

# INSECTARIUM

MONTREAL, QC

The fundamental idea behind the Insectarium project is the synthesis of form and content. The result is neither flamboyant architecture nor an abstract container. Uniting architecture and nature, the Insectarium is a true biotope in which insects, plants and people come together and relate to each other.

The Insectarium is authentic. Nature, architecture and museology converge to form a single entity. They are linked to enhance the individual sensory experience.

The Insectarium is a living organism. It functions as a metabolism that not only allows the plants and insects to develop under the expert care of the collaborators, but can also nurture the visitors' growth during their visit.

The Insectarium is landscape. Its architecture is practically invisible. From the outside, visitors only see greenhouse rooflines gradually ascending from a prairie to connect visually with the adjacent trees.

The Insectarium is experience. It doesn't just exhibit, but also interacts with visitors. Architecture and scenography become one. The result is not a décor, but rather real experiences: touch, smell, heat, the bioclimatic effect of the materials themselves, all changing as the visitor moves from one space to the next.

The Insectarium is discovery. It is about the insects, the plants, the collaborators and finally the visitors themselves. Beyond their differences, they are all closely linked to one another. The project is guided by the desire to awaken the visitors' perceptions and to offer them new experiences through a series of direct encounters. Through a precise sequence of spaces and events, the visitor is initiated to the world of insects.

The Insectarium is process. It is structured in a series of stations: reset, perception, interaction, immersion and workshop spaces. The specificity of each of these stations is expressed in its built form. Through this experiential sequence of spaces, the visit becomes imprinted on the visitor's memory: the Insectarium as a mnemonic organism.



### **Invisible**

Positioned lightly within the landscape of the botanical garden, the Insectarium appears from afar as a simple ascending greenhouse placed at the edge of a prairie. A large vegetated dome emerges directly in front of the long glass facade.





### Descent

As we approach, we discover a long slopping butterfly garden, descending down from the prairie, and leading visitors below the greenhouses.



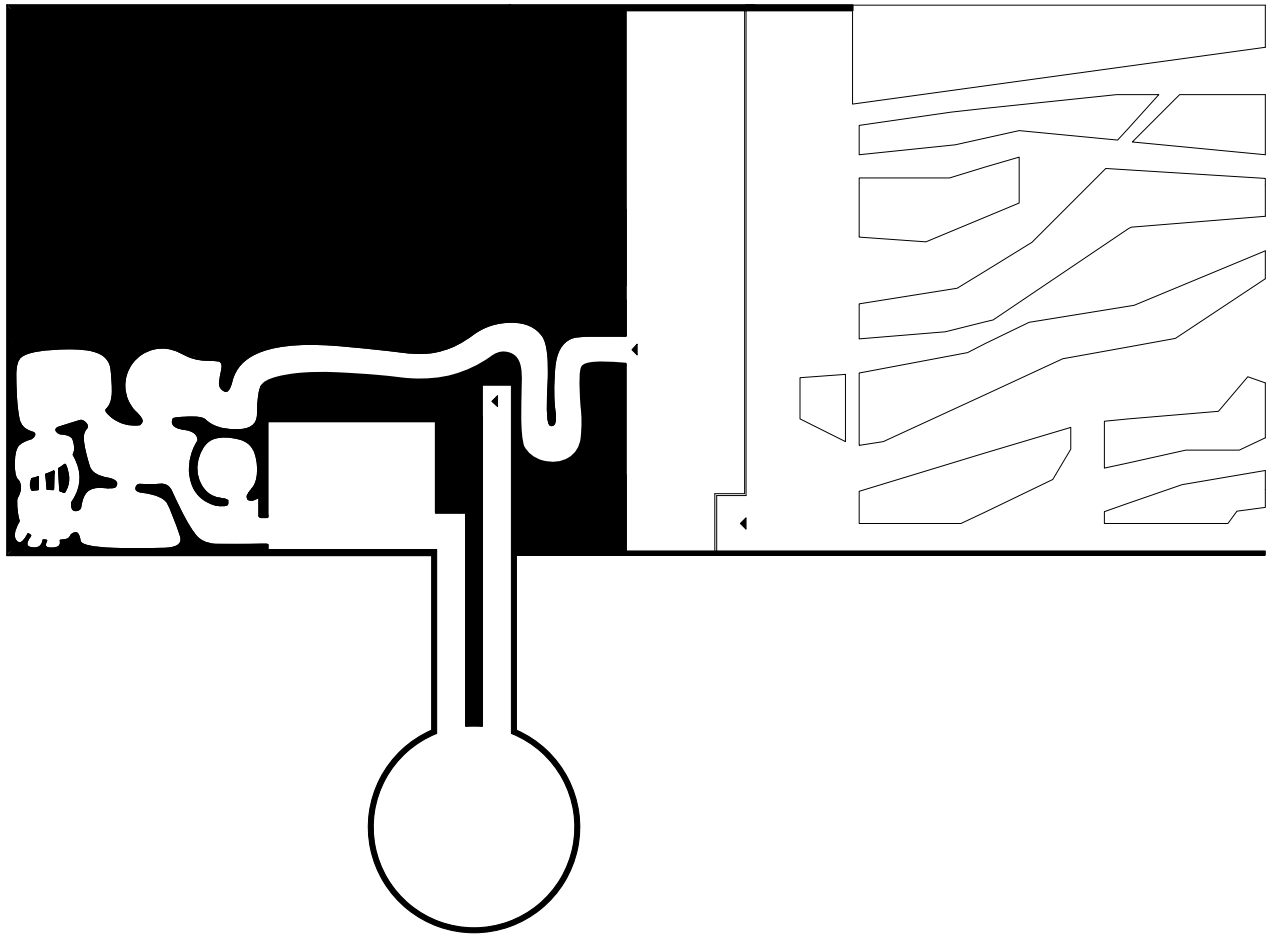


### Entrance

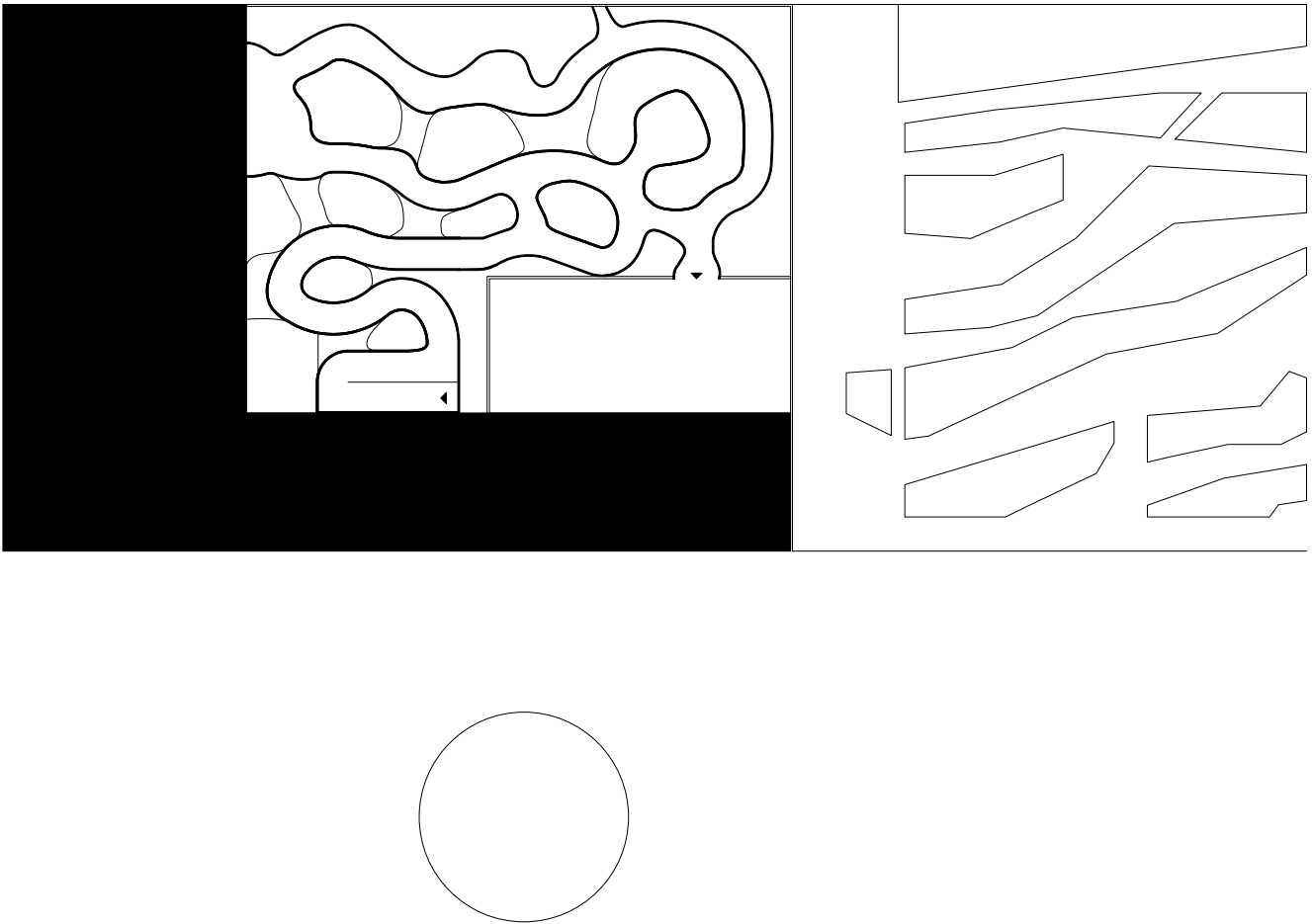
The foyer is a continuation of the sloping butterfly garden. It is a long and relatively low pared down space, open to the outside. A long cut in the back wall of the foyer brings the visitor further underground where the museum visit starts.



Underground



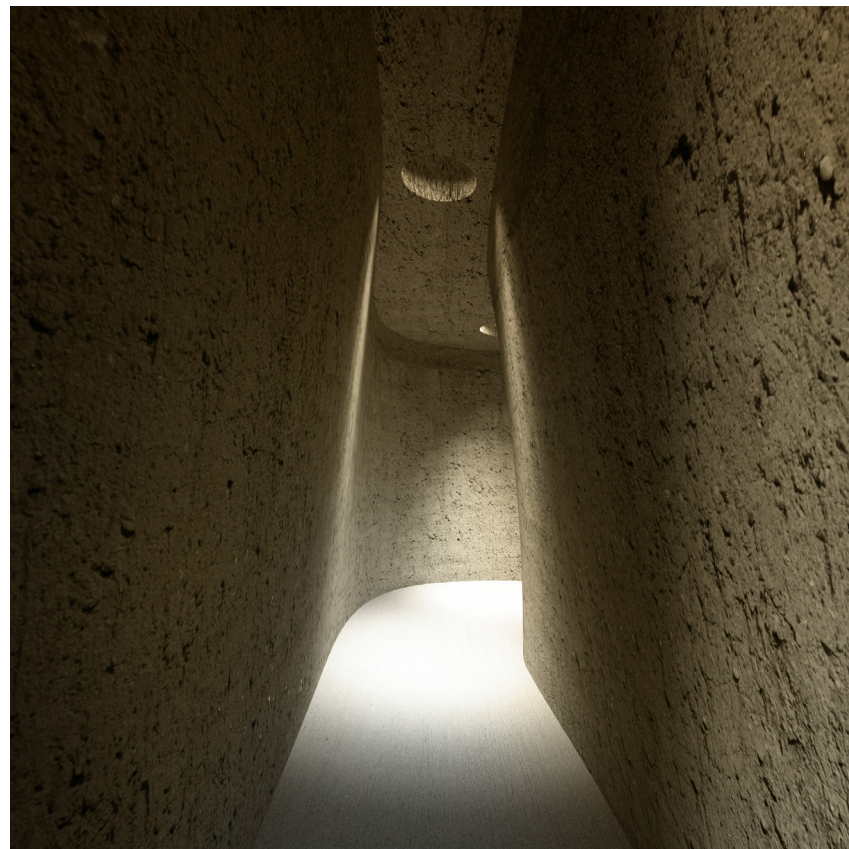
Above Ground



**Parcours**

The parcours is intentionally long and disorienting. A sequence of spaces and events bring the visitor underground, before gradually ascending to eventually emerge into a large butterfly house.





#### **Reset / De-contextualization**

Prelude to the museum experience, here the visitor loses his sense of orientation and his sense of control in a serpentine descent through a fault in the earth. Out of context, he is introduced to the scale of insects.





### **Perceptual space**

A series of rooms interconnected by gallery spaces is conceived as an analogy to the typology of caves. The museographic installations are designed to confront the visitor with the insects' sensory and motor perceptions, and to sensitize him to the immense difference in scale between their world and his.





### Collection

The visitor slowly ascends into a space whose shape evokes a cocoon. There, he finds himself surrounded by the Insectarium's collection of naturalized insects.





### **Emergence**

The visitor slowly comes back to the surface. The light, the temperature, the humidity and the smells all gradually change. Once fully above ground, he emerges at the heart of the greenhouse. There, he finds himself surrounded by butterflies and insects.

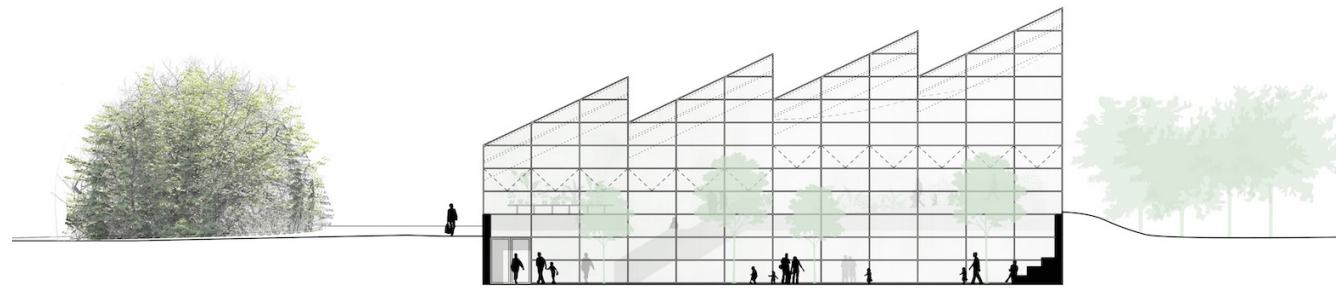




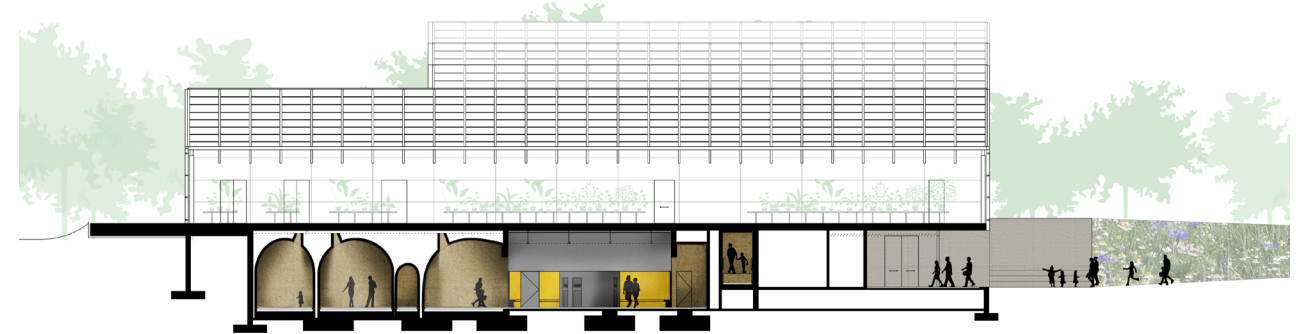
### **Immersive space**

The greenhouse structure of this luminous space offers the visitor a synthesis of his Insectarium experiences. Furrows cut into a mass of earth of variable height guide visitors through the space and form natural displays, showcasing the different insects in their respective environments.

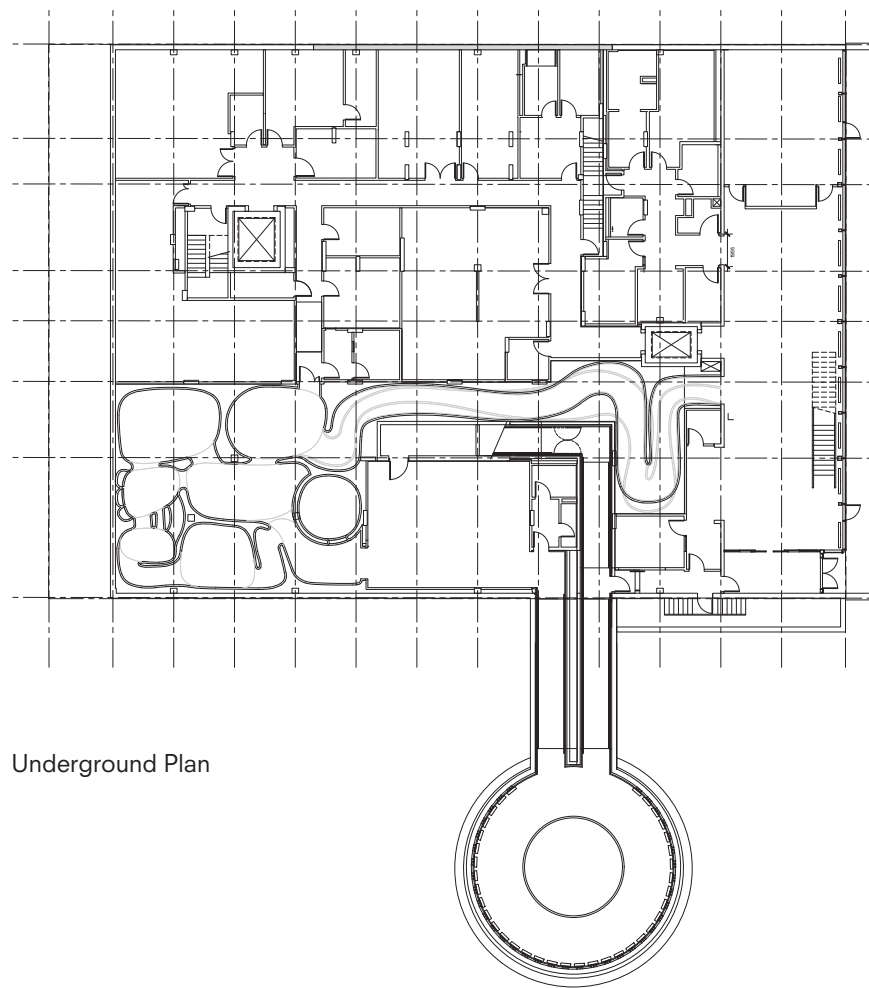




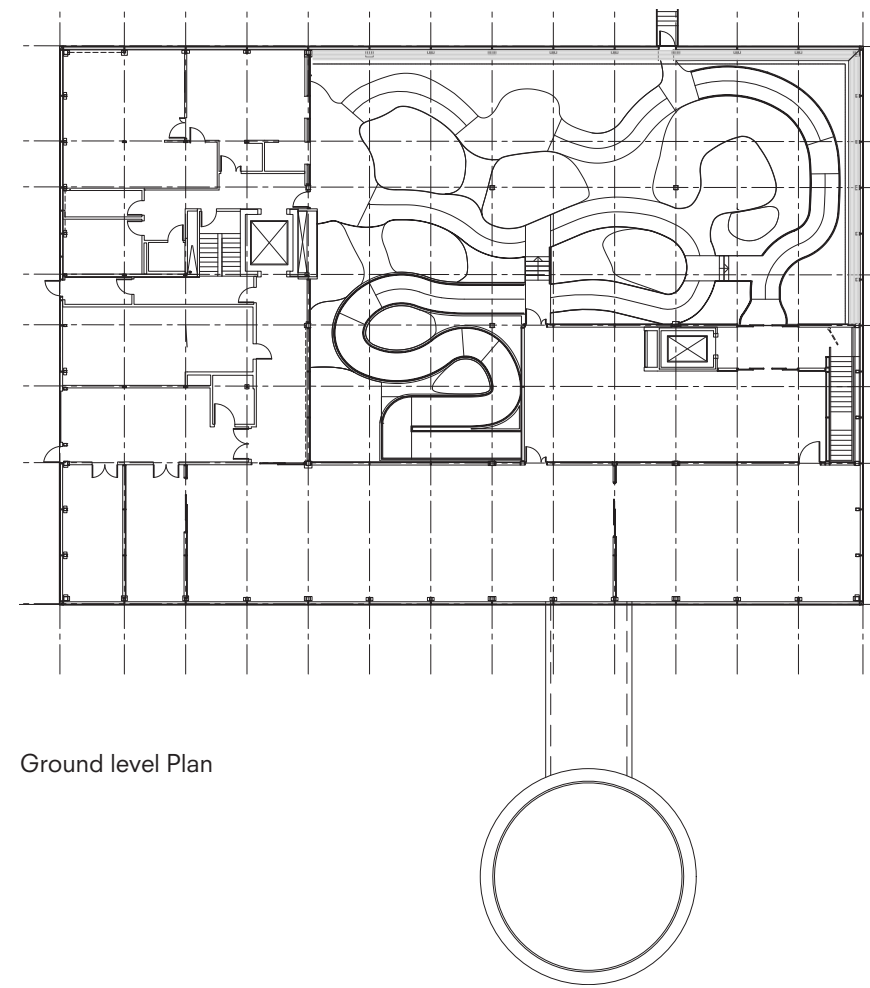
East Elevation



Section



Underground Plan

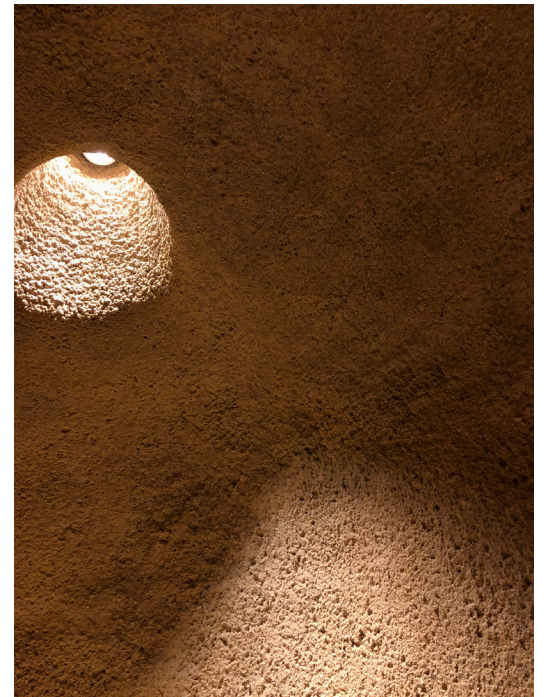


Ground level Plan

### The machine / Synthesis

The Insectarium functions as a “machine” built under a large greenhouse. This machine is voluntarily exposed to allow the visitor to see its internal activities from inside out. Back in the gardens, the visitor has an overview of the visit he just completed. He can perceive the “machine” that is the building in its totality.





### Prototyping

A large prototype of the caves has been built to test the unique form and materiality present throughout the museum. The project is now at the final stage of construction documentation. Start of construction is planned for 2019.