

- What is the specific problem that the project wants to solve?
- What is the project hypothesis?
- What are the project's objectives?
- Which are the desired outcomes?

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# Theme

“Between the Lines” is a project that aims to preserve the narrative of Jimbolia’s quarry lakes, formed as a result of the industrial activity of Bohn’s ceramics factory. Positioned in the center of the site, near its most frequented area, the park, our proposed structure presents itself as a line connecting two former quarries Balta Szeles and Balta Herişanu, and their respective views: the former site of the Bohn factory and the place of the sunken bagger. Appearing as a continuous free-standing brick wall cutting through the vegetation, the structure intrigues from afar. Inside, the wall presents a sequence of spaces that tell the stories of the industrial landscape and the community that built it. Thus, our project aims to capture and preserve the identity of this cultural site, offering you the opportunity to understand its complexities as you walk along, from space to space, and read between the lines of history.

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# The problem of forgetting

The site of the competition finds itself to be a complex cultural landscape for Jimbolia and the Banat region at large. The quarry lakes, transforming into a biodiverse natural area, have slowly seen themselves being erased of all the traces of history that speak of the impressive industrial activity that shaped them in the first place. Researching the projects that Jimbolia's administration proposed for the area of the lakes, it was clear to us that the historical aspect of the site and its significant cultural impact was being completely overlooked. In the discussions we held with members of the local community, we could understand that there wasn't any clear, definitive perception of the site of the quarry lakes, of its potential and local cultural values. The area was mainly seen as a sort of "dead space", viewed mainly through the nostalgic lens of collective memory. In this context, we find the core of the problem in the well-known truth that memory is not infallible. In the absence of any tangible elements that can continuously evoke the local history, the collective memory starts to falter and gradually erode its stories, with each passing generation. We identify here the danger of the site's cultural values remaining intangible, and with that, the risk of them becoming largely unknown and forgotten in a few generations' time. Thus, in order to address this problem, our project aims to preserve, reinterpret and present the stories that shaped the cultural landscape of the quarry lakes of Jimbolia.

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# Hypothesis

Our project, “Between the Lines”, proposes a structure that assumes its role as a tangible anchor for the collective memory in the vast environment of the quarry lakes. We started with the image of the ruined Bohn factory wall in mind, the last constructed trace of the bygone industrial activity of Jimbolia. It stands present as a witness, holding in the countless personal stories that have cemented its place in the memory of those who lived them. Our project materializes in the form of a line cutting through the organic, natural and, perhaps, at a first glance, seemingly chaotic landscape, referencing a former logic and rationale that once governed the place. Placed in proximity with the local park, in what can be considered “the heart” or the central zone of the site, the proposed structure reinterprets the industrial connections between the lakes, creating a link between Balta Herişanu and Balta Szeles. It is within the forms of this connecting wall that we propose the construction of an open-air museum, dedicated to presenting Jimbolia’s ceramic industrial activities. The process of traversing this connection will, in turn, relay to its visitor a succession of stories, outlining piece by piece the culture and community that evolved along the quarries, and their elusive history that awaits to be discovered. Using brick as its main material of construction, the structure aims to be both efficient in terms of sustainability, using local materials and workforce, and expressive in relaying the tradition and cultural values of the region.

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# Discovering the Lines

Positioned in the proximity of the most frequented area of the site, the “Loc de Picnic” park, the structure appears in the landscape as a long spanning brick wall, free-standing and seemingly placed there randomly. At a first glance, the wall seems to be impenetrable, presenting a continuous texture of bricks, cutting through the landscape, acting as a sort of backdrop for the complexity of forms and shadows created by the vegetation. As the wall intersects the main dirt road, it presents a gate through which it allows you passage on the other side, an image reminiscent of the thick vegetation walls that border the lakes and their various perforations that lead you towards the water. As you approach, you start to notice that the continuous texture of bricks is not as monotonous as once thought, and with that, its constantly changing patterns allow for certain glimpses through its skin. Getting closer, you can spot people walking along the length of the wall, some traversing above the gate, some whose silhouettes can be seen through the glimpses the gaps in the brick patterns provides. Crossing the gateway finally reveals to you the scale of the space created by the structure, its width spanning 7 m. However, the gate does not grant you an entry inside the wall. Looking from afar, you can see that its two ends present two diametrically opposed images: a wide platform, submerging into Balta Szeles, contrasted by a cantilever-like structure piercing above Balta Herişanu, suspended. With that, you decide to approach the Szeles platform, as it invites you through its courtyard, its entrance outlined by two free-standing brick walls.

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# Giving form to memory

How can one relay a history that has lost most of its material traces? In the case of Jimbolia's ceramic industrial activity, any museum that tries to tell its story will be confronted with this problem. However, even with the absence of these material traces, we can still see that the impact this history had on the collective memory is incredibly significant, still vividly present for the members of the community that took part in it. As generations pass however, without an active effort to keep this story in the common consciousness of the local community, it will gradually become less and less acknowledged. With this in mind, we believe that the collective memory needs a material and functional anchor in order to preserve itself throughout the ages. This does not necessarily imply the need of present physical heritage or other traces of the past. Ironically, a lot of the times one can find a more uniquely profound historical truth in the more subjective side of history, in the reality of memories spanned from a community living through events, blurred and undefined as they may be. The collective memory is not a tangible thing, but it can be anchored, provoked, and represented in a structure. The industrial history can be relayed by referring to concepts common to both the former community of factory workers and the visitors. Concepts such as work, shelter, survival, product, identity, community, childhood, family, development, construction, prosperity, fun, and decline offer the general public the opportunity to identify in this history a familiar reality. With this goal in mind, the structure we propose takes on the function of an "open-air" museum, presenting its story solely through a sequence of scenography spaces constructed by its architecture.

# The narrative

The project proposes the pursuit of a narrative thread through which to tell the story of the area of Jimbolia quarry lakes. This thread will respect the Aristotelian narrative structure, a linear one, composed of prologue, middle and epilogue. The relayed narrative will consist of a series of sequences that reflect this industrial story from the point of view of the social dimension, presenting the impact of the ceramics industry on the condition of the working class. The wall starts from the platform of Balta Szeles, offering a panoramic view towards the former site of the Bohn factory. The sequences materialize into a series of filters, both scenography spaces and gardens that frame the nature and invite contemplation, that the public must go through before reaching the other end, Balta Herişanu. The sequences will convey the key themes of the story of the ceramic industry, which reflects the evolution of the community and the different social conditions it has faced.

The prologue is represented by the very presence of this museum, which speaks primarily through its materiality. The brick, the material that evokes the story behind the cultural landscape of the ponds, manages to express through a common language, a wide level of communication dedicated to a diverse audience. The discovery of this architecture in the natural area of the ponds will arouse the interest and curiosity of passers-by, who will want to explore it further. The prologue will be defined by the access, as you walk across a wide platform submerging into the lake, offering an ample view of an image towards the now absent Bohn factory.

1. Kubicas & the cubed m of clay: The first sequence tells the story of the first workers, kubicas, of the ceramics industry. The year 1864 marks the date of the establishment of the Bohn factory. The workers who dug the first quarry of the factory did this manually, using shovels. Their work was physical, exhausting, working over 12 hours a day. The conditions in which they lived were miserable. At the same time, their jobs became their home, as they slept in make-shift barracks in the quarries they dug during the day. The identity of these workers was closely linked to the work they did and the value attributed to it, as evidenced by the name "kubicas" they received, which attests to the fact that they were paid per cubic meter of excavated clay. These kubicas were defined by their work, accepted out of a need for their survival. The space will express the identity of these workers, their work quantifiable by a cubic meter of clay, and implicitly their association with the raw material, the first step in the process of obtaining a ceramic product. The boundaries of the space, its walls and floor, will be show a grided patchwork of different patterns, each 1 squared m, expressing the idea of individuality found in the kubicas, each paid according to the amount of material extracted.

# The narrative

2. Ziegel, tegla, cigla: The second sequence represents the industrialization of the production process of ceramic products. This phenomenon radically changed the way the factory operated and, implicitly, the reality of the working class. Industrialization was the starting point for an exponential development of production activity. An entire circuit of rails, wagons, muki locomotives and bagger excavators was introduced into the territory, expressed in space by a designed linearity. The factory expanded its activity and thus the number of workers employed in it increased. At the level of workers, there is a diversity from an ethnic point of view, with Hungarians, Germans, Serbs and Romanians. This process of industrialization also leads to an improvement and refinement of the resulting ceramic products. We are therefore talking about a space that must present these first steps of shaping a community of workers. The workers had different ethnic backgrounds, but in the context of the factory, the same purpose. This concept is reflected in the word "tile", which in German, Hungarian and Serbian, have the same pronunciation - "ziegel", "tegla" and "cigla". A transition can be seen, from the association of workers with the raw material, to their association with the final product of production. A three-entry gateway allows passage into the same common space, defined by a linear trajectory that carves through the piles of tiles.

3. Futok and the art of construction: The third sequence is dedicated to the presentation of the Futok working-class neighborhood. The need to build a working-class neighborhood indicates that the workforce of the ceramics industry has increased significantly. At this stage it is already a community of workers serving the Bohn factory. Initially, the first settlements in the Futok neighborhood were precarious buildings in the form of barracks. It was not until 1892, when the land near the factory was parceled out and sold by the company to the workers, that the first houses began to appear. During the development of this neighborhood, one can see a clear definition of the culture of the place, distinct from the rest of the built landscape of Jimbolia. The proletarian community develops its own style of construction, and in their constructions the activity of the factory and the products resulting from it are reflected. Visually, the neighborhood receives a special character, through the multiple ways of installing the used brick. In addition to the housing function, the neighborhood also benefits from a community church, built with the ambition of highlighting the quality of the ceramics produced. The community of workers becomes closely linked, working together, eating together, living and building in a small area, close to the factory. The space of this sequence will therefore have to represent the art of construction cultivated in Futok. Opting for an intriguing route, this sequence presents itself as a space-within-a-space, guiding the visitor through layers of prop-like facades that call upon some traditional elements of Futok architecture.



# The narrative

4. The Bohn swimming pool: The fourth sequence is represented by the Bohn swimming pool, the leisure place of the factory workers. The development of the Bohn business, the emergence of the Futok working-class neighborhood and the need for a formed community to have a common recreation space led to the emergence of this swimming pool. It was located inside the factory, and its space was divided, one part being dedicated to workers, who benefited from free admission, the other being used by officials and the rest of the clientele. The swimming pool was a place of recreation, with swimming pools, sports fields, a bowling alley and a dance floor. All these activities present in this complex resulted in a community of workers who spent their time not only working in the factory, but also having fun and socializing. The exhibition space must reflect on this transition, through which the first quarry of the factory, whose first workers had not even reached the primary needs, becomes a leisure space for the generations that followed. The main element of this transition is water, associated since this stage with industrial activity and predicting the landscape now found. In the center of the reflective water, its shallow depth changes as an excavation of 1 cubed m calls back to the first visited sequence.

5. Preserving memories: The fifth sequence is dedicated to exposing the collective memory left over from this industrial project. After acquainting the public with the various stages of development of the Bohn factory workers' community, the fifth space presents this story, told through the memories of the people who lived it. This space assumes the important role of preserving and presenting the voices of the last workers of the factory, through which the impact of the existence of industrial activity on the individual lives in the community can be understood. The individual memory of these people manages to provide a deeper understanding of the public on the story of the ponds. In enclosed spaces, visitors can listen to excerpts from interviews and examine old photographs and object connected with the person's relayed memories.

6. The fall & the ascension: The sixth sequence will address the issue of the disappearance of this industry and, implicitly, of the community formed by it. Jimbolia's ceramic industry, with a history of over a century, is disbanded, and its traces are erased in the span of just a few years. With the cessation of this activity, the community of workers, which depended on its existence, will fall apart. The end is, therefore, a sudden one, which left few traces of its existence. In this closed off and dark space, a light can be seen entering and guiding the visitor towards the outdoors.

The epilogue represents the transition between the story of the past and the natural landscape of the present. It must return the visitor back to the natural context, communicating with Balta Herişanu and creating a state of contemplation on the story of this place, now submerged. Rising above the water and looking down, the view created is marked by the presence of the sunken bagger, an unforeseen relic, which attests and confirms these events, whose nature has, until now, been seen as close to legend. At the same time, this unexpected discovery of a historical trace will encourage the public's curiosity to further explore the elusive layers of the quarry lakes' complex landscape.

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# Conclusions

Cutting through the cultural landscape of Jimbolia's quarry lakes, two parallel lines drawn by brick walls invite the public to discover the spaces that form between. The proposed structure serves as a starting point for visitors of the area, initiating them in the story of the site and its historical complexity, unnoticeable for the untrained eyes. It incites in the public the desire for movement, exploration and interaction with the former quarries. At the same time, it is also a project that is dedicated to the community that shaped this environment, aiming to emphasize the identity of the place and preserve its stories. Through scenography, the architecture manages to give form to the subjective side of history, with profound truths told at a human scale, as memories become tangible and show their sensibilities.

The project materializes itself through a participatory approach, using local workforce for the implementation. Taking from the sense of place found at the site, the structure expresses a tectonic language, using the brick, a universal unit, as its main material. Through this expression, the object created assumes an atemporal quality, remaining unchanged as its architecture presents the narrative of its construction.