

# Beyond Arrival: Ethics in Housing Those Who Will Come

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**ABSTRACT:** The paper discusses ethics in architecture amid the design of asylum spaces in Europe. It queries the role of the designer in the building typologies of shelter and housing across the limitations that the contemporary asylum practice poses on the discipline, pointing out regulative, political, as well as historic and current societal aspects that critically inform the design sphere around asylum and the understanding of refuge – discussing global phenomena as much as local initiatives. In doing so, it not only works out features related to design types and methodologies, but it also reflects on the ambit in which designs are put forward, including official solutions, privately based collaborations, and university research or lab projects. Against the background of the most recent trends around standardization and design policies, the paper debates if there is an architectural leeway and its potential worth along theoretic and actual design contributions towards a humane contemporary architecture for refugees and displaced people in Europe.

**KEYWORDS:** design ethics, asylum architecture, invisible design actants, law and leeway in architecture

## INTRODUCTION

If we assume that there is *ethics* in architecture, we thereby acknowledge its absence, or rather the existence of an architectural *non-ethics*. Sensing this absence is a way of critically reflecting on potential values of (an) architectural design and on the role of the designer who attributes them to it – based on morality. How, then, give meaning to the designer's individual knowledge of and practice along moral codes and define those as ethically, as socially responsible (opposed to being simple a response to problems)? Attorneys vow to constitutions, physicians take the Hippocratic Oath – how would an architect's oath come about? Are design actions, compared to other disciplines, merely a secondary set of value add to humanity? What are the aspects that limit ethical decision making in design?

## 1.0 NON-ETHICS AND INVISIBLE ACTANTS IN THE ARCHITECTURE ARRIVAL

Arguably, architectural design includes a set of seemingly invisible aspects that strongly influence space making and its form: our modern societal expectations and our human patterns of behaviour are formed by our institutions that sturdily regulate our human relations through legal frameworks. Designers, then, adapt to the institutional regulations and assume the circumstances around the objects to be designed, concerned with giving the best possible form to predefined situations (Burckhardt 1980). In the vast field of architectural typologies particularly affected by regulatory bodies, arrival architectures, those structures built to welcome and accommodate asylum seekers, are situated right at the intersection between ethical considerations (as in societal acts of care and humanitarian aid) and aspects of legislation and political power. As such, they are part of an increasingly acute conjunction of architectural design and law, in which human rights and the sense of wellbeing (when it comes to spaces of habitat) seem to make way for political agendas – across the means of building codes, backing them up with the use of strong vocabulary that indicates a potential danger to the societal systems, such as *crisis*, *challenge*, *problem*, or *safety* (Misselwitz 2010).

When it comes to the practice of asylum, referring to both a political status and a physical place of refuge, the consideration of a designer's leeway towards ethical decision making seems particularly critical. On the one hand side, housing – principally for vulnerable groups such as refugees – requires the careful consideration of all those invisible design actants that influence the well-being of its inhabitants, such as dignity, safety, health, and inclusion (UN Habitat 2020). The establishment of standards, in this regard, is often considered an achievement towards the betterment of living conditions for a growing number of displaced persons and refugees (SPHERE 2018) – a number that has surpassed a saddening milestone of 100 million people for the first time in 2022 (UNHCR 2024). As of today, particularly in Europe, the arrival of asylum seekers is subject to a highly protocolized procedure with different phases and the spatial conditions surrounding those phases fall into the standardizations that, as in action fields of humanitarian aid around the world, rather reflect the applied logic of military or medical care than humanitarian aid. The contemporary humanitarian spaces in Europe mirror this logic and can be considered an indicator for the vicinity of humanitarian aid and our established systems of power and political will (Weizman 2014). If we consider humanitarian spaces as an interpretation of design policies that influence specific architectural decisions, the architecture of asylum seems to remain an inclined typology that signals various stages of welcoming and care that are subject to place, time, the institution responsible, and – (only) to some degree design aspects, as architect Brandlhuber underlines through his statement “Architecture begins with laws, not according to them.” (Brandlhuber, Kerez, and Trüben 2016, 11).

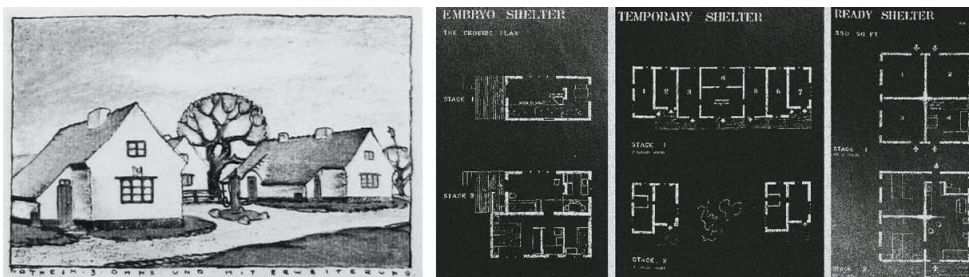
Some of the resulting contemporary design features around the architecture of arrival in Europe can be pointed out here: they are considered temporary, often find themselves in secluded surroundings and non-urban settings, are protected (marked by fences or similar barriers), they are formed under extreme conditions according to sudden demands, and they show a certain uniformity in their spatial programmes. Along with the re-occurring use of structures that were never purposed to meet housing demands such as tents, containers, or former industrial and military sites, this contributes to a 'campization' trend across Europe (Kreichauf 2018). Broadly speaking, the design types around arrival architectures can be distinguished into swiftly erectable modular housing units, adaptations or transformations of vacant buildings, ad-hoc solutions using on-site materials, or entirely new constructions. The different design types can be detected in all the different groups of the existent accommodation, independent of them being first reception points, second line accommodations, or refugee housing (ibid). Much of Europe's humanitarian architecture seems not to put into place what it (or should) advocate(s) for.

## 2.0 CAUSES AND INFLUENCES AFFECTING THE CURRENT EUROPEAN ASYLUM PRACTICE AND ITS SPATIAL COMPONENTS

The notion of asylum evolves dynamically, undergoing cultural, political, and economic transformations that parallel the swings in collective and individual societal practices of our time. Notably, for instance, the shift from sacral to statal asylum has altered its spatial condition and political significance. Formerly rooted in a combined act of physical and institutional care, asylum now leans towards a state of reception, a limbo where asylum seekers await the outcome of protracted procedures inside dedicated spaces. The physical aspect of asylum, once a refuge, has shifted into a realm of uncertainty, temporary solutions often transitioning from an intentional short-term condition to a lasting one with people living habitats that were never fit for housing purposes for ten years and longer (Albadra et al. 2008). Today's asylum practice is a relatively recent development, originating in 19th-century Europe and evolving in significance and practice over subsequent centuries in response to historic events (Misselwitz 2010). As mentioned, the current connection between refugee housing and design reflects a narrative centred on safety, shaped by the complex history of migration Europe and, more recently, the European Union's asylum policies of the last decade.

### 2.1. Asylum architecture during World Wars and the inter war period in Europe

The massive migration waves during and after World Wars I and II in the first half of the 20th century prompted architectural designers, including renowned figures like Le Corbusier and Alvar Aalto, to tackle mass housing challenges. During a research stint at MIT in the 1940s, Aalto experimented with a 'growing house,' strategically designed to evolve from hosting multiple families in an emergency state to becoming single-family homes (Schildt 1991). His work highlights how adaptable geometries can bridge the gap between basic shelter and more enduring housing, addressing a weakness in humanitarian shelter architecture through thoughtful design. In contrast, Ernst May, as the chief designer for Silesian refugee accommodations in the interwar period in central Europe, focused on the concept of a growing house rather on a material and logistical level, overcoming building material scarcity and addressing the urgency of post-war housing shortages in Germany (Herscher 2017). May's foresighted construction practices, honed through his experiences in the conception of refugee accommodations with specific housing qualities, contributed to the high standards of the massive settlement development in Frankfurt, distinguishing it from other housing projects of the time (Henderson 2013). Independent of their individual interpretation of what makes decent living conditions, what defines the narrative of both May and Aalto is the consideration of the building task not merely as an emergency requirement but as a contribution to increasing the national housing stock (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** The designs of both Aalto and May showcase the concern with the general housing stock opposed to temporary solutions. Source: (Schildt, G., 1991. *Alvar Aalto – The Mature Years*. New York: Rizzoli Publishers, © Ernst May Gesellschaft, 2023.)

### 2.2. Post war Europe, the international community and its effect on humanitarian design

After World War II, nearly seven percent of the global population experienced displacement due to war-related events, destroyed habitats, or border redefinitions (Steigenga 1958). It's crucial to note that post-war migrants cannot be equated with today's asylum seekers and neither the reception facilities. Although various refugee accommodations were developed at that time to manage the massive influx of people relocating to new or former places of habitat, these were primarily military-oriented and served as transit and registration points. They made use of modular military camp structures and were not designed to address longer-term accommodation questions, as is, partly, the case today. This historical context may contribute to the diverse approaches designers take in shaping humanitarian spaces today, reflecting a departure from a unified design compass, a perspective also

acknowledged by architect Kristian Kerez: "Where there is an architectural consensus, there is no need for building laws" (Brandlhuber, Kerez, and Trüben 2016, 12).

The end World War II brought about the formation of the international community and shifted the discourse on housing refugees from the architectural realm to specialized institutions, such as UN agency for refugees UNHCR (Herscher 2017). Beyond monitoring the global numbers and movements of refugees and advocating for their rights, UNHCR assumes a crucial role in relief missions, shelter, and the accommodation of displaced individuals. The iconic blue-logoed tents and other structures serve as a visible link to these relief efforts. However, the involvement of UNHCR, coupled with the post-war establishment of firm territories and nationalities in Europe, has alienated refugees from the architectural housing discourse thus distancing them from designers' engagement. Rather than leaving refugee housing to informal channels, the response of the international community to migration has been formalized, assigning new roles to various actors authorized to engage in the humanitarian space, related to health, hygiene, infrastructure, and so on. The design of emergency sites follows an operational logic, making the creation of a humanitarian space a distinct bubble limiting designers' involvement to specific, defined parameters. Consequently, the typology of arrival architectures transforms into a heterotopian realm, existing outside societal norms and featuring stringent access restrictions (Foucault 1984).<sup>1</sup> While one might argue that architecture itself is neutral, the applied logic to asylum spaces underscores their heterotopian nature (Ebeling 2018).

Despite effecting design limitations, some architects actively pursue collaboration with UNHCR, exemplified by Shigeru Ban's and his critically acclaimed designs of the 'Paper Log House', using polyurethane-coated paper tubes secured within sandbag-filled beer crates. These four-millimetre thick, ten-centimetre-wide paper tubes, available worldwide, offer protection from the elements, insulation, and ease of assembly in six to ten hours by unskilled workers. Ban emphasised that housing quality, whether for refugees or 'on-order', should maintain the same standards (Christian 2014). The aspects of time urgency, easy mobility, and swift assembly, naturally, dominate the task of designing basic shelter relief. Parameters that have informed the development of the 'Relief Housing Unit (RHU)', emerging from the Better Shelter initiative in collaboration with the IKEA Foundation and a group of Swedish industrial designers. RHU units are modular, consist of a steel frame and semi-rigid floor and wall panels, are easy to assemble (within six hours), and meet internationally established living standards and can be transported flat-packed (Better Shelter Organization 2024). Although UNHCR in general promotes the use local materials for shelter (UNHCR 2024), RHUs have served over 80,000 people worldwide and only more recently seek for ways to integrate local resources (Better Shelter Organization 2024)(Figure 2).

Both design concepts concentrate on enhancing the emergency status, reinforcing the perception of refuge as a non-local, temporary phenomenon rather than a lasting aspect of a generally increased mobility amid our globally interconnected and crisis-prone world. In essence, the responsibility remains reactionary and leads back to the ethical debate differentiating between response and responsibility. Design initiatives in humanitarian aid, aiming to enhance refugee living conditions through shelter upgrades, risk imposing a 'global shelter imaginary' (Monk and Herscher 2021). This perpetuates a universal view of relief, blurring crisis and response distinctions and fostering specialized shelter production subfields.



**Figure 2:** Shigeru Ban's Paper Log House in Kobe (Japan), 1995 and Better Shelter Initiative in Tanzania. Source: (Shigeru Ban Architects © Takanobu Sakuma, 2014 and Better Shelter Organization, 2023.)

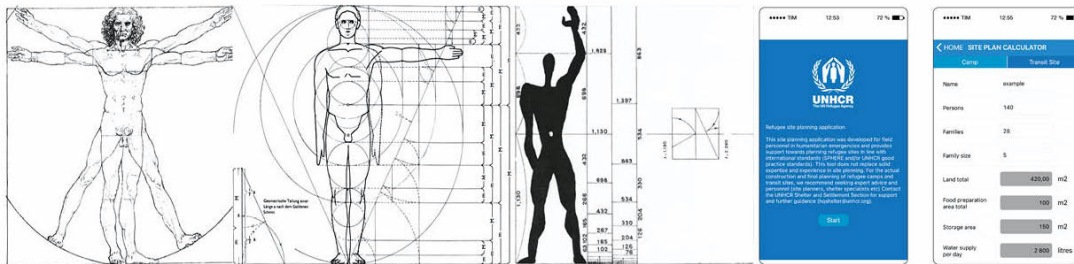
### 2.3. The current European Union's design policies

The official guidelines regarding asylum inside the European Union's member states are regulated through the Common Approach to Asylum. In 2013, the EU member states reached a historic agreement on a unified asylum approach, influencing the design of refugee accommodations. The regulatory framework, articulated through the *Reception Conditions Directive*, aims to ensure 'decent' living conditions and enhance the 'self-reliance' of asylum seekers (EU Commission 2023). The legal concept of "standard of living" encompasses housing, food, employment, and care. The European Agency for Refugees (EUAA, formerly the European Asylum Support Office EASO) contributes to the concrete design of refugee accommodations by providing guidelines and design manuals for member states (EASO, 2016, 2019, EUAA 2021, 2022). Yet despite official policies, the member states grapple with asylum flows differentially, depending on their geographic position—whether as frontline arrival points or second-line destinations surrounded by safe third countries (Misselwitz 2010) and the actual situation for arriving asylum seekers varies. Particularly amid the unprecedented influx of migrants caused by the recent war events in Syria and Ukraine has prompted the assessments of member states' willingness to grant asylum. It seems the contemporary asylum dynamics serve as a strategy to counteract state intrusion, navigating the varied stances that states adopt based on their border situations and domestic political agendas.

Further, the guidelines cover five categories: Location, Allocation, Infrastructure, Security, and Design of Common Spaces. Each category begins with introductory statements and further details standards and indicators. For

example, the location category emphasizes effective access to services, specifying requirements like proximity to public services, schools, healthcare, and daily needs (EASO 2016). The standards section outlines details such as spatial organization, sanitary conditions, and sleeping quarters specifications. Some measurements, like a minimum height of 2.10 meters and minimum furniture requirements, are provided. The guide refrains from detailing construction or maintenance standards, referencing national and local standards based on geographical conditions. The infrastructure chapter specifies sleeping quarters, common areas, and facilities like washbasins, toilets, and showers. Requirements for separate bedrooms, minimum space per resident, and regulated access times are outlined. Overall, the guide seems to serve as a checklist for safety and quality parameters, including evacuation plans, natural ventilation, lighting, temperature, and noise protection.

The EUAA offers detailed design manuals, exemplified by 'Modular Design to Reception: Container Site Design,' providing practical insights for the construction of EU-standardized reception points (EUAA 2022). This comprehensive manual not only enumerates crucial functions for reception centers—such as registration, medical facilities, ongoing healthcare, administration, offices, security, and accommodation—but also juxtaposes practices, offering dos and don'ts through visualizations and renderings. Emphasizing an organic zoning system, the design principles propose a central 'nerve center' from which roads extend to accommodation zones and administrative areas, fostering an efficient and safety-oriented layout. Particular attention is dedicated to security (the seventh principle), advocating for staff presence, open environments for unobstructed views, and recommending fencing only when necessary for specific groups. The uniform layout guideline suggests using a standardized ISO 30 model of containers stacked on a maximum of two floors for residential purposes, with one sanitary container per floor. It's noteworthy that these official EU design manuals endorse standardized containers as a primary solution for reception point construction, aligning with a broader 'campization trend' observed across Europe (Kreichauf 2018). This trend manifests architecturally, functionally, and socio-spatially, leading to spaces where different aspects of asylum practice blur and social and cultural segregation may occur (Ebeling 2020).



**Figure 3:** The assumption of a *model refugee*? Modern technology allows next to anyone the access to the widely established planning tools of UNHCR, some of its functions are depicted in these redrawn screenshots of the UNHCR refugee camp planning site. Source: (Collage by the author via © Britannica, 2023, © Neufert Stiftung, 2023, © Modulor, and © UNHCR Site Planning Tool, 2022.)

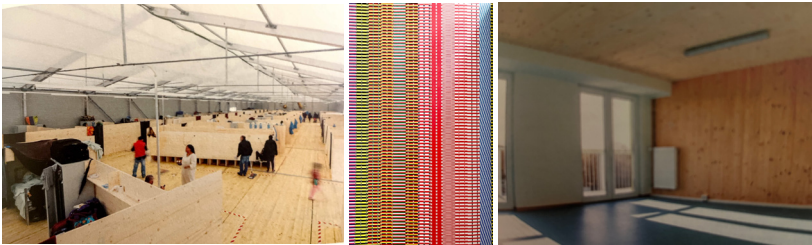
The establishment of a European model refugee and the full segregation of all spatial elements that surround asylum seekers by now seems complete (Figure 3). And, despite the UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi continuous reminder of refugees' dependence on the "generosity" of others (UNHCR 2022), European countries put a growing emphasis on a practice of asylum outside their territories and detention. Notably, the EU Parliament has endorsed the establishment of asylum check points and detention centers along the EU's external frontiers (European Parliament 2023), while the UK government currently advocates for asylum centers outside its territory (BBC 2024). This signifies yet another shift in the asylum practice, further alienating it from the design field of shelter or housing, seemingly deviating from the states' obligations outlined in the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of Refugees since 1951 (UNHCR, 1951), but it also aligns with a detected phenomenon that an increase in asylum seekers is followed by a tightening of laws (Kreichauf 2018).

### 3.0 ETHICS IN THE ABSENCE OF ETHICS

Inside the disputable creation of the highly controlled, so-called humanitarian space, what remains designers to engage with when it comes to care for refugees? When exploring the European spaces of asylum from a design-driven research perspective, the level of ethical engagement can be measured through a variety of factors such as attentiveness, responsibility, competence, and responsiveness (to the critical circumstances surrounding flight and refuge) (Tronto 2005). How to define a careful response to critical aspects like trauma, loss, language barrier? How to commit to safe and legal procedures and democratic decision making in asylum through design? It seems complex to detect one unique moral compass directing what has been put into practice by designers around the refugee architecture in the past decade, not only because the design approaches and constellations vary and tend to blur between the different group of actors – there are interventions based on private practice, those related to university-based initiatives, and lastly, projects put forward by the international development (Charlesworth 2014). The assessment of the value of an architectural contribution around the arrival of asylum seekers can follow those that mark any design typology, such as functionality, materiality, or sustainability. However, the fundamental value is formed through the perception and user experience of spaces (Hahn 2008).

In conjunction with the 2016 Architecture Biennale, which coincided with the influx of millions of Syrian refugees to Germany, the German Architecture Museum in Frankfurt (Deutsches Architektur Museum DAM), in collaboration

with design Studio Something Fantastic, curated the German Pavilion in Venice under the theme "Making Heimat – Germany, Arrival Country." Dedicated to embodying the spirit of welcome and reception for asylum seekers, the exhibition sought to explore the unique dynamics unfolding after the arrival of over a million displaced persons through a design lens. This included a focus on both newly built interventions and improvised solutions. Subsequent to the Biennale, DAM hosted an exhibition featuring an atlas of refugee architecture in Germany and neighboring countries like the Netherlands and Austria. The atlas showcased various examples of refugee accommodation deemed valuable from a design perspective (Schmal et al., 2017). The commitment to shaping ethical housing solutions was evident in diverse approaches and a variety of building types. The various solutions featured in the atlas range from temporary to more permanent solutions that allow for a flexible future use, exemplified in Figure 4.



**Figure 4:** Collage made of images from the Refugee Atlas, Making Heimat, DAM, 2016. Source: (Author, 2023).

Revisiting the featured sites of the atlas a few years later, following another significant influx of refugees from Ukraine in 2023, provides an opportune moment for reassessing their contribution value, as noted by exhibition curator Oliver Elser.<sup>2</sup> Some reevaluations have unveiled discrepancies in the initial assumptions about optimal asylum design, particularly in cases where inhabitants' living patterns deviated from designers' expectations. For instance, spaces with abundant natural light and large windows, initially deemed atmospherically enriching, were, in some instances, covered with cardboard or shawls by inhabitants seeking increased privacy (Schmal, 2017). As with any typology, adaptation necessitates thorough evaluation, a profound understanding of users' living patterns and specific needs, and, inevitably, the passage of time. After all, there is no such thing as a model refugee.

Winston Churchill's renowned assertion, "First, we shape our buildings – then our buildings will shape us," from 1941 (UK Parliament, 2024), underscores the pivotal role of architecture in influencing our democratic understanding. Churchill fervently advocated for the reconstruction of the UK Parliament chamber following its complete destruction in WWII. Regarding the accommodation of asylum seekers and the limited access and knowledge designers have of specific needs, the ethical engagement of architects and designers in addressing the challenges of arrival and refuge in Europe can be viewed from an alternative perspective. Notably, institutions like the DAM, along with others, have initiated discourse and invested in research or installations to raise awareness, as seen in the report "Ingenmansland" (No-man's-land) by the Swedish Center for Architecture and Design in Stockholm.<sup>3</sup> Another instance is the installation "1.000.000 German Passports" in the Munich Museum of Architecture in the summer of 2023, critiquing asylum protocols and frontier practices, attracting numerous visitors.<sup>4</sup> Newly constructed designs addressing the plight of millions of refugees, such as Denmark's FLUGD, Refugee Museum situated in the former refugee camp in Oksbøl that once hosted millions of German refugees after WWII, represent a noteworthy endeavor (Figure 5). Executed by the prominent architectural firm BIG, this museum stands as a landmark in a relatively remote area, aligning with the vision to attract a broad audience and raise awareness on a topic often sidestepped or influenced by ongoing media debates and political trends. According to the director, a welcoming and distinctive architectural design plays a crucial role in achieving this.<sup>5</sup> Despite the pressing demand for housing stock that currently challenges cities and towns across Europe, fostering knowledge exchange remains central to the museum's mission.



**Figure 5:** Installation "1.000.000 German Passports" by Alfredo Jaar in Architecture Museum Munich, 2023 and FLUGD Denmark Refugee Museum. Source: (Author, 2023).

#### 4.0 (ARRIVAL) ARCHITECTURE INTO THE UNKNOWN: HOUSING THOSE WHO WILL COME

An Irish Proverb says, "It is in the shelter of each other that we live."<sup>6</sup> – reminding us of the importance of never distinguishing between people when it comes to the argument of home. Housing is a fundamental human right (UN 1948) and whenever we are concerned the task, especially for an unknown user group, refugees and asylum seekers whose arrival date we don't know, it is important to make them an integral part of our society. If refugees are confined within humanitarian spaces, isolated from societal norms, the achievement of one of the key markers defining adequate housing—inclusion—will be elusive. Despite being a significant part of our society in terms of

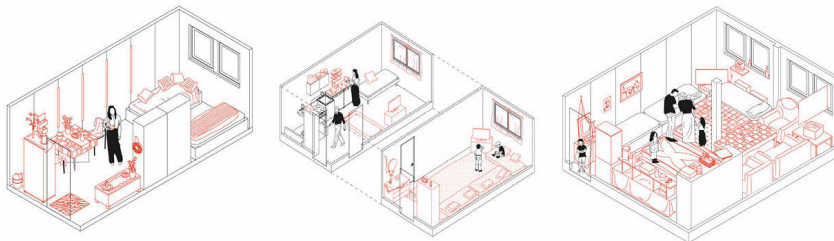
numbers, they will remain secluded. If we consider architecture as a means of understanding our contemporary world, making the design realm surrounding arrival more meaningful and humane requires further contemplation of an "arrival architecture" into the unknown.

What ultimately constitutes a home? It lies in how we appropriate and adapt the spaces we inhabit to our individual needs. Regardless of how well a designer anticipates the use of walls and floor layouts in a spatial container, they merely suggest possibilities to the user. The poetics of home reside in multifaceted layers shaped by individual cultural, social, and aesthetic preferences, limited or enriched by resources and creativity. Observing the modifications in housing and refugee accommodations reveals what we could term the *poetics of living*. In this context, it seems only natural to note how swiftly refugees transform basic relief structures provided to them in emergencies, adapting to host essential activities for their livelihood. The informal layer enhances and adds value to standardized design forms, where the spatial container serves as the shell within which actual life unfolds. The adaptive power and creative energy exhibited by displaced individuals globally take distinctive and striking forms. Beyond well-known examples, like the refugee church in the Calais camp, crafted by the Eritrean and Ethiopian refugee community, similar adaptations occur daily within humanitarian spaces worldwide, using whatever materials are available (Figure 6).



**Figure 6:** Images of the Calais Refugee Church. Source: (Jerome Sessini. *FRANCE. Calais. November 27, 2015.* <https://jstor.org/stable/community.18991316> and <https://jstor.org/stable/community..18991326>.)

While some larger-scale self-crafted structures, such as the Calais church, exist, smaller-scale adaptations are common, especially where the provided spatial container lacks the poetic essence of living, as seen in container sites – the prevalent structures for reception and accommodation in Europe. Despite criticisms of container solutions, like the "Tempohomes" in Berlin, single-story rows of container apartments forming small villages in urban patterns (Parsloe 2020), inhabitants report an atmosphere akin to suburban residential neighborhoods, with individual adaptation efforts, from interior modifications to gardening interventions, contributing to a positive reception (Figure 7).<sup>7</sup>



**Figure 7:** Redrawing of adaptation processes inside various Tempohomes in Berlin, studied by architecture students of TU Berlin. Source: (Misselwitz, P. et. al., 2022. *Tempohomes – Untersuchung sozial-räumlicher Aneignungspraktiken von Geflüchteten in ausgewählten Berliner Gemeinschaftsunterkünften*. Berlin: TU Berlin Verlag.)

## CONCLUSION

While numerous designers seek to engage with the design around asylum applying their interpretation of moral codes across time, there are complex regulations restraining contemporary interventions as well as (partly unconscious) design biases that lead to counterproductive design effects for users. If designers remain unable to dissolve the humanitarian space into the shared urban space, in this sense, the informal sphere of design that is informed by everyday life activities, regardless of the respective spatial container or resource scarcity, could become a critical factor. It is imperative to acknowledge this when discussing an innovative approach to arrival architecture into the unknown. Innovation, therefore, could require the readiness of the designer to shift from designing even more to a mediating role between users and policy makers, potentially, a more experimental or supportive role when it comes to design. Another scenario, would embrace the temporary state as permanent scenario, embedding refugee housing in any form of housing typology and understand it as an integral part of our contemporary urban coexistence from an architectural point of view. When we contrast the different design philosophies around the accommodation of asylum seekers across time. For instance, the spatial configuration of the Tempohome container villages in Berlin showcases strong resemblances with some of Ernst May's settlements in Silesia – with the difference that the Tempohomes container units have short life expectancy and operate on short term, emergency building permits while some of Mays designs are still in use.



**Figure 8:** Contrasting the designs for refugee settlement of Ernst May during the inter-war period in Europe with the Belin Tempohomes reveals striking resemblances, just that the duration of the container sites is limited and made of temporary units, while May's designs from that time, in some cases, are still in use. Source: (Ernst May Gesellschaft, 2023 the author, 2023.)

It feels safe to say that any design speculations around the architecture of arrival, has to stem from those elements: the informal sphere and the support of invisible design actants, combined with the consideration of the aspects of time and the temporality in the sense of not considering any form of housing solution outside the general communal housing stock. This seems ever more urgent in an increasingly mobile population where migration for improved work and living conditions is common (IOM, 2024). In this sense, some of the older designs of arrival architectures, that combine not only the features of short-term stay, but the chance for a permanent homes, remain the most ethical way of approaching refugee housing and, could therefore be considered a moral compass for any design interventions, particularly towards urban stimuli in the further development of the European metropolitan regions.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Foucault defines heterotopia(n places) as “other places”, externally to the state of normal. They are reserved for people who find themselves in moment of crisis, or who have in other ways deviated from the societal norms.
- <sup>2</sup> Telephone interview with DAM curator Oliver Elser via phone, conducted by the author, 13 October 2023.
- <sup>3</sup> On site interview with FLUGD research lead Stina Troldroft Andersen on site in Oksøl, 23 August 2023 and FLUGD museum director Claus Kjeld Jensen via phone, conducted by the author, 16 October 2023.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ingenmansland* (= No-man’s-land) is the title of a report on the feasibility of the reception facilities for asylum seekers in Sweden in 2022, commissioned by ARKDES, the Museum for Architecture and Design in Stockholm. The report marks a journey to and survey of the places that accommodate and service refugees in Sweden, drawing comparisons from the recent experiences of the 2022 Ukraine crisis to the situation after the influx of refugees from Syria in 2015 through site visits and interviews with protagonists involved.
- <sup>5</sup> On site interview with exhibition curator and museum director Andreas Lepik, 14 August 2023.
- <sup>6</sup> Irish Proverb, see, among others: p. 25 in Christine G.T. Ho, Loucky James. *Humane Migration: Establishing Legitimacy and Rights for Displaced People*. West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 2012.
- <sup>5</sup> On site interview with facility managers and press spokesman of Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten LAF, 14 August 2023.