

**FLOATING  
UNIVERSITY  
BERLIN**



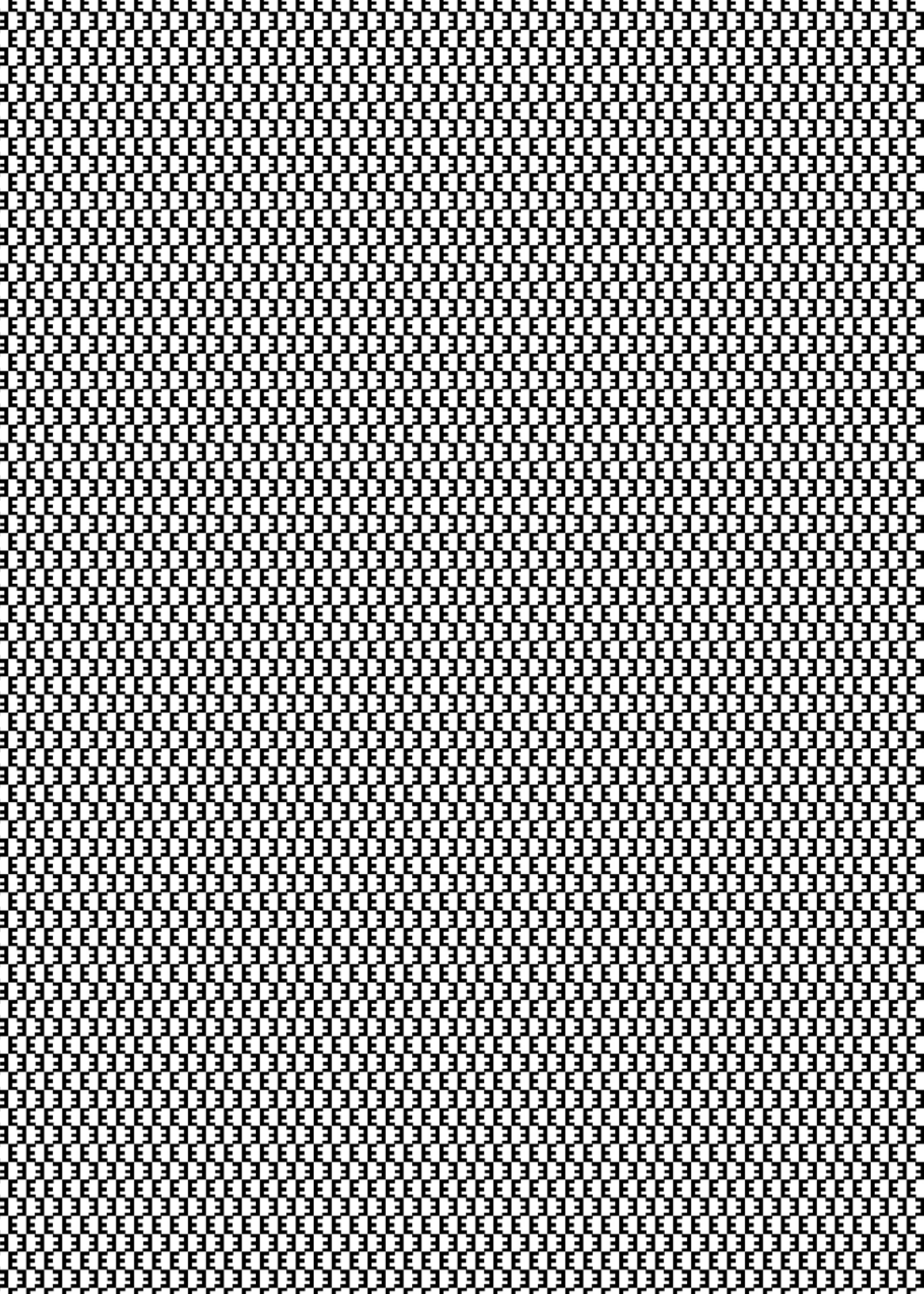
DESIGNING AROUND THE KITCHEN TABLE

# DESIGNING AROUND THE KITCHEN TABLE

UNIVERSITÄT DER KÜNSTE BERLIN  
FG ENTWERFEN UND GEBÄUDEPLANUNG

17. APRIL — 17. JULI 2018

FLOATING  
UNIVERSITY  
BERLIN



*"Sometimes the wheel turns slowly, but it turns."*  
Icelandic proverb



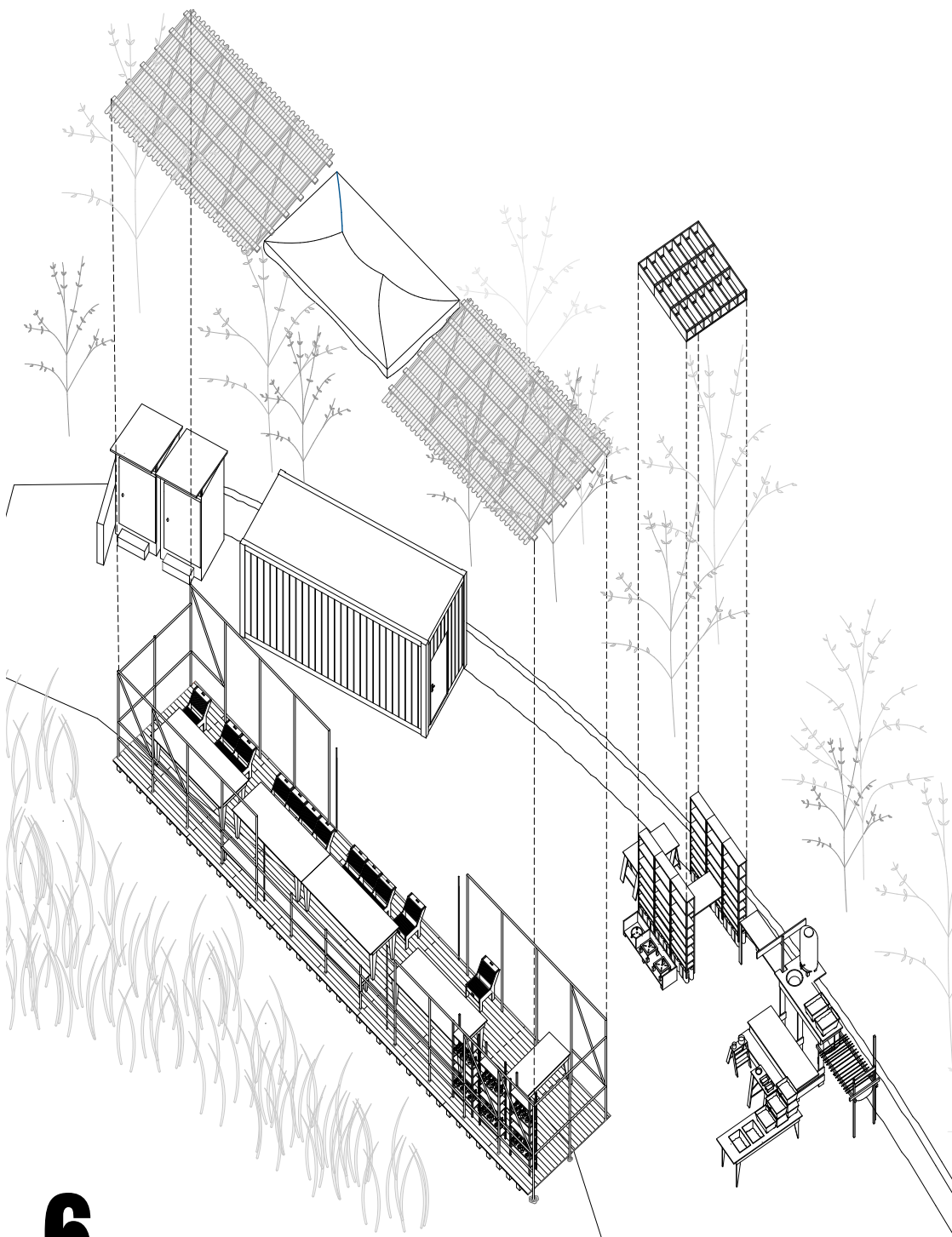
the studio in/about the kitchen	04
building & improving process	10
the kitchen as practice	24
the neighbourhood scale	40
visions for future living	54
exhibition at UdK Rundgang	72

# CONTENT 3





**4 THE STUDIO IN/ABOUT THE KITCHEN 5**



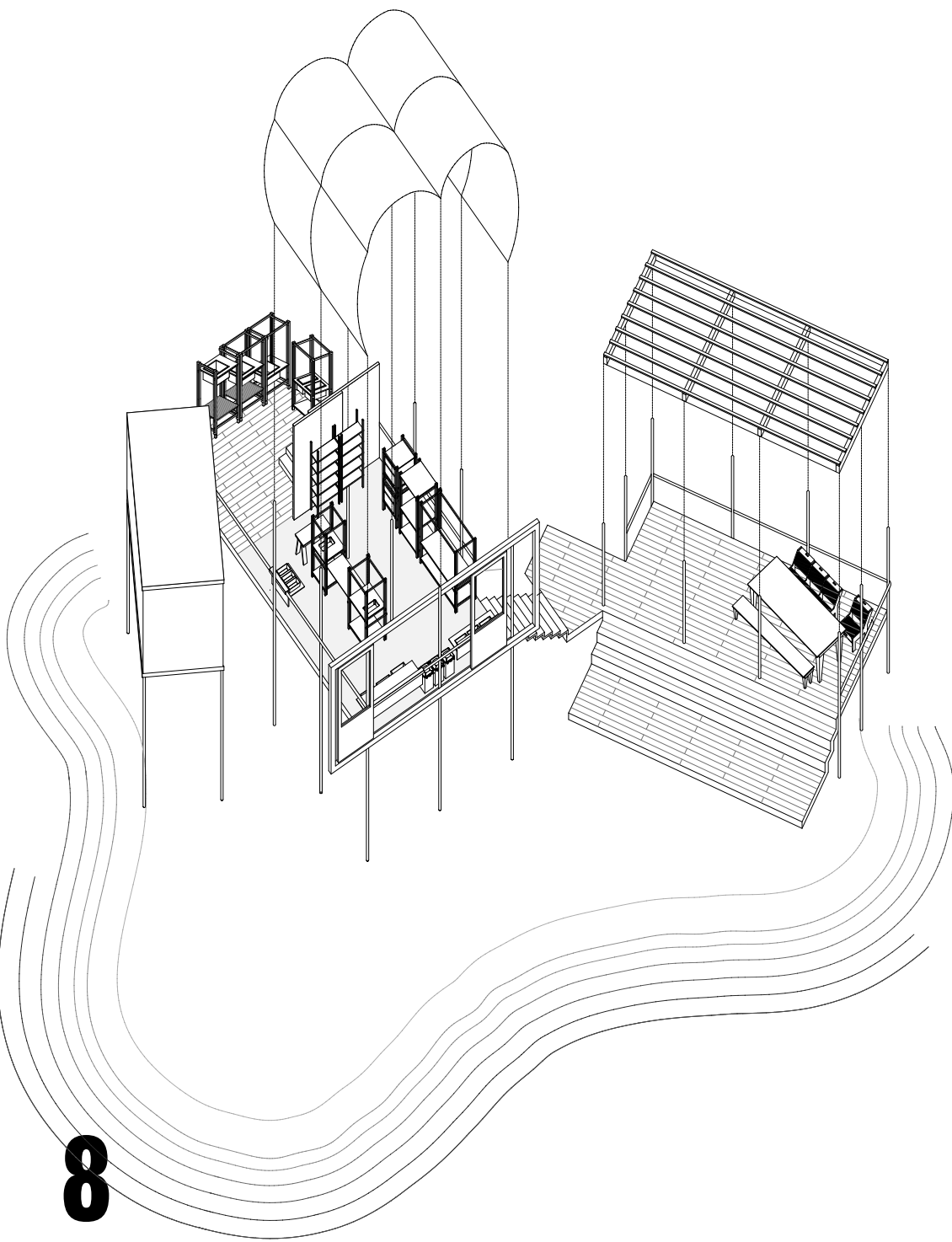
In April 2018 the Floating University Berlin appeared on a magical location next to the Tempelhofer Feld, hidden behind Columbiadamm, sport grounds, graveyards and allotment gardens in the rainwater retention pool of the former airport field. Together with the faculty members of the Floating University and with students from over 20 universities from Europe, USA and South America 15 architecture students from the University of the Arts Berlin worked during the summer term on building and researching not only the physical structure of the emerging institution but also its social architecture. In this offshore laboratory we researched and learned together about visions in urban practice and created an unique experiment in order to re-imagine new ways of living together in urban space.

Next to the floating assembly hall and a cascade of water filtration, near the bar, the university kitchen was be the main common space of hospitality, production, careful housekeeping and collective knowledge production. Within the space production studio the students from the UdK built, run, flooded and filled with life the kitchen of the Floating University Berlin. During the design-build the students built and re-shaped the kitchen by testing and improving it. The 1:1 design process became a constant experiment and a hands-on laboratory.

During the summer term the kitchen was not only a place of cooking but the core element shaping a social practice, it turned into a place to reflect while building sinks and wastewater infrastructures, a space to question the system behind the production of food, a situation to produce and share knowledge in public. In this context, every Wednesday the kitchen hosted a thematic dinner where participants were invited to share and co-produce a moment of hospitality. It became a place for conversations, lectures, discussions, common cookings, but also for analysing and drawing. We started a thematic survey into the surrounding urban areas through the lens of the kitchen to understand forms of living (and cooking) together and their spatial frameworks. We worked on a design for a better city from the kitchen table.

During the construction work a temporary kitchen on site produced each day a collective moment during lunch and simultaneously a test area for the building process





The kitchen holds a very special place in our society. Its meaning in our everyday life spreads way beyond the limits of architecture. Looking into the typology of the kitchen involves reflecting about space, economy, gender, social agency as well as politics. During our PlugIn at the Floating University, we intended to look at the kitchen as a space, but also as an object of study that would lead us to gain knowledge and precise questions within the topics of architecture as a collective practice, and architecture as a resource.

The refectory in Bauhaus Dessau was the central place of the informal exchanges between students and teachers. The absence of hierarchy in the discussions in the canteen or on the terrace of the refectory reflects the potential of the learning practice of the Bauhaus. From there, the ideal of the collective living was thought through, experienced, could take form on stage, as well as in the architectonic accumulation of the daily life of the students (cf Szymczak 2016). Our exploration about the future of the kitchen started with a look in the strongly regulated cafeteria and refectory of the UdK. Next to the kitchen, designed to follow a precise daily rhythm and answer a strict logic of efficiency, we discovered the small office kitchen, following the typology of the “tea kitchen”, which merely enables one to warm up a plate or a cup of water, and is only accessible to the staff of the institution.

On the first meeting of the semester, during the one-day procession from the Hardenbergstrasse to the Floating University, we discussed the aims of the kitchen we were to build on the site, as an object of research and experimentation. The typology of this future kitchen was to be similar to the flat share kitchen, and should enable the same collective moments. It should also be effective like the “Mensa” - the student refectory - and enable many people to cook and eat together in a relatively short time frame, but at the same time be at the disposal of the members of the team, to come in and have a coffee or a snack at anytime. Through the translation of those defined spaces towards the unfinished space of the Floating University, we brought up the questions of food preparation and transport to an architectonic assignment, and challenged the border between the domestic and the public. The connection to the concrete project of the Floating University Berlin offered us the chance to research, experiment and build at the scale 1:1.



**10 BUILDING + IMPROVING PROCESS 11**



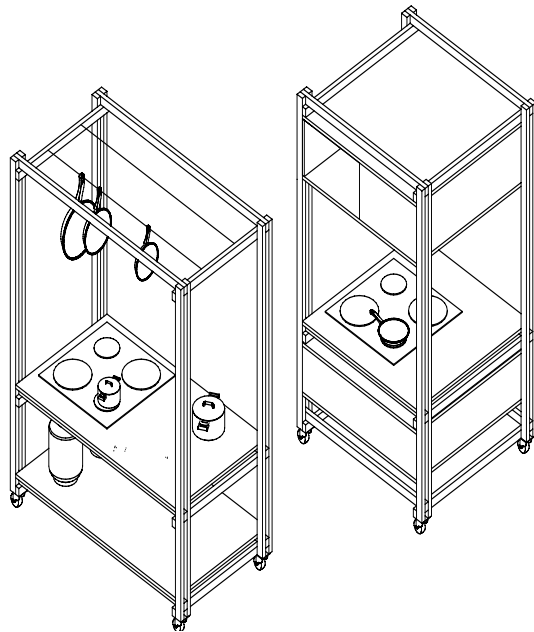
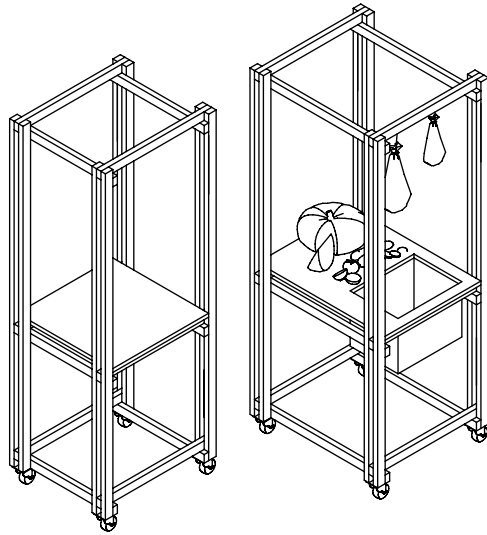


The semester began during the building phase of the Floating University. In the first three weeks, parallel to the general building process, the students started to develop the inside arrangement of the kitchen. As the outside envelope and structure of the kitchen space was being installed by professional builders, the inner side of the space was being thought through by the students of the studio. We decided to flip the normal course of a project studio, and to start first with the building, that we later studied in an empiric investigation. Based on the diversity of requirements in the kitchen (large canteen during the Open Weeks, self-used kitchen and workspace, tee and coffee station for a quick pause...) it was decided to work with a flexible and modular structure. The design included 5 objects that were 2m high, where the user could chose the height of the working surfaces. Similar to the OpenStructures project, the idea was to propose a design that could be used as a spatial frame, and be later appropriated and developed by the different users of the kitchen. An other important element of the design was the flexible position of the different objects in the space and the possibility to create different spatial constellations within the same room. Therefore, all the structures were built on wheels, and could be moved easily.

The “Spülküche”, or washing kitchen, was one place of concretization of a bigger theme of the Floating University: a laboratory for new water practices. The water station was built following the same design principles, and its use was developed together with Katherine Ball, the artist in residence who planned the water filtration system. Through a cascade design, connecting 3 different water tanks, and the use of coffee ground to scrub the oil off the plates, the “grey water” produced in the washing process could be cleaned through different water filters and re-used to water the plants of the greenhouse.

The different elements were done after 3 weeks of building, and it was decided that every week, a small group of students had to observe, propose and realize an improvement to the existing design. Later, some parts got modified and adapted by other users of the Floating University, based on their own observations. At this time, the term of “improvement” was strongly discussed. Given the short time and the few ressources, all decisions and modifications had a big impact. Who decides which requirement prevails? Can other groups be involved in the modifications, or does that create a conflict of authorship and responsibility over the elements?









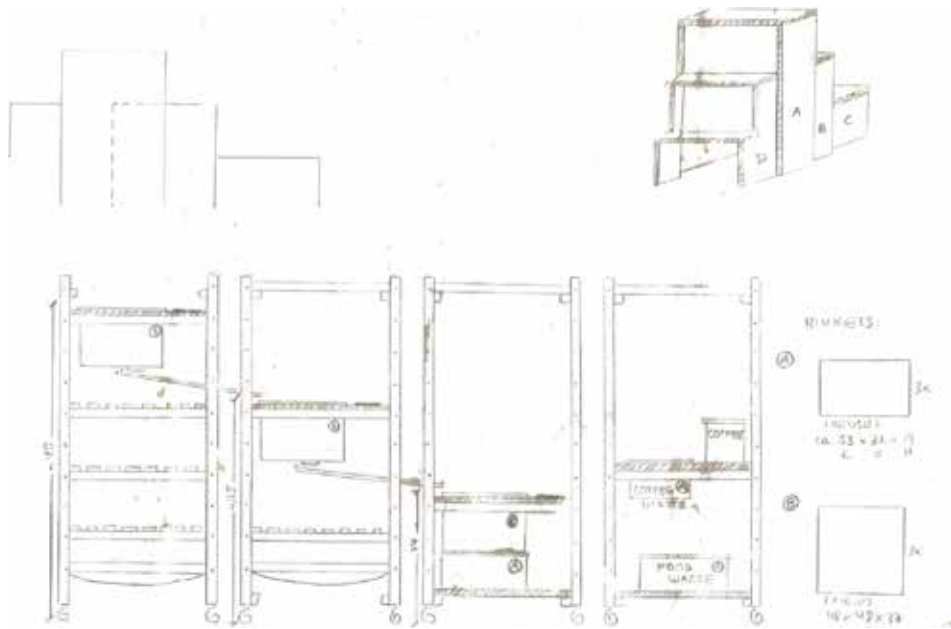
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Building a rinsing-tower for vegetables, a small quick-rinsing-tower and a tower with space for two ovens above each other. Covered from the sides and the top / bottom by wooden boards.

After 3 weeks on site during the construction process the kitchen was ready to host the cooking collective from Portugal AFAVA and the first Open Weeks with hundreds of visitors each day.

17





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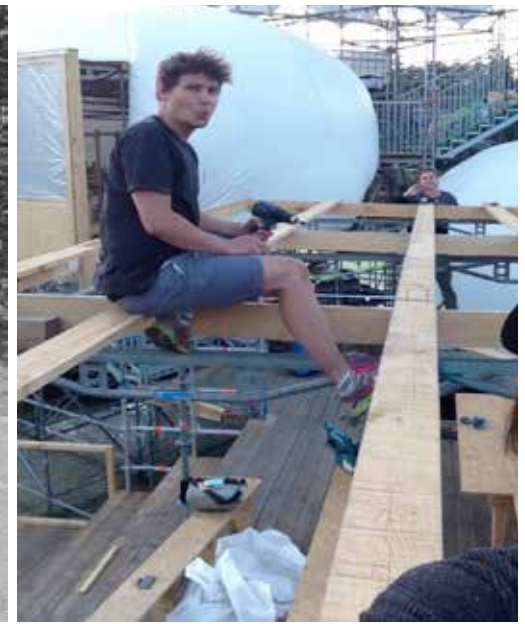
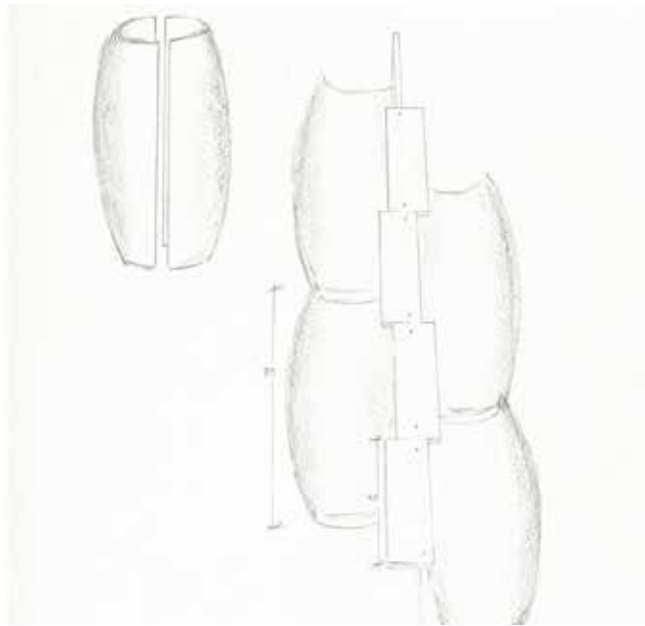
Design and realisation of the "Spülküche", our rinsing station.



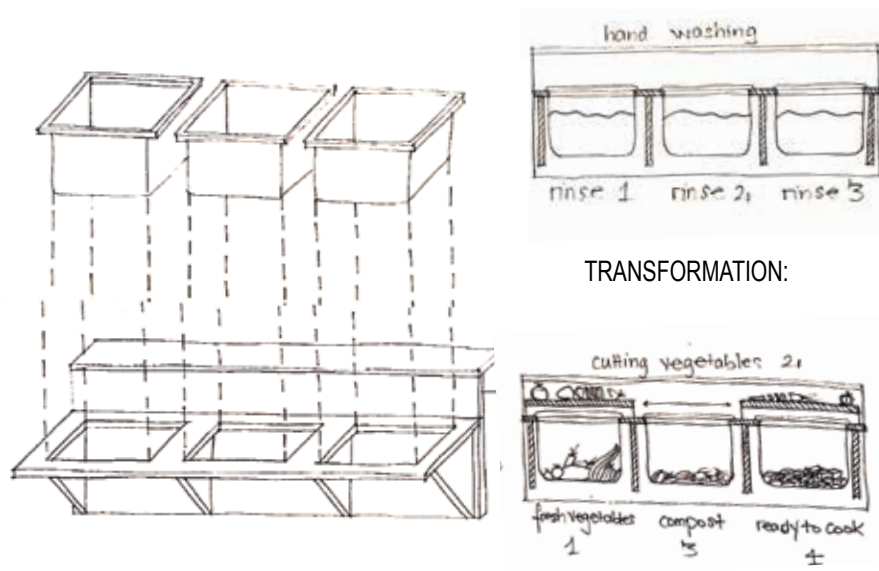
details of the water connection from one tank to another (top left)  
and everyday use of the Spülküche

19









22

The handwashing station functions similarly to the rinsing-station, as it has three buckets with water: soap / rinsing the soap / clean water.

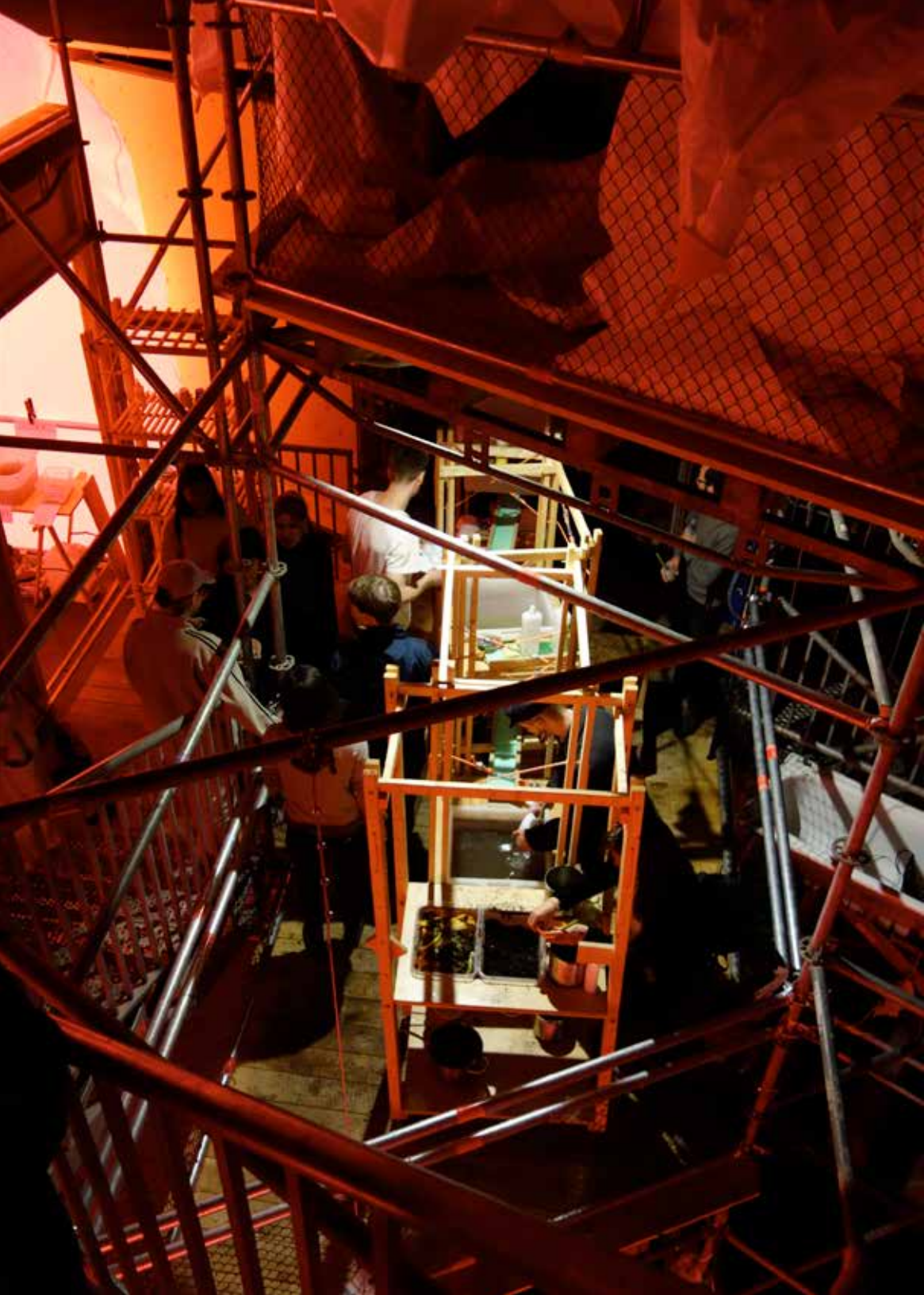
Transforming the handwashing-station into a cutting-board and adding a wooden board on rails to move above the buckets and be used for cutting. Transforming the rinsing-buckets into one for the fresh vegetables, one for the compost and one for the ready-to-cook-vegetables.

23









### **Stammtisch - a weekly conversation**

The goal of the semester was not only to design and build the kitchen space, but also to use it and occupy it. In this way, we started using the term “spatial practice”. It deals with the creation and arrangement of the space through the negotiation of collective protocols toward its common use (cf. Aßmann, Bader, Shipwright, Talevi 2017). In the mean time, between the 17th of April and the 10th of Juli 2018, the students of UdK conceived and hosted a weekly format, called “Stammtisch. A weekly conversation”. Every Wednesday in the Floating University, they prepared, cooked, and set the space in order to welcome all the interested participants to a collective dinner, a moment of social exchange. The students were in charge of the curating of the evening : the choice of the topic, the invitation and care of the guests, the creation of the menu, the preparation of the food, as well as setting up the space for the night. The public program was composed of 12 events, hosting different guests, and offering a variety of meals to a new publikum each night.

**17.4. Inaugural Welcome Stammtisch** with Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius, raumlaborberlin dean of the Floating University Berlin

**24.4. Artistic strategies with water infrastructures** with Marjetica Potrx (Ljubljana, HfBK Hamburg) and Katherine Ball (artist in residency, USA)

**8.5 Feminist Futures of Spatial Practices** with Meike Schalk and Therese Kristiansson (Stockholm)

**15.5 Architecture of Temporalities and The Circular City** with Florian Stirnemann (raumlaborberlin) and Nanni Grau (Hütten und Palaste, Uni Kassel)

**23.5 How to read water** - reading with Nicholas Robert (UdK Student) and **Experimental Kitchen Furniture Families** with Marta Sanches (June14)

**30.5 Stories and Visions around the basin** with the neighbors from the allotment gardens

**6.6. Exchange of diverse participants** in the Floating University about further work

**13.6. Lecture performances** from students of Hito Steyerls class (UdK Berlin)

**19.6. Leftovers Cooking** with the Real Junkfood Project and **drawing** with Yü Chen (Antwerpen)

**27.6. Politics of Care** - team preparations for the Open Weeks and the PlugIn

**3.7. Collarborations with Some Notes** - Niklas Fanelisa (Niklas Fanelis Atelier Berlin and Markus Shimizu (mimi fermentations Berlin, Tokyo)

**10.7. Final**





28

Every monday the students would pick up the leftover food of a nearby organic super-market, and plan the menu in fonction of the ingredients.

Most of the time, the cooking was done by the students in the kitchen, but sometimes the public was invited to become part of the collective process.

29

















### Breakfast Club

Another format got established, shortly after the start of the semester: the "Breakfast Club". In a more informal setting, at the breakfast table in the kitchen, the students discussed various subjects together with different experts visiting the Floating University. In this way, the usual hierarchy between the lecturer and the public was transformed, and the exchange made easier.

#### 20.4. Assemble (London)

**27.4. Katherine Ball, Marjetica Potrc** and students of the HfBK Hamburg

**2.5. Jean Philippe Vassal** (Paris), **AFAVA** kitchen collective (Lissabon)

**9.5. Meike Schalk and Therese Kristiansson**

**17.5. Laura Bruns** (stadstattstrand and Freiraumfibel)

**28.5. Yoshi Tsukamoto** (atelier bow-wow, tokyo)

**30.5. Xu Tiantian** (design and Architecture, Beijing)

**26.6. Cristina Werner** (Studio Oladur Eliasson and Institute for Raumexperimente), **Cristine und Lauren** (The Kitchen, Studio Olafur Eliasson)

**27.6. Petter Fattinger** (design.build, Vienna)

Through implementation of the Stammtisch and the Breakfast Club, the students were able to discuss and criticize themes such as hospitality, economy, labour, reproduction as well as maintenance and care. Again through this format, the roles in the Floating University got inverted: the "guest Studio" became hosts for a night. In this very particular way, a situation of 'unconventional hospitality' was created (Jacques Derrida, *Dufourmantelle* 2000). The entrance situation got reinterpreted through this will of Hospitality, and therefore transformed into a welcoming gesture. The preparation of the food, as well as the financial aspects of the dinners led to various debates and questionings around the concepts of Maintenance and Economy in today's Society (cf. Bittner, Krasny 2016). The ingredients were exclusively gathered via the collect of unsold edibles from the Organic Supermarket Denn's who accepted to collaborate. Every monday a group of students in charge of the dinner was responsible of getting the fruits and vegetables that weren't sold in the previous days, and prevented it from going directly in the trash bin. The food, that was almost always still good to eat, was then prepared, transformed, rethought, and served for dinner the next day. The sorting out and use of the groceries was a point of discussion. Referring to Silvia Federici's text "Counterplanning from the kitchen" (1975) und Margarete Schütte-Liotzkys design for the Frankfurt's Kitchen (1926) the valuation of the domestic work, and the work in the kitchen were critically discussed all along the semester.

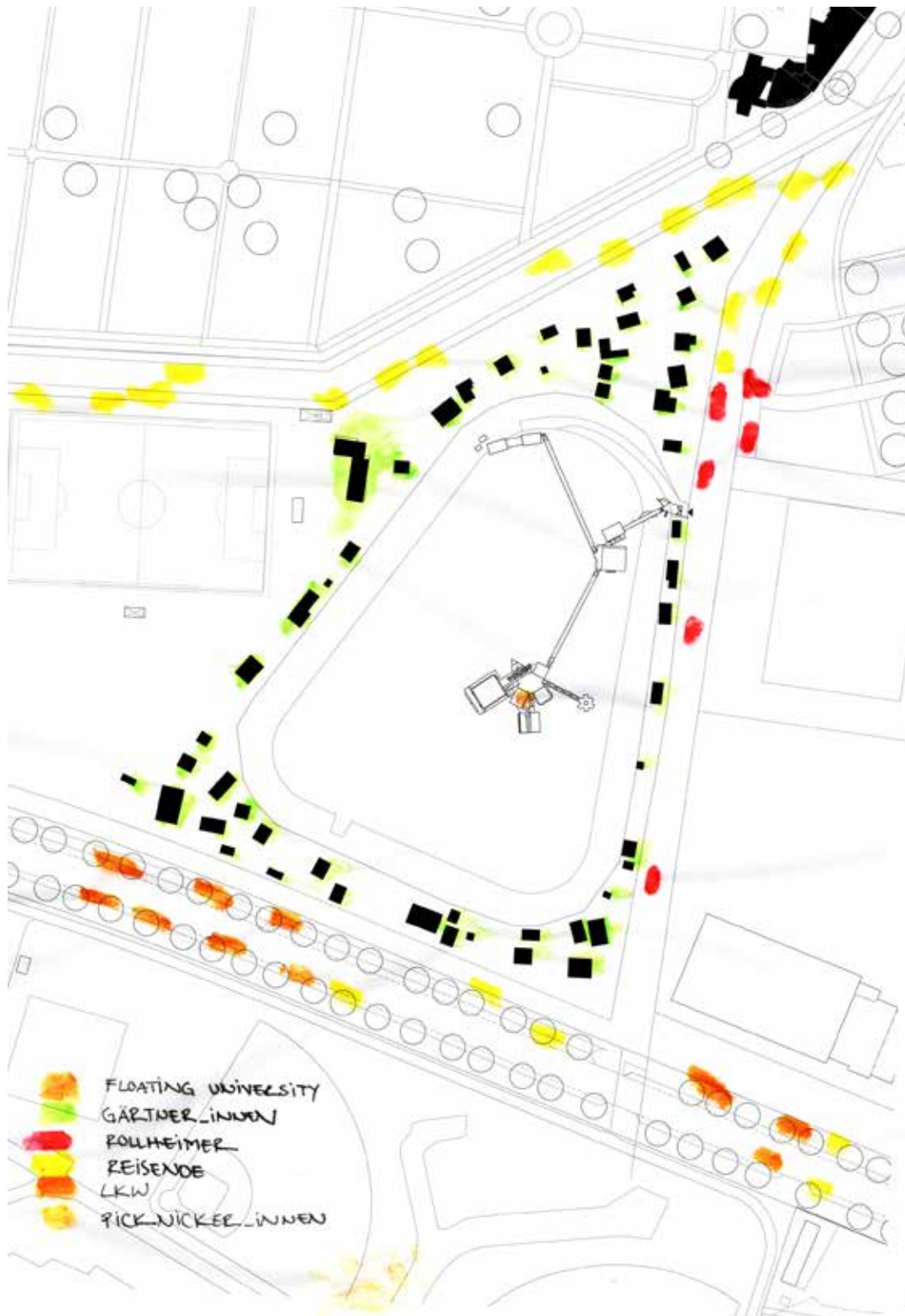




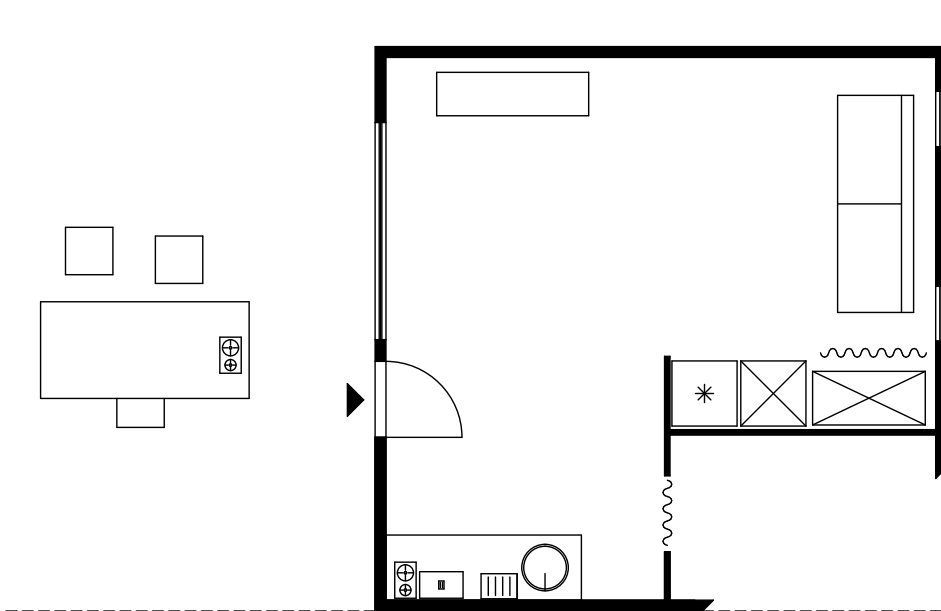






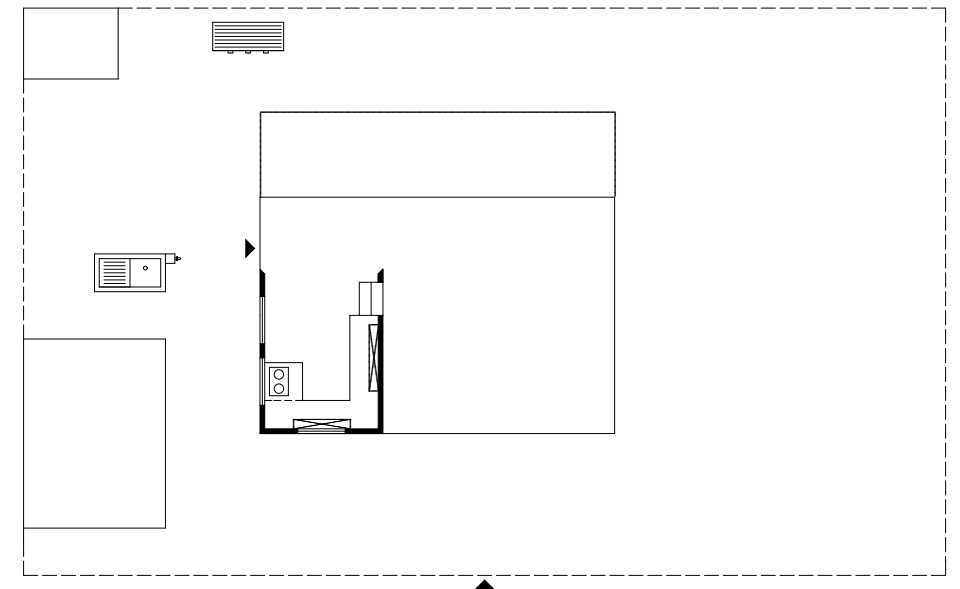


This part of our empiric studies started with the collection of the different open kitchens we could find in the direct neighborhood. This brought up many questions, such as: where does the kitchen start, and where does it end? Are barbecues on the Tempelhof airfield also part of an open kitchen scheme? Are the “week-end kitchens” from the allotment gardens as important as the traditional house kitchens? In further analytic steps, the students researched the kitchens of the allotment gardens in the area of the rainwater retention basin, as well as the mobile kitchens of the vans in the Lilienthalstrasse, or those of the trucks parked on Columbiadamm. The ethnographic work with the neighborhood of the Floating University led to the conception of the following hypothesis: the kitchen is not only a place inside a building, but more a network of different kitchens through which we move everyday. A similar acknowledgment led the Spanish architect Anna Puigjaner in her dissertation project “The kitchenless city”(cf. Puigjaner 2018).



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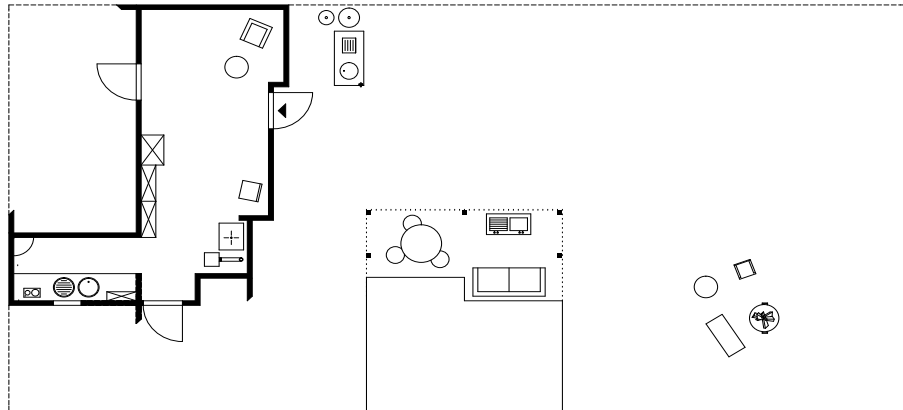
Open kitchen in one of the small house of the allotment garden. Self-built and part of the living space, they move it to the outside when the weather conditions allow it.W



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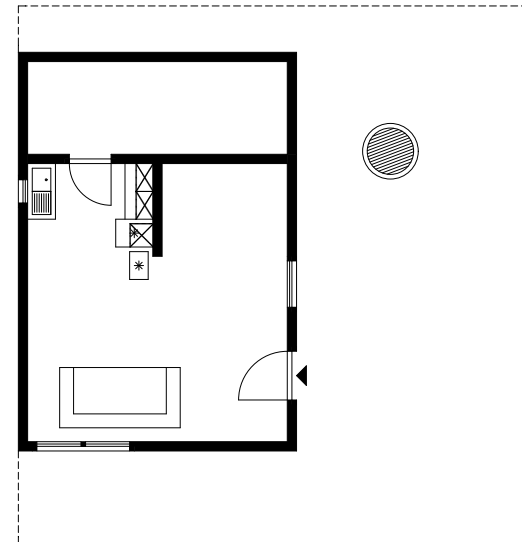
This outside kitchen has been built close to the water access, it is imperfect and provide this "garden feeling", and a somehow adventurous playground for the children.





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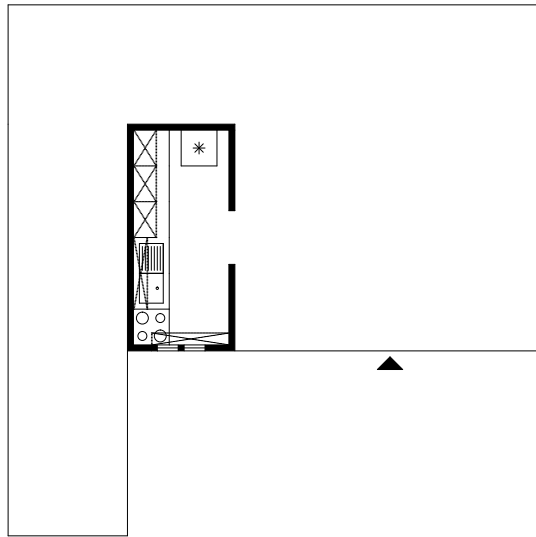
This garden with its kitchen situations is used by the owner himself and his extended family. Because of the many different aged users, there is a variety of cooking spots around the property



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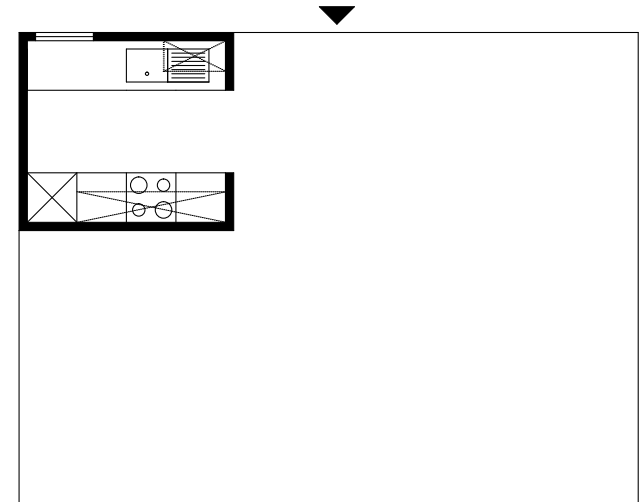
The garden is mainly used to have some nice weekends with friends and have a kind of a sanctuary towards the loud and dirty city. The kitchen is not used for cooking only for preparing bbq.





48

Today's owner kept the existing kitchen, thinking of it as a nice opportunity to have some friends invited for dinner, and sometimes cook for their own. It is now used for long weekends with some hot coffee in the morning and sometimes a nice dinner due sunset.



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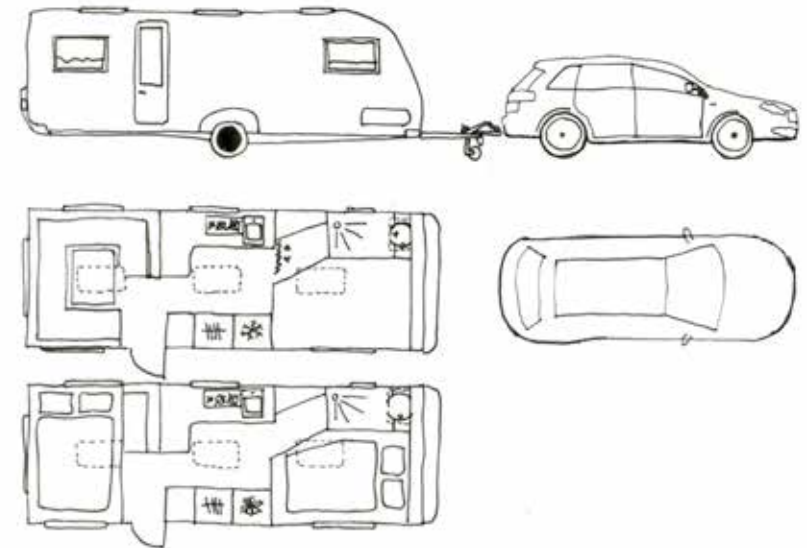
The today's owner kept the inbuilt kitchen and added some shelves. If she could have done it on her own, she rather would have built a minimized kitchen only with a fridge, a little gas stove and a coffee machine to have a kind of modest living.





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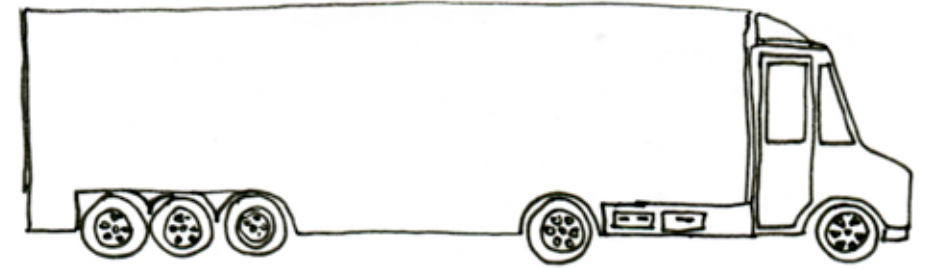
Die Küchen werden täglich benutzt und sind recht gut ausgestattet. Durch die lange Aufenthaltsdauer kann sich der Bewohner gut einrichten und muss seine Ausrüstung nicht jedes Mal verstauen.



Die Küchen sind selbst in die Autos eingebaut und unterscheiden sich von den fertigen Wohnwägen und untereinander. Hauptbestandteil sind Gaskocher, kleine Kühlschränke und Waschbecken. Oft sind die Küchenelemente während der Fahrt verstaut.

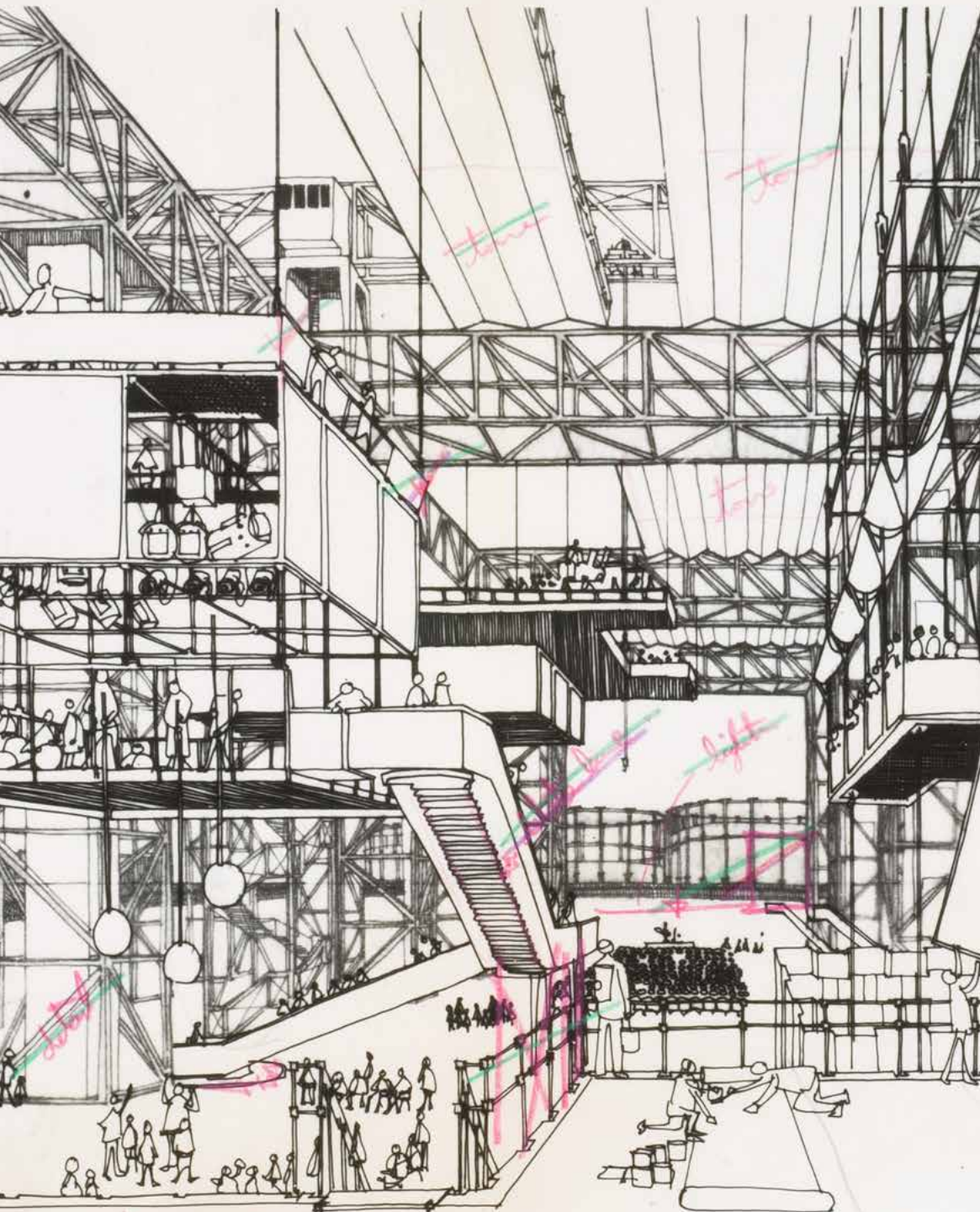
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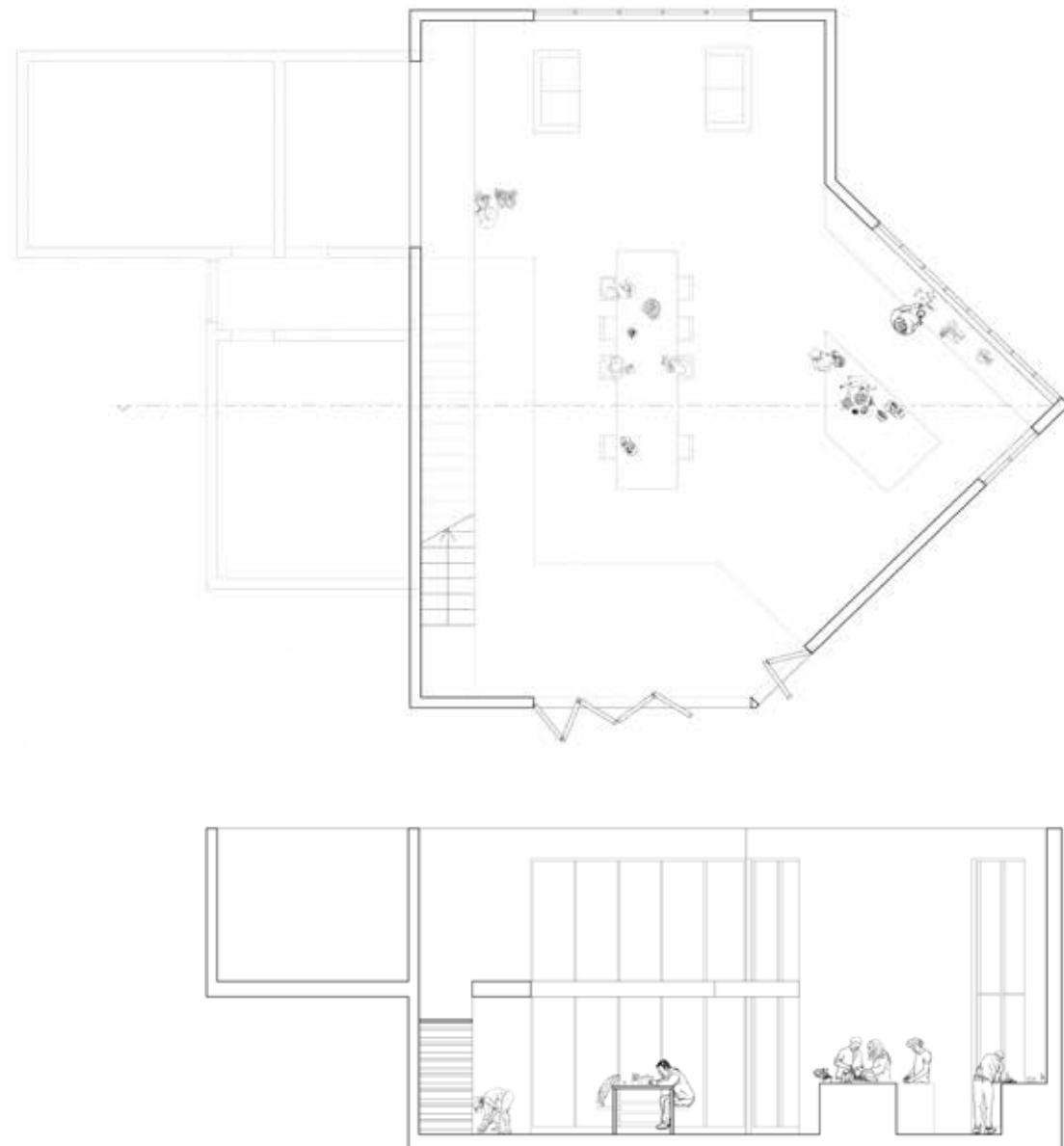




As a conclusion to our analytic discussions, we continued by building architectonic speculations about the future of our society, based on the design of the kitchen. Within 4 weeks, the students worked on the conception of a vision as a reaction to the question: How will we live in the future? The starting point was a scenario where in future we would spend more time for collectivity as well as for our individual development. We took for granted that the technical progress will work towards giving concepts such as empathy, well being, care, self-time and lifelong learning a central position. The students were invited to speculate about those relations and develop a scaleless spatial scenario. Does "more time for community" automatically mean "more time for hobbies"? Which social class are we designing for? How can we bring the production system closer to our everyday life? The results of these four weeks were a variety of speculations about resources and hybrid spaces.



58



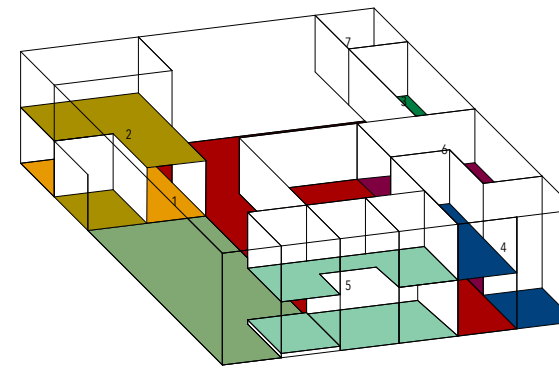
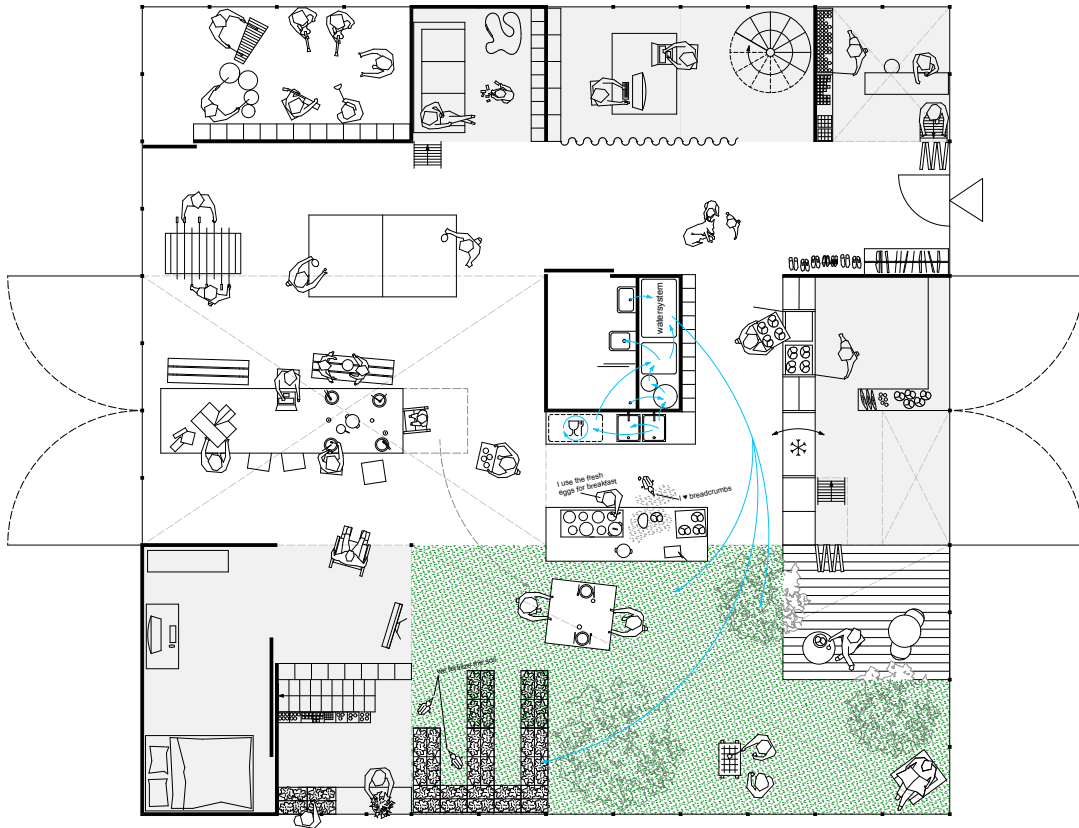
Collective Living between private, semi private, semi public and public space – Anna Wentritt, Luisa Pohlmann, Justus Bartelmeit

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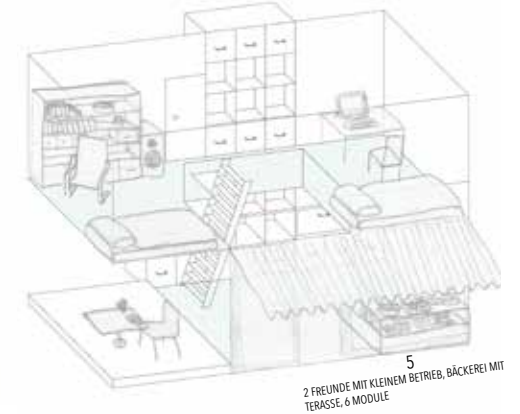
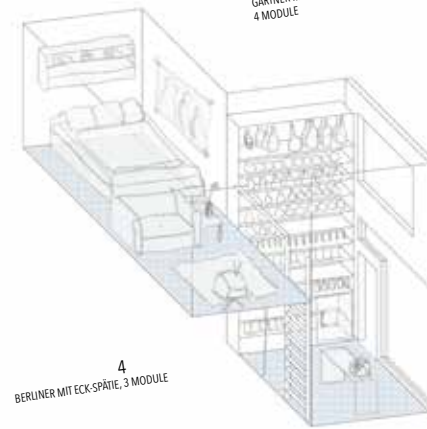
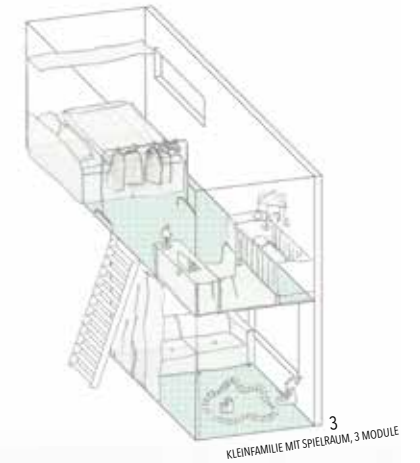
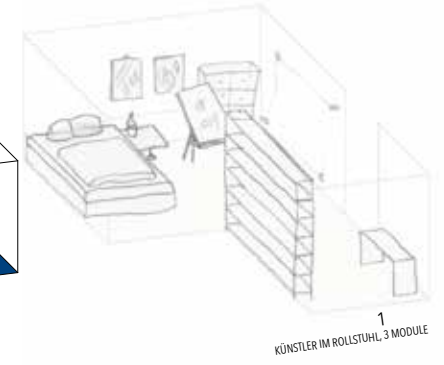




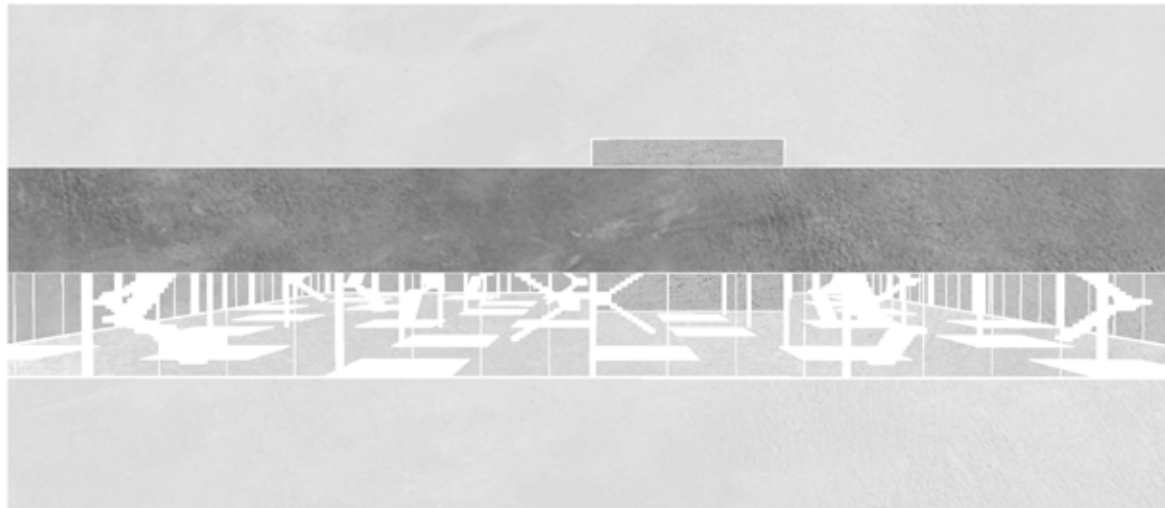
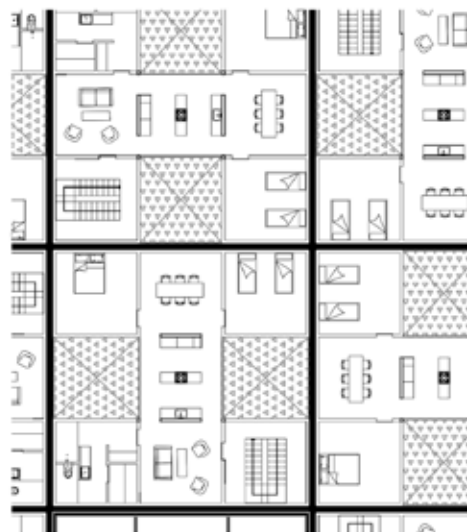
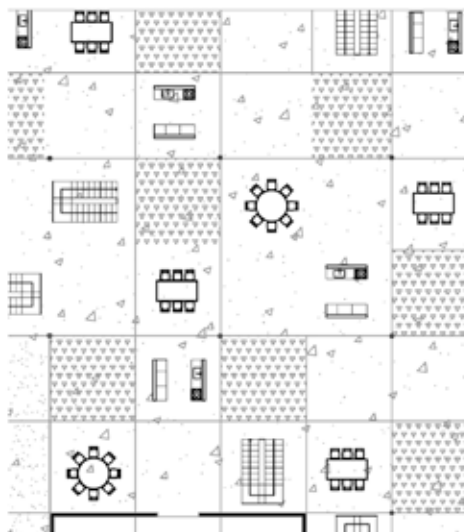
The kitchen as hybrid space for communication, energy production  
and food preparation – Christine Fulsche, Kamila Juruc

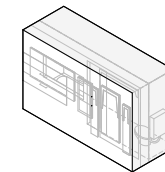
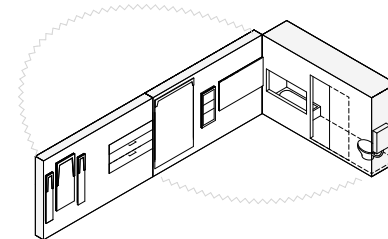
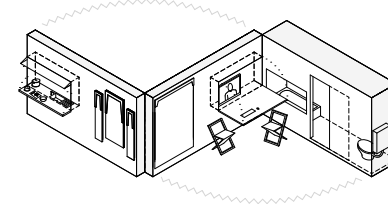
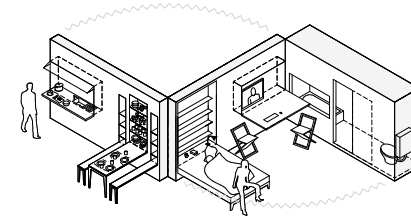
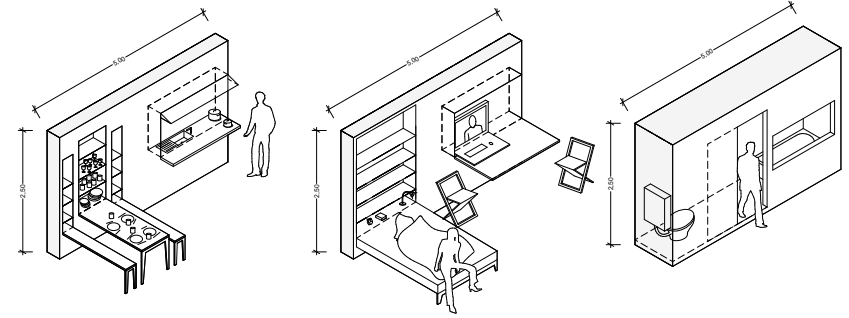
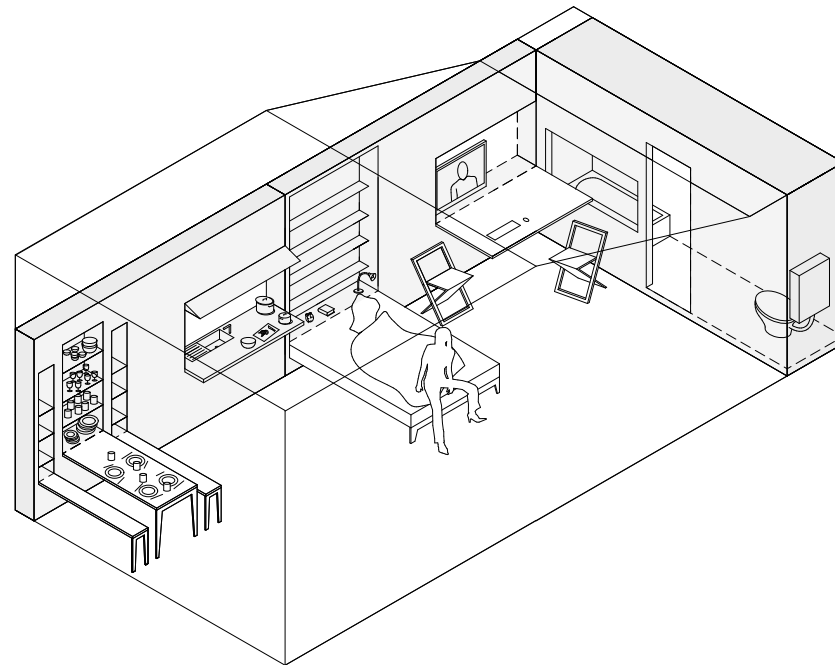
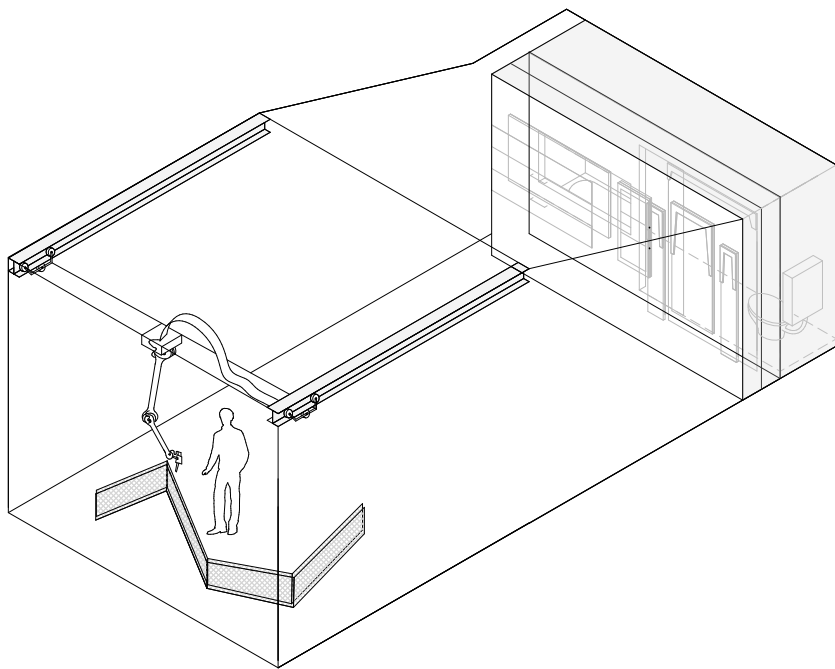


GREEN HOUSE KÜCHE KOLLEKTIV

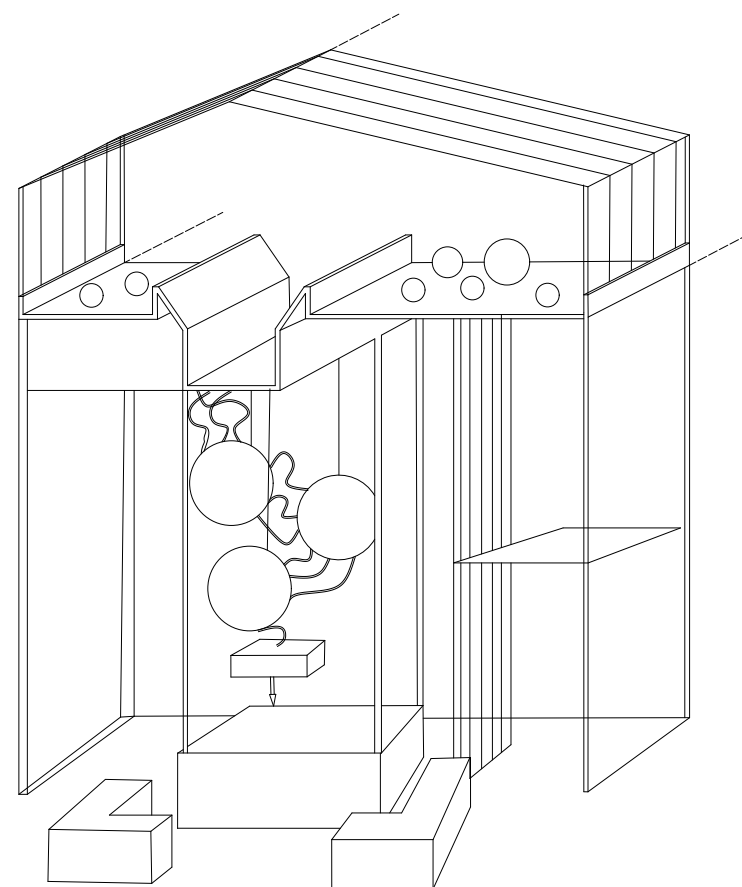
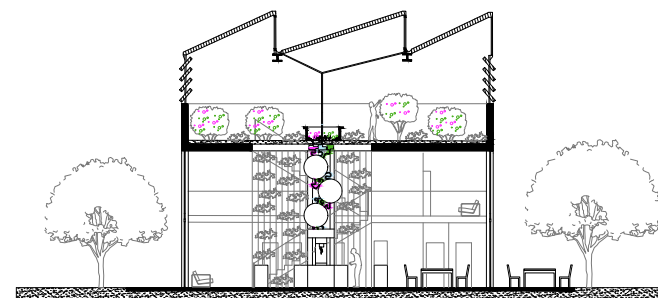
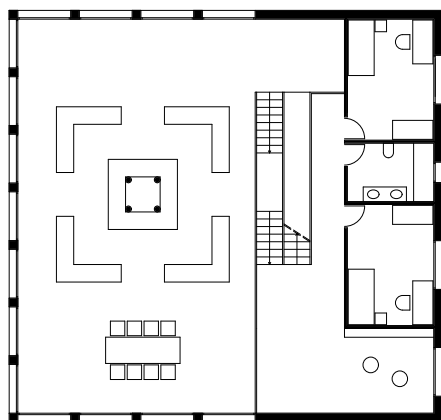
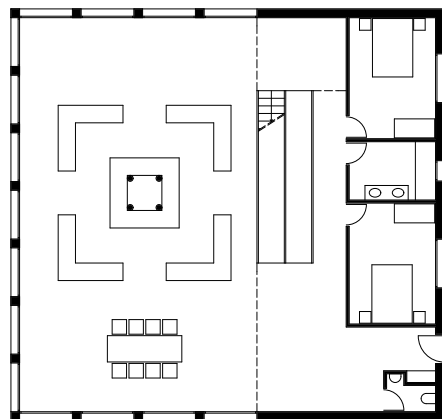




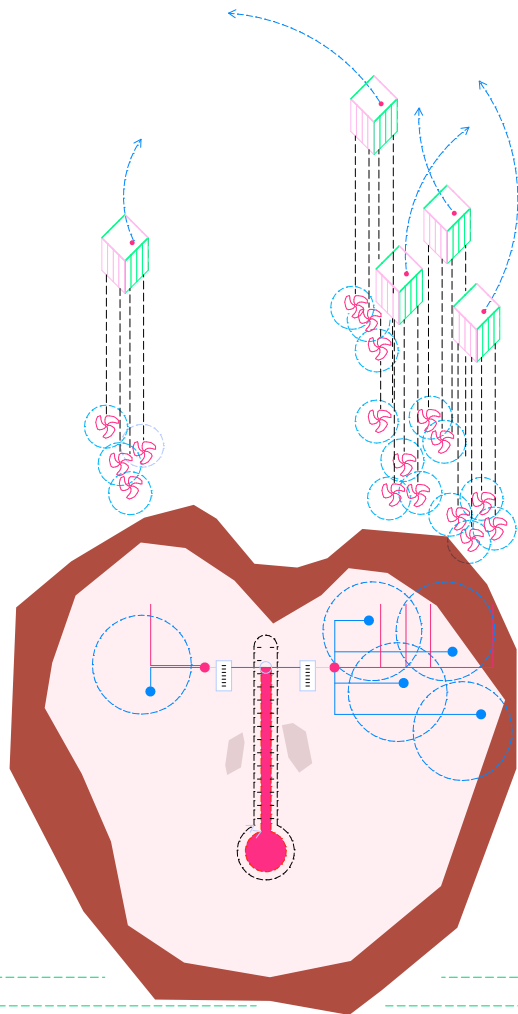






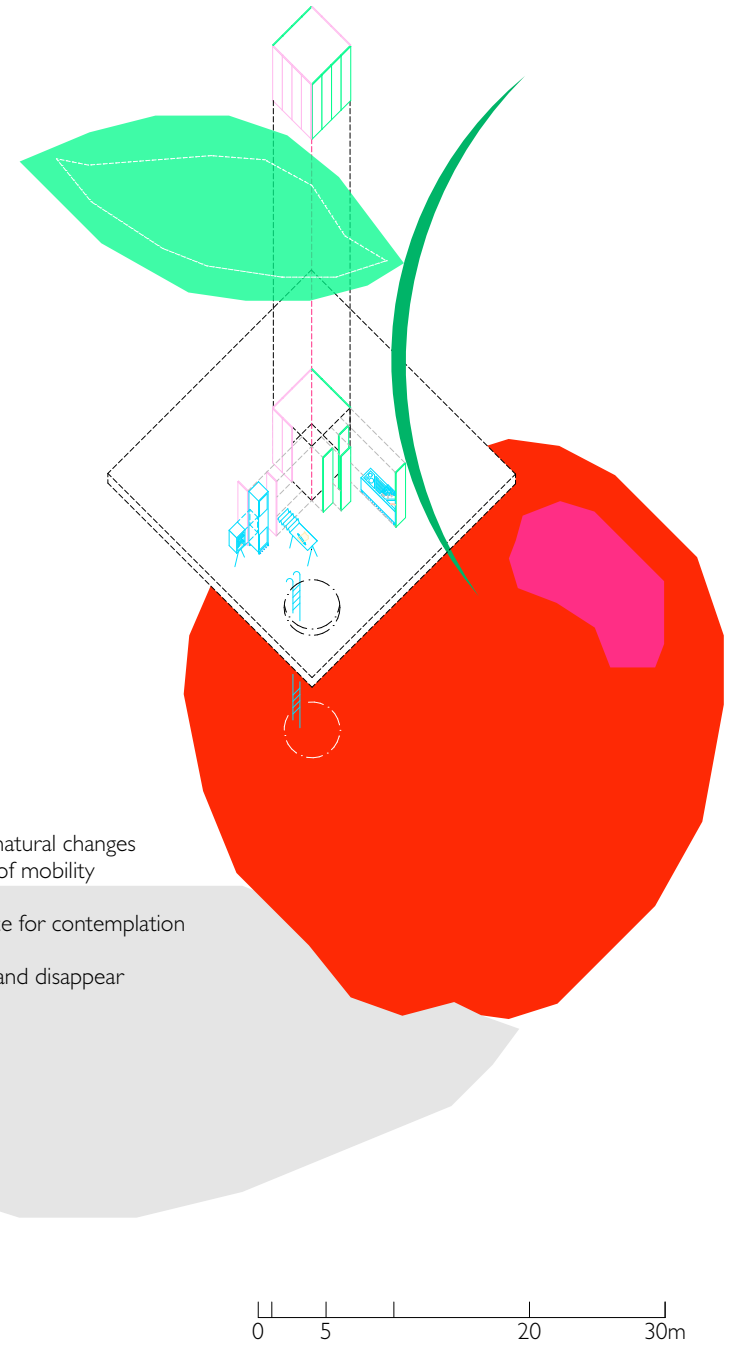


Home as place of food production, machine based food preparation and collectivity – Laurie Negrone, Laura Konieczny



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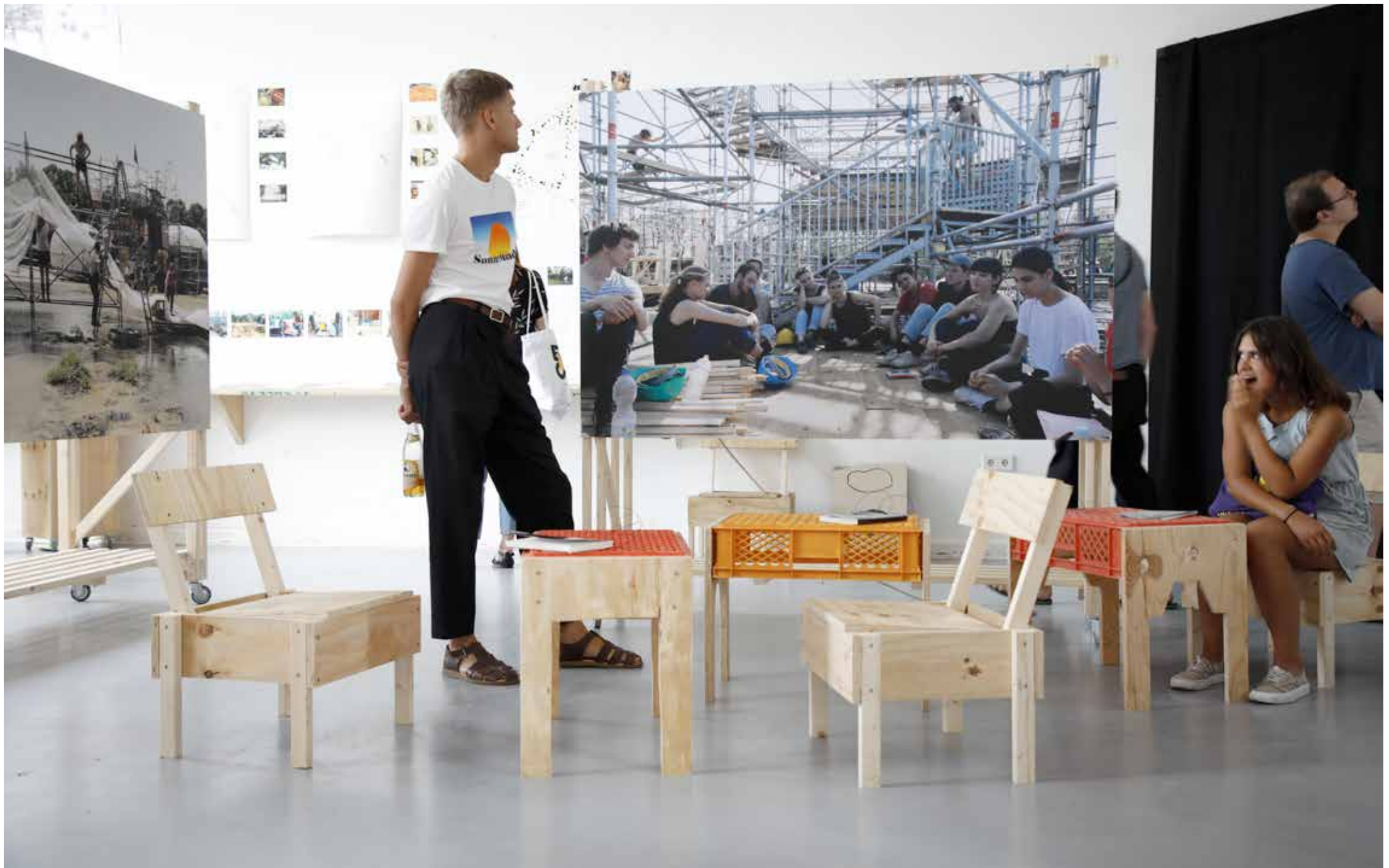
the decay and sensibility to natural changes  
would create the need of mobility  
we would need more empty space for contemplation  
our kitchen would appear and disappear

0 5 20 30m

"Fruits of the Earth" a short story about resources and mobility in  
the future by Sophia Melliou

71





**72 EXHIBITION AT UDK RUNDGANG**

**73**



At the end of the semester, we faced the challenge of the disseminating and the propagation of our results, and in particular our process of work at the Floating University, back to the University. The exhibition format is very important in the world of architecture. At the Bauhaus, it held a very important role, and was part of the statement of the progresses schools. In July, the last 2 weeks of the semester were dedicated to the conception, design and setting up of the exhibition, as part of the annual Rundgang of the UdK. The results were to be seen by thousands of visitors.

### **Conclusion**

Realizing a design studio around the design of the kitchen and its practices within the Floating University Berlin, where the limit of domesticity and public is dealt in a new way, constituted a “plug-in” experiment. With this experiment, we could question in many ways and from different perspectives the research-led pedagogy. The resulting awareness of the directing themes of architecture as a collective and architecture as a resource set concrete questions for the future of the architectural practice, questionnements that the mobile workshops and the summer school will be able to take further.







### Participants

Laurie Negroni  
David Holländer  
Laura Konieszny  
Erasmus Famira-Parcsetich  
Katharina Bonengl  
Carl Gulde  
Justus Barteleit  
Luisa Pohlmann  
Anna Wentritt  
Serena Abbondanza  
Sevgim Ayhan  
Christine Fulsche  
Timm Bergmann  
Sophia Melliou  
Kamila Juruc

### Studio Concept

Markus Bader  
Anna Kokalanova

### Team FG

#### Entwerfen und Gebäudeplanung

Christof Mayer  
Rosario Talevi  
Nicholas Roberts  
Jeanne Astrup-Chauvaux  
Jöran Mandik

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