

MICROCLIMATES, MICROCOSMS

*Atmospheric scenarios for
domestic rituals*

2021

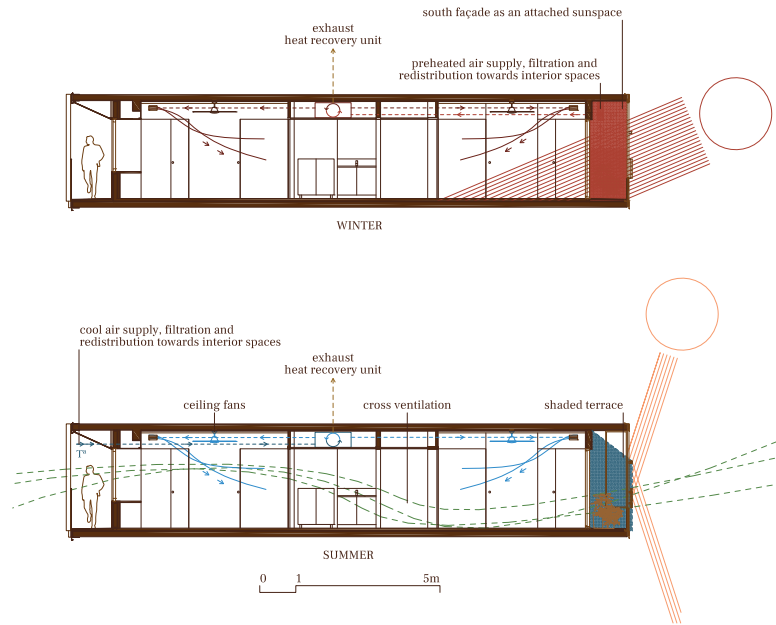
We understand space as the infinite universal continuum that envelops the Earth, existing prior to any human intervention. And architecture is like a membrane built by humans that occasionally modifies this initial space with the aim of generating occasional conditions of physical and spiritual comfort in which to carry out the different activities of our lives. Architecture defines a material sphere (microcosm) with specific environmental qualities (microclimate) in contrast with, and at the same time, in an intense relationship with the conditions of the environment where it is located. Our work as architects does not focus on creating the space, but on modifying the characteristics of this preexisting infinity. Extremely local and highly accurate operations, such as the construction of a building, define living environments with varying degrees of relationship with the cosmos. Architecture may be the link between humans and the world, the place and the universe.

The Earth's crust has been shaped and reshaped by people to build their habitats for thousands of years. The techniques and solutions developed by each community over time find their expression in its villages and cities. They are often buried in the subsoil of our homes, as the city transforms and rebuilds itself on its own foundations. Sometimes, villages are abandoned and centuries later, they reemerge as archaeological sites. These are places that speak to us about our own history and it is worth listening to understand the essence of the art of living. We find a valuable intelligence and a profound understanding of the wisest ways of relating to our environment in all these ancient walls. And a distilled science that deals with how we are able to define certain energy, climate and atmospheric conditions



through the layout of physical elements. We believe in a contemporaneity that insistently seeks new ways of overlapping layers of reflection and complexity to the tangle of knowledge entwined in the woven and rewoven framework of memory. Drawing and redrawing on the remains, sometimes almost disappeared, of as many pasts as possible. Designing implies being equally attentive to traces from all eras that can illuminate our decisions.

6x6 block, south facade as an attached sunspace in winter and as a shaded terrace during the summer, adaptative architecture.
Photo, José Hevia.



Dwellings might be the places where the essence of the architectural membrane as a mediator between people and the cosmos is most evident. A haven, where the most primary human activities and the most intimate rituals take place, it is the place in which we should be able to enjoy a harmonious and balanced relationship with the world. The most ancestral learning processes of our civilization might be a solid foundation to attain this yearning. It seems imperative to focus on the capacity of our constructions to create atmospheres resulting from the domestication of climate and not from its denial. The evolution of building systems and the widespread passage to the aesthetic paradigm of transparency, along with the rise of a powerful climate control industry have led to an intense feeling of connection with the environment while generating at the same time a greater isolation

with regard to environmental conditions and a worrying mechanization of indoor spaces.

In view of this evolution, it seems necessary to once again vindicate our discipline as a creator of optimum microclimates for human life, based on the smart management of available natural resources. We cannot forget that only architecture, through the definition of the building envelope and the conception of intermediate spaces, allows for the attainment of a healthy metabolism based on passive strategies, essential to design welcoming homes and guarantee a sustainable horizon. All this leads us to imagine the home of the present and the future as a superstructure, a physical and climate support, an open ecosystem ready to host the known models of living, as well as other possible and still unsuspected variations.

Microclimates and microcosms, origin and destination of architecture.

Ramon Bosch and Bet Capdeferro
Girona, February of 2021

6x6 block, sections: the inhabitable threshold acts as a passive regulating system for the interior climate of each apartment and significantly reduces energy demands.