



PUBLISHING
BLANK SPACE

FAIRY TALES

WHEN ARCHITECTURE
TELLS A STORY

MUSEUM OF LOST VOLUMES

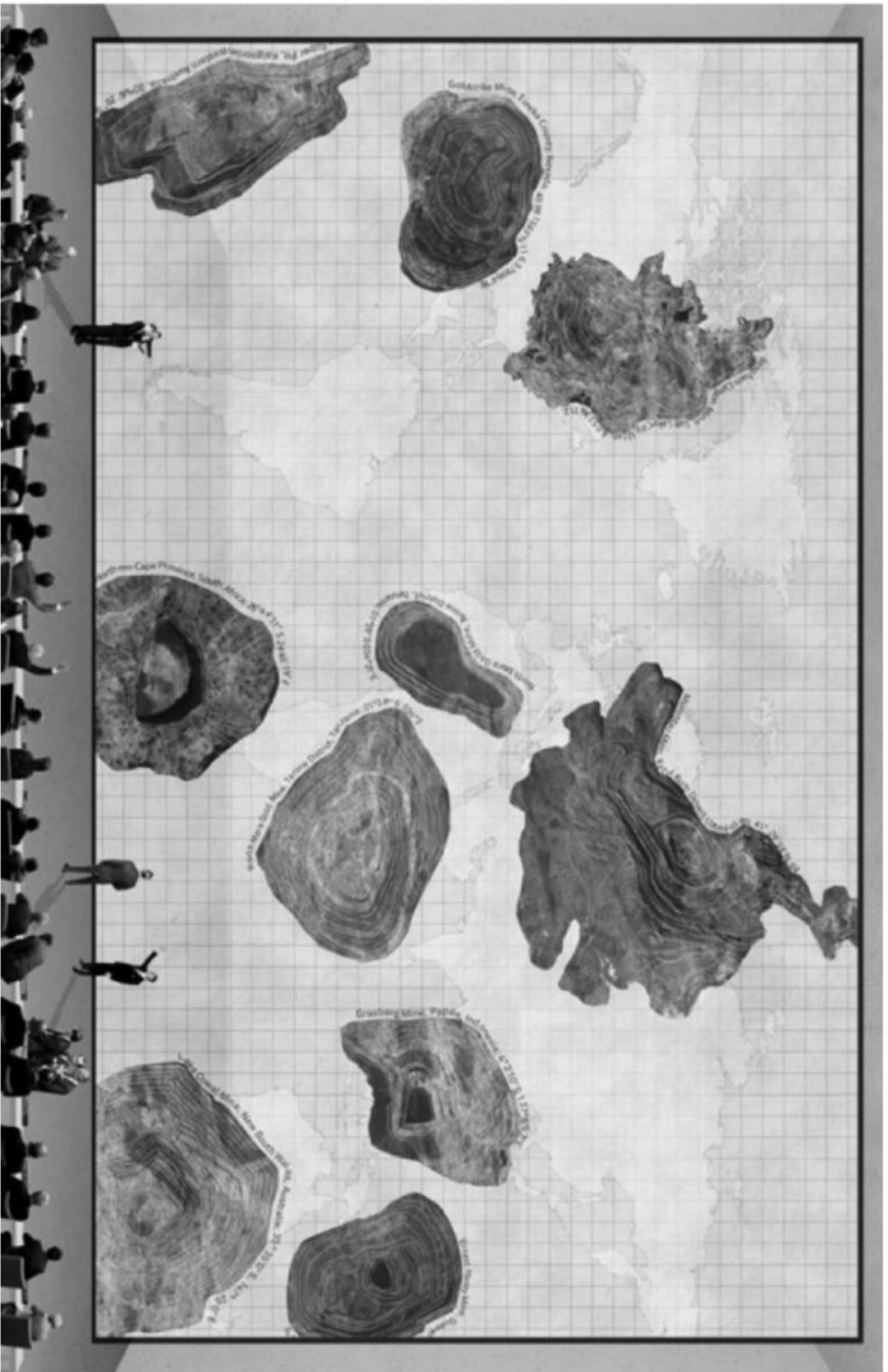
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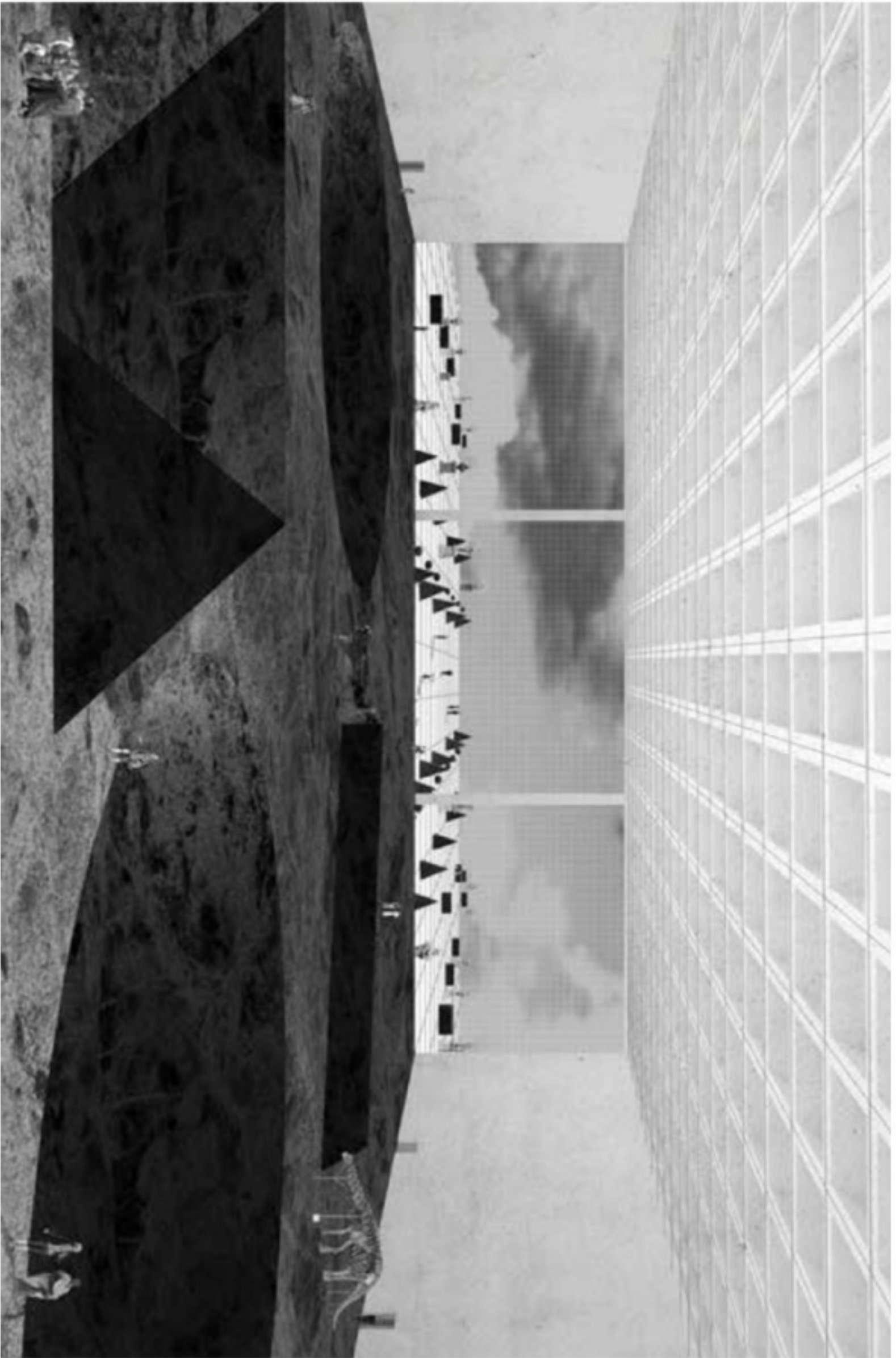
HONORABLE MENTION

1. UNITED COUNCIL OF RARE EARTHS

Once upon time in the Zero-carbon Hedonistic Era, the entire world was finally sustainable. Clean-energy technologies were abundant and ubiquitous. Large quantity of energy-efficient light bulbs, wind turbines, electric car batteries and solar panels would come with a price, however. Since all of these clean-energy technologies relied on Rare Earths, a group of seventeen chemical elements and their abundant extraction from the earth's surface, significant worldwide increase in their demand led to the scarcity of these minerals. Nearly all of the Rare Earths were discovered in the 19th century but their use mostly proliferated in the Zero-carbon Hedonistic Era because of their association with green technologies. Not alarmed by the possible tragic outcomes of the further mining of these minerals, the world celebrated their delirious consumption with more car batteries and solar panels until very little of these minerals were available. Soon after the depletion of this precious resource was officially announced, in an attempt to prevent major geopolitical conflicts, United Council of Rare Earths was established to promote international co-operation regarding this matter.

In its inaugural meeting, the Council members drafted the text of the Declaration by the United Council of Rare Earths, which was signed by all countries. After a long meeting, the unanimous vote was held to ban further Rare Earth mining and to build a museum that would house and preserve remaining Rare Earth mines of the world, and would carry their legacy to future generations. The museum was named as the Museum of Lost Volumes.





2. THE ROOM OF FLOATING VOLUMES

The Museum of Lost Volumes was composed of many rooms. Each room of the Museum was dedicated to different minerals while exhibiting a particular spatial quality regarding these mines. The first room was divided into three parts and was connected with a single bridge that looked over the three different minerals. The bridge felt so small in this large space, and so did the visitors. While the mines were placed into the underground exhibiting the extraction processes of how they are removed from the earth, the visitors walked through the bridge observing them. The section profile of these colossal rooms was a monument to the mines as well, as they resembled the profile of a particular resource extraction. While walking along the bridge, the visitors felt as if they were floating in between the gigantic hollowness of the volume underneath and the massive spatiality of the ceiling above. Admiring the commemoration of these mines as volumes, visitors left the room completely mesmerized.

3. THE ROOM OF SPECIES

The next room of the museum showcased inverted pieces of Rare Earth mines from each of the seventeen mineral types that were placed carefully in preserved glass boxes. Varying in size, shape, and texture, each mine piece was filled with different stories and different lives. Visitors walked from one box to another, analyzing these glowing mountains so up close. One child put his nose up to the glass box, trying to get a much closer view to one of the minerals. "Why are these monuments trapped?" he asked to his mother. The mother looked thoughtfully. "If you are preserved and showcased, that means you are rare and very precious," she said. "These monuments are actually at peace."

4. THE ROOM OF PLATONIC VOLUMES

The final room was a large continuous surface from which large platonic volumes were carved out. While each volume represented a particular Rare Earth mine in the world, the mine sizes were compared to one another in scale within the space of the room. Walking along the edges of these volumes, one visitor thought about the amount of neodymium extracted from one particular mine because of the sheer mass of the volume represented. "How many wind turbines would this make?" he said to himself. In this room, the represented lost volume was not bounded by a box or had to be viewed from a bridge like the other rooms. Having the chance to walk on the actual



matter and to be able to touch it was in itself a sublime feeling. The surface of the mineral felt smooth, but looked textured. The visitors were both astounded and heartbroken that these volumes were all lost.

5. THE GRAND TOUR: RARE EARTH REPLICAS

Last section of the museum was dedicated to 1:1 scale Rare Earth replicas. Since Rare Earth mines were too large to fit even in the specially constructed large rooms of the museum, these replicas had to be observed in the outdoors. In order for their total volume to be fully comprehended, the Rare Earth replicas also needed to be seen from a far distance. Because of their colossal size, they were placed on a vast flat land. Visitors took the Grand Tour to these geographic ruins to be terrified with their artificial magnificence. All the replicas were inverted upside down reminding of the ziggurats from ancient civilizations. Millions of visitors would visit the museum and would take the Grand Tour to these inverted monuments every year. When they went back to their homes after their visit to the Museum of Lost Volumes, they would be filled with admiration, anxiety and thankfulness for the resources of this rare thing called the Earth.

