

Gastronomic culture was born when simple subsistence eating became a set of skills, knowledge, rituals, symbols and traditions, ranging from landscape to table. The sharing of food, space and the convivial time spent eating together is the foundation of cultural identity and continuity of communities throughout the Mediterranean basin, emphasising the values of hospitality, proximity, intercultural dialogue and creativity.

Like the *Madeleine de Proust*, food has the power to transcend its purely physical dimension of flavours and organoleptic qualities, touching the sphere of our unconscious: the experience we have of **gastronomic culture is closely linked to its place of origin, the memories it arouses, the stories it tells and the atmospheres it suggests.**

The stones of the old town of Makarska convey an atmosphere composed by sequences of places, interconnected spatial compressions, that create a **system of places with different spatial and functional characteristics.** St. Mark Cathedral, the steps of Kacik Square, the shadows on the walls of Kalelarga, the Mediterranean Sea, Biokovo Mountain, are all part of a network of spatial references strongly linked to the historic town, interconnected with the activities of fishermen and everyday life on the coast. Within this network, the three project sites are currently configured as “**functional voids**” only partially occupied through a fragmentary and highly sectorial programme that occupies them for a limited period of time. Once their main function ends (the market, the car park), they **remain non-places, effectively extraneous and excluded from the cultural and community dynamics of the city.**

The project proposal reflects of the **temporality of actions and their traces on the urban fabric:** it aims to stitch up the holes within this net(work), **creating dynamic spaces capable of integrating the cultural offer of the city with new functions related to Mediterranean gastronomic culture.** It becomes an opportunity to create a **new idea of a city centre** in connection with the history and landscape of Makarska: a new circulation based on the communication and sharing of the gastronomic culture of the Makarska coast, complementary to the routes connecting Kalelarga, the church square and the waterfront.

The “net(work)” connecting the 3 sites becomes the unifying element of the design, establishing a system that connects the new functions with the existing spaces. The existing voids are redefined and come to life through a definition of spaces that enhance the traces of history present in the urban landscape, creating a new urbanity for the local population and tourists.

As the fishermen’s net that gathers the fruits of the sea, **FishingNETwork! gathers these spaces giving new life to the voids in the new urban centre of Makarska.**

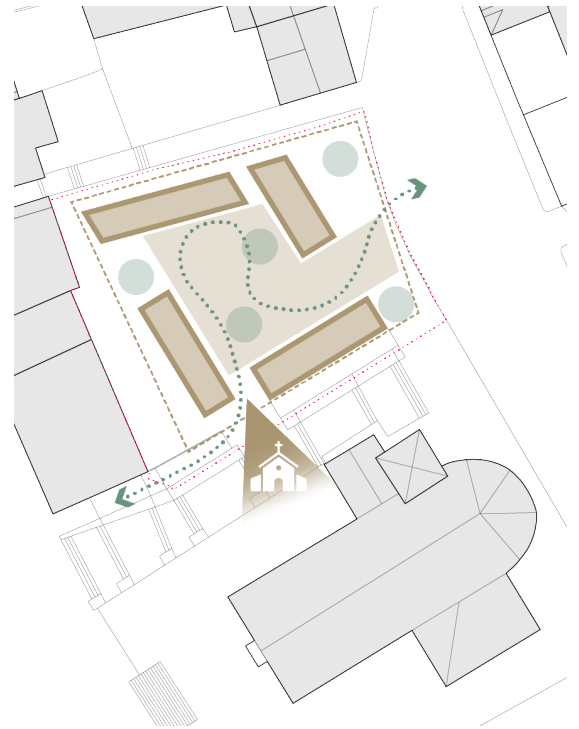


## VOID AS MULTIFUNCTIONALITY

The current market site is characterised by a particular elevation condition that connects Ul. don Mihovila Pavlinovića (the main street through the historical centre of Makarska) and St. Mark's Cathedral. The project site is located in a privileged part of the city, in direct communication with the landmarks of the city centre and the main tourist flows. The centrality of this space means that the new intervention must necessarily become a **new nodal point within the network of public spaces serving the city**. The new market exploits the existing orography of the context, connecting the street and staircase leading towards the Kacic Square.

The space is developed on two levels and is defined through the articulation of closed **volumes which contain the permanent sales points** dedicated to fish, meat, eggs and dairy resellers and the open towards the new square. The volumes are completely autonomous, equipped with storage and kitchens for food preparation and can be closed when the market activity end.

The resulting space opens up towards the main highlights of the context, namely towards the church, towards the shops along the south side and towards the large staircase that connects the square to the street. The empty space is delimited vertically by a **double-beam roof that provides protection from the weather and shields from the sun's rays, while at the same time guaranteeing a lit environment**. The gaps of the roof mesh open up to accommodate the existing trees and new vegetation that characterises the environment of the new square.



The roof becomes the system that controls the **climatic functioning of the market**: glazing with integrated photovoltaic cells between the beams allow the production of electricity while providing the entrance of natural light. At the same time, the glazed surface channels rainwater to an accumulation cistern, located on the ground floor, used to irrigate the vegetation and clean the market square.

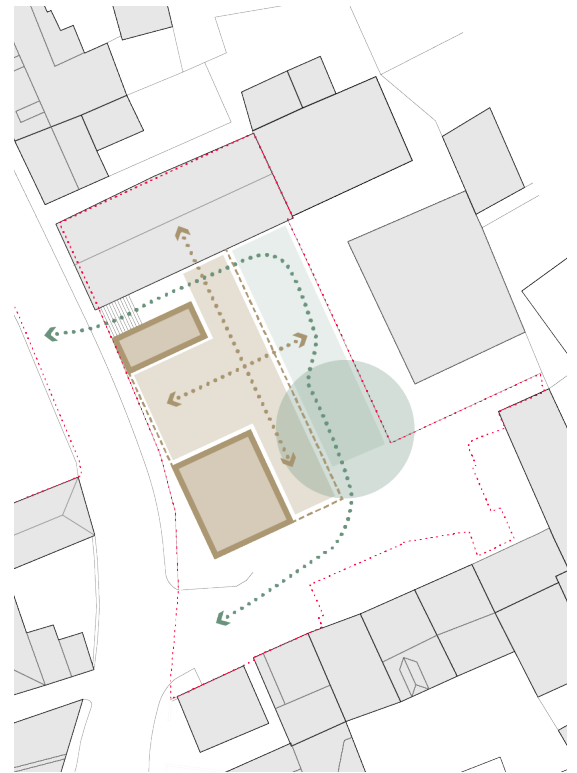
The upper level of the market, accessible directly from the street level, it's designed as a **terrace open towards the city** that hosts spaces for serving food, where meals are prepared from ingredients purchased at the market and sold to visitors. The market lounge is defined by the volumes of the kitchens and the patios that contain the trees reaching to the roof: **an autonomous space for rest and relax that can be used all year round by tourists and locals alike**.

The new market becomes a unique experiential space, based on **sharing the experience of food production, preparation and consumption: a quality space, capable of accommodating different functions during the day and during the different seasons**, thanks to retractable curtains that allow the square or the upper area to be closed independently, guaranteeing the simultaneous development of different functions.

## VOID AS CONNECTOR

The old fish market is a physical manifestation of the gastronomic culture of Makarska: a representative place where one can breathe in the past history, customs and traditions of coastal life. On the same square, currently used as a parking lot, the large pine tree is a landmark equally deserving of preservation: trees have always been a meeting place and **reference point for the community and transmission of culture**, they are witnesses to history, protagonists of the passage of time and the traditions of the places in which they live.

The new centre of Mediterranean gastronomy is developed in the empty space between these two landmarks, through a **sequence of closed volumes containing the technical functions** (services, wardrobe, storerooms, changing rooms for workers, technical rooms) **and open spaces** (open-kitchen, presentation space) enclosed by a roof surface that connects the space of the old market and the shaded area under the large pine tree.



The **presentation space** is organised as a flexible mediation space between the open kitchen, which is in direct connexion with the city, and the outdoor garden space towards which it expands visually and functionally to accommodate different events and scenarios. The decision to maintain the existing pine tree allows to create a **quality open space**, integrated with a vegetable garden for the production of local products and seats where the visitors can taste the products.

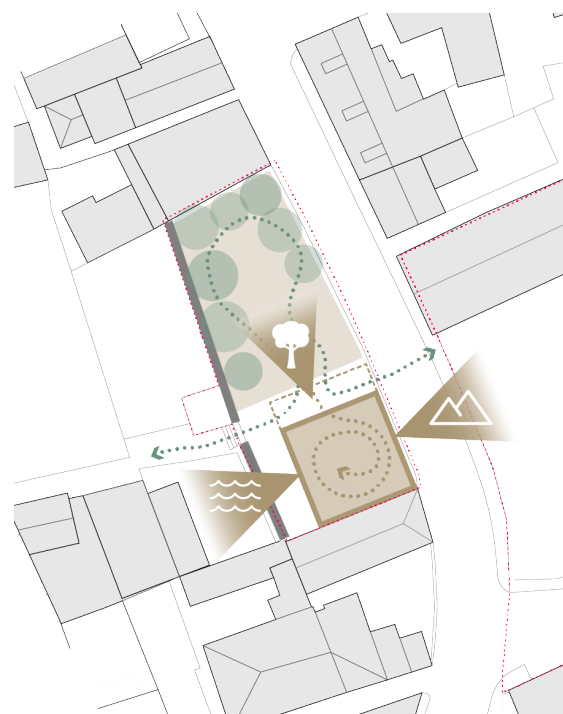
The old fish market houses a **multi-purpose hall for tastings, cooking demonstrations and lessons for the tourism school**. It becomes a space for tasting and studying the history of Mediterranean gastronomy, in direct contact with its physical heritage. It is provided with an autonomous kitchen and a multifunctional lounge space that can accommodate different uses according with the events hosted in the gastronomy center. The entrance to the gastronomy centre is from both the pine square and from the staircase that connects it with the street level through a foyer that allows to separate the flow of visitors, creating the **possibility of hosting several events simultaneously**.

The entrance to the underground car park is located in the southern part of the project site. It develops through two levels below the gastronomy centre and the cultural hub, connecting them and providing 80 parking stalls. The exit is located in the northern part of cultural hub site, **limiting the passage of cars in the proximity of the pedestrian crossing creating a safer pedestrian environment**.

## VOID AS RESOURCE

The third project site, formerly used as a car park, is bounded by the presence of the road and the **18th century wall**, whose staircase directly connects the project area and Kalelarga. **This rare empty space within the urban landscape is preserved as an open space and returned to the community**, becoming an active square that can be used for outdoor events connected to the hall of the cultural hub. Drainage paving allows water to be collected to irrigate the herb garden along the old wall, a ramp and a staircase connect the new 'arena' to the street level allowing access also to people with reduced mobility.

The cultural hub is configured as a vertical pathway composed of a sequence of stairs that frame views of the surrounding landscape and guide the visitor through **interconnected spaces suitable for hosting cultural events of the various organisations in the area**.



A large multifunctional space suitable for hosting exhibitions and performances is located on the first floor; the second floor hosts a cultural staircase, developed as a double-height space for study and meeting, which can be used as audience for cultural events, conferences, exhibitions. The space expands outwards through a large L-shaped terrace that allows a view of Biokovo Mountain and the outdoor cultural square. The ascending path ends with a **panoramic terrace that reconnects the new intervention with the surrounding landscape, finally opening up towards the sea**. The mesh roof descends along the walls, becoming a solar protection element of the façade and reconnecting the building with the net-roof of the other elements of the project.

The cultural centre thus becomes a **new landmark**, a watchtower that allows the visitor to appreciate the characteristic elements of the Makarska landscape through a single ascending path: the Biokovo mountain, the roofs of the historic town, the coastline and the Mediterranean Sea interconnect with the cultural activities, becoming an active part of them in a process of **continuous visual cross-references between the culture and the territory in which it originates**.

## MATERIALITY AND ATMOSPHERE

The project lives in the **relationship between empty and closed spaces under a single roof** that becomes the characterising and unifying element of the 3 sites. The roof is realised with a double-beam crossed frame of steel box beams closed by glazed diaphragms that allow the illumination of the spaces below. The “fishing net covering”, in addition to being a unifying element in the geometry of the 3 projects, also becomes an activator of a new urban redesign through its extension on the pavement, which draws diversified and safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists and new urban greenery. The volumes are made of a biodynamic cement, composed of a mixture of aggregates from construction waste and local stone scraps from the demolition materials. The tones of the masonry create a continuous **reference to the materiality of the historic city** and the chiaroscuro effects generated by the ‘fish net’ roofing contributes to creating a **changeable and evocative environment that can be used in different seasons of the year**.