

EMBODYING PREFIGURATION

Embodying Prefiguration
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Jonne van Bunningen 4998332
TU Delft | Faculty of Architecture & Built Environment
Msc Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences
Track Urbanism
First Mentor | Irene Luque Martin
Second Mentor | Juliana Goncalves

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I would like to thank all members of the 'Design Through Feminist Values' cluster. Thank you for our collaborative exploration of horizontal academics, alternative ways of knowing and being, and for re-politicizing urbanism while embracing the friction and uncertainties that come with it.

Finally, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my dear mentors, Irene Luque Martin and Juliana Goncalves, for trusting me and allowing me freedom, without which this transformative process could not have taken place. Thank you for guiding me, nurturing the critical thinker within me, and believing in me.



Dear reader,

You are not going to read a conventional academic thesis. You will follow along a process of exploration, challenging, critically reflecting, de and re-constructing design education and practice.

Do you dare to open up to an alternative pathway??

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores through autobiographical action research, how the embodiment of prefigurative practices can inform urban design while simultaneously deconstructing the dominant imaginaries in which design is rooted. It begins with the premise that the current poly-crisis stems from how many humans -this author included- perceive the world: through the imaginaries of Modernity, which we, as spatial designers, are responsible for reproducing. The problem lies in how we produce space (the power dynamics it enacts) (Lefebvre, 1984) and the knowledge systems that underpin it.

Thus, this project is a process of resituating spatial design practice (as experienced by this author) by exploring methods that enable alternative ways of gaining knowledge and subsequently producing space, rooted in non-Modernistic imaginaries. The primary method is the embodiment of prefigurative practices. Beginning with three intentional communities in the Netherlands, the embodiment has demonstrated how social-spatial reproduction can counter Modernistic frameworks while produce space by emphasizing lived space.

The thesis then investigates how design itself can be grounded in prefigurative practices, seeking methods to translate the knowledge gained from these communities. This exploration culminates in two main approaches: first, by documenting the communities' practices and revealing how they deconstruct dominant imaginaries. A method that highlights alternative ways of spatial narration and grants agency to the communities

as active actors. Second, by exploring how as a spatial designer, one can embody prefigurative practices within their own context beginning with a critical reimagining of that context, followed by a pathway for action.

This thesis contributes to feminist and activist design discourses by challenging Modernist conventions in spatial design and demonstrating how embodiment -as a method- can serve as a foundation for action. It inspires alternative spatial configurations and allows the thesis itself to both contribute to prefigurative practices and become one. The argument is twofold: spatial designers must critically reflect on the knowledge systems through which we conceive space, but more importantly, we must shift our focus from producing space through conceiving to producing space through living it, by becoming active agents in our surroundings.

Therefore, this thesis does not deliver conventional outputs. The report you are about to read is an exploration -fragmented, partial, and imperfect- an alternative pathway that invites you to critically reflect, resituate, deconstruct, and take action.



GLOSSARY

Imaginaries

Imaginaries refer to collective, often unconscious frameworks that shape how individuals and groups perceive, interpret, and aspire to transform the world. They are shared mental models, narratives, symbols, and visions that guide social action, cultural norms, and even political or economic systems. Imaginaries are not merely abstract ideas; they are embedded in practices, institutions, and material realities (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2014).

Radical spatial imaginations

A subset of imaginaries specifically focused on reimagining the spatial organization of society in ways that challenge dominant power structures. "Radical spatial imaginations are a design method that enable designers and communities to envision spatial pasts, presents or future beyond the limits of existing political, institutional, and epistemic frameworks" (Luque Martin, 2026). They are transformative, aiming to disrupt hegemonic spatial practices and propose alternatives.

Prefigurative practices

Actions or experiments that embody the values, structures, or relationships of a desired future in the present. Prefigurative practices are not just symbolic; they are tangible, lived alternatives to dominant systems, often emerging in social movements, intentional communities, or grassroots initiatives. They reject the idea that change must wait for large-scale revolution, instead creating microcosms of the world they wish to see (The Future is Now, 2022).

Prefigurative politics

A political approach that emphasizes prefigurative practices as a strategy for social change. Unlike traditional politics, which often focuses on seizing state power or policy reform, prefigurative politics builds alternative institutions and ways of life that prefigure a more just society. It is rooted in the belief that the process of struggle should reflect the desired outcome (The Future is Now, 2022).

Modernity

Modernity is the hegemonic Western imaginary that has shaped the dominant attitudes, structures, and practices of the contemporary world. It is not merely a historical period but an ongoing, contested project founded on four interlocked beliefs: economy, individual, real and science (Escobar, 2018). In this thesis, modernity is identified as a root cause of the current polycrisis (the interconnected ecological, social, economic, and existential breakdowns) because of the attitudes and practices stemming from these beliefs.

Communities

A group of people who share common interests, values, identities, or geographic proximity, and who engage in collective practices, norms, or mutual support. Communities can be formal or informal, local or virtual, and homogeneous or diverse. They are dynamic and contested, as membership, boundaries, and power relations are constantly negotiated.

Intentional communities

A deliberately formed group of people who consciously live together with a shared purpose, sharing resources and working cooperatively to reflect their core values (Waerther, 2014). Intentional communities are designed to foster cooperation, sustainability, or social experimentation, and they often involve collective decision-making, shared resources, and communal living arrangements. They differ from 'communities' as their establishment is deliberate to following an explicit purpose.

Embodiment

Embodiment grants agency to the 'lived body' as both a subject and a medium through which we perceive, act, and make sense of the world (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). In doing so, it inherently explores non-dualistic ontologies by rejecting the separation of body and mind. This methodology encompasses how we physically and emotionally connect with others and how these connections shape our ethics and politics (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017).

Embodied experience

A first-person perspective on the world that is mediated through the body's sensations, movements, and emotions. Embodied experience emphasizes how knowledge and reality are perceived and constructed through physical engagement with the environment. It is personal and situated, varying across individuals based on their bodily capacities, histories, and social positions.

Lived experience

The personal experience of everyday life, including routines, emotions, social interactions, and cultural practices. Lived experience is shaped by—and shapes—structural forces such as class and gender, and is central to understanding how individuals and groups navigate, interpret, and resist the world around them. It concerns the ordinary and the extraordinary, from daily chores to life-altering events.

Lived space

The space of everyday life as it is experienced, felt, and given meaning by individuals and communities. Lived space is emotional, and social, it is where memory, desire, and resistance intersect with the physical world. It is not just a backdrop for human activity but a product of human agency, constantly (re)created through practices, symbols, and struggles.

Perceived space

The material, sensory space of everyday life, the space that is directly experienced through the senses. Perceived space is the physical reality of the world as it is navigated, used, and encountered in daily routines.

Conceived space

The space of representations and plans, the space imagined, designed, and controlled by experts, institutions, and power structures. Conceived space is abstract, rational, and often hierarchical, reflecting the interests of those who produce it. It is the space of maps, blueprints, laws, and theories, which seek to order, standardize, and dominate the physical and social world.

Design anthropology

A transdisciplinary approach that integrates anthropological methods and theories into design practice (Escobar, 2018, p.55). Design anthropology centers human experiences, cultural contexts, and social meanings in the creation of artifacts, systems, or spaces.

Ethnography of design

An anthropological study of design practices, cultures, and institutions. Unlike design anthropology (which brings anthropology into design), the ethnography of design brings design into anthropology by examining how designers work, the social worlds they inhabit, and the power dynamics of design processes. It treats design as a cultural phenomenon worthy of critical analysis (Escobar, 2018, p.55).

Anthropology of design

The application of critical social theory to design practice, with the goal of denaturalizing design and exposing its political, economic, and cultural dimensions. While design anthropology and ethnography of design focus on methods and cultures, the anthropology of design is more theoretical and normative, asking what design should be (Escobar, 2018, p.55).

Holacracy

A decentralized management system that replaces traditional hierarchies with self-organizing teams and distributed authority. In holacracy, decision-making power is not concentrated in managers or executives but is instead distributed among roles and circles (groups of roles) based on expertise and purpose. The system is rule-based (governed by a constitution) and transparent, with clear processes for proposing, amending, and enforcing organizational policies.

Situated knowledge

Situated knowledge is a critical epistemological framework that asserts all knowledge is partial, relational, and shaped by the positionality of the knower. It rejects the idea of universal, neutral, or objective truth, instead emphasizing that truth claims are always contextual, embodied, and influenced by social, cultural, and historical locations. Positionality is not a bias to be eliminated but a necessary lens for transparency, reflexivity, and accountability in knowledge production (Haraway, 1988).

Spatial design in stead of Urban design

The term spatial design is used in this thesis, as urban design links to the urban fabric. This thesis doesn't only address the urban fabric, but a more widely interpretation of space and therefore uses the term, spatial design. Space being lived, perceived and conceived.

Situating

When not referring to 'situated knowledge', situating in this thesis refers to the act of placing an object, idea, or practice within a specific context to understand its meaning, function, or significance.

Repositioning

The process of physically or conceptually moving something to a new location, status, or role within a system, altering its spatial, social, or discursive place.

Recontextualizing

The act of placing something in a new context to transform its meaning, interpretation, or function, emphasizing how context shapes understanding.

POSITIONALITY

I am a 25-year-old white, cisgender, non-heteronormative, able-bodied woman, born and raised in a middle-class family of five, consisting of my mother, father, older sister, and brother. Our family home was located in a suburb of Nijmegen. We lived relatively far from our extended family: my father's side resides primarily in the province of Overijssel, while my mother's family lives in Stockholm, Sweden. Growing up in a city suburb I can admit that I have been an obedient citizen, going along with the pathways shaped by regulations.

This attitude changed while being in high school. Through taking philosophy classes, I was stimulated to question what I perceived as normal. This awakened the critical thinker within me that acknowledged the existence of plural realities and perspectives. Later, during the bachelors – a predominantly technocratic discourse – this interest combined with an interest in nature¹ made me read into philosophies of post-humanism, reading scholar such as Haraway, Latour, Tsing, and Braidotti.

Following my bachelor's degree, I worked as a graduate landscape architect in Sydney. This professional experience made clear that the philosophies I found compelling largely remained confined to academic discourse. Upon returning to TU Delft for the master's program in Urbanism, I sought to translate these

philosophies into spatial visions and design practices. This search was strongly supported by educators working along similar theoretical lines. However, after a year of experimentation across multiple scales, I remained dissatisfied, aware that these explorations would ultimately exist only within academic settings. This realization motivated a desire to experiment within practice itself, by engaging with those already living and testing alternative ways of organizing life. Drifting away from the nuance of post-humanism on more-than-humans, to the roots of human design practice.

As this project is situated within the Design with Feminist Values graduation cluster, it benefits from the space to question normative approaches, unlearn established methods, and experiment with alternative forms of knowledge production. The cluster embraces plurality, justice, critical methodologies, and horizontal communication, creating a supportive environment in which dominant systems can be challenged within the pragmatic constraints of academic research and graduation requirements. This space has been made possible by the founders of the cluster and by the guidance of my two supervisors, Irene Luque Martin and Juliana Gonçalves.

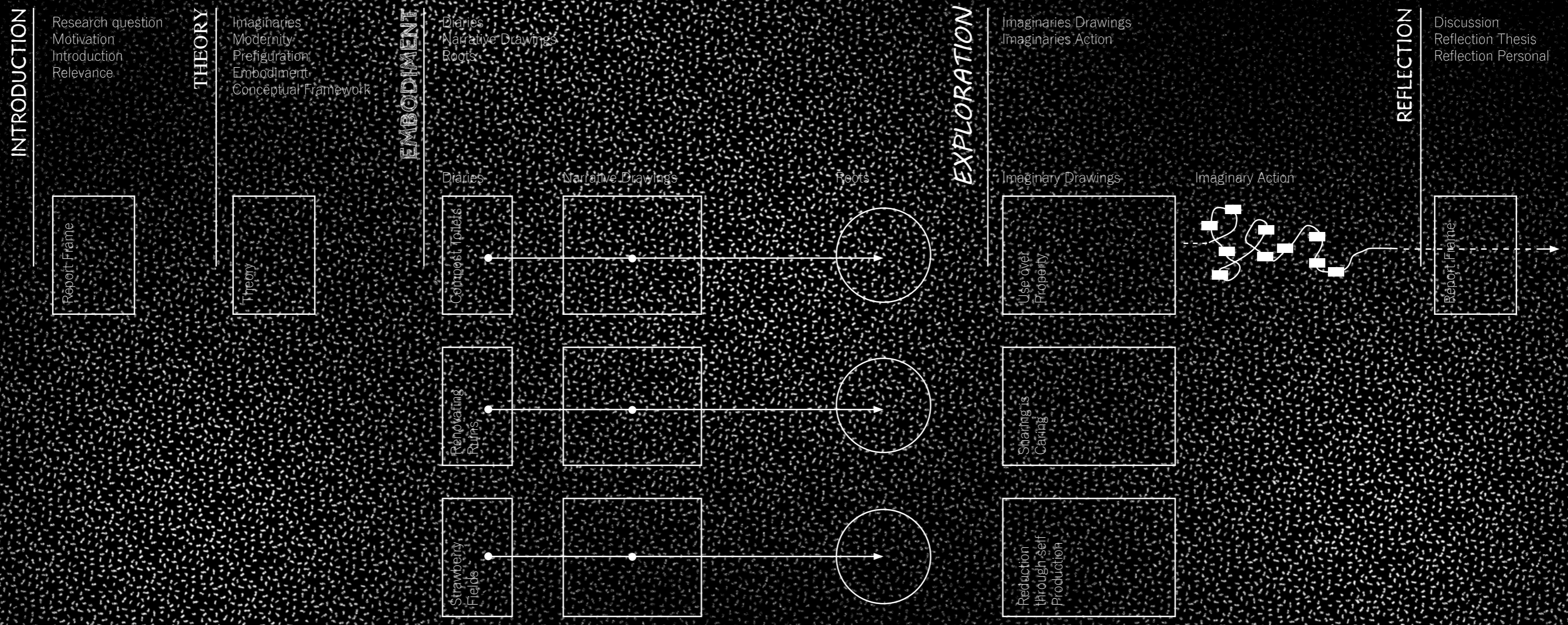
Through this project, I will immerse in several communities to engage with and embody the lived experiences of their everyday context. While this engagement is still forthcoming, it already raises questions about transparency, embodiment, and the negotiation between situated practice and academic regulation. It also prompts reflection on the agency of the designer within this type of research. This positionality statement aims to function as way through which transparency can be provided. Offering an inside in the persona behind the knowledge produced in this thesis.



¹In this context, 'nature' is defined as the non-human environment. I acknowledge that this usage aligns with a modernist framing and reinforces the nature-culture dichotomy critiqued by Bruno Latour. Nevertheless, I adopt the term here in its everyday sense, as it remains the most commonly understood designation in daily language.

The process...

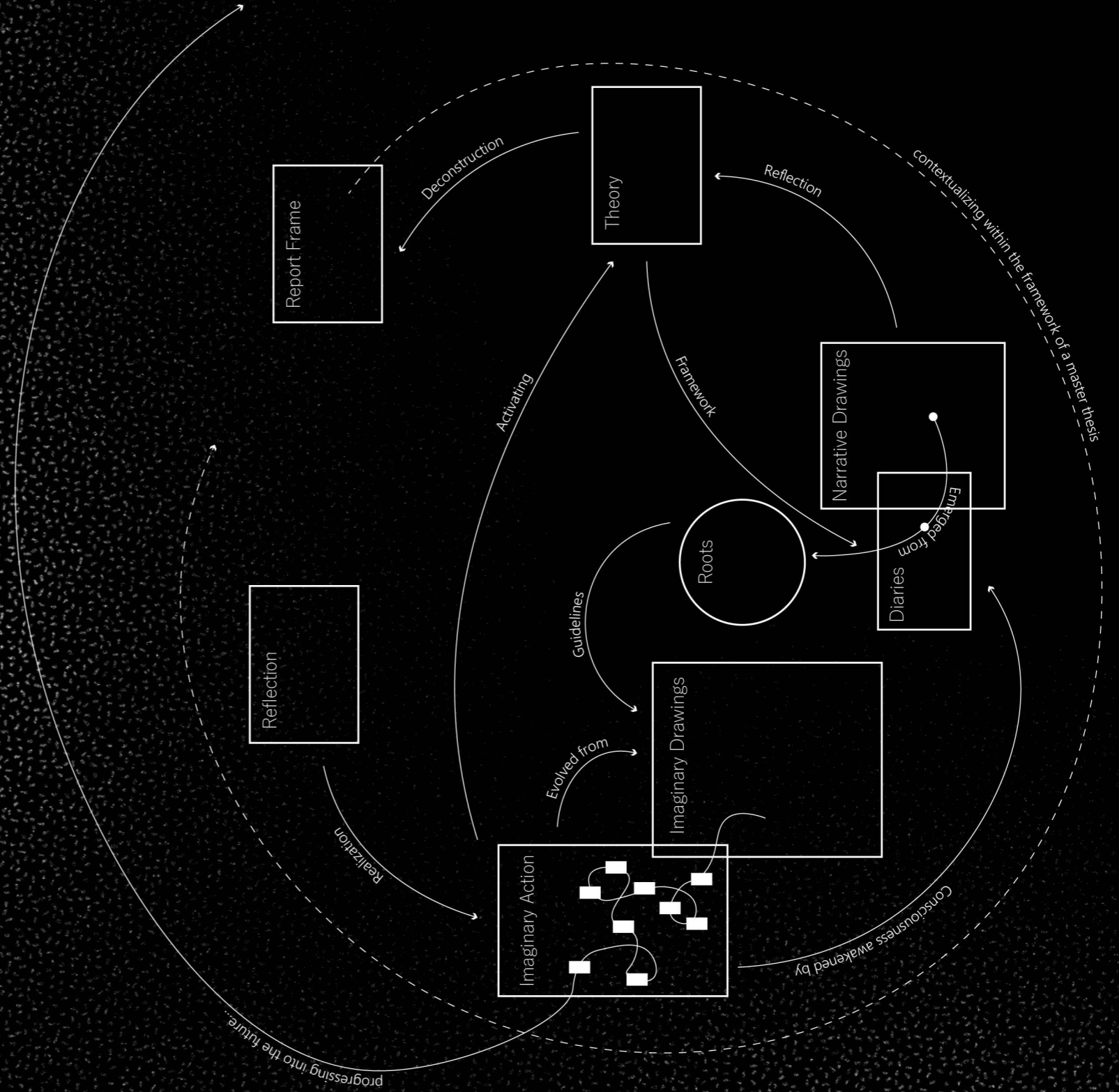
CONTENT



READING GUIDE

This thesis consists of separate booklets that together, narrate the process of the past months. This format was chosen to reflect the idea that multiple truths emerge through the narration of interrelated elements.

1. The theory booklet clarifies the theories underlying the process. Diving into Lefebvre's three perspectives on space (conceived, perceived and lived). Explaining why prefigurative practices should be considered as essential practices to learn from and why embodiment is an indispensable method to do so.
2. The embodiment booklet shows the documentation and translation that came out of the embodied experience in the three intentional communities. Highlighting how space is alternatively produced and exposing root themes of this production.
3. The exploration booklet consists of imaginaries based on the roots of the embodied experience. Additionally, this booklet explores how one can embody prefigurative practices in their own context.
4. The reflection, looks back onto the methodologies used and explains how the positionality of the author has changed.



INTRODUCTION



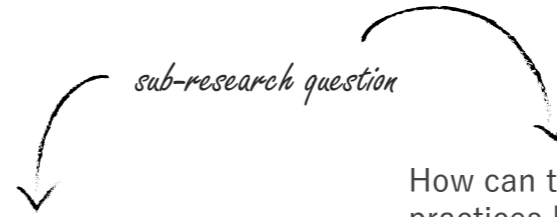
How can the embodiment of prefigurative practices inform spatial design?

RESEARCH

Main Research question



sub-research question



How can the embodiment of prefigurative practices deconstruct the modernistic roots of spatial design?

How can the embodiment of prefigurative practices be expressed through urban design?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To question design education and practice by repositioning myself.
- To engage in prefigurative practices and learn from them through embodiment.
- To highlight prefigurative practices by documenting them.
- To use the methodology of imaginaries to explore translations of embodiment and to act.
- To highlight the importance of positionality and reflection.

RESEARCH AIM

- The aim of this research is to deconstruct and question design education and practice by exploring alternative methodologies and practices.
- The aim of this research is to transform a thesis project into a prefigurative practice.

MOTIVATION

Arising from the acknowledgment that people live in multiple and differing realities, this project is driven by an ongoing curiosity about reflection, questioning, critiquing, and deconstructing the thoughts and ideas through which we produce and perceive the world.

This curiosity, combined with a drive to act, to engage, and to experience space, has led to an interest in alternative ways of living and how they shape the world. It is a motivation to search for practices that challenge the dominant social-spatial structures responsible for ongoing degradation. Ultimately, it is a desire to, through this thesis, reposition myself, to contribute to these shifts toward alternatives.

INTRODUCTION

We are in a polycrisis: climate change, ecological decay, biodiversity loss, mass extinction, resource depletion, water scarcity, food insecurity, global inequality, cultural erasure, colonialism, dehumanization, refugee displacement, misinformation, mental health crises, democratic backsliding, the rise of authoritarianism, and the threat of World War III, among others. The causes of these crises are often framed under concepts such as the Anthropocene, capitalism, or patriarchy. In other words, the world is shaped by interconnected expressions of confusion, conflict, and suffering that define our reality. These crises are the result of how we live our lives and are perpetuated through the traditions, routines, and habits that structure our days. In this thesis, this process is defined as social-spatial reproduction within Modern imaginaries.

The notion of social-spatial reproduction builds on Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space. Lefebvre demonstrates how space is produced through social relations across three intertwined perspectives: perceived space (daily routines), conceived space (design and planning), and lived space (experiential dimension). His theory reveals how spatial designers, who assert power over space through spatial representations (conceived space), are themselves influenced by the spaces they inhabit and perceive. This dynamic clarifies how "living" in Modern spaces (by spatial designers) reproduces Modern spaces. Consequently, urbanism; the education and practice of urban design, planning, and conceptualization, perpetuates Modernity.

To challenge and counter the foundations of our reality in this polycrisis, we must therefore challenge and counter the networks of Modernity. This begins with ourselves, as urban designers, and how we (re)produce spatial design (representations of space). We must acknowledge that design practice is never neutral. This means we need to explore new methods and approaches that allow us to re-situate ourselves from Modernity, meaning; designers need to explore methods that embrace alternative ways of knowing and stimulate the formation of alternative imaginaries.

Rather than being created by experts, alternative imaginaries are already being enacted by grassroots initiatives and social movements through prefigurative politics. Prefiguration is "the practice of living an intentional future in the present" (Monticelli, 2022). It enables ways of living that are not rooted in Modernity but in an intentional and alternative future. This form of politics can be practiced at many scales and across a plurality of topics, but currently, its highest density (and thus its greatest transition potential (SOURCE)) is found in intentional communities (Monticelli, 2022). Intentional communities are groups of people who consciously live together with a common purpose, sharing resources and working cooperatively to reflect their core values (Waerther, 2014).

This thesis aims to understand how social-spatial reproduction occurs through prefigurative politics in intentional communities, presenting an opportunity to deconstruct and reconstruct design practice. It does so

by centering embodiment as a methodological approach, considering all three aspects of space (conceived, perceived, and lived) to enable a multidimensional interpretation of space within intentional communities. Three intentional communities in the Netherlands serve as situated contexts where alternative ways of living and being are enacted, here and now. This approach results in two "intentions": deconstructing and repositioning of the design research (and practice).

RELEVANCE

Disciplinary relevance

The outputs of this thesis contribute to a number of projects that explore and articulate alternative design approaches and methodologies. As part of a growing experimental discourse, this project seeks responses to the methodological and epistemological limitations and injustices of Modernist, conventional spatial design practice. This exploration is essential to deconstruct and expose the deep-rooted Modernist foundation of spatial design practice, while simultaneously enabling the development of non-dualistic (non-Modernist) social-spatial representations. Including a critical reflection on the power relations currently shaping space (conceived, perceived and lived-space). Fostering more inclusive and holistic expressions of space.

Methodological relevance

The project specifically emphasizes the importance of embodied research as a counter-practice. It demonstrates how embodiment enables critical reflection, encompassing all spatial perspectives, and, when situated within the context of prefigurative politics, how it challenges Modernity. Embodiment also facilitates the development of situated knowledge and is essential for establishing alternative ways of knowing, being, and becoming (Escobar, 2028). The thesis showcases how lived experience can be translated into design through the creation of various outputs, such as narrative drawings, assemblage mapping, and imaginaries. By participating in prefigurative practices, the project provides insight into how embodiment allows a thesis to become a ground for action. It contributes to the prefigurative practices of three intentional communities and produces a site for prefiguration as an output/ and enables the thesis to be prefigurative.

Social relevance

By highlighting the prefigurative practices of these three intentional communities -and how they have led to the development of personal prefigurative actions- this thesis may also serve as inspiration or hope for those who have succumbed to growing pessimism and a diminishing belief in the possibility of alternative worlds: the "loss of the future" (Davoudi, 2018). This pessimism often results in passive alignment with dominant systems. Through narrating the lived experiences of (partly) non-Modernist life in intentional communities, and its effect on the author's lived experience, the project may inspire others to question their own lived experiences. For some, it may also act as a stimulant, exposing the possibilities inherent in lived experience and making other ways of living (and designing) more accessible.

It has, at the very least, done so for the author...

Dear reader, it is time to dive into Theory...

**THEORY
&
METHODS**

CONTENT

IMAGINARIES	3-5
MODERNITY	6-17
<i>THE BELIEF IN THE REAL</i>	7-9
<i>THE BELIEF IN SCIENCE</i>	10-11
<i>THE BELIEF IN THE INDIVIDUAL</i>	12-13
<i>THE BELIEF IN THE ECONOMY</i>	14-15
PREFIGURATION	18-19
EMBODIMENT	20-21
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	22-23
METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	24-25
REFERENCES	26-27

IMAGINARIES

OUR WAY OF UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD

When discussing reality, we must first define what we mean by the term. In this thesis, reality is framed through the notion of imaginaries. Imaginaries refer to the ways in which people come to know the world and make sense of their place within it. They are the landscapes of individual or collective ideas, associations, meanings, fixations, and narratives that create shared understanding, making coexistence possible (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2014). As social constructs¹, imaginaries may be entirely dreamed up or rooted in histories and traditions (Castoriadis, 1987). They shape how humans interpret the chaos and beauty of the world.

According to Castoriadis (1987), imaginaries can be categorized as either “instituting society” or “instituted society.” The former generates alternative narratives; the “otherwise” (Olufemi, 2021). While the latter conforms to dominant norms, such as those of Modernity. The “instituted” and “instituting” imaginaries are intertwined in power dynamics marked by conflict and tension. Dominant norms (the “instituted”) often suppress alternative narratives (the “instituting”) because they are institutionalized, whether immaterially; through cultural factors like symbolism, language, and stories, or materially; through physical infrastructures, spatial arrangements, or legal frameworks (Schilder, 2025). Both “instituting” and “instituted”, material and/or immaterial, are shaped by the social-spatial contexts in which we find ourselves.

¹ Imaginaries can be social constructs; shared frameworks of meaning that shape how groups or society understand the world (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2014) or they can be; individual thought or personal imaginaries which encompass unique interpretations, dreams or personal worldviews that haven't yet (or may never) align with social constructs. In the context of this thesis, the first type of imaginary is being addressed.

Using Lefebvre's definition of social-spatial reproduction, the spatial perspectives in which these imaginaries are created and expressed, are explained. Lefebvre describes three perspectives on space that are intertwined and constantly interacting, demonstrating that space is shaped through the negotiation of power structures and social relations.

1. Representations of Space (the Conceived Space)
 This space allows authorities and institutions to enact their power by structuring and organizing society through tools such as zoning laws, city plans, zoning regulations, architectural blueprints, and urban policies. Often, this is the result of top-down planning driven by expert technocrats and scientists. It is established through design, mapping, systematization, and regulation.

2. Spatial Practice (the Perceived Space)
 This term refers to the everyday use and organization of space, created and maintained through how people move through and physically use environments. These daily practices stabilize and maintain the social order as perpetuated by the conceived space, such as commuting routes, workplace layouts, and housing patterns

3. Representational Spaces (the Lived Space)
 The experiential dimension of space is created through symbolism, meanings, emotions, and cultural practices. It influences how people perceive and interpret certain spaces, which can either reproduce dominant meanings or become a ground for contestations (of conceived space), shaping alternatives.

The power relations between the three perspectives on space are in this thesis interpreted as (see arrows in the figure on the following page);

1. The lived space provides a foundation for the creation of alternative imaginaries through contestation.
2. The conceived space dominates our daily patterns (the perceived space)
3. The perceived space sets the material boundaries for the lived space.

Consequently, the role of the spatial designer, who operates through the conceived perspective on space, is never neutral. A designer's choices and creations are expressions and extensions of their beliefs, influencing the imaginaries and realities of others. Therefore, as spatial designers, we have a responsibility to question ourselves by deconstructing our beliefs. In the context of this thesis, these beliefs are; Modernity.

The figure showcases the three perspectives on space when being expressions of the "instituted imaginaries". In portraying the perspectives as such, the framework states that lived space, although contesting the conceived space is still part of dominating (instituted) imaginaries.

Meaning, the lived space is countering how the dominant imaginary is enacted (through conceiving). Nevertheless, this doesn't mean that the lived space is automatically countering the dominant imaginary. As how space is lived; cultural practices, symbologies and meanings can still be rooted in this "instituted imaginary".

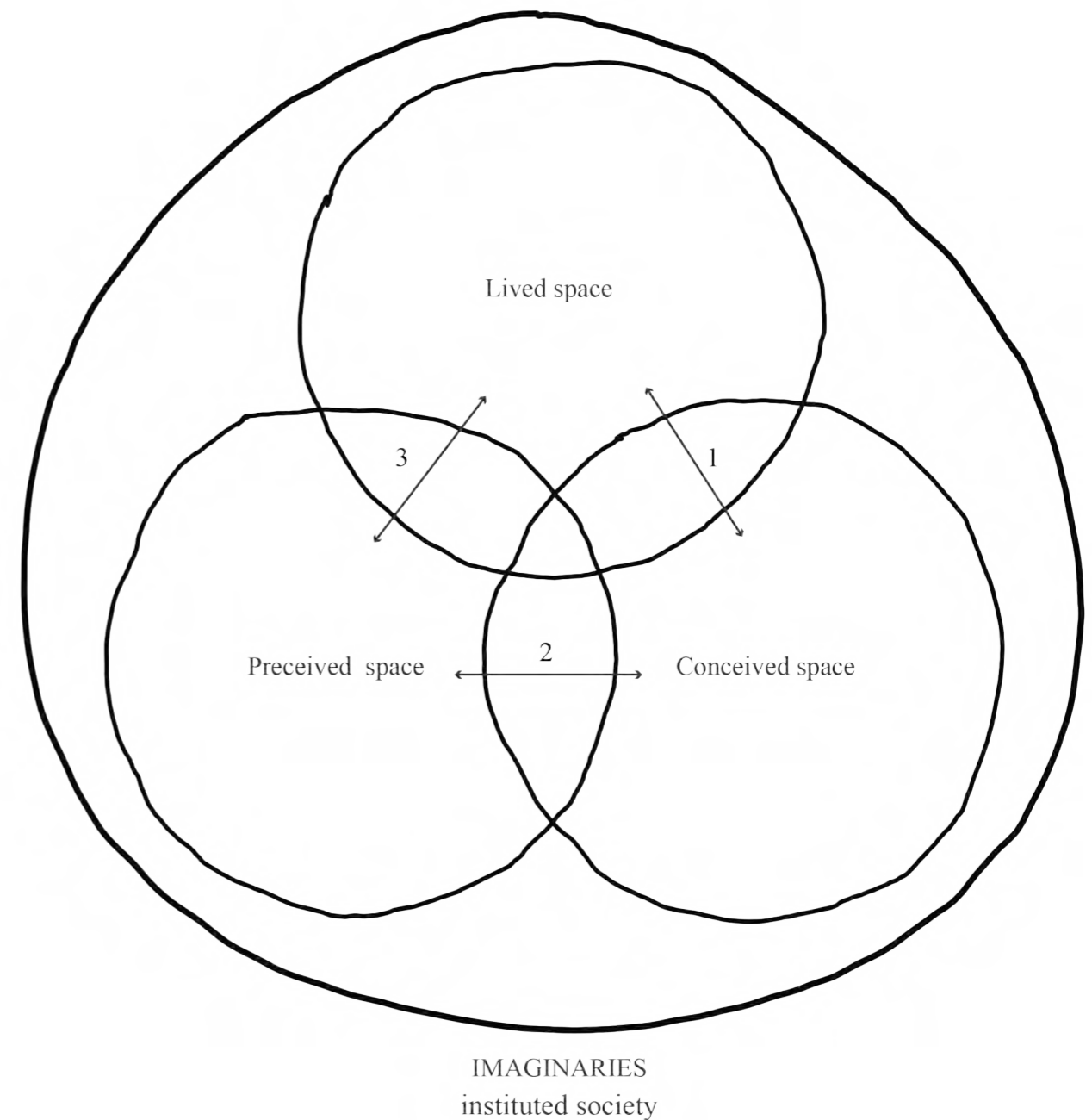


Figure 1.1 Imaginaries and the three perspectives on space
 Source: Created by Author.

MODERNITY

THE DOMINATING IMAGINARY OF THE PRESENT

Modernity, the oppressed Western reality is known under different names such as; Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Neoliberalism, Anarcho-capitalism, Colonialism, Consumerism, etc. The plurality in terminology showcases how Modernity is intertwined with many projects, each name, aiming to emphasize a specific nuance. As Modernity is known under many names, this theoretical lens adopts Escobar's definition of Modernity.

According to Escobar, Modernity is based in dualistic ontologies. He describes the dualities to be expressed through four beliefs encompassing all Modern doings: the belief in the real, in science, in the individual and in the economy (Escobar, 2018). Four pillars which shape the (currently dominant) Modern social-spatial imaginary.

In the following section these beliefs will be clarified as well as interpreted, through reflection upon the perspective of previously described; conceives space, according to the lived experience of the author. This theoretical practice explores the deconstruction of the context in which this thesis is written, aside from inevitably deconstructing the imaginary of the author.

Therefore, the written exploration, encompasses an interwoven view on multiple levels. Including the level of education; course focuses and teaching methods used, their underlying frameworks, the produced outputs and current representations of existing spatial structures. The text doesn't aim to give an extended and all-encompassing view on the (conceived) spatial and educational implementations of the four beliefs (Modernity). It merely tries to awaken a critical thinking process which can be continued by its author and readers.

THE BELIEF IN THE REAL

The belief in the real is grounded in the Western idea of humans existing in One World with One Truth. This idea stems from dualistic ontologies, three of which are the most widely discussed: the separation between nature and culture, between us and them, and between body and mind. This belief arises from an unsituated notion of objectivity that claims universality, underpinned by the idea that humans are mere occupants of an inanimate world (Escobar, 2018, p. 86).

This Western notion of the real positions its perception of reality as inherently superior, suppressing alternative ways of knowing and enabling othering. It fosters the illusion of human mastery over nature by denying the existence of relationalities.

REFLECTION ON CONCEIVING SPACE

In urbanism, this perspective manifests in several ways, such as through conventional methodologies and human-centric design. When employing conventional methodologies, design practice is rooted in mental perception, emphasizing the rationalistic processes of the mind. Consequently, the knowledge underpinning designs is often derived from theoretical sources, online research, or the visualization of predominant ideas, while excluding the knowledge that could be gained through physical experience.

Conventional methodologies and their neglection of embodied knowledge

In many academic courses, field trips are often limited to a single visit. Although some educators encourage repeated site visits, time for such activities is rarely allocated in the schedule. As a result, lived and perceived space are barely experienced first-hand. This approach assumes that representations

of space can be created based on a one-day visit and an individual's biases, shaped by their education. Additionally, when moving through a space which to design for, this movement is often influenced by educational methodologies for 'fieldtrips. Such's as creating a picture overviews or fieldtrip map.

From many examples of courses marked by this approach, one course concerning Amsterdam, gives a clear impression of how the embodied experience is often not taken as an essential source of information. As the course concerned the whole region of Amsterdam, the few site visits weren't sufficient to explore the region fully. Consequently, the final vision was based on a partial physical perception of the city, with much of the plan reflecting a projection of this limited experience or physically ungrounded personal perceptions resulting in standardization.

What further question does this reflection awaken?

- *Should design practice be localized and only consider the spaces a designer embodies? Can this be?*
- *What is the balance between embodied knowledge and (in this context) conventional knowledge?*



This author only began questioning this conventional approach, after taking a course that did prioritize knowledge obtained through physical experience of space. In this elective, designs were meant to emerge from frequent visits and extended stays at the intervention site. This approach fostered a perception of space that differed significantly from the one formed during the initial weeks of online research, as it was grounded in embodied experience. This shift in perception was deeply influenced by encounters with humans and more-than-humans, as well as the multisensory experience of continuously walking through the area.

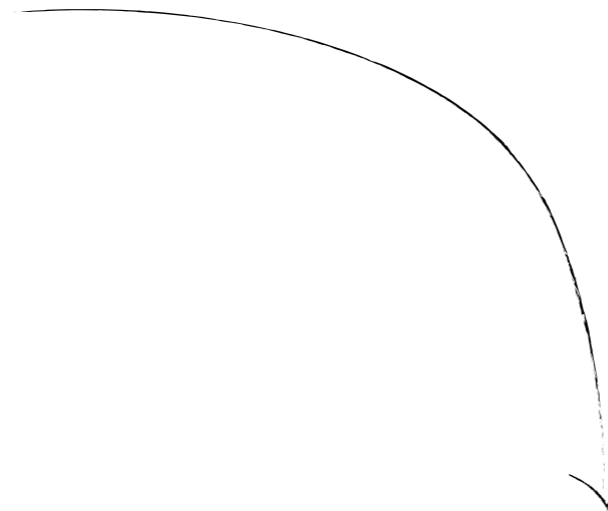
A focus on human-centric design

The belief in the real is also evident in human-centric design, which mirrors the nature vs. culture dichotomy. This approach overlooks the more-than-human perspective on space and, by extension, its interrelations with humans. Focussing merely on sustaining human life, leaving other lives unseen.

In the context of multispecies -which considers all humans and more-than-humans as equal species (Arends, 2025)- spatial design education rarely addresses how more-than-humans use space or what might improve (or deteriorate) their spatial conditions. There is also little to no collaboration with fields of knowledge that could provide such insights (e.g., ecological or Indigenous knowledge¹), nor are there courses that integrate multispecies perspectives in design. While enthusiastic educators encourage exploration, knowledge about multispecies design is often self-acquired, as is the task of defining what a multispecies design approach entails.

This knowledge gap became particularly apparent during a course in which I decided to design a multispecies public space for bats and humans. Although the process was well-guided, examples of multispecies public space design or approaches to multispecies spatial design are still scarce and far from mainstream.

¹ While ecological and Indigenous knowledge are mentioned together, the author does not equate them. Instead, their inherent differences make them complementary, necessary for understanding of the more-than-human world.



What further questions does this reflection awaken?

- *How can a human comprehend what a more-than-human needs in design, while being a human designer?*
- *Should multispecies be comprehended according to dominating knowledge frameworks, or should these frameworks be shifted?*

What further questions does this reflection awaken?

- *How to comprehend reality without classifications?*
- *How would education alter if students aren't guided to find "solutions"?*



THE BELIEF IN SCIENCE

Modern science serves as a powerful confirmation of the Western perception of the real, as it operates through structural objectivity, reproduces it, and validates it. Totalizing human consciousness and contributing to the legitimization of domination (Escobar, 2018, p. 89). Only by neglecting the relationalities that enable existence does the domination of, entities perceived as solitary, appear justified. As a result, science becomes a contributor to tendencies of isolation and violation (Escobar, 2018, p. 89).

Science is also practiced through power structures, expressed in classifications and hierarchies. This is evident, for example, in the value assigned to precision, as instruments materialize our surroundings in increasingly detailed ways. Tools like QGIS deconstruct every spatial aspect into layers or labels, enabling hierarchies and fostering a compartmentalized perception of space. Everything is divided into its own (material) category. Simultaneously, such instruments reinforce science as a field of expert knowledge, accessible only to those with the necessary training.

REFLECTION ON CONCEIVING SPACE

In urbanism, this means that educational approaches are derived from conventional, positivistic research, focusing on the creation of "scientifically valid" outputs while neglecting other ways of knowing. This ties back to the belief in the real; the perception of the world as One World with One Truth. Such a perspective overlooks and limits the many truths that exist within urbanism and other disciplines, as truth is perceived as a product of Western science.

Education captured in the problem-solution mindset and the intertwined belief in technology

This research attitude is exemplified by the problem-solution mindset, which dominates most design assignments. This mindset perpetuates the illusion that issues can, and should, always be solved, making project outcomes appear universal, because of

being the result of linear, logical reasoning (as prescribed by Western science). While this approach may seem idealistic, it undermines the critical reflection that idealism is based on. It ignores the fact that solutions are often one-sided and partial.

Intertwined with Western science and its problem-solution mindset is a faith in technology, which treats technology as an objective means of improving space. This belief translates into technocratic designs, often driven by an efficiency fetish and developed through systematization and classification, such as data studies. In doing so, it risks dehumanizing both the design process and its outcomes.

For example, during the first year of the urbanism studies, we were tasked with designing a regional vision for the Port of Rotterdam. The assignment focused on the energy transition, addressing

the proposed problem of rising energy demand and outdated infrastructure. The imaginaries created by students (including this author) typically involved strategies for upscaling Dutch energy storage or updating its network. We placed our faith in technology, approaching the problem with linear solutions without questioning its root: Why do we use so much energy in the first place?

Potential shifts in our (Western) understanding of science and thus spatial design

Epistemologies that challenge Western science and its aligned solutionism include feminist theories, contemporary notions of prefiguration, non-Western scholarship, and methods of embodiment. As Braidotti (2022) argues, these theories highlight the injustices of patriarchal, capitalist, colonial, and Anthropocentric power systems. They adopt a critical lens, questioning contemporary approaches, highlighting plural interpretations, while developing knowledge better suited¹ to understanding social and spatial phenomena.

Although these epistemologies are essential for social-spatial knowledge creation, they remain marginalized in institutions like TU Delft. They have only been adopted by a limited group of scholars who actively promote such approaches, such as through the establishment of the graduation cluster "Design Through Feminist Values", within which this thesis is written.

What further questions does this reflection awaken?

- *What does scientifically valid mean?*
- *How can an altered perception of science be established?*



¹ This knowledge is better suited for understanding social and spatial phenomena because it acknowledges their situatedness and plurality, moving away from Modernist reductionism by rejecting the standardization of social-space.

THE BELIEF IN THE INDIVIDUAL

The neglect of an existence through relationalities is mirrored in the belief of the individual. The Western dualist ontology stimulates a reductionistic approach towards physical bodies roaming this earth. Materializing a human, to a solitary body instead of understanding it as an assemblage within a network, shaped through its network relations. This leads to an individual who must carry and create its own essence, its own purpose (Escobar, 2018).

REFLECTION ON CONCEIVING SPACE

In urbanism, the belief in the individual is recreated and maintained. Within the educational system, from being a child on, humans are rated individually and mainly work individually. The demand to work individually, dominates as well in the courses of the Master Urbanism. Although projects often start collectively, most of the grading is based on a subsequent individual part. This thesis is a perfect example, as it can only be completed individually. We are trained to become 'solitary geniuses' (Escobar, 2018).

Physical space designed to enable individual use

Reflecting on spatial design configurations, the physical space enables and is adapted for individual use – this notion of 'individual' includes the individual's role in the (nuclear) family-. Meaning that space is conventionally design as such that individuals don't need to interact with other individuals. They can, but they don't need to. This is expressed in examples such as; the tremendous amount of parking lots that are implemented and the fact that everybody has their own house including bedroom, kitchen, toilet and shower.

Obviously, individuals do indirectly interact with each other through institutionalized frameworks; such as the road worker that fixes the road, which enables you to walk on it. Nevertheless, individuals don't need to directly interact due to the simple fact that everyday routines can be fulfilled through individual action. There are no little (spatial) designs, which demand direct interaction and collaboration to make them usable.

During the Master of Urbanism, conventional spatial configurations have always (unconsciously) prioritized individuality. As mentioned above, by providing in the possibility¹ of a non-interactive spatial surrounding. Configurations prioritizing communal use such as; housing cooperatives or communal gardens, are gaining recognition in the discipline but are still primarily focussed on housing instead of public space.

¹ The question here concerns the possibility as there is also the possibility of interacting in the surroundings. There is nevertheless not the impossibility of being a individual, if space would be based on a belief in community, there would always be communal use and the possibility for individualism, now, it is the other way around.

What further questions does this reflection awaken?

- *What spatial configuration look like if we would belief in 'the community'?*
- *How could education become a communal process?*

THE BELIEF IN THE ECONOMY

The belief in the individual is sustained and reinforced by the belief in the economy. Capitalism thrives on individuality, as it expands the consumption market, making it seem as though everyone requires their own (spatial) products. In doing so, the belief in the economy reduces humans and all other entities to economic metrics, a reduction often justified by the science of economics.

Hannah Arendt describes the rise of the economy and its self-regulated market as a distinct domain of thought and action; as the “rise of the social.” This process marks a shift in human identity, from political beings to homo economicus: a being whose existence is defined by the repetitive, cyclical process of laboring to live and consuming to survive (Arendt, 1998). From childhood onward, the belief in the economy conditions humans to “prioritize production and consumption at the expense of other ways of valuing existence” (Escobar, 2018, p. 90).

REFLECTION ON CONCEIVING SPACE

In conceived spatial structures, this leads to the capitalisation of space resulting in spatial configuration which respond to and recreate the capitalistic impulse. This is perceived to be translated in; urban cores where social interaction is depended on/catered through consumerism, density configurations and greenery reduction.

A few perceived spatial expressions of capitalism

Diving into urban cores, nowadays, city centres primary contains retail structures. When walking through the main streets you are overwhelmed by the shopping opportunities, restaurants and other (specialized) services. Therefore, you mainly encounter people who are spending money. There is little to no room for social-spatial interactions that are not based on economical transaction. This spatial focus on consumption isn't surprising when taking

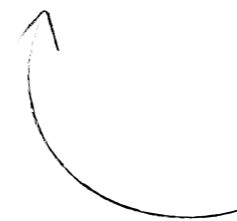
into consideration the high land -subsequently, rent-prices, retail owners must respond to. They need to make money to keep their spot in the urban fabric.

The capitalisation of land can also -among others- influences density configurations. Due to high land prices (in urban cores), investors recoup their expenses by building skyscrapers. Giving them the opportunity to gain more money (or break-even) from renters and buyers by going into the “free sky”. This financial impulse creates city scape with high rise districts wherever regulations allow for it.

This idea of space as an investment, translates in the reduction of greenspaces and greenery. Partly because greenery, such as trees, are costly to purchase and maintain they are not prioritized in city development. Although valued more in the past years -the importance of greenspaces

for physical and mental health, as well as for climate resilience and many other things has become more apparent- green structures are still secondary to retail opportunities, infrastructures or residencies, in currently realized urban centers.

Because of the exclusion of a financial impulse in design course prescriptions, multiple master courses provided the opportunity to think beyond the capitalisation of space. In the first course of the master of Urbanism, this was translated in a future vision of Amsterdam, focussing on the implementation of green structures and ecological corridors. Also, other courses, allowing a post-human design approach, provided the opportunity to experiment with non-capitalistic structures (for more-than-humans). Nevertheless, there are many normalized spatial configurations, rooted in capitalisation, which still need to be expose.

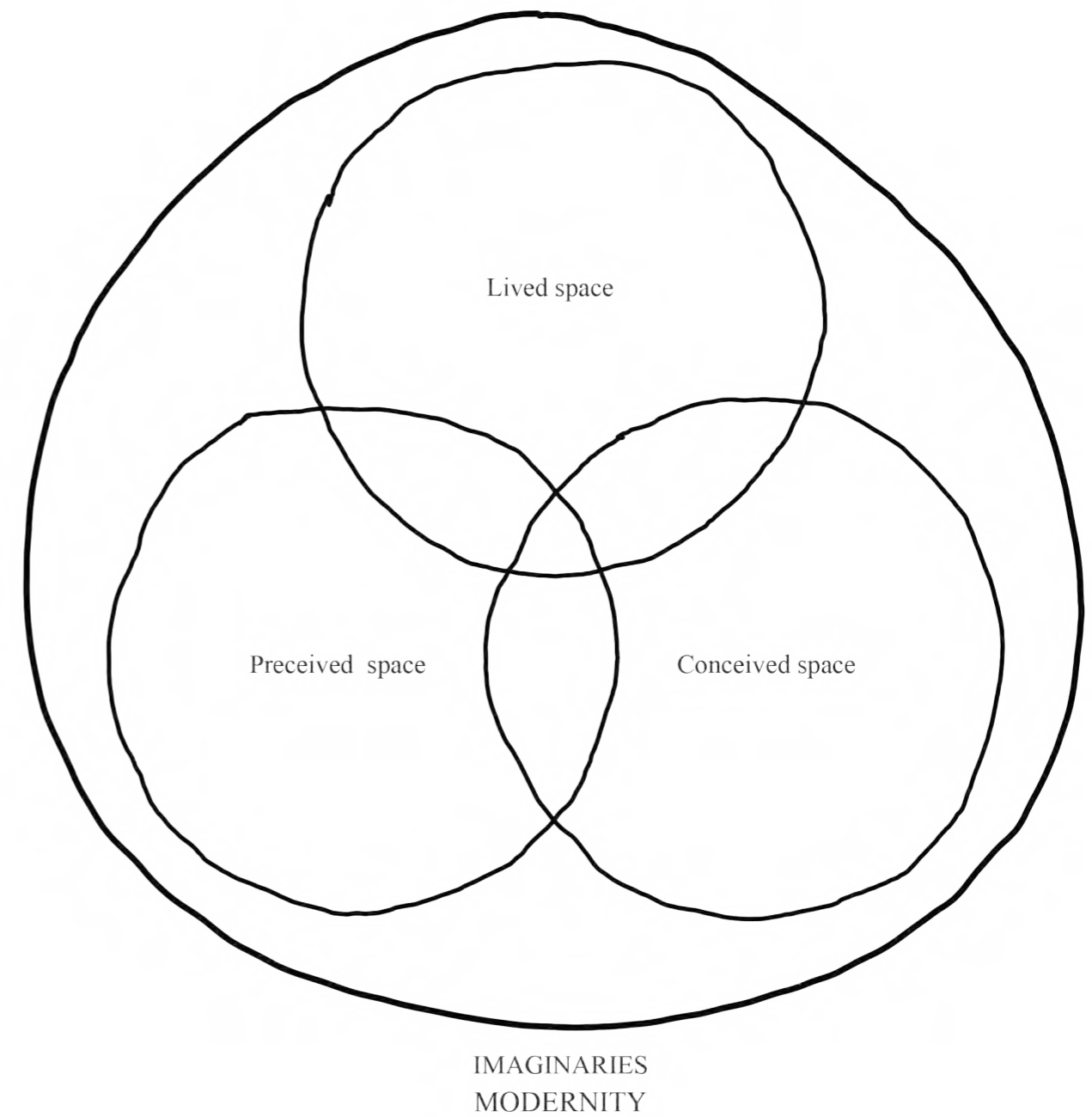


What further questions does this reflection awaken?

- *What would be prioritized in urban cores if there was no capitalistic impulse?*
- *What other spatial configurations are expressions of capitalism?*

¹ As far as we can think beyond capitalism, perceiving reality through a capitalist imaginary (Modernity)

The figure showcases that the “instituted imaginaries” are redefined as “Modernity” encompassing the four previously discussed beliefs.



CONCLUDING

The reflection on the four beliefs through the perspective of conceived space, unfolds (a small part/ a beginning) of how these beliefs are expressed in the perceived urban design reality, practice and education. Through describing, it showcases how embedded the four beliefs are in our context as designers (exemplifying the context of the author) To challenge these beliefs, we should continue to expose them through exploring practices which move away from their imposed ideas. To enable the acknowledgement and imagination of alternatives, creating other forms of “knowing-being-becoming”(Escobar, 2018, p.91).

Figure 1.2 Modernity
Source: Created by Author.

PREFIGURATION

A PRACTICE OF CREATING ALTERNATIVE IMAGINARIES

Alternative imaginaries that deconstruct Modernity are already being enacted through prefigurative practices. Prefiguration is defined as “the practice of realizing an intentional future in the present by means of experimentation” (The Future is Now, 2022). Unlike Modernity, which is grounded in the present, these practices are rooted in an intentional future. For this reason, they are considered in this thesis as loopholes; exits from Modernity.

Prefiguration is plural, occurring on different scales and in diverse contexts. Drawing on Lefebvre’s perspectives on space, prefigurative practices often emerge from lived space but can gain recognition through conceived (and thus perceived) space. Prefigurative practices establishes alternatives to the dominant morals in society, either through short-term confrontational protest or the long-term social construction of organizations and communities (The Future is Now, 2022). It addresses lived experience and everyday life by (re)politicizing them, stimulating action by calling for self-development and transforming individuals from silent observers into actors (Sitrin, 2012, p. 84).

A high density of prefigurative practices is found within intentional communities (The Future is Now, 2022). Intentional communities are groups of people who consciously live together with a shared purpose, sharing resources and working cooperatively to reflect their core values (Waerther, 2014). Their practices experiment with and build alternatives: alternative social, political, educational, and economic systems, making them spaces where alternative imaginaries are established through everyday life.

These communities have existed across time and in many contexts, shaping a plural landscape. Over the years, they have inspired and influenced those in mainstream society, both through their willingness to share their way of living and through the diffusion of their experiments into broader society (Temesgen, 2021). These actions hold the potential to bring about significant change in mainstream society and are therefore considered a transition potential (Avelino & Kunze, 2009). Examples of intentional communities include ecovillages, collaborative housing, and squatting.

This thesis perceives intentional communities as alternative imaginaries from which to learn. Their practice of shaping their surroundings (social-spatial reproduction) through lived space is seen as a valuable approach that can inform spatial design by challenging the power dynamic between lived and conceived space in design practice and education. Therefore, this thesis focuses on learning from the prefigurative practices of intentional communities by immersing in them and contributing to them.

The figure showcases how prefiguration exists of a cycle of intentional action and reflection. Portraying it as an ongoing practice in time.

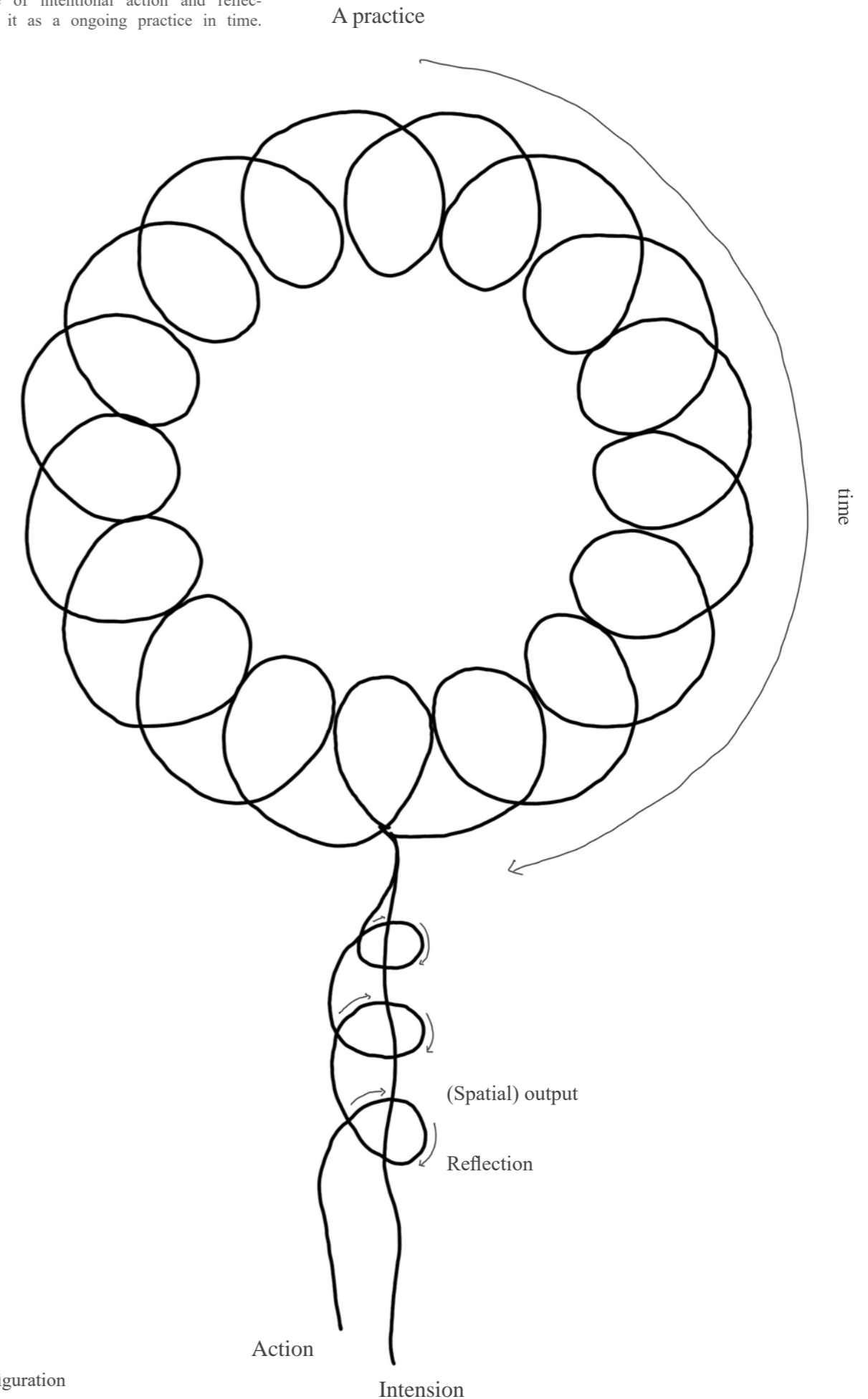


Figure 1.3 Prefiguration
Source: Created by Author.

EMBODIMENT

AN OPPORTUNITY TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE IMAGINARIES AND A PREFIGURATIVE METHODOLOGY.

The methodology used to learn from intentional communities is embodiment. Embodiment grants agency to the ‘lived body’ as both a subject and a medium through which we perceive, act, and make sense of the world (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). In doing so, it inherently explores non-dualistic ontologies by rejecting the separation of body and mind. This methodology encompasses how we physically and emotionally connect with others and how these connections shape our ethics and politics (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017).

Embodiment aligns with the notion that “the world is not something that is given to us but something we engage in by moving, touching, breathing, eating” (Varela, 1999, p. 8). It deconstructs the idea of humans as mere observers and instead situates us as active participants; “immersed with the whole of our being in the currents of a world-in-formation: the sunlight we see, the rain we hear, and the wind we feel” (Escobar, 2018, p. 87).

By emphasizing the lived experience of this author (a designer), embodiment navigates the intersections of Design Anthropology (bringing anthropology into design) and the Ethnography of Design (bringing design into anthropology). As such, it serves as a bridge between design and anthropology, enabling critical reflection on disciplinary cultures, what Escobar refers to as; the Anthropology of Design (Escobar, 2018, p.55).

Reflecting on Lefebvre’s three dimensions of space, the spatial designer embodies all these perspectives; conceived, perceived and lived, but designs through conceiving. By embodying the lived experience of prefigurative practices, the designer

is confronted with how space is actively shaped by production through the lived space. Adopting this methodology, as a designer, reveals and deconstructs, the power dynamics between lived and conceived space, enabling the designer to (potentially) redefine their position within these dynamics.

Additionally, embodying more equal, free, democratic, caring, or just relations (as seen in prefigurative practices) can contribute to the development of a revolutionary ‘consciousness’ (The Future is Now, 2022, p. 39). This ‘consciousness’ motivates and enables its bearer to stimulate transcendence or transition by pushing against the system (Modernity).

Thus, the embodiment of prefigurative practices, is a methodology that encompasses; critical reflection, re-positioning, deconstruction, an exploration into multiple ways of knowing, counters modernity and potentially creates a ‘revolutionary consciousness’. Making it into an essential method for transforming research into an opportunity for prefiguration.

The figure showcases how a designer is embodying all three perspectives on space. Highlighting how the designer has a double role in maintaining this imaginary, by being a conceiver of space.

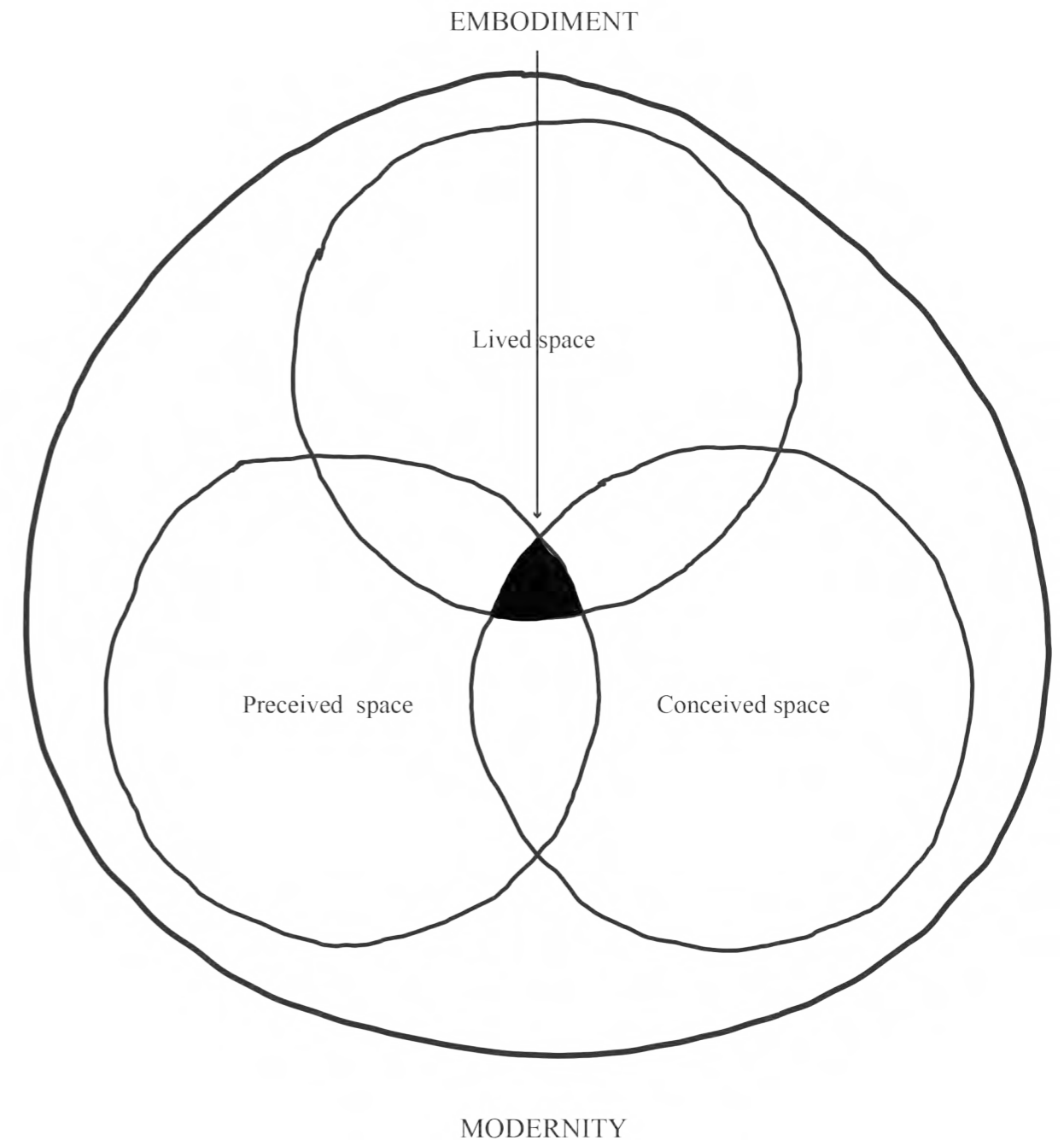


Figure 1.4 Embodiment
Source: Created by Author.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework is composed of two sides in which the current dominating imaginary; Modernity (portrayed as a circle) evolves in an Alternative Imaginary (portrayed opposite of Modernity) through the embodiment of prefigurative practice of the designer (the core of the framework).

The dominating imaginary; Modernity encompasses all perspectives on space -as this thesis centers Western perception, exemplified by the lived experience of the author- (portrayed as overlapping circles)

The shift towards Alternative Imaginaries is two folded;

- Prefigurative practices are rooted in intentional futures and therefore move away from the dominating imaginary of Modernity (through a continues process of action and reflection, therefore portrayed as a looped circle moving from Modernity to Alternative).
- Lived space provides ground for contestation of conceived space and therefore question the knowledge on which conceiving is based; Modernity (therefore the prefigurative practices depart Modernity from the perspective of lived space).

So the designer that embodies prefigurative practices which center production of space through living, shifts their knowledge framework as well, as their design practice towards Alternative Imaginaries.

This framework is a simplification of how the theoretical concepts are interrelated and therefore, although far from linear or simple, portrayed as such.

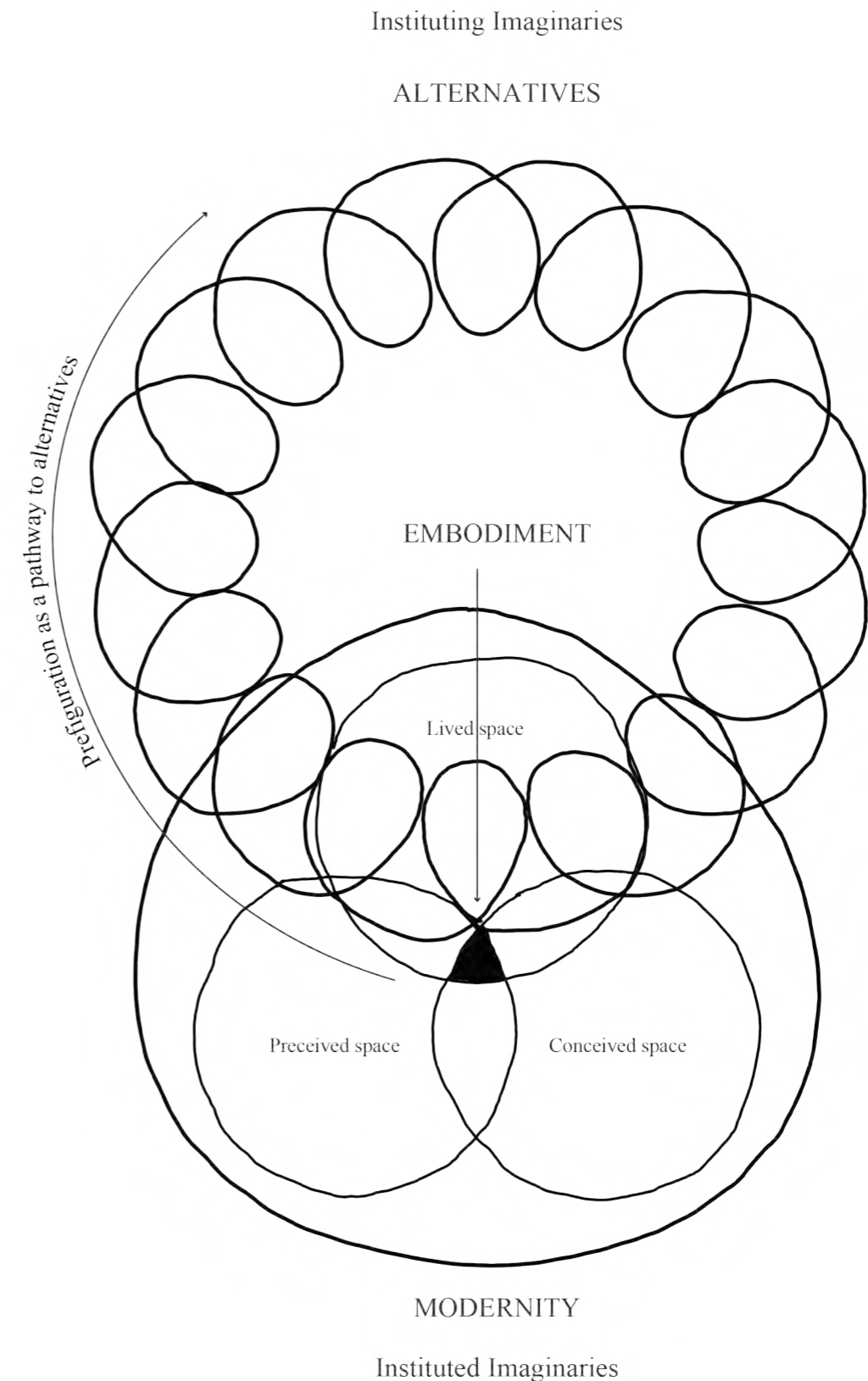
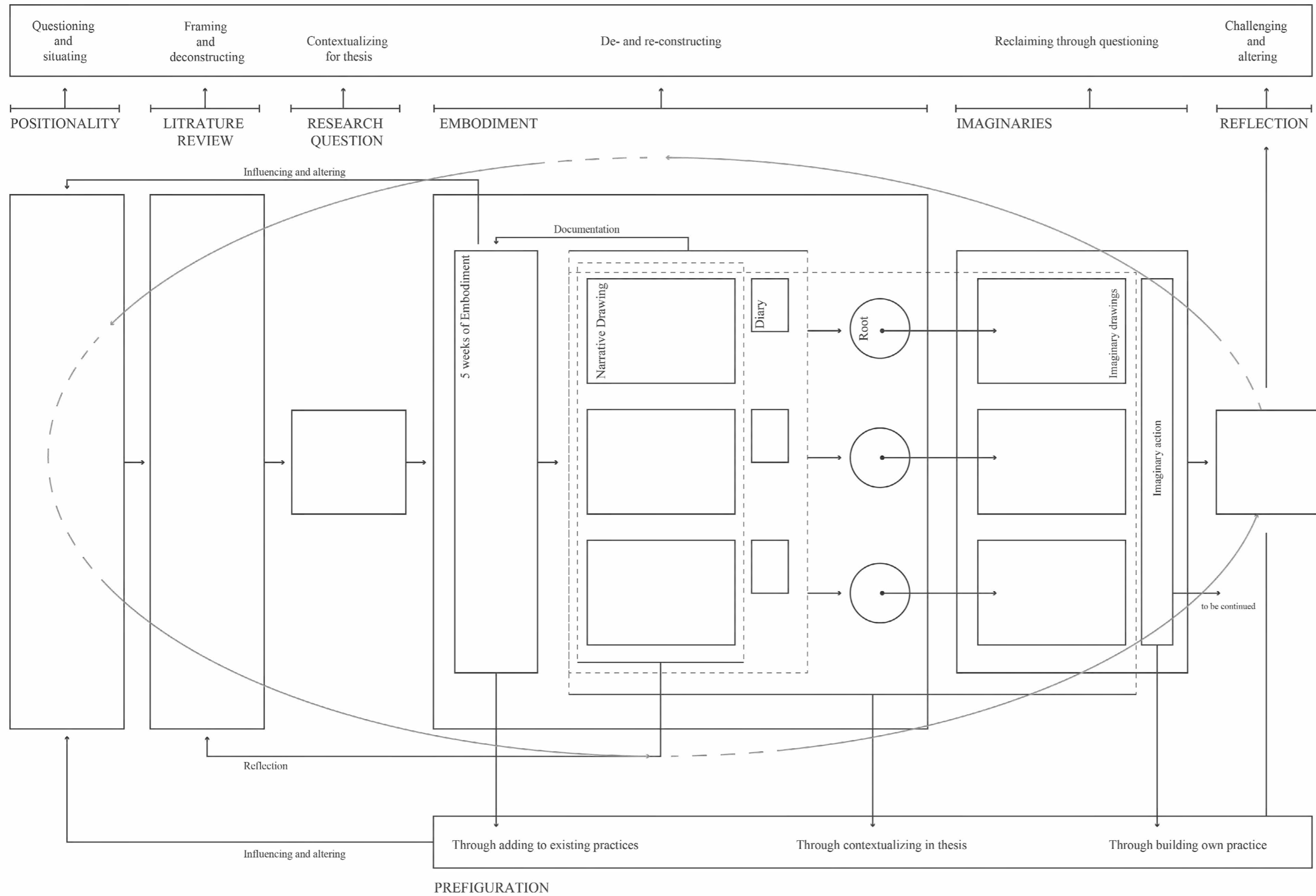


Figure 1.5 Conceptual Framework
Source: Created by Author.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

SPATIAL DESIGN



The methodology of this thesis starts with positioning to frame the starting point of this autobiographical action research.

The literature review frames the process by providing the concepts through which reflection and exploration can take place.

The research questions are formulated as guidelines for the process.

Embodiment is the primary methodology to gain knowledge through re-positioning.

Imaginary are a method to explore recontextualization of the embodied knowledge.

Prefiguration as a method has first learned and added to prefigurative practices and later transformed this thesis into a prefigurative practice itself.

Reflection clarifies how the positionality has been altered through the process.

Figure 1.6 Methodological Framework

Source: Created by Author.

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FIGURE LIST

Figure 1.1 Imaginaries and the three perspectives on space	5
Figure 1.2 Modernity	17
Figure 1.3 Prefiguration	19
Figure 1.4 Embodiment	21
Figure 1.5 Conceptual Framework	23
Figure 1.6 Methodological Framework	25

Dear reader, are you still with me?
To summarize the previous booklet...

What?

Reality = Polycrisis

Modernity = Reality

Reality = perceived through Imaginaries

Imaginaries = how we come to know the world

Designer = maintainer of Modernity

Challenging Modernity = Challenging designing

How?

Exploring alternative pathways through embodying
prefigurative practice in intentional communities.

Why?

Prefigurative practice have their roots in intentional fu-
tures instead of Modernity

Intentional Communities consist of a high density of pre-
figurative practice.

Embodiment allows the designer to resituate all perspec-
tives on space.

So...

Embodiment of prefiguration practices as a designer chal-
lenges the Modernistic roots of design by questioning the
knowledge on which design is based and questioning how
design is practiced.

Let's embody...

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DIARY DOCUMENTATION

CHOSEN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES

COMPOST TOILETS

RENOVATING RUINS

STRAWBERRYFIELDS

NARRATIVE DRAWINGS

NARRATIVE DRAWING AS A METHOD

COMPOST TOILETS

A day in the life of...

Reflection on Modernity

RENOVATING RUINS

A day in the life of...

Reflection on Modernity

STRAWBERRYFIELDS

A day in the life of...

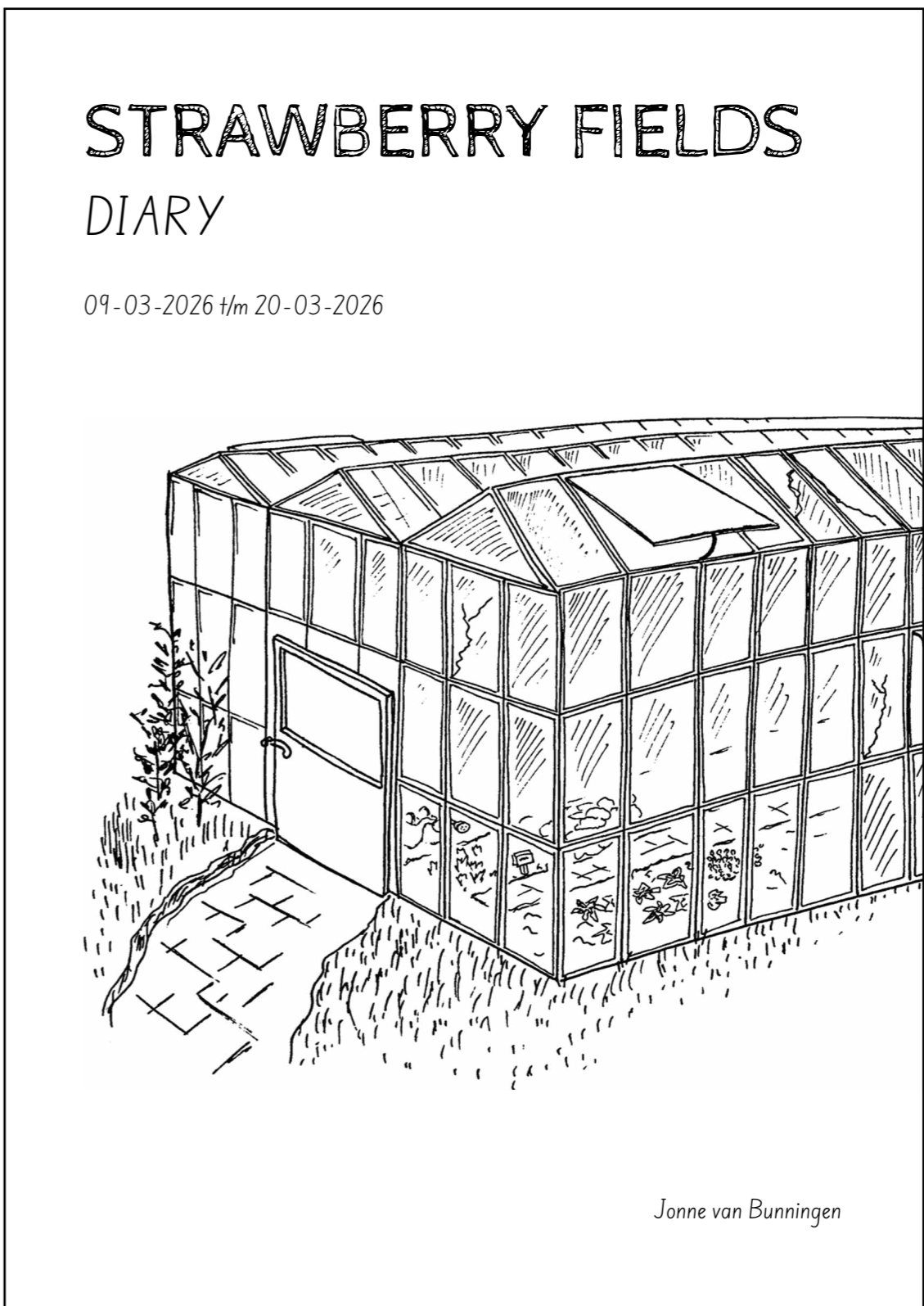
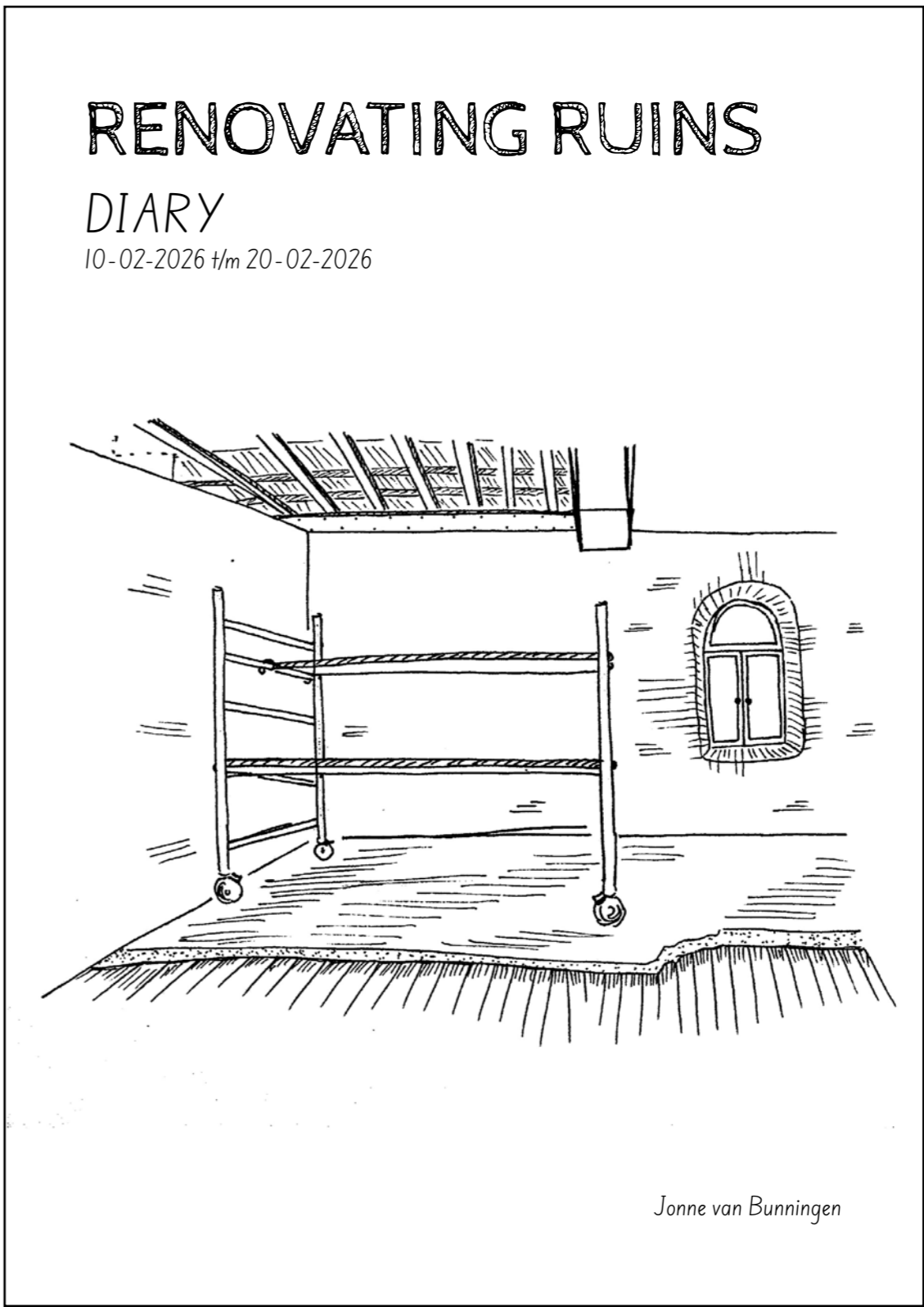
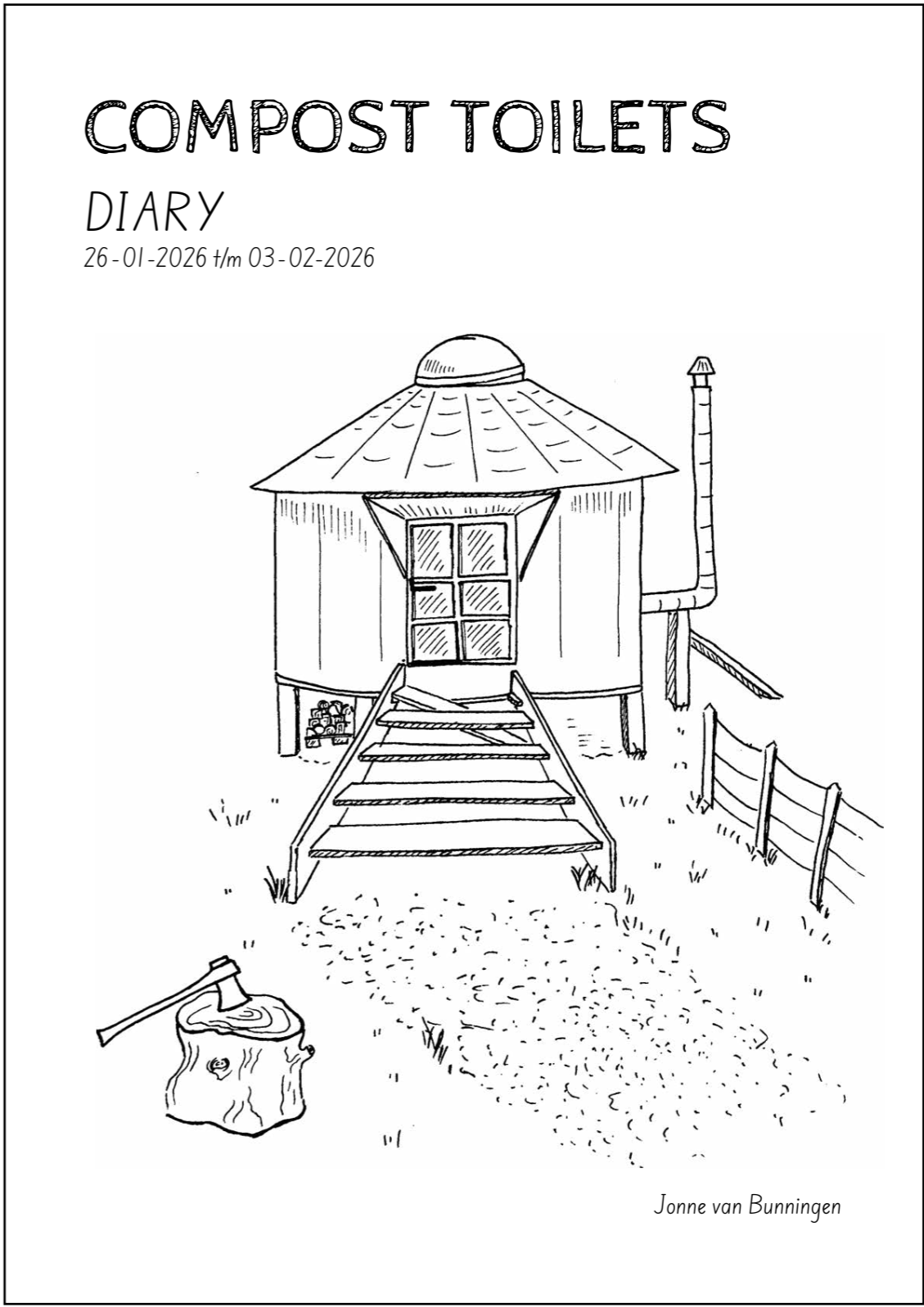
Reflection on Modernity

ROOTS

From embodiment to the root

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CHOSEN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES

To remain true to the author's cultural context, the embodiment of lived experience is situated within the Dutch cultural context. This approach allows the project to focus on questions surrounding prefigurative practices and spatial design in Modernity, as well as the anthropology of design, without being unduly influenced by cultural factors which the author doesn't embody. In doing so, the thesis deliberately seeks to learn from transitioning practices rooted in the Dutch cultural context, rather than extracting alternative ways of knowing, being, and becoming from other cultures rooted in non-dualistic ontologies. Although, still acknowledging the value of knowledge created and existing in such contexts.

Embodied research was conducted in three distinct intentional communities in the Netherlands. The thesis examines three communities instead of one to ensure a plural and diverse interpretation of prefigurative practices across different contexts. To create an outline of potential intentional communities, several websites and research sources were consulted (Global Ecovillage Network Netherlands [GEN-NL], 2025; Peters, 2025), resulting in an overview map (see Appendix Figure 1.1). The communities eventually visited were selected primarily based on their responds rate and availability

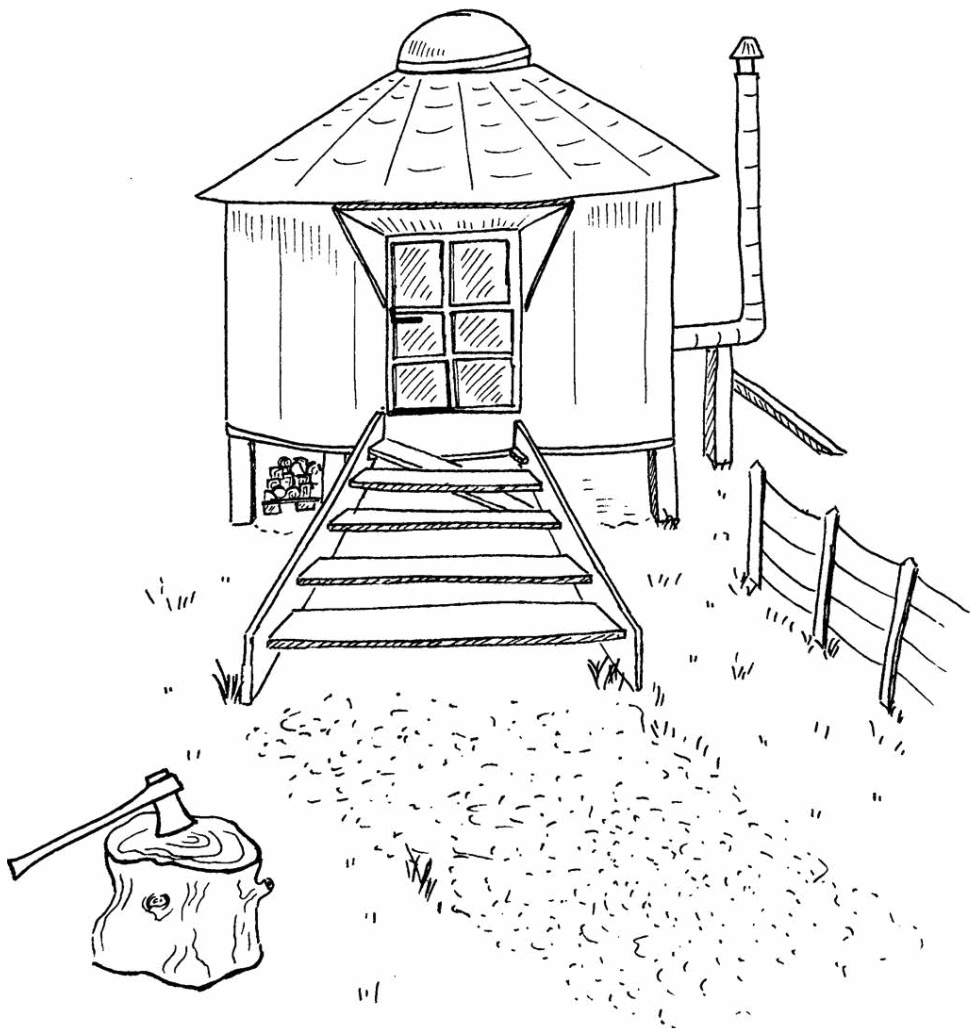
The three communities share similarities in size and location, particularly in terms of urban density. Located in low-density areas, each community occupies a large plot of land (two to three acres), which they use according to their needs. Two of the three communities are situated in historic farms in rural surroundings, while the residents of the third community live in nomadic structures within a forest. Group sizes ranged from eight to fifteen members, including solitary adults, couples, and families.

**Although the communities openly share their practices on social media, to protect their privacy and that of the individuals encountered, the names of the communities and their residents are pseudonymized in this thesis.*

COMPOST TOILETS

DIARY

26-01-2026 t/m 03-02-2026



Jonne van Bunningen

26-01-2026

After waking up in Nijmegen at my parents' house, I prepared my backpack to leave for Compost Toilets. I spent the morning charging my phone and camera, as I would have limited access to power while being in the yurt.

After lunch, my brother brought me to the place where Anarchist Toilets is located. We said goodbye and I walked into their living room to say hello. I was lucky to find Jan and Julia there, as I had also talked the longest with them the previous time. We almost directly had a conversation about anarchism, what it is, and what definition of it they believed in. Jan said he kind of defined it as believing in use over ownership, in collaboration instead of individually, in decentralization. He said that statistically you could have health insurance with forty people; why trust companies over people? Julia talked about how things are organized here. Things are done in a loose way. Whenever someone feels like picking something up, they do.

Lately, they have been doing major fixes: renewing the energy system, which is still a process; changing the plastic for the roof so they can get "clean" rainwater from there; renewing the facade of the mothership as it had been leaking. There appears to be a constant workflow of fixing things around the terrain. After this conversation, I spent the day collecting wood, chopping it to heat the yurt, helping Jan with cooking, and attending an "Eet café" meeting. This initiative takes place every second Friday of the month. They cook dinner and sometimes invite a band. People can join the dinner on a donation basis. The meeting took place like a regular community meeting with agenda points, which covered topics on food, money, and task division.

After this meeting, I boiled some water in the mothership to take with me so I could fill my hot water bottle and thermos, preparing for my first night in the yurt.





solidéz

solidéz

solidéz

27-01-2026

I woke up in the early morning because of the cold. The stove had long before burned out and it was time to heat it up again. I put in some wood and lit it with a lighter. Slowly, the fire woke up and the heat returned to the yurt. As my hot water bottle had also turned cold overnight, I put the kettle on the stove to reheat the water. Everything set and done, I closed my eyes again for another hour of sleep. When waking up for the second time, I put on my clothes that I had kept relatively warm overnight by putting them underneath the blankets as well.

Arriving in the mothership, I walked into Mike, who explained to me where I could grab breakfast and such. He also told me he was going to work on a treatment wetland later on, and asked if I would like to help. I walked up to him after breakfast and together with some others we shuffled out some bamboo roots to make place for the pond. The pond had to become the last part of a treatment wetland. The water that needed filtering would come from two kates (comes from building kates, as these houses used to be a temporary canteen/rest spot for construction sites) standing close to the location of the pond. Removing the roots was a heavy task and good practice to express frustration if you have some. We encountered a steel pipe along the way that we removed with an angle grinder.

After working a while, we had a little tea break. Talking to Roos, who served the tea, she told me she had lived in several communities and that in all of them, the topic of "who does what and do people do enough" was always a "big thing." As we had previously spoken about how things are arranged here, if you want to do something, you should pick it up yourself and possibly some people will help you. She said it is always better to focus on what you can do yourself instead of what other people aren't doing enough. We finished the tea and continued working for another hour.

When it was time for lunch, I was searching for some food as I walked into Jan. I asked about their energy system, which he willingly explained. He showcased the solar panels and batteries and how they were connected. When talking, my friend, who happens to work in the AZC next to Compost Toilets, walked in. We had some lunch together, enjoying the delicious soto from yesterday once again, while I linked her to the "Eat Cafe" initiative. Julia, who is in charge of the cafe, explained some about the initiative and how it works. Her husband as well. After an enthusiastic conversation, they came to the conclusion that the building could possibly plan during the upcoming "Eat Cafe."

Later on, we left again for a walk in the forest. Thereafter we went into to the building and started to arrange the community. I had to go back to fix my wood supply for the night as it was about to rain. I checked some pieces and looked for a chainsaw to have some others to get a bit more wood. I returned to the living room to help with the wood supply. During dinner, we spoke again about this graduation and what they thought of it. They spoke about the idea of temporary places in cities, but also about the importance of being self-sustainable and taking responsibility for your own processes. You don't distance yourself from the problem, as some urban systems do, like with sewage or energy. By fixing your own cycle you can't ignore your footprint. Also, this place being built from waste showcases that you can live without all these new materialities and for free, using waste.

Saving money is something that returns in more aspects of living here, as for example the wood that they collect. They get old pallet wood from industrial sites that otherwise have to pay to dispose of it. Part of their food they get from the farms they work on or, for example, from

I woke up in the early morning because of the cold. The stove had long before burned out and it was time to heat it up again. I put in some wood and lit it with a lighter. Slowly, the fire woke up and the heat returned to the yurt. As my hot water bottle had also turned cold overnight, I put the kettle on the stove to reheat the water. Everything set and done, I closed my eyes again for another hour of sleep. When

waking for the second time, I put on my clothes that I had kept relatively warm for the night. As well.

Arriving in the morning, I walked into Mike's who explained to me where the best place to go to work on a great wetland later on, and asked if I would like to help. I don't distance myself from the problem, as some urban systems

do, like with sewage or energy. By fixing your own cycle you can't ignore your footprint. Also

this place being built from 'waste' showcases that you can live without all these new materialities and for free, using waste."

After working for an hour, we had a little tea break. I asked to Ross, who said that the topic of who does what and do people do enough to do something. She usually spoken about how things are arranged here, if you want to do something, you should pick it up yourself and possibly some people will help you. She said it is always better to focus on what you can do yourself instead of what other people aren't doing enough. We finished the tea and continued working for another hour.

When it was time for lunch, I was searching for some food as I walked into Jan. I asked about their energy system, which he willingly explained. He showcased the solar panels and batteries and how they were connected. When talking, my friend, who happens to work in the AZC next to Compost Toilets, walked in. We had some lunch together, enjoying the delicious soto from yesterday once again, while I linked her to the "Eet Cafe" initiative. Julia, who is in charge of the cafe, explained some about it when my friend asked if they might be in need of a band as well. After an enthusiastic conversation, they came to the conclusion that the band could possibly play during the upcoming "Eet Cafe."

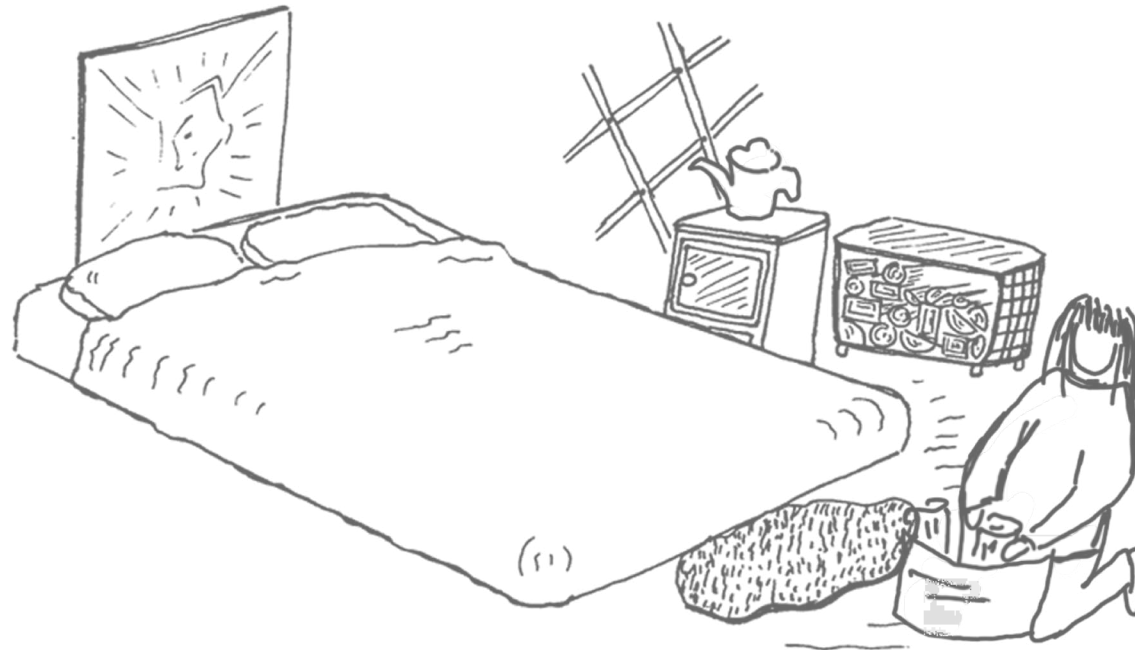
Later on, we left to go for a walk in the forest, whereafter we went into town to warm up with a chocomelk. Returning to the community, I had to act quickly to fix my wood supply for the night as it was about to rain. I chopped some pieces and looked for a chainsaw to halve some others. I was just done when the first drops fell. Leaving the wood supply for the night safely inside the yurt, I returned to the living room to help with some cooking. Lentil stew tonight.

During dinner, we spoke again about this graduation and what they thought might be an interesting aspect for it. They spoke about the idea of temporary places in cities, but also about the importance of being self-sustaining to take responsibility for your own processes. You don't distance yourself from the problem, as some urban systems do, like with sewage or energy. By fixing your own cycle, you can't ignore your footprint. Also, this place being built from 'waste' showcases that you can live without all these new materialities and for free, using waste.

Saving money is something that returns in more aspects of living here, as for example the wood that they collect. They get old pallet wood from industrial sites that otherwise have to pay to dispose of it. Part of their food they get from the farms they work on or, for example, from

the No Waste Army.

After dinner, a spontaneous jam session started where people began to dance around and sing. It lasted for an hour and I was happy to sing along. It was a very beautiful and cheerful explosion of energy where several instruments were played and improvised. After the explosion, we ended with some slower songs, slowly preparing to go to bed. After boiling water again for the hot water bottle and thermos, I went to the yurt, spending an hour heating the place up with the wood stove before putting myself underneath the sheets.







28-01-2026

When I woke up, I noticed that I was way less cold than yesterday, as if my body is getting used to the temperature. After heating up the stove again and the hot water bottle, I stayed in bed for another hour before going to the mothership for breakfast. While eating breakfast, I was accompanied by some others who had just woken up. A stretching session was initiated by Julia to stimulate one other resident to do his physio exercises. Something I perceived as a practice of care, trying to stimulate his awareness of his physical health. Coaching transformed into participating, and before I knew it we were stretching together, the four of us.

When our little stretching session was over, I went back to the yurt to get the camera and make some pictures. Walking into Henk, he explained to me how the treatment wetland works, showing me where the pipe for the wastewater comes from and the boxes it goes into to get filtered. I walked around for a bit, also looking into the compost piles and the greenhouse. After a while, my toes got so cold that I went inside again. I sat down on the heated bench attached to the stove. Jan was playing the piano and we chatted a bit about his studies.

After lunch (leftovers from yesterday), I started on one of the chores, making a door for the power cabin. With the circular saw, I cut out the door from a big wooden plate, asking Jan all the time where to find the tools. After sanding the edges and putting on the hinges, Jan helped me to attach it into its frame. We put on the lock together, screwing it from another door where it wasn't really necessary, and took a warming-up break after. The break turned into the end of today's chores, and after chatting with Jan and some others who came for a coffee, I went to the yurt to grab stuff to shower. Walking into the shower, passing the gas tank that would hopefully provide me with warm water, I climbed the stairs, entered the small cabin, and took a warm shower.

When I was heated up again, I put my stuff back in the yurt and went to the mothership to see if anybody needed help with cooking. The person cooking said it wasn't much and I could just chill. So I did, talking again with Jan about today and other things in life, about television series, about politics, about everything and nothing. When dinner was ready, there weren't many people joining. Apparently, they never know how many people will join dinner and therefore cook enough for everyone. The philosophy is that the leftovers will be finished in the following days during lunch or so.

The conversation during dinner was about the greenhouse and vegetable garden and how to best treat them. It was very clear that some of the residents studied agriculture, as super detailed knowledge on nitrogen levels and "compost tea" got shared. The task for the "food production" shifted this year from one person to the other, therefore sharing this knowledge and ideas for planting over dinner.

When the dishes were done and we had some more chitchat over nice vegetables and the agriculture sector, what they saw as a better type of agriculture and how they would prefer to do agriculture by hand and not with these crazy machines killing biodiversity. After a while, an old resident and friend walked in with his dog, looking for Henk. He happened to be the person who assembled the treatment wetland. Currently, the wetland isn't in a good state and they are planning to redo it. He said that at the time, there was no budget for the treatment wetland and he built it with what he found lying around: plastic boxes, sand, and reed. The conversation turned in a different direction and I put the kettle on the stove to heat some water for the night. Walking back with my hot water bottle and thermos, I was greeted by tiny snowflakes.



29-01-2026

I woke up in a world covered by snow, walking into the crisp, fresh snow to go to the toilet while all others were still sleeping. After heating the stove again and drawing some of the processes they have here, I went to the mothership to get some breakfast. Walking into some others and hanging there while talking and chilling. This time the conversation was about art, about Hockney and how he did his "paintings" on an iPad, a disgrace for real paintings such as Van Gogh's. What is art, especially when it says to enhance the relationship between humans and nature? What is the relationship between humans and nature?

This conversation continued for a while when Noah and Sam came in. We started playing Twister with Noah, the smart two-year-old. When noticing that he was doing fine, his mom asked if it was okay for us to take care of him for the coming hour, so she could do some work. Playing Twister, puzzling, building houses, playing hide and seek. The mothership gave space to all of it. I ate some lunch while Noah, who already had some pancakes, amused himself by throwing blocks. When his mom came back, I left him and the rest of the people working on their laptops to fix some wood for the night.

After this chore, I fixed one of the doors with some scrap wood, whereafter Mike asked me to help him with the treatment wetland again. We hammered in some wooden branches to attach some planks for the plastic seal. When we were almost finished working, Sam brought us, walking in her shirt through the snow, two plates of delicious pumpkin-sweet potato soup. When we had filled our bellies, Mike brought back the plates while I took the tools back to the power shed. Continuing my route to the mothership to heat my toes. Kees was still working on the dinner table, putting emails together. Other residents came in and I sat on the heated bench chatting with them.

Many people were joining us for dinner. Band members of Jan and another sheep herder, a friend of Katja. We sat together at the big dining

table enjoying each other's company. A nice mixture of happy chatter and intimate conversations. Two dogs lying on their bench. We did the dishes and played a bit of piano together. After hanging a bit more on the couch, it was time to heat the stove in the yurt again.

"If you want something to be done, you should do it yourself and possibly people will help you"



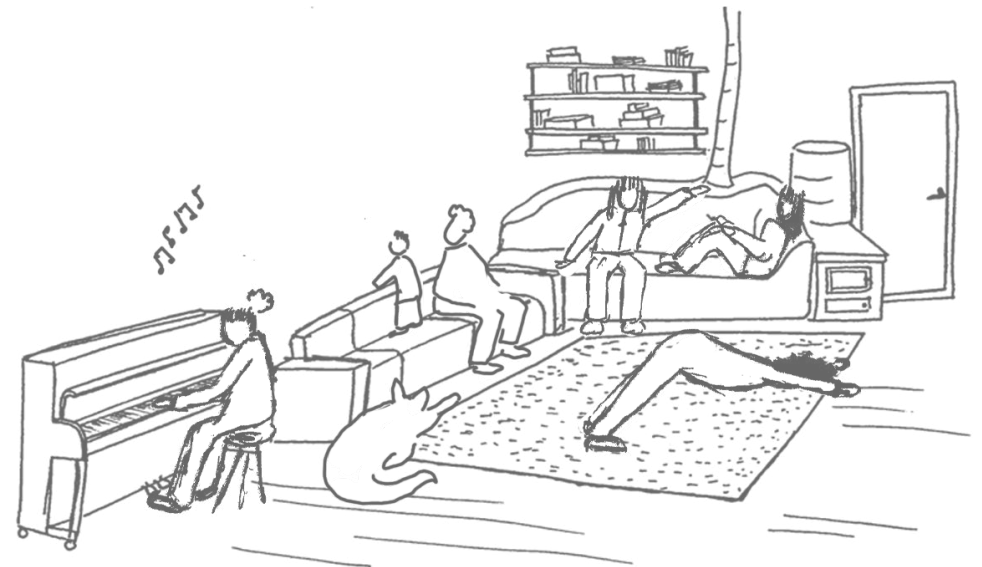
I woke up in a world covered by snow, walking into the crisp, fresh snow to go to the toilet while all others were still sleeping. After heating the stove again and drawing some of the processes they have here, I went to the mothership to get some breakfast. Walking into some others and hanging there while talking and chilling. This time the conversation was about art, about Hockney and how he did his "paintings" on an iPad, a disgrace for real paintings such as Van Gogh's. What is art, especially when it says to enhance the relationship between humans and nature? What is the relationship between humans and nature?

This conversation continued for a while when Noah and Sam came in. We started playing. The boy is 10 years old. When noticing that he was doing this on his own, I asked if it was okay for us to take some work. Playing Twitter, puzzles, building houses, playing hide and seek. The mothership gave space to him. I ate some lunch while Noah, who already had some pancakes, amused himself by throwing blocks. When his mom came back, I left him and the rest of the people working on their laptops to fix some wood for the night.

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WEGBELEIDING
OP LAADPUNT





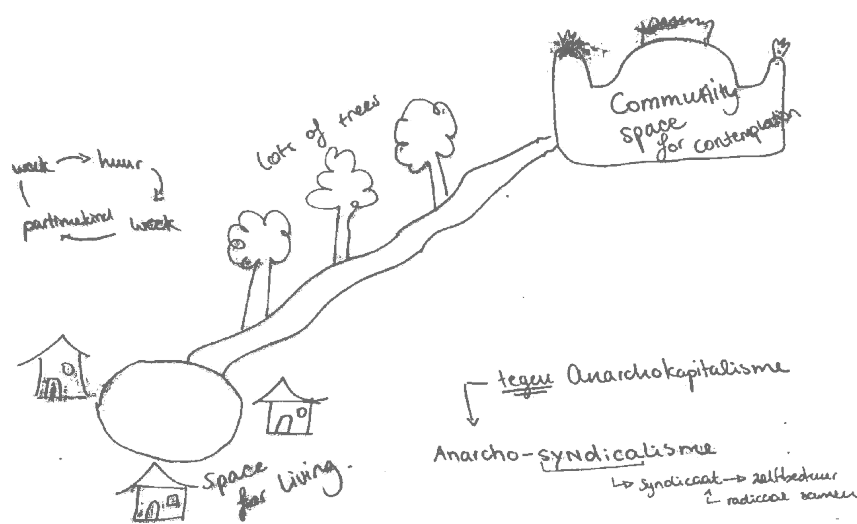
30-01-2026

Today I woke up super early due to the cold. I put my stove back on, boiled water with the heat of the fire, and went back to bed again. When waking up the second time, the yurt was finally warm. The first time I managed to heat it up so much that I could just sit in my shirt. After heating up for a bit, I went to the mothership for breakfast. I encountered Jaad doing yoga and Henk and Kees eating breakfast. They talked about the counter demonstration for an anti-AZC demo which they went to yesterday. Apparently, there had been many neo-nazis waving the NSB flag. They were with ten against approximately a hundred, making it a very intense experience.

I stayed in the living room, putting down a sheet of paper to discuss some questions. Thinking on the questions, I discussed with the people present what possibly could be good questions. After talking about it, I noted down some questions and left the paper on the table, free for anyone to give input. Henk stayed around in the living room and we started to discuss them. While having a conversation, I wrote down his input. At some point, Kees walked in and joined the discussion: what is a utopia, what would it be for him? Slowly, more people walked in, joined the conversation, and left again. The paper got fuller and fuller with notes.

At lunchtime, I left it lying on the table to chop some wood for the night. When arriving back, Sam and Noah had also written some things down. Grabbing a cup of tea, Truus came in to tell her story, while I continued to write things down. She spoke more on behalf of the squatters' community, how they are essential and how they struggle to constantly claim and build their space. How their claim to land is a claim for a way of being, a way to exist. The afternoon passed by quickly, chatting and drinking tea. The sun lowered and two residents started cooking. I lay on the piano stool as others were knitting on the couch or just chilling in the room.

Dinner was served and we ate together while convincing more people to join the superette, a community gathering (with more squatters) where a band would be playing tonight. In the end, we managed to convince half of the people. Of the people going, half of us went by bike and half by car. When arriving at the spot, the band was already playing. They were inspired by an artist called Zappa and their music was groovy. Together with Julia, I danced in the front, while others sat, finishing their dinners or chatting. The evening was a lot of fun. More and more people started dancing and I had a nice conversation with Kees and his girlfriend. At 00:00, the building closed and we all had to get out. Cycling back to the forest and the yurt to sleep one last night at this surprising place, I felt sad as the time had passed so quickly. Hopefully, I will be able to return here again soon.





31-01-2026

Today I said goodbye to the community members, I invited them for a wentelteefjes breakfast. As I thought it a good idea to use the old bread they had left from dumpster diving. Many of them woke up earlier than they used to, to join the breakfast, which was very sweet of them. I was pleased to see that the wentelteefjes were appreciated. After stuffing ourselves, it was time for me to leave. I gave all of them a hug and grabbed my bag.

oplossen terwijl, er bestaat geen probleemloze

vinden
hoe verhoud je je tot de eigenaar?

hinderen voor het uitvoeren van deze intentie?

access to land!

claim op bestaansrecht

Wat is je intentie met hier wonen?

lekker dicht bij 't bos

persoonlijke groei

het is heel uitdagend om in een groep te wonen

verschillende normen & waarden & gewoontes
komen uit verschillend sociaal milieu.

vergadering officieel

informeel top 1 gesprekken

constant proces van verandering

is werken om te wonen

eco
waarde inzien van wat de natuur te bieden heeft → planten weeding
kinnieren → klonnen in bos
↑ voedsel bos aanleg

Bestaansrecht
↳ ruimte pakken als gemeenschap
↳ Het is een cultuur

Wat blijft je motiveren om zo door te gaan?

- proepies
- omgeving (bos, waterwaarde etc)
- Samen komen → cultuur

mijn kind Maas

- In contact blijven met je omgeving
- eigen ruimte behouden

leven en kennis overdracht

gedachte aan toekomst & willen bijdragen aan vormen "andere wereld"

Het brengt voldoening om te handelen in lijn met je normen & waarden

diepe motivatie om er samen doorheen te komen.

↳ tiechtie aangaan

Op welke waarde is dit gebaseerd?

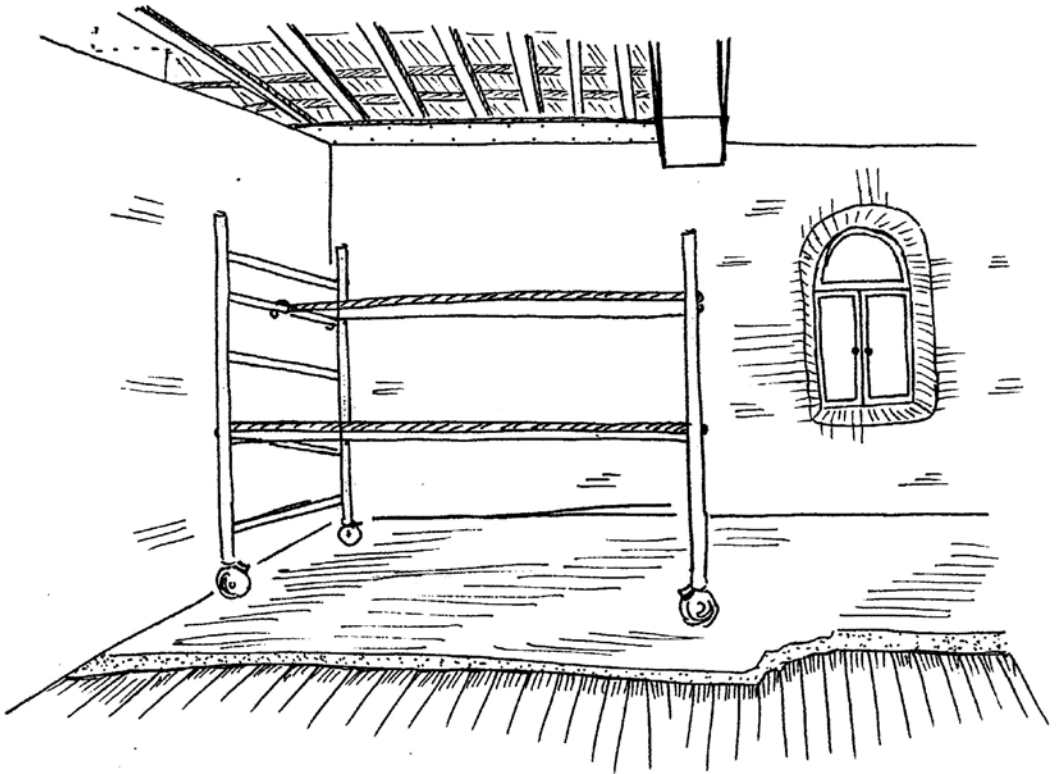
- Anarchie
- Gemeenschap / naar elkaar omkijken
- zelfvoorzienendheid



RENOVATING RUINS

DIARY

10-02-2026 t/m 20-02-2026



Jonne van Bunningen

10-02-2026

I woke up at my parents' place and grabbed my bags to go to Community L. It took two hours by train to get there. When I got off the last bus, I crossed some farmlands, walking alongside the road. Cars were speeding past me, with no obstacles on these long, straight roads.

After a few minutes, I arrived at the community's location: a 200-year-old "Hoeven," a farmhouse with a courtyard. On my right, a door opened and a gentle bearded man greeted me. I entered the common room, set in a renovated stable, with a wood stove at the center, backed up by a gas stove. A few people were sitting around the fire and immediately introduced themselves. It was dad Giem with his almost one-year-old daughter, Sarah. I got a cup of tea and was greeted by another volunteer. Listening a bit to the conversation, which went in many directions, I took some bread for lunch.

When I finished my lunch, the gentle bearded man guided me to the place where I would sleep: a temporary unit that had been placed there five years ago when the project started, together with some other units for volunteers and three units for the residents. I would share my unit with another volunteer, also arriving that day. I settled down a bit and went back to the common room to sign some safety clarification, after which the gentle bearded man gave me a tour of the whole area.

We started in the old stable that now served as temporary food storage and a free shop. "You can grab whatever you want for free," he explained, meant to provide for the volunteers. Walking further through the building, we passed a lot of stacked furniture and other stored objects. We entered a space with sand on the ground: a room still to be built, the last living room for the final participants of the project. Continuing the tour, we came across the units for the residents and walked through their future house (the project I would help to construct), saying hi to the contractor who was plastering the ceiling. The tour continued outside, where we passed the pigs, chickens, rainwater ditch,

plot for the future vegetable garden, and playground. Circling back inside, we entered the future crafts workshop for, among other things, forging. Two men were shifting huge beams from one side of the room to the other. We walked into the last building, the place where they wanted to create some temporary social housing. My guide explained that the priority at the moment was these houses and the housing for the residents themselves.

When we were almost finished with the tour, Sofia arrived, another volunteer from Prague. She would stay with me in the unit. We introduced ourselves to each other, and she was introduced to the place as well. I started helping Gaston prepare dinner. We made some burritos and got to know each other better while the residents came in after work.

We enjoyed dinner together. The two oldest children ran around like crazy, full of energy. After dinner, the dishes were done incredibly fast by those who didn't cook, and I was taken by the hand by Sam, who proudly showed me her aerial gym cloths hanging in the barn. We played a few games together in the common room, after which we got a dancing show from Maaika, who (although she didn't have TikTok) knew all sorts of short dances.

After enjoying the performance, we all slowly went to bed.





11-02-2026

Today I started the day together with Sofia, searching for breakfast in the common room. When finishing our bowl of oats, other people walked in. When the working crew of the day gathered (the volunteers, the contractor, and two residents), we had a moment of silence. Five minutes of silence followed by a round in which everybody could share their thoughts. Most of us said we slept well and that we were looking forward to the day. When everyone had finished, they would say aho as an ending, the rest of us replying 'aho', letting the person know we had heard them.

When everybody had spoken, it was time to go outside. The gentle beard guided me and the other two volunteers to a few piles of bricks that had to be placed somewhere else. The gentle beard has the role to manage the volunteers and therefore was giving us directions. We spent most of the morning putting old bricks and roof tiles into wheelbarrows to later place them on pallets to later be brought away to storage by a forklift. While working, we chatted about our personal lives and our hobbies, getting to know each other.

Halfway through the morning we had a coffee and cookies break and later an early lunch. The lunch was delicious with scrambled egg from their own chicken. During lunch I informed if it would be oke to make some pictures/videos and they agreed. The lunch took place in the common room with the contractor, residents (including the children as the older girls were free from school on Wednesdays), and the dogs. Everybody prepared their own lunch and took whatever they needed from the kitchen. Situating ourselves at the stove, we ate our eggs.

During the afternoon the work shifted to inside. We started to straighten one of the ceilings in the barn, using a tripod laser to see where the beams should be. Time flew by and we were done with work before I knew it.

When the construction work for the day was done, I had a quick call with Anika to update about the BK-feminist week and how to remodel the central library exhibition. I wrote down what needed to be changed, something I would pick up later in the evening as I first promised to join the girls to their aerial gym class. I quickly jumped underneath the shower, to wash the work dust away. Jumping into the car only 20 minutes later to go to the location of their aerial gym. In the car they happily talked about their favorite Disney movies and songs, playing some of them on the car radio. After a 30-minute drive we arrived. The girls quickly ran inside, us Thomas, Sofia and me, took place on some chairs in front of the glass doors.

"It hadn't been easy as there had been more than 200 possible complete shutdowns of the project, which they had to overcome."

While talking to Thomas, I also heard about the possible shutdowns of their ecovillage. He explained that he and his wife have been living in another project for a while, but they had to stop it to happen. It hadn't been easy as there had been more than 200 possible complete shutdowns of the project, which they had to overcome. In the start, they needed to get 700,000 euros to buy the land and the temporary units to live in while renovating. On the 1st of June 2021, they had only got around 200,000 euros and had not signed the housing contract yet, while they had already agreed on buying and placing the units on the 9th of June. It had been very tight. But he explained that when they started to truly believe in it (canceling their old rental contracts for example), things started to happen. Believing that "You take the first step, and the universe follows". It was needed to have an open attitude and to work from an intrinsic motivation.

Their financial system is based on the idea of Vrijcoop. An initiative in which a project becomes an association with the residents as members and Vrijcoop as a member (49%), making it possible for the residents to make all daily decisions themselves, but if it comes to ownership and finance, they need to discuss with other members from Vrijcoop. Meaning that residents would invest a certain amount of money in a

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When everybody had broken, it was time to go outside. The gentle beard guided me and the other two volunteers to a few piles of bricks that had to be used to build the structure. I was the role to manage the volunteers and therefore was giving us directions. We spent the day working on the project. We used wheelbarrows to transport the bricks on pallets that later be brought away to storage by a forklift. While working, we chatted about our personal lives and our hobbies, getting to know each other.

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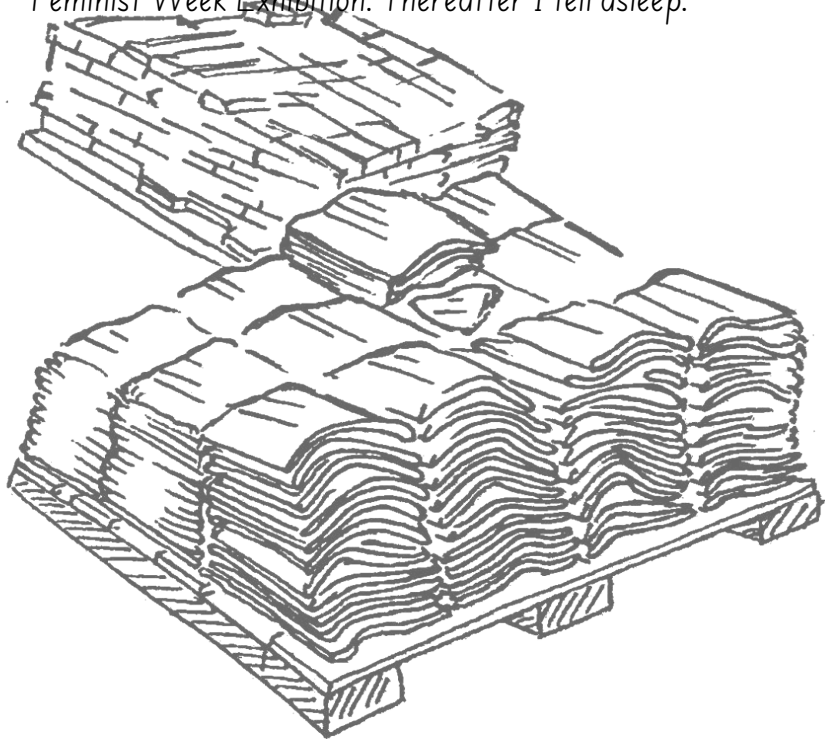
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While watching, Thomas started talking about the history of their ecovillage. He explained that he and his wife have been living in another project before but that they had long wished for this project to happen. It hadn't been easy as there had been more than 200 possible complete shutdowns of the project, which they had to overcome. In the start, they needed to get 700,000 euros to buy the land and the temporary units to live in while renovating. On the 1st of June 2021, they had only got around 200,000 euros and had not signed the housing contract yet, while they had already agreed on buying and placing the units on the 9th of June. It had been very tight. But he explained that when they started to truly believe in it (canceling their old rental contracts for example), things started to happen. Believing that "You take the first step, and the universe follows". It was needed to have an open attitude and to work from an intrinsic motivation.

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project, Vrijcoop possibly adding a bit of money to this first investment, whereafter the residents continue to pay rent (also when the mortgage is long paid off) to create a financial resource for other people who want to do the same. As the property becomes part of the association, residents "don't have property, but have everything". When they want to leave the project, they get a return of their first investment (ten thousand euros), nevertheless, rising property values are not taken into account.

Thomas explained all of this while the girls were hanging in their clothes and later over dinner. He kept talking until one of his daughters grabbed his arm, demanding him to put on the Olympic ice skating games. As they watched the games, I went to my unit to model the BK Feminist Week Exhibition. Thereafter I fell asleep.





12-02-2026

This morning I woke up at 7 again. Anna sent me a message about some model alterations for the BK-feminist week, so I started to convert the model immediately, like a real workaholic in my pyjamas. Sofia was so sweet to make breakfast for me so I could quickly finish the alterations and get dressed.

At the breakfast table we were teased by one of the two cats, Saartje, who wanted to eat our yogurt. Not long after, we sat down at the stove again with everybody joining today. After the five minutes of silence and the check-in round, we got down to business. We mainly worked inside today, straightening the ceiling by applying special screws, pieces of wood, or plastic. At some point we quickly had to move some newly delivered building materials to a dry storage space, after which we continued with the ceiling.

During lunch we made ciabatta with eggs. The newest and youngest residents were also having their lunch in the common room. The Gentle beard put on some nice dancing music and the baby and three-year-old started jumping around, laughing hard and screaming at each other. The Gentle beard and I put up our hands, also dancing, while the dog licked the empty plates. The three-year-old ran around to the beat, and we adults discussed which songs we (used to) dance to in the club, David Guetta being a favorite.

After lunch we continued with the ceiling. Bram, the contractor, had to come by once in a while to explain something to us. We continued with this task until the end of the working day at two o'clock. Sitting down on the bench in the common room, the tiredness hit me. I closed my eyes and we all sat there in silence, tired from the physical work. Not long after, I walked to the unit to take a shower and lay down on the bed for a while, completely drained but satisfied.

After regaining some energy, I got up to get some food from the shop. Sofia joined me and we found some crackers we wanted to eat. Walking into the common room, we encountered many people gathered there. They sat around the fire or were walking in and out. We joined them, preparing ourselves some food (pre-dinner). We sat at the fireplace while eating, talking to Giem, who told the story of how he and his family had joined the project. In the meantime, his almost one-year-old daughter was actively crawling around, and he kept her away from the fireplace with a watchful side eye.

The other youngsters played together, wrestling on the couch, sometimes picking up the baby and helping each other collect the plates when dinner was served. We had a very nice dinner cooked by the Gentle beard, after which the oldest teenager of the whole community gave me and the other volunteers a hardstyle lesson. From hardstyle we went to jumpstyle to dubstep, or whatever it is all called. The jumping tired everybody out, making most of the residents retreat. Together with the other volunteers, we stayed behind to play a game. After a lot of giggles, we also went to bed.





13-02-2026

The day started as usual with five minutes of silence and the following round of individual check-ins. When everybody had spoken their minds, I put on the song "Let's Get Down to Business" and half of us started to jump around. When we jumped ourselves warm, we went to work. Getting the tools from the tool cabin and continuing yesterday's job of straightening the ceiling. Gaston put on his French techno music (pretty intense for the morning) and we screwed and unscrewed.

Soon the coffee break caught up with us and we were leaning against the already installed radiators, eating our stroopwafels and sipping coffee. The rest of the workday flew past as it was only until 13:00 on Fridays. When work was done, we all really needed a shower as the insulation material we had been working with had been very dusty. We threw all our clothes in the washing machine and washed ourselves.

After updating some uni stuff, I went out to do some filming. Not long after, Sofia and I went to the supermarket to get some ingredients for our Saturday cookie-baking plan. The supermarket was only one kilometer away. When arriving, we were greeted by teenagers in Carnival outfits. Back in the common room again, we made ourselves a snack and, not long after, helped the Gentle beard prepare the pizza dinner for the night. We all built our own pizzas, excited to eat them. Harmen put on some dancing music and people started jumping around.

I spoke with Harmen about what he was doing for the community and how things had gone in the beginning. He told me that he was handling the animals and practical things such as ordering building materials and, for example, emptying the septic tank. He also said that the construction was a building association to which the residents' association and Vrijcoop paid rent. He added that you could get the investment of renovating the place back if you would leave the initiative within two years after leaving.

I still sat for a long time at the fire before going to bed, thinking about the chicken that passed away today and the sorrow that had fallen like a blanket over the whole community when they buried the chicken together.





14-02-2026

Today, Saturday, there was no alarm at 7:00 and I woke up around 8:30. Little Sarah would turn one today. Her grandparents would come to visit and there was a celebration planned at eleven in 'the encounter' (common room). When walking to the common room for breakfast, a cold wind caught us—ten degrees colder than yesterday. As the common room is uninsulated and nobody had lit a fire yet, Sofia and I took our breakfast to our unit (which is warmed by gas). We enjoyed a slow morning, reading and chatting. At 11:00 we went back to the common room to join the festivities. Most of the residents were already gathered around a burning fire.

Giem handed out his homemade pies and little Sarah got her first present for her first birthday. Half of the residents were wearing carnival outfits, fitting the celebrations taking place in the villages and cities around us. The music was also carnival-themed and most of us once in a while put our hand in the air as a dance move. The grandparents arrived and joined the birthday circle. Time passed as the cake slowly got eaten.

While finishing my piece, I talked with Thomas about the previous project he and the kids had lived in: Ecodorp Boekel. He said that they decided to leave after five months of living there. One reason being the organisational structure (holism), which is a sociocratic system with a leader figure in every circle, making it possible for a certain level of hierarchy to still emerge—something he wasn't a fan of. Also, the vision of the village had been set from the beginning and there was no space for alterations. So if you liked the vision you could join; if not, it was up to you to leave. The second reason had to do with the building structure. The houses created too much of an artificial indoor climate, making you lose all connection with the season outdoors. The third reason was the size of the community, which developed from a comfortable ten to thirty.

Therefore, he and his family had been looking for a new project, which made them find this one. When I asked him what exactly was ecological about this project, he explained that the ecological aspect had been taken into consideration, especially with the choice of building materials. Nevertheless, setting a standard for himself and comparing it with Boekel, he explained that people in Boekel would go very far to build sustainably. This project was a bit more flexible with the sustainability aspect, as costs and time were also taken into consideration when choosing a building material.

Later that day, his little girl taught Sofia and me some aerial gym. This meant we were both hanging upside down in the old straw barn. I have to admit that it looks way easier than it is. The cloths you have to hang in are much more painful than they seem. When the cold got to us, we went back inside. The second plan of the day was to bake some cookies together with the kids. We prepared the dough and gathered the children to make some figure cookies. Happily slamming the dough to get it flat, they created a very creative assortment of differently shaped cookies. We played quartet while waiting for the oven. When they were finally finished, the plate full of cookies was quickly emptied.

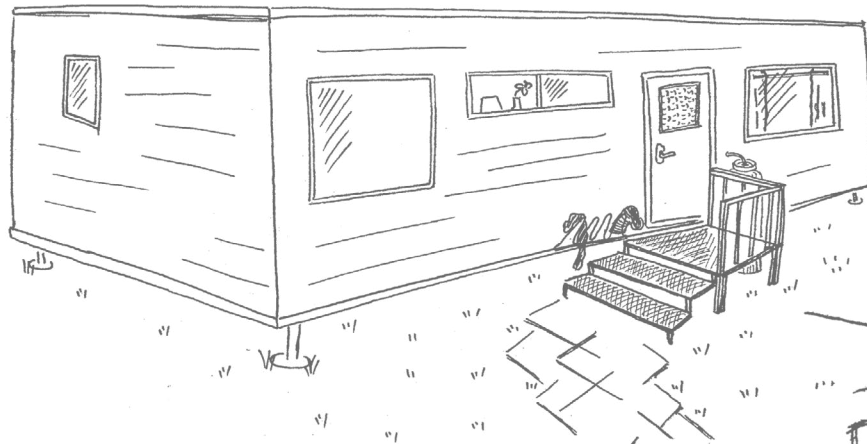
I took Pepijn (the oldest of the kids) outside to fly the drone together. He quickly grasped how to control it and flew over the old barn and the fields. Standing beside him, shivering from the cold, the other kids joined, interested in this weird flying machine. We played around a bit until the battery got empty.

Completely cold, I went for a warm shower.



15-02-2026

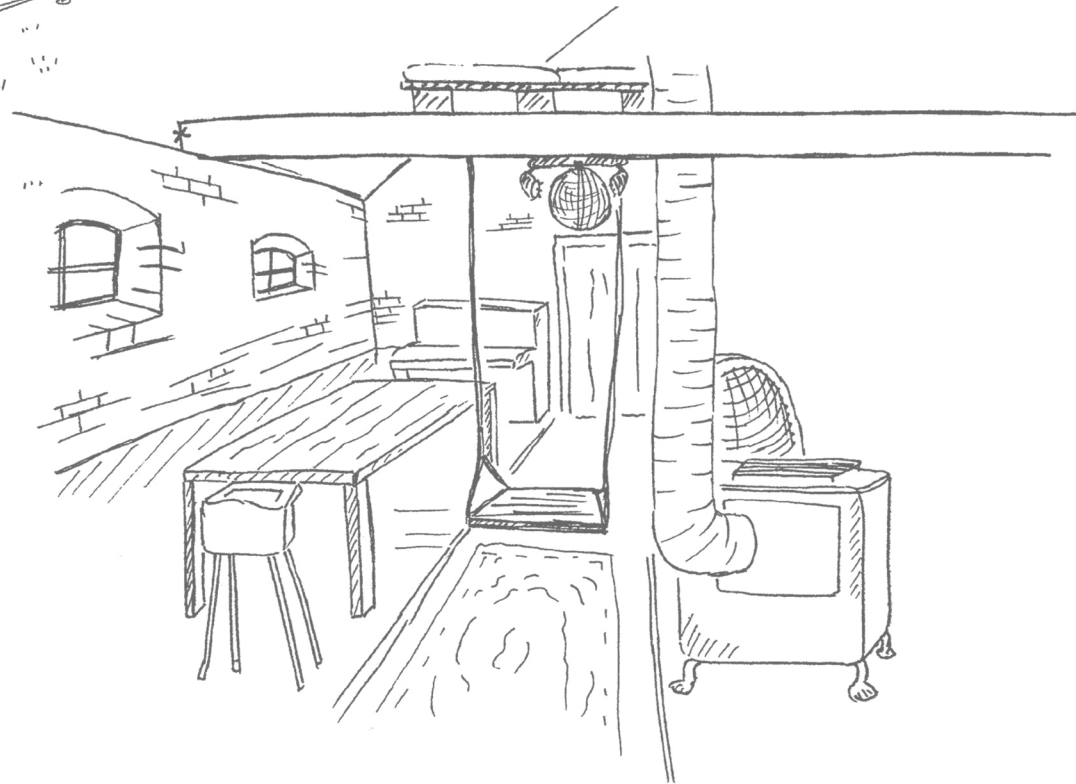
Today I spent most of the time drawing scenes from my experiences in community P. Sitting in the unit (being the warmest place), Sofia and I studied, only going out into the cold to get food, and quickly going back again. With the snow falling outside, we remained in the unit heated by gas



16-02-2026

This Monday we didn't have to work as we took the day off out of respect for the carnival celebrations. Apparently everybody in Limburg has a day off after carnival, and the residents from the community (although the majority isn't originally from the region) didn't want to be the odd ones out by neglecting the local celebrations.

We played games instead while enjoying an afternoon potluck. Dix-it was the chosen game. We teamed up in pairs so we could do a Dutch-English combination, pleasing both volunteers and the children. The day passed quickly: playing, chatting, eating. A volunteer who had been away for a bit came back and was happily greeted by everyone. During the evening we were now with three girls in the unit. We chatted a bit and noticed the gas bottle was empty, meaning tonight would be a cold night.



18-02-2026

The day started as usual. We shared five minutes of silence, after which we had our opening round. The round progressed more neutrally this time. People shared how they had slept. The Gentle beard reminded us "that every day there is a reason to smile," wishing us all a good day. Sofia expressed her gratitude for the safe space created during the round. Gaston admitted he didn't feel great but didn't know why. We all shared our thoughts.

We continued placing the plasterboards on the ceiling. It progressed quickly. During the coffee break we chatted with the contractor. He spoke about building projects that inspired him, including one that claimed to be able to steer and capture energy in buildings. The explanation had some resemblance to conspiracy thinking; nevertheless, who am I to say what is true and what isn't?

After lunch we finished the ceiling, after which we prepared for the last step: putting on the fake beams. To do so, the contractor gave us instructions on how to use the saw table and how to cut the beams. His instructions were very clear and extensive. Eventually the whole instruction took around an hour, which meant we had to leave the job for tomorrow as it was already time to quit. We put the tools away in the closed-off closet.

When stepping outside, the Gentle beard just came around the corner with a new volunteer. We shook hands, after which I went back to the unit for a shower. When I felt fresh again, I sat down on the couch and did some work on my computer. When Sofia came back with the groceries, I helped her with cooking. We made some potatoes and vegetables from the oven and a dessert. As I had eaten the dessert of the Gentle beard yesterday, we had to make up for it today, so we made an orange cake.

The dinner was much appreciated. The dessert as well, especially by the Gentle beard. After all this sugar, we played a card game with some of the volunteers. Giggling and making many weird faces, we sat for a while. When we got too cold, we went back to our units to go to bed





19-02-2026

We followed the normal routine. I had to grab some food from the volunteer shop, pushing myself through some icy snow wind to get the necessary oats. With a full belly we walked into 'The Encounter' for the opening round. As everybody had spoken and the new volunteer had expressed his gratitude for being here, I put "Let's Get Down to Business" loudly on the speakers and we started.

The new volunteer had a very strong opinion, so I left him and the two other girls to work together as I was not feeling like dealing with this today. There was no need for four people on this job anyway, so I picked up another task and straightened another part of the ceiling. At some point Thomas came in and we got into a good conversation about a design for the stairs and the setup of the living room in general. The conversation lasted for a while and made the day fly by.

After work I sat down with Elna in 'The Encounter' to talk about their project a bit. I was especially interested in details about the financial structure. It seems like their financial structure is a big part of their philosophy, prioritizing use over ownership. Apparently they have a structure with several associations: a real estate association, a residents' association, and Vrijcoop. The real estate association pays the loans. This is paid through the monthly rent that the residents pay. The rent consists of an amount to pay off the loans and an amount to pay for other facilities.

Apart from the financial structure, they also have an interesting social structure. They don't have a set meeting day. Their meetings happen spontaneously. However, if anybody wants to change something in the vision or plan for the site, they have to submit a motion. This is done by filling in a specifically made form. In the form you write down the plan and draw what you want to alter. This form is sent to all the residents and a meeting to discuss the form is scheduled.

During the meeting, the consent method is followed. Firstly, there is a question round where residents can ask factual questions without involving their opinions. Secondly, there is an opinion-forming round, where everybody gives their opinion on the motion. Thirdly, people are asked if they consent to the motion. If somebody does not give consent, they have to come up with a new proposal. This structure makes you search for a solution that everybody agrees on.

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The tasks that have to be fulfilled to keep the place running arose naturally from the needs for the place, for example, for practical material deliveries, organizing, etc. The task is fulfilled by someone who has taken on the responsibility. However, if somebody wants to do it a different way, they have to submit a motion. They might need to outsource it to someone who is not part of the community.

After work I sat down with Elna, sitting next to the burning fire. We both got a bit chilly. We talked for a while and then I went back to the unit to grab some food. She stayed with me for a while. We read for a while until dinner was ready and we grabbed a plate from the bar. We ate at the table.

The conversation over dinner went in different directions. Slowly the residents went to their units. We stayed behind the longest with the volunteers until we felt it was too cold and decided to watch a movie in our unit.

We followed the normal routine. I had to grab some food from the volunteer shop, pushing myself through some icy snow wind to get the necessary oats. With a full belly we walked into 'The Encounter' for the opening round. As everybody had spoken and the new volunteer had expressed his gratitude for being here, I put "Let's Get Down to Business" on the speakers and we started.

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The new volunteer has a very strong opinion, so I left him and the two other guys to work together. I was not really like dealing with this to be a good idea for a while. I picked up another task and straightened another part of the ceiling. At some point I returned and had a conversation about a design for a staircase. The conversation lasted for a while and made the day full by.

After we sat down with Inga at the Encounter to talk about their project and their financial structure, I learned a lot about their philosophy, glorifying use over ownership. Apparently they have a structure where the residents' association, a residents' association, and Vrijcoop. The real estate association pays the loans. This is paid through the monthly rent that the residents pay. The rent consists of an amount to pay off the loans and an amount to pay for other facilities.

Apart from the financial structure, they also have an interesting social structure. They don't have a set meeting day. Their meetings happen spontaneously. However, if anybody wants to change something in the vision or plan for the site, they have to submit a motion. This is done by filling in a specifically made form. In the form you write down the plan and draw what you want to alter. This form is sent to all the residents and a meeting to discuss the form is scheduled.

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The tasks that have to be fulfilled to keep the project running arose naturally and out of necessity, for example bookkeeping, practical material deliveries, organizing, etc. The task is fulfilled by someone who has taken it upon themselves. Nevertheless, if someone doesn't want to do it anymore and nobody else wants to take on the task, they might need to outsource it to someone who is not part of the community.

After a long talk with Elna, sitting next to the burning fire, we both got a bit sleepy. When all topics felt covered, I walked back to the unit to grab my book, taking Sofia with me to read next to the stove. We read for a while until dinner was ready and we all grabbed a plate from the bar. We scooped some pasta onto it and sat down at the table. The conversation over dinner went in different directions. Slowly the residents went to their units. We stayed behind the longest with the volunteers until we felt it was too cold and decided to watch a movie in our unit.



WEEKEND
SNACK BOX

CRUNCHY
MUESLI
MISSEL

Diamant
FRISCH & SNACKS

FLEISCH
ESPHIT

20-02-2026

Today was the my last day of working on the restoration project, on the ceiling. I feel a bit sad knowing that my time here is almost over. Nevertheless it also reminded me to enjoy the day even more. I continued my job from yesterday, straightening the ceiling, using leveling tools including a laser. Today Gaston and his girlfriend helped me as they completed their other tasks.

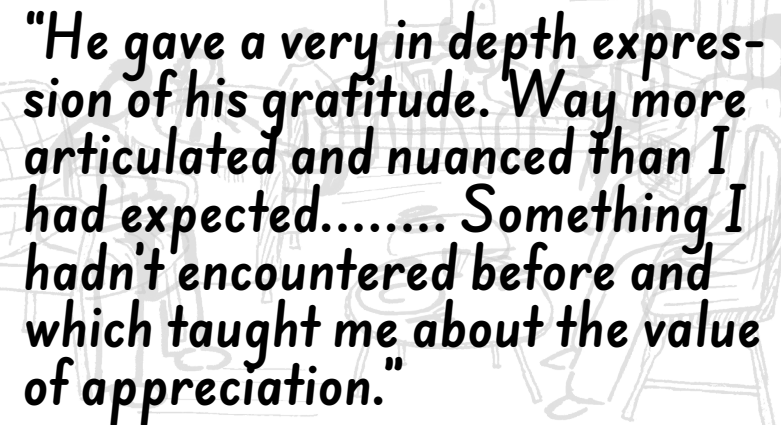
We worked slowly but steadily. The day passed quickly because it is Friday and we only work till one and because I was working very concentrated, focussing on doing it right. When we finished, me and the other girls went back to the unit to take a shower.

Tired from the physical work I laid down on my bed to take a nap. Around half past two I met Thomas in his living room as I promised him that we could still discuss the design a bit more. We ended up speaking for two hours about the layout, materials, etc. We discussed that the current floor could actually just stay as it is, without an extra floor on top. Keeping the rustic look and saving material on a screed.

We also discussed how to layout his kitchen, creating a small desk near the window. It felt very good to help him shape his future living space. It also helped to prevent him from making some inconvenient choices. When we discussed all the corners of the room and he looked satisfied, we both went our own ways again.

Later in the evening, after dinner, it was time for my goodbye circle. I had been nervous for this all day as I don't like to be the center of attention. Harmen started talking. He gave a very in depth expression of his gratitude. Way more articulated and nuanced than I had expected. It was an expression of some deeper understanding between the two of us that doesn't necessarily need to be put into words, but he managed to do so. When he finished, the others one by one took over. Each giving extended expression of their gratitude, fitting to our relation

and to themselves. It was a very beautiful and valuable experience to be thanked like this. Something I hadn't encountered before and which taught me about the value of appreciation.



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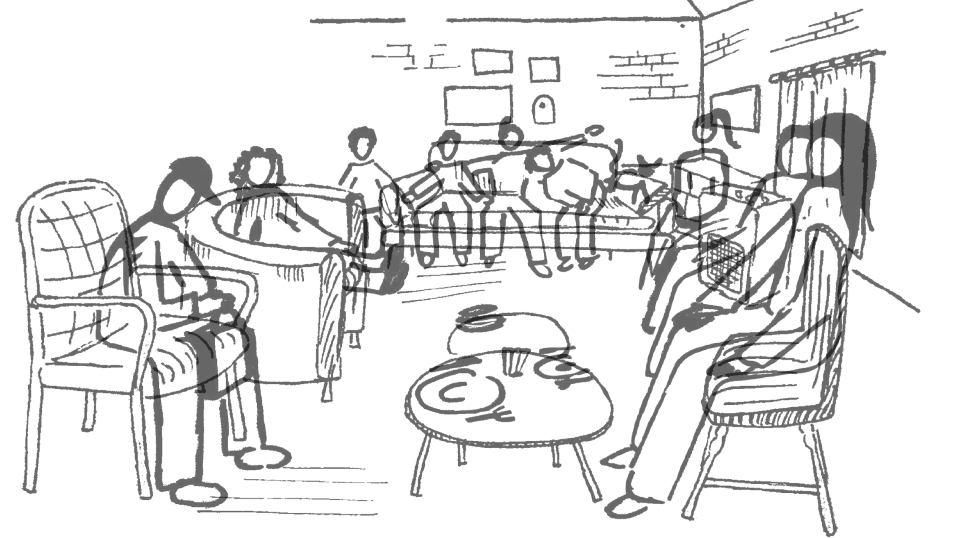
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We worked until it is Friday, and we all work till 10 and became very concerned about focusing on doing it right. When we finished the and the other
"He gave a very in depth expression of his gratitude. Way more articulated and nuanced than I had expected..... Something I hadn't encountered before and which taught me about the value of appreciation."
Tired I had a nap. Around 10:30 I met Thomas in the living room as he promised him that we could still discuss the design a bit more. We ended up speaking to him and he discussed that the current floor could actually just stay as it is, without an extra floor on top. Keeping the floor and saving material on a screed.

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21-02-2026

The morning came and my last day in this community had arrived. For the birthday of the little girl, more people would come over today, as would my family to pick me up. They were curious to see the place where I had stayed for these two weeks. Around noon, we sat in the common room in a large circle with all the visitors, enjoying some cake while chatting about the community.

At some point I gave my family a tour of the space, showcasing them where I had slept and where I had lived. They bombarded questions on me which I happily answered. When we finished the tour, it was time for me to say goodbye to everybody.

I went around to give hugs, ending with my best buddy, Sofia, who I had been doing everything with these past weeks. We made plans to meet each other again in summer as she would come over to the Netherlands again. Relieved that this would only be a temporary goodbye (also for most of the others) I put my bag in the car and we drove away.

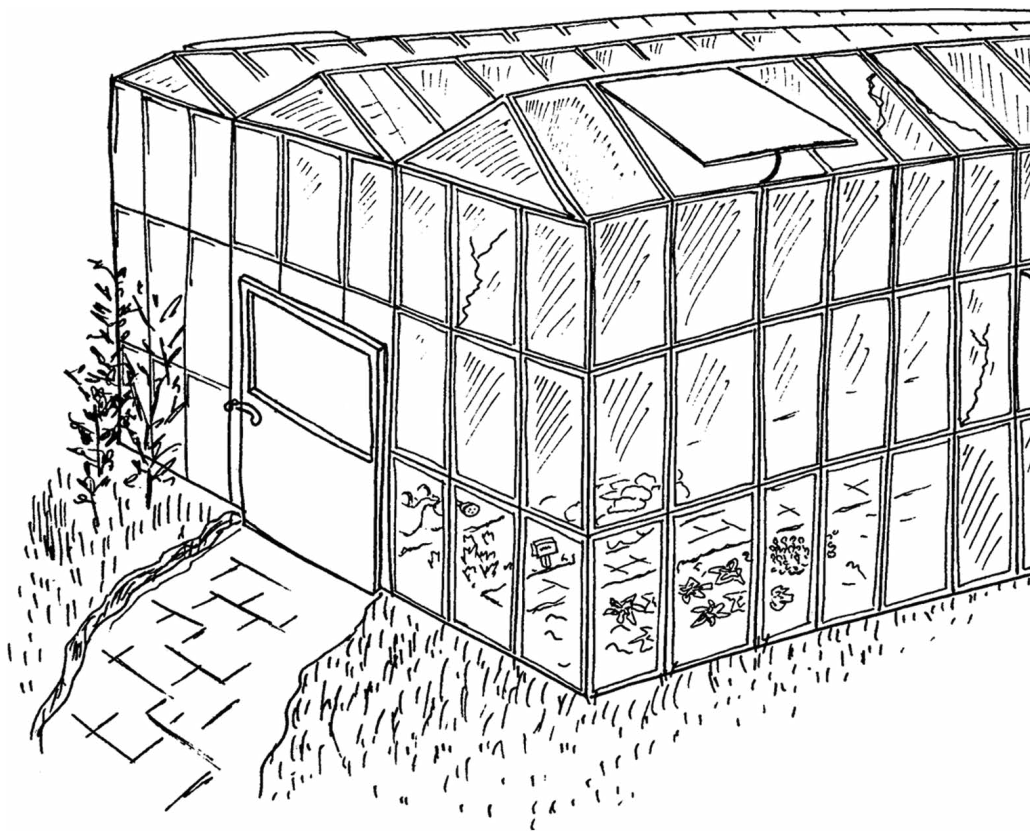




STRAWBERRY FIELDS

DIARY

09-03-2026 t/m 20-03-2026



Jonne van Bunningen

10-03-2026

The alarm rang, I got up and grabbed some breakfast to still quickly dive behind the computer before heading to Germany to visit the community Strawberry Fields (no not the festival). After a one and a half hour bus trip, I arrived. I wandered around the house looking for the residents. I found them still captured in a 'strategy meeting'. They were sitting in a circle on the ground in the yoga room (workshop).

To allow them to finish in peace, I went to the main house to grab some tea and read some. Not long after I poured myself a ginger tea (to hopefully finally kill the germs that cause my runny nose), one by one, the residents wandered in. Nora being among them. Happy to see her we embraced each other and had a catch up chat. It didn't take long as she shortly after, had another meeting about the garden maintenance. I joined the meeting with Dianna and Elke. They spoke about the need to quickly start seeding, about the seeding plan and divided the task of checking on the seeds.

The meeting was still unfinished when it was paused for the everyday communal lunch at one hour clock. We were lucky as the sun was shining again. We ate lunch at the outdoor tables, delicious chilli sin carne. While having lunch I introduced myself to the people I hadn't met before. After finishing our plates, the person with the dishes task took them away for cleaning. Henk took me along to show me my room.

After unpacking my bags I sat again in the sun reading some literature as a possible input for the graduation report. When the sun moved behind a cloud I stood up to go inside, walking into Henk with whom I spoke about starting a place like this. He expressed his frustration with my generation and said we should just grab some land, don't pay for it. The conversation continued heading into many different directions until Marie came along to talk with Henk.

I resigned to the living room and sat down on one of the many sofas, to

read. In the office, next to the living room, and on the dining tables two other meetings were taking place. One about the summer festival, the other one I couldn't figure out as it happened to be in German. Today apparently was a meeting day as everybody was at home. I continued reading most of the afternoon.

I only got out of my reading chair again to help set the table for dinner at 18:00. While cleaning the kitchen after dinner I spoke with Valentina. She told me she chose to live here as her intuition had told her so and she had longed for creating things together with others, communal creation. She was interested in personal development through living with others.

"We live rather closely together because we share one kitchen. Resulting in us eating lunch and dinner together everyday"

She explained that this community lives together rather closely, as they always have one kitchen. Next to this, they also run a business together. Namely, the second renovated old barn in which they host groups. This makes them bound together by more than just the wish to live in a community. They are housemates as well as colleagues.

When the kitchen was cleaned, including mopping the floor (they regulate high cleaning standards to fulfill company hygiene standards), I went dancing in the yoga room with Nora and Elke. We just moved around freely in the room. Following the music that rose in speed and volume. After half an hour I noticed my body was tired, still recovering from the cold that got to me over the weekend, and I decided to go to bed.

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She explained that this community lives together rather closely as they always have dinner and lunch together. Because of the simple fact that they only have one kitchen to share. Next to this they also run a business together. Namely the second renovated old barn in which they host groups. This makes them bound together by more than just the wish to live in a community. They are housemates as well as colleagues.

When the kitchen was cleaned, including mopping the floor (they regulate high cleaning standards to fulfill company hygiene standards), I went dancing in the yoga room with Nora and Elke. We just moved around freely in the room. Following the music that rose in speed and volume. After half an hour I noticed my body was tired, still recovering from the cold that got to me over the weekend, and I decided to go to bed.



11-03-2026

The day started with a small breakfast whereafter me, the other volunteer, Dianna and her daughter Roos, went into the garden. We put woodchips into wheelbarrows to spread them at the feet of newly planted trees. While doing so, the little girl was whining. It "was not her day", as her mother put it. While little Roos screamed, her mother explained to me how to spread the woodchips. Around the new trees there were also other plants planted. Species that are symbiotic with the trees.

We walked back and forth in the big garden to gather woodchips and place them at the roots of every new tree. The trees were already blooming as the weather had been very warm these last weeks. When all trees had gotten fresh wood chips around their roots, our new job was to sieve clay. As the seeds had to go into the ground shortly, this week, we had to prepare the compost. The compost would exist of ☐ clay, ☐ sand and ☐ ruff compost. Before starting the sieving activities, it was time for the coffee break. During the coffee break, another day volunteers arrived. I happened to have met him before, in December, during the first weekend I stayed here. He came to discuss and design a vegetable washing station.

Excited for fixing stuff, I joined their brainstorm on how the vegetable station could possibly look. When the ruff idea was finished it was time to begin with sieving. I sieved a few big buckets of clay. A very meditative chore as the others were doing other stuff.

Lunch time came and we enjoyed a big curry together. Someone expressed that "we live in abundance" whereafter Nora said "We might live in abundance, but it is also good to be sober". After lunch I took a small break, taking some time to reflect on my thesis. Around 15:00 I continued sieving again until 16:00. The time flew past as I thought about this project. Elke came to ask me if I was alright working alone. I told her that today, it wasn't a problem. After finishing all the buckets

of clay my job for the day was done.

Tired from the physical work, undressed, and took a good shower. I sat down on the couch for a little bit. Walking over to the kitchen later, to help with cooking. While cooking, I talked with Elke about how she came to live here. She explained she had been living with her ex-husband and son before, but when they separated she followed her dream to live in a community. As her son was doing well with his dad, it was oke for her to do so. We chatted a bit more until we finished cooking and sat down for dinner. Dinner was pleasant and a bit quiet. People were cut up in their thoughts including myself.

"We might live in abundance, but it is also good to be sober."

When we had finished all the dishes for a bit, talking with Mike, the longest inhabitant. He told me he has been living here for 15 years. Making that he still lived with one of the founders (as the place exists for 20 years) and that he has seen many people come and go. He proclaimed to be lucky to have bought some bitcoins some years ago, resulting in that he never had to work again and could provide in some of the sponsoring of Strawberry Fields. We continued chatting until I dried the cutlery. Whereafter it was time for me to resign to bed.



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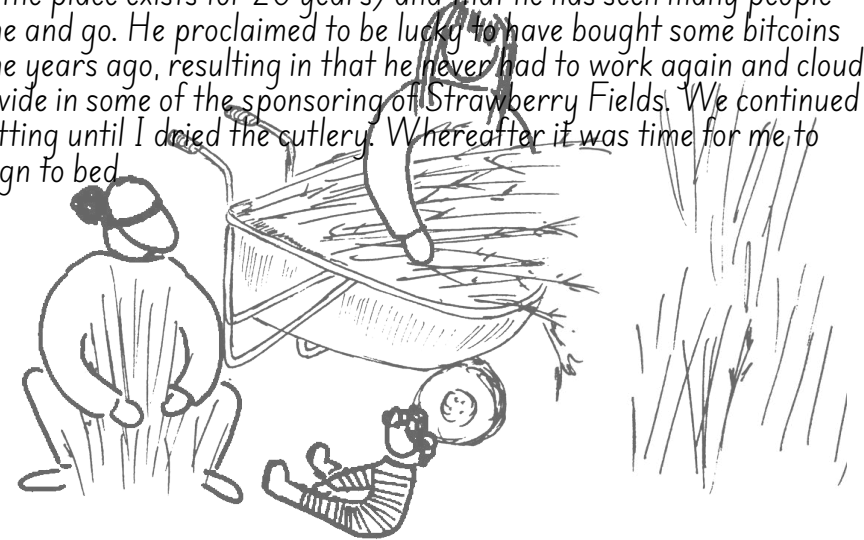
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When everybody was finished I helped out with the dishes for a bit, talking with Mike, the longest inhabitant. He told me he has been living here for 15 years. Making that he still lived with one of the founders (as the place exists for 20 years) and that he has seen many people come and go. He proclaimed to be lucky to have bought some bitcoins some years ago, resulting in that he never had to work again and could provide in some of the sponsoring of Strawberry Fields. We continued chatting until I dried the cutlery. Whereafter it was time for me to resign to bed.







12-03-2026

I woke up because of the bright sunlight shining through my window. Later than yesterday, I walked to the kitchen to collect some breakfast. I walked into Dianna and her little Roos. She was making porridge and offered me some as well. We ate our porridge in the coffee room, the room opposite to the kitchen and closest to the entrance of the house. The room that everybody passes when they enter or leave. Little Roos was screaming cheerfully eating her warm porridge, blowing her spoon to cool it down. While eating together, slowly more people walked in. Taking from the porridge and waking themselves with coffee.

When we were finished, Jan and I walked to the workshop to prepare for another day in the garden. We put on our boots, rain trousers and jackets. Not long after, walking across the field to find appropriate plastic sheeting to put over the fields. We also placed some empty plastic sheets for the compost we were going to collect. When the plastic sheets were done we drove with the van to a neighbouring farm to collect compost. We brought a gift, a bottle of kimchi.

In total we would collect 4m³. Meaning we had to move a lot of mass around. We drove the van and borrowed a trailer to the huge compost pile and started digging. We dug and dug, taking turns to allow each of us some rest in between. It took a while but after many shuffles we filled the first trailer, around 2m³. Jan drove home, driving the trailer backwards, taking many turns, to the plastic sheets we prepared. When the trailer arrived at the sheets, it was time to move the 2m³ again, now onto the sheet. Standing on top of the pile we shuffled the compost down. Luckily, other residents came to help us.

After a while of demanding physical work, all the compost was placed in the sheet and we could enjoy a well deserved coffee break. Normally I don't drink coffee but doing physical work these days makes coffee necessary fuel for me. We planned to collect the other compost right

away, nevertheless as the other volunteer had to leave for a while, and he was the most skilled trailer driver, the plan changed and Dianna the little girl and I went into the garden to plant onions. We shifted the straw, covering the bed, aside. She made the holes and I put in the small onion seeds. Little Roos helped by giving me hands full of onions.

Do you have a favourite day of the week?

We discussed some things about what they were growing in the fields and how they decided on the crops for the year. They base the amount of a species on the previous years and the demand from the community. As community members change over time, this demand also changes over time. Mike made delicious pasta which was most welcome after this morning.

Me: Friday because you have the weekend.

We spoke about how to keep your body healthy through exercising. Various things were mentioned, like yoga, bad for your body. When the dishes were made again, I heard Elke with the dishes. It took a while making that soon after I had my mentor call. The call was about the garden. When the call finished I hurried into a good reaction (at least now). When the call finished I hurried to put on my rain boots again to help Elke and Jan to just arrived back with the trailer.

Mike: For me it used to be Friday as well, or Saturday; the holy weekend. Nevertheless since I live here I don't have it anymore. The holy weekend is a capitalistic thing, we don't have to live according to that time schedule...

We started with gathering dried nettles as a crop. We filled a wheelbarrow and added it to the other straw collection. I walked back to the kitchen after to do the cooking. We had some left overs from the previous day, which I turned into fried rice. The cooking was finished quickly as today we were only eating with five. At the diner table everybody was tired but satisfied from the day's work. Only little Roos was still filled with energy and moved around in the living room, playing in her cardboard "house". I helped with the dishes again and scrubbed the floor. We planned to have another dance session but the workshop appeared to be already in use. maybe for the best as I felt the physical tiredness, time to go to bed.

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In total we would need 2m³, meaning we had to move a lot of mass around. We had to have the van, we were going to use the compost pile and started digging. We dug and dug, taking turns to allow each of us to have a rest. We had to have some shovels and shuffles we filled the first trailer again. 2m³. In the day, home, driving the trailer backwards, taking many turns, to the plastic sheets we prepared. When the trailer arrived at the sheets, it was time to move the 2m³ again, now onto the sheet. Standing on top of the pile we shuffled the compost down. Luckily, other residents came to help us.

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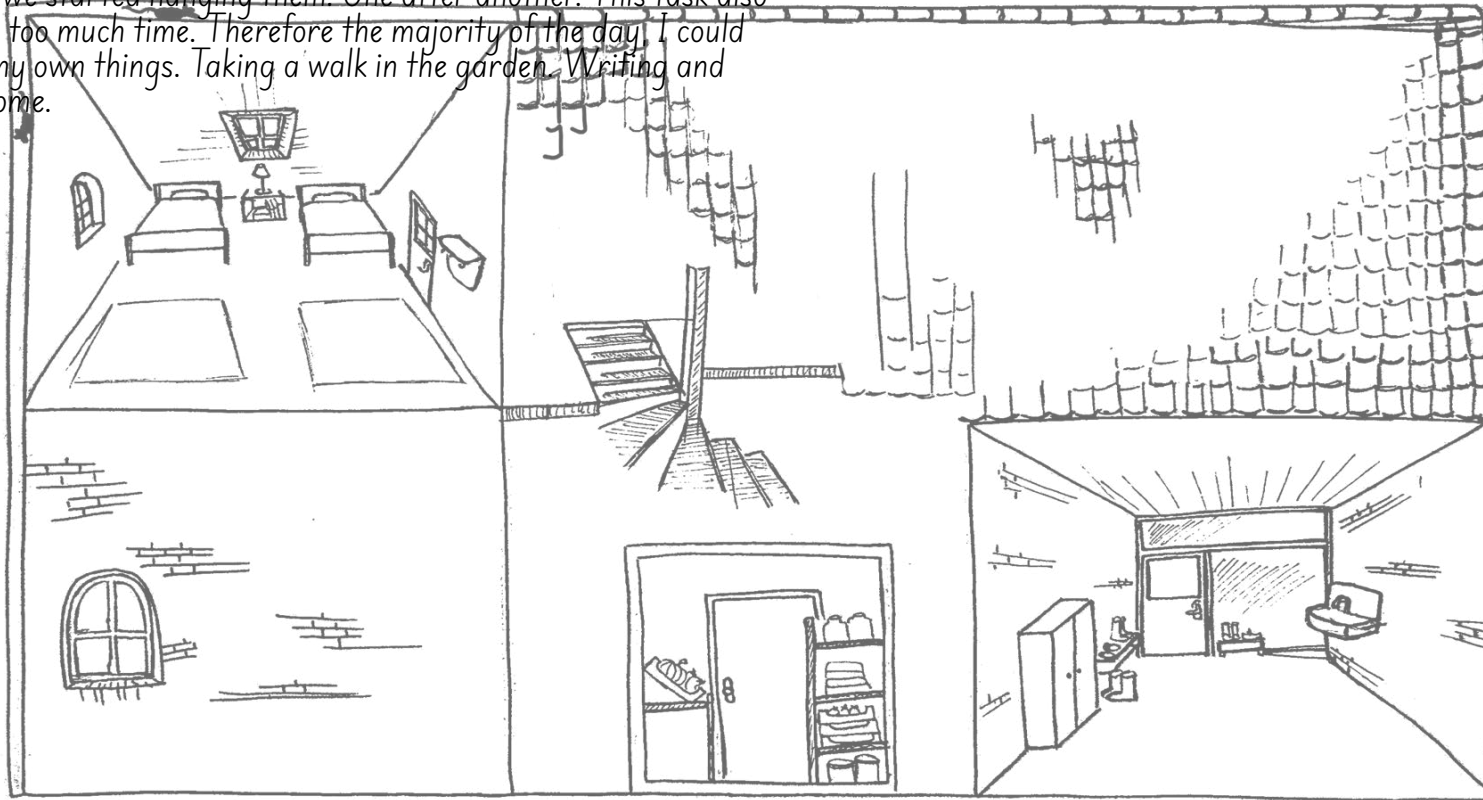
We spoke about how to keep your body healthy through exercising. Various theories were mentioned about myself being good or bad for your body. When the plates were empty again, I helped Elke with the dishes. It took a while making that soon after I had my mentor call. The call was very pleasant and gave me a lot of mental rest as I felt going into a good direction (at least now). When the call finished I hurried to put on my dirty clothes again to help Elke and Jan who just arrived back with the other 2m³ of compost.

We unloaded the trailer whereafter I went to help Dianna with gathering dried nettles as a straw. We filled a wheelbarrow and added it to the other straw collection. Walking back to the kitchen after to do the cooking. We had some left overs from the previous day, which I turned into fried rice. The cooking was finished quickly as today we were only eating with five. At the diner table everybody was tired but satisfied from the day's work. Only little Roos was still filled with energy and moved around in the living room, playing in her cardboard "house". I helped with the dishes again and scrubbed the floor. We planned to have another dance session but the workshop appeared to be already in use. maybe for the best as I felt the physical tiredness, time to go to bed.



13-03-2026

Today was a calm day. As the garden day was switched with the cleaning day (normally friday is garden day and Thursday is cleaning day), today was only a bit of cleaning. I had some oats in the morning and helped Elke with ironing some curtains in the washing basement. The ironing took a while as the curtains were huge. When we finished the first ones, we started hanging them. One after another. This task also didn't take too much time. Therefore the majority of the day, I could spend on my own things. Taking a walk in the garden. Writing and drawing some.





14-03-2026

This morning I entered the kitchen while Elke was making porridge. She offered me some so I happily accepted. In the coffee room, Dianna and her little girl were already sitting and eating 'berry tea', 'berry tea', the little girl screamed. I took a seat next to them with my porridge and jasmine tea. Asking how they had slept, "well" and chitchatting some. Nora also entered. Porridge filled her morning bowl. When we were almost done eating, Jan walked in to have his morning coffee. When all bowls and mugs were empty, we moved ourselves to the greenhouse.

Here we started with watering the beds. Pouring rainwater water cans over them. Walking alongside the edges, starting with watering the sides, filling the can again with the rainwater collected in a huge bucket outside, and continuing watering the middle of the beds. We continued like this for a while until it was time to go back to the living room to celebrate Lucas' birthday. Happy to be in the warm living room again, we all sat at the table. Already prepared for the celebrations. Having cake in the middle, coffee and tea. We sang a birthday song whereafter Lucas handed out the cake.

While eating some of the apple pie, Dianna gifted him the present. A coupon for a home improvement store, as he had been so busy with renovating part of the workshop for own use. We chatted some about peoples plans for the weekend. The birthday people would go to celebrate with their family in the North of the country. Dianna and her little girl were going to stay the night at the house of her parents, leaving not many people in the Strawberry Fields. After the pie, me, Nora and Jan, went back to the glasshouse to do some seeding. We seeded tomatoes, bell peppers and cucumbers.

Taking us around one and half hours to place all the separate seeds into their designated sprouting pot. While seeding I slowly felt colder and colder, making that I was happy when it was over and I had the chance

to heat myself again, taking a warm shower. The lunch also provided for a reboost, as it was mashed potatoes, a dish I love but hadn't enjoyed in a while. This gave new energy to, after lunch, work on the roof of the glasshouse.

Closing some of the gaps caused by chattered glass with plastic sheets. We worked on this the whole afternoon, until I had to get dinner ready. Today there weren't many people, just like yesterday, so I just used the scraps of the day before to make the soup. Nora had just finished some delicious sourdough breads which were truly mind blowing. We ate half of one, leaving two for the next few days. After dinner I said goodbye to Valentina who was leaving for a trip tomorrow and I wouldn't see again before my leave. Dishes went fast, as we got pretty good at working together. We ended the evening watching a movie on the couch.

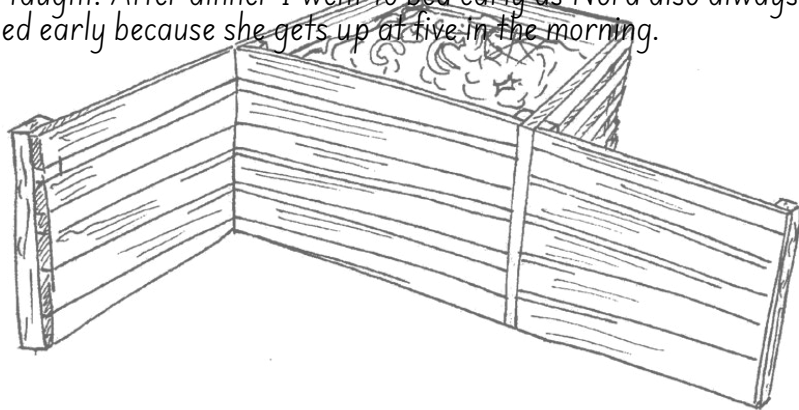




15-03-2026

Sunday, the day of the week that nothing was happening. Nothing to maintain the community at least. Therefore I took the day to write a bit and draw a bit. I used the office for writing and aimed to continue drawing outside. When I went Marie asked me some questions and we had a little chat. We spoke about how she didn't feel like Strawberry Fields was such an ecological place, although relatively seen, it is. She also expressed how it can be difficult to run a business together and live together, or rather the other way around. She would wish for a small extra kitchen so that you wouldn't have to use the big kitchen in case you are sick or just overwhelmed with people. We sat in the sun, almost falling asleep because of its warmth. Lunchtime arrived and I baked some eggs as Sunday everybody cooks for themselves.

After having enjoyed lunch in the garden with Marie and Michael, I started drawing. Drawing the experiences I have had here so far. This kept me occupied the whole afternoon. At dinner time I heated some old soup when Nora walked in. She just got back from helping a friend of hers move to Utrecht. We ate together talking about ecstatic dance and a folk dance festival she once went to. It sounded amazing. A festival where all kinds of old European folk dances were performed and taught. After dinner I went to bed early as Nora also always goes to bed early because she gets up at five in the morning.



16-03-2026

The sun was shining bright when I walked to the main house to get breakfast. I was just eating my oats when Jan walked in, the other volunteer. He would go to work today, making that I was more pointed to myself. I decided to clean the information sign in the garden, as Elke asked me the other day. While doing so she came to me to ask if I would like to help with ironing the curtains again.

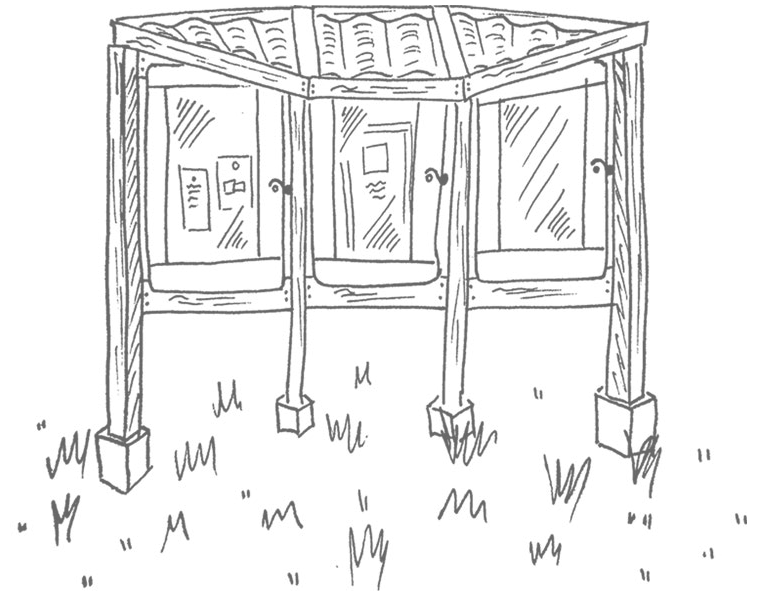
When the information sign was finished, I went to the washing basement to start ironing. I was working for around two hours when she walked in with a music box and we continued together. Apparently, ironing the curtains was part of the big cleanup that they did of the Seminar House before the summer season. It clarified why everybody had been so cautious on keeping the house clean.

Lunchtime arrived and we got a splendid lunch from Marie. During lunch the conversation went into the topic of 'deep state' and other complot theories. I decided to start doing the dishes as I wasn't much into listening. While doing the dishes, Marie came to help me with her boyfriend Michael. The dishes were quickly done whereafter I returned to the ironing task.

Everything was already ironed so we just needed to hang the curtains on their hooks to finish the task. When this was done tiredness got to me, I took some time for myself before dinner. Henk got back from his job today and did the cooking. We had vegetable soup. Nora Got home very tired of work and decided to directly go to bed. After dinner I did the dishes and mopped the floor. When this was finished I went for a walk with Elke and Jan.

We walked for an hour alongside the farmlands. We even came across a burning house with firefighters in it. Nevertheless it seems like an exercise as everybody was very calm and there were no other people aside from the firefighters. We continued our walk, chatting about

hiking in the mountains and cycling to Berlin. Time flew by as we got back to the Strawberry Fields. I went to my room, did some drawing and went to bed.





Re A

4A

17-03-2026

Today started with a sharing circle. Meaning that everybody who felt like it, could join the session in the living room. We were seven in total, spread on the couches in the living room when Marie opened the circle. Everybody closed their eyes and we kept silent for a good while together. After around fifteen minutes of silence, Elke started talking. She gave an extended report of her experiences last week. Including her feelings, frustrations and reflections. When finished she called out 'Aho', responded with a 'Ahe' from the others in the room. Everybody took their turns. Some were more emotional, some more philosophical. While talking all of the residents spoke a lot in terms of; emotions, feelings, flows and energies. Giving more agency to these themes than I have seen before. When the last person spoke, we still sat on the couch for a while. Until people started to get up to do their cleaning chores for the day.

Tuesday was cleaning day. Me and the other volunteer would clean the volunteer house. We started in the kitchen where we soon found some rat poop. We got rid of all the poop and cleaned every shelf and relic that had been on them to assure all rat feces were gone. We vacuum cleaned, mopped, cleaned the kitchen, shower and toilet. When the whole house was done, I took an hour for myself before lunch. Lunch was extensive. All leftovers and more stood on the table, making it into a festive looking whole. We were with many people today. Many residents and a guest joined, who was interested in rebuilding the sweatlodge.

After lunch I helped with the dishes, exchanging some music with Nora. We enjoyed 'klein orkest' together while brooming the kitchen. When this was done, there were no clear tasks, making that I could take some more time for myself. Around four, I went into the garden to see if there was any chore I could still quickly do. Bringing me to do some weeding in the 'zen-tuin'. Elke joined me and we crouched in the garden,

weeding, for a while, chatting. Until dinner was ready and we went inside to set the table.

We ate potato soup, again with a full house. The Epstein files were discussed again, a favorite topic of the people here. Later when sitting on the couch, Nora invited me for some contact dance in a nearby city tomorrow. I would like to join but have to see whether or not I can make it there by bus.

The sunset was amazing this evening so therefore I walked into the garden and sat on the swing. Watching the sky turning into many different colors. The sun went down and the stars came out. I went back in again. Waiting till dark. Waiting to join Elke for a dance session in the workshop room.

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The sunset was amazing this evening so therefore I walked into the garden and sat on the swing. Watching the sky turning into many different colours. When the sky was almost completely dark, I went back in again. Writing this diary, waiting to join Elke for a dance session in the workshop room.





18-03-2026

The day started, waking up with a bright sun. I made myself some breakfast when walking into Dianna and her little girl. I asked about how to harvest the sprouts for lunch. She reacted amazed that I was set on the schedule to cook lunch. She had hoped to have more hands in the garden during lunch preparation time. To satisfy her and make it easier on myself later, I already started to wash some potatoes after breakfast. I felt energized today, and we only had to meet at the greenhouse at nine. Giving me still forty minutes to do some lunch preparations.

When I was done washing potatoes, I also gathered some parsnips, for Elke who doesn't eat potatoes. At nine I hurried to the greenhouse. We started with weeding some of the beds. To prepare them for seeding in the afternoon. This kept us busy all morning, with our heads in the sun. Geert arrived, the volunteer who is going to help with building the vegetable washing station. This was the perfect time to have a coffee break. For me meaning, to continue cooking for lunch.

Before walking to the kitchen, I took two sprout plants from the field. It felt very good to get rid of the leaves of the sprouts and harvest the vegetables directly from the ground. I was busy cutting while Dianna brought me some tea. When all the sprouts were cut I finished the potatoes and put them in the oven. Together with the parsnip. I cutted vegetables for the salad and fried the sprouts with balsamic and agave syrup. When finished, it was time to ring the bell. People came in to help set the table and we started with a moment of silence.

The garden crew hadn't arrived yet, they came a bit later, apparently not having heard the bell. We ate. Everybody was very happy that I dared to cook lunch. After lunch I helped Mike with his dishes tasks as I had left the kitchen rather messy. When these were done, I went into the garden again to continue weeding. Weeding was followed by seeding carrots, swiss chard and spinach.

We first tried to use a seeding machine, but this apparently didn't work with bigger seeds, so we did the swiss chard by hand. To stimulate the growth we put a thin layer of compost on the beds and a layer of mulch on the beds that we hadn't seeded yet. We were just finishing putting a thin piece of fabric on them when the dinner bell rang. We gathered the stuff and hopped to the dinner table to sit there, tired and quiet but satisfied with red cheeks from the sun. We had amazing soup and salad again. I completely stuffed myself whereafter I took a well needed shower.



19-02-2026

When I woke up, my body felt heavy from yesterday's work. Therefore I was a bit later than usual in the coffee (breakfast) room. Having a slow start. The little girl was cheerful like almost every other morning. This time having a smirky smile as she was playing her mother. Demanding a rice cracker but not finishing it. When I finished my second cup of tea I felt ready to move again and went into the garden to do some weeding.

This kept me busy for the whole morning. Nevertheless it was a very social morning as everybody seemed to be tired from the day before, strolling around for a place in the sun and small talk. As the most preferred bench was standing right at my weeding spot I had the pleasure to often be joined by others. The little girl came along at some point, helping me with the weeding. Crying out happily when she managed to rip out a plant. This continued for a while until her attention flew elsewhere again. Bringing her to the other child of the house the little boy who was also stumbling around. The lunch bell rang and we gathered on the benches outside to enjoy Mike his standard pasta on Thursdays.

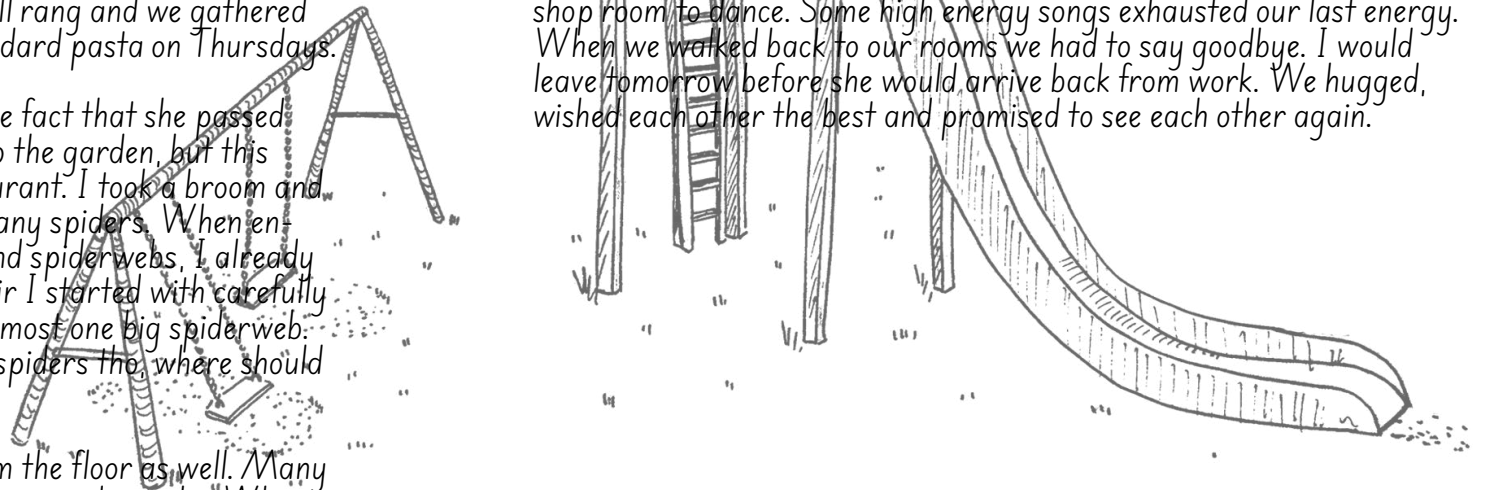
We ate while congratulating Josefien with the fact that she passed her drivers theory. After lunch I went back to the garden, but this time to start with cleaning the outdoor restaurant. I took a broom and prepared myself for being confronted with many spiders. When entering the old wooden shed, covered in dust and spiderwebs, I already walked into one. After getting it out of my hair I started with carefully brooming the ceiling. The whole ceiling was almost one big spiderweb. Brooming the webs away went quickly. Poor spiders though, where should they go?

I moved the furniture outside so I could broom the floor as well. Many relics were situated in random places, also all covered in webs. When I was busy with the floor, my alarm went and I went inside to have a mentor zoom call. The call gave food for thought, as always. Therefore

it was perfect that I could process the content while continuing on cleaning the outdoor restaurant. I started with beating out the dust from the rug that had been laying on the ground. Halfway through I was interrupted by the little girl, demanding me to join her on the slide.

The rest of the afternoon changed from cleaning, into chasing her around in the playgrounds. We went on the slide, on the swing and on the trampoline. At the end she was handing out cappuccino's from the sand box. Which she proudly brought to all of us. Just before the dinner bell rang, we covered the box again to prevent the cats from taking a shit in it and put the tools back in the shed.

Dinner was served with some stinging nettles from the garden. Nora had to do the dishes after and I helped her. We were playing loud music and singing while the big dishwashing machine was working. Enthused by the music, we, after finishing the dishes, went into the workshop room to dance. Some high energy songs exhausted our last energy. When we walked back to our rooms we had to say goodbye. I would leave tomorrow before she would arrive back from work. We hugged, wished each other the best and promised to see each other again.





20-03-2026

Today was my last day at Strawberry Fields. Time had flown by. Although I'm sad to leave, I'm looking forward to returning to Rotterdam and being with my friends again. These two months I moved around a lot and I feel comfort in knowing that for a while now, I will stay at home. The day started like most days, eating breakfast in the coffee room, waiting for people to wake up. Nevertheless, I already almost finished my breakfast when Jan walked in. He asked me where everyone was when his phone gave the sound of a notification. Dianna texted that her little girl, Roos, had gotten a fever. They would take it easy this morning, meaning, probably no garden day.

I sat with Jan at the breakfast table chitchatting a bit when the conversation went into the direction of his beliefs. He explained that he read a book, called "the letters of Christ", which had captured his attention. Apparently the writer of this book had spent forty years cleaning her consciousness of blockades and her ego to become a portal for the true thoughts of Christ. These thoughts are countering many things written in the bible. He explained that much of the book evolved around the topic of the ego and the soul, that to reach the soul you needed to set aside your ego. This conversation continued for a while. He also offered me the book as he had some spares to hand out to people interested. I told him that I would find it online, if I would feel the need to. The conversation ended when I stood up to do the dishes and he had to leave for work.

We said our goodbyes and I waved when he walked out the door. After cleaning the dishes I walked into Elke. She just gathered a painting she made, to hang it in the outdoor restaurant we cleaned yesterday. I joined her to have a look at the restaurant and the layout. We hung the painting, the face of Buddha, fitting well to the wooden background. Discussed a bit how the whole could start to look cozy. After a bit of discussing I left to do some weeding as Elke continued fiddling around by herself. While weeding I felt cold, as the pathway I was maintain-

ing, sat in the shade. I decided to do another needed job, collecting mulch. I took a wheelbarrow and walked into the field to collect the dried stinging nettles.

The sun heated my body again and I stamped around gathering bushes of mulch. It was a nice task to do and I continued until there was truly no more mulch needed for the moment. Concluding the task, I covered the hole with the plastic sheet again. Going back to my weeding job in the zengarden. As the sun had reached the garden, I could enjoy the task without feeling the cold. The morning passed and the lunch bell rang. Josefien had headed all the left overs. We enjoyed the food, while discussing my departure in the afternoon. They expressed that they would like to see me return if and whenever I saw fit to it. When the plates got emptied, I still sat together with Dianna in the sun. She and Roos had been sleeping a lot this morning, both not feeling great.

We talked about StrawberryFields and similar initiatives. Dianna gave me many recommendations. We also went up to her room and she handed me a few books I should surely read. I made pictures of the covers. We chatted for a bit until I went to the garden again to continue the weeding. After an hour, it was time for me to change. I walked a last round in the field. Saying goodbye to Lucas and Elke. Especially Elke gave me a big thanks as I helped her with many of her tasks. We hugged and wished each other the best. I took my bags, one in front and one in the back, walking to the bus stop.



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NARRATIVE DRAWINGS AS A METHOD

To document the lived experience, intuitive drawings were created during the visits to the intentional communities. These drawings emerged from a meditative practice, conducted within the communities whenever possible, and serve as a direct translation of the lived experience.

As an exploration for translating the embodied experience, these intuitive drawings were later expanded and composed into narrative drawings, offering a partial perspective of life within the communities. The narrative drawings intentionally highlight the spatial context alongside scenes that depict how the space is inhabited, clarifying the interplay between space and its social use. This approach aims to contextualize the social-spatial reproduction within these communities.

Beyond serving as partial documentation and representation, the narrative drawings have proven to be a valuable methodological tool for reflection. When viewed through the theoretical lens of Modernity, they reveal how the practices depicted in the drawings; such as decapitalization, commoning, ontological alternatives, and the rejection of universal objectivity, counter the four beliefs of Modernity. This reflection also deepens the understanding of social-spatial practices as it highlights the role a practice has in a network of activities. Preventing practices to be taken for granted.

COMPONENTS

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF

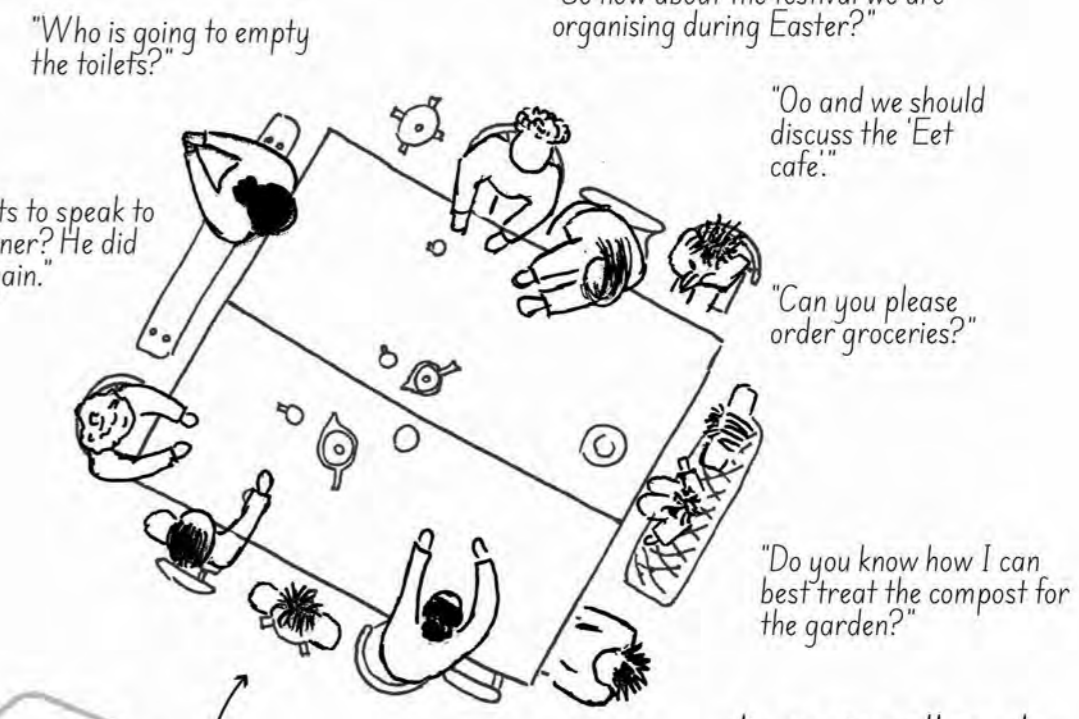
26-01-2026 t/m 01-02-2026

4. We'd eat together, sharing stories and ideas of which some would later be picked apart in the Emomeeting. With full stomachs and clean dishes, we'd linger in the warmth of the common room, reluctant to return to the cold of our yurts and the task of reigniting our personal stoves...



Living Room & Kitchen

"Aa with this stove bench, I can finally heat my feet."
"Yess It is really cold he"
"She is working now, she will be back soon"
"Where is mama?"
"Whoever is cooking today, could you use the vegetables I brought from the farm?"
"Yeah sure"
"Maybe the yoga will make sure your back pain goes away"



Emomeeting

Starting and ending with a Compliment Jar. Two compliments for everybody, one for at the start and one for at the end of the meeting.

"Who is going to empty the toilets?"

"So how about the festival we are organising during Easter?"

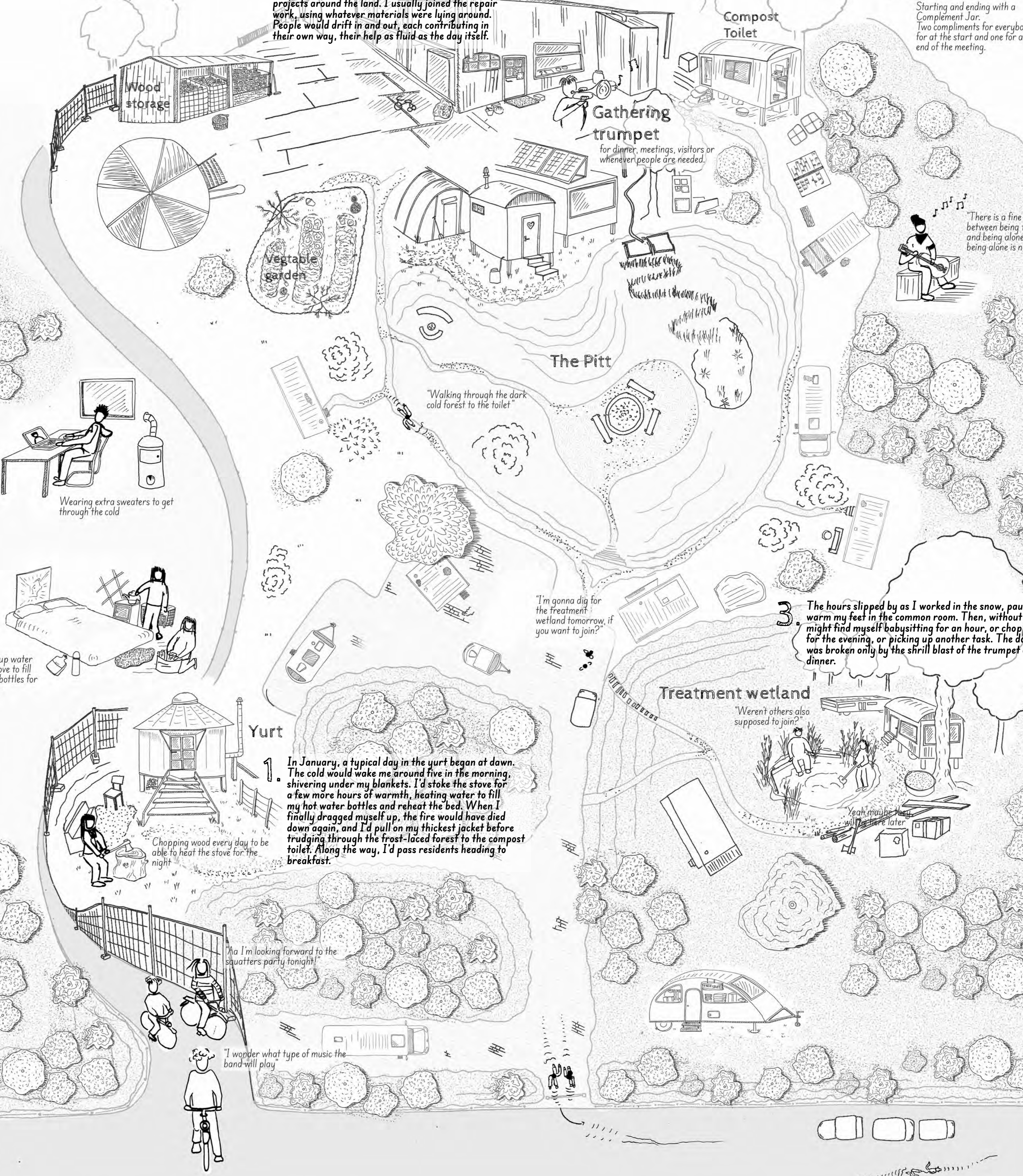
"Oo and we should discuss the 'Eet cafe'."

"Can you please order groceries?"

"Do you know how I can best treat the compost for the garden?"

discussing all needs once every two weeks

2. After joining them for a meal, everyone would scatter; some off to work outside the property, others to strum a guitar or tackle repairs and building projects around the land. I usually joined the repair work, using whatever materials were lying around. People would drift in and out, each contributing in their own way, their help as fluid as the day itself.



Gathering trumpet

for dinner, meetings, visitors or whenever people are needed.

Compost Toilet

The Pitt

"Walking through the dark cold forest to the toilet"

3. The hours slipped by as I worked in the snow, pausing only to warm my feet in the common room. Then, without warning, I might find myself babysitting for an hour, or chopping wood for the evening, or picking up another task. The day's rhythm was broken only by the shrill blast of the trumpet calling us to dinner.

Treatment wetland

"Weren't others also supposed to join?"

"Yeah, maybe they will be here later"

Yurt

1. In January, a typical day in the yurt began at dawn. The cold would wake me around five in the morning, shivering under my blankets. I'd stoke the stove for a few more hours of warmth, heating water to fill my hot water bottles and reheat the bed. When I finally dragged myself up, the fire would have died down again, and I'd pull on my thickest jacket before trudging through the frost-laced forest to the compost toilet. Along the way, I'd pass residents heading to breakfast.

"Aa I'm looking forward to the swatters party tonight!"

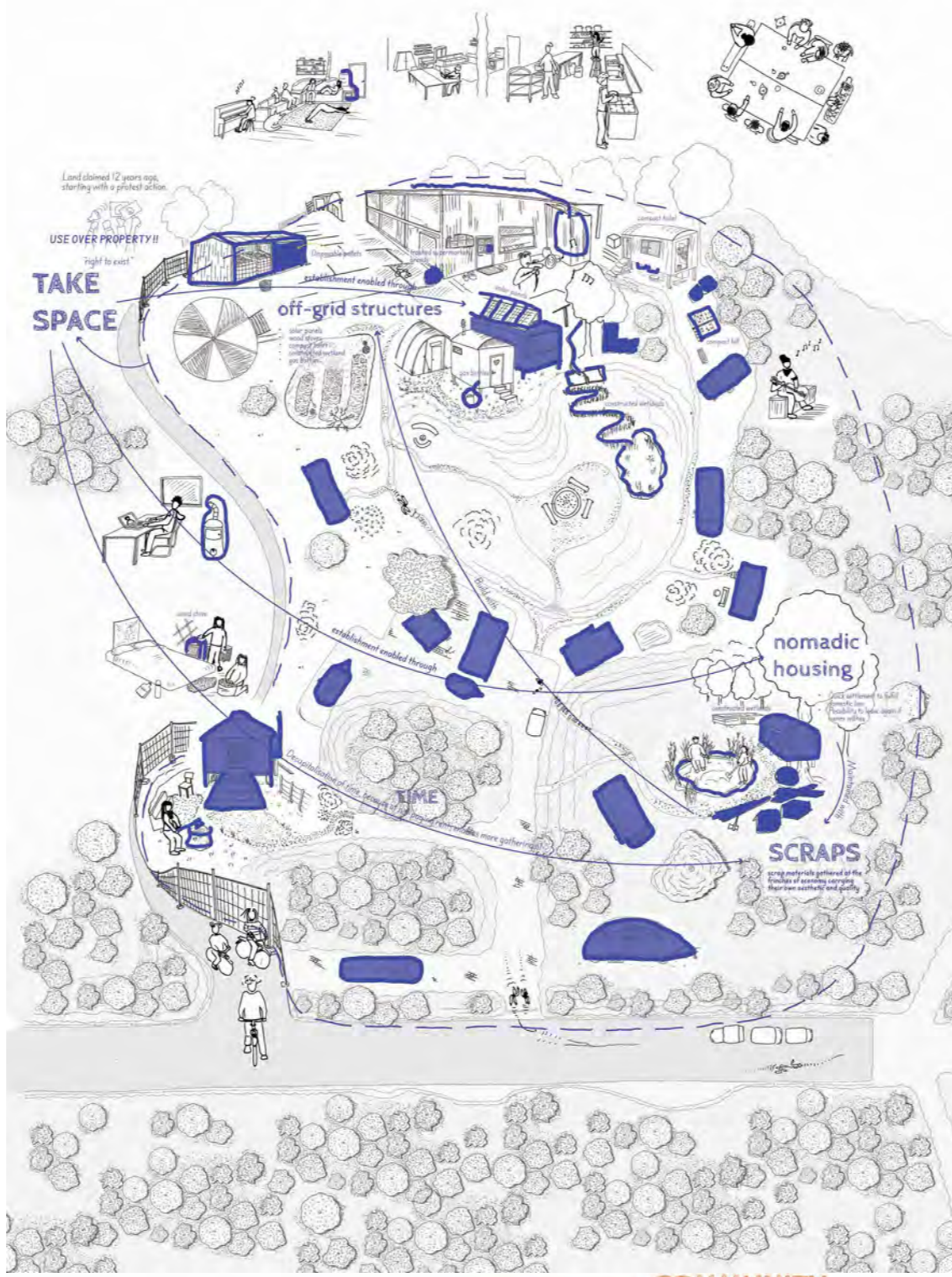
"I wonder what type of music the band will play"

Wearing extra sweaters to get through the cold

Heating up water on the stove to fill the heat bottles for the night

Chopping wood every day to be able to heat the stove for the night

CONTEMPORARY



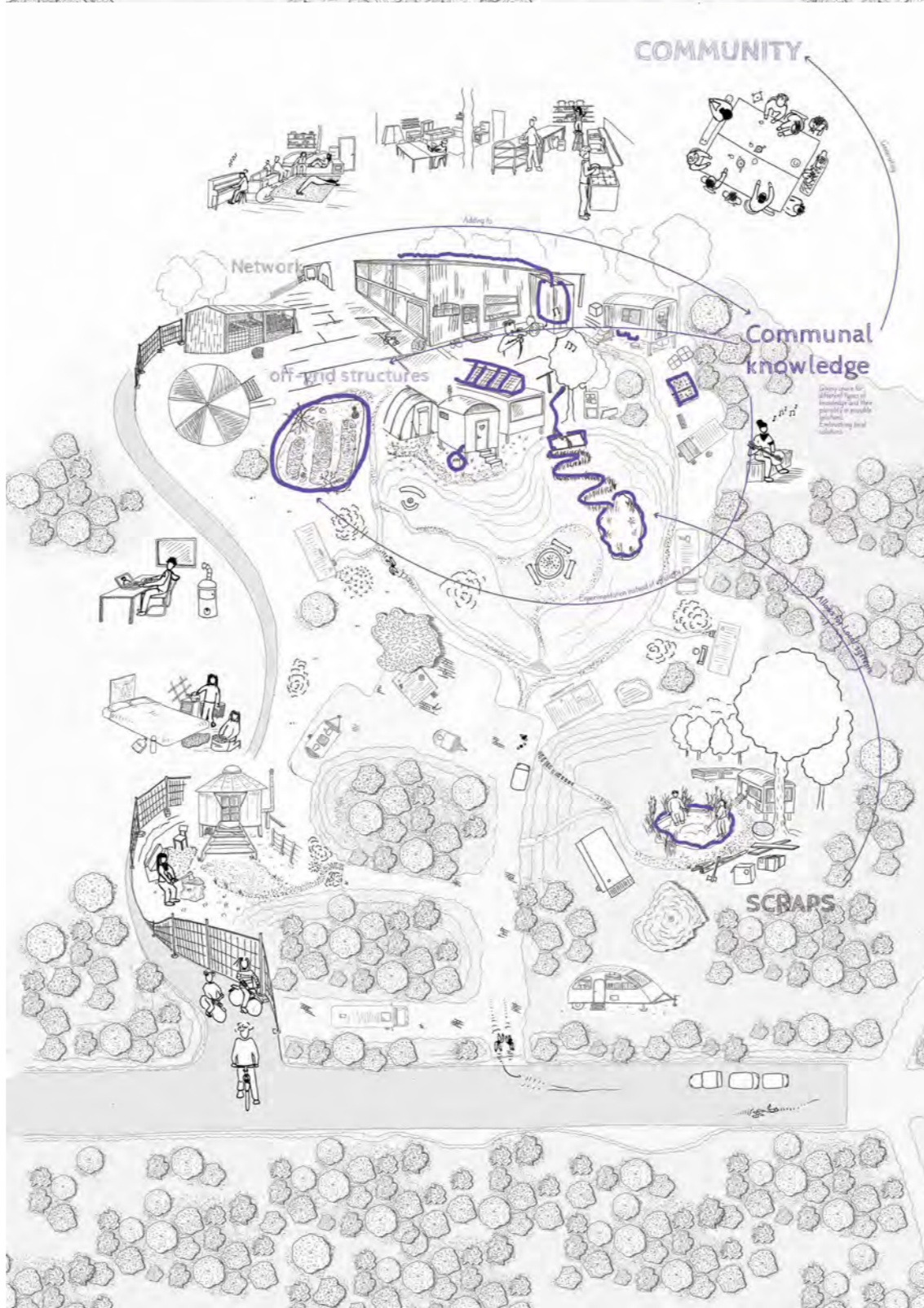
ECONOMY

- Taking Space
- Nomadic Housing
- Off Grid Structures
- Scraps



INDIVIDUAL

- Sharing space
- Network
- Visitors



SCIENCE

- Collective Knowledge



REAL

- Seasons
- Ecosystem

COMMUNITY

Connected through common interest
Translated in collective social-spatial reproduction

TAKE SPACE

USE OVER PROPERTY!!
"right to exist"

Living with the seasons

During the visit; winter time

Visitors

- Interested
- In need of residency

Network

- Sharing knowledge
- Sharing goods
- Sharing time
- Sharing skills

Commoning space

off-grid structures

Activities

- Festival
- Eat cafe
- Workshops

Communal knowledge

Giving space for different types of knowledge and their plurality in possible solutions.
Embracing local solutions

nomadic housing

- Quick settlement to fulfill domestic law
- Possibility to leave again if owner wishes

SCRAPS

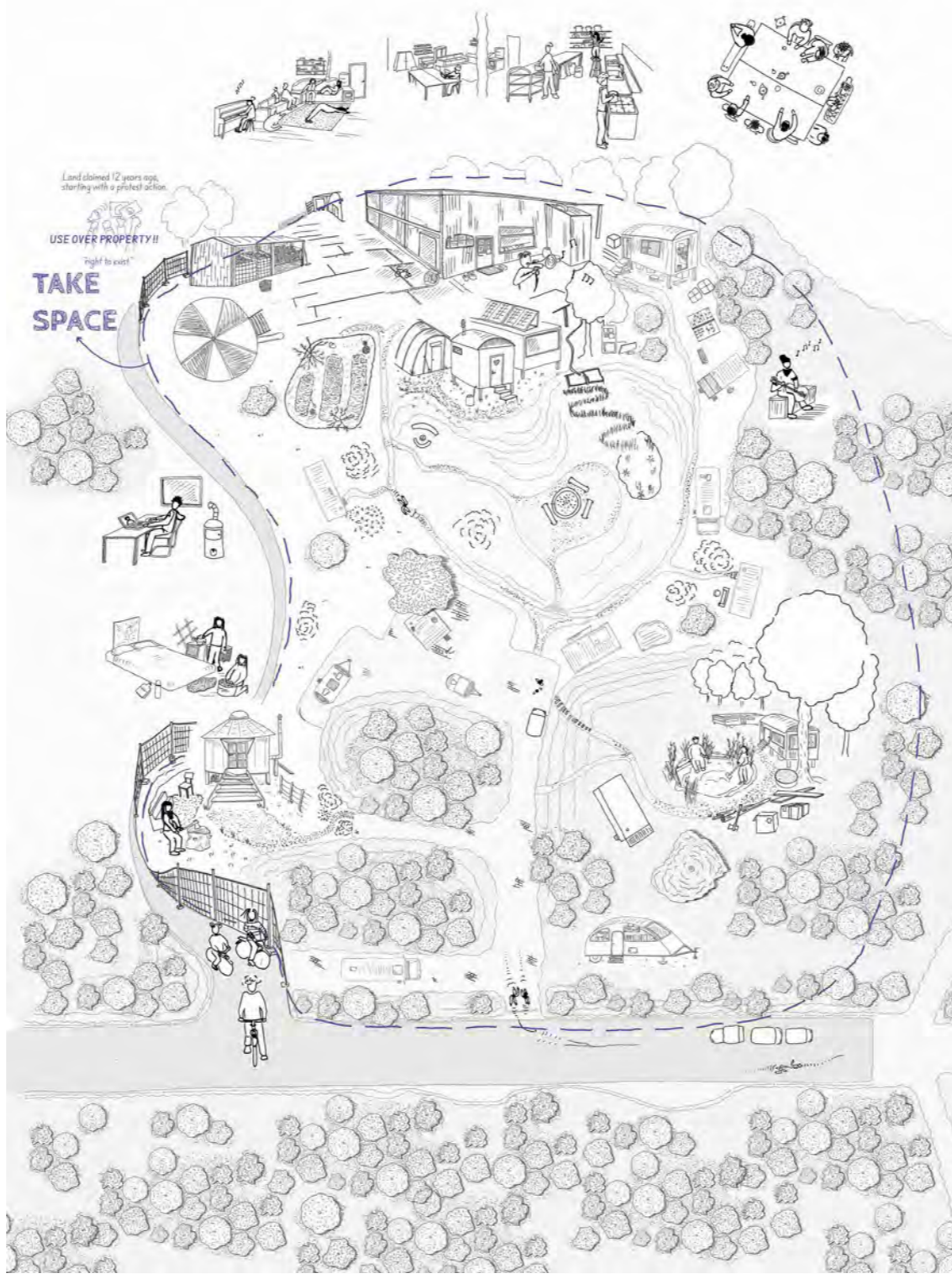
scrap materials gathered at the fringes of economy carrying their own aesthetic and quality

Living in the ecosystem

- Housing on wheels for biodiversity
- Compost toilet for circularity
- Treatment wetland for circularity
- Insect nesting places for biodiversity
- Conservation of resources



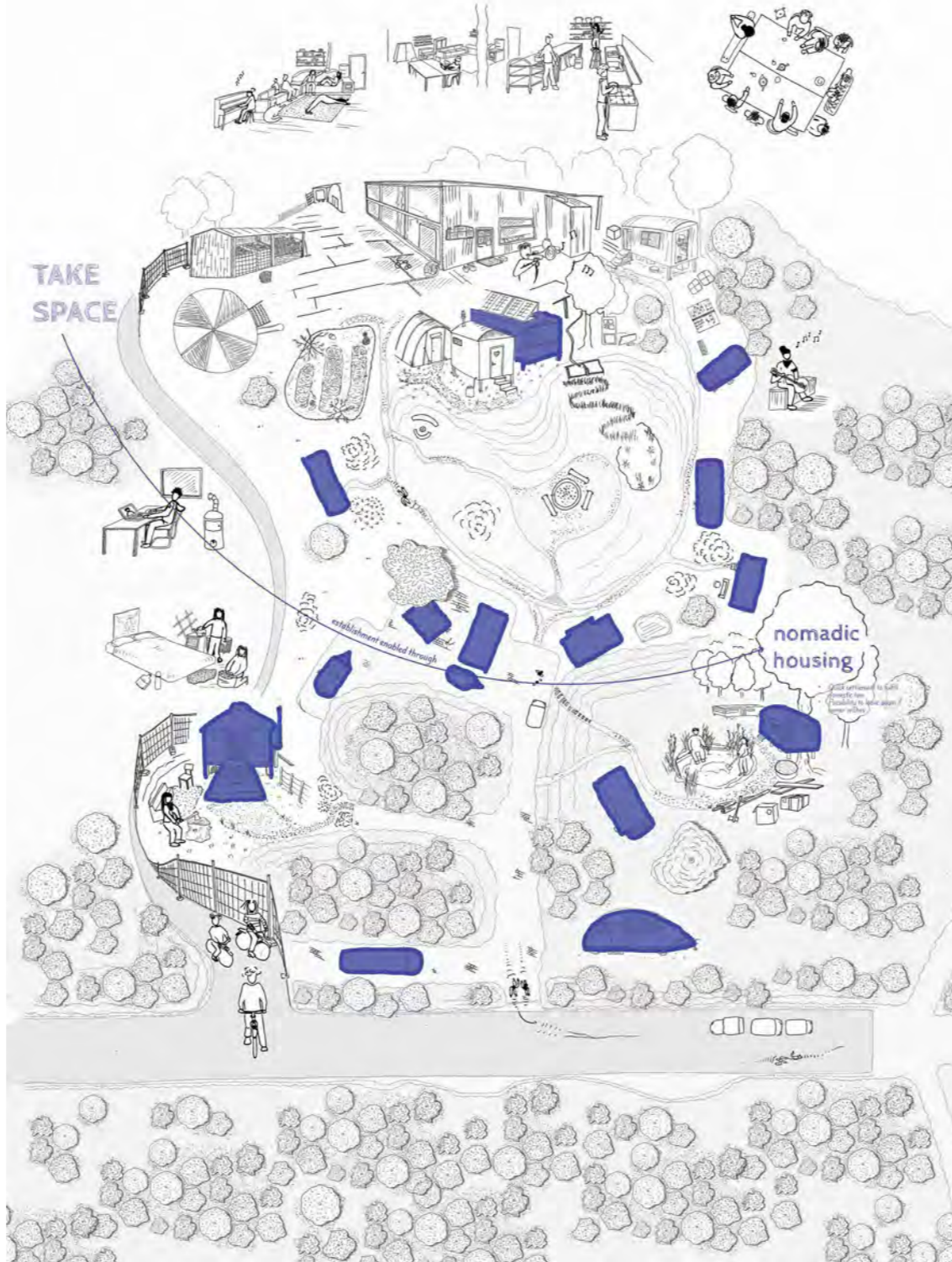
WILSON



TAKE SPACE

By just taking the space, the residents (squatters) decapitalized the land and the 'right to exist', through their philosophy; 'Use Over Property'.

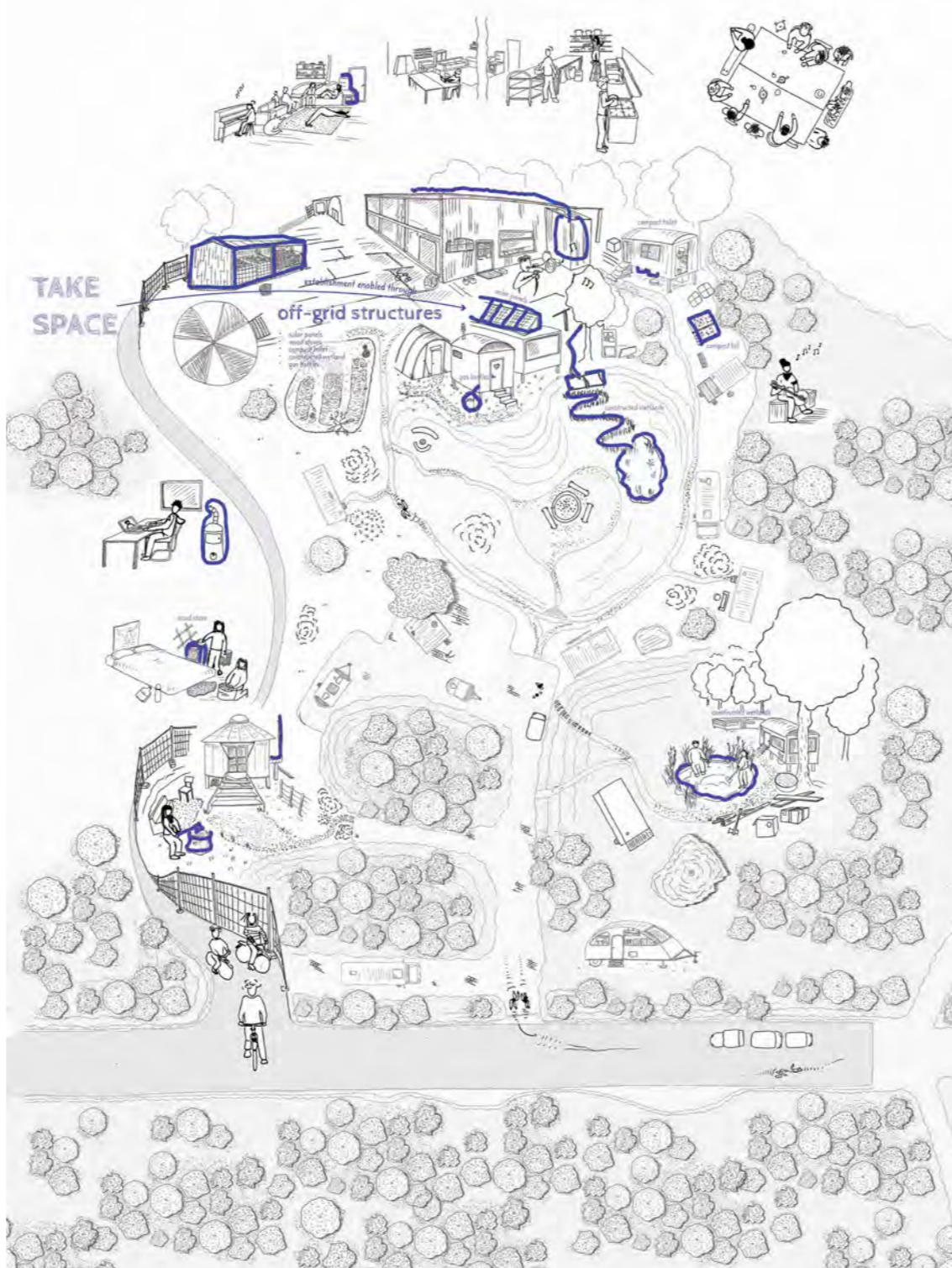
The space has been occupied for twelve years. It began as a protest by the squatters' community, who started with a camp on the finches of the land to, during the first month, observe the land and assess its natural conditions. With help from friends -rewarded with pancakes- they installed solar panels and built structures, gradually creating the place as it stands today. The legal owner originally planned to develop an ecological neighborhood, but strict building regulations due to the site's proximity to a Natura 2000 area made the project unviable, at least for now.



NOMADIC HOUSING

The nomadic housing structures allow the community to quickly occupy land, effectively "taking the space" and decapitalizing it, while also enabling a swift exit if legal issues arise.

Residents build and collect these structures themselves. Most are repurposed bouwketen; temporary resting units originally used by construction workers. The residents insulate them, add a stove, bed, and clothing storage, and customize them to fit their needs. Once acquired (whether bought or gifted), the structures are loaded onto trucks for transport. Upon arrival in the forest, a tractor and a team of helpers complete the final move, carefully positioning the unit.

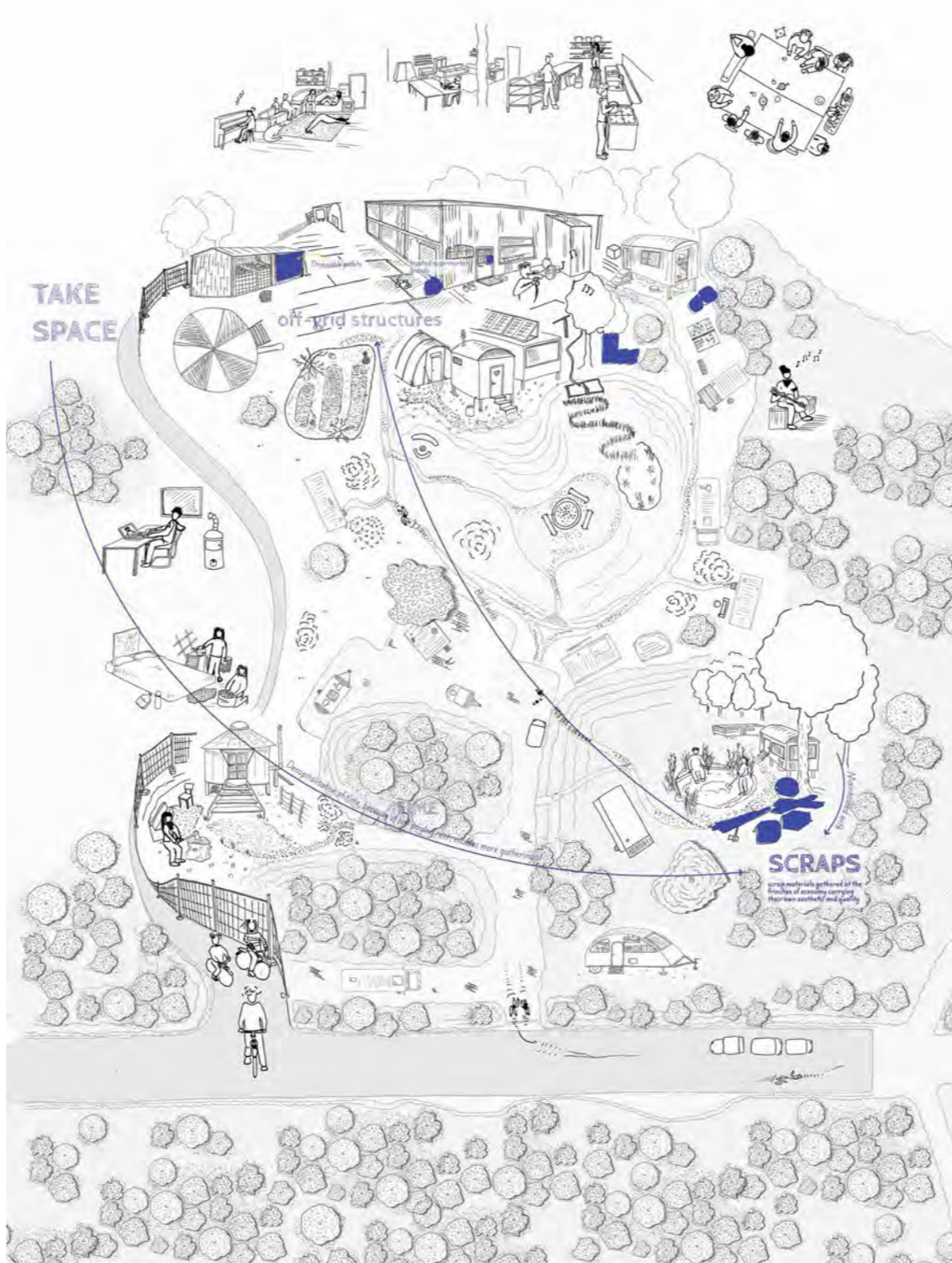


OFF GRID STRUCTURES

Thanks to off-grid structures, this land not originally intended for human habitation can now be lived on. These structures provide essential living conditions: electricity, heating, and compost toilets.

Electricity comes from solar panels scattered across the land. Their energy is stored in a repurposed forklift battery and then distributed to the common room and other areas. Heating is provided by burning wood; old pallets are collected from industrial sites, while high-quality wood is purchased.

The compost from the toilets is stored in designated composting areas for five years. Urine is filtered through a wastewater wetland system, a series of tanks filled with shells, stones, sand, and plants. All these systems are built and maintained using communal knowledge (see SCIENCE).



SCRAPS

The residents find value in what others discard. Items no longer considered property (because they've been thrown away) are repurposed as valuable materials.

Scraps are gathered through gifts, free pickups, or dumpster diving. Doors, bricks, and other building materials lie scattered across the terrain or are stored in sheds until used, shaping the land's unique aesthetic. Food from supermarkets or farm leftovers is quickly transformed into meals for lunch or dinner.

COUNTERING ECONOMY

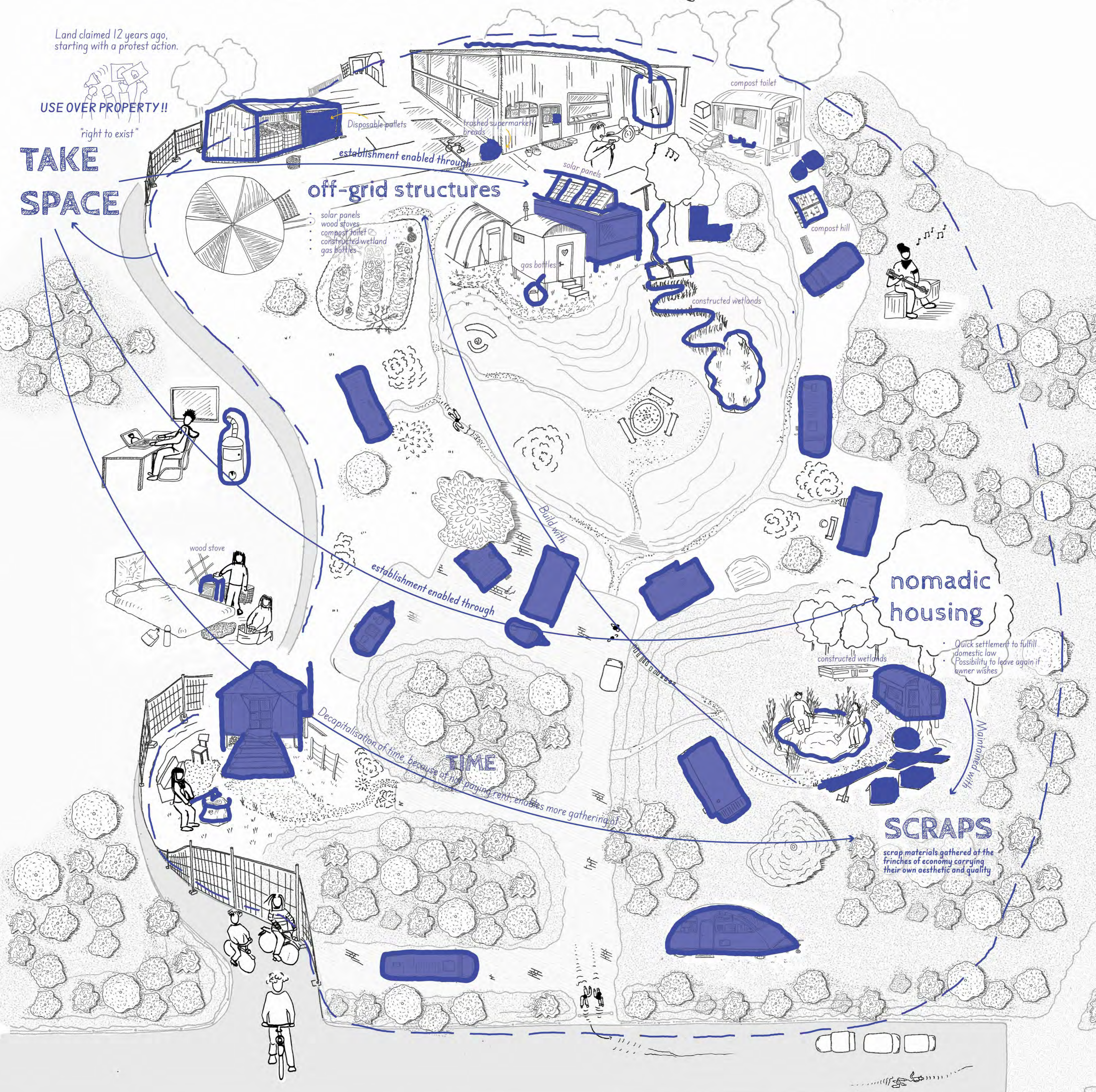


Land claimed 12 years ago, starting with a protest action.

USE OVER PROPERTY!!

"right to exist"

TAKE SPACE



off-grid structures

- solar panels
- wood stoves
- compost toilet
- constructed wetland
- gas bottles

compost toilet

solar panels

gas bottles

constructed wetlands

compost hill

nomadic housing

- Quick settlement to fulfill domestic law
- Possibility to leave again if owner wishes

establishment enabled through

Decapitalisation of time, because of not paying rent, enables more gathering of

TIME

SCRAPS

scrap materials gathered at the fringes of economy carrying their own aesthetic and quality

Maintained with

wood stove

Build with

constructed wetlands

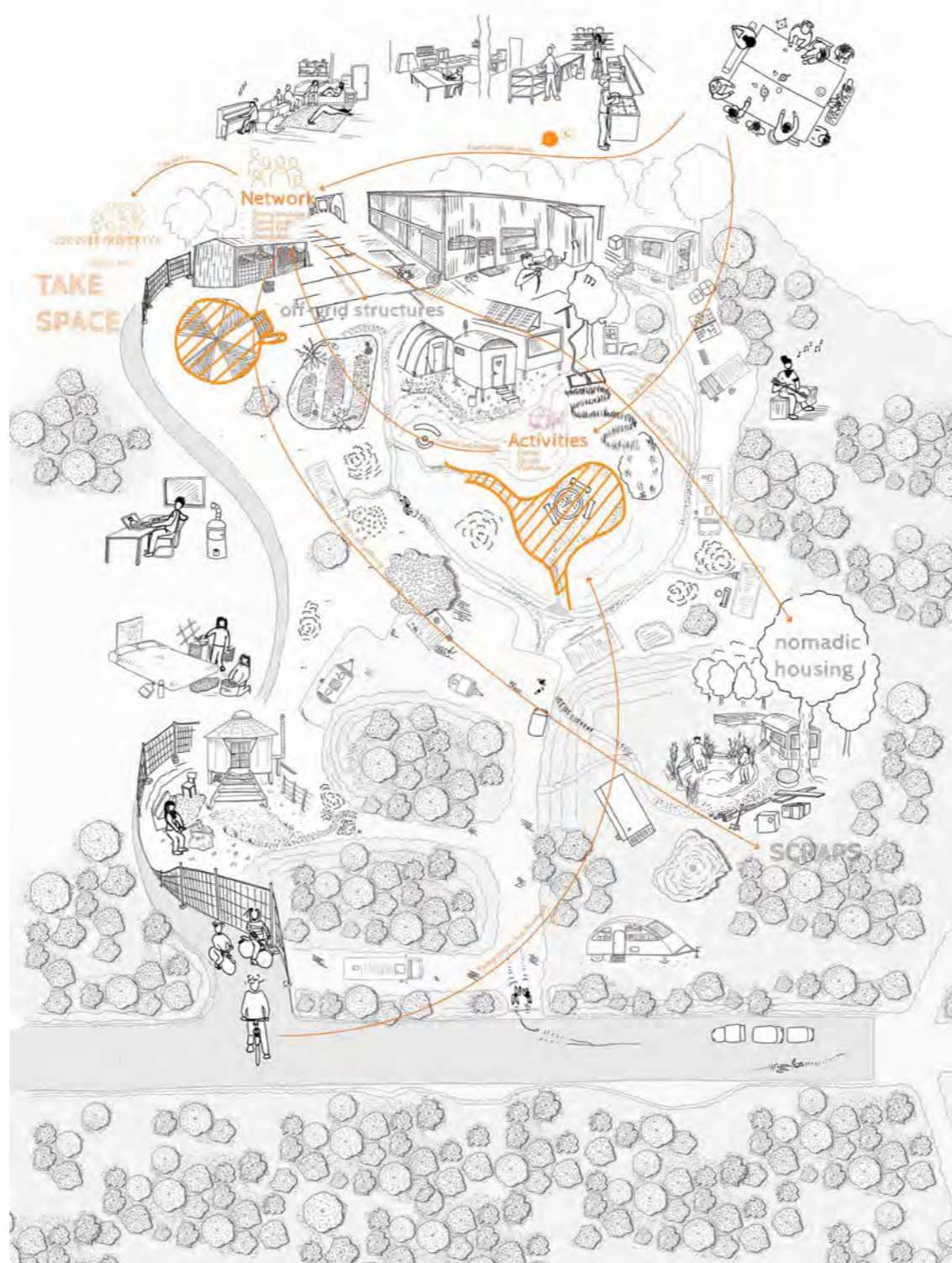
ANNUAL



SHARED SPACE

The belief in the individual is countered through commoning the space. The residents of the community are collectively responsible for social-spatial reproduction taking place on the land.

Apart from their bedrooms, the residents actively share the grounds and its utilities including the toilet, shower, kitchen and living room. The kitchen-living room, located in the only static building on the land, plays an essential role in connecting the residents. As a central meeting point, it fosters communication and connection among the residents. This collective responsibility is reflected in joint activities such as mending, building, and cleaning and meetings.

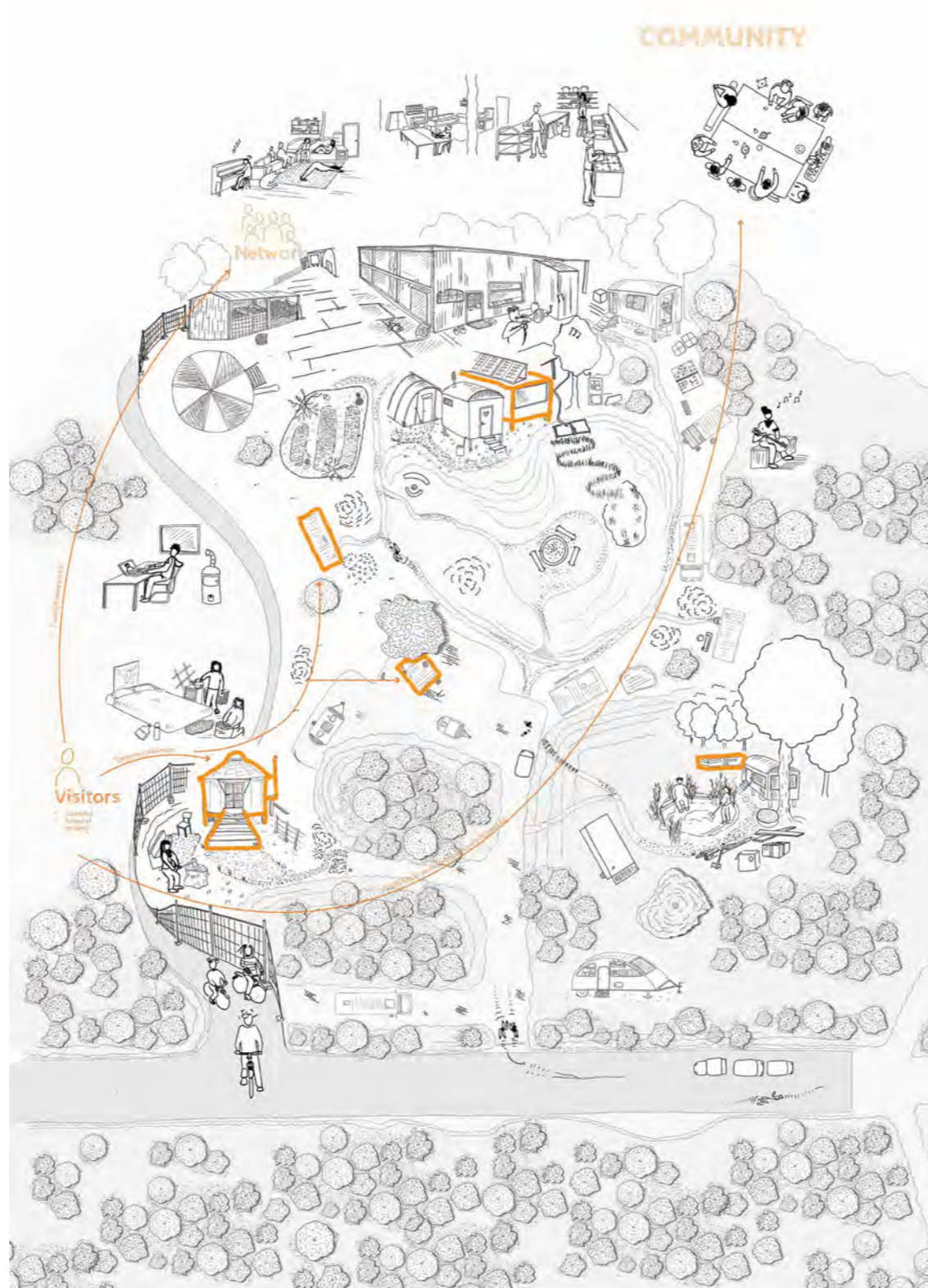


NETWORK

Commoning is not limited to the residents of the land. This practice extends to a large network of friends and acquaintances, which is essential for establishing the social and spatial reproduction of the community as it exists today.

The network shares its knowledge, skills, and time to maintain and sustain the grounds. In return, the residents provide food, dinner parties, and other activities, such as the annual Easter festival.

During the construction of a treatment wetland, a German biology doctor and former resident visited to ensure the correct composition. She explained: "We need the shells to go into the first filtering tank; they will neutralize the pH from the urine.... The sand from the previous tanks needs to be reused in these new ones, as it contains the microbiome we need for the filtering process."



VISITORS

Visitors are also considered part of the commons. Those who join activities on the land (such as the Easter festival), those interested in the residents' way of living (like this author), or individuals in need of residency are all welcomed by the community.

Visitors are offered entertainment, food, information, and/or temporary residency. All made possible by the landscape and building structures on the grounds. The pit and circus tent are used during the Easter festival, while surplus housing provides temporary residencies. After visiting, visitors can become part of the community's network, taking a more active role in the commoning practices.

COUNTERING THE INDIVIDUAL

COMMUNITY

Connected through common interest
Translated in collective social-spatial reproduction

Established through



Commoning space



TAKE SPACE

USE OVER PROPERTY!!
"right to exist"



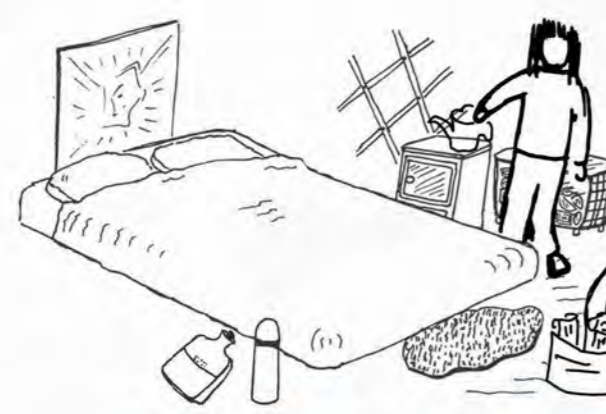
off-grid structures



Activities

- Festival
- Eat cafe
- Workshops

Possibly become part of



Visitors

- Interested
- In need of residency



Temporary residences

Possibilities for permanent residency are discussed by

Visiting activities from the network

Organized by

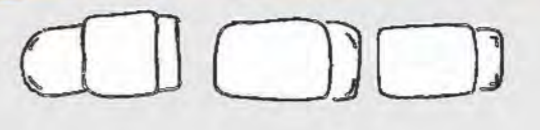
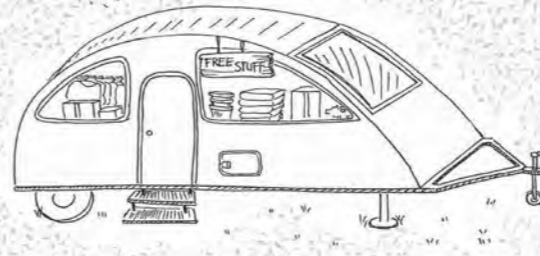
Helps with planning, building

Helps with gathering

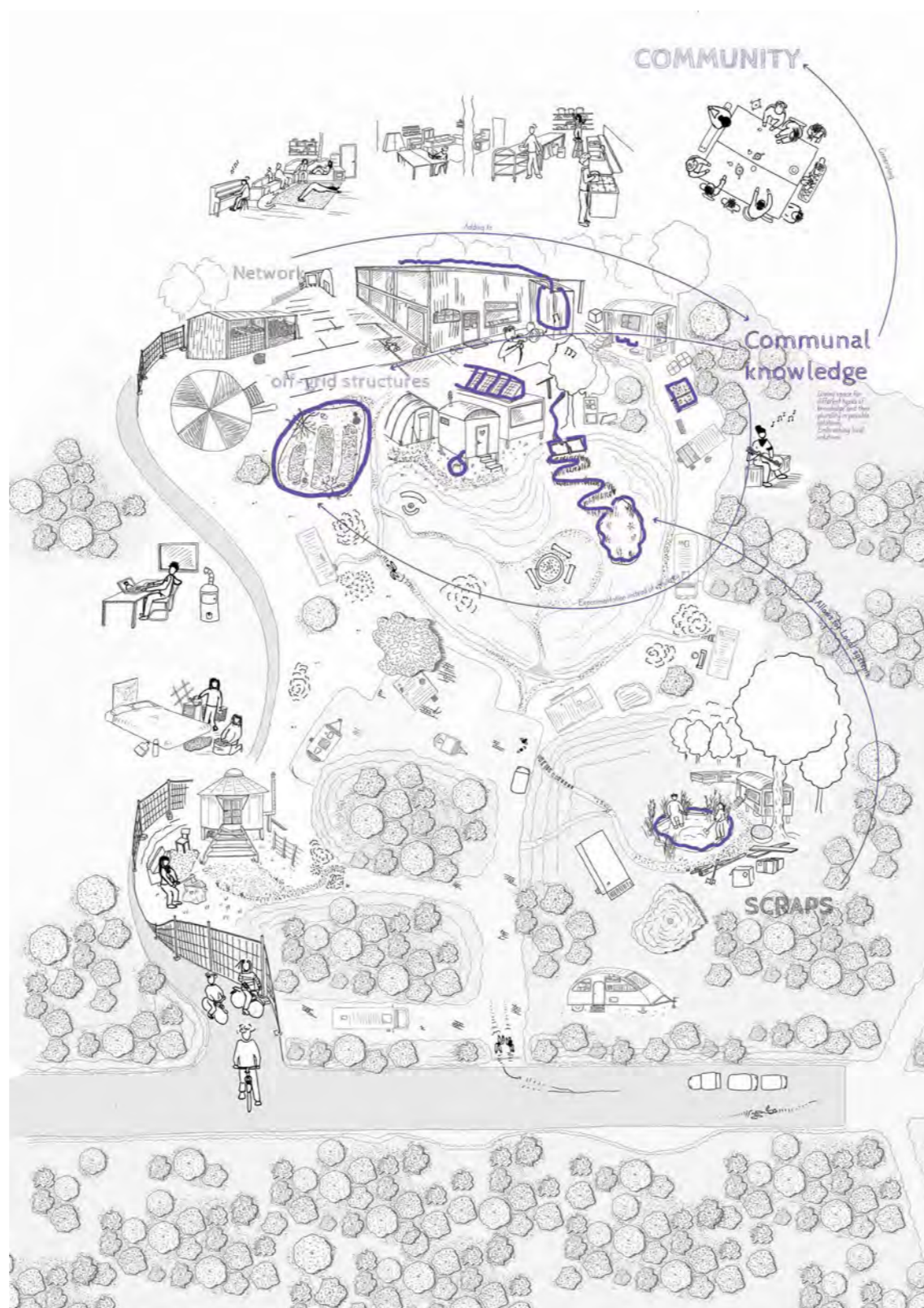
nomadic housing



SCRAPS



ENGINEERING



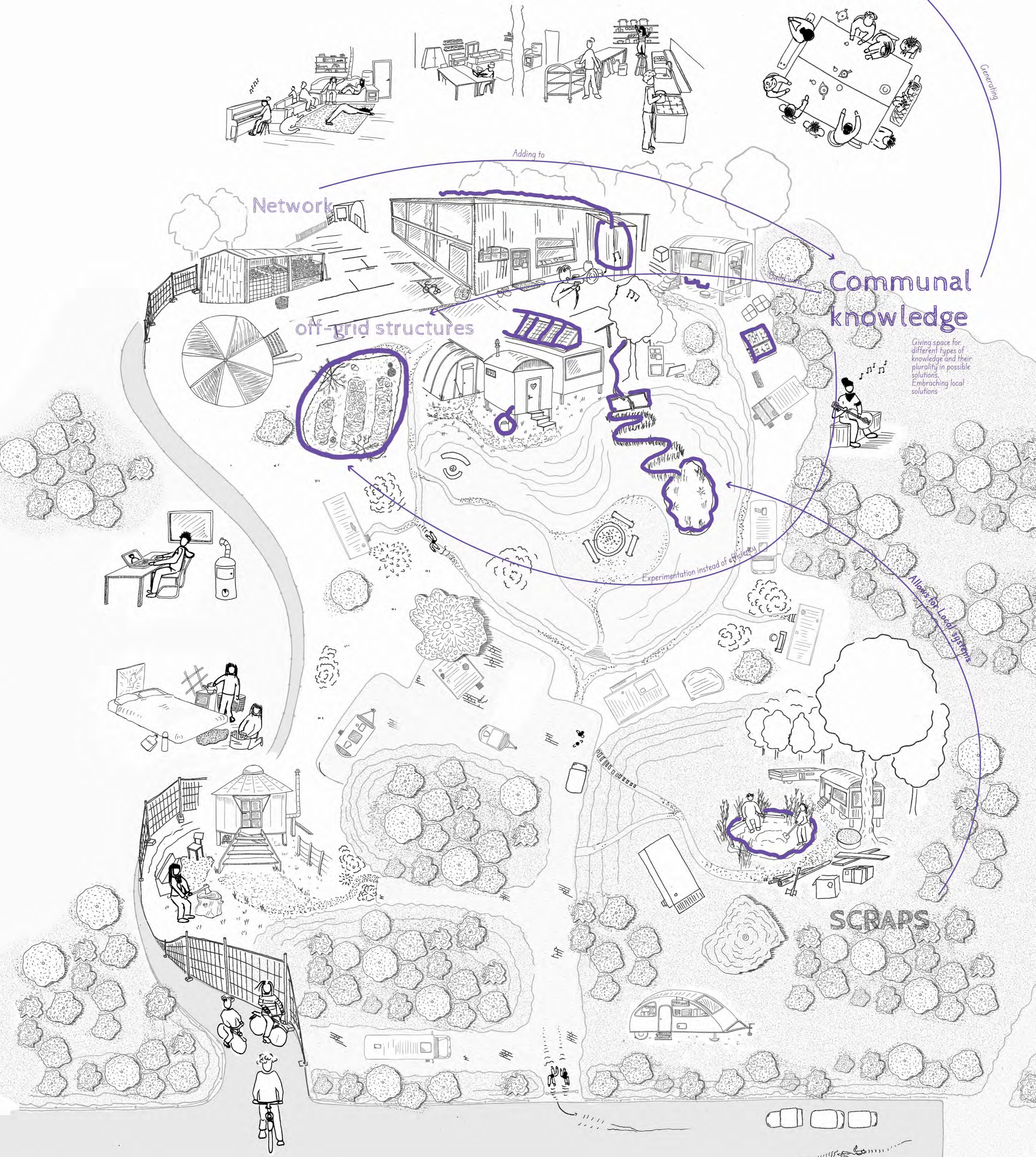
COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

Rather than relying on universal objectivity or "expert knowledge," the community creates, maintains, and builds its surroundings through communal knowledge, appreciating a plurality of perspectives and approaches.

Although the community and its network include so-called "experts," their knowledge is not valued above that of others. For example, during the construction of the wetland, the biology doctor's expertise was combined with the intuitive knowledge of others, together shaping the final result.

COUNTERING SCIENCE

COMMUNITY



Network

off-grid structures

Communal knowledge

Giving space for different types of knowledge and their plurality in possible solutions. Embracing local solutions

Experimentation instead of agriculture

Allow for local systems

SCRAPS

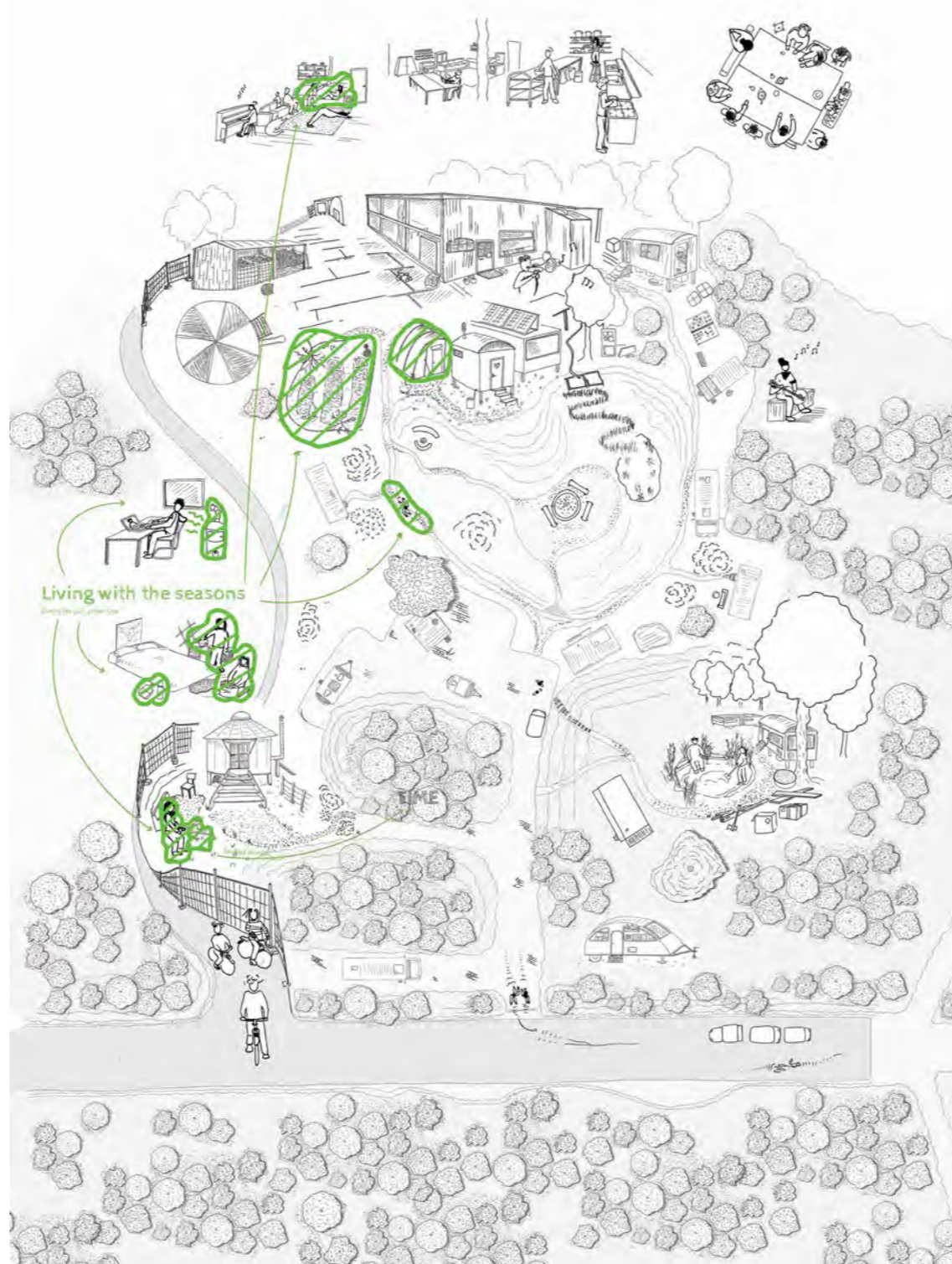
REAL REAL REAL



SEASONS

The community counters the dualistic ontology separating nature and culture, by positioning themselves as a part of nature. This idea is partly translated by how their living comfort is dependent on seasonalities.

Because of the way in which the grounds are shaped; focusing on being outdoors because of divided and limited insulated building structures, social-spatial reproduction is shaped heavily by the seasons. To provide for their basic needs, the residents need to move through the forest; to go to the toilet, shower or living room and need to chop wood; to stay warm at night. Making their actions inevitably connected with the outdoor conditions.



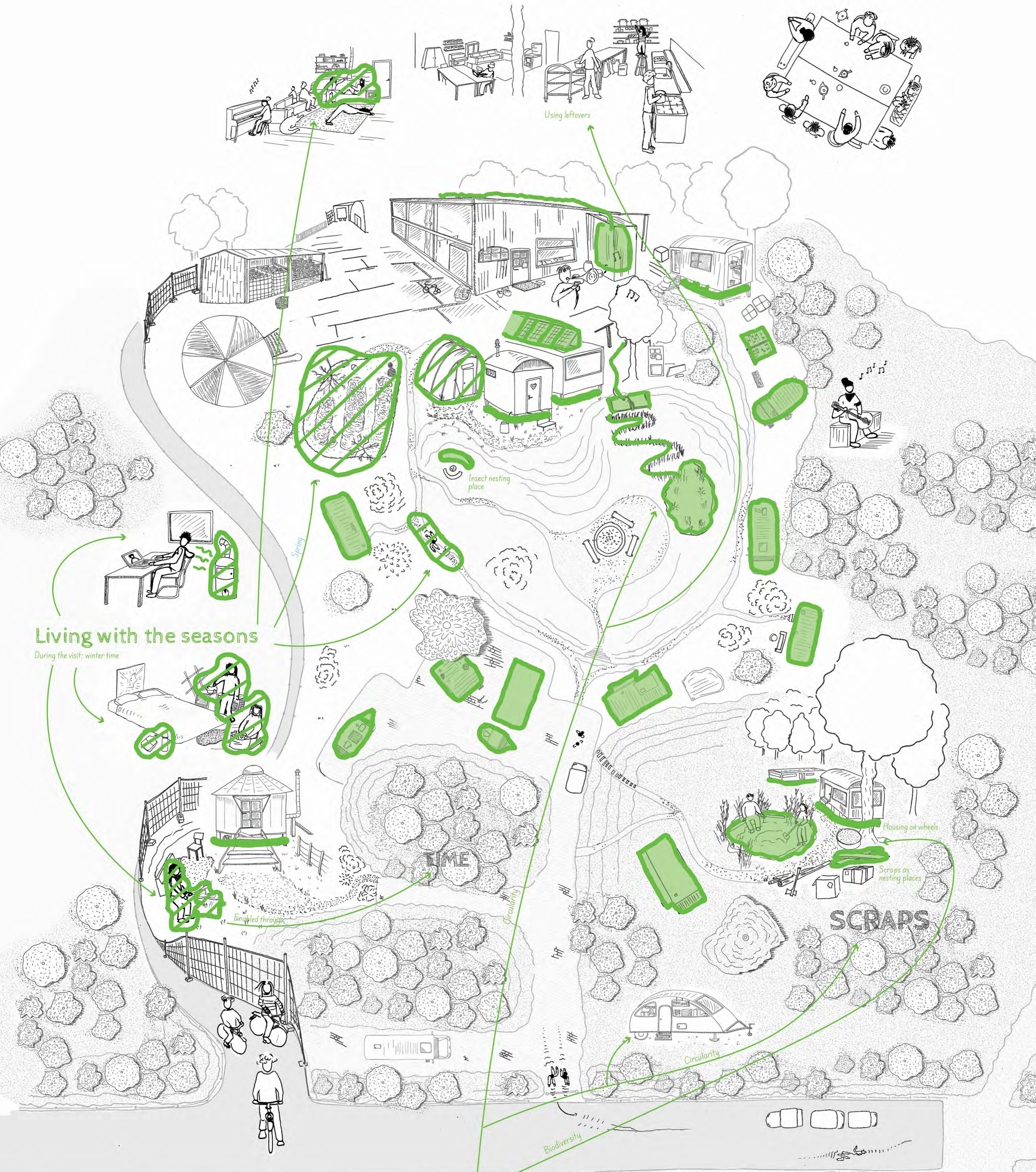
ECOSYSTEM

The idea of being part of nature also translates into their actions, as they take *responsibility** for their footprint. They do this by providing for their own energy needs and managing their own sewage system, while also highly valuing biodiversity.

They meet their energy demand with solar panels and woodstoves. Instead of traditional sewage systems, they use compost toilets and treatment wetlands. Their housing is elevated from the ground to preserve ground life, and bricks are scattered around the land for insects and other animals to use.

* a central tenet of Donna Haraway, her posthumanist philosophy, signifying the cultivated capacity to respond to and with other beings in a damaged world.

COUNTERING THE REAL



Living in the ecosystem

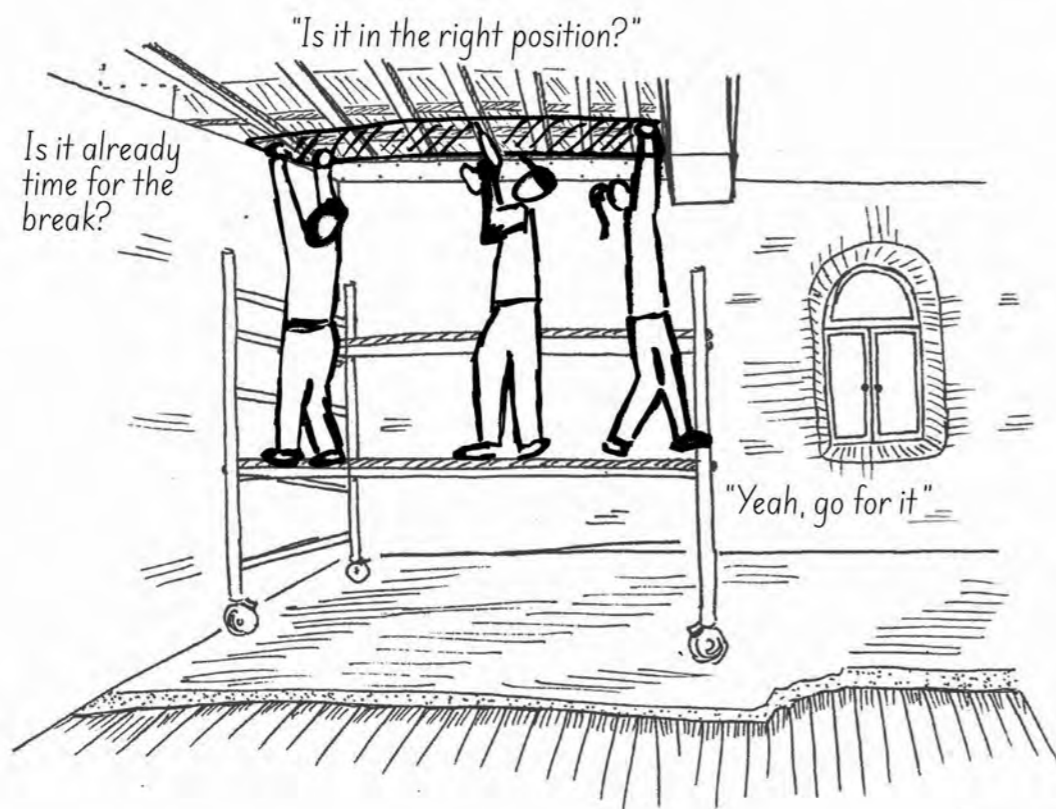
- Housing on wheels for biodiversity
- Compost toilet for circularity
- Treatment wetland for circularity
- Insect nesting places for biodiversity
- Conservation of resources

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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF

09-02-2026 t/m 22-02-2026

2 We'd start by gathering the necessary tools from the tool room, then set up the scaffolding in the right spot before tackling the ceiling or another task. Loud music; French rap or Czech jazz, depending on the DJ, filled the space as we worked. The morning would fly by until the Gentle Beard arrived with coffee and cookies for our break. After far too many cookies and cups of coffee, we'd return to work until lunchtime.



Renovating shared house to host three families

4 Dinner was usually a communal effort, with one of the volunteers or residents cooking and the rest helping with preparation or cleanup. As we cooked, the common room would gradually fill with people. The children, brimming with energy, would run around, dance, or swing, while the adults would join in or gather near the fire for warmth.

Friday evening dances



Sharing



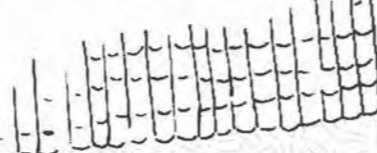
COMMUNITY

1 In February, a typical day in the community began with a shared cereal breakfast among the female volunteers in our sleeping unit. After morning conversations, cereal, and a cup of tea, we'd head to the common room for the daily "sharing" ritual. We'd sit in a circle, first in silence for five minutes, then each taking a turn to express our feelings and thoughts. This gave everyone clarity on how we were starting the day. Once everyone had spoken, I'd play Let's Get Down to Business over the speakers, and we'd set off for work.

For lunch, we'd prepare large sandwiches with eggs to fuel us for the afternoon. At two o'clock, work ended, and we volunteers would head back to the units to freshen up, showering off the dust. Once clean, we'd either go into town for groceries or take a nap to recharge.



Gas bottles for heating



Temporary Unit

Orchard



Vegetable garden

"We can start planting in spring"

Piggs

Chickens

Old bread oven

"This Material is for the ceiling beams"

"Two weeks"

"How long will you stay?"

"More old roof tiles are coming"

"So where will those materials go?"

"They will be stored for future use"

old roof tiles

Future social housing

"Yeah yeah"

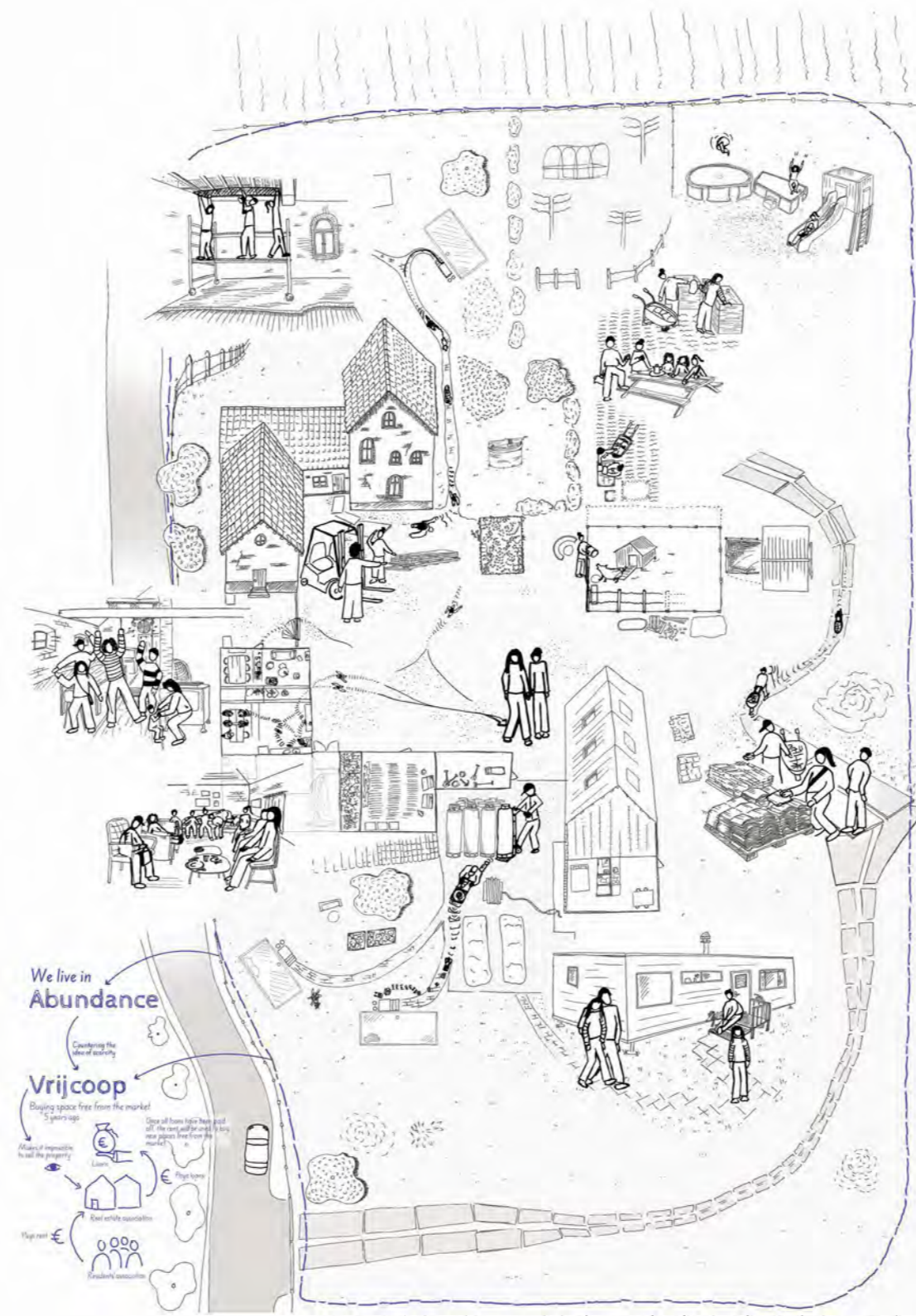
"Are you tired from work?"
"Yeah I need a nap"

"Hurry it is already time for the sharing"

5 After dinner, half the group would head to bed, while the rest played games or watched a movie until everyone slowly drifted off to sleep.

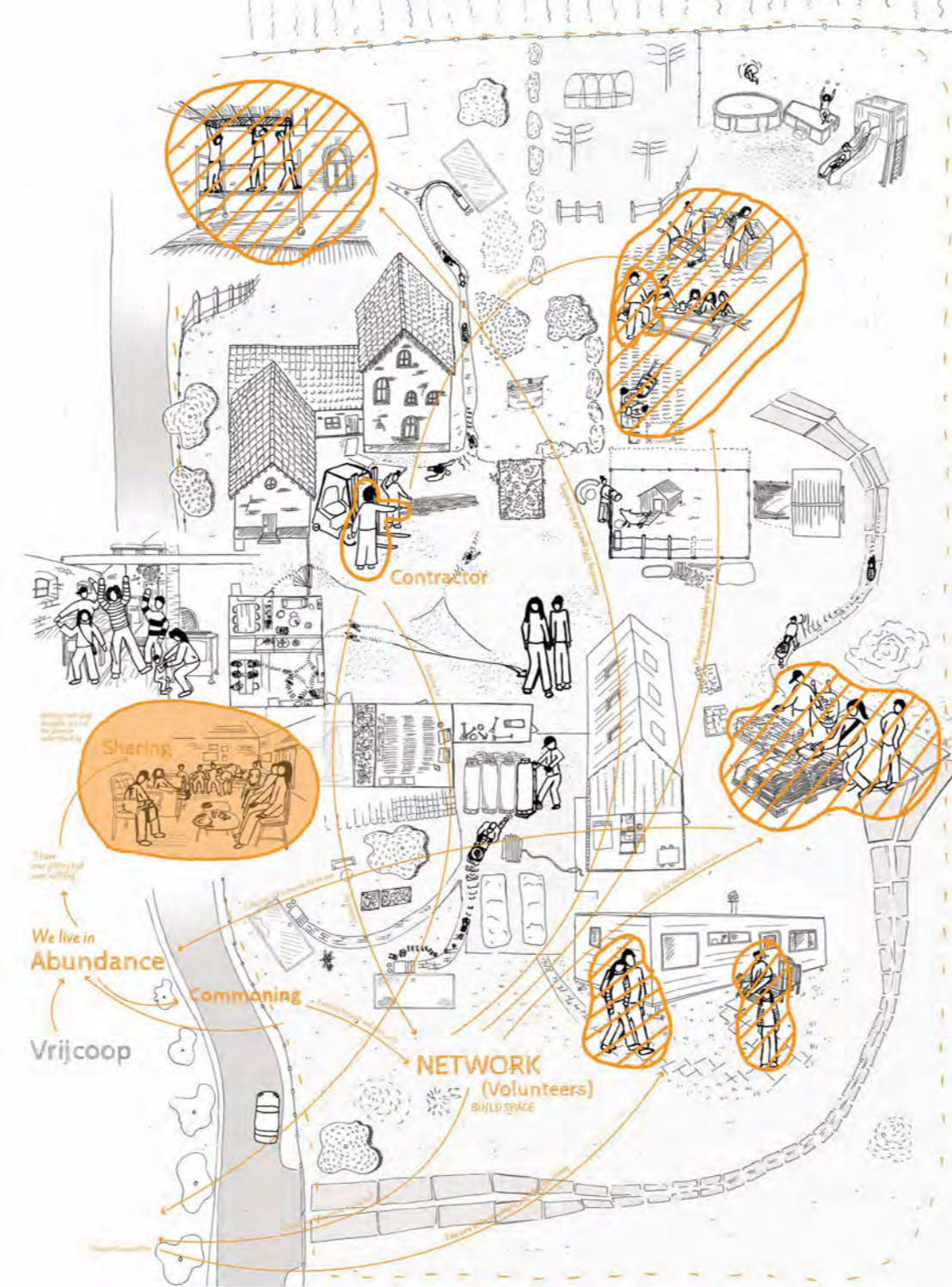
Future campground

CONTENT



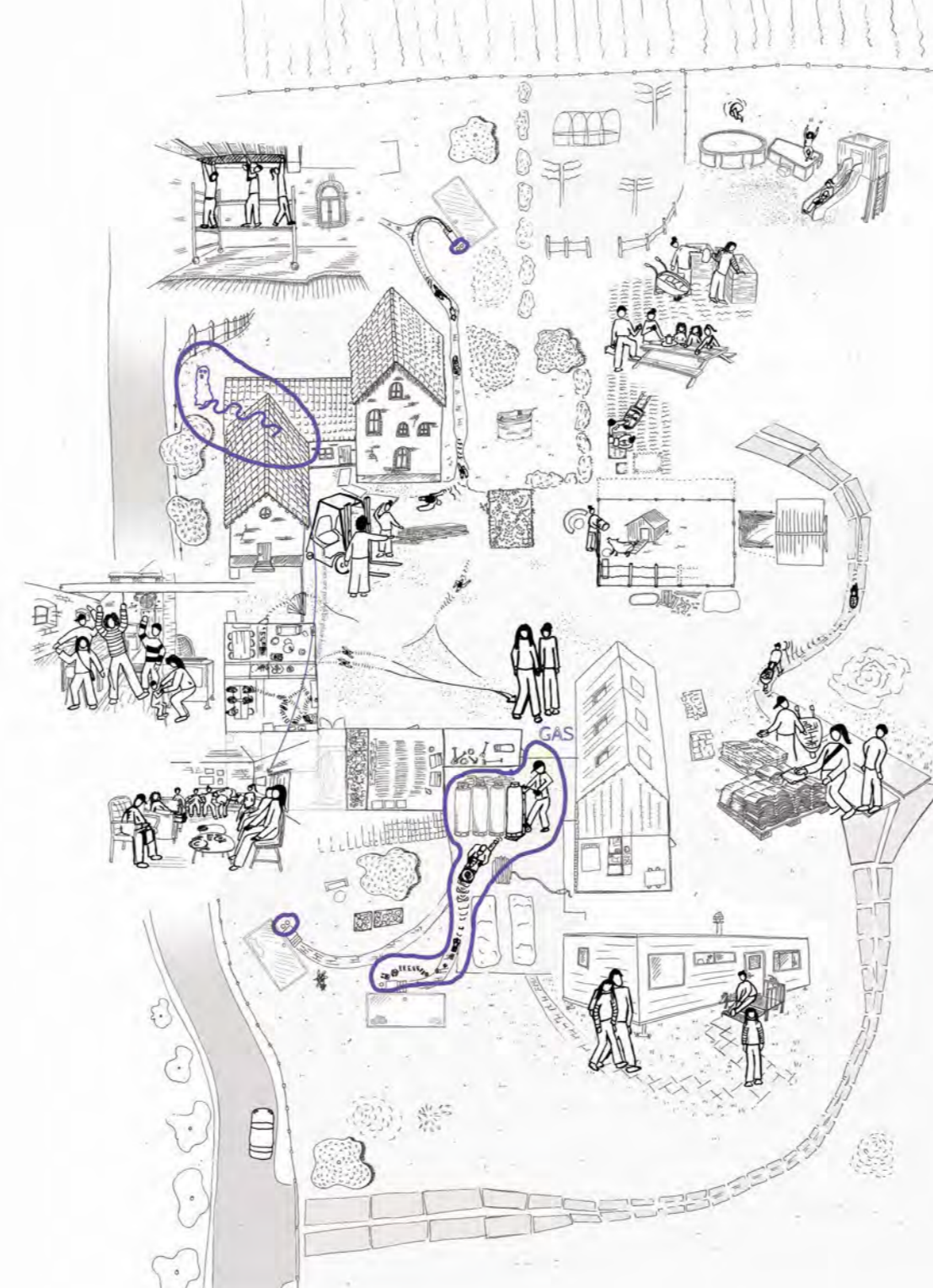
ECONOMY

- Vrijkoop
- Abundance



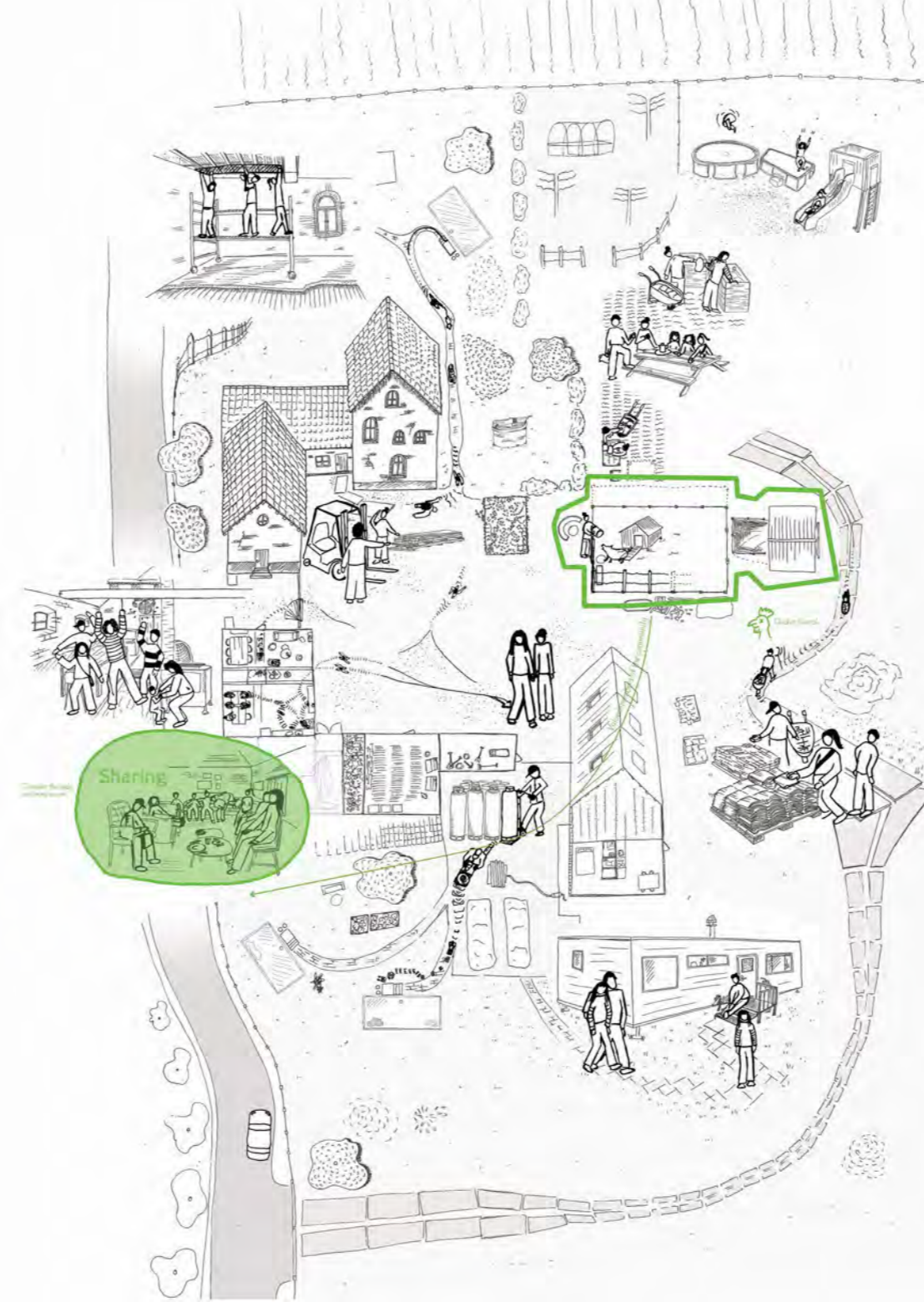
INDIVIDUAL

- Abundance
- Volunteer
- Contractor
- Sharing



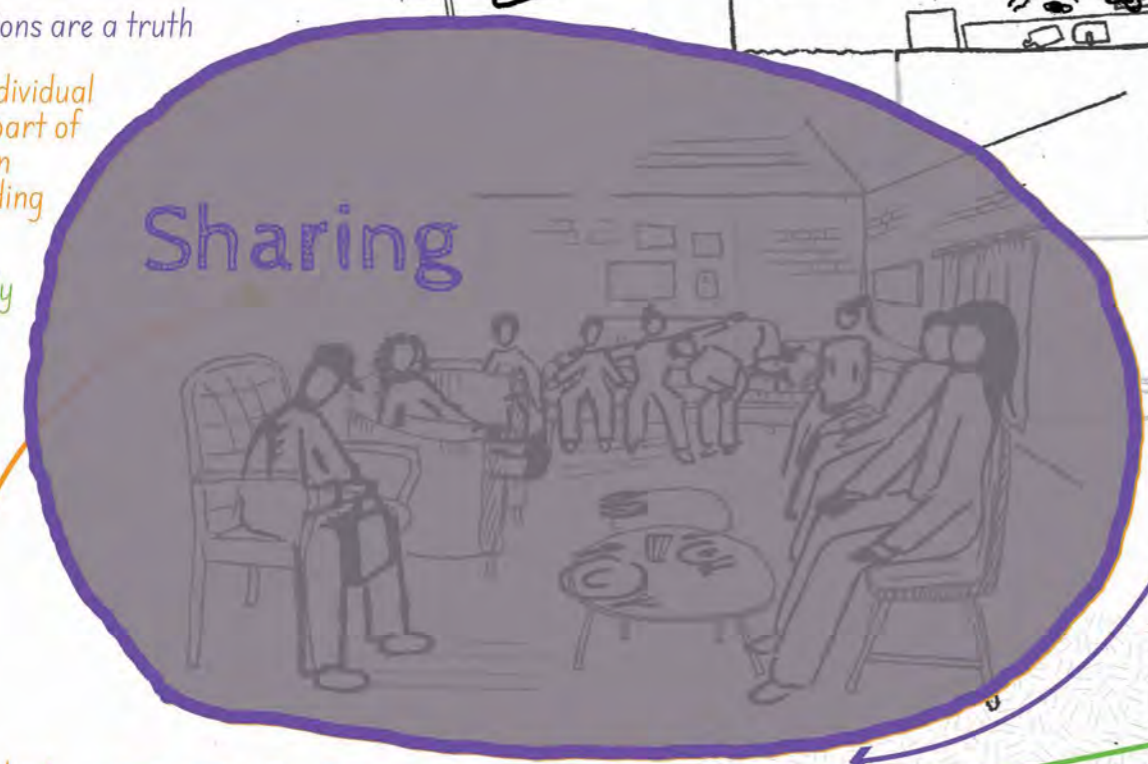
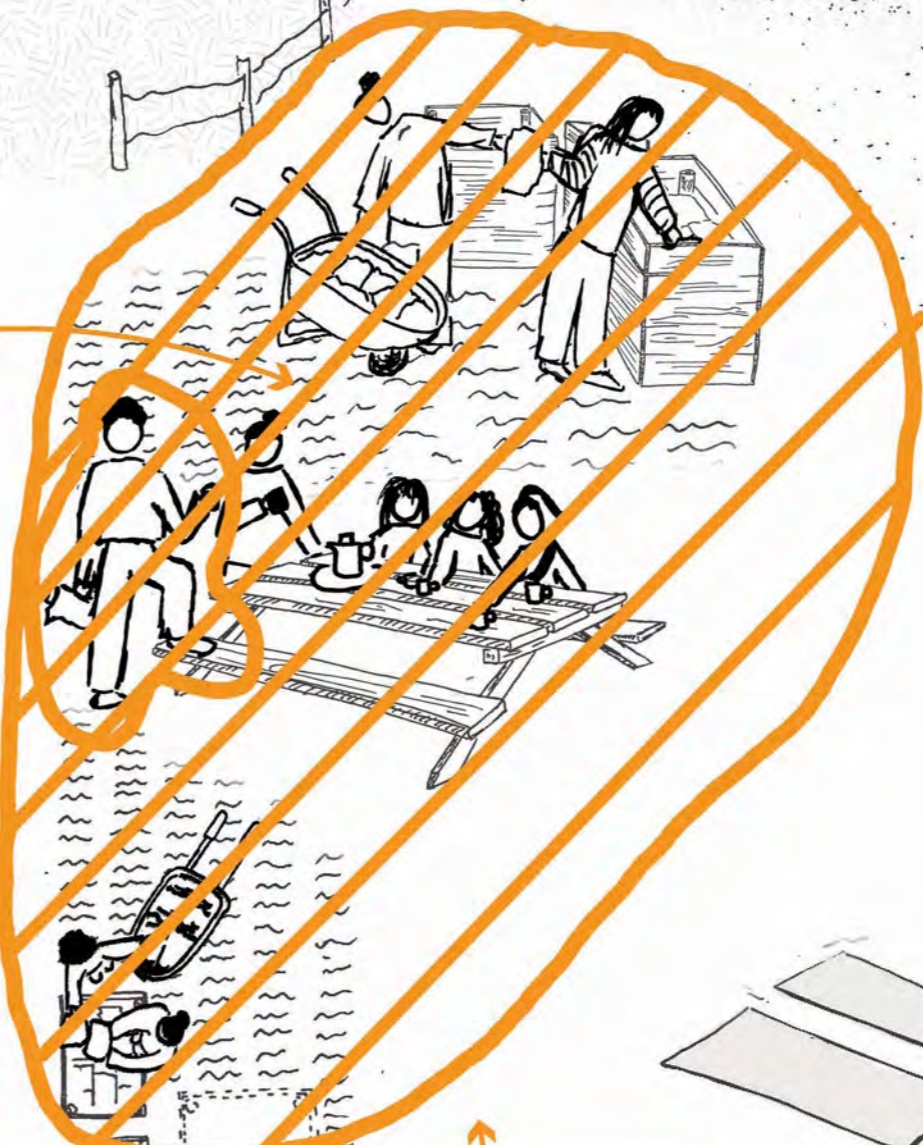
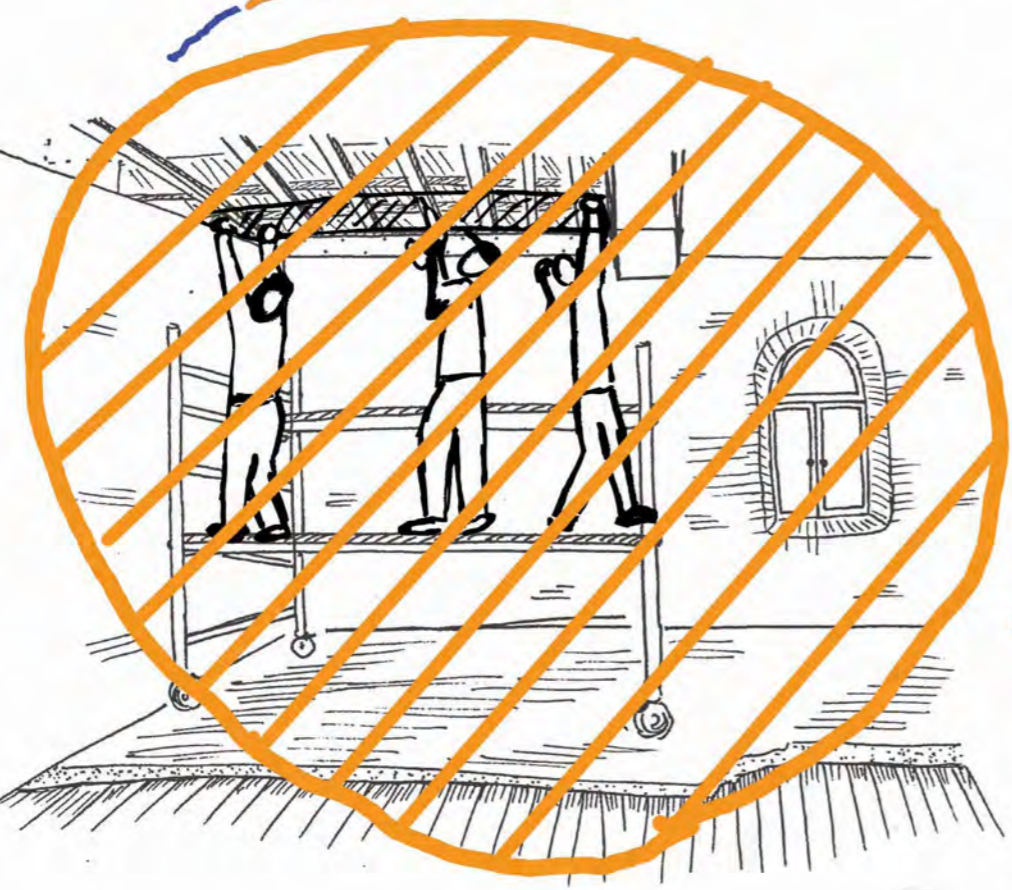
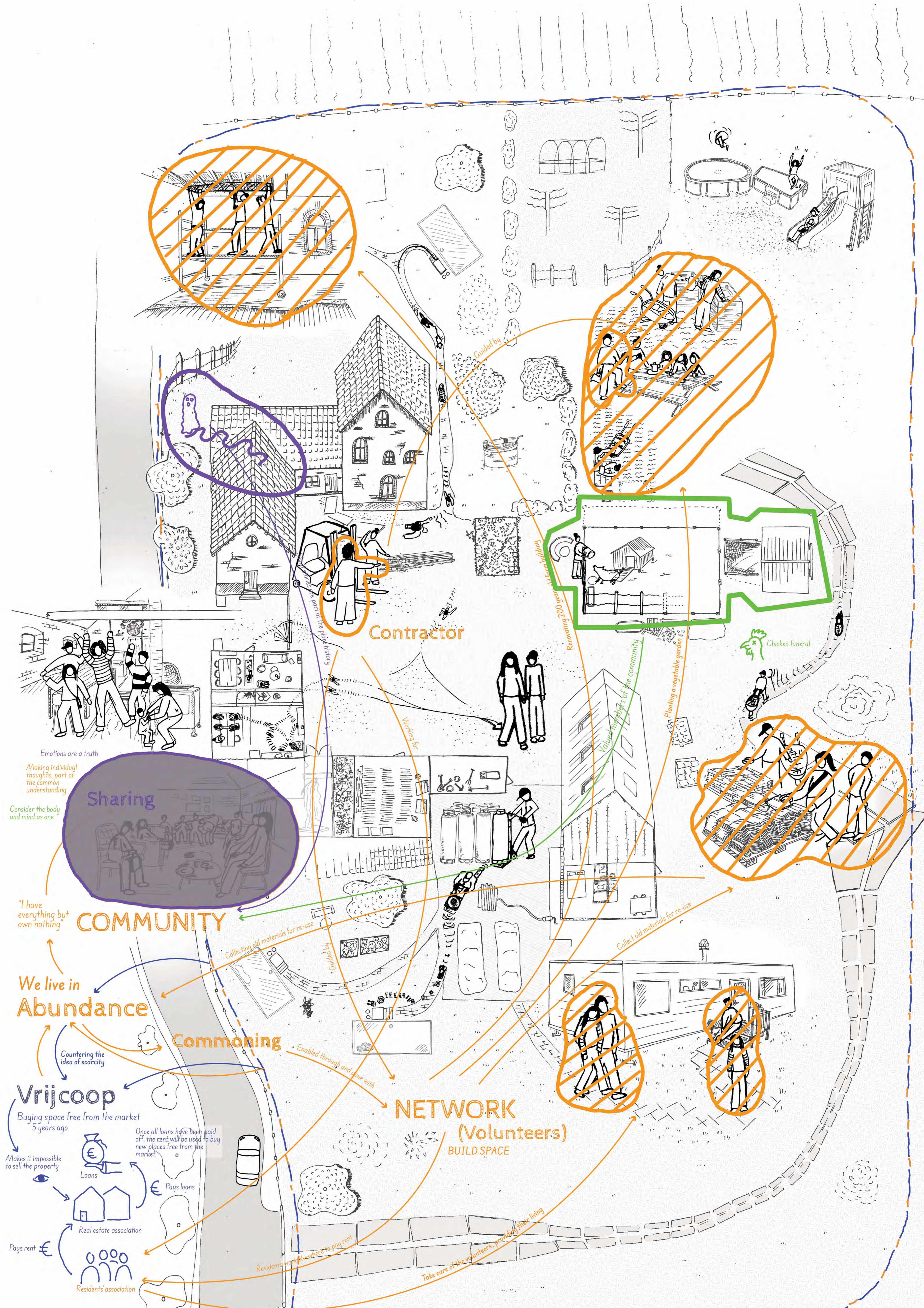
SCIENCE

- Ghost
- Gas



REAL

- Sharing
- Animals



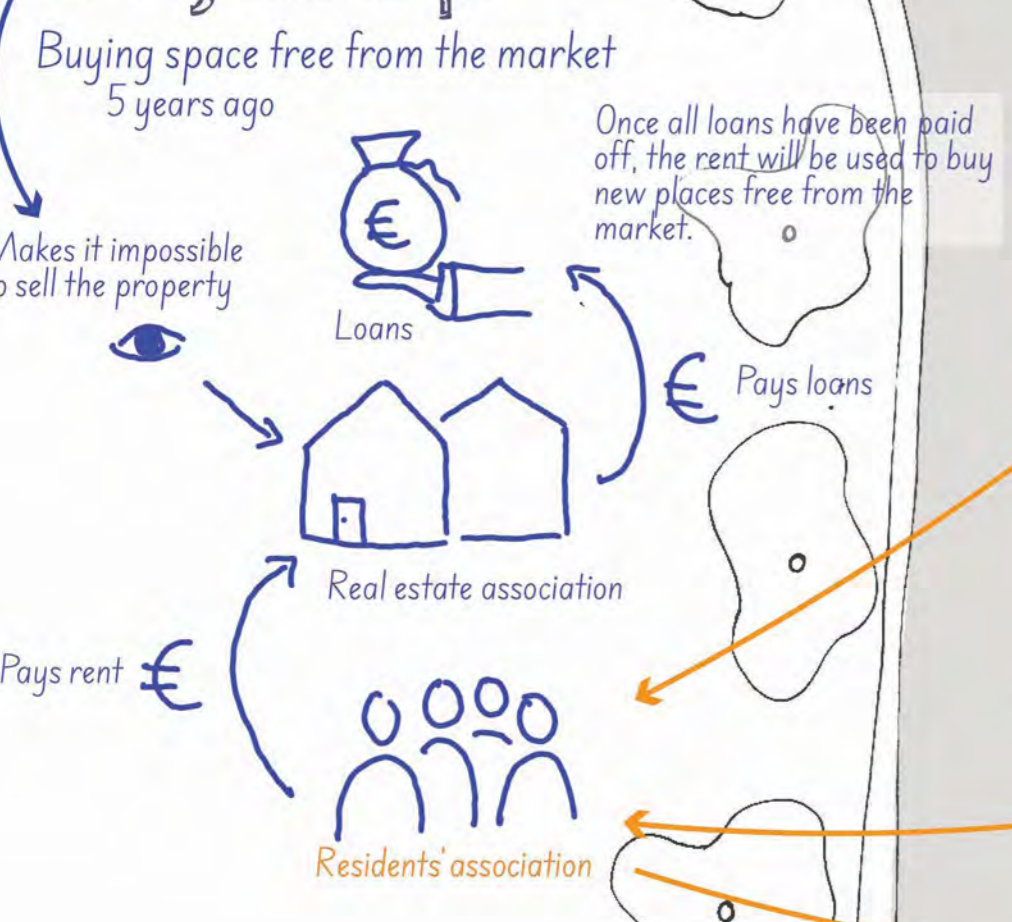
Emotions are a truth
 Making individual thoughts, part of the common understanding
 Consider the body and mind as one

COMMUNITY
 "I have everything but own nothing"

We live in Abundance

Commoning

Vrijcoop



NETWORK (Volunteers) BUILD SPACE

Contractor

Guided by

Renovating 200 years old farm building

Valued members of the community

Planting a vegetable garden

Chicken funeral

Guided by

Collecting old materials for re-use

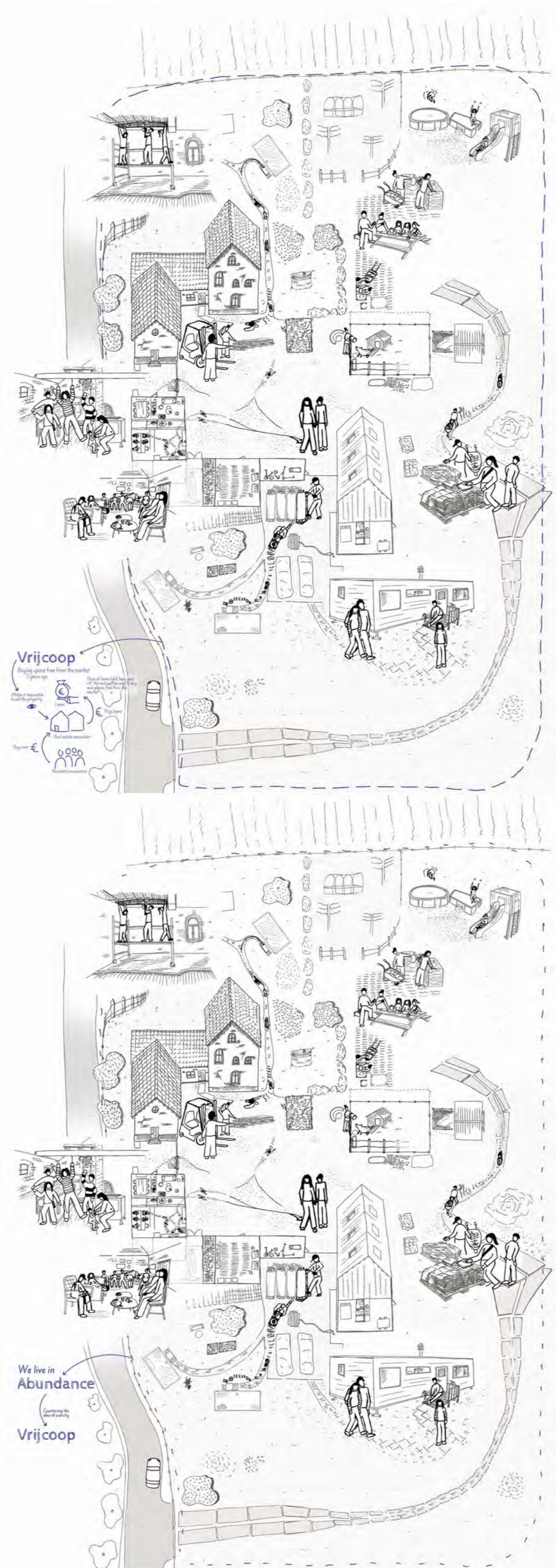
Collect old materials for re-use

Working for

Residents work elsewhere to pay rent

Take care of the volunteers, provide their living

ECONOMY



VRIJCOOP

Through the legal structure of Vrijkoop, the residents have removed the land from the speculative market. Vrijkoop, an association dedicated to combating property speculation, ensures the land is owned by a real estate association. The resident association then pays rent to this association. As a "control member," Vrijkoop prevents the land from ever being sold or used as a tool for speculation, keeping it permanently under the real estate association's ownership. In this way, the community effectively decapitalizes the land.

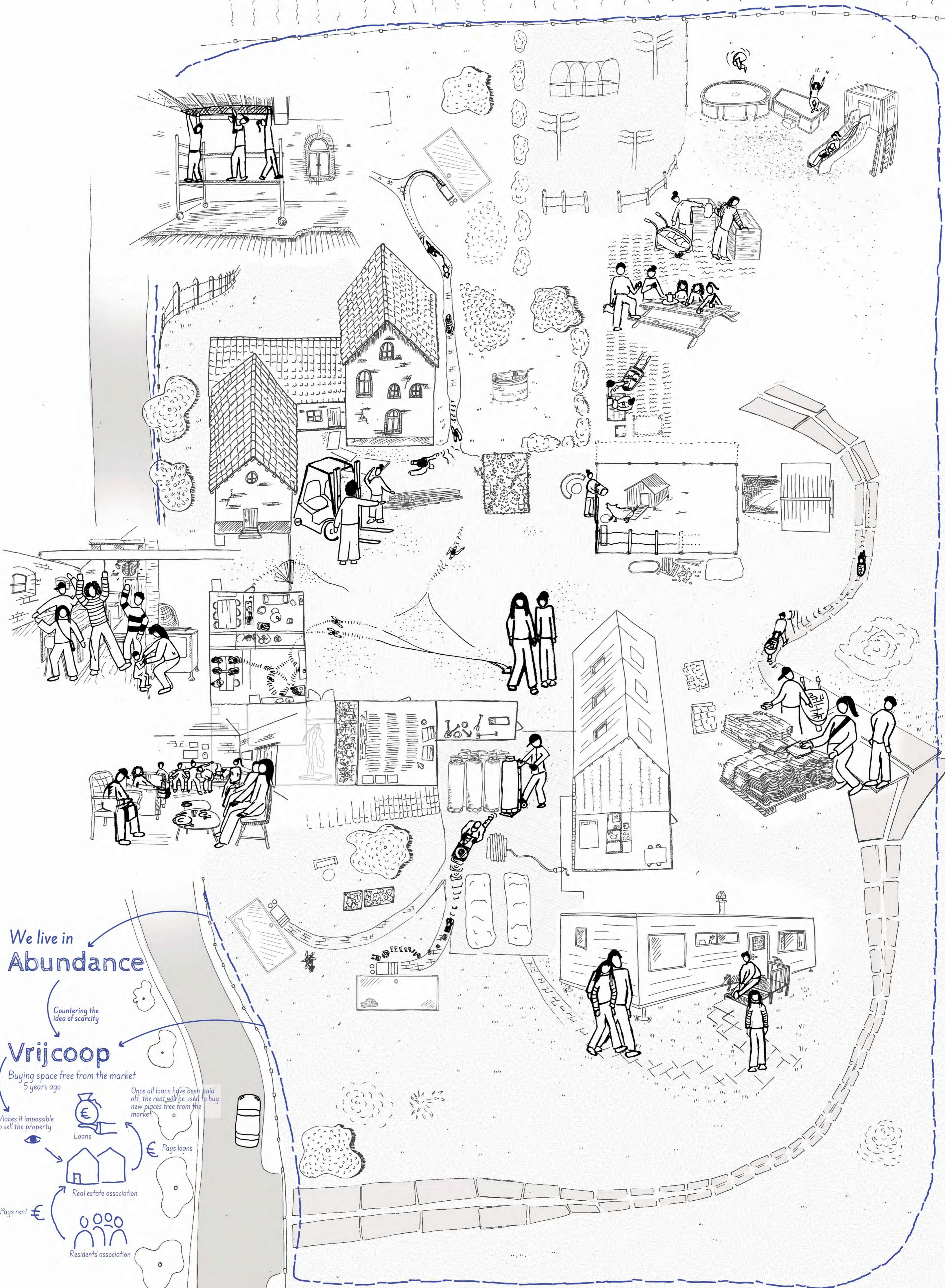
To purchase the land, the residents combined their own savings with crowdfunding, crowdlending, and a loan from a German bank (Dutch banks have only recently begun offering loans to communities, but the process remains uncommon and less specialized). These loans are factored into the residents' monthly rent.

ABUNDANCE

The residents have adopted this economic model because of their core philosophy: "We live in abundance." According to this belief, there is more than enough for everyone; food, tools, materials, money, clothes, space, etc. As one resident put it: "I own nothing, but I have everything."

This philosophy directly challenges the modern economy's foundation of scarcity, which drives the belief in endless growth and fuels practices like extractivism and exploitation. Instead, it fosters commoning (see INDIVIDUAL).

COUNTERING ECONOMY



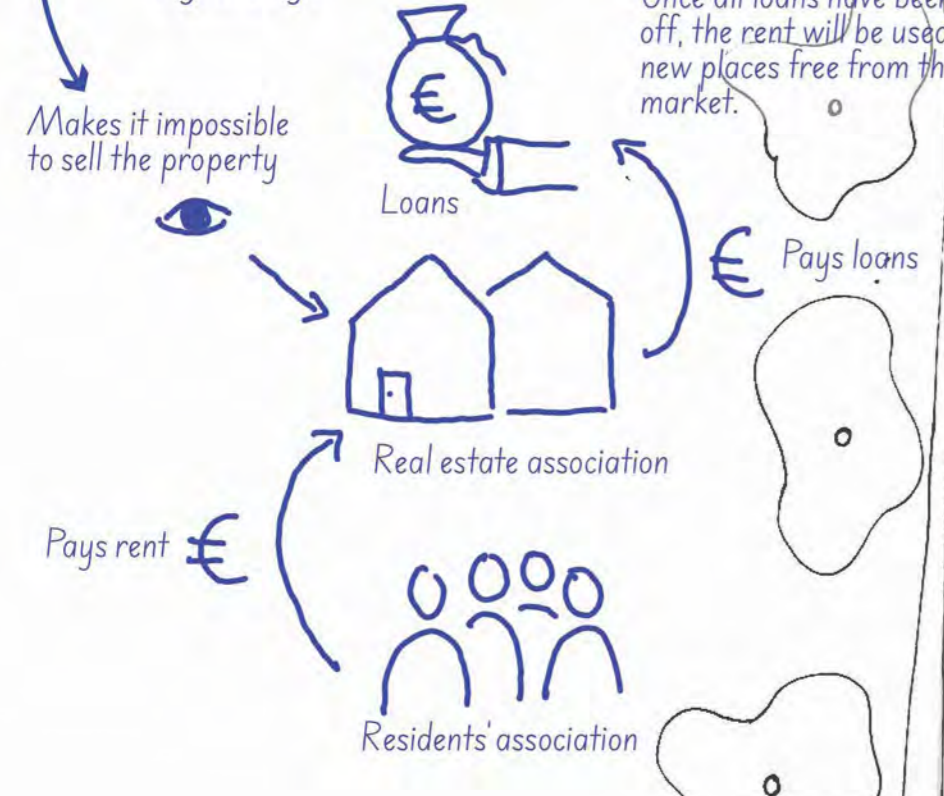
We live in Abundance

Countering the idea of scarcity

Vrijkoop

Buying space free from the market 5 years ago

Once all loans have been paid off, the rent will be used to buy new places free from the market.



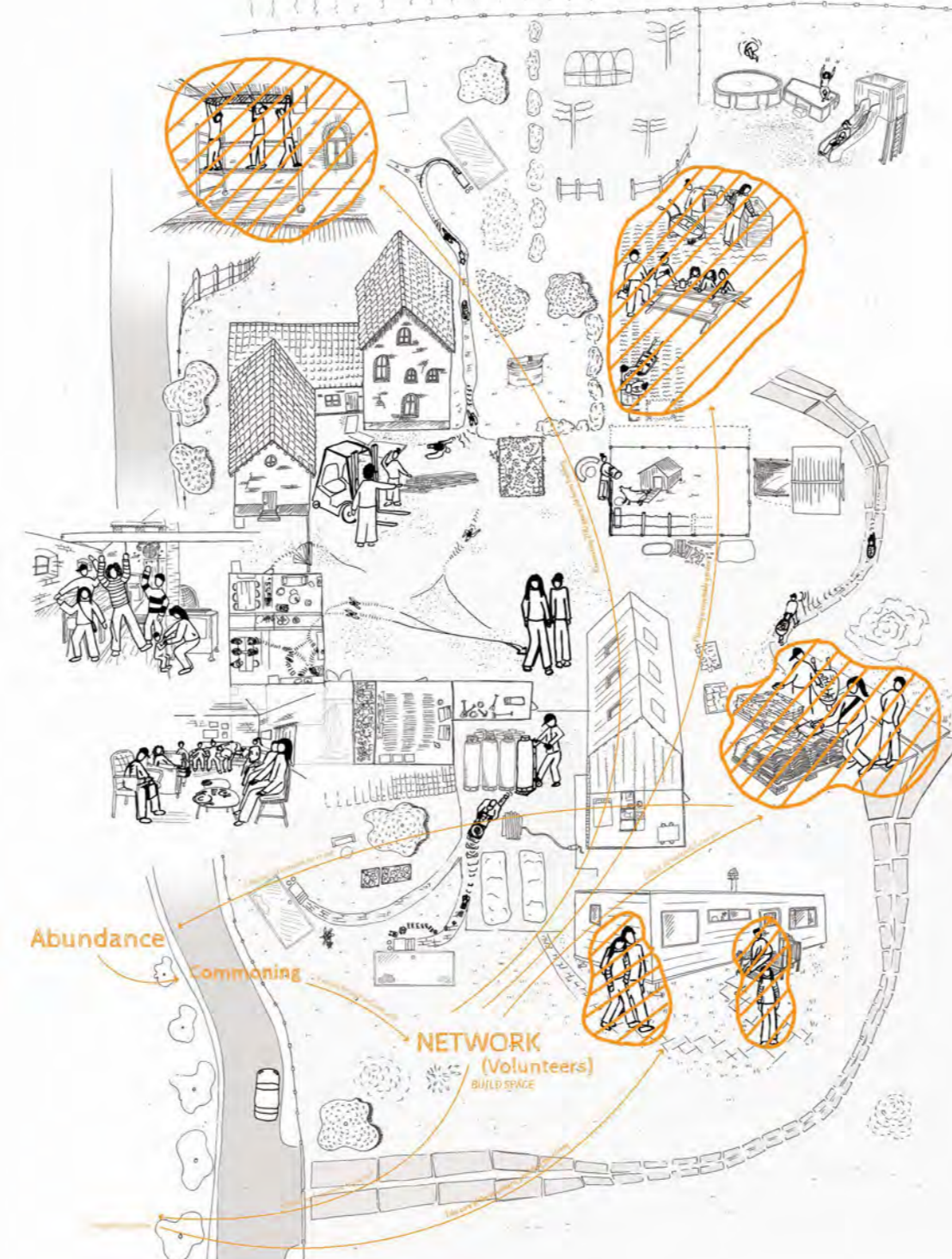
ABUNDANCE



ABUNDANCE

The idea of abundance doesn't just challenge the belief in economy, it also challenges the belief in individuality by embracing commoning as a way of life. For this community, abundance means sharing both land and goods, transforming ownership into collective stewardship.

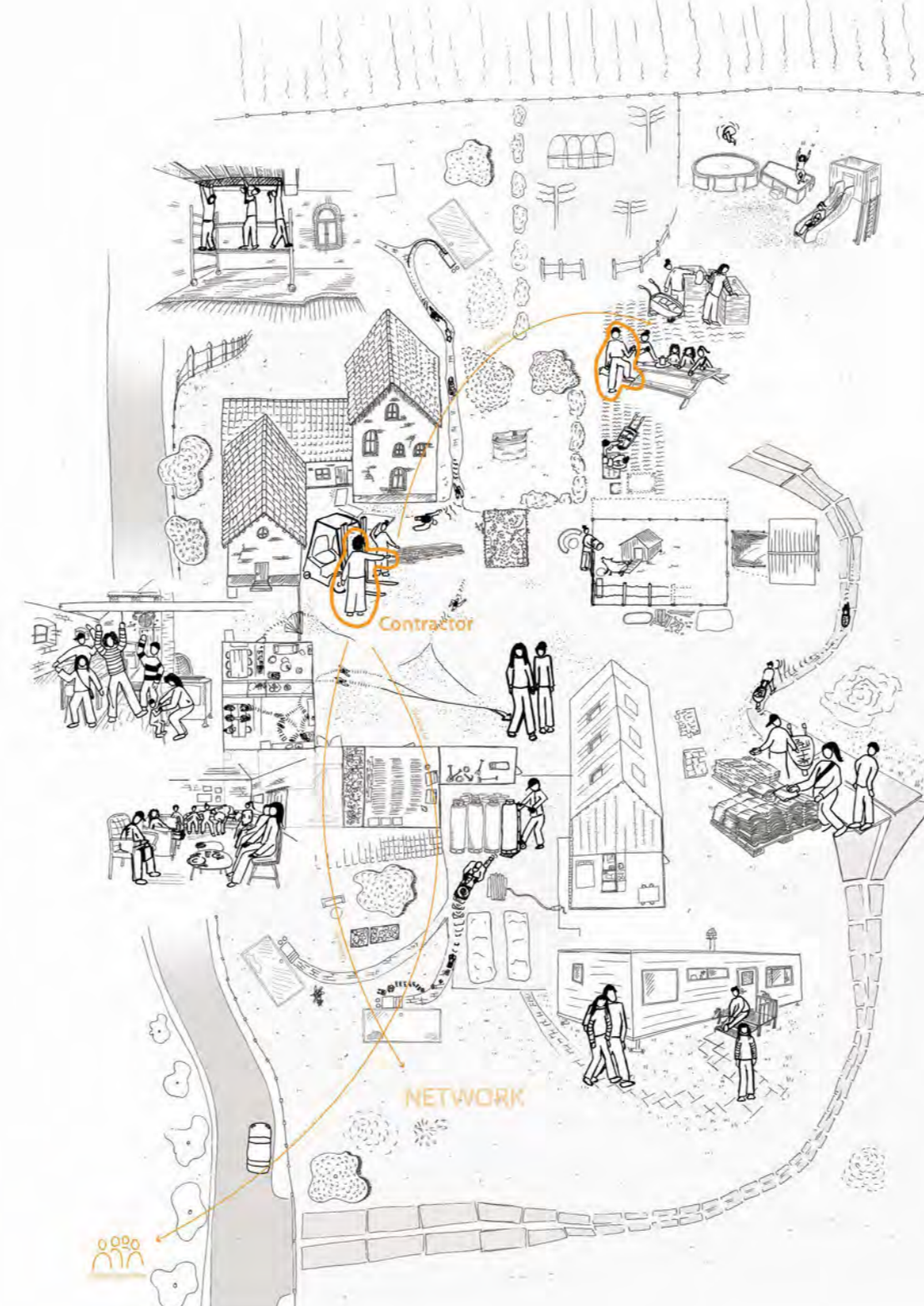
The land itself is commons: currently shared among three families, with a vision to expand its use for broader social goals. In the future, they plan to introduce temporary social housing and a campsite, ensuring the space serves a purpose beyond private use. While each family has its own living space, the community practices an 'open door' policy, inviting residents to visit freely, fostering connection and spontaneity.



VOLUNTEERS

The residents' dream is shared with a wide network of supporters; people who have lent or gifted money to help bring their vision to life. Their living space is also open to a diverse community; a blacksmith who uses part of the farm to preserve traditional craftsmanship, and, for now, numerous volunteers who are helping to restore the 200-year-old farm.

These volunteers are indispensable to realizing the residents' dreams, especially since the residents themselves work off-site to pay back the loans. The volunteers stay in temporary units, which the residents also use during the ongoing construction. At the heart of it all is the common room, a central gathering place where residents and volunteers come together, share meals and exchange ideas.



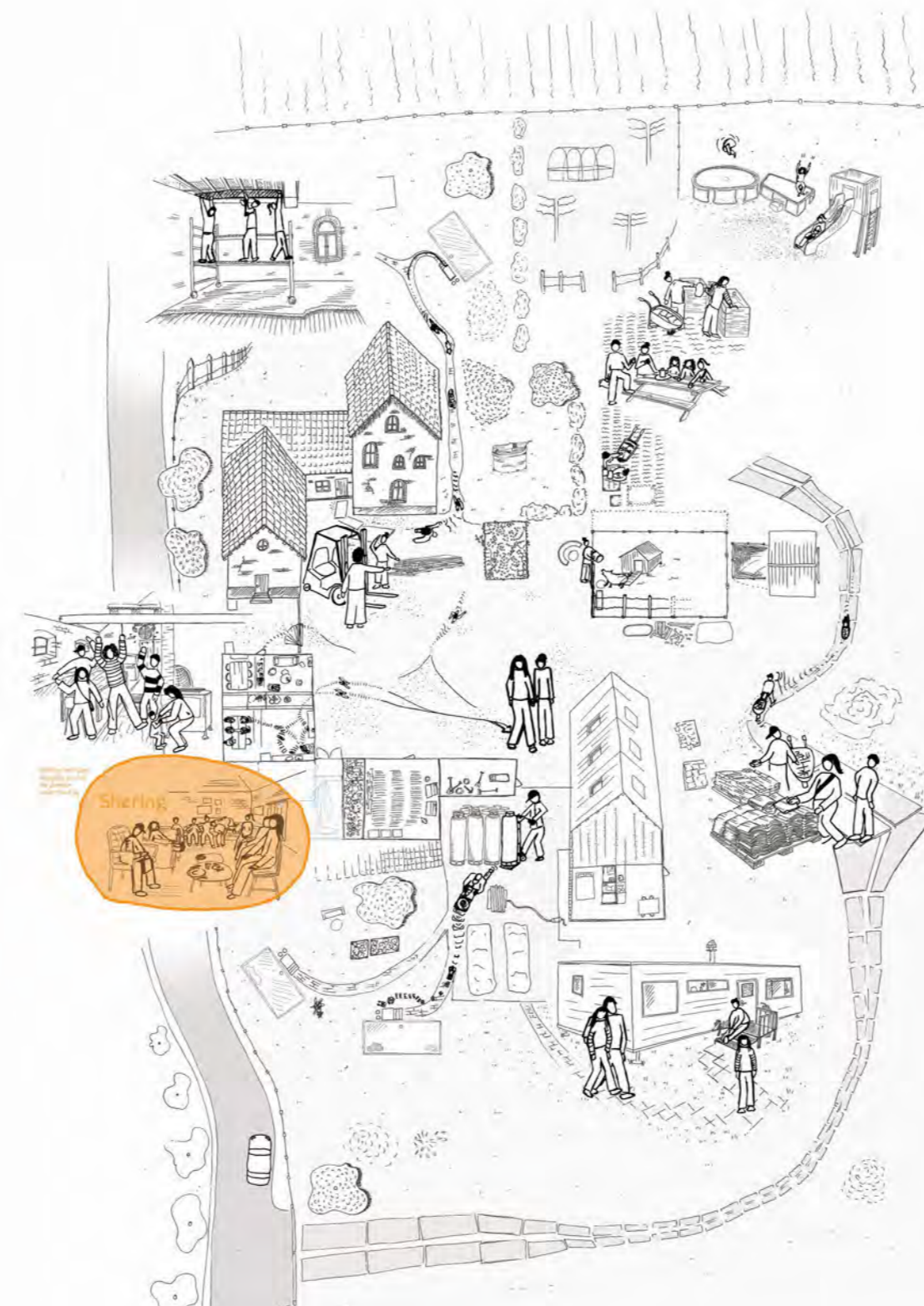
CONTRACTOR

A key member of the network is the contractor, whose values align closely with those of the residents. His decision to join the project not only provided essential expertise but also legalized the construction work, as he holds the necessary licenses.

The building site operates as an official construction site, where the contractor teaches and guides the volunteers. His knowledge transforms the volunteers into skilled contributors, equipping them with new abilities and confidence.

Link to SCIENCE

The contractor embodies the institutionalized "expert", a product of modernity's emphasis on specialized knowledge. Yet, despite his formal role as the project lead, he avoids positioning himself as the sole authority. Instead, he places trust in the capabilities of others, fostering a collaborative environment where expertise is shared, not hoarded.

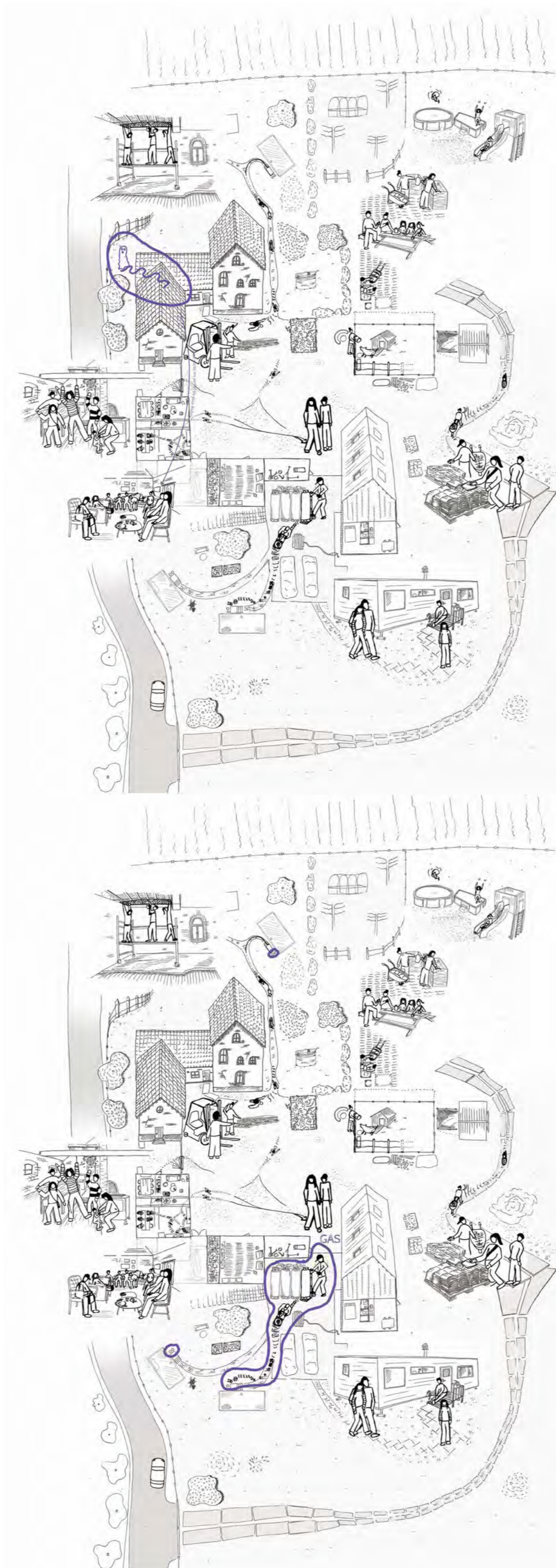


SHARING

The belief in the individual was actively challenged through sharing circles; daily opening rounds where everyone could voice their thoughts, feelings, and intentions. By beginning each day this way, the community ensured no one carried their burdens or joys alone. These moments reinforced the idea that everyone present was part of a shared journey, fostering collective care, understanding, and a sense of unity.

Sharing circles also played a crucial role during transitions, especially when someone was leaving the community. In these closing rounds, the group didn't just reflect on the individual's personal qualities, they also acknowledged their unique contributions and the value they brought to the collective. This practice underscored that each person's presence had shaped the community.

ENGINEERING



GHOST

In this community, stories that Modern Science might dismiss as myths (due to the fact that they can't be proven) are embraced as meaningful truths. One such story is that of the farmer's son. Early in the project, a resident heard a boy's scream echoing, "I don't want to..." from a specific spot on the farm. Another resident later saw the ghost of a young boy in the same place. When they shared these experiences with the elderly couple who once lived on the farm, the couple revealed the tragic history: their son had taken his own life on that exact spot because he didn't want to be a farmer...

GAS

The community currently uses gas to heat their units, chosen for its flexibility, affordability, and the uncertainty surrounding what currently is the best source for sustainable energy. Overwhelmed by the complex pros and cons of emerging energy sources portrayed, like hydrogen, the residents have evolved a disbelief in their truth, therefore, have struggled to decide on the best path forward, currently preventing them from transitioning to a, according to science, more sustainable energy source.

However, it became clear during my stay that preparations have been made for more sustainable alternatives, such as solar power. The infrastructure is already in place, so the community can transition to solar energy later in the building process, whenever they feel ready.

REAL REAL REAL



SHARING

The residents challenge the modern separation of "body" and "mind" by placing great value on the mental and emotional landscape. During my time in the community, it became clear that feelings and emotions are not just acknowledged but celebrated as integral parts of the self, deeply intertwined with the physical body.

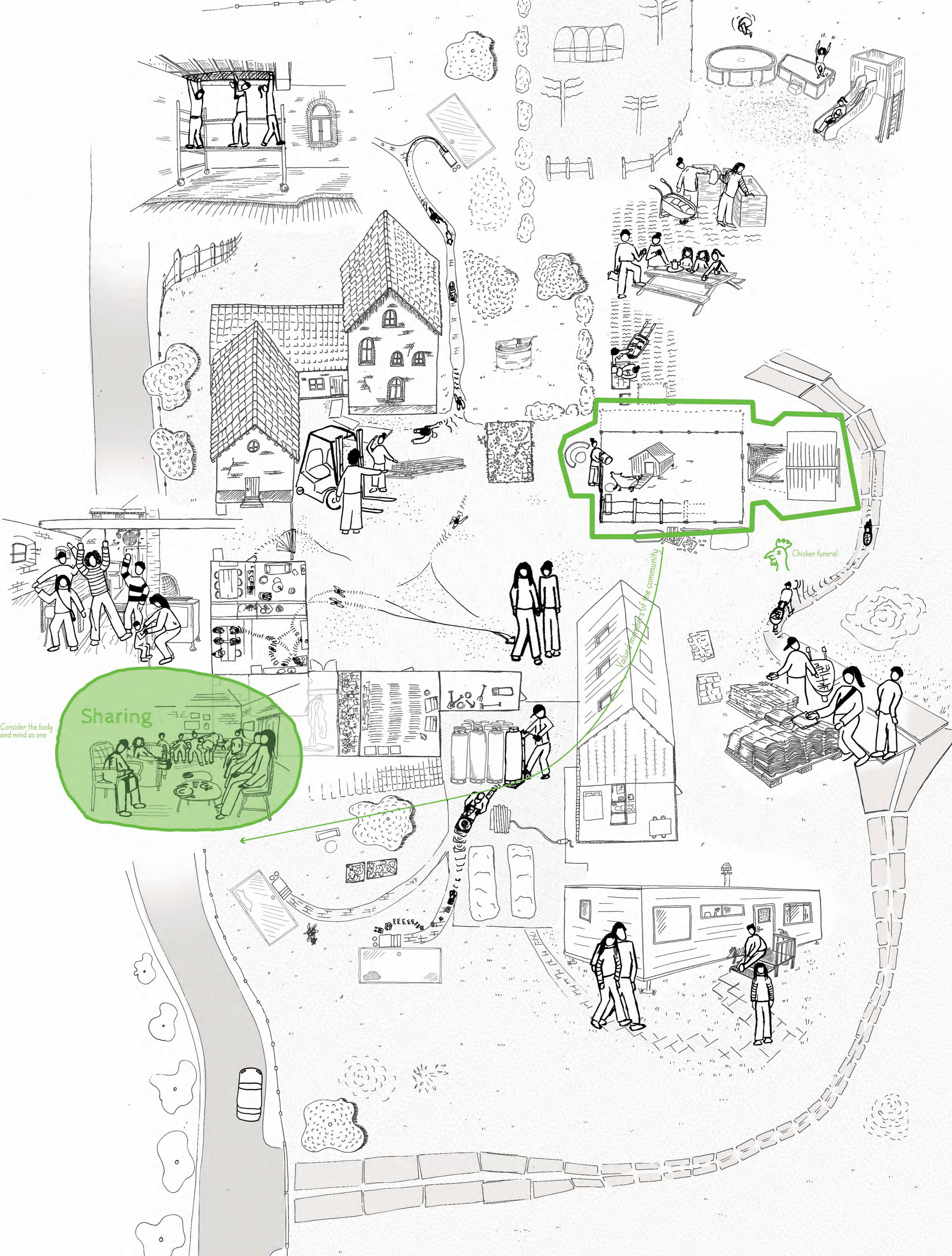
This philosophy was evident in the daily sharing circles each morning. If someone wasn't feeling well, it was understood and respected, they might take it easy with work that day. It was also reflected in the goodbye rounds held whenever someone left the community. These moments highlighted the emotional connections between people, reinforcing that such bonds are not just meaningful but essential.

ANIMALS

The residents actively blur the line between nature and culture by treating animals as cherished members of their family. During my stay, a chicken passed away, and its death was deeply felt. The residents held a funeral for the chicken and buried it in a place of personal significance, honoring its life as they would a human loved one.

The same care and attention were given to the two pigs living on the land. The residents knew their preferences, dietary habits, and behavioral quirks intimately. As they planned the future vegetable garden, they also made sure to expand the pigs' field, giving them more space to roam, roll, and forage, prioritizing the animals' well-being as part of their own.

COUNTERING THE REAL



Sharing

Consider the body and mind as one

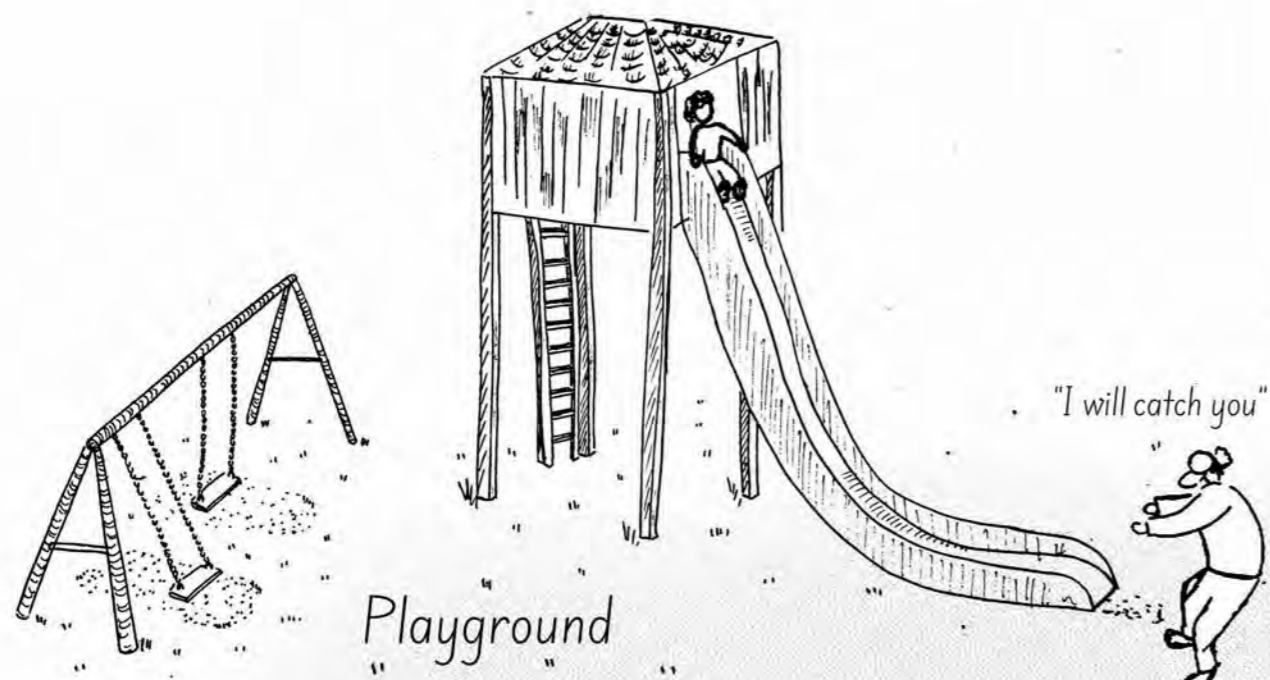
Values, traditions of the community

Chicken funeral

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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF

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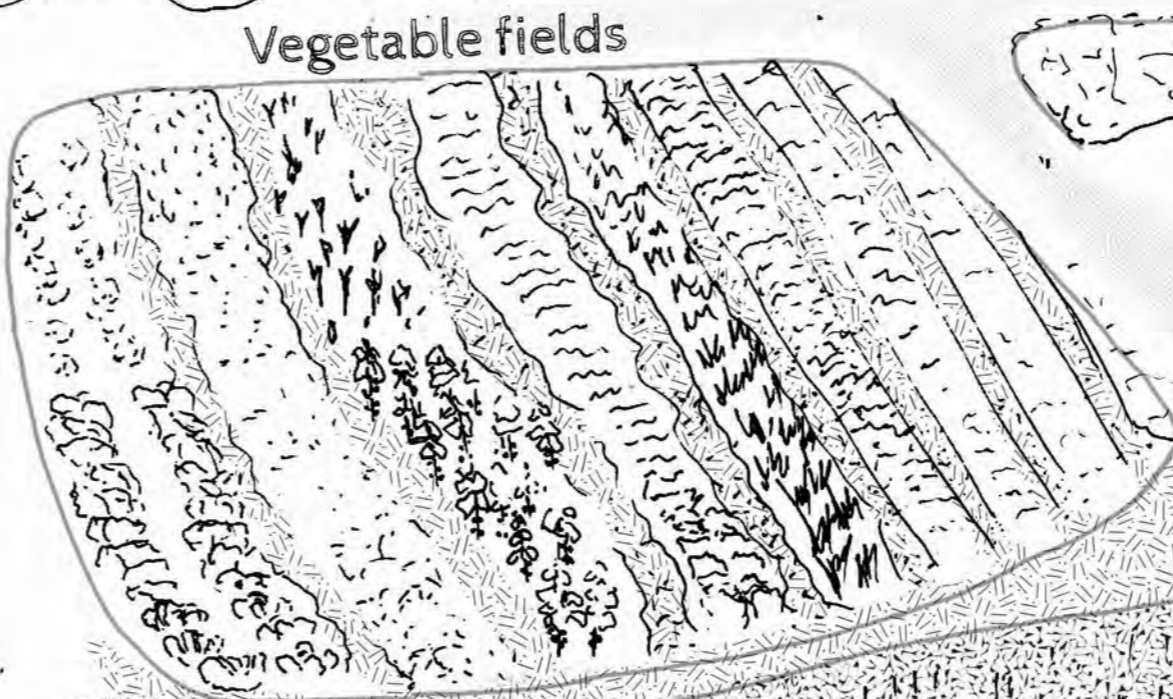


Playground

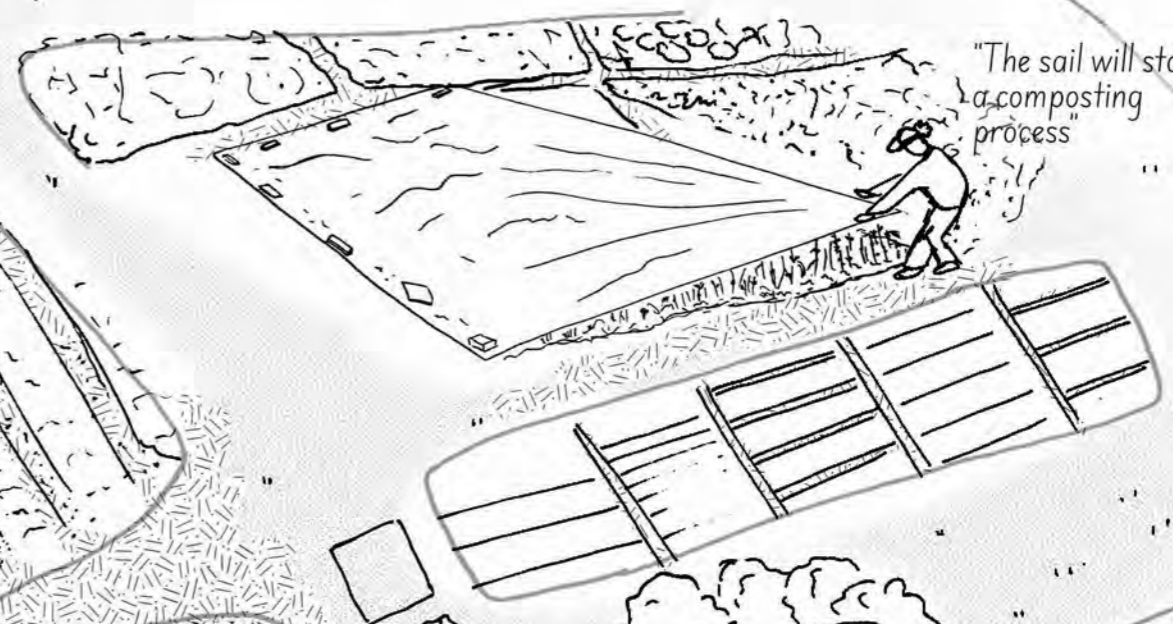
"I will catch you"

4 Work was flexible, guided by how people felt each day. If someone needed more rest, they took it; if they preferred to work earlier or later, they followed their own rhythm. At 18:00, the dinner bell would ring, and everyone would gather again for a simple, light meal, often soup.

Campground



Vegetable fields



"The soil will start a composting process"



Meditation egg

"Yes dear, we are almost done"



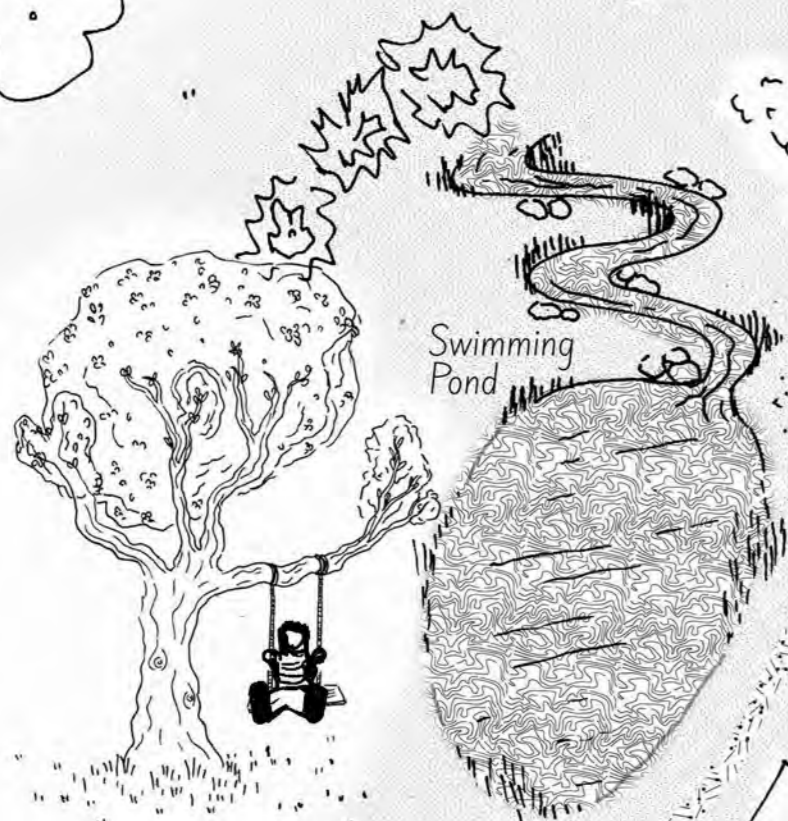
mulch

"This is the mulch without seeds"

"Mamaaaa"



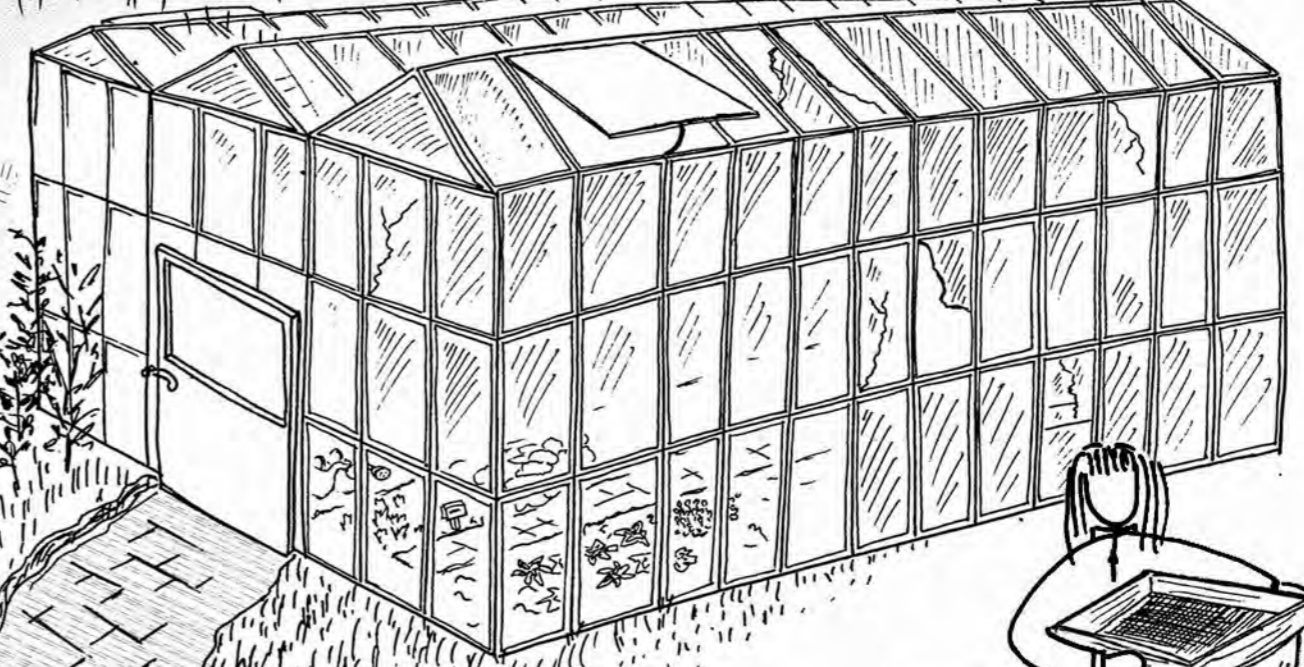
Compost area



Swimming Pond

Sauna

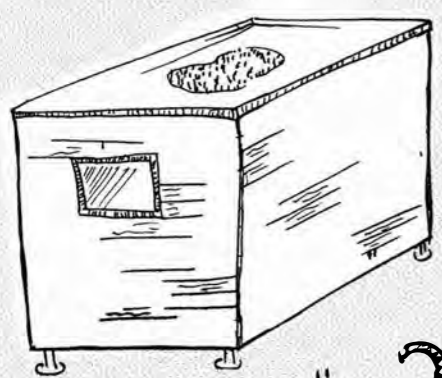
Information sign



Greenhouse



sifting clay for the compost mixture



tiny house

2 With my porridge in hand, I would take a seat in the breakfast room, eating as other residents stopped by for a quick coffee or joined me with a bowl of yogurt. Often, someone would let me know how I could help that day. Some weekdays were reserved for farming tasks, and we would discuss what needed to be done in the garden; seeding carrots, turning compost, or repairing the greenhouse roof. On other days, the focus would be on cleaning, such as deep-cleaning the kitchen or ironing the curtains in the rental house.

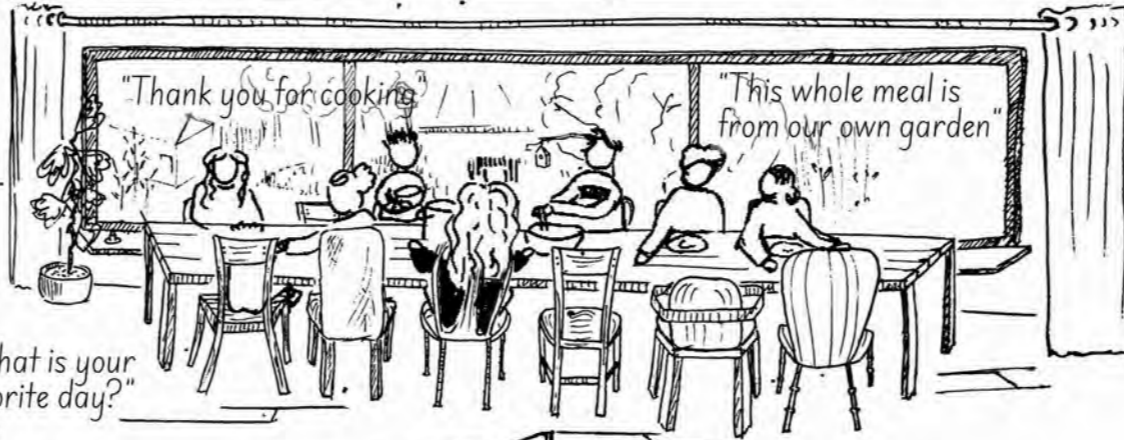
COMMUNITY Living room

"Well my favorite day used to be Friday, but since I live here and escaped capitalism, it diversifies"

coffee room



"What is your favorite day?"

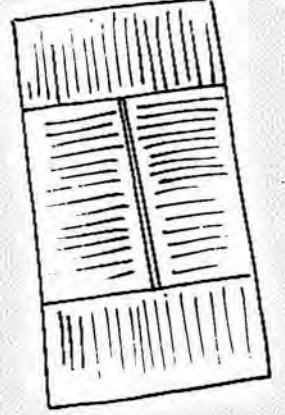


"Thank you for cooking"

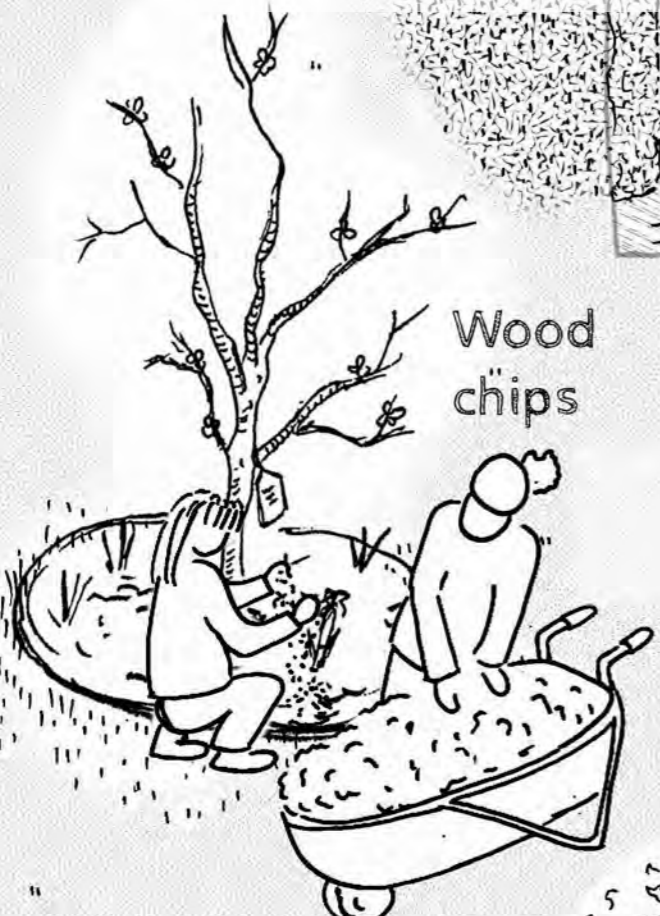
"This whole meal is from our own garden"

3

At 13:00, the lunch bell would ring, and all the residents present would gather in the living room or at the outdoor tables to share the day's main meal. Lunch, usually prepared with ingredients from the garden by whoever was on lunch duty, often consisted of a hearty warm dish accompanied by salads. After this filling meal, everyone would take time to rest. Those working for the community that day would often regroup around 15:00 to continue their tasks in the garden or the laundry basement.



tiny house



Wood chips



kitchen

"For three years now"

Weeding

"How long have you been living here?"

dancing evenings

Workshop room



5

After dinner, those on dish duty would clean up, while others would retreat to their rooms, take an evening stroll, or enjoy an hour of dancing in the workshop room. I often joined the dancing before heading to bed early. Life at Strawberry Fields followed weekly and daily schedules, but it also moved with the rhythm of the sun. When darkness fell, the community would grow quiet.



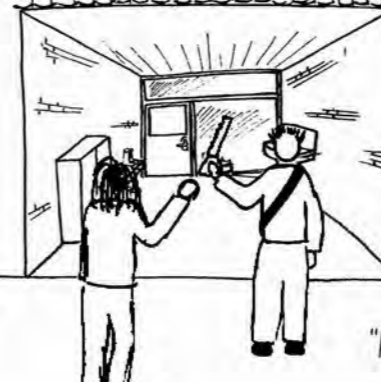
"Um let me think, tomorrow morning?"



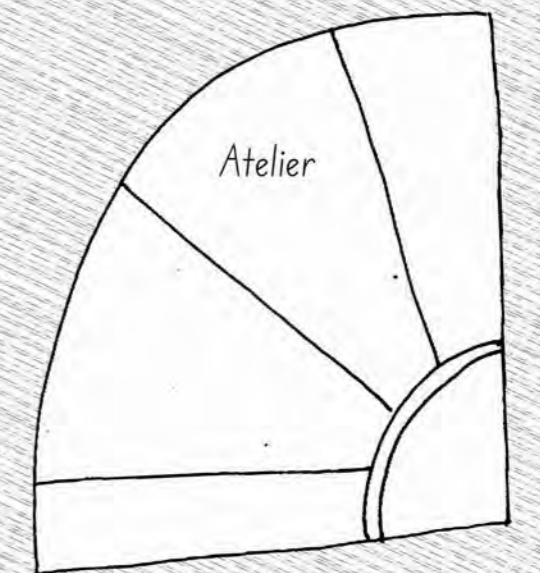
Renovated barn

At Strawberry Fields, a typical day in March began with breathing in the fresh air as I walked from the front house to the breakfast room. I would step outside, cross over to the main house, and pass through the old farm stables into the kitchen. There, I would prepare my own breakfast or find a resident making porridge, which they would often offer to share.

cold storage room

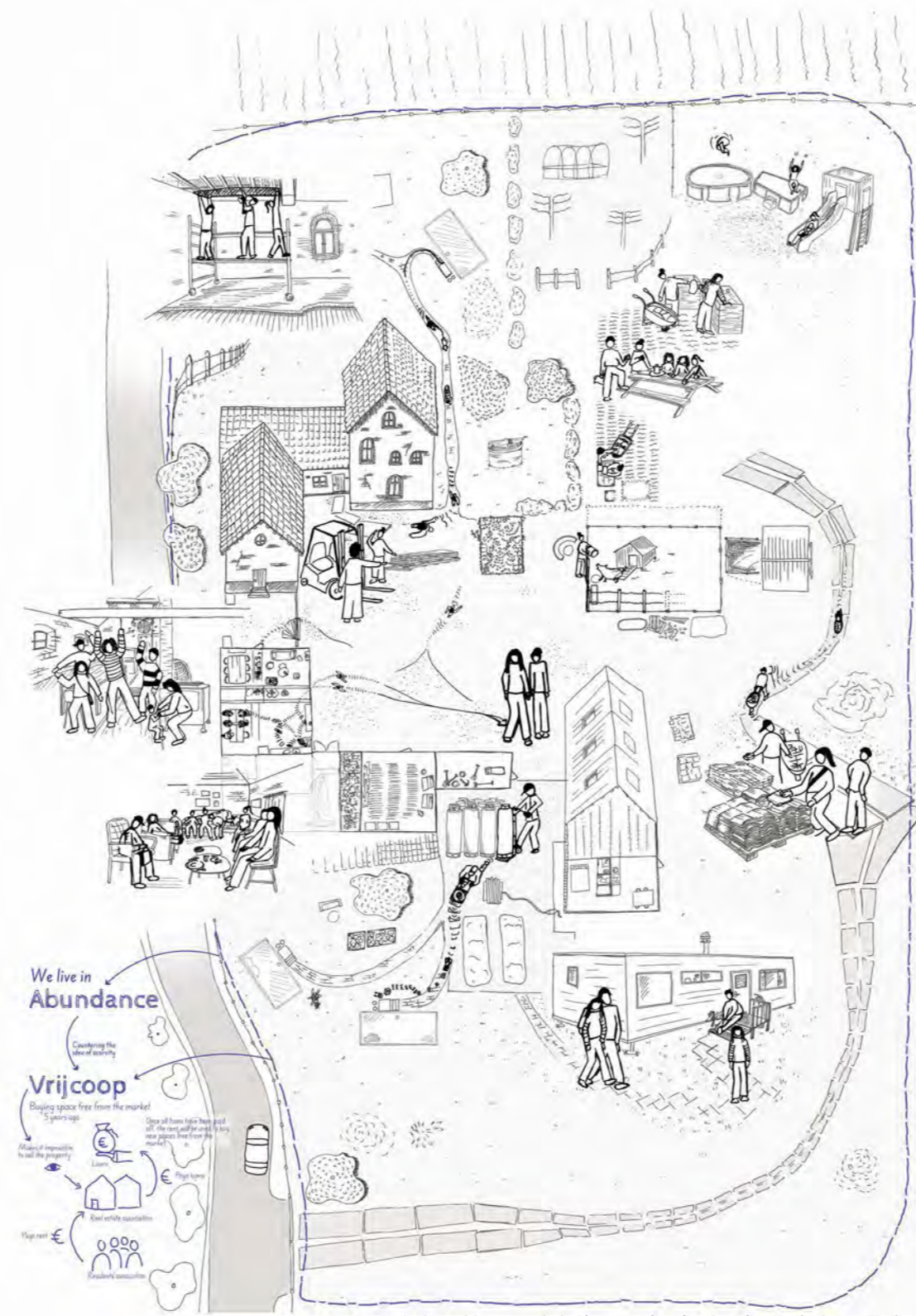


"here use the saw"



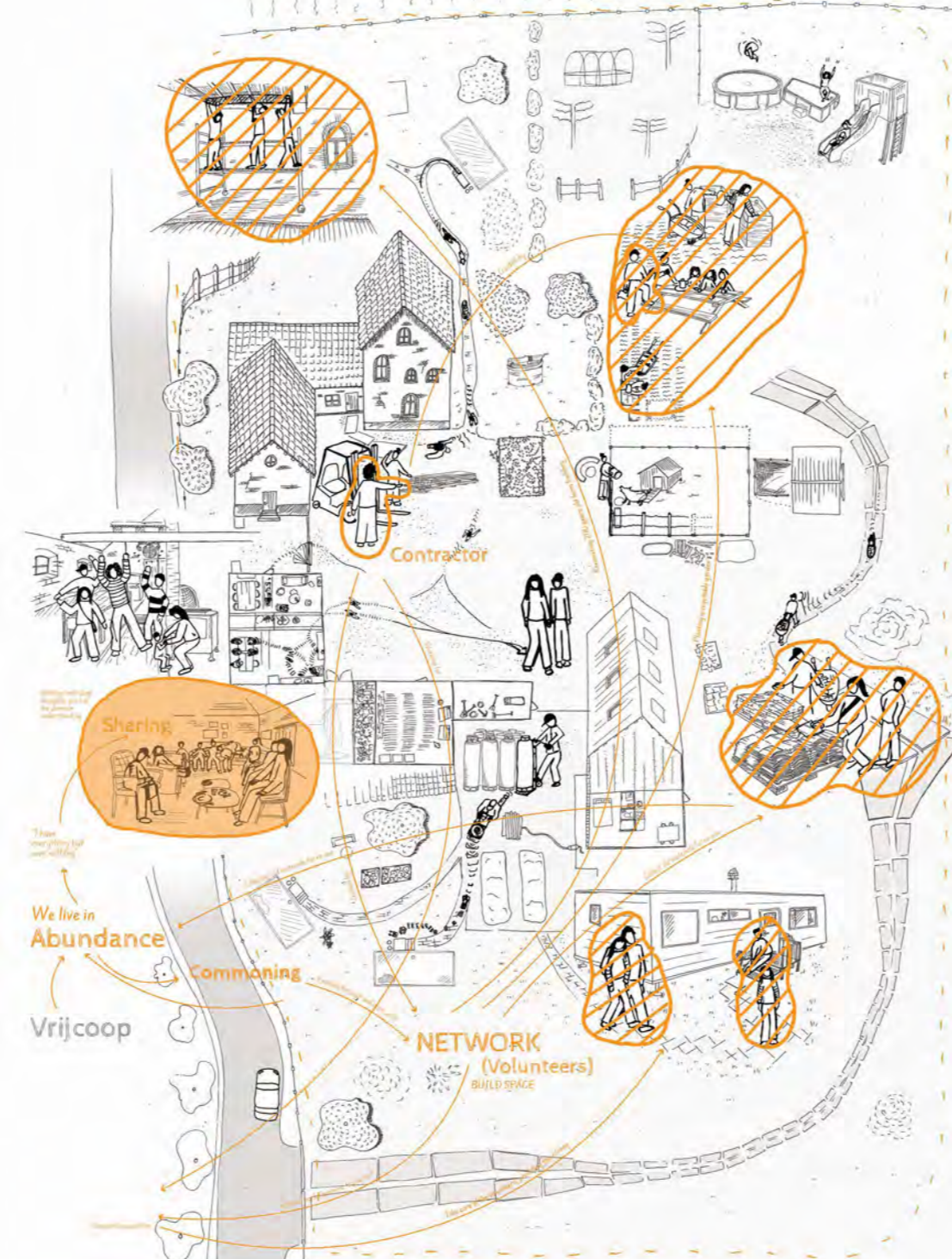
Atelier

CONTENT



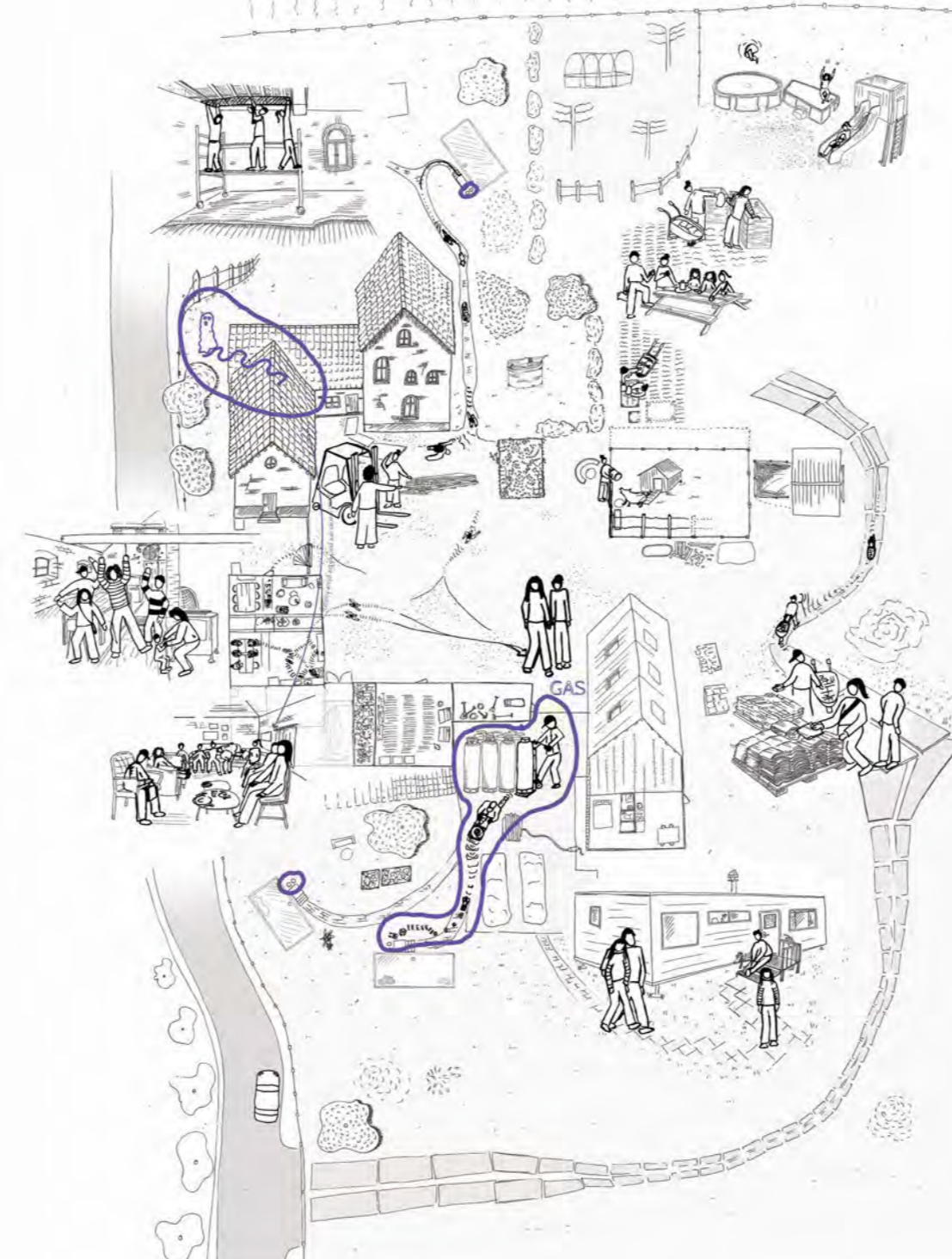
ECONOMY

- Association
- Reduction
- Barter Trade



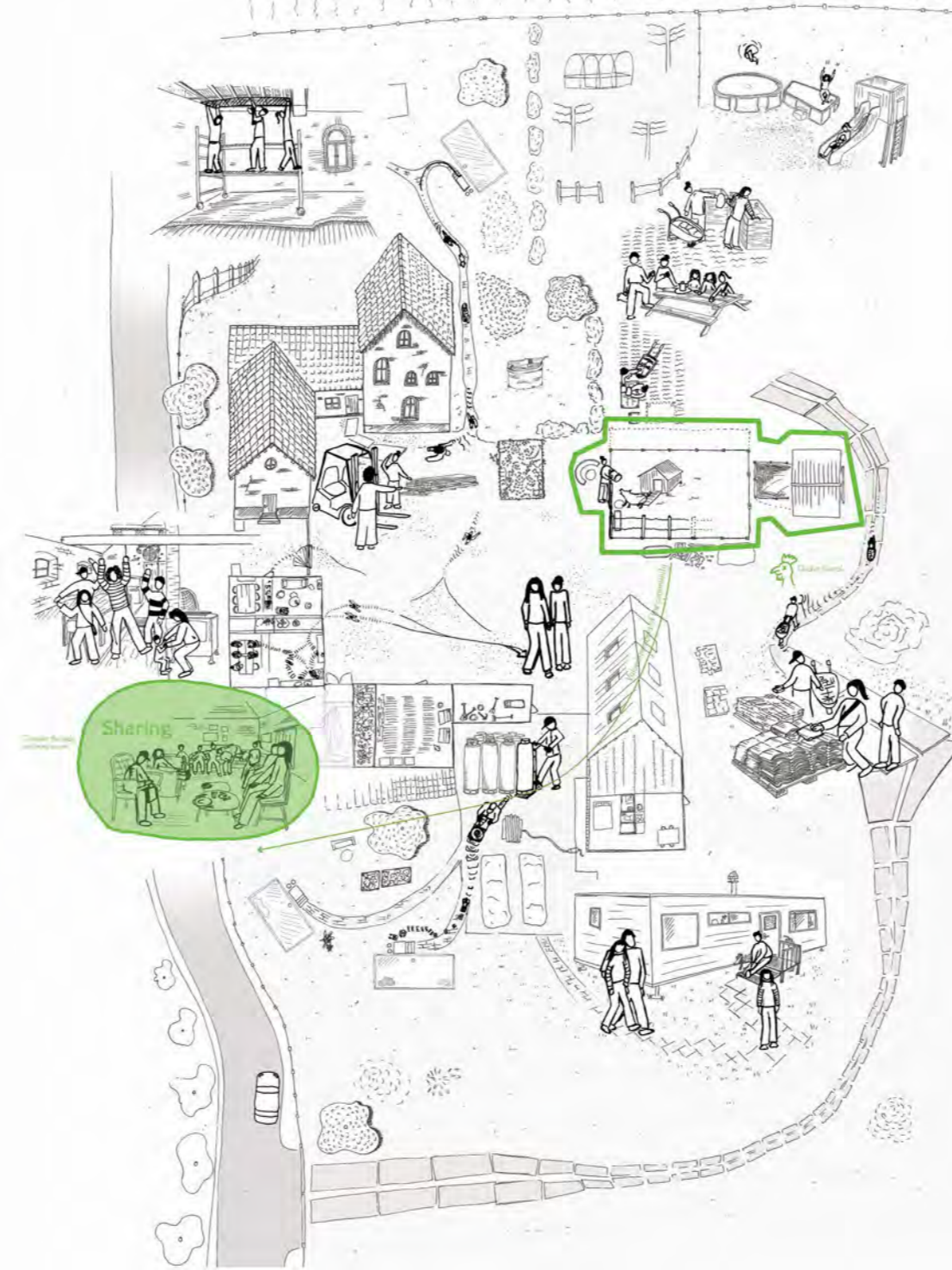
INDIVIDUAL

- Land
- Work
- Network



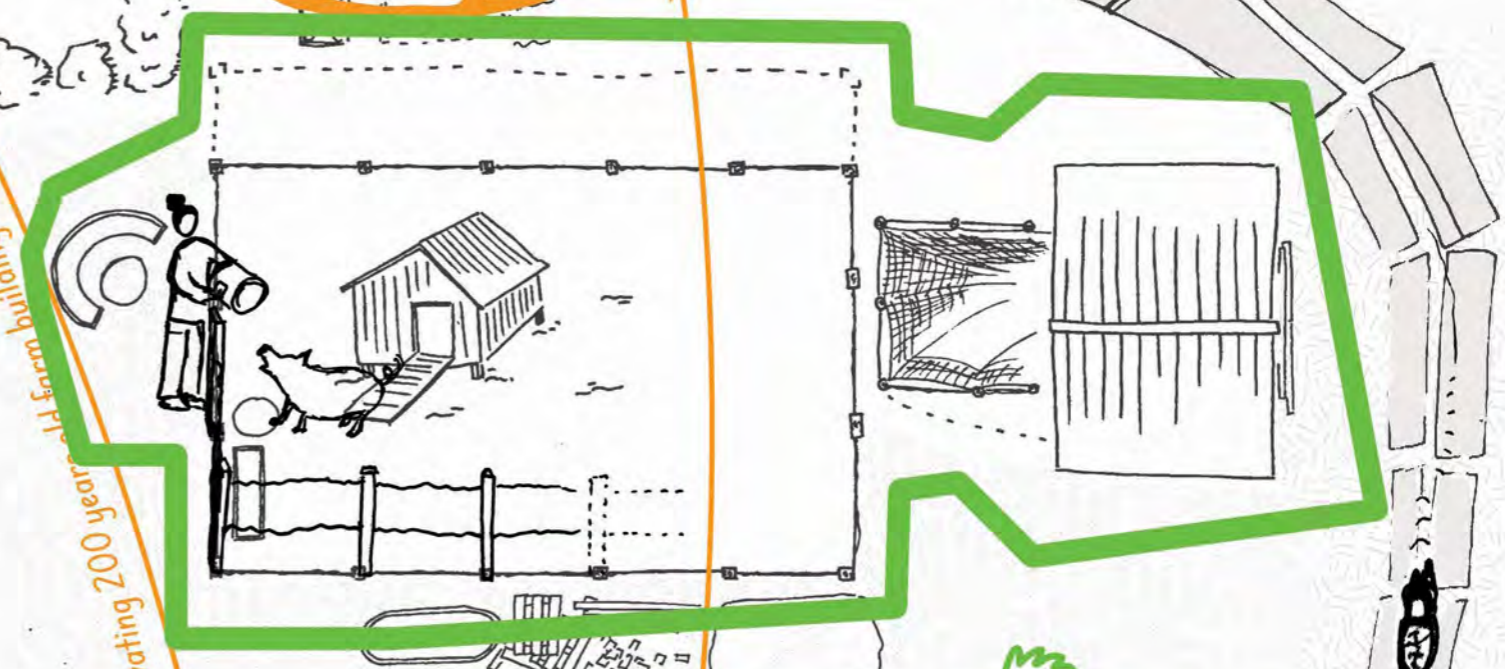
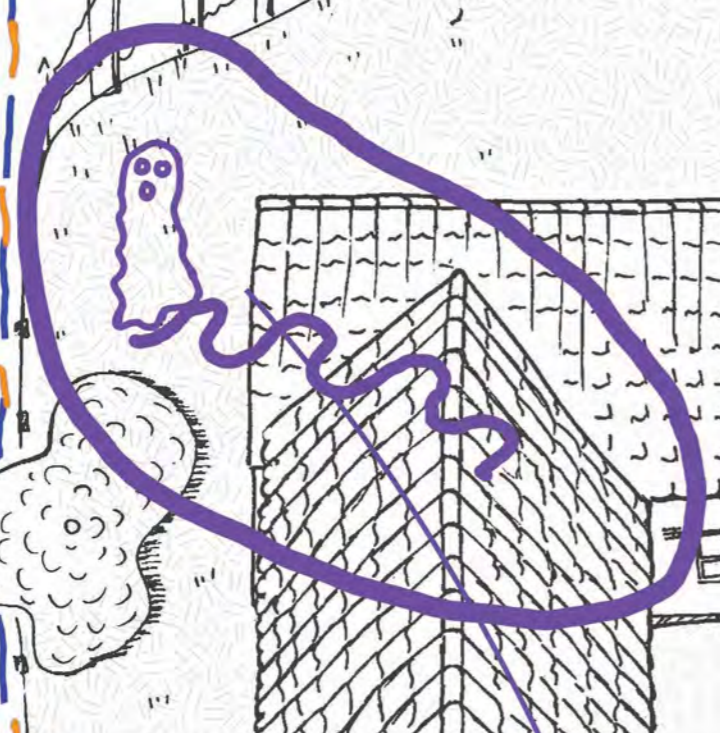
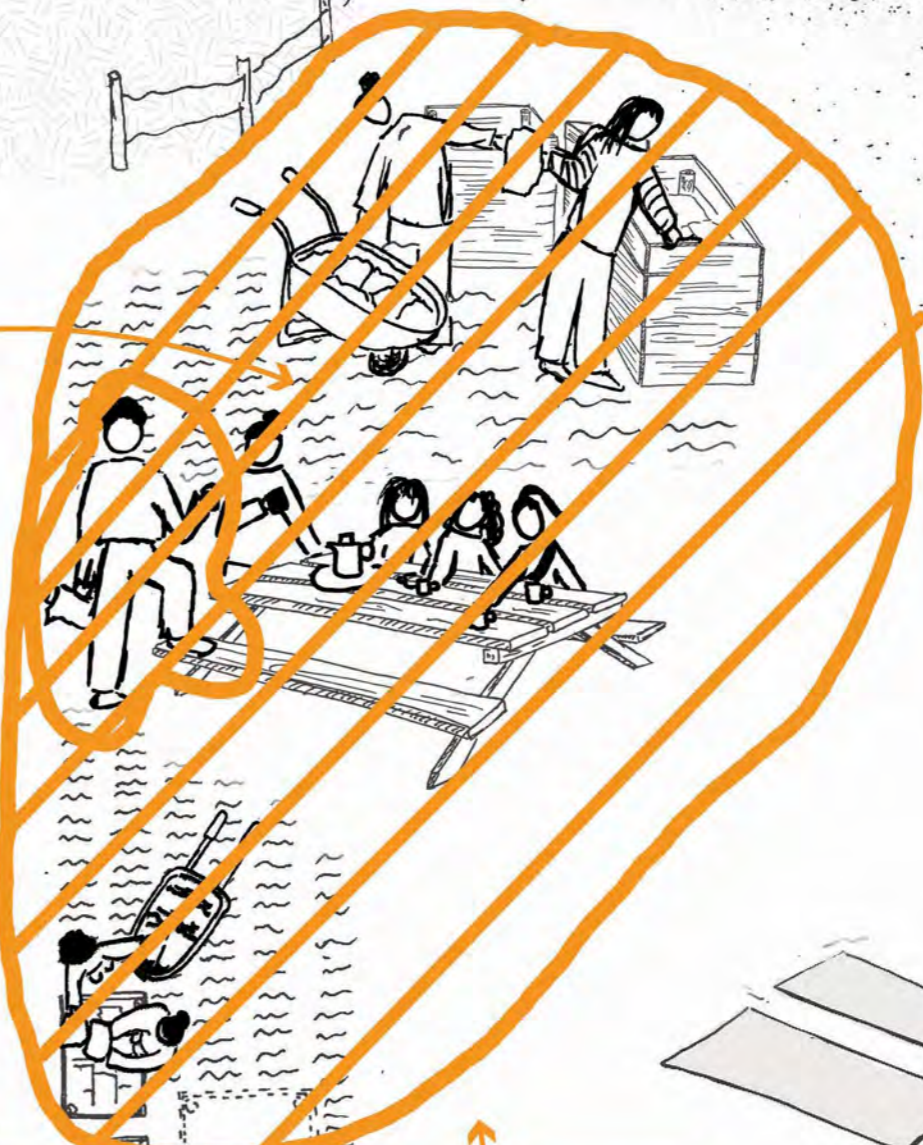
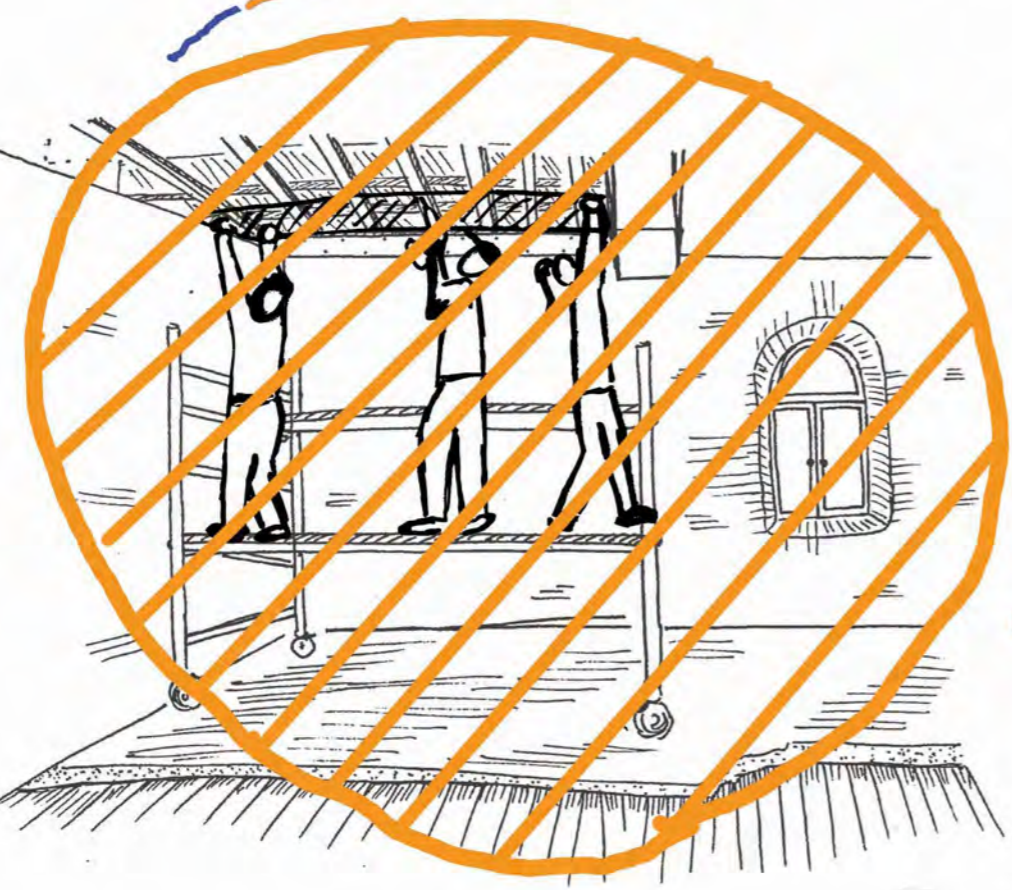
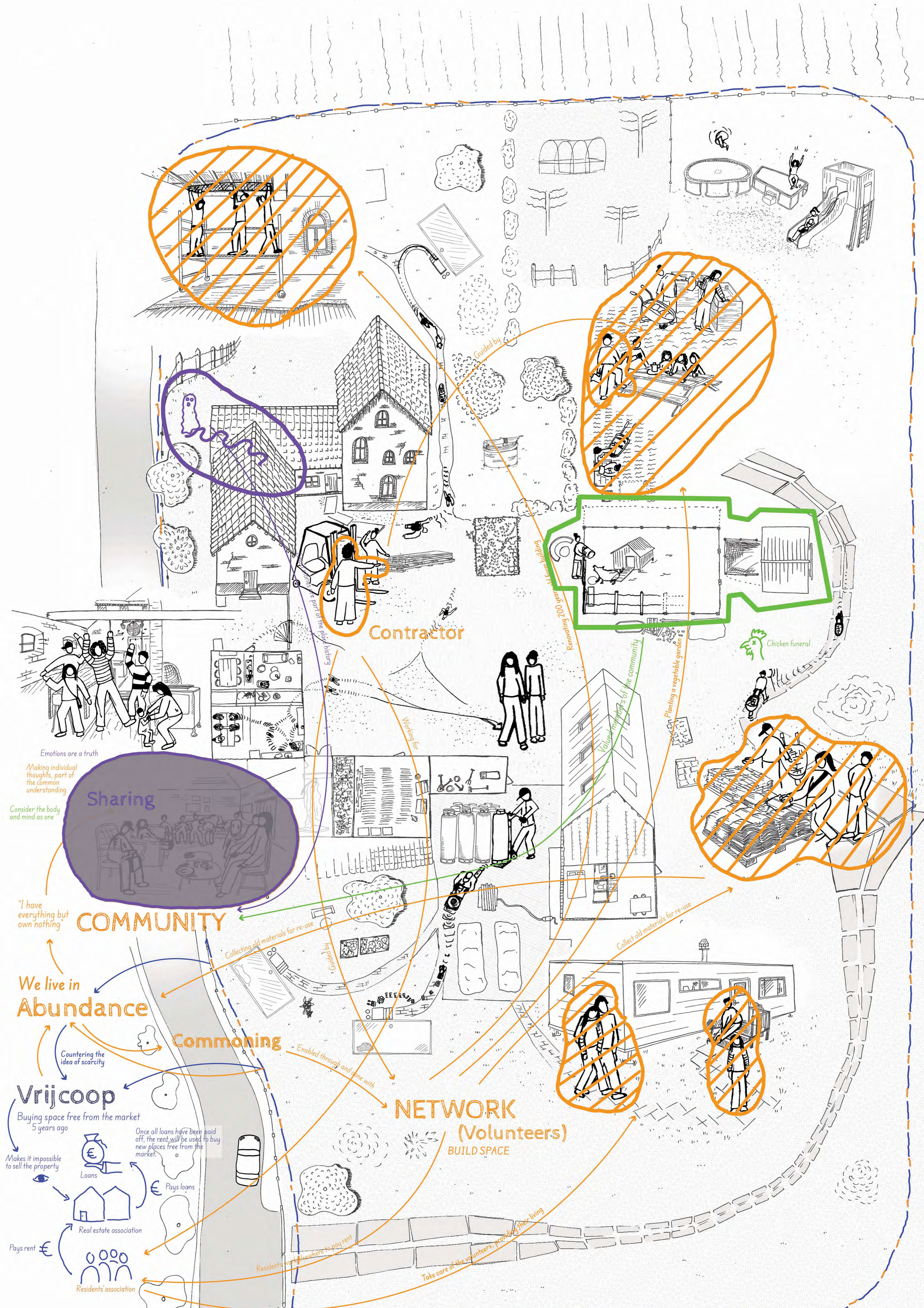
SCIENCE

- Intuition
- Objectivity



REAL

- Ontologies
- Seasons



Contractor



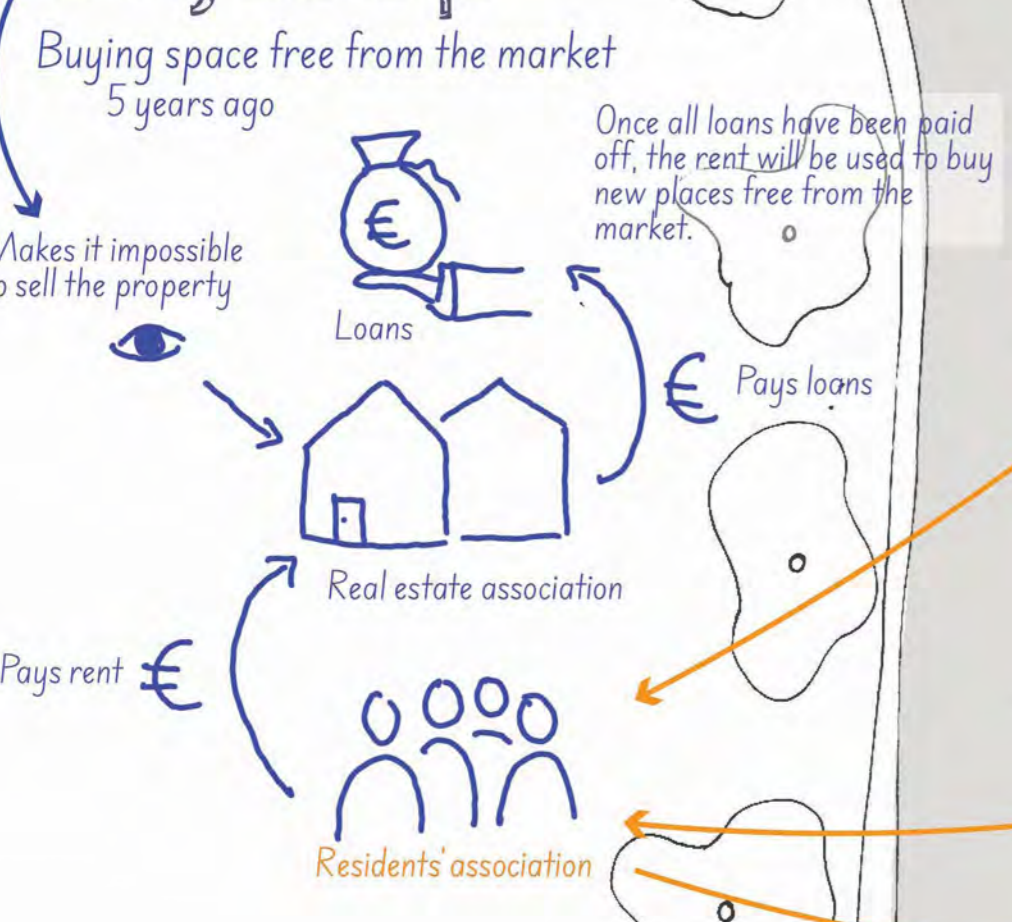
COMMUNITY

"I have everything but own nothing"

We live in Abundance

Commoning

Vrijcoop



NETWORK (Volunteers) BUILD SPACE



Chicken funeral

Planting a vegetable garden

Collect old materials for re-use

Collecting old materials for re-use

Guided by

Working for

Values traditions of the community

Renovating 200 years old farm building

Residents work elsewhere to pay rent

Take care of the volunteers, provide their living

Emotions are a truth

Making individual thoughts, part of the common understanding

Consider the body and mind as one

Sharing

We live in Abundance

Countering the idea of scarcity

Vrijcoop

Buying space free from the market 5 years ago

Makes it impossible to sell the property

Loans

Pays loans

Real estate association

Pays rent

Residents' association

Once all loans have been paid off, the rent will be used to buy new places free from the market.

NETWORK (Volunteers) BUILD SPACE



Chicken funeral

Planting a vegetable garden

Collect old materials for re-use

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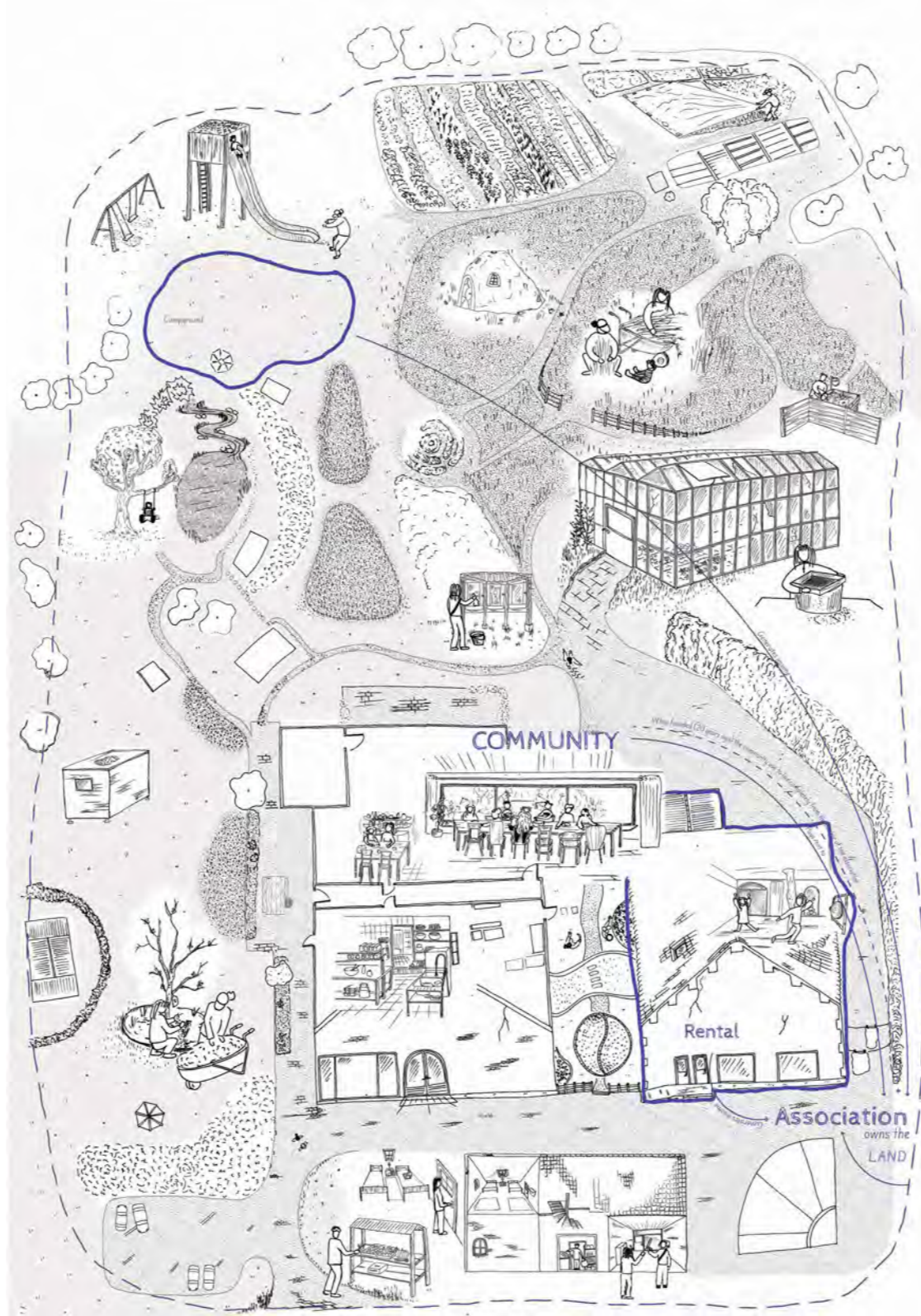
Pays rent

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NETWORK (Volunteers) BUILD SPACE

ECONOMY

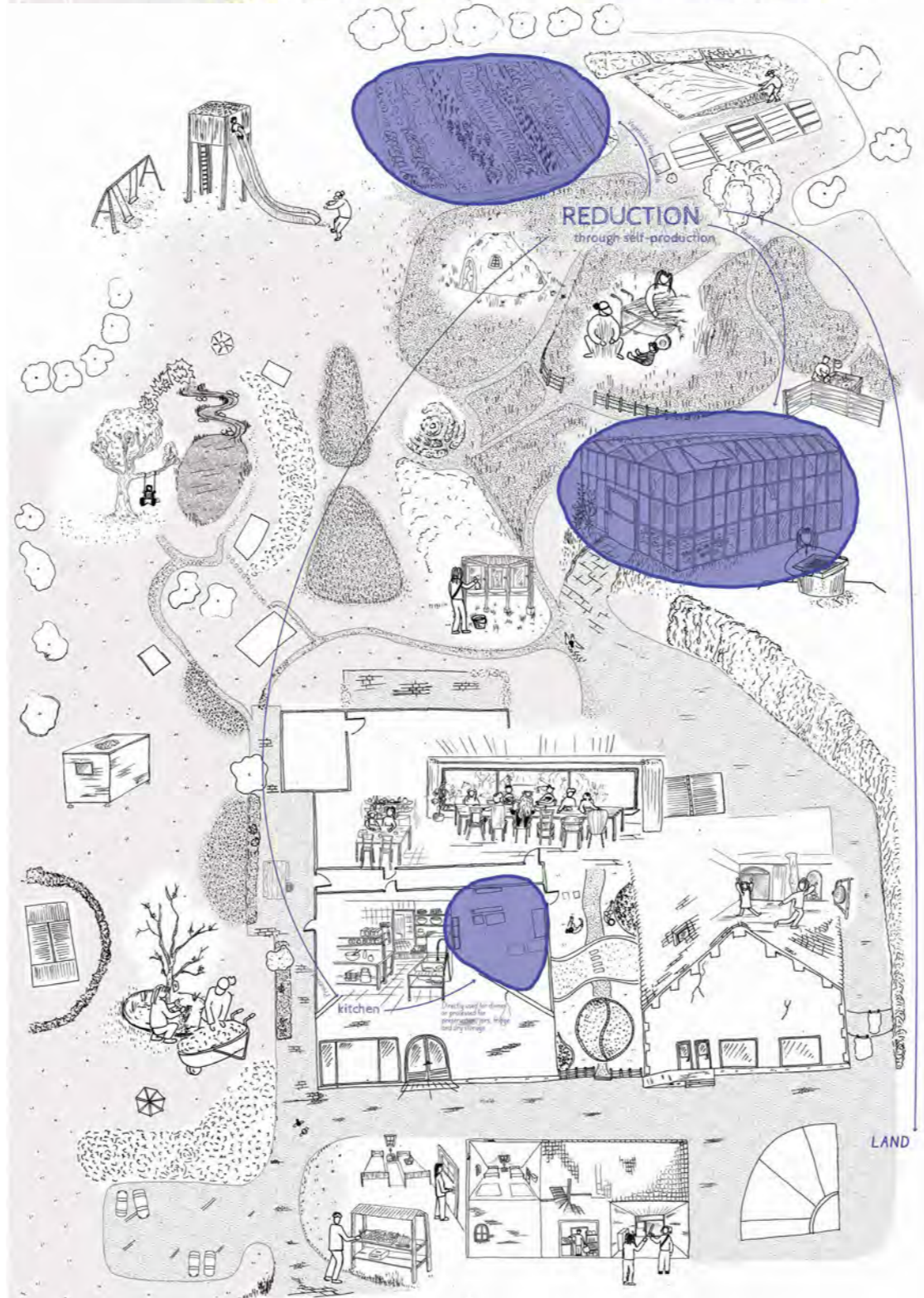


ASSOCIATION

The land is owned by an association, ensuring it remains collectively held. Residents use the land but do not own it, meaning they cannot sell or speculate with it, similar to the model used by "Renovating Ruins".

The association generates income through a rental house and campsite. In return, residents contribute labor to the association, which reduces their rent. This creates interdependence between the residents and the association's income.

Having existed for twenty years, the association has already paid off the land loans. As a result, residents now only pay rent to cover maintenance costs and the supplementary food they consume.



REDUCTION

Twenty years ago, the community was founded on the principle of complete self-sufficiency: growing all their own food and generating income, through the rental house and campsite, to cover additional costs like materials and seeds. This philosophy aimed to allow them to operate, at least partially, outside the capitalist system.

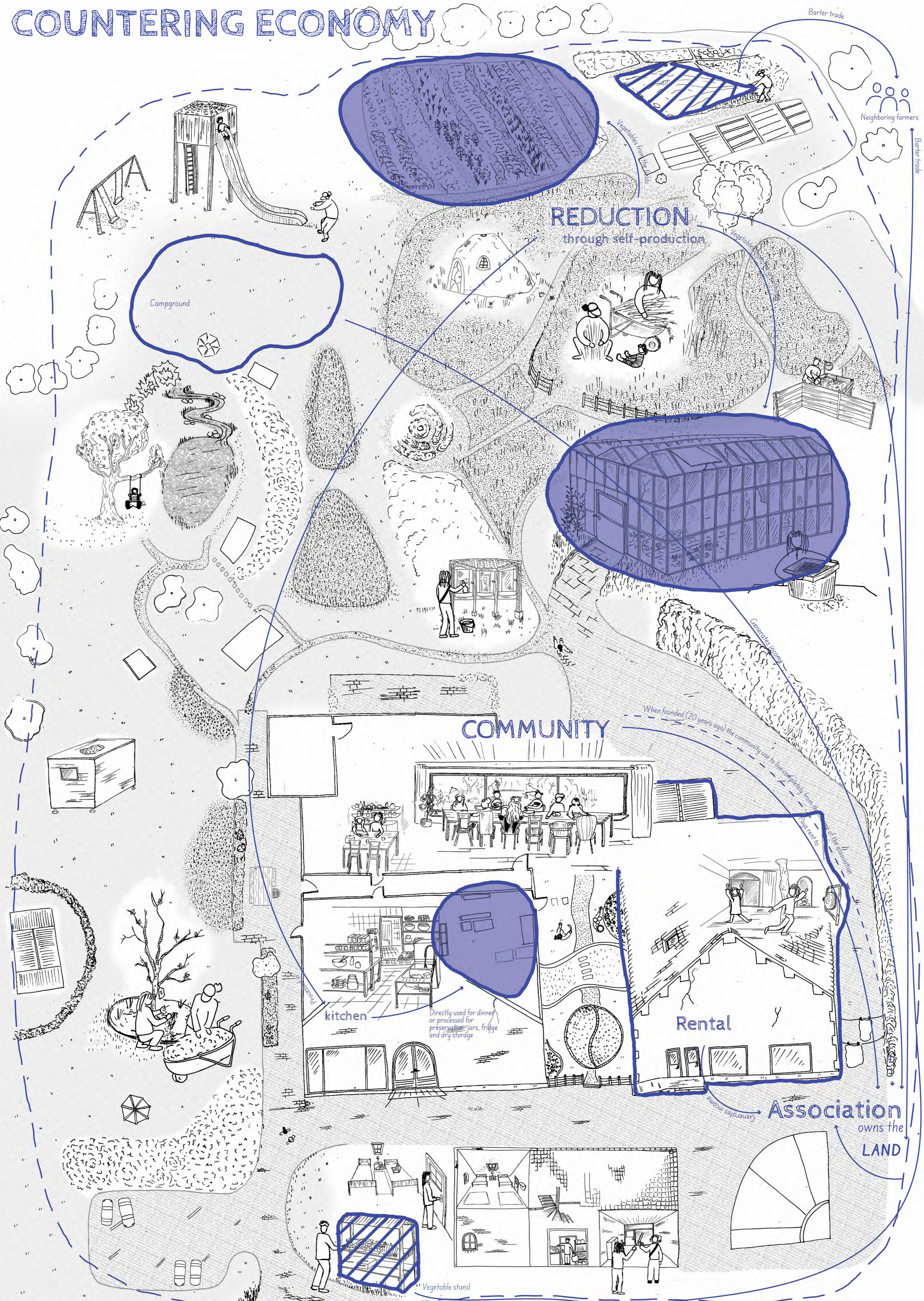
Today, to ease financial pressure on the association, residents also work external jobs. Yet, they still dedicate 20 to 25 hours a week to sustaining the community, focusing on tasks like farming, building maintenance, campsite management, and cleaning. Thanks to their efforts, they remain partly self-sufficient, reducing their reliance on the capitalist system.



BARTER TRADE

In addition to reducing their financial footprint through self-production, the community also reduces their involvement in the capitalistic system by using barter trade. They exchange their surplus harvest, grown on their land, for essentials like hundreds of liters of milk from a nearby dairy farm or wood chips needed for farming.

COUNTERING ECONOMY



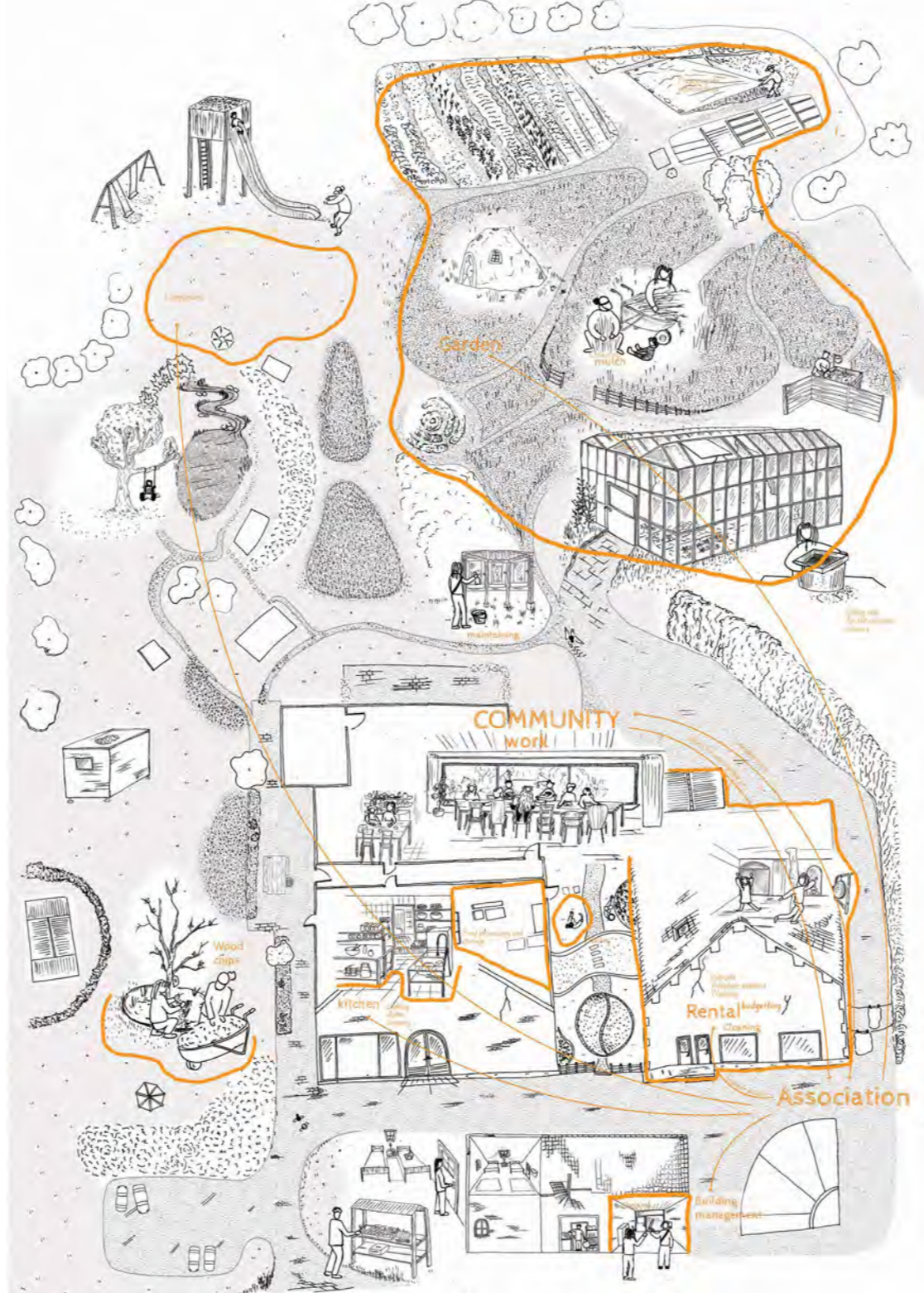
INDIVIDUAL



LAND

The community challenges the belief in individualism by collectively owning the land, living spaces, and shared structures such as the workshop room, atelier, workshop, playground, and greenhouse. Over the years, former residents have contributed to building these structures and left them as part of the commons for the community to use.

Private spaces are limited to residents' bedrooms, which may be located in the shared house, a caravan, or a tiny house on the property. During a visit, one resident was constructing his own section of the workshop. Upon further inquiry, it became clear that his goal was to create a functional workstation that would also be available for use by other residents.



WORK

The community collectively maintains the association that owns the land, helping to sustain part of their living costs and needs. This shared responsibility fosters direct interdependence among residents regarding the work that needs to be done. As a result, their livelihood depends more on communal structures than in previous cases; 'Compost Toilets' or 'Renovating Ruins.'

To manage the workload, residents are assigned specific responsibilities, such as overseeing food production, building maintenance, or the campsite. However, to prevent these responsibilities from placing too much pressure on any single individual, weekly meetings provide a space for members to voice their needs, ask for help, and discuss their roles within the community and its work. Whenever a resident requires assistance, others step in to share the load.



NETWORK

The network of volunteers plays a vital role in maintaining the land and meeting the association's needs, such as cleaning, greenhouse work, or farming. The community can host up to five short-term volunteers at a time, in addition to offering a few permanent volunteer rooms. For those interested in becoming residents, the process begins with an introductory period as a "permanent volunteer." This allows both the volunteer and the community to get to know each other. If the experience is positive for both sides and all residents approve, the volunteer may transition to full residency.

The community also organizes volunteer weekends, during which groups can come and help for the duration of the weekend. These weekends, with their larger volunteer turnout, allow the community to tackle more substantial tasks. Additionally, these events help expand the community's network, a valuable asset, as the network also contributes to the community's income. Former volunteers may return as renters of the 'rental house,' make contributions during volunteer weekends, or visit again to enjoy the campsite.

COUNTERING THE INDIVIDUAL



SCIENCE



INTUITION

The community counters the dualistic ontology separating nature and culture, by positioning themselves as a part of nature. This idea is partly translated by how their living comfort is dependent on seasonalities.

Because of the way in which the grounds are shaped; focusing on being outdoors because of divided and limited insulated building structures, social-spatial reproduction is shaped heavily by the seasons. To provide for their basic needs, the residents need to move through the forest; to go to the toilet, shower or living room and need to chop wood; to stay warm at night. Making their actions inevitably connected with the outdoor conditions.

OBJECTIVITY

The idea of being part of nature also translates into their actions, as they take response-ability* for their footprint. They do this by providing for their own energy needs and managing their own sewage system, while also highly valuing biodiversity.

They meet their energy demand with solar panels and woodstoves. Instead of traditional sewage systems, they use compost toilets and treatment wetlands. Their housing is elevated from the ground to preserve ground life, and bricks are scattered around the land for insects and other animals to use.

* a central tenet of Donna Haraway, her posthumanist philosophy, signifying the cultivated capacity to respond to and with other beings in a damaged world.

COUNTERING SCIENCE



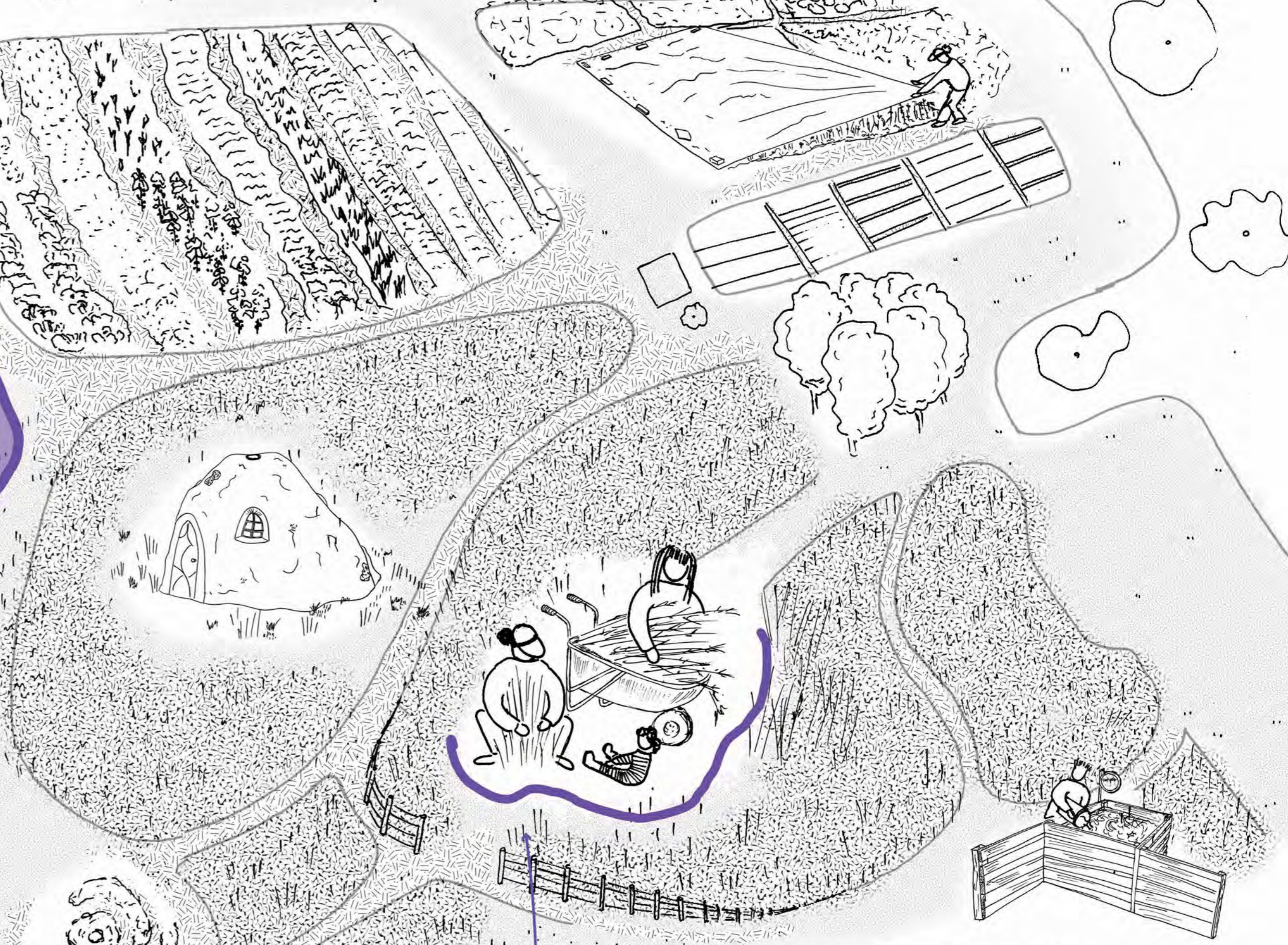
Playing in the playground



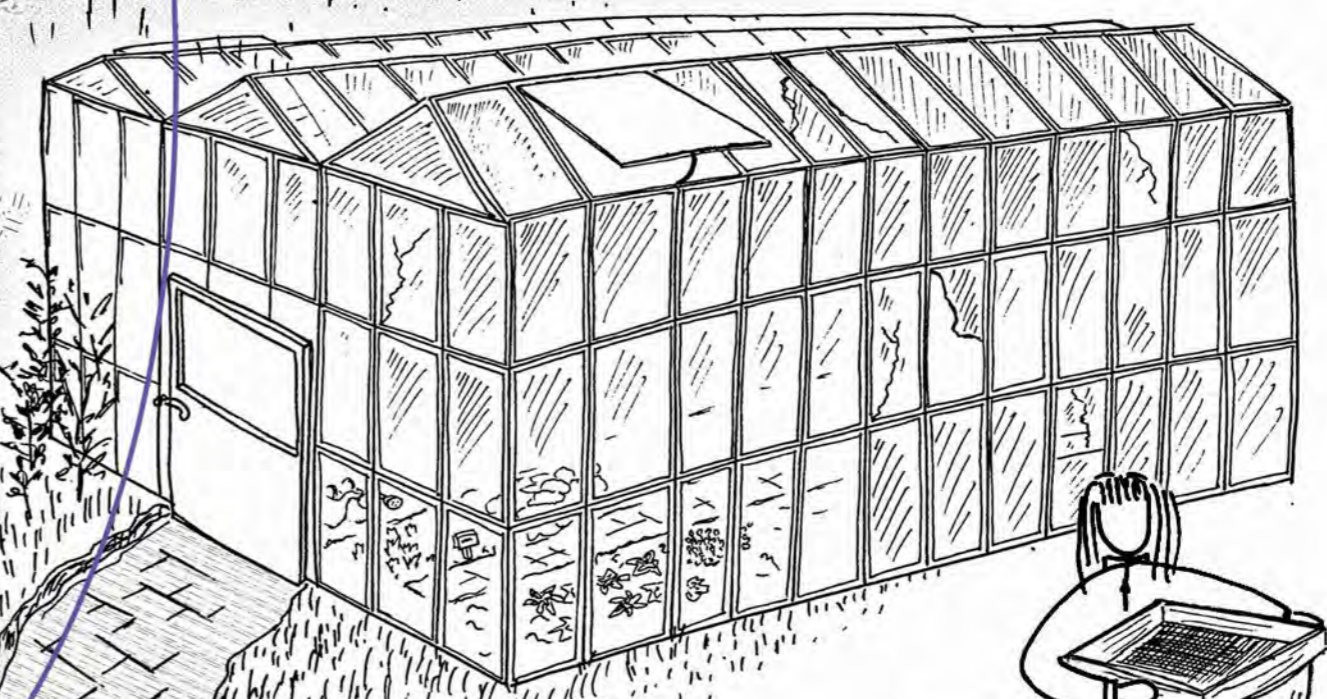
Swinging on swing

Following your intuition and responding to its needs

Relaxing in the sauna



Relaxing in the sauna

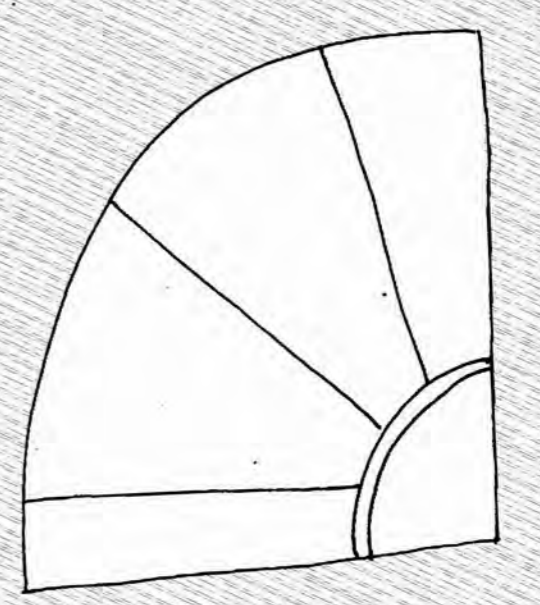
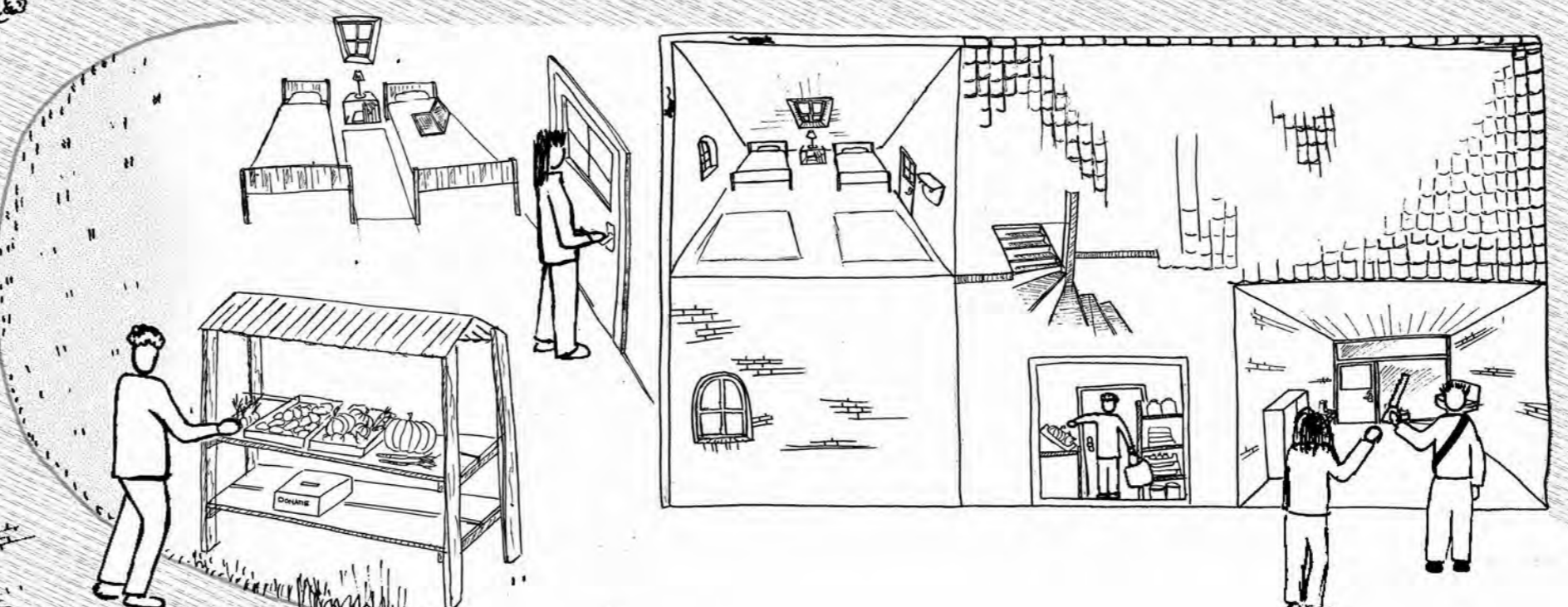
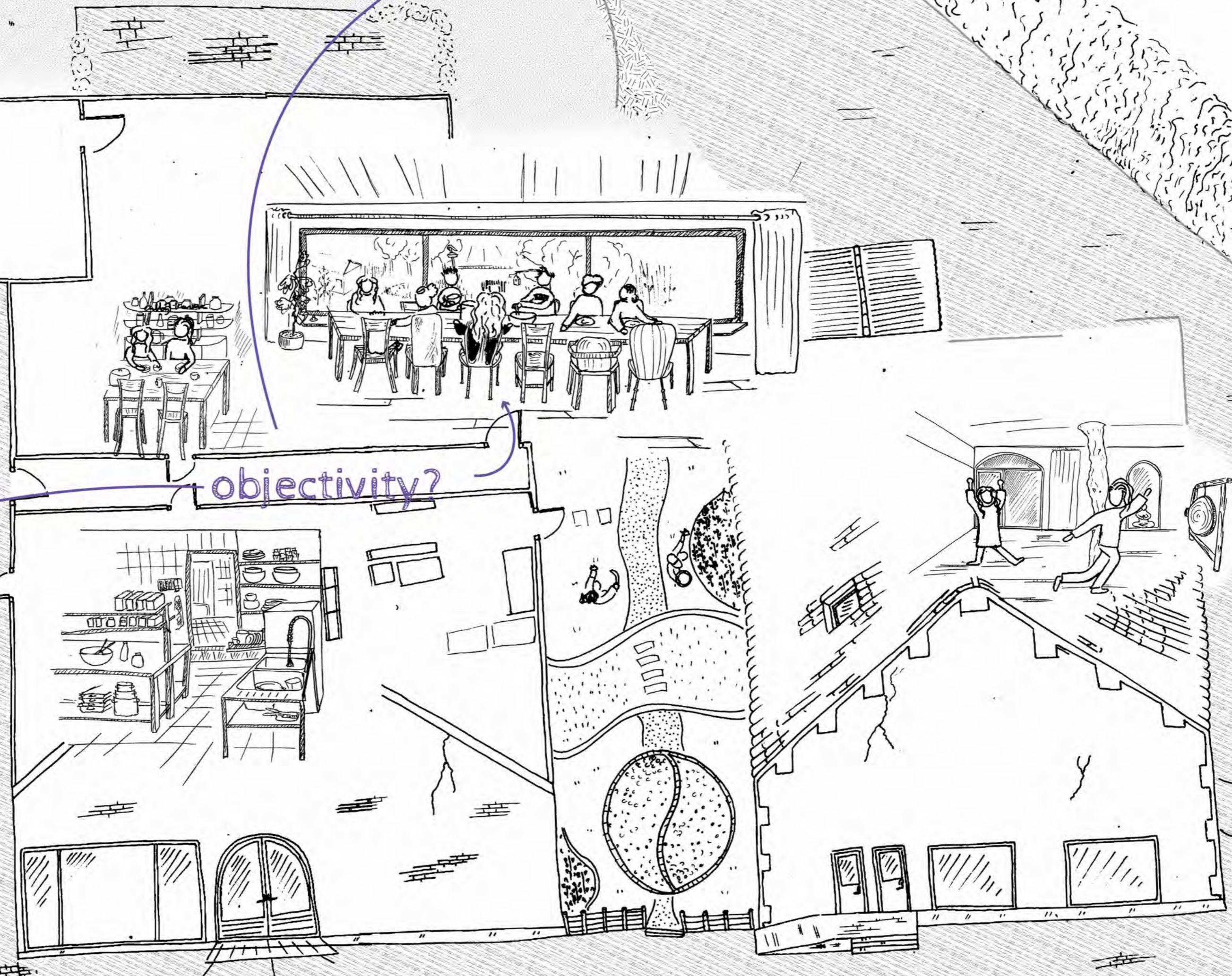


objectivity?

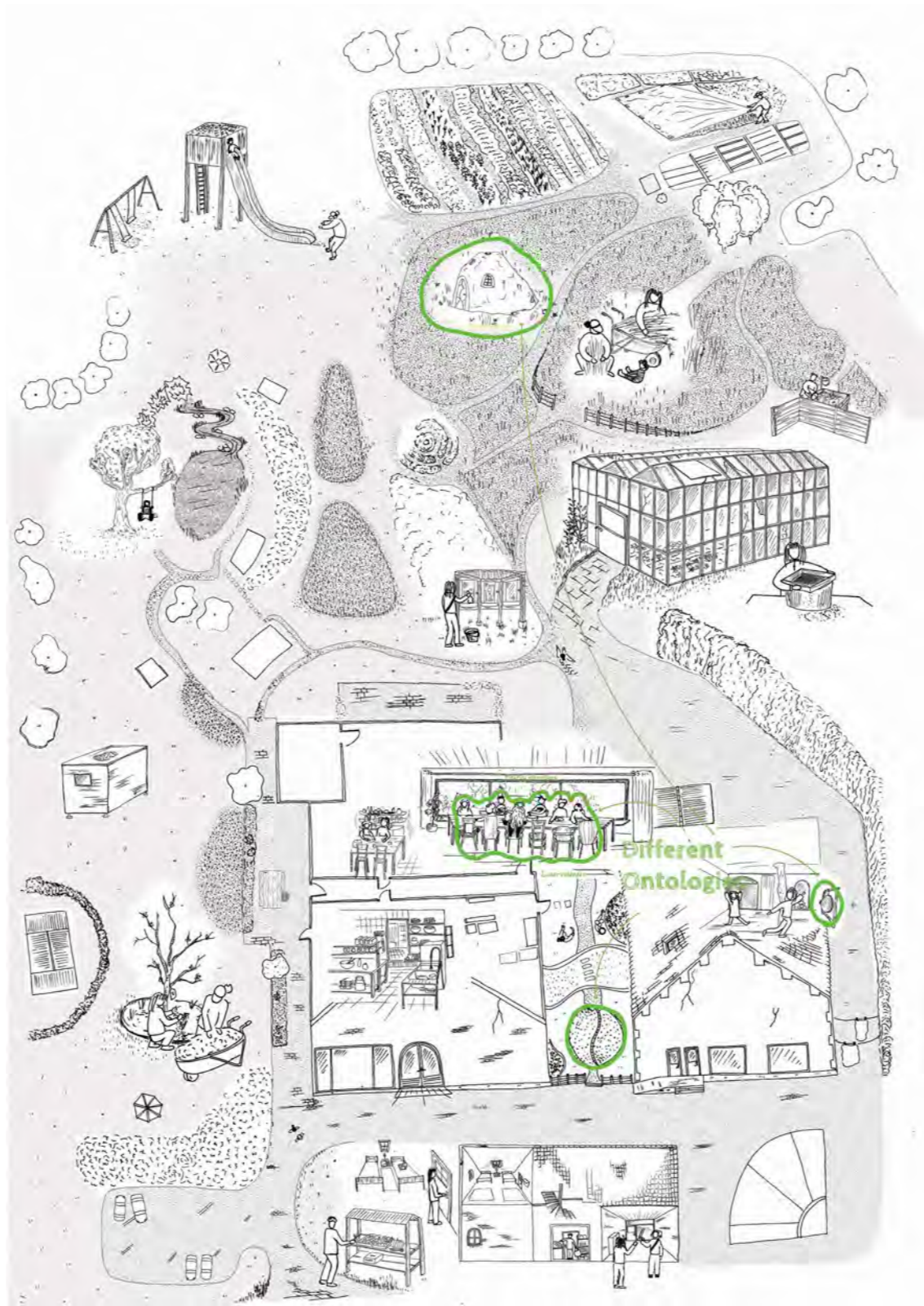
Anthroposensitive approach



Anthroposensitive approach



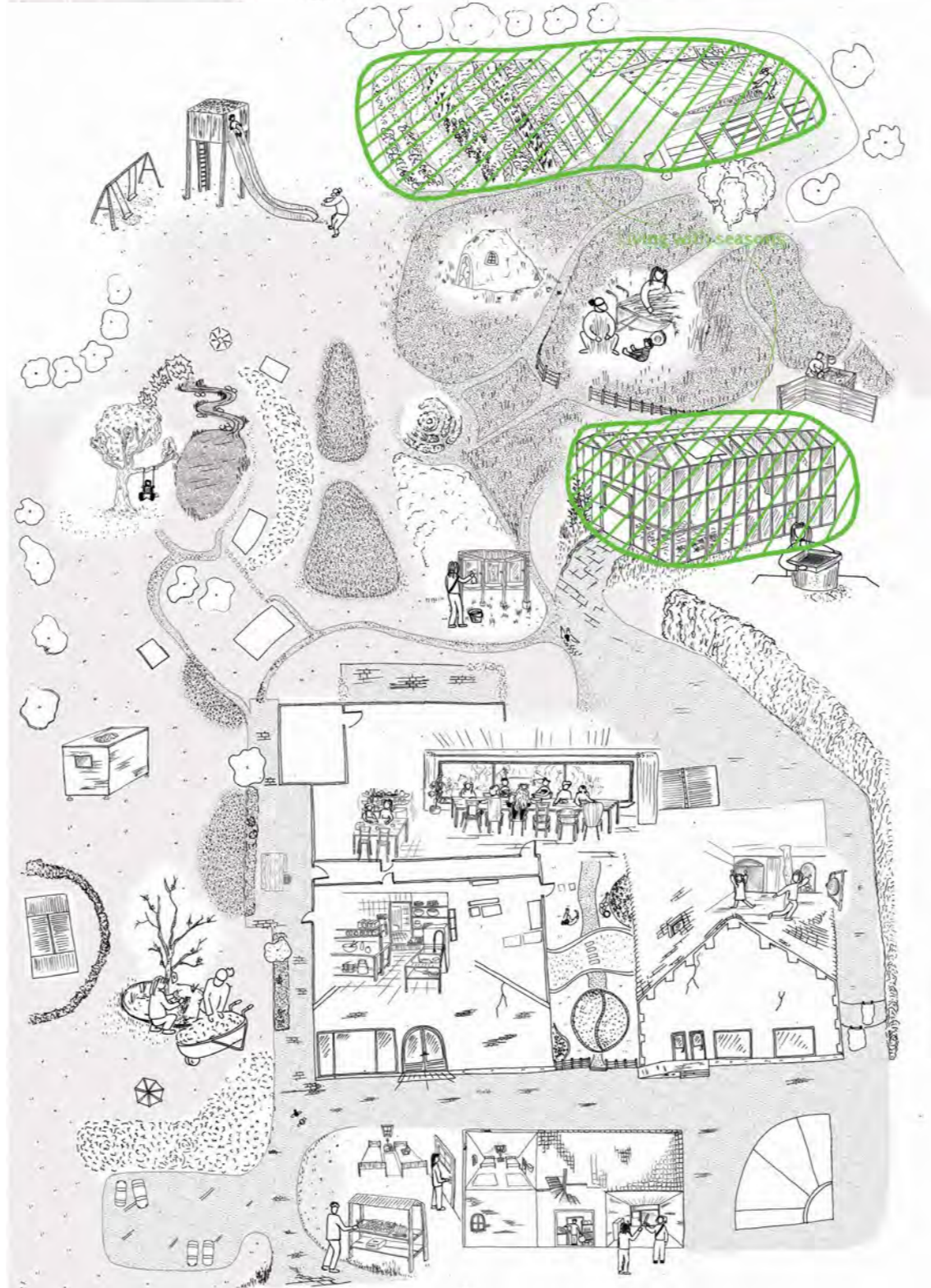
REAL REAL REAL



ONTOLOGIES

The community challenges conventional notions of 'the real' by embracing diverse and varied belief systems. These perspectives often reject dualistic ontologies, such as the separations between nature and culture, mind and body, or "us" versus "them." Their imaginaries are rich and plural, ranging from beliefs in energy vibrations to lunar calendars and other non-dualistic worldviews.

Symbols of these belief systems are scattered across the land. Examples include the meditation egg, the Yin-Yang symbol embedded in the pavement, Buddhist statues, a Buddhist gong, dreamcatchers, and bone structures.

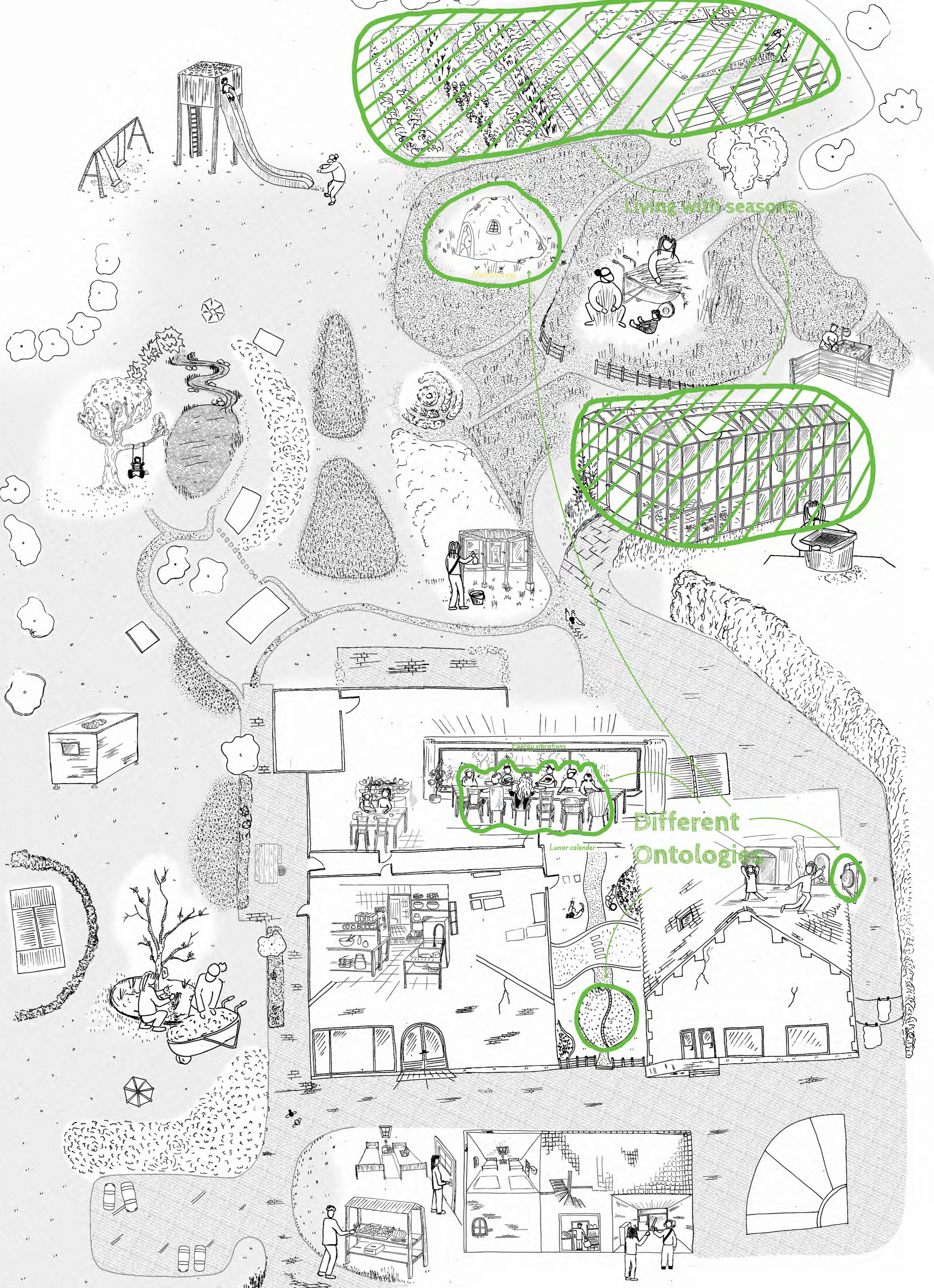


SEASONS

The community challenges the separation between "nature" and "culture" by intertwining their social-spatial reproduction with the land they inhabit, living (at least partially) from its fruits. Their farming practices make them dependent on the health and condition of their soil.

This deep connection has turned the residents into active and aware stewards of their surroundings. They nurture the land and intentionally support other-than-human life, whether by building nesting structures or leaving out food.

COUNTERING THE REAL



Living with seasons

Medicine egg

Different Ontologies

Family vibrations

Lunar calendar

STORR

FROM EMBODIMENT TO THE ROOT

Reflecting on the Narrative Drawings through the theoretical lens of Modernity has revealed key aspects of the communities' social-spatial reproduction. These insights, combined with the lived experiences documented in diary writings, have been translated into the 'roots' that align with the practices and ethos of each community. Roots meaning; core principles.

The root "Use over Property" emerged from the Compost Toilets community, as this philosophy underpins their establishment and is deeply embedded in their daily routines. As part of the broader squatting network, the residents are united by squatter imaginaries, where "Use over Property" is seen as essential to enabling people to live. In this community, they enable use in various ways, such as reclaiming land, hosting events and visitors, or repurposing materials that others discard.

The theme "Sharing is Caring" was uncovered during the theoretical reflection on the Narrative Drawing of Renovating Ruins. While sharing was already evident as a central aspect of the community's social interactions, the reflection highlighted its indispensable role in countering Modernity. By beginning each day with a sharing round and organizing closing circles when volunteers leave, the practice of sharing (and its natural outcome of caring) is an essential aspect of the community's social-spatial reproduction.

For Strawberry Fields, the root is "Reduction through Self-Production", meaning reducing dependence on Modernistic (capitalistic) systems by meeting as many of their needs as possible through self-sufficiency. This root is based in a community idea: "We might live in abundance, but it is also good to be sober." It reflects their practices of partial self-sustainment through their association and farming.

The roots serve -aside from the embodied knowledge which is captured in the memory of the 'lived body' of this author and therefore not translated on paper- as a guideline for the next phase in the process of this thesis. This method of translation prevents the embodied experience from being reduced into separated spatial aspects that subsequently are being projected onto a completely different context. By working through 'roots', the social-spatial meaning of a theme can transform according to the context in which it is used. Therefore, they are formulated in such a way that they can still be widely interpreted but capture the key aspect of the embodied prefigurative practices.

REFERENCES

GEN NL. (n.d.). *Ecodorpenkaart van Nederland*. Retrieved December 10, 2025, from <https://gen-nl.nl/overaichtskaart-alle-initiatieven/>

Peters, E. (2025). *Ecovillages in Dutch context: Different clusters of ecovillages from a geographical perspective* (Master's thesis, Wageningen University & Research).

Dear reader,

What?

The embodied experience has been documented and spatialized.

How?

Through diary writings, Narrative Drawings and Roots.

Why?

To explore methods of spatializing embodied knowledge (Narrative Drawings) and enable further spatial exploration in different contexts (Roots).

So...

Time to continue spatial explorations...

Lets explore...

EXPLORATION

CONTENT

RADICAL SPATIAL IMAGINATIONS	2
LOCATION CHOICE	3
SHARING IS CARING	5-9
REDUCTION THROUGH SELF PRODUCTION	11-15
USE OVER PROPERTY	17-21
IMAGINATIONS, A METHOD OF DECONSTRUCTION	22
ACTION - Chef	23-.....

CHAPTER STRUCTURE

The Explorations start with an intuitive drawing exercise showcasing which associations arise with the 'Root'. Afterwards these associations are explored further in the context of the neighborhood through a continuation of sketches and/or thought cycles. Based on these intuitive drawings, an overall imaginary is compiled which showcases a possible perception of the space and raises questions for further exploration.

RADICAL SPATIAL IMAGINATIONS

"Radical spatial imaginations are a design method that enable designers and communities to envision spatial pasts, presents or future beyond the limits of existing political, institutional, and epistemic frameworks" (Luque Martin, 2026). During this thesis the method of radical imaginations has been applied to envision presents and futures, which translate the themes derived from the embodied experience.

In doing so the method "unsettles dominant spatial assumptions" (Luque Martin, 2026), by awakening/raising questions, through reconfiguring spatial configurations. This practice serves as a starting point for more in dept critical reflection, further explorations and research.

Radical imagination has been practiced through the creation of drawings, but also as part of physical action. Both processes have been in parallel to each other and informed each other.

Drawing has been practiced to question space by conceiving it through knowledge rooted in the embodied experience, instead of in Modernity. This has been expressed onto three imaginary boards, each primarily focusing on one theme and giving rise to questions for further research.

Action has been practiced through the lived space; creating/shaping space by living it. This has been expressed through starting a design collective and the construction of a collective workspace, through and from which they can build their prefigurative practice. While building this practice, futures are imagined, embodied and enacted.

LOCATION CHOICE

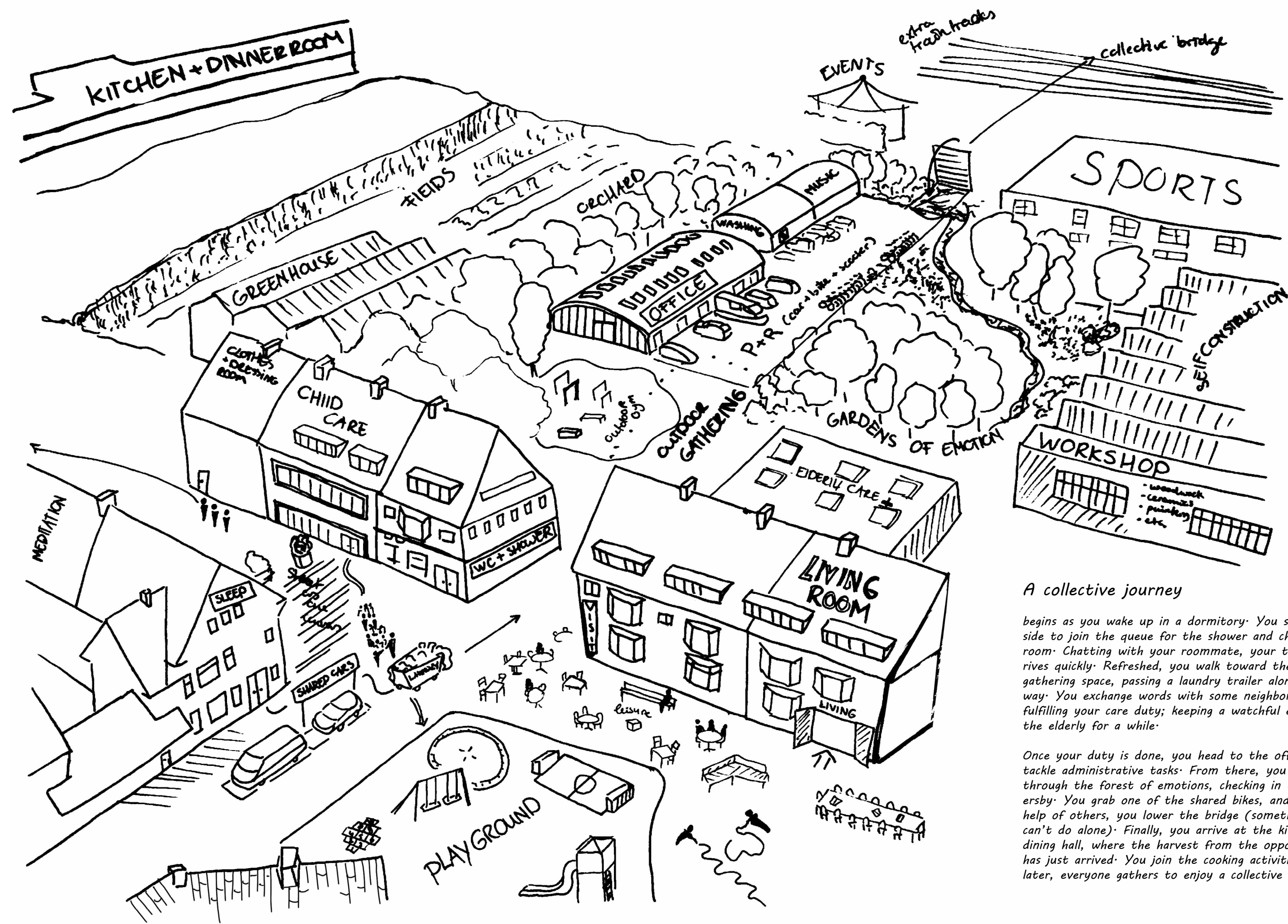
As the thesis focusses on the value of the lived space, the created imaginaries are located around the everyday lived space of the author, in her neighborhood in Rotterdam (Rotterdam North)¹. Therefore, the themes are projected onto a location in which the lived experience of the author aligns with the theme;

1. "Sharing is Caring"; the view on which the imaginary is projected encompasses the shared house of the author.
2. "Reduction through self-production": because of this theme's link to food production, the imaginary is drawn on the location of the neighborhood supermarket, the author often visits.
3. "Use over property": this imaginary is located on a fenced off piece of empty land, the author always passes by. This fenced off land is a clear example of how property (through fencing) clearly unables use.

¹ Locations will not be further specified due to privacy concerns.



SHARING IS CARING



A collective journey

begins as you wake up in a dormitory. You step outside to join the queue for the shower and changing room. Chatting with your roommate, your turn arrives quickly. Refreshed, you walk toward the outdoor gathering space, passing a laundry trailer along the way. You exchange words with some neighbors before fulfilling your care duty; keeping a watchful eye on the elderly for a while.

Once your duty is done, you head to the office to tackle administrative tasks. From there, you wander through the forest of emotions, checking in with passersby. You grab one of the shared bikes, and with the help of others, you lower the bridge (something you can't do alone). Finally, you arrive at the kitchen and dining hall, where the harvest from the opposite field has just arrived. You join the cooking activities, and later, everyone gathers to enjoy a collective dinner.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

What is the optimal number of shared vehicles (e.g., cars, bikes) needed to meet the transport demands of a neighborhood?

How would designated collective movement corridors influence residents' movement choices?

What would be the long-term social and psychological effects if bunk beds or shared sleeping arrangements became the norm for certain age groups?

How would shared or organized queuing systems shape the atmosphere and social dynamics of a neighborhood?

How would neighborhood-based care systems affect social networks and class divisions?

How could neighborhoods organize to provide their own childcare and elderly care?

What time commitment would this require from each resident to sustain such a system?

How much residential space could be saved if private living areas (bedrooms, living rooms, bathrooms) were replaced with shared communal spaces?

How would the design and function of streets change if social use took priority over infrastructural use?

How would local facilities work in connection to regional facilities? Would their be regional facilities?

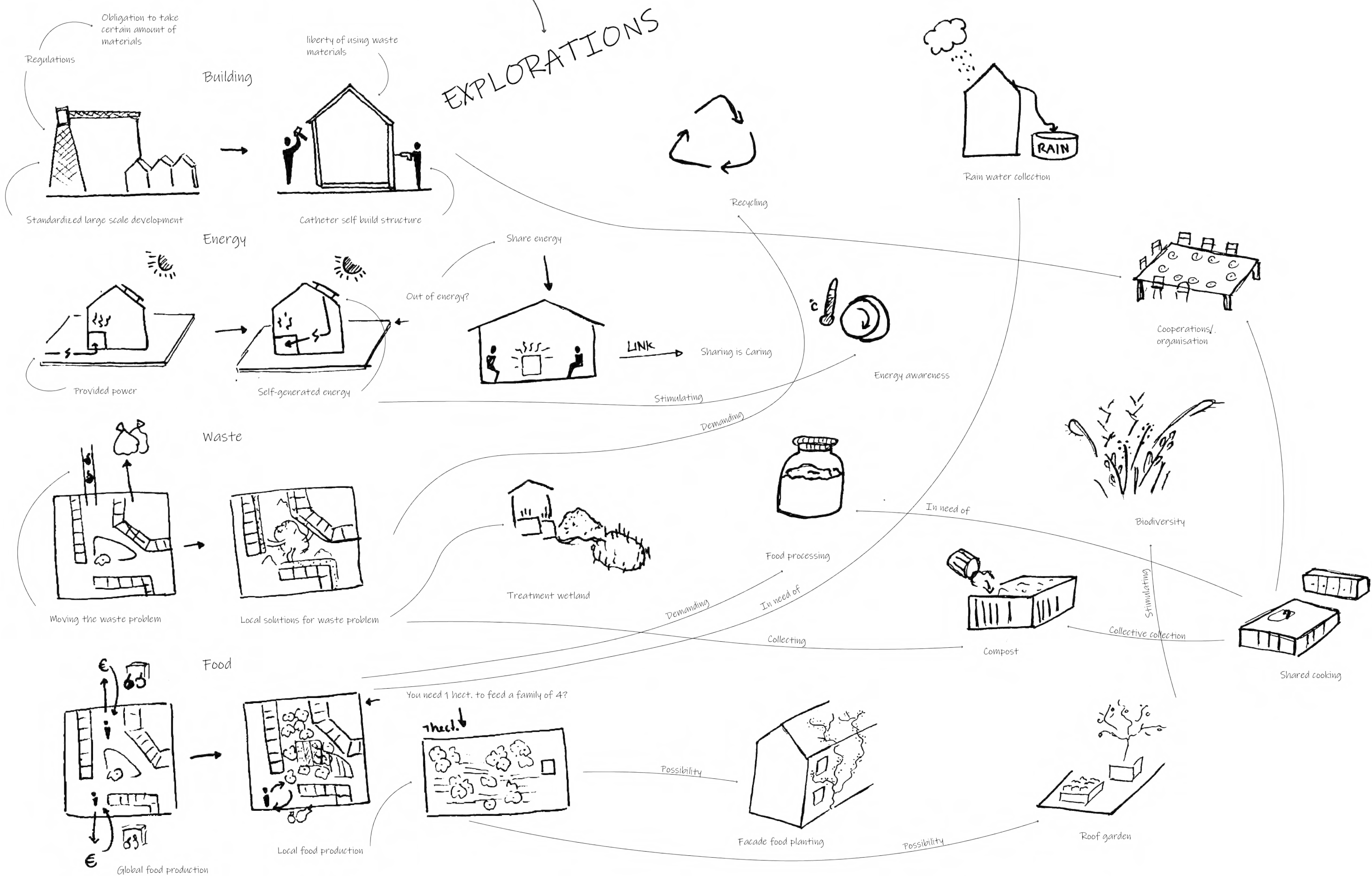
What would be the long-term social and psychological effects if bunk beds or shared sleeping arrangements became the norm for certain age groups?

How could emotional states be nurtured by social-spatial compositions?

THOUGHTS

*REDUCTION
THROUGH
SELF PRODUCTION*

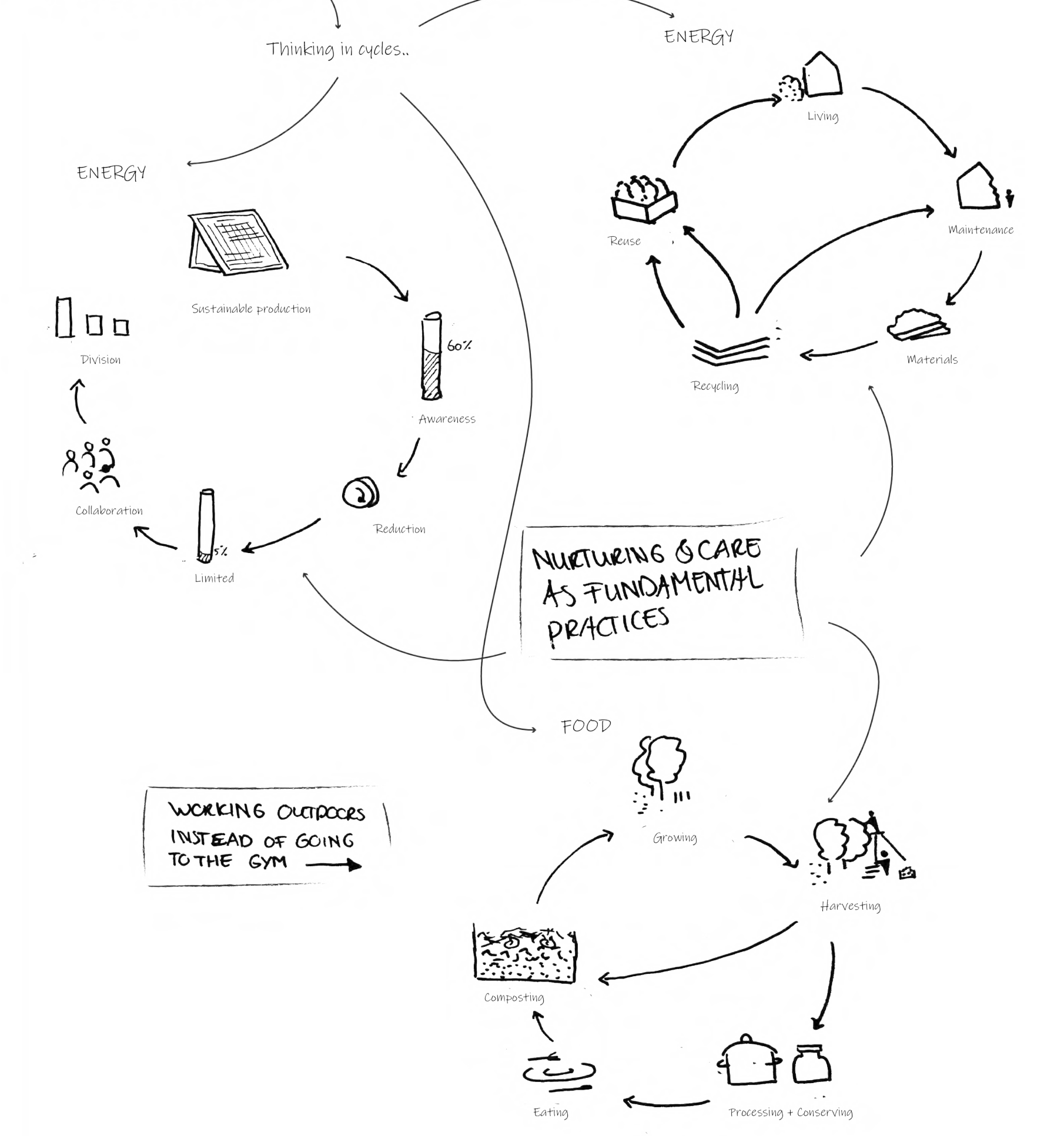
What would be examples of selfproduction?

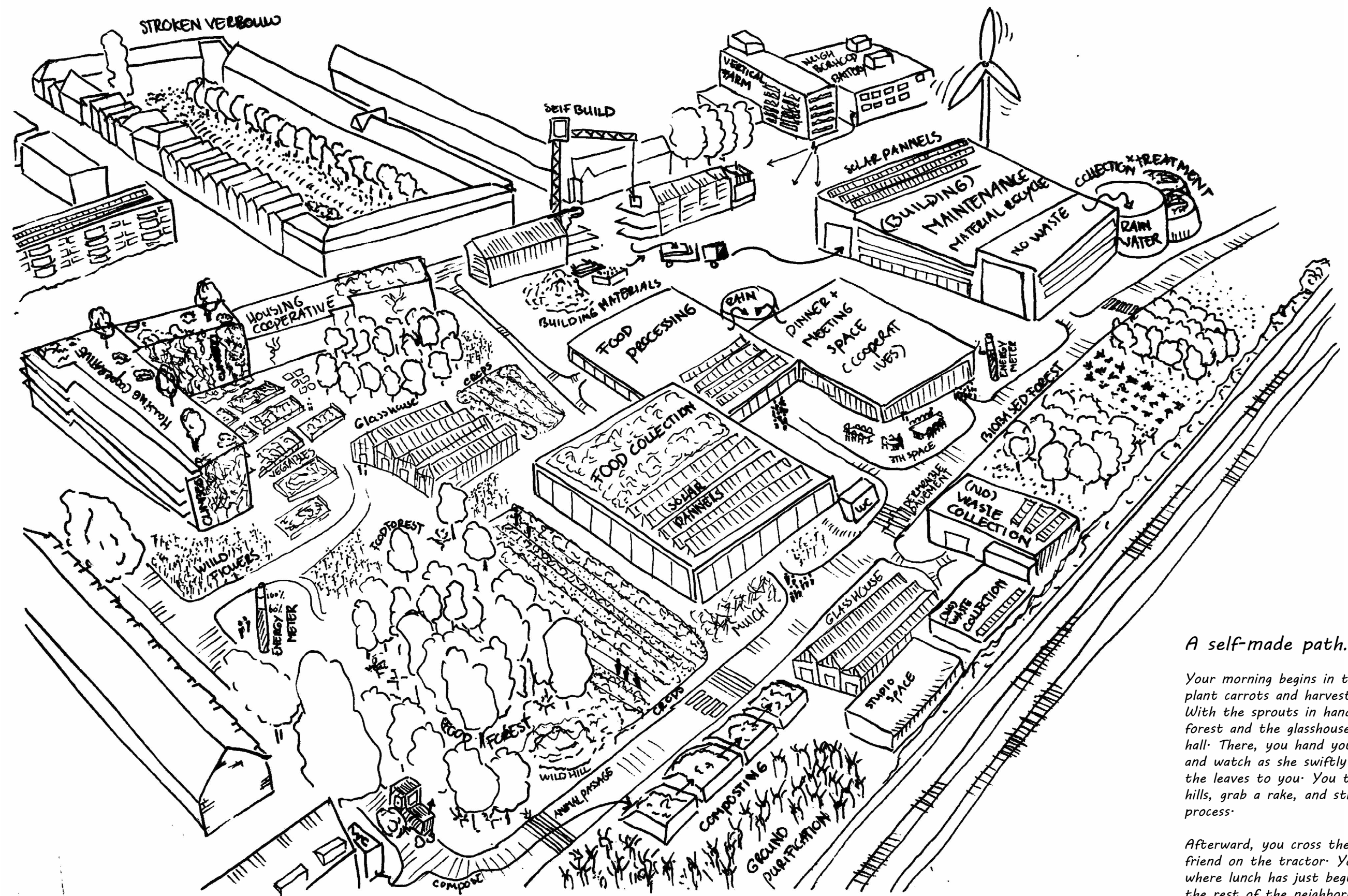


LOCATION



IMAGINARIES



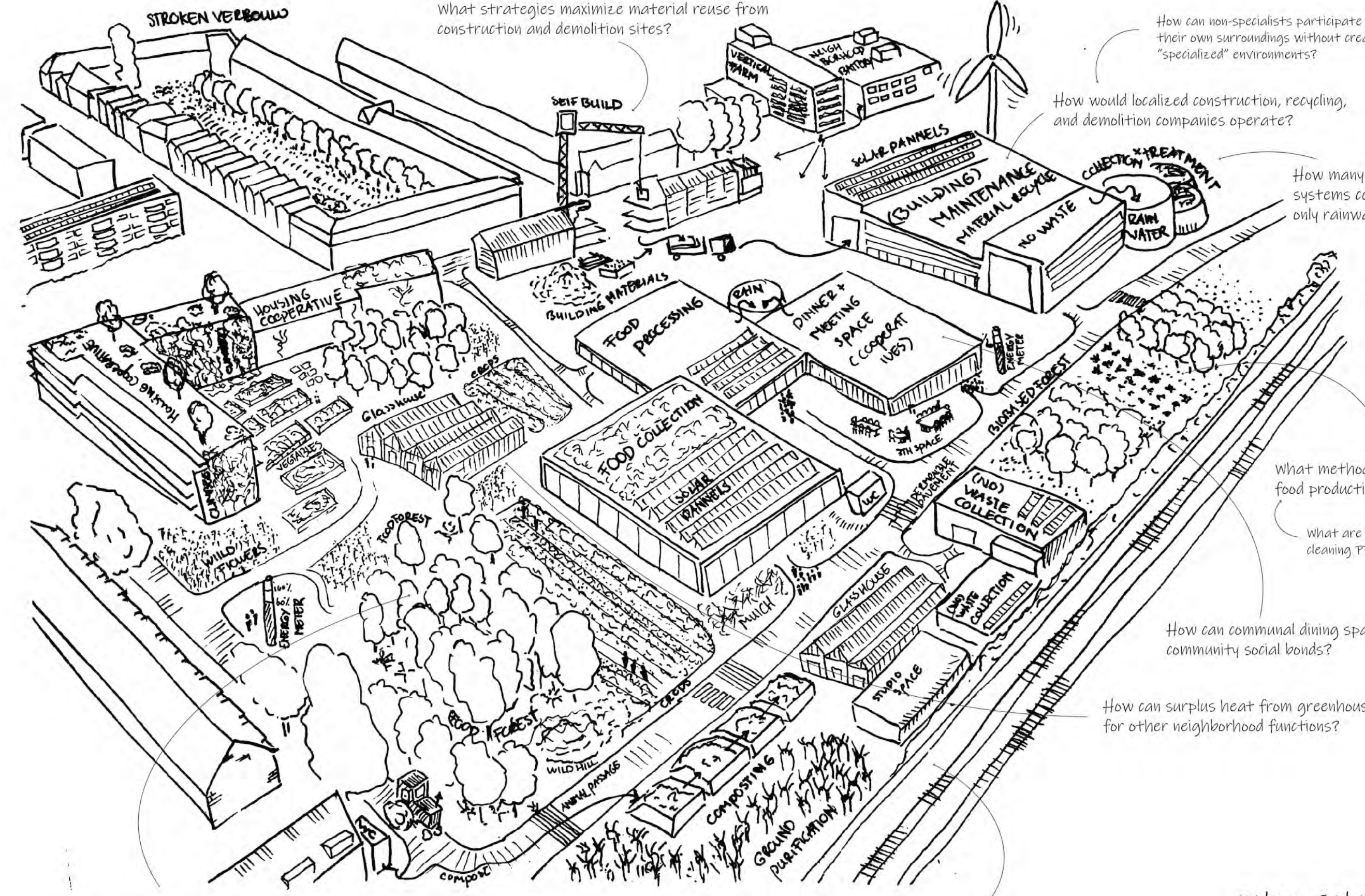


A self-made path...

Your morning begins in the vegetable fields, where you plant carrots and harvest the last of the sprouts. With the sprouts in hand, you walk past the food forest and the glasshouses toward the food processing hall. There, you hand your harvest to your neighbor and watch as she swiftly trims the sprouts, returning the leaves to you. You take them to the compost hills, grab a rake, and stir the pile to speed up the process.

Afterward, you cross the road again, waving to your friend on the tractor. You head to the dinner hall, where lunch has just begun, and enjoy the meal with the rest of the neighborhood. With a full stomach, you visit the recycling hall. Inside, a team has just started deconstructing large facade elements to transform them into a coffee bar. As you pass the large-scale arrangements, you reach the small-scale compositions. Your eye catches a beautiful chair, one you'd love to have. You reserve it at the counter, and it will be delivered to your place tomorrow.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION



What strategies maximize material reuse from construction and demolition sites?

How can non-specialists participate in building and dismantling their own surroundings without creating "specialized" environments?

How would localized construction, recycling, and demolition companies operate?

How many neighborhood greywater systems could be sustained using only rainwater?

What methods allow safe food production on polluted soil?

What are effective techniques for cleaning PFAS-contaminated soil?

How can communal dining spaces strengthen community social bonds?

How can surplus heat from greenhouses be repurposed for other neighborhood functions?

What are the physical health effects on a community that produces its own resources?

How does farming impact muscle development, and how does this compare to gym-based strength training?

How would people's attitudes toward their environment change if they became dependent on their immediate surroundings?

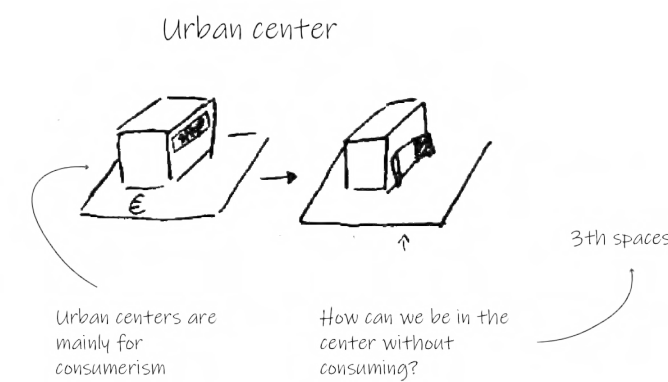
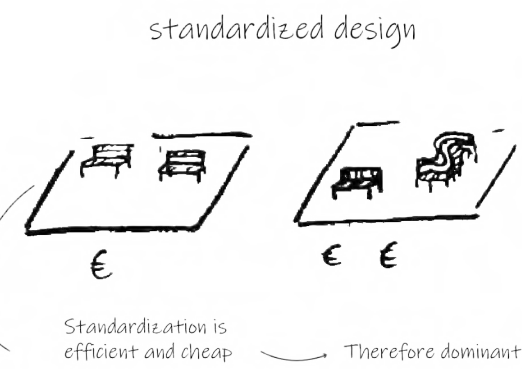
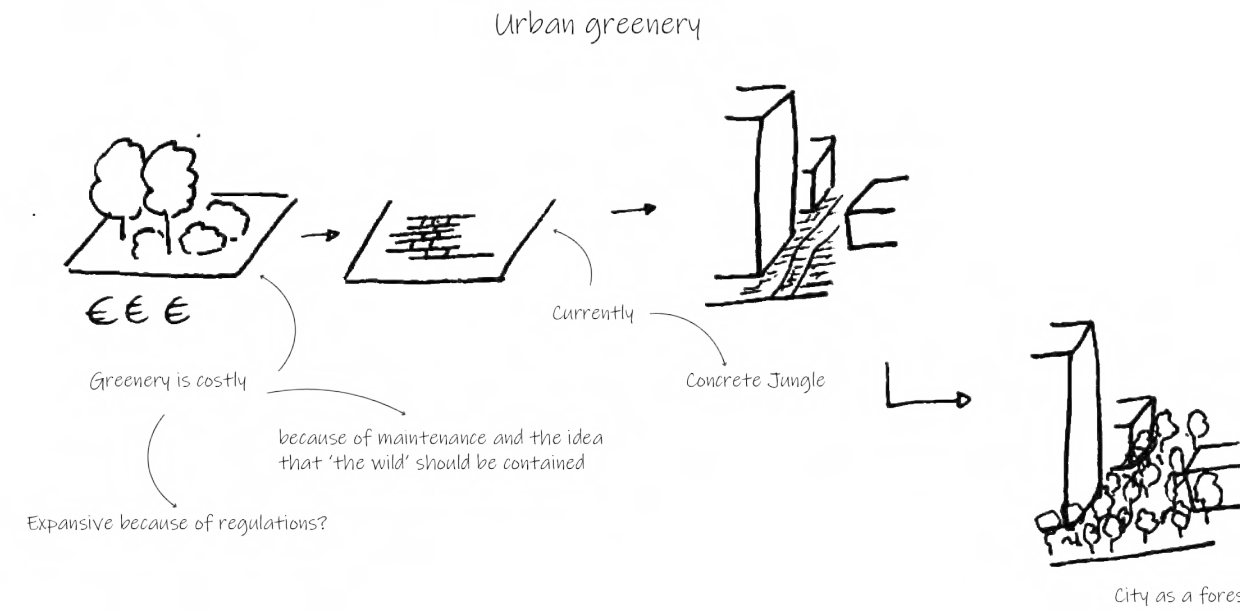
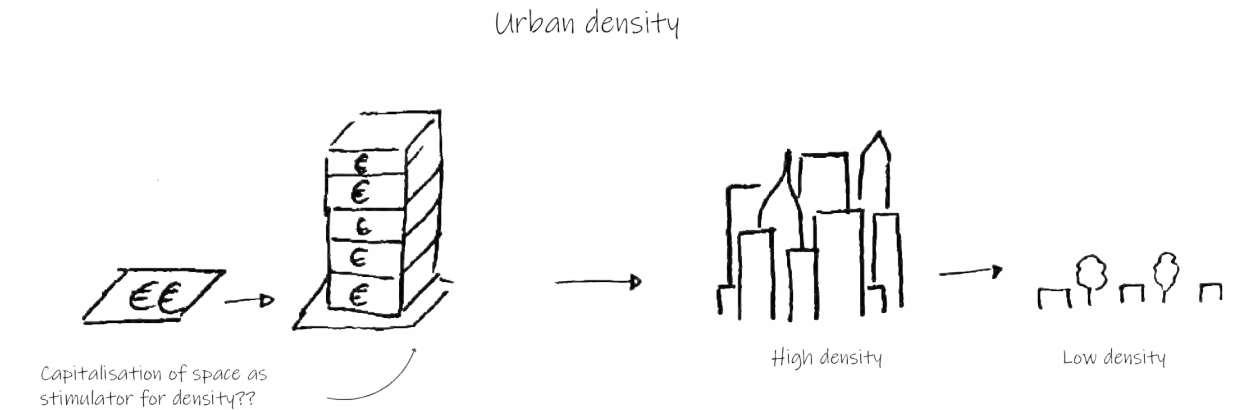
THOUGHTS

USE OVER PROPERTY

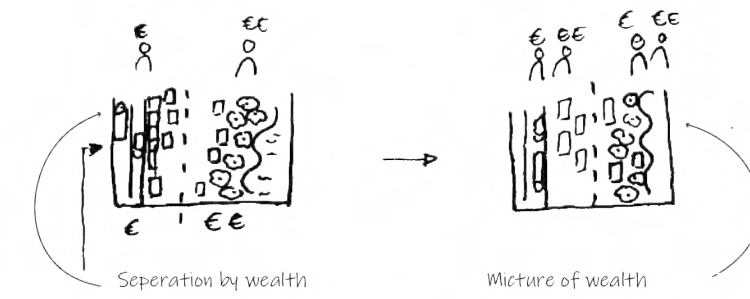
Why do we even have such a thing as property?

Capitalisation of space!!

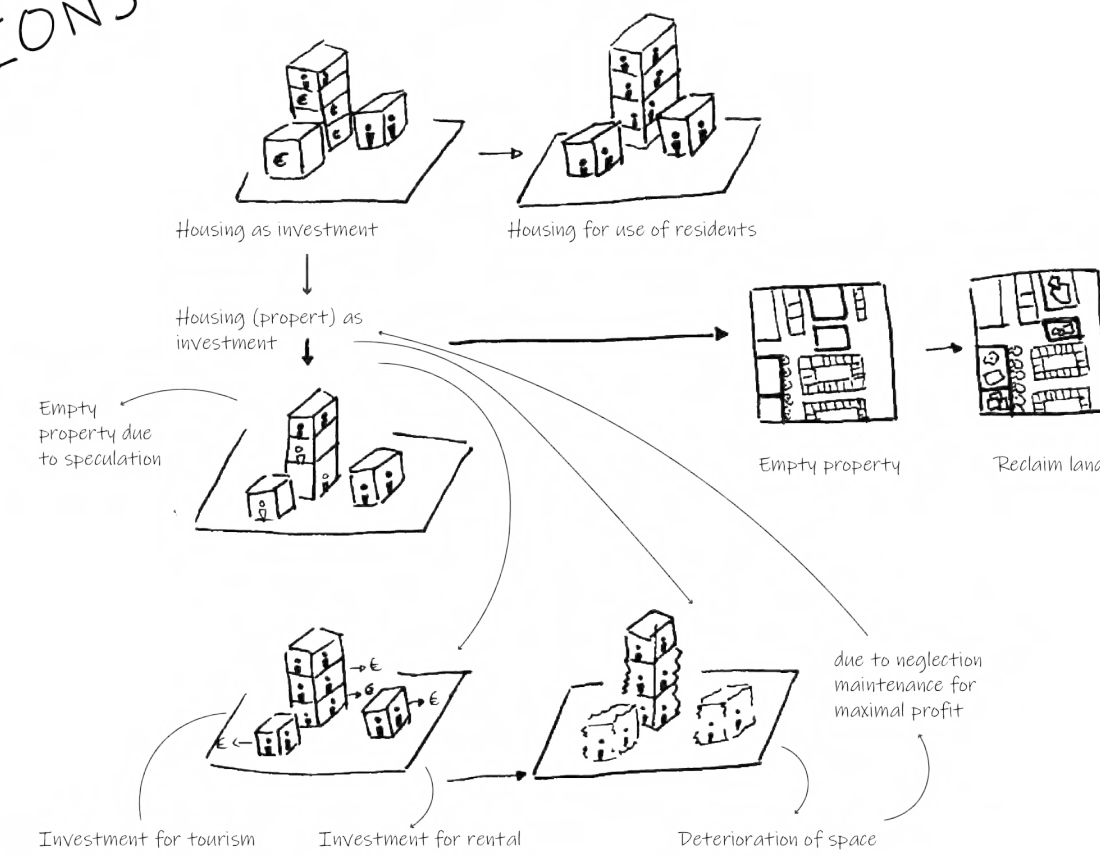
How does this shape space?



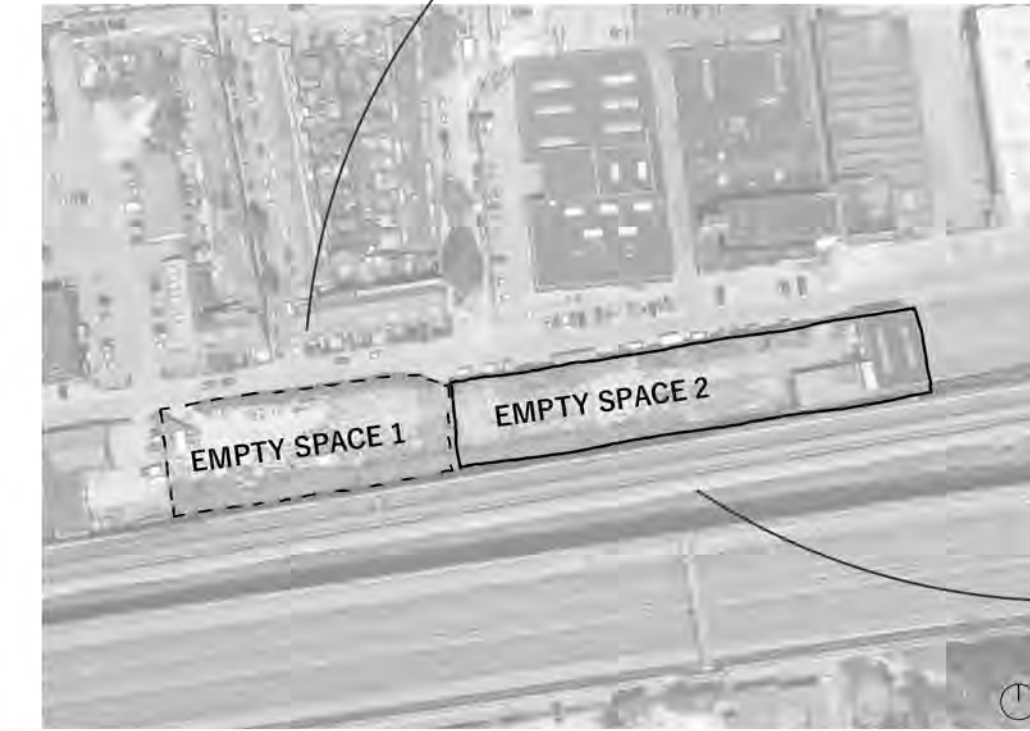
Green neighborhoods for the wealthy?



Housing

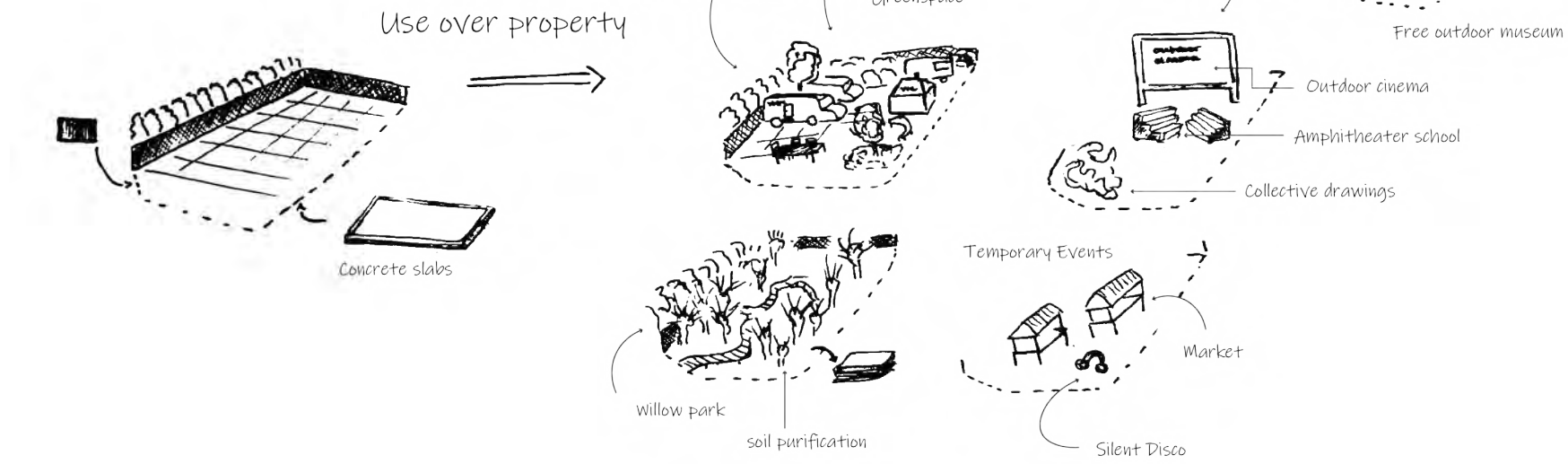


LOCATION

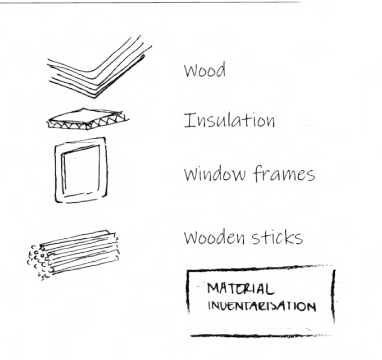
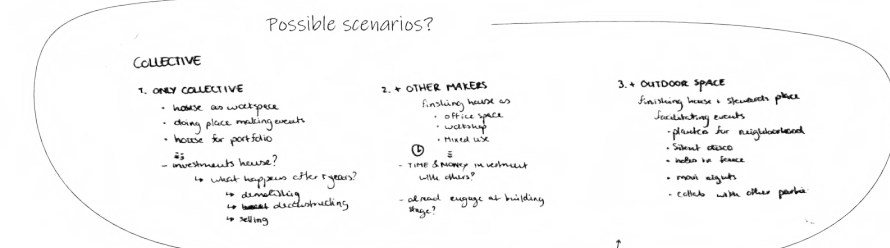
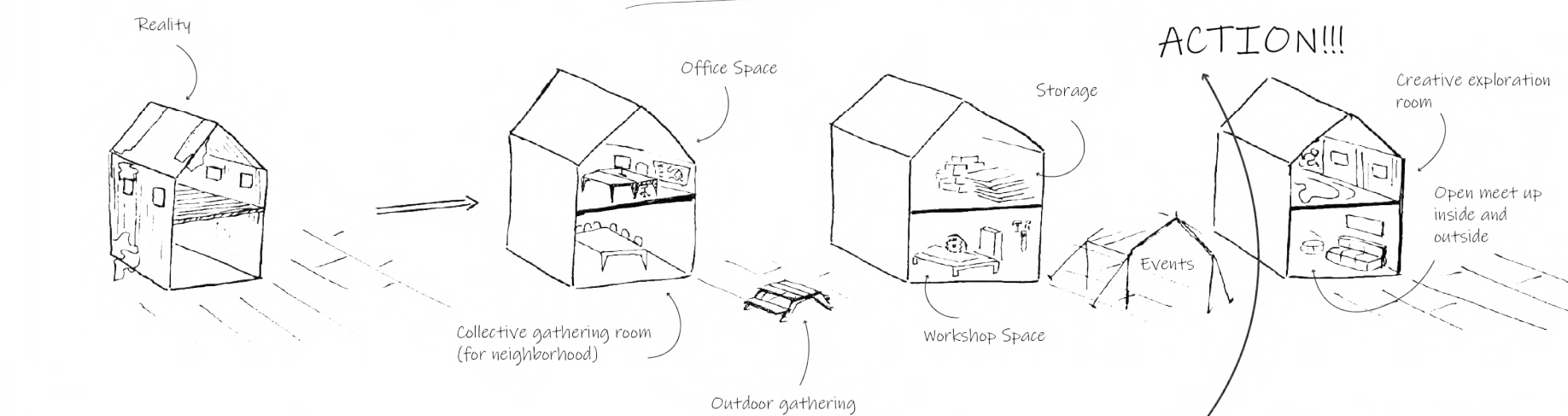


IMAGINARIES

Empty space 1



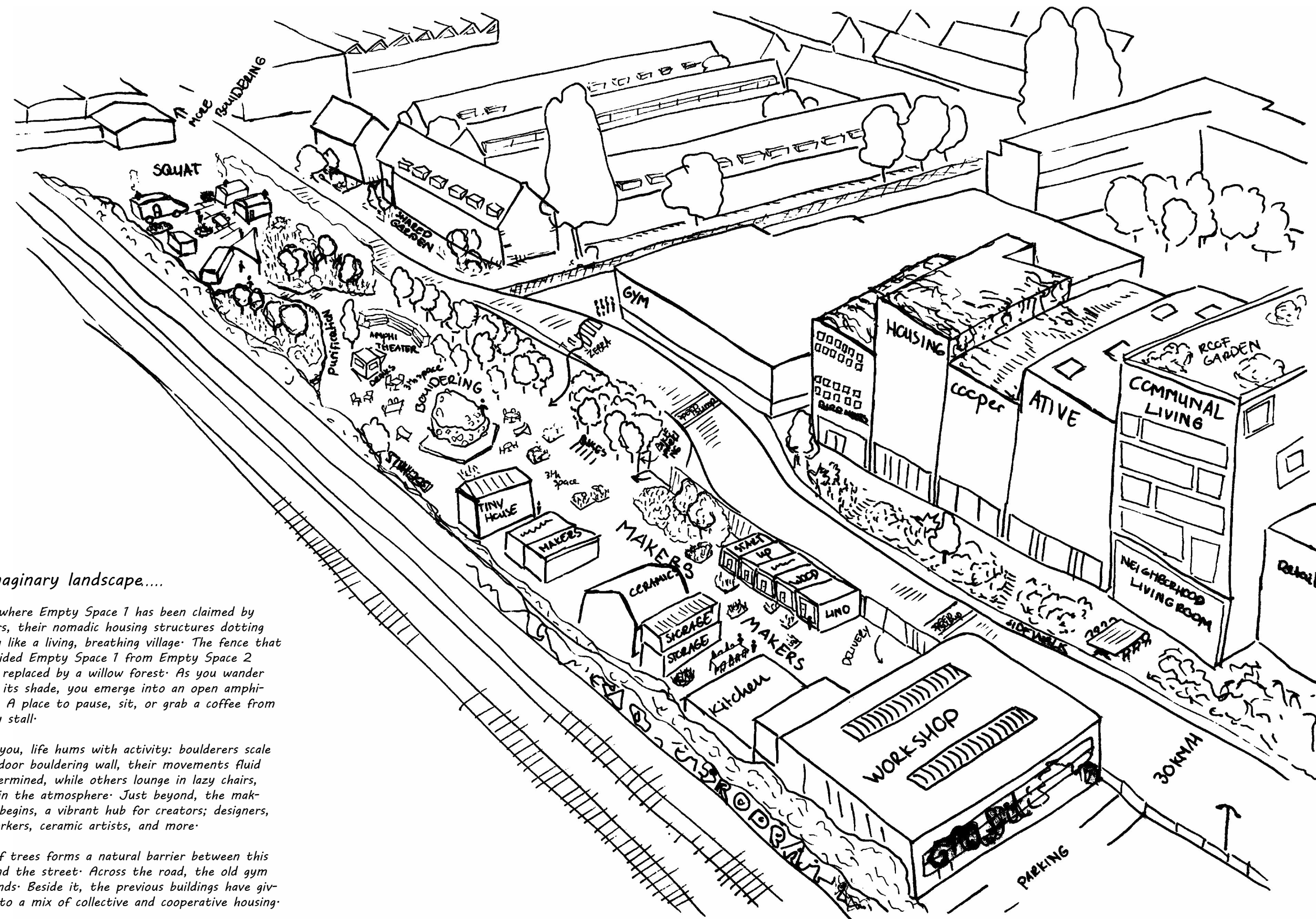
Empty space 2



Collective C.Hef ? ?

ACTION!!!

The collective got offered to finish a tiny house in this upcoming makerspace in Rotterdam North. TO BE CONTINUED see "imaginary action"



An imaginary landscape....

unfolds where Empty Space 1 has been claimed by squatters, their nomadic housing structures dotting the area like a living, breathing village. The fence that once divided Empty Space 1 from Empty Space 2 is gone, replaced by a willow forest. As you wander through its shade, you emerge into an open amphitheater. A place to pause, sit, or grab a coffee from a nearby stall.

Around you, life hums with activity: boulderers scale the outdoor bouldering wall, their movements fluid and determined, while others lounge in lazy chairs, soaking in the atmosphere. Just beyond, the makerspace begins, a vibrant hub for creators; designers, metalworkers, ceramic artists, and more.

A line of trees forms a natural barrier between this world and the street. Across the road, the old gym still stands. Beside it, the previous buildings have given way to a mix of collective and cooperative housing.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

THOUGHTS

How would a nomadic city function in practice?

How would cities composed only of short-term or temporary structures be organized?

How many houses are unoccupied?

To what extent would demand for new housing decline if these properties were put into use?

How to make decisions about the use of space without property as a regulation?

How much total space is currently occupied by empty properties?

How could third spaces collectively be used and maintained?

What would be the relation between spatial and personal boundaries if spatial boundaries (property) disappear?

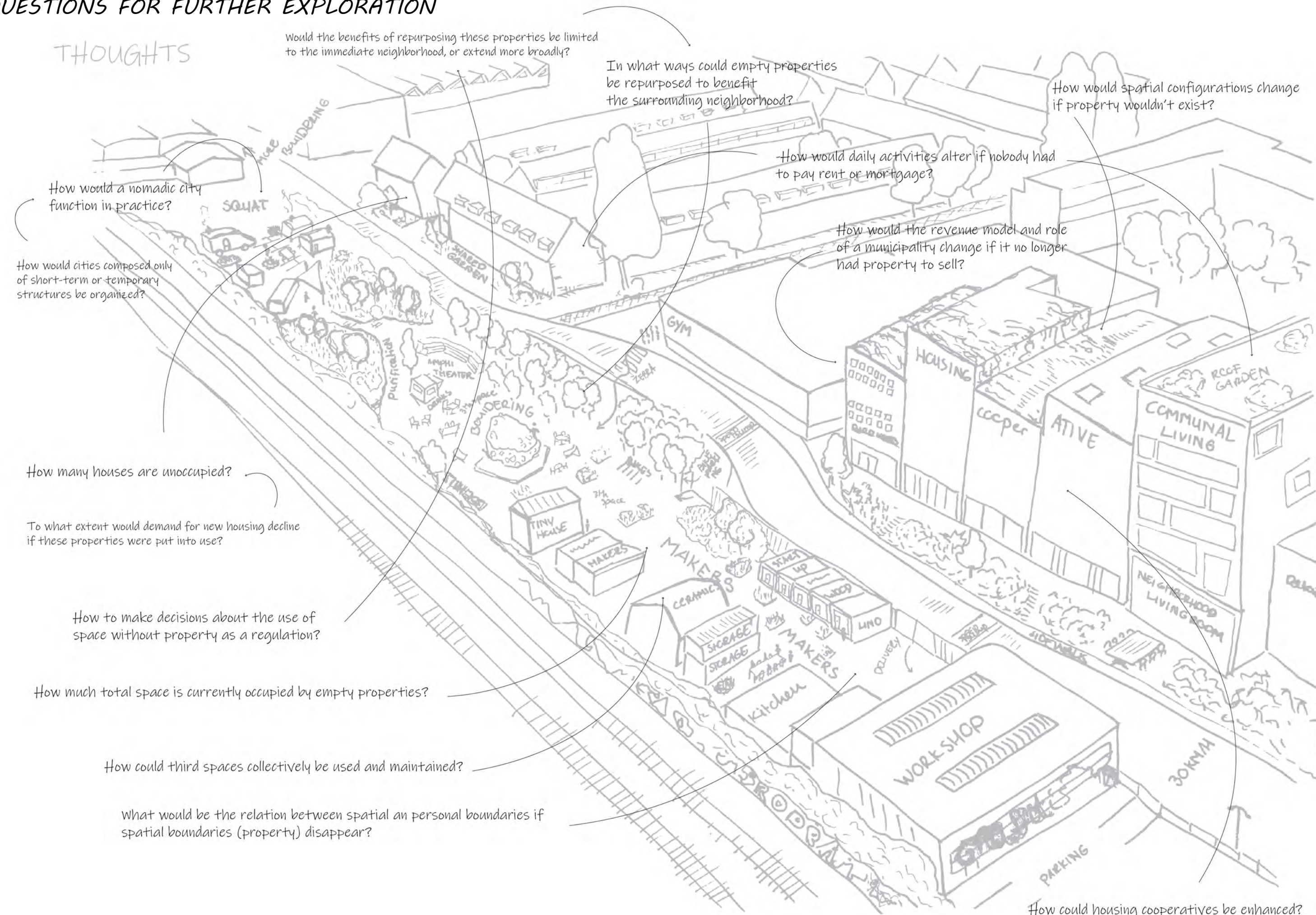
Would the benefits of repurposing these properties be limited to the immediate neighborhood, or extend more broadly?

In what ways could empty properties be repurposed to benefit the surrounding neighborhood?

How would daily activities alter if nobody had to pay rent or mortgage?

How would the revenue model and role of a municipality change if it no longer had property to sell?

How would spatial configurations change if property wouldn't exist?



How could housing cooperatives be enhanced?

RADICAL SPATIAL IMAGINATIONS, A METHOD OF DECONSTRUCTION

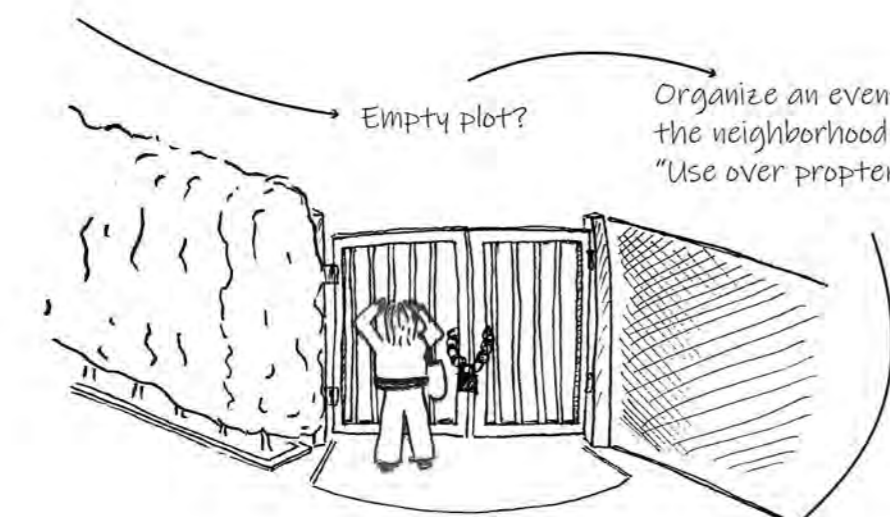
The prior exploration of the 'Roots', through radical spatial imaginations, has deconstructed conventional spatial configurations by re-drawing and narrating them, based on embodied knowledge -grounded in non-Modernistic practice-. The process has exposed spatial configurations of individualism, globalism and capitalism by proposing an alternative imaginary.

ACTION

REFERENCES

Luque Martin, I. (2026). MT presentation [PowerPoint slides]. Technical University of Delft.

HOW ACTION HAS BEGUN

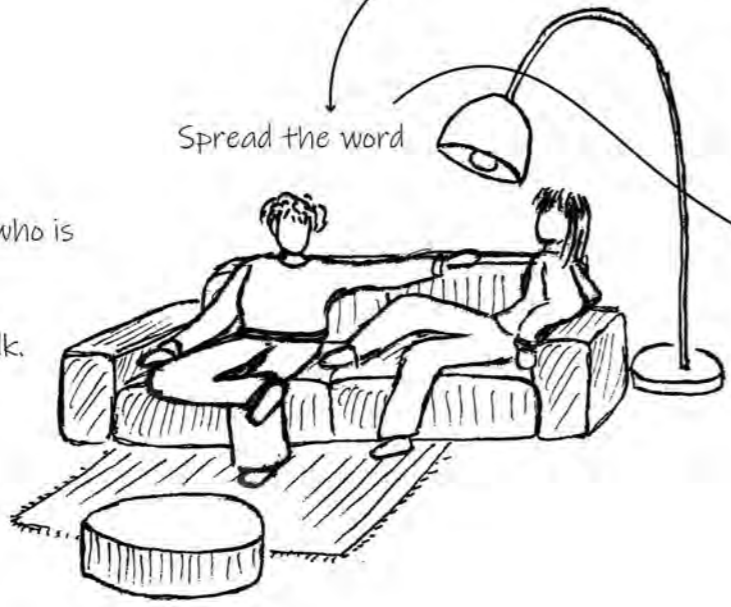


Empty plot?

Organize an event for the neighborhood to continue "Use over proptery"

I want to organize an event in my neighborhood

Do I know the person who is managing this land, I can get you in touch then you can have a talk.



Spread the word

So you want to organize an event, what are you thinking about?

Talk

I want to see how this space can be valuable for the neighborhood and make use of empty property



Recently I also became part of a collective.....

..... Why don't you just finish this tiny house with your collective?

Let's start a collective!

I would like to collaborate on spatial design and not be bound to regulations (of offices)

What do we like to do?

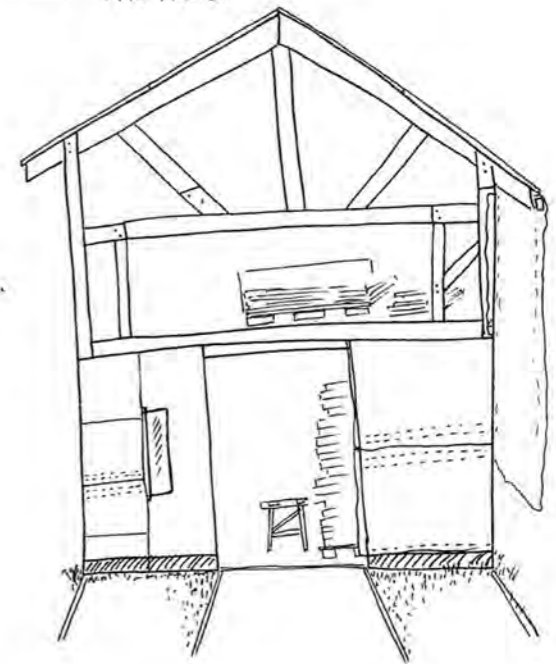
Urban gorilla gardening

Respond to tenders?



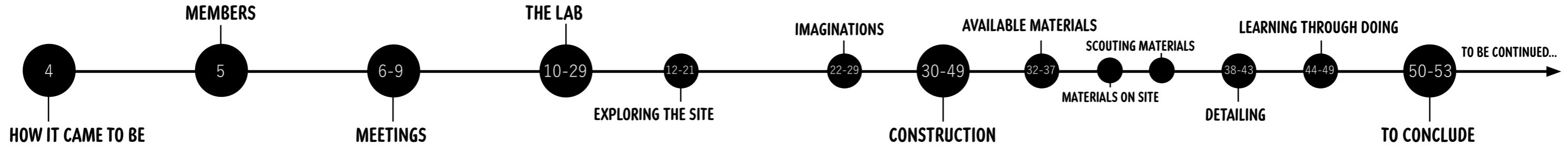
Collective + house evolves in...

The house



C.hef

CONTENT



HOW IT CAME TO BE

Inspired by other collectives, we decided it was time to establish our own. If they could do it, why couldn't we? The idea had been simmering for a while, and during International Women's Week, we set our first meeting.

Around the same time, I (Jonne) reached out to the land administrator of a plot along the Ceintuurbaan, initially to act on one of the 'Roots' (a key theme from the thesis): "Use over property." The administrator was enthusiastic, and when he learned about our collective, he asked, "Why not finish this tiny house (lab) with your collective?" I didn't need to be asked twice. Finishing the house would extend prefigurative action beyond the thesis while giving the collective a space to "practice practice."

MEMBERS



ALICA



BARBARA



CHARLOTTE



EVA



JONNE



JULIA



MARIE

MEETINGS

With the lab upcoming, it time to get "serious"...



As we are all busy woman, to make this work, we need to be committed

WHICH VALUES DO WE FIND IMPORTANT?

Discipline	Plezier	Zekerheid	Kennis
Kerlijkheid	Rechtvaardigheid	Ontspanning	Wijsheid
Waardering	toewijding	Bezit	Macht
Flexibiliteit	Tolerantie	Gezondheid	Afwisseling
Humor	Verantwoordelijkheid	Zelfstandigheid	Zelfvertrouwen
Liefde	Vertrouwen	Uitdaging	Avontuur
Loyaliteit	Schoonheid	Gelijkwaardigheid	Innerlijke rust
Onafhankelijkheid	Zingeving	Gehoorzaamheid	Vriendschap
Creativiteit	Zorgzaamheid	Eenvoud	Intimiteit
Openheid	Persoonlijke ontwikkeling	Bescheidenheid	Spiritualiteit
Optimisme	Succes	Samenwerken	Zelfkennis

Some people might be able to invest more time than others so let's appreciate each others efforts

We are experimenting so let's keep it fun, let's not take ourselves to serious

Good to go out of our comfort zones and to challenge ourselves

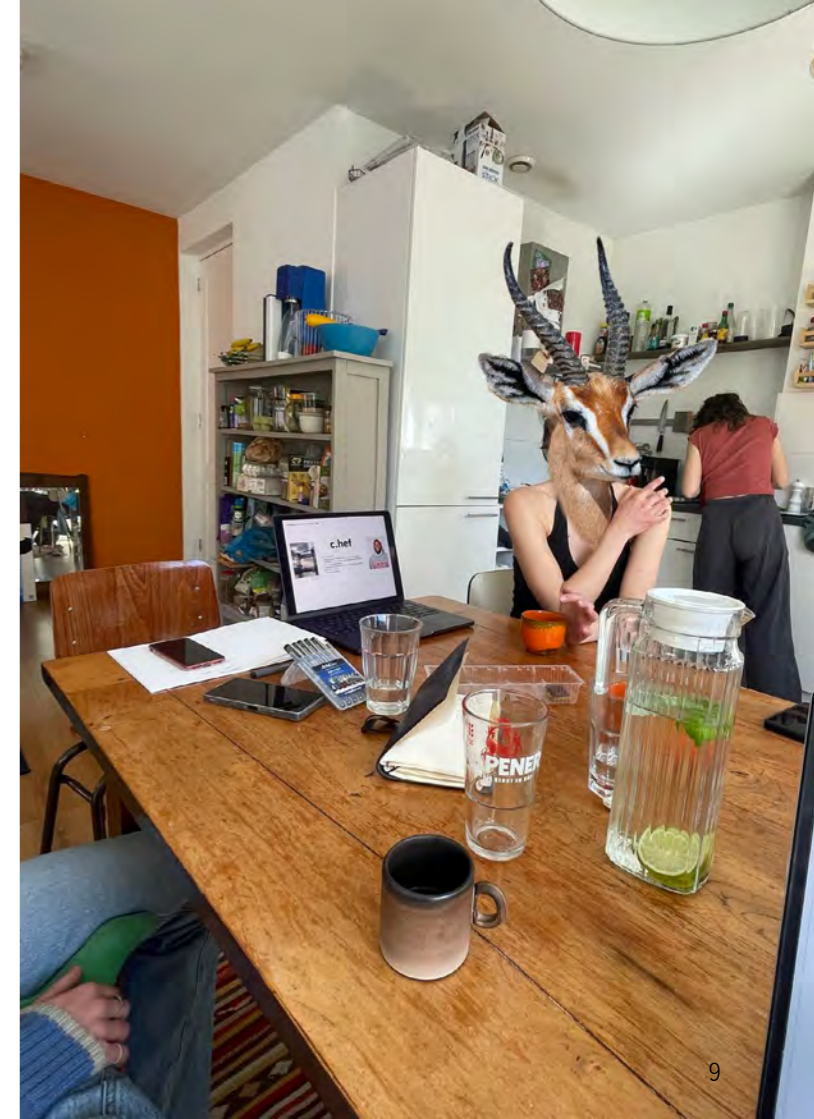
Equality, we are all as valuable

As we are all good friends, friendship will always be the primary focus

Collaborations with others (makers or neighborhood groups)

WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE COLLECTIVE?

The aim of the collective is to establish their own social-design practice according to the previously described values. Projects can be either commissioned or self-initiated deferring their practice from tenders to for example, urban gorilla gardening. Driven by friendship, equality, and optimism, the collective rejects capitalist impulses, collaborating both within the collective and with external partners. Experimentation and continuous reflection lie at the heart of their practice.



THE LAB

The Lab (tiny house) sits on a plot alongside the Ceintuurbaan in Rotterdam North. It's a two-story wood-frame construction wrapped in a vapor-permeable waterproofing membrane. Originally built by 'Bende', a Rotterdam collective, the project was abandoned after the group went bankrupt. The house has been in this state for over a few months.



EXPLORING THE SITE

What are we talking about...



The site is near Rotterdam North Station. Previously managed by the collective Bende, it has recently been taken over by PlaceBASED, which also oversees Keilewerf and De Kroon, both makerspaces in Rotterdam.





3.



4.





WE CAN BECOME A PART OF THE TRANSFORMATION HERE, INFLUENCE IT AND AS A PART OF IT, CONSTRUCT THIS HOUSE TO OUR LIKING.



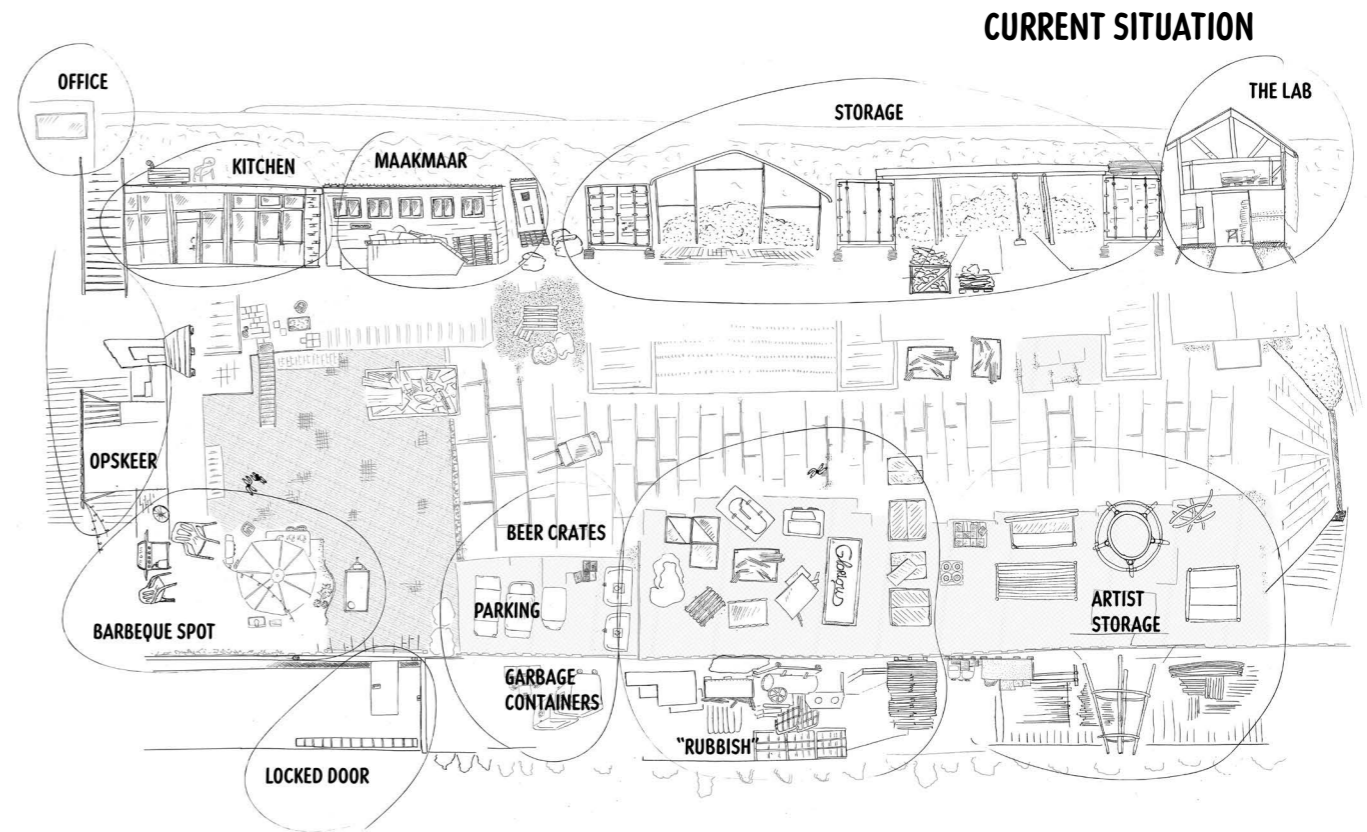
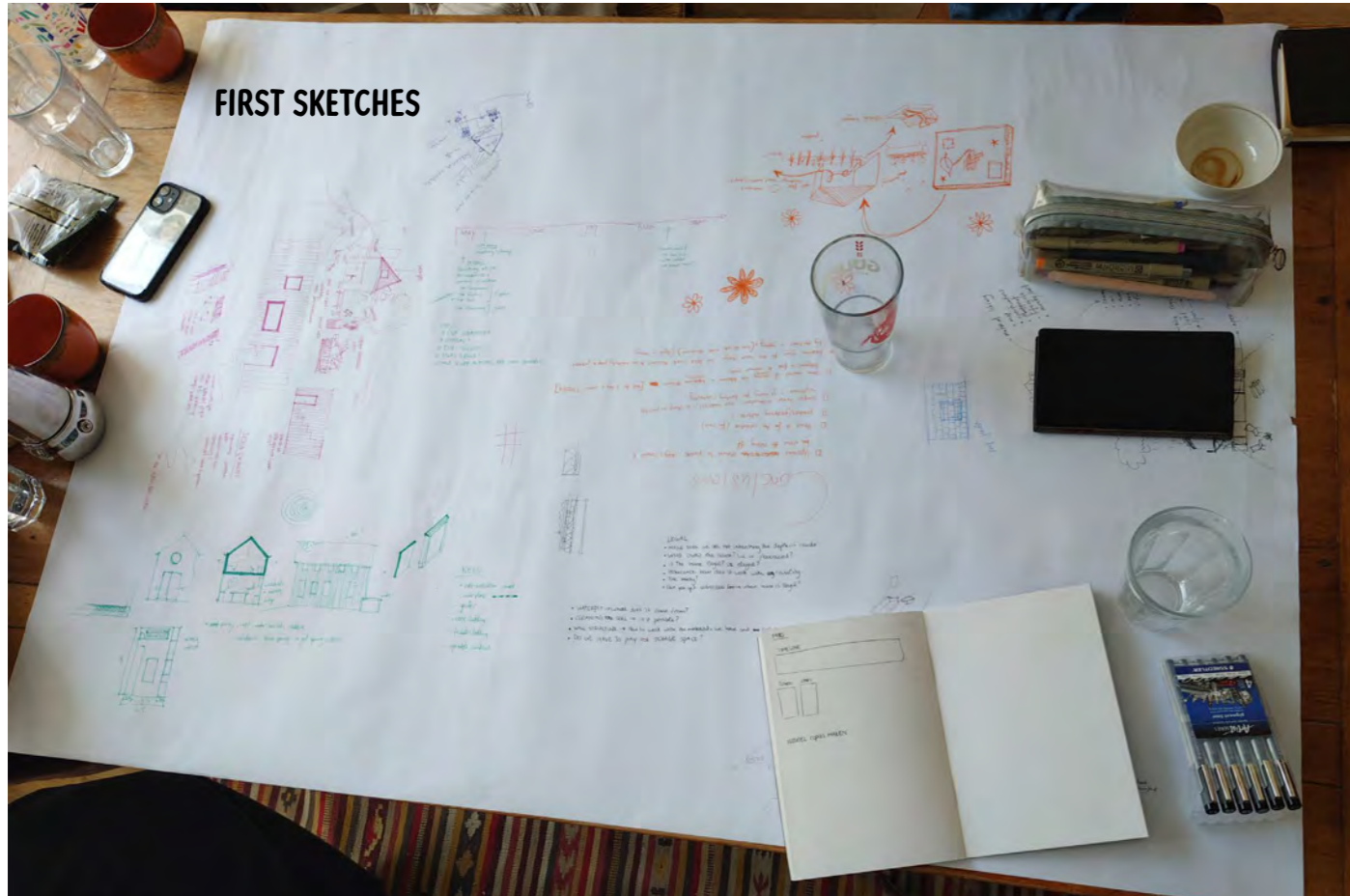
SO SHALL WE DO IT?

OMG YES!

IMAGINATIONS



HOW WOULD WE
IMAGINE THE HOUSE
PROJECT ACCORDING
TO OUR AIMS?



INPUT FROM C.HEF AND OTHERS INVOLVED...

"Maybe we could do something to clean the ground? phytoremediation?"

"A friend of mine just made a movie, what about an outdoor cinema?"

"Grondwerk, a company making bricks from waste material will be next to you"

"It would be amazing to have planters here"

"I want all this rubbish gone"

"collaborative workspace"

"Bamboo and hemp can apparently clean the ground..."

"There will be more containers for other makes"

"It would be great to have a car for all the materials..."

"Maybe we can arrange a community kitchen?"

"Circular, a recycling company will take the corner of the land"

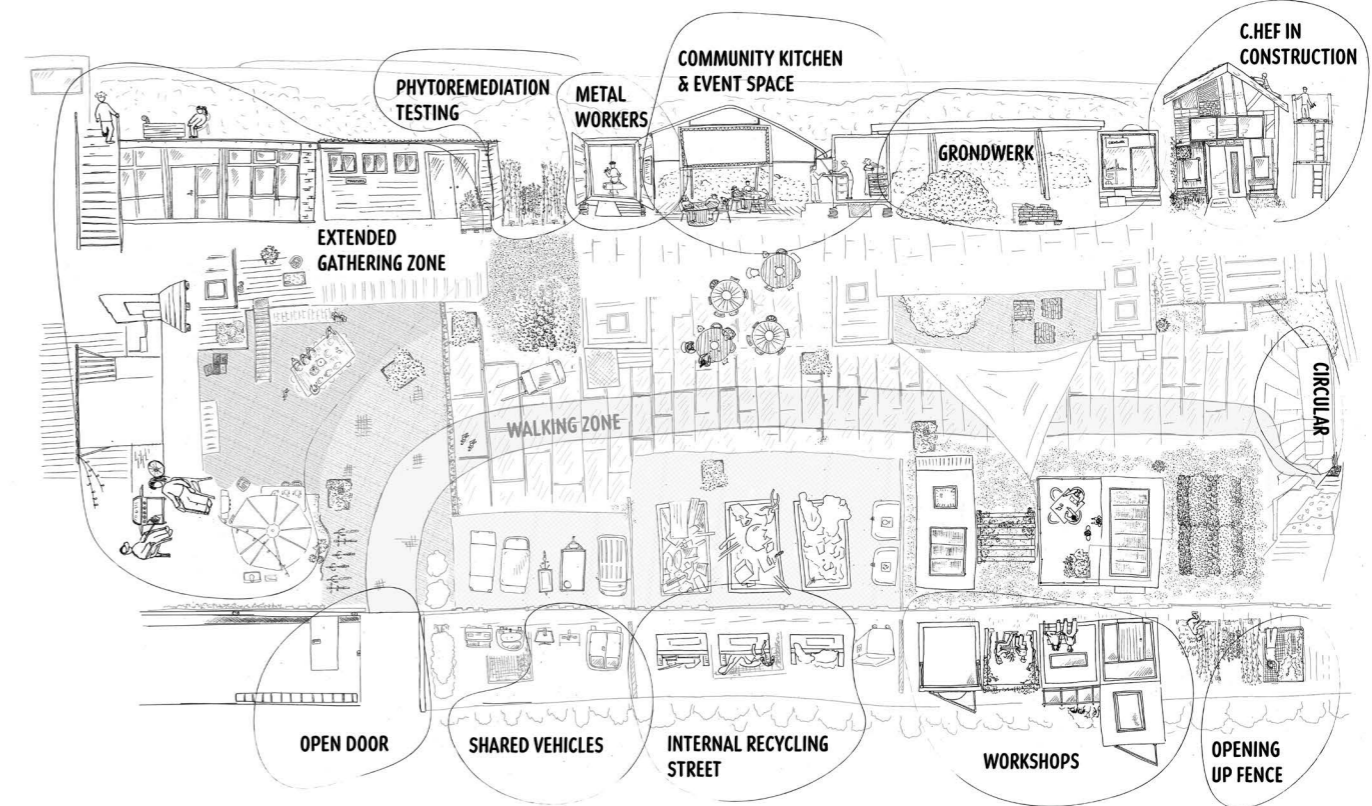
"Apparently poetry is a big topic in the neighborhood, let's organise a poetry night"

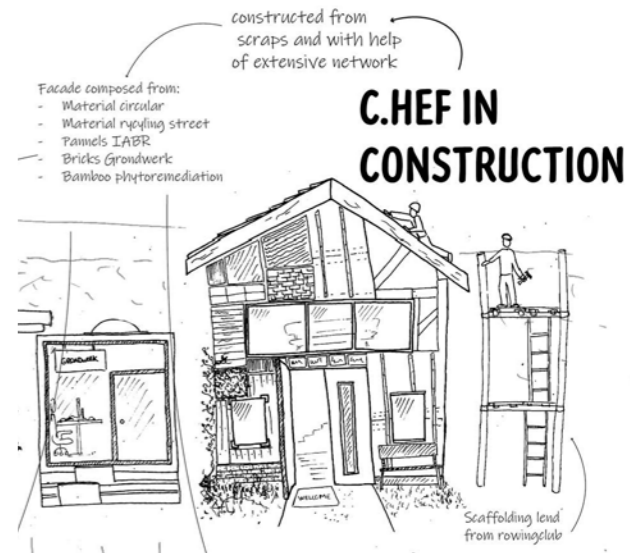
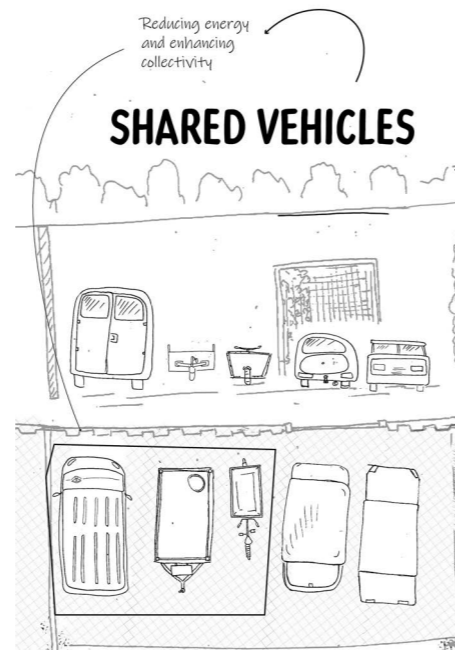
"What about parties, silent disco?"

"There are two metal workers that will take this container"

"We need more parking lots"

IMAGINATED SITUATION





CONSTRUCTION

*prefigurating an alternative design practice
through action*

Currently, the collective's primary focus is constructing the house, enabling them to "practice practice" and embody their values throughout the process. These values manifest at multiple levels: in meetings, through prioritizing friendship and care; in the first construction phase (sealing the building), by involving friends and community members; and in the second phase, through design experimentation, on the facade and interior, by the collective and collaborators. Simultaneously, values are enacted through hosting events (outdoor cinema, silent disco, poetry nights, and barbecues) to transform the site into a vibrant community space. To establish these imaginaries, at the moment, the focus is on sourcing building materials, detailing their combinations, spreading the word for events and learning through doing.

AVAILABLE MATERIALS

SO CAN WE USE ALL
THESE MATERIALS?



YES. MOST OF THEM
ARE SCRAPS FROM
BUILDING SITES.

MATERIALS ON THE SITE



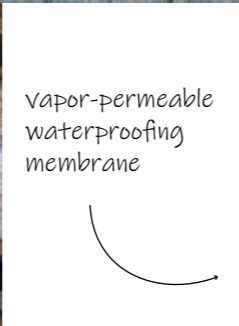
pressed rockwool insulation



osb wood



window frames



vapor-permeable waterproofing membrane



PIR insulation



windows



SCOUTING MATERIALS

Keeping our eyes open for potential building materials or furniture for the house..

Old ventilation pipes



Charlotte
can we make something out of big steel tubes?:)

19:17

Eva
Haaha jonne and i also just biked past it

21:39



Eva
≥ Gratis, gebruikte golfplaten voor dak of schuur of afdak —...
Gratis af te halen Komen van de schuur af die ik heb afgebroken in 2023. Deze schuur heb ik opnieuw opgebouwd met een nieuw dak. Verschillende afmetingen, marktplaats.nl

https://link.marktplaats.nl/m2392923780?utm_source=ios_social&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=socialbuttons&utm_content=app_ios free golfplaten roof

Roof



Charlotte
There <https://maps.app.goo.gl/KidVEdbbbUX4p3X7A>

zien we hier iets interessants tussen?

Material dumps



Wooden cupboards

Old model boxes



Charlotte
These wooden boxes are gonna be thrown away at IABR, they are 1000x1000x150mm and the paper models are loose in there. I thought that they could maybe work as garden boxes, if we stack a few of them? We can have them all or some of them for free, just need to pick them up.

CB

10:56

Alicia
Oh nice what material is it? Black MDF? Can also be nice for furniture like shelves and things like that

11:01

DETAILING

To construct the house with the construction and the materials we currently have, we needed to figure out the building order, how materials respond to weather conditions and find the answer to many more questions. To figure things out, we have had help from many different people among others; architects, constructors, friends and teachers.





Can OSB be wet for a while?

"As long as it ventilates you don't need to worry."
- Bas



What is this pit?
"remains of an old weighbridge, You can just empty it with a pump"
- Bram



How should we attach windows?



"you are designers, you can experiment with how you attach them"
- Roel

"This online tool can calculate the insulation value for you"
- Laurence

What would be the best build structure?



LEARNING THROUGH DOING





FIRST CONSTRUCTION DAY

**WE ARE REATTACHING
THE VAPOR-PERMEABLE
WATERPROOFING MEM-
BRANE TO PROTECT THE
WOOD FROM THE RAIN.**

LEARNING FROM OUR MISTAKES

A few days after reattaching the waterproofing membrane, it and the other sails came loose again, the membrane over the roof was completely blown off. We learned we need to adjust our approach: the staples were too short and insufficiently secured.





LEARNING TRIP

To learn about construction, especially biobased methods, we helped build a biobased house over a weekend, gaining familiarity with tools, learning clay plastering, and completing all the plastering preparations.



TO CONCLUDE

C.hef is in the middle of prefiguring their design practice by grounding themselves in the construction of this tiny house, spreading the word, extending their network, asking for help, reflecting and figuring it all out by doing.

FOR US ONLY ONE QUESTION REMAINS...

WILL YOU HELP

CONSTRUCTING?

Dear reader,

What?

The embodied experience has been recontextualized

Why?

To further deconstruct modernistic design practice and awaken reflection.

To continue the influence of the embodied experience beyond the scope of graduation.

How?

By using Radical Spatial imaginations, the Roots have been expressed through drawings in this author's neighborhood.

By prefiguring an alternative design practice; "practicing practice".

So?

This thesis has been a ground for prefiguration.

Firstly, adding to prefigurative practices, immersing in the intentional communities.

Secondly, transforming this thesis into a prefigurative act; prefiguring alternative methods of conceiving (based on embodied knowledge and personal action) and enabling the author to become an actor.



CONCLUSION

Revisiting the research question...

CONCLUSION

How can the embodiment of prefigurative practices inform spatial design?

The embodiment of prefigurative practices informs spatial design by challenging the designer's perception of space in two primary ways: First, in the context of intentional communities, it demonstrates how space can be lived differently, countering the imaginaries of Modernity through practices such as commoning and decapitalization. Second, it reveals how space is produced through living it, emphasizing the value of this process and showcasing ways in which the power relation between lived and conceived space can be challenged. To provide a more extensive answer to the main research question, the text will elaborate on the two sub questions.

How can the embodiment of prefigurative practices deconstruct the modernistic roots of spatial design?

The first question, shifts the designers' ideas of what to design for. It moves away from Modern (instituted) imaginaries such as nuclear family homes or individual-centered infrastructure, toward alternative (instituting) imaginaries, including collective housing, decapitalized land, and seasonal dependency (see Theory and Embodiment). Since Modernity and its underlying beliefs are identified as the root cause of our current polycrisis, this shift in perspective on what to design for is a necessary step in dismantling the designer's preconceptions of what can, could, or should be.

In this thesis, the beginning of this perspective shift -initiated during the embodied experience within the communities- is documented in the diaries. These diaries highlight the lived experience of alternative ways of being, which are valuable for design. Their value as practices countering Modernity is clarified through theoretical reflection on the Narrative Drawings. The Narrative Drawings, standing on their own, provide recognition for the practices of intentional communities by visualizing them.

How can the embodiment of prefigurative practices be expressed through spatial design?

The second question, shifts the designers practice of how to produce space. It moves away from conceiving space through distant analysis, based on preconceived ideas and assumptions (expressed in "final designs" and linear temporalities), toward producing space through communal action, collaboration, and experimentation. This repositioning of design practice challenges the - in Modernity rooted- power relations between conceived and lived space. It alters the role of the designer from creating space through being a (unconscious and involuntarily) oppressor to, creating space by becoming an mediator through being and actor.

In this thesis, this shift in approach has been enabled by the embodied experience and the resulting 'consciousness' (see Personal Reflection). Through the methodology of imaginaries, spatial configurations have been explored without being rooted in Modernity, instead drawing inspiration from the embodied experience (see Exploration). Finally, becoming an actor inevitably turns the designer into a mediator, as their positionality differs from that of non-designer actors (see Process Reflection). This process of becoming an actor is most clearly expressed by the author's actions to activate her network and surroundings, which

led to the developments around the Makerspace in Rotterdam North and the intertwined practices of the collective. While this process will continue into the future, it has been partially documented in Action for this thesis.

this thesis is an exploration towards alternative ways of knowing, being and becoming (Escobar, 2028).

It adds to the academic discourse by:

- Offering a critical reflection on the imaginary this discourse is grounded in
- Showcasing how embodiment can inform spatial design; through Narrative Drawings, reflection and repositioning of a designer.
- Highlighting how radical spatial imaginations can recontextualize embodied knowledge, serve as a method of deconstruction and inspire action.
- Expose the value of prefigurative methodologies as part of a design thesis, narrating how prefigurative practices can transform a thesis into a ground for action.

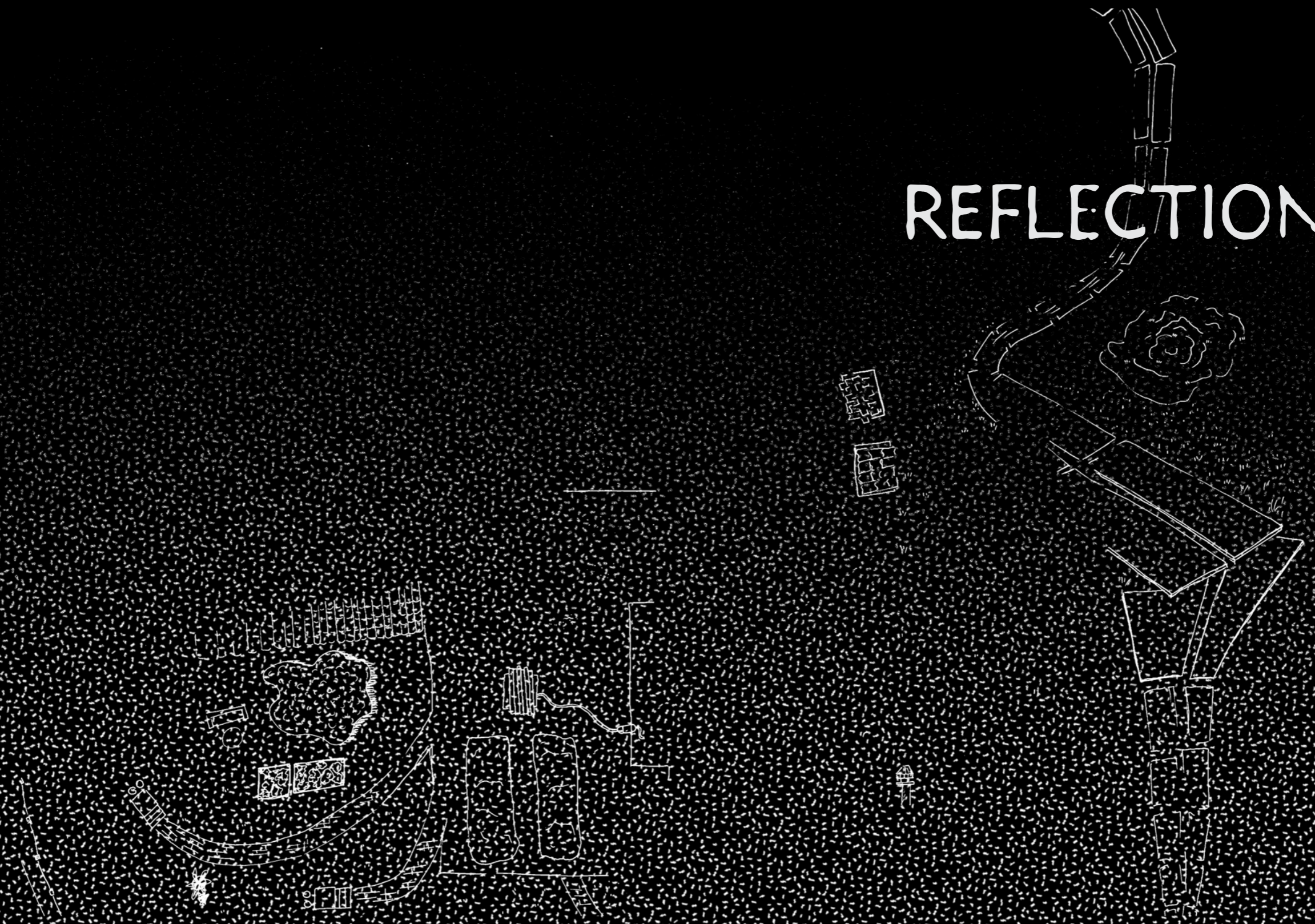
It speaks to spatial designers by:

- Questioning where designers should design for and how they should design.
- Showcasing how dominating imaginaries can be questioned through theoretical reflection and embodiment.
- Narrating how a spatial designer can reposition.
- Giving insight on how repositioning can alter a designers attitude towards their surroundings and transform them into actors.

It is valuable for others because:

- By altering the designers positionality, from a oppressor to a mediator, future spatial configuration might be more influenced by how people live space, giving more agency to their position in their surroundings.

REFLECTION



REFLECTION ON PROCESS

THEORY

During this process, in which acting gained an important role, theory has been indispensable for offering a lens (the concepts) through which to understand and perceive the undertaken activities.

Theories and methodologies used

The theories addressed in this thesis are Modernity, prefiguration, embodiment, the production of space and imaginaries.

The theory of Modernity frames our (Western) perception of reality through the theory of imaginaries. Both theories are emphasized to be spatial by highlighting social-space through the theory of 'The production of space'. The theory of prefiguration offers a pathway away from Modernity and the theory of embodiment situates this thesis and its author onto this path.

Therefore, prefiguration and embodiment in this thesis also function as methodologies. Embodiment is practiced as a methodology by emerging in the intentional communities and translating the experience of the lived body into among others; diaries and Narrative Drawings.

Prefiguration is practiced as a methodology by firstly adding to prefigurative practices and secondly altering this thesis into a prefigurative act – 1. Narrating the thesis so it adds to feminist (alternative) methodologies 2. Transforming the thesis into a ground for action beyond the scope of graduation.

Imaginaries are also applied as a methodology through the creation of three Radical Spatial Imaginations based on the 'Roots' which emerged from the embodied experi-

ence (see Reflection on Process, Exploration).

Interpretation of theory

The theories chosen are wide, all encompassing (in Western perception), which initially made it difficult to choose a focus point. Identifying the whole of Modernity as a problem, I wanted to challenge everything. Nevertheless, I realized that to criticize and deconstruct the world around me, I should start with deconstructing myself.

Therefore, the thesis became an autobiographical action research focusing on my lived experience as an essential part of theoretical interpretation and reflection (see Theory, Modernity, reflection on conceived space). Positioning my lived experience as a primary source of knowledge was a deconstructive practice in itself. Being taught to ground knowledge in existing academic research (in context of TU Delft) it went against my intuition. Nevertheless, to explore other ways of knowing, it was necessary to move away from this context of knowledge production. Therefore, positioning my lived experience as a primary source of knowledge is a way to question this context, question "One world with One truth", by embracing subjectivity, limited and partial views; a practice of situating.

This process is challenging, insecure and uncomfortable at times. Trying to break with the frameworks you perceive as 'truth' (real) put you into the realm of unprescribed and unknown pathways you must discover and develop yourself. Especially when your embodiment of this deconstruction is a key aspect of the research story, the knowledge you aim to narrate.

EMBODIMENT

During this thesis embodiment has proven to be a valuable method for deconstructing Modern imaginaries and transitioning this author into an actor (see Personal Reflection).

The practice of embodying

Positioning

The practice of embodying took place within, as previously stated, three intentional communities for a total of five weeks. During this time, knowledge was gained through immersing in the prefigurative practices of the communities. Although, this immersed experience encompassed the daily routine of the communities' residents, it is important to acknowledge that as a temporary visitor and volunteer, you are limited in your understanding. Therefore, it is inevitable that you are appointed to the understanding of your own experience. This links back to Donna Haraway's notion of situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988); this experience (as well as this whole thesis) is partial and limited. To contextualize this partial perspective, the positionality statement functions as a way to provide transparency.

Awareness

Additionally, as embodiment is a practice in which you include all the aspects of your being, it is highly personal and therefore important to, while emerging, be thoughtful, aware of your own biases and tolerant to sustain a safe environment for the community and yourself.

During the embodied experience, this safety has primarily been provided by constant reflection on my (this author's) role within the

social-spatial configurations of the community -situating myself as the person I am, instead of as only a researcher- and by transparent communication. Before entering the communities, the residents have been informed about their role in a graduation project, and they have been asked if they would be okay with visual documentation (pictures and videos). Their verbal consent has been confirmed multiple times during the stay.

Translations of embodiment

The documentation style of the embodied experience has been developed during the visits. This approach allowed the freedom to respond to the needs of the community and to the experience of this author, instead of projecting these into a preset format. This resulted in diary writings, Narrative Drawings and identified 'Roots'.

Diary

The diary writings primarily encompass an overview of happenings. This is done deliberately to focus on the communities' practices instead of on the personal stories of the residents within these communities. Although acknowledging that their personal stories play an important role in their collaborative practice - as well as their personal relation to me (the author) plays a role in how the experience is portrayed in this thesis-. To preserve their personal privacy, writing considers practices and the names of the residents are pseudonymized as well as the name of the communities.

Narrative Drawings

The Narrative Drawings are made by hand to portray the experienced reality. Moving away from traditional mapping, instead, comprehending mapping as a 'designed narrative' (Rankin, 2015) -drawing a perception instead of mapping a 'set reality'¹ -. The Narrative Drawings visualize, as previously stated, a combination of spatial context and social scenes to emphasize the social-spatial reproduction.

All Narrative Drawings use a similar drawing style for the three different communities. This style is a result of what this author ecstatically and pragmatically prefers. In this thesis, the drawings serve their purpose as they are primarily functioning to give an impression of the community's everyday life and to provide a ground for reflection. For further research it would be interesting to experiment with several drawing styles to explore how the plurality of the communities can be captured in these drawing styles. Subsequently, apart from experimenting with styles, to capture the embodied experience, the focus of such drawings could be further explored. Possibly also visualizing emotions, tactility, smells, or other aspects of embodiment.

Roots

Formulating the embodied experience into 'Roots', based on the reflection on the Narrative Drawings, enabled a spatial exploration in the normal everyday context of the author. The 'Roots' therefore function as a

bridge between the two lived contexts, providing guidelines for the created imaginaries. This jump from the embodied experience in the communities to the embodied experience of the author's own daily contexts can be seen perceived with confusion. When only perceiving spatial configurations, it might seem as a far stretch to go from rural and forest context to a highly urban context. Nevertheless, this thesis doesn't only speak about space, it addresses (prefigurative) practice (of the author) and how these influence space. Therefore, the jump in context should be comprehended as a re-situating of the designer. In the first context, practices are learned, in the second, practices are enacted and explored (see personal reflection).

Overall, the translations of embodiment have primarily been the result of the author's personal expressions. While making visual documentation (pictures and videos) residents (of 'Renovating Ruins') actively involved, taking pictures and videos themselves. More participatory documentation methods have been explored by putting a questionnaire on the dining table of the communities, providing residents with the possibility to write their input. Nevertheless, this opportunity wasn't used and therefore isn't taken along in this thesis. For future research it could be interesting to emphasize a more participatory documentation method in which the residents play a more active role (if they see fit to it).

¹ The idea of 'set reality' links back to Modernities belief in 'the real'; the existence of One world with One truth.

EXPLORATION

After the lived experience in the intentional communities, spatial configurations of the embodied knowledge have been explored in the authors everyday context through the use of imaginaries and (imaginary) action. Through this exploration which takes place as well through conceiving space (drawing, conceptualizing and imagining) and living space (action) the Exploration chapter challenges the power dynamics between the two (conceived and lived space) where the Embodiment chapter challenged the knowledge through which we conceive.

Radical spatial Imaginations as a method of conceiving

Imaginaries as a method which “enables the envisions beyond limits of existing epistemic frameworks” (Luque Martín, 2026) are a fitting approach for the exploration of embodied knowledge into spatial configurations.

Radical Spatial Imaginaries, as a method that “enables envisioning beyond the limits of existing epistemic frameworks” (Luque Martín, 2026), are a fitting approach for exploring embodied knowledge within spatial configurations. Initially, the ‘Roots’ were expressed through small spatial fragments, investigating potential manifestations of the ‘Root’ or its underlying Modernist problems -Use over property comes from the ‘capitalization of space’, Sharing is Caring comes from the modernistic focus on the ‘individualization of space’ and Reduction through self-production can be said to counter ‘the globalization of space’-

This exploration spans a wide range of spatial concepts, which are later grounded in a spatial imaginary situated in the author’s neighborhood. The decision to locate the imaginaries in the author’s lived environment aligns with the thesis’s focus on how space can be produced through living it, the space must therefore be experienced firsthand by the designer (the author).

The explorations and contextualized imaginaries cover a broad range of interpretations grounded in this lived experience – including the embodied experience in the intentional communities-. While the freedom of creating spatial imaginaries may produce seemingly random drawings and ideas, this apparent randomness can be confusing but is part of the strength of the methodology. It fosters questioning and exploration, ensuring that the imaginaries are not perceived as desired futures or finalities but as tools to deconstruct and interrogate contexts.

Engaging with this methodology has reshaped my perception of my neighborhood. Beyond the theoretical reflection on Modernity’s spatial configurations, this practice has repeatedly called into question what I consider ‘real.’ Moreover, creating the imaginaries has ignited creativity, enabling the portrayal of alternatives; a fusion of embodied experience (guided by the ‘Roots’) and my positionality as a designer.

Embodying imaginaries through prefigurative action

Imaginaries are not merely conceived; they

are also lived; embodied through prefigurative practices that create spatial manifestations through action. These manifestations will continue to evolve into the future, extending beyond the scope of this thesis.

As described in the chapter Action, the collective C.hef is prefigurating alternative design practices through the process of constructing a lab (a tiny house) in Rotterdam North. While prefigurating, the collective and its individual members, including myself, imagine the use of the space both for ourselves and others. These imaginaries are then enacted and allowed to evolve through practice.

While radical spatial imaginations produce space through conceiving it -rooted in non-Modernist knowledge- the practices of the collective produce space through living it. This enacts a fundamental aspect of the thesis: challenging the power relations between conceiving and living space. This challenge is not only achieved by learning from how space is lived (as observed in intentional communities) and subsequently conceiving space based on this knowledge, but also by recontextualizing and continuing the prefigurative practices of producing space through living, continuing them.

Currently, this practice is focused on the construction process of the lab. The collective aims to enact its intentions through its values (see Exploration, C.hef booklet) during this process, while also considering how these practices can be sustained after the construction is complete.

It is important to acknowledge that this re-contextualization of prefigurative practices is partly subject to coincidental happenings in one’s surroundings. This continuation could have taken many forms. For this thesis, the initial idea was to continue the prefigurative practice of ‘Use over Property’ by hosting an event on an empty property in my neighborhood. However, this idea evolved into the Lab project, which could not have been foreseen. Yet, by intentionally taking it on, it enables the continuation of prefigurative practices beyond this thesis (see Personal Reflection, Becoming an Actor).

Challenging the power dynamics between conceiving and living space

Embodying the dual approaches to producing space (living and conceiving) raises a fundamental question: What is the role of the designer, and does everyone who produces space through living it qualify as one?

This thesis does not aim to define everyone who lives and produces space as a designer. Instead, it questions the practice of designers and the methods through which they produce space. It argues that designers should be more deeply informed by how living space (both their own and others') produces space, granting agency to this process. In doing so, this narrative resituates design practice; shifting it from a passive act of conceiving to an active practice of activism.

To briefly recap the distinction between the two modes of spatial production:

- Producing space through living it involves shaping space via identity, symbolic attachment, resistance, practice, ritual, and conflict. It is an embodied, relational, and often subversive act.
- Producing space through conceiving it involves shaping space via definitions, planning, regulations, representations, ideologies, and abstract knowledge. It is a structured, institutional, and often hegemonic act.

According to this author, not everyone who lives space is a designer. While everyone is a producer of space, to be a designer requires explicitly positioning oneself as such. To clarify this distinction, I turn to the concept of posi-

tionality. As Haraway (1988) argues, your positionality defines the knowledge you are able to produce. The same applies to the production of social space: your positionality shapes the social-space you are able to produce.

Meaning that you can only be a mediator between the act of living and the act of conceiving, when you know how space is conceived due to the training you have followed. Even when you deconstruct this training, it gives you the insides on how conventional spatial configurations are created and therefore enables you to question and alter this practice, stimulating spatial refiguration, possibly through living it.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

The process of this thesis has been partial, fragmented, non-linear and much more, but above all a process of transitioning and becoming for this author. How the past month have altered this author's positionality is explained...

DEVELOPING A "REVOLUTIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS"

Guided by an initial curiosity about alternative ways of living and a desire to enable such structures, the past months have offered far more than just the knowledge to spatially respond to prefigurative practices. They have transformed me into a prefigurator myself, stimulating and empowering me in ways I hadn't anticipated.

At the start of this thesis, I recognized in myself the sentiment Davoudi (2018) describes as a "loss of the future" a growing pessimism and diminishing belief in the possibility of alternative worlds and imaginaries. I felt trapped within the system, which I later identified as Modernity. My aim was to shift this mindset by seeking out practices that inspire me; practices that showcase alternative ways of being. This search, partly through theory, led me to intentional communities.

Before immersing myself in prefigurative practices, I believed I understood them, after all, I had read the literature. Yet, after five weeks of embodying these practices, I realized I had only grasped what my previous positionality allowed me to: that of a graduation student thinking within the frameworks of my education. During and after the embodied experience, I came to understand that I was learning through practice, through being and becoming (an ongoing process). This shift in positionality has turned me into a practitioner who acts.

In theory, this transformation is described as "the development of a revolutionary consciousness" (Monticelli, 2022, p. 39). Raekstad and Gradin (2020, p. 74) define

revolutionary consciousness as a comprehension of the world that arises from experiencing "much freer, more equal, and more democratic social relations." This awareness fosters a drive that "pushes against the system and compels us to transcend it."

In my case, this revolutionary consciousness emerged primarily as a set of feelings: the sense of being able to alter my surroundings, the joy of creating through action, the confidence to dare to act, and the faith in the networks that sustain alternative practices.

BECOMING AN ACTOR

The shift in consciousness has not only been valuable for a personal transition in how I perceive the world. It has also altered how I act in this world, becoming an actor, acting and possibly influencing the perceptions of others as well.

As previously stated in the booklet 'Theory', as an actor, one moves away from being a silent observer (Sitrin, 2012, p. 84). Or, as I would phrase it, you step away from being a passive follower. Combined with embodiment, this means you act and make sense of the world by giving agency to your lived body and its relation to the spaces it moves through (Merleau-Ponty, 2012).

During this thesis my journey began with contributing to action, helping with the prefigurative practices of the communities. This later evolved into becoming an actor by enacting practices myself. The first act of action is challenging the conventional frameworks of an urbanist graduation thesis by questioning urbanism education and practices through exploring alternative methodologies, as reflected in this thesis. The second act of action is establishing a design collective that practices design through continuous reflection and critical evaluation. Our aim is to spread this practice by taking on social-spatial challenges while grounding ourselves in Rotterdam North.

Delving deeper into the actions of the collective, it seems more than coincidental that we were appointed to continue the construction of the lab. Personally, I believe it to be

an inevitable part of the journey of this thesis; searching for alternative ways of designing and being, and being enabled to do so. The construction of the lab has (and will continue to) enhance the collaboration within the collective, as it provides the opportunity and motivation to "practice practice."

At the moment, the practices of the collective are plural and evolving. While our current focus lies on the construction of the lab, intrinsic values and thoughts -which are yet to be formulated in a one-pager- are already being expressed in how we communicate with each other and interact with those we encounter in the process. Clear examples include:

- The horizontal meeting structures we apply.
- The care we provide for each other.
- The aim to stimulate collaborations.
- The use of waste materials or biobased construction materials.

While our sub-intentions are still vague and need to be articulated, the intention to enact alternative design practices and figure them out along the way is clear. To do so, we are establishing our own institution, as literature emphasizes: "It is essential to build those institutions through which people are able to develop their capacities and make themselves fit to create a new world" (Lebowitz, 2012, p. 88).

Dear reader,

So to conclude this two-year Master of Design

Who have I become as a designer?

I have become an actor, a critical thinker and a conscious body.

Working with feminist theories I am taking part in a continuous process of becoming -among others- a prefigurative practitioner.

While not all intentions are clear yet, the intention to add to the transformation of the conventional design discipline is.

I aim to continue action in whatever shape it may take; through the collective, through expanding my network and most importantly through staying a critical thinker. This thesis has, due to the freedom provided in the feminist value graduation cluster, the thinkers within it, the residents of the intentional communities and my amazing mentors, awakened a transformation which I will take along in the rest of my life...

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APPENDIX

OVERVIEW MAP INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES IN THE NETHERLANDS



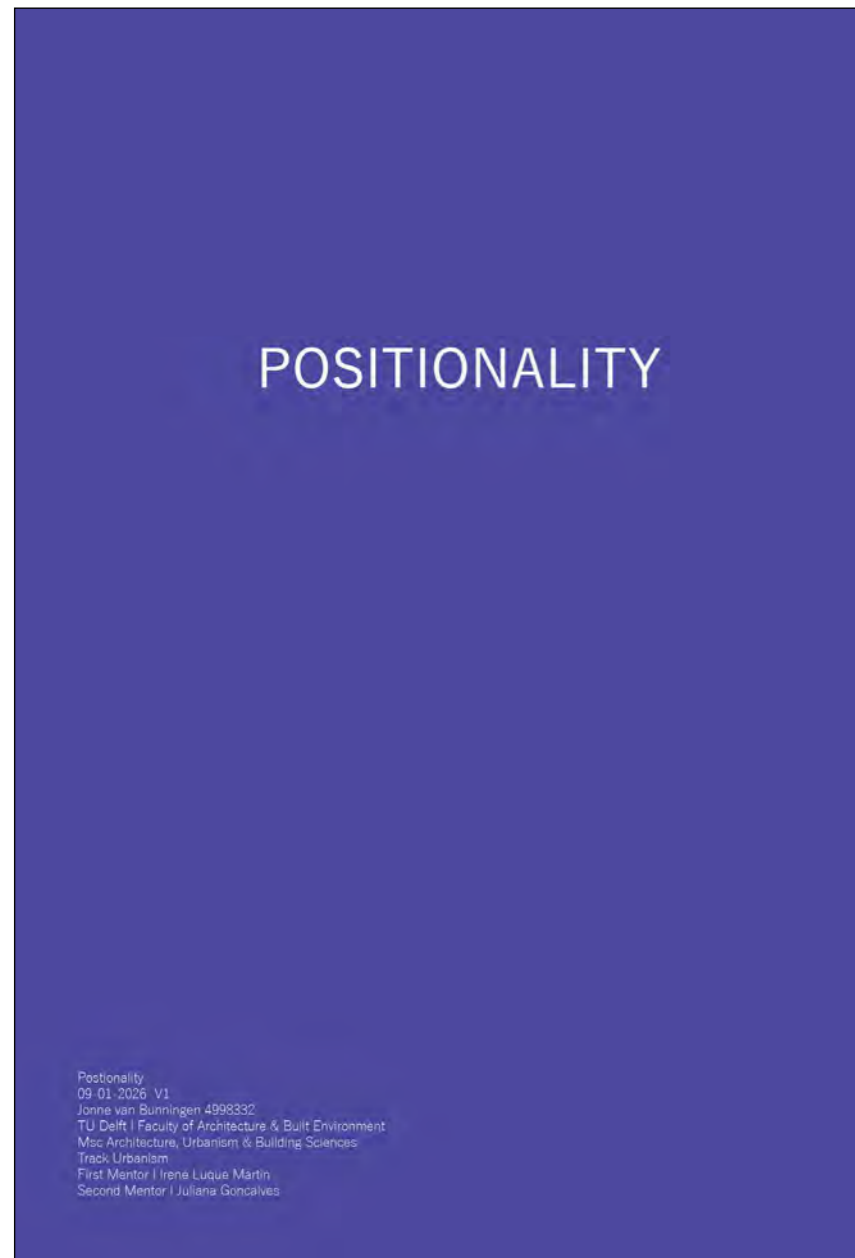
Figure 1.1 Existing Ecovillages

Source: GEN-NL (2025), PuurPermacultuur (Ballemans,2022), Omslag Resink (2024). PDOK, Converted by Author.

POSITIONALITY BOOKLET

In the beginning of this thesis a positionality booklet was kept. The booklet existed of; a positionality statement, a diary, an emotional mapping, a location mapping and a relational accountability chart. By keeping track of these topics, the booklet aimed to situate the knowledge acquired during the process. Nevertheless, the booklet has been discontinued after the first month of the thesis because of becoming a production necessity rather than -as intended- a tool for reflection.

This appendix contains snippets of the booklet.



knitting and listening to podcasts. When I arrived I just walked into a random direction. Then I found another volunteer and we were soon found by a resident who guided us to our rooms and showed us the way to the common room. I unpacked and put on some more comfy clothes to then go to the common room. In the common room there were already some guests and a lot of the residents. We introduced ourselves to each other while more guests were arriving. **The evening started with welcome word, a moment of silence and a dinner made out of vegetables from the garden.** It was sooo delicious. I had some small talk with other guests. Some had been here before, others were new like me. After the delicious food we all cleaned our own dishes and were invited to go to the workshop room. There we sat in silence, me and the other 13 volunteers, waiting for one of the residents to say something. -----, the resident in charge of the volunteers started with introducing himself whereafter we all introduced ourselves briefly. While the first people were introducing themselves, the little child from one of the hosts was furiously jumping and screaming around, energized after dinner. We sat there, in a circle on yoga cushions, all saying 'Aye' when somebody ended with speaking to introduce the next person. When everyone had spoken, -----introduced the schedule for the weekend so we knew what to expect. When the formalities were over, ----- (another resident) put on some music and people started to dance in the room. I still had a small conversation with -----, **who told me that they are currently living here with 9 people, but they prefer to have 12 residents. Some live together in the big house, others have their own tiny house on the plots. They do work next to living here, also to pay the contribution of ----- euros (food included).** She has managed some of the finance stuff she said. Myself included. After some minutes I warmed up so much that I drank a bit of water, chatting with some other volunteers. Some of them were around the same age as me and they told about their experience in the summer in an ecovillage in Italy. We talked and talked until we decided to join the announced eve-

ning walk. With the majority of the group we gathered at the entrance of the plot. **Together we walked through the darkness that is unknown to big cities,** toward a dyke. We strolled on the dyke, chatting about our lives, getting to know each other. At some point we took a moment of silence, **hearing the birds, cars and rustling leaves around us.** We made our way back whereafter I dived in my bed. Tired from the day. I share my room with ----- who has stayed here for two weeks. Also dreaming about maybe one day living in an ecovillage. She shared her experience and why she decided not to live in this village. It is a bit too low in number and too far away from her friends and family. After our talk I fell into a deep sleep.

13-12-2025

Today I woke up like a smudged baby. I slept so deep and so long, apparently I needed it. I took a quick shower to freshen up. Although it didn't help waking up, at the breakfast table I sat, moaning. **During breakfast the tasks of the day were announced. We could pick which one we could contribute to. I chose to help with the strawberries.** Together with ----- and the resident ----- we walked over the field to go to the strawberries. We spend the morning getting rid of old plants, airing the ground, making new pathways with woodchips, composting the new beds, planting the strawberries and walking back and forth with wheelbarrows chatting about community programs. Around 11 we had a coffee break, eating cookies and taking a bit of rest. **I felt my body was already getting tired, not used to working outside.** I ate a lot of chocolate cookies, getting my sugar levels up. After the break we continued the work. We managed to finish the fields and went on with the next task, preparing a pumpkin field. The foodbell rang and we had (yet again amazing) lunch. After lunch we went to the 'restfield' which **we were going to prepare for pumpkins in spring.** Meaning we had to build a lasagna on top of the old plants from poop and leaves, topped with a layer of plastic to compost all of it. More people were joining our team now. I

Figure 1.2 Diary

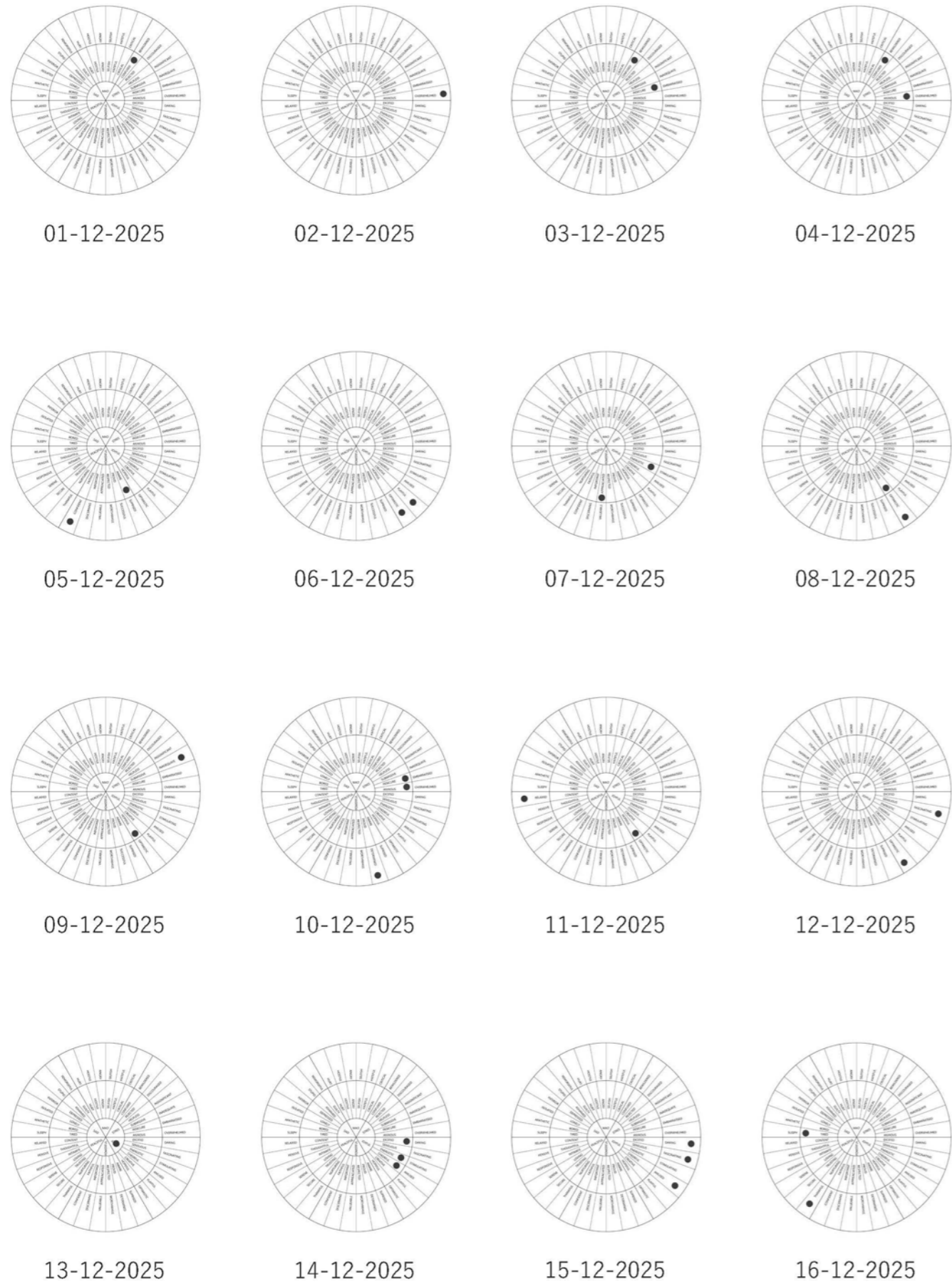


Figure 1.3 Emotional Mapping
68

DECEMBER

During the December month I have mainly spent my days in Delft at the Faculty of Architecture, and in Rotterdam, at home. These days were not so much influenced by the physical space as I was mainly informing myself through the digital space, reading papers and searching for information on websites. However, the weekend of the 12th of December I visited an eco-community close to Nijmegen and an Anarchist community in Wageningen. During this trip, the spatial experience had an essential influence.



Figure 1.4 Location Mapping

DECEMBER

During this month I was mainly interacting with my two mentors, Irene Luque Martin and Juliana Goncalves who helped me by offering relevant literature and design methods, and digital literature. A major influence came from my visit to de Vlierhof and Ppauw. The conversations I had with the groups and individuals living in this community were very interesting and revealing. My friend also provided input by simply questioning what I would tell them.

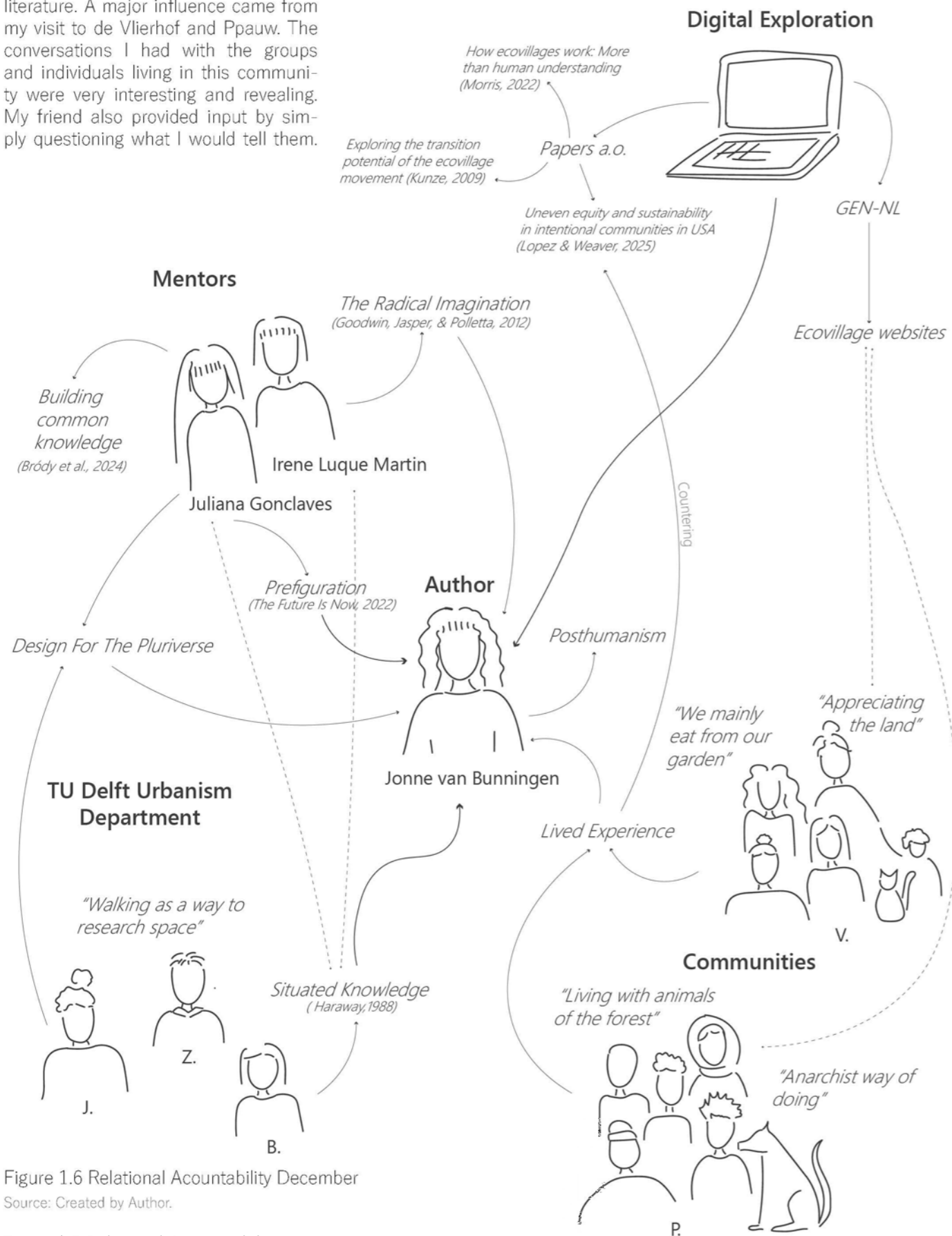


Figure 1.6 Relational Accountability December
Source: Created by Author.

Figure 1.5 Relational Accountability
70

SYSTEM DRAWINGS COMPOST TOILETS

During the embodied experience in 'Compost Toilets' systematic drawings were made of their everyday routines and underlying actions. The drawings provide an inside in how the community sustains their way of living.

FOOD

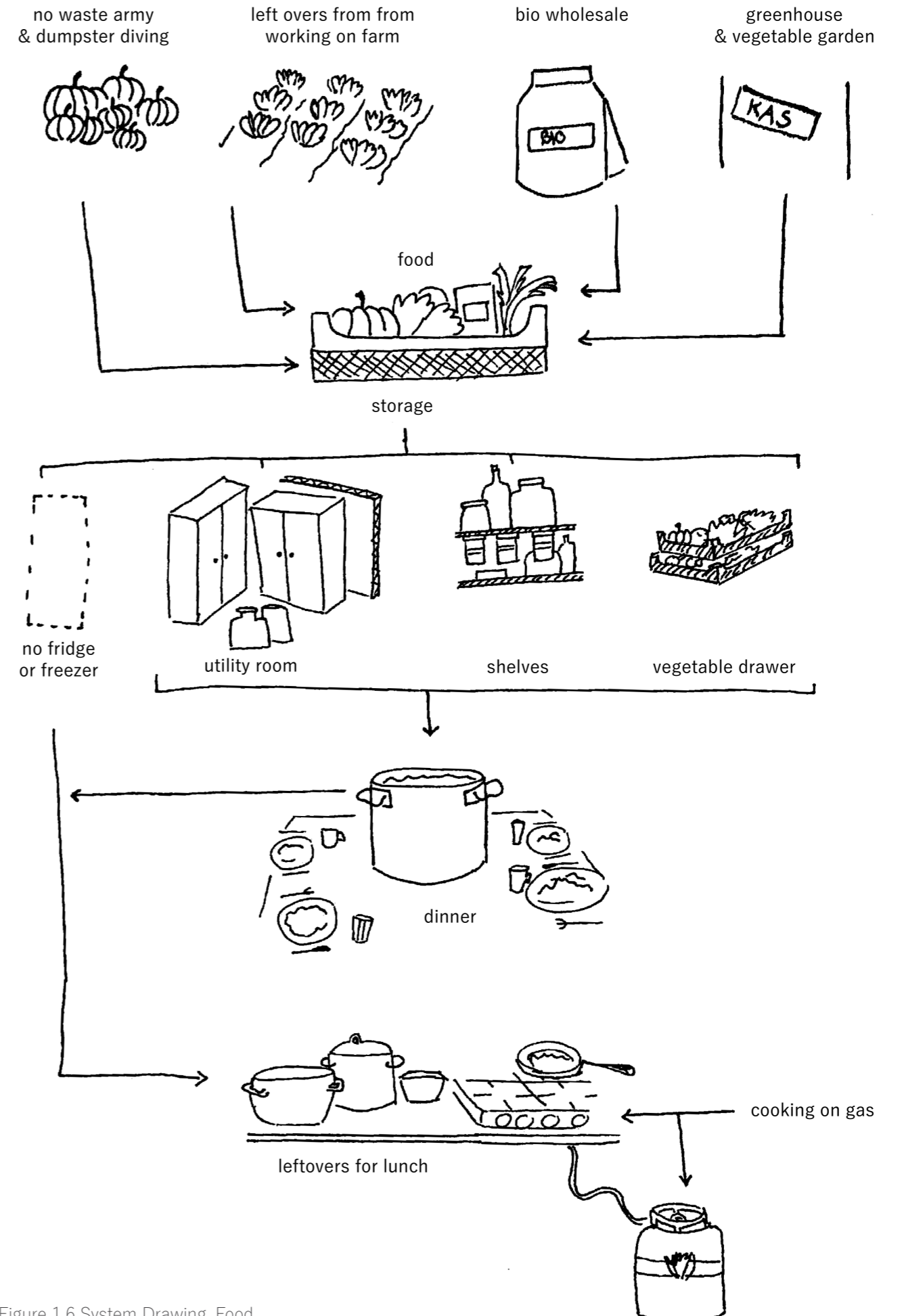


Figure 1.6 System Drawing, Food

GREY WATER

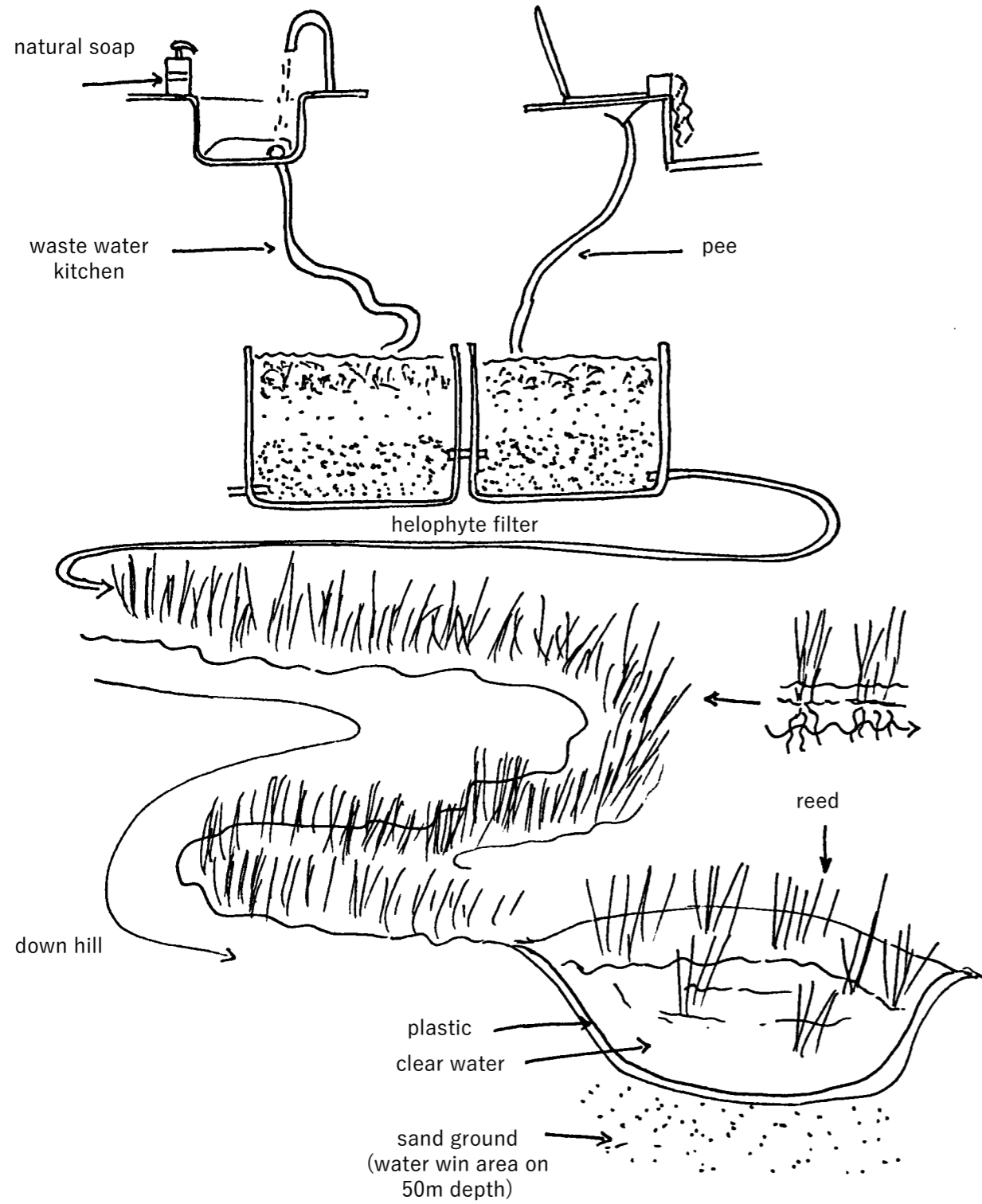


Figure 1.7 System Drawing, Grey water
74

TOILET

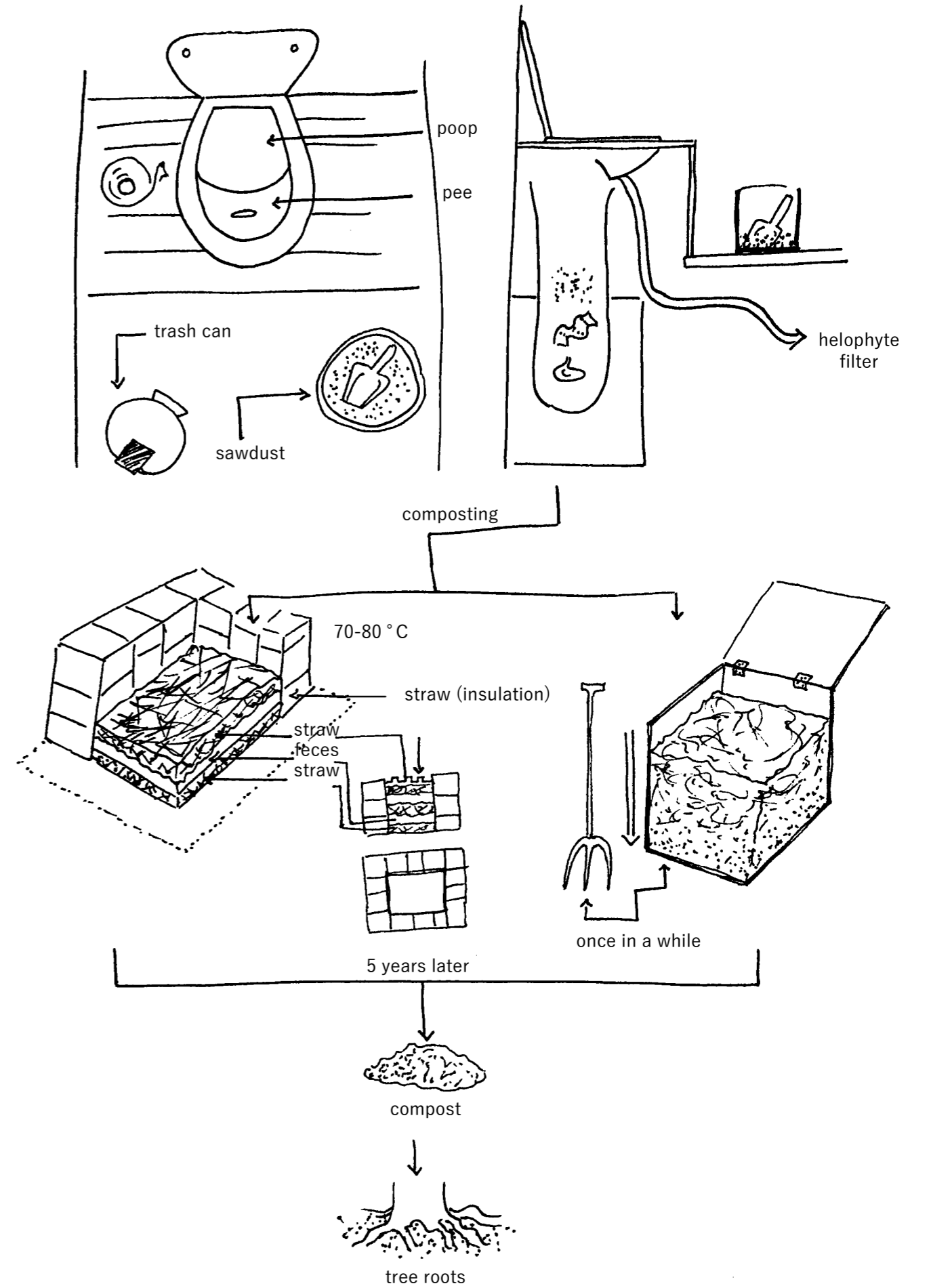


Figure 1.8 System Drawing, Toilet
75

LAUNDRY

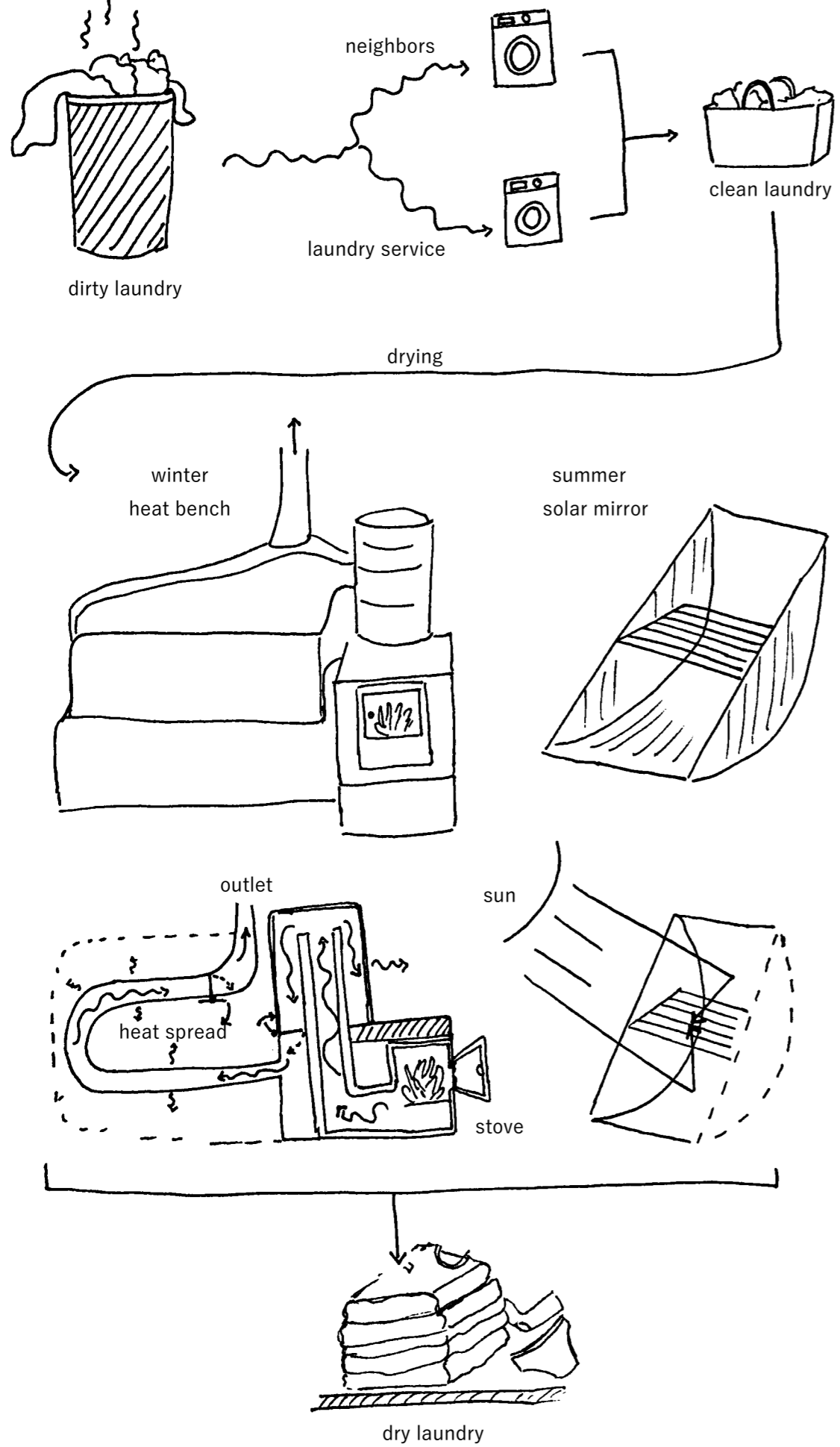


Figure 1.9 System Drawing, Laundry
76

ENERGY

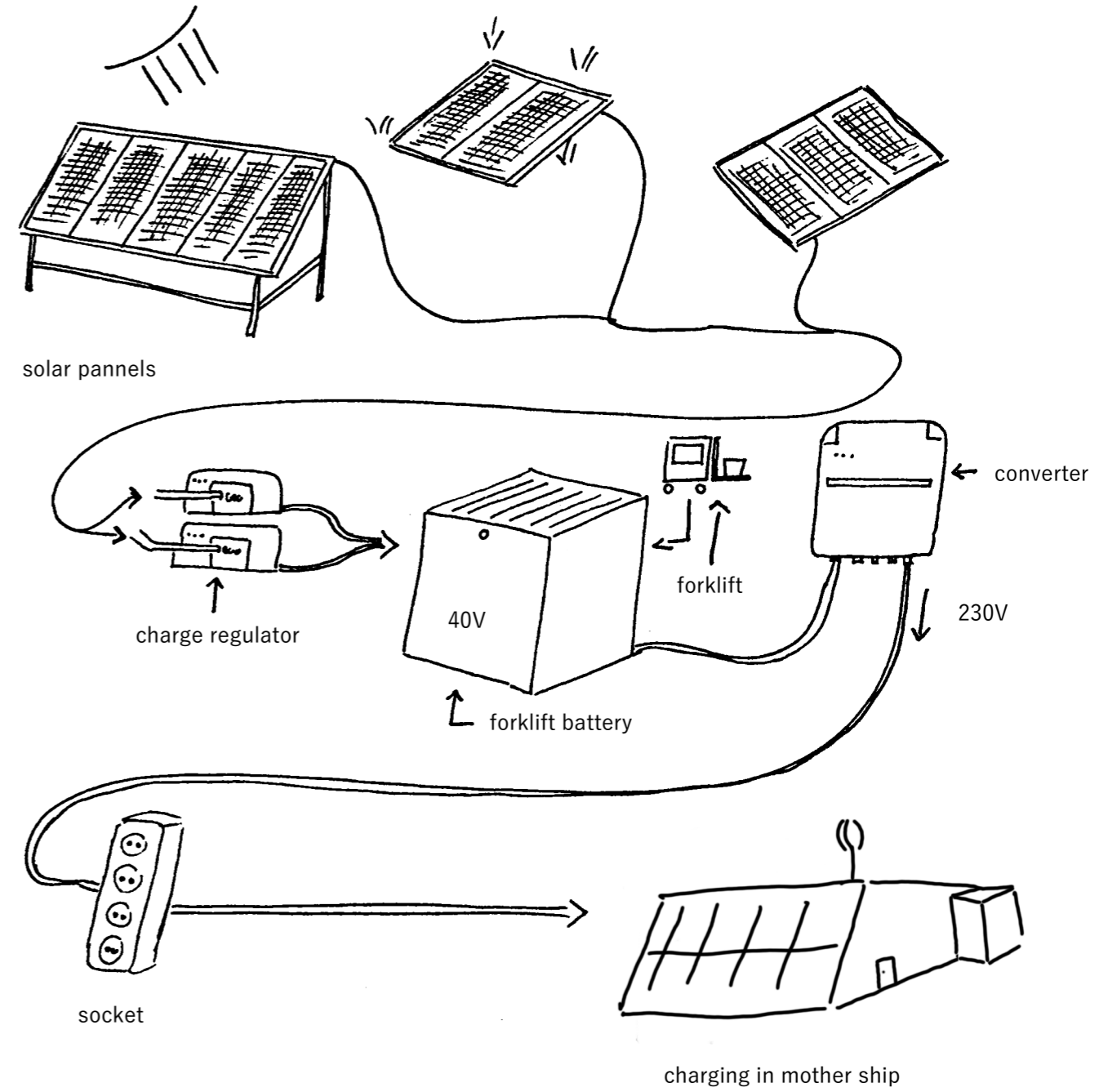


Figure 1.10 System Drawing, Energy
77

HEAT

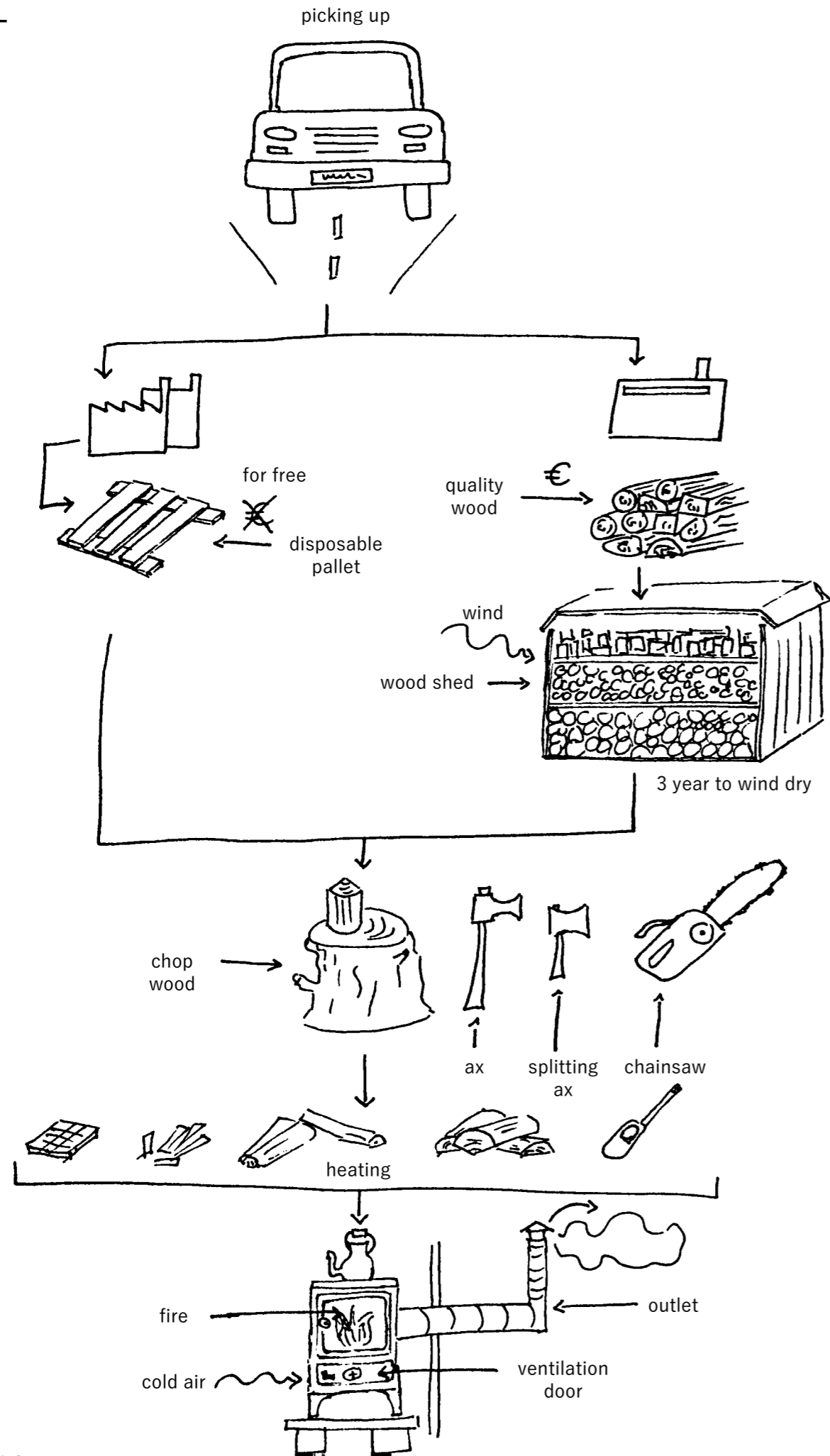


Figure 1.11 System Drawing, Heat
78

WATER

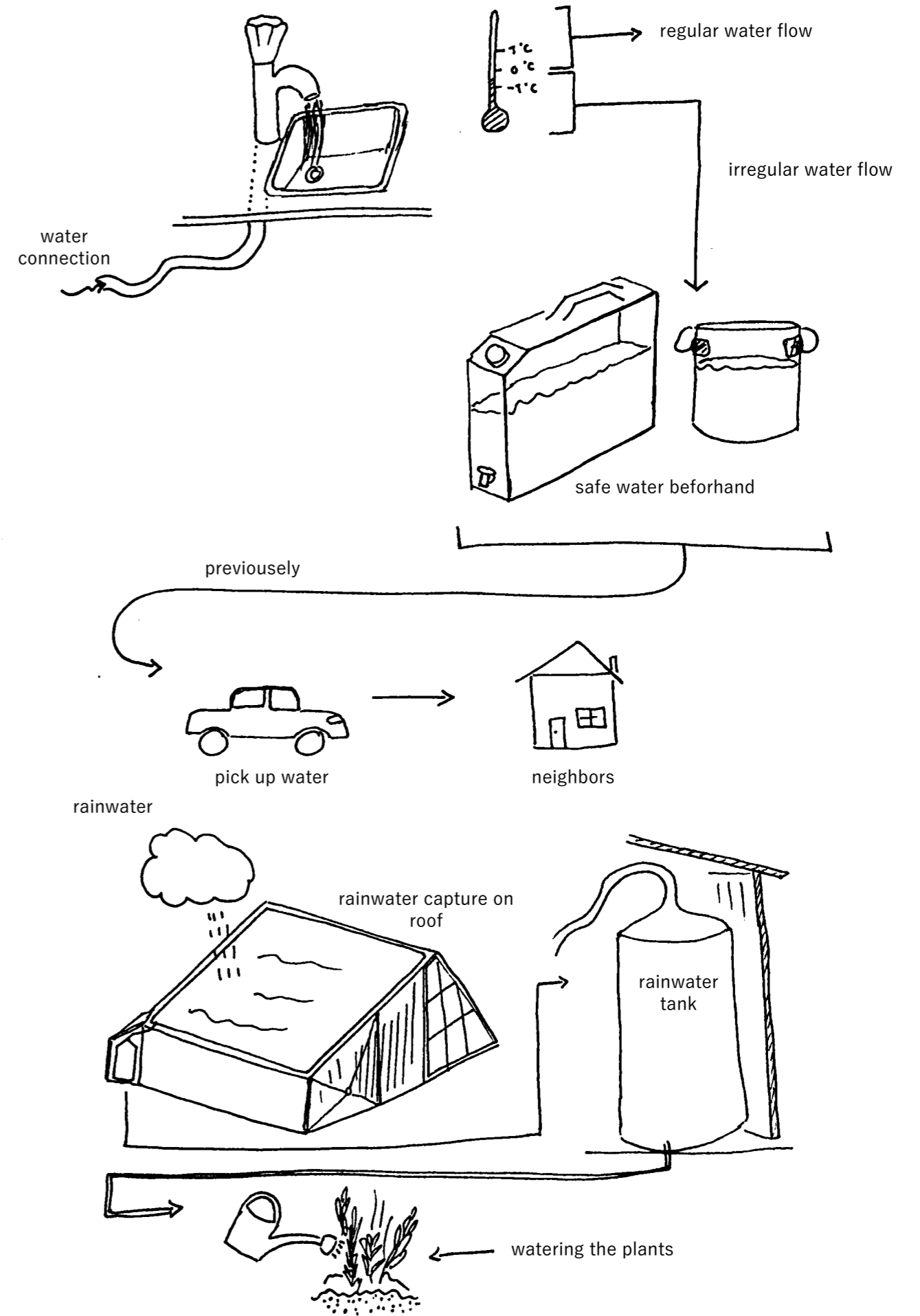


Figure 1.12 System Drawing, Water

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FIGURE LIST

Figure 1.1 Existing Ecovillages	66
Figure 1.2 Diary	69
Figure 1.3 Emotional Mapping	70
Figure 1.4 Location Mapping	71
Figure 1.5 Relational Accountability	72
Figure 1.6 System Drawing, Food	75
Figure 1.7 System Drawing, Grey water	76
Figure 1.8 System Drawing, Toilet	77
Figure 1.9 System Drawing, Laundry	78
Figure 1.10 System Drawing, Energy	79
Figure 1.11 System Drawing, Heat	80
Figure 1.12 System Drawing, Water	81