

WHERE
DO YOU GO
WHEN YOU
CLOSE
YOUR EYES?

Where Do You Go When You Close Your Eyes?

Curator Marina Slavova

Artist Kalin Serapionov

The contemporary society is in a constant state of motion, driven by the relentless pursuit of better opportunities, the desire for new experiences, and the instinct for survival in the face of ongoing crises. Continuous movement and displacement have long become the norm in the context of the globalized world.

These dynamics of constant transitions across states, nations, territories and borders create both a sense of interconnectedness and alienation, of a global community but also a lack of belonging. This compels us to consistently reassess the notion of home. The dichotomy between mobility and stability proves fundamental to humankind. It is this clash between the ever-present fragmentation of society due to constant movement and the unstoppable drive to build collectivity that appears as one of the main lines of the curatorial theme set by Adriano Pedrosa – “Strangers Everywhere”.

What is home in times of mass migration? What does our idea of home become when it loses its spatial dimension? Does it have a density, materiality and volume that can be expressed through an object or a functional item? Or is it an abstract feeling, a memory, a sense of security? What happens to our identity when we are away from home, when we lose touch with it, when we cannot return? Is it possible to mentally go there by closing our eyes for a moment? And how does one build a new, shared home? These are the questions Kalin Serapionov aims to explore in *Where Do You Go When You Close Your Eyes?*.

Developed specifically for the Bulgarian pavilion at the 60th Venice Biennale, the project is entirely tailored to the space of Sala Tiziano. It consists of a three-channel video installation located in the exhibition hall, a sculptural composition made of 33 mirrored containers and a sound environment connecting the indoor and outdoor spaces.

This video installation continues Kalin Serapionov's previous artistic line, known from projects such as “About the Walls Next To Me” (2022) and “The Dessert” (2020), in which he observes the individual behavior of the characters and the random interactions that emerge between them. His video installations are recognizable and memorable for their scale and for the depth of the psychological images he manages to capture and construct through the visual language.

In *Where Do You Go When You Close Your Eyes?* Kalin Serapionov explores the theme of communication, the boundaries between the personal and the shared, but this time the individuality of the characters is presented through their personal belongings. 33 strangers of different genders, ages, backgrounds and social contexts will participate in the filming of the video. Each of them will be provided with a mirrored surface container, the size of a traveling suitcase – a familiar capacity that has become part of our nomadic everyday life. In these containers, each participant will bring their most important possessions, defining their character, essence and interests, but also telling their personal motive and idea of travel.

The project's name, composed of 33 characters, serves as the basis for determining the number of elements comprising the installation. Also significant is the choice of a mirrored surface for the containers. The mirror appears as a symbolic tool that refers to the notion of self-reflection and the formation of the idea of one's own image. Transcending its physical dimension, mass migration is linked to a number of individual processes such as self-knowledge, awareness and adaptation, which require introspection and self-analysis.

The action in the video takes place in the atrium of an office building – an absurd space on the border between outside and inside, between workplace and freedom, which visually recalls the aesthetics of a heterotopic space of timelessness. Placed in this artificial environment, participants will face the challenge of engaging with one another, acquainting themselves through the objects, and collaboratively constructing a new shared home to reside in collectively. The mirror containers themselves will be a key element. Their modularity allows the construction of functional structures resembling furniture or the partitioning and defining of spaces.

The sound of the participants' interactions will serve as the basis for the creation of an authentic sound environment, connecting the video installation in the exhibition hall with the external spaces of Sala Tiziano. It will be modified through different algorithms, creating an immersive impact.

Three projection screens, resembling the walls of a labyrinth, will be placed in the exhibition hall. They will invite visitors to immerse themselves in the installation, enabling them to focus on a particular fragment or on the overall action. The 33 mirror containers used in the video will also be present in the show in the form of a sculptural composition placed in the courtyard. Their reflective surface, bearing the marks of use, will expose the visitors' presence, directing their gaze to their own story.

W H I E R E
D O Y O U G O
W H E N Y O U
C L O S E
Y O U R E Y E S ?

Installation – exposure plan and technical information

The video installation consists of three separate synchronized video channels and a common sound environment. The duration will be 33 minutes (loop). The three videos will be projected on three projection screens, approximately 260 x 450 cm, which will be suspended from the ceiling and will hang in the space approximately 50-60 cm from the ceiling and floor. The video projectors will be mounted to the profiles of the metal ceiling construction. The wiring will be hidden. The audio speakers will also be suspended from the ceiling, in various locations and pointing downwards, the subwoofers will be placed on the floor behind the screens.

The video screens are positioned in the hall to form a complete structure. They are kind of walls, resembling the feeling of a building, a home, a refuge where people feel safe. They are the "shelter" in common crises, risks and instability. Following the logic of things unfolding "in front of our eyes", although the title of the work refers to the invisible and abstract, the layout of the installation invites the viewer to enter and immerse. It creates the feeling of not being alone, not being isolated and not being pushed to the periphery. The location of the screens is also adapted to the viewing line. There are several viewing perspectives from which visitors could cover all three videos at a glance, while also concentrating on specific details. The three screens show separate fragments of the work, but the video projections communicate with each other and unfold a common visual narrative across the different layers, levels and directions.

The positioning of the screens takes into account the specificity of the room, namely the infrared beam of the security system, which runs through the middle of the space, though the entire length, at a height of 310 cm. In order to meet the contact camera on the opposite wall, it must not be crossed.

The ceiling of the space will be covered with separate modular panels of lightweight material or aluminum, hiding the wooden beams which are too visually active and would affect the perception of the work.

The glass of the doors to the courtyard will be covered with museum foil so as not to let in the strong daylight. This will create a suitable environment for a bright and contrasting video image.

The floor of the space will be carpeted in a neutral gray color measuring approximately 1700 x 650 cm. Its purpose is to delineate the visual field in which the video installation takes place, to eliminate glare from the Venetian mosaic and to minimize sound resonance.

The 33 50 x 70 x 40 cm containers used in the video will be installed in the courtyard. They will form an installation composition in the shape of an L-shaped wall, 240 x 340 x 220 cm. Displayed as an independent object, they appear as the main connecting element in the otherwise spatially fragmented work. Through their mirrored surface, they expose the presence of visitors, transforming them from observer to participant.

Technical specifications of the sound environment

The sound environment will be built on a sound library recorded during the making of the video as a result of the interactions between the characters in it. The recordings will be realized with different types of microphones placed in the space that the participants inhabit during the filming. Some of them will be visible, others hidden, and others will be contact and record sounds through the bodies of the objects they are mounted on.

The sound library created will allow the development of authentic sound directly tied to the visual aspect of the video installation. It will be modified through various algorithms, creating an immersive impact. For this purpose, a 12 channel sound system will be built for the hall, courtyard and corridor of the space. The sound installation will form a whole, creating the possibility for sounds from the external environment to flow into the enclosed space and vice versa, in line with the idea of migration and constant movement of people through different environments that modify the character but not the essence.

Technical specifications

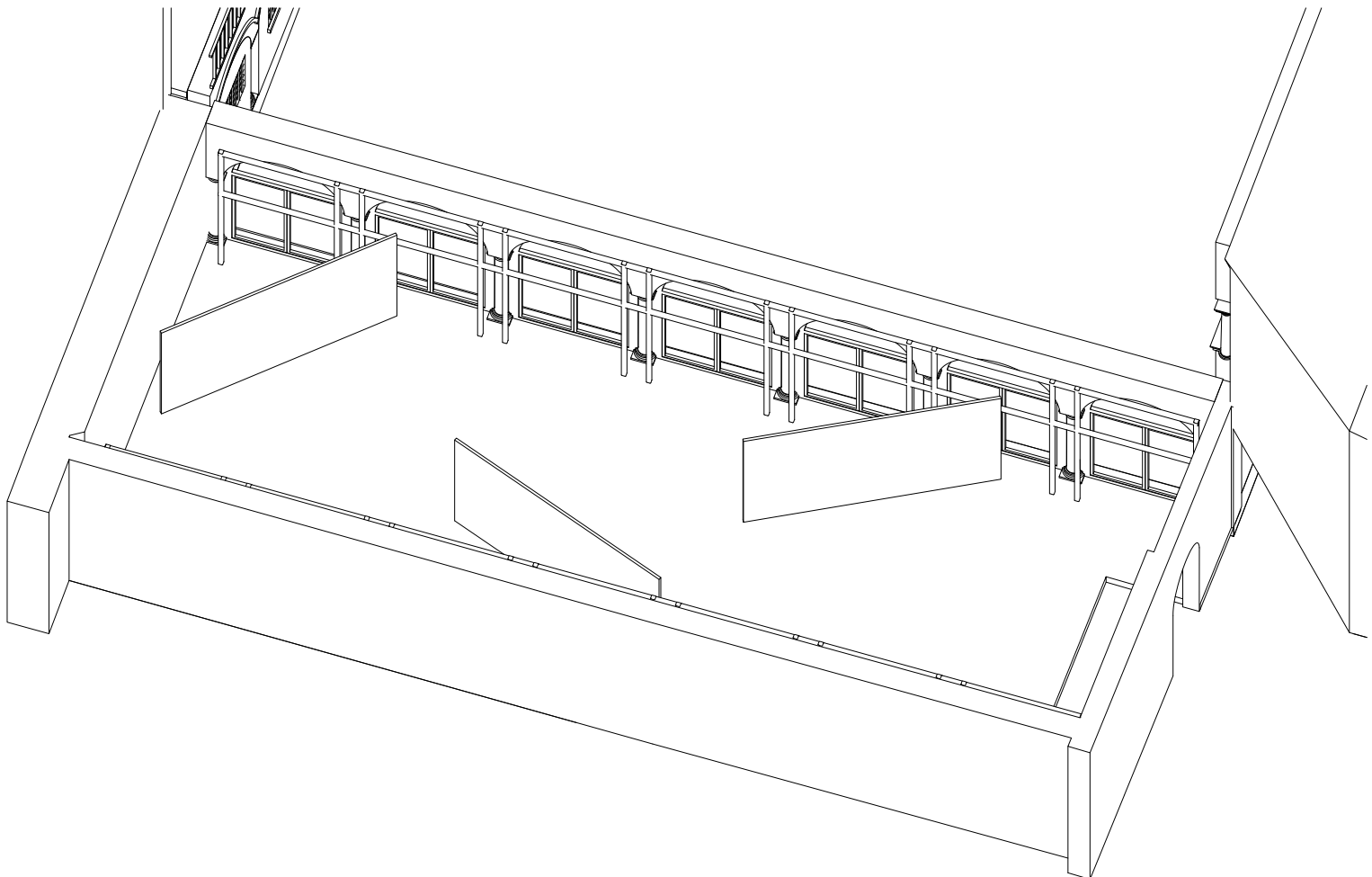
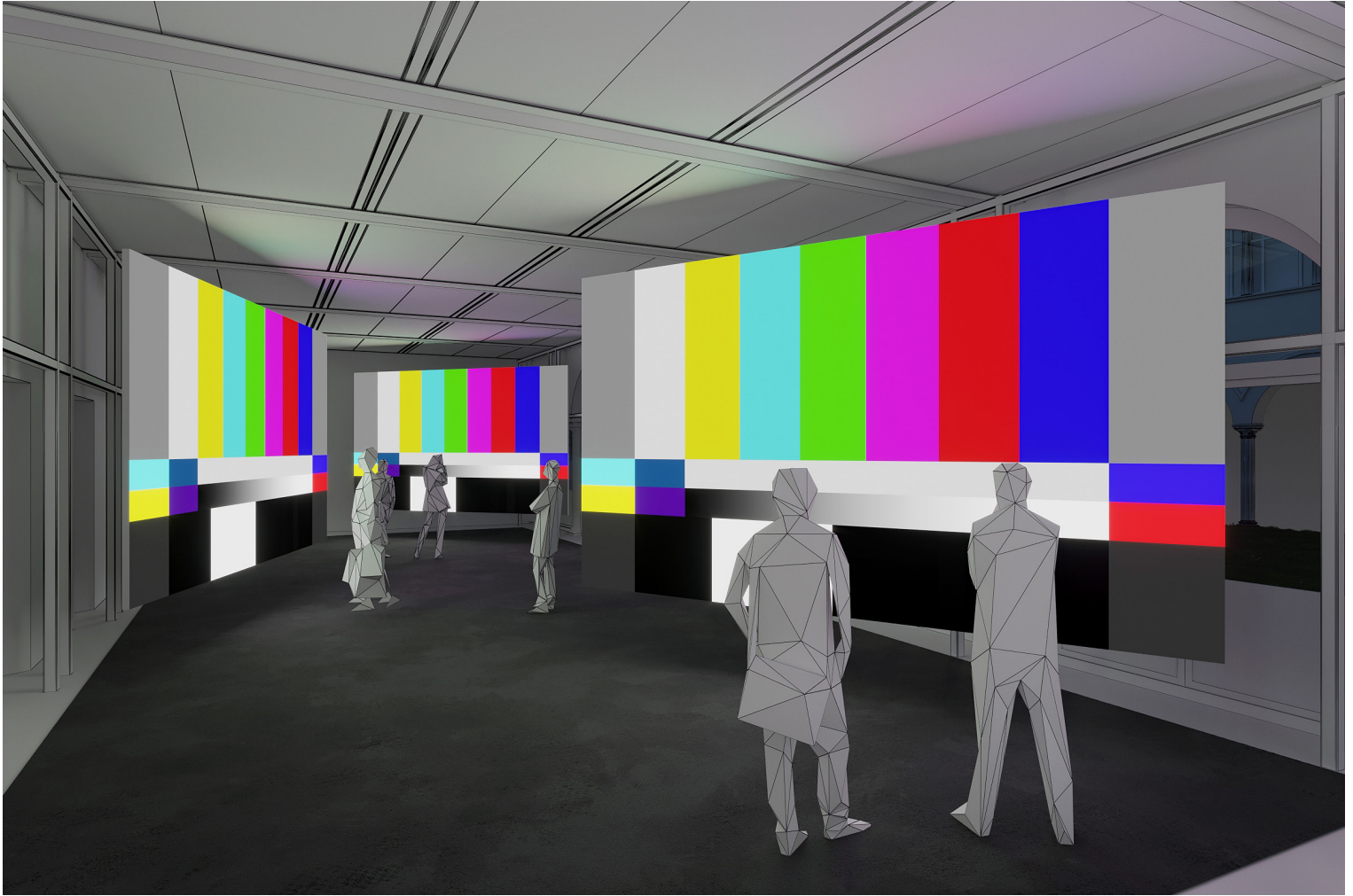
Three-channel video installation, 2K/HD, sound, sync, 33:00 min (loop);
33 pcs. metal containers with mirror surface and dimensions 50 x 70 x 40 cm each;

The work will be mastered on DCP. For the exhibition in the pavilion it will be provided in 3 separate video files, HD, QuickTime .mov, Apple ProRes 422HQ codec and one 12-channel wave audio file.

Required equipment and materials for the exhibition

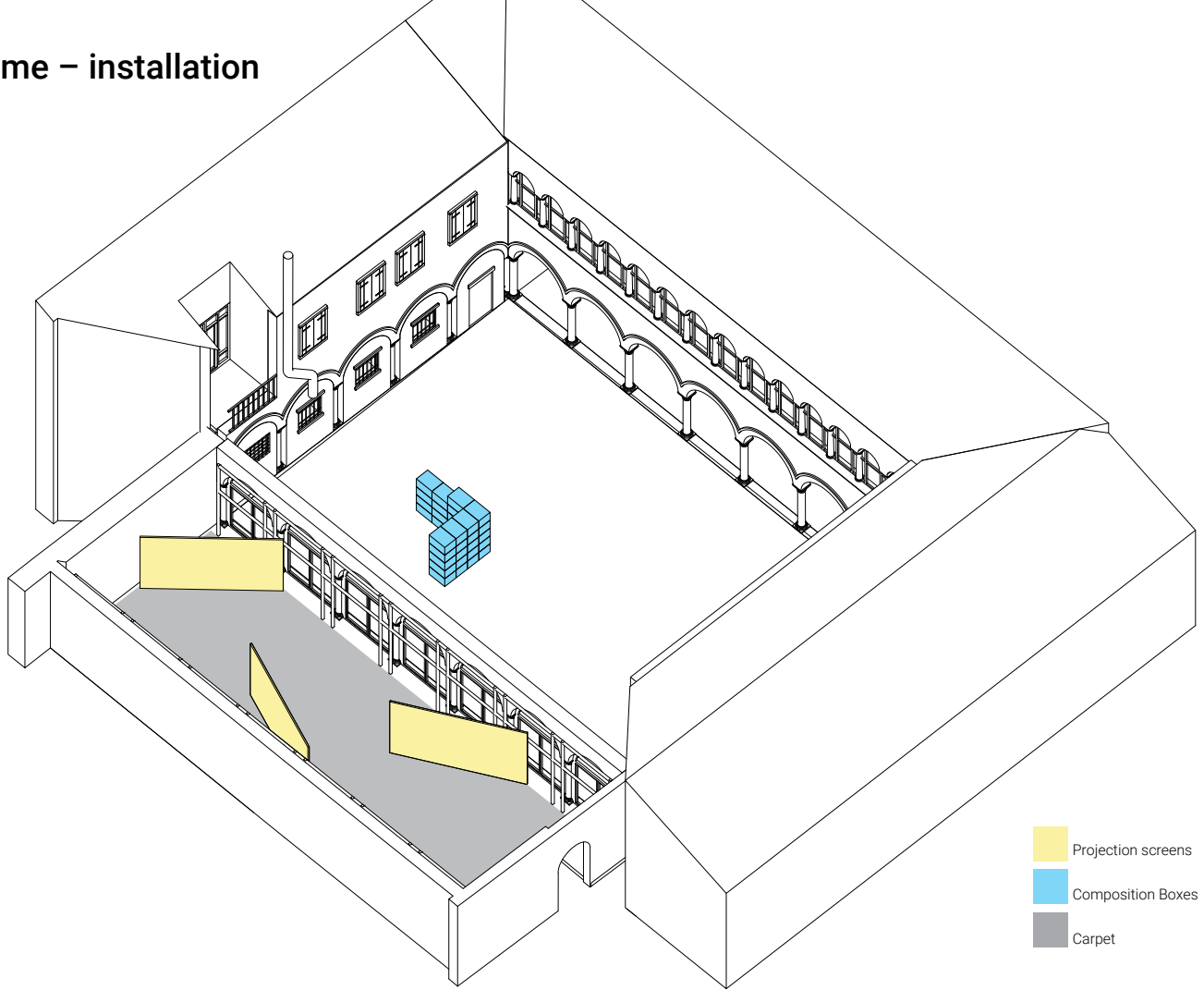
- 3 HD 1920 x 1080 video projectors, DLP technology, minimum 6000 ANSI lumens, laser light source, SDI input;
- Professional broadcast desks – 3 pcs. with SDI output and SSD cards or media server with 3 HDMI / SDI outputs, audio and Resolume Arena software for playback and synchronization;
- 3 projection screens, size 260 x 450 cm and a system for hanging them on the ceiling;
- Audio system with 8 speakers and 4 subwoofers;
- 3 projector mounts for ceiling mounting;
- Wiring;
- Carpet measuring approximately 1700 x 650 cm, gray color;
- Foil to darken the glass of the doors of the exhibition space to prevent light transmission;
- Slabs of lightweight material to hide the wooden beams of the ceiling.

Visualization – view from the entrance of the space



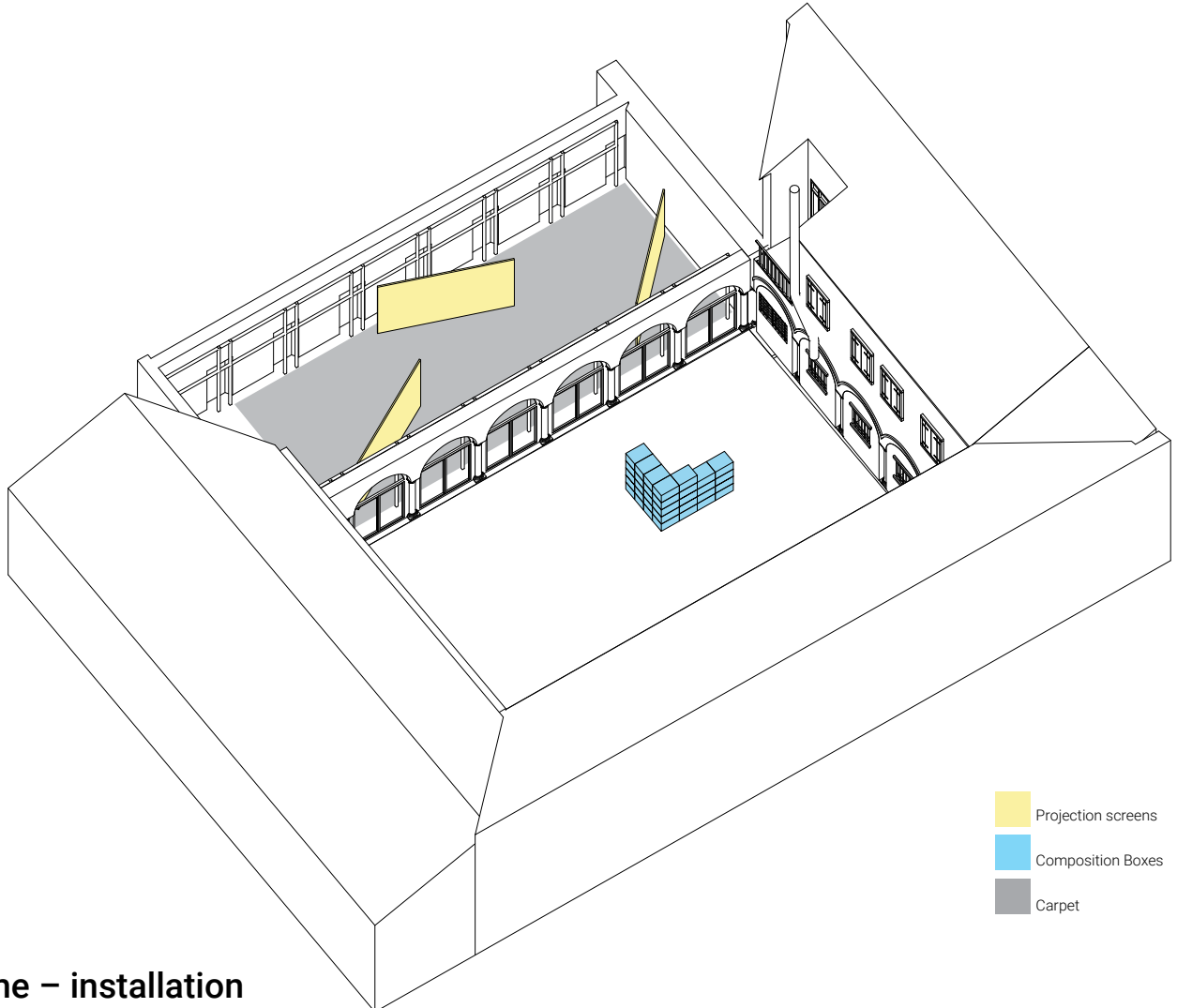
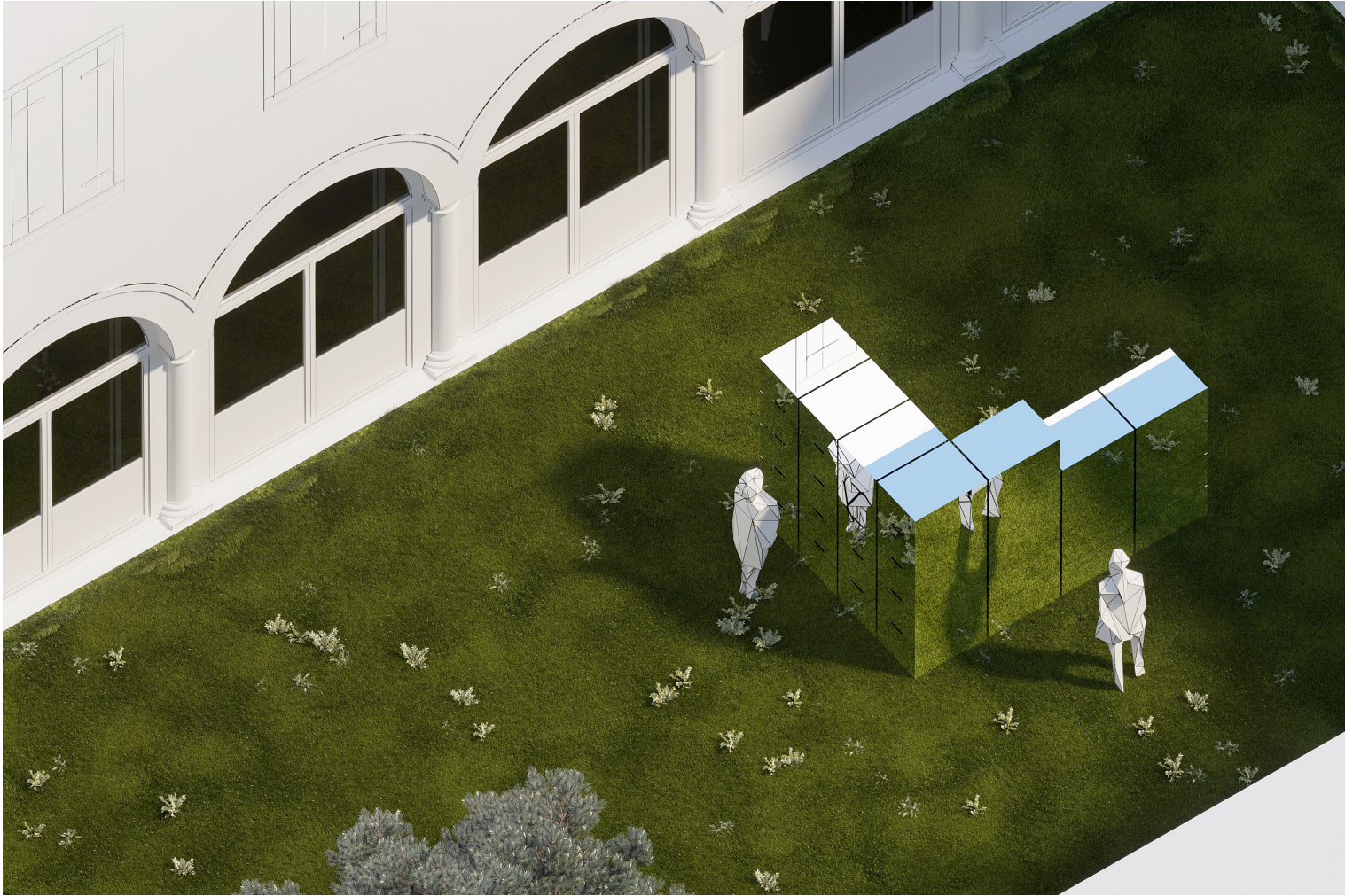
Scheme – projection screens

Scheme – installation



Visualization – view from the opposite side of the space

Visualization of the installation in the yard



Scheme – installation