

fall semester 26 - inside out



cierto estudio

spring semester 27 - a house is a city



inside out

the room as the primary unit

Conventional housing design often begins with a programme: a given number of bedrooms, a list of functions and a predefined organisation. This studio proposes a different approach. Working in pairs, students progressively construct a dwelling through a sequence of architectural fragments, each exercise focusing on a single domestic question. Rooms, spaces of care, filter spaces and housing typologies are explored one by one, allowing each investigation to inform and transform the next. The final dwelling emerges gradually, rather than being predetermined from the outset.

The studio deliberately avoids a specific site. Freed from the constraints of context, students are invited to speculate on the dwelling of the near future by concentrating on the most intimate scale of architecture: inhabitation itself. The physical model becomes the principal design tool throughout the semester, enabling each fragment of the house to be explored spatially before being assembled into a coherent whole.

We understand the house as something that is built from the inside out. Rather than beginning with the city or the urban block, the semester starts with the room: the smallest domestic unit, where everyday life unfolds. A single space is first designed—its geometry, proportion, light and atmosphere—before attention gradually shifts towards spaces of care, filter rooms and, finally, the housing typology itself. The semester concludes by assembling these successive investigations into a flexible, non-hierarchical dwelling conceived from the inside out.

Kitchroom, Cierito Estudio, 2026

a house is a city

from the city to the home

We understand housing not as an isolated object but as a continuum extending from the city to the dwelling. The quality of everyday life depends as much on the home itself as on the collective and transitional spaces that connect it to the street. Housing blocks therefore have the opportunity—and even the responsibility—to improve their surroundings and foster community. We are particularly interested in those intermediate spaces—porches, passages, courtyards, entrance halls, galleries and walkways—that belong simultaneously to the house and to the city. They accompany residents home while enriching the public realm, turning the journey from street to dwelling into a gradual transition between public and private. As Aldo van Eyck famously wrote, “A city is a house; a house is a city.”

The studio takes place in Fira Montjuïc, one of Barcelona’s most emblematic yet contradictory urban sites. In a city facing an acute housing shortage, this mono-functional enclave invites a broader question: how can an existing urban enclave become part of the everyday city? The studio explores this question through the adaptive reuse of the exhibition halls as collective housing.

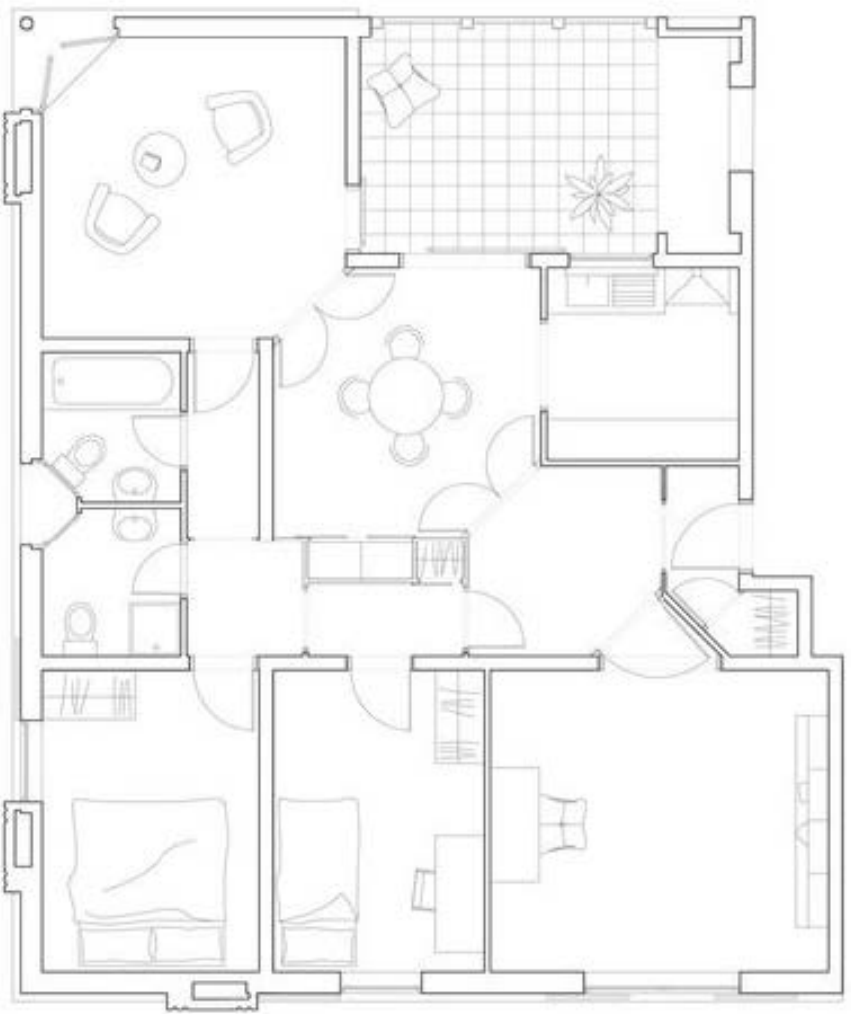
Developed in pairs, the project unfolds through a sequence of architectural questions rather than through the design of a complete building from the outset. It is constructed progressively, moving from the city towards the dwelling—through collective space, the domestic threshold, the housing typology and its aggregation—before returning once again to the city. Each exercise builds upon the previous one while remaining open to transformation as the project evolves.

Fira Montjuïc, Italian Pavilion

1. case study

The course begins by building a shared imaginary. Each student receives a reference dwelling —a good starting point— and studies it closely: drawing it, breaking it down and presenting it in a short talk. The aim is not to describe it, but to capture what makes it valuable —a geometry, a connection, a threshold, a way of living— and add it to the studio’s shared vocabulary. Each reference will be presented on a panel to be pinned upon a collective board —physical and digital— that will remain in view throughout the semester. A wall of references, a shared imaginary to feed the rest of the course.

Mas Abelló dwelling, Oscar Tusquets, 1988



2. a room

The second exercise asks students to reflect on the smallest unit of the dwelling: the room. The model is the working tool here — it lets us think through the room not only in plan but spatially, giving us control over the key decisions that shape it. Programme is left open: each student chooses whether their room takes on a defined use or stays neutral. What interests us is treating the room’s form as a design resource — working its geometry, its proportion and its position within the plan, all of which shape the connections it can strike up with the rest of the house: its doors, its sightlines, its circulation. This is where typology begins. Depending on the qualities each student gives it, every room takes on a character of its own. We’ll look at a few types we’re especially drawn to — the middle room, the *rótula* (hinge room), the *water room* (bathroom) and the *bubble room* (pops out of the façade) — not as a fixed catalogue, but as starting points from which each student develops their own room, the seed for the exercises that follow.

A sunlit interior, Peter Vilhelm Ilsted, 1909



3. spaces of care

We want to focus on the spaces devoted to care work — the spaces traditionally tied to women's labour, since the main domestic tasks fell to them: cooking, washing, cleaning and drying the laundry. These tasks take up a good part of daily life and yet, for decades, the conventional dwelling has banished them to its least favoured corners — the kitchen tucked at the back, the laundry hidden away, the washing hung out in the darkest courtyards — rendering care work invisible.

This exercise overturns that hierarchy: students take the servant spaces — long treated as secondary — and design them as rooms that are dignified, full of light and well connected. The kitchen is reimagined as a *kitch·room* — not a kitchen, but a social space, the heart of the home: where today we gather, talk, work and, along the way, cook. The laundry and drying areas become spaces with natural light and comfort, capable of turning into places for casual encounters between neighbours.

In a society moving towards equality, dignifying these spaces is also a way of sharing domestic work more fairly.

Volver, Pedro Almodóvar, 2006

4. filter rooms

How a dwelling relates to the outdoors is an essential ingredient of its quality. The pandemic, with its long stretches of confinement, gave us a renewed appreciation of outdoor spaces: we discovered just how vital they are to a home's dignity, and how directly they bear on the physical and mental health of those who live there. To this we can add global warming, which makes these spaces ever more essential allies in tempering extreme temperatures, both heat and cold.

This exercise works on the *filter rooms* — terrace, gallery, balcony, loggia, *cancela*, seasonal room... — through a model of a fragment of the dwelling: pieces that mediate between inside and out. These are spaces that can shift their condition with the seasons, opening onto the landscape in summer or closing up as a winter garden. They act as a thermal buffer between the house and the outdoors — a lesson traditional Mediterranean architecture has been teaching for centuries. They bring light, air and outlook to the rooms that embrace them, and extend the uses and comfort of the dwelling throughout the year. And when they face the walkway or the courtyard, each becomes a hinge between the domestic and the collective, able to open or privatise itself, setting the degree of privacy between the dwelling and the shared space.

Seasons Room, Schönberg-Ost, Esch Sintzel 2015

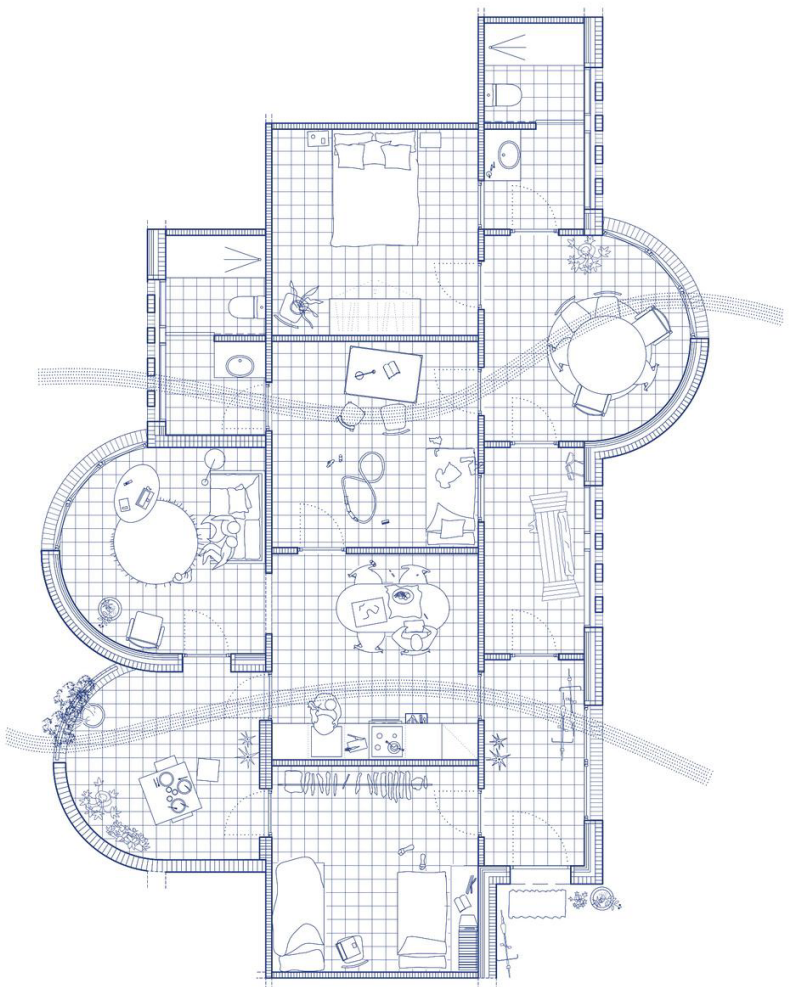


5. typology

Now comes the moment to assemble. Students gather everything they have designed over the semester and adapt it to conceive the dwelling as a whole. These are no longer closed pieces to be fitted into place, but a material of their own that has to be adjusted, knitted together and completed with whatever is missing, until it composes a full housing typology — one born of the earlier reflections.

The aim is less to add up bedrooms than to make the rooms developed so far work as a whole, seeking the connections and overlaps that let them function together. In this exploration, some of the strategies we have been testing may prove valuable: *rótulas* that multiply connections, diagonals that open up sightlines, corridors that disappear. At this stage students begin to consider the materiality of the spaces, once again with the model as their working tool. They will need to unify the fragments while readjusting and reconsidering previous ideas.

La Medina, Cierta Estudio, 2022



6. aggregation

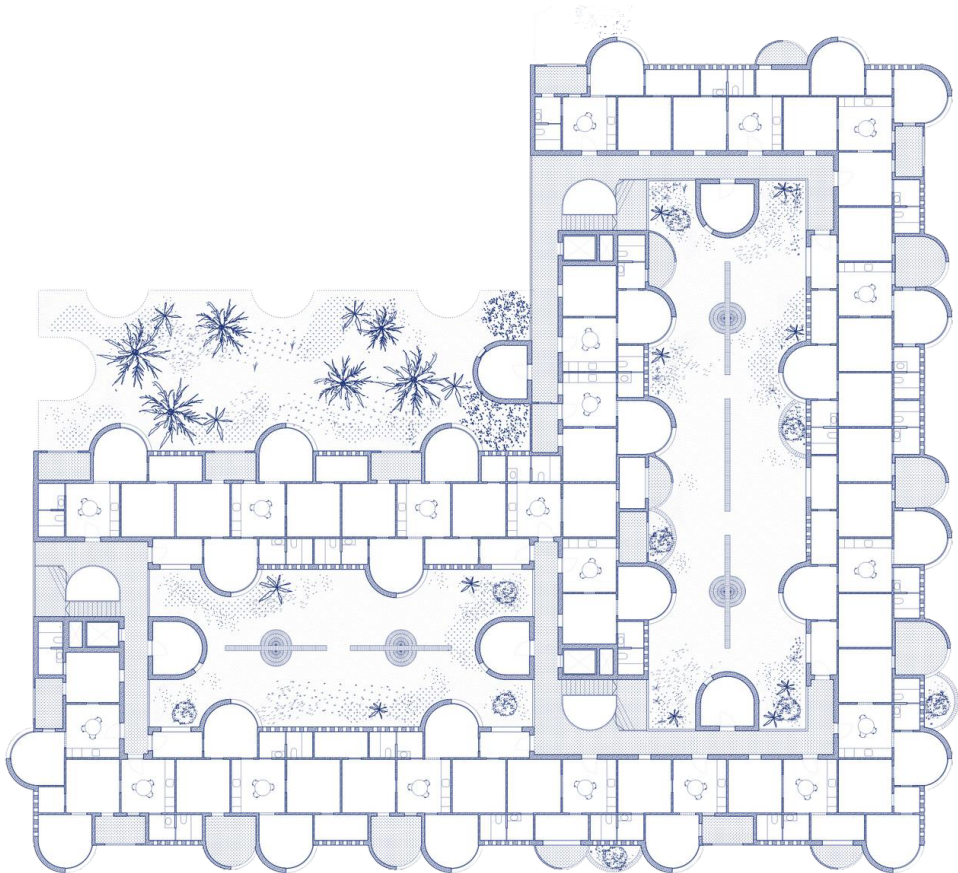
Once the dwelling is defined, the exercise turns to how best to aggregate it: how to move from the single unit to the many, from one home to a set of homes that together make up the building. Students build the floor plan by repeating their typology with variations and exceptions, all legible as versions of a single system: a mother typology and its variants.

Everything hinges on the mode of aggregation and access, which each project resolves in its own way: an outdoor walkway you wander along until you reach your door, an internal core around which the building turns, the direct contact with the street of a ground-floor development...

The aim is not to maximise the number of homes, but to build a system with a clear spatial and design logic, where each dwelling asks for its own way of being reached and of joining the others.

Aggregation also opens up an opportunity: the *satellite room*. When several homes come together, certain spaces that often sit empty need not be duplicated in every unit. They can be conceived as shared, easily detachable rooms — a guest room, a workspace, a room for temporary care — that neighbours use when they need them, without having to house them within their own home.

La Medina, Cierta Estudio, 2022



7. timeline +15

A dwelling is never finished: it is built over time, with the people who inhabit it and with life's unforeseen turns. This final exercise tests the flexibility of the system by projecting its transformation across fifteen years.

Students narrate how their aggregation takes in the changing lives of its inhabitants: homes that grow and shrink (in plan and in section), rooms that change use, satellite rooms that attach or break away, units that subdivide or merge, connections that open or close between neighbouring spaces. We will work with several time scenarios — year 0, +5, +15 — supported by diagrams that make the dwelling's evolution over time legible.

This temporal reading puts the plan itself to the test: in many cases, anticipating these transformations will call for revising and adjusting the aggregation already designed, so that change becomes truly possible. It is the ultimate proof that reversibility and ambiguity are not abstractions, but what keeps a dwelling alive.

El ciclo habitacional, Cierta Estudio



+ study trip

Zürich and Basel friday 9 - monday 12 october 2026

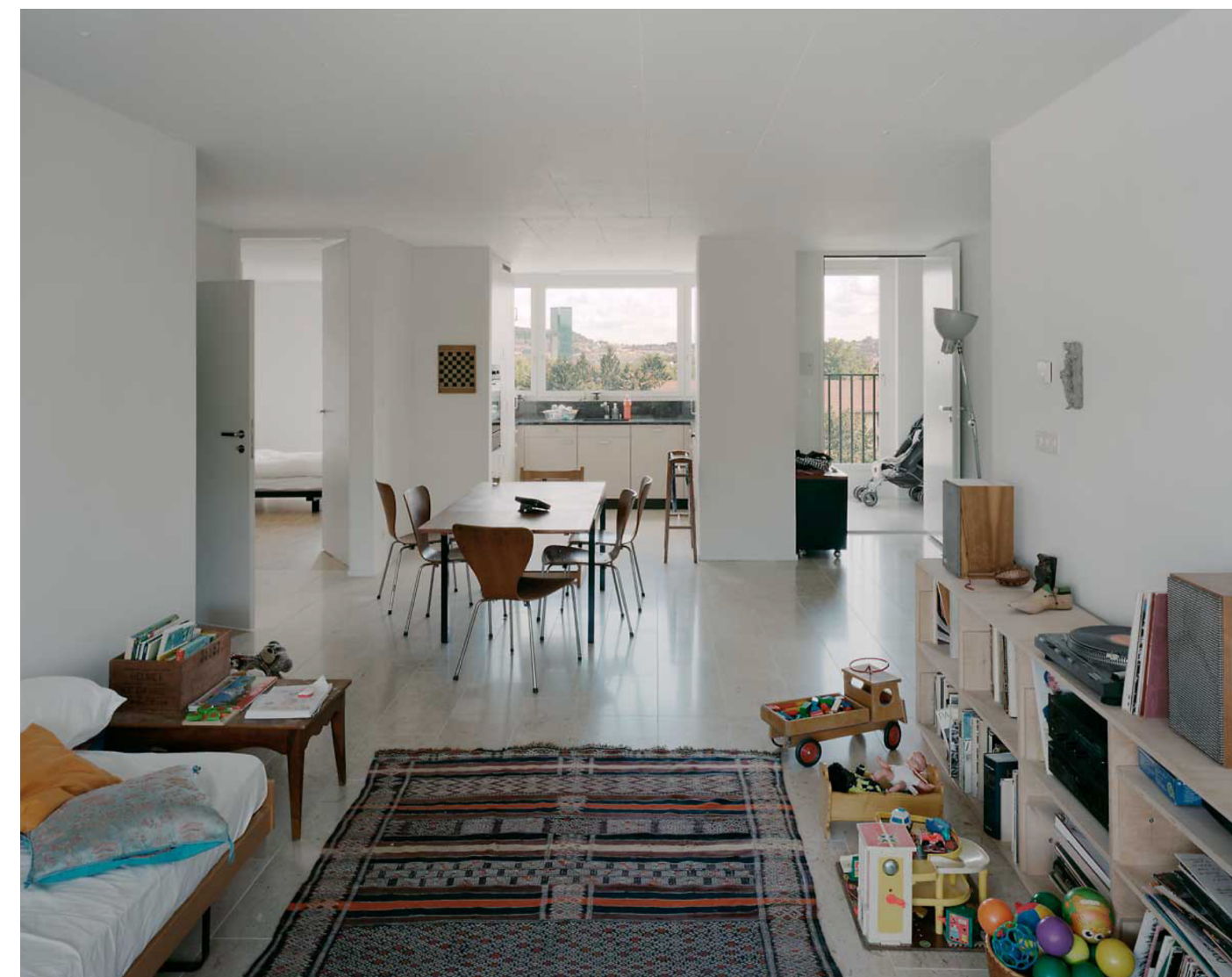
Train: CHF 80 (round trip with half-fare card)

Accommodation: 3 nights, estimated at CHF 100 per night
(Total: CHF 300)

Meals: Estimated at CHF 15 per meal (Total: CHF 120)

Total Estimated Cost: projected to be around 500 CHF

Im Gut cooperative housing, Peter Märkli, 2012



a house is a city

inside out

inside out

+

calendar FS26

week01	week02	week03	week04	week05	study trip	week 06	fall break
07.09 + 08.09	14.09 + 15.09	21.09 + 22.09	28.09 + 29.09	05.10 + 06.10	09.10 + 12.10	12.10 + 13.10	19.10 + 20.10
1. case study		2. a room		3. gender	Zürich and Basel	4. filter rooms	
floor plan reference image diagrams descriptive text/slogan axonometry introduction of the studio & cases study		floor plan (1:30) model (1:30) photo of the model theoretical input <i>Community of Rooms</i>		floor plan (1:30) model (1:30) photo of the model theoretical input <i>Spaces of Care</i>	program will follow...	floor plan (1:30) model (1:30) photo of the model theoretical input <i>Filter Rooms</i>	
week07	week08	week09	week10	week11	week12	week13	week14
26.10 + 27.10	02.11 + 03.11	09.11 + 10.11	16.11 + 17.11	23.11 + 24.11	30.11 + 01.12	07.12 + 08.12	14.12 + 15.12
5. typology	midterm	6. aggregation plan		7. timeline +15		charette	final jury
floor plan (1:30) model (1:30) photo of the model diagrames		aggregation plan (1:200-300) diagrams theoretical input <i>Aggregations</i>		aggregation plan in year 0, +5 and +15 (1:200-300) sequence of timeline diagrams diagrams		all final documents for each exercise axonometry of the dwelling update models photos of the models	

a house is a city

inside out

the room as the primary unit

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Fira Montjuïc

The studio takes place in Fira Montjuïc, one of Barcelona’s most emblematic yet contradictory urban sites. Originally built for the 1929 International Exposition, the exhibition grounds have remained largely unchanged for almost a century. What was conceived as a temporary installation became a permanent enclave: a vast fairground inserted between two consolidated neighbourhoods that today remain physically disconnected despite being only a few hundred metres apart. The exhibition halls, each the size of an Eixample block, operate only intermittently—intensely occupied during events and largely empty for the rest of the year. There are almost no residents, little vegetation and very limited everyday urban life. In a city facing an acute housing shortage, this mono-functional enclave invites a broader question: how can an existing urban enclave become part of the everyday city? The studio explores this question through the adaptive reuse of the exhibition halls as collective housing. Rather than treating the existing buildings as constraints, the project understands them as an extraordinary reserve of built resources, capable of accommodating new forms of domestic life while reconnecting the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Fira Montjuïc, Hall 2



1. reading the existing

This semester begins from a predefined urban framework that transforms the Fira precinct into a mixed-use neighbourhood. The masterplan has already established the main urban strategies and introduces the minimum interventions required to make housing possible within the existing exhibition pavilions. By taking these urban decisions as a given, the studio can focus directly on the architectural challenge: transforming these remarkable structures into collective housing.

The first exercise is devoted to understanding the site through two complementary scales of analysis. At the urban scale, each team studies the surrounding neighbourhoods, public space, topography, mobility networks and the urban connections currently interrupted by the Fira. The aim is to understand the role that housing can play in repairing these relationships and reactivating this fragment of the city. At the architectural scale, each pair adopts one existing pavilion and studies it through the act of redrawing. Plans, sections, elevations and structural axonometries become analytical tools to reveal the building's spatial qualities, dimensions, construction logic and structural system. Particular attention is paid to spans, levels, façades, roofs and the opportunities and constraints that each existing structure presents for its future transformation.

This analytical process unfolds before, during and after a study trip to Barcelona. Visiting the site, together with a selection of built housing projects, allows students to confront their drawings with reality, understand the material qualities of the existing buildings and observe how collective and transitional spaces perform once inhabited.

Ortofoto, Sector Fira de Montjuïc, 2022, Google Earth Pro

+ study trip

Barcelona friday 26 february - monday 1 march 2027

Train: CHF 200 (round trip via SNCF), or

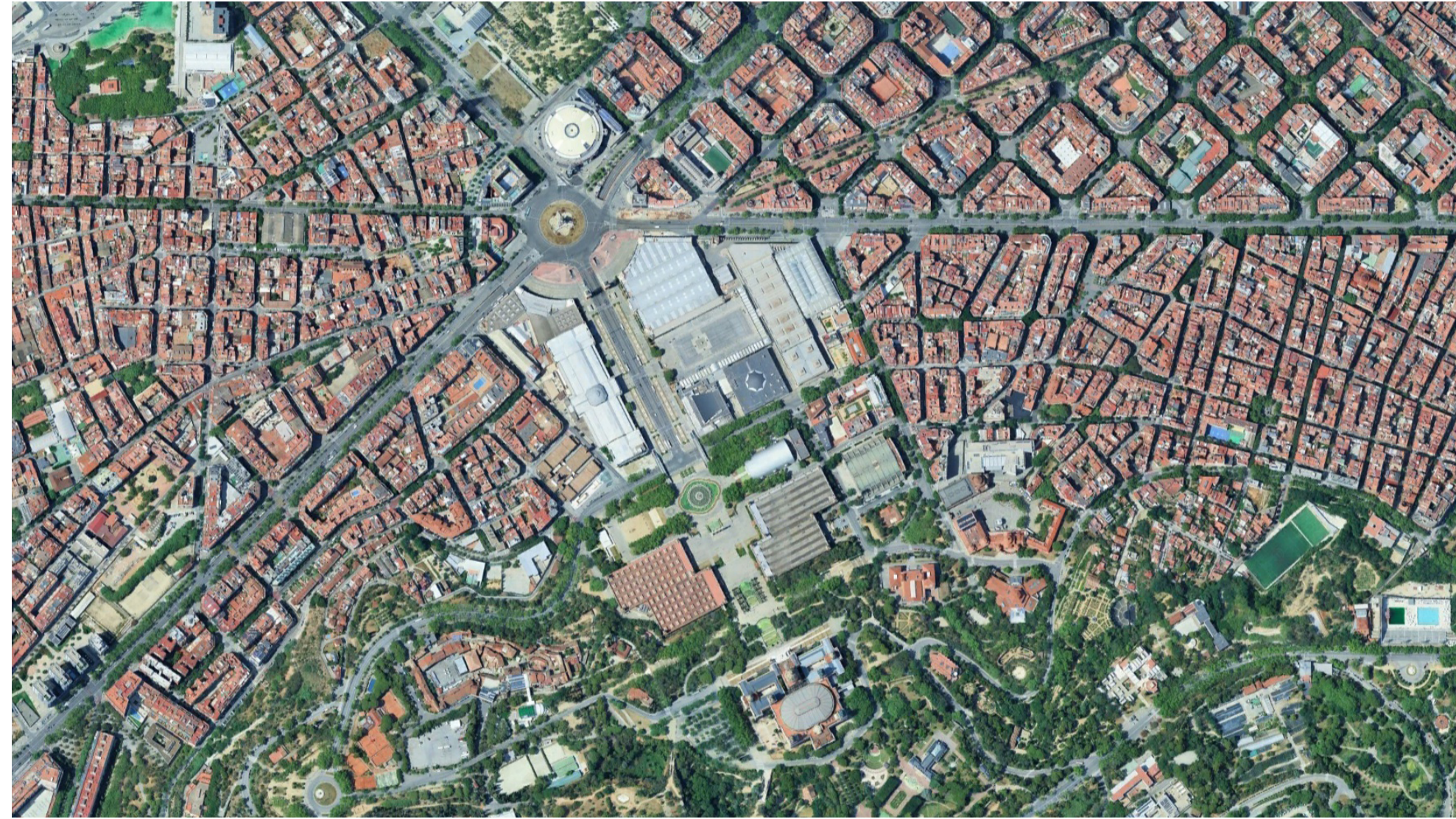
Plane: CHF 100 (round trip via EasyJet)

Accommodation: 3 nights, estimated at CHF 100 per night
(Total: CHF 300)

Meals: Estimated at CHF 10 per meal (Total: CHF 80)

Total Estimated Cost: projected to be around CHF 480 and CHF 580

Casa Vicens, Antoni Gaudí, 1888



a house is a city

inside out

2. imagining the collective

In an increasingly individualised society, designing housing also means designing the conditions for living together. Collective spaces are not simply circulation areas but the places where neighbourly relationships begin. Their success depends on their architectural quality: the sequence from the street to the dwelling, their generosity, thermal comfort, the presence of vegetation and the activities they can accommodate. They should invite people to pause, meet and gradually appropriate them as an extension of their own homes.

The architectural proposal therefore begins with the collective realm rather than with the dwelling itself. Working with the existing qualities of each pavilion, each tandem will imagine the sequence of shared spaces that connects the street to the home, exploring different degrees of privacy and collective life. The exercise investigates how architecture constructs this shared field: how a courtyard can open onto the city while remaining intimate, how a staircase can become a social space rather than simply a means of circulation, or how a threshold ceases to be a line and becomes a place. These first spatial decisions establish the collective framework—and the shared imaginary—from which the housing typologies will later emerge.

Hunziker areal, Duplex architects, 2015

3. the domestic threshold

Between the collective space and the dwelling lies a decisive architectural fragment: the domestic threshold. Entrance porches, galleries, patios, vestibules and seasonal rooms mediate between collective life and domestic intimacy, allowing the home to extend beyond its physical limits while preserving privacy. More than transitions, these spaces make it possible for the collective realm and the dwelling to coexist without conflict.

Building on the collective sequence developed in the previous exercise, each pair will design one inhabited threshold as a detailed architectural fragment. Through a large-scale model and plan, the exercise investigates how light, vegetation, materiality, climate and the existing qualities of the pavilion can shape a space that invites comfort, permanence and everyday appropriation. It is here that an entrance ceases to be a line and becomes a place: a space where domestic life gradually meets the collective realm.

Kitchenroom, Cierito Estudio, 2026

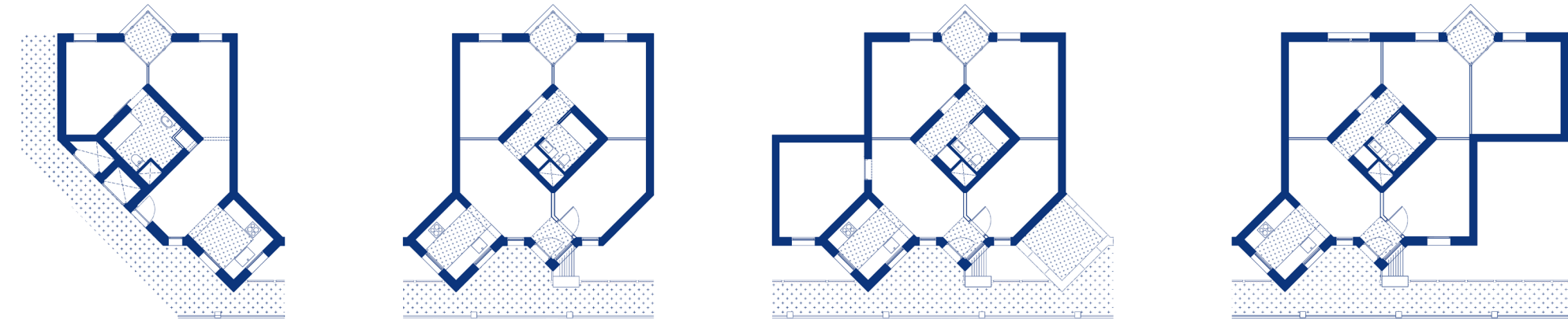


4. housing typology

Only after designing the collective spaces and the domestic threshold do we enter the dwelling itself. The house is understood not as a fixed programme but as an adaptable system, capable of accommodating different ways of living and evolving alongside the lives of its inhabitants. Rather than organising the dwelling through predetermined functions, the exercise explores a sequence of equivalent rooms whose uses can change over time. The aim is to design a housing typology that can support different household structures, patterns of occupation and future transformations without compromising its spatial quality. Conceived as a natural extension of the collective and transitional spaces developed in the previous exercises, the dwelling is conceived not as an isolated object but as one moment within the spatial continuum extending from the city to the home.

Distribution diagrams will illustrate how the same spatial framework can accommodate different forms of inhabitation throughout its life.

Illa Glòries, Cierito Estudio, 2024



5. aggregation

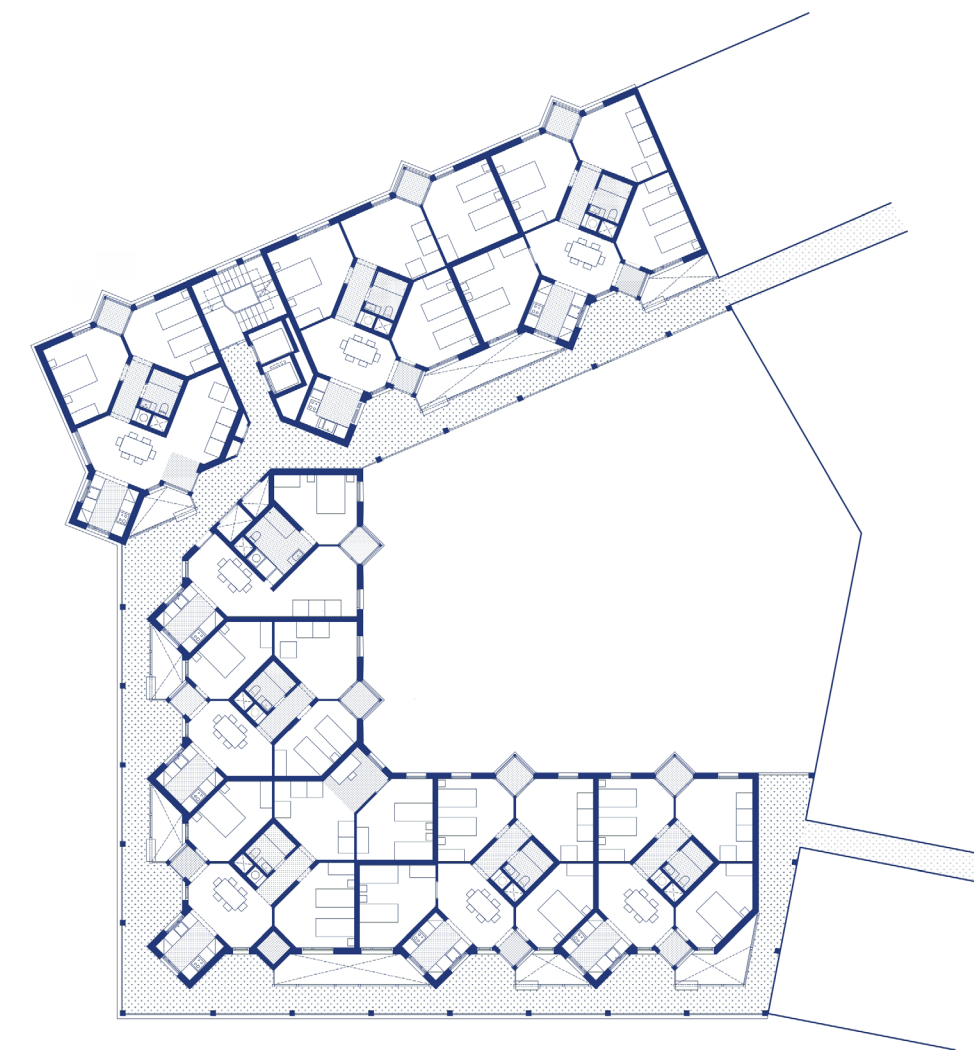
The project now shifts from the dwelling to the building as a whole. The collective spaces, the domestic thresholds and the housing typologies are brought together into a coherent system of aggregation.

The exercise explores housing as an open system capable of evolving over time. Dwellings may grow or shrink according to the changing needs of their inhabitants in two complementary ways: compactly, by incorporating or releasing adjacent rooms within the dwelling itself, or through segregation, by adding or removing independent satellite rooms connected to the shared spaces.

This approach also questions the very limits of the dwelling. Which activities need to remain inside the apartment, and which can become part of the collective realm? By relocating certain domestic functions into shared spaces, the project investigates how more generous, flexible and better-equipped homes can coexist with a richer collective life.

The project is developed simultaneously in plan and section. Together, they describe the building not as a collection of apartments, but as a living domestic system capable of adapting over time.

Illa Glòries, Cierito Estudio, 2024



6. where the house meets the city

The city and the dwelling meet at the building's edges. The façade, the ground floor and the spaces between the street and the collective realm are not simply transitions but places of exchange, where urban and domestic life influence one another. Porches, passages and entrances belong simultaneously to the house and to the city, extending the public realm into the building while allowing domestic life to become part of the urban landscape.

Returning to the urban scale, the students will design the façade, the ground floor and the adjoining public space, understanding the ground floor as a porous threshold between the street and the collective spaces. Working with the existing pavilion, the project explores how a change of use can transform the building's relationship with its surroundings while preserving its architectural identity.

Through a detailed section–elevation and a physical model, students will represent the complete sequence from public space to the dwelling. The façade is understood not as an isolated image but as the visible expression of the life unfolding behind it. It should make the collective life of the building legible from the street, revealing that something happens beyond the threshold—inviting curiosity without fully exposing domestic life.

Orphelinat Burgerweeshuis, Aldo van Eyck, 1960



inside out

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calendar SS27

<i>week01</i>	<i>study trip</i>	<i>week02</i>	<i>week03</i>	<i>week04</i>	<i>week05</i>	<i>spring break</i>	<i>week 06</i>
22.02 + 23.02	26.02 + 01.03	01.03 + 02.03	08.03 + 09.03	15.03 + 16.03	22.03 + 23.03	29.03 + 30.03	05.04 + 06.04
1. the existing	Barcelona		2. the collective		3. the domestic threshold		4. typology
site plan and urban analysis of the neighbourhood (1:1000) pavilion catalogue: plans, sections and structural axonometry (1:200) historical research references on adaptive reuse photographic documentation introduction of the studio & site			axonometry of the collective space from the street to the home theoretical input on the collective		floor plan (1:30) model (1:30) photo of the model theoretical input on the domestic threshold		floor plan (1:50) diagrams illustrating transformations and patterns of occupation theoretical input on typology
<i>week07</i>	<i>week08</i>	<i>week09</i>	<i>week10</i>	<i>week11</i>	<i>week12</i>	<i>week13</i>	<i>week14</i>
12.04 + 13.04	19.04 + 20.04	26.04 + 27.04	03.05 + 04.05	10.05 + 11.05	17.05 + 18.05	24.05 + 25.05	31.05 + 01.06
	5. aggregation			6. the house meets the city		charette	final jury
	aggregation plan (1:200-300) section (1:200-300) diagrams theoretical input on aggregation			section–elevation (1:50) fragment model of the sequence from public space to the dwelling		complete project intentional axonometric drawing of the transformed pavilion final image representing the relationship between dwelling and collective life	

a house is a city

two journeys, one question

The studio is structured as two complementary investigations into housing.

The first semester focuses on the domestic world. Through a sequence of architectural fragments, students progressively construct a dwelling from the inside out, allowing each exercise to reshape the next. The second semester expands this exploration to the scale of the city. Beginning with an existing urban structure, students design collective housing by moving from public space to the dwelling, before returning once again to the city.

Although their trajectories differ, both semesters share the same pedagogical approach. The project is never conceived as a finished object from the outset, but as the result of successive architectural questions. Each exercise isolates one aspect of the project, allowing new discoveries to transform previous decisions. In this way, architecture is understood not as the production of forms, but as a continuous process of inquiry.

This is how we design housing in our own practice — or at least how we have come to understand it. A dwelling is never resolved in a single move: it advances through questions that keep returning to modify what seemed already settled.