

EVOLUTIVA

TRIENNALE DI MILANO
May 1 – June 3, 2018

THE HUMAN SIDE
OF INFRASTRUCTURE

FREE ENTRY



LA TRIENNALE DI MILANO

salini
impregilo





AN EPIC TALE OF WORK TOLD THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

Man's Work and the Construction of "Cyclops"

"That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." These famous words pronounced by Neil Armstrong on July 21, 1969, when he first set foot on the Moon is a very suitable description of the meaning of the "Cyclopica" exhibition.

Man's footprint is present in every great conquest, every great challenge. The individual's will is measured against history's difficulties and the toils of time.

Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man exalts man's bodily perfection, while symbolizing the existing harmony with the sky and the Earth. Man has always used intelligence to evolve.

"Cyclopica" tells the story of the works of Salini Impregilo across the globe. It serves as a witness to a technical evolution, where Man is the true protagonist.

And just like the "small step" taken by Armstrong, individual skills lead to gigantic works like infrastructure of cyclopean size, which mark Man's genius in the service of improving people's lives.

These are the works of Salini Impregilo and the companies that preceded the Group: cyclops, giants that take the shape of dams, endless tunnels that transport water or allow trains to travel through mountains; metros running underground, and suspended bridge spans; tunnel-boring machines excavating under the cities of Copenhagen and Riyadh; 33-metre-high gates containing the waters of the new Panama Canal; the 250-metre-high concrete wall on Ethiopia's Omo River giving life to the Gibe III dam: these are just some examples of the majestic works created by Man.

previous page:
Morasco Dam, Italy
1938

right:
Limmerboden Dam, Switzerland
1962





The exhibition represents a reconstruction made possible by a unique collection of a century's worth of photographs from a vast archive whose 1,200,000 photographs and 600 videos were organized during the last five years. Their importance is nothing short of a cultural heritage. The exhibition narrates Man's work, the strength and uniqueness used to build gigantic works. It also tells the story of the constant innovation of Man's work, poised between technology and craftsmanship, skills that make each project unique, some of which requiring more than 30,000 men often in extremely challenging conditions.

It is a profession described by Italian writer Primo Levi as the work carried out by those who travel the world to build infrastructure in places on the boundaries of reality "with his socket wrench hanging from his belt, because for us it's what a sword was for the knights in olden times".

left:

Gibe III Hydroelectric Plant, Ethiopia
2016

next page:

Lovero Hydroelectric Plant, Italy
1948 — Guglielmo Chiolini





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The Camera's "Eye" Enters the Worksite

A single "eye" to witness great things. This impression conveys the philosophy behind "Cyclopica" perfectly. On the one hand the camera: a unique "eye" that scrutinizes and fixes reality in time. On the other, its subjects: Man's work and the construction of great infrastructure, which since the beginning of the century, has marked the evolution of entire nations.

Black-and-white images immortalized by the camera lens, narrating moments, stories, different lives in distant worlds, and rebuilding an epic tale of the men who built the works of Salini Impregilo and those of the companies that preceded the Group worldwide since the beginning of the 20th Century, where private spheres and work merged together.

Notwithstanding the incredible evolution of machinery, especially during the last decades, Man is still at the centre of the project. "Cyclopica" celebrates his work, his technique, his genius and hard work, his hands, his ability to move great amounts of earth, and his attention to detail: all essential

qualities for building large-scale infrastructure.

Salini Impregilo, aiming to merge art and technique, photography and construction, collected the most beautiful and most representative images from its historical archive dating back to 1906.

Admiring the photographs, one gets an immediate two-fold impression: on the one hand, the passing of time, visible in the evolution of the machinery used to ease Man's work, and of technology, with the transition from traditional tunneling to the use of tunnel-boring machines. On the other, Man's spirit that remains intact, immutable, and always ready to encourage people to push themselves through set boundaries to challenge the impossible.

In terms of size if we compare Man and machinery, the individual disappears, but still his footprint remains, leaving a mark in time and transforming the "Cyclops" into a domesticated giant: an enormous structure made of science and technique, to serve Man and progress.

right:

Cadarese Hydroelectric Plant, Italy
1925





Photography: Immortalizing the Epic Tale of Work

Photographs have created a document of record: black-and-white images, portraits of people, workers climbing steep rock faces that had to be tamed, and men raising their glasses to celebrate the completion of a project. These are images that convey a sense of immediacy of the experience thanks to artistic elaborations by the masters of the lens, turning them into icons of an entire era.

The image of the construction workers having their lunch out on a beam at the top of a skyscraper being built for the Rockefeller Center in Manhattan on September 19, 1932, can be so easily recalled. It is one of the most famous and controversial photos of the century, probably taken by Charles Clyde Ebbets (this was only discovered 70 years later thanks to his widow). There is another one of firefighter Paul “Red” Adair who is soaked in oil as he puts out the Kuwait oil well fires with dynamite, taken by Sebastião Salgado in 1991 after the first Gulf War. Then there is one of men coming from all over the world to seek their fortune, half-naked and covered in mud from the bowels of the earth in a gold mine

of Serra Pelada, again immortalized by Salgado, the great Brazilian photographer. Micro-stories combined with micro-histories, individual destinies that form, like the pieces of a mosaic, collective destinies.

And these micro-stories are an integral part of a universal story: that of men who, with Salini Impregilo and its predecessors, built some of the most significant infrastructure works in the world, like the dams in northern Italy built for Edison to provide electricity and support the industrial development of the country; or the Trans-Iranian, a key railway for interconnecting Iran; or the Kariba dam, the first to be partially financed by the World Bank in Africa, with the largest loan involving international institutions at that time.

left:

Pian Telesio Dam, Italy
1954



INFRASTRUCTURE AS SEEN BY PHOTOGRAPHERS

The Origins

The story of Salini Impregilo's long journey around the world begins with the approximately 40 albums concerning the activity of the Girola company, one of the companies that gave life to the Group. Each album, dated from the 1920s to the late 1950s, includes approximately 100 prints in 30x40 or 24x30 format, dedicated to a specific construction site. The ones dated before the Second World War are the work of Antonio Paoletti, a professional photographer whose archive was distributed among his various clients. The task of documenting the works was later commissioned to Guglielmo Chiolini, another important professional photographer who succeeded in maintaining the quality of the images representing life on the construction sites around the world.

previous page:

Trans-Iranian Railway, Iran
1933

Born in Livorno, in 1908, Antonio Paoletti moved to Milan. He opened a studio on via Pantano, where he immediately began to collaborate with Luca Beltrami, who hired him to photographically reproduce the art collections of the Sforza Castle's Musei Civici. Paoletti, subsequently, came into contact with Umberto Girola's business. His work for the company grew from documenting city buildings to the major dams built in the Alpines. Paoletti's photos clearly convey the ambivalence between the immensity of the structures and Man, who, despite his tiny position within the frame, still remains the absolute protagonist. The photographer's work celebrates the individual as the inventor of projects that challenge the limits of nature and technology, continually finding new solutions.

left:

Domodossola Hydroelectric Plant, Italy
1941





The 1950s

Paoletti died in 1943. In 1947, his daughter, Fernanda, sold the business to Mario Zacchetti, who had previously worked as her father's assistant for many, many years. Zacchetti carried on with the work of the studio up to 1966, leaving the name Antonio Paoletti printed on the photos. In 1966, Zacchetti sold a part of the negatives to several clients. This may explain why the Girola archives contain numerous boxes of plates, measuring 18x24 and 24x30, featuring the serial numbers of the Paoletti archive. In the 1950s, the Umberto Girola company turned to the professional studio owned by Guglielmo Chiolini in Pavia, which, among other things, was already collaborating with Lodigiani, the other historic company behind

Salini Impregilo. The Chiolini professional studio had more than 880,000 pictures (positives, negatives and slides) shot by the photographer from the mid-1920s to the 1980s. Today, these archives belong to the City of Pavia. Chiolini used the same photographic style and maintained the same completeness of the documentation. However, facilitated by less cumbersome equipment, coupled with the progress that had been made in photographic technique, he also focused on large overall views portraying the size of the works. The focus was still on Man, as he maintained a novel way of telling the story while portraying an epic tale of work.

previous page:

Agaro Dam, Italy
1938

right:

Limmerboden Dam, Switzerland
1959





The Challenge on the Nile and the African Adventure

In 1964, the photographers' challenge moved to the Nile. That year, the construction of a dam threatened to submerge the two Temples of Abu Simbel. This is why, following a request by UNESCO, it was decided that they should be moved to a safe location, thanks to an international consortium that included Impregilo, a Salini Impregilo predecessor. It was an extraordinary task, which required the work of specialized cutters from the Carrara marble quarries. Each temple was literally dissected into large blocks, which were then dismantled and re-assembled.

The German photographer Günter R. Reitz photographed the operation, the result of which was an outstanding reportage. One of the photos, a panoramic view from above, won a prize in the 1965 World Press Photo Competition.

This is only one of the many African stories in Salini Impregilo's archive that contain a series of 6x6 or 6x9 negatives. As was customary at the time, there is no mention of the photographer. It is likely that several different people took turns photographing, depending on the locations, judging from the different styles that are clearly visible when comparing the images.

The approach is more journalistic, especially when the photographer made sure he or she took photographs of the surrounding circumstances as well. One example is the Kariba site. The pictures also narrate the life of the communities being formed around the construction site.

Dining halls, kitchens, doctors' clinics, but also schools, churches, public rooms, all that was needed for the life of the many workers who lived with their families on the construction site for periods of time that varied, in an inseparable mix between private life and work, united by their passion for large-scale infrastructure in the world.

left:

Abu Simbel Rescue, Egypt
1965





From the 1990s to the 21st Century

As years went by, Salini Impregilo widened its horizons, expanding its activity worldwide. This commitment was immortalized by different photographers who collaborated with the Group, sometimes for just one construction site, while at other times it involved following all the Group's construction sites in a particular country. Armin Linke, for instance, followed some of those in China and Pakistan between 1994 and 2000. More recently, Edoardo Montaina traveled extensively in Panama during the construction of the new canal. Moreno Maggi immortalized the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in Athens, while Filippo Vinardi did the same for the dams built by the

Group in Zimbabwe. In his or her own style, each photographer contributed to visions that go beyond the immediate situation. Some of them concentrated on the structures, exploiting the perspectives and the geometries while maintaining a rigorously objective point of view. Others instead opted for a more interpretative style, transforming the subjects into visions that go beyond the immediate situation, towards a more imaginative representation. This is what is so appealing about photography. It is an open work *par excellence*, telling stories that always go well beyond the immortalized moment.

previous page:

Expansion of the Panama Canal, Panama
2011

right:

Rosario-Victoria Motorway Bridge, Argentina
2018

next page:

Osborne Dam, Zimbabwe
2017



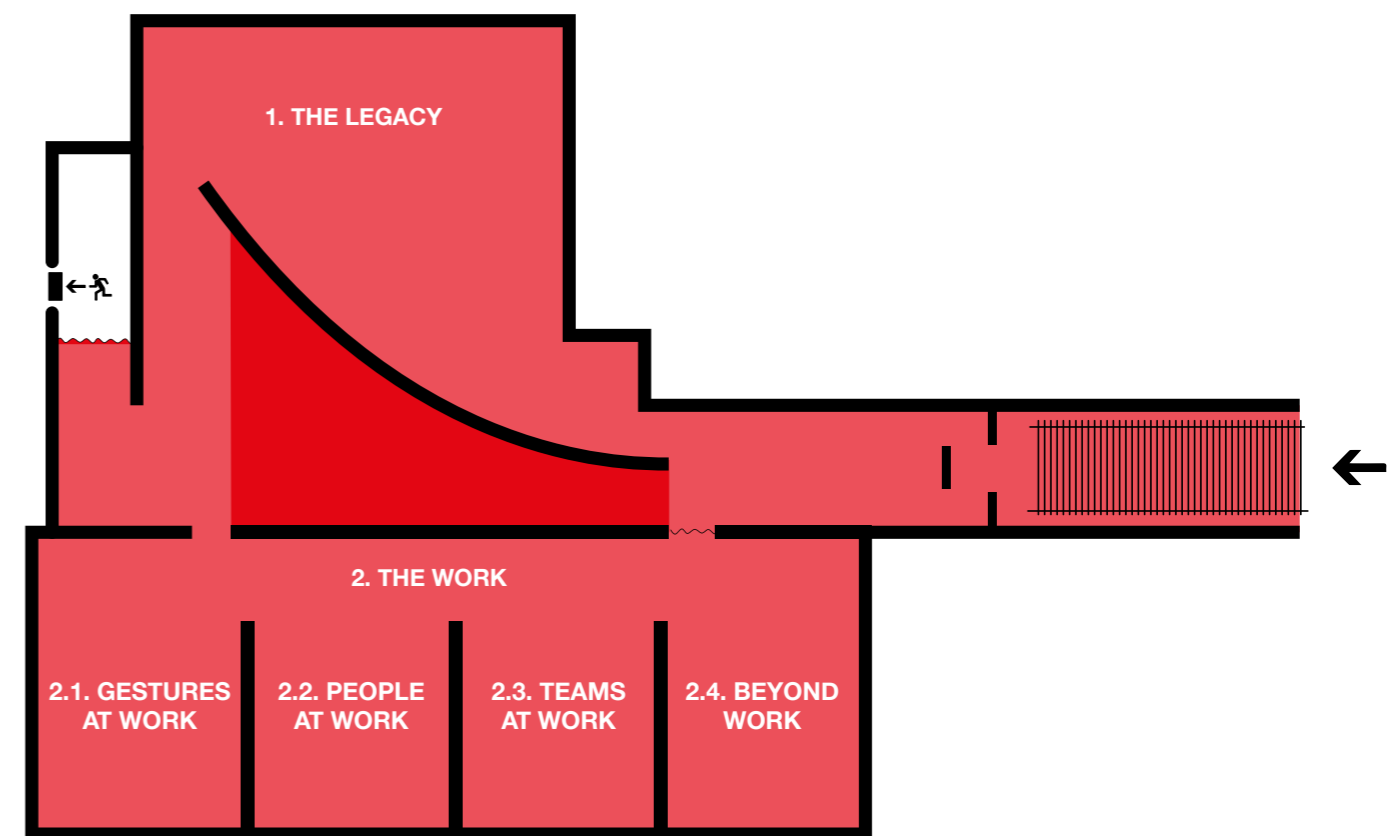


CYCLOPICA: THE MULTIMEDIA IMMERSIVE EXHIBITION



“Cyclopica” is an exhibition with a plethora of images narrating distant moments in life, in different worlds, through photos, videos, audio and projections of complex large-scale infrastructure built throughout the world by Salini Impregilo and its predecessors.

The path of the exhibition includes two macro-stories, each one divided by a mega infrastructure: a dam that symbolizes Salini Impregilo’s world and can be accessed through the reproduction of an underground tunnel.



The Halls

The first story is told in the first large hall “**The Legacy**”. While walking under the dam’s crest, visitors will be able to plunge into a multitude of photographs and images: 21 carousels of slides, which guarantee the best photographic quality. They are programmed and synchronized using advanced technology, and accompany the public in over a thousand different scenarios depicting men at work, construction sites and completed works, from 1906 to the present day, with a perpetually changing rhythm, from hectic to slow.

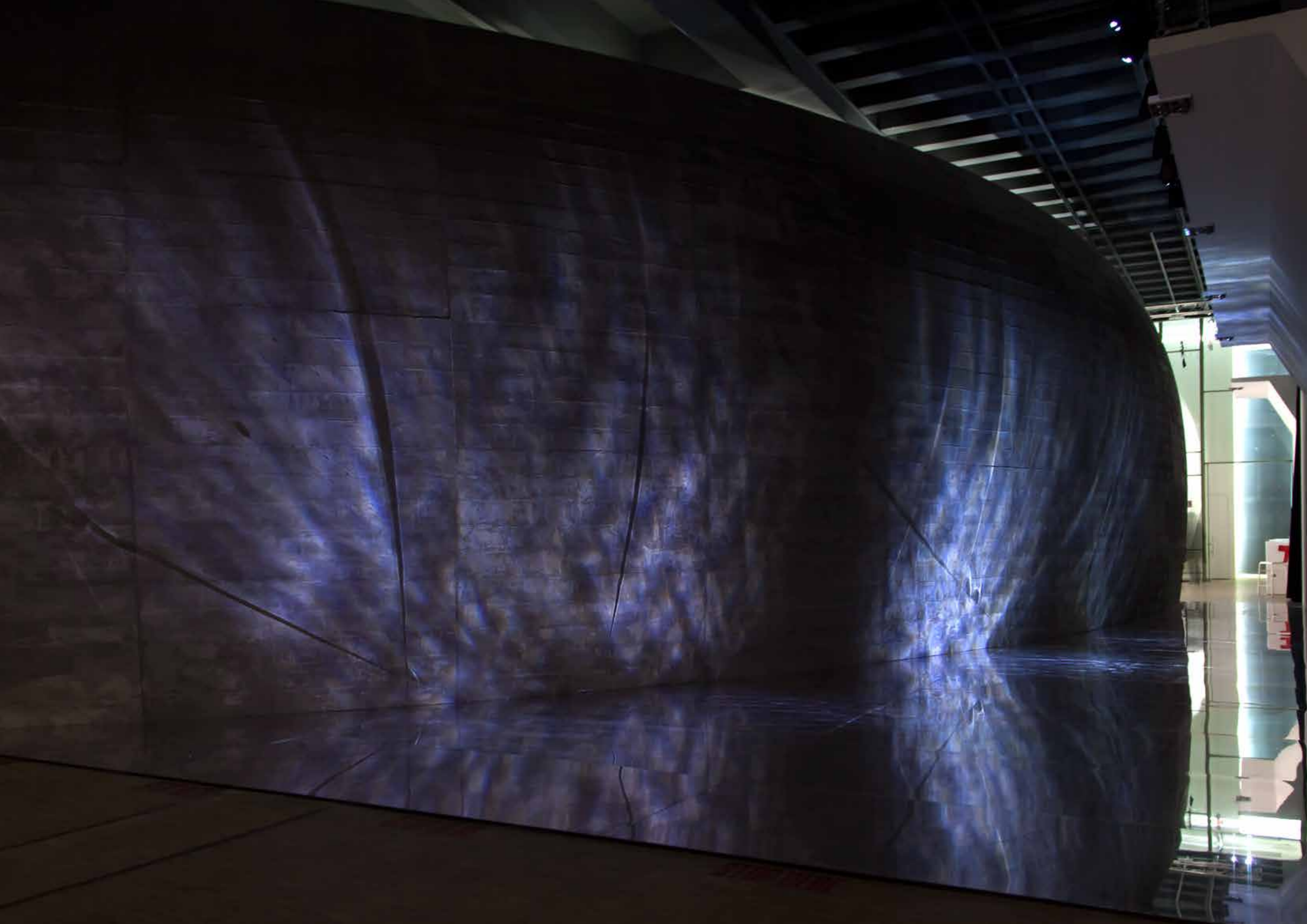
Visitors will encounter impressive surroundings for an exhibition, when walking around this large-scale infrastructure: the dam’s façade reflects into the water’s surface. This reservoir will allow visitors to rest for a while, experiencing a moment of silence and beauty, before proceeding to the second part of the exhibition.





GACY





The second hall, “**The Work**”, is divided into four areas and narrates in detail the work carried out on construction sites. Every gesture and image, along this path, represents a musical note forming a symphony: the construction site.

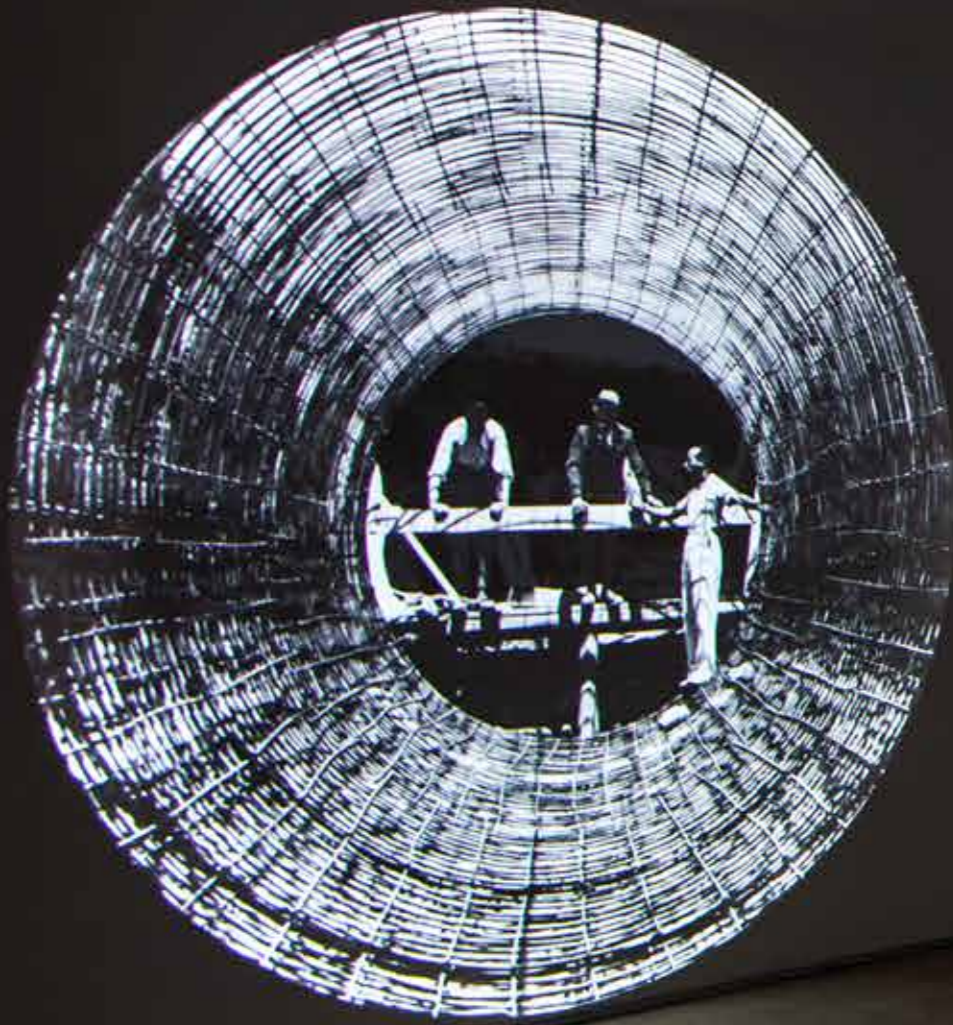
On display in the first area “**Gestures at Work**” are single gestures of workers: expert movements of the numerous professions (more than 250) found at a construction site. Skilled actions modelling large-scale works. Forty photographs are illuminated, one by one, by a rotating light. While passing by, the sound associated to the gesture magically plays a single note, the C note, creating the work, step by step. Sound is the protagonist here.



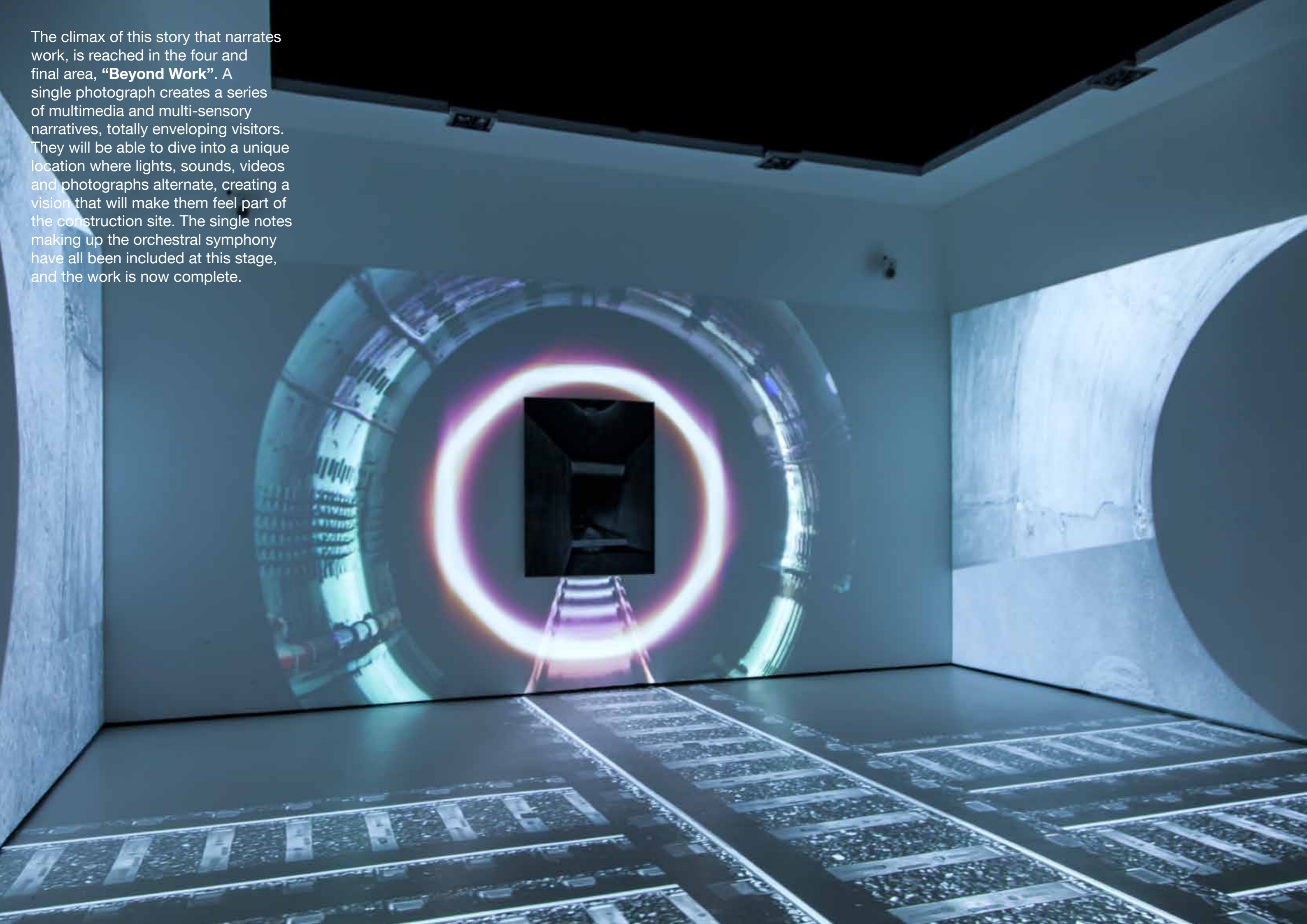
“People at Work”, the second area, narrates the stories of people and the skilled execution of works: photographs coming to life, dancing through continuous projections. Men in movement, alternating with the tools and machines to build their infrastructure. Sound and movement are the protagonists here.



The third area, **“Teams at Work”**, focuses on team work, the dominant element. A multimedia synthesis of photos and videos will exalt the existing synchronicity, complementarity and cooperation of the men building the same work, together. A large-scale infrastructure can only be built if many workers (sometimes up to 30,000) collaborate. Images and sounds blend together like elements intertwining into a suggestive harmony. Sound, movement and rhythm play leading roles in this area.



The climax of this story that narrates work, is reached in the four and final area, "**Beyond Work**". A single photograph creates a series of multimedia and multi-sensory narratives, totally enveloping visitors. They will be able to dive into a unique location where lights, sounds, videos and photographs alternate, creating a vision that will make them feel part of the construction site. The single notes making up the orchestral symphony have all been included at this stage, and the work is now complete.



The numbers

over

1200

images

100

printed photographs

30

30 multimedia displays

2 LARGE-SCALE INFRASTRUCTURES

a 10-metre-long tunnel and a dam measuring 22 metres in length and over 6 metres in height.

21

programmed and synchronized slide carousels



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