CITIES IN A CHANGING WORLD:
QUESTIONS OF CULTURE, CLIMATE AND DESIGN

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Striving for our own spot while avoiding the embrace of the other. An architectural problem of today

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• Abstract (300 words):
There is a fact that is undeniable: the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 somehow changed our lives, at least for a while. The images of the most important cities of the world like NY, Tokyo, London, Madrid, or my own Lisbon, and so on, without a single soul drifting around there, were unbelievable. Two years ago, that reality was unthinkable, for sure. All of a sudden, the crowd vanished from the public eye, right to their houses. The public spaces no longer were able to be shared by anyone, as an extension of their daily use space. Their existence’ space did shrink abruptly. The home is also the office, the school, the restaurant, the cinema, the gym, the playground, at the same time. Any house turn out to be the most crowed and almost unbearable place of the world. Now we are all striving for our own spot, while avoiding the embrace of the other, everywhere. Even at home. Therefore it became an architectural problem that urges to be solved today, to mitigate its negative effects on the inevitable future pandemics.

Concerning architecture, house matters, thus the aim of this paper intend to focus on how can architecture, particularly in urban and dense areas, may deal with our existential and individual space? How to keep any space open and free, but simultaneously private and controlled? The question of our own privacy and safety gains new meaning today. It’s time to rethink the domestic space and the nearby space, as
the new need of an outside domestic space, while we crave to maintain our sanity. Paying attentions through two filters of approach: the dwelling and the street level on the city, it’s aimed to reflect on the broad issues of individual isolation and privacy in order to outline solutions, like some design proposals, helping to ease the problem somehow.