



Re-tracing

HOME



WORKSHOP SERIES
FRAGMENTS OF HOME

ESSAY

Heimat
Monika Jedrysiak

WORKSHOP

Privacy
Community
Responsibility
Network
Connectivity
Comfort
with 89 people from around the world

REFLECTION

All spaces are transitory
Benedikt Stoll

EDITORIAL

The German term “Heimat” is very difficult to translate and describes rather a feeling of belonging than a place of dwelling. It can mean “Zuhause”, describing the feeling to be “at home” or “Wohnort”, signifying a place of residency. In general, “Heimat” defines a human relation within time and space which has social, cultural and emotional connotations. Therefore, it is easier to find a new “Zuhause” in another place but it is rather difficult to find another “Heimat” or become “heimisch” [home-like].

The English term “home” assembles various interpretations of these ideas and can relate to the place of residence or the house but also the home-country and even the asylum. There does not seem to be an accurate translation for “Heimat” in Arabic. It could mean the country [Watan] or the house [Bayt] which literally means the place where one can spend the night.

The comparison of different linguistic terms of “Heimat” hence already illustrates how manifold and diverse the perception and representation of “home” can be and insinuates what this could mean for displaced communities who are received in a new home-country and supposed to find a new “Heimat” or “Zuhause”.

It even appears that this term is in great demand when the reality of life is not homelike anymore. But the longing for a space of „Geborgenheit“ [feeling of security and comfort] is often also equated with segregation. There seems to be an urge to defend something when the stability of the everyday life is endangered. Consequently, the loss of „Heimat“ is associated with pain and its political instrumentalisation often leads to a fatal defence of a place against „others“ which transfigures the actual longing of security and comfort. The underlying issues of equity and social participation remain concealed. Thereby one may ask who is in charge to define what one calls „Heimat“ and how it may change. Is it something deeply personal that is not compatible with political ideals? Which ways of life are included? Who is excluded?

Re-tracing individual narratives of „home“ can help to explore this space of „Geborgenheit“ that might stand against the fear of change, social decline or the „other“.

Heimat

Monika Jedrysiak

In the last couple of years since the „refugee crisis“ has reached its peak, there are more and more people who ask themselves the question of “Heimat”. What does it actually mean? What and who is part of it and how do you create a new “Heimat”?

We – the team from Architecture for Refugees – are also constantly dealing with this topic. “Heimat” does not only mean the place of residence thus the house where one grew up for us. It is a lot more than that. It is connected with family and friends as well as smells, objects and places where one can feel comfortable and welcome. Places where one can simply be without being questioned. Consequently, the process of creating a new “Heimat” implies to deal with a new psychological and physical environment. It is a process which takes time to gain trust, to get accustomed, to assimilate and become part of something new.

That is why public space plays an even more significant role. A roof over one’s head is not sufficient to get accustomed in a foreign country or a foreign city. Spaces for communication, encounter and mutual exchange are crucial. That is what we aim for with Architecture for Refugees. We want to create spaces where locals and migrants get to know each other by organising regular workshops as well as guided city tours, group meetings and small festivals. Friendships and acquaintances can only emerge when one has the opportunity to meet.

For me personally, “Heimat” also means a lot more than the built house. It is more than an object with the own four walls. It is where my family and my friends are. It is about human exchange and contact. This plays a vital role for me if a foreign city becomes home-like.

These issues were also discussed amongst others at Vienna Design Week 2017 when the Guerilla Architects collective invited us to their Re-tracing Home project. A series of drawing and writing workshops asked open-ended questions about what “Heimat” would mean, how it should look like and where one would feel at home. The participants were welcomed in a cosy round with tea and could write down their

“It is a process
which takes time”

“Spaces for
communication,
encounter and
mutual exchange are
crucial.”

answers on the walls of the entire room. The goal of the workshop was to speculate about different fragments of an “ideal home” and co-create a temporary installation.

It was exciting to see that “Heimat” and thereby also being at home had very little to do with the actual house for many participants. Depending on different cultures, food was paramount but also smells and close persons made a difference. A common ground was certainly the past and thus the memories of childhood. Almost everyone thought about how and where one lived in former years.

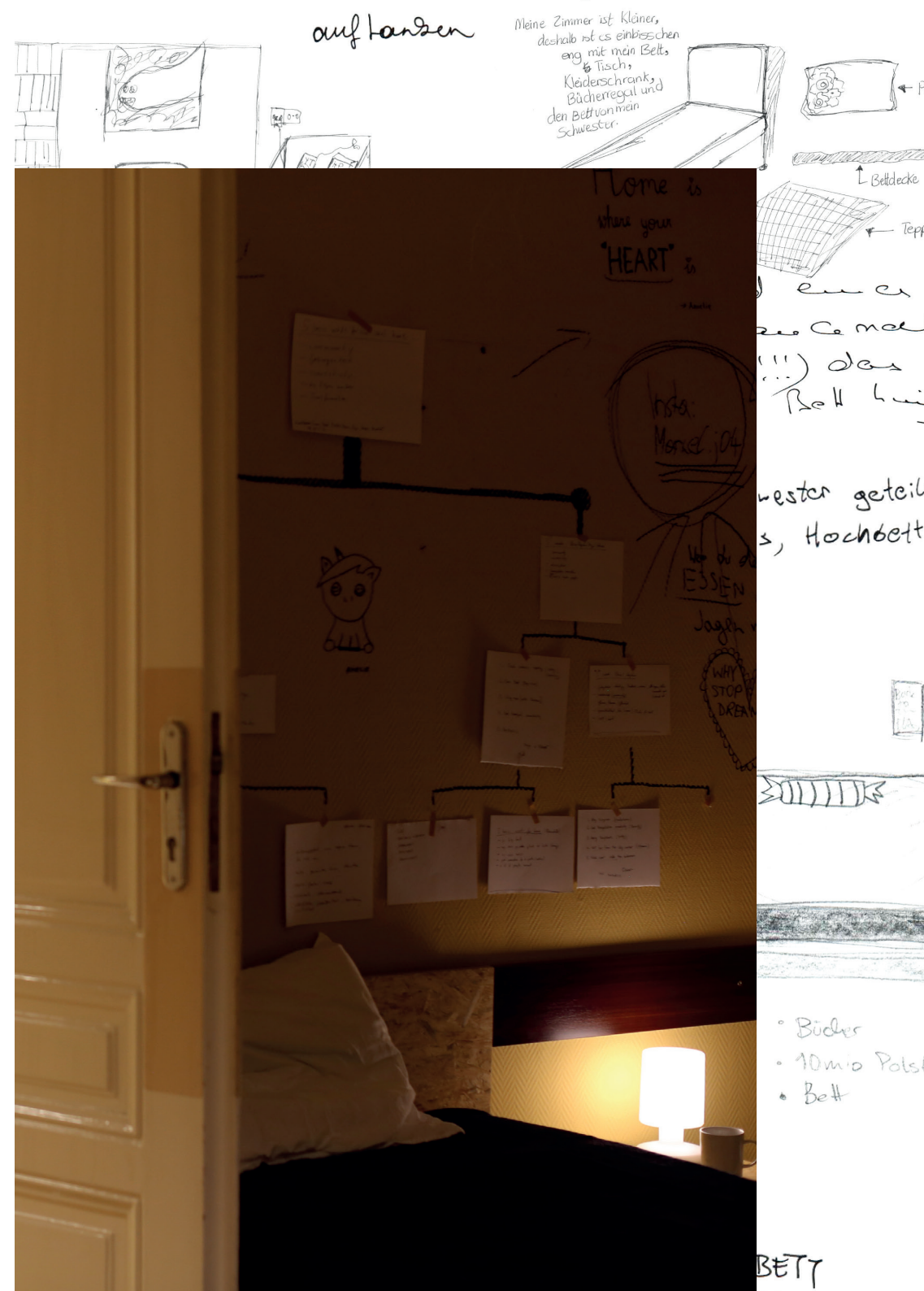
Is „Heimat“ consequently our past or is it something else? Probably it is a combination of very different factors that then again varies from one person to another.

Privacy

Having a private space seems to be crucial in shaping the feeling of "home". It is a space where one can feel liberated from any external surveillance, the struggles of daily life and exhausting encounters in the public. It was described "as a place where I feel comfortable und detached from the outside world". "Home" is also perceived as a chance to celebrate individual independence. It is "a place that exists regardless of its environment and is not defined geographically".

This very private space could be anything like a bed, a sofa or small room with curtains that reinforce the feeling of detachment: "I need my own space where I do not feel obliged to watch my thoughts and behaviours". Some even spoke about a red line that only very few people are allowed to cross.

The bed seems to be the most significant object that reminds people from different cultural and professional backgrounds of "home". It almost becomes a global symbol that should be an elementary right for everyone: "My home is my own bed".



Handwritten notes on a piece of paper, including a drawing of a device and a list of items:

① Handy
② Lochkarten
③ Bild von Elektrogeräten
④ Als ich 8 Jahre alt war, hatte ich der offenen Natur: Benutze. Einmal war ich so weit, dass ich mit den Fingern gegen die Wand geschoben habe.

Additional text at the bottom: Ich habe dann jedoch so fest geschrien, dass ich dann mit der Hand geschrien habe. Ich habe dann mit der Hand geschrien.

Jakob

① Honty
② Polster
③ Bild von Elektroautos
④ Als ich 8 Jahre alt war, hatte ich der Eltern Wachen-Brücke. Einmal war ich so müde, dass ich mich gegen die Wand gelehnt habe.
⑤ Ich habe dann gefast so fast gehalten, dass ich ein Sach um die Wand gehalten habe. Ich habe mich nicht bewegt.

① Hobby
② Polsteren
③ Bild von Elektroauto
④ Mir with 8 Jahre alt wov
hatte ich der offenen Natur
bevorz. Einmal war ich so
weiland. dan mit der Felsen
gegen die Wand
gehalten habe.

ich habe dann gleich so fast gehalten, dan
ich ein Sach um die Wand gehalten habe ich dann mit
meiner Hand halten konnte.

Türker war mein Z
 jense oben, neben dem
 Schlachzimmer meiner Eltern
 Heute ist mein Zimmer
 im Eingangsbereich.
 Für mich ist meine Bett mein Fi
 =ort, auf dem ich verweile, wenn
 mich ausruhen muss.

eng mit mein Bett,
 & Tisch;
 Kleiderschrank,
 Bücherregal und
 den Bett von mein
 Schwester.

↑ Bettdecke
 ↑ Teppich

Ich habe mir ein Zimmer mit meiner großen Schwester geteilt.
Wir hatten ein, von meinem Vater selbst gebautes, Hochbett
mit einer Rutsche.

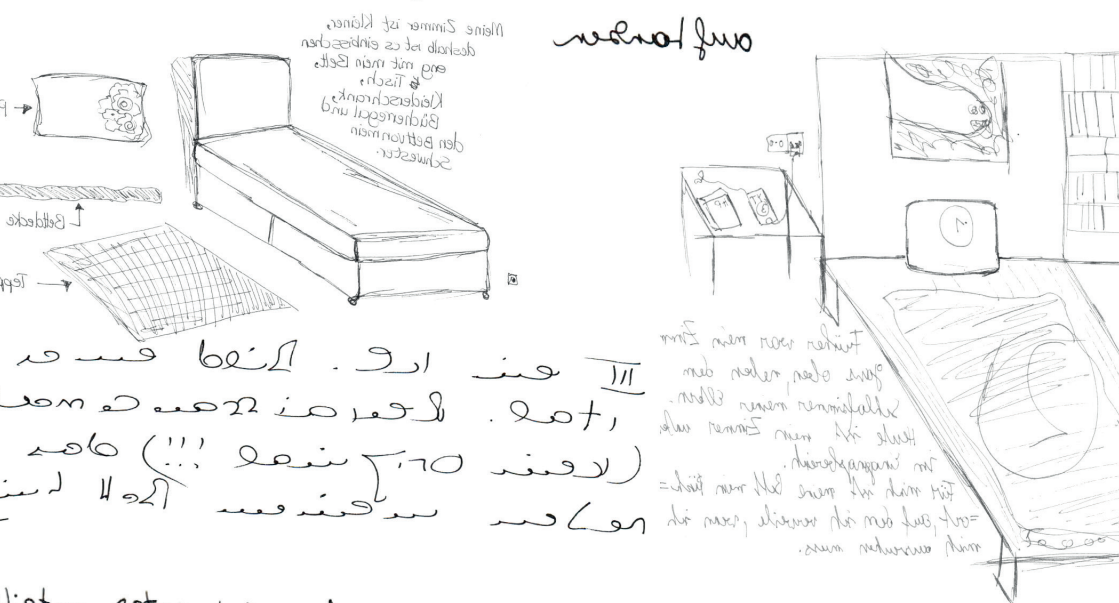
Lochbett - das war so echt nützig eigentlich weil
eine richtige Schlafkrije und die Stufen
wie eine richtige Treppe.

Hand-drawn sketch of a bedroom interior. The sketch includes a bed with a headboard, a lamp, a bookshelf, and a chest of drawers. A list of items is written next to the chest of drawers:

- Bücher
- 10 mio. Pöls
- Bett

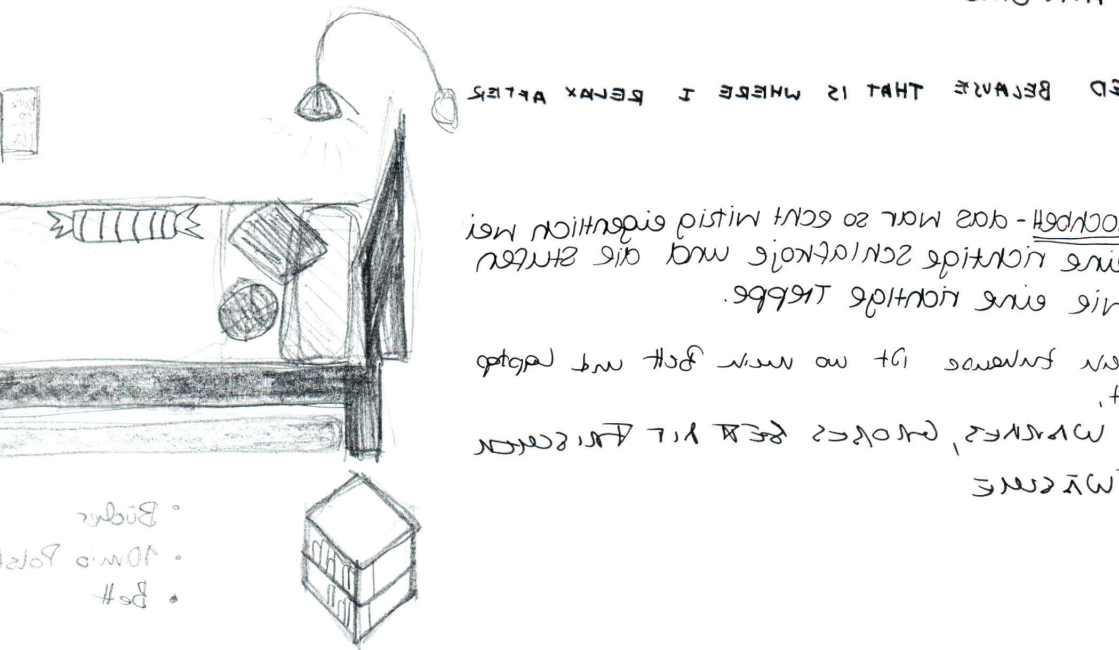
DER RAUM, WO ICH MICH WOHL FÜHLE
MEIN EIGENES BETT

IMMER WENN ICH DORT BIN UND IN MEINEM ALTEN BETT
SCHLAFTE KLACHE ICH IN DER NACHT AUF MICH



"My home is
my own bed"

Ich habe mit dir immer in einem kleinen Zimmer gelebt. Ich habe mit dir immer in einem kleinen Zimmer gelebt. Ich habe mit dir immer in einem kleinen Zimmer gelebt.



"I need my own
space where I do
not feel obliged to
watch my thoughts
and behaviours"

Community

The tendency of enjoying privacy the most should not be equated with the longing for being isolated from society. The need to belong, to communicate, to love and share is as fundamental as being alone. A Romanian student living in Vienna elaborated that "home is where my family is and where love never ends" and another voice even declared that "home is a small state for my family".

Sharing food was another common memory that defined "home". It is a reason for family gatherings and sharing daily news: "Our dining table is the meeting point of our family". A Japanese couple stated that the kitchen is very important for them because "nothing makes you feel more at home than a home cooked meal".

The social aspect of sharing time during meals played a major role for all participants. It was not just about the food itself but rather about the quality time which became habitual. A Viennese woman talked particularly about the "5 o'clock tea with my parents" that strengthened her relationship with her family.



Community



views.

nden Tea and cookies made by my grandmother

FRUIT BOWL

DINING TABLE

COUCH IN LIVING ROOM

They are
connected
with positive
emotion
sharing time
ESSEN

ut, Freude, gemeinsam Essen
le Menschen in der Küche



MIT LIEBLINGSMENSCHEN.

in runder Tisch, unter
en il wird „we krieden
onte:



||
Küchen -
am Tisch hat
sich alles abgespielt
im Eck bin ich,
als ich ganz
klein war, vorher
der ganz gesehen
und hat den
Erwachsenen zugehör
30 glaube/te
sie bemerken mit
Beit

“nothing makes
you feel more at
home than a home
cooked meal”

[illegible]

Responsibility

"Home" does not appear to be located on a plan that does not allow any personal interventions. The need to re-shape and customise different fragments supported the idea of unfinished designs. The place for a cat, the shelf for plants and the personal taste of furnishing were often mentioned. This process of personalisation makes every place unique. A pupil recounted that "I put a lot of emphasis on details in my ideal home. The furnishing, the small personal objects make the difference".

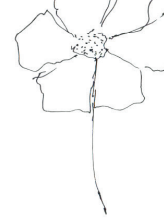
Therefore, one might postulate that "home" should be a flexible space which can be easily appropriated by its users.

Other voices even declared that "home is portable" and can be carried wherever one goes. It may change in different contexts but is also shaped by the individual understanding of places and the possibilities to customise them. This is again influenced by different memories, tastes or customs like a cup of tea at 5pm.

Workshop

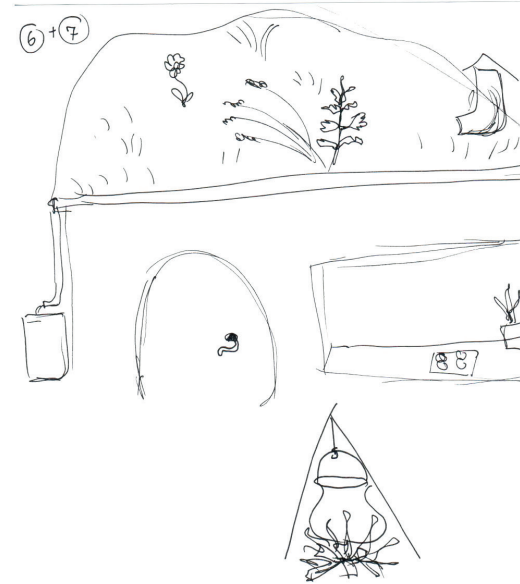
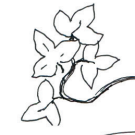


Responsibility



wichtig: viele Pflanzen & Decken & alter Boden + Teppiche + mein Kater

Garten



7. A lot of green in front of the windows.

3DINGE

Bäume/HÜGEL

WASSER

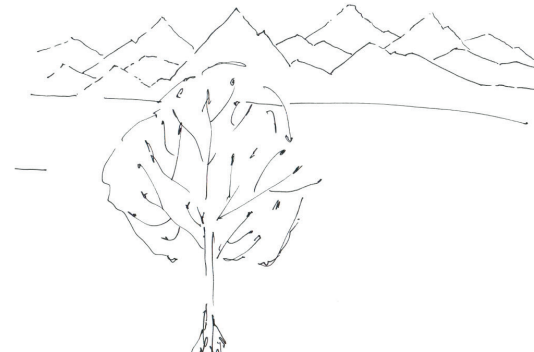
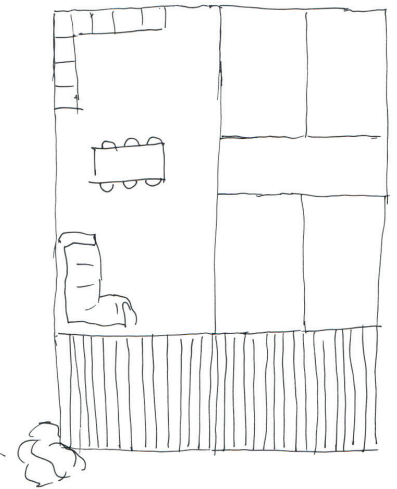
GRÜN

PFLANZEN



Ich habe einen Kater

NEUES ZUHAUSE
UNFINISHED
ZUHAUSE ALS
GERÜHL
SICH ANGEKOMMEN FÜHLEN



Hand-drawn sketch of a landscape with a large, multi-story building on the left, a smaller structure in the middle, and a large tree on the right. The building has a sign that reads "GROB OFFEN GEMEINSAM". The smaller structure has a sign that reads "KLEIN GEM". The tree has a sign that reads "HAINK". The landscape includes mountains in the background and a body of water in the foreground.

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Connectivity

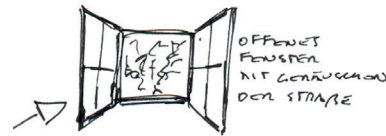
Opening a window in the morning and having the same view over and over again can provide a feeling of stability and familiarity. The connection to the outside world right in front of one's individual "home" seemed to be essential to feel part of something bigger and to belong to a neighbourhood or city.

Consequently, one could ask if home is where one walks without using Google maps? This sense of familiarity also correlates with a good transportation connection as well as the idea of memory. By keeping "memories of spaces... spaces that become more and more familiar over time... we imbue them with a sense of home". That is how a Chinese artist who grew up in the United States shared his experience when he had to go back to China with his family every summer.

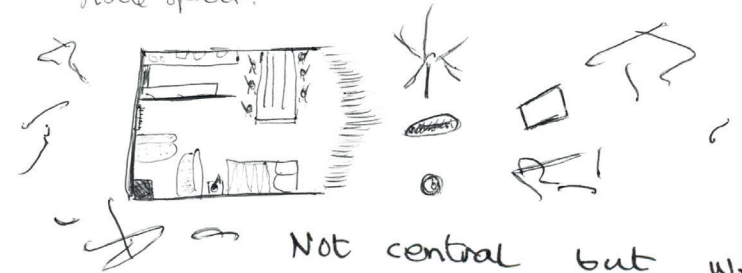
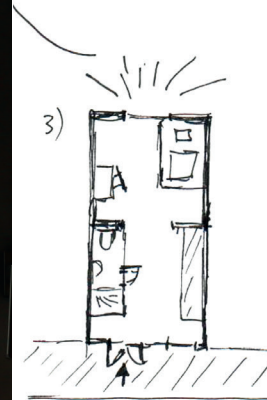
He further elaborated that his memories are in transition year by year: "I don't know why but I have particularly strong memories of this home. Every time we would visit. It would feel foreign at first, but over time it always felt like home again. This process of having to familiarize myself with this house and rediscover it again and again, every year". This shows how memory could enhance the place making process and leaves the question if designers are able to create places that could be filled with them.



Connectivity



könnte natürlich auch eine kleine Wohnung in der Innenstadt sein, bei der die Außenwelt eine erheblich größere Rolle spielt.



Haltestelle oder U-Bahn, ~~nicht~~ ~~neben~~ ~~See~~ ~~Park~~ oder ~~See~~

ALLEINE

Connectivity



Location (Central)

Location near services.

AusBlick

NEHTBUCK



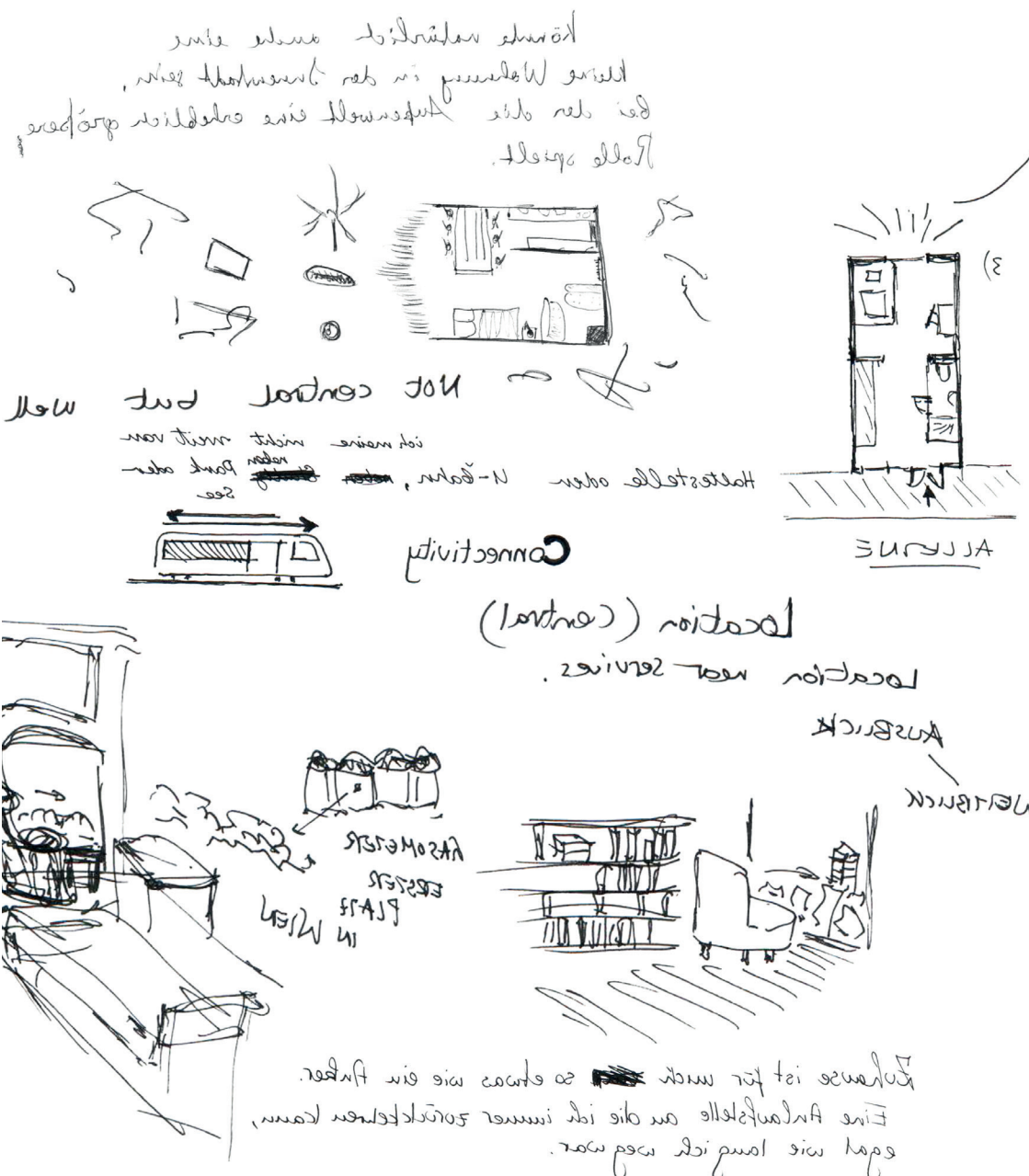
HAUSMEISTER
ERSTER
PLATZ
IN WIEN



Zuhause ist für mich ~~so~~ so etwas wie ein Anker.

Eine Anlaufstelle an die ich immer zurückkehren kann, egal wie lang ich weg war.

THE VIEW OUTSIDE, SEEN FROM OUR GIANT



"It would feel foreign at first, but over time it always felt like home again"

"memories of spaces... spaces that become more and more familiar over time... we imbue them with a sense of home"

Network

How do you connect with people? How do you stay in contact? "It is important to have Wi-fi access at home to be always reachable if something happens or I need help" reported many particularly younger people. One would also have the "opportunity to communicate with someone in the whole world" and obtain information. Some adolescents also admitted that they do not use any electronical devices during quality time with family and friends.

Social Media seems to enable a network around the globe but what would happen if we would not have wi-fi and electricity anymore? Many spoke about an increasing feeling of insecurity or even chaos in "real-life". Our network might become very local again and one would have to move back to one's "Heimat" or place of birth to stay in contact with the family.

The current notions of online accessibility might be a very democratic way to connect people from different places with each other and also add another – a virtual dimension – to home.



Network



STEAM

9 GAG

YouTube

Whats App

Ich benutze Steam zum Schreiben, Zeichnen und Leute kennenlernen. Ich habe über Steam viele Leute kennengelernt mich mit ihnen befreundet und chatte mit man den fast täglich. Shout out to Edii. Persönlich getroffen hab ich mich mit noch niemandem. Meine Freundin kommt ich zur anrufen. Aber mein Vater, der schreibt, ich auf Whats App. Meine Mutter lebt mit mir. Meine Mutter und ich

"die einzigen die in Österreich leben."

W-LAN zu haben ist mir schon wichtig, weil ich dadurch schnell mit anderen Kontakt aufnehmen kann. Außerdem braucht man für viele Haus Internet.

Mein Handy verwende ich hauptsächlich zum und Musik hören.

Während ich mit Freunden oder Familie zusammen bin, lege ich alle elektronischen Geräte weg und ich es wichtig finde mich auf sie zu konzentrieren.

Auf sozialen Netzwerken "befreunde" ich mich mit Leuten, die mir wenigstens halbwegs bekannt erscheinen. Ich nehme nicht jeden an, der mich folgen will. Jemand der völlig fremd ist, nehme ich nicht annehmen.

Geborgenheit; ein Ort, wo man sich wohl fühlt mit der Sprache, die man braucht; W-LAN brauch ich auch:)

Eigentlich habe ich genauso viele Freunde auf Social Media wie im realen Leben.

Ich nehme nicht jeden an den ich sehe. Die Leute müssen entweder mit jemandem befreundet sein oder ich kenne oder ich kenne sie persönlich.

Mit meinen Freunden kommuniziere ich immer entweder über WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat oder Facetime. Meine Eltern sind noch nicht so vertraut mit social media daher reden wir meist über SMS oder wir telefonieren. Zuhause ist es wichtig für mich wlan zu haben da ich so immer erreichbar bin falls etwas sein sollte oder falls ich Hilfe brauche.

Ich finde es aber auch sehr wichtig das Handy einfach mal wegzulegen z.B. beim Essen um sich einfach mal auf die Familie zu konzentrieren.

~~Ich finde es auch wichtig, dass man das Internet nicht zu oft benutzt. Es ist immer besser, wenn man das Internet nicht zu oft benutzt. Es ist immer besser, wenn man das Internet nicht zu oft benutzt.~~

Die meisten Menschen mit denen ich auf Instagram befreundet bin kenne ich persönlich oder jemand den ich kenne ist mit ihnen befreundet.

Durch Wifi habe ich die Gelegenheit auf der ganzen Welt zu sein.

YOUTUBE

WHATS APP

INSTAGRAM

PS

Die Plattform/Konsole die ich mit WLAN am häufigsten verwende ist die PlayStation.

Dort schreibe ich. Dort schreibe und spiele ich. Ich habe 4 Internetfreunde kennengelernt, die alle nicht Deutsch sprechen. Einer ist aus der Niederlande und die anderen aus Dänemark, Spanien und Mexiko. Ich bin täglich online (manchmal länger/kürzer). Wenn es das nicht mehr geben würde, würde ich denk ich fast verblühen mit meiner Familie. So ist es. Ich bin dankbar.

Network

Comfort

One of the most mentioned aspects was “Geborgenheit, a place where one can feel comfortable” and safe. This often related to very narrow and cosy spaces where one could be alone or sometimes also be together with loved ones. One woman reported about a niche under the table where she felt at home: “It was my first individual room where I was the only one allowed to go”.

A place of refuge and recovery was often associated with home meaning “comfort, warmth, safety, in one word: happiness”. The feeling of “Gemütlichkeit – feeling relaxed and comfortable” had many forms but always required an intimate space where one is not questioned and can enjoy watching others or simply a nice view.

Mein Schreibis &
stehen dem Tisch
hab ich mich wohl
und Zuhause gefühlt

Zeit 14:18 Uhr, Billy von ...
Überall riecht es nach Räucherstäbchen
Lavendel und Zimt, an der Wand



waschmittel
del

ich sein kann
nicht sein

schiffchen

joy is

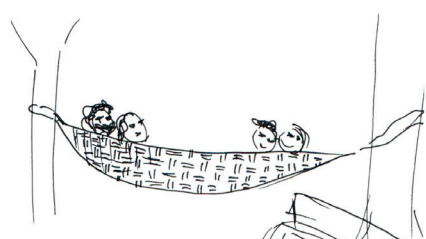
schiffchen,

gemütlich
Tisch
e. offen
re mit
craft

Handwritten notes in German, partially mirrored and upside down. Visible text includes: "Himmelstempel", "Lohnen", "Himmelstempel", "Lohnen", "Himmelstempel", "Lohnen".

Handwritten notes in German, partially mirrored and upside down. Visible text includes: "Himmelstempel", "Lohnen", "Himmelstempel", "Lohnen", "Himmelstempel", "Lohnen".

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"my first individual room where I was the only one allowed to go"

"comfort, warmness, safety, in one word: happiness"

All spaces are transistory

Benedikt Stoll

This project could also be called „The more consciousss you are, the less space you need“ or „all spaces are transistory“. Home seems to be „no place. It is rather a situation with humans where one can feel comfortable and know that one can always come back again“. It is not a „real space“ but intended to be „for me“.

It was also mentioned that you can call a place home much faster than the German term “Heimat” implies. There does not seem to be an adequate translation in any other language which might define this sense of belonging.

We exposed ourselves to this dilemma of translation – linguistically and spatially – to question what “Heimat” or “at home” can mean from different perspectives and backgrounds. This was always a processual and open-ended (self-)experiment where the active presence of all partners and participants left their traces. Therefore, home can be perceived as performed identity.

“Feeling at home” is a multifaceted snapshot which one can probably only sense in its fragments. That’s why our installation showcases spatial metaphors which brings together individual aspects of an “ideal” home from different countries and cultures. The question of common denominators shall be rather discussed than diverging comfort zones.

Our temporaray installation consisted of a bed (privacy), a niche (comfort), a table (community), a plant and cat toilet (responsibility) as well as a Wi-fi and mobile charging station (network) and a window (connectivity) is not meant to give answers to the contemporary housing question. In context of the so-called “refugee crisis” we aim to give associative thought-provoking impulses which do not offer architectural “solutions” but rather question the meaning of basic spatial elements that might create an “ideal” home.

What is the role of architects and designers?
Can you actually translate notions of home into architecture?

“home can
be perceived
as performed
identity”

“The more
consciousss
you are,
the less space
you need”

Thereby, it has to be underlined that all involved parties from refugees to long-established locals are asked to be part of the knowledge co-production of a common home in the future (transformation). This can often just be a „very minimal room and a very peaceful home”.

Facing such an inconclusive issue like the potential influence of migration on housing or architecture more generally cannot be dealt with in the time of a 10-days festival. It is self-explanatory that our temporary installation was no more than an attempt to showcase a final „product” in the scope of a design exhibition.

Admitting the simplicity of this product stems from the reassurance that its development was far more complex and challenging for its contributors. This process also showed that partly anticipated differences of the multicultural imagination of „home” were mostly not approved. Consequently, one could say that the architectural representation and design of contemporary housing should be rather simple or even undefined.

Moreover, the life in the process of a project becomes more reluctant to its concluding moment and invites its contributors into a metamorphosical field of personal and professional co-production.

Anja Fritz and **Benedikt Stoll** are partners
and co-founders of Guerilla Architects.

The design research project „Re-tracing HOME“ started in summer 2017 in Berlin and was continued at VIENNA DESIGN WEEK 2017. **Edwar Hanna** from Communication for Development and **Monika Jedrysiak** from Archietcture for Refugees joined our workshop team during the festival in Vienna. We would like to thank **Stephanie Köck** und **Bassel Fayad** for their continous support.

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The second part „Fragments of Home“ of the workshop series „Re-tracing HOME“ was a participatory „work in progress“ research project at VIENNA DESIGN WEEK 2017 (29.9–8.10.). It consisted of guided city walks, drawing and writing workshops as well as a correlated building workshops with a conclusive installation on the notion of an „ideal home“.

Can you transform an empty room into a new „home“ in 10 days?

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