

MACHINE FOR DYING

BEAU ARCHITECTS

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We can now live long, some might say too long. As the risk of endangering our societal model is becoming real, we must question our refusal to die and address it on both psychological and technical levels. A very simple question arises: Should we offer to others and ourselves a clean, beautiful and most importantly useful way of dying? Are we ready for a programmed, prepared and conscious methodology of death?

The above question is raised now and has been raised before, especially within the fictional realm. In *Soylent Green*¹, Sol is put to death thanks to a lethal drug in the clinical assisted-suicide facility known as the "Home". While listening to an assortment of elegiac selection of Tchaikovsky and Beethoven, he watches the lost beauty of his vanished world on the 1973 version of an IMAX screen. In *Logan's Run*², the population and the consumption of resources of a computer-run world are maintained in equilibrium by killing everyone who reaches the age of thirty. People happily and eagerly either die or watch. In *Cloud Atlas*³, slave labour clones are recycled into food for other clones in a factory-boat travelling from city to city.

We don't speak here about burial rituals and cemeteries (merely a "storage" in such context) but about the places where death actually happens. It is anyway interesting to note that the bodies (at least in the so-far selected case studies) disappear. They are not a burden anymore; the world is left clean and unmodified, allowing us (the living) to focus on what really matters (a paradoxical, never-ending, unquestioned everyday). The experience of death has escaped the accidental realm (even if it obviously still happens) to become a fearless and fully accepted climax in our life.

Whether hidden (Sol dies almost alone) or part of a collective experience (as the highly celebrated Carousel's ritual of Logan's Run or the Exultation's ceremony of Cloud Atlas), the value of death is in both cases entirely dedicated to the greater good. Even if still sacred and ritualized, the abandonment of any singularity/individuality and randomness leads to a hyper formalization (death is as formal as definitive) and technicization of both the process and its spatial expression. Stripped of all prior notions of rationality, these are two aspects (formal and technical) that can be explored through the most depictive architectural tool, that is drawing.

The material on which to apply such filter is entirely selected among movies depicting a (sometimes naïve) dystopian society where death has been artificialized. Even if arbitrary (and assumed as so), this choice allows for an archeology of past's futures and their extended contexts (fears, hopes, taboos, etc.). The superficial (visual) essence of this material, its "fakeness", opens the door to a speculative exploration/amplification of what could be beyond what meets the eye.

By enforcing an overly technical/architectural vocabulary to represent these places where death actually happens, the representations return to and emphasize the troubling rationality behind them. It could be built. It could be repeated. It could even be improved (as all machines). The mode of representation is cold and effective as blueprints should be. A text, in the form of a user manual describes the process of each space/machine.

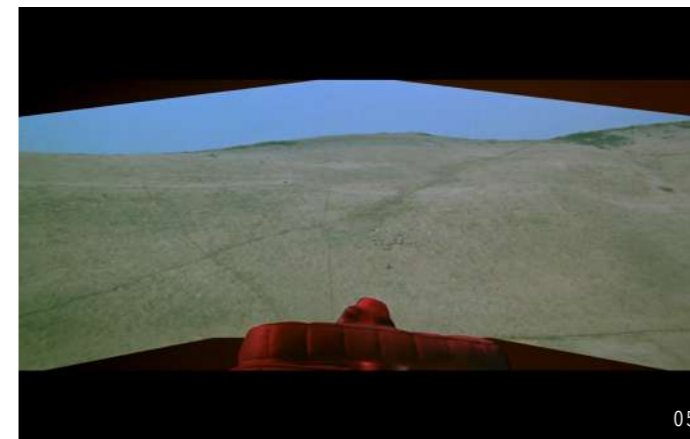
1 . SOYLENT GREEN, RICHARD FLEISCHER, METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER, 1973.

2 . LOGAN'S RUN, MICHAEL ANDERSON, METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER, 1976

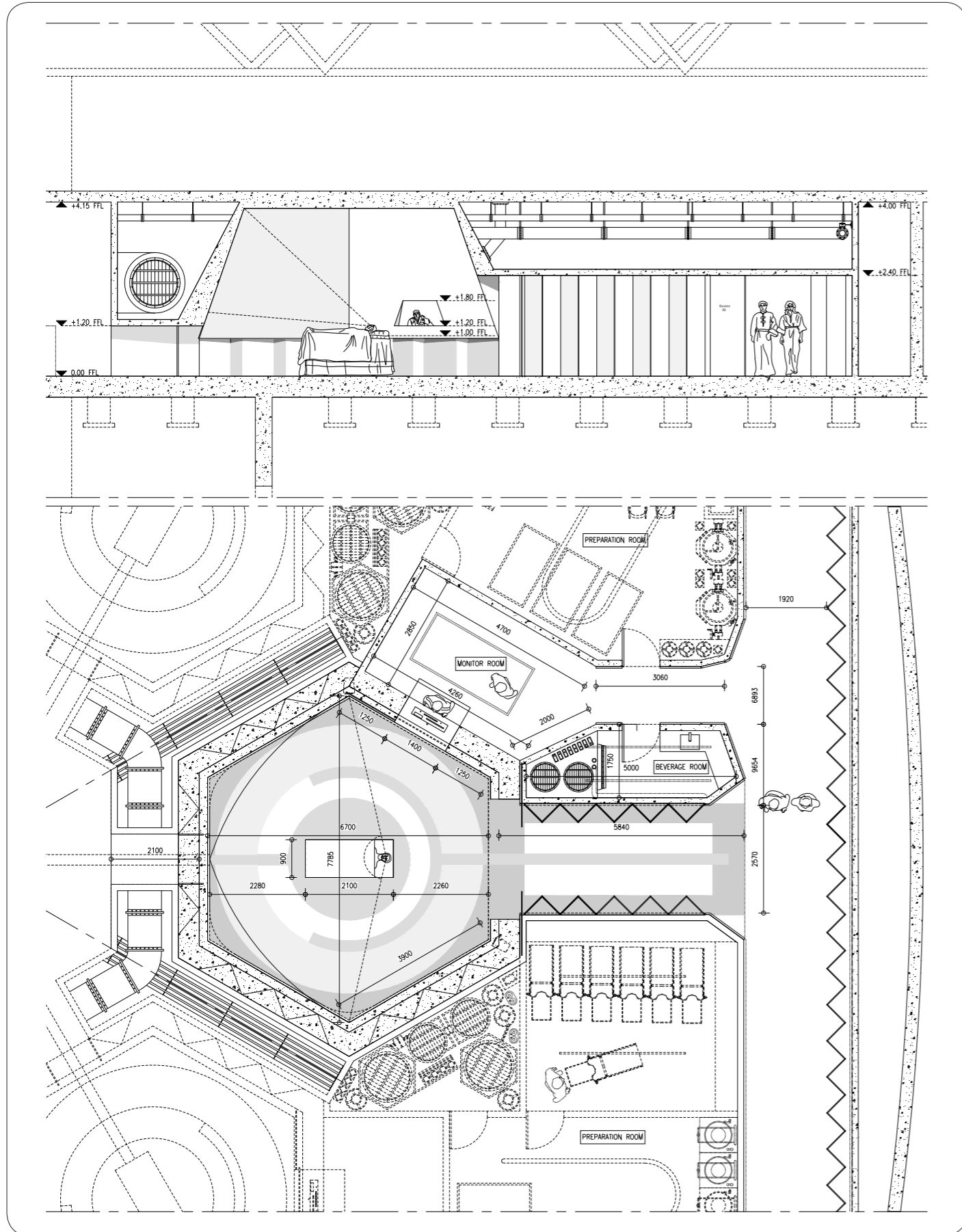
3 . CLOUD ATLAS, TOM TYKWER, LILLY WACHOWSKI, ANDY WACHOWSKI, WARNER BROS. PICTURES, 2012.

EXIT 001

Movie title: Soylent Green
Movie Director: Richard Fleischer
Movie Producers: Walter Seltzer & Russell Thacher
Music by: Fred Myrow
Release date: April 19, 1973
Language: English



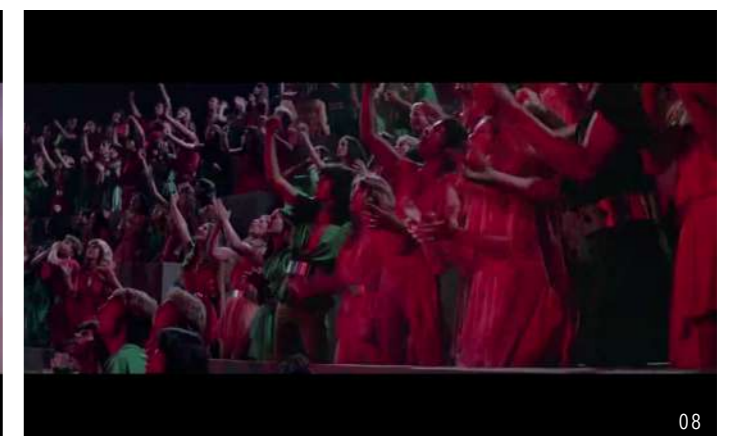
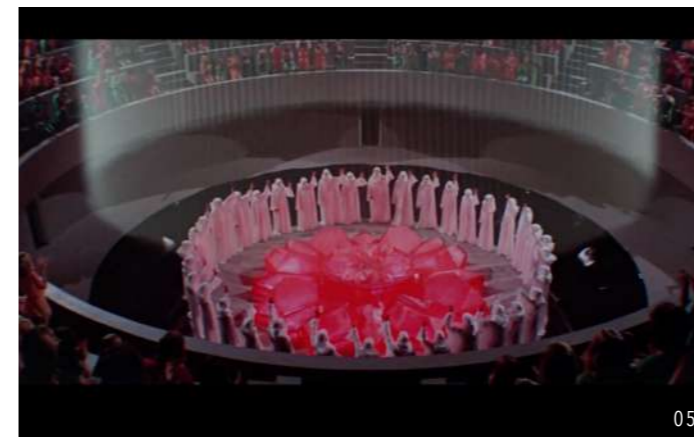
- 01. External view of the building, "going home" ceremony hospital.
- 02. Reception / Clients queuing up for registration and selection of their favorite music and colors.
- 03. Transition area / Clients guided to the Theater by an attendant and welcomed by two clergymen.
- 04. Last Theater / Clients undressed, settled and served their last beverage.
- 05. Last Theater / Clients "going home" while surrounded by images of the vanished world.
- 06. Last Theater / Bodies handed-over to technical staff through hidden door.
- 07 & 08. Basement / Bodies transported and loaded onto waste disposal trucks for further processing.

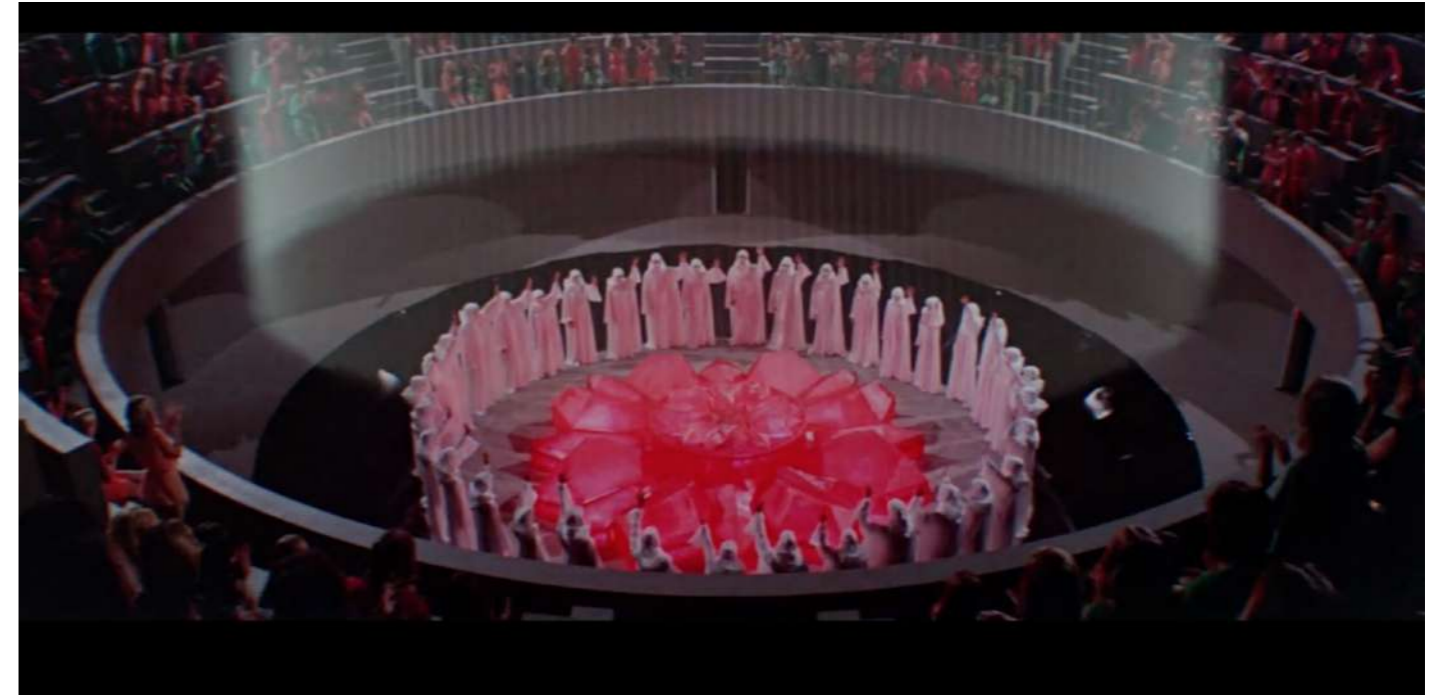
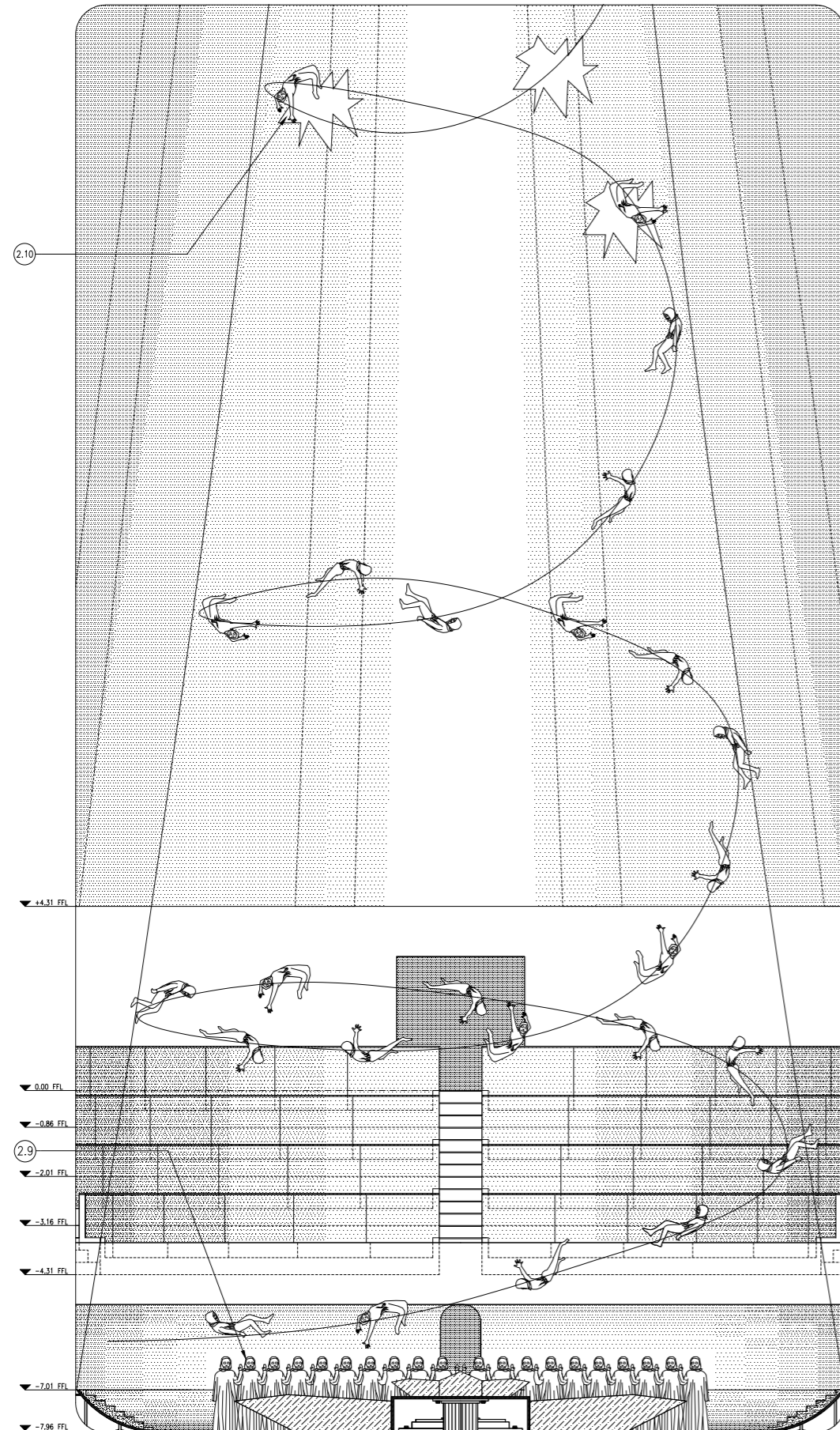


EXIT 002

Movie title: Logan's Run
Movie Director: Michael Anderson
Movie Producer: Saul David
Music by: Jerry Goldsmith
Release date: June 23, 1976
Language: English

01. External view of the building, "Carousel" ceremony temple.
02. Hall / Crowd gathering for the ceremony.
03. Transit corridor to Carousel.
04. Audience terrace / Crowd taking place for the ceremony.
05. Renewal stage (lower area) / Participants surrounding the life-clock, ready for renewal procedure.
06. Renewal stage (lower area) / Participants attracted by force field towards the pulsating "renewal" gem.
07. Renewal stage (upper area) / Participants renewed.
08. Audience terrace / Crowd celebrating.





EXIT 003

Movie title: Cloud Atlas

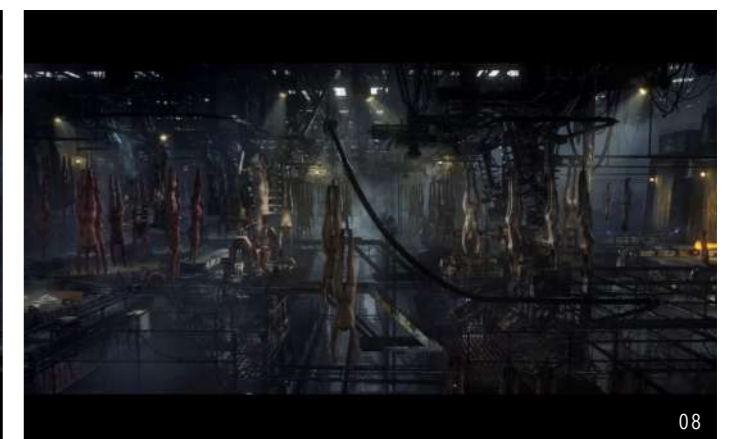
Movie Directors: Lana Wachowski, Tom Tykwer, Andy Wachowski

Movie Producers: Stefan Arndt, Grant Hill, Lana Wachowski, Tom Tykwer, Andy Wachowski

Music by: Tom Tykwer, Johnny Klimek, Reinhold Heil

Release date: 8 September 2012

Language: English



01. External view of the GEO-R93, "Exultation" ceremony boat / Fabricants boarding.
02. Main corridor / Fabricants directed and progressively funneled according to their category.
03. Execution chamber (exterior) / Fabricants queuing up to enter.
04. Execution chamber (interior) / Fabricants welcomed and installed by staff.
05. Execution chamber (interior) / Fabricants neutralized.
- 06 & 07. Execution chamber (interior) / Fabricants bodies transferred to processing area.
08. Refrigerating unit (storage) / Bodies stored before further processing.

