

Kanagawa Institute of Technology KAIT workshop



the light likes sunshine filtering through foliage



interior view filled with furniture and plants



interior view without furniture



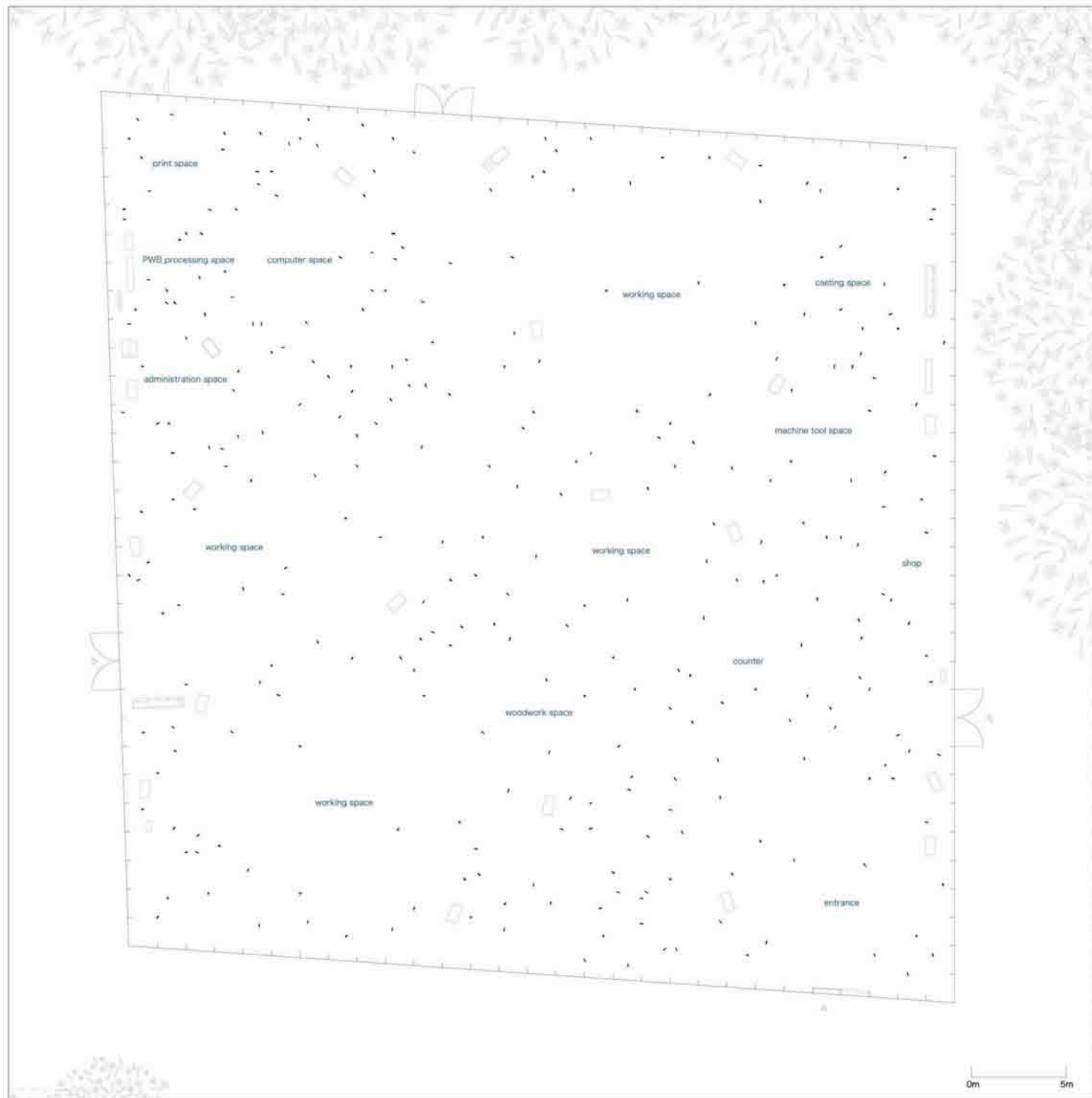
exterior view



view of the roof top



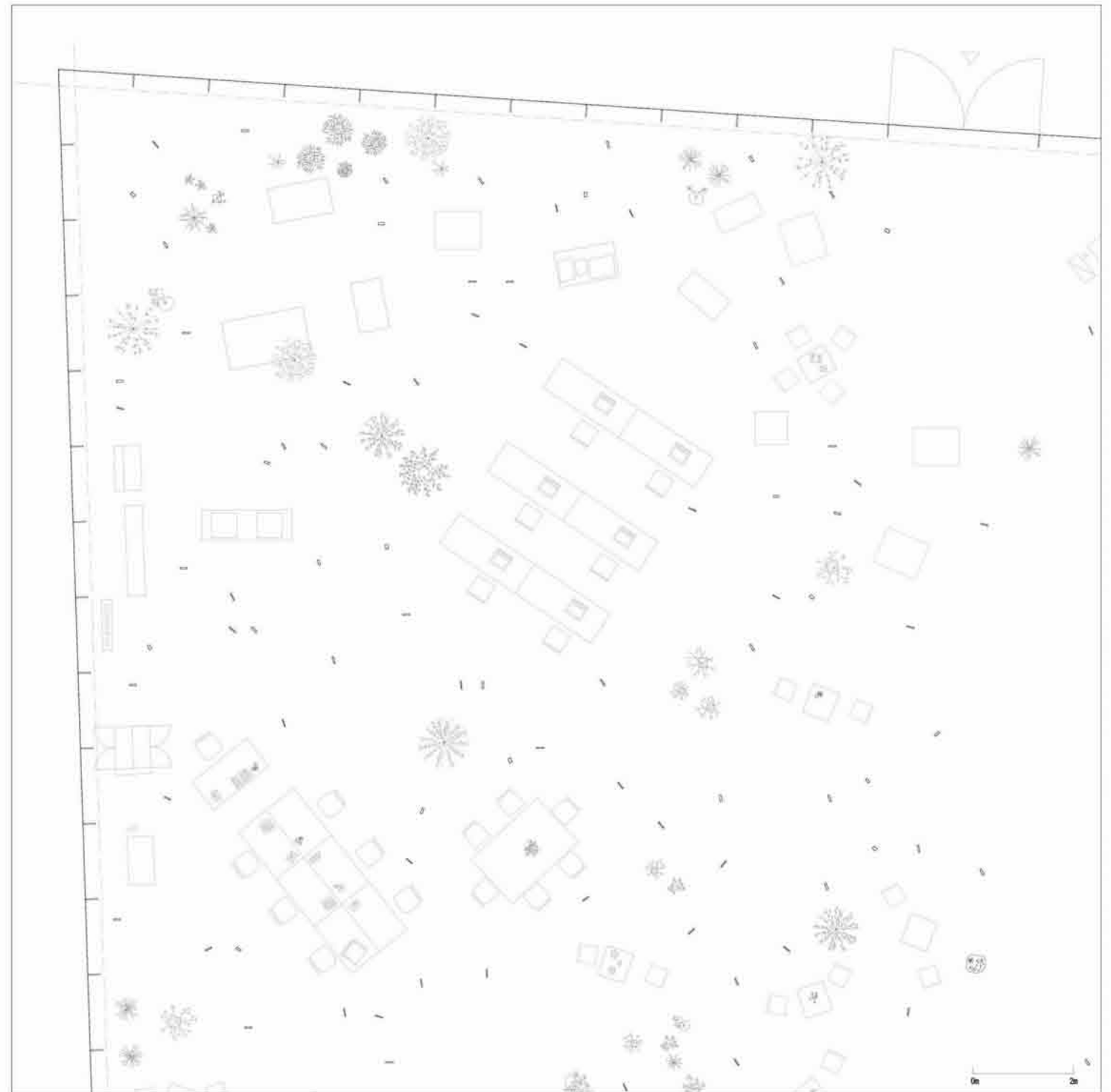
exterior view



plan



elevation



plan

This is a studio/workplace constructed on the Kanagawa Institute of Technology campus in the suburbs of Tokyo.

The client wanted this structure to be a place where students could work on diverse self-initiated projects to make things, and to also have a high public capacity, as it would be open for use by local children.

With regard to the flexibility this building required, I saw little need to tailor sections of the plan very differently according to the various programs it would house, as each of the individual spaces would necessarily be specialized to some extent. Then, to ensure that users would have the freedom to alter the spaces to meet different needs within a reasonably short time period, it began to make more sense to me to pursue flexibility in the relations between adjoining places, and in the way various spaces are connected with each other. This view led to the thinking that some soft, ambiguous kind of borders could be invented by raising pillars in a random fashion.

To be specific, I wanted to provide no earthquake-resistant walls, but make this building work on just an ensemble of slight pillars of varying proportions. What shape the sections would be, the coordinates and the angles of the pillars would be adjusted by the millimeter. How "densely set" should the pillars be? Resultant spaces would be best open toward which directions and to what extent? The studies we did to examine these issues became quite extensive. We did models in

numerous scales ranging from small to extremely large. Sketches were made with the plan depicted in dots, to explore just what kind of spaces would exist between pillars. Studies of the plan were done with a program written for this project on a special CAD. We had an Excel program created to do trial calculations and give us general ideas on the structural soundness, and so on.

All these were carried out simultaneously throughout, and in the end we were able to arrive at a structure that stood on 305 pillars, almost none of which had identical sections or angles. At the same time, borders between individual places emerged, as a result of these pillars. Even as I, the architect, am creating the space deliberately and with clear intent, I am not the one who can tell you what determined the decisions made. Is the basis structure, function, or design—? I had hoped for this, for even the borders between such bases to become indistinct.

In fact I would say that in an ideal building the pillars would have the same presence or outward bearing, and be formed on the same dimension as, the surroundings, the furniture and the greenery. I was hoping, by creating all elements equally strong in presence—as well as possible—that a very generous and productive degree of flexibility could be achieved. I was interested, I would say now, in the promise held by a kind of abstractness having nothing to do with the abstractness that we consider a property of diagrams and such.