

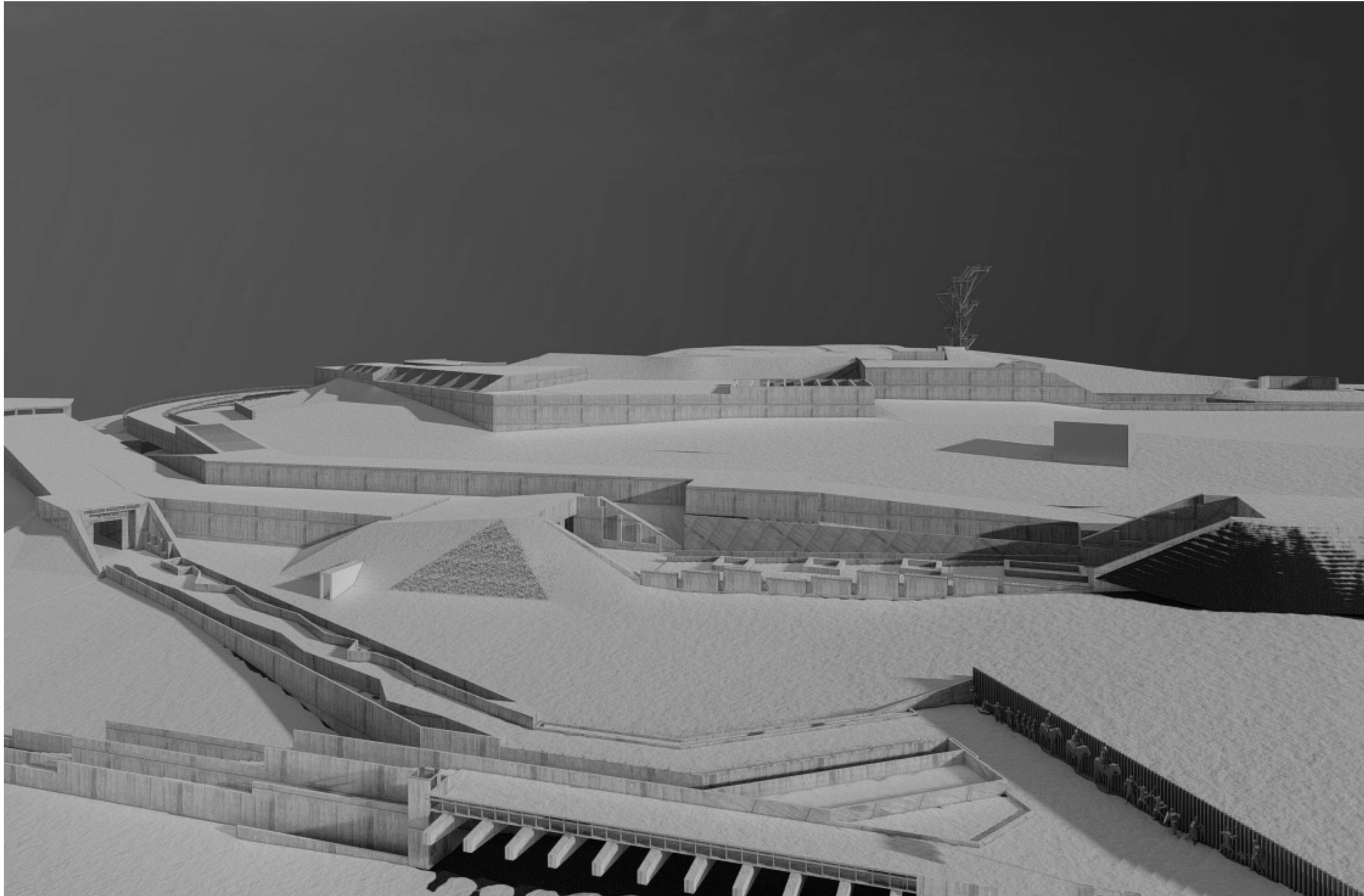
DEVÍNSKA KOBYLA MISSLE BASE

STUDENT IDEA COMPETITION

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DEE, TRISTAN SAMUEL ESPINA, IRA CHRISTOPER ONG, PATRICIA LAUREN

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES DILIMAN (CLASS OF 2020)



ONWARD & UPWARD

AN IMMERSIVE WALK THROUGH HISTORY

Architectural Storytelling is the concept employed in this design of the Devinska Kobyla Iron Curtain Memorial. Form, finish, circulation, elevation change, light and shadow will tell the story of the people that had come to inhabit Slovakia, as well as the physical and ideological struggle it has faced through the years.

This memorial will be a museum and hiking path. The path will wind up through the former missile base, passing all of the existing bunkers. As you go up the mountain, the building will tell you the story of Slovakia in chronological order from prehistory, to the medieval times, to the Interwar and War-time periods. These areas are at-grade, and/or recessed in the ground.

Then, it will lead to the Communist Bunker Exhibit which is underground. In the design, we compare the ideology of communism to a bunker. A bunker protects and keeps people safe, but it also keeps you underground, not knowing what is really going on above. This is reminiscent of the experience of former communist countries. Their government provided them much-needed safety, especially during a rough post-WW2 time, but took their liberty in exchange.

The nature of man is to seek self-determination, the ability to make choices for oneself. After all, human will is one thing that separates us from other species. Because of this, the strict control of liberties that communist regimes often abuse will always break down. This idea is shown in our design by how cracks and gaps in the concrete tunnel as well as the Iron Curtain Memorial slowly let light in.

As the path goes up, a person will see light at the end of the tunnel, but before that that person must make a choice. Beside the light is another path, darker, leading back to the bunker, to return to communist rule. This choice represents the peaceful transfer of power between the communist regime to a more democratic one, a choice made by the people of Slovakia.

When they make it out of the bunker, they are brought to a large hall with a reflective pool. Much like countries that make it out of oppressive regimes, before they take on a new path, they must take time to introspect. They must figure out their identity to tackle the problems that they face now, and they had faced back then, lest they want to devolve into another oppressive regime. Unfortunately, this is what other countries lacked.

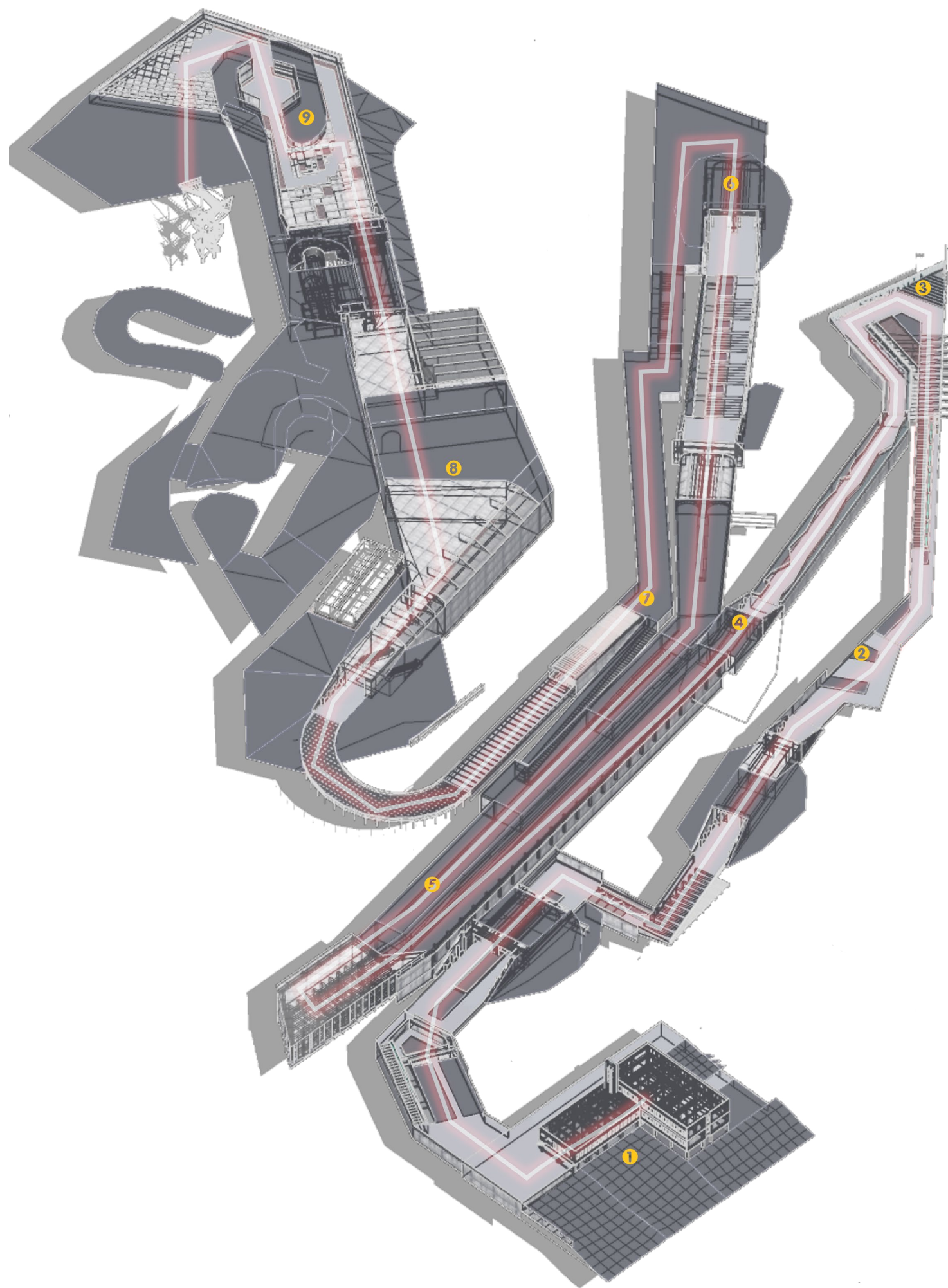
The end of the path is the Democracy Monument and Observatory. A free panoramic view of Europe greets you. Freedom is a conscious choice by the people that enjoy it. There are ups and downs, but power to the people is better than power to the few. That is what the people of Slovakia must remember.



LEGEND

- ① MILITARY MUSEUM/PLAZA AND VISITOR'S CENTER
- ② SANDBERG GALLERY
- ③ SLOVAKIA WAR MEMORIAL
- ④ WORLD WAR II AND THE COMMUNIST BUNKER
- ⑤ THE CAVE
- ⑥ THE IRON CURTAIN MEMORIAL
- ⑦ THE VELVET REVOLUTION MEMORIAL
- ⑧ HALL OF INTROSPECTION
- ⑨ DEMOCRACY MEMORIAL
- ⑩ LOOKOUT





9 - Democracy Memorial

The Hall of Introspection extends all the way to below the Command Post (Úkryt pre prehľadový rádiolokátor P-15 - Space #16). Once the people exit the building, they are greeted by the Democracy Memorial, an open exhibit dedicated to the ideals of democracy, an equal society unencumbered by oppression. The exhibit makes use of concrete squares of different elevations, symbolizing the up-and-down nature to be expected from a society that rules itself. From there, they can end their hike at the Observatory for a panoramic view of the rest of Europe uncovered, a testament to freedom.

8 - Hall of Introspection

After the bunker, the path is now all well-lit. From their vantage point, they are able to see the rest of Europe, yet before them lies another structure. Located at the surveillance radar bunker (Úkryt pre prehľadový rádiolokátor P-15 - Space #19), it is the Hall of Introspection, a large underground hall with a reflective pool. This exhibit represents the now of Slovakia, and what path Slovakia will take in the coming years. Before the country can achieve its goals, it must stop to introspect, to take a good look at itself, hence the reflective pool.

7 - The Velvet Revolution Memorial

Slowly rising out of the bunker, more light is starting to seep in, symbolizing how the predisposition of humans to freedom and self-determination will always prevail, even amidst the most oppressive of regimes. At the end of the bunker, the museum-goers are given a choice, exit into the light, or go back to the darkness from which they came. This symbolizes the Velvet Revolution, the people's peaceful choice to exit the iron grip of Communism.

6 - The Iron Curtain Memorial

The path will then go up into bunkers (Pracovisko Technickej Obsluhy Rakiet- PTOR, and Zdvojený úkryt - 2ks ZIL-131 - Space #11 and #13). In between them is the Iron Curtain Memorial. This is the only part of the Communist Bunker that is not underground. The sky is above yet the panoramic view from the mountain is still mostly blocked by large concrete slabs. In between the slabs are small openings for people to peep through. This is symbolic of the Wall that the communists used to keep people in and keep free-thinking out. The play of light and shadow from the small gaps between the slabs also symbolizes the freedom that the Slovaks were slowly realizing was being kept from them. This exhibit will talk about the Iron Curtain, as well as those who perished trying to escape it.

5 - The Cave

In the middle of the Communist Bunker is the exhibit of the Cave. It calls back to the Allegory of the Cave of Plato. It is a story that presents the suppression of knowledge and how it contributes to keeping them oppressed, reminiscent of the communist period. In this case, the "fire" being talked about by Plato in his allegory is the sculpture of an Eternal Flame in the middle of the exhibit, a symbol of communist rule in Eastern Europe. This exhibit will focus on the censorship and suppression done by the communist party to maintain its grip on power.

4 - World War II and the Communist Bunker

Following the War Memorial, the path becomes broken and shoddy, reminiscent of the destruction brought about by it. At the end of this path comes the Communist Bunker, starting from the current bunker (Úkryt pre techniku - Space #9). On the top of it, written in neon signage, are the words "Proletari Vsetkych Krajín, Spojte Sa!" Much like the promise of communism, it promises paradise amidst discord, only to become oppressive in its own way. This whole exhibit is underground, and will focus on the early communist rule of Czechoslovakia.

3 - Slovakia War Memorial

The path will then lead up to the Slovakia War Memorial, located on top of the current Rugged Trench (Zodolnený okop - Space #10). This space overlooks the Hrad Devin, a testament to how valiantly Slovakia and its people defended themselves from invasion. The exhibit in this area, a large bas-relief included, will show the military tradition of the country from the times of the knights all the way to the Interwar Period. This is to show that even before World War II and the Cold War, its people tried their best to defend themselves, and their right to self-determination.

2 - Sandberg Gallery

From there, the path leads through the first two bunkers (Pracovisko Technickej Obsluhy Rakiet- PTOR, and Úkryt pre techniku - Spaces #21 and #22), to lead to the Sandberg Gallery. Located in the current Fleet Garage (Spaces #5,6,7), it is an open-space sculpture gallery that overlooks the Sandberg Site. The exhibits here will be about the early history of Slovakia, prior to the Roman Period and the Slavic Migration. It will also house open areas for climate and environmental activists.

1 - Military Museum/Plaza and Visitor's Center

The memorial is a hiking path museum going up to the observatory. The path shall start at the Military Museum/Plaza and Visitor's Center, which is at the current Accommodation Block (Ubytovací monoblok - Space #2). The military museum, workshop spaces for artists, ecologists, historians, and tourism infrastructure will be located here, fronted by a large entrance plaza that looks up to the rest of the path.



“Workers of the World, Unite!”, a sign pasted above the Communist Bunker Exhibit. The promise of a better life after the discord of two Great Wars veils a reality of freedom curtailed, a reality of darkness



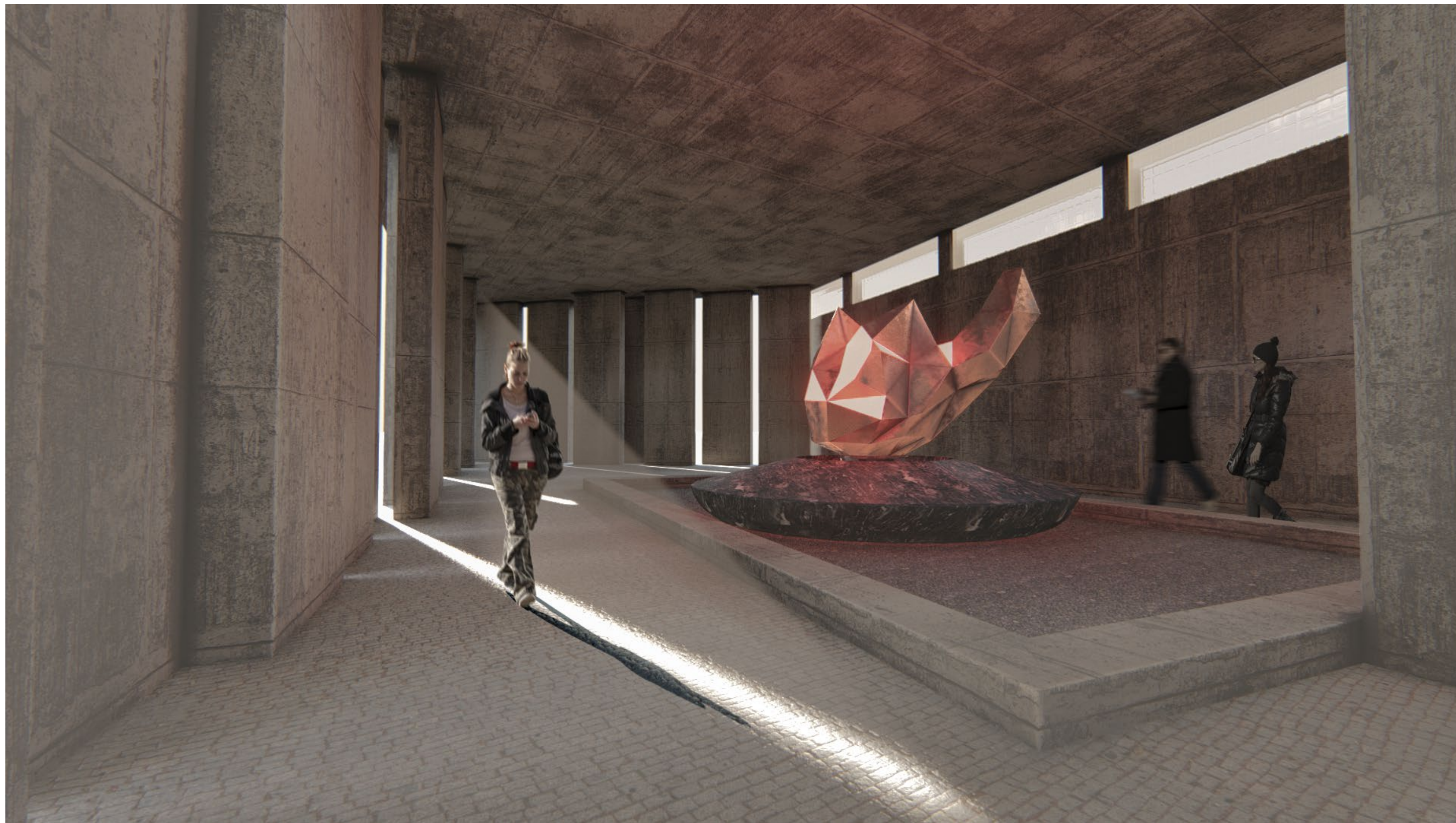
The Military Museum Plaza and Visitor’s Center is the first step of the hiking path and museum. Before going further with the hike, one must go around a reflective pool, to take a look at oneself, examine their identity and biases. This is to better prepare them for what they will learn during the rest of the trip.



The Slovakian War Exhibit focuses on how valiantly the peoples of Slovakia defended their land, and more importantly their right to self-determination, even before the Communist Regime. It overlooks the Hrad Devin, an example of such military tradition.



Besides the lookout to Hrad Devin, the central attraction of the Slovakian War Exhibit is a Bas Relief of those who fought for their freedom, from the times of knights, to the times of cavalrymen, to the times of the Interwar and World War 2.



The Allegory of the Cave of Plato is a story that presents the suppression of knowledge and how it contributes to keeping them oppressed, reminiscent of the communist period. The sculpture of an Eternal Flame in the middle of the Communist Bunker exhibit, a symbol of communist rule in Eastern Europe. This exhibit will focus on the censorship and suppression done by the communist party to maintain its grip on power.



The light at the end of the tunnel signifies the liberty Slovaks enjoy after Communist rule.



The Hall of Introspection represents the now of Slovakia, and what path Slovakia will take in the coming years. Before the country can achieve its goals, it must stop to introspect, to take a good look at itself, hence the reflective pool.



“Democracy is the worst form of government... except for all the others” (Winston Churchill)

Freedom is a conscious choice by the people that enjoy it. There are ups and downs, but power to the people is better than power to the few.

