

Catalogue

GATHERING GROUNDS:

The Architecture of Invitation



Family dinner (photograph supplied by author)

Robin de Wilde
5036127
Urban Architecture
Graduation Studio 2024/2025
TU Delft

INTRODUCTION

This booklet presents ‘Three Days in a Life’, a narrative exploration of architecture through the daily rhythms of three women: myself, my mother, and my grandmother. Set within the buildings I designed as part of the urban architecture graduation studio, each chapter follows one of us through a day in this imagined shared future, where three generations live, move, and overlap within the same spatial framework.

Rather than presenting architecture solely through plans or sections, this catalogue captures the building as it is lived, through routines, gestures, coincidences, and moments. It asks: what does it mean to live together, apart? How do different temporalities, habits, and bodies shape space and allow space to shape them in return?

By tracing our parallel yet intertwined routines, from morning rituals to evening returns, the project attempts to make visible the ways architecture mediates intimacy, independence, and intergenerational coexistence. It is both a design reflection and a personal speculation, a small story that aspires to speak to broader questions about domesticity, care, and urban living.



CHAPTER 1: ME

I start my day slowly, sitting on the couch with a cup of coffee. Through the window, I see my mom walking past on her way to the car. She's already dressed for work and in a hurry, like most mornings. We don't speak, but we both know the routine.

After I finish my coffee, I leave the studio and cross the square. As I pass through the square, I look up and spot my grandmother on the balcony. She's drinking her tea, already dressed, and watching the day begin. I wave and she smiles and lifts her cup in return.

I head toward the office building where I've set up a desk for university work. It's quiet and bright inside, and I like having my own space to focus. Around lunchtime, I take a break and sit by the water square. Across the square, I spot my grandmother having lunch with her neighbor friend.

In the afternoon, I return to the office and work until the light starts to fade. Then I head home. When I arrive, dinner is already on the table. My mom and grandmother are waiting. We eat together, share small stories, and end the day as we often do: all in one place.



"SHE'S ALREADY GONE... NO
TIME FOR A GOOD MORNING"



"SHE'S ALWAYS UP THERE
WITH HER TEA. I HOPE I GROW
OLD LIKE THAT"



"FUNNY HOW EVEN HERE, I'M
NOT REALLY ALONE"



"DESIGNING HOMES WHILE
WATCHING PEOPLE LIVE IN
THEM"



"NO MATTER HOW THE DAY
GOES... WE ALWAYS END UP
HERE"

CHAPTER 2: MAMA

She wakes up early and moves through the house with purpose. There's no time to sit, coffee goes into a thermos, keys in hand, bag over her shoulder. She steps outside and walks quickly along the row of trees, heading toward the parking lot.

The neighborhood is still quiet, a mix of green and brick, but as she drives closer to the center of Antwerp, the pace picks up. The traffic builds, and the calm of Hoboken fades into the energy of the city.

At work, the day is structured and full. Meetings, phone calls, emails. It's a routine she knows well.

By late afternoon, she's already heading back. She likes to be home before the others, to open the windows, to put music on low, and to start cooking.

Her mother joins her in the kitchen. As the food simmers, they catch up: little things from the day, quiet observations, familiar jokes.

When dinner's ready, she sets the table. Her daughter walks in not long after. They sit down together, the three of them. It's the part of the day that doesn't change, no matter how full the rest of it was.



"COFFE. KEYS. GO. GO. GO."



"A BIT OF QUIET... BEFORE
THE NOISE STARTS"

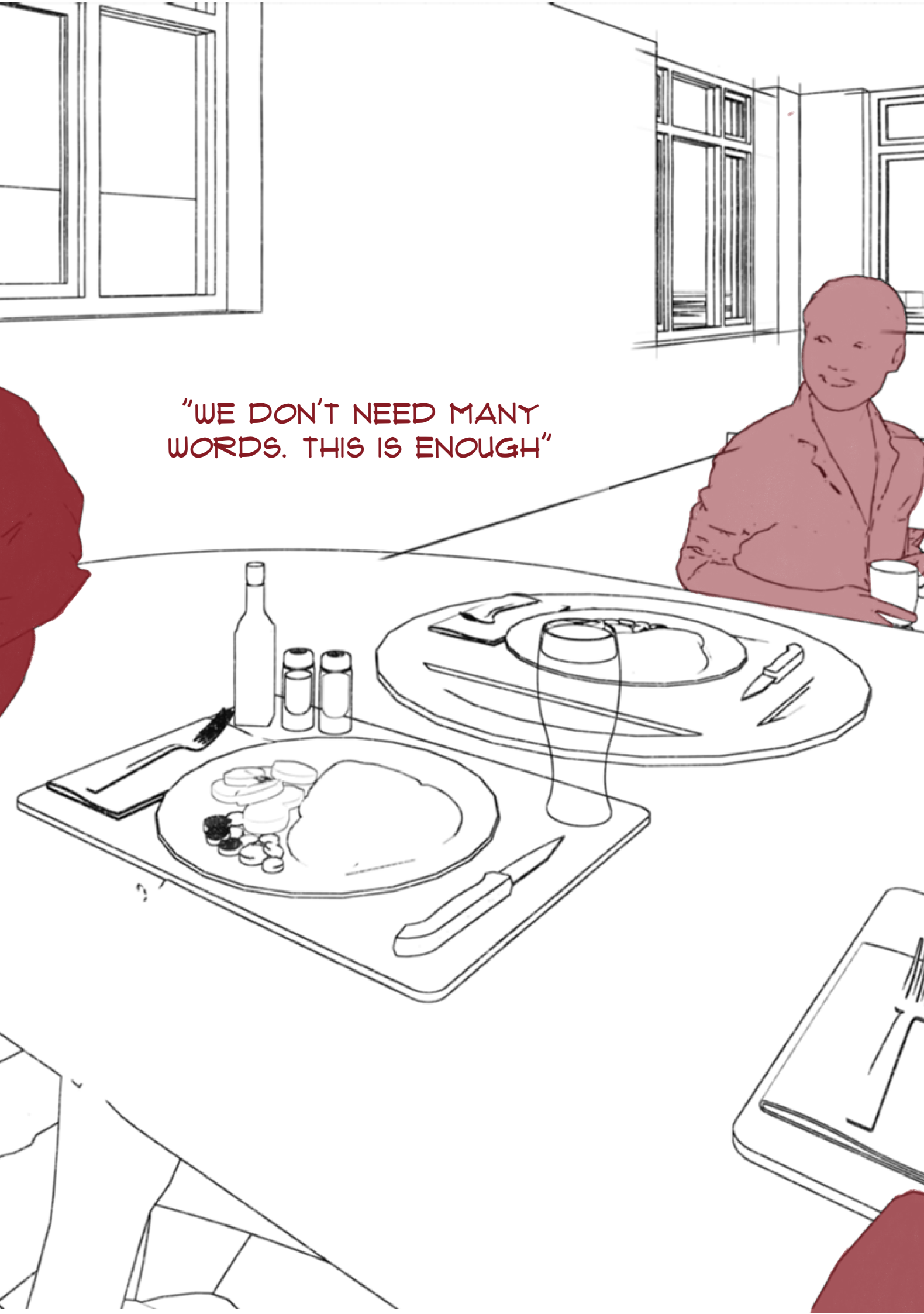
"SAME ROAD. SAME TRAFFIC.
DIFFERENT DAY"



"ALMOST HOME. I HOPE
THEY'RE HUNGRY"



"WE DON'T NEED MANY
WORDS. THIS IS ENOUGH"



CHAPTER 3: OMA

She starts her morning with a cup of tea on the balcony. From there, she watches the square slowly wake up, a few people passing through, birds picking at crumbs, someone sweeping the pavement. She spots her granddaughter crossing the courtyard and lifts her hand in a quiet wave.

Later in the morning, she heads downstairs with her shopping bag. The bakery, the greengrocer, the butcher: everything she needs is just around the corner. She takes her time, greeting familiar faces, chatting with the woman behind the counter who always gives her the freshest bread.

Around noon, she meets her neighbor for lunch at a new place that's just opened on the square. They sit outside and share a meal, watching life unfold around them. Across the square, she notices her granddaughter sitting by the waterfront, having lunch alone. They exchange a smile from a distance.

Afterwards, she returns home and lies down for a short nap. In the late afternoon, she gets up, crosses the balcony, and steps into her daughter's kitchen. They talk while preparing dinner together. As evening falls, they sit at the table. Three generations, one meal.



CLOSING WORDS

This project explores how architecture can support not just individual lives, but the quiet relationships that unfold between them. Through three overlapping routines: mine, my mother's, and my grandmother's. A layered portrait emerges of how space is lived, shared, and shaped by different generations.

The building becomes more than a structure; it becomes a backdrop to daily gestures, casual encounters, and moments of togetherness. Each of us moves through the same spaces differently, at our own pace, with our own needs, but we remain connected by proximity, by habit, and by care.

In imagining all three of us living here, I'm also imagining a kind of urban life that allows for slowness and spontaneity, for independence without isolation. The square, the balcony, the kitchen: they aren't just architectural elements, but social ones. They frame the small, recurring scenes that make a life feel whole.

In the end, this is not just a design for housing, it's a proposal for living together, apart and together at once, in the halfway city.