

View | Intro space



With an elegant scenography for the Soft Power - The Brussels Way of Making the City exhibition at S AM in Basel, we want to encourage visitors to embark on a journey to Brussels through architecture under the guidance of the BMA. Upon entering the first gallery space, visitors are greeted with a glowing wall of images, a living tableau celebrating 500 competitions organised by the BMA over the past ten years. Each illuminated image contributes to the 'big picture', i.e. BMA's ongoing commitment to creativity and innovation in the design of architecture in Brussels, and offers an insight into the projects that have shaped the cityscape. This strong visual element is supported by an introduction to the role of the BMA projected onto the opposite wall. At the other end of the room, a large photographic print of the city with written information in front of it offers two further readings of the city.

Moving deeper into the exhibition, visitors encounter the 'closer look' section, where 10 to 15 projects from the 'big picture' are displayed in detail on simple yet elegant table structures. Here, the rhythm of Brussels unfolds before the visitors in its translation into the exhibition layout. Following both diagonals of each gallery, the positions of the table structures introduce a dynamism to the interiors. They invite the visitor to meander between them, like in the densely woven urban fabric of Brussels. With their three different heights, the tables rise and fall like the undulating contours of Brussels itself, creating a sense of movement and dynamism that mirrors the pulse of life in the city.

View | Main exhibition space



Our proposal transcends the boundaries of the exhibition space. It embodies a dynamic entity that can adapt and evolve to different environments. Through collaborative dialogue, we extend an invitation to the teams of S AM and BMA to co-create an experience that reflects the 500 competitions that have taken place during Kristiaan Borret's tenure as BMA. Together we want to create an experience that reflects the vitality and diversity of Brussels' urban identity.

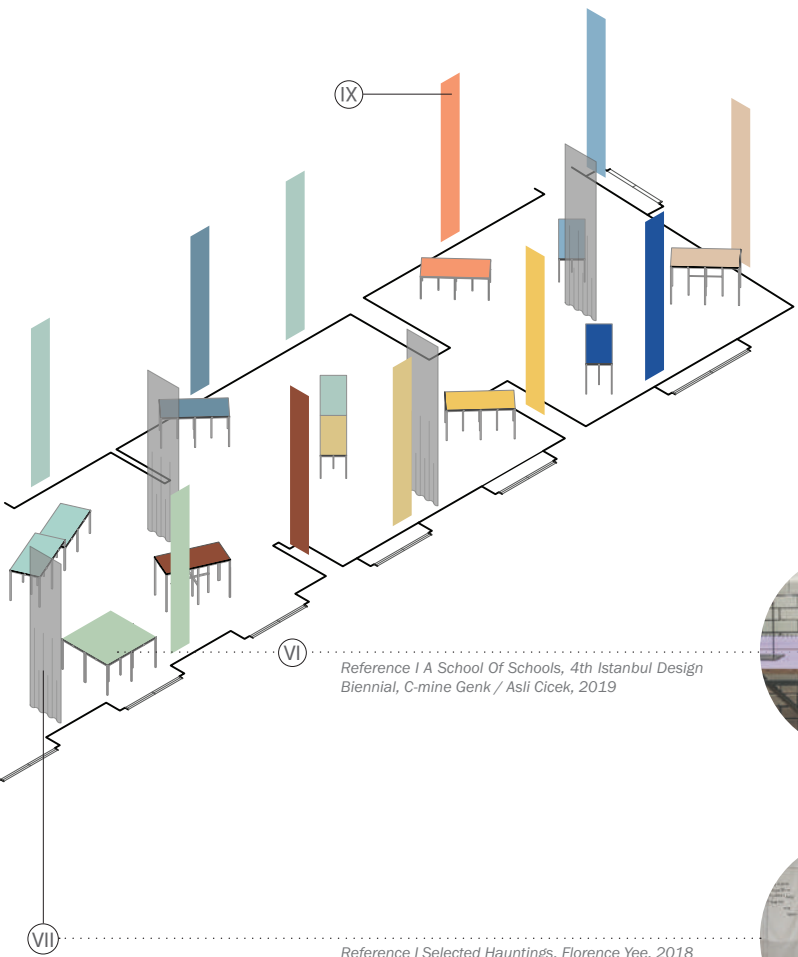
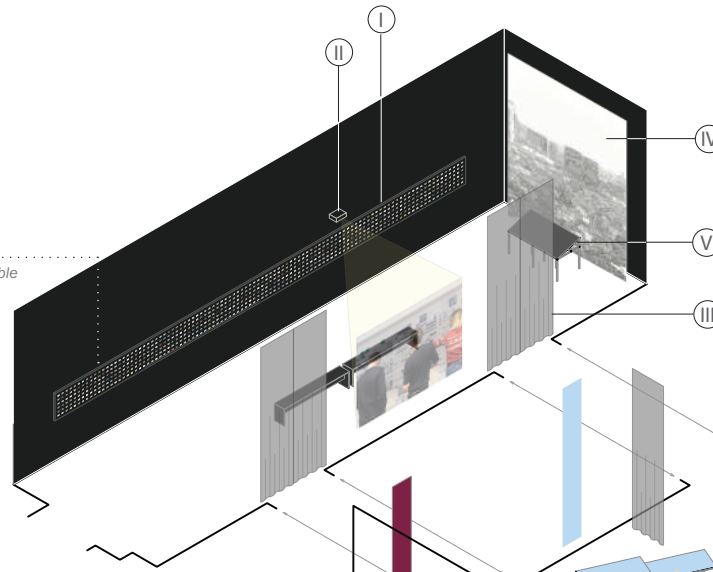
Ultimately, our aim is to transport visitors into the essence of Brussels' urbanity. We want to stimulate their imagination and ignite their enthusiasm for the architecture of the city. With an engaging mix of visual presentation, informative narrative and subtle soundscape, we reveal the gentle power inherent in the BMA's work that enhances, nurtures and guards the architectural quality of the city. By presenting Brussels as a rich and multi-layered context, we invite visitors in Basel to discover the unique charm of the Belgian capital.



Reference | Fischli & Weiss, Visible World, 1986 - 2001, dia tables



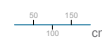
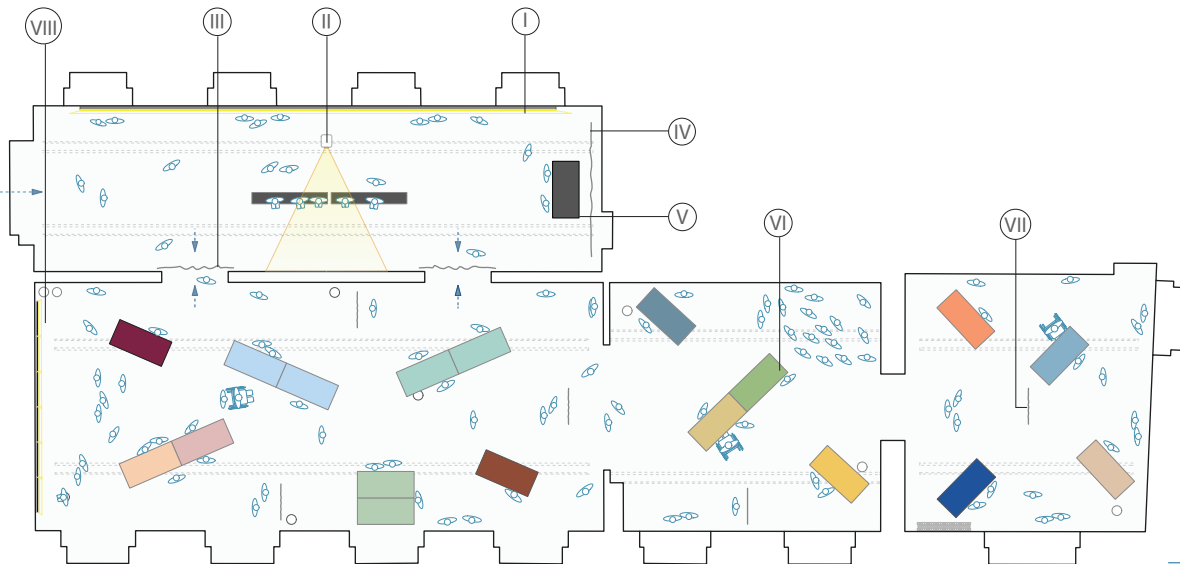
Reference | This Land, Pier 24 photography, 2018 - 2019



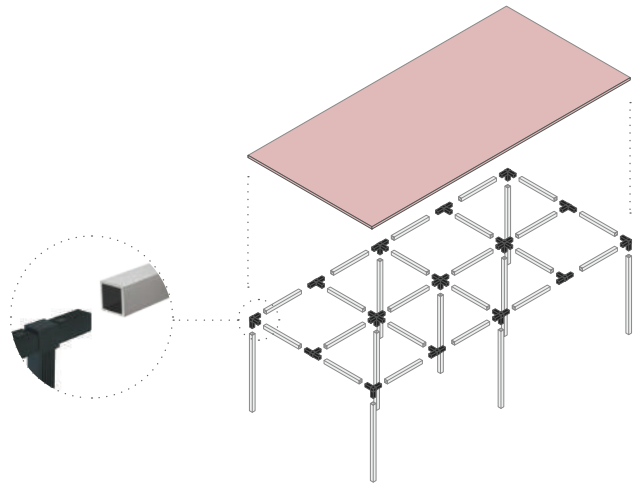
Reference | A School Of Schools, 4th Istanbul Design Biennial, C-mine Genk / Asli Cicek, 2019



Reference | Selected Hauntings, Florence Yee, 2018

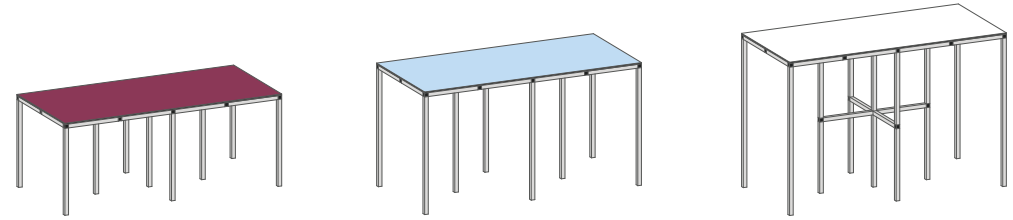


- I - Lightbox on the wall I presentation of 500 projects of the BMA competitions - the 'big picture'
- II - Informative wall projection (content yet to be determined)
- III - Blackout curtains I entry to expo space
- IV - Title and image of brussels printed on large fabric surface
- V - Table with informative text and map of Brussels
- VI - Presentation surface, tables with referring colour code specific to a project - the 'closer look'
- VII - Hanging fabric 'banners' with informative text
- VIII - 10 large flat screens displaying street scenes and the (urban) atmospheres of Brussels
- IX - Reference colour code specific to a project for indication of wall area as presentation surface



For this project, we designed a structure with several legs, made of slim aluminium tubes (2.5cm/2.5cm), and consisting of connectors. These elements are straightforward to assemble and disassemble, making it easy to transport and reassemble the parts. Additional tubes and fittings can be added to create other structures, thanks to the availability of the material. This also allows for quick reproduction or modifications to existing structures.

To transform the structure into a table, a 70cm by 150cm plate (made of wood, such as MDF or poplar plywood) is added. The thickening at the bottom of the plate will allow it to lie in the grid structure, without the need to make holes in the plate or tubes. At the bottom, the tubes (legs of the structure) are fitted with cover caps that contain adjustable bases. These ensure that the assembled tables can be stabilised on uneven surfaces.



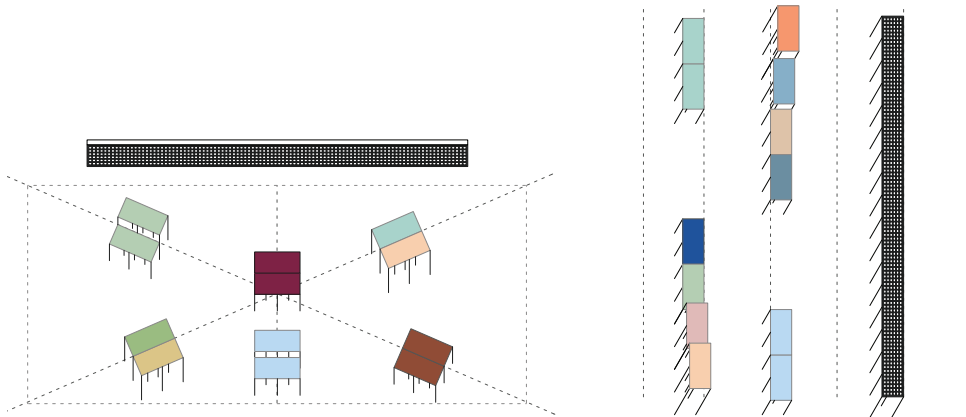
For a topographical effect that evokes the lush and chaotic height differences of Brussels, the composition of legs and connectors with surface plate leads to assembled tables with 3 different heights.

Because the lightbox on the wall can be taken apart in components, the 5 plexiglas plates with a printed film with competition images can also be used as a horizontal surface. One can make a horizontal lightbox. Either separately in 5 parts (250cm/71,5cm) or as 1 long table (12,58cm/71,5cm).

The horizontal lightbox can be built by using a new set of aluminium tube legs and connectors or using other leg types (i.e. trestles, pedestals...)

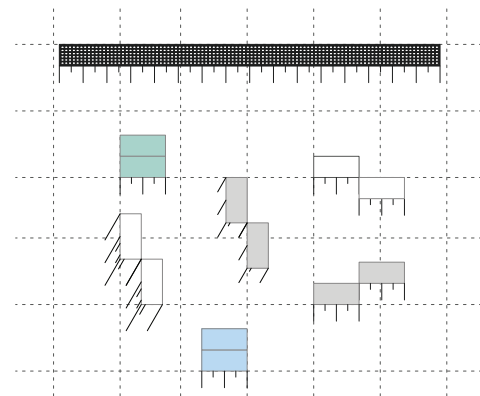


Different presentation possibilities (table arrangements), at various locations

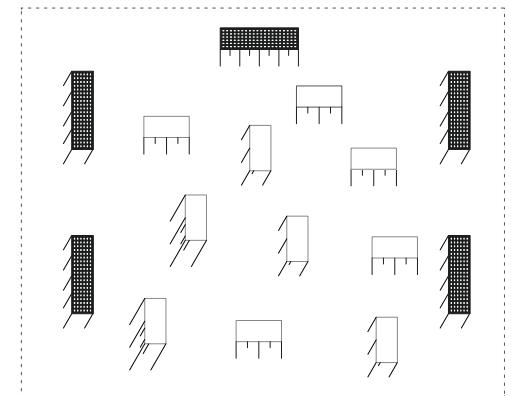


– diagonal arrangement / lightbox on the wall

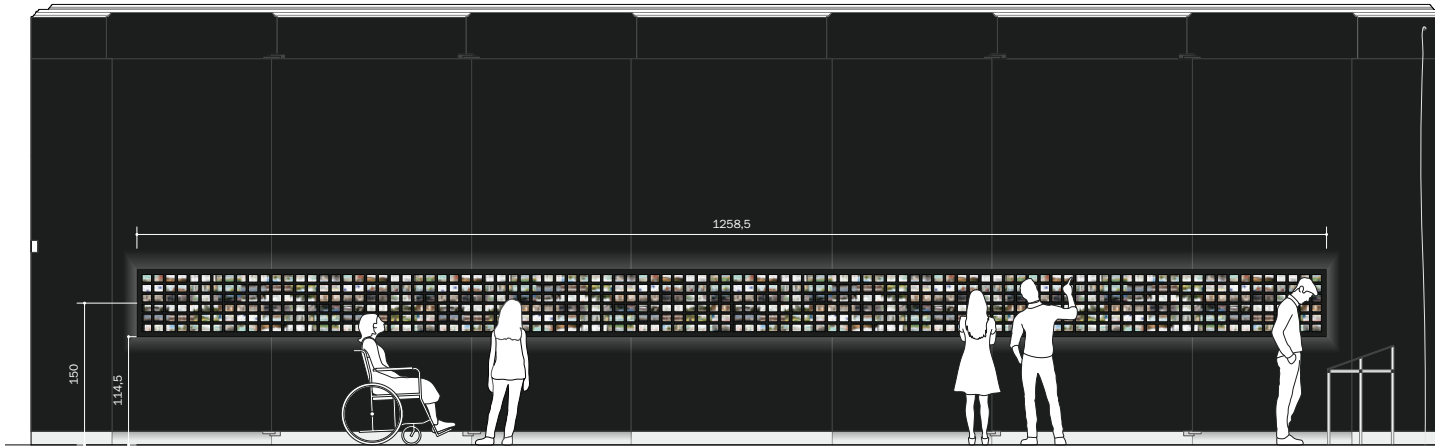
– parallel arrangement / lightbox as long table



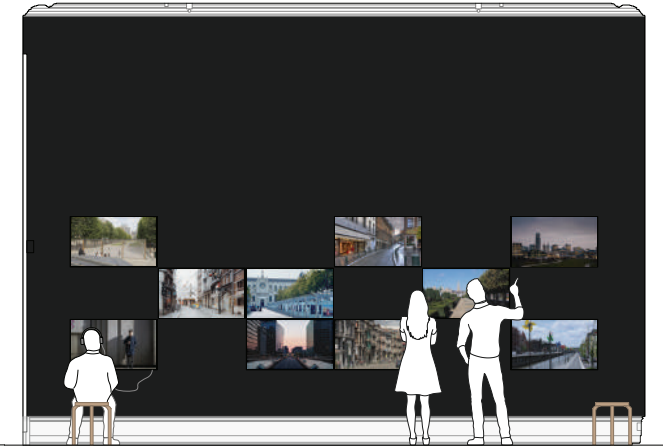
– grid arrangement / lightbox as long table



– free arrangement / lightbox as 5 freestanding tables

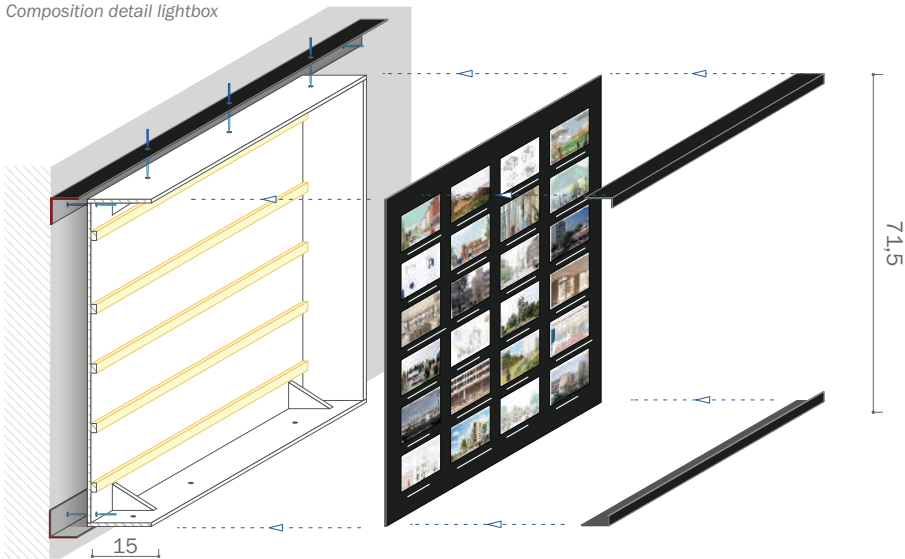


View of light box foreseen on wall in room 1 | dimensions



View of the screens arranged on the wall in room 2 (main exhibition)

Composition detail lightbox

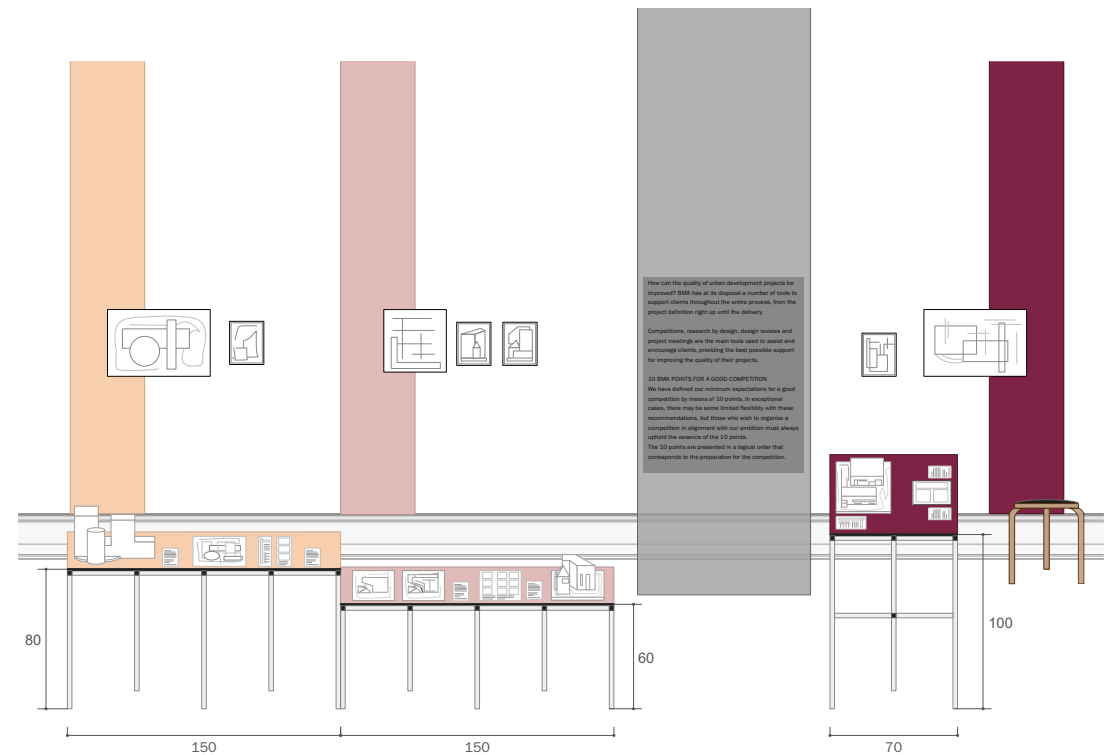


The light box is made up of 5 compartments of 250cm / 71.5cm / 15cm.

Constructed with:

- 5x lightweight poplar plywood (8mm) frames | painted white inside, black outside
- 5x opaque plexiglass sheets provided with an HD-print film with the given images in a grid
- Each compartment has 5 LED strips
- The plexiglass sheets are slid into a groove provided by a frame profile (black aluminium) attached to the front of the wooden frame
- Two profiles are provided at the back of the frame. These profiles are fixed to the walls and not to the window shutters (span using profile).

The 5 compartments are fitted alongside each other to form one long unit.



Display table dimensions + composition colour code arrangement | table colour linked to colour strip on the wall - colour specifically assigned to each project



During the preparation of our scenography proposal for the exhibition *Soft Power - The Brussels Way of Making the City*, which will first be shown at S AM in Basel, we analysed three aspects of the project:

1. Translation of the content into the space
2. Logistics and technics of the installation
3. Adaptability of the concept to other venues

These analyses led us to a concept that includes a simple exhibition system, which forms the basis for a collaborative, dialogue-oriented process with the respective teams of S AM and BMA. We structure our methodology through the three aspects mentioned above to provide a systematic overview of our approach.

### 1. Translation of the content into the space

Two main lines of this aspect are the *'big picture'* of BMA's commitment to improving the culture of architectural competitions in Brussels and the *'closer look'* at a number of competition winners in execution.

The *'big picture'* is to be illustrated on the basis of 500 competitions organised over the last ten years and completed with an explanation of the BMA's activities. We believe that each competition project should be presented on an equal level, in a non-hierarchical and purely chronological order. Therefore, we propose a visual introduction of all projects in the first gallery with a continuous light box at eye level. An image of 10x8cm (a photo of the location, an image from the call for entries...) from each competition is shown on a grid of 100 columns and 5 rows: the projects light up colourfully as an immediate eye-catcher when entering the exhibition space of S AM.

This proposal for an attractive overview refers to a very impressive and beautiful project *'Visible World'* by the artist duo *Fischli & Weiss*. The duo conducted over many years a visual research for the *'ideal image'*. In 2000 they published the 2800 photographs as a book. Later they exhibited the images in various museums. The spatial translation of the book became a very long light table on which hundreds of photographs are illuminated: a glowing archive that the artists have built up.

Our fascination with this reference lies in its visual quality and the lack of a categorisation system for the images. The latter lends the work a uniformity of perception and, above all, in its spatial realisation, the illuminated pictures on a very long grid provide an appealing, attractive overview of this impressive archive. The long light box fixed on the wall of Room 1 in S AM will act in a similar way. This object will be complemented by a projection on the opposite side, the content of which has yet to be determined by the curators. (We can imagine that a short interview with the BMA might explain the organisation most directly, perhaps with voice-over overviews of Brussels...) At the back of the gallery, a fabric with a picture of Brussels and the title of the exhibition encloses the space. These three elements form a strong introduction before entering the enfilade on the street side, which is dedicated to the *'closer look'*.

The three following rooms, in which 10 to 15 projects with different documents are shown, are organised with simple table structures. The tables are arranged on the two diagonals of the room. This configuration immediately results in a dynamic spatial organisation and visually refers to the complex urbanity of Brussels.

In our current proposal, tables with heights of 60, 80 or 100 cm are configured in order to evoke a topographic effect, while practically offering different presentation options for each project. We foresee for each project a horizontal table surface of 70x150cm, but for larger buildings two or more tables can be joined together. Each table top is given a colour which is applied to the nearest wall with a 50cm wide vertical strip to indicate the continuation of the project display on the walls. Text information contextualising project groups is printed on few tall, narrow fabrics distributed throughout the rooms. In addition to this basic layout, the only wall without openings in room 2 becomes a surface for moving images and sounds: here, ten flat screens arranged on an invisible grid can communicate images of projects, interviews, moments and sounds from Brussels.

### 2. Logistics and technics of the installation

Our approach to this aspect is influenced by two considerations: the travelling exhibition, which could perhaps surprisingly have a positive impact on the budget, and the spatial conditions of S AM in particular, alongside a thorough analysis of the material inventory received from the institution. The list of available material brought us to the conclusion that, due to its fragmented content, it is not possible to reach a coherent design with the available stock. Parallel to that, the traveling character of the exhibition requires a modular, robust system that can be used many times with a minimum effort.

The fact that the exhibition will first take place in Basel and then be shown in Brussels gives us the opportunity to consider a part of the production in Belgium. The material can be transported to Basel by acquiring the ATA carnet, which allows transport from EU countries to Switzerland on the strict condition that the goods are returned to the EU country of origin within 12 months. As the exhibition in Basel lasts five months, it corresponds directly to the main rule of the ATA carnet. In this way, production costs can be kept within the available budget. In the budget overview, however, we also show a cost estimate for production in Switzerland.

We propose manufacturing the structures for the tables from industrial aluminium profiles and assembling them with standard connectors. This simple, repetitive system not only saves costs, but allows flexibility both during the work process with curators and assemblage of the displays. For table tops we use MDF plates and have no material waste. The plates can be transported together with the aluminium profiles in a truck. The light box is to be produced in the workshop as 5 modules measuring 250x65x15cm. LED strips are integrated into each module and illuminate the opaque acrylic panel covered with a printed foil of the projects. The modules are dimensioned so that they fit into the same truck for transport.

After the exhibition in Basel, the material will return to Brussels to be reconfigured for the same exhibition in another venue. With our modular design we aim the reuse of the table structure at each stage of the exhibition tour, as the reuse of the light box, which can also be displayed horizontally if the space allows. The fabric banners with contextualising information in German and English that we suggest for the enfilade of S AM can also be reused in the other exhibitions. In Belgium, Dutch and French languages can be added with new banners of the same dimensions.

The second consideration regarding the spatial conditions of S AM involves the intelligent use of the existing material from the institution's inventory and the simple treatment of the rooms.

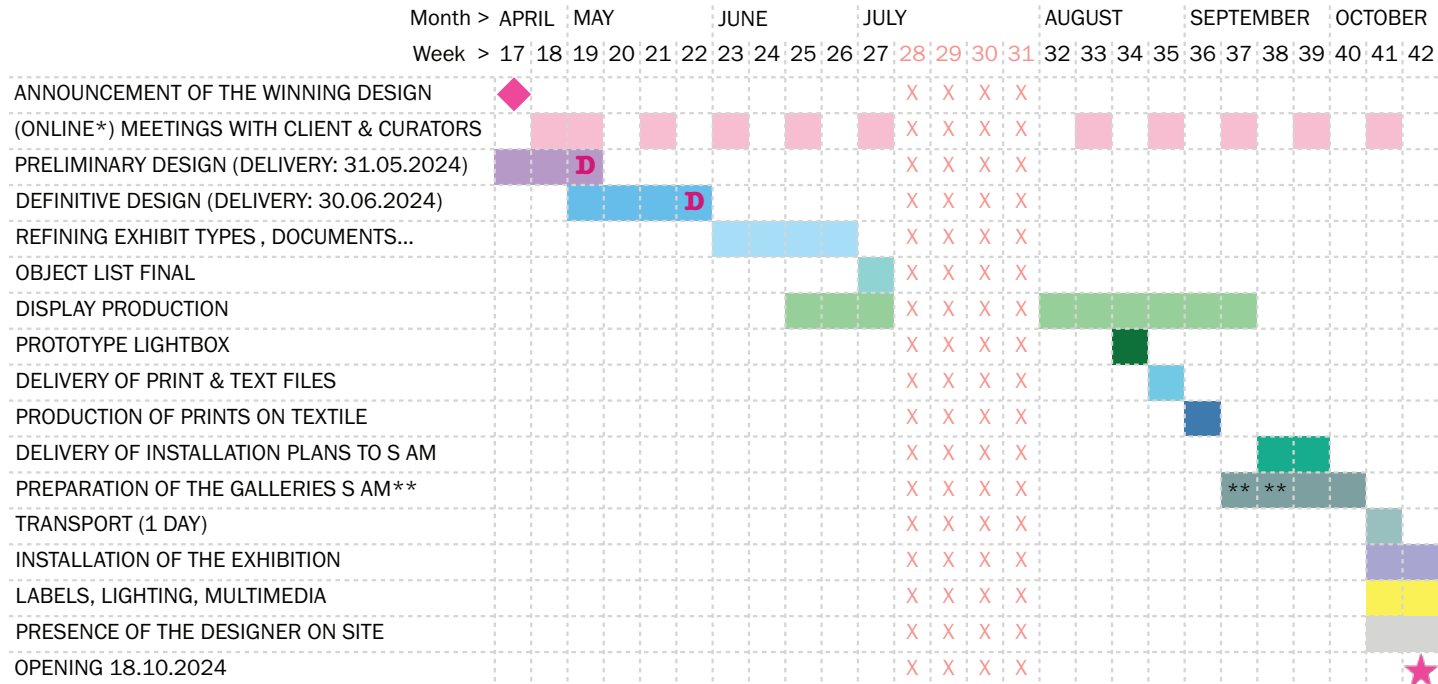
To achieve the desired effect of the light box and the projection on the walls of the introduction room, we suggest closing the shutters in room 1, painting the walls black and fitting the two doors to the enfilade with blackout curtains. In the enfilade, the walls are kept white except the vertical stripes in colour marking the area where a project presented on a tabletop will continue to be displayed on the wall. Flat screens, headphones, a projector, chairs and two benches from the S AM equipment are used so that no additional equipment needs to be rented.

### 3. Adaptability of the concept to other venues

The modularity of the exhibition displays allows for effortless reconfiguration at any new venue. The dynamic arrangement of the tables in S AM follows the diagonals of the spaces to allude to the urban fabric of Brussels. In Brussels, however, this configuration may be redundant and the arrangement of the exhibition may follow a different grid or other guidelines. The vertical colours on the walls, which correspond to the shades of the table tops, are equally easy to apply. The modular light boxes on the wall of S AM can be displayed elsewhere horizontally, together or in individual parts. The boxes could become part of the BMA offices after the exhibition tour, be reused for other images by simply replacing the printed foils, or be dismantled altogether to be stored.

Most importantly, the modularity and adaptability of our proposal provides a space to develop the exhibition together with the curators, graphic designers and finally with the production team. Nevertheless, we believe that a few rules such as using the diagonal lines of the galleries, working with colour areas to directly recognise project documents and also defining the table space available for each project will be helpful during conversations with curators. In order to maintain a coherent graphic identity, we hope to work closely with the graphic designers involved.

As we had already emphasised in the first phase of this competition, we value the gradual and increasing involvement of the executing parties such as contractors, builders, craftsmen and lighting technicians from the preliminary design phase to the day of the opening of an exhibition.



Planning

\* When needed the designer can attend meetings in Basel.  
 \*\* To be discussed with S AM production team.  
 D Delivery of each design phase.  
 X Summer holidays in Belgium and Switzerland.

Meetings with the graphic designers will be made by appointment.

The designer's office delivers scale drawings with measurements, installation positions and alike for a smooth installation period.

The designer's office will be following the whole process of the exhibition, including the dismantling.

Element	Dimensions	Description	Production in BE	Optional *	Production in CH
Total excl. VAT 21% (BE) or VAT 8,1% (CH)			19000,00 €	18384,00 €	21966,00 CHF
TABLE STRUCTURES	H: 60, 80, 100cm, W: 150cm, D: 70cm	Standard aluminium profiles 2,5x2,5cm & connectors	4188,00 €	4188,00 €	6000,00 CHF
TABLE TOPS (19X)	H: 1,2cm, W: 150cm, D: 70cm	MDF plates, to be painted in S AM	616,00 €	Take-over of plates	300,00 CHF
LIGHT BOX (IN 5 PIECES)	H: 70cm, W: 1250cm, D:15cm	Wooden box, aluminium frame opaque acrylic plate, printed foil	3754,00 €	3754,00 €	6000,00 CHF
LED FOR LIGHT BOX (15X)	L: 245cm x 4 stripes/ modul, 20 pcs	LED strip integrated into light box	2234,00 €	2234,00 €	4000,00 CHF
FABRIC WITH BRUSSELS PRINT (1X)	H: 420 cm, W: 310cm	HD photographic print on M1 fabric	786,00 €	786,00 €	1256,00 CHF
DARKENING CURTAINS (2X)	H: 415 cm, W: 190cm	M1 fabric, incl. steel cables and hanging system	600,00 €	600,00 €	800,00 CHF
FABRIC WITH TEXT PRINTS (5X)	H: 420 cm, W: 95cm	M1 fabric, transparent, text fields printed (or sewn) on solid colour	1737,00 €	1737,00 €	2160,00 CHF
LIGHTING	N/A	S AM equipment	S AM	S AM	S AM
BENCHES, STOOLS	Bench H:45cm, W:200cm, D:30cm	2x exhibition benches & 11 Artek stools (available from S AM)	S AM	S AM	S AM
PROJECTION (1X)	N/A	Sony projector (available from S AM)	S AM	S AM	S AM
FLAT SCREENS (10X)	H: 53,94cm, W: 92,21cm, D: 2,99cm	Samsung (available from S AM)	S AM	S AM	S AM
HEADPHONES (4X)	N/A	AKG Samsung K52 (available from S AM)	S AM	S AM	S AM
TRANSPORT BE > CH, ACCOMMODATION	N/A	One driver (contractor) & truck, 2 nights stay in DE or FR	1835,00 €	1835,00 €	0,00 CHF
BUILD- UP	N/A	Contractor with the assistance of 2 people from S AM team (1,5 days)	850,00 €	850,00 €	0,00 CHF
DISMANTLING	N/A	Contractor with the assistance of 2 people from S AM team (1 day)	500,00 €	500,00 €	0,00 CHF
TRANSPORT CH > BE, ACCOMMODATION	N/A	One driver (contractor) & truck, 2 nights stay in DE or FR	1500,00 €	1500,00 €	1450,00 CHF
TEMPORARY IMPORT TO CH	N/A	ATA carnet (150 €) & handling of the project, custom formalities	400,00 €	400,00 €	0,00 CHF

Cost estimation

The cost estimate is based on the concept of a modular exhibition structure that can be reused for future exhibitions or other BMA events. The tables can be completely dismantled and require very little storage space. For the next "Soft Power - The Brussels Way of Making the City" exhibitions, the system can be transported to other venues and helps to minimise production costs. For this reason, and because of the lower material costs, we favour the production of the scenography elements to be prepared in Belgium, transported to Basel for the duration of the exhibition in S AM and then brought back to Brussels.

\*: Optional

We are in contact with the architectural firm URA, which has designed an exhibition at BOZAR in Brussels, and offer a large quantity of plywood panels that will be collected after the exhibition is dismantled in June 2024. The cost impact of this takeover is shown in the last column of the cost estimates chart. It is not included in the calculation for production in Switzerland, as the transport costs for the plywood panels alone would be disproportionately high.

Please note: Production in 21966,00 CHF equals 22653,07 € at the current exchange rate.