

Architects in Ambulance

Master's Thesis 2026
Chalmers School of Architecture
Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering

a thesis that asks : what can we gain in terms of being
agents of social equality from repositioning our practice as
ambulatory rather than geographically restrained?
*ambulance, latin ambulare
to go, to walk, to be in movement*

Philip Johansson

Examiner :
Marco Adelfio
Supervisor :
Jessica Lundin

Philip Johansson

Architects in Ambulance

a thesis that asks : what can we gain in
terms of being agents of social equality
from repositioning our practice as
ambulatory rather than geographically
restrained?

ambulance, latin *ambulare*
to go, to walk, to be in movement

Master's Thesis 2026

Chalmers School of Architecture
Department of Architecture
and Civil Engineering

Architecture and Planning
Beyond Sustainability [MPDSD]

Society, Justice, Space

Examiner : Marco Adelfio
Supervisor : Jessica Lundin

Gratitude is directed to:

Britt-Lisa Landahls fond

C E Wikströms minnesfond

For supporting the production of this thesis



An immense gratitude is aimed at the co-creators of this project, including but not limited to:

Maja Eknäs

Love,
support,
and
reminding me of the
many facets of life
beyond this
work.

Ludvig Jönsson

For being an
incredible
collaborator
and
friend.

Jessica Lundin

Tutoring
and
guiding
with unfathomable
energy
and
untangling the patterns
of my own mind.

Marco Adelfio

Opening
intellectual doors
for me
and
reinforcing a belief
in
architecture as a
tool for
good.

Tabita Nilsson
Peter Lindblom
Jarkko Nordlund
Toste Skånberg Dahlstedt
Peter Bäckgren

Initial help
with getting started with this process,
insight into techniques,
giving away material,
showing interest,
and the immense work that is running
the Chalmers Architecture School's workshop
as well as
the Chalmers FUSE labs.

Naima Callenberg
Peter Christensson
Daniel Norell

Giving time for
extra tutorials,
interesting conversations
about and beyond
the project
and
sharing invaluable
insights.

Acknowledgements:

portable
office
CARR

Adelina Allberg
Jenny Hällström
Julia Wiel Fredén
Diana Cailean
Tindra

Welcoming us
to Virserums konsthall,
hosting us,
taking interest in the work and getting involved,
helping with connections,
interesting conversations and practical
help. Without you this work would have been
something
entirely different.

Entering
the project,
capturing valuable
moments in the process
on video
and
being a fun
and
insightful
collaborator.

Alfred Ribbenvik

Samuel Dias de Carvalho
Lisa Bengtsson
Bruno Oliveira Gonçalves
Mattias Gunnarsson

For your
inestimable
contributions
to the learnings
of this project
and
far beyond.

Kenth Svensson
Thomas
Heiki
Ferdinand
Hedvig
7th and 8th grade classes from
the Prolympia School in Virserum
Dacke
Maggan
Tina Bågenhammar

Elin Kováts
Wera Holmquist
Ola Jönsson
Josefin Hjerdin Jönsson
Rune Eknäs
Carolne Eknäs Holm
Magnus Eknäs
Siwert Johansson
Carin Johansson
Simon Kováts
Anna Kováts
Andreas Hadzikostas
Rickard Johansson
Nicklas Wallman

Participating in the
on-site part of the project in
seminal ways, allowing us to gain
valuable knowledge
and
understanding of the questions asked
and
their insufficiency.

Various treasured efforts to contribute to the project,
without which it would not be in existence.

Acknowledgements:

How can explorations into positioning architectural practice as ambulatory give us insights into methodological tools for community engagement with local public space?

How can spatial peripheries in southern Sweden's countryside be self-defining and assume agency through temporary frameworks of discursive practice?

Research questions:

Keywords:

mobility

crossbenching

rurality

micro-scale

performance

Over the last decades, following increasingly neoliberal ideology permeating all layers of political life, centralization has taken an ever increasingly rigid hold on development on urban, regional, national and global scales. Power and resources are increasingly concentrated to higher instances, and an urban norm permeates public discourse. Simultaneously, processes of urbanization must be viewed as complex, multipolar and encapsulating much more than a simplified understanding of it as a rural to urban migration.

Arguing that the static, distanced and projecting nature of ordinary architecture practice is complicit with such extractive processes, this thesis attempts to challenge conceptions of what architects can do. Utilizing the idea of crossbenching as a critical spatial practice, the aim is to use an ambulatory approach to architectural work in order to enter spatial peripheries without formal mandate, and in that place invite people to engage in collective building as a para-institutional space for discourse and unofficial democracy. Learning from performance theory, it is argued that such spaces can activate latent agency through forming networks, probing the concerns and desires in people and seriously assess them and create platforms to act on them.

The thesis inquiry is tackled through a two-part project: Building a framework for ambulatory work, and testing it through action in field. The first part is conducted at the Chalmers School of Architecture, using methods of case studies, interviews with practitioners, and staging participatory events to test the performative functions of the built framework. The second part is carried out during a two-week field experiment in the small rural town of Virserum, Småland, where a space of participatory building is set up in collaboration with Virserums Konsthall, attempting to engage people in discussion about their local context and the architectural questions about local public space.

Rather than producing a design proposal, the thesis emphasizes a processual focus. The outcome takes the form of a "negative" manifesto, using the incongruence between hypotheses from the first phase and the complex relationality of the in-field operations to extract learnings that form fragments of an outline of what a decentralized and ambulant architectural practice could be.



Within the Positioning chapter, factors outlining the thesis are presented. Acting introductorily, the Positioning chapter guides the reading of following chapters.

In the context chapter, the Project's context is divided in two: an exploration of mobility in the form of a gathering of reference Projects and Practices; followed by a description of the on-site context that the work is Produced in.



"Building a framework", is equal to Phase 1 of the Project. The chapter ends with a collection of outcomes or learnings, which function as hypotheses for the upcoming on-site work.



The discussion chapter attempts to bring together the two Phases, synthesizing the learnings to formulate concepts that have emerged throughout the Process. It further addresses the research questions, aim and theory to situate the work in a wider discursive context.

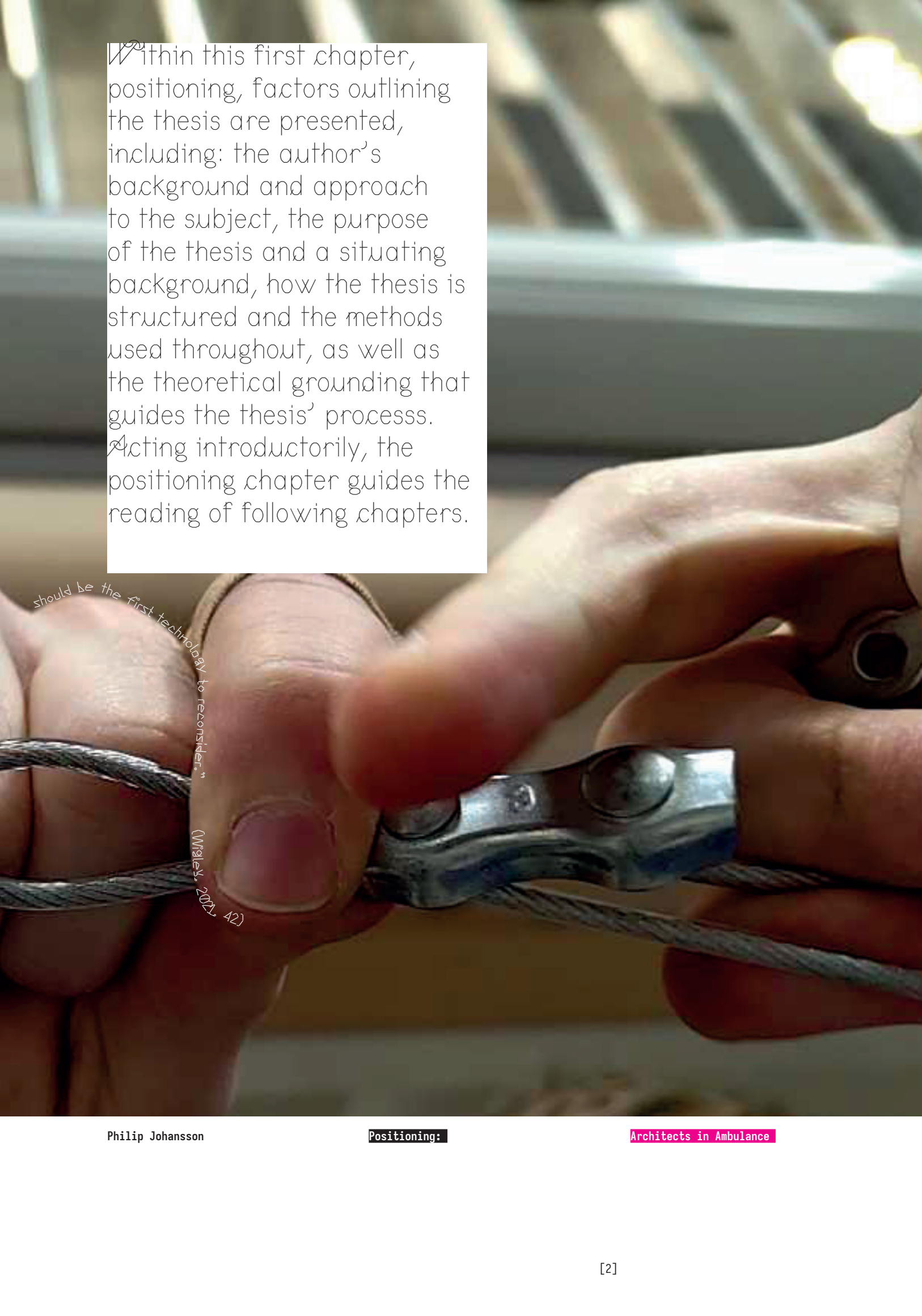


Entering Phase 2 of the Project, the in-field testing chapter Presents the on-site Process in Virserum. The newly gathered and Produced knowledge from the on-site Process leads up to an overview of outcomes and finally a written reflection about the time in field, comparing the outcomes to hypotheses from Phase 1.



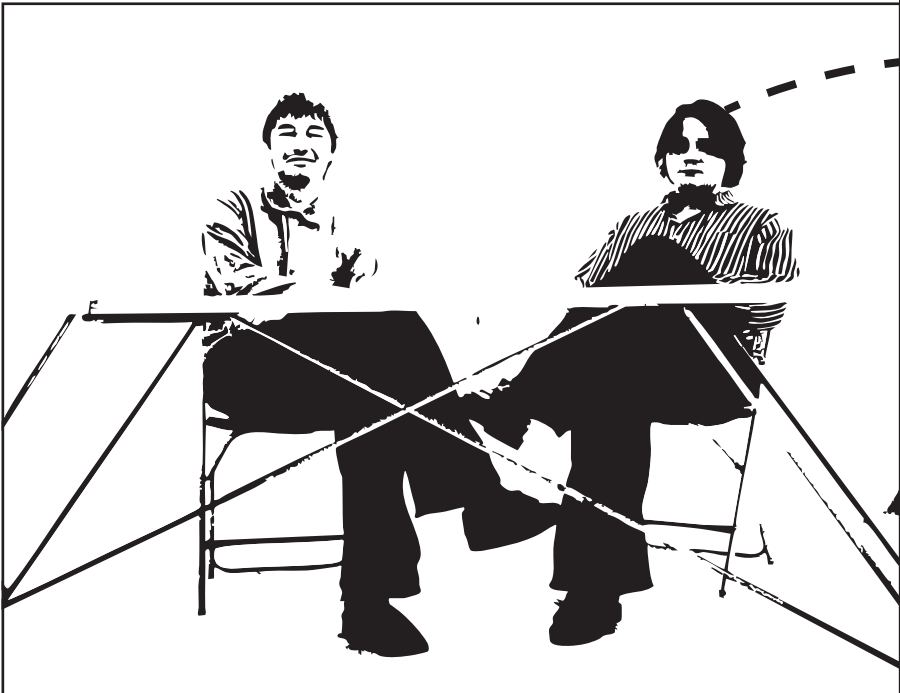
[]	Acknowledgements
	Abstract
	Index
[01]	Positioning
[03]	Introduction
	Disclaimer
[04]	Author background
[05]	Problem setting
	Aim
	Research questions
[06]	Delimitations
[07]	Project background
	Rurality as spatial and agential periphery
[09]	On envisioning a new role (for an architect)
[11]	Thesis structure overview
[13]	Method descriptions
[14]	Theoretical sources
[19]	Context
[21]	On mobility
	References (case studies)
[24]	On-site testbed
[25]	Phase 1: Building a framework
[27]	Iterative building/prototyping
	A somewhat chronological photo essay, commented.
[31]	Semi-structured interviews
[32]	Samuel Dias de Carvalho [ON/OFF studio etc.]
[33]	Bruno Oliveira Gonçalves [raumlaborberlin etc.]
[34]	Lisa Bengtsson [bygggleplatsen]
	Mattias Gunnarsson [artist and lecturer]
[35]	Architecture as/generating/hosting events
	Inflatable pop-up
[37]	Temporary lunch space
[38]	Pop-up cinema(s)
[40]	Enter the bubble (again)
[41]	Collection of findings
[47]	Phase 2: In-field testing
[49]	Introduction
[51]	Chronological account
[59]	Outcomes
[63]	Relational outcomes
[65]	Collection of learnings
[67]	Discussion
[69]	What did I find out from this criss-cross adventure?
[70]	Three fully unanticipated lessons learned along the way
[72]	Negative manifesto
[75]	Bibliography





Within this first chapter, positioning, factors outlining the thesis are presented, including: the author's background and approach to the subject, the purpose of the thesis and a situating background, how the thesis is structured and the methods used throughout, as well as the theoretical grounding that guides the thesis' process. Acting introductorily, the positioning chapter guides the reading of following chapters.

should be the first technology to reconsider." (Malen, 2007, 42)



Ludvig Jönsson to the left – collaborator – Me (Philip Johansson) on the right.

Introduction / Prologue:

A personal insecurity towards entering the field of architecture serves as the point of departure for the thesis. My personal understanding of an architect's contemporary role is that of an enabler, one who attempts to disrupt status quo and order by means of spatial intervention, and uses their knowledge as a tool for activating movements. Entering into a market economy, there are naturally few opportunities to monetize such a role: it plays strictly against the rules set out.

The thesis therefore moves to explore what such a role might entail, and the very hands-on knowledges needed to assume it. It questions the fundamental toolset learned through education in architecture in order to physically imagine and perform ways of standing in relation to architecture that are alternative to the mainstream way of working. Through constant trials, failures, reflections and reassemblages, it seeks critical spatial practice as an outset, not an addition.

Positioning:
Introduction

This master's thesis bases itself on empirical work done in collaboration with another student of architecture at Chalmers, Ludvig Jönsson [MPARC]. Therefore, every we, us, ours etc. refers to me (Philip Johansson) and Ludvig Jönsson, if the reference is not clearly aimed at a larger group. Ludvig has produced another thesis based on the project, yet departing from another theoretical framework and approach, focusing more heavily on the act of making in the one to one scale and the functions of improvisation in architectural work as tools to regain lost knowledges in the profession. Having collaborated extensively before in curricular projects as well as outside the university setting, and sharing interests in similar fields of academic discourse, the theses' trajectories intersect and overlap each other in part. They may also be produce apparent contradictions at times, however a discussion on the relation between the two has been deemed outside the scope of this work. This disclaimer primarily describes the relation between the two, and aims to clarify that each is autonomous. All written content in this the project report you are reading now, is produced by me. All empirical work is done in tandem with Ludvig, intertwined to the degree that separation of parts is impossible.

Disclaimer:

Curriculum Vitae: _

Education

Master of Science in Architecture MPDSD (Architecture and Planning Beyond Sustainability) Chalmers University of Technology	2024-2026
Contemporary Philosophy Södertörn University	2024
Theoretical Philosophy Gothenburg University	2023-2024
Bachelor of Science in Architecture Chalmers University of Technology Gothenburg, Sweden	2020-2023

Experience

Architect Eksjö Municipality	2025
Teaching assistant Arkitektur och Stadsbyggande For Greta Faxberg	2025
Co-founder of Transformationsstudio	2024
Teaching assistant Architectural history For Johan Linton	2022-2024
Chairperson Architects Sweden Chalmers.	2021-2022

Exhibitions

Workshop: Exhibition and participatory workshop about the future of Gothenburg and non-transparency in planning.	2024
Faut-il Brûler? - Arkitektur eller Regression? Exhibition commenting demolitions in Gothenburg.	2024

Built

Office Small interior transformation for private client.	2023
--	------

Competitions
+ proposals

Seating Competition entry for seating made from reused concrete for the City of Gothenburg.	2024
Pavilion Competition entry for the City of Gothenburg at annual book fair.	2023
Luleå Norra Hamn Published + exhibition + public seminar + proactive city plan.	2021-2023

Studios

Intgrated Sustainable Building Design:
Architects
Design Approaches and Narratives
Academic Approaches and General Structure
Building on Building
Nordic Architecture
Design Systems
Community Architecture and Urban Design
Sustainable Development and the Design
Professions
Beyond Sustainability

Positioning: _
Author background: _

Research question 1: Overarching

How can explorations into positioning architectural practice as ambulatory give us insights into methodological tools for community engagement with local public space?

Problem setting

Over the last decades, following increasingly neoliberal ideology permeating all layers of political life, centralization has taken an ever increasingly rigid hold on development on urban, regional, national and global scales. Consequently, power and resources are continually concentrated to centre on each level. Coupled with a permeating view of the urban condition as normative, the storytelling of decision-making institutions often conveys an image of the non-city as Other, an undesirable environment which is not "up to date". (Björling & Fredriksson, 2018).

Brenner (2016) further describes how the framing of the urban/rural relationship in itself produces false, or misguided, beliefs. Even generally accepted statistical results can be questionable, stemming from different conceptions of what urbanity and its counterpart is. The foundational concepts we generally use are products of ideological belief in urbanization, and taking a closer look at the concept itself unveils how it is always sustained by "[...] large-scale transformations of non-city spaces, often located at a considerable distance from the major centres of capital, labour and commerce." (Brenner, 2016, p. 123).

The neoliberal effect on planning further induces competition as a major driver for planning the non-city (Björling & Fredriksson, 2018), resulting in another image of the countryside based on its relationship to the urban populace – either as emergent urbanity or as resort for tourism when viewed through a lens of nostalgia (Lantz, 2020, pp. 78–80).

Stacking these effects upon each other brings forth a clear image of an urban-rural force field that hinders direct agency to produce a common space among communities in peripheral spaces.

Aim

This thesis aims to put forward experiments grounded in reshaping architectural work in a mobile mode of practice, in order to engage with a public and collectively produce knowledge about the unique values of the non-central spaces they live in. These experiments are supposed to give evidence for an alternative mode of work for architects that questions the power relations in the urban-rural binary, and even the binary itself. The outcome is a documentation of the experimental process, giving testament to a possible alternative way of positioning oneself as an architect.

Research question 2: Operative

How can spatial peripheries in southern Sweden's countryside be self-defining and assume agency through temporary frameworks of discursive practice?



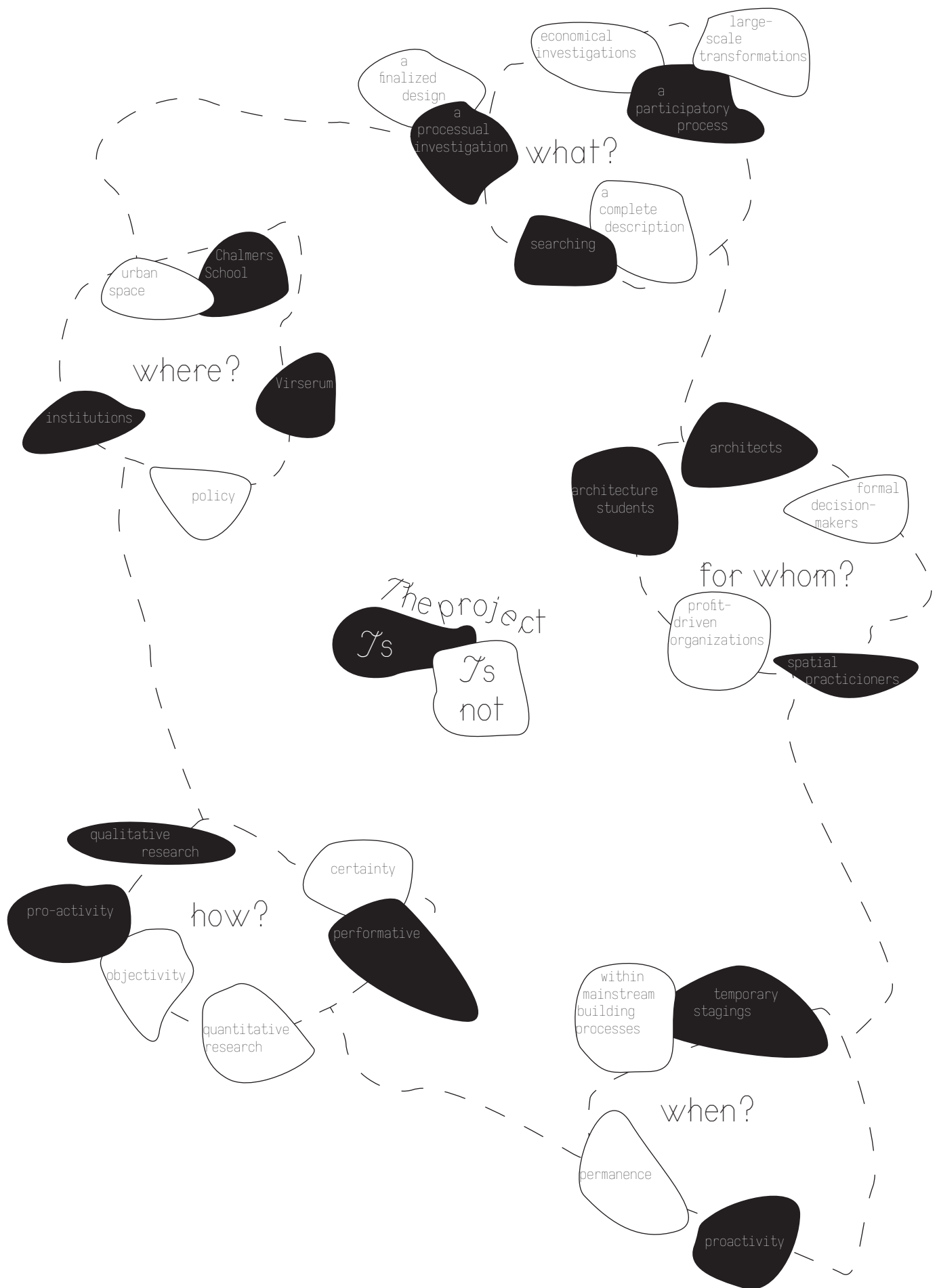
Early frame for workshop cart

Positioning:

Problem statement:

Aim:

Research questions:



Positioning:
Delimitations:

Rurality as Spatial and Agential Periphery

The division of urban and rural as a discourse subject has been on the table for quite some time – decades, not to say centuries – bringing about an extensive body of works in several fields of research (Limonad & Monte-Mór, 2015). Theories on groundings for such a division as well as its contemporary nature and what could be done to topple the hierarchical structure between them are diverse and plenty. Still, it is painstakingly obvious that a primary focus on urbanity is institutionalized and permeating academic and public debate. Exceptions, naturally, exist – programs for rural development exist on both national, EU and UN levels, grants for work can be awarded just because they take on rurality, and there are entire schools dedicated to rural inquiries (though mainly from industrial standpoints). Even so, it seems still impossible not to apprehend a high degree of urban control, or perhaps even domination over the vastly more spacious non-city lands globally.

Though urbanization processes are statistically continuously rising, it is a far too simplified version of the concept to view it as a migration from rural areas to cities (Brenner, 2016). The UN-DESA (2019) concluded that the world urban

population surpassed the rural ditto in 2007, a phenomenon that has been cited again and again as if the 50/50 ratio alone had some special quality compared to one that is 49/51. This type of statistical purity is questioned by Brenner (2016) in an attempt to lay bare a blind spot in theoretical circles regarding how the nomenclature employed in itself reproduces the image of an intact universal "city" and its outside, a likewise universal "hinterland" or "countryside" (2016, 121–122). Words like these and the attempt to define them (with different strategies depending on nationality and census bureau) make it very hard to define urbanization as a two-dimensional, linear vector. Rather, we should understand it as a complex, multifaceted and layered concept in which a capitalist logic is deeply embedded (Brenner, 2016, 123). This makes the case for a uniform countryside setting very hard to defend, seeing as multiple non-city spaces not necessarily share social conditions, but are united in their forced subsuming to urbanization processes. Thus, it is clear that urbanization as it appears in today is an ideological project, which opens up for the possibility of reviewing our understanding of urban/rural relationships and finding new and differentiated ways to read and work with

Positioning

Background: _

non-city settlements, beyond profit-driven aspirations (Brenner, 2016, 127).

Björling & Fredriksson (2018) gives an account of urbanizational processes on a Swedish national level, highlighting how traditionally perceived conceptual boundaries between urban and non-urban are dissolved. Contrarily, there is a steadily growing concentration of means, through power and resources, to centre in multilayered structure – globally, nationally, regionally and locally (Björling & Fredriksson, 2018, 7). Consequently, peripheries are (re)produced continuously on several levels, left without the infrastructure for local decision making nor means to pursue local interests in an effective way. Further, an increasing neoliberalization and privatization within political spectra, in Sweden as well as the global western sphere, gives way to an increasing market influence on planning (Björling & Fredriksson, 2018). One result is a shift in focus towards competitive force as a main driver for state programs, which generally manifests in the countryside as an inter-municipal rivalry for local emergent urbanization and cultivation of commerce – be it sports, industry or tourism. Ergo: the non-urban imitates the urban.

Parallel to (as well as affected by) neoliberal ideology gaining influence, the urban is assigned increasingly normative properties, giving it a primary position to the non-urban (Björling & Fredriksson, 2018, 7). Pointing back to Brenner, the situation could be described as one where the 'pure' concept of urbanity is dependent for defining itself on doing so against an antithesis – which needs to be the 'pure' rural. This means that while the urban and city-like contains notions of progress, development and desirability, the non-urban assumes a place of otherness, equating to being stigmatized, non-desirable, not up-to-date (Björling & Fredriksson, 2018, 7) and lacking grounds for support according to ruling dogma. The result is inevitably homogenizing, with capital gain as the main aim. Similarly, otherness can be further exploited through making it out as exotic and using it as a means to fuel competitive forces. This is done, e.g. through tourism, by utilizing images of the countryside through a nostalgic lens (Lantz, 2020, 78–80) in order to spark interest among a urban, well-capitalized class.



Encounter with in-field site.

Note: We do not claim to have the answer to what the alternative **"is"**. We only claim to try to find a way to serve it as it emerges.

The Right to the City (Lefebvre, 1996) frames the urban condition as a social space, and to use, live in and affect it in different ways is a collective human right. Through The Production of Space (Lefebvre, 1991) this can be further understood, as space is argued to be non-neutral and continually produced by social, economical and ideological drives. Perceived this way, the production of space ought to be a collective right to be strengthened. This thesis argues that representation in different forms works against this right, whence direct action can counteract the power-systems that inhibit people from adopting the right.

Limonad and Monte-Mór (2015), takes these ideas beyond what is perceived as city or urban, by reading Lefebvre more closely and arguing that the conditions of urbanity in modern times permeates even the rural, and so production of space is present wherever there is a collective of any kind. This reasoning is consonant with the ideas about rural space and place articulated above. "The right to the city" becomes a right to co-produce space wherever life happens.

Continued on next page >

Positioning
Background: _



Driving towards the site, 2026-04-06.

> Continuation from last page

There are, evidently, a multiplicity of peripheries emerging from processes of continuous centralization, here the non-urban in stands in the focal point. The rural population is, just like the urban ditto, affected by structurally enforced processes stemming from material conditions under the current ideological hegemony. As agency is centralized, what are the possibilities to create alternative realities, to produce spaces of specific, local, rural qualities and be self-defining in public space? I am interested here in the qualities of the non-centers and ways to enable spatial agency in what is remote or invisible to the urban dweller.

...

On Envisioning a New Role

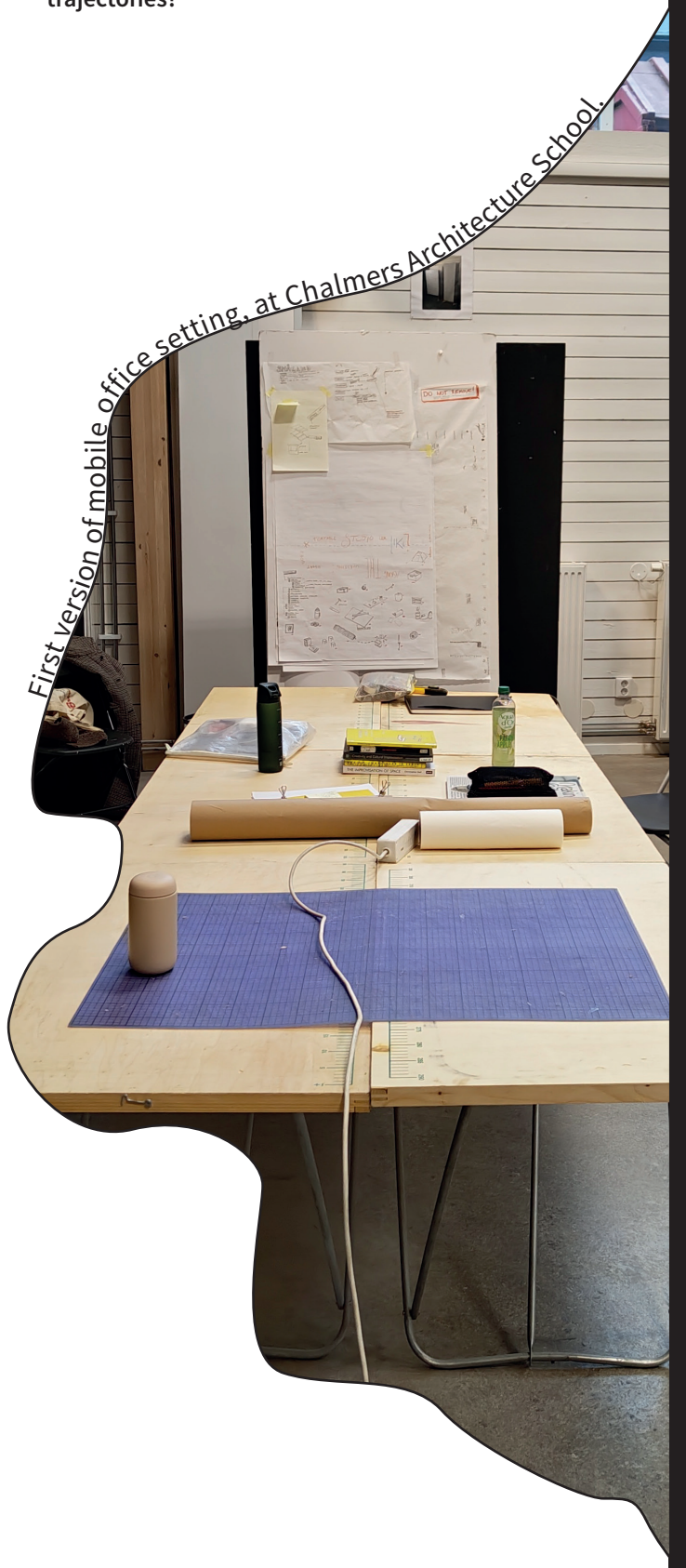
(for an architect)

Claiming to envision a "new" professional role for architects can seem quite futile. This project is not about finding a new way to claim ethical self-righteousness in the privileged role that one embodies as an architect. It is rather about imagining, probing, and embodying visions of what is possible to do as an architect. How can we use our education in ways that go beyond traditional definitions?

The search for an ethical practice means constant iteration. Unless the ethical is to be understood as a program, it must be continuously reconsidered. Today, it is perfectly reasonable to argue that if the architect

Positioning
Background:

does not assume responsibility for how their agency is positioned, it will be determined for them – naturally by the strongest agent in the current hegemonic system. The question is how to catch this agency, and make use of it. What mandate, and power, do we have to shape our own trajectories?



To use a somewhat beaten slogan, repeated by many, "[a]rchitecture is too important to be left to architects" (de Carlo, 2005). It remains true, but acting upon it is continuously denied through structural obstacles. The professionalized nature of architecture of today stands in the way of letting go of the control one is allowed. This also leads to the mainstream debate becoming simplified and style-focused in a populist manner, leading away from pressing questions being widely discussed in a serious manner. From this another question emerges – how can we form broad networks beyond professional boundaries that involves architecture in questions beyond its regular scope, and conversely, involves other professionals as well as people in their roles as civilians in questions of architecture?

Further drawing on de Carlo, such a rewriting could potentially open up for the non-canonical or "disorderly" qualities of what is excluded from privileged positions within power structures to emerge more clearly and with more presto into public space (2005, 18). Such unruliness has the potential to create more complex webs of relationships, constantly reconfiguring itself, and thereby letting process rule over the static and stagnant.

Connecting back to the problems of centralization, the rural is primarily planned from institutional levels in conjunction with market actors. The role of the architect or planner within this situation is to exercise control by being able to oversee a totality. The top-down, standard ways of planning can be simplified as planning through maps, with vastly different experience of place than from living in and from the space signified in the map. This situation of projection towards a place of otherness is a central problem connecting the architecture industry to centralizing processes – The legal structure shaping power so that a few exercise power over the many (Lefebvre, 1991).

Instead of finding ways to open the planning processes of state-mandated institutions, as these are increasingly conflated with market actors (Björling & Fredriksson 2018) – giving them incentives not to prioritize civilian spatial agency – this thesis puts interest in how a practitioner of architecture outside urban and regional planning structures can assume a role that is countering above mentioned phenomena. This is done primarily through asking how the setting of the static (often city-bound) office can be uprooted, aiming towards a fully nomadic practice.

Positioning
Background:

Centralization, Urbanization
(Brenner, 2016)

Nostalgia and Imagery
(Lantz, 2020)

Centralization, Urban Norm, Neocapitalist Planning
(Björling & Fredriksson, 2018)

The Right to the City, The Production of Space
(Lefebvre, 1996, 1991)

Beyond the Right to the City
(Limonad, Monte-Mór, 2015)

Architecture's Public
(De Carlo, 2005)

Crossbenching
(Miessen, 2010, 2016)

Practice-in-action
(Miessen, 2016, 2024)

Para-institutional space
(Miessen, 2024)

Performance
(Miessen, 2016, 2024; Kassem, 2019; Schweder, 2022)

Event
(Kassem, 2019)

Reflection-in-action
(Schön, 2003[1995])

Background

Rurality as spatial and
agential periphery

On envisioning a new role
(for an architect)
[p. 9]

Building a framework

Iterative building [pp. 27-30]

Semi-structured interviews [pp. 31-34]

Performing events [pp. 35-40]

Case studies of
reference practices [pp. 21-23]

Hypotheses
Collection

Positioning:

Thesis structure overview:

The project takes on a process-driven approach, letting inputs received throughout the process shape the next step. It is divided into two parts: building a framework for nomadic architectural work, and testing it in field. The learnings from the building phase materialize in the framework, and

are brought together in a collection that functionally are hypotheses for a methodology of the work in field. As the outcomes of the field work appear, they are reflected upon and compared to the hypotheses in order to say something about a way forward through the final outcome: a mapping of failures.

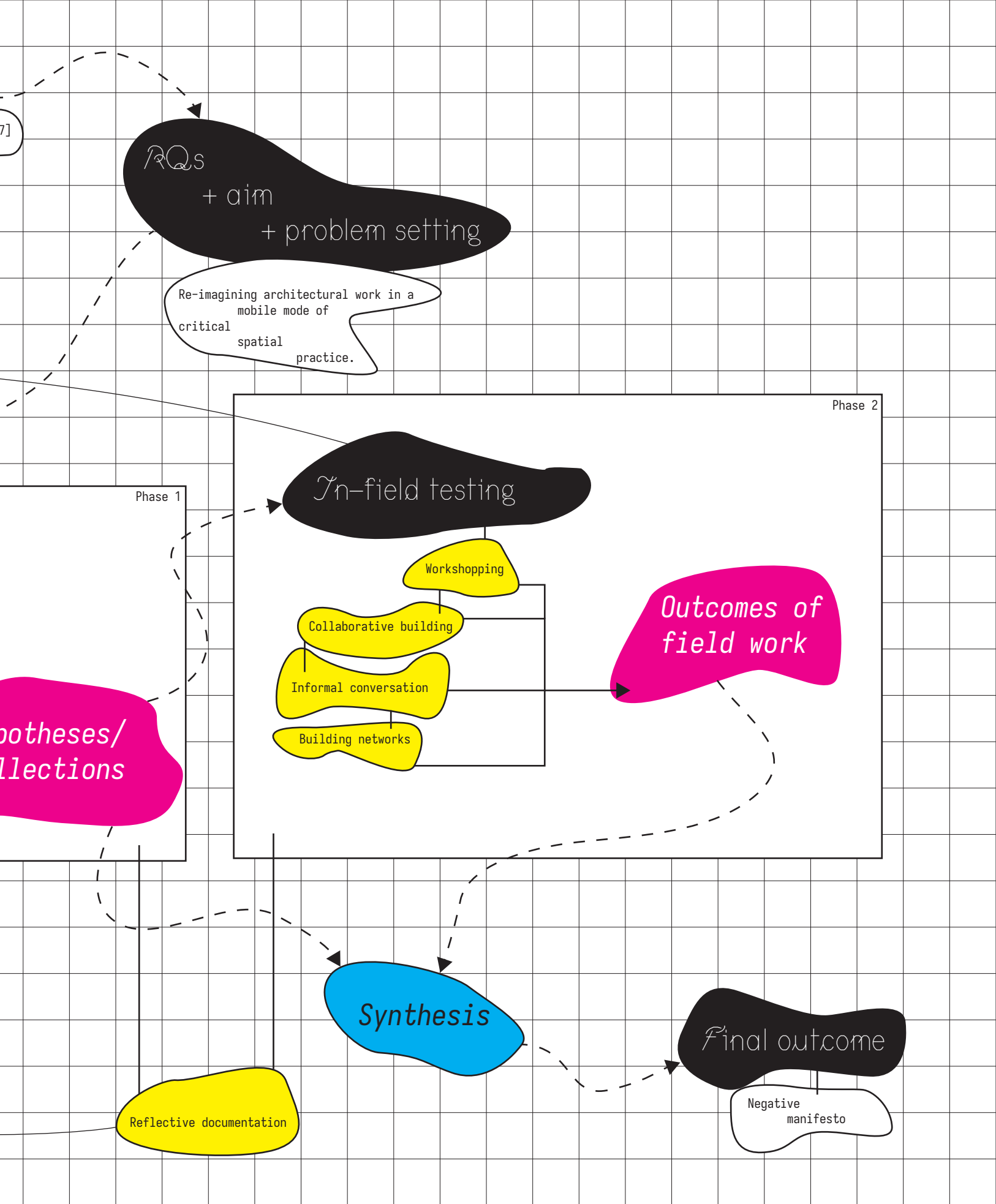


Fig. 1. Diagram showing how parts of the thesis relate to one another.

Positioning:
Thesis structure overview:

Methods

Event-making/Performance

While still on campus, the building/prototyping process is supplied by a prototype development for the on-site methods of engagement. This takes the form of performative events set up to give insights into the design of the office as well as the programming of on-site events. On-site, the performative takes the form of the prepared framework as well as our acting and choreographing, as methods for igniting engagement and lead the public into a process. These methods are informed by Schweder (2022) and Kassem (2019), see p. 16.

Building/Prototyping

The project hinges on building as a multi-functional tool. The first phase is heavily dependent on the assemblage of mobile office setting or framework. It is built with an improvisational approach, relating to the availability of sourced material as well as design principles continuously developed in dialogue with other methods equipped during this phase. In the second phase, collective building is used as a process for activating concern and care for local public space as a step towards agency towards the same. Thus, building becomes a tool for embodied learning, imagining and preparing for on-site work, and a performative setting for co-learning and sharing experiences.

Interviews

As a method for acquiring tools to give the project a readable (whether tangible or not) outcome, interviews and relaxed conversations with experienced practitioners in the field is applied. This is based on a model for 'semi-structured interviews', which is a common method in qualitative studies. However, since these are not meant to be used in a comparative study, the questions posed vary, depending on the interviewee. The subjects proposed in the questionnaires include participation, performance, public engagement, communication, legality, representation etc. The interviews further inform the building of the mobile office framework as well as on-site engagement.

Casestudies

During the first phase of the work a series of case studies on relevant practices and projects are being done, partly to inform the thesis project and partly for the purpose of identifying gaps to fill and illuminate the landscape of practice and discourse where the project is situated.

(sort of) Ethnographic observations

Even though programming of the on-site period is done beforehand, being attentive and open to reevaluate decisions depending on local circumstances is crucial. Hence, ethnographic observations inform the on-site process heavily, and especially the resulting manifesto, being derived from on-site learnings. As these observations are fully intrusive (Avilla-Royo, 2023), these are non-generalizable, however they give less precisely put information about the on-site process and the methods employed, such as performativity.

Process documentation

The whole process is continually documented through images and texts in a field diary serving as an open document that evolves as a steadily growing library over the experiences of mobile working. This ensures that everything that happens is formalized to some degree. This practice is inspired by Donald Schön's (2003[1995]) concept of being a 'reflective practitioner'. This continuous permits a critical stance towards one's own practice in order to facilitate the research-by-practice approach, as well as to connect practice with theory in a reciprocal relationship.

1:1 scale sketching

Avoiding the traditional tools we are used to as architects, sketching in a 1:1 scale with materials available through different modes of sourcing gives us embodied knowledge of interacting with the materials, or staging a place. The knowledge produced is a know-how that is tacit, as described by Donald Schön (2003 [1995]).

On-site-being

Being on-site is central to the reason for being mobile - being able to understand things with boots on the ground. In this project this is taken on partly by building a mobile framework, comparable to an office setting, for architectural work, but also making use of partnering with a local institutions, and this way making ourselves understood as "hands-on technicians" (Avilla-Royo, 2023, 88).

Positioning:

Methods:

This line of theoretical settings work to frame an overall approach to the project – utilizing the terminology of crossbenching as a mode of criticality in spatial practice, developed by Markus Miessen through many research projects and practice. These are the primary outline for central concepts, consisting of texts

1, 2 and 4, turning from the Miessen's critique of mainstream utilization of participatory methods towards a suggestion for participatory practice based on providing alternative spaces and frameworks for democratic discourse. Texts 2 and 3 give a contextualization

of the view of practice as research-instrument pertaining to the situated, where research outcomes are not only present in this report but also in us, as well as all participants in the project. Concepts of performance, event and creating such alternative spaces in a 1:1 scale are mentioned in Miessen's writing, as well as exemplified by reflections on an array of practical examples in his *Agonistic Assemblies* (2024) anthology. As these are actions

and strategies that have influenced this thesis project, texts 5 and 6 lays out the understanding of performance and event based on a reading of Alex Schweder's *Performance Architecture* (2022) and a paper on learning from curation and exhibition for the notion of 'event' by Ayman Kassem (2019).

Theoretical sources here described and referenced are used as inspiration, providing a framework for the project's path forward. By iteratively studying chosen literature throughout the project, they provide several functions at once – justifying chosen methods and actions, clarifying findings throughout the project and sustaining the project through providing a base that resonates with personal perceptions of the process. The text includes words that are highlighted when describing central concepts for the project. Such words is found in the following parts of the booklet, then referring back to these descriptions for clearer definitions.

1 Crossbenching

The concept of **crossbenching**, theorized by Markus Miessen (2010; 2016; 2024) as a model of participatory practice, is adopted as an overarching approach to this thesis. Based to a substantial degree on Chantal Mouffes' political theory of radical democracy as agonistic, it argues a mainstream use of the word "participation" is based on consensus-seeking processes. The consensual model is understood to be predetermined to favor the stronger party, cementing a hierarchical model of participation. Further, it is argued that a large number of top-down attempts at extending democratic influence are in reality alibis for outsourcing responsibility to an unnamed 'people'. (Miessen, 2010)

Accordingly, such invitation to participate is furthering the structures set out to be disrupted and replaced with horizontal ones: "Instead of viewing participation as a top-down opening of the decision-making process, one should see real participation as an individual entrance strategy toward personal empowerment; as a post-consensus method of getting in the door." (Miessen, 2016, 24).

Driving this critique towards a prescriptive argument, participatory practice is argued by Miessen to be powerful asset for sustaining a critical spatial practice (2016) , if reinterpreted. Again pointing towards Chantal Mouffe, truly democratic processes must be based in **dissensus**, as radical democracy must be understood as



a continuous process of becoming (Miessen, 2024). The architect crossbencher, is thus a practitioner who assumes responsibility as an **uninvited outsider** positioning themselves in a certain context without mandate, in order to spark interaction through the inherent friction in the act (Miessen, 2010). In a postscript to the 2010 book *The nightmare of participation*, Carson Chan assigned the uninvited outsider the role of an **intellectual midwife**, one that is not themselves knowledgeable in a field but able to "bring it forth in others" (Chan, 2010).

While the published works on crossbenching are primarily concerned with the urban setting, the operative model suggested seems fit to be tested in a rural condition, depending on the argument that processes of urbanization permeate the rural, laid out in the background chapter of this thesis (see pp. 7–10), as well as its focus on the local and critical.

Positioning:

Theoretical sources:

This thesis further draws on Miessen to contextualize

2 Practice-in-action

its practice-driven approach. The concept of 'crossbenching' is meant to be understood as operative, championing "practice-in-action" as a methodology of research and giving emphasis to the intrinsically experimental nature of designing: "In practice, things are being introduced into the world with little comprehension of what they will become" (Miessen, 2024, 35). Understood this way, design-builds produced in this thesis and put out in the world can give feedback on assumptions made. This underlines an understanding of theory and practice to be mutually dependent – resisting an understanding of theory as existing freely on an independent plane, instead seeing it as developed from, and reciprocal with, multiple actual sites and spaces in time (Miessen, 2016).

By such reasoning, the aspect of failure becomes increasingly important. Failures here will be understood as unexpected diversions from a planned trajectory, useful as feedback in a way somewhat analogous to a negative epistemology, tracing boundaries of a possible mode of practice.

This entails a proactive stance as a means to arrive at critical spatial practice – rather than realizability repressing the critical urge, or possibly as bad, criticality abstaining from realization, proactivity means accepting the precarious situation one is in and confronting it head on with a practice that is unsolicited and with the means one can muster. (Miessen, 2016)

3 Reflection-in-action

As a continuation

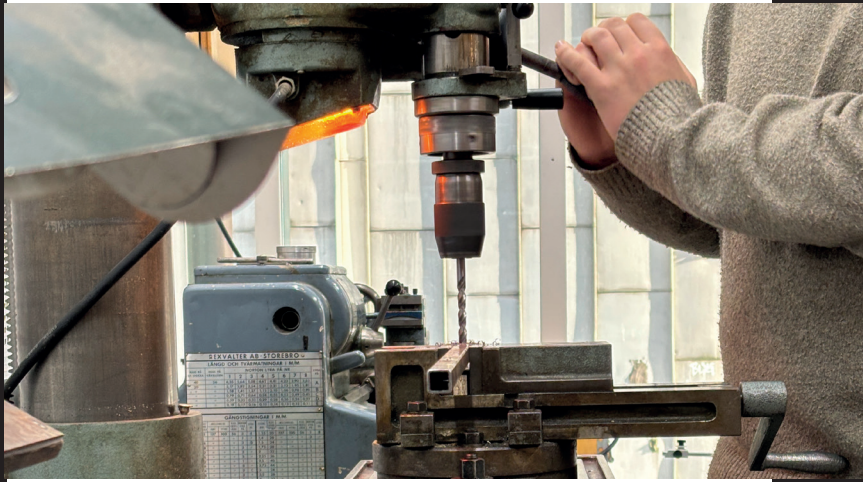
of the idea of practice-in-action as a mode of research, the thesis project further hinges on the idea of the "Reflective Practitioner" (Schön, 2003[1995]) as a professional role where a positivist epistemology is critiqued for its insufficiency in describing the "know-how" that is part and parcel of both everyday civilian and professional life, to the advantage of a view of knowledge being both produced and existing "within" practice.

Positioning:
Theoretical sources:

Schön argues that a conventional understanding of knowledge in relation to action or practice sees them as inherently divided, a misguided understanding of reflection as "preparation for action only as an implementation of thought" (2003[1995], 280). Such an understanding bases itself on thinking and knowing as a process that could be described as mathematical, based on utterances that are either true or false. Taking the ordinary knowledge of how to ride a bike, this view quickly gets problematic – it is not sufficient to know how the pedals rotate, how the gears function, how to counter balance it or to not slam the front brake at full speed – it requires a process of reflection in action and trial and error. The knowledge produced is a know-how that is not based on a series of knowledges that can be factually described and build tectonically upon each other – but rather a tacit knowledge, existing in the act, and only in the act.

Taking this into the domain of what we often perceive as more intellectual practice, Schön (2003[1995]) argues that this mode of knowing more often than not is very present in professional work as well, for example in handling vast quantities of information while not remembering it word for word or number for number, that ability is a kind of knowledge derived from a process of reflecting-in-action and being able to identify more and more patterns. The knowing indescribable, it often escapes the awareness of the holder of it.

Being concerned with the "everyday" as a place of genuine concerns (Miessen, 2016, 84), we need to acknowledge that the production of such tacit knowledge in practice is not something happening only with us in this project, but with participants in the production of spaces. Even when not being the instigator of a process, the participant needs to improvise in actions and speech in order to play the role they choose, meanwhile letting their intellect perform a plethora of complex and miniscule reflections and decisions within the act and thereby learning from its consequences. Within this play of performances (see below), knowledge is produced that is not tangible or describable in words, as the know-how is "in the act" (Schön, 2003[1995]).



Para-institutional space

4

As an alternative to the arguable non-sufficiency

of top-down engagements in participation, and a perceived systematic unwillingness to answer to dissensual voices, Miessen argues that "it is the self-initiated and assumed task of critical spatial practice to deliver precisely this quality in the spatial realm." (2016, 33). It is by this reasoning "para-institutions" are called to be formed, meaning that the role of the crossbencher allows for calling into question what architectural dimensions are needed in order to be able to **set a stage** where local discursive practice can take place (Miessen, 2024).

The aim for such **para-institutional spaces** is to promote a "political biodiversity" (Miessen 2024, 65), meant to stir up the sedimented praxes of democracy that are present today. It is further meant to activate agencies by way of producing community and spaces for informal political decision-making (Miessen, 2024), the result of which could vary extensively.

Arguing that the making public of an increasing number of resources, votes, processes, discussions, etc. renders the publicness itself redundant because of the sheer volume of things and responsibilities outsourced on participants, Miessen (2016, 84) holds that "real" discussions with real consequences are moved to so-called "gray zones" of public life – kitchens, corridors or other "in-between" spaces. It is therefore in these **everyday spaces** a critical spatial practice must find its field of operations.

Stressing the importance of proximity as an essential value for the creation of such arenas of discourse, Miessen underlines how this thesis' on-site based, socially guided, work finds its way as research. When on site, within the context of the social bonds formed or met, the being-in-place itself is essential to evaluate in which ways the spaces produced in this thesis work or do not work to create



these alternative political arenas, producing an "archival model" (Miessen, 2024) in a search for an alternative methodology.

Performance

5

In order to imagine, and produce, **informal spaces of discourse**, Miessen highlights the "critical importance of social gathering based on the performative, the choreographic, and [...] the question of democratic becoming through the 1:1 physical scale of cultures of assembly" (2024, 33). This thesis project addresses such values through making use of the performative as a key concept for establishing ephemeral sites of interaction and discussion.

The use of **performance**, and the understanding thereof, is informed by Alex Schweder's (2022) writing on coupling architecture with performance theory and performance art, in order to understand the architecture as processual and through its methodology, rather than as an agglomeration of built objects. As this thesis project is focused on relationships between humans and things, the use of performance architecture as Schweder describes it facilitates an interpretation of the performative workings of objects on a certain setting.

Schweder traces a history of the entrance of the performative into academic discourse, starting with J.L. Austin's thinking of language containing performative utterances in the 1950's. According to such an understanding, certain utterances do not describe the world as perceived but produces a new perception of it, thereby producing a certain reality and "alter[ing] material conditions" (Schweder, 2022, 57). One important and distinct use of language in a performative manner within the mainstream practice of architecture, is naming spaces on a drawing, often a plan drawing, what is

Positioning:

Theoretical sources:

Central to a performative understanding of architecture, and

extensively known as programming. The naming in itself prescribes a certain use of a space according to normative everyday practices, such as dining room, bedroom, etc. (Schweder, 2022, 58). Contrarily, the same act of naming could be used subversively in order to prescribe non-normative uses, and further, the participants using a space can also choose to act in a way that in itself re-configures the properties of the space.

Further, Schweder argues for a view of architecture as a language which by itself makes performative statements (2022, 58). This way, form becomes intrinsically connected with human behaviors and forms relationships to and among humans, similar to Miessen's request for reestablishing relationships between object and subject within critical spatial practice (2016, 45).

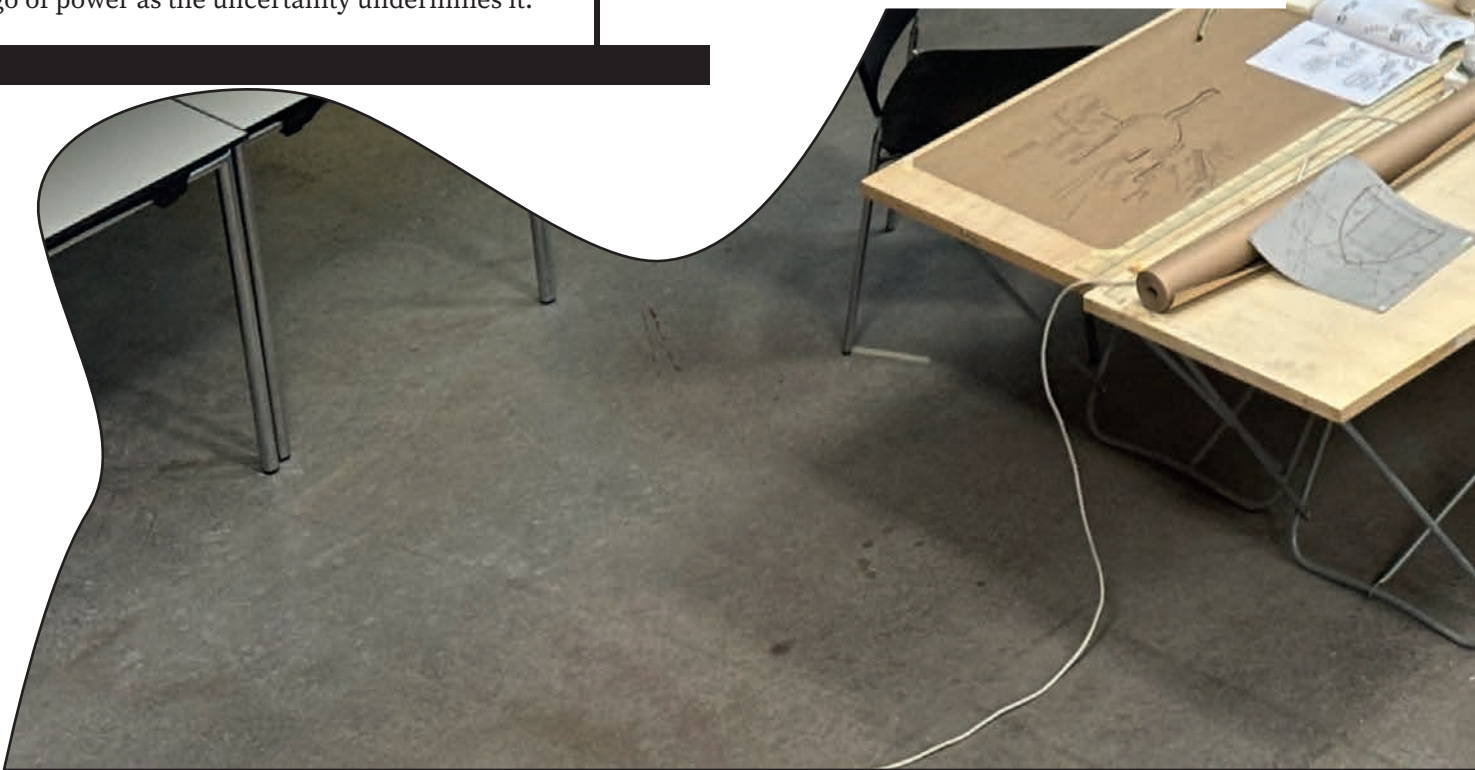
One of the cornerstones of Schweder's work is Judith Butler's thinking of gender roles as performative subjectivities, that is investigated by Schweder in order to find use of performance as subjectifying with a wider scope, not specifically addressing gender (2022). This thesis does not use such terminology of subject or examine how the performances within it are subjectifying, but rather aims to make use of the borders between perceived reality and fiction to produce spaces based on very minimal and ephemeral spatial settings, to the advantage of promoting and staging critical spatial practice. This is led by the conceptual framing of architecture coupled with performance theory, questioning the relationships between architects and users (Schweder, 2022, 60–61). The role of users as an audience, simply experiencing the "factual", already built space, they are introduced as co-constituents of space. Reciprocally, the role of the architect is called into question as it is widened and altered – primarily trying to curate an event but having to let go of power as the uncertainty undermines it.

with it the focus on process rather than product, is the notion of the event. In this sense, this thesis project is also informed by exhibition and curatorial practice, as using different 1:1 scale interventions, objects and choreographed action in an event in order to produce an experience. Thusly, this entails an architecture of intervention that is materially frugal or even immaterial (Kassem, 2019).

The event-character of interventions is employed in order to temporarily alter, or "animate" a certain space for a certain time. Kassem divides the functions of: "1) Architecture as the event, 2) Architecture as a host for events, 3) Architecture as a generator of events" (2019, 7, emphases added), as three dimensions working either simultaneously or individually to perform a certain spatial setting at a certain time.

Further, Kassem suggests, we can borrow the term unfolding of events from performance art, as the event-character lends itself to a certain level of unpredictability revealing new insights into the constituents of a performance (2019, 7), allowing for the productive use of mistakes and failures proposed by Miessen (2016, 50). As an event unfolds, the unpredictability and open-endedness of an event plays to the advantage of participation, allowing for participants to alter the nature of the performative setting, and contrarily, to be transformed or to have relations be transformed (Kassem, 2019).

This way, the architecture design-builds within this thesis are aimed at producing, hosting and generating events with an open-ended plan towards their unfolding, thereby leaving space for the learnings that will be the outcome of the thesis project.







In the context chapter, the project's context is divided in two: an exploration of mobility in the form of a gathering of reference projects and practices; followed by a description of the on-site context that the work is produced in, which could be seen as a test-bed - the on-site work in Virserum, collaborating with the local art centre.



Philip Johansson

Context:

Architects in Ambulance

On mobility:

Based on the fact that the history of the human species being settled is far superseded by the period when constant movement was the standard, it would not be outrageous to argue that nomadism is a very human trait. Still, dominant cultures worldwide share the attribute of being stationary, living of standardized and industrialized production of goods, transportation, food, energy and infrastructure. Capitalist culture is highly dependent on control through measurability, while nomadism is the chaotic antithesis of the same – depending to a significantly higher degree on contingencies.

As architectures are then, in a sense, our oldest form of architecture. It is therefore interesting to witness the “renaissance” of mobile architectures in western

society being viewed as inventions of novelty. Just as well as industrialization paved the way for mass production of stationary buildings, housing and industry, it produced the possibility for the temporary, flexible and prototypical. This released a wave of experimentation in the 20th century, pointing towards a future of possibilities (Siegal, 2002).

While it is widely understood that programming space defines outcomes in every

1/5 The Local Support Ambulatory Service, SAAL (Serviço Ambulatório de Apoio Local) was a portuguese innovation of participatory architecture in the form of a national program. Run between 1974 and 1976 on the basis of need for higher quality of housing throughout the country (Maier, 2015, April 16). It was based on on-site participatory work from among others architects, engineers and inhabitants, and a pioneering practice through its direct exchange consisting of in-place organized “brigades”, and resulting in varied answers to the housing needs.

While troubled by financial, political and bureaucratic issues, the project produced over 150 operations clearly involving local communities in shaping their future. (Incite-DEM, n.d.)

SAAL works as an initial inspiration to the project's aim for decentralization of professional action. Further, it was for its time an experiment in reshaping common practices and dismantling professionalized aspects of building and planning that gate-keeps the sphere of architecture. While a nationally endorsed project, this is still relevant for the thesis as a precedent and an idea of practice that transcends existing power structures.

2/5 Fantastic Norway was a studio from 2003-2013 founded by classmates at BAS (Bergen Architecture School) Erlend Blakstad Haffner and Håkon Matre Aasarød, when in year three of their education starting their own trajectory by starting to move around between different cities throughout Norway. Operating out of a bright red caravan, their goal was to identify wishes and concerns among the public through using the caravan and the space around it as a platform for meetings, discussions and workshops, gathering a knowledge database at every place that formalized local but non-recognized experiences. This was used to instigate community-led projects, amplifying voices through media outlets and a use of the knowledge in design proposals. (Harboe, 2012)

The Fantastic Norway practice is used as a source for developing methods in this thesis. Their way of nomadicism, and entering into places with no knowledge of the local situation beforehand, is certainly a main inspiration for the project. Exhibiting at La Biennale di Venezia in 2008, they presented their own method as a chart called the make-it-fantastic method (Harboe, 2012, 71) including extensive use of local media for outreach and communication, and finding and befriending local actors that have extensive networks and local influence. These are useful takeaways to make the on-site time in the project efficient and leave behind an actual outcome.

Context:

References:

The text above includes highlights, which are meant to illuminate main concepts and learnings taken from these case studies. These contribute to the overall learnings and findings of the first phase of the thesis project, to be found later in Collections (see pp. 43-46).

architectural situation, there is a lack of self-awareness in the mainstream architectural industry: certainly the program that denotes the place and situation of work for an architect delimits and preconditions what outcomes are possible.

This project’s aim, to produce a suggestion for an alternative methodology based on mobility and decentralization of practice, is not sufficiently answered if the only answer is a design for a regular office on wheels. The mobile architecture is not just characterized by its potential for movement, but needs to be a purposeful and efficient infrastructure for certain functions (Siegal, 2002). Hence, a few key references to study are chosen and presented here, highlighting how the world of mobile architectures for practicing

architecture already exists, and the entry of this thesis into the field as another possible methodology among others.

The case studies serves as precedents of socially engaged practice based on mobility as a grounding factor, but also show the lack of similar practices in the area selected for study within this thesis project. Thereby, a clear gap to be investigated shows itself.

3/5 The architectural office Guerilla Architects works extensively with small-scale urban interventions in a socially critical manner. One project, that is a useful reference for this thesis project is the **Stadt:Symbiont** (Guerilla Architects, n.d.), a mobile co-working office built inside a caravan, meant to work within an urban setting and promoting cross-disciplinary meeting in a **less static and high-threshold** than the office spaces in Berlin. This provides a precedent for how to work with **open-access information** regarding the process and the repeatability of the thesis project, as well as aspects of mobility that are crucial to sustain the practice. Furthermore, it highlights an aspect of the thesis which is not central, but valuable: recently graduated peers in architecture face an unstable labor market, a rigid industry, and national politics that severs processes of sustainable development. Finding ways to self-organize, renouncing the static position of offices, and making use of public resources can offer opportunities to engage with architecture in a plethora of new ways.

4/5 Translated into Ambulance for Monuments in English, **Ambulanța Pentru Monumente** is self-descriptive. “[R]oaming the Romanian countryside, calling on the aid of local people, together with architecture students, to repair endangered architectural heritage” (Forty five degrees, 2022, 190), the organization is primarily focused on preservation of built structures threatened by years of neglect. However, while this approach is earnest, it becomes an easily communicable concept that brings with it a sustainable long-time goal: to **activate engagement** among people living around the “monument” as well as local authorities. By this method, interest is sparked in preserving collective artifacts and people are trained in self-organization, one place at a time. While on-site, traditional methods are applied, working with **hands-on approaches** (Forty five degrees, 2022, 194), igniting an embodied knowledge production for methodological and organizational models.

Creating interest and forming relationships is reliant on **building trust**, requiring patience and continuity through employing daily activities in the local context, such as going to a bar and chatting with locals (Forty five degrees, 2022, 197). While the project is clear on a surface level – learning together about caring for local common spaces and resources – it relies very much on seemingly insignificant but vitally important actions. This is a crucial aspect inspiring the thesis, taken as a lesson for on-site work. While a clear language and communication can lower the threshold for civilians to get engaged, approaching people through existing infrastructure and **infiltrating the social dimension** cannot be overlooked.

is a nomadic library of artifacts of indigenous knowledges, collected and built as a central and ongoing part of the work of Sámi architect and artist Joar Nango. Including over 500 books, video material, reused materials, tools etc., it is a traveling exhibition that works as a database, social space and a structure that 'speaks' on the value of indigenous approaches in modern times. It is a critical space of questioning and non-canonical understanding of architecture in relation to resource use, methodology, collaboration and sensitivity to ecology. As a continuously evolving structure that travels and adapts to new spaces and places, it also includes contributions from collaborations between Nango and other architects and artists. (ArkDes, 2023)

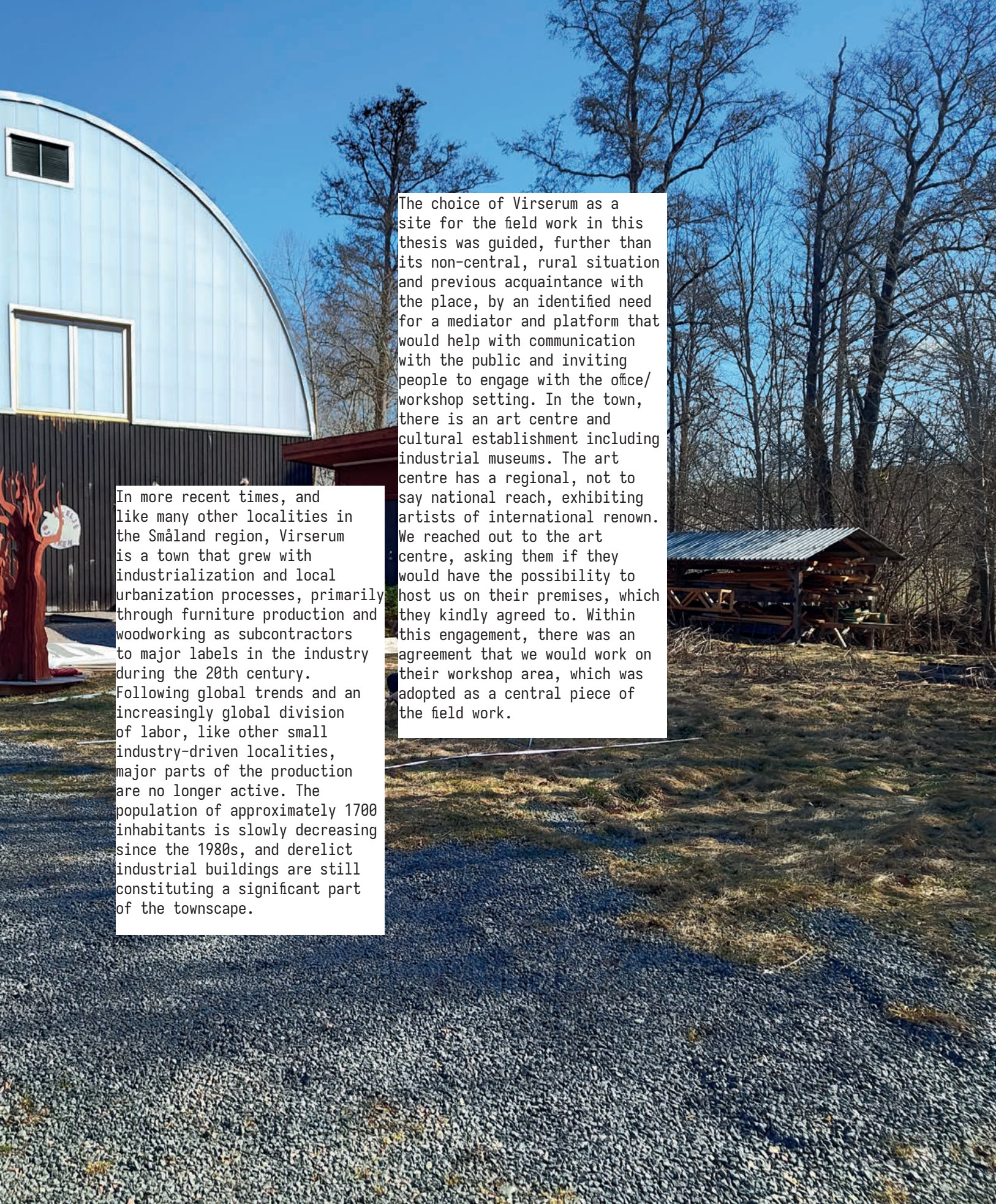
The Girjegumpi project is an embodiment of alternative views on what architecture means and can do in contemporary times. It constitutes a precedent and inspiration to this thesis as a nomadic structure for **learning**, **knowledge sharing** and **co-production**. While the thesis does not include indigenous questions within its scope, the site-specific and **non-formalized** knowledge of local dwellers is central. The collection of such kinds of knowledge is an aim within this thesis where Girjegumpi yet again can be said to be an inspiration.

Context: _
References:
On site test-bed:



Virserum, a small town in rural southern Sweden, is the chosen site for this thesis. It is situated some 30 km from the municipal center of Hultsfred. Virserum has a strong historical anchor point in identifying with the major peasant uprising called Dackefejden in the 1500s, in which peasantry in the Småland region came together to attack the newly established regency of Gustav Vasa, whose reforms centralized royal power and raised taxation among other things. The civil war that erupted is supposed to have ended on the ice of the lakes around Virserum, with the leader Nils Dacke executed, leading to an economically and population wise challenged Småland region for many years to come.

The text above includes **highlights**, which are meant to illuminate main concepts and learnings taken from these case studies. These contribute to the overall learnings and findings of the first phase of the thesis project, to be found later in Collections (see pp. 43-46).



In more recent times, and like many other localities in the Småland region, Virserum is a town that grew with industrialization and local urbanization processes, primarily through furniture production and woodworking as subcontractors to major labels in the industry during the 20th century. Following global trends and an increasingly global division of labor, like other small industry-driven localities, major parts of the production are no longer active. The population of approximately 1700 inhabitants is slowly decreasing since the 1980s, and derelict industrial buildings are still constituting a significant part of the townscape.

The choice of Virserum as a site for the field work in this thesis was guided, further than its non-central, rural situation and previous acquaintance with the place, by an identified need for a mediator and platform that would help with communication with the public and inviting people to engage with the office/workshop setting. In the town, there is an art centre and cultural establishment including industrial museums. The art centre has a regional, not to say national reach, exhibiting artists of international renown. We reached out to the art centre, asking them if they would have the possibility to host us on their premises, which they kindly agreed to. Within this engagement, there was an agreement that we would work on their workshop area, which was adopted as a central piece of the field work.

Context:

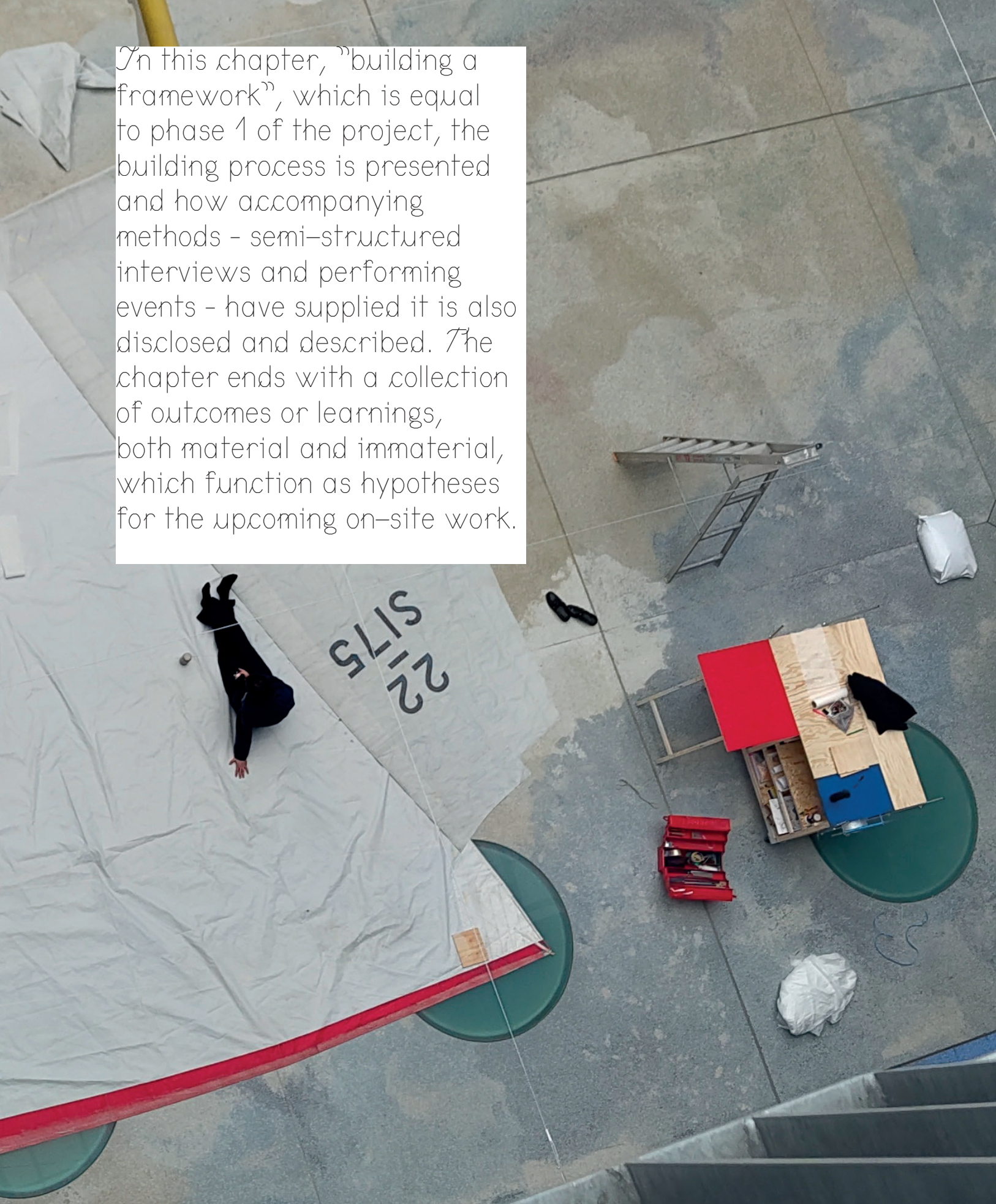
On site test-bed:



"Participation should be simply
be understood as a tactic of complicit curiosity scaled to the space that one is currently inhabiting."

(Miessen, 2016, 89)

In this chapter, "building a framework", which is equal to phase 1 of the project, the building process is presented and how accompanying methods - semi-structured interviews and performing events - have supplied it is also disclosed and described. The chapter ends with a collection of outcomes or learnings, both material and immaterial, which function as hypotheses for the upcoming on-site work.



Sketching thoughts one what the framework should do, what do we need in field?



Trajectory 1: mobile w

Iterative building/prototyping: A somewhat chronological photo essay:

The physical building of the framework for a mobile practice is the first part of phase 1, and started off already in the first week of the project. In the following series of images, one can find several trajectories of building - 1. Mobile workbench cart; 2. Prototype for inflatable; 3. Roof structure; 4. Inflatable - that have been overlapping each other and meeting each other at different points in time. As the on-site work constitutes a constant performance of a space for building, building the framework for the practice itself functioned as a preparation and exercise in the act of improvised design-building from a set of parameters. The different trajectories depend on the continuous feedback from case studies, interviews and the performed events, as well as the development of a plan for what to do in the field studies - ultimately leading up to the outcomes.

To start building without having a clear brief also functioned as a **catalyst** for the project itself, building momentum in learning from the improvisation. Starting out, a collection was made of different aspects that had to be served by the framework - physical ones, such as cooking, keeping tools, solar panels for electricity etc. The first trajectory started with building a workbench cart, a sort of base for what was to come and a very basic piece of mobile furniture that could be host to a multitude of functions. Putting wheels on the base also unlocked the first key to **moving away** from the static workplaces where we ordinarily work, which in this case would be the desktops at the architecture school.

The building process was also shaped by a lack of funds and material, which turned out to be another lesson in making do with what exist and finding alternative ways to make something happen. The process of **sourcing materials** took up a lot of time and found us going around large parts of Gothenburg in order to find cheap or even free options, meaning that what we could find shaped the design by way of being opportunistic. This development stands, when viewed from the scope of the full project, analogous to the way Miessen (2016) describes adapting the means one have, assuming responsibility, in order to refrain from letting criticality stand in the way of realizability and remaining in a 'purely' theoretical domain. By making things physical, putting them into space and thereby introducing them into relational webs between people and things, these objects acted as tools in a **practice-in-action** research approach as seen later in this chapter under 'events' and further on in the field work.

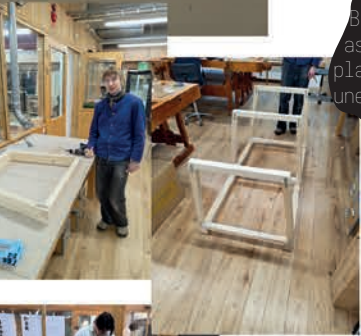


An office on w
= verY

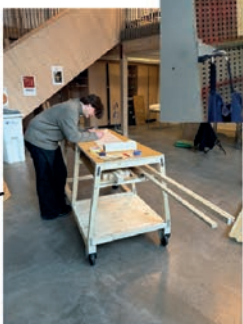
Building a framework:
Iterative building/prototyping:



workbench cart



heels
fast!



The
sourcing
included **borrowing**
with the promise
of returning things
in a good state,
for example this
extremely powerful
industrial fan.



Trajectory 2: prototype for inflatable



Prototype
for an
inflatable,
made from
one long
sheet of vapor
barrier plastic
and packaging
tape, using the
industrial fan.

Building
as opposed to
planning gave way to
unexpected ideas
and thoughts.

Being a silly goose is
sometimes a useful
strategy.



Informed
by interviews, the
space being created needed to be
visible and **signify** that something
special is happening. What better
ways than a sign and
some color?

Building a framework:
Iterative building/prototyping:

The text above includes **highlights**, which
are meant to illuminate main concepts and
learnings taken from this process. These
contribute to the overall learnings and
findings of the first phase of the thesis
project, to be found later in Collections
(see pp. 43-46).

Material sourcing: kindly, we were **given** huge sheets of leftover and/or ripped sailcloth from Ringövarvet, Gothenburg.

Utilizing **1:1-scale sketching** as a tool for understanding the everyday spatial qualities and relationships between what's to be built and its surroundings.

A little bit of steel tubes left, and no supports for folding tables = steel rods as supports. An example of a by-the-minute solution where means available and needs collide, resulting in a design choice.

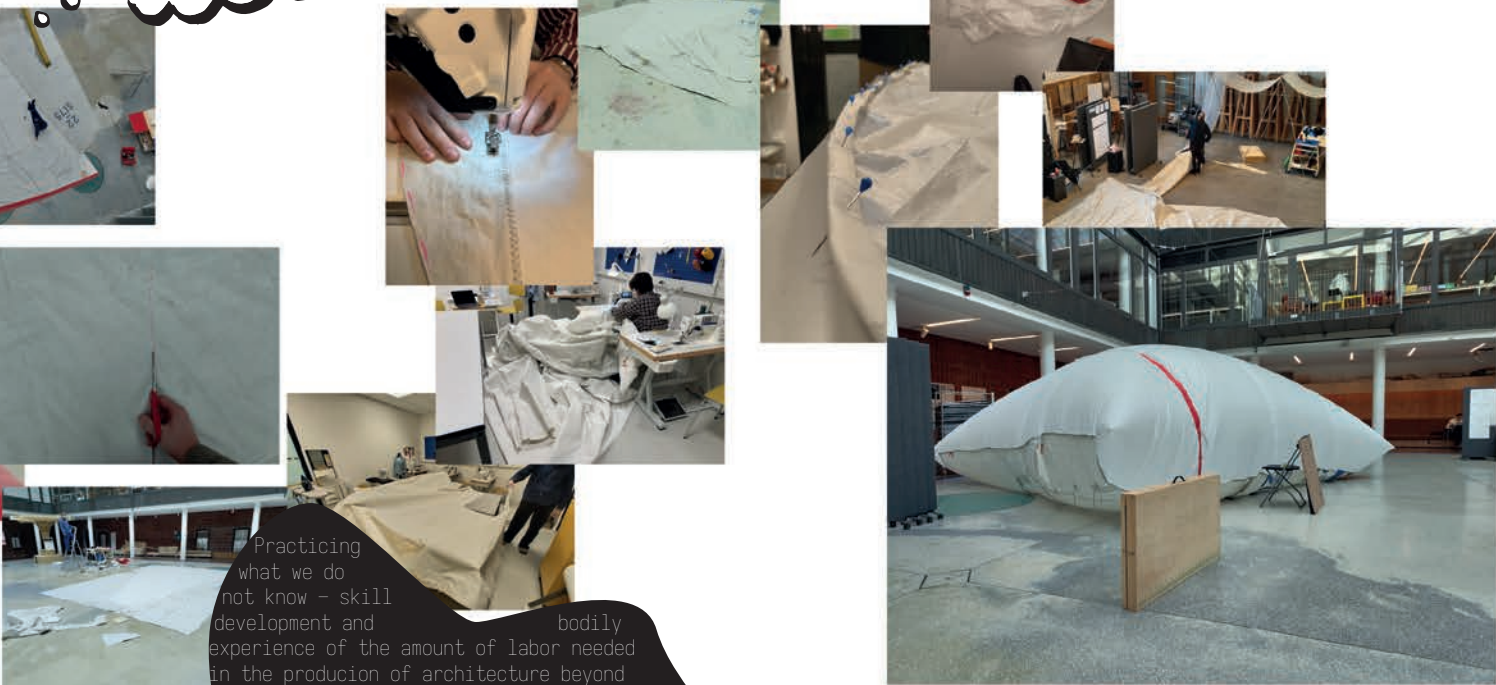
Bodily measurement as an instrument to foresee relation to use in a fast thought-to-action sequence.

The forms of the framework took shape through **improvisation**. A lightweight, easily constructed roof was needed. We found used steel tubes that were given the role of supports through manipulation in the school's metal workshop.

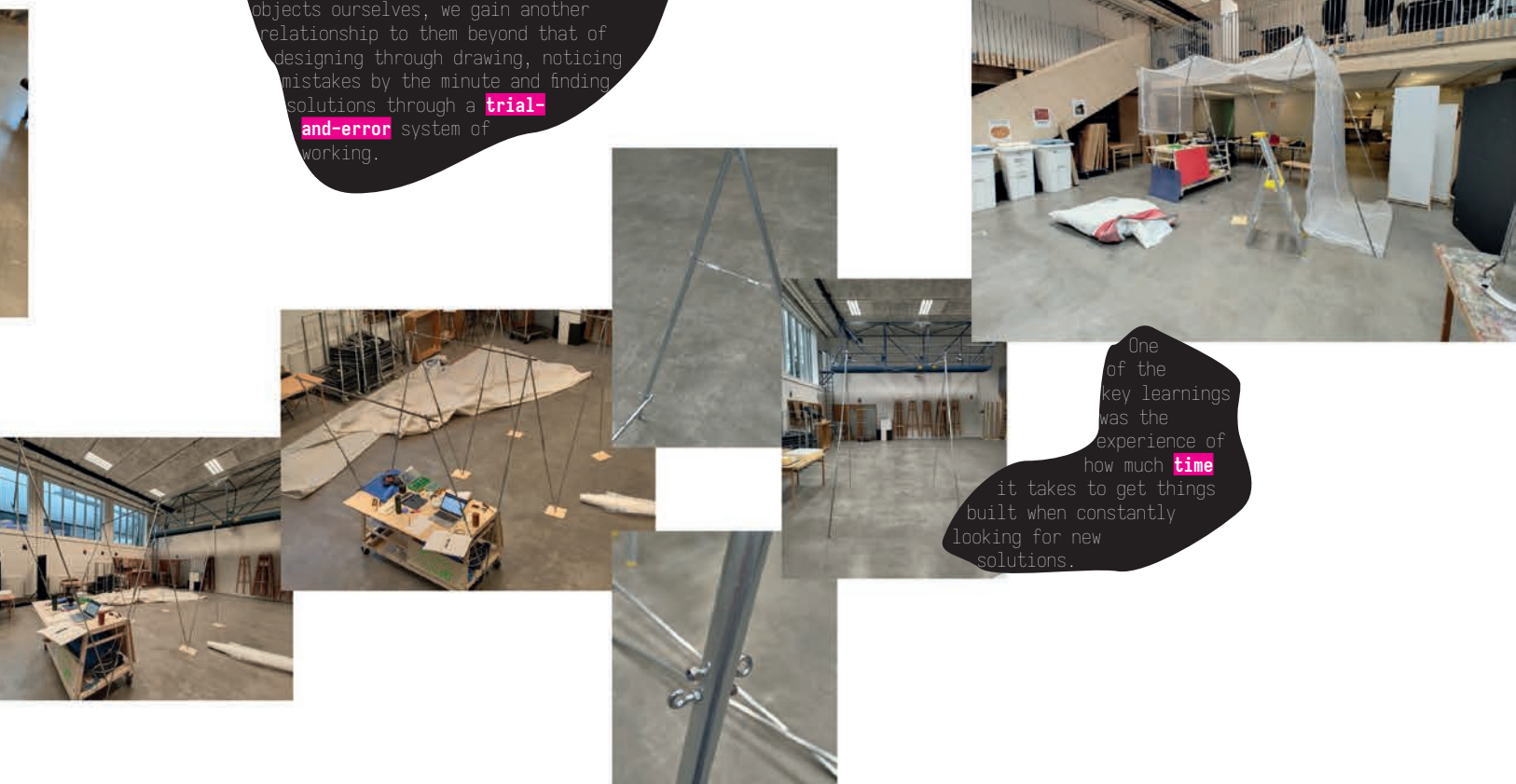
Trajectory 4: inflatable

Trajectory 3: roof structure attached to workbench cart

1:1 sketch: how is this room relating to the body?



Practicing what we do not know – skill development and experience of the amount of labor needed in the production of architecture beyond planning/drawing/deciding. Within this comes a detailed but hard to present kind of knowledge about the object, its assemblage and stress limits not amountable to numbers or words, described as a **tacit knowledge** by Schön (2003) that is the professional's tool for practical research. By producing the objects ourselves, we gain another relationship to them beyond that of designing through drawing, noticing mistakes by the minute and finding solutions through a **trial-and-error** system of working.



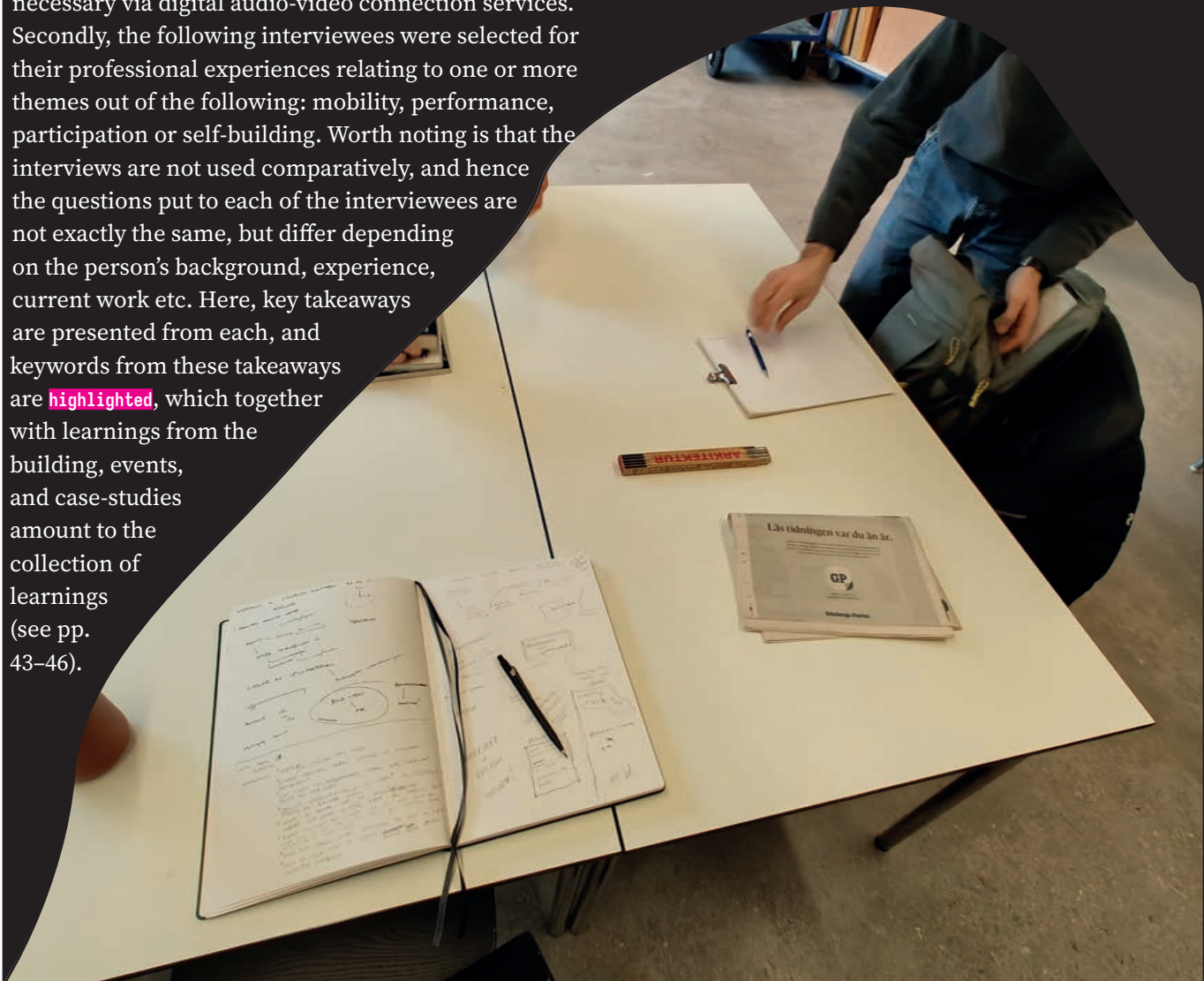
One of the key learnings was the experience of how much **time** it takes to get things built when constantly looking for new solutions.

The text above includes **highlights**, which are meant to illuminate main concepts and learnings taken from this process. These contribute to the overall learnings and findings of the first phase of the thesis project, to be found later in Collections (see pp. 43-46).

Building a framework:
Iterative building/prototyping:

Semi-structured interviews:-

During the first phase of the project, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with several practitioners that we could get a hold of and that have experience relating to the questions we are exploring. The interviews themselves serve both as background that is useful to be able to program the on site weeks as functional and analyzable experiments, and as a collection of experience that adds to the assemblage of knowledges produced and reproduced within the confines of this project. The aim when looking for interviewees was firstly to find people that are readily available to us that can talk to us in person or if necessary via digital audio-video connection services. Secondly, the following interviewees were selected for their professional experiences relating to one or more themes out of the following: mobility, performance, participation or self-building. Worth noting is that the interviews are not used comparatively, and hence the questions put to each of the interviewees are not exactly the same, but differ depending on the person's background, experience, current work etc. Here, key takeaways are presented from each, and keywords from these takeaways are **highlighted**, which together with learnings from the building, events, and case-studies amount to the collection of learnings (see pp. 43-46).



Building a framework:
Interviews:

Samuel Dias de Carvalho
Date:_ 260212
Place:_ Microsoft Teams video call.

Samuel (Sam) is an architect teaching in Gothenburg and Porto, who after graduating got his first internship in a neighboring field - scenography for theatre, influencing then his thought of the possibilities of architecture. Later, this lead to him working with raumlaborberlin whose practice is also influenced by theater and performance. 2014-2018 he worked full time with an interdisciplinary collective he co-founded call ON-OFF, working with combined strategies from several field to engage the public in relation to their environments. The outputs of ON-OFF, though the earlier parts of it very urban in setting, are of great interest to the author of this thesis and influences the view of what interventions can have architectural effect on shared space. Their work, described by Sam as characterized by inspiration from theater and performance art and directed at activating space, also taps into the questions explored in this thesis.

One of the more pertinent themes of the conversation was regarding the role of the architect in a participatory setting. In ON-OFF, it was important to see the architect as a form of curator, not just a facilitator. In Sam's words, it is not fruitful to serve every impulse being brought forward or try to merge everything, this way you are abstaining from the role as one participator among several. Rather, the curating and/or programming of an event is a good way to vectorize the action (cf. event, p. 17).

The conversation also went towards the actively social aspect of participatory work, often introduced by a very awkward phase of figuring out where one stands in relation to another. Sam's experience, similar to other's we talked to, was that cooking is a great tool to break the ice - 'everybody can build, everybody can cook'. Connected to this is also the functionality of the slightly absurd or unusual, disrupting the everyday. Sam referenced Haus-Rucker-Co's food city, engaging people by means of disruptive but fun event. Having much experience with inflatable structures, Sam talked of them as "crazy temporary spaces" that ignites dialogue and creates awareness of their presence.

Further, productive obstacles were brought up as a topic, relating to several themes. Several aspects of our project relate to potential obstacles, such as funding, legality, material sourcing, relationships to businesses and so on. Sam made a very important notes about these, relating them to the act of producing a festival where you also have to deal with a plethora of obstacles emerging in different fields, but referenced them as 'productive'. They are productive because you need to learn how to deal with them in their precise nature and thereby produce an unteachable kind of knowledge through the act. This highlights the research-by-practice nature of this project.

Film tip:_ Garbage warrior (2007) about Michael Reynolds, inventor of the earthship movement.
Book tip:_ Collectif ETC. Détour de France
+ Artificial hells by Claire Bishop.



performance

curation

trust

cooking and building

absurdity + disruption

productive obstacles

researching through practicing
+ unteachable knowledge

Building a framework:
Interviews:



Pitfalls:
 .not knowing what to do
 .not knowing how to do it
 .wanting to do too much



Bruno Oliveira Gonçalves
 Date:_ 260216
 Place:_ Chalmers architecture school atelier.

Bruno is an architect working as a teacher at Chalmers University, with a background in participatory practice, primarily on the building side of things. This interest in creating things by hand comes from his studies at an art and architecture school, where cross-disciplinary collaboration including several fields was customary and encouraged, within and beyond school curricula, resulting in a creative do-it-yourself milieu. Having worked with collectives such as raumlaborberlin and ConstructLab, his insight into on-site building and engaging civilians is valuable to us.

Responding to what complicates participatory processes, Bruno revealed the three major pitfalls to avoid: not knowing what to do, not knowing how to do it, and wanting to do too much. Avoiding these, observable results are highly probable, allowing the design-building practice to be a 'continuous research project'.

From this spanned a long conversation about programming, an essential part of avoiding above mentioned pitfalls. Every event has to be programmed with margins allowing for the unexpected, however every point of programming allows for the process to move on - for example through time frames, limited access to materials, a clear goal for the work and so forth. At the same time, the programming must be smartly done, or it will hinder the work: 'Design-building, not design and then building'.

One further aspect that was stressed was to maintain a low-tech approach as a key to avoid hindering the process - everything needs to be easily put together or disassembled by a participant.

As the conversation went on to more practical tips, Bruno had some thoughts on what a mobile office needs. In his experience, when setting up a space for a design build, what is needed first is always a cooking station, and then a work station which benefits greatly from having vertical surfaces for communication. These are catalyzers that produce fuel for the continued process. Additionally, a roof over your work space is a great benefit in several situations.

Finally, discussing communication and interface towards the potentially interested public, Bruno emphasized that the too non-specific nature of social media renders online invites superfluous, while on-site encounters and physically interesting spaces works much more effectively. He proposed a flag or similar that states what we want: come work with us!

As a final note: **do not think too much, just act.**

Book tips:-
 House in Time - raumlaborberlin
 Convivial ground - ConstructLab
 Polylemma - raumlaborberlin
 Co-Machines - ON-OFF

Programming

Design-building, not design and then building

On-site encounters, physically interesting spaces

Low-tech

Trust-building

Clarity

Build a network

'Must-haves':
 Cooking
 Work station
 Vertical surfaces for communication
 Roof

Building a framework:
 Interviews:

The text above includes **highlights**, which are meant to illuminate main concepts and learnings taken from these interviews. These contribute to the overall learnings and findings of the first phase of the thesis project, to be found later in Collections (see pp. 43-46).

Lisa Bengtsson
Date:_ 260211
Place:_ Bygglekplatsen, Biskopsgården Göteborg.

Lisa is a pedagogue at Bygglekplatsen, a staffed playground in Gothenburg with focus on creation together with visitors (Göteborgs Stad, n.d., Om Bygglekplatsen). As part of the staff, she is primarily responsible for their mobile unit, creating pop-up situations throughout the city of Gothenburg as opportunities for people to start building together. Her eight years of experience within this setting makes her knowledge valuable to this thesis, primarily through the act of inviting people and creating an environment that people are ready to interact with.

One theme of the conversation was how different age-groups interact very differently with the playground. Children up until the age of six are not limited by demanding to know what their finished product will be, instead they are quick to build with free imagination. Older age groups are increasingly dependent on programmes for the outcome. These different approaches require that trust is built through forming relationships with the participants.

The trust-gaining is also anchored in continuity. It is easy to imagine that people will flood to an event, but most people are careful. Therefore people need to get a chance to get familiar with an event as recurring before daring to delve in. For Lisa, eight years in, the playground's outreach is gaining momentum just now.

Lisa also stressed the importance of language, and to build different levels of language for different interactions. Mentioning marketing, she argued that the 'three-second rule' works just as well in non-commercial situations. Therefore, clarity towards possible participants is crucial.

Building a network is also very helpful, through approaching nearby vendors and important actors to spread the word. Connected to this is also trying to stand out as a contrast or anomaly in the immediate surroundings.

Lisa also mentioned that it is a good idea to try to involve several generations at once. For them, collaboration with a nearby gardening association has enabled this, leading to intergenerational learning situations - through cooking, building the garden and tending to it together.

Interface towards a 'public'

Mattias Gunnarsson
Date:_ 260304
Place:_ Art Library - HDK/Valand, Gothenburg University.

Mattias is an educator at HDK Valand in Gothenburg which is a university faculty for art and design. Mattias also runs a practice for collaborative artistic work together with Susanne Westerberg. Their work in temporary outdoor spaces, and building by themselves made this conversation a valuable entry for this thesis.

Our interview or talk was primarily shaped by our explanation of our upcoming on-site work, as well as methodology for an eventual future upscaling of the method explored in this thesis. Mattias was positive to the fact that we had started making things, as this unlocks ways of thinking and unexpected learning situations. At the same time he was already skeptical towards how well the built framework being developed would be actually helpful on-site. Specifically, the cart was mentioned as probably more of an inhibition than a useful tool, due to its size, limited outdoor use, etc.

Further, we discussed the interface between our setting and people approaching - how can one invite people and be immersive in a successful way. On this topic Mattias stressed the notion of being on-site, not merely when 'actively' working, but that it is equally as important to take time to immerse oneself in the local context by visiting stores, restaurants/kiosks and other actors, talk to people on the street and so forth, in order to build relationships and find out how to make use of as well as give back to the existing community. The risk is otherwise to become a temporary on-site enclave, one that is not in reciprocity with its surroundings. Its also important to keep thresholds very low and invite people to participate through everyday actions.

Another theme discussed was the scale of the intervening actions taken. According to Mattias, it is useless to think about numbers in this setting - engaging one person actively in participation is much more valuable than having a hundred visitors that are uninterested.

Finally, there was also a discussion on power and our connection to the institution being Virserums Konsthall. In what way are we transgressing regular power networks if we work with an active institution? Who can come to and feels invited there?

Combining age-groups

Immersion/on-site-being

Everyday actions

Quality over quantity
in engagement



Building a framework:
Interviews:

Architecture /as/ generating/hosting/ events
 A testing ground for the performative
 function of the framework:

As a part of the preparatory work, informing both the building process itself and the collected learnings (pp. 43–46) that will be used to shape the field work, several "events" were hosted with the help of the built office framework. These were set up and performed repeatedly throughout phase one both for the sake of testing how people interacted with the framework in different settings, and to try building a sense of continuity by appearing over and over, as learned from the interview with Lisa Bengtsson (p. 34) in order to build trust with people and inviting them into the process.

Using the sense of event as described by Kassem (2019), multiple strategies were employed for using the framework as an architecture "as event" and as a "host for events", and turned out to "generate events" beyond our planning, giving us insight into how it could be used, altered or further developed. The insights here provided us with information that could be used in the field work in order to engage people in conversation and action, and shape the informal space of democratic discourse that is the aim of the framework.



Maiden cruise for an early version of the mobile workbench cart.

Further, the staging of the events as required us acting "as if" whatever was happening was fully normal, giving us the roles of choreographers of action. All of the events took place on the school, using other students as test audience/participants. Several were set up in the "lightyard" in the Chalmers architecture school building, which is a large space with an almost cubical volume, a former atrium or courtyard that is now with equipped with a glass ceiling letting light in heaps of natural light. All of

the students' and teachers' corridors have views towards the floor of the lightyard, thereby being useful by being visible and possibly attracting people to participate.

In order to encapsulate some of the learnings from these events, here presented are some key parts that made us reflect. The events are presented in an array ranging from the first, small scale attempt at raising engagement by inflating the prototype for an inflatable, through making a temporary lunch space and several temporary cinema settings, to inviting people into the final inflatable structure.

Writing "pratbubbla" (speech bubble) on the inflatable prototype as an act of performative naming the space (Schweder, 2022) in order to choreograph the use of the space - in here we talk to each other.



Building a framework:
 Events:

The text above includes highlights, which are meant to illuminate main concepts and learnings taken from these events. These contribute to the overall learnings and findings of the first phase of the thesis project, to be found later in Collections (see pp. 43–46).



"Man kan gå in i bubblan" (you can enter the bubble), says the sign in front of the inflatable. Though this surprised and delighted some bystanders, our subsequent wish for them to remove their shoes before entering and the trouble of crawling in to the space, seem to have been the reason that no person dared engage with the possibility. This was a teachable moment - **low thresholds** means really low, and if you are to enter, why would you bother if there is nobody else in there?

The first trial of the until then built framework was through a very open-ended event, hinging on the **architecture as event** principle. Positioning the workbench and the inflatable prototype in the lightyard at Chalmers at lunchtime implied a lot of traffic from people going to get lunch or to heat their brought lunch and passing us by. The intention was to get a sample of reactions on the physical things themselves. Though nobody this time dared engaging with the architecture by for example entering the inflatable, around 10 people stopped by to ask about what was happening. This way the objects functioned as facilitators for conversation, and training us in explaining what we were trying to do. One man stopped to take a photo of the workbench and cart, since he wanted to build something similar for his garage at home.



Communication for outreach is a main key to inviting people into the process. The use of **social media** as a platform for invitation was not very helpful in itself (cf. interview with Bruno Gonçalves, p. 33), but a useful tool in spreading knowledge of the events happening, therefore being a good supplement to much more effective strategies such as **verbal communication**.



Building a framework:
Events:



Unordinary things happening in "public" or transitory spaces of the school worked well, bringing in the theme of **disruption** as learnt from the case study of Fantastic Norway and interviews, and thereby prompting questions from bystanders. Within the situation of explaining what we were doing, time and again we needed to reflect on the process and our goals. It also served as a golden opportunity to invite the person asking to the events.

Temporary lunch space!

In order to get more people engaged we decided to make use of **familiar activities** rather than total open-endedness, aiming for lowered thresholds as people feel safe in an act where they know what to do. Setting up foldable tables and the bubble to set a scenery for a "fun" place to have your lunch rather than where you usually do so, on the above mentioned lightyard, **temporarily transformed** the place into one of meeting and discussing everyday subjects. One seemingly important aspect was that nobody joined in until we sat down and performed the action that we wished from other people to partake in – showing that **we are as much part of the performative settings as the objects we are using**. However, as we found out, most of the people involved already had direct or indirect relationships to us already – proving that we needed to find new ways to build trust with people who do not know us. Further, the objects needed for this action were few – chairs, tables and the inflatable – making clearer the claim of Kassem (2019) that the event-character of architecture can make it less material-intensive.



Two people decided to stay at the tables after the lunch break, appropriating the setting as a place for an informal meeting. Here, the architecture functions as **generator** of unforeseen events (cf. event, p. 17).

Pop-up cinema!

On several occasions we used the scenery of cinema as a structure for events, where the architecture of our office framework served as **host** for the event. We used this opportunity to experiment with different settings to get a sense for how different existing environments can **perform** differently with the help of relatively small infrastructural additions, consisting of our built structures. We invited people to take a break from their ordinary schedules or spend their lunch hour joining in, sitting down, and watching a screening of documentaries that we had seen before: Post-capitalist architecture TV by Joar Nango and Ken Are Bongo, an interview with Anne Lacaton for Louisiana Art Museum, and a documentary by Peter Magnusson on the Swedish forest industry 'Om skogen'. In the first of these installations, we occupied a staircase landing (see background image here and isometric drawing on the next page), screening on the wall next to the elevator. This way we took the concept of **disruption and absurdity** to an extreme level, which seemed to pay off. The space had people arriving and leaving in waves, at most attracting 16 people at one time (filling the staircase area slightly beyond capacity) and a total of 47 staying for more than a minute. Somewhere around 200 people passed by, reacting to the performed space as a place of ritual, showing respect by keeping their voices down, walking softly so as not to disturb, and excusing themselves for exiting the elevator. Similarly, the participants almost compulsively applauded as soon as the screening ended.

The text above includes **highlights**, which are meant to illuminate main concepts and learnings taken from these events. These contribute to the overall learnings and findings of the first phase of the thesis project, to be found later in collections (see pp. 43-46).

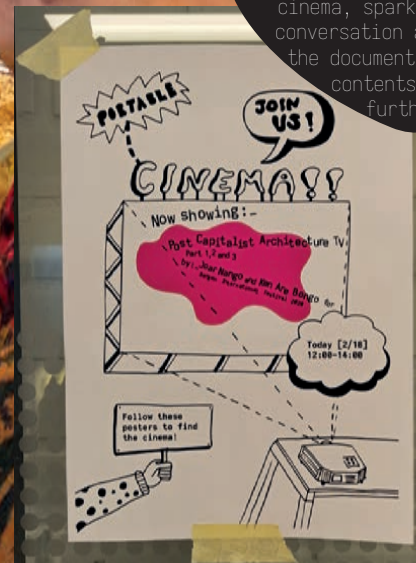
Building a framework:
Events:

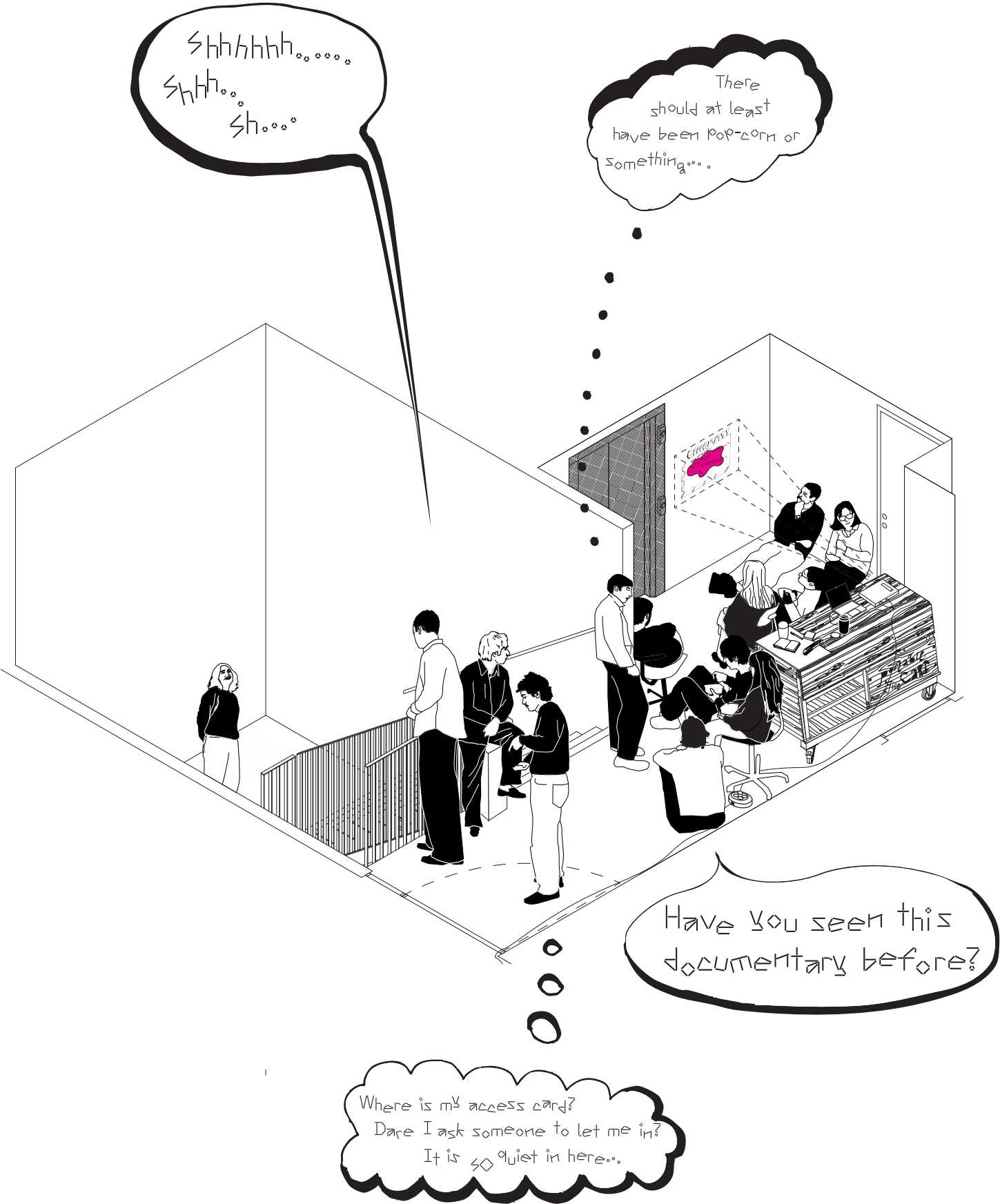


The cart working just as a surface, barely interacting with the participants but rather acting as an infrastructural insertion and signifier of event.



Communication via posters, similarly not very functional on their own but coupled with verbal invitation and handing them out, acting as a naming of an event, the naming itself temporarily transforming the otherwise transitory space into an actual cinema, sparking conversation about the documentaries' contents and further.





Building a framework:
Events:

The text above includes **highlights**, which are meant to illuminate main concepts and learnings taken from these events. These contribute to the overall learnings and findings of the first phase of the thesis project, to be found later in Collections (see pp. 43-46).

Pop-up cinema!

There's a time and place for everything. On a friday afternoon in february, apparently not many were in the mood for a free coffee and watching a documentary about the forestry industry in the middle of the lightyard. However, the space functioned well for the ones that did arrive, closing off this temporary event from the rest of the vast room and making it a **concentrated space for conversation**. One of the key learnings here is that, over the course of all events, our lack of control over what happened led to encounters in the everyday and exchanges of ideas that might not otherwise have appeared. Every single time we set something up, the outcome was a meeting between people, with the architecture functioning more as **an excuse to converse** than a goal of its own. This process shows the capacity of the framework to be simultaneously **hosting** an event and **generating** new ones (cf. event, p. 17).

Enter the bubble (again)

Shortly before departing for Virserum, the final inflatable was finished, giving us an opportunity to test the reactions on it as well. Inflating the 5x7m structure on the lightyard, we tested its disruptive abilities by letting it act as an **architecture as event**, no special happening planned. We were ourselves fairly astonished with the very unordinary quality of the space and its strange interaction with surroundings. Quite a bit of people showed up, commenting on its "coolness" and how you get an almost childlike sensation of playing house within it. It acted as a **catalyst for conversation**, giving us positive feedback on what we had expected. Due to its non-normative appearance, many conversations started with questions on how it works, keeps airtight, and so on.

Kaffe
+ film (coffee
and film), a desperate
attempt at bribing people
into coming by and
engaging with what we
had built.





Building a framework:
Collections of learnings
/Hypotheses:

Following now are distilled learnings from phase 1, or the building of a framework for mobile architectural practice. These reference the works done so far in building, interviews and event-making, as well as the case studies of spatial practices relevant for the project, and relevant theory.



Building a framework:
Collections of learnings
/Hypotheses:

Inflatable:

Inspired by the experimental architecture of the 60s-70s and utilizing the Ant Farm collective's Inflato cookbook (1971), the idea to make the inflatable was coupled with the idea that we needed a room to invite people into. Throughout the interviews a major theme was that of **disruption** or **absurdity** as a tool for gathering and engaging people, and the office framework clearly needed something that communicated that something is happening. It could also be connected to the **event-character**: during events, it kept on being a talking point and people who entered were astonished with the experience and started talking to each other about it. Though it is a 5x7 m room of only ~20 kgs and foldable to fit in a bag to carry on one's shoulder, which in itself is strange, the appeal is hard to pinpoint. As a constantly breathing, moving space with a uniform diffused light seeping in, it simply attracts. This way it is useful, both as a **signifier** of event and as a **framework** for events in itself.

Building a framework:
Collections of learnings
/Hypotheses:
Material outcomes:

The text above includes **highlights**, which are meant to illuminate main concepts and learnings taken from phase 1.

Roof structure:

The roof structure is a delimiter of space first and foremost, useful as a gathering space or a cover against the elements. Though clearly not very functional as a cover for heavy rains or rigorous enough for strong winds, it is superficially a cover that may act **performatively** as a signifier for a certain action - be it a meeting over a table, a cinema screening or the place to lay drawings and tools on a table. Like the inflatable, it functions through a **form-based language** - this place is something, acting in relation to surrounding space by setting a loose boundary around it. Through the process of events, it turned out that our behavior towards the objects shaped others' relations to them. Thereby, there is a large collection of things the roof could be used for.

Mobile workbench cart:

As stated in the text about the building process, the mobile workbench cart functioned primarily as an **incubator** for ideas and a tool for reflection. When it surfaced that its functions are the easiest to replicate in field, and transporting it would necessitate much more costly and complicated course of action, it was decided that it had to be left behind. Instead, it was a useful tool in the preparatory work on Chalmers, as it became a **conversation opener** many times.

Before deciding to leave it at the architecture school, the idea was to use it to attract attention, rolling it around in Virserum. It was also supposed to work as a combined **outdoor kitchen** and **workbench** depending on occasion, following Bruno Gonçalves "co-building must-have:s" (p. 33).

Fig. 2. Isometric view of physical outcomes from phase 1.

Building a framework:

Collections of learnings

/Hypotheses:

Material outcomes:

Building: together

The building process further showed how starting to build can itself be a **catalyst** for interaction and ideas about what should happen next. This is central to the idea that the field work should be a space where building facilitates conversation. Further, it was an exercise in **improvising** towards a somewhat vague goal. In order to do so, and invite others in the process, solutions must be **low-tech** and **reversible**, as stressed by Bruno. Another key learning from the process was the sheer amount of **time** needed to get things built, connecting to another point of Bruno's: the **main pitfalls** are 1. attempting too much; 2. not knowing what to do; and 3. not knowing how to do it. This brings in an important point for the field work, learned from theory, interviews and events: whatever happens in these processes, it has to be **curated** in order to work. A simple and open invitation to do "something" leads nowhere. Since our presence is not familiar, we need to give clear frameworks for what is to be done, how and why. The tentative performance of spaces worked similarly - if the purpose was not apparent, the engagement was purely on a level of asking what it was about.

Activate engagement:

The key goal for the field work process, or phase 2 of the project, is to **initiate active engagement** with the local architecture and built heritage, and instilling the sense in people that their personal concerns have value and should be developed in conversational settings. Learning from Ambulanța Pentru Monumente and the crossbenching theory, the method for this is to **stage a space** of hands-on building that also acts as **a space of discourse** that can yield ongoing **engagement** once we are gone from the place.

Social catalysts:

As a strategy for making conversations develop with a multitude of ideas, Lisa suggested **combining age-groups** in activities as they open up different sides and honesty in each other. Further, one important note is Mattias' claim that **quality is much more important than quantity** when it comes to engaging with a public - one connection made could change much more than a hundred brief conversations.

Megaphones:

As a strategy for amplifying unheard voices of the local community, and shed light on the dissenting opinions, wishes and concerns for local public space, **using media outlets** and other platforms is to be endorsed. This is a main lesson from the practice of Fantastic Norway, who managed to both spark interest among the public and communicate ideas through the use of **local newspaper**.

Building a framework:

Collections of learnings

/Hypotheses:

Immaterial outcomes:

The text above includes **highlights**, which are meant to illuminate main concepts and learnings taken from phase 1.

Building: trust

As the practice of Ambulanța Pentru Monumente as well as the interviews with Lisa Bengtsson and Mattias Gunnarsson showed, building trust is absolutely central to engage a public in the process. One strategy derived from this is to **inhabit the local context** and **place oneself in the social web** (cf. crossbenching, p. 14) through visiting local venues and establish relationships with local vendors. This is also informed by the events, which showed that it was incredibly hard to engage people without already **existing relationships** with us. This is also fruitful as the **spoken invitation** or one traveling by **word of mouth** is more successful than digital formats or posters, as shown through the events and articulated by Bruno Oliveira Gonçalves.

Interface:

Trust can further be built through the use of **everyday**, **easy** and **low-threshold** activities as **invitations** into a process, as described in interviews with Sam and Bruno. Weaved into this is also the need for a developing **multiple "languages"**, especially when working with research at the same time, as described by Lisa Bengtsson in her interview. There is no need for theoretical groundings for letting the public know what is happening - what is needed is **clarity**. There is also a very real need for the event to be visible, where the strategy here is the **disruptive** quality of elements informed by the interview with Bruno. This is achieved by both the inflatable as an abnormal object, and the festive quality of **signs and pennants** produced (see previous spread), signifying festivity and that something "special" is taking place - the elements perform a space of event.

Building: without means, without money

The building process of the first phase taught us valuable lessons in how to supply oneself with the means one does not have. This is a highly social process that relies on **informal social contracts**, built on a transparency of intent, which more often than not lead to the possibility of **borrowing**, **bargaining**, or simply receiving things **for free**. Searching for situations where **surplus** appears (such as public events or active workshops, etc.) usually ends up with you doing them a deed by taking over responsibility over material that would otherwise have to be dealt with. If this is not a possibility, finding **reuse**-ready materials through second-hand dealers or online services keeps prizes down to a minimum.

Building a framework:

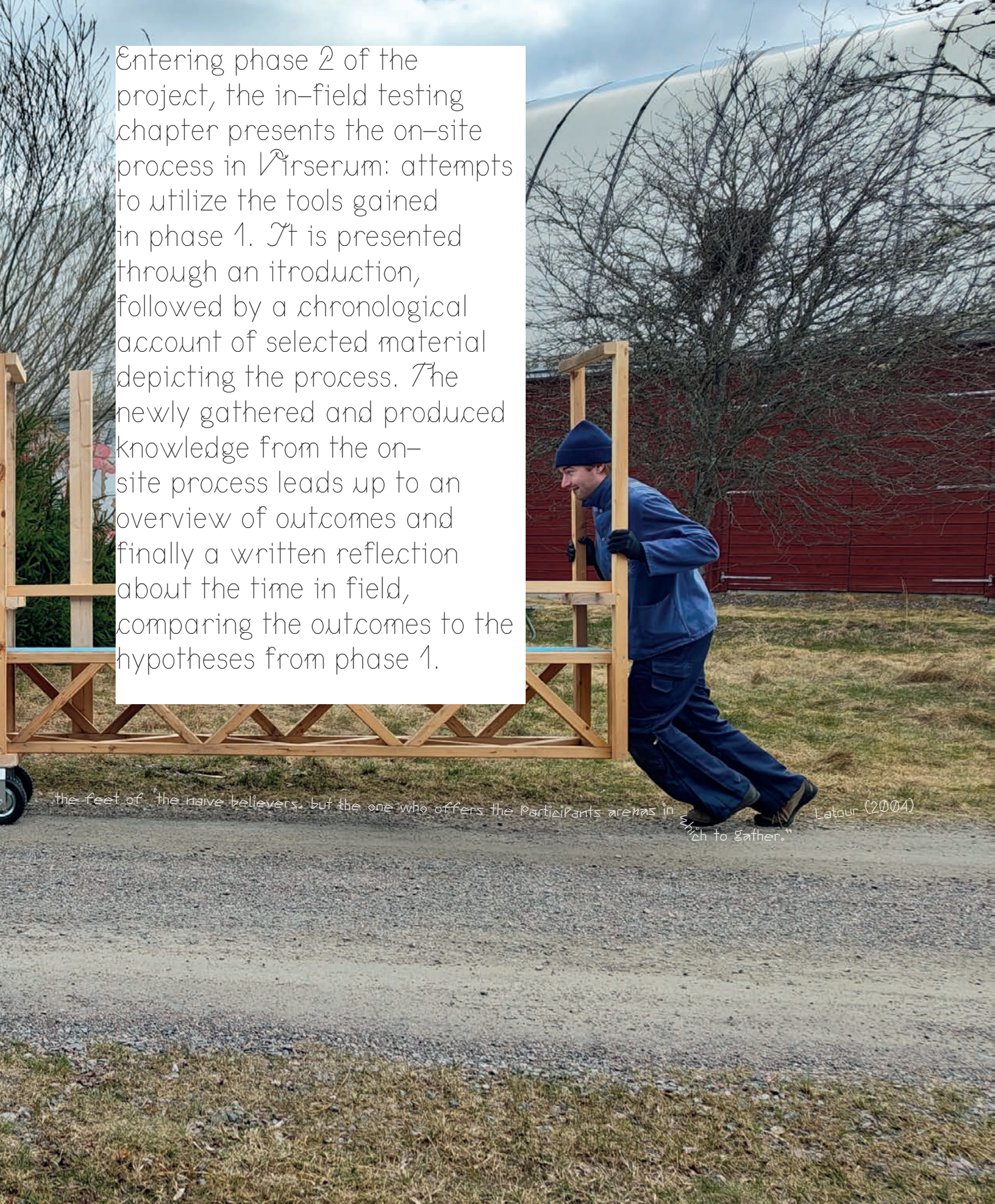
Collections of learnings

/Hypotheses:

Immaterial outcomes:



Entering phase 2 of the project, the in-field testing chapter presents the on-site process in Virserum: attempts to utilize the tools gained in phase 1. It is presented through an introduction, followed by a chronological account of selected material depicting the process. The newly gathered and produced knowledge from the on-site process leads up to an overview of outcomes and finally a written reflection about the time in field, comparing the outcomes to the hypotheses from phase 1.



the feet of "the naive believers, but the one who offers the participants arenas in which to gather." Latour (2004)

Entering the field:
Virserum as a testbed
for a mobile practice.

In-field testing:
Introduction:

As the first phase turns into the second, we take with us the learnings/hypotheses out into the field, approaching our chosen site – Virserum, and more specifically, Virserums Konsthall. The art center hosts exhibitions by globally renowned artists and holds a place of contrast in the small town of only 1700 inhabitants.

The choice to use this site for the project depended on a few aspects. Firstly, informed by the background, aim and problem setting, the goal was to use a site that is non-central, spatially as well as structurally with regard to decision-making. Secondly, there was a need for an entry point to the local social life. Thirdly, that entry point needed also to be a mediator and a platform, to facilitate communication with the public being addressed. Further, the time constraints on the project necessitated a mediator with tools and land use rights that would enable us to bypass legal questions. A list was made early on in the project, containing institutions and organizations that were possible collaborators. Surprisingly, the first one we contacted were happy to partake, and that was Virserums Konsthall. All of the above mentioned criteria were necessary to fill in order for the explorations to be fruitful.

What follows is a chronological account of the time on site, utilizing photographs, sketches and text, as well as comments relating what was happening to the first phase as well as theory and case studies. Representing the process this way is purposefully done in order to give the reader an overview of what happened on site and the various, often minuscule details that became important lessons. As a document

of ethnographic observations, it is inspired by the book *Learning From Las Vegas* by Denise Scott Brown (1972), Steve Izenour and Robert Venturi, whose work with students shows an early precedent of architects engaging in field, trying to learn from and understand a place without proposing an intervention of any kind.

Following the chronological account is a collection of the knowledges from the time on site through images and short comments, an isometric overview of the relational outcomes and a reflection over the time on site.

In-field testing:
Introduction:



What was made on site through collaborative building is a mobile atelier/workshop module and an inflatable roof that can attach to the existing structure in many ways. These additions, spawned out of the collaborative efforts made with visitors, local dwellers and school children, are not final goals in themselves, but tools left on site to prolong the effects of our brief stay, further performing spaces for learning and interaction at the art center.



(1 DAY LATE DUE TO STORM CALLED 'DAVE')



Day 2

As our official on-site time started, we packed the car early with things and set off for Virserum. We visited a café called Centralkonditoriet for morning coffee and in order to build trust and enter the local scene, we decided on going there several mornings so that we could build continuity. The day in its entirety was marked by the fact that we instinctively treated this as yet another project were we were consulting. Realizing this, we decided that the next step was to just start building something that we sketched, learning from the building process at the architecture school where building worked as a catalyst. We also needed to be active in order to have the place to perform, and attract interactions.

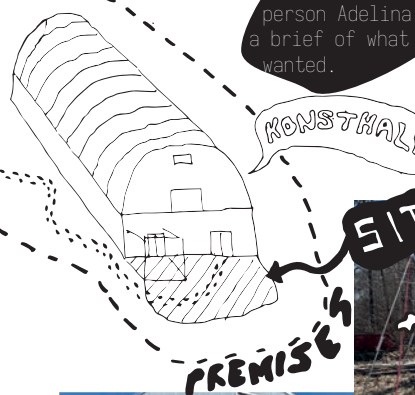
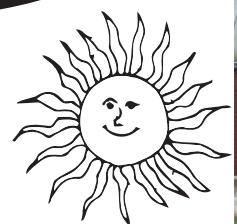


Day 1

Though not a long trip, the logistical aspect of it was quite exhausting, as we borrowed different cars and needed to be able to stow all of our things into one car. The traveling day was supposed to have been one day earlier, and this day was supposed to be spent walking around and connecting with local actors. The only one we actually met was the cashier at the pizza place where we had lunch. Instead we had to do things quicker and did a car-borne tour of Virserum, realizing that it feels bigger than anticipated, built on hilly grounds with many nooks and crannies. Visiting the site at Virserums Konsthall (which was closed for the day), we walked around the building and nearby area.

Finding our residence for the two weeks, we went on a further ten kilometres to find the small village of Bösebo, where the bottom floor of a house was rented out to us. The day was ended with preparing for contributing to an event for elderly people at the art center with a presentation and discussion about our work.

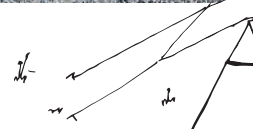
Centralkonditoriet



We got a tour of the premises from member and our person Adelina, a brief of what was wanted.



Branding ourselves, with blue overshirts saying "portable office", works as a performative act of naming (Schweder, 2022)





1:1 sketching, as learned from the improvisational process at the architecture school. Testing weight and other relationships with the body gives a sense of how it could interact with users.

← SIGNS

Signs as a tool for naming (Schweder, 2022) the event: "Together-, Future-, -Building" as a nod towards what goal the process has.

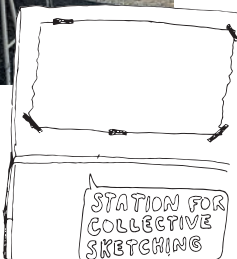
Low-tech!

Day 3

Visiting Centralkonditoriet again, we tried to strike up a conversation with the person working the desk there, and ended up explaining what we are doing, inviting them and leaving leaflets for other visitors of the café. These leaflets were supposed to be spread around town, but there was almost never a good opportunity for it, as most of our time was spent at the art center. The weather allowed for us to set up the office framework more successfully, adding the roof tarp and another sign near the entrance to the art center. Still, it needed us in performative action in order to convey the sense of being an active site of work where people were invited. Realizing that the staff at Virserums Konsthall are as much the public sought after as anyone, we struck up conversations with them and invited them to join the building. Knowing that something had to start happening, we took inventory of the materials at hand, being especially interested in a readymade wooden truss and started imagining ways it could be a base for, or generate, events (Kassem, 2019) of collective character beyond our time on site. Utilizing very low-tech solutions, we started building upwards from the truss, imagining it to become a mobile storage/workbench module.



We prepared how-to instructions for assembling a simple chair. Sadly this was not a successful task as we did not have the time to prepare material, cutting to length etc.



Virserum is really like a tiny version of a metropolis. We have both downhill skiing and a bathing site!

In-field testing:
Chronological account:

THANK YOU
HELVIG, HEIKI,
AND FERDINAND FOR
THE HELP ??



Attaching the newly painted wood to the workbench-module!

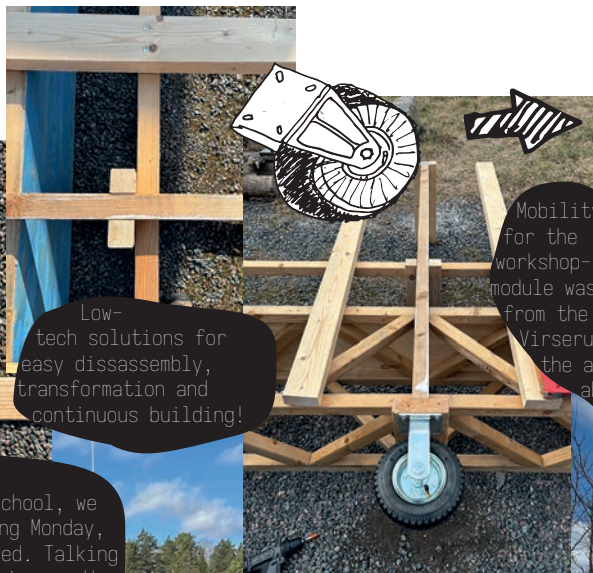


Day 4

As we entered the site, we realized the need in order to have people and not just say hello, but to show what is happening and then leave a conversation with Adelina, who prepared three workshop elements that were meant to be low-threshold and accessible to anyone. Thinking about Lisa Bengtssons interview and the need for clarity to build trust, we cleaned up the site and laid out appropriate tools for each task. In order to get things to happen, we once again used ourselves as performers, giving a coreographical cue to people, and as a tool to be able to ask them to join in. Thirdly, we made more signs asking for simple actions in order to lower the thresholds and make ourselves visible. For the first time people actively wanted to contribute in the process, leading to conversations about a lot of different things, however as per usual we were asked to describe what we are doing. This was interesting to think about, and we had to change the story slightly every time to not make it boring.

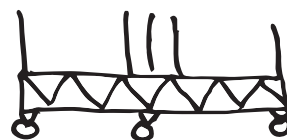
the fourth day,
eed for curation
ple engage
ask what
e. In
e
ements

t
n
nce



Low-tech solutions for easy disassembly, transformation and continuous building!

Mobility for the workshop-module was a request from the staff at Virserums Konsthall. Now the atelier can move about wherever they want!



WORKING OUTSIDE THE ENTRANCE!



After a long time trying to get a hold of the local school, we got invited on the following Monday, when the art center is closed. Talking to people, we learnt that this was the way of Virserum, things happen in place, very fast and without hesitation.



The inflatable, just like in the school, drew attention. It was fascinating to visitors, who unprompted gave suggestions for how it could be used. At the same time, it became somewhat a liability when trying to build at the same time. At least one of us always had to be present when people wanted to get in, for security reasons.



In-field testing:
Chronological account:



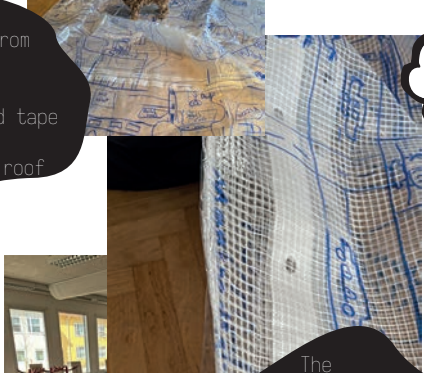
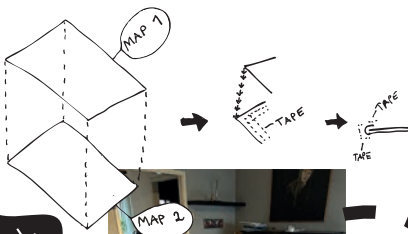
Day 5

The fifth day unfolded quite differently from before, as we put wheels on the module we were working on and moved around the art center to work in front of the entrance, making use of disruption as learned through interviews with Sam and Bruno as a tool for engaging the public. This was successful, however not many paused to engage in the building process. This was a day when we talked to many people but never at length. This was the first time the inflatable was used, earlier it had been too hard due to unpredictable winds. It worked quite as intended in being surprising and intriguing to visitors, working as an performative architecture (Schweder, 2022) by acting as an object lowering the thresholds for conversation.

Entering a new week of work after two rest days, we arrived at the local school and were greeted by the principal, Tina, together with teachers Dacke and Maggan, who kindly offered us space in three lessons with 7th- and 8th-graders. We presented ourselves, talked shortly on architecture overall and then challenged the pupils to enter the **role** of a spatial planner by mapping out perceptions of their surroundings on a blank piece of tarp. We had to **enact** the action in order to lower the threshold at times, but as the collective action started there was no stop, with the participants arguing with each other over what things are and not, showing both or crossing out each other's. It was clear when starting out that their relationship to architecture as a field was distant, but through this **curated performance**, previous knowledge was unveiled and shared, and new formed through interaction. Us **entering** a (for us) almost completely unknown field and starting this process shares aspects with the crossbench image of an **intellectual midwife** (Chan, 2010), bringing forth (tacit) knowledge that one could not access nor teach.

Day 4

Tarp
maps from
school
+
double-sided tape
=
inflatable roof



The
map-making
facilitated talking to
the kids about their personal
understanding of their
surroundings, utilizing the
making process as a
performed place where
such reflective thinking
came naturally.



What
started in
silence and shyness shortly
erupted into total chaos. All
needed was one kid to grab
the pen and start
noodling.



Thank you,
Maggan
and Dacke
(teachers in
arts and crafts)
for hosting us!



In-field testing:
Chronological account:



WITH 60 KIDS

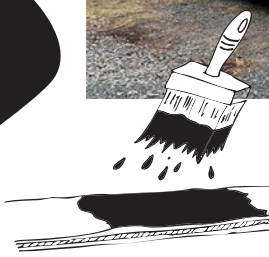
x2

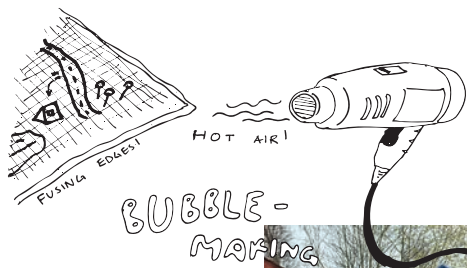
Day 7

Coming back to the art center, it was made clear to us how much the weather makes a difference, since we had decided to do everything outdoors. During day seven and eight there was a painstakingly clear lack of visitors or possible collaborators. One probable and major reason could be that we completely have missed out on the possibility of **connecting with the local networks** and making ourselves known through multiple media including **local press**. This will be expanded on in the discussion chapter (pp. 67-74). With only us working on site, hoping that someone would come by, we had to face the situation at hand - and decided to finish things that are hard to do so that we can find easy tasks for people to engage with when we have a better situation.



Why are we only
two people???





The workshop module becomes a performative setting that can work after we've gone, you are (in the role of) an artist or craftsman as soon as you are using the architecture/infrastructure for that purpose.

Attachment of polycarbonate sheets with the help of readily available material: punched steel tape.

1:1 sketching, as learned from the improvisational process at the architecture school. There is no useful aspect of drawing this relative to testing in real scale.

In-field testing:
Chronological account:



Day 8

Another day without any visitors, which left room for reflection in action, revisiting our attempts at engaging people in discursive situations. We can now state that the most successful (although specific outcomes are opaque) endeavor was the connecting with the local school. Apparently there is a ton of information that would be useful to us which would have been available if we had formed more connections. This will be expanded on in the discussion chapter (pp. 67-74).

Doing what we cannot: build. Architects draw, but nevertheless we insist on trying to make things ourselves, by hand - resulting in easily avoidable mistakes. Such as thinking we could inflate this large plastic bubble with the help of a hand-driven bicycle pump through a dunlop valve.

Apparently there's a difference between pressure and volume. :/

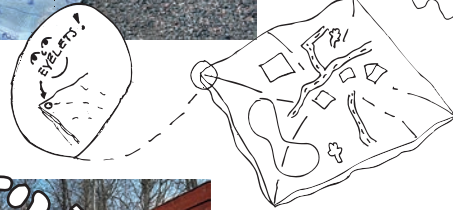


New acquaintances, local dwellers and heroes of the day: Kenth and Thomas



While we still had not managed to penetrate the local social web very well, quite differently. A visitor called Kenth arrived from inside the art cent to us. He told us of his life experience from working in different munic around Småland, and now in retirement returning to Virserum, expres for the industrial heritage and how left-over it is by the multin companies it served. He insisted on exchanging contact informat possible future collaboration on the subject, and while we thou was a one-time encounter (though interesting), only two hours found a reason to call him. Having the resulting maps at hand workshops at the school, we wanted them to become something lasting, and had fused them together to make an inflatable roof. As the inflating by hand-pump method was extremely tedious and non-effective, we called to ask whether he had an air compressor at hand. He did not, but showed up minutes later in a car with a friend of his, Thomas, who owned one. Without accepting coffee nor barely even a thank you, they both stayed and tried to help us for nearly two hours. Finally, we found a natural way to enter a local network of people. Continuing our earlier conversations with Kenth, and learning from Thomas about his whole life spent in Virserum.

Attaching the workbench module to stable structures, partly for support against wind, partly strageical through the placement of attachment loops to produce sceneries for future unfolding of events.



TRIPOD TEST!



Clearly a performance: tomorrow the kids from the school are coming here and we prototype in scale 1:1 what they are going to build so we can see that it works. What they build is primarily for the sake of building, and learning by/while doing it.

In-field testing:
Chronological account:



FINAL COFFEE AT CENTRALENDIDRIET
FINALLY HAD A LONGER CONVERSATION
WITH BAKER WHO LEFT VIRSERUM
MEXICO CITY FOR



down, resulting in d standing obsolete. This process, expanded in the

this day played out
er, eager to talk
cipalities
sing passion
ational
ion for
ught this
later we
d from the

Day 9



As the first iteration of a tripod was too tight, the kids quickly started over – trial and error – this way gaining knowledge through reflection in action. An interestingly similar version of our building process.

Alfred, a friend of ours, showed up the last two days to videotape some of our process.

Day 10!

The visit to the school being a success, we had come to an agreement with the teachers Dacke and Maggan that we would invite two of the school

classes that we met to our final day on site and engage them in the process. We staged the site as us being "not done" with the project even though it was our final day and needed help. The 29 kids were divided into three teams, rotating through stations of painting, sketching ideas for continued development of the site, and building tripods to suspend the inflated roof – thus giving them a choreography (Schweder, 2022) with notes along the way.

The making led to conversations about memories connected to the act, giving us opportunity to talk more about living in Virserum. Interestingly, much of the seemingly alien actions to many of the kids were developed quickly, and often wordlessly even when collaborating. Other acts turned into discussions on how to do things, such as masking an area for painting, or whether there should be a bowling alley or a folk race track outside the art center.

As the children left for the weekend, we spent some time recovering from the intense workshop and cleaning up the mess that was made.

As a final gesture before leaving, we pulled out the inflatable and used the mobile workshop module as an outdoor kitchen, serving hot tomato soup to visitors and talking about what had happened during our time there.

INFLATABLE ROOF



TRIPODS

Sketching ideas for what should happen here in the future.

Bettering the paint, using masking tape, designing and painting a logotype on the module – each group building on the 'previous' work.

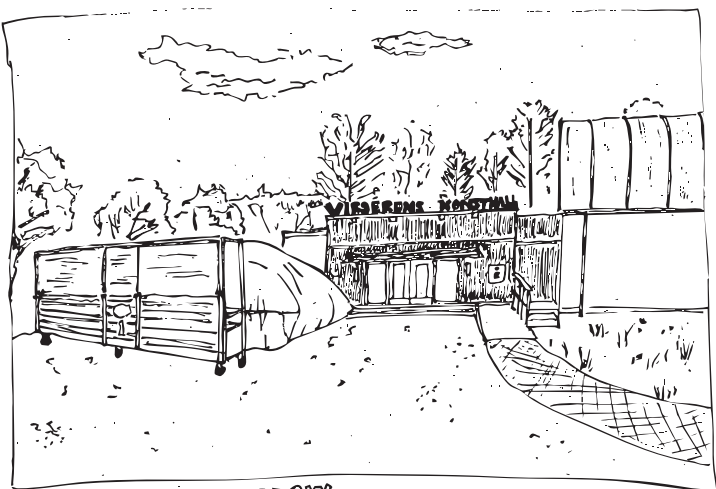
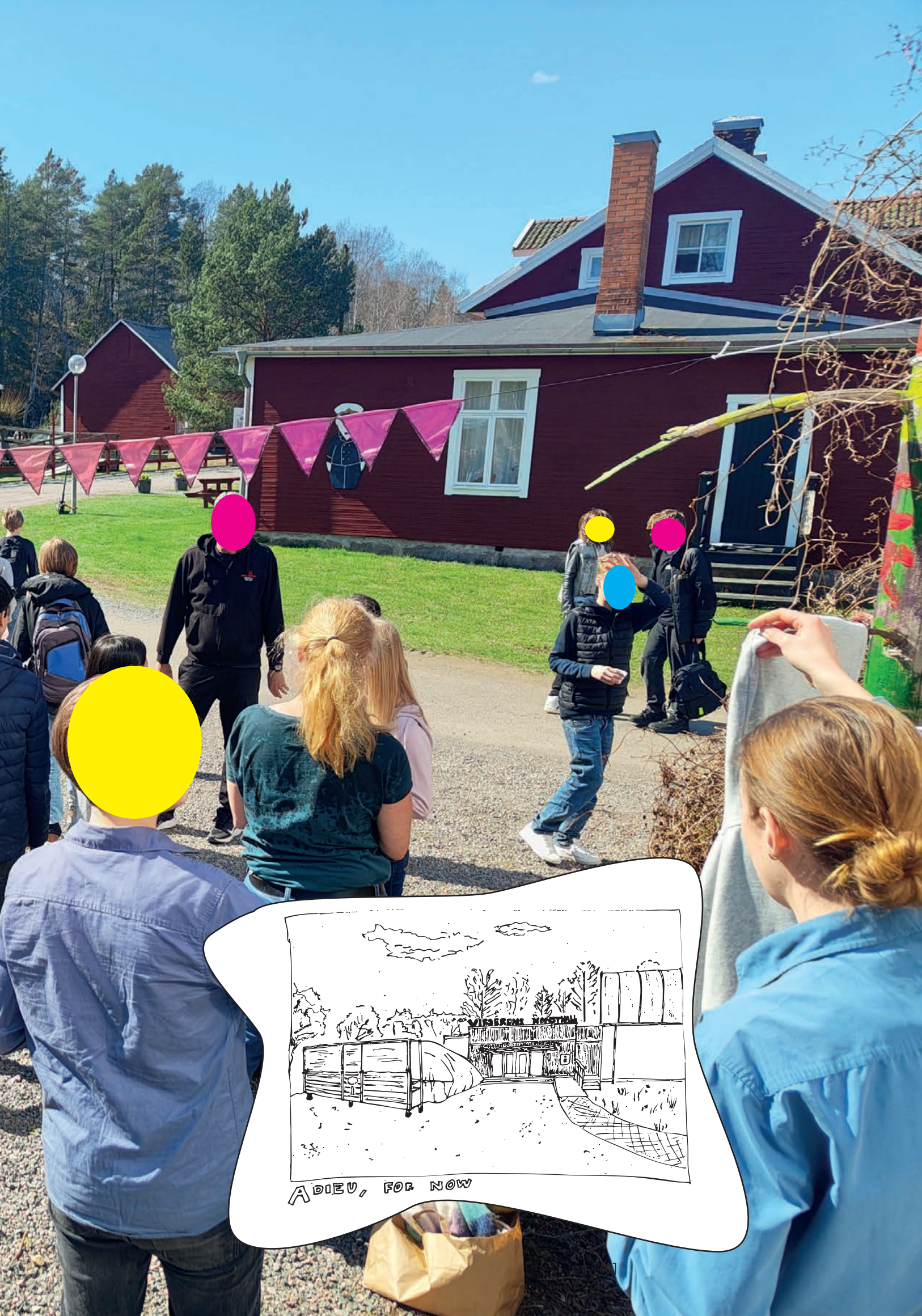


MOBILE OUTDOOR ATELIER AND WORKBENCH

After returning to Centralkonditoriet for coffee and the occasional cookie for two weeks, we finally had a lengthy conversation with the baker Kepler. The conversation revealed a frustration among the public about the decline and feeling of being left dry when the furniture industry died. Emotions of housing left empty and industrial structures encounter with the everyday left us with thoughts about our discussion chapter (pp. 67-74)



In-field testing:
Outcomes:



ADIEU, FOR NOW

The inflatable was working the way we wanted when inflated, however this was only possible at two instances due to the need for tending to it when active. For it to be really useful, an event would have to be curated only in relation to the inflatable, it cannot be an add-on unless one person can be responsible for it and nothing else.



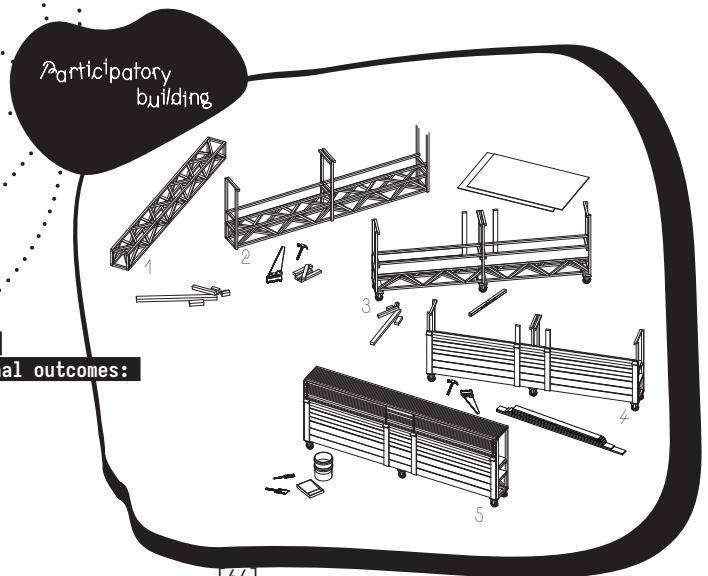
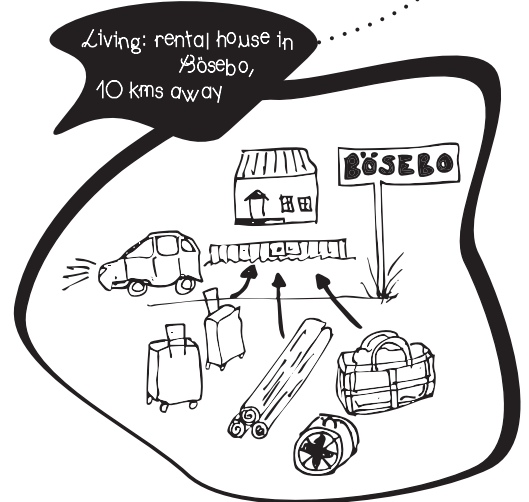
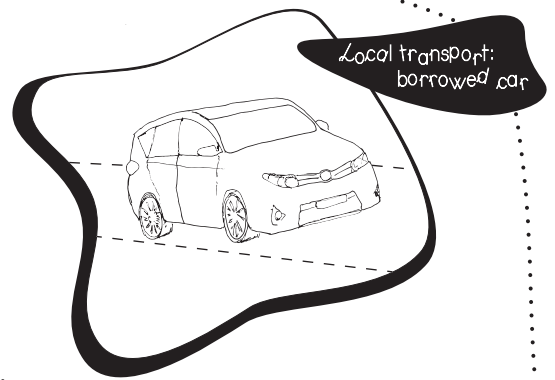
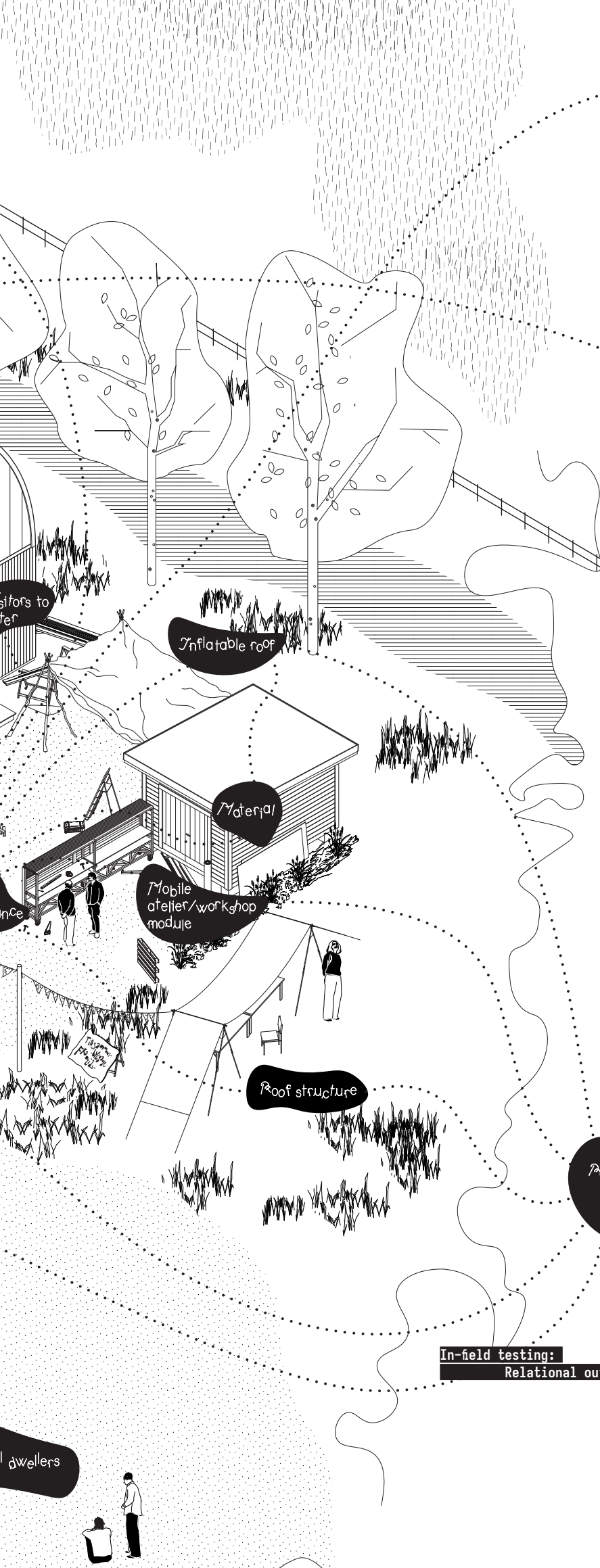
In-field testing:
Outcomes:



The roof structure was set up during the entire on-site period. It functioned primarily as a continuously performative tool expressing the presence of the event, and was only actively used for coffee breaks and in the final workshops with the schoolkids.



Fig. 3. Isometric view of relational outcomes from field engagement.



A photograph of a person with dark hair, wearing a dark blue jacket and dark pants, walking away from the camera on a paved path. They are carrying a large, full white bag with red straps over their shoulder. In the background, there is a red wooden house with a white-framed window and a large tree trunk to the left. The scene is outdoors with some grass and a white fence in the foreground. The image is overlaid with a large, stylized black and white graphic on the right side, resembling a large eye or a stylized face. There are also several small white circles scattered across the image, some of which are part of the graphic.

Stopping
to think before
we go... what have I
reflected on during
these weeks?

In-field testing:

Reflections on what happened in field:

Collection of learnings from in-field testing!

As a main thread tying the whole project together is the idea of the practice of architecture being one that is mobile and always working with both feet on the ground in the space that one is thinking of altering, materially or immaterially. This turned out to be much harder than anticipated, or, the uncertainties that appeared when one first imagined the project far in the future did not really disappear once the time came for in-field testing of this idea. Even more uncertainties and unexpected contingencies appeared. Even the first day this was made apparent through a major storm entering Swedish territory from the west, forcing us to postpone our arrival with by one day. Scheduled on-site-being, out the window! Arriving and setting up the framework as planned, we quickly found ourselves wondering where everybody was, growing somewhat desperate even though we knew we had two full weeks to make something happen and several people had warned us beforehand not to overvalue the quantity of people we engage (see interview with Mattias Gunnarsson, p. 34).

Another unexpected hardship was the mental and physical capacity it took to be in constant questioning of what one was doing and accepting the uncertainty. Every evening we barely had enough energy to cook dinner, all the while having planned to have this time for intermediate planning and rethinking. The ever-existent uncertainty however, seemed to work as a stimulant for reflection-in-action (Schön, 2003[1995]), leading to a development of knowledges beyond what is reproducible within the confines of this thesis, and probably beyond what I myself can identify. One aspect worth stopping to consider is how we planned as if we were many more than us two as the core team pursuing this project, over and over again. While having good help from the staff at Virserums Konsthall, expecting them to assume a similar role to ours was no option. It was our responsibility after all, to produce our own project, and expecting them to be able to reflect within our theoretical frameworks was no option.

Tying ourselves to an institution was a conscious choice, however it can be questioned how it shaped the process.

While anchoring us for extensive parts of the workday to a stigmatized place (in the sense of it having certain connotations of high culture and clientele, etc.), having a direct relation to the staff was highly useful, and we are incredibly thankful for their contribution to our project.

However, it seems like we could have used this relationship more effectively as a tool. Connected to being on site in order to establish relationships in the local community, as stressed by several of our interviewees, is the usefulness of a stakeholder as an entry point. However, as we realized in our second week on-site – especially when meeting with Kenth and Thomas and visiting the school – we should have spent a good amount of time on-site before starting any building or other events.

The importance of curating or choreographing was another lesson taken from the field. Inviting someone and lowering thresholds is something to practice and learn. Asking someone what they want to do leads nowhere most of the time, especially with adolescents, teens or adults. Looking to the last day on site, we can see how the clearly delimited and choreographed tasks formed an event when the participants started improvise themselves, learning along the way without our constant input, both communicating verbally with each other and in silence. Thusly, clear choreography and scenery, as borrowed terms from performance theory (Kassem, 2019), gives a possibility to assume roles and play with them, making the architecture (both physical and immaterial) host, generator and event in itself.

As a last note from this excursion, it is appropriate to mention how well it seems to function with out-of-the-ordinary, disruptive elements to make people engage, even if it just by exchanging a few words during a walk with the dog. The inflatable, our silly jackets, the 3x3 meter plastic sheet to collectively draw on in the school, and so on served as mediating objects in giving us access to people and vice versa – and even them to each other, igniting new conversations beyond the ordinary.

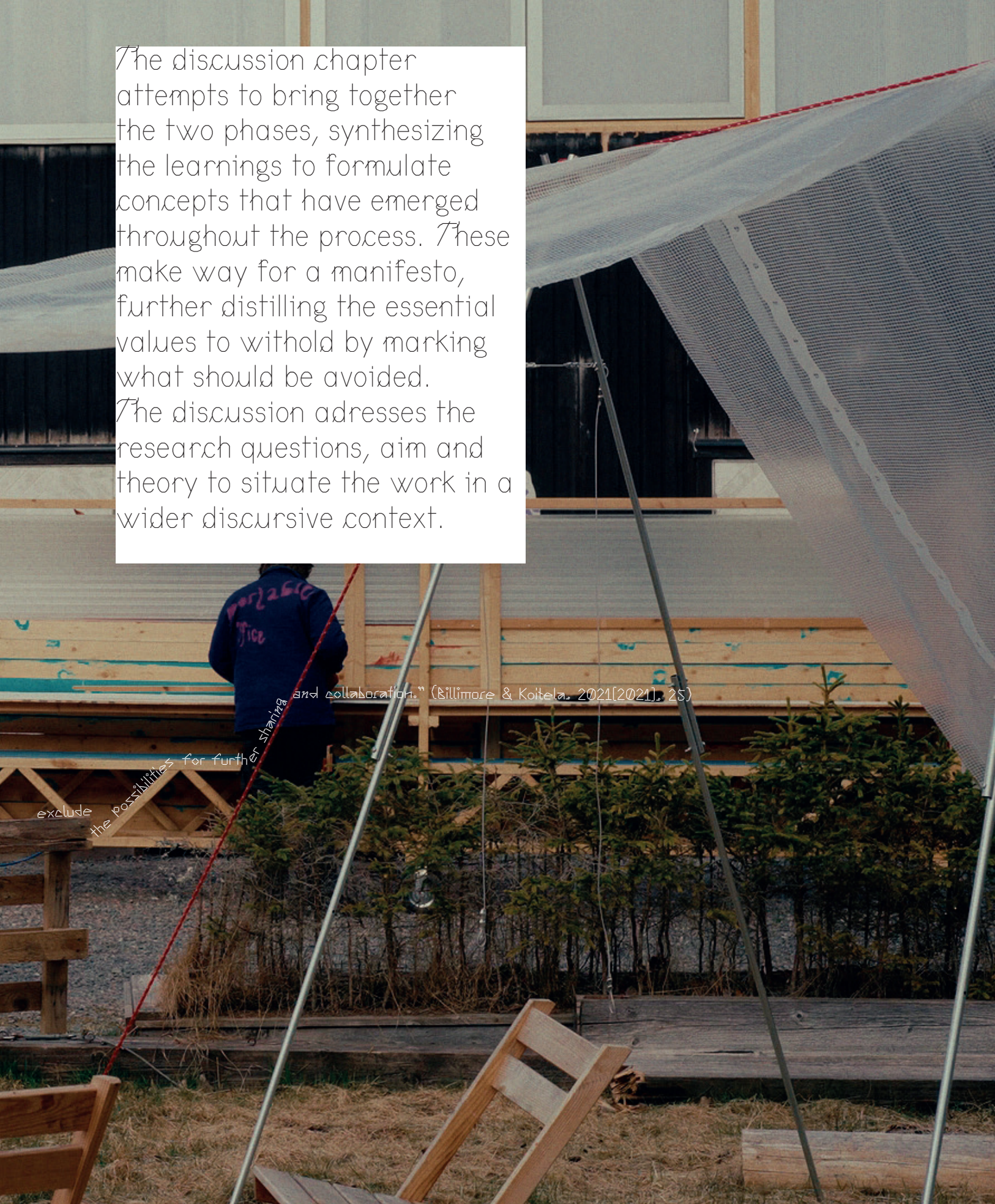
In-field testing:

Reflections on what happened in field:



"To overcome the dichotomy between a host and a stranger it is necessary to understand how different ways of knowing and knowledge can be inviting while on the other hand also

The discussion chapter attempts to bring together the two phases, synthesizing the learnings to formulate concepts that have emerged throughout the process. These make way for a manifesto, further distilling the essential values to withhold by marking what should be avoided. The discussion addresses the research questions, aim and theory to situate the work in a wider discursive context.



What did I find out from this adventure?

Our initial intentions and what actually sprung from them:

This project started out with the idea of designing, building and employing a mobile office as the spine – a search for a methodology to serve us when entering a professional field that does not seem to be able to spot itself within the masses of fields serving current ideological hegemony. The idea was to build something that served all purposes we would need while remaining on the road, always – a sort of caravan-turned-home/workplace/respite. It has become increasingly clear that the architecture for this methodology lies not primarily in the physical, but an architecture of networks, relationships and communication.

Facing the fact that we could not afford a caravan of adequate quality at the time, as well as early on gaining the insight that us being overly fixated on detail and severely lacking in experience of building, we had to accept that this was not going to happen, and quickly regroup our thoughts and intentions to shape another trajectory. This was the first major obstacle on our path out of many to come – and an early hint toward what was to become the watchword of the process: indeterminacy.

Representational inadequacy:

Not as an excuse, but as a symptom of the nature of the work that has been carried out through this thesis, I must admit that it is clear that it will be hard for a reader to grasp the totality of it. The presentation is messy, chaotic, and esthetically closer to emulating a scrap-book showing a recent trip to the Canary Islands than a clearly formatted, streamlined document of research. I cannot claim that it is intentional, however it is evident that the work done and the outcomes are opaque, primarily owing to the relational nature of it, and to the learnings being largely a kind of knowing-in-action, as described by Schön (2003[1995]), and learned from our interview with Sam – referencing the "unteachable". Even the learnings pertaining to non-physical things, such as ways to invite and engage with a public, are to a large part indescribable, at least by the means we are

Discussion:

Friendly reminder:
These are the research questions:

What can we gain in terms of being agents of social equality from repositioning our practice as ambulatory rather than geographically fixed?

2
How can spatial peripheries in southern Sweden's countryside be self-defining and assume agency through temporary frameworks of discursive practice?

familiar with. This brings up more questions about the practice of the architect, how can we extend our repertoire of methods to include everyday practices, and how do we represent inputs and effects that are spatial yet not physical, relational yet more complex than stating that there is a relation of a certain nature such as economical exchange or social pressure?

Similarly, the project has taken on a process-driven approach to methodology from the get-go, letting new encounters and learnings throughout the process guide the next steps, improvising with the at-hand in order to make progress in some direction. Therefore, the path has not been straight but meandering, however always searching for a way to bring about what the research questions ask for. In this constant input-reflection-output-input loop, the reflective practice, the ability to improvise has showed



built framework that was brought on site, thought to be a kind of deconstructed office-setting for nomadic practice, did perform this way – to a certain degree. What was more acute when actually in-field, in the “real world”, was the immaterial framework. Even though the inflatable worked very well as an ice-breaker, and the roof functioned at time as a performative delimiter of space for action such as in the final workshop, the on-site process did not depend on their existence. Learnings from interviews and events translated themselves far better to the new setting compared to the physical structure. Still, these learnings were things we knew about, but needed and still need to be practiced in order to become proficient in acting them out.

Beyond? a visit:

Going back to the outset of this thesis, what was imagined and sought after was a way to practice architecture that disrupts an urban-rural dichotomy, centralizing processes and the constant deferral of non-central concerns as they are forced to wear the sign of Otherness. Should one try to find ways to be critical towards what this project did, one does not have to look far. There is an obvious dissonance in our spatial circumstances as University students in Sweden’s second biggest city, visiting a topologically and institutionally non-central town of barely two thousand inhabitants, then calling it an endeavor towards creating spaces of alternative democracy. If one is looking at it as a singular instance, not relating to anything else, it is embarrassingly empty. Recalling the theoretical framework and Markus Miessen’s (2024) call for spaces of informal decision making and agonistic discourse, the project could not be said to have done that – we have

Discussion:

not been able to create social assemblies of agonistic debate during the time we were there. However, if one looks at the project through the operative lens of the performative as a framework for creating alternative situations, forcing us together with participants to activate our potential for knowledge production in ways that we are not accustomed to, this project has produced a plethora of techniques to move in a direction towards activating small cells of para-institutional practices. Further, the established contacts with the local social web of Virserum and its surroundings are not

Methodological outcome:

We never expected to find an all-encompassing methodology from which we could depart into the field of architectural practice. Referring to Miessen, being concerned with the “the performative, the choreographic, and [...] the 1:1 physical scale of cultures of assembly” (2024, 33), one has to accept that every such process is situated both temporally and spatially. What we rather found was a view on ourselves, our own professional role viewed from afar, and the fact that we must be ready to accept standing in disillusionment, in awkward uncertainty, and accept

3. The question of hosting is something to think further about. Though not included in the theoretical framework of this thesis, the question of hospitality has naturally been permeating every aspect of the participatory settings that have emerged. Even in the situations where we name the architecture a host of events, it is questionable where the hostship lies, and who or what is hosted? Do we co-host with other participants, or are they forced into Otherness by being guests in the setting? Are we, at times, hosted by the approaching “visitor” at the art centre, and is Virserum hosting us when we decided to go there uncalled? And, when we decided on where to go with our nomadic office, it could be questioned whether we really should have asked a mediator to host us on “their” grounds.

temporary. If this is to become something more than just a visit, we have to take responsibility for the instigating we tried to start. Otherwise, we are nothing more than performatively (by the worst meaning possible) visiting con-artists, deepening the chasm we tried to bridge. Crossbenching, if I can claim to have understood the concept well enough, demands continued pursuit of a cause, even if attained knowledge is insufficient.

contingencies of all kinds as possibilities rather than hindrances. Stepping down from the privilege as an educated architect in a first world country entails entering the everyday as a base for work, accepting our ignorance in the many fields of both professional and civil character, and embracing it as potential for perpetual mutual gain.

Negative manifesto for ambulant architects

facing the age of polycrisis, we search for an alternative space for architectural practice. Nomadic, processual, concerned with being on site and building in a 1:1 scale together with people in public space. Process-led, we know something of what it is not. We say:

Beauty

Architects with a capital "A" already exist everywhere. A diversity of use of architectural knowledge is needed.

There is no taking responsibility without assertion.

Designing for

A solution for a situation somewhere else.

The portfolio

Unless you know that you will make them no profit.

Clients

Pre-designing

Investors

Projection

You must plan, and planning and organizing is the most time consuming in this branch of work. Yet you do not project from afar, you plan processes on site.

Proactivity is crucial!

Waiting

One must become temporarily domestic on site to form relationships and learn the local concerns.

Visiting

You are a nuisance wherever you go. Make use of it, everything depends!

Fear of rejection

Your role is almost inflexibly that of maintenance of and around the event - cleaning, planning, preparing, keeping contacts, sorting, budgeting, assembling, disassembling, and assessing, managing logistics, cataloguing and assessing.

Speed

Always take time for reflection, and do it together with participants. Over, and over, and over again.

Speed

Do not fixate on the built, the easily representable. The performative view of architecture allows you to work in purely immaterial insertions, if appropriate.

Outcomes

Paper architecture

There simply is no time not to work in real space.

Comfort

Indeterminacy is the word of the day! Uncertainty and awkwardness are the fertilizers that feed the growth of knowledge.

Leaving behind

Your new arsenal of tools are a phone, email, mailbox, fax machine, telegraph, radio wave transmitter, or other means of long-distance communication.

Leaving behind

Your ongoing process is about building a network across vast areas of space.

Leaving behind

Always let people know how their participation is valuable.

A novelty

Globally, there are many spatial practitioners that try the limits of architecture to concern itself with the social. The contents and lessons here are, however, believed to be true and valuable.

Hosting

This is arriving as the uninvited guest.

Teaching

This is learning together by surfacing the unknown known that you do not know.

Professional

Architects with a capital A already exist everywhere. Daring to be unprofessional might be the only way to reshape your knowledge to serve less extractive processes.

Only rural

Peripheries are produced everywhere. If you are city-bound, you could start by moving yourself out of the room you are in and start asking around for concerns.

Trading here for there

Or vice versa. Realize that the work on-site in one place is not forever, and what you want to ignite is engagement.

Manifestos

Realize that manifestos are mass produced goods, and that the only thing you can really do is put yourself out there, where you do not yet belong.

This thesis ends with a manifesto, tying back to the search for an alternative mode of practice for architects, based in nomadism. It is by no means an all-encompassing guide. Neither is it final: its basis is that of continuous questioning

Negative manifesto for ambulant architects

Facing the age of polycrisis, we search for an alternative space for architectural practice. Nomadic, processual, concerned with being on site and building in a 1:1 scale together with people in public space. Process-led, we know we can never define a final state of what such a role entails. Nevertheless, we know something of what it is not. We say:

NO TO

Beauty

Architects with a capital "A" already exist everywhere. A diversity of use of architectural knowledge is needed.

NO TO

Designing for

There is no taking responsibility without assertion.

NO TO

The portfolio

NO TO

Clients

NO TO

Pre-designing

NO TO

Investors

A solution for a situation somewhere else.

Unless you know that you will make them no profit.

NO TO

Projection

You must plan, and planning and organizing is the most time consuming in this branch of work. Yet you do not project from afar, you plan processes on site.

NO TO

Waiting

Proactivity is crucial!

NO TO

Visiting

One must become temporarily domestic on site to form relationships and learn the local concerns.

NO TO

Fear of rejection

You are a nuisance wherever you go. Make use of it, everything depends!

NO TO

Speed

Your role is almost inflexibly that of maintenance of and around the event - cleaning, planning, preparing, keeping contacts, budgeting, assembling, disassembling, sorting, managing logistics, cataloguing and assessing.

NO TO

Speed

Always take time for reflection, and do it together with participants. Over, and over, and over again.

NO TO

Outcomes

Do not fixate on the built, the easily representable. The performative view of architecture allows you to work in purely immaterial insertions, if appropriate.

Discussion:
Manifesto:

and
process-led practice. It is rather a set of refusals, dependent on the situations I've encountered throughout the project, and what steps I could take in my very privileged position to challenge the stigma of professionalism.

It facilitates putting oneself in a precarious position where professional dependency on relationships surfaces, imploring the reader to learn what

contingency means in the real world.

NO TO

Paper architecture

There simply is no time not to work in real space.

NO TO

Comfort

Indeterminacy is the word of the day! Uncertainty and awkwardness are the fertilizers that feed the growth of knowledge.

NO TO

Leaving behind

Your new arsenal of tools are a phone, email, mailbox, fax machine, telegraph, radio wave transmitter, or other means of long-distance communication.

NO TO

Leaving behind

Your ongoing process is about building a network across vast areas of space.

NO TO

Leaving behind

Always let people know how their participation is valuable.

THIS IS NOT

A novelty

Globally, there are many spatial practitioners that try the limits of architecture to concern itself with the social. The contents and lessons here are, however, believed to be true and valuable.

THIS IS NOT

Hosting

This is arriving as the uninvited guest.

THIS IS NOT

Teaching

This is learning together by surfacing the unknown known that you do not know.

THIS IS NOT

Professional

Architects with a capital A already exist everywhere. Daring to be unprofessional might be the only way to reshape your knowledge to serve less extractive processes.

THIS IS NOT

Only rural

Peripheries are produced everywhere. If you are city-bound, you could start by moving yourself out of the room you are in and start asking around for concerns.

THIS IS NOT

Trading here for there

Or vice versa. Realize that the work on-site in one place is not forever, and what you want to ignite is engagement.

REFUSE

Manifestos

Realize that manifestos are mass produced goods, and that the only thing you can really do is put yourself out there, where you do not yet belong.

Fig. 4. Illustration of manifesto on two-sided A5 format.

Discussion:

Manifesto:

Printed sources

Avilla-Royo, R. (2023). *Collaborative tools for community architecture: Approaches to design and making*. Arquine.

Ant Farm. (1971). *Inflatocookbook*. Ant Corps.

Billimore, Y., Koitela, J. (2021[2021]). Hospitality as a Practice is Also a Call to Collective Action. In: Bader, M., Kafka, G., Schneider, T. & Talevi, R. *Making Futures*. Leipzig: Spector Books.

Björling, N., Fredriksson, J. (2018) *Relationer mellan stad och land i det regionala stadslandskapet* [Electronic source]. Chalmers Tekniska Högskola.

Brenner, N. (2016). The Hinterland, Urbanized? *Architectural Design*, 86(4), 118-127. DOI: 10.1002/ad.2077

Chan, C. (2010). Epilogue. In: Miessen, M. *The Nightmare of Participation: [(Crossbench Practice as a Mode of Criticality)]*. Sternberg Press.

de Carlo, G. (2005). Architecture's Public. In: Blundell-Jones, P., Petrescu, D. & Till, J. (Eds.). *Architecture and participation*. New York: Spon Press. Pp. 3-22.

Forty five degrees. (2022). Ambulanța Pentru Monumente. In: Hunchuck, E. M. (Ed.). *Radical Rituals: An itinerant survey along the 45° parallel*. Bucharest: PUNCH Press.

Harboe, L. (2012). *Social concerns in contemporary architecture : three European practices and their works*. [PhD thesis, The Oslo School of Architecture and Design]

Kassem, A. (2019). *A Performative understanding of spatial design, learning from exhibitions*. SHS Web Conf.64 03006 DOI: 10.1051/shsconf/20196403006

Lantz, M. (2020). Landsbygd, måleri, seende – och missförstånd. In: Linnéuniversitetet, Engqvist, J. H. (Ed.). *Nya Småland*. Stockholm: Arvinius+Orfeus Publishing. Pp. 75-81.

Limonad, E. & Monte-Mór, R. L. (2015). Beyond the right to the city: between the rural and the urban. *Scripta Nova Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*, 13(17), 103-115.

Lefebvre, H. (1996). The Right to the City. In: E. Kofman & E. Lebas (Eds.) *Writings on Cities*. Blackwell Publishers, pp. 63-177.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Miessen, M. (2010). *The Nightmare of Participation: [(Crossbench Practice as a Mode of Criticality)]*. Sternberg Press.

Miessen, M. (2016). *Crossbenching: toward participation as critical spatial practice*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.

Miessen, M. (Ed.) (2024). *Agonistic Assemblies: On the Spatial Politics of Horizontality*. London: Sternberg Press Ltd.

Schön, D.A. (2003[1995]). *The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action*. (Repr.[= New ed.]). Aldershot: Arena.

Siegal, J. (red.) (2002). *Mobile: the art of portable architecture*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Schweder, A. (2022). *Performance Architecture: A Performative Architectural Practice* [Apollo - University of Cambridge Repository]. <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.85830>

Till, J. (2013). *Architecture depends*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Wigley, M. (2021). Returning the Gift. In: Space Caviar (Ed.). *Non-extractive architecture vol. 1 on designing without depletion*. Moscow: V-A-C Foundation.

Web Sources

ArkDes. (2023, May 20). *Joar Nango: Girjegumpi*. <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/514462/joar-nangogirjegumpi> (Retrieved 2025-10-16)

Guerilla Architects. (n.d.). *Bastian der Stadt:Symbiont: a co-working space inside a caravan*. <https://www.guerillaarchitects.de/en/portfolio/bastian-der-stadtsymbiont/>. (Retreived 2025-10-15)

Göteborgs Stad. (n.d.). *Om Bygglekplatsen*. <https://goteborg.se/wps/portal/start/uppleva-och-gora/parker-och-lekplatser/bemannade--lek-och-aktivitetsytor/bygglekplatsen/om-bygglekplatsen> (Retrieved 2026-04-24)

Bibliography:

Incite-DEM. (n.d.). *Remembering Portugal’s SAAL: A Revolution in Housing After the Carnation Revolution*. <https://incite-dem.eu/remembering-portugals-saal-a-revolution-in-housing-after-the-carnation-revolution/> (Retrieved 2025-10-15)

Maier, T. (2015, April 16) *The SAAL Process: Architecture and Participation in Portugal, 1974-1976*. Frieze: contemporary art and culture. London: Frieze Magazine. <https://www.frieze.com/article/saal-process-architecture-and-participation-portugal-1974%E2%80%931976>. (Retreived 2025-10-15)

UN-DESA (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division). (2019). *World Urbanization Prospects 2018: Highlights* (ST/ESA/SER.A/421). <https://population.un.org/wup/assets/WUP2018-Highlights.pdf> (Retrieved 2025-10-03)

Images All images are personal photographs, by the author or published with permission, or illustrations made by the author.

Fonts used Source serif

