

Terlaba.

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Credits

Illustrated and written by
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Designed by Terlaba.

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Terlaba.

— I photograph architecture before it exists. —

is a visual practice dedicated to architectural imagery.

I create sensitive, narrative 3D visuals capable of translating a project's intentions with precision and poetry.

Images designed to reveal what the drawings don't say: a light, a use, a rhythm.

I accompany architects through key phases: competitions, presentations, publications.

Each image is conceived as a space in its own right — an atmosphere, a point of view, an emotion.

Terlaba. is an independent practice, driven by artisanal rigor. A single point of contact, a clear vision, total commitment to every project. Far from simple photorealism, my approach favors accuracy, atmosphere, suggestion.

A successful image doesn't say everything. It leaves room for interpretation and opens an imagination.





Image as Space

. A picture is worth a thousand words

Speech is the foundation of our modern societies. It slowly refined itself, became standardized, until it turned into a common tool; precise, shareable.

A language on which we built norms and rules, structuring civilization as a whole.

Historically, the image precedes this agreement. It belongs to a deeper, more instinctive layer of consciousness.

The child is an illustration of this. Before knowing how to properly handle language, the child draws. Without method, without grammar. By impulse. By pure creative energy.

44,000 years earlier, this same gesture was already present in our intentions. Facing a rock wall, in the silence of a cave, the first humans felt this same irrepressible need : image.

To give shape to what could not yet be said.

. The image is everywhere

Because of the remarkable influence of the audiovisual in modern life, our modern societies have placed the image at the heart of our modes of communication.

It shapes habits, influences narratives, alters desires.

Finely composed, it becomes a tool of persuasion of formidable efficiency.

Architecture, meanwhile, is born at the crossroads of multiple languages: drawing, writing, speech, debate, icons.

But at the end of this complex process, it is through the image that it reveals itself, through the image that it explains itself, through the image that it is transmitted.

Architectural imagery is not a decorative end point. It is the tipping point where intention becomes perceptible to the greatest number. No more standardized representation, no more explanatory notes, no more codification.

What remains is a direct visual expression — the synthesis of the design process.





Sun King Supportive Housing - Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects



Sun King Supportive Housing - Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects



Abbaye de Notre-Dame de Gausan - Les comptoirs de l'architecture



Abbaye de Notre-Dame de Gausan - Les comptoirs de l'architecture



Abbaye de Notre-Dame de Gaussan - Les comptoirs de l'architecture



Salle Georges Brassens - Atelier Nebout - Concept



Salle Georges Brassens - Atelier Nebout - Concept



Salle Georges Brassens - Atelier Nebout - Concept

Images That Leave a Mark

Architects lose more projects than they win. I sometimes think about it. Tell myself that financial investment was made, time mobilized, energy deployed — and that it isn't This project and This image that wins.

But there is another way to read it. The image doesn't disappear with the competition. It extends the project beyond the verdict. It circulates internally, lives on in title blocks, feeds future presentations, finds its way onto social media, into references, into memories.

I always hope an image can be the decisive piece. The one that helps a jury perceive a project's relevance. The one that makes a young architect want to join a firm.

But even when that shift doesn't happen, the image still acts. A true image creates movement, creates tension, feeds reflection, and ultimately leaves an imprint.

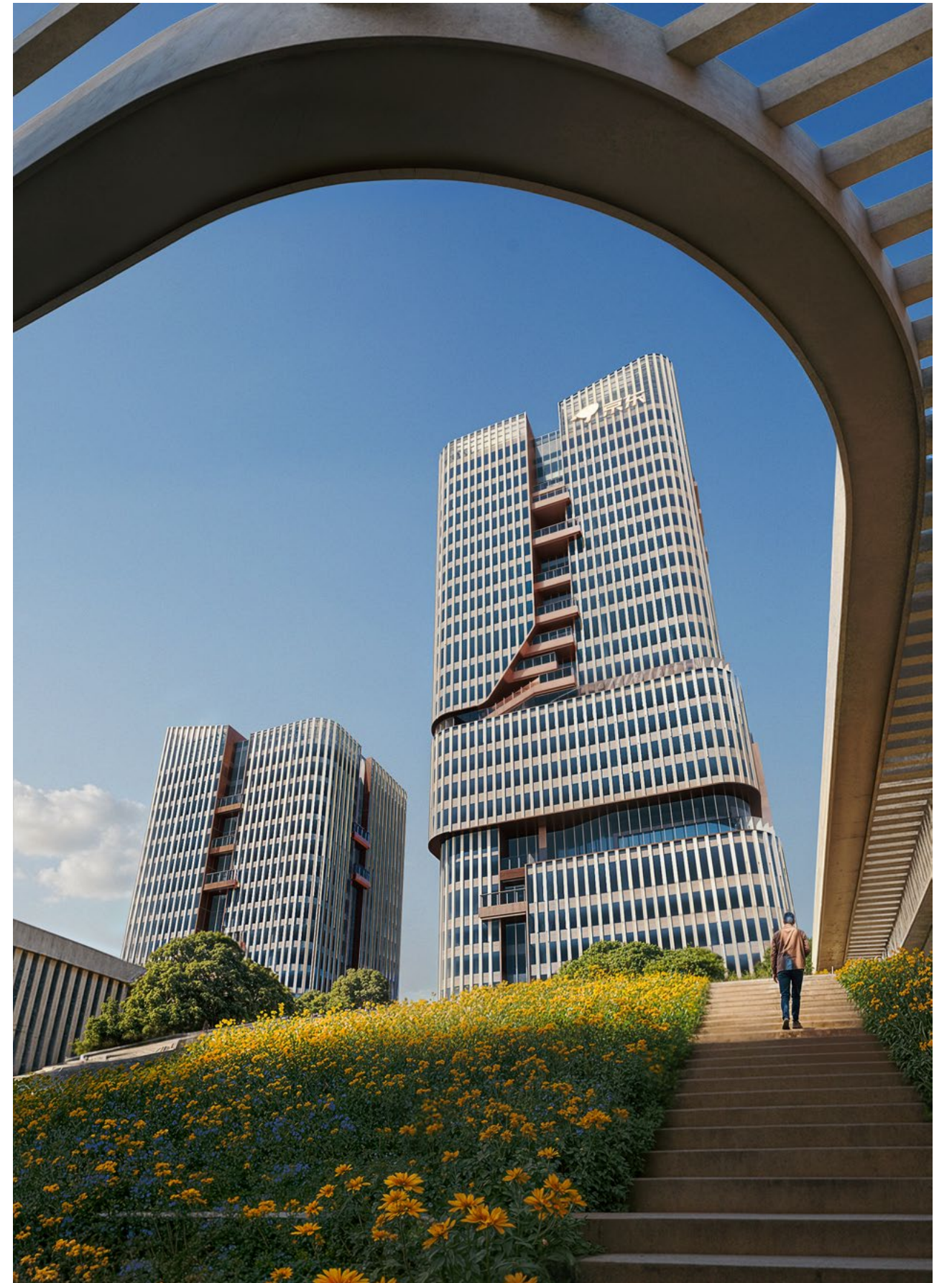
It leaves a mark.



Undisclosed project - Atchain



Undisclosed project - Atchain



Undisclosed project - Atchain



Undisclosed project - Atchain

Recurring Images

When I started out in this practice, I admired the productions of the big architecture firms. I couldn't yet tell the studios apart. I saw images that were strong, masterful, seductive.

Avec le temps, un phénomène m'est apparu. Les projets Over time, a phenomenon became apparent to me. The projects changed. The images, much less so: The same two-point perspective. A perfectly oriented sun. Smiling residents on every balcony. Lush, flawless vegetation. A calibrated atmosphere. Through sheer repetition, the image loses its power. It becomes predictable. Almost interchangeable. I became attentive to this visual fatigue.

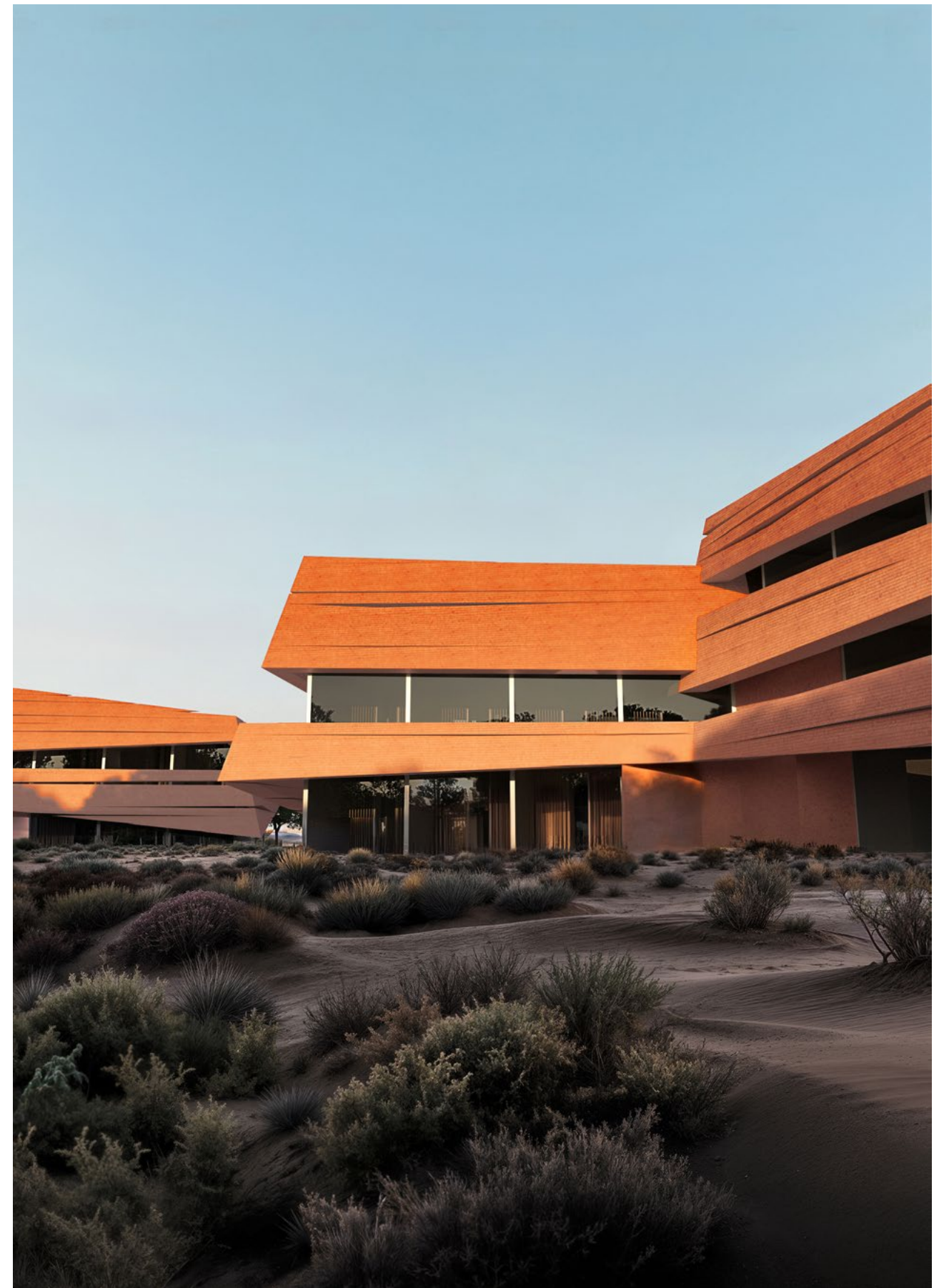
Architectural photography, on the other hand, offers a much vaster territory. It accepts shadow. Raking light. Details that are almost abstract. Elements that cross the frame by accident. It plays with what is revealed, with tension, with imperfection.

It's on this ground that I build Terlab's language. In the low sun that sculpts volumes. In framings that let the off-screen suggest. In compositions that refuse the obvious. I try to stay in motion. Not to reproduce a standard, however effective. To preserve a capacity for astonishment. Not to be different at all costs, but to stay relevant.

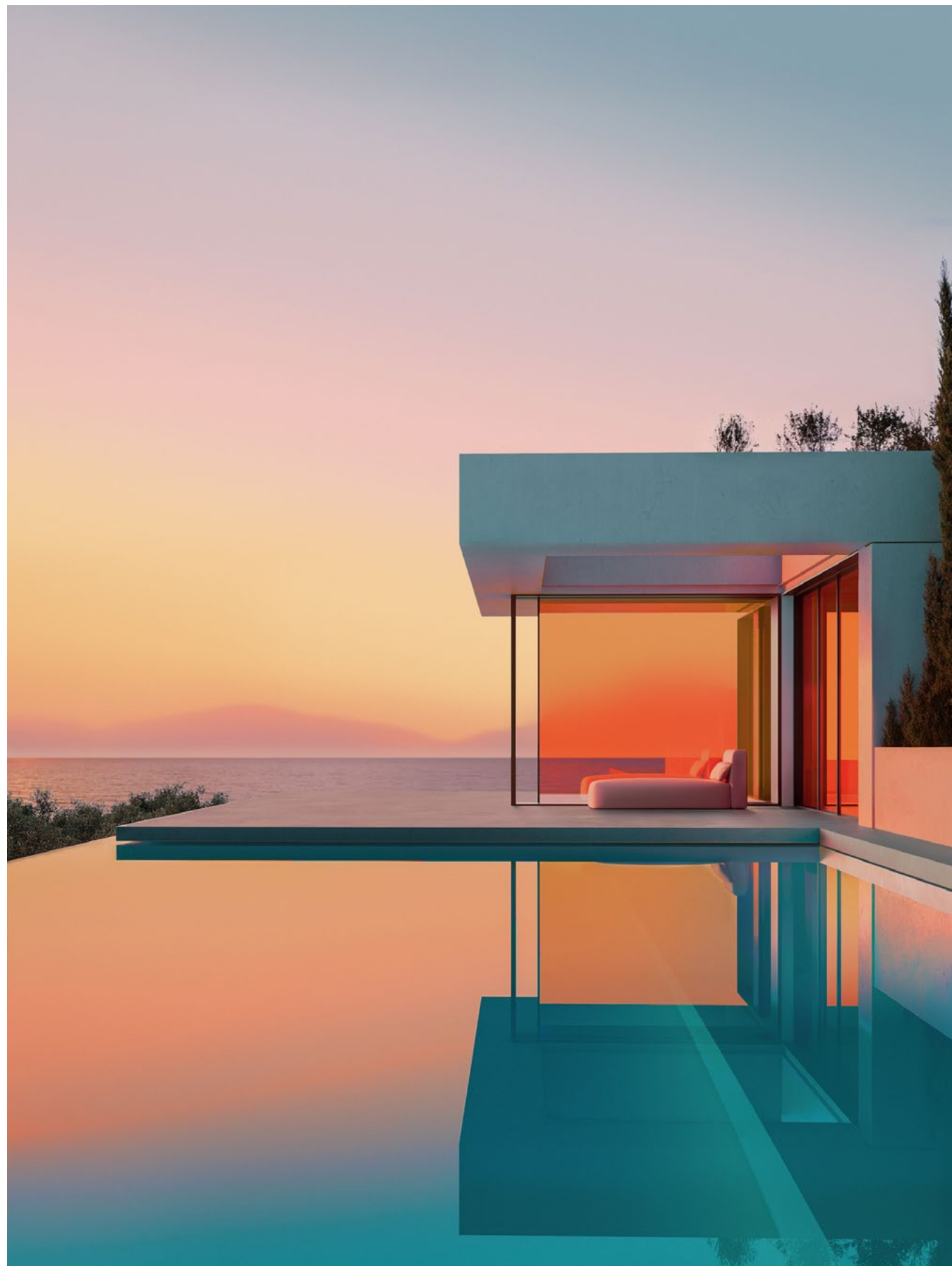
An image shouldn't reassure out of habit. An image must awaken the gaze.



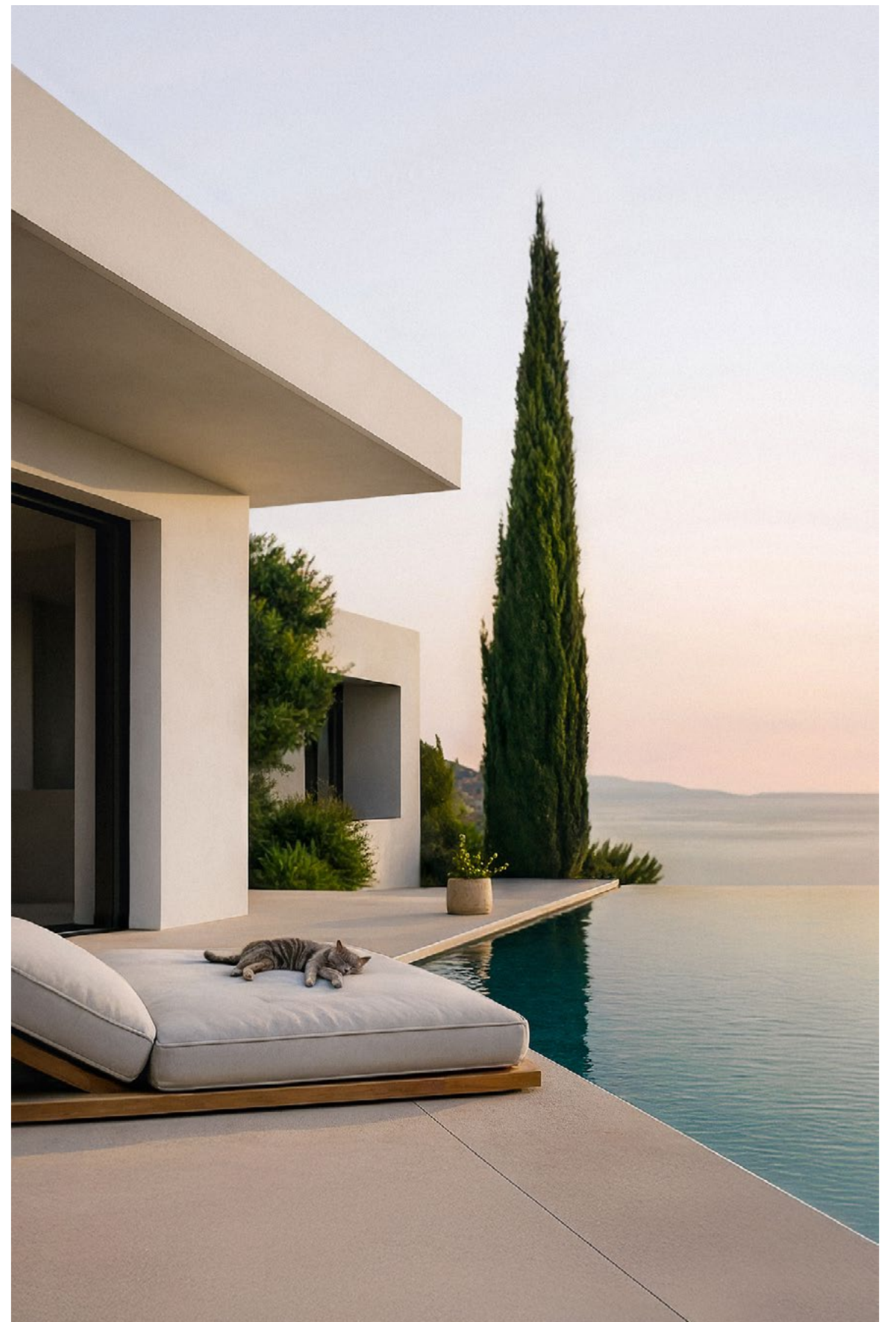
A resort in Portugal - Kengo Kuma and Associates



A resort in Portugal - Kengo Kuma and Associates



Last bite of summer - Terlabs'



Last bite of summer - Terlabs'

The Language of the Image, a Taste for the Strange

Producing images today requires particular attention. Technology allows for everything. It makes flawless atmospheres possible, perfectly populated scenes, impeccable light.

And yet, that is precisely where the risk lies. Modern tools make it easy to mass-produce lifeless images.

An image that is too controlled can lose its vibration. Too sparsely inhabited, it seems empty. Too animated, it becomes artificial.

Architecture builds places to be lived in. The image must carry that humanity, that real human presence, that breathing. I look for images that are neither frozen nor overplayed. Images that leave room for the unexpected.

Some things take time to be understood. A piece of music that at first seems chaotic. A taste one doesn't immediately appreciate. What resists before convincing leaves a deeper mark.

Art often takes this path. The most powerful works don't seek unanimity. They divide, they question, they shift the gaze. I practice image-making the same way. I don't seek immediate approval. I seek resonance. If an image leaves no room for doubt, it is consumed quickly. If it opens a slight friction, it stays.

It's in that space, between attraction and reserve, that the image begins to live. That's where the project breathes. Where the gaze lingers. Where architecture goes beyond mere representation to become experience.

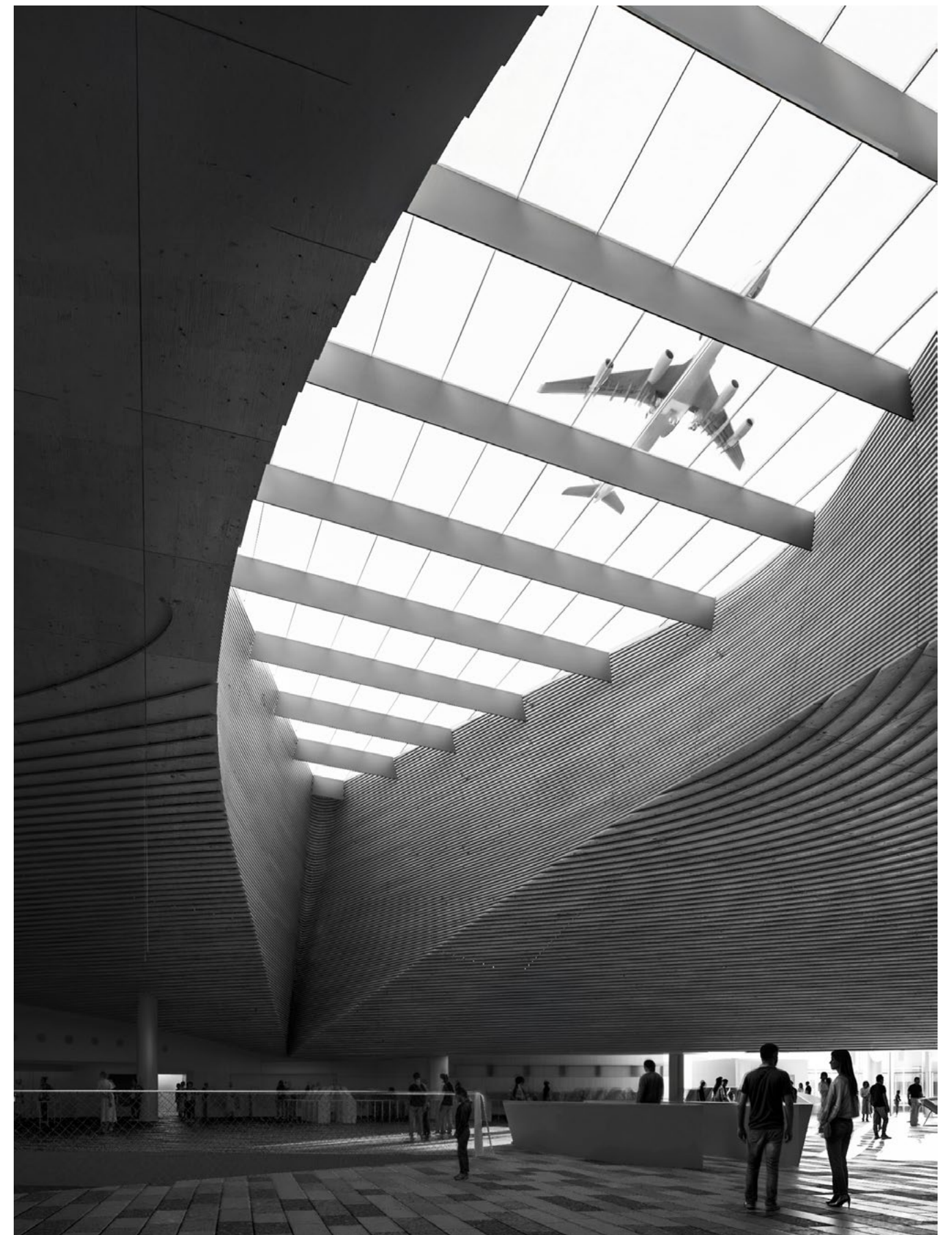
I don't look for perfect images. I look for inhabited images.



Inzovu Mall- Coldefy



Helsinki Airport Extension - ALA Architects



Helsinki Airport Extension - ALA Architects



The Research Process

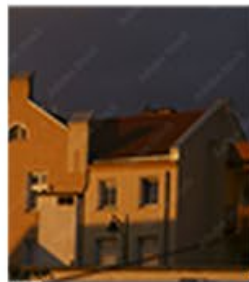
The path to a final proposal is never linear. It requires research, references, trials, and above all, iterations. This isn't about stubbornly chasing a perfect image. It's about composing a true image, capable of offering a portrait of the architecture that is both legible and sensitive.

I prefer to spend this time upstream rather than exposing my client to needless back-and-forth. Taking the time to interlock the elements one after another:

A camera that stages an element with precision. A light that eliminates distractions and guides attention. Details that anchor the image in memory.

When these elements find their balance, the image stops being manufactured. It simply *is*.

What follows shows part of this process. On the left, the steps needed to get there. On the right, the result.





Blue hour - Terlabs'

The Gallery of the Unforgotten

Some of my most artistic images, the most surprising, sometimes the most audacious, don't get chosen. In reality, barely 20% of my output is ever made public.

The rest exists nonetheless. In some cases, it's understandable: not enough visible architecture, too much visible architecture, too much empty space, too zoomed in on a detail, too assertive an intention.

In others, they are simply my truest images that don't find their place. Without any clear explanation. Or simply, the first impression isn't the right one. And that's fine with me.

If the intuition isn't shared, there's no point insisting. The right image should always be a mutual, obvious truth.

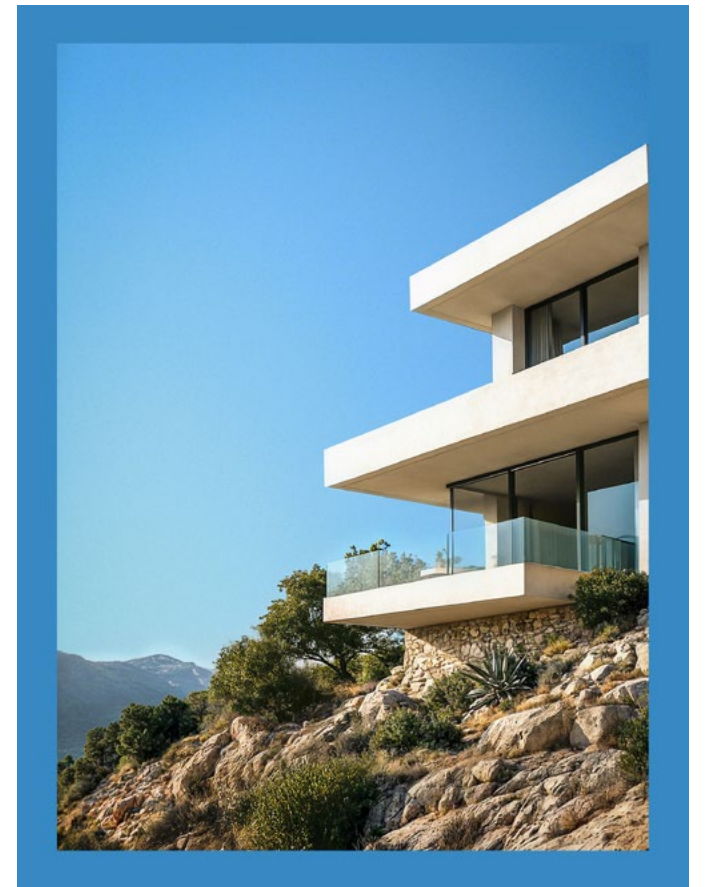
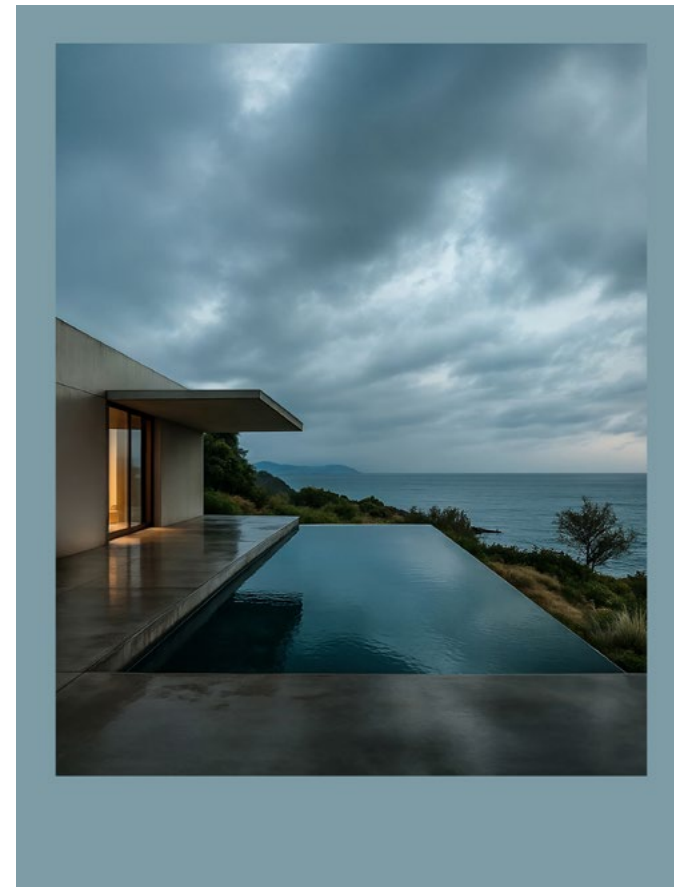
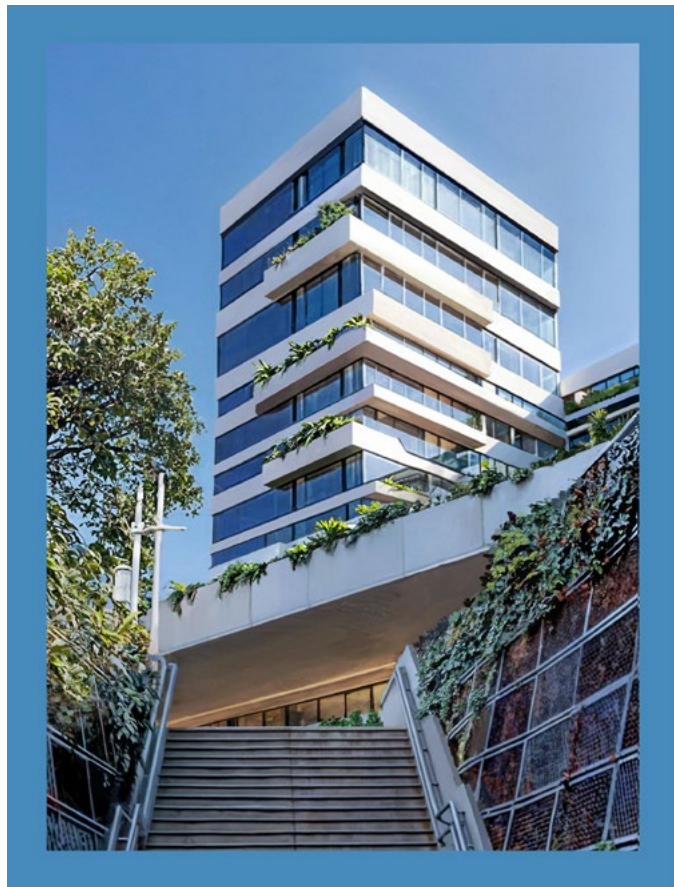
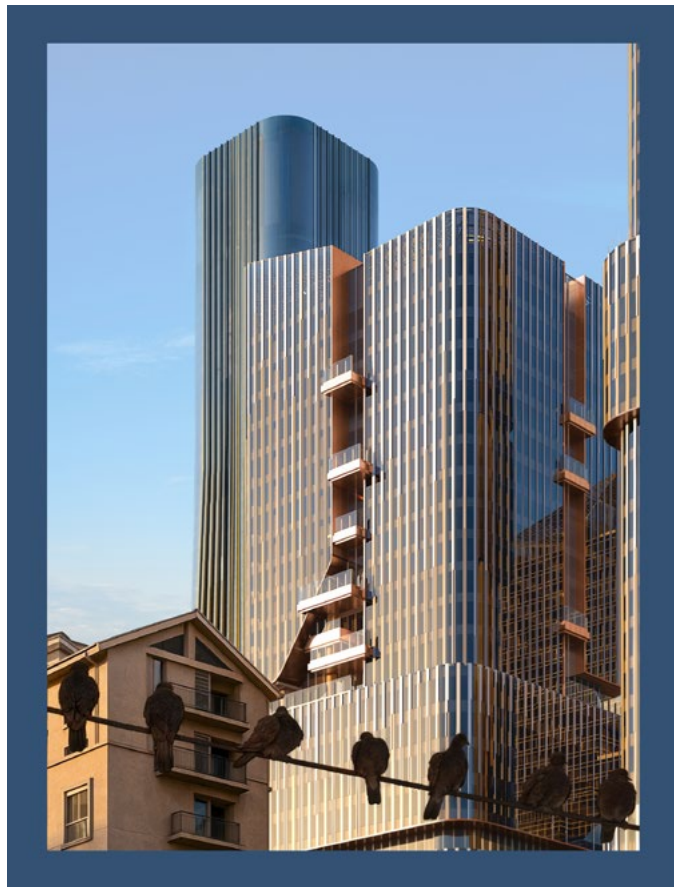
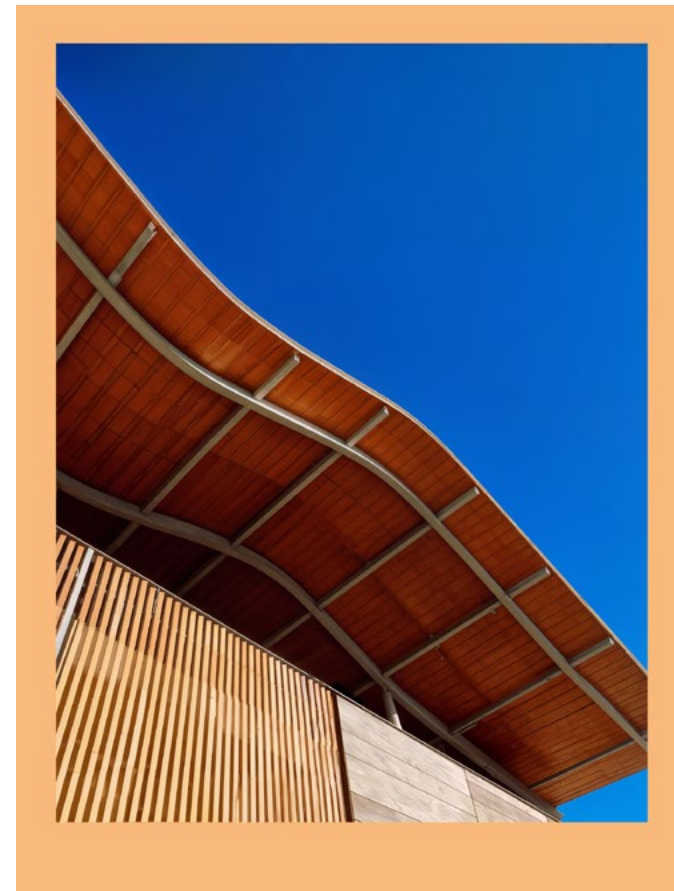
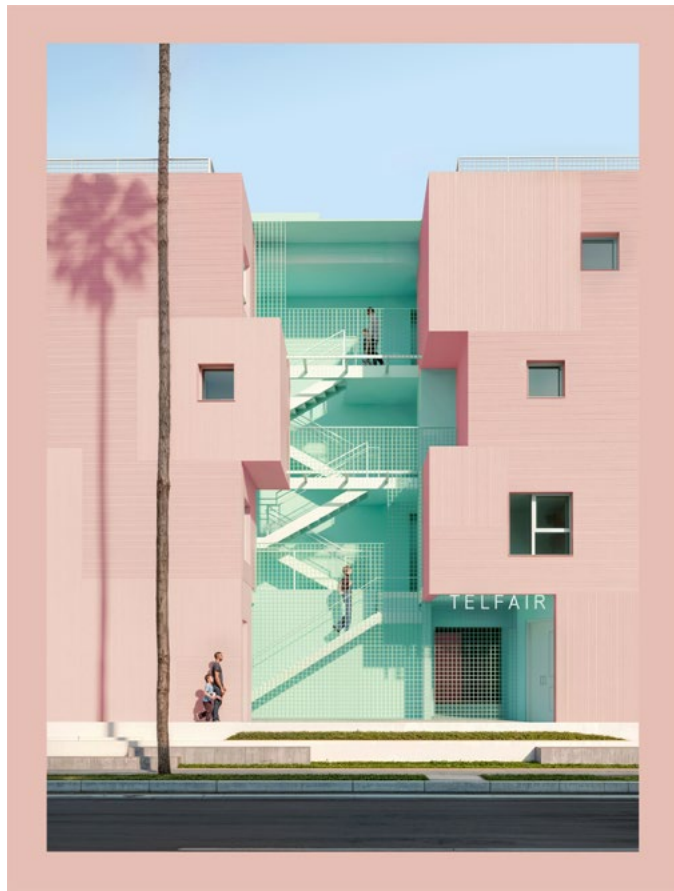
I keep working this way regardless. Because experimenting is the salt of my craft. It's what keeps me moving. What pushes me to propose an unexpected framing, an improbable light, one more point of view.

«And this one, did you think of it?»

And even when it doesn't make the final selection, it existed. It opened up a possibility. Seeing a project staged in an inventive way is energizing, for the architect, for me.

The purpose of this process is simple: to create enthusiasm.

The following pages are dedicated to these images. The ones that, for one reason or another, weren't chosen.







La villa L - Aterla Architecture

A Story of a Shift

Villa L is a house made of few materials: dry stone, timber, render and water. A low-slung building, set within a garden that grows faster than it does.

The commission called for a series in daylight: the arrival, the passage, the pool. A descriptive exercise intended to help the future inhabitants picture themselves within an extension that wraps around an already-lived-in house, still standing in the middle of a neutral, almost uninhabited landscape.

The original delivery included the entrance, framed from the driveway, where the rubble-stone wall prepares the threshold. The passage beneath the pergola, where the slats draw a second pattern across the ground. The pool and its intimate, planted setting. Three images to tell the story of the project, its restraint, and its relationship to the land.

But a house cannot be fully described in three portraits. To stimulate the imagination, the image sometimes needs to go beyond what it is expected to show. To suggest something more than the building, and give the eye somewhere to settle.

As the series developed, two views began to leave the documentary register: a suspended dive, in black and white, followed by a gaze from the bottom of the pool. Something shifted. The project ceased to be an object to be shown. It became a place to be experienced.

The night series was born from this drift.

Four images that no longer quite document. Star trails above the roof. A red light catching the stone and holding it in the night. Floating spheres replacing the blue of the water. A staircase caught between turquoise and amber. Colour no longer dresses the house; it becomes an event.

These are no longer views of the project. They are hours of the house.

This is the story, told in nine images, of the extension of Villa L.

← *The entrance view, an imposed figure.
An image giving a glimpse of the materials*



La villa L - Aterla Architecture



← A view showing the entrance section progressing through the heart of the project

↑ The view presenting the main character of the project : the swimming pool

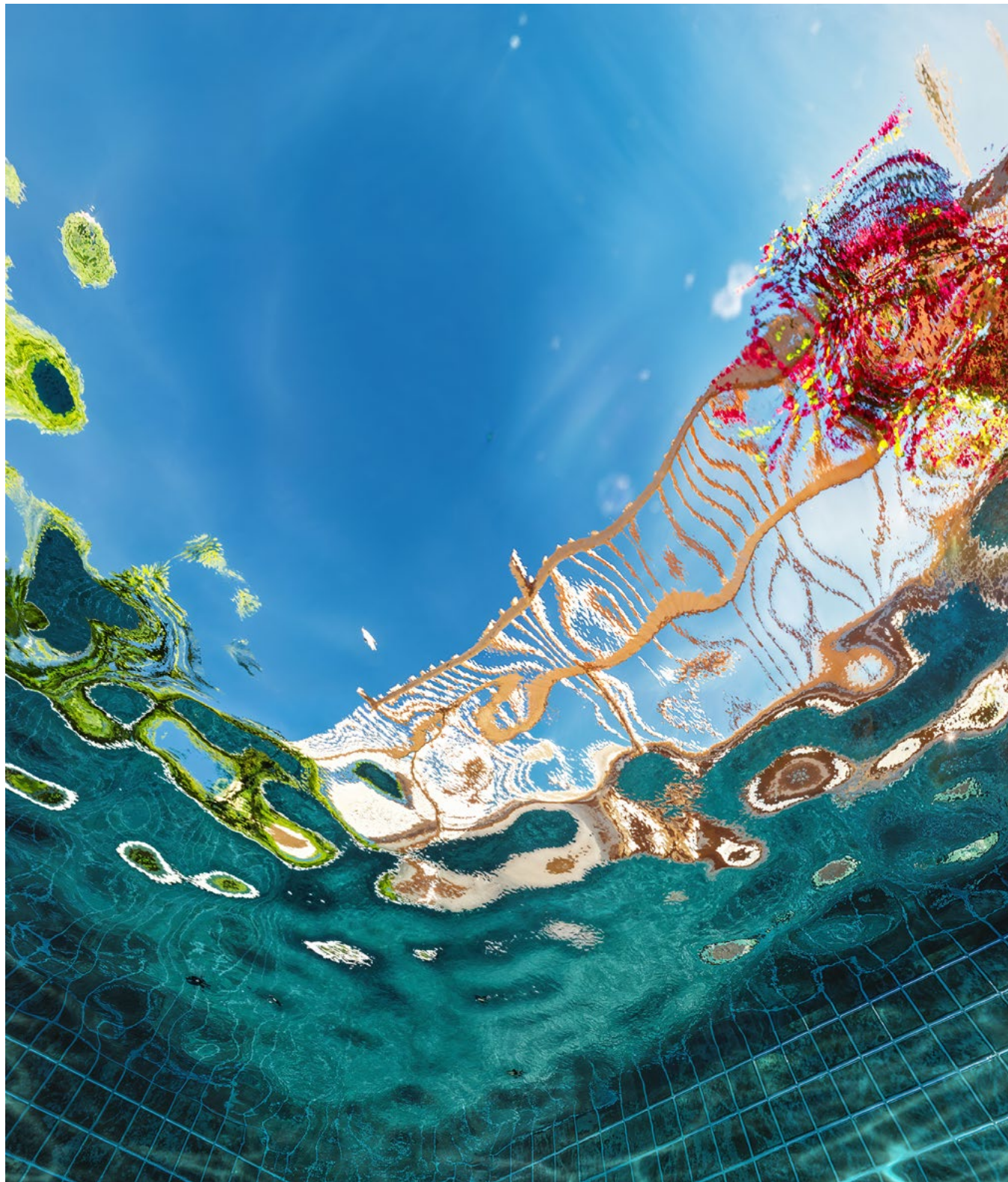




La villa L - *Aterla Architecture*



La villa L - *Aterla Architecture*



Strange as it may seem, it was this abstract side of the series that moved the clients the most. Suddenly, after months of design and discussion, they could see themselves spending summer there. A refreshing dive. A quiet night beneath a warm summer sky.

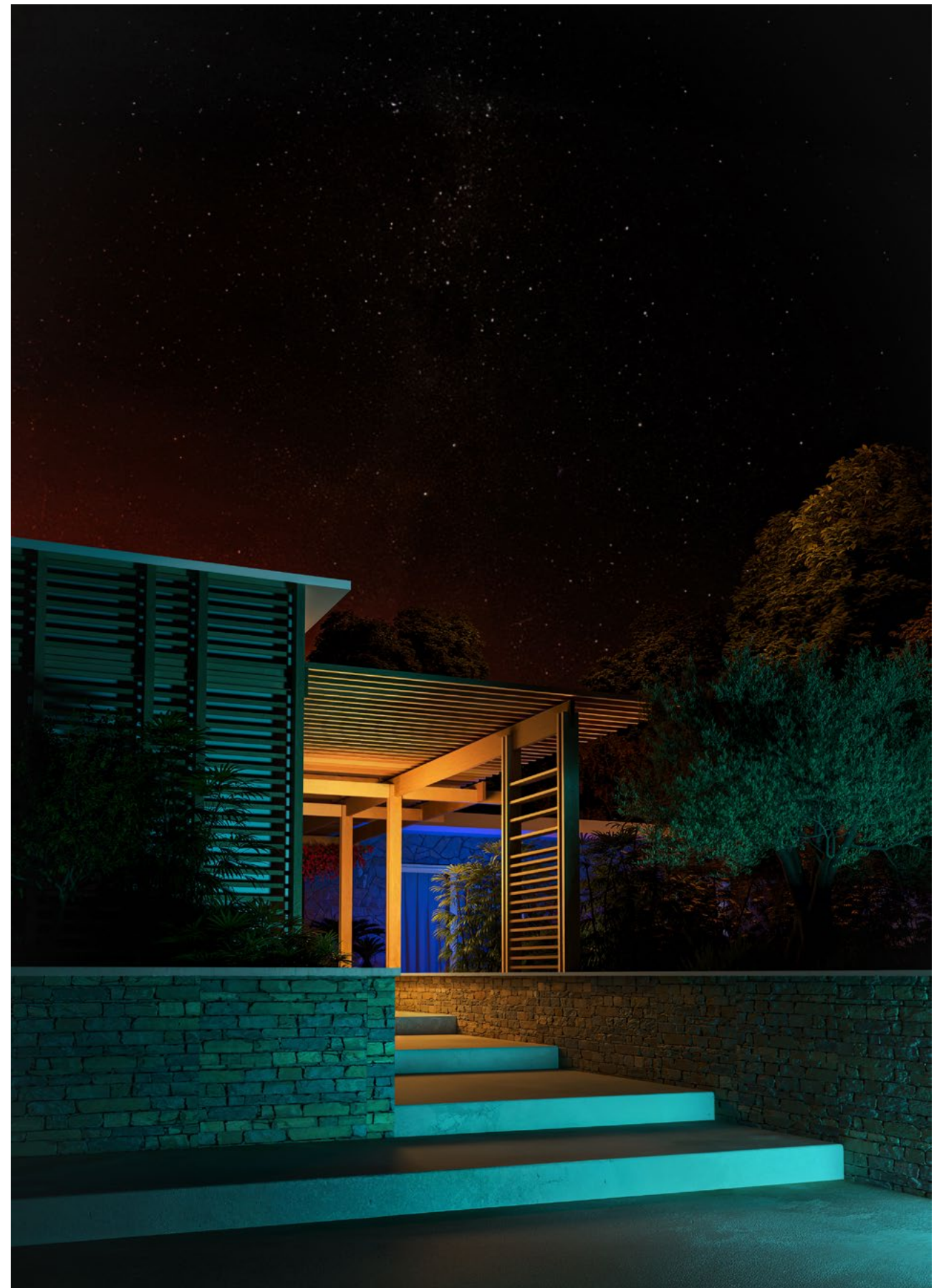
Here, choosing to step outside the usual conventions proved to be just as playful for the architect as it was for the clients. More open than the traditional architectural image, these views allow the project to be approached differently: not simply as a building to look at, but as a place to imagine.



La villa L - *Aterla Architecture*



La villa L - *Aterla Architecture*



La villa L - *Aterla Architecture*



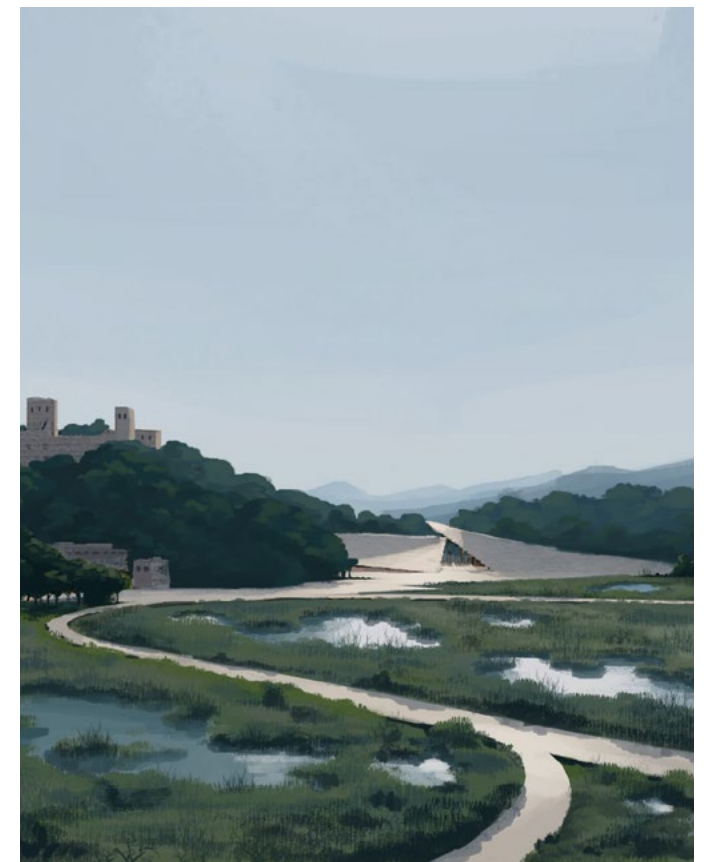
Visitor Center at Butrint - Kengo Kuma and Associates

Painting Architecture

Before becoming an architect and then a 3D artist, I studied art. Drawing has always been part of my communication toolkit. Even today, it feeds my exchanges with architects. It gives me a freedom that virtual cameras and lighting calculations don't always allow.

Some images are powerful from the very first intuition. Bold, too. Digital painting lets me test these directions quickly, to sketch out a strong concept without committing several days of production. It becomes a shortcut to a strong proposal, one that could not convince as a «work in progress» render.

Over time, this approach has become a graphic style in its own right. Some architectures deserve to be warmed by the human hand rather than defined solely by the precision of computation.



Visitor Center at Butrint - Kengo Kuma and Associates



La Grande Motte - Brenac & Gonzalez & Associés - Concept



La Grande Motte - Brenac & Gonzalez & Associés - Concept



RDAI Museum - Brick Academy



RDAl Museum - Brick Academy



RDAl Museum - Brick Academy



Museum - Terlabs'

I Am an Image, Not a Backdrop

When I started in this profession, essentially one type of image was expected of me. Functional and effective: the standard competition perspective. The first image on the first board, the main entrance under a perfectly oriented sun, happy occupants in an idyllic, perfectly controlled atmosphere.

Over time, and above all through experimentation, I understood that architectural imagery could be approached differently. I didn't have to insist on replaying the same popular song, known to everyone. There is a whole world of symphonies to explore. Architecture is designed to last. And yet, we insist on representing it on the first day of its existence, unaltered, without a trace, under a perfectly controlled laboratory light.

It's a paradox.

Architects are the first to celebrate matter, the lived-in quality of materials, patina — a noble form of aging. They know that time, relentless, is part of the work. Patina is born from exposure to the environment, to use, and to the seasons. It bears witness to a sun too harsh, storms too dense, heavy skies and hazy evenings. We are sensitive to stories that don't tell everything. In the same way, we are moved by images that let us glimpse a lived history, in their imperfections.

These moments are not secondary in the life of a building. They belong to its full cycle. They anchor it in a world in constant motion. These are the moments I seek to capture. Not to dramatize or to stand out at all costs. But to respond to the matter.

To compose an album of memories yet to come. To explore all the lives awaiting the architecture even before it is born.



La maison Dumas - Aterla'



La maison Dumas - Aterla'



La maison Dumas - Aterla'



La maison Dumas - Aterla'

**JE PHOTOGRAPHIE CE QUE
LE MONDE A DÉJÀ VU :
L'ARCHITECTURE
CONSTRUITE, JUSTE
AVANT SA LIVRAISON,
ET QU'ELLE NE CHERCHE
PLUS À CONVAINCRE,
TANT QU'ELLE SOIT
CONFORME À CE QUI
ÉTAIT PRÉVU.**

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