

Design of Justice:

The courtroom of the future

Students of the Amsterdam Law School (UvA) and Architectural Design students of the Rietveld Academy challenged the current structures of the criminal courtroom and developed design concepts for the ideal space for justice.

September - December 2018

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM
Amsterdam Law School

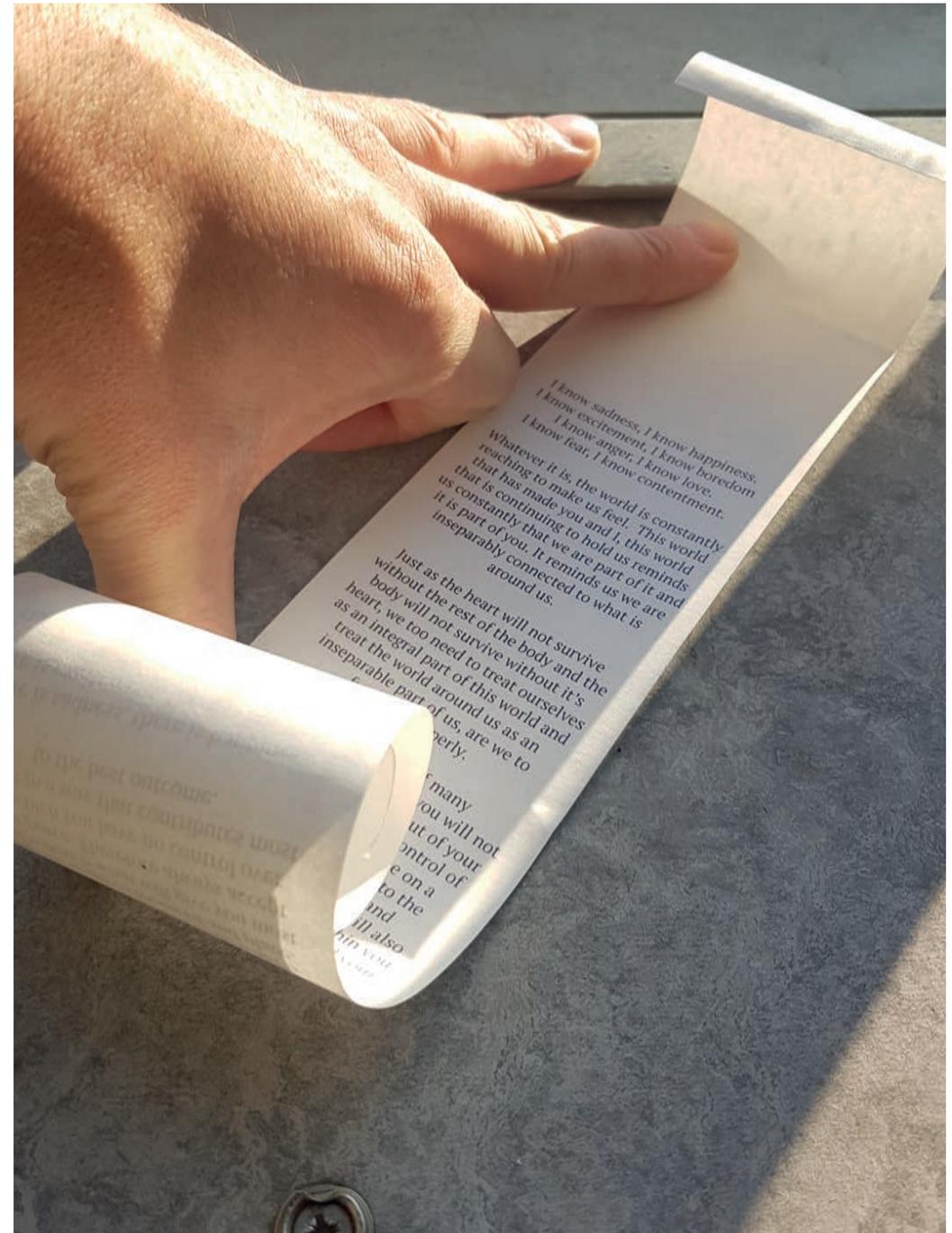
Gerrit Rietveld Academie

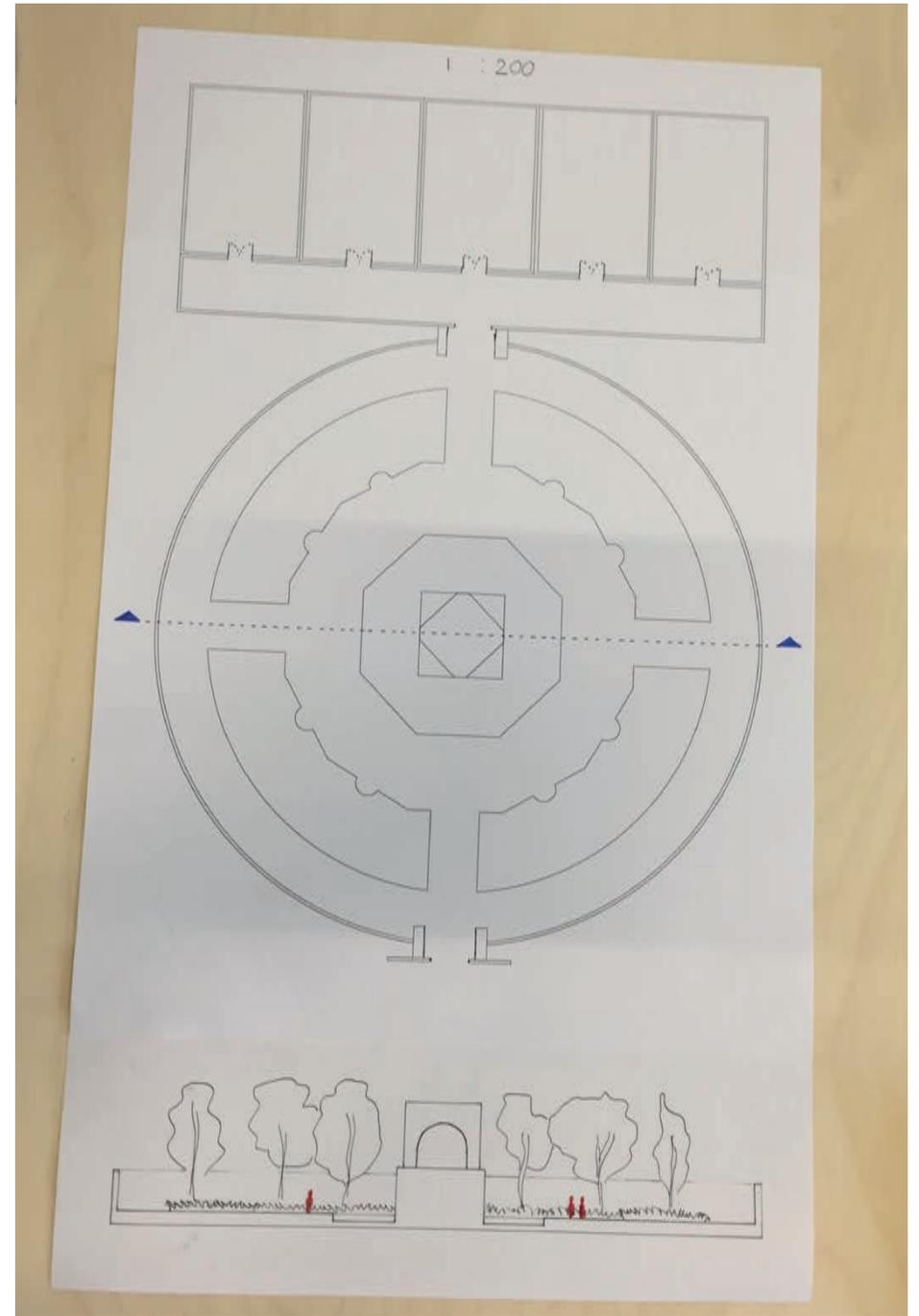
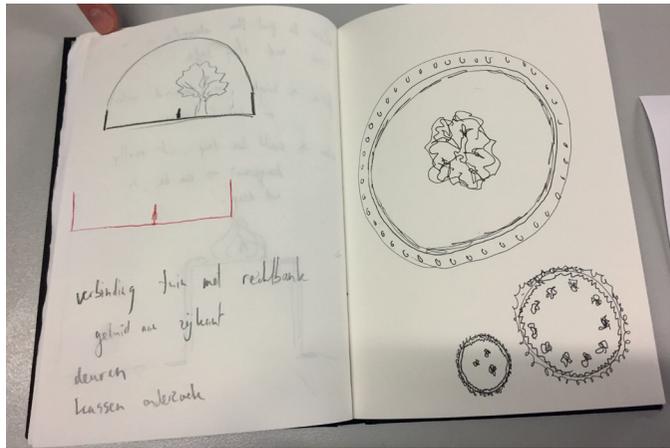
Lawyersaschangemakers.org

Annan Yap

A courtyard for the courthouse

What the courthouse needs is someone who is not there to judge, but someone who hears you, who sees you and who supports and wants to help you. Therefore I wrote a text with the aim of giving people strength, wisdom and love. To give this text a space I created a calming courtyard with the intention to get people's minds out of a often stressful courthouse and bring them back to earth. Furthermore I decided to give every group their own entrance/exit between the courtyard and the courtroom to make the existing structure of the courthouse more clear.





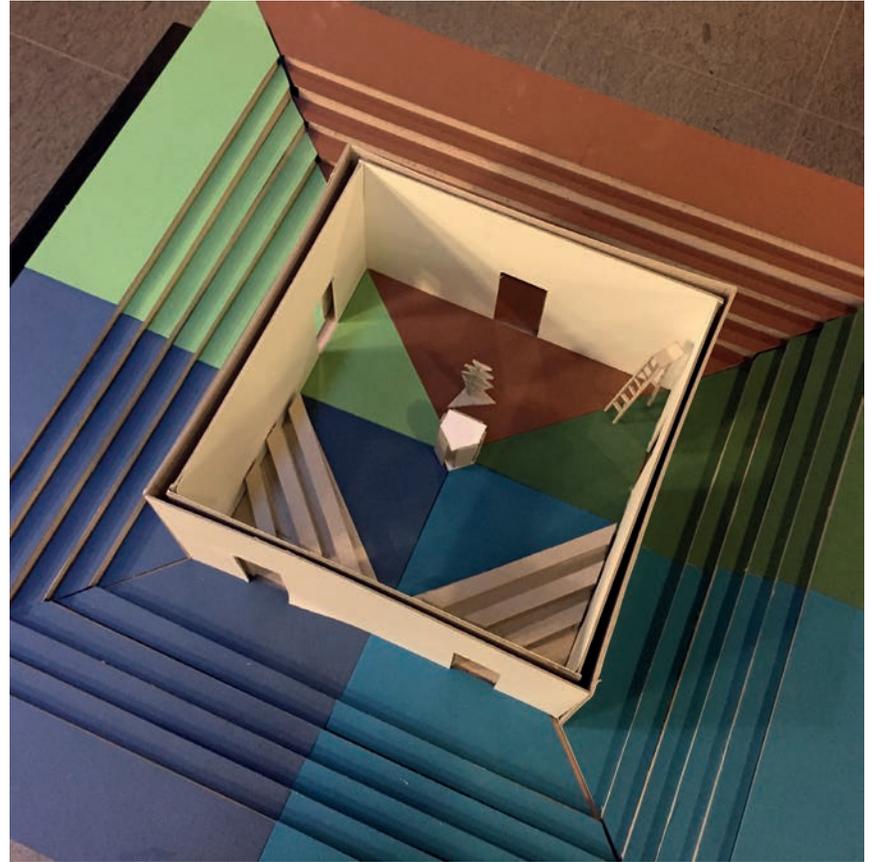
Alma van de Burgwal

The courtroom as a sport field

Flexibility, safety and clarity are qualities that the courtroom of the future should possess. This design focusses on a space that can be adjusted per court session. Each court participant has his or her own field of color. By enlarging the adjustability of the space in terms of the physical distance between parties, parties can move to be closer or further from each other. In the center is a high table that forms a middle point where conversations can take place.

Parties who need a break in the court procedure can literally step out of the courtroom and move in the corridor that surrounds the courtroom. The corridor also invites the audience, a party with a controlling function that should not be neglected, into the courtroom.

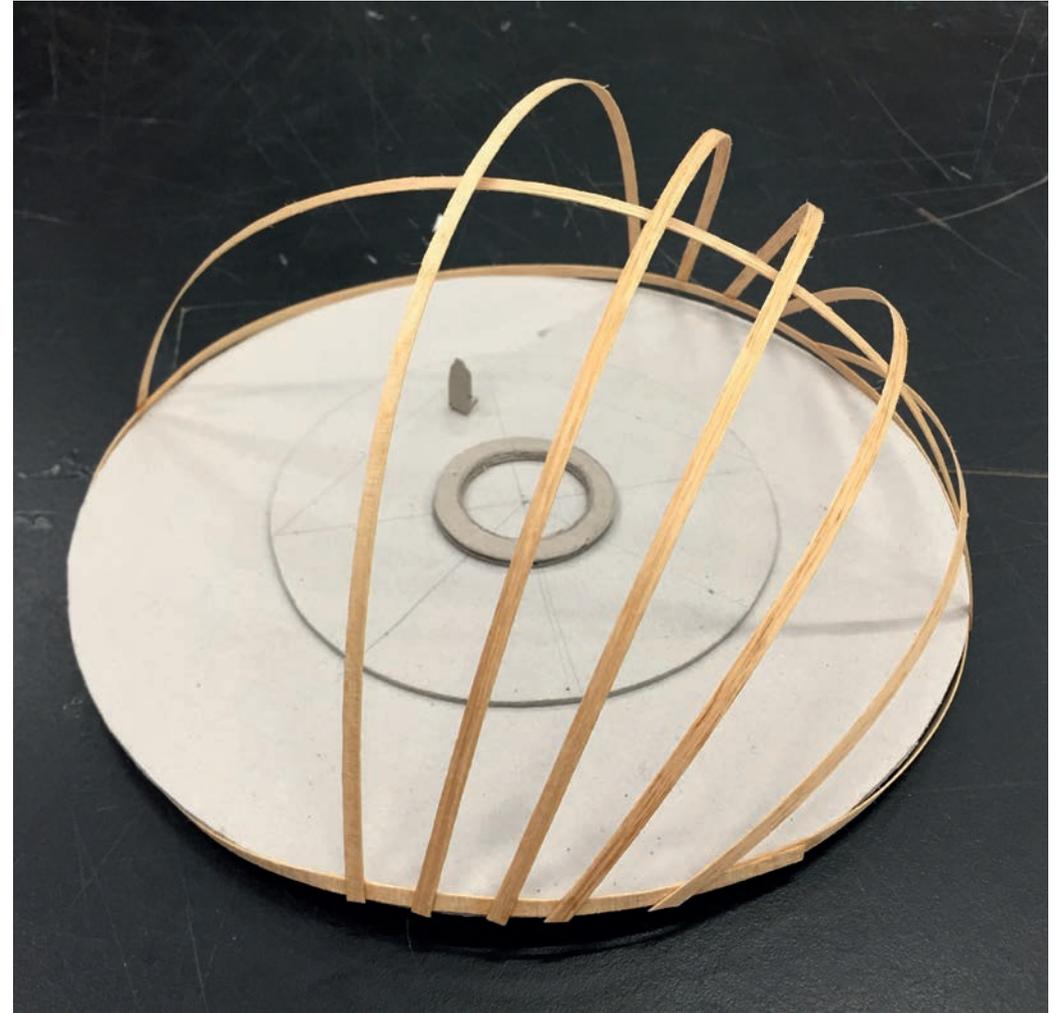


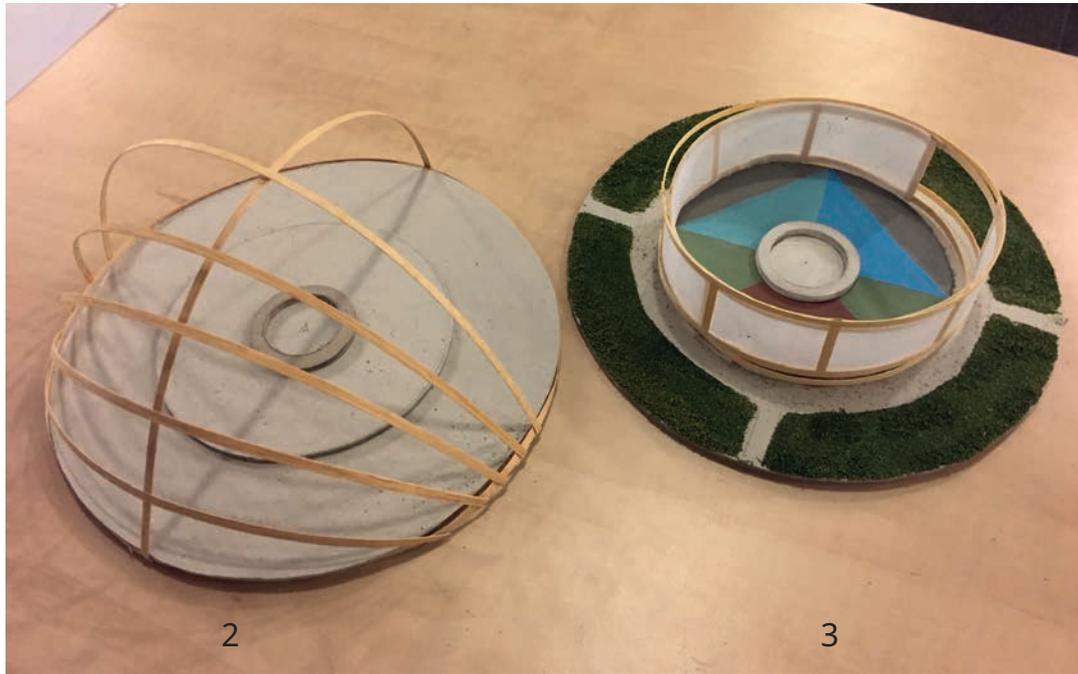
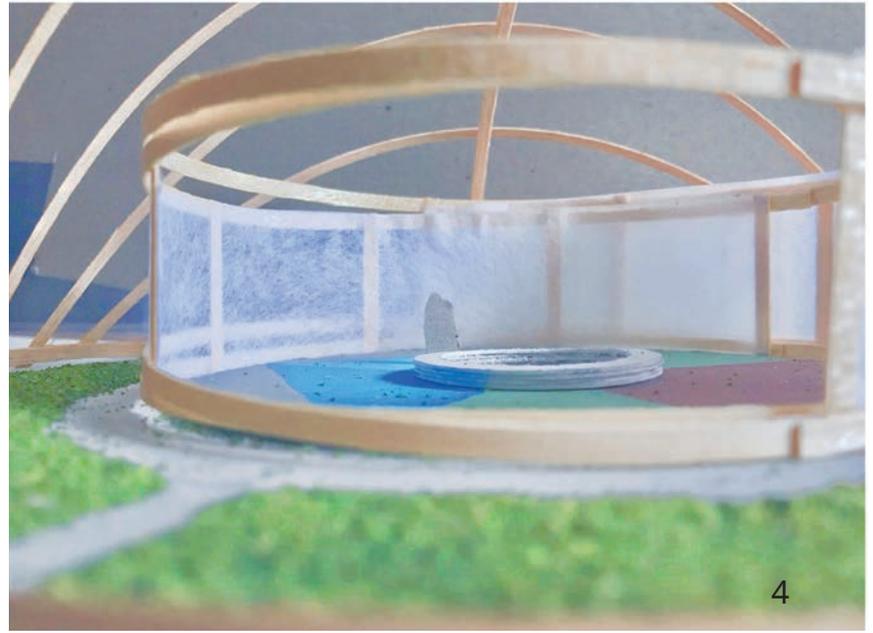
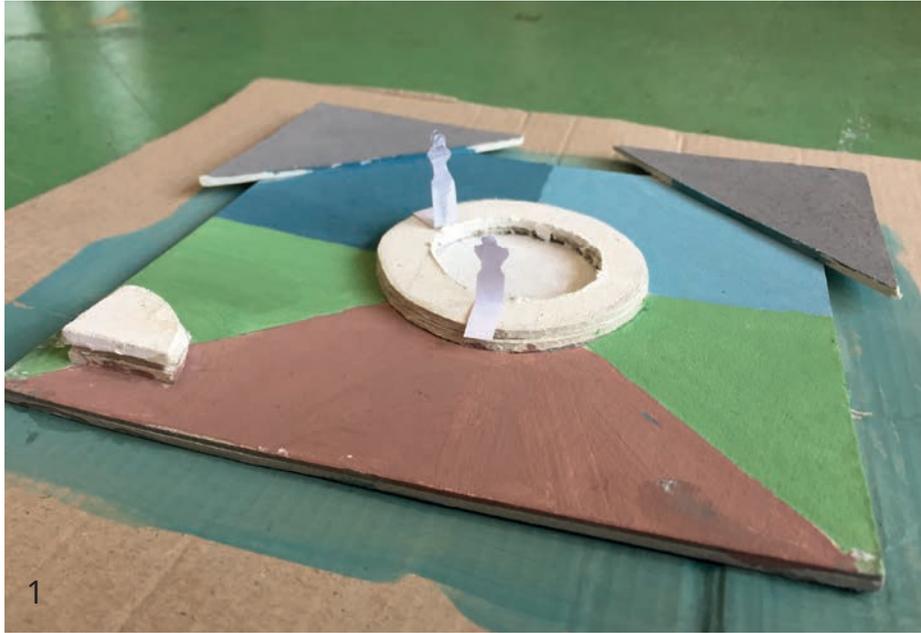


Esther Rüter

Flexibility in court

My design is based on the values safety and flexibility. Choice of where to take place in a space can influence how safe we feel. The actors are appointed to a certain colour inside the room for clarity, but still have choice to move further down or closer to the centre. The centre consists of a circle. The goal would be to have the actors feel safe enough to end the process inside the circle. Just outside of the courtroom is a corridor. Leaving the courtroom without actually leaving the process is therefore possible to stimulate conversation, thought-process and a feeling of safety.

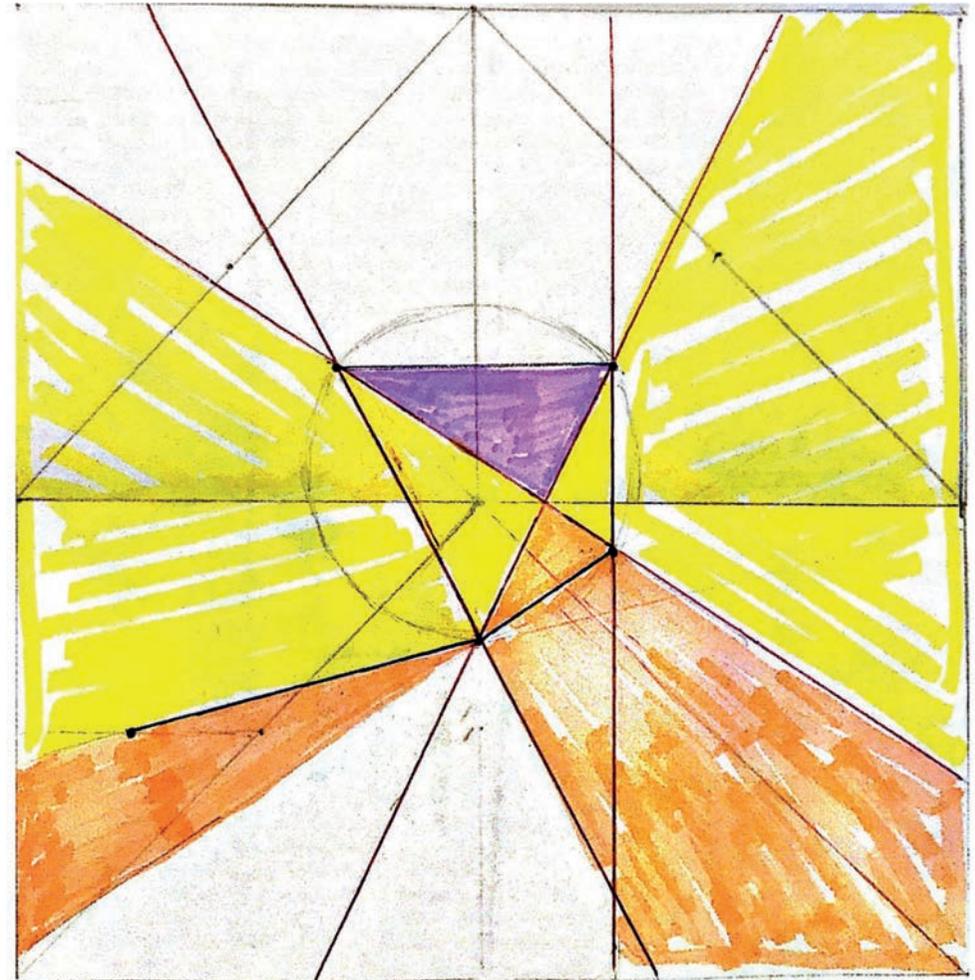


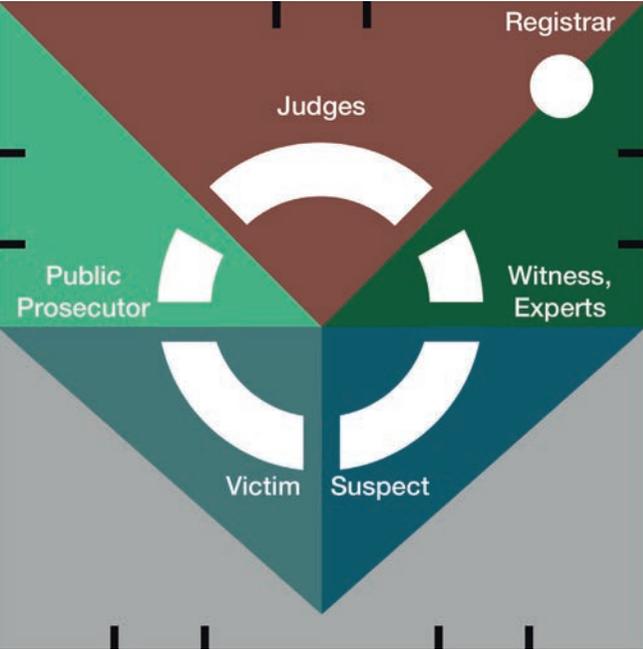
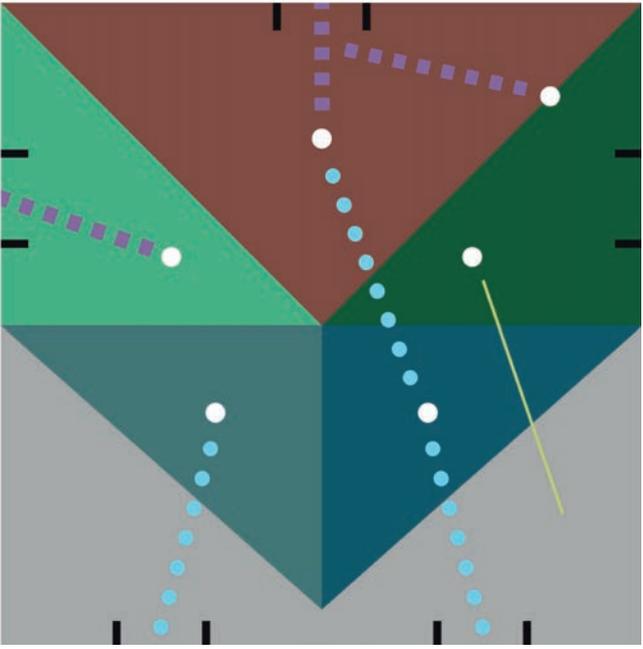
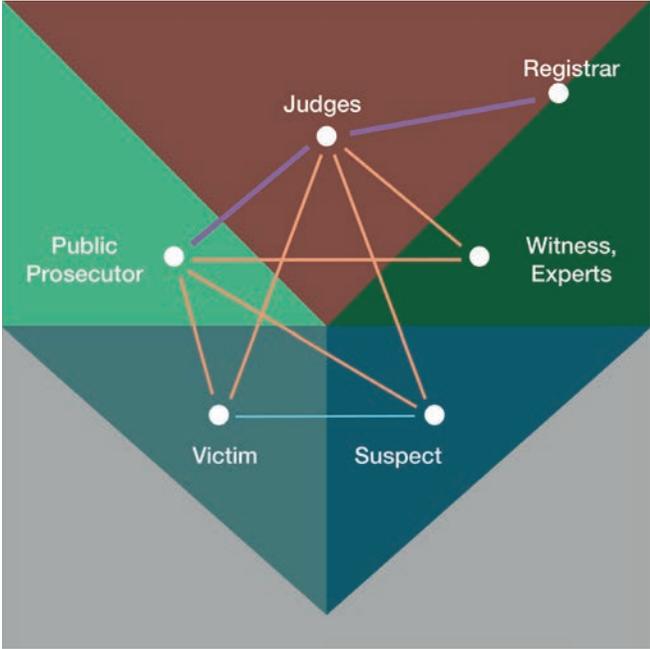


Roos Brantjes

The field of contact

From the beginning of my process I held on to the values of safety and flexibility. When I thought of a way to enclose these values in a potential design, I chose to focus on the idea of clarity. I think clarity can contribute to an atmosphere of safety and can create space for empathy in court. In order to achieve this, I considered it necessary to deduct uncertainties and impediments from the room. My main method was using lines to visualize the contact between the different participants. In my opinion having the opportunity of contact without any obstacles is required in the courtroom of the future.



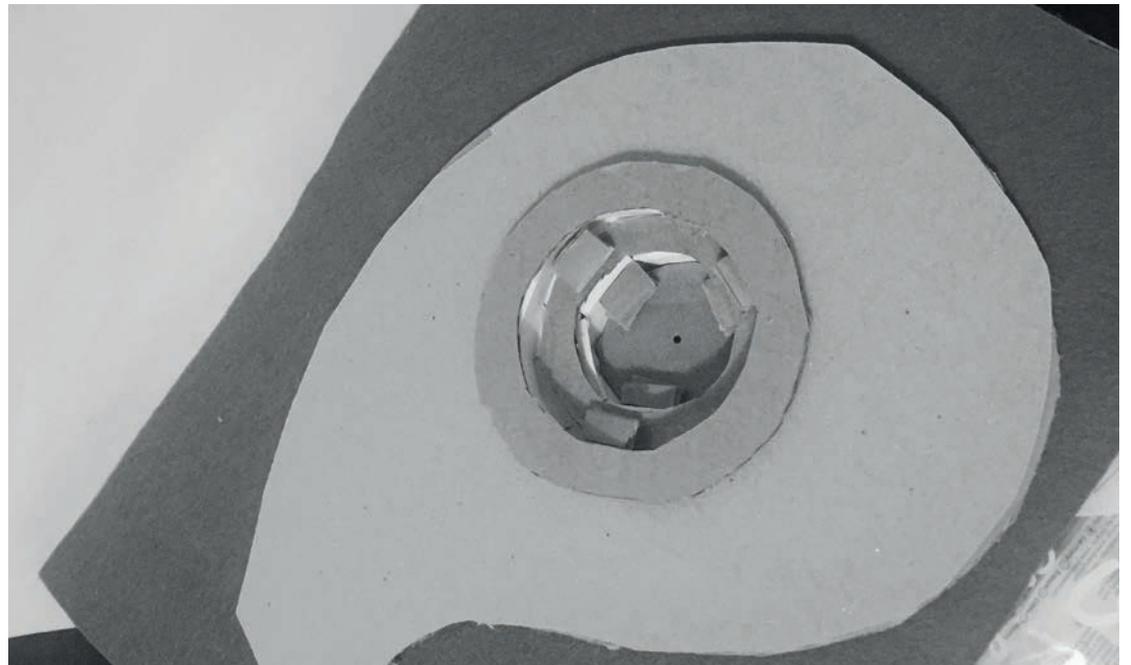
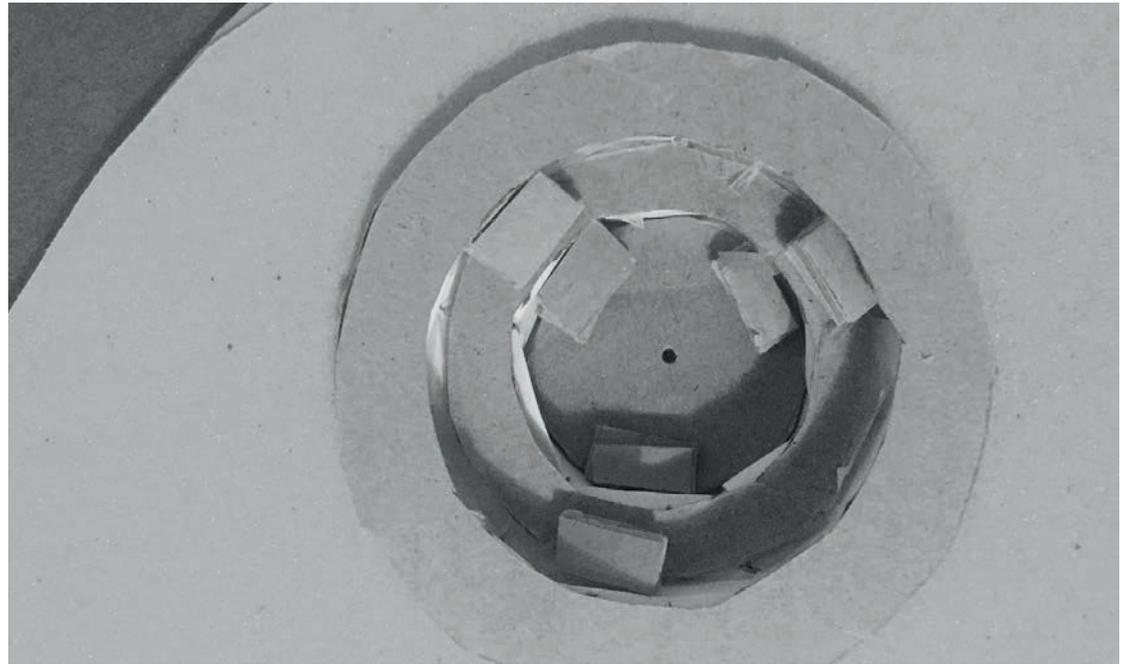


Chaja Laurey

*The courtroom as a shield
of protection*

I have designed a courtroom with an atmosphere of trust and comfort. Nature and the womb were sources of inspiration. The courtroom has an oval shape. This corresponds with the womb and the form of leaves. Like in nature, the surface is not flat but structured. There is one entrance for all parties. Based on sawas and waterfalls, I came up with a layered arrangement for the trial participants (Public Prosecution Service, judges, defense lawyer, accused, victim).

Differences in height are not dictated by position or role, but by choice of the participants: the courtroom as a shield of protection.

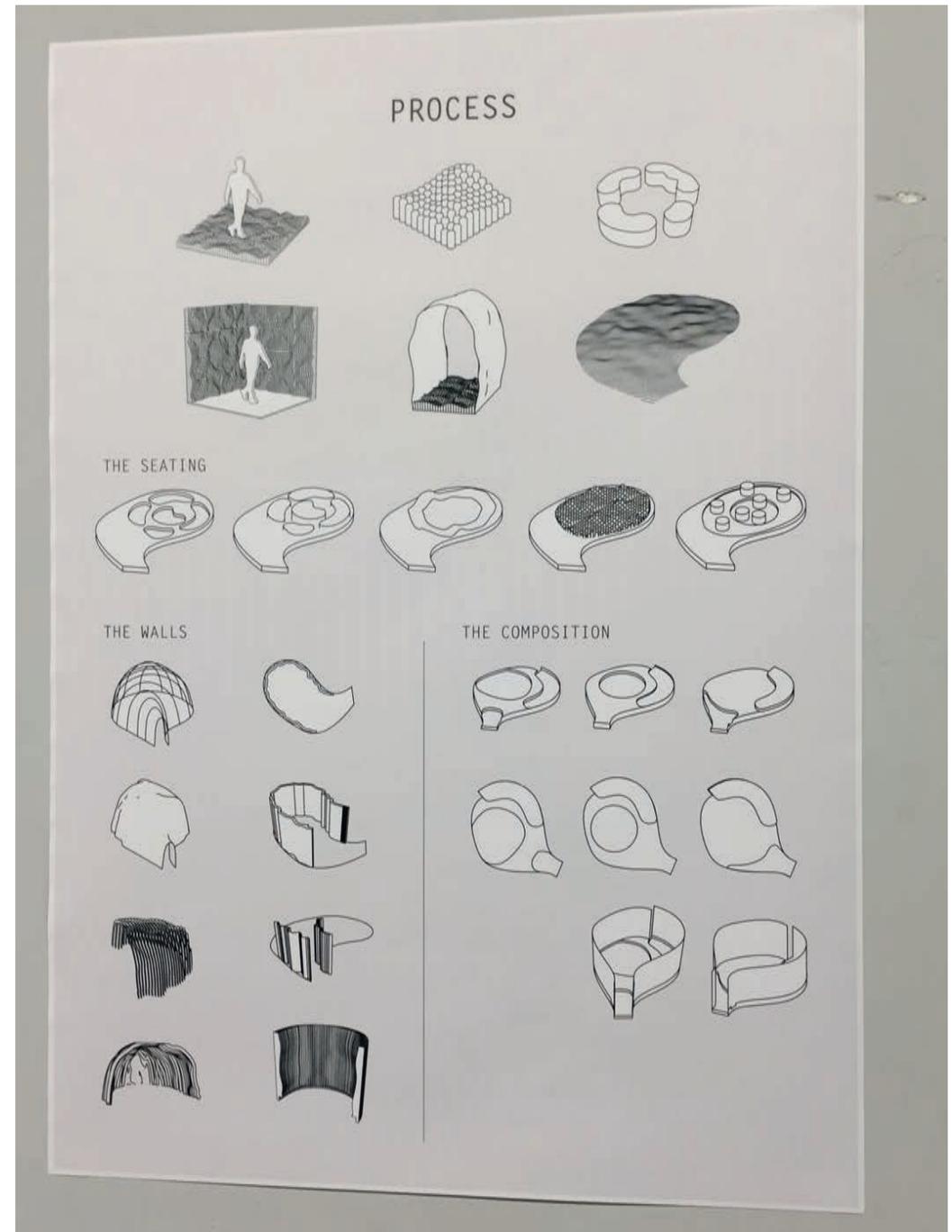


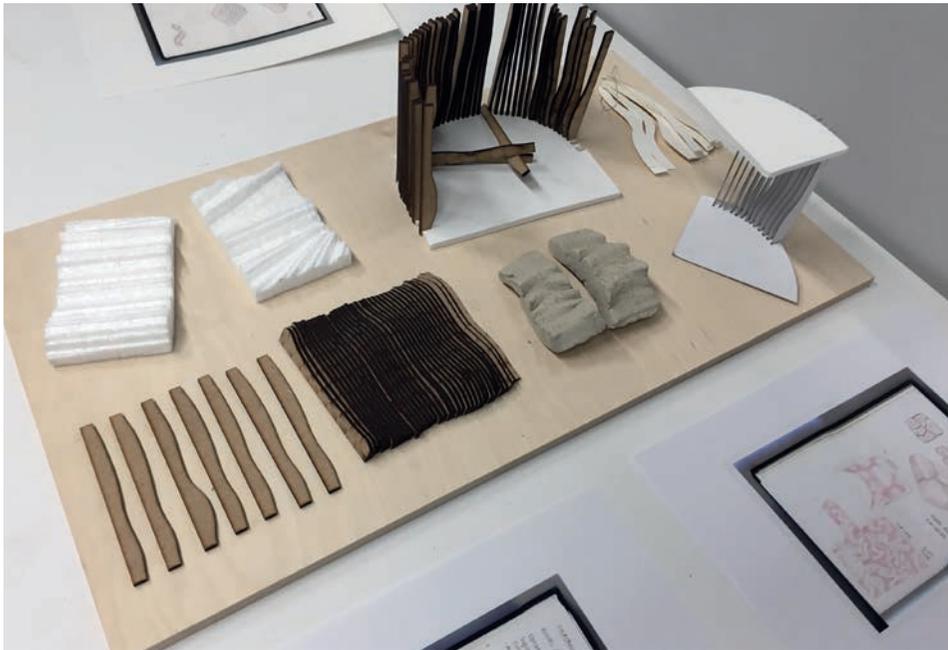
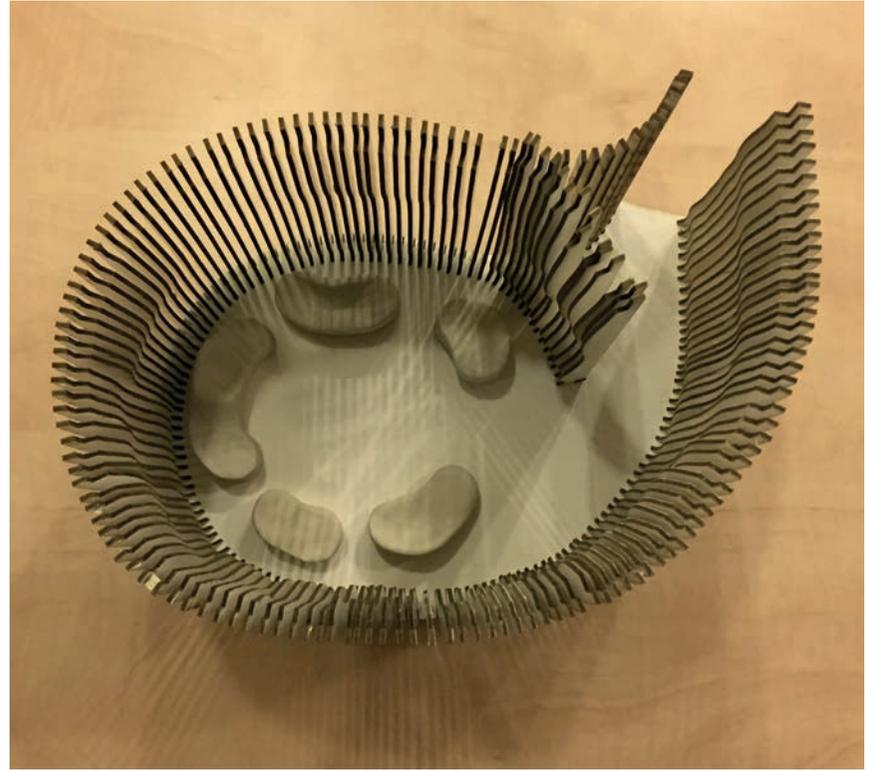
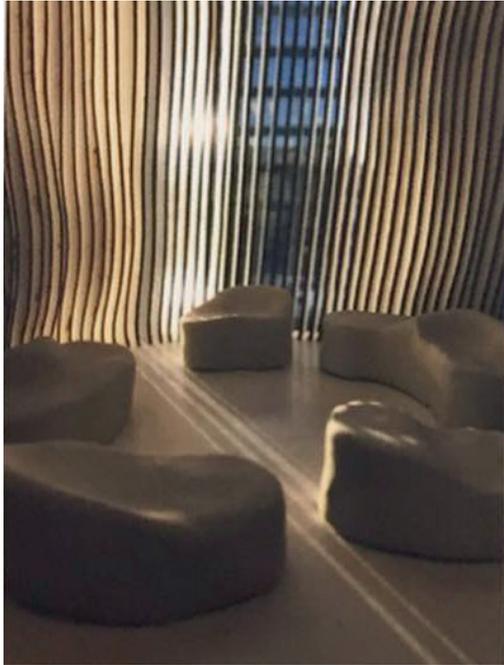
Lisa Andrén

Feeling safe

The aim is to provide a safe space for all the participants, contributing to the feeling of being trusted. By applying the organic and calming aspects of the nature, I'm creating an equal and soothing environment. A space that engender an intimate conversation and a personal adaption for your body. The common entrance emphasize the equality and the seating stimulates the flexibility.

I want to generate an awareness and connection between you and your surroundings. An irregular floor encourages to feel trust to the steps and to be present. The organic structure of the walls gives a glimpse of the outside and reflects the light streams appearing among the trees, to impart the dynamic and peaceful atmosphere I want to implement in the new courtroom.





Birte Geraerts

The chair you are sitting on affects not only your body posture, it also affects your behavior.

Trust should be a core value in the courtroom.
The visible difference in power does not work for having trust in each other.

In the courtroom, the difference in power is even visible in the chairs. The chair from the judge is way bigger than the chair from the suspect. Studies showed that a chair affects not only your body posture, it also affects your behavior. Changing the chairs looks like something small, but it can change a lot.

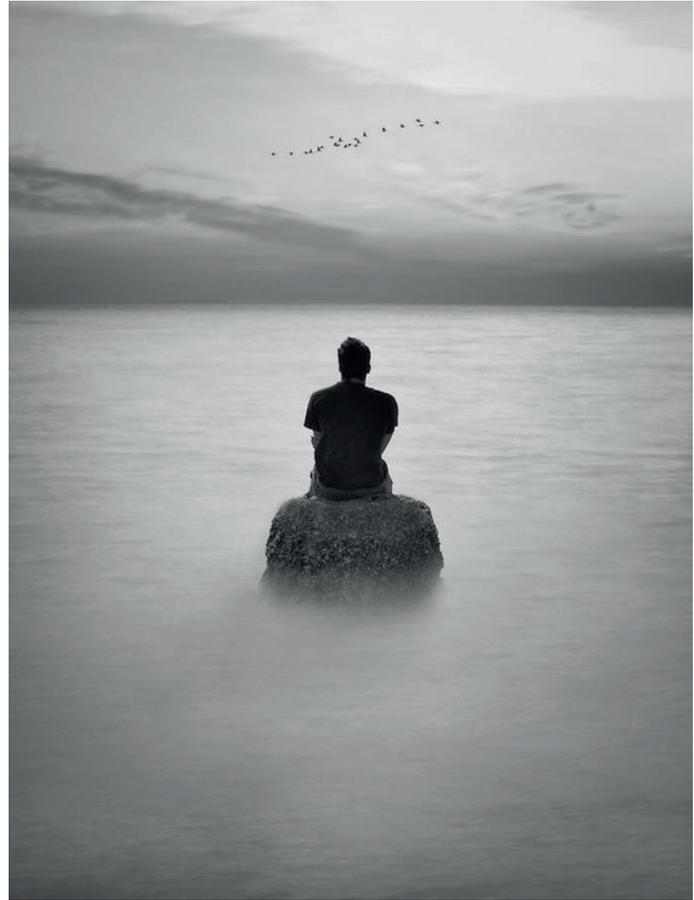


Milou Francisca

A ritual of trust

How do we gain more trust in the courtroom? The court-sessions are daily business for the judges. For most suspects it is a one-off meeting with the judge who can make a life-changing decision. My ritual would contain an introduction, poetry and a mindful breathing exercise. The judge already involves the poem in his preparation of the lawsuit. He tries to find out what kind of poem fits best with this suspect and the circumstances of the case. This in combination with the mindfulness would create a distance from emotional prejudices and stimulate the communication between all the parties.





Anna Kostiouk

Judicial robes and the meaning and effects of colors

My starting point was the question: how to emphasize the independence of the prosecution? For a non-professional without foreknowledge, it is quite a job to recognize what the function of every robe-wearing person is. Suspects must be able to distinguish the prosecution from the judges, as they should have the feeling that a fair procedure is taking place. Currently there is not enough focus on the independence of the prosecution: the prosecutor is sitting next to the judges in exactly the same costume. My research resulted in rethinking the design of toga's. I have looked into the meaning of colors and their psychological effects. I have come up with the following colors:

- Judges: black with white collar
- Prosecution: grey with white collar
- Lawyers: blue with white collar





+ Authority
+ Safety
- Danger



+ Neutrality
- Depression

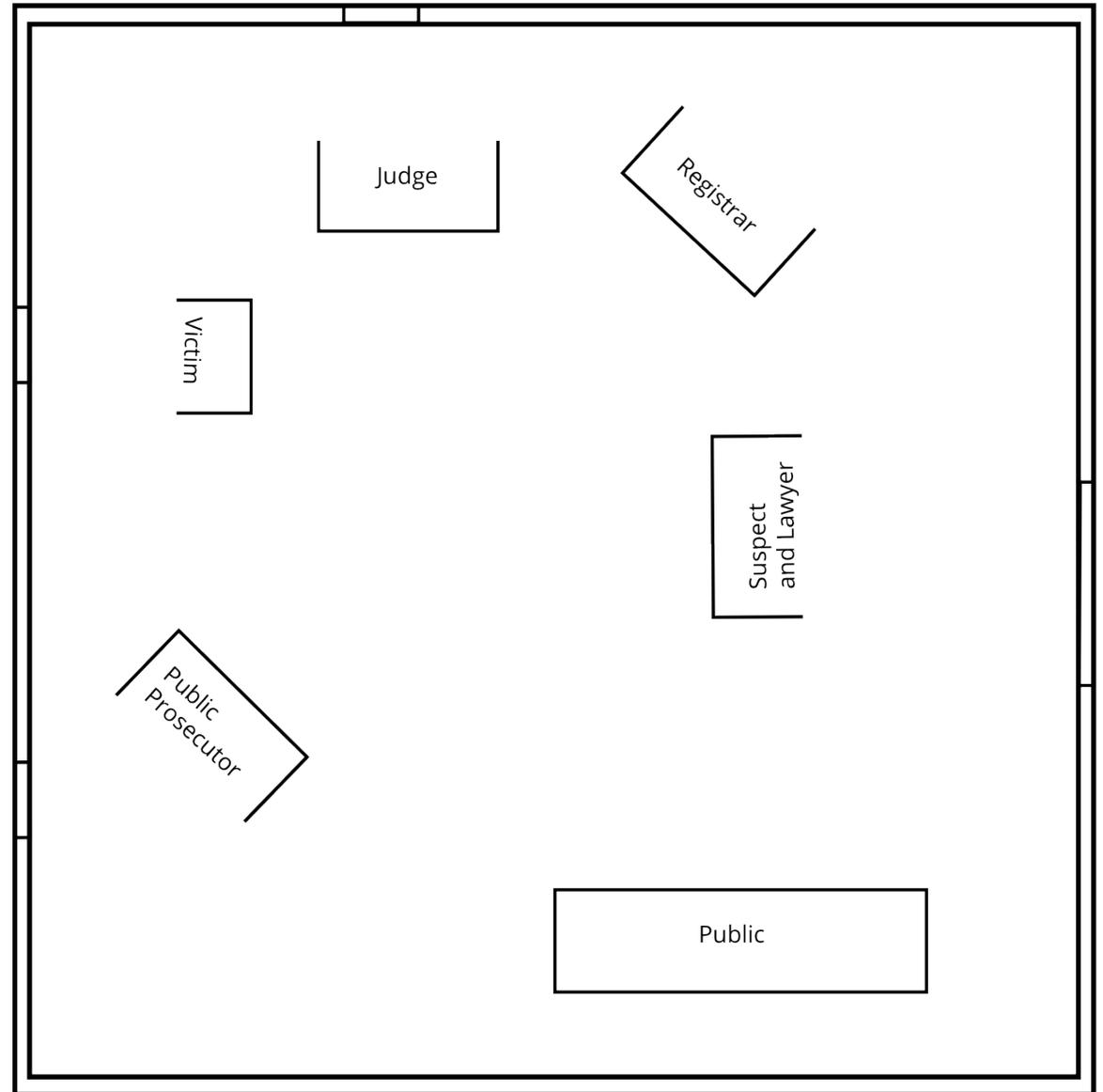


+ Trust
- Fear

Maurits Ferwerda

Emphasize Clarity

This design emphasizes the difference between the Public Prosecutor and the Judge. For legal experts it is clear that there is a difference between the two actors in a courtroom. But for most people entering a courtroom for the first time it is not clear at all and it is not far-fetched to think that they are playing on the same team. By placing the Public Prosecutor further away from the Judge it is more clear that they are not on the same team and it hopefully creates a more experienced fairness in the trial.



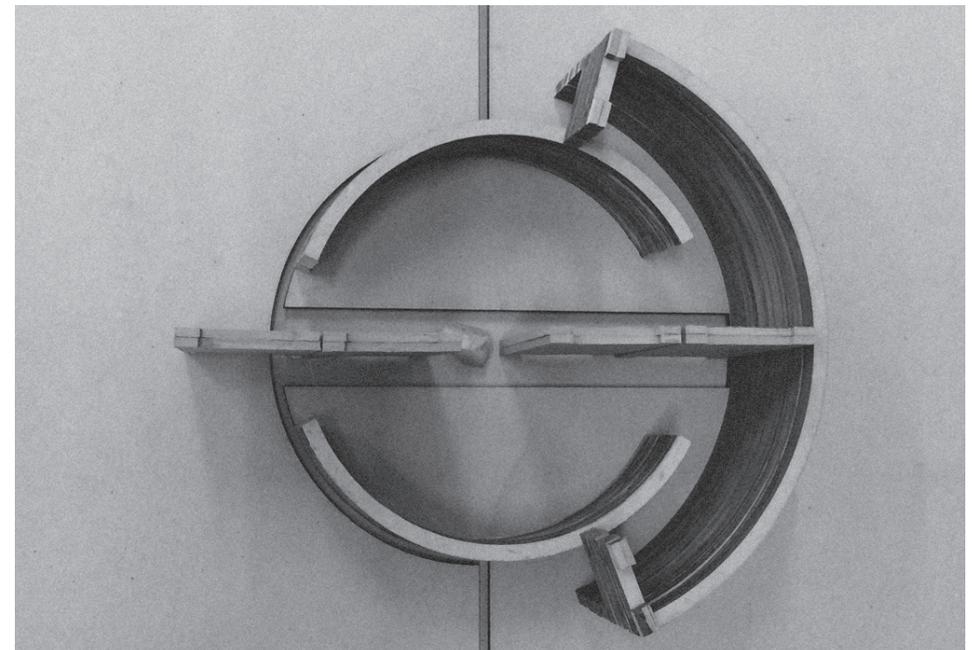
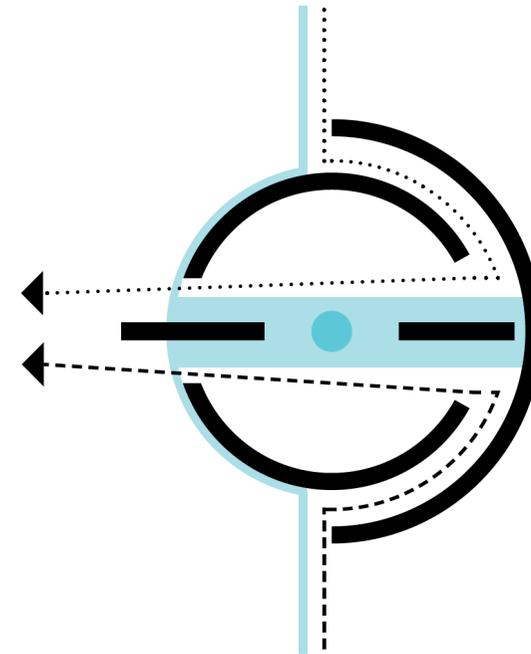
Eloi Gimeno

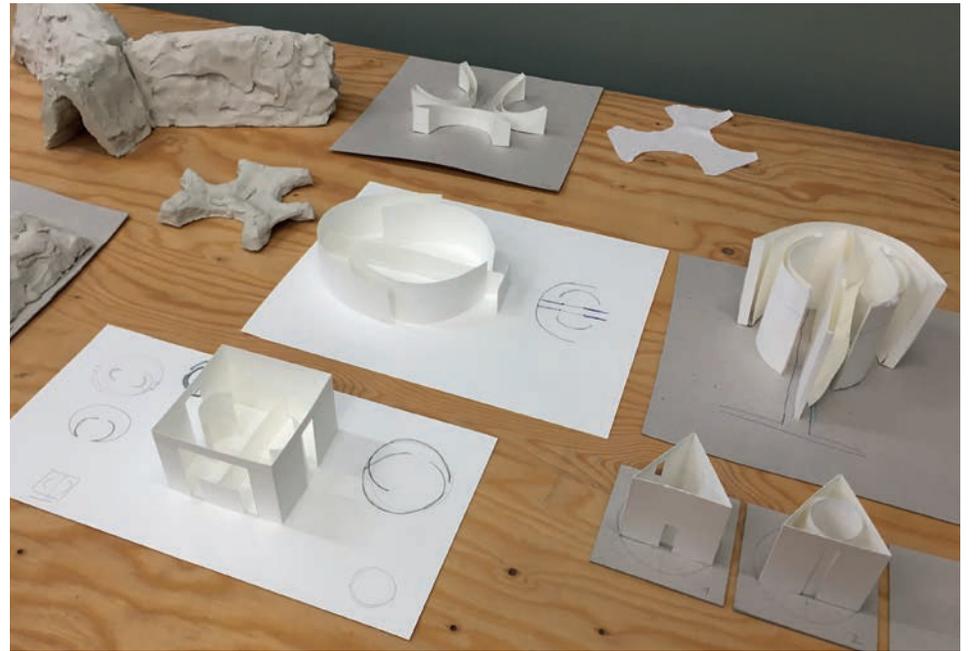
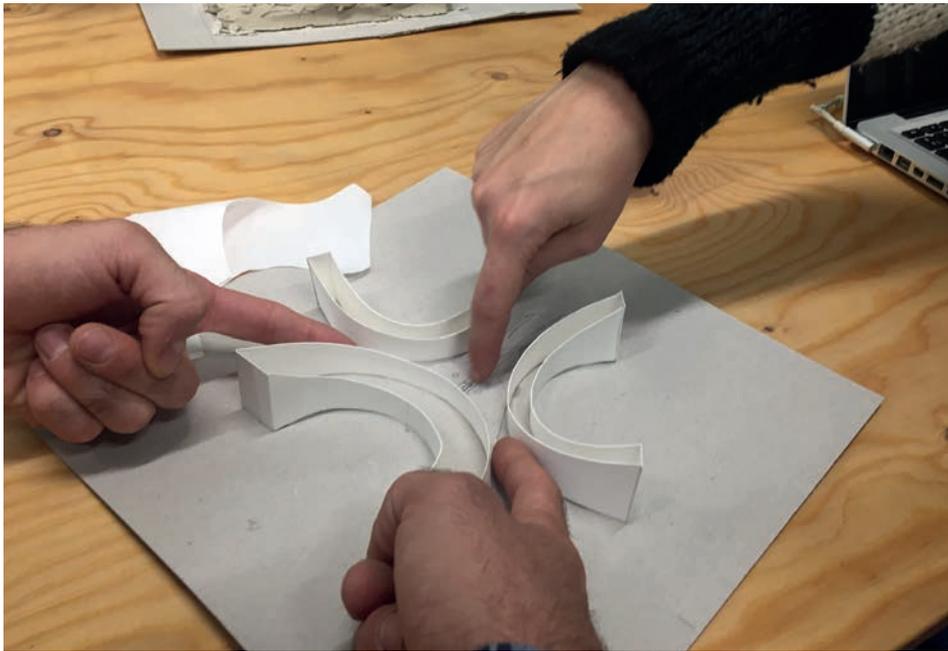
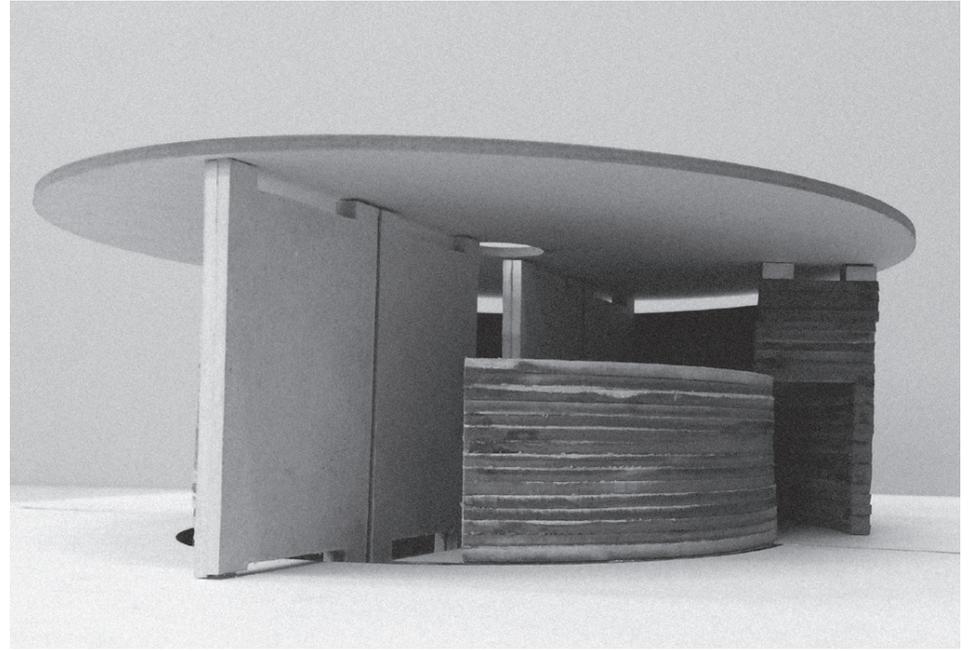
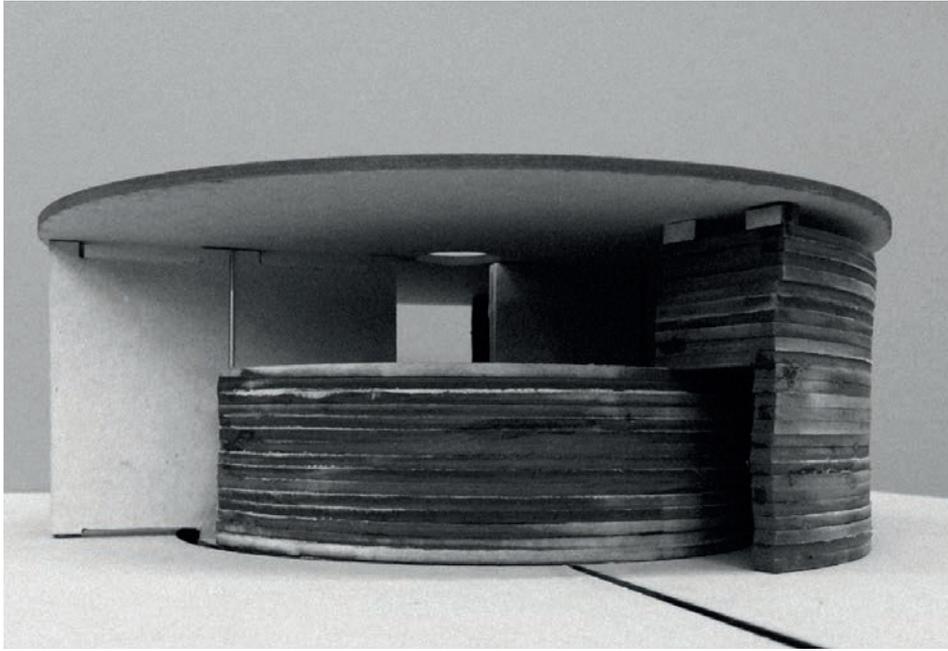
Reconciliation module

I propose the creation of a space that fulfils a need that can't be found in the courtroom, a space for reconciliation. Based on the principles of restorative justice the Reconciliation Module serves as a meeting place for two people (victim and perpetrator) that have the need to solve a conflict between them outside the requirements of the law.

The module, that is composed by two accesses, a meeting point and a common exit, is designed and constructed under values associated with justice such as equality, balance, transparency, fairness and honesty.

The module becomes, in that way, the three-dimensional representation of an agreement, being not only an architectural construction but also a sculptural piece.





Thomas Viers

*Play,
Proposal for a courtroom*

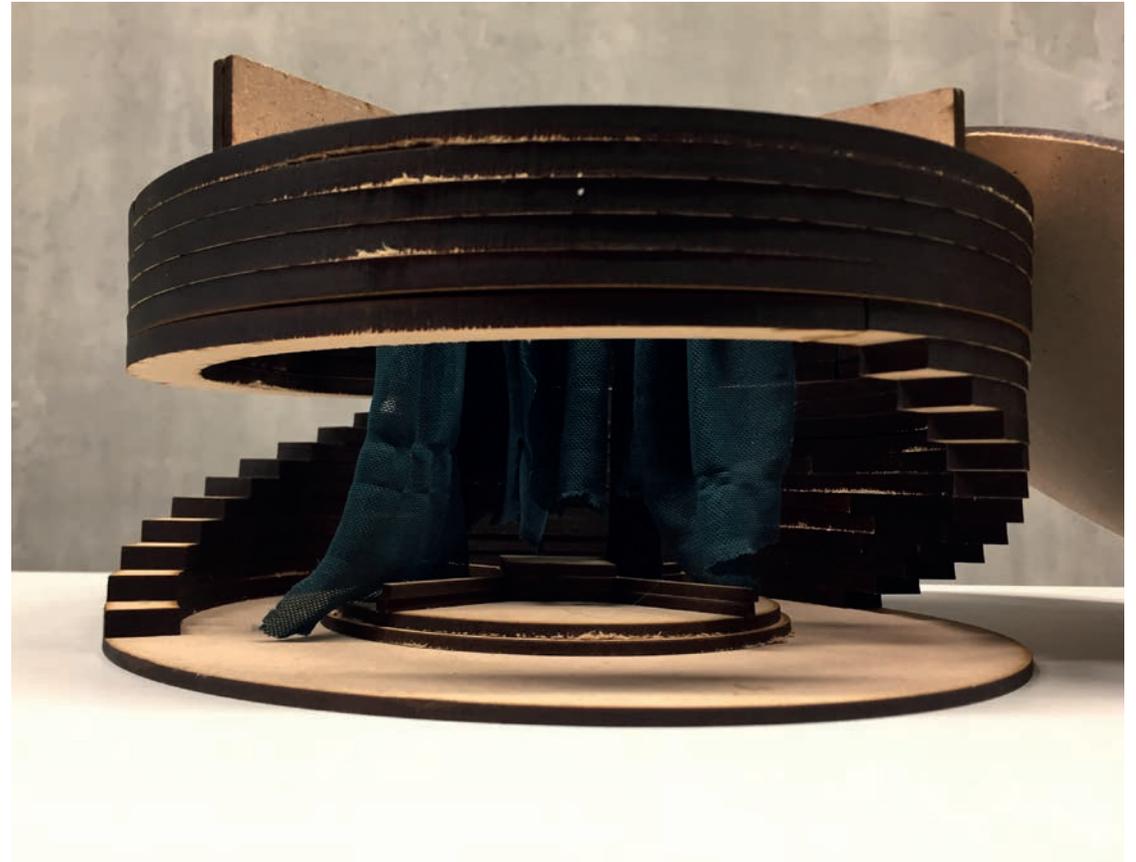
The principle is to delimit each space to limit each conversation one by one in space. Here four zones are present, one for the judge(s), one for the victim, one for the suspect and one for the prosecutor.

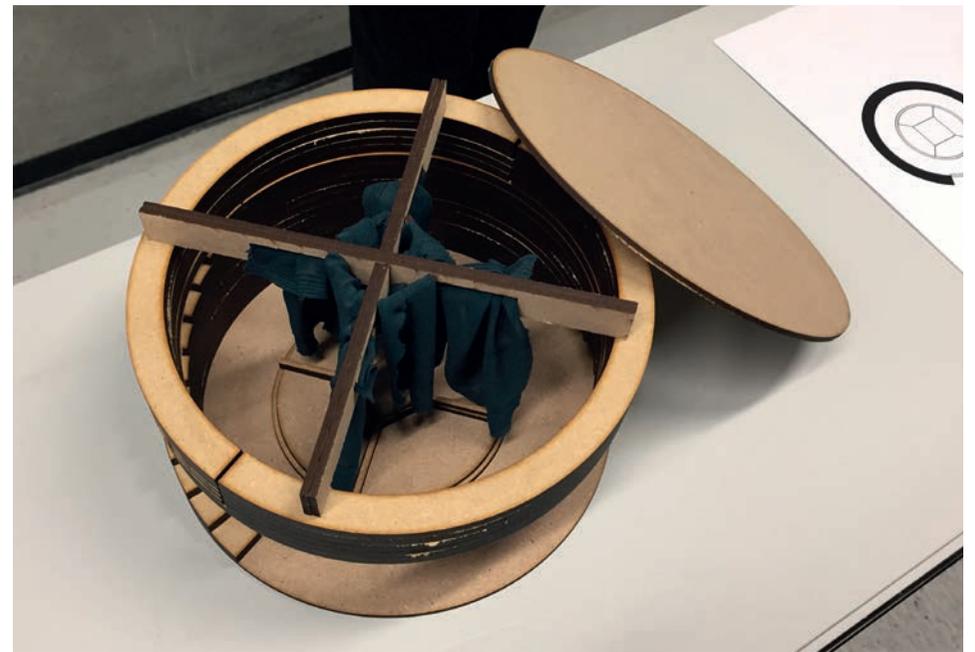
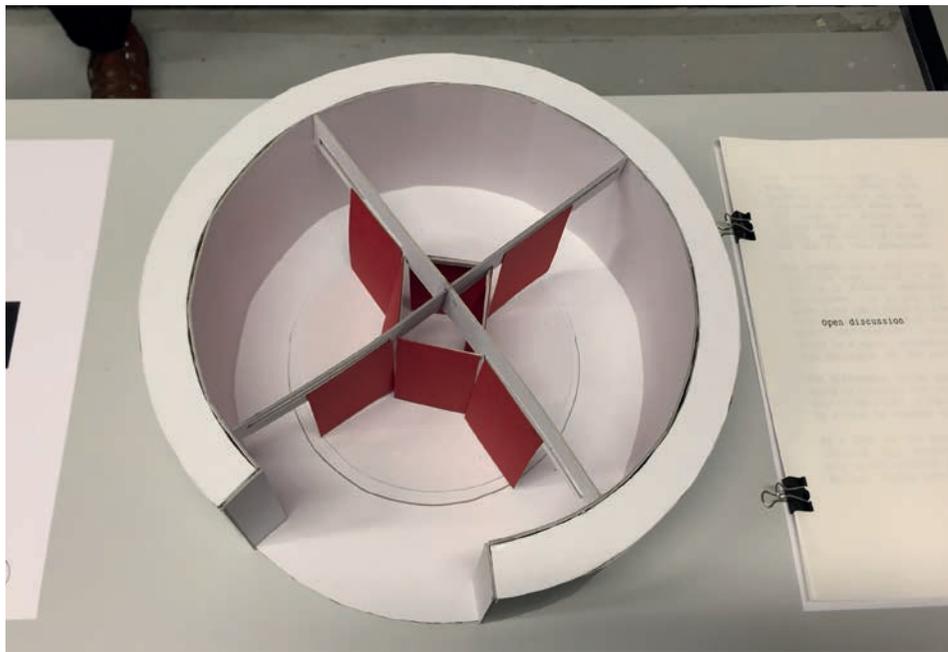
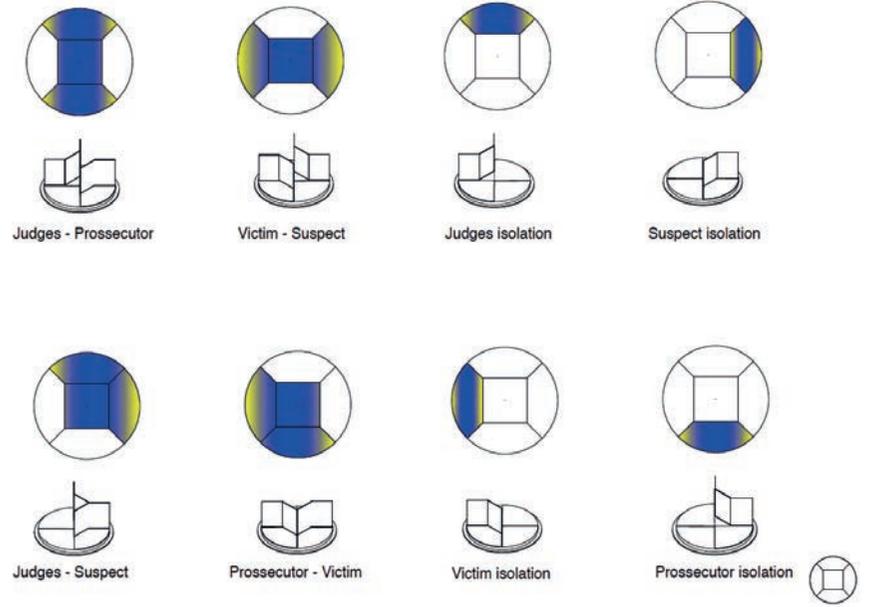
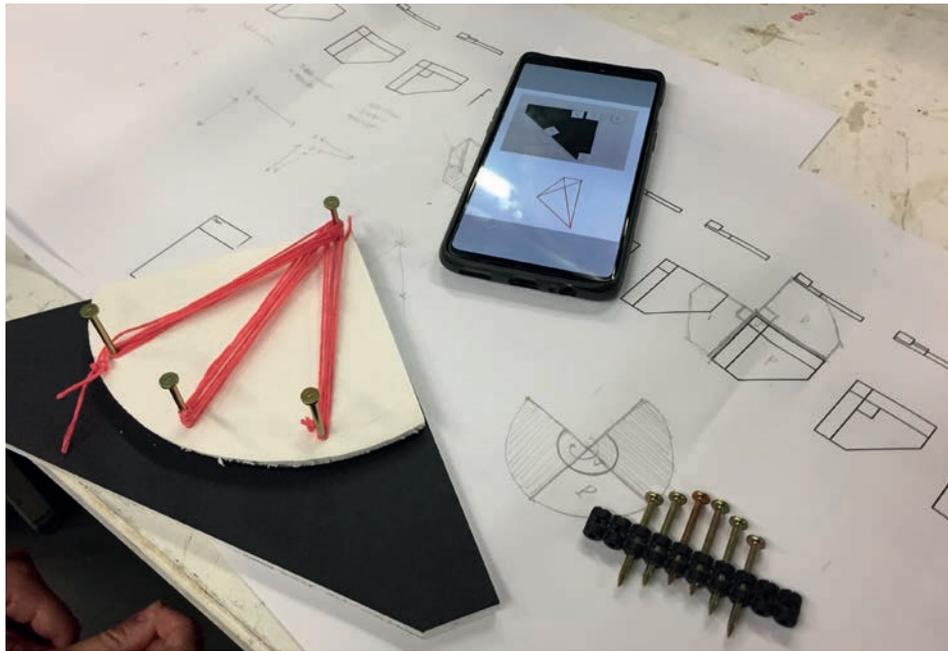
The project being fictitious, since the organization of the justice is already completely established, the project proposes a new space which will define the session step by step.

Each conversation corresponds to a space, according to the decisions of the actors.

The different spaces are limited by curtains that an extra actor, the messenger can pull to close the spaces.

As a play at the theater the curtains will describe every act, so the «scenario» have to be written before every session.





Roos Wijdeveld

A defendant's faith

A design that unifies informality (kindness) and extreme formality (symbolism)

With this design, I've tried to develop a way to best ensure a defendant's faith in our judicial procedure. The prosecutor has been given an important role, as he is directly representing the truth. In his role of 'omniscient narrator' the prosecutor, wearing his white robe, constitutes a completely neutral component in the procedure. The judge serves as a final safeguard for a humane decision. By marking out the roles of the judge and the prosecution like this, it should be clear that the judge and the prosecutor are both acting in the hopes of serving justice.



