In my research I focused on the aspect of folding in architecture, which seemed to me extremely interesting and not yet thoroughly examined. I started research allowing myself not to know where it will lead me, I kept myself open to all possibilities the results might create. During the studies, I made some small personal discoveries which were important and significantly influenced my design project in many ways, also indirectly.

I have found out that folding in architecture can be observed in different scales, materials and purposes. This way of creating the space can appear in micro and macro scale as well, it can be used to contrast materials and surfaces and as a result to influence the perception of the viewer.

The most fascinating and inspiring aspect was for me - big-scale folding, of whole architectural elements. On the one hand they are forming the shape of the architectural object, on the other hand - the void in-between them, where we live and interact. Studying folding led me to conclusion that similar effects on our perception as dense rhythm of folds on ground/walls/ceiling can be achieved by simple forms with rich use of materials and transparencies. My design evolved from complex, folded surfaces to very simple, long, slightly curved volume.

Research in folding made me more sensitive to perception of the surfaces enclosing space: their shape, size, proportion, rhythm, materiality, light-shadow pattern. I have become more aware of the ways in which borders and limits of spaces are created, using different rhythms and materials in construction. This appeared to be most helpful for my design.

At the beginning I expected to find a form-finding tool. Either for the volume of the building or for the structure of the facade. It turned out, that for me folding is most interesting when used as exploration tool and not as a technique to arrive with certain form. The exploration of folding allowed me to become more sensitive to the relation between the opposite qualities of space: open/close, light-shadow, interior-exterior, dynamic-static.

The attempt to use folding as a leading technique at a concept stage of my design was unsuccessful. After conducting interviews with architects and curators as well as studying Warsaw history and plans for the future, I realised what is really needed for the public space in the Warsaw’s city centre, exhibiting art and what’s crucial to experience of visitor. At first, I have focused too much on the form, connections and circulation. So, I started the design process again, thinking about the place, knowing it by experience, creating different visions for how this place in future might be used.

My design consists of three elements: the museum building, the park and the wall enclosing park. The biggest challenge was to find a solution for diminishing dominance of Palace of Culture - socialistic tower from 1955, which is set just in the centre of the city. I decided to use extremes to get in a dialogue with context. I created an extremely long volume – the museum building. In this way I have contrasted two dominants – vertical direction of the tower and horizontal direction of the museum itself. I have introduced a huge par as a surrounding of the building, which creates peaceful, quite, relaxing space around and becomes the exhibition space, as well as intimate public
space for the locals. I enclosed the park with a high wall and lowered the terrain by 6 m in relation to the street level. In this way I managed to create completely different world just in the city centre.

At the end of design process, e.i. while designing details and the structure of facade, my initial research in folding became helpful again. I was looking for the way to create single, uniform facade, that would reflect light in different ways and allow different levels of transparency. To create this depth I have used curved, glass panels. Together they form very long, folded surface, which is light and transparent, and resembles fabric curtain.

In conclusion, research in folding has helped me to formulate my interests in architecture, which are experience of space and methods in which we achieve certain spatial qualities. It made me more sensitive to how spaces are constructed and how they relate to each other. To the significance of borders. But also it helped me in the last stage of design process, in the form-finding process of the facade. Folding is a very powerful and diverse tool that can be used in different ways and at different scales in the building.