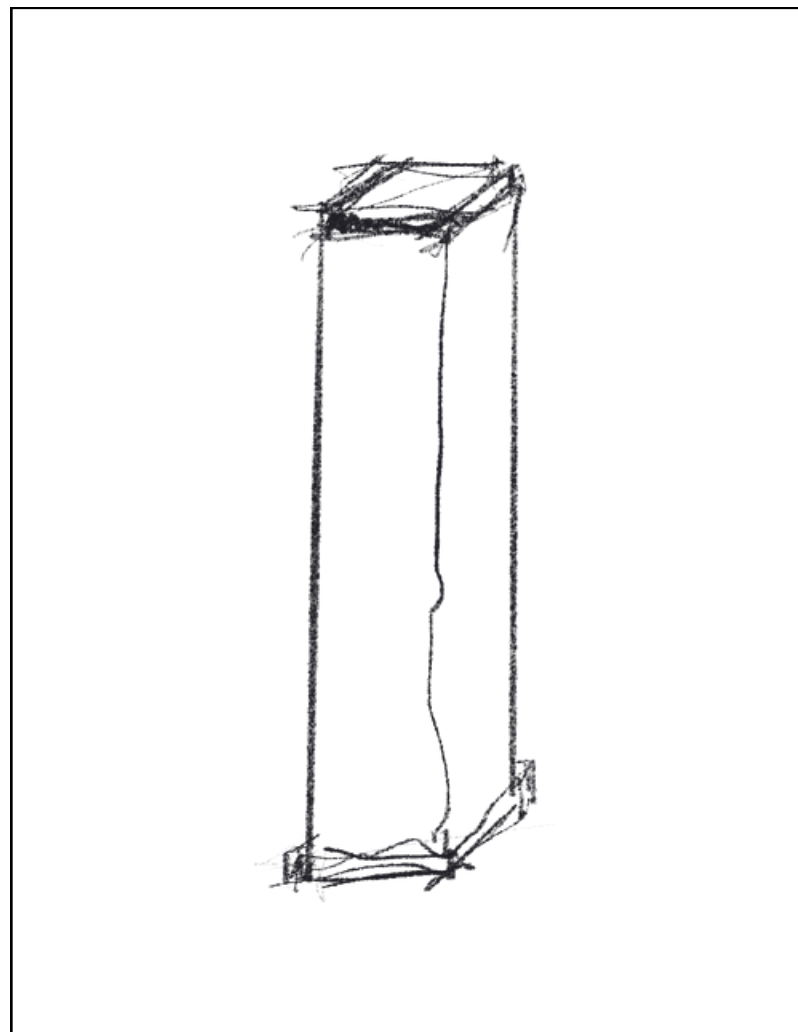


LE PIÉDESTAL

PROJECT RESEARCH



FROM IMPOSED VALUE TO CHOSEN ATTENTION

The Transformation of the Pedestal Across Museum and Domestic Display Regimes

OBSERVATION METHOD

This research examines how the pedestal organizes attention across museum and domestic display regimes in order to define its contemporary reactivation within domestic space.

Examining how objects are elevated and supported in space. Each display situation is documented using a comparative table describing object type, support, height, spatial position, display density, and viewer/habitation behaviour.

RESEARCH QUESTION

This research analyzes the pedestal as a spatial object that organizes attention across display regimes, in order to define its contemporary reactivation within domestic space.

MUSEUM REGIME

RESEARCH

- Classic museum display (19th century)
- Modern museum display (1960s–1980s)
- Contemporary museum display

The research examines how museums historically used the pedestal to construct hierarchy, distance and fixed systems of attention through elevation, isolation and controlled viewing conditions.

“Collections first appeared in princely and aristocratic residences before being transferred into museums.”

Pomian, Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice 1500–1800

The spatial practices used in museums did not originate in museums themselves. Early forms of collecting and display developed in aristocratic houses and private collections. Public museums later institutionalized these domestic display practices, transforming them into formal systems of exhibition and viewing.

(Bennett, Tony. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. London: Routledge, 1995).

Transformation of the Pedestal

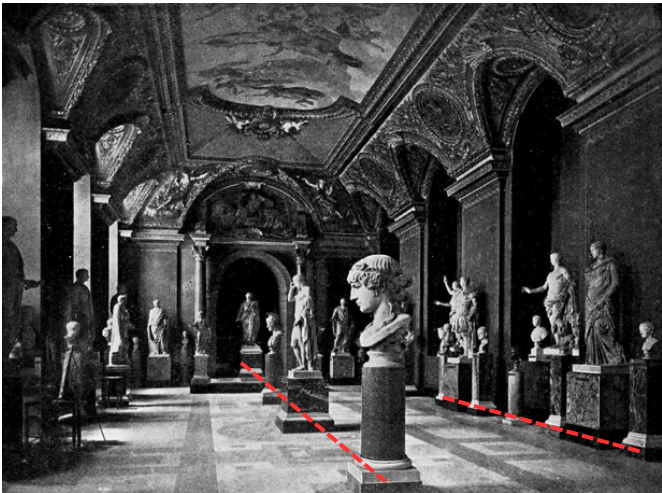
While museums reinforced the authority of the pedestal as a device of display, modern artistic practices later questioned this system. As a result, domestic interiors gradually abandoned the pedestal in favor of more integrated and informal modes of display.

Duncan, Carol. *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*. London: Routledge, 1995.

MUSEUM REGIME 1 — THE LOUVRE

Classic museum display (19th century)

Museum	Object type	Support	Height category	Spatial position	Display density	Viewer behavior
Louvre classical sculpture salles	classical sculpture	carved marble pedestal	90–140 cm	perimeter + axial (dense)	dense accumulation	sequential viewing



Ancienne salle d'Augusten (Salle des Empereurs), Musée du Louvre, Paris. Date, entre 1900 et 1919. © louvre.fr

Observation

In nineteenth-century museums, the pedestal elevates sculptures above the viewer and organizes them along the gallery axis. This arrangement creates symbolic distance and establishes a hierarchical relationship between artwork and observer, reinforcing the museum’s authority as a space of cultural ritual.



La salle des Cariatides au 19e siècle. © louvre.fr

MUSEUM REGIME 2 — CENTER POMPIDOU

Modern museum display (1960s–1980s)

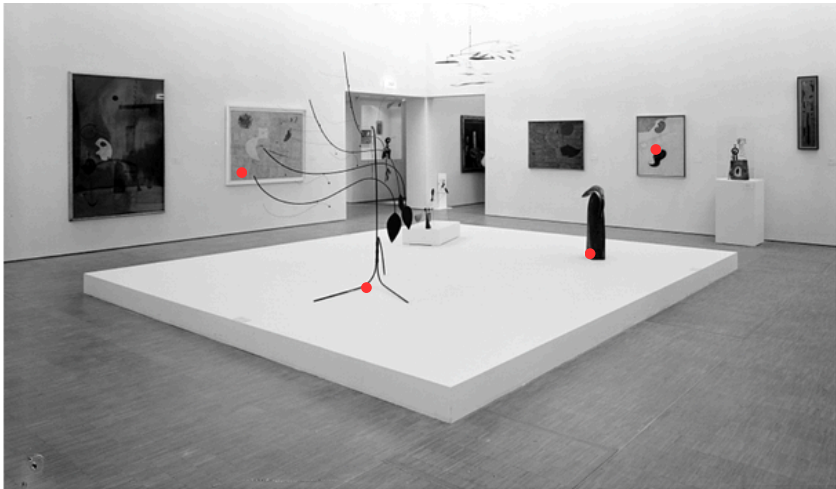
Museum	Object type	Support	Height category	Spatial position	Display density	Viewer behavior
Centre Pompidou	painting + sculpture+ frames displayed together	white plinth / floor platform	low pedestal (approx. 40–90 cm)	Field display	low density	viewer circulates freely around works

Observation

Modern museum displays replace the hierarchical pedestal system with open spatial fields. Objects move closer to the floor and are distributed sparsely within large galleries, allowing free circulation and reducing the symbolic distance between artwork and viewer.



Opening of the Center Pompidou, 1977. © Center Pompidou, Mnam-Cci

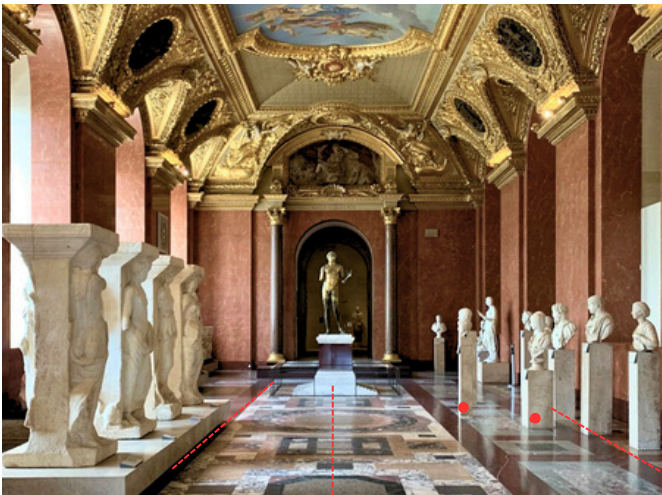


Center Pompidou, 1985. © Center Pompidou, Mnam-Cci

MUSEUM REGIME 3 — THE LOUVRE & CENTER POMPIDOU

Contemporary museum display

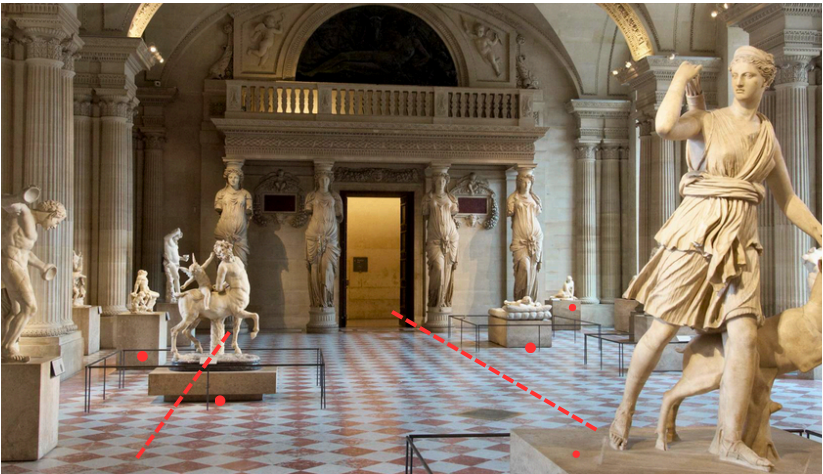
Museum	Object type	Support	Height category	Spatial position	Display density	Viewer behavior
Louvre Museum	mainly sculpture in one space	stone pedestal / plinth	low–high pedestal (≈40–120 cm)	perimeter + axial + terraced composition	Medium	viewer circulates around but remains at respectful distance
Centre Pompidou	painting, sculpture, and “specific objects” displayed together	floor placement, low white plinths, or wall mounts	very low platform or floor level	Field display: objects distributed within open gallery field	Medium to low	viewer shares space with artwork and moves freely



Salle d'Augusten (Salle des Empereurs), Musée du Louvre, Paris. Date, entre 2024 et 2026. © louvre.fr



La cour Marly © louvre.fr



La salle des Cariatides, 2026 © louvre.fr

Observation

Contemporary museums combine historical systems of elevation with modern open-field display conditions.



Center Pompidou, Salle formes et attitudes © Center Pompidou, Mnam-Cci/Adam Rzepka



Center Pompidou, 2007–2008. © Center Pompidou, Mnam-Cci



Brancusi at the Center Pompidou, March–July 2024

*ARTISTIC RUPTURE



Brancusi, "Colonne sans fin" (1930-1931)



pedestal is part of the artwork

Constantin Brancusi (1910s-1930s)

Brancusi transforms the pedestal into a sculptural element.
Support and sculpture merge into a single composition.

In pieces such as Endless Column (1930) and in the arrangements of his Paris studio, the distinction between sculpture and support dissolves, transforming the pedestal into a sculptural element.
Sidney Geist, Brancusi: A Study of the Sculpture, 1968.



Giacometti, with the "Walking Man I" (1960)



Giacometti "Standing Woman I-IV" (1947-1950)

Sculpture includes its own platform.

Alberto Giacometti (1940s-1960s)

Giacometti's figures often stand on a thin ground plate cast together with the sculpture.
The sculpture already contains its own base, reducing the need for an architectural pedestal.

Museums often add pedestals for presentation, but the sculpture itself no longer depends on them conceptually.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. The Search for the Absolute, 1948.

Minimalism (United States, mid-1960s)

Artists: Donald Judd - Carl Andre - Robert Morris

Minimalist artists remove the pedestal entirely.
Objects are placed directly on the floor, or attached to the wall, occupying the same spatial field as the viewer.

Judd argues that sculpture should exist as "specific objects" occupying space, not elevated statues:
https://monoskop.org/images/3/31/Judd_Donald_1965_2005_Specific_Objects.pdf



Judd, "Untitled (Stack)" (1967)



Andre "Equivalent VIII" (1966)

The pedestal disappears entirely

TRANSITIONAL CONDITION



Alberto Giacometti Exceptional Pair of Vases (1901-1966)
© Galerie Jacques Lacoste, Paris

After the pedestal dissolves as an autonomous support, its operations do not disappear entirely.

In Giacometti's monumental vases, sculptural presence migrates into domestic object typologies. The distinction between sculpture, decorative object, and architectural presence becomes unstable.

The logic of elevation and distinction survives internally within the object itself.

DOMESTIC DISPLAY

RESEARCH

- Aristocratic domestic display
- Early modern domestic interiors
- Late-modern collector interiors
- Contemporary interiors

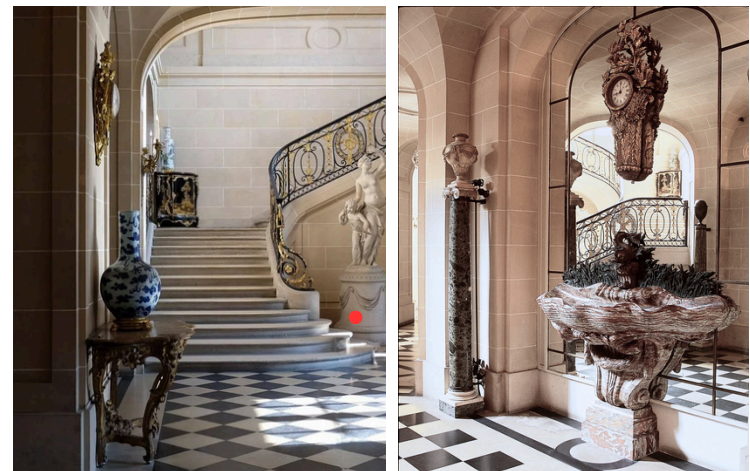
The research examines how domestic interiors progressively absorbed the pedestal into furniture, architecture and everyday spatial life.

Aristocratic Domestic Display
Hotel Moise de Camondo, 1911-1914
(historicist Louis XVI interior)

Object type	Support	Height category	Spatial position	Display density	Habitation behavior
classical busts and sculptures	marble & stone pedestal	medium-high pedestal (≈90–120 cm)	aligned along walls, corners, architectural axes (entrance hall, dining room, niches)	dense accumulation	act as monumental markers within inhabited reception spaces.

Observation

Pedestals elevate sculptures to emphasize their status as collectible and patrimonial objects. Even within lived reception rooms, elevation maintains their authority and separates them from everyday furniture.



Hotel Moise de Camondo, 1911–1914

Early Modern Domestic Interiors (1920s–1930s)

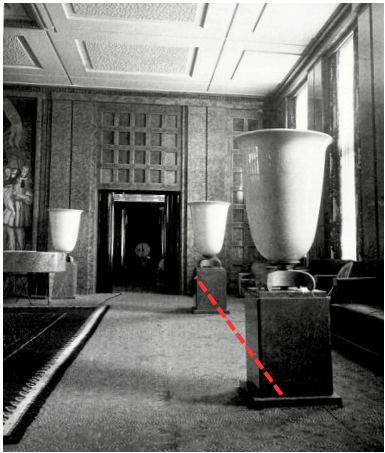
Case	Object type	Display density	Support	Height category	Spatial position	Habitation behavior
Ruhlmann interiors	Sculpture, decorative objects (his own)	Sparse	Decorative pedestal, architectural niche pedestal	medium–high pedestal (≈90–120 cm)	Along walls, in niches, integrated with architectural axes	objects punctuate reception spaces while circulation continues around them
Marie-Laure de Noailles by Jean-Michel Franck (1926)	lamps, sculpture, only essentials	Very sparse, until lived	floor placement (sculpture); consoles or side tables	Floor level or furniture height	Along walls, corners, integrated with furniture	Objects coexist with everyday domestic life
Marc du Plantier apartment (1935)	historical sculptures	Sparse	simple plinth (white block and wall niche)	medium–high pedestal (≈90–120 cm)	Along walls, in niches.	sculpture integrated into living space, transitional logic



Object inside architecture, used as a precise architectural insertion= focal point



Pedestal in niche. Chambre d'appartement, Salon d'art décorateur 1928,



Along walls, reinforcing symmetry



sculptural objects begin to occupy the domestic floor plane directly.

The home of Marie-Laure de Noailles, by Jean-Michel Franck, photograph by Thérèse Bonney

Same space after some years of living, with no pedestal in view, the walls become the main display surface for artworks.

Observation

In early modern interiors, the traditional pedestal system weakens as artworks migrate to walls, fireplaces, and furniture. While the density of objects varies depending on the collector, display is no longer organized around freestanding pedestals. Instead, vertical surfaces and domestic furniture become the primary supports for artworks.



The home of Marc du Plantier's apartment in boulevard Suchet, Paris, 1936



The round entrance of du Plantier's apartment in boulevard Suchet, Paris, 1936

Late-Modern Collector Interiors (1970s–1980s)

Case	Object type	Display density	Support	Height category	Spatial position	Habitation behavior
Hôtel de Luzy (Seydoux residence), 1974	Vase and plant	Medium	Louis XVI Boulle pedestal	100–120 cm	placed along wall	decorative display within a study space
Hôtel d’Orrouer, Hubert de Givenchy, 1986,	classical bust sculpture	Medium	marble pedestal	100–120 cm	placed near window wall along circulation space	formal display in transitional space

Observation

In the living rooms of the Hôtel de Luzy, objects are displayed on consoles, tables, vitrines, and mantels rather than on pedestals. Even within rooms maintaining classical decorative settings, artworks remain integrated into furniture and wall compositions. The pedestal thus appears only marginally, while the dominant mode of display relies on layered domestic arrangements.



Entrance of the house doesn't have any pedestal, even the sculpture under the stair is not as important as it used to be



Display shifts toward walls, consoles, tables, and fireplaces, while the pedestal survives marginally as decorative furniture or transitional marker.



Phtotographed by Horst P Horst, 1974



A single Louis XVI Boulle pedestal appears in the library, repurposed as a plant stand rather than as an art support. Pedestal survives only as a collectible artifact itself.



The first-floor landing of the hotel d'Orrouer, © François Halard for Christie



The drawing room, showing at the table two objects that look like a pedestal base by...? objects placed on coffee table, consoles and fireplace. © François Halard



The sculpture no longer requires an autonomous pedestal; its base is absorbed into the work, allowing it to coexist with domestic circulation.



In the petit salon of the hotel, the modern Picasso's" Faun With a Spear" (1947) is frames with classical frame, a move that art collectors loved to do. Even though the furniture and objects are combining the classical and modern eras, still no show of pedestal in personal spaces. © François Halard

Observation

While the density of objects varies depending on the collector, display is no longer organized around freestanding pedestals. Instead, vertical surfaces and domestic furniture become the primary supports for artworks.

Today Interiors (2000s-2026s)



I Mahal Bath, “AD Interieurs” Exhibition, Paris, 2012. Using Rublmann colonne pair acts as a vertical punctuation in the room



Montaigne appartement project, 2017
Phtotographed by Adrien Dirand



The pedestal persists as a spatial marker, sometimes detached from its original display function.

Interior/ case	Object type	Display density	Support	Height category	Spatial position	Habitation behavior
Joseph Dirand Interior	Non/ urn	very sparse	monolithic block (stone, marble) /Historical art collection (Ruhlmann)	70–120 cm	placed on axis, symmetry point, or spatial threshold	pedestal structures spatial composition
Niche placements	sculpture / bust	very sparse	built architectural plinth or niche base	40–70 cm	integrated into wall niche, alcove, or architectural recess	spatial maker sculpture integrated into architectural composition
Pedestal placement	bust /classical sculpture/ objects	Medium-low	antique pedestal (marble or wood,) reused	90–110 cm	placed near wall, corner, window, or architectural threshold	historical pedestal reused as decorative artifact displaying sculpture

*CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES ARE CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THEIR SPATIAL FUNCTION RATHER THAN THE HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF THE PEDESTAL OR STUDYING A SPECIFIC PROJECT.



Villa Pineda by Humbert et Poyet. Integrated pedestal niches frame the stair axis, where classical busts function as architectural markers within the entrance sequence.



Parisien appartement for the designer Nathan Baraness, placing Aristide Maillol “Etude pour Harmonie” in a integrated architectural plinth.

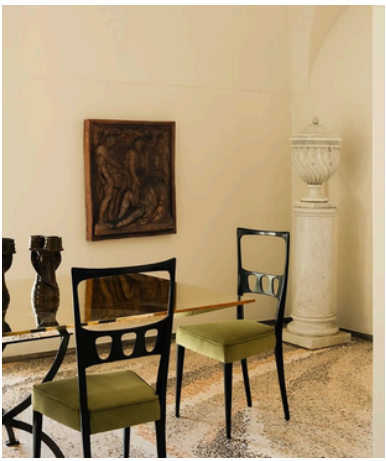


François Halard 18th century Hotel particular in south of France, most of his artwork collection is placed on top of furniture surfaces. Art frames are between classic and modern, 2020.



Historical classical female bust with Gothic-style wooden pedestal — probably 19th century. placed next to a window. next to it a contemporary ssculptural object on a tripod stand.

François Halard house.



A historical neoclassical pedestal reused as a decorative object stand, placed in the corner of the room, by Humbert et Poyet

Observation

The pedestal is no longer primarily a support but a rhetorical figure—a sign that changes how the object is read.

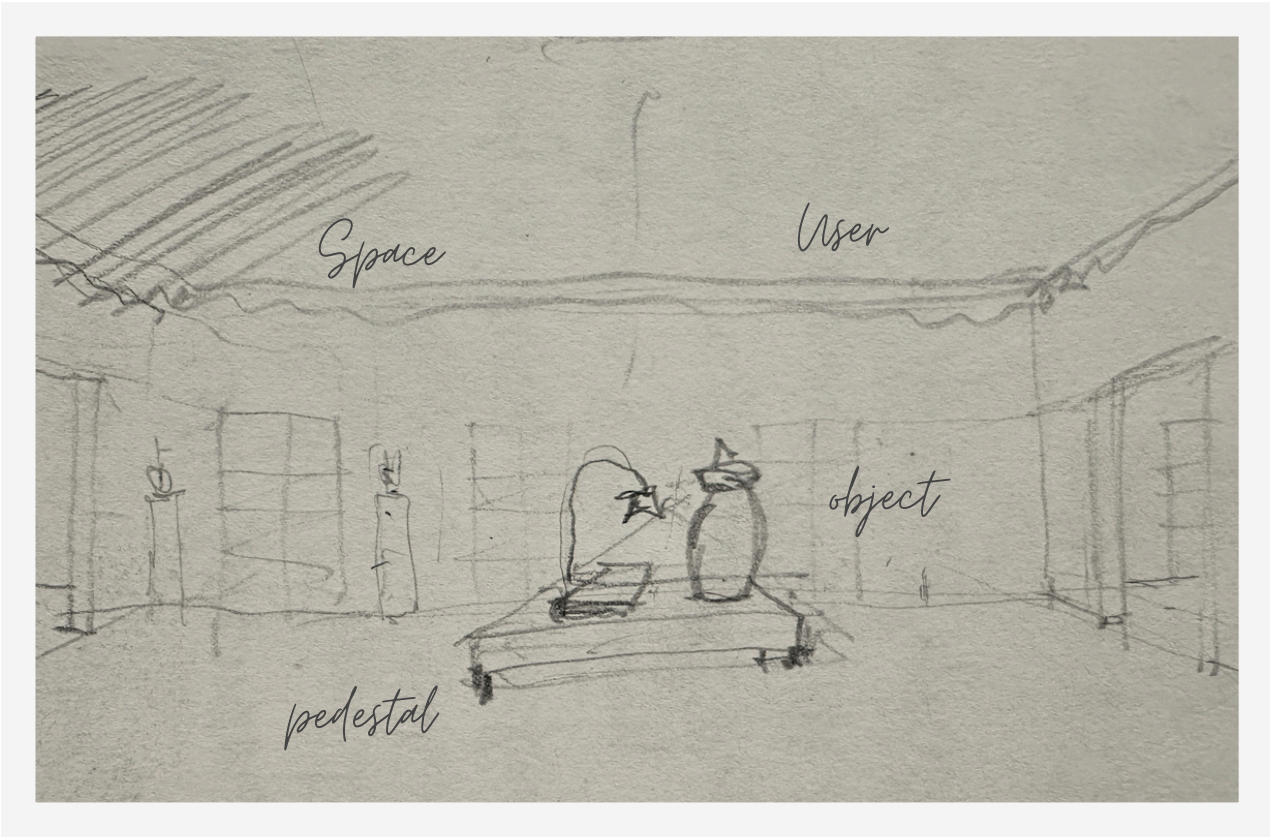
The pedestal surviving as spatial marker in thresholds, corners, niches, symmetry points, and axes. That pattern is visible much more strongly than the authority object argument.

CONCLUSION

Research into museum and domestic display revealed a shift from fixed systems of symbolic authority toward more contingent and personal forms of attention.

While the historical pedestal imposed hierarchy and distance, contemporary domestic space disperses objects across continuous horizontal surfaces where focus constantly shifts.

The project therefore reintroduces a vertical condition capable of isolating an object and constructing moments of intentional attention within everyday domestic space.



From imposed value → to chosen attention

OLD PEDESTAL

- monument
- assigns value
- authority over the viewer
- fixed meaning
- symbolic distance

CONTEMPORARY DEVICE

- Relation
- Constructs attention
- Agency of the user
- Contingent meaning
- Bodily proximity



INTENTION

Dans les intérieurs domestiques contemporains, les objets se dissolvent dans la continuité de l'espace quotidien, dispersés sur des tables, des étagères ou d'autres surfaces horizontales où l'attention se déplace en permanence.

Le projet réintroduit le piédestal comme une structure spatiale discrète, capable d'isoler un objet et de créer, au sein de l'espace domestique, des conditions localisées d'attention.

Par la maîtrise de sa hauteur, la limitation de sa surface et l'orientation de la lumière, il établit une relation plus directe entre le corps, l'objet et l'espace qui les entoure. Si la structure demeure constante, ce qu'elle accueille peut, lui, évoluer continuellement.

