Emma Ekman

"Sammanfoga delar, söka det gemensamma"

"Merging pieces, searching the common"

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Degree Project in Architecture, second level, 30 credits
Examenarbete inom arkitektur, avancerad nivå, 30 hp
BACKGROUND
Much indicates that our most common way of living in Sweden today, that is single-family households, is not sustainable environmentally and psychosocially. I therefor wanted to work with dwelling, and more specifically shared functions and rooms.

My purpose was not to change existing plan solutions and ideas about the collective housing but rather an investigation in what could attract more people to choose a housing with common functions. What would make me/us choose a shared living instead of an individual one, apart from the obvious economic gains? How can I make the common and private spaces in such a dwelling as interesting and enjoyable as possible? How can I attract more people to live more collectively rather than forcing them?

METHOD
Interior painting by Vilhelm Hammershoi; Copenhagen in the turn of the last century- light from the outside seeks its way along the floor into the interior highlighting the details. Amsterdam 1663; a glimpse of the outside world gives depth to the interior, is it an exterior or interior room in the background? Why do I want to stay here?

The surrounding space of these rooms in focus affects our perception of it; in what way are they connected and which sources of light might exist behind? My method has been to phenomenologically explore a set of artworks representing rooms that, to me, convey a desirable place to stay and live in; thus, the fact that I stay in a home is also more environmentally sustainable in the long run.

Why artworks? I have always had a great interest in art and I wanted to explore the feeling I get when I look at certain artworks and the atmospheric qualities in them. I love to work with my hands; build models and paint, and I therefor focused on this in my method. I chose eight works of art to analyse more closely by building models of them in scale 1:20. In the first seven I worked three-dimensional with flat paintings and pictures. In the last analysis, I changed my perspective and made two-dimensional interpretations in watercolour of three-dimensional light installations. I examined the structure of the rooms and how they were interconnected, where I had to imagine much of the structure based on what I saw, making assumptions based on the light. Many of them have elements that resemble each other, and I therefor assumed that I chose these artworks based on similar qualities. I found that it is the intervals between light and darkness, the line of sight and the world perceived outside, that attracts me to them. That is; the rooms in the background are of great importance to the room in focus. The background affects the image; it sheds light on the illuminated. In each of the artworks, I interpreted the light and then built the rooms, from the beginning as close to the picture as possible, in colour and scale, and then more and more abstract. Could I transform this into an accommodation with similar qualities? How could I work with shared and private spaces with the help of art?

The next phase was to make smaller interpretations of the larger models. I tried to tie them together and expand them, to see how I could interconnect them to a dwelling. I built spaces in scale 1:75 and tried to combine them.

RESULTS & FINAL PROJECT
I have mainly worked with the natural light, below is a more detailed explanation. My thought with the first entrance was a long common outdoor walkway, which on both sides is surrounded by rooms. I made a two-storey building to easier let the light in. The light is cast in intervals through the passage above the ground-floor, from east to west. These pathways above, that create the dark spots beneath, tie the upper plan together. The light is thus created by the darkness. I was inspired by my model of Gustave Moreau’s painting Salome dancing before Herod; light coming from behind illuminating the scene in focus, resembling a back drop. At the end of the walkway, the background is perceived, the view from the cliff the building is situated on. The line of sight continues throughout the passage. The apartments, as well as the workshop on the left side wrap-around each other but are still divided, thought with a line of sight also here throughout the building to the patio. If you continue, you will come through a large entrance, due to the importance of transparency of the shared spaces, into the main common rooms with kitchen, storage and dining area. Further in there are play areas for children, a small library and sofas. The shared space for laundry is also placed here, integrated with the other functions.

I have chosen to place the laundry room open as this has always been a room associated with positive sensations for me; something about the smell and the common work made there, a kind of natural meeting place.

The shape of the wall is also inspired by some of the paintings; the arched forms and domes. The light and shadows reflected by them are very soft, almost independent of the light conditions (hard sunlight in May or a hazy day in February). The round wall encloses the shared area, and since this is quite large, I thought of the possibility of renting it out at certain times. The private apartments on this side extend into the common space through the walls which also create the smaller cubby-holes. These homes are much inspired by The Linen Closet (Pieter de Hooch) with windows facing the wide room in the background, the sight continuing towards the outdoor space, light coming from above at the staircase.

The thick walls are projecting the south light from outside-in. There is also a second entrance, surrounded by flats and guest-rooms, whose plans are inspired by Hammershoi’s interior paintings, with its line of sight and room intervals and openings. These are framing the entrance and patio on this side. I have also illustrated shared cultivation areas and garden spaces outside the private entrances that are thought of as gathering points. The large room with openings facing the north is intended to be studio/hobby activity space. This, as some of the other spaces, illustrates rooms and functions not often afforded in a private residence.

The program and plans are, in addition to my light investigations, also the result of many interviews I made with people from different backgrounds and family situations, both young and old, trying to find out what spaces people that wouldn’t normally live this way could share. It is also a result of my conversations with people already living collectively today. I asked them a lot about what is working or not in this kind of housing. I have thus taken impression of existing accommodations and I made one to four room apartments with private facilities.

ABOUT THE LOCATION
I have chosen the location in Täby Kyrkby (where I live), north of Stockholm, a lot because it is situated on a high spot with good light conditions. The ground is quite hilly which suited my idea I had from the beginning to adapt the project to the soil and reduce groundwork on the stone. This resulted in the building’s adaptation to the ground with many height differences and levels. The site also has good public transport facilities with buses and trams, near preschools as well as supermarkets, which hopefully means less private car trips. The result may not be easily built with a simple construction plan but hopefully, by creating rooms adapted to my light investigations, I made a living where you want to stay for a long time, thus choosing this option instead of an individual accommodation with fewer possibilities and more isolation.
In the end of independence, there is no happiness. In the end of independence there is a life of emptiness: a meaningless life and utter, utter unimaginable boredom.

Zygmunt Bauman
At the linen closet!
Utsnitt skala 1:100

At the linen closet!
Tolkning skala 1:150
Interior with Ida in a white chair I Utsnitt skala 1:100

Interior with Ida in a white chair I Tolkning skala 1:150
Aftensol i kunstnerens atelier I
Utsnitt skala 1:100

Aftensol i kunstnerens atelier I
Tolkning skala 1:150
Salome dancing before Herod I
Utsnitt skala 1:100

Salome dancing before Herod I
Tolkning stängd form skala 1:150
Salome dancing before Herod I
Utsnitt skala 1:100

Salome dancing before Herod I
Tolkning öppen form skala 1:150
Der Laden / Abstract I
Utsnitt skala 1:100

Der Laden / Abstract I
Tolkning skala 1:150
Vem ska trästa Knyttet? / Interior of a protestant gothic church
Utsnitt skala 1:100

Tolkning skala 1:150
Corner of a drawing room I
Utsnitt skala 1:100

Corner of a drawing room I
Tolkning skala 1:150
Location North of Stockholm