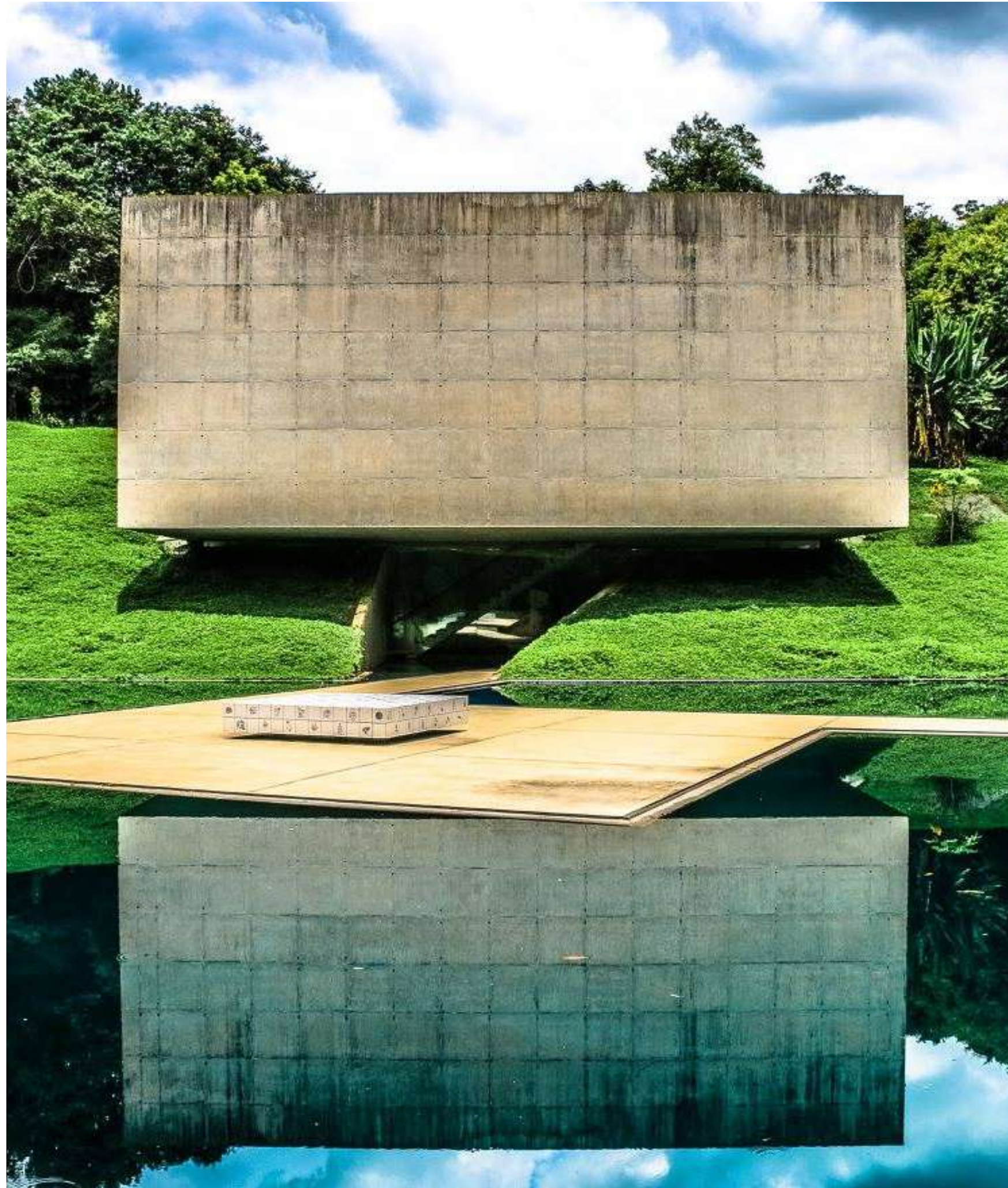


Babylon Gardens

Future of sustainable urban spaces

Introduction



The purpose of this project is to explore the relation and limits between art, architecture and nature, which means all the elements necessary for people living in the urban area, and to construct them as a habitat for sustainable future.

In this project we will see works which navigate on the boundaries of art, strongly inspired by the potential of architecture, even bringing what it is supposed to be the main difference between the two disciplines: utility. The purpose of those works does not stop at the mere contemplation; in fact, in some cases they are meant to be used – a property typically attributed to architecture.

Artists working on this project go beyond the traditional usage of artificial objects, which tends to serve exclusively the direct purpose of human, and add to them space for nature to thrive, creating green areas which will contribute to lowering temperatures in the concrete jungle, neutralize carbon emissions, but also positively impacting mental well-being of inhabitants.

The project



“For the artist, communication with nature remains the most essential condition. The artist is human, himself nature; part of nature within natural space.” Antoniades, Anthony C. Poetics of Architecture

The concept of architectural and artistic sustainability, using and drawing on natural elements in structural designs dates back to the ancient times, when the abundance of resources was used in such a way that allowed for efficiency and utility and catered for the needs of the people, both practically and aesthetically. The first architectural and artistic attempts were indeed inspired by the surrounding landscapes and forms; our ancestors did not only use ecological materials, but also incorporated living elements of nature in building and shaping functional spaces.

The ancient peoples' understanding of the distinctive relationship between man and nature derived from the inherent, almost spiritual receptiveness and appreciation towards the perfectness and balance of natural processes. Their admiration, gratitude and humility towards nature, its power and generosity were a determining factor in architectural and artistic development. Ancient relationship with nature embodied more than just coexistence; rather it resembled a continuous dialogue, harmonious reciprocal communication between man and other elements. Literary sources teach us that the ancient

Babylonians and Assyrians, who inhabited the area of the Northern and Eastern parts of the 'Fertile Crescent', where the inventors of landscape planning that incorporated gardens, orchards and various forms of water within cities and social spaces. It was there, presumably, that the remarkable ancient achievement of landscape architecture was constructed: the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. The most mysterious of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon remain a challenge in Mesopotamian research, owing to the lack of mention in Babylonian contemporaneous sources as well as insufficient historical and archaeological evidence. The existing, primarily Greek accounts also seem contradictory in terms of the description and origins of the Gardens. There are three principal ancient writers whose accounts allow us to attempt to define their location and appearance.

The earliest mention of the Hanging Gardens is that of Berossus, a Babylonian priest of Marduk, who wrote in the third century BC. It was Berossus who credited the construction of the Gardens to the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II reigning in the sixth century BC. Nebuchadnezzar would build the Gardens to please his Median wife Amytis, who longed for the green, lush, and mountainous landscape of her homeland. This romantic interpretation is what added to the ethereal, mysterious aura that surrounds the Hanging Gardens



of Babylon until today. In his writing, Berossus refers to the Babylonian Wonder as a 'pensile paradise', that is, a suspended, elevated, or hanging, garden. He describes the magnificence of the palace placed within the gardens, and mentions high stone terraces that rendered the construction an exact resemblance of mountains, with different kinds of trees and plants adorning them. Strabo, a Greek geographer of the first century BC admires the size of the Hanging Gardens – four plethra (over 400 feet) long – and the mastery of their construction. He makes note of cube-like foundations filled with soil and holding trees, vaults and arches, and a stairway reaching up to the highest point, embellished with colourful flowers and incorporating water conducts.

One of the most detailed descriptions of the Babylon Gardens is given by a Greek historian Diodorus of Sicily, who also wrote in the first century BC. Diodorus writes that the gardens were square-shaped and laid out on an intricate construction of planted rooftop terraces built in the form of ascending tiers, which gave the site the appearance of a theatre. Large trees were rooted at a height above ground level and in upper terraces rather than in the earth, and a lush variety of the most delightful, most satisfying to the eye by their size and beauty flowers and plants of all kinds was cultivated. The construction was supported on stone columns carrying beams of palm wood curving uprights, resistant to dampness, and able to nourish itself to the root

branches and fibers. Streams of water drawn from the river would flow plentifully from elevated sources down interlaced sloping channels, constantly irrigating the whole area and keeping it permanently green and luscious. The Gardens, wrote Diodorus, were "a work of art of royal luxury". Though traditionally thought to be located in Babylon, some recent sources suggest that the Gardens were in fact built in Nineveh, an ancient Assyrian city on the eastern bank of the Tigris river, by the Assyrian king Sennacherib around the seventh century BC. Despite the fact that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon no longer there and the uncertainty surrounding their existence and details, they remain an expression of appreciation for the unique symbiotic bond between man and nature, and the idea of incorporating that accord into a magnificent work of landscape engineering still fascinates us today.

Recently it has become clear what enormous damage has been inflicted on nature over the 150 years of human industrial activity. The manic growth of the city and its indispensable role in development, paired with the infatuation with technology, advancement, expansion and ownership have inevitably led the mankind to the verge of renouncing our once-inherent connection with nature. Our relationship with the living world, much like the perception of our own role within it, has been distorted. Nature has become a commodity, an article that can be bought and sold, and moulded to our liking. The ancient



metaphysical kindred between man and nature as a common life force that drove spiritual and physical trajectory has become no more than a distant myth or a deluded indigenous legend. The recent years have seen a shift in how we see our relationship with nature and brought new, or perhaps the original perception of the role that nature could and should play in our development endeavours, particularly in the light of the urgent need for sustainable solutions. Contemporary urban engineers, architects and artists are becoming more and more aware of the ways in which we can utilize nature without exploiting it, and how it can reclaim its role as a metaphysical driving force that provokes and fosters life, vitality, and rebirth. The innovating solutions within the framework of sustainability use natural resources to provide energy, improve air and water quality, and protect and preserve the wider natural environment. In architecture and landscape engineering, this interprets into a new, reconstructed way of perceiving the connection between architectural and urban space and the natural elements. It is indeed the nature and its conditions itself that made architecture possible and fortified it over the centuries.

It continuously showed the mankind its astonishing science, remarkable providence and faultless pristine beauty captured in its mechanisms and structures – the complete masterpiece, so adored in the ancient view. Drawing from the fabled wonder of Hanging Gardens of Babylon, we aim to create new visions in architecture and art that honour

the ancient understanding of nature and seek to incorporate it in urban and landscape planning combined with art in such a way that responds to contemporary needs and challenges and reinforces our relationship with environment, both physically and symbolically.

The Gardens, as an expression of ancient affinity towards life and nature is an inspiration for cultivating participation and unity, deconstructing the perceived physical boundary between man and nature, and striving to redefine our role in the living world. Nature provides us with all the vital aesthetic and economic tools that can inspire our creative desires and stimulate creation and invention. Thus, the artist can and should assume the role of a complimentary positive force, an appreciative co-operator, a parallel element of nature and its components.

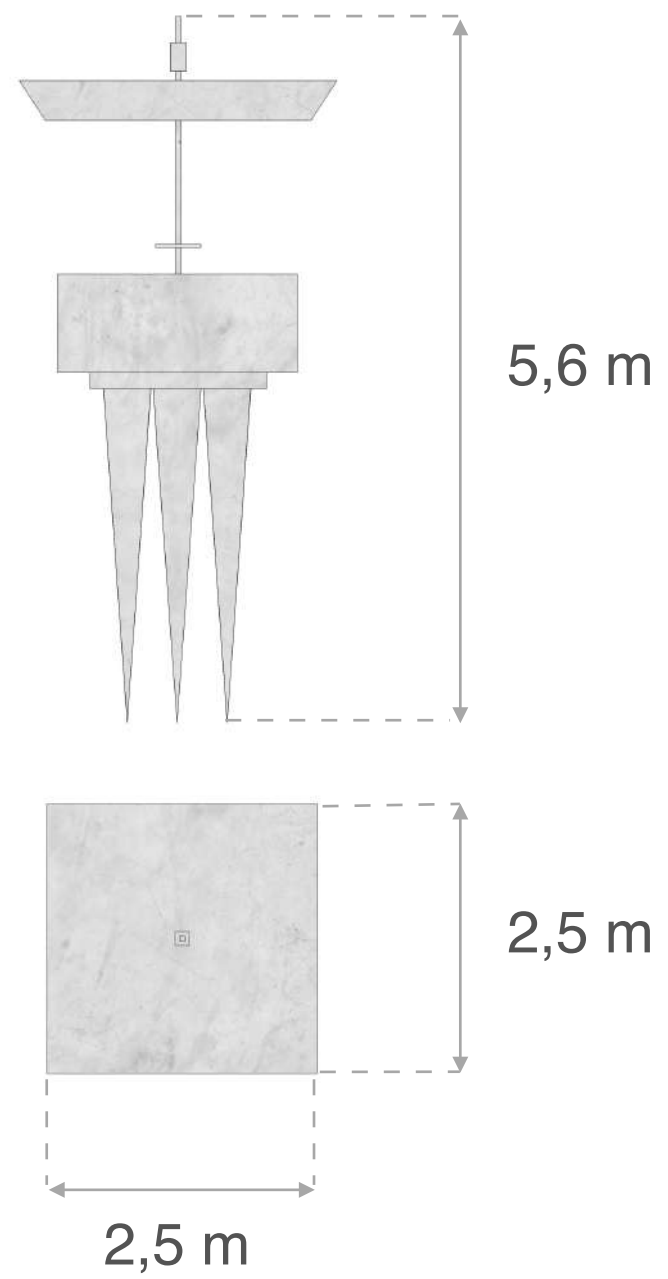
Like Amytis's longing for the lush, abundant landscapes of her beloved homeland, the man's yearning to reconnect with nature leads him to the revival of the ancient unity and harmony. Architecture and art can bring ways of redefining the complex, yet simple character of the fine relationship with nature, and striving to rejuvenate the sublime connection with the forces that shape our spaces and surroundings, not just in selected, restricted places, but everywhere, without constraints, boundaries, or thresholds.

Visuals



BX - 0001

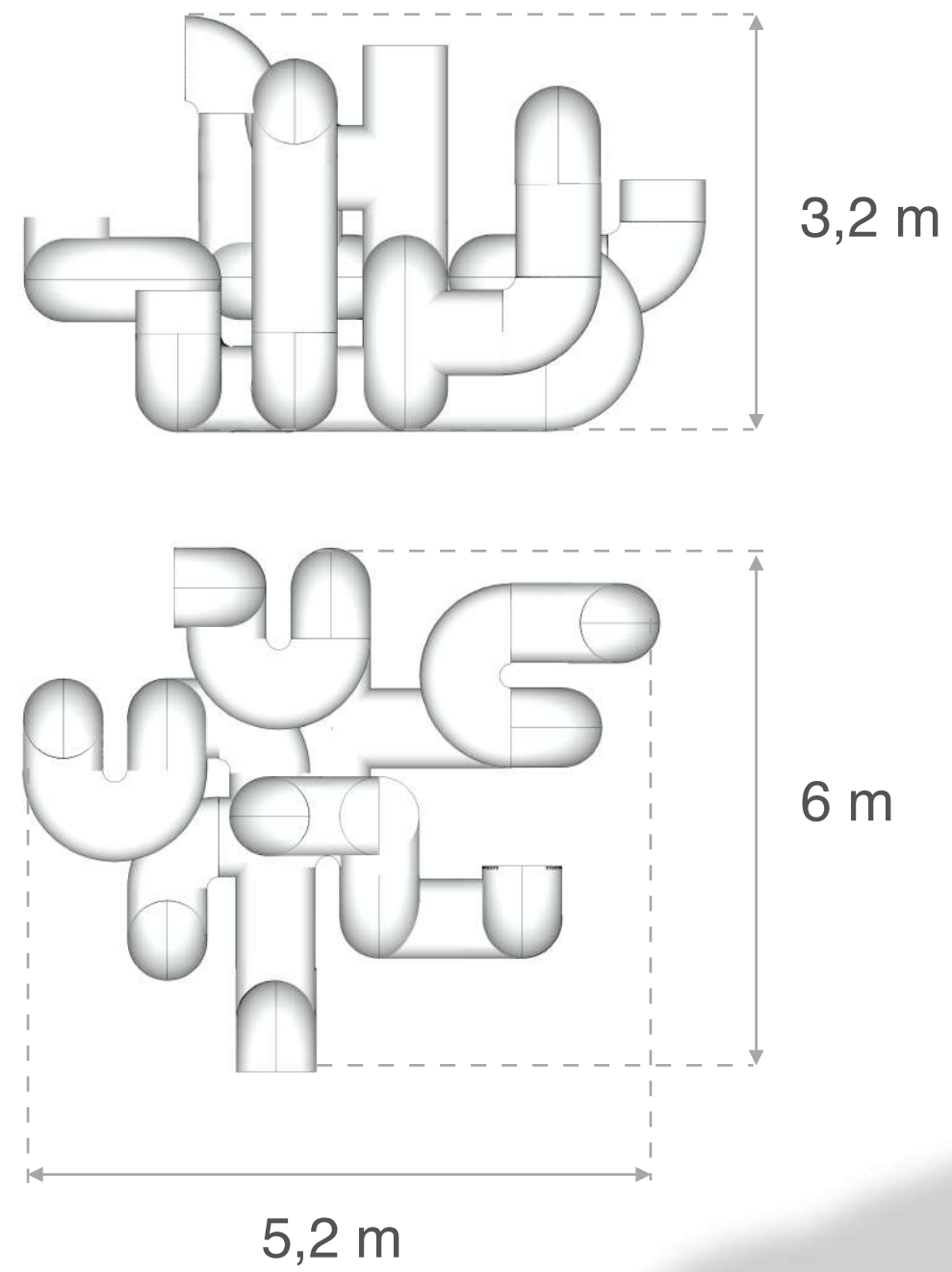
Inspired by the Babylon's Hanging Gardens, this piece connects sculpture, architecture, and nature in an exquisite mix of refinement and delicacy, blended with the beauty of nature.





BX - 0003

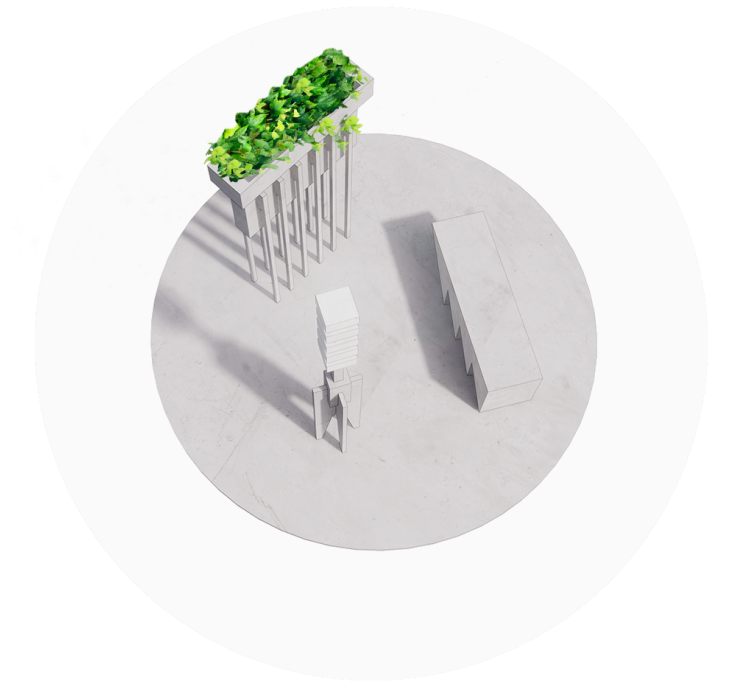
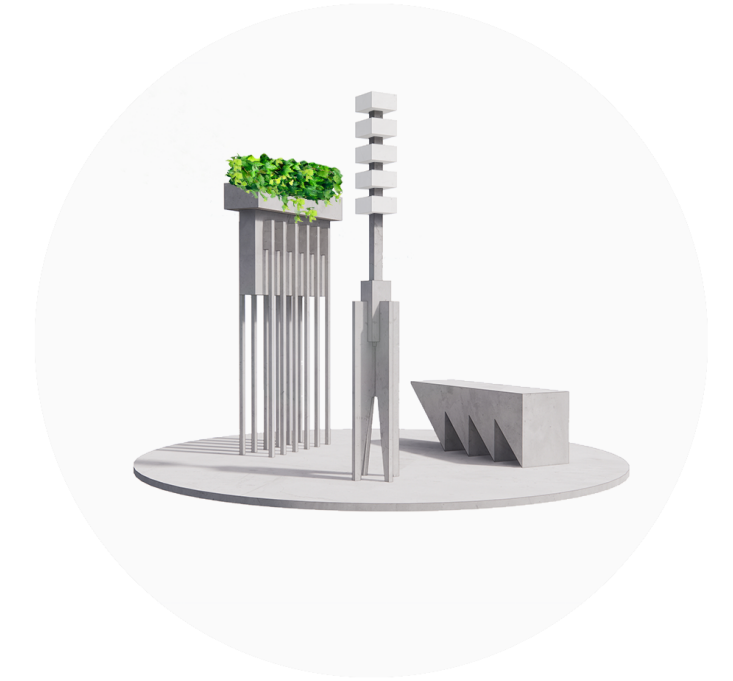
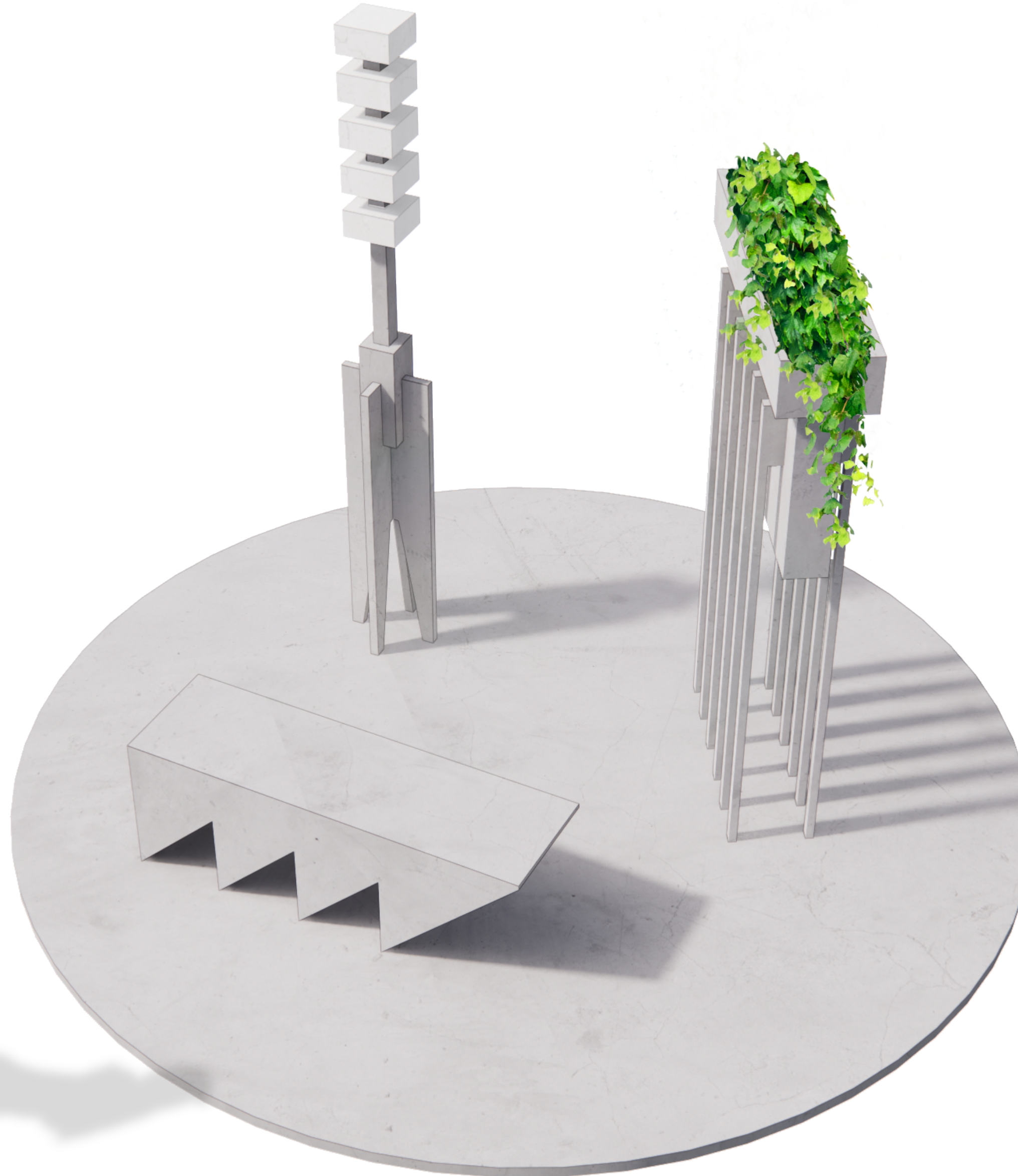
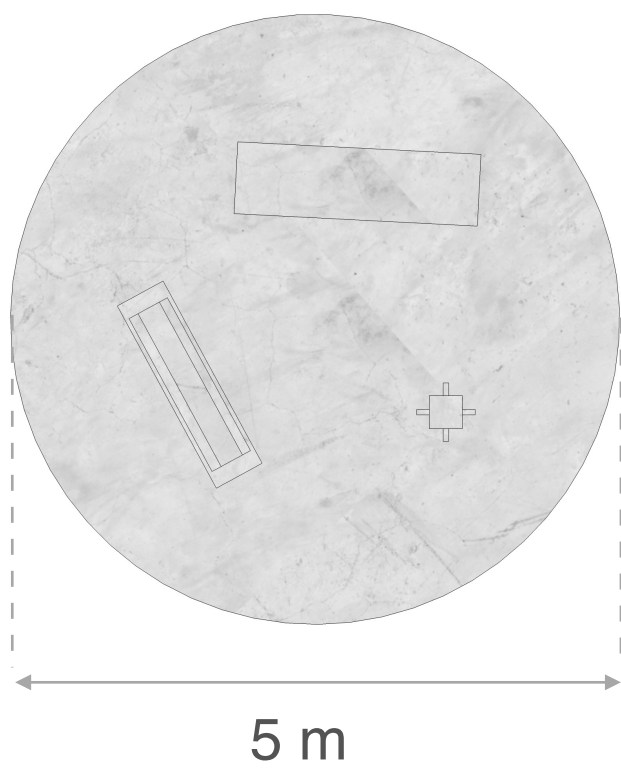
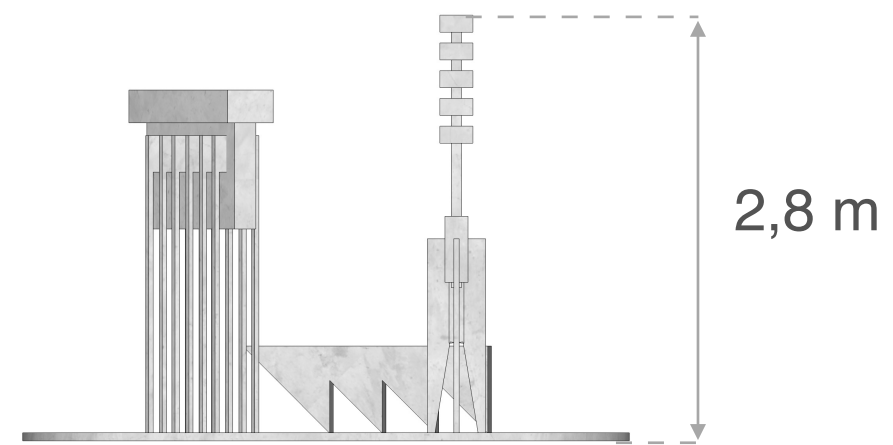
Referencing Medusa, this brutalist composition is as terrifying as it is beautiful. Combined together with winding plants, it enchants with its curves like a body of a nymph.





BX - 0005

“Zone” with three elements – a bench, a lamp and a flower pot - looking like pieces from factory machines, where nature finds its place and flows through it.



Artist





Bartosz Janczak
Barcelona, Spain

Biography



Bartosz Janczak was born on the 27th of June 1984. He is a self-taught sculptor, curator and designer born in Poland and is now living between London, UK and Barcelona, Spain. After spending ten years in the field of design, working for two of the best advertising agencies in the world and some of the most renowned brands, he decided to follow his heart and become a sculptor.

His abstract structures are inspired by military defense structures, brutalist architecture and eastern bloc monuments. They have an aggressive appearance and seem as if they tear apart the air with their edges, other times they appear bonded in a deadlock. Visually all of his art is very raw in its approach and posture.

You can find his sculptures in countries such as Spain, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, China, and Taiwan. On top of this Bartosz is also a co-founder of the Sonder Foundation, an organization supporting and promoting the activities of artists working in the field of abstract contemporary art.





Portfolio preview





Cv

2020

- “Sculpture and Spatial Forms Exhibition”, Pragaleria, Warsaw, Poland
- Joint Exhibition at Museu d'Arquitectura i Urbanisme "Josep Mas Dordal", Almacelles, Spain
- 3rd Edition of Sculpture Park d'Europa, Almacelles, Spain
- “Muestra Internacional de Arte Abstracto”, ImaginArte Gallery, Barcelona, Spain

2019

- Art Residency at the Art Department of National Taipei University of Education (NTUE), Taipei, Taiwan
- Karosta Festival, Liepaja, Latvia
- Cooper Leg Art Residency, Vaskjala, Estonia

2018

- “Ar/t /chitecture” Art Festival, Tainan, Taiwan
- “New Order” Group Show, Warsaw, Poland

2017

- “Unknown Pleasures” Art Festival, Taipei, Taiwan

2015

- “Paradise Garage” Solo Exhibition, G11ery, London, UK
- Traffic Art Festival, Gdynia, Poland

2014

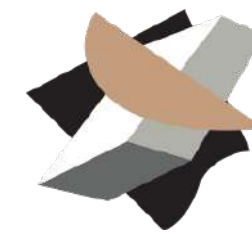
- Solo Exhibition at Craft Mnl, Manila, Philippines

2011

- Lyric Installations Festival, Gdansk, Poland

2010

- “Typoets in Viuro”, Collective exhibition, Warsaw, Poland



Thank you