

a sense of home

objects of homemaking and the exploration of social architecture

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Supervisor: Bri Gauger
Examiner: Kristina Grange

Society, Justice, Space
Chalmers School of Architecture
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Chalmers School of Architecture

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Finally, I would like to thank my “home”; my friends, my family and Donna. Thank you for your unwavering support and faith in me.

abstract

The concept of home is widely discussed and well researched in an array of fields, more so in recent years in combination with the discourse on migration. This has implications on the research of the concept of home, especially within the architectural field. To explore this, the aim of this thesis is to answer the question: how and through what means do newly arrived international students create a sense of home after relocating?

One can wonder what the role and responsibility of the architect is concerning feelings of home and “homemaking”, or in other words, creating a sense of home. This thesis also investigates if there is a way for architects to design spaces past materialities by understanding architecture as social objects. This thesis therefore discusses the following questions: What is the architect’s role in the design of a home, as opposed to the design of a house, and how can this kind of design be done? What is the architect’s responsibility in designing buildings with a sense of home?

A Sense of Home is a thesis based on extensive theoretical research across academic disciplines, and qualitative means of data gathering with a heavy focus on material obtained through interviews. These narratives belong to residents of the student housing Gibraltar Guesthouse. The international students who participated in the study recently migrated from outside of Europe and have all lived in Gothenburg, Sweden, for less than 2 years. By comparing the participants’ responses, themes have been identified which then has iteratively been compared to the theoretical research. Through this

process, three personas have been created, each relating to homemaking differently.

The thesis explores what implication migration has on the experience of home and the process of homemaking. By identifying themes in the discussion of belonging related to both spatiality and materiality, this thesis gives light to the increasingly important topic of migration and home in the age of globalization. Using the aforementioned personas, a series of architectural designs further analyzes this phenomenon. This thesis contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how people navigate the terrain of making new homes.

Keywords:

Home
Homemaking
Belonging
Migration
Interviews

student background

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preface

The idea for this thesis grew out of my personal experience as a person of mixed background, who has doubted my identity and belonging many times. Sometimes this has happened as a result of having had my identity questioned by someone else. Even in spaces in which I would supposedly belong, I sometimes seem to be perceived to be different. These moments of alienation hurt – a feeling I believe most can identify with to a certain degree. Often I've felt especially vulnerable as one that does not belong, have been when moving, whether that be within Sweden or abroad. In this kind of situation I would often get the popular question "where are you from?", and a non-satisfactory answer would lead to the follow-up question "but where are you REALLY from?". These experiences would make me question my belonging and my home. Is home where I have my family and friends? Is it in the apartment where I live? Is home where I was born or is it my ethnicity? What happens when all of these places are in different places or spaces? What then is home?

Writing this thesis has been a weird but interesting experience where a lot of the insights emerging from the theoretical research have been applicable to my own life. This is inevitably the reason for me having such a great interest in the subject.

To conduct architectural research on the subject of home has been rather difficult. The theoretical work that seemingly exists in abundance in many other fields of academic work, has much less presence in architecture studies, which is curious as our work largely is to draw spaces in which supposedly

home happens. This is where I've slowly realized, to my frustration, the homogeneity of the architectural practice. Who is happy about technically advanced structures, aesthetically pleasing dwellings with sustainable smart systems if the social aspect isn't tended to? To me, it seems like the answer would be no one other than the architect. If not the architecture is seen as an object in which homes will be built, if the architect cannot take the dweller into account, the empty shell will then be uninhabitable and uncared for. And with that insight I've developed a disdain of drawing empty shells.

contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Purpose	3
1.3	Research Questions	4
1.4	Delimitations	5
1.5	Reading Instructions	5
1.6	Glossary	6
2.	Methodology	7
2.1	Reading	9
2.2	Talking	11
2.3	Observing	13
2.4	Drawing	14
2.5	Ethics	14
2.6	Context	15
3.	Theory	19
3.1	Home	19
3.2	Sense of Home	24
3.3	Homemaking	24
3.4	Migration	25
3.5	Familiarity & Strangeness	26
4.	A Sense of Home	27
4.1	Three Personas of Homemaking	27
4.2	Homemaking for all	39
4.3	Homemaking Beyond the House	41
4.4	Unhomely Feelings	43
4.5	Reaching a Sense of Home	44
5.	Design for Three Personas	47
6.	The Architect as an Enabler	61
7.	Conclusion	67
8.	Bibliography	69
9.	Appendix	73



[Fig 1] Shaun Tan, *The Arrival*, 2006

chapter one.

introduction

1.1 background

In the age of globalization, migration has become a more prevalent occurrence, leading to widespread transnational movements of people, cultures and objects. Migration, a fundamental aspect of history, continues to shape societies, economies and cultures worldwide. In recent decades global migration flows have intensified, driven by a complex interplay of factors such as economic globalization, political instability, environmental change and demographic shifts. Whether voluntary or forced, temporary or permanent, the movement of people across borders presents both opportunities and challenges for individuals, communities, and nations, making migration an inherently complex phenomenon.

As individuals traverse geographic, cultural, and social boundaries in search of refuge, opportunity, or change, they encounter a myriad of challenges related to inclusion, exclusion, and identity. With the desire to belong, comes the fear of alienation, and our increasingly global world is plagued by the rise of racism and xenophobia, resulting in a surge in hate crime reports, according to the United Nations (2016). By capturing the diversity of migrants' lived experience in Gothenburg, Sweden, this thesis sets out to investigate the diverse experiences, practices and strategies employed by international migrants as they navigate the complexities of settlement and integration in a new context.

Gothenburg is a richly diverse city that historically has been characterized by migration, both immigration and emigration. During the first decades following the early founding of the city in the 1600's, Dutch merchants constituted the dominating group of inhabitants. Later, Scottish entrepreneurs came to play an important role in the history of the city. The subsequent development of the harbor increased the trade and immigration to this west coast city. In the modern age, Gothenburg, Sweden's second-largest city, has become a hub for innovation and education with migrants from all over the world moving to Gothenburg (Holgerson, 2010, p. 9). Regardless of the reason for migrants finding themselves in Gothenburg, they all have something

in common; a previous home far away, and a new space to call home. They have abandoned familiarity and are now settling in as strangers in this new city, seeking to once again find familiarity. How can this be done and is there a way to help people in this process?

Through a combination of different qualitative research methods, this thesis attempts to provide a nuanced understanding of the diverse experiences and realities of migrants' homemaking practices. By centering the voices and perspectives of migrants themselves, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex and multifaceted ways in which globalization shapes the meanings and practices of home and belonging in an increasingly interconnected world.

1.2 purpose

First and foremost, the aim of this thesis is to explore both the joy and the struggle of homemaking, and to raise awareness on the value of home, familiarity and belonging. This value is relevant to everyone, but becomes particularly important for migrants, who by relocating have had to challenge their notion of home, consciously or not.

There is an emerging branch of architectural research which radically criticizes the notion of architecture as nothing but the “*production of pictures and production of objects*”, and by doing so hopes to expand the field of what an architect could or might do (Till, 2018). In the spirit of this critical engagement I am setting out to investigate if there’s a way for architects to design spaces past materialities and rather as socially constructed objects and imaginaries, that in the case of this thesis specifically concerns the feeling of home. While the concept of home is well researched in other fields of academia such as geography and anthropology, the common discussion on the home in architectural research instead focuses on the physically constructed building of the house (Lenhard & Samanani, 2020, p. 6). This confusion where architectural research loses its social qualities is to me a problematic result of the lack of multidisciplinary approach within architecture. Architects have to be able to design both houses, with its smart sustainable solutions, technological innovation systems and artistic statements. But we also have to be able to design homes, or at least enable residents themselves to create homes.

“There is a disconnect between the research on the architectural term house, and that of the home” (Lenhard & Samanani, 2020, p. 6).

In the discourse of belonging within architectural research, which contains similar elements as the discourse on home and homemaking, the outcome would oftentimes be materialized in the design of public space using different participatory design approaches. These are important interventions of social architecture, however with a slightly different scale of research from this thesis. The interest of this thesis is mainly the homemaking within the house itself, something that is less explored within the architectural field (Lenhard & Samanani, 2020, p. 6).

A further aim of this thesis is also to generate discussion on the architect’s role in homemaking. Asking the question if it is the residents’ role to create a *home*, or the architect’s role?

1.3 research question

“How and through what means do newly arrived international students create a sense of home after relocating”

This thesis seeks to answer the main research question of the migrants process of relocating and making oneself at home in the new context of Sweden. The thesis also explores the following sub-questions that relate to the role of the architect:

“What is the architect’s role in the design of a home, as opposed to the design of a house, and how can this kind of design be done?”

“What is the architect’s responsibility in designing buildings with a sense of home?”

1.4 delimitations

The project research was conducted through qualitative means, and should therefore not be interpreted as quantitative. The conclusions made are not general, but in-depth analysis, suggestions and thematic findings found from a small group of research participants. Although design is used to research and explore a fictitious visual world, the design is not meant to be understood as a practical design intervention. Neither are the designs meant to be intended as “solutions”, but rather as speculative interventions – ideas to question and comment on the status quo.

The project is limited to the geographical context of Gothenburg, Sweden. Specifically the student housing Gibraltar Guesthouse has been chosen as study object, and its non-european international residents.

The project initially contained research on how people communicate a sense of home and belonging, especially through the use of windows. However, throughout the process of the thesis this became less important.

While questions of home and migration often raise issues of segregation, I have chosen to not venture into this topic as that would have expanded the thesis considerably. Similarly focusing on home and homemaking brings issues of homelessness to attention. It is interesting to note that we seldom talk about houselessness, when this is often what is in actuality implied. However, as for the purpose of the work here homelessness is beyond its scope.

1.5 reading instructions

The *Introduction* presents “the why” of this thesis, showing the purpose of the project and situating the project within its wider context. The *Methodology* explains “the how” of this thesis, what has been done in what way, using what lens. The *Theory* is a literature review on topics significant for the understanding of the thesis. These include the introduction of home, sense of home, homemaking, migration and familiarity and strangeness. The section *A Sense of Home* is the outcome divided into five parts. Starting with the introduction of the personas, this section goes through the various aspects of homemaking and its different scales. The chapter *Design for Three Personas* presents a speculative design scenario. The section *The Architect as an Enabler* is a discussion containing further analysis and interpretation, answering the research questions and a reflection on the study material while placing it in a wider context. Finally, the *Conclusion* gives a short and concise summary of the thesis.

1.6 glossary

Home

“A single account of the concept of home will never be settled upon and nor should it be” (Meers, 2021, p. 600)

The home is understood as the relational experience of a space and the subject's feelings towards the space. The home is not to be confused with the house or the dwelling.

Sense of home

The feeling of belonging in a space which results in the achieving of a sense of home.

Homemaking

The process of making oneself at home and the tools used to do so.

Homing

Creating a sense of home through assimilation and integration (Boccagni, 2016, p. xxvi).

Spatial imaginary

The subjective mental construct, perception, and interpretation of a space (Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 9).

Social architecture

Architecture that goes beyond technology and artistry through the care of its social value and meaning (Cairns, 2004, p. ii).

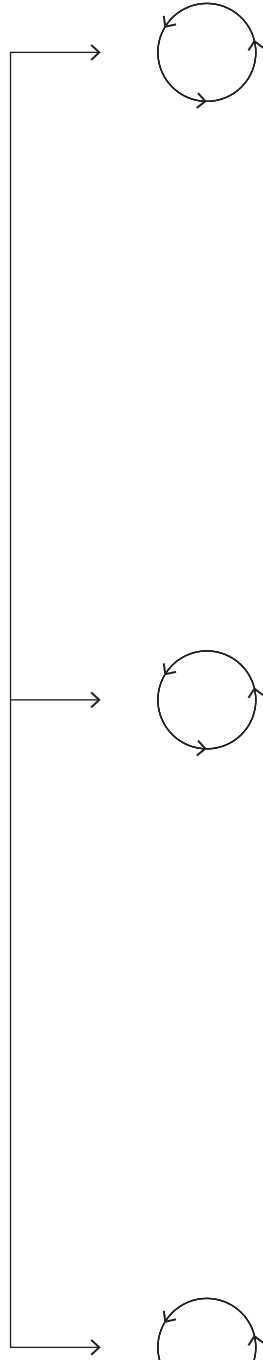
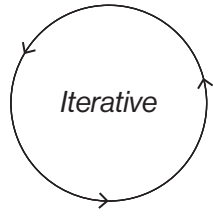
chapter two.

methodology

The project was conducted in multiple stages, each stage informing the other in an iterative process in a methodologically qualitative manner, narrated by an interpretivist worldview (Hammersley, 2012, p. 26). Interpretivism is a methodological philosophy that seeks to understand people's behavior as influenced by their lived life with the aim to understand a person "from the inside" as an emphatic exploration (Hammersley, 2012, p. 26). This thesis is a product of several layers of subjective interpretation. To embrace this subjectivity is essential to this thesis, as it seeks to explore human experience, something that inherently is subjective.

With the subject of this thesis in mind, qualitative research is the most appropriate methodology for the purpose of answering the research question. Using this methodology would also allow for a more focused and detailed study of a smaller number of cases, using verbal and expressive means of analysis rather than statistical (Hammersley, 2012, p. 12). Quantitative research on the home can be relevant if the research tends to questions regarding for example the analysis of the housing market or the household demographic change (Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 40). Qualitative research can tend to the "politically, socially, and culturally constituted but lived and experienced in personal ways" (Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 40). This thesis is not seeking for an absolute and it is not seeking to objectively answer a hypothesis, but to explore different options and flexible truths.

A Sense of Home is a thesis based on extensive theoretical research and qualitative means of data gathering with a heavy focus on material gathered through interviews. The methodology has been divided into four parts, namely *reading*, *talking*, *observing* and *drawing*, each with their own set of tools and application. The design strategy of this thesis is "research for design" and "research by design", as the design is based on the findings of the theoretical research, data collection and analysis, but also became a tool that helped to further the analysis of the gathered material. I will now go through each of the stages, discuss ethical implications and present the study site.



Chapter 3, Theory

Reading

Literature review
Inspiration
Method research
Study context

Chapter 4, A Sense of Home

Talking

Conduct interviews

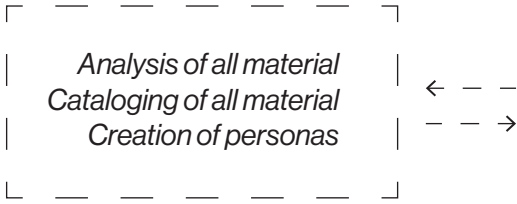
Observing

Photographs
Sketches

Chapter 5, Design for Three Personas

Drawing

Speculative design



2.1 reading

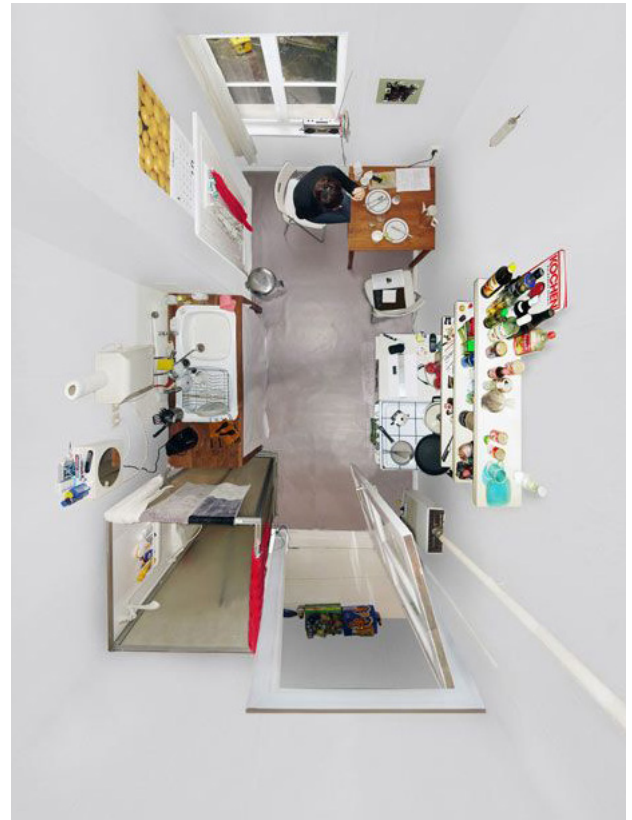
The literature review consists of material from a variety of academic fields including for example anthropology and geography, as it is a multidisciplinary subject. The themes explored in the theoretical chapter consist of the study on home, migration, belonging, familiarity and strangeness. The monumental work in this field is that of geographers Blunt & Dowling (2022), which was originally published 2006. It has been used extensively throughout this study. Another important work is that of sociologist Boccagni (2016 & 2023). These are works within the framework of home studies, as well as migration studies, meaning that these works are all extensively referenced in other material in regards to these topics. Many of these books and articles are well regarded and essential readings in the field, which is the reason for the referencing of these works in an architectural thesis.

To develop an appropriate methodology, research on qualitative research was made, which furthered the nuancing of methodologies of data gathering and the ethics of qualitative research. This was then used to further develop an interviewing technique and a code of conduct. For this, readings of Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) and Hammersley (2012) were used. The work of Miller (2008) was used as an inspirational reference, as his work concerns interviews of people inside of their homes in a sensitive manner.

I have also drawn inspiration from written and visual projects on the method and outcome of the project. The photography series "Toy Stories" by Gabriele Galimberti (2014) and "Room Portraits" by Menno Aden (2006) are some of these inspirational works. These are photographic works showing how people relate to their material belongings in relation to their home and how to represent that visually.



[Fig 2]
Gabriele Galimberti,
Toy Stories, 2014



[Fig 3]
Menno Aden,
Room Portraits, 2006

2.2 talking

Interviewing is a commonly used method of gathering data within the study of home, oftentimes conducted within the participants residence (Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 45), as is the case of this study.

The spine of the thesis project became the interviews conducted of the residents of Gibraltar Guesthouse and the analysis of these discussions. But why do interviews? One key to evaluate if interviewing is the preferable method for this research paper is to ask oneself if "... the subject matter concerns aspects of human experience or our conversational reality" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 127). To be able to respond to the research question of this study and to find out the human experience of a sense of home, it was deemed necessary to conduct interviews. This topic could have been grossly simplified through other means of research which could lead to generalization and loss of nuance of the gathered data. The interviews were conducted through open-ended and semi-structured interviewing of migrated people residing in Gothenburg to gather their personal experiences.

The reason for choosing specifically to interview residents of Gibraltar Guesthouse was to be able to limit the participants to a specific group. Gibraltar Guesthouse is an international students only residential building. The reason for migration is excluded from this thesis as a way of limiting the study. By choosing international students, one can hypothesize that the reason for migrating is to study and eliminate any further need to dig into the background of the person's migration. Forced migrants may have a very different outlook on what home is, than the migrants who willingly moved. I have also chosen to only work with recently migrated people as their experiences of a new home is more in the present. Furthermore, working with the residents of one building means that more variables can be controlled and having a constant throughout the study, such as every participant having the same apartment layout. The building is located at the Chalmers Johanneberg Campus in Gothenburg, Sweden, which also made it easily available.

A string of luck led me to my first interview, a mutual friend introduced me to a resident of Gibraltar Guesthouse. Then, through word of mouth, I was referred from person to person, according to the so-called snowballing method. In total, 2 people were interviewed through my first contact. I also contacted the housing company (Chalmers Studentbostäder) directly by emailing a representative who then let me inside the building to leave flyers in the residents' post boxes. The purpose was to get as great a variation of residents' backgrounds as possible. In total 3 people reached out from these flyers. Anyone showing interest was asked to participate in the project. Other than being residents of Gibraltar Guesthouse and of an international background, no other requirement was asked for. Everyone that I managed to get in contact with were international students from a non-European country. This was not something that was intentionally sought out, but rather a result of the residents of Gibraltar Guesthouse being majority of non-European background.

To prepare for the interviews I did methodological readings on qualitative research, on interviewing techniques and ethics, which then helped prepare a consent form. I continued researching the theoretical background to give myself a solid groundwork to prepare the interview questions and protocol.

The interviews were conducted inside the participant's apartment at Gibraltar Guesthouse. The interview began with the participant signing two consent forms (see appendix), one to keep for

themselves and one for me. Anonymity was promised to the best of my ability through the consent form, including not showing faces or the presentation of the individual's name. The participants have been given names of colors as nicknames to ensure anonymity. The project and the process was then explained. The person was asked to draw a floor plan of their own apartment and to add whatever detail felt important to them in that drawing (see appendix). The questions were asked and photos were taken.

The interviews were held semi structurally following an interview protocol (see appendix) to proceed from but with the possibility to organically answer to the way the participant responded. These questions were of the category "the dwelling", "sense of home", "communication of sense of home", "speculative" and "architecture as social object". Other questions were asked as felt fitting as how the interview was proceeding. Questions were also added, removed or rephrased between interviews. The interview protocol can be seen as a living document.

I reached out to all 100 inhabitants of Gibraltar Guesthouse. Out of the 100, 9 people agreed to participate in the interview. All of the participants were of international background from different parts of the world, but from a non-European context. Gender varied and the age of the participants ranged from 24 years old to 31 years old. All participants had moved directly to Gibraltar Guesthouse when moving to Sweden. The length of residency in Gibraltar Guesthouse ranged from 7 months to 1,5

years. All of the participants were active students of Chalmers University of Technology. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour.

The interviews were consensually recorded. The audio recordings of the interviews, notes, drawings and photographs were all used to analyze the data, which was done in an iterative manner. After each interview the new data was compared to the previously gathered data to review the outcome. Analysis was done through iterative analysis of transcripts and drawings, finding keywords and to get an overarching sense of all material gathered. The answers were categorized to make a comparative analysis possible. This was then compared to the theoretical material gathered from the literature review. (Devitt & White, 2021, p. 174)

Parallel to this, the creation of personas has been used as a tool to deepen the analysis of the gathered material. Personas in this thesis are made up characters that are representations of thematic findings and suggestions. The use of personas can help make sense of complex data while maintaining the anonymity of the study participants, and simultaneously push both the analysis and design of the project while communicating findings in a comprehensive way (Devitt & White, 2021, p. 158).

2.3 observing

The interviews were held at the individual's apartment in Gibraltar Guesthouse to make possible other qualitative data gathering and mapping in the form of photography and sketching. The photographs taken were representations of the objects or actions as discussed in the interviews. In each apartment a photo of the window was taken, as I had an earlier interest in how participants used their windows, for example by decorating them. This hypothesis was later abandoned as a delimitation, but I kept taking the photographs, as it created a representative archive of the apartments I visited and their similarities and differences. The observations are architectural observations in the homes of the participants that might give additional information that haven't necessarily been communicated through the interviews. Especially regarding their belongings, how they are presented and the layout of their apartment.

The sketches were an ice-breaker exercise in which the participant was asked to draw their apartment layout, adding notes on what felt important to them. This was to get a quick understanding and a feel of the participants values and to be able to prepare for the rest of the interview. The first two participants were asked to draw their layouts from a blank page, but from the third participant and onward, I had prepared a blank plan of their apartment.

The sketches and photographs, both of the interior and objects, were analyzed comparatively in the same way as the interview material, and against the created personas. The photographs were also used as a tool to represent themes of discussion.

2.4 drawing

The information gained through the interviews and visits at Gibraltar Guesthouse, the literature review and the creation of the personas all fed into the drawing phase, which was the speculative design of the personas. Everything learned through the previous steps could be used for the drawing phase, which again iteratively helped to further the analysis of the personas and the interview material. It is suggested that the use of personas when combined with visual design approaches can help improve research analysis (Devitt & White, 2021, p. 174).

Speculative design is an approach within design practice that explores and examines possible futures or alternative realities through the creation of scenarios or narratives. Rather than focusing solely on solving current problems or meeting present needs, speculative design aims to provoke thought, stimulate discussion, and challenge assumptions about the future (Thorpe, n.d., p. 14). In this thesis, speculative design is used to reflect and further deepen the analysis of the gathered material, and to simultaneously nuance the discussion on the architect's role in homemaking.

2.5 ethics

The project is of qualitative nature with a focus on people's personal experiences which poses potential dangers and ethical vulnerabilities. Especially when going into someone's private home, consent is of importance as well as the thorough understanding and briefing of the project for whoever participates. The participants had the opportunity to read the consent form before the interview, and had received information over text about the nature of the interview (the interview taking place at the person's home and photographs being taken etc) before agreeing to the interview. After the interview, the participants were left with information on how to withdraw their consent and contact information if they had anything to add.

Qualitative research relies on the interpretation of data, which introduces the potential for subjectivity and bias. My individual experience and personal beliefs have inevitably influenced the analysis of the material. It is important to try to overcome cultural assumptions, especially as this thesis concerns the experience of non-European migrants in Sweden, studied by an author who has grown up in a Swedish context. Similarly, dynamics of social-class, gender and language barriers will inevitably affect both the way a participant may respond and influence the interpretation of the interaction (Hammerley, 2012, p. 53). Some participants spoke more freely during the interviews, while others needed more questions to be able to elaborate on certain thoughts, which could have influenced the outcome. By simply being in someone's home, there are dynamics in interplay between the participant and the researcher (Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 46).

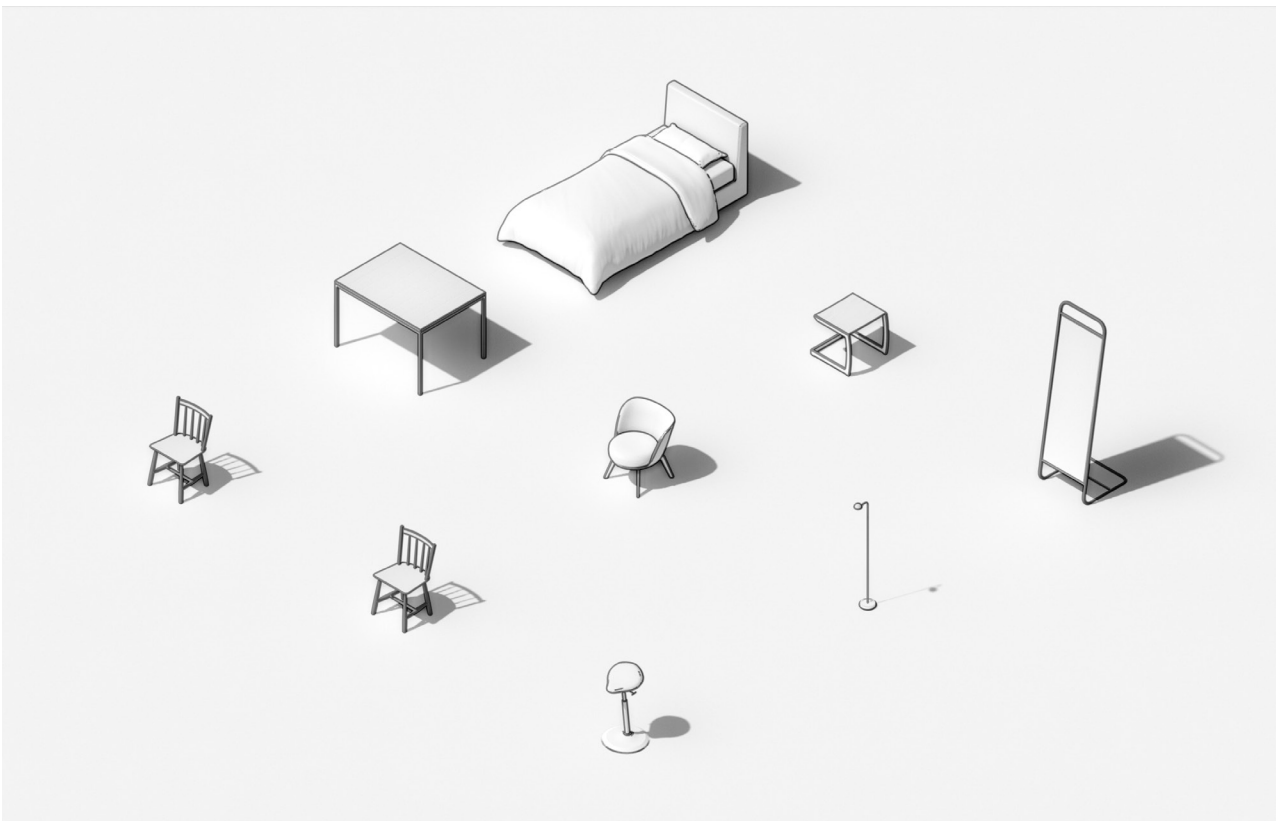
2.6 context

Using the private homes of migrated people in the context of the city of Gothenburg, Sweden as a point of departure, the student housing complex Gibraltar Guesthouse has been identified as a point of interest. The building sits right by the Chalmers Johanneberg campus and is owned by Chalmers Studentbostäder who dedicated the 100 apartments for international master and PHD students as well as international guest researchers. Making all of the tenants in this building migrants who most likely fairly recently moved to Gothenburg. The simple naming of the building suggests that the residents are not actually at home, but rather guests, meant to leave at some point. The building itself is also somehow a guest, built on a temporary building permit in 2019 set to be demolished within 15 years.

Gibraltar Guesthouse is a wooden hybrid building combining different wood building techniques. Each apartment is 28 sqm, already furnished and standardized in modular units on six floors. Everyone has a basic framework of their home, making a comparison and analysis possible. The architectural firm behind the project, Olsson Lyckefors, has designed the building with the social interaction of a student in mind, each floor holds around 70 sqm of social space, which they have named "The Social Shelf". The ground floor provides common laundry space, and the upper floors were left open to be programmed by the students themselves, for example being used to play table tennis or common study spaces (Brandt, 2019, p. 24).

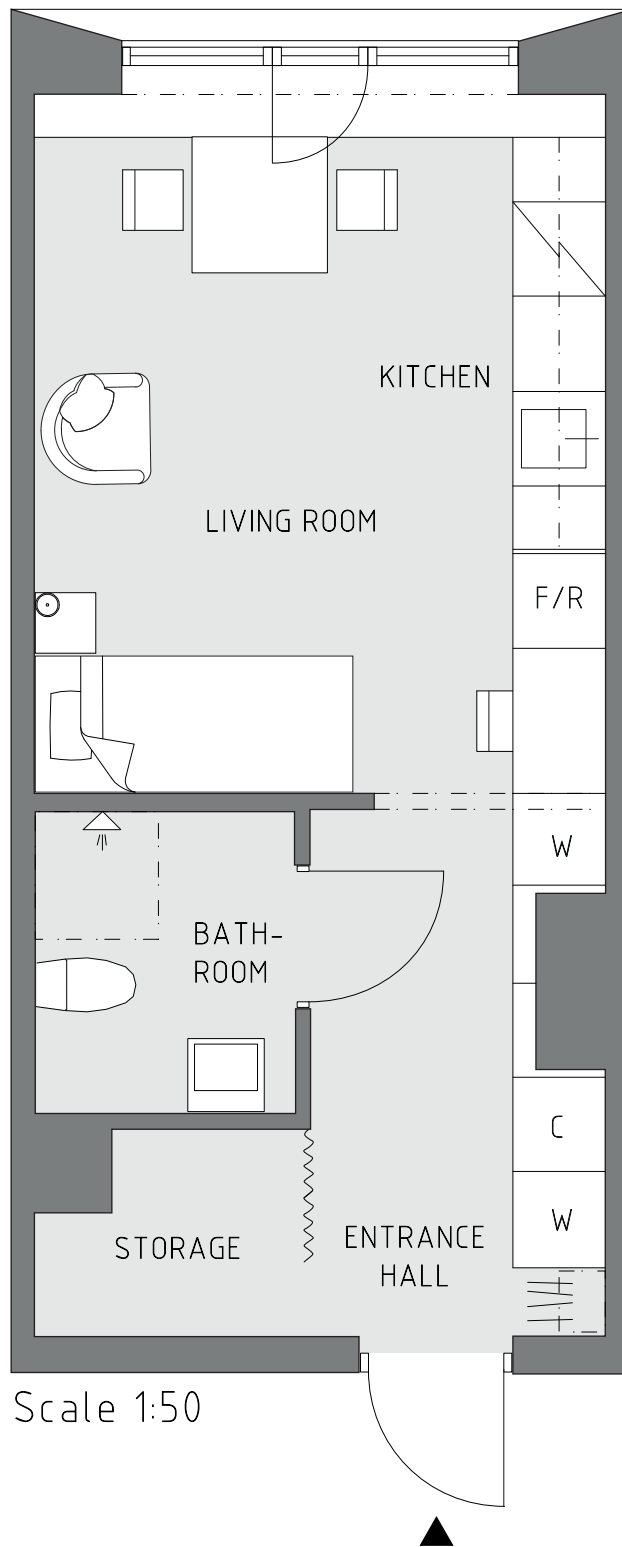


[Fig 4] Å. Eson Lindman (2018)



The included furniture

- | | | | | | |
|----|------------|----|------------|----|------------|
| 1. | Single bed | 2. | Side table | 3. | Mirror |
| 4. | Table | 5. | Armchair | 6. | Floor lamp |
| 7. | Chair | 8. | Chair | 9. | Stool |



[Fig 5] Shared layout (Olsson Lyckefors, 2018)

chapter three.

theory

3.1 home

In the theoretical discussion about home, it is important to differentiate a few terms sometimes used indifferently. The *home*, as discussed in this thesis, is not to be confused with the *house* or the *dwelling*. The concept of the house only refers to the physical entity, a machine to inhabit and understood as a shelter. Therefore, a house doesn't necessarily have to be a home (Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 9). Other synonyms of the house, such as the domicile or the residence, lack the psychological dimension of the human feeling and only signifies a building to reside in (Oliveira, 2020). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the term house refers to a western type of residential building, whereas the term dwelling can encompass other ways of living, such as slums (Coolen & Meesters, 2012, p. 2). The terminology of dwelling, much like that of home, has a broader and sometimes even conflicting definition. On one hand, it suggests a physical structure used by people for living (Rapoport, 1980, as cited in Coolen & Meesters, 2012, p. 2), much like the definition of the house. On the other hand, dwelling is commonly understood in terms discussed by philosopher Martin Heidegger in the article "Building Dwelling Thinking" (1971). Heidegger sees the concept as a psychological relation to a space, with the understanding that to dwell is to be at peace. Although this understanding of the dwelling is much closer to the home than that of the house, there are distinctions that are valuable to have in mind. In the same article Heidegger explains that home necessarily doesn't have to be where one dwells, giving the example that the truck driver could be at home on the highway, but doesn't have their shelter there (1971).

"Any researcher engaging with the concept home is faced with the dilemma of how to distill workable principles from such a vast literature." - Meers, 2021, p. 599

“These feelings, ideas, and imaginaries are intrinsically spatial. Home is thereby a spatial imaginary.”

- Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 9

The study on the concept of home is comprehensive, making it difficult to find a starting point in which to discuss the concept. The understanding of the concept can vary widely depending on the person you talk to or in what context it's discussed. Different scholars have studied the subject through various lenses using many different approaches, with a variety of academic backgrounds including geography, feminism studies and architecture. The concept has throughout history and between cultures changed notion and been ascribed different values. Many scholars have described both positive values, for instance in association with feelings of nostalgia and belonging, and negative values in another instance in association with feelings of alienation and violence (Meers, 2021, p. 600; Coolen & Meesters, 2012, p. 3; Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 9).

To understand the concept of home as interpreted in this thesis, I draw inspiration from the influential work of Blunt and Dowling (2022), in which the term is deconstructed into two elements. First and foremost the term is to be understood as “an imaginary imbued with feelings”, meaning the feeling of the subject, but also as the material understanding “a place where we live”, understood as a space where life takes place (Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 9). Most importantly, home is to be understood as the relation between the two (Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 28). In other words, home is understood as the feelings of a subject in relation to the space where their life takes place. A space with value and memories tied to it as experienced by the subject.

The home can be referred to on multiple scales, such as the geographical scale of the nation or the city (Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 313). It can refer to different physical scales such as the building or the object, as in the work of Miller (2008), in which home is discussed through material and object attachment. It also has other dimensional qualities, meaning it can refer to a non physical space, such as the digital or the social space. I have chosen to focus on the study of the home within the house, meaning a feeling of attachment in relation to a specific building where living takes place and with its objects within. However, as the term home is as complex as it is, inevitably other dimensions will be discussed, such as that of the city scale and the social space. When referring to a *space* throughout this thesis, it is only natural that the space can be referring to any of these scales.

“Home here stands for a symbolic space of familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment” - hooks 2009, p. 213, through Antonsich, 2010, p. 646

Home also holds a relation to identity and power (Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 29). Much of the work on the home by geographers, anthropologists and humanists references the studies by feminist scholars and norm critique studies that examine the home intersectionally, through lenses of race, class, gender and sexuality. This multidisciplinary background of the concept of home cannot be erased, as it helps answer questions on *why* home is so important and how different home can look for marginalized communities.

In conclusion, I've noticed a trend where architectural research on the *home* tends to be treated as the research of the *house* as a physical object without its social dimensions. I believe this to be a knowledge gap to be filled in. This thesis uses the research on homemaking to unravel architecture as a social object. The research on homemaking as discussed in other fields can be used as a tool within architectural research to bridge that gap between the research on house and home.

Home

House

Dwelling

Only material

Only where one reside

Home is the relation between:

Material

Immaterial

Space where life takes place

Feelings of the subject

In multiple scales

Positive experience:

Homemaking
Homing

Process

Tools

Sense of home

Feeling of belonging to a material space

3.2 sense of home

Having outlined the term home, I will now discuss what it means to feel a sense of home. To understand this I will first deconstruct what it means to *be at home*. To be at home is a positive emotional experience of belonging (Antonsich, 2010, p. 646). Belonging indicates attachment, identity and safety (Antonsich, 2010, p. 647), to be at home then suggests positive emotions of these factors. A sense of home is a question if the subject is *de facto* feeling positively about their space and to question if they feel at home. To embody a sense of home proves the subject has successfully achieved feelings of belonging. However, one may feel more or less at home. Boccagni understands the feeling of home as an “emotional and relational experience” (2016, p. xxvi), meaning that a sense of home can be something compared and a multiple. It can be scalar and seen as a process, and it can always be improved or deteriorated.

3.3 homemaking

“If imaginaries of home span across time, then this leads us to an understanding of homes as dynamic, rather than as stable entities. Home is understood as a process.” - Lenhard & Samanani, 2020, p.14

At what point does a residence turn into a home and how does that happen? The process of making oneself feel a sense of home is, in this thesis, conceptualized through the term of homemaking. It asks the questions of what actions and what tools the individual would use to create and achieve a sense of home over time. In most of the previously cited literature, such as Blunt & Dowling, scholars have treated *homemaking* as a self-explanatory term, simply a verb of making homes. I believe homemaking is more than that, and I will borrow the concept of homing (Boccagni, 2016) to shed light on the concept of homemaking used in this thesis. The term homing specifically refers to migrants’ process of “orienting social practices accordingly” (Boccagni, 2016, p. xxvi) and “people’s evolving potential to attach a sense of home to their life circumstances, in light of their assets and of the external structure of opportunities” (Boccagni, 2016, p. 23).

What can the process of homemaking look like then? There are many means of homemaking, as evident by the different focus of each scholar. Home can be created through social relationships, friends and family (Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 28), it can also be created through material means of objects (Miller, 2008; Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 28), and through everyday practices and daily routines (Lenhard & Samanani, 2020, p. 14). All of these elements are influenced by the subject’s dreams and

ideals, affected by their lived life and past experiences. (Lenhard & Samanani, 2020, p. 13). Homemaking is the appropriation of space with the goal of reaching a sense of home over time. The term suggests the longing of a better home or the ideal home in which the subject would be fulfilled, a life-long search that always has room for improvement (Lenhard & Samanani, 2020, p. 14).

Homemaking as a term in this thesis is encapsulated by all the ways a subject makes oneself at home, whether that be by homing, by appropriating space, or any other way.

3.4 migration

“In a commonsensical understanding, migration can simply be framed as a way of leaving home behind, and possibly reestablishing it elsewhere” - Boccagni, 2016, p. xxiii

As presented in previous chapters, home is a complex and multifaceted concept. The discussion on home becomes even more intricate in the context of migration, in which another dimension of identity is added. The home evokes feelings of familiarity and belonging, while the meaning of migration suggests the opposite and could perhaps even be conceived as a threat to the home (Boccagni, 2023, p. 5). Migration does not only imply a transition from one dwelling to another. Migration also forces the subject to restart their process of homemaking in a new context. In the dichotomy between the “old” and the “new” the migrant will have to reevaluate their feelings of home and develop their identities (Lenhard & Samanani, 2020, p. 15).

The notion of home brings images of stability, permanence, and rootedness. For migrants, this notion is challenged, and is instead shaped by processes of adaptation, negotiation, and transformation over time.

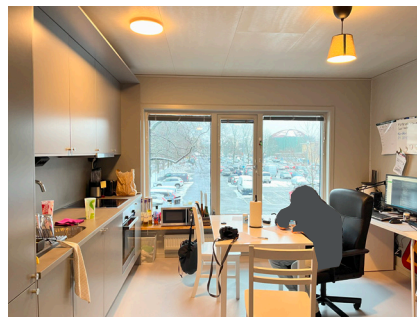
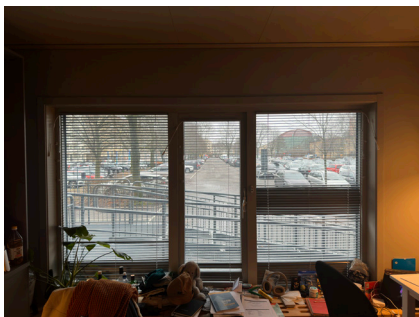
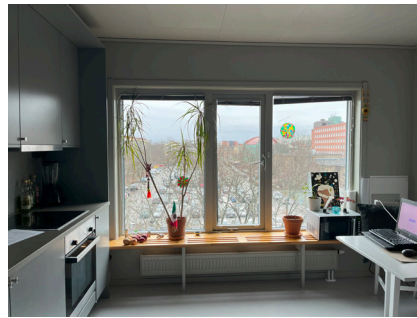
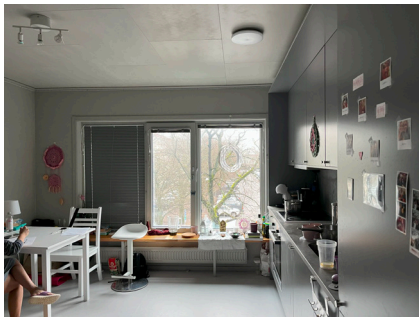
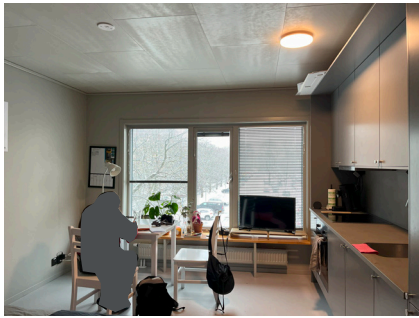
“Researching home and migration is a way to illuminate the transformations in place relations under conditions of mobility, migration or displacement, and the diversified and unequal societal arrangements in the aftermath of these processes.” - Boccagni, 2023, p. 2

3.5 familiarity & strangeness

“This ‘home’ is a place with which we remain intimate even in moments of intense alienation from it. It is a sense of ‘feeling at home’” - Brah, 1996, p. 4

From the discourse on home and migration comes the unavoidable consequence of familiarity and strangeness, in which home represents familiarity and migration represents strangeness. We decorate our homes with what is familiar to us, but to be in movement upsets the order of things. Migration changes elements of what used to be familiar and it instead becomes a source of strangeness or can be understood as the process of estrangement from what once was inhabited as a home (Ahmed, 2000, p. 92). As a result of migration the city might be strange, the house might be strange, the people around you might be strangers and the language spoken might be strange. My understanding of homemaking is the process of appropriating a strange space with familiar elements and objects, making the space turn familiar.

The experience of migrating can become an obligation of loyalty and attachment for multiple or even too many homes, in which case home then becomes nowhere (Ahmed, 2000, p. 330). In a similar train of thoughts in which home is nowhere, negative experiences of migration can give birth to feelings of extreme alienation (hooks 1991, p. 148). From these analyses one can conclude that home, whatever meaning it holds to the subject, carries immense power and value. The disruption of the home creates tension, in which the realization of being “not at home” may result in feelings of loss (Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 29). If it is possible for the architect to address this sense of alienation, it would imply that the way we design can have an impact on people’s experience of relocation. For this reason it is important that architects are aware of how they can influence homemaking, and use that influence to mitigate alienation.



[Fig 6] The apartments of all the participants, on the top left corner is the standard unit photographed by Å. Eson Lindman (2018).

chapter four.

a sense of home

4.1 the three personas of homemaking

As established in the theoretical background, a sense of home is the experience of a space and the subject's feelings towards it. It's something that may change, something intangible and something that differs from person to person. Instead of trying to narrow down homemaking to one specific process, I have opted to make an analysis and find connections between different behaviors and reasonings. What I have discovered through this is that there are three distinct thematic groupings in the way people relate to home and homemaking. Based on these thematic groupings I have constructed three personas. The three personas are:

- the Sentimental
- the Explorer
- the Nomad

These personas are not to be regarded as absolutes, and one participant may have attributes from several personas, or even attributes that don't belong to any persona. A person is thus more complex than a persona, but the personas are used as a heuristic device to understand thematic behaviors and to analyze participants' responses. While not absolute categories, these three personas emerged from the coding of the research data.

I will now introduce the personas that emerged from my analysis and then go into more depth with each one, explaining how my interview and other data analysis supports each persona.



The Sentimental

To the Sentimental, homemaking has become a task in which the goal is to recreate previous homes in a new context. The Sentimental longs for what is familiar to them and they adorn their space with cultural objects, foods and relics from their past. Home is only achieved once the Sentimental feels that they have reached a standard compared to previous homes. *To the Sentimental, the home is a sanctuary.*



The Explorer

The Explorer perceives homemaking as a process over time of creating a new home in a new context. They see homemaking as a challenge and an adventure, and they see joy in this process of trying to assimilate and adapt their living accordingly. The Explorer has embraced the temporality of their dwelling, having to relocate or move their notion of home elsewhere, they have decided to appropriate their newfound space as a new home, rather than as a replica. *To the Explorer, the home is a canvas.*



The Nomad

To the Nomad, the home is a constant and homemaking is therefore not seen as a process over time but an instant. The Nomad travels with their home as if it were a part of their belongings, carrying it from place to place. The architectural space and building is but an afterthought, and the Nomad doesn't mind change of furniture or surroundings, as the Nomad has the ability to transfer feelings of home to objects. They live in contentment, and there's little that makes them feel less at home. However, functionality is an important part of their homemaking. *To the Nomad, the home is a machine.*



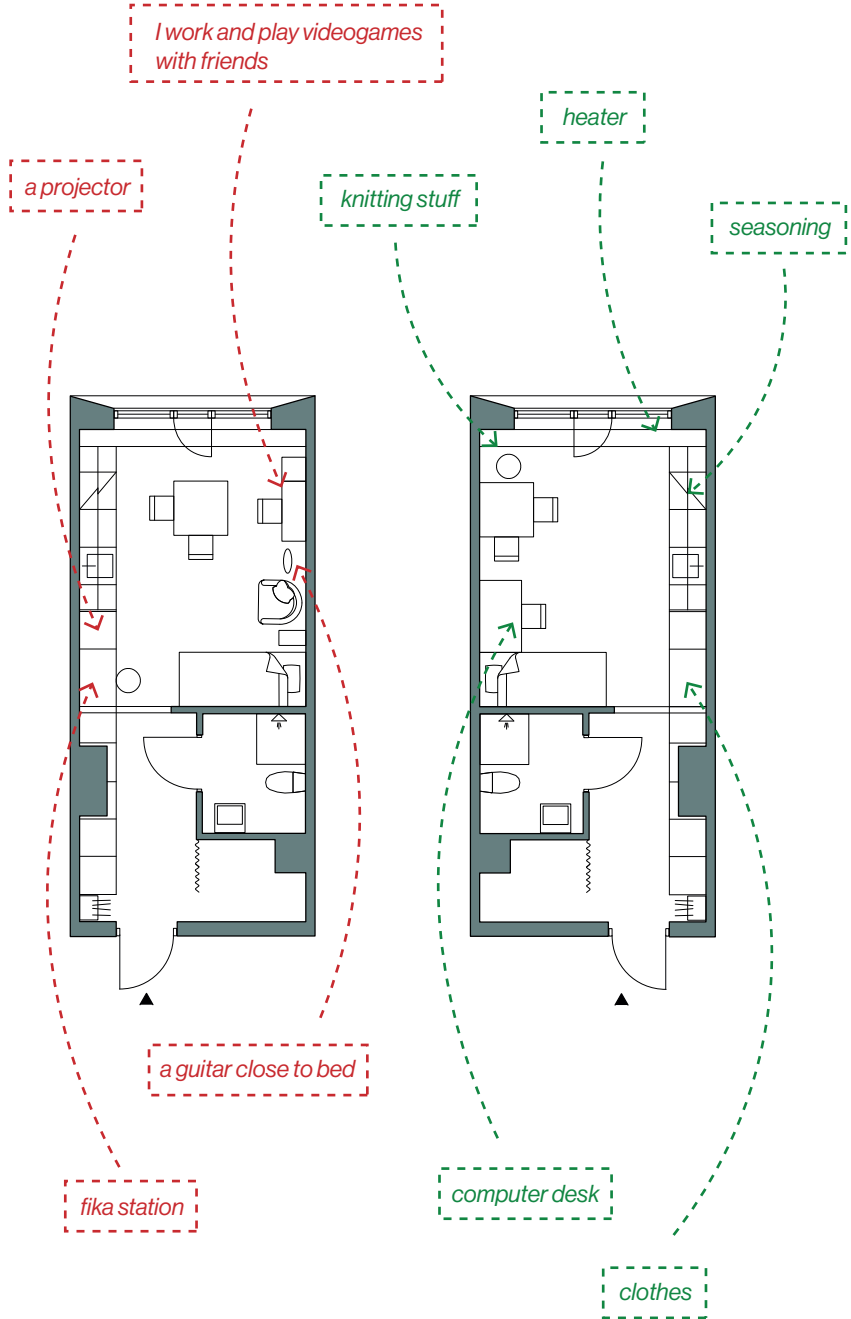
the sentimental

For the Sentimental, with their attachment to the past, homemaking means that home was built and held up by memories and social relations, infused into objects. Many of the interview participants decorated their apartment with these nostalgic items displayed. Most of the time, these emotionally charged objects were photos, like in the case of Teal, who had adorned all walls with photos from friends and family. Sometimes these objects could also take the form of other memorabilia and especially as plushies, such in the cases of Red, Lavender, Blue, Turquoise and Teal, who all had plushies with stories behind them. These objects were talked about with a great sense of nostalgia, and many participants spoke about memories of childhood. They were like relics that had traveled with them from home to home. Sometimes the objects were more recent gifts, but seemingly had just as much emotional value. In the quest to remake homes, the Sentimental holds on to the past with these valuable objects.



One of Teal's photowalls

The Sentimental also connects to their previous homes through practices that were performed in their previous home, and as part of making oneself at home in the new context, these were replicated. These practices could be cooking, religious practices and hobbies. Each activity was designated a space in the apartment: the desktop setup for gaming, knitting corner with all materials needed or instrument setup. In the cases of Red and Green, they both had everyday activities that were performed in their previous home, for Red, playing video games was such an activity, and therefore a proper desk setup became very important. Red also played the guitar, which made it natural for them to keep close to hand, placing it near the bed. For Green, knitting was a hobby that helped them create a sense of home. Both Red and Green pointed this out in their drawing of their apartment layout as seen to the right.



Cooking cultural food was both a convenience and something the participant was used to, but was also talked about as a specific action when missing previous homes. Some ingredients were specifically brought from the home country when moving, as it wasn't possible to find in Sweden. Others were only found in special grocery stores. Although it is quite inconvenient to cook with such specific ingredients, as noted by many participants, many also noted that it was worth it, and an important thing to still do. The ingredients oftentimes had their own assigned space in the kitchen, for example the box with spices, the candy cabinet and the sauce drawer.



"Whenever I'm stressed, I cook something from back home."

- Teal



the explorer

In contrast to the Sentimental, the Explorer finds it interesting to create new attachments and seek new experiences that they haven't experienced before. The Explorer seeks to assimilate and to partake in cultural activities that do not exist in their previous homes. This can take the form of adapting new everyday activities, but also by taking cultural objects from the host country into the apartment. Coral had a Swedish traditional dalahäst (traditional carved and painted wooden horse) as decoration, whereas Blue had collected the Swedish Blossa glögg (spiced mulled wine) bottles and Teal had both a christmas tree and had crafted a christmas window star themselves. They all saw this as exciting and different from their previous experiences that they wanted to cherish. Some participants brought this up as an important aspect of their home but when asked why they couldn't really explain why that was. Perhaps a part of making



oneself at home in a new country is also to accept the cultural differences and to find a proudness of one's newfound identity as a Swede. Using objects to connect to their "Swedishness", the Explorer brings objects to their home and creates feelings of attachment around that object. Homemaking is a challenge to the Explorer and this spirit of exploration becomes evident in the way Turquoise reasons about their home.

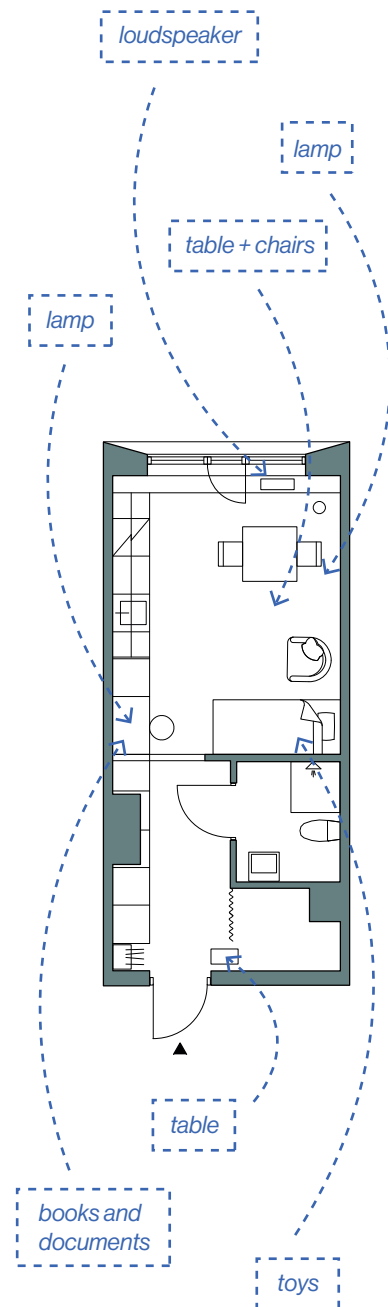


Um... to me home... may be like the place where I'm most comfortable in. So I feel like this sense of home or being at home, it's something that maybe you earn. I don't know if earn is the word because, like the house needs to do something to win, but yeah I feel like it comes from time. Like for you to feel at home. It is not like a space or like a physical area. It's more like if I'm comfortable now existing here or resting here then I will say you know: Okay, so this is my home now.

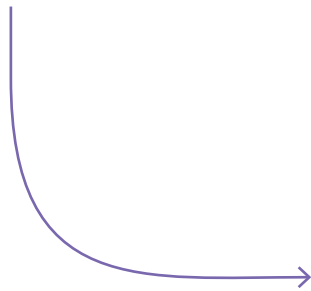
- Turquoise

the nomad

To the Nomad, in contrast to both the Sentimental and the Explorer, object attachment over time plays a less significant role when making their home. It is less important to the Nomad to carry specific objects from home to home, as their sense of home is not infused in the objects themselves. Rather, the Nomad is more concerned with establishing a comfortable lifestyle and the sense of home emerges from that. Generally speaking, comfortability is important to gain a sense of home for most people, but what comfortability is can vary from person to person. For the Nomad, the feeling of comfortability is more akin to functionality. The Nomad's objects are newly bought to fulfill specific everyday needs rather than for decorative purposes. Having everyday needs fulfilled leads to a functional and comfortable life, which is central in creating a sense of home. The continuity of the object is less important, and things can therefore be replaced, as long as the particular needs are fulfilled. The apartment of Blue is a case in point. The apartment is rather empty, sparsely decorated with bare walls. The few objects decorating the space are a rice cooker and a loudspeaker which serves very specific functions in the household. The Nomad doesn't need



to appropriate a space by distributing meaningful objects, either nostalgic objects as in the case of the Sentimental or new objects as in the case of the Explorer, to feel at home. Purple explained this with their attachment to instruments, in which it becomes clear that the function that instrument fills is what is important to them, not the actual instrument itself.



"I think I need an instrument. And that's it.

Instruments? What kind of instrument?

I think I need a piano and a guitar. Yeah, yes. I think this is like kind of complete. But the other thing is a piano and a guitar.

So is that something you feel like you miss in this apartment?

Yes. Yeah.

So if you get the piano and guitar then you will be like, yeah, 100%

Yes, I can completely live here for ages

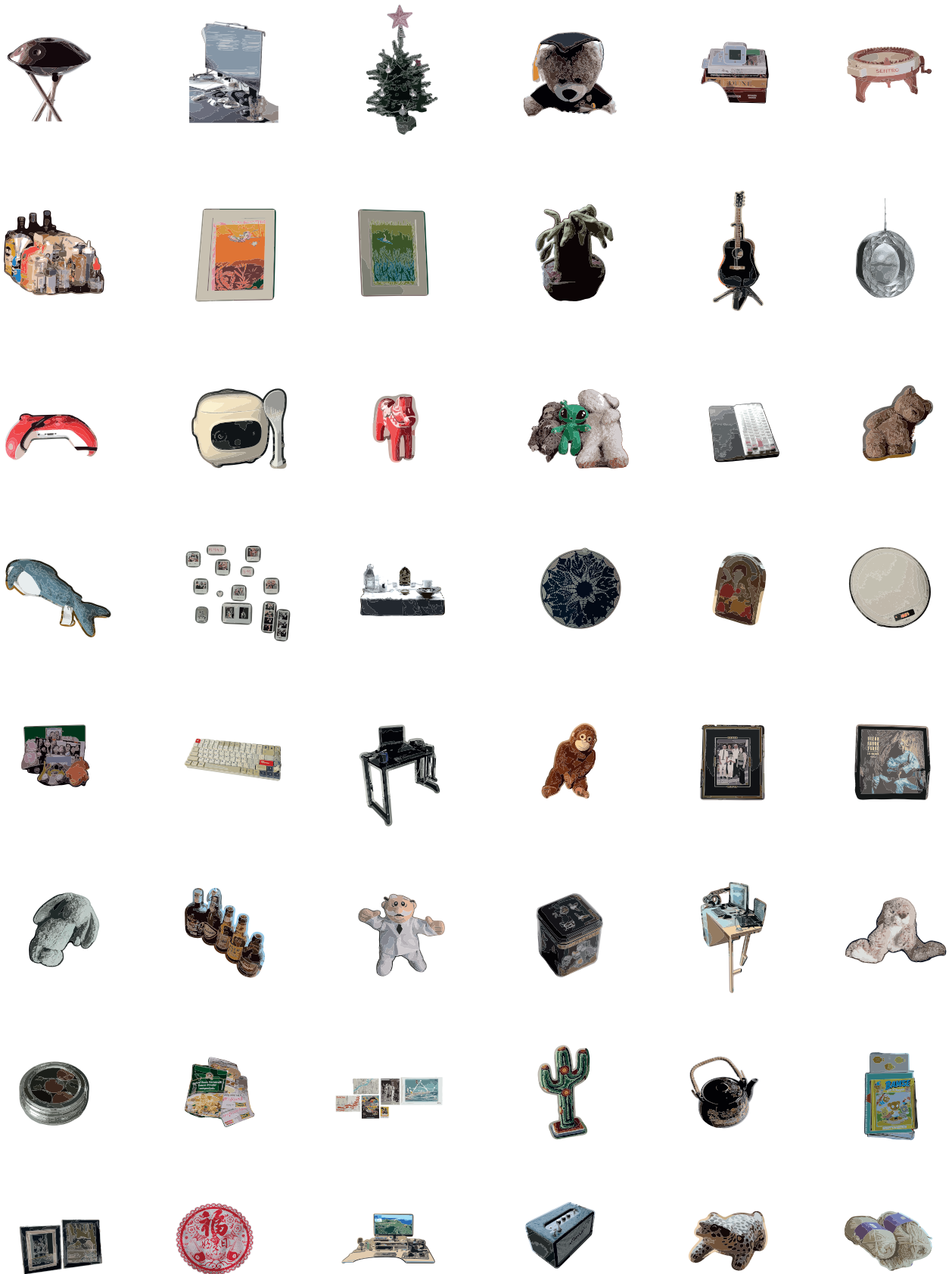
And then if you would say move to another country again. And you had all of the same things that you have here and the piano and guitar, you would instantly be at home.

Exactly.

Oh, okay.

Yeah, I mean, for me, it's not dependent on the place. No, like it's I think it's like, what can I do in my home? And like, how comfortable am I like when I'm doing it, if I'm comfortable enough or not?"

- Purple



Collection of the participants objects that represents their home, showing the wide range of ways a home can be materialized.

4.2 homemaking for all

As discussed, home is a notion interpreted differently depending on the person and the context. This became considerably clear during the interviews, in which each participant would relate their sense of home and their homemaking to different things such as physical objects, social relations, feelings of safety, freedom and ownership to name a few.

The following discussion regards general aspects of homemaking, and are findings that are applicable to all personas to some extent. Regardless of the personas, the process of reaching a sense of home also looked very different from person to person. All participants except one expressed that they felt at home at Gibraltar Guesthouse and each person had taken a different amount of time to reach this feeling. Most felt as if homemaking indeed was a process to commit to, some even expressing feelings of struggle to gain a sense of home, this is especially true for both the Sentimental and the Explorer. An example of this struggle was voiced by Turquoise, who expressed how they gradually gained a sense of home that lacked in the beginning.



“So do you feel at home in this space?”

I feel now I do. Yes. Before Yeah, not in the beginning. And I remember I was super confused. But like a lot of things like that. This like kind of like the house was playing the rules that I need to follow.”

- Turquoise

Homemaking is a process perceived differently between people, whether that be with excitement, joy, suspicion or anxiety. For some, that process can take time and effort. For the Sentimental, in a sense the process starts with the arrival in a new context and having “lost” the previous home. The process of rebuilding the previous home can take longer, and can also become a struggle to the Sentimental. In the case of the Explorer, the starting point with the arrival in a new context is less of a strained experience. Still, having “lost” a previous home, the Explorer start off their homemaking process at a point where they do not feel at home, but then gradually gain that sense of home. The Nomad, much like the Sentimental and the Explorer, regard homemaking as a process. The difference however is that the Nomad lacks the time aspect to the homemaking process. Therefore, the starting point for the Nomad is already with the possession of some feelings of home. Some participants, like Red, claimed that they instantly felt at home and regarded the homemaking process as a process of making oneself feel more and more at home.

“Would you say that you feel at home in this space?”

Yeah. Yeah since the first day I arrived. I kind of, I mean, I liked how tight it was. I mean, it's small, but then when you don't have much stuff, it's fine. It's good enough. So yeah, I think like from the beginning I kind of, I mean it was my only place to stay. It's not like I had another option. So yeah, I clicked quite fast with it.

4.3 homemaking beyond the house

In discussion of homemaking in relation to the city scale, as opposed to homemaking inside one's apartment, the participants' responses were very mixed. Some had positive feelings of home and other's with negative experiences felt less at home in Gothenburg. A big thematic reasoning behind the feeling of home in the city was related to other people, friends and strangers, who you know and what others think of you. This had outcomes such as language barriers and sometimes even xenophobic experiences. These negative experiences affect people regardless of the three personas. Another thematic discussion that oftentimes came up was the familiarity of the city. Some people had managed to take the time to familiarize themselves with the city, in which case they felt at home, while others were not able to orient themselves, in which case they felt less at home.

To the Explorer, these were challenges to overcome. An example of this is participant Blue who felt that the only thing keeping them from feeling at home in Gothenburg was the language, but they were also actively studying the language. But these obstacles can be particularly hard for the Sentimental, who had a previous experience of familiarity, and if they haven't managed to reach that feeling once again, are left feeling alien. This was voiced by Turquoise who expressed feelings of insecurity in a new city without a support network like they used to have in previous homes.

"If it's like late at night and I'm alone for example, and I'm just walking. And then I started to feel insecure. And then suddenly I'm like, What am I doing here? Like if something happens to me, I don't know. I don't have like a three hour trip to get to my parents house. I don't have a support system, because I had family for example in places that are nearer to the cities that I've been living in. So I don't have that kind of connection to people yet. Like I have friends I have classmates but maybe not there yet to tell them like hey, something happened. And so then I just feel like an outsider."

- Turquoise



Similar to the conclusions of the theory (Meers, 2021, p. 599), the participants would refer to several spaces as their home. Home was their apartment in Gibraltar Guesthouse but so was every other previous place of residence, be it their family house, where they lived shortly during work, or where they lived during their bachelor's studies. Many would relate home to the culture of the place they grew up as a more influential home, even though they had experienced homes elsewhere. All of these places were homes, and this is true to all of the personas, but the personas values these previous homes differently. The Sentimental could express feelings of longing for their previous homes, in the example with Lavender the longing would almost become yearning to the point that they didn't feel at home in Gibraltar Guesthouse at all.

"So I really miss my home because I don't think this is like my actual home. Because my parents, they don't live here and my sibling also don't live here."

- Lavender

On the other hand, both the Explorer and the Nomad accept the fluidity of home, which is perfectly encapsulated by this quote by Coral.

"But I know that I can recreate that feeling and I can make a different feeling of home somewhere else."

- Coral

The in-between scale – that is the space outside the apartment, but also not within the city scale – was less discussed by the research participants. In the case of Gibraltar Guesthouse, it consisted of the common spaces on each floor, the workshop and the outdoor space by the entrance. These spaces were mentioned by many of the participants, but weren't used by any of them. Instead they stated that other residents of the Guesthouse were using these spaces. Some participants referred to the common spaces as messy or loud, others noted it seemed like nice gathering spaces but that they simply didn't use them.

4.4 unhomely feelings

Most people seek to reach a sense of home, but because of external factors the process might not be linear and sometimes reaching a sense of home in a new context becomes even impossible to the subject. These unhomely feelings are unwanted by most but are also hard to predict and prevent. It is also possible that a subject manages to successfully reach a sense of home, but due to some negative experience or event, the feeling of home might regress. In this case, it becomes truly visible that homemaking is a process.

All participants were asked the question if there were things that made them feel less at home, regardless of if they felt at home overall in their apartment or in the city. The times the participants would feel less at home were feelings of unfamiliarity related to cultural differences manifested in the physical space of the apartment, an example of this would be a Maroon who had removed the entire bed frame to be able to put their mattress directly onto the floor.

This is especially true for the Sentimental, who relate their new experiences to their previous ones, comparing them to what felt familiar to them previously in their previous home. In a case in which the new context becomes too different from their previous experience, being able to adjust might become an impossibility.

"I think this is also another difference between Sweden and (redacted, home country) or Europe and (redacted, continent of home country). For the bed. How to say that, that I put the bed on the floor directly just...

The mattress?

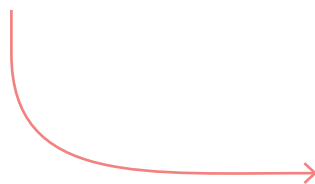
Yeah, the mattress, because in that house we have the bed frame and we put the mattress onto that, but the framing is just so soft. That made my back hurt from day one. So I put the bed frame away and put the mattress just on the floor to make my back feel better."

- Maroon



4.5 reaching a sense of home

Interestingly, there was a discrepancy between how the participants answered the question of “what home is” and “how to reach a sense of home”. As described previously, home was understood in many different ways by the participants, but most would ascribe home notions of social relations and psychological feelings rather than physical attachments. This could then in turn translate into physical objects decorating the apartment, as photos and memorabilia. However, in discussions on how to reach a sense of home and what homemaking processes could look like, most participants would instead relate this to physical objects or the familiarity of the physical space, like knowing where all your kitchen utensils are. In both instances, familiarity bears a huge importance. Social relations as one familiarity and then the familiarity of space and belongings. Coral would for example relate home to their friends and having a network and feeling safe, but would go on to answer the question of how to reach a sense of home as the point in which they felt like the space had adapted to their daily habits.



“I would say home is, it feels like when you have a really healthy network of people that invite you or really like to live close to you, or share time and spend time with you.”

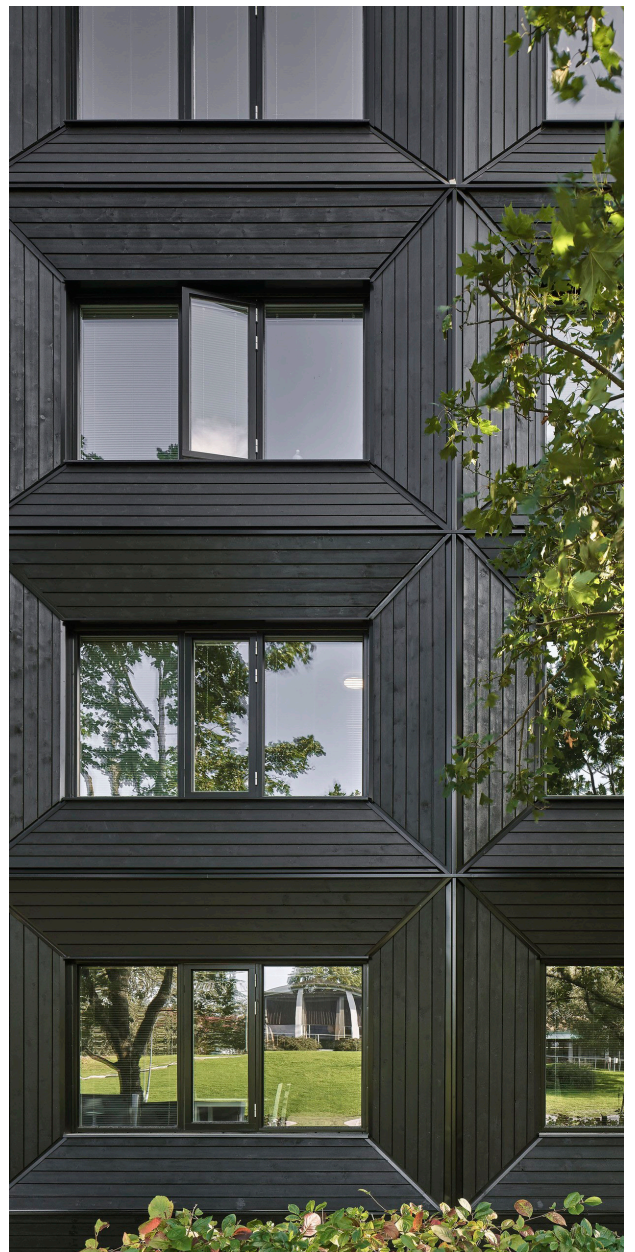
- Coral about what home is to them

“So the more the space combined with my daily habits, the more I feel we are one you know. At the beginning, it's like going to your friend's kitchen, where is the spoon? Where is it this and that. Then you start to ask because you feel like an external element there. But the more I started to make things as I wanted and as I needed them, the more I felt like it corresponds with my identity, like okay, this is me, me me.

- Coral about how to reach a sense of home

This discrepancy between the home and homemaking became even more evident when the participants were asked to imagine what feeling perfectly at home would be like and what their perfect home would look like. Answering to this question, participants would develop ideas of object and place attachment, where belongings were described as the main feature of their perfect home. Most participants also emphasized that the place of their home didn't matter to them, what country or what city, but rather the property of the place. Green said that it had to be a well connected city with good transportation, Lavender pointed out it had to be a spacious and bright space, and to Red it was most important that the kitchen, living and bedroom were separated. Not a single participant related their perfect home to social relations or feelings, as almost every participant would when they explained what home is to them.

Finally, we ask ourselves what the architect's role in all of this could be. Is it the residents' role to create "home", or the architect's role? With the apparent material influence on homemaking as discussed by the participants, it is not strange to conclude that the architect is involved in, or at least can enable, the making of a sense of home. However in the interviews, all participants expressed that they believed architect's are able to design with a sense of home, but when asked to elaborate they had a harder time to explain how this would be done.



[Fig 7] Å. Eson Lindman (2018)

chapter five.

design for three personas

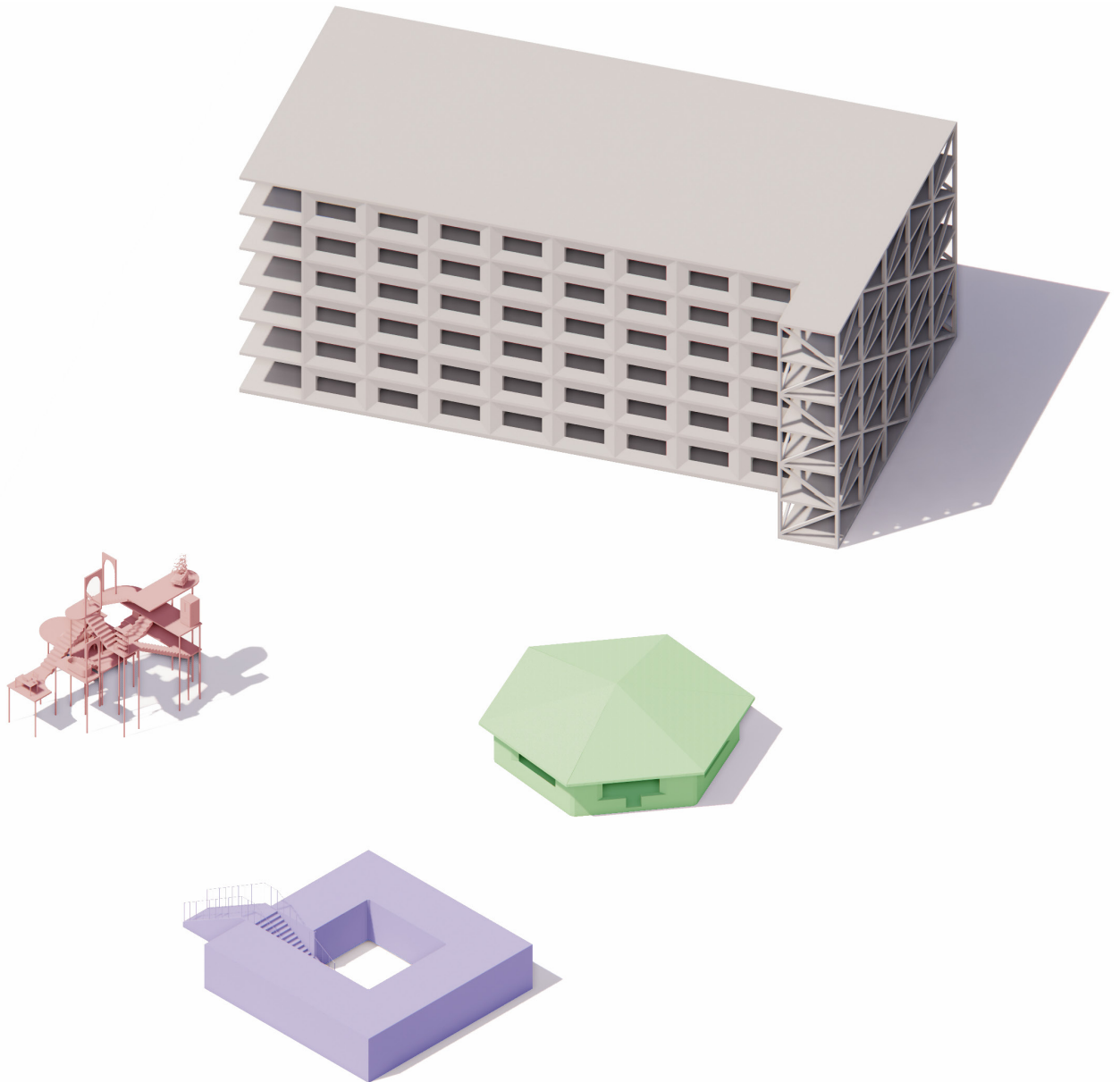
As established in the theoretical background and now also in the empirical research, a sense of home is the experience of a space and the subject's feelings towards it. It's something that may change, something intangible and something that differs widely from person to person, making it rather difficult for an architect to design for a sense of home.

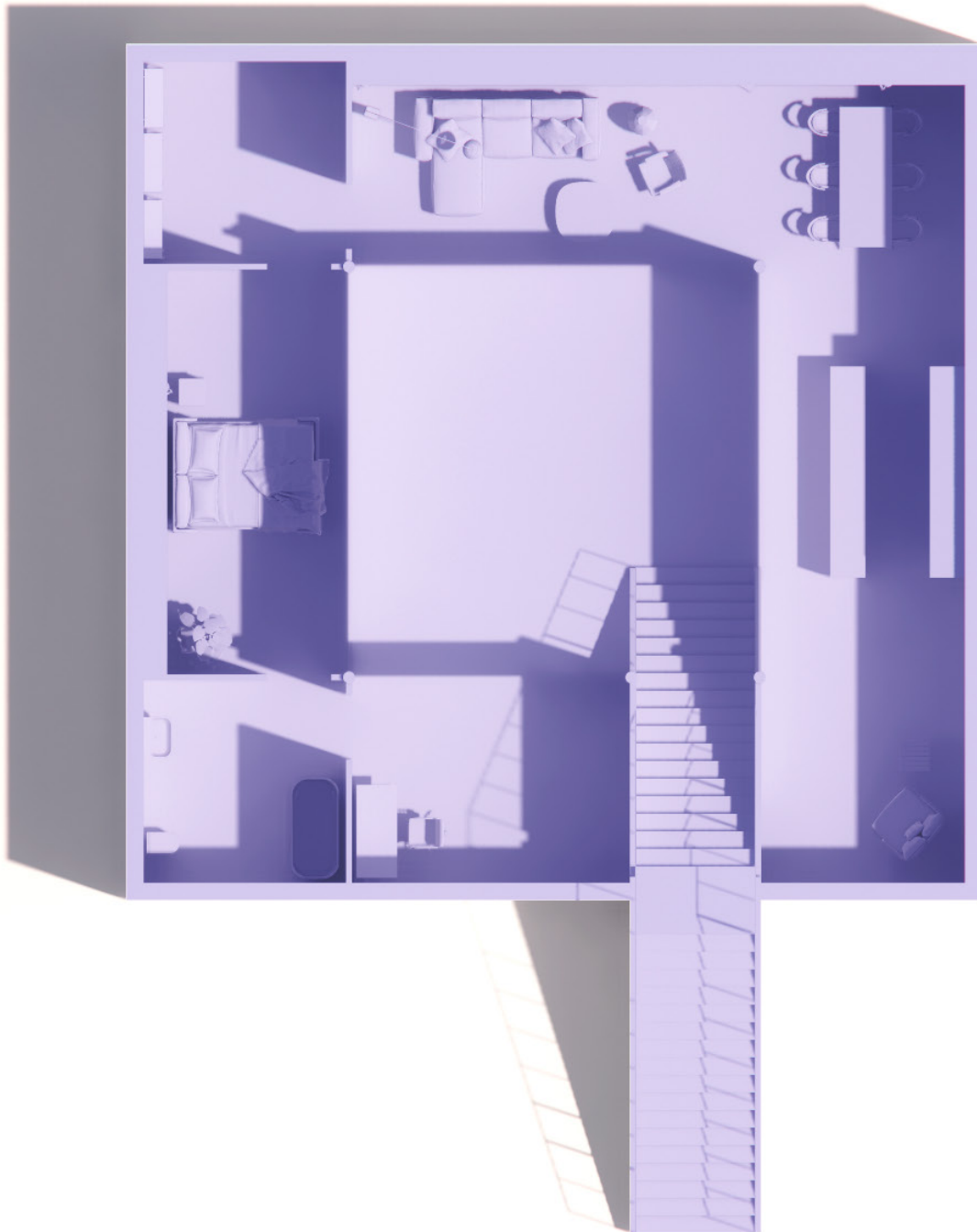
However, it is clear from the interview study that the participants believed that the architect does have a role in the homemaking process and that the architect is able to design to enable the creation of a sense of home for the subject. This is in line with my own position as stated in the introductory chapters, and validates the purpose of this thesis.

Instead of trying to narrow down homemaking to one specific process, I have opted for an analysis that shows connections between different behaviors and reasonings. Through this I have discovered that there are three distinct thematic groupings in the way people relate to home and homemaking from which three personas have been assembled. The three personas are:

- the Sentimental
- the Explorer
- the Nomad

In 10 years time when Gibraltar Guesthouse is being torn down and the space returned into a parking space. I will here present an alternative future scenario in the form of a speculative exhibition site. This speculative exhibition presents the houses and the homes of the three personas, in which specific attributes are exaggerated for analytical clarity.

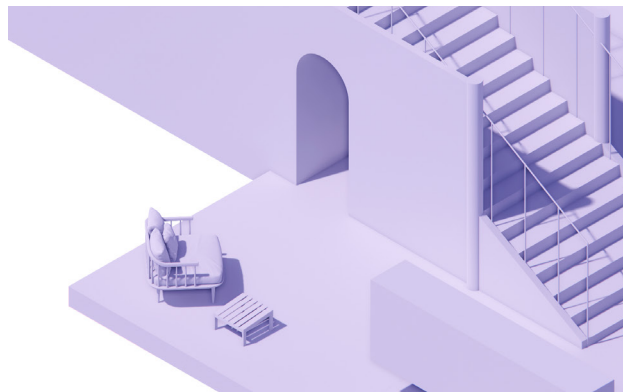
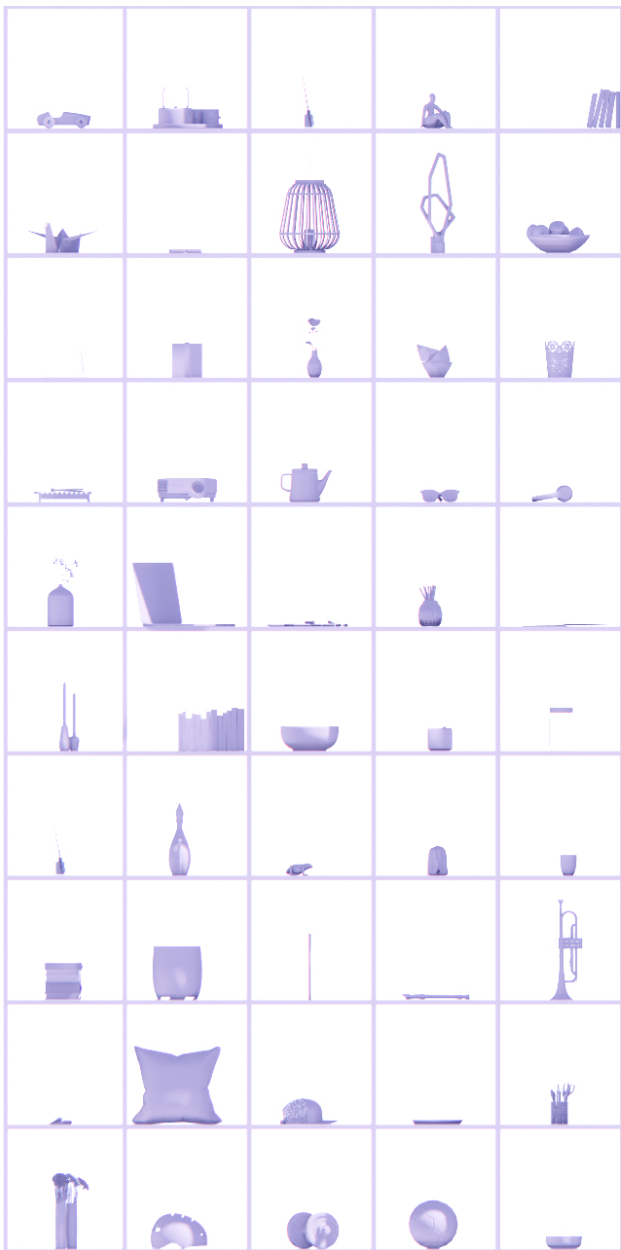


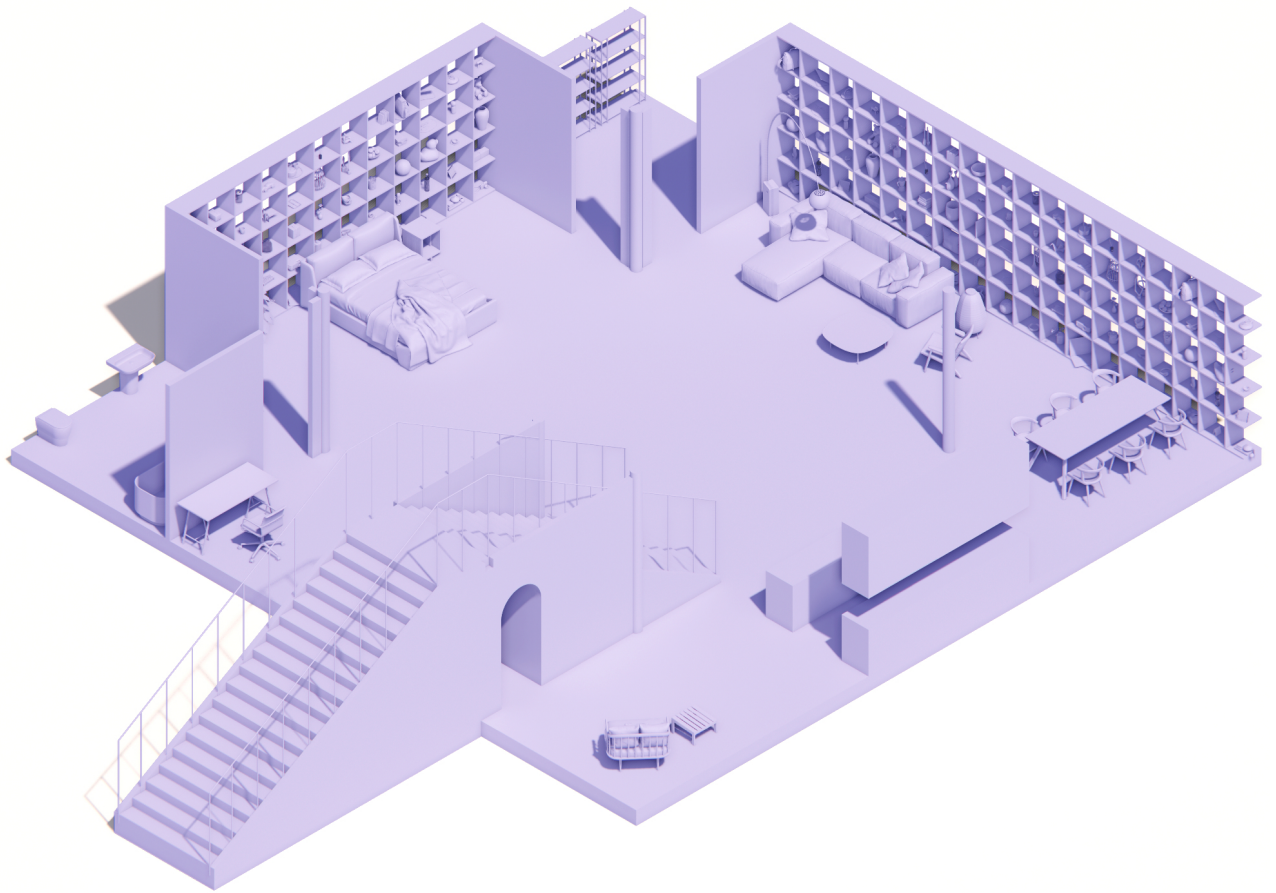




the sentimental

The Sentimentals' house is a rational square structure surrounding an atrium. The house is only accessible from a set of stairs into the atrium. For the Sentimental, their own past is a central concern, which is reflected in their house with windows only facing the inner atrium. It is decorated with material belongings gathered over time, representing attachment to objects fused with nostalgia and memories. The objects are showcased throughout the house, showing the Sentimentals' successful effort of making oneself at home.

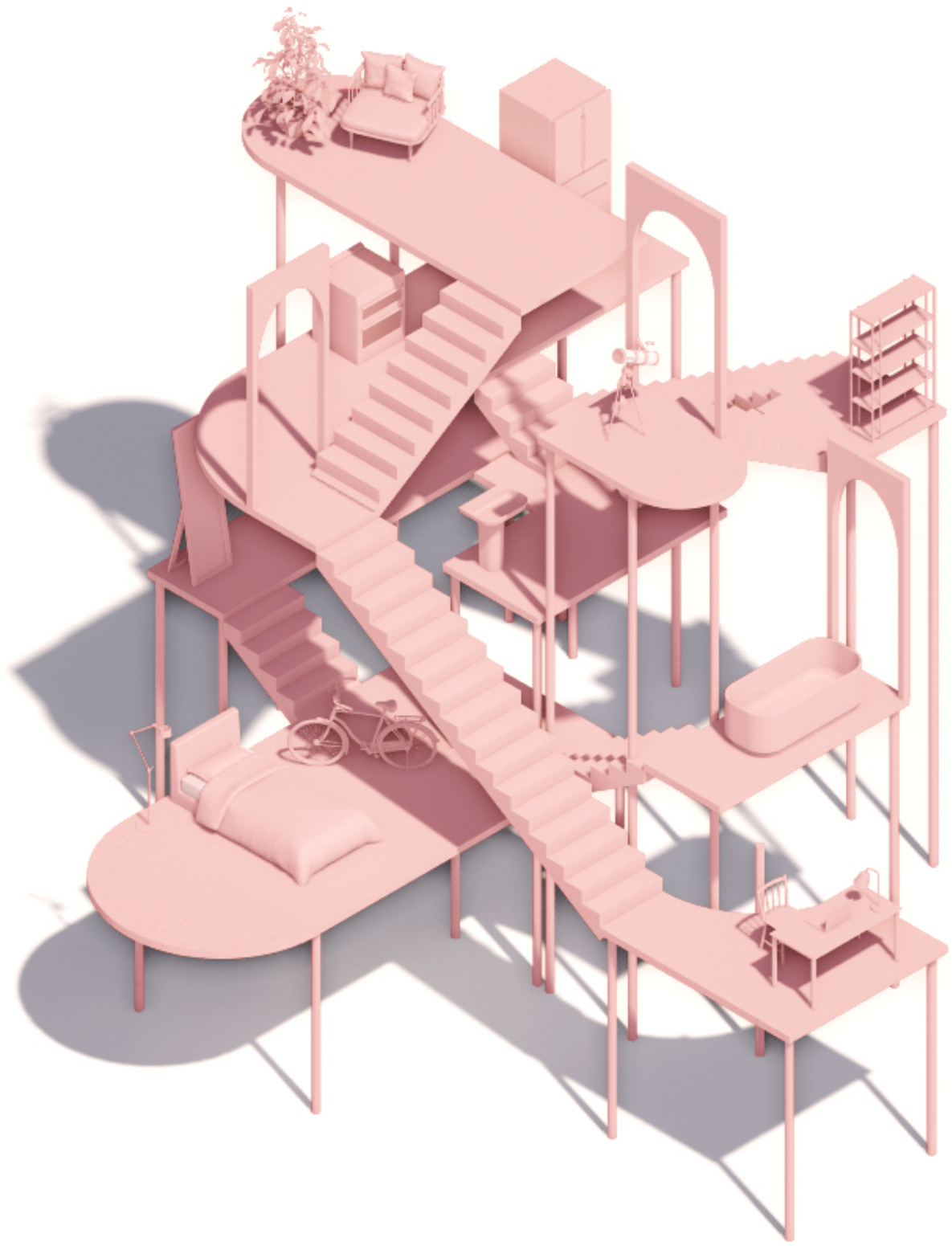


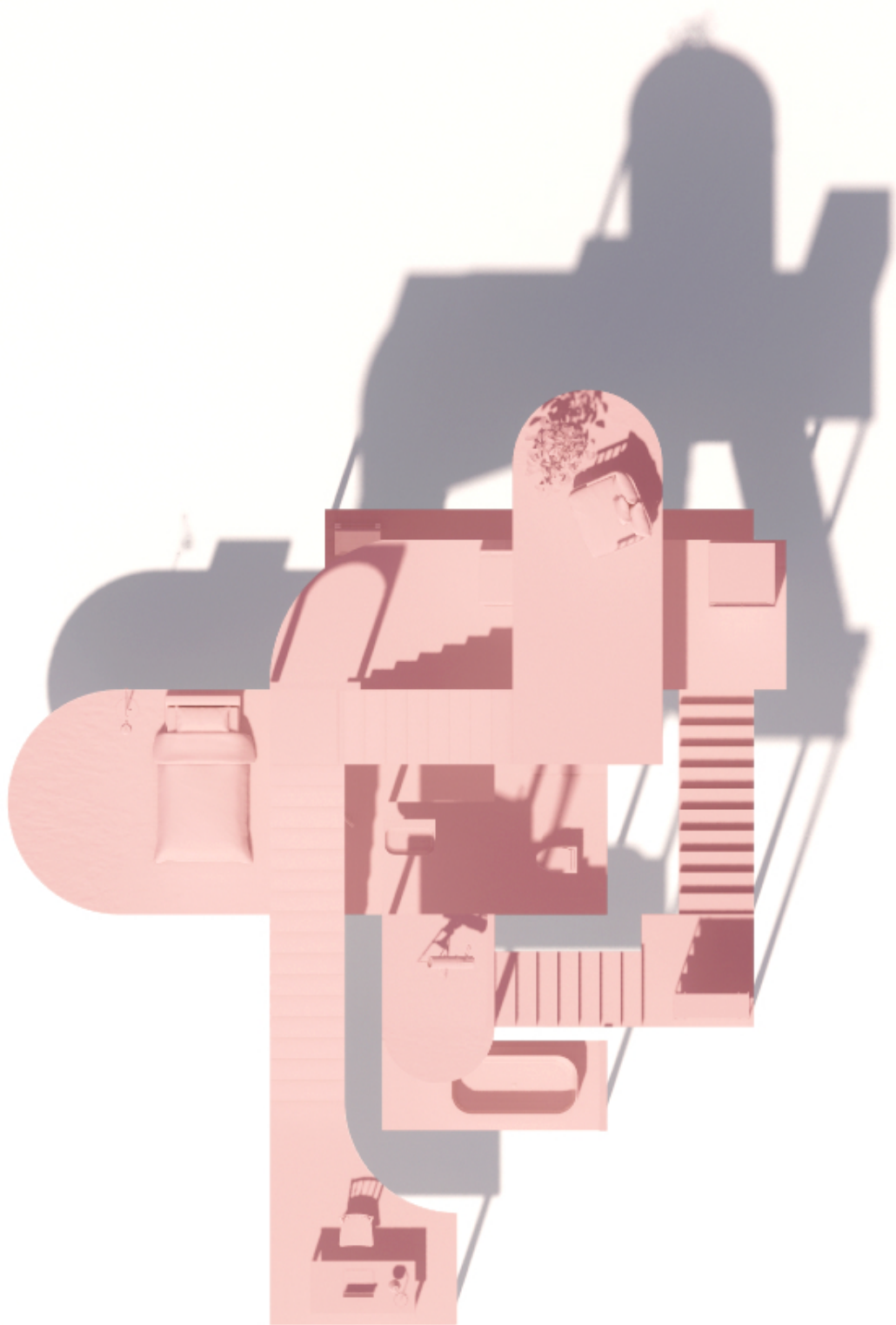


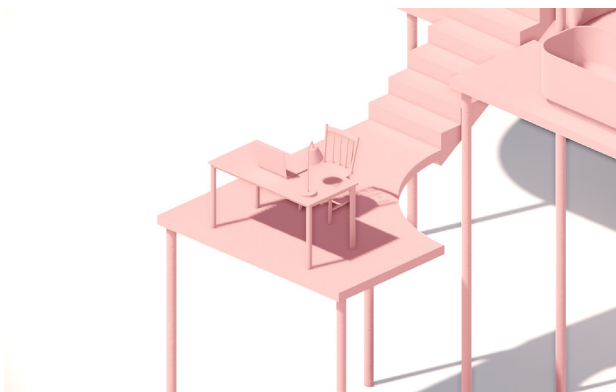
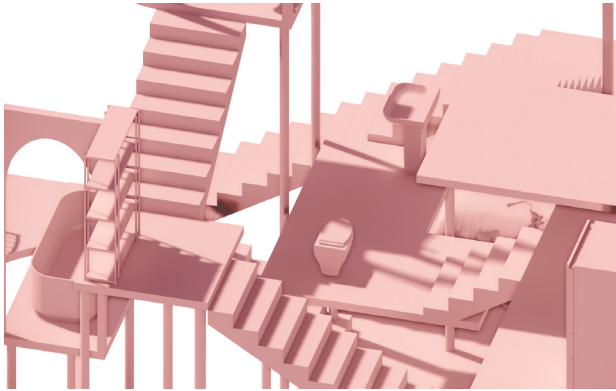
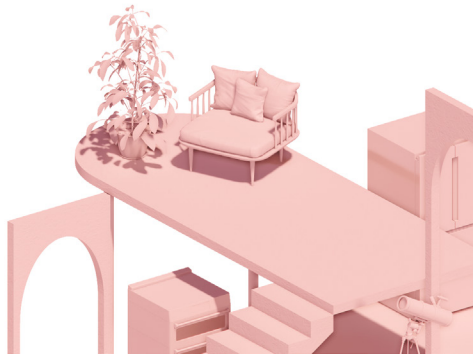
the explorer

The Explorers' house is to themselves, a foreign typology. It is a maze-like tower and an adventure waiting to be explored, encouraging new activities. The structure is without walls, creating views in all directions far away. The house is decorated with novel material objects, strange to the Explorer. These objects can easily be changed and removed to give place for new objects.











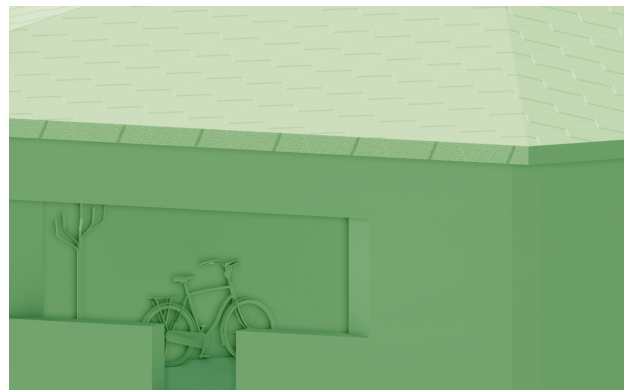
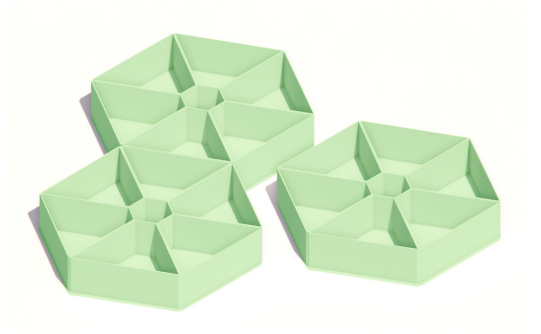
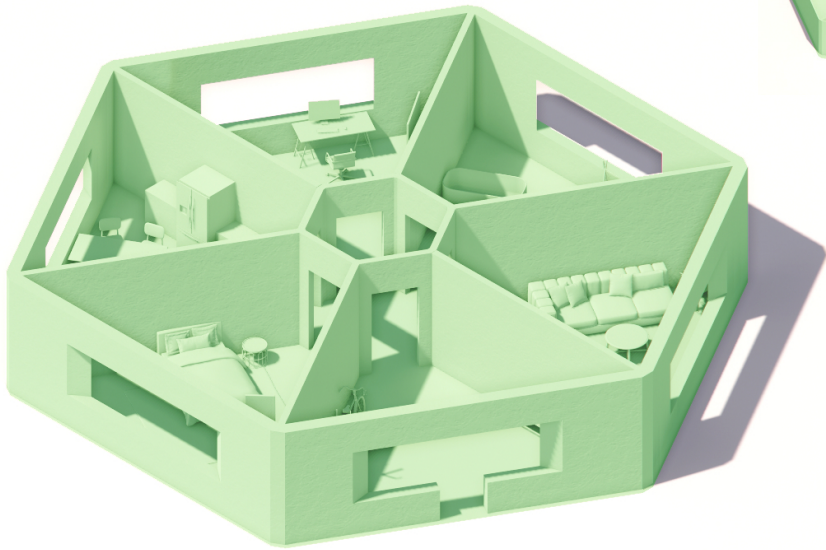
The nomad prefers functionality and comfort, here, objects are arranged after its function.



the nomad

The Nomad's house is a machine of functionality and comfort. The house is completely standardized and prepared with mechanisms that fulfill the needs of the everyday lifestyle of the Nomad. The space is strictly divided and each room has a designated function, for sleep, to eat, to work, leisure and hygiene. It's a lifestyle that is ultimately functional, but leaving no space for personalization of objects.





chapter six.

the architect as an enabler

This thesis is a study on two separate, but intertwined scales. First, it examines the specific case of homemaking among residents of Gibraltar Guesthouse. Second, on a larger scale the thesis discusses the role of the architect in creating homes.

The analysis of the material from the qualitative interview study of migrants in Gothenburg answers the main research question in relation to the theoretical literature review on home and homemaking:

“How and through what means does newly arrived international students create a sense of home after relocating?”

The subsequent emergence and design of three separate personas of homemaking has helped answering the sub-research questions:

“What is the architect’s role in the design of a home, as opposed to the design of a house, and how can this kind of design be done?”

“What is the architect’s responsibility in designing buildings with a sense of home?”

The residents of Gibraltar Guesthouse related differently to the many aspects of home and homemaking, which resonates with Meers’ conclusion in his research overview to what was concluded by the extensive research (2021, p. 599). Topics brought up the interviews were similar to what was covered in the literature review, such as discussions on object attachment (Miller, 2008), feelings of identity and power (Blunt & Dowling, 2022, p. 29) or thoughts on everyday practices and daily routines (Lenhard & Samanani, 2020, p. 14). The literature review suggests that there is no singular way of homemaking, however, in analyzing the interview material it became evident that three thematic attitudes towards home and homemaking emerged. This thesis attempts to extend on the theoretical discourse through the proposal of the three analytical personas. As noted above, this is not to suggest that the three personas represent three separate ways

of homemaking in real world situations, but should rather be seen as a heuristic device to uncover three thematic attitudes which can be combined within one person. Indeed, several of the interview participants responded in ways fitting two or even three of the personas.

The personas identified as the Nomad, the Explorer and the Sentimental, all hold different values and attitudes towards the home which has helped the further analysis of the gathered material. The research question on how and through what means newly arrived international students create a sense of home, will be explored through the three personas below. The further discussion of the personas in relation to contemporary lifestyles and trends places each of the personas in a wider context. In order to explore the architect's role in the homemaking process, the three personas of homemaking were also translated into designs. The designs are used as a tool to further the analysis of the personas and the role of the architect in the homemaking process.

The Sentimental

The Sentimental's homemaking process is a careful reconstruction of the past. The Sentimental finds a sense of home through the successful reconstruction of these past feelings and materialities.

The attachment to things creates incentives for the Sentimental to treat their belongings with care and make sure to extend the lifespan of their things. The Sentimental takes part in the circular economy of objects through the reuse, repair and recycling of things. This makes it possible for the Sentimental to personalize their home as far as their belonging allows them to. But for how long should one commit to one's belongings, is perhaps the Sentimental in their lifestyle tied to their previous material belongings?

The Explorer

To the Explorer, the exciting challenge of creating a new home comes with the accumulation of new things. The Explorer finds a sense of home through the making of a new home and the attempt to adjust

their lifestyle to the new context. The living situation to the Explorer is a relational one, affected by their context. This homemaking process of the Explorer comes close to what Boccagni calls homing (2016, p. xxvi).

This attitude fits well into the contemporary capitalist society with a focus on consumerism, sometimes to the point of overconsumption. The Explorer is fully able to personalize their space, but this behavior can become unsustainable. The accumulation of new things to create a sense of home comes with the amassing of waste from the production, shipping and replacement of things. To take part in this market-exchange requires an income, making this consumption a privilege (Widlok, 2017).

The Nomad

The process of homemaking has less of a time perspective to the Nomad, as they experience home more as a constant. It can be argued that the homemaking process to the Nomad is a rejection of ownership. The Nomad finds a sense of home by applying that feeling onto existing things around them that supports a comfortable lifestyle.

The Nomad has an elusive relationship to ownership and objects. With the functionality of the object being more important than the object itself. This can be recognized as a trend in other aspects of modern society, in the way that we increasingly strive towards cooperative living and ownership through shared spaces, car pools, sharing of tools and objects (Widlok, 2017). This lifestyle is an improvement in sustainability, but at what cost? With the immense standardization of things, spaces and objects, do we not lose the personality and the charm of ownership? When sharing, do we perhaps forget to care for our things?

People are different, they need different things and will appropriate space differently in their quest of homemaking. To create a sense of home is indeed an individual endeavor, however, what is clear from the

interviews is that it lies within the architect's responsibility to design houses to *enable* the creation of a sense of home. Therefore, it is important that the architect is aware of the diversity of approaches and attitudes towards home and homemaking.

The analysis of the interviews suggest that, to many people, physical aspects have limited importance for the making of a sense of home. When materiality matters, it primarily concerns objects endowed with deep nostalgic feelings and memories. These things are often appreciated for their stability and continuity and are therefore not changed or redesigned. However, in discussions of unhomey feelings the design of architectural space has greater impact. It can be difficult to predict what can become the cause of an unhomey feeling. As presented earlier, in the case of Gibraltar Guesthouse for one participant it happened to be a bedframe. Each individual has a different experience of space and therefore it is impossible to accommodate everyone within one unified design. It is still up to the resident to make a house into a home, but based on the research of this thesis, I draw the conclusion that the architect can facilitate that process and do their best not to create unhomey situations.

Having concluded that the architect's role is to *enable* the creation of homes within their designed spaces, the ensuing question entails how this can be done. This is a complex question without a straightforward answer. For the purpose of exploring possible answers I will here return to the personas of homemaking, and I translate them into architectural work to discuss what the architect can do to design spaces that enable homemaking practices.

The Sentimental

Architectural design for the Sentimental focus on the perseverance of the previous home, which in content differs between individuals. To be able to design for the Sentimental, one solution could be to use participatory design methods, in which the architect designs together with the Sentimental. Another method is for the architect to work

directly with the previous house of the Sentimental. Perhaps parts of the previous house can be repurposed or reused in some way.

The Explorer

To design for the Explorer, the architect can work with adaptive and transformative properties of spaces. By designing spaces that can be rearranged into new layouts, the space will continue to be exciting for the Explorer. To achieve this, the architect can work with transformable features of the house, such as moving walls. The architect can also work with modular design. Using modules of both spaces and furniture, the Explorer can continuously replace and exchange their interior as they wish.

The Nomad

For the architect to design for the Nomad, a focus on shared space is of importance as previously discussed. The architect could design for a collective living situation where residents share their living space, furniture and tools. There are different degrees of shared living situations and the architect can work with this diversity, giving each resident varying degrees of access to spaces through design. Like with the Explorer, the architect could work with modular design to enable the Nomad to connect their house to others and through this create shared living spaces.

In contemporary society, it seems as if architect's seek to design around one persona only, the basis has become the design of the Nomad's house. Such is the case at Gibraltar Guesthouse, with its built-in solutions and included furniture. Not to dismiss this solution, this thesis presents a valuable point of view that is less explored. Everyone is expected to adapt and appropriate their living in accordance to the normative needs and habits of a Nomad. As the interview has shown, there are more personalities in play with other needs than what the Nomad presents. The speculative design as presented in this thesis draws attention to the architectural hegemony of Nomad homes, by showing other lifestyles and to discuss the advantages and disad-

vantages of each persona. By designing houses primarily for the Nomad's homemaking, as we do today, we unwittingly restrict the other personas in their homemaking processes.

If the architect recognizes the diversity of people and seeks to design with inclusion in mind, it would entail caring for architecture as a social object. It is therefore also within the architect's responsibility to practice social architecture. Although the designed houses of the three personas presented here are purely speculative and taken to extremes, these speculations are instances of social architecture in the sense that they have been designed in response to people's thoughts and experiences of homemaking.

chapter seven.

conclusion

Throughout this thesis, the complexity of home and homemaking has become increasingly apparent. The literature review, the interviews of the residents of Gibraltar Guesthouse, and the heuristic design of three personas all testify to this. This study has revealed the multifaceted nature of home and intricacies of homemaking, but also the importance of belonging.

The process of making oneself at home involves different attitudes towards attachment to physical objects, social relationships and everyday practices. As demonstrated by the participants of the interview study, each person holds different values towards their home and the homemaking process. This variety led to the development of the three personas of homemaking: the Sentimental, the Explorer, and the Nomad. Each of these personas relates to home differently and embodies unique values. This was used as a heuristic device to further analyze the data gathered from the interviews, and in turn helped to answer the research question: How and through what means do newly arrived international students create a sense of home after relocating?

The Sentimental seeks to recreate their previous home, decorating with familiar objects infused with nostalgia and valuable memories. They do their best to replicate their previous life situations through cherished possessions. In contrast, the Explorer embraces the homemaking process to create a new home by way of novel additions. They seek the challenge of adaptation and assimilation, finding joy in the exploration of new experiences. Meanwhile, to the Nomad, home is a fluid concept that transcends physical boundaries and specific places. Rather than introducing old or new things, comfortability and functionality become the significant factors in their homemaking.

These personas provide valuable insights into the complexity of homemaking, highlighting the importance of subjective experiences yet bring to light some general tendencies. They also raise questions about the role and the responsibility of the architect in facilitating the creation of a sense of home. While the building of a house or physical

design elements can influence comfort and functionality, a sense of home is just as much an emotional experience forged by a subject. The design of the personas in combination with the following discussion on the role and responsibility of the architect has helped to answer the following sub-research questions: What is the architect's role in the design of a home, as opposed to the design of a house, and how can this kind of design be done? And, what is the architect's responsibility in designing buildings with a sense of home?

As the analyses of participants' responses suggest, the architect has a responsibility to design houses with a sense of home. It can be concluded from the interview analysis that the final creation of a sense of home lies within the subject, but that the architect has an important role in the homemaking process. The architect's role is to *enable* the creation of homes within their designed spaces. How this is done is a much more complex question to answer. As this thesis presents, there are a number of different methods for the architect to approach diverse design. These could range from participatory design methods to transformative design. With no straightforward answer, it is important for the architect to take into account their many tools, and to adapt their design methods to the appropriate one depending on who we design for. It is essential for architects to recognize the diversity of homemaking practices. It is also within the architect's responsibility to avoid creating unhomely spaces. Although not every single individual's needs and preferences can be accommodated, this thesis has shown that the simple recognition of diversity by the architect can empower residents to personalize their living space.

In conclusion this thesis has, through the study of home and homemaking of the international residents of Gibraltar Guesthouse, bridged the gap between the architectural study of the house and the study of home using the multidisciplinary framework of homemaking. Finally, this thesis can be seen as a call for diversity in design and the recognition of the diverse process of homemaking, which can help architects understand their role in enabling individuals' making of their own homes.

chapter eight.

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8.2 figures

Figure 1. Tan, S. (2007). *The Arrival*. Hodder Children's Books.

Figure 2. Galimberti, G. (2014). *Toy Stories: Photos of Children from Around the World and Their Favorite Things*. [Photography]. Harry N. Abrams.

Figure 3. Aden, M. (2006). *Room Portraits* [Photography].

Figure 4. Eson Lindman, Å. (2018). *Title unknown* [Photography].

Figure 5. Olsson Lyckefors. (2018). *Title unknown* [Drawing].

Figure 6. Eson Lindman, Å. (2018). *Title unknown* [Photography].

Figure 7. Eson Lindman, Å. (2018). *Title unknown* [Photography].

chapter nine.

appendix

1.	Consent Form	75
2.	Interview Protocol	76
3.	Participant's Plans	77

CHALMERS

Consent and information about processing of personal data in student thesis

I agree to my personal data in the form of:

Photography and drawing of your home at Gibraltar Guesthouse, and shared information from interviews in audio recording.

may be treated by Chalmers University of Technology for the study:

“A Sense of Home”, a master thesis at Chalmers University of Technology, Department of Architecture & Civil Engineering, by student Linn Appelgren. The thesis examines what “home” means, the process migrants go through in home making and how to achieve a “sense of home”.

Information

Your personal data will be handled as follows:

The data will be used exclusively in the master thesis project by Linn Appelgren, which will be presented, printed and exhibited digitally and physically. I will do to the best of my ability to anonymize the information, including not showing faces or presenting of names.

Your consent is valid until further notice. You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time. You do this through contacting Linn Appelgren (linnapp@chalmers.se) or registrator@chalmers.se

If you withdraw your consent, we will cease processing personal data we have collected with the support of your consent. Some information may be saved due to Chalmers obligations under Swedish archive legislation.

Chalmers University of Technology, org. No. 556479-5598 is personal data controller. You can find Chalmers privacy policy at www.chalmers.se.

As a participant you have the right to receive information about how your personal data is processed. You have the right to have incorrect information corrected, redundant data deleted, request that processing shall be restricted and data transferred to another actor. You also have the right to submit a complaint to the Swedish Authority for Privacy Protection (Integritetsskyddsmyndigheten). Do you have any questions about Chalmers’s processing of personal data contact Chalmers’s data protection officer at dataskydd@chalmers.se.

I agree that Chalmers University of Technology processes personal data about me in accordance with the above.

Place:

Signature

Date:

Name clarification

Interviews at Gibraltar Guesthouse

To do:

Explain project, sign consent forms, audio tape interview, take photo of room, take photo of window, take photo of object, sketch plan layout. Bring, consent forms, camera, pen and notebook

Opening statement

How would you describe Gibraltar Guesthouse, the building and its residents, to an outsider?

How long have you lived here? In Sweden/Gibraltar Guesthouse? Where are you from? What do you do (student?)? Age?

The dwelling

How is your dwelling furnished? (bring paper and pen and draw together) object placement?

What furniture is your own? What is included in the rental?

Sense of home

What is "Home" to you?

Do you feel at home in this space? Where are you in the process of homemaking?

If yes, why? If no, why not?

How do you feel about moving from here? Do you feel temporality in this space?

What makes it your home here?

Is your home any different from your previous home?

Are there certain actions or objects that make you feel more at home? Do you have something in this room that represents a feeling of home and can you show it to me?

What would make you feel less at home?

Is there anything you do to avoid that?

Speculative

Think of a hypothetical future where you're perfectly at home, what would that look like? Where do you live and what does that home look like? What would your home look like?

Architecture as social object

Do you think an architect can design in a way that you would feel more at home?

Closing statements

Ask if they have anything more to say, ask about their experience of the interview



