

## NATURE

According to Aristotle nature is the principle and the cause of movement, of the inherent evolution and constant change of things. When we observe nature through time, we perceive how fragile and blurry the limits are between its different elements: life and death, solid and air, sea and land seem to coexist in an ever evolving landscape. The history of nature is the tale of invisible metamorphoses and spectacular incidents in a scenography without curtains: on a almost microscopic or extremely slow level - the accumulations of corals, the evolution of animal species or the moving of tectonic plates - or by specific shifts such as earthquakes, fires, floods, dryness, plagues, hurricanes... nature evolves without conscience. It is there.



1. Movement of tectonic plates from Pangeae to present days. / 2. View of southern coast New Zealand / 3. Cover of the book "Singing Sailors" by Mark Manders and Roger Willems, 2002

## LANDSCAPE

Landscape is the geographic translation of the natural environment; the homocentric interpretation of our natural context. *Land art* finally was a kind of poetic geography: a new way to articulate the existing landscape apart from the factual delimitations of territory and the exploitation of resources, a mark in the landscape that could provoke an unusual perception of space. It pretended to bring us a new experience that could emphasize the relations between the human and the natural logics.



1. Donald Judd, Untitled, concrete elements at the Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas, USA, 1975 / 2. Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty, Great Salt Lake, Utah, USA, 1970 / 3. Michael Heizer, Double Negative, Mormon Mesa, Nevada, USA, 1969-70 / 4. View of Norwegian fjord landscape.

## CULTURE

As a human characteristic and incited by the idea of reason, the function of culture is to give meaning to the natural order. One of the most primary acts of civilized man is the conquest of space (territory): to draw a rectangle in the sand to delimit what's yours. The inside is defined as cultivated space, while the outside is nature. This instinctive need to make an enclosed space, delimitation or a boundary embodies the quest for a space of comfort and protection against the natural elements. This superposition of culture on nature has always been a ferocious conquest of the other; the result is an unstable equilibrium of opposites. The geography questions nature, frames the known world, and classifies it by landscapes and territories. The drawing of the *mapa mundi*.



1. Still from "2001 Space Odyssey" by Stanley Kubrick, 1968 / 2. Ancien earth town of Chan Chan in Trujillo, Peru. / 3. Map of the Antarctic by Mercator and Hondius, around 1614. / 4. Island-town Mezcaltitlan in Tepic, Mexico

## MEMORY

Nature is set outside any historical order. It doesn't recognize morality or guilt. It doesn't have a memory... Finally, the monument. Architecture without any function, except from commemorating, emphasising and communicating the signifying moments and loci from our collective memory. By introducing a monument into an environment, we force the context into the logic of historical space and time. The monument is by definition the strongest cultural token in the field of symbols. It is there to leave a trace of our existence or - on the other hand - to disguise our fear to disappear.



1. Arc de Triomphe, Paris, France, finished in 1836 / 2. Étienne-Louis Boullée's, project for a memorial to Isaac Newton, 1784 / 3. Obelisk at Cape Dombey, Australia, 1855 / 4. Superstudio, The Continuous Monument, project 1968

## DISASTER

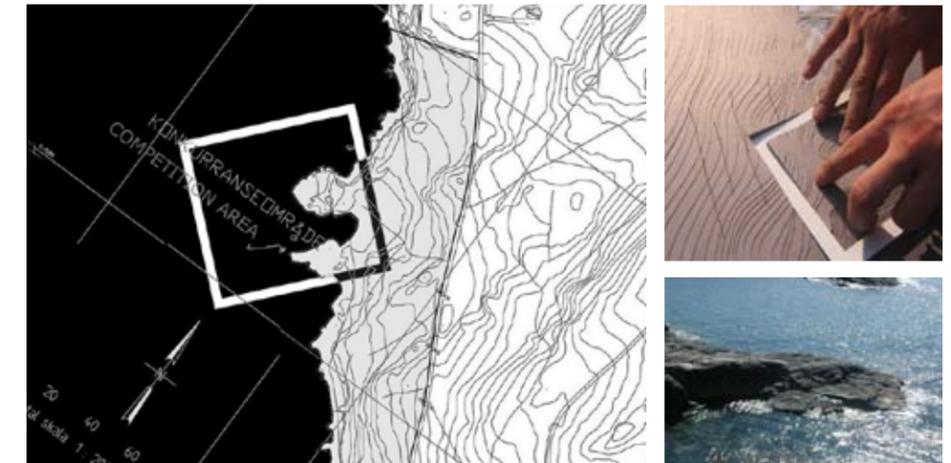
In a pure context of nature the disaster doesn't exist: it's called change. The disaster is a cultural denomination of the natural phenomenon of abrupt change. Without the superposition of human structures (culture) on nature, disasters - as such - don't exist. On moments of natural disasters the balance between nature and culture is shocked abruptly. These moments makes man stand still and rethink his situation. It reminds man of it's ancient fight against the uncontrolled savage, or - in somewhat more contemporary terms - of it fragile equilibrium in it's relation with the surrounding ecological system. Disaster reactivates our conscience about nature.



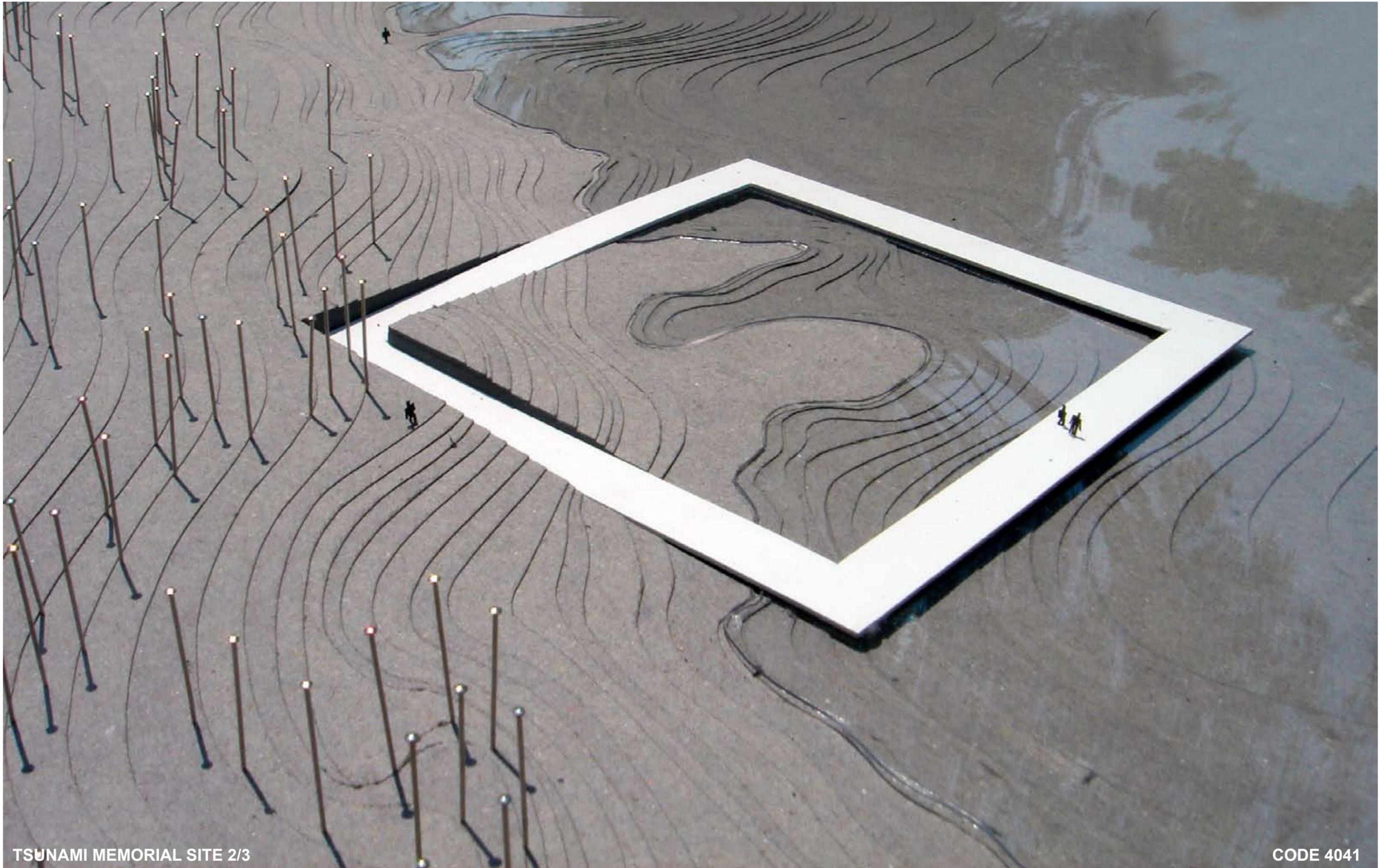
1. Various images of Tsunami disaster in South East Asia, 26th december 2004 / 2. Map of Tsunami epicentre

## PROJECT

When we commemorate the victims of the Tsunami disaster, we are obliged to focus - not on the personal loss and grieve- but rather on this fragile relationship between culture and nature, between the Cartesian space and the entropic unknown. By inserting a perfect square into the site - trapped in between the condition of sea and land - we propose a reflection on the dialectics of man and nature. We provide a frame of special experience around (and in) a constantly changing piece of nature. Situating the platonic form in between low and high sea level, the square can become an extension of land towards the sea, or can be 'taken' by the sea and almost disappear. A reflection about space, about nature, about us.



1. Memorial Site, Bygdoy Norway - conceptual drawing, model and image of shore





Although the exact size and height of the square is still open to further detailing, the represented square on plans and sections has sides from 50 by 50 meter and the surface has a width of 5 meter. The height is approximately 20 cm above the lower water level. The concrete structure forms an accessible platform into the sea. Like a path through a natural park, where different views and experiences generate contemplative situations, this object is inserted into the environment to generate places of solitude and separation (whether you leave the landside and walk into the sea, or you find yourself enclosed by landmasses).



The strong imposition of the square on the landscape – almost like a futuristic fata morgana in the natural environment - becomes obsolete when the water level rises and nature takes back what it belongs. This continuous dynamic of cultivated and natural space is the central issue of this proposal. We frame a piece of landscape to focus on the constant change and movement of the context we are living in, on the fragile line between different conditions.



The spatial experiences give the monument a strong phenomenological power: while following the path over the sides people find themselves enclosed by the earth or later surrounded by the ocean.



When the high tide covers the square with water, it remains visible in the seascape as a mysterious reflection below the water surface. On land the void fills itself with water and becomes an artificial river that opens up to the horizon of the sea.

