celebrating human transactions in space, a new form of integration
interdine
Celebrating mutual transactions in space,
a new form of integration

Gaia Crocella
gaiacroce@gmail.com

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Umeå School of Architecture
Umeå University
www.arch.umu.se

Supervisor:
Andrew Belfield
Carlotta Novella
Tom Domson
Johannes Saumelsson
Jaime Montes Bentura
Annika Bindler

External Critique
Sofia Dona

Examiner:
Robert Mull
Humans are evolutionarily programmed to respond to danger, natural disasters, wars, destruction and harassment through fleeing and migration. Finding refuge in a new place is a necessity for the survival, health and well-being of every individual. This is crucial within the context of what the western world defines as the Refugee Crisis. Today, an unprecedented 65.6 million people around the world have been forced to leave their home. Among them, there are nearly 22.5 million refugees fleeing from misery, environmental defacement, wars and harassment; mainly coming from sub-Saharan countries and middle eastern one. After the peak of incomers in 2015, Europe started shutting its borders. Since then, the number of approved asylum applications in Europe has decreased drastically. In the meanwhile, the urgent need for integration has increased in all welcoming states. Having reached Sweden, refugees are being located according to where the Migration Agency can find accommodation for them. This happens often without considering their relation to the surroundings, hindering the process of integration to take place. The goal of Interdine, as a thesis project, is to celebrate human transactions in space. To address the modern era of mass displacement and the subsequent need for integration, the role of the architect, myself in this context, is to claim space for integration and mutual exchange in our cities. This will be proposed through two scales of action: a 1:1 live action research project and a speculative design proposition confronting legacy and providing a permanent space for Interdine. In Sweden, the thesis investigation takes the example of the city of Umeå, which homes today 698 asylum seekers. Here, organisations working with integration are positioned in the city centre, whereas accommodations and housing for refugees are often located along the outskirts of the city. In order to bring visibility and critical denounce, the key site of intervention is Kulturvaven, the so called House of Culture. During time, discursive dinners, civic classrooms, and dining rituals will be adopted as a means to investigate the problem, claim space and educate the city and its community. Through food, the thesis project aims to redefine the term integration in a spirit of celebration, interaction and mutual enrichment. The proposed design hopes to be a revolutionary prototype to be applied in other cities within Europe.
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Suddenly the stillness of a Sunday morning in Umeå centre is broken by the rhythmic, megaphone shout of “Utvisa ingen till Afghanistan, Ingen människa är illegal!” (“Don’t deport anyone to Afghanistan, no one is illegal.”). February 17 and 18, 2018 had been a weekend of protests in several European cities, among them, the main streets of the city centre of Umeå. The streets are filled with local residents and asylum seekers demonstrating against the November 2015 decision when 17 European Nations declared Afghanistan as a safe country to live in. This implies that any afghan citizen over the age of 18 can see their application rejected and then be deported back. While waiting for a response from the Migration Agency to their asylum application, people are sitting and waiting in a form of forced leisure which turns into despair. “I have been trying my best to become part of the Swedish society, to become integrated, as they say; after having learned Swedish and English, after getting the best marks in schools, I just received negative responses from the Migration Agency and I am still sitting and waiting for a new one. I’m restless. I cannot sleep in the night,” says Hussain, one of the demonstrators. (fig.3)

After the political decision of closing the borders, the European countries seem to face a new difficult task: integration. Refugee livelihoods have become a crucial topic in contemporary geopolitical relations. One fundamental challenge for integration is the separation between ‘citizens’ and ‘refugees’.

While waiting for a response from the Migration Agency to their asylum application, people are sitting and waiting in a form of forced leisure which turns into despair.

“I have been trying my best to become part of the

3 Figure 3. Crocella, Gaia. Hussain at the Demonstration against Deportation to Afghanistan [Photography]. 2018.
introduction

What is the moral role of architecture in an era of mass displacement and the subsequent need for integration?

Italy is today one of the first borders to be crossed in order to enter the EU and find refuge. As an Italian citizen, armed with the equipment of an architecture student, I see my duty to bring light on Europe’s inhuman migration policies and examine possibilities for more welcoming policies. This thesis project aims to explore how architecture can help foster integration in cities and their societies. Understanding how integration occurs in our surroundings arises as a very urgent topic in the current global condition of mass displacement and its affects upon European cities. If in the modern world, we lack a systematic scheme for refugees’ assimilation and integration, the thesis objective is to promote mutual transaction between local citizens and refugees in our cities. Carefully avoiding to fall into institutionalising the problem or infantilising its subjects, the project proposes two scales of intervention based on a continuous program: a 1:1 live action project and a speculative design proposition to claim space.

I have selected Umeå as my design location as it is the place in which I am currently located. Here, through participatory methods of investigation I have redefined the term integration. The research created the basis on which I could design social engagement possibilities. The term integration is today defined by the English Oxford dictionary as the “Intermixing of people who were previously segregated”. Stepping away from its technical sounding terminology, what does the term integration really mean as a feeling or phenomena? The problem with the term is it blurs the border between its subjects and objects as individual citizens or as representatives of a community, culture or ethnicity. So the question to be asked is integration to what or by whom? During time, the process of analysis of the term integration, the research methodology, the social engagement strategies, the understanding and solving of the problem, have all been addressed through the same action: Interdine.

In this context, understanding the role of the architect has been crucial. Can the role of the architect evolve and expand in order to bring individuals together to form a community? Moving on the footsteps of aristotelian ethic, which develops the idea of good conduct towards others, architecture’s main concern should be about its effect on its users and the environment. To this end, Karsten Harries questions the common ethos bringing it to Architecture and its ethical function. Inspired by his thoughts, I believe that architecture should serve a common ethos and has a duty towards the community. Its ethical function is inescapably always also political.

The term integration is today defined by the

the moral role of the architect.
the architect as a host

In my opinion, as architects in the present society, our responsibility is moving away from the isolated act of designing beautiful shaped buildings. As spatial practitioners we should expand our agency, paying attention to issues of social concern. Our duty is to facilitate the right of every human being in the world to live in a decent situation, providing a sense of home, neighbourhood and community. At the same time we should encourage the design of social engagements and the disposition of relations between citizen.

However, in the specific context of a world characterised by mass displacement and migration, followed by the urgent need for integration, the architect should enable boundaries to be crossed, letting the unfamiliar to become familiar. Going beyond the act of curating the settings of encounters, the thesis proposes the architect as a host who aims to empower participants to create personal bonds and connections through events and social engagements.

At this point in time, I needed to reflect on my own role as an architecture student developing a methodology of social engagement. Being an education, economic migrant in Sweden and a temporary resident in Umeå, gave me a position of neutrality between the refugee, and the Swedish citizen. During the research, the knowledge produced through the sessions of social engagements had to represent the community as a whole. This would allow, in a possible future, active collaborations between inhabitants and institutions. To make this happen, my intention was to, first of all, become familiar with the local situation of refugees. At this stage, the act of building trust became so precious and charged with ethical questions that I, as an architecture student, had to ultimately think of the other and not myself.

As a result, my duty of care as a host, has been to remain embedded within the situation of the event and its participants. Yet my hope for the future is to let the hosted become hosts, as active agents questioning positive and negative impacts of the city spaces on integration processes and peoples lives. As stated in "The architect as host" by Torange Koshari, the act of hosting is not intended as a passive action to get people’s views but rather to enable a long term engagement that “can lead people to self governance and ability to actively shape the city landscape in which they are positioned.”

background and context.

refugee crises

In the summer of 2015 Europe experienced the highest influx of refugees since the Second World War. Over 1 million people arrived to Europe seeking for asylum. Three years later, the plight of the world’s 65.6 million forcibly displaced people remains. 5 People denominated as “refugees” are fleeing from their countries because forced by poverty and starvation, natural disasters, the consequences of environmental devastation or most often armed conflict and persecution. 6

Outside their country of origin, asylum seekers are subjected “to two kinds of law: The 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention and the receiving state’s immigration laws.” 7 The former aims to oblige the states to allow entry and give protection to refugees, the latter functions as states’ tool for distinguishing between citizens and aliens. In Europe, refugees gain the right to be in a territory when their application for asylum is being processed and only this ensures that they cannot be deported at will.

The EURODAC, the database system of fingerprints check established within the Schengen Area is adopted to provide evidence for examining an asylum application made in the EU. 8 Through the recording of fingerprints and other biometric characteristics, registered refugees carry their borderers with them like shackles, irrespective of their location. This is meant to ensure that, in accordance with the Dublin Regulation, the first country registering the fingerprint is responsible for examining an application for international protection. 9

The EURODAC Regulation reduces the European borders to the smallest possible dimension: the fingerprint, with which the human body and the border merge and become indistinguishable from one another. This reduces people with political and legal status to their mere physical existence. Europe has committed to protect these people because “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of a person” and “[…] to leave one country, including his own […]”. 10 It is precisely this obligation that the progressive hardening of Europe’s external border is working against. The Schengen Agreement guarantees free movement for EU citizens, but at the same time it creates boundaries for outsiders.

Europe is the continent where the refugee convention was born. It was the refuge for people coming across the iron curtain, fleeing the Soviet Block. When people started coming in larger numbers, the system became overwhelmed. Soon after writing the Charter of the fundamental rights of the European Union in 2012 stating that “The Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity”, 11 at the beginning of 2015 European countries started closing their borders. As illustrated in figure 5, the first to close was the Hungarian and Macedonian border, followed by Croatia and Slovenia: the route from Turkey to Europe (fig6). In march 2016, the European Union and Turkey struck an agreement to stop the refugee flow, in exchange for promising Turkey €6 billion euros in aid and visa-free travel to Europe. 12 In the meantime Italy started making deals with Libyan smugglers to stop the inflow towards the Italian islands and the southern costal area of the continent. From one day to another, people fleeing their homes, on their way of seeking refuge found themselves stuck on the line of a border. They could not return back to their homes nor move further.

In order to better understand the processes of asylum procedures and try to illustrate the series of spaces characterising the journey of a refugee flying his own home, I had the opportunity to listen to Nour, a friend and colleague who shared his story with me. As visualised in figure 7, together, we tried to trace his 22 days path from Syria to Europe(fig7).

Following Nour’s route made me understand that labeling the flood of refugees as a state of emergency already implies excluding them from being a part of society. The refugee’s journey is characterised by diverse spatial borders (fig7), how is the welcoming state responding to the problem? These questions underline the importance of architecture and urban planning for integration.

Being located in Sweden, I have specifically studied the refugee situation in Sweden. In 2015 Sweden received 160 000 asylum seekers. Since then, the Swedish Government has announced the planned deportation of 80 000 failed asylum applicants while introducing obligatory ID controls on the borders. 13 Today Sweden hosts 20 000 asylum seekers. While asylum applications are being processed or approved people are often moved between different locations. Being in Umeå, in the region of Västerbotten, has allowed me to understand the issue on a local level.

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As it has become increasingly more difficult to find a way into Europe, the number of people seeking asylum has decreased, meanwhile the number of people dying while crossing the Mediterranean has increased from 3162 in 2014 to 5098 in 2016.

The Schengen Area is established: 26 European nations acknowledged the abolition of their internal borders with other member nations and outside, for the free and unrestricted movement of people, goods, services and capital, in harmony with common rules for controlling external borders and fighting criminality by strengthening common judicial system and police cooperation.

Guarantee of free movement. It entitles every EU citizen to travel, work and live, in any EU country without special formalities. The border-free Schengen Area guarantees free movement to more than 400 million EU citizens, as well as to many non-EU nationals, businessmen, tourists or other persons legally present on EU territory.

The Dublin System consists of the Dublin Regulation and the EURODAC Regulation, which establishes a Europe-wide fingerprint database for unauthorised entrants to the EU. The Dublin Regulation aims to “determine rapidly the Member State responsible [for an asylum claim]” and provides for the transfer of an asylum seeker to that Member State. Usually, the responsible Member State will be the state through which the asylum seeker first entered the EU.


Dublin Regulation comes into force

II Dublin Regulation

III Dublin Regulation

Austria, Hungary, Macedonia, Croatia, Slovenia closing borders

Europe deportations:

Europe does not recognise Afghanistan as a country hosting an Urgent Crisis and Conflict anymore. Afghanistan has been going through 16 years of war costing 900 billion dollars: 28 thousand dollars per each Afghan.

Between January and April 2017, just Germany deported a total of 8,620 failed asylum-seekers, according to a report by Die Welt am Sonntag, which cited figures from Germany’s federal police. Last year it deported more than 25,000 people.

Some non-Schengen citizens need extra transit visa to even enter the Schengen area for transit purposes, referred countries:

Afghanistan, Bangladesh; Congo; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Ghana; Iran; Iraq; Nigeria; Pakistan; Somalia; Sri Lanka

NAME: Nour M. Baker
AGE: 22
3 FRIENDS
500 people old freight ship
1 BAG ALLOWED

EURODAC according to the Dublin Regulation, the first country taking your fingerprints should be the one taking giving REFUGE.

Meeting a dealer to get tickets to France: Milano-Paris: 200 euros per person. EXPIRED TICKETS (two months ago)

4 people room
TAXI

LIVING BIOGRAPHY FROM SYRIA TO SWEDEN
STATE OF REFUGE

Permanent Residence Permit in Sweden

END 2013
2012/2013
04-02-2016
2017
2017/09/22

Nour path towards the State Refuge, 22 days journey from Syria to Sweden.
Umeå: the site of the investigation

My presence in the city of Umeå enabled a direct investigation of the built environment. Not counting asylum applications that are still being processed, Umeå is today the new home for 698 people, mainly from Syria, Georgia, Iran, and Somalia. The city has a network of NGO’s and volunteering organisations who together create a structure for activities, education projects, interaction and direct intervention. Despite this, the analysis of the built environment showed that there was a considerable spatial distance between the organisations working with refugees situated in the city centre, and refugees themselves, whose accommodations were often found further away, towards the outskirts of the city (fig.8).

However, the decision to tighten border controls by the Swedish Government has gradually affected the situation. Stopping the inflow of new incomers means that refugee accommodations are successively closing down. Whilst some of the people inhabiting those accommodations are being ensured a future home, others become subjects of refusal and deportation.
I documented the refugee situation in Umeå through drawings, videos and fanzines. I used architecture to illustrate the relationship between policy and reality, theory and experience. Interviewing was a fundamental method of conducting the research. The methodology has evolved from a desktop and library research, to participation in events organised by volunteers. Beside that, I have started curating new events as a live action research project called Interdine, which gives space to an interdisciplinary approach and brings the conversation to the public domain. (fig.10.11)
Interdine was born in my home kitchen. (fig.13) The name focuses on the intersection of two concepts: ‘interaction’ and ‘dining’. Carried on as 1:1 live action-research project, Interdine is a meeting across borders that takes place around a dinner table. Here different actors, who are involved in the issue of refuge seeking and integration, come together to discuss relevant problems and in cooperation find possible solution to them. During time, the dinners have been involving refugees, newcomers, NGOs, social enterprises, local inhabitants, the governmental bodies of the Social Employment Service and the Swedish Migration Agency, students of architecture, project managers, volunteers and professors. Through a dialogue of reciprocity and exchange of knowledge, we have tried to find cracks and missing points in the system as well as create potential outcomes for future scenarios. Acknowledging the sometimes clashing opinions and misunderstandings between participants, Interdine tries to create a new and richer knowledge about the local processes of integration in Umeå. It is in the conflictual character of the events that Interdine wants to find its productivity and vibrancy (fig.10.11.12.13). In this regard, the philosopher Chantal Mouffe stresses on the danger of seeing the world as uni-verse and not pluri-verse, underlining the importance of offering the possibility for conflicts to take place.

As the guests and the hosts bring to the dinner table different opinions and points of views, the dinners allow an agonistic confrontation and a pluralist discussion to take form. The sessions are inspired by the ‘discursive dinners’ of RaumlaborBerlin22, and the studies of Jeremy Till and Sarah Wigglesworth, who see the dining table as the heart of the house23. Furthermore, the concept of spatial agency sees the key element of intervention as the way new knowledge arises through engagement24. Hopefully the active discussion will enable different actors to understand each other’s experiences and thoughts. In this way Interdine becomes productive both for the refugee, for the Swedish citizen as well as for the swedish society.

In order to create a spontaneous and intimate atmosphere, each event takes place in the presence of food. In the context of a Swedish northern city, typical food and cuisine from foreign countries become the material of common interest, fundamental tools to enable encounters between strangers.

“...the crouch talk both in the domestic and in the...

Figure 12. 2017/11/30, Interdine #2, in the kitchen of the social enterprise UBEC.
In ‘The Psychology of Taste’, Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, says that “The pleasure of eating is one we share with animals, the pleasure of the table are known only to the human race”. If food is at the basis of human survival, the way in which food is consumed and shared creates the features of culture identity and social rituals. Rhythmic, performative, shared and mimetic, the meal becomes the tool used for creating relations going beyond boundaries. Hence, designing the architectural setting of the shared meal becomes fundamental in each Interdine event.

Being located every time in a new place, each Interdine creates a new topography merging the meal setting with the surrounding (fig.14). The setting of the meal on the dinner table is often composed by a drawing or a map as a table cloth, cardboard menus to initiate the ritual and fanzines functioning as invitation cards as well as elaborating on the discussion themes. In this way the setting of every meal, being it on the ground or on a kitchen table, gives rise to a series of thoughts elaborated in the talk and discourse of the diner. However, David Leatherbarrow argues that, we tend to think of architectural settings as essentially spatial configurations, forgetting to consider the temporal character of the meal. The extended temporality of the shared food, he says, allows the disclosure of the meal in its different stages, from tactile to emotional. Interdine promotes the replication of similar performances in space through the city.

The presence of food and the performative aspects of the meal turn out to be fundamental elements of diverse case studies around Europe. Encouraging integration processes through the adoption of food, “Kitchen on the Run” is a mobile kitchen container that travels through Germany and Europe and organises cooking events on the way. Settling in a public space for several weeks, the kitchen promotes a temporal platform for personal exchange, allowing residents and refugees to meet on the kitchen table and get to know each other on a neutral ground and on an eye level. The kitchen gives the opportunity to refugees to act as hosts while giving the locals an insights into the respective culture through typical dishes: locals learn through the joint preparations and the enjoyment of foreign recipes and food. This is for them a tool for a simple and positive access to the culture and living environment of the refugees, as the beginning for a more intensive getting to know each other.

In parallel in Holland, the food designer Marije Vogelzang works with the settings of the dinner table as her main strategy to crate spaces for informal encounters. Going beyond stigmas, bureaucracy and preconditions, her project “Eat Love Budapest” is able to weave threads of similar stories in powerful performances enabling direct interaction through food. As a host, she works with the most intimate 1:1 encounter, removing any social codes or rules to follow. She works with personal storytellings to erase the boundaries of segregation and exclusion of roma from the Hungarian community.

Also working with performative dinners, the London based duo-architects “Cooking Sections” show how food can be used as the mean to connect and inform. Disclosing history, politics and power structures lying behind food markets and production, they use sophisticated recipes, served on the dinner table, to enable education, denounce and awareness.

Taking in consideration the mentioned strategies, some of the Interdine sessions, were driven in collaboration with the project EatUmeå, the social enterprise UBEC and the language cafe’, Språkkaféet. They took the form of public participatory sessions that brought people of different nationalities together. Throughout the events we experimented with typical food making (fig.15,16,17) and we sheared the meals while discussing in between short presentations. The act of dining together gave life to an informal forum extended in time through which we defined and understood the problem of integration in its multiple aspects.

Over the course of 6 months Interdine has hosted 4 events bringing together between 8 and 45 participants from 15 different nationalities. Using Interdine as a platform for action-research, with each session building on the last, four key discussion topics were established - Language, Employment, Networks and Home. These main aspects of integration were defined in the following manner:

1-Learning the language of the hosting country is the first key aspect to start engaging with the local community. All NGOs and volunteering organisation in Umeå, are attempting to provide Swedish courses and different levels of civic education. SFI: Swedish for immigrants is an example, directly provided by the Swedish Social Employment Service.

2-Learning the local language increases the probability of getting a job. A job is the basis to become self sufficient, have a regular income for paying rent and food, while contributing to the welcoming state. Paradoxically, this situation also denote the continuous interdependence between the citizen and the state explained in the role labor-power illustrated by Karl Marx in the last section of Capital, part II. In this capitalists system, if the capitalists need workers to combine with their means of production in order to create sellable commodities, the workers are dependent on capitalists to provide a wage that pays for means of subsistence.30

In Sweden, one gains the right to employment when being registered with a temporary personal number (samordningsnummer) at the Swedish Tax Agency. Jobs are mainly provided by the Social Employment Service, through the so called “etablerings plan” (integration plan): of 2+1 years of learning the language and getting into employment. The city of Umeå, Umeå University and a number of social enterprises are working to ease the way for refugees to find a local employment.

Yet the statistics of SCB (Statistiska Central Byron) offer probably the most comprehensive empirical analysis of the challenge of finding a job in a new environment: it takes an average of 7-9 years for 50% of newcomers to find employment in Sweden.31

3-The ongoing discussions about integration is nevertheless underlining the importance of the network as a fundamental reference and a solid
background to start learning the language and getting a job. This means that there is no integration if Swedish citizens are not involved in the integration-making itself.

“Kramfobi” (from swedish kram: hug, fobi: phobia) was a term coined during the first dinner by one of the participants. To him, the phobia of hugs, was mirroring the politically-correct-attitude of Swedes. “They hug you and give you fika, but no job.”

The World Value Survey Map, created by the World Value Survey association, illustrates that Sweden, seen in a global context, is perceived as an abnormal and divergent country. Following the line of individualistic values on the map, Swedish culture appears as one of the most secular countries in the world (fig18). This can make integration difficult. For this reason I have chosen a design strategy that enables encounters, exchange and dialogue as the basis for mutual understanding.

4-The network should also nurture a sense of safety and ‘home’. This appears to be one of the most challenging aspects of integration according to what is said by a participant of ‘Interdine, after 5 years of life in Sweden: “I will never feel at home here. My family, my friends are all Back in Syria”. This emphasizes that seeking refuge means always that you have to create a new home.

35 Participant 1: Hammargatan 10, Umeå. Home. Interdine #1, Discursive Dinner conversation 2017-10-10.
If you are already in Sweden, you should contact a Migration Agency. The police will ask few questions and refer you to the nearest Swedish Migration Agency.

YOU CANNOT APPLY FOR ASYLUM BEFORE COMING TO SWEDEN

If you work, study or have sufficient income, you have right of residence if you are employed, self-employed, a student for a period of 5 years without interruption of your employment or study.

The fingerprints check will be used to see if you have been given a particular decision in your asylum case. After you handed in your application, a decision will be made within 13-30 months if investigation is needed.

You can get a personal number just if you have a passport. To know your personal number makes it easier for you to sign an insurance, get a tax number or open a bank account.

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home

The American Heritage Idioms Dictionary defines the home as a place in which ones domestic affections are centred.6 This interpretation avoids any references to the materiality of architecture and location. According to the sociologists Margarethe Kusenbach and Krista E Paulsen, home and domesticity are determined by a various spectrum of factors such as temporality, sensory experience, personal affection, collective memory and social networks. They reveal the meaning of home as strictly bound to Culture, Identity, Practice, Emotion and Belonging.6 Home is not just the physical architecture represented by the house, but an ideological projection of emotionally charged experiences and thus differs from the technical and mechanical process of housing people.

A house intended as a shelter providing comfort, is often the beginning of a home, but the physical structure can’t carry the being of a home all on its own. Refugees are often defined by the lack of a home. They are home-less, they have been forced to leave their home and find another home elsewhere. In order to empathise with this condition, the writer Helen Taylor suggests us home often transcends the personal realm, over time and space, and create its own network (been that a local or a refugee). 7

In this regard, it is interesting to analyse what the Migration Agency intended with ‘home’ in the agreement with Umeå Etablering Centrum (fig.20), a refugee accommodation in the outskirts of the city. Everyday 319 kr per person would provide 5 sqm of covered living space, 0.5 sqm of leisure area, 3 meals ad fruits in between 8am ad 6pm, a cleaner, a staff, a safety guard and access to internet connection(fig.21).

After two years, just before the agreement was about to end, people were sent 214 km north of Umeå, to a camping site in Piteä, where small bungalows became their new homes during winters. Added to that every summer, during the camping high season, people are re-displaced in the hotel Nordkalotten in Luleå.40

Today UBEC is vacant space. Refugees are often moved around according to where the Migration Agency can get the best offer. The continuous relocation of refugees hinders the process of integration to happen. The loss of social network can be one of the hardest consequences of displacement. Acknowledging that the concept of home often transcends the personal realm, overlapping with the one of neighbourhoods and public spaces41, the act of “displacing” represents a form of poverty which is often underestimated and which creates social disarticulations, dismantling of community and dispense of networks.62

In his documentary entitled Human Flow, Ai Wei Wei underlines that generally refugees spend 26 years displaced from their homes. In Sweden, the waiting period for the asylum application to be processed, can vary from 6 months to two and a half years (fig.19). During the waiting time, people are often displaced from one place to another with no regard to people’s relationships established in one location. Displacement can happen suddenly and without prediction, hindering the integration process and the connection to the surrounding to take place.

A good architectural counter example to the economic movement of people described through the displacement of refugees in northern Sweden, is the “Sharheaus Refugio” in Berlin. Refugio is running a whole 5 stories building in the multicultural neighbourhood of Neukölln. It proposes a program that gives space for refugees and local inhabitants to dwell and run activities together for15 months, the amount of time that they think is needed for a person to integrate and create its own network (been that a local or a refugee).43 While running a coffeeshop and

displacement

9) Participant 3, Ridvägen 5, Umeå. Interdine #2, Discursive Dinner conversation 2017-12-11.
a catering together, the house hosts dances and suppers, grows veggies on a roof top garden and organises events for locals and newcomers to meet. Through these, the program of the building helps learning German and integrate on all levels. Yet in exchange for accommodation, people are committed to become hosts and provide the space maintenance. In this way the project promotes cooperation as well as self agency and allow people to create a solid basis from which to start an own independent life. This case study underlines that, in integration processes, the problems of accommodation and displacement are fundamental issues that can hinder the process of integration.
Simultaneously the municipality provides of 319kr to live for a month. Here, the migration agency pays for each person’s accommodation and disposed a budget. Today, the spaces and rooms for 180 people at UBEC remain empty. From UBEC people were moved to Piteå’s camping.

The contract was ending, because the contract was ending, UBEC closed in March 2017, and project manager architecture student from Pakistan, social entrepreneur from Sweden had already made a new contract yet the Migration Agency because the contract was ending, UBEC hosted 180 people. Closed 17th March 2017.

Seeing the trend of displacement, the aim of repopulating northern cities and displacing refugees seems to meet the very important issue, I have decided to focus on the later stages of integration which are fundamental for a shift of paradigm in the future of our cities. Aiming to respond to social needs, the program wants to foster self-employment possibilities, creation of potential new jobs and a new social platform. Livelihood possibilities, all levels of needs, from the most practical to the most emotional ones. Although

Figure 21 drawing 2018/11/20. Displacement and integration, all the pockets opened and issues radiated by buildings in the city.
redefining integration as transaction in space

Recognising the changing patterns of home, ownership, identity and belonging, we have to admit that on the basis of existing as human beings, there is no real distinction between citizen and non-citizen because all refugees were once citizens of their own land. In response to that Interdine wants re-conceptualise the term integration through the architectural and spatial tools. As the Italian Design Theorist Ezio Manzini argues, designers must facilitate ‘shared visions building by generating and proposing possible scenarios and solutions’49. Architecture should therefore be able to propose a new vision for the term integration to take form in our cities, independently of the decision of Europe to close its borders.

The concept of integration as absorption of who was previously segregated should be replaced by the concept of mutual transaction. A pure interaction or exchange between people, from which both subjects come out enriched. The geographer Doreen Massey talks about space in “The Social logic of Space”, in which space is designated as “a function of the forms of social solidarity, while these are in turn a product of the structure of society”49. In the book they evolve a theory for analysing space as determined by society. Hiller and Hanson are profoundly inspired by the sociologist Durkheim who, in “The Division on Labour in Society” had distinguished between two fundamentally different forms of social solidarity or cohesion: an “organic” solidarity based on interdependence through differences and a mechanical solidarity based on integration through similarities of belief and group structure49. He located the cause of different solidarities in spatial variables: the size and density of the population. His theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population. His theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidarity requires unity of the population, his theory is interpreted as profoundly spatial: if the organic solidity takes its form in interior spaces. The former has a higher degree of indeterminacy, the latter more structure.51 As follows the writers underline that the strong integrating cores of a system need to be linking the interior with its outside space. By stating that: “Urban life is the product of the global order of the system, and of the presence of ‘strangers’ as well as inhabitants, and is not a result of purely local patterns of spatial organisation”52, they support the argument that the city, in order to grow richer, needs the combination of local as well as global characteristics brought by newcomers as well as usual residents.

Specifically looking at what informs Interdine, the theory explicates that the exterior space of transactional politics works best when boundaries are small and isolated allowing the flow of “transpatial” solidarity to take form. Moving on the structure of this analysis the development of the thesis project suggests to bring Interdine as a platform promoting mutual transactions, from the table of a private home (a place with a fixed system of categories), to the core of the city, allowing linkages between interiors and exteriors.

In the city centre, facing the riverside, Umeå’s Cultural House, Kulturväven, is visited everyday by a wide spectrum of users. Today, the building presents itself as Umeå’s local-to-global space of daily transactions linking exteriors with public interiors.

Kulturväven: the key site for mutual trans-actions

for Interdine, is its visibility. In fact, the cultural house and its public library is often used as a reference point for both refugees and NGO’s who are actively working with integration. The building is also used informally as the meeting point for public demonstrations to start from.

On the contrary, its interior is accurately characterised by a fixed system of categories, some of which are celebrating a culture of consumerism and directed to a specific kind of user: a high to middle class consumer. In fact the ground floor opens up to its users by an enclosed plaza served by cafes, restaurants and local food boutiques. Next to them, the public space of the library grows vertically on three floors. Every monday, on the second floor, one room of the library hosts the Language Cafe (Språkcafeet) run in collaboration with the NGO Im. The event is popular among refugees and newcomers because of their successful enabling of encounters and language learning exchange. In this case Väven becomes the site for enriching transactions to take shape. However, hidden inside the library, with no previous indication, those events are not so easily accessible by a larger public who is instinctually directed to stay and consume on the ground floor cafes.

The culture house Väven is owned by Väven AB a company which half is owned by the municipality and the other half by the Baltic gruppen. To create a place of inclusiveness and work in the interest of people, it is fundamental to understand the social structures lying behind the production of space. Refusing to design in service of Väven´s main private owners, Interdine needs to understand itself as part of a complex web of social relations and challenge the system from within. “By working with or against these connections, spatial agents are able to shift apparently predetermined and unchangeable superstructures.”

It is necessary to act within the public domain of Kulturväven, adopting those spaces that are rented by the municipality.

As shown in figure 22 on the 4th floor, the municipal library rents the south side terrace and a curved “mingle area” offering a beautiful view of the riverside. These spaces, connected to each other through a transparent facade, are left as un-programmed and unused big open spaces, where boundaries are small and isolated. With a strong potential for interaction, the site becomes the critical point on which to bring integration as mutual transaction to the core of the city.
To test the discussed findings, *Interdine*’s last event took place in Väven, in collaboration with Språkkafeet. Here, *Interdine* was able to occupy municipal spaces that would otherwise not be accessible by a larger public. The event, as a 1:1 live-action, was appreciated by participants and the library itself. It involved around 40–45 people between kids and adults from diverse nationalities. The presence of kids, music, food and the toolkit supporting the settings of the event, created a spontaneous atmosphere of celebration (fig. 23).

Being conscious of my coming departure from Umeå, the session was focused on finding new hosts focused on driving *Interdine*’s agenda. In this scale of action, what is interesting to me, is not to be the host anymore. Passing on and handing over the hosting to *Interdine*’s participants is a way for them to host others and let *Interdine* continue acting in the future of Umeå. If local citizens are enthusiastic about the idea, they become hesitant and shy when being proposed to drive the platform. Simultaneously, because of their precarious situation, refugees and newcomers avoid to take the initiative and responsibility to organise and regulate.

Although *Interdine* has been collaborating with different organisations and networks, the action-research has also relied on myself as an individual.

Perhaps my energy in willing to create the setting for mutual transactions, brings a lot of people in, who otherwise would not be present. Because of that, working with an already established organisation would be easier, both in regulation and financial terms. In fact, *Interdine*’s has been proposed a partnering with Språkkafeet, which will be driven as a collaboration between Umeå municipal library and the network Vän i Umeå. Another option could be to partner with Folkkök, a group that provides meals at low costs for the guests.

*Interdine* has been greatly appreciated by the participants. On a second scale of action, my role as an architect and a host, is to claim space for *Interdine* and create a permanent space for it. This takes the form of a speculative design proposition, placed in Kulturväven’s un-programmed space. To address the modern era of mass displacement and the subsequent need for integration, *Interdine* becomes at this point a scalable design strategy: from a 1:1 action-research project that wants to endure in time to a speculative design proposition used to claim space and create a permanent site for *Interdine*’s future.
interdine in the future: guidelines for future hosts

“You host and allow the hosted to host to claim the future commons.”*6

During time, the 1:1 scale of the research, has evolved adopting different settings, tools and guidelines enabling the hosted to be future hosts.

• CO·HOSTING: at least two hosts hold the dinner (one local inhabitant, one outsider): together, they meet before the event, get to know each other and discuss how to best combine typical food from different nations in one meal. This allows language exchange, culture exchange and cuisine based knowledge exchange. The menu is thus flexible: e.g. course 1 (A country) course 2 (B country), or mix different recipes in one course etc.

• INTERDINE HAS MULTIPLE ACTORS: As an open event Interdine invites whoevers wish to participate

• INTERDINE ENABLES INTIMATE and INFORMAL ENCOUNTERS
It is fundamental to create an atmosphere of security, intimacy and freedom to express oneself. In order to do that, Interdine requires a high level of respect for one another. This is mostly allowed by the primal size of Interdine hosting 8-10 people. If participants are more, multiple tables, each hosting 8-10 people, will be connected to each other.

• FOOD IS ALWAYS PRESENT, AS THE TOOL TO ENABLE ENCOUNTERS AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

• EACH COURSE IS FOLLOWED BY A DISCUSSION OR A STORY. The theme should relate to the emotional and political aspects of that specific food or country through a visual presentation between courses.

• FUNDING: Participants in Interdine pay a voluntary fee. Some of the events were run in collaboration with public entities and NGOs who covered most of the expenses. Locally, there is the possibility to apply for funding: through the organisation of Svenska Kyrkan (Swedish Church) or Umeå Fritid at Umeå Municipality.

• PRACTICAL ISSUES TO DECIDE: Who collects the money, who provides the ingredients…etc.

• PLACE: pitched to Väven as an already present public space, the aim is to create a fixed place for Interdine. The dinners can also move from home to home and, if possible, between different public spaces in the city. The dinner setting can adjust to a table of different heights and dimensions or it can take place on the ground.

• TOOLKIT: the toolkit constructed to host the dinners allows the table cloth to roll down over the table and become the base for the dinner as well as a display for the discussion. The kit is a mobile structure that provides storage for fanzines, menus, basic tools for the dinner, table cloths, ingredients. It also present a shelf specifically built to store typical trays, pots and tools used during the first Interdine sessions.

These guidelines create the basis on which to develop the key aspects of the design consideration.

6- Food is in the focus of the architectural program. Adopted as a tool through which celebrating cultural diversity, food brings a sense of informality that crosses boundaries and...
claiming space through Interdine

open restaurant

750mm

High Tables

400mm

Low Tables

10mm

Dining Mat

Cooking Culture

Food preparation

DIning Rituals

interdine plan /floor 0

1:100

first floor 1:100

festival food preparation dinner setting typologies

section A_A' 1:100
Celebrating human transactions in space through food, the act of hosting culminates in its second scale of action: the design of Interdine’s open restaurant. The space positions itself along Kulturväven’s south terrace. Connected to the present building, the restaurant functions independently regardless of the library’s opening hours and allowing people to use the space during nights.

Being a social catalyst for refugees and local people to get together and exchange taste and knowledge about cuisine and hosting cultures, its architecture generates specific spatial qualities:

1. The space is open, accessible and welcoming. It allows linkages between interiors and exteriors and promotes transpatial politics to take place. The spatial atmosphere enables celebration as a form of active confrontation, to move forward and beyond the underlying sense of racism being present in the background of the Swedish society.

2. To transfer the informality of the events into design, a sense of human scale, gradually growing towards the sky, is kept present.

3. The space provides an atmosphere of intimacy and security: the amount of care present at each Interdine event is here perceived in the space composition. Its architecture is inviting as well as protecting, enhancing the importance of hosting.

4. Profoundly appreciated by the participants, the sensorial quality of items used at each event (cardboard menus, screen printed zines, table cloth) is retained into the materiality of the design.

5. The space creates possibilities for chance encounters.

The food preparation, combining local food with typical food from other countries, happens in the restaurant main space. Here, a long continuous oven incorporates a combination of diverse cooking cultures happening simultaneously on the same surface. Giving refugees the opportunity to act as hosts, and bring to the local people an insights into the respective culture through typical dishes, the oven creates a space for workshops, cooking classes, fusion cuisine experimentations and fresh local preparations. Simultaneously, food festivals and the selling of typical products are made possible.

The dining rituals are enabled by the presence of tables. While maintaining the atmosphere for a ‘dialogue of reciprocity’, the tables allow the most intimate and informal encounters, as well as bigger scales of discursive dinners and forums.

The restaurant is a permanent platform for people to meet, get to know each other on neutral ground and eat. Its self sufficiency relies on fees paid by the costumers eating food. In this way, since the space needs a minimum of three cook(1 local, 2 outsiders) and hosts always present on site, the restaurants is generating new jobs.

Through designing and hosting events, where...
claiming space through Interdine open restaurant
receiving and giving are important factors, I have both seen and been part of integration myself in a small scale (fig. 27).

The goal has been to allow encounters through food, to teach to local inhabitants to learn from incomers, and to refugees to accept and embrace the culture they have come to.

My hope for the future is that by changing the attitude towards the culture of integration we will hopefully be able to change the systematic processes and structures affecting it. Interdine, has changed nothing at a bureaucratically level. If not worse, the systematic process of integration is at the same stage on which it was few months ago. On the other hand, what Interdine has really changed is the feeling of richness and closeness which affects culture on a personal level, where mutual transactions enriched each one of us. We, the participants of Interdine, have smiled, learnt and met as equal human beings on a neutral ground and an eye level over a white table cloth.
The refugee crises is the way we deal with it. It is not about refugees, it is about all of us. We know that physical borders can stop and kill refugees, but can borders stop migration? The activist Ai Wei Wei addresses the problem saying that: “In nature there are two approaches to dealing with flooding. One is to build a dam to stop the flow. The other is to find the right path to allow the flow to continue. Building a dam does not address the source of the flow. If a powerful flood were to occur, it could wipe out everything in its path. The nature of water is to flow. Human nature too seeks freedom and that human desire is stronger than any natural force.”

His provocation points at our humanity, asking us if the poor, displaced or occupied can still exist when their societies are destroyed. Should they simply disappear? If we fail to recognise that their continued existence is an essential part of our shared humanity how can we speak of civilised development in our cities? Policy, politics and economics are today dictating the laws ruling the world, going beyond humanitiy, solidarity, and the existence of human beings who still carry feelings, emotions, stories and knowledge.

Migration and liberty of free movement is a human right and due to climate defacement, natural disasters and globalisation it is not gonna stop. The challenge is now to recognise that the world is shrinking and people from different cultures and religions need to learn how to live with each other.

The need for integration in our cities is not an opinion, but a fact shaping the whole Europe. With its specific expertise of building human transactions in space, Interdine is not geographically limited to the area of Umeå. Seen as the ground on which to design social engagement possibilities, Interdine, in its two scales of action, is transferable to other European scenarios. Determined to shift the stigma attached to migrants and the negative narrative around population movements, my hope is to promote agency among refugees and local inhabitants to strengthen ties.

To end, Interdine calls for an invitation to other spatial practitioners and citizens to get involved in hosting as a methodology of engagement and transmission of agency. Mutual transactions in space will then be easier to spread.
1. CO-HOSTING:
Minst två värder håller middagen (en lokal invånare, en nyanländ); tillsammans möts de före evenemanget, lär känna varandra och diskuterar den bästa kombinationen av olika typiska rätter. Detta möjliggör språkutbyte, kulinariskt utbyte och

INTERDINE HAR EN FLEXIBEL MENU:
slips genom att kombinera olika recept som kommer från olika delar av regionen. (kurs 1 (A land) kurs 2 (B land)) // Blanda olika recept i en kurs

INTERDINE HAS MULTIPLE ACTORS:
eller invånare-nyanlända-utbytestuderider

INTERDINE MöJLIGGÖR INTIMA OCH
UFORMALNA MÖTEN:
Spädning av möten kring fisk i varandra. Interdine skapar en samtalsmiljö av respekt och

BOLKIT

18/04/16
Interdine #4, discursive dinner
bibliography

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- Wei Wei Ai, Human Flow, La Biennale di Venezia, 74th Venice International Film Festival, 2017-09-5.

**images**


**talks and conference**


**live action research**

- Participant 1: Hammargatan 10, Umeå. Home. Interdine #1, Discursive Dinner conversation 2017-10-10.
- Participant 2: Ridvägen 5, Umeå. Home. Interdine #2, Discursive Dinner conversation 2017-12-01.