

# Department of Keys

**Liam Gillick**  
**For the University of Houston**

January 2012

## **DEPARTMENT OF KEYS**

The contemporary university is cannot be characterized by a single description. It is a place of multiple activities, desires and energies.

Department of Keys is an artwork designed to emphasize the complex and multifaceted role of the contemporary university.

The work is both a marker and a demonstration of independent spirit and thought.

The work is a series of fictional Departments indicated by multi-colored signs fixed to a large stainless steel sign-post.

A large number of fictional departments are fixed to the post pointing in many directions.

The work is intended as a reinforcement of the multi-faceted aspect of the university and as an indicator of growth and potential revealing a place of no limits where all questions can be asked and all possibilities examined.



## THE COMPLEX SIGN

There is a long tradition of improvised signage - generally pointing towards distant locations. With Department of Keys we do not point towards places but departments - departments of thought and potential.



City	Number
CAIRO	7605
LAS VEGAS	241
SAN PAULO	6162
DETROIT	1992
NEW YORK	2461
MONACO	6089
SUVA	5498
ROME	6353
MONTVIDEO	6228
LISBON	5689
MILWAUKEE	1754
KOMIZA	6403
SAN PEDRO	9
LONDON	5462

Paris 2140 Km

Londra 2371 Km

Viena 892 Km

Praga 1224 Km

Uniunea  
Europeană 0 Km





## UNIVERSITY SIGNAGE

While Department of Keys indicates a sequence of fictional departments the nature of the artwork - its form and execution - is not likely to be confused with typical existing University signage types.



511

School of Education

School of Fashion & Textiles



512

School of Fashion & Textiles




513

School of Fashion & Textiles



514

University Services 



515

School of Design [TAFE]

-International Centre of Graphic Technology

Technical Services Unit



516

School of Design [TAFE]

-International Centre of Graphic Technology

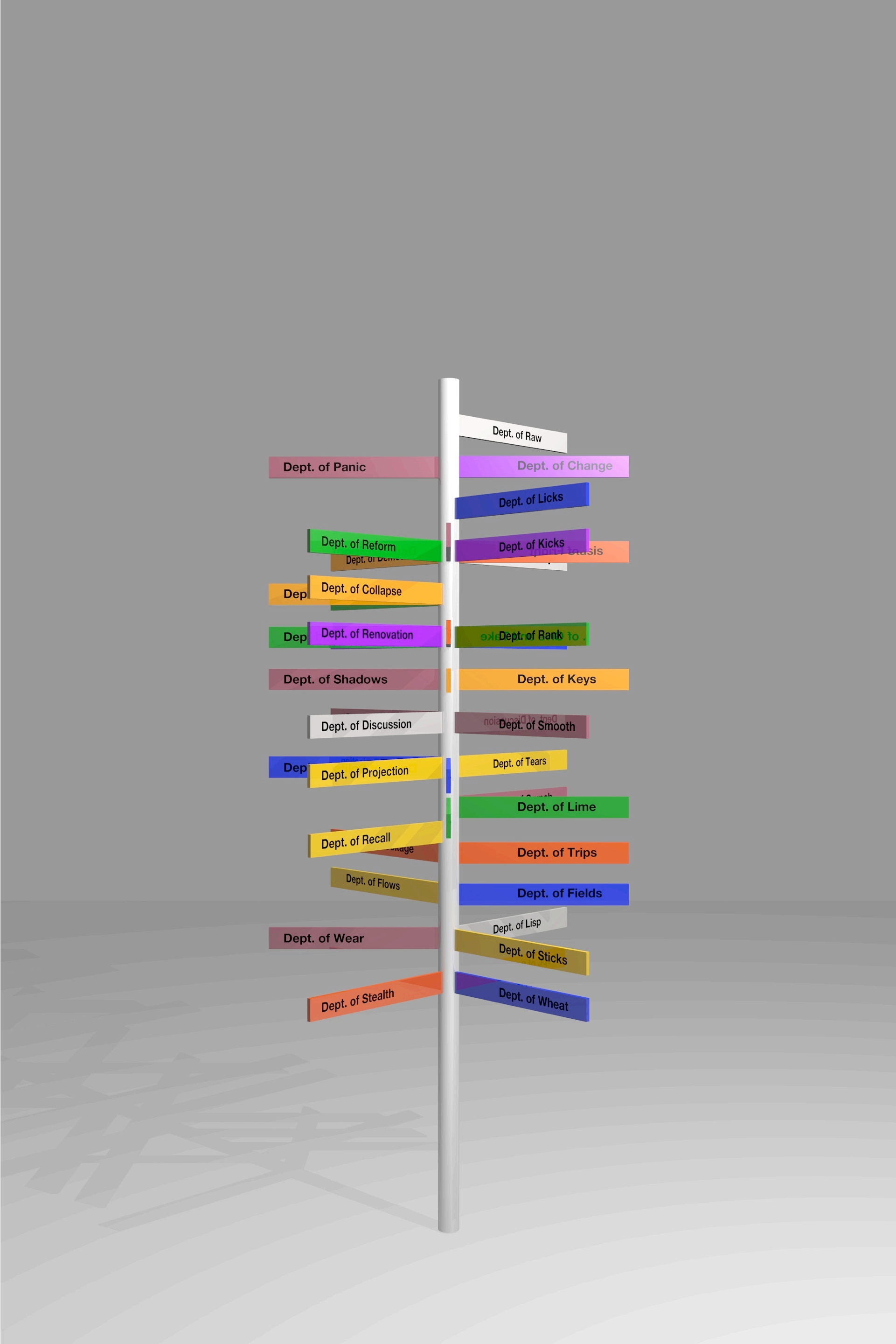


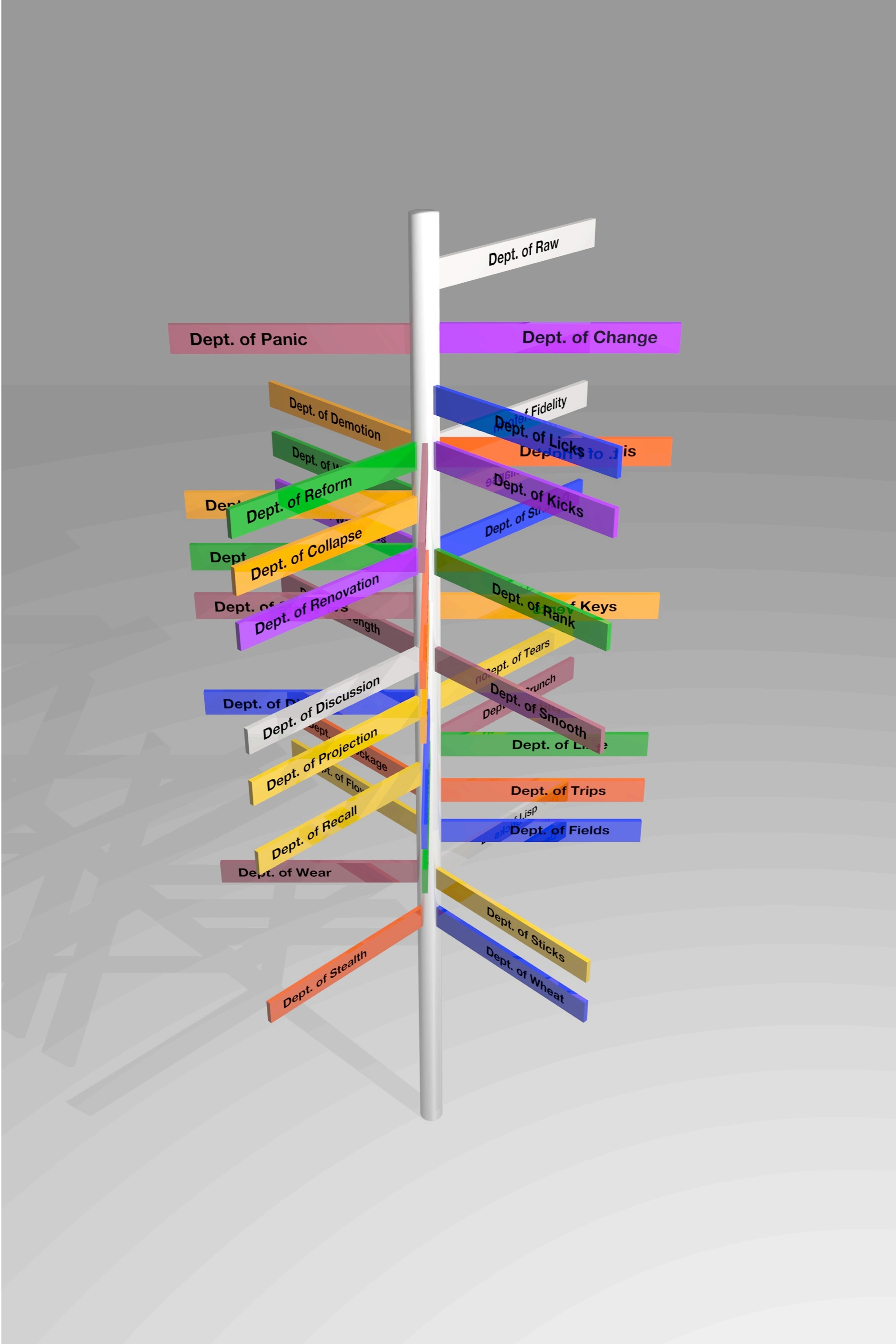
## THE STRUCTURE

The structure comprises a stainless steel post fixed to the concrete of the plaza. A number of powder-coated aluminum signs are fixed to the post. Each sign is screenprinted with a fictional department.

A PROLIFERATION OF SIGNS

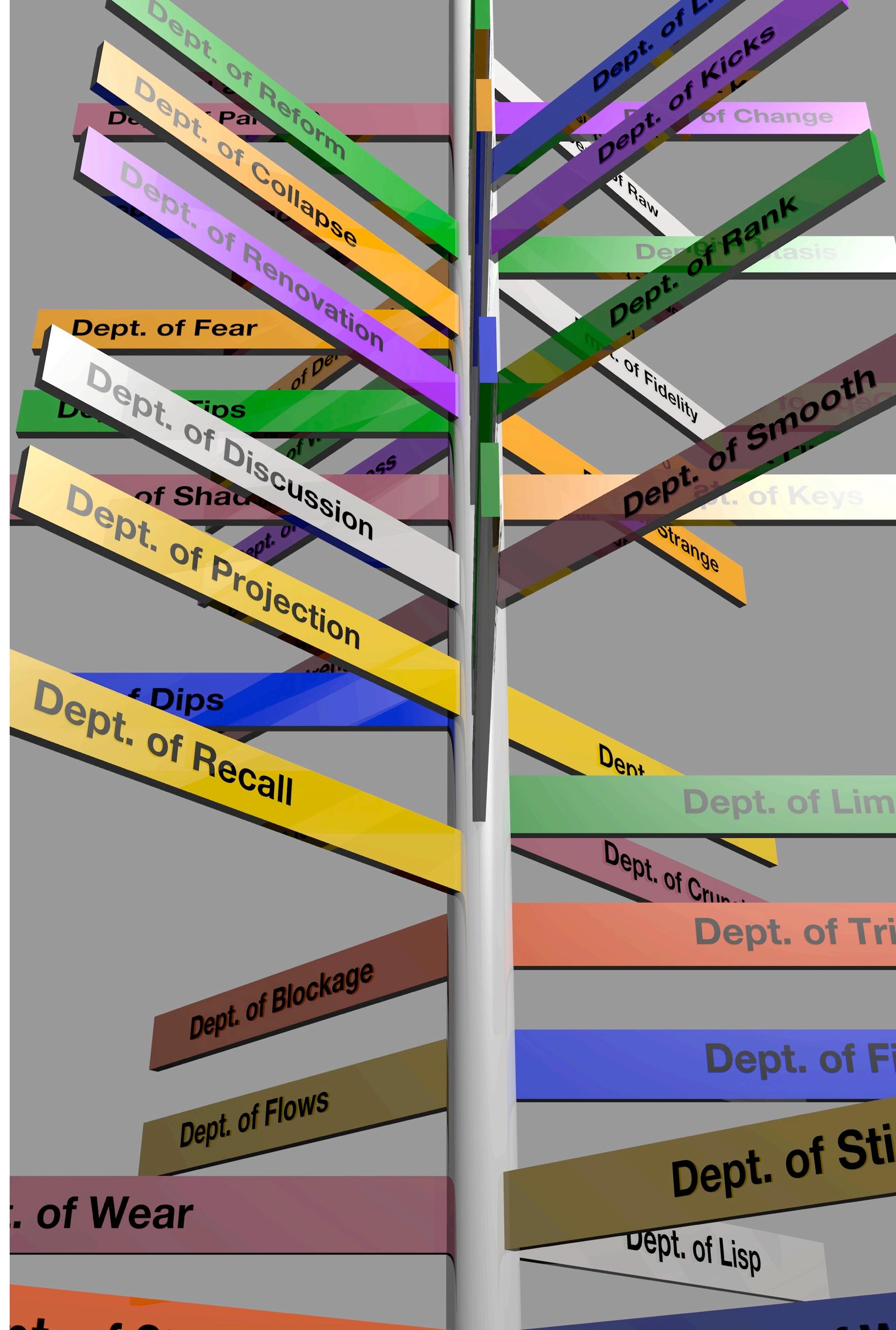
There are so many departments on the post that the first impression of the work is its form.





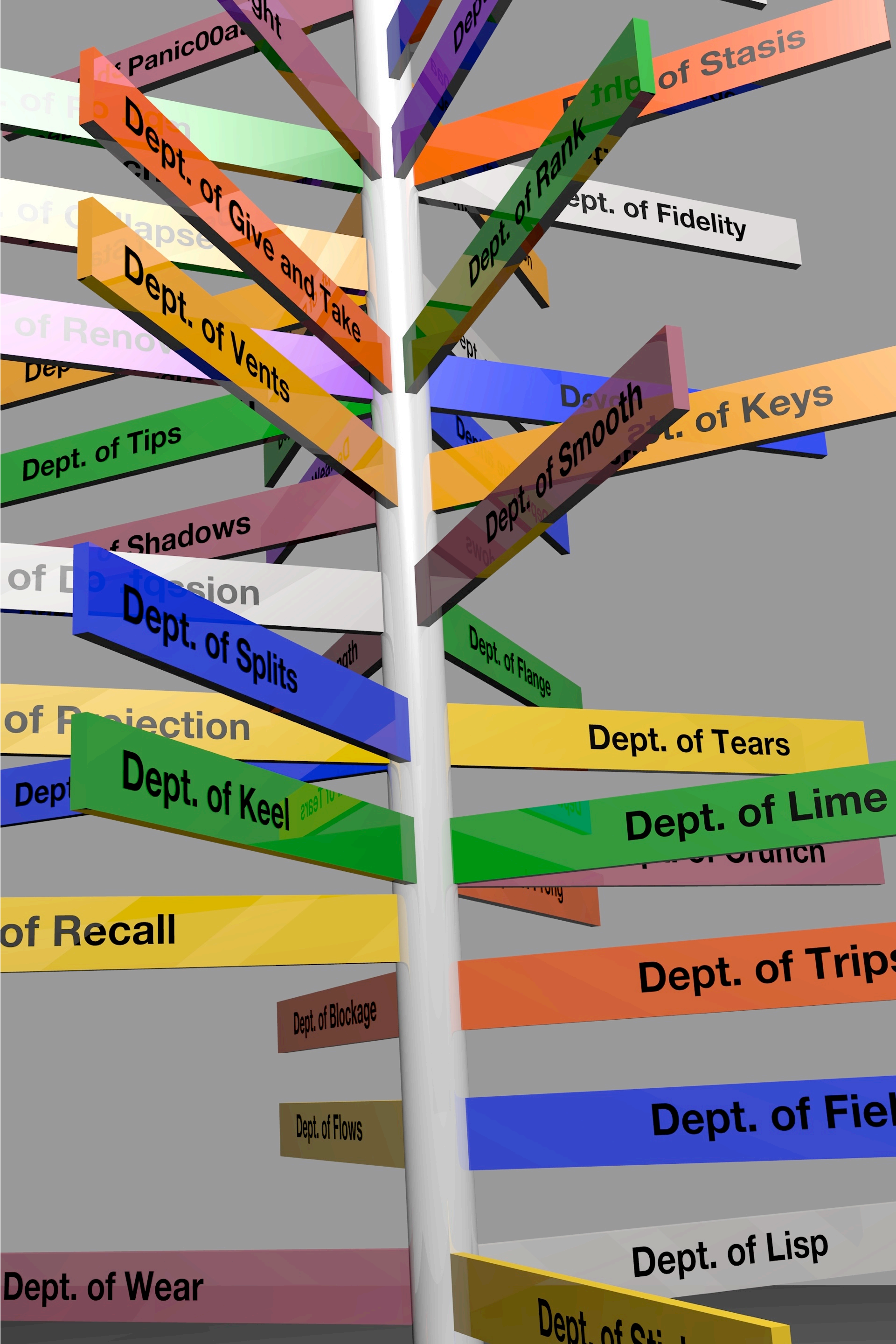
**FROM ABOVE AND BELOW**

The form is developed in order to be effective from below, above or at a distance.



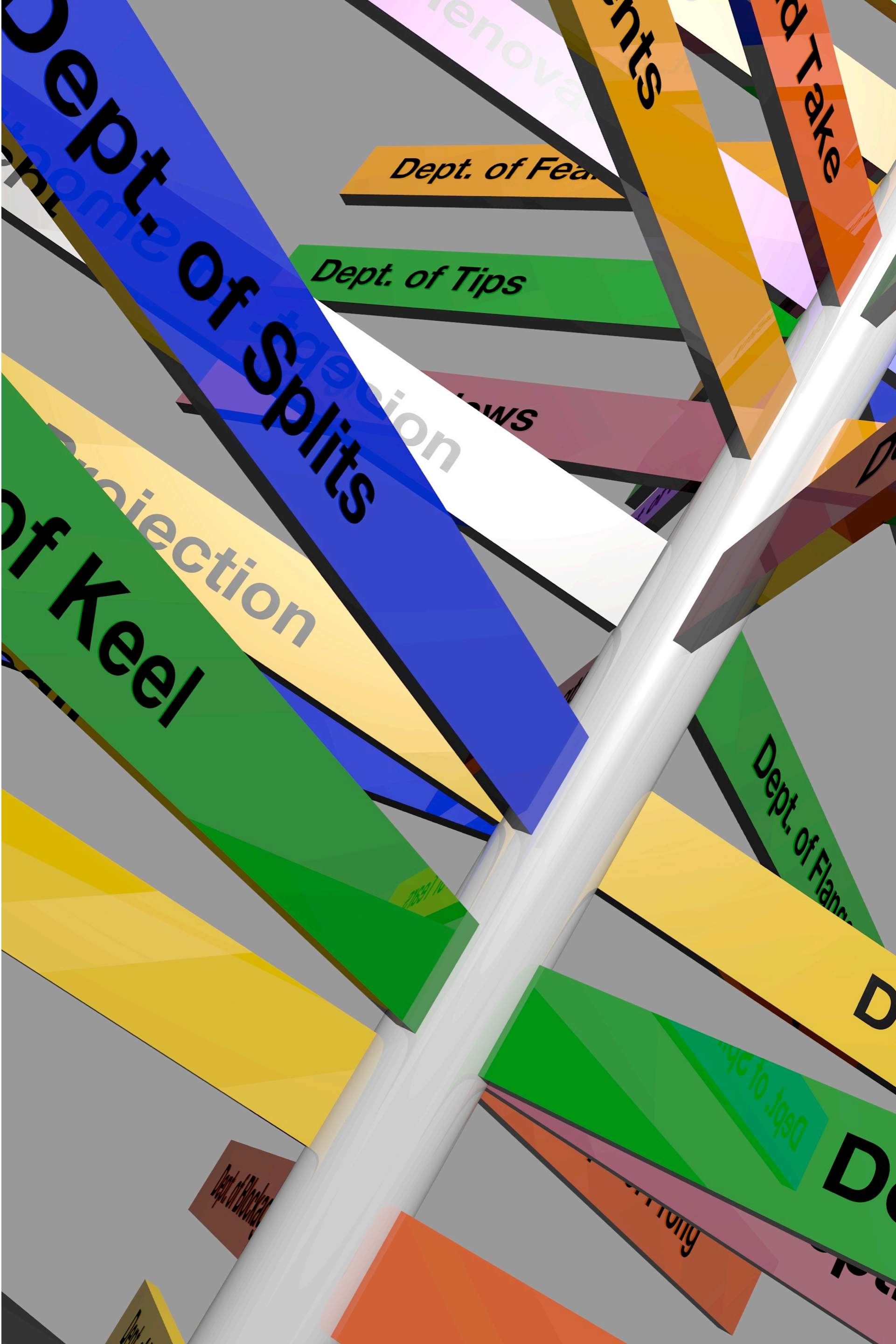
## CLOSE UP

When close to the work it is expected that visitor and students will make this a place to meet - a marker that will be a gathering point. And a place that prompts discussion and a proliferation of images and pride.



# FIXINGS

The signs arms will slot onto lugs welded to the main structure. The post itself will be fixed to the concrete plaza using established techniques used for existing signage and flag-poles. The installation and maintenance of the work would also be carried out by an experienced organization who produce large scale signage and flag poles.



THE DEPARTMENTS

Dept. of Shadows	Dept. of Renovation	Dept. of Prong
Dept. of Dips	Dept. of Collapse	Dept. of Burr
Dept. of Wear	Dept. of Reform	Dept. of Keel
Dept. of Tips	Dept. of Licks	Dept. of Splits
Dept. of Fear	Dept. of Kicks	Dept. of Vents
Dept. of Change	Dept. of Stealth	Dept. of Give and Take
Dept. of Stasis	Dept. of Rank	Dept. of Fright
Dept. of Keys	Dept. of Smooth	Dept. of Panic
Dept. of Lime	Dept. of Sticks	
Dept. of Trips	Dept. of Wheat	
Dept. of Fields	Dept. of Flows	
Dept. of Raw	Dept. of Blockage	
Dept. of Fidelity	Dept. of Strength	
Dept. of Strange	Dept. of Weakness	
Dept. of Tears	Dept. of Wild	
Dept. of Crunch	Dept. of Demotion	
Dept. of Lisp	Dept. of Reduction	

pt. of Discussion

pt. of Dips

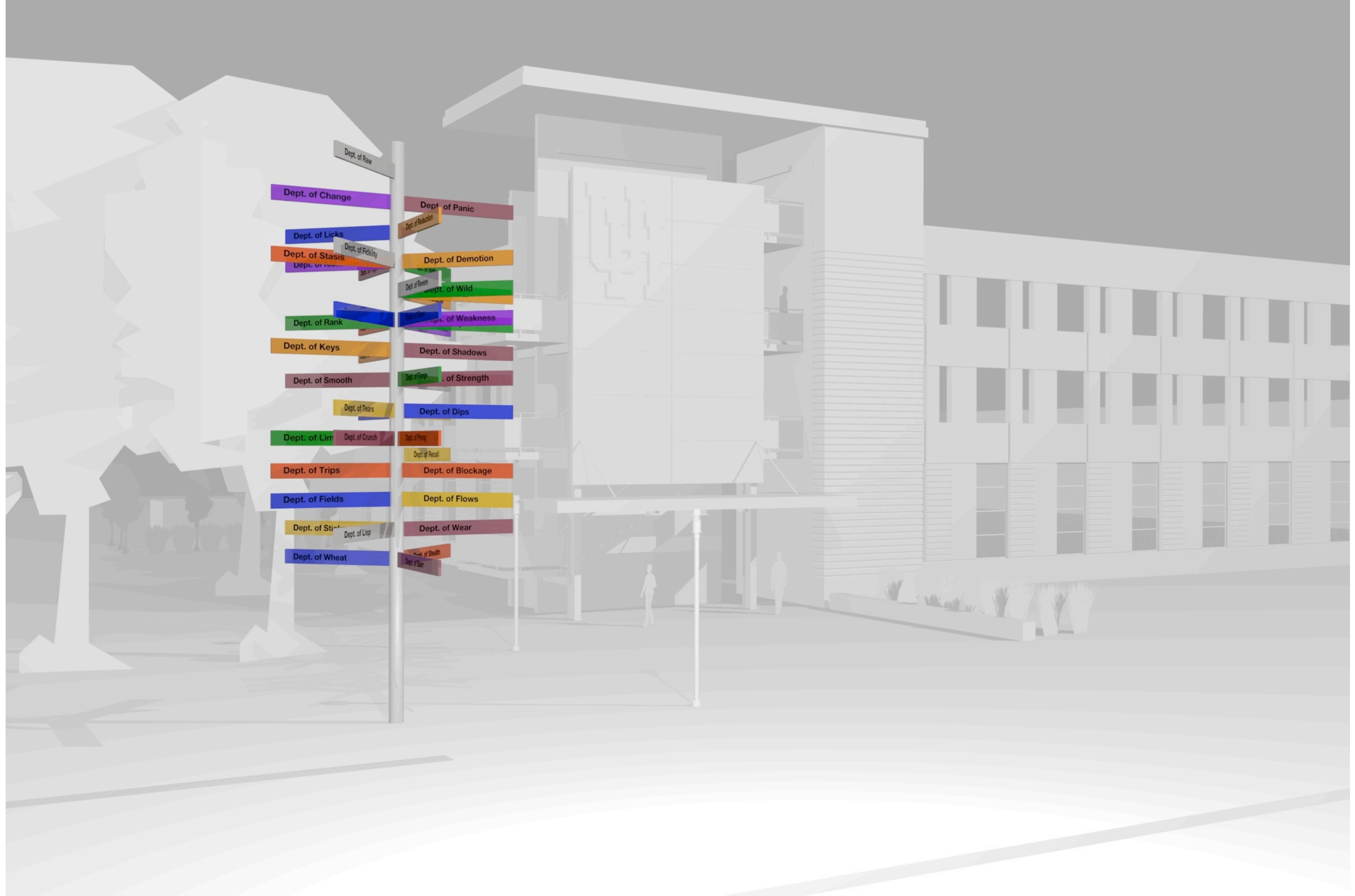
pt. of Projection

lockage

pt. of Flows

pt. of Recall

Dept. of



Dept. of Raw

Dept. of Change

Dept. of Licks

Dept. of Stasis

Dept. of Fidelity

Dept. of Rank

Dept. of Keys

Dept. of Smooth

Dept. of Tears

Dept. of Lim

Dept. of Trips

Dept. of Fields

Dept. of Sticks

Dept. of Wheat

Dept. of Panic

Dept. of Reduction

Dept. of Demotion

Dept. of Wild

Dept. of Fever

Dept. of Weakness

Dept. of Shadows

Dept. of Strength

Dept. of Dips

Dept. of Crunch

Dept. of Recall

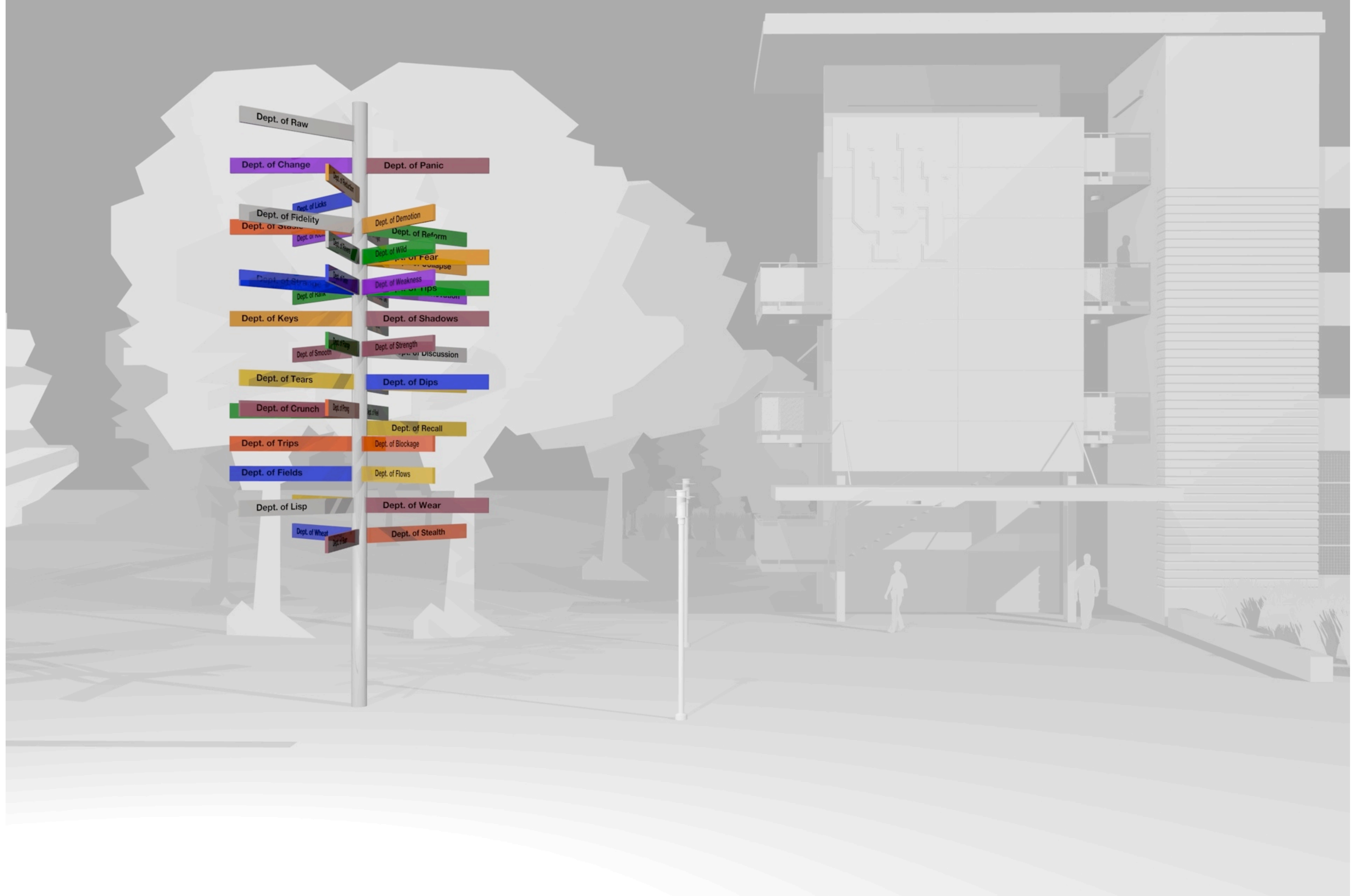
Dept. of Blockage

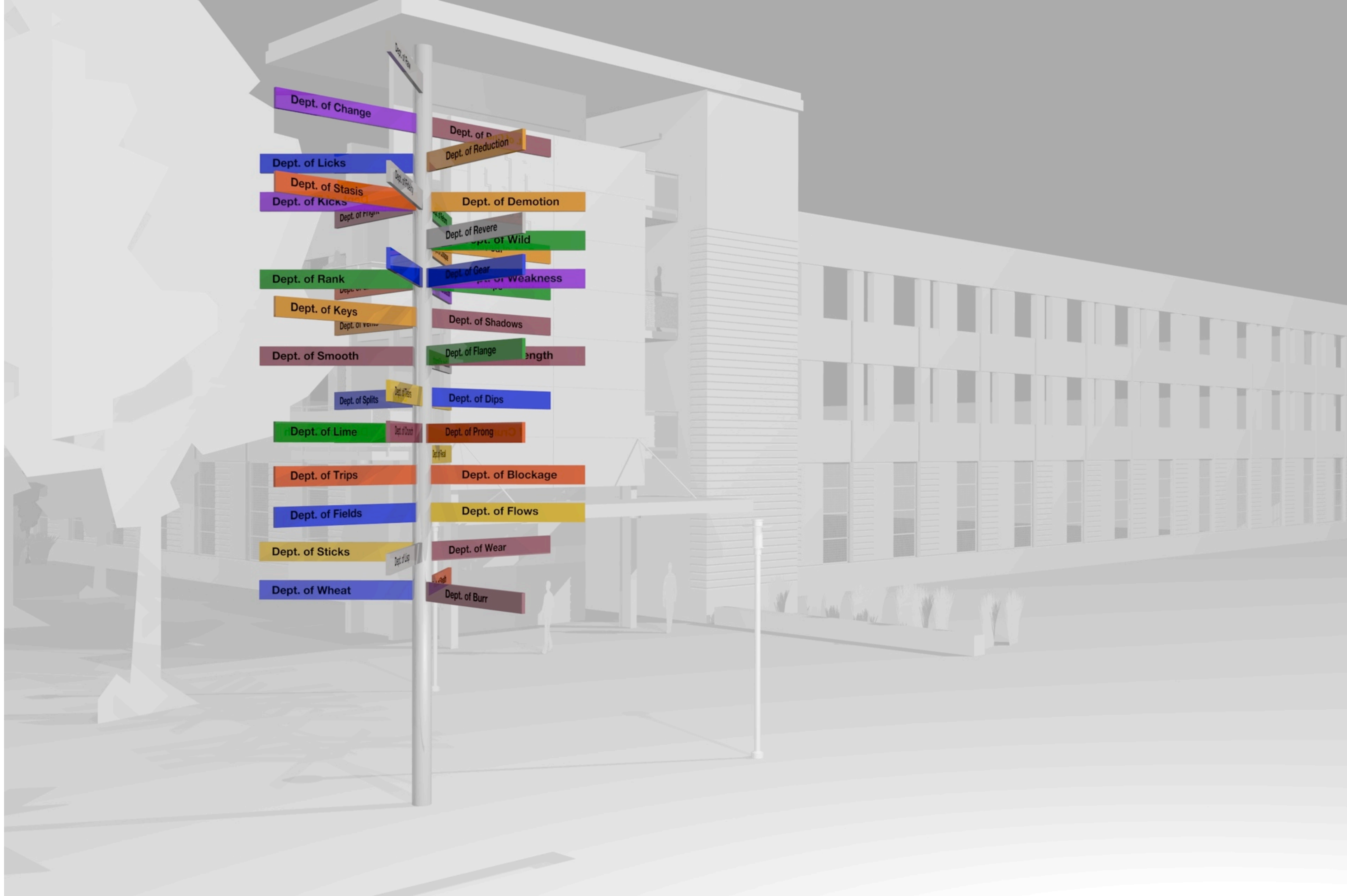
Dept. of Flows

Dept. of Wear

Dept. of Health

Dept. of Surr







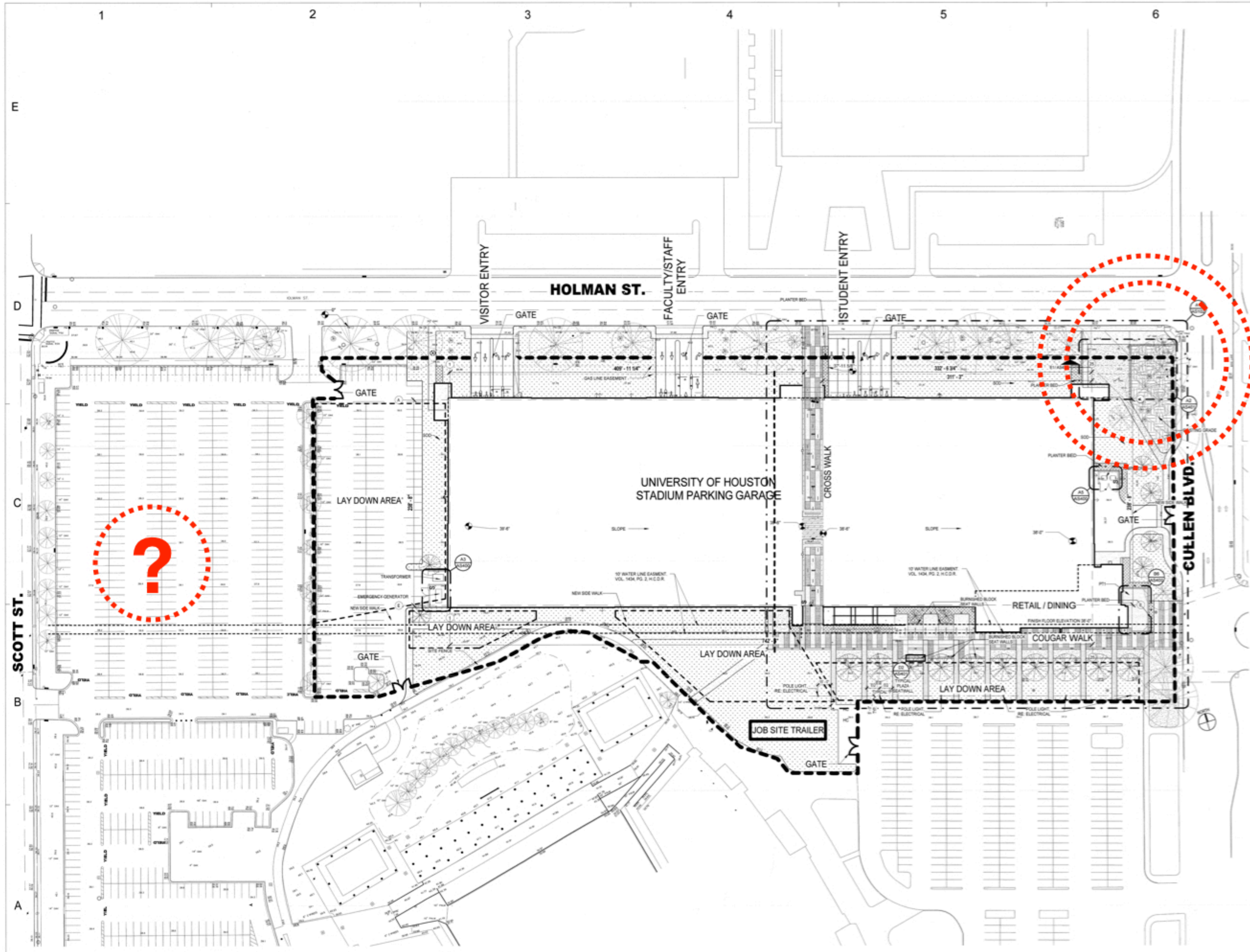
## SCALE OF THE WORK

The work should be on the same scale as the trees in the area but not as high as the parking facility. It should be larger than the planned street lighting.



**POSSIBLE LOCATION**

The proposed location is North East Plaza. But the work could potentially be placed anywhere on the site - including the uncovered parking lot - where it would be an effective landmark.



FILE NAME  
FILE LOCATION

LAST PLOTTED  
LAYOUT NAME

PLOT BY  
PLOT DEVICE

A1 SITE PLAN  
SCALE: 1" = 40'-0"

**WHR ARCHITECTS**  
Architecture with People in Mind

101 Louisiana 28th Floor  
Houston, Texas 77002  
713.665.5665 phone • whrarchitects.com

CONSULTANTS

**LEGEND**

COLOR CONCRETE 1	[Pattern]
COLOR CONCRETE 2	[Pattern]
COLOR CONCRETE 3	[Pattern]
PAVER 1	[Pattern]
PAVER 2	[Pattern]
SOIL	[Pattern]
PLANTING BED	[Pattern]
DECOMPOSED GRANITE	[Pattern]
CONCRETE SIDEWALK	[Pattern]
MULCH	[Pattern]

REAL (S)



KEY PLAN



University of Houston  
System



PROJECT INFORMATION  
**STADIUM PARKING GARAGE**

UN PROJECT NO.  
CAMPUS NAME  
PARCEL NUMBER  
BLDG. NUMBER  
BLDG. ABBREV.  
BUILDING NAME  
ADDRESS  
CITY/ST  
FLOOR NUMBER

DATE	DESCRIPTION
12-03-2010	SCHEMATIC DESIGN
01-07-2011	DESIGN DEVELOPMENT
02-07-2011	BID PACKAGE 1
02-14-2011	50% CD's
03-28-2011	BID PACKAGE 2

Rev.	Date	Description
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ISSUED: **BID PACKAGE #2**  
DATE: 03-28-2011  
DRAWING FILE: 010304-UNL-PKG-Design-Rev1  
DRAWING: 010304-UNL-PKG-Design-Rev1  
CHECKED BY: WHR ARCHITECTS  
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SHEET TITLE  
**SITE PLAN**

**AS100**

SHEET NO. 4 OF 292

## LIAM GILLICK

Liam Gillick is an artist based in London and New York. Solo exhibitions include The Wood Way, Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2002; A short text on the possibility of creating an economy of equivalence, Palais de Tokyo, 2005 and the retrospective project Three Perspectives and a short scenario, Witte de With, Rotterdam, Kunsthalle Zurich, Kunstverein, München and the MCA, Chicago, 2008-2010. He was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2002 and the Vincent Award at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 2008. Many public commissions and projects include the Home Office in London (2005) and the Dynamica Building in Guadalajara, Mexico (2009). In 2006 he was a central figure in the free art school project unitednationsplaza in Berlin that travelled to Mexico City and New York. Liam Gillick has published a number of texts that function in parallel to his artwork. Proxemics (Selected writing 1988-2006) JRP-Ringier was published in 2007 alongside the monograph Factories in the Snow by Lilian Haberer, JRP-Ringier. A critical reader titled Meaning Liam Gillick, was published by MIT Press (2009). An anthology of his artistic writing titled Allbooks was also published by Book Works, London (2009). In addition he has contributed to many art magazines and journals including Parkett, Frieze, Art Monthly, October and Art Forum. Liam Gillick was selected to represent Germany for the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009. A major exhibition of his work opened at the Kunst und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in April 2010. He has taught at Columbia University in New York since 1997 and the Centre for Curatorial Studies at Bard College since 2008. Public collections include: Government Art Collection, UK; Arts Council, UK; Tate, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Hirshhorn Museum, Washington DC; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.