

Artis Islands

Personal position

The zoo, a place where human and non-human meet. A place where family's come together to see, observe, learn and interact. Habitats are recreated and adjusted for the human to see the animal in it's most possible natural form. To let the human have the ultimate experience, borders in the zoo's are as minimal as possible, dangerous animals behind glass, birds in cages where visitor's can go into and water animals can be seen from underneath.

Seen from the animals perspective, I agree to let the animals live in a enclosure where the natural behavior is recreated. An animal enclosure has to be designed to prevoke the natural behavior of the animal, so the human can see and learn from the behaviour. The enclosure itself has to be optimized for the animals needs.

Seen from the humans perspective, the educational part and the personel interaction with the animal is interesting to observe, feel and recreate. It is interesting to let the human feel and experience the qualities of the animal, the strength, the size, the softness, the textures of the skin, or the smell and the sounds the animals make. These experiences let us human think differently about animals and make us remember the visits.

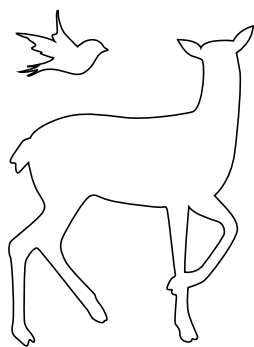
The mountain lion

The mountain lion is the second-heaviest cat in the world. Secretive and largely solitary by nature. It is an animal that mostly lives and hunts at night, and it's occasionally seen by day. The mountain lion is more closely related to smaller felines, including the domestic cat, than to any species of subfamily Panther.

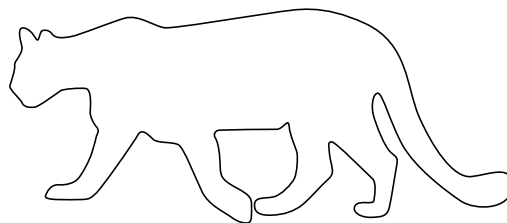
The female mountain lion can reach a length of 1,5m and a male can reach a length of 2m. Their weight can go up to 100 kg. and reach an average age of 18 years old. The big strong back legs of the mountain lion make sure they can jump around a length of 5 m and up to 3 m in height, and run at speeds from 60 to 80 km/h.

The mountain lion is an ambush predator that pursues a wide variety of prey. Primary food sources are ungulates, particularly deer. It also hunts species as small as insects and rodents. This cat prefers habitats with dense underbrush and rocky areas for stalking, but can also live in open areas. The mountain lion is territorial and survives at low population densities. Individual territory sizes depend on terrain, vegetation, and abundance of prey. While large, it is not always the apex predator in its range, yielding prey it has killed to lone jaguars, bears, alligators and groups of gray wolves. It is reclusive and mostly avoids people. Fatal attacks on humans are rare, but have recently been increasing in North America as more people enter mountain lion territories, and build developments such as farms in their established territory.

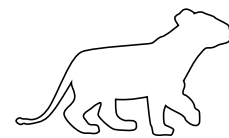
Intensive hunting following European colonization of the Americas and the ongoing human development into mountain lion habitat has caused populations to drop in most parts of its historical range. Nowadays more and more humans go trophy hunting on mountain lions. The mountain lion is threatened by loss of habitat, habitat fragmentation, and depletion of its prey base due to poaching. In Florida, it is threatened by heavy traffic, which causes frequent fatal accidents involving mountain lions. Highways are a major barrier for mountain lions.



9 kg/day



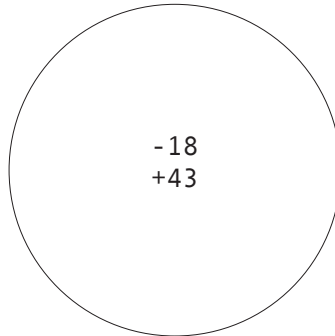
2200 mm



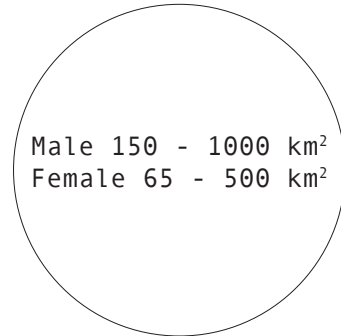
age +/- 20

Tonto National Forrest

Tonto National Forrest a desert type forrest with a lot of different plants and animals. A perfect environment for the mountain lion. The plantlife and rock formations are densified in the enclosure.



Temperature



Territory



Terrain



Area



Arizone Sycamore



Arizona Walnut



Englesmann Prickly Pear Cactus



Firecracker Penstemon



Agave



Saguaro

Border

The chosen mountain lion the concolor lives in the dessert terrain with gravel ground. The animals can withstand temperatures from -18 to +43 degrees. One of the many national parcs the mountain lion lives in is the Tonto National Forest. This parc is really close to the main city of Arizona called Phoenix. A city where mountain lions are spotted on regular base.

The city Phoenix (human territory) is expanding in the mountain lions territory. Houses are build around water spots were mountain lions used to drink. A city where the border between human and mountain lions territory is clear and vague at the same time. Mountain lion are more often spotted in the city then before. Situation appear where mountain lions are lying on porches or trespassing.

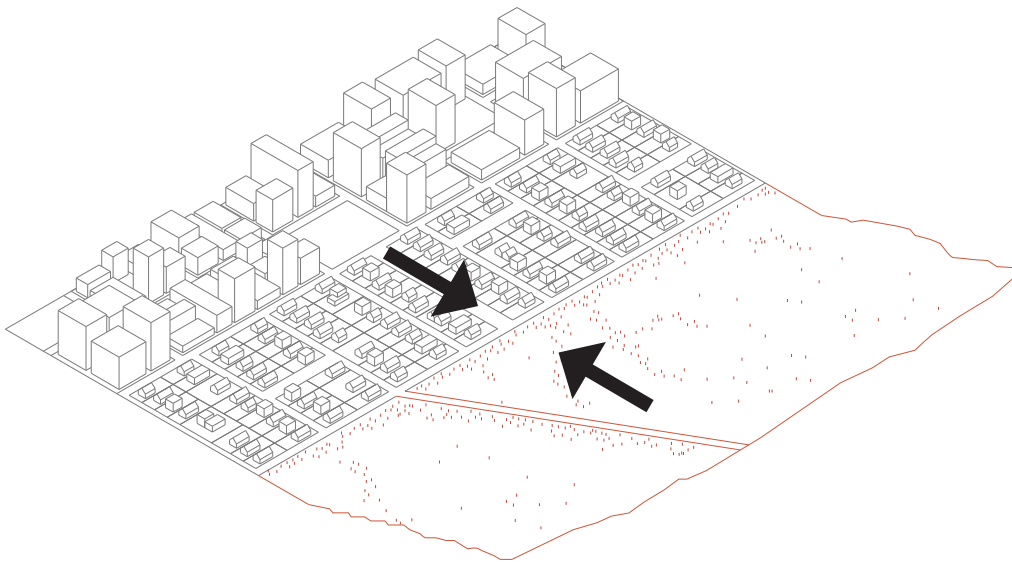


Phoenix Arizona
Human Habitat

Tonto National Forrest
Habitat Mountain Lion

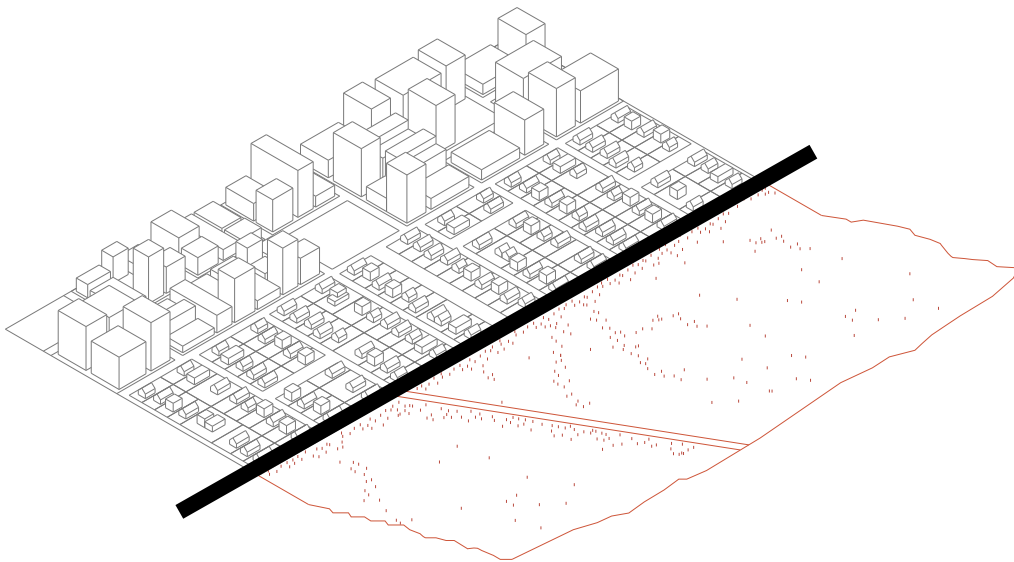
Crossing borders

Because human territory is expanding, mountain lions are forced to step into the human territory. They even use it in their advantage to hide bait from other animals in abandoned sheds or attics. To reflect on this situation, the enclosure is designed so both will meet in each others territory.



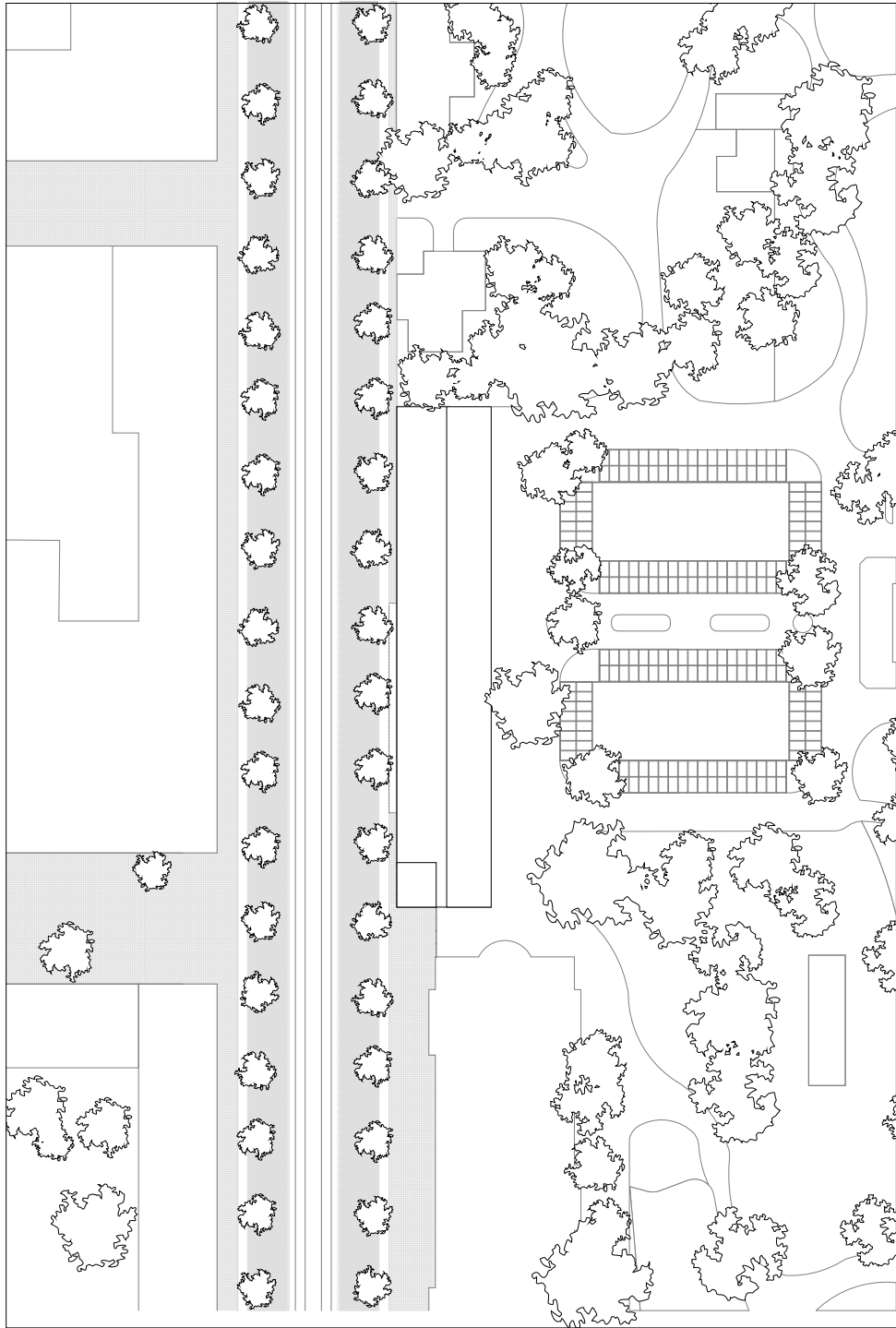
Defining the border

Humans have the need to keep control over unexpected situations, so a border will be made visible by a man made structure. Defining the border will give the visitor a feeling of control.



A roof structure is designed to create multiple opportunities for visitor and mountain lion to meet underneath. The structure has been placed on the border of the enclosure, the place where mountain lion and visitor bump into each other. Reflecting to the situation in Phoenix a structure is designed in such way that the visitor has the feeling he or she is in control, as well as the zookeeper is in control. This is accomplished in different ways. A readable grid structure has been designed so the human will have overview. The roof structure has the form of a modern steel barn, 'the ones you see everywhere in Arizona', it also looks like a roof on top of a viewing dek. The whole structure will be made from 'off the shelf products' like, iron beams, corrugated steel sheets, concrete floors and metal rods. All products will be recognizable for human as man made materials. The whole structure is detailed in such a way that it could be a toolkit. The utilitarian look comes forward from the human need of control. It makes clear that the enclosure is designed by - and for human.



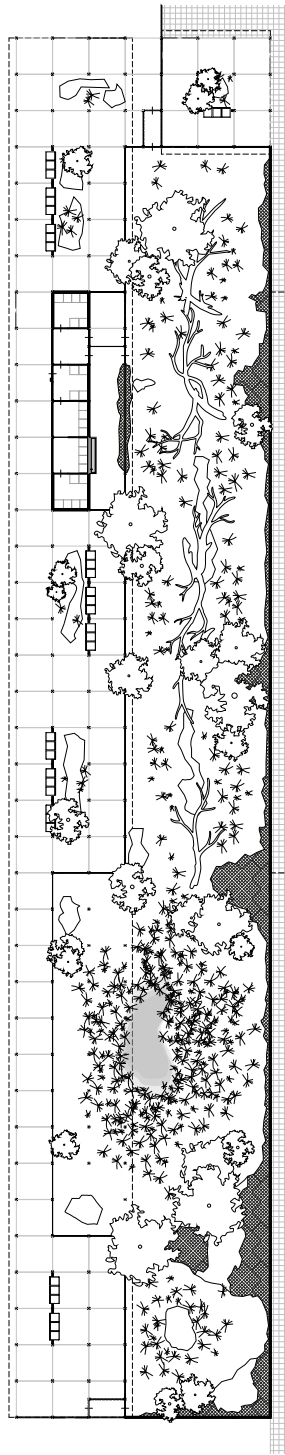


Site

The enclosure is situated on the edge of the zoo next to the always moving city Amsterdam. The roof structure is placed along the length of the road. It has a length of 76x6m. With a viewing platform from 6x6 at the side of the road.

The plan

Underneath the metal corrugated roof is a pathway following the columns set on a grid from 2x2m. The path will change along the length of the enclosure, It will be changing from 2 to 6 m in with and the enclosure will change from 8 to 12 m in with. It refers to the vague and clear border in phoenix as the role of the zoo and the zookeepers in control of the animal.

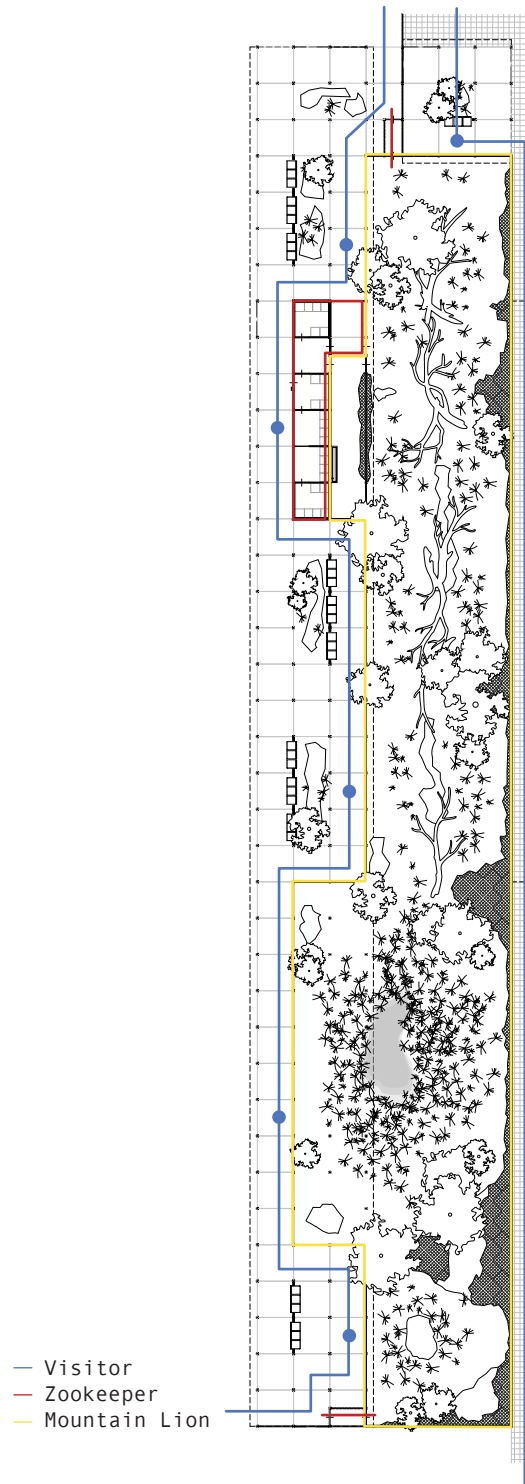


Routing

Visitor: Along the blue line a sequence of different views are created for the visitor to see the animal in a perfect scenery. There will be information boards placed along the path to give information about the mountain lion.

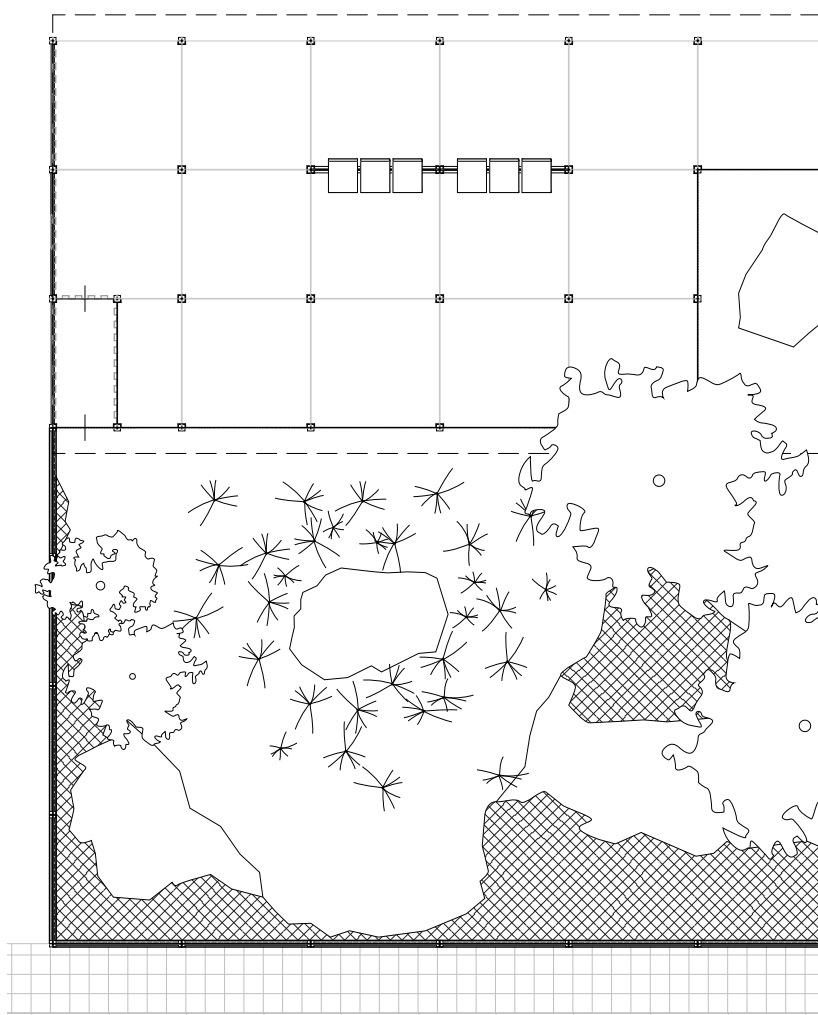
Zookeeper: The red line shows the logistics and the escape routes for the zookeeper on each corner of the enclosure.

Mountain Lion: The yellow line defines the edge of the mountain lion enclosure.



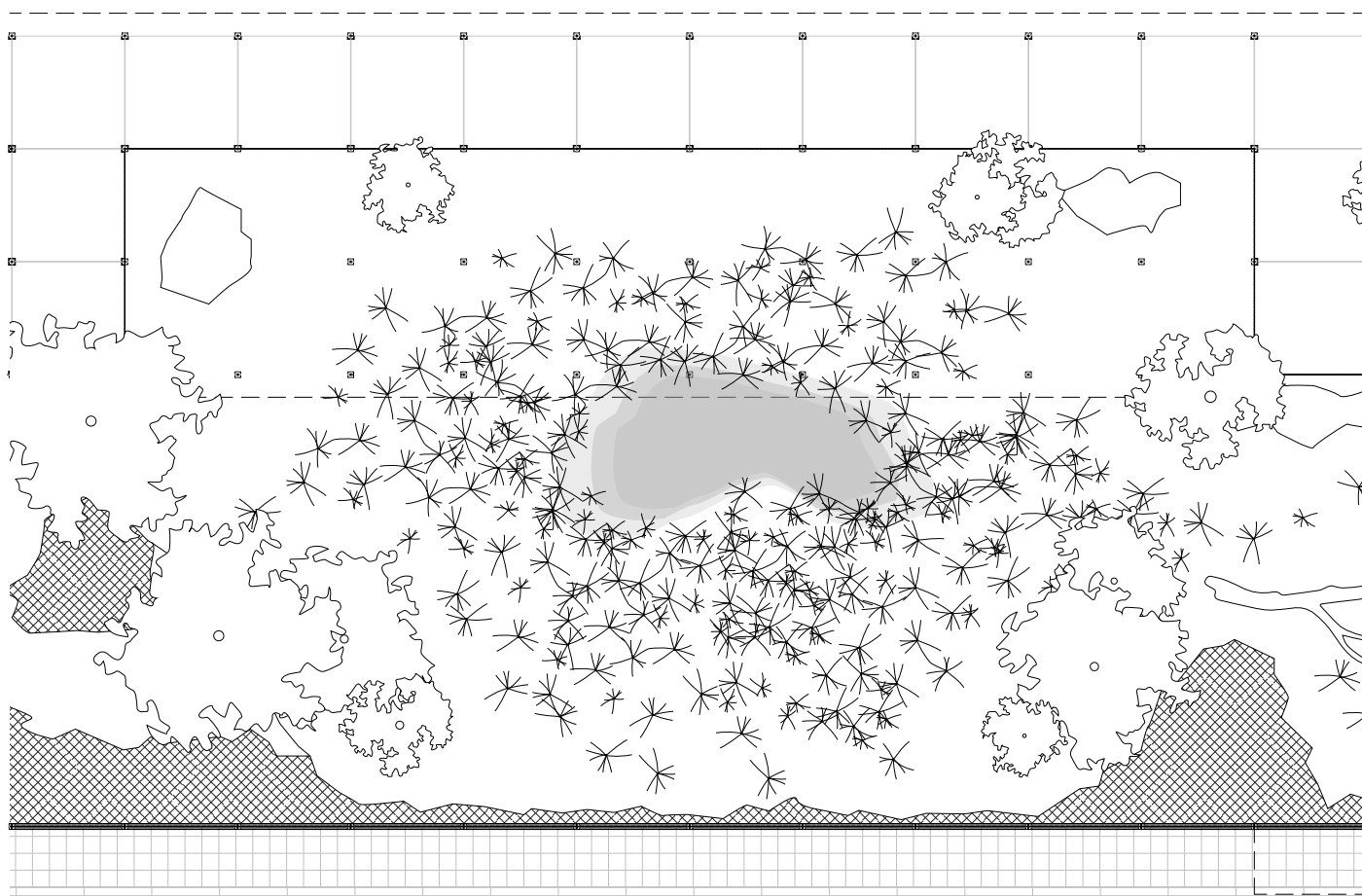
The visitor arrives and finds a perfect spot where the mountain lion could be lying on the sun heated rock. Or sleeping in one of the two caves. An intimate place is recreated to emphasize the view between visitor and mountain lion.

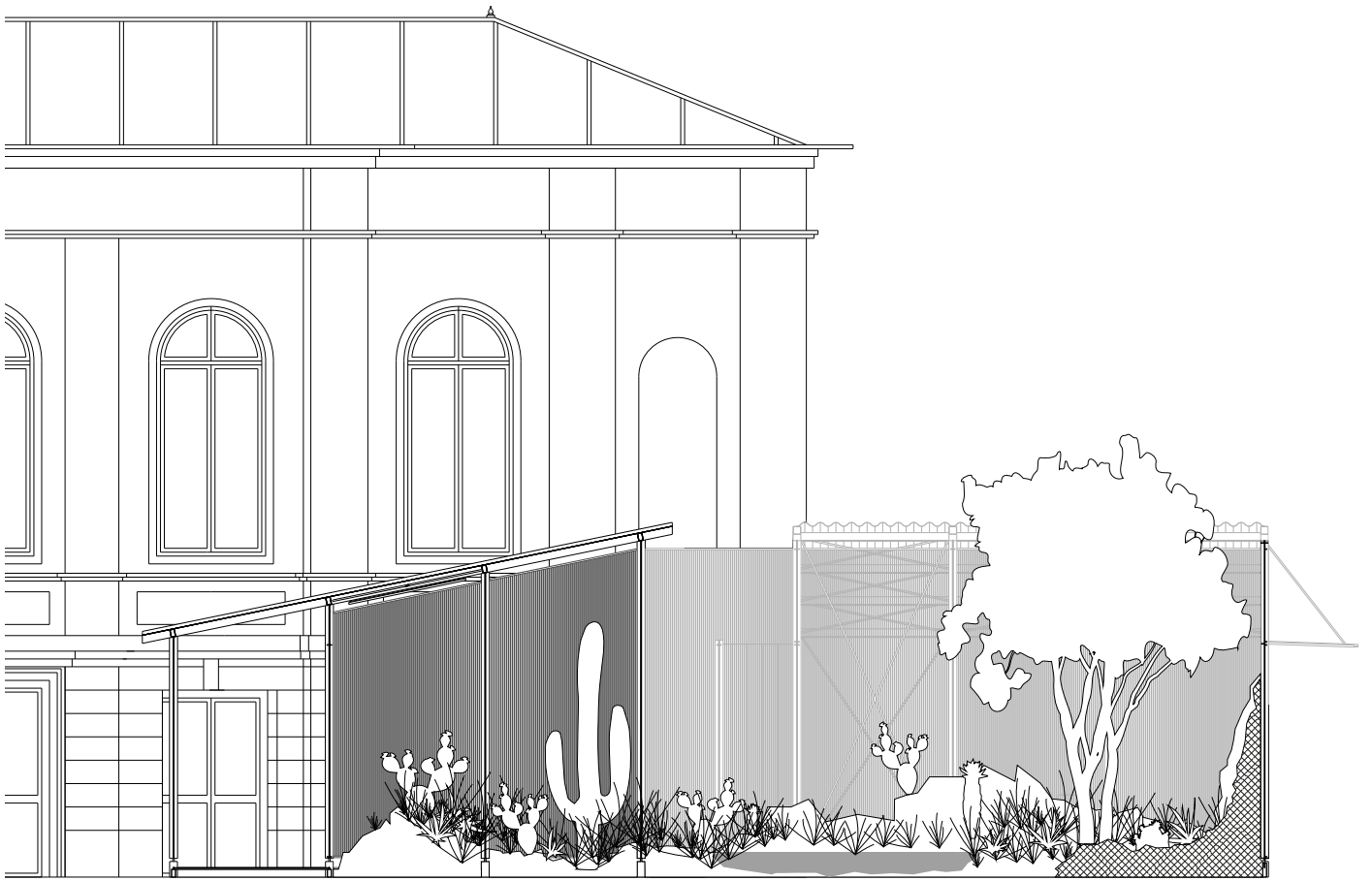
Multiple places are created in the enclosure to hide food for the mountain lion. Underneath trees, inside bushes or between rocks. Spreading the food will make the mountain lion move from spot to spot.





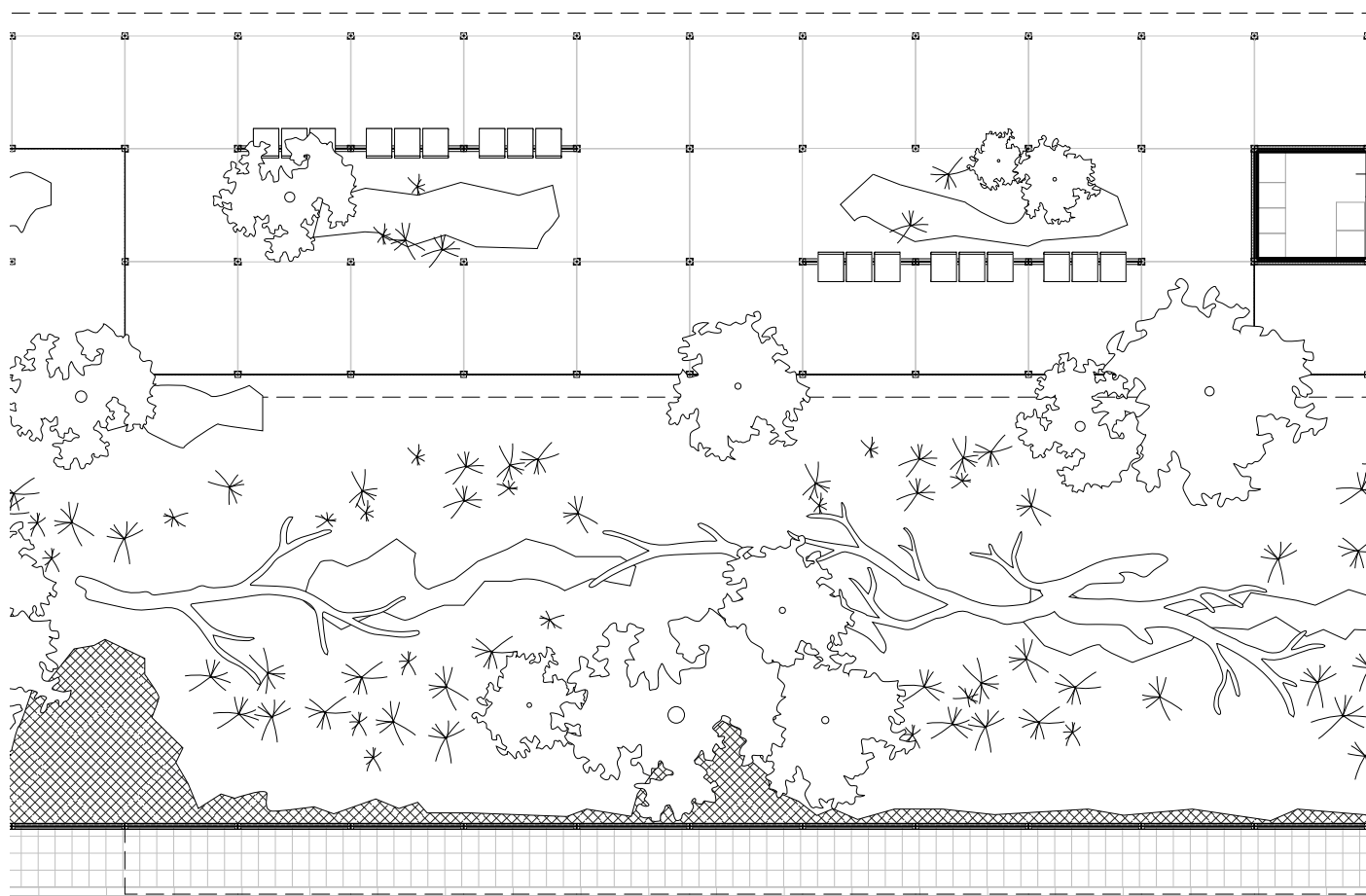
The pathway gets smaller and the enclosure expands underneath the roof. A perfect high grass field with a drinking puddle in the middle. A place where the mountain lion can get really close in the human territory. A wide landscape scenery is recreated. The mountain lion can make use of the high grass to hide while hunting for birds flying over or insects living in the grass.





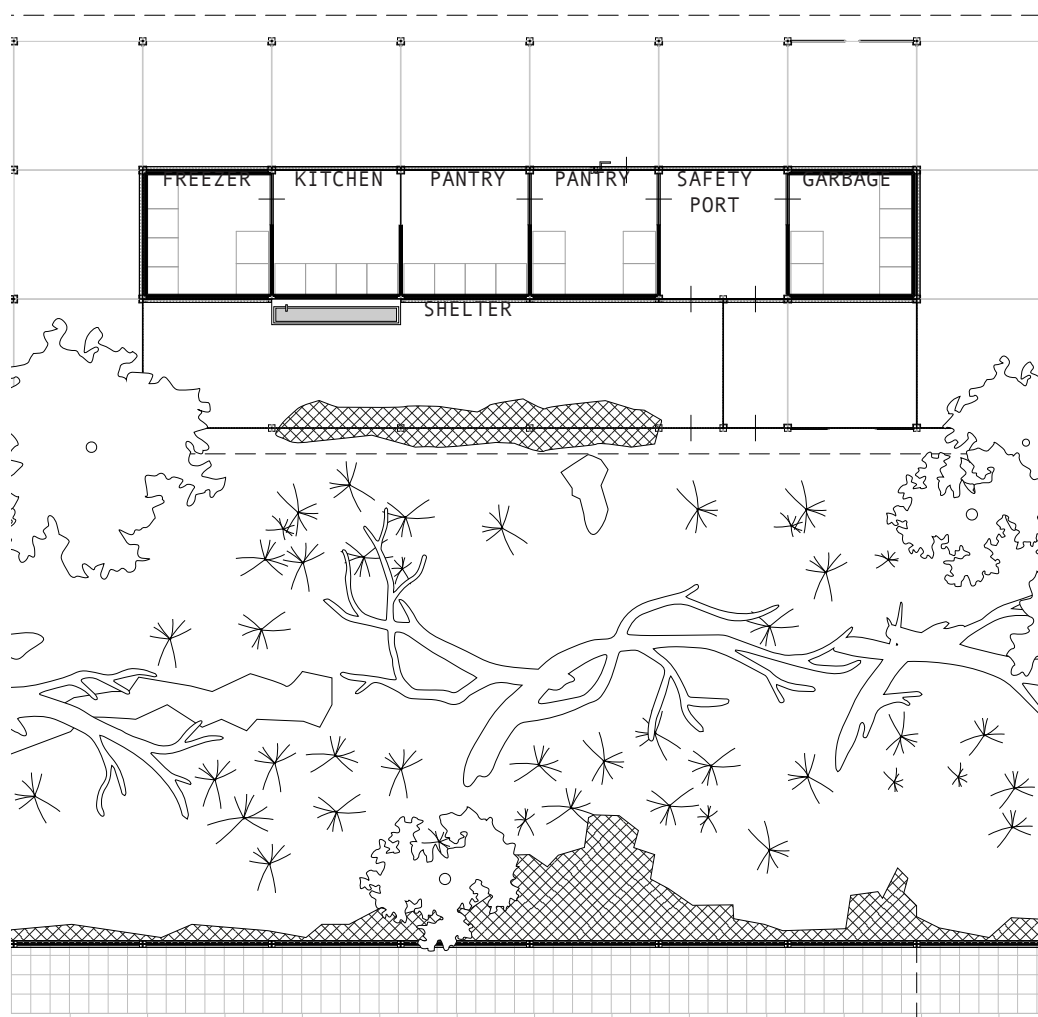
The pathway leads back into the enclosure between rocks and plants, it creates a private place for visitors to take a seat and watch the mountain lion. In this area there are multiple hiding places for food and a lot of branches for the mountain lion to climb on, in and between. An active place for the mountain lion is created for the human to watch. There are also pockets of rocks and green on the human site who can be used by visitors to climb and play on.

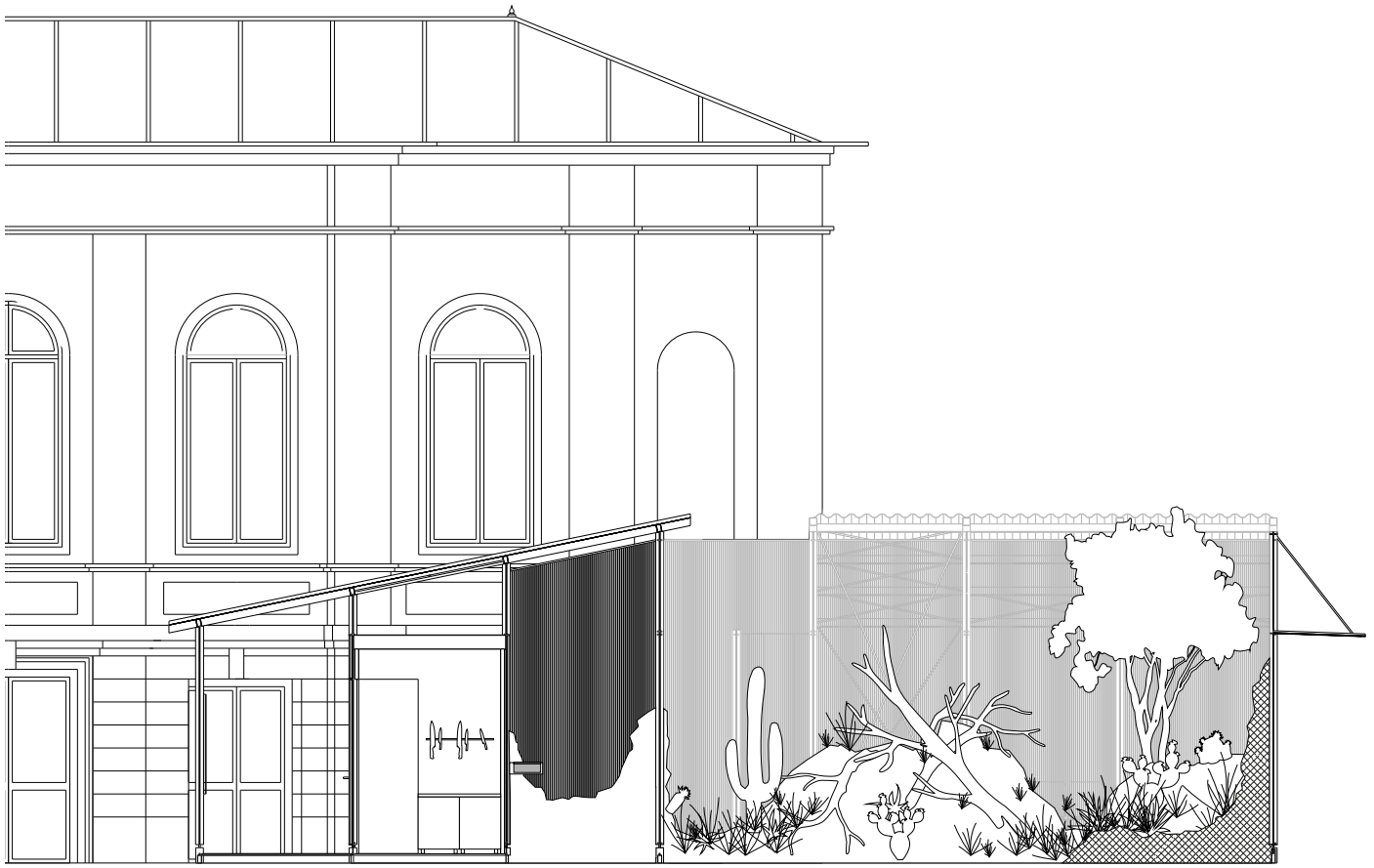
On the city side a roof appears for some shelter for trespassers. The roofline breaks the long fenceline.



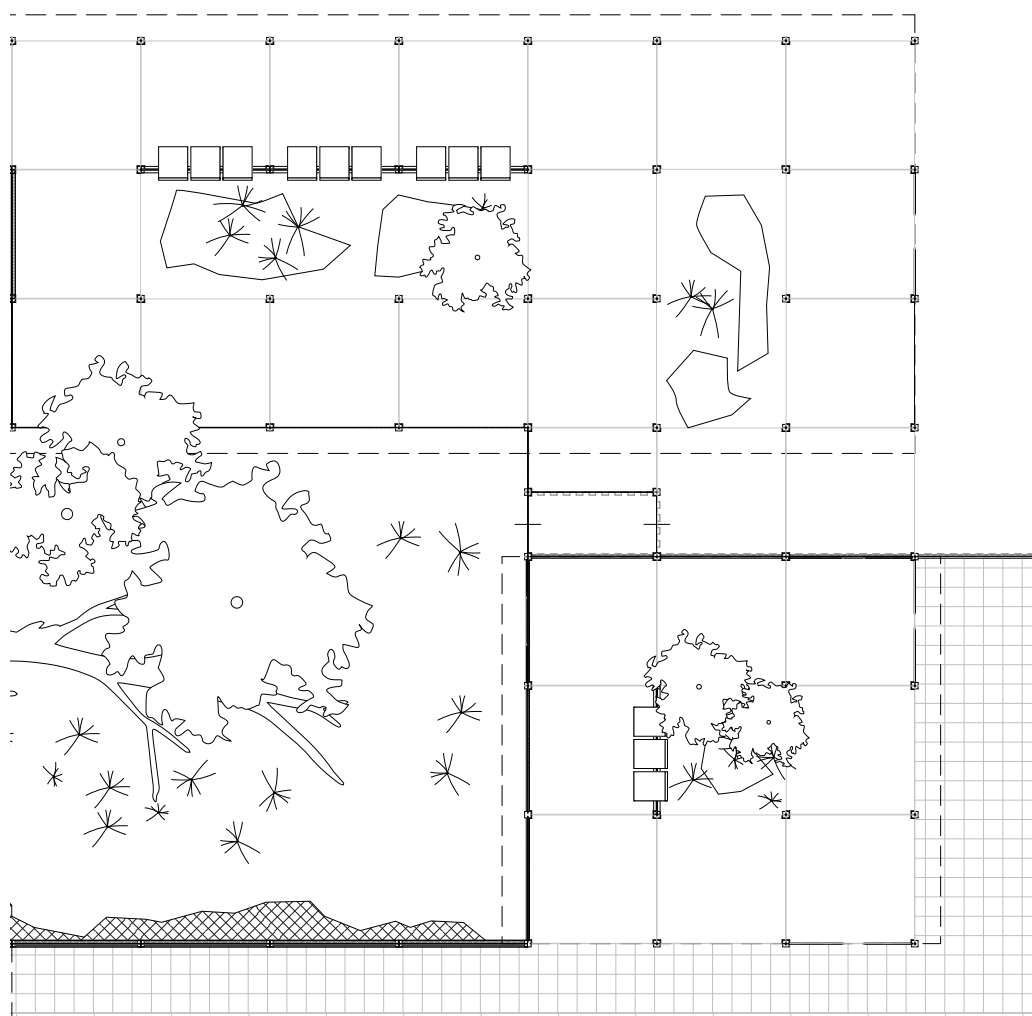


The place for the zookeeper to maintain the enclosure is designed within the grid of 2x2m, a volume is created from 2x12m. The volumes is programmed with a freezer, a kitchen, a pantry, a garbage room and a safetyport. Next to the volumes is the shelter where the mountain lion can be locked temporary while feeding or cleaning. The narrow volume doesn't break the continues route of the visitors, it is an addition where visitors can get close to the foodprocessing, the cleaning and maintenance of the enclosure. For safety reasons there are always 2 doors between the mountain lions area and the visitors area. This is the area were the zookeepers have the most and direct relation with the animal. To show the zookeepers are in control everything is manmade. Like the metal drinking sink and the watertap. The visitors can observe the mountain lion upclose from the side.



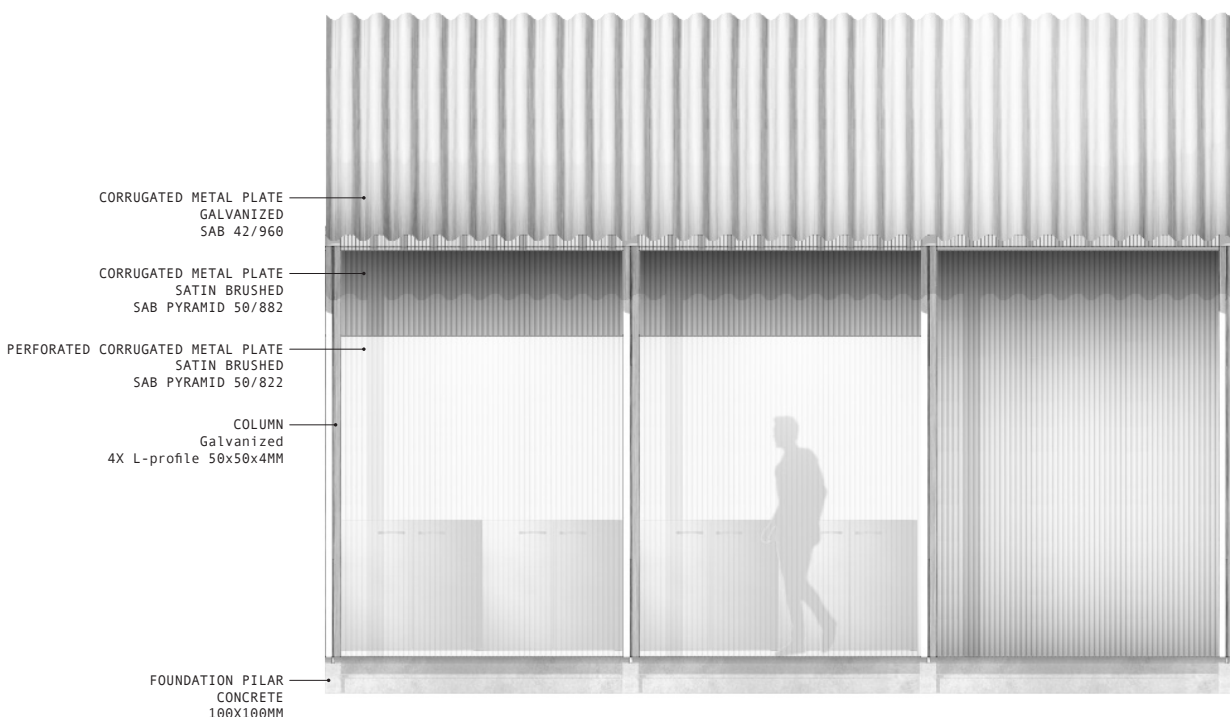


The 6x6 viewing point is placed at the streetside on the edge of the enclosure. Trespassers will see the mountain lion in a perfect scenery. For the most visitors this will be the first and the last place to see the mountain lion a place to remember. A place where they can return regularly. This place is right on the edge between the city and the zoo. A place where both habitats touch and observe each other. For trespassers it will be strange seeing a mountain lion in the middle of the city and for the mountain lion it will be strange to see and hear a tram passing by every 15 minutes. It represents the thin and vague relation between animal and human. As we don't tend to expect an animal as dangerous as the mountain lion so close within our own habitat. All that keeps both worlds apart and in balance, are some fences and metal plates that are just 6mm thick.

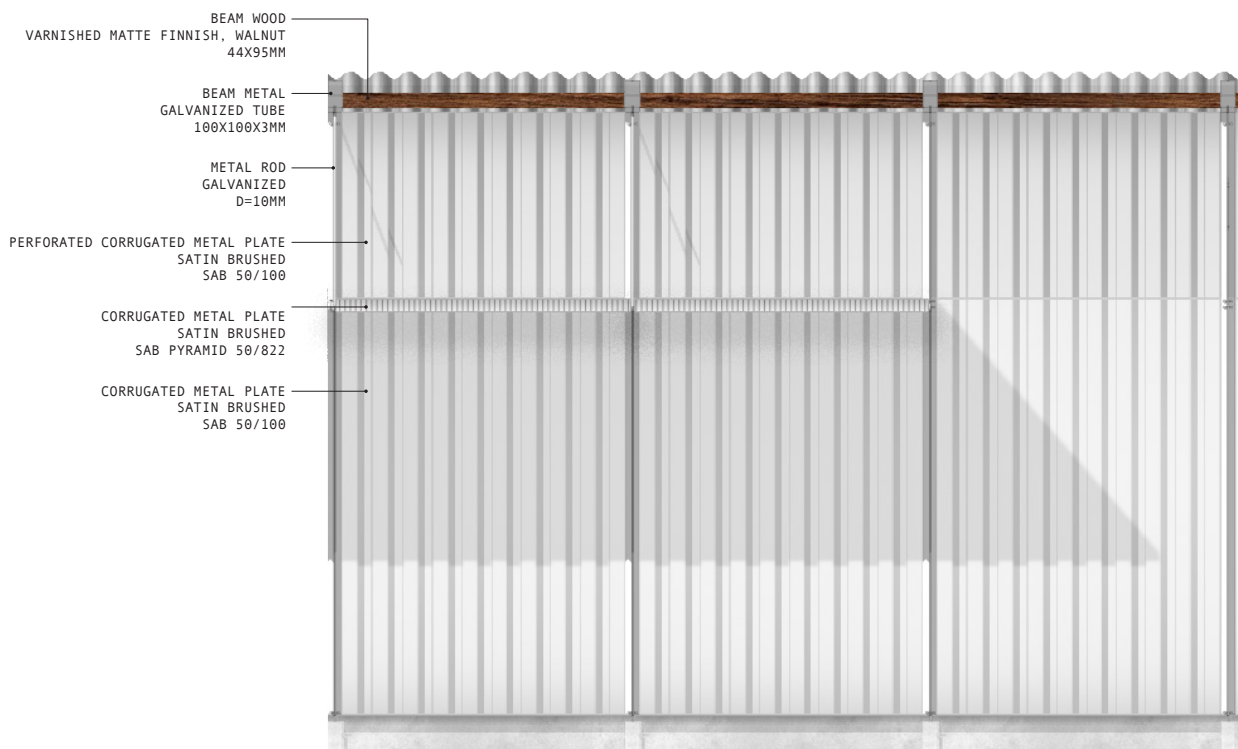


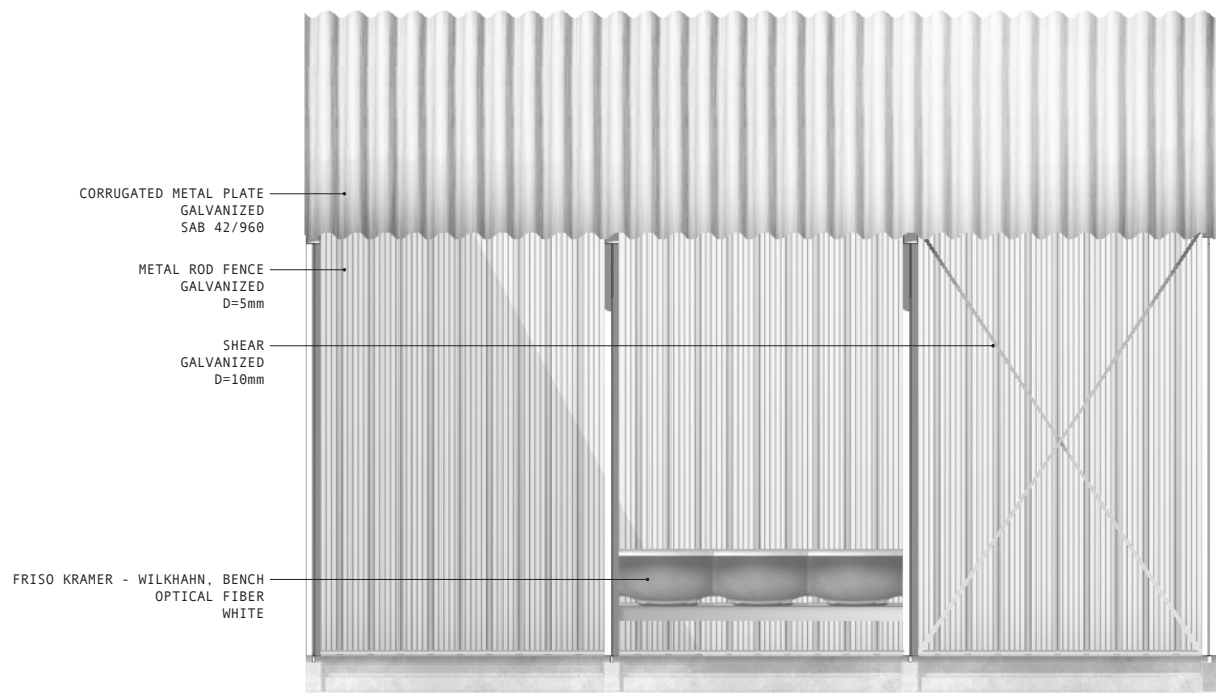
The metal sheeting and columns will not only have a controllable function it will also be shimmering with the sunlight. Reflecting the different colors exposed by the enclosure. The dark red sand and the green colours of nature will be emphasized by the contrasting hard and cold metals of the enclosure.

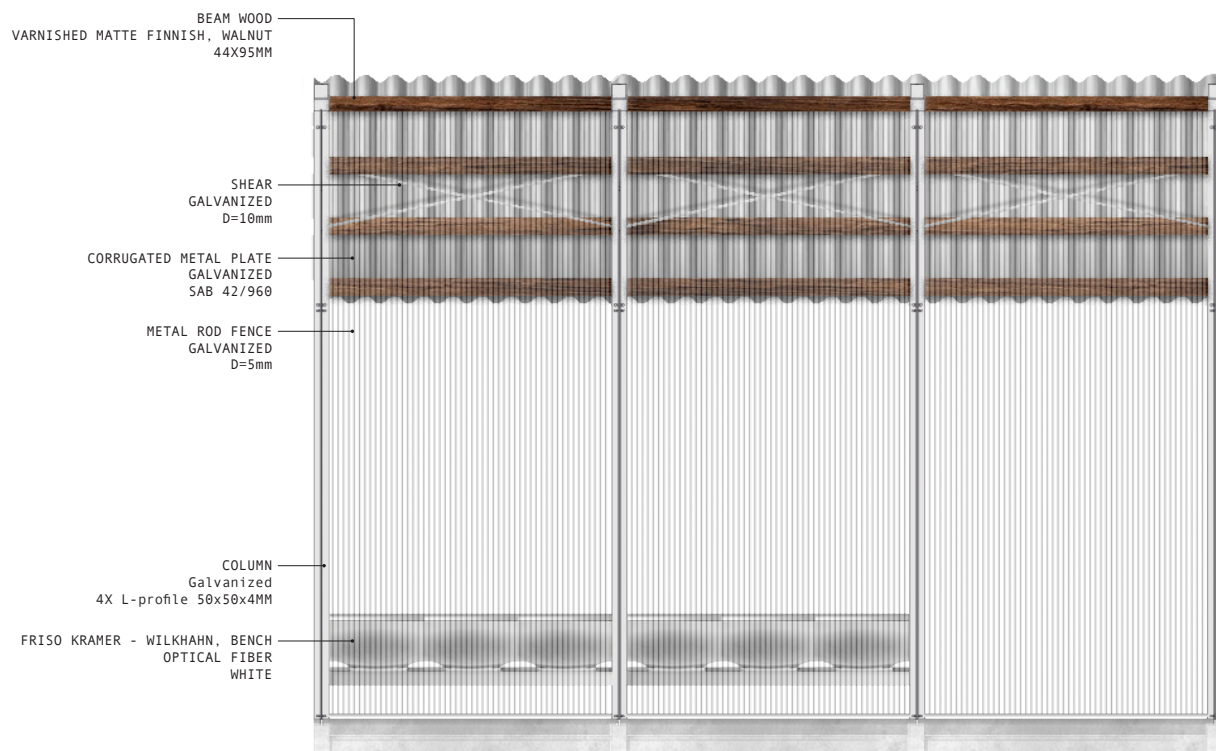
All the columns will be made from 4 l-profiles attached to each other with bolts. Between these profiles all the different sheets will be fastened. The columns will be supported by a concrete foundation.

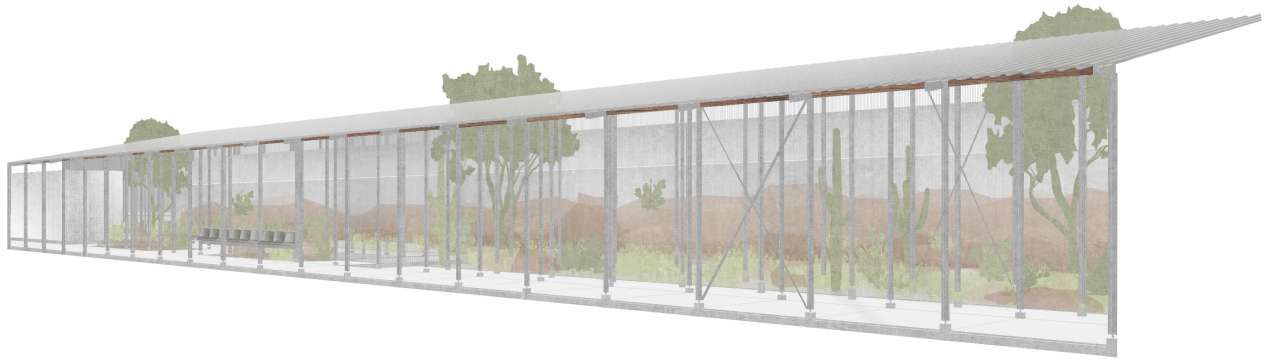


On the side of the city the metal will have a cold appearance by reflecting the grey shades of the city. These two contrasting worlds will live next to each other.



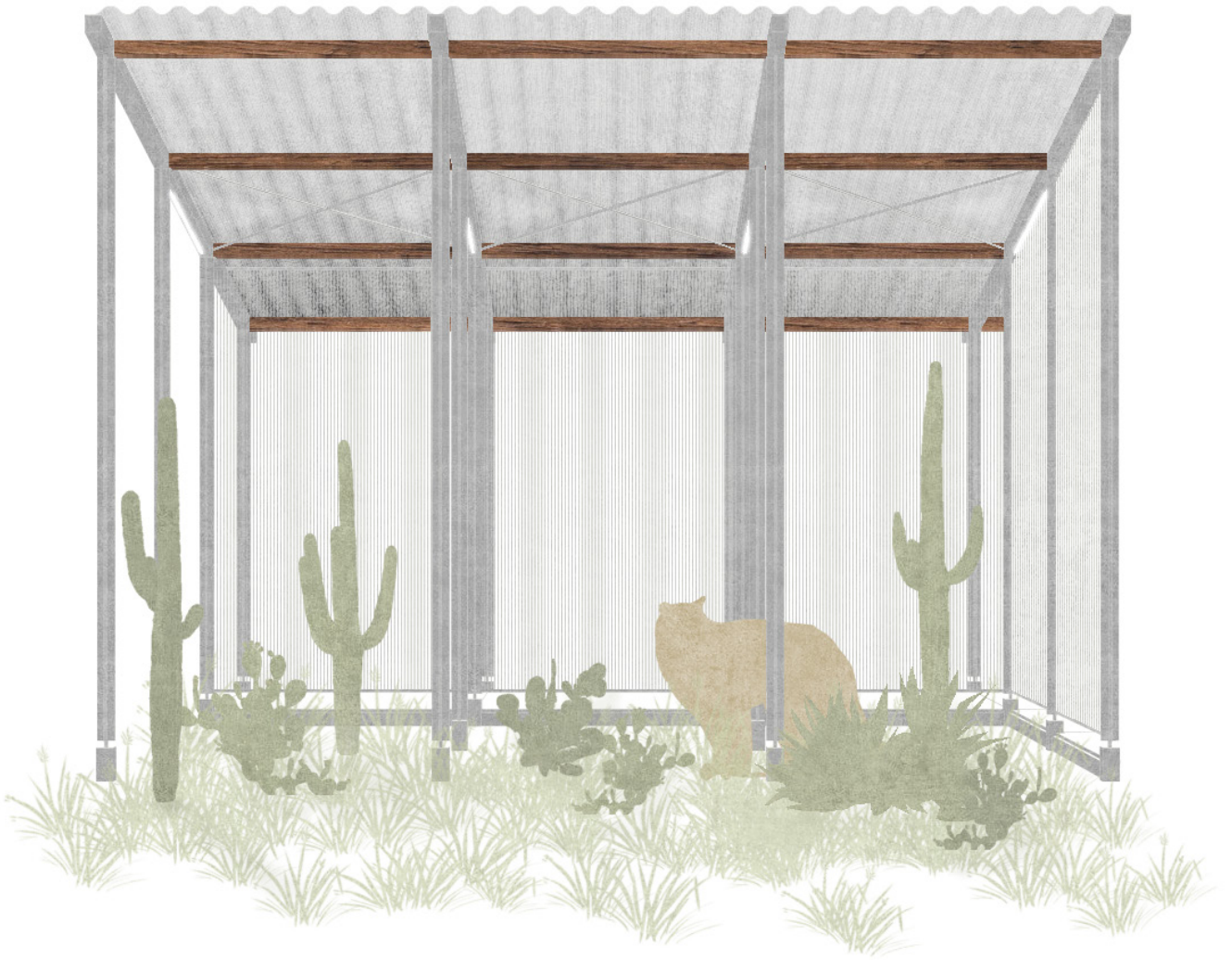














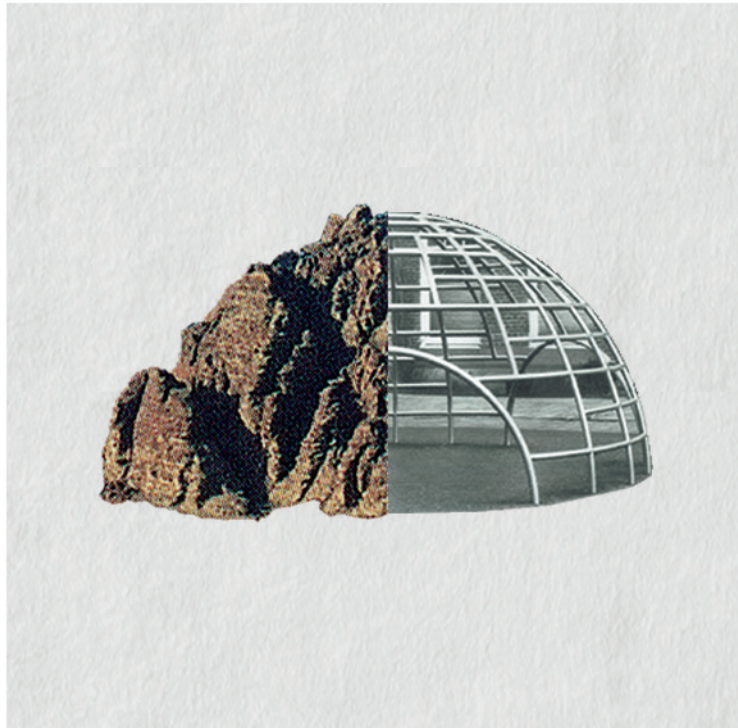
Jelle, 10 years old. Jelle has moved to the city Amsterdam. To get to know the city his father and Jelle are going to visit Artis.

To the zoo.

When I'm playing in my new room in the afternoon and open the window, I can hear the elephants of Artis trumpeting, I can imagine myself in the jungle for a while. Daddy gave me a booklet with pictures of wild animals, there's also an elephant in there. Dad has promised that we will go to the zoo tomorrow, and that I will see the animals from the book up close. I close my window so I don't wake up from the tram that passes every fifteen minutes.

After breakfast it is finally time. We walk to Artis via a wide road with one side, according to daddy 'Amsterdam mansions', and on the other side the zoo. We see a big old building, daddy says it's the aquarium. We are viewing the building as I see an animal shelter in the corner of my eye, and wonder which animal is in there. I run towards the enclosure. "Are you a bit careful?" Calls Dad. I startle and walk quietly until I see the bars. The bars are stretched between thin columns. I am afraid and don't dare to get closer. Daddy and I take a seat on the plastic chairs under the metal roof.

Through the bars we see trees, tall grass, cacti, large rocks and dark red sand. It looks exactly like the pictures from my picture book. This must contain a dangerous animal. Daddy says, 'the sign says there is a mountain lion in the enclosure'. I stand on the chair and pinch my eyes to look further into the enclosure "I think I see him!". He sits behind it the... My sentence is interrupted by a car that suddenly tears by, and I realise that we are not yet in the zoo, but still in the city. We walk further along the same metal wall, it feels firm but cold. I realise the mountain lion now may be literally standing next to me. Daddy says, "Watch out maybe he'll climb across'. I look up at the high fence and wonder how high a mountain lion can jump. We continue further to the entrance gate of the zoo.



On hands and feet.

We are at the main entrance and buy a ticket. I ask Dad if we go to the mountain lion because I am disappointed that I just missed him. We see the enclosure on the map. Along several winding paths we walk to the enclosure. We pass some monkeys playing between the ropes, a leopard lying on a rock and many different birds whistling in their cages. We walk on and immediately I recognize the warm red color of the sand: we are at the mountain lion enclosure. I ask my father if he's coming. I am a bit more careful now and reach for my father's hand. We walk to the enclosure.

When we get closer we see the rocks and trees, but no mountain lion. While searching we enter the enclosure. I pass the tall thin columns getting closer to the fence and see if the mountain lion is still on the spot. But vanished. I spot some caves and see if he is there. We walk in search between the tall grass along the columns. I see the tall grass growing further under the roof and realise that the mountain lion can also be very close. The grass moves occasionally, but that can also happen through the wind. Between the tall grass is a small pool, I ask Daddy if the mountain lion uses the pool to drink, dad nods. For a moment I imagine that we walk through the area of the mountain lion, through the tall grass, towards the puddle .. Till dad says: 'Hey look Jelle, we can loosen some of those bars with a wrench.' I am surprised and ask if Daddy has his wrench with him, but luckily he left it at home. Dad laughs but I get a little nervous.

We continue our search and stop at an information sign that shows which plants are in the enclosure. We walk further and the path slowly leads us further between plants and rocks. We can no longer be seen by other visitors. I ask Dad if I may climb some rocks to get a better viewpoint. Dad says, "of course you may." While I'm on hands and feet climbing higher and higher the mountain lion suddenly appears! He jumps off a branch and I immediately jump down from the rock and run towards the fence screaming, look dad there he is! Dad also shouts, "be careful Jelle, soon he will grab you! I stop a few centimeters from the bars. And realise that he's staring me straight in the eyes. I pause and look back at him.



Feedingtime.

The mountain lion slowly disappears into the high bushes after a moment of eye contact. I have shivers running down my spine: how big he is! I run back to my father and we walk towards the shelter of the mountain lion. I ask Dad why he has a separate shelter. Dad says, "the zookeepers have to be able to place him somewhere else so they can enter the enclosure for cleaning or feeding". We walk on and pass a long narrow volume lined up with metal rigged plates. These plates are also fixed with the same screws as the fence. I ask if dad also wants to unscrew, dad laughs.

I realise there are holes in parts of the ribbed plates. We can look inside the volume and see the zookeepers preparing food in a metal kitchen. I ask Daddy what they are doing. He reads from the information board: 'the mountain lion will be fed around 1:00 PM. They are carnivores and can eat up to 9 kilos of meat each day. " I can see it's almost 1:00 pm at dads watch and we quickly walk back to the shelter. From here we have a good view, one of the zookeepers lures the mountain lion into the shelter with a piece of meat. The mountain lion responds immediately and leaves a trail of large paw marks in the sand as he heads to the shelter. When inside, the shelter automatically closes a metal squeaky door. The mountain lion feels even more impressive now that we see the him from up close. He takes a look around in his loft and rubs his back against the bottom of a metal sink. I take hold of my father's hand and keep looking at him. Sometimes he looks back and it feels like where connecting. I let go of my father's hand, he is not really that scary. While the mountain lion enjoys his meat, one of the zookeepers walks into the enclosure and distributes the rest of the meat. He hides the meat in different places. Between trees, shrubs, in the high grass and in the caves.

Meanwhile, more people are gathering around us when the zookeeper returns to building and we hear the squeaking door again. The mountain lion rushes to the door; he already knows that food is ready for him, the door opens. The zookeepers haven't hidden the meat well enough. The worn paths in the enclosure show that the mountain lion knows exactly where everything is, it seems as if he has fully understood the routine of the zookeepers, just like the sound of the squeaky door so he knows he can get out. With great, easy jumps, the mountain lion goes from branch to rock and knows exactly how to collect the meat, it amazes me how flexible and fast he is.



The tram.

We walk further into the aquarium and go up the stairs. Still I keep thinking of the the mountain lion. I look out the window and now I can see the mountain lion's shelter from above. From here it is very difficult to see him again.

Dad is standing next to me. I ask him: where do mountain lion's really live? Papa laughs: 'They live here in Artis, but they also live in the wild, in America, Arizona, there they roam through a desert landscape and sometimes they even come in the garden of people who live nearby. ' I look at him and think. I just got near a mountain lion and cannot imagine one in my own garden. But actually he was just standing in our backyard with us, Daddy winks. It seemed like we were in the enclosure but the fence kept us safe. Sometimes it seems you see the mountain lion in the wild, but if you look around and see the materials, they could be bought at the local hardware store, just like that screw. I nod. "Are the paths also man made?" Daddy looks questionable. "No, they are from the Mountain Lion. We try to steer the mountain lion, but eventually he does whatever he wants, he has his own routines within the limits designed by the zookeepers. "I'm less afraid of him than I was before."

After seeing many other enclosures we head home. We pass the metal wall again, which I now know he cannot get over. We stop for a moment under the roof but I can't see him, I think he's hiding again. We walk on and just before we turn around I look back for one more time. He now lies on a branch and looks at the passing cars. I wonder what he thinks. Later that night I go to bed. Before going to sleep I take my new animal booklet. I look back at the pictures of the Mountain lions and wonder if these are his family. This time I leave my window open at night, knowing the mountain lion wil hear the same tram passing a few moments later.

Artis Islands

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