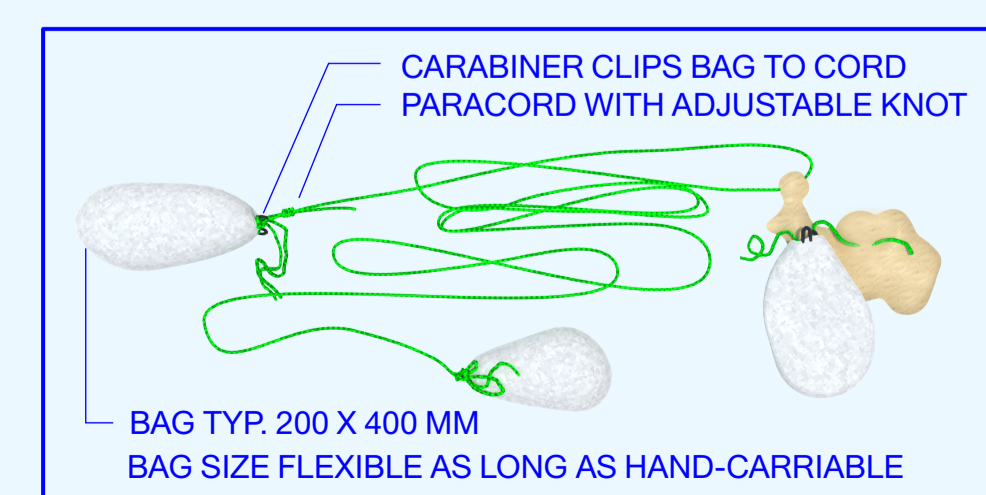
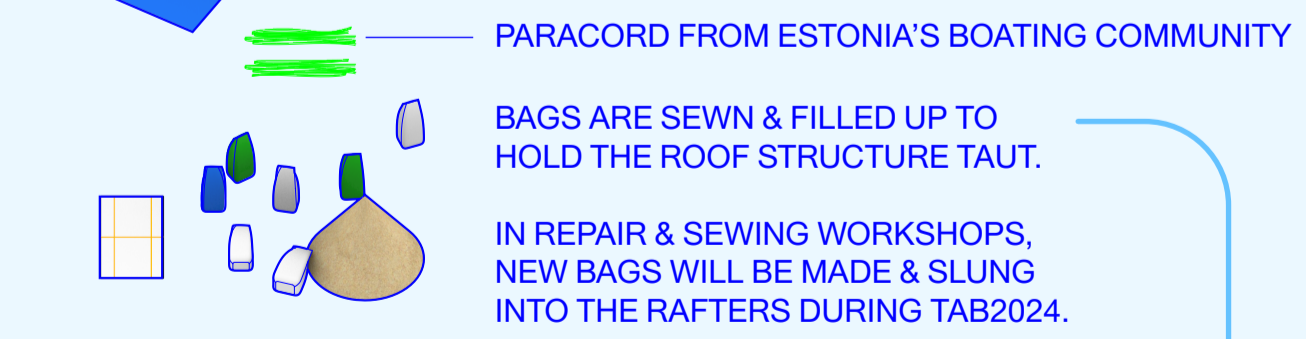
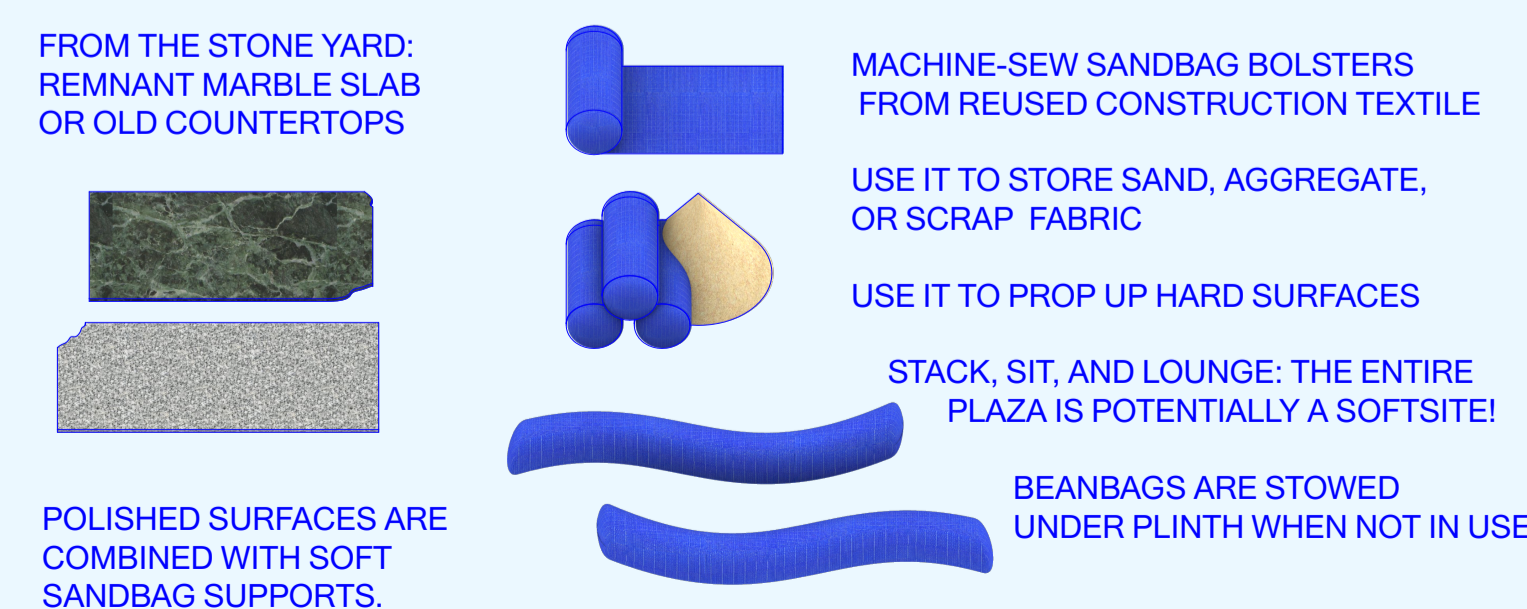
CARRIER-BAG
BAGS CAN EASILY
BE MADE FROM
ALMOST ANY
SCRAP FABRIC,
BY ANYONE, FOR
ALMOST ANY USE.

The pavilion is a lightweight structure clad in a tailored "rain jacket" that can be easily put on and taken off. **Surplus and offcut textiles** participate in a massive global waste stream; here it is part of the project's materiality, from waterproof roofing to bags and chairs. **Waterproof textiles of irregular sizes** can be joined, reinforced and given a new life as architectural materials.

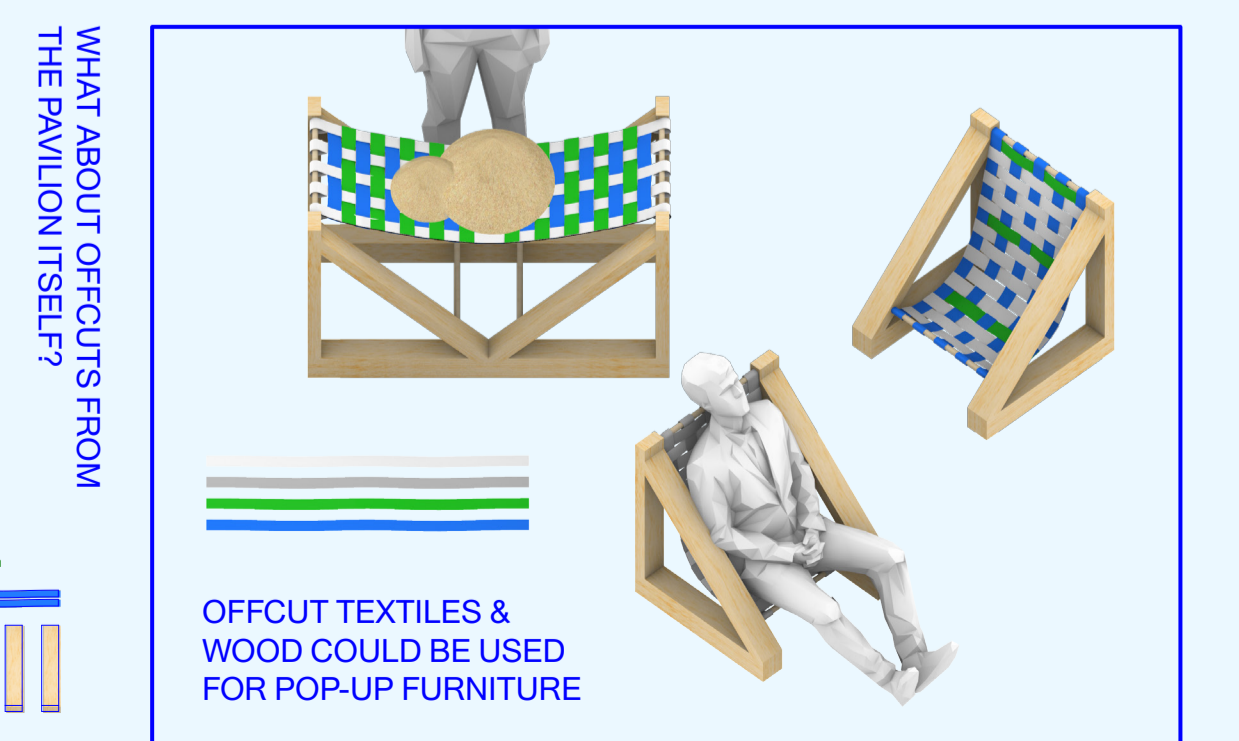
Sewing is typically considered household work, rather than a construction activity. Flipping the gender norms of *who* gets to work with construction materials and salvage, machine stitching and quilting techniques are skills readily accessible to a broad public that foster an ethos of repair and care. See **Reference 9 on Board 4** for more details.



BAG_SEATING



BAG_OFFCUTS CHAIR



STRUCTURE



1
SOMEPARTS X BUDGET GYM
STOCK-A-STUDIO, 2019-20, LOS ANGELES

Installed in a storefront gallery, the project is a temporary work-out space constructed from a deployable kit-of-parts assembled to form a functional gym. Drawing from "material diversion tactics from DIY queer cultural production," the modular steel structural system holds bodies and objects in action: pull-ups, bench presses, punching bags, water coolers... The kit also includes "props" and "prosthetics" such as tape, ratchet straps, shims, dunnage bags, sandbags and vacuum-formed panels.

SOFTSITE takes a similar "kit" approach where a structural frame is tarped, slung, and hooked in different ways to serve changing seasonal and programming needs of the pavilion, in doing so lending its architecture a tectonic of adjustable assembly.



2
ROCK HUT
MATERIAL CULTURES, 2020, CUMBRIA, UK

Rock Hut is a shelter that invites its contents to perform architecturally as part of the container. Boulders gathered from a local quarry become weights, chained to the rafters to resist uplift on the eaves from the structure. Rocks are also placed on roof battens or grounded into the landscape, lending an aesthetic of material display. The structure is a locally sourced timber frame resting on a dry-stone wall plinth.

SOFTSITE works with a lashed tectonics whereby less permanent elements are strapped to more permanent elements to create an assembly. This process opens up a space for testing the disciplinary space between architecture and textile design, making production processes and structure visible and manipulable to the pavilion's publics.



3
IL COMMUTATORE (THE SWITCH)
UGO LA PIETRA, 1970, MILAN

Part of the Italian *architettura radicale* of the 1960s and 1970s, Ugo La Pietra's performance work sought to redefine the relationship between the body and urban space. Here, two planar frames are simply hinged together to create an inclined surface to lie on in the middle of traffic.

In a similar vein, SOFTSITE's gently inclined architecture creates opportunities for slowing down within a busy station. Passers-by are encouraged to physically touch and occupy salvaged material surfaces.



4
PLANETARY HOME IMPROVEMENT
AMELYN NG, GABRIEL VERGARA & CHRISTINE GIORGIO, 2021, PRAGUE

Created using construction site offcuts, this gallery exhibition sorts and indexes the geohistory of architectural materiality, "from just-in-time to geological time." Steel studs organize four bays of materials according to the geological chart: metals, rocks, plastics, and wood. Drawings use transducers to literally convey the sounds of material extraction through the wood and polycarbonate panels themselves. A parallel website provides details for items scanned in the gallery.

SOFTSITE is also organized using a clear, repeated structural idea, one that is tectonically distinct from the stuff of salvage that it contains.

CONTENTS & ACCESSORIES



5
TEMPORARY BOAT COVER
SWEDEN, UNDATED

This temporary boat protection cover is simply fabricated from a tarp with tailored cuts and reinforced edges. To prevent it flying off in the wind, it is weighed down by water bottles hung along the hem.

This low-tech, vernacular detail is the tectonic concept for our pavilion's rainjacket cladding — a light, adjustable and weighted-down surface that functions as a protective skin for people and materials seeking shelter. It can be easily repaired, cleaned, layered, and dressed up or down, separate from the structure itself.



6
REPOSE
ALLYSON VIEIRA, 2023, FALL RIVER, MA

At first glance, Vieira's public art project appears to be a haphazard pile of sandbags. Upon closer look, they evoke the bodies of reclining figures resting next to a pond. Materials that spell labor and disaster preparation are transformed into figures of rest.



7
BAG & SLING TESTS
SOFTSITE TEAM

Textile offcuts. Sailing paracord. Universal carabiner hardware. Knots. Fill with sand, gravel, or other found aggregate. Used to carry, sling over, and weigh down material. Folds flat when not in use.

At SOFTSITE, bags are soft containers for loose and irregular material. Bags allow material to be handcarried in manageable units. As a **prosthetic technology**, bags use the whole body to carry something comfortably, allowing easy adjustments in load while traveling to and from sites.

For the Biennale, bags would be fabricated from **offcut textiles** such as tarp, canvas, or ripstop. When filled, bags would sling onto the structural frame, acting as a double-sided ballast (like theatre counterweights) to keep the pavilion's tarp roof in place. **Colourful cord** may be sourced from Tallinn's local sailing community.

Fabricated by the SOFTSITE team, these homemade bags experiment with offcut canvas and ripstop fabric. They test out easy-close drawstrings and reinforcement stitches.

These bags are quick and easy to make. The public would be invited to make some of their own during the biennale in a **carrier-bag workshop**.

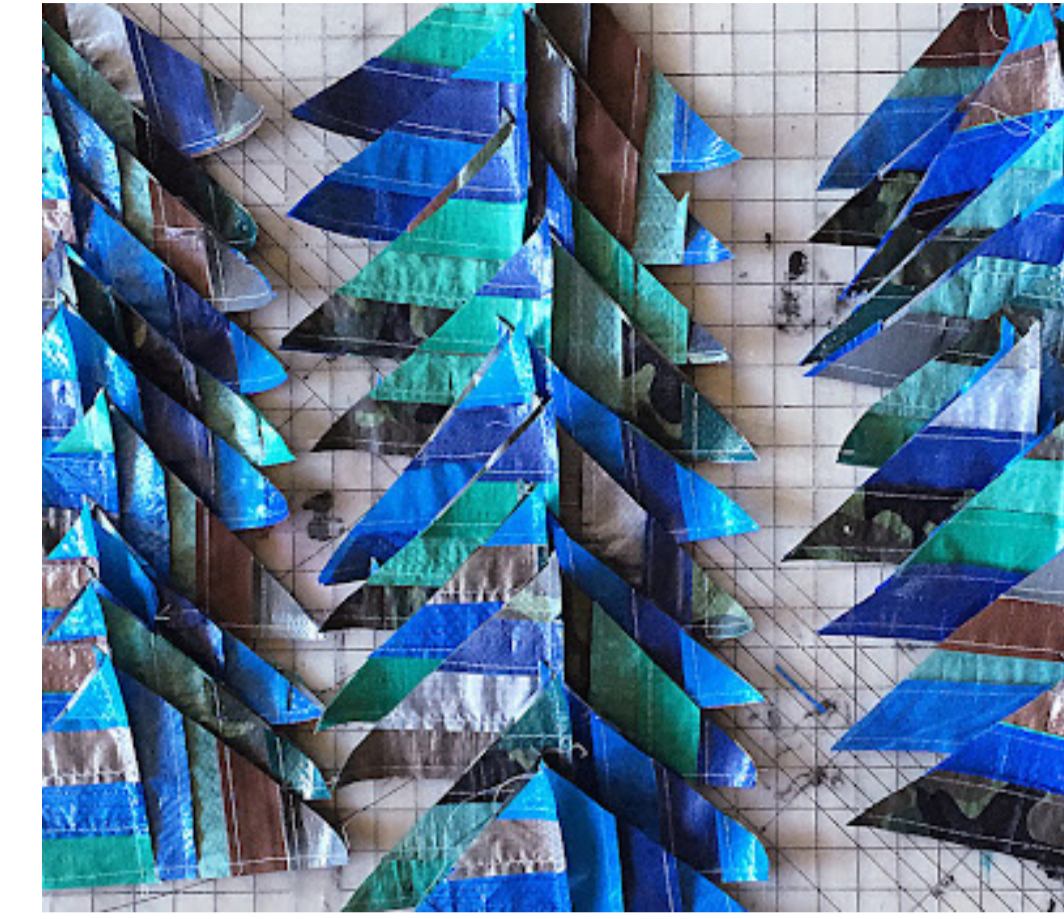


8
SUSIE SECRETARY, 2021-2022, MPAVILION
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Recognizing a deep need for recuperation in today's pressurized society, Susie is an installation that engages concepts of fitness, rehabilitation, and recreation. A shortening of "suspended activation," Susie explores how the capacity to rest might be architecturally trained as a strategy of resistance.

SOFTSITE takes cues from Susie by imagining how unconventional materials could provide rest on a public site. The technique of weaving fabric strips together can also accommodate offcut materials and lend an approachable, comfortable expression.

PROGRAMMING



9
SEWING AND QUILTING ACTION
TALLINN SEWING ROOM; REET AUS

We propose a collective sewing action involving local expertise and citizens, to produce a high quality, tailored rainjacket to clad the final pavilion.

We have identified two local resources: the new **sewing room at Tallinna Keskraamatukogu** (Sole Library), and **Reet Aus**, a Tallinn-based slow fashion designer who works with scrap textiles and holds repair workshops. Her studio is located within walking distance of the TAB 2024 site.

Textile bag and quilt workshops can be held during the biennial under the temporary tarp roof.

Reference image by process-based artist Wynde Dyer.



10
CAMP HERE TONIGHT
WYNDE DYER, IN SAY: *RADICAL! YOU SAY: FEMINIST!*, VANCOUVER, 2018

Wynde Dyer's tarp quilting practice transforms a hard, exterior-facing fabric into a warm, familiar material reminiscent of domesticity and notions of home. In *Camp Here Tonight*, A-frame tents are clad in colourful tarp pieces sewn together. In the dark, the illuminated tarp envelopes are completely elevated from the original ubiquitous material.

In this vein, SOFTSITE's rain jacket shifts the aesthetic of salvage beyond pure utility or provisionality, into more experiential and aesthetic registers.



9
REBEAUTY/NORDIC BUILT COMPONENT REUSE
VANDKUNDSTEN ARCHITECTS, 2014-2016

This project explores, through 1:1 mock-up prototypes, new practices for the reuse of dismantled building components and materials at all product stages - from sourcing and rehabilitation to design integration and construction.

One of these mock-ups was a Spiro wall shingle prototype made from flattened ventilation ducts, clipped onto a wood frame. Depending on what materials are sourced in Tallinn, SOFTSITE's recladding could include a workshop considering such techniques in creating seasonal cladding solutions through the process of "making good" outlined on Board 2.

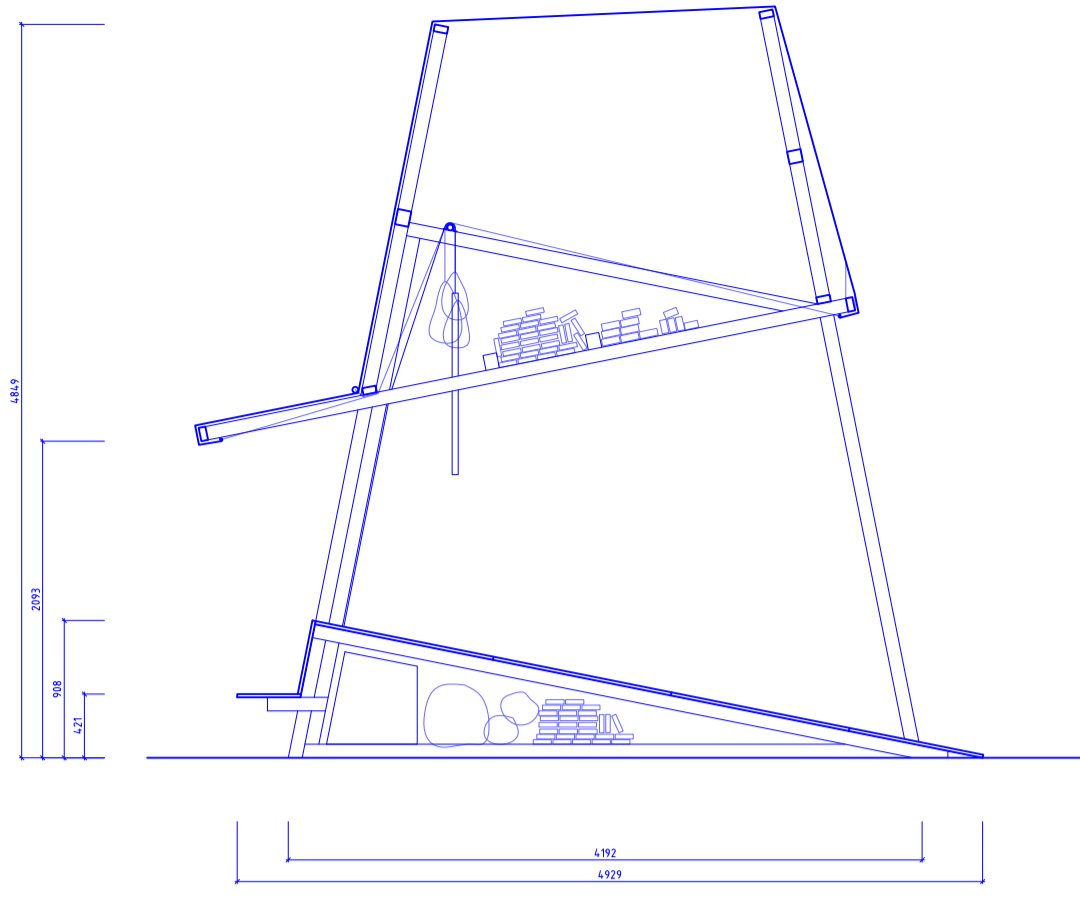


10
CHOREOGRAPHING FLOW: A STUDY IN CONCRETE DEPOSITION
HELENA WESTERLIND, 2021

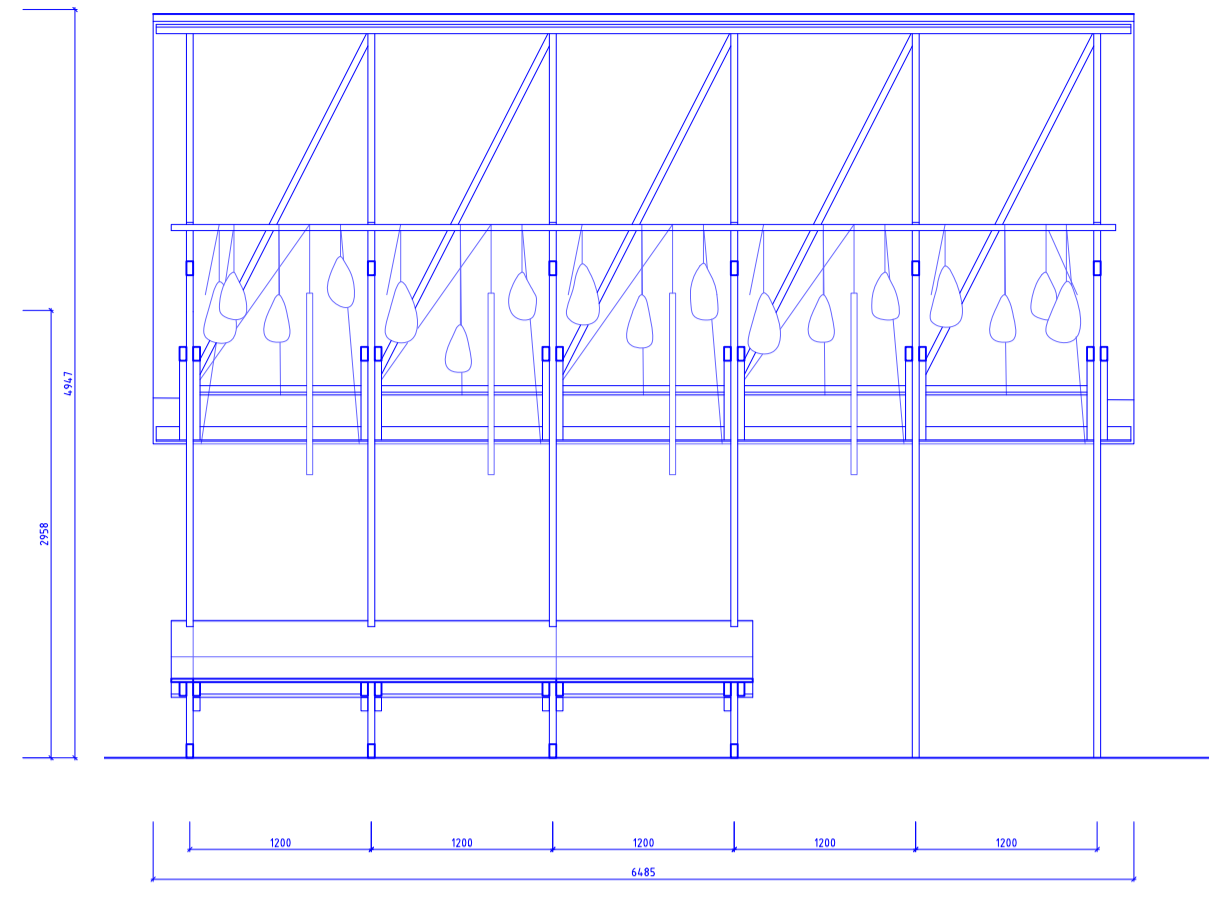
Stockholm-based architect and materials researcher Helena Westerlind uses the term "choreography" to refer to the processes of guided deposition that she engages with. Her work looks at the mixtures, tests, and apparatuses that are taken for granted in producing common construction materials like concrete, opening them up to artistic experimentation and reformulation.

The SOFTSITE public program is to include a public workshop themed loosely around Westerlind's previous work on a "liquid stone cookbook" whereby bags would be transformed into moulds for the production of permanent furniture for the pavilion.

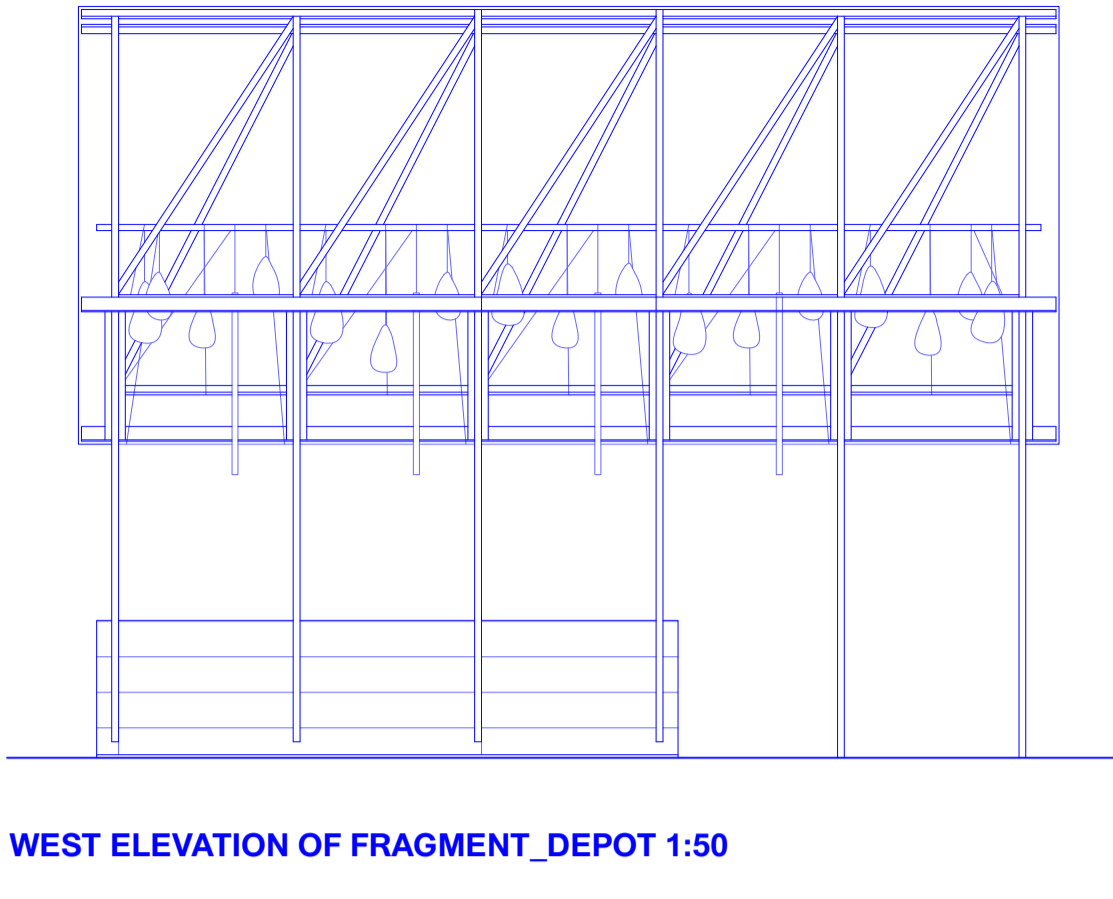
FRAGMENT_DEPOT



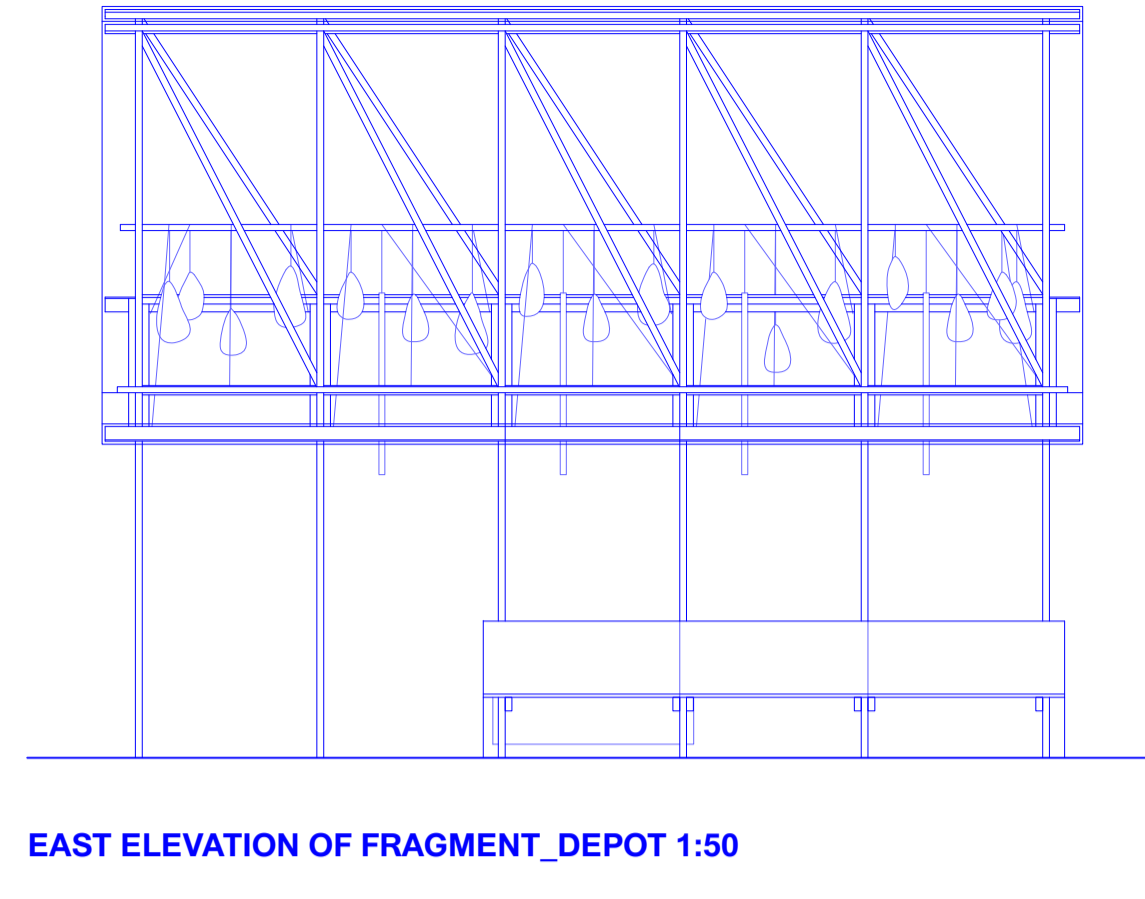
CROSS SECTION OF FRAGMENT_DEPOT 1:50



LONG SECTION OF FRAGMENT_DEPOT 1:50

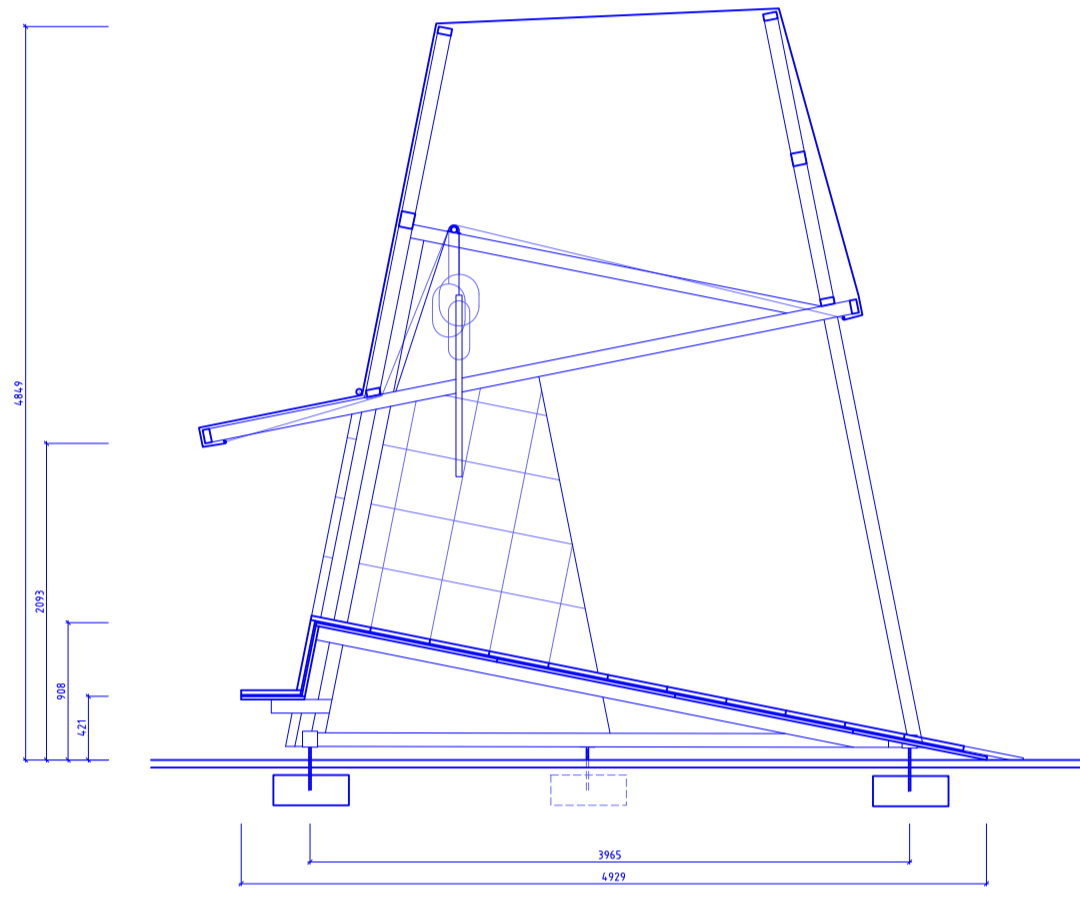


WEST ELEVATION OF FRAGMENT_DEPOT 1:50

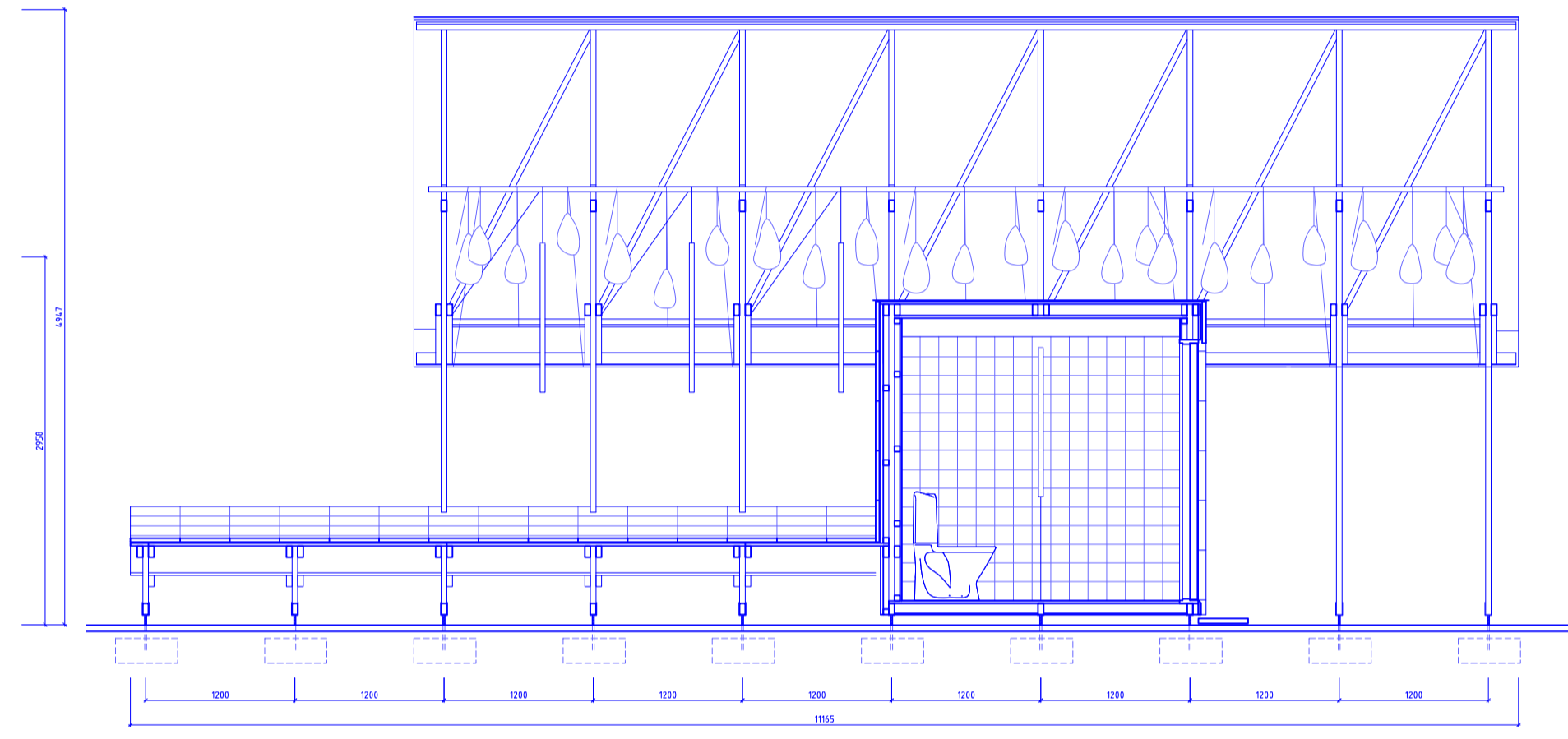


EAST ELEVATION OF FRAGMENT_DEPOT 1:50

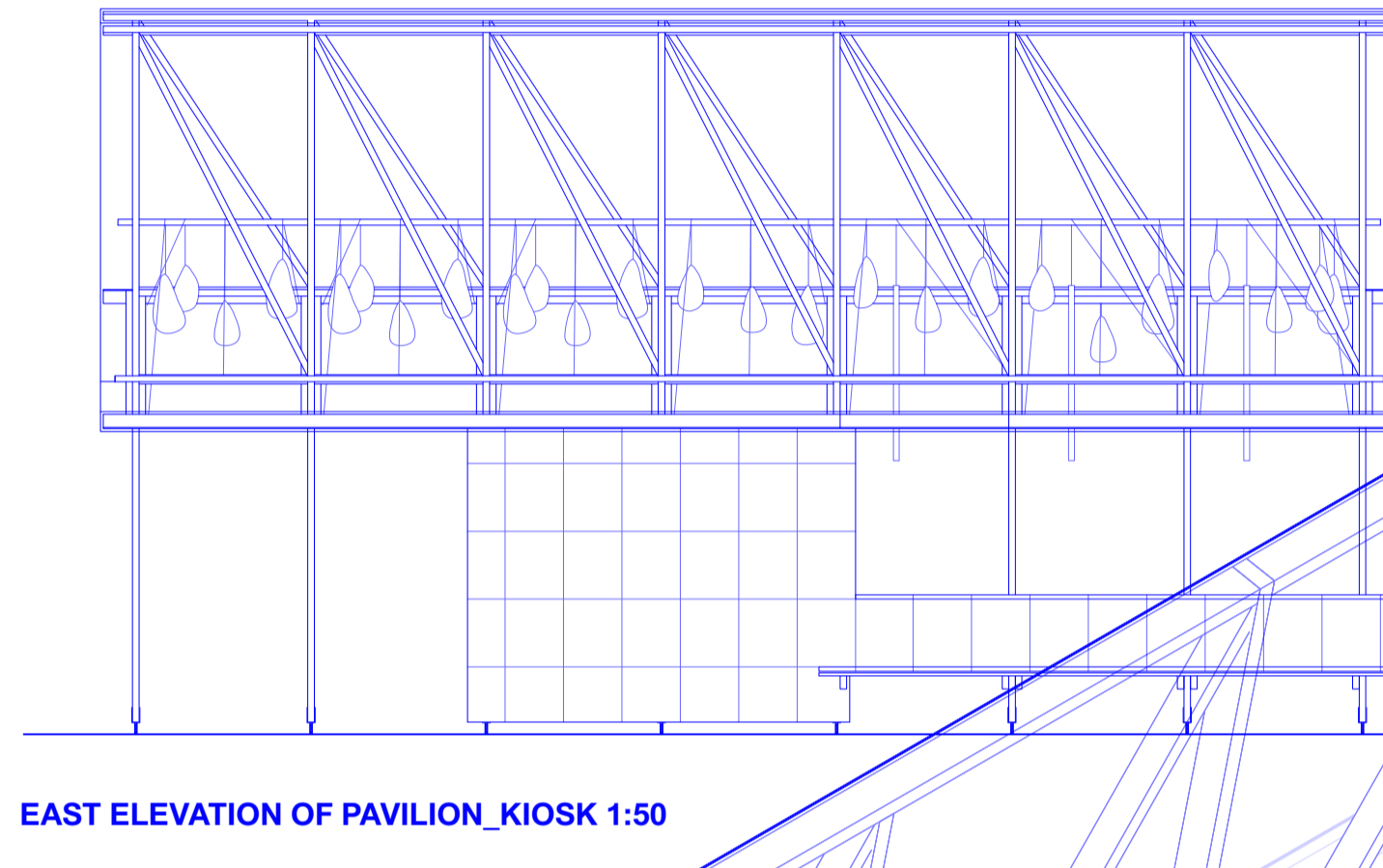
PAVILION_KIOSK



CROSS SECTION OF PAVILION_KIOSK 1:50

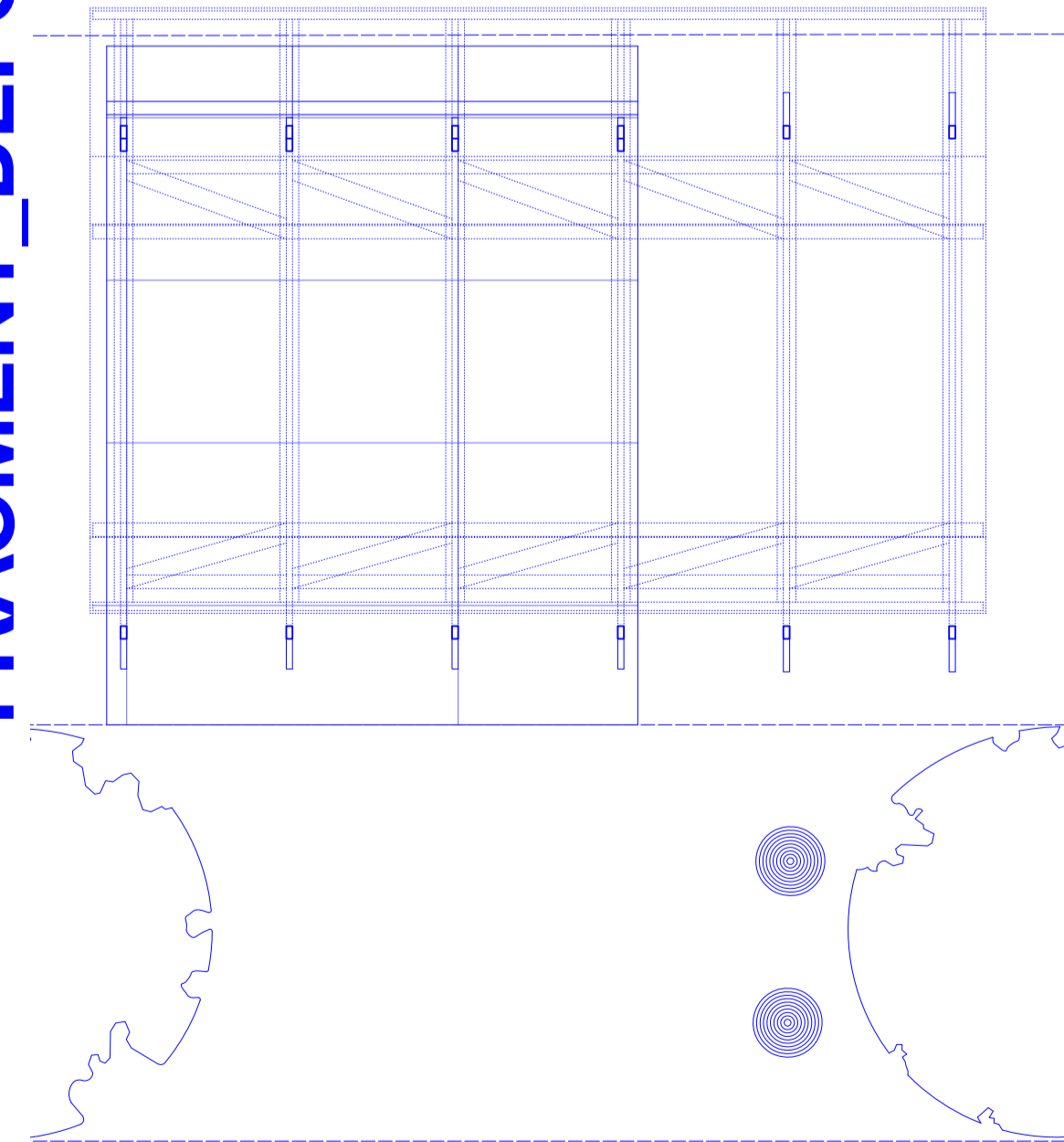


LONG SECTION OF PAVILION_KIOSK 1:50

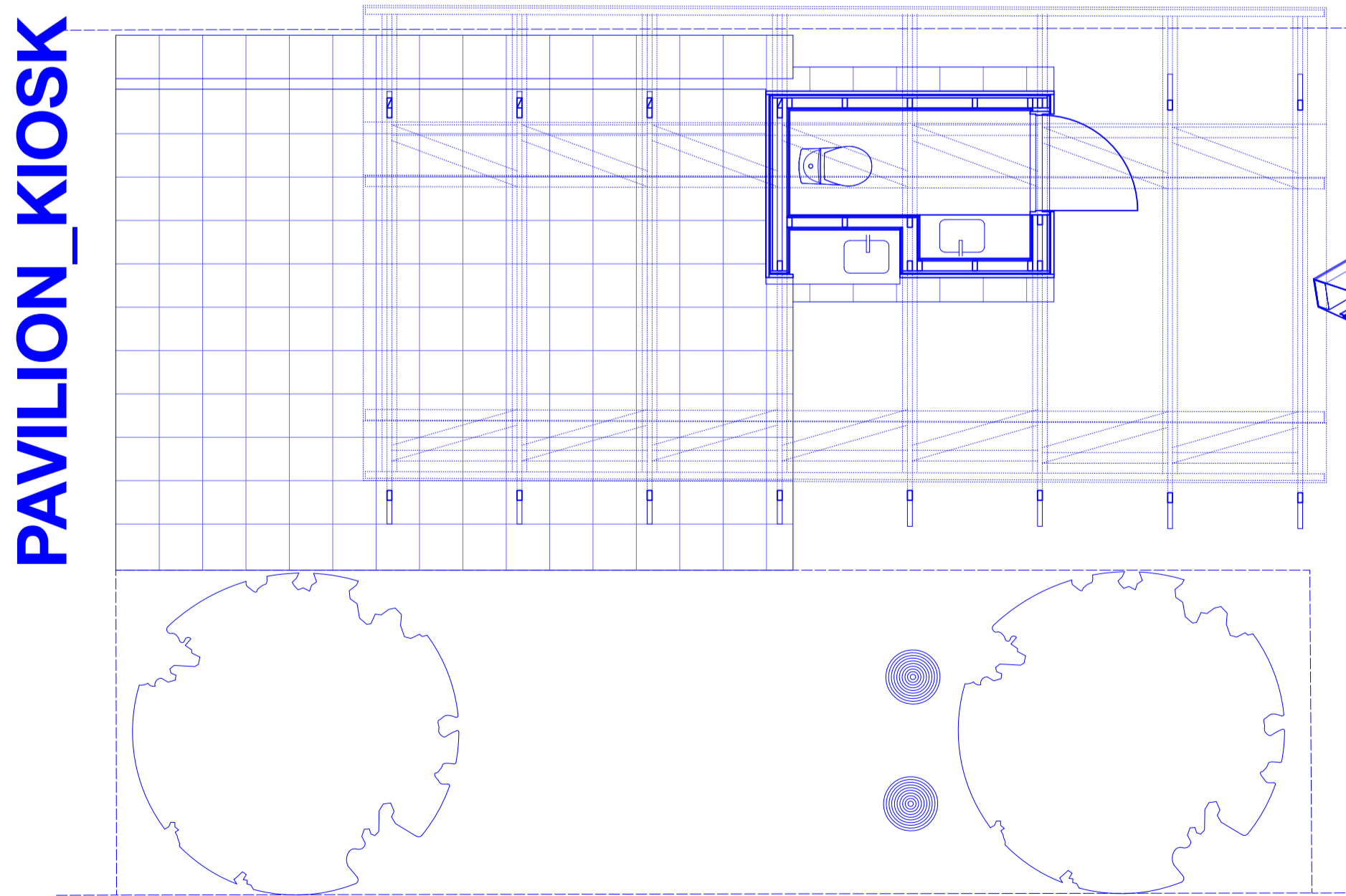


EAST ELEVATION OF PAVILION_KIOSK 1:50

FRAGMENT_DEPOT



PLAN DRAWING OF FRAGMENT_DEPOT 1:50



PLAN DRAWING OF PAVILION_KIOSK 1:50

DRESS REHEARSAL

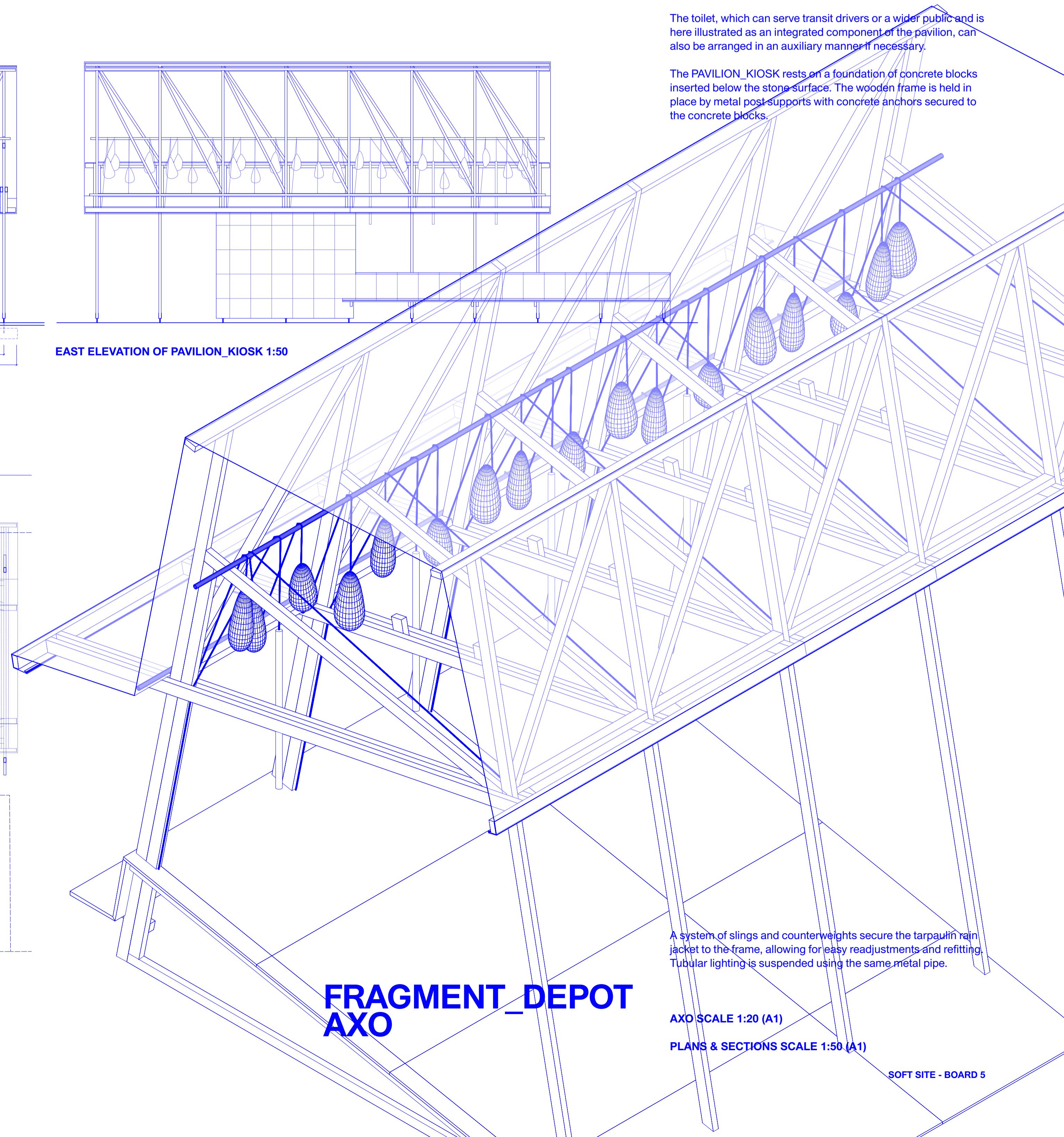
The wooden frame of the FRAGMENT, which we conceive of as a SLOW DEPOT, is self-supporting, either resting directly on the existing stonework of the plaza, or using a thin layer of bitumen, rubber, fabric, wood, or concrete, to protect the stone surfacing, with no need for penetration or alteration of the existing surface.

The easy to assemble, re-assemble, and dis-assemble nature of the frame of the FRAGMENT_DEPOT facilitates experimentation. Different techniques of splicing, joinery, and reinforcement can be tried out and studied onsite, resulting in a strategic documentation of best-practice techniques in anticipation of the final pavilion.

The FRAGMENT_DEPOT is proposed as a draft to be further developed into the PAVILION_KIOSK in dialogue with local authorities and the commissioning body. Local construction and building code compliance and accessibility is to be refined as the project progresses.

The toilet, which can serve transit drivers or a wider public and is here illustrated as an integrated component of the pavilion, can also be arranged in an auxiliary manner if necessary.

The PAVILION_KIOSK rests on a foundation of concrete blocks inserted below the stone surface. The wooden frame is held in place by metal post supports with concrete anchors secured to the concrete blocks.



FRAGMENT_DEPOT AXO

A system of slings and counterweights secure the tarpaulin rain jacket to the frame, allowing for easy readjustments and refitting. Tubular lighting is suspended using the same metal pipe.

AXO SCALE 1:20 (A1)

PLANS & SECTIONS SCALE 1:50 (A1)