

INFRASTRUCTURE OF SOULS

The wish of the pavilion, entitled 'Infrastructure of Souls', is to highlight the dynamics between cultural signs and the human scale using the meaning of trees and wood. The world has changed significantly since 1967 when Roland Barthes wrote the essay 'Semiologie et Urbanisme' yet discourses surrounding urban planning and architecture are still largely focused on function rather than on issues of human meaning and signification. While the theme issued by UIA 2017: **'The Soul of The City'** refers to animated city life, there can be elements in everyday practices that border the spiritual and connect with signs and meanings, that can be found in the cityscape.

The idea of the pavilion is based on a practice that is best described as *'leaning against trees'* – a phenomena encountered across the Baltic states, where city dwellers can be spotted leaning against trees in order to obtain the energy that the trees are believed to possess. This specific usage depicts a relationship between humans and nature in an urban setting. Thus the material of the pavilion is wood and the functionality is centered around the space the visitors create when they lean against either side of the pavilion where sticks move when applied pressure upon. The exterior of the pavilion can be interpreted as an infrastructure of a city that magnetises individual and collective consciousness – *the soul of the city*.

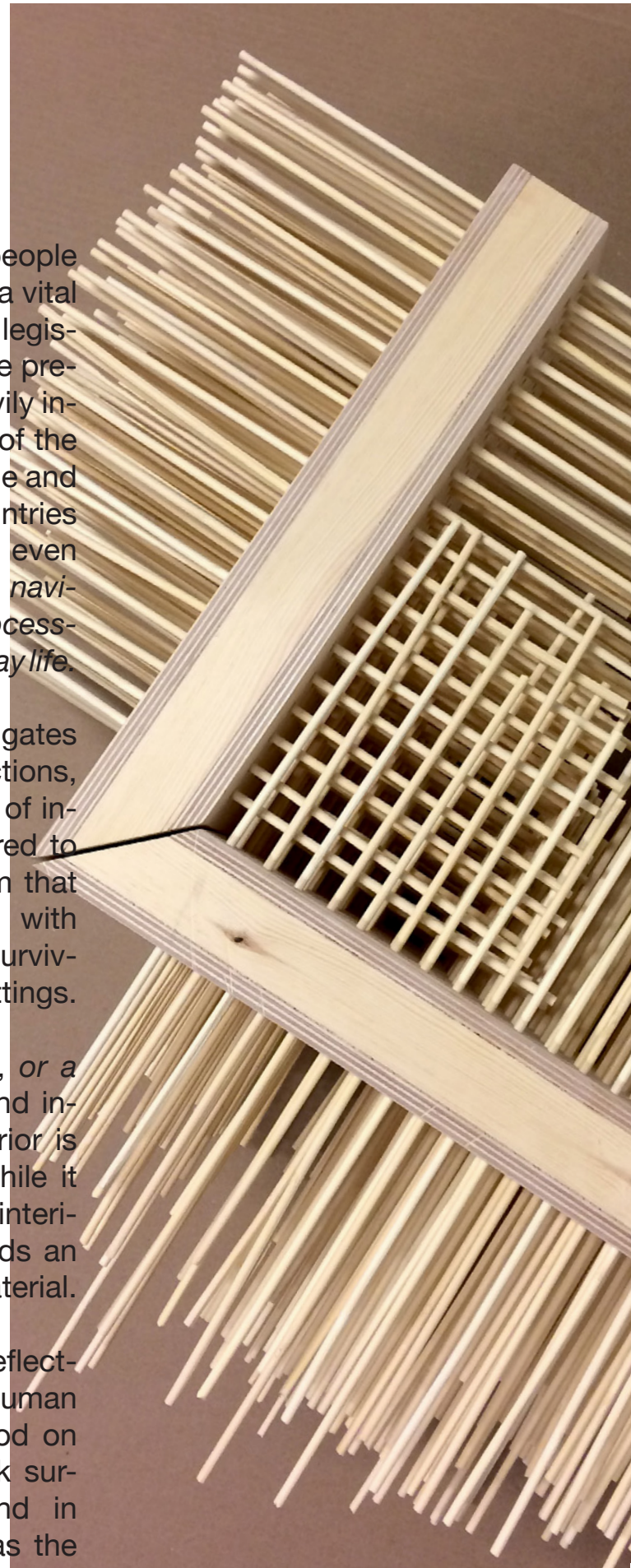


Wood has always been important to people of countries facing north, it has been a vital factor in survival. As a result of Soviet legislation, forests, and trees in cities, were preserved and historically wood has heavily influenced the architectural typologies of the Baltic states regardless of different rule and time. For the people of the Baltic countries timber continues to have a positive, even nostalgic connotation. *While the city navigates throughout different political processes, it also initiates the poetics of everyday life.*

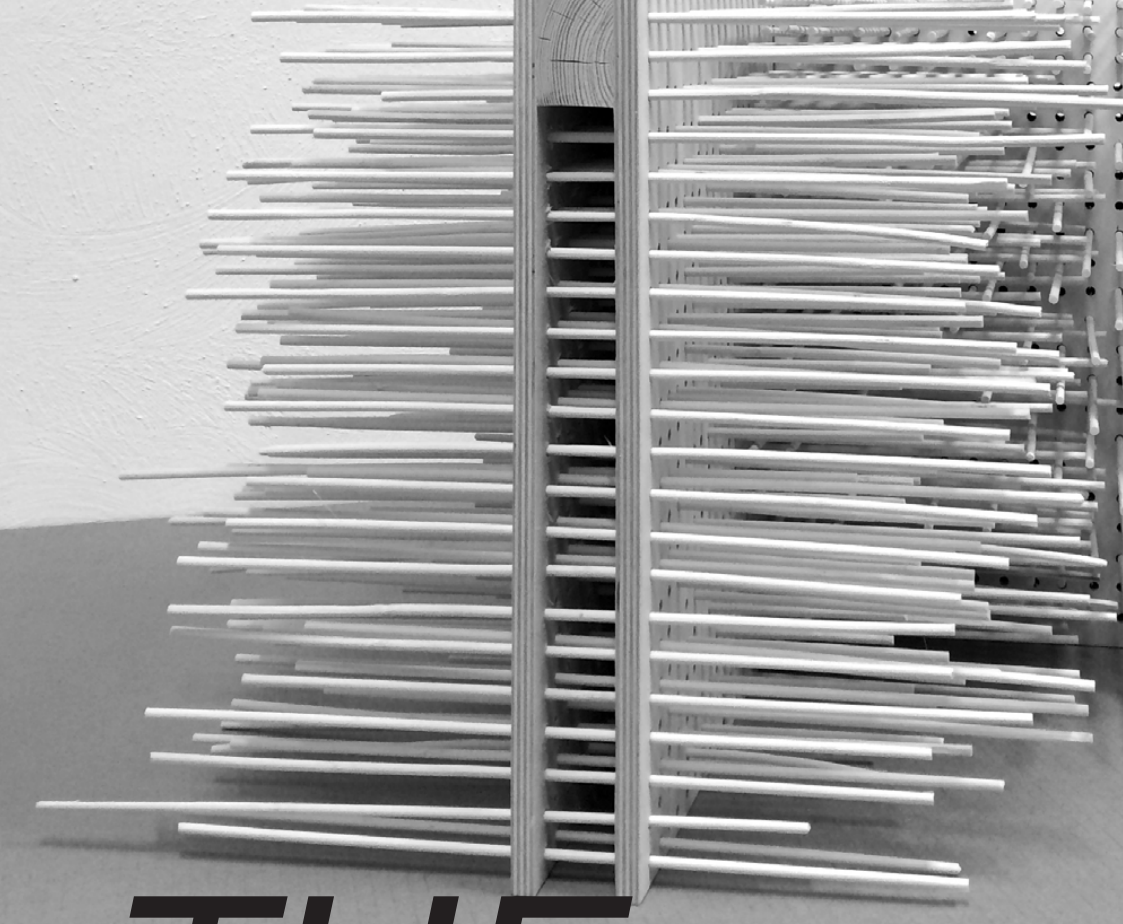
The design of the pavilion investigates how trees are elements of urban functions, how trees exist within their own kind of infrastructure. This is sometimes referred to as the *'Wood World Web'* – a system that explains how trees "communicate" with each other in order to ensure their survival in increasingly different urban settings.

As the brief by BAUA states, a city, or a chicken, exists of both an exterior and interior. Yet so do the trees. The exterior is the part that is visible to humans while it is alive and still in the ground. The interior is the wood, the material that leads an afterlife as timber and a building material.

Trees belong to all and as well as reflecting the seasons, they help reflect human lives, moods and stages of life. Wood on the other hand creates the framework surrounding ordinary everyday life and in that sense continues to reflect time as the wear leaves its mark on the wood. When dealing with revitalising a city in the Baltic states, wooden constructions are often taken into consideration and sometimes become the target of heated debate. As trees allow us to see ourselves and our surroundings in a human scale, the wooden constructions often find themselves in opposition to taller constructions that reach for the sky. 'Infrastructure of Souls' is a way of relating to the current debate of spatio-cultural issues in the public sphere.



When Cicero (106-43 B.C) defined culture as the cultivation of the soul, it was an addition to agriculture – the cultivation of the soil, a term that already existed. Cicero's explanation insists on a dual understanding of culture that revolves around both the soul and the soil. In the case of 'Infrastructure of Souls' this definition serves as a useful tool in understanding how the soul of the city is cultivated by a culture that is closely connected to the soil – and the trees that grow out of it.



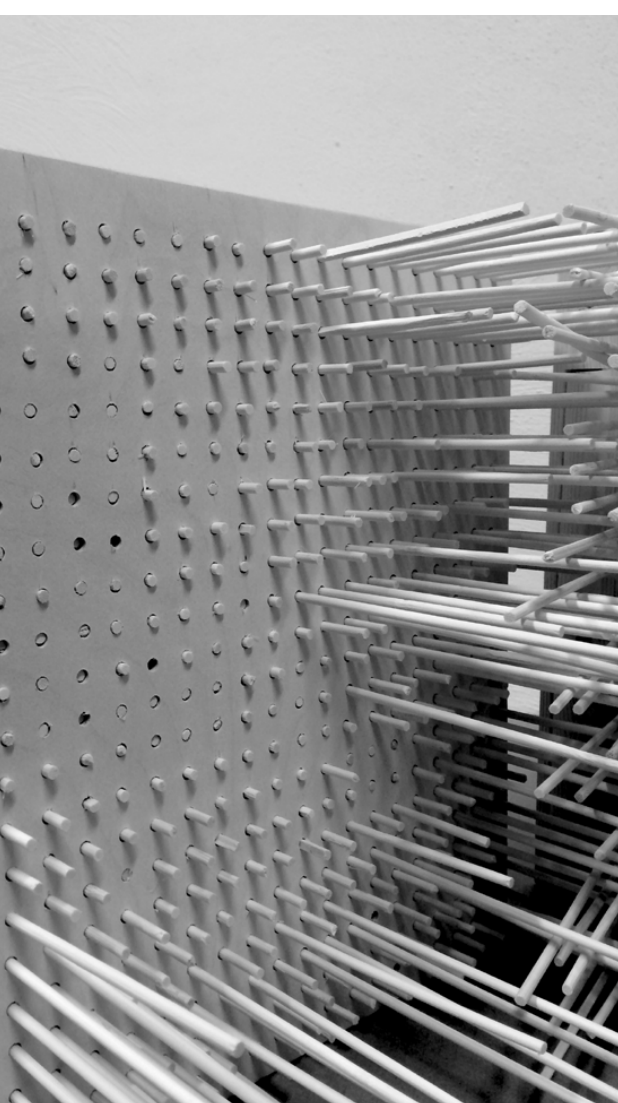
THE SOU- VENIR

The essence of a souvenir relates well with the purpose of the pavilion, as trees and wood reminiscent the idea of memory.

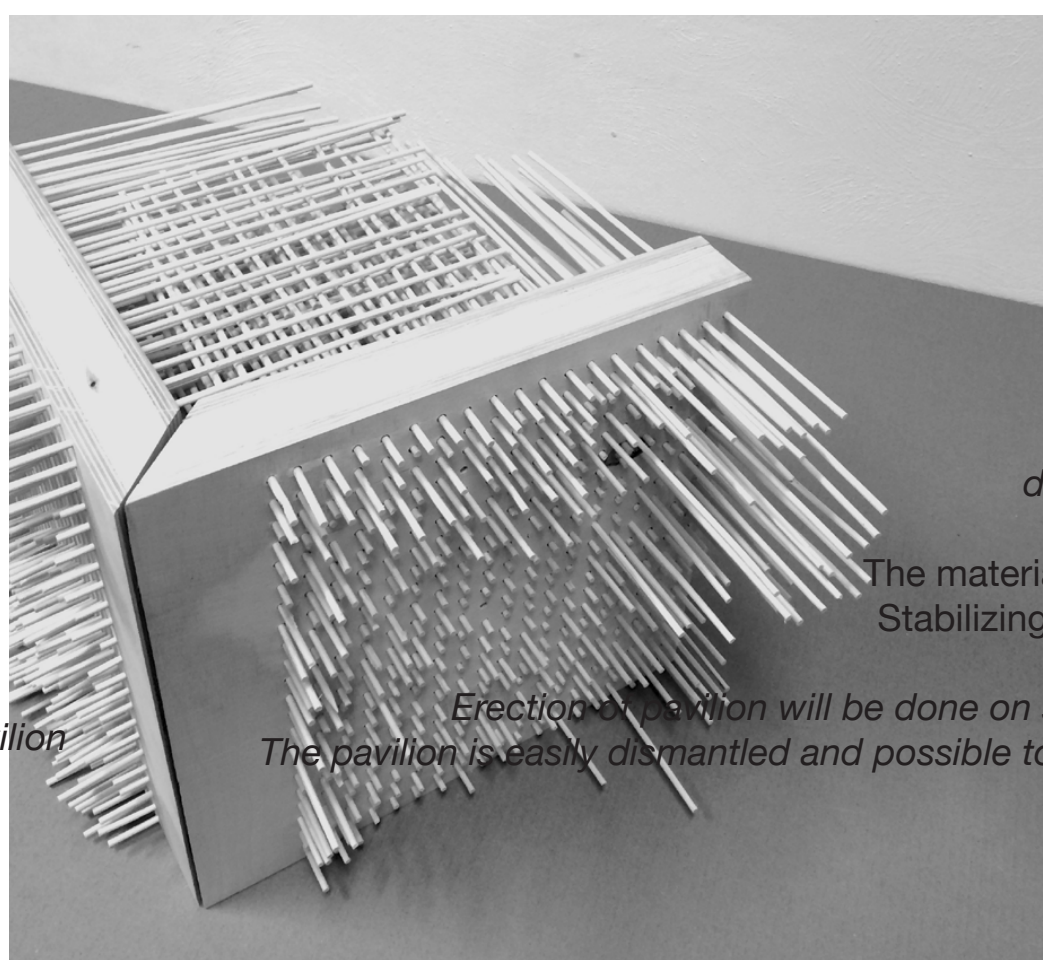
Modernity and urban life puts memory to the test – access to a common past is challenged by globalisation. The crisis of memory contributes to the need for a collective history, but instead of focusing on the restorative aspect of memory, influenced by nostalgia, the aim is to look to the future and to promote a relatable common past that is globally translatable. Most people, regardless of origin, are able to appreciate or relate to trees. In Seoul trees also have a special place in society and have as well been targeted by political struggles. About 63 km away from Seoul resides a tiny half-moon shaped island – a special place for Koreans to visit and appreciate the changing seasons exhibited by the forest. Thus the stick, as a souvenir, should to be recognized as a piece of nature that can be universally appreciated.

The idea is that the souvenir is optional. Either the visitor takes a stick, removes it from its web, or simply chooses not to interfere with the grid. The removal of the stick intends to symbolize the choices between demolishing and conserving – this choice is often considered black and white and charged with various political agendas, but the many layers at which human beings encounter historical traces or practices on an everyday basis should be acknowledged. The stick is an everyday souvenir from the global landscape and wants to spark the question:

How do we ensure that the trees stay part of the city's soul and prevent them from morphing into a sacred untouchable spiritual artifact?



Sustainability: According to numbers done by the E.U, total production of wood in the Baltic states amounted to 2.65 million tons in 2014. As coal is being replaced with wood pellets across Europe, forestry is now proving to be the green gold for the Baltic. The pavilion wishes to reflect this progress and further development of green energy and obviously promote the importance of trees in an 'urban ecosystem'. The most sustainable way to get the material is to buy it in Korea, from local suppliers.

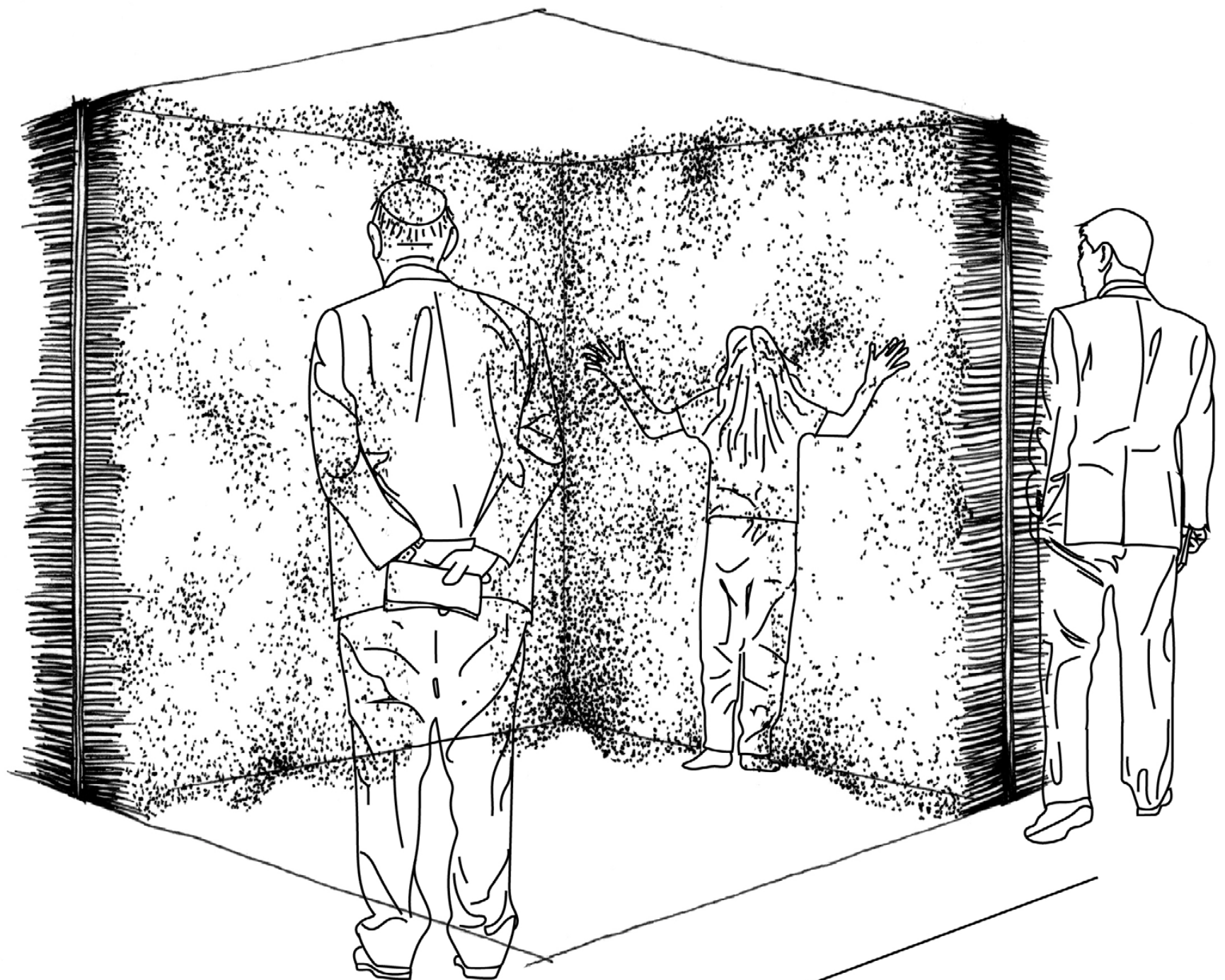


Construction details:
Unfinished hardwood sticks
length up to 500mm
diameter 5mm
Perforated plywood
thickness 15mm
holes' diameter 5mm
distance between holes 15mm

The material will be perforated in Baltics
Stabilizing construction of walls: timber

*Erection of pavilion will be done on site by the team + local team.
The pavilion is easily dismantled and possible to exhibit in different locations.*

*The model is a detail, not the pavilion
in its full entity.*



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THE PAVILION

As the two sides gradually will be dismantled, by the visitors who chooses to take a souvenir with them, the grid will emerge. This way the pavilion will be naturally interactive as the sticks will function as an invitation to engage tactilely. This flexibility allows for an open typology made of a rigid system consisting of holes. When the sticks are added to the system the pavilion will gain a quality from the human movement. *It adapts easily to external force.*

The pavilion consists of two half-way opposing grids that are filled with sticks. The adjustable sticks are added to the grid in order to articulate the spatial heterogeneity of a city as well as to create a spatial experience. Additionally the wooden sticks will make it possible for the visitor to make a print that will show how much room the visitor consumes of the space—the *human scale*. Different prints will surface in the midsts of the grid and the infrastructure of souls and make a pattern of coexistence.

