Pavilion of Possibilities

An architectural journey to create stages for social inclusion

Belen German Blanco

Master’s thesis
Architecture, Master’s Programme in Creative Sustainability
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Master’s Thesis
Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture

Figure 1. Photograph of painted wall representing diversity.
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Aalto University
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Figure 2. Photograph of the ground to accompany the dedication.
A mi madre y a mi padre,
por todas sus enseñanzas entre templos mesoamericanos y kilómetros en bicicleta.
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Public spaces tend to be ambitious by nature, however, engaging with the cultural, social, economic and environmental surroundings, represents a complex task. By a journey of theoretical and design work, this thesis explores the design process for public space to act as a mediator for social inclusion within the intention to contribute to the bigger picture to urban health. Using the perspective of space as a stage, the architectural proposition aims to empower users by providing a model of public space with multiple uses, in the form of a small scale community centre. Besides the materiality of the building, named Pavilion of Possibilities, the intervention aims to emphasize the regeneration of an existing urban setting.

The first part of this thesis is based on literature reviews on topics that resonate with the intention of bringing architecture closer to sustainability. Understanding the meaning and levels of engagement of wellbeing is an important phase in the review, opening the floor to the World Health Organization framework of Healthy Cities Network, to reflect on strategies for urban health.

The second part of the thesis comprises a building design proposition in a culturally diverse context: the District of Malmi, in Helsinki, Finland. For this means, urban planners in charge of the development of the area are approached as a methodology to understand the local context and the vision of the City Planning Department. Walking the site was a method to experience the neighbourhood on a human scale. For the analysis of the site documentation is made through photography, mapping and sketches. A working physical model of the site is used to explore the scale and qualities of the urban setting, as two possible locations for the building. The second part concludes with the building design proposal with various layouts.

The findings of this thesis are expressed in three ways: by reflecting on the design proposal’s contribution to urban health; by conceptually placing the Pavilion in a different context in México, and finally by presenting a manifesto. Being one of the objectives of this work is to inspire spatial projects for social inclusion. Shared Spaces Manifesto states the position of the author regarding human experience and urban health. Overall, this thesis contributes to the field of architecture and sustainability aiming to strengthen their interdependence.

Keywords: public space, sustainability, social inclusion, placemaking, urban health
INTRODUCTION

Concerns regarding sustainability are gaining more attention all over the world turning the spotlight on our profession. This is because the construction industry is one of the big players in the generation of carbon dioxide emissions (CO2) worldwide, and being aware of such impact is imminent for building designers to look at this situation as an opportunity to take a stand and emphasize the responsible side in the practice of architecture: we are not offenders, we are here to find, explore and create better solutions.

When we speak about sustainability within our field, analyzing the construction materials, techniques and alternative solutions besides the conventional ones is a natural step. However, it is far from being the only direction to look at. I believe and propose with this thesis that a major broadening perspective is needed to emphasize the social impact that architecture can bring about. Along the present work, I want to explore public space as a game-changer on shaping the existing cities, stressing on the value of sharing and the habit of face to face human interaction.

So, what does this intention represent for me, as the author, and for you as the reader? Being the last chapter of my graduate studies, this project represents the transition towards my professional career, in times when accurately described by Senge’s thoughts on systems thinking: “As species, as societies [...] we have so little ability to be aware of the consequences of our actions.” (Senge, P. 2014). For this transition, I believe that on a social and individual level, being conscious about the impact of our decisions is the only way to secure our existence and build a better future, which I see embedded in the ethics of any profession. Being conscious about such impact is the path to secure and promote our wellbeing. For that, sustainability requires education.

As a foreign resident, I carry a combination of experiences in scenarios-sometimes opposite, that influence my path as a designer. I consider this duality of backgrounds, México and Finland, a straightforward quality on the academic journey that I have been walking through in the past years. The experience within has been filled with nationalities, languages and cultures. In that sense, the present work represents a merging point of my background and the desire to study forms of architecture devoted, in as many ways as possible, to making people’s lives better while celebrating the presence of diversity. This is the main force and the reason why I consider the last chapter of my studies as the beginning of a new one as an architect.

As part of that new chapter, the arena for design is to be expanded and shaped according to a location. Socio, economic, cultural and natural characteristics form unique scenarios. In any scenarios, although at a different pace, societies need help to communicate matters of sustainability. The current state of the world and the consequences of our decisions within the future must be explained in a more effective, determining way. This is how I raise the question of investing in the connection of architecture and sustainability to highlight the positive changes that we can promote if one discipline cooperates closer with another. I strongly believe in collective practices to effect cooperation between actors. Specifically, I am keen to create spaces for inhabitants outside their homes to improve life quality, free from constraints posed by level of income and background. For this I see a great opportunity in spaces meant to be shared.

At best public spaces can be ambitious by nature with a clear vision towards wellbeing. Yet, due to the number of factors involved, the good intentions behind a project do not guarantee that the space is going to empower its users. In countries like México, with diverse socioeconomic spectrum, the implementation of public space in order to reach development becomes a major challenge. Spatial solutions are given the task of promoting interaction between individuals while fighting obstacles carried by race, beliefs, different levels of income and education. Yet, such a major challenge does not represent a disadvantage. Instead, spatial designers, are a step ahead when dealing with multicultural scenarios. To such diversity, we must attribute value, not only in
heterogeneous socioeconomic contexts, but in welfare states as well.

When I think about México and Finland, despite the very different contexts they deal with, I identify as a common factor that cultural diversity is increasing (Sitra, 2019) and with it, the need of understanding the abilities of public spaces to promote the value of sharing. As a consequence, architects and urban planners, policymakers and any stakeholder involved in city planning, must understand the importance of promoting a healthy environment for social and cultural diversity, in terms of both tangible and intangible elements.

Looking at architecture as a means to provoke human encounters and stimulate interaction, I am keen to explore the design process of public space to strengthen the interdependence of perceived wellbeing and sustainability. As a preamble to the content of this thesis, I consider necessary to clarify three aspects. First, I express my position towards sustainability, insisting in how prejudicial it is to pretend that its three approaches (social, economic and environmental) are separated. It leads us to a conflict where “Our interdependence has grown, and our awareness of the interdependence has declined.” (Senge, P., 2014). Second, when I insist on the need for effective communication towards sustainability I refer to learning processes. When speaking about learning along this research, I refer to it as an ongoing process along the life cycle of a person. Besides education as institutions, it should be promoted in casual and informal contexts as a lifelong practice. As a result, could a learning space drive people to gather and create a community focusing on the kind of future they long for? Answering to this question would take us to the third aspect, which is that within the scope of this thesis, the design process is focused on the social impact of the building rather than the detail of its materiality. Next to this idea, I argue that an built structure can have an impact beyond its walls, therefore a small scale intervention can impact a on a larger scale.

Finally, I insist on the importance of an agenda towards wellbeing and urban health as an approach towards sustainability.

This supports the intention of making an architectural design responsible, attractive and feasible, responding to the site particularities. Most importantly to assure that every design decision is made on the investment of dignity. To define dignity I refer to the phrase that has idealized Mexican history: “Between nations as between individuals, respect for the rights of others means peace” (Juárez, 1960). On an individual level, as every one of us deserves to be accepted, respected and given equal opportunities, not ignoring our differences but being aware of them and exploring them within our community. If we design to invest in dignity, meaning self respect and respect to others, we will for sure contribute to better solutions, and better spaces for them to flourish.

So, as an architect, how do I invest in dignity? What you will read about is the design journey of a space developed with a human-centred approach. Pavilion of Possibilities is the name I have given to it, and it is the first wooden building I design. By sharing the journey of observation, research and design, along with thoughts and questions not yet fully answered, I hope this to evolve as inspiration for future projects. I hope such inspiration to reach designers and users in the process of bringing the idea into reality, not only in Finland, where this project is born, but in other contexts. Whether climate, availability of resources and particularities of the sites vary, human encounters and the dialogues that occur around them are something that must be celebrated. I strongly believe that once we regenerate the relations in our society and learn again the value of sharing, we will be better prepared to empathize with one another and respect the natural limitations set by the planetary boundaries.
Figure 4. Wooden surface of round bench in Kaupparaatti, Ylä-Malmi, Helsinki, Finland.
STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The present thesis is a theoretical and design work divided into three parts. While the first part reviews literature, the second one draws on research by design and the third one consists of a reflection on how the design intervention addresses urban health and wellbeing.

Part one is a reflection based on the literature reviews that narrows down from a general perspective of sustainability towards an approach to public space. As the foundation of the project, it aims to determine the qualities and function of the space to be designed. It leads to the definition of the scope, focus and framework.

Part two moves on to the design phase to exemplify and shape the findings of part one. Hence, theory meets practise on a real site: Malminkatu Square, a centric node located in the District of Malmi, in Helsinki. The analysis contains digital and physical graphic studies to understand the area and process of the creation of the building. An architectural project is presented and the intervention is visualized in the existing context by the end of this section.

Part three reflects on the contribution of the Pavilion to urban health, followed by a second conceptual visualization of the Pavilion. One of the ambitions behind this project in the future is for its principles to be replicated in various context. As an example, at the end of the thesis, a second application of the Pavilion is conceptually placed in the city of Tlaxcala, México. This final gesture is followed by Shared Spaces Manifesto.

As a side material, a design tool used throughout the creative process of research by literature review and research by design, is shared as an annex. The publication is titled LÍNEAS: 90 days of thesis thinking.
PART ONE

Research through literature review

Figure 5. Sketch inspired in the discourse between architecture and sustainability.
“Buildings as physical products function in a number of independent but interactive ways - they are structural entities, they act as environmental modifiers, they function socially, culturally and economically. Each of these types of function can be analyzed separately but the built form itself unifies and brings them together in such a way that they interact. Research into architecture thus needs to be conscious of these interactions across traditionally separate intellectual fields”. (Till, J., 2007)
1.1 WHAT TO SUSTAIN?

"Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" is one of the most common definitions of sustainable development, provided by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1983. The conceptualization of sustainability implies an equilibrium between economic growth, environmental quality, and social wellbeing (Khan, A. and Allacker, K., 2015). As I agree on such conceptualization, I argue that we are speaking about a nearly-utopic equilibrium. In addition, speaking about the types of social wellbeing implies the understanding that wellbeing starts as an individual condition. The complexity of sustainability as a noun, emerges when we analyze it as a verb: "sustain, -v: to cause or allow something to continue for a period of time" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). Therefore the concept of sustainability could mean nothing without a definition of what it is to be sustained, standing for the fact that while concerning all inhabitants on Earth—human and other animal species—, sustainability is a context-based phenomenon. I aim to answer the "what is it to be sustained" question by the end of this reflection, in order to define the definition of sustainability for the present research and design work.

Sustainability needs to be analyzed thoroughly to dare to speak about it. Difficulties may not come from the implementation of solutions nor the incitation of changes, but when keeping the desired balance between the factors that need to be taken into account, which data and elements are continuously changing. What I feel confident after being part for the past two years of the Creative Sustainability Programme in Aalto, a community of students and academics with great concerns towards the state of the world, is about the fact that sustainability requires education, constant education and continuous update. For the interest of this work, I opt to look at sustainability rather than an overlap of interests between environmental, societal, and economic domains (Fig 6) as an embedded system of the three-domain acting within the limits of the other (Fig. 7). I believe this is the healthy way to look at sustainability. This approach is inspired in the doughnut model (Raworth, 2012) where the three domains draw the limit of one another: the planet is the environmental ceiling, within which we exist, followed by a social foundation as the core. Economy is an embedded inner level, described as an inclusive and sustainable economic development (Fig. 8). The doughnut model defines the safe and just space for humanity and illustrates the interdependence between them, instead of showing them as equal independent shares. My work will explore a language through architectural design focusing on the discourse between social impact acting within the boundaries of the environmental systems.

In Architecture and Sustainability: Critical Perspective for Integrated Design, Kahn and Allacker propose to look at sustainability from two different angles. The first one makes reference to the big lens of a bird, flying from above. Such top-down conceptualization of sustainability is a compilation of information given by various disciplines and based on environmental, societal, and historical events. It may sound too broad, but adequate within a political context. The second angle comes from below, making reference to a smaller lens through the eyes of a worm. It conceptualizes sustainability through "green" ecological consciousness within disciplines of architecture and urbanism. This bottom-up perspective is, according to Kahn and Allacker, the one from which architecture can propose a discourse. Nevertheless, I challenge this approach identifying a gap when the first view scales down from a big perspective that feels external and superficial, to the view from the bottom. The second one, in a figurative way connects to the soil, and most of the natural sources of energy. This perspective is supported once it is agreed that the ground is, in most of the cases, the foundation of the three-dimensional canvas for our work as architects and spatial planners. Yet within these opposite angles, I miss the connection with the societal domain. How is our species, the provocateur and victim of the actions played between the eyes of the bird and the worm? I consider important to cultivate a third angle: a view for architects...
and spatial planners to propose a discourse, in which the impact in people’s lives is examined (Fig. 9).

Awareness towards the three planetary system boundaries that have been exceeded (Fig.10) (Rockström, J. et al., 2009) is raising much more attention than any human needs-scarcity in the globe: we continuously use technology in our favour and explore its potential next to medicine, but still 1.5 million people die annually from preventable diseases worldwide (Ofot, P. 2020). Too many people subsist in underserving conditions, and the numbers are growing (Heringer, A. et al., 2013). Being aware of this but considering society’s wellbeing within the planetary boundaries, locates us in an era of transition towards a sustainable human-centred approach, searching for solutions to bring hope and enthusiasm by promoting urban health. Processes of transition tend to promote change of mindsets. Hence, we should analyze environmental concerns next to societal, understanding they are interconnected and that the improvement in one of them will positively impact the other.

In order to act globally, we should start tackling environmental problems locally, for which human relationships, meaning the need for association and acting more together than individually, need to be taken care of and in cases restored. Some could argue: aren’t we acting more collectively than ever? Regarding climate change strikes and plastic-free policies, I believe we are. Let me be clear on the fact that I do not discourage any sustainability-driven movements. Neither do I undermine the small actions in daily life, since they are the ones that establish habits towards the creation of the future we long for. I merely insist that the importance of human interaction tends to be left aside.

Encounters and actions to help others could certainly produce tangible results in the short term while cooperating for the long term vision towards sustaining the existence of our planet in order to sustain ours. The relation between people and nature inside a city scale is explained by Rogers (1998) as interdependent: social injustice in all its forms undermines a city’s capacity to be environmentally sustainable […] There cannot be urban harmony or real environmental improvements without basic human rights and peace” (Rogers, R., 1998). I take this as the inaugural statement, taking humans as the centre player. To complement it, I stress in the pursuit of wellbeing as a strategy to invite people to join a community, whose common concern is a better present to evolve into a secure future. The road to sustainability is looking at it as a process instead of a state to achieve, aiming to promote the practice of human face-to-face interaction to invest in dignity and advocate on social wellbeing. Could architecture facilitate a space for this to happen?
1.2 DESIGNING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Fortunately, geographical boundaries mean less than before as we try to become a global community striving towards sustainability. This is the era of information, cross national cooperation and common Sustainable Development Goals. Development, however, has always happened at different timing around the globe, creating an inevitable gap between the ones who have achieved the most and the least. As a consequence, power distances grow and inequality increases. This can lead to cases of social polarization within local contexts.

Polarizing societies contribute to the decline of the vitality in urban spaces, representing a loss in the habit of participating in street life (Rogers, R., 1998). One manifestation of such displacement are gated communities, which are, to my eyes, an extreme transition from shared public space to private ones. As the wealthy walls themselves creating a lifestyle inside a high-class sphere within the city spectrum, they generate disconnection. Physical boundaries inside cities increase the distance between diverse groups and reduce the possibilities for them to meet. As a consequence, the vibrancy of public spaces—the ones truly accessible for everyone—diminishes. I doubt this kind of planning is the one to push us towards development and I hope such a path not to become the mainstream of our profession. Simultaneously, from the perspective of an architect, it is fundamental to grasp that non-physical boundaries could be the ones generating social polarization as well, but perhaps those are more malleable to deal with, representing however the need of a deeper understanding of the social composition of the context.

So, what does development mean in the first place? It seems to be a convenient open position. Nabeel Hamdi claims it is not only related to financial status: "[it] is whatever you want it to be, depending on your politics and ideology [...] Development happens when people, however poor in money, get together, get organized, become sophisticated and go to scale [...] Development is that stage you reach when you are secure enough in yourself or collectively to become independent" (2013). It depends on emergence, which is the ability to organize and move from one level to a higher one.

Long term thinking is necessary when we speak about development. To take a look to the past helps to make sense of long term visions towards the future: native American groups evaluate each decision by asking what impact it will have on the seventh generation from today (Washington State Department of Ecology, 2003). Dory Reeves (2005) rephrases the same principle by emphasizing the value of the resources: "Thinking about the limits creates an appreciation of the finiteness of the ecosystems." (2005). She also states that development awakes locally, for which we should focus on the scale that concerns the city, village, neighbourhood or group of households.

According to the Schumacher Society, a sustainable city should address safety in public places, equal opportunities, freedom of expression and the needs of the young, the old and the disabled adequately provided (ibid). A sustainable city can be described according to Rogers (1998) with the qualities of a city that is just, beautiful, creative, ecological, of easy contact, compact, polycentric, and diverse. I would like to dive into the meaning of two significant characteristics regarding this project: an easy contact and a diverse one. An easy contact city refers to a city where the public realm encourages community and mobility and where information is exchanged both face-to-face and electronically. A diverse city fosters a vital public life where a broad range of overlapping activities create animation and inspiration (ibid).

Similar approaches are listed when describing the aspects to pay attention to when making a city healthy: creating age-friendly cities, encouraging physical activity, air quality, reducing road traffic injuries, ensuring a healthy diet, contribute reducing urban violence and tackling mental health (World Health Organization, 2019). Addressing these qualities should be prioritized in any urban spatial project, proving that when speaking about a sustainable city and a healthy city we are referring to one.

As a consequence I suggest to have in mind that when we
design spaces for a healthy city we are bringing sustainability to the agenda, involving both the planetary ceiling upon us and the human rights foundation.

A method to imagine solutions for cities is presented by SENSEable City Lab, MIT’s: futurecraft. It consists of posing future scenarios using what if-questions, entertaining their consequences and exigencies and sharing the resulting ideas, to enable public conversation and debate. It proposes scenarios that include public debate as part of the design process. Futurecraft starts by estimating from the present condition to place ourselves in a fictional but possible future context with the intent of realizing that future through public discourse (Ratti, C. and Claudel, M., 2016). It proposes a positive vision, which I consider very much needed. It explores “what could it be” rather than “what it already is” converting into strategies. It does not focus on fixing the present (an overwhelming task) or predicting the future (a disappointingly futile activity) but influencing it positively (ibid.).

Thinking ahead represents pressure on whether our design decisions are suitable for the future. Accepting such uncertainty and giving value to it as an opportunity for users to engage with the space could be a way forward. It is suggested to be, as designers and planners, a little less neurotic learning from how organic things happen. Spaces will be occupied by people the way we don’t expect, and that is the biggest compliment for any architecture and the best way to learn about the future (Rojkind, M., 2019). Under this philosophy, it is expected to embrace the limitations of our work, making the best out of the resources we have access to. “Futurecraft intends to maximize its impact by aligning scope and reach. It works under the value of having in mind that possible futures are rooted in the present and not in distant, idealized, extraordinary or digressive visions” (Ratti, C. and Claudel, M., 2016) (Fig. 6)
1.3 PLANNING FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

Triggers to social polarization from the perspective of spatial design were exposed in the previous section as a discussion about concepts of development and qualities of a sustainable city. Balancing provocation with strong ties to the world-as-it-is as futurecraft suggests (ibid.), I aim to switch from avoiding social polarization to provoke social inclusion. This section opens the door to a conversation on the needed values.

Social inclusion is defined as “the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society; and the process of improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity to take part in society” (World Bank, 2020). To facilitate such improvements, taking diversity into account in planning processes is the starting point. Principles of equity and equality in addition to respect for difference are considered the foundation for a sustainable city (Reeves, D., 2005). Under this thinking, two concepts need to be understood: diversity and difference. The first one refers to the quality of being different, or varied, without implying a reference point, while difference in the contrary needs a comparison point. Equality means ensuring that people with different needs have equal opportunities and outcome. This is the opposite of treating everyone equally ignoring their differences, because noticing diversity without equality only addresses difference. On the other hand, combining diversity with equality addresses power (ibid.) and this is the combination that should be proposed when planning urban spaces.

Certainly, this cannot be achieved working exclusively from our field, but we can contribute to the matter by facilitating shared public spaces to promote equality and diversity as interdependent concepts in urban life. The value of a space being capable to receive diverse users and function under various spatial configurations is magnified when we identify that diversity involves a physically and mentally healthy management of differences. This is because differences may lead to discrimination and disadvantages. As a consequence groups with different power levels appear.

Therefore, the importance of looking at diversity as a way to manage the differences in a morally correct form and providing the same opportunities to the most and the least powerful is fundamental (ibid.). Diversity gains more attention when we set physical constraints and look at it in a specific space, next to the value of sharing space with strangers. This is because no matter the demography of a place, as the population in cities increases public space are going to become a bigger need and with it the sense of sharing.

A common factor for positive impact when sharing spaces is creation of a sense of belonging, a psychological human need usually found in a community. Whether speaking about hardship conditions or a welfare state, a strong sense of identity empowers individuals towards an end, it brings individuals together. A sense of belonging and appropriation evidences that community refers not only to physical space but to intangible elements: “It is a place not only of economic activity and human association but a place where memories are centred, both individual and folk memories” (Hamidi, N., 2013). Attachment between the place and the user needs to arise, to provide a sense of belonging and validation.

Since we are speaking about communities, the focus within the sphere of wellbeing for the purpose of this work must be explained. Wellbeing is defined as the state of feeling healthy and happy (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020) and it consists of two key elements: feeling good and functioning well (Steemers, K., 2020). It is then assumed as an individual state, however, wellbeing happens in relationship (Teghe, D. and Rendell, K., 2005). Looking closer, this takes us to the concept of mental wellbeing, a dynamic state in which the individual is able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others, and contribute to their community (Foresight, 2008). The physiological needs of belonging and validation are embedded in mental wellbeing (Fig. 12). Within a shared space, perceived wellbeing should be talked about under conditions where several individuals interact. Social wellbeing presents five

![Figure 12. Illustration of elements of wellbeing. The scope is highlighted](image-url)
dimensions: social acceptance, actualization, contribution, coherence and integration (Teghe, D. & Rendell, K. 2005). I consider the five dimensions to dictate the road for social inclusion, by bringing, as Reeves suggests, diversity and equity as key values (Fig. 13). To complement building on this theory, speaking about an urban context, social wellbeing is closely connected to communities. Overall, the value of shaping spaces for everyone refers to the right to public space. "Human rights create the freedom of public space. [...] Sharing public spaces breaks down prejudice and forces us to acknowledge common responsibilities. It binds communities" (Rogers, R., 2005).

A community is formed by human systems with similarities. Five types can be identified: communities of interest, culture, work/practice, resistance or place-based (Hamdi, N., 2013). One may be part of more than one, even all of them at once. All the types require respect, self-respect and mutual respect to create an ambiance of equality for social relationships. In addition to what is the common factor between communities, I rephrase Hamdi’s reflection by saying that within human systems with similarities, individuals are diverse, representing a great growing opportunity for the members within the community. Then, ironically, a community is formed by human systems with similarities where diversity allows equality.

Diving into a diverse community we face age ranges. The World Health Organization refers to an age-friendly world as of one that enables people of all ages to actively participate in community activities and treats everyone with respect, regardless of their age. It is a place that makes it easy for older people to stay connected to people that are important to them. (2020). Involving people of all ages, I recall Growing up Boulder, a planning initiative that brings young citizens (0-18 age) in city planning design. Besides a gesture of equity this is as a strategy towards accessibility: because they have a greater sense of empathy for other beings. [...] children are inclusive in the city planning, they design for everyone. From their grandmother in a wheelchair to the homeless woman they see sleeping in the park. Children design for living creatures, not for cars, egos or corporations. [...] A friendly city for children is a friendly city for all. (Minster, M., 2017)

In Planning for Diversity, Policy and Planning in a World of Difference, the sustainable approach to planning is summarized under the acknowledgements of "environmentally driven response will tend to be more protective; an economically driven response will tend to look on the environment as a resource and society as the culprit; and finally, a socially motivated response will look to improve people’s quality of life by reducing the environmental impact of economic development." (Reeves, D., 2005). This is how the whole spectrum would look like under the approach to sustainability where social, economic and environmental domains are balanced. The interpretation given to sustainable development will determine how diversity and equality issues are treated closer (ibid.). Yet within it, the approach could be defined as environmental, collaborative, in public administration, economic, physical or social. Relying on one approach does not ignore the essence of a balance, they simply work under different vocabulary, assumptions, conceptions and aims. Sustainability is the language in all of the previous approaches. For the purpose of this work, I analyze closely the social planning approach along the design process. (Fig. 14)

Figure 13. Illustration on the dimensions of social wellbeing inspired in Teghe, D. & Rendell, K. (2005)

Figure 14. The social approach summarized. Reeves, D. (2005)
1.4 URBAN HEALTH

Framework and behaviours to individual mental wellbeing

Architecture should look at its immediate context to explore how can it benefit and coexist with the setting. Such coexistence is expected to gain particular attention when it comes to public spaces. To understand the collaboration of the building with its surrounding the conceptualization of a healthy city is analyzed.

According to the Health Promotion Glossary (1998) "a healthy city is one that is continually creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and developing to their maximum potential". WHO, which stands for World Health Organization, launched in 1986 the Healthy Cities Programme, a long-term international development initiative that aims to place health high on the agendas of decision-makers and to promote comprehensive local strategies for health promotion and sustainable development. Although this is an international framework, particular initiatives underneath focus on regions or specific aspects of urban health, as the WHO European Healthy Cities Network working on age-friendly cities, and the Partnership to Healthy Cities stressing the prevention of non-communicable diseases. All of the initiatives, however, focus on health promotion within the layout of cities.

Before the planning and design process of this project begins, a holistic understanding of the factors that make a city healthy is analyzed. The framework utilized is the one of WHO Healthy Cities Network (2019) (Fig.15). It introduces seven categories of qualities and goals to enhance urban health:

- Reducing road traffic injuries
- Air quality in cities
- Tackling mental health in cities
- Innovative approaches to reducing urban violence
- Promoting healthy urban diets
- Creating age-friendly cities
- Encouraging physical activity for better health

All of the aspects to consider, build on the creation of a holistic approach to understand how to invest in health in urban planning. Also, by bringing next to these aspects, social inclusion, the perceived wellbeing and value in terms of placemaking are strengthened. Being that physical health is related to mental health, I would like to discuss further the aspect of mental health in cities.

I refer to the Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008), that defines to positive mental health as "a state of 'mental flourishing,' which is a combination of feeling good and functioning effectively most of the time. Describing a person as being mentally healthy (or equivalently, having positive mental health) means much more than the absence of symptoms of mental illness. It should be recognised that the alleviation and control of symptoms does not in itself bring mental health. Positive mental health is equivalent to a state of good mental wellbeing".

With a very concise approach, five ways to mental wellbeing are presented in form of behaviours to connect, keep active, take notice, keep learning and give. (Fig. 16) They raise awareness towards people investing in their wellbeing and of those around them, which agrees with the pro-social behaviour that is been studied along this thesis for inclusive shared spaces. It also builds on the idea of wellbeing starting as an individual condition and reaching collective levels as a second stance.
Figure 15. Spotlight-Graphic representation of the framework for Healthy Cities Network. WHO (2019).

Figure 16. Five ways to enhance individual mental wellbeing, hence promote social wellbeing. Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008).
1.4 ATTITUDES TOWARDS SPACE

Searching for the function of public space towards a more inclusive community for the aim of this project, I dive into the conception of space through existing theories. In this section perspectives presented by different authors are explained. After reflecting on them, I communicate by the end of this section my stance regarding public space to promote social inclusion.

Space and place are the first concepts to discuss. In The experience of a place, Tony Hiss defines place as a particular point or part of a space or surface. It could be a town or a city; a place to live, a riverbank or a park; a favourite hideaway for children; a spiritual retreat. Most importantly, he declares places to be for experiencing and argues that the value of a place is mostly measured in terms of physical and spiritual worth, rather than monetary value (Hiss, T., 1990). In that sense, a place, recognized as a particular point, can be intangible; but space is a physical tangible element. It is defined as the three-dimensional expanse in which all material objects are located. Space contains tangible objects such as buildings, natural landscape and people (Reeves, D., 2005). Space is the expanse for us, architects, to create places that would establish attachments with the people.

To define the role of architecture in the creation of places, Khan and Allacker (2015) observe two design-attitudes. The first one, architecture as an articulation, relies on socioeconomic development, linked to the modernization of cities to provide an upscale lifestyle. This design-attitude mainly impacts the image and function of the city, hence it has been criticized by social sciences. The second design-attitude, tackles more sensitively the social domain. It defines architecture as a mediation, paying attention to the context, the culture, the historical messages, and the value in the form and meaning of architecture (ibid.).

Building on the conceptualization of architecture as a mediation, I am eager to think that buildings are meant to be permanent, optimistically speaking. Every site presents particular natural, cultural, social and economic conditions; and reacting to them is a response to sustain the systems that the site is part of.

Beate Hølmebakk (2020) considers the management of the site a decisive face in the planning of a building and a way to bring sustainability to the agenda. The way the landscape is transformed contributes or neglects to its conservation, “One must be very aware on how to deal with the site” (Hølmebakk, B., 2020). On top of that, a big share of understanding site refers to the people that surround it: the ones that live, work, or simply walk across. This brings closer the human approach to the site analysis.

Some buildings are meant to be temporary and others aim for a longer life. Referring to the second ones, long term presence buildings are meant to be durable. They may change over time and their functions may evolve, but buildings do tell stories. Philip Johnson reflects on this quality of architecture referring to the ancient city of Teotihuacan, in México: This was a pedestrian causeway with many stairs crossing the processional and lined by religious pavilions; a neolithic monumental congeries of structures that have defied time and science; courtyards and pathways and sloping walls that spoke to us a thousand years after the Teotihuacan people disappeared [...] The art of architecture is the only human activity that can produce that miracle. (1979). Architecture can tell stories, communicate knowledge, shape behaviour and be a stage for action and interaction (Khan, A. and Allacker, K., 2015). Such a stage could host a certain function in the present and different ones in the future, architecture being the constant mediator.

To elaborate on the design attitude that refers to architecture as a mediation, I review the concept of mediation in its original context: a legal setting. Mediation is often thought of as a last step to adjudicate disputes and the last resource before going on court. It is the process of talking to two separate people or groups involved in a disagreement to try to help them to agree or find a solution to their problems (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). According to Leonard Susskind, mediation is a problem-solving process, for which three qualities are required: willingness on the part of all the relevant stakeholders to work together to resolve
the problem or deal with the situation; the availability of a trusted neutral with sufficient knowledge and skill to manage difficult conversations; and an agreement on procedural ground rules (2010). Adopting architecture as a mediation to invest in the regeneration of an existing settlement, and contribute on social inclusion within, the idea of a stage for action and interaction emerges (Khan, A. and Allacker, K., 2015).

The idea comes originally from Hilde Heynen studies on the spatial relation with social constellations, which find its roots in spatial planning back in history. The idea of architecture changing societies has been present since its alliance with power was identified. I think of Prehispanic Mesoamerican temples as government trade center, and Architecture or revolution (Le Corbusier, 1922) suggesting the capacity of architecture to provide decent living conditions and prevent violence. Spatial interventions do have the qualities to change social reality, the question is in which way they do it. Heynen (2013) explains three models to think of space, its meaning and function. They analyze the relationship between the space and the social constellations from the point of view of an architect. Constellation, outside of an astrology context, is defined as an assemblage, collection, or group of usually related persons, qualities, or things (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2020).

The first model, space as a receptor, is described by indicative verbs such as reflect, express, and embody. Social and cultural processes can be identified in spatial appearances, but the space itself is not seen as a generator or activator of social transformations. It is considered as a neutral container that acts as a background for social activities (Heynen, H., 2013).

The second model, space as an instrument, uses the imperative verbs like organize, structure, shape, dominate, discipline and determine. In my opinion, appreciating certain space as an instrument could be invasive. I think of an extreme case to exemplify my argument: Presidio Modelo in Cuba, a prison designed after panopticon ideas of philosopher Jeremy Bentham (Seelie, T., 2017). This is a spatial configuration acting as an instrument to control prisoners from a watchtower located in the centre of a circular layout, from where the guard observes all the cells, without the inmates knowing whether they are watched. On the other hand, when we think about a less tense scenario, the model or space as an instrument could provide efficient configurations for living and working spaces, nudging users towards certain behaviours. When approaching space as an instrument, the values behind the function are key to define whether such instrument acts as respectful or invasive.

Finally, by merging the concepts of space as a receptor and space as an instrument, the third model appears: space as a stage. For this model, “the agency of spatial parameters in producing and reproducing social reality is more fully recognized” (Heynen, H., 2013), contrary to the neutrality of space as a receptor, “while the theatrical metaphor is far from deterministic”, as in space as an instrument, hence space as a stage “allows for a better understanding of the interplay between forces of domination and forces of resistance” (ibid). I consider this model suitable for multidisciplinary perspectives on solutions for public spaces.

For the purpose of this work, I opt for a mediation attitude to the architecture of my project, where social processes are played in public space in order to enhance human encounters. To generate such discourse through the design of a building, I argue that architecture and sustainability together produce a combined effect promoting wellbeing in the daily life of users; and secondly, on a larger scale, promoting knowledge building for sustainability. For this duality, sustainability must be considered an ongoing process rather than a state to be achieved.

To complement the attitude towards space as a stage, and specifically the balance between how much corresponds to the design of the architect and how much to the appropriation of the space by the users, I recall two approaches to space regarding its activities. Richard Rogers (1998) describes as single-minded spaces the ones that focus on a single, clear function and have been
planned by big developers, for instance, a housing state or a business district. On the other hand, there are open-minded spaces, meaning multifunctional spaces giving opportunity for participation to a wider, more diverse group, as an example we can think about a market or square (ibid).

Both classifications of space are associated with different rhythms for the users: single-minded spaces are generally in a hurry, while open-minded spaces slow down the rhythm. To my eyes, open-minded space can encourage reflection participation and interaction more easily. They can generate an ambience for users to explore and discuss contemporary issues and raise questions, provoking dialogues. They are the type of space most likely to provoke self reflection as a space-scene from reality; or, on the contrary, provoke the exchange of information casually. In any case, curiosity is given an important role in open-minded spaces. In that sense, attraction towards the space itself and its actors could effect the creation of a community of interest. Rogers (1998) insists on diverse sectors of society coming together in this type of spaces, breeding a sense of tolerance, awareness, identity and mutual respect, what I interpret as an ideal scenario to bring about social inclusion.

I conclude merging the attitudes and approaches cited in this chapter, for the purpose of this work stating that to consider architecture as a mediator, space as a stage should perform as an open-minded space. But how is the flexibility of function so important in the search of perceived wellbeing? This is an aspect related to the experience of a place rather than its function. We perceive spaces by the experiences lived on that place and we are often drawn to places that offer rich experiences. Simultaneous perception (Hiss, T., 1990) is an internal mechanism that combines the appreciation of the environment that we get through all the different senses. All of them together alter the information that the mechanism receives. This is how through the system of perception we see ourselves as part of an environment (ibid).

Our task as architects is to imagine, shape and create spaces to provide attractive settings with a strong identity, yet malleable to be able to fulfil experiences according to diverse profiles. Such creation should generate an intimate relationship with its visitors, enhancing and promoting its longevity. A place that is desired and wanted will be taken care of, and this is fundamental for the interests of the investment parties in a project of this nature. In words of Tony Hiss, simultaneous perception goes beyond architectural beauty and tells about the character of a place, the quality of life there, its essence, resonance, harmony: connected to the experience of someone on the place. It is an individual opinion (1990). When we deal with perceived wellbeing on a collective level, public spaces become a place where association emerges from individuals that feel validated and experience a sense of belonging in a shared space. This is how an individual opinion becomes a pro-social behaviour and contributes to the improvement and development of human systems within a neighbourhood.
1.5 SPACE AS A STAGE

Introducing the design phase for Pavilion of Possibilities

Reflections on the previous reviews come together to elaborate a proposal of public space. The perspective towards architecture is defined as one of architecture as a mediator to enhance agency and promote human encounters. It recognizes addressing sustainability when dealing with the site in a form that is transformed to create better settings respecting the existing social systems of an area and its identity.

The attitude towards space is Space as a Stage and relies on a multifunctional layout that agrees on the idea of an open-minded space, offering various configurations. Diversity and equity as key values are the driving force to think about the accessibility and versatility of the space (Fig. 17). Consider fundamental for a stage of this nature to be prepared to be visited by users with diverse mindsets, interests, and capacities, but all of them keen to gather and shared a space. The metaphor of bringing a stage, that originally belongs to the theatre, to the street evolves into a shared space in the form of a stage.

A stage is much more than an elevated platform to direct the attention of an audience towards a demonstration, because it is not an instrument, either a receptor. Space as a stage evokes a sensitive balance between its fixed spatial qualities and agency on its visitors. Theatre and opera director Erik Söderblom defines the presence of a stage as the quality that makes the theatre, and the stage as the division of the ramp, the verge, the edge that divides the physical space of the stage from the audience. (Söderblom, E., 2020) The architectural gesture that divides the two spaces can be shifted with the proposal of taking the stage to an outdoor urban setting. In that sense the hierarchy between actors and audience is meant to disappear. Hence, it pens the floor and its doors, to users to experience and shape the stage freely according to their specific needs.

Figure 12. Illustration of the attitude towards space for the purpose of the project, based on the previous reviews. This is the concept for the design of Pavilion of Possibilities.
PART TWO

Research by design

Figure 18. Sketch inspired in open-minded spaces that allow diverse journeys.
“One of the opportunities of architecture is that, through the design of form, space and materiality, it can order our relationships with each other and our environment by creating interactive settings for life. It can do this in such a way as to provide opportunities to improve our sense of well-being, enrich our lives, make our lives healthier and more pleasurable”. (Steemers, K., 2015)
Figure 19. Board for promotion of cultural events in the Square of Malmintori, Yli-Malmi, Helsinki, Finland.
2.1 THEORY MEETS PRACTICE IN THE DISTRICT OF MALMI

As the first part of the thesis has become a set of values and concept for the creation of public space I searched for a site and user to move on to the design phase. Drawing on the idea of working on a culturally diverse context, I decided to focus in the city district of Malmi. According to statistics in Population with foreign background in Helsinki 2016, the average proportion of foreign-language residents in Helsinki is 14%, while specifically in Malmi is rated between 21 and 28% (Hiekkavuo, 2016).

The district of Malmi is located in northeastern Helsinki, approximately 10 km away from the city centre. It is known for its airport for pilot training and recreational aviation (Helsinki-Malmi Airport, 2019), and the Cemetery of Malmi, the largest in Finland in terms of the number of graves (Helsingin Seurakunnat, 2019). Until 1946, Malmi used to be the administrative centre of the rural municipality of Helsinki and it was in the '80s that infrastructure and urban development increased significantly when the Malmi station was constructed (Helsinki City Museum, n.d.).

Walking the neighbourhood, was the first method

I arrived in Malmi by train on a not-so-cold-winter day in January. I walked across the tunnel and shopping centre towards the inner side, with a peculiar sense of noisiness: different languages, probably diverse cultural backgrounds. Although this was perceived in both sides of the railway, to my eyes, the identities of Lower and Upper Malmi appeared disconnected. In Lower Malmi, the presence of the Longinoja, an urban brook that flows into Vantaanjoki River offers a rich place in terms of biodiversity. The main cultural hub of the district, Malmintalo is located on the same side. Next to it, there are parks of historical value. In between Malmintalo and Longinoja there are schools, sports facilities and various housing types residential areas. There are plenty of sites under construction on this side, yet I describe Lower Malmi, as the side where culture and nature coexist.

On the other side of the railway, in Upper Malmi, the environment feels older but more vibrant. Commercial spaces are mainly located around MalminTori, followed by residential areas around the commercial node. Many bicycle-related business are observed, also, a lot of small business establishments such as hairdressers salons, laundry, bars, and restaurants of international cuisines. The typologies of foreign entrepreneurs stated by Lilius, J. & Hewidy, H. (2019) come to my mind while the test walk. Basic services provided by big companies are gathered in the shopping centre, such as banks, pharmacies, and grocery stores. Around it a sense of different cultures try to fit and combine around it. In the middle of Malmintori Square, a metal board informed about sports, music event and social norms. I interpreted it as a subtle demonstration of the sense of community within the area. Perhaps it is stronger during summer, when most of the squares awake. In this time of the year, the Malmintori square was empty, with lot of people walking across, but in the meanwhile empty. Nobody stopped, neither stayed for a while.

Notes on the first visit to the site.
Figure 20. Printed map of Malmi in the library located in Malmintalo, Ala-Malmi, Helsinki, Finland.
A conversation about the neighbourhood was the second method.

Besides mapping and documenting by photographs during test walks, reaching the City Planning Department was the starting point to understand the intentions for the regeneration of the area from the perspective of the local authorities and institutions.

I met Antti Mentula, part of the Urban Renewal Team, and Architect in charge of the development of Malmi. Mentula suggested Malmi Tori, the Square of Malmi, as a site that could benefit from my design and provide me with an interesting cultural context.

The interview took place on the Landuse General Planning office, on march 12, 2020. The past, present and future of the neighbourhood were extensively discussed during the interview. Along the conversation, Mentula referred to the findings and content of Malmin keskustavisisio uudistumisen polkuja, a report that gathers participatory design, strategies and possible scenarios for the neighbourhood (2020). A working model of Malmin Tori was a useful tool during the meeting, making possible to analyze specific aspects of the urban and architectural qualities of the site.
Neighbourhood Scale: understanding the location and urban network

Figure 21. Upper and Lower Malmi, and the railways in between

Figure 22. Malmintori Square, located in subdistrict 3 of Upper Malmi

Figure 23. Traffic network

Figure 24. The site and green areas in the surroundings. Illustrating the site as part of the green network to connect Upper and Lower Malmi

Scale of diagrams 1:2000
Mapping observations was the third method

The train is the fastest and more effective means of transportation connecting Malmi with Helsinki city centre and other cities. However, the railway is perceived in the neighbourhood scale as a disconnector between Upper and Lower Malmi. Bridges and tunnels between one side and the other are scarce, yet the tunnel that directs to Malmintori is full of vendors, making the arrival to the site interesting. The two areas of the district are illustrated in Figure 21, both with the railway tracks in between.

Figure 22 illustrates the location of Malmintori Square, which belongs to the Sub District 3 of Upper Malmi District. It is considered the centre of the whole district of Malmi. (Mentula, 2020)

The area is generally well connected and the presence of public transportation and cycling paths is more prevalent than the use of private cars. After mapping exercises and observations, the site of Malmintori Square is identified as a transition space between the inner side of Upper Malmi towards the commercial area and shopping centres, the railway and most importantly, it is an indirect transition space towards Lower Malmi, where the cultural centre of Malmintalo is located. Traffic network is illustrated in Figure 23.

Malmintori Square, highlighted in grey, is analyzed next to the green areas in the surroundings. As a strategy of adding value to the Square, a possible connection between the different parks is drafted in Figure 24. The network could contribute to one of the intentions of the Vision for Malmi (2020) of connecting both sub districts.
Figure 25. Current situation of Malmintori Square in 2020

Figure 26. Centric location for the Pavilion next to the pond

Figure 27. Focus on the northern edge instead of the centre. Looking closer to the built environment

Figure 28. Northern location for the Pavilion to activate Malmintori Square as a whole

Scale of working models 1:500
2.2 Exploring the Location in the Square

Graphic studies on Malmintori Square

Possible strategies for the site are explored utilizing a working model. The studies draw on two different locations for the Pavilion.

Illustrated in Figure 25, the current situation of the square shows as a central composition the pond and art piece of Seppo Manninen. The current state of the sculpture and pond with poor maintenance was observed during visits to the site. A subtle, sensitive approach for the intervention would be to build the Pavilion and revitalize the square according to the existing elements located in the centre. Such an approach is illustrated in Figure 26, supported with further studies on pages 35-37. This location suggests that the development of the square would start from the existing urban elements.

A different approach is illustrated in Figure 27, proposing to concentrate the development strategy of the square on the northern edge, changing the focus on the centric location. An existing building is key for this perspective: the former Community Centre constructed in 1929, the oldest building surrounding the Square. The inhabited building is owned by The City of Helsinki, and besides the lower level extension, it is in good condition (Mentula, 2020). Therefore the future use of the building could potentially open its doors next to the Pavilion, respecting and representing layers of time within the square.

As a consequence, the fourth approach in Figure 28, represents the Pavilion located on the northern edge of the square, engaging with the preservation of Malmi Raitti 3 and the activation of the whole square. This approach will be analyzed further next to the design proposal (page 40 onwards).
Studies of the Pavilion in a centric location 1/3

**Figure 29.** View of the urban composition in the centre of the square. Photograph is taken from the north.

**Figure 30.** View of the composition and the edge of the square in the back. Photograph is taken from the south.

**Figure 31.** View of Malmintori and the active edge of the square from the pond.
Figure 32. Sketch of the southern view. The existing trees and sculpture delimit the location of the Pavilion in the middle.

Figure 33. Sketch of the northern view. The Pavilion acts as a complement of the existing urban composition of sculpture and pond, aiming to their revitalization.

Figure 34. Sketch of closer northern view from the pond. The pond is a reflective element for the building once it is revitalized.
Studies of the Pavilion in a centric location 3/3

**Figure 35.** Existing deciduous trees on two axes define the path that leads to the Pavilion. Their heights is approximately 7m.

**Figure 36.** Scale of the Pavilion next to existing buildings around the square. The square is divided into three zones, the one in the back is paid less attention to.

**Figure 37.** The curved gesture of the southern facade of the Pavilion is meant to act together with the the last trees of the central axis.
Outcome from studies and aspects to reconsider

The intention of showing the studies of the centric location as part of the process, is to identify valuable aspects of the proposal that must be reconsidered.

First one is to keep aligned the entrance of the Pavilion with the existing trees situated in two axes, yet pay attention to the distance between the Pavilion and the tree of the central axis.

Second aspect is to explore the scale of the Pavilion in terms of height. Respecting a safe distance between the Pavilion and the existing buildings is an important decision in big measure define by local regulations. Yet, the height of the Pavilion could vary, creating a more interesting interior space, the roof, for instance, can be different from flat.

One of the challenges if locating the Pavilion next to the pond is recognized, realizing that focusing on a centric location contributes to the subdivision the square into three different areas: north, central and south. Fragmentation complicates the activation of the Square as a whole.

Elaborating on this challenge, the backside of the Pavilion could contribute to the urban health of the Square more holistically if it engages with something more than the revitalization of an existing urban composition that presents difficulties already. In terms of identity, it is stated that the pond is poorly appreciated by the users of the area and the authorities in charge of its maintenance (Malmin keskustavisio uudistumisen polkuja, 2020). In that sense, the removal of the pond and relocation of the art piece is analyzed for a more ambitious overall performance of the Square.
Figure 38. View of the corner of the former community centre (Nuo-risotalo) located in Malmin Raitti 3. Photograph is taken from the limit of Malmintori Square that faces the street.

Figure 39. View of the north-west facade of the building. Attached to it, there is a lower element. Photograph is taken from Malmintori Square, on the edge that faces commercial buildings on the south-west.

Figure 40. Closer view of the lower element attached to the former community centre. North-east facade.
The wooden building located in Malmin Raitti 3 was completed in 1929. It is currently inhabited.

The date of completion of the lower annexe attached to it is unknown (Helsinki Service Map, 2020). As it was observed in the site visits, commented on the interview with Mentula (2020), and a publication of Lahitieto (Pihlajamaa, 2015), the indoor air quality presents unhealthy conditions due to humidity.

The rest of the buildings surrounding the Square were completed in the 80's. Their use is mostly commercial, some of them with residential and office spaces in the upper stories. The sculpture was designed by Seppo Manninen in 1998.
**Figure 43.** Strategy for the intervention, focus on the northern edge of the square

**Figure 44.** Defining the exact location based in the built environment and the presence of trees on the square and in the vicinity

**Figure 45.** Circulation is represented according to strategy, as different angles to access the square

**Figure 46.** A zonification for the square is represented as the Pavilion is located to activate the square, starting by the north.

*Scale of working models 1:500*
2.3 STRATEGY AND SITE PROPOSAL

Focus on the northern location

Focusing on the northern edge of the square, the location of the Pavilion is justified with the following strategy, for which graphic notes on the previous page illustrate the intentions.

To contribute on the preservation of Malmin Raitti 3, the lower annex with poor air quality conditions is demolished, adding to the square a greener area. All the existing trees on the square are preserved and it is proposed that the sculpture is relocated and the pond is removed. The previous is illustrated in Figure 43.

Besides the trees on the Square, the trees located in the proximities are mapped and considered in the approach to the site as well. Illustrated in Figure 44, axes are drafted to aligned the back facade of the Pavilion with the commercial and residential vicinity building, on the north-east.

The new traffic network is represented on the Square: cycling paths in black, pedestrian flows in blue and a path for automobiles to access the square in extraordinary circumstances, in white. New forms to access the Square support the image of the intervention from different angles. Traffic network is illustrated in Figure 45.

Finally in Figure 46 a general zoning is sketched proposing a green corridor, space for vendors, a new location for bicycles parking, and the creation of a green corner that surrounds the existing building on Malmin Raitti 3. The Pavilion in its new location engages both the southern and northern side, attracting users from both sides and activating the Square as one larger space to be experienced collectively.
**Figure 47.** The existing trees on the square still emphasize the path to the Pavilion, which is now located further in the square. In turn, the pond is removed.

**Figure 48.** In comparison with the previous location, there is a longer distance between the Pavilion and the trees of the central axes. This allows a better circulation and use of the space formed in front of the Pavilion as an extension of it.

**Figure 49.** A curved gesture opens to the south-west. The Pavilion is now closer to the former community centre-Malmin Raitti 3. The building can be observed behind the Pavilion in the corner.
**Figure 50.** The back facade gets more attention. It should be attractive since it faces the quietest area of the square. This facade could make the Pavilion a bi-directional building.

**Figure 51.** The Pavilion is aligned with the axes of the commercial-residential building located on the north-east side. This way the building does not block the new space that is been freed next to Malmin Raitti 3.

**Figure 52.** The space that used to be the location of the lower annexe element becomes an extension of the square, activating the corner and adding a more introspect space.
Figure 53. The strategies come together illustrating a conceptual proposal for Malmintori Square, with the location of the Pavilion defined.

Scale 1:500
2.3 FINAL STRATEGIES AND PROPOSAL ON THE SQUARE

The process of analysis of the site was fundamental to make tangible decisions about the location, scale and orientation for the Pavilion. Furthermore, referring to intangible aspects, decision making draws around placing scenarios on the site. As suggested by futurecraft, it is encouraged to maintain a balance between the place as it is and its optimistic future transformation, based on real conditions.

That principle explains the need to continuously go back to the site scale when working on the design and materiality of the building. The reason I explain this is to expose the process transparently, recognizing that the analysis and design phase have been a dynamic process, rather than linear. As a consequence moving from the building scale to the site scale and vice versa has been necessary.

Yet conceptual, the importance of the strategies for Malmintori Square rely on a set of decisions based on all the methods used to approach the site, presented by graphic notes on the illustration. By the regeneration of the square, the Pavilion stands for the values behind a small building design intervention that is capable of a considerable positive impact on its surroundings. The way the Pavilion articulates with Malmintori Square as it is, is crucial for it to be able to contribute to the urban health of the area.
Figure 54. View of Pavilion of Possibilities from Malmintori. Illustrating cultural diversity and the use of the Pavilion as a stage that opens an engages with the square. The use of the building is illustrated according to spring or summertime. The existing buildings on the vicinity are illustrated as their current state.
2.4 BUILDING DESIGN

The strategies for the site, values and qualities explored for a shared space to propose social inclusion have taken the form of a building. With a net area of 124 m², Pavilion of Possibilities, is a wooden based structure inspired in the attitude of Space as a Stage. The construction materials are locally fabricated. Besides responding to the surrounding built environment, the building is shaped strategically according to its orientation regarding sunlight. Being a building equipped to function year-round, it encourages the value of design to benefit from the sunlight across the seasons, creating indoors and outdoors comfort.
Figure 55. Typical floor plan, notes on accessibility  
Scale 1:100
FLOOR PLAN AND ACCESSIBILITY

The organization of the interior space is illustrated showing relevant details of the fixed equipment and furniture to make the building accessible according to ADA Standards for Accessible Design (Department of Justice, 2010). The ground floor of the Pavilion is elevated 750 mm from the Square, for which besides the stairs there is a ramp with a slope of 1:12 and railing with a handrail at the height of 450mm. In the vestibule, there are two coat racks fixed to the walls to function as a cloakroom. The racks have different heights, one of them fixed at 1200 mm, according to accessibility standards, the other one at 1800 mm. The restrooms are unisex. One of the W.C. modules is accessible and one of the washbasins is elevated 865 mm, with 685 mm for knee clearance for a wheelchair.

When desired, it is possible to separate visually the vestibule and restrooms from the rest of the space by pulling a double-height curtain. The main hall is defined as an interaction space. Around the corner, there is a kitchen and a technical space and in the form of a vertical closet. The kitchen counters, with a height of 865mm, have two areas with the knee clearance for accessibility.

The layout is designed as much as possible as a free floorplan to make out of the main hall for interaction, a versatile space. Three configurations for the interior layout are shown on pages 55-60. The slope of the roof, however, suggests more introspect spaces in the back, by the kitchen, hierarchizing the space for interaction. The south facade is in great measure composed of a glass wall system, divided into modules that simulate a curved element. It is connected to a curved element, the exterior wall, that surrounds the outdoor space. Two exterior benches are attached to the walls, while the other benches are detached. The north facade accompanies the cycling paths, delineated by the trees on the other side.
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>+0.750</td>
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<td>+0.000</td>
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<td>0 GROUND LEVEL, SQUARE</td>
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<td>-0.800</td>
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<td>-1 FOUNDATION</td>
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Figure 57. Cross section referenced in the typical floor plan with the code S-02. Construction types and details consulted on Puuninfo-Suunnitteluhjeet and Rakennustieto
*Scale 1:100*
CONSTRUCTION TYPES

SECTION 02
CASUAL USE CONFIGURATION

This is the first proposal for the interior spatial configuration of the space. The present layout supports the use of the interior of the Pavilion by various users simultaneously, with the possibility to focus on different activities. This defines that the space can be used daily for casual reunions to take place, without the need of strictly one organized event. It also supports the intention of a shared space that provides shelter around the year.

This layout represents an introspect use of the space. The Pavilion comprehends under this configuration four spaces labelled as:

1. The entrance area or vestibule and unisex restrooms
2. Interaction space with curved table*
3. Buffer zone, living room alike, located in the corner
4. Kitchen

*The curved table is mounted on wheels so that it can be moved according to the function of the day and time.

Figure 59. Interior view of the buffer zone, between the interaction space and the kitchen, illustrating simultaneous functions with the casual use configuration.
Figure 60. Floor plan and layout two: configuration for events

Scale 1:100
EVENTS CONFIGURATION

This is the second option for the interior spatial configuration of the space. The layout supports bigger reunions and events when all the users interact.

Under this configuration celebrations, workshops, lectures, meetings, can take place. The curved table is removed from the centre, and located by the glass wall system. The design of the furniture follows the shape of that wall so that it becomes part of it when not needed as a centrepiece. The Pavilion comprehends under this configuration three spaces labelled as:

1. the entrance area or vestibule and unisex restrooms.
2. the interaction space
3. kitchen

The curtain dividing the vestibule and restrooms from the interaction space, permits other users besides the ones taking part in the reunion, to use the restrooms without interrupting the activities in the interaction space.

Figure 64. Interior view of the interaction space as a bigger area once the curved table is removed from the middle. Illustrating a configuration for a planned event and collective use of the space.
Figure 62. Floor plan and layout three: configuration for a space that connects with the square
Scale 1:100
OPEN-UP CONFIGURATION

This is the third and most extrovert option. The layout shows the interior and exterior space merging, as the activities that take place. This is possible by opening the glass wall, which is divided into six modules.

Under this configuration performances can be hosted, inviting a larger audience on the square. Although this follows a more traditional approach to the stage, with the elevated stage that emphasizes a separation between actor and audience, the stage, encourages as well that the audience and the actors can meet and exchange positions. Outside, the curved wall pretends to create a place inspired in systems thinking, where people stands or sits in a circle to enhance dialogue.

The Pavilion under this configuration has three spaces labelled as:
1. the entrance area or vestibule connected to restrooms
2. the stage that open ups to the square
3. the kitchen and curved table as an extension.

This configuration is weather dependent, adding to the concept of the Pavilion its transition and different presence along the seasons.

Figure 63. View of the interaction space opening towards the Square. Illustrating Malmintori in the back and culturally diverse users.
Figure 64. Floor plan representing the Open-up configuration creating a stage, and a backstage in the north west
Scale 1:200
A BI-DIRECTIONAL BUILDING

Besides the three interior configurations for the Pavilion that mostly engage with the southern area of Malmintori Square, an additional dimension to the whole building is presented with the concept of a backstage.

Located in the north-west facade, the backstage turns the Pavilion into a bi-directional building. Next to this approach, the back facade gains as much attention as the front facade. Gestures in both facades are designed according to the use of the square and the orientation of the building.

The south facade is composed in great measure of a glass wall to obtain a maximum solar gain during winter. It generates the interaction space to be used under different configurations, and due to its orientation, the sunlight provides more hours of light during the day.

On the other hand, the north-west facade is composed in a great measure by the sloped element that comprises the roof, ramp and terraces. It protects from the cold winds, especially during winter. In summertime the backstage orientation points towards late sunsets and sunlight for longer periods, making the outdoor space more enjoyable.
Figure 67. Roof, ramp and terraces.
Scale 1:200
**BACKSTAGE**

The nature of the backstage intends to be unconventional, in the sense that it is not exclusive. Traditionally, backstages are spaces closed to the audience, they lack natural light and could be absolutely closed to increase the level of privacy.

Recalling instead, the approach of Space as a Stage, the Pavilion proposes a shift for its backstage, providing an open space for people to visit, linger, climb or walk by. Adding to the inclusivity that the building aims to promote, because it contains no threshold, the backstage is meant to be open year-round 24/7.

Structurally speaking, the roof of the Pavilion becomes a ramp, which, in turn, converts into a chain of terraces. The sloped roof has a hidden gutter underneath the wooden deck that collects rainwater into a small pond. Guiding the water to the ground contributes to the absorption capacities of the soil.

The ramp creates a shelter on top of the absorption detail and makes possible for pedestrians to walk across the building instead of surrounding it, offering more qualities for simultaneous perception. In the same way, the detached terrace, last one of the chain, allows users with limited physical mobility to experience the backstage from the ground level of the square. There are no labels for the spaces on the backstage. The sloped surface, terraces and benches are for the user to explore.

*Figure 68. North East Facade. An alternative location for the sculptures is illustrated.*

*Scale 1:200*
Figure 69. View of the Pavilion towards the green extension of the square. Illustration of an age-friendly space: the last element of the system of terraces is detached allowing users to experience the Pavilion from the ground level. The ramp creates a space underneath, making possible for the users to walk through the building rather than around it. The buildings on the vicinity are illustrated.
Figure 70. View of the outdoor shared space from the northern edge of the square. The level of the terraces are measured as a step, a bench, and a second step that turns into the inclined wooden deck. The detached element can be utilized as a platform for performances, being the roof, ramp and terraces space for the audience. The buildings on the vicinity are illustrated.
Figure 71. View from the revitalized corner of Malmin Raitti 3. Illustration of a more natural atmosphere within the urban area. A permeable wood pavement is suggested for the green space added as an extension of Malmintori Square. The different treatment for the ground contributes to the absorption capacity of the ground and delimits the cycling paths. The buildings on the vicinity are illustrated.
OUTDOOR SPACES CREATED BY THE PAVILION

Once the different spaces have been illustrated and explained, the holistic presence of the building can be perceived. Consequently, it precise to zoom-out and take a look to the site scale and the intention of locating the Pavilion on the northern edge rather than in the centric location.

This location balances the building and its surroundings. Hence, the gesture of a bi-directional building relies on its connection to the green revitalized corner, an this in turn, contributes to the conservation of Malmin Raitti 3. In that sense, new architecture coexist with older entities. Furthermore, it pays attention to the approach to the site from the secondary road, which is of a more human scale nature than the approach from the railway.

Overall, the intention of the building, being a fairly small architectural element, explores its capacity to benefit the broader picture. Especially connecting with the existing elements, respecting the historical value that are part of the identity of the district and heritage.
PART THREE

Reflection on findings

Figure 72. Sketch inspired in the user’s journey on the square.
How does Pavilion of Possibilities contribute to the urban health of the District of Malmö?

What if it was replicated to contribute to the urban health of a different context?
3.1 HOW DOES THE PAVILION CONTRIBUTE ON URBAN HEALTH IN THE DISTRICT OF MALMI?

As the principles and values of the intervention have taken form in a building, it is appropriate to reflect on how Pavilion of Possibilities contributes to the urban health of the area. According to the WHO framework of Healthy Cities Programme (2019), five categories out of seven are addressed on this project in a direct form.

Air quality. The contribution to air quality is by promoting the visits to the Pavilion by human-powered means: walking or cycling, and locating it next to a major transit hub. The motivation to visit the place is intentionally followed by a space without parking lots around. The regeneration of the northern corner, which becomes a greener space, contributes to the same matter. The new trees and bushes planted are evergreen. The green corner represents a space by providing a relaxed and quieter place within the urban vibrant atmosphere. Being more introspective than the middle of the square, on that corner sessions of yoga or meditation in the early mornings could be hosted.

Encouraging physical activity for better health. The Pavilion promotes movement through several aspects of its design: cycling roads, parking places for bicycles triangulated with benches and a green corridor, terraces and inclined surfaces to climb. The site is to be developed in order to create enjoyable walking, cycling paths and areas to linger. Physical activities such as dancing events and group exercise can be organized.

Age friendly cities. Referring to the diverse users the Pavilion is inspired by, this aspect refers to accessibility as much as social inclusion. The interior spaces are accessible, while the outdoor elements offer a more interactive configuration with the possibility to participate as an actor or part of an audience. Elder people can visit the pavilion and circulate in and around it by themselves. The location next to public transportation nodes is key for the site to be age-friendly. The whole building is developed under the idea of slowing down instead of crossing the square as a transition space, looking at it as a destination. Once it is conceived as a place to stay, the possibility to meet other people contributes to the social interaction of people who may live alone. It is important to agree that an age-friendly city should take into account the young citizens as well.

Tackling mental health. By promoting human encounters, solitude, and depression due to lack of social interaction can be relieved. Psychological and perceived well-being would be increased if the Pavilion evolves from a space into a place. This will happen when the people find on it a sense of belonging a validation. Such psychological needs come to people from other people, meaning that the space is merely a mediator in the journey. Individual well-being, dependent on a group of people, meets social well-being. Raising the value of sharing as key for placemaking and appropriation of the space, what is desired is that people would take ownership of the Pavilion creating different types of communities and engaging with the conservation of the tangible and intangible elements of the place. By telling stories, sharing recipes, speaking about weather, enjoying sounds and silence, empathy is cultivated. (This is discussed further according to Foresight Project).

Innovative approaches to reducing urban violence. Overall, if all the previous intentions mentioned on the mental health aspect were succeed, violence and crime can be reduced and the identity of the neighborhood will continue to grow. When placemaking is achieved, the input of the Pavilion as a physical entity will become embedded in the social practices within the square, promoting the creation and maintenance of a safe environment around it.

The two aspects of urban health that were addressed indirectly are however discussed.

Reducing road traffic injuries. The square is already a pedestrian area, and the traffic network around was
not modified on this project. However, the design includes a defined path for bicycle circulation. Automobile access is not allowed unless extraordinary situations, for which an 8 meters wide path is left empty for the circulation of vehicles into the square.

Ensuring a healthy diet: This aspect is expected to come next to physical activity. Yet, the spatial interior configuration refers to it by having a food preparation area instead of a bar counter for someone to become a business opportunity. I strongly believe that public spaces must be detached from the capacity of affording something-food or drinks in these circumstances. Healthy diets may find their way to the Pavilion, being frequently rooted in traditional cooking. Recognizing the cultural richness of the area, food preparation could promote an atmosphere to meet, eat, and converse. In that sense, the space is a suitable setting for a cultural exchange through food.

As part of the second framework presented in the literature review on Urban Health, the narrative of the following paragraph focuses on mental wellbeing. Reflecting on the five behaviours stated in the Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008), To what aspects the Pavilion can collaborate by facilitating its spaces?

The versatile interior space and the dynamic exterior spaces generated around the Pavilion offer a place for social connections. These are spaces for families, friends, colleagues, neighbours and strangers. Thinking of these connectors and investing time in developing them can improve wellbeing. Reaching the Pavilion and exploring its spaces encourage users to be active, stimulating mobility, which ties together mental wellbeing to physical health. The Pavilion is now part of a vibrant location, encouraging to slow down and take notice. By being curious and perceiving through our senses the surrounding we reflect on our experiences of the present. We become conscious and furthermore, when experiencing simultaneous perception we become part of the environment. The pavilion as a shelter to gather curiosity and create communities promotes in different ways lifelong learning, recognizing that it can happen anywhere and it always brings self confidence.

The spaces created in the interior, exterior, on top, across and around the Pavilion are pro-social rather than private. Seeing ourselves, and our happiness, as linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around us (Foresight, 2008). Users of the pavilion, as member of a community give, care and support, evolving into a sense of belonging and validation that contributes on social inclusion beyond the walls and spaces of the Pavilion.
3.2 MANIFESTO

The conception of a manifesto, a written statement of the beliefs, aims, and policies (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020) is used to conclude the journey of this thesis. With Pavilion of Possibilities, I reflect on the qualities of public space and the nature of the building design, which can be replicated in diverse contexts.
Architecture of shared spaces is the one that provides shelter, agency and interaction. It is meant to be durable, versatile and in the long term provoke place-making. Its power of impact relies on being able to connect with people. Moreover, in good architecture, space and people are connected, shaping each other. With both introspect and extrovert gestures, architecture is accessible and meant to be experienced. It is tailored to mediate encounters, recognizing cultural diversity as an advantage in the co-creation of urban health. Inclusivity in shared spaces identifies and celebrates diversity.

Thus, architecture speaks different languages and beliefs. It brings people together, understanding wellbeing as an individual stance that reaches collective levels and promotes the creation of communities.

Striving to sustain the value of self-expression and demonstration, on a shared stage where actors and audience coexist, architecture acts as a mediation. It contributes to the creation of a desired future with roots in the present, between people, space and the existing setting.
Figure 73. Conceptual view of a second Pavilion of Possibilities in the city of Tlaxcala, México. Illustration of social inclusion and cultural diversity around the building. Materials are chosen according to the local context. The purpose of this figure is to illustrate the intention of designing a second Pavilion of Possibilities for other settings.
3.3 VARIATION OF THE PAVILION AS A REFLECTION, FUTURE STEPS

I graphically express through this visualization the building in a different location, which I am eager to continue researching and studying in my career as an architect.

Spatial interventions like Pavilion of Possibilities can be agents of change towards healthier spaces in our cities. Conditioned to an analysis of the context, the model can be shaped and built according to its new location, replicated with the same intentions yet adjusted to a different environment.

Therefore, I hope to refer to this project and Shared Spaces Manifesto as a toolkit. Such toolkit should act as inspiration and guidelines to develop similar interventions and create stages for social inclusion in other cities and rural settings.

As this thesis begins with a global approach towards sustainability and a local approach for the architecture, I conclude by sharing that I am keen to contribute on sustaining the richness found in cultures, especially different cultures coexisting in shared spaces.
CONCLUDING REMARKS
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to acknowledge the financial support given by the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología. This subsidy made possible for me to join the Creative Sustainability Master Programme, for which I express my sincere gratitude. In the same way, I would like to acknowledge the support by Aalto University Scholarship.

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To all the communities in Aalto University, academics and students that build on an ambience of inclusivity, I would like to extend my appreciation. Especially to the Creative Sustainability members, for their intense, committed and persistent attitude, which is been an explicit example of participation across disciplines to make of this world a better one.

I would like to thank my parents and sister for their unconditional support, the kind that doesn't mind the distance. They are my personal admiration of lifelong learning. Finally, to Martti, I would like to dedicate a special thanks for his presence in this journey, in all the possible senses of the word.
LEARNING DIARY: LÍNEAS, 90 days of thesis thinking

The content of this learning diary shares the reflection-process that was carried out during this theoretical-research project. Sketching systematically was a creative tool and form of documentation throughout the creation of this thesis. It illustrates the process of thinking and designing Pavilion of Possibilities.

It consists of 100x70mm heavyweight paper pieces, where ideas were drafted using ink pens and watercolours. The task was to document with one sketch and one sentence the learning outcome of the day, in approximately 15 minutes.

As a method of synthesizing ideas by the end of a day of reading and writing, it facilitated the definition of the scope, which was a challenging part. Concepts, case studies and theory became abstract lines and occasionally obvious graphic notes. The diary includes material that influenced both, directly and indirectly the content of the thesis. When the site analysis and design part commenced, the sketches turned into illustrations related to the building design.

LÍNEAS: 90 days of thesis thinking can be consulted in the appendix by the end of this publication.
REFERENCES

BOOKS

ONLINE PUBLICATIONS


LECTURES


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INTERVIEW AND COMMUNICATION


*S: The interview was recorded with the explicit consent of the interviewee, permitting to use the findings for the purpose of this work.

Söderblom, E. (2020, February 25) E-mail communication with E. Söderblom.
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Figure 74. Photograph of painted brick wall in Calle de la Constitución, Oaxaca de Juárez, México.

Additional notes about the figures:

All material including photographs, drawings and designs presented in this thesis are produced, taken by and copyrighted to the author, unless stated otherwise in the credits.

The source of base maps is Helsinki Map Service, retrieved from https://bit.ly/2SP5EaA

The source of human scale images used in the 3D views is Nonscandinavia, retrieved from https://bit.ly/3bXpEza
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31.03.2020
day 63
It is allowed to climb.

01.04.2020
day 64
Threes on the side and slope towards north-west.
02.04.2020
day 65
Back facade is now the backstage. Bi-directional.

03.04.2020
day 66
One curve to surrounds the space in front of the stage. Complicated element.
04.04.2020
day 67

05.04.2020
day 68
The roof as a path for rainwater to meet the ground.
06.04.2020
day 69
Orientation, seasons, layouts.

07.04.2020
day 70
Bringing theory and design together.
08.04.2020
day 71
Fairly small, yet stimulates the revitalization of a large area.

09.04.2020
day 72
Across rather than around. Simultaneous perception from the ground level.
10.04.2020
day 73

It is not a curved glass wall, modules are straight.

11.04.2020
day 74

Diversity and different ways to approach the Pavilion.
12.04.2020
day 75
Same surface on the slope that becomes the chain of terraces.

13.04.2020
day 76
Pine boarding floating. It does not touch the ground.
Contrasts in the ground.

The performance of the Pavilion is the performance of the square.
16.04.2020  
day 79  
The heights take you in. The curve accompanies you.

17.04.2020  
day 80  
Indoors. A shelter, a introspect corner.
18.04.2020
day 81
Climax: when the stage opens

20.04.2020
day 82
A bigger board: a stage for self-demonstration and self-expression.
21.04.2020
day 83
Urban health: activating the north edge and expanding towards the corner. The old wooden building adds value.

22.04.2020
day 84
Reflect on urban health. How does it coexist with its context? How does it improve it?
23.04.2020
day 85
To be replicated, once it is shaped according to materials and its new site.

24.04.2020
day 86
Transit hub, Pavilion on the square and the inner world of Upper Malmi.
25.04.2020  
day 87  
Multilayers of spaces and functions. The Pavilion does not stand alone.

27.04.2020  
day 88  
Narrative of questions, theory, a building and a manifesto.
28.04.2020  
day 89

Architecture to sustain and improve the setting. There should be a *before and after.*

30.04.2020  
day 90

More stages for a more inclusive world
Figure 74. Photograph of painted wall representing diversity.
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Espoo, Finland