



ö (Swedish) = “Island” / “Refuge”

Stockholm is Scandinavia’s largest city, built across 14 islands and 50 bridges, on a greater archipelago of 20,000 islands, where Lake Mälaren meets the Baltic Sea. As one of Europe’s fastest growing urban economies it has embraced investments in ‘smart’ city networks and open data to develop the world’s second most prolific tech hub and the startup capital of Europe. Yet this spirit of experimentalism is also made possible from a certain Swedish isolationism, a position at the northern fringe of Europe, with the mindset of *Jantelagen* that prioritises the collective over the individual. The “city between the bridges” comprises of 30% water and 30% protected green space culminating in a disaggregated city, not only geographically but socially, politically and financially.

In an age where overwhelming quantities of ‘big data’ assert and drive the systems of top-down control and order, the unit will consider the potential opportunities of the islands of small data we generate and carry ourselves through daily life in the city. We will look for how these personal digital traces and behaviours might translate to a unique architectural language that informs and alters behaviour.

We will start with the Swedish “Stuga”, this exploits the plentiful land to build simple sparse dwellings where Swedes will seek refuge to in the summer months. Often located by water, they are built to a very basic standard where the ritualistic routines of survival, chopping wood, repairs and renovation offer a counterpoint to the stress of urban life and provide a physical manifestation of the commitment to quality of life. Often passed from family to family, lent by friends or companies they offer a place for solitude, quiet individualism, and time spent purposefully on self-development through commune with nature. You will be asked to design a personal retreat space. Taking any signal from your behaviour, movements, or activity, recorded through your phone or any other digital and analogue means; we will then test its translation into a personal spatial language through models or drawings. It can be generated from the esoteric observations of your routine, the glitches in your data, or the disruptive cloud you leave behind. Moving beyond mapping, the resultant architecture should shape and inform your projected behaviour within the summerhouse and define a unique form of escape and isolation.

The unit will then travel to Scandinavia to take in the best of Sverre Fenn, Snøhetta, Lewerentz and Asplund. We will fly first to Oslo, then travel by train to Stockholm.

The second and main building project will be sited amongst the islands of Stockholm. You might consider the political, legal and economic frameworks as sources of data. We can draw on the social, human and environmental factors to explore new methods of forming space, controlling light or innovative materials. The unit is interested in the manifestation of such hybrids of immaterial and physical space into outcomes that are resolutely framed as design propositions. From the drawn or modelled language of the first project can be developed a larger architectural proposal with a detailed programme, considering an attitude to the networked and the isolated, and when your architecture acts as islands and when it is bridged.