

our islands 11°16'58.4"N 123°45'07.0"E
martha atienza

Team

Organising/ Safety:	Pablo Santillan Mario Forrosuelo	Orwin Abrasado JR Abrasado
Costumes/ Organising	Ronel Dollantes	Junjun Carraballe
Divers:	Jomarie Quindao Lindon Santillan Andy Santillan Lucio Batarzal Raffy Santillan Niño Vargas Porcan Ybañez Jerry Batindaan Roque Forrosuelo Naphe Ablao Orlando Abrasado Orly Abrasado Renaldo Illusorio Rafael Illusorio Zaldy Amangayon Jesus Nazarino	Carlos Lawan Geron Espina Analyn Tiongson Marisa Santillan Ameros Forrosuelo Violeta Santillan Sharon Batindaan Ieusef Santillan (Post-Production + Camera) Roberth Fuentes (All around organiser + Post-Production) Joe Xyl Gil (Camera Wifi and equipment testing) April Villacampa (Props) Clint John Andrada (Equipment testing)
Tig (boat crew):	Antoño Lawan Joemar Pasaylo	Santillan Family + Forrosuelo 1. Manilyn #1 2. Manilyn #2 3. Manilyn #3 4. Angela 5. Julia
	Logistics/ Cooks:	
	Atonisla crew: (Our Island Youth Group)	
	Bangka (boats):	

about the work

Our Islands 11°16'58.4"N 123°45'07.0"E is part of a bigger project **Our Islands**. Our goals are for Islanders to Unite, and finding solutions together. Bringing experiences from our Bantayan Island-based projects, we want to connect to other islands across Oceania and the Pacific, to build bridges relating to major issues we have in common such as climate change, loss of cultures and displacement.

What can we learn from each other and how can we move forward together?

Our Islands is a project under **DAKO**gamay. An investigative, journalistic, and experimental platform created by siblings Martha and Jake Atienza. Using art as a tool to tackle social, economic and environmental issues in their home of Bantayan Island in the Philippines has resulted in a need to build relationships within the Philippines and other island nations in Oceania and the Pacific.

- *Baloise Group*

Martha Atienza's video installation, "Our Island, 11°16'58.4" 123°45'07.0"E", shows a traditional procession from her native Philippines, which she alienates by placing it under water. We watch the procession passing by as if in an aquarium: Christ carrying the cross, men in women's clothes and demonstrators carrying tableaux with political slogans, threatened from behind by menacing, armed henchman. Through her cast of characters and choice of setting, Atienza presents a both critical and humorous take not only on the state of society in the Philippines but also on the threat of climate change to which the country is increasingly exposed through the warming of the world's oceans.

- *Cocoy Lumbao*

The spectacle found in one of the Philippines' oldest festivals called the Ati-Atihan is one that seems to drown in its own strangeness. It is performed, through lavish procession, in honor of a child saint--supposedly the infant Jesus--yet remains hounded by heathen imagery: cross-dressing males, dancers painted in black, and a slew of impresarios and impostors. It owes its nebulous nature from the abrupt sanctification of a once pagan and animist culture that underwent colonization during the 16th century. The observance of this age-old festival continues to this day and has thrived more extravagantly in certain parts of the archipelago. In Bantayan Island, for instance, where the artist Martha Atienza hails from, the Ati-Atihan has been an annual display of rascality where the community, who are mostly fisherfolks, revel, and which she has been documenting since 2010.

There is a kind of madness to it, as displayed in her previous work, *Anito* (2012), where she took footage of an actual procession taking place. Men dressed as women, clad in gowns and high heels; while others impersonate their icons: boxers, politicians, and other headline makers. The community seizes the opportunity to heighten the festival's nature through portrayals from current events and deviant performances, making the stage/procession a kind of release from the pastoral, as well as a review of the changing times. And through years of documenting the procession, Atienza has come to realize how it said a lot more about the country--the state of the Philippines, more than anything else. Which is why it has evolved into a growing work to include her community's youth, who in the past two years have documented the event along with her. The series has become a living archive for preserving and re-discovering the people's culture and identity.

Although Martha Atienza, in her works about the Ati-Atihan, may have placed under examination the visual profundity that it carries--the nuances of role-play, the merging of the sacred with the profane, and the near-hysteria to which the performers partake, she also knows that the festival goes beyond the color and exuberance that are caught inside the frame. "It is more important to note," she insists, "that the whole phenomenon such as the Ati-Atihan is essentially derived from the community's involvement."

Starting with the work, *My Navel is Buried in the Sea* (2012), Atienza's works have become a platform for getting everyone together and for sharing experiences as seafarers (and their family members). This is where screening events have become opportunities for the people involved, her subjects--the community, can talk about their concerns, about how it felt like growing up with seafarers as parents, to be away from them, of the different hardships one must endure through the process and their effects in the environment.

This enables us to resort to a kind of reading which is more necessary: that the spectacle before us is, by and large, the architecture of the people. It has become a testament to an evolving practice, or more importantly, to an evolving need that the community had sought from their rituals, which continue to take on more ingenious forms over the years.

Martha Atienza, in her new work, 'Our Islands, 11°16'58.4"N 123°45'07.0"E,' resorts to a necessary form for the Ati-Atihan--one whose procession is submerged under the seas of Bantayan Island, ascribing to specific coordinates which were chosen by the fishermen themselves according to the tide, current, and time of day. The men, whom all are fisher-folk and volunteer Ati-Atihan dancers, are clad in the same costumes they'd typically wear during the festival on the surface. These men, who have also worked as compressor divers, walk over the almost barren and lifeless reef, whose colors are now drab and are outshone by the red, velvet capes or golden kilts worn by them. "Attention has to be redirected in some way," Atienza said after making the video. "Back to a place where awareness about the environment and marine life's condition in particular can be included in discussions."

Martha Atienza has been known to produce works that not only represent the community but also serve the community. She has initiated screening programs that involve active participation and workshops that allow the exchange of ideas between the members of the community and, to a certain degree, empowerment, particularly with the use of video as a tool. Video has

become her chosen medium in establishing close ties with the people of Bantayan Island, which goes deeper beyond mere storytelling or documentation. In each of her projects she has insisted on continuity that can be handed down to folks who can relive the discussion of pressing issues around them, either through their own programs or their own artworks to show the world. These have become 'lifetime' projects that can endlessly run as long as there are issues to address, dialogues to be heard. For Atienza, her works are projects where the youth can take over and continue to share knowledge, and where art can become an open source for ideas and can give voice for those rarely heard.

One of the pressing issues in Bantayan Island is the damage that the fishing industry puts on marine life. The life between reefs have slowly dwindled away due to illegal practices in fishing and diving. Atienza, who has continually immersed herself within the practices of the community has come to understand far better the underlying conditions it stems from, which are impoverishment and unawareness. This has propelled her to approach the matter differently, with hopes to engage the people involved through small increments, rather than alienating them with bulks of righteous know-how.

"The problem we face, not only on Bantayan Island, not only in the Philippines but around the world, is climate change. To address this is of utmost importance. So we have as our main problems: people destroying (nature) through illegal activities and nature itself."

In the Philippines, since the Marcos era, fishing vessels and large companies have forced small fishermen to resort to illegal fishing. But in reality, majority of the damage takes place when large trollers take large amounts of fish and scrape the bottom of the sea, destroying the ecosystem and the rest of marine life. Corruption plays a big part in this. And small fishermen and compressor divers are left to use dynamite, cyanide, in desperation for finding food and income.

The result is the work, *Our Islands*, 11°16'58.4"N 123°45'07.0"E, which drew the people of Bantayan to a practice they loved, a ritual they depended on. "They are fighting underwater. It shows survival. As they push through the currents, they themselves destroy what they live off from," says Atienza. The *Ati-Atihan* under the sea sends across a most fundamental message to the fishermen who they themselves took part in--that life can be the same from above as below, that our rituals resonate throughout parts where we also tread for our sustenance. And that both sacred and the necessary should attain a kind of balance. "This is the reality that we face. We need to change our ways but we also need to realize that the seas are changing and destruction is here. We have nothing to catch anymore. It is time to unite and tackle these issues together."

Performing characters from recent issues like the 'Yolanda' storm survivor, the police against the suspected drug pushers, the 'Filipino Boxing Legend' for this sub-aquatic procession echoes an inter-connectedness between the deep and the surface. And this allows the fishermen involved to think about that moment spent under the sea, about that daring, and quite literally-breathtaking performance that dissolved the boundaries of the real (the surface) and the imagined (the deep). Seeing themselves, their friends, the whole community in that position--as performers against the magnificence of the deep, is where Atienza remains hopeful to be able to lay the foundations of awareness, and beyond through concrete action.

Our Islands, 11°16'58.4"N 123°45'07.0"E is part of that continuing effort and series of works. For her community in Bantayan Island, the carefully meditated and belabored steps of each diver going around in performing the procession underwater, like in many rituals, is a heed for absolution that starts with the depiction of lives--of saints and sinners, of heroes and villains--all of whom are interconnected in the mystical trance that the deep bestows. For the Filipino spectator, in his rare encounter with this kind of *Ati-Atihan*, it has become a heightened meditation on the many lives and roles one partakes, that eventually lead to the nation's state. It is a diorama under the sea, as well as a collaboration with the community. It is an ongoing project to which Martha Atienza is never afraid to admit: "It is work done together with my neighbors, the fisherfolks, and the island's youth."

the installation

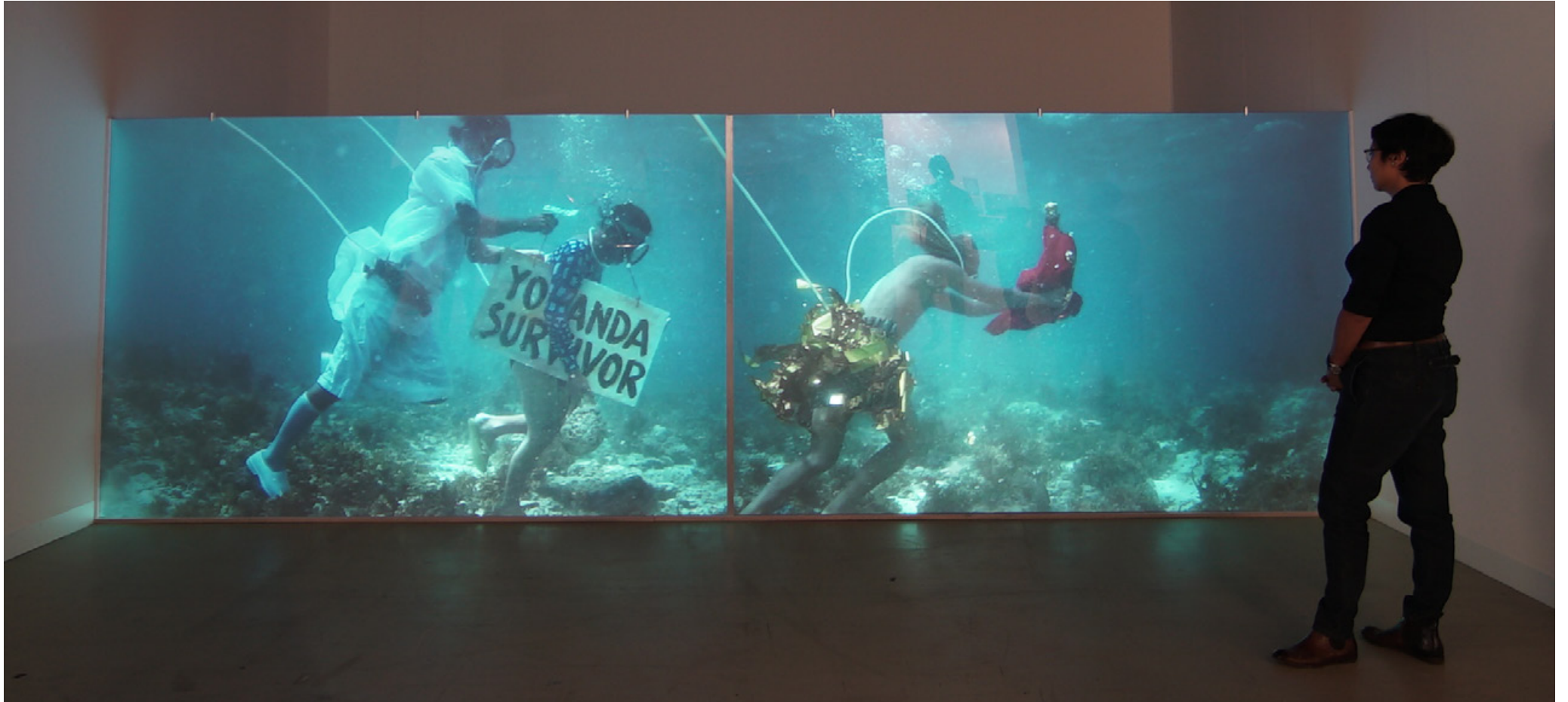
Our Islands 11°16'58.4"N 123°45'07.0"E has been shared in our hometown of Madridejos, Bantayan Island, in the Philippines and internationally.

In this document I share the different ways it has been set up and the ideal way it should be setup.

At this moment there are two options.

1 being *back projection* and the 2nd being *Led wall*.

Option 1 _ back projection



Projection should be from the floor up.
Should look like an aquarium or a diorama.

The work deals with our loss of culture and what culture and tradition really means? Where are we today? Who are we? We create our new traditions that stem from our passed. Maybe even unconsciously. But we are resilient and mankind is creative and creates new ways that continue on, and are passed on..

At the same time we are dealing with the rising sea and the destruction that is happening to our marine life. We are loosing our corals to illegal ways of fishing but also rising sea temperatures.

There is something about standing behind glass looking in. It creates a strange barrier and relation between the people behind the glass and the onlooker. It also gives a feeling of weight to the water. This is very important to the work.

* When using the LED screen there was water around the screen. Hence the viewer could not step close to the screen because of the water. This also created this barrier.

In Art Basel Switzerland it was an art fair and so there were many viewers passing through. It was important to keep the setup simple and intimate.

The way the work is 'boxed in' between the two walls created this intimacy and concentration.

The work is 72mins long. It is up to the viewer to watch all.

The reason we used the cables to hold the plexiglass screen is because the plexiglass was thin. It is better to use a minimum of 10mm thick plexiglass so that this does not have to be held at the top with cables. Another problem that exists with thin plexiglass screens is a buldge.

Technical Requirements:

OPTION 1

projectors

2x Panasonic PT-RZ770 laser projectors
Resolution 1920 x 1200 WUXGA
7000 ANSI lumen

or

2 panasonic PT-DZ870
With new lamps and same color correction.
Resolution 1920 x 1200 WUXGA
8000 ANSI lumen

lens

Panasonic ET-DLE085 - wide lens

media player

Brightsign 4K 1042 player
or
Brightsign XD1033 player

video

left and right video (1920x1200) the size of the work is 16:10
projectors resolution 2x 1920X1200

screen

Glass

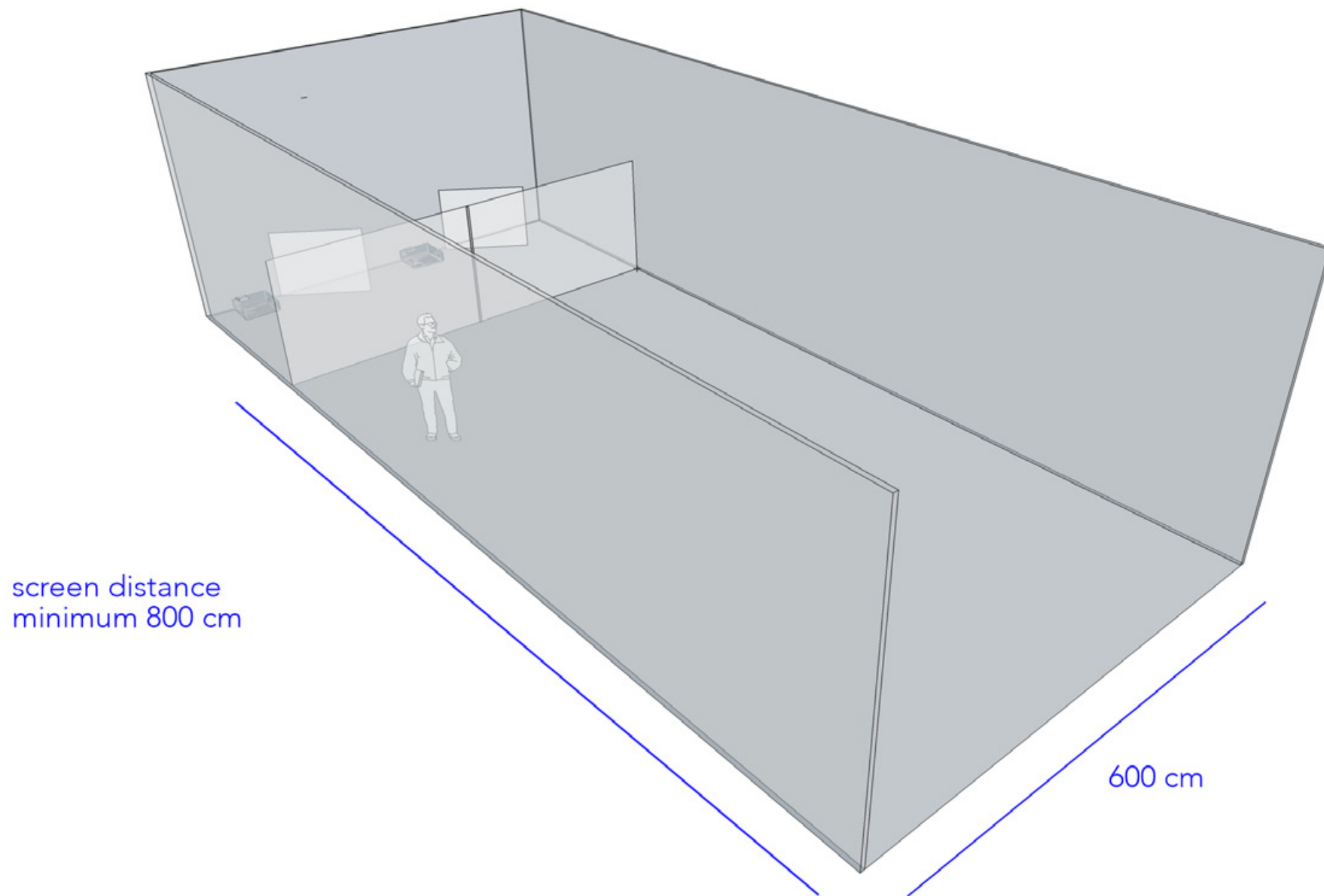
The size per screen has to be 295,6 cm (width) X 185 cm (height).

Total screen is 591,2 cm (width) X 185 cm (height).

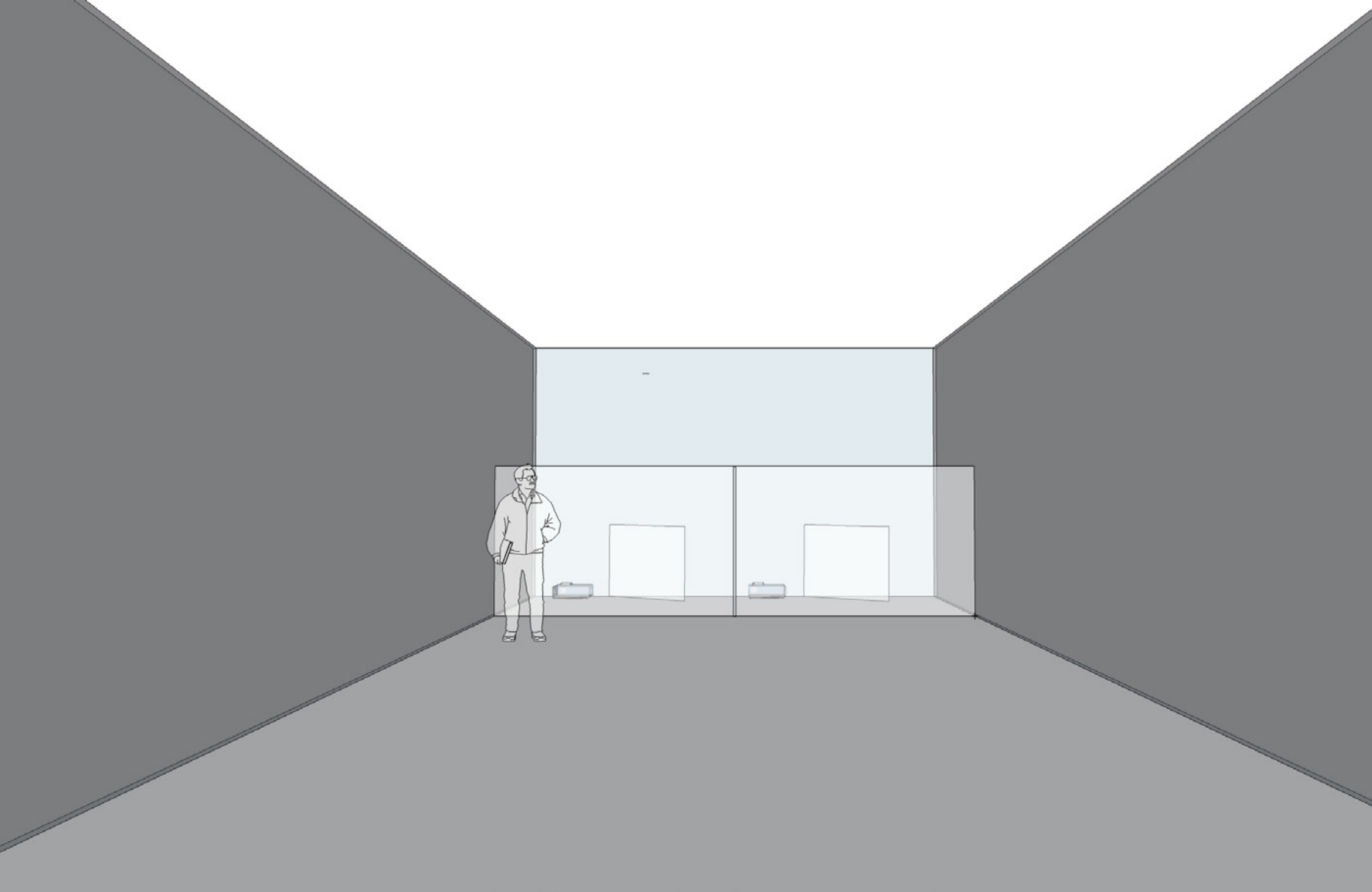
Alternative would be 2 High Gain Rearprojection Plexiglass Screen
10mm thick

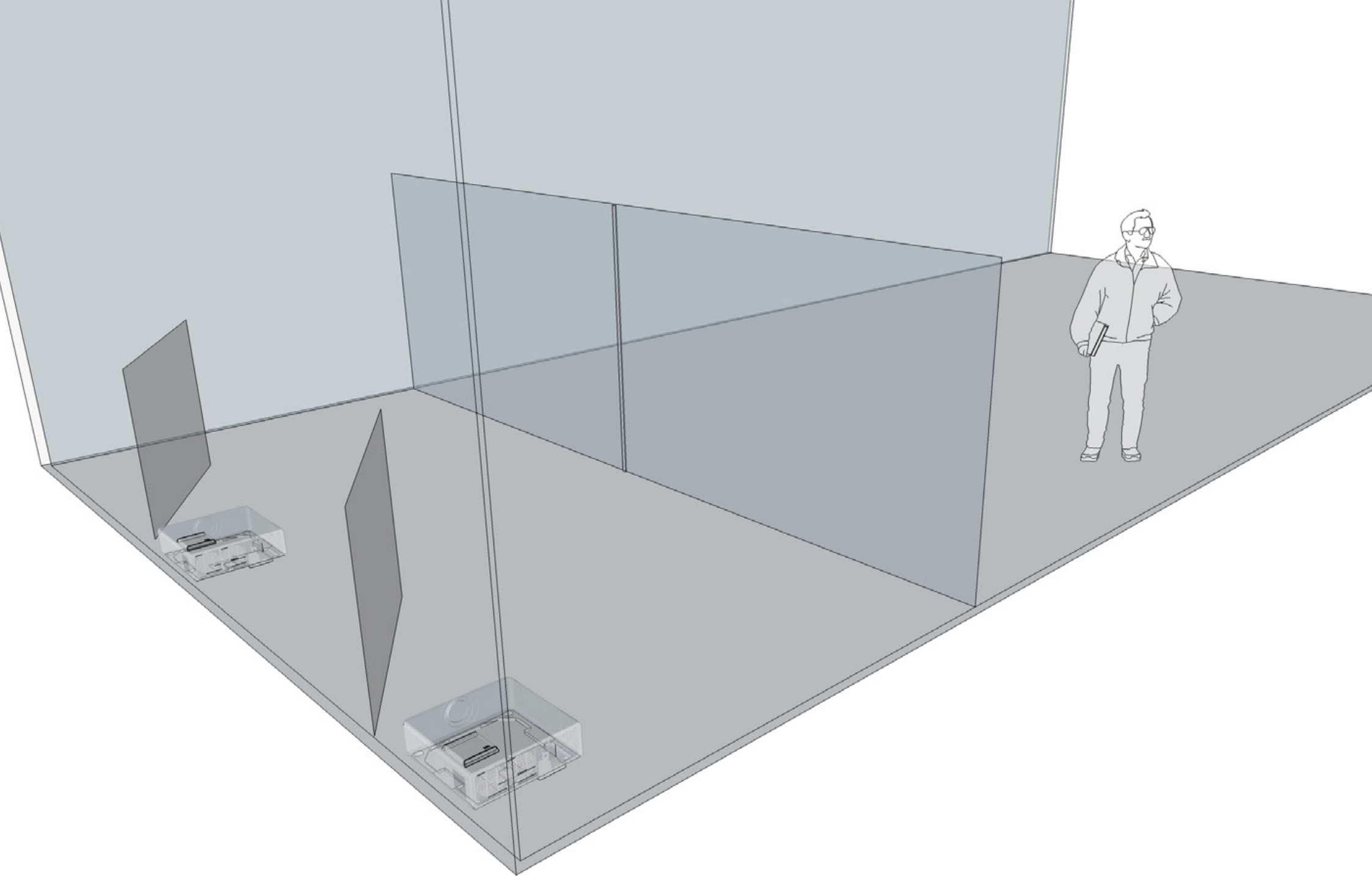
Special foil to create a back projection

Please note that the screen size may vary according to the space size and to the way it will be installed. So this should be finalized when all details are known.



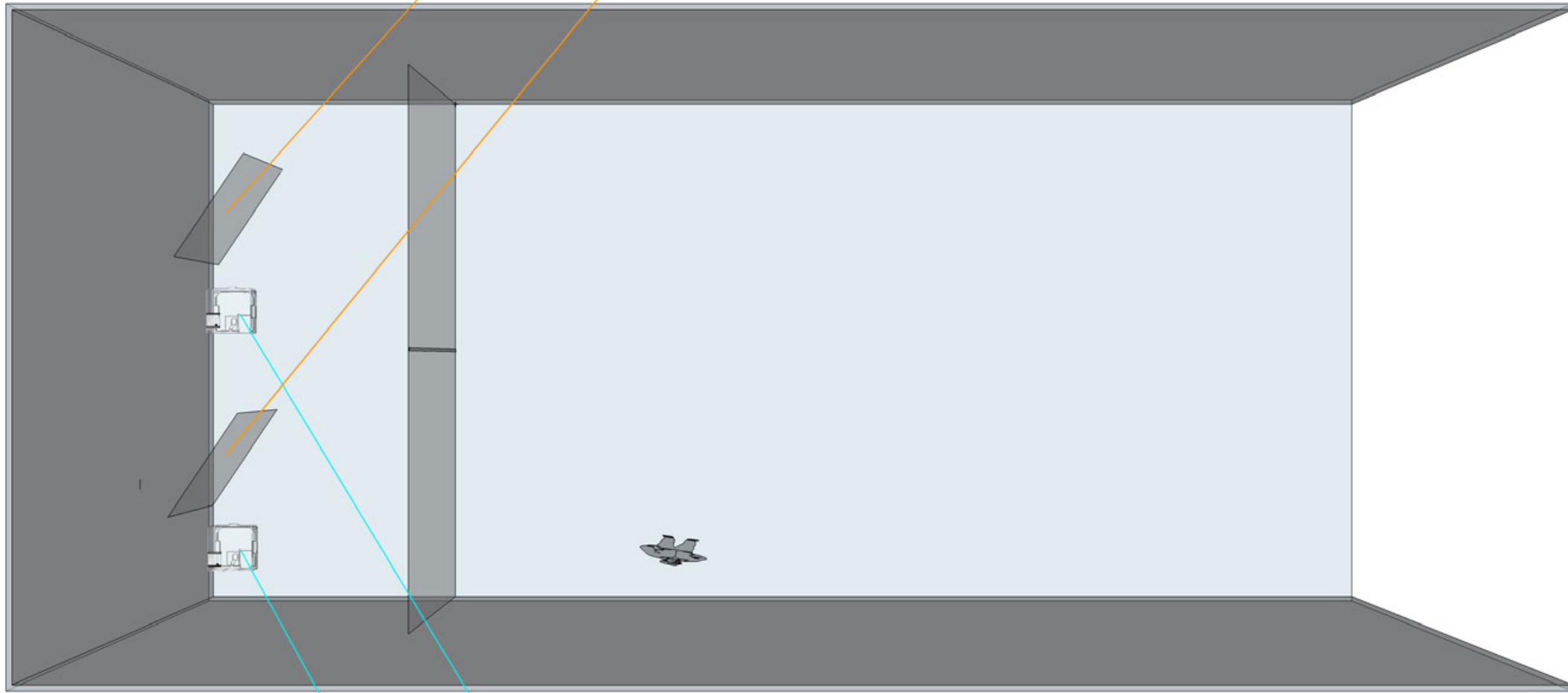
Plexiglass screen held at the bottom, sides and cables at the top. Should look 'light' not bulky.
There should be 8m minimum distance to the screen.
14.5m would be ideal.





TOP VIEW

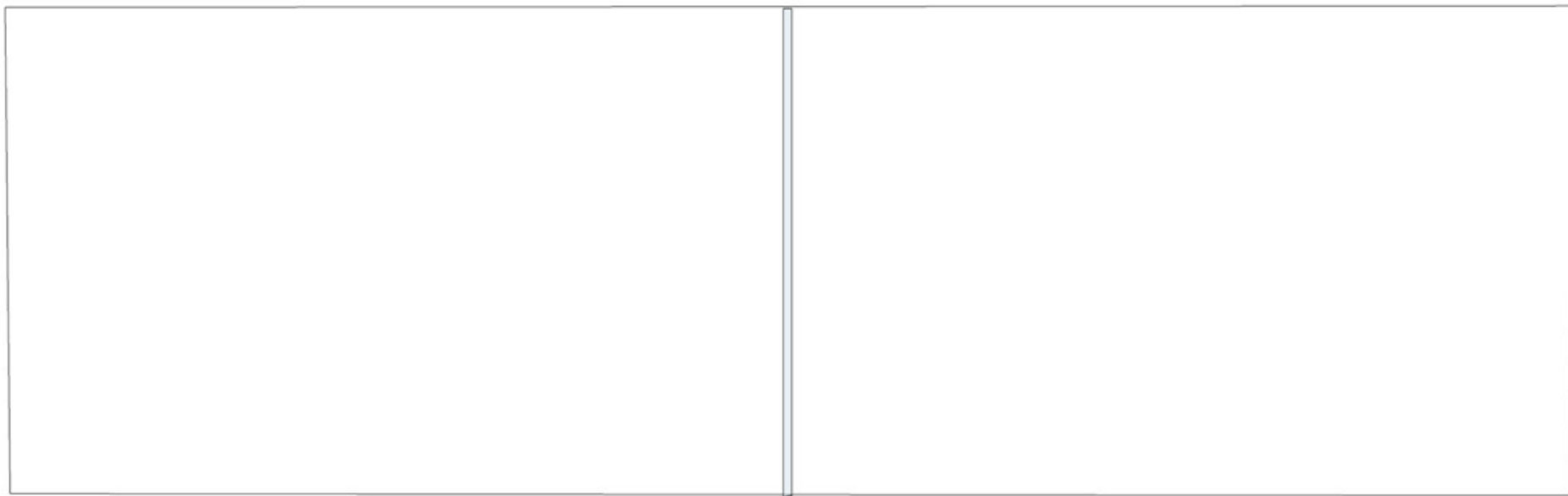
mirrors only when we need more space for viewing



projectors

SCREEN

591,2 cm



185 cm

295,6 cm

Important for the work:

That the space is a place where you can stop and stay. Not a walk way or a space where you simply pass. The work is so very quiet and needs time and space. It should be a place to stop and watch.

It is important to have distance to see the work. 14.5m is an ideal viewing distance. To really walk towards it.

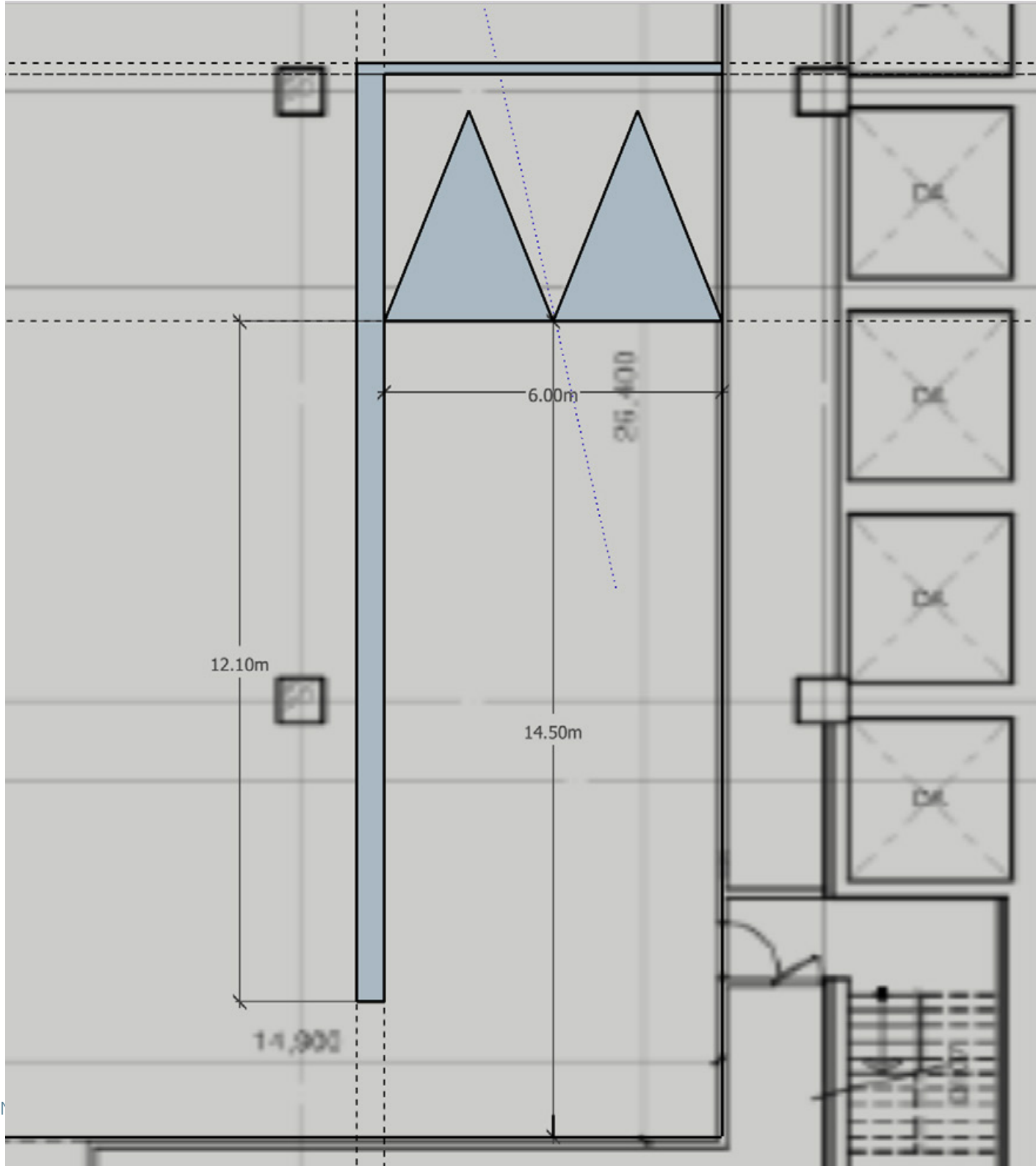
The darker the space is, the better. I would not recommend a completely dark space. It is good to see one another in the space. It is also good to feel like the space is lighter through light opposite of the feeling in a completely dark space.

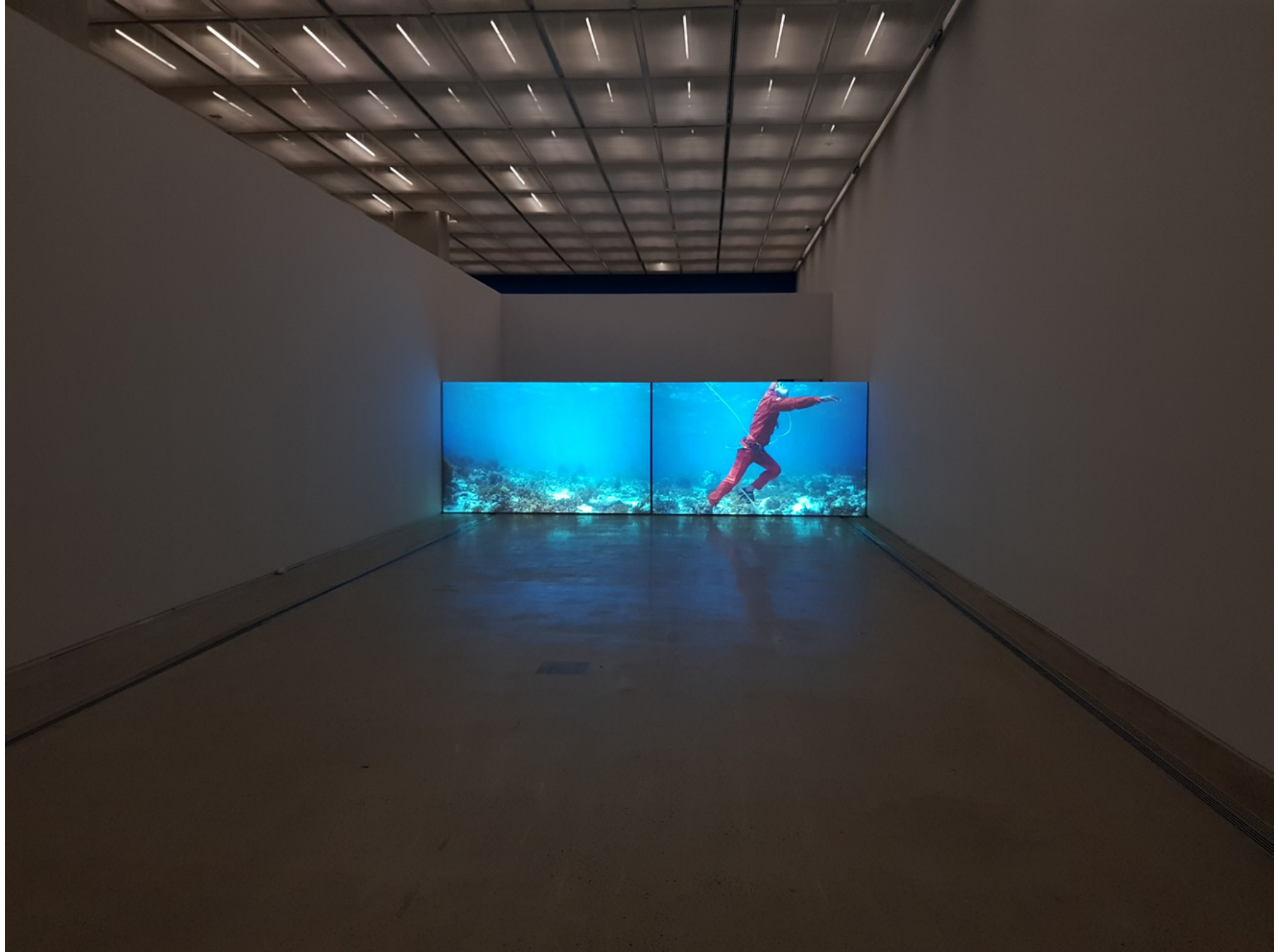
The good thing about not having a closed-off space (Opening ceiling) is that it gives a good sense of space and lightness about it. The height of the ceiling really creates freedom to the work. I could imagine that if the ceiling was closed with for example black fabric it would change the experience and really create a typical black space for video. Dark but open ceiling is ideal. It should be a light and positive space.

A quiet space is ideal. Any other sound in the same space really will affect the work.

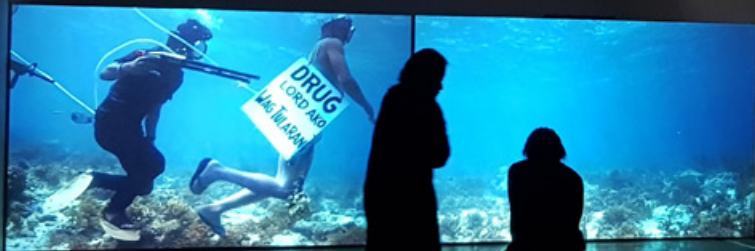
National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea

7 April 2018 – 8 July 2018

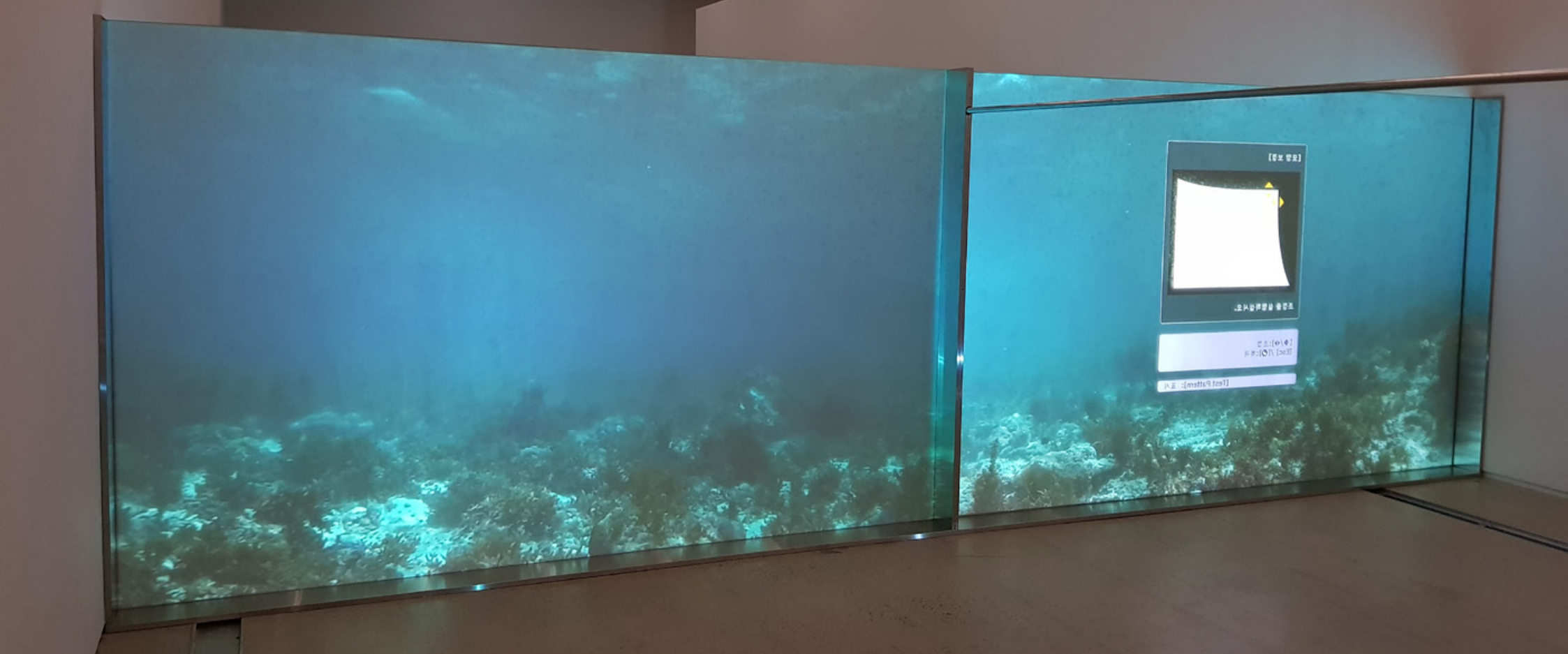






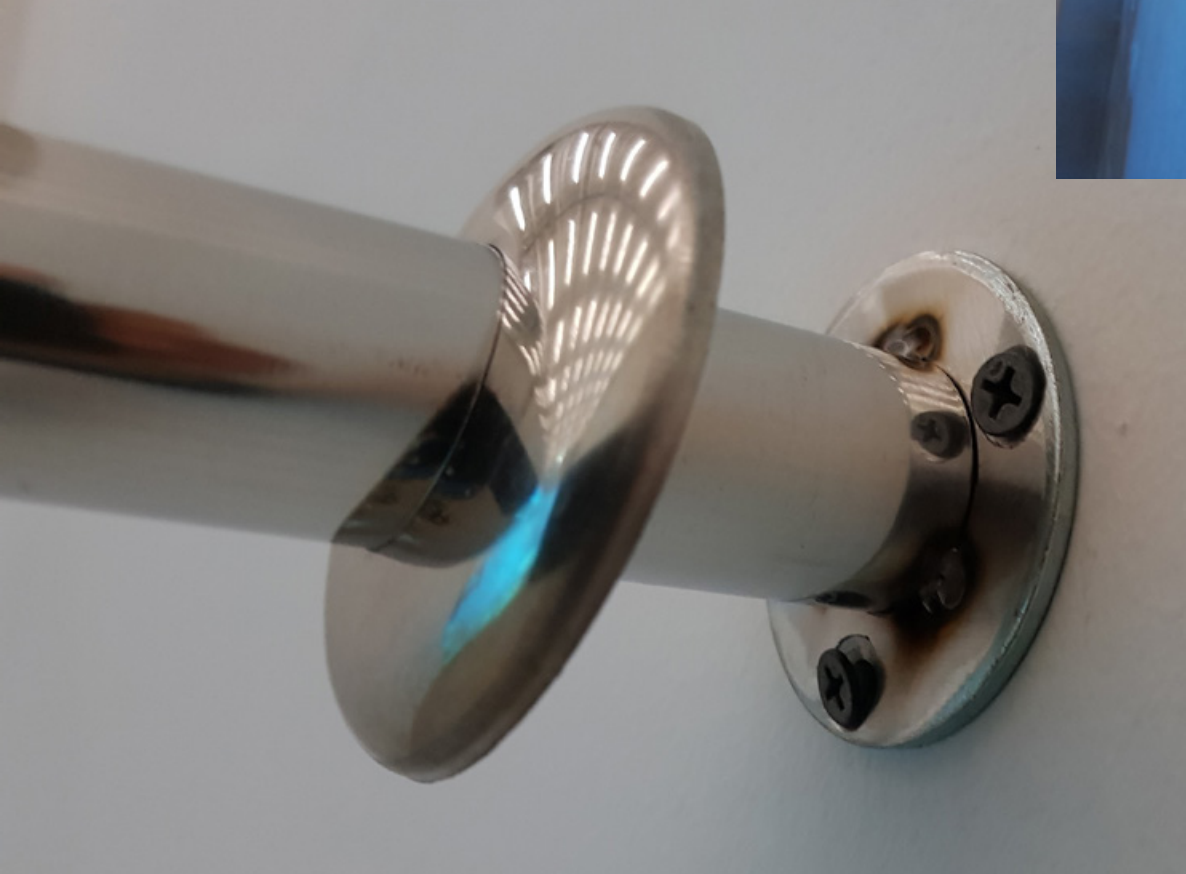






Back view of the screen.

The steel framing to hold the glass screen.
5mm glass
special foil
Held by back wall for safety.





32mm wide

20mm





Option 2 _ led wall

Our Islands Special Presentation
Tower One and Exchange Plaza
Manila, Philippines
Feb 26 - Mar 04 2018

Using an LED wall is a different experience than a back projection.

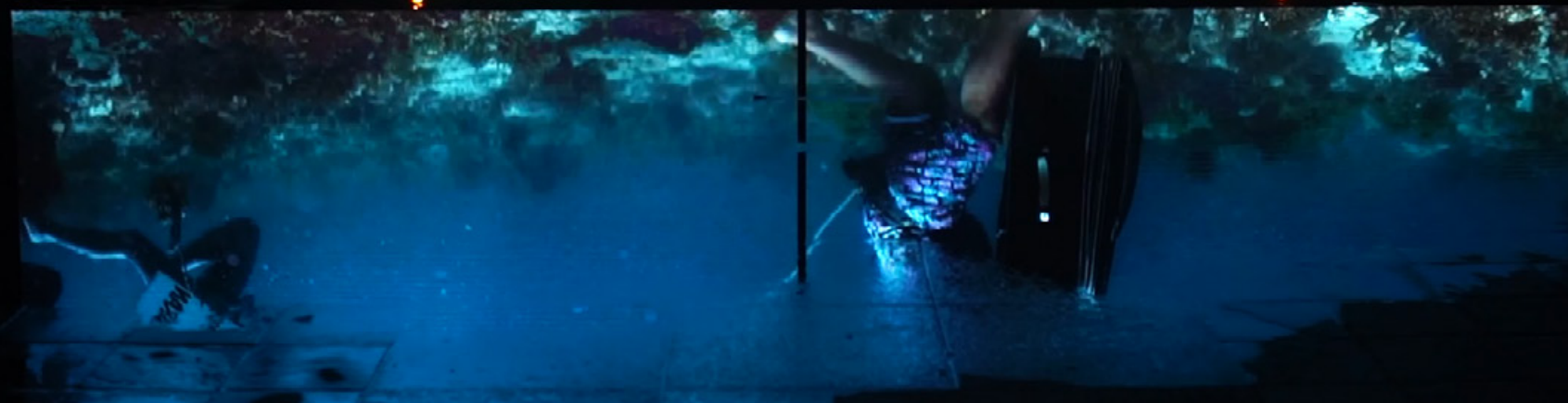
The advantages are that the image is very clear and looks real life.

Another good thing is that it works in daylight. It can also be placed outside.

The light is evenly divided across the video unlike the back projection.

For this installation we setup in a public park outside. There was a very shallow pond (1cm) and we placed the work on top of the water. This worked very well as the video reflected on to the water. As if the images was under the sea and the procession was reflecting under the sea.

I could imagine the LED wall without the water as well. It really brings out the video very well. It is a recommended option as well.

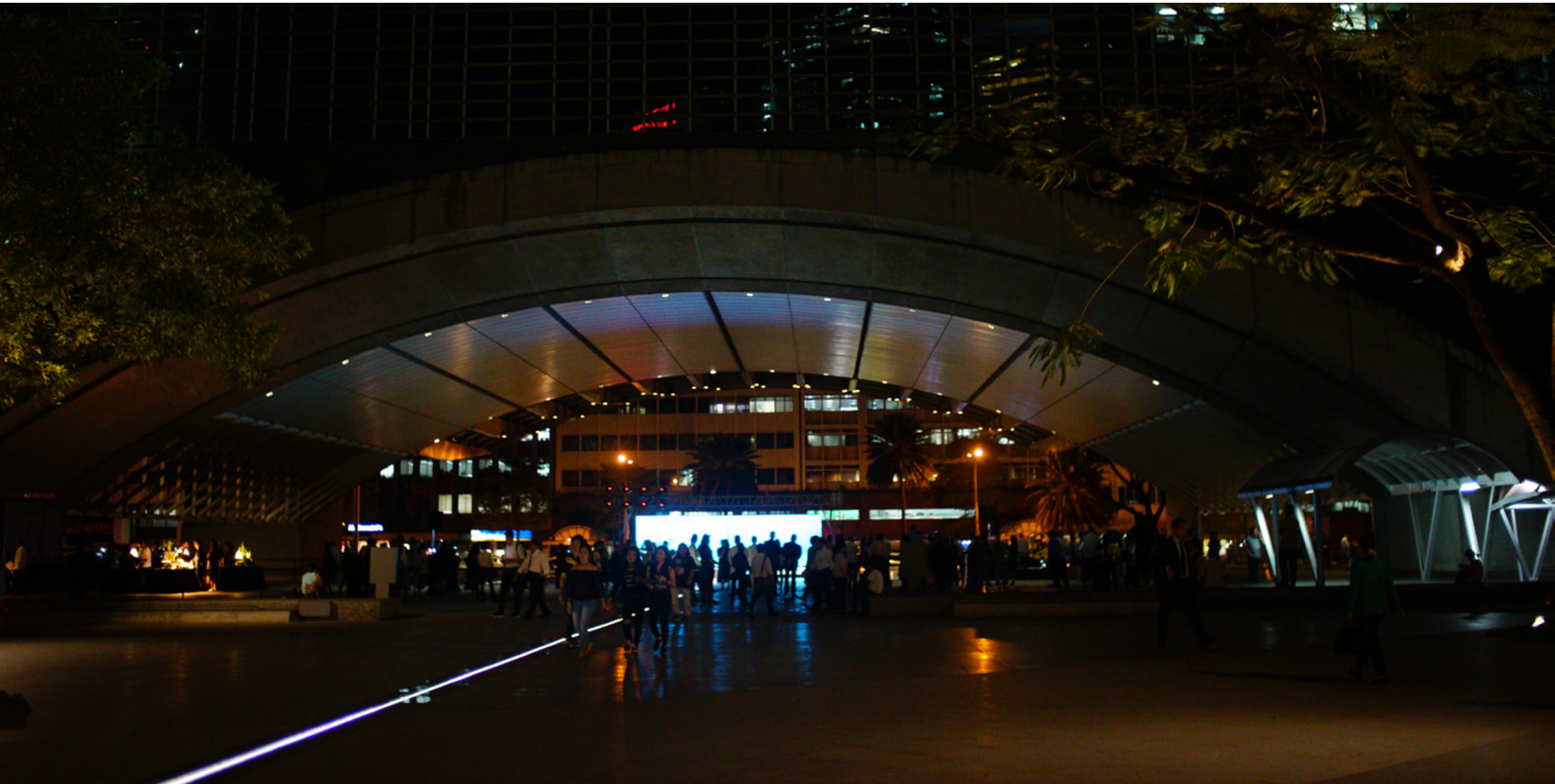


Mounted on top of 1cm deep pond. This created a reflection of the video on the water.
This size worked well as the audience had 4 meters minimum distance from the screen.







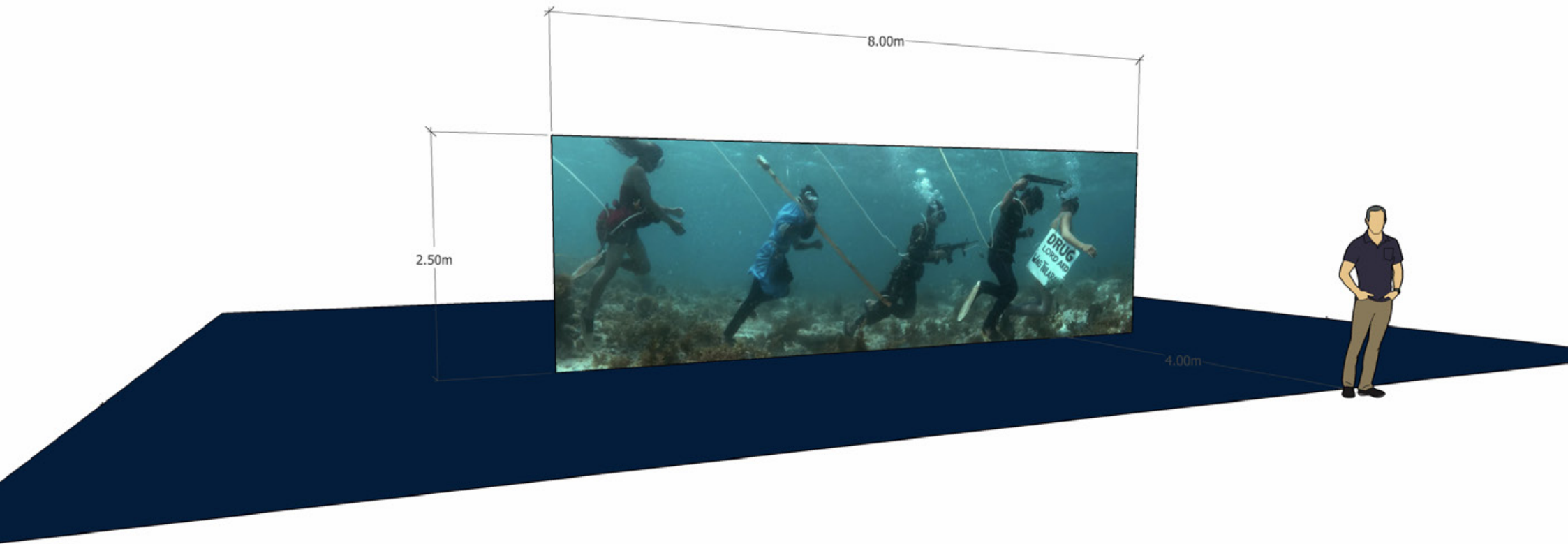


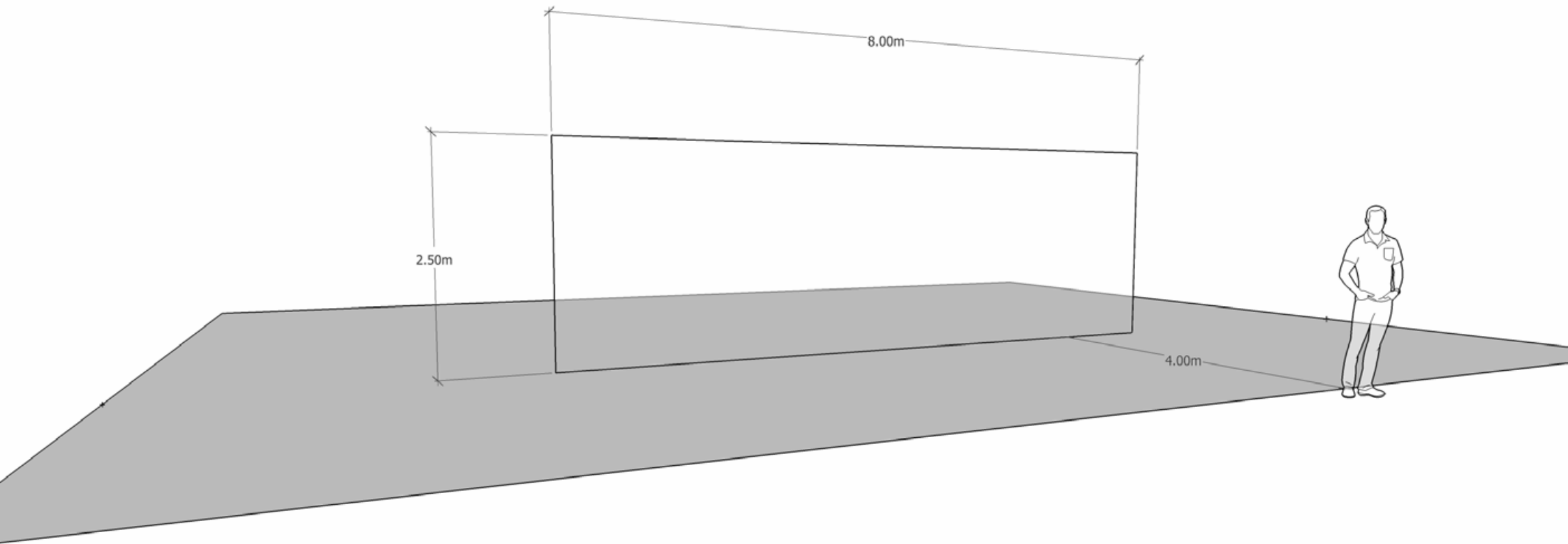
Technical Requirements:

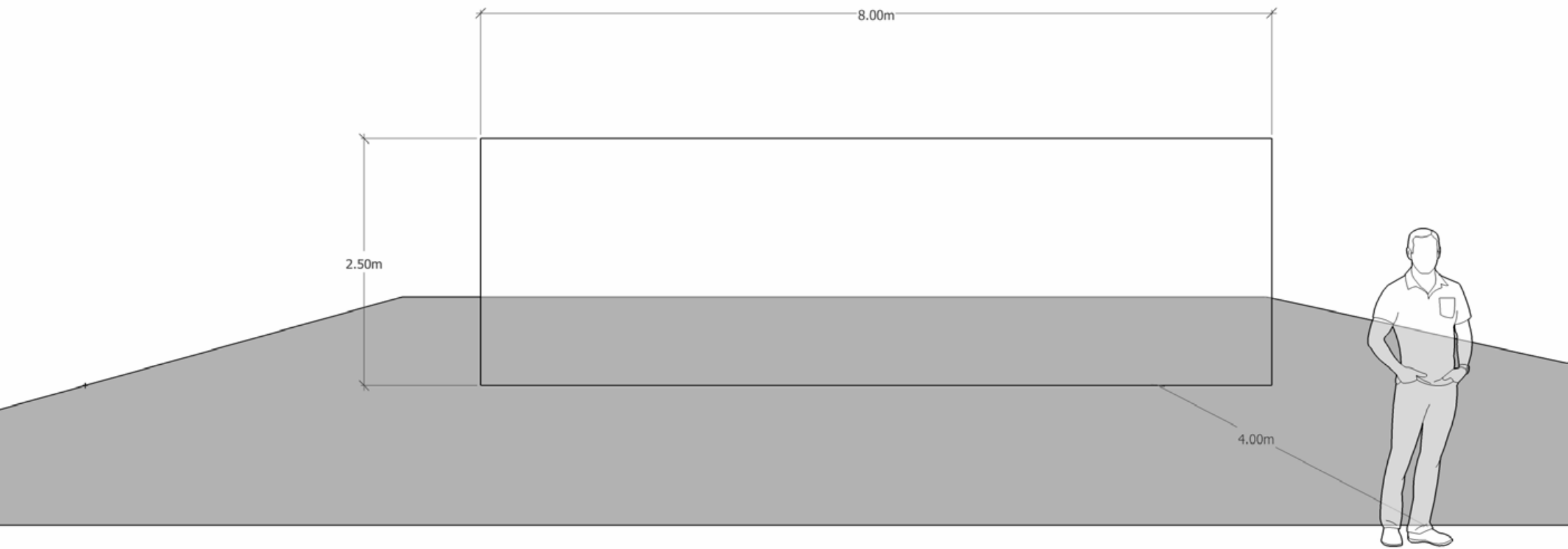
P3 LED

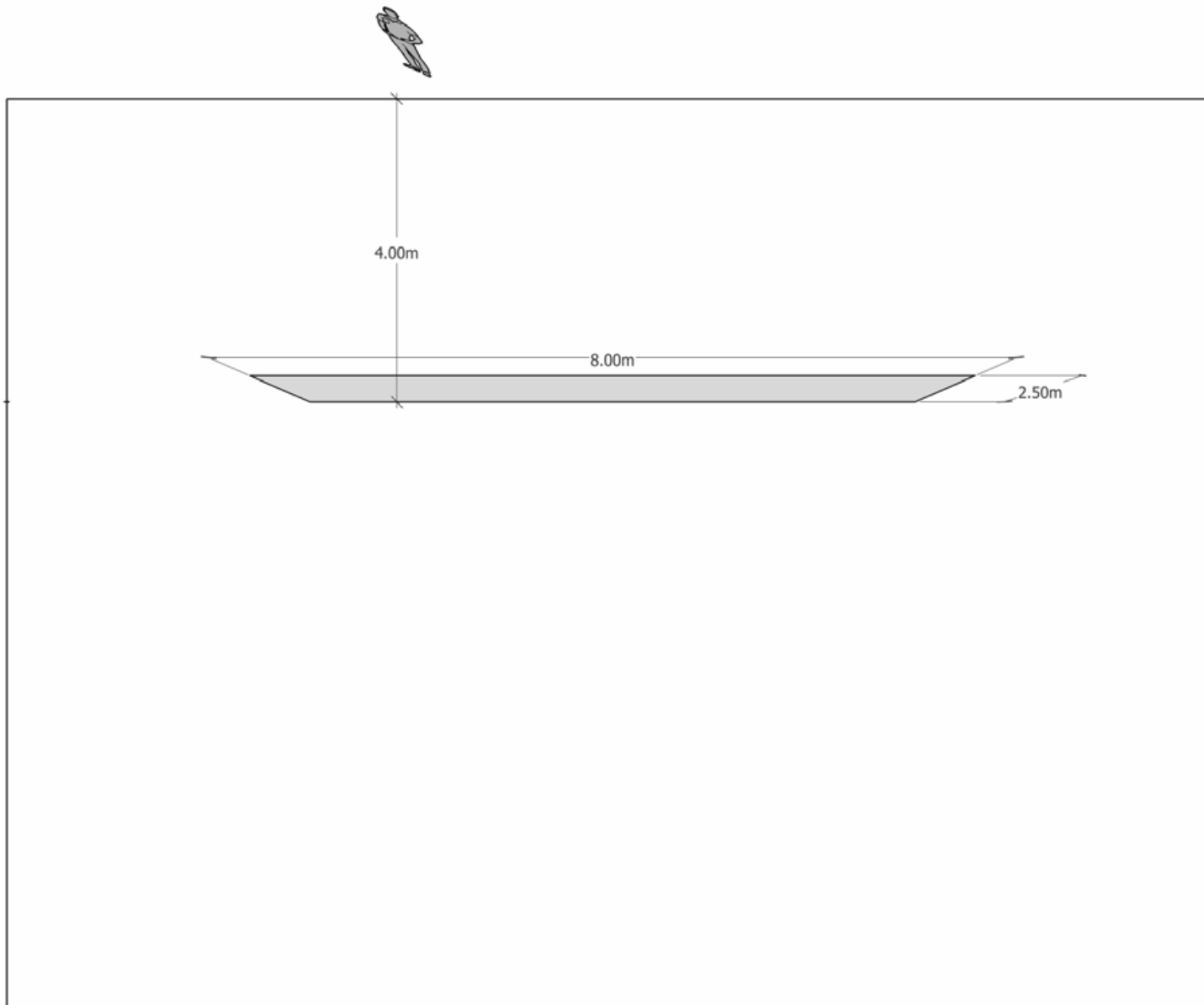
2 sets = 80 cabinets

8 meters wide, 2.5 meters high (size depending on the space and audience distance)









Upcoming

- 2018 The 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT8), Queensland, Australia
 Viva Excon Biennale, Capiz, Philippines
 Taipei Biennale, Taiwan
- 2019 Good Space – Communities or the Promise of Happiness, Villa Merkel, Galerie der Stadt Esslingen, Germany