

**Christine Dybing**  
MFA Spatial Design

# A Public Boudoir

– Exploring Radical Feminism, Architectural History, and Publicness  
in the Design of a Space for Women

# A Public Boudoir



**Christine Dybing**

Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Design – Spatial Design  
Konstfack – University of Arts, Crafts and Design  
Supervisor degree project: Tor Lindstrand  
Examiner degree project: Tor Lindstrand  
Supervisor report: Helen Runting  
Examiner report: Kristina Fridh

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**KONSTFACK**  
*University of Arts, Crafts and Design*



Fig. 1 Reflections in the water, Barnhusviken. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2022.





*Fig. 2 Close-up of Tower model 1:20. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2023.*

## ABSTRACT

This diploma project explores the creation of inclusive spaces that address the pressing issues of diversity and equality in modern societies. It aims to foster a discourse about the diverse requirements within public spaces and explore their potential. As designers, how can we repurpose our architectural heritage to establish spaces that foster connections between individuals, architecture, and society? How can we encourage both direct and indirect social interactions and incorporate feminist principles and practices? The project centres on designing a contemporary space specifically for women, reflecting our core values of democracy, equality, transparency, trust, diversity, and social sustainability, with the ultimate goal of cultivating a more liveable world.

By transforming a private space with a historical desire to transition into a public space, thus returning it to the city. Simultaneously, preserving the personal and emotional significance of Ulla Gyllenstedt and her family's stories and experiences living here during the Second World War.

Keywords: feminist architecture, social sustainability, social interaction, society, public realm, transformation, built heritage, borders & boundaries, various programs, situations, spatial design, sustainable interiors, hope, holistic, public space.



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## INTRODUCTION

### *IN HINDSIGHT*

I have throughout my studies been interested in working with questions that relate to what is happening in our society and how we as human beings want to feel a sense of belonging in public space and how most people have felt excluded and oppressed by society. These large issues and problems of our society are things that, when addressed, create a more holistic and beautiful world. A world which we can be different together, have healthy discourse about our distinctions while being respected for whom we are.

Today, anno 2023, is a world where capitalism is “ruling” and creating enormous disconnection between humans, nature, and society – it is an absolutely disgrace that the world has come to such a state. There is war in Europe, a war which should have never happened, led by men who are obsessed by themselves and their reflection in the mirror. We all know through “Snow White” that either the mirror is projecting a lie, the evil queen, where the lie is also the mirror’s unfortunate master because of its power and control. Or the mirror is showing the truth, the others, human beings who live, breath and exist as the true power of democracy, but as discussed in Deutsche’s *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, “democracy has a difficulty at its core. Power stems from the people but belongs to nobody” (Deutsche, 1998, p. 273). Here Deutsche writes how as a result of the invention of democracy, because of its difficulty of being in accordance with itself, democracy invents the public space (ibid., p. 273).

In a rather enlightening moment, Roselyn Deutsche asks us to think about democratic public spaces where “the task of democracy is to settle, rather than sustain, conflict” (ibid., p. 270).

“The cities everyone wants to live in would be clean and safe ... provide cultural stimulation, and help heal society’s division of race, class, and ethnicity...These are not the cities we live in...Something has gone wrong, radically wrong, in our conception of what a city itself should be” (Sennett, 2010, p. 1). Through international news about what is happening in this world, our society today does not feel or look very hopeful. I want to try to address some of these problems we have by creating public spaces that are welcoming and safe for women in our society. In Richard Sennett’s text “The Public Realm” he argues that the public realm plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of community and belonging, and that it is the responsibility of designers to create spaces that are inclusive and engaging. I am provoking the idea of fully democratic spaces, such

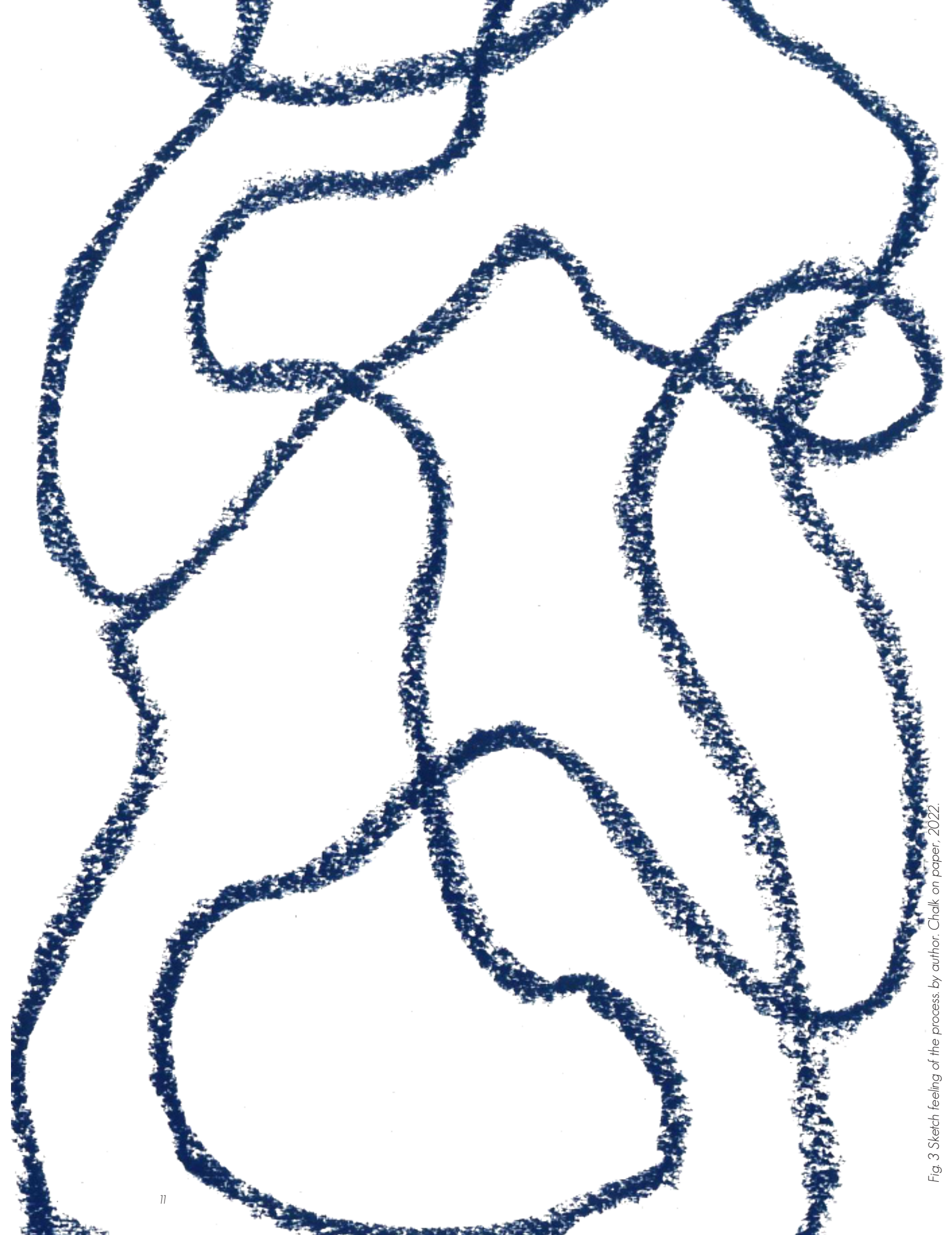


Fig. 3 Sketch feeling of the process by author. Chalk on paper, 2022.



as public libraries, parks, squares, and beaches, by focusing on a smaller and oppressed group of people, women – to make that as clear as day – to emphasise the need for various public spaces to maintain a more safe and open society. It is impossible for the public sphere to be completely inclusive and therefore are fully reliant on conflict, division, and instability to exist, discussed so beautifully by Deutsche (Deutsche, 1998, p. 289).

This diploma project is motivated through research from listed references and the inevitable undeniable feeling of responsibility as a designer to enriching relevant issues within our society. To contribute improving humans' everyday lives and the planets need of a radical change towards a better sustainable, holistic, and hopeful future. I am designing a functional and aesthetically pleasing space that meet the needs of women, providing a place where they can freely embrace their womanhood together, without the presence of men. Which, to be honest is a very problematic issue in all public space. This place, The Apartment, is a tribute to women and the fight for equality in a long-lasting war with inequality. I have chosen to locate the project in Stockholm, Sweden, where I have spent my master education, in order to utilize the knowledge and experience I have gained from interacting with this city and its residents.

I aim to design a space that promotes social diversity and equality, where users can find trust, safety, and foster connections between human beings, architecture, and society, with the ability to evolve over time and encourage social interaction, transforming our built heritage. It is at the borders the most intense and interesting meetings occur, for that reason the various programs and women will effortlessly interact through time and space.

Through analysing and mapping original architectural drawings, and meetings with a previous resident I have collected fragments of photos, stories and moments of the existing building and its history and represented them through drawings, models, illustrations, and collages. Since I lack the physical experience of the space, I have taken the opportunity to be more radical in my design choices. So, where standardisations of architecture usually occur, I have instead been inspired by today's design experimentations and wanted to create a space out of a more imaginary sense.

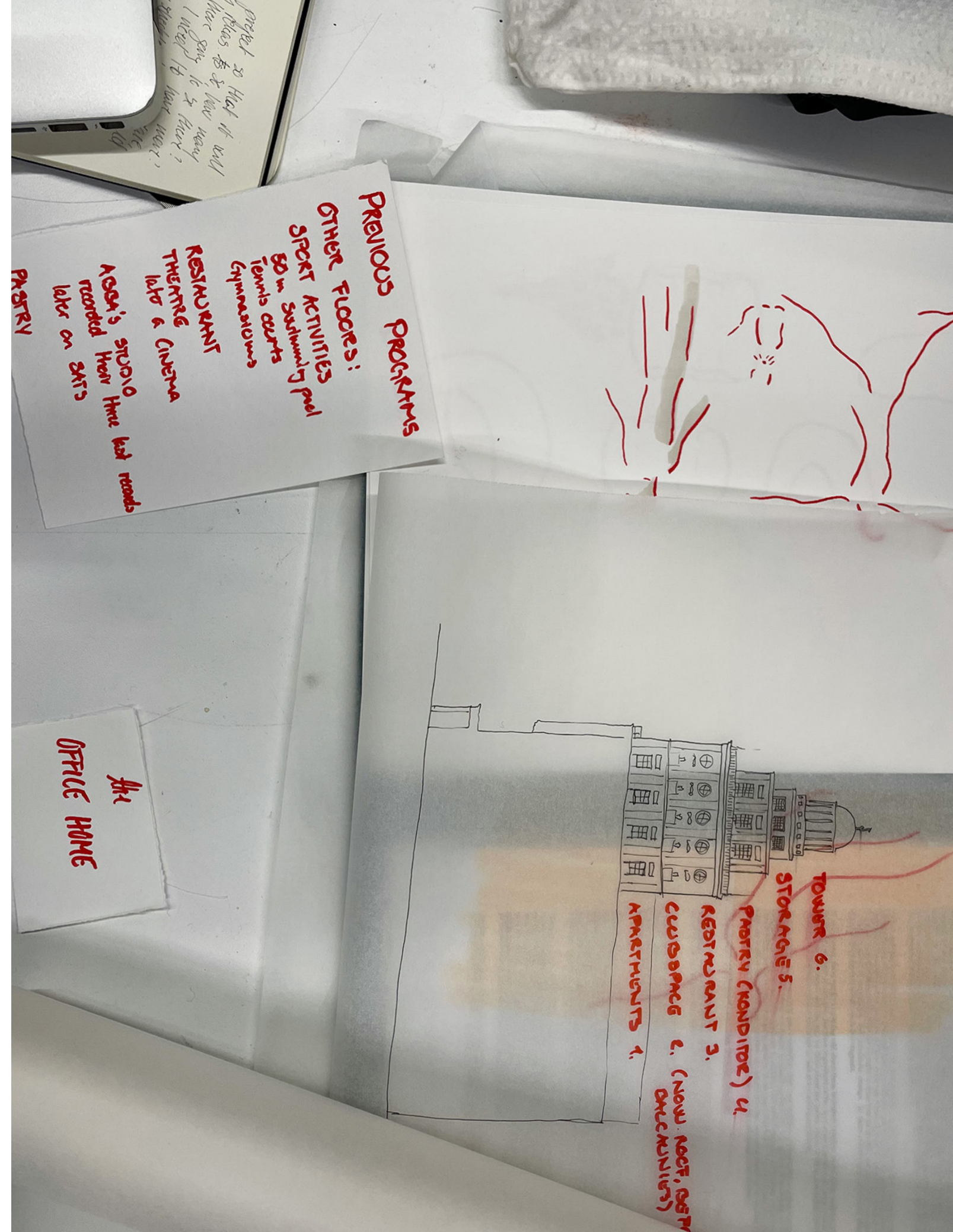


Fig. 4 Mapping. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2022.





Fig. 5 Close-up of Tower model 1:20, DJ and dancer. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2023.

## *TOWARDS A COCKTAIL BAR ... AND THE OTHER SITUATIONS OF THE APARTMENT*

The content of the top four floors at Sportpalatset at Fridhemsplan will be a coffee and cocktail bar with moments of activities related to arts, such as reading, writing, painting, cooking, performance, music and more. These situations are based on the history of the space and stories told to me by Ulla Gyllenstedt, a previous resident that I have learned to know during this project. Originally it was meant as a restaurant and pastry with a man's club on the floor beneath the apartment, this plan was never fully realised as Bruno Liljefors, a famous sculpturer and painter moved in to use as an atelier. It was after Liljefors had lived and worked in the space that Ulla Gyllenstedt and her family moved in the year 1936.

The context of my thesis is to work with transformation within architecture. To find a better use of the spaces that we already have and how to reuse them. Not just maintain our built heritage, but to continue to integrate it in our everyday life as an expression of our values. By studying the materials properties, architectural history and the existing building structures can several significant architectural characteristics be discovered. Therefore, ensuring that the cities and buildings conservational qualities are not destroyed. (Harlang & Algreen-Petersen 2015, pp. 72-82)

I want to show how spatial design can be more circular in its planning so that they can evolve over time and adapt yet be contemporary within our values of the society today, democracy, equality, transparency, trust, diversity, and sustainability.

How can these different programs work together in an open plan so that the division of situations are not regulated between closed physical space, rather divided over time? What material, plan structures, furniture and atmospheres are needed in such multifunctional space? I want to research how such contrasting situations can function together without going at the expense of others while emphasising on how this will be a more sustainable solution of public space. How can I find an architectural solution that sheds light on the issues at hand and at the same time takes care of the human, architecture, and values within our society?



## WHAT THE HELL AM I TALKING ABOUT

First before I start digging into the whole main body of this report, I will introduce some structure and terminology as a helping tool or guide. Starting with the history of the chosen building and its contextualising and changes through its life. A rich life, which I have manifested in my proposal, mostly through the inspirational stories from Ulla – which I am forever grateful for – but also about the fact that I am working on bringing back this history of life, that is in some ways gone through the building's transformation. Further on, I move my way on to the design process and proposal. I present several theories of which I find relevant and important to have a discourse around in an artistic design research education.

Richard Sennett (2010) argues that the public realm demands consideration of borders and boundaries. As the anonymous blogger and architect "The Sleep of Rigour" explains in relation to Sennett's work, "boundaries being limits ... which separate one territory from another and border being a zone of interactive edge between territories" (thesleepofrigour, 2014). In Deutsche's text *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* she argues "how we define public space is intimately connected with ideas about what it means to be human, the nature of society, and the kind of political community we want" (Deutsche 2014, p. 269). Topics within my proposal, "the Apartment", that are relevant for the discourse of the projects various concepts and moments.

Another aspect of this diploma project is feminism and radical feminism, which are terminologies voicing an observation of needs within the public realm and showing an example on how to solve a problem with the use of radical feminism as a tool. Where "feminism" and "radical" are a strong and charged words, I will define them within this text and use the expertise help from women like Rosalyn Deutsche and Jane Rendell.

All this information will be put in context and be in discourse with my design process and proposal of Sportpalatset's penthouse apartment as a public space for women, a boudoir – that literary means a place to sulk, from French "boudoir" "to pout", which I find entertaining. Defining "The Apartment" with its content of programs and its users, it is a milieu for women to be in public space without the constant reminder of our oppressor, the man. A coffee and cocktail bar and a cultural arena with workshops such as cooking, painting, writing, yoga etc, performances of music, dance, readings, etc. And as the week is turning to an end, the top floor turns into a dancefloor – wonderfully reliving to dance your worries away.



Fig. 6 Close-up of Livingroom model 1:20, by author. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2023.





SITE-SPECIFIC HISTORY AND ITS INHABITANTS

Fig. 7 Sportpalatset viewed from Vasastan. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2022.



### THE PALACE OF SPORTS

As it says on a sign mounted on the building itself, is the building drawn by the architect Jean Sigfrid Adrian between the years of 1929-1930 with sports as the main focus and supporting idea of the building. It was complete in 1934 with a 50-metre indoor swimming pool, first of its kind in Sweden and the largest swimming facilities in North Europe when it was inaugurated, and a part of a larger complex sports situation such as tennis courts, bowling alleys and gymnasiums (Hulten, 2000). Even though its strong relation to sports, it also has a rich history of other cultural aspects, such as: Bruno Liljefors atelier and home, ABBA's music studio where several other world-famous artists recorded music (Rolling Stones, Rammstein, Backstreet Boys, Beastie Boys, Celine Dion, Genesis, Belinda Carlisle, and others), theatre with 600 spectators and restaurant which later turned into a cinema called Rivoli. The cinema closed in 1957, where the swimming facilities had already met the same destiny the previous year.

The building in its context was built as a companion for its neighbouring building on the opposite side of Sankt Eriksgatan, St Eriks Palatset which was already completed in 1909 and has its contrasting red colour on the façade.

Jussi Björling, one of the world's foremost opera singers during the 30s and 40s, celebrated his wife during one of his performances in a gondola that rocked side to side as he sang with his powerful voice, at Sportpalatset. The king of Sweden, Carl the XVI Gustav have taken his swimming lessons here. This was also a place for education, where you could get your lifeguard training. Arne Borg and Sally Bauer have been swimming teachers here, to mention a few fun facts about the use of the building and its users (ibid, 2000).

From the original architects' drawings, the top four floors of Sportpalatset were meant as a social meeting place and a part of the public realm. They are represented as consisting of both a restaurant and a pastry, which opened my mind of what this enormous apartment of 300 square meters could be for the public and how this diploma project could be thought of something to give back to the city of Stockholm.



Fig. 8 Sportpalatset. In the picture Ulla Sundsten is seen thanking the promoter, medical council John Byttner for eklövskransen. Photography: Vimar Ericsson, 1950.





Fig. 9 Ulla Gyllenstedts photoalbum, info from Sportpalatset. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2023.



Fig. 10 Ulla Gyllenstedts photoalbum, one of Sportpalatsets many offers. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2023.



## CRAZY PAINTER GUY – BRUNO LILJEFORS

A master among animal painters. Liljefors was already in the end of 19th century one of Sweden's foremost artists and became international known early in his career. Born in Uppsala Sweden in 1860 and resident of Sportpalatset's apartment underneath the open lantern or the tower of the building. This was also his atelier where he fed birds who were all invited to fly into the lantern but also the floor below. This gave him in-action models to paint right there in his atelier in the middle of the city. Even though he was thrilled with this exclusive close encounter with nature, every week there were complaints from passer byers of Sportpalatset that the birds dropped food down at the street, food that came from Liljefors feeding them. After he moved back to Uppsala, the apartment was in much need for renovation as the interior had especially been ruined by birds flying around in there and the floors were all distorted and had to be replaced. For several years after his move birds still tried to get into the apartment, making it a problem for the new residents of the apartment, the family Gyllenstedt.



Fig. 12 Bruno Liljefors in his atelié at Svartbäcksgatan Photography: Paul Sandberg, 1937.



Fig. 11 Bruno Liljefors and John Österlund probably in Uppsala. Photography: Gunnar Sundgren, no date.



## ULLA GYLLENSTEDT – QUEEN B

Between the years 1936-1953 – when also the second world war was roaring in Europe (1939-1945) – the family of Ulla Gyllenstedt lived their lives filled with lots of love and care on the top of Sportpalatset, – Lilliefors's previous atelier. It is through the stories told by Ulla to me over the Swedish rituals of having fika I have been so fortunate to learn their values and how much honesty and happiness has made this a safe place for her family but also how these values have reached outside their family and to friends, neighbours and all people touched by their presence.

*Tegnérsgatan 2, Stockholm 17th of January 2023 – Fika with Ulla.*

I was meeting Ulla Gyllenstedt for the first time, after texting back and forth, in a café close to where she lives. Feeling a bit nervous at first not knowing how this person would be like, that I was about to meet. I went through different imaginations of how she would look like, talk like and how this could be a part of my master project. She was early, she said as I walked towards here at the table she was waiting at in the café. As we sat down with a cup of hot coffee and a delicious cinnamon bun, she almost immediately started telling her childhood memories of living at Sportpalatset.

*Kunstendsgatan 2, Stockholm 6th of February 2023 - Fika with Ulla.*

The second meeting, I got to come to Ulla's home where we went through her photo album which her aunt had put together and given to her. It was interesting to see how much she remembered by looking at the photos, even though she was just a child at the moment they lived there. Showing how important childhood memories are and how they will stay with us in our lives.



Fig. 13 Ulla Gyllenstedt as a baby looking at the view from Sportpalatset. Photography: Ulla Gyllenstedt, 2023.



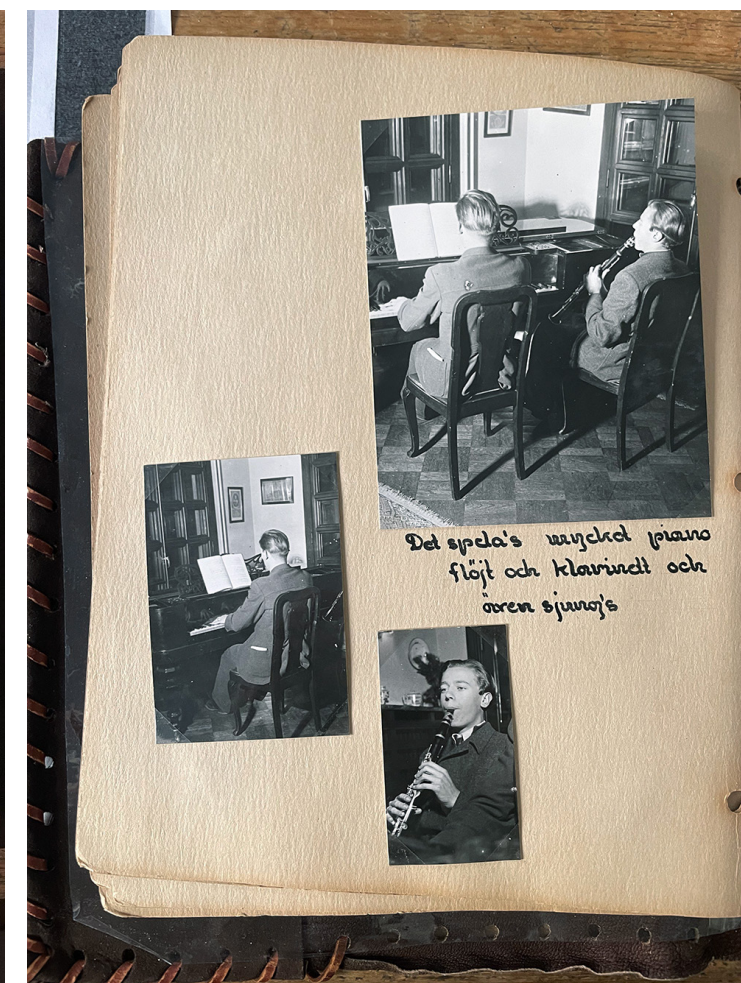
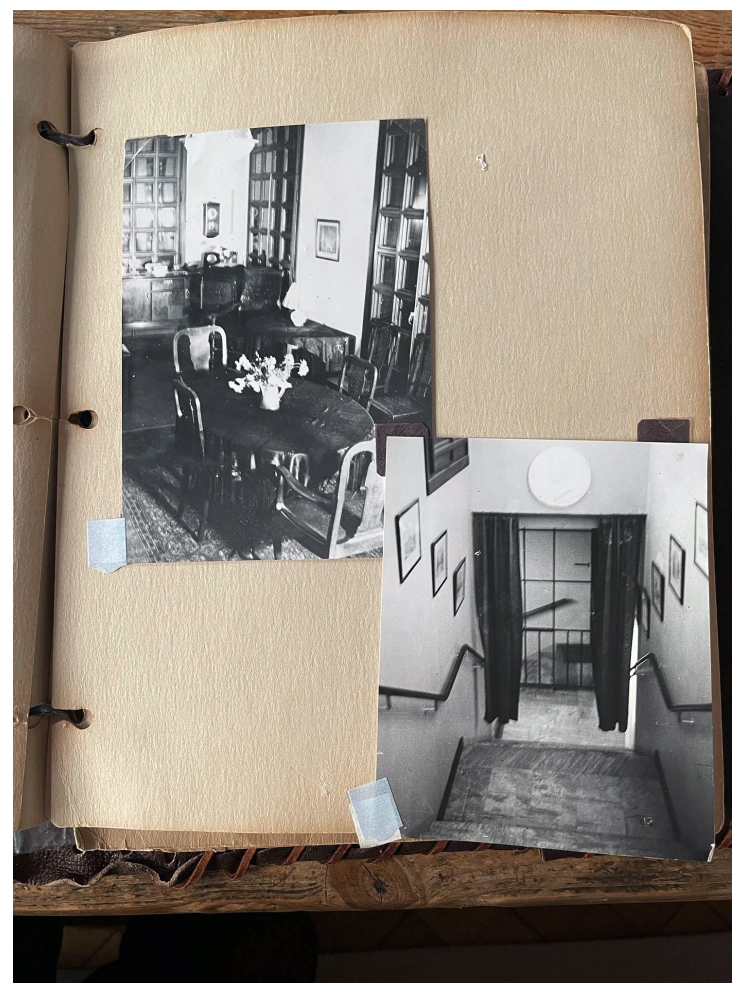
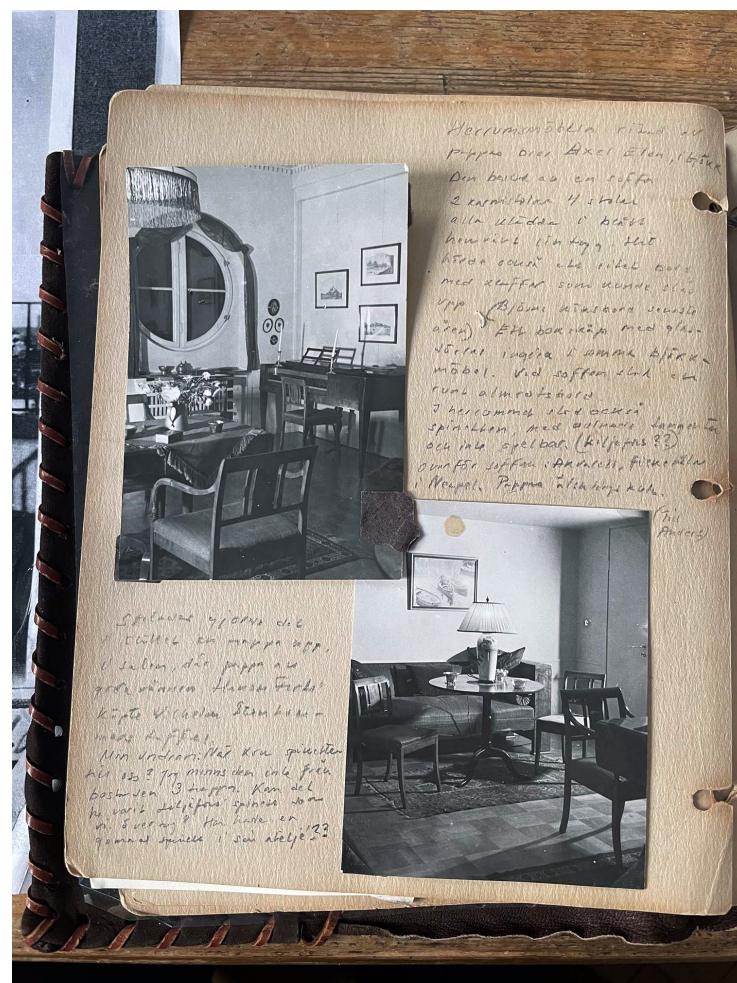
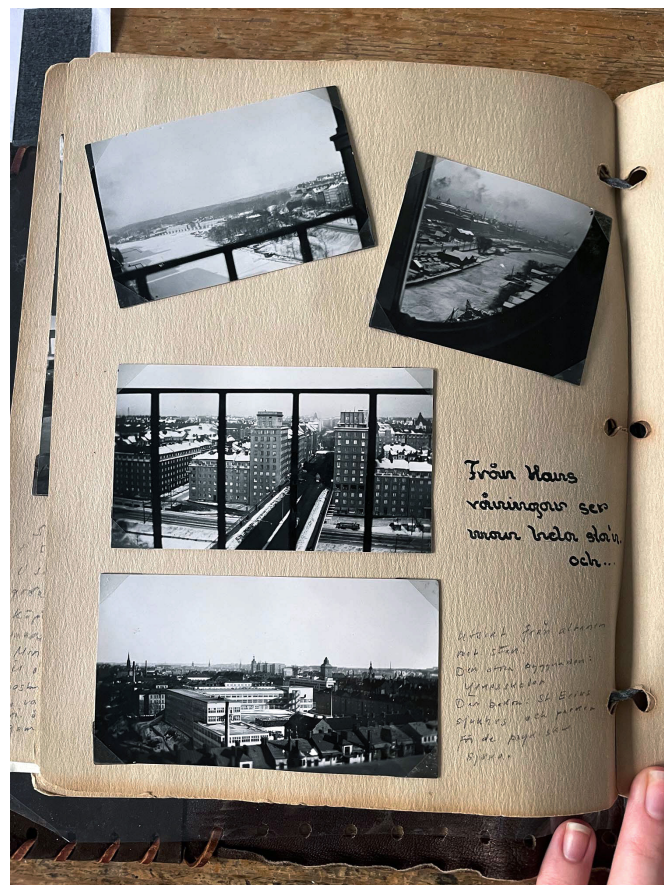


Fig. 14-19 Ulla Gyllenstedts photoalbum.  
Photography: Christine Dybing, 2023.





THE PROPOSAL WITH ALL THE THEORY, SWEAT AND TEARS



## *HORROR VACUI*

Looking at what the public realm is and how it has evolved throughout history we can still define it simply as how Richard Sennett so uncomplicatedly defines it in his essay “The Public Realm,” that of a space where strangers meet. All these strangers we pass and interact with, usually with an indirect interaction where acknowledging each other’s presence is the only factor needed, are people we do not have any knowledge about. Whereas when we enter the private realm, we know others within it well and in a closer manner, such as our family and friends (Sennett, 2010). This, in my opinion, relates to publicness in a larger and wider context where everyone can meet everyone, such as in a library, public park, plaza etc. “The Apartment” though, is situated in-between publicness and privacy, since the users have one specific thing in common and therefore a common knowledge about each other even before experiencing the space, and that is of being a woman. To be a woman and what the definition of that sense of self are difficult and open questions that are not resolved in this thesis.

As Deutsche notes, “Antagonism affirms and simultaneously prevents the closure of society, revealing the partiality and precariousness – the contingency – of every totality. Antagonism is ‘the experience’ of the limit of the social” (Deutsche 1996, p. 274). Reading Rosalyn Deutsche’s text, I come closer to defining the public space that “The Apartment” is, or wants to be, in my proposal. Radically excluding men and only including women to take part of a diverse programming, perceiving, and experiencing space in conjunction. Being able to only be without the disruption of men is almost becoming a basic need for women today. If you analyse, which I have not but only considering my own experiences as a white Scandinavian woman, you will understand the enormous negative impact “men” have in a “woman’s” life. This does not exclude our experiences in the private space, which is where women are most endangered, her own home. A topic Jenna Gillinger so importantly expresses in her bachelor thesis “Home is Where Her Horror is – A Call for Knowledge about Domestic Violence in the Field of Architecture and in Society” (Gillinger, 2023).

So, how do the women of The Apartment interact with each other, both guests and workers, and what kind of similarities and differences do they share that gives this space its exclusiveness while being causal? Interacting with strangers in a public space often feel uncomfortable, especially when the context of the space is not designed out of the users’ needs in society and what a space can give for citizens rather than just adding another commercial space similar to what already exists. Creating a space where both the guests and workers have a lower threshold of communication to initiate an effortless atmosphere human to human, is an important essence of my proposal. Therefore, giving the Apartment a new definition of what public space is and can be – which of course already exists such as in these two examples; Andre til Høyre (Second to the left) in Oslo, a cocktail bar described as being invited home to Anne Maurseth’s apartment (the owner of Andre til Høyre), or Byens Tak (The City Roof) in Oslo, a bar and cultural arena inviting the citizens of Oslo to connect over architecture and urban culture while also “enjoy a glass in the sunset with close friends, or rent the space for a special occasion” (Byens Tak, 2023). These two references are projects that I have relations to from previous experiences. These two references have some of the qualities that I want to achieve for my proposal, they both have a sense of effortlessness to them while being interesting spaces of interaction, communication, and community from contrasting aspects.

## SO, WHAT ABOUT RADICAL FEMINISM

The choice of designing a space for women comes from an interest as a feminist and designer to solve problems of public spaces in our societies to evolve in correlation to feminist thinking and to shed light on issues surrounding humans' disconnections to each other. The Apartment is an attempt to re-join humans on a smaller scale and show the need for humble places for connection.

Defining the word "feminism" has been an important aspect throughout this whole project. A word which I am yet to discover all its flavours of and ways of tasting it on my lips. A word that means openness, trust, equality, respect, and knowledge to me. Openness in the way of people being open to change, open for other people's opinions and open for acknowledging that you can be more and learning as you go through life. "Trusting thy neighbour", a common unwritten rule in our world, which of course comes with some exceptions, just like in mathematics. To be equal to all, of course we do play different roles in the society, but at the end of the day we are all human beings with the same basic needs, serving the same faith. In Hannah Arendt's book "The Human Condition" she manifests how the three different human "doings" – labour, work, and action – are tools for us to get a closer connection between us (Arendt 1953). To be more open and knowable to one another will give us the opportunity to build worlds together. To not just step away from our differences but see how because of our diversity and differences we will thrive together. Arendt shows then how it is on the political realm the third "doing, action, belongs (Arendt 1953, p. 15). Respecting our differences and similarities, give some damn respect to others and respect yourself as well, life is too short to go around thinking you are better than everyone else, so show some respect. Be humble enough to know that there is always something new to learn and you will never go through life without learning something new, knowledge is good.

Defining such a word for this project has been important, but equally as important has been to define the word and usage of the word "radical". I remember during the first project here at Konstfack, Introduction and Broadening of Perspective, where we focused on the community house "Medborgarhuset" in Hägerstensåsen – Tor Lindstrand, Thomas Platiel and Sebastian Dahlkvist hosted a seminar about the Swedish term "Folkhemmet" (2021). "Folkhemmet" is a political term that the social democracy used to describe a vision for the community" (Nordiskamuseet, [2023]). Where we talked the term radical and how this

building specifically represented a radical movement in Stockholm. In some of the conversations we had there was a discourse of how radical can be both very large and create a massive impact, but it can also be very small and do small yet significant changes. This conversation really stuck with me and is something I have thought about during the process of making this diploma project. Since, when creating a public space which is so clearly excluding, it is exactly this exclusion which is the radical part of my project. The fact that women are the only ones allowed inside, something that would be managed through a host working at The Apartment and making sure that the concept of it being a space for women is maintained. Together with clear formulations to the outside world in social media and other platforms of visibility and marketing of who are welcomed as guests here.



## APPLYING THEORY INTO FORM

In this chapter I will lead you through the roller coaster of a process this project has had and write about its various methods, techniques, and design choices. With little knowledge of the – hopefully – many gems and hidden places of Stockholm city, choosing a site to apply what I wanted to focus on during this last six month of my studies, was – excuse my French – a bitch. But luckily, I have had help from some great teachers here at Konstfack, and Sportpalatset fell into my lap when Einar Rodhe gave me his contact information to his neighbour Ulla, who provided me with the generous stories from her time at this magnificent apartment.



Fig. 21 Johanna Metsälö, Sonoka Minami and Linnea Eriksson building of wall in our exhibition room. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2023.



## MAPPING

To get an understanding of the place and its location, I went – together with some very nice student colleagues – to see if I was able to get in or closer to the private apartment, which is what this place is today. Because when you are at street level and looking up at the building, you only get a small understanding of what this jewel can unfold. We got as far as to an elevator door opening and right in front of it was the door leading into the apartment, but it was late in the evening – or maybe it was just winter now that I think about it, but it was dark at least – and we were not supposed to be there. Therefore, I did not dare to ring the doorbell, even though it felt like it was screaming at me to do so, my fear of disturbing someone living in such an expensive posh place got the best of me. Little did I know that site visits could give you a small adrenalin kick. But even though I did not get so much of what I was looking for, or what could I expect, I also only wanted to know who lived there so I could contact them, which is one small click away at Hitta.se. Hitta.se would then never give me the same excitement and discoveries of the interior details of dark oiled oak panels with carefully chosen frame worked ornaments on the elevator walls, where two frames contained mirrors – a detail most elevators have. The ceiling had similar detailing, but the frames had a different shape, of a diamond, and centred a lamp illuminating the space was placed. Granite tiles, like the ones in the long-stretched stairs leading from ground level up to a top – not sure which one, not the top, but a top – where also the material of the elevator floor.

At this point I had not met Ulla Gyllenstedt and it was, as mentioned in chapter about her, when I met her, she helped contact the residence of this apartment again to find a way for us to visit and see the apartment. So, I thought the small site visit together with my friends would be the only physical interaction with the place, which it also turned out to be.



Fig. 22 Freja Ullert Sharabi and Emilia Forsman site visit of Sportpalatset Photography: Christine Dybing, 2022.



It says in James Corner's chapter "The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention", "...mapping precipitates its most productive effects through a finding that is also a founding; its agency lies in neither reproduction nor imposition but rather in uncovering realities previously unseen or unimagined, even across seemingly exhausted grounds" (Corner 1999, p. 89). Which is what is so exiting about reading those original drawings of a space and trying to re-imagine its changes and how to, in this particular situation – together with Ulla's stories – map through storytelling, memories and family photos. Because it is with this limited set of information, I have had to create representations and reproduce the space which has, step by step, uncovered unexpected realities. Where it sometimes was difficult to put the pieces together between the stories, which are childhood memories, Ulla's family photos, that mostly included people and not interior since photos were expensive then and there were other priorities – something that probably is unimaginable for new generations to imagine today with the unlimited space we have on our smartphones – and the hand drawn architectural drawings of a imagined public space which was never realised. Creating another level of the challenge of re-imagining and exercise my abilities as a spatial designer to reveal and realise hidden potential.

Something Maisam Mahdi so powerfully expresses in her article in the new architectural magazine in Norway, *Arkitektur*, which I wanted to share, since it is information I also think is so absolutely significant to tell from time to time – preferably constantly. Mahdi writes that "Interior architecture is the essence of human scale, everyday living, psychological framework and atmospheric spaces...Interior architecture is an interdisciplinary practice that combines elements from architecture, environmental psychology, structures, behaviours, colour and material knowledge" (Mahdi, 2023).



Fig. 23 Mapping of proposal in the Aquarium room, Konstfack. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2023.



Fig. 24 Emilia Forsman, Lisa Salvall and Freja Ullert Sharabi in elevator in Sportpalatset. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2022.



PROGRAMMING > --- 0 1101 ^\*\*\_\_

Rem Koolhaas's office OMA is a program-first architectural office, and in his analysis of the Downtown Athletic Club he detects "...how the stacking of different human activities can generate different and exciting modes of living and architecture" (Koolhaas, 1997. p. 157). Which has been one fundamental part of this project, to design a program, or several of them, that would add something to this building and at the same time keep parts of history. Analysing the original drawings gave me some surprising discoveries, where I thought, how did this place ever turn into a private residence when there were clear plans of a public space? At the third floor, from the top, there were plans of a pastry and underneath a restaurant. Above it was written "storage" on the drawings, making my jaw drop, because how can such an exclusive space be planned as a storage space. At the time it was drawn, this was also one out of a few tall points in Stockholm, remember that this was built in the early 30's and Stockholm has gone through a lot of changes since. On the floorplan underneath the apartment, a "Clubroom" was written on the drawings, of which I speculate was more of a "men's club" than a woman's clubroom. This was the "eureka" moment when I knew for a fact that my proposal was meant to be for women.

The start of woman's involvement in public space was in the French Salons in Paris during the Enlightenment in the early 18th century. This was a space where both women and men met for intellectual discourse. Here the women served as hostesses and decided the agenda for the day with different topics to be discussed, where they also had the power to regulate the conversations. "This led to reduced marginalization of women in Paris. The emergence of salons allowed for leadership and involvement for women in intellectual areas in Paris in the early 18th century." (Zundel, H., duPoint S., Olsen, E., Rondinelli, M., 2011).

I had a couple of moments within my research where I had the pleasure of analysing my friend Sarah Hansens, a student at the Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts, dancing in an abandoned building, and her together with classmates performing a beautiful performance using different medias to create various atmospheres. It was very inspirational, and it set the tone for some of the atmospheres I wanted The Apartment to have. Atmosphere of letting go and feeling free from the outside world, just being able to be without the interruption of all that is going on simultaneously in a city. To focus on one thing at a time, either it is a yoga class early in the morning



Fig. 25 Sarah Hansens performance at Stockholm Academy of Dramatic, here another of the dancers in the spotlight Arts. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2022.



Fig. 26 Sarah Hansens dancing in abandoned building. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2022.



in the tower space of The Apartment, someone performing and you being the observer totally mesmerized by the moment. Or in the middle of the night, dancing at the top having a euphoric sense of self letting the stress leave your body.

These moments, that I have called them earlier in the text, of cultural aspects where also created through the history of usage of the space. Where it had been an atelier of Liljefors and how Ulla tells her stories of how the space was filled with music, people, and parties. These were important moments for me to learn the atmosphere and how the space had lived and breathed in its early days. I think when, as an interior architect, you transform something existing it is important to take in consideration all the factors of why it has been and how to not just delete its history of existence but take knowledge from it. Maybe the answer is to go in the complete opposite direction.

I have chosen to make this space into a multi programmed situation, because of its beneficial sustainable sides, to share space that has several programs and the possibility for longer opening hours. Being used throughout the day and nearly no hours are unused, creates a diversity of people using the space –in this case, women – and the gained benefits of creating borders within itself when people have the chance to meet people they would not have met if the place only had one program. “In natural ecologies, borders are the zones in a habitat where organisms become more inter-active, due to the meeting of different species or physical conditions. The boundary is a limit; a territory beyond a particular species does stray. So, these are two different kinds of edge” (Sennett 2010, p.). When I read Sennett’s text about The Public Realm, he sets the tone of boundaries being something negative, also in his examples it is described as something bad. That it is the border which is the positive solution. These are of course my analysis of the text, and I might be wrong, but I am searching for a solution where both, boundaries and borders, is the answer. And it is then in the text by Jane Rendell, “Critical Spatial Practices: Setting Out a Feminist Approach to some Modes and what Matters in Architecture” in *Feminist Practices. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Women in Architecture*, that I finally found some specific literature reference which sets out similar tones and matters of what I am trying to apply to this project (Rendell, 2012). Which I will go into later in this text.



Fig. 27 Using different methods combined to design proposal. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2022.





Fig. 28 Conceptuall illustration of Sportpalatset's context in the city, by author. Photoshop.





Fig. 29 Conceptual illustration of The Apartment and its users, by author. Photoshop.



## MOVING THROUGH COLOURS, SHAPES, AND MATERIALS

Usually in an interior architecture project I map out the colour and material scheme of the chosen site. What is the history behind it and how would one experience it. Doing a site visit and taking tons of pictures, look through archives and experiencing the space as much as possible throughout the day and evening to see how the mood changes and appears. This is a very essential part of a transformation project, was as mentioned earlier in the text, something which was challenged through working with black and white photos and video of the space during the 30s to the 50s. And of course, the fact that I did not get the opportunity to visit the place, because of certain tragic personal problems happening with the family living there at this present time. Materials were easy in some sense to get an understanding of, but colours were impossible to guess, except lightness and darkness. The lack of information did present a positive side to itself, giving me the possibility to make colour and material choices which did not need to have a reason behind it more than the obvious reasons. Being the right type of material for the right type of function, letting the materials qualities be beneficial for the usage and aesthetics of the space. This possibility of a more independent design method was beneficial for my design process, because of the big emphasis on feminism in its programming, it was nice to have a more conceptual take on the colour and material choices. If it would have been a restoration project, I would have done a very different approach and wanted every design choice to be connected in some way with its history.

The materials that I do know was there at some point, I kept. Such as the floor in the kitchen and living room floors, which I assume from photos, was a basketweave oak floor put in different directions, on the different floors. In the kitchen, it was put on a 90-degree angle and in the living room a 45-degree angle, creating the illusion of a very different floor. In the large stairs going from the entrance up to the living room, there was granite tiles – or “exclusive enormous marble stairs” which Ulla remembered as a child, and then reflected upon that it might have been because of her being a child she remembers it as being almost out of scale in its size.

Other materials I have had a hard time to recognise, other than walls were painted in white paint and the many doors and windows on the façade where either in a dark wooden material or also painted over with white colour. The façade I was able to analyse has a light blue/green colour in plaster covering a brick structure, with a contrasting dark red/brown colour on the bay windows some floors down on the north facing façade.

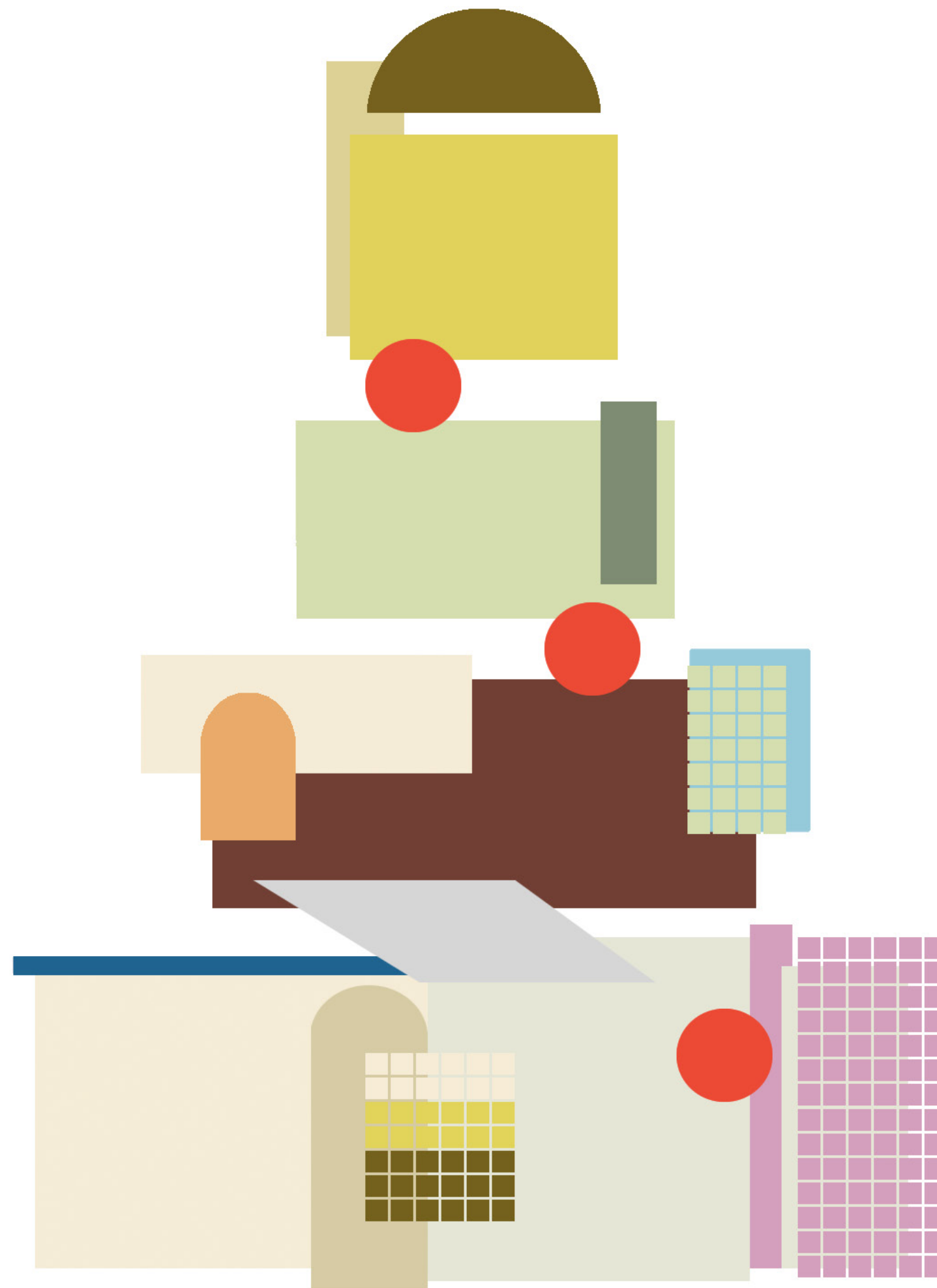


Fig. 30 Colour palette, by author. Photoshop.





Fig. 31 Sectional illustration of proposal with colours, materials and users, by author. Photoshop.



My method of choosing colours and materials is to compliment the atmosphere and function of the space, together with the information of existing architectural elements and materials which will create a contemporary and sustainable design proposal. How the people of The Apartment will interact with each other and the different situations that will happen in the place are important factors for the design choices. When entering, either you have taken the stairs or elevator, you are welcomed into an open and light space, leading you either to the café on the same floor or up to the Livingroom floor. The café room, which is located on the Kitchen floor, is light with contrasting red window frames and a deep blue ceiling. The furniture comes in different sizes and comfort, meeting the guest's various needs. And as a continuation of it being a home in present time and a lively home in Ulla's times, where I often imagine furniture had to been moves around when they had large parties. Like a sculpture in the middle of the room there is a large kitchen island in travertine stone with metal doors on one side, in memory of Bruno Liljefors's atelier.

The Kitchen floor also consist of two bathrooms in separate rooms. One larger in the southwest corner, which is pink, almost from head to toa with the exception from the fierce red window frames and the light beige door frame. The second bathroom is in the centre of the floor, smaller and in beige, yellow and dark moss green colours.



Fig. 31 Visualisation of the Livingroom, by author. Rhinoceros + Photoshop.



Fig. 32 Visualisation of the Tower, by author. Rhinoceros + Photoshop.



Fig. 33 Visualisation of the Kitchen, by author. Rhinoceros + Photoshop.



Fig. 35 Visualisation of the Bedroom, by author. Rhinoceros + Photoshop.



One floor up is the Livingroom, here you'll get a laid back but still lively atmosphere. Consisting of one open room with lounge seating and a bathroom in the southwest corner. On this floor you can go outside from three different doors on three of the facades and entering a 360-degree balcony with similar atmospheric furnishing. Further on, walking up the fiery red spiral stairs, you will get to the Bedroom. Which also was the bedroom of Ulla's grandparents, therefore I thought it was suitable to continue the wording and feeling of such a room in some ways. The space is smaller than the previous floor and consists of two sofas designed especially for this space. Inviting the guests to sit or lay down while enjoying a performance in the same room or a deep conversation with close friends. A smaller balcony is embracing this floor, a perfect spot to watch the sunset. Towards the top, you will climb another spiral stair leading you to the dancefloor which is also open for morning yoga classes or just to take a breath and look out at Stockholm city.

For example, because of the amount of windows in the space, curtains are very present, especially in the bedroom and living room floors. This creates a possibility to shade for the sun – obviously – and to make small changes which gives either more privacy or less. If you look at the curtains in the bedroom floor, I have created round rails for the curtains to be hung from which are placed around each of the two sofas I have designed especially for this space. If there is a performance going on in the space, it would be more natural for the curtains to be open, so that the visitors can see the performer. Or maybe the performer would use the curtains actively in their performance. Situating the room in a late-night cocktail session a hot summer night, the curtains would be perfect to close – since these are transparent – while keeping the doors open, creating rooms within a room. Becoming a perfect spot for intimate conversations or sharing of secret favourite spots in the city – The Apartment of course being one of them.

The presence of textile is like a soft smack on your face, or it is very much there and for several good reasons. Textiles have remarkable abilities for sound improvement, spatial indication and the un-denying ability of being soft and comfortable. It meets you in sofas, dining chairs, poufs, lounge chairs, rugs, curtains, bar stools, and in lighting. Coming in various materials, colours, patterns, and textures creating a symbiosis of relaxation, since to be honest, the softer the spot the sweeter the stay. And here guests are encouraged to stay to experience every aspect of what it has to offer.

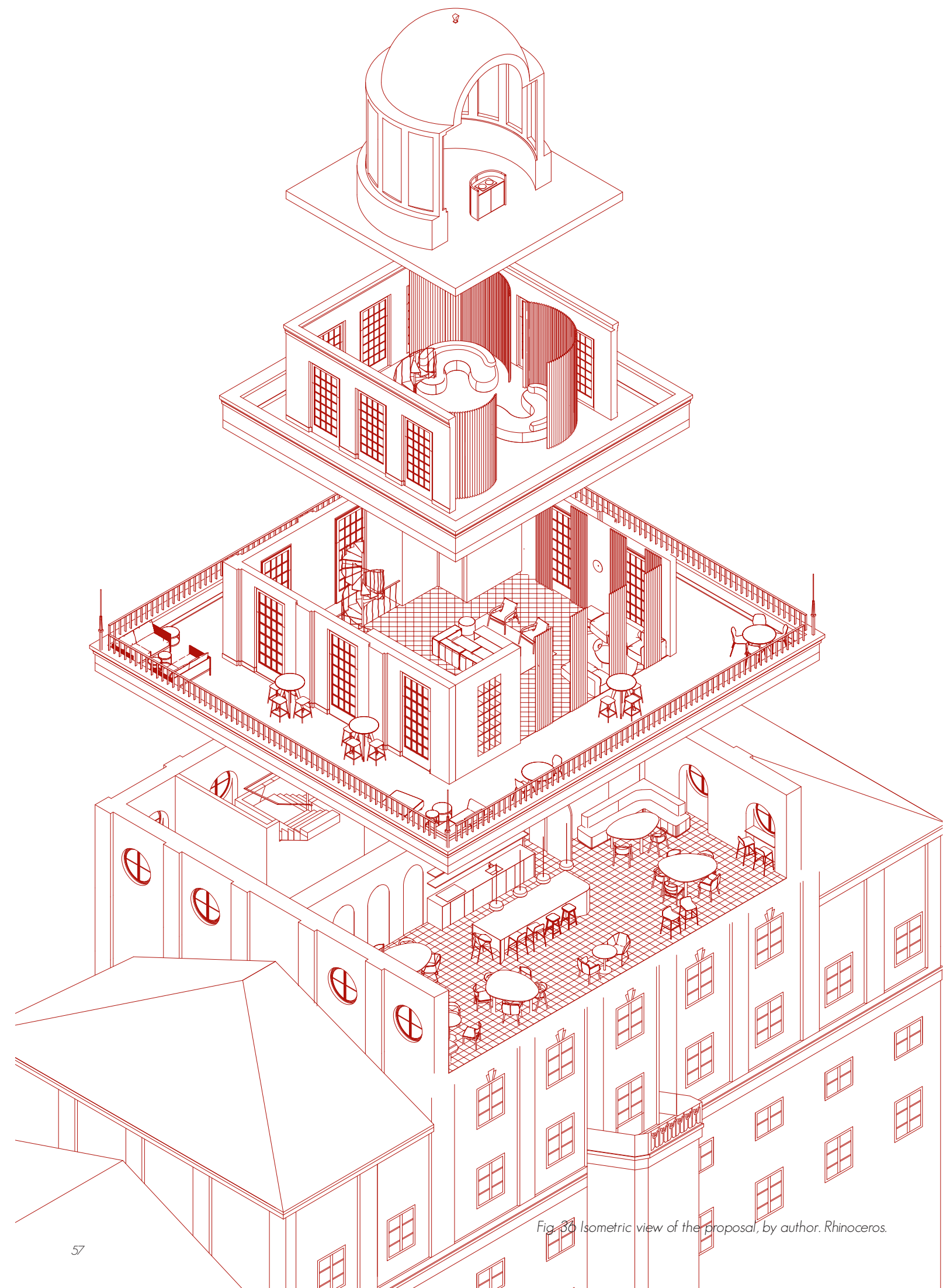


Fig. 36 Isometric view of the proposal, by author. Rhinoceros.



Furniture and its ability to move around and change the space, while also being chameleons of the room, since the usage of furniture is multiple and should be looked at with a creative mind. Creating various atmospheres and perception which is something that is essential for the programming and the changes that would occur throughout the day of The Apartment. Giving visitors a variety of seating options and new type of spaces, sets the mood of something new to explore the next time you visit.

The Kitchen floor offers a variety of taller seating, like dining chairs and bar stools. Either you want to enjoy the view alone or with one closer friend or lover, over a cup of coffee in the day or a tasteful cocktail while looking out through the round conspicuous windows which embrace the room. Or you are with a group of girlfriends planning your next workshop or event at The Apartment. The café and main bar offer plenty of seating which will satisfy the ones needing a table while visiting. If you are one of the brave ones you can also join the kitchen island, which also works as the working counter for the employees, where you can sit or hang out while enjoying a chat with the bar managers.

Moving up to the next floor, the Livingroom, you will experience a lower lounge seating in the format of sofas, lounge chairs and poufs. A dry bar is placed in the northeast corner of the room, made with a round thick beige travertine top and leca blocks placed in a circular shape creating one massive leg for the bar table. A seamless storage furniture is covering the two doors of this corner, where you can find books, games, and equipment for the course you are joining for the day, and where the bar has its needed equipment, in a sweet orange semi-transparent resin material.

This project addresses the need for diverse public spaces which meets the needs for all human beings. Being, all people no matter the colour of their skin, their preferences, geographical origin, political opinions, and everything in-between. The choice of focusing on one set of human beings, women, is to emphasise how women still are being oppressed and that even though the need for a space for women was even more clear during the Enlightenment, it is still very much needed today. This is maybe because we have a larger understanding of our differences now than what we had then. We are evolving as human beings and as we are becoming smarter as a species, we need to use our knowledge of how to live better to the fullest.

In the world of place, milieu, location, home, nation, neighbourhood etc. there is, and will always be, need for improvement. Precisely like how our politics and behaviour changes, everything else also must follow. This is what this project has been to me, an attempt to change our way of design thinking and practice to be able to step out of the standardised processes to also make room for the "exceptions".



Fig. 37 Close-up of Tower model 1:20, by author. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2023.



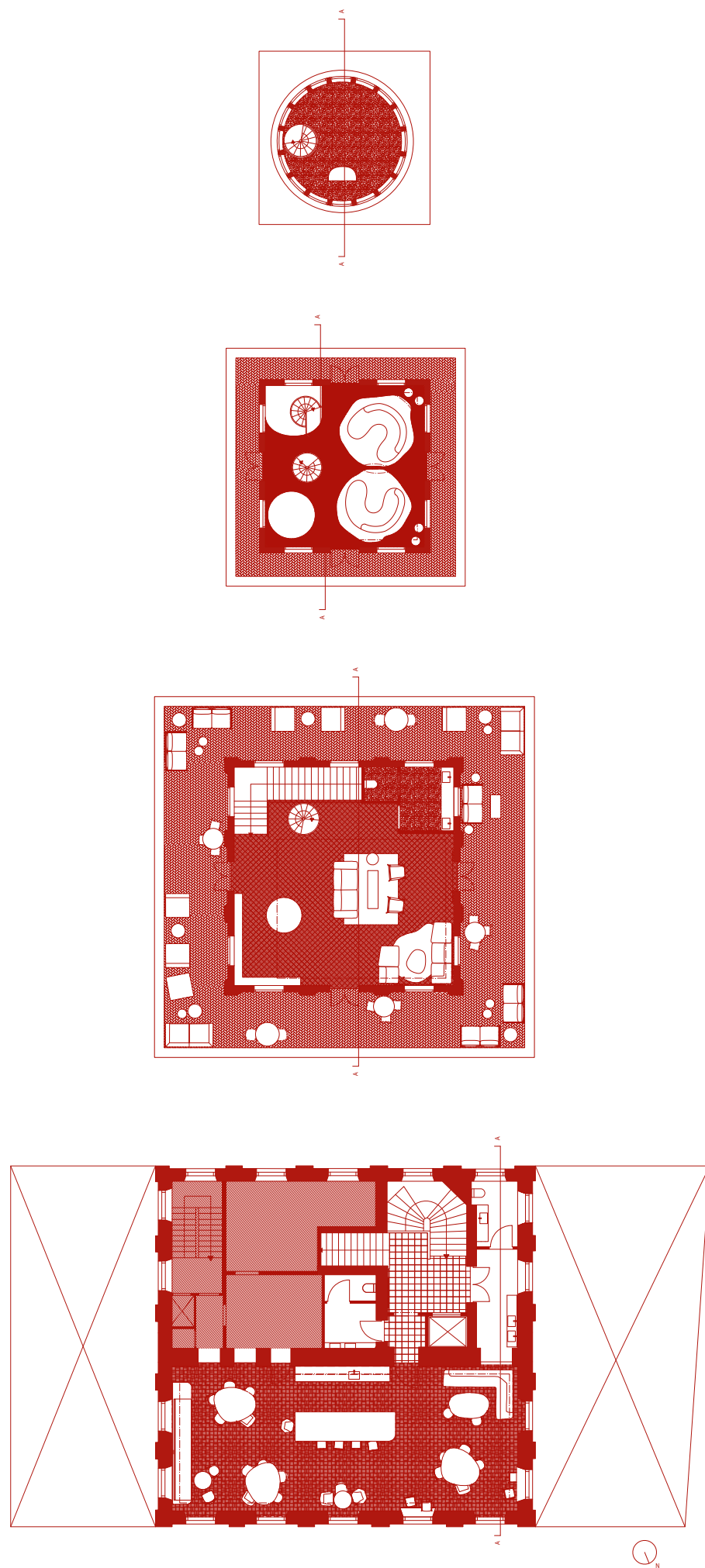


Fig. 38-41 Plan drawings of proposal, by author. Rhinoceros.

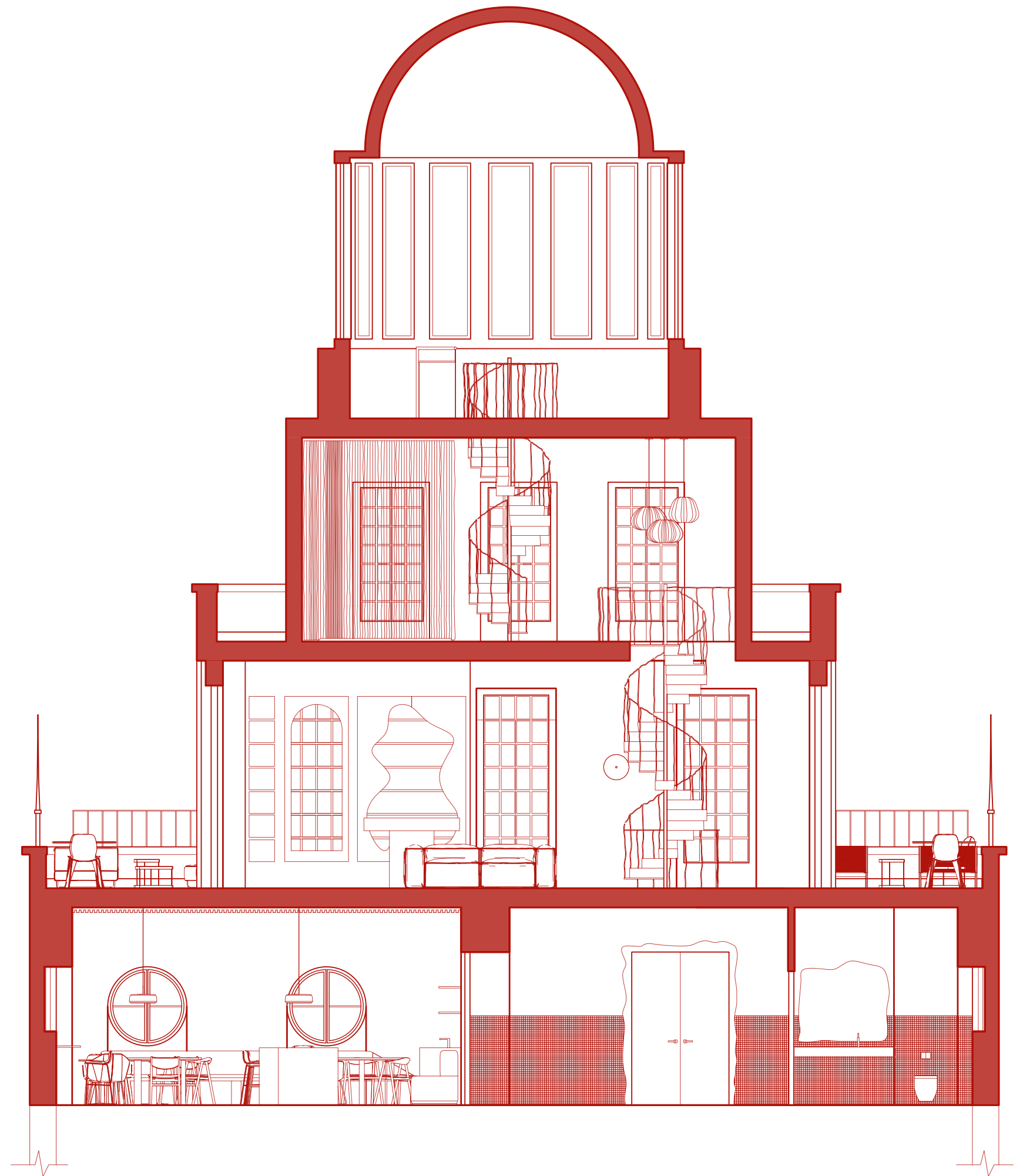


Fig. 42 Section A-A of proposal, by author. Rhinoceros.





Fig. 43 Close-up of Livingroom model 1:20, by author. Photography: Christine Dybing, 2023.



## *REFLECTING AND REFLECTIONS IN THE MIRROR*

It has been an alternate design process were most of the time I have been hesitant in my choices. One would maybe not think that when someone is doing a project based on such a strong and historically powerful concern, or rather the exact opposite, that of course this would come with its challenges. But then again, this turbulence of a process has challenged me in new ways of which I had not been challenged before. Where I have been needed to formulate and define words like feminism, radical and what a public space is both for me and for this exact project. I did have some sort of definition of what these words mean to me and how they mean in the context of design and architecture. But they have changed, or rather gained more knowledge and depth to them as I have read more literature and had more discussions around the topics during this project. Which, looking back, has given me a stronger belief of the importance of such an offer and others similar to it in our society.

Designing from someone else's childhood memories has been such a pleasure even though complicated at the same time. Where methods of combining photography, storytelling, original architectural drawings, and my imagination has been enlightening. Because of choosing to do something radical, both in the awareness of this historically being a home and a private space, but also the fact that the man has been the focal person in the storytelling's of the apartment, Bruno Liljefors and Hans, Ulla's grandfather. Maybe my concept would have gone in a different directing if it was a man within Ulla's family who I heard the stories from, because the stories and memories would not have been the same, they would have been from someone else's memories. Being able to share these moments with Ulla Gyllenstedt, who is above retirement age, and having her interest throughout the project is something I am forever grateful for.

Even though I have been decisive in my process, which I think has its positive and negative sides, I have throughout wanted to create an atmosphere and feeling of belonging. The feeling where you can enter a room and breath because the space has some moments of memories. Memories present in scents, materials, textures, view, movement, and people. I think a lot of these experiences are very present in my representation of the project, except scent, which was something I would have wanted to experiment with in the exhibition, but unfortunately was something I was not able to do.

With the choice of the colour red in my drawings, giving them a more illustrative character which, hopefully, made it easier for some to read as an outsider from the field of architecture. Discreetly placing them in different heights in the exhibition, was a very successful choice and visitors appreciated this a lot. Which makes me think how subtle small changes in how presenting a project can give someone an eureka experience and feeling included in something which often they feel excluded. Such as when it comes to reading architectural drawings, which needs some experience.

There are many other examples of how I have made a sense of belonging both in the proposal and in the presentation of the proposal. I think this has been interesting to work with, because of course you would want someone to understand your project in an exhibition, but to be able to create parts of the same atmosphere, which is present in my proposal, has been very fun to work with. Creating a sense of belonging in several layers of the project.

Through this project I am contributing to addressing the pressing issue of diversity and equality of public spaces in our societies. For it is important to have variety and be able to meet the needs of all people, to design also for the ones who have not had their own space and to set an example of being open to contemporary radical spaces. The discourse has been fruitful through the project and in the various conversations I have had with people I see a positive future for similar concepts. I hope this project can be of inspiration to repurpose our architectural heritage and to reconnect humans, architecture and society, and use feminist principles and practices as tools and values of how to create a more habitable world.





Fig. 44 Exhibition at Konstfack, by author. Photography: Katya L., 2023.



Fig. 45 Exhibition at Konstfack, by author. Photography: Katya L., 2023.



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