

# Desterro

(Trad.: exile, deportation, transportation, expatriation, exílio, banimento, degredo, expatiação, retiro, insulamento, destierro, ostracismo, extrañamiento, proscripción, confinamiento, exilio, relegación, deportación, expatriación, extradición, aislamiento, ausencia. separación, soledad)

**ARTISTS: Patricia Borges (Brazil) and Sandra Birman (Portugal)**

TYPE OF PROJECT: installation / public space / website

BIENALSUR 2020

## SYNTHESIS OF THE PROJECT

Colonised society is often pictured as being static, timeless, and spaceless. We will use these characteristics to make a determination about the contemporary age and its own centres of power. We will ask, is tech a colonial tool? Colonial relationships are hierarchical, extractive and exploitative. Extraction was initiated to increase the flow of capital within Europe and took the form of stealing directly from the Americas, Asia and Africa.

The extractive nature of tech colonialism resides in the minerals that need to be mined to make the hardware for products, but also applies to the case of data extraction from the streams of information given by as residents of all countries go online. The uneven consequences of colonialism are felt across the entire system. Our theory of colonialism needs to be amended to account for the complicated territory brought into being in the current moment. The players and forms taken across imperial spaces have changed but we keep doing the same things for centuries across the globe.

If colonialism is a relationship, rather than a historical period, we can practice decolonial thinking refusing to be included in particular narratives of help, of loss, of diversity, and of erasure. We might narrow the conceptual focus to a particular, solvable problem: our future. The past is here, the floor is paved, let's learn from it. Via public space interventions we propose visual stimuli to act differently in the future, using elements from our past.

# FORM AND SUGGESTED EXHIBITION SPACES

## BRAZIL - RIO DE JANEIRO

- Ephemeral Intervention on sidewalks: from **Valongo Wharf** archeological site to **MAM museum** pilotis
- Temporary Installation: 10 days at public square under MAM pilotis (Museum of Modern Art)
- Public website with project research + documented artistic actions\*

TYPOLOGY: public streets + covered museum square

CHARACTERISTICS: ground level, flat terrain, open air, free of charge, 24/7 access (unpublished project)

DIMENSIONS: museum square covered area 850,00m<sup>2</sup> (installation: 25m<sup>2</sup>)

optional walk 3km length (38-39 minutes)

\*same interventions may happen in Lisbon, Portugal

# **PORTUGUESE STONES PAVEMENT ARE HERE AS A SOLID REMINDER THEY WEIGHT OUR SHARED COLONIAL HERITAGE**

The starting point of our artistic research is the presence of Portuguese Stone, which was transported to Brazil as ballast for caravels during the crossing from Portugal to the colony. And it was used simultaneously in the construction of the sidewalks in Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro.

Historians believe in the hypothesis of the replacement of these stones in the Brazilian colony by gold or coffee, during the stay of caravels in the Brazilian ports of the time.

Five centuries ago, territories were dominated and a worldwide exchange of products took over the seas. Today both countries are technological colonies.

The military power of the time subjected the native population to the force of arms, stimulating internal rivalries and trade.

The world has not changed. We share the same paths. We want to honor colonial signs as a reminder that we must do things differently. Not erase them.



**Rio de Janeiro - Brazil (2020)**



**Lisboa - Portugal (2020)**

# MEMORY STONES

At colonial times (15th-18th centuries)  
Brazilian gold was shipped to Portugal  
Portuguese stones were brought to Brazil

Today we propose to build memory stones with those same materials  
and affectively return them to their origin - in reverse cartography.  
We pay homage to the past as a learning tool - but we envisage a fair trade future.

We seek the similarities and bonds between both countries.  
It doesn't mean the wounds are not there. Some sides will be covered in black matter.



**Black stones + White stones**

**Gold leaf + Black velvet powder**

## POETIC INSERTIONS

Proposed walk (3km) starts at Valongo Wharf where Portuguese mercantile ships arrived during colonial times (bringing the stones as ballast) to MAM museum square where a temporary installation will be built using the same stones.

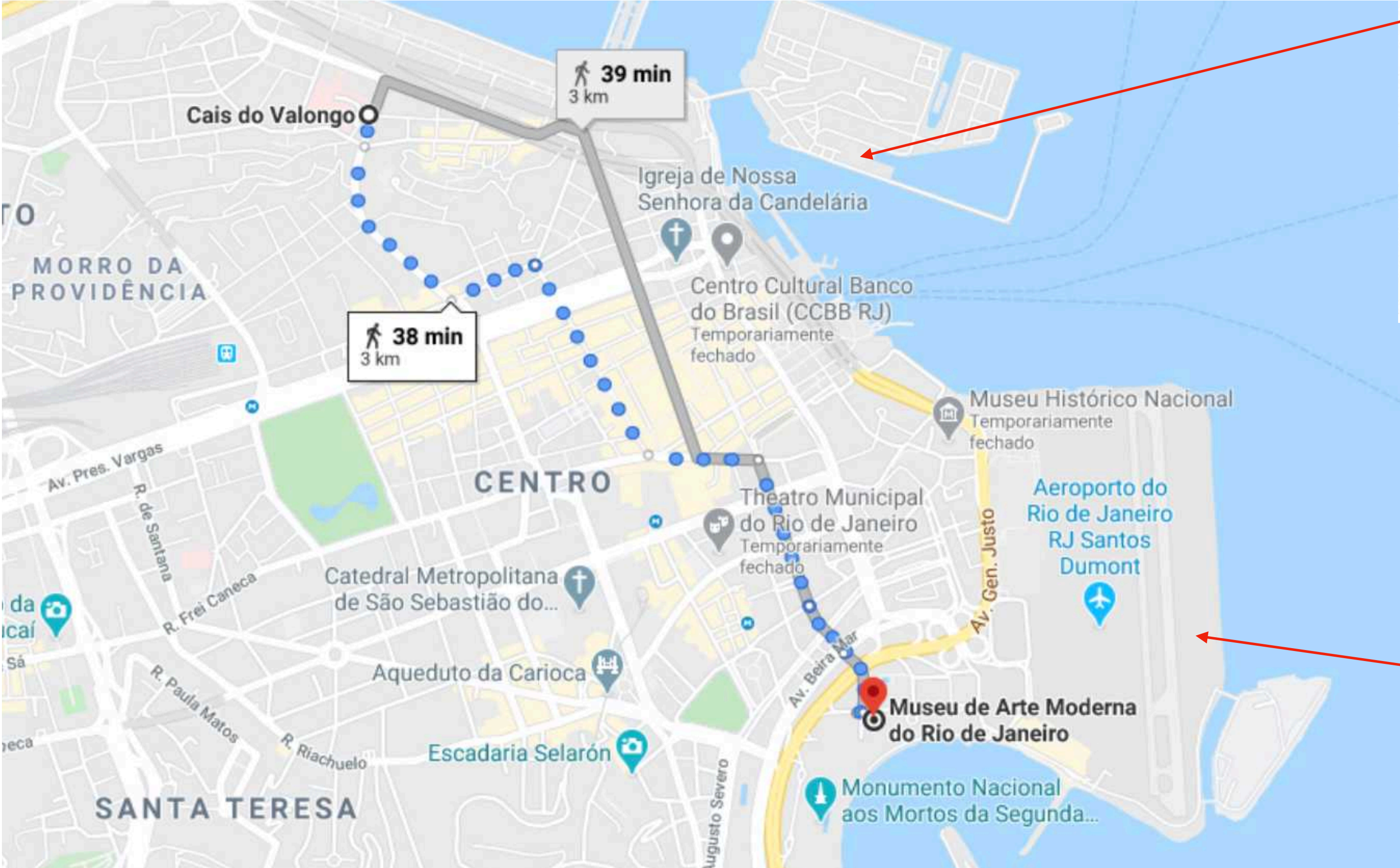
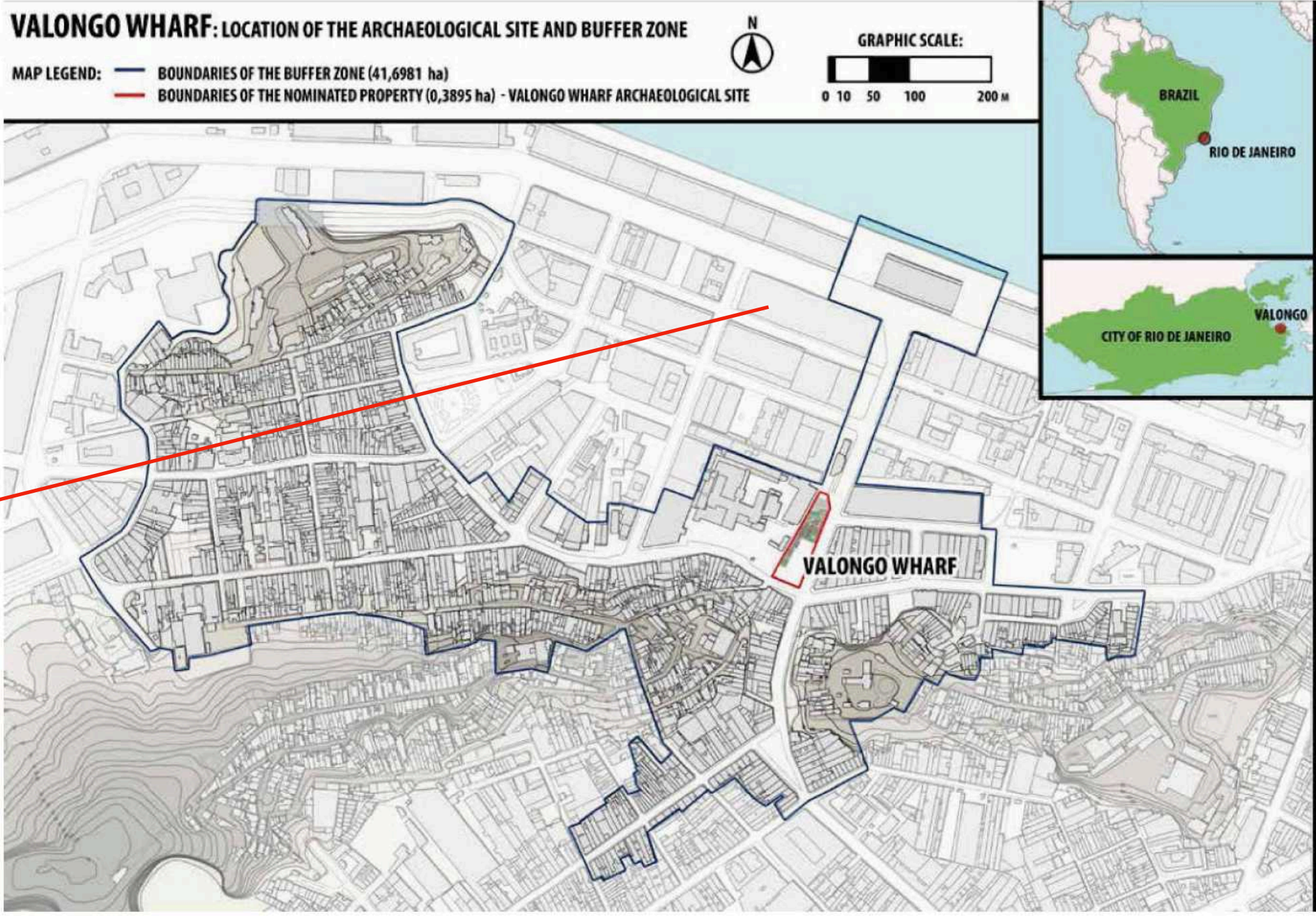


Black and white stones, covered with gold leaf or velvet powder will be inserted on sidewalks gap (empty spots from missing stones) at an average pace of one insertion per each 50 - 60 meters / 30 seconds walk.

# DESTERRO WALK FROM VALONGO WHARF TO MAM MUSEUM

38-39 minutes on pedestrian sidewalks / mostly flat terrain

Following DESTERRO path is a way of wandering around the city (flaneur) but also to reflect about past and present similarities as we step on those old memories.



# POETIC INSERTIONS ALONG THE WALK FROM VALONGO WHARF TO MAM MUSEUM

Images from the actual proposed route (source: Google Street View) please watch the video for more details: <https://vimeo.com/428857735>



Portuguese stones pave the sidewalks with different patterns on each street of the itinerary. Pavement lack conservation (empty spots)

The walker will find a gold or velvet stone every 30 seconds inserted on the path before reaching the museum installation.

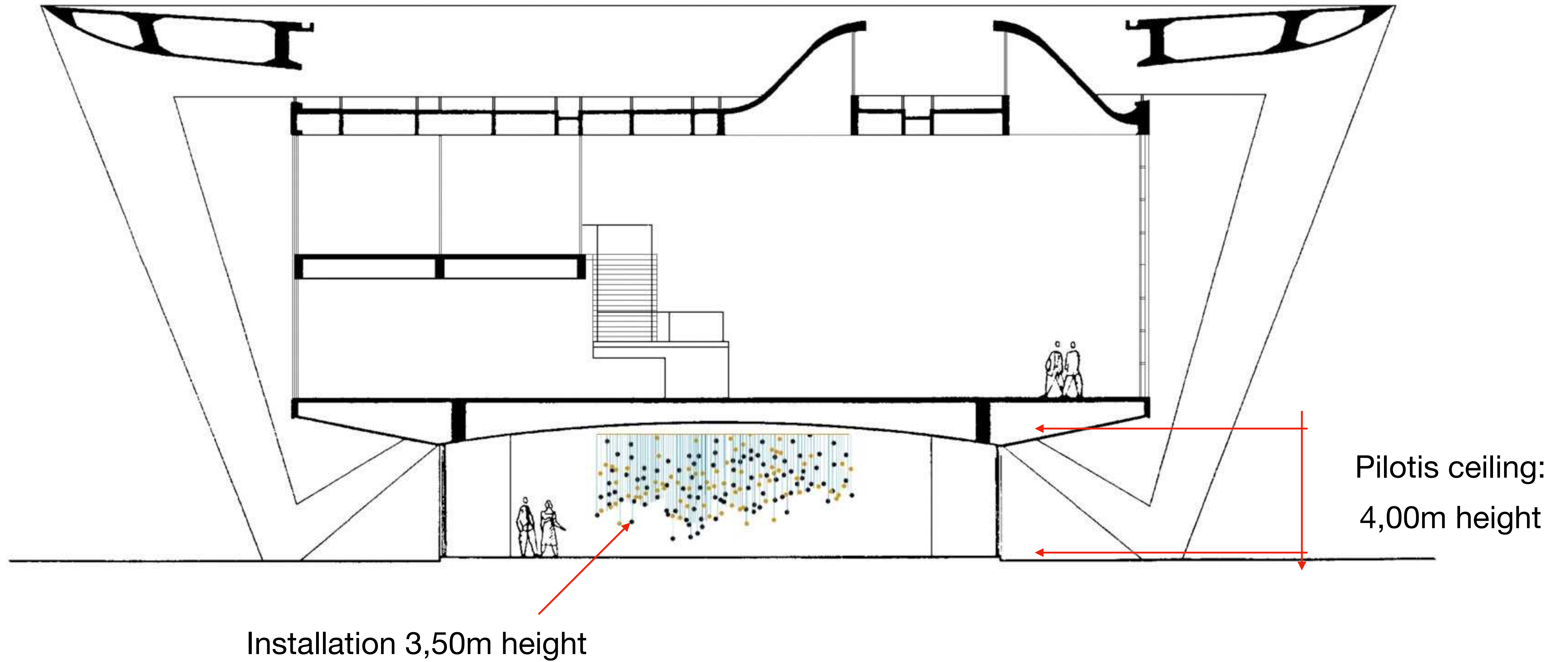
50 to 60 inserted stones in total (costs: USD\$4/m<sup>2</sup>) (1m<sup>2</sup> aprox.70 stones)

We will build digital archives of the project (records publicly available on a website) as the interventions are ephemeral

- the stone itself will mend the pavement forever - but the memory coating will vanish.



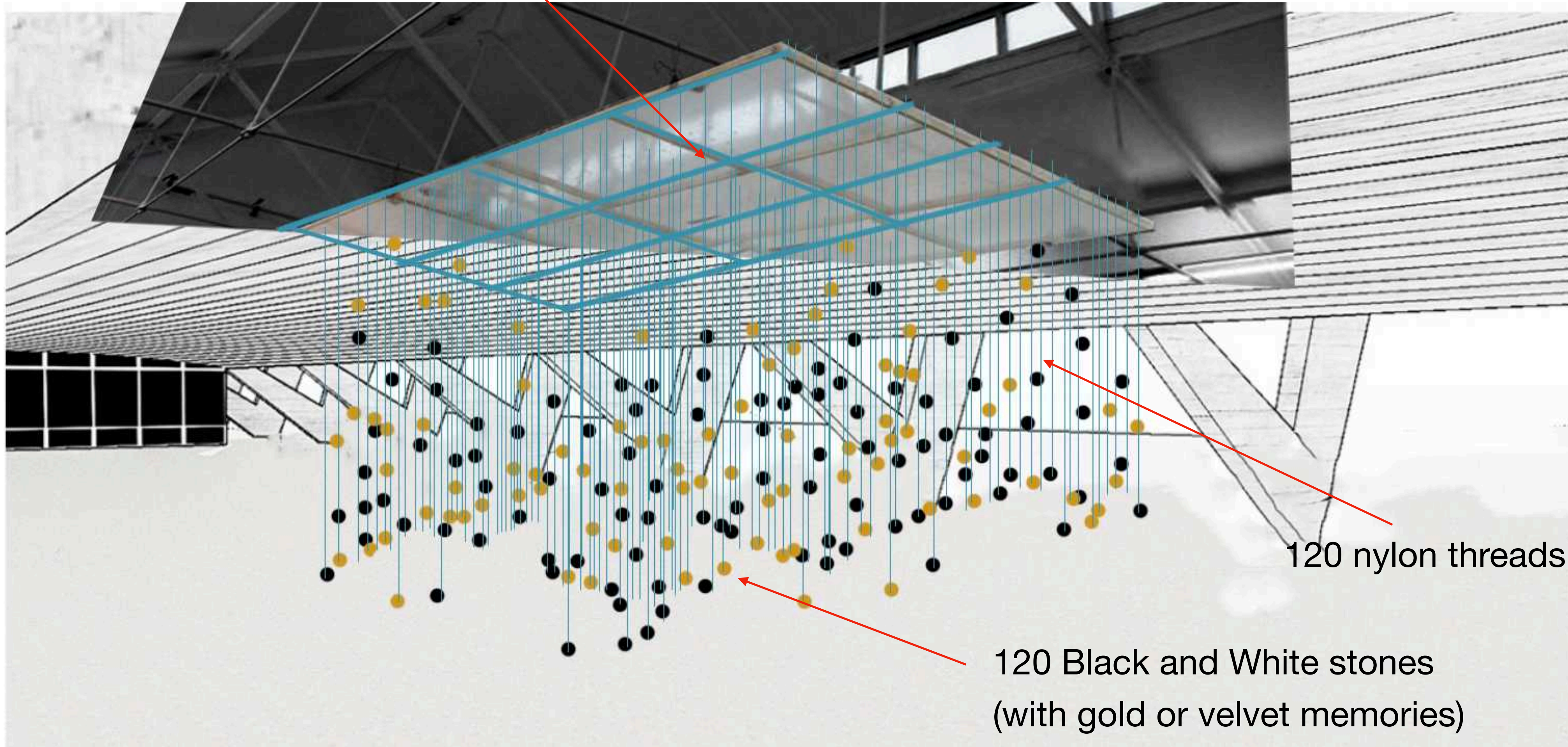
**DESTERRO** TEMPORARY INSTALLATION @ MAM MUSEUM SQUARE



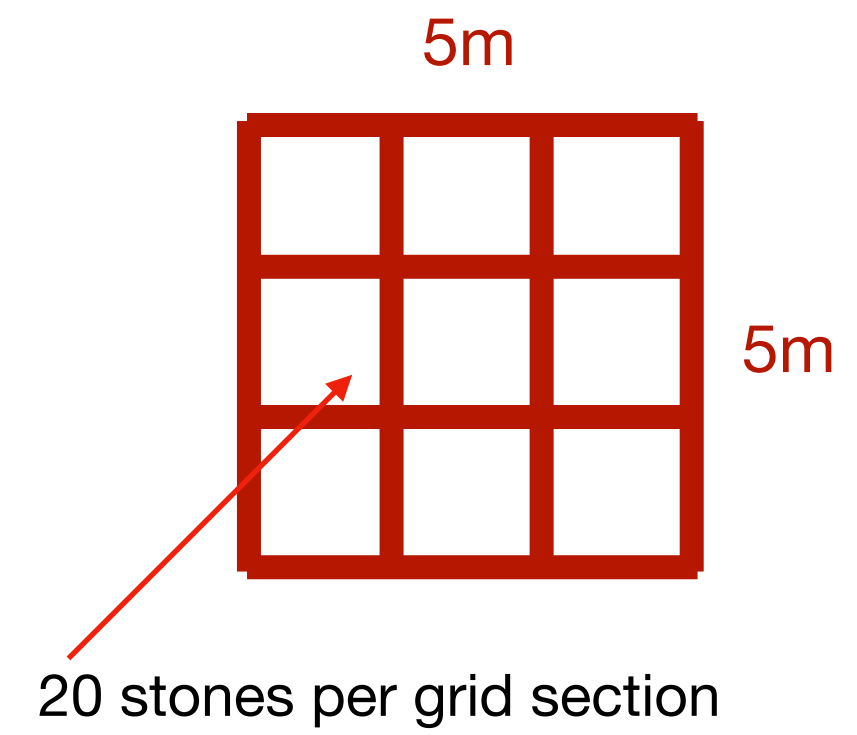
# DESTERRO TEMPORARY INSTALLATION @ MAM MUSEUM SQUARE

Light wood structure

(tied around the museum pillars with steel cables - no perforation needed)



# DESTERRO TEMPORARY INSTALLATION @ MAM MUSEUM SQUARE



5,00m x 5,00m grid structure (width / length)

- 120 stones
- 120 nylon threads
- 50m stell cable
- 48m light wood (4x4x4cm)



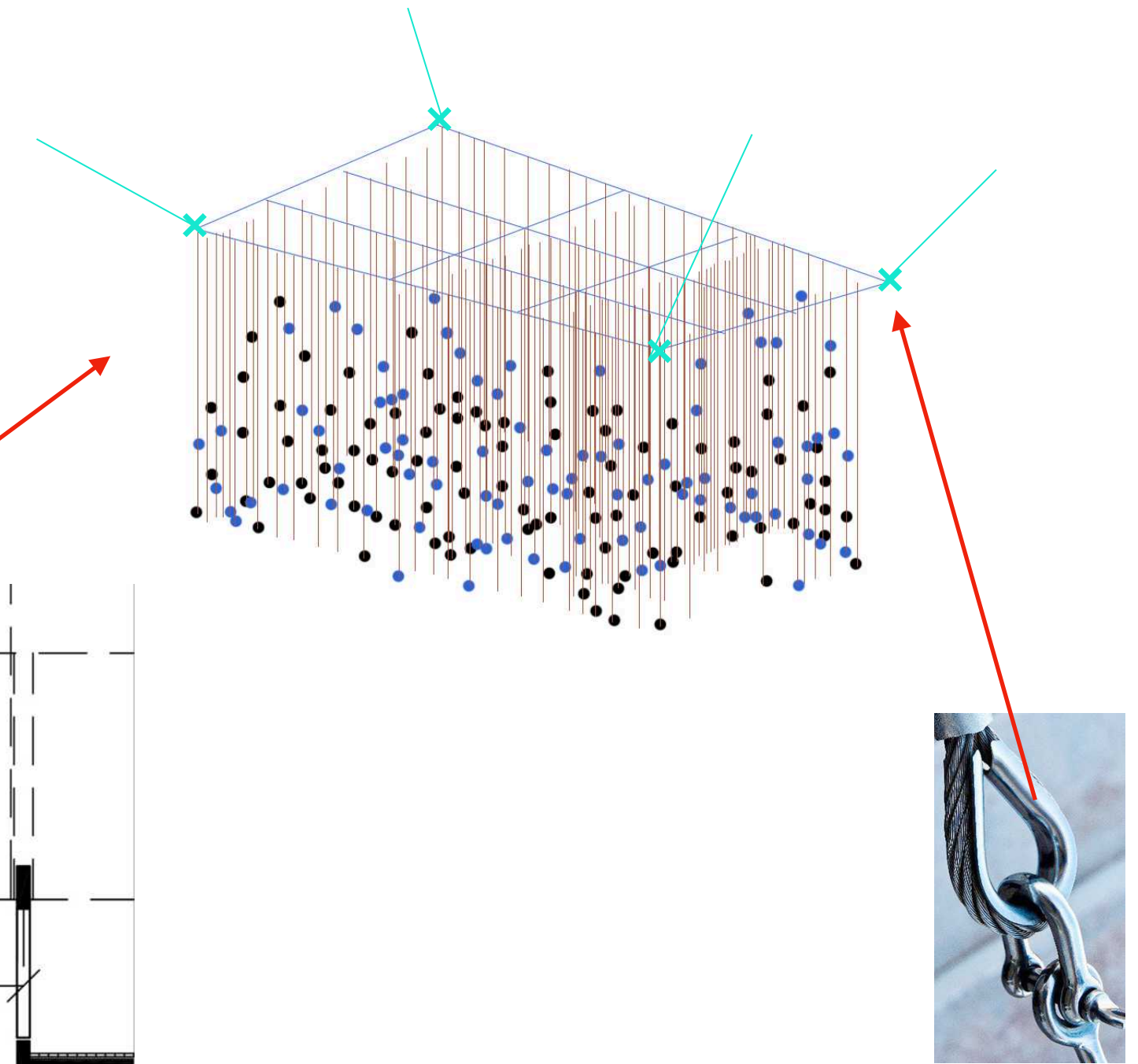
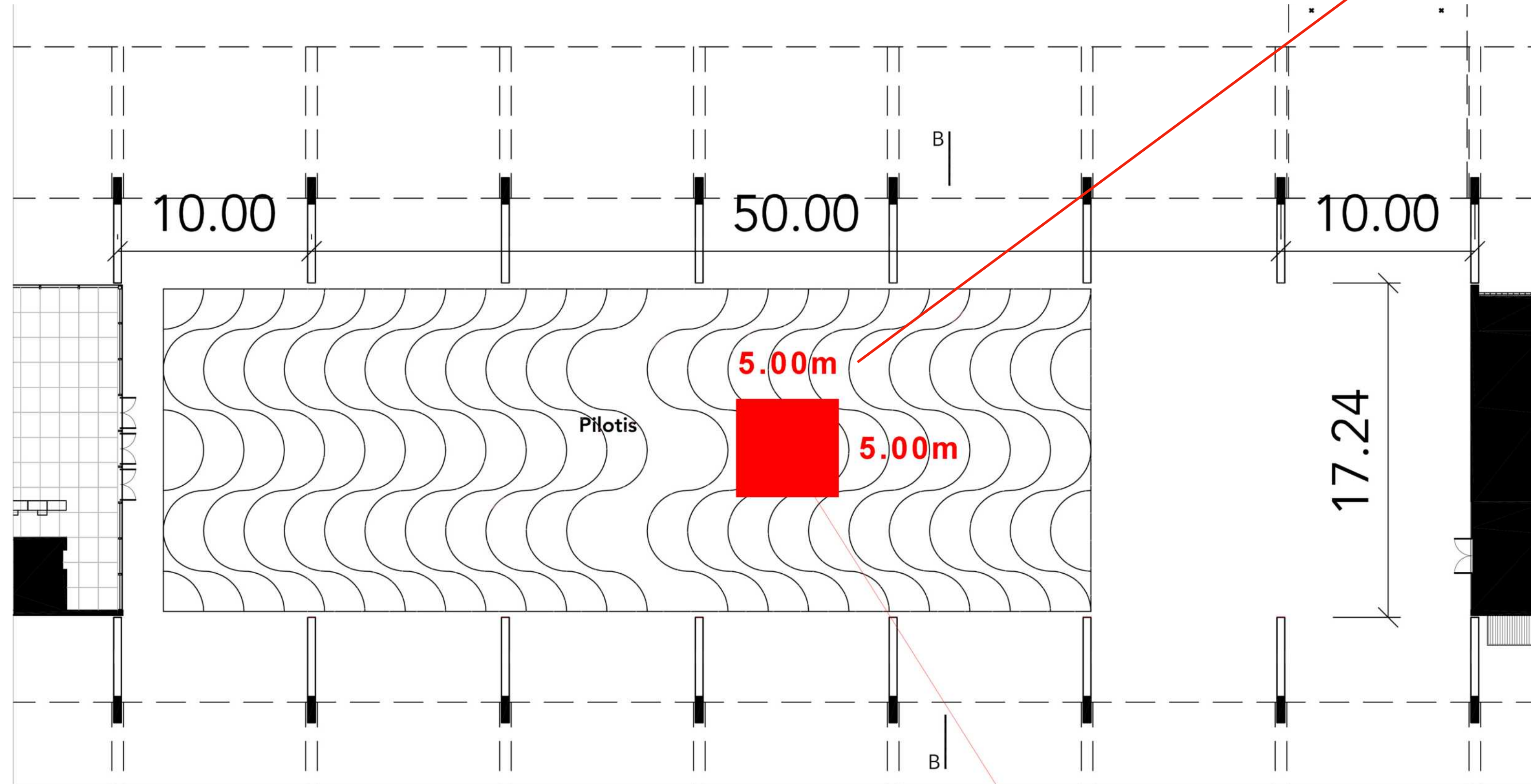
3,50m height

Installation approximate weight: 100kg considering 78kg/m<sup>2</sup> = 150 stones

4m<sup>2</sup> of Portuguese Stones will mend the pavement along the proposed walk and build the installation (stone costs USD\$4/m<sup>2</sup>)

Museum square / pilotis area is paved with Portuguese stones

# TEMPORARY INSTALLATION @ MAM MUSEUM SQUARE



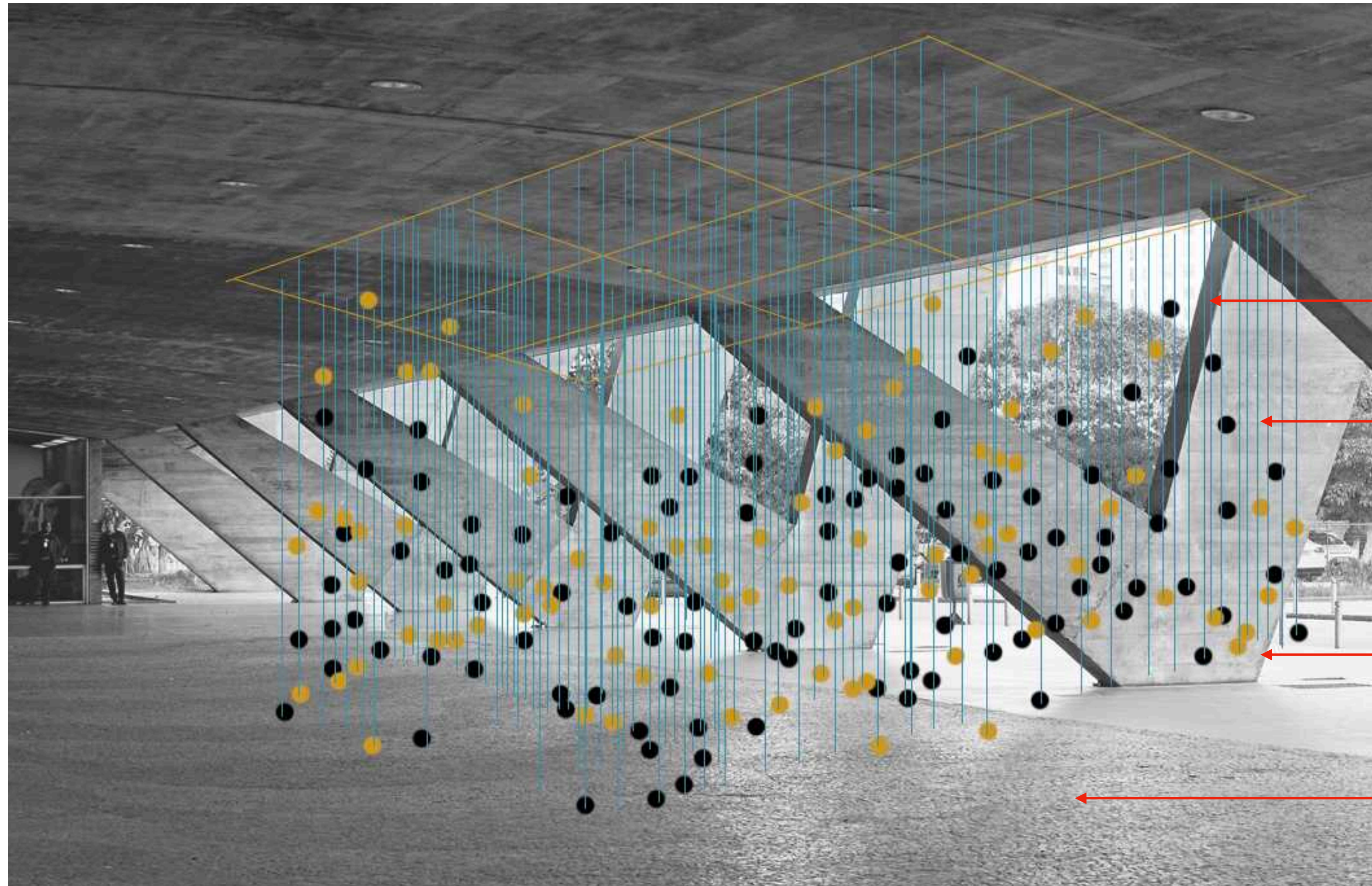
AREAS

Installation: 25,00 m<sup>2</sup>

Pilotis: 850,00 m<sup>2</sup>

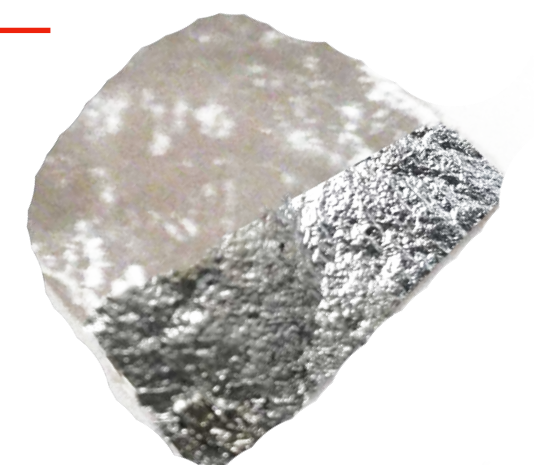
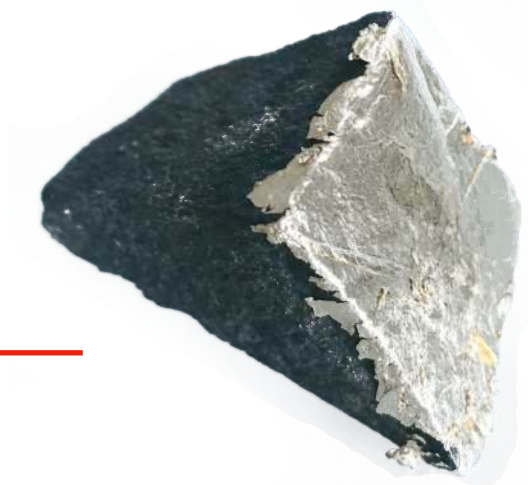
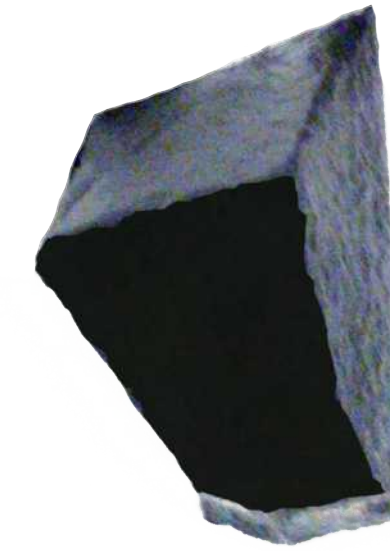
**DESTERRO**  
**temporary installation**

# DESTERRO - A POETIC REFLEXION ON THE WEIGHT OF OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE



Portuguese stones in  
Brazil - with gold and  
velvet tracing elements:

floating on space,  
exploded (as we visually  
represent data)



With the installation we aim to create a visual reminder:  
That every time we see this paving pattern from now on, we shall recall to build a better future. Do things in a different way.  
World economy shall be based on fair trade. We shall reflect on the origin and paths taken by the goods we consume.

## POETIC INSERTIONS ALONG THE WALK FROM VALONGO WHARF TO MAM MUSEUM



[Click to watch 1min video](#)