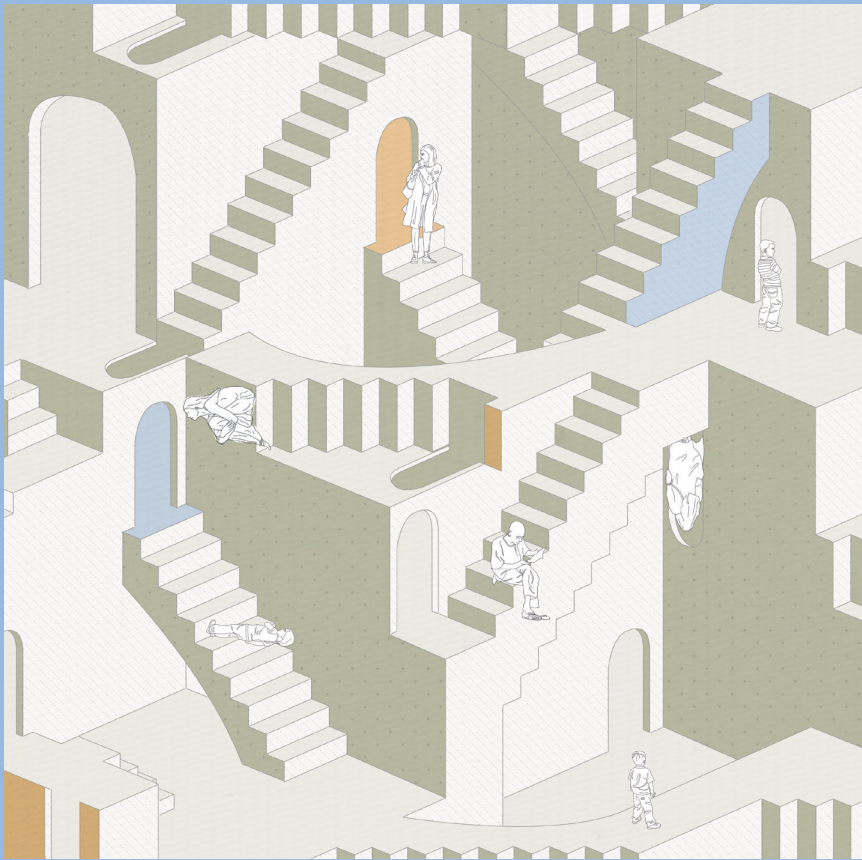


# AGE SEGREGATION



An explorative discussion - manifesto-  
about the role of architecture as a tool of  
age integration

Degree Project in Architecture

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per Nonna

## Thank you

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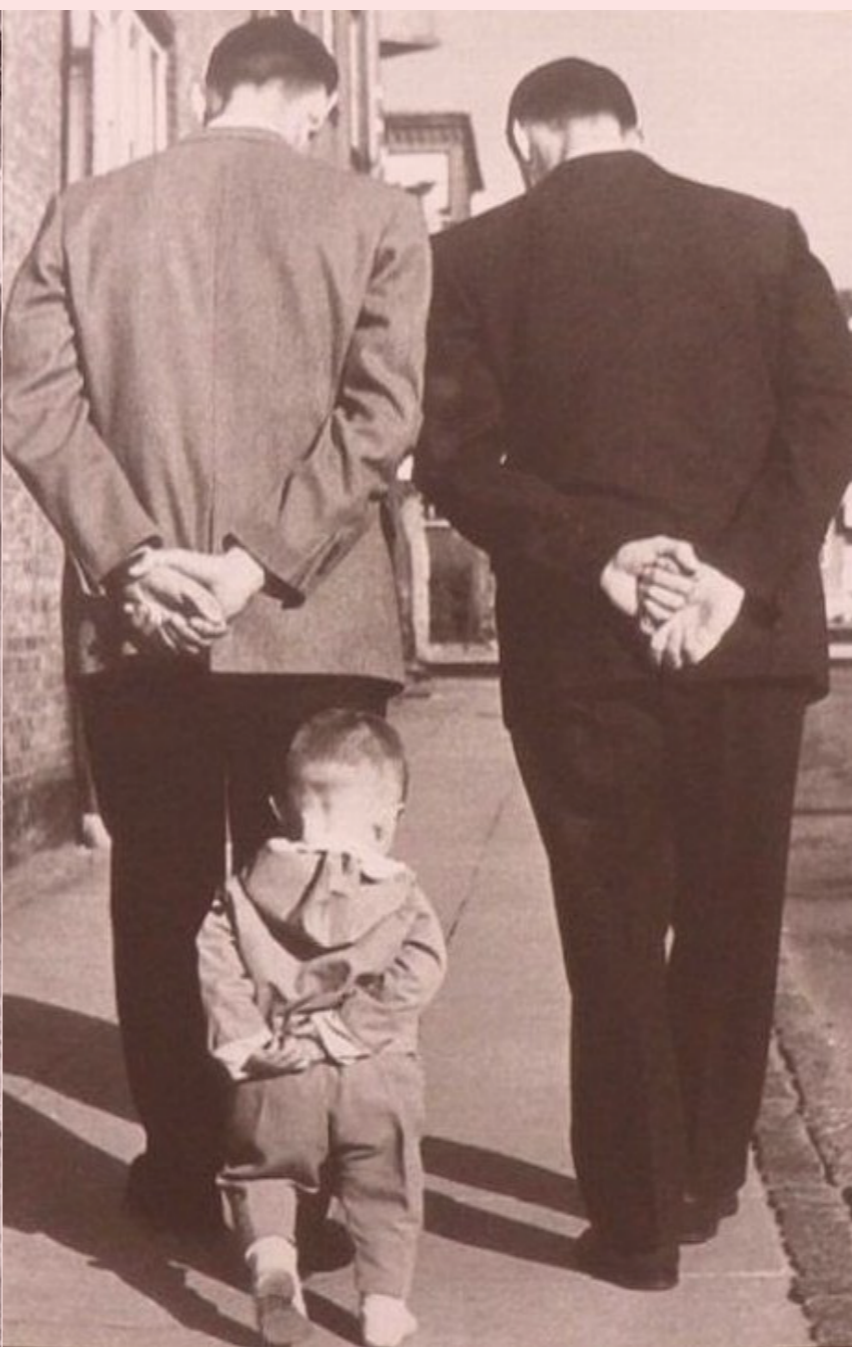
My boyfriend, Patrik who interrupted my Zoom calls and made this pandemic much better.

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## Abstract

This thesis takes upon the explorative discussion of the role of architecture as a tool of age integration, which means this is a manifesto appealing to the architectural discourse. The thesis started off with the goal to design a facility that is age inclusive, but after conducting research and discovering different places that work with this concept, my aim has shifted. This aim has been readdressed to the architectural discourse in general, creating a manifesto. We cannot longer only plan age integrated islands in the city, but we have to work with a holistic approach and see the city as one unit, where age integration is always an ingredient in the planning. By introducing the methodology of storytelling, an alternative to the strict theoretical approach is formed.

The first part of the thesis consists in an exploration of the themes of age and its societal implications. Taking a closer look at how different architects tried to tackle the thematic and different interviews. The second part establishes a discourse based on the three entities Body, Mind and Space and the relations they create. By introducing different notions and their relations to architecture, a dialogue is created that formulates questions and gives possible answers. The aim is to give different causes for thought related to the own relation to age and ageism and how barriers can be minimised in the future. Age integration should be a present criterion in planning, and we have to consciously add it to architecture.



## Introduction

### What is age?

For being a society that improves its life quality so much that the life expectancy increases, is our relation to other generations quite unbalanced. Age is a major factor that decides in our lives if we should be in school, work or have reached the point of retirement. This demographic factor, which has been introduced to us not even 300 years ago, defines and separates us in a quite dramatic way, not only mentally but also spatially, giving each age group specific buildings. Why is ageism such a diffused discrimination and why does it create age segregation?

Naturally we grow older and will change in the course of our life our spot in society. We start off as children, become teenagers, grow eventually adult and at some point we will be part of the elderly. If the course of time cannot be changed, why do we have this strong feeling of separation between us and another age group? We have been, or will eventually, live through all the phases, so can we act in our own interest and create an age integrated society with the help of architecture?

## Process

### Workflow

Since this thesis is an explorative discussion about the role of architecture as a tool of age integration, does the initial part consist in a collection of knowledge about the theme of age, ageism and age segregation. Additionally, I conducted some interviews and explored the realm of age integrated design. This creates the base for the further development of the thesis.

The next phase consists in the investigation of the themes of body, space and mind and additional theories about those three entities. They create the base for my own observations.

The last section consists in a discussion about the themes of body, space and mind and how they relate to each other. Through the relations and notions, a storytelling is created, that wants to pose questions and possible answers, where the reader starts to confront their own thoughts and opinions.

The goal is therefore to create a manifesto on the awareness of age in our society and in the architectural discussion, to have age integration as a constant factor that has to be respected when building.



## Methodology

### Call for a new approach

The methodology of this thesis is characterised by being an in between. By not being a strict theoretical, nor a design based thesis, an alternative method is being used, storytelling, which forms this thesis to be a manifesto. The associate professor Janina Gosseye from the university of Delft, called for this new way of conducting research, in order to create a narrated architecture, which is relying on personal experiences and connections to the architecture realm.

I created this journey around the theme, developing my own thoughts after conducting research about age and its role in society. I therefore created a lexicon with relations, notions and subcategories,

to give the storytelling a structure and let the reader follow the journey. By having a personal approach to the theme, the reader can create their own thoughts about it and place their own opinions to the theme. The value of this methodology lies exactly on this approach – anyone can form their thoughts about the role they would like age to have in society and how that possibility can change.

Any experience is valid and can help in creating a richer discussion about age and architecture. Through this methodology a manifesto has been developed calling for a new approach to age integration when creating architecture.



## The development of differentiation of age

When introducing themselves, kids will often say their age and ask about their opposite's age. They do it in order to understand how much they have in common with the other person, but also to classify themselves in the age structure. Age has a major importance in our society and is one of the major demographic factors to define different groups of population. It is a rather obvious factor that can be estimated by looking at someone. According to our age we have a different role in society. We are expected to go to school as children, then later on as adults to work and as elderly our life consists mostly of leisure, the activities in our lifetime are defined and any alteration is seen as uncommon.

Age is taken as such a given factor, that we do never wonder how this construct became so relevant.

Before we even start talking about the creation of the conventional term age we have to differentiate the multiple ways of defining age. The term age that we use in our everyday life refers to the chronological age and tells us how many years one person has lived (Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2005). Another quite obvious way is to describe the biological age, which refers to the signs of age of the body, for example white hair and wrinkles indicating a higher age than a new born (Lewinter, 2008). Psychological age measures a person's mental maturity, while social age describes the behaviour in relation to society, for instance is the person married or are they working (Frisk & Frisk, 2016). These are just some of the possible classifications of age and the following discussion will focus on the general terminology of age and its perception in society.

Age differentiation is in fact a rather modern phenomenon in the global North. Before the 19th century age had less of importance in our society, since it was not a determining factor socially and legally. With the start of the industrialisation, bureaucratisation and the beginning of mass education, the role of age grew in importance (Dannefer & Feldman, 2017). In the pre-industrial society, where most of the work took place in the agricultural field, did children count as labour power and were inserted in the economic circle as soon as they were physically strong enough. By the age of seven they did have full adult responsibilities (Chudacoff, 1989).

Retirement did not exist and therefore did elderly work as long as they were able to do so. We could say that people were distinguished by if they were of a functioning age or not. By functioning age, we classify a person by evaluating how they performed physically and psychologically. This age is not related to chronological factors. A person who could not work anymore or provide for themselves was simply seen as old (Andersson, 2008).

Since death was common in any life phase, were elderly seen as especially enduring considering that they were able to overcome different difficult phases in the course of a lifetime. Additionally, were they appreciated for all their accumulated knowledge and experience in the field of expertise (Dannefer & Feldman, 2017). Chronological age was not of interest for many societies and birth dates were rather approximations of phases in a lifetime (Andersson, 2008).

how old are you?





The change started with the industrial revolution when society shifted from a rather familiar working setting to a factory one. Women and children, who before had an important role in the domestic economy, were marginalised from earnings. Adult men were seen as most valuable to do a job and therefore to get paid, since they had the most physical strength. They got the role of family provider (Bernard, 1981).

Since women and children became marginalised in the economical realm and experienced uncertainty also in their identity, did the domestic sphere change. Studies have been conducted about the role of women in New England in the 19th century and a paradigm shift was noticeable. Women took now the role of nurturing children and focusing on the household (Cott, 1977). Women started to focus on the new needs of children, since the youth did not have any responsibilities anymore and could “be kids” – as the modern word would implicate that today (Cott, 1977).

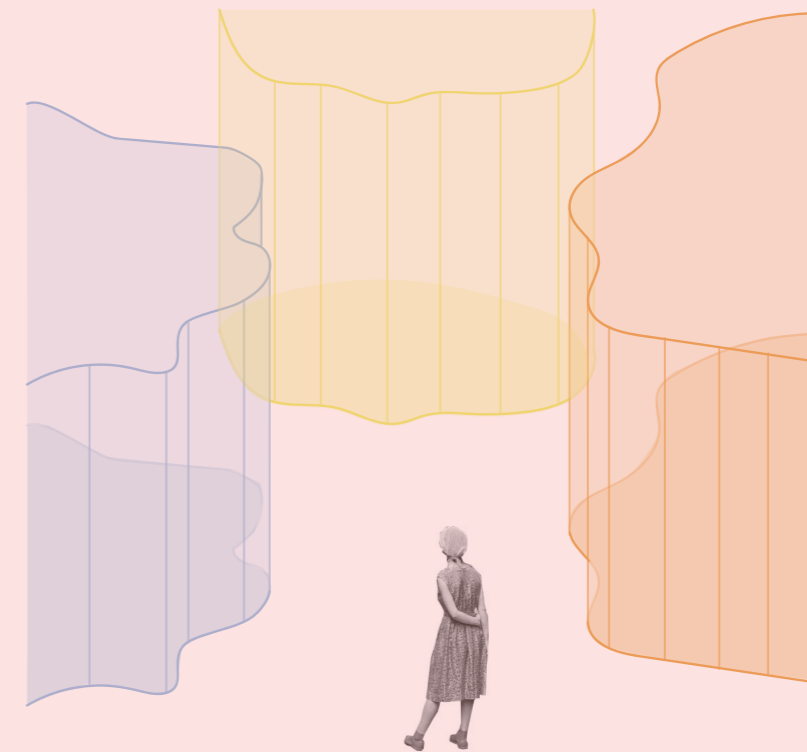
Compulsory mass education, which was introduced at the end of the 19th century, created a new institution, which was reserved for the young generation. Schools and in general the realm of education belonged to children and youth, while adults were expected to work in manufactories and factories. It was also partly created as a response to social

disorder created by the industrialisation (Kett, 1977). Since children did not have an occupation, a new order was created and society could take the role of main educator.

Also elderly were not exempted from this new separation of society. With the introduction of structured work and efficiency being a major factor determining if someone should get a salary, were elder excluded from this reality. The category of elderly and later pensioners was created.

Age was now of importance. Soon were kids also separated in the school environment, mostly not because of educational reasons, but rather economical ones. Women were preferred to be hired as teachers since they could be paid less, but just till a certain point. As soon as boys would grow and become physically stronger than female teachers, male teachers were required to be able to “tame” them (Dannefer & Feldman, 2017). With this additional separation, a new life stage was discovered – adolescence, which was defined between the age of 14 and 24 (Hall, 1904) and explained why the new generation felt anxious about shifting from the traditional family business to modern occupations (Dannefer, 1984). Since adolescents did not belong to the realm of children, nor to the one of adults, did they not have a fixed role in society and seen as lazy and not understood.

With this new organisation of society, we see that the importance of age grew over time. We have now different life phases such as childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age, each life phase marked by different factors and characteristics. Society introduced age specific buildings and created new typologies, which were mostly separated by age. Schools, educational buildings, workplaces and retirement homes were some of the newly introduced categories and created differences in society based purely on when someone was born. With the introduction of these new phases, additional differences appeared as well. A base of a “we and them” thinking was created and fortified certain trades to specific ages. Stereotypical thinking emerged in the relation to age and further on created specific ageism.



## When stereotypes create discrimination – ageism and age segregation

The word and phenomenon of ageism has been defined in the 20th century as other forms of discrimination such as racism and sexism. The first time this term has been used was 1968 by the American psychiatrist Robert Butler in an interview and later in his lectures. He described the term as “prejudice by one age group against other age groups” (Butler, 1969). He mostly focused on the institutional discrimination and prejudicial attitudes against elderly, while in more recent years the definition was expanded to a general discrimination towards all age groups (Levy & Banaji, 2002). This can include for instance the prejudice towards teenagers. These prejudices create an accepted standard, that does not necessarily have to be discriminatory, but consequently can lead to stereotypes (Andersson, 2008). Stereotypes are cognitive structures, so a systematic way of thinking, which store our impressions and expectations of people of different social groups. (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002). On one side they help us to group certain characteristics to certain people and follow an easy structure of organisation for our brain, but on the other side they also create a pigeon-hole thinking, where it is hard to break out from these categories. Ageism can therefore be found in any age group thinking of another one. Common misconceptions such as older people being stubborn against new technologies, or youth being lazy because they do not find a job, create tension in society and a distancing from other generations.

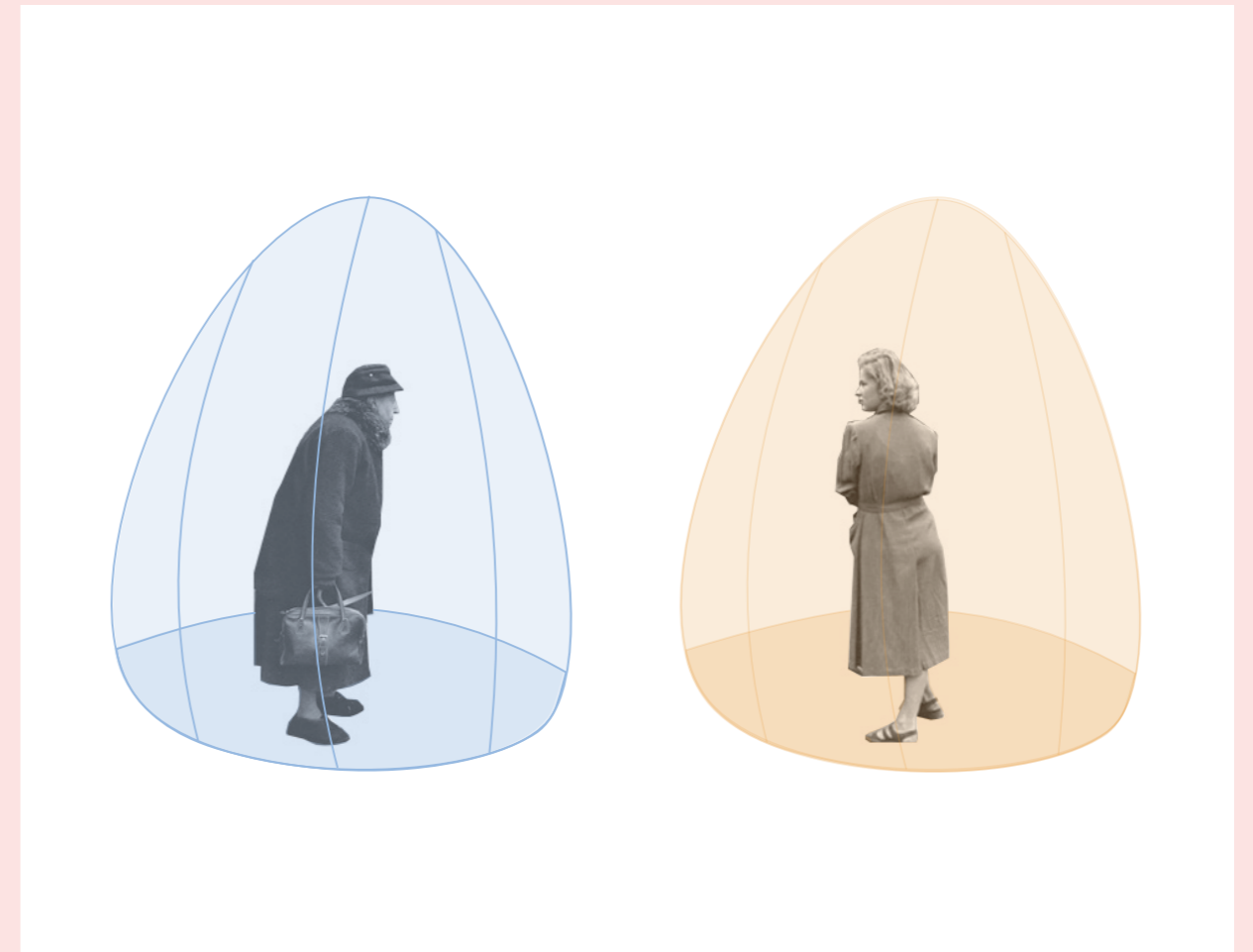
Additional problems are created in the built environment when architects and designers merely work with these

seemingly constant stereotypes to create spaces for specific age groups (Frisk & Frisk, 2016). With no direct contact and knowledge exchange with the interested age groups, we create with good intentions spaces that are not suitable for their needs and wishes.

With the creation of ageism this phenomenon expands in multiple areas of society and leads to political and administrative decisions that can have a negative impact on the well-being of certain age groups. It also creates explicit laws, rules and regulations of resources that favour such harming behaviour (Butler, 1980).

With a negative connotation towards a certain age, the exchange between different ages becomes more sporadic. The thought of a teenager, that they do not have anything in common with an old person is understandable, if there is no contact with them. A creation of a more distant society does not only create a mental barrier but also a special separation. Ageism creates as consequence and as antecedent age segregation (Coleman, 1982).

We can notice how distinctive age segregation is, when we analyse the age-composition of the social network of a person. How many individuals in the social network are actually of a different age group compared to the own one? The more various the network, the more likely it is to have an age integrated person. It is crucial to have personal contact with other generations, to be able to exchange thoughts, opinions and new information and be integrated in society (Uhlenberg & Gierveld, 2004).



Not only factual information gets exchanged, but also social, emotional and interpersonal ways of thinking can be transmitted. Additional invitations to other social activities and organisations can happen, so that personal bonds will have more possibilities to develop (Marsden, 1988).

If no social contact is created between different age groups, we will create a division in people, since they will not understand the way of thinking of the other. Older people then get described as “alien” and old age forms a “separate country” (Smith, 1995). This separation and creation of otherness between generations also does not allow a discovery of common interest and a possible similar ways of thinking, that could create the base of a lasting social connection (Dannefer & Feldman, 2017). Obviously is age homogamy also favourable to feel understood in a context of like-minded people, but we should not forget that variety is the key for a balanced society. If we are open-minded to others we can expand our horizon and gain additional knowledge, which otherwise will probably not be transmitted.

Especially non-kin (non-familiar) connections have a positive connotation for the different generations, since there is no familiar pressure having to maintain the relation (Beam, et al., 2002). Such connections are especially created when institutionalised age segregation gets minimised.

Institutionalised age segregation is created when “the principles and norms that define a social institution include chronological age as an eligibility criterion for participation” (Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2006). Hereby are children focused in schools and education, with just age homogamous relations during their day. Adults spend most of their day in the work realm, which is not accessible for kids and elderly. And again elderly have limited opportunities to be in educational spaces and work, they rather should just live a retired life in leisure (Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2006). While it certainly can be of advantage to create targeted plans adapted to a specific age, often these needs are assumed from an ageist perspective rather than from personal knowledge about what certain age groups enjoy.

An additional age segregation is the one focused on culture. Some of the biggest factors that create this culture related segregation are language, fashion, food and music. These can be fortified by society by recurring to marketing and showing what is adequate for a certain age (Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2006). This cultural age segregation is less visible in the queer community, where it is more common for waster age groups to stick together as one community. Through that important knowledge is passed on and a greater respect is created between generations (Vanderbeck, 2007).

The last but nevertheless important segregation for this thesis is spatial segregation by age. It occurs when different spaces cannot be occupied at the same time by different generations. It can also be that certain areas in the city are partially or fully reserved for just one generation and the entering of other generations is tried to be avoided. Some of the most common and obvious spatial age segregated buildings are schools, kindergartens, universities and workplaces. But also intentionally age homogeneous housing such as nursing homes, assisted living facilities, student dormitories and elderly homes are quite common in our society (Hagestad & Uhlenberg, 2006).

We could talk about “islands” that create territories, in which certain age groups will spend their time. The other generations do not know how the island of the other person looks and will have a more abstract picture of it (Ariès, 1977). When we ask a child if they know how the island of their parents look like, in this case work, they will not be able to give a defined answer, since they do not know either what adults do at work, nor how that space looks like.

Ageism and age segregation create a vicious circle, that can just be broken by trying to eliminate the separation and create social networks between generations.





## Age integration – co-living of different generations in different countries

Integration can be achieved by creating knowledge, to be able to eliminate false prejudices and assumptions (Allport, 1954). The same theory also relates to the realm of age segregation. While one theory is to create generational knowledge through education, that aims directly to reduce ageism, there is a general preference in creating “sustained familiarity” (Pettigrew, 1998). The more contact one person has with a different generation, the likelier they are to build a personal connection and therefore a stable picture of how a different generation lives and what knowledge they can transmit to them. The contact is not immediate and therefore it needs time, but also the necessary spaces to be able to create these connections.

Some of the most common intergenerational connections are kin connections, where family members of different ages have frequent contact with each other. The fact of being related creates already a common ground and therefore a first contact in creating a bridge between generations. Even if the relation to elderly family members is different in the world, they still create the most common intergenerational connection (Uhlenberg & Gierveld, 2004). The care for different generations and especially elderly depends on many factors such as culture and context. It is therefore understandable that different countries have a different approach to intergenerational connections and care. Especially in southern and central Europe, where the states support children taking

care of their elderly parents, is elderly care a matter of the family (Feddersen & Lüdtkke, 2011). As a result of this connection between the family, do older generations help with child-care, since they do not have any work related obligations and have spare time. This intergenerational bond between grandparents and grandchildren allows a natural keeping up with current technologies from sides of the elderly and a pass on of knowledge for the younger generations (Caspi, 1984). In northern Europe it is more common for trained personnel to take care of elderly. The state tries to provide professional home care services. This system allows to create small scale networking of home care services that are embedded in the urban environment. The combination of good infrastructure, social meeting points, services, public transport and shopping opportunities in the area are consciously created to minimise age segregation (Feddersen & Lüdtkke, 2011).

Countries which have a traditionally strong connection and respect of the elderly such as in Africa have to fight the disintegration of family support networks. With the movement of younger generations in the bigger cities, where more work opportunities are, do many elderly stay in the rural areas and do not have the social security that historically has been always provided. It therefore happens that elderly have to work even after their pensioning age to be able to support themselves (Feddersen & Lüdtkke, 2011).



Research and data allows us to obtain a good picture of living situations of elderly, but I wanted to gain additional knowledge by getting first-hand information. I interviewed three elderly women living in three different housing situations. The scope of these interviews was to get a life perspective of elderly and also understand what possible needs are. While talking to these women I also understood what age actually represents. It is an accumulation of knowledge gained over the arch time, taking different decisions, but always learning from those experiences. It is fully understandable why previous in history the connection to elderly was so important since storytelling and oral preservation of knowledge was crucial to survive in the future.





Martina, 95 years, Kärnten, Austria (phone call)

“I live in my apartment since 60 years, on the ground floor we had a photo studio and we were on the first floor. 11 years ago my husband died, but that did not stop me from continuing living here, even though now alone. I understood that I put a lot of energy into my husband and kids and I cared for me as last. But that changed now!

My daughter once asked me if I would like to live closer to her in another apartment. But I refused! I do not want to change my habits now. I know where everything is in my home and in my town. Everyone knows me and calls me Aunt Martina, since I led the kindergarten for 33 years and I “educated” almost everyone here.

If the neighbours could, they would cook for me every day, but I do not want that. I want to cook, clean and do everything else for myself, too. Maybe I am slower now, but for sure I am more accurate at cleaning since I have not a hurry while moving the vacuum cleaner. I think the key for becoming old is to stay active: reading, following the current politics and doing chores such as going groceries shopping keep my thoughts fresh and my mind busy.

Obviously you have to adapt to your age. My grandkids told me, that I am not allowed to clean the windows anymore. If I could then I would be up that ladder! I noticed that my eyes went worse and my hearing, too. But with some help such as a magnifying glass, good lighting and headphones I can be almost as good as when I was younger. The only thing I cannot do anymore is sewing and doing handcraft. I simply do not see the little details, but that is okay. I managed to sew many toys in my life and give them away. So I know that someone appreciates them and thinks of me.

Since most of my friends are in

the graveyard now and I cannot meet them up, I like to call my other friends that live further away. My best friend for 70 years lives in Italy, but that does not stop us from catching up once a month.

I am not mobile anymore, since I cannot walk for too long and somehow the city planners forgot all the benches and nice walking paths in my town. Therefore, I sometimes need help from my grandchildren, which drive me to stores that are further away or to get heavier groceries. I would also enjoy more meeting points in the city, since I do not like going to a café by myself.

But otherwise I really enjoy movement and I have no problem climbing up the stairs or going hiking.

Everyone tells me that my living room is cosy and welcoming and I enjoy when people come and visit me. But if I could change something, then I would like to have a balcony to be outside even now during Corona. I would also like some space in the kitchen for a small table, so that I can eat smaller meals there, instead of going in the living room.

Some years ago I renovated my bathroom, but I wanted to keep the bathtub. I placed a chair in there so that, I can sit while I shower and have a foot bath at the same time.

I would not like to live in an elderly home. In general, I would not like to live with someone else. Not elder or younger people. I want to stay right where I am. My impression of people living in an elderly home is their loss of independence. I feel like since they do not have to do anything to support themselves, they switch off their brain, too. I do not enjoy talking to elderly, who just complain about their aches and pains. I mean everyone, me included, have their bags to carry, but you cannot annoy everyone else with those things. You should not let the negativity and loneliness get to you and rather brighten your day through positive thoughts. Two of my good friends from

many years live alone, too.

Each one with their own system. My Italian friend lives in Bergamo in a city house on the last floor. Some years ago she wanted an elevator in her building, but no one else in the house wanted to pay for it. So she decided to pay it herself, with the financial help of the government. She is now the only one that uses the elevator and during Covid, her family puts the groceries in there and she picks them up on her floor. Normally a lady comes to her twice a week to clean the house, but now she does it herself.

My other good friend lives in a village close to mine. She is a bit younger than me and still drives her car. Through that she is able to do most of the daily tasks herself. She just does not cook, since she never did that in her life. Her husband was a chef and always did that for her. Now her daughter has to take care of that every day."

"My impression of people living in an elderly home is the loss of independence. I feel like, since they do not have to do anything to support themselves, they switch off their brain, too."



Antonietta, 89 years, South Tyrol, Italy (interview)

"60 years ago I moved to this region with my husband. Since then we moved a couple of times and now I live next to my son. We share a balcony and my grandchildren can easily visit me anytime. I enjoy cooking lunch for them and spend some time together in the afternoon.

My apartment is on the third floor but luckily we have an

elevator in the house. Otherwise it would be impossible for me to get downstairs, since I have some issues with my knees. Some years ago I got a walking aid. At the beginning I was very much against it, because just old people use it, but now I understand that it can be quite helpful.

When my husband was alive he did all the groceries shopping

and went to the city to get the necessary, but now that I am alone, my daughter does most of these things for me. The Italian state subsidises this and allows her to take off 5 hours per week but still pays her, so that she can help me. Through that I do not have to employ a stranger but rather my daughter earns something through the help she would provide to me anyways.

I really enjoy that I have a balcony and a lot of windows in my apartment. This allows me even in these quarantine times to have a connection with the outdoors. I like flowers and plants and therefore it is great to have some outdoor space to have a connection to nature.

I have a spacious living room, where I read, watch TV, do handcraft and where family members and friends can be invited. I think it is important to have a lot of contact with other people. Either they visit me or I call them, especially for festivities and birthdays.

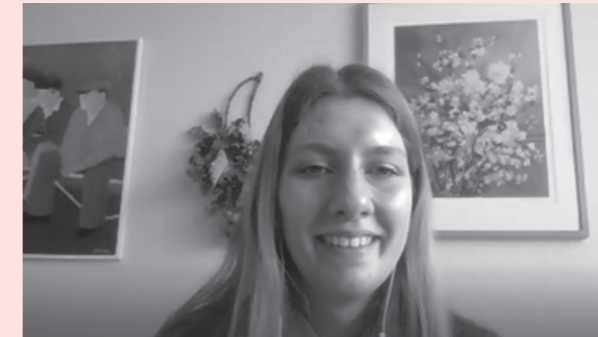
Since I grew up in the South of Italy and girls were not allowed to go outdoors by themselves, I still prefer being accompanied when going to town or in a café. When I was young I spent a lot of time with my grandmother.

I think the connection to younger people nowadays did not change, but they often live far away, in order to find a job.

I still clean my apartment and cook for myself, but for bigger things I ask my children. I could not imagine living in an elderly home or with other elderly people, but I could with younger generations. They bring joy, light-heartedness and energy when I talk to them. If I would live together with other people I would prefer to have my own room to have some privacy and then a shared living room, to spend time together to talk or watch old movies.

I do not enjoy spending too much time alone, my cat is therefore quite helpful in keeping my mind busy. Every day my children and grandchildren come and visit me and I am very connected to them.

Most of my friends live in their own apartment, too. They get help either by their children or by a caregiver, which comes two to three times a week. Elderly homes do not have the best reputation in my opinion, since you are far from your family and they treat you in quite an impersonal way."



Mrs. Lehmann, 87 years, Vienna, Austria (zoom call)

"I live in an elderly residence in the centre of Vienna. I really like it here, since it is so well connected to the rest of the city. There is a tram line close by and if I want to go for a longer walk I can go directly to the city centre. We have a supermarket right in front of the building and many smaller stores, too. I grew up here in Vienna, but since my husband was

an engineer, we moved to the Netherlands, where he worked for a large airplane manufacturer. When he retired, we thought about where we should live and decided that we wanted to have a little house in the idyllic Austrian countryside and one small apartment in Amsterdam. We had a nice balance and travelled between the countries. As my husband

died, I had to decide where I wanted to live. I had many friends in the Netherlands, but since I was the youngest I did not want to fear that everyone would be gone. My children live in the Netherlands too, and to keep my independence and not bother them, I decided to move to this elderly home in Vienna. The building was born as a cartographical institute and when it was not needed anymore they transformed it partly into apartments, but also a medical centre, a kindergarten and our elderly home. The size of the apartments varies and everyone can choose how big of a living space they need. We have a restaurant in the building and a cleaning lady comes and tidies up the rooms. That saves me time, which I can dedicate to other things that I enjoy. Additionally, we have a team of doctors, physiotherapists, psychologists and massage therapists that are here to help us. I also chose this residence, because we have an intergenerational program. We elderly go to the kindergarten and read stories for the younger ones. Everyone really enjoys

this time. We also have two students that live with us. They help us for example with our technical issues or go with us to the theatre. It is really great to have them here and they are a wonderful addition to our living situation, since we all learn from each other. We have some gathering rooms such as the library and the seminar room, additionally to the restaurant and the terrace. Each week in the library there is a little knitting round, where you can find all the gossip. One of our students gives us small technology lessons there, too. During this quarantine we used the seminar room as our private cinema, which was great. Each of the apartments has a small kitchen, which I separated a bit from the living room, so that I do not feel like I am sitting in the kitchen the whole time. Otherwise we could furnish the rooms ourselves and I really enjoyed putting modern Bauhaus elements in this Gründerzeit house. I tried to create islands of functions to divide the space, but still keep it open. I like to spend time in my home and read books in different

languages to not forget them or listen to classical music. But I also enjoy going to the theatre, exhibitions, swimming, skiing and traveling. I do not feel ashamed to do that alone. It took me some time to go to the cinema all by myself and even though my husband laughed at me, I did it. You cannot wait for someone else to have the mercy to do something with you! When you become older you understand the value of life and that you should not waste your time, rather be conscious and enjoy it to the fullest. I sometimes think that elderly are disadvantaged in our society, because they did not grow up with technology. My husband and I owned the very first personal computer and I

have tried to keep up with the newest technology ever since. I skype with my family, have online banking and sign myself up for online guided tours. And with some help I can do all the other things, too. The green-red administration in Vienna really helped to improve life in the city. We have a lot of green islands, great public transport and big pedestrian areas. The other inhabitants of the residence have also an international background and it is therefore easy to find similarities or common interests, which, in my opinion, are an important key factor for living together and harmonizing."

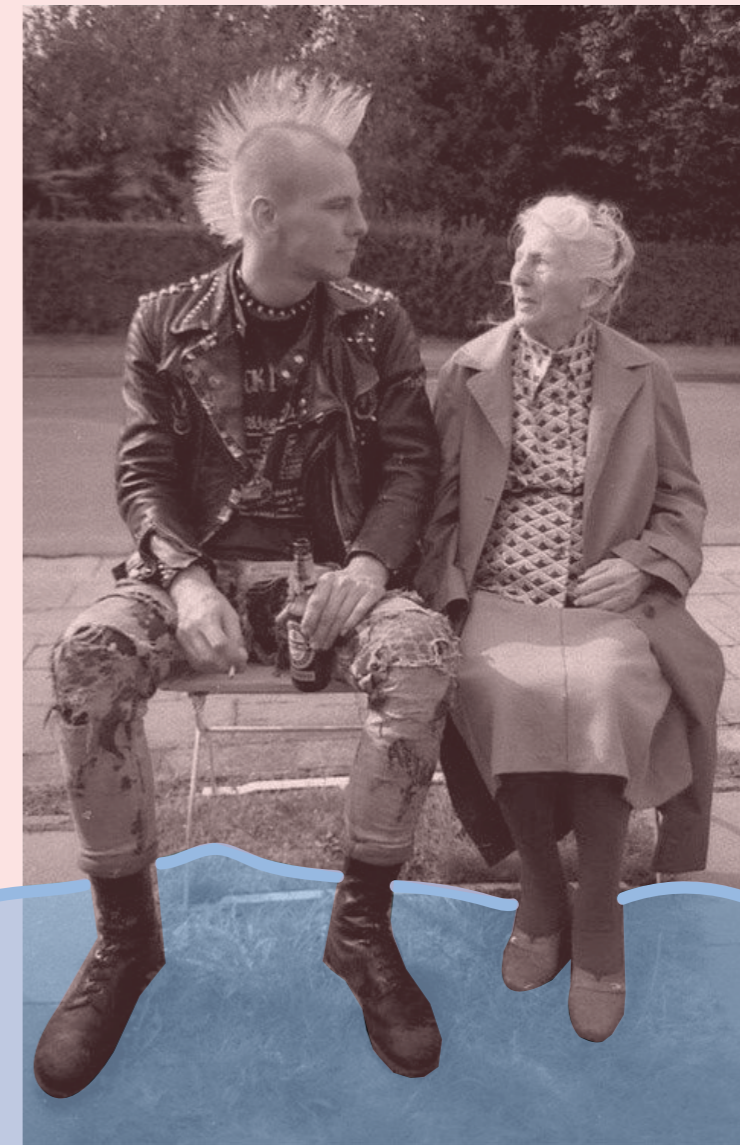
The experience of these three women show us that age integration is possible, but also very relying on the fact if kin-connections are available. Through the interviews I found myself the opportunity to create new relations and even friendships, through the connection of minds.

## How can we create spatial age integration?

Spatial proximity is a crucial factor to create spatial age integration. It creates a sense of belonging, rather than isolation and alienation (Hassell, 2019). A well age integrated urban space can allow a peaceful coexistence and shared space between different generations (Frisk & Frisk, 2016). The creation of multiple simultaneous territories, allows that everyone can find a space in the public space that can be appropriated by them. Additionally, can it be a solution to add in the islands of certain age groups another age group. This could for example happen by creating child zones in workplaces, so that parents can bring their children to work and they will have a concrete picture of the workplace of their parents (Frisk & Frisk, 2016).

A goal should be in general to design for multiple age groups from the beginning, so that a natural exchange and contact could happen.

Certainly can spatial connections achieve a certain amount of proximity, but additional factors have to be added. As Jan Gehl explained, there are different levels of public encounters with different degrees of intensity, these are Close Friendship, Friendship, Acquaintance, Change Contact and Passive Contacts (Gehl, 2006). Depending on what grade of connection we want to achieve in a certain space, we have to give different support systems. While more shallow connections can be created by shared spaces, other deeper connections have to be subsidised. Social factors and organised activities can help for that. Volunteering, church, courses or sport can be such connecting activities, that do not require a certain age to be able to participate (Uhlenberg & Gierveld, 2004). By creating a common activity, we are spatially closer and specific spaces for the activities should be created. Through constant meetings and regular exchange, we can minimise ageism and favour intergenerational connections.



## Successful age integrated designs

### Kotoen age integrated facility, Tokyo

Japan's first age integrated complex is Kotoen, a combination between housing and additional services for elderly and a nursery for children under 5 years. The philosophy of the structure is to create fureai between the generations, which can be translated as "coming in contact" and "implies spontaneous interactions involving feelings and emotions" (Thang, 2011). The elderly residents fill in the role of honorary grandparents, to allow them to still have a connection to younger generations, even though they do not

have their own grandchildren. The youth also profits from this connection by having early on a contact to this very different generation. Connecting activities are exercises together in the morning, participations to festivals and celebration and assisting the young ones in preparing for nap time (Thang, 2011). While the connections are very planned by the employers of the home, the connections are not created in an organic and spontaneous manner. Nevertheless, this connection can create confidentiality.







## Urban nursing home Sølund, Copenhagen

The urban nursing home Sølund in Copenhagen is the winning project for the Nørrebro area. This project has a more urban approach, to create a multi-generational area in the city. The urban block consists of 360 nursing home units, 150 homes for young people and 20 homes for senior citizens (C.F. Møller Architects, 2016) Additionally, we can find a day-care centre, shops, cafés and workshops in the block. The focus has also been put on the outdoor, by creating attractive seating

and urban meeting points in the centre of the block and by creating a connection between the generational housing. More public functions are placed towards the street side, while more semi-public functions are facing inside of the square (C.F. Møller Architects, 2016). While we will see how the project will develop in the future, the interconnectivity towards the inhabitants and the city area seems promising and creates a pluriverse itself in the city.



## Project Kampung Admiralty, Singapore

Many urban planners and architects follow the concept of pluriverse, which tries to combine multiple factors in a design and putting the focus on the experience for the user (Escobar, 2018). The project Kampung Admiralty in Singapore tries to create an urban mix with different facilities in the building. The lower layer consists of a public plaza, which creates a meeting point for the inhabitants of the area, a medical centre in the middle layer and on the upper layer a community park and studio apartments for elderly. On the lowest floor we find additional commercial activities, such as shops, cafés and restaurants, but also

the possibility to organise events such as concerts and festivals, to attract users to the building. In the community park we find small scale community farming, possibilities to exercise, seating areas and a children's playground. The apartments are clustered in households creating a village feeling in the bigger complex. The housing units adopt the universal design approach and favour natural lighting and cross ventilation (WOHA, 2015). The project is often shown as a successful approach for designing a city block and is the model example for the future development of the city.



## Public Square Superkilen, Copenhagen

The last urban example that tries to propagate integration, not just age based, is the public square Superkilen in Copenhagen. The public square aims to connect different people and create territories, so that multiple diverse groups obtain a connection to each other and are able to understand and co-live with different people. The square, which has a collection of urban furniture from all over the world, allows also different aged users

to find their territory and appropriate the space, while having its border close to other age groups (Griffith, 2020). The creation and the planning itself has also been a combination of three firms, Big Architects, Topotek1 and Superflex, from the different fields of architecture, landscape architecture and art (Topotek1, 2012). It shows how different experts can create together one project, that is more specific and thoroughly planned.



These are just some examples in the world that work with age integration in an attempt to create a more inclusive environment in the city. We should try to aim for a planning that is conscious of its implication in multiple scales and tries to achieve integration and connectedness for its users.

## Why should we continue thinking about age integration?

Ageism and age segregation have been important subjects in our society for a long time. So why are these themes still of importance to us? We can argue that since our life quality improved, our life expectancy also went up. While this factor is pleasing, on the other side we have to be conscious of a new phenomenon – an ageing society.

A common trend in many industrialised countries is, that the number of children diminishes, while the number of elderly grows. The number of younger people is still higher but the percentage will change in the upcoming years. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs reports see a growing trend of older age in society. Globally the population aged 65 years and over is at 9,3% in 2020 while it is expected to grow around 16% by 2050 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020).

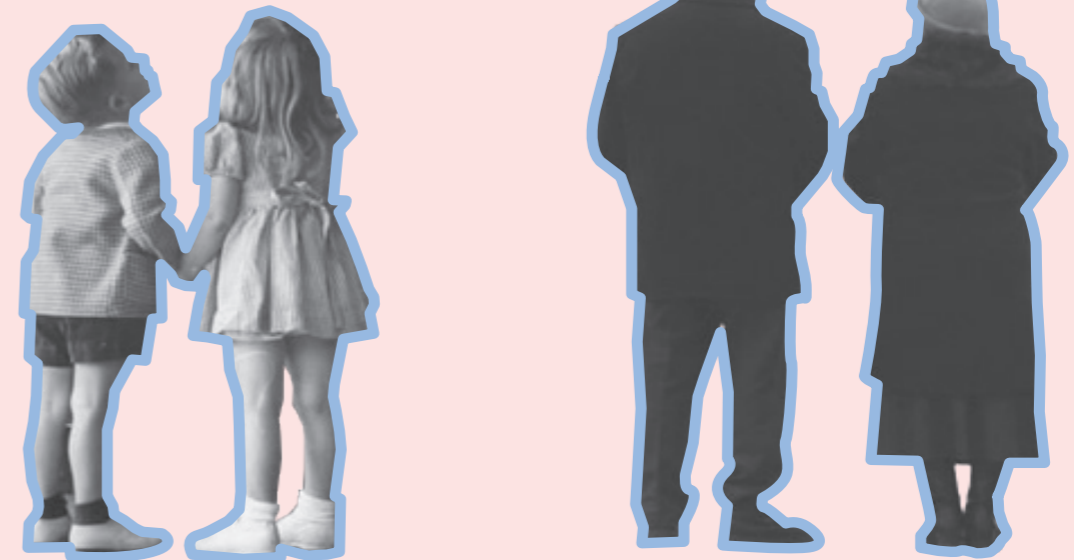
Factors such as “declines in fertility, changes in patterns of marriage, cohabitation and divorce, increased levels of education among younger generations, and continued rural-to-urban and international migration, in tandem with rapid economic development” shape our society and should make us think how we deal with age (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020).

Since age created loneliness, in the dense city and urban segregation, are expected outcomes of these shifts in society, we should think about what we want for our future. It is quite interesting to think that each of us will pass, in the course of a lifetime, all the different stages of youth, teenage, adulthood and older age, why do we then keep up these barriers between us?

By having age segregation in the presence, we will create segregation for us in the future. Time cannot be stopped. We therefore have to work with it and embrace the different stages of age in our life.

If we do not think of possible solutions on how to co-live with different generations, at some point there will be a majority of elderly, which all will feel alone and segregated from the newer generations, missing out on the presence and not allowing the youth to learn about the past and review previous mistakes.

We as architects have to create age appropriated design, that also includes the change that happens within us. The relation to space, our own body and our mind will shift over time, how can we translate that into the built environment?

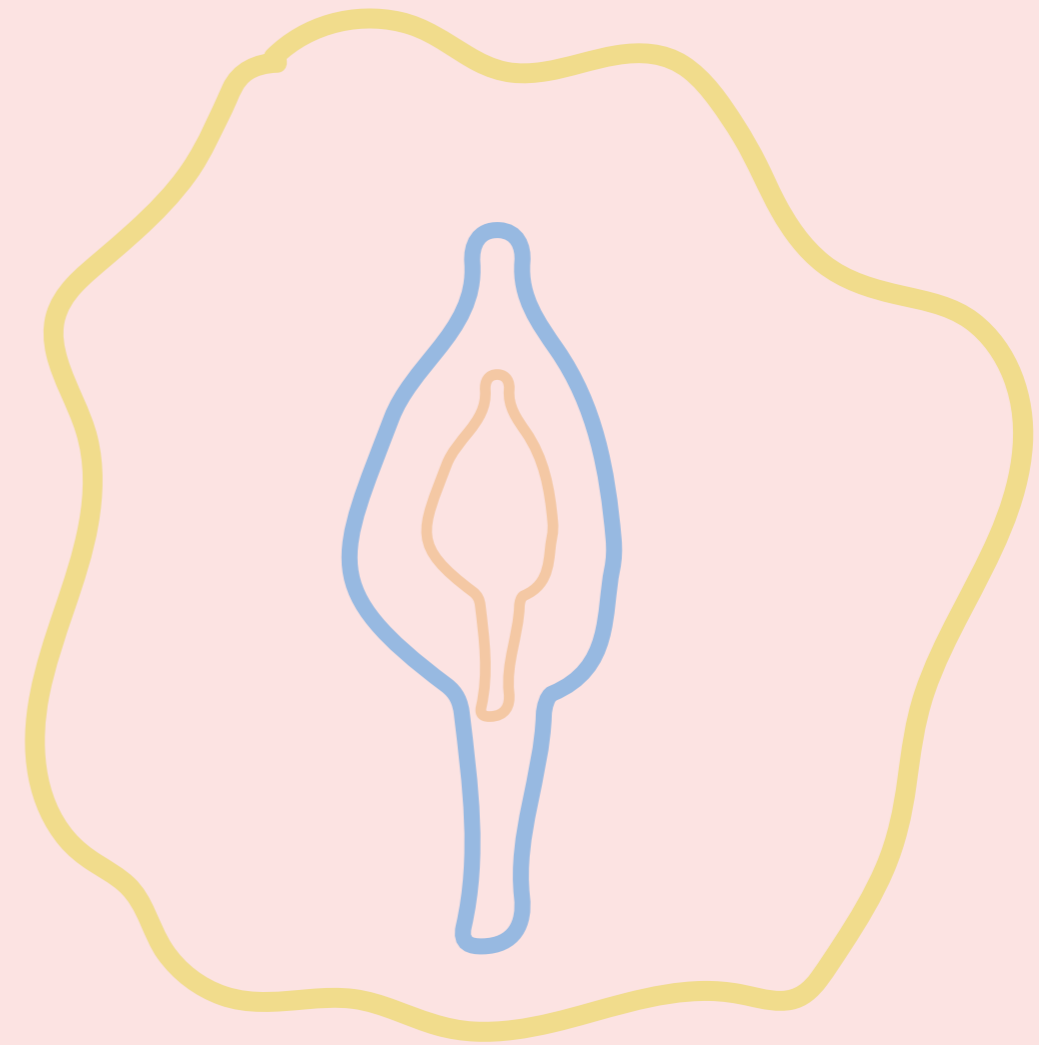




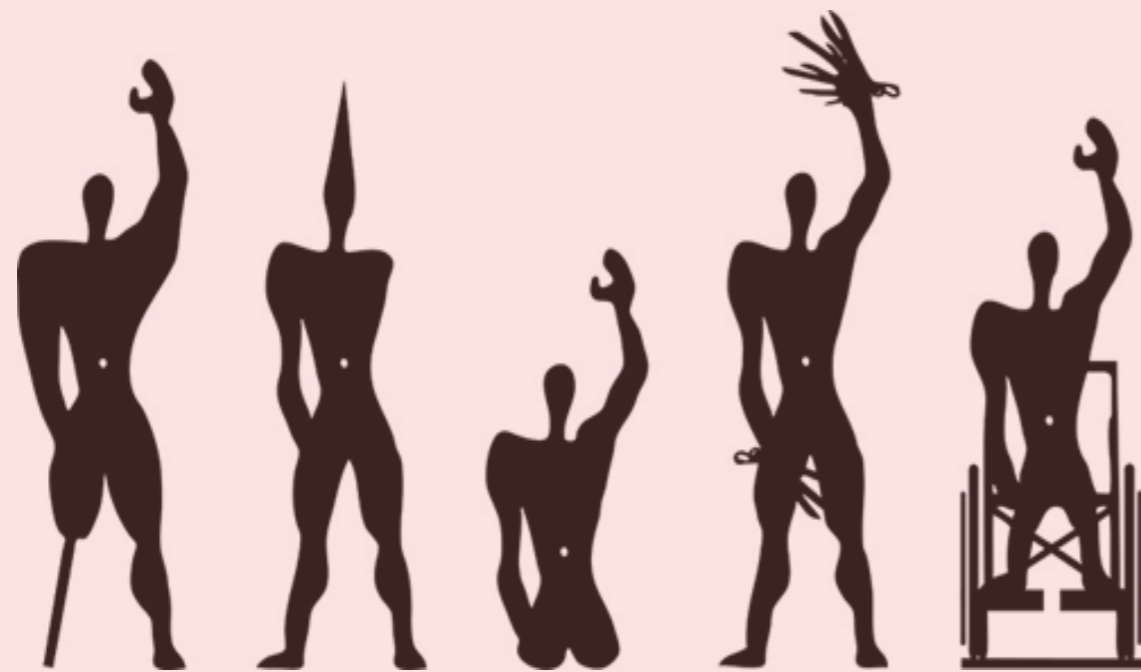
## Space, body and mind

Architects create space out of the full complexity of space. Our human interaction with space is an appropriation of it according to our needs (Lefebvre, 1985). So we appropriate certain space in the vastness of the whole available space and create an exterior and interior architectural space (Andersson, 2011). The exteriority is characterised by the tectonics and structural elements, while the interiority is created by the tectonics but holds the spatial qualities of the architecture (Cornell, 1996). Architecture can therefore be intangible, but perceivable, if we analyse it according to the interior space; and tangible and perceivable if we think of the exterior tectonics (Andersson, 2011). With this two definitions of space a third one is created, which is the perceived architectural space (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). These three forms of spaces combined create our perception of space and therefore our interaction with build space (Andersson, 2011). This also means that the perception of a certain space can change over time and is a combination of all the times we have perceived the space. These memories, that create the space in our mind, are a combination of not only visual characteristics, but are perceived by all of our senses (Pallasmaa, 2008).

As Lefebvre states does the mind notice the mental space, the perceived space, but the body experiences the lived space, therefore is it important to consider both factors when designing (Lefebvre, 1985). As a result, can architecture be in the material but also in the concept (Moon, 2016). The different aspects of space are therefore important, when creating a space that should be inclusive and create a sense of belonging. Space can be inclusive in different aspects. It can allow certain groups of people to be there, but also be accessible for the users. Accessibility is connected to the body. Our body is our "shape", our exterior with which we explore our environment. It is the home for our mind and shapes our appearance (Grosz, 1992). It is altered by time and its strength changes over the course of our life. The body helps us to move and be in space and is our tool to explore space. With the help of all of our senses we are able to define our surrounding. If space is adapted to the body, it is accessible. If space is not adapted to the body, then the body becomes a cage for our mind and subordinated (Grosz, 1992). Especially when talking in the realm of age it is crucial to incorporate aspects of an ageing body when creating inclusive spaces.



## Architecture adapted to the body?



Architecture has been created by humans for their own needs, to create shelter and give protection from nature. It is therefore a premise, that architecture has to be accessible. We have to be able to enter in the protective architecture, to be able to gain profit from it. It is therefore quite unexpected, that architecture does not always fulfil this factor.

Architecture should be adapted to the human body and be of reasonable dimensions to be able to be habitable or usable.

Yes, architecture should be adapted to the body, but it should be especially for the body. This means that just looking at the bodies proportions and dimensions is not enough when designing architecture. Prominent example is The Modulor by architect Le Corbusier, which is a unity of measurement derived from the golden ration and the human body (Le Corbusier, 1953).

He decided to create a "standard" body, which was according to his perception a male body with the height of 1,75 cm. While it is already impossible to define a "standard" body, harder yet to derive all measurements for a project from it. The dimensions in Le Corbusier's buildings are hard to relate to any human body and he even deviated himself from the Modulor when the proportions did not please him (Kuhlmann, 2013). When planning we have therefore to include the human body as an entity, not just as a conglomerate of measurements, to be able to create liveable spaces, which we can enjoy.

## Diller and Scofidio – exploring body and space

But how can we architects explore the right relation between body and space? The architect duo Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio tried to explore in the 1980ies through objects, installations and performances this realm of architecture and art. They tried to understand what architecture can do, by discovering its power outside of the 2D representation of it and experiment with space as a physical, material and cultural construct (Moon, 2016).

Diller and Scofidio tried to work between the built architecture and the drawing to create architectural objects, which were in the scale of furniture to understand the relation of body and space (Diller + Scofidio, 1994). Their installed exhibitions wanted to show how the body is subjected to the objects and is also constructed by its environment (Sartre, 1943). They allowed the spectators to interact with the installations and become a part of them, to be able to grasp architecture. Through movement was it possible for the spectators to experience and read space as an extension of the human body and recognise it mentally and physically (Moon, 2016).

Goal of these exhibitions were also the understanding of belonging and appropriation. A continuous adjustment and appropriation wants to create architectural space into a personal space, which can create a home with deep emotional connections (Lefebvre, 1985).

Architecture can so be an amplifier of emotions and memories and “reinforce sensations of belonging and alienation, invitation or rejection, tranquillity or despair” (Pallasmaa, 2008).

Their interventions were placed as part of exhibitions inside a building, but also as installations in the public realm.

Small scale interventions such as the Vanity Chair (1988) appropriate everyday objects and reconfigure them to create a new relationship between the subject, which is the human body and the object. They create a territory and force the spectator to rethink his environment. Inspired by the readymade of Duchamp Diller and Scofidio want these objects to be used or misused and perform autonomously and in relation to the environment (Moon, 2016).

Also bigger scale installations such as Traffic placed in New York in Columbus Circle on June 25, 1981 force the passers-by to interact with the new perception of space and rethink the idea of space appropriation. The 2.500 orange traffic cones highlight the configuration of the site without actually stopping the traffic flow and creating consciousness of the site (Moon, 2016).

Architects such as Diller + Scofidio try to grasp the limitations of paper based architecture and the built unchangeable environment. By creating their temporal installations, they create a new layer of architecture which is easier to understand and wants an immediate response from our body.





## Spaces for our mind adapted for our body

The themes of creating an age integrated society are of particular interest to me. A healthy society needs the connection and exchange between generations. This is crucial for its development. A straightforward approach in achieving this is to create spatial closeness, spaces that invite interage interaction and appropriation. By enabling this space of exchange, generations can understand each other's needs and expose each other to different points of view and opinions. The questions that follow and the focus of this thesis are therefore:

How can architecture create age integration?  
How can architecture be age inclusive?

As mentioned earlier, accessibility is connected to the body (Grosz, 1992), while the experience and appropriation of space is highly connected to the perceived space (Merleau-Ponty, 1945) and the tangible, the interior and exterior architectural space (Cornell, 1996). I therefore, choose the three entities, mind, body and space as my guides in defining my concept.

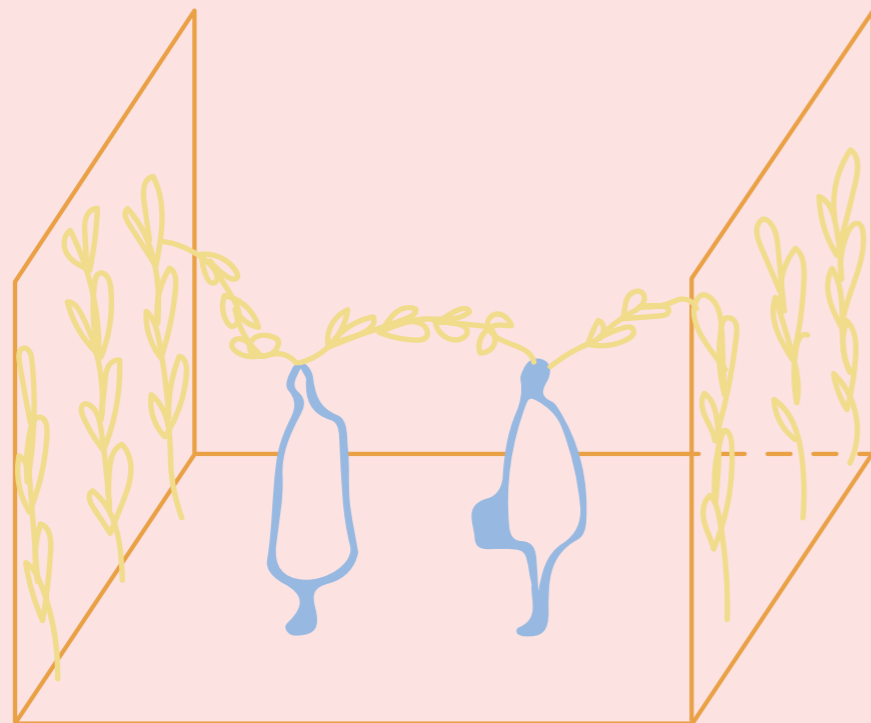
The entity MIND is constant in our life. Yes, we do learn and grow personally, but our personality stays quite the same even with time passing.

The second entity is BODY. The body is constantly changing and is the major factor showing that time is passing. By growing and growing old our body has different challenges, which we have to address.

The last entity is SPACE. The category, which is particularly crucial for us architects. Especially with the relation of age we have to create spaces that are adapted to our needs, or that can change to our needs over time.

These three factors define the concept, which is:

SPACES for our MIND adapted for our BODY.



## But what does that mean exactly?

### Spaces for our mind

The concept of mind stands for knowledge. Spaces for our mind are stimulative or fruitful places, where we can exchange our knowledge and teach it to different generations. Space that enables connection, understanding and appropriation. Society needs these forms of intergenerational interactions, in order to be healthy and thriving. The knowledge comes from experience and therefore anyone can join in the exchange, with their experience. This kind of knowledge is created by experiences that each generation has and can further develop with the help of someone else.

### Adapted for our body

Adapted for our body relates to the spatial connection that the body should have, explaining that space should be accessible to anyone, but not only. The word "for" your body has been chosen intentionally referring to the fact, that the space, yes, should be accessible, but even more important be a liveable and enjoyable space. As Kuhlmann (2013) argues, is trying to define a standard body impossible. The human body is an entity not just a conglomerate of measurements and therefore it is not enough to just create spaces that are proportionally adapted to

our body. We need to create space that is welcoming and allows appropriation. After all, as Pallasmaa (2008) argues, can architecture be an amplifier of emotions; it can reinforce sensations of belonging and alienation. The mind will feel trapped in a body that cannot move in the built environment. Our body is our shell, our tool of exploration and therefore restricted by space. If we cannot appropriate spatially and interact, space becomes a source of discontent and even depression.

Space that is adapted for our body could be seen as platforms to address the current relation of the different generations in our society. An exchange of difficulties in the everyday life can be created. A space that allows knowledge to flow and be passed on or exchanged.

So my hypothesis to my questions of architecture as tool of age integration and age inclusion, is that if spaces are stimulative for our mind, and age appropriate we will be able to create age integration in spaces and further in our city. I would like to create a discussion, a manifesto about space and age, why age segregation is still such a dominant form of discrimination in our society, even though we all are affected by it.

## Lexicon

To try to understand how it is possible to create an age integrated and age inclusive society, I posed three different hypotheses. The three hypothesis are based on the theoretical knowledge that I gained so far and sum up the discovered theories.

The hypotheses are:

By diminishing ageism, we can create a dialogue between the age groups.  
 If spaces are stimulative for the mind, we can create age integration.  
 If a space allows appropriation for the body, it creates age inclusion.

entities
concept
hypotheses

These three hypotheses are related the three entities body, mind and space. They can create a rounder perspective on the themes.

The three relations are therefore:

MIND + BODY  
 MIND + SPACE  
 BODY + SPACE

The three entities BODY, SPACE and MIND have been illustrated before from a more theoretical and referential perspective. Now, at this point, I would like to pose different notions, that came up while working.

Initially I started the work on my thesis with a design project in mind. Gaining a better understanding of the subject, I soon realised that the question at hand is much more complex than that. While a design project would deal with creating a space, which is age inclusive (for body and mind), the discussion around age inclusive space needs to detach itself from the idea of institution. We need to start looking at the bigger scale, the city. As well as adapting our city's infrastructure, we need to create adaptable and accessible space for all its dwellers. There is therefore a need to introduce age inclusive spaces as an important ingredient in our design.

There are no absolute answers, otherwise this problem would not exist. To identify the need for discussion and understanding in more depth, we need to create awareness. So each relation creates a framework for the notions. There will be two notions for each relation and they will analyse different aspects. The imagery that accompanies the notions represents the theme.

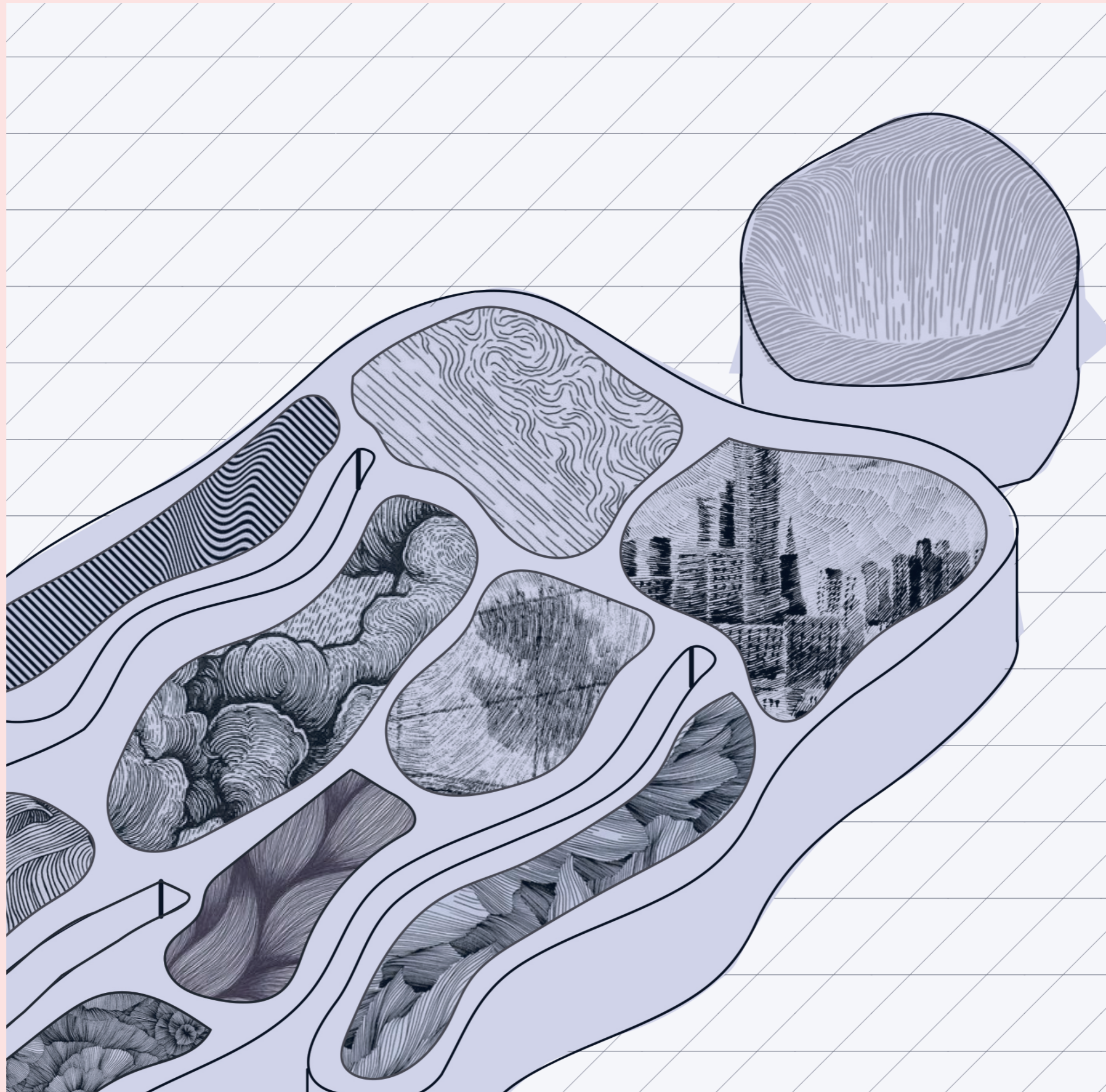
So as mentioned before, the goal is to create an understanding how to create space that are age inclusively. The notions are permeability and connections beyond bodies for the relation MIND + BODY. For MIND + SPACE they are creating common culture and creating common living. And for the last relation BODY and SPACE we have the notions of appropriation and accessibility.

For the conclusion we can combine the relations to one BODY + MIND + SPACE and create a bigger picture and possible projection of how the built future can look like.

Through this storytelling a manifesto is created, which wants to deal with age integration in every architectural creation.







## Relation mind and body

the body as vessel containing all our thoughts and emotions

## Relation Mind + Body

The relation has been deduced from the hypothesis by diminishing ageism, we can create a dialogue between the age groups. As we illustrated earlier in the thesis, a big factor of eliminating prejudices and discrimination consist in creating a relation between the generations. If we have a closer relation to someone of a different age group, our vision of the whole group changes. We have a personal perspective, that otherwise would be stirred by other outer voices and create a distorted picture. It is always easier to judge something we do not understand. But this exactly has to be our goal when we want to diminish ageism.

I paired this hypothesis with the relation of BODY and MIND. It is referring to the fact that our body changes over time, even though our mind does not. It works with the themes of our own relation to our body and mind. It therefore touches upon the fact that we can ourselves understand how we change over time and what this “new” body has to offer. With each stage that we reach in our life, we gain new knowledge, but also a new body. Rather than seeing aging as a negative factor, as a weakness, we should celebrate each stage. Like a butterfly reaches its climax in the later stages of life, do we evolve as well. Neither one of the stages is better or worse than the other and we should acknowledge that. Time is always passing and so do we age, the sooner we make peace with that, the sooner we can enjoy every part of the journey.

The other fact this relation is referring to, is the connection between different bodies. The first visual factor that separates youth from elderly is the showing of age on our bodies. Despite the fact that our bodies are different, our minds do have similarities. It is very likely that one has or had similar

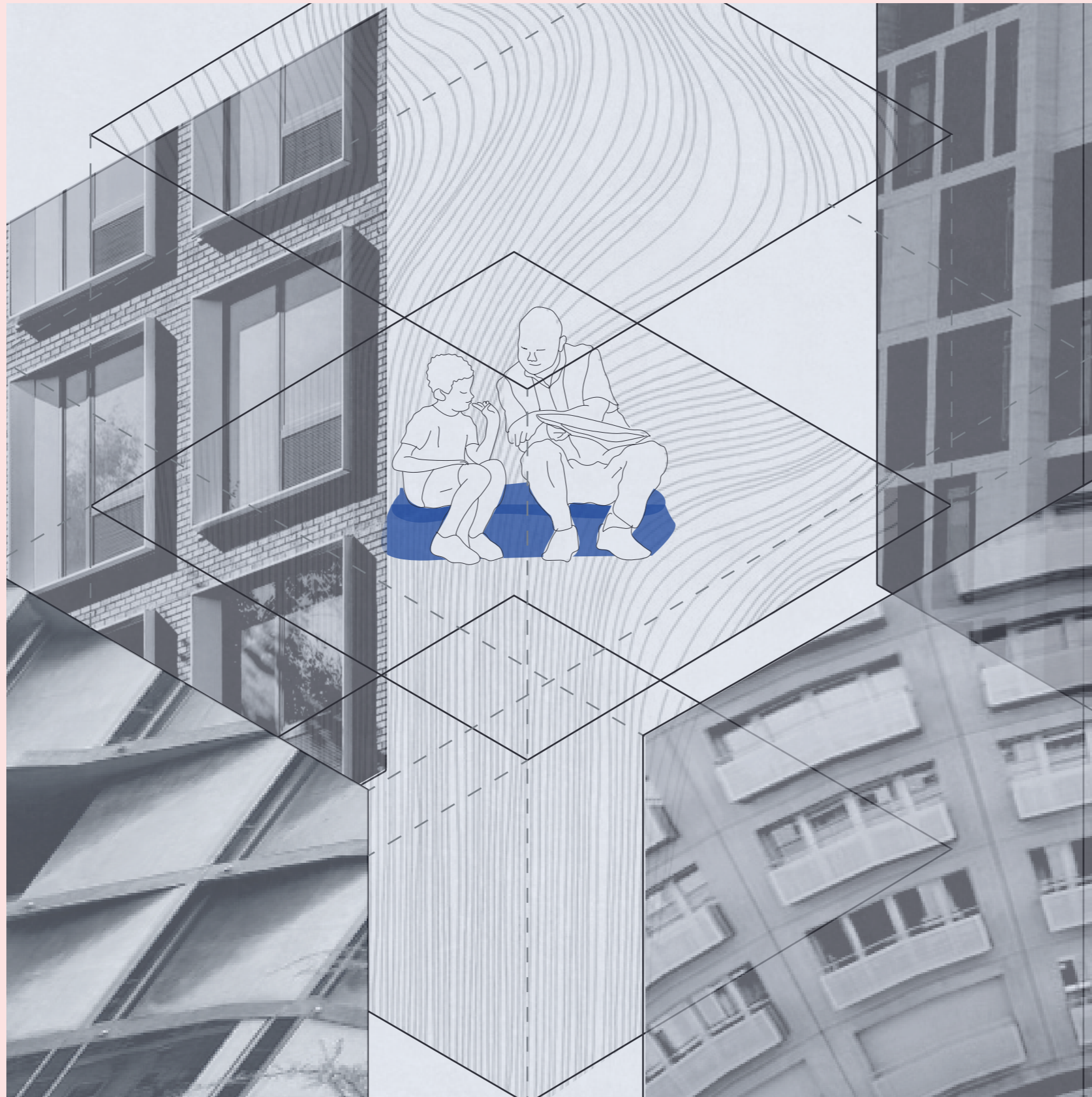
interests or problems. Since everything in the world has already been thought about, we can assume that different generations have similar connections to topics. By doing so, a different approach can be created and we can understand what other people think about or do the whole day. An anti-movement to the separation of age in institutions can happen, where we do not only understand what other people do, but also get to do ourselves these things that nowadays are just reserved to a specific age group. Maybe through that approach we will feel, that we do not have to wait till a certain age, until we can finally do something. And additionally we will not have to feel like we missed our opportunity in the past and cannot make up for that lost chance in the presence.

Through these additional connections that are not anymore just related by the factor age, we can maybe also work against another big problem in our society, urban loneliness. We will be able to “choose” between a bigger pool of people and be able to find connections, that are maybe spatially closer to us. If it is socially more accepted and seen as positive to have relations between different age groups, we will be able to find interesting new acquaintances, that otherwise would not be a part of our group of relations.

Feeling lonely is not bound to one age group. It is easier to feel lonely if our former friends do not exist anymore, or they are further away. This can happen to youth and elderly and why should we then not combine the factors and create new friendships and relations.

I introduced notions, which group the subcategories and allow connections to be created.





## Age connecting institutions

removing the walls of institution and connecting the generations

## Age connecting institutions

Age segregation happens on multiple levels in society. As previously stated is the level of separation so advanced, that most of our institutions are affected by that as well. Kids go to school and kindergartens; and in general there are certain spaces that are exclusively dedicated to children. This is obviously a positive factor in giving them the needed attention and support, but it also creates a separation between the generations, that could create fruitful relations.

Teenagers or adults have to stop at a certain point in their life to go to certain sports clubs, reading rooms and playgrounds. An evolution of interests happens naturally, but what if interest shift again years later. Can adults or elderly visit a playground if they feel like they would like to be on a swing again? [Can an adult pick up a hobby they had as a child and continue being amused by it at an older age?](#)

While it seems like adults have the interest of being connected again to activities they enjoyed when they were younger, these hobbies can also be connected to nostalgia. The remembering of a different time can create in us certain emotions, that maybe let us forget our current situation. As children play and do not notice the around world, would that happen to adults as well. Maybe this is exactly the reason, why it is not seen as a standard thing for grown-ups to play anymore.

There is a stigma being seen as playful and connected to the inner child. Adjectives such as naïve and childish (these word already imply the negative nature of

being “like a child”) come then into play and connote negative aspects to being childlike.

By creating a barrier between the age groups, they never get in contact with generations other than their family. It appears, that just adults that have kids are allowed into their world and allowed to play again, while the rest is not.

There has to be a change in the connection between generations creating age connected institutions.

[But why is it so negative to be seen as a child?](#) Well, ageism has its impact also in this relation. Children should obviously not have to take huge responsibilities in their lives and are allowed to be children, but this does not mean that they are incapable of taking care of something. If there would be a transparency between which responsibilities an adult has to take, a child would understand that better as well and be more prepared to what the future will look like.

We have to stop creating unnecessary barriers between the age groups, to be able to understand each other's reality. Almost every adult understands and has lived through the concept of school, but nevertheless is it hard to understand what a current child is doing in school. It would help, if someone who is educating oneself further would not be seen as someone who missed out in life before, but rather someone admirable, that wants to broaden their horizon. Studying is seen as a young adult activity and should after that not be discussed anymore. I would rather prefer if we would see a greater mixture of ages in

lecture halls to get a greater exchange and better understanding of how society looks like.

Education should not be just connected to one age group, but seen as a process that can continue a whole life. Lifelong learning is a concept nowadays, but still not connected to the institutions.

By letting children also know what their parents do during the day, we can create a broader understanding for them as well. “Going to work” only becomes a reality after our education and before that one cannot comprehend, what activity requires this constant energy input and takes up such big parts of the day. This argument should obviously not favour child labour, but create an insight in the adult realm. It will be also easier to choose a future profession, if a certain connection is already created.

The activity that is connected to elderly is leisure. Only after a whole life of hard work are we allowed to get our rest and enjoy our time. But the idea that we deserve this leisure just after we worked till we are elderly, is very money driven. If having leisure time would be an integrated part of our adult life, I can imagine that stress could be reduced. Taking a sabbatical year would be seen as a standard practice and be accepted.

Changing institutions is obviously not a matter of years, but takes a longer time period to be studied, approved and realised. [This is just a possible way of thinking on why we should not lose the interest in learning and playing and letting others understand what we do on a daily basis.](#)

Institutions are needed, no question, but we need a mixture, by removing spatial barriers, and creating closeness. By creating inclusion and permeability between the age groups, we can achieve a dialogue and understanding.

We can imagine a classroom, where elderly sit in between youth and learn together. We could imagine a space in an office that has a little desk for children, when they accompany their parents to work and do their own homework. Or we could think of young guests in an elderly home, that want stories to be told and books to be read to them.

Just by creating a mixture of ages and a low threshold in society, we are able to feel comfortable in between other age groups. By knowing how to talk to them and how to act, we can create new connections and a stronger society.





## Creating a new age culture

letting our inner child to the outside

## Creating a new age culture

A common sentence, that describes how youth should behave is “[you are only young once](#)”. While the more positive interpretation of this sentence wants young people to enjoy their time and do as much as possible as long as they are able to, does it also create a negative dimension.

It creates the illusion that ageing is this negative aspect of life that no matter what we do, will come in force. That will slow our body and our mind down, that makes us incapable to be part of society, that does not allow us to do whatever we want anymore.

No wonder that anti-ageing products are so popular. We want to cover the signs of time passing from our physical appearance. We want to avoid people see that we are no longer the youngest members of society. Any weaknesses that can be connoted to ageing should be minimised and an eternal youth should be the aim. Ageism comes in multiple facets in all categories. [Prejudices stir our view on age and create a false reality, where age is a weakening tool](#). The trend of age being negative has changed over history and depending on the time period, it has created different relations. Yes, elderly are not as agile as younger people, but nevertheless they have huge resources. Space can solve such imbalances, by creating accessibility and inclusion, by allowing different age groups to be together.

Knowledge and experiences should be seen as a positive value that only time can give us. How many people celebrate their birthdays and feel anxious when their

age symbolises “becoming old”? But their age can also symbolise that they are strong, managed to live so many years and overcame all problems that once seemed impossible to defeat. Our age is a symbol of resilience and adaptability.

The same happens also on the other part of the spectrum, to youth. Ageism does not stop just by saying that “too much” age is bad, but also being young is not ideal.

One of the most important requirements in a job application is the years of experience, not giving younger people the chance to explain what they learned in their time they have been working in a specific field. In this case are many years seen as something positive. But also not always since too old also means not flexible enough to keep up with the new technologies.

Inexperience, but also the lack of taking responsibility and knowing the own priorities, are aspects that elder generations have against the younger. It seems like just a slim part of society is seen as ideal. The middle aged. If we say that an average life expectancy is around 80 years, and we are seen as unexperienced till the age of 25, and “over experienced after the age of 65, then we get 40 years where we are not good enough or anymore and 40 years where we are “attractive” for society. That means that if we follow this age classification, half our life is not ideal. Where we have to aim to look like a younger or older standard, where our body and mind is not on the height of society.

Our relation to age has to change. We should not separate and define one age as the best, but rather see the positive things in each time period of our life. Each age has their positive aspects, as their negative, but the sooner we embrace that time is passing and we are evolving, the earlier we can understand and enjoy what each stage in our life has to offer us.





## Being trapped in the own body

the body as cage to our soul that isolates us from the rest

## Being trapped in the own body

The title of this subcategory emerged during one of my interviews. I talked to elderly to understand how they feel in our society and what their needs are. While talking to these women, which have a huge collected knowledge, I noticed a sort of disconnection between the body and the mind. While it was noticeable that they had a great set of experiences, there was no feeling of talking to an elder person. As everyone am I also biased in having my preconceived notions about age, from the experience I have collected in the past. But talking to these elderly form a more “scientific” aspect, I understood that our mind does not change.

If we say that our character and we as a person are our mind, then the body takes in this secondary position. Like a shell, the body protects our mind and transports us to where we want to be.

The elderly talked about how they themselves do not feel old. Like their mind is still in an earlier stage in their life. Like they merely collected more knowledge, but are still feel like the person they once were. – But is it even correct to say the person they once were? Do we become another person when time is passing?

Well, we can argue that, yes our body does change. Through the development and the raising of the living standards our age has managed to go up. But nevertheless, our bodies are coming from nature and specific processes become slower and our cells do not regenerate as quickly as they once did. No matter what we do, our body becomes older, slower and weaker. This has created since the beginning of

time different myths of the fountain of youth and in general the dream of living forever. *There is this strong believe, that merely the shell is weak, but the mind should be able to survive in eternity.* As in many religions, the thought is, that the body will decay and stay on earth, while or mind, our soul will be able to continue to an other places and continue to exist.

Age is connected to death. And I guess that is the whole reason why we do not want to become old. We do not want to get to know where our mind will be after we die and if we longer exist. Since there are no answers beforehand, we will never know how to react to death.

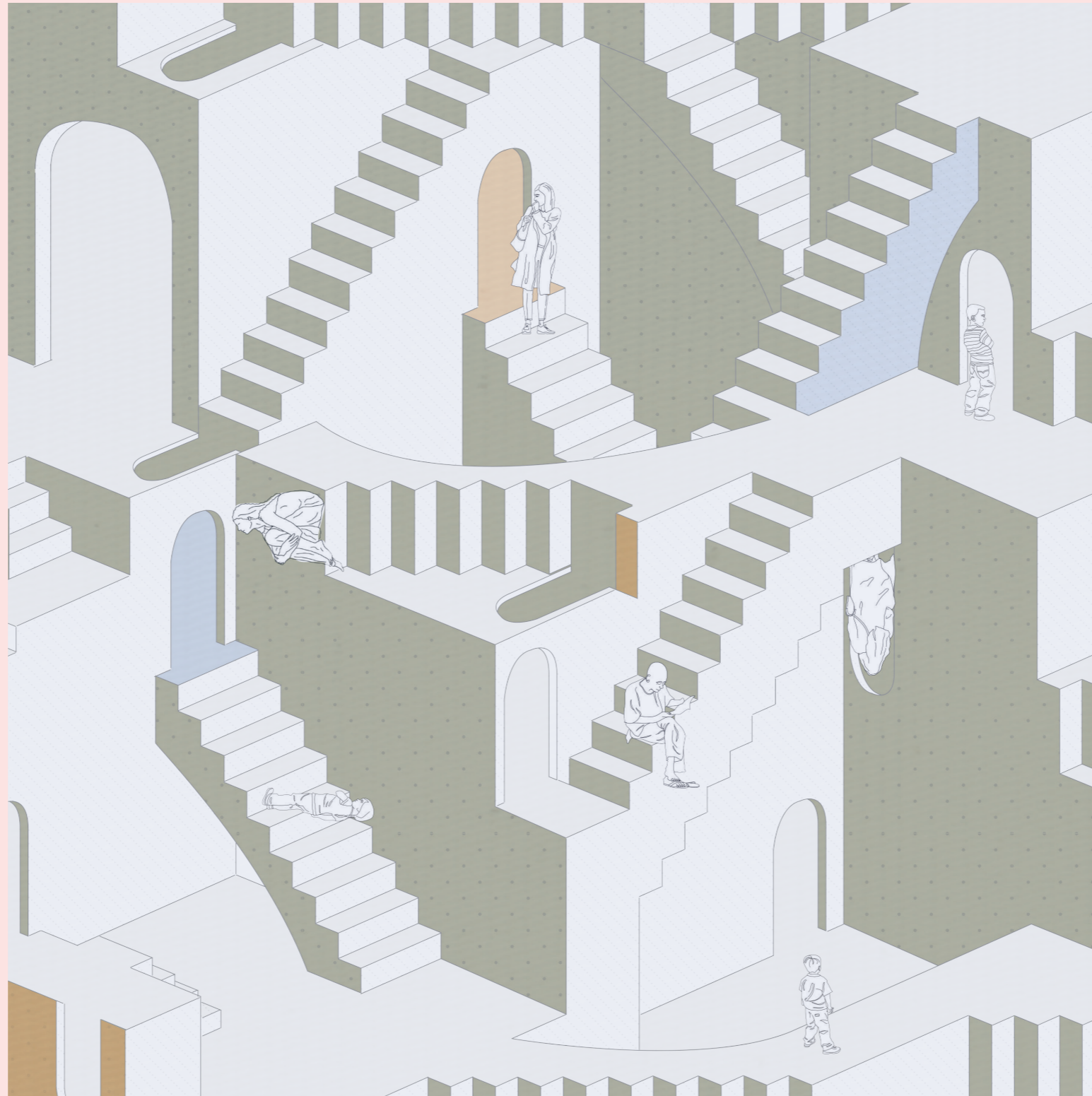
Also this aspect was very interesting to discuss with the elderly. I had the feeling that they are in peace with whatever happens after death, since their mind will continue to live somewhere else and in people that loved them.

This wisdom of knowing that their mind is unchangeable, makes me think that the relation towards age has to be changed. If we were able to see the mind, instead of the body, that maybe looks so different from ours, we could be closer to other generations. We have to force us to see beyond what we can apprehend with our eyes. *We have to see the person and the mind they have to offer to be able to create a connection that goes beyond bodies.*

With the expression trapped in your own body, we should also think how we can facilitate the environment to minimise the difference between mind and body. Being trapped in a “space” that you dwell, can be very conflictual. Maybe the body is a cage that we cannot escape from, but we have to open up at least the door of the cage, so that we can fly out sometimes. If elderly have a contact to younger people, they will feel like there is a window from their world, where they can connect. I remember an elderly lady approaching me once since I wore a hat with a veil and she was very happy about it. She said they were fashionable when she was young and she is happy that they are coming back.

Such situations minimise the difference between generations, where we feel like a small act is enough so that we talk to each other and create the first step to a connection. We therefore need body adapted spaces in the city that allow the generations to meet and unite. Communication can be a great step to connect the minds, without needing the body as a tool. The body is a big visual tool, but we are much more than just that.

“While it was noticeable that they had a great set of experiences, there was no feeling of talking to an elder person.”



## Urban loneliness

despite living spatially close, we feel lonely in the city

## Urban loneliness

In a time where spatial closeness and densification are major factors in urban planning, it is interesting that more and more inhabitants feel lonely in the city.

Urban loneliness is a phenomenon that occurs when we least expect it, when we have more neighbours than ever. Where we could theoretically be in touch with the whole city. But we are not, and obviously we cannot be. It is said that we know our neighbours if we do not have more than 40, otherwise it gets unmanageable. If we are spoilt for choice, we will decide to choose nothing. Our mind cannot grasp all the information and we get overwhelmed.

But knowing the own neighbours could be a good possibility to get to know a different age spectrum. Since housing can be age heterogeneous, it could pose the chance to get easier in touch with someone. Saying hello in the staircase is the first step in starting a conversation and a brief connection.

Obviously does this dynamic not work in every cultural setting. In certain places it is acceptable to start a conversation, or ask the neighbours for favours, in others it is hardly admissible to politely say hello, while trying to get into the own apartment as quickly as possible.

Is it possible to create a closer connection between neighbours, or does home equal to privacy and we therefore should be "isolated"? I think especially intergenerational connection can benefit from such opportunities. We all want to live in a friendly neighbourhood and, as in any relation, we have to invest something to be able to achieve it. By being spatially close, we already create a

low threshold for a relation, since we do not have to move far to be able to see someone else. This relation is basically at our feet since we just have to open our front door and go to the next one. A city could create cooperations, that allow the members to use certain spaces, spatially close to their home, to create a feeling of neighbourhood and not having to be in the own apartment.

As said, we have to invest ourselves in the creation and upholding of a relation. But if we do not know, or we do not have the possibility to approach different generations, a vicious circle is created that upholds loneliness. We are therefore in need of different spaces of encounter, that allow us to start a relation, that are accessible for all bodies.

With the own body not being as mobile anymore, involuntary isolation of especially elderly can happen and this can lead to loneliness. This can explain why elderly enjoy looking outside of the window, so that they feel like being part of the happening on the street. It does not, as many would guess, merely consist in spying, but more create a virtual connection between the own apartment and the urban realm, to still feel like being part of the city. By creating such relations, we will feel like our own four walls will expand and are not limited by the physical barriers.

Sometimes urban togetherness is created as a state of mind, even though we do not actually know a lot of people. If we ourselves are feeling complete we can add on this feeling, by getting to know other people. It can be a feeling of belonging and safety, of self-esteem in

knowing we are a valued member of the world. This could be connected to feeling at home, even when we are in a foreign city. We create a fantasy of how we would live and what our habits would be. But what is the difference between dreaming about a certain reality and actually living in it? Well, life. Reality is always different from what we expect it to be. It is therefore important to understand the relation we have with others, but with ourselves as well.

Urban loneliness can happen on so many levels and we should not forget that it starts within ourselves. If we feel at ease, when we are alone, we know, that we are not missing out on the rest of the world. We merely decide what is best for us in that moment. While talking to the elderly I got the answer, that you cannot just rely on others. A lady told me, that she started doing certain activities that she enjoys alone. She did not have anyone in her circle that wanted to do these things with her and she therefore decided to do it herself, which eventually led to new friendships. She said that going out of your own comfort zone is just temporal, but the feeling of managing something is bigger than that fear. It will make us feel better in the end.

With the covid-19 pandemic spreading this past year, we saw how all age groups were forced to stay inside and just be connected by windows. We saw how concerts happened from balconies and how relations were upheld by connecting more mentally than physically. We can then understand why elderly like to communicate through a window and feel connected to the city, even though they

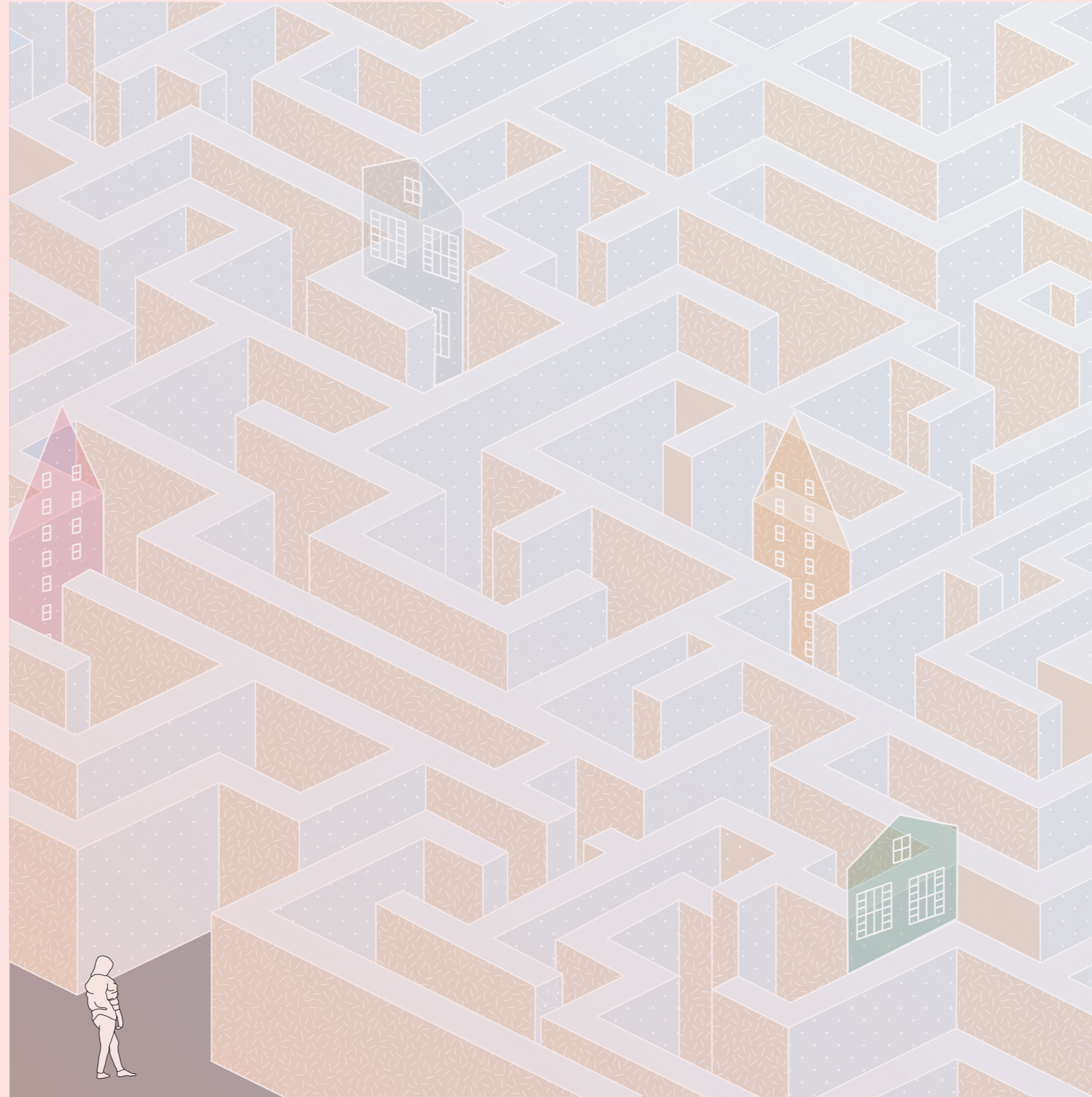
physically cannot be part of it. Through the lockdown we got to experience how other people have to live every day of their life. Maybe an awareness to spatial limitations has been created, in people that never have to think about.

Elderly and youth were now equally hit by this new situation, since everyone was deprived from even the smallest interaction. We got to know also a new way of communicating, by technology. Even if that cannot substitute physical closeness, we at least have still a feeling of connection and not total isolation.

No matter the age group there is always the need of a human connection to not feel lonely, meet and interact, be able to have a conversation and develop together.







## Relation mind and space

the mind should guide us through space, which is not an easy intent

## Relation Mind + Space

The relation MIND and SPACE developed from the hypothesis that spaces that are stimulative for our mind can create age integration. It refers to the fact, that it is easier to connect to other people if we have something in common. If there is a shared interest and we can enter into a passion with other people. Just because friend group should be heterogeneous, does that not mean people should be forced to be together. The mere fact that there are different ages does not pose the ideal combination.

We have to think about individuals and their interests. As with same aged, can there be people whose company we enjoy more than others. With intergenerational relations, we have to create additional favourable spaces that allow interaction to happen. Since there is a general lack of these connections, we have to place additional effort to enable these meetings to occur.

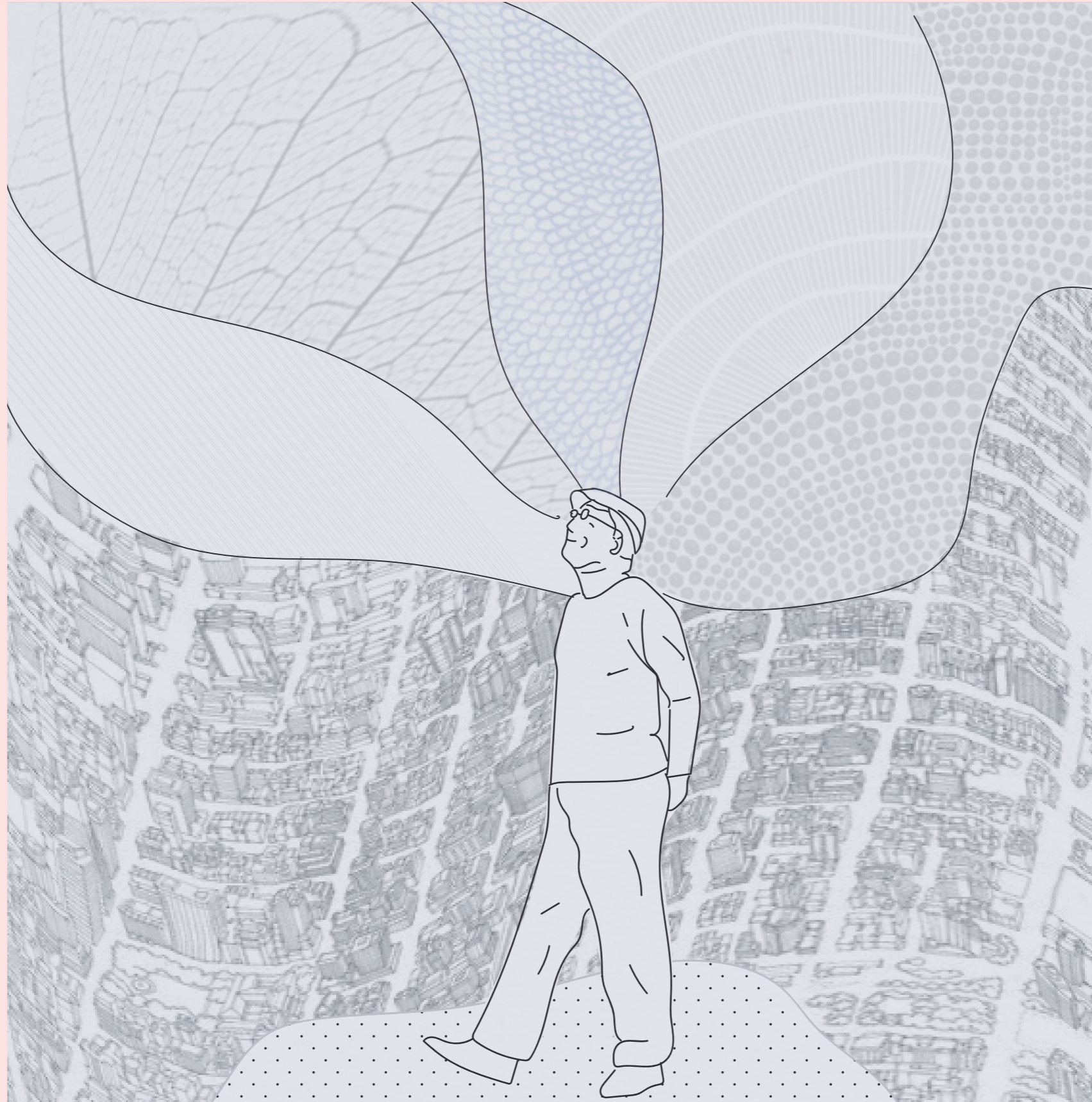
Therefore, the relation of mind and space refers to spaces that allow us to connect through our mind and enable knowledge exchange. There should be spaces in the city, platforms for interaction, where the passers-by are compelled to think about age and its role in society. A space that is inclusive for a vast majority of people, not just related to one subject, but rather for multiple interests.

Therefore, this chapter will be less focused on the body, which is the dividing entity, but more on the common characteristics that unite us between generations.

Therefore, the term folklore will be introduced. That will show the possible connections that different generations can have. This chapter will also discuss the importance of intergenerational connections. It is especially important to create heterogeneous relations that create inclusion and a better connection between the generations. Additionally, focus will be placed on kin-relations. They are the most "natural" form of contact of intergenerational interactions. Why the value of grandparents and being in touch with different generations is so high.

Under MIND + SPACE we also find the category of living together on different levels. What we need ourselves as a mind to be able to feel like a space belongs to us, but also what is required if we share living spaces with different generations. Additionally, will I touch upon how we can create common living also in the urban realm and understand the different needs. Here we find additional connections, how our mind shapes our perception of space and how that can create intergenerational relations.





## Keep the mind active

training not only the body, but also the mind to feel more connected to the surrounding

## Keep the mind active

When talking about elder care and health we often connect it to the health of the body, and too often we forget to think about the health of the mind. In order to stay agile, it is crucial to connect care and staying active also to the mind. We often overlook that we have to “train” our mind as well, in order to keep it in shape. This does not stand in contrast with the previously stated, that the mind stays constant, but it is referring to the fact, that having an active mind allows to be more in touch with one self.

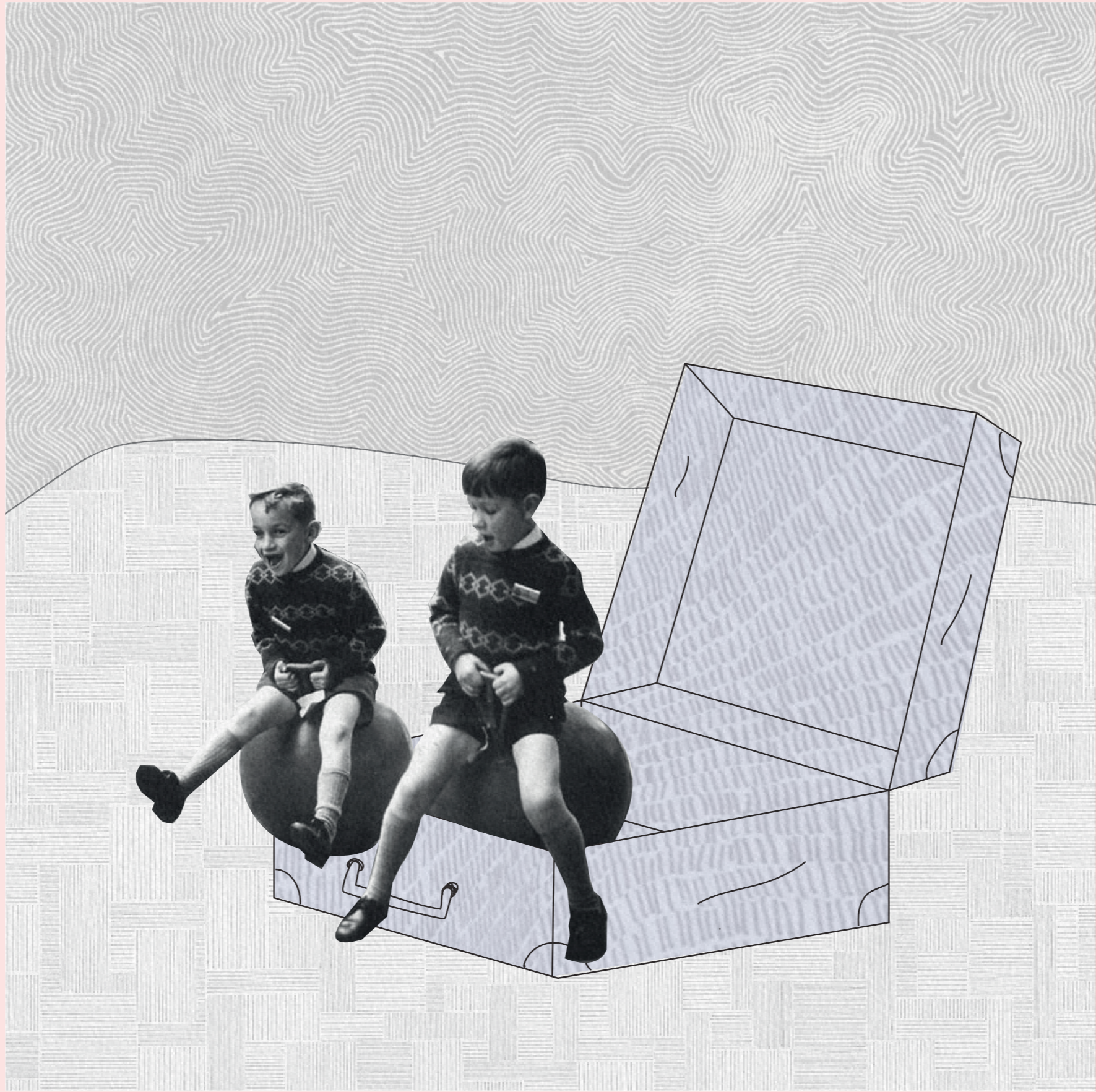
Maybe it can create an even bigger contrast between the ageing body and the more active mind, but I think these two factors go hand in hand. *An active mind, will never create negative repercussions on the body. It is rather helpful and makes us feel more connected to the outer world.*

While talking in my interviews with the elderly, I sometimes heard a common need - to keep doing things that keep the mind working. These exercises could be more manually related like doing household work, going grocery shopping by themselves or thinking about what to cook. Like that the mind is connected to the body and keeping both of the factors active.

Or more mind concentrated exercises like reading, watching movies or staying in touch with relatives. Obviously there is no limit to the kind of activity one chooses, but rather something one enjoys.

Opposed to common belief, that learning a language is only possible when one is young, is this a great exercise to keep the mind active and connect to other people at the same time. In the institutions, we do not have a mixture of the ages, yet, that would create a combination of different aged. Therefore, it is no wonder, that courses offered by other organisations such as adult educational associations are so popular for elderly. They usually have the money and time to finally spend on their interests. It would be great if a mixture of demographics of the course visitors could happen, allowing different students to show each other learning techniques or material. *These sorts of bonds allow not only to be more active mentally, but also to be more integrated into society and have different social connections.*

“We often overlook that we have to “train” our mind as well, in order to keep it in shape.”



# Folklore

our experiences as luggage that we carry with us

## Folklore

The word folklore creates specific images in our mind, that are related to old traditions and mystical themes, but I would like to use the word to describe how minds can be connected. When analysing the word, we find the two parts folk and lore. Folk stands for community or a specific group, and lore derives from the old English word for teaching and stands for the exchange of knowledge (Pfeifer, 1993). According to the Oxford dictionary, folklore stands for “the traditional beliefs, legends, and customs, current among the common people”. The transmission of this knowledge and folklore is strongly connected to our elderly generations. They transmit knowledge either by talking about them, or living them out. Most of the time these folkloristic subjects gain additional value with the more experience one has with the subject; the more one has been diving into the matter and creating an own way of dealing with them. This does not exclude younger people from transmitting them or exchanging knowledge about them, rather the opposite! As soon as there is a view point about a theme, a discourse can happen and the space gets activated. Someone with minimal experience, but interest in the theme can ask a more experienced user for help, but can also

introduce a new viewpoint. Having to explain something for the first time, makes oneself question why it is done in a certain way, rather than another. As well as different ways of thinking or doing can be created. Also, if multiple users have a certain level of understanding of the theme, an interesting discussion can happen, where different perspectives can be discovered.

The word folklore stands therefore not only for the collective knowledge of a specific group of people, but also the exchange of that knowledge and discussion between the different generations. Folklore is, therefore, a collective knowledge that is constantly evolving, created by a broader mindset and tolerance towards the new.

It is almost impossible to invent something completely new, and so it is also with new subjects. They all have their origin in history, and through evolution, in society, they became a new invention in our days. Since there is always a connection to the past, it is a good possibility for different generations to exchange about the theme and younger generations to teach the elderly the newest matter. Folklore is the preservation of knowledge and passing of it, but it is also constantly changing knowledge, which in its turn

creates new knowledge. Since folklore is often a combination of a greater heritage, which has been passed on from multiple generations and evolves with society, there are multiple ways to transmit the knowledge. Most of the time, it is transmitted orally by storytelling, but it can also be written or explained by an object or passed down by showing how something can be done.

A crucial part of folklore is therefore the contact between different people, so that knowledge and rituals can flow between the users. Folklore lives in the users and is passed on by having social contact.

Such spaces that propagate folklore in the city can be with any function. Some exciting activities can be the combination of manual work and knowledge. Connected to for example handcraft and learning a manual profession. Where centuries old knowledge is transmitted and creates a very intimate moment of thought sharing. Movements that exist since the beginning of human living, create an archaic connection, where the experience is valued more again.

The same concept is also used with the activity of storytelling. Here we can see either a merely entertainment aspect to it, in telling actual fairy tales, legends and own experiences, but it can also be connected to learning. In many

culture the aspect of teaching how to act in certain situations is connected to storytelling. The abstract story is then applied to life and transmits deeper understanding. Since oral transmission of knowledge is also quite flexible, does it not require big physical mobility, these activities can connect very old and very young generations.

Another oral connection can be the “ask different generations”, which is a judgemental free space that allows to ask about different aspects about someone else’s life, that otherwise could not be asked. Bigger questions and fears can be touched upon and different views of the theme can be discovered together. By sharing personal information, we can also feel like we build up a connection with someone else.

What we need sometime, is someone we can simply go to different places together. These activities can just be groceries shopping or going to a café, or more activity based, such as going to an exhibition or to the theatre together. This virtual space, should be a connection point to find people with similar interest and just enjoy each other’s company. Also activities such as volunteering can be connected to being together with other generations at the same time.

This can lead us also to the connecting function of technology. Obviously can younger generations teach the most advanced and modern technologies to the elderly, but the same also goes the other way. We should never just assume, that another person is unknowing about a certain theme. **We have to be open minded and actively understand our opposite.** Like that we can actually create a connection and further a relation. We can create small pockets within the urban realm and enable these types of encounter.

Other folklore activities that are subsidised by objects are music, reading and games. By creating exchange of the generations, we can achieve a vaster collective knowledge about a themes, that are evergreen. Additionally, do these activities not require straight away discussions. One can do certain activities together, even if the activity itself is more introvert, but at the same time be social. If the physical mobility is also better, sport and movement can be connecting. Playgrounds and outdoor gyms are already now hotspots in creating a mixture of generations, by allowing different age groups to coexist and be united by the joy of movement. Also being outside and enjoying nature are ageless activities anyone can try to find new relations.

A theme that I always connect to intergenerational connections is food.

The act of eating and all being together, where one can tell what happened during the day or where important themes can be discussed, allows a low threshold in creating a dialogue and interests.

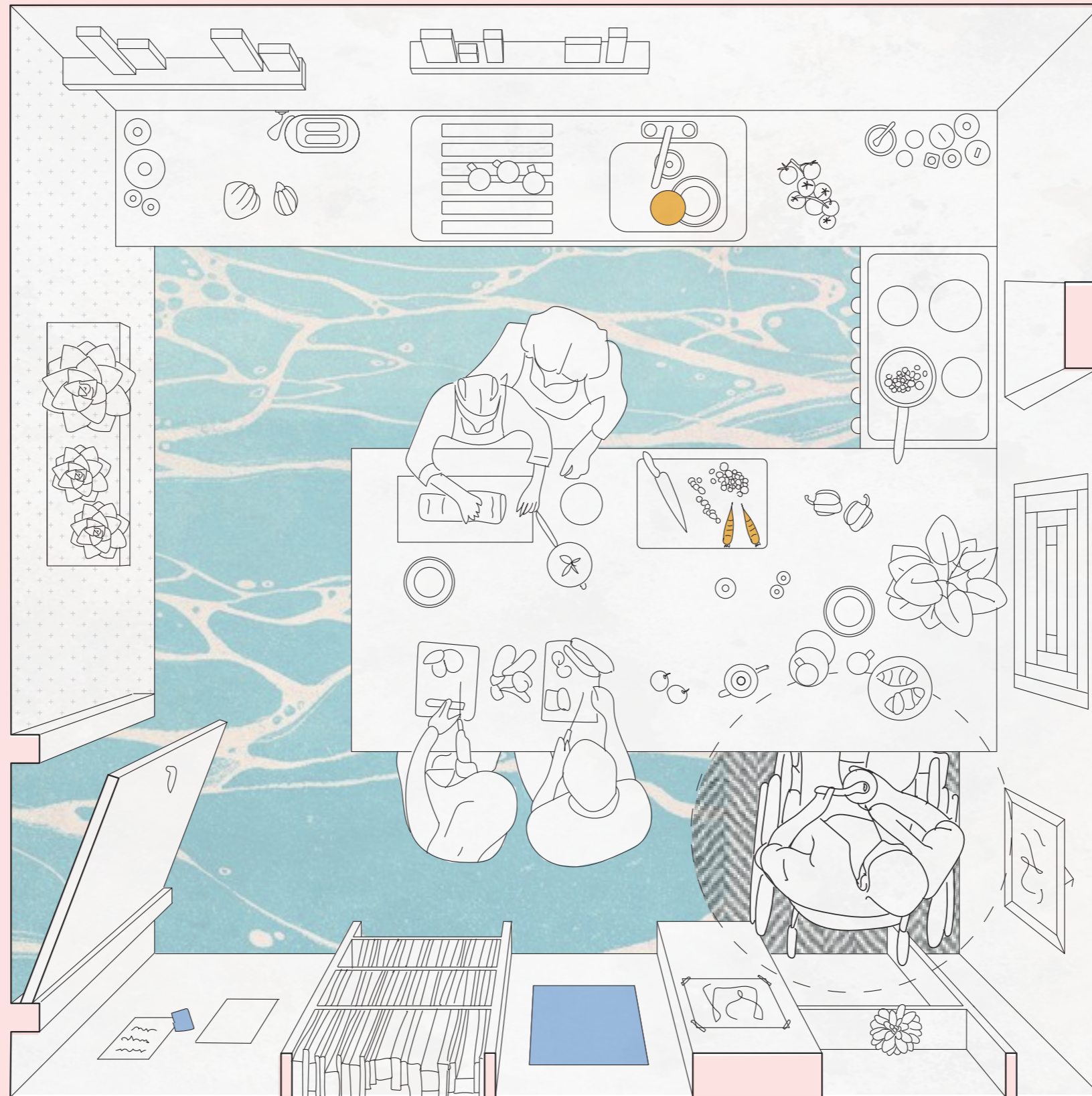
The enjoyment of good food and talking about it, can also create connections. While elderly can share their experience, can youth introduce new dishes and influences.

In cooking I actively see how folklore is created and transmitted. I do not only know, but feel how much to add of certain ingredients. I saw how my mother and grandmothers did it and at the same time I see hundreds of mothers before them collect that knowledge and transmitting it directly to me. This knowledge is harder to apprehend from a book, but rather comes from the direct contact of the collective knowledge and can almost be seen as an immaterial richness.

In Italian we have the saying **rubare con gli occhi**, which can be translated to "stealing with the eyes", it refers to the fact that you learn and understand how to do something, by looking at someone who is able to do it. I think folklore describes very much this idea, that by being in close contact with someone else we ourselves do understand how they feel or why they act in a certain way, we can learn from each other and create a mutual respect if not relation. So folklore describes the knowledge transmission of functions and activities, but especially also the social, emotional and interpersonal knowledge exchange.







## Why is it great to be together?

age should not be limiting - let's achieve urban togetherness

## Why is it great to be together?

As previously mentioned, the connection of ages creates a more harmonious society, in which everyone has their place, and poses a great space of exchange and learning. However, do we want to be connected with different generations? What do we gain from that? With this manifesto I am arguing that different situations and spatial constellations make it possible for us to create a contact with different generations, but the good intention alone will not make a change. I am not saying that creating a dialogue with different generations will always go smoothly, but I am arguing that there has to be an effort into that direction.

If we are a selfish society, then we still want for ourselves the best possible life, we still never want to be discriminated. With this thought in mind, we want the best possible life when we are old, as well. We will not want to be segregated, but still part of society. We will want to be connected to the newest technologies and not feel like we already did everything in life and are now just expecting the end.

If we once had a close connection to another generation, we will feel like we understand that other age group, that we can talk to them and feel like we can have a connection to other people of that age as well. If we take the most common intergenerational relation, namely kin connections, connections that are formed by being related, will we have an easier access to the realm of the elderly in general.

If we have contact with our grandparents, so does that form us as a person, also in the future. The grandparent can be the part of the family that is not directly responsible for us and can therefore allow us to enjoy the leisure of age as well, creating less barriers between the generations. Obviously does not everyone have the privilege to grow up with grandparents. I therefore am very much in favour of connections that can be created with organisations that allow us to "adopt" a grandparent.

Sometimes the first step is just someone allocating us to an elderly and create a first connection. We get help to climb over

that wall that separates the generations and gives us a contact spot.

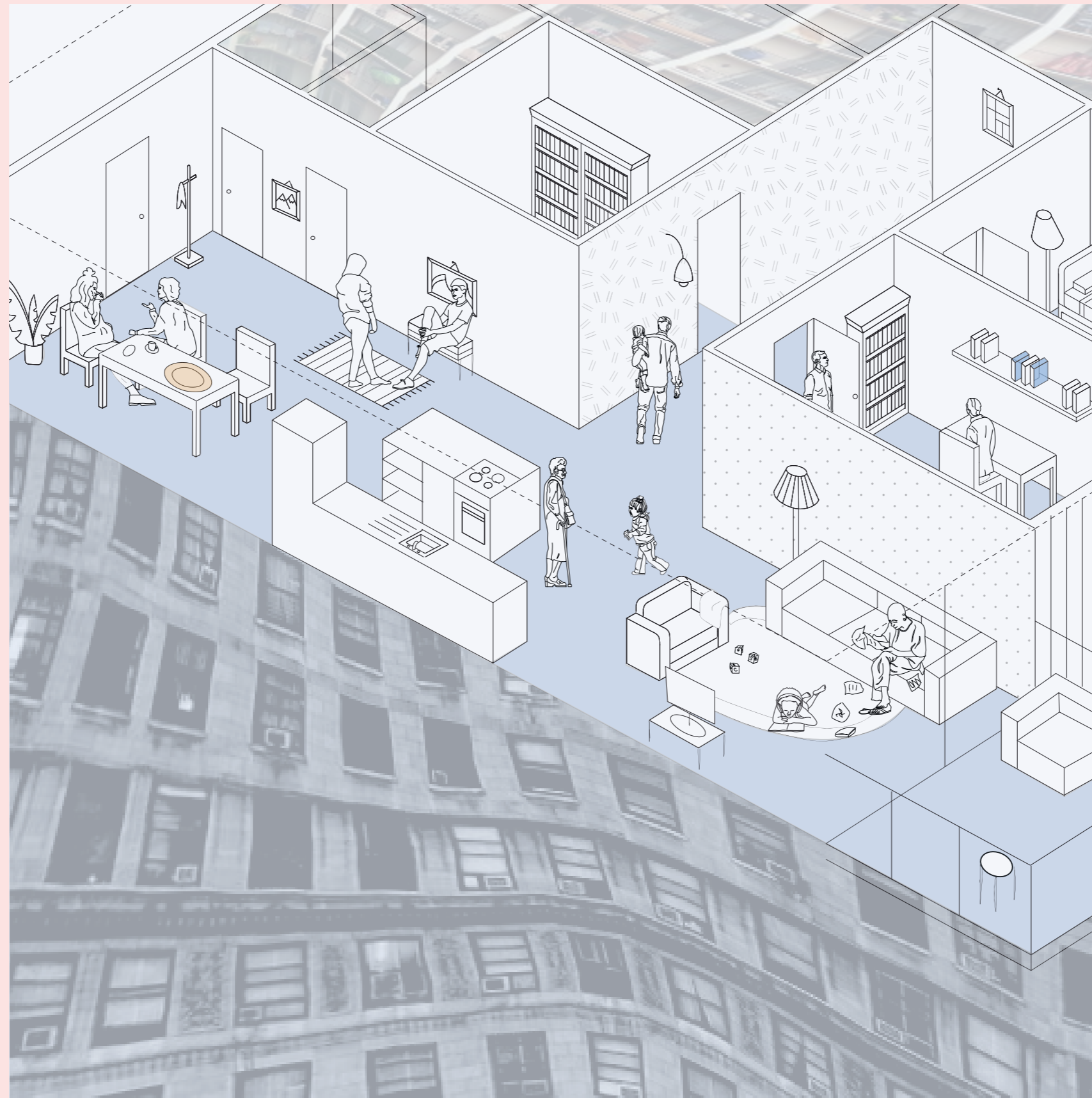
Like that, we will not fear to talk to another elderly, because we already have experience. We can be confident, that there is something that we have in common with that person, that once was as old as we were. When elderly say "can you imagine I was once your age", they imply that they once also had similar aspirations as we have today. If we cannot imagine that a person ever has been young, it is just connected to their appearance, but our minds are connected on another level and have similar dreams. If we befriend the elderly, we learn and gain a lot from their experience. Understand what they went through in order for us to have the life we have and what we should do to improve it even further for our future generations. It is no wonder that already in old Greece Aristotle complained about the young lazy generations that do not know yet how life should be lived. If we just judge and never try to understand will we live quite an exhausting life, thinking that no

one is on our side or understands us. That everything is unfair and we have to rebel in order to earn something.

If we see all ages being part of one time, taking care for one another, we will be able to work and try to diminish other segregations as well, to create a pleasant life to everyone.

So where can this exchange happen? We can create such relations by having mixed generational living, but also by connecting in the urban realm.





## Common living

sharing living spaces - getting to know different generations

## Common living

As in the urban loneliness chapter already mentioned, can spatial closeness be a decisive factor when working with age integration in the city. So many different people can be close and living together, without having anything else in common. Why then not actively create common living between different generations?

In certain cultures, is this already the case, multiple generations live under the same roof, most of the time we talk about kin-connections living together. Since the family takes over role of caring for children and elderly, it is understandable that they live spatially close as well. In other countries is this connection not existent anymore since the state takes over the role of educator and carer. In these cases, a reconnection of the generations has to happen in order to create a common living.

There are already multiple examples of successful integration of students in elderly homes or generational living in one apartment. **One of the keys in creating these project is to create different zones of privacy.** Everyone needs their own peaceful retreat, where personal privacy is guaranteed. Where one can rest and come back after socializing with the other members of the household. Where one can be in peace with oneself.

Like in a traditional city, where everyone goes to their apartment in the evening, does a personal room allow to withdraw. With this method the city is rescaled and adapted to a different way of living.

While for example in the countryside everyone has their own house and knows their neighbours, is the house represented in the city by the own room and the neighbourhood by the apartment. **Through this approach we can achieve a neighbourhood in the own four walls and try to minimise urban loneliness, since there is always a contact in the shared facilities.**

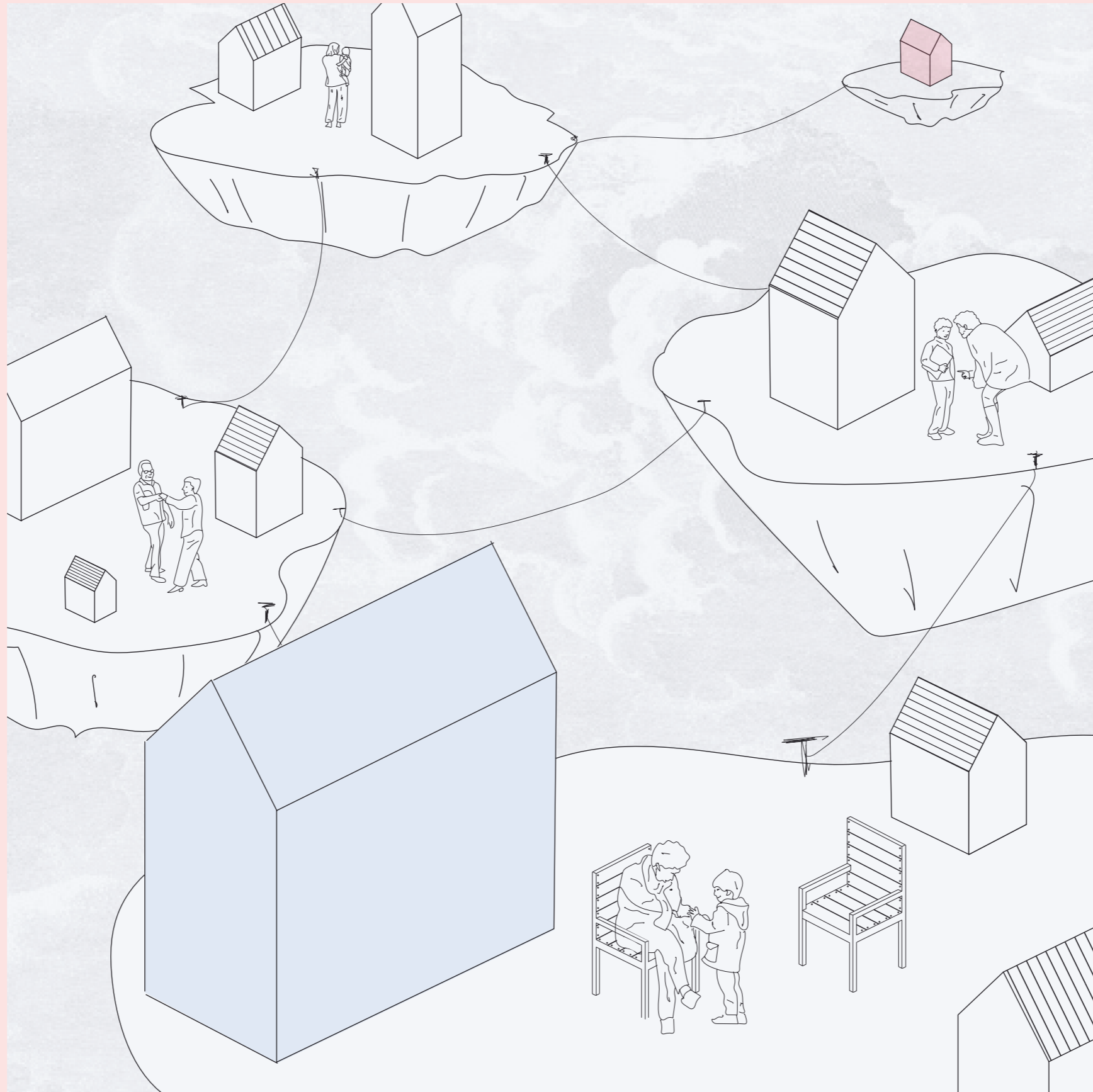
The shared spaces can be meeting points in the apartment that actively or passively create interactions. This can for example be a kitchen, where the inhabitants meet out of necessity, but can also consciously cook together. Living room and common spaces are actively there to meet and be in contact with other inhabitants. Passive interactions can happen in connecting spaces, where more casual interactions can happen. Also laundry or workshop rooms allow either to be used for the function actively or to be seen as a meeting point in the apartment. By creating different grades of public and private within the apartment, we can achieve different meeting points and connections between the inhabitants and generations.

This example can also be in a bigger scale, where the shared apartment is a whole house. In this case the personal space can be bigger, but there still have to be spaces that “force” the inhabitants to interact and create a connection.

**Spaces alone are not enough to connect generations, there have to be introductory activities, so that the first shyness barrier can be broken.**

Activities, such as folklore pastime, that create a connection or strengthen the relation. There has to be a constant upholding of the system, in order to make it work.

There are many more possibilities on how to live together. With this manifesto, I want to discuss how we can see the future and generational living develop, hoping that everyone decides for themselves how they would like to live now and in the future.



## Urban common

creating islands throughout the city that allow different generations to get together

## Urban common

The urban realm is the easiest way to get in contact with different generations. We do not only walk the same streets, but we also see a variety of distinct age groups. By noticing different age groups, we create the first contact, which is one of the first steps in eliminating discrimination. We perceive someone and their differences and we maybe have to think what things we have in common.

Placing benches close to walking paths, do not only give the possibility to rest after walking, but offer an island, where we feel safe and can appropriate the space. We can create an anchor in the city, that allows to create a place for any age group. By having these spaces that are not specifically age directed, but rather age inclusive, we allow spatial closeness to happen. [We can create smaller acupuncture inserts in the city, that allow us to stop there and have a dialogue with another person.](#) The acupuncture can be harmonious in the city and offer information or wholesome moments of connection. Those points could also be spaces of reflection and interruption of the lines and rhythms of the city. These point would attract the interest of passers-by and help igniting a discussion, or they could make them understand how differently aged people perceive the city and what difficulties they have.

It can be an installation such as the architects Diller + Scofidio were creating to make actively understand how these realities look like and what we other generations can do to facilitate someone else's daily life. By creating discussion about age in society, we get vigilant of other possible difficulties and we can try to be a part in eliminating them. It is important to talk about different thematics and not just swallow these problems down and create taboos.

[The realm of architecture is already trying to impose universal design that allows everyone to be physically able to be part of the built space.](#) By adding these little interventions in the city we are able to not only create inclusive space for age, but in general for any group that is disadvantaged in the city. Lowered curbs, acoustic signals next to street crossings, benches and ideal illumination are minimal changes in the city, that have a big impact. If we do not have any problems moving around the city, we will forget that others could have difficulties. As architects and urban planners we are, for a big part, responsible for these themes in the city and we have to impose these rules, we have to create inclusion. But inclusion is more than just for the body. We have to pose the question for whom we are building and what do we want to achieve through the built space.

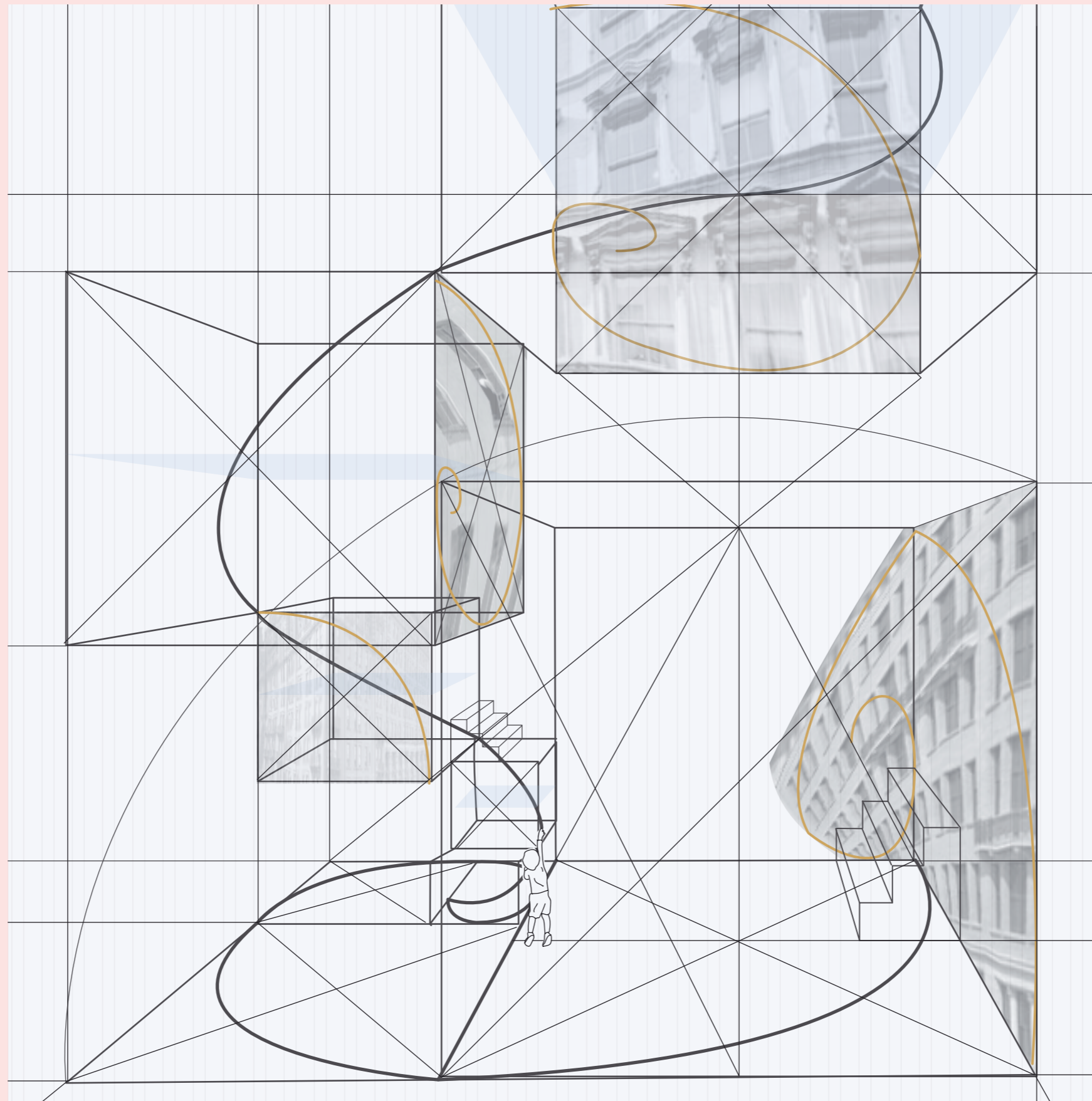
How can architecture create an age inclusive city space, by not only defeating built barriers, but also connecting different worlds?

Well, as this chapter is alluring, we have to look further than the body and try to [create connections between the minds in the urban space.](#) In order for us to feel integrated we need spaces, outside of our home, that allow us to be part and active in the city life. It is therefore crucial that we work with different typologies of spaces, with the premise the of age inclusiveness.

Nowadays we find typologies such as libraries and culture houses, that allow us to connect age and interests. There has to be a reason we consciously want to go to a certain space in the city. There have to be activities that are of interest to us and others, that we could come in contact with. This could be the call for a new typology, one that is related to age and wants to create age integration. It could contain folklore activities and exchanges of knowledge, or just the chance to be spatially close, to see other people and try to understand differences and how we can overcome them. Like a library with its books, we could have stories told by actual people, by being in contact with them. [Age is connected to everyone and we all have a relation to it, so why then not connect through it?](#)







## Relation body and space

built according to proportions and ratios - not enough to be adapted for the body

## Relation Body + Space

From the three relations is BODY and SPACE the one that comes to mind easiest. Since it talks about the relation of bodies that change over time and the space they move within. It is also the relation that we can perceive in a city visually. If there are different solutions adapted to age, we at least feel like there is space for everyone in the city.

This relation has been created from the hypothesis that if space allows appropriation for the body, it will create age inclusion. Accessibility is naturally connected to the composition of the city and the public realm. Composition of urban furniture and elements and how we circulate through the city are important factors that change the image of the city. Especially for elderly or people who are physically disabled are these elements crucial to be able to be part of the city life. Creating actual accessibility is important to create integration. If a person is not able to access certain parts of the city, they will always need assistance and that is a major challenge, if the person would like to be autonomous. We cannot create cities that are just adapted to a specific group of people. As architects and city planners we have responsibilities and cannot deviate from inclusion agendas, just because they involve a different approach or more money to realise.

Challenges and restrictions generate creativity and we cannot afford to create a world for just a part of our population. This has been for a long time the thought, but this is not the correct way to continue.

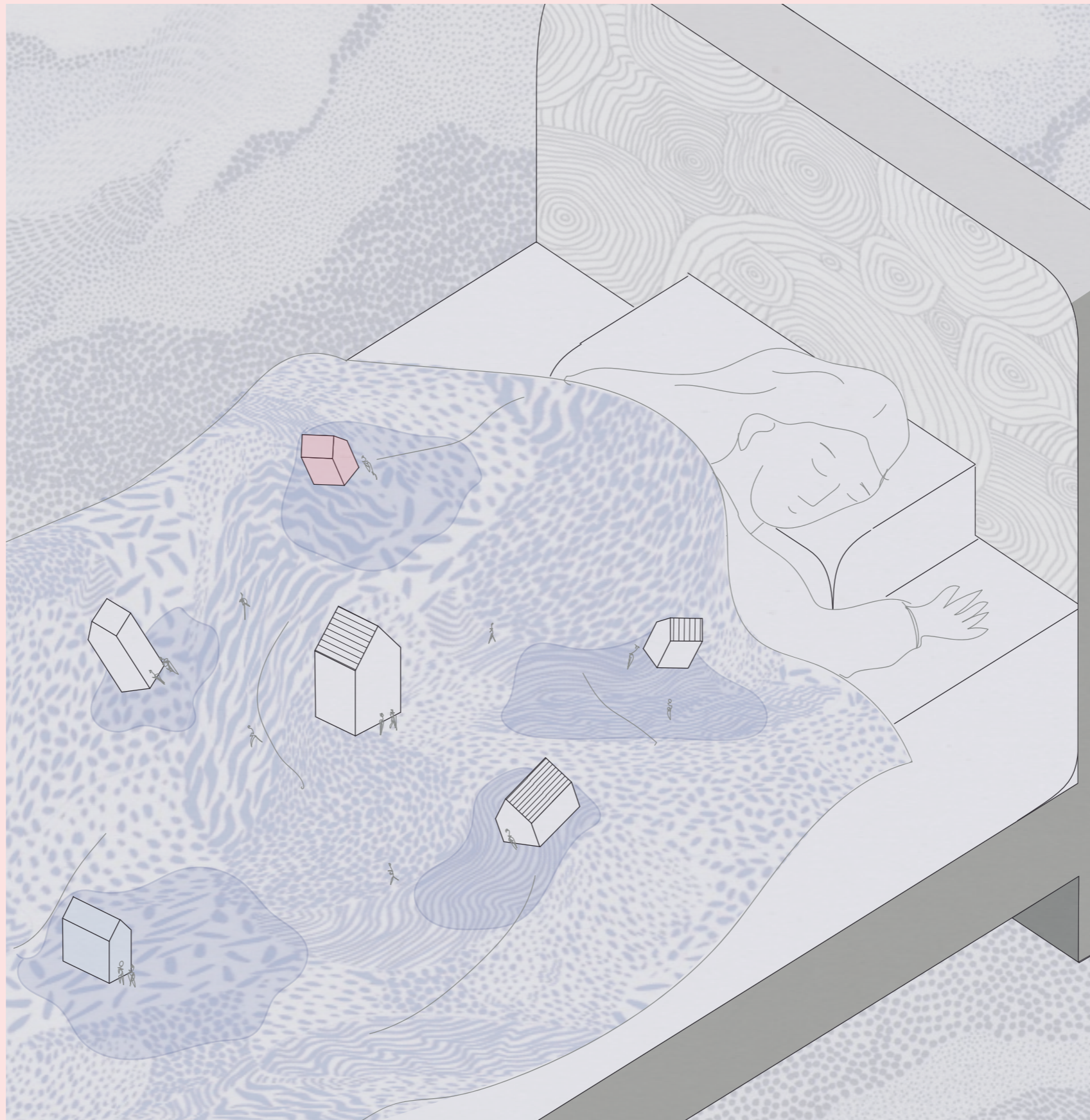
Who decides for whom we should build? – The majority, even if minorities are especially challenged and actually need inclusion. But this step has to come from the majority.

Accessibility is therefore, not only related to the actual accessibility of space, but also to the feeling of being welcome in the city. If we are allowed to appropriate space and feel safe doing so, we will feel like we can be part of the city. There are already different theories on how to create a feeling of safety such as formulated by Gehl (2006) and Jacobs (1961); and in the case of age integration we have to go into the needs of elderly.

Through space appropriation, we get in contact with other people that appropriate space close to us. We can create different levels of appropriation and maybe even share them with other inhabitants.

This creates different bubbles of intimacy, that we create when we are comfortable in a space, where we ourselves decide whom we let in. By wanting to create age inclusion we therefore have to think how to possibly merge different bubbles of intimacy and create a new standard of age integration and the concept of age in general.





## How to feel safe

city as appropriable space, where we feel like we can be in

## How to feel safe

Safety, and the feeling of it, can be very subjective notions. One person can feel in danger in one situation, while another feels safe, or at least not threatened. Ideally, we want to create a city that feels safe for everyone. This is obviously not possible in practice since the perception of our senses can be so different, but nevertheless is this the greater goal.

Safety is often connected to the known. If we are used to a certain situation, space or demographic, we will feel less in danger. We know how to read the situation and therefore how to act.

Therefore, are discrimination and feeling unsafe closely connected together. If we do not know how a person acts and we feel like we could be threatened by them, certain feelings will be triggered. These feelings are often based on prejudices and are discriminatory, introducing a feeling of us and them. As previously mentioned can these feelings be reduced, with the help of open dialogue and a desire to understand how other people feel.

The other factors of feeling safe are related to the city itself, the feeling of safety is created through a combination of different aspects. People we do not know can be the cause for a feeling of unsafety, while people we do know and trust eliminate this feeling. Safety and familiarity are connected relations.

As Jane Jacobs theories postulate is a feeling of safety also created by having "eyes on the street", by having people on the streets and around them (Jacobs, 1961). So even if we do not know all people on the streets, they still create a safety net, so that we are less vulnerable, since we are part of a bigger group of people.

A more practical aspect that can increase the feeling of safety is light. Light is related to the sense of vision. Even if over time our senses get weaker, vision is still one of the major guidance senses. The major factor changing between feeling safe or unsafe is therefore the capability of seeing. Since in the evening and night, light is limited, a general feeling of safety is lacking. It is not only important to have illumination in the public space, but also to work with the quality of light. The more the light mimics daylight, the safer we will feel (Plan International, 2018).

But to create that light quality, a higher cost is required, which is often the point against these realisations. Creating safety and welcomeness are often related to a cost point and are undervalued in the general perception of the city.

Since the body changes over time, elderly often cannot keep up with the high pace that we find in the city. This slowness is not correspondent to the calculated walking times over streets or seating possibilities.

Therefore, elderly often do not want to go into the public realm by themselves, since they feel like they cannot cope with all these factors and feel like the city is overwhelming. Consequently, the feeling of safety is minimised.

In my opinion it is not necessary to slow down the whole city, since that would disturb the flow for other people, but to create a "slower line" in order to help slower members: To make them feel like they do not have to rush in the city. We have to take into account when designing pedestrian areas that the flow should not be interrupted and everyone should be able to walk in their speed.

If we feel like we can take up space, we will feel safer in the city in general.



## Appropriation on different scales

occupying space and making it our own

## Appropriation on different scales

As the word says, is the public realm, the area in the city, which belongs to everyone, or at least where everyone is allowed to be. Where we all should be able to find our space and can appropriate it. We create a space for our own in the vastness of the whole space. This need of appropriation of space happens out of necessity (Lefebvre, 1985).

Appropriation, implies that we not only occupy space for a certain time, but we make it our own. We can do this in different ways, by being in a certain space in the public more often, or by leaving a piece of belonging there signalling that we want to sit in that space.

Appropriation happens also between the different age groups and specific areas of the city "belong" to different generations. If we want the generations to come closer, we can try to create areas that are spatially close, where everyone is able to establish an own territory. Again then, different generations get to be in the same space and therefore get to know each other. This form of incorporating different age groups in one area, can be the first step in establishing intergenerational relations. Appropriation can happen in different

scales and can therefore create different kind of interactions. Park benches can be easily appropriated objects in the urban realm, that not only allow us to rest, but also to get in contact with someone. Already the act of sitting next to each other is often enough to spark the first act of interaction. It is therefore quite common that small talk can happen between different ages on a park bench or while taking the public transport. The important thing with these interactions is balance, not being too invasive towards the other person. Again can that depend on the culture of the country, if having small talk conversations are custom.

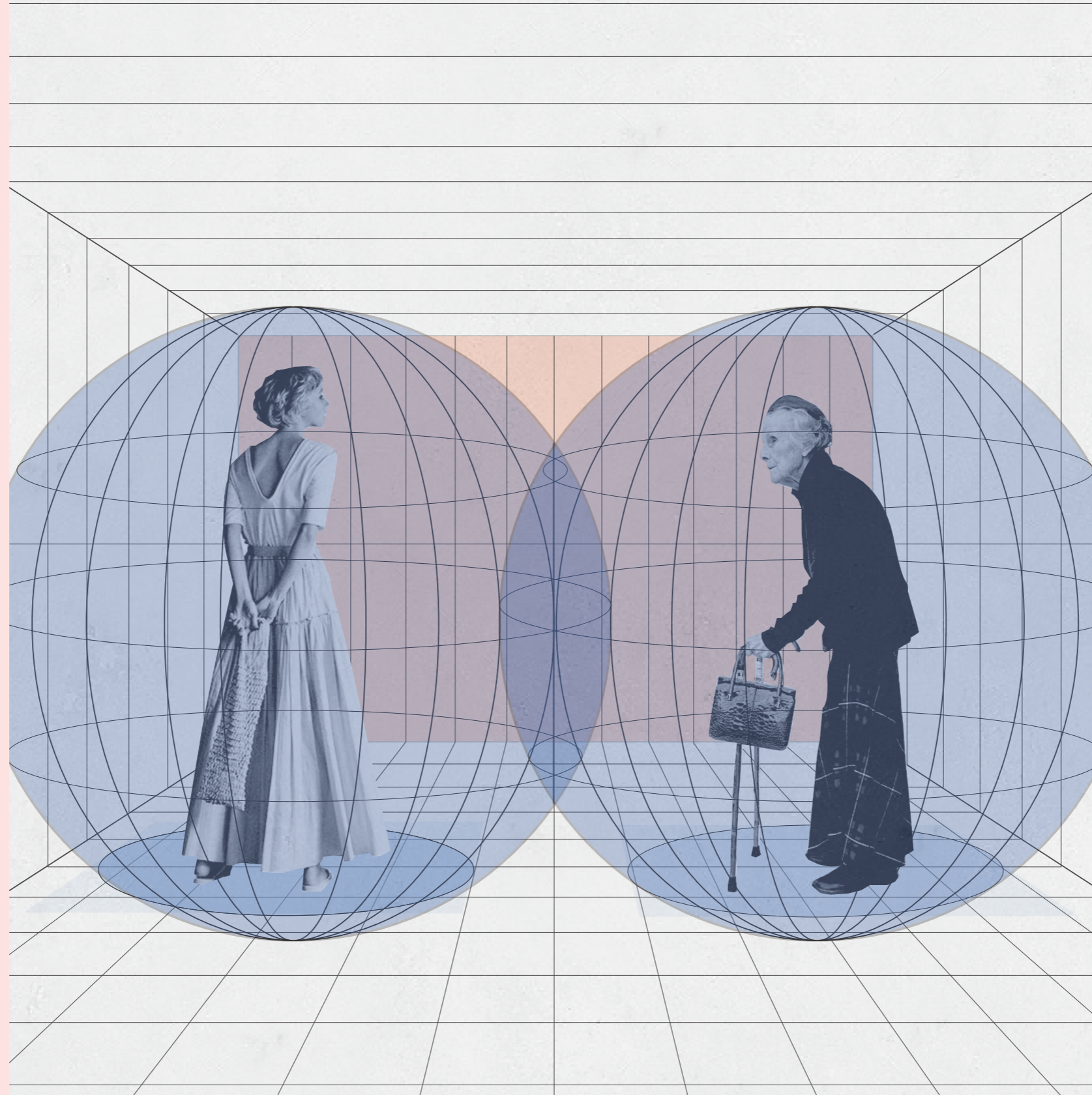
Bigger appropriations happen if a smaller area of the city is appropriated by a group. While appropriation can be favourable in the city in order for everyone feeling like they belong to the city, it can also create segregation. In our society, space is defined by age separated appropriations, but what if we can unite age groups, so that bigger appropriations can happen. What if these appropriations are at the same time inclusive and allow expansion, whenever someone new is coming? Can, then, the act of appropriation create age integration?

I think that everyone wants to be allowed to find their own space in the city. If we feel not threatened that someone could take that possibility, we can be less defensive towards the act of appropriation itself and allow other people to appropriate as well. As already mentioned is segregation created by fear for the unknown. If we can overcome the fear by understanding how other people are, we can be spatially and mentally closer.

Additionally, does appropriation not mean, that no one else can use the space except for the person appropriating, but it is rather a temporal confined appropriation, that allows an age exchange.

A larger scale of appropriation would be in the city level, where whole neighbourhood communities can be established. A larger group of people then appropriates the city realm and even different buildings. If a successful appropriation happens, we can add community buildings and functions in these areas, so that there are additional meeting points for the community.

If a whole quartier is appropriated by different age groups, there is a space for everyone and a harmonious living can be achieved.



## Bubbles of intimacy

being comfortable in a space and deciding whom we let in



## Bubbles of intimacy

If there is a common feeling of safety, and we know that we can declare a small space of the city temporary of our own, we are able to create intimacy.

Intimacy with the city can mean that we have found our space in the built environment and know, that there is space for us. These feelings can be created by the built environment and urban furniture, but also vegetation. We create a bubble of intimacy with the inanimated objects around us.

We can also create intimacy between people in the urban realm. As Jan Gehl describes, there are different level of public encounters with different degrees of intensity (Gehl, 2006). These different degrees of intensity can be connected to different grades of intimacy. Where we create smaller or bigger bubbles according to the relation we have or we create in a briefer interaction with another person. Intimacy can also expand, if we know more people and we allow them to take part in our bubble.

If we take Gehl's categories, they are Passive Contact and Change Contact (Gehl, 2006) the two relations, where we barely get to know a person. This could be sitting next to someone in the bus and saying sorry when having to pass, but also small interactions such as asking for the way. We do not have to undervalue these limited interactions, since they are able to be very impactful nevertheless. For elderly these interactions can be the only ones for the whole day, if they live alone.

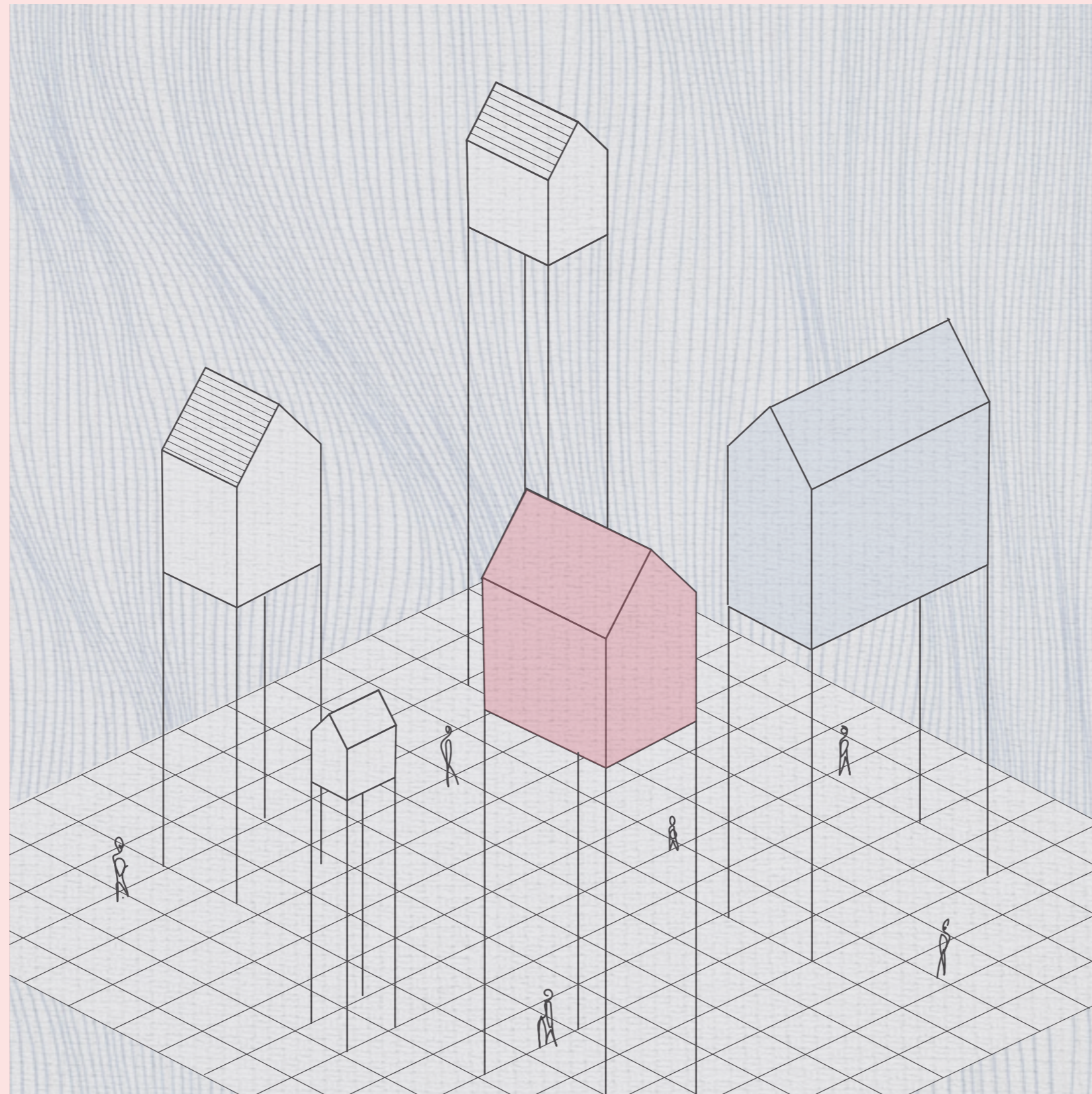
Even though the interaction does not have a high degree of intensity, is it possible to create a bigger bubble of intimacy and a small positive impact on the day. It can therefore be good to think for oneself, how we would like smaller interactions in the city to happen. Did we feel a bit better after a long day because a random person said something kind to us? Not that compassion should drive our daily experience, but we can think of the impact we want to have on other inhabitants.

These smaller interactions do already happen casually in the city, but we can increase the probability for them to happen by creating seating, where we are closer to other people, where we still feel like we appropriated our own space, but can share our bubble of intimacy.

Acquaintances (Gehl, 2006) are closer relations and therefore the bubble of intimacy is bigger. If we meet a person multiple times a week or month and can have a casual conversation and know something about them. Such interactions can happen in a neighbourhood, where we know a neighbour's name and can maybe ask them, if we can borrow some ingredients. Other acquaintances could be our baker of trust. Where we know they have the best bread and can have a small conversation of the duration of the grocery shopping. If a neighbourhood feeling can be created in an area of the city we also achieve such interactions.

The last two categories are Friendship and Close Friendship (Gehl, 2006).

These interactions have the biggest bubble of interaction and we can talk for longer time periods with the other person. To be able to create a friendship, we always start from the smallest conversation and through constant work, we are able to create a higher degree of intensity. If we want to introduce more of such closer relations, we can hope that they happen casually, but if we want to introduce them in the city we have to subsidise them through different folklore activities in the city, so that new relations can be created. In my opinion is age not a factor that could change the degree of intimacy or the creation of a big bubble of intimacy. On the other hand, different aged relations can be more special since we do not have so many friendships that are intergenerational, yet.



## Accessibility

allowing everyone to be part of the built environment

## Accessibility

The other notion related to the relation of BODY + SPACE will be accessibility. This chapter will discuss how we can create inclusion by creating access to the city through the built. The themes of circulation and placement will be discussed and how universal design can help us to further develop age integration in the city.

As mentioned in previous chapters, it is not enough to create an accessible city to create inclusion, but it is an essential factor that we should not discredit. By not allowing access to certain members of society, we automatically create segregation. Especially by not allowing certain age groups to be in the public space, we create a visual segregation that perpetuates the stigma, that once old we will no longer be part of society. Moreover, this creates a vicious circle, where we do not know how to interact with different age groups.

Accessibility, as in the previous chapters mentioned, also means to feel comfortable. We create access to the public realm by allowing appropriation and occupying specific spaces.

We can also create an urban dialogue by connecting the public to the private, by introducing visual connections. Allowing passive participation, by having outdoor spaces also connected to our apartment. If elderly or others do not want to be actively part of the happening, they can nevertheless see what is happening on the streets and a sort of accessibility is created.

Additionally, can accessibility be created by having a strong community if other community members offer their help and create access to the rest of the world. If an elderly person needs help with grocery shopping a younger member can help them and all of a sudden a new relation to the city is created, a new accessibility.

Accessibility is nevertheless not only rules and laws that imply how to build elderly friendly. How inclined a ramp should be, how wide a door is, where elevators should be, are all important factors that we have to implement in our design in order to create inclusion, yes, but with that we are not done. There is a bigger agenda that has to be pushed.

There have to be spaces in the city, spaces in every neighbourhood that allow us to create a contact with other generations.

Accessible in the sense of having spaces that allow us to have contact. That create access to other people, with whom we can have an interaction and maybe even develop a bigger bubble of intimacy.

Humans are social creatures that need contact with others. We do not lose the need for that, maybe it changes, but we want to have conversations and run our passions free with others.

Denying other people being part of society, is denying ourselves to having great connections with others that create experiences that help us in our daily life as well.





## Conclusion

Architecture as a tool of integration? Yes, but we have a long way to go!

## Conclusion

So after going through the research and discussion, which conclusions do we reach with this manifesto? We can say that architecture has already an important role in society and we have much power on our hands to stir integration in the city. Many improvements are already being made by creating age integrated housing and universal design in the urban realm. Public spaces give space to all age groups, elderly homes and kindergartens are often paired for interaction.

### Nevertheless, is this not enough!

It is not sustainable to only have age integrated islands in the city and hope that the different age groups will miraculously live harmoniously together. Currently, we do not have a balance between the age groups because there is no holistic approach to the theme of age integration. Architects and urban planners should see age integration as an essential criterion that always has to be used in the design process. As building barrier-free has become a standard ingredient, so should age integration be seen as well.

On every scale we should see how age integration can happen. From the small scale lowered street curb, that allows kids and elderly to get easily on the walking path. To the seating areas close to walking paths, where a break can be taken from a longer walk and a casual interaction can start. To the playground, that becomes a space for everyone, where urban furniture

allows different appropriations. To the city block, that becomes an age integrated typology, that has connecting folklore activities for the neighbourhood. To the city quartier, that supports neighbour connections, where families help each other. To the whole city, that is well connected and accessible, that has good illumination and a vibrant city life, that creates safety.

In each scale we have to make the effort and think about age integration and age inclusion and see architecture not only as the definer of the built environment, but as a tool for creating connections.

To be able to eliminate the feeling of them and us, we have to be in constant contact with different age groups. No one will win in this unnecessary battle of the ages. Obviously, is this easier said than done, but as this manifesto discusses, there are many ways of how integration can happen. By understanding the things that connect us rather than divide, we will be able to create bubbles of intimacy and allow everyone to appropriate areas in the city.

The architectural discourse must be pushed further, taking age integration as a constant criterion when planning. The goal should be that every space offers the possibility to exchange and not just single buildings in the city, in which not even everyone is invited to.

I am biased because I get emotional when seeing elderly by themselves and urban loneliness being a propagating phenomenon. A person that once was in the "bloom" of their life and is now forced to be alone. How can we as human race support a system that exploits us in our "best years" and leaves us then by ourselves, once we need assistance?

We are all in the same boat, and not wanting it to sink is our common goal. We cannot accept age segregation, but at the same time, we need support systems that facilitate interactions. We need spaces where we get in touch with what exists out there in the world, things that we did not even know about. We have to understand that age is an immaterial good. That age and different generations are and will always be factors that accompany us in our daily life. I think we have to get back to appreciate the exchange and also the differences there are. We can learn so much more from each other, when not everyone does the same things or thinks the same way. Exchange is the key to creating integration in our society and architecture is the enabling platform for this exchange to happen.

So how would I conclude my manifesto? Can I say that my hypotheses were successful and architecture can be a tool of age integration? Yes, absolutely. By having a dialogue about our needs and the needs of others we

can create age inclusion and integration, but that alone is not enough. We cannot limit ourselves to the 2D realm of architecture, we have to look further and understand the real implications, that architecture can remove and create. The relation that is created between the built space, the body and the mind.

With this manifesto I generated a storytelling, where different solutions are mentioned, or questions are posed, in order for us to understand our relation to age and architecture, where every reader questions their relation to age as well. These suggestions can be adapted in the design of (age integrated) cities. Age integrated in parenthesis, because that should be the aim for every design and area in the city and not just a concept for an utopian project. If we do not have to use age integration as a special concept for a project, we know that we will have reached the goal of having age integration as a constant factor that has to be respected in order to be build.

We cannot limit ourselves to the known, we should have the goal to constantly grow and feel like we are part of the city. Denying other people being part of society, is denying ourselves to having great connections with others that create experiences, that help us in our daily life as well.



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