
IDEA SUBMISSION || 2025

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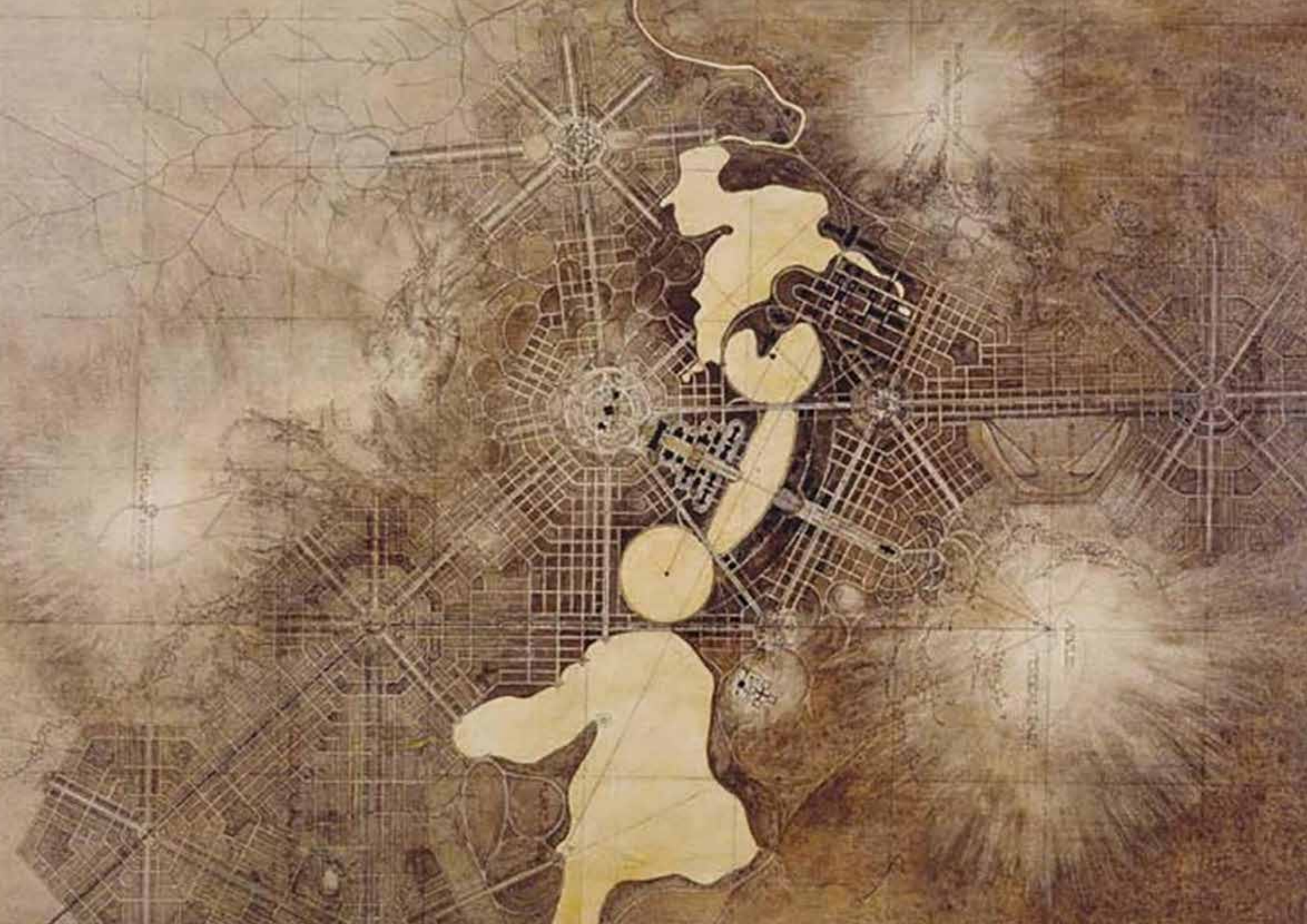
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APRIL PINE

CANBERRA LIGHT RAIL
STAGE 2A – PUBLIC ART

A3 CONCEPT SUBMISSION

1ST MAY 2025



MARION MAHONY GRIFFIN

The City She Drew

Positioned at a key intersection along Canberra's light rail, "The City She Drew" honors Marion Mahony Griffin — the architect, artist, and visionary whose hand gave form to the original drawings of Canberra. Responding to the commission for a major female-led artwork, this sculpture embodies the theme radiating heart, drawing on both the physical geometry of the Griffin plan and the emotional resonance of a woman's unseen contributions.

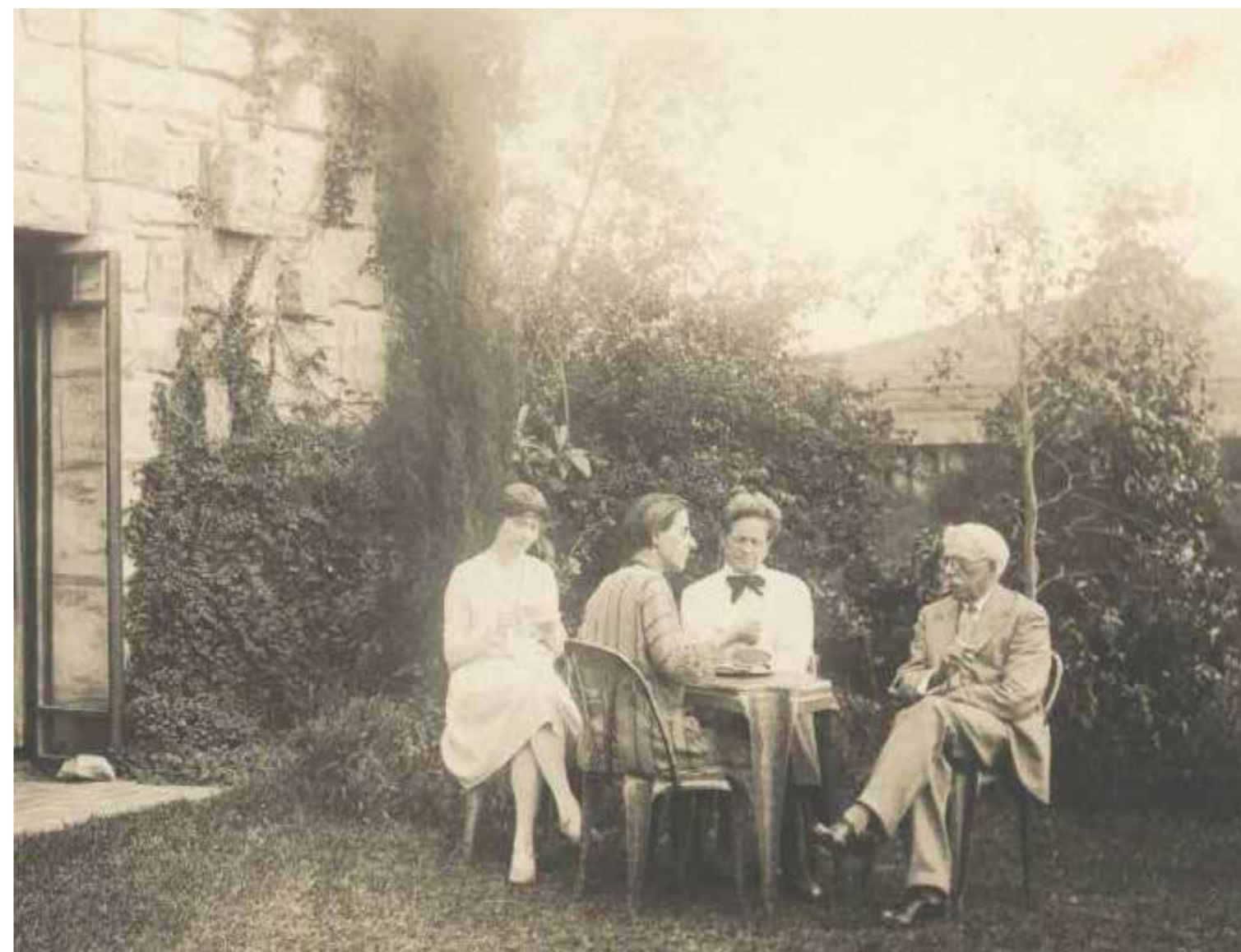
Marion is captured mid-gesture, grounded yet expansive as she draws into the skyline, her pencil extending toward the horizon. At its tip, a fine steel diagram of the Griffin master section floats in space, echoing the city's larger logic. In her other arm, scrolls and drawings allude to the weight of authorship and vision. Her figure is structured but softened, reflecting both discipline and fluidity, intellect and intuition.

This work invites the public to reconsider the master narrative. In honoring Marion not just as a partner, but as a lead voice in shaping the national capital, the sculpture acts as both recognition and correction. The City She Drew stands as a quiet force: a radiating presence, aligning past and present through the act of design.

The sculpture is a dialogue between art and architecture, smooth and flowing expressed in geometric grid. By taking traditional portrait and materiality and contemporarising it with new technology and computational methods. The sculpture is a cross pollination of architecture, art and engineering to create a marriage between old and new.

The grided structure of the sculpture talks to the concept of 'memory and framework'. Very present and solid from one perspective, but disappearing when in perfect elevation as though invisible or a 'memory'. The body is composed of intersecting horizontal and vertical plates to create a framework for the sculpture that functions as both structure and expression.





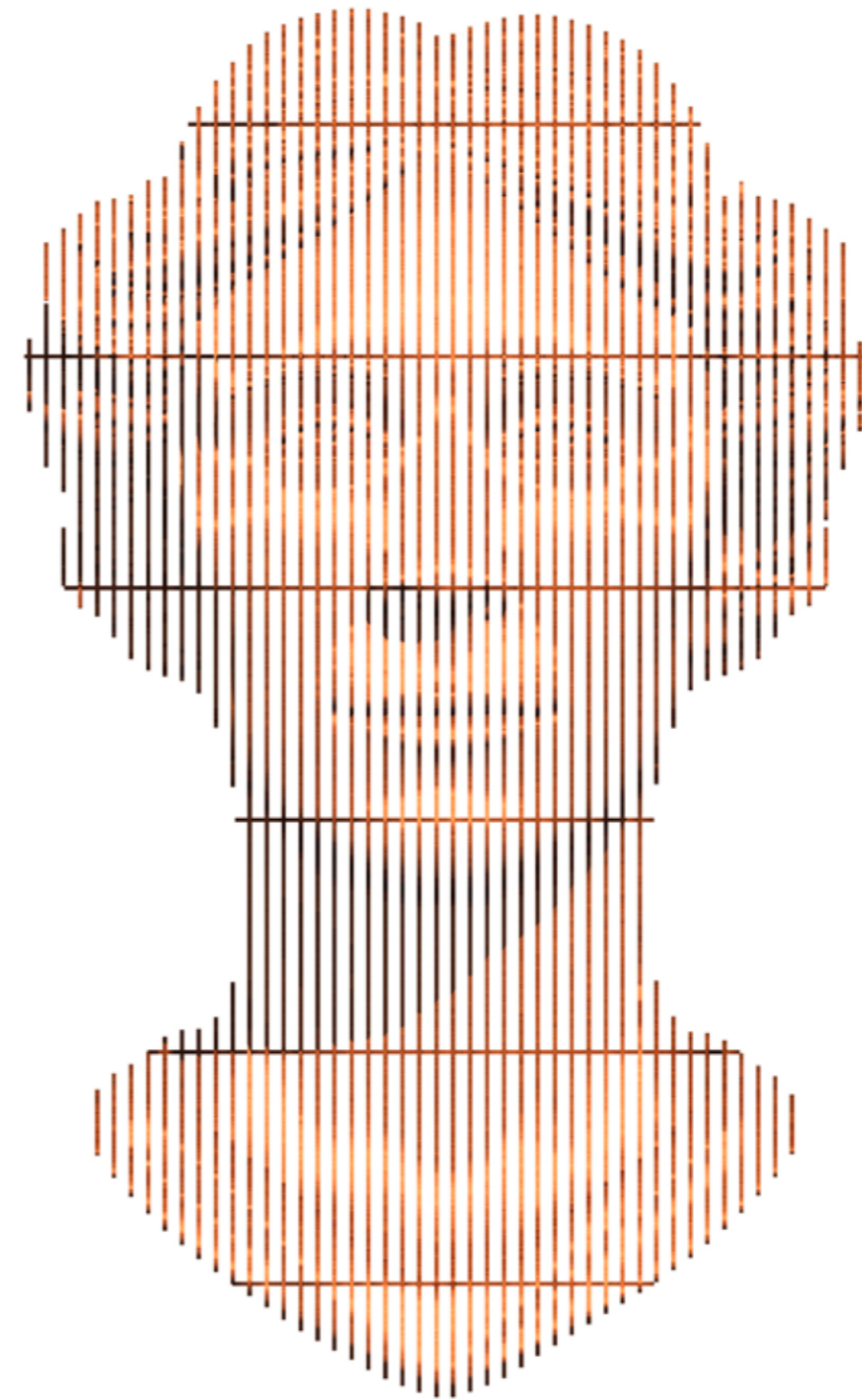
Creating a Likeness.

This early model studies the facial and hair structure of Marion Mahony Griffin, focusing on her being middle age, around the time she completed the seminal drawings for Canberra. The model is preliminary and references the bronze bust that already exists to test proportional accuracy before moving into finer detailing and more acute representation. At this stage, the face remains intentionally expressionless as I work toward capturing her specific likeness with more sensitivity and depth. This is preliminary only, to be developed in parallel with her body and pose.



Grid density will be more like this image.

The more detail the model is to begin with, the more intentional the plates are when cut at a lower density.





The feeling of alignment.

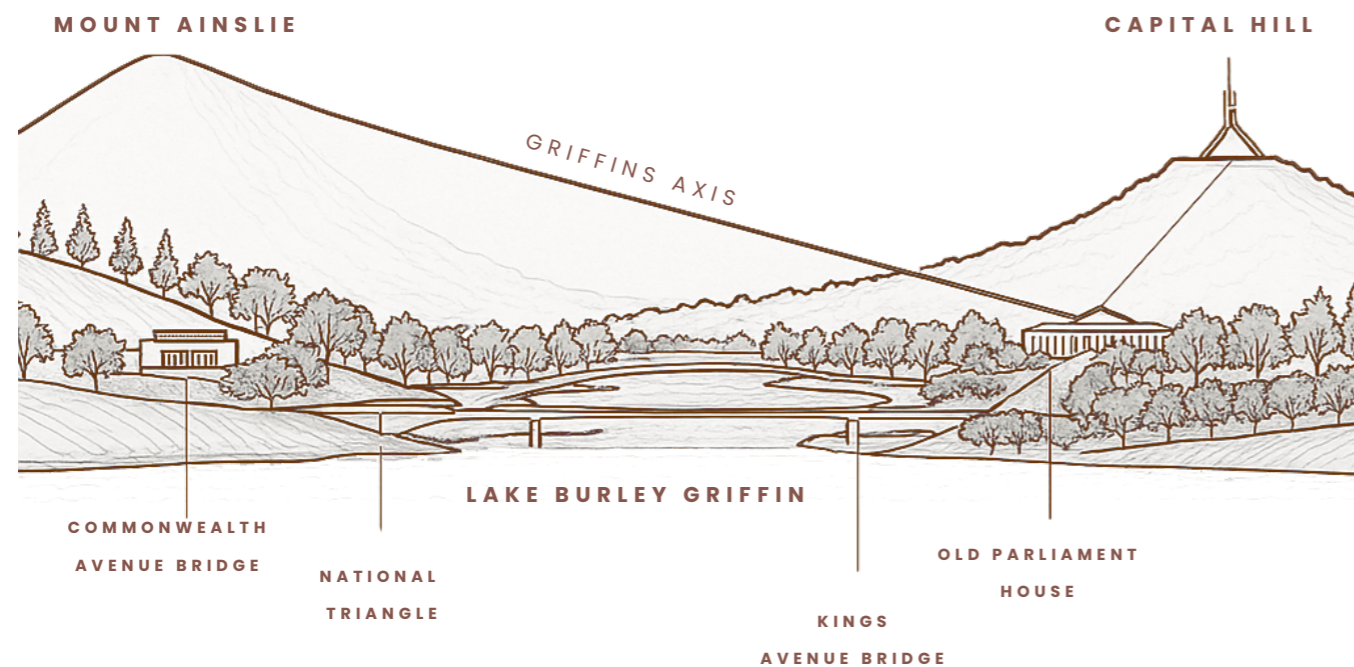
The primary moves in the masterplan reference the strong natural qualities of the existing nature landscape. There is an invisible order and structure when in Canberra that feels comfortable. The confident gestures made at master planning level are experienced at the pedestrian level. The intent is to bring a legibility to those orders in the sculpture.

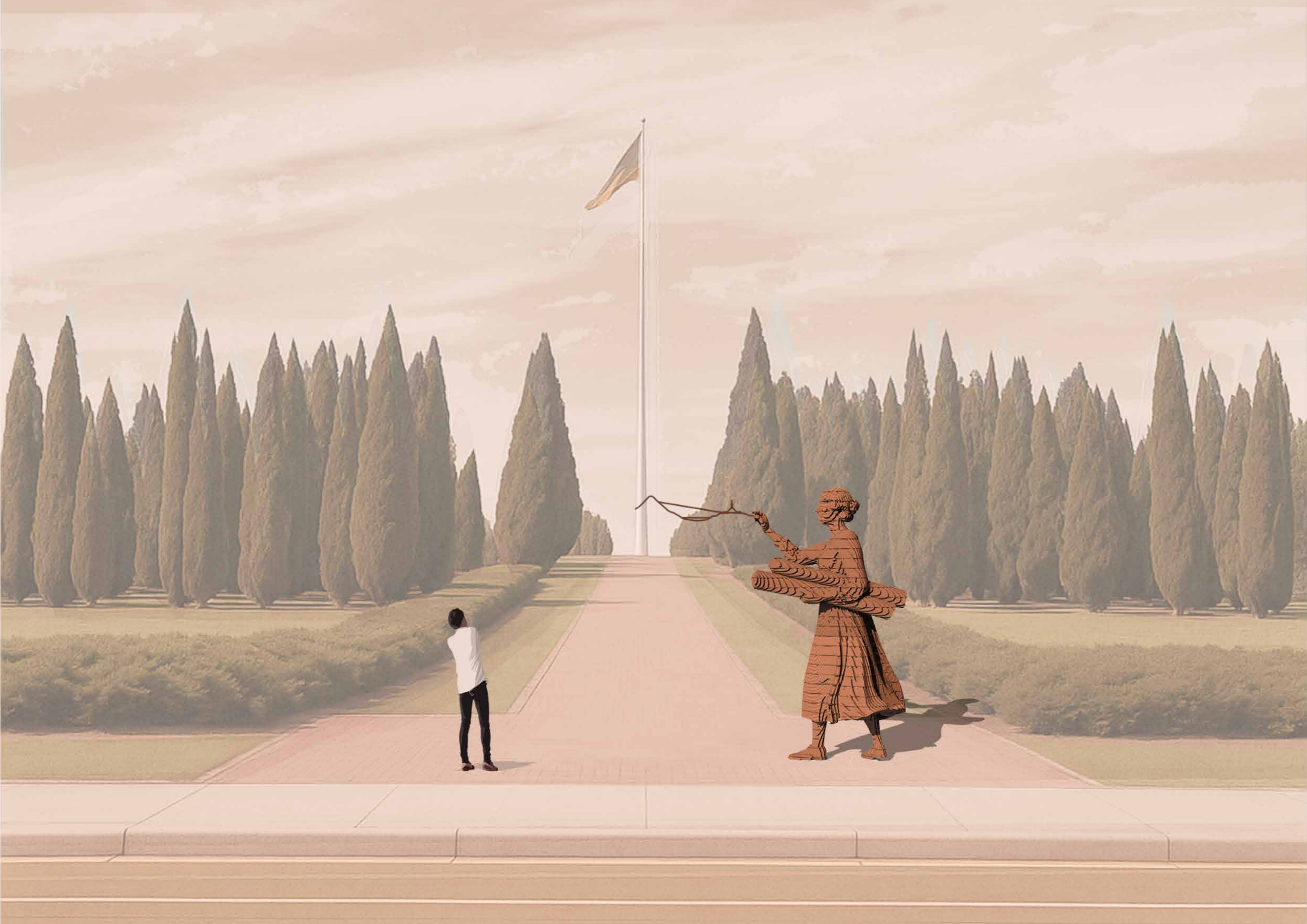
Final diagram to be prototyped at 1:1 scale. Finding the balance between being lightweight enough to not support bird life or vandalism, but durable enough to be robust in a public setting. Height of this element is important to be beyond reachability.

Idea 1 = Show her vision as a sectional diagram in 5mm as shown

Idea 2 = Radial Plan shown as a singular line when in elevation, yet the shadow falls to the ground revealing the master plan radial outlines.

Both intended to be very subtle gestures.





Detail + Pose Subtlety Studies



Single drawing.
Upright, soft arm.



Contrasting arm angles
Volume in skirt
Uplift in arm
More formality



2 drawing rolls
lean into focus
tightness in the body
straightness in the movement and angles
focus on geometry and right angles



forwardness
leaning into the drawing
stillness in the skirt



scale of drawings to emphasis architecture
movement in the skirt
leaning with lightness



exacerbating movement in the skirt
almost walking
flaneur type feeling
within the landscape vs observational

Renders

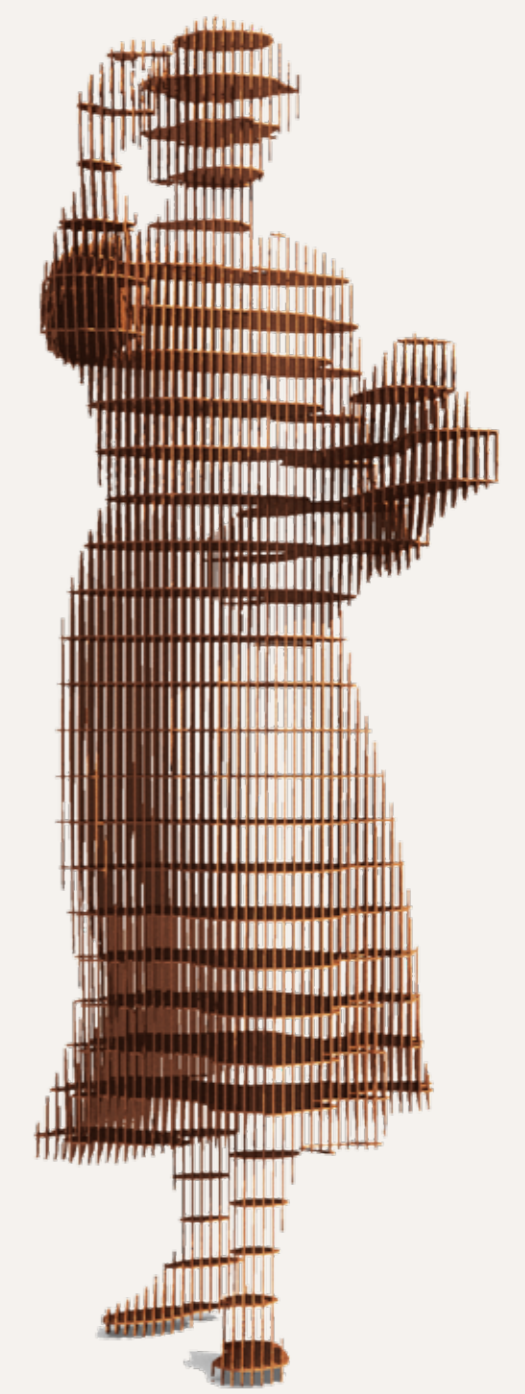
The artwork is a single sculpture made from vertical metal sheets with intersecting horizontal sheets. The sheets are individually treated then hammered together to create a compression fit with select welds where required. The methodology requires micro-millimetre tolerances which are achieved by using techniques developed in close relationship with regular suppliers.

The sculpture has no back, with each side sculpted to be reactive to the multiple axis the sculpture is visible from.

Grid dispersion graphic only. Density in reaction to engineering requirements. These renders are an even dispersion. See engineering section for more evolution on this.

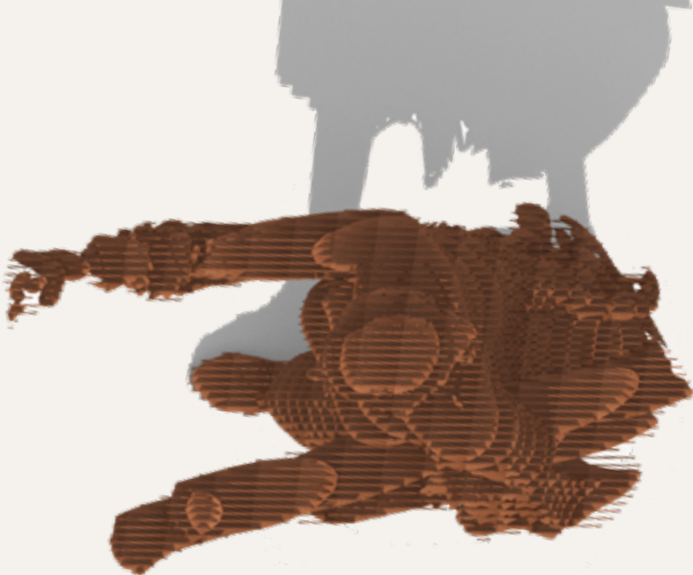


side view

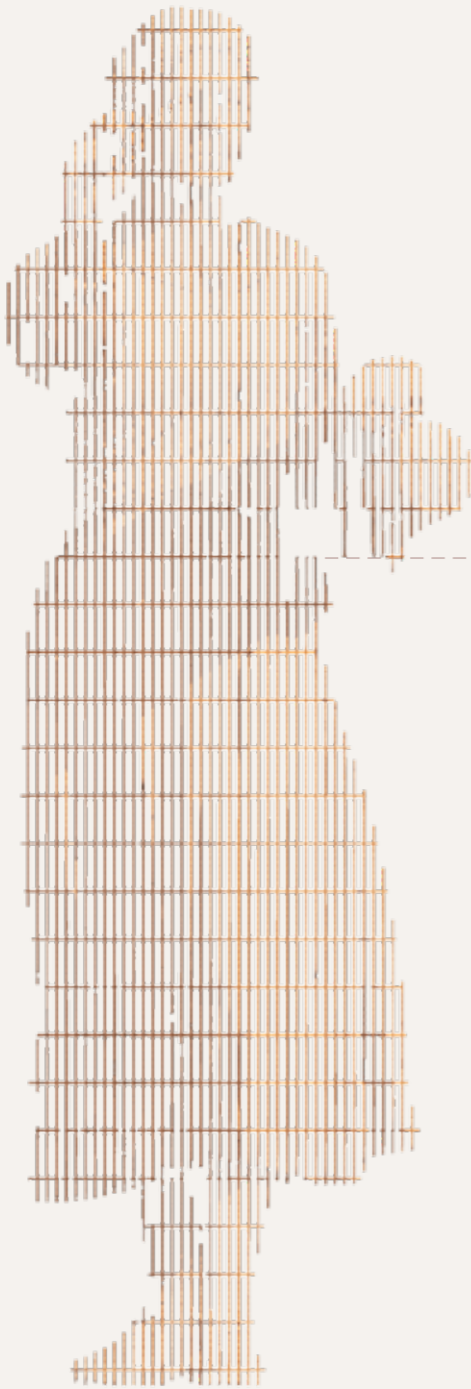


front view

no one side the same.



plan



eye level

perfect elevation



back view



A Soft strength.

The artwork is designed around the axis of the medium strip adjacent the turn of the future light rail. The sculpture aims to have a monumentality about it whilst still exercising a subtle and discreet layering to the surrounding context. A quiet hero of sorts.

Exact placement is flexible and to be worked out in conjunction with the architects and broader group.

A flush base with no podium is the artists preference as this feels more humble, more honest, more feminine. However the scale may be too subtle at the medium strip, so opportunities to explore in and around the area is a process required with further site studies and more information regarding the arrangement of objects in the urban landscape.

Whilst this pose is still in development, the intention is to create a harmony between structure and flow, softness and strength.





Materiality + Maintenance.

The sculpture is proposed to be made from a material that has an integrated finish instead of an applied surface finish to evoke a more natural quality and withstand high public exposure. Aswell as being more robust and longer lasting a natural finish this will enable a better aging process with a developed patina. Weathered steel (corten) is the proposed materiality. Welding is more discreet and strength in plate is higher to achieve with a steel compared to an aluminium or softer metal.

weathered steel.

The sheets would be a combination of 3mm or 5mm depending on structural strength required. The finish is a textured, dark brown finish that takes about 12 months to settle into a colour. The dark rust is the most durable and least maintenance of all the metals. Graffiti can be sandblasted away, scratches are naturally weathered into the metal and any bird poo build up can be power washed without damage to the sculpture.

Consideration of subtle staining to the pavement to be considered.

Sculpture will be sandblasted and acid washed prior to installation to accelerate the oxidization process.



01. Pre-weathered steel.

Once sculpture is fabricated it will be sandblasted to remove oil and lubricants so a consistent rust colour is achieved.



02. First Acid Wash

Approximate shade at the time of delivery.

Sculpture has its initial acid wash in the studio to minimise initial run off. This occurs 2 - 4 times before delivery to site.



03. First Year

Approximately shade 4-6 months after installation



04. Oxidisation complete

Approximate shade at the end of oxidisation period. 12-18 months after installation



5mm plate (vertical + horizontal)



3mm vertical plate 5mm horizontal plate

Both images in studio (after acid wash) not yet installed.



In Studio post 4-5 Acid Wash applications

Ready for Installation



4 years outdoors

Photograph january 2025.
Installed December 2020

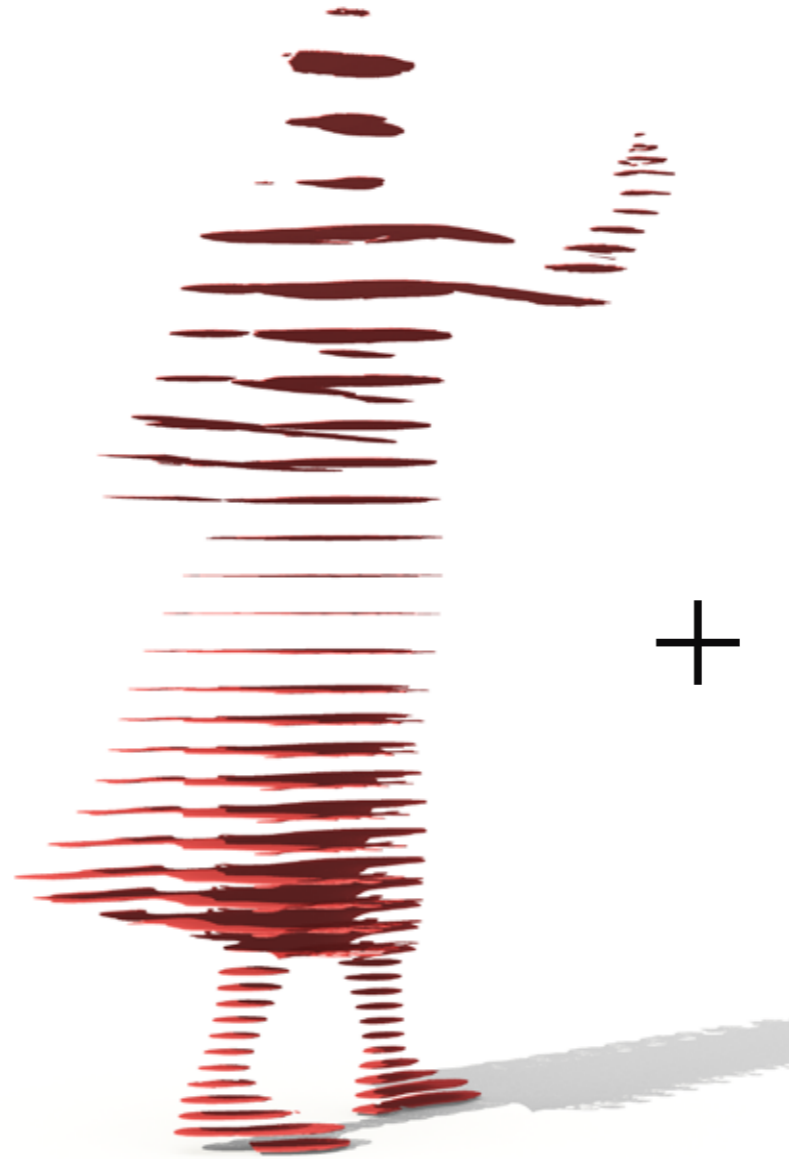
Grid Study

Exact grid reactive to final pose.



two axis

Intent: An overall Vertical Expression



horizontal axis

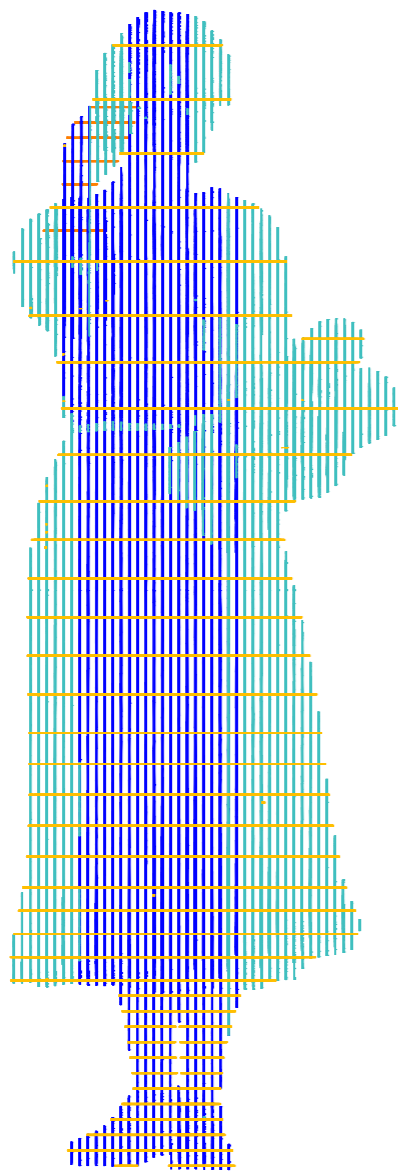
5mm bracing plates



vertical axis

5mm min to key structural areas
3mm where possible to reduce weight)

←-----→
 3mm to outer **5MM TO CORE** 3mm to outer



OPEN

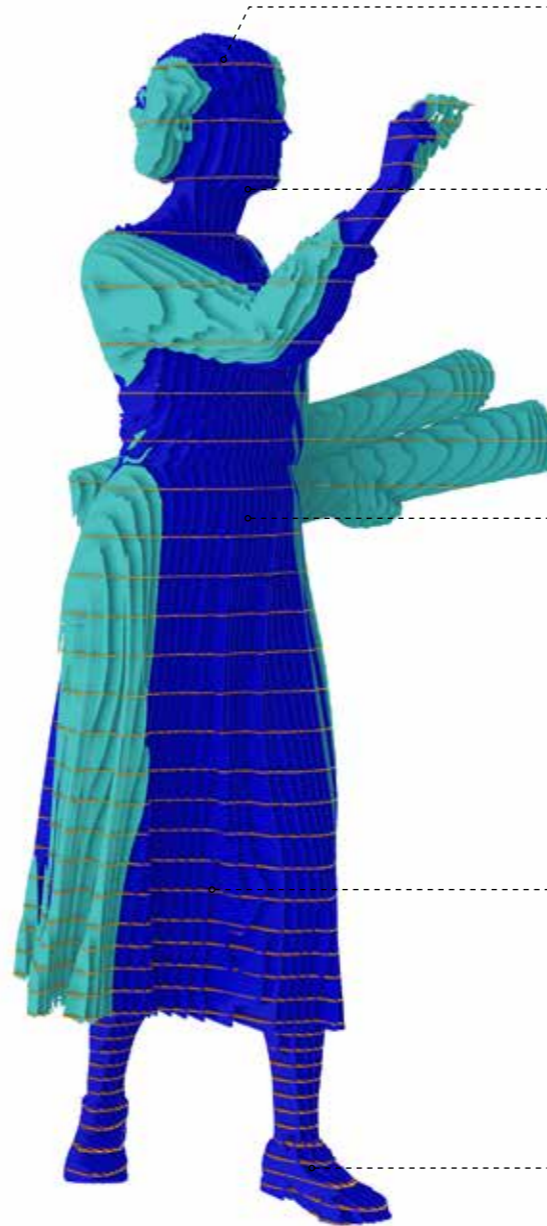


DENSE

Structural dispersion.

Reducing weight where possible to create lightness whilst increasing plate density to more fragile areas.

Subject to engineering. All plates may end up 5mm



Light

The higher components would be lighter and more open. This would allow a stronger connection to sky, reduce the overall weight and cantilever of the sculpture.

Detail areas

Increased density to arms and hands when reached out to increase strength.

Central Structure

Leg plates extend and continue through to centre of the sculpture, this enables a strong stitch between the structure and the body. Core plates connect to base plate.

Skirt

In development. Focus on softening final plate shapes to reduce any sharpness

Connection to Ground

All of the structure is channeled through the legs. The plate distribution will be the most dense through these areas.

- Vertical Plates - 5mm
- Vertical Plates - 3mm
- Horizontal Plates - 3mm

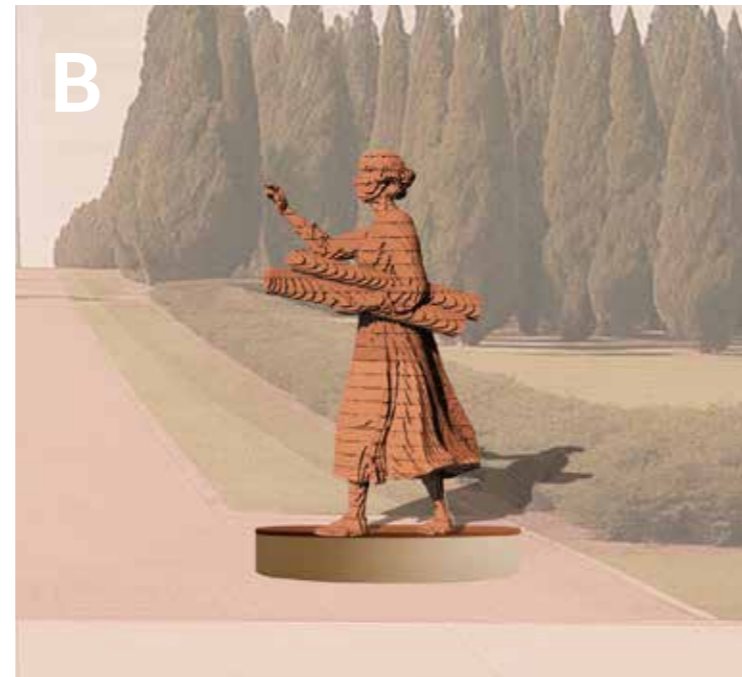


Drawings

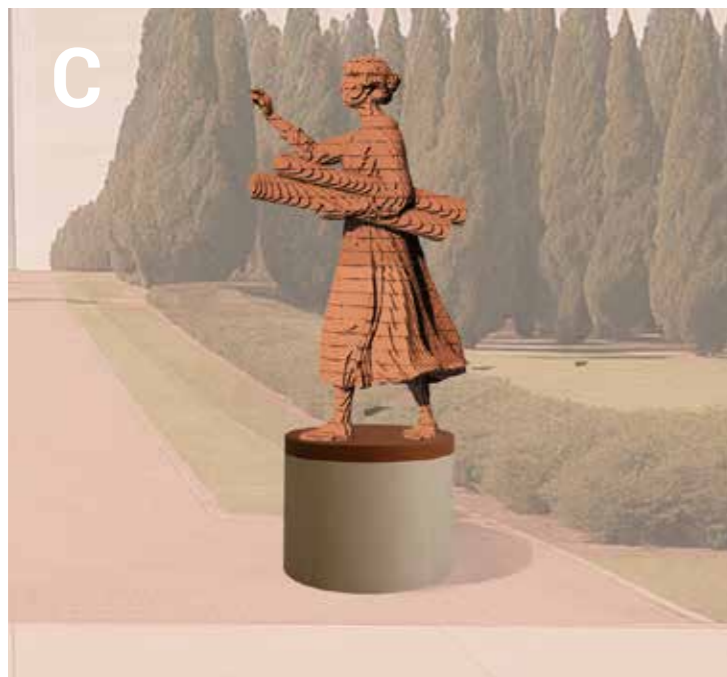
Balancing budget and scale. Bigger plinth = smaller sculpture



no plinth = 3.2m high sculpture



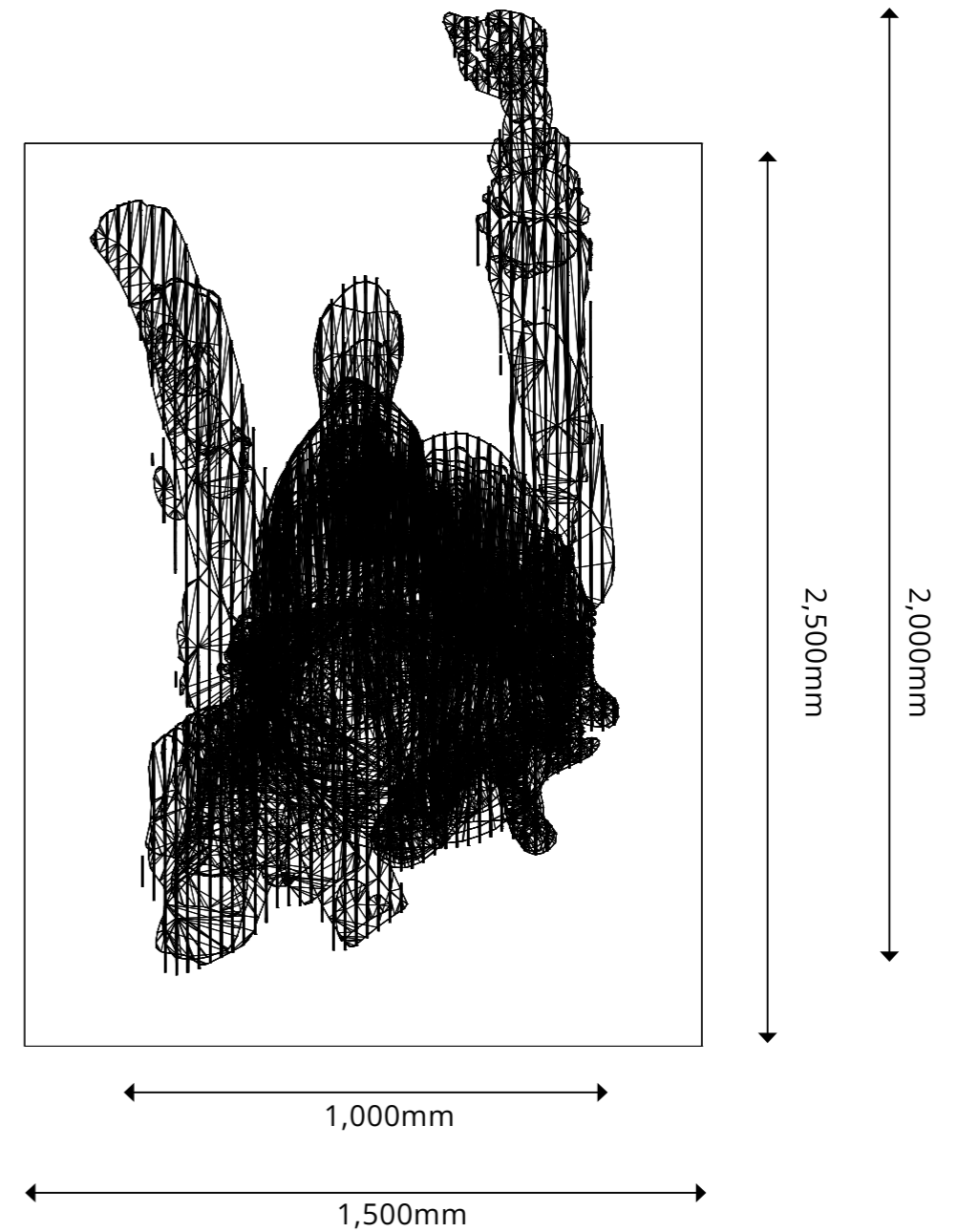
Class A concrete plinth, corten lid
3.1m high sculpture
plinth = low and wide



Class A concrete plinth, corten lid
3.1m high sculpture
plinth = narrow and tall

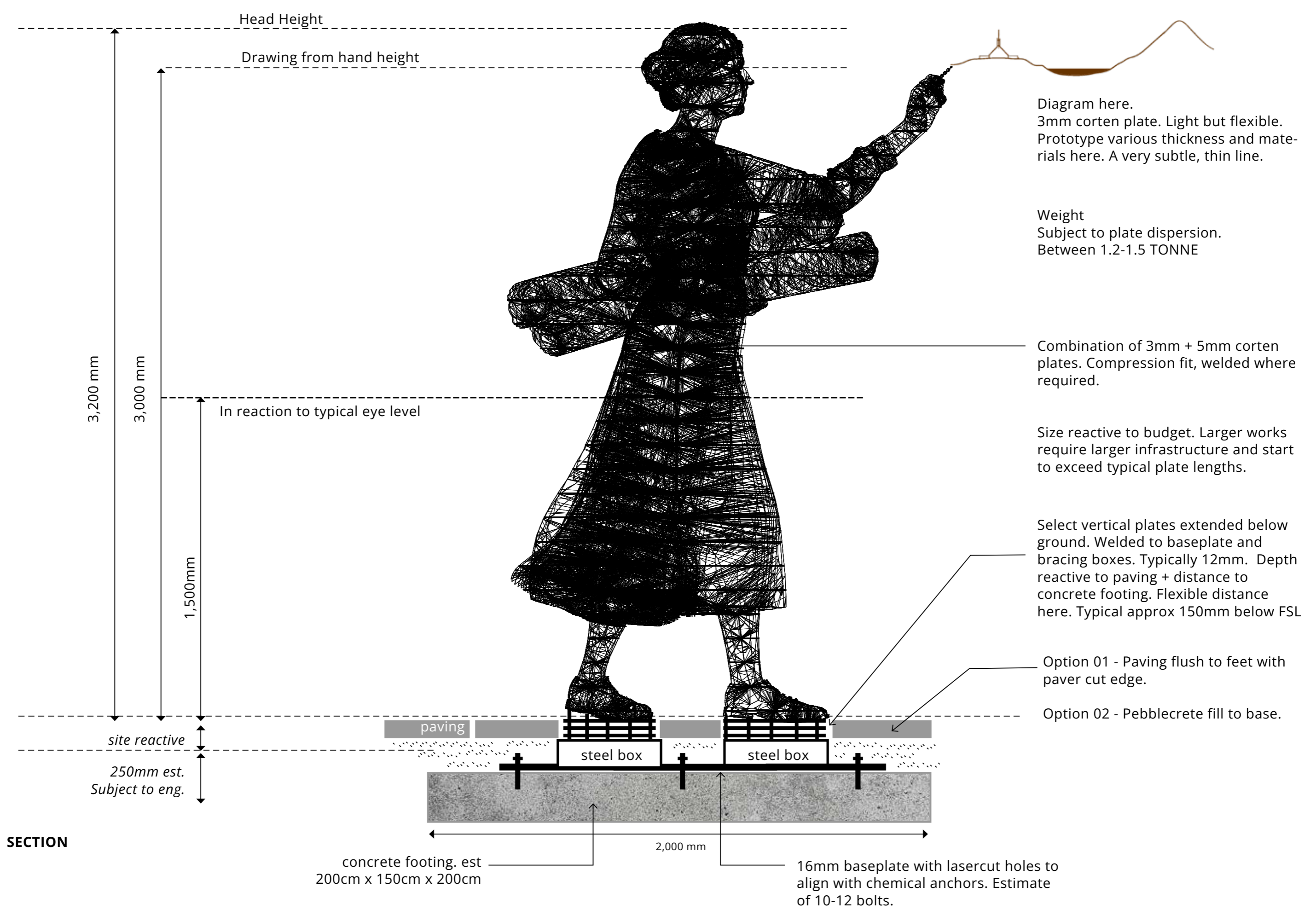


Class A concrete plinth, corten lid
2.9m high sculpture
plinth = wide and tall



PLAN - 1:16 at A3

Footing Proportions.
Subject to engineer.



SECTION

Process.

WORKSHOP + STUDIO



APPROACH

The act of making is central to the process. Multiple models are created across the journey, testing nuances of connection, density and proportion. The process of reports, drawings and diagrams are intrinsic to the development of the artwork reducing risk and creating transparency in the evolution from idea. Site details and constraints are documented with options presented clearly for review.

FABRICATION

The sculpture would be fabricated in April Pines Welshpool workshop with specialist contractors brought in when required. April Pine works to micro-millimetre precision and has spent years refining and honing her process. Regular contractors and suppliers have been the key in establishing consistency. Visits to the studio are welcomed to review process and key milestones if of interest.



Installation.

The artwork is intrinsically structural with a singular baseplate with precut holes for the primary fixing point. This can be fixed to a precast footing or a cast in situ footing subject to site restrictions, access and loading etc. Footing would be 100-300mm below surface to conceal all fixtures subject to site detail. Minimal site work is generally preferred. Artwork would be completely finished prior to arriving on site. Footing and site detail designed first to minimise site work at time of installation.

01. TRANSPORT FRAMES

Alot of work is carried out to ensure base fixings are concealed, neat and integrated. Transport frames for interstate work are designed around fixing locations. Transport frames can also act as a rotating and lifting device to manage risk.

02. BASEPLATE TEMPLATES

Templates are created to pre-determine location of fixings. This makes installation very quick. Embedded anchors with extra height to allow for a levelling nut to ensure artwork is level if concrete is not. Precast footing can be arranged if site prefers this.

03. LIFTING STUDIES

I work with a regular crane company in Perth. We rotate and move the sculpture during fabrication many times. During this process photographs are documented and a rigging study is prepared to mitigate risk come installation day. Yuri Humenuik has completed 6-7 installations of mine nation wide, he would be the on site contractor and be brought on early to advise of strategy.

