

# Bridging Borders with Reuse

Exhibition-Reader

Swiss Network With Ukraine  
Studio Boltshauser  
CO-HATY

Fall Semester  
Exhibition  
2024

D-ARCH  
ETH Zürich

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Photo: Rémi Jourdan



Photo: Carole Allenbach, Ilu Demont, Ivan Malkov, Noah Neuhaus, Anna-Julia Plichta, Bastien Terretaz



Photo: Rémi Jourdan



Photo: Carole Allenbach, Ilu Demont, Ivan Malkov, Noah Neuhaus,  
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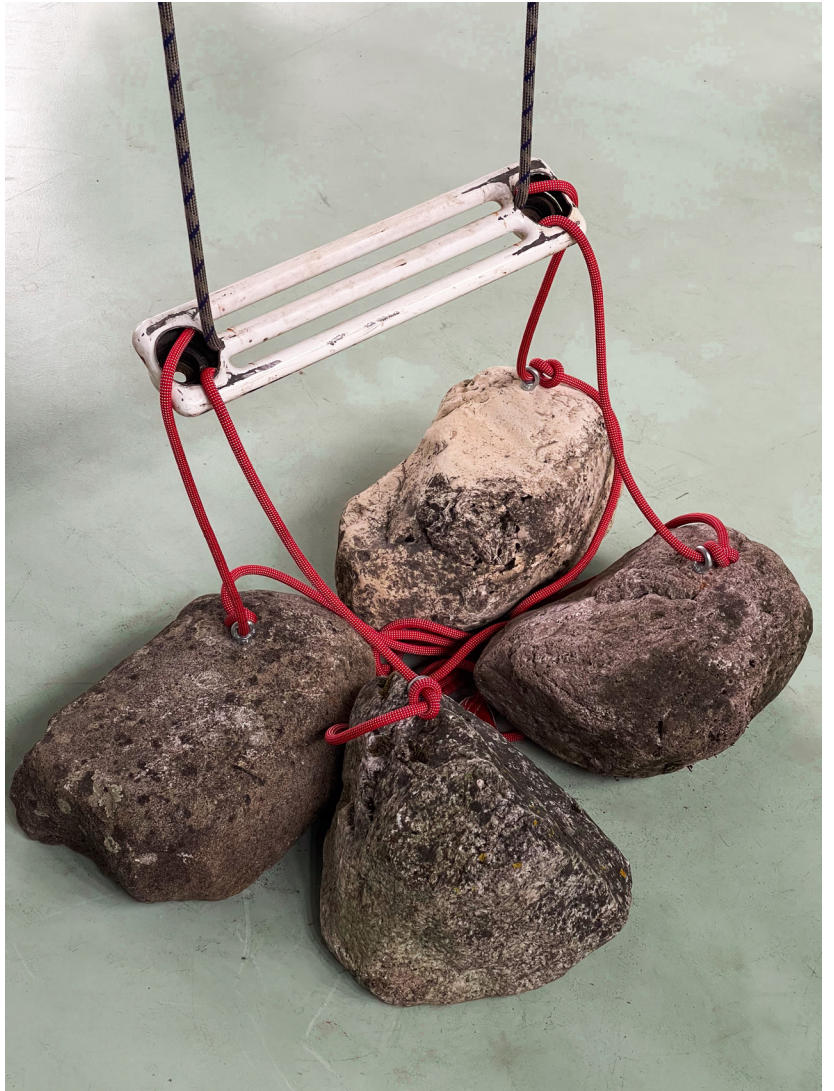


Photo: Victor Kastlin, Erik Gonzalez, Nils Braun, Tim Müller, Fabian Guzelgun



Photo: Rémi Jourdan

The exhibition Bridging Borders with Reuse presents the outcomes of an intensive and thought-provoking seminar week titled "Repairing Vacancy in Ukraine: For Those Who Lost Their Home During War," held in March 2024 at ETH Zurich. This exhibition goes beyond a display of architectural designs and mock-ups—it stands as a testament to the transformative power of collaboration, reuse, and creative thinking in addressing humanitarian challenges. While neither state programs nor international aid have fully addressed the needs of the millions of forcibly displaced people, there is an urgent demand for innovative ideas to address Ukraine's housing crisis, which has been exacerbated by the Russian invasion.

In response to this, we have joined forces with 21 outstanding ETH students to explore innovative approaches to rebuilding a municipal house in Lviv, crafting new possibilities for dignified and resilient living spaces. The seminar, organized in partnership with The Swiss Network with Ukraine, Studio Boltshauser, and CO-HATY, focused on one fundamental question: How can architecture respond meaningfully to displacement and destruction while honouring local culture and community needs? The resulting four projects, now featured in the exhibition, include a diverse array of furniture prototypes, architectural drawings, and 1-to-1 mockups of building components that reflect the students' efforts to rethink the use of existing materials and reimagine what recovery can look like.

The exhibition is structured around themes that emerged from the seminar week's discussions and a series of interviews. Central to these themes is the

concept of reuse—not just as a strategy for resource efficiency but as an ethical and cultural commitment. Each piece on display speaks to the idea that every material, no matter how damaged or seemingly insignificant, can become a building block for renewal. Whether it's rubble repurposed for new walls or abandoned spaces reimagined as vibrant community hubs, the students' work showcases how reuse can be a powerful tool for reconstruction, both practically and symbolically.

The mock-up of the project "An Added Balcony" exemplifies this approach. By extending an existing balcony to create communal space while enhancing the building's thermal performance, the design integrates new functionality without erasing the old. Similarly, the "Shifting Wall" project tackles the challenge of housing adaptability by proposing a modular wall system that can be assembled using reclaimed materials, allowing for rapid reconfiguration of vacant buildings to meet evolving needs. These projects embody the seminar's ethos: that architecture, even in times of crisis, should aim for more than just shelter—it should restore dignity, create connection, and build a foundation for long-term community resilience.

Beyond the technical aspects, Bridging Borders with Reuse emphasizes the human dimension of architecture. In a series of in-depth interviews accompanying the exhibition, participants and experts reflect on the role of trust, humility, and empathy in the design process. As noted in the conversation of Anna Dobrova with Félix Dillmann, "We are not there to teach, but to learn as well. It's about creating some-

thing together.” This sentiment is echoed throughout the exhibition, where the focus is not on delivering pre-conceived solutions but on engaging participants in a dialogue to understand communities’ needs, dreams, and aspirations.

A key takeaway from the seminar week was the realization that temporary solutions often become permanent. This insight prompted the students to approach their designs with a long-term vision, ensuring that each intervention, whether temporary or permanent, contributes to the community’s sense of identity and stability. The exhibition’s projects navigate the delicate balance between urgency and longevity, proposing adaptable frameworks that can evolve over time without compromising on quality or sustainability.

The theme of adaptability is vividly illustrated in “Through the Door frames,” a student project that transforms vacant spaces into flexible, multi-functional environments using shifting wall modules. This solution, crafted from reclaimed materials, not only addresses immediate housing needs but also provides a blueprint for how communities can adapt their spaces as circumstances change. Through such projects, the exhibition advocates for an architecture that is both resilient and responsive, capable of adjusting to future uncertainties while maintaining a strong sense of place.

Another recurring theme is the tension between shared and private spaces, which is particularly relevant in emergency housing contexts. As highlighted in the conversation between Gyler Mydyti and Daniela Sanjinés Encinales, “Navigating the Public-Private Dynamics and Temporary-Permanent Housing Solutions,” there is a need to design shared resources, such as communal kitchens and living areas, in ways that enhance the quality of life rather than being seen as a compromise. This approach fosters a sense of belonging and ownership, transforming housing from a mere necessity into a space for rebuilding social ties.

The exhibition also addresses the cultural and historical dimensions of reuse. In their explorations, the students discovered that reusing materials is not just about sustainability; it’s about preserving the stories embedded in each element. As noted in the conversation of Olga Konovalova with Kees Christiaanse, “Ethic vs. Aesthetic,” the patina of time on an old factory wall or the rough texture of repurposed bricks carries a narrative that connects the past to the present. This understanding shaped the students’ work, prompting them to see every intervention as an act of cultural preservation and reinterpretation. The student project “Flex” demonstrates this beautifully by transforming discarded radiators into functional and aesthetic elements that add character and warmth to a new communal space.

The accompanying conversation of Anastasiya Ponomaryova with Philip Ursprung, “The Culture of Reuse Has a Magnetic Power,” reuse is portrayed not only as a technical approach but also as a catalyst for rethinking architectural practice itself. It has the

potential to bring together diverse disciplines and perspectives, creating new opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and collective problem-solving. This concept of bridging borders—whether physical, disciplinary, or conceptual—is at the heart of the seminar’s vision and the exhibition’s message.

As visitors move through the exhibition, they are invited to reflect on the implications of these projects for their own contexts. The housing crisis in Ukraine is a specific, urgent situation, but the principles explored—reuse, adaptability, community engagement, and cultural sensitivity—resonate far beyond this particular case. The ideas presented here challenge us to rethink how we approach building in times of crisis, to see constraints as opportunities for innovation, and to recognize that architecture, at its best, is a deeply human endeavour.

Bridging Borders with Reuse is not just a showcase of student work; it is a call to action. It asks architects, designers, and planners to reimagine their roles in post-crisis contexts, to prioritize human dignity and resilience, and to engage communities as equal partners in the process of rebuilding. By doing so, we can create spaces that are not just physically strong but also socially and culturally robust—spaces that honour the past, respond to the present, and inspire hope for the future.

In a world increasingly defined by displacement, climate challenges, and resource scarcity, the exhibition offers a timely and thought-provoking perspective on the power of architecture to heal, transform, and connect. The students’ work, enriched by their diverse backgrounds and fresh perspectives, demonstrates that even amidst loss and uncertainty, there is room for creativity, collaboration, and renewal. Through reuse, we can bridge the borders between destruction and recovery, between the immediate and the enduring, and between architecture and the communities it serves.





# Project Context



Lviv, situated in western Ukraine, is often predominantly associated with its central Rynok (Market) Square, renowned for its captivating and beautiful elements. While Lviv is undoubtedly an attractive city, like any other, it boasts distinctive local neighbourhoods. Pidzamche is one such neighbourhood that embodies the genuine spirit of Lviv. On the other hand, Pidzamche is rather different and can be characterised as an unexplored facet of Lviv.

The distinctiveness of Pidzamche, evident in its houses and factories, streets and plazas, as well as historical background, significantly contributes to the city's unique genius loci. Being in Pidzamche provides a tangible sense of place that sets it apart. Throughout history, northern Lviv, particularly this area, has functioned as a sort of backyard with its workshops and machinery.

Pidzamche, especially its northern part, is somewhat isolated from the rest of the city by a railroad constructed in the 19th century. During that period, the railroad played a pivotal role in accelerating industrialization in the neighbourhood, solidifying its status as a worker's district.

Today, the railroad still traverses the district, creating a notable separation from the rest of the city and exerting a significant impact on the urban and social fabric of the neighbourhood. In fact, it has evolved into an integral element of the local landscape, shaping and contributing to the neighbourhood's distinct identity.

Another notable feature of Pidzamche is Bohdana Khmelnytskoho Street, the most vibrant thoroughfare

in the neighbourhood in terms of both transportation and urban life, as indicated on the maps.

Recently, in 2023, Zamarstynivska Street underwent reconstruction, now boasting a new tram line. Our abandoned building is situated along this street. Pidzamche – Between Public Initiatives and Business-as-Usual Development

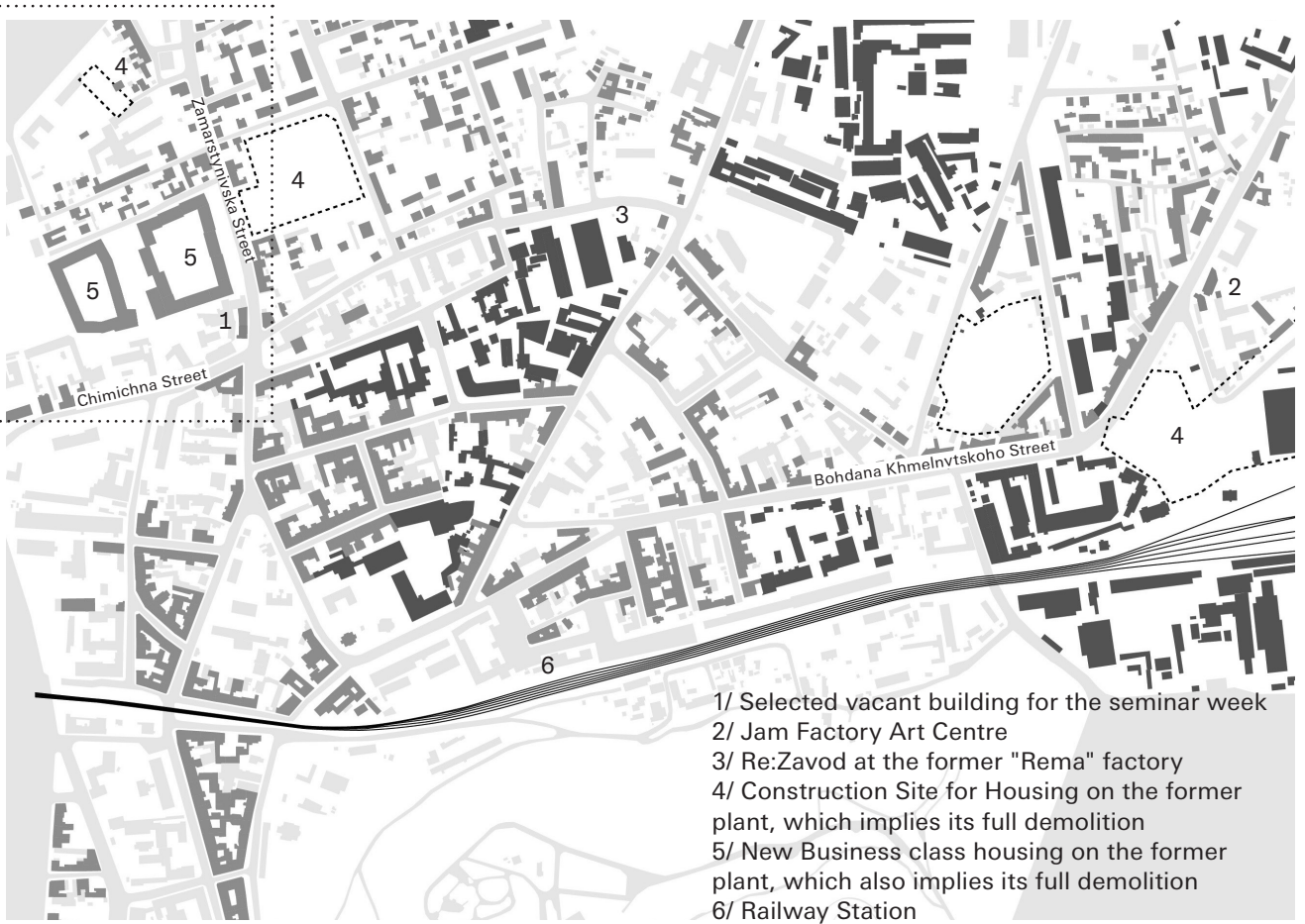
Since 2013, several public initiatives have been undertaken to revitalize Pidzamche. Five years ago, the Lviv City Institute, in collaboration with the Krakow City Development Institute, developed a program to revitalize the Pidzamche district.

Ukrainian researcher Iryna Sklokina makes the following claim:

«By 2019, many of the industrial zones mentioned in this municipal initiative, have been already built up by very conventional high-rise commercial housing, with no preservation of industrial heritage. Even though there are creative communities in some of the buildings, welcomed by the owners (such as grass-root creative industries NGO uniting several dozens of small businesses called Re:Zavod at former "Rema" factory, most often there are no major renovation works and creative people have no clear status or contract with the buildings' owners. So this initiative of the municipality had only limited impact, namely, stimulation of public discussions on revitalization, and promotion for the promising and already developing projects like Jam Factory and Lem Station. As for the Lem Station, it is important to mention that it is the only case of successful public-private partnership in adaptive reuse in Lviv, and it will partially start



The Site in the Neighborhood, Google Map 2010 (left) and 2024 (right)



- 1/ Selected vacant building for the seminar week
- 2/ Jam Factory Art Centre
- 3/ Re:Zavod at the former "Rema" factory
- 4/ Construction Site for Housing on the former plant, which implies its full demolition
- 5/ New Business class housing on the former plant, which also implies its full demolition
- 6/ Railway Station

■ houses ■ industrial buildings



Balcony on the rear facade of the building. Photo: Anna Pashynska, 2024

functioning in 2 years and fully in 4 years, at least in accordance with the plan»<sup>2</sup>.

A noteworthy example of comprehensive heritage revitalization in Pidzamche is the transformation of the Jam Factory into a cultural centre. Following a decade of planning and implementation, the Jam Factory Art Centre, a contemporary art institution, was opened in 2023. Today, this institution plays a key role in reflecting and presenting contemporary processes in Ukrainian and international art and culture, while also providing opportunities for public dialogue. The space of the Jam Factory Art Centre has been shaped by a history of more than 150 years. The main building endured two World Wars, witnessed half a dozen regime changes, and served various owners and purposes.

Respect for this legacy stands as one of the guiding principles that shaped the architectural approach to the project.

Ambitious public outreach efforts by Jam Factory have successfully attracted new investments into Pidzamche district, including real estate developers who demonstrate varying levels of respect for heritage. However, there is a potential risk that these changes may contribute to the gentrification of the district. The current state of Pidzamche demonstrated the possibility of various urban transformation scenarios. Given the abundance of vacant spaces, it is crucial to prioritize scenarios that promote eco-awareness and reuse.



Vacant building, view from Zamarstynivska street.  
Photo: Yuriy Bobak, 2024



Vacant building, view from Chimichna street. Photo: Anna Pashynska, 2024

The plot is situated in Pidzamche, at the intersection of Chemichna Street and Zamarstynivska Street, and is designated for industrial development. The building, with a history dating back to 1902, has undergone several transformations under different political regimes. It has been abandoned since 2019 and stands as a unique example of community housing buildings<sup>3</sup>.

The primary function of N. Mayer's property was a bakery, likely situated on the first floor with housing on the second – a common arrangement in Pidzamche.

In 1904, Lviv entrepreneur H. Blumenfeld acquired the property and transformed it into a lacquer and paint factory. The plot was expanded by combining it with adjacent premises, converting the building into an administrative facility for the plant. This factory was one of Lviv's first chemical enterprises.

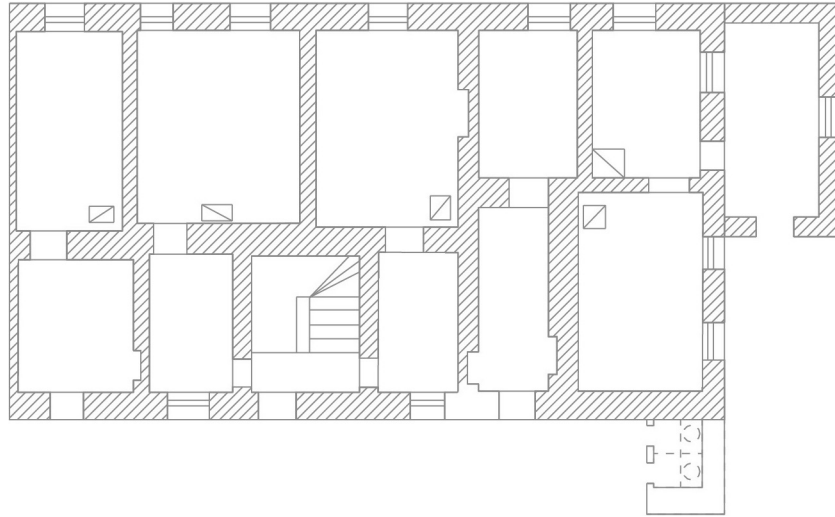
In 1912, a fire broke out at the plant. Over the next two decades, the factory underwent complete reconstruction and expansion. Ownership passed to H. Blumenfeld's son, Emmanuel, upon his father's death. During the Nazi occupation, the factory was incorporated into the "labour zone" of Lviv's ghetto (modern-day Chemichna Street was then Dunkelgasse).

In 1939, the Soviet authorities nationalized the factory, merging it with another Chemical Products Plant. The Blumenfeld family subsequently emigrated to Switzerland.

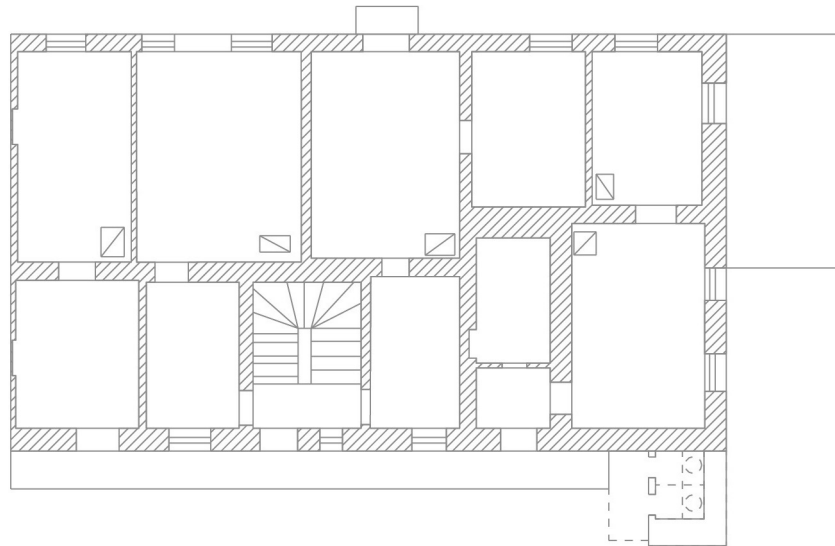
The building's foundations are strip masonry, made of rubble stone and brick on natural soil (sand). The base has a width of 600-750 mm and depth of 1.8-2.0 m in to the soil. The roof features a double slope with wooden rafters. The flooring above the basement consists of brick vaults. A major renovation of the building took place in 1985-87. During this period, balconies and wooden flooring were replaced with prefabricated reinforced concrete structures. Toilets in the extension with a septic tank were eliminated, while bathrooms and sewage systems were installed in the apartments.

During the 2019 inspection of the building, significant defects were found in the walls, including vertical and diagonal cracks on the façades, damage, and misalignment of openings. The vertical cracks, with an opening width of up to 10.0 mm at the junction of the end wall and the facade, are attributed to soil deterioration caused by water logging. This issue stems from the emergency condition of the existing external drainage network and water supply pipes on Zamarstynivska Street.

Evidence supporting this includes a strong sewage odour, ground subsidence above the emergency sewer chamber near the building's end wall, and leaks from the water supply pipe. Residents and builders detected these issues during the excavation for the collector. Notably, the water supply pipe remains unsealed,



Ground floor plan, Scale 1:200



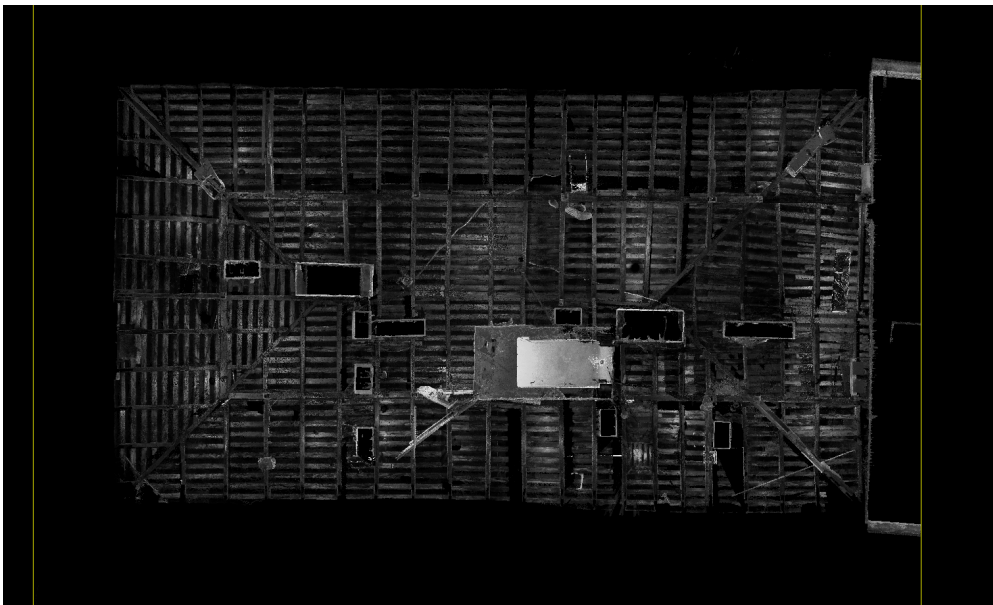
Ground floor plan, Scale 1:200



3D scans of interiors



3D scan of façade



3D scan of roof



saturating the soil.

The basement floor is partially made of soil and requires replacement with a more rigid material. No cracks were found in the vaults and load-bearing walls of the basement. However, local cracks were identified on the main facade in the masonry brick lintels above the windows. These cracks appeared suddenly due to deformations in the foundation soils and foundations caused by construction activities opposite the building). The cracks resulted from both vertical and horizontal deformations of the building due to the complex engineering and geological conditions of this area. These conditions were initially misjudged but later clarified during the construction process.

The plot is located in the Pidzamche area, which has experienced the most intense housing development since 2014. Access to the main stairwells of the buildings is from the courtyard facade, through the internal courtyard from Chimichna Street. The inner courtyard of these residential buildings is shared with about 12 neighbouring households. Our plot includes both the building and nearby courtyards, making them subjects for the design concept.



CO-HATY shelter in Ivano-Frankivsk, July 2022. Construction process.  
Photo: Nastya Kubert (NGO Metalab)



Attic in the vacant building.  
Photo: Anastasiya Ponomaryova, 2024



View of the living room.  
Photo: Anastasiya Ponomaryova, 2024



Vacant Building in Lviv. View from the one of the living room.  
Photo: Anastasiya Ponomaryova, 2024



View from the courtyard to the rear facade.  
Photo: Anastasiya Ponomaryova, 2024

# From Rapid House to Sustainable Housing Model in Ukraine

The project has undergone continuous evolution since its inception as an emergency housing initiative for internally displaced people (IDPs). It is now transitioning into a pioneering affordable housing project designed for long-term residency. In alignment with this strategy, a building for the seminar week was selected in collaboration with Lviv Municipality.

The following preconditions for the vacant building contribute to achieving this strategic goal:

1. The relatively small volume of the building (initially eight apartments) allows for a minimum-risk catalyst project, adhering to the principle that fewer square meters mean less risk, with a strong emphasis on the quality of solutions.
2. The location is advantageous, as it is in close proximity to urban infrastructure and public transportation. Additionally, its visibility enhances the promotion of the housing typology.
3. The current legal status as municipal housing minimizes the risk associated with establishing long-term living conditions for forcibly displaced people.
4. The stakeholder, Lviv City Municipality, possesses high capability in executing a catalyst project within the Ukrainian context.

The CO-HATY team defines the following for the architectural concept:

1. Contribute to the architectural industry trend by demonstrating that projects with social impact are influential and aesthetically appealing.
2. Reduce maintenance costs through design, a crucial aspect for non-profit and self-sufficient housing.
3. Implement ecological, sustainable, and innovative solutions in design, spanning from refurbishing the building to creating building components.
4. Emphasize communal and shared spaces through design, particularly in the scarcity of resources, prioritising the quality of materials used in communal and shared spaces over private areas.
5. Utilize furniture with maximum modularity and adjustability.
6. Support local production.

# The Recent Expertise in Design and Refurbishment, Along With the Economic, Legal, and Social Aspects of CO-HATY

Project Context

HATY - in Ukrainian, 'HOUSES'

COHATY - in Ukrainian, 'TO LOVE'

CO-HATY is a co-housing project for people who lost their homes due to war.

Faced with the challenge of accommodating internally displaced people (here and after IDP's), the complexity of which is difficult to overestimate, Ukraine found itself with little experience in providing affordable and safe housing. In spring 2022, approximately 12 million Ukrainians were forcibly displaced due to the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Of those, 40,000 Ukrainians sought refuge in relatively safer Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, where the CO-HATY project has been implemented. At that time, the number of state or municipal housing units in this oblast was around 20 units. On the country scale, less than 1 percent of the buildings could be considered as social housing. Moreover, there is a lack of regulation in the flat renting market, an inefficient mechanism of building maintenance and operations, and an absence of housing cooperatives and non-profit houses. This context challenges Ukrainian architects, municipalities, and civil society to find rapid solutions to normalize people's lives, but also to change the status quo in housing policy.

In February 2022, in their search for shelter, Ukrainian architects from the Kyiv-based NGO Urban Curators, along with other future members of the CO-HATY team, found support in the non-governmental organization Metalab in Ivano-Frankivsk. Their own experience of forced resettlement, combined with the skills of both NGOs and their understanding of the architect's role, crystallized into a pilot project in mid-March 2022. As a result of the pilot, in collaboration with state and municipal partners, the CO-HATY team were able to accommodate almost 150 IDPs for the midterm stay.

The transformation of the vacant dormitory was initiated by an active group of professors from Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical University of Oil and Gas. The CO-HATY team joined the project to support the professors with architectural and urban expertise and to raise a 2 million hryvnia (around 50 000 US\$) budget for repairing and furnishing. The project formed a strong volunteer community: over 100 people joined the renovation works, including many IDPs.

## A Secure Option for Housing Saves Lives

One of the fundamental principles of the CO-HATY project is the concept of 'rapid-house'. While people in cities under attack are hesitating to escape from danger, the availability of space becomes crucial for making decisions. In these critical moments, architecture becomes a life-changing affordance, probably the most important option after the ability to run away safely. However, accessible and safe accommodation is a fragile space without strategic actions, whether it is about social-economic models or the integration of IDP's into the host community. In the western part of Ukraine, numerous transit shelters in repurposed educational and sports facilities were initially intended for a week's stay but have transformed into spaces for many months.

In contrast, CO-HATY aims to establish secure accommodation for the longer term, mitigating the risks of segregation, potential eviction, and misunderstandings with the host community. The CO-HATY team provides architectural and urban expertise, cooperates with local governments and property



CO-HATY residents, December 2022. Photo: Stephan Lisowski ©METALAB



CO-HATY shelter. Construction process, July 2022. Photo: Oleksandr Demianiv ©METALAB



CO-HATY residents, December 2022. Photo: Stephan Lisowski ©METALAB

owners, raises funds for repairs and furnishing, and coordinates the construction process. The NGO Metalab initiated a four-year contract with the local administration for accommodation, preventing eviction and providing free rent for a temporary group of vulnerable people. While the current legal framework in Ukraine allows for the provision of municipal social housing with zero rent for those considered vulnerable by law, it helps minimize the risk of eviction or exclusion for those unable to pay rent. However, in the long term, this legal framework presents an obstacle to transforming housing into an economically sustainable space. This space is crucial for communities of residents to accumulate resources for maintenance and development at the local level. Additionally, the capacity of state resources to provide affordable housing is far from sufficient to address the scope of the problem.

#### Design for Continuity

CO-HATY recognizes that renovating abandoned buildings for use as housing is a rapid and impactful response to the housing provision problem. This approach not only contributes to reducing the CO2 footprint compared to new constructions but also positively impacts the community by revitalizing a dilapidated area for forcibly displaced people. Moreover, working with abandoned buildings minimizes barriers for improvement, making it more accessible for non-professional activists and volunteers to feel comfortable in such spaces.

#### Integrated and Sustainable Accommodation

While architectural tools such as location, floor-layout solution, and furniture design contribute to the integration of IDPs into the host community, architects face limitations in achieving in-depth integration. Therefore, CO-HATY involves sociologists and policymakers to empower the residents. The ability of architects to work across sectors (public, municipal, non-governmental and business) and disciplines becomes crucial.

For social integration, CO-HATY encourages IDPs and the local community to participate in building future accommodations. Five IDPs from Kharkiv and Mykolaiv, among a large group of volunteers, have become part of the team, sharing responsibilities and project resources. For some, the construction site of the future shelters has become a communication platform between IDPs and the local community. The act of refurbishing an abandoned building is a starting point to achieve short-term and long-term aims: to help IDPs and transform a neglected building in the city respectively.

Text by Anastasiya Ponomaryova.

Credits for CO-HATY project: Anna Dobrova, Anna Pashynska, Tanya Pashynska, Yulia Rusylo, Nazar Dnes, Varvara Ognysheva, Anastasiya Ponomaryva, Yaryna Onufrienko, Oleksander Onufrienko, Oleksiy Sadovyi, Kateryna Mutz, Yulia Holiuk, Oksana Horodivska, METALAB team



CO-HATY. Photo: Bohdan Volynskyi, March 2022



Chairs donated by Re-WIN for CO-HATY shelter in Kamyanets-Podilsky.





Installed shelves donated by Re-WIN for CO-HATY shelter in Kamyanets-Podilsky, March 2023



Installed door donated by Re-WIN for CO-HATY shelter in Kamyanets-Podilsky, March 2024.

The furniture design by the CO-HATY team reflects the needs of IDPs and implies strategic goals. CO-HATY cooperates with local production companies to support the local economy.

In parallel with material reuse, the METALAB team is developing the makerspace to support the local economy and provide working facilities for newcomers and for prototyping.

Observations of life in shelters and interviews with internally displaced people about their experiences and needs have inspired the prototype of furniture for temporary residences, including the CO-HATY bed – an adaptation of Creative Commons design solutions by Tania Pashynska.

While creating this bed, the following ideas were implemented to make it suitable for any compact living space:

1. Easy Assembly and Transportation: Assembling the bed requires no tools and takes only a few minutes. The piece is easy to pack and has compact shipping dimensions, with the length of each element not exceeding 4 feet (1.22 m).

2. Multifunctionality: The height of the bed with the mattress matches that of a chair. In compact spaces, it can serve as a sofa for guests or a working chair. Storage: The height and construction of the bed allow for maximising storage space underneath, a crucial feature for compact residences.

3. Accessibility: Recognizing the discomfort for older

people to get up from lower beds, their height was adjusted to make the beds more accessible.

4. Sustainable Production: The beds were locally produced using regionally sourced materials, ensuring a sustainable process that supports the local economy.

5. Double Bed Option: Two single beds are easily transformable into one double bed, making the item suitable for different types of residents' families.

The CO-HATY bed exemplifies our commitment to thoughtful design, sustainability, and adaptability to diverse living situations. With the bed sales, we raise donations to support CO-HATY project development.

Text by Anna Dobrova



CO-HATY bed. Photo: Oleksandr Demianiv

## CO-HATY's core design principles

First privacy, then sharing.  
Space-saving design solutions, such as adjustable and transportable furniture.  
Maximize reuse!  
Compact and multifunctional rooms.

## CO-HATY study on private and shared spaces

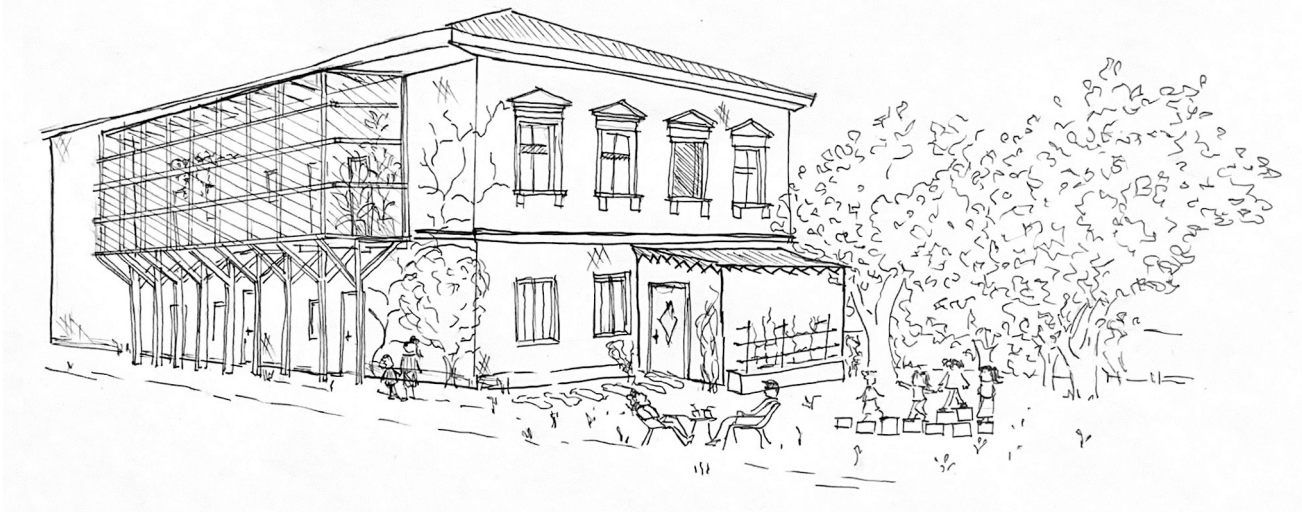
1. An overall tendency is that people are traumatised by forced co-living with others, and want to have as much privacy as possible.
2. Better small than shared.
3. Some of the participants would agree to share a bathroom or a kitchen for a few flats. However, it was told in comparison with their current living conditions where they share a kitchen for 30 flats.
4. Most of the interviews appreciates private bathroom and little private kitchenette. (sociological research by CEDOS, March, 2024)

## Planning restriction

No building extensions.  
Modifications to the south facade are possible.  
No modification to the height of the building.  
The building does not have preservation status.  
Minor changes to structural elements.

# Selected Works





Perspective drawing

Following the design framework, the team maximized the number of apartments without complex structural changes by simply optimizing the existing structure. However, they did not compromise this goal with their second objective—adding a space for social interaction. In the first scenario, the team added communal space in the attic. In the second, by extending the existing balcony, they created a space that can be used not only as a transit area but also as a meeting place for residents.

## Participants

Carole Allenbach  
Ilu Demont  
Ivan Malkov  
Noah Neuhaus  
Anna-Julia Plichta  
Bastien Terrettaz



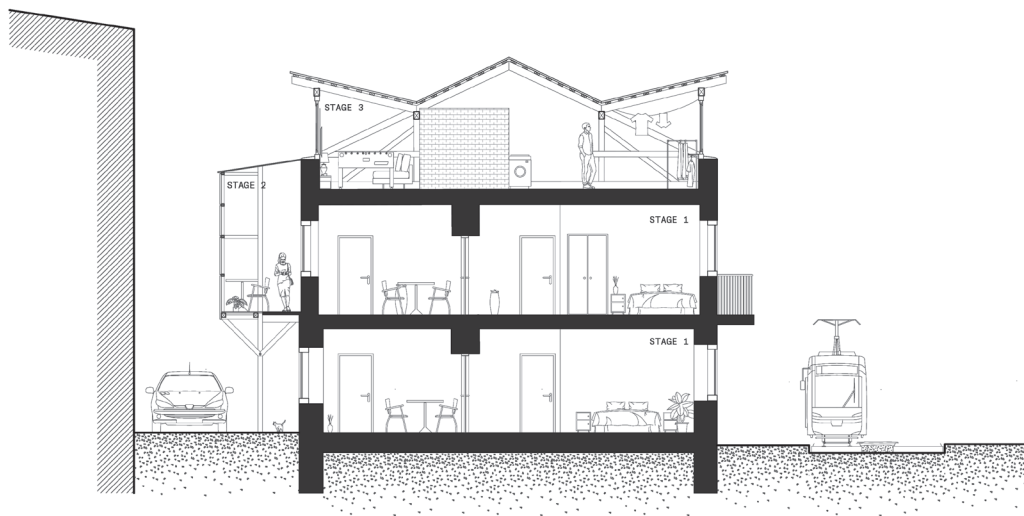
Perspective drawing



Perspective drawing

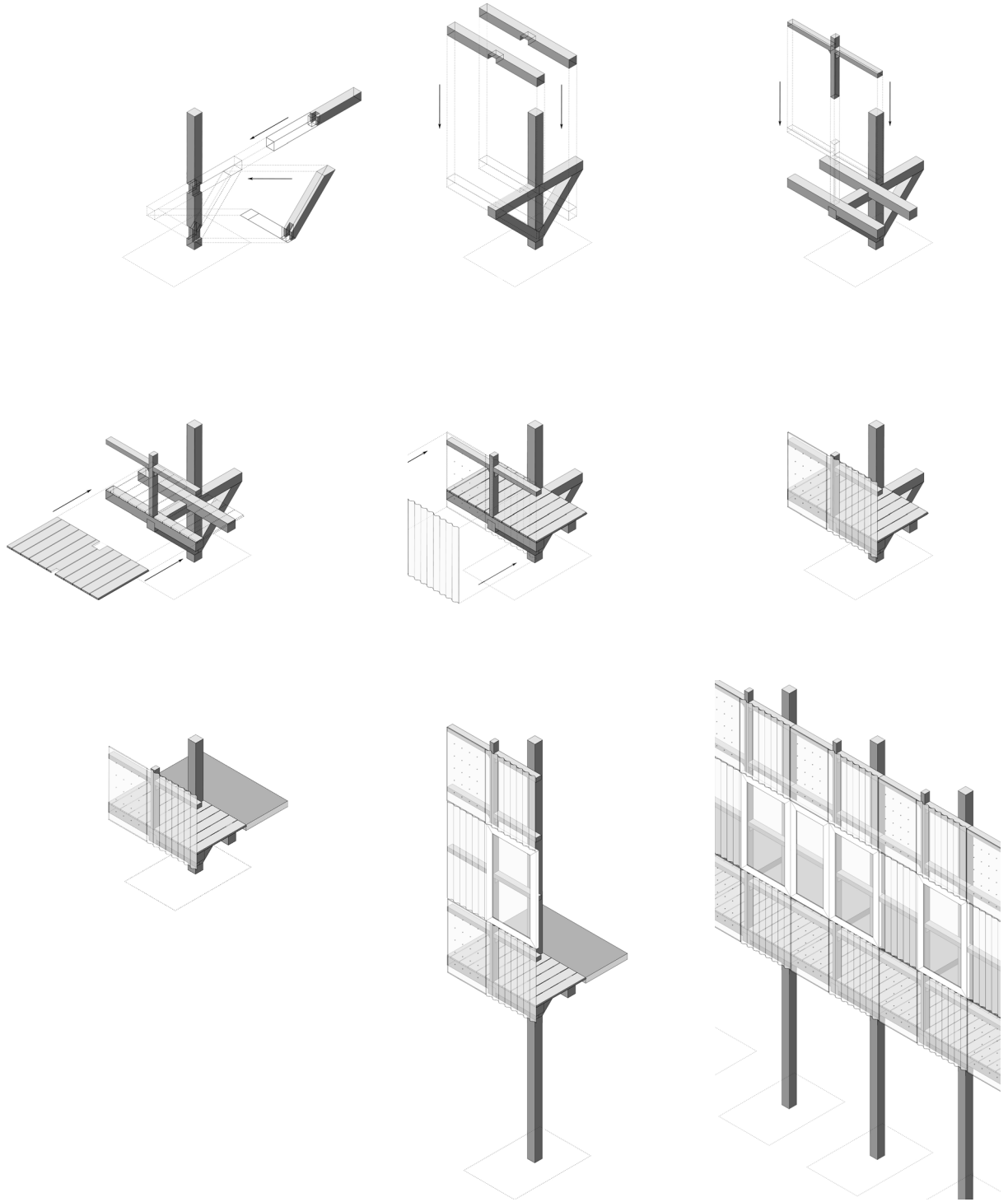


Elevation, scale 1:200

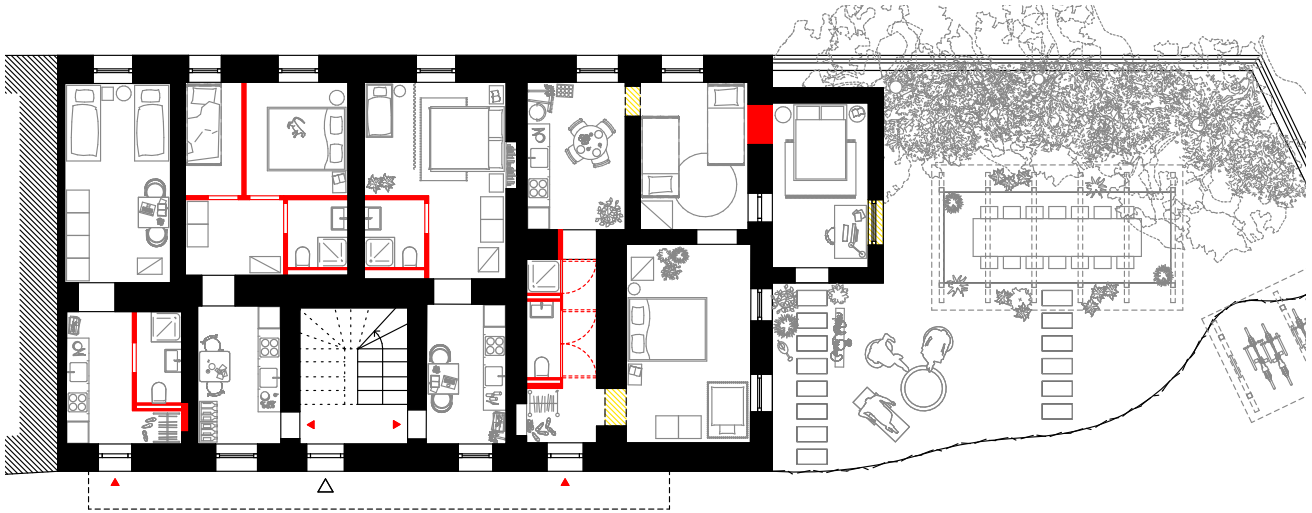


Section, scale 1:200

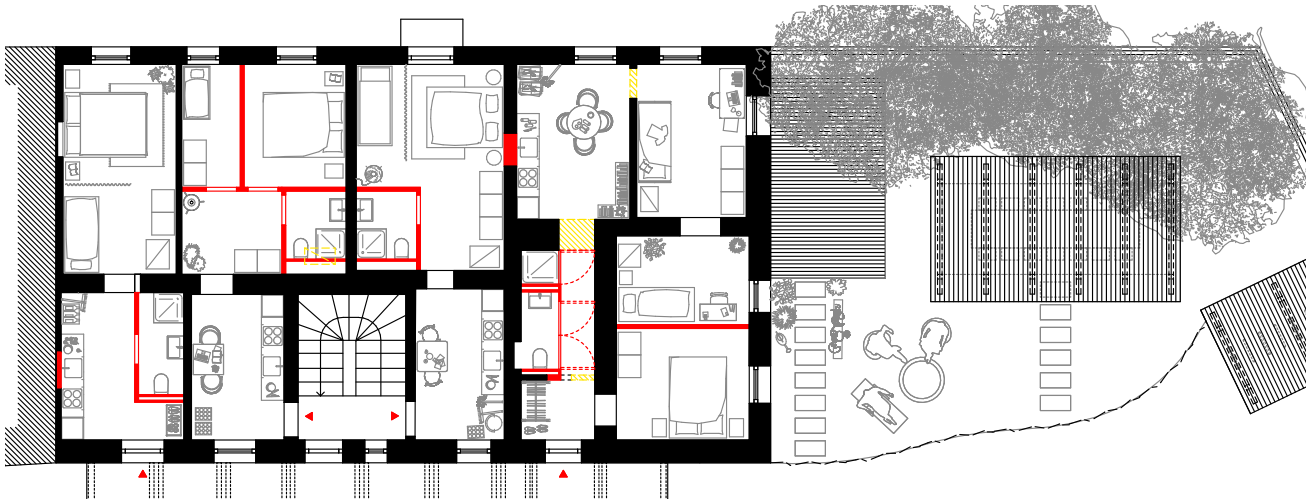




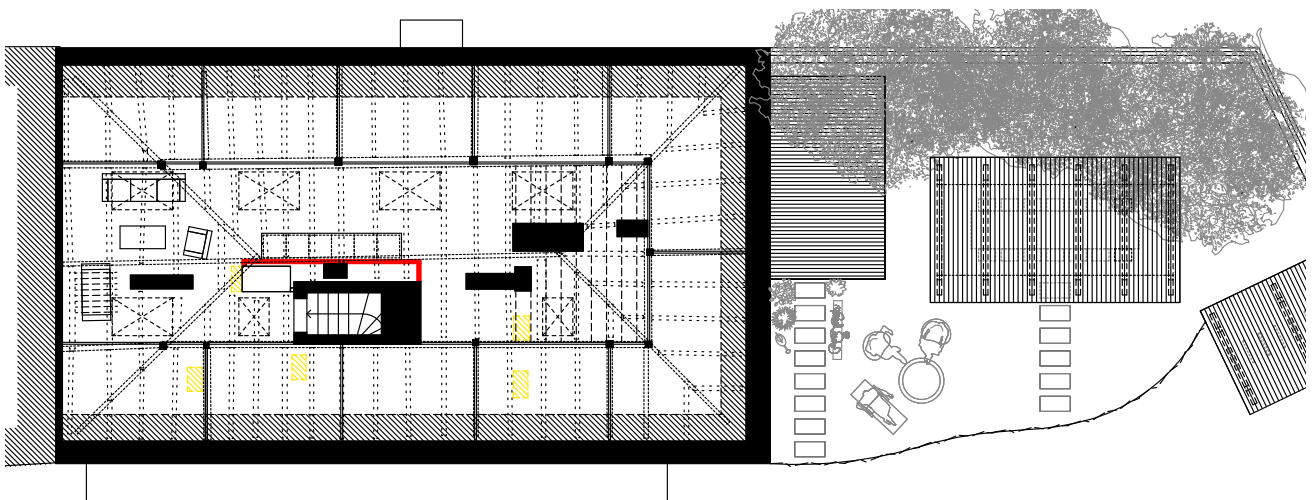
Axonometry of construction method



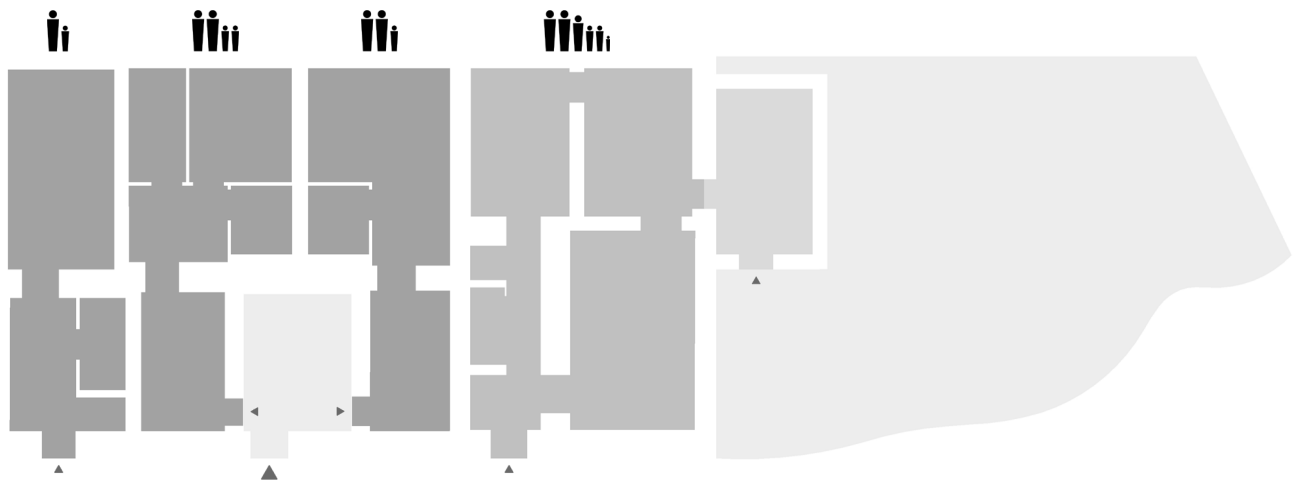
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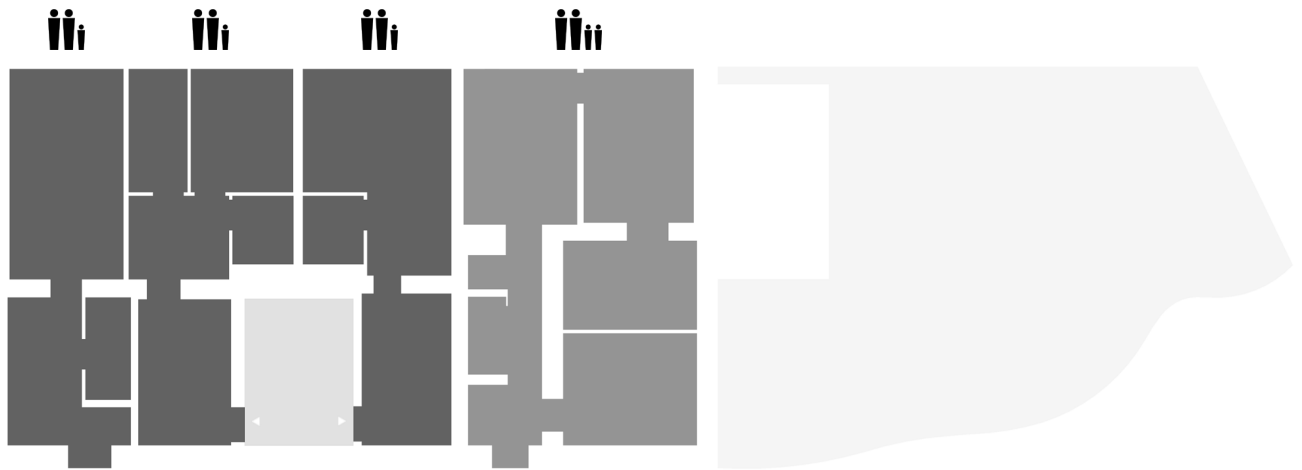
Intervention 1, first floor, scale 1:200



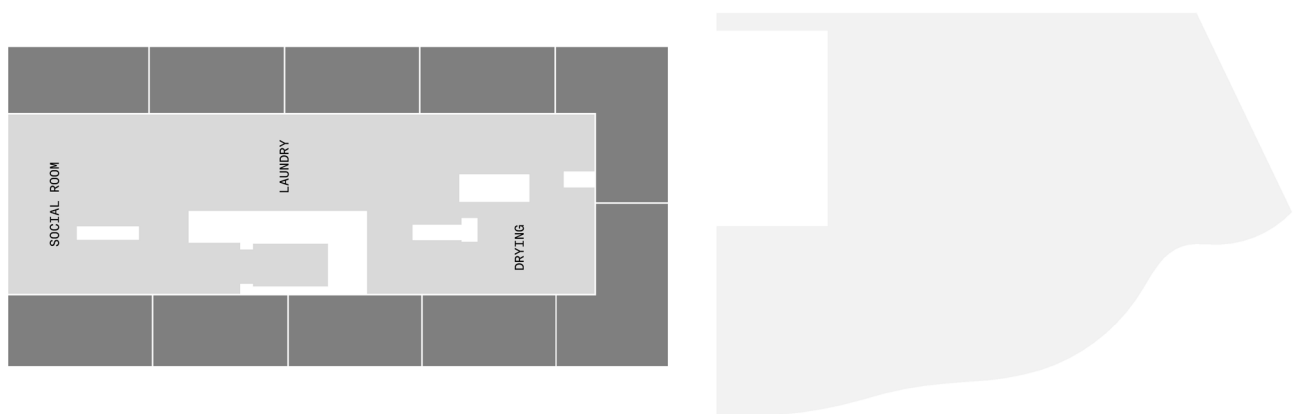
Intervention 1, second floor, scale 1:200



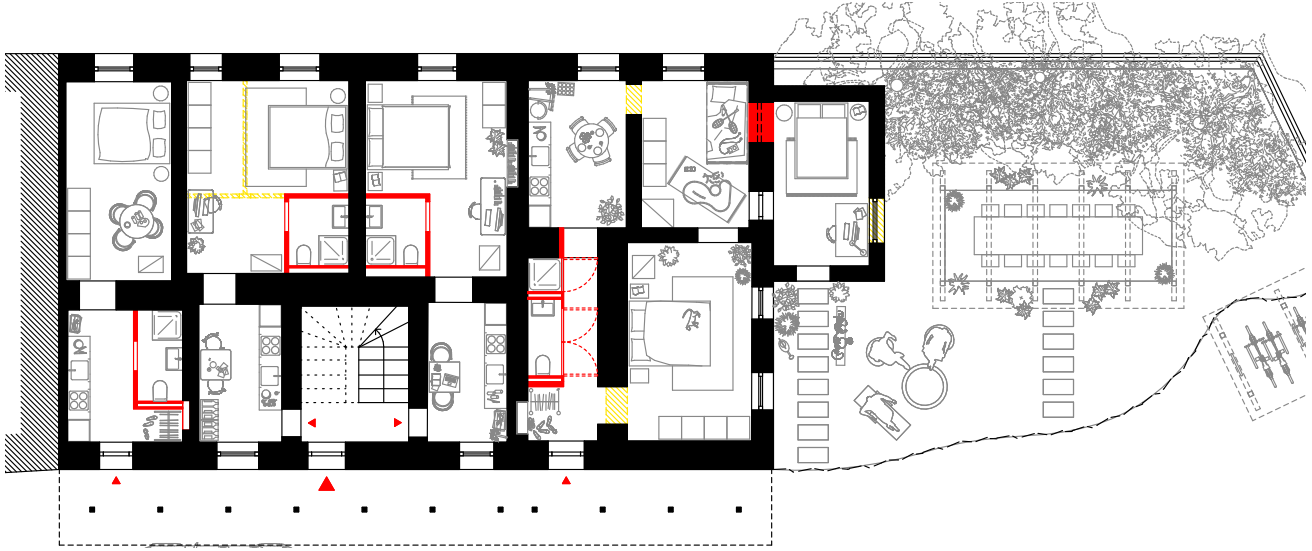
Intervention 1, zoning diagram groundfloor



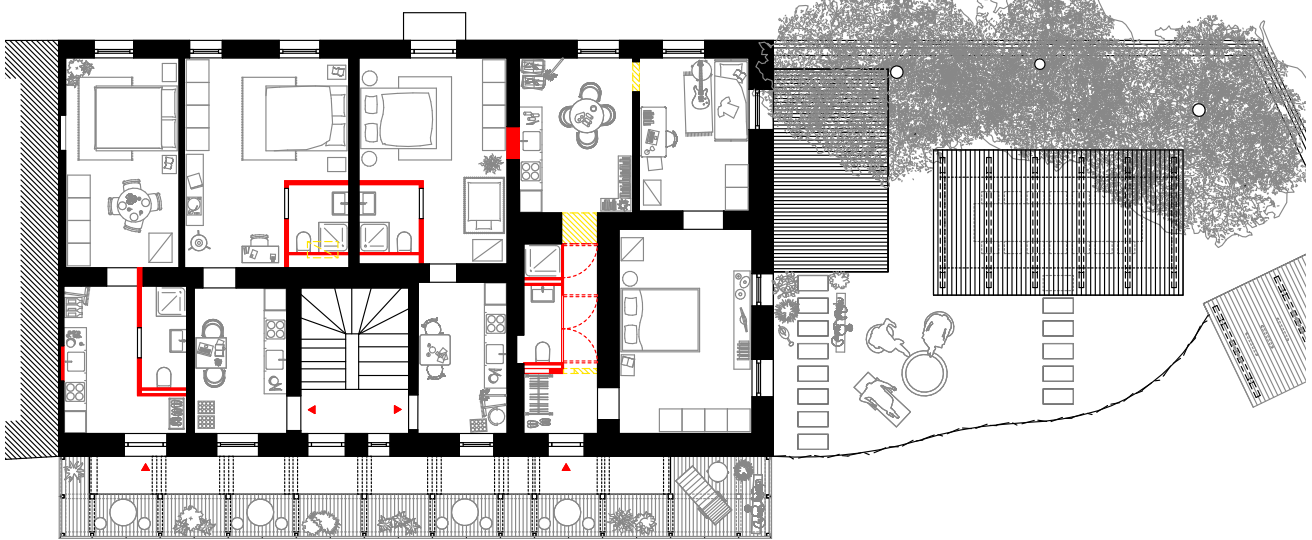
Intervention 1, zoning diagram first floor



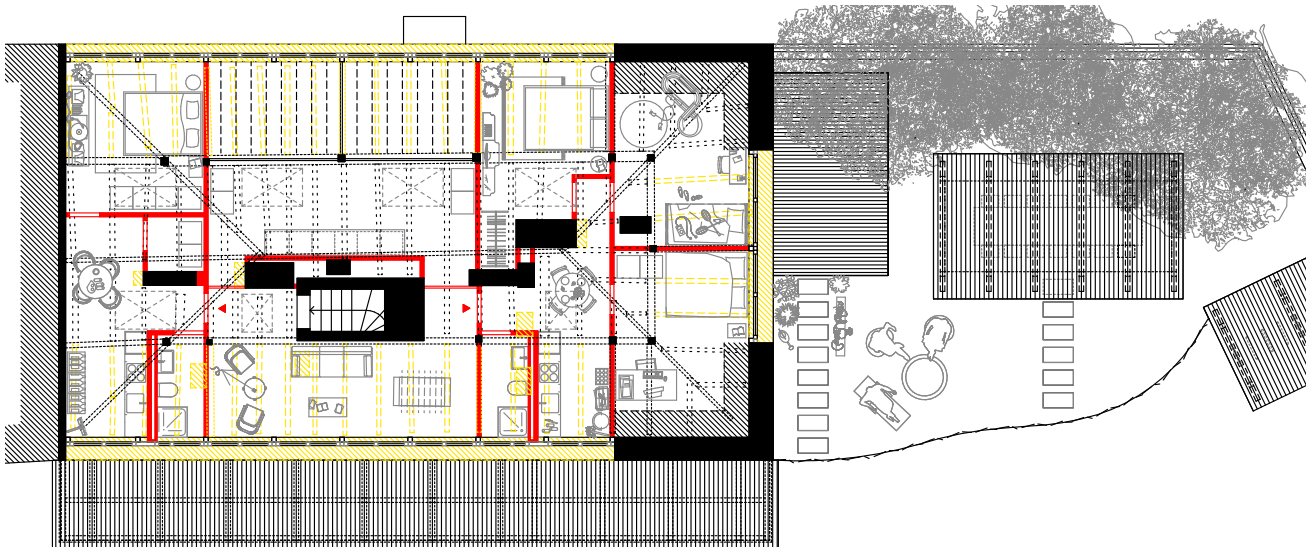
Intervention 1, zoning diagram second floor



Intervention 2 and 3, groundfloor, scale 1:200



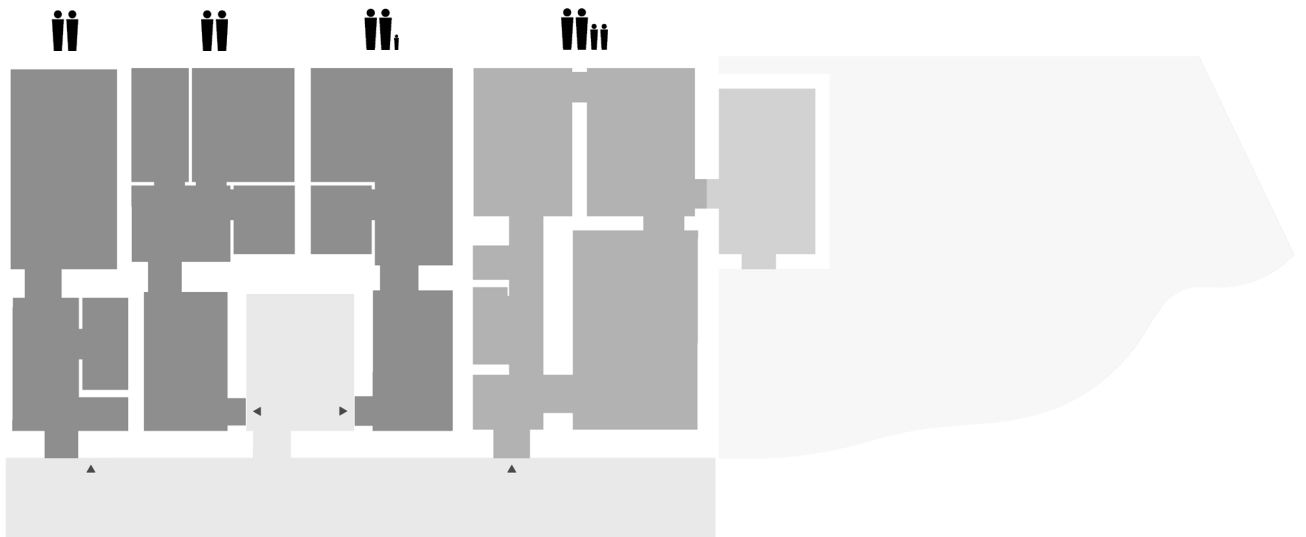
Intervention 2 and 3, first floor, scale 1:200



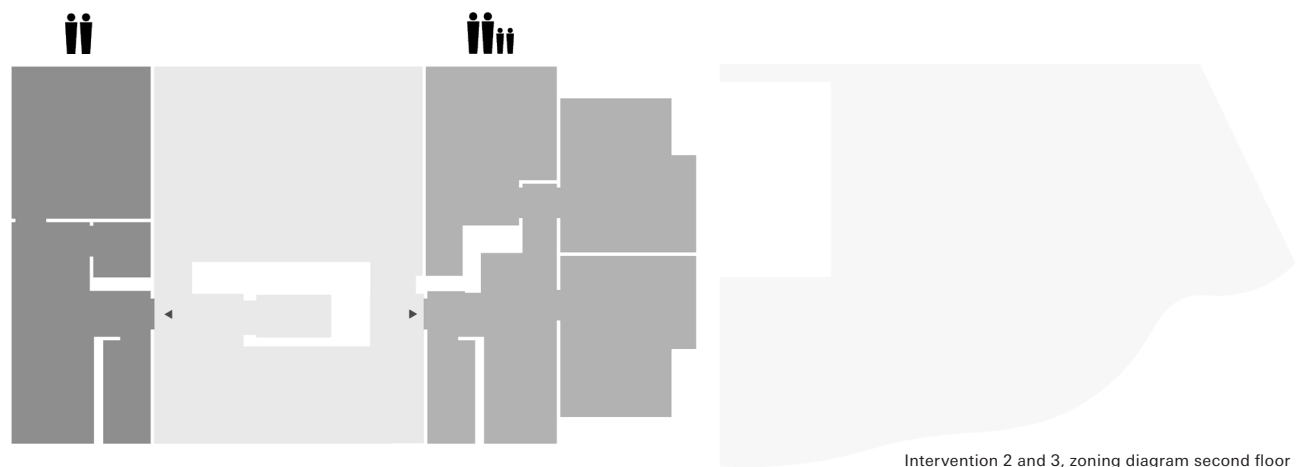
Intervention 2 and 3, second floor, scale 1:200



Intervention 2 and 3, zoning diagram groundfloor



Intervention 2 and 3, zoning diagram first floor



Intervention 2 and 3, zoning diagram second floor

Anna Dobrova in conversation with Félix Dillmann

ANNA DOBROVA: Hi Félix.

FÉLIX DILLMANN: Hi Anna.

AD: Thank you for finding time to talk with me. How are you today?

FD: Very fine, it's good weather, we had a nice breakfast in our office.

AD: What are your plans for today in terms of work?

FD: We have to finish a few open tasks considering the trucks that went to Ukraine last week. We had three trucks the last few days and we have to finish up the paperwork, let the public know that it happened, and create videos, images for social media, etc.

AD: Let's come back to the Seminar Week that happened in May and recall the impressions and experience that we had. The goal of the Seminar Week, "Vacant Building in Lviv: From Rapid House to Sustainable Housing," was to practice reusing vacant buildings and salvaging building components, while also fostering solidarity between Switzerland and Ukraine. You have practical experience in both of the above: architectural solutions for social projects worldwide (in Ghana and Nepal) and your active humanitarian work with Re-Win in Ukraine. What solutions or approaches do you think could realistically be implemented in the actual project in Lviv?

FD: I would say implementing solutions produced by the students would be a bit overrated as the students have never been there. They had one week to get to know a really foreign culture and to dig into it. They learned a lot about Ukrainian culture and about the infrastructure, but the solution they provided was still from the perspective of a foreigner.

So, first of all, I would not directly implement a solution but look at them and see what we can learn from them, and how we can translate these solutions into a Ukrainian language. But, that said, what I found really interesting was the approach and the attitude, the way they treated material, local culture, existing infrastructure and the way they approached this task.

And each group had a different approach, different elements that they picked out. For instance, one had this radical attitude towards local labour, where they wanted to learn what skills were available and design the solutions based on those skills. And so

they did a study about non-skilled labour in Ukraine and tested it on themselves. Students can already be skilled architects but not yet skilled craftsmen. This allowed them to reduce complexity and design pragmatic and low-tech but impactful solutions.

Another group I would like to highlight is the one with the radiators. Not because of the radiators, they were funny, let's agree on that. But they searched for something else. The attitude towards the existing infrastructure and towards the liveability of the spaces was a search for dignity. They said, okay, even in a crisis moment, people not only have the right to a roof, but maybe more important is the right to dignity.



Seminar week, final review. Photo: Barbara Buser

And they included a lot of different playful elements in their architecture's language and through that enabled the locals to feel at home, to engage with fun activities and through that effectively create a safe space. By that, the roof becomes a necessity, but the space they feel at home is much more important than closed windows, for example.

AD: We saw during the presentation how the youngest audience went to play with it with these elements right away.

FD: Exactly, I think it sets apart the container housing programs here, where Ukrainians are packed into compact areas and provided with basic necessities, whilst the necessity of feeling at home is not provided. And this is a negotiation we have to do or we could do, and maybe come up with solutions that are way different than traditional humanitarian action.

AD: Speaking of humanitarian aid, how crucial is capacity building, particularly in developing knowledge and skills, for the success of international projects? Drawing from your experience during Seminar Week, how can students and educational activities contribute to this process?

FD: First, I have to admit that I, too, am still learning and don't exactly know what skills are available in Ukraine. In some areas, students were more informed than I was. In Switzerland, we use the term Fachkräftemangel, meaning a shortage of skilled workers. In Ukraine, many skilled men are fighting in the war, and many skilled women, elderly, and others have left. So, there's definitely less capacity than before the war.

Given this, we can't rely on traditional approaches. We need to work with unskilled labor by reducing complexity or incorporating skill-building into the process. By helping locals develop practical skills, we enable them to help themselves. As a foreign university, we're not here to tell them what to do but to support them in achieving what they feel is most needed. In times of financial hardship, developing skills is a sustainable and cost effective way to become self-reliant.

Students can contribute by bringing fresh perspectives. Their distance from the situation allows them to think outside the box, challenging known patterns and processes. This can motivate innovation and contribute to collective knowledge. So while students and locals share knowledge, it's up to Ukrainians to decide what's valuable and how to use it.

AD: But you've also been in this role, right, When you were doing your projects in Ghana or Nepal as a coach or as a volunteer? How was your thinking outside the box perceived there?

FD: I mean, of course, whenever we come to a foreign country, we bring something. We cannot deny that we have an impact on the local culture and that we transform it in a way. In my opinion, what has to be really important is humility – that we are not there to teach, but to learn as well. It's learning from each other. And the outcome will, be something we've created together.

In Nepal, we worked in teams: one European with five or more Nepalese together. We try to do the same in our RE-WIN workshops, we try to bring together Ukrainians and Swiss people. When we build racks, put the windows on the pallets, when we prepare them for transport, we invite 50% Swiss, 50% Ukrainians, to really create skills and cultural exchange.

Both are profiting and learning from it. And the solutions are valuable for both of them.

AD: Great! You've already started answering my next question! RE-WIN is a non-profit organization (Verein) from Switzerland that focuses on reuse within Switzerland and circular practices in the reconstruction of Ukraine. What challenges do you face? How do you ensure that the aid provided aligns with the actual needs on the ground, despite potentially limited presence?

FD: I mean, it's difficult. We are far away. It's a culture I've never been in before, a culture that is really foreign to me. I know Asian and African cultures better than I know Eastern European cultures. The initiative started based on a Swiss idea, but early on we tried to be in contact with the Ukrainians to really ask: what do you need? our colleagues, our Ukrainian partners, do the needs assessment. We don't. Windows from here is a humanitarian aid for them. So they are the ones with the only voice in deciding if it is needed or not. When they say, we don't want certain materials anymore, we stop.

On the other hand, the initiative is not only an aid project for Ukraine, but it also helps us develop circular economy principles. By deconstructing, transporting, and reassembling the windows, we learn a lot about how circular economy practices work. We aim to produce knowledge that can be applied both in Ukraine and here. I also believe that the knowledge created in Ukraine is pioneering and can easily be adapted elsewhere.

The pragmatic way in which the windows are constructed serves as a leading example that we can present to our architects in Switzerland. If Ukrainians can do it, why can't we? Therefore, I believe that every partner—both the Ukrainian partners and us—has the right to determine what is important in their respective contexts. Being in dialogue and working across borders is essential, and the binational nature of this project strengthens both sides.

AD: What I observed during my time volunteering in these activities, it creates a platform for discussions—about what is happening back in Ukraine, how else we can help, and other related topics. It's not just about sharing knowledge and experience; it also provides Ukrainians with the opportunity to contribute and stay connected to their homeland. This sense of connection fosters a strong bond within the Ukrainian community, and I believe it's truly beneficial for them.

FD: You are talking about something very important right now. One of the key ways we try to tackle this challenge is through trust-building. We need to trust our partners to be truthful about their needs, and they need to trust that we have only good intentions. I believe the greatest proof of trust would be if they feel comfortable saying, "No, that doesn't help me."

One challenge we face is that Ukrainians are very appreciative of our help. However, due to the donor-recipient hierarchy, they often hesitate to express what they truly need or to say when something is not useful to them. Since we are working with second-life

materials, it's crucial for all of us to learn what is valuable and what is not. This requires ongoing discussions.

**We aim to move away from viewing things as "waste" and instead apply common sense in our approach.**

This is actually the biggest challenge. We repeatedly ask them, "Is what we're doing helpful? Is it working? Do you have any problems?" And they mostly say yes. So, trust-building is a long process.

Of course, we don't want to tell our partners in Ukraine how or what to do with the materials. They say where the window is needed the most. But we still have responsibilities towards the material and towards our donors. Do we have the right to go there and check? Did they do their job?

AD: I think it's ok to report each other, maybe it sounds too bureaucratic, but it still creates this feedback and trust. It brings more responsibility towards the material received. And it also creates the trust with the donors that their effort is appreciated and needed.

FD: Moreover, Instead of fearing or hating foreigners, Swiss people have the chance to contribute by passing on something they valued, like a window, to the next owner. This creates a personal connection to a foreign culture and builds solidarity with Ukraine. The idea is to see value in materials often seen as broken or destroyed, treating them as treasures.

AD: Félix, how do you imagine the future of architectural humanitarian projects in Ukraine, both during and after the war?

FD: One thing I really appreciate about the way you are looking at the situation is that you don't want to be part of this help machinery, but you want to be part of, let's say, a global collective society that wants to invest into architectural projects in the Ukraine. And I think with that attitude, the future of these projects are as global, as transcultural as everything else. And obviously it's the Ukrainians, who are there, it's their home. But when we go with this attitude that it's not an aid machinery and the humanitarian action is not only an emergency action, but people's first action, then we can contribute meaningful and impactful architectural projects together for and with the people who are living there.

So I hope this humanitarian world is changing towards a more socially oriented, participatory and process-oriented action.

AD: What was your best practical experience in reuse, and how would you apply this in the context of Ukraine?

FD: My best experience with reuse was in Nepal after the earthquakes, where homes had collapsed, leaving families with piles of broken bricks. It was decided to

build a school, as the community prioritized education over their own homes. To gather materials, each family was asked to contribute 10 bricks. Despite scepticism, every family gave their bricks, and together we built the school from these second-life materials. Even a man whose home was undamaged contributed money for bricks to be part of the effort.



Brickhouse, Nepal project by Superstructure gUC.  
Photo: Superstructure gUC

The school, made from different-shaped bricks, became a symbol of collective action and pride. It created a sense of identity for the community, and they were proud to send their children there. This experience showed me how reuse can become a powerful tool for rebuilding, not just a practical solution.

In Ukraine, though the situation is different—a war, not a natural disaster—the idea remains the same. We can rebuild using materials Russia tried to destroy, turning them into a symbol of resilience and collective action. Reuse isn't just about materials; it's about creating something meaningful together and reclaiming what was valued.

**We can rebuild using materials Russia tried to destroy, turning them into a symbol of resilience and collective action.**

In Nepal, we also built a school entirely from old windows. At first, the community resisted the idea of using "trash," but once completed, the building became a known landmark. It's now a Nepalese model school, indicating how reuse can contribute to pioneer new approaches, create pride and positively influence education. Though Ukraine's trauma comes from war, not an environmental crisis, the healing process through reuse and reclaiming material property can be similar. We need a more multi-disciplinary approach to tackle the challenges, to realize various added values and to go beyond just reusing old, broken materials.

AD: And to wrap it up: how do you see your role in the circular economy?

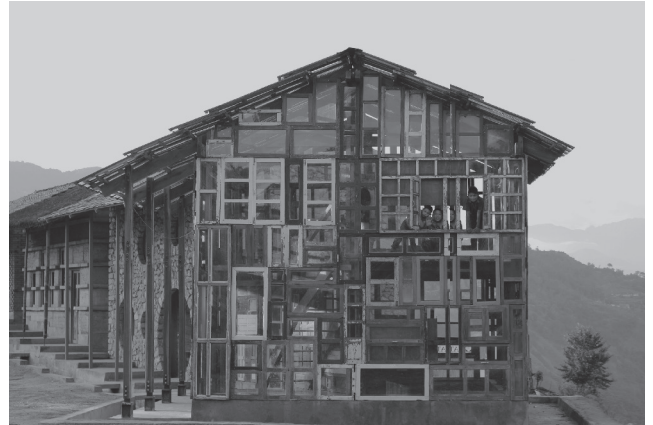


FD: Even when people lose their homes, they retain ownership of these materials. My role is to facilitate this process by creating projects that bring people and materials together. We've partnered with Libereco, a human rights organization, to combine circular economy and human rights.

In Ukraine, we assume that reclaiming materials can be part of trauma therapy. The process of cleaning and reclaiming items that were once loved helps restore a sense of ownership and aids in healing.

Every building that we build, every material that we move is an opportunity to include diverse stakeholders, diverse people, and to develop new processes and new attitudes. But in all this we are only at the beginning.

AD: Thank you for this interesting conversation and your work!



Glasshouse, Nepal project by Supertecture gUC.  
Photo: Supertecture gUC

Olga Konovalova in conversation with Kees Christiaanse

OLGA KONOVALOVA: A text on the poster at the "Second Life of Things" exhibition currently on display at the Landesmuseum Zürich reads:

"In times of war, there is a shift in the definition of what constitutes waste. Import restrictions and labour shortages can result in certain items becoming scarce, making rationing necessary for many goods. What was previously discarded is suddenly seen as a resource. During the two world wars, things were reused as much as possible ... "

Where do you see this shift in Ukraine?

KEES CHRISTIAANSE: In a wartime situation, scarcity changes perspectives. People begin to see value in materials that might otherwise be overlooked. Ukraine offers some intriguing possibilities.

The rubble which stays instead of cities shows a viable path forward: how to recycle almost all the solid material on-site for rebuilding efforts. It's not just a research and innovation challenge; it represents a substantial business opportunity, especially once the war ends. Building materials will likely be scarce, and we're already seeing shortages in Western Europe. Timber, for instance, is becoming increasingly difficult to source. So, there is a huge potential for business and innovation in this area.

OK: Can the war stimulate the development of sustainability in architecture? What approaches do you already see implemented in Ukraine? What projects within the Swiss Network do you see developing?

KC: Interestingly, the war situation could be an opportunity to challenge and revise construction norms inherited from the Soviet era. For example, there are efforts now to change building regulations to allow for more sustainable practices, such as constructing multi-story buildings with wood. We're trying to set up a wooden housing project with Martin Huber and Gramazio/Kohler<sup>1</sup>.

Under current Ukrainian regulations, this isn't typically allowed. However, exceptions are being made: if a building is prefabricated in a country like Switzerland and then brought to Ukraine, it might be approved, provided it's built to Swiss regulations. Cities like Lviv are considering such projects.

Even though wood is seen as a renewable resource, its availability is limited. In Ukraine, the supply of quality timber, particularly in the western parts, is already stretched. Also, some experts argue that using wood as a mass construction material is not a long-term sustainable solution because global wood production can only meet a fraction of the demand. So, while timber might be suitable for smaller structures, it's not necessarily a feasible option for larger-scale urban construction, especially in areas undergoing rapid rebuilding. It is also questionable in terms of climate change. In our work group, we've decided that the housing we produce will use wood only very sparingly, and the rest will be filled in with other materials. The idea is to use digital fabrication to maximise the efficiency of wood use and allow for different material combinations.

Another group in Ukraine that is working with circular construction is CO-HATY. It is a group of young architects who renovate empty buildings in the cities of western Ukraine for internally displaced people (IDP). For interiors they use second hand things shipped from Switzerland that are not needed anymore, like doors, flooring materials, curtains, bath furniture etc. I think CO-HATY is excellent. It's one of the best projects I've ever seen. It's so good that we should be asking them for advice instead of the other way around. This is actually the way to go.

There's a lot of potential here, and even after the war ends, the early years will likely require many temporary facilities, ideally made from modular construction.

OK: How do you imagine the future of architectural and humanitarian projects in Ukraine, both during and after the war?

KC: One of the primary dangers is that large building investors may come in and dominate the market. The real estate market in Ukraine is already quite imbalanced, heavily dominated by private enterprises, particularly in residential construction. This situation is problematic because it is linked to a form of oligarchic control, with a few parties owning a vast amount of land and real estate. Addressing this imbalance will be essential for Ukraine's future.

This is why grassroots initiatives, like CO-HATY, are so important. They provide a counterbalance and introduce new models of development. For example, we've been in discussions with CO-HATY about

<sup>1</sup> The project is thought to be an IBA Project between Zürich and Vinnytsia, done by the team of Ukrainian researchers at the Chair of Prof. Fabio Gramazio and Prof. Matthias Kohler at ETH in collaboration with the companies Huber Fenster and Divario. Kees Christiaanse is coaching the project.

forming housing cooperatives or collective housing initiatives. Such models, which are popular in places like the Netherlands, could provide affordable, high-quality housing and serve as examples for other communities. These cooperatives could potentially lead to policies where a certain percentage of building stock is allocated to these more community-oriented approaches.

OK: In your experience, how does the cultural context of a place influence the success of reuse projects?

KC: One of the most important tasks of architects is to get a clue about the site and the cultural context and the identity and the character of an area. It's extremely important because by using traces in the area of different types, you can create a local identity, reinforce a local identity, or create a new identity that has a link to the past. Whether you're working in a densely populated urban centre or a rural village that has been largely destroyed, the cultural context should guide your approach.

The challenge often lies in the capacity and quality of the local stakeholders involved. In smaller communities, the people responsible for planning and construction often lack the necessary skills, experience, or capacity to handle innovative reuse projects. In contrast, larger cities tend to have a more critical mass of culturally engaged individuals. These are often well-educated people who understand contemporary planning policies and can appreciate the value of innovative, sustainable projects.

OK: What has been your best practical experience in reuse, and how would you apply this in the context of Ukraine?

KC: It is the waterfront redevelopments in former port and industrial areas, like parts of Amsterdam's waterfront and HafenCity in Hamburg. These were long-term projects—HafenCity<sup>2</sup>, for example, is a 20-year endeavour. Over the course of these years, new paradigms, policies, and ideas emerged, which allowed us to refine our approach continually.

The area was prone to flooding because it lay outside the dikes, so the initial plan was to raise the entire site by three metres using sand. This would have created a significant height difference between the street level and the water, with new concrete and steel quay walls required. But this approach would have been enormously expensive, and it would have destroyed the historical character of the old quay walls, some of which were made of bricks or wood. And you destroy the potential of the neighbourhood to be situated on the water, because the water level is then so low that you have no relation.

Instead, we proposed to raise the land level only in the centre of the site, leaving a six-metre-wide promenade along the water's edge at the original level. This promenade would flood occasionally, preserving

the historic character of the port and maintaining a connection to the water. We also proposed adding floating islands and jetties connected to the quay, creating a three-step relationship with the water: the high land in the middle, the promenade at the original level, and floating structures on the water.

OK: So, the long-term nature of these projects and their ability to evolve with the context are key factors?

KC: Exactly. These projects grew organically with their context. During the process the kind of debate on more sustainable and more liveable urban development feeds into the project gradually. So it's a kind of feedback that continuously yields new discoveries that were not known before when the project was started. We also experimented with innovative construction methods, such as using wood and preserving old sheds for creative industry activities.

OK: What do you see as the main distinction between working with existing structures and designing something entirely new? What are your principles (ethics) when working with existing buildings?

KC: From our perspective, there's actually no difference in approach because, even in the most new conditions, you're still working with an existing context. In the past, we worked on urban extensions in the Netherlands, which means new neighbourhoods in former agricultural lands<sup>3</sup>. The typical approach would be to treat the land as a blank slate—a *tabula rasa*—and build a completely new environment. But we always considered the existing traces in the landscape in our design: waterways, soil level differences, vegetation, and even things like old fences or rows of trees that were looking nice.

To illustrate: in the past, when building in green areas in the Netherlands, the land was often first covered with sand and then waited for a year until it was stable enough to build on. This practice, however, erases any trace of the original landscape, covering it like spreading peanut butter across a field. Instead of smearing sand over everything, we focused on consolidating the existing features—like the edges of ditches and canals, or tree lines. We filled in sand between these natural lines, preserving the original identity and character of the landscape.

This approach was quite radical at the time. People hadn't yet recognized the value of the site's identity and the need to respect it.

On the other end of the spectrum, you have old industrial buildings, such as factories or harbour areas. Removing these structures would be extremely costly. Moreover, they very often have an identity in the form of either historical value or simply a kind of time patina, and that gives them a certain character.

In recent decades, the sustainability debate has reinforced these ideas, emphasising that demolition is not sustainable. Reuse is far more efficient and

2 The masterplan for Hamburg's HafenCity by KCAP, 2000-ongoing, 2,000,000 m<sup>2</sup> masterplan for 5,800 residences, 45,000 m<sup>2</sup> of workspaces, culture, leisure, restaurants, retail, parks, squares and promenades.

3 Master Plan of the new city district with several neighbourhoods for Leishe Rijn by KCAP and other architects, Netherlands, 1995-2002.

climate-friendly. So, whether we're dealing with a seemingly empty piece of green land (which is never truly empty) or a very strong tectonic structure of a nice factory from the 19th century, our approach remains consistent. The only difference lies in the degree to which we reuse or reinterpret the elements present on the site.

OK: I would like to shift to another topic—the student exhibition at ETH Zurich in April, where students worked on a housing project in Lviv. Seeing the presentations from the Seminar Week, "Repairing Vacancy in Ukraine," reminded me of your article from the book, "City as loft"<sup>4</sup>. You mentioned that

"Waiting" buildings and spaces that are not pre-programmed evidently have an inviting, liberating effect on new users.

I see parallels here. What would you say was the most successful strategy from the "Balcony" group for housing reconstruction in Ukraine?

KC: This building might not be the most efficient structure for accommodating a substantial number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). However, its symbolic value is significant. Firstly, it's located in the inner city and is an old, possibly listed building or at least within a listed area. This makes it a crucial element for integrating people into the existing urban community, which is extremely important.

Secondly, it's a small-scale building, which means the community of people who will live there will have an intimate environment. They won't be just numbers; instead, they will form a close-knit community, depending on each other intensively. Thirdly, it's a vital symbolic reconstruction project initiated by a city like Lviv, serving as a benchmark for other cities. These aspects are more important than the specific designs we currently have, even though those designs do offer interesting solutions.

What's particularly intriguing about this project is its connection to the Lacaton & Vassal principle in Paris<sup>5</sup>, where they added a new layer on top of the facade, incorporating balconies with potential utilities, services, and communal spaces for the residents. For the city of Lviv, this project is an important step in creating a foundation for sensible post-war reconstruction activities. These range from grassroots and small-scale initiatives to larger-scale efforts across different programmatic areas. At first glance, the projects might seem like just a student workshop, but when you delve deeper and consider that CO-HATY will now start developing a real project out of it, you realise how significant it is.

OK: These projects seem essential not just for practical

reasons but for cultural and symbolic ones, too. But is it ethical to design urgent housing for those who lost their homes?

KC: You mean that it becomes too exclusive? Yes, and also... too expensive?

OK: And also design itself, I mean, urgent housing in my head, it's something which should be done quickly, effectively and cheaply.

KC: Yeah, but that's actually our thesis. This is also the thesis of the housing project with the Chair of Gramazio/ Kohler at ETH and Martin Huber.

By means of design, you can make more efficient, beautiful, and also cost effective projects. So in that sense, I think we should not see design as a kind of luxury addition to a project, but we should see design as a kind of attitude that wants to make the project. The combination of design and digital innovation is creating the potential to create custom-made, contextual and flexible buildings of a type and size for the same budget as could previously only be achieved with standard units.

I think this is just the beginning, but if the building is completed within a year or a year and a half, it will have quite a significant impact. And perhaps, when people are no longer under constant stress, when they have the mental space to focus on design, it will become easier.

It's difficult to be creative when you're worried about a missile hitting your house.

OK: What are the benefits and risks when foreign architects design in such a sensitive context? What ethical principles do you follow in the work of the organisation Swiss Network?

KC: Basically, what we are doing is trying to involve Ukrainian architects and students and researchers in our projects. And for instance, the IBA project that we are doing, we do not want to be the IBA here. We want to help set up IBA Ukraine and it should be managed and run by Ukrainians, not by us.

Of course you have things like star architects going to destroyed cities to create master plans. The downside is that they just fly in, create the plan, and the local community is largely left out. It often lacks realism and the potential for proper implementation. But on the upside, they bring in development funds, using their foundations to help reconstruct parts of cities. So, there are two sides of the coin.

In many cities that were heavily bombed during the Second World War, such as Berlin, Amsterdam or Warsaw, local architects were already working on reconstruction plans of the cities before the war

ended. It is very important that this work is done now, so that repair and reconstruction go hand in hand and form a continuous and fluid process of transformation and adaptation.

That said, I believe we're on the right path, especially with people from CO-HATY and others. We're creating a kind of collaborative network where there's a complementary effect between those in Ukraine and those here.

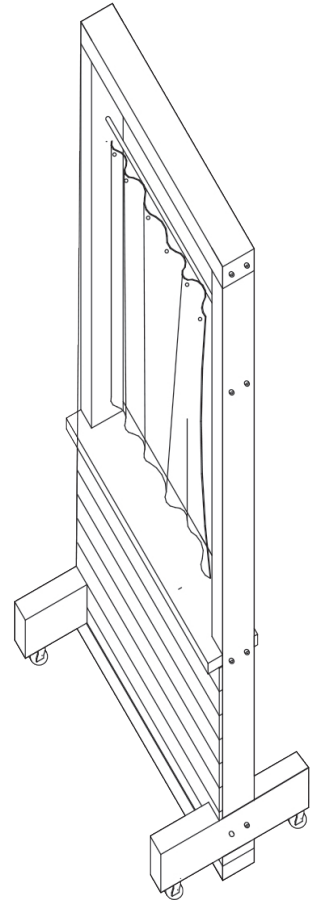
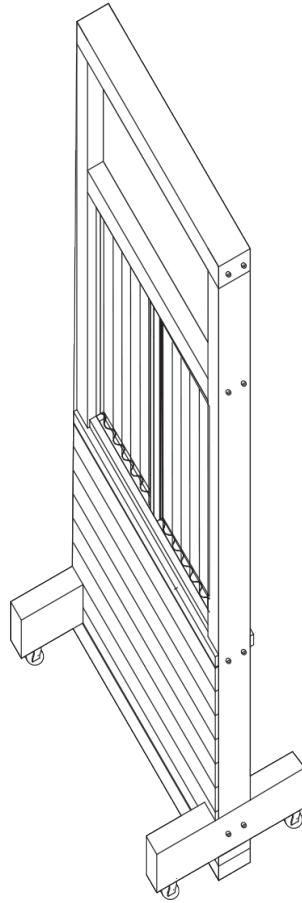
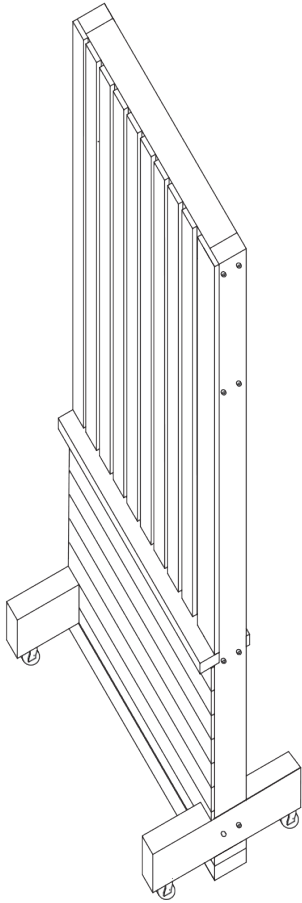


Render of interior space

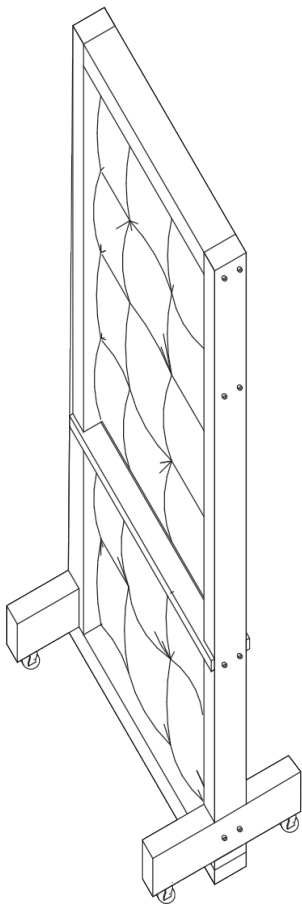
As a reaction to the overall Housing crisis in Ukraine and other parts of the World, we dedicated our work to find adaptable solutions for vacant buildings. In order to increase the comfort and lifestyle of citizens during housing crisis, we developed shifting wall modules, from reuse materials. These can easily be assembled, using various materials, depending on the purpose.

## Participants

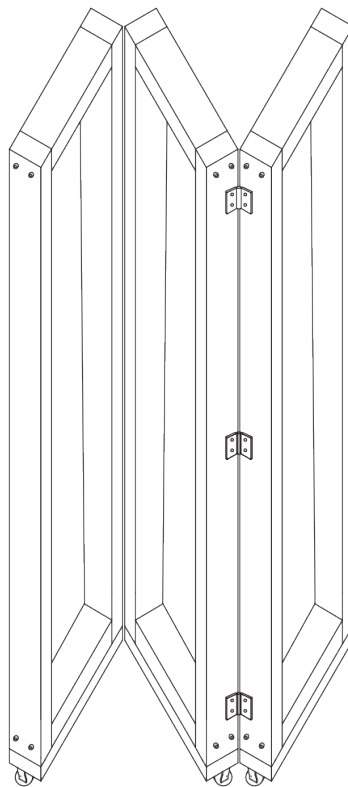
Michael Kling  
Wanja Korner  
Louisa Valentin  
Paat Von Allmen  
Noah Zollinger



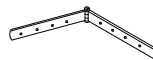
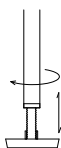
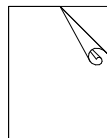
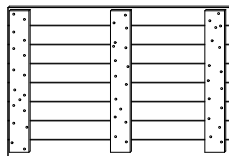
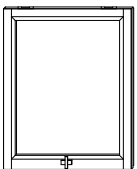
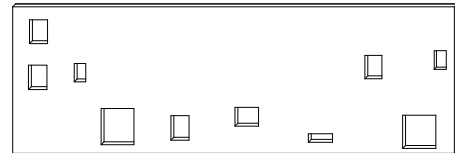
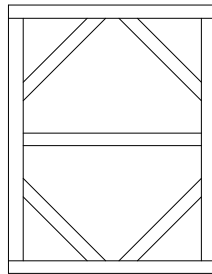
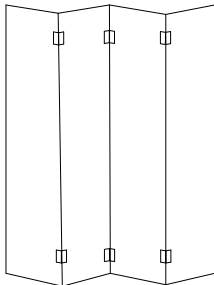
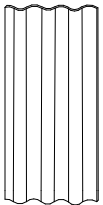
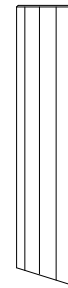
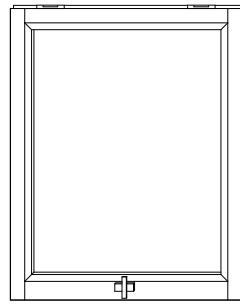
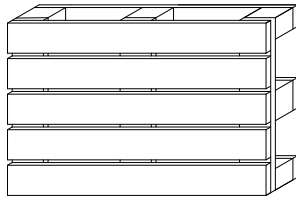
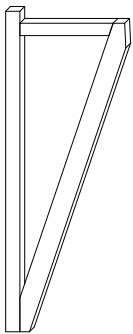
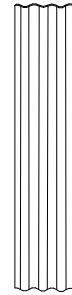
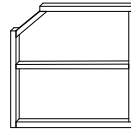
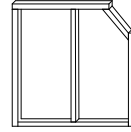
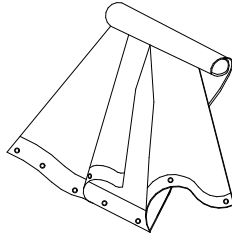
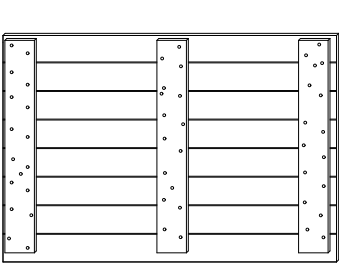
Rigid system axonometry



Insulating system axonometry

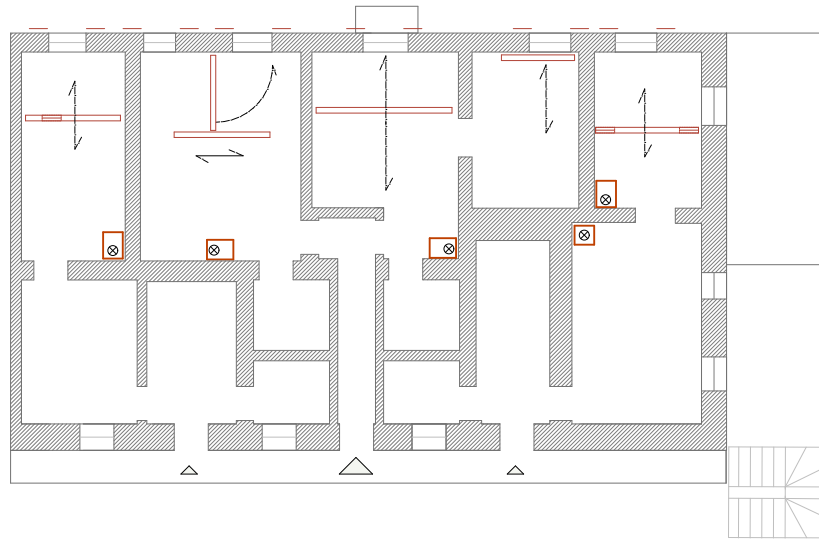


Flexible system axonometry

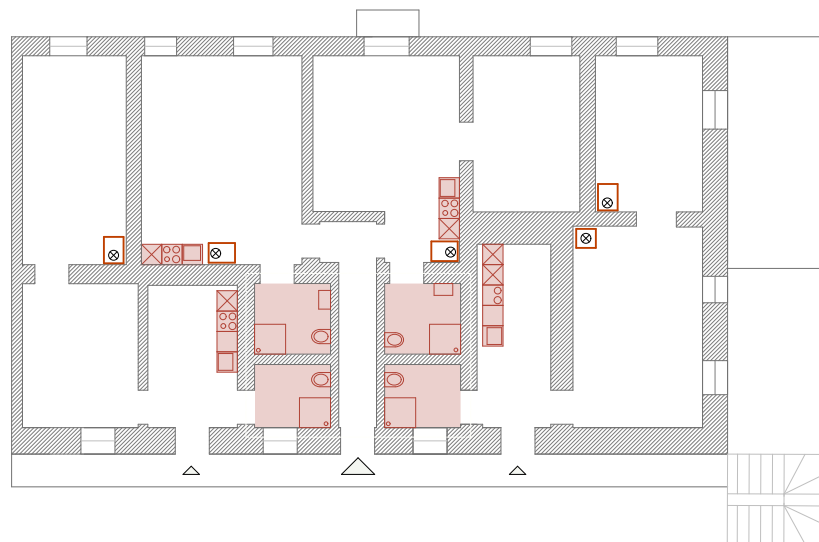


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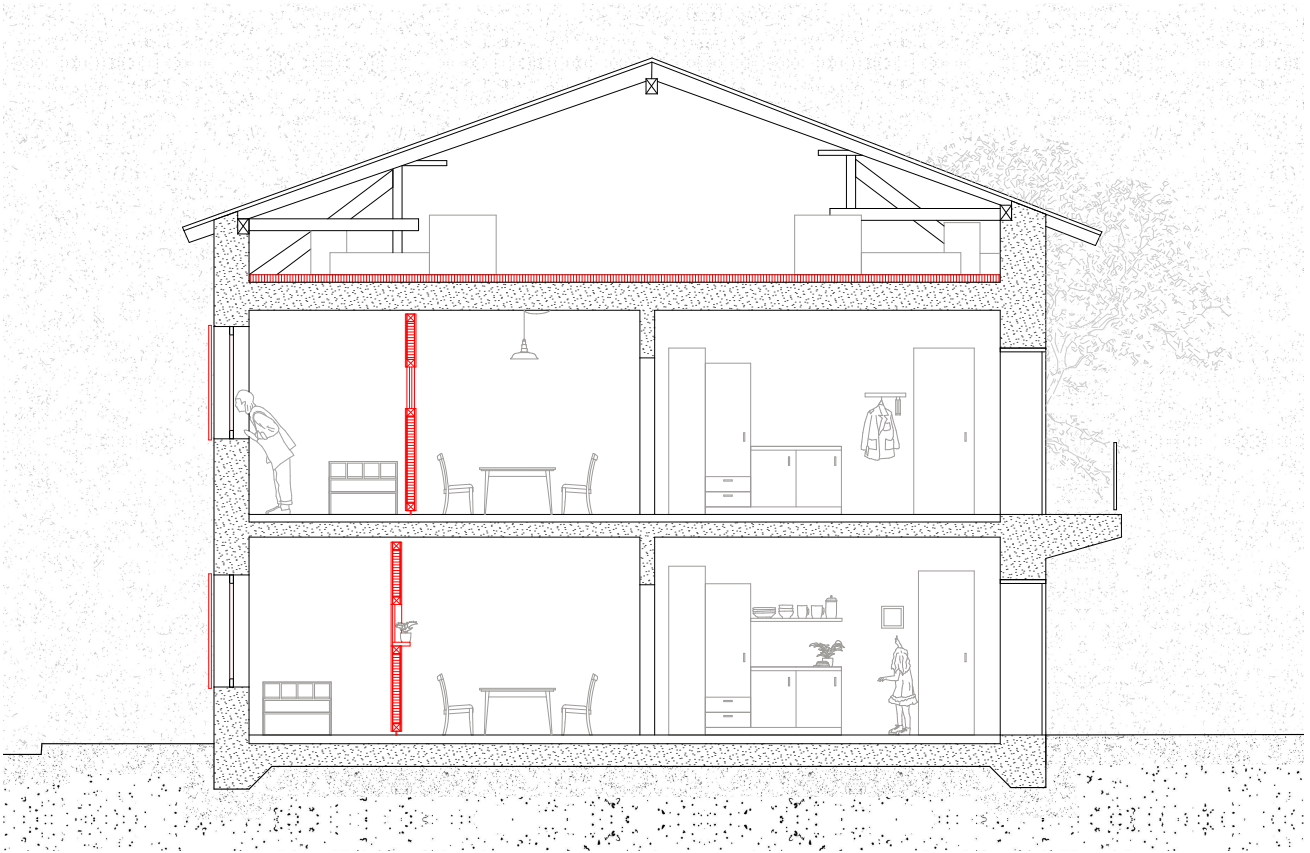




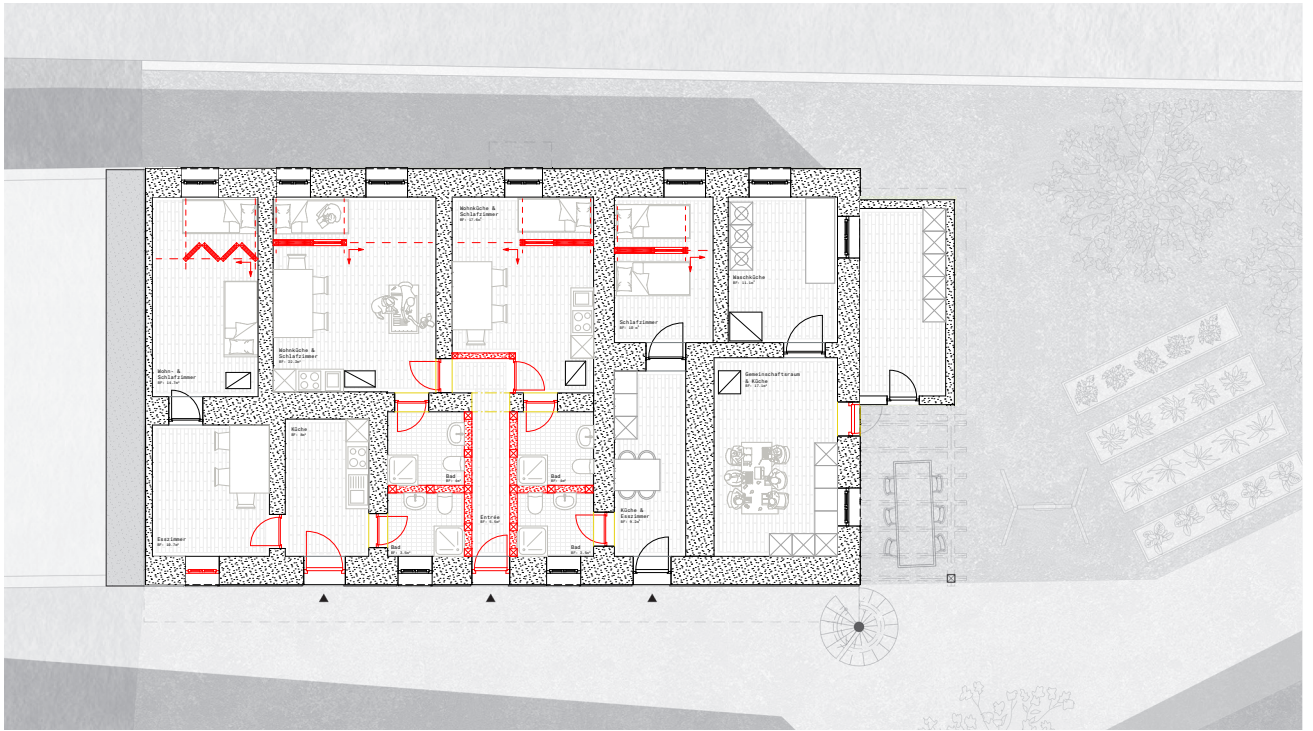
scheme of wall partitions



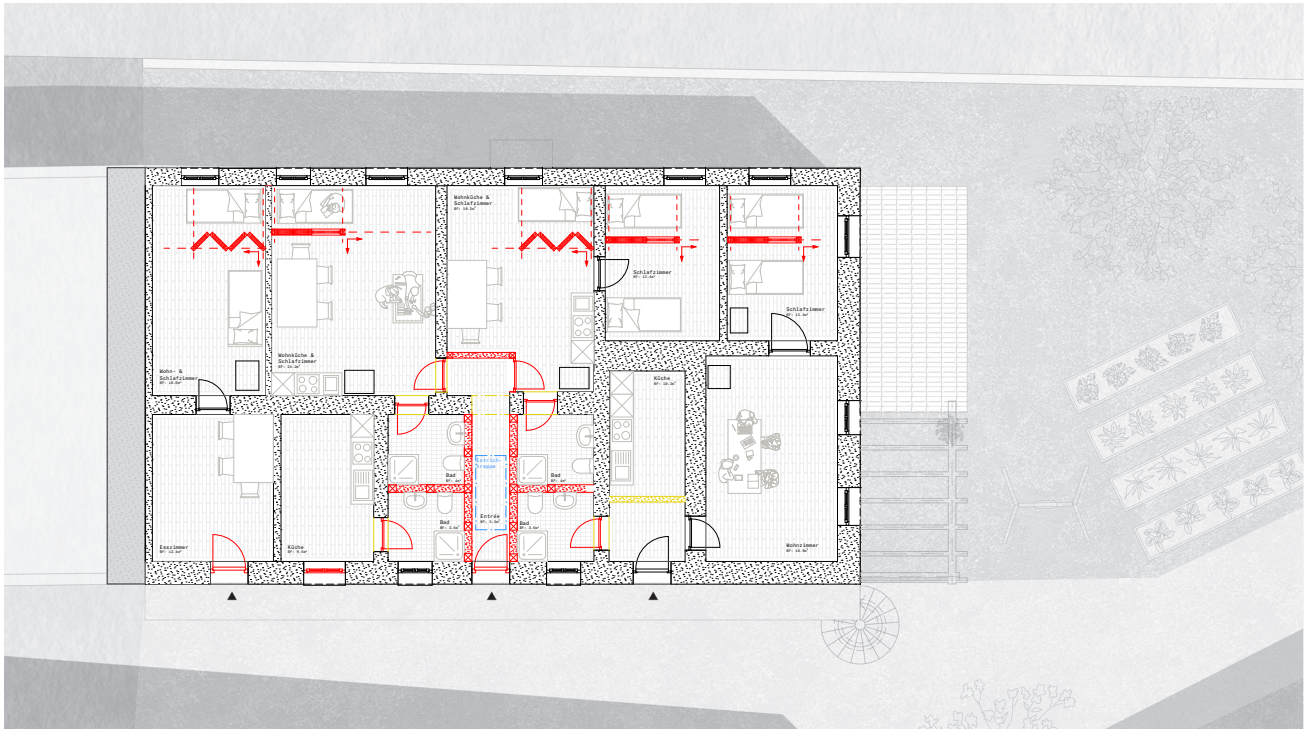
scheme of utilities



Section, scale 1:100



Groundfloor, scale 1:200



First floor, scale 1:200

Gyler Mydyti in conversation with Daniela Sanjinés Encinales

GYLER MYDYTI: How do you imagine the future of architectural (humanitarian) projects in Ukraine, both during and after the war?

DANIELA SANJINÉS ENCINALES: When considering architecture in the context of migrant crisis or displacement, we may follow a wide range of innovative architectural approaches aimed at responding to moments of crisis. While technical solutions for temporary shelters and innovations in design are valuable,

I find the true value of architecture as a tool for displaced people to be active participants in rebuilding their lives, rather than an end in itself.

This perspective is particularly relevant in the current crisis. Alternative spaces and architectures emerge outside conventional norms during these states of exception leading to blurred lines between the individual and the collective, between public and private spheres, between temporary and permanent.

There are valuable lessons to be learned from these exceptional moments that can inform architectural practices in non-emergency times and therefore architecture needs to radically transcend its conventional boundaries. This shift acknowledges moments of crisis as critical junctures that present a unique opportunity to it. leverage the skills and knowledge from affected communities in rebuilding processes and ii. foster alternative solutions that contest existing structures.

GM: What was your best practical experience in reuse, and how would you apply this in the context of Ukraine?

DSE: The experiences of mutual aid housing cooperatives in historical city centres in Uruguay and El Salvador are interesting examples of reuse through collaborative housing, mutual aid, and self-management. These revitalisation programmes have involved housing cooperatives in the refurbishment of empty and deteriorated housing stock in urban centres through mutual aid processes supported by technical assistance. In these cooperative models implemented in Montevideo and San Salvador, housing is collective-

ly owned and removed from speculation, thus providing permanently affordable housing and fighting off gentrification. There are valuable lessons to be learned from these initiatives that could be applied to emergency contexts. Historically, cooperatives have played a key role in post-war reconstruction. In the context of post-conflict Colombia, there has been a re-emergence of collaborative housing initiatives by ex-combatants seeking to re-incorporate collectively. Within the framework of a research project I am currently involved with, we are exploring together with different institutional actors in Colombia, a cooperative housing pilot project for ex-combatants in the city centre of Bogotá.

In the context of Colombia where I am from, there have been devastating consequences left by war. However, reconstruction has also opened up the possibility to introduce innovative housing solutions for affected communities but that simultaneously address housing needs of the wider society.

GM: What role do you believe adaptable interior design elements, such as partition-based layouts demonstrated in the students' work, can play in the reconstruction of homes in war-torn and post-war Ukraine? How do you evaluate this student project?

DSE: We have learned from humanitarian crises that temporary solutions often become permanent in protracted crises. In times of uncertainty, self-managed, self-built collaborative forms of housing production become valuable tools.

One question that arises from this is how to adapt architectural and spatial solutions to the temporary dimension of displacement.

**Displacement is not a static process, and different needs emerge in different moments of the crisis.**

Housing needs to adapt over time to meet the evolving needs of families.

The adaptable interior design elements, such as partition-based layouts demonstrated in the students' work, can play a crucial role in the reconstruction of homes in war-torn and post-war Ukraine. The students' project also highlights the significance of knowledge exchange between normal times and emergency situations, particularly in addressing the changing needs of families throughout their life cycle. Through their work, the students explore how collaborative housing practices can address these needs both from a social and spatial perspective.

Furthermore, this project brings up thought-provoking questions about managing flexible housing solutions and the decision-making process behind these adaptations. The insights gained from emergency housing situations can inform broader conversations about collaborative housing practices. Overall, I believe this project recognizes the constant need for change, both in emergency and non-emergency settings, and highlights the importance of meeting the diverse needs of people at different times, balancing privacy and communal living.



Mutual Aid Housing Cooperative in the Historic City Center in Montevideo, Uruguay. Photo: Daniela Sanjinés Encinales

GM: How do you interpret the dichotomies of temporary vs. permanent, as well as private vs. shared spaces, in the context of war and post-war scenarios where people are forced to adapt to new and often challenging living conditions?

DSE: Looking at the social aspects of these dichotomies, we can question whether the desire for more private spaces and the struggle for temporary versus permanent living arrangements are only prevalent during war periods when people are exposed to communal living conditions. Or is this something we can still explore in the future and how that might look?

I think that this was a very interesting topic of discussion during the seminar week.

On one hand, there are benefits to commoning and having shared resources during times when social support is crucial. On the other hand, people in these situations also value their private space.

It seems that this tension between shared and private spaces is relevant to emergency settings, but I also want to understand if it extends to other contexts as well.

This raised the question of whether moments of crisis could be critical junctures for rethinking how we conceive housing, challenging the individualistic imaginary of housing prevalent in many contexts.

In times of crisis, can we reconsider the concept

of housing and question whether it has to be centred around individual home ownership? Could this be an opportunity to explore collaborative housing processes that were previously less common, such as in Ukraine before the war? This might signify an opportunity to have an impact on the housing system in the future. Furthermore, considering the evolving needs of people in shared spaces, there can be an initial need for shared resources like a communal kitchen, which gradually evolves to encompass shared spaces that enhance quality of life rather than being seen as a sacrifice. This could mean providing the opportunity for individuals to have smaller, private kitchen spaces alongside larger shared kitchen spaces, allowing for choice rather than imposition. Additionally, the level of collective action in collaborative housing projects may shift over time, with initial high motivation and participation giving way to varying levels of engagement from different individuals. Therefore, collaborative housing should allow for varying levels of participation, accommodating both minimal and more extensive involvement.

GM: Based on your research in the Global South and other conflict contexts, what insights into cooperative housing and its role in post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction could be valuable for Ukraine? Could you highlight the key practices to adopt and those to avoid?

DSL: In the case of Colombia, for example, cooperative housing served as a means for ex-combatants to reintegrate collectively into civil society, allowing them to maintain their social networks and support structures. This highlights the importance of social connections beyond just providing housing.

However, one lesson we can learn from recent cooperative housing initiatives in Colombia is the importance of rapid and continuous institutional support to communities wanting to reincorporate collectively. The rigid housing system, individualized support, and extended delays eroded the collective desire of the community, leading many to give up and pursue individual routes.

Therefore, in implementing cooperative housing projects, it is essential to have the support and enabling mechanisms in place to sustain the momentum of collective initiatives.

Access to land, finance, and technical assistance are crucial factors that enable the success of cooperative housing projects.

Furthermore, the role of federations and cooperative networks in providing support and resources is also significant. Lastly, while promoting collective housing initiatives, it is important to be mindful that forcing collective processes on communities that are not willing may be counterproductive. Therefore, bottom-up processes and enabling instruments need to work in tandem to ensure the success of cooperative housing projects.

GM: What about the legal instruments? In many countries, there aren't legal instruments to enforce collaborative housing. What role does the legal framework play, and how do you think this could change? For example, has there been any change in Colombia after movements from ex-combatants towards collaborative housing? Was there any ground provided and changes over time, or how should one fight?

DSE: The legal framework is key in ensuring the sustainability of cooperative housing models over time. You can look at the experience of the Uruguayan Federation of Mutual Aid Housing Cooperatives. Uruguay has a very structured and institutionalised cooperative housing model, which they've been trying to replicate in different areas around Latin America. They have identified key ingredients needed for a cooperative housing model to emerge and sustain itself over time, and the legal framework is a key part of it. In places where they're trying to replicate it, they usually start with pilot projects to show how the model can be adapted to a local context. The importance of pilot projects becomes key because of the need to test out different elements and see what works, what doesn't, and to inform public policy. Legal frameworks should not only include enabling instruments such as land banks and financial mechanisms for cooperative housing but also establish an institutional framework that clearly defines roles and responsibilities to specific institutional actors. These are relevant learnings for Ukraine as well.

In Colombia there is a legal framework that recognizes collective property and emphasizes the importance of including collaborative housing organisations in the provision of affordable housing. In practice, the national housing system is completely focused on promoting individual home ownership and contractor-led housing, making it impossible for community-based organisations to play a relevant role. However, that housing system has failed to provide adequate housing to large segments of the population. Within that context, there is a re-emergence in collaborative housing practices. People are looking into collaborative forms of housing as a means to pull in resources, especially in urban centres where there is a housing affordability crisis. The peace process in Colombia has also opened the debate around cooperative housing.

International cooperation has played an important role in funding these projects, but sustainability after cooperation ends is a challenge. For example, in El Salvador, cooperative housing initiatives have been funded and managed to a great extent by international cooperation. Currently there is a pilot programme funded by international cooperation to build a series of cooperative housing projects in the historical centre of San Salvador to be implemented by the state. There are a lot of challenges in institutionalizing the model, and the pulling out of international cooperation has proven to be very difficult. How do you create enabling instruments, who leads them, what institutes are involved in allocating resources, who provides technical assistance?

GM: You've mentioned the importance of management models several times, and I agree that it's a crucial aspect. Could you please provide examples of management models that could serve as a reference for Ukraine? Additionally, can you explain the involvement of different stakeholders in these initiatives?

DSE: Cooperative housing is an umbrella term that encompasses many different models that have been implemented in a diversity of contexts such as Switzerland, Uruguay, El Salvador, or India. Perhaps that's why it is such an interesting housing model as it can be adapted to very different economic, political and social contexts. There are cooperative housing models that take on a more top-down approach while others are driven by community grassroots organisations. Their goals may also vary. Some cooperatives focus on pulling resources to secure housing finance, building construction, purchasing of land or as a means to ensure collective living. Some cooperatives, such as building cooperatives, once they fulfil their goal they are dissolved and tenure rights are distributed individually. There are also for profit and non-profit cooperatives. Tenant cooperatives, which are the most common type in Europe and Uruguay, are self-managed, non-profit housing providers that retain collective ownership and remove housing from speculation, securing long term affordability.

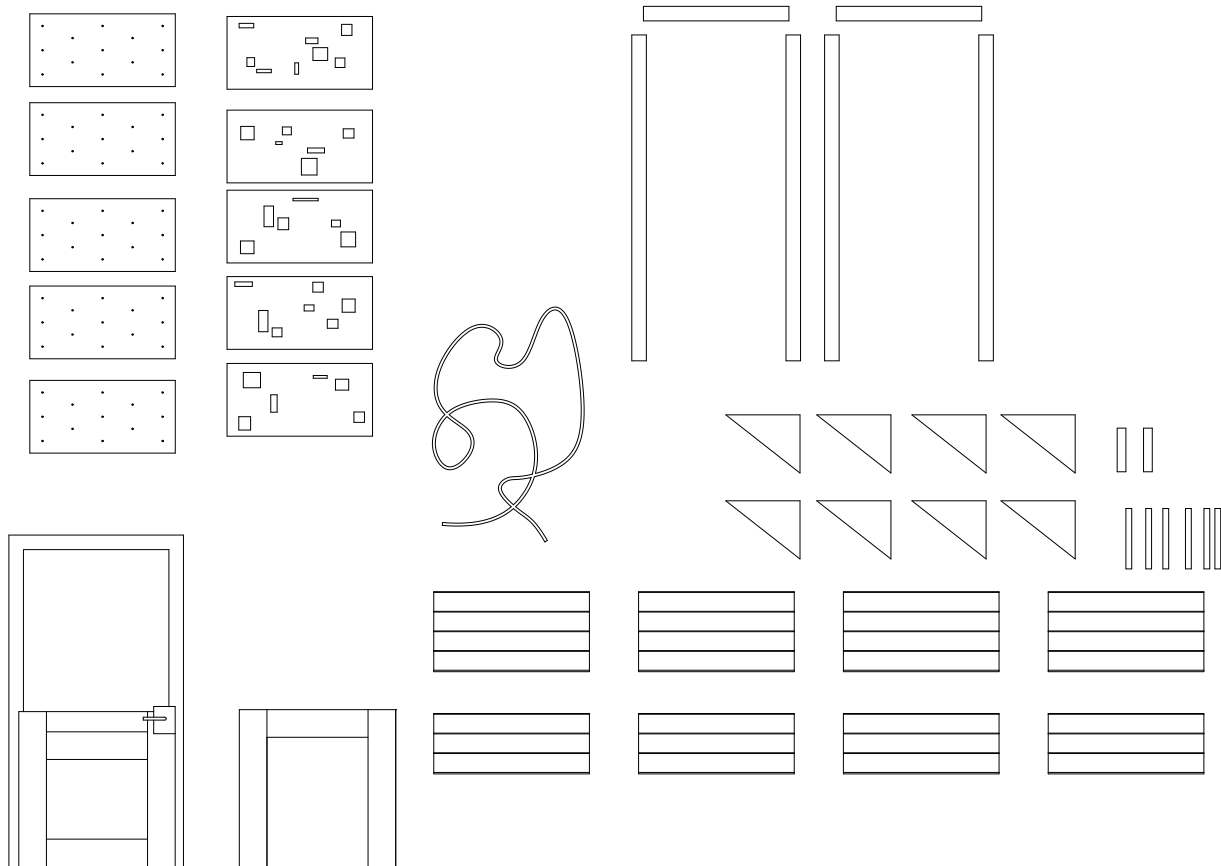
In summary, cooperative housing allows for flexibility in establishing different models that involve different institutional actors, internal organisational set-ups and decision making processes. There is a wealth of information available, and knowledge exchange among cooperatives is a key principle. There are global and regional associations that facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and sharing knowledge.

GM: What are your thoughts on our seminar week, on the process of learning, while designing and building something simultaneously? Do you see it as a part of different studios or teaching structures within institutions?

DSE: There is a responsibility as architects, educators and students to engage in the current multiple crises happening around us. This should be a central part of our training today. How do we do this in an ethical manner? How do we avoid engaging in academic extractivism and ensure we communicate and share our contributions in a transparent and timely manner? This seminar week brings important insights not only on how to combine teaching, research and design, but also on how working closely with local organizations and individuals on the ground is crucial. Another important accomplishment I perceived of this seminar week was the ability to reflect on the complexities of humanitarian response during a crisis at different design scales. I am sure that it was a transformative experience for the students and hopefully a valuable contribution for organisations on the ground.



Mutual Aid Housing Cooperative in the Historic City Center in San Salvador, El Salvador. Photo: Daniela Sanjinés Encinales



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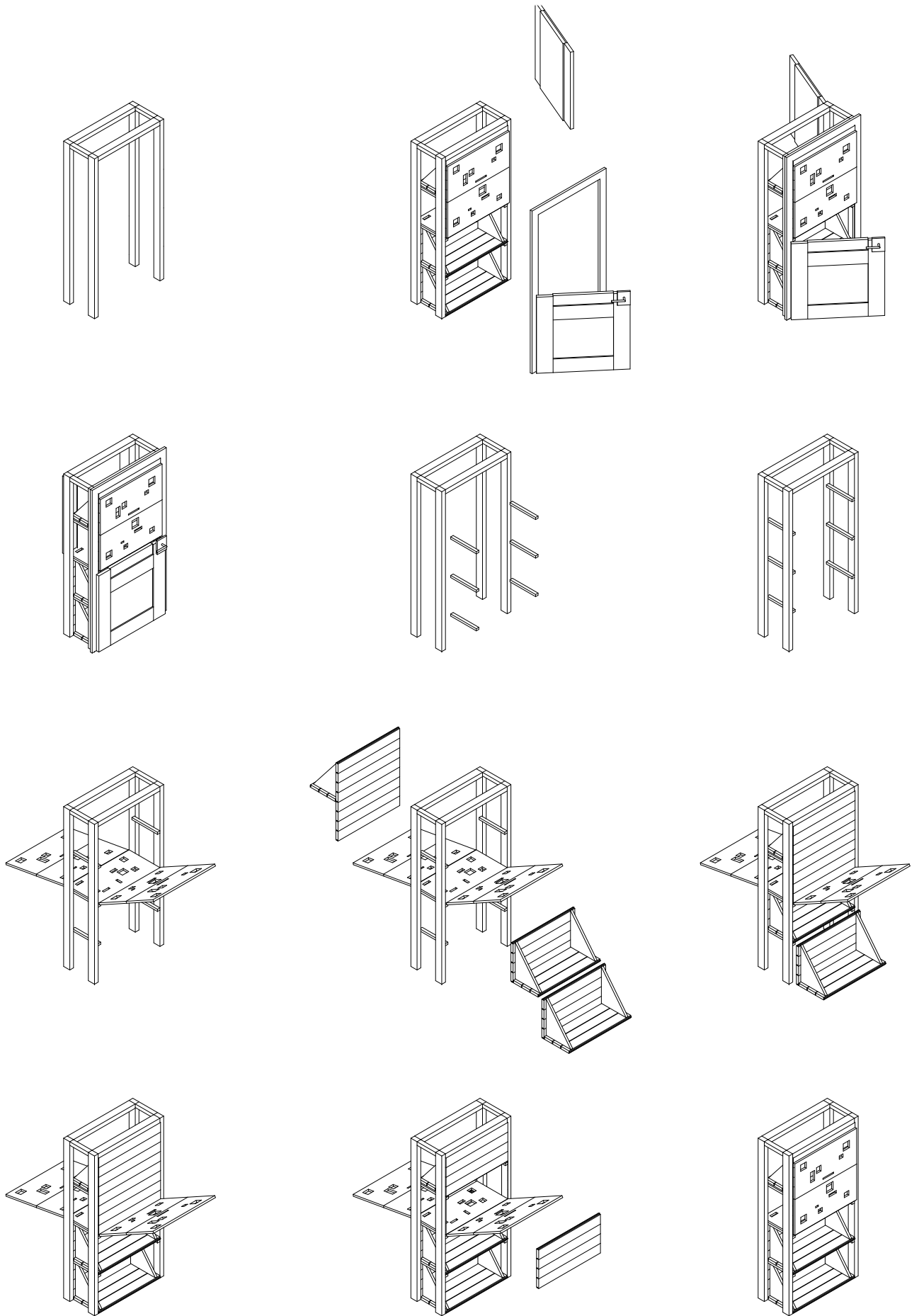
Multifunctional module design addresses various domestic needs (bar, kitchen table, storage, etc.) and facilitates social interaction or temporary isolation. It can transform into a wall element or into a collective dinner table for two households across the wall. The design allows residents to choose whether to socialize or not, without forcing interaction.

This idea is a powerful prototype for a transformable wall element that can enable redesigning spaces, combining or dividing neighbouring apartments. It's a practical concept in the context of vast demographic shifts of forcibly displaced people. In municipal housing intended as rental space, this design solution accommodates a wider variety of demographics. It also allows for efficient transformation of wartime housing into more spacious, decent accommodations after the war.

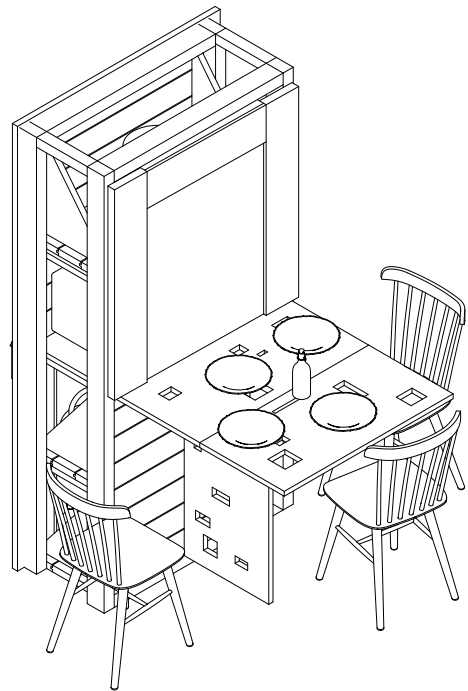
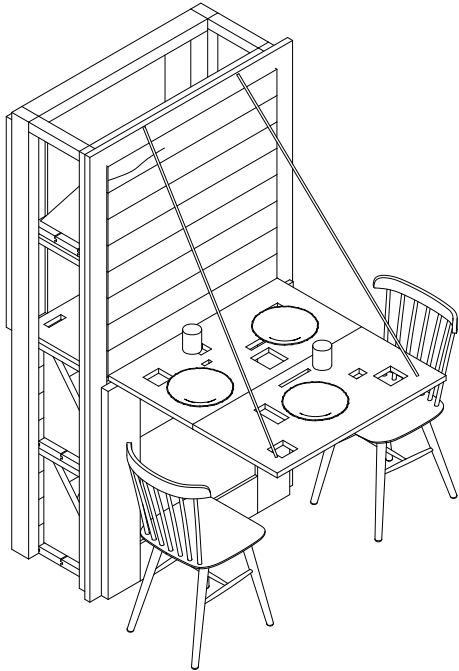
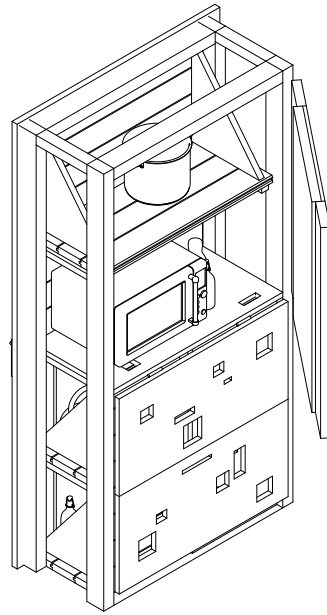
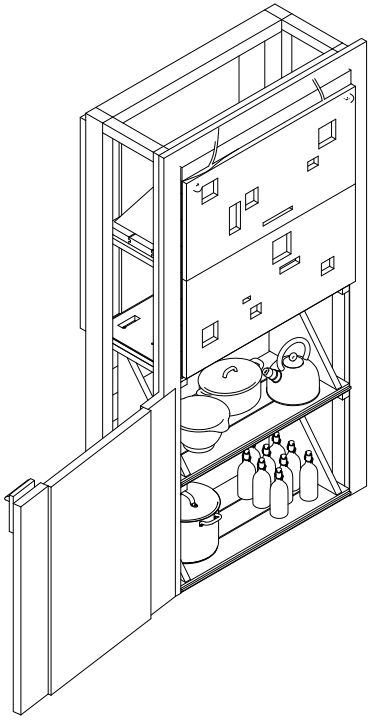
## Participants

Julianne Bachmann  
 Ivana Bogdan  
 Varvara Sulema  
 Florian Hofman  
 Sara Frei  
 Ketsia Wild

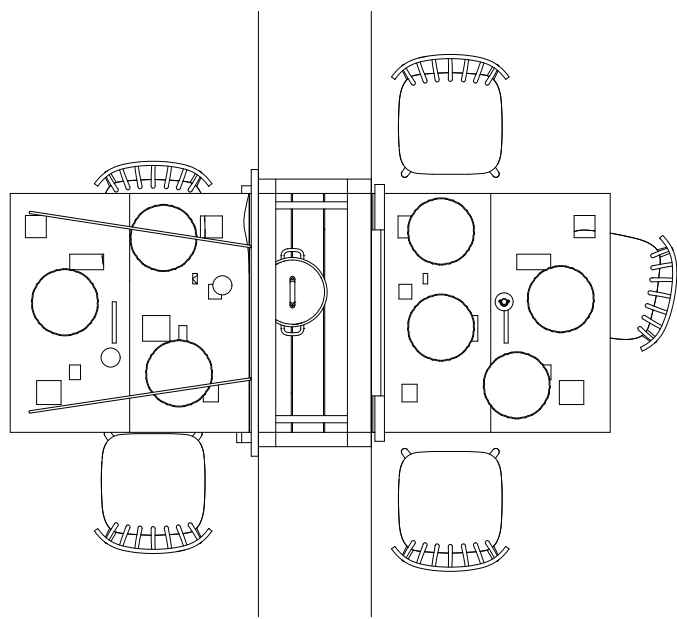




Axonometric drawing of construction method



Different usages in axonometric drawings



Top view



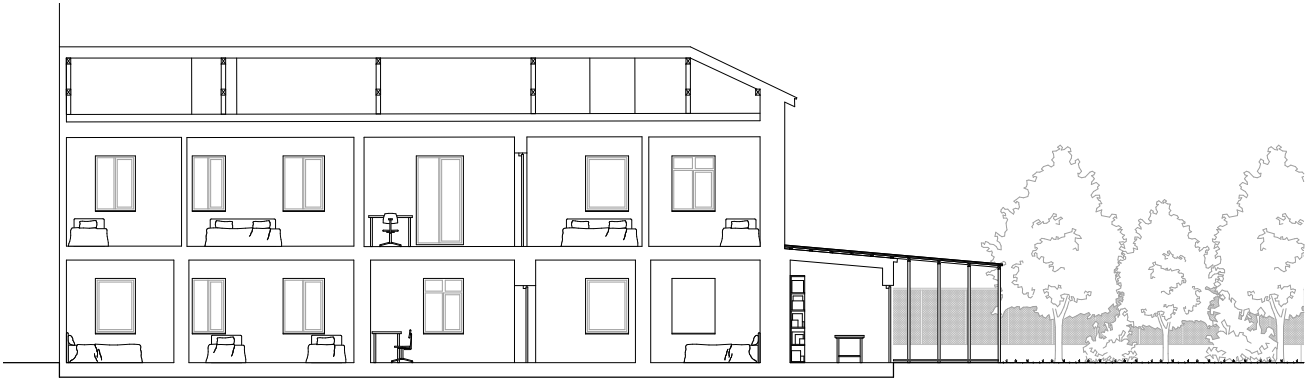
Perspective drawing



Perspective drawing



Perspective drawing

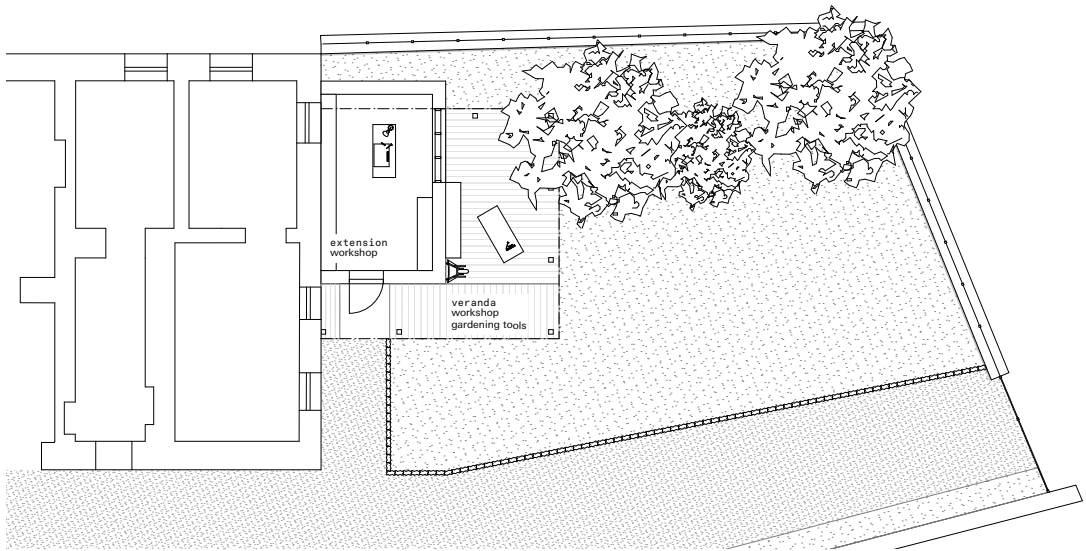


Length section, scale 1:200

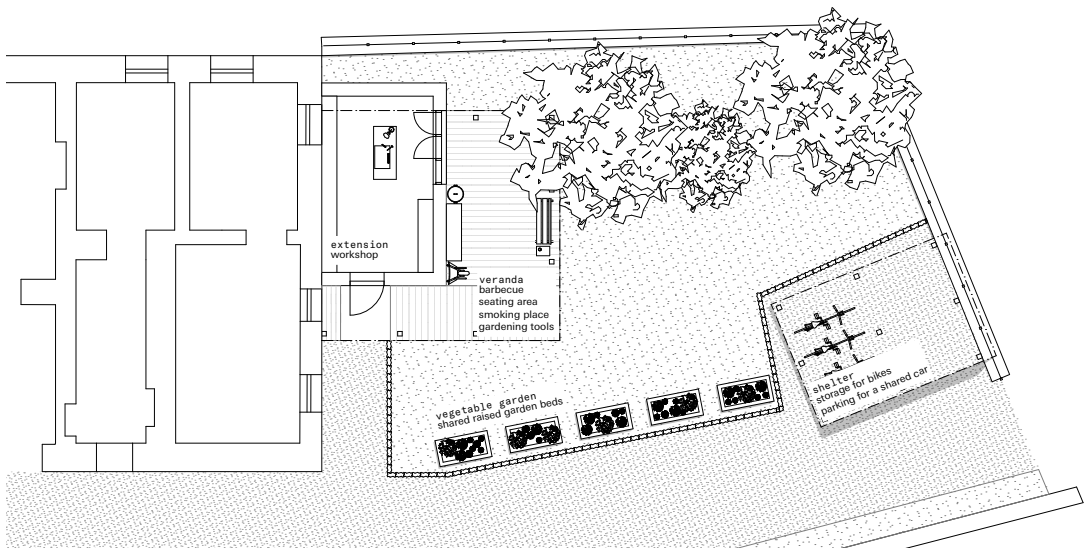
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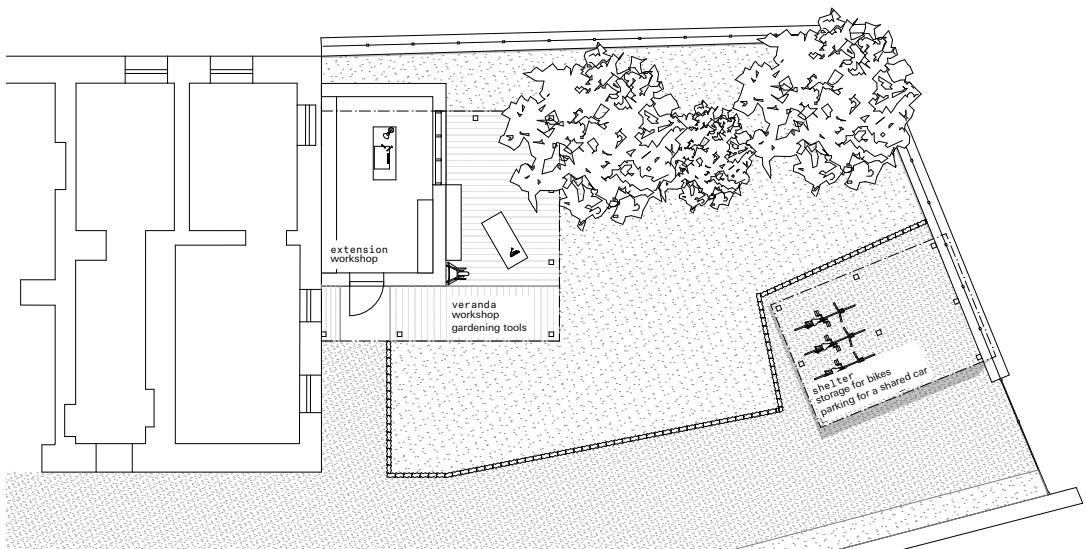
Width section, scale 1:200



Phase 1 garden floorplan, scale 1:200



Phase 2 garden floorplan, scale 1:200v



Phase 2.2 garden floorplan, scale 1:200

Xavier Blaringham in conversation with Silke Langenberg

XAVIER BLARINGHEM: The student project “Through the Door Frames” focused on modular dividers made of doors to connect with or separate apartments from one another. This allowed for a certain degree of flexibility for the relocation of internally displaced people, enhancing social interaction, and then allowing for the further evolution of the building. This was our students’ answer to humanitarian projects in Ukraine. How do you imagine the future of architectural (humanitarian) projects in Ukraine, both during and after the war?

SILKE LANGENBERG: I thought that it was a very interesting project, especially in terms of the collaboration with Ukrainian people, and I believe it’s the right approach to work like that. Very often we see projects that are done without including the people who are directly affected, who live in that country. Involving locals is a crucially important approach, to avoid developing some kind of colonial projects for other regions where we do not have the insight and we do not understand the needs. In general, and beyond the Seminar Week, it’s important to join forces on such a topic, to have an open ear to current challenges and problems. As for the project output, I believe our role is probably more about giving recommendations and trying to help. It would be difficult to come with ready-made solutions.

XB: You mentioned the collaboration, but as architects, we should also bring a certain level of beauty or at least quality in a way that people feel comfortable in their new homes. Is it something that you would find relevant in the context of war and post-war housing? Because one could say we just have to produce and provide quantities, but I think the question of the quality is also relevant.

SL: In such cases of emergency, one probably cares less about how beautiful the place is. At that moment, it’s often more about safety. But for sure, we are architects, and we know how important it is for a place to be beautiful. But we must understand beauty in a wider sense. It’s also about comfort, about safety, about different conditions coming together and making the inhabitants feel comfortable and at home. Another thing might be that what architects consider beautiful does not always correspond to what people who live there perceive as beautiful.

It’s important to get an understanding of the needs, to avoid making “big plans” that would not be suitable for the people in the end.

XB: In our case, we had a building from the municipality of Lviv that was available and could be transformed into a co-living space for internally displaced people. We asked our students to plan the transformation with scrapped materials.

What is your best practical experience in reuse and then how would you apply it in this context of Ukraine?

SL: It’s a very broad question, but in my experience, how someone sees and treats an object is perhaps more a didactic experience than a practical one. The question is how people begin to identify with an object, if and how they develop a strong desire to protect it, to preserve it, to use it further. The work that the students put into this project certainly adds an additional value, a new relationship to the object which helps prolong its lifespan.

This is important, as they start mentally appropriating the objects and make it theirs. If something is broken and we hand it over to somebody else to repair it, we don’t build this relationship, and the object doesn’t carry the same meaning for us. Yet if we have done something by ourselves, we forge a stronger relationship, and maybe it feels more like ours. In that sense, what you did in the Seminar Week on this project about rebuilding in Ukraine is exciting. Through their involvement, they make the place their home, and the recovery process goes much faster than if it’s done by an external planner or repair project.

XB: During the Seminar Week, we had some questions about the term “reuse”. What is the right approach? Is it to repair, to renovate? There was also a certain amount of attention to some of the details of the building which students would have liked to keep and preserve. I think it’s much more than the semantics, each terminology would lead to a certain way to do the project. In your opinion, how do different terms (repair, renovate, preserve) have an impact in terms of the way we approach existing objects?

SL: Very often, students - but also some colleagues - use incorrect terms. Using the right terminology is crucial. There is a difference between conservation, restoration, reconstruction, and the same applies to reuse and repair. There is not one right or wrong concept, and it’s very difficult also to do a project just



being on one track. Very often, it's more than using a certain single concept, because of different depths of damages.

It's important to ask again and again how much you intervene, how deep you work with the substance.

There are cases where one wants to conceal all changes and in some cases where one really wants to show what has been added or removed. The right concept is always related to the value of the object. If you have an object with a very high artistic and historic value, which is damaged due to war or a natural disaster, a reconstruction is maybe the right choice, like what is happening with the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris after the fire. But in other contexts where an object has already been changed many times, maybe a conservation or a new intervention is the right way to go. It could also be that different elements in an object ask for different interventions.

XB: I think there is also the question of methods. In a case of a transformation with reused materials, how much should it be a fix or flexible design? Would it be better to work with a manual, knowing that someone else has to assemble things on site as well? How do you get an idea, a concept and make it possible to realize it, while maintaining its quality?

SL: Working in the existing context needs a lot of flexibility for sure. And it needs creative people who are inspired by the objects and parts that are available and do not immediately arrive at a finished design. In existing buildings, the conditions always change, and you have to react to them. This also applies to building with materials available at hand. You have to adapt to new conditions all the time. I think that

one major challenge in building with available or reclaimed materials is not ending up with a "bricolage".

They can be nice but are not the only solutions. Maybe we can develop new design concepts, and here we are back to your first question on beauty.

This is really a challenge at the moment, and one of the major tasks in this field is finding a new architectural language with found objects.

Not just for buildings, but also for found building elements and to develop something new out of them.

XB: You talk about a new architectural language, but I think that there is also a new aesthetic appearing. Do

you think this is a trend and are we entering a new era? There is the question of how much we make visible the different layers and the different lives of the building. One could call it a palimpsest, to make different lives of the building visible.

SL: Well, Palimpsest as a term is quite fashionable at the moment and architects seem to just have discovered this. In monument preservation, we have always worked with different layers of use. When it comes to specific projects, we must investigate and decide how much of each layer to keep, and what the value of each layer is. There is also the Venice Charter, which is quite explicit about this issue: you should only scratch away a layer if the one underneath is really worth it.

But perhaps the best protection for the layer underneath is to not scratch the one above. It's often difficult to come up with one answer. When observed from the point of resources, every layer of an existing building is probably worth protecting or being reused. In monument preservation we normally try to keep as much of the original substance as possible, and to intervene as little as possible.

XB: In the case of the house in Lviv, a concrete floor has been added over time with some connections on the facade, which already started to "destroy" the facade. This came with a new circulation system and a gallery access in the back changed the role of the old wooden staircase. This led the students to have opposing approaches towards the stairs, with some wanting to keep it and others not. That was interesting to see and had a huge impact. How did you experience this?

SL: I think the stairs are a good example. In the Lviv project, it was really interesting to see that the students valued different parts of the object differently. Some groups, indeed, thought this staircase has a very high value in this object. It's still there, and that somehow became the driver for their projects. Other students had a completely different focus, and for them the staircase got in the way of their projects. That was also fine because besides the evaluation, it's also about the argumentation, how you develop your project and what the main concept is. The concept needs to be based on the evaluation, and if you have a strong argument that one can follow, it's fine. What is crucial to teach to the students is to recognize different values. This evaluation would be done in advance by experts, and you already get some criteria that need to be integrated, and within that framework you have to develop the concept.

XB: Do you think the issue of re-use is in line with the current interests of the students? I noticed that they are really looking into integrating existing elements in their design for sustainability. In addition to the environmental considerations this also brings a patina that one will not find with new products.

SL: When I was studying, it was a very small group who was interested in historical objects and in restoration or preservation. Meanwhile, that has changed completely. I don't think there is really a

special interest in protected monuments, but for sure students like and want to work with existing objects. They also ask for such topics in the curriculum. We have many students interested in our subject, students who come to us and want recommendations also for not protected buildings, and we clearly see that there is a change going on. Here, sustainability seems to be the driver now, as we have the “Fridays for Future” generation in our classrooms and design studios. They are aware and they care about the existing built environment.



Final review of the seminar week with Silke Langenberg. Photo: Rémi Jourdan

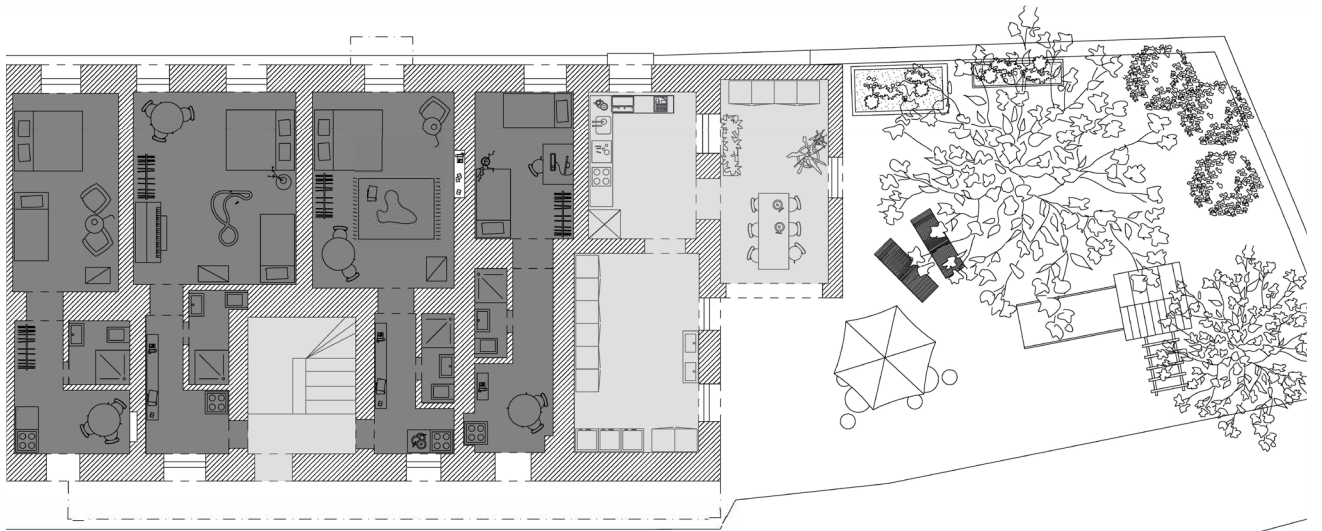


Render of interior space on the second floor

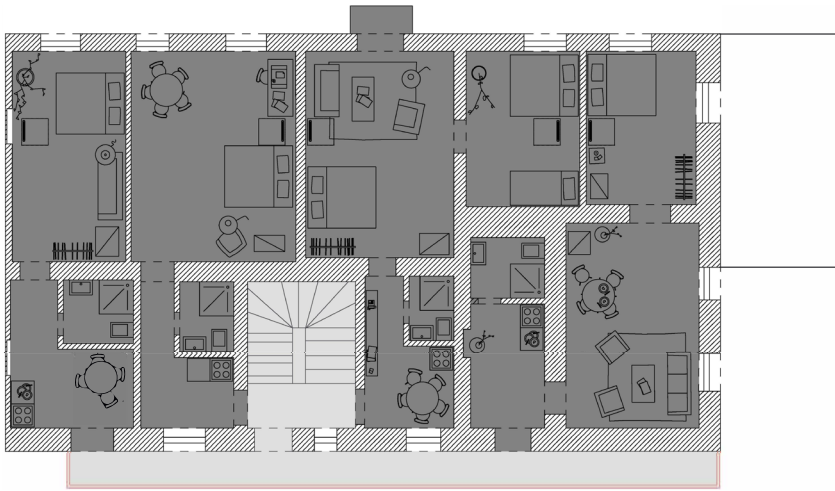
Our design takes a playful, sustainable approach that minimizes costs, interventions, and construction time while fostering a comfortable, communal living experience. We preserve the existing structure and room layout, making changes only where needed to improve living conditions. By cutting openings in the roof and floors, we introduce more natural light into the living area and create a vertical connection between the second floor and attic. On the ground floor, a communal kitchen opens to the garden, and a window facing the street can serve as a charming café. The design also incorporates elements crafted from repurposed radiators, adding a joyful touch.

#### Participants

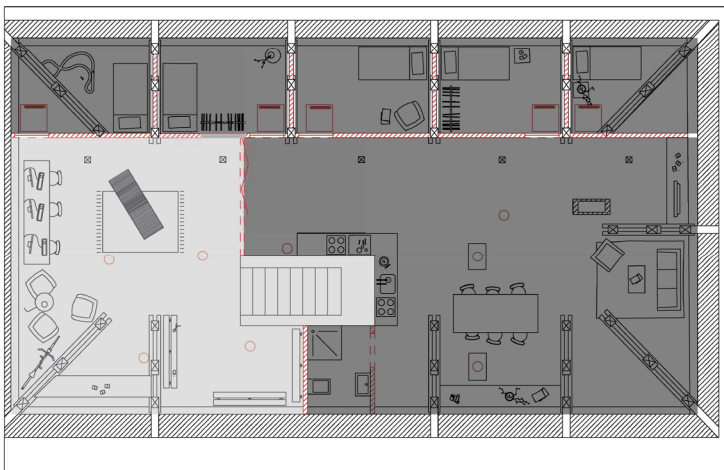
Nils Braun  
Erik Gonzalez  
Fabian Guzelgun  
Victor Kastlin  
Tim Müller



Zoning of the groundfloor, scale 1:200



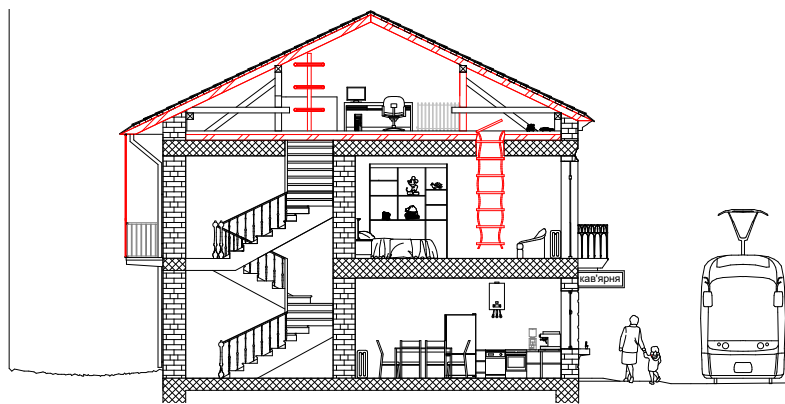
Zoning of the first floor, scale 1:200



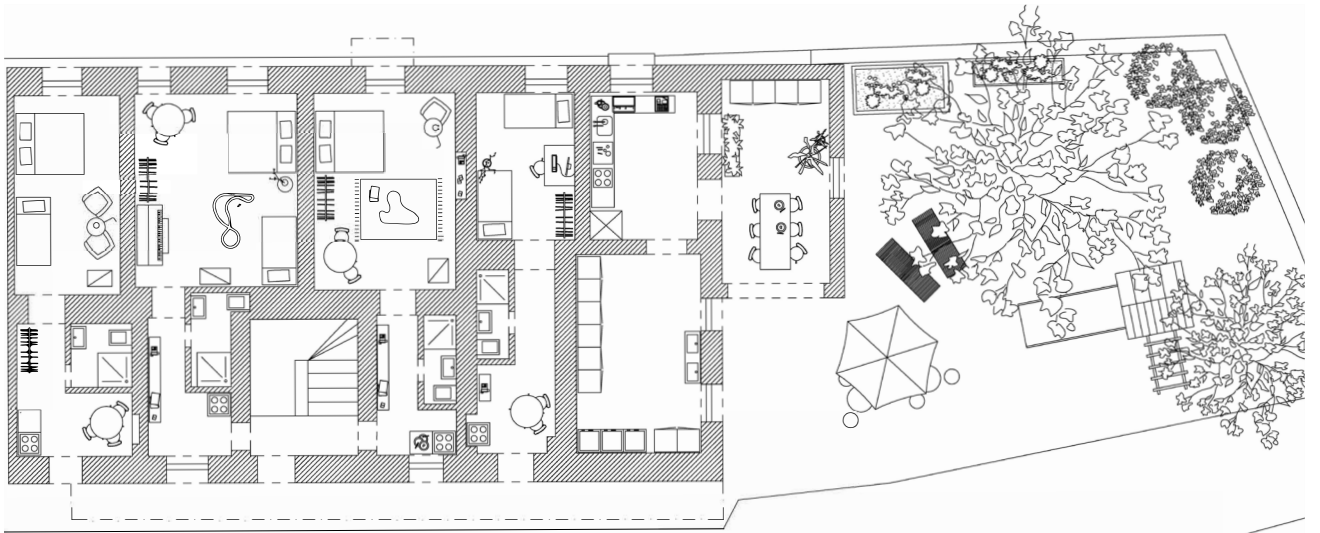
Zoning of the second floor, scale 1:200



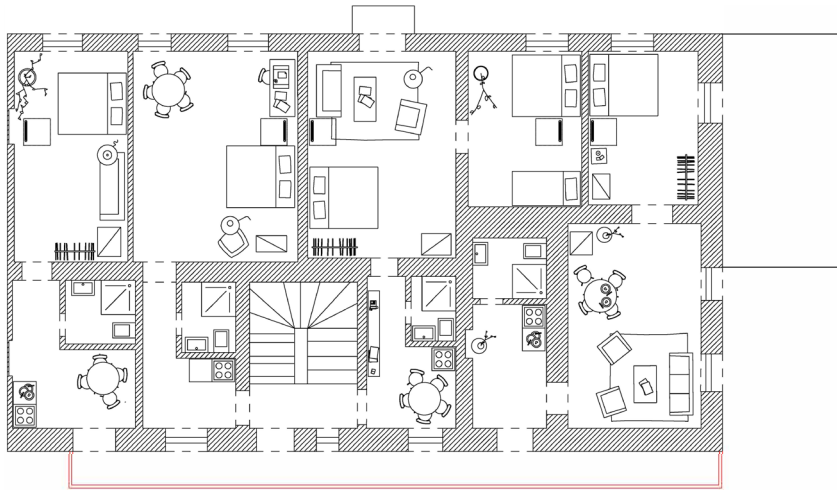
Length section, scale 1:200



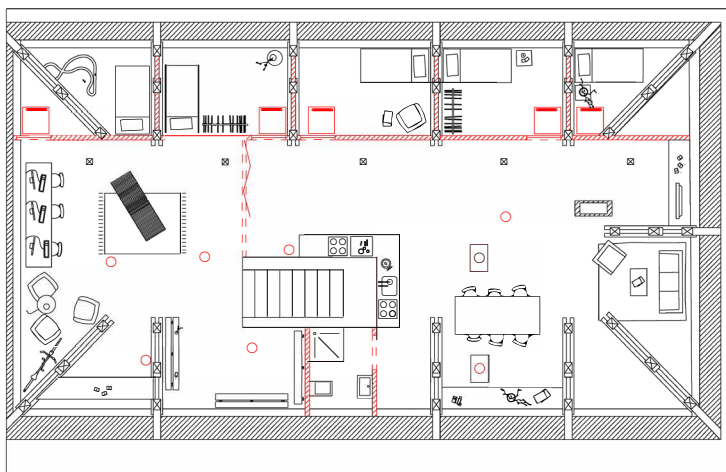
Width section, scale 1:200



Groundfloor, scale 1:200



First floor, scale 1:200



Second floor, scale 1:200

Anastasiya Ponomaryova in conversation with Philip Ursprung

ANASTASIYA PONOMARYOVA: How do you imagine the future of architectural (humanitarian) projects in Ukraine, both during and after the war?

PHILIP URSPRUNG: The situation in Ukraine reminds us that all architectural projects should be humanitarian. They show the perspective of people suddenly in need and people who are engaged in using design to make the best they can out of it. This practice in a moment of crisis can serve as a model for architectural methods and a broad understanding of the role of architects which goes way beyond Ukraine.

AP: What was your best practical experience in reuse, and how would you apply this in the context of Ukraine?

PU: The strongest experience of reuse was my visit to the SESC Pompeia in São Paulo, designed by Lina Bo Bardi. The former factory is not conserved as a ruin but transformed into a place to strengthen social coherence through leisure, sports, education and fun. It developed its own aesthetic of reuse. Ukraine was and is not only a bread-basket for Europe, but also one of its main sources of power (nuclear and gas). The transformation of spaces of the power industry could serve as a worldwide model of renewal.

AP: Indeed, this has huge potential for repurpose. In Kyiv, around 30% of the territory is occupied by industrial spaces, most of which are not in use anymore. Moreover, it's mostly a legacy of the Soviet era—the result of radical transformation of old Kyiv through a top-down hyper-industrialization plan. Now, among other reuse challenges, it presents a huge obstacle for practical reuse, with a negative connotation from its connection to the colonial past.

Meanwhile, reuse brings playfulness and joy to architectural challenges. Exercising reuse within our Seminar Week, students often start with the material investigation, including its sensory experience. They touch material, and play with it, leaving the computer apart from the process. After a successful play that finished with prototypes of ideas, creators then adjust their ideas to the context without relying on project drawings.

Is this the power of reuse that brings art and architecture together?



Project by Victor Kästlin, Erik Gonzalez, Nils Braun, Tim Müller, Fabian Güzelgun.  
Photo: Rémi Jourdan

PU: Yes. I believe that the notion, or culture, of reuse has a magnetic power, one which brings people together as well as disciplines, like architecture, art, engineering, environmental sciences, politics. Much of our language and values are based on the ideology of progress, innovation and limitless resources. The current experience of violence, injustice and polarization has made many people, particularly the younger generation, aware of their own role in society and their responsibility.

Art is about giving oneself a task, about choosing what to do, about being responsible.

The hands-on mentality of the students in your Seminar Week is a good example of this shift in culture.

AP: Dismantle or reuse? Most of the time, these are alternatives, but sometimes they are cross-dependent. One cannot reuse something before dismantling it. And if one dismantles for future reuse, it requires more effort, right?

PU: In scarce economies, reuse and repair is standard. The culture in consumer societies is different. It is cheaper to buy new objects, because so many jobs depend on manufacturing and logistics. This might change, depending on the economic development. One can learn a lot from poorer societies.

There are voices that demand an end to demolitions. Other voices even demand an end to construction. This depends on the situation. In many cities, for instance in Zurich, where I live, it is in fact scandalous



to see perfectly fit buildings demolished. But there are areas with rapidly growing societies where new buildings are the only option to cope with demographic growth.

AP: But we cannot dismantle for waste anymore, right? Isn't it brutal?

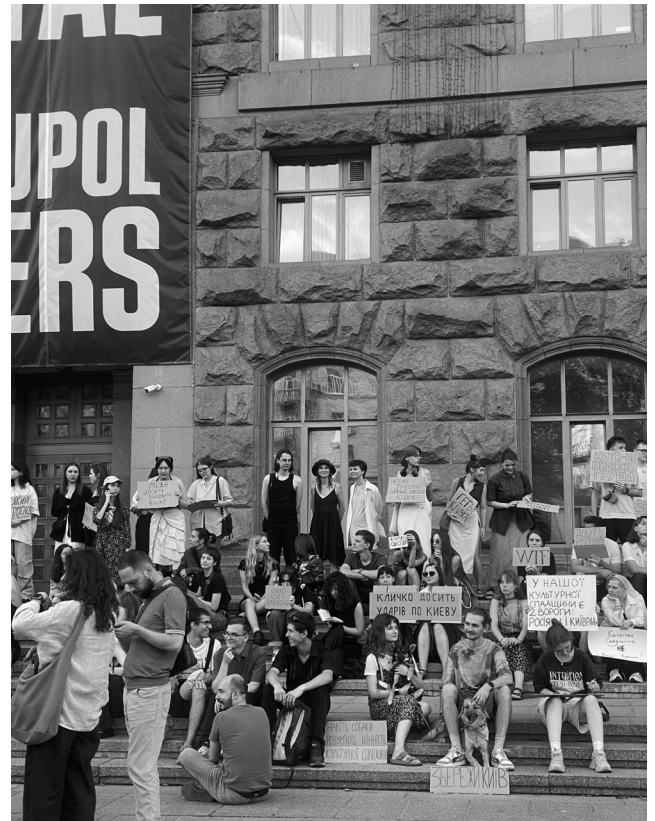
PU: To see a demolition site today is hurtful. We cannot take the images from the violent destruction of buildings in wars and natural catastrophes, where people are hurt or killed, out of our memory. They remind us that every destruction contains violence. To dismantle for waste is shocking.

AP: In Kyiv, the city where I live now, the dismantling of the old buildings for new real estate has continued since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. Protests against the demolition of old buildings have been ongoing, gathering around the proactive community of Map\_Renovation and Spadshchyna\_kyiv (@map\_renovation and @Spadshchyna\_kyiv on instagram respectively). The recent protest against the demolition of the Zelensky building was supported by extreme statements. "The Kyiv Rada (municipality) acts the same as Russian rockets destroying our heritage". This is an intense message, but it represents the sensitivity of Ukrainians toward brutal and unreasonable demolitions of the city heritage. Active communities cannot accept any undesirable demolition for the sake of city development.

I believe that the notion, or culture, of reuse has a magnetic power, one which brings people together as well as disciplines, like architecture, art, engineering, environmental sciences, politics.



Peaceful protests against the demolition of historic buildings in Kyiv near the Kyiv City Administration, summer 2024. Slogans on the placards: "Klitschko is a thief" ("Кличко - Злодій" in Ukrainian), "Who will destroy more? Russian rockets or the Department of Cultural Heritage Protection of the Kyiv City Administration?" ("Хто знищить більше? Російські ракети чи департамент охорони культурної спадщини Київської міської адміністрації?" in Ukrainian), "If not the Ruskis, then the Kyiv City Administration" («Як не русня, то КМДА» in Ukrainian) - slogans on the placards. Photo: Kseniia Paltsun from NGO Renovation Map



Peaceful protests against the demolition of historic buildings in Kyiv near the Kyiv City Administration, summer 2024. Slogans on the placards: "Klitschko is a thief" ("Кличко - Злодій" in Ukrainian), "Who will destroy more? Russian rockets or the Department of Cultural Heritage Protection of the Kyiv City Administration?" ("Хто знищить більше? Російські ракети чи департамент охорони культурної спадщини Київської міської адміністрації?" in Ukrainian), "If not the Ruskis, then the Kyiv City Administration" («Як не русня, то КМДА» in Ukrainian) - slogans on the placards. Photo: Kseniia Paltsun from NGO Renovation Map

PU: This is shocking to hear. The cynicism of demolition for individual profit is even more striking, given that so many people are suffering and in need of space.

AP: In your Lecture Series: "Reflections on an Exhibition" that you held in ETH Zurich during the spring semester of 2024, you described the production of the exhibition Neighbours which you made, together with Karin Sander, in the Swiss Pavilion for the 18th Architecture Biennale in Venice in 2023. You mentioned that the Venetian bricklayer carefully dismantled the bricks with three main goals. In addition to the more obvious reasons of preserving as many bricks as possible for future wall reconstruction and appreciating the heritage, you, as a curator, intended to avoid brutality, especially in the context of the war in Ukraine.

PU: We opened a part of the enclosing wall of the Swiss Pavilion and created a passage to the neighbouring Pavilion of Venezuela. The bricks removed were used to build benches. After the show everything was put back into place. Our proposal for the 2023 Architecture Biennale was developed in Fall 2021 and chosen in March 2022, two weeks after the invasion of Ukraine. Already then it was clear that we had to avoid any association with violent destruction. The cut needed to be very carefully crafted, "analytical", so to

say. The workers took much care to clean every single brick and remove from sight all broken bricks.

AP: What is reuse in the “global context”, and why does it hold such symbolic continuity?

PU: Reuse is probably not universally applicable as a category but is specific to time and space. It is a concept that makes sense in industrial societies with an excess of products, where people have the choice to reuse goods or not.

In preindustrial societies or, say, in highly precarious societies of today, reuse is the only choice.

I would therefore plea for an additional concept, namely “de-use”, or, not use at all. The ideology of recycling and reuse aims at maintaining the current lifestyle. But we don’t know how long this will be possible.

AP: As we (members of Swiss Network with Ukraine) plan to continue the project after the exhibition in ETH this autumn, we aim to implement some ideas from Seminar Week, particularly the project in Lviv. Ideally, we will fulfill the promise given to students (to exercise their talents for a real non-temporary project that helps the temporarily vulnerable in Ukraine) and inspire them to continue reusing after graduation. However, there is some risk that the plan may change, and we could face the limit of our utopia. How can we inspire them to continue helping communities and experimenting with reuse beyond university?

PU: In my view, the academic education as a whole is a concentration of the “outside” practice, not a separation. What is done during the short and energetic time of studying usually stays with people for many years. Even if access to the sites in Ukraine will be impossible, one can continue to plan, talk and build models from ETH.

AP: What would be the approach for an educational architect to design using salvaged materials, particularly in the Swiss context, where one of the strongest architectural archetypes is the perfect box with tailor-made details?

PU: I like the idea to start on a dump, with the real material, and then see what happens. As soon as one moves to the classroom or the office, abstraction starts.

AP: Where do you see a bottleneck in spreading reuse practices in the building realm?

PU: The bottleneck is probably an issue of scale. For large-scale projects with a long planning phase and complex supply lines, improvisation is difficult. With smaller projects, homes, small shops, flexible adaptation is much easier. On the other hand, I see

many functioning office buildings torn down. The concrete skeletons could probably be easily reused if one modifies the norms and codes, the “auxiliary army of the construction industry” as Anton Garcia-Abril once called it.

AP: How do you imagine the future of architectural humanitarian projects?

PU: The architectural focus is currently shifting towards care and maintenance, the age of star architecture is over. Architects are equipped to know about the needs of the people affected by crises better than many functionaries. I therefore see a lot of demand for architectural humanitarian projects and much competence within the discipline of architecture, to further develop this field.



Karin Sander & Philip Ursprung, Neighbours, Swiss Pavilion, 18th Architecture Biennale Venice, 2023. Photo: Saskja Rosset



Photo: Rémi Jourdan



Photo: Rémi Jourdan



Photo: Rémi Jourdan



Photo: Rémi Jourdan



Photo: Rémi Jourdan



Photo: Rémi Jourdan



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Photo: Rémi Jourdan



Photo: Rémi Jourdan

Rémi Jourdan in conversation with Barbara Buser

RÉMI JOURDAN: Thank you very much for being here, Barbara. Could you introduce yourself?

BARBARA BUSER: My name is Barbara Buser. I'm an architect, trained at ETH Zurich. After my studies I worked for over ten years in Africa. This has made my whole career. Comparing the two cultures I realized that

we are living in a culture of luxury and waste which is not sustainable.

RJ: That was exactly the first question that I had prepared for you, Barbara. How was your experience in Africa? What were your key learnings? And how did you implement that experience in your first projects back in Switzerland?

BB: My first experience when I came back was a shock – all waste that our civilization produces... a waste of resources and human energy. We don't even know where to put all the waste materials. Seeing all these developments which I had been away from for a decade, I was overwhelmed. I needed some time to understand our society back in Switzerland and to understand myself. It was a challenging time for me. I became a captain of a ferry boat which crosses the River Rhine; I had a small daughter. There were no child caring organizations and there was no village taking care of the children, like in Africa.

Then I tried to do something in my field of work: trying to avoid waste in the building industry. In Africa I had learned that there is no waste. People don't throw things away because they don't want them anymore, there is always somebody who would need exactly this thing. In Switzerland there's too much money around, so it's just easier to buy new stuff than to look around for old stuff.

In the meantime, the internet had developed. I thought it would be a good opportunity to collect these unwanted things and put them on a platform where other interested people would offer them a second life. Back in 1995, the internet was in its infancy – everybody was laughing at me and asking: What the hell is the internet? I realized that we had to add a physical shop. We started to work with jobless people who fell out of the Swiss system of over-performing. It was a great match. We would salvage

materials, clean them and display them for sale on our platform and in the physical shop.

RJ: When did you start to act again as a classical architect with your first project back in Switzerland? Maybe also with reuse intentions?

BB: That was in '98. An old building in the centre of Basel was on sale for 9.5 million Swiss francs. People thought that they had to invest the same amount to transform it into a good project. Me with a group of friends, we said: Why don't we take it over and keep as much as possible. Just taking away all the things which had been added in later years. It was a very beautiful building. We wanted to go back to the origin. It was built as the headquarters of a Swiss bank. So, you can imagine how well it was constructed. We found the Edith Maryon foundation as an investor who bought it and we rented it from them. The renovation budget we started with was 200000 Swiss francs. We cleaned out the rooms and added a layer of clay plaster over the synthetic surfaces. This way we were able to improve the indoor room climate and rent out the rooms. With the money from the rent, we could invest into the further renovation of the building. After two or three years the whole house was rented out.



Input lecture by Barbara Buser during the seminar week.  
Photo: Rémi Jourdan

RJ: Thank you very much for sharing the start of your career. I also want to share with you how I started my architectural career. Like you, I studied at ETH Zurich. During my internship my way led me to South America, to Bolivia where I was working for a housing NGO. The first thought you could have, is to go there as a Swiss architect from one of the best universities in the world to help people, right? Instead, it was me who was helped and taught so many things. I've

learned a new set of skills. For me, it was mainly participatory building techniques in combination with locally sourced and bio-based materials. I was amazed by these two fields and continued specializing. Today I'm adopting these two principles in my projects. It requires low transportation, low financial expenses, only human energy and provides a great thermal comfort. Basically, it is everything that we are seeking for today in Switzerland. In Ukraine we are talking about emergency humanitarian aid in the context of war. What can we learn from Ukraine's experience and its urgent needs for rapid reuse and repair?

BB: I think that our whole construction industry is going in the wrong direction. It's just excavating whatever material. We are cutting trees, using them in buildings and after sixty years or sometimes already after forty or twenty years the buildings are torn down and in the best case the material is recycled. But also then the material is lost. Recycling saves around five percent of CO2 compared to new production. By reusing one can save seventy to eighty percent of CO2. If we want to stay on this earth as a human race, we must change immediately and completely into circular construction, which means that

**we cannot afford to lose any more materials in our finite world.**

RJ: My next question is about the term reuse. Today reuse is on everyone's lips. It has become a buzzword, especially for architects. On one hand, I think it's great that we gain public awareness for this topic. On the other hand, I also see some potential for misuse. Do you see a risk for excuses to destroy buildings and dismantle only a few components for reuse instead of reusing and renovating the building in itself?

BB: Of course, there is a big potential for misusing the term reuse. We as actors in this scene must be careful not to cover up green washing.

**The very best is not to destroy any building, not to disassemble them, - you can improve every one of those. There is no limit for renovation and improvement.**

Swiss buildings are especially of such quality that they can survive forever, provided that they are properly maintained!

The Swiss recycling industry has been subsidized by the anticipated recycling fee. Although the Swiss law mentions reuse as more desirable than recycling, it has never been subsidized by any single frank. Reuse can only develop into a competitive industry with significant investments. People who are active in the reuse scene are struggling to sustain it. Every month's salaries are difficult to pay. Lately Syphon, a second hand material store in Biel, had to close. This is absolutely outrageous and unacceptable. Things need to change, because it's the only way.

RJ: Our society expects us to work a hundred and twenty percent. There is a very different idea of living together in other cultures. I find the concept very interesting to invest some of your time into sustaining your own life instead of paying others for it. In construction you would share distinct knowledge and learn how to repair your house by yourself.

BB: You have been working in Latin America. This is a different reality. For example, termites are eating buildings. Tenants invest one week per year into renovation. The material is locally sourced and bio-based. Some are better at laying bricks, others are better at plastering. And others enjoy cooking for the whole community. Everybody can contribute. It is an exchange of workforce which also existed in Switzerland. For example, in Emmental. Fritz helped Hans, Hans helped Regina, and Regina helped Fritz. They didn't note down their hours but knew exactly who had helped whom and for how long. This is what I want to introduce now in Frank Areal in Basel.

RJ: As far as I understand, people from lower income groups can fulfil their dream to live in a house in Frank Areal. They are guided by professional craftspersons to participate in the building process. I'm curious how this collaboration works. Do you think it is also an appealing concept for rebuilding in the context of Ukraine or other war zones?

BB: It's definitely a concept that will work. Even though you cannot own your own house, you contribute to the building process and produce a great sense of ownership. In Frank Areal we decided to build a basic structure from reused materials which can be steel, concrete or wood. We give the future inhabitants a structure where they can create their own infill. We still have to decide where the meeting point between structure and infill, between professional's and tenant's work is.

RJ: At our office we've just renovated a house where we also changed the windows. We took over the project when it was already decided to change the windows. They were double glazed windows in a good state. It would have been great to keep them in the building in the first place. Since this was not an option at this stage of the project, the second idea was to dismantle them carefully to offer them to Re-Win. First, I talked to the window maker who explained to me the additional effort for him and the additional price. Then I talked to the client who did not understand why they should be paying extra. In the end I brought one window to the office to examine its potential. The rest went to the dump. It feels awful. As architects, we need a good set of arguments to be able to rival the financial argument. How can you convince people to make an additional effort?

BB: I heard many of such stories. One is especially stuck in my mind. There is this architecture company which tried to convince their clients to invest 40000 francs into the dismantling and sending windows to Ukraine. They wouldn't want to do that. So, the architects themselves invested the money to send the

windows to Ukraine.

If all young people like you make a lot of noise and take the example of Re-Win, we will receive more funds. You can find people who are capable and willing to support everywhere. But it's so much work finding them. Félix (general manager at Re-Win) is busy with that all day. If we had two people like him, I'm sure we could send double the number of windows. If there were ten of us, we could send ten times more.

RJ: Let's talk a bit more about Re-Win. I understand that you initiated this association first under the name "Windows for Ukraine" which has then developed into Re-Win. You collect all types of building components of high quality which are then redistributed to the areas of need because of war, like Ukraine, but also natural disasters or other emergency needs. Could you tell us how you came up with the idea to found this association and what is your motivation behind this project?

BB: It started at the kitchen table with my daughter. We asked ourselves what we could do to support Ukraine. Some people send food, others send clothes. My expertise lies in the building sector. What do people need most after a missile attack? Mostly the houses remain more or less intact, however the windows are blasted. This is how collecting windows came about. We organized the first three or four transports with thirty thousand francs donated by baubüro in situ. Since then we go on with big and small donations from Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

We have not really expanded to other building components yet. Of course we could send roofing material. We could send kitchens. We could send sanitary appliances to where they are desperately needed. Since we are a volunteer organization, we cannot go too fast. For now, we focus on windows as we are experts in this field.

RJ: In the context of an emergency, it is very important to provide any material which can help. Topics such as ecology and especially economy can or even should have a secondary role. If we imagine a post-war Ukrainian or the Swiss context, materials have a different ecological, financial and ethical impact. Which reused materials should be part of a global trade and which ones should be part of a local market?

BB: I think natural materials like straw or clay can be sourced locally. Highly manufactured building components like windows make sense to be sent to Ukraine. From an economic point of view, it makes absolute sense as the costs are one tenth of a new window. Our calculations prove that also from an ecological point of view it makes total sense (note: a reused window sent to Ukraine requires three times less CO2 than a newly produced window in Ukraine). It's not only about windows as such, the whole discussion about durability and circularity should be taking place.

RJ: How do you imagine the future of architectural (humanitarian) projects in Ukraine, both during

and after the war?

BB: During the war I don't think there's a big concern about architecture. After the war there would be a debate on how to rebuild. Do we rebuild as it used to look? In Warsaw they rebuilt whole areas. One can see and feel that. It's not the same as it used to be before. Other people say it is better to build something new. In this case it is important to use natural and reused materials.

**I don't care about architecture as architecture is normally understood.**

For me it's construction. You need homes for people who have no more home. You need to construct fast and cheap. A lot of money is required for this reconstruction. I think that's the main issue.

RJ: We're coming to the end of this interview. I have a special last comment and question for you. You have been teaching at school. I had the chance to do my diploma with you at ETH Zurich and gained a lot of wisdom from you. What stayed with me the most was your trust in people. You have the ability to connect people, to find the fitting person for a project and, most importantly, to give everybody a bag full of trust. With this trust one can only do a great and passionate job Thank you very much for teaching me that. I am curious about what you have learned from us students, while you were teaching. How did it influence you and your work on a personal level?

BB: It's also about trust. You are the ones who can change the future. Trust gives me a better, brighter view of the future. People of my age and down to forty are the ones who are already in the normal course of life. They have children, mortgages, car loans. They cannot change on their own. And it's your generation that can make real changes. We need a funny and enjoyable part in this discussion about the future. Being desperate and crying doesn't help either.

**So better keep laughing and keep joking, and really keep changing things.**

You motivate me and I trust you.

RJ: Thank you very much for these beautiful and hopeful words, Barbara.

BB: It was a great pleasure.





Final review of the seminar week with Barbara Buser. Photo: Rémi Jourdan

Anton Kolomeystev in conversation with Roger Boltshauser

ANTON KOLOMEYTSEV: In 1995 Martin Kubrick, professor at Vienna Technical University, started a cooperation between the Technical Universities of Vienna and Lviv. The resulting programs were very successful and substantially influenced the architecture of Western part of Ukraine. However, even after 30 years, we still find ourselves somewhat outside the European architectural tradition. Ukrainian architects are often rather consumers of architectural developments from elsewhere than contributors. I believe we need to take a more active role in shaping the architectural discourse. Do you think there is such a thing as a European architectural discipline, and if so, what makes it special?

ROGER BOLTSHAUSER: That's an interesting question. While Ukraine is indeed in a unique position, I think the challenges faced by younger architects are similar across Europe.

**Climate change, energy conservation, and sustainability are universal concerns that go beyond national boundaries.**

The younger generation has a strong focus on these issues, influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis, and ongoing conflicts. They're rethinking traditional approaches to architecture, aiming to reduce CO2 emissions while still creating remarkable buildings. This trend is evident across Europe, from Portugal to Poland. It's less about where an architect is from and more about a shared commitment to doing things differently. The key is working with local resources to create architecture that is both innovative and sustainable.

AK: Building with less CO2 really came to the forefront during the war in our country. Before, everything was very much industrialized, with construction happening without any thought given to sustainability. But during the war, with the absence of many technologies, materials, and so on, there was a shift—a rethinking that happened alongside the troubles and challenges. The destruction of many buildings in Ukraine has sparked a debate among Ukrainian architects about reconstruction and permanence. This discussion centres around a key question: Should we prioritize speed and cost-effectiveness with more temporary

structures, or invest in long-lasting, permanent buildings? You state that a building's longevity directly correlates with its sustainability, regardless of construction methods. This ecological perspective is clear—the longer a building lasts, the more beneficial it is. However, we often see buildings demolished not due to structural issues, but because they've become functionally or aesthetically obsolete. Consider how many postmodern buildings from the 1980s have undergone extensive renovations. This raises several questions: In terms of sustainability, should we aim to construct buildings that last for centuries? Or should we realistically plan for shorter lifespans from the outset? Should our focus shift towards material circularity—considering how materials are assembled and disassembled?

RB: It's difficult to give a general answer. It depends on what you're building. If you urgently need new housing for families moving into the city, it might make sense to build faster, with wood or circular materials. With these materials you can create nice buildings that can be disassembled and repurposed. Circularity is an interesting concept regardless of a building's lifespan. The Romans, for example, built with old stones and reused them for new buildings like the Palazzo or the Colosseum. That's also circularity, and yet these structures have lasted for centuries. But there's also the question of quality when building in a city. You have to create functional spaces with lasting qualities. It really depends on the function and the lifespan of the building. Sometimes a lighter structure that is flexible and that can disappear might be appropriate. But if you build with stone, you can reuse it, adding to the cultural identity, which is important. In Germany, for example, you often feel like you're in a city from the 1950s because many older buildings have been destroyed or demolished. This leads to a loss of identity, which isn't good. Munich, on the other hand, has rebuilt more of its historic structures, and I find it has a stronger cultural presence as a result. These aspects—cultural identity and quality—are crucial. Whether you build for 60 years, or 100 years, or 200 years, you should carefully consider these factors. In Switzerland, all our CO2 calculations are based on a 60-year lifespan for primary structures. If you extend that to 120 years, it doesn't matter how the building was constructed.

**This reflects the importance of quality and identity, which are difficult to calculate but essential.**

Engineers might focus strictly on calculations, using brick and concrete, but they often can't guarantee that a structure will last beyond 60 years. This is something I emphasise to our students:

calculations alone won't create good architecture. You need to focus on producing quality and identity.

Sometimes it makes sense to build something more flexible that can be adapted quickly. In a city centre, I might build something more permanent. For large scale housing, flexibility and circularity might be more important. But even with stone buildings, you can incorporate circular principles. The answer is complex and depends on the context. But circularity can be applied everywhere.

AK: Yes, and as far as I understand, it also depends on the materials used. You have extensive experience with rammed earth, recycled concrete, and timber.

RB: Yes, and brick, of course.

AK: So, what should we use in different cases? Considering longer-term use, understanding the typologies or specific locations is essential. You mentioned locally available materials. In Ukraine, we have timber, concrete that can be recycled, and brick. But there's a problem with energy, especially since brick production requires a lot of heat. What would be your recommendations?

RB: First, each material should be used in the right place. Concrete has a high energy cost, so it is best used for foundations or areas where other materials won't be as effective. If you use brick, consider how they're bonded. For example, we did a building with reused bricks and found that the mortar from before the 1960s is easier to remove, allowing the bricks to be reused. Mortar made after the 1960s is harder to remove without damaging the bricks. So, if you use brick, use mortar that is easy to remove. Stone is interesting because it has a lower CO2 footprint as it doesn't need to be burned, unlike brick. Wood is suitable for slabs, roofs, and other structures, while rammed earth can be used in some cases.

I believe the answer lies in intelligent, hybrid construction.

We can calculate and be sensitive to these issues, using the right materials in the right places while preserving cultural identity. If it makes sense to rebuild, then do it. Larger structures might need to be more flexible, but circularity remains important.

Don't forget that new typologies, such as schools and laboratories, require innovative approaches. Traditionally, these have been built in concrete, but now we need to rethink how we construct these large

structures sustainably. For example, we're working on a large university laboratory using hybrid timber construction. It's a significant challenge, but it's leading to new solutions.

Architecture is evolving, and this creates an opportunity to build our own identity while respecting our culture. The upscaling of earthen construction is particularly interesting, as it allows us to draw on past solutions while addressing contemporary needs. This is true for every country—it's about finding the specific answers in your context.

AK: Consider Palladio, who created more affordable architecture by constructing columns with bricks that mimicked stone. This raises questions about honesty and representation in architecture. How important is it for architecture to be truthful? How crucial is it to accurately represent materiality in construction? Should a building's form follow its technology?

RB: I believe honesty is important. But there's also a lot to consider regarding space, identity, and the human scale. When I wrote my first book "Elementares zum Raum" in 2009, it was primarily about space. Quality, I believe, extends the lifespan of a building and makes it more ecological. The Eiffel Tower, for example, is completely made of steel. Over time, it has become very ecological because it wasn't torn down. At the same time it's a pleasure to build with earth, to test it on another scale, causing less CO2-emissions from the beginning. At a city level, too, we need to keep quality in mind and ask what works and what doesn't anymore. Cities from the 1960s to the 1990s, where every function was in a separate area, show that this is not the right concept for a city. Sometimes, it makes sense to remove buildings that were built for cars and not for people. We have to be critical: sometimes it's better to keep building stock, but other times, it's just the wrong building in the wrong place. These questions present your generation with extremely interesting opportunities that will lead to new answers.

AK: What are your thoughts on the role of art in architecture? I remember a quote by someone who said, "Architecture is art with plumbing." What do you think about that?

RB: I'm one of those architects who, like many others, initially wanted to be an artist. In my early work, which was heavily criticized when I was around 20, I found my focus on material, which came more from art than from an ecological aspect. At that time, energy wasn't a major concern; I was more interested in materials that were rough and related to art.

I liked materials that already looked 100 years old when you built with them—something that already had a history. I came to those topics more through art, but today, I'm an architect. Even if I do drawings or lithographs, I consider them my personal work, not art.

Without my interest in art and my attempts to create art, I wouldn't be where I am as an architect. It's always good to explore other sides, to try things out—just because you like it. It might not directly help your project, but it gives you insight into yourself, your

preferences, and your perception. That might come back into your architectural work later. In my case, it did. That's probably why I started very early. It wasn't initially about big ecological questions, but those concerns quickly came into the picture. We started calculating and realized it was fundamental, but it began with a feeling for something.

AK: That's so interesting because, as you mentioned, it starts with a base—this felt sense, right? This juxtaposition of something raw, can we say that this aspect is somehow a contradiction to something clean, comfortable, and technological? Does it rebel against those things? When I see your projects, I feel an energy that motivates and inspires. Spanish architect and author Jesús Vassallo writes that building from earth is anti-capitalist because you don't have to buy material. You can just dig it up and build with it. So it's somehow provocative. What do you think about this?

RB: This feeling, maybe it's a kind of reaction to our society. I find this way of dealing with things also in art. Even after the oil crisis, artists started to work like that. So this is close to me, and I think there are people who want to do things differently. Now I believe your whole generation wants to do things differently.

AK: In Ukraine for the next few years, we will have rather modest budgets. We will have to be efficient and pragmatic with what we build and how we build. In your projects, you also use materials like glass which are low-tech, one can say. How do you think it's possible to make architecture with a capital A, with good impact and with lower budgets?

RB: Of course, it's possible. But if you use earth, you have to be honest - it's a lot of manual labour. In Switzerland, it's more expensive to build ecologically. Everything is more expensive than just using concrete or normal brick. Maybe it's a little better in your country because handwork is probably still a bit cheaper. If you only think about money and need to build quickly, the easiest thing to do is to just use the cheapest materials available. We have to analyse how we can do things differently, as we did in the Ukraine project workshop. We really looked at what materials we had and how we could reuse them. We asked ourselves: Is it really more expensive to reuse than to build a new window? Building cheaply and ecologically requires a lot of effort and smart solutions. You have to use the right material in the right place, and you have to know what it costs. To be honest, it's difficult to find unconventional solutions that are cheaper. But we have to do it. We have to change the whole industry to ultimately make sustainable solutions cheaper.



Final review of the seminar week with Roger Boltshauser. Photo: Rémi Jourdan

## Reuse and Sustainability

Reuse is an ethical necessity, not an option.  
Reuse is a mindset that transforms waste into potential.  
Reuse strengthens cultural identity and minimizes waste.  
Every material has value—even rubble can become a building block for renewal.  
Avoid demolition—renovation and adaptation are more sustainable.  
Circular construction means designing for assembly and disassembly.  
Hybrid construction is the future of sustainable architecture.

## Reuse and Play

Reuse offers light-hearted solutions for age-old problems.  
Play with available materials for new inspiration.  
Reuse is discovery and adventure in action.  
Reuse empowers architecture to express its artistic soul.  
Efficient, beautiful design is not a luxury—it's essential.  
Reuse is a tool for rebuilding lives, not just spaces.

## Reuse and Adaptability

Adaptability is key—temporary structures often become permanent.  
Prioritize adaptability to meet changing needs over time.  
Build temporary solutions with permanence and quality in mind.  
Longevity is sustainability—build for generations, not just decades.  
Reuse reduces environmental impact and builds resilience.  
Avoid big plans—small, adaptable solutions work best.  
Design must balance shared and private spaces to foster community.  
Design must respond to real needs, not impose predetermined visions.

## Reuse and Community Engagement

Trust is built through humility, listening, and respecting local voices.  
Trust communities to say what they need, and accept their rejections.  
Build trust through transparent and participatory design processes.  
Reuse must be transparent, revealing the source of salvaged materials and agents involved in their allocation.  
Reuse empowers communities to actively shape their built environment.  
Communities must shape their own environments to gain true ownership.  
Reuse shifts the role of architects from dictators to facilitators.  
Reuse is a gateway for participatory design.  
Create spaces people cherish, protect, and connect to.

## Reuse and Resourcefulness

Resourcefulness is about creating opportunities from constraints.  
Scarcity pushes us to see value in what remains.  
Scarcity is a catalyst for innovation and new solutions.  
High-quality architecture can emerge from limited resources.  
Use local resources to strengthen context and community.

### Reuse and Cultural Identity

Reconstruction must preserve identity, not erase it.  
Preserve cultural identity through sensitive reuse.  
Let spaces tell a story, weaving the past into the future.  
Rebuilding should integrate the past into a shared vision for the future.  
Every act of destruction erases history and culture.

### Humanitarian Architecture's Global Mission

Today's system of humanitarian projects are prototypes for a disciplined, established future architectural framework.  
Architecture is a life-saving discipline.  
Humanitarian architecture must transcend borders and connect communities.  
Humanitarian projects must connect people, disciplines, and resources.





# Credits



## Roger Boltshauser

Roger Boltshauser, after graduating from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH) in 1995, founded Boltshauser Architekten AG in Zurich in 1996. His firm has since grown to a team of around 75 employees, working on a wide range of projects from competition phases to construction management. In 2021, a second office was opened in Munich to complement the main office in Zurich. Alongside his architectural practice, Boltshauser has been active in academia, serving as a research assistant at ETH Zurich's Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta) between 1996 and 1998, and as a teaching assistant under Peter Märkli at both ETH Zurich and EPFL Lausanne from 1997 to 1999. He has also held several teaching roles, including lecturer positions at the University of Applied Sciences Chur and Anhalt University of Applied Sciences between 2004 and 2009. More recently, he served as a guest professor at EPFL Lausanne in 2016–2017 and TU Munich in 2017–2018, before becoming a lecturer at ETH Zurich in 2018.

In addition to his academic work, Boltshauser has contributed to city planning committees, including roles in the Building Committee of the City of Lucerne from 2012 to 2018, the City of Zurich's Building Council from 2018 to 2022, and the Building Committee in Berlin since 2022.

Boltshauser's work has earned him numerous accolades, including the Fritz Höger Prize for Brick Architecture, the Ernst A. Plischke Prize, and several "best architects" awards, recognizing his contributions to sustainable architecture and innovative design.

## Barbara Buser

Barbara Buser graduated in civil engineering from ETH Zurich in 1979 and later pursued further studies in architecture at the University of Applied Sciences in Basel. In 1998, she co-founded with Eric Honegger the architectural practice Baubüro in situ, a firm that focuses on transforming existing structures into functional and environmentally friendly spaces.

Buser is also a strong advocate for circular economy principles in architecture, emphasizing sustainability and social responsibility in her projects. In 1996, she and Klara Kläusler founded the first-ever Bauteilbörse (building parts exchange) in Basel.

Throughout her career, she has received numerous accolades for her contributions to sustainable urban development.

## Kees Christaanse

Kees Christaanse, emeritus professor of architecture and urban planning at ETH and founder of KCAP in Rotterdam, Zurich, Paris, Seoul, Singapore, and Shanghai, has left an indelible mark on the field. He served as Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at the Technical University of Berlin from 1996 to 2003 and later held the Chair of Architecture and Urban Design at the Institute of Urban Design at ETH Zurich until 2018. In addition to his academic roles, Christaanse served as chief curator of the 4th International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR) in 2009 and as program director of the ETH Future Cities Laboratory (FCL) in Singapore from 2010 to 2018. He is also a prolific author, contributing numerous books and articles to the field. Currently, he serves as a visiting professor at the Technical University of Munich.

In the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Kees, along with a small group from ETH Zurich, committed themselves to assisting Ukrainian refugee students, scholars, and educators while advancing architectural education in Ukraine. This effort evolved into the comprehensive "Swiss Network with Ukraine." As a central figure in the network, Kees facilitates collaboration between individuals and institutions, spearheading projects aimed at the reconstruction of Ukraine.

## Félix Dillmann

Félix Dillmann completed his Master's degree in Architecture at ETH Zurich and MIT in Boston. He is the general manager of RE-WIN, a non-profit organization dedicated to develop circular building practices in Switzerland and crisis regions like Ukraine. Until recently, he worked with an NGO in Nepal to build community architecture using reused and locally sourced materials as socio-economic drivers. As an architect specializing in urban design, he understands the urban environment as a place to create multidisciplinary practice and redesign resource systems to transform the construction industry in a socially and environmentally sustainable way. Additionally, as a Design Thinking coach and facilitator for ETH Sustainability, he has contributed to a various project-based courses both domestically and internationally, leveraging transdisciplinary approaches to advance the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promote sustainable innovation.

## Anna Dobrova

Anna has a background in architecture, acquired through studies at the National Academy of Fine Arts in Kyiv and the Technical University of Vienna, as well as practical experience in multiple architectural and urban planning offices such as Formaarchitects, Feld72, bogner-cc. During her time in Vienna, Anna developed a keen interest in socially oriented architecture, which she actively practices through curatorial work, educational workshops, art and urban interventions, and participatory action research. Since 2015, Anna has been a co-founder of the NGO MistoDiya, focusing on urban interventions, research, and curatorial practices. And in 2018, she co-founded and curated Metalab.if, an urban laboratory in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. Since 2022, Anna has been residing in Basel and is an active member of the "Swiss Network with Ukraine" in ETH Zurich and the NGO "Re-Win".

## Anton Kolomeytsev

Anton Kolomeytsev, born in 1986 in Lviv, Ukraine, is an architect with a background in architectural studies from L'vivska Polytechnic University. He earned his PhD in 2013 in Lviv, after which he dedicated himself to teaching and research at the Chair of Architectural Design at L'vivska Polytechnic University. His research is centred on exploring the intricate relationship between architecture and its broader context. Since 2019, Anton Kolomeytsev has held the position of Chief Architect of Lviv, simultaneously serving as the Head of the Architecture and Urban Planning Department of the Lviv City Council. In these roles, he contributes to shaping the architectural and urban development of Lviv, bringing his expertise to the city's planning and design initiatives.

## Olga Konovalova

Olga Konovalova, born in 1989 in Boyarka, Ukraine, is an architect and independent researcher of architectural history. She graduated from Kyiv National University of Construction in 2012 and later from Politecnico di Milano in 2016, earning degrees of Specialist and Master of Science in Architecture, respectively. Since 2017, she has been working as an architect at the Swiss architectural firm EM2N, initially in Berlin and now in Zurich, while continuing her research. Her focus is exploring the history and reevaluating the significance of Ukrainian architecture within the European context. Since 2022, she has been a member of the Swiss Network with Ukraine.

## Silke Langenberg

Silke Langenberg is Full Professor of Construction Heritage and Preservation at the Department of Architecture at ETH Zurich. Her professorship is affiliated with both the Institute for Preservation and Construction History (IDB) and the Institute of Technology in Architecture (ITA). Previously, she was a full professor of Construction in Existing Contexts, Conservation, and Building Research at the University of Applied Sciences in Munich. Langenberg studied architecture in Dortmund and Venice. Since her engineering dissertation on "Buildings of the Boom Years," her research has focused on issues related to the development, repair, and long-term preservation of serially, industrially, and digitally produced structures. At ETH Zurich, she and her team address theoretical and practical challenges of inventorying, appreciating, and preserving monuments as well as recent (including very recent) buildings. With the orientation and naming of the field she represents at ETH, "Construction Heritage and Preservation", she coined her own research area and concept, which deals with the appreciation and communication of procedural, technical, and constructive innovations in the built environment.

## Daniela Sanjines

Daniela Sanjinés has been a researcher at the ETH Wohnforum and lecturer of the MAS ETH in Housing since 2018. Currently she is pursuing a PhD within the framework of the SNSF funded project titled "Negotiating space for housing cooperatives in Latin America. The case of post-conflict Colombia and El Salvador". She holds an MSc in International Cooperation and Urban Development from TU Darmstadt and an MSc in Sustainable Emergency Architecture from the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya. Previous work includes the design and implementation of affordable housing policies in Colombia and the design of participatory camp improvement plans for the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the West Bank (UNRWA).

## Olha Zarechnyuk

Olha Zarechnyuk is an architectural historian based in Lviv, Ukraine. In 2013, she earned an MA in Architecture from Lviv Polytechnic National University. She currently works as the architectural editor of the Lviv Interactive project and conducts research on the history of heritage preservation at the Center for Urban History. She has lectured at the Kharkiv School of Architecture and CEU Summer School, as well as participating in academic seminars and workshops in architectural and digital history, including VIU in Venice and ETH Zurich. From 2021 to 2023, she collaborated on the co-authorship of a historical exhibition at the Jam Factory Art Center, focusing on Lviv's former suburbs of Pidzamche and Znesinnia.

## Philipe Ursprung

Philip Ursprung (b. 1963) earned his PhD in art history from Freie Universität Berlin, following studies in Geneva, Vienna, and Berlin. Since 2011, he has been Professor of the History of Art and Architecture at ETH Zurich and served as Dean of the Department of Architecture from 2017 to 2019. As a writer and curator, he has contributed to numerous publications and exhibitions. In 2017, he received the Prix Meret Oppenheim from the Swiss Federal Office of Culture. In 2023, he co-represented Switzerland at the 18th Architecture Biennale in Venice alongside Karin Sander.

## Xavier Blaringham

Xavier Blaringham is an architect and urban designer trained in France and the Netherlands, Partner at KCAP (Zurich) and former Lecturer at the School of Architecture of Strasbourg. After completing his studies in Lille (ENSAPL) and Delft (TU), Xavier joined KCAP in 2004, progressing through various roles until becoming a partner in 2018. During his time at both KCAP Rotterdam and KCAP Zurich, he was involved in the design and realization of numerous architectural projects and masterplans across Europe and Switzerland. The projects range from new architectural developments to the transformation of existing buildings and inner-city urban developments to large-scale urban visions. Xavier pays special attention to the application of new digital tools and sustainability at all scales, encompassing building technology, social aspects and urban considerations. As a unique architect, Xavier's French roots contribute to a sensibility for aesthetics and reflection, while his Dutch design approach, developed during his time in Delft and Rotterdam, has been refined over the last 15 years spend in Switzerland, enhancing his pursuit of perfection and attention to detail. In addition to his role at KCAP, Xavier has held a teaching position at the Strasbourg National School of Architecture (ENSAS), where he was responsible for an international design studio and participated in various academic activities. Furthermore, Xavier voluntarily offers some of his time and know-how to "The Swiss Network with Ukraine," supporting and promoting the future reconstruction of Ukraine, with a focus on Housing, ranging from refurbishing to new modular solutions.

## Rémi Jourdan

Rémi Jourdan is a passionate earth craftsman who strongly believes in the power of participatory design and building. He has always been curious to discover different cultures around the world which have inspired his architectural works. Notable among his experience is his work with the Urban Think Tank (2016) on the project Empower Shack in Khayelitsha, South Africa's largest informal settlement. In Bolivia, Rémi collaborated with the NGO Fundación Pro Habitat (2018-2019), facilitating participatory design and building workshops in informal settlements. His involvement extends to the Amazonian rainforest of Colombia, where he contributed to a project for an Indigenous university for the Inga people (2019-now). During his residency in Finland (2021-2022), Rémi engaged in a research project on Sámi architecture, focusing on the last indigenous people living in Europe. Coming from the pisé region Rhône-Alpes, France, Rémi has drawn inspiration from earth houses since his childhood. His time in South America and the Middle East deepened his understanding of various building techniques with earth. Since 2020, he has been affiliated with Lehmag AG, Switzerland, and collaborated with Terrabloc and Oxara. Since 2023, Rémi has served as a scientific research assistant on earth construction at the chair Roger Boltshauser at ETH Zurich. He is the founder of the collective Erdikal, dedicated to promoting participatory construction with earth. Since 2024, Rémi has assumed the role of director at the architecture studio Peter Sulser.

## Gyler Mydyti

Gyler Mydyti is an architect, urban planner, and researcher, currently serving as a Project Leader and BD Manager at KCAP in Zurich, and as a lecturer at the University of Liechtenstein. With over a decade of experience in conducting and managing projects at different scales, from architectural to urban and territorial, Gyler is dedicated to understanding territories' socio-spatial transformations, envisioning their sustainable development, and creating livable spaces for all. With distinguished achievements, Gyler earned a BSc in Architecture from Istanbul Technical University and an MSc in Urban Studies from Politecnico di Milano. In 2014, she obtained her PhD from Politecnico di Milano, concentrating on the City-University relationship and its profound impact on large urban transformations, particularly former industrial sites. Furthermore, with a specific focus, she has extensively studied the transformations of post-socialist and post-war territories, particularly in the Western Balkans. Prior to her arrival in Zurich in 2016, where she accumulated over five years of experience as a post-doctoral scholar and lecturer at ETH Zürich, Gyler also worked in renowned design firms and research institutions in Istanbul, Milan, Paris, and Prishtina. Alongside Kees Christiaanse, Gyler co-founded and co-coordinates the "Swiss Network with Ukraine." In this network, she actively volunteers her time to the IBA-Ukraine and Planning Cluster, as well as passionately bringing people together from various clusters to initiate projects aimed at the reconstruction of Ukraine.

## Anastasiya Ponomaryova

Anastasiya Ponomaryova is an architect, researcher, and co-founder of the NGO Urban Curators and CO-HATY initiative. She has acquired professional experience at the Donbas National Academy of Civil Engineering and Architecture and Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture, as well as in esteemed bureaus like Zorov&CO. Her academic journey includes roles at ETH Zurich's Architectural Department, the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture, and the Levental Center for Advanced Urbanism at MIT. With over a decade of experience in Ukraine's public sector, Anastasiya has actively contributed to hybrid bottom-up state initiatives. Currently, she is immersed in a project focusing on integrated, sustainable, non-profit housing in Ukraine. Additionally, Anastasiya is a member of the "Swiss Network with Ukraine," where she concentrates on developing design ideas for circular architecture.

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Swiss Network with Ukraine  
Studio Boltshauser  
CO-HATY

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Sources  
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