Nudity is a condition relieved of any hierarchical differentiation by the theology of layers of clothes and other masks. Consequently, the true collective is a naked collective. Nakedness is an intimate state, requiring privacy and usually doesn't take place as a collective act. But to what extent can people share this condition? And what function and characteristics should be implemented in any given space to extend this intimacy?

In Russian society the value of the collective and the common was always very high, even before the USSR. This collectivism expressed itself on many different levels, but spatially it was especially representative in the form of the banya, a traditional Russian steam bath. Through the figure of the banya, collective nakedness and communal intimacy became a cultural condition, and one that developed though many historical periods.

As a type the banya has been studied through extensive archival research. The archival research is been made and the timeline of development of that type is documented. This includes a number of Banyas designed by famous architects, like Suzor or Nikolsky, but most of them were made by unknown architects from different times. This material, in form of plans, sections and elevations, is housed in the archives of St P, in particular The Main State Archive, the Historical State Archive, The Archive of the Art and Literature and The Technical State Archive.

Banya evolved from a single steam room as the extension to a house, or more often it served for three houses at a time. Then it gets to isolated bath pavilions with laundries or other various programmes. In 18-19 century it comes to the city and represents more collective form, fitted in existing urban fabric. After that it turned to a collective spaces in the USSR, which were placed more secluded in micro districts. Later it came to a multifunctional entertainment space and also to small steam rooms in apartments.

In many ways, the history of the country can be seen through the transformation of this type. Even though the banya is a traditional type in Russia, it is only ever defined by its interiors and structure, and never codified or celebrated as a distinct architectural form. Despite its cultural and infrastructural significance, this type has not been studied before. The aim of this project is therefore to document and analyse the history of the banya, to create an archaeology of this type and understand how it remains relevant as both an interior form, and even as a urban model in contemporary Russia. Therefore the archival research is been made and the timeline of development of that type is documented.