

Dwelling Axonometry 1:50

Image: Viktoriya Angelova, 2022-23

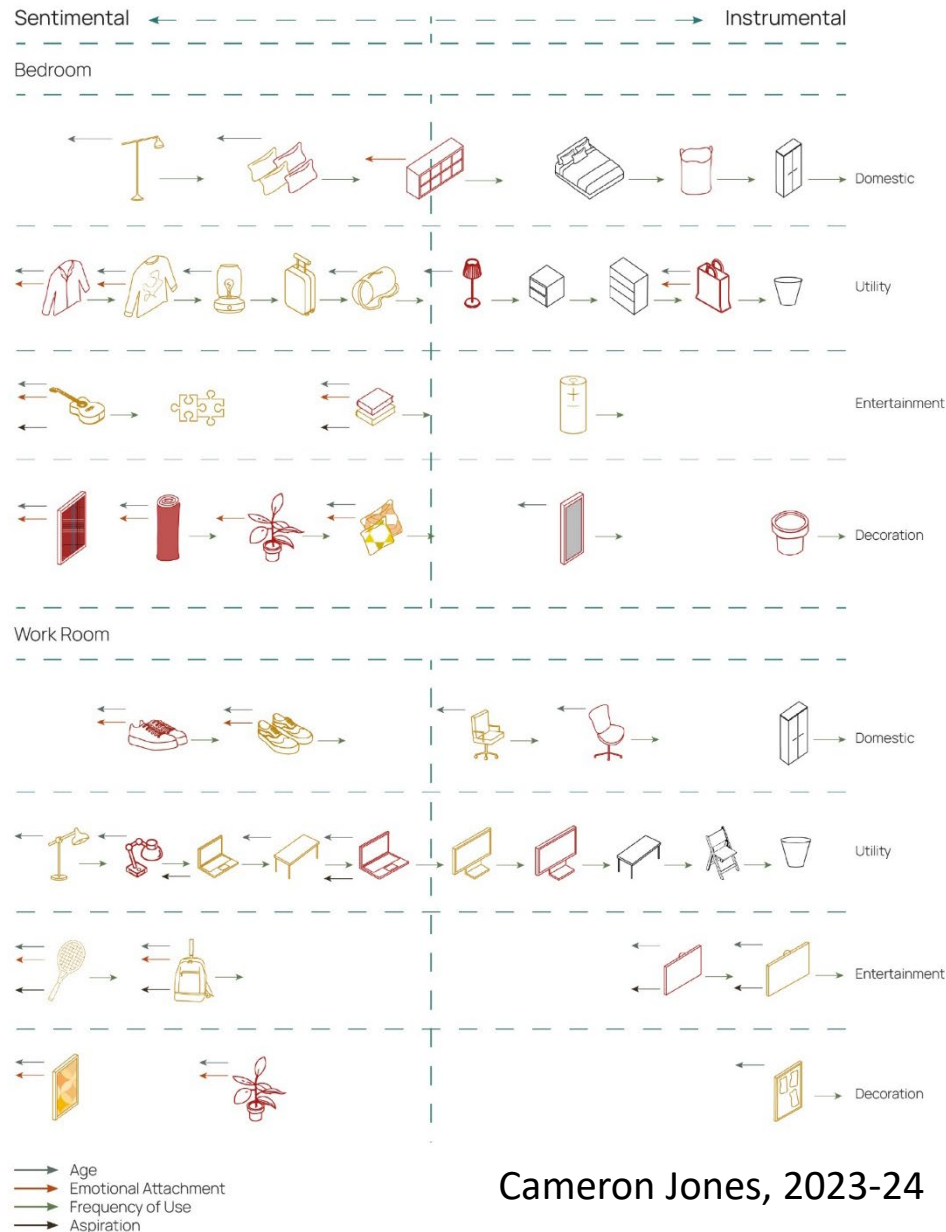
association of architectural educators (aae) 2025 Annual Conference

Nurture: Cultivating care, creativity & collaboration in architecture

Working Paper

Developing Careful Designers: Paying attention to personhood and place through ethnographic drawing

abstract



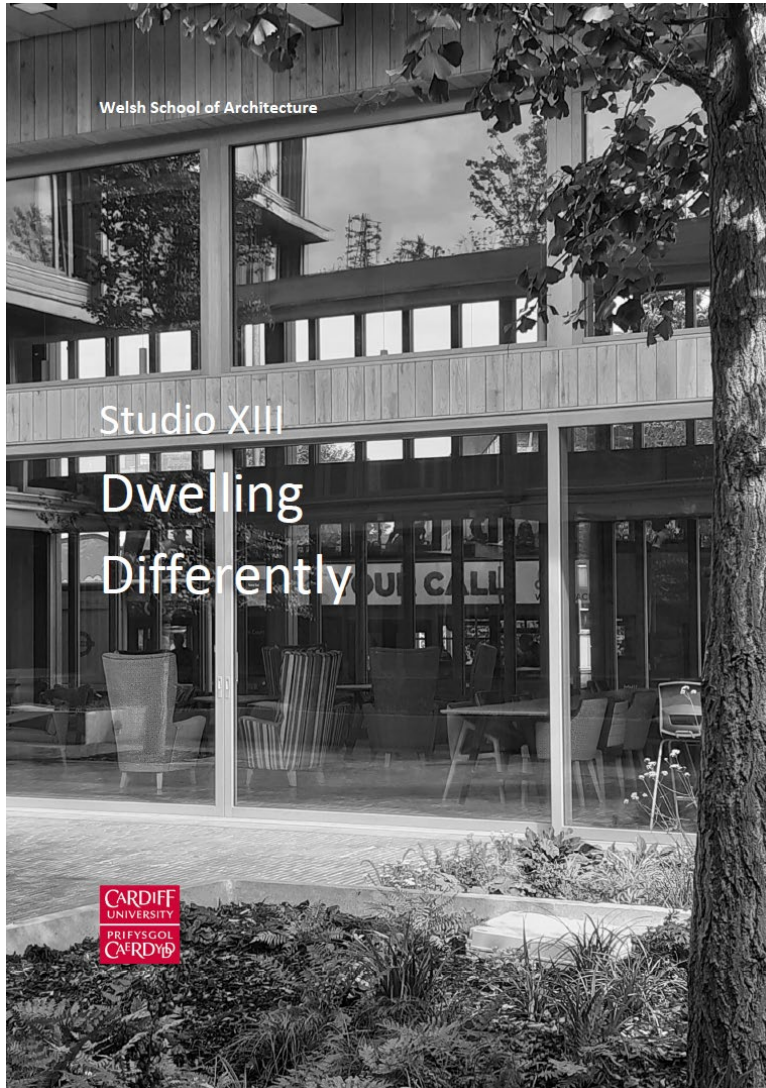
Cameron Jones, 2023-24

This paper approaches nurture from two angles:

- developing careful designers that pay attention to personhood and place, and
- creating a supportive student-centred learning experience rooted in exploring everyday homes.

The paper presents reflections on the research outcomes of a Masters design unit, 'Dwelling Differently', over four successive years. It is thus a reflective practitioner account; one that seeks to locate the work of the studio within an emerging curriculum thread, 'Personhood and Place', while considering the ways in which students pay attention to these in design studio.

Specifically, the paper presents a sample of ethnographic drawings gathered from primer studies that preceded design thesis projects involving forms of housing.



The *Dwelling Differently* studio focused on the design of places in which people live or reside – both buildings known as dwellings and public spaces in which we dwell – be it by choice, chance or otherwise.

Students were encouraged to explore and re-imagine the phenomenon of ‘dwelling’; an important research theme in architectural phenomenology since the work of Heidegger, and arguably a mainstay of architectural practice since its origins.

2020/21: *Homebound*

2021/22: *Affordability*

2022/23: *Estates*

2023/24: *Ageing-in-place*

learning outcomes

UNIT XIII: Dwelling Differently LEARNING OUTCOMES

	DESIGN THESIS MODULE LEARNING OUTCOME	UNIT LEARNING OUTCOME
1	Formulate an architectural brief in response to appropriate design problems or issues and ensuing research questions that can sustainably and ethically meet the requirements of building users and society at large.	Formulate an architectural brief in response to the unit agenda of <i>Dwelling Differently</i> and specific theme of <i>Ageing in Place</i> . The brief should identify a research question, or practice problem, concerning design for enhanced quality of life / wellbeing of dwellers (as part of RIBA 'six duties for ethical practice'), with reference to relevant design guidance and/or built precedent.
2	Design architectural proposals that show due consideration of physical, social, political, economic, environmental, technological, historical, theoretical, cultural and regulatory contexts within which they reside. This should explicitly include a stance on climate emergency.	Design architectural proposals for dwelling, with due consideration of physical, social, political, environmental, technological, theoretical, cultural and regulatory contexts, including guidance/best practice for space standards. Proposals should show particular attention to atmosphere, experience, and habitation. Proposals for demolition / construction / renewal should balance impact on the climate and ecosystems.
3	Incorporate into design a coherent understanding of how architecture is made in terms of structures, construction methods, materials and building services, and how it performs, reflecting understanding of the input of the wider professional design team in achieving this. This should include specific targets for low or zero carbon environmental performance.	Incorporate into design a coherent understanding of how architecture is made; demonstrating awareness of how design decisions impact on the lived experience and relative agency of dwellers; evaluating person-environment relationships and showing understanding of behaviour / performance of each. Evidence understanding of the inputs of the wider professional design team and commissioners / decision makers. Energy strategies/environmental performance should consider the comfort and wellbeing of older persons.
4	Present architectural design in effective, professional creative ways visually, verbally and through written summaries and reports. Show knowledge of conventions of architectural representation whilst also drawing on the fine arts.	Present architectural design in a manner that foregrounds the needs and aspirations of dwellers, particularly older people, exploring modes of architectural representation that are accessible, inclusive, and inspiring; visualising intended atmospheres and habitation, as well as prospective lived experience(s) for dwellers. Outputs should reflect an iterative design process, describing an evolving project, and exploring occupancy scenarios within the design life of the proposed building(s).
5	Develop and test an intellectual position and reasoned argument through and also regarding architectural design, based on critical consideration and selection of theory, research and practice relevant to the project themes and identified problem(s)/ issue(s).	Develop and test an intellectual position and reasoned argument through architectural design, referencing external projects and texts. Show understanding of the architect's agency / role in shaping different designs for dwelling within, or consciously outwith, the frame of contemporary practice, including development/regulatory contexts where design quality is challenged by other values. The work should declare a clear position on how design can support ageing in place.

LO1. Formulate an architectural brief... design for enhanced quality of life / wellbeing of dwellers (as part of RIBA 'six duties for ethical practice')....

LO2. Design architectural proposals... Proposals should show particular attention to atmosphere, experience, and habitation...

LO3. Incorporate into design... awareness of how design decisions impact on the lived experience and relative agency of dwellers; evaluating person-environment relationships and showing understanding of behaviour / performance of each.

LO4. Present architectural design... that foregrounds the needs and aspirations of dwellers, particularly older people... visualising intended atmospheres and habitation, as well as prospective lived experience(s) for dwellers... exploring occupancy scenarios within the design life of the proposed building(s).

LO5. Develop and test an intellectual position... Show understanding of the architect's agency / role in shaping different designs for dwelling...



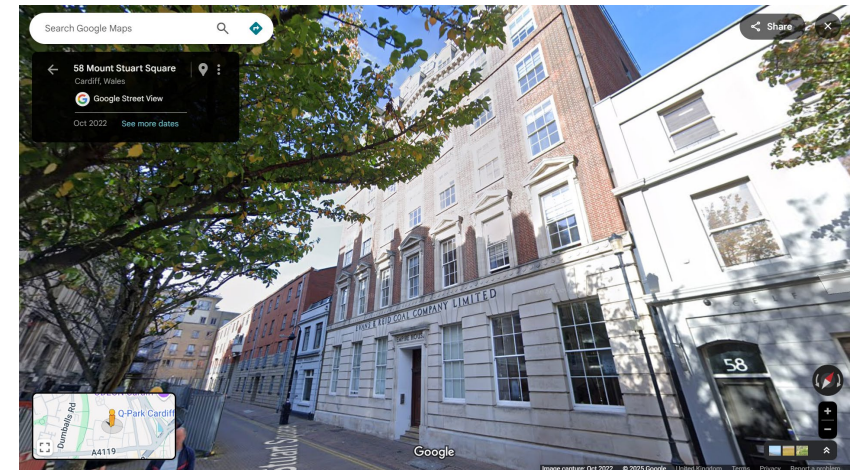
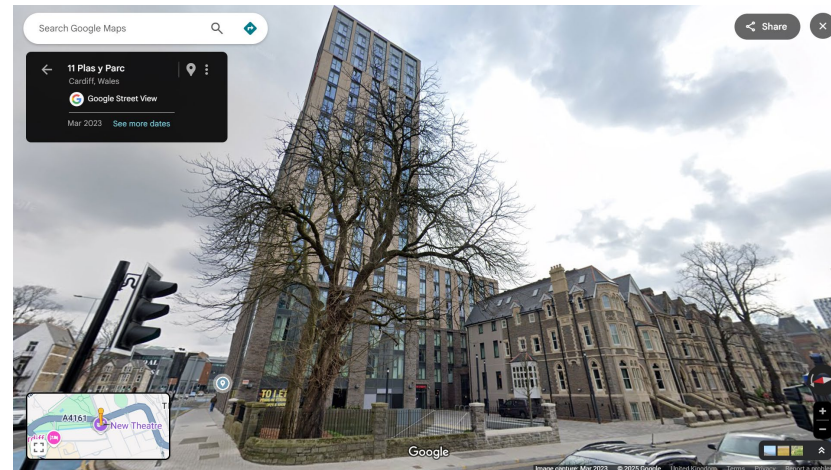
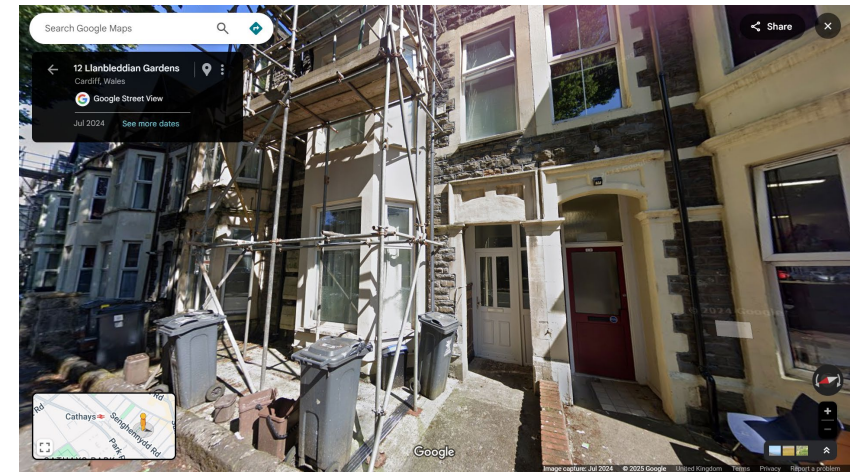
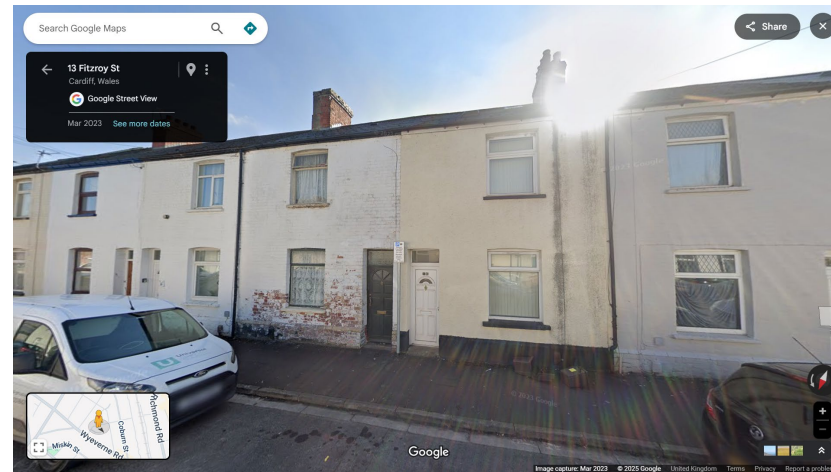
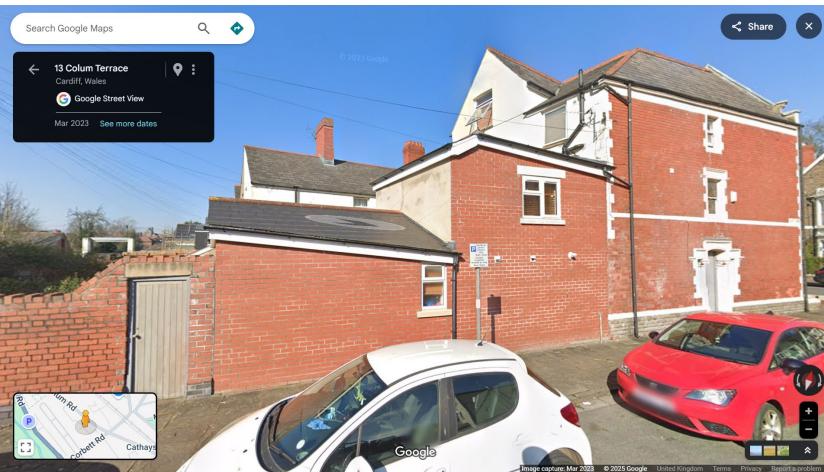
Turning to the student experience, the studio initiates its work each year through a walking tour of members' neighbourhoods and dwellings – each student leading the group home and opening their private rooms.

This first activity made manifest a studio agenda to

- (i) de-canonise architecture by studying everyday housing;
- (ii) de-colonise the curriculum by exploring multicultural lived experiences and appropriations of housing;
- (iii) topple studio hierarchies by empowering students as hosts and expert guides, and
- (iv) establish a sense of community by knowing one another's living circumstances.

Altogether, the studio co-created a student-centred learning experience and context for nurturing careful design thinking.

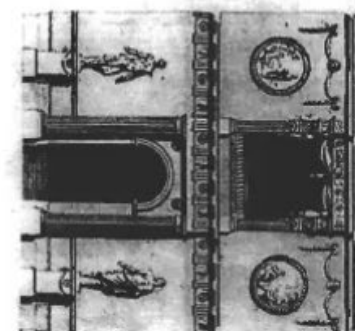
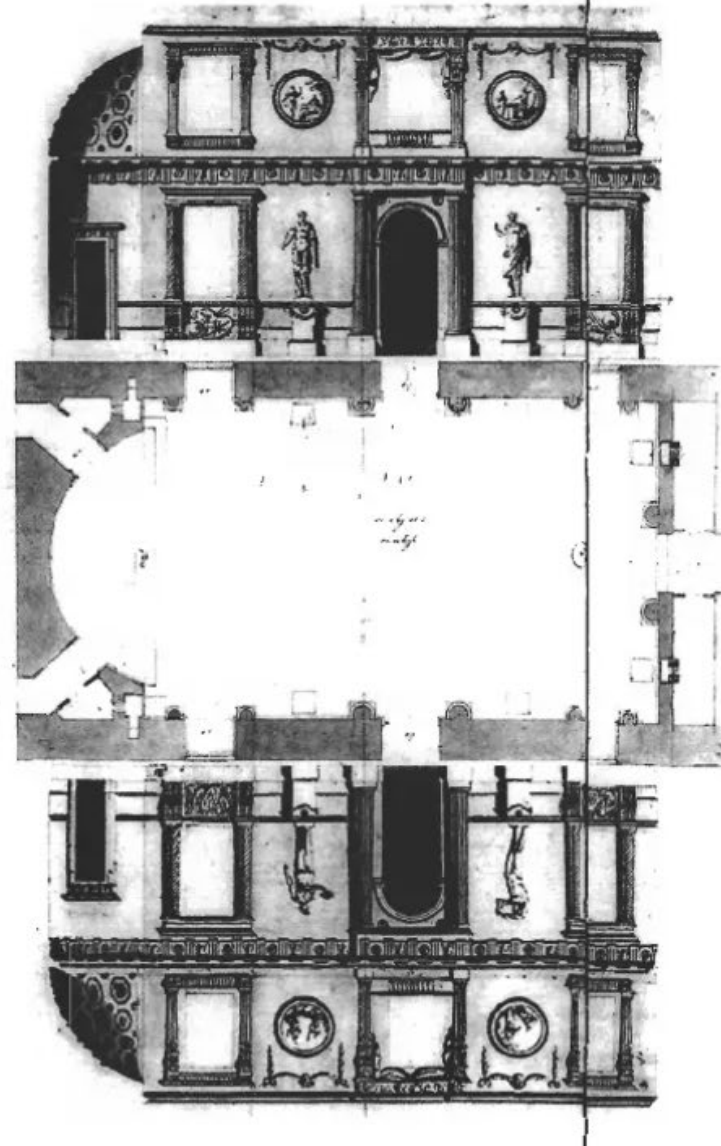
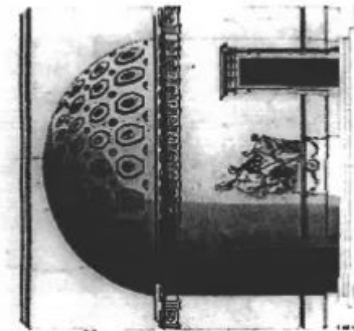
student homes



drawing references



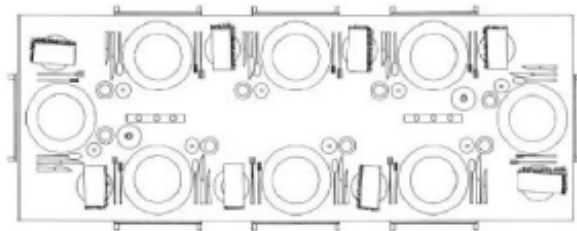
Translations from
Drawing to Building
and Other Essays
Robin Evans



SECTION OF THE GREAT HALL OF STON-HOUSE IN MIDDLESEX One of the SEATS
of the High Court The Hall of the High Court

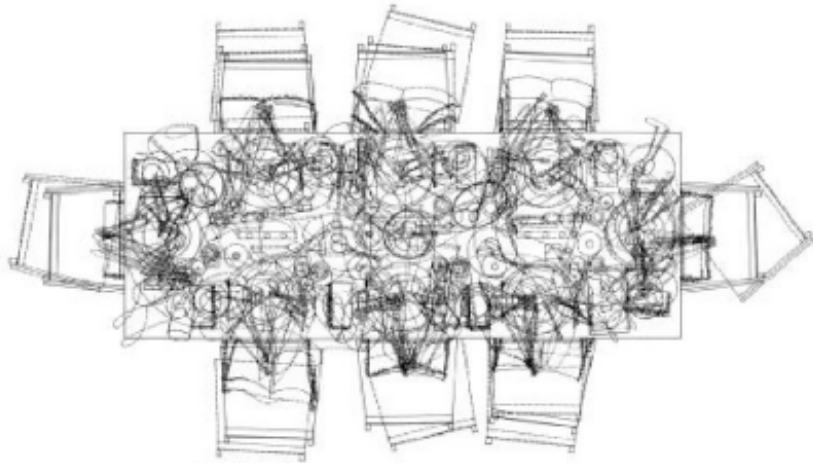
Robin Evan's text 'The Developed Surface: An Enquiry into the Brief Life of an Eighteenth-Century Drawing Technique' in: Evans, R. (1997). *Translations from drawing to building and other essays* [Book]. AA Publications.

drawing references



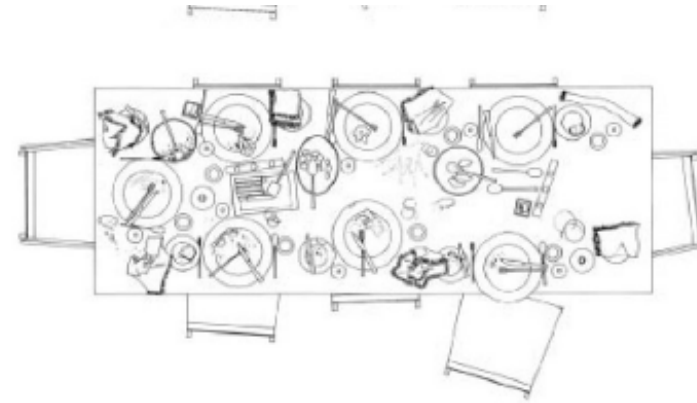
THE LAY OF THE TABLE

An architectural ordering of place, status, and function. A frozen moment of perfection. This is how architects see.



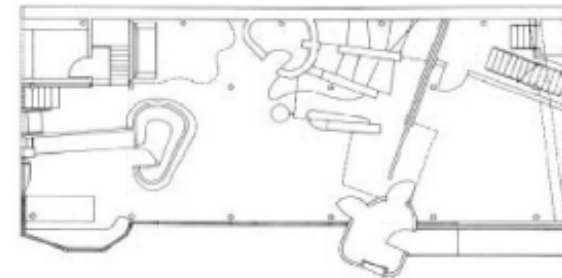
THE MEAL

Use begins to undermine the apparent stability of the (architectural) order. Traces of occupation in time. The recognition of life's disorder.



THE TRACE

The dirty tablecloth, witness of disorder. A palimpsest. This is the reality of domestic life.



THE LAY OF THE PLAN

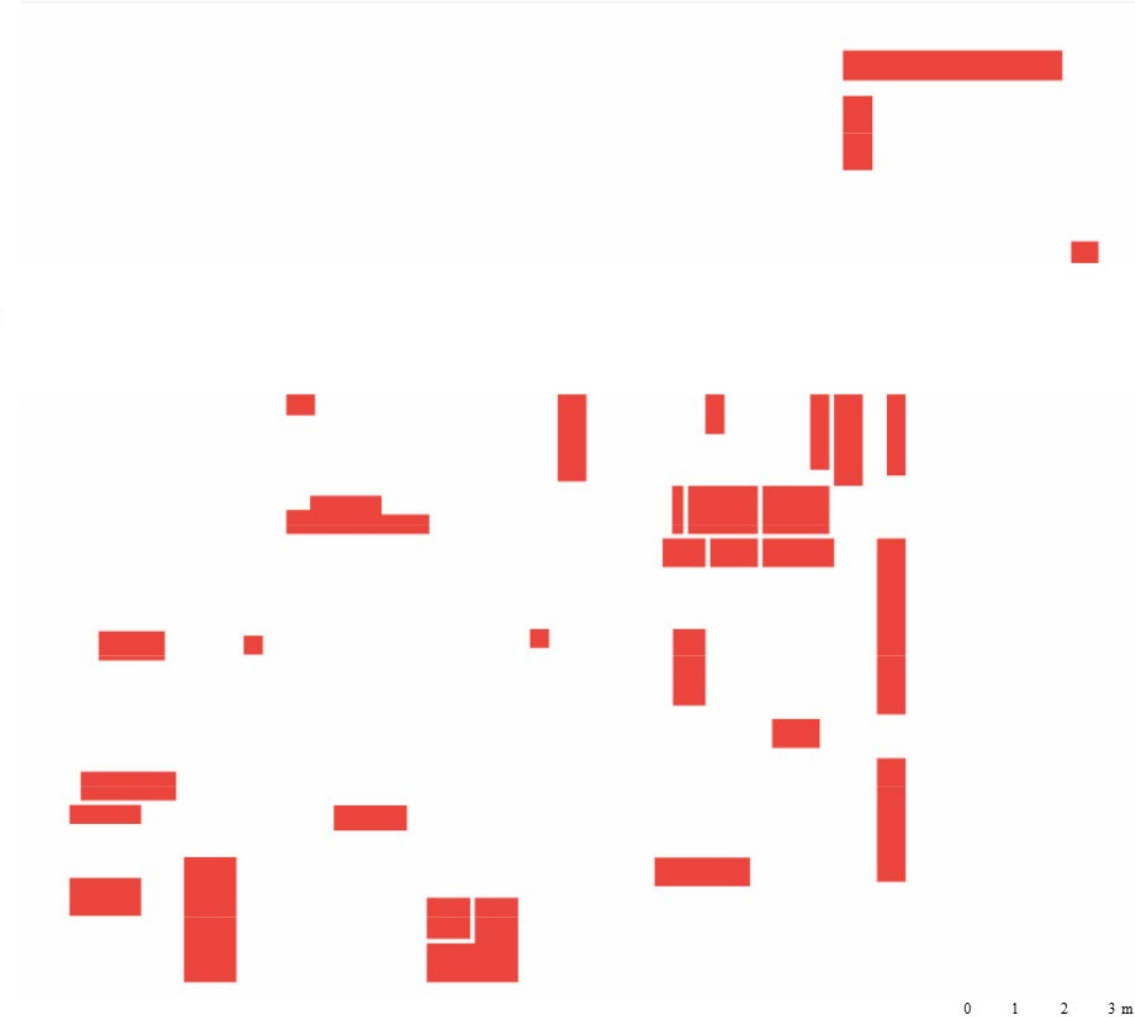
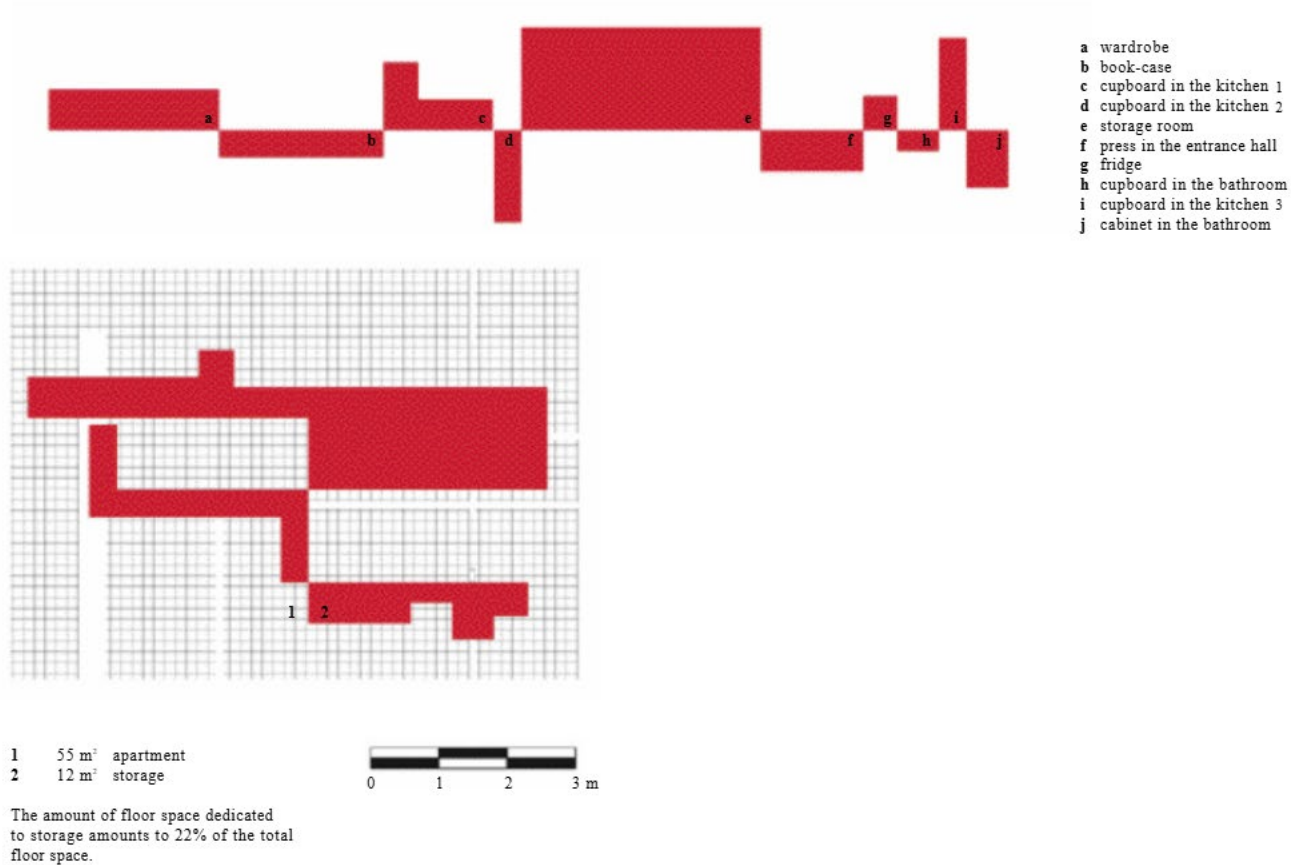
The trace transformed into the plan of our house. Clutter filling the plan(s). Domestic difficulties interrupting the order of the grid.

Sarah Wigglesworth Architects,
9 Stock Orchard Street, London.

‘Table Manners’ drawing by Sarah Wigglesworth (Till & Wigglesworth, 1998), which formed the design basis of the Straw Bale House (2001) but also subsequently inspired many architectural students ‘mapping’ habitation;

drawing references

My home:
List of storage spaces



Drawings by fine artist Lieven De Boeck in which housing is considered as storage space for personal belongings, as a kind of camouflage of the inhabitant vis-a-vis his environment, and as a domicile (De Boeck, 2003)

drawing references

Articles

Drawing in Good Faith

Adam Sharr

Pages 306-321 | Published online: 04 Dec 2009

Cite this article <https://doi.org/10.1080/13264820903341662>

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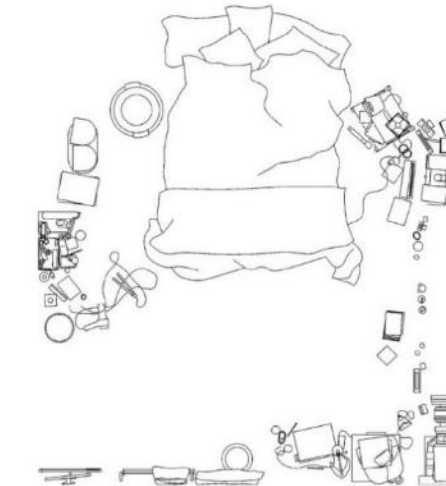
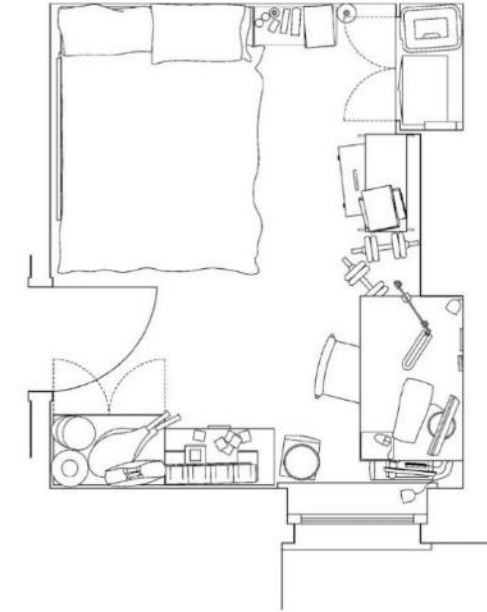
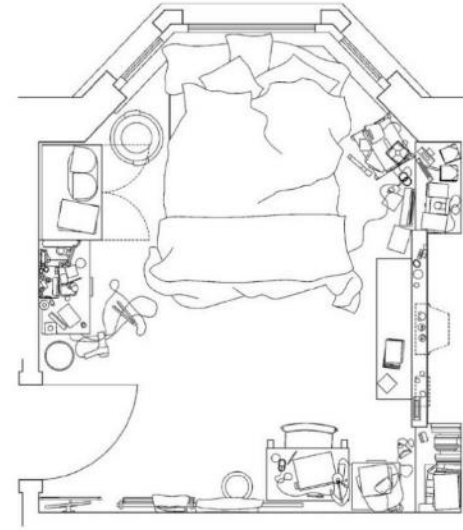
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Abstract

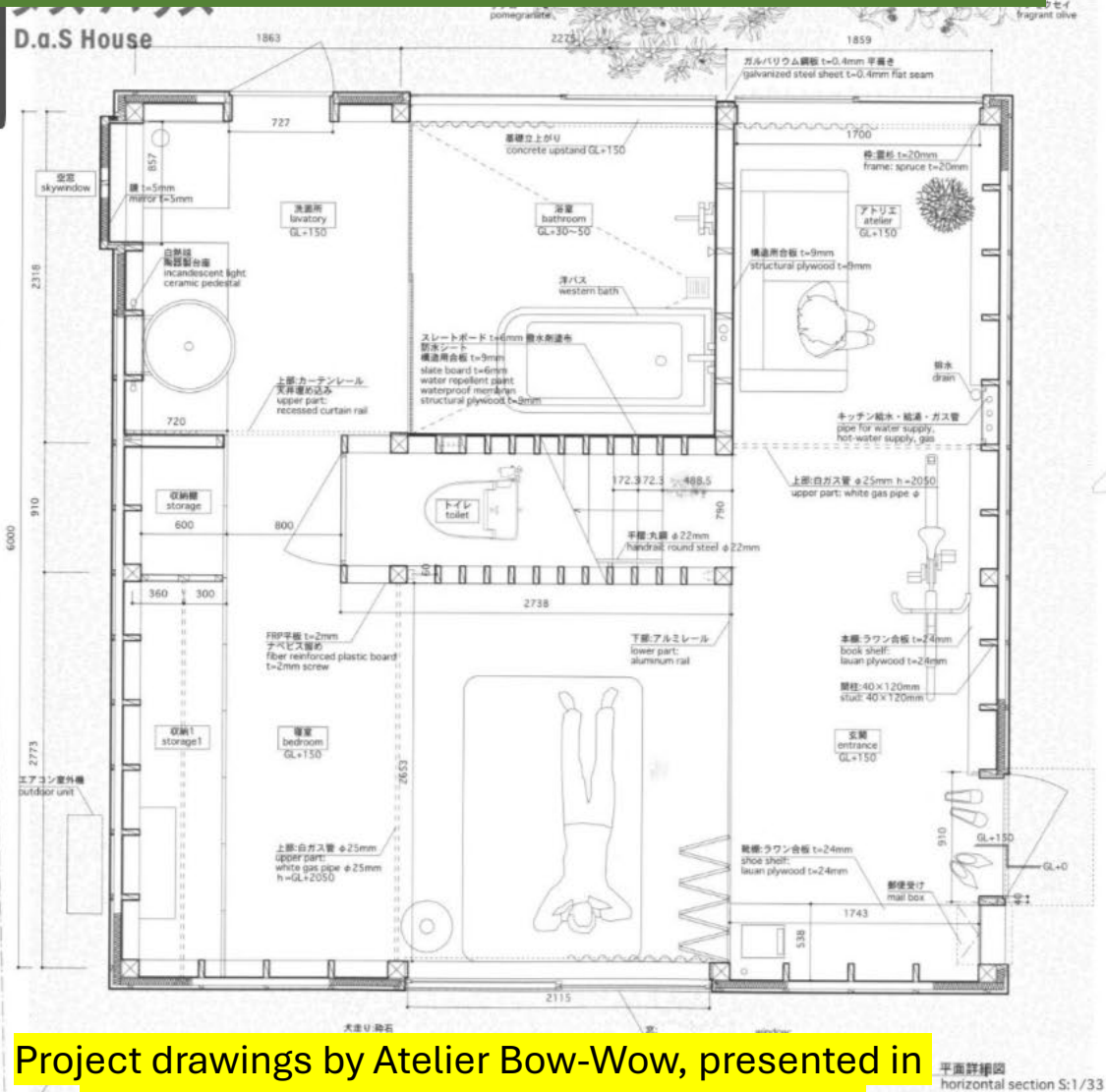
This paper introduces measured drawings that record the inhabitation of domestic interiors. It locates them in the tradition of measured drawing and explores their particular theoretical provenance in Henri Lefebvre's notion of "the everyday" and Martin Heidegger's conception of "building" and "dwelling". Expert drawings, but recording non-expert design, they are questioned in relation to Pierre Bourdieu's ideas about taste, competence and virtuosity. It is concluded that, while these drawings come from the professional realm and follow professional conventions, they criticise the boundaries and priorities of architectural expertise. In this way, they involve drawing in good faith.

Inhabitation studies of two student rooms within a Victorian terrace house in Cardiff © Rob Stevens

[Source: Sharr, Adam, 'Drawing in Good Faith', *Architectural Theory Review*, 2009, 14(3), 306-321.]

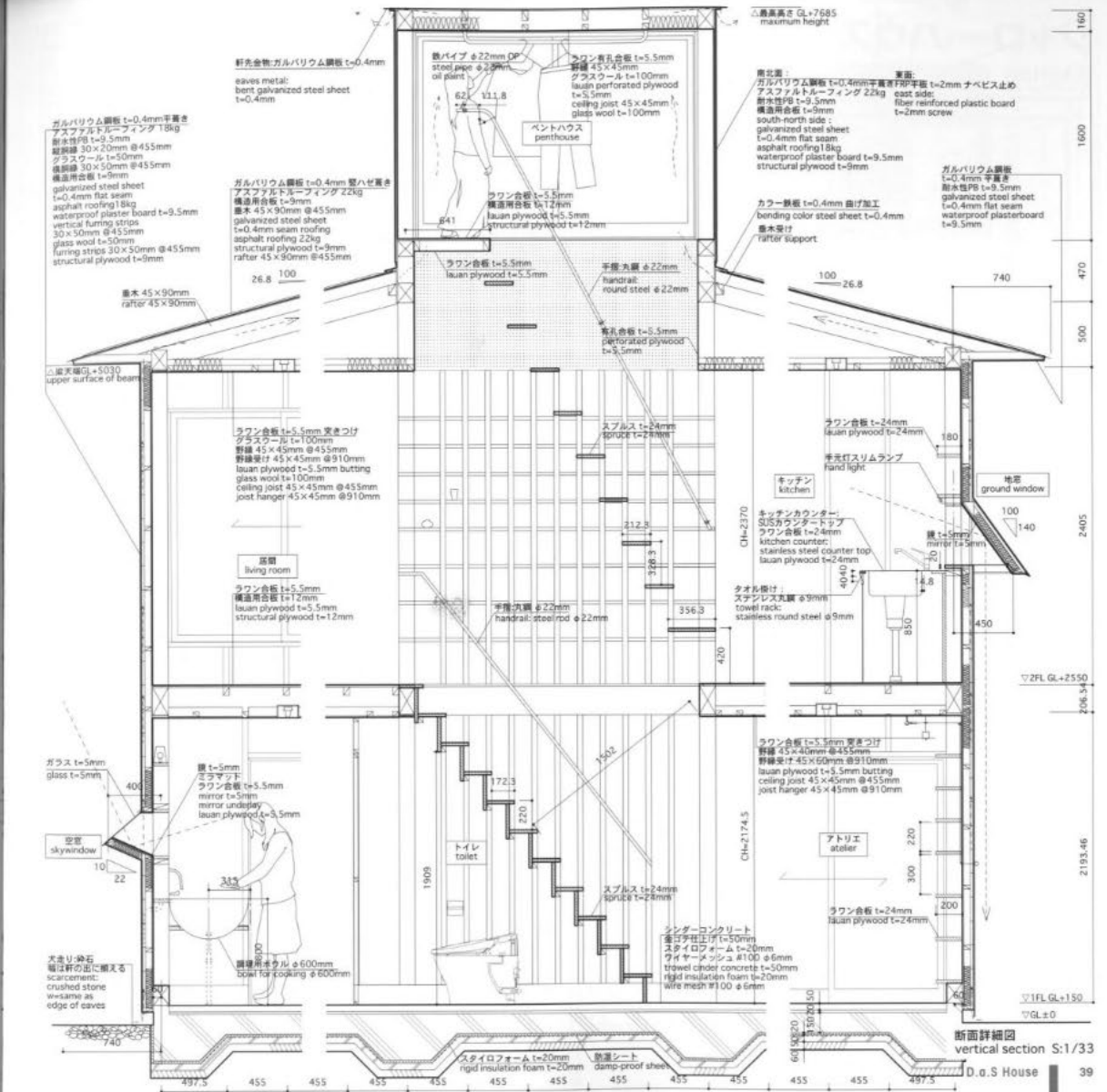


drawing references

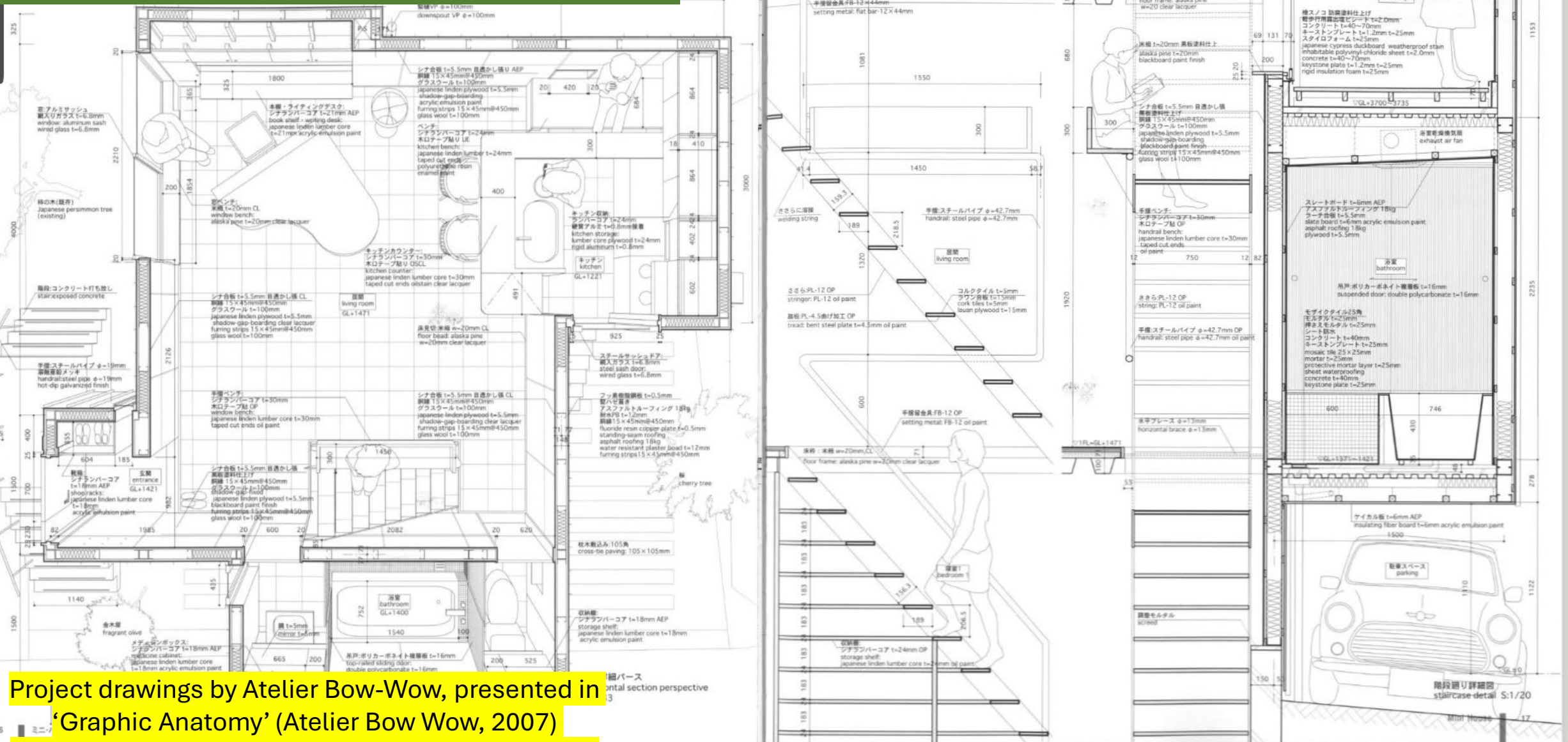


Project drawings by Atelier Bow-Wow, presented in 'Graphic Anatomy' (Atelier Bow Wow, 2007)

<https://archive.org/details/atelier-bow-wow-graphic-anatomy/page/14/mode/2up>



drawing references



Project drawings by Atelier Bow-Wow, presented in 'Graphic Anatomy' (Atelier Bow Wow, 2007)
<https://archive.org/details/atelier-bow-wow-graphic-anatomy/page/14/mode/2up>

drawing references



Catalogue of the exhibition, 'Architectural Ethnography' (Kaijima, 2018), in the Japan Pavilion at the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale, curated by Momoyo Kaijima, co-founder of Atelier Bow-Wow. W House – Entrance Side Drawing © Yukiko Suto, 2010.



The Gradual Gaze: Drawing as a Practice of Ethnographic Description

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SUMMARY *Nourished by my research's theoretical and ethnographic resources, this article explores the act of ethnographic drawing and its potential. I introduce a concept of gaze that I call "the gradual gaze." I suggest that drawing, which can transform the gaze into the gradual gaze, is a creative and heuristic way of attentive thinking and a process involving both unlearning and learning. The mimetic quality of drawing strengthens the fieldworker's eye and entails a search for connectedness with the environment and people. The fieldworker's domain of experience offers insight for understanding the mimetic practice in drawing. However, this mimetic practice goes beyond duality, imitation, and representation. This article explores the triangular relationship between the fieldworker, the subject drawn, and the drawing. [drawing, ethnography, slowing down, mimesis, epistemology]*

Due to its nature, no doubt, drawing is represented, experienced, and experimented with as a compulsion, like the effect of an irresistible impetus.
—Jean-Luc Nancy (2013, 15)

In social and cultural anthropology, field notes, photographs, and films remain standard methods of collecting empirical data and generating ethnographic resources. However, during my fieldwork, I learned about the considerable potential of drawing, including immediate sketching as a subcategory of drawing. Drawing during or after fieldwork provides the opportunity to preserve the memory of moments with people, and of places, situations, circumstances at distinct periods, and conditions and positions in which one finds themselves. It also opens the research field's horizon to reveal its hidden qualities.

This article explores the triangular relationship between the fieldworker, the subject drawn, and the drawing. There is no need to be trained in the arts to draw. Drawing, I suggest instead, is more or less the art of slowing down. To make this argument, I introduce a concept that I call the *gradual gaze*. I suggest that drawing, which can transform the gaze into the *gradual gaze*, is a creative and heuristic way to think attentively. It involves both unlearning and learning by becoming connected thoughtfully with the environment and people. The mimetic quality of drawing, I argue, strengthens the fieldworker's eye and entails a search for connectedness. The fieldworker's domain of experience offers

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DOI: 10.1111/anh.12325.
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Besides drawing as method, students also engaged with, to varying degrees, qualitative research methods such as:

- “Methods for researching homes’ written by Sarah Pink et al (Pink et al., 2020), which served as inspiration for short-term and intensive ethnographic and design research;
- Jasamin Kashanipour’s writing on drawing as a practice of ethnographic description and the benefits of the ‘Gradual Gaze’ (Kashanipour, 2021);
- ‘place-centred’ behavioural mapping techniques as described by Sommer and Sommer (B. B. Sommer & Sommer, 2002);
- Pamela Davies’ ‘trace measures’, namely two types of physical traces of past behaviour – natural erosion measures and natural accretion measures (Davies, 2006).

Behavioural mapping, with an emphasis on social-spatial interactions within and outside living rooms.

Appropriation (of commons), with students interested in how shared spaces are used within the dwelling, and specific examples of staircases being utilised variously.

Surface traces, with a common interest in mapping 'trace measures' and/or literally tracing activities taking place on specific surfaces of worktops, tables, and desks.

Ecologies of things, with students sorting and making sense of personal and shared belongings and the ways in which they are stored and organised.

behavioural mapping

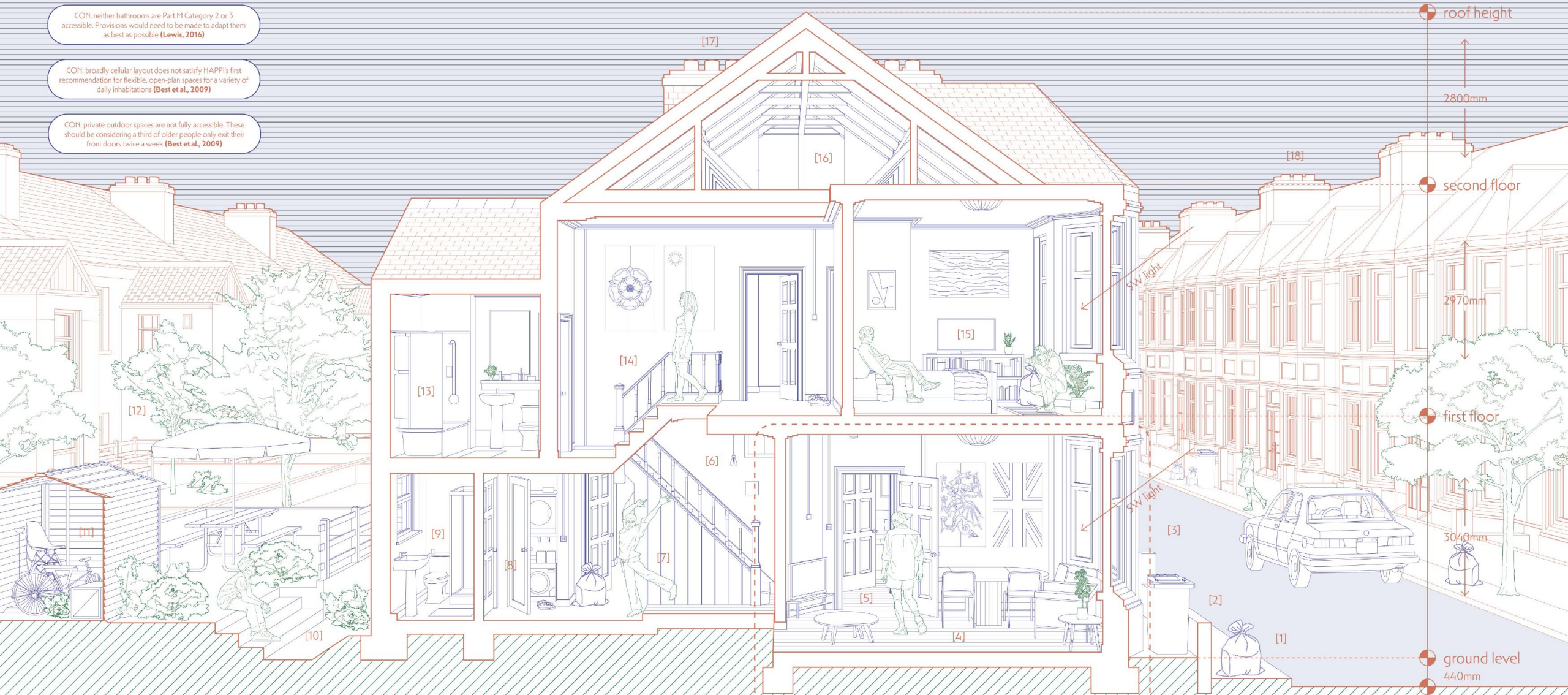


Figure 1: Christopher Adams, 2023-24

behavioural mapping

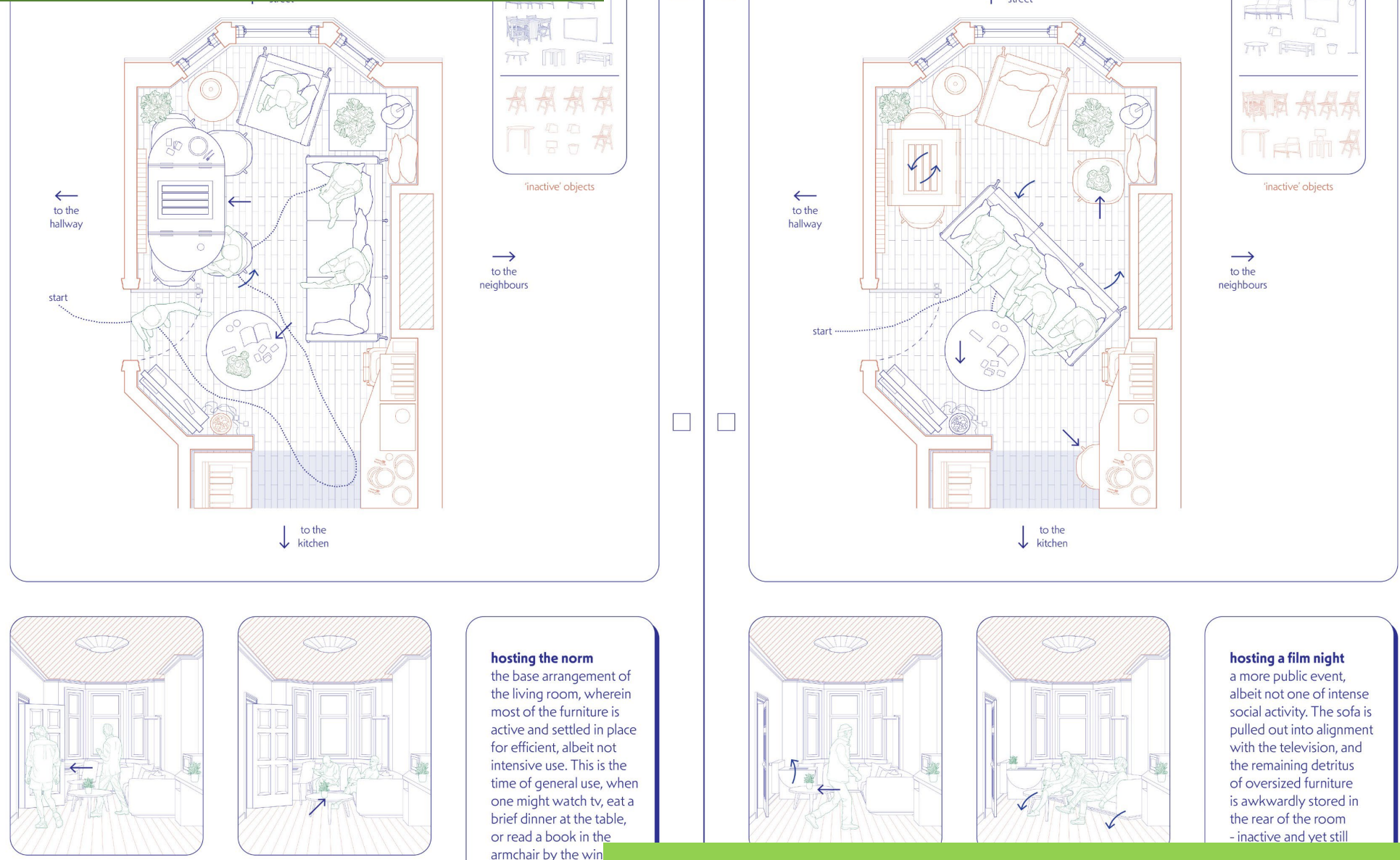


Figure 2: Christopher Adams, 2023-24

behavioural mapping

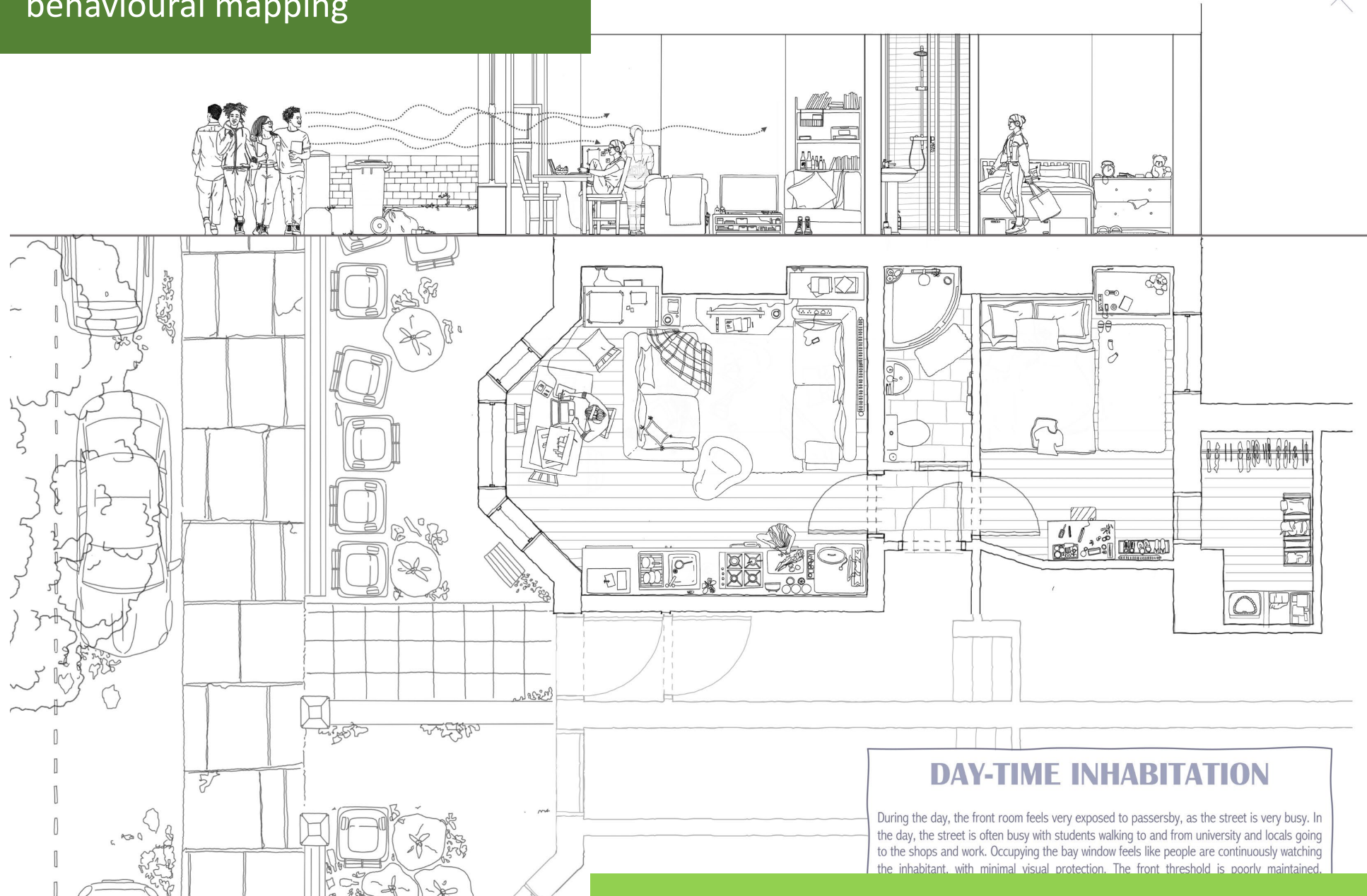


Figure 3: Samantha Powell, 2023-24



Figure 4: Samantha Powell, 2023-24

appropriation of commons

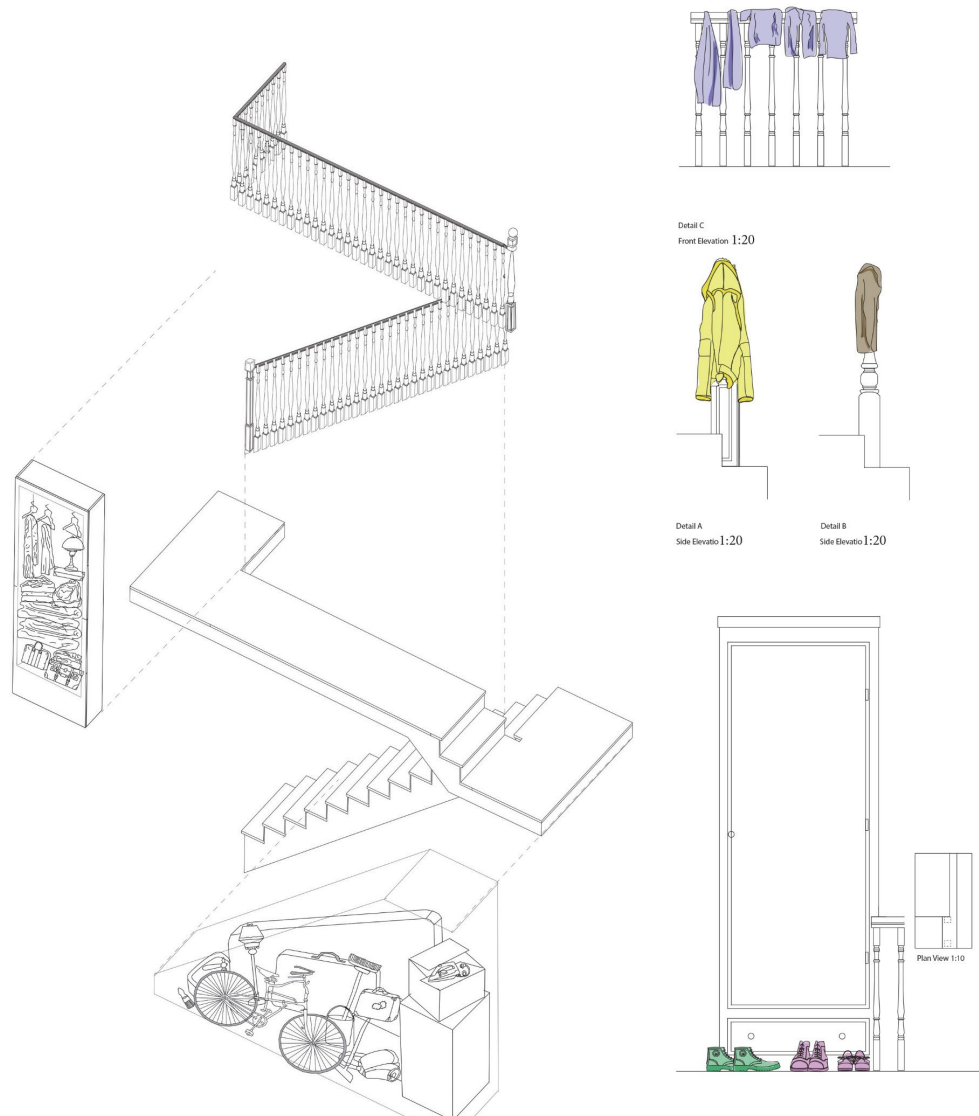
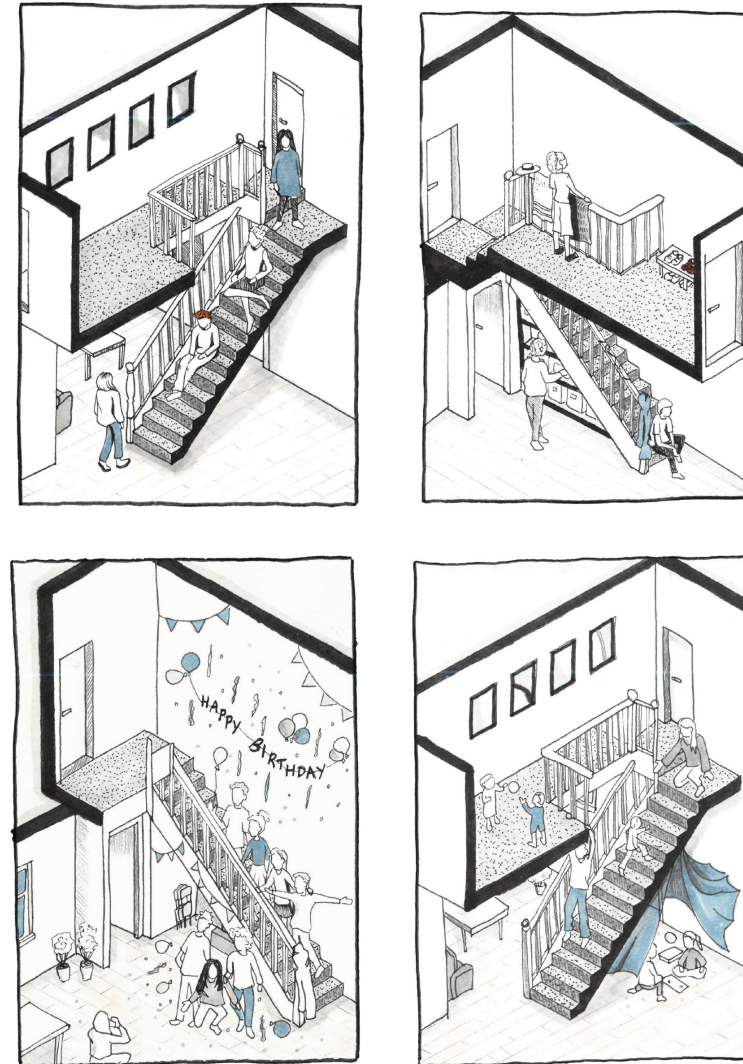


Figure 5: Viktoriya Angelova, 2022-23

Figure 6: Christina Hristova, 2021-22



appropriation of commons



The Stair as Ornamentation and Decoration



The Stair as Moments of Pause



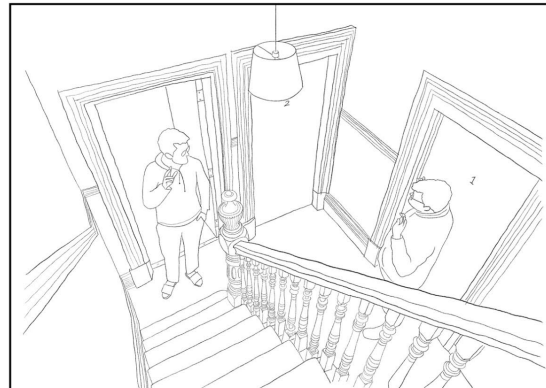
The Stair as Theatrical Descent



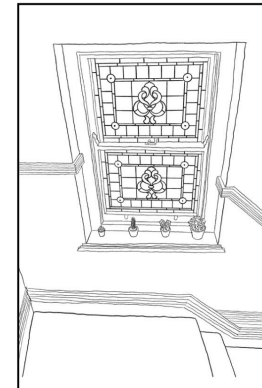
The Stair as Uninspiring Ascent



The Stair as Conversations Within Landings



The Stair as Prelude to Social Space



The Stair as Aesthetic Performance

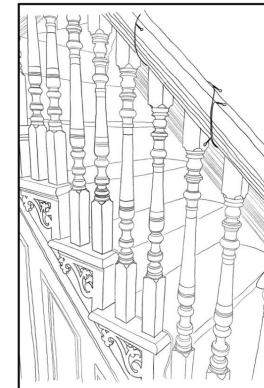


Figure 7: Elias Klif, 2023-24

surface traces

Experiment 1

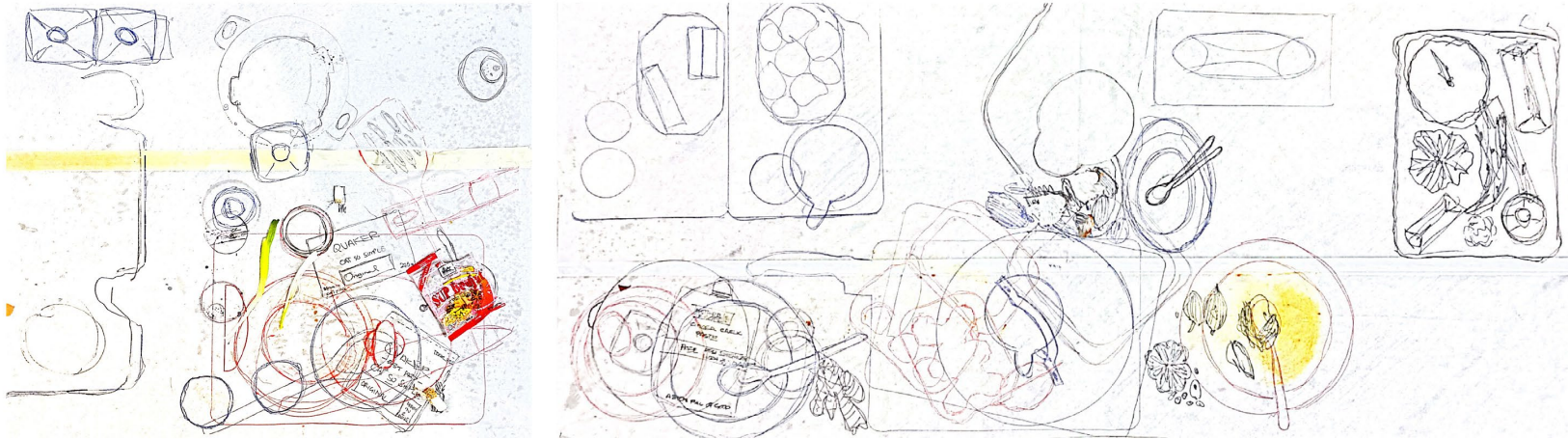


Figure 15: Author, Experiment 1: Traced of cooking activity at 1:1 scale (menu: basmati rice, tumeric fried chicken), 2022

Experiment 2



Figure 16: Author, Experiment 2: Traced of cooking activity at 1:1 scale (menu: spaghetti bolognese), 2022

surface traces

What is a Home without a Kitchen?

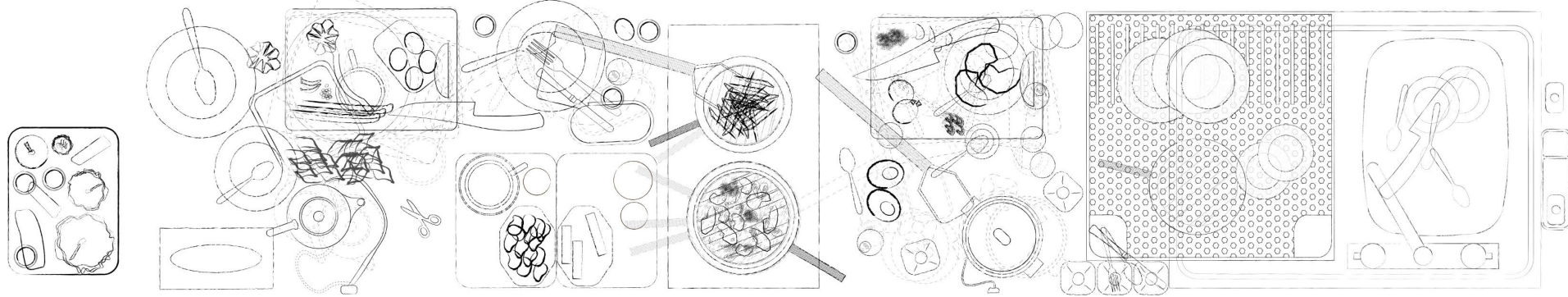


Figure 24: Author, Arrangement of cooking preparations, 2022

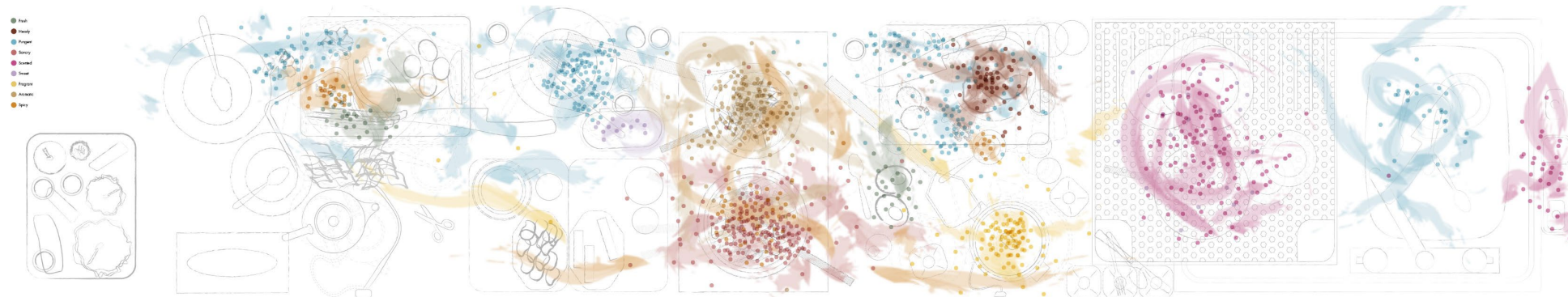


Figure 25: Author, Smell Map: Arrangement of cooking preparations, 2022

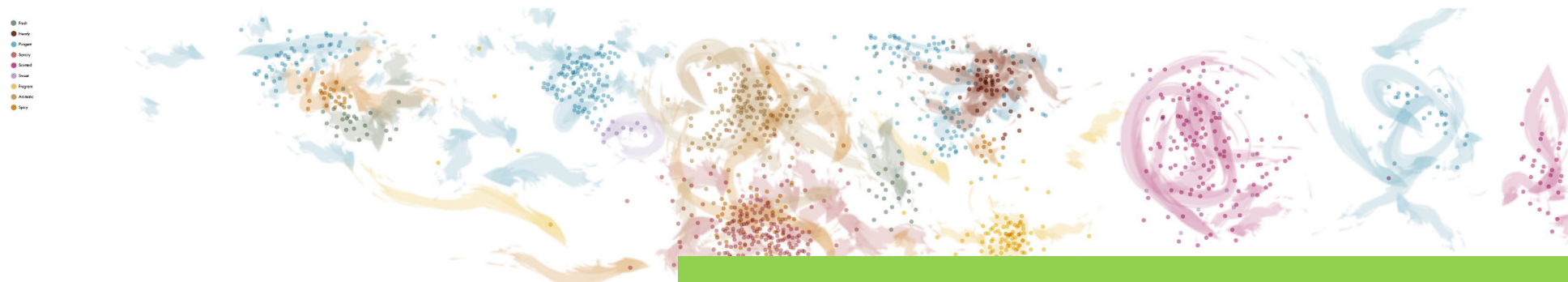


Figure 9: Aina Fadzil, 2022-23

Dr Sam Clark | ClarkSD1@Cardiff.ac.uk | Welsh School of Architecture

surface traces

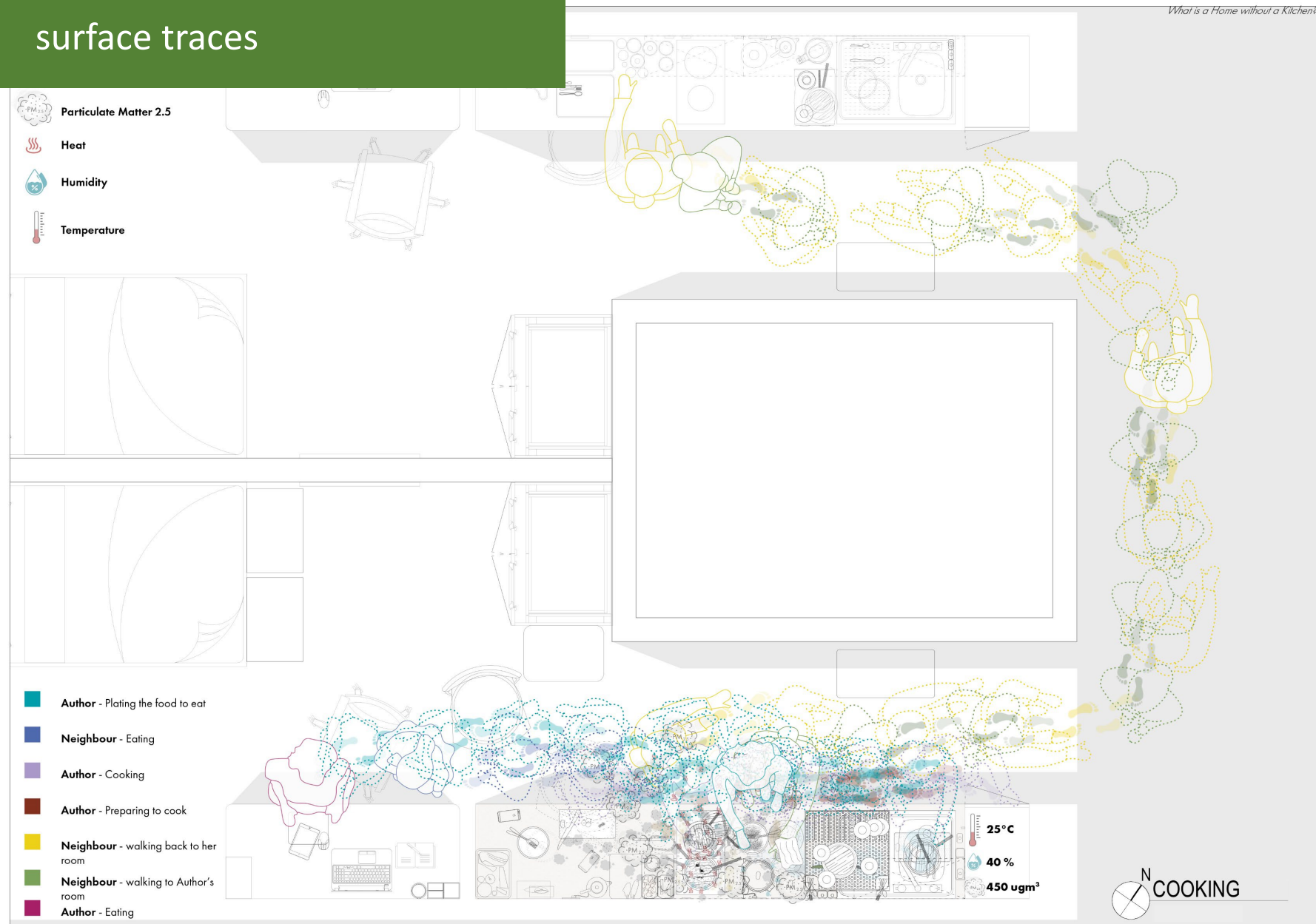


Figure 10: Aina Fadzil, 2022-23

surface traces

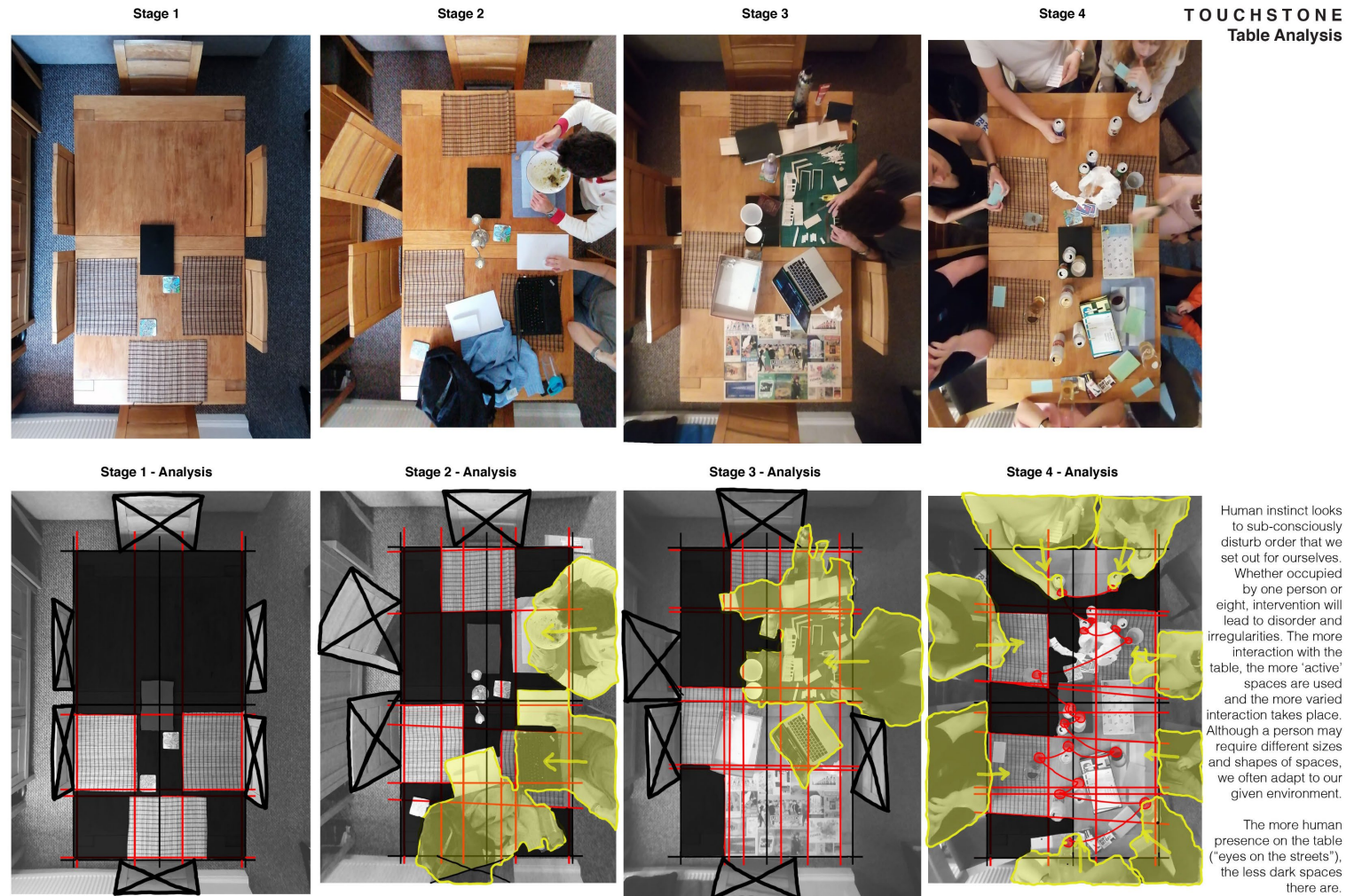
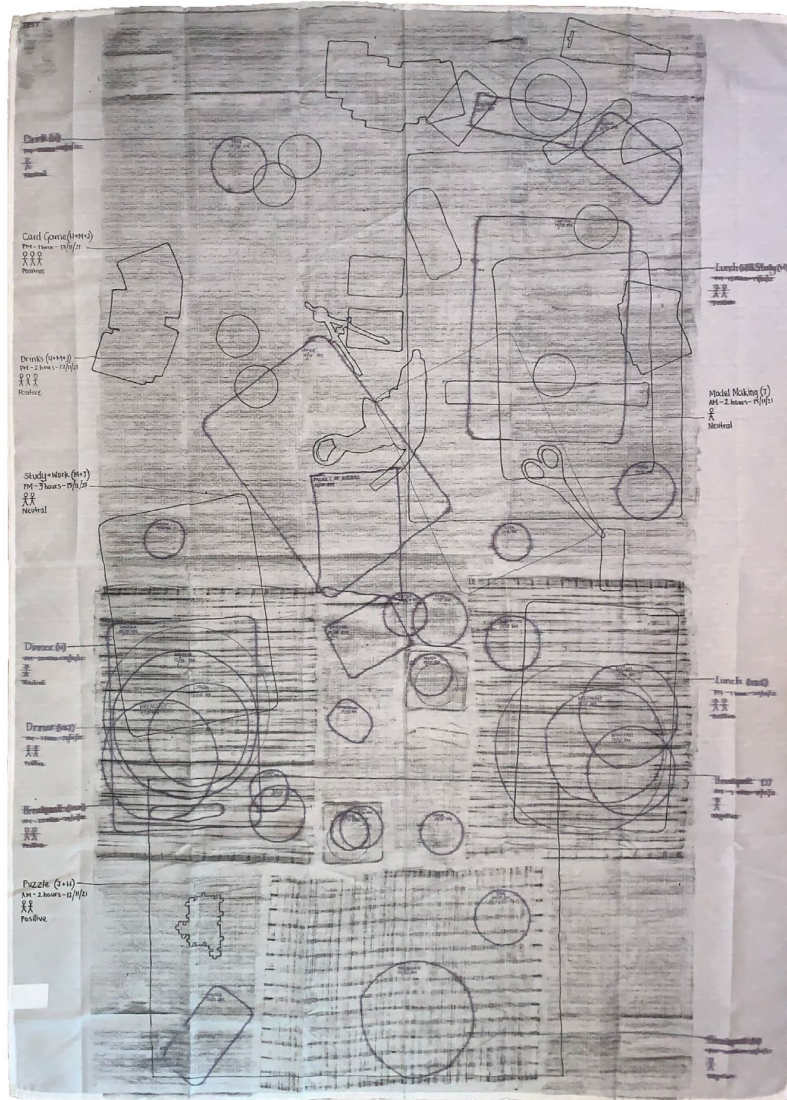


Figure 11: Holly Davidson, 2021-22

surface traces

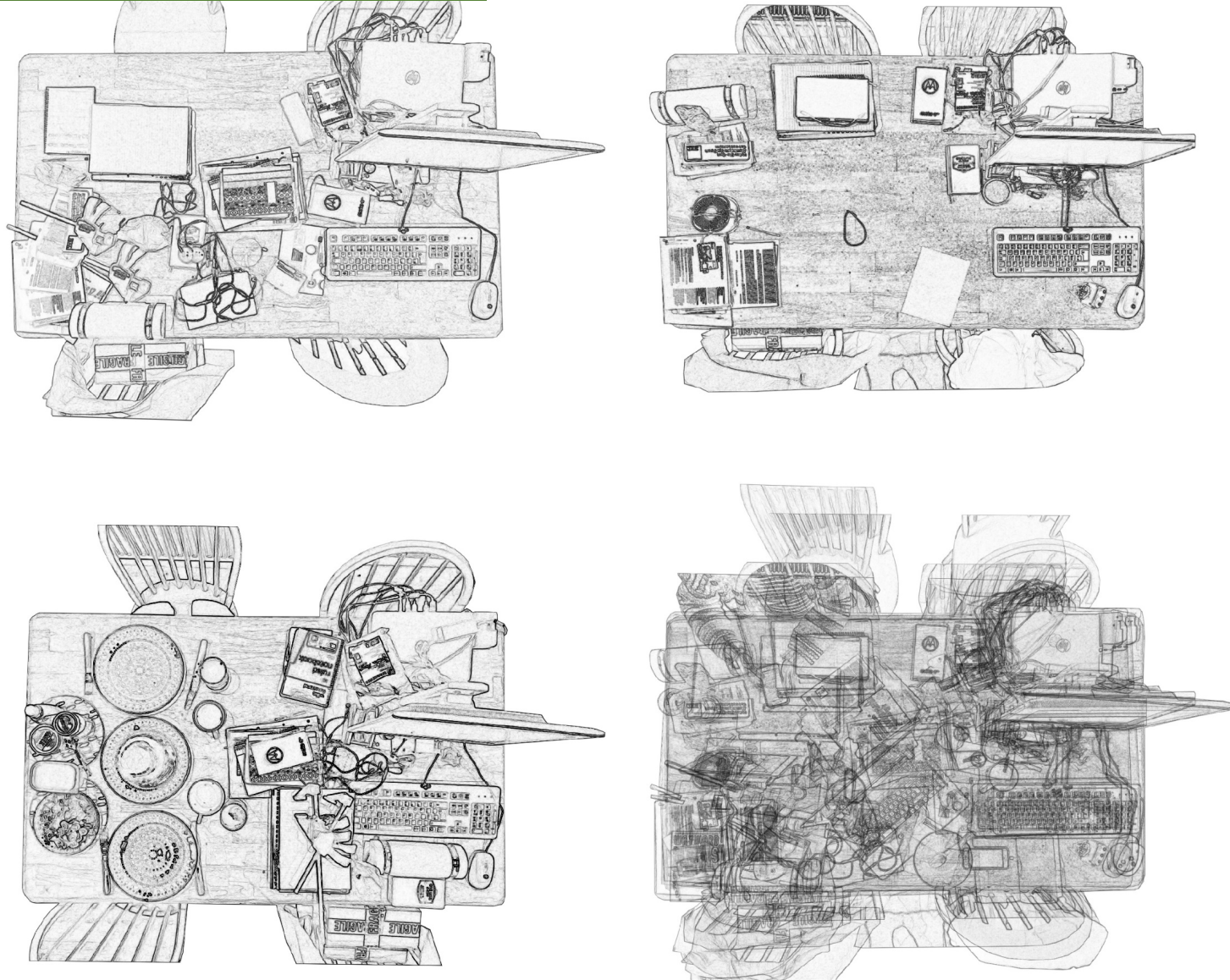


Figure 12: Alex Morgan, 2020-21

ecologies of things

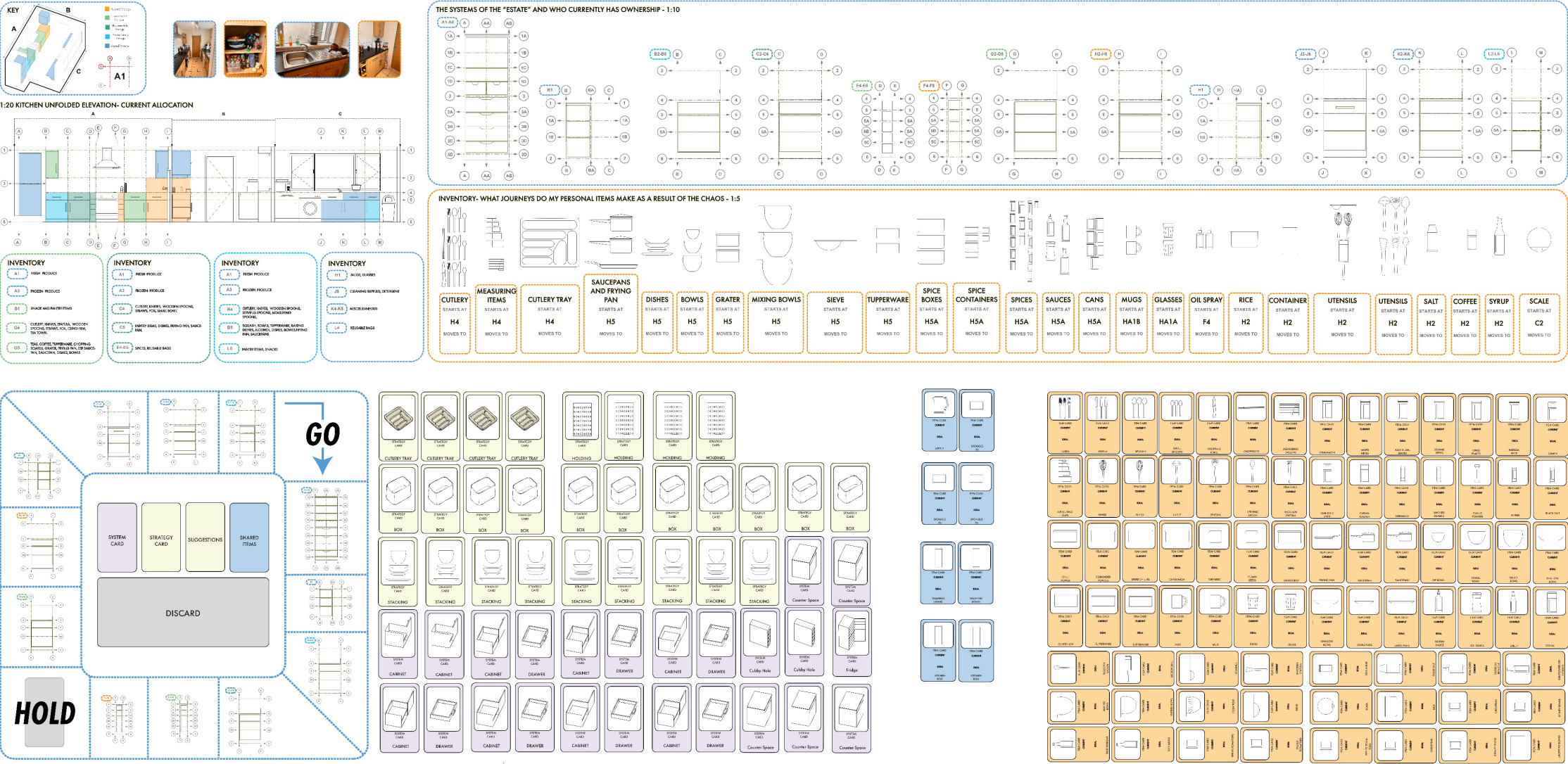


Figure 13: Reha Shah, 2022-23

ecologies of things

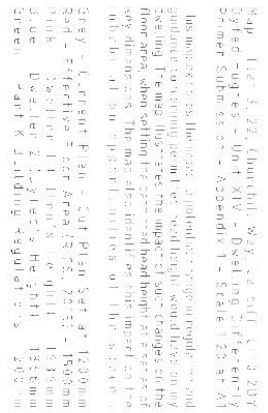


Figure 15: Dyfed Hughes, 2022-23

- Drawing offers as suitably slow and deliberate means of ethnographic observation – ‘the gradual gaze’ (Kashanipour, 2021 – making visible material/spatial implications of design.
- By encouraging modes of ethnographic drawing, or architectural representation that foregrounds habitation, we can support an approach to developing careful designers.
- Through the studio we have not determined a particular stylistic approach but loose framework for thinking about architectural survey techniques and storying lived experience.
- Primer studies helped create a supportive student-centred learning experience rooted in exploring everyday homes; getting to know each other’s environments and attitudes towards dwelling.

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Questions