



*The Good Life, Sina Auf der Maur, Noëlle Baechler, Anna Luzia Hess, Aline Vonderwahl, Meilingen, 1987*

# Honey, I shrunk the house

By 2050, Switzerland is anticipated to grow by 1 million people.

By 2050, Europe has agreed to achieve a climate-neutral building stock

More than half of residential buildings in Switzerland - by number - are single family houses. The single-family house (and the land it occupies) is the least environmentally efficient settlement yet remains the aspiration of many. Excessive energy-use per capita from the house and the private transport that sustains it are just part of the widening gap between societal objectives and individual emancipation, freedom and desire. To many, the single-family house represents the good life. To liberal urbanites, it represents the banality and wastefulness of the suburbs, which perhaps explains the lack of critical attention in architectural discourse. In fact, architects have condescended the suburb for decades ever since 1933 when CIAM declared it and all it contains “a kind of scum churning against the walls of the city”. And it is in part due to this deep-rooted snobbery that the single-family house developed its own design codes by mixing a cocktail of real estate value and aspirational taste away from the gaze of Architecture. Yet, beyond the superficial cliches of dull conformity – applied from outside - the suburb represents a great untapped opportunity to radically expand housing provision over the coming generation. The single-family house cannot be understood without the garden, which like the architecture it hosts, will be reimagined for new climates and ecologies. To house one million people in the next twenty-five years cannot be contemplated without a radical restoration of unbuilt ground connecting every private plot into a common good.