

Let's play home / Zabawa w dom



Małgorzata Markiewicz, CRIR, Christiania,
Copenhagen, Denmark, May 2014, <http://zwd.vot.pl>

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Photo Benjamin Lazar

1.Introduction

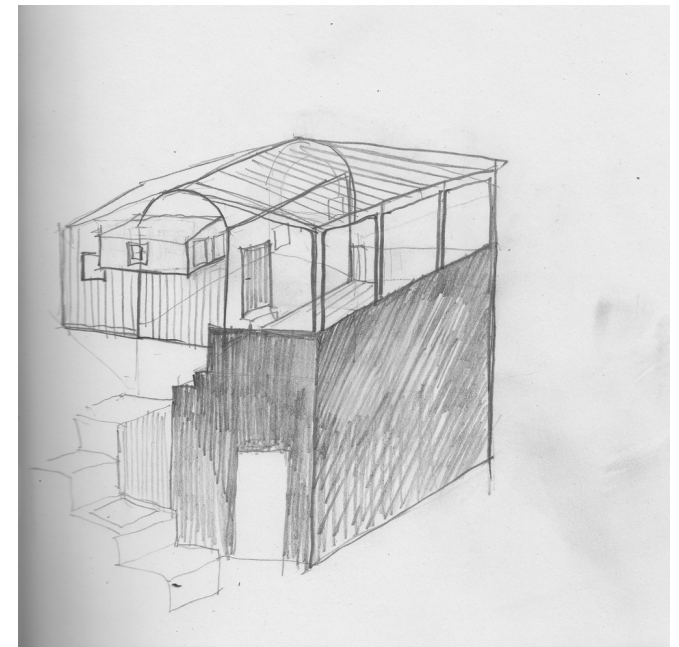
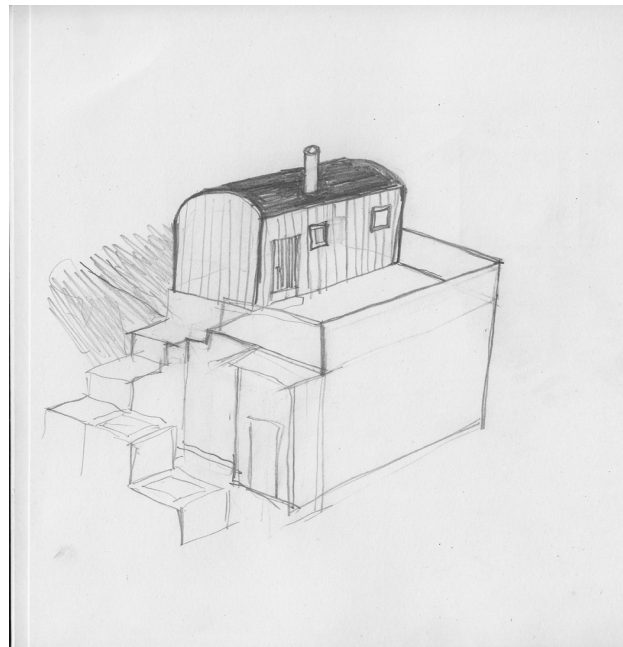
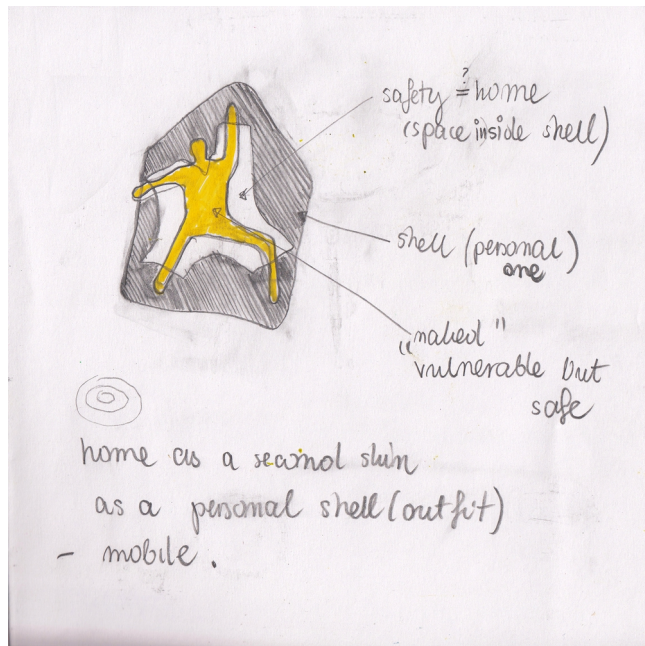
key words: performance as process/ social sculpture/ sense of production/ socially engaged art/ responsibility

The action of the performance took place among two weeks of May 2014. We arrived at Tuesday the 13th and left 14 days later at the 27th. The setting for the playing home activity was the area of the Christiania commune in Copenhagen. Christina Research in Residence was my host and gave me the local house to live in. The house were build without the project, and grow according to the changing needs of its owner. Recently after his death it become the place where the researches live.

It is fairly small cabin in Christiania that, as I saw it, needed to be 'refreshed and refurbished'. My intention was to domesticate it by performing housework, by cleaning and making soft repairs. By doing so, I wanted to prepare it for future use. The effects of taking care of the house by doing housework would become a tangible element serving other people as well, people who would use the house after our passage. The artistic initiative can be described as a social sculpture in which my aim was to do something that can be termed as useful, something practical, that could be inscribed in the ceaseless and daily practice of inhabitation.

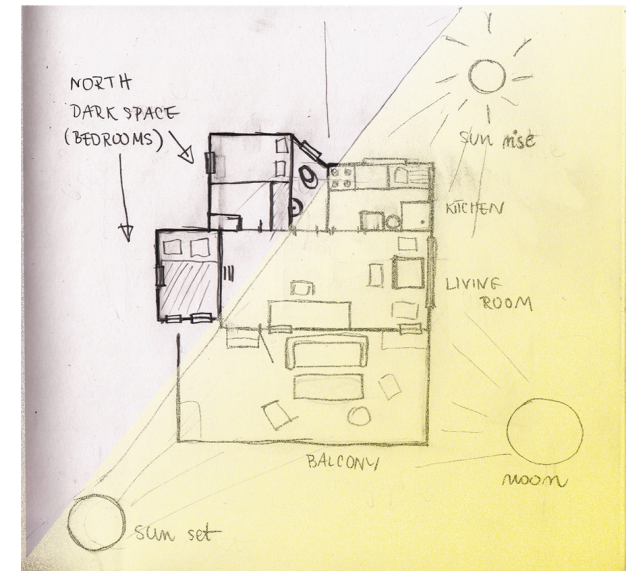
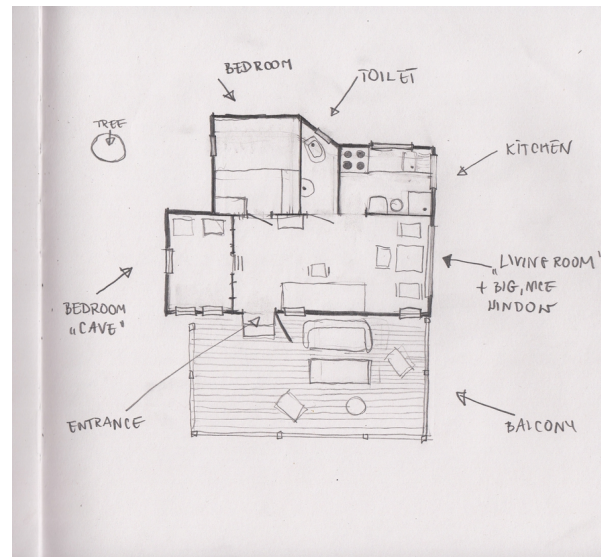
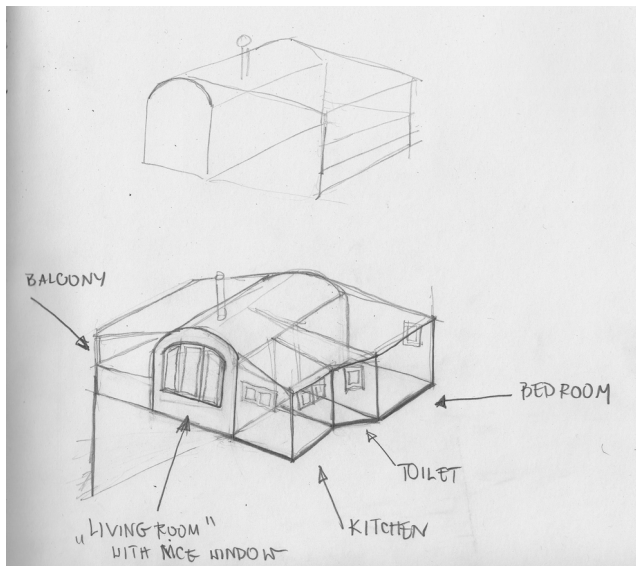
2. CRIR House

key words: reshaping/ re-building/ sustainable/ organic/ growing/ Christinia's architectural style / Oskar & Zofia Hansen/ theory of Open Form/ House in Szumin/ architecture without the project/



Drawings M.Markiewicz

Witold Rybczynski claims that: building is not only an integral part of the environment, but also a place from which the environment can be observed. (...) the view from the well positioned window is (...) unique and thus determines the interior's character. (...) Even though buildings are still, the surrounding is changing, depending on the time of day, time of the year. (...) Well sheltered veranda with wide eaves is a place where you can watch the rain. (...) Perhaps the most important element of the site is the sun, which determines the location and appearance of each room, as well as character of the facade.



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ENTRANCE



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3. Let's play home

key words: Play / game / theater / children games / pretending / maps of gender influence / responsibility / oppression / patchwork family /

Under the denominator 'Let's play home' I performed a project inspired by children's games and I staged it as a theatre of life, one of 'making / playing' home. The central characters in the event were Benjamin who played the role of the man / husband, my son Bruno as the child and myself as the woman / wife. The play was meant to become a seamless mixture of reality and fiction.

From Space, Time and Perversion, The Politics of the Body (1991)

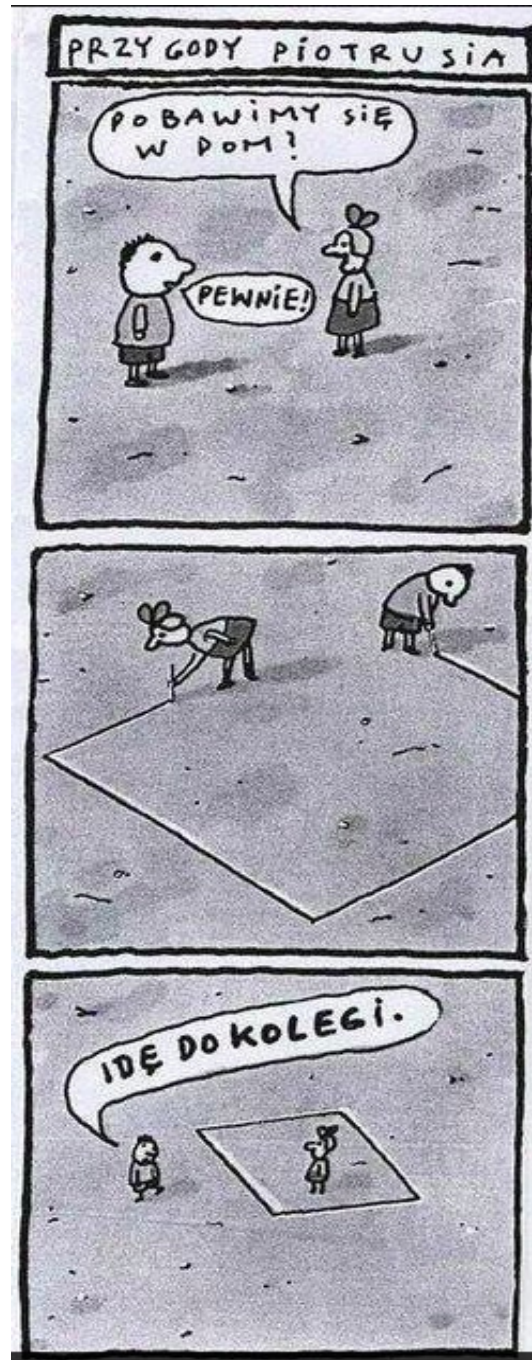
Everywhere you shut me in. Always you assign a place for me. Even outside the frame that I form with you.... You set the limits even to events that could happen with others.... You mark boundaries, draw lines, enclose. Excising, cutting out. What is your fear? That you might lose your property.

What remains is an empty frame. You cling to it, dead.

Luce Irigaray (1992:24-5)

Girl: Let's play home

Boy: Sure!



Boy: Bye,
I go to see my
fellows

4. Packing

key words: mobile home/emigration/diaspora/ appropriation/homeless/

What should be taken? Which tastes and smells, which objects and memories make home? Is it possible to put it into the suitcase and take in another place? For me, the most important is tea, all kinds, green for the morning, red after the dinner, bronchisan for the throat sorrow, linden to heat up, camomile for the stomach. Chocolate, millet flakes and some other dry grains for the morning mamlyga. Cacao for Bruno and cinnamon & orange soap. Home in a suitcase?

From Why We Build by Rowan Moore: (page 54)

“John Berger, (...) described the idea of home-as-cosmos as fundamental to humanity, as essential to making sense of the world. In 'traditional' societies, he said

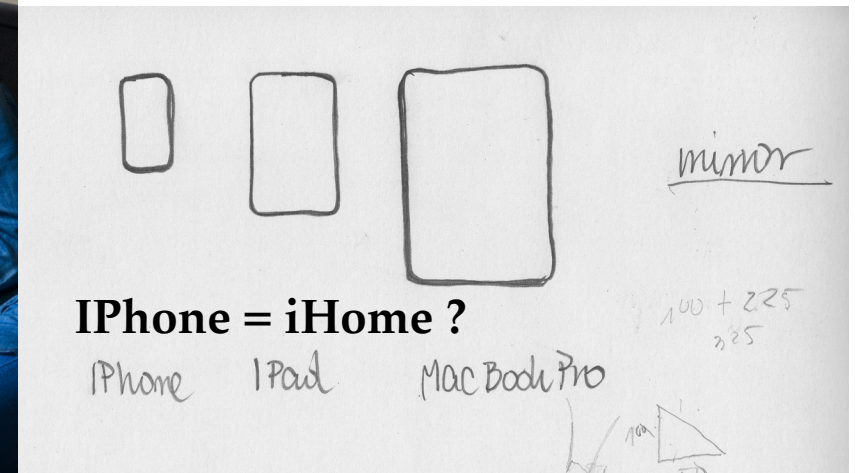
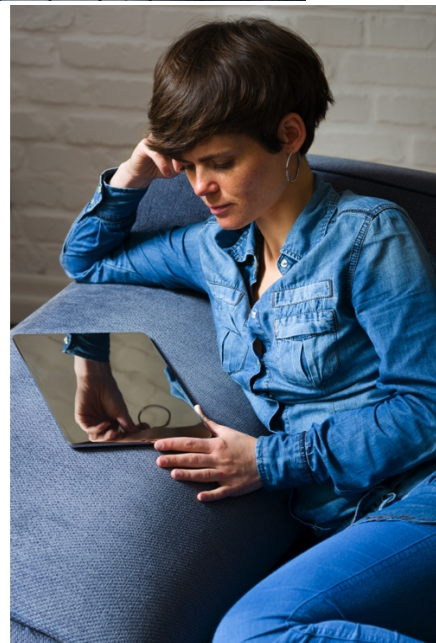
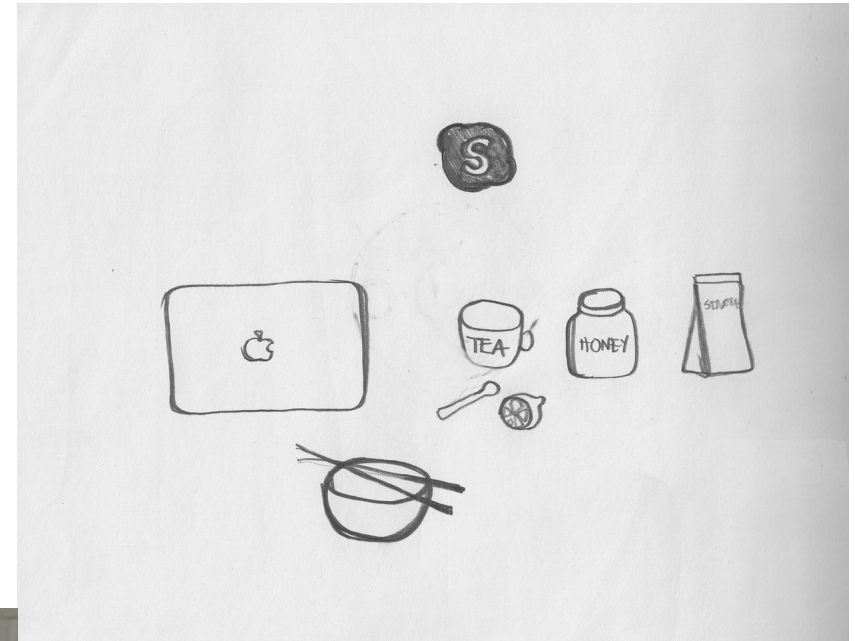
without a home at the centre of the real, one was only shelterless, but also lost in non-being, in unreality. Without a home everything was fragmentation.

Being nomadic did not exclude this cosmic idea: nomads could establish a sense of home wherever they pitched their tents. But for Berger, this life of mobile rootedness was not the experience of displace people in twentieth century, of those force by economic pressure to uproot themselves and move to alien cities. To emigrate 'is always to dismantle the centre of the world, and so to move into a lost disoriented fragments'. To find a new centre and preserve their identity, city dwellers have to resort to actions rather than physical form. They have to make a 'substitute' home that

has little to do with a building. The roof over the head, the four walls, have become ... independent from whatever is kept in the heart and is sacred ... The displaced preserve their identity and improvise shelter. Build of what? Of habits, I think, of the raw material of repetition, turned into shelter. The habits imply words, jokes, opinions, gestures, even the way one wears a hat. Physical objects and places - a piece of furniture, a bed a corner of room, a particular bar, a street corner – supply the scene, the site of the habit, yet it is not they but the habit which protects.”

From the Book Aglaja V - As child for the circus family, she was making home by using blue piece of cloth. Always spreading it next to her bed in differed places where she was sleeping. It was comforting her.

“ (...) people can make their home, without or despite the contribution of build form, albeit with considerable struggle.”



Mobile signature of the place – the one's own place



Mobile signature of the place, Małgorzata Markiewicz 1999

It was Virginia Woolf who claimed that woman needs her own space and some amount of money to be independent and creative

The work of mine which examines that aspect is *Mobile Signature of the Place* from 2000. The object is made from 25 rectangles, can be arranged and used as a carpet. Its aim is to mark the place, the private space where no one can enter. It is portable and easy folding so can be taken and moved to other context very fast. During that time I had a great need to mark the space, to separate from the rest of the world – from public space and private space of the others. That act can be read as a feminist demand of having the own room, to be independent. Here privacy is understood to provide positive qualities, such as the right to be alone, to confidentiality and the safeguarding of individuality.

5. Home

key words: subjective meaning/ home as a cosmos/

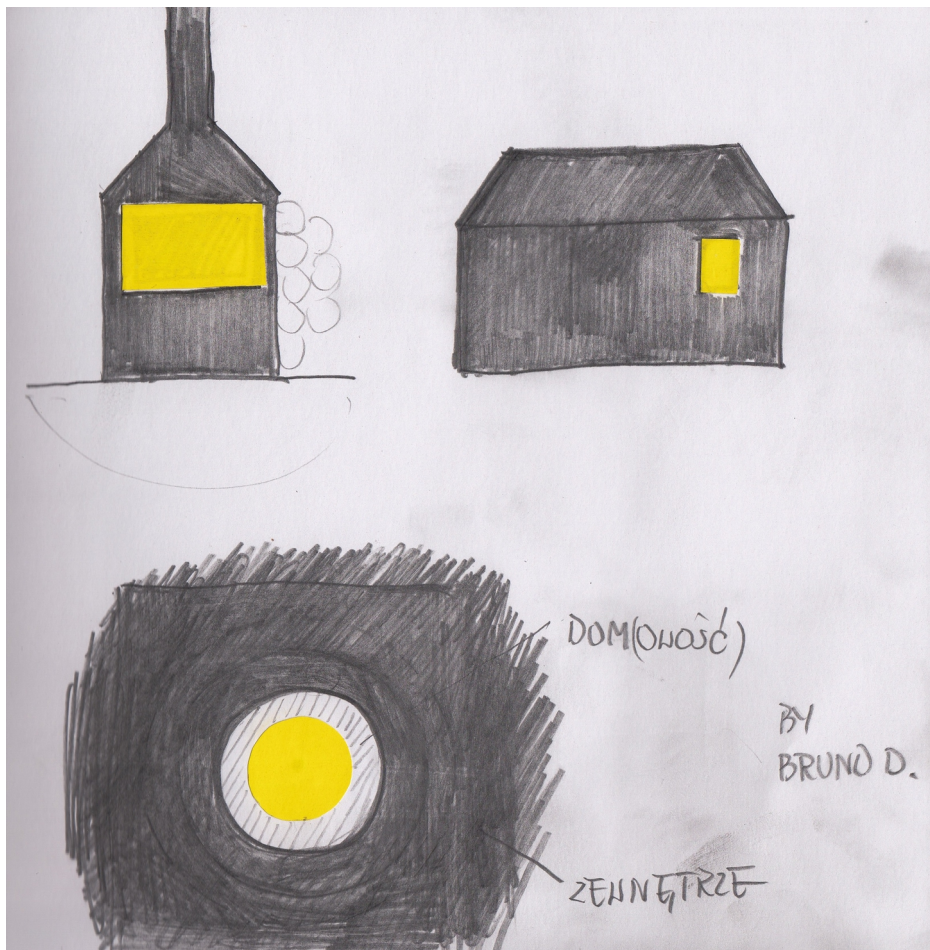
*The idea of home, whether expressed as a stable cosmos or as nomadic wandering, shows basic truth, which is that the space we occupy is not neutral to us. We can not look at it with detachment. We are in it , we make it, and it makes us. Rowan Moore, **Why We Build***



photo M.Markiewicz

Malgosia:

To feel home I can in easy way. Just need for that to have a possibility to make a cup of tea with honey and lemon. When it is cold I use to add also a bit of fresh ginger. Lately even the hotels came out with the idea of having the tea pot, cups and some tea at their rooms. I use to take my iPad with me as well. That is my temporary home...it is the way in which I appropriate the new space.



Drawings M.Markiewicz

Bruno:

when it is evening

and dark outside

we are all in the kitchen

the lamp is on above the table ,

we all do our own things

but besides that we still are together

that is home

Ben:

this place is inside, deep within, in a warm silence, where a spark kindles. but this place is sometimes on the outside too, where the body leaves itself and a couple of important things; where there is a pot in which I can cook beans, broad beans and lentil until there is no excess water to drain, because I know how much water to pour to suffice for an hour, half an hour, fifteen minutes... my change pairs of shoes and winter clothes are there as well. Up until recently this is where I also kept my books, but ever since they appeared in an electronic version and I got an e-reader, I take all books I treasure with me... I try to make sure there's enough sunlight there, as well as shade and at least 4 m² of level ground so I can comfortably stand on my head.

6. Smell

key words: memories/identity/ home/ architecture

from *The Eyes of the Skin* Juhani Pallasmaa

(...) Every dwelling has its individual smell of home. A particular smell makes us unknowingly re-enter a space completely forgotten by the retinal memory; the nostrils awaken the forgotten image, and we are enticed to enter a vivid daydream. The nose makes the eyes to remember. (...) Why do abandoned houses always have the same hollow smell(...)?

First morning I woke up with a heavy head caused by the house's mouldy smell. The smell was also the reason of the nausea when I tried to drink my favorite morning tea. It was not warm outside.

Our house stinks of mustiness, unventilated interior and most of all the dampness of the roof which decay. By moving in we bring with us our smells of coffee, clean floor and wind from open windows.

The aspect smell relates to the text about 'what does it mean to have own's place', written by the woman who was prison: (I have made a textile based on that text.)

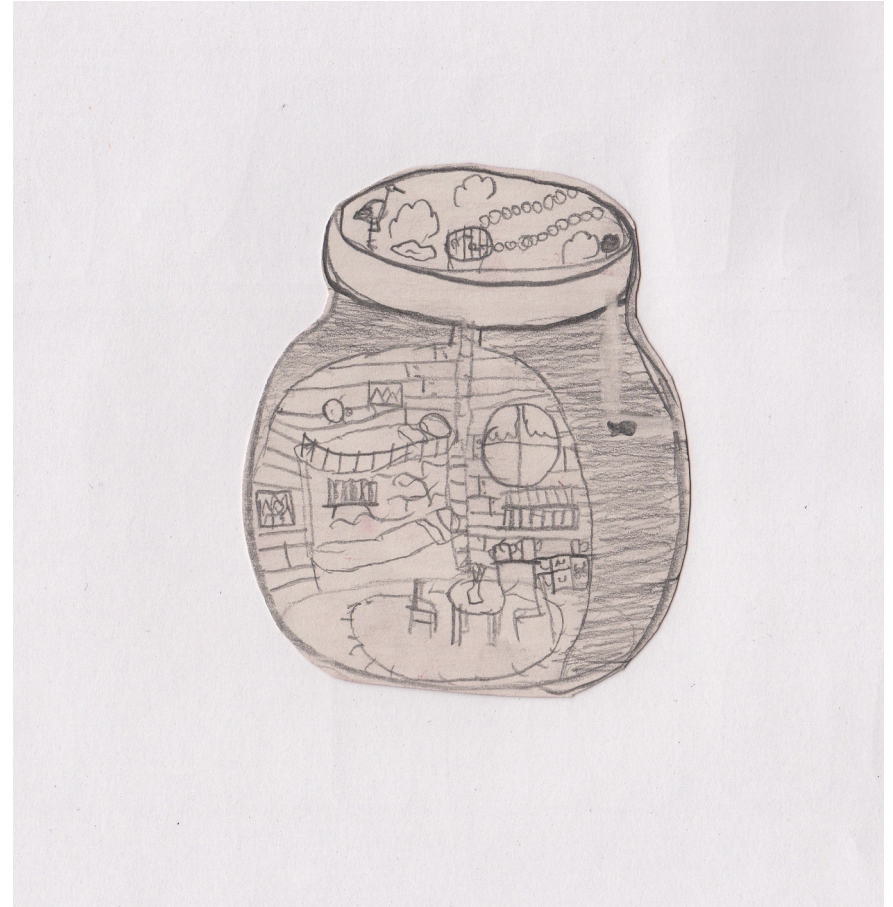
to sit means to miss, to kill time, to clean, to wait. I'm always cleaning, time and again I have a different place to sleep, I sleep where others slept before me, how many people were there? many. I want to have my own place, so I clean, I wash, I scrub. I want to wash off the smells and traces of all the others, I want to smell my own scent at my own place and on my towels, in my bed. I'm going to scrub this place of mine. How long do I have it for? a month, a week, maybe a day. until next year.

7. Taste

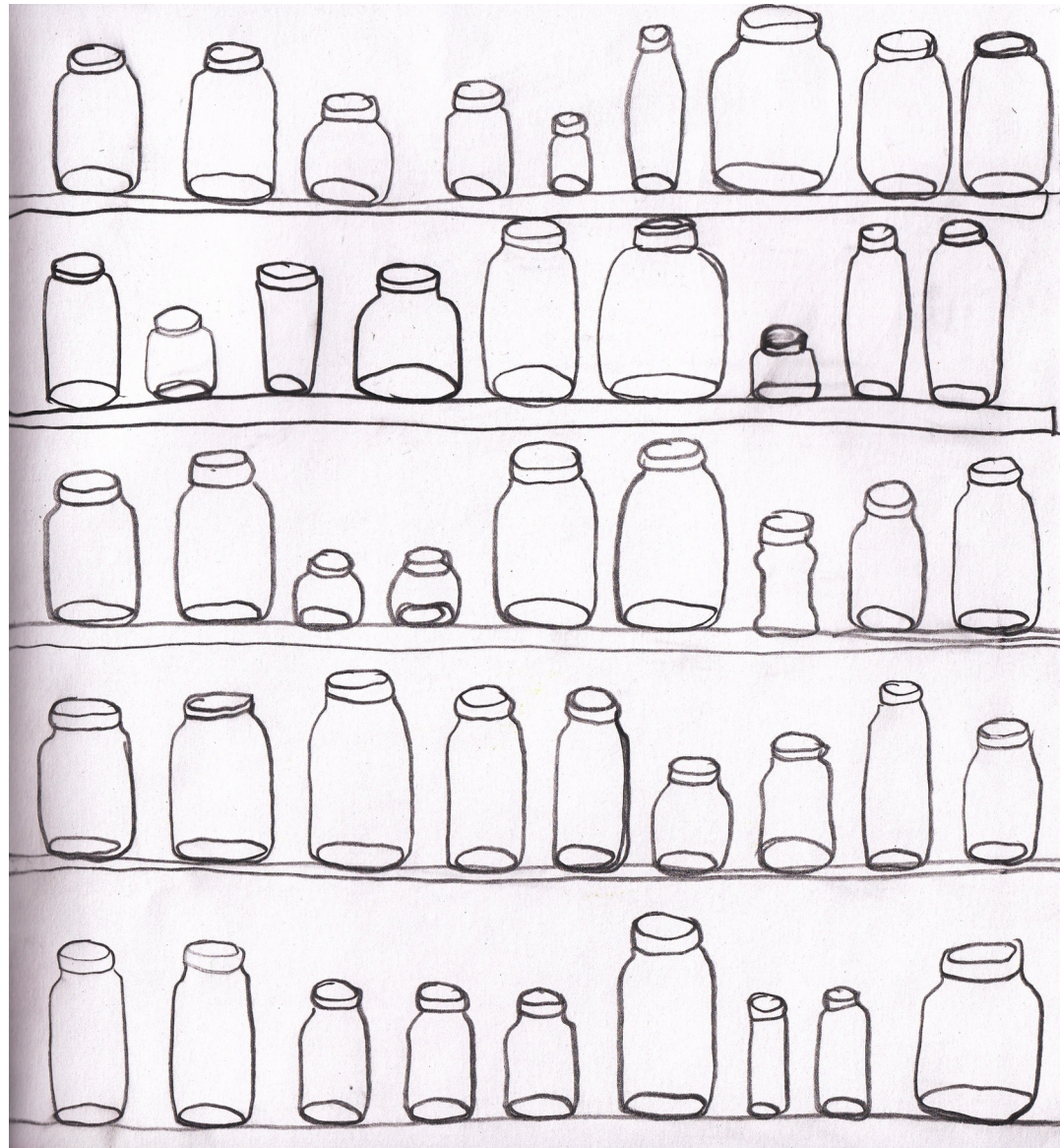
key words: memories/identity/ home/ architecture/ home in a jar? / *The Cook Book with Home Metaphors*/



Photo M.Markiewicz, Drawing Bruno



/is it possible to put your home in a jar?/



8. Homing/ Dwelling

key words: everyday life / dispersion / cooking / cleaning / vanishing effort / unpaid duty / Platonic Chora / dignity of the rag / clean / dirty / visible / invisible / making home / gender / erasing the inscriptions of the past / oppression / repairing / gardening

from Elisabeth Grosz - *Woman, Chora, Dwelling*

I was your house and when you leave, abandoning this dwelling place, I do not know what to do with these walls of mine. Have I ever had body other than the one which you constructed according to your idea of it? Have I ever experience a skin other than the one which you wanted me to dwell within? (Irigaray, 1992:49)

The containment of women within a dwelling that they did not build, nor was even built for them, can only amount to a homelessness within the very home itself: it becomes the space of duty, of endless and infinitely repeatable chores that have no social value or recognition, the space of the affirmation and replenishment of others at the expense and erasure of the self, the space of domestic violence and abuse, the space that harms as much as isolates woman.

I would like to refer also to my previous works. Pinafores from 2002, which examined women's home oppression. Their work consist of objects, action, performance and photos. Pinafores can be made of an oil cloth. They are inexpensive, easy to keep clean, water-proof, and everything washes off them. Their appearance is reminiscent of summer dresses. They are also sexy, hence attractive to men. Pinafore is the universal outfit of the housewife. A woman wearing a pinafore can fulfil culturally imposed functions: mother, wife, lover. A pinafore is an apparel that - using a special pattern designed especially by the artist - can easily be manufactured by its prospective wearer.



Pinafores, 2001, M.Markiewicz

Cooking/ cleaning dishes/ repetitive/ vanishing



Photo Benjamin Lazar, Małgorzata Markiewicz

Weeping floor with a rug/ repetitive/ vanishing/ dignity of the rug/



Photo B.Lazar, M.Markiewicz

Gardening/ repairing/ painting/ fixing/ window cleaning



Photo M.Markiewicz



9.Windows

key words: creating house from inside/ view/ mystery/ private/ subjective/

Juhani Pallasmaa *The Eyes of The Skin*

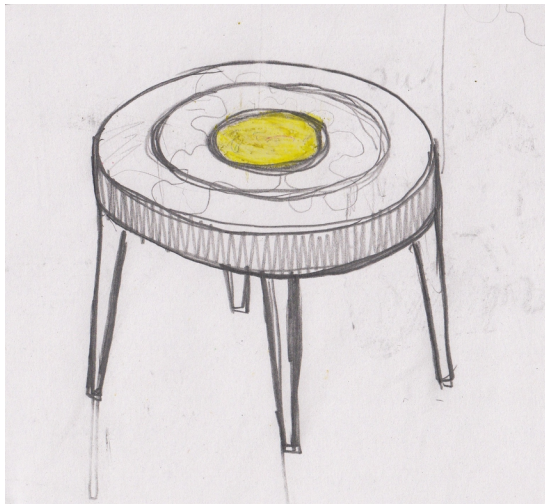
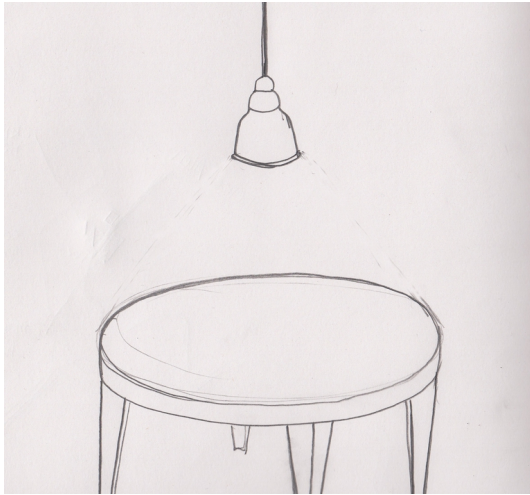
In our time, light has turned into a mere quantitative matter and the window has lost its significance as a mediator between two worlds, between enclosed and open, interiority and exteriority, private and public, shadow and light. Having lost its ontological meaning, the window has turned into a mere absence of wall. (page 47)



photo M.Markiewicz

10. Lamp

key words: fire/ light/ warmth/ kitchen/ security/ belonging/



Drawings, photo M.Markiewicz

11. Table

key words: center/ home life/ mediation/ sacrum/ profane/ union/ home/ encounter



photo Iwonka, and M.Markiewicz

12. Bed

key words: birth/ death/ fertility/ cycle of life/ bed as table/

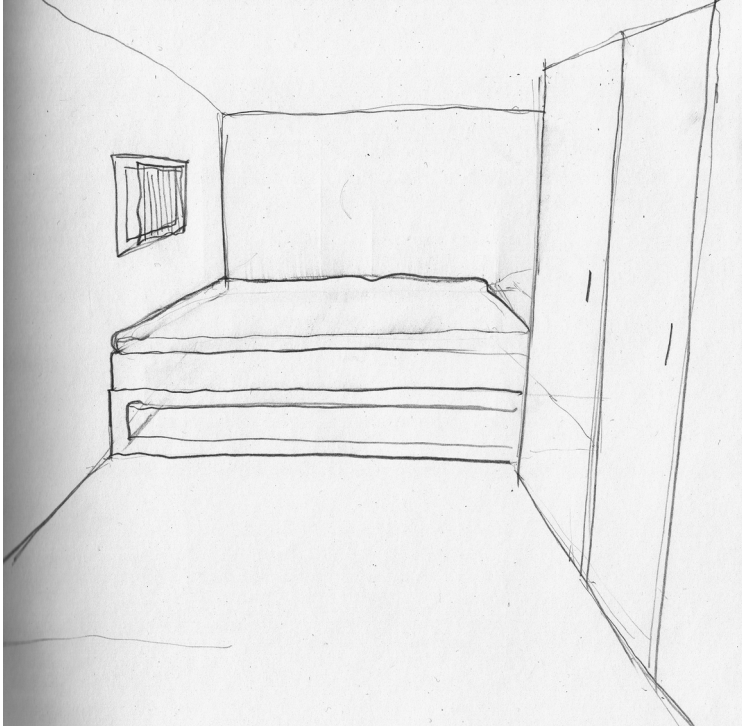
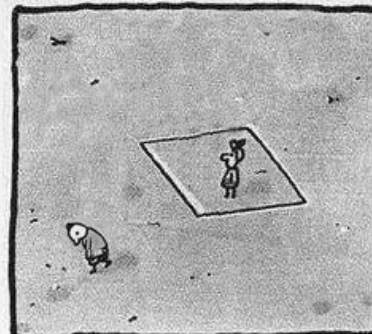
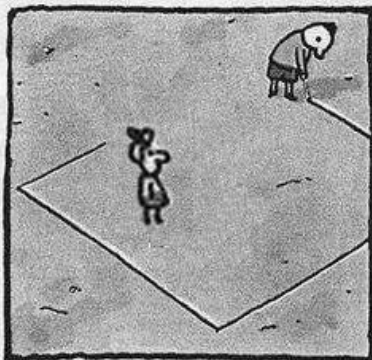


Photo and drawing M.Markiewicz

ZABAWA MAŁGOSI



Girl: Let's play home

Boy: Sure!

Boy: Why?

Girl:
Because now I am
going to continue
playing with
someone else, you're
useless..

Girl: OK,
Now get lost.

13. Cracks (in everyday life)

key words: routes to escape/ mystery/ new world in hole/ repairing/



Repairing, M.Markiewicz



Cracks – it was easier to fix the t-shirt then the relation

14. Mrs. Dalloway

key words: pretending/ mask/ facade/ fixing/ mending/



Homebuilding some times is intend to be remedy for the family crisis, hope that it can cure the ills, fix the relation. But:

At the heart of this enduring syndrome is the double meaning of the world 'home'. It means the physical residence, but also the family that inhabit it. I means building, people, and relationship. It is easy to imagine that by fixing the bricks and mortal, one is fixing the flesh and blood, the more so as buildings seem easier to sort out than people. The result is more tangible, measurable, demonstrable. Because they are are expensive and effortful, construction projects offer the appearance of serious attempts to fix something, even they are irrelevant to the matter in hand. (Rowan Moore, Why we build, page 39)

15. Mr. Dragonfly

key words: spirit/ ghosts / aura



Photo M.Markiewicz

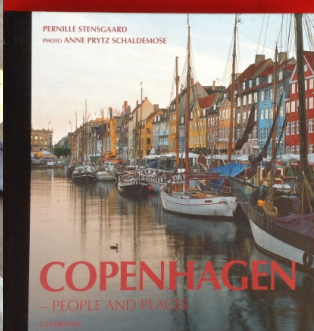
16. Gifts and encounters

key words: relations/ friends/ net / support/ food/ encounter/ gift party/



Photo M.Markiewicz





17. That is not the end

key words: appropriation/ unfinished/ reshaping/ growing/ changing/ living/ dwelling/

Rowan Moore: (...) *home will always be in some way imperfect.*



Walter Benjamin: *making home is a continuous process that requires a lot of effort and work, and is obviously never finished.*