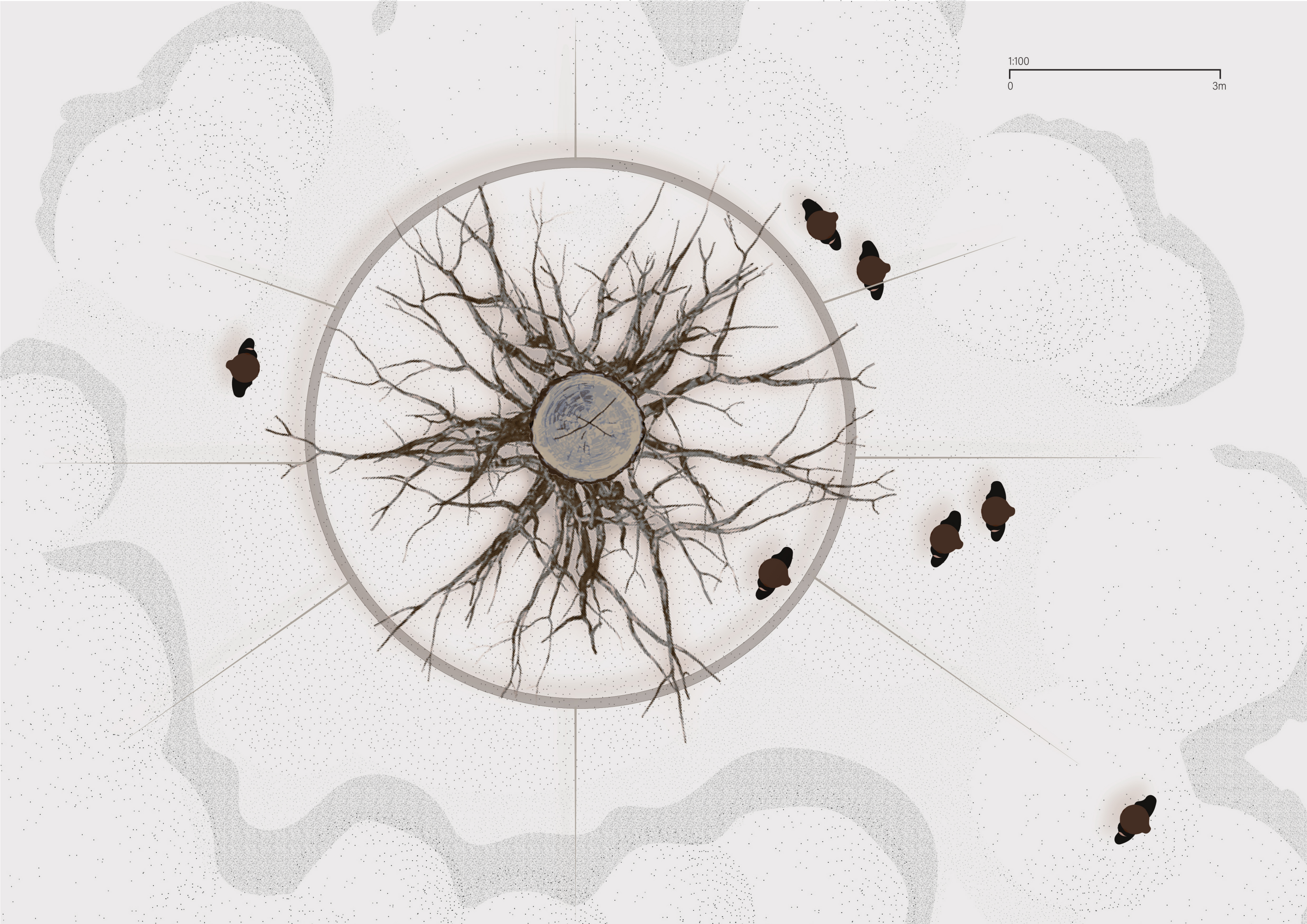


GARDEN OF LOSS

Part of the process of adaptation is the acknowledgement of loss. Grieving is often framed as the process of adapting to life *after loss*. What the pandemic and compounding environmental traumas have revealed, however, is that closure is elusive. Instead, we grieve not only for already lost landscapes, livelihoods and cultures (in the case of many living at the forefront of climate change), but for the continued death and devastation that is to come – grieving for an unavoidable future. Thus part of the process of adaptation is learning to live with grief, with the pain of understanding our complicity in the death of more-than-human bodies, while acknowledging our interspecies connectivity and interdependency, and seeking, grasping, moving forward under the weight of the enormity of what we face.

The Garden of Loss acknowledges death, providing a space for acute and ambiguous grief and a sense of connection to the more-than-human worlds on which we interdepend. While a gardener is typically always adapting to loss and change, to sit in the presence of death is rarely primary to the garden experience. By elevating death suspended from and supported by the living forest and by exposing roots as themselves networks of interdependency, the garden becomes a space for grieving together and acknowledging the entanglement of all life in the face of the shared experience of death.





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PLANT PALETTE: With the spruce budworm so vastly decimating the spruce forest, the raising of its remains seems most appropriate. Its expansive and sculptural root systems, often harvested for basketry by indigenous populations, express the networks of interdependence acknowledged as sacred in the garden. The history of extractive logging and accelerating climate impacts would make almost any dead tree remains resonate in this garden of loss.



DESCRIPTION: The living forest holds a metal ring via cable that surrounds and supports the dead tree (likely spruce) whose roots are exposed overhead. On the ground, a corresponding circle marks the sacred zone and allows for the collection of mourners to enact rituals of grief and to stand in the presence of death.