# BUILDING PLEASURES: AGEING IN ESCH

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Through a series of instalments in collaboration with the Esch Clinics, the research initiated at the Chair of Architecture and Care (Care.) about ageing and pleasure—with a gender and queer studies perspective—will look at forms of shared kinship. Departing from an expanded notion of care, one that goes beyond medical and basic physiological needs to include pleasure, leisure and sexuality, we will look at the spatial and architectural manifestations of existing and desired care infrastructures, centered in the elderly population of Esch. What are the urban experiences of this collective? What spaces do they have? What are their wishes? Where do they come from? What spaces would they like to have?

Through an open and emotional, yet methodological and focused, process of mapping—including interviews, dérives, collective talks. We will interrogate the places, agents, and institutions procuring formal and informal care provisions and trace the physical and emotional urban patterns and flows generated by its relationships and interactions with the aging population of Esch. The aim is to read beyond the visible, to resurface informal ecologies of care and geographies of desire, to acknowledge their social meaning and to inquire on their potentialities for the future. Acknowledging that "cities function differently during different times," as stated by Matylda Krzykowski and Felix Ganzer, these cartographies will also map the different timeframes in which these activities happen. The material compiled will inform the taxonomy of pleasures for/from/with the elderly population in Esch—where do people go to eat, flirt, rest, have sex, dance, play? Followed by a taxonomy of desires—those spaces that do not yet exist in physical form but on their desires and imaginations. What kind of places are you missing?

This will take the form of a series of visual cartographies made public and understood as a starting point for further research, but also as a triggering question for both the inhabitants and authorities of Esch on the future of care. The objective is not just to bring to light existing social and spatial infrastructures of care existing beyond the institutional (from informal group meetings to dating apps), but to approach their fragile ecologies sensitively and collectively give them value and new possibilities of existence.

Care. is a research and educational project addressing care and architecture. The project was launched in 2023 in the Department of Architecture at ETH Zürich to promote new forms of interdependent care through design and theory. Care. aims to rethink the built environment at multiple scales to foster non-conforming ways of living and joy, from a gender, queer and crip perspective.

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Nicole Walraet and Martha Beckers dance at the Lift Brussels nightclub. Photograph: Yves Herman/Reuters. Image source: https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/may/02/we-can-live-again-belgian-nursing-home-residents-hit-the-nightclubs