



## MICRO - ARCHITECTURES

### EXPLORING INTIMATE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN BODY, SPACE, AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF DIVERSE REALITIES

The ongoing debate surrounding the dichotomy between the physical and the virtual has become a key subject in architectural education. The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has further intensified this discourse. Within this context, this article reflects on the transformative potential of architectural projects grounded in a deep relationship with the human body - projects capable of constructing perceptions of reality that differ from dominant paradigms.

#### Exploring Alternative Realities

This exploration centres on a series of exercises that build bridges between the physical world and what may seem to be an enigmatic virtuality. Notably, this "virtuality" is not a mere abstraction - it reflects tangible experiences for marginalized groups such as individuals with neurodegenerative diseases, those experiencing loneliness, social segregation, or irregular immigration. The research aims to illuminate how their perceptions of space, rooted in bodily experience, may offer an "alternative reality" that architecture can meaningfully address.

#### Unravelling the Intricacies of Therapeutic Architecture

The broader goal of this work is to articulate a notion of *Therapeutic Architecture* - a design approach that draws inspiration from non-normative realities. The emphasis lies in showing how spatial interventions, conceived through embodied experience, can redefine our engagement with the built environment.

To this end, the article redraws six architectural exercises developed by students. These projects emerged in response to a common challenge: to design spaces for individuals in conditions of social marginalization. Importantly, students were urged to approach this with empathy rather than pity - investing in understanding the worldview of those for whom the designs were intended.

This collection of exercises gives architectural voice to those often unheard.

## MICRO - ARCHITECTURE FOR OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER (OCD)

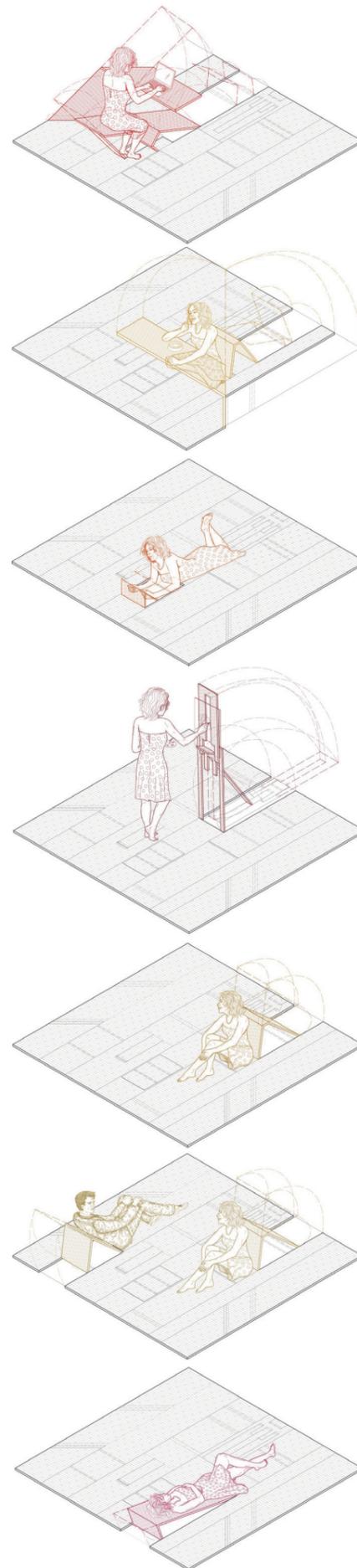
This project aimed to help students empathize with individuals suffering from OCD. This behavioural cycle - obsession, anxiety, compulsion, relief - was adapted so that anyone could experience its logic. Within an uncomfortable space filled with stimuli, the only way to find relief is to act compulsively to restore order.

Recognizing that OCD often enhances focus and perfectionism, the students designed distinct spatial positions for:

- Working: Kneeling chairs reduce physical strain and increase concentration.
- Eating: Sitting cross-legged on the floor enhances digestion and mindfulness.
- Reading: Lying on the stomach frees the hands and facilitates prolonged focus.

Other positions include:

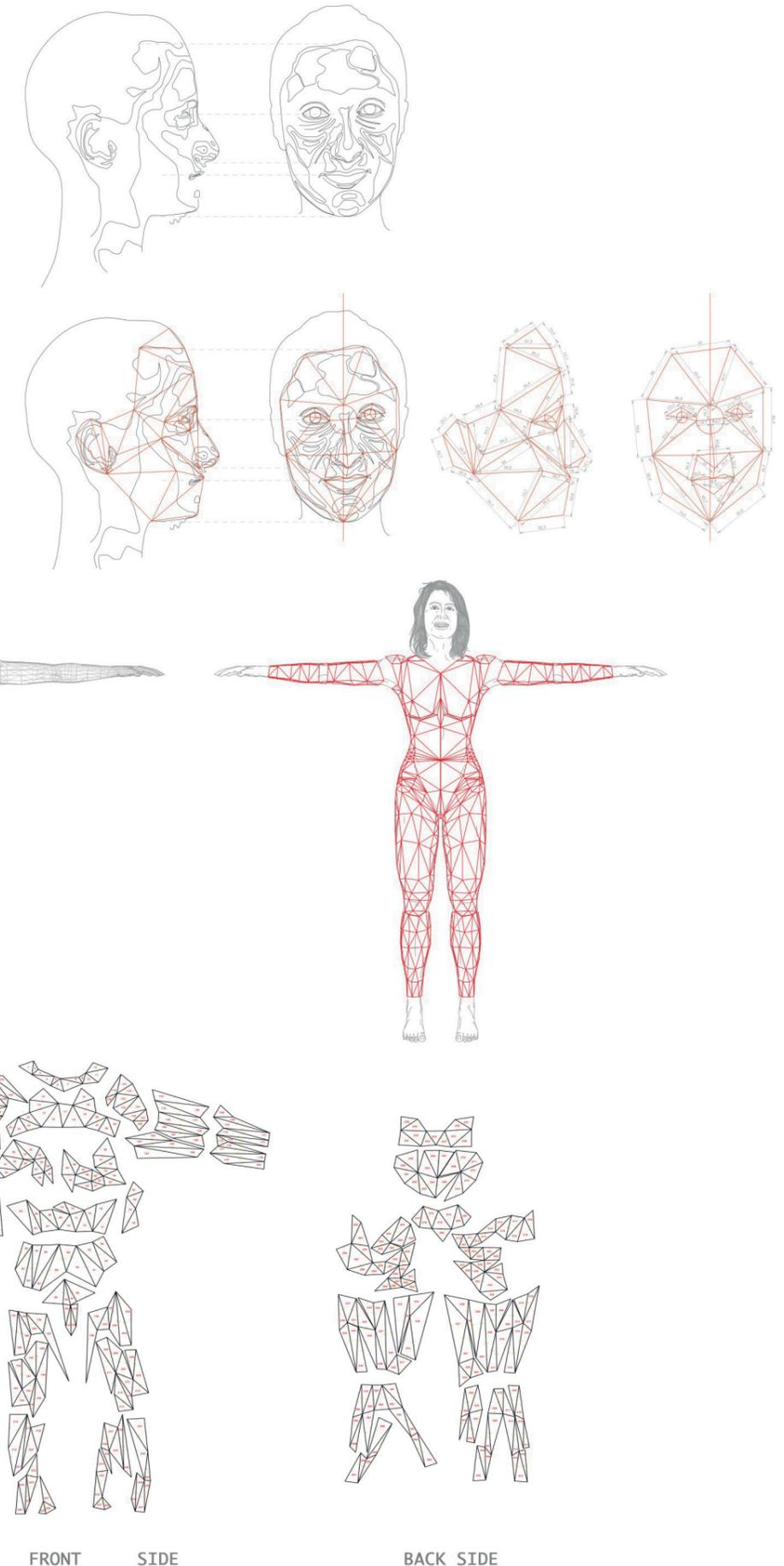
- Painting.
- Resting.
- Socializing.
- Sleeping... each designed with sensitivity to OCD needs.



## MICRO - ARCHITECTURE FOR MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS)

Rooted in empathy, this project simulates the bodily awareness demanded of MS patients. A collaboration with a Multiple Sclerosis Association informed the design.

A paper suit - light, elegant, and precisely constructed using triangular modules - acts like a second skin. Inspired by Enric Miralles' croissant drawing, the suit demands bodily self-regulation. One must control even breathing movements, as the suit can tear easily - exposing the wearer, literally and symbolically.

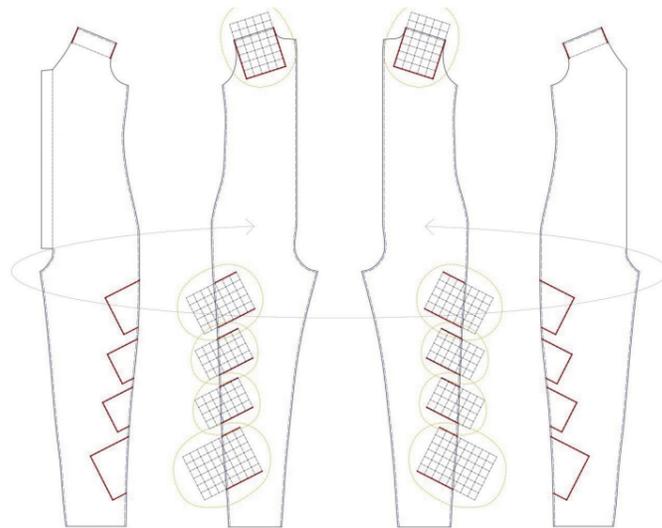
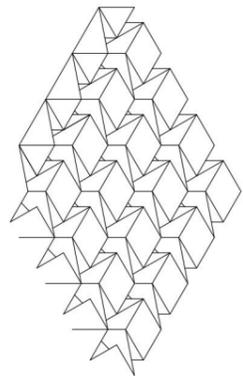
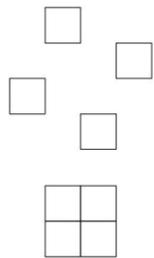
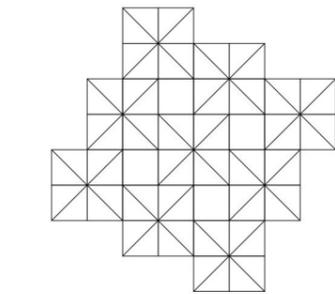
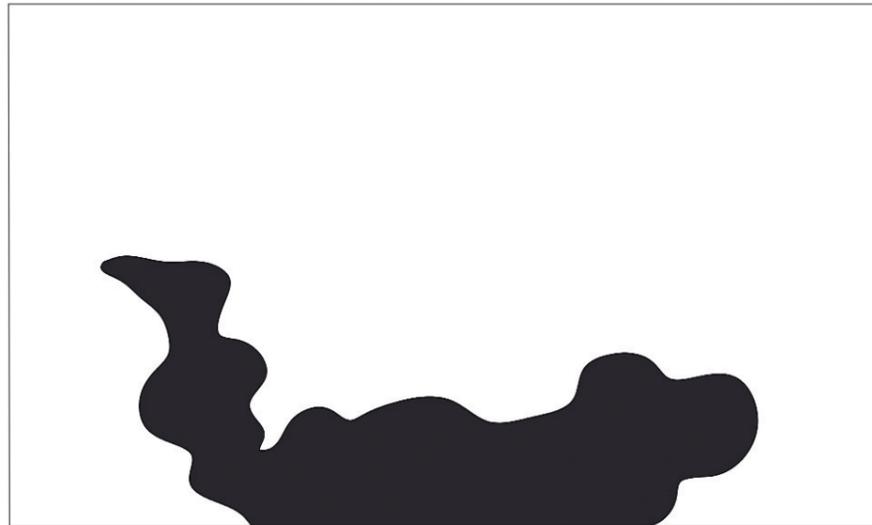
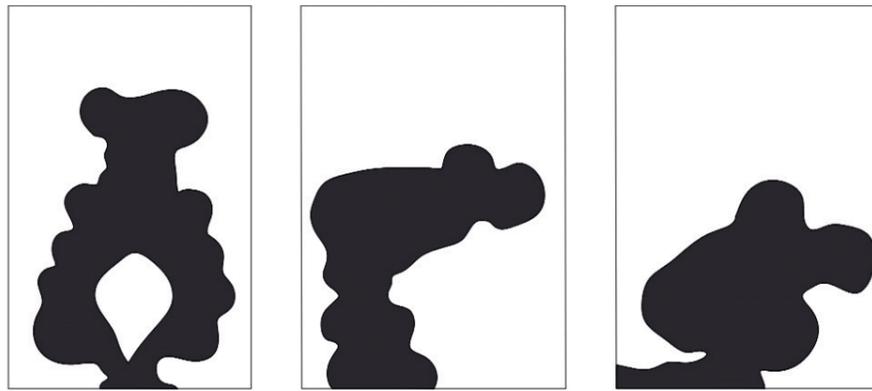


### MICRO - ARCHITECTURE FOR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Inspired by the Rorschach test, this microarchitecture generates abstract shadows through movement and light. These shadows stimulate memory recall and imagination in individuals with Alzheimer's disease, offering moments of connection with past experiences or recognizable forms.

The exercise explores:

- Movement as a constant.
- Light as an essential medium.

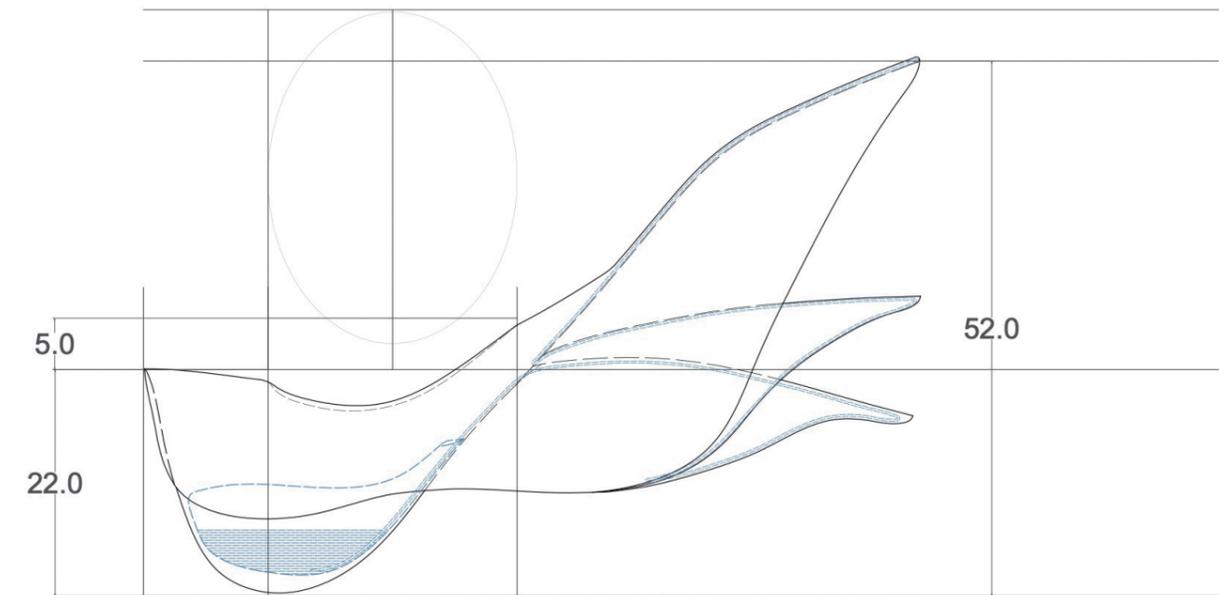
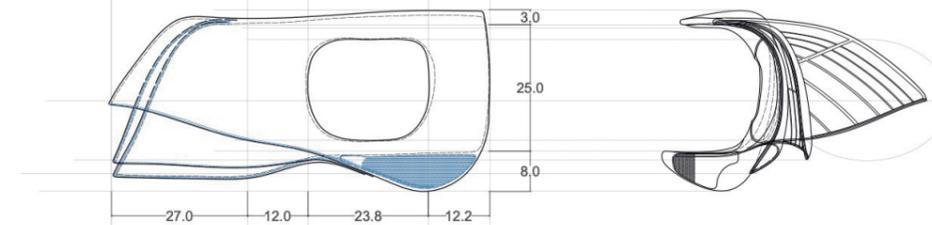
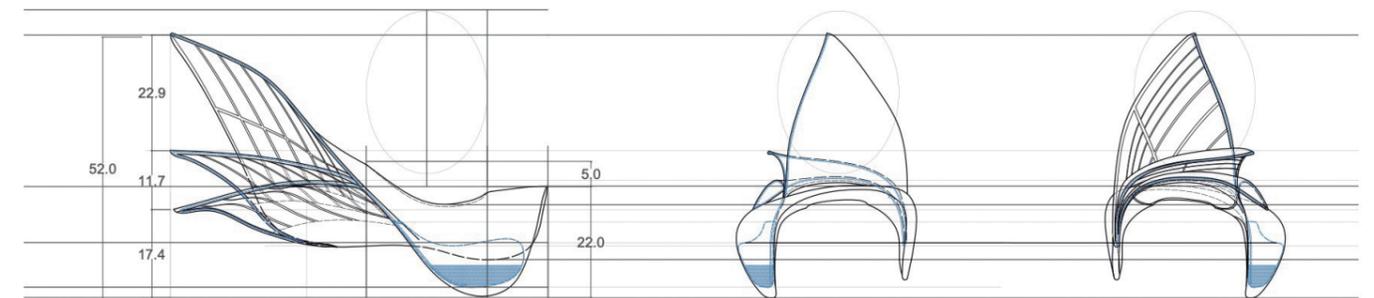
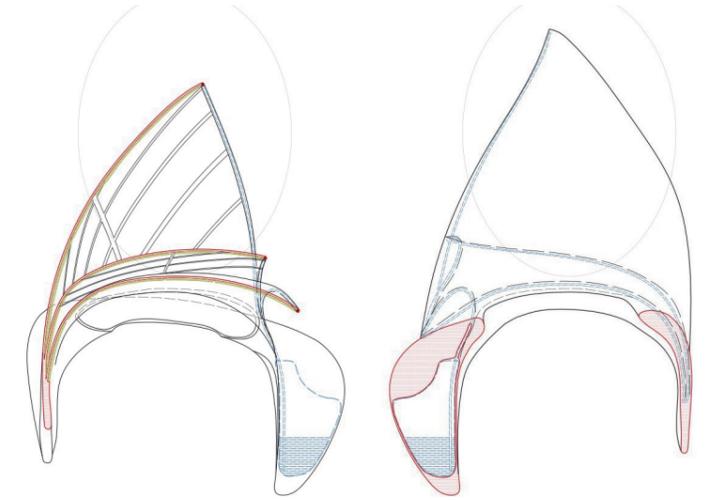


MICROARCHITECTURE FOR ALZHEIMER

### MICRO - ARCHITECTURE FOR CAPTURING AROMA

Marseille - a city rich in multicultural scents - inspired this olfactory design. A custom fiberglass mask fits the face and captures aromas through capillary action. Moisture, contained in a perimeter tube, activates pearls (like those in sanitary towel) to store the scents.

This microarchitecture treats smell as a cultural archive and sensory interface with the city.



MICROARCHITECTURE FOR ORIENTATION

