Embracing the Interval
Exploring the Role of Architecture in Refugees’ Healing and Integration

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Design for Sustainable Development Masters Program

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I believe in creating designs that provide people with dignity, promote their health, and enhance social encounters to create stronger communities. This thesis is a personal project because it relates to the war happening in Syria; from where my family come. May it be a small contribution towards the betterment of tomorrow.
Swedish Institute,
For believing in my abilities and providing me with the chance to come to Sweden and study my masters.

Emilio Brandao and Joaquim Tarasso,
For their valued mentorship, inspiration and continuous guidance throughout my thesis project.

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Everyone who has contributed to the creation of this thesis with their love and support.

My parents, Rafee and Rima, and my sister, Danya, for their unconditional love, motivation and cherished support. For being my examples of strength and purity.

My grandfather, Ibrahim Hakky, for all the late-night conversations and precious stories. For being one of the greatest beauties in some of my darkest times.

My family, for all the love, laughter, memories, and support.
May we all meet again.
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“Honor the space between no longer and not yet”

(Nancy Levin)
ABSTRACT

Studies have shown that even after witnessing the terrors of war, one’s mental well-being is primarily affected because of additional stress. The journey to seek refuge and the isolated waiting period until decision is made, which often spans more than a year in Sweden, are among the main stress triggers. This transitional and uncertain period causes much anxiety which may lead to severe psychological concerns. Refugees need considerate conditions to cope with their past, thrive in their current insecurity, and to learn about their new homes.

Instead of trying to sugarcoat the sensation of being in transition, it can be used as grounds for healing, showing the beauty and hope in the movement it contains. “In the space between chaos and shape was another chance.” (Winterson, 2000)

This thesis seeks to investigate integrative and therapeutic activities and suitable hosting spaces to make the transition a positive experience. Extensive research on the mental effects of being a refugee, therapeutic activities and examples of integrative projects for refugees preceded design experimentation.

An aspired result is to raise awareness of the emotional and psychological aspects of being a refugee through a symbolic and participatory-based (design-and-build) pavilion that changes form through time. Carefully studied intimate spaces are placed within the pavilion where a set of integrative and therapeutic activities can be performed by locals and refugees on an equal platform. The activities and the entire building process work as evolutionary symbol.

The topic of refugees is a continuous debate; however, it is sadly often stripped into economic calculations ignoring that it is the largest humanitarian crisis of our time. If its potential is grasped, refugees’ transitional period could be the key to a brighter future for them and the societies into which they journeyed.

Keywords: architecture and psychology, light-weight architecture, participatory design, pavilion design, refugees, social integration, social sustainability, symbolic architecture, therapeutic architecture
CHAPTER 01
INTRODUCTION
Life often challenges people to their limits; pushing them to see whether they will push back. Yet sometimes, the greatest challenge is to those standing on the sidelines, and whether they will dare to make a difference. Tragedy strikes over 22.5 million refugees worldwide today; and the affected lives will only increase. It is a global problem that is too big for one organization, one nation, and definitely one thesis to attempt to solve. Therefore, this thesis looks at this crisis through several filters; this thesis delves into the waiting period refugees face after they reach their destinations in Europe, particularly, in Sweden. Two years ago, the waiting period was for more than a year, now, there is no estimation of how long people will have to wait. During this period, refugees’ lives are suddenly put to a halt with nothing to fill their days, with no access to education and limited interaction with society, refugees are bound to suffer psychological consequences. This thesis studies the psychological consequences a refugee faces, then investigates therapeutic activities that can contribute to easing their pain. The investigation then develops to study suitable spaces for several groups of activities to be able to find different spatial characteristics that can host all the required activities.

The thesis then progresses to design an interactive pavilion, which in many cases represents a monument for refugees in waiting. It also attempts to raise awareness of the psychological difficulties refugees face through information stations, and hosts therapeutic activities in intimate spaces within the pavilion.
AIM

The aim of this thesis is to explore the possibilities of utilizing architecture in helping make refugees’ interval period less painful and more healing and integrative.

QUESTION

How to design symbolic, adaptive and therapeutic spaces for refugees and locals?

How can we utilize refugees’ waiting period for integration and healing using simple architecture / design means?
METHODS

Intensive research on refugees’ psychological wellbeing preceded the design and continued throughout the entire thesis. The design process included continuous exploration on how to illustrate findings and create conscious designs. Therefore, key findings from the psychological research were addressed in the design.

READING INSTRUCTIONS

This booklet first explains the current situation and some of the psychological implications of being a refugee, the key headlines to go through are ‘Psychological Implications’, ‘Key Findings’, and ‘The Idea’. The next chapter links active psychological treatment with spaces and is the foundation of further design decisions. Thereafter,
chapter four extracts design concepts from the psychological findings and explains the direction this thesis takes; therefore, the introduction to this chapter is crucial. Chapter five illustrates the design project, afterwards the last chapter presents the discussion.

DATA SOURCES

Exposure to psychology came through reading articles, statistics, reports, and books, watching documentaries and conducting an interview with a psychologist, and a group of refugees during their waiting period.
DELIMITATIONS

Due to the project delving into one of the greatest problems of our time, there were a lot of delimitations to be placed in order for it to become a reasonable thesis topic. Among the greatest delimitations were setting a specific period of being a refugee which will be studied: the waiting period. Another delimitation is that the thesis does not go much into the building physics and construction details.

The following page illustrates a delimitations chart. It shows the different areas that relate to this project in a large scale, and highlights in red the areas this thesis will explore.
“Syria is the biggest humanitarian crisis of our time”

(UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2016)
The topic of refugees and asylum seekers is currently continuously debated under political and/or economic benefits and costs, thus resulting in closing borders, cutting Mediterranean rescue missions, and refusing asylum seekers. Sadly, this topic is not looked at through a humanitarian lens as often as it should. Exposure of the devastation continues to increase but the little action to fight the damage is not enough. In an article by The Independent titled “Child Refugees in France ‘Neglected’ In Accommodation Centres After UK Home Office Rejections” (Bulman, 2017), the often miserable conditions of the waiting period of refugees’ is portrayed. The article mentions the case of a child attempting suicide several times due to the scarcity of two crucial elements; food and ‘emotional support’. Social workers who assessed the situation called out, among other things, for much needed ‘psychological support’ for these minor refugees. This article is merely one of thousands that depict the refugees’ current desolation and they are among the key triggers for this thesis.

Although this thesis recognizes the Syrian crisis as “[t]he biggest humanitarian crisis of our time”, and most of the studies and research is concentrated on Syrian refugees, neither the research nor the design proposal is limited to a single refugee group. Today we are at a crucial moment in history; there are many predictions for an increase in refugees in the near future for diverse reasons such as environmental refugees. Therefore, this thesis addresses the general psychological devastation of refugees in poor circumstances and seeks simple, implementable solutions to ease the integration and enhance healing and wellbeing.
Upon beginning the thesis, the first crucial area to research was current statistics. From the numerous conversations that preceded and coincided with the thesis process, it was apparent that often times lines were blurred between facts and guestimates to serve specific arguments. Therefore, this thesis opens up with statistics that can put this crisis into its true enormous scale.

The current statistics on refugees and forcibly displaced worldwide according to (UNHCR, 2017) are staggering.

The timeline for the largest waves of refugees in recent history strongly portrays the current catastrophe as it compares it to WW2 and corresponds with the many statements that say we currently face the largest humanitarian and refugee crisis since 1945.

To me, one of the most disturbing findings is that the UNHCR statistics have drastically increased in number from the time I started this thesis four months ago to the day this document is written. (Author, 2017, Jul 25).
Current Statistics on Refugees Worldwide

FORCIBLY DISPLACED WORLDWIDE

EVERY MINUTE
24
CURRENT TOTAL
65.6 M
(UNHCR, 2017)

22.5 M
(UNHCR, 2017)

ASYLUM CLAIMS IN EUROPE, 2015

1.3 M
(BBC, 2016)

APPROVED ASYLUM APPLICATIONS IN EUROPE, 2015

MAIN NATIONALITIES:
1. SYRIA
2. ERITREA

292,540
(BBC, 2016)

Largest Waves of Refugees in Recent History

WWII
1940-1945

40 M

POST WWII
1945-1950

11 M

NAKBA
1948

5 M

YUGOSLAVIA, BOSNIA, HER-ZEGOVNIA
1994-1995

2 M

SYRIAN WAR
2011-

12 M

(DePhillis, Lu, & Saluja, 2015)
A 1945 photo from El Shatt camp in Egypt shows women washing their clothes in the open air. (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration)
There are many stark similarities between WW2 and our current crisis other than statistics. A significant piece of little known history sheds light on substantial events that occurred in European refugee camps located in the Middle East.

During World War II, European refugees fled to the Middle East, particularly to Aleppo, Palestine, and Egypt and sought safety and refuge. The camps thrived to provide dignity, leisure, and as much of a normal life as possible. It has been documented that there were over 40,000 refugees in July of 1944. The camps made sure to provide job opportunities to whoever wanted to work, and placed a high priority to provide access to education for children despite limited resources.

This information comes from an article published by Public Radio International (Taparata, 2016) and another publication by the Washington Post (Tharoor, 2016).
ALEPPO CAMP, SYRIA

Refugees could go to the nearby town to:

- visit: shops and movie theaters

  “get a distraction from the monotony of camp life”
  (Taparata, 2016)

Refugees were encouraged but not forced to work as:

- cooks
- cleaners,
- cobblers

NUSEIRAT CAMP, PALESTINE

To insure people stayed occupied and active, camp officials tried to create opportunities for refugees to use their skills in:

- carpentry
- painting
- shoe making
- wool spinning
Croatian and Yugoslavian refugees work as cobblers at a refugee camp in El Shatt, Egypt during World War II.
Credit: United Nations Archives and Records Management Section
EL SHATT CAMP, EGYPT

Some refugee camps “doubled as nursing training programs for Yugoslavian and Greek refugees and locals alike” including El Shatt Camp, according to Taparata (2016). This is a perfect example of using education for integration. Even if the program was not conducted for that reason, the fact that both refugees and locals were included in an educational program as complicated as nursing with little resources and people with various educational background, shows that there was a high level of mutual respect, equality, and willingness for good.

EDUCATION

In all camps:
“[I]t was best for children in refugee camps to have regular routines. Education was a crucial part of that routine.” (Taparata, 2016)

In Nuseirat camp:
“Well-to-do people in the area donated toys, games, and dolls to the kindergarten, causing a camp official to remark that it “compared favorably with many in the United States.” (Taparata, 2016)
Croatian children write the words for “our school” in the sand at Tolumbat camp in 1945.
(United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration)
A study by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (Agic, McKenzie, Tuck, & Antwi, 2016) explains the importance of caring for the mental wellbeing of the refugees they recently welcomed into Canada. This study reveals crucial findings regarding the relation between the effect of treatment of refugees after arriving to a country on their mental wellbeing.

It states that “The way groups are welcomed into a country; where they live; whether they can work; if they are considered residents; and their access to education, training, and initiatives fostering social inclusion (e.g. language classes and resettlement services) are fundamental factors in promoting mental health.” (p. 6)

This was one of the substantial discoveries that highly influenced this thesis. It places high importance on the treatment of refugees after their arrival to foreign countries. The study mentions secondary trauma and one method of fighting it is to decrease the usage of Immigration Holding Centers (IHC).

This study was built upon a previous one. In the mid-1980s a national task force was created to examine the mental wellbeing of refugees and immigrants coming to Canada. “The Task Force concluded that while moving from one country and culture to another inevitably entails stress, it does not necessarily have to threaten mental health. The mental health of immigrants and refugees becomes a concern primarily when additional risk factors combine with the stress of migration.” (p. 7)

This significant finding alters the entire perspective and connotation of refugees and their mental health because it places the responsibility of the whole issue on their hosts.

Some of the many articles exposing the large psychological distress among refugees is one by Karasapan (2016) that quotes a note from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2015) disclosing the spread of “emotional disorders, such as: depression, prolonged grief disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder and various forms of anxiety disorders.” among the vast majority of Syrian refugees.
Components for wellbeing; among the necessary factors for building resilience. (Mind, Mental Health Foundation (2013))

Author’s interpretation: Refugees’ timeline suddenly comes to a stop and they are without anything to do resembling a flat line.
Circumstances today often fail in comparison to how they were in the past, nor have they progressed enough for this day and time. The situation for refugees during their waiting period is often extremely dire. This, in many cases, results psychological consequences.

Prior to their journey to seek asylum, refugees had jobs, schools, families and friends, favorite restaurants they went to on weekends, specific shops they bought their groceries from, sports tournaments they practiced for, and above all, dreams and aspirations for their lives and where they were headed. After often extreme journeys to reach their destinations with profound obstacles along the way, refugees’ lives abruptly come to a complete halt; with no progression or retrieval, awaiting an unknown. The emptiness of waiting, the uncertainty of one’s fate, the sensation of being trapped, and the loneliness during the waiting period, regardless of where one is held waiting, is something all refugees endure. This waiting period varies depending on situation and hosting country. In Sweden, the Migration Agency has updated their website and no longer state an average waiting time for asylum applications and instead states “It is not possible to say how long you will have to wait.”

In a project for a previous studio in my master’s education which focused on the integration of refugees, a group of students and I went to an Immigration Holding Center outside of Malmo, Sweden. What is meant by Immigration Holding Center in this case was a compound for asylum seekers who were waiting for their decision of whether they will be accepted into the country or refused.

In an interview with the refugees in the camp, one man expressed his anxiety for the sake of his children, wondering if he had made the right decision in coming to Sweden at all. Others came in on the conversation and confessed that on particular rough days, they wondered whether they were better off back in Syria despite the war. A mother frantically spoke about her bed-sick daughter who had fallen with severe depression, and unfortunately, had no one to talk to.

From reading numerous articles and conducting several interviews, the psychological consequences of refugees became more apparent, and so did the importance of raising awareness to them.
A little over a year ago the waiting period for asylum seekers was for more than a year. However, the Swedish Migration Agency updated the section in their website which calculates application waiting times and removed estimates for waiting times for asylum applications “The result will show how long it has taken for people with similar applications to get a decision. No time can be displayed for those who have applied for asylum.” (Migrationsverket, 2017)

The World Health Organization and The Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) created an Assessment of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Needs of Displaced Syrians in Jordan. Among several disturbing discoveries were that approximately 40% met the criteria of being severely upset, 30% excessively nervous, and another 40% uninterested in things they used to enjoy. Circumstances in Sweden in several aspects are better than those in Jordan which could affect the findings. However, many fundamental psychological consequences can be found in all places if refugees were not provided sufficient care.
A cross-section study explored the occurrence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among refugees coming to Hungary in the recent refugee migration wave. This study concluded by stating “cross-sectional data suggest that almost two-third of asylum seekers in the global “European migrant crisis” may meet the diagnostic criteria of PTSD.” (Keri, 2015)

The study reveals the immense numbers of refugees suffering from a severe mental disorder. Unfortunately, the healing and comforting of refugees’ psychology is not at the top priority list of the several immediate actions necessary upon refugees’ arrival to their countries of destination.

In a skype interview with Angelica Andersson Drucker (2017), a psychologist specialized in trauma, she explained that trauma is very individualistic, therefore, it is difficult to assess that everyone who underwent a traumatic event will develop a trauma-related mental disorder. Drucker instead pointed out that the main psychological problems refugees face according to research is stress from uncertainty and depression. She elaborated on depression being the disorder from which the majority of refugees suffer. The main key to healing depression is activity, it is the antonym of depression. According to Drucker, one of the best activities is that which activates the senses. One of the first things established in the interview was that refugees’ isolation from their hosting society all in stressful conditions and in
only one specific location is bound to have many complications not the least of which, psychological consequences. When asked about specific surroundings or spaces in relation with those suffering from depression, Drucker mentioned nature as being one of the best environments to go to which allows people to connect to something bigger and more significant. She also talked about how people suffering from depression are likely to be highly sensitive to the concept of exposure and enclosure. A fine balance is needed to create a comforting and relaxing space without feeling too secluded or too displayed, and these preferences are frequently personal. As a result of this interview, depression became the disorder this thesis would focus on in seeking design solutions that can contribute to easing the psychological consequences refugees face. Drucker pointed out that in contrast to other disorders refugees may suffer from, like PTSD, depression is a disorder which is easier to diagnose and may not necessarily require individual assessment. Among the key findings that played a significant role in the design is the need to create surroundings that activate the senses. The other finding was to try to strike a balance between exposure and enclosure, and possibly provide different variations of both. The final outcome from the interview and previous research was the significance of bringing together the local community and refugees and limiting their isolation.

“We never live, we are always in the expectation of living”

(Voltaire)
Through browsing articles depicting refugees’ daily lives in waiting in different circumstances and places, a continuous link appeared between refugees in their waiting period, and prisoners. The comparison is not meant to be offensive to any party, and the fact that Swedish prisons are among the best in the world is not overlooked.

This comparison represents the similarities between many prisons’ circumstances throughout the world and the circumstances of many refugees’ waiting period. Whenever this comparison was pointed out in a conversation, it was embraced and appreciated as a way to better display the horror of the situation and bring it closer to people’s eyes. The parameters for this comparison are taken from an article published in the Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review titled The Trauma of the Incarceration Experience (DeVeaux, 2013) which showcases the conditions of life in prison. These parameters were compared with descriptions of refugees life in immigration holding centers and camps as presented in a number of articles. The diagram in the following page shows that the number of similarities between refugees’ in their waiting period and prisoners are excessive and astounding. Some of the resemblances are their isolation, loneliness, humiliation, hopelessness, and unsafety. The differences are even more staggering as they reveal that in crucial aspects, circumstances are better for prisoners. For example, one of refugees’ core causes for suffering is the uncertainty they face, from the first steps of their journey until they reach their destinations and sit for an unknown time waiting for the answer of whether all their risks were worth. Prisoners do not fear this, they know where the end is, and that in itself gives hope and acceptance. Almost all prisons have recreational programs, psychologists or psychiatrists available, and educational programs, things refugees’ very rarely have access to in their waiting period.
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<th>SIMILARITIES</th>
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<td>SYMPTOMS</td>
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<td>FACE UNCERTAINTY</td>
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“The Task Force concluded that while moving from one country and culture to another inevitably entails stress, it does not necessarily have to threaten mental health. The mental health of immigrants and refugees becomes a concern primarily when additional risk factors combine with the stress of migration.”

(Mental health commission of Canada 2016)
“Although a minority of refugees will develop problems, they are a high-risk group for mental health problems or illnesses”
(Ahic, McKenzie, & Tuck, 2016, p. 8)

“(R)efugees are faced with a sudden loss of identity and subsequent demands to reconstruct themselves within the new context (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003)”
(Murray, Davidson, & Schweitzer, 2008)

One of the best ways to fight depression is through behavioral activation and through activating the senses. Going to a new environment automatically alerts one’s senses and activates them, making it a good method to help fight depression.
(Angelica Andersson Drucker, Psychologist Specialized in Trauma)
Integration is a complex and often misinterpreted process. It is sadly often perceived as black and white. A person either succeeds to integrate or not - and this view is often subjective. However, this thesis sees that the best integration method is one which accepts that it takes time to learn about and from different groups, and that this process is what creates a stronger society. The result is not a black or white canvas, but rather a burst of color.

The idea of letting things take their required amount of time to guarantee positive experiences for refugees was a key concept in developing the initial framework of the design of this project. In fact, the design is based on this thesis’ vision of the role of architecture as a tool capable of helping in addressing psychological concerns.
NEWCOMERS

LOSE PREVIOUS IDENTITY

SOCIETY

REMAIN OUTCAST

BURST OF COLOR
This thesis does not claim to solve the psychological problems of refugees nor solve the problems of segregation, it merely attempts to bring attention to the topic and suggest one way architecture could contribute to the discussion.
This thesis attempts to look at the problem of waiting from an angle different from the depressing and painful one experienced by refugees. It sees it as a transition and realizes that there is beauty in transition, in movement. Instead of trying to sugarcoat the sensation of being in transition, we can utilize it as a method for raising awareness, healing, and integration. This thesis aspires to contribute to changing the perception of transition from a negative experience to that of growth and revival.

Some of the main difficulties in the waiting period like loneliness, isolation and uncertainty can be lessened when one has something to do. Activity is the antonym of depression. Migration entails terrible hardships but it also encompasses opportunities to be introduced to new worlds. The waiting period could be the best time for refugees to discover, renew, and heal, and the best time for locals to meet those coming into their society.

From significant findings in the research, two key notions were developed to be achieved in the design stages:

(I) Activities are used as psychological treatment, and they are much appreciated in current circumstances where there are many resource shortages. Therefore, the first idea derives from the psychological necessity to provide activities for refugees which can also work as places for integration with locals. The suggested activities can help provide a door to therapy for refugees who require it, and can also work as a method for integration for all refugees.

(II) The design attempts to suggest spaces with qualities capable of addressing the psychological difficulties from which refugees suffer. The design stages require testing a multitude of flexible spaces and investigating their ability to inhibit the activities. The second notion is the importance of raising awareness to the psychological impact of being a refugee to a larger audience through a poetic and symbolic structure which simultaneously takes visitors on a journey of adaptation and renewal.

This thesis, at its core, seeks to raise awareness of our current epidemic through architecture that aspires to stimulate people and raise questions, architecture that can represent a problem while immersing people in opportunities to approach it.
It was imperative to understand the psychological consequences of being a refugee in order to formulate suitable design-related conclusions to use in the continuance of the project. The research began by collecting current refugee statistics and reading numerous articles on the refugee situation in Europe to get, as much as possible, an overall and general view. The investigation quickly developed towards understanding the psychological status of refugees and began to formulate specific questions related to refugees’ psychological wellbeing. The purpose of this enquiry was to understand the global problem and explore studies in different refugee camps and immigration holding centers to then be able to focus on a specific psychological consequence the majority, if not all, refugees suffer from; depression. During the process of learning about depression it became possible to identify significant factors from its symptoms and treatment methods that would play a strong role in the further development of the project.
I. Connection, mindfulness, learning, giving, and activity are components necessary for wellbeing. Activity is the antonym of depression.

II. Activating the senses is one of the best ways to fight depression.

III. Healing takes time. Integration takes time. The asylum decision takes time. This time however, needs to be represented in an uplifting way - not overlooked.

IV. Need to raise awareness to the psychological consequences of being a refugee to bring this issue closer to people’s minds and hearts.
CHAPTER 03
BRIDGING PSYCHOLOGY & DESIGN
“There is a saying in Tibetan, ‘Tragedy should be utilized as a source of strength.’”

(Dalai Lama XIV)
INTRODUCTION

After defining depression as the main health issue from which refugees suffer, the research was geared towards understanding activity-based therapy which could contribute to treating depression and creating opportunities to socialize and integrate. Conceptually, these identified activities are to be hosted in appropriate spaces. The objective of the design was to explore different spatial parameters for the spaces to better serve the identified activities. Experimenting with the selection process and reasoning behind the choices was more important than creating a single design result. This part of the thesis could work as a toolbox and a trail of thought which can be adapted and modified to different locations, spatial and therapeutic requirements, and resources.

Based on the findings of the research related to treatment methods for depression, it was easy to conclude that one way for easing refugees’ psychological suffering is through providing a set of carefully selected activities to help those who developed a disorder. The activities also offer emotional and psychological support to refugees whose psychological consequences have not advanced to disorders.

There are several examples of successful and innovative integration projects for refugees. One of these is Über den Tellerrand (Beyond your plate)’s project “Kitchen on the Run.” This project brings together refugees and locals around a dinner table. It is also successful in bringing people together on an equal and playful platform, thus creating numerous friendships and great memories. This project is proof of how a single simple activity, if enough effort is put into it, can be vastly successful in contributing to bringing people together.
This chapter investigates the possibility of hosting both therapeutic and integrative activities in a flexible space for refugees who require psychological and integrative assistance, and for those who only require integrative assistance. The first selection process of activities was based on carefully studying a long list of therapeutic activities. Then the search expanded to include activities that served more integrative purposes. Extensive investigation was conducted upon the selection of activities and concluded that it is very difficult to label any activity solely as therapeutic or integrative. However, activities can be sorted for example by serving to a larger extent therapeutic purposes, or serving to a larger extent integrative purposes. The selected activities aim to be a suggestion and a source of inspiration for other projects rather than a decisive list of what activities should be performed. In addition to including both individual and group oriented activities, it was also important for the selected set of activities to contain different focuses ranging from mindfulness, creativity, exercise, and playfulness.
Through researching the different psychological consequences and emotional disorders that occur from being a refugee, links could be drawn between specific activities that may lessen certain symptoms. It became important to place these links as a rough draft of how psychological problems can be approached through activities as this thesis sees it.

The first connection was to the crucial problem of lack of education. During the waiting period in Sweden, refugees are prohibited from participating in any educational system, which needless to say, results in social and psychological consequences. This thesis highlights a simple solution that could be adopted on a large scale to save the future of generations: a language café. It promotes more than one of the components for wellbeing stated previously: learning, connection, and activity. This idea exists, as many of the activities suggested, to show that solutions are within reach. However, these existing projects are either on a very small scale or not geared towards refugees.

Another problem faced by refugees is their general feeling of meaninglessness, hopelessness, and insecurity. One way to tackle these feelings is by participating in therapeutic activities such as meditation and writing to help refugees release building anxiety. Another way is to provide activities that are goal-oriented, ones that give people a sense of achievement and control.

The general monotony of living in an immigration holding center or camp can be addressed by providing a variety of activities from which refugees can chose. Refugee camps during the WWII show a number of examples in this regard. The following table presents a number of problems faced by refugees and means of addressing them through activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>ACTIVITY(IES)</th>
<th>JUSTIFICATION</th>
<th>EXISTING EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LACK OF EDUCATION</td>
<td>LANGUAGE CAFE</td>
<td>LEARN THE LANGUAGE &amp; BEGIN INTEGRATION</td>
<td>SPRÅKCAFÉET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEELING OF MEANINGLESSNESS</td>
<td>THERAPEUTIC</td>
<td>DEVELOPE FEELING OF COMPETANCE &amp; ACCOMPLISHMENT</td>
<td>BEHAVIORAL ACTIVITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEELING OF LONELINESS &amp; ISOLATION</td>
<td>INTEGRATIVE</td>
<td>MEET PEOPLE ON AN EQUAL &amp; PLAYFUL PLATFORM</td>
<td>REFUGEES WELCOME ORGANIZATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROBLEM</td>
<td>ACTIVITY(IES)</td>
<td>JUSTIFICATION</td>
<td>EXISTING EXAMPLE</td>
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<tr>
<td>INCREASE IN MONOTONY</td>
<td>□ □ △ □</td>
<td>PROVIDE VARIETY &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCREASE IN DEPENDENCY</td>
<td></td>
<td>INCREASE SENSE OF OWNERSHIP &amp; BELONGING</td>
<td>SUMMER CAMPS PROGRAMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFLUENCE SURROUNDING &amp; SITUATION</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
There are two psychological problems this thesis tries to investigate and approach directly through its design: depression and indignity. It has been proven that one way to fight depression is by performing activities that stimulate the senses. The design tries to embrace that by providing a continuously evolving and altering structure, one that can stimulate people during their different visits throughout the year and seasons. The other problem is the general indignity refugees feel because of being constrained psychically, mentally, and socially. This thesis hypothesizes that one way to ease this is by giving refugees a part of their humanity back by allowing them to make decisions and choices regarding their immediate surrounding. This design embraces that concept by being one that can be altered and modified by the refugees themselves based on different usages and needs.

### Problem
- Depression
- Indignity

### Design Solution
- Activities that stimulate the senses
- Adaptive - evolving - morphing structure
- Increase ability to make decisions & influence surrounding
- Adaptive design - easy to modify for various preferences

### How
- Interview with psychologist specialized in trauma: one of the best ways to heal depression is to stimulate senses, going to new environments is a natural way to do that
- (TURNER & Wetzel, 2014) Prisons aim to provide dignity to inmates through allowing them to live a ‘normal life’. Inmates “can decorate their space as they wish.” Showing the significance of influencing one’s surrounding
During research on the selected set of activities, continuous design exploration and investigation underwent to determine different spatial qualities for each activity. The studied spatial parameters were enclosure and exposure; relating to what Drucker stated in her interview regarding refugees being sensitive to how exposed or enclosed spaces make them feel. In a quest to better understand each activity’s spatial requirements, every activity was examined in accordance to both visual and spatial enclosure and exposure. The process was very educational and gave way for in-depth analysis; however, the result was a simpler linear diagram. This diagram’s purpose is to showcase how activities can be grouped based on their similar spatial requirements under a general spatial characteristic such as enclosure, exposure, or both. It is unreasonable to suggest one specific spatial setting for an activity; this diagram rather showcases the relation between activities, demonstrating how some activities require more spatial enclosure or exposure in comparison to others.
ENCLOSURE & EXPOSURE
(SEMI-ENCLOSURE)
“Patience is not simply the ability to wait - it’s how we behave while we’re waiting.”

(Joyce Meyer)
It was possible to find direct links between specific emotional or psychological problems and certain types of activities that can ease their negative influence. The tables shown in pages 51-53 aim to provide validation to the chosen activities.

It was also found, as shown in the diagram in pages 54 and 55, that the selected activities can be housed in one of three spaces in connection with the level of enclosure: enclosed space, exposed space, and semi-enclosed space.
CHAPTER 04
DESIGN CONCEPTS
The aim of the project is to explore the role of design in the formation of spaces that can foster the relationships which exist between activities, healing and integration.
INTRODUCTION

The design exploration that followed the research took the lengthiest amount of the thesis time. The process included testing numerous variations of different design approaches. Regardless of the method, the design criteria were to be able to design a cost efficient, incremental, easy assembly, and transformable structure.

The initial design direction was to design a mobile rehabilitation center; therefore, a substantial amount of time was dedicated to understanding mobile architecture, researching existing examples and exploring possible designs. The concept was to design something that can go to where refugees are; because they are scattered in many different places. Containers were among the first ideas because they suited all the criteria. However, the exploration developed to designing structures from wooden panels that can be assembled and disassemble easily on site; giving way to more variations in the design.

The exploration also included learning about inflatable architecture which resulted in designing structures that included both wood panels and inflatable structures. Though extensive, the process was very educational and provided the opportunity to investigate the design criteria in relation to the psychological research findings through different perspectives resulting in the thesis taking a different approach than the one thought of initially.

The main goal was to design something that touches upon both psychological and integrational levels. As the thesis process progressed, the importance of sharing the psychological traumas of refugees with a wider audience became more eminent. Therefore, the design developed to become a structure that can represent refugees’ struggles to a larger audience while also being a host for therapeutic and integrative activities for both refugees and locals. The design is not a traditional monument, although in many aspects, it can be considered an interactive monument; it is an interactive pavilion.
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Building upon the main outcomes from the first two chapters and during the process of researching and analyzing, it was possible to reach four design principles that would be the foundation for the design.

1. The pavilion will aspire to exhibit the dynamics of an interval period through symbolic references and faintly reflect the difficulties refugees face in that time.

2. The pavilion would extract its design concept from the continuous change and movement the transitional period contains.

3. The design itself will not be only an illustration; but also an attempt to contribute to the process of integration through being partially constructed through participatory workshops.

4. The pavilion would contain three ideally placed intimate spaces that can encourage casual encounters and host a variety of activities.
“In the space between chaos and shape was another chance”

(Jeanette Winterson)
“Honor the space between no longer, and not yet”

(Nancy Levin)

The first element of the design is a steel frame. It is continuously repeated with alterations in proportions to create a complete structure. The frame is shaped like the basic outline of a home - something all refugees aspire to attain. A frame also represents the interval - between one space and another, one event and another. The sequence created by repeating a series of frames signifies going through intervals without landing on a destination or having a beginning or an end. This highly symbolizes refugees’ interval period where they go from one day to the next without knowing their destination. The result is a pavilion that brings together locals and refugees in a symbolic space.

The sequence corresponds to the first design principle where it became important, during the process of research, to demonstrate and raise awareness to psychological consequences of being a refugee.

The pavilion aspires not only to be a representation of the tragedy of refugees, but more importantly, it is an attempt to explore creating an interactive space that in itself can contribute to the large efforts necessary to reduce it. The pavilion will host in it flexible spaces that can adapt to different spatial requirements based on activities.

The frames’ placement begins by creating an intriguing pathway, taking visitors on a journey. Then the frames develop in their positioning to create spaces that vary in size and intimacy. This reflects the first design principle.
The second element of the design is hemp rope which stretches between the frames. The different layers, colors, and arrangements of rope signify people’s attempts to make sense of their interval period. The rope also demonstrates the development of a homogenous society into one that flourishes with additional demographics. The arrangement of the rope in the beginning of the structure where the frames are arranged to compose a pathway is messy and unordered, resembling the beginning of integration. Like anything, beginnings are often uneasy and underdeveloped in organization. Gradually, however, the rope begins to formulate in specific sequences to create arches, entrances, curved surfaces, and different layers of enclosure. Arches and entrances are created to give the sensation of moving between spaces and mediums, giving the sensation of landing into different destinations and atmospheres.
The repetition of the rope in the specific sequence creates a surface with different heights.

Order of the rope: it connects from the highest point on one frame to the lowest on the other.

Result: surface from above and an arch from the front.

Result: an arched entrance from the front.

Arch entrance: The direction of tying the rope on one end is opposite to that on the other end (A to A* and B to B*).

Result: two layers on top of each other from above.
The relationship between the rope with the frames has been lengthily explored through a model in Rhino where variations in the arrangement of the rope, thickness, and distances were studied. After trying a number of sequences, a general framework was established: the distance between each rope would be 150mm, overlapping of the rope was better avoided for easier assembly, the illusion of overlapping gives much room for playfulness. To create a surface or an overlapping illusion, one rope must only gradually differ from its previous. The first line of diagrams shows that the direction of tying the rope onto the first frame is opposite to the direction of the tying the rope on the other frame – this creates a curved surface. Once the same method is repeated with two sets of rope from opposite sides, the sequence will result in an arch created from only straight lines (rope). This demonstrates much room for development and exploration.
CHAPTER 05
DESIGN
INTRODUCTION

At the research level, this thesis included references from around the globe because the psychology of being a refugee does not largely differ from one place to another; what mainly makes the difference is the way they are welcomed into their new countries and how their time is spent. This thesis seeks to address the psychological consequence of depression and other emotional disorders every refugee may face, and try to suggest a local approach within Sweden, particularly in Gothenburg. The problem is immense and impossible to solve through one project; this thesis merely attempts to raise critical questions and suggest an outlook so that other architects, organizations, and volunteers are encouraged to participate in the crucial dialog about the psychological and emotional wellbeing of refugees. This chapter delves into the design showcasing site selection and analysis, spatial studies within the pavilion, suggested building process, exploration of the pavilions in three dimensions through elevations and perspectives, and finally lighting studies.
The process of selecting the site for this project included testing several locations and analyzing each one’s potentials. An intimate location by lake Delsjön was considered for the placement of the project because of nature’s renown healing qualities, something refugees require, and that it is in an intimate location where refugees might be less likely to feel over exposed. The other two locations considered are Gotaplatsen and Gustav Adolfs Torg in the central heart of Gothenburg. These sites were considered because they offer refugees a front and center position where it is very easy to meet numerous amounts of people from diverse backgrounds, ages, and professions. The other studied site, which was finally chosen for the project, is in Slottskogen Park. This location combined the best of the other locations. It is active all-year-round and attracts a diverse mixture of people. The park is in the heart of the city and one of the main destinations; therefore, refugees will still be among the most local places in the city of Gothenburg. Moreover, the park is connected to a natural reserve, and thus, although it is a busy destination, it still offers nature’s serenity and peace. Finally, the park is close to public transportation and it is accessible by car.

The chosen site within the park is next to a main intersection but is softly concealed through bushes and large trees; therefore, that it has a direct connection with the flow of people but is not over exposed. The chosen site was to be a local destination where refugees can easily participate in fun activities and not be over exposed or displayed. However, it was important to balance that sensitivity with the need to create something attractive enough for people passing by to notice, become intrigued, and approach. The project is placed at one side of the open area so that it does not completely take over the entire space. The project wishes to bring additional activities to those that already take place in this part of the park. The reasoning behind the placement comes from how this thesis sees the integration process: a balanced mixture of two elements where neither is dominant.
EXISTING BUSHES ENHANCE VISUAL PRIVACY FROM THE BUSY STREET

EXISTING SMALL STREAM WORKS AS AN ADDITIONAL BARRIER FROM BUSY STREET

STRONG CONNECTION BETWEEN PROPOSAL AND EXISTING SERVICES

HIGH EMPHASIS AND VISUAL QUALITY FOR ENTRANCE THROUGH TWO LARGE TREES

OPEN SPACE ALLOWS SPORT AND PLAY ACTIVITIES

HIGH VISUAL QUALITY TO OPEN SPACE

LOW PEDESTRIAN FLOW

CIRCULATION AROUND AND THROUGH THE PROPOSAL IS EASY AND INVITING - IT GIVES EMPHASIS ON ONE ENTRANCE BUT ALSO ALLOWS PEOPLE TO MOVE FREELY THROUGHOUT THE PROPOSAL

GREEN PLANTED AREAS ENCOURAGE OUTDOOR GARDENING AND BETTER DEFINE SPACES WITHIN THE PAVILION
The arrangement of the frames was carefully studied in relation to the site. If the project speaks about integration; then it should be one that relates closely to the existing conditions and elements of its location. If the project speaks about providing spaces that can induce a certain comfort and psychological wellbeing; then it must relate to the immense studies about nature’s benefits to those who are unhealthy. Those are concepts that were followed from the original process of designing the flows through the pavilion, thus dictating the location and arrangement of the frames.

The main entrance to the pavilion begins with a pathway that begins between two large trees at the edge of the area right next to the street with low pedestrian flow. Those two massive and closely placed trees, in and of themselves, signify an entrance. The first frames of the pavilion begin at a certain distance from the trees to build excitement, intrigue, and privacy. The placement of the frames in the beginning of the pavilion creates a pathway with a messy rope membrane.

The feeling this space tries to portray to its visitors is that of being enveloped and enclosed within an interconnected organism. The frames gradually increase in height and the rope slowly begin to arrange in a studied sequence as the intimate pathway opens up to a large space with a number of different inner paths. This large space can also be reached directly from the open area in front of the pavilion to allow people a number of ways to enter and experience the pavilion. When walking through the inner paths within the pavilion, one can discreetly find an entrance to one of two intimate spaces surrounded and concealed by frames and rope.

The two intimate spaces will vary in enclosure based on the arrangement of the frames, the arrangement of the gardening areas, and the density and thickness of the rope membrane. The larger space is more exposed and is where integrative activities and large groups of therapeutic activities can occur.
MAXIMUM ENCLOSURE
Discussion
Meditation

MEDIUM ENCLOSURE
Painting
Music

LEAST ENCLOSURE
Exhibition
Workshop
Rope on the top of the frames would be assembled based on a specific design which carefully study the arrangement to create surfaces and full coverage with a range of densities.

Rope placed in the inner spaces of the pavilion change according to required enclosure for each performed activity. They are assembled by participants.
The frames range from a minimum height of 3 meters to maximum 7 meters. They will be supported by additional beams that will be concealed through the layers of rope. The sequence of the rope at the top of the pavilion, the ceiling coverage, will be carefully designed to create surfaces with a range of densities. Due to being very high, professional workers will tie them throughout a long period of time.

Rope stretching over the rest of the frames, particularly those located from the ground level to the height of 2 meters, will be arranged by the pavilion’s visitors, refugees and locals, embracing the third design principle (pg 65). The messy rope at the beginning and end of the pathway is to be tied throughout a long period of time by different visitors. Stations with rope will be set up next to the pathways where people can pick up strands of rope. However, the rope that creates the intimate spaces within the pavilion which will be used for therapeutic activities need to be constructed on a shorter timeframe; thus, will be created through organized workshops with students, professionals, volunteers and refugees.
THREE Dimensions Exploration
Illustrated elevation gently paints how the pavilion may look like during one of its more complete phases. The vibrant colors create a joyful, inclusive and welcoming experience for whoever comes to the structure. Though the pavilion’s purpose is partly to represent a sad truth of our time; it more importantly aspires to be a tool against it by hosting spaces for communication, integration and therapeutic and fun activities.

The experience of walking through the pavilion in the beginning encourages thoughtfulness and reflection. Information boards are hung at the beginning and end of the pathway providing a brief background of the pavilion’s purpose and design concept. The atmosphere desired is one that resembles walking into an exhibition, then the more one progresses into the pavilion, the more it becomes a welcoming space for participation and involvement.

The fact that the creation of the pavilion and completion of tying the rope will expand throughout a long period of time reflects the second design principle (pg 65). The design reflects the continuous change and movement wished for in the waiting period by being continuously evolving, adapting, extracting and expanding.
The way to the first frames of the pavilion also carries symbolic references. The main entrance to the pavilion stretches from a pathway between two large trees that exist on site, as mentioned before. The material of this pathway gradually changes. In the beginning next to the asphalt road, a pathway is created from pebbles. Then the material gradually mixes with mulch until under the several first frames of the pavilion in the messy formed rope, the pathway becomes completely covered with mulch. The materials represent society; when segregated, it is like a mass of pebbles, divided, harsh, and uneasy to walk on. Then as integration flourishes, the ground becomes more cohesive and soft to walk on. This is what the pavilion aspires to be a part of: the process of integration. Organic lines shape the pathway to reflect the natural trails in nearby forests and resemble the intertwining way to integration. It is also easy to maintain.
The perspective image shows the interior of an intimate space that is fully enclosed with thick ropes sculpting the area. Next to the intimate space separated by rope is the pathway that stretches throughout the entire pavilion.

Individuals can gather in these intimate spaces for different activities. The image shows an example of individuals gathered for a group therapy session. Surrounded by soft plants, and gentle natural lighting, people can share their experiences in a safe and supportive space.

Some activities, like group therapy, may require a consistent group of people; therefore, such activities may be organized as courses rather than individual events or activities. A schedule and list of activities will be advertised on social media and released at the beginning of each month. This allows for the frequency and type of activities to be flexible and depending on the time of year and season.
The pavilion strongly emphasizes public participation in its building process and in the activities it hosts. One way of encouraging passersby to tie rope and partake in the pavilion’s development is by placing two large stations on either end of the pavilion that contain an explanation of the participatory process of building the pavilion, as well as instructions on how to take the rope and where and how to tie it. On several occasions, someone knowledgeable would be standing near the stations to help the newcomers, it could be refugees or volunteers who have already learned and tried the process. These occasions can be during weekends when people are most likely to come to the park, public holidays, or when other events are happening in Slottskogen. The rope can be placed in what resembles a vending machine for safekeeping and people can pay some Krona and get a strand of rope. The money would be donated to the pavilion’s caretaking.
The pavilion can be used day or night as demonstrated in the following image. Here, an exhibition is formed within the pavilion to display art pieces generated during therapeutic workshops. Members of the community are invited to explore the completed work. This creates additional opportunities for interaction between those participating in the activities and the community to further societal integration. Due to being in Gothenburg where it is often rainy, it was important to design a way for the structure to be water-proofed. A large plastic or rubber membrane can be stretched across the pavilion, or parts of it, to shelter it from different weather conditions. The rubber or plastic would ideally be transparent or translucent so that the light from inside the pavilion will be reflected onto it and illuminate it; creating a large lantern in the middle of the park. This membrane will be placed on top of the frames and rope at the top of the pavilion. It will have its own rope to tie onto the frames from above. Due to safety, it will be placed by professionals once every year at the beginning of autumn, and removed by the beginning of spring.
The first feeling the pavilion aspires to portray on its visitors is the feeling of being enveloped and embraced within it. The rope membrane is not only above and on the sides of the pavilion; through the shadows, rope will be reflected on the ground too. Thus walking through the pavilion becomes an immersive experience that changes with the seasons and times of day creating unique and varied atmospheres. The rope and its shadows create enclosed walkways that exude a sense of safety, security and warmth.
CHAPTER 06
DISCUSSION
"Do not fear failure but rather fear not trying."

(Roy T. Bennett)
DISCUSSION

This thesis began with an awareness to the psychological problems refugees may face to then uncover numerous studies and articles exposing the tragedy. Thereafter, the process developed to search for effective and implementable solutions that do not require many resources for depression and other emotional disorders among refugees. This lead to an in-depth investigation of therapeutic activities and existing examples of integrative projects for refugees. After a broad awareness of fields outside of architecture, the process turned into an extensive design exploration to find flexible hosting spaces for therapeutic and integrative activities.

Continuous research on psychological disorders remained during the entire design investigation. Working in parallel in both fields allowed the possibility to develop a cohesive design result that was true to both the research and design theory. The approach this project decided to attempt was to design a structure that can display the tragedy to a larger audience. However, it was important to embrace solutions rather than stop at displaying the problem; therefore, the design aimed to also include a space that can partake in the efforts to support, heal, and integrate refugees.

This project does not end here; it would be very exciting to be able to explore more research relating to therapeutic activities and test the effect of different spaces on people’s experiences. More studies on the construction of the pavilion are also among the extensions this project would look into with more time. Another design advance would be for the frames to alter in their shape, giving way for more organic and abstract structures. The greatest development would be to build this project and test it to be able to extract evidence and findings relating to the link between psychology, therapeutic activities, participatory projects, and interactive pavilions.
“In the space between chaos and shape was another chance”

(Jeanette Winterson)
The pavilion will aspire to exhibit the dynamics of an interval period through symbolic references and faintly reflect the difficulties refugees face in that time.

The pavilion would extract its design concept from the continuous change and movement the transitional period contains.

The design itself will not be only an illustration; but also an attempt to contribute to the process of integration through being partially constructed through participatory workshops.

The pavilion would contain three ideally placed intimate spaces that can encourage casual encounters and host a variety of activities.

The pathway to the pavilion. The rope. The frames. The building process.

The pavilion continuously changes in design; it does not have a final shape just as the interval period.

Half of the building process is through participatory workshops and involvement of passersby. The spaces which host the activities are extremely flexible: they are created uniquely for each event.

The pavilion contains two intimate spaces that can be adjusted in the amount of their enclosure as well as one central exposed space.

Design principle / goal:

1. The pathway to the pavilion. The rope. The frames. The building process.
2. The pavilion continuously changes in design; it does not have a final shape just as the interval period.
3. Half of the building process is through participatory workshops and involvement of passersby. The spaces which host the activities are extremely flexible: they are created uniquely for each event.
4. The pavilion contains two intimate spaces that can be adjusted in the amount of their enclosure as well as one central exposed space.

How this thesis chose to approach it:
CHAPTER 07
REFERENCES & APPENDIX


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**Interview:**


**Images:**


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Additional Unit

As mentioned earlier, many studies of mobile pieces of architecture were done throughout the project to house activities. One of the final studies was meant to support the pavilion. Due to difficult weather in Gothenburg, it seemed appropriate to have an additional unit that can come to site whenever necessary as additional administration space, storage, or intimate space for activities when the weather is too severe. This unit is meant to be dismantled when it is not in use for easy storage. Its size is meant to be flexible so that it expands and extracts according to need. It can be placed outside, along, or within the pavilion based on its usage.
This scenario shows a protected exhibition space inside the supporting unit in full form. It is placed by the pavilion like an additional pathway that organically stretches out following the lines of the pavilion.
In this scenario the unit is placed in a designated gathering area in front of the pavilion and towards the open space. Here only half of the unit is used, so it is open towards the audience seated in the pavilion.
SCENARIO 02 OF UNIT

In this scenario the unit is part of the pavilion as it goes into the medium enclosed space and therefore turns it into a maximum enclosed space for required activity.
Lighting Option

This image shows another option for lighting. In this example, light is attached to the frames so that they can become a source of illumination at night. It also showcases different stages of the rope construction; displaying that even without completion of the rope, the frames can still identify different spaces within them if strategic rope is tied.