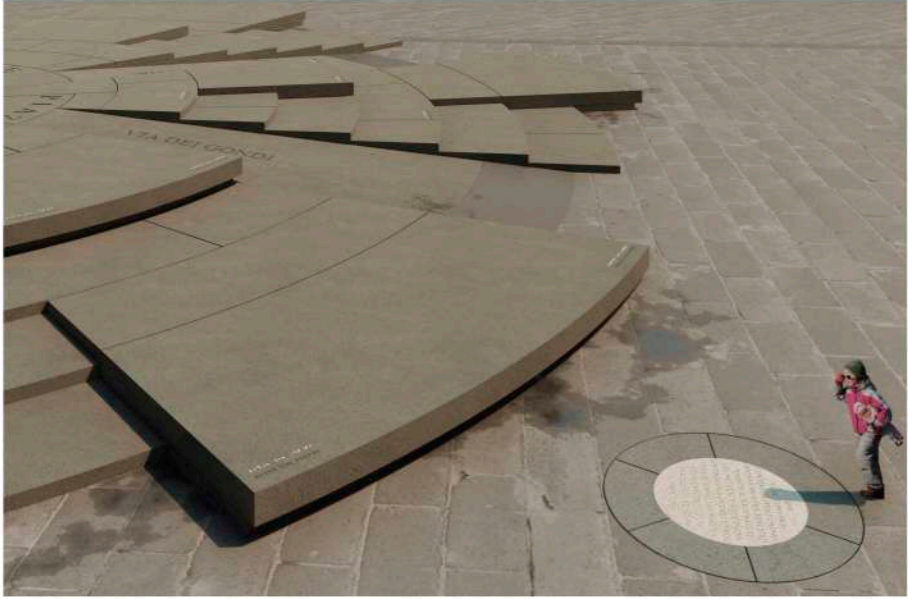
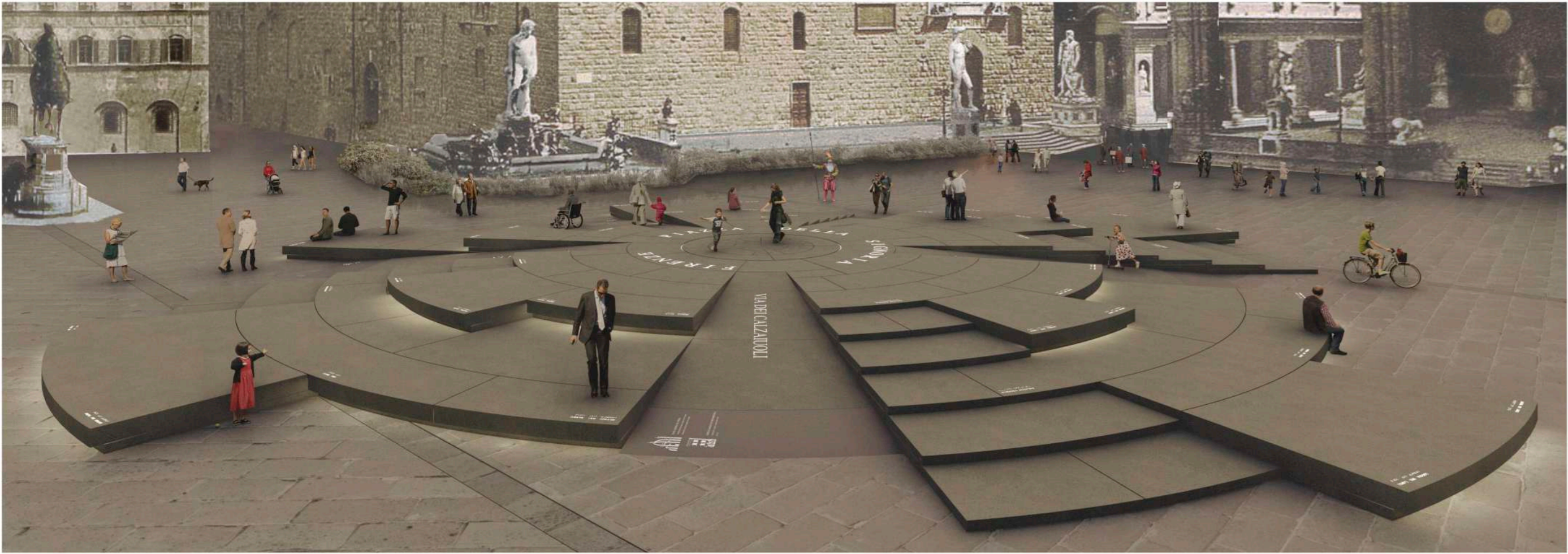
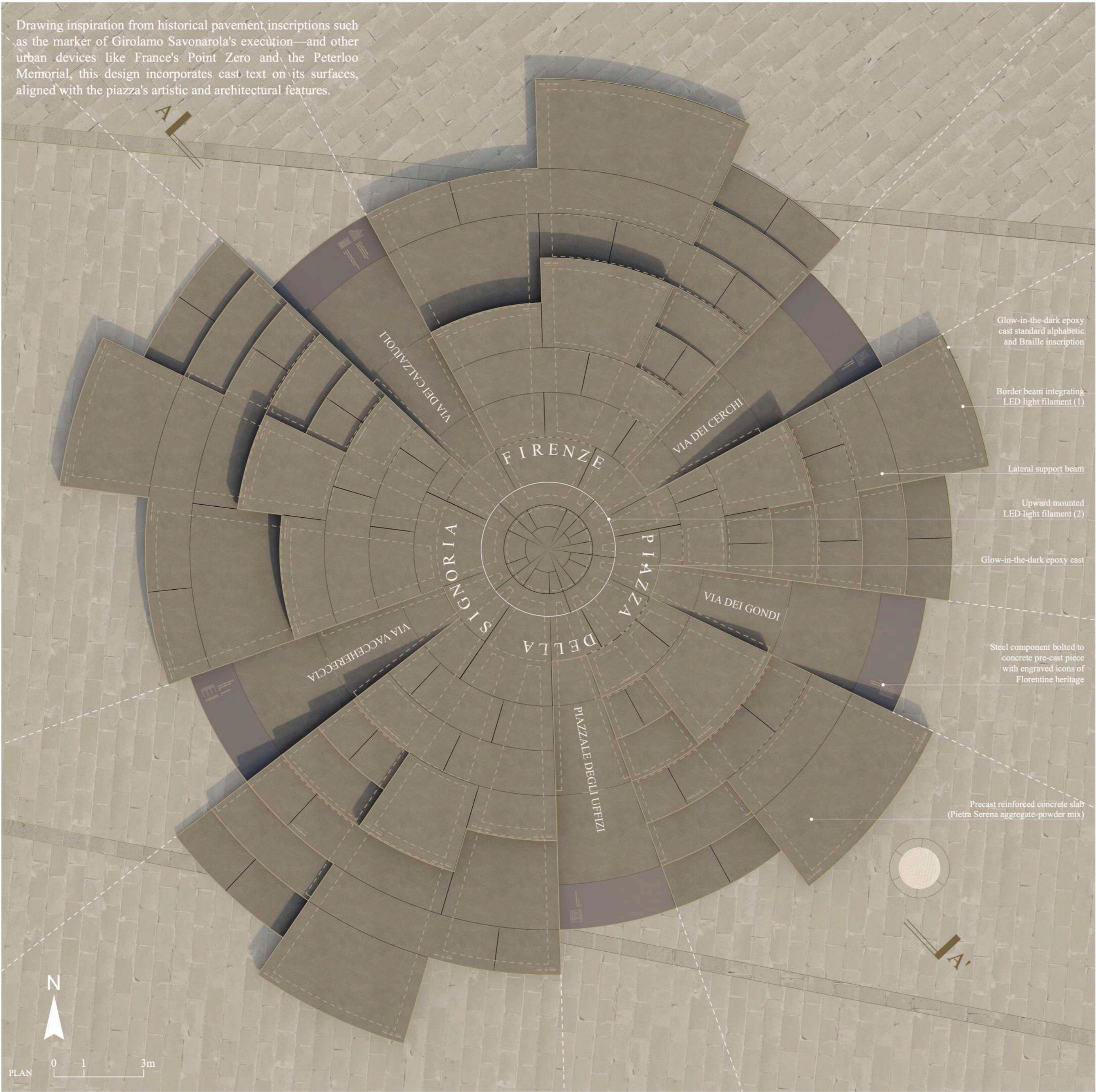


PUNTO ZERO



Drawing inspiration from historical pavement inscriptions such as the marker of Girolamo Savonarola's execution—and other urban devices like France's Point Zero and the Peterloo Memorial, this design incorporates cast text on its surfaces, aligned with the piazza's artistic and architectural features.



The proposal is guiding device for newcomers to Florence, while also a self-sustaining, universally accessible open-air interpretive center—an "inside-out amphitheater." It functions as a platform for the well-deserved contemplation of surrounding artworks and monuments, whether seated or elevated above the crowds obstructing the view. Additionally, the design aims to optimize pedestrian flow and gathering points across the piazza, hopefully mitigating the wear and erosion they cause.

By incorporating glow-in-the-dark epoxy lettering and Braille inscriptions, this piece ensures universal accessibility. Thus, whether day or night, visitors can read or, if unable to see, still perceive and understand what stands before them—expanding access to those previously excluded.

The identical ramps, which divide the different sections, guide pedestrians towards the streets leading off the square that connect it to the heritage of the wider historic center. These streets' names are also cast into the ramps, as well as the heritage they lead to. This transforms this platform into a large-scale map and compass, serving as a tool for urban interpretation and an understanding of Florence's historical center, through a simple yet effective gesture of tactical urban furniture, rather than an enclosed building.

Piazza della Signoria has been a central point of Florence's historic center for centuries, both geographically and symbolically, though many visitors may not fully appreciate its significance. Still, it naturally attracts an overwhelming number of tourists.

Mass tourism, among other factors, impacts heritage preservation, drives residents out of historic centers, and, ironically, disrupts the connection between cultural artifacts and visitors, especially newcomers, since it leads to measures that restrict access to these spaces, aiming to prevent degradation but ultimately eroding the public's ability to appreciate and understand cultural heritage.

This site is a prime example.

"This Italian City Is Cracking Down On Overtourism With Restrictions"

"Italian tourist city bans evening walks to halt overcrowding"

"Venice: 'Traffic lights' for tourists, fines for those who sit on the floor"

"Florence cracks down on overtourism by banning key boxes, tour guide loudspeakers"

"You Could Be Fined €500 If Caught Snacking on the Street in Florence"

"Florence, annual cleaning operation on the statues of the Loggia dei Lanzi"

Florence bans key boxes, a symbol of overtourism

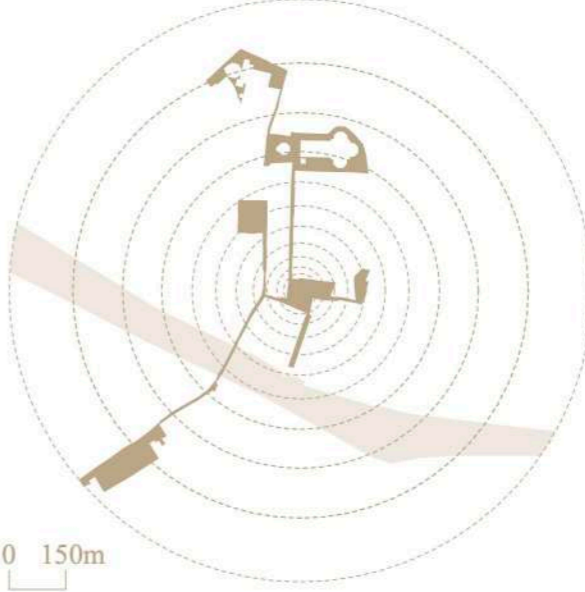
"Florence mayor aims to keep picnicking tourists at bay with hosepipes"

"New rules to visit the Loggia dei Lanzi in Piazza della Signoria"

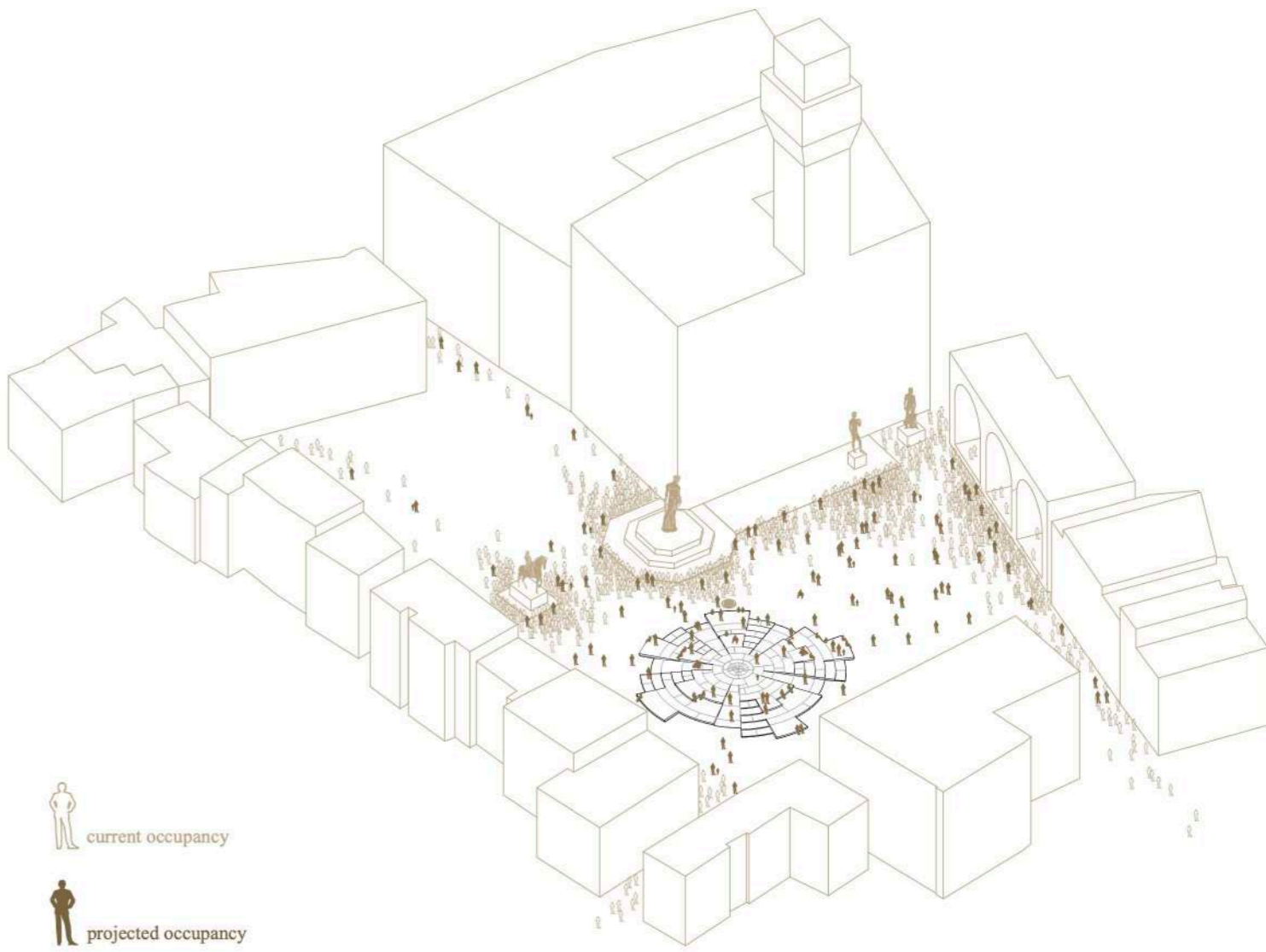
"Romedoesn't wanttourists sitting on the city's most famousstaircase"

"Tourist habits in Italy that are worth a fine!"

"Florence, Rome, Venice: Italian cities are cracking down on overtourism in 2025"

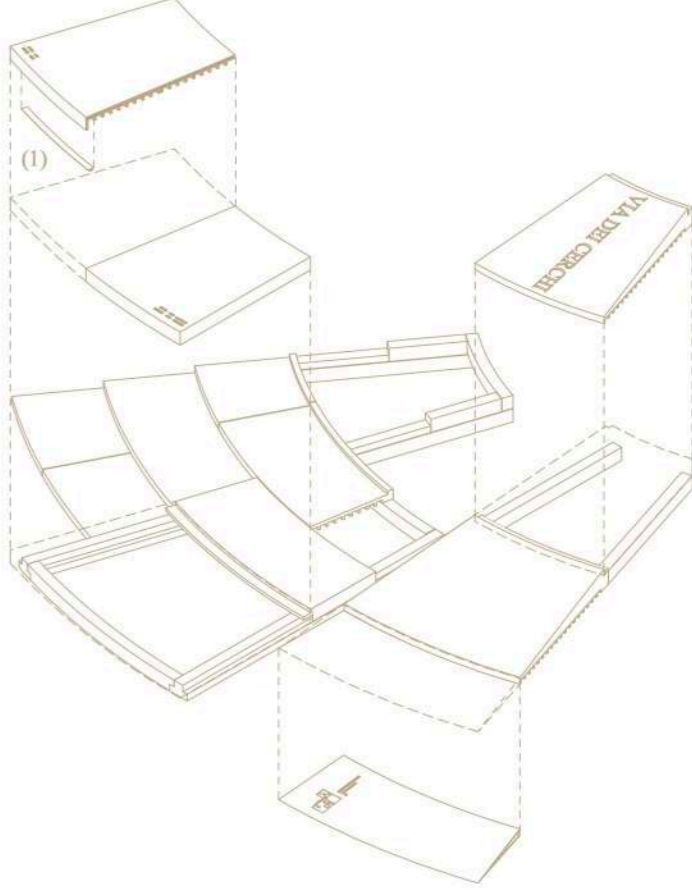


One could make the point that this square serves as a vast atrium for an open-air museum, surrounded by an impressive collection. The heavy pedestrian traffic and concentration around its perimeter, however, create a nearly deserted, shapeless, and largely unused center. While it may accommodate more people during busy seasons or events, it feels overwhelmingly empty and vast for what could be, in essence, the focal point of the city's cultural network—the starting point for exploring its remarkable urban plan. Such formulation of the problem leads to a solution. Both cities and museums benefit from visitors, and visitors, in turn, benefit from clear directions and instructions to navigate them properly.



Aside from the impossibility of simply sitting for a moment, gaze and absorb all that is free to see, the urge to admire the architecture and statuary turns into a race to escape the throngs, probably bypassing some of the most iconic pieces hidden behind endless lines of people. Even if presented with the opportunity for a closer look, it is shortly overshadowed by the pressure to make way for the next group. Thus, contemplation and urbanity are replaced by a transitory, evanescent and, most likely, meaningless experience. In the end, this results in a fragmented understanding and underappreciation of the city. Without a cell phone or GPS, would be fair to say that even at second visit the modern tourist would struggle to navigate Florence or any other city while being able to grasp the sequence and significance of public spaces, namely this square.

The assembly is designed for straightforward construction, utilizing precast concrete elements made with pietra serena aggregates and quarry dust. This approach ensures visual harmony with the square's pavement while repurposing leftover materials. The resulting structure comprises hollow, reinforced precast slabs with fixing notches, assembled into a flower-like form featuring steps and ramps that elevate visitors above the crowds. In the unlikely event that it needs to be removed or if a seasonal assembly allows for easy dismantling and storage, depending on the judgment of the public and inhabitants. Additionally, the informative "petals" are designed at a comfortable height, allowing visitors to sit while learning about the landmarks in their line of sight.



As a whole object, it symbolizes Florence's historic center -and, arguably, Italy itself- as a unified whole composed of diverse pieces, each rich in its own right yet ultimately sharing common ground, while marking the zero point or what could become the epicenter of Florence's historic center.

