**Cultivating Constructs**

A Place of Sanctuary for Dementia Care

This thesis poses the question of how a respite centre for individuals with dementia might be integrated within our socio-cultural milieu by realigning our thoughts about the care environment towards more resilient thinking.

The project carries forward the aspiration of a strategy which acknowledges the national emergency of an ageing population in Malta and proposes that the existing urban fabric of the village of St.Paul’s Bay becomes a host to integrating a network of care in the community. It is for this reason that the aim of my project turns towards the importance of providing an adequate place in society for individuals with dementia, which allows for daily rituals to unfold in a meaningful and culturally sensitive manner.

In this day and age, what constitutes good health is no longer simply an issue of having access to good medical treatment. Just as influential are the social and psychological factors akin to the condition of the built environment (Steemers, 2015). Considering this, the intervention is built on the premise that there is a gap in the care system for those living with dementia whereby once diagnosed, being confined to your home becomes the norm because of the lack of appropriate dementia-friendly spaces in the local scenario.

For this reason, the intervention constitutes a theoretical exploration of how to open the city to health, while retaining individuals in the community. The proposed sanctuary for dementia care is, in fact, a network which connects individuals at various stages of dementia based on Tom Kitwood's (1997) premise that "the person comes first”. Acting as the backdrop to the sanctuary, the garden opens its boundaries to the community, hosting several dementia based uses together.

The programme of insertions draws upon on a set of parameters extracted from a wider design research study conducted earlier this year, as part of my dissertation study. This allowed for a constructive organisation structured constructs along the chosen landscape, marrying the elements of nature, sea and respite. Each construct within the sanctuary provides a different level of engagement and meaning, hence, broadening the scope of what can be understood as meaningful by the individual with dementia.