

MINI LIVING



**BIG LIFE.
SMALL FOOTPRINT.**

BUILDING URBAN FUTURE.

At MINI LIVING, we believe that it is possible to enjoy our own space while embracing community, and that creative use of space is key for new approaches to the cities we love. We apply our design knowledge to discover new concepts for urban living, and establish smart ways to share our resources. This is why we collaborate and innovate, to unlock the hidden potential in our urban areas, searching for quality of life on a minimum footprint. Living consciously, and building the future of our cities.

MINI LIVING.

MINI LIVING creates a holistic experience based on MINI's understanding of future urban living. It explores an architectural housing concept, where individuality and privacy are preserved and in which shared amenities are added to the personal living experience.

The installation presents a combination of four 30-square-meter apartments thought to share the floor of a residential building. Together, they form a micro-neighborhood, in which assets and functions are shared. The mechanism enabling this is an innovative wall concept of rotating shelves, that can be pushed into the communal space. By opening their shelves, filled with personal assets such as a kitchen sink or a sound system, the residents can share these functions with their neighbors. When and to what extent residents wish to share space and time with the community is up to them.

The installation dissolves the conflict between private sphere and community. And shows: we get a whole lot more when we share.

MINI LIVING is a collaboration between MINI, studio ON Design and Atyp.

MINI LIVING crea un'esperienza olistica che si basa sulla comprensione di MINI di come sarà il futuro della vita urbana. Esplora un concetto di architettura abitativa, in cui individualità e privacy sono preservate e a cui sono aggiunti servizi e funzioni condivisi per migliorare l'esperienza di vita personale.

L'installazione presenta una combinazione di quattro appartamenti di 30 metri quadrati, pensati per condividere il piano di un edificio residenziale. Insieme, formano un micro-quadro in cui risorse e funzioni sono condivise. Il meccanismo che rende possibile questo è un concetto di parete innovativo di scaffali rotanti, che possono essere spinti nello spazio comune. Aperti, questi scaffali, riempiti di oggetti personali come un lavandino o un sistema audio, consentono ai residenti di condividere queste funzioni con i vicini. Quando e in che misura i residenti vogliono condividere lo spazio e il tempo con la comunità è up to them.

L'installazione dissolve il conflitto tra la sfera privata e quella pubblica e ci dimostra che si ottiene molto di più quando si condivide.

MINI LIVING è una collaborazione tra MINI, studio ON Design e Atyp.



MINI LIVING

DO DISTURB.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2016





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A GATEWAY TO A NEW DIMENSION.

'DO DISTURB'
INSTALLATION LETS
THE OUTSIDE IN.



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2016



For the MINI LIVING installation 'Do Disturb', MINI explored the future of urban housing by designing a conceptual floor plan that enables you to have the best of both worlds: your privacy as well as a life in a vivid community.



Private office, or coworking space? The flexible approach of 'Do Disturb' allows for both possibilities. For MINI LIVING the Japanese studio ON Design creates rotating bookcases that turn neighbours into coworkers in an instant.

'DO DISTURB' RECLAIMS COMMUNITY.

URBAN SPACE RE-
IMAGINED AT SALONE
DEL MOBILE 2016.



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2016



Photo (bottom): Davide Calafa

For Salone del Mobile 2016, MINI LIVING collaborated with the Japanese studio ON Design and the Berlin division of engineering office Arup on a new vision of urban living. The installation 'Do Disturb' literally turns conventional apartment living inside out. MINI designed a conceptual floor plan that encourages creative life and fosters community.

Remember those old movies where the villain had a rotating bookcase in his otherwise normal-looking home? If you pulled the right book out at the right angle, the shelf, the wall it was attached to, and sometimes even the guy holding the book, would rotate a full 180 degrees, usually revealing a secret passageway, a futuristic super-computer, or a gateway to another dimension.

MINI.COM/LIVING

Well, if you came along to see MINI LIVING at Salone del Mobile 2016 in Milan you might have been reminded of this old trope by our installation 'Do Disturb', a MINI collaboration with Japan's ON Design and Berlin's Arup, in which MINI explored the concept of the future of urban housing by designing a conceptual floor plan. You walk into a stylish, comfortable-looking apartment. In the bedrooms and bathroom, the walls do what walls usually do, keeping the inside in and the outside out. But in the kitchen, living room and workspace, you find that the walls are made of shelves and bookcases that can be swivelled around and opened out at will. What's behind the living room wall, however, is not a secret passageway, but something even more mysterious—neighbours! Our houses and apartments are generally designed to help us forget they exist, so it comes as some surprise to find them right behind the wall. At 'Do Disturb', the walls opened up to invite

the neighbours in, so dinner for one could become a communal affair, and a person practising an instrument alone could soon find herself at a spontaneous jam. What lies behind the wall really is a new dimension. It might not be 'futuristic', but it could well represent the future. ON Design's Osamu Nishida describes 'Do Disturb' as, "encouraging creativity through mixture and diversity", and this is what cities at their best provide—the chance to have your mind changed and your ideas enriched by collaboration and exchange. But our houses and apartments generally do a terrible job of facilitating this, since they're stuck in forms invented during the last century. 'Do Disturb' takes a step away from the existing models of apartment and suburban living. It acknowledges that people still want and need their privacy, but also hopes to reclaim what's been lost in our hurry to banish the outside world from our homes—community.

BEHIND THE WALL: ANOTHER DIMENSION.

THE MAKING OF
'DO DISTURB'.



Osamu Nishida, of Yokohama based architects ON Design, collaborates with MINI LIVING to explore urban living solutions for the 21st century. Nishida describes 'Do Disturb' as, "encouraging creativity through mixture and diversity".

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DO DISTURB.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2016

From concept to completion: ON Design's model for 'Do Disturb' shows a radical rethink of urban living.



At Salone del Mobile 2016, ON Design and MINI's concept becomes reality and visitors can experience 'Do Disturb' for themselves.



Architecture for a creative life, where living space can be adapted to your changing needs and spontaneous ideas.



What's behind the bookcase? 'Do Disturb' flips the script on traditional urban living, letting the outside in.



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DO DISTURB.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2016

RECLAIMING THE CITY.

MINI LIVING RETHINKS URBAN
LIVING TOGETHER WITH ARCHITECT
ASIF KHAN.



‘Forests’ was a place for shared experience.

Not strictly private or public, outside or inside, but a hybrid of all these things, MINI LIVING – ‘Forests’ is a place for interaction, creativity and shared experience. Produced in collaboration with London architect Asif Khan for the London Design Festival 2016, ‘Forests’ rethinks urban living by reactivating the potential of public space, and offering a ‘third place’ in the heart of the city.

Picture this: you’re walking down a street in the city you live in, when suddenly you see something you’ve never seen before—a little geometric pavilion, bursting with light and life, sitting right there in a place where there had previously been... well, not much. You poke your head inside and find an urban oasis, gentle light filtering through the leaves and shoots of potted plants, illuminating a quiet,

comfortable space. There’s electricity, wi-fi, people sitting quietly, meeting, talking or working away on creative projects. What is it? Not a café or a bar or a shop, not ‘home’ or ‘work’, but something in-between. Put simply at MINI LIVING, we rethought the concept of the ‘third place’. ‘Third places’ will become a vital element of peoples’ lives. They should offer the right function in the right place at the right time.

What we’ve just described is a project we created with Asif Khan, installed on the streets of Shoreditch for just over a week as part of London Design Festival 2016. ‘Forests’ consisted of three transparent pavilions, filled with lush greenery and furnished in a simple, minimal style. The ‘Connect’ space featured a table for meetings, talks, dinners or coworking jams. The ‘Relax’ space had a bench for quiet contemplation, or just somewhere to put your bags down and rest your legs. The ‘Create’ space, meanwhile, offered a flexible arrangement of tables, chairs and other bits and

pieces, so you could use it for whatever you like.

‘Forests’ turned up in the kind of places we walk through every day, but barely notice, those ‘in-between’ zones that, if they appear on a map at all, tend to be coloured in a uniform grey, as if to say “nothing to see here”. This, for us, was exactly the point—to activate neglected or overlooked public spaces, to invite city-dwellers like ourselves to really live in the city.

And why not? We live in small apartments crammed with belongings, and share crowded offices. We seek relief at coworking spaces or cafés, but find that these alternatives are somehow never quite right. And we feel the corporate sphere taking over our streets, privatizing public space, and find ourselves increasingly squeezed out. Meanwhile, we move every day through parts of the city we think of as empty or blank. ‘Forests’ invites us to do just that—re-imagine our surroundings and activate the hidden possibilities of the cities we share.



MINI LIVING

YOUR SIDE
OF TOWN.

LONDON DESIGN
FESTIVAL 2016



The 'Connect' space; a place to meet.

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OF TOWN.

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FESTIVAL 2016



Climb up to 'Relax' in the city.

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MINI LIVING

YOUR SIDE
OF TOWN

LONDON DESIGN
FESTIVAL 2016

A place to 'Create' in an urban space.

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“I’ve got no time for exclusion.”

ASIF KHAN

Asif Khan is not the kind of architect, who builds for the sake of building. What gets him out of bed in the morning is the idea of using architecture to connect people, forging links between London’s diverse, but often estranged communities. For Khan, it’s the architect’s job—responsibility even—to design a way out of the urban blues.

He must have been pleased, then, with the results of MINI’s intervention. Over seven days, ‘Forests’ became a catalyst for chance meetings between people of all walks of life. Apart from the accidental encounters that took place on the ‘Relax’ space’s comfortable bench, or the ‘Connect’ space’s communal table, the rooms also played host to a series of special events presented by MINI LIVING as part of the London Design Festival programme.



MINI LIVING

YOUR SIDE
OF TOWN.

LONDON DESIGN
FESTIVAL 2016

Design a way out of the urban blues.

Locals and visitors to the festival were invited to participate in a 'plant exchange', for example, to take home a plant from the room (a selection curated by Jin Ahn of Hackney's Conservatory Archives) in exchange for one they'd grown themselves. The Disappearing Dining Club—a London collective dedicated to creating eating experiences in unusual urban settings—presented a pop-up dinner party at the 'Create' space.

Watching East Londoners happily swapping ferns and fig trees, or sharing a meal together in what, only a week before, had simply been another urban no man's land between work and home, it seemed as though we had not so much created a new space, as made people realise they were already sharing one.



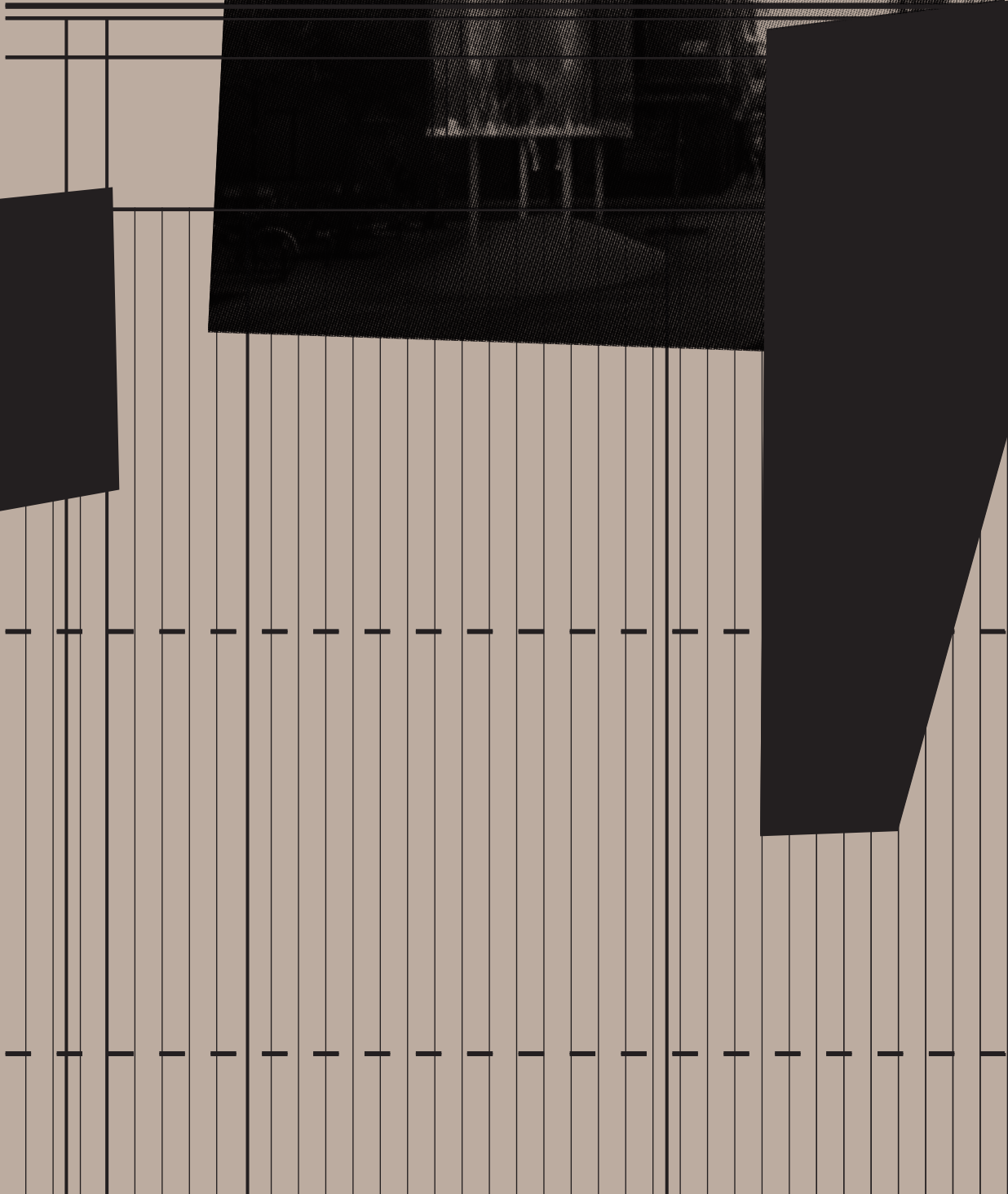
MINI LIVING

YOUR SIDE
OF TOWN.

LONDON DESIGN
FESTIVAL 2016



In creating 'Forests', Asif Khan was inspired by the Japanese concept of shinrin-yoku, or 'forest bathing', but also by a lifetime spent living in London.



MINI LIVING

YOUR SIDE
OF TOWN.

LONDON DESIGN
FESTIVAL 2016



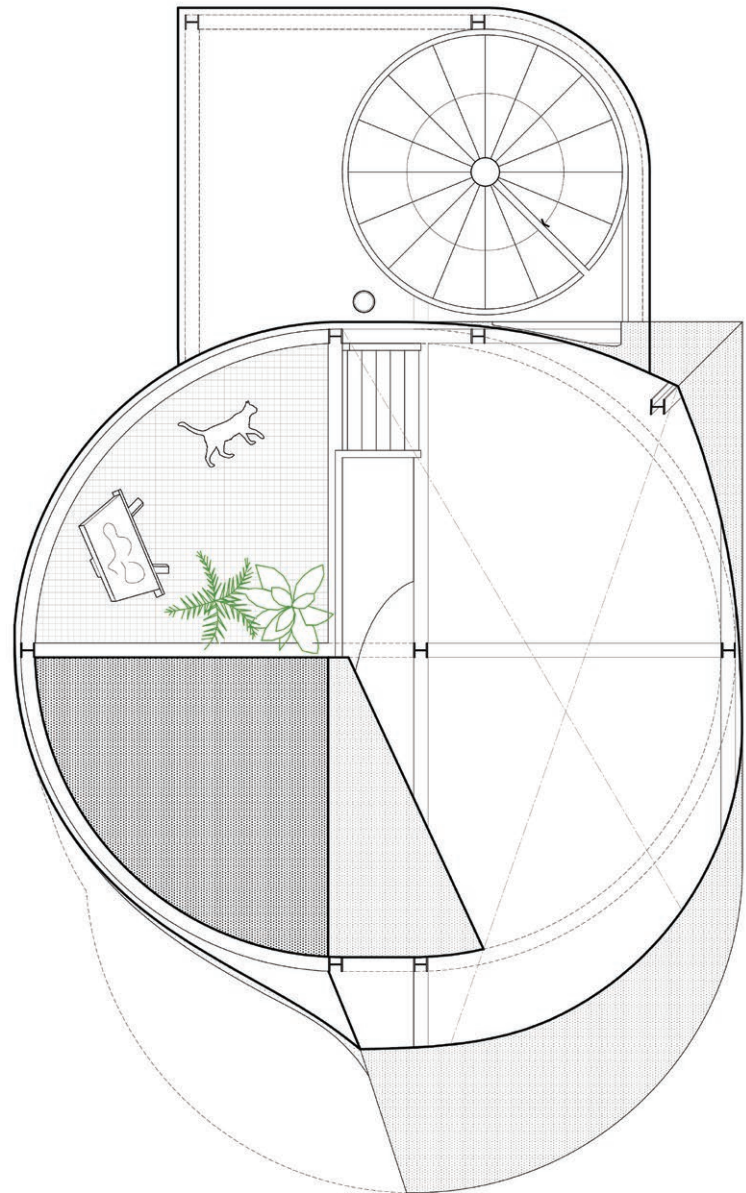
SO-IL: THE IDEA OF CONNECTION.

'BREATHE',
FOR A BETTER
URBAN LIFE.

What is the future of urban living? How can we live comfortably and sustainably in the city? In search of answers, MINI LIVING is collaborating with New York architects SO-IL on an installation for Salone del Mobile 2017. 'Breathe' faces tomorrow's challenges using MINI's core principle: creative use of space.

What's the difference between an artist and an architect? According to MINI collaborators SO-IL, it's simple: artists can use their work to raise questions, whereas architects have to provide answers.

The Brooklyn based architects' latest project is an installation made together with MINI LIVING for Salone del Mobile 2017 in Milan. It's a communal home and living space for three people, but here is where its resemblance to any other house or apartment you've seen before ends. It's not made of concrete, brick, or timber, but of a piece of tough, porous fabric stretched across simple metal scaffolding. This protects you from the elements, while simultaneously purifying the air you breathe and allowing light to filter into your living space. The same material divides the interior into levels and rooms, giving you privacy where you need it, and letting the outside in when you don't. The roof includes a communal garden and a rainwater collection system that makes the home largely self-sufficient, and also provides a space for you to think and relax.



'Breathe' brings city life in touch with the elements. A garden and a rain collection system on the roof provides your home with food and water as well as your very own urban oasis.

MINI LIVING

BREATHE.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2017



It's practical and beautiful. But if this is an 'answer', what is the question? MINI and SO-IL are tackling a problem you've no doubt thought about yourself. That is, given how crowded our cities are becoming, and how much we're having to compete for their space and resources, how can we improve the quality of urban life? And furthermore, how can we do this without resorting to last century's worn-out solutions? This isn't just a matter of changing fashion. High-rises and expanding suburbs have been, to put it mildly, a mixed blessing. Tower blocks and urban sprawl may have improved on the 19th century slum, but they did so at the cost of the environment and the community, leaving pollution and isolation in their wake. "I think some of these ideas were related to a more stable style of living,

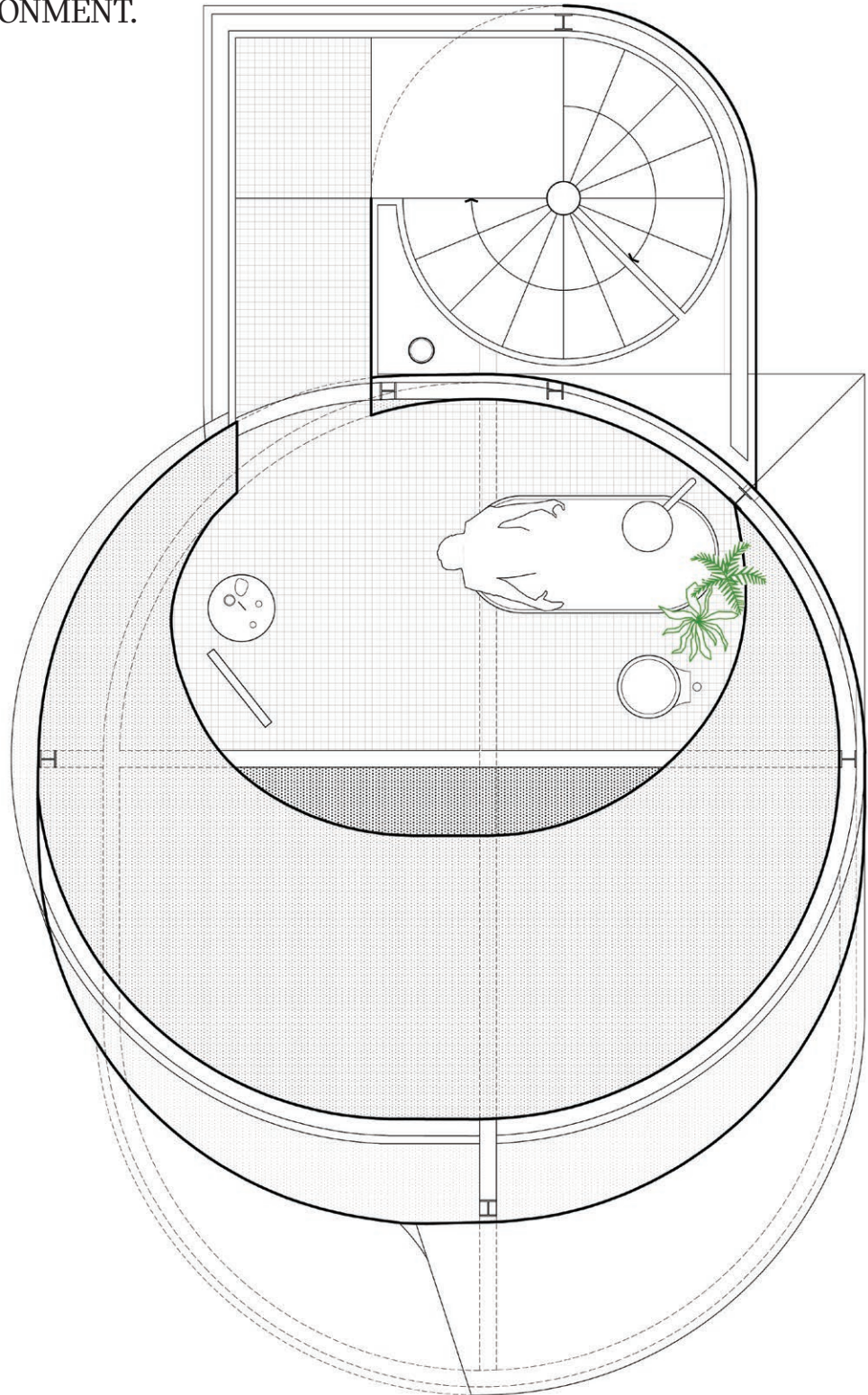
which may not reflect today's reality", explained SO-IL principal Ilias Papageorgiou. "People move more, there's more mobility, so there's been a need to rethink some of these models".

For MINI LIVING, the challenge ahead consists of finding a solution to the problem of urban living that is community-minded, collaborative, energy-conscious and sensitive to the existing environment, both built and natural, while still offering you privacy and comfort. To this end, for Salone del Mobile 2017, we put together a team of our favourite creatives from around the world, including A/D/O, the Turner Prize-winning collective Assemble, food designer Laila Gohar and SO-IL, to investigate the concept of mindful urban living. What are the consequences of

our actions? How can we design spaces for urban life and work that increase our awareness of the environment, our use of resources, and our responsibilities to one another? These questions are explored in different ways by all our collaborators— at Gohar's Conscious Café, Assemble's 'ideal factory', and SO - IL's 'Breathe'. The architects' solution reflects their long history of exploring and dealing with the challenges of urban living. "In all of our projects, I think the idea of relationships, either between people or between people and their environments, has been important", explains Papageorgiou. 'Breathe' takes this idea one step further. The installation acts as an 'urban contributor' that connects people to their neighbourhood and the vital resources again.

AIR, LIGHT AND WATER.

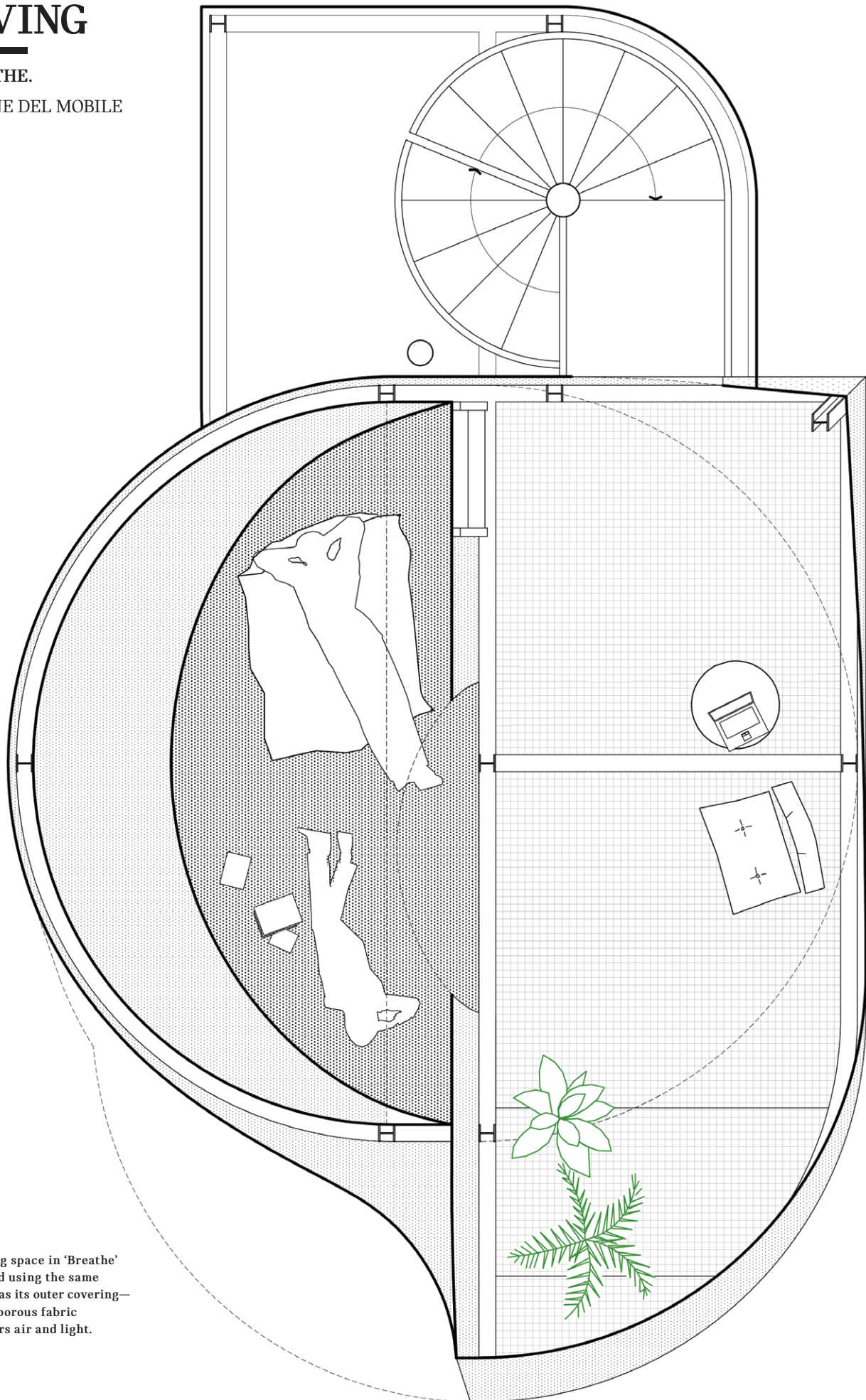
URBAN LIVING,
AWARE OF THE
ENVIRONMENT.



MINI LIVING

BREATHE.

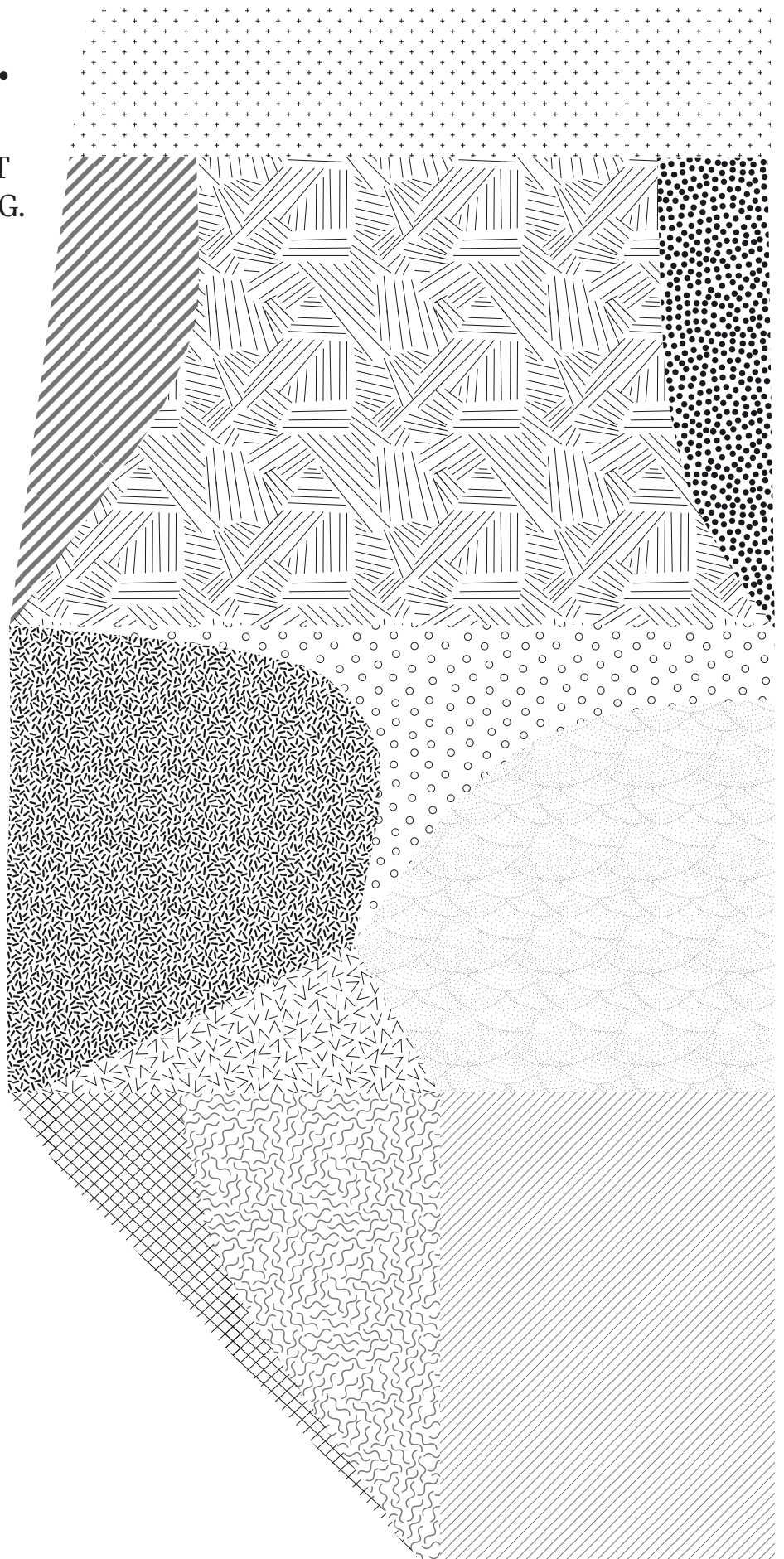
SALONE DEL MOBILE
2017



The living space in 'Breathe' is divided using the same material as its outer covering—a tough, porous fabric that filters air and light.

DESIGN FOR LIFE.

A NEW BLUEPRINT
FOR URBAN LIVING.



'Breathe' layers textures and materials creatively, offering an alternative to outmoded living concepts, and altering our thinking in the process.

MINI LIVING

BREATHE.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2017

The unique design of 'Breathe' affords privacy and connection, intimacy and community, through creative use of space and materials.

**“You’re
always aware
of the other
people or
objects in the
structure, so
there’s always
this idea of
connection.”**

ILIAS PAPAGEORGIU

Step inside 'Breathe', MINI LIVING and SO-IL's vision of conscious urban living on a small footprint.

'Breathe' responds to the challenges posed by urban life by making efficient use of resources—air, water and light. The structure collects rainwater for washing and drinking, while its unique elastic skin simultaneously purifies the air and amplifies natural light, creating subtly shifting effects through the various rooms over the course of a day. The installation is nestled into a small space between two buildings for an extremely compact physical footprint. And while it offers all the privacy you'd need, the house also allows for communal rather than private living, and an awareness of the outside world you wouldn't get in a normal house or apartment. "You're always aware of the other people or objects that are in the structure", says Papageorgiou, "so there's always this idea of connection". Indeed, this sense of connection and common responsibility is key to the whole project; SO-IL believes the installation's way of letting the outside in will subtly amplify our awareness of our environment, as surely as the walls of a brick house or concrete apartment building allow us to forget it. "We believe", write the architects, "it is impossible to care for our planet if we don't experience it."

SO-IL principals: Florian Idenburg, Jing Liu,
and Ilias Papageorgiou (from left).

A PLATFORM FOR RESEARCH.

INTERVIEW WITH SO-IL'S
ILIAS PAPAGEORGIU.



“We use projects like this as a platform for research into new ideas.”

ILIAS PAPAGEORGIU

For Salone del Mobile 2017, MINI LIVING – ‘Breathe’ showcases an installation in collaboration with SO–IL: a vision of ‘conscious living’ for the urban future. Formed in 2008, the Brooklyn based architectural design firm has since developed a reputation for forward-thinking work with a conceptual slant, and a particular concern for the real-world consequences and environmental impact of architecture. SO–IL’s Ilias Papageorgiou became a partner in 2013. As the installation gets underway, Papageorgiou sits down with MINI to talk about immersive living and how to move away from last century’s spatial concepts.

MINI is all about solutions for urban living. As a city dweller yourself, what do you like about urban life?

Ilias Papageorgiou: I’ve always lived in cities. I currently live in Brooklyn, New York and I grew up in Athens. My whole life has been in urban centers. I like the variety of conditions and opportunities you find in cities—the richness.

When we think of the challenges facing cities today, overcrowding is one of the most serious. In the past, the solution to this has been to build up, like a tower block, or to spread out into the suburbs. Are these ideas still useful? And if not, is there another way?

I think some of these ideas were related to a more stable style of living, which may not be today’s reality. People move more, so there’s been a need to rethink some of these models. I do think that the suburban model is obviously not valid, in terms of occupation of our planet. This spread-out urbanism doesn’t work as the population increases.

You’ve said, “it’s impossible to care for our planet if we don’t experience it”. How does your installation for MINI LIVING – ‘Breathe’ help us do this?

On the one hand, it does this by increasing our awareness of our resources—air, light and water. The installation is covered in a fabric that purifies the air, so we become aware of the problems with air quality that our cities are facing, which again is a result of the increased density of cities. There’s also a filter that collects water from the roof and stores it for the use of the inhabitants. And finally, it plays with light, as layers of light are filtered in different ways and create different degrees of transparency and translucency. This, in turn, plays with

how the installation is inhabited. You’re always aware of the other people or objects in the structure, so there’s always this idea of connection.

When we think of sustainable living, we usually imagine having to make some kind of sacrifice. Do we have to downgrade our quality of life to live on a small footprint?

Not necessarily, I think it might be just a different type of living.

Five years ago, SO–IL’s Jing Liu spoke of wanting to create a ‘communal living space’ in the heart of the city, but that urban regulations and privatisation made this difficult, if not impossible.

Has this collaboration with MINI LIVING brought the idea of a sustainable communal space closer to reality?

In all of our projects, I think the idea of relationships, either between people or between people and their environments, has been important. And that’s definitely something we’re trying to bring forth in this installation for MINI LIVING. We use projects like this as a platform for research into new ideas that feed into our work as architects. So even as we grow as a company, we still find it exciting to participate in projects like this one for Salone del Mobile, because, while they’re small, they can have a large impact.

SO–IL: SOLID OBJECTIVES: ORDER, EDGE, AURA.

AN EXCLUSIVE
BOOK PREVIEW.



We wake up to a desaturated dawn. Hazy fleeting images of a landscape flash by, carefully constructed in various shades of grey. Tracks run perfectly parallel to an unswerving canal. Perpendicular to it, endless rows of poplars rhythmically emerge out of the thick mist. More and more signs of a meticulous, modern world appear under the sun's slow ascent. Beneath a gloss of harmony, the mood is sombre and grim. Tabloids and broadcasts rehash the same message in various tenors: Progress is over. "Now that we have seen the future, can we please go back?" Globalization brought quick ecstasy but a draining hangover. Regressive beliefs resurface while fences re-emerge; Tastes yearn for histories, indifferent to their actuality.

Unsettled and anxious, even architects turn nostalgic, romantically reviving fads of the past.

Incapable of reconciling inconsistencies inherent in reality, modern conceptions go awry, rendering their protagonists suspect. Yet, to forgo the guise of scapegoat or flagellant, architects must abandon unattainable prophecies and stop chasing the deductive and exact. Consider how an embrace of fleeting uncertainties—programmatic, social, meteorological, or cultural—would upset our actions. The delightful unpredictability of life on this planet and the beauty of its ambiguity rouses. Freed from a fascination with the stable, the monumental, and the explicit, we can start to see the elastic nebulae that weave our contemporary lives together in vibrant inexactitudes.

The cracks in the modern project spores of a larger and more complex

world, a labyrinthine condition in which matter and space are in continuous flux. Design no longer seeks control and associated capital gain but strays into new, unfamiliar territories. Bastard typologies, ad-hoc infrastructures, and mutant materials. Fleeting equilibriums, shaped intentionally and by chance, offer temporary repose. These are the transitory realms, structures, and objects that make up our world. Their momentary compositions affect how we move, where we end up and, ultimately, who we become.

How then might we meaningfully organize matter(s) in our increasingly volatile world? It is human nature to reduce in an attempt to understand complexity. Yet new terrain lies in the random, the subjective, the intuitive and the foreign. Can we surpass our desire for shelter, stability and betterment to discover a new beauty in the evolving, the transient and the erratic? Architecture can become the brief rearrangement of the substance that

MINI LIVING

BREATHE.

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This book is not a road map. It is a sequence of small and large spatial events, a series of filmic frames arranged as a continuum through past experiments. Each page is the precursor for the next. Moving through loosely defined conceptual themes, this trajectory is sequenced with moments of reflection—reveries on issues large and small as well as moments of concentration that draw the attention to a single project. As a totality, the book proposes an architecture that requires interpretation.

444 pages
9" x 6 5/8"
1 kg

constitutes our world. Unpredictability rejoices with organizational strategies that can develop, rather than be rigid and controlled. As our relationship to place is no longer stable and singular, instead of meaningless fragments, we create fluid multiplicities—varieties of form, experience, and relationship—such that diverse people can gather around their commonalities, but also their differences. We eschew global order for cosmopolitan citizenship. We find joy in miscommunication and misuse over clarity and singularity.

Our constructed and experienced world is increasingly mediated and measured through devices and algorithmic power, offering endless prying into human behaviours, sensorial experiences and neural mechanisms. Yet informational hegemony will not be our Shangri-La. Rather than a push for the seamless and integral, architects could also use these newfound tools to produce entropies, uncharted lands and unknowns: Places of wonder and surprise. In our increasingly pragmatic and quantified environments, dare we construct a new wilderness?

The book at hand can be understood as an erratic call to arms. It puts forth possibilities of solidification—the

orchestration of matter and space. Without claiming conclusiveness, the suggested tactics aim at contemplating how assemblies might trigger exchange or confrontation, how they evoke wonder or realization, affect our sense and insight, and create a confluence of influences. The search for a more androgynous modernity produces an ongoing series of constructs, objects, and propositions.

We may be certain about the path, as we have let go of the ultimate position. Yet this book is not a road map. It is a sequence of small and large spatial events, a series of filmic frames arranged as a continuum through past experiments. Each page is the precursor for the next, moving from order, organization, and the conception of plans to the consideration of how to embed these arrangements in the current, how to envision their interfaces, their edges, their borders. Finally, we explore the presence of our material assemblies. This trajectory is sequenced with moments of reflection—reveries on issues large and small as well as moments of concentration that draw our attention to a single project. As a totality, the book proposes an architecture that requires interpretation. Layer over layer, we work toward a new kind of focus.

SO – IL: SOLID OBJECTIVES: ORDER, EDGE, AURA.

AN EXCLUSIVE BOOK PREVIEW.



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A visual and textual manifesto, *Solid Objectives: Order, Edge, Aura* introduces an attitude towards the design and realization of architecture in an interconnected environment. Conceived by Florian Idenburg, Jing Liu and Ilias Papageorgiou, the book presents a collection of built and unbuilt projects, texts, processes and experiments of the first eight years of work of the New York based architecture firm SO – IL. (2008–2016).

it's about time all over again

for centuries architects working in cities have dealt with historical settings. often such context offers a hint or hand, determining "appropriateness." be it a typological, stylistic, or even a contrasting response, history acts as a guide. but more frequently these days, as recent building stock unrelentingly replicates, the remnants of previous occupants are not the prized relics of past civilizations. instead, the growing pile of leftovers in which to operate amounts to just plain stuff: walls, pipes, struts, lintels, cornices. moreover, sites come not only with material residue but also emotional and sentimental baggage, the things that are hard to let go of: endearing vistas, semisuccessful symmetries, idiosyncratic portals, even poetic aspirations gone awry. these physical fragments comprise our unedited legacy, history, and identity—the substance that actually fills up cities is our real heritage. how to engage with this filtrate of well-intended human activity?

of course, we might evaluate the reuse of this debris from an economic standpoint, considering its remaining value and the cost to maintain. then there is the ethical angle—reuse so as not to be wasteful—treating the existing as a collection of carriers of embodied energy. such approaches are commonplace, breeding benign ideas of "harvesting" or "mining" cities and sites. yet while quantitative approaches might give us some clue regarding material value, we believe there is an additional set of principles to contemplate. in adaptive reuse projects, architects tend to treat the existing as if it were an inert site, without agency. but what if we imagine found conditions as laden with attitude? what if we consider the preexisting as an inspired landscape of architectural qualities, which we can complement and enrich through negotiations with the new?

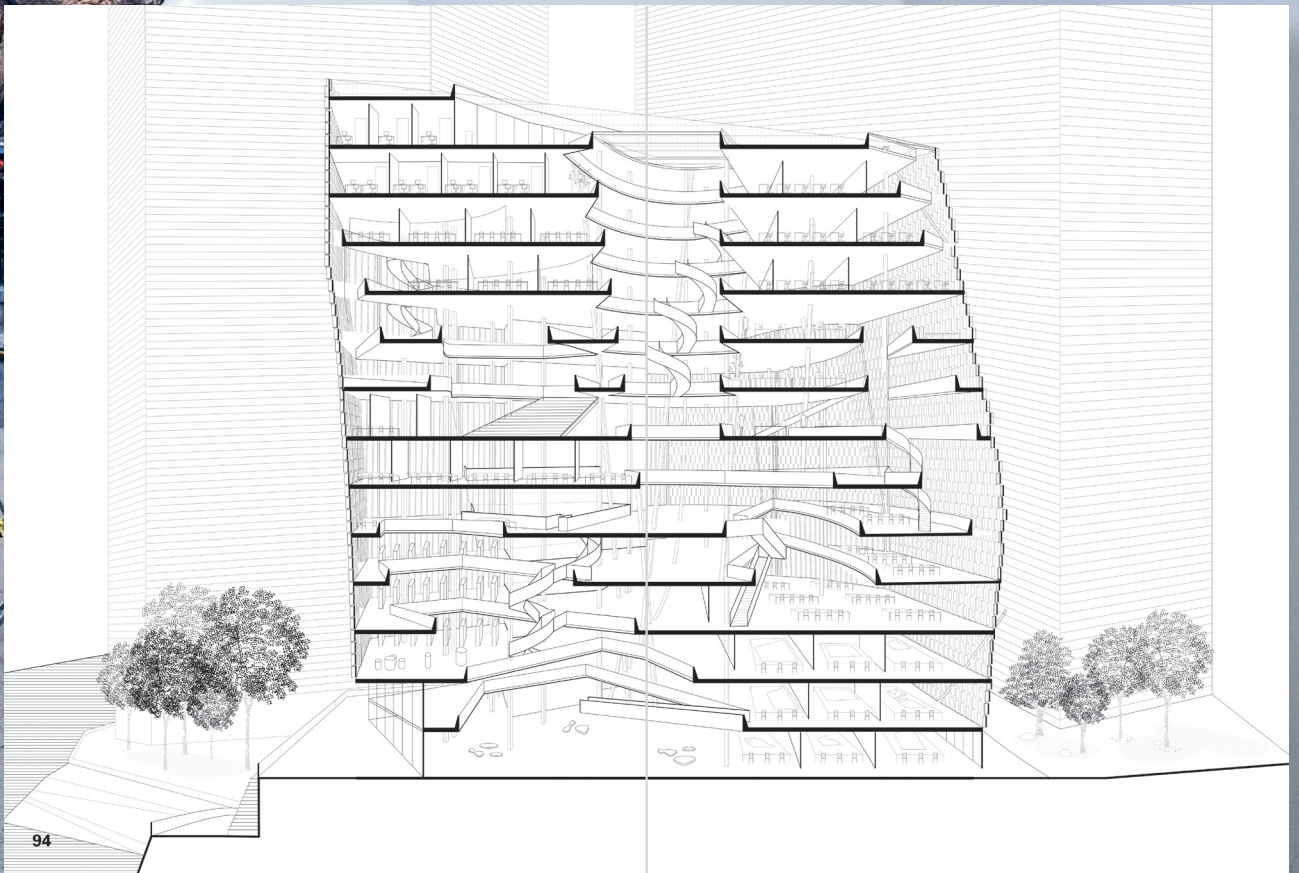
an example: the design for the renovation and extension of Z33, an institute for contemporary art in

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DIY IN THE ARCHITECTURAL COLLECTIVE.

ASSEMBLE AND
THE SPIRIT OF
A GENERATION.



Granby Four Streets is an urban regeneration project in Liverpool. Assemble's work there is part of an ongoing collaboration with a group of residents who took control of their neighbourhood following years of decline and failed regeneration schemes.

They conquer places in the city and give them new identities.

The presumably most famous building created by Assemble is currently stacked in a warehouse in South East London. Bare wooden beams, prefabricated facade elements and pastel-coloured cement tiles. Built and rented out by the British architecture and design collective themselves in 2014, “Yardhouse” now lies dismantled and packaged in anticipation of a buyer. The building is flexible. It originally served as a work space, but can be used for other purposes. The important thing is that the new owner reconstructs the iconic tile wall—even if for Instagram alone. For Salone del Mobile 2017, MINI LIVING invited Assemble to exhibit a temporary version of its project ‘A Factory As it Might Be’.

‘Yardhouse’ shares the fate of other Assemble architecture. The very first project, the self-initiated no-budget

cinema ‘The Cineroleum’ in Clerkenwell constructed in 2010, is long gone as well. The cultural enclave ‘Folly for a Flyover’ under a London motorway feeder road and the temporary ‘Theater Playing Field’ are also history. There is no reason for phantom pain, however, as these ephemeral interventions demonstrate one of the abilities of the London based collective currently consisting of 15 members—they make spaces for possibility visible. With their projects, they conquer places in the city and give them new identities.

This fresh view of the city also impressed the jury of the most important British art award, the Turner Prize, in 2015. Assemble was honoured for their work in Granby Four Streets, a neglected city district in Liverpool. Together with local residents, they developed a restoration concept for the neighbourhood’s vacant Victorian terraced houses. In this ongoing project, however, the buildings are not being made marketable by prettying them up. The concept includes the needs of the people and the state of the buildings including all of their blemishes and alterations. A ruin consisting only of exterior walls, for

example, is being transformed into a public winter garden.

Assemble is made up of pragmatists, who enjoy doing things themselves. In Liverpool, they established a workshop to produce accessories like fireplace frames and doorknobs. Residents have now taken over production and sell the objects in an online shop. The Assemble members also taught themselves the skills required to make their own cement tiles for the Yardhouse facade. Self-construction was an important part of the concept, especially in the early projects. These were true performances and included numerous volunteers. With their work as a collective and their DIY approach, Assemble perfectly embodies the spirit of its generation.

The collective is currently testing its appealing mixture of architecture, activism and social work on a larger scale, as its members are transforming a Victorian bathhouse into exhibition spaces for the Goldsmiths arts school in London with a budget of around 2 million pounds. The time has come for Assemble to prove that it not only masters temporary intervention, but also permanent construction.



Self-initiated experiment: 'The Cineroleum'
transformed a petrol station into a cinema.
Photos: Assemble

MINI LIVING

BREATHE.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2017



FOOD FORWARD.

LAILA GOHAR
CONCOCTS
AN ALCHEMICAL
EATING SPACE.

Wherever Laila Gohar is, food takes over. Her ardent and refined interest in anything edible was the beginning of a career that lies between food design, conceptual communication and creative catering—or, better described: food adventuring. For New York based Gohar, it is about bringing people to the table in a most thought-provoking and artful way. ‘Vital’, her installation for MINI LIVING is a multi-sensorial take on sustainability that explores the very fundamental—our alimentary resources.

Where do you draw the line between a designer and a chef, a gourmet temple and a street food shack, a snack and a feast? Laila Gohar never really liked stereotypical thinking, as she has her own story to tell. It’s a story about the power of food, which, for Gohar (28), started to take off when, after countless dinners she had hosted in her Manhattan apartment, friends convinced her to professionalize what

she’d been passionately doing anyway—bringing people together for inventive gatherings. After working in gastronomy and with a food magazine, it felt like something she intuitively developed, but never really planned.

The dimensions grew and soon her home kitchen became too small for catering events from a gallery reception to a fashion show. She now thinks up creations that are then executed by chefs she partners with. If you’re lucky enough to be on the guest list, you’re likely to be blown away by a cloud-shaped pile of marshmallows, harvest your own vegetables or eat from a bread sculpture. Having an international background herself (Laila was born and raised in Egypt), she likes to employ the turns of another country’s cuisine while exploring ways to use local techniques and ingredients.

Inspiration comes from the art world and the cuisine context alike, so Gohar’s days, when preparing for a project, can start with museum hopping or extensive reading and a stroll to Union Square market and a nearby organic farm (yes, they do exist in

New York) where she loves to source ingredients for her delicious productions. The latter is where she recently adopted an abandoned lamb and learned how to temporarily raise it in a New York flat. This might be a side plot, but it depicts Laila’s authentic engaging character and talent to improvise.

Categorizing her would simply be limitative. For Laila Gohar, food is primarily a tool for narrating something wider. It is about blurring the boundaries and breaking the norms of social etiquette and fine dining—a direction that got her in the door of prestigious clients like Tiffany’s, Shiseido and Opening Ceremony, just to name a few of her clients.

She usually throws herself into a new commission with a good meal, endless conversations with friends and in-depth research, soon to be transformed into bold imagery and intriguing spaces to remember. So, get yourself prepared for some culinary sunbathing and aquatic delights. Watch out for mushrooms grown on the spot and other organic surprises that show sustainability can be mouth-watering indeed.

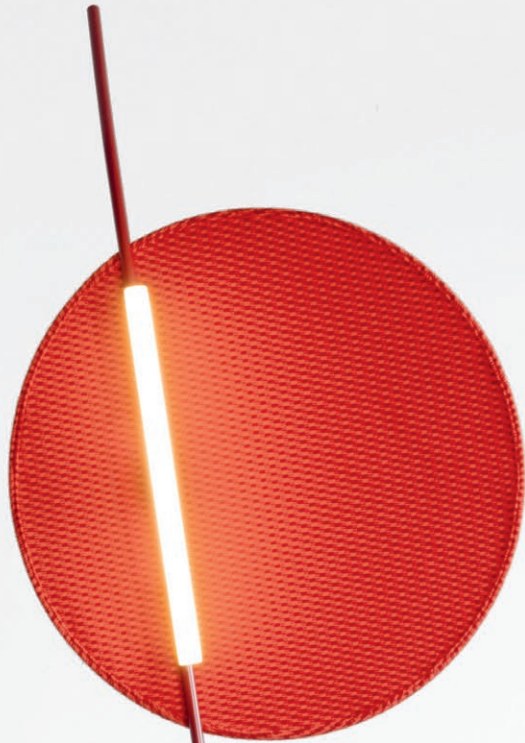
**“Nature was my biggest
source of inspiration.”**

LAILA GOHAR



Photos: Laila Gohar





LIFE IS NOT GEOMETRIC.

ITALIAN DESIGNERS
ZAVEN RESPOND
TO SUSTAINABILITY.

“The decoration is given by the material, not the things you put on it.”

MARCO ZAVAGNO

Designers Marco Zavagno and Enrica Cavarzan, the couple behind the multidisciplinary studio Zaven, first met while studying at the University of Venice. Both were studying product design, but then they took diverging paths. When they connected again, they started dating and discussing their mutual day-to-day work in the design world. The discussions turned into creative suggestions and feedback. “We thought: okay, we are doing good things together, maybe we can start a studio,” Zavagno says.

While Zavagno worked in the interactive media department at Fabrica, Benetton Group’s research lab, Cavarzan made her way in the art world, working as an artist’s assistant. Their backgrounds inform the work that Zaven does today—collaborating with artists and curators as well as brands like Nike and Tod’s. Their portfolio ranges from mass-produced

products through their label ‘Something Good’ to custom projects including rugs, furniture, lighting and graphics. Working in so many media, “for us it’s natural,” Cavarzan says from their sunlit studio.

The first project the studio took on was ‘Unbroken’, a series of objects like vases and lamps that were cast with a proprietary bandage material, a fiberglass used in orthopaedics, made by 3M as an alternative to plaster. Zaven made 50 different pieces all by hand, pushing the limits of the new material. The process resulted in ghostly pieces that are both innovative and familiar—a Zaven specialty.

Their process is research driven. Rather than imposing a narrative or visual idea on their material, they prefer to let the medium speak for itself, whether they’re creating a new design object or an immersive installation. “The decoration is given by the material, not the things you put on it,” Cavarzan says.

A powerful example is the ‘Pila’ vase, a ceramic vessel made of undulating angular sections. It’s a visual surprise that the material could even accom-

plish such an effect, but Zaven worked with craftsmen to design the process. The unique aesthetic also becomes a metaphor: “Life is not geometric; you have a different complication every day,” Zavagno says.

Their aesthetic stems from the design process. It’s about maintaining a certain honesty, staying true to the materials and the spirit of the challenge. Zaven stays away from outright glossiness, preferring a material’s natural surface, its “skin,” as Zavagno calls it. The goal is “to transform it, so that the people see the material differently,” Cavarzan explains.

‘The Athletes’ series of lamps the studio designed for Nike reflect the same spirit, combining the company’s innovative Flyknit material with a linear graphic design, so the lamps become both functional and abstract. The familiar becomes unfamiliar.

For Salone del Mobile 2017, MINI LIVING asked Zaven to develop a project based on air, water and light, that deals with the idea of sustainability. The result is a visual orchestra of devices that can only be activated by a community.



MINI LIVING

BREATHE.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2017



With the installation 'Breathe',
MINI LIVING makes a strong
statement on conscious living.

MINI.COM/LIVING



MINI LIVING

BREATHE.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2017

The installation 'Breathe' is composed
of a permeable fabric skin stretched
across a metal frame.

MINI.COM/LIVING



LIFE ON AIR.

'BREATHE' BRINGS
THE OUTSIDE IN.

“Letting the outside into our homes will subtly amplify our awareness of our environment.”

ILIAS PAPAGEORGIOU

Visionary spatial concepts are needed to respond to the increasing complexity and continuing growth of modern cities. Working with MINI LIVING, the award-winning architectural firm SO - IL has created 'Breathe' as an illustration of future dwelling. While providing traditionally desirable home qualities like shelter, space to relax and a place to entertain guests, the installation's permeable fabric exterior also allows in elements of the environment. In stark contrast to conventional buildings, 'Breathe' sets out to redefine urban living from a perspective of openness and sustainability.

Florian Idenburg, Jing Liu and Ilias Papageorgiou of SO-IL take a minimalist approach to maximizing those neglected city spaces so often found in between existing structures. In collaboration with MINI LIVING, the architectural designers have used this approach to make a sculptural statement set against an industrial backdrop. Nestled between two brick buildings in a previously overlooked gap in the urban landscape, the installation is made of a modular metal frame covered with a translucent mesh fabric.

Upon entering the airy structure, one is immediately greeted by sunlight, filtered only through the lightweight covering material. The interior of the home is divided into rooms that are also separated by fabric alone. A spiral staircase leads up past three levels and then opens out onto a lush roof garden. Over the course of the day, the gradually shifting natural light shining in from the outside continually redefines the atmosphere of the entire home.

The construction is not only visually appealing, but is also intended to provide people with a very real impetus to decrease their consumption and increase their contribution to a sustainable future. The building's outer layer interacts with air, water and light in new ways, thus allowing its inhabitants to form a deeper connection with their home and their environment. As such, the installation calmly promotes environmental awareness, while encouraging its guests to re-examine their tendency to take resources for granted.

The installation provides what we all long for in a home—a modern, yet cosy space for both togetherness and retreat. At the same time, the structure's open concept challenges our perception of what a home can be. The boundaries between inside and outside—and even between rooms—are blurred to provide for a new type of domestic experience that is both private and collective.

PERMEABLE HOME.

URBAN SPACE RE-
ALIGNED WITH AIR,
LIGHT AND WATER.



Mesh not only defines the transition between inside and outside, but subtly divides the space itself into levels and rooms to allow for experience that is both collective and private.

MINI LIVING

BREATHE.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2017

Placed in a previously unused gap in the industrial landscape, the ethereal structure maximizes the space provided by the vertical dimension. A spiral staircase twists its way up through levels of light-filled rooms before opening onto a lush roof garden.



The installation has been designed, not as a home with rooms dedicated to specific functions, but as a collection of conjoined realms. Different atmospheres are generated by permitting light and air to permeate the space.



A flexible, translucent outer skin made of mesh fabric serves as the only boundary between inside and outside. The permeable exterior allows inhabitants to engage more intimately with their environment.



MINI LIVING

BREATHE.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2017

“I’ve got no time for exclusion.”

ASSEMBLE



Production is transformed into a creative act as visitors help push clay through an extruder. With their model factory, the creative collective Assemble Studio explores the possibilities of chance in an industrial process. Unique ceramic tiles of various shapes and colours result, reflecting the variety of people creating them in this communal manufacturing process.





Laila Gohar presents food facts in a highly aesthetic and tasty way.

MINI LIVING

BREATHE.

SALONE DEL MOBILI
2017

Using nature as a primary source of inspiration, food designer Laila Gohar creates edible installations that are as aesthetical as they are tasty. The experiential menu includes mushrooms grown on location and greens that are to be cut by the visitors immediately before eating. Gohar's work blurs the boundaries and breaks the norms of social etiquette and fine dining.



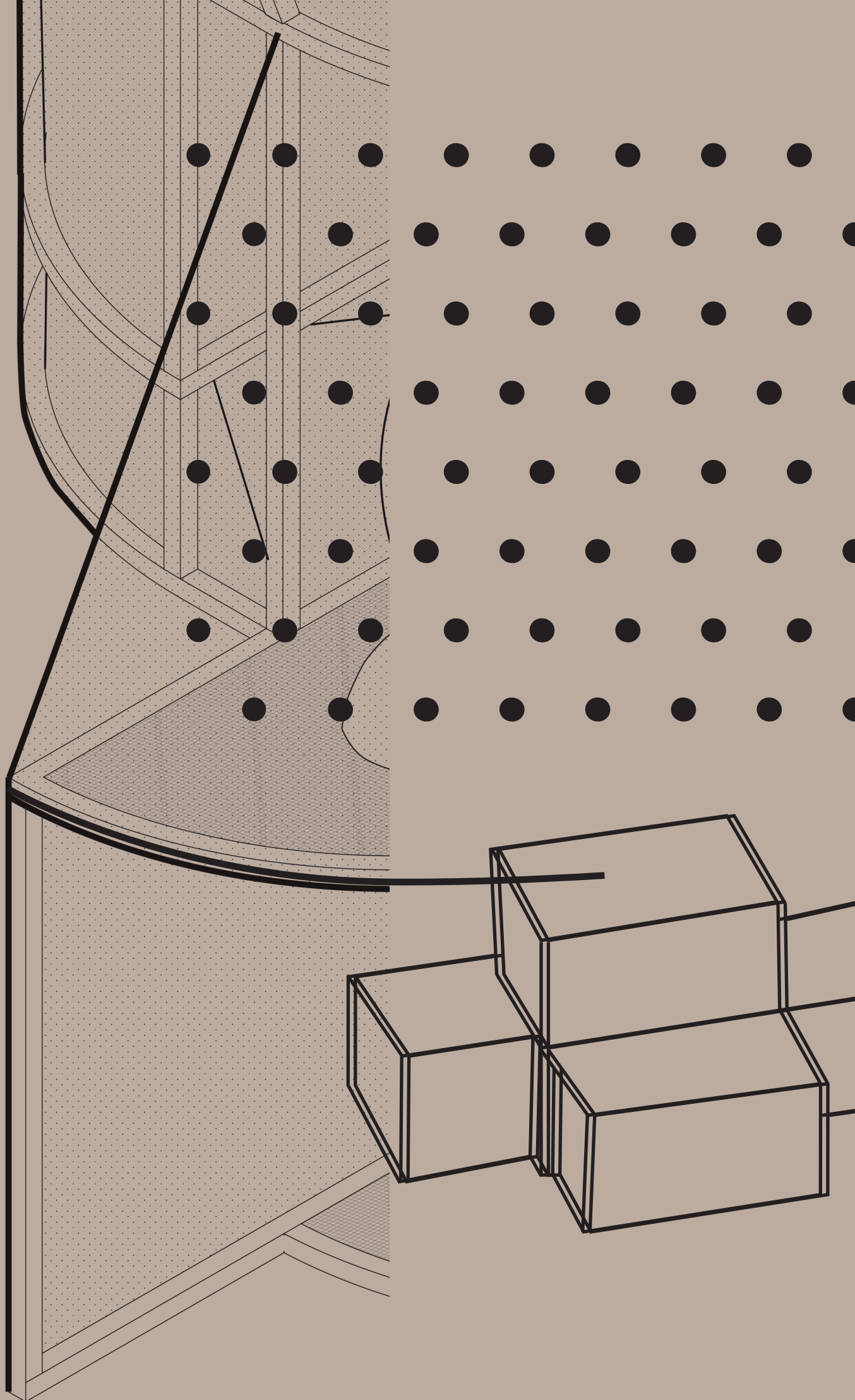


Working with MINI LIVING, Italian design studio Zaven has developed geometric devices that epitomise air, water and light.

MINI LIVING

BREATHE.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2017



MINI LIVING

● BREATHE.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2017



THE URBAN NEST – CONTRIBUTING CONSTANT CHANGE.

AN ADAPTABLE
STRUCTURE FOR
ENDLESS URBAN
POSSIBILITIES.



As part of the MINI Urban Matters platform, MINI LIVING presents its Urban Nest installation in Shanghai. Working together with Penda Architects, MINI LIVING has designed its Urban Nest as a spatial framework offering a flexible future of city living based on a small footprint and a collaborative lifestyle.

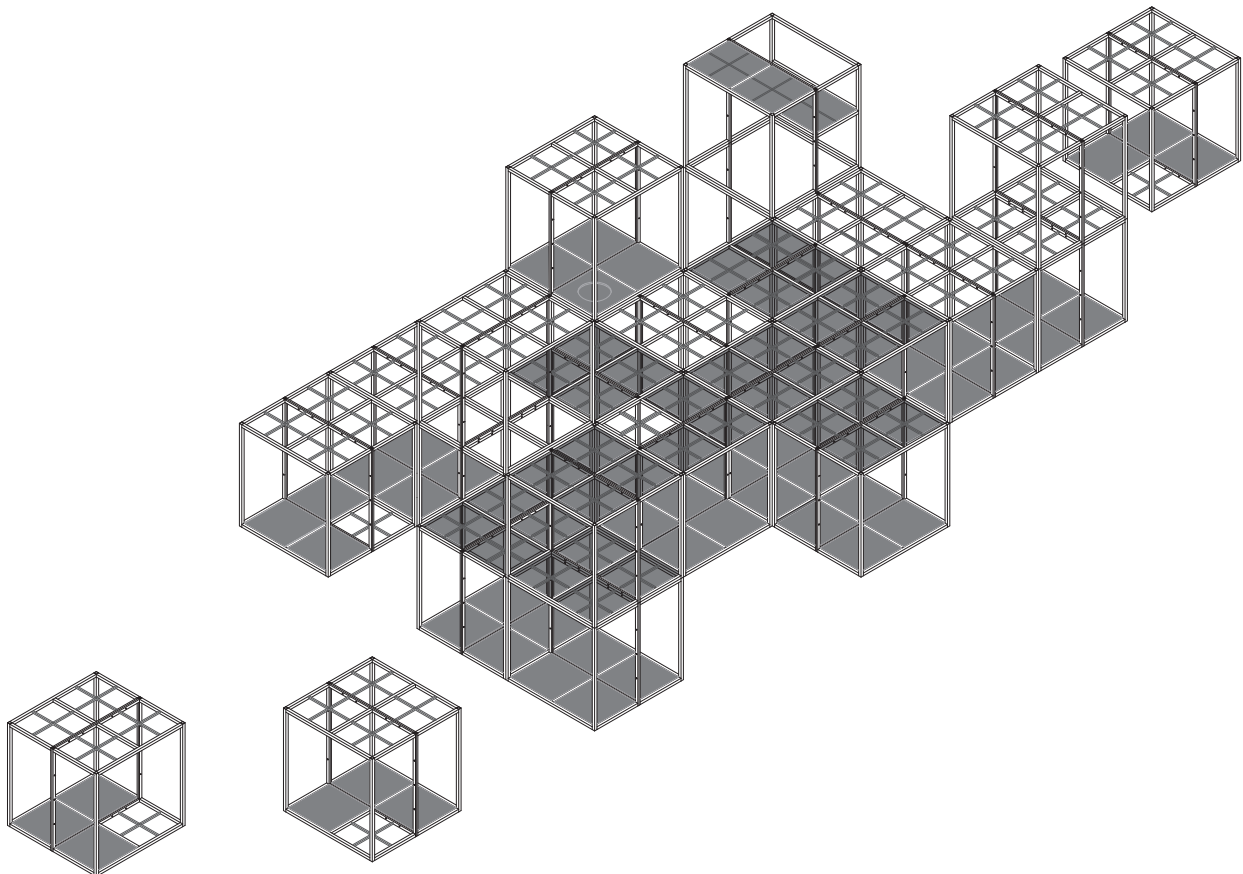
Imagine a building that can easily adapt its geometry to any urban void and turn it into an inhabitable place. This is where the design idea for the Urban Nest originated. The installation created by MINI LIVING in collaboration with Penda Architects for Urban Matters in Shanghai rethinks the static nature of architecture.

The Urban Nest is made up of 3 x 3 m modules that can be combined and extended to offer endless possibilities for spatial configuration. Providing space to live, work and play according to the individual requirements of its inhabitants, the MINI LIVING Urban Nest is more than just a residential building. With its open and flexible character, it invites the public in and becomes an urban micro neighbourhood at the heart of the city. Inspired by the rich history of using space effectively in Shanghai's dense traditional districts, MINI LIVING Urban Nest makes creative use of space to connect the past with the future. Integrating nature to cool the microclimate and produce food for both the inhabitants and the neighbourhood, the structure serves as an incubator for a brighter future of the places we love most—our cities.

MINI LIVING

URBAN NEST.

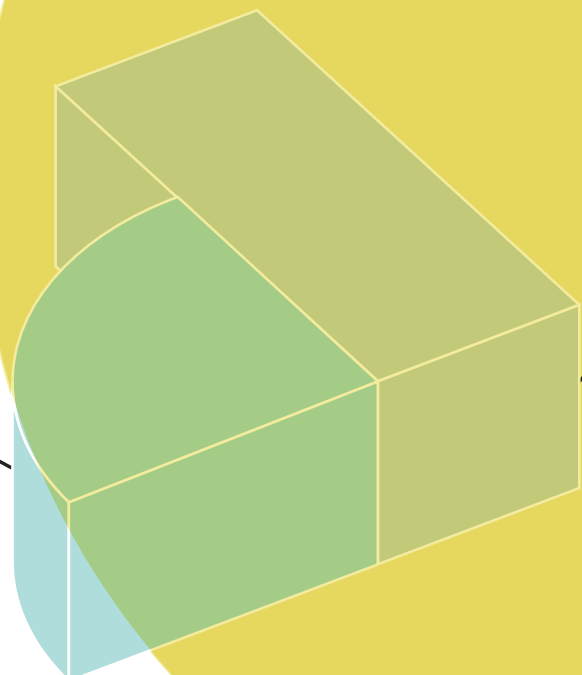
URBAN MATTERS
2017



The Urban Nest is made up of 3 x 3 m modules that can be combined and extended to offer endless possibilities for spatial configuration.

BUILT BY ALL – A COMMUNITY WITH A SHARED VISION.

MINI LIVING INVITES PEOPLE
TO INDIVIDUALLY DESIGN
URBAN HOUSING MODELS
IN THE FACTORY OF IDEAS.



MINI LIVING

BUILT BY ALL.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2018



MINI LIVING considers the participants in the FACTORY OF IDEAS to be true spacemakers.

The future no longer lies in the hands of experts alone. When it comes to housing and everyday life, inhabitants are increasingly playing a key role. Appreciating and celebrating this fact, MINI LIVING encourages individuals to develop their own environments in its FACTORY OF IDEAS at Salone del Mobile 2018.

As a demand of modern urban life, buildings are more than a lone working task of architects, but rather a creative teamwork approach to develop new habitats. A growing number of people occupy a limited amount of space, living mobile lifestyles that require flexible forms of cohabitation depending on their individual needs and choices.

MINI LIVING explores various approaches to the future of housing, liv-

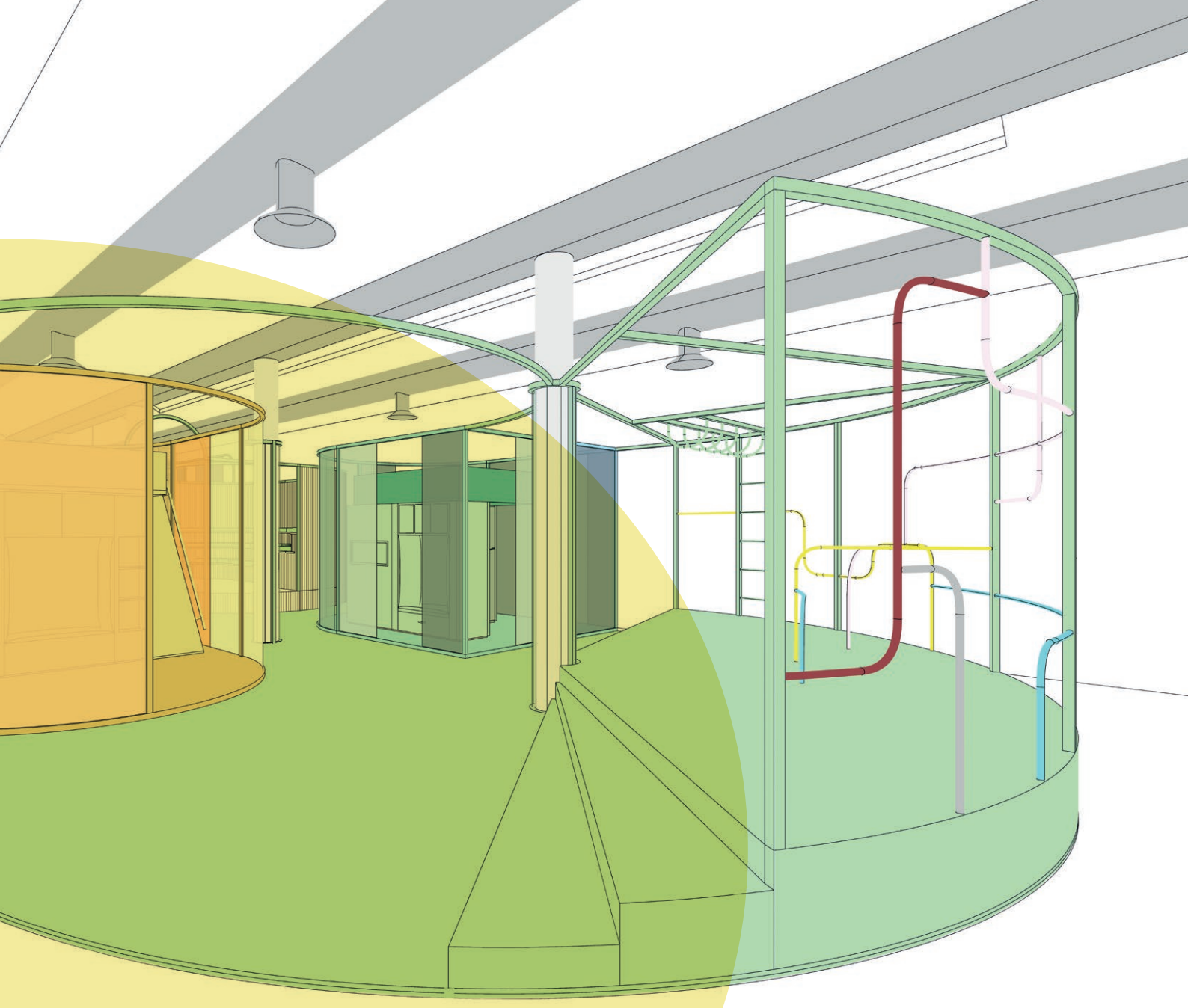
ing and working. It combines different and equally inventive ideas in experimental concepts focused entirely on the inhabitants of the space. The discussion that this concept is a part of is not primarily defined by the search for a new style of architecture, but by intensive research into the ways existing space can be repurposed to suit new ways of living.

MINI LIVING has developed its main installation around the TOTEMS in cooperation with Studiomama at this year's Salone del Mobile. These pieces of personalised built-in furniture are integrated into semi-transparent coloured SHELLS, softly defining the boundaries between private and public spaces. Dynamic TOTEM and SHELL combinations form new model neighbourhoods focused, not on permanence, but on perpetual change.

Separated from the main installation visitors are invited into the FACTORY OF IDEAS to think about the design of their own TOTEMS, their functions, and their arrangement in a living

space. The tiered concept sees TOTEM, SHELL and neighbourhood combined to increase the quality of life of a community, and it allows visitors to implement and discuss their own design ideas at different levels. In this arena for the playful interaction of form and function, the FACTORY OF IDEAS produces truly tangible models of urban living. These are then presented as a visualisation of how a highly individualised micro-neighbourhood can evolve.

MINI LIVING considers the participants in the FACTORY OF IDEAS to be true spacemakers. Here, individuals are empowered with direct involvement in the process of designing their habitat, and become co-creators of their own environment. The very concept itself sprouts from the desires of individuals and blossoms with community ideas. Visitors become active participants who, in exchange for their knowledge and input, expand their skills and create new solutions in collaboration with others.



THE FUTURE OF URBAN LIVING – IT TAKES A VILLAGE.

BUILT BY ALL BRINGS
COLLABORATIVE
ARCHITECTURE TO
SALONE DEL MOBILE.

MINI LIVING

BUILT BY ALL.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2018

The idea of participation – residents join architects in designing urban space.

Are traditional design processes still the most successful solution to the challenges of limited living space? MINI LIVING – BUILT BY ALL is a new installation that questions conventional architectural practices and puts the focus firmly on collaboration. At Salone del Mobile 2018 in Milan, the concept demonstrates how participation from both residents and architects can solve future challenges in the urban environment.

As urban populations grow, so does competition for living space. However, in addition to finding creative ways to optimise space, urban planning is increasingly focused on people, their individual needs and their ideas. MINI LIVING – BUILT BY ALL considers the future inhabitants of urban housing as important and active co-designers of their own environment. As such, they are directly involved in the design process and are invited to adapt space according to their personal needs.

In collaboration with London based design firm Studiomama, MINI LIVING has developed a scenario that fosters and celebrates close collaboration between urban residents and architects. BUILT BY ALL takes an industrial space in a Milan courtyard and transforms it. Personal space and community areas are distinct from one another yet cleverly intertwined, offering residents the power to choose when their dwellings can be opened up. As such, communal areas become extensions of private spaces.

Four SHELLS define individual rooms. Studiomama defined triangles, rectangles and arcs as the basic geometric shapes that can be adjusted and combined by residents to form their own geometry, based on the available space. Textiles and other tactile materials are attached to an underlying structure to increase or decrease the levels of transparency, and therefore privacy, that the constructions have.

The SHELLS are equipped with TO-TEMS—highly individualised, integrated pieces of furniture that cater to the everyday needs of the inhabitants. The compact modules are spacial structures with various levels for retreat and sleep, as well as integrated storage for clothes and personal items.

Although hugely inventive in design, they are deeply functional areas that give space to sleep, eat and work.

Areas between the personal SHELLS serve as communal spaces. The shared kitchen is designed as a meeting place for guests and residents. A community kitchen table serves as a dining and working area for larger gatherings, and the 'Amphitheatre' provides open space for lively discussions, film screenings, and any number of public events.

The communal garden offers the opportunity to relax and connect with nature. It is a space for leisure and the responsibility of caring for it is shared. In contrast, the gym encourages invigorating activity.

One of the key motives of MINI LIVING is to explore the potential of unused urban space. This installation demonstrates the innovative and deeply useful results of collaborative thinking on this topic, as it transforms a vacant industrial space into a dynamic dwelling for a community to enjoy. MINI LIVING – BUILT BY ALL caters to urbanites in search of flexible living spaces, while also extending an invitation to engage in the process that will design their neighbourhood.

CREATING PLACES FULL OF INSPIRATION.

REDESIGN UNUSED SPACE BASED
ON THE BELIEF THAT COMMUNITIES
ARE BEST BUILT FROM WITHIN.

Oke Hauser, creative lead at MINI LIVING, and Nina Tolstrup, founder of Studio-mama, met at the designer's studio in London to talk about future urban life and the ways, in which the process of developing architecture could change.

How is the way people live together in cities evolving?

OKE HAUSER: Cities are fascinating and ambivalent places, they are places of manifestation and constant change at the same time—our most human invention. Many architectural planning and design approaches no longer reflect these human principles and we at MINI LIVING sense a strong need to literally break down walls to create true urban places—places that provide inspiration and enhance our human spirit by being together. In this day and age, there is a strong will to design the world we really want to live in from the bottom up. Putting people's needs first is ultimately the essence and beauty of architecture.

NINA TOLSTRUP: Yes, big changes are necessary. Cities are under great pressure. If the current trends continue, we will all be living an urban life by the end of the 21st century. Space is getting more expensive and the predominant mindset among the younger generations is driven by experience rather than ownership. Reflecting this, the main idea of this project for Salone del Mobile consists of creating a conceptual structure for flexible co-living—adaptable spaces and social inclusion. It is a pop-up idea—using an empty warehouse space for a limited time.

What are the biggest challenges that urban living is currently facing?

NT: Two of the main challenges are density and urbanisation, but we also have historic opportunities for new socio-economic constellations and environmental solutions. It is an amazing time of radical changes with a need for innovation and creative thinking. We just have to get the balance right to move towards a more sustainable and enjoyable future for everyone.

OH: We all love cities, but of course they present great challenges at the same time. Instead of building homogeneous apartment complexes in response to the lack of space, we have to find inspiring places that provide human interactions. MINI has a track record of tackling challenges with clever design approaches since its beginning. In this collaboration, MINI LIVING is translating the age-old MINI design philosophy of "Creative Use of Space" into architecture in order to shape a better world to live in.

“We just have to get the balance right to move towards a more sustainable and enjoyable future for everyone.”

NINA TOLSTRUP

MINI LIVING

BUILT BY ALL.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2018

What does MINI LIVING have in mind when talking about unused interior space?

OH: In the past, MINI LIVING has shown how to transform empty urban space into inhabitable places. Empty warehouses, malls and offices provide great opportunities waiting to be turned into living spaces. The problem may not even be the amount of space itself, but how we use it.

Do you see a need to reorganise the design process in architecture?

NT: Yes, and it is also important to excite people with inspirational ideas and solutions, while at the same time motivating politicians and decision-makers to make brave calls and investments.

OH: BUILT BY ALL takes a different approach to the conventional top-down architectural process. It is entirely focussed on empowering individuals to create their own habitat in collaborative ways. After all, who says only architects have great ideas about how we should all live? We wanted to explore the full creative potential of each one of us by providing a toolkit to create the world we all want to live in. Our home is as personal as it gets, and everybody should be able to design it that way.

What makes MINI LIVING and Studiomama the perfect match for this Salone project?

OH: We share the same mindset and believe in a challenging design approach to fully explore the potential of the creative use of space. This approach questions conventions and regulations, and is centred around a more joyful and human vision for our cities.

What is Studiomama's specific approach to architecture and design?

NT: We like to work on the edge of

“Who says only architects have great ideas about how we should all live?”

OKE HAUSER



contradictions—being playful and pragmatic at the same time. We strive to optimise spaces with flexible, transformative and adaptable solutions. In our process we try to think of the functional benefits and the emotional qualities a solution brings to each individual.

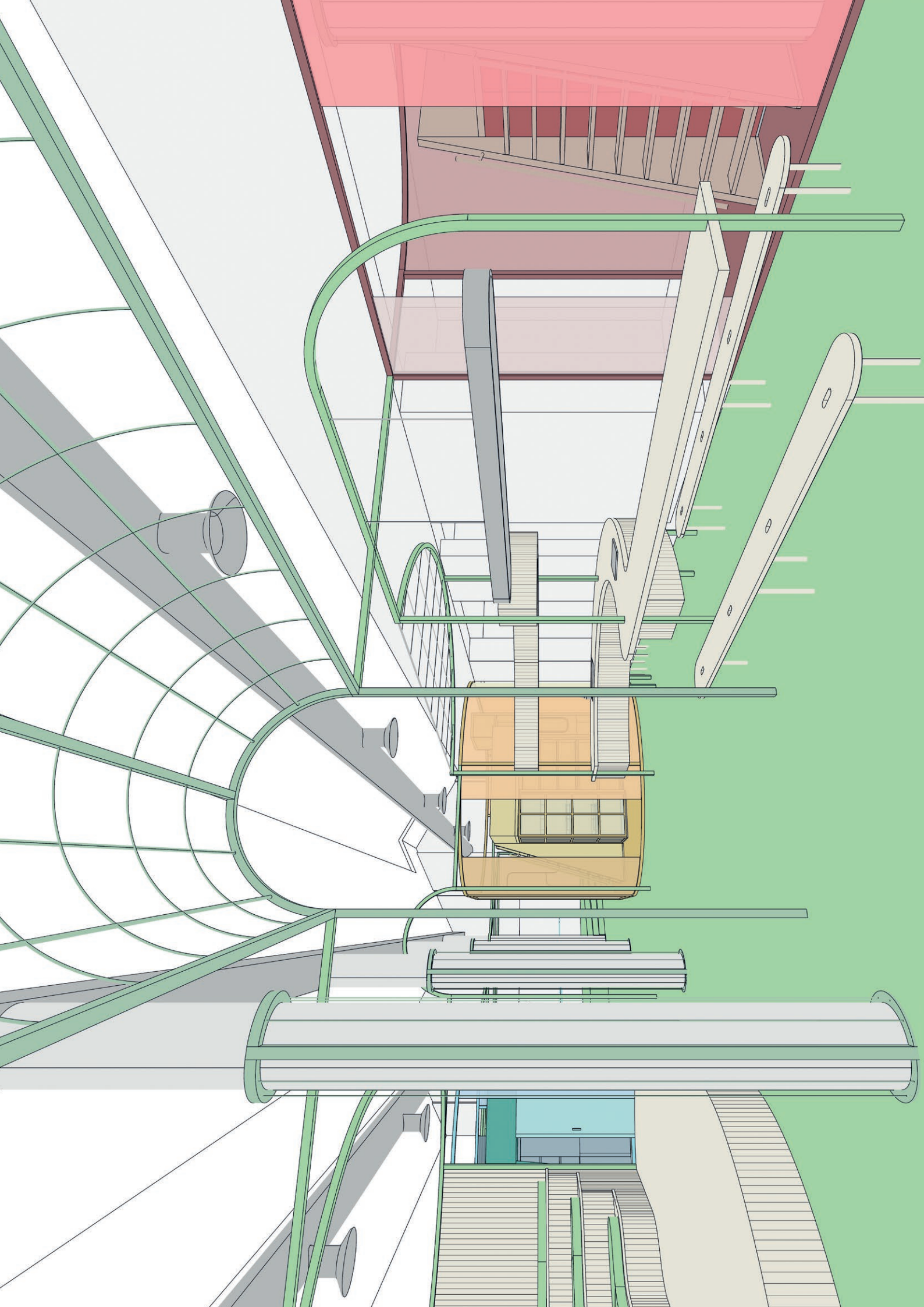
Is there a basic set of needs that every new solution for living should address?

NT: I think our needs are changing with the progression of technology. This has an impact on our way of life and society as a whole. There might

be a basic set of needs, but it is always a welcome challenge to question the status quo.

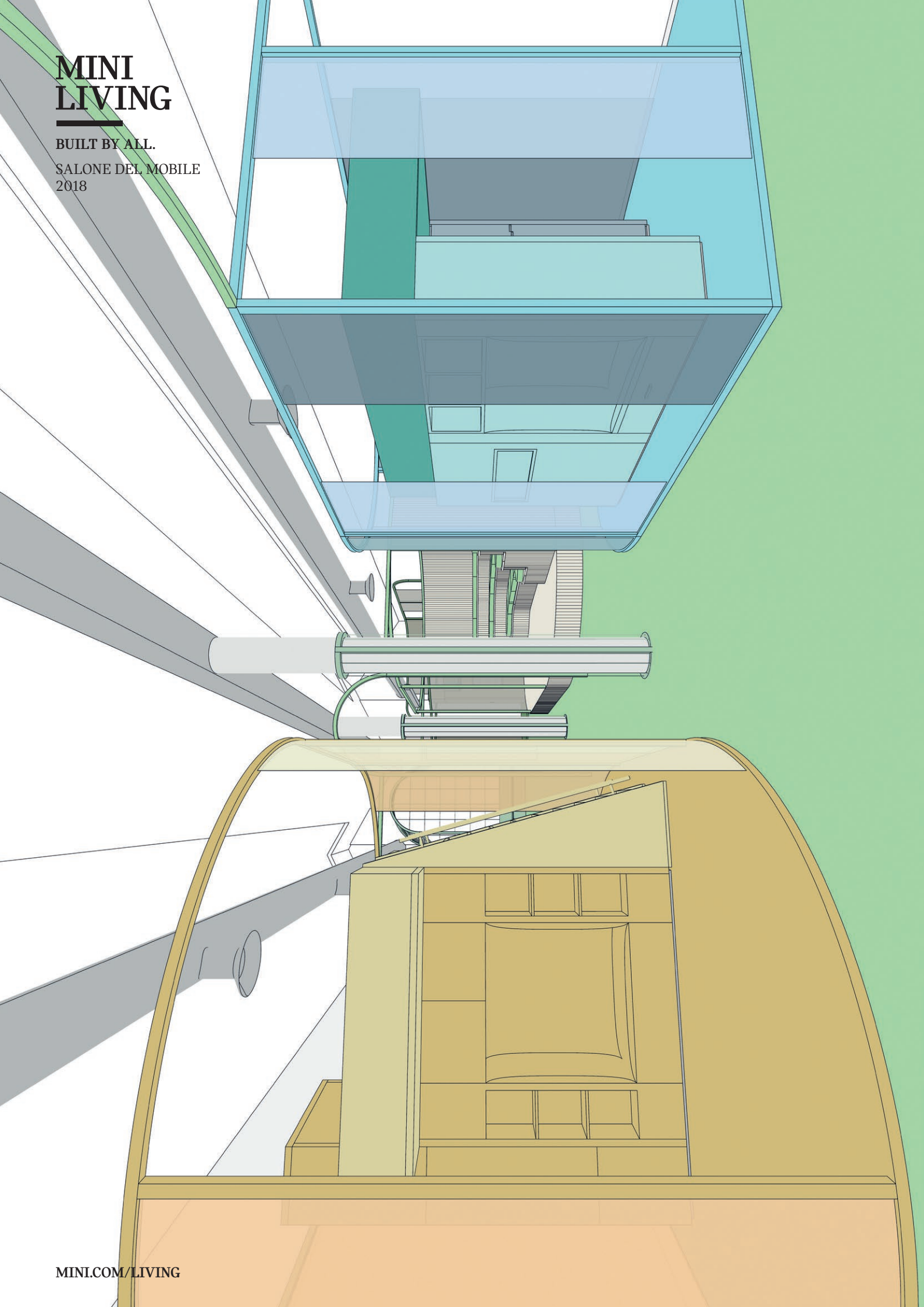
What does BUILT BY ALL stand for?

OH: MINI has always focussed on people and their individualities. The idea of BUILT BY ALL is a result of this mindset. By inverting the conventional top-down planning process, we are seeking to turn users into makers. BUILT BY ALL provides a toolkit based on a small personal footprint, which enables people to truly design their habitat according to their necessities.



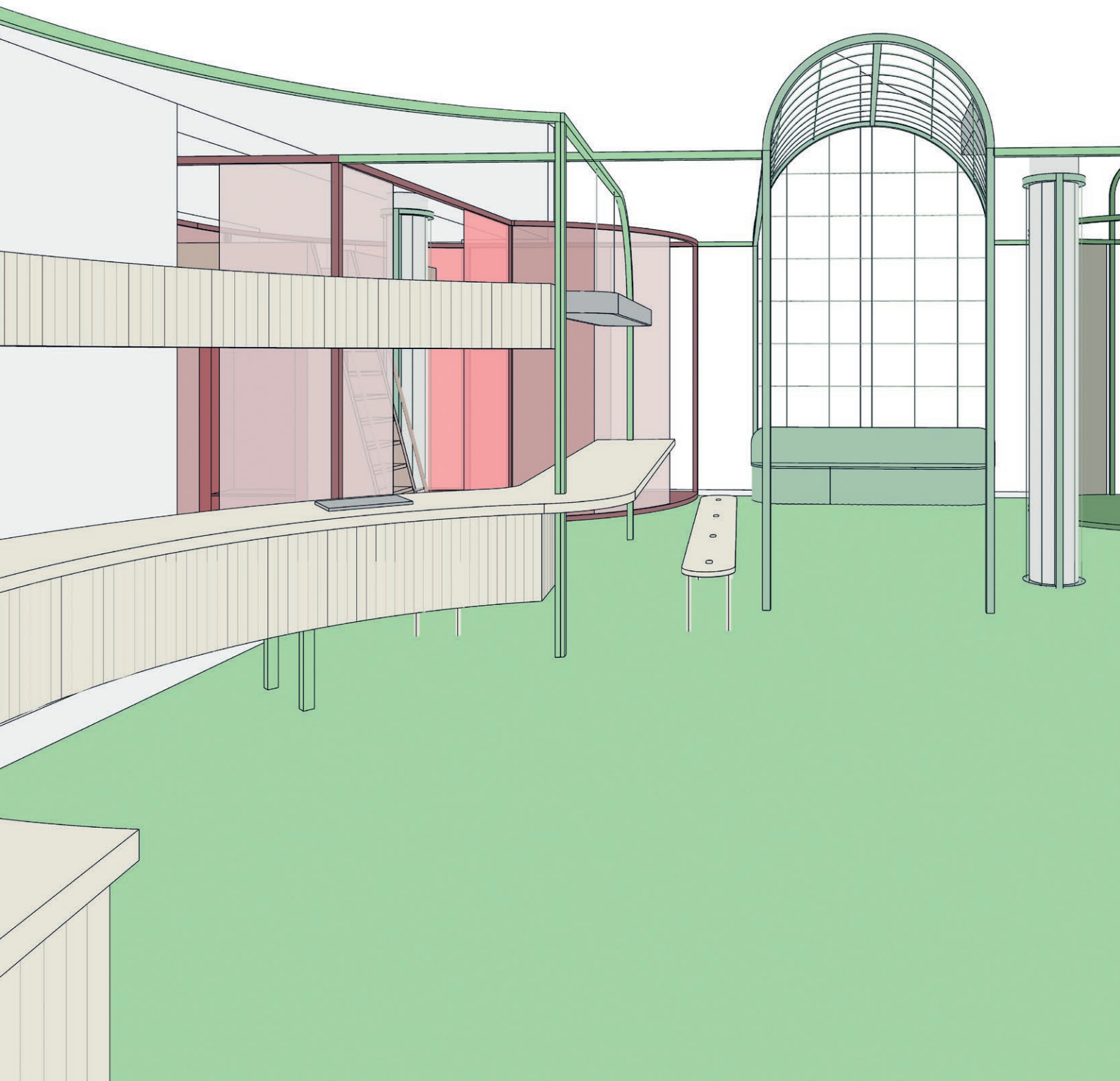
MINI LIVING

BUILT BY ALL.
SALONE DEL MOBILE
2018



THE FUTURE OF URBAN LIVING – DESIGNED TOGETHER.

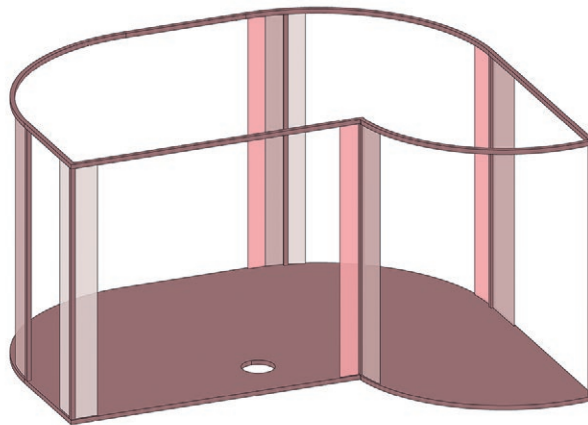
A NEW CONCEPT ENCOURAGES
COLLABORATION BETWEEN
RESIDENTS AND ARCHITECTS.



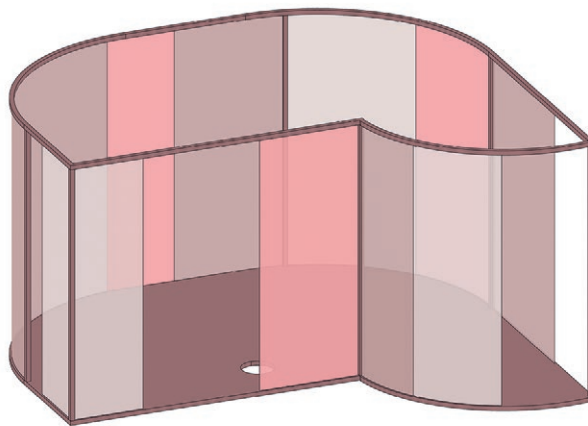
MINI LIVING

BUILT BY ALL.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2018



OPEN



CLOSED

In the installation BUILT BY ALL, SHELLS are furnished with TOTEMS, which combine the functions of everyday life in compact form. Textiles and other materials are individually attached to an underlying structure, creating various levels of transparency.



MINI LIVING

BUILT BY ALL.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2018



MINI LIVING

BUILT BY ALL.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2018



The idea of participation – residents join architects in designing urban space.



**MINI
LIVING**

BUILT BY ALL.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2018





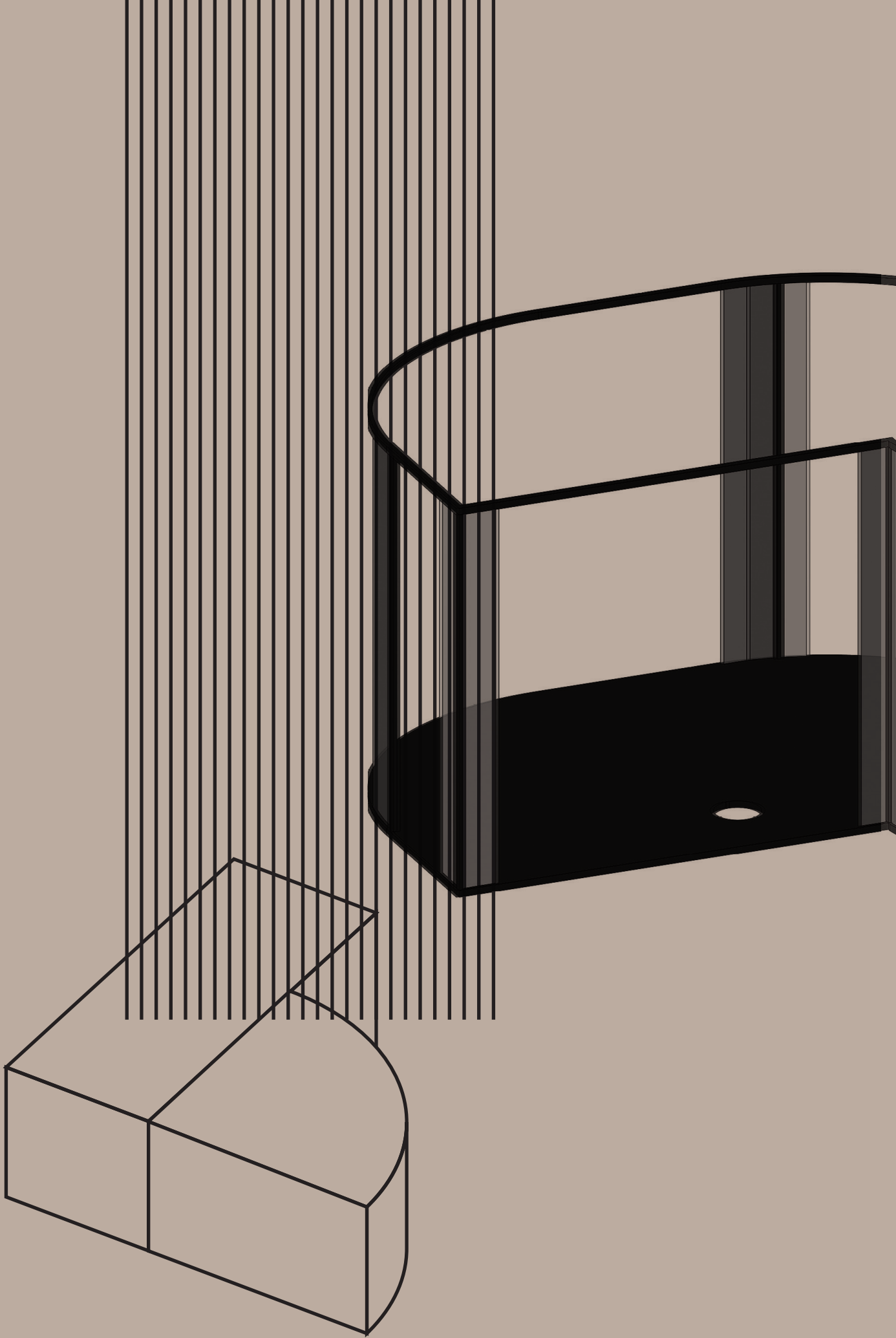
MINI LIVING

BUILT BY ALL.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2018



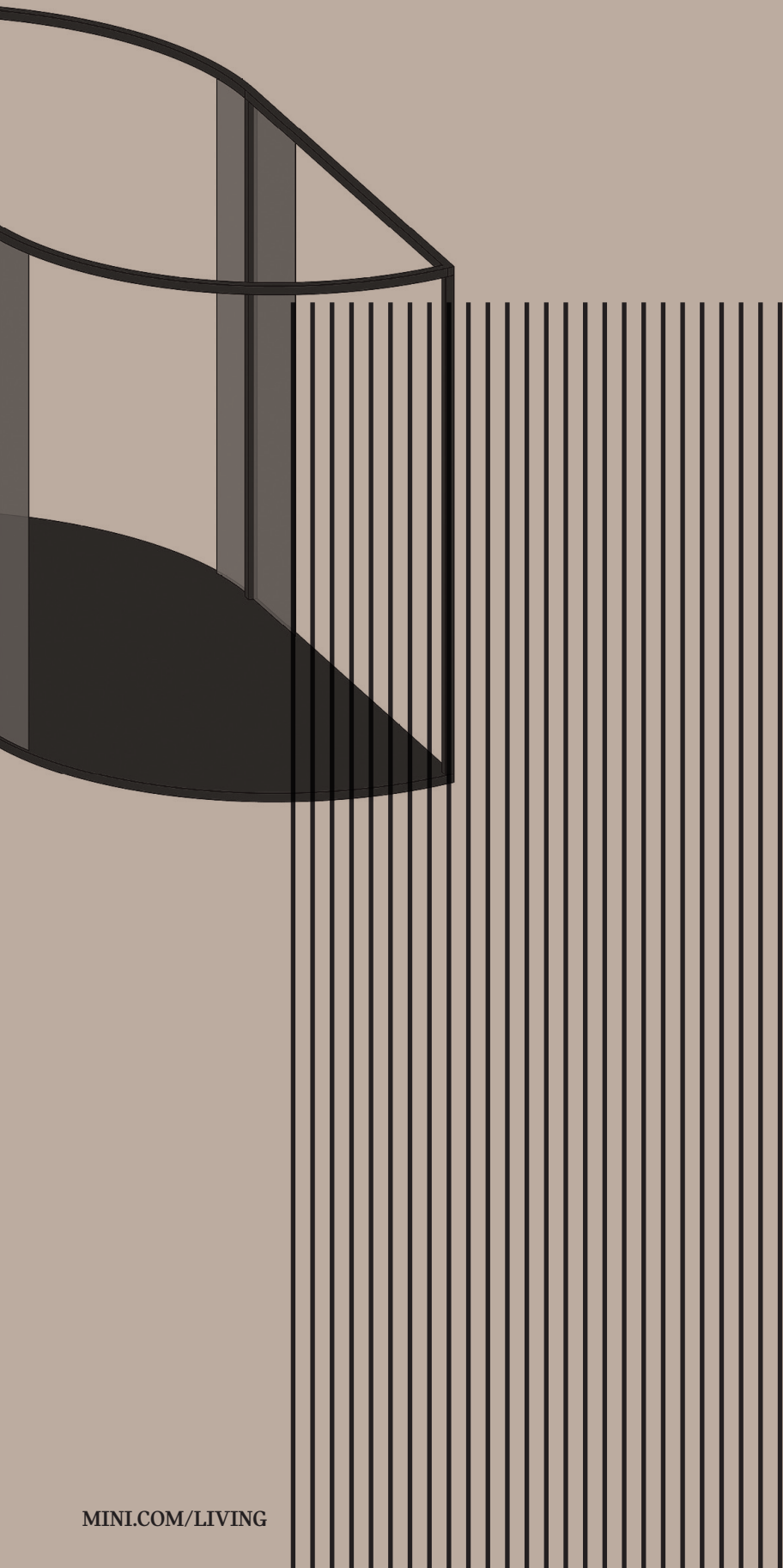
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MINI LIVING

BUILT BY ALL.

SALONE DEL MOBILE
2018



THE URBAN CABIN – EXPLORING NEW URBAN IDENTITIES.

SHARING HOMES THAT
FOSTER PLACE WITHIN SPACE
AND DRAW ON THE PAST TO
FORGE THE FUTURE.



MINI LIVING has launched its Urban Cabin concept to encourage an experimental and innovative approach to creating new, shared homes in today's downtowns. Among other things, the concept explores how urban nomads can create a sense of place for themselves in the amorphous spaces that are still left in today's congested urban fabric—one that reflects global and local narratives.

Today's global world is increasingly defined by extreme urbanisation and mobile populations. New and younger city inhabitants often find nowhere they can call their own. They are confronted by an urban fabric that consists of either hyper-densities or "junk spaces", often homogeneous and bland.

City residents thus potentially seek to create personal niches that counter a loss of identity in a world often characterised by nomadic impermanence.

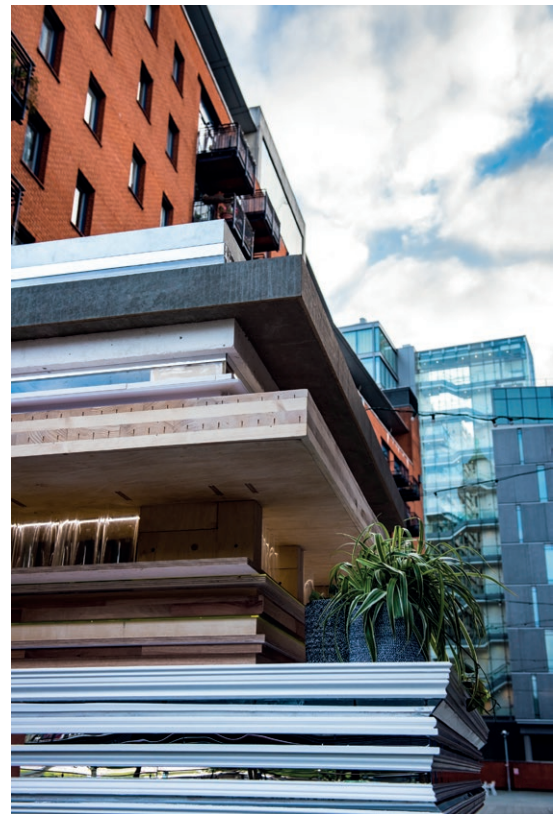
In this context, questions such as "What makes you feel most at home?" "How much space equals a home?" and "What do you really need in it?" invariably arise.

This is the starting point for MINI LIVING's Urban Cabin concept, which outlines what a micro-house or micro-home could be and encourages sharing as a maxim for the future. It is based on a miniature footprint that can fit into any number of different niches in cities—pared down to the

MINI LIVING

URBAN CABIN.

LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL 2017



essentials. The Urban Cabin displayed in the Oxo Tower Courtyard in London on the occasion of the London Design Festival 2017 encourages visitors to pause and think. Additional Urban Cabin installations are presented in major global cities like the one in New York during “Archtober” 2017. This second cabin inhabits the courtyard at A/D/O—the design hub by MINI in Brooklyn, which provides resources to creatives who challenge the status quo through their craft. An inspirational workshop programme at A/D/O discusses how to advance it into a full-fledged home concept in 2018.

With its minimalism, the cabin seeks to prompt visitors to ponder the extent to which they can reduce the objects they ‘own’ while still clearly enjoying a local and personal sense of place—particularly one shared with others. Oke Hauser, Creative Lead of MINI LIVING, comments that “in an

ever more generically designed world, we must trust in turning spaces into places. Places that offer local characteristics and identity at various levels, because people want to feel where they are—it is all about as real as you can get.”

To this end, MINI LIVING Urban Cabin has consciously been designed with local cultural and architectural traditions in mind while remaining open to the world—the louvre wall offers a seamless transition between inside and outside. The architecture thus questions any rigid divides, suggesting that the future will be characterised more by interfaces. Yet, as MINI LIVING Experience Designer Corinna Natter explains while “the facade of the Urban Cabin plays with the reflections of its surroundings, the interior is an interactive space to evaluate personal needs.” To this end, London architect Sam Jacob was in-

vited to create the core cabin’s extensions. The cabin boasts a fold-out kitchen. When folded up, it stays inside the cabin. When folded out a bit, the kitchen table can be shared with a friend or two. And when folded out further, it stakes out space and offers ample dining or discussion opportunities. Corinna Natter adds that “it’s crucial to the Urban Cabin design process that we truly understand what makes living in this specific city unique.” Sam Jacobs took this to heart with the main element he designed for the interior, which is destined to nudge visitors gently towards engaging with the changes that home living has undergone in London down through time. The cabin’s interior houses a miniature public/private library of books about London’s residential past. In this way, the cabin forges a link between history and the present in an attempt to find the best possible urban future.

THE URBAN CABIN – A NEW FUTURE IN A NEW PLACE.

MINI LIVING URBAN
CABIN IN NEW YORK
PROVIDES A FRESH
TAKE ON MIGRATION.



The colours in this city change with every step one takes.

Continuing its Urban Cabin concept series, MINI LIVING designed a model dwelling in New York in collaboration with Bureau V. The space is being presented at A/D/O in Brooklyn as part of the city's Archtober architecture and design month. Reflecting both the local surroundings and global issues, the structure explores how a home away from home can be informative, inspirational and even humorous for its new inhabitants.

Following on the heels of its debut at the London Design Festival 2017, MINI LIVING's Urban Cabin project is setting up shop in New York as the next step in its demonstration of architectural solutions for new urban challenges. To complement its core site-specific design, MINI invites local architects in each city to design local extensions for its Urban Cabin. A kitchen extension provides an ideal platform for exposing cultural differences, whereas the so-called experience room allows the architects to express the peculiarity of their city and

the specific issues they see it facing. For the design of its Urban Cabin in New York, MINI is reflecting and at the same time contrasting the local surroundings. As MINI LIVING Experience Designer Corinna Natter explains, "the iridescent surface of the Urban Cabin plays with the viewing angle. As when walking through New York City, the colours change with every step one takes." The interior, on the other hand, is intended to serve as a place of inspiration that provides space to take short breaks. A section of the space with a hammock, for instance, can be opened to form a small garden area, or closed for quiet time surrounded by plants and the sun coming in through colourful windows.

Serving as a new home in a new place, the dwelling provides informative content for its future inhabitants. The extensions' design seeks "to add a dose of humor and to provide some respite from the stress of relocation," says Stella Lee, principal of Bureau V.

Bureau V's kitchen unit combines the reflective metal of the classic New York City diner with the floor plan of the compressed galley kitchen—a

common feature of the NYC apartment. The project humorously flips the diner's exterior inward, as metallic materials wrap its interior. The exterior of the enclosure exposes a material softness to the elements, reversing the strategy in the other extension. The experience room created specifically for New York combines a spiky facade with a soft, brightly coloured, nest-like, upholstered seat on the inside. "It's basically St. Mark's Place in the 80s: a bit punk, a bit kawaii... and close to John Hejduk," says Peter Zuspan, principal of Bureau V, explaining some of the design's references.

With this edition of its Urban Cabin, MINI LIVING is emphasizing inspiring communicative elements. A bookshelf contains books about NYC, micro-living and urbanization. An installation hanging from the ceiling can be used to pull on a string and lower a random book for unexpected insight. A blackboard provides visitors with a place to express how they would like to live in the future. And the top platform has a little corner made of perforated plexiglass, in which guests can place messages to the MINI LIVING design team.

BRINGING NATURE INTO THE CITY.

MINI LIVING AND ADD THE THIRD URBAN CABIN TO THE GLOBAL VILLAGE.

Corinna Natter, designer of the Urban Cabins at MINI LIVING, and the two lead architects behind FreelandBuck discuss their collaboration on the latest stop of the project at LA Design Festival.

What was MINI LIVING's motivation for its Urban Cabin in Los Angeles?

CORINNA NATTER: In 2017 we launched the MINI LIVING Urban Cabin concept in London and then continued its journey in New York. With our latest stop in LA, our vision of a global village is starting to take shape. Each location contributes to a holistic vision of being at home all over the world. We set out to activate urban voids and therefore inspire a discussion on how to make better use of the space that's already there. LA has a lot to offer in this sense with regard to both creativity and urban potential. What we set our thematic focus on with this specif-

ic one is the fact that people in LA live a life that is very much connected to nature. However, usually they have to leave the city to experience it. We wanted to give them the opportunity to do that within the city—right in the heart of downtown.

What fascinated you most about working with MINI LIVING on this project?

DAVID FREELAND: The micro-cabin as a type of residence typically focuses on efficiency within a small space. What impressed us about the Urban Cabin series was the interest in integrating both efficiency and experience—encouraging and enabling interaction among many people, rather than focusing solely on the domestic needs of one occupant. This presented us a unique opportunity to focus on spatial effects and experimental material assemblies.

How did the city of Los Angeles impact the design of the Urban Cabin?

BRENNAN BUCK: LA is characterised by remarkable architectural variation sprawling between mountains and the ocean. This diversity enables both the city and nature to be used as archetypal settings, not only for the film industry, but for everyone. We considered how the cabin would be captured and experienced, and utilised surfaces that vary between graphic alignment and kaleidoscopic effects as one moves around and through them.

Which elements of the resulting structure reflect MINI LIVING's vision?

CN: The concept is shaped by a flexible structure based on the idea of sharing. It offers the potential to be rearranged according to the immediate context—whether private or public. The interior

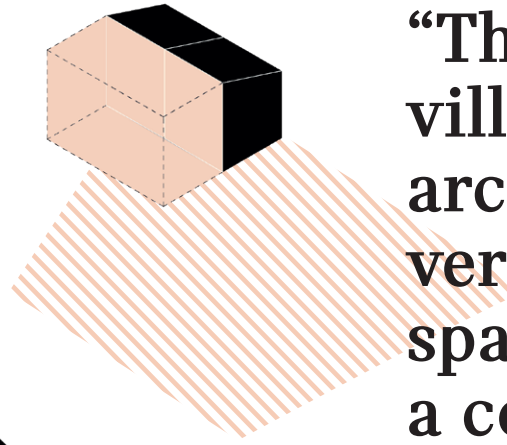
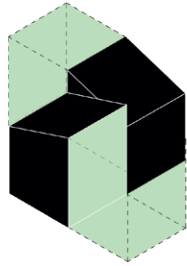


“We embrace design that both connects you to the location and feels like home.”

CORINNA NATTER

MINI LIVING

BIG LIFE.
SMALL FOOTPRINT.



“The global village creates an archipelago of very different spaces that form a connected network.”

DAVID FREELAND

walls, for example, are simple geometric forms that can be moved to effortlessly and playfully adapt the entire interior layout to your needs. You can even turn some parts of these walls to the outside to give them a new function or share them with your surroundings.

What is special about the location ROW DTLA?

CN: The rooftop that we located our cabin on provides us with an amazing view of the skyline and the hills around LA—you feel connected to nature while remaining in the middle of it all. This is the perfect backdrop for an exterior that plays with shifting light and shadow during the day, thus creating an atmosphere in and around the Urban Cabin that alters every hour—like nature itself.

What inspired MINI LIVING to create its Urban Cabin series in the first place?

CN: We embrace design that both connects you to the location and feels like home. When we travel to different cities, we are impressed by how the differences shape our experience and, ultimately, how they make us feel. With this project we immerse ourselves in these various urban fabrics before starting to create. The Urban Cabins became a testing ground for how visitors in different locations re-

spond to our design, while at the same time providing us a fantastic opportunity to learn from various cultures, traditions and habits for our future MINI LIVING co-living hubs, with the first one opening next year in Shanghai.

What interests you most about the idea of a global village?

DF: We find the concept of a global village fascinating in that it creates an archipelago of very different structures and spaces that form a connected network. While we all know how connected the world's major cities have become, what hopefully distinguishes them is the different approaches taken to the same fundamental issues.

What elements should globally distributed locations include?

BB: Global distribution implies a sameness across projects around the world with a focus on universality. At the same time, each project inevitably becomes contextualised by its location and is best when it embraces this kind of site-specificity.

What connects the various Urban Cabins?

CN: At MINI LIVING we feel a natural affinity toward cities with great cultural richness and a vivid history of evolving as a living environment. New York and London were therefore nat-

ural choices for us, and LA is the next logical step along this journey. Each of these cities are actively tackling their unique challenges in terms of urban development. This makes them role models for a great number of other cities and relevant playing fields for our vision of urban living.

What do you see as the major challenges currently facing architecture?

DF: As our world becomes increasingly interconnected, architecture is being pulled in two opposite directions. On the one hand, buildings and spaces are becoming more generic and flexible to serve multiple purposes as opposed to conventional single-use spaces for working, dining or sleeping. On the other hand, there is a growing need for more unique site-specific spaces as people become increasingly mobile.

What links the Urban Cabin project to other MINI LIVING initiatives?

CN: One of the key aims of MINI LIVING is to bring people together and encourage shared experiences. We believe the way we live—and the way we live together—cannot be underestimated with regard to its impact on society. With this in mind, MINI LIVING seeks to create simply more liveable environments with every single one of our past and future spaces.

INTRODUCING THE GROWING GLOBAL VILLAGE.

THE MINI LIVING URBAN CABIN BECOMES A TEMPORARY HOME THAT TRAVELS THE WORLD.



In response to the many ways in which the quality of urban life is decreasing, MINI is exploring new perspectives of city living through its five MINI LIVING Urban Cabins. These living concepts stop in metropolises around the globe and provide a temporary home to its inhabitants. On a mere 15 square metre footprint, it offers flexible solutions that bring MINI's design credo of "creative use of space" to life, all while examining our new, global cultural identity.

The declining quality of life in our cities is caused by rising rents, ever-expanding urban populations, increased density, and the isolation of metropolises' inhabitants. Meanwhile, the world is more connected than ever. Styles and tastes now transcend borders—most noticeably in architecture—and as a result our cities look more and more alike, leading to the erosion of local, cultural identities.

With the MINI LIVING Urban Cabins, MINI is traversing previously unexplored perspectives of urban living. On only a 15sqm footprint they create

space for a global identity on a local level. Each cabin is located in a different city and enables its inhabitants to feel at home wherever they are. With the first fully operable co-living hub opening in April 2019 in Shanghai the idea of this global village will be taken to the next level.

The five different Urban Cabins will be placed in five cities and delve into five locally relevant topics. From exploring the decreasing number of libraries in London with a micro-library, to Beijing where visitors can enjoy a meditative break from the

MINI LIVING

BIG LIFE.
SMALL FOOTPRINT.



The MINI LIVING Urban Cabins are the epitome of the MINI design credo “creative use of space”.



bustling city streets. Each cabin is equipped with an experience room that is solely related to the specific topic. The room is developed by a local architect who knows his city’s needs and desires best and is able to create a meaningful experience here. Each Urban Cabin reverberates with the spirit of the city it represents, and each cabin’s focus theme will be reflected in one of the elements in MINI LIVING Shanghai as well.

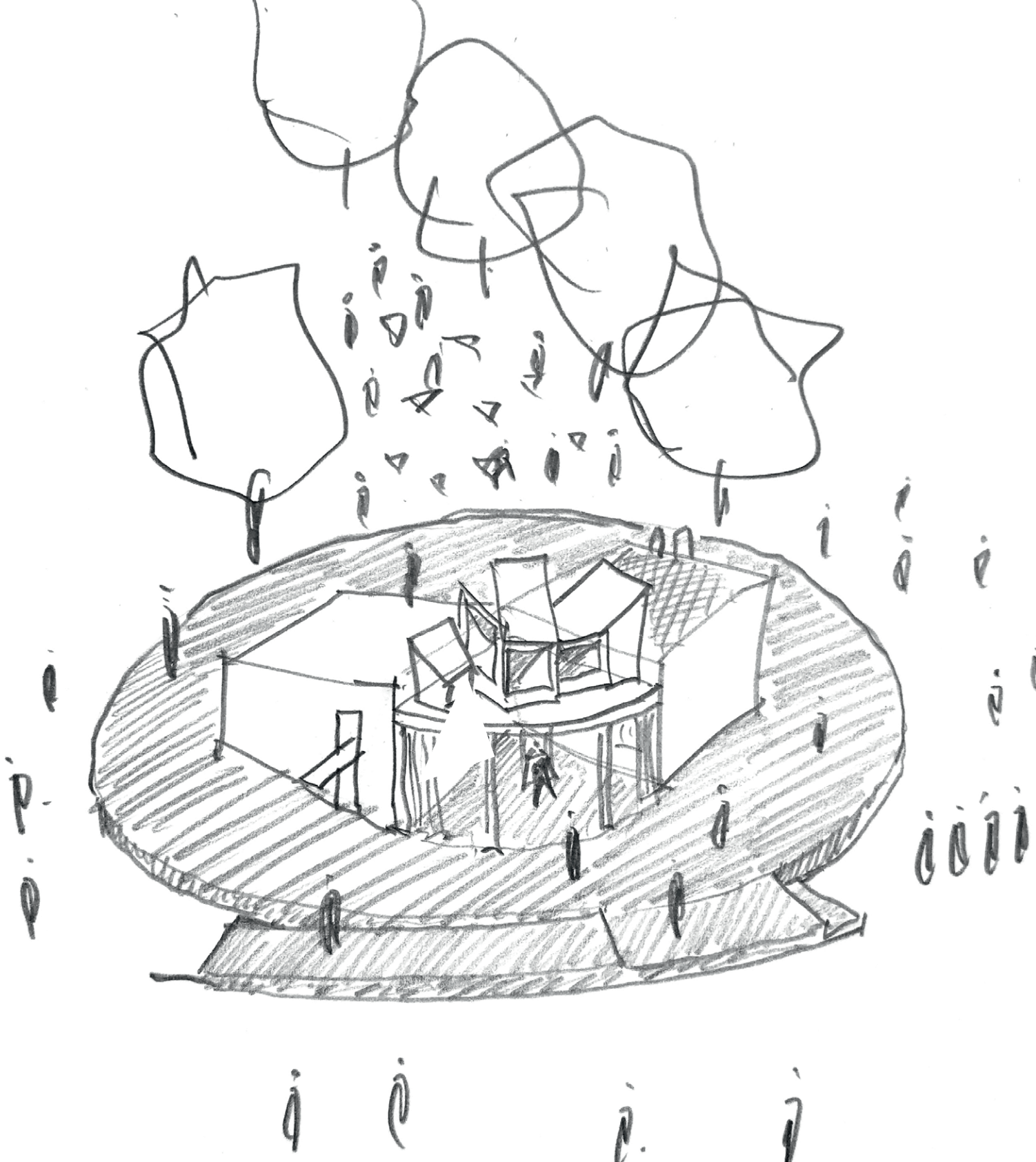
Beyond the respective themes that the Urban Cabins explore, the materials used in their construction will also give them distinct personalities. Where the core material of timber provides warmth and a sense of

home to the interior, additional secondary materials are sourced locally. These materials give texture, colour and a style that only LA, Beijing, New York, or London could create.

Although on a tiny footprint, each cabin maximises the space it can provide to create a comfortable living space for two people. These flexible miniature houses can be reconfigured with a rotation, a fold, a slide, or with the pull of a wall, to suit the people who live in it. As a result the character and feel of the spaces change, shifting from day to night and according to the changing needs of its inhabitants. During the day, the Urban Cabins open up to the city, inviting communication

and fostering community. At night on the other hand, they can be closed, creating flexible, comfortable and beautifully designed homes.

On the one hand, each temporary and inhabitable Urban Cabin is a concise approach to a new way of urban living, but on the other hand it is a creative ambassador for open-minded global togetherness—a commitment to collaboration, communication, exchange and dialogue. In line with MINI LIVING Shanghai the cabins demonstrate how we can create architecture for our shared global identity that adapts to our way of living.



THE MINI LIVING URBAN CABIN IN BEIJING.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE HOUSING
CONCEPTS INSPIRE A FRESH TAKE
ON COMMUNAL LIVING.

Don

MINI LIVING

BIG LIFE.
SMALL FOOTPRINT.

“Inspiration here is drawn from the hutongs, where a big part of personal life happens in the public area of the space.”

CORINNA NATTER

As part of the China House Vision exhibition in Beijing, the fourth MINI LIVING Urban Cabin evokes the locality's historical forms of living to demonstrate innovative ideas for achieving ultimate quality of life in even the smallest spaces. Collaborating with local architect Dayong Sun, the most recent edition of the Urban Cabin has become both an homage to the past and a vision for the future.

In its continued pursuit of the creative use of space, MINI LIVING is working with local architects around the world to create its Urban Cabin project. The most recent Urban Cabin in Beijing is the latest interpretation of the concept MINI LIVING has developed to provide highly flexible multi-use living spaces on a small footprint. To achieve this, MINI LIVING worked with the local architect Dayong Sun from the architecture studio Penda to re-inter-

pret traditional forms of urban living in Beijing and ignite dialog about communal living in the city.

For each of its Urban Cabin editions, MINI LIVING has asked a local architect to conceive a so-called experience room with the character of an installation. Dayong Sun's design for the experience room in Beijing is inspired by the traditional hutongs spread throughout the city's older districts. These living quarters define Beijing's traditional architecture, consisting of courtyard houses and passageways, which are treasured primarily due to their unique combination of private and communal spaces.

In this Urban Cabin, Dayong Sun has placed golden telescopic mirrors above the communal space of the “experience room”, which reflect not only the immediate environment, but also the wider urban context. A swing in the centre of the space playfully changes the perspective of the inhabitants. Geometrically shaped seating and surfaces around the Urban Cabin are reminiscent of the traditional Chinese puzzle game Tangram, thus also extending an invitation to linger. As Day-

ong Sun says, “the project reflects not only the surrounding environment but also—in a very abstract way—our childhood memories.”

Due to demographic change, the hutong model is gradually disappearing from Beijing's cityscape. The MINI LIVING Urban Cabin revives the hutong's basic principles and transposes it onto modern urban life. As MINI LIVING Experience Designer Corinna Natter explains, “we want to achieve a seamless living experience that creates a connection between exterior and interior but most importantly between the people who actually live in it. In this case, the inspiration was drawn from the hutongs, where a big part of personal life happens in the public area of the space.”

The MINI LIVING Urban Cabin project explores how the creative use of space can be used to allow for increased individuality, a new sense of community and maximum quality of life in a minimum amount of space. As Dayong Sun puts it, “small-footprint living is a deeply intelligent solution, representing not only a spatial strategy, but also a new value and lifestyle mindset.”



“Small-footprint living is a deeply intelligent solution, representing not only a spatial strategy, but also a new value and lifestyle mindset.”

DAYONG SUN



MINI LIVING

BIG LIFE.
SMALL FOOTPRINT.



BREAKING DOWN WALLS.

MINI LIVING CHOOSES SHANGHAI'S
JING'AN DISTRICT FOR ITS FIRST
MULTI-LAYERED CO-LIVING PROJECT.



MINI LIVING



Urban life, reformatted. MINI LIVING is transforming a former paint factory in the creative Jing'an District of Shanghai into a vibrant collection of apartments, communal areas and public spaces. Unused industrial buildings will get a new life as modern dwellings, with an open architecture that invites the community to assemble. It is scheduled to open its doors in early 2019, but excitement is already building.

Since 2016, MINI LIVING has been exploring new living concepts in major cities around the world. With creative curiosity and an open mind, it seeks to solve the challenge of improving the quality of urban life on a small footprint. The results of these explorations are now coming to life in the first habitable space. MINI LIVING chose Shanghai as the site of this co-living project, a city familiar with the challenges of accommodating a growing urban population. The project is entirely befitting the MINI philosophy of 'Creative Use of Space', and the multi-functional living complex in

Jing'an is being created in co-operation with Chinese development company NOVA Property Investment Co.

Six buildings will be connected to create an innovative new neighbourhood with an open-minded approach to architecture that will result in flexible transitions between private and public spaces. Great emphasis has been placed on promoting personal freedom. The open-house philosophy behind this building encompasses an optimal use of space and fostering a strong sense of kinship; at once inwardly reflecting and reaching out to invite people to create a community. Dwellings, workspaces and common areas are being built alongside shops, restaurants and areas for recreation. A MINI car sharing service will be available to residents—the future of mobility and urban living go hand in hand, after all.

The design of the complex embraces Shanghai as a city of contrasts. Inside the apartments, which vary in size to cater to singles and families, contemporary design and local elements are combined to create unique but unmistakably Shanghai interiors. The apartments will be nestled in the heart of the neighbourhood and built around the needs of the residents. Varying rental terms allow those who require

a temporary home near friends or colleagues to simply book adjacent rooms. This simple system means that the existing space is used efficiently, with its functions kept flexible.

“With MINI LIVING we're looking to create a genuine alternative within the rental market of big cities,” explains Esther Bahne, head of MINI Brand Strategy and Business Innovation. “We're offering a place that can adapt to its residents, is flexible and allows room to breathe.”

The planning for this inventive project combines expert design knowledge with the spirit of excitement that MINI is known for, and it has been executed with a view to open the complex to the broader neighbourhood. Shops, restaurants and gardens are open to the public, forming focal points for the community that will bring people together in meaningful ways. Additionally, mobile apps will facilitate access to a wide range of offerings and services within the complex.

MINI LIVING is not only demonstrating a creative use of space, it is illustrating the commitment MINI is making to shape the ideas behind the future of urban life.

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