



A first letter by *Heike Langsdorf* about sharing the house you own and possible allyship between houses by people who want to share them with others — addressed to *Simone Basani*, *David Weber-Krebs* and *Miriam Rohde*.

Heike Langsdorf's open letter — addressed to some close colleagues — is a very personal, yet sharable by many people, reflection about the potential of owning and sharing houses. Houses, their owners, and their guests offer time. And the advantage of an allyship between houses is to multiply this time and use it fruitfully.

This letter is a sort of invitation-manifesto.

An invitation to see what happens if such an allyship takes place; a manifesto about the importance of houses as "spaces in-between" people and institutions. Houses - some houses - are places where ideas in their germinal, generative phase are first shared, discussed, tested, ruminated, and become strong enough to be brought into the world, into (art) institutions, and acknowledged places of culture.

Houses are places where thoughts and ideas are taken care of.

How to acknowledge the potential of houses in being crucial in processes of encounter and discovery? How to connect one time & place and all that is inside — vulnerabilities included - to other times & places? How to redraft notions of ownership and privacy when houses become places of/for others, not always of/for ourselves?

This allyship results are still uncertain and unforeseen; they can never be merchandised — can only be enabled, be witnessed, and meditated on.

Alice Ciresola, Brussels, March 10

Hey!!

Can — Want — Should houses bond?

After a small year of going public with radical_house there have been a lot of contradicting observations, made, talked about and reflected on — what I write here is trying to make sense what came up in various conversations.

houses exclude,
houses invite,
houses are touchy,
houses are precise, preoccupied and surely have a history,
houses need rules
... and much more ...

people owning and inhabiting houses are excluding,
people owning and inhabiting houses are inviting,
people owning and inhabiting houses are touchy,
people owning and inhabiting houses are precise, preoccupied and surely have a history,
people owning and inhabiting houses need rules,
... and much more ...

users of houses shared by their owners who live there as well
(that exclude and invite and are touchy and precise, preoccupied and having a history are feeling many things when being invited by inviting, excluding and being touchy, precise, preoccupied and surely have a history)
are excluding, inviting, are touchy, precise, preoccupied and surely have a history.

Being inclusive is a fantasy of those who can desire to be inclusive.

Owners who want to be generous with what they own, need to embrace the fact that things will get messy.

To have and to have-not is a curious thing to share.

To give and to take is a curious thing to do to each other.

And so on ...

What does it tell?

Maybe that people gather only around questions?

Maybe that it is hard to take care of something – the same thing – together?

How can we feel as user as much as an owner does?

And how as an owner as much as a user must feel?

Maybe that it all depends on always very unique situations?

That one needs to dare to be highly subjective — observe how and why we can and cannot cope with the unanswerable?

I don't know.

As an example, I take myself:

I got a house and having it did not come from nothing.

The fact that it stands today as it does is the very sum of my upbringing and relating to my parents. Without their financial support no chance to purchase and transform it.

And I was and still am now majorly dependent on my actual energies.

A daily work to maintain, sustain, to suspend and take care of.

I got a house and the opportunities to share its use with others.

This house is not a metaphor. It does to stand for something else than what it really presents. Neither do I.

The house has neighbors and thin walls. It needs to be kept in shape.

It shows damage when it gets damaged and it needs repair.

It cannot be 'whatever we want it to be for a while' as a theater can.

Owning a thing — here be it a house — means feeling directly what gets appreciated, doubted, hurt, damaged, destroyed ...

Using this house we feel ourselves in a quite finite and limiting physical space — what gets appreciated, doubted, hurt, damaged, destroyed ... comes in without much filter.

It stands in front of us — polite or not — or already hit us in the face.

And maybe conflicts more than harmonies present themselves as opportunities of true encounter.

What does this tell us?

Maybe that we are all vulnerable, fragile and that the communities we are part of are a nasty thing to be held as ideal?

Communities in general — and paradoxically — include and exclude.

For those that are trying to get 'in there' there are consequences to this wish.

For those that want to get 'out of there' there are consequences to that wish.

A house is a house, we would think.

At first sight not necessarily connected to one or the other community yet.

What do we lose and win when a house starts bonding with another and more?

What sense of community does it suggest?

There are definitely questions endlessly produced by wishing and wanting.

We should definitely gather around, take the time we need.

Acknowledge how all depends on the situation and on our subjectivities unfolding.

How can we cope with this and that — how can we cope with us?

I don't know.

The most beautiful observation is this one:

When a house and an inhabitant and the people who use it trust one another it makes total sense to not knowing the answers to questions coming up.

It is easy to talk about building communities, going beyond ones' own boundaries, be inclusive and forever sharing. But it is a work with an ultra slow laser to understand what is at stake for whom, look at things sharply so we do not *fuck up* but *free up* ... one another — and say yes to what we want to trust.

Well, and houses are lonely when they stand isolated,
like people,
like institutions, organizations.
They are not hospitals, hotels, neither schools nor clubs.

Houses don't program and don't have programming.
People end up there informally.
Houses might rather happen than perform.

Still they are connecting to officially organized cultural life.
A specific kind of knowledge is born in them — and in the practices anchored in there.
Domestic cultures and inherited codes.

What houses have, when their inhabitants or owner/s want and can, is time.
Especially when they bond, become bonding and become more than one.
A network of places with people that want and can — take time.

Time for what is mentioned above:
In the first place the understanding of subjective struggle and striving, moving and diving.
Then for the job for which we seem not to have enough space (and time): connecting the dots,
drawing the lines they suggest.

An image, not seen yet, that might amaze and surprise us.

Let's start?

Let's see!

Heike

