Previous state
The Cotton Industrial Complex of Bucharest was the largest cotton factory in Romania. It is situated in a neighbourhood dominated by derelict industries and large residential complexes, ironically named “Timpuri Noi” (Eng. “New Times”) – the area is poorly equipped with public functions and services. Like most industrial facilities in the city, the Cotton Factory has stopped production in the early 2000’s. Since then it has been slowly decaying. While some of its buildings are still rented out as storage facilities, the former factory was essentially an unused property, on the banks of the river, just south of the city center (1.8 km).

The Cotton Factory’s potential for a functional reconversion as a center for the creative industries has been tested as early as 2010, when its buildings have hosted parties and independent art shows. But without a long term vision, these endeavours have had mixed success and little impact in the city.

Aim of the intervention
Since 2015, a group of young creatives (planners, designers, engineers, artists, inventors and entrepreneurs) has decided to start working on the former factory’s potential to become a major creative industries center, in Bucharest. Based on the experience of the previous projects developed here, the group has come up with a vision for a bottom-up reconversion process, regarding the former factory and the immediate area. By attracting new partners and corporate sponsors, the group has also initiated a series of successful and high profile projects dedicated to the local creative industries scene. In a short time span, the former Cotton Factory has transformed from a derelict industrial area into an attractive hub for the city.

Building on this initial success, and in order to satisfy the needs of its growing creative community, Nod makerspace decided to expand in 2017, with a materials library. The particular need of local makers for new or innovative materials, was paired with a natural curiosity from the wider public for experiencing a wide array of materials used in all types of products. Mater, the first materials library in SE Europe was designed as a mixed-use public hall, hosting a large collection of materials, a hub for design professionals, their clients and producers, but also as an educational instrument for students and the general public.

IN 2015, WE STARTED WORK ON THE VISION WITH A MAKERSPACE * a rooftop bar (for afterhours)

IN 2016, WE OPENED A COMMUNITY CENTRE
+ we get new neighbours (a restaurant and a coworking)

IN 2017, WE DESIGNED THE MATERIAL’S LIBRARY
+ an events & concert venue moves in

IN 2018, WE ARE PLANNING A STREET FESTIVAL, ALONG THE RIVER
+ build a stair for better connectivity