



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Landscape Architecture, Horticulture
and Crop Production Science

Creative motivation

- Motivation in the search for good solutions, in the landscape architecture practice

Motivation i den kreativa processen

- Motivation i sökandet efter den goda lösningen, inom det dagliga arbetet som landskapsarkitekt

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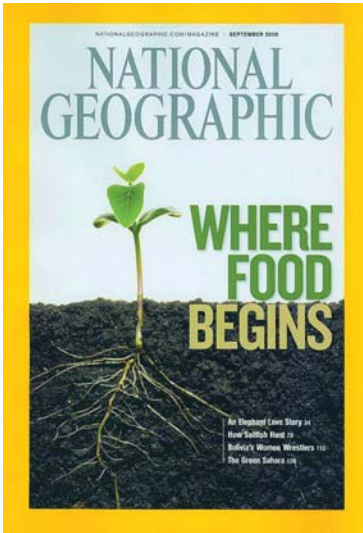
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Department of Landscape Architecture, Planning and Management

CREATIVE MOTIVATION

Motivation in the search for good solutions,
in the landscapearchitecture practice



The format and content of the magazine National Geographic has inspired and motivated us.

EDITORIAL

You are about to read our collection of thoughts about motivation and inspiration which we believe is vital for the practicing landscape architect in the context of generating ideas, and getting the creative process started.

In searching of a format and package for the material we wanted something that is more than just a size. Something that mirrors the society we live in and inspires and motivates us. This thing in your hand is something that we were searching for during our studies.

To be open and curious is an important aspect in design disciplines, such as the discipline of landscape architecture. To be open means establishing access to unexpected or hidden thoughts and ideas.

We want this thesis to support design-thinking and reflect on the process of finding and associating as a way to frame ideas. We also want this product to be inspiring and to motivate creativity.

We would also like to add, that we are now finishing this thesis almost 14 years since we started in 2001. And the subject of motivation and inspiration still feels as important to us now as it did when we started.

Johan Krikström and Christer Lundenius
2015-06-22

ABSTRACT

Introduction

We started this thesis when we during our landscape architecture studies realised that motivation and inspiration was an important factor in the creative process. We often talked about the working process and sources of inspiration of other designers, and how they came to their conclusions for a particular design. We want to get to the bottom of understanding motivation. What creates an idea? There may be innumerable elements affecting us. How aware are we of these affects? A thorough investigation of our senses to clarify our own basis of ideas is exciting and also to put this 'our own basis' in relation to our surroundings. Can we get a broader insight of our own creative process by studying others?

Method

To make an investigation we focused on making a series of semi-structured interviews in the form of conversations with landscape architects and architects. Giving us enough material for a qualitative study. The topics were how to keep motivated, inspiration and the creative process. Upon that we put together a series of workshops trying out methods and sources of inspiration extracted from the conversations.

Result

Motivation and inspiration origins from a field of infinite sources and it is important as a landscape architect to actively engage in the creative process and that it is beneficial to learn about one's personal inspiration and motivation. We find that over time our awareness expands on the subject and so does our internal library of references. The more we engage in work we have interest in, the more motivated we get to learn, create and evolve within that field.

Discussion

This process has made us understand the importance of reflection on the subject of motivation and inspiration when working as a landscape architect. Be open at heart. Good methods to be creative brings a more relaxed relation to the design process. Try to find your own inspirational sources, and sometimes question them. Also to cultivate and feed your inspiration with information on anything you find interesting.

We realize that this thesis will be with us our entire working life and we know that if we are inspired and motivated when we are designing landscapes we are on the right track and there will be a lot of fun and really good designs.

This thesis/magazine consists of three main parts.

Initially we describe the background problem and aim for the thesis

Part 1 deals with the method. It explains how the conversations are structured and planned.

In **Part 2** we travel to geographically different places and meet people with whom we discuss motivation, inspiration and the creative process. We get exposed to new influences through the change of environments and by facing different cultures. We try to make interpretations of some of the interviews to test a creative method or to follow tracks through a process.

And finally in **Part 3** we conclude the material.

The theoretical trip is harder to track than the physical but here we try to map it. We discuss the trails that appear and compare them to each other, do they blend or are they contrary to each other?

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Introduction

A few years into our studies in the field of landscape architecture we began more and more to reflect upon the process that starts within us as designers, when a new project arise. We often talked about the working process and sources of inspiration of other designers, and how they came to their conclusions for a particular design.

In various magazines on landscape architecture, architecture and design we would read about how it was obvious and clear too many designers how to walk through the process of designing.

The importance of transparency regarding once source of inspiration and also to document the process of designing has been emphasised in some courses but yet to us this field was hard to embrace. We felt as if everything was orbiting around us and that we needed some distance to find clarity. We wanted to master our creativity and control when and how we would engage in the process of design. To refine methods and apply them smoothly in the working process. The idea of writing this thesis made us realize what an opportunity it could be to immerse into the processes of designing and to explore creative methods.

Background

Studying in Alnarp has given us the opportunity to step into the world of landscape architecture and architecture. The door is opened and ours is the task to enter and to achieve more knowledge. These are the thoughts that started us:

We want to get to the bottom of understanding motivation. What creates an idea? There may be innumerable elements affecting us. How aware are we of these affects? A thorough investigation of our senses to clarify our own basis of ideas is exciting but we also want to put this 'our own basis' in relation to our surroundings.

How you get a wide entry into projects when there are, one, demands from a client and, two, commitments to society. At the same time you want to be happy with yourself and know that you are doing something you can stand for. What if we could get an understanding of other peoples way of entering their projects and that way get a broader insight of our own creative process?

Travelling can free your mind from daily routines, through travelling it's easier to live in the present and to perceive the surroundings then when you are at home.

How does the mind of the favourably reviewed landscape architects function? What motivates them and what can we learn from them?

Problem

In defining the problem of our thesis we have found these questions that frame the thoughts that we want to harness!

- How and where do landscape architects seek their motivation or inspiration today?
- How does motivation and inspiration help and affect us in our daily work?
- How and in what ways do we seek motive in the creative process?
- Can we develop our way of finding inspiration?

These questions come from different aspects of our background. Mainly it's our will to be able to make good designs during our entire career as landscape architects. We feel that there might be a risk that we might lose our ability to be creative in our future work. And we think that the aspect of inspiration and motivation in our work can be important keys in an long and creative career.

We also experienced that in some of the design courses at university we made better result when feeling motivated and especially when we had presented our source of inspiration.

Aim

We want to understand the importance of motivation and inspiration in the creative process.

And we want to show that organising or mapping your own inspiration and motivational sources is a powerful way to make your work as a landscape architect easier and more effective. Especially in the aspect of creating ideas and interesting design solutions.

We want to continue and go deeper in our thoughts concerning inspiration/motivation, and get a bigger comprehension for the effect it has on our creative process.

In this work we also want to try different creative methods especially methods that help us realize the effect of being inspired in our design work.

This will hopefully lead us to a better understanding of our own and other landscape architects sources of motivation.

PART 1

METHOD

Introduction

To be able to make a relevant study we realized that we couldn't rely only on interviews. Our plan became to travel to meet with active designers and talk to them about their work and how they understand inspiration and motivation. And in doing these journeys we would take the chance to make workshops to better understand what we had learned from the meetings. We will document our travels and conversations and collect all the documents from our workshops. And finally we will analyse our results.

We will document our ongoing dialogue on the subject and we will use literature to encourage and to challenge ourselves. Through workshops we will explore other designer's methods to find motivation and to create.

Within the thesis we estimated that we could perform somewhere between ten to fifteen conversations. This gave that it couldn't be a quantitative method, we therefore focused on making a series of semi-structured interviews in the form of conversations. Giving us material for a qualitative study.

To find designers for the conversations we did not want to choose them ourselves. Our method would be to ask other people to recommend us designers that they could think

The conversations will be audio recorded and afterwards edited by us in a way to capture characteristics but get a nice flow in the text. We include all the transcribed texts in the appendix, in their original language.

To further investigate the result from the conversations we are going to make workshops. The workshops following conversations will focus on various methods clearly appearing in the conversations. These are practical studies to comprehend creative methods.

- Interviews/Conversations with architects and artists in Sweden but also in other countries where differences in context offers a wider field of answers. Travelling to other places and countries is also an input of new inspirations, motivation and influences.

- Workshops; after every interview we will treat their ideas in a workshop to comprehend them fully. These workshops concentrate upon the creation of ideas and they are one way to extend our ways to get motivated.

- During the work we will investigate relevant conceptions that we encounter in our daily work. These conceptions we will try to explain to each other on a weekly basis.

This is an introduction to our method. We will further describe and develop our methods in the following chapters.

Methods in making the Conversations (Swedish: samtal)

To find the answers that we are looking for we have chosen an empirical investigation. Meaning, we have to go out and meet people and talk to them. These meetings shouldn't feel formal or strict on the contrary we want an open atmosphere. So we see these meetings as more of conversations rather than interviews.

How did we choose people to meet?

We had a discussion with our tutors and presented a number of countries where we thought we could find interesting people to talk to. Finally we agreed that we should concentrate on a few countries far away, and some more close to us. U.S. and Australia are far away; still we can easily understand and make ourselves understood. Their cultures are different from ours, but not a total opposite. Great Britain, The Netherlands, Poland are countries closer to us. They are all part of Europe but there are cultural differences. In some ways the cultural difference between European countries can be really confusing too.

To choose the actual persons were a bit harder, because we both are interested in urban design, we tried to find offices in bigger cities. We did not want to just go out and pick a few, we would rather see that they were picked randomly, though with some kind of quality in the different choices. Our solution was to ask other person's that we thought were reliable to recommend architects to us. Our tutors gave us a few names, others were given to us by people who had spent some time in the regions which interested us. This way we got a fairly qualitative collection of architects to interview, and in a rather practical way. We would never be able to make a quantitative selection and then go through them in 6 months with the kind of questions we have.

Method of starting a conversation

We were a bit worried on how we would be able to ask the right questions so that the conversation would give relevant answers. We thought that by having some sort of questionnaire, we could start and then try to direct the conversation our way. The goal was to go through every meeting and try to make up new questions that would take our knowledge further after every conversation. This

way the designers actually had a big chance of influencing the conversations and give them a touch of the unexpected, which to us is important.

The questions functioned as a base step into the interviews and the use varied. We noticed that when talking to the designers, their interests often directed the energy in the conversations.

The interviews are edited due to space and readability

These questions are the one we started with:

- o How would you describe yourself?
- o What movies do you see, what books do you read and where do you go on holidays?
- o Is there any special field of research, which you find more interesting than any other?
- o How much do you think your surroundings affect you? Describe your surroundings.
- o How do you get the projects you work on?
- o Do you have the possibility to choose and select between projects?
- o Do you have any routines when you start a new project?
- o Do you find it harder or easier to work without any restrictions?
- o Is it possible to make a sketch of your creative process? Try to visualize your workflow.
- o Do you think it's easy to follow your idea through the whole process?
- o Do you co-operate with other professionals, like chemists, biologists or artists?
- o If you are in a competition where the conditions are the same, what will make your proposal special and unique?

The connections which gave us the actual persons to meet.

We had chosen eight countries (in earlier discussions with our tutors) that we focused on, in getting variation in background and culture of the people we had our conversations with. The countries were, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Great Britain, Australia, Poland, The Netherlands and United States of America

Here we describe how we found the actual persons in the countries we were focusing on:

Johan Paju and Petter Hauffman was our own decision, we had them as tutors in a workshop at one of the design courses that we took at Alnarp. They somehow introduced us to a more organised way of treating inspiration in the creative process. So for us they will work as a first test.

Aida Kalnins was suggested to us by Thomas Hellquist our tutor.

Henrik Schulz was a mishap, we were intended to meet with his boss Jonas Lindvall, Jonas was recommended to us by our tutor Måns Holst-Ekström

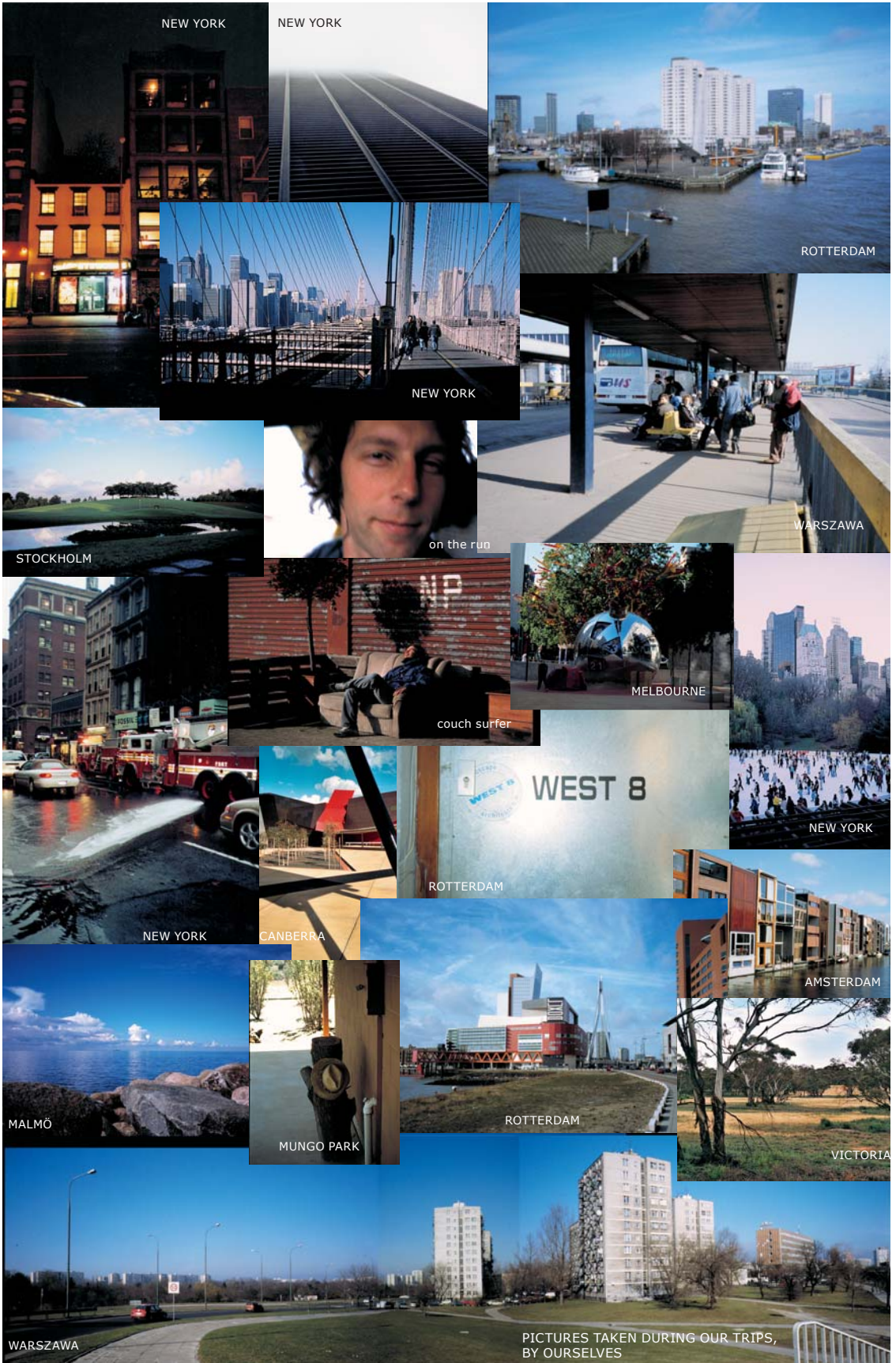
Matt Davies who worked in London, was recommended to us by a fellow student, Karin Graham who had worked in London as intern. She had heard about Matt's office Planet earth, and told us that he would probably be an interesting person to talk to.

Ken Smith was recommended to us by Martin Arfalk and Anna Lundquist who had been working as interns at an office in New York. There they had cooperated with Ken Smith in some projects, and they were impressed with the work his company made.

In planning our thesis, we knew that Christer would be going to Australia visiting his father, working in Mildura. So including Australian aspects was already a part of our program. That journey gave us an opportunity to try getting in touch with landscape architects in that part of the world, far away and in real life. We got in contact with landscape architect **SueAnne Ware**, lecturer (later adj. professor) at the university in Melbourne (RMIT) and we managed to schedule a meeting just a few days before the departure back to Sweden.

While in the country Christer made attempts to schedule meetings with other landscape architects and the library of Mildura became a temporary base to accomplish that. With some help from a dedicated librarian he was pointed to an architect who just had won a competition in Canberra. Initiated by the government with the purpose to raise the awareness on the troubling history of how the nation has been treating the indigenous cultures, and just recently started a reconciling process. The leading architect behind the winning proposal, **Simon Kringas** has his practice in Canberra and Christer visited for a long conversation about the process concerning that project and about inspiration.

At the National Museum of Australia in Canberra Christer heard of a newly constructed visitor's centre about the aboriginal culture on Tasmania, designed by landscape architects **Jim Sinatra and Phin Murphy**. They had also released a book about people's relationships to the land and would be an interesting duo to talk to. Sinatra & Murphy has had their practice in Melbourne some years and seems to be an upcoming office in the country. But on a short basis they managed to make room for a conversation over lunch.



To find interesting people in Poland, we had no real knowledge about the landscape architecture scene there. So we asked Robert Schäfer the chief editor of *Topos* magazine (A magazine about contemporary landscape architecture). We asked him to recommend a landscape architect in Poland that he thought could get interesting answers to our questions about inspiration and motivation. Robert then recommended **Mirek Sztuka**.

When meeting Mirek and having an interesting week in Poland, Mirek thought we should talk to Jerzy an architect that he often worked with. So we got a bonus conversation with, **Jerzy Szczepanik-Dzikowski**, architect at Jems Architects in Warsaw.

In discussing with our tutors on who to meet in the Netherlands, they suggested West 8 and Adriaan Geuze. To organize the meeting with Adriaan G. was not that easy, so in the end we got to meet one of the other architects at West 8, **Marc Lampe**.

The meeting with **John Lonsdale** was not planned. It started out with us asking the people at West 8 about other interesting people to meet with. They then suggested an architect in Groningen, but somehow the architect in Groningen (The Netherlands) couldn't meet us. So the company in Groningen recommended John Lonsdale at Big House architects instead.

How the conversations are edited

All the conversations are recorded on minidisks. Each conversation is transcribed, the transcribed conversations are available in the appendix. The conversations are edited to make them easier to read. We have not removed any vital information in the edited versions.

The edited conversations will be translated from Swedish to English when needed. The transcribed versions will remain in the original language.

Limitations/definitions

To start with the simple investigation, we have looked up the words inspiration and motivation in two relevant dictionaries. This also give us limits to our work, our work should move within the theoretical definitions of these two words. What we find is that what we are looking for has to do with desire, enthusiasm, being eager to work or even A person, place, experience, etc., that makes someone want to do or create something.

We have chosen two words that are in a way similar, we think that the combination of these words make our study easier to apprehend and more useable. In discussing two words you can start to separate the different nearby conceptions and hopefully get a wider understanding of the matter.

Definition, Motivation:

1.1. A reason or reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way.

1.2. Desire or willingness to do something; enthusiasm.

(www.oxforddictionaries.com, 2015)

2.1. The act or process of giving someone a reason for doing something : the act or process of motivating someone.

2.2. The condition of being eager to act or work

2.3. A force or influence that causes someone to do something

(www.merriam-webster.com, 2015)

Definition, Inspiration:

1.1 The process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative

1.2 The quality of being inspired

1.3 A person or thing that inspires:

1.4 A sudden brilliant or timely idea:

(www.oxforddictionaries.com, 2015)

2.1 Something that makes someone want to do something or that gives someone an idea about what to do or create : a force or influence that inspires someone

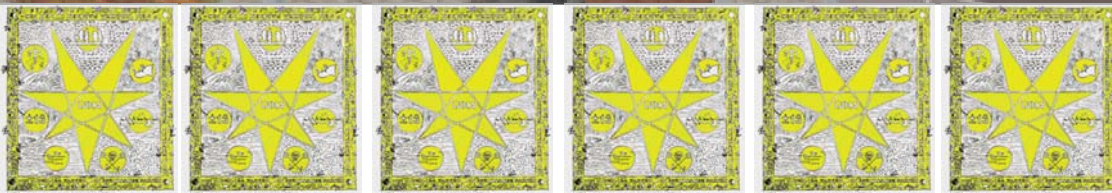
2.2. A person, place, experience, etc., that makes someone want to do or create something

2.3 A good idea

(www.merriam-webster.com, 2015)

PART 2:1

CONVERSATIONS



CONVERSATION AT NOD

#1

Stockholm, Sweden

2nd of October 2001, 15:00

We took a trip to Stockholm to meet some of the people at NOD (Natur Orienterad Design) to speak with them about our thoughts concerning our final thesis. We also wanted to see how good we were at conducting interviews.

We met Petter Hauffman at their office and told him briefly about our ideas on the subject of inspiration and the creative process. It's an exciting field of interest, he says, but it's hard to define all your inspirational sources.

- In the first phase you have different control points where you gather your information, though it varies from project to project. Different project forms have different structures, for example it varies how much time you give to form the idea.

A big part of their work is about thinking. To generate their ideas they sit down at a table and throw out all the ideas they can think of, then they choose the best ones, and push them as far as possible.

- Often you focus your mind to find the idea. Maybe that isn't the right way, because there are so many entrances to every project. We try to sell the idea-content of the project, but I actually think that all parts are equally interesting.

- How do you think your office stands out in comparison to other offices?

- We try to have the philosophy about this company and our projects and work, that all of us making sketches together characterizes the things we do.

NOD emphasizes that awareness is essential. It can easily happen that you get stuck with routines when you get more experienced at the drawing desk.

- Do you think that your ideas follow all the way through your proposals?

- That's the goal, but the moneybag often cuts away some parts. On Bo01 we think that we succeeded. But there on Bo01 the construction site has messed up the garden.

- You get a lot of projects. How do you choose between them?

-We take projects that interest us, then of course there are projects that we are forced to take, so we have to incorporate them anyway.

- How do you get inspired to do the things you do?

- Inspiration is never the same, it has different directions; society, architecture and environment. They work as coat hangers to hang up the inspiration on, and sift it through. Mysticism is also something that inspires us, but it varies a lot.

- Is there any discipline that has given you more ideas than any other?

- The artists have given us a lot, but we try to stay on the landscape architect side as much as possible. It's a balancing act. Often the client doesn't want an art project when he orders a landscape project. Art raises questions. We try to sneak in some artistry when it is appropriate, for example the "Biotron" wall at Bo01. The reaction from the public is important. You also have to face the fact that time is an important aspect. Things that don't work today may just need some time. Our challenge at Bo01 was to create something that would be the most frequently discussed issue at the expo; our answer was the 'Biotrone wall', the idea was lettuce cultivation in space.

When we wonder how Petter would respond to a thesis like ours, Johan Paju arrives to relieve him. Petter leaves and Johan continues in his tracks.

Short facts: Johan Paju and Petter Hauffman

Johan Paju and Petter Hauffman was two out of four founders of NOD, nature-oriented-design. NOD was founded 1998.

They both worked with NOD for several years, Johan left NOD to start his own company. NOD was transformed into (nod)C-O-M-B-I-N-E. A cooperative business. Petter continued with (nod)C-O-M-B-I-N-E until 2013, when the company ended and continued as a co-working facility called Coffice.

Today Johan Paju works with the architectural firm FOJAB. Petter Hauffman works at Wingårdhs architects.

Source:
www.combine.coop (2015)
www.fojab.se (2015)
www.wingardhs.se (2015)

-The final thesis is a unique situation. You try to explore yourself and what kind of hooks you have. Later on you can take advantage of your own hooks to put something personal into the project. The way you put the question determines the way you get the answer. It can't be too blunt or too specialized, then you only examine one line, and sort out all the things you already know. Traditionally you take one piece of the cake and make a case study. Maybe you should use the quick method, just put down your hand in the cake and see what you get. It's about finding your own choices, clarifying them and formulating them. Trends and inspiration are about putting one thing in relation to the other. Trends and inspiration translate into methods.

Johan Paju shows us 'Beepeln', a project he completed in cooperation with some classmates during his training to become a landscape architect. They examined principles of design and tested methods through translating theories and ideas into physical shape. When we turn the pages we start to see the form for our project. We continued to talk about the importance of understanding what inspires and drives you in your own work and how you translate your thoughts into physical form.

- Inspiration, Johan?

- Inspiration is a fuzzy borderland. How do you define the concept? Related words might be interesting to analyse. I think it's hard to say what inspires me, but the mythical is one big piece, a kind of story. Sometimes inspiration can be very evident, for example in practical solutions. You take the smartest solution, a part of the story. We all have different inspirational roads. Dissect a landscape and pick out the active parts, replace them and make contrasts. I think that natural phenomena and the border between biotopes is very inspiring, the landscape itself. If we don't have a concept it's hard for us to pull in the same direction. You have to define what you think, why we are doing this project.

- You have been doing this for three years now. Can you make any shortcuts today?

- Yes, we understand each other a lot faster today. We use only around five percent of the ideas that we generate per project. We keep all the ideas, and the number is just increasing all the time. Those are ideas we can use when we are in a hurry.

After the interview our self-esteem improved enough for us to continue our quest. We've got an idea of how our project should be formed, and we start to realize how much it can grow. We also start to face the fact that the questions we are asking might make it hard to elicit really concrete answers.



PICTURE TAKEN FROM NODs WEBBPAGE,
CREDIT NOD

the Biotrone wall at Bo01

CONVERSATION WITH AIDA KALNINS

#2

Malmö, Sweden

22nd of October 2001

Aida works mostly with stage set designing on theatres and for movie productions but she is originally educated as an architect.

She starts every new project with some days off. She fills these days with routine duties so that her subconscious can process the new task, but also to leave the old mindset behind. During these days when she takes "vacation", she filters the world around through what she calls the "selective vision", a subconscious that registers details that occur. These details register if they fit into the overall concept. After this the process that has started in the subconscious begins to clarify. With a collage technique she builds an atmosphere or the character that should permeate the project. Now she and the director can discuss and develop the story. The collages will work later on as a foundation for the ongoing sketching and model making.

- *Collage seems to be a very powerful tool to develop an idea. Is it a method you use frequently?*

- Yes, always. Collage is a real canon! It seems simple, but it takes a really long time to turn all the hundreds and hundreds of pages to find the one image you need. It's because you don't block your mind with details but start with an open mind that the selective vision can work. Your eyes are open to everything that fits in, and you can collect ideas from many different areas, which will give you all original solutions that no one has thought of before. It's very important not to be too concrete when you first meet the client. Because it's easy then to get stuck with small details, it's very important to speak the same language and get on well with each other. It's extremely dangerous to show a drawing too early; it should come when the client is ready. If you don't start from the right direction, it's too easy for the details to kill the creative process.

Inspiration and creativity

- When I studied architecture my teacher said to me that the first phase in a project you should be able to draw on a stamp, it shouldn't be bigger than

SHORT FACTS: AIDA KALNINS

Aida started her career as an architect, she later in life turned to production designer and got very successful. She also designed exhibitions and worked as a teacher for design courses at the architecture school at LTH in Lund. Today she is retired.

Here are some of the projects or movies she worked with:

- The movie "En enkel till Antibes" 2011
- The exhibition "Händelsernas Hus" Bo01 2001
- The movie "Ögat" 1998
- The movie "Glädjekällan" 1993



PICTURE OF AIDA KALNINS SKETCHBOOK

that. It will show what you mean, your basic idea is the most important one. Then you can pick up the Swedish construction regulations, but not before. The strength in the idea will still be there if you sketch it like this and do the details and measurements afterwards. It is the same thing with collage. Because of the bigger vision in the first phase, you can much faster and more easily be inspired from all sorts of things and take advantage of the selective vision.

Total freedom is the biggest inspiration killer. If you ask a child to draw a horse it's quite hard for her, but if you say draw a horse with small dots that is grazing and carries a broken saddle, then it's much more fun. The more you limit the task, the more concentration and joy you get. Solving difficulties is extremely good, and it develops the creative mind.

Problem

- *Is it common that problems appear that are hard to solve?*

- Yes, it happens all the time. When you get a task, in the beginning you do like everybody else. Then you realize that you want to be a bit extraordinary, but it's not so easy to be extraordinary just like that.



Difficulties help because you have to find a way out and create something of your own. You have to be confident to dare to do that, and to be confident you need to trick yourself and raise your level of adrenaline. The ideas don't just fall in, they never do. There is no one who gets ideas just like that. You see, most people can't study for a test until the last three days, because there is no tension. The tension is needed to change to second gear.

Trends

- Don't be against trends, but feel free to pick what you like. It's important to be honest with yourself. You have to dare to like something although it's supposedly "bad taste", and to dare to like something although it's bad taste is a hard thing. To be critical isn't so hard; you can always be critical when you have the result. You can always find that little mistake that makes you better than the one that you criticize. Look at Bo01, it was monotonous and all the appartments were alike. It's not strange that it was all decorated in the spring of 2001 and everybody did what they thought was the best and what they could get hold of at that time. There were some who decorated with old furniture, but there was no story behind it. It wasn't vivid. As a set designer I have to make the environments lively, to give a scene from 1950 life. All furniture shouldn't be from the same decade. I have to take things from the 18th and 19th century and something inherited and something new, and then it could be a vivid scene from the fifties.

A personal style

- *What separates you from other designers? How do you recognize your style?*

- It's hard to say. I have done both ugly things and beautiful things, I have done kitschy things and I have made classy things, but everyone who knows me, knows immediately when it's something that I have made. It's the personality; I mean this--Aida points at the space around her in the dining room. Now I have stuff everywhere, it's something with character just like my pictures. I always work with a wide scale of levels, and it's very important that every detail tells one and the same story.

About her job

Aida appreciates it if clients contact her a bit earlier than usual, so that her subconscious can start to work.

- The clock doesn't tick, it's just that when I know something in advance, then they get some for free. Because then it lies there and affects the subconscious when I am out shopping, for example. It just stays there in the back of my head while I move around, and things just come in without any conscious part of my brain working. It's just like short circuits, it just creates ideas, and you only have to be relaxed. While you are doing one thing the other things are just maturing; it's some kind of maturing process.

Aida showed us some of her models, which is the next step in her method, and you can clearly find her original inspiration in the models.



"Since fifth grade I've wanted to be an architect. I've always liked handicraft and to make my own stuff."

THESE ARE ALL PICTURES OF THE WORK OF VERTIGO
CREDIT JONAS LINDVALL AND HENRIK SCHULTZ



Short facts: Henrik Schulz

Today he has his own company "Henrik Schulz". Educated in Denmark, today he works with Volvos showrooms, furniture design for HAY, cooperation with Koenigsegg and Ateljé Lykta. Architect and designer Henrik Schulz is educated both at Chalmers, as well as "Konstakademin" in Copenhagen and Denmark's Design school. Henrik has worked with the designer Jonas Lindvall in Malmö and with Gert Wingårdh in Gothenburg. Since 2008 he runs his own architectural Company in Gothenburg. His clients

are for example; Volvo, SCPgrey, Stendahls, Ateljé Lykta, Skandiiform, Horreds, VGL Property, Sagaform and HAY. The office mainly works with brand design and private homes and product design.

Source:
Webpage Gyllensvärd & Co (2015) headword: Henrik Schulz
Available: <www.gyllensvardco.com>, (2015-06-16)

Malmö, Sweden

24th of October 2001,

We park our bicycles outside Vertigo on a cold day in October. Vertigo is a design company located fairly central in Malmö with a discreet sign. We are here to talk with Jonas Lindvall and enter through the big garage doors. We step directly into the big office room and feel a bit obtrusive. Jonas is not there, but he has asked one of his companions, Henrik, to take care of us. We become slightly disappointed by the fact that he hasn't announced it in advance; maybe we could have changed the meeting. But now that we are already there we decide to go through with the interview anyway.

The name of Jonas Lindvall was a tip from one of our tutors, Thomas. We don't know anything about Henrik; sometimes it's the unforeseen that gives the best results so...

We sit down in the conference room decorated of course with their own furniture and Henrik fills the table with espresso mugs and nice-smelling coffee.

He is fairly young, and seems to dedicate most of his time to design matters. He was trained both in Gothenburg and Copenhagen, and for some years he has been working for Jonas Lindvall at Vertigo.- Tell us what a furniture project might look like.

- Let's say that a company wants a new conference chair. Jonas might think, let's make a chair out of two pieces, where the armrest is one part and the rest is one part. I make a few suggestions, maybe three; out of them he chooses one. I continue the work with this chosen model, we have another meeting, etc.

-Do you feel free to do what you want or are there any frameworks that you must work within?

Henrik: - The client makes a choice when he chooses us. They know what we have done earlier, and therefore they know which frameworks we work within. If you make something too extreme, it usually doesn't get to be anything. I try to make the furniture fit our style.

- *What is it that makes your proposals look the way they do?*

- I think I try to rely on my intuition. That way the sketch yields the best result. Then I try to illustrate it with the computers, but it never gets to be as good as the sketch. It's an attempt to get closer to the sketch anyway. Maybe you only have a couple

of lines in the sketch, an image of what you want to create. Then you try to get as close to the chair you want to make as possible, with the real measurements. A real chair's measurements, all the angles and such things. The image has nothing to do with accurate measurements, but you try to combine the two.

It is the classical way to work, with paper and pen you create the shape that later on will meet all the regulations and standards. It is hard to keep the original shape, Henrik says.

- *Do you still work in the same way with every project?*

- No, not really. I make furniture, houses and asht-rays. They all differ very much, so there are obviously different ways to work. But the most obvious thing about my design is the image in my head and my small sketch, and then I'm trying to put them together. When I'm doing a house it's much more like a collage, a collection of inspirational things that you try to weave into a solution. A house is a much more complex thing; it contains so many parts. A design object should be much more direct, you should understand it right away. A house should be more of a maze, you should discover more and more all the time.

- *Are there any special branches that inspire you more than another? Is there anything special you look for, trends or any special style?*

- Oh, I think that is in the background. You are very much affected by them without knowing, and I think some of us follow them without noticing; they make things that are like what's in the magazines. Then you are out in deep water; how much attention you give to trends is up to each individual. For

me it's more important to feel that I'm doing something that I can be proud of. And then if it is fashionable or not is not that important. But I think that if a design is good it will always find its place.

- How do you think that the designer climate is in Sweden?

- Sweden is very much ahead, I feel, in the design consciousness. We are awfully aware of design here in Sweden. In every magazine there is an interior design article or a design article, and everyone has those ELLE magazines at home. That's not how it works abroad. It's been overstated here in Sweden; it's been that way for some time now. We'll have to see how long it will stay the same. But I have to say that it is a relatively designer-friendly climate here. It's only sad that there is not the same kind of money here as abroad. But, on the other hand, there is a big interest. I don't know what is the best, maybe the interest is the best.

- Do you feel that there is some kind of mainstream that everybody is attracted to, like the "Nordic light" design for example?

- I think that we are losing that today. The typical Swedish form is fairly accepted all over the world today, and foreign designers have started to design in the Scandinavian manner. I think you have to be a bit more open and start to get influenced by other traditions than the typical Swedish. Maybe it's we who have to borrow from them and develop their ideas. This Swedish tradition has existed for some time now, and I think it's slowly losing its central role in this region. It's apparent that if a bigger company introduces some kind of new cabinet that has a different look and seems to work, then next year you will have ten companies showing similar products at the annual exhibition. New mainstreams are created all the time.

- How long does it take you to produce a proposal from the time it's ordered?

- It's usually a very short period of time until I send them the first drawing, but then they start to change things and the ideas go back and forth for some time. For example, it doesn't work with the machine we have or we already have a mould that we could use instead, etc. Even if you produce a good idea, it's hard to make the producers accept it because they are taking the financial risks and have to be efficient to be competitive. Then it's hard to propose an idea that doesn't fit into their production.

- Do you think that the working process and the inspiration walk hand in hand? You get inspired, a new idea, a sketch, and then the inspiration will help you through the process?

- I usually have an image in my head of the product I'm working on, and that image doesn't change that much during the process. If I've been working on a project for a longer period of time I usually lose the image, but in the end I always return to that initial image. It's hard enough to find that image; to start to modify it is just a waste of time.

- Role models?

- When I attended the architectural school, I was very interested in sculptural art. It gave me a lot of inspiration; I can't mention anyone special. But to visit sculptural art shows always gave me new ideas and new aspects different from those that you found in the magazines. Of course other products and other working methods inspire me. I think everyone has an architect or designer that they think is extraordinary.

- If you see a designer who has done something good, and you check it out, you'll find that he has been inspired by something. Many modern chairs have their roots in the antique. There are designers today who design furniture the same way as they did in the sixties. You can't see the difference. It's definitely not wrong to be inspired by someone, but the important thing is what you do with the inspiration. If you can create something new, that is great. It's hard to make a chair unique, you shouldn't think about it so much, you have to go by your intuition. To be able to rely on your intuition and like the things you do. To rely on the fact that the images you have in your head are good, and then just work. I think that is the only way.

- We wonder sometimes about where we stand as designers.

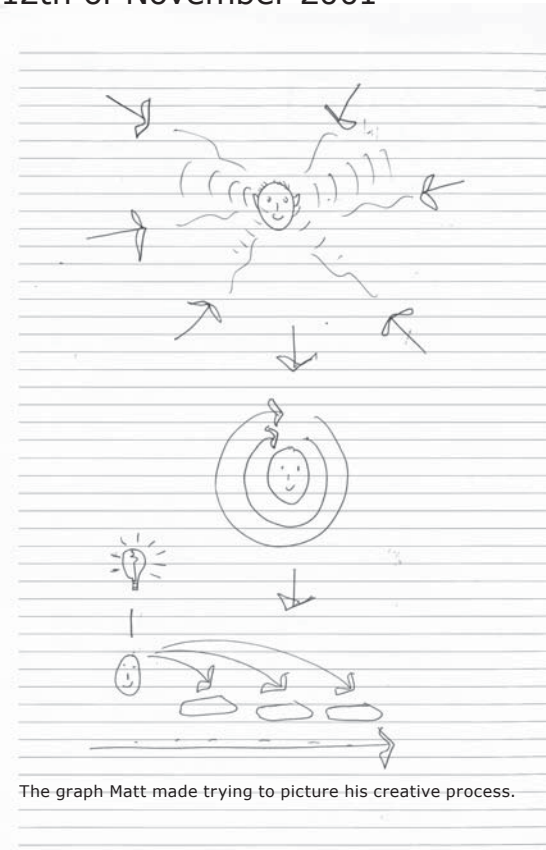
- When you go to school you construct ideas and a way to work, then when you go out in the real world it's quite a big let down when you see that there's a big difference from what you are used to. It's up to you to make something good out of it. If you can accept what the industry says and combine it with your own ideas, if you can do that you have succeeded.

We say goodbye. The disappointment of not meeting Jonas disappeared when we talked to Henrik whom we could easily understand.

CONVERSATION WITH MATT DAVIES

#4

London, UK
12th of November 2001



The graph Matt made trying to picture his creative process.

Short facts: Matt Davies

He started his career as a landscape architect and ran his own office called Planet earth Ltd. He started the company in April 1994 and in December 2012. Now he has changed direction in life and work as a psychosexual therapist.

Education:

- Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships, 2014 – 2016 Psychosexual and Relationship Therapy
- Spectrum Psychotherapy Centre, 2005 – 2012 Spectrum Training Certificate, Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy
- Chelsea College of Art & Design, 1993 – 1995 MA, Public Art
- The Manchester Metropolitan University, 1985 – 1990 BA(Hons) DipLA, Landscape Architecture
- St Alban's College of Art & Design, 1984 – 1985 Foundation Certificate, Foundation in Art & Design

Source:

Linkedin (2015): headword: A. Matt Davies
Available <www.linkedin.com>, (2015-06-16)

SKETCH BY MATT DAVIS
PICTURES FROM MATT DAVIES WEBBPAGE
CREDIT PLANET EARTH



The first I saw of his work was an internet site, www.planet-earth.co.uk, a thorough introduction to the company, it woke my curiosity, so I mailed him and scheduled an interview.

We first meet in the office, after some minutes of waiting we went across the street for a cup of coffe and to do the interview. The café is a cosy place were people go in and out all the time, the coffe is ecologically grown and tastes very good.

-When you start your work, with the others. For example if you have a competition, for something, what makes your proposal look a special way, do you have some things that appear in all your projects, or things that come back?

Yeah, oh yeah. That's a good question, I always ask that question to people who I interview. I ask; what's special about your work, how would I recognize it?

Well, I think the work is very, sort of socially centered, it kind of is very responsive to a use or a function in a social way, and it's also very integrated into the context, I suppose any work should be if its good.

Matt laughs.

- Still it can be more or less.

- I think that's something we really try to get right, that sense of integration, and that sense of something having grown out of the place, you know, as if it were naturally evolved like that, and that would also say look, the moving pattern of people you know and such. I suppose we try to visualize, well I don't know if it has that sense. Maybe we try to use the four elements, like the water and the earth and the air, try to get the sense of the sun and all of that coming together as well that's a bit more kind of ephemeral.

- If you should describe your creative process in a graphic way how would you do? Could you? (see graph on opposite page.)

- Ok, It could be something like this. Well it might be kind of, say, say that's me, ok , so this is kind of influences coming in I guess. So a kind of sort of sensitivities, listening, you know, could be, it's auditory as well as visual. And then I guess there is this kind of process of, I do something I really like to do I like to kind of really sort of sleep on ideas, things go round and they sort of digesting, you know sort of digestion. And then I guess then comes, this idea of well, a process of, how would I describe that. It's kind of like, really making a strategy, some kind of logical idea. Hmm in order to do that you already have the goal in mind, kind of, yeaah that's it! I guess I know what I'm aiming for then I'm trying to find out how I'm gonna get there. So I'm trying to put the pieces in place, so I have a sense. That's right so I already have, That's really important actually I forgot to say on this process, like the vision, the idea is kind of already there.

- Some blurry thing,

- Yeaah that's right. So I know what the idea is, but I don't quite know how to express it, and how to make it legible or understandable in the normal world, in a sense of that, cause it kind of might be a fuzzy idea. Because I really like the sense of working backwards on something, because if you take a landscape, hmm I mean it's easier if you take a sample of a building, you can take the building apart, and you can see how it's been built, the materials it's used, but you can't see the idea of the building and why they did it in that way. And I would like to think of that in the landscape, that you know, there must be an idea there, although it's hidden, somehow, but you might be able to see, the idea, you might be able to interpret the idea, by looking on whats been done. It might be legible and trying to make it legible, would be a very interesting way of working.

- When you visit a site what would you say affect you the most there?

- Well, Its just a sense of the place, I mean its so difficult to know what it is!, I was talking about it to this Peter Jungman this really old lad, and he is very pragmatic, he just says "oh you know a place is just a physical characteristic" But I think there is kind of

all sort of atmospheres and you know nuances that aren't just about physical characteristics, it could be the quality of the light or the wind, or the temperature of the site. And all the subtle electromagnetic vibrations and frequencies so. So that's I think there must be something spiritual, about a site or whatever you call it, electromagnetic or whatever, different energies and that is what I try to sense what they are. I also observe like the physical what's growing there because that's part of the living energy. So what's actually physically there, what growing there, how its been affected, and changed by different influences and I also like to look at the history of the site, I like to know what's been going on there before, because I kind of think that human interaction, I'm really interested in landscape and memory, I'm sure that landscape has a memory cause all the things that happens on it, it seeps into it.

-Its like the layers of rocks!

-That's it, yeah that's right, so I think if there has been lots of people doing some things on the site or moving across the site, or if there has been animals on the site that will affect the site. So like to try to build that up, so I look back in to the maps, go to the local libraries and look hundreds of years back, it's really interesting to see!

- But, like when you have a contractor, do they often have much ideas of how the work should be done, or ideas how it should look like with materials and so one ?

-Yeaah they do sometimes! And sometimes I think that's quit good, because they, there then participating in the design, because they are the one's building it. And I find it is a problem sometimes this like, this gap between the designer and the contractor. In some of my projects I've done, I've actually left certain things up to the contractor, because then they feel they got ownership of the design, and they often work better! So!

- You work here in this part of London, how would you say it affects you? Do you live here as well?

- Yeah I live just up the road, about twenty minutes cycleride. Yes it does affect me actually, but I do like it, I like the hardness, the urban hardness of it, because I think thats when our kind of work, and our art can really affect people mostly. I've had thoughts about eventually if I have children

sometime moving out in a nice country sometime. A farm you know, but then I think how different would my work be, because I really find this environment very challenging, I quite like being here, but on the other hand, like the first question you asked me; what time do I start? Sometimes I start late because I really like to sit and be quiet in the morning to read and concentrate on the reading, so thats nice as well. In the summers I like being in the country, being quiet, and concentrate, but then I like this busy business as well.

-If we go back to the books you read, which books do you read now, that would affect you in your work?

-Well, at the moment I'm reading quite a few books about spiritual psychology. It's kind of trying to train your mind or your thoughts, it's a bit like the alchemists in the 15th century. So you can train your mind to reach kind of higher levels of consciousness. So I think that does link directly to my work, because what I'm trying to do is to really clarify the way ideas come to me and the way I think about sites. So if I'm going on a site I like to really, try and be aware, have a very tuned awareness on what might be happening on that site. And I'm also in to Steiner, Rudolph Steiner, I'm really in to his evolutionary theories, how the earth came in to being, and how gradually different aspects of the human being began to form like a certain awareness or sort of ego consciousness and this kind of happened over ions and ions of years. So that kind of gives me a sense of the inspiration of the universe and the human being, it's a bit difficult to sum up in a nutshell.

It ends with a laugh at the café.

After two weeks we got a mail with a more colourful answer to one of our questions;

Dear Johan

It was great to meet you last week and be questioned on such interesting things. On reflection, I was not satisfied with an answer I gave you to the question of 'inspiration' or 'ideas process' when I drew the diagram for you. I thought you might think that I only value the physical input through the eyes and ears etc. because I drew a head. What I really mean is more than that. I rely on an emotional response in the mind, heart and body, as well. By drawing the head, I mean to say that thoughts are important too, thoughts and images in the mind. What I

wanted was to explain that by going on site I look and listen and try to be objective and unprejudiced in what I see and how I respond. Then there is an imaginal function in the mind that I try to be sensitive to.

I observe images that occur in my mind. Sometimes these images are very strong and occur quickly while I am there. Sometimes I have to return to the site later to become more sensitive to spiritual influences. These spiritual influences are as real as any other physical influence experienced through the normal bodily senses, eg eyes and ears etc but the spiritual influences are more subtle and we have to tune our mind and emotions (soul) and body (heart) to receive them (through the body's energy centres known as chakras in some spiritual traditions). I hope this clarifies and expands my earlier answer. I hope your research is continuing to go well. I would be very interested to know more about your studies and how they develop.

Yours

Matt



PICTURES FROM NEW YORK, PICTURE TAKEN by JOHAN KRIKSTRÖM

Short facts: Ken Smith

Ken Smith (born 1953) is an internationally acclaimed American landscape architect. Smith was born in Waukeg, Iowa, and attended Iowa State University, where he graduated with a Bachelor's of Landscape Architecture in 1976. After graduation, he apprenticed with sculptor Paul Shao, and worked for the Iowa Conservation Commission in Parks and Recreation Planning. He attended the Harvard Graduate School of Design, and received his Master's in Landscape Architecture in 1986. After working in the office of Peter Walker and Martha Schwartz, he opened his own office in New York City in 1992. Smith is active as an educator, teaching as an adjunct professor at the City College of New York from 1992 to 1996, and as a visiting design critic at the Harvard Graduate School of Design from 1997 to the present. Smith is a board member of the Architectural League of New York and is active in advocating preservation of

modern works of landscape architecture.

Smith was the recipient of the 2011 Christian Petersen Design Award presented by the Iowa State University College of Design. He is well known for his work on the Roof Garden of New York's Museum of Modern Art, which consists of white gravel, recycled black rubber, crushed glass, sculptural stones and artificial boxwood plants in a camouflage pattern. Smith was a member of the THINK Team in the World Trade Center competition in 2002. Smith was recently awarded a major commission for a 1,300-acre (530 ha) urban park on the decommissioned El Toro Marine Base in Orange County, California. Ken is the responsible for the Landscape for World One project, Mumbai, India.

Source:

Wikipedia, (2015), headword: Ken Smith, landscape architect

Available <www.wikipedia.com>, (2015-06-16)

CONVERSATION WITH KEN SMITH

#5

New York, United States of America
30th of November 2001

After being absorbed by an amazing concentration of human activity and a massive amount of physical structures supposedly protecting and lodging all these humans, I'm slowly returning to real life and starting to prepare my self to meet another landscape architect in a different context, for him; home, friends, work, pleasure and challenge. For me this is NEW YORK, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

I'm entering the office at 4:30pm. They have just finished one week's work and Dan one of the landscape architects just rushed away to the print shop with a cd containing the latest competition. The atmosphere is high and the Friday beer is opened.

- Do you feel alone as a landscape architect here in New York, are there many competitive firms?

- In New York, No it's not a very strong landscape community in New York. When I worked in California there were a lot of landscape architects, there it was much more competitive, you had a real community, it was actually kind of nice because you could meet with people and you could talk about

stuff, but in New York you are really much more alone. We are much more likely to talk to artists than landscape architects or musicians or architects. The great thing about New York city is that it's a great kind of social hive, it's like a beehive. You know there is just all these interactions and things, just going down the street. You'll meet people and talk to them and hear their ideas. New York city is just a really great place because of the density of culture. A lot of people don't like that, I mean there are people who absolutely couldn't live in New York city, they just hate all that but I think it's a great thing. It's a great place to have an office in that way, I moved here because the arts are here, and I just thought that's where I want to be. New York city has really shaped us, we are the kind of practice we are because of this place.

- Are there any special routines that you pursue, or do you do anything special every time you have a new project?

- No every project is different, I think. I mean I think that generally when a project comes in, there is something particular about that project which is interesting, there is something about the client or the program or the opportunities. So generally very quickly in a project we will determine that there is something that we really want to pursue as a kind of idea about this project, so that then forms that project.

The office is crowded with old models, Ken tells me that there used to be much more, there has been a change, they used to build big models of everything, now they work almost entirely with computers, and that is a big change. He continues to talk about the general approach on their projects

Ken: - But anyway, each project, is generally an exploration of some ideas, there's always an artistic agenda for each project, and generally speaking we are pretty good about keeping that going through the project. I think the clients don't always know that we are doing that, or they don't appreciate it. Often times they don't get it until the end of the projects, sometimes not until it's built. Then they go; ooh that's what you were talking about. But generally we're really focused on trying to keep that idea through, for me it's important, because you know, you need the kind of idea about what a project is about, in order that all the details and all the subordinate things are sort of reinforcing something. You see a lot of work, and there's nothing that holds it together.

- *Were do you look for news, or ideas or something outside your own knowledge?*

- For me, I'm particularly interested in art, I look to the art world, and I'm also interested in fashion, clothing design. So I actually always read the fashion reviews, like religiously. I love reading about the couture shows in Paris!

- Are you interested in fashion, I would have never guessed, says Judith laughing. she's an of Kens associates. Right now enjoying the start of the weekend.

- You know I'm always interested in like what Rei Kawakubo is doing, Rei always has interesting ideas. Issey Miyake's craft is really incredible, and I think that someone like Martin Margiela is really incredible, because his clothes always have incredible set of ideas about them. And so I actually find clothing collections very interesting and a clothing collection is, it expresses an idea or maybe a cluster of ideas, very simply and clearly with a lot of elaboration in a very short period of time. A year later they will have done another collection. And clearly when you look at a fashion designers career that's something that holds it all together. But each year they manage to take a set of ideas and develop something that is new. And I find that actually really interesting, and so the parallels between fashion and landscape interest me.

- *It's also like humans, interactions, the body, land, clothes.*

- It's like humans, the body, you know the earth moves, it breathes, grows, it dies, and clothing fits a moving body, and paving and structure fits a living body. There are a lot of parallels, and even the conflicts in fashion, there is a conflict between, whether fashion should reveal the body or set it apart from the body. And very much the same in landscape whether you go with nature or express culture. I find fashion very interesting. I'm also interested in music, I think music is another kind of good source of ideas for landscaping.

- *How would you graphically describe your design process?*

- Graphically?

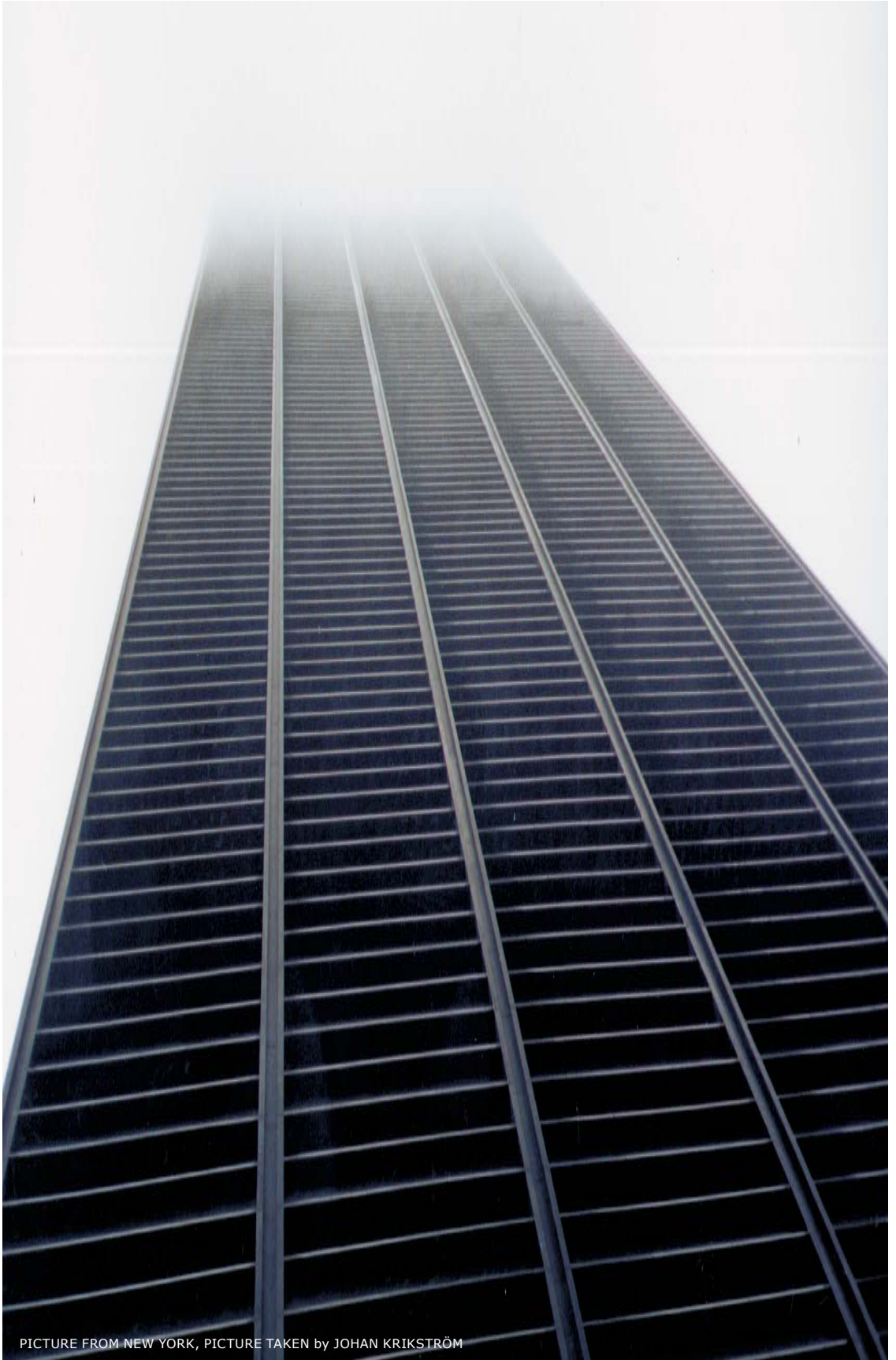
- *Is it possible?*

- I don't know, never thought of that, Haa, that's an interesting one. I mean when I did a design studio at the GSD (the graduate school of design at Harvard), were I took the studio and I graphed it graphically, "like graphed it graphically" hmm, it was interesting it actually ended as a whole series of overlapping strips and things like that and there was some kind of things that went along with that, but there was a kind of linear thing, with all these overlapping pieces, and I think I was inspired by Steven Reich's music, the kind of overlapping strips and things getting in sync and out of sync and actually the in sync, out of sync is interesting, because life is like that, there are moments when it all seems to work and then it all falls apart. But I would guess it would be some kind of linear bands that overlaps and some unexpected things.

Ken shows me one of his most spectacular projects; a hotel suite should be transformed to the Garden of Eden for a photo session for an interior design magazine.

He ends the interview by talking about his other passion, travelling. He uses the travels to open up the mind, he usually goes to experience cultures which he has no real knowledge of because they give the most in terms of intellectual feedback.

I'm pleased with an interesting interview and returns to the street and a weekend in New York before going back to Sweden.



PICTURE FROM NEW YORK, PICTURE TAKEN by JOHAN KRIKSTRÖM

Short facts: Simon Kringas

Ongoing. Lecturer - University of Canberra, Faculty of Arts & Design
2004. Kingston Foreshore – National Competition Commendation, RAIA Presidents Medal ACT – 2004
2002. Federation Place – National Competition Winner 2002
2001. Reconciliation Place National Competition Winner 2001
1999. Jenkins Farmhouse – RAIA Canberra Medallion

sources:

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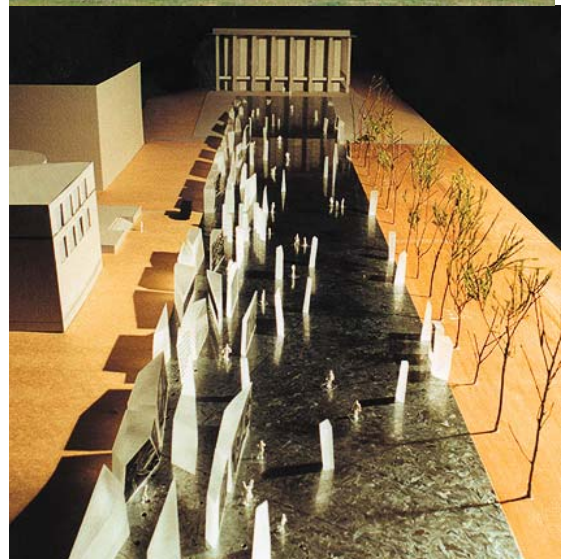
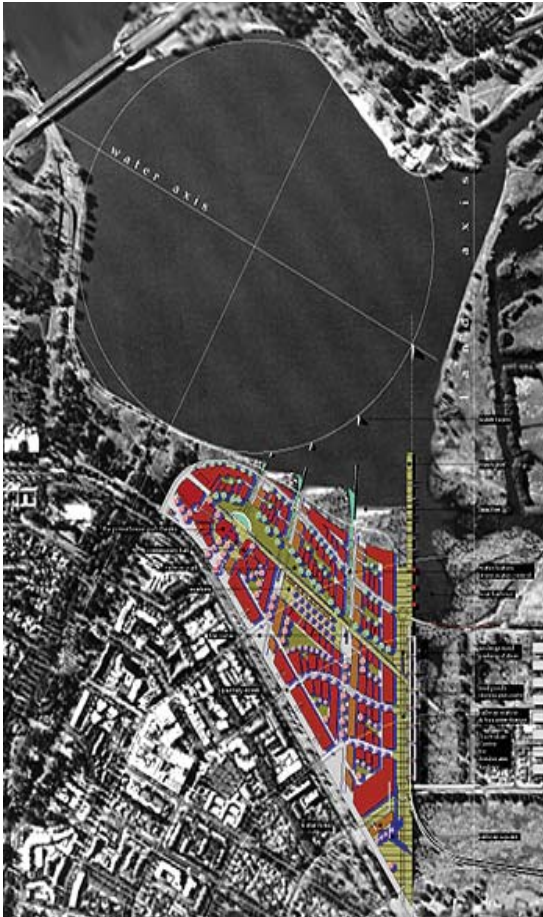
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www.nationalcapital.gov.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=82&Itemid=300 (2015-06-17)



PICTURES FROM KRINGAS ARCHITECTS WEBBPAGE
CREDIT KRINGAS ARCHITECT



CONVERSATION WITH SIMON KRINGAS #6

Canberra, Australia

15th of November 2001

Kringas Architects recently won the competition for the Reconciliation Place in the Australian Parliamentary Triangle, and is now engaged by the Federal Government as the Principal Design Consultant for the project.

My search for people to interview in Australia led me to Canberra where I met Simon Kringas at his office, a small brick house with a leafy garden in the center of the city. The office is small and intimate and I almost got the feeling of being in someone's home.

Simon introduces me to the different projects that he has been involved in and he talks about the process, influences and the meaning of architecture. He thinks that the ideal way to work is to teach and run a practice simultaneously, because as he says practice turns into a bit of technical exercise after a while but teaching reinvigorates that and also provides for research. Teaching is fun, but too much of it can be really frustrating.

Much more than work

- I'm not really interested in bread and butter building just for the sake of making money, for a business, I'm really more interested in architecture as a more innovative end.

The critical eye

- Certainly in teaching students, the biggest failing is this linear progression of a design, where you start with something, and move from a broad concept to a detail concept. I don't accept that. I think details occur and are embedded in the early concept, whether they are critical resolved to that point or not doesn't matter. They are still essential to the idea. I don't accept the idea that there's a start from this fuzzy thing and it works to the precise.

That's the thing that I find orthodox. Students are working and they pull it up, but then, they don't challenge it! A lot of it has that accidental element in it as well. You grab something and twist it and

challenge it. It's really about just saying; what if, what if I did this, even if it seems the unconventional thing to do. What if I did do it? What implication does that have?

What if I took these and lay them down aside, and if I did that and that's the critical part for me. If you come back and say that you were on the right track that is good. You've learned something by knowing what not to do, or it informs you about what's closer to the idea or the quality that you after in the design.

The design process

- In terms of design processes, I'll sit with A3 paper and just make sketch after sketch after sketch of very small drawings and little studies, trying to distil it down in its simplest way. There will be 20 pages of A3, of just doodles, which look meaningless, but then there will be one or two that just brings an understanding of what a relationship one part has to another. I tend to work mostly in sections in my designs.

As far as the actual process of design, whether it's a moment of inspiration or hard work or, I don't know. I think that the fundamental thing is, not taking things for granted. Questioning preconceptions and finding processes that do question them, but then having the discipline to be able to distil those ideas into lucid forms of clarity and legibility, because in the end that produces diversity. I think there is a difference between trying to make "you're building the whole world" and have all the diversity of the world where as, perhaps it's better to make your thing quite clear in a reduced set of qualities, so at least those things can be done well. Let its neighbour create a counter point to that, and in the total mix there is diversity to that, rather than saying every building, every door and every roof have to be from a different mentality.

Influences

- In the hey days of post modernism I got my version to symbolism or linguistic ideas from decon-

structivism, trying to apply them towards design. My attitude has always been that architecture or design generates experience, then we have put labels on those things that is trying to explain, and that's where symbols come from. Even deconstructivism is linguistically based and I'm still sceptical to that. The other big influence for Simon is the environmental and sustainable design, and there's quite a strong school in Australia, like the work of Glen Murcutt. It is very much about the native Australian landscape and trying to come up with forms that are symbiotic with it in terms of light and form.

The avant-garde view on architecture

- My education in architecture was all about challenging preconceptions and that was the foundation of architecture. Its duty is to question what we already have, that is its job. It's not trying to solve problems for every one and the masses. Its job is to be out there, it's that avant-garde view of architecture. That's what architecture's role in society is, because without art or anything doing that it basically stagnates.

Simon refers to Vittorio Grigotti, an Italian writer he admires, who said that the core of modernism was the questioning of the project, where as previously, buildings were fairly formulaic. The modern project starts with the questioning of the conditions of the time, and what the program is for the project. Grigotti is very sceptical of linguistic views and sees it as relatively aimless, or a lack of consistency in a project.

- You're trying to come up with an answer and you recognize that that's an answer only at that time, and it's frail and will be superseded, but that is still an essential way to go. The disappointing thing with deconstructivism in practise, is that the questioning is quite superficial instead of looking at form or space and the program that goes in it, and trying to create a new relationship between those.

The only other thing that I suppose I believe in is that architecture in the end goes back to the idea of the avant-garde. Architecture produces diversity because it produces exceptions to the rules. We have rules and architecture looks at breaking those to see if there is better ways of doing it, rather than just accepting those preconceptions. The more precise we can make design, the more diverse city areas. If I've got something that's vague and imprecise, it's more difficult to distinguish it from something else that is vague and imprecise. The more precise I can make something and carry it through to its essential

quality, the more it distinguishes itself from everything else, and in the end we have diversity and more to choose from.

That means understanding the nature of the beast, or the design that you're doing and if there is a quality in it, taking it to its end degree. I'm a proponent of minimalism, but I'd call it more essentialism in that it's about finding that unique quality rather than just stripping away parts for the sake of them. Architecture or design is very much a customizing process and that's what it does best. It deals with specific conditions on specific sites for a specific client. I think there's something anti-architecture about trying to solve all the world's problems or come up with generic designs, but I'm sure there is universals as well, I'm not getting into that, this is where I am at the moment, in the design and the housing.

Importance of architecture

Today, in a society with globalisation, media and information, we think we are more and more diverse, but we're not. We're becoming more and more homogenized in to a single society. It's very critical now to recognize that art and architecture's role is to provide counter points to that to keep some level of diversity.

- *When you teach in the university, is planning what you teach about?*

- I tend to bounce around through a few things, probably from design at the core and just running design studios and setting design projects. I suppose trying to race some critical theory ideas through the projects, sustainable design at one end but I'm not a militant environmentalist. In Australia we've got a plethora of buildings, that's just simply long skinny buildings facing north and the design is often let at rest at that. There are many ways to get light and ventilation through a building and, I think for me, sustainable design is about creating an experience within a building and not just trying to satisfy a connotative thermal performance. I've been to conferences for passive energy and architecture conferences and you sit through lecture after lecture and all you see is graphs of energy performances. There is no discussion on the actual experience of buildings at all. To me sustainable design is about clever shelter creating, and that should give opportunities to liberate the building.

About reconciliation place₁

- I'm not much into symbolism; to me symbolism is something that flows from experience of a design. I

think it's quite artificial to try and resort to preexisting symbols and that just limits the capacity of the design. Foremost in our minds here was that the project should be a place where people want to go and there would be events there and things to do there rather than being a memorial where you go and simply read some text or something like that.

The idea of reconciling with the previous owners of the land, and so, to create a symbol would always be a fairly superficial thing to do because the process is not complete. This is the beginning of a process not the end so if it requires meaning, over time, that's great and we'll see what happens, this might go on for a long time.

- Do you remember really where you got the inspiration or the ideas?

- Right at the beginning? First of all; getting an understanding of a site and the scale of the site was very important. I think in terms of attitude, it was always important that the centre be a positive form. We were trying to be consistent with the Burley Griffins design but as far as the level change, I think it was just simply through walking through the site and trying to conceptualise these objects, also trying to stay away from a single monument, or a single object.

So I can remember drawing it up on a whiteboard, and the group I was with was sort of fairly sceptical of the idea. They thought it was too big and too bold and things like that, and then it was tuned from there, but in principle that concept was already there and it stayed the same. It's only the spacing and the number of the objects, and the exact alignment and things like that. The materials only came once we won the competition. We had said that these might be stone or steel or glass, in the competition. I mean there was a desire to have consistency in them and that they weren't all just completely different objects, but some variation to.

¹ The Reconciliation place is a well discussed project in Canberra.

² Burley Griffins; American architect that made master plan for Canberra, The new capital of Australia

CAN RESPECT ONE ANOTHER, AND THE KIDS CAN GET TOGETHER, BUT THEY HAVE TO UNDERSTAND EACH CULTURES.



PICTURE FROM SINATRA & MURPHY'S WEBBPAGE
CREDIT SINATRA & MURPHY

Short facts: Jim Sinatra

Co-director of the Melbourne-based art and landscape architecture practice Sinatra Murphy, Jim Sinatra has earned wide respect as a designer, author and educator in the USA and Australia. He is presently Emeritus Professor at RMIT University's School of Architecture and Design. With qualifications from three universities in the USA, Jim has been a professional designer since 1966. He has been instrumental in the landscape architecture course at RMIT University and been awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.

Jim has long been interested in exploring the design dynamic created by the interplay between the natures of nature and the natures of human culture. Since setting up their studio in 1991, Jim and Phin Murphy have applied a philosophical approach to landscape architecture that celebrates the culture of people and the spirit of nature. Their work covers community planning, master planning, landscape design and consultative and workshop design processes. Other pursuits include public art projects, stone sculpture, writing and publishing.

The practice has received numerous awards in recognition of its contribution to design, research and public art projects. Jim has also contributed to his profession as a lecturer, critic, juror and reviewer around the world.

Source:

Ideasondesign (2015), headword: Jim Sinatra
Available <www.ideasondesign.net>, (2015-06-17)

Short facts: Phin Murphy

Phin Murphy graduated with Honours in a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from RMIT in 1990. He received an AILA Landscape Architecture Victorian Chapter Student Award for his final project: Beagle Bay – A Three year landscape improvement plan for an Aboriginal community. Since then Phin's primary interest has been to explore the range of landscape related projects that fall outside the boundary of the 'mainstream'. As a result Phin has been committed to Sinatra Murphy's exploration since its inception, gaining a diversity of skills. These include Concept Design, Design Development, Documentation and Project Administration for landscape design projects; fabrication and installation for art projects; and writing, design and typeset for publication. As a Director of Sinatra Murphy Pty Ltd, Phin values the importance of drawing on his extensive and ongoing travels throughout Australia as a source of inspiration in the creative process for landscape and sculpture work

Source:

Sinatramurphy.com

Available: <www.sinatramurphy.com/html/phin_murphy.html>, (2015-06-17)

CONVERSATION WITH SINATRA & MURPHY #7

Melbourne, Australia

5th of December 2001

About work

Jim: - We have a very diverse office so it's very hard when people ask us what we do. You do a little bit and you see all the issues, and whatever project is interesting, that people want us to respond to, we do. We don't worry about if we have experiences or not, we figure we'll pick it up along the way. Today Phin is working on a Reconciliation kit for the City of Darebin, which is trying to show how different cultures can respect one another, and the kids can get together, but they have to understand each other's cultures.

Jim used to be head of a course at the department of landscape planning at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) that gave students an opportunity to experience the remote areas of Australia, and the first time they went to Broome, on the west coast, they met Paddy Roe, a Nyigina elder, teacher and story-teller. Phin was a student at that time.

Phin: - It was the emotional experience of going to Broome to meet Paddy, but as we started working with the communities we became aware and learned more about some of the real issues that exist. In some of these communities, boredom kills people. Three year olds sniffing petrol. How do you deal with that? As a planner or someone who's involved in designing communities and houses, how do you deal with that? Is it going to solve the problem? All those things become more and more evident. For the old people there is a lot of meaning and importance in the landscape, they're on their own country. The Law is strong, the dream is strong and the language is strong. All that is really strong, but the young kids are hooked up to the rest of the world by satellites and TV. They know that there is something else out there, so the sense of profound importance of the landscape is maybe not so real for them as it is for the old people.

There is not much to do apart of football and driving 500 km to Alice and get drunk. The young kids end up sniffing petrol and the whole social thing, which is still traditional but not traditional, starts to break down.

The thing that we really came to realize is that in all of these communities, until all of those social issues are sorted out, the projects that are involved

in physical things like houses or physical planning are not going to have the success that they deserve. They are not designed for the social problems; they are designed for something else. That's where it gets really complicated and that's why you need a really long timeline on projects. There needs to be commitment, there needs to be support from every way possible. The issues are so entrenched that it's going to take a long time.

The Wilytja project

The Wilytja project in Kintore is a practical example of how inspiration from studying traditional living developed into a design.

Phin: - We were invited out to this community to develop a landscape plan for the community to address dust. These people are very traditional and planting trees isn't a part of their culture, but there had been someone out there for seven years, planting trees. To try and ensure that those trees had every opportunity of surviving, he needed mulch, he needed to protect them. There is litter everywhere so he used what he had in his hand to do it. He found that it was working very well, but when he left, because it was a 'white-fella-job', it wasn't seen as a part of a cultural thing to do, the work in the trees stopped and they died. People wouldn't look after them.

Well, we're not going to be there for another seven years so we've got to figure out a way of dealing with this. A lot of it was learning about the community, there were a lot of issues out there and we were trying to develop some sort of direction from the landscape aspect.

We started looking at the humpies that people were building themselves. That was their way of dealing with housing that wasn't working for them. We used architecture as a way of developing these shade-cloth structures that provided basic shelter, but from a cultural aspect there were a lot of things that housing wasn't doing. We wanted that something like this should be developed along side every house because it would help addressing the environmental issues from the standpoint of the people. The Wilytja project was the ideas coming from a four-year process, it was two weeks of building and basically four days before it had to come down. The kids went on top of the structure to use it as a trampoline, and to get to the top they cut slits

in the side panels to climb. It lost tension and it became dangerous. Now at that point, the project stopped, but what should have happened is that it should have been revisited and prototype number two should have been developed, which it would have if it had lasted longer.

We believe that the concept of the Wilytja still can work, but given the fact that all those social things have to be sorted out. Given the right environment, that has a lot to offer. But it won't until all this other stuff is sorted out.

The experience of working with communities in different parts of the country, learning and understanding the complex issues amongst the indigenous people is one side of their work, doing community planning, but recently they have done more design work due to government change and different values that come into place.

Jim: - We're doing this fountain for a country club based on golf balls--68 golf balls! We work, of course, with fountain consultants. We do things like that and we do some residential work. Just a few each year, they're quite interesting to do and it keeps us aware of materials because the materials you use are very important. We learn about materials by doing some of our small residential projects. We don't do construction drawings on the smaller projects, we work with the graders. It costs more to do it this way but we work with them until it looks about right.

Stories to be told

Jim: - A lot of our work has the experience that we've had from the interior country, represented in urban scenery. We've been marrying our experiences in Australia with our work in the suburban city.

- You are very inspired by the indigenous cultures and the rural landscape of interior Australia. Are there any other inspiration sources that you have?

Phin: - Probably. When Jim and I first started working together, I was still at school. We went to Broome and we went to Beagle Bay. At that time, there weren't many people from a landscape background that were really getting involved in the planning and development issues in the communities. We decided to follow the lead that was given to us. To try and search out what the journey was going to bring us.

The first five years of Jim and I working together,

we didn't do anything else but trying to learn about what the issues were, and work in some projects around the country. Jim was still teaching at RMIT so we still had a tight affiliation with the course at RMIT. I think that that's the primary one, and also from having the opportunity to sit down with people from a culture that is still very traditional, and still has a living memory from the first time they saw white people. I suppose the spiritual connection to the land and the profoundness of the landscape is still very important in many of the aboriginal cultures around the country, and that's what inspired us. Having the opportunity to visit some of those places after talking to people like Linda and Paddy Roe and Mrs. Bennett sort of moves you in way that in your creative projects you want to, not replicate it, but to use that inspiration in how you design.

I think it's from both a cultural aspect and from a natural aspect, from going to places that are remains and just being blown away by the landscape.

Those are the type of experiences, though, it's hard to do it in urban scene but that's what we're trying to do. We are trying to identify one or two essential qualities about the identity of landscape, that is strong enough to carry the whole project. It's like poetry almost.

- You concentrate landscape into urban sceneries.

Jim: - We believe that there are stories to be told from our landscapes. In the Riawunna project, it's not just rocks sitting around a building. And I think that's true with many of our projects, they have an artistic sense but they also have stories that can be told. The landscape that extends beyond the boundaries of the site is a part of our work as well.

About design

- Are you given any creative space in your work?

Phin: - It's only in the last 18 months or two years where we've starting doing work that is more domestic, and we've been lucky enough to have the opportunity to have clients that have allowed us to do that.

That's primarily because a lot of our work comes through word of mouth and through some architects. They are aware of what we are doing and they like to get us involved. Generally, the clients have been fairly creative in some way themselves, but also allowing the architects having freedom over the design so allowing us to explore the landscape.

- When you are doing these designs where the aboriginal people have inspired you, do you consult them regularly, do you have an ongoing contact with them?

Phin: - It depends on the project. The Riawunna project on Tasmania was done in consultation with the local group. When it comes to working on non-indigenous projects and design projects, it's us, it's how we've been inspired by working with indigenous groups, but it doesn't necessarily make any specific connection, it may on certain projects, but it's more about how we've changed as a result of those experiences. It's not trying to be faithful to any particular view; it's the creative process basically. The creative process, it's us.

About trends

- How do you look upon landscape architecture of today?

Jim: - If you just look at what wins awards in the practice of landscape architecture, which is quite different from teaching, I think the design work generally is quite good. Look at some of the new work that has been done in the US. They're a bit ahead in style, not necessarily in theory, but in styles. There are more clients, and there are more wacky clients that allow you to do things. If Martha Schwartz didn't have wacky clients, she couldn't do wacky things. That's the reality. No matter how good you are at selling things and your ideas, you also need the client base to give you the opportunity for those ideas to become reality. So I think the US has more "Wackos" that allow you to try yourself out, to do crazy things

Sometimes I think that the work that Phin and I did initially, working with the indigenous Australia is the most important work we've done. That we should return to it because it's so important, but the government is not as good as in the Labour days

- Do you think that there will be a time when the traditional ways of living and western way of living will some how find a meeting point? That you can live in both ways?

Jim: - When we worked in our project in Tasmania (The Riawunna Aboriginal Studies Centre) a lady picked us up in a red BMW. She smiled and then she taught us for two days about her culture and she was able to retain so many traditional stories, she is a part of the land.

Professor Sinatra is Emeritus Professor of Landscape Architecture at RMIT University. He joined RMIT in 1981 as head of the new undergraduate landscape architecture course, and in 1992 became Professor of Landscape Architecture. Since 1982 Professor Sinatra has initiated design studios throughout rural and remote Australia as part of the RMIT landscape architecture course. The studios led to the set up of the RMIT OutReach Australia (ORA) Program, which encourages Australian and international students and RMIT staff to participate in rural and remote projects. Over the past 15 years Professor Sinatra has been responsible for establishing successful and longstanding working relationships between the RMIT ORA Program and a variety of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities nationwide. His work has led to 'Listen to the People, Listen to the Land'. Professor Sinatra retired from RMIT University in 1998 with an Emeritus Professorship. In 1991, he started a small landscape architecture practice, Sinatra.Murphy. The practice maintains its involvement with indigenous groups, as well as working on urban design projects where the studio is committed to exploring the art of landscape, largely inspired by experiences from rural and remote areas.

Mr Phin Murphy grew up in Melbourne, Victoria, and graduated from RMIT University in 1990 with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (Honours). He received an Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture (AILA) Landscape Architecture Victorian Chapter Student Award for his final year project, and it was while working on this project with his then advisor, Jim Sinatra, that led to the start of the pair's working relationship to study the potential role of landscape architecture in contributing to resolving settlement issues faced by rural and remote indigenous communities. After travelling for eight months in Europe, India, Nepal and Thailand between 1991 and 1992, Mr Murphy returned to Melbourne to join Professor Jim Sinatra in their landscape architectural practice. The initial focus of their practice paralleled efforts of the RMIT Outreach Australia (ORA) Program, in which they both maintain involvement, forming appropriate planning and community development strategies through understanding the effects that Euro-centric settlement models have on indigenous culture and health. The efforts of their practice, and their direction for ORA's involvement in working with indigenous communities, have taken them to all over Australia to work on community planning and development, action research and design projects. The culmination of ideas on establishing alternative planning strategies were published in 1997 in 'Landscape for Health: Settlement planning and development for better health in rural and remote indigenous Australia'.



Short facts: SueAnne Ware

SueAnne Ware is a landscape architect and 'design activist' and her work shows how much aware one as a landscape architect shares in the responsibility for setting the political, social and environmental agenda. She sees the landscape as a physical catalyst for social change. Her projects are characterised by a strong commitment to what are considered marginalised groups in our society. SueAnne Ware has her own practice as a landscape architect and is Professor of Landscape Architecture and Deputy Dean of Research at the RMIT School of Architecture in Melbourne, Australia. Where she has been teaching there since 1997. She is also a writer and is involved in a number of journal articles, publications and books.

Some Publications:

2007. Monacella, Rosalea and Ware, SueAnne, *Fluctuating Borders: Memory and the Emergent, New Possibilities for International Borders* Monacella, RMIT Press, Melbourne (May 2007)
2006. 'Time, Ephemerality, and Memory: An Australian Case Study' * International Federation of Landscape Architecture Conference Proceedings, Sydney, Australia, pp. 78 – 92
2004. 'The Nature of Design', * AILA Conference Proceedings, Brisbane 2004

Some Exhibitions and Design Research Projects:

2003 ongoing. *The Road-as-Shrine*, Churchill Victoria
2005. *Anti-memorials: Re-thinking the landscape of memory*, 'PhD Exhibition, The Artery Gallery, Fitzroy, Victoria
2001. *An Anti-Memorial to Heroin Overdoses*, Melbourne Festival Installation St Kilda, Victoria October 11 - November 3 2001.

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CONVERSATION WITH SUEANNE WARE, RMIT,

Melbourne, Australia
7th of December 2001

#8

At Sueanne's office at RMIT. I give her a quick brief about our project, our interest in inspiration and where it originates. I present to her the idea of a black box, where inspiration enters and a product comes out, but the knowledge about the developing process is quite unknown.

- **I believe very much** it is about passion. The American way is a very conservative, linear way of looking at design. They probably call it conceptual development. On RMIT, we talk about it as your agenda. You're testing your agenda with new ideas. How that occurs or how it inspires is a pretty amazing thing, and it's just as varied as there are designers and projects.

Landscape probably has things that are specific to it, different to architecture or other disciplines. You have to take into consideration the fundamental things of landscape that makes it different. If you read Rosalind Krauss she would describe the difference between the object and the field. Landscape considers the object but it's primarily about the field. That is a very basic and distilled reading of her.

Landscape has this enormity of time associated to it. Corner writes quite well about it, his critique is that representational landscape is not dealing with time and process. If you're thinking about what inspires your ideas, because of those fundamental fluxes, those kind of inspire your passion about landscape as a media, and then taking these things into account also inspires to do that. Time and the fact that landscape is fundamentally a process, the way that one is conceptualising and playing with the big ideas of an agenda, is actually looking and thinking deep fundamental ideas about how landscape works. That is actually what makes it fairly different to architecture. It makes it similar to interior design.

One of the bigger things that landscape architects in particular have to deal with is the whole specificity. If you are a modernist, specificity and regional contextuality was one in the modernism, but it was very much against international modernism. So how does one look at those ideas, deal with

landscape, because it's quite specific to where you are in the world? One could argue that architecture doesn't have to be sensitive, but whenever a landscape doesn't respond to its context, it dies. Or it has to be so artificially maintained that it becomes unsustainable.

When people are conceptualising landscape as a whole, they start thinking about the bigger ideas. Perhaps then they start to think about more specificity into the site. Central questions as: What is unique about this site? What can I draw from? That then leads into, where again when we defer from something of the architectural world and interior world, there is a program, a program is fundamentally a part of what architecture is. Landscape has a program without us assigning one, just by the virtue of being landscape. Even if you can have an open framework in architecture, landscape has automatically an open framework. We can say that the program of this is a park but we know that the way that people use a park is very open. Everyone uses a park in a different way and one can say that about a building as well but it's a different relationship to program then to say something that is fundamentally defined by program. Architecture is very much divided, it's domestic, it's commercial and people can kind of say that about landscape. They can say it's a garden or it's a park but that's based on a scale, and the way it's appropriated can be totally diverse to that. Landscape exists without us naming it.

When people start conceptualising or initially considering landscape, they can surely assign it a use but in the end of the day it's probably going to have fifty different uses. - Do I offer a flexible or a very set framework? Fundamentally, that's another way the light bulb goes on.

There is this whole idea about a formal language

in the landscape. Landscape doesn't have to have a particular form whereas building has to have a structural form. Landscape can be quite diverse in its horizontal format. I suspect that is where the ideas in the head and the ideas that goes out on paper and in the models or into the computer become quite... that's the hard part. The hardest bit is conceptually what I believe and what I'm thinking, then the physical formal response to that. I find that, and you will find that, first year of doing it is incredibly rough. What you are talking about and the complexities of your ideas versus what the formal outcome or the thing on the page can be incredibly distinct. Then you get more refined, you get better able either to communicate or you're probably a bit more lateral about how you think. You start to be much more comfortable about taking this to the paper.

Things that are fundamental to landscape the other disciplines take for granted. We are questioning the very nature of those things, which in traditional design are basically accepted. Here is a program, here is the site, come up with a formal response that deals with this kind of perimeters. In landscape, you can dictate those perimeters but they are quite loose. That's probably why landscape as a profession doesn't have this nerderiaty or seem as a bit more open disciplinary. It doesn't seem as defined and everyone is going; - Why do you need a landscape architect or what is landscape architecture? That question has been around for 200 years, it's a bit boring and I'm tired of answering it.

I suspect because we are so able to deal with that in a number of ways whereas building is fairly recognisable. Landscape is much more interesting, it's always changing. I find it really fascinating and trying to work out when go into the black box and how. I think that it is fundamentally based on what's different about landscape, what makes landscape interesting to engage with. That's not to say that you can engage with it the same way you do with architecture, I think some people do that incredibly well the same way they do art or the same way they do other things. It is a fundamental question about when you are conceptualising something. I don't know any landscape architects or designers that don't contemplate landscape.

Landscape, especially public landscape always has a politic associated with it. It's very different to the other things that are allied in design - What does public mean? What does culture mean? Whereas an architect might struggle with that and say a museum is something of a public symbol of culture.

Landscape is always engaging with ideas of our culture. You cannot separate them. It is incredibly complex and that's why it's so hard to define. The whole range of scales that landscape deals with is also to diddle with, to what the way you think. Distilling the facts is probably time, scale, program or not to be program, and process. These are all really different energies or synergies of landscape and even if you just want to deal with composition, those things come into play. There is also a regime of maintenance, which many of us think is generative for the landscape.

You still have a very drawing-centered way of design and thinking of space. That is certainly a rigorous way of letting the physical product of one's communication also be generative. Rather than saying; - I have an idea and I'm going to draw it, say; - I'm going to make a collage and whatever kind of spatial roundifications that has, that's the design. For example, let the material dictate the surface, design through making and that can be quite a formalistic thing.

I'm doing a PhD on memorials. My work is looking at and redefining memorials. They are very static, they don't change but landscape is always changing so why are we using something in the landscape that doesn't change? We reconceptualize and rethink history but memorials stay the same. What can you do on a public ground that gets people to challenge their worldview, which I think memorials can do, but also has flexibility and is ephemeral.

- How do you start your projects? Where do you get your ideas from?

- I tend to do projects that I personally have a state in. I don't do projects I can't be passionate about. I'm an academic and my time is quite limited and I don't have a practise so I don't have to make money so I tend to choose the no-hopers, the project that someone who would want a fee wouldn't choose. That is how it starts. I grew up in the south of L.A. and I have this wealth of experience of drugs, gangs and public housing cultures behind me. If you spend your life doing something you should bloody well care about it.

The first thing is to work out what I am passionate about and then to see if the public is interested in that. Then I will see who is crazy enough to let me do it, and then the ideas start flowing. Part of what I do is looking at what is contentious

in today's society. That is what landscape architecture can do, sometimes it gets just aesthetics and sometimes it's ecological obligations, that is just as valuable but it's nothing I would do. That is how it starts. Then the formal language starts with; I'm an everyday person in a public practice, walking down the street, what do you see? How can you engage with the things that you see in your everyday life and twist them ever so slightly that they have a different meaning? You don't have to go over the top to make a point. You can actually use what is at hand and do some pretty amazing things, or you can be incredibly sympathetic to a place and the way a place operates and add something or insert something ever so slightly different that people start to think about the form.

I also tend to believe that teaching is very much a practice. Teaching is very much about design and you have to design to be engaged in what you are doing.

You reinvent the process and you do a new process every time you design. It's all based on what you are doing and it's totally specific to what you are engaging with.

- What type of modern landscape architecture inspires you?

- The idea of dealing with things in a more ecologically sound way and dealing with things that are fundamental to landscape is quite interesting but not separating landscape from humans. The traditional thought of nature is one thing I think landscape has moved quite a bit since I was educated. The landscape itself is a medium that we have been engaged with in a number of ways now and because of that, people can conceptualise it. Then it was all about compositional things; Hardgreaves, Schwartz and Walker.

Landscape follows fads for about two seconds but it takes too long and people get tired of it when it doesn't grow fast enough. They move quick away from fads and return back to what landscape really is but you still see gardens that are a bit passé. The best all time garden though is Dan Kiley and the Miller House. It's modernistic but the way he engages with the landscape and space is amazing for the time. The way the Californian modernists carried ideas about landscape through. They just had a really interesting sensibility, part of it is compositional, but part of it is a real amazing understanding of grading. It's so fundamental. It's Illinois, it's flat, therefore, let's play with the flatness. Expand upon it and exaggerate. That whole idea seems pretty easy, but to do it and to do it well.

PICTURES FROM WARZAW,
PICTURE TAKEN
by CHRISTER LUNDENIUS

CONVERSATION WITH MIREK SZTUKA #9

Warszaw, Poland
15th February 2002

Short facts: Mirek Sztuka

Mirek has been working as a landscape architect and project manager for over 20 years. He has been involved in a variety of different scale projects ranging from small private gardens to regional environmental/landscape strategies and new town developments. He is an experienced team leader and project manager that worked successfully in many different countries (Poland, UK, France, Germany, Dubai, Hong Kong, China, Russia).

Currently he is focusing on large scale residential projects, while still continuing his involvement with regional and urban landscape planning projects with a strong sustainable component. He is also experienced with LEED and BREAM certification procedures.

He started his own firm in 1996, RS Architektura Krajobrazu S.C., in Warsaw. Currently he owns and work as managing director for S&P Architektura Krajobrazu Sp. z o.o, in Warsaw. He is also works as a consultant for Brusnika Engineering Ltd, in Tyumen Region, Russian Federation. Recently he also started his PhD study on Landscape Planning issues in a context of EU Flood Directive

Source:
Linkedin (2015), headword: Mirek Sztuka
Available: <<http://ru.linkedin.com>>, (2015-06-16)

Design

- What I found and realize is that I practically, even if I don't design in the office, I'm thinking about design sitting at the table. There is a design, which I'm supposed to execute. I design all the time, I drive and I think about it, I walk and I think about it and I sometimes think about it when I go to bed. Very often the process starts the moment I see the site, it's like an unstoppable avalanche. It just goes. If the site is easy or if I got a feel for it, within two or three days I know what the product is going to look like. There is not a line put on paper but I know what it will look like.

At the beginning when I started working I used to do two or three versions, nowadays, it probably comes out of experience. The first (idea) is always the one I keep, because I know that every other will just be forcing you to do something; which really don't fit. Coming back to the question, designing on paper, I do, it varies but I say; to be a designer is not a profession, it's a lifestyle! You are a designer, non-stop.

- *Would you say it's a passion?*

- Definitely! If you don't have a passion, don't come to the profession. It has to come from within your-

self; otherwise you will just be doing what other people want you to do.

For me the biggest challenge in the design is at the end to satisfy myself. To satisfy the client is easy. Last time I talked to a client was the first time a client asked me, are you happy with the design, and I said, if I'm not happy with the design I wouldn't show it to you. So you would design this for yourself, he said?

I don't know, but for this building most probably yes. At the end the final judgment is whether I'm happy with what I'm putting in front of the client, because if I'm not, I cannot persuade him to it because that would be false. You have to believe in what you are doing. If you are not driven by passion you are just drawing nice things.

- *That means that you wouldn't do something that you don't believe in, or would you if you needed the money?*

- No. I always try to find in a clients philosophy, something that would inspire me to do something with what I would be pleased. If I cannot find in a client something that would be good, I try to persuade the client that perhaps we will slightly change the approach. Usually it works, I've never ever in my life done a design which I would not be con-

vinced that it should be like this, for one or another reason, never.

- *The first input you get from a client, what would that be? Do they show you the site or do they show you intentions?*

- It's different. Sometimes it is a meeting with a client in the office. Any contact with a client is an input because when you design something for a client you design something for a person. The more you know the person the better design you can do. Every contact with the client is an input towards the project, even if you go there to have coffee for five minutes and drop the drawings. It's still an occasion to get some new information about the person you are working for. As I told you yesterday, I got a philosophy that designers, especially for private clients, should be like a good hairdresser. The client can come and talk to you about family problems, about work problems, relax and be himself. Then you know what their lifestyle is, what moves them or makes them going and a good design is when the client comes out, when it's executed, and it moves him. You really have to know what the client is about to make an impact on him by your design.

- *Could you define a typical design for your office?*

- No. We do anything, anything that pays enough. It's not only because of the question of money, it's because I think a routine is the worst thing that can happen to the office. I like projects that are new, something we have not done before. A challenge that makes me learn more about things. It push my boundaries further. I like feeling stretched to the extreme when I'm working. I don't like this kind of, warmish work. If the work is hard and it makes you sweat, it's worth doing.

- *If you would say that there is something special about your work. If there were a competition, how would your work be different to others? Do you have some kind of speciality?*

- I think what really brings us out is our graphic presentation, that is one thing. Somebody once criticized us that it's too realistic, and I said, the clients wants to know what they will get, it has to be realistic. Perhaps the attention to details. The other thing I find when I'm designing is, if I design a whole garden, very often I have to already solve the problem with the kerb or a little detail in the fountain in order to be sure that ten meters further

it will be okay. I would like to say that we put a lot of attention to details in an early stage of design. Even if the design starts in my head I'm already choosing the species, which will have the right feel for the place. It goes very often in the geometrical way, in my head it grows very fast and very often I put it on paper, not because I don't see it but I can forget the details.

- *These details that you come up with, are they new ideas every time or do you find them somewhere else?*

- Well, there is nothing totally new, ever. You always base on your experiences, visual, other work. What can be new is the way you assemble it. The elements are always old. Innovative design very often comes from people who can marry two disciplines, which are lying very far away.

One method

- We basically take two, three books and ask them what they like, because otherwise, clients very often are not able to express them selves, what they really like. When they see the pictures they say, oh, I really like this, no, I don't like this, oh, this is excellent. Then one can start building a design portrait of the client.

About Magazines

- The most important for a designer is to know what is going on, what is happening. This is also our inspiration to see what other people are doing. To be a designer in a void, first of all, it's very hard. I find it in working myself, physically painful. Secondly, it's pointless, we are flock animals. We live in groups and we should bounce our ideas. I found that a dialectic method, which was used by Marx in politics, from clusters of ideas new ideas are developing. I find that very effective in design.

The process

- *Do you see different phases in the process? Is it first thinking, then producing?*

- There is no pattern. Sometimes it's like this that I see the place and I know immediately what it should look like. Sometimes I look at the place ten times, I look at the plan, and it just doesn't work. I scribble something on the drawing, nothing, nothing! Suddenly I see in a book, an element, and it gives me an idea for the whole thing. Sometimes I sit down and draw different shapes and it works. Every time is different; there is no pattern whatsoever.

- *What if you have a problem and you don't get anywhere?*

- I leave it. There is a certain point beyond which you should leave it because you are just getting tired and frustrated. If something like that happens I sometimes call people who can give me an idea. Sometimes if I cannot get anywhere, I try to give a theme. Sometimes it's a word from a client, which inspires. I really can not put one pattern to the way I design.

Inspiration

- *Do you think that this location of your office somehow affects your work?*

- Probably not(he says after a long silence). It's nice when you want to have a break to go out in the garden, but what happens with me when I design, it's almost like I go into myself. I close myself and it happens inside. This is probably the reason why I like working at night, it's quiet, the music plays and nobody calls. I can switch of everything and just concentrate.

- *The word inspiration, what does it mean for you?*

- Probably every time something different. I would say, if your life is not inspiring you cannot be a good designer. Your whole life should be like this. You cannot switch and become a designer for one hour and then be someone else. It has a lot to do with good imagination and fantasies. You have to live a little bit in the koko-land to have a good inspiration. Otherwise you will just do what people expect you to do and what one has to do is something unexpected.

- *Do you find it easy to persuade the client into your ideas of things?*

- It might sound awful but I find myself with a talent to persuade people. I might be manipulative. In all of my life I have been interested in people. Every person in the world is interesting; you just have to find it in them. There is always an interesting story to every person. When you meet the client it's the same, you have to find the interesting story and through this story you can reach him and explain him, you just have to find a method of explaining. Every story is different. It is what I find fascinating in this profession, every time is different. There is no repetition. It's probably what drives me in life.

- *The source of your passion, where do you think it comes from?*

- I think life is one of the greatest things in the world. I think it's tiring and bloody difficult. I think mine will be awfully long, which is not necessary good. I come from a family where people are long lived. My grand mother is 96. I still think that life is one of the most exiting things, which can happen and every day is different. The most exiting thing in life is that you never know what will happen tomorrow. It can be the greatest shit ever that happens to you or it can be something wonderful that shoots you to the sky. It's why life is worth living. The only real things are emotions, all the rest, all the material things, we appreciate because other people appreciate them. What we really feel, what moves us is really the most important things and I never understand people who runs away from strong emotions. I feel that I'm alive when life is very hot or very cold, there is no middle way to life. Take it as it comes, all the way, or not at all. If you do something you have to put yourself into it, otherwise, how will you know your limits? I like stretching life to the limit. Life without risks is a safe cage. You will never know what is there if you don't take the risk. The worst thing in life is fear. It's a powerful and destructive force. I agree with what the Buddhists say; in life you got two forces, love and fear. The rest is only a mix of the two. One of them is creative, the other is destructive. So it's a passion I would say. I don't think of myself as an artist, I think it's a craftsmanship because art is much more abstract. We are creating utilitarian things. It's like a table, it can be beautiful esthetically, but it's still just a utilitarian thing. We create spaces to be used. Spaces where people are supposed to enter and things are supposed to happen. They rest, they are entertained, they look at it, they are impressed, but there is always a reason to do it. Even in the business parks where they put sculptures, those are big businesses wanting to impress their clients, Versailles was really the first corporate landscape. For me landscape architecture is a craft, very complex but it's still a craft. As in every craft it's extremely important to know your profession, to know the elements, to know the technicalities, to be very precise. We are supposed to do something that pleases the client, of course we want to please ourselves as well, that is one of the challenges but we work for the client whom we want to please and we never do it for the sake of doing. In fact, I would find it diffi-

cult if somebody would give me a piece of land and say, do something. Where to start?

- If you would say that there are any trends today, what would they be?

- In general there is this modern design that is riding high. It will never be as modern as it was in the sixties. It will forever have this touch of post-modernism. Never pure function, there are always stories added to it. There is this big trend with a mix of prairie style with Pieter Oudolff, this huge sway of perennials. It's a style that made a funny way, it came from Scandinavia and Holland and then it went to the States, mixed with the prairie style and then it came back. I like very much it's nice and very natural look, it's almost ecological. It never was ecological thou. Now there is this very strong trend, and is probably one of the beginners was Martha Schwartz putting out the bagels and the frogs in a pattern. She is a direct line from French formal gardens. There is no one pervading stuff, and it's probably good. There are plenty of people who do things, which are not in any other style, and they are still good. There are traditional things that are excellent. We live in this multicultural era where everything is mixing and probably in fifty years someone will say, this was the time of this and that, but now we are in the middle of it.

Many influences are being mixed in New York and London, and what comes out are really vibrant and new things. Designers come popping from left and right like fireworks, and suddenly something completely new is happening. The danger I can see in landscape profession is the profession enclosing its own circle. We should take much more lead from fashion design. When they design something they get inspiration from fields far away, they go to industrial sites, they go to different cultures. In landscape where there is a tendency of being a landscape designer looking only between landscape designers, not taking inspiration from what's happening in technology, in science or in literature. I think those crosses are always very fertile. What is a modern design? It's a design, which takes the latest lifestyle trends and the latest technologies and uses it in the design. Capability Brown was probably the first modern landscape architect. He didn't do it for esthetic pleasure, he did it to simplify the maintenance. He used the newest philosophy, which was there at that time and he used agricultural technology to create a landscape. He was very modernistic, the form was directly driven by the function. If anything, we are recently too much preoccupied

by form, not why it's supposed to be like this. We want it to look like something. I think this global influence is very good.

A few weeks later we sent a letter to further explore some questions.

How do you define Inspiration?

I am not sure if it is possible to define an 'inspiration'. Are we talking about an object or a 'thing' that inspires us, or about a process of being inspired? People use the word 'inspiration' in both meanings. I presume the question is about the second one, about the process of being inspired, because earlier I already said what can inspire me in my work.

In that case I would say it is a moment in which ones thoughts about a particular problem find a satisfying solution, or at least the core of the solution on which we can build the rest of it. Often it takes a form of almost enlightening. It is when the inspiration results in a quick and practically complete solution exploding in ones head. Sometimes it is like lightning a match. It starts with a bright flash and than it burns for some time till the solution is completed. It is not an accident that I describe it as phenomena with light. The sensation is like entering light up area after walking in semi darkness.

Most people working with design have a sense of how their creative process works. Do you think that that image has changed since you started working, and what will it look like in the future?

It did change very much, and in fact if it would not, I would worry very much about myself. One of the great qualities of life is that through the passage of time almost all its aspects change. But, in my opinion, the changes in the process of creative thinking and in the process of designing have to do mostly with experience. I have an impression that by acquiring experience in work we start doing big part of it subconsciously. We use shortcuts, we do not have to examine all the aspects by drawing details and trying solutions on models. When you see few of your designs build, you now the next time how some of the solutions will work. Your mental library of knowledge is building up. As a result you can work quicker.

The other thing that happens often in my case is looking for introducing new aspects into design process. Just when I am about to drop into a routine, I introduce something to make it different and usually

more difficult. I take into consideration additional elements of environment, add new technical solutions, try to look for new uses of the space, make them more flexible. The list is long. Contractors who work with me for some time say that I always make them to learn new things with each project. They always have to flex their brains taking on my design.

So, nowadays I am working faster for sure, but also less precisely, which is a nightmare for my co-workers. I have more of results of the creative process left in my head than on paper, and they have to drag it out of my when they can.

Fortunately I do not know how it will look in future. It would be a horrible thing to know that. I want it to be different and unexpected, otherwise it would mean I seized to be a designer responding to changes that happen around me. To be able to define oneself as a designer in future means planning to work in isolation from outside world. In our profession it should be forbidden.

CONVERSATION WITH JERZY SZCZEPANIK- DZIKOWSKI #10 Warszaw, Poland 16th of February 2002

Mirek Sztuka arranged a meeting for us with an architect that he knows well and has worked with on a project. We met Mr Szczepanik-Dzikowski in his most recent built buildings. Mirek Sztuka designed four interior light shafts, a couple of atrium yards and also put up surrounding climbers and trees, a very interesting project.

Mr Szczepanik-Dzikowski is a fifty year old architect schooled in the modernistic school of Poland. Unfortunately he was very tired and also very stressed when we met him. He was double scheduled having a meeting with one of the owners of the house and at the same time a guided tour for a group of some kind. Well, we jumped right into it and got sixteen minutes.

— ...probably I am a very difficult partner to talk about those matters, because generally, I'm this kind of person who is not oriented to see to much or to find, a pattern for my creative work so generally I prefer to use the brain and to see the bar and to think I don't know generally some rules who is important for the work generally whatever it is. But I'm not oriented to see what how works Johnsson or any very known architect so if you have hundreds books, doesn't matter what type of books, and you read those hundred books, then practically, probably you have enough information to find any solutions, if you have the brain if you have not, of course you have to read the proper book. I don't know if it's clear, I would like to say that first of all, everyone who wants to create something should ask himself what is interesting for him, shouldn't ask other person. What is important, nothing comes from nothing, then of course we have to observe the world around us, and we have to interpretate, and we have to feel of course

building in each city, we have to understand this city and we have to understand people living there, and we have to try, I don't know, atmosphere, and for these reasons I liked those bars, cause hmmm, looking through the window through these I can observe allot, ok, maybe it's a joke

– *Or maybe it's not.*

– I don't know how to because if you ask me about the source of inspiration. I would say only, in my understanding the source of inspiration is the world which is around us in generally. And each of us should find his one way of interpretations, each of us should try to answer the question, what is important, what is not important. Such answer means nothing....

– *For another people*

– Because, anyway I wouldn't say I know any architect who is most creative and I would try to do something like he is doing. I don't know such person, of course there is allot of buildings, that are beautiful and very interesting and I want to learn them, not to find the source of inspiration but to learn them and to understand how the outer of those buildings solved simply the problems, sorry I'm tired.

– *But for example if you have a problem with a design, that are hard to solve, how do you get around problems?*

– Depends to the type of problem.

– *For example how to put the wooden drapes,*

– You mean technical problems, or more intellectual problems.

– *More design problems.*

– Ok so we have to think about the philosophy of design, Ok. If you ask me how to use for example those timbers, it comes I think in case of this building, comes from the philosophy of the building. So what I think is important is that each detail says the same what says the whole, or should try to say the same. And probably it's hard to clarify the process, my understanding is that, detail is type of language, to say what you think about whole building. So detail and whole building should be compatible, and should represent the same way of

thinking. I don't like details that are, that you can very often observe in Warszawa. That the detail is created for it self, it's something that can be separated, I have to solve the problem the shape of this screw and it is very sophisticated shape, it could be very sophisticated if it comes from the idea of the building. If I have like say the building in which so many screws or screws generally are important, and I'm using to I don't know, to show the structure or a rhythm. So in this case it might be such a big screw, the head of the screw. But it should come from the general idea.

– *How do you produce this general or main idea for this idea for example for this house?*

– Ok, this house, I think that's very easy to say, because this building was very clearly defined by the client. We knew that, yes, what they wanted, a very flexible, they wanted to have a building which creates special environment for the office space. Then we have studying for very long the environment around each work station, not each but generally around the workstation, and how to met some problems like flexibility, like acoustic problems and allot of light and to solve the problem that this light shouldn't disturb the computer screens and so on and so on.

– *So it kind of started from the inside and worked its way out.*

– Yes, yes generally yes. I'm sorry I have to go...

The interview stops he gets torn away from us, for another meeting. It was short but intensive I think it gave a quite clear picture of his work.

Short facts: Jerzy Szczepanik-Dzikowski

Architect – born in Lublin in 1945. Graduated from the Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology in 1972. In 1984-1987 President of the Warsaw Chapter – Union of Polish Architects SARP. In 1984-1989, ran an autonomous architectural studio together with Olgierd Jagiełło as part of the ESPEA cooperative. Since 1988, founding partner of JEMS Architekci. In 2001-2005 Secretary of Polish Chamber of Architects Since 2010, supervisor of diploma projects at the Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology. Winner of the SARP Honorary Award 2002.

Source:
JEMS Architekci (2015), headword: Jerzy
Available: <<http://jems.pl>>, (2015-06-16)



WEST 8

Short facts: Marc Lampe

Marc now has his own office, working as an independent advisor in urban development.

Career:

- Own company
Owner Marc Lampe
March 2002 to present (2015-06-17)

- Architect

West 8 landscape architecture and urban planning
March 1996 to March 2002

- Researcher

Faculteit Bouwkunde, TU Delft
July 1990 – June 1995

Education:

- Architecture
Delft University of Technology
Masters, architecture
1987 – 1995

Source:

Linkedin, (2015) headword: Marc Lampe
Available <www.linkedin.com>, (2015-06-17)

CONVERSATION WITH MARC LAMPE #11

Rotterdam, The Netherlands
18th of February 2002

West 8 is a big office with roughly 50 employees. They do projects in all scales and they are often provoking in some way!

After a quick mail we got an interview with people at West 8. Marc Lampe is one of Adriaan Geuze's closest working companions.

After two days in Amsterdam, we walked out to Hotel New York on Wilhelminakade in the harbour where the office is situated. The office occupies the third floor, of an old warehouse, where they have plenty of space, which is good when you work a lot with big scale projects. A quick walk around the office looking at models being built and models of ongoing projects and then we start the interview at one of the lunch tables.

- We should just start with the word inspiration, we were thinking about one thing, are you free in the way you work here in your office, do you search your inspiration or do you have any method or can you be very free and personal in your expression?

- There is no method, I guess there is 45 people coming from different places, who are having different backgrounds, we have landscape architects, architects, industrial designers, artists. It's more images in people's minds and the way they come together, because every project that leaves this office is not a product of the genius of the boss. But it's something where everybody puts something of themselves in it. And in terms of where does inspiration come from, it has a lot to do with the Dutch landscape, with vast horizons and the clouds, it's the whole tradition you also find in landscape painting from the more classical period. And has a lot to do with the transformations in landscape and mobility and asfold and big boats.

- If you would see a West 8 work somewhere how would you recognise it if you compare it to other solutions in a competition?

- You would recognise the sense of skill, there is pretty much always some sort of reference to infinity, sometimes very literal in the sense that you can see a horizon and sometimes by emphasizing the contrast between small intimate spaces and bigger endless spaces, this is something that you pretty much always find, further more there is a strong sense of making a texture in spaces, giving it a sense of smaller scale, the texture is always, like you put a carpet in your house or you put wallpaper it's giving a sort of a smell or a sense to a space.

- Would you say that you have a certain philosophy here at the office?

- Yes, we design to create a certain authentic experience in people, it's not neat or cute. No, we really try to make them fall off their chairs, it's about reaching, addressing directly to the heart or to the mind. Adrian is always telling me; you are from this Delft school of architecture... He describes it as inflicting or organising authentic experiences and authentic means without the mind being in between. It shouldn't be; ah, I see he thought A, B and then C. These experiences have a lot to do with what I explained earlier, sense of infinite, or sense of intimate.

- But how do you get people working here to create these kind of experiences, to make you feel it with your heart, and not seeing it with your eyes. How do you make people do that? By throwing away the bad ones and just waiting for the good ones?

- You just push people long enough till they either leave your office, which doesn't happen very often I must say, or they come up with great ideas. There are lots of ideas, they come from Adrian or from other, and people work on these ideas, and come up with their own interpretation, or explanation so it has a lot to do with what they put in the computer of other ones. It's a criteria if I don't fall off my chair then why bother, if you don't make me fall off my chair then it's probably not good. And eventually you will find that there are projects that never ever will make somebody fall off their chair because you didn't manage to get the client to accept or whatever, and you still have to finish and this is not so funny because you are in this quiet corner of the office trying to finish this project and still do the

best you can, even though you are not as happy as you imagined you be. This is also a day-to-day practice.

- Could you graphically draw your creative process, explain it in a graph?

-Oh that is a hard one, cause if you are just sitting alone in your office, it's something like there is options and generally there is less options and you arrive somewhere. In here it would be much more fuzzy, because even if I do my own project, and I'm here(he points in the graph) and everybody's happy my boss comes and says; yeah, but let's do that. So I think it would be a process with a lots of levels of how we put attention, that's maybe a nice way to draw it. There's a sort of general amount of attention and then; let's discuss this and then everybody's grabbed. I'm not happy with the result on this project, can we give it an impulse.

It's not what you would imagine in an architects office where you are working very steadily like running a marathon. Here its more like sprints, sprints, sprints. Lots of ideas comes up, but people also really get some pepper up there (in the arse).

And in terms of how options are, I think there is a lot of, not exactly dead ends, but radical brakes It's not like Adriaan spends his weekend to make a sketch and then drops it on my table and is abso-



A graph of Marcs creative process. Sprints, sprints, sprints and lots of ideas.

lutely convinced that I will do what he had in mind, because I've worked here six years and I know him so well. Usually if we don't start, he doesn't come. So we make a proposal and show it to him and then he, first time he pretty much always sweeps it of the table and comes up with another idea, but this idea never comes if we don't feed him.

- But if you sometime are looking for trends like; what's happening right now, where do you look then?

-I think that would be nothing to artistic, when

we discuss trends its very down to earth. How does the market work? Where do money come from? How do certain organisations work? It's more an architectural approach or it's definitely not a west 8 approach. Ok, what's the architectural interpretation of these times? That's nothing that is bothering us.

- When you first started to become a architect what made you go to school?

-Ah, this is a personal question, my personal background comes from a fascination with building. From actually feeling my heart beat when ever I pass a construction site, I want to do this, and when I started, even before I started to study architecture, I asked somebody who was in the architectural school if it would be possible that I would be trained as an architect and then build my own designs. It was something that really fascinated me at the time. Still my favourite part of work is actually visiting building sites and see projects grow. Actually I'm a lot more fascinated during the process when you can see things grow, then afterwards, when something is there, I usually loose interest.

- Now for yourself, if you have a problem, like; I have this site and I'm going to do this for a client and then you can't make up an idea at all, nothing happens. What do you do then? Does it ever happen?

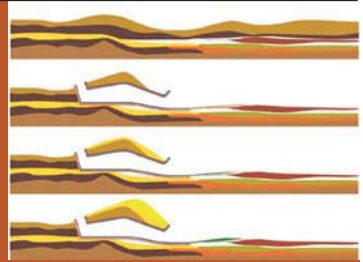
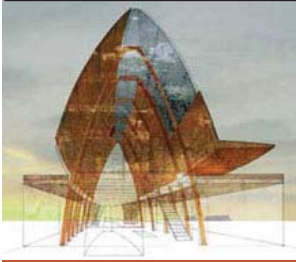
- It never happens. If you are stuck the best solution is to stop do what you are doing and go and have a beer. When we are stuck in a project it's never because we fail to come up with the right ideas. I would say we have enough designing skills to solve whatever. The problems are always when you are in a process which is very complicated and where you cant refer to the logic of the design to get things solved. You have to really find a strategy in which you make Mr A agree with Mr B that C is the best solution and D has to pay for it. A really different sort of creativity comes in, like that you try to understand how the process is constructed. Who is having what agenda, and who are you going to address to in order to solve a problem. That's a kind of creativity that had absolutely nothing to do with, sort of design inspiration. That's just what I am going to do. To bloody hell make it work!

- Do you sometimes find that there are three or four, or several solutions and you just have to pick one. They are all equal and you have to pick one of them?

-Its one of the things I actually learned while working here. When I came here, I wouldn't have a problem at all to go to a client and say; ok we have worked on several proposals which I want to present to you now. Not in order so that they could choose but just to take them by the hand in the process in which we'll say; ok we are not going to decide straight away where we are heading, but we are going to study these options and see where we end up. And sometimes this is a very good way of working. This is a strategy that works in sort of complex urban situations, but when we are asked to do a landscape or garden, we don't come up with, of course we work on, quite often, several ideas. But usually Adrian or someone says; lets do that! You should imagine my boss, he's a bit of a gambler. He says; all or nothing! He is not carefull, studying and considering. He says; lets do that! Sometimes you really break your back on that, and you end up with nothing.

- And you have to explain for them why this idea you have is good!

-And sometimes you manage to get their enthusiasm. Sometimes you don't, you have to go by yourself. It's important to be self supporting, not to be dependent on somebody else to light your fire.



BIG HOUSE

Short facts: John Lonsdale

Background

The practice was founded in 2004 by Northumbrian born architect John Lonsdale and is based in both Amsterdam and Northumberland. Apart from the design of buildings the range of commissions has grown over the last few years from the scale of a table, to art gallery installation, to a spatial planning strategy for Almere Oost. He is a thinker and sculptor of landscapes and uses buildings, or architecture, as the means through which to express his art. When needed he collaborates with specialists including building engineers, building construction advisers, cost experts, land surveyors, industrial designers, historical geographers, archaeologists, writers, artists, biologists and photographers.

In 1991 he lived for a year on a nature reserve before graduating from the Architectural Association in London in 1995. He is currently teaching at the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam and the RAVB (Rotterdam Academy of Architecture), as well as being invited to lecture and run workshops in the Netherlands and further afield.

In 2001 he was awarded the Prix de Rome for Landscape Architecture and Urbanism for his work called 'Shifting Horizons', a study into 'listening to the land' and how not to resist the forces of nature but to live with them.

His work is supported by the Netherlands Architecture Foundation, the Department of Landscape Architecture of the Technical University of Delft, the Dutch Water Authority and Vereniging Natuurmonumenten.

In the Netherlands the practice follows the DNR 2011 (The New Rules 2011) which establishes the legal

relationship between client, architect, engineer and consultant.

In the last years I have striven for the reconciliation of architecture with landscape. I see a future where humankind can live in a sustainable way in newly created wildernesses or mud landscapes. It is through thinking in this way that I believe a new kind of architecture will arise.

The need to build dikes and dams to tackle the rising tides and storm floods is shifting towards a more reflective attitude. My work taps into this shift and seeks more balanced relations between land and sea, between stabilities and flows.

I make work that looks forward to the release of forces of nature held between the meeting of land and sea, held in check by the work of dams, sluices and dikes. Once unleashed human involvement can engage with and put good use to the forces of wind, wave and tide. I am not interested in a nostalgic approach. My work is of the present. I want it to resonate with rather than merely repeat what was there - using the language that is already inscribed in a place but in a way that speaks of today.

Acknowledgments

John Lonsdale thanks David and Elizabeth Lonsdale for their kind and generous support.

The words are partly borrowed from and inspired by reading Andy Goldsworthy's book called 'Enclosure' pp92-103 'Coleridge's Walk - Buttermere, Ennerdale and Wastwater'.

Source:

John Lonsdale webpage, (2015), headword: about Available: <www.johnlonsdale.org>, (2015-06-16)

CONVERSATION WITH JOHN LONSDALE #12

Amsterdam, The Netherlands
20th of February 2002, 13:00

John came to Holland because he found more work there, and he enjoys doing work that allows him to be reflective. He was educated at AA (Architectural Association School of Architecture) in London.

- *What made you start studying at AA?*

- It's very boring, very banal. My dad is an architect. It is quite common, it says a lot about the profession. It's tradition. He always thought that I should be an engineer, so he was steering me away from it. I think I could not be anywhere else, you find your place.

The creative act is very illusive, very illusive. There is a certain moment in a project, which I call the 'crunch time', when you have to make decisions, and that's the most exciting moment, the scariest moment. I see complete darkness at that moment. I used to withdraw and stop, I used to be scared of it. Now I am seeking it, that moment. That's the moment when you take decisions, when you create. That's the moment I ask my students to encounter; often they leave it to the last week. Then it becomes even darker.

- *Would you say that, that is the moment when you are the most frustrated?*

- I wouldn't say frustrated, I'd say the most vulnerable. You really have to dig deep, right into your heart, and open up. If it's frustration it's because you want to close off, you can't create. Frustration is a sign that you can't express yourself. If you are actively seeking that moment, you get to embrace it. I'm talking ideally; it's never as good as that. Sometimes, it gets close.

- *Can you follow your ideas from the beginning to the end in your projects?*

- If you have an idea, you stick with it. That is the thing. As a student, all the ideas that I had were never good enough. I would always abandon one idea and take on a new one, thinking that it would

be better. Often your first idea is clearly from your intuition, and you follow it. You don't give it up; you keep on trying and testing it out.

- *I wonder what happens, why do the ideas get blurred and disappear?*

- Because you want to be sure that it's not something else. I don't know.

We started the interview by talking about creativity and how the work actually advances.

- This question...how do you create, I'm not an architect or a landscape architect to solve problems. Scientists solve problems. I create them and I'm trying to create interesting problems or another way to look at it. I try to create different possibilities. I do not like to consider myself as a problem solver. I don't want to solve other people's problems; if I do solve problems I like to solve my own. If I solve problems, it's problems I've set for myself. It is making up that question which is highly creative. You set the framework in which you are working. You set the parameters. For me that's a creative act. What that means in terms of a project is that you try not to design; you set up some understandings of how you understand a site, the different political bodies involved. I always held back from designing but then I went to Norway last year and I met two architects from Oslo, Lasse and Anne Stein, and they said; why don't you just design, so I did. Instead of trying to justify everything with strategies, I simply started shaping things and giving myself the freedom of being a sculptor. All these other strategies of framework are very important, however, at a certain moment it's great just to do a thing. That was a huge breakthrough to allow myself to do that. Before then, I was justifying and

determining a framework.

John shows the model of the glass house that has got its design inspiration from the Dutch Westland landscape. Digging in the ground and looking at the different layers, letting them get in contact with each other. He says it's an example of the freedom he is given to play. That's what the Norwegian duo told him; just do what you like.

He also shows a piece of wood that he found at home, a form that might give inspiration one day.

I'm becoming much more interested in giving myself the freedom as an architect in a formalistic way, pure forms. I also believe that every project should be located to its specific site.

- Do you have many ideas collected in a box, to choose from?

- That box used to be clearly defined. It used to be called the portfolio of my studies at the AA in London. There is two years work there of asking questions, and I've been going through each one, exploring them. This box of ideas is less clearly a box. I work with students and each year there is a new student, a new box. Big House is another box. There is a shelf in the box in Big House with shapes and forms. There is also home, at home I have another little box. On the weekends, I started running in the heath lands. That's another box that puts you in touch with the landscape. That is what I really miss.

- How would you define the typical work that your office does?

- Large scale competitions and small domestic projects. I'm working towards those two meeting and they are not too far apart. The way of thinking is more or less the same. It's a question of scale. You can apply the same strategies, the same way of working for one as well as the other.

The name Big House, John explains what he thought about when he took that name.

- The metaphor of Big House is the different urban roles, sometimes as a cornerstone supporting a piece of urban fabric, sometimes as a bridging piece crossing a void and sometimes as a buttress to stop a void from collapsing in. These are all metaphors that I found in the existing city wall where I found fragments of Roman and Greek architecture embedded

in the walls. This became a metaphor for the urban project. It's often very accidental, you are not very conscious of using this. It's only lately that I realize what I've done.

- When you look back on your projects, does your inspiration come from being on the site?

- In that instance, yes. In another project in Turkey, we didn't have a chance to visit the site but we were sent good documentation of it and we walked it through the maps. The jury were convinced that we had been on the site.

- Do you see any clear trends in today's architecture?

- What I see is the architect struggling with his or her role in society. They become far less powerful, even less powerful than they were. Their role has been marginalized in the building process and in the process of creating or recreating the urban and rural landscape. I see our role now is first of all redefining our role, finding a new role for our self, to reinvigorate the role. That's why I like to collaborate with other people. Rather than looking at lovely sites to build in, put more objects in these lovely sites, beautiful sites in the city or beautiful country sites. I'm looking at abandoned territories, forgotten or overlooked spaces. Looking at means and ways of restoring those landscapes through means of vegetation, plants and so forth. Then introducing an architecture that's founded on how you restore that landscape. The architecture will belong to that process of restoration. It will belong to that place. An architect can't do that, only as a team can you create that. I'm weary as an architect of simply putting forms and objects in places. I think it's important to create that place first.

Johns reply on the questions we wanted to hear more about.

Most people working with design have a sense of how their creative process works. Do you think that that image has changed since you started working and what will it look like in the future?

The most significant change has been the shift from working alone to working in a team. One of the first creative acts then is to create the team that you think will best develop the project. This might be different for each project. In the future I would like to work more with the people who will inhabit the

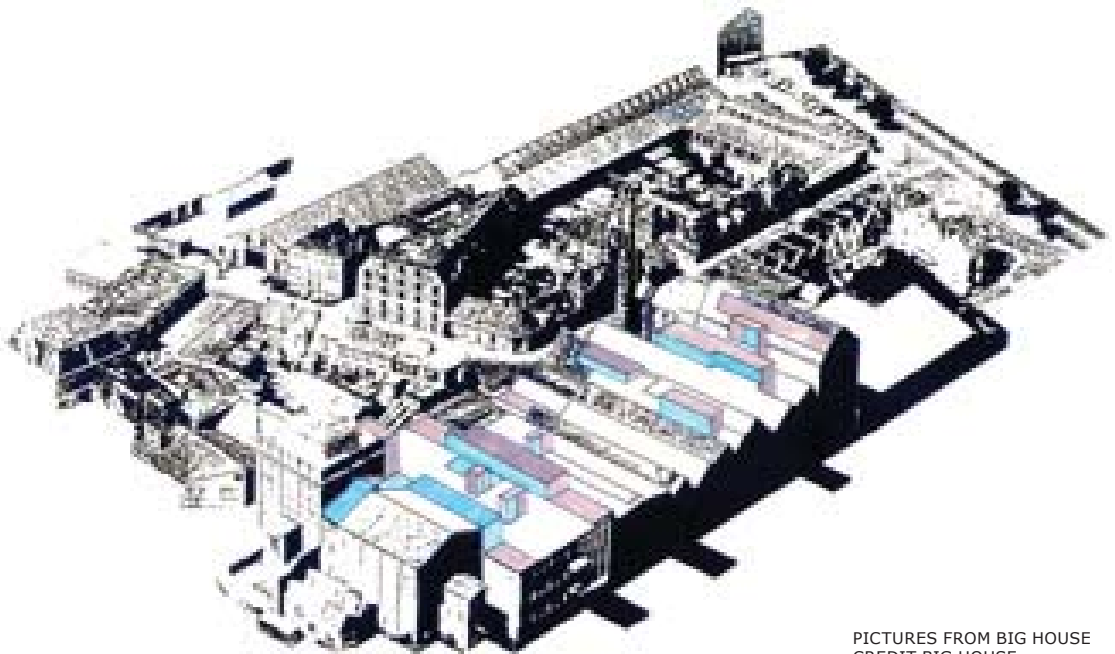
designs, extending the team further as it were, to include them, so that individual preferences may live on in the inhabited spaces.

How do you define Inspiration?

Inspiration is something that flees the moment you try to define it or explain it. It wells up almost of its own and lives momentarily as a spirit that sings inside.

Would like to work with you sometime in the future if the opportunity arises. Let me know what happens with the results.

All the Best, John



PICTURES FROM BIG HOUSE
CREDIT BIG HOUSE

PART 2:2 WORKSHOPS

Introduction

The conversations gave us a lot of material and to better comprehend them, we conducted workshops to investigate sources of inspiration and methods of motivation that have been discussed. The results of these workshops were thereafter evaluated and compared.

Method

We have done a number of workshops to practically try methods that we have come across talking to landscape architects and architects. Doing workshops gives us a creative process to analyse. We can analytically follow every step in our work or choose to make an analysis after we have finished a workshop.

-How does it work?

We select a site to work with and then we write a program that sets the premises for the site. After that we choose a method extracted from one or more conversations, to come up with a conceptual proposal for the site. We work together or individually depending on the method we choose for the workshop.

The program for the site is composed by one of us. We build a scenario where there is a client (usually the municipality) that wishes to develop a site. The sites we have chosen are in the same cities as some of the conversations that we have done. We have looked for central to semi-central open spaces like squares, parking lots or wasteland areas, where we feel that a change is needed or could be wanted.

We have done six workshops and here follows a short brief on how we made them:

1. Workshop, The Dry Dock
Method, Collage
Originates from the conversation with Aida Kalnins

2. Workshop Drottningtorget
Method, Mind on paper
Originates from the conversation with Henrik Schulz
3. Workshop Bedford Plaza.
Method, Theme
Originates from the conversations with Ken Smith,
Johan Paju & Petter Hauffman
4. Workshop Wastelands in Rotterdam Harbour.
Method, the Outsider
Originates from the conversation with Marc Lampe, Sinatra & Murphy
5. Workshop Campfire Contemplation.
Method, discussing and contemplating
Originates from the desire to discuss our own experience in this work.
6. Workshop Retell
Method find our own experience..
Originates from the fact that we have been working for thirteen years and have our own experience to share.

About the workshops

First we wanted to do a workshop after every interview, but we soon saw that the method we concentrate on in one workshop often is used as a whole or partly by many of the architects we visited. We think that the workshops we have done cover the most common ways of working through the creative process.

All pictures and sketches in this section is made by Christer Lundenius and Johan Krikström

1. The Collage

Making collages has become Aida Kalnins major working method. She has found a way that works well for her and quickly gives her the inspiration she needs to precede her creative process. This method takes a lot of concentration, but the result is very useful and reliable to lean on. Industrial designer's works with a similar method they call "Mood board". It's more carefully prepared while a Collage should be quickly put together under concentration.



2. Mind on paper

Sharpen your ability to play with forms. Let your hand be a direct link between your mind and the paper. Like Henrik we tried to find a form by sketching what we saw fitting, from our mind. It's a craft and you need experience to fully get into the flow of creativity, which removes any obstacles of doubt.

3. The Theme

After the interview with Ken Smith, Johan found this place in New York. To use a theme to find inspiration and to tie your ideas to is a common method. We think that most architects use this method somehow. Aida Kalnins talks about it when she mentions ways to start yourself going, because it's very hard to start with a blank page. NOD talks about themes as coat hangers to hang their ideas on. Ken Smith gets a lot of his inspiration from music and fashion.

4. The Outsider

In this workshop we work with an external person who can give us a new perspective at our ideas. Some of the offices we have been to use this method regularly as a part in their creative process to get that certain twist. Like when Aadrian Geuze quickly moves into a group of architects on West 8 and provokes them to revalue their ideas (The interview with Marc Lampe). Others might get it unexpectedly during their work, talking to colleagues or clients. (Nod's consults)

5. The Campfire

To open the channel to your inner self, your subconscious, and tune in on the problem you are conquering can produce really interesting answers. Your subconscious often knows the answers but you have to be observant and sensitive to see the answers when they are presented to you (Inspirationens ögonblick) in dreams or daydreams. Sublime ways of analysing a site or searching for inspiration to the ideas that are unique to a specific site, are hard to scientifically prove as necessary. A site's atmosphere can be sensed but not measured (The interview with Matt Davies). Jim Sinatra and Phin Murphy has learned much from the indigenous peoples' perspective on the landscape, they are a part of it, never parted (The interview with Sinatra and Murphy. Listen to the people, listen to the land.).

6. The Retell workshop

This workshop is a way of adding our own personal experience to our study. We have been working for roughly thirteen years, and this gives us our own experience from being part of different work situations. And also in taking part of different creative processes.

We will in this workshop describe our career and describe how we have thought about inspiration and motivation in our own practice.

1. THE COLLAGE WORKSHOP: DRY DOCK

Malmö, West Harbour Composed by Christer Lundenui, 2001 November



Program:

The Kockums dry dock is surrounded by streets and newly built houses, the dry dock itself is a hazard to its surroundings. The crane is removed, but the municipality wants something exiting being done with the dry dock. They want the area remodelled into an entertainment place in the western harbour. They want people to enjoy good food, excitement and relaxation, and have the ability to do some shopping in this new part of Malmö.

Descriptions of the site:

Where: the dry dock is situated in the Western Harbour of Malmö. It's a fifteen minutes walk from the city centre.

Context: there is houses built all around and there is a harbour for pleasure boats nearby.

Use collage as a method to make a concept for the design of the dry dock. Let the subconscious mind work during the night and the next day start searching for material to make a collage that represent the feeling that the client has in mind. If needed try and do some sketches based on the finished collage.

Day 1: The program is presented but the actual work starts the day after. The night will hopefully let the subconscious mind work with the program for the next days work.

Day 2: Search material in magazines and papers and make a collage that represents the characteristics wanted by the municipality. Work quickly and to let the subconscious mind do the job.

Day 3: eventually add some sketches to the work. Evaluate.



Left: The West Harbour in Malmö.
Below: The Kockum Dock, filled with water.



Workshop: The Dock

by Johan Krikström, 2001 Sept

To create a collage as a starting point, partly not to be locked up by details but rather in yourself find and search the things that will come to you after working on the assignment in your head. Unfortunately we had to little time to work in our heads that the input I got was the assignment from Christer. To me it was about creating an attractive environment for the people who moves in the area. I saw before me a rich down lowed, bottomless muddle of bird nests. Safe refuges which all are parts of a large net, but without through fare. Each nest has an entrance, then there is always a back door that is hard to define...

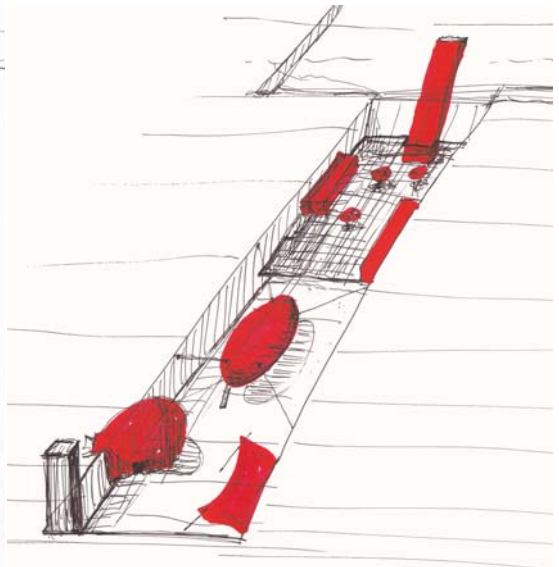
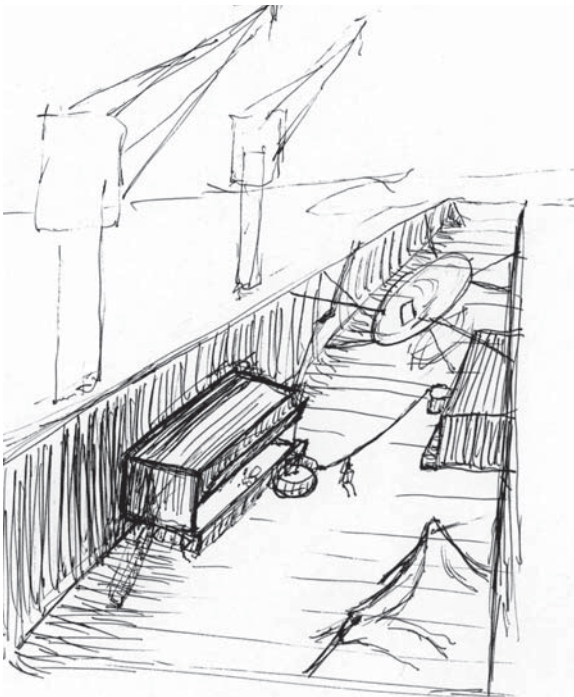
The method, you could say, let me grasp the whole area, but above all it was about the exiting moods

I was seeking. I don't know from where I got the image, but I suppose it came from the instructions that Christer wrote, that and the 'something' that I search in a city. What does this mean? It's the description of the project and my own wishes that matters.

I have to admit that the work with the collage started an incredible activity in my head. The problem then maybe, is how to move on with the results, what one should do is to visit some sort of a client to see if there is a possibility to continue on a project based on what we came up with.



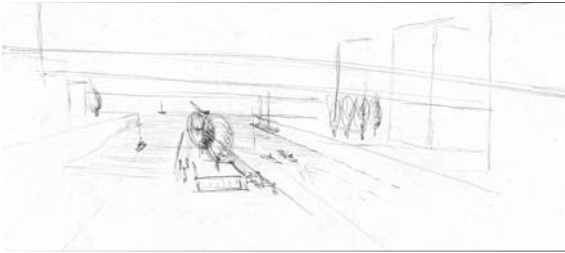
Collage and sketches by Johan Krikström



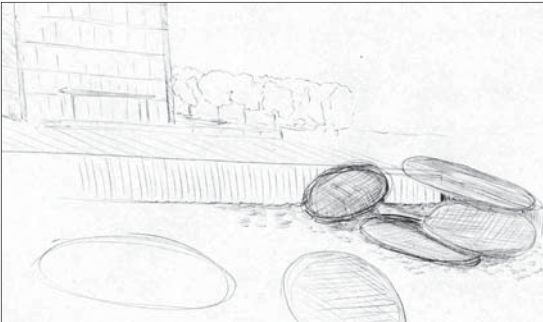
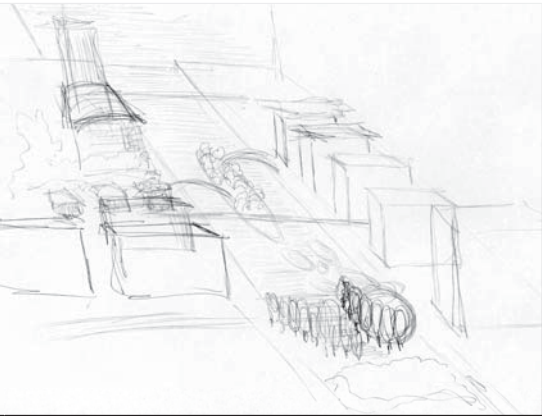
Workshop: The Dock

by Christer Lundenius, 2001 November

Collage is a sort of brainstorming. You tease your associations and you search for connections in images, forms and colours. Turning and tearing among pictures and magazines, results in a pile of cuttings; that somehow seems to have one or more common denominator. They are brought together in a composition that represents an emotion or a characteristic that we want to present. The method demands powers of concentration and time seems to have vanished away when we, many hours later, reach the end of our cutting and pasting.



Sketches of ideas that came to my mind shortly after putting together the collage.



2. THE MIND ON PAPER WORKSHOP: DROTTNINGTORGET

Malmö Composed by Johan Krikström, 2001 October



Program:

The distinguished square 'Drottningtorget', is sited nearby the railway station. Today it's uses are as a marketplace for agriculture products a few days in the week. To be able to use the place as a refuge in the dark wintertime, we have realized that there should be new furniture on the square. This furniture should be comfortable for at least two persons; it shall also work as a solitary piece or in combination with other furniture's.

Descriptions of the site:

where: Drottningtorget is situated in the centre of Malmö. Near the canal and the train station.
context: There are rows of trees edging three sides of the square and along the fourth side there is a low building containing a museum, and a parking lot. In one corner there is a hot dog stand (korvmoj). The buildings surrounding the square are five to six stories high and represent different epochs of the last century.

Facts concerning the place:

The cart museum at the square is the old cavalry stable. Here you find the most distinguished collection of horse driven carts, bicycles, fire and utilitarian vehicles. The buildings surrounding the square are from the beginning of the 20th century in Jugend style.

Working method:

Work intuitively with pen and paper and try to let the pen be in direct contact with the form that appears in your mind.

day 1: Sketch until there is a design you are satisfied with.

day 2: Make a 3D image. Does it agree with the initial picture in your mind? Evaluate.

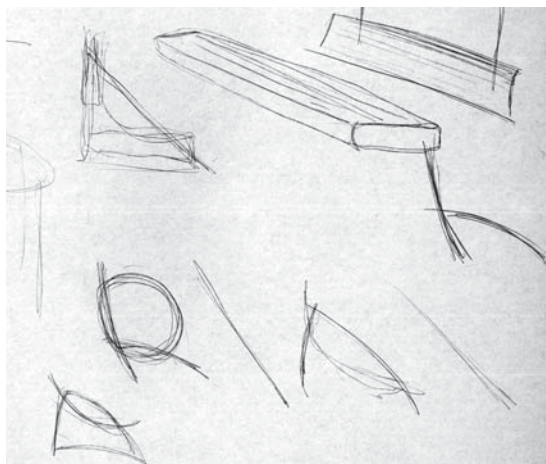


Workshop: Drottningtorget

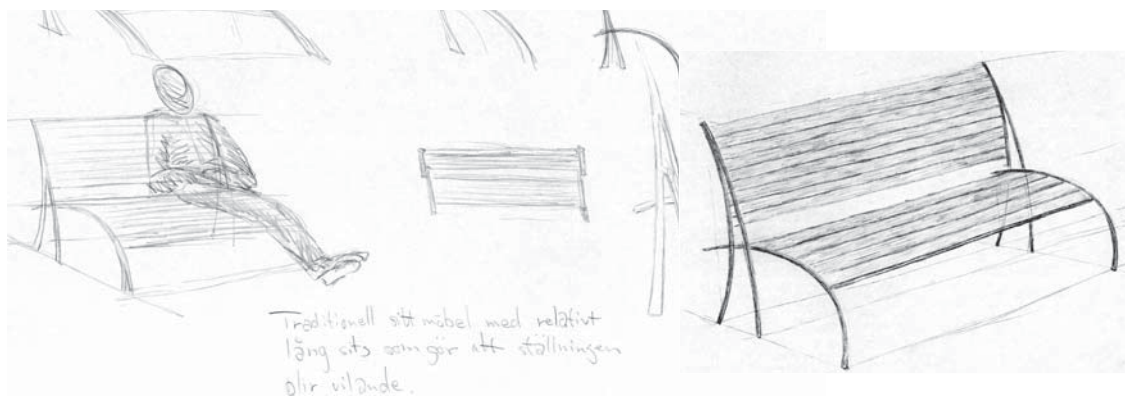
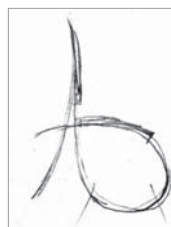
by Christer Lundenius, 2001 October

It is not easy not to take the context into consideration when you look for a design. In this workshop we wanted to let the mind flow freely and just “come up” with a design. I was sitting by the desk for quite a while just playing with lines, scribbling a whole day before the form started to reveal itself. The form wasn’t ready, but there was something that I could sharpen and once the form was clear, the total design with materials and colours came quickly.

I think that working like this is very a quick and effective way when you get in to it, especially if you don’t have to take much more than characteristics into consideration. But I believe it works only for designing items and furniture. A landscape is a much more complex matter.



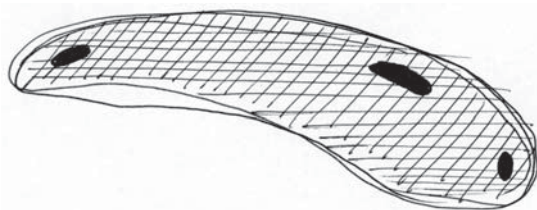
The bench has a form in my mind and through sketching I try to materialize that form. The idea was inspired by letters...don't really know why. It gets more and more defined and I also try it in 3D.



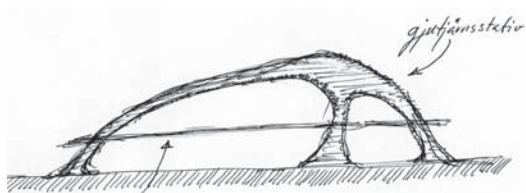
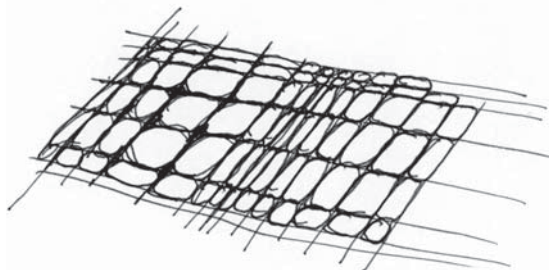
Workshop: Drottningtorget

by Johan Krikström, 2001 October

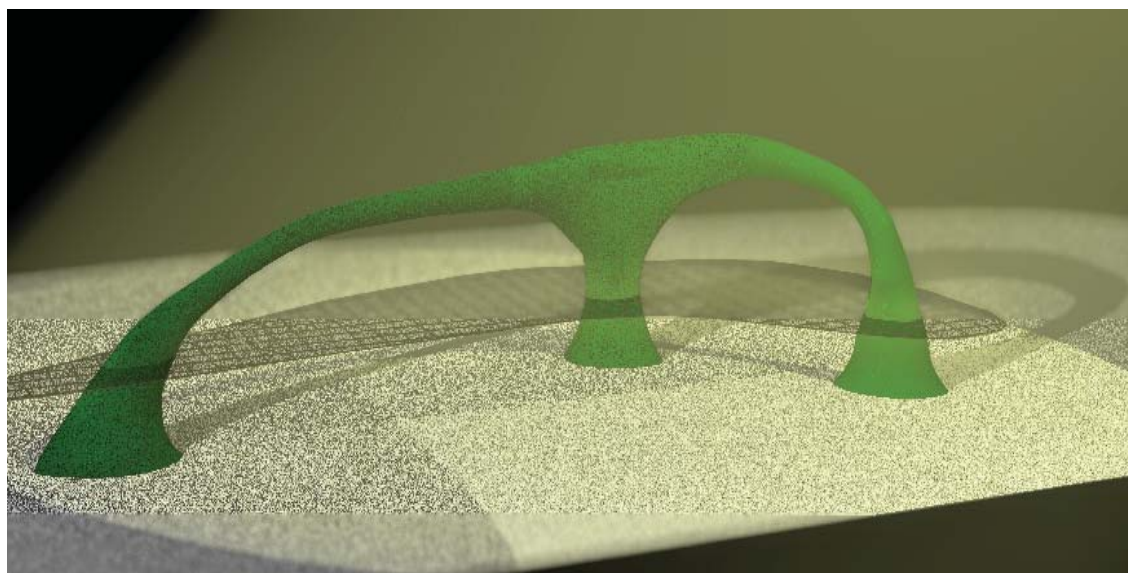
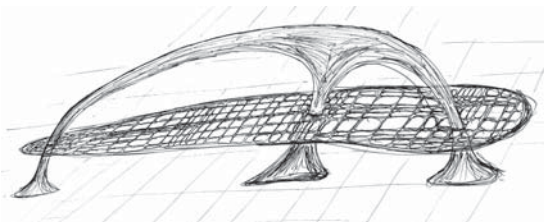
After I read my own program I, I don't know what it was but I had the design in my head from the beginning. I wanted to make a mix of old genuine cast iron with soft lines and for contrast I needed something high-tech! A warm seat, my mind searched for high-tech seats that could be heated. Carbon fibre reinforced grids, that contained some sort of electric heating, maybe a water solution. My thoughts focused on the shape and the materials, the process was extremely fast. The will to create some sort of decoration was really strong and there was a difficulty: it was really hard to change the original shape. I tried to develop the seat by making grid not so strict. I thought of having some parts more flexible then others, making a more comfortable bench. I really think that you can rely on your own ability to produce a shape, the hard part is probably when you are going to make the exact drawings.



monster i sitsen som ger olika mjukheter i sitytan.

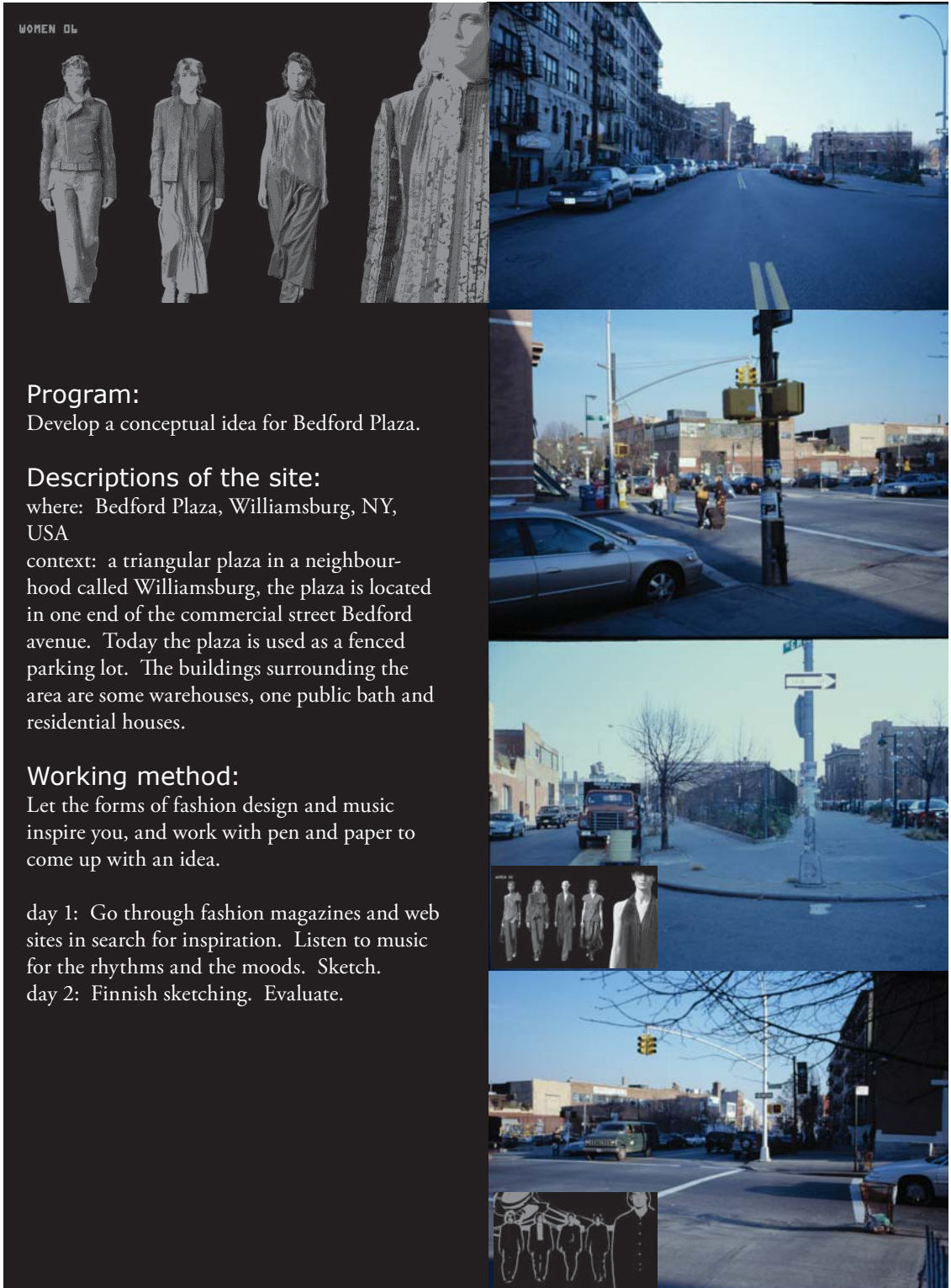


Sits i carbon, i sitsen löper det värme (elektrisk eller vatten)
sitsen är formad som ett rutnät, vilket gör
att man kan sitta mjukt igenom. Det ger även sitsen
en viss stabilitet



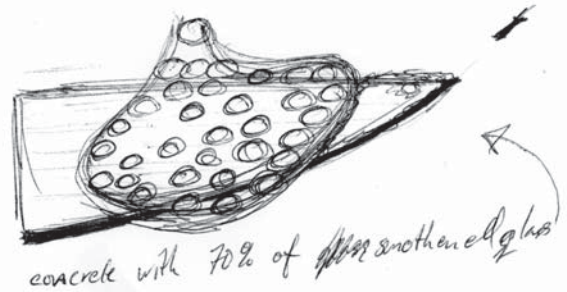
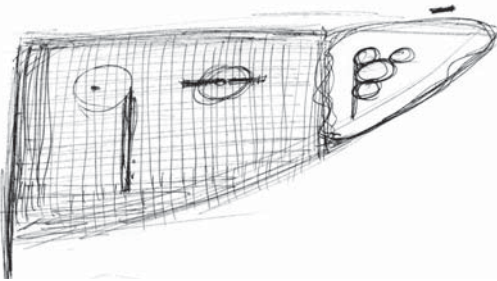
3. THE THEME WORKSHOP: BEDFORD PLAZA, NEW YORK

Composed by Johan Krikström, 2001 October

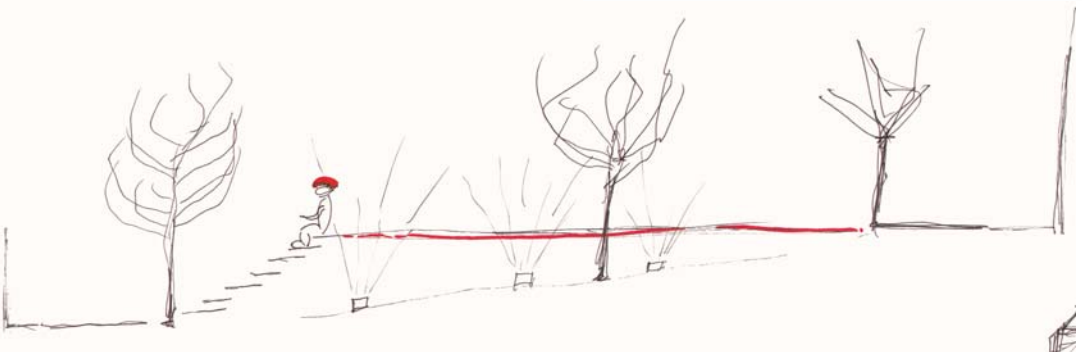


by Johan Krikström, 2001 October

For me the theme made me think about changes, what is changing and why?

[illegible]

- Wall
- Trees
- Bushes



Workshop: Bedford Plaza

By Christer Lundenius, 2001 October

How do you work with a site you've never been to? The pictures Johan has taken gives me an idea of what it looks like and that's what I got. I'm searching for a theme in the world of fashion, listening to music to get inspired. I tried to listen to the music Ken Smith was talking about like Philip Glass, but it worked better for me to listen to what I normally listen to.

Is there a rhythm in the movements along the streets of Bedford Plaza?

I listen to rock, it's dirty and edgy the way I picture N.Y. The rhythm is sprawling. Use your elbows!

How can fashion express New York to me?

To me New York means extreme individuality.

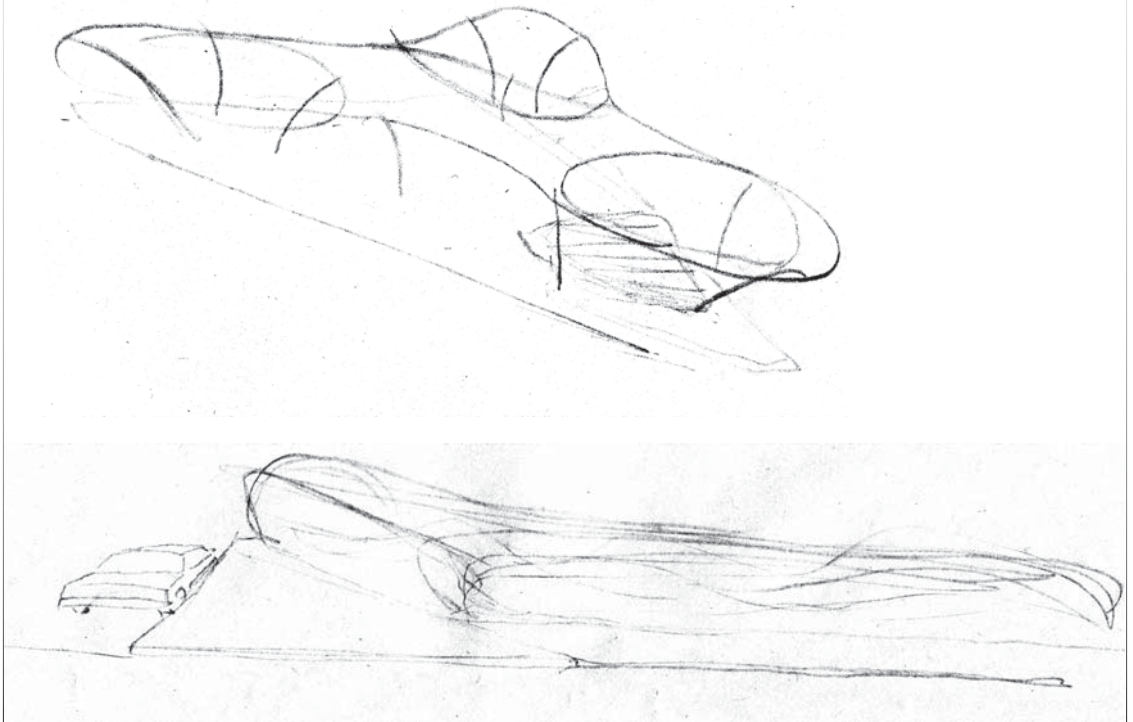
Pieces are falling apart and coming together again, following their own rhythm, in phase, out of phase. Suddenly something unexpected!

I want to express the perspective of time, how people are living in this area affect the site and also how they are a developing part of it.

The site can be an important centre square to this city area. To write a good agenda I have to go there and feel the rythm of the streets myself. Combine the rythm of the site with my inspirational sources. That's how far I got in my thoughts, but I only made a few very simple sketches, trying to express what's starting to take shape in my mind.



The design has an organic form. There should be a rythm in it, maybe some kind of repetitions. Function: shelter, areas for different activities but also for relaxation. Dynamic and flexible solutions....



4. THE OUTSIDER WORKSHOP: WASTE- LAND, ROTTERDAM HARBOUR

Composed by Johan Krikström and
Christer Lundenius 2001 October.

Program:

The city of Rotterdam would like to see this area as
a place characterized by the harbour and the theatre.
They want a peaceful place with an eternal sense and
an ability to touch people's hearts.

Descriptions of the site:

where: There is an open space right by the water,
situated behind the Luxor Theatre in Rotterdam.
context: This site is well defined by water, a major
road and high façades. The space has an almost
rectangular shape where there are buildings on two
sides. Next to the site runs a major road, coming
from the outskirts of Rotterdam it's passing the area
on it's way over the Erasmus Bridge and in to the
centre of the city. The ground is flat and it's all fill
materials and towards the water there is a slope of
boulders. There is hardly any vegetation growing in
the hard ground, just some herbs, a few bushes have
found enough moisture beneath the stones in the
slopes

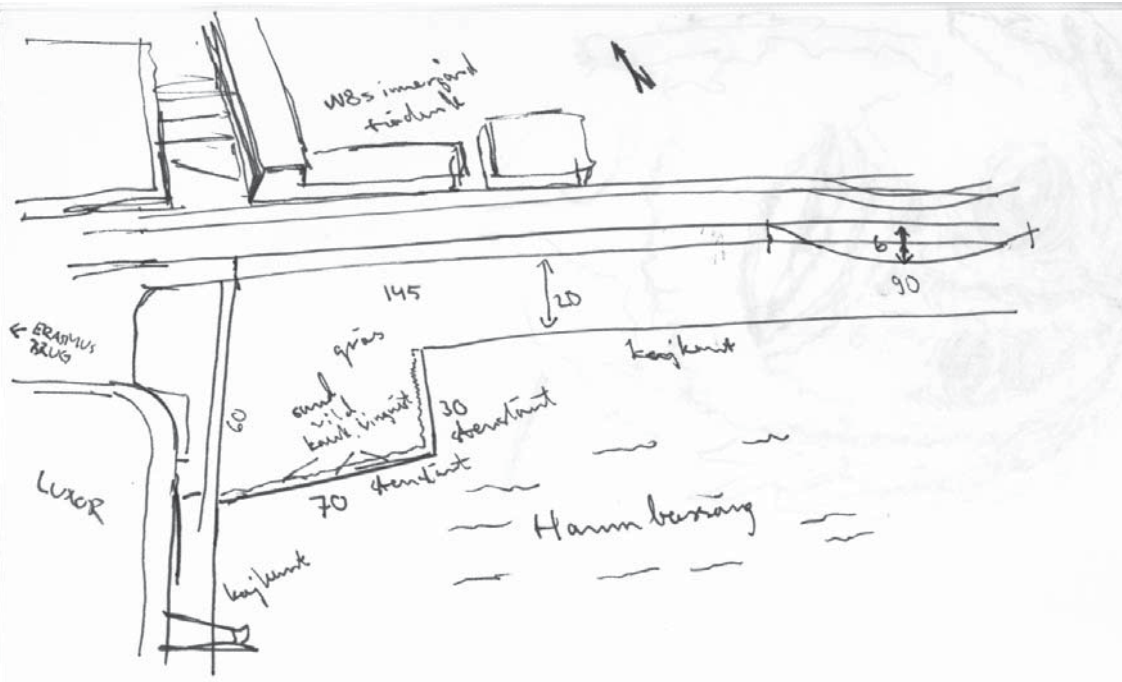
Working method:

Work in a group with brainstorming, try to distil
ideas you believe in and present them to an out-
sider for an opinion. Alter the ideas and finish a
conceptual idea.

- day 1: discuss the program and solidify it, do
sketches until you fell satisfied with the concept or
a detail that will solve the overall thought. Invite
a critic who puts everything at its edge. Continue
with what is left of a concept and make it better!
- day 2: build a model of the concept.
- day 3: explain the proposal with illustrations, texts
etc. Evaluate.



The site is situated right behind the Luxor Theatre (top).
Surrounded by high buildings on the north side and to the west.
The site is a narrow strip between the road and the harbour
bassin (below).



The workshop: Wasteland

by Johan Krikström and Christer Lundenius,
2001 October

A short workshop, only two days, it was a quick start. Johan had written a program, only some few worlds to define the project. We took the first hours to brainstorm around those sentences.

How the idea came; from a picture we had taken we saw a future in the area, a more organised scene. We saw an open air lounge. Comfortable couches and trees that forms small and well defined units. Placed within a specific frame.

Inspiration. Where does it come from? The picture, the will to make something that would make us thrive in this area. Images from glossy places where people are sitting relaxing on a day with some sun or even days when the heat is elsewhere. There should be some kind of heating possibilities. So that you don't have to be cold when you are relaxing between two shifts in the creative industry.

The idea was presented to a friend and her critics gave us a really good input. The concept of an outdoor lounge worked but we had to cut away lots of excess details that we had put in to it. Finally we ended up with just a few materials and a simple design.

Truck trampolines as pillows for the sofas, filled with some soft material.

Pine trees as trees giving shelter, and sun shelter.

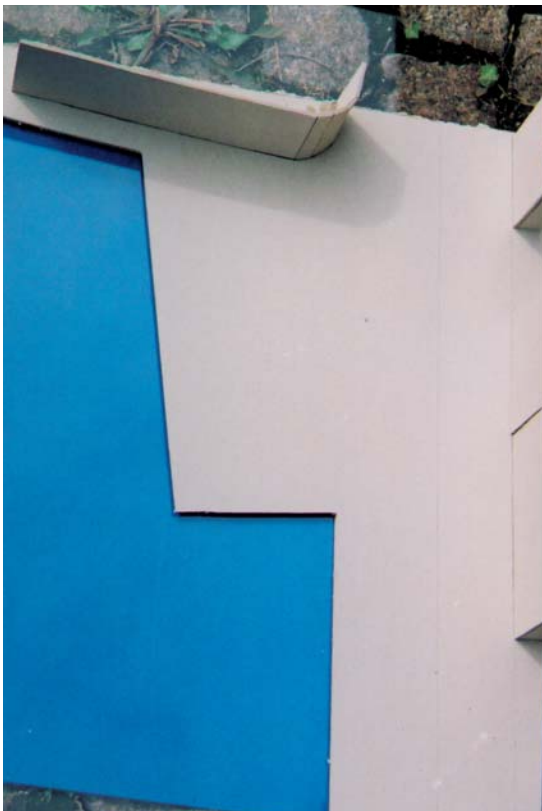
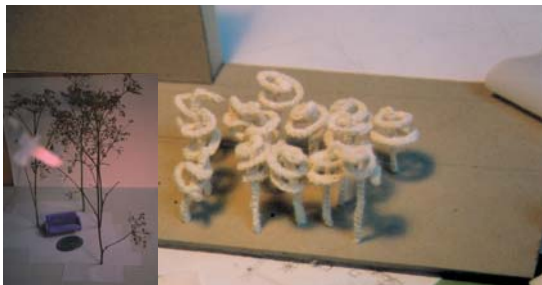
Their verticality connect to the nearby high riser.

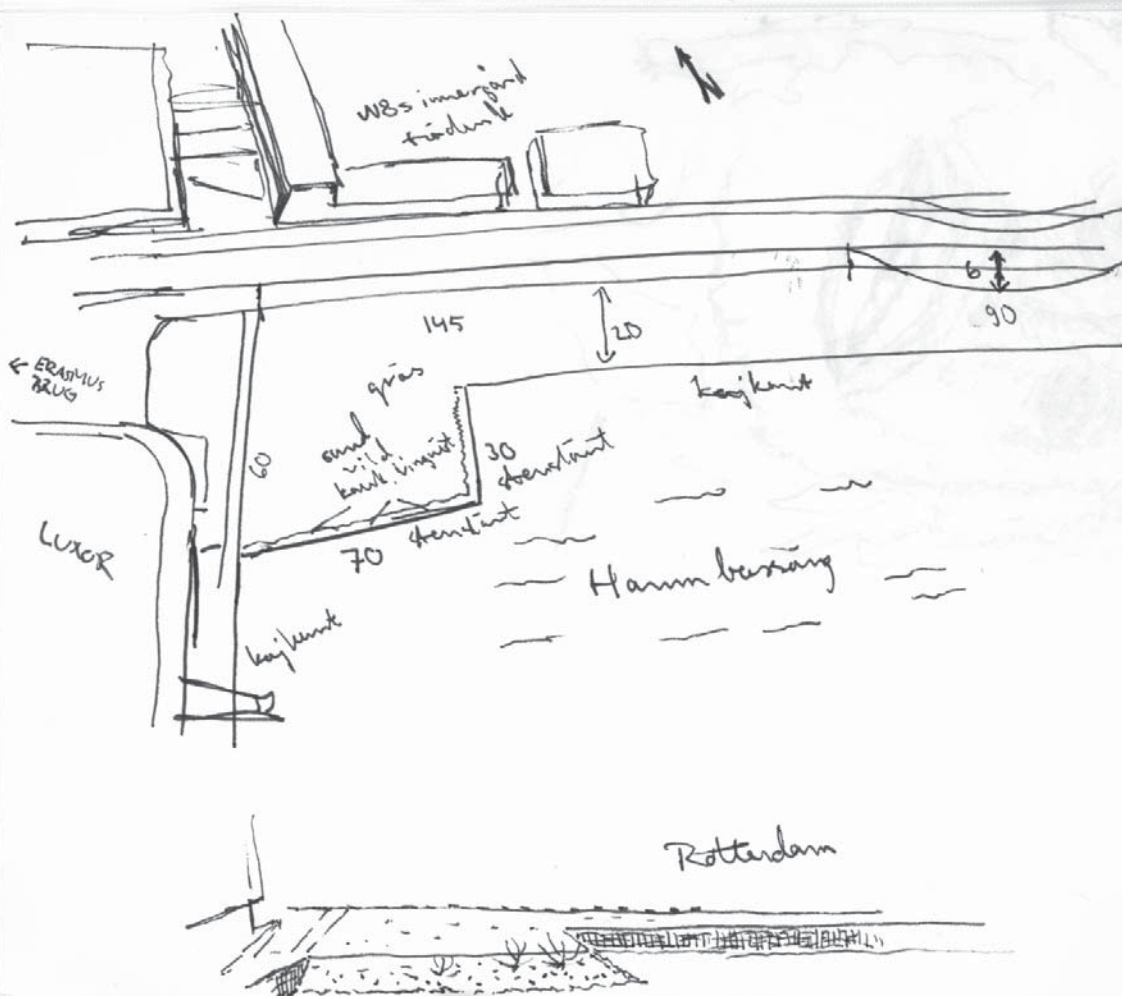
The ground material is made of raw steel plates.

that are used to reinforce the ground when you are moving heavy machines over sensitive areas.

In one of the lounges there is a mirror to eternity, a glass screen that looks like a hole through the earth, it's a projection of a star field rushing towards you.

The sofa surrounded by trees, a view over water. The window to eternity in front of the sofa (below and down right). The actual site (middle right). A lounge room consisting of pine trees (top right).







5. THE 6TH SENSE WORKSHOP: A CAMPFIRE CONTEMPLATION

Composed by:
Christer Lundenius &
Johan Krikström 2002 August

This workshop differs from the earlier we have done. It is a workshop about getting in contact with our inner selves by going to a peaceful place with a very open space. Less distraction makes it easier to concentrate on discussion and contemplation.

Program:

Find a non-disturbing environment that allows you to get in contact with yourselves to seek answers from your sub conscious mind.

Descriptions of the site:

where: The site chosen for this workshop is on Hal-lands Väderö, an island just out of Torekov on the west coast of Skåne.

context: There is a light house on the farthest part of the island and there, on the cliffs by the shore is the place for this workshop. Cliffs, boulders, the open sea and a dark sky sprinkled with stars.

Working method:

Make a camp on the site and when the mood is tranquil enough start a discussion based on questions or problems. Discuss every issue thoroughly before you move on. After the discussion take your time to contemplate over what has been said and try to find your true opinions about these issues. Evaluate.

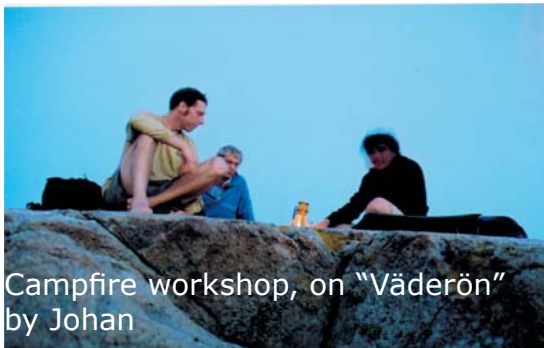
These are the questions of issues that we discussed on the island:

- # What inspires me?
- # Where do I find a will to do good?
- # How do I become a better landscape architect?
- # How can I open my mind and be more receptive to influences?
- # What is the core in my view on landscape architecture?
- # Which issues has touched me during this work and made me want to learn more about them?
- # Which working methods comes most natural to me?

The Campfire workshop

by Christer

This work was about finding a calm place where we can sit peacefully and discuss without disturbance. We got on a boat out to the island where we anchored in a bay close to our site. This outpost on the barren rocks where the sea meets the sky is a perfect place to help us to express our standpoints in the issues of discussion. First we thought that one question of issue would be enough to discuss but during the day we came up with seven questions. These were questions that related to our thesis and not to fictive problems like the ones we have made up in earlier workshops. During our discussion we searched within ourselves to present what we have picked up doing this Final thesis, and also the rest of the time we have been studying at Alnarp. Spontaneously a friend of ours (Ola Pettersson) wanted to come along on our little trip and he turned out to be the joker in our discussion. He told us that he didn't want to interfere but we urged him to, and his contributions made the workshop even more interesting. After our long talk we sat by ourselves for awhile to contemplate on what had been said. Sitting there I felt my roll as a landscape architect



Campfire workshop, on "Väderön"
by Johan

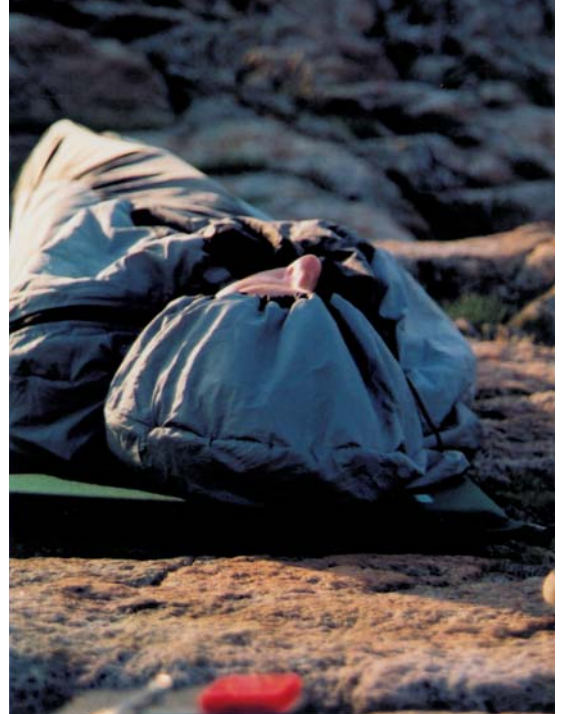
Aim: leave culture and spend some time in nature. Reflect over the final thesis period.

Process: (method) take the boat to "Hallands Väderö". Find a quiet place near the water. Try to be relaxed and discuss questions concerning our work. Afterwards sit totally still in the night and try to find peace and rethink what you just discussed.

My inspiration: "odling"- cultivation of the earth. The thought that we started to take care of the earth by collecting and growing things in the earth. This leads to making landscape architecture that you want people to feel that they belong to the earth. Make things that you have to be careful with or things with a very personal connection.

was slowly taking shape. I could clearly feel which issues are important to me, and what I want to put most of my energy on. This was really good for me because I always get interested in more or less everything that comes to me, and I find it hard to tell the things I really want to do apart from the things I think I want to do.

The full moon was rising and we became one with the elements surrounding us. Quietly we returned from our mental journeys and lay ourselves to sleep on the rocks, bathing in the pale moonlight.



Ways to be a better landscape architect:

- 1 Be more conscious. Stay with youngsters for two hours every week, visit a place for old folks, make interviews with different craftsmen on a regular basis.
- 2 Feel things whenever you pass a new material, feel it, taste it etc.
- 3 Get a personal interest a hobby, which can compete with your occupation. Helps you to put deadlines.
- 4 Dig up your old projects and redo them in your mind.
- 5 Write, by hand a personal letter once a day.

To be out on the island was no real escape from culture, there are so many boats, lights from light-houses, other people moving around, satellites in the sky, airplanes passing by frequently. Though the wildlife and the wind and the rock beneath us was all very obvious to us it was really relaxing.

6. CAREER RETELL

experinece - work - reflection

Composed by:
Christer Lundenius &
Johan Krikström

12th of June 2015

Program:

Thirteen years after starting the work with this thesis we have had the time to gather a lot of professional experience in which we thought it would be interesting for the reader to use. Our (Johan Krikström and Christer Lundenius) working experiences can help us to evaluate and understand our intentions with this thesis. Also an opportunity to see what we as professionals brought with us from the work we did thirteen years ago.

Site:

Where ever!

Method:

To write a descriptive text about in what way this thesis has influenced our daily work. Also a description of how matters regarding inspiration and motivation has changed, or not changed, during our careers as landscape architects.

Workshop #6
Career - retell
by Johan Krikström
13th of June 2015

We started this thesis in 2001. Now I have worked for thirteen years and my career has made me experience some different working environments. And also different in the way my own attitude towards the creative process has evolved.



Me (Johan Krikström) sitting in the home office of my father-in-law, Photographer: Anders Holmer, 2015-06-13

Just to start with this moment, I just now sit in the home office of my father-in-law, Bertil Holmer. He is a retired architect (though still working). He now has made an office out of one the houses in his garden. His energy being 77 years is a great source of inspiration. He has also given me moments building his “dreams”, that are extremely inspirational. As when we built a new house in the garden, a “trainhouse”, it’s a house that is built out of one idea “to move his model railway from the big house out into its own house”. So we built a new house that replaced an old shed. This house is approximately eight times four meters and with two floors. On the bottom floor we installed the model railway on a big table that could be lifted up in the roof. This way that Bertil (my father-in-law) plans and create things out of an idea, has been extremely motivating. And it has also given me physical work, physical work that sometimes is monotonous, and in being that giving my mind time to reflect. I remember especially when I was working with a project in Malmö a new square in Hyllie. Work was quit stressful and I worked a lot of hours every week, so almost all weekends we drove down to my parents-in-law, and I could build things with Bertil. That gave me all the energy I needed to work another week. So in a sense, all the physical work made me able to keep working and feel motivated in my work. So now let’s go back to 2001 when I was finishing my studies and first had to do my manda-

tory internship. Since I had been in contact with NOD in this thesis I asked them if I could become an intern with them.

After a few weeks and some discussions I started my career as an intern with NOD in Stockholm and stayed there, four months. It was a perfect start I worked with interesting projects in a creative environment. The office was located together with two architectural companies Wingårdh and Berg architects. And the office was situated in an old storage facility for wine and liquor in "Liljeholmen" a quay area that was transforming from an industrial area into a residential and office area. This was very inspiring often when I walked to work I thought of what Marc Lampe had told us, about being inspired by the building process itself.

My first real employment was with Selberg architects in Trondheim, Norway. I started there in 2003, it was different from my first working experiences with NOD. Here I worked much closer with architects, both in building projects and in infrastructure projects, for example bridges. Here I worked more independently in projects, that was a bit scary at first, but after a while I started to enjoy the freedom. This gave me a lot of energy and motivation in work.

When the family situation made it desirable to move back to Sweden, I got the opportunity to start at Sweco, one of the bigger consulting firms in Sweden. Here I worked in a group with only landscape architects.

You could say that I worked in two offices at the same time, because of the different characters of the projects that I worked in. On the one side, I started to work with T. Andersson in his project "Cyrilusparken". I then continued to work with him throughout my time at Sweco with different projects, I worked with him almost half the time. The other side of my work at Sweco was with larger infrastructure projects. I worked with two major projects the new stretch for E18 between Kista and Hjulsta then I also worked with "Arbetsplanen" for "Förbifart Stockholm" the new bypass around Stockholm a new major highway. The main goal of this project was to determine the land use for the entire project, so that all the different legislative plans could be determined. We also produced a design manual for the different bridges, tunnel entrances and different technical buildings we also worked as a partner in producing the design manual for the tunnels, which was a big part of this highway.

Inspiration. I experienced a lot of different processes, that were extremely interesting. In working with Thorbjörn I learned to refine details and to work with design until the details were perfect. And also to coordinate all technical solutions with other consultants. This gave a lot of inspiration in meeting other talented professionals in other disciplines; lighting design, graphic design, experts in water and storm water management and of course structural engineers.

In 2011 I changed to a smaller landscape architectural firm called Funkia.

I changed because of three reasons, I wanted to be part of a smaller firm where strategic decisions were taken closer to the practicing architects. And I didn't like the direction Sweco took in regard of architecture. It seemed to me that the architectural part of the business was being reduced in favour of other consulting disciplines. The third reason was that I thought it would be a new start, when I say a new start I mean that I missed that feeling I had in Norway, where I sometimes felt "alone". This lonely feeling gave some freedom in the work, and I wanted to get back to that feeling.

What has kept me working and feeling motivated? Motivated to make interesting work?

There is not one answer to these questions. When reading Carola Wingren's doctoral thesis (*En landskapsarkitekts konstnärliga praktik*, 2009, Alnarp) I can clearly relate to her way in organising inspiration and also in seeing the cumulative effect that inspiration has on your own creative process.

My inspiration or motivation often comes from three main directions, and when thinking back I realise that these sources have followed me from when I was younger, and evolved and there have been new layers of complexity almost each year.

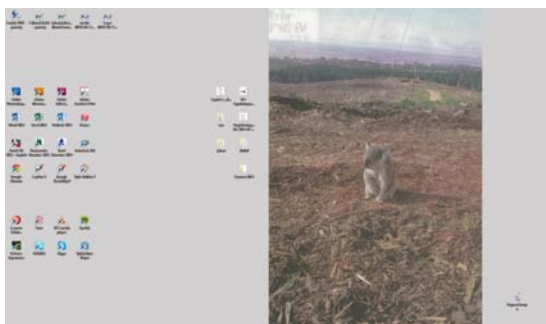
Technology/mechanics, Graphic design or nature itself. To describe what I mean I here give an example

- Technology/Mechanics - I have always been interested in technology, and had a big interest in how things are put together, I'm one of those who can read a technical manual and really love to understand all the features and built-in smartness in things. I still remember how I could disassemble all sorts of things, just to understand how it worked.

- Graphic Design - I like to understand how graphics are constructed, and I find it extremely fascinating how a few simple lines can give balance to a white A4-paper. This inspires me every time I'm starting the layout for a technical drawing or col-

lects pictures for an inspirational collage.

- Nature – In the concept of nature there lies so many inspirational sources. But for me it's mostly the chance we have as working with constructing society, the chance to work for a more sustainable society. So for me I collect pictures where we (human beings) have made big mistakes against nature and animals. These pictures make it easier to keep fighting for solutions that I believe in.



Screenshot of my desktop (Johan Krikström)
This is a picture cut out from the magazine Metro, 2013-05-13.
The koala misses its tree that is cut down by us humans.
Some pictures stay longer before I change them, this one has been there for almost two years.

In what way have I used my insights from the work I made in 2001 throughout these years working until today?

What I learned was that the work to find good ideas takes time, but eventually ideas appear. Because that was what I heard from all the people we meet. If they had problem finding an idea, they all somehow eventually found an idea. And that was comforting to me, when I started to work. That made me think that it was just to work and things would fall into place.

Since I've realized that the people we talked to were all very good architects, and what they made seem relatively simple, was in fact very hard. So now in finishing this thesis it's clear to me that finding good ideas isn't that easy. You really have to be focused and hard working. I still believe that one of the biggest keys to create interesting designs is to use your own inspiration and motivation in your work. Another side effect was that it gave me self-confidence. The self-confidence came from the experience to have spoken to some practicing designers, and being able to talk about design and the creative process.

Workshop #6 Career - retell by Christer Lundenius 16th of June 2015

I'm house-sitting my dear friends cottage situated at the very end of the park in Alnarp, while attending an intensive course on constructing and maintaining green roofs in Malmö. Johan and I are wrapping up our thesis on exploring creativity and the design process and ever since we started this journey as landscape architects I have been fizzled to broaden my horizons.

When we left university I had a focus to experience the basic crafts and knowledge on plants, landscaping and maintenance. Later I searched for a more holistic approach and I wanted to be a part of a bigger picture. It has put me in a place where I have embraced some methods to keep my creativity going as well as to control the design process. One internal method starts with a short period of letting my subconscious collect information. Mainly while gardening or domestic work. Then lots of sketching, questioning and testing of ideas by incorporating people in the office. Another method is based on working with a group of persons from other disciplines, it's an animated process and hard to control, but the results are often satisfying when the leading thread from all the experiences of the group is extracted.

When I left the university I wanted to learn more about plants and got a job at a nursery and garden centre. There I did get to know an awful lot of garden companions and even more about all the hard labour it takes to run a successful garden centre. I met some very experienced people regarding plant production which, besides lots of work, is both science and sensitivity. It has to be a passion to become experienced in commercial plant growing. I left the nursery and went to landscaping.

I got a job in a typical medium sized constructor and landscaping firm. Suddenly plants was not what everything revolves around and I was looked upon as the plant geek by huge guys driving king size

vehicles. I got blue prints to follow and I learned about earth works, stone works, pipes and drainage as well as maintenance of residential areas. I dedicated some years in this manner and enjoyed being outdoors.

During the time all this outdoor work was going on my life was expanding on a family level. Having kids changed my priority list and I got less interested in rushing out to work all day. Beside plants and landscaping I had a genuine interest in environmental, social and health issues but these topics was hard to bring up to discussion amongst my colleagues and it made me feel alienated. If I had a passion for landscaping it was no more. I got laid off when a financial crisis some years ago affected the company and a slow lifestyle followed filled with reflection and just being with the family.

I started to think about this thesis again and also to try getting a job as a landscape architect. My practical skills and experience worried me a bit, would a person who hasn't been working as a traditional landscape architect for a long time even be considered? Luckily I found an office of like-minded environmental consultants where my thoughts were highly appreciated.

Today I have the possibility to question and reflect on what matters and in my work groups we do that ever so often. Our work process can be very challenging, we want everyone involved to reflect and contribute on everything and this often gives us both the independence and responsibility to strongly influence the agenda or program controlling a project.

Another part of having both the theoretical and the practical interests and experiences is that I am now being involved in a wider range of projects then I could imagine a few years ago. Some very practical, and others purely by the desk but mostly a fusion of both.

This physical working phase at the nursery and the landscaping was a long period of gathering information and experience, using the whole body as an instrument. The present phase I see myself in is fusing that physical phase with the academic period at university.

When it comes to inspiration I find being outdoors in nature is a great source. It was the same thirteen years ago but nowadays the information I experience is by far greater. Another source of inspiration I often turn to is the holistic knowledge on crop growing and farming that has developed the last decades. It is a very inclusive perspective where environmental and social and health issues is the focus

and people are striving to leave a positive footprint rather than as little as possible.

I think our sources of inspiration often are external. A lot of designers seems to be drawn to certain kinds of inspiration and living in a heterogenic culture similar designs follow. Trends. Sooner or later someone chooses a different way to relate to sources of inspiration, or use unexpected sources. If the timing is right there will be a success. The emotional perception can of course alternate enormously between individual designers thus there would be a correspondent variation in creative expressions. Despite that, there are inspirations and norms and functions that constantly are being rewarded and setting trends in our time and space.

We have the unique possibility to adapt to almost any situation, to survive and even thrive within time. It takes a lot of training to become really skilled, to fine-tune your body's own tools; our sensitivity being trained to balance experience and decision making, with the brains capacity to use the repertoire of feelings, intuitively and culturally tied to the physical world. We train our brain to daily use these tools to assemble and reshape. This fascinating capacity to transform our environment and by doing so, transform ourselves, is a wide topic and I conclude this workshop by thinking; would these thoughts be a part of me if I had finished the thesis thirteen years ago?



Me (Christer Lundenius), Waiting for the bus in the morning. Taken 2015-03-15, Christer Lundenius.

PART 3

We have been travelling, meeting architects and studying to find answers to questions we brought up in our program. During our work new questions and thoughts arose and the thesis really lives its own life. It becomes coloured and affected by our day-to-day experiences. This final discussion will conclude the conversations and our workshops, and we will present our thoughts on the benefits from our work to the practicing landscape architect.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE CONVERSATIONS

The Design Process

Donald A Schön, a professor in urban studies and education at MIT, investigates the presence of “professional knowledge” that is demanded to conduct a profession. Schön means that knowledge often is silent or soft (Schön 1983:viii) and he tries to find ways to describe it. He wants to describe a design process, the choices a designer makes from idea/concept to drawing/completed site.

We focus on the first part of a landscape architects design process, when it all starts. In the conversations with the various designers many reflections were argued and we made an attempt to map (diagram 1) an overall picture and also to extract some essence of inspiration and motivation within the initial working processes amongst these designers.

The second diagram (p. 85) illustrates the internal process of inspiration and motivation (left cycle) and it's input-output connection which feeds to a common or a corporate design process (right cycle). It's a living system in interaction and there is always fine-tuning and optimizing to be done.

Schön mentions the conception of “reflecting-in-action” (Schön 1983:59) to describe the process when a practitioner uses professional knowledge to evaluate the possible directions a project might take. He writes that during a workday a professional will have to rely on his or hers experiences when facing unique situations never encountered before where decisions have to be made. For these situations Schön uses the conception “tacit-knowing-in-action” (Schön 1983:49).

As landscape architects we train ourselves to read the landscape and to design by using sometimes really sublime processes in the landscape and sometimes more profound and symbolic artefacts. With experience comes the ability to play with more levels of information while the design becomes more simplified.

Part of this knowledge Schön is writing about might be collecting references of internal experiences and images of landscapes. A library of knowledge we tap into consciously or not, being put in a demanding situation or through methods creating a similar tacit-knowing-in-action. The experienced and well aware land-

scape architect has a wide base of information for reflection-in-action and easier access to the tacit-knowing-in-action conception. Thus the importance of engaging in motivating creative acts and awareness of ones sources of inspiration.

Inspiration

We often reflected upon inspiration, especially in the later period of our studies. During the years of practise the insight has grown stronger about awareness of our sources of inspiration (workshop 6). In dictionaries inspiration is described as; something, a force or an influence, or a process, giving a person ideas or creativity (p.15). Inspiration can be viewed as an energy field that we have access to. We perceive our picture of it depending on our preferences such as culture, religion etc. Awareness of our internal creative process (diagram 2. p.85) enables us to use inspiration in a rational manner in our daily work. Katie Hawkinson stresses the importance of discussing the topic of inspiration during your studies in the book

"Thinking/drawing, confronting an electronic age" (a collection of essays, edited by Marc Trieb). According to her this awareness is beneficial for students to "enter their creative process with an active mind" (Thinking/drawing 2008:164).

To characterize sources of inspiration is like viewing the processes changing a landscape over time. Inspiration is a landscape with infinite sources. Fields that may or may not overlap, borders come and disappear. These fields (sources) are being characterized by us viewing them. Diagram 1 shows an estimated allocation in an imagined landscape of inspiration.

Sources of inspiration are here exemplified and categorized based on the conversations. Having these definitions in mind and reflecting upon the talks can demonstrate that one source is not constantly defined by one category, it may alter between two or more, and other categories are there to be found in the conversations.

Inspiration from a very general view:

In some of the conversations "everyday life" is a main source for inspiration and the environment where ideas are extracted. The architect Jerzy Szczepanik- Dzikowski puts it simply; "... in my understanding the source of inspiration is the world which is around us in general" (appendix. 143). His friend, landscape architect Mirek Zstuka's answer to our question -inspiration, what does it mean to you, was: "Probably every time something different. I would say, if your life is not inspiring you couldn't be a good designer" (appendix. 139). Landscape architect SueAnne Ware gives an example of her thoughts on how to find inspiration when starting a new project: "I'm an everyday person in a public practice, walking down the street, what do you see? How can you engage with the things that you see in your everyday life and twist them ever so slightly that they have a different meaning? You don't have to go over the top to make a point" (appendix. 135).

Inspiration from a private interest

Private interests differs of course and can be very unique as well as really simple. We reflect upon our own interests in the sixth workshop, and architect Marc Lampe says it well when talking passionately about his interest in construction sites; "my personal background comes from a fascination with building from actually feeling my heart beat whenever I pass a construction site" (Appendix.144). Landscape architect Mirek Zstuka also has a passion for the profession: "My work is the passion of life and it's a good life, but it's also a curse, you never know when to leave the office." (appendix. 141)

Inspiration from the gatherings of information

Collections of information gives a diverse source of inspiration, accessible through various methods, to be put into the design process. Landscape architects Sinatra & Murphy sampled background material for five years before feeling confident to work with a social issues: "...the

first five years of Jim and I working together, we didn't do anything else but trying to learn about what the issues were..." (appendix. 128). Art, music and fashion are sources of infinite inspiration and landscape architect Ken Smith is very much into that: I "...I actually always read the fashion reviews, like religiously. I love reading about the couture shows in Paris!" (appendix. 113)

How and where does landscape architects seek their motivation today?

We all have our sources of inspiration and a variety of different things in the world that motivates us in work. The conversations gives an insight to this just by looking at chart 1, illustrating the diverse field of what inspires these designers. Now having said that, we stress that landscape architecture is unique because it has the program of the landscape to reconsider. "Landscape is there without us naming it" (SueAnne Ware. 133) as designers we may have a variety of inspirations to choose from

Diagram showing the inspirational/ motivational spread of the conversations

To investigate the material from the conversations, we have put the different inspirational and motivational sources in a matrix, to see if they somehow are concentrated in any corner of the matrix. In analysing the material we use opposing common conceptions that are used in design discussions. The conceptions are: nature versus culture, and contemporary versus traditional. In sorting the different results into the matrix we realised that some of the

answers were hard to relate to conception that we used. So we added two more conceptions, external and internal. In this we mean external or internal sources of inspiration or motivation. For us the external sources are more of the classical way of being inspired or motivated by something, internal is more of a way of interpreting a reformulating things that you learn, and being inspired or motivated by your own thoughts about other things.



Diagram 1:
Left-Right axis: Nature – Culture, Top-Bottom axis: Contemporary – traditional and Internal - External

but we all have the landscape in common. It is profound.

How does motivation help and affect us in our daily work?

Laurie Olin mentions in his essay, the importance of being engaged in the observation of things and by being engaged in connecting to your memories (Thinking/drawing 2008:82). We have met very creative designers with a reflective mind-set and clear awareness about the design process. This engagement has in several conversations been defined. It's a passion. We tend to agree on this. The more we engage in work we have interest in, the more motivated we get to learn, create and evolve within that field.

How and in what ways do we seek motivation and inspiration in the creative process?

The illustrative diagram 2 explains the cycles of the process really well in theory. Practically it can get chaotic and philosophically it might be hard to grasp but it all boils down into practise, practise and more practise. And awareness.

Can we develop our way of finding inspiration?

The work on this thesis has been very inspiring. It has been a long process, when it begun we cannot say for sure and neither if it ever will end. While we were working with conversations and on workshops we were very much in a flow of current influences. One week it was listening to certain music and the next we were collecting pictures making a collage. Our heads were filled with thoughts and much focused on what our private sources of inspiration are. The search was quite illusive in the beginning and we expected much.

With working experience came confidence to trust in those sources of inspiration. Our awareness expands on the subject and so does our library of references. We are sure we will continue to talk and write and reflect upon the

matter because we feel engaged and we enjoy the flow of the design process.

Having these conceptions in mind here is a short summary of the conversations.

Conversation #1 (landscape architects) Petter Hauffman & Johan Paju, mysticism, biotopes

For Petter and Johan inspiration comes from a variety of directions like; society, architecture and environment. They work actively to seek new ways to make interesting designs. Johan talks about myths and stories as motivation in his work as well as biotopes and the way different biotopes work together.

Conversation #2 (scenographer) Aida Kalnins, cut and paste

Her motivation is routine, sticking to a method and giving her self-time to let her subconscious work before the upcoming design challenge. At the same time she collects pictures and arrange them to give herself a creative boost in her work, motivation and inspiration.

Conversation #3 (architect) Henrik Schultz, the sketch – intuition

Henrik mentions sculptural art as a big inspiration. Then he talks about the sketch how he tries to find a form, through sketching. When he has his sketch he tries to realise it in the design of a chair, for example. It's hard he implies, but sketching motivates him in his work.

Conversation #4 (landscape architect) Matt Davies, literature

He talks about the site and what it can give. He believe that being aware can bring you influences other than physical which can be inspiring. He reads a lot and likes to give him-

self time to absorb influences. Matt also finds it very rewarding to analyse the history of a site, through historical maps.

Conversation #5 (landscape architect)

Ken Smith, music and fashion

Ken finds inspiration in different art- and design forms. He specifically names music and fashion design, and he draws a few parallels to the landscape architecture trade. He also travels a lot and like to confront himself with totally new cultures. The office location in a very urban context also drives and inspires him.

Conversation #6 (landscape architect)

Simon Kringas, distilling

He finds motivation in being innovative, questioning himself to make things in a unique and site specific way. To him the architect has a responsibility to question agendas and to raise the level of awareness about public places.

Conversation #7 (landscape architect)

Jim Sinatra & Phin Murphy, traditional landscape

Their work together with aboriginal cultures has inspired them intensely. They have this experience of people's profound connection to the land, as a muse in their work.

Conversation #8 (landscape architect)

SueAnne Ware, devotion

SueAnne says that she has to be passionate about a project, and then it seems as she is building up a relationship with the client. After this she is ready to start to generate ideas, and the ideas comes from everyday life. Then she twists her experiences slightly, and that starts her process.

Conversation #9 (landscape architect)

Mirek Sztuka, Client

It's the client that starts the process, the needs the client have. Mirek likes to push himself to find new "things" to incorporate in the design

to make it, for example, more flexible. He finds he's becoming really good at selling his ideas.

Conversation #10 (architect)

Jerzy Szczepanik-Dzikowski, humans

Jerzy talks about the world around us, everyday life inspires. Keeping an open mind and read books to create a mind full of ideas for future use.

Conversation #11 (Architect)

Marc Lampe, interaction, building process

Marc is fascinated about all the people with different nationalities and education at his work place. He thinks that this mix is motivating and inspiring for the entire office. For Marc personally, the building process itself is a motivation and source of inspiration. He emphasise that it's important to have your own "thing" to "light your fire". He also believes in taking a break from the task if you get stuck designing.

Conversation #12 (architect, landscape designer)

John Lonsdale, own pace, life, art

John clearly have two ways of motivating himself. At first he talks about giving himself challenges or questions, and that way provoking his mind to find new and interesting ideas. Or to use the agenda as a tool and the act of not designing becomes design. This is an interesting way to create, not by solving but rather by finding the precise right question. Site specific. And there is so much to be found in a question, and to find the core question that is not possible to break up in more questions. More recently he also has embraced a more free way of designing, a more artistic way of sculpting and relying on his own ability to design.

Illustration on the relation of inspiration and motivation has on the creative process

In talking to all the people we've been meeting, it's clear to us that inspiration and motivation are connected to the creative process. And to show how we perceive the relationship between the creative process and inspiration/motivation we composed this diagram.

The diagram consists of two circles one to the right and one to the left. The one to the left is our idea of the origin of your own inspiration and motivation, and this circle affects the creative process, the circle to the right. (We have borrowed the illustration to the right from Funkia, the current workplace for Johan Krikström).

In working with landscape architecture, the creative

process usually involves more than one individual in contrast for example an artist's work who usually works alone, with the creative process. In saying this we understand that a lot of work in a landscape architecture practice involves a single individual. But a landscape architect almost always have to work with a colleague or in close connection with a client or other consultants.

So we think that in working as a landscape architects it's important to understand where your own inspiration and motivation comes from. So you clearly can debate this with the people you work with in your project.

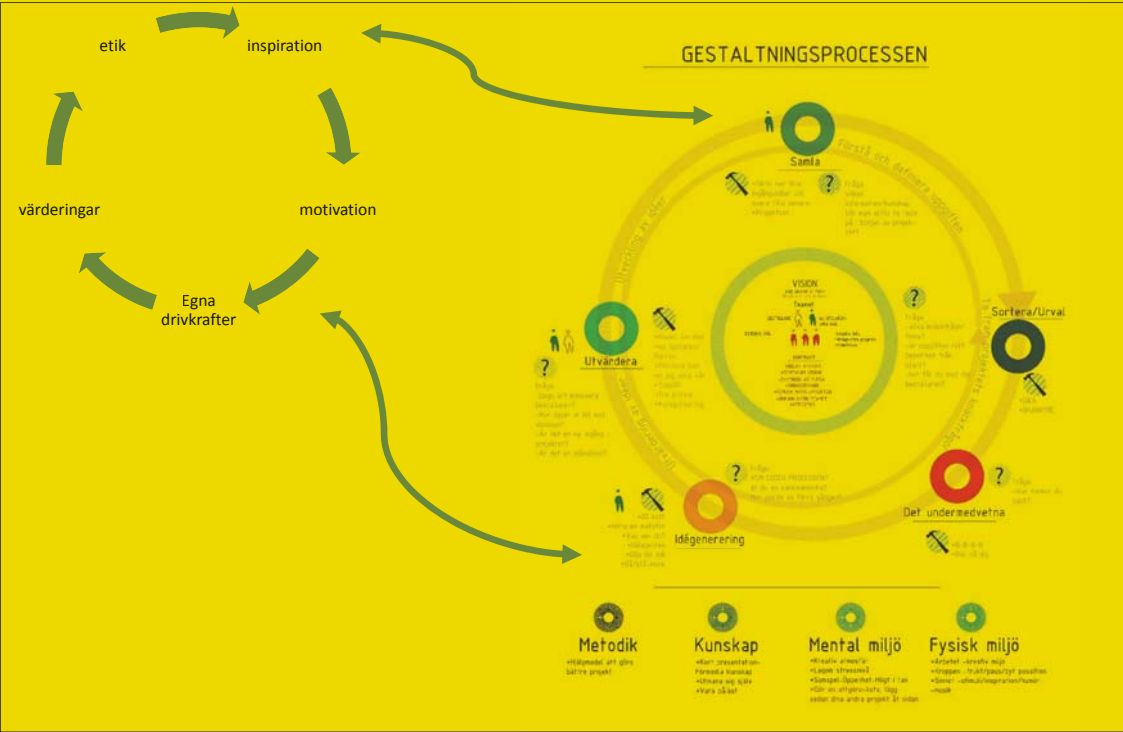


Diagram 2:
Left circle: Inspirational and motivational sources
(Translated from Swedish words from top and in clockwise order: Inspiration, Motivation, own driving force, personal set of values and ethic).

Right circle: Creative process, illustration of the creative process described by landscape architects at Funkia, 2014
(Translated from Swedish words from top and in clockwise order: Collecting, sorting/selecting, the subconscious, generating ideas and evaluate).

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE WORKSHOPS

To draw any clear or logical conclusions from our workshops regarding our questions is a bit tricky. We soon realized that even though it worked fine to create an agenda for a workshop it's not all black and white but an organic structure within the evolution of the workshops.

The main thing was to work through the conversations practically and to process them by trying various methods and sources of inspiration to create a design processes. These processes feeding our reflective self, more layers to gather information from, then just the intellectual which is often in focus.

The first to the fourth workshop was all about trying different methods we extracted through the conversations. Some of the architects had similar working methods and we categorized the following; "collage work", "sketching", "work within a theme" and "external influences". We got really engaged in these workshops but when we were done it felt as if something was lacking. The process of trying to understand and use another person's way of getting inspired is difficult and we were very optimistic. The program we wrote for every workshop was actually asking more then we could solve in such a short time and without further feedback the design process halted.

Therefore we found the fifth workshop (campfire) to be very rewarding, it was not really a way of using another person's motivation or inspiration, but a method to focus internally, to listen and to find one's own answers. And finally we took on a sixth workshop that involves time and reflection. It's a workshop that expresses our experiences and insights on the matter of this thesis.

If we should try to evaluate our workshops, we have to somehow grade the results. So we made our own questionnaire with a grading system based on how our questions in "Problem" and our goals in "Aim" is lifted as well as a subjective perspective of all workshops.

- 1. Total failure, we weren't able to complete any sketches. None of the main questions were discussed.
- 2. We were not satisfied with the result of the workshop, but got some discussion going.
- 3. We were satisfied with the result of our workshop, and felt that our main questions were in focus.
- 4. We were more than satisfied with the result of our workshop and the main questions were deeply discussed.
- 5. We made sketches/or discussed ideas that we couldn't imagine ourselves do before that particular workshop.

Workshop nr.	Christer	Johan
#1	3	3
#2	2	2
#3	3	2,5
#4	3,5	4
#5	4,5	4,5
#6	4,5	4,5

We became better at working within the framework for every workshop we made and also better at finding out the agenda. We can also state that this was a joyful part of our work with this thesis, it felt very creative to search for inspiration and to use the methods of others.

We also believe that we learned to recognize more of our own inspiration and talking to people about their methods and then trying them out, is training ourselves and motivating us in the creative process. Definitely a way to digest the conversations within the body and on other levels then the intellectual. Awareness on a sensitive plane is an important component in work. As is to be read in Schöns conception of "reflecting-in-action" (Schön 1983:59) to describe the process when a practitioner uses his professional knowledge to evaluate the possible directions a project might take...

Conclusion is that good methods to be creative brings a more relaxed relation to the design process. It can still be hard and tough to go through but methods provides confidence to push limits, to fine tune and to be true to yourself.

REFLECTIONS ON OUR METHOD

Looking back at our work and how we have done this thesis, it is probably a few things we would have done different today.

CONVERSATIONS

For a start, it would probably be better if we had sent the questions in advance to the people we have been seeing. Then it would probably have been easier to focus on the subject of motivation and inspiration in the conversations. It was obvious to us after analysing the conversations, that we only got real answers to approximately fifty percent of the questions we had.

We did follow up on the conversations, we sent the transcribed texts to all the people that we met so that they could read through the text and hopefully have some comments to their answers. We did get some replies not that many. We could probably have used this way of dialogue in a more evolved manner. For example, we could have told our conversation partners that we would follow up on the questions, and that we would be back with an email with reflecting questions. This way we could have caught eventual reflections that might have popped up in the heads of the people we met.

Another aspect of the individuals we met was that we got a really unbalanced gender ratio. Two out of twelve are female, we could have altered our method of finding interesting people to meet, so that we got a more balanced mix. We have also focused on the “western” world and not incorporated big parts of the world in our study. In evolving this study it would be interesting to meet people South America, Africa and Asia.

WORKSHOPS

The workshops were really interesting to do, although, we didn't feel that they gave all the answers that we had hoped. We think that maybe it would be better to have some sort of incubation time between the conversations and the workshops.

We think that the workshops were important and a vital part of this work but they could have given more. Maybe we could have made the fifth reflect-

ing workshop first, and in this way outlining the other workshops. Possibly the fifth workshop could have been done after completing all the conversations.

The sixth workshop was like the fifth a reflective workshop, somehow they tied a lot of the loose ends together. And made us focus on the core questions, it was easy to lose the focus on the questions in traveling and meeting all the interesting people we have met.

One advantage to conduct the workshops in the way we did was that, it felt very creative to be in a location, and on day one have a fantastic conversation and on the other day prepare a workshop, and then to be creative and do the workshop. This gave a feeling of flow in the study.

ONGOING DISCUSSION

We had an ongoing discussion during our active parts of the study, and this made the work both easier and harder. Easier in the meaning that you had someone to bounce your ideas against. A person that had the same questions in mind. Harder in the meaning that trying to formulate all the thoughts that occur in a thesis like this is hard and then to do it so that we both agree on what we write, that takes time.

RESULT

In analysing and discussing all the material we have gathered. It's been hard to separate own reflections from the input from the conversations. This is because we have made the workshops which more relate to our own minds, and we have been learning things from the conversations. This learning process combined with the investigating part of the conversation, has in away blended together, so to separate the thoughts after this fairly long period is almost impossible.

Although we have been as clear as possible in separating our own thoughts from the input from the conversations.

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APPENDIX

TRANSCRIBED CONVERSATIONS

Here we present all the conversations unedited and in the original language.

Samtal På Nod tisdag 2/10-01

Petter Hauffman & Johan Paju

Johan: - Eftersom ni har funderat inom det här området förut kanske ni kan hjälpa oss i vår inledningsfas.

Petter: - Det är ett intressant område, men det är svårt att stolpa upp sina inspirationskällor. I inledningsfasen har man olika kontrollpunkter där man samlar upp sig. Det varierar från projekt till projekt, vi har långsamma och snabba projekt, olika projektformer ser olika ut rent strukturmässigt.

Johan: - Hur stor del är inspiration.

Petter: - Det varierar efter vad som är mest intressant, ibland är syftet satt att det är idén som är viktig.

Johan: - Yttre och inre inspirationsdel?

Petter: - Allt är en stor gröt av inspiration, ibland kanske man plankar något då hänvisar man till det, Gert har alltid tydliga referensobjekt i sina projekt.

Johan: - Diedens¹, japanskt?

Petter: - Klart den är japaninspirerad, det blev bara så, Gert har använt liknande element tidigare så det kanske bara blev så. Trädgården har blivit mer japan än huset, tar man dit en japan så kan han kryssa i alla sina kryss i sitt lilla trädgårdsformulär. I det fallet var det helt fritt ifrån beställaren.

Johan: - När det är mer fritt är det kanske viktigare med inspiration,

Petter: - Det är så mycket som inspirerar. För att få till det är det viktigt att se glädje i sitt arbete. Man kan ju inte stänga huvudet blodigt hur mycket som helst, mycket har ju med engagemanget från alla olika håll att göra.

Johan: - Är det svårt att få detaljer rätt när de är speciella?

Petter: - Nej till en början brukar det funka bra, det kan bli svårare när de väl ska göras.

Johan: - Mystik vad är det för er?

Petter: - Mysticism och kurbits är saker som vi hämtar inspiration ifrån, men det varierar mycket. Det är bara i det inledande som vi använder det.

Johan: - Vad skiljer er från resten?

Petter: - Vi försöker ha en ide om företaget och de projekt vi gör, det är väldigt lätt att bara göra en fyrkant etc. Mer erfarenhet gör lätt att man blir tröttare. Vi jobbar alla fyra, kastar ut våra idéer på bordet och sen ser vad som finns där. Vi försöker att använda hjärnan.

Johan: - På Bo01² ser ert speciellt ut.

Petter: - Vi tog det på allvar, försökte visa biotoper, framtid, urbanitet och strand. Trädgård som har ett eget liv. De andra gjorde väldigt klassiska trädgårdsdelar, vi lyckades väl med att skapa något speciellt.

Johan: - Hur mycket var givet?

Petter: - Cirkeln var given sen gjorde vi vår grej, vi jobbade mycket nära med arkitekten. Vi gör trädgårdsdelen de gör huset och sen knökar vi ihop det. Gyllins trädgård³ däremot gjorde vi alltihop tillsammans, ifall vi har lyckats får vi se.

Johan: - Har idén följt med från första skissen till slutresultatet?

Petter: - Det är ju målsättningen, men pengapungen kommer ju alltid att hugger, på Bo01 tycker vi väl att vi har lyckats. Där har tyvärr bygget vart i vägen för trädgården.

Johan: - Den personliga catchen, har ni olika?

Petter: - Vi har olika, och det är det som är bra, men

samtidigt måste man ju vara ödmjuk mot varandra, så att alla får plats och ingen blir undantryckt.

Johan: - Det är svårt för er att utöka?

Petter:- Ja det är det ju.

Johan: - Hur sållar ni?

Petter: - Projekt som är intressanta då måste vi ta dem sen finns det vissa som vi är tvingade att ta, då får man knäa in dem.

Petter: - Ofta fokusera man på att hitta den där idén, det är kanske inte helt rätt. Det finns ju så många andra infarter. Vi försöker ju sälja idémässigheten i projekten. Alla delar är ju egentligen lika intressanta, t ex. varför ska det gå så snabbt eller varför är markarbetare så dåliga?

Johan: - Ni hittar er inspiration överallt och det är alltid olika?

Petter: - Ja det är alltid olika, fast vi har våra olika inriktningar; samhälle, arkitektur och miljö. Våra galgar som vi hänger upp allt ting på och så silar det ner igenom dem. Bagers torg t ex, då vi mer letar inom samhällsfacket. Dan Wolgers blev ett klart val i detta samhälls projektet. Det finns många olika idédelar i ett projekt, då var t ex Nytorgets format förebilden. Sen finns det ju olika förebilder.

Petter: - Ibland kanske man destillerar fram en tanke som blir mer central.

Petter: - Vi ser det som att vi vill lära oss saker under vägen, då tar man ju in olika människor. Allt ifrån ekologer, zoologer, arkitekter och konstnärer.

Johan: - Har något fack gett er mer än andra människor?

Petter: - Konstnärerna har gett oss mycket fastän vi försöker balansera på rätt sida. Man ska akta sig för att trilla över kanten? Varför då? Jo beställaren vill ju inte ha ett konstprojekt

när han beställer ett landskapsprojekt. Konst ställer frågor, vi försöker ändå smyga in det när det passar. T ex biotronväggen på Bo01. Reaktionen från allmänheten är viktigt, man får ju också inse att tiden spelar in, det som idag inte funkar, kanske ser man det senare. Någonting skulle bli det som skrevs mest om på bomässan, Nods svar blev biotronväggen. Vår idé var salladsodling i rymden.

Johan Paju dyker upp.

Johan: - Hur skulle du Petter, göra motsvarande ex-jobb?

Johan trippar loss på vår mic.

Johan Paju: - Fan vad häftigt!

Petter: - Ex-jobb, det är ju en unik situation. Dels kan man göra ett projekt om murar, eller så kan man göra lite mer forskning. Det är ju alltid positivt. Det är ju svårt att få tag i det man vill. Trendmagasin tar med det som är trendigt eller snyggt. Utforska era egna hjärnor, vad har ni för egna hookar? Det har man helt klart nytta av sen, gör något mera personligt då kan det kanske bli något mer tror jag. Skanna marknaden kan bli lite dött, halvtråkigt.

Petter drar sig ur och Johan Paju tar vid.

Johan Paju: - Som man frågar får man svar. Det får inte var för trubbigt eller specialiserat, då undersöker man bara den här linjen. Då radar man bara upp det man känner till. Traditionellt tar man en tårtbit eller skiva och går ner i en fallstudie. Kanske ska man köra ner näven, ta snabba metoden. Att hitta sina val och tydliggöra sina val och formulera sina val.

Johan Paju: - Trender och inspiration, tradition, sätta det i olika scenarier. Varför är jag intresserad? Lära sig något, sätta det i förhållningen till andra saker. Det handlar mycket om förhållningssätt.

Johan visar Beepeln⁴. De försökte undersöka mål; få insikt i

gestaltungsstrategier, översätta teorier och idéer till fysisk form.

Johan Paju: - Vi hade skitkul, vi var trötta på situationen på Alnarp och vi ville göra något i Bengt Edmans stora lokal i folkparken. Det var som ett företag, vi var våra egna lärare. Vi valde en egen metod som skulle var kul. Man tröttnar på att harva i ett och samma ämne och metoder. Massa workshops med olika saker att undersöka, en studieresa och en tävling. Vi valde sättet att arbeta. Vad är en gestaltungsstrategi utifrån olika begrepp. En var lärare som tog fram bakgrundmaterial. En vecka var ett ämne. T ex en Feng Shui - analys av Tågarp. Det var spännande, vi kom inte fram till något speciellt mer än att det är bra att ha en strategi, men det kan bli bra ändå.

Johan: - Hur kom ni igång?

Johan Paju: - Vi ställde upp mål, vad vill vi göra, gestaltning, presentation, modeller och studieresor. Vad är vi inspirerade av? Bli berömda, sätta djävlar på plats, etc. Vi satt på en krog och kom fram till vad vi ville göra. Randeffekter och Wasteland var väldigt intressant just då. Metoden då? Vad innebär begreppsstudier? Vad betyder orden? Vad betyder de för er? Har man en egen plattform har man något att utgå ifrån, annars blir man stekt. Det är nästan som att vara en upptäcktsresande, som en journalist. Vi hade en idé om att istället för att göra en gemensam resa ta en sista minuten resa och så fick man se var man kom. Göra frågeställningen till er egen formulering. Varför är jag intresserad av det här? Vad är målet, vad kan jag få ut av det här? Ni kan ju göra en jättebra undersökning av det här, hitta strömningar inom trender och sådär, då har ni gjort en undersökning men ni måste också göra den till ert eget. Man lär sig en massa men har i princip bara samlat fakta, det måste bearbetas också, tränga in i frågorna. Det kan vara bättre att göra en punktinsats och gå tillbaka

för att studera den. Vartefter kanske man kan börja skönja ett mönster., Det är knivigt att formulera sig och det här är det som avgör kvaliteten på ert jobb och om ni kommer att ha kul.

Johan: - Handledare är ett problem.

Johan Paju: - Man ska ju bli godkänd också, det studietekniskt viktiga och examinatorn löser sig nog. Vad är det övergripande målet? Förstå vad man själv får inspiration från, analysera inspirationskällor. Vår berättelse och andras tankar och hur de använder sig av inspiration. Hur man använder sin inspiration och hur man omsätter sina tankar. Varför blir det som det blir? Svart låda, vad händer när det går igenom vår låda? Det kanske är mer metodik än inspiration. Trender och inspiration översatt till metoder. Det gäller att skapa en juste arbetssituation så att man skapar en juste deal. Vara sin egen arbetsgivare. Livets kostcirkel, det finns så mycket som påverkar det man vill och något som man är bra på. Det finns alltid olika böjelser AMA t ex. Det är det pappret som examinatorn tittar på, var kanske lite låg på pappret. Vilka metoder, resor och intervjuer, hur reder man ut sin egen situation? Letar i sin egen svarta låda, kanske skulle man hypnotisera sig, eller så drar man ur strömmen och går ner i källaren, tänder ljus och rökelse, världens metaresa. Vi försökte genom subliminala signaler påverka oss inför vår uppgift. Det hade grym effekt. Man fick väldigt mycket inspiration direkt, lite sektmässigt. Vårt normala arbetssätt kanske är lite väl traditionellt, först samla klossarna, sen ska de kastas runt. Vi måste ju bli varse vad vi gjort själva. Kanske ska ni byta grejor? Man har ju inte sin egen plattform. När man har gjort en tävling kan man bedöma de andras projekt. Det kanske är så att man först måste gå igenom en process för att förstå. Bertrand Russel pratar om logiska typer, hur man i olika sammanhang kan diskutera saker. Ibland är man på olika

plan eller sakernas natur är på olika plan. Vill man ha svar på en fråga i ett plan måste man formulera frågan inom samma plan. Det är mycket grundläggande metodik som måste knäckas. Kanske är det en flerstegsraket. Drar allt material åt samma håll? Det är bara ni som bestämmer vilken vikt det har.

Johan: - Om man söker upp sitt svar och andras svar, analyserar och sedan gör en jämförelse. Man gör en vettig förklaring och ett pedagogiskt upplägg.

Johan Paju: - Analysskedet är en del i jobbet, sen ska det bli verkstad! Ni gör världens coolaste landscaping grej. Ni har scannat marknaden. Ni har kollat vad som är ballast, var ligger trenderna idag och ni har avslöjat bakgrunden till varför folk gör sånt där. Då kan ni lätt springa förbi och göra ännu coolare grejer för ni fattar mekanismerna bakom. I det här landskapliga begreppet finns det så många olika delar. Har ni funderat på hur ni ska smalna av er bland alla trender?

Johan: - Från början hade vi en idé om att sikta in oss på halvurbana torg, efterhand har vi tappat det och gått in på inspirationsgrejen. Vi vill också hitta kontor som utmärker sig, folk som har en uttalad vilja, de som utvecklat manifest.

Johan Paju: - Det vi alltid tjarar om; omformulera sitt program så att man förstår själv, en hookline. Man kan ju spela ut folk mot sig själva. Man måste vara busenkel mot sig själv så att man själv förstår. Jag tycker att det är svårt att säga vad man är inspirerad av. Det mer mystiska är en stor del av det hela, en slags berättelse, att man har det med när man börjar. Ibland kan det vara otroligt tydligt ifråga om praktiska lösningar, man tar den smartaste lösningen, en del av berättelsen. Inspiration är ett suddigt gränsland. Hur definierar man begreppet? Närliggande ord kanske också är intressanta att analysera. Man har ju olika linjer, dissekera ett landskap och finna de

verksamma delarna, man kan byta ut och kontrastera. Jag tycker att naturliga fenomen och biotopmöten inspirerar, landskapet i sig. Har man inget koncept är det svårt för alla att dra åt samma håll, man har ett papper där man definierar vad man tycker, man trigger sina begrepp, varför gör vi det här projektet? Inspirationen kommer ur den metod man har valt, har man högt i tak?

Johan: - Ni har hållit på i tre år, kan ni ta genvägar idag?

Johan Paju: - Ja vi förstår lite snabbare idag vad vi pratar om. Vi använder kanske bara fem procent av de idéer vi har per projekt. Dessa har vi ju, och det blir mer med tiden. De idéerna kan vi ju använda sen när vi har bråttom. Intervjuerna är viktiga, ni får vika hur många intervjuer ni kan göra under de veckor ni har på er. Ni kan ju välja bort att ha en metod, det är ju också en metod. Skriva dagbok och se vad man har gjort kan vara bra. Vi hade ju en stenhård ram, det var viktigt. Annars blir det bara kaos. I vårt allmänna kaos måste det finnas några regler. Tjejrerna^s gjorde en mycket snyggare grej. Jag måste erkänna att de har gjort ett juste arbete. Det här är en första utgåva. Deras mål var; hur vi påverkas av de trender som råder och hur medvetna är vi om de värderingar som ligger bakom. Planka det rakt av vet jag, sen kan ni åka runt. I det dagliga arbetet råder det ett allmänt kaos, en snabbskiss; först utbryter det panik, vi har för mycket att göra, vi hinner inte men vi måste för att det är ett så himla roligt projekt. Först; varför ska vi göra det; rent tidsmässigt, bra beställare, det går rätt fort. Sen gäller det att ta reda på alla förutsättningar. Är det möjligt med de här förutsättningarna så att man inte gör några kardinalfel. Det kan ge inspiration. Sen ska man lägga på ett koncept, en berättelse eller en idé som väver ihop det.

Johan visar några projekt,

Hotel i Stockholm, Scandic Crown.

Johan Paju: -Förutsättningarna var; juste läge, fin utsikt, förvuxen trädgård och lågt i tak. Först allmän analys, sen vad är ett Hotel? Vad kan en trädgård bidra med? Samtalsämne, tillfällig installation, stadga i det, en slags designmanual, sen stämmer det här med rummet. Först skala bort allt ihop. Ingen tid att sköta anläggningen, mycket folk och dammig. Vatten, ljus, lättsköt, rumsskiljare dra in landskap en shakei. Det var en för rörig plats jag ville skapa en tomhet, allt skriker ifatt man får vika med det man vill då kanske det funkar. Det får vi se om en månad. Vi gick igenom alla bilder och böcker för att se allt som finns. Vi gick igenom gamla förhållningssätt där man redan har gjort idéer. PM Sällström har hjälpt oss. Dieden anläggningen har hjälpt oss väldigt mycket i det fallet, speciellt den här dubbla kanten. Bilder och hur de leker tillsammans. Oftast dissekerar vi våra bilder, det ska sprudla av liv, dambotten, damkanten, shakein och bambuskogen. Delarna som man visar. Finns det då några gjorda exempel idag. Man kan få inspiration i en konstruktion som man då visar, djuren är kanske viktigast här, Paddan Bengt som blir hooken för hela projektet. Här funkar det inte med några buskar, de skapar ingen myt. Vi hittar på en story där vi speglar in Gamla stan, då säljer man kanske lättare till någon. Lekplats för blinda barn. En idé om att skapa en levande värld där allt byggs på våra sinnen. Det är en rätt enkel inspiration. Här var det att bygga en värld. Det kanske är lättare att använda sig av stora begrepp. Här var det fyra världar. Den var bra den blev tydlig. Korvfabriken. Var ett projekt där vi ville undersöka 3Dfenomen. Man betraktar de från olika håll, en busenkel grej. Konstnär Escher lajjar med omöjliga 3D saker som inte går ihop, olika synvillor, 3Dboxar, landskapssceneriet, maskineriet och någon grafik. Testar någon annans metod,

metaprinciper, nej vad heter det, cybernetik flyttar en metod från en värld till en annan, då blir det en korsbefruktnings.

Stadsbyggnads tävling i Malmö, hitta inspiration i landskapet och hur man förklarar det, överlagringar. Det är bara för att det är ur mode det kan ju vara lika bra för det, dekonstruktivismen svarar kanske inte på alla frågor idag är det nog en ekotrend. Vi försöker nog att integrera allt så att det berättar samma historia, biotopisk maskin man betraktar det inte som en helhet utan som ett skeende, ett system. Arkitektur är ett rumsbyggande, vi kan mer beskriva processen.

Bagis tårtan, Dan Wolgers hjälpte oss. Det här ska byggas till sommaren 2002. Sveriges första prinsessårtetorg. Vi jobbade mycket och kom fram till det här svaret. Vi har löst alla rumsligheter, sen blev det här hooken sen saltar man, placerar ut detaljer. Undervisningskåk. Inspiration ett uppdrag att det som man har med sig i ryggsäcken, manifest är bra bara man inte sätter upp för stelackade regler så att man låser sig själv. Vårt manifest, bara levande material och som kommer från den tidsperiod som vi skulle beskriva, det kan ju inte bara stå jura och trias t ex. Det ska vara mer definierat, Vilka rum vill vi skapa. Synd att de inte byggde det. Nu har ju Gert gjort färdigt något liknande och det är ju lite ball, göra en park inomhus.

Här har Anders Mårten jobbat med mytologi. Kul när man får till det med olika skalor. Här ser man inte mönstret, här ser man en liten skog sen blir det här floder, allt beror på vilka material man använder. Det var ett projekt till en inomhus utställning.

Vi har tyckt att det finns så dåliga material så musselskal är ett av de material som har funkade bra för oss.

Bo01 har varit klart men nu lagrar de massa skit och små traktorer som har förstört stora delar. Först skulle det vara biotronen i mitten. Mossorna skulle ha varit förödlade men sen fixade de det själva. Helst ska det ju vara lite luftburna alger.

Johan: - Har ni alltid suttit här och jobbat, har utsikten utåt påverkat er?

Johan Paju: - Jo för fan, man måste skapa en situation både mentalt och fysiskt som man trivs med. Det är livets kostcirkel annars kan man inte göra bra grejer. Det är jätte viktigt med en bra lokal, sen värderar alla grejer olika. Man ska inte känna sig tyngd av saker som är onödiga.

Johan Paju: - Vår normaltillvaro innehåller alldeles för mycket arbete just nu det borde balanseras bättre i kostcirkeln.

Slut Johan helt utmattad och förkyld. 17:36 2001-10-08

Samtal med Aida Kalnins 2001022 kl 1300

Aida möter oss i dörren och bjuder snabbt på kaffe. Vi bänkar oss framför kopparna vid köksbordet och en diskussion går igång innan Johan riggat m:in. Aida är kvickt inne på vårt spår och berättar om sitt sätt att arbeta och söka inspiration.

Aida: - Lite av de och de, då blir det ett hopplock och inte en egen idé. Om man istället tömmer huvudet och sen, vad man än sysslar med så tittar man på någonting som inte har med det att göra, men som kanske ger en idéer.

Christer: - Det här registre-randet du gör är det medvetet?

Aida: - Det är omedvetet men så fort man hittar det, blir det medvetet.

Christer: - Det blir medvetet under de här tre dagarna, inte efteråt?

Aida: - Nej, det bara ramlar in, och sen när det har gjort det kan man sätta sig ner med pappret, då är det bra att göra vad som helst. Om man nu ska börja rita, alltså även ifall man inte är färdig kan man börja rita något. Är det dåligt kommer du att rätta till det tills du är nöjd. Du kan inte göra det om du inte har börjat rita, eller bygga, och ofta är det bättre att bygga skissmodeller, alltså tredimensionellt. Och jag har lite exempel. Jag har jobbat mycket med långfilmer, och då får jag ett manus, jag är den första som träder in på manusnivå. För att diskutera med regissören om mina första idéer är det viktigt att inte ha något allt för konkret i början. Kommer man med nåt konkret, t ex ett litet gult rum, då börjar man diskutera dessa små detaljer som inte är viktiga alls, det viktiga är att vi är överens, och att vi pratar samma språk. När jag säger ett varmt rum är det verkligen det han menar som varmt rum? När han beskriver något hemskt, är det hemskt för honom, det jag ser som hemskt? Det är det viktiga. Då gör jag collage, det är inte

jag som har hittat på det, det är rätt så vanlig. Innan man gör ritningar så gör man ett collage över den atmosfär man vill ha. Där kan finnas prylar och det kan finnas ritningar och det kan finnas saker, som tillsammans ger en enhetlig bubbla av känslor och plöts-ligt kan vi diskutera. Exakt så känns det, säger han, eller, det där är utanför, det där känns inte bra.

Christer: - Är det en metod du brukar använda?

Aida: - Ja alltid jag kan visa er. Det här gjorde jag för länge sedan, det var en lägen-het i en tv-serie som skulle vara väldigt kylig och ele-gant, och där jag nästan med-vetet tog bort alla möbler, men den kanske är lite mer, för där hade jag redan planen det var mer en färgplan, en atmosfär i andra stadiet.

Johan: - Hur lång tid har gått när du gjorde den här?

Aida: - Den här gjorde jag för 11-12 år sedan.

Christer: - Men i processen är det en vecka eller så?

Aida: - Det är det första steget.

Johan: - Efter en vecka?

Aida: - Ja, det är första steget. Här ser man en annan, det skulle vara grönt och vän-ligt och en gammal tant som bor, men här har jag ju ritat planen och så. Jag har andra som är mer...

Christer och Johan: - Den är mer abstrakt.

Aida: - Så här gjorde jag förra julkalendern, och då sade regissören att det skulle vara en riktig saga á la John Bauer. Det var en pojke och en flicka som bodde i var sitt hus, och de husen skulle vi bygga i studion. Det jag bör-jade med var, jag tyckte att flickan skulle vara rosa och pojken skulle var blå, så det var en riktig saga. Jag bör-jade göra collage med John Bauer och ta fram de färgerna och miljön, flickan med famil-jen skulle bara syssla med musik och det skulle finnas i allt. Men du ser att det är

exakt, det är samma miljö. När man ser huset som det blev så småningom, kan du ha den i och du bara ser direkt det är exakt. Du ser, det är små bitar, det kan vara färger, det kan vara tyger, det kan vara ett ansikte, det kan vara en stämning, det kan vara vad som helst. Men detta var Johan Bauer, och sedan den färgskalan. Pojken här skulle vara kemist och famil-jen skulle syssla med experi-ment. Jag hittade på att det här labbet, för man kan inte göra det labbet i en vit miljö och spela in det i en hel jul-kalender. Det skulle vara det där blåturkosa så jag hittade på att de skulle ha en swim-mingpool som de gjorde labbet i istället. Så blev det och det kom lite ifrån färgerna egentligen. Detta är ingen efterkonstruktion utan det är den här vägen det gick.

Johan: - Innan du gjorde detta vad gjorde du då?

Aida: - Då läste jag manus. Jag har fått ut lite ifrån regissören, eller så kommer kanske jag att föreslå någon-ting.

Johan: - Har du några skrivna punkter som du arbetar dig genom?

Aida: - Nej, det skrivna är ju manus, jag behöver inte beskriva utan detta är mycket starkare. Det kan man göra med trädgårdar eller med vad som helst.

Johan: - Det verkar kraft-fullt.

Aida: - Det är sån kanon, man tror det är enkelt men det tar jättelång tid, det är hundra och åter hundratals tidningar man bläddrar igenom bara för att hitta en bild. Jag har stora lager.

Christer: - Är det allt mellan himmel och jord?

Aida: - Ja, och jag gör nu mera så att så fort jag hittar en bild som är laddad så klip-per jag ut den. Jag har en packe med bilder inför kom-mande collage för nu vet jag vilka bilder som funkar.

Johan: - Det är otroligt kraftfullt redskap för att

presentera en ide på.

Christer: - Jag hade en sådan idé för länge sedan, och jag började spara bilder.

Aida: - Det kan ni börja göra för det är en skatt. Det här var en film som hette glädjekällan som jag gjorde med Rickard Hobert. Den var en "roadmovie" och då skrev jag alla scener, eftersom man åkte från en miljö till en annan kunde jag göra den så här. Jag gjorde collage för att se hela utvecklingen. Här ser man temperaturen och då skulle det börja i en lägenhet, där det skulle hända något hemskt i. Mamman dog, och i och med att det handlar om döden, sa Rickard att alla miljöer ska vara så ljusa som möjligt, eftersom det blir hemskare då. Den lägenheten skulle vara full av sol och värme och ljus. Då tog jag fram den här, det är ett äldre par. Det skulle ändå finnas just den här honungsfärgen och soliga och vänliga, och där händer då döden. Lite 50-och 60-tals atmosfär, och de skulle igenom Skärallid.

Sedan var det en scen i någon by som var lite som en dröm, man visste inte om det var en mardröm eller inte. Det var en konstig scen som var en tillbakablick, som har lite den här känslan i sig, upplevde jag då. Och sen så fortsätter det. De skulle fastna i ett grustag med en stor turnébuss som jag upplever som en tjur som stupar mitt i arenan. Jag fick bara den bilden och tog fram den och de färgerna. Nu blev det lite annat men det var intentionen färgmässigt. Sedan var det en annan skog som var full med... och det var kättja och en naken kvinna, och mannen var otrogen. Därefter kommer de till glädjekällan. Där var syrenerna väldigt viktiga men jag tänkte inte på att det skulle vara vita syrener som symboliserar döden. Det här har man med sig sen hela tiden från början till slut. Du kan återvända så fort du vill hitta en pryl och inte har den i huvudet, du hittar det som passar i collaget. Det här är en norsk film jag gjorde med det där lite kyliga igen. Det är väldigt användbart och det viktiga är inte att det är vackert, utan att det inte binder till det oväsentliga. Man börjar inte dis-

kutera detaljer, varför har du en pelare där och inte en vägg där? Man diskuterar det väsentliga, sedan kommer man fram till detaljerna. Det är väldigt viktigt att börja från rätt håll i den kreativa processen, inte börja med detaljerna som dödar allt annat. Jag hade en arkitektlärare när jag läste arkitektur som sade att det första stadiet i det bästa projektet ska du kunna rita på ett frimärke. Större än så ska det inte vara.

Aida ritar ett hus på papper för att visa vad hon menar.

Aida: - Det visar din starka idé, din grundidé är det viktiga. Var man kommer in och så är oväsentligt. Sedan kan du ta fram Svensk Byggnorm för att se om det stämmer, men inte innan. Om du ritar det så, finns styrkan i idén kvar, och efter det kan du mäta och rita, får du plats med en dörr osv. Det kommer sedan. Det starka, det är det här (hon pekar återigen på bilden). Det är samma sak med collage.

Christer: - Du tycker sen att när du väl ser filmen, scenografin som är uppbyggd, att man ser det klart och tydligt?

Aida: - Jag har ju varit med hela vägen dit så det är klart att jag aldrig har friska ögon när jag ser filmen. Den film jag ser är inte samma film som ni ser. Det är omöjligt. Det tar tio år innan jag kan se den filmen utan att titta på vad jag har gjort. Jag vet ju vad jag har gjort. På vägen dit har jag ju kunnat ändra och rätta till så att det alltid blir som jag velat ha det ändå. Ja, det blir det, för att jag har alla tillfällen i världen att rätta till det under inspelningarna, men jag kan aldrig se det med nya ögon.

Christer: - Kanske får du höra från andra att de tycker det eller att du sätt det hos andra som jobbar på liknande sätt?

Aida: - Jaa, jo då. Men man vet ju aldrig hur uppriktiga andra är.

Skratt!

Aida: - De regissörer jag

jobbat med har jag velat fortsätta med och det är det bästa betyget. Faktiskt!

Johan: - Det förstår jag.

Aida: - Jag har gjort den här serien med Rickard Hobert, de sju dödsynderna. Det är sju långfilmer. Just nu gör han en annan film som inte jag kunnat vara med om, men han vill ju ha med mig i sitt arbete. Så nog är han nöjd.

Johan: - När du sen har tagit fram den här första fasen. Känner man att när man ändrar, kan man snabbt ta till sig inspiration från någon annan bit? Alltså, man upplever något nytt, kanske ser något på nyheterna?

Aida: - Oja, javisst! I och med att du har det här stora greppet, det är samma med den här lilla ritningen (hon pekar på huset). I och med att du har det stora greppet, så plötsligt ser du tegel som är runt. Wow! Jag gör det i tegel! Där kommer det selektiva seendet in. Plötsligt har du ögonen öppna för allt som är runt, och som har runda former (huset har en rund vägg). Ska jag göra i betong eller i tegel, i betongglas eller i trä. Du ser alla som har gjort det, överallt, var du än tittar, och kanske bara inte hus eller trädgårdar, utan du plockar från andra områden vilket ger dig helt originella lösningar som ingen annan har tänkt på. Det är för att du inte har blockerat din hjärna med detaljerna från början, utan du har tagit det stora greppet först och det är så väsentligt, det är ett mirakel när man märker att det fungerar. Ett annat tips är, när du stöter på en svårighet, ge aldrig upp utan lös den, för det är där du får de absolut bästa idéerna. Det är när du plötsligt stöter på en stoppboll; här går det inte att lösa, kringgå det med att hitta en väg ut ur det, för det är då du får de absolut bästa idéerna. För det svåraste när man är kreativ är som med barn när man säger till ett barn; kan du inte rita en teckning, och barnet frågar, vad ska jag rita? Säger du vad som helst finns det ingen inspiration alls. Den totala friheten är

det mest inspirationsdödande som finns, om du säger, rita en häst som betar och har lite fläckar, en söndrig sadel och någon som springer efter, då sätter han igång. Ju mer du begränsar uppgiften, ju mer får du den här koncentrationen och glädjen. Att lösa en svårighet är fantastiskt roligt för kreativiteten.

Text swimmingpoolen i julkalendern, i manus stod det att det var en gammal källare med en tom glödlampa som hängde i taket, och det var lite den här klyschaktiga miljön för ett labb eller en källare. Jag sa att man inte kan spela en film så. Först och främst ser man inte en tom glödlampa i taket i en film. Man går med kameran mot den en gång, sen när du tar alla andra bilder så syns den aldrig mer, jag har ingen nytta av den i en film. I en film ser man aldrig allt på en gång, man fokuserar. Så det är ingen beskrivning. En tom källare är ett grått rum och det är ingen barnfilm. I och med att jag hade gjort det här collaget så tänkte jag labb och kakel. Vitt kakel går inte men så hade jag den där färgen, det måste vara en swimmingpool. Självklart! Så blev det plötsligt. Herregud vad kul! De flyttar in i ett hus som har en swimmingpool i källaren och då blev det runda fönster på fasaden som gjorde att man såg på fasaden att det var nåt märkligt där nere. Jag fick två våningar att spela på, en språngbräda och en trappa ner, och en tom swimmingpool. Det blev en miljö som jag fick helt gratis och som blev så spännande för att jag inte gav mig. Ingen hade någonsin kommit på det om det inte hade varit hopplöst att göra en källare. Det är typiskt!

Johan: - Har det uppstått problem som har varit omöjliga, det går bara inte att lösa? Det finns inte resurser. Händer det någon gång?

Aida: - Ja, det händer hela tiden, självklart i början är det rätt klyschaktigt, när man får en uppgift är det klart man går på det där som alla gör. Sedan tänker man att man inte kan göra som alla andra, jag måste ju vara lite originell. Det kan man inte vara på beställning, men stöter du

på en svårighet, då kan du bli det, då har du fått en väg ut ur det och du kan börja skapa någonting som är ditt eget. Men man måste ha självförtroende för att våga göra det och för att få självförtroende får man lura sig själv, och pumpa upp någon slags adrenalinnivå. Inte bli uttråkad för att inte idéerna ramlar in i huvudet, för det är det vanliga. Man stirrar på det där bladet (Aida stönar och skissar med fingret på en pappskiva) jag kan inte och så. De ramlar inte in, det de har de aldrig gjort hos någon. Det är ingen som får idéer som trillar in i tratten utan vidare. Ett väldigt bra sätt är att man bara väljer ett tema, vad som helst. Du kan slumpvis ta ett objekt, en sten eller en gren. Den ska vara min utgångspunkt, det är bättre än ingenting, du kommer ändå rätta till allt som inte passar så småningom, men desto senare du gör det desto bättre idéer får du. Abelardo¹ använder det, han sade att man kan börja från ett objekt, en skruv eller en mutter eller något sånt, och så börja förstora den eller multiplicera den eller försöka göra en sektion igenom den. Sedan gör man det i en helt annan skala, men det kanske finns kvar så mycket av den muttern att det höghuset man har byggt har något. Det är banne mig något märkligt, och det är muttern som är kvar där. Du har ändå anpassat dig till normerna, så småningom blir det ändå ett hus. Det kvittar vad du börjar med, och det måste man nog göra för det är ingen som får idéer av ingenting.

Christer: - Du sa innan någonting, det var väl då när du körde igång det selektiva seendet som du kallade det, att du gjorde allt annat. Är det nåt som du kan ta upp nu då, om du stöter på en svårighet att du släpper det hela och ger dig in i nåt...

Aida: - Det gör jag, men det är i första fasen sen när man väl har satt igång med en ritning eller så då har man ju satt igång processen. Men jag menar de tre första dagarna över huvudtaget. Minst tre dagar men jag vet att ifall jag har en kort uppgift, om man ska göra en reklamfilm t

ex, har man aldrig mycket tid. De tror att de kan ringa på förmiddagen och så på eftermiddagen börjar man bygga, men så funkar det inte. Det räcker om dem berättar vad det gäller för mig lite innan, du vet klockan tickar inte, bara man får vet innan så får de gratis hela min kreativitet. Då ligger det och gnager i huvudet när man går på stan. Man har det i bakhuvudet och medan man åker runt förutsättningslöst så kommer det in, det är precis som när kortslutningar sker, plötsligt träffas de och så blir det idéer. Bara man är avkopplad då.

Johan: - Men då handlar det mycket om att man har ett starkt grundintresse som är otroligt starkt för det man håller på med just då, att man har byggt upp det här intresset?

Aida: - Fast jag skulle kunna tro att om man sysslar med flera grejer samtidigt, så är det ändå bra, medan man håller på med det ena så håller den andra på att mogna, alltså det är en mognadsprocess. Jag tycker jag känner det och innan jag sätter mig och ritar så städar jag, vilket jag avskyr att göra. Men att jag gör nåt riktigt aktivt, eller diskar allt, eller tvättar två tre fönster så jag pumpar upp den här energin, och sedan sätter jag mig, och då har jag energin. Adrenalinnivån som jag kallar det, jag vet inte om det är fysiologiskt rätt, men jag känner det som att jag har pumpat upp en slags energi som behövs, och det är artificiellt. Det är precis som att de flesta inte kan tentamensläsa förrän tre dar innan (vi skrattar igenkännande) för det finns inte den spänningen. Det är en artificiell uppumpning av spänningen som behövs för att sätta in den där andra växeln i huvudet, det går inte annars, det är för tråkigt.

Christer: - Jag trodde att det bara var i studenternas liv.

Aida: - Nej det följer med hela livet, i kreativa jobb i alla fall. I rutinjobb kanske det är annorlunda men man kan nog vara kreativ där också. Jag antar att det är samma sak när man lagar mat, det kommer ett plötsligt besök och du har

tre morötter och en lök. Det är klart du hittar på någon-ting gott.

Johan: - Det är ju det som är skoj med mat.

Aida: - Det är det som är skoj med mat, då blir det den där rätten som man aldrig hade gjort annars. Kanske blir det en riktig höjddare.

Johan: - Det är ett bra exempel med matlagning! I början av din utbildning till scenograf, hur var det?

Aida: - Jag var väldigt osäker. Jag är utbildad arkitekt, inte scenograf, men jag har alltid sagt, från att jag fick min första uppgift att javisst, det kan jag, sedan har jag fått se till att jag kan det. Jag kan påstå att jag var riktigt osäker. Min styvfar var arkitekt och jag hade komplex, men så fort han kom med ett gott råd och ville hjälpa mig, kunde jag inte ta det. Det var förnedrande för mig att följa hans råd för det bevisade att jag inte kunde, tyckte jag. Så jag har ju gjort alla fel man kan göra, men så småningom lär man sig, och det har med självförtroende att göra, enbart. Nu har jag ju hållit på med så många elever i Lund, eftersom jag är övningsassistent. När de får en uppgift så är det jag som går runt från bord till bord och ser hur det går för dem. Jag diskuterar med var och en för att få igång dem och när det är sextio elever som ska få sextio idéer så är man ett sänt huvud i slutet, men det är ju fantastisk feedback och jag känner igen alla vändor. Vissa är så inknutna och vågar inte visa, och när man kommer med ett råd kan de inte ta det, de tar det som något negativt. Men de som kan mycket och man ger dem ett tips, de säger, vad bra, det ska jag göra. De upplever inte alls att de inte gör sitt, utan det finns en nyfikenhet, att de tar emot allt som man berättar och gör det på sitt sätt så småningom. De blir inte blockerade av att det är någon annans ide, och det har med självförtroende att göra. Man tror att det är tvärtom, att de som är mycket själv-säkra vågar att ta emot från andra, men det är tvärtom.

De som är mycket självsäkra har kraften att våga ta från andra, så är det faktiskt. Det är alltid de duktigaste som gör det, de är inte för att de inte kan och åker snålskjuts. Det är för att de kan och känner igen en bra ide när den kommer, och de känner det inte som ett hot.

Johan: - Och att kunna förvalta idén och bearbeta den på ett bra sätt.

Aida: - Självklart, men det gör man alltid. Det där med svensk byggnorm, den boken måste man ju följa ändå förr eller senare. Men gör det sist av allt, då får man göra de där sista revideringarna. Då finns det så mycket must och kraft kvar. Börjar du med svensk byggnorm då hade ju alla vardagsrummet sett likadana ut, som tur är gör de inte riktigt det, även om det rätt så nära här i Sverige.

Christer: - Trender, tror jag att du nämnde i början?

Aida: - Ja, det finns ju, och jag tror att när man sysslar med kreativitet känner man lite i förväg det som kommer. Man är så känslig för alla signaler för trender. Nu har vi haft den här minimalismen och den japanska trenden väldigt länge, och det finns en ny trend, lite emot det, lite mer kitschigt. Så har man säkert upplevt det innan det kommer ut på marknaden, det är för att man är känslig för det. Det finns ju alltid och det är klart, det gäller ju att göra sig lite fri från det, det finns ju vissa allmängiltiga värden som är viktiga. Trenderna är också viktiga, det är en känslighet för sin omgivning man måste ha. Det är klart man påverkas, jag antar att vid sekelskiftet, jugendstilen, efter alla de där slingorna kräcktes man på det. Man tröttnar. Det är som med musik, vissa slagdängor kan man inte höra efter ett tag fastän de var ljuvliga första gången. Och trenderna är ju sådana. De finns och det gör att man kan datera varje rum. Ni har varit på Bo 01? Jag pratade med Thomas om det och han sade; det är märkligt, det är så enförmigt, man kommer inte ihåg det ena från det andra. Alla inredningar

är så lika. Det är ju klart, allting har inretts på våren 2001, alla har gjort det som de tyckte var bäst och gick att få tag i just då. Det är därför det är lika, det var någon som inredde med gamla möbler, men det finns ingenstans en historia bakom, det finns bara det som var inne just nu i år, tacka fan för att det är lika. Det är inget liv, det är inte levande, och den effekten har det. Jag som scenograf måste göra en miljö levande. Om jag ska göra en 50-tals miljö, då ska inte jag ta alla 50-tals möbler, det är också väldigt inne så det är urläcker att göra det, utan då måste jag ta saker ända från 1700talet, 1800talet och sekelskiftet. Sedan några ärvda prylar och några nya grejer som de hade råd med från 50-talet, då är jag på 50-talet i en levande miljö.

Johan: - Det är sant, vi jobbede där hela sommaren som trädgårdsguider, och man mädde illa till slut. Det var lite synd, men så var det.

Aida: - Man ska inte vara mot trenderna, man får plocka det man tycker om, man ska absolut vara ärlig mot sig själv, tycker man om någonting ska man göra det även om det är dålig smak. Det är ju du, sedan kan man rätta till och transformera och ändra lite, så blir det någonting, men man ska våga tycka om, det är det svåraste, för att vara kritisk är inte svårt. Det kan man alltid vara med facit i hand, du kan alltid hitta det där lilla felet som gör att du kan bättre än den som har gjort det. Det är inte svårt, men att våga tycka om något, det är det svåraste som finns, och det tycker jag att man ska satsa på. Även om man gör bort sig, so what! Det är i alla fall personligt och där följer man trenderna.

Christer: - Det kanske är oundvikligt.

Aida: - Ja, det tror jag, men gör man det med uppriktighet och ärlighet, då är finns det en allmängiltighet i det. Då finns din historia i det, alltså du är inte bara där det året som en inredning på Bo 01, utan det är du, med din bakgrund, med dina föräldrar

och dina drömmar och vad du nu vill göra. Det tycker jag är okej.

Johan: - Vi som landskapsarkitekter har ofta tävlingar, är det så att ni har det, händer det ibland att det är en tävling till en scenografi eller något sådant.

Aida: - Nej jag tror inte det, det är oftast regissören som väljer sin scenograf. Men om de inte känner någon och är tvungna att arbeta på en viss teater, kan den teatern välja en scenograf. Mitt första jobb med Rickard Hobert var att jag jobbade med tv, och han hade tv som medproducent och letade scenograf. Han kunde då se vad jag hade gjort och dessutom föreslog de mig. Men det har inte varit tävlingar såvitt jag vet.

Johan: - Då ser man tydligt vilka inriktningar man har då en tävling har samma grundförutsättningar. Jag undrar vad det är som gör att man gör olika saker, vad är det som gör att du har din stil?

Aida: - Ja det undrar jag, det säger alla som känner mig, jag har gjort fula saker och jag har gjort det jag tycker är vackert. Jag har gjort kitschigt och jag har gjort stilfulla saker, men alla ser direkt att det är jag som har gjort det.

Johan: - Vad tror du att det kan vara?

Aida: - Ja det är svårt att säga, det är personligheten. Jag menar det här (Aida pekar runt om i rummet), nu har jag prylar överallt och det är en arbetssjukdom. Så fort jag ser något som har, det är precis som mina bilder, något med karaktär i. Det är ju aldrig dyra saker så jag skaffar det och så hamnar det någonstans. Men det är klart i mitt sätt att vara, vill jag alltid jobba med skalan på olika nivåer. Det värsta jag vet, det är när man har ett stort rum och man möblerar bara med stora möbler, för då har man skapat ett rum som trycker ner människan. Eller för all del små rum med bara små möbler, det blir så att man känner sig som en elefant i en porslinsaffär.

Men det är de två extremerna. Man ska alltid försöka få med alla nivåer, alltid ha en stor bredd på skalan på det du har med. I filmsammanhang ska det alltid finnas väldigt små detaljer, det är inte bara de stora dragen, man måste komma ändå ner till den lilla nålen, eller den lilla detaljen. Allt ska berätta samma historia.

Christer: - Det är väl någonting som vi tänkte på när vi gick på Bo01. När vi gick och tittade på husen, som Wingårdhs t ex. Vi upptäckte de här små genomtänkta detaljerna som man blev så glad av att se.

Aida: - Men det är inte för inte att han är en av de duktigaste, och även lekmän upplever att hans miljö var den läckraste. Det är för att han har tänkt även på fönster och kök och alla arkitektoniska smådetaljer, man får lyckorus när man ser att även skruven är designad. Wow! Det blir man ju lycklig av, men de här stora dragen som man ser på långt håll, då drar det ner hela kvaliteten. I film så arbetar man oftast med tre nivåer: Helbild, det är hela kroppen, halvbild är halva kroppen och närbild är ansiktet. Det är i huvudsak de bilderna man tar, och om jag nu är i det här rummet t ex., i helbild. Så har det den här karaktären med de här färgerna och alla de små prylarna överallt. Det ser överbelastat ut när man ser hela rummet. När jag har en halvbild och låt oss säga att jag tar den framför det fönstret, ja då är jag inte i samma rum, för jag står framför ett fönster som kunde vara på Rosengård. Sedan när jag tar en närbild och bara har den väggen bakom, och det bara är kalt. Då är jag inte heller i samma rum. Så i film måste man alltid ladda alla nivåer, alltså jag får aldrig ha en tom plätt om jag vill att det ska synas att det finns väldigt mycket prylar. En studio ser inte klok ut, men man måste ladda med tio gånger mer än på teatern. På teater ser du alltid hela scenen, du är inte hjärntvättad av kameran för du kan fokusera själv.

Christer: - Är det någonting som andra arkitekter i angränsande områden faktiskt borde kunna ta till sig och utnyttja mer?

Aida: - Jag tycker ju det, jag har gjort ett program. Jag ålskar att föreläsa så jag har tänkt åka runt och föreläsa om sådant. Jag upplever att allt jag har lärt mig om film och teater kan ge så mycket feedback till arkitekter så jag tycker absolut att arkitekter kan lära sig och ska tänka på det när de planerar, även om det där är total frihet för den som är i rummet. Man behöver inte göra det så påtagligt. På teater överdriver man lite, där har man ju ljuset som hjälper att fokusera, du kan ju ha en liten vit näsduk på en tom scen så är det en hel scen, den laddar hela rummet hela tiden om du har en spot på den, och inget annat. På film måste du ju ha en näsduk i varje hörn och på varenda vägg för att man överhuvudtaget ska uppfatta att det har varit en näsduk där. Det är ju för att i filmen kan du inte välja själv, det är kameran som är publik, inte vi. Det är kameran som hjärntvättar, du kan inte välja någonting. När jag bygger en scenografi för en film, om jag vet att en person bara ska sitta i den stolen i det hörnet, så bygger jag bara det hörnet en meter ut. Det räcker om jag vet att det är en fix kamera. Jag gör alltid mer för jag vet att när de kommer så behövs det, men i princip ska man kunna göra det.

Johan: - Jag blev så förvånad när jag såg "bakom kameran" på Roy Anderssons, "Sånger från andra våningen", allt är ju uppbyggt.

Aida: - Jaja, allt är uppbyggt, det tror man inte.

Johan: - T ex cafésenen...

Aida: - Och du ser att taket aldrig har varit byggt och golvet framför kameran, det slutar där, man bygger otroligt ekonomiskt, för det är så dyrt ändå. Man bygger bara det man vet kommer med, för varje krona det kostar ska också ge utdelning. T ex ett rum med höga fönster, och du ska köpa tyg för att göra speciella gardiner, de stannar halvvägs på

fönstret, för jag vet att kameran aldrig ser högre än två och tjugo däromkring. Om det är ett väldigt långt rum så ser du naturligtvis en bit av taket, men allmänt om du inte kommer så långt bort, ser du aldrig det. Man köper aldrig hela längden.

Christer: - Om man nu tänker på Dogma eller dokusåporna, då kanske det är annorlunda?

Aida: - Ja, dels spelar de in kronologiskt och de är i de miljöerna flera år. De bygger de i stort sett som på riktigt helt enkelt. Sedan har de tre kameror som tar bilden samtidigt. En långfilm spelar man in en hel dag och så skapar du ungefär tre och en halv - fyra minuter färdig film om dagen, i bästa fall. I en såpa gör du en halvtimme, kanske fyrtio minuter om dan. I en långfilm har du en kamera och ljussätter enligt den kameran. Sedan tar du motbilden, då tar du om den scenen från andra hållet, och sen kanske du tar från sidan, och slutligen binder du kanske ihop det med en åkning. Du tar varje scen, kanske tre, fyra gånger, och det är inte omtagningar utan det är nya ljussättningar och grejer du ser. Därför tar det sådan tid, och sedan ska det klippas ihop. Mellan tre och fyra minuter gör du i bästa fall om dagen. Såpan har tre kameror som tar samma scen samtidigt från sidan men det begränsar samtidigt. Ljussättningen är ju aldrig så bra där, för dem kan ju inte ljussätta för en tagning. De måste ju ha ett allmänljus som ska funka för alla tre vinklar, därför blir det aldrig lika spännande ljus. Det är inte att de inte kan, det går inte att göra. De tar tre olika bilder från tre olika håll. Och så, tar de kronologiskt så de kan ta längre, för de har alltid alla skådespelare på plats och är de går ut och in gör det ingenting om det regnar, för de tar hela scenen under en dag. I film där emot måste man ha "väderklafs" som det heter. Har man börjat i sol måste man vänta tills det är samma ljus, och du måste ljussätta utomhus, inte för att skapa ljus utan för att undvika beroendet av solen eftersom den flyttar sig hela tiden. Sedan har vi ett tredje som är värre och det är reklamfilm, en

reklamsnutt är bara några sekunder eller en minut lång. Där ljussätter man varje rörelse, där skapar man några sekunder på en hel dag, på 24 timmar, det är vansinnigt.

Christer: - Om man nu ska se på det mer tekniska, är det trender i det också?

Aida: - Det är det ja. Dogma är ju trenden, och nu börjar man väl tröttna lite på det. Jag tror att alla har mått så illa i stora biografer så att man återgår till den välgjorda. Jag menar, det finns alltid kvar lite av Dogma, för det är ju en energi som har tillförts till det där stela som kanske...

Johan: - När det passar igen.

Aida: - Ja, och så kan man ju blanda, så det finns ju alltid någonting kvar av det, och som kan skapa energi, jag vet inte om ni har sett "Moulin Rouge"?

Christer och Johan: - Inte än men snart.

Aida: - Den är nog en blandning mellan Hollywoods fyrtiotalssromantik och tekniskt är den jätteskojig att titta på. Även "Amelie från Montmartre" som ni måste se. Den är också gjord på ett gammaldags sätt men tekniskt väldigt nytt ändå, oerhört rolig blandning. Den har de här små detaljerna, jag älskar den filmen för den har allt.

Christer: - Blir det mycket film privat också?

Aida: - Ja, jag bor ju här och det är så nära, det är i perioder jag tycker om att titta på film.

Johan: - Men känner du då att filmlivet går tillbaka till filmerna, att man hela tiden hämtar ny inspiration i filmerna eller är det mer utifrån?

Aida: - Ja, jag har inte själv märkt det så mycket för min del. Jag har ju gjort rätt så mycket teater och jag upplevde att jag började från scratch ändå. Det är inte så mycket sådant jag har sett förut, utan det är så speciellt program man alltid har. Jag gjorde en gång Falstaff här på stora scenen i Malmö, och det var

en så stor opera att jag gick och hyrde ett band med en engelsk uppsättning, bara för att förstå hela storyn. Hur många scener och vilka bilder det var och hur de skulle hänga ihop. Det var rätt så skönt för det var så förfärligt det jag såg. Bättre än det här kan jag ju alltid göra. Det nästan befriade mig. Det var inte så att jag fick idéer utan jag fick självförtroende av det. Sedan byggde jag modeller, det var en väldigt komplicerad opera med många stora bitar som vi skulle bygga och naturligtvis skulle vi spara pengar och jag hade gjort det väldigt realistiskt. På verkstaden sade de att det blir väldigt tungt och att det inte går. Men jag kunde tänka mig att, istället för att bygga stenar av frigolit som man cacherar med duk och målar, som är ganska dyrt, att vi bygger volymerna och målar skuggor, nästan som akvarell. Det var bra tyckte regissören och de målade bra, men däremot ljussättaren ljussatte inte som målningar utan han vräkte på med goboljus. Goboljus är fläckigt ljus som ger atmosfär, då tog han sönder allting som var så fint målat, det skulle ha varit ett rätt platt ljus för att uttrycka det. Där blev det inget samarbete, han var jätteledsen att jag inte hade gjort en hel massa grejer som han kunde få fram skuggorna på. Den där målade dekoren hade jag sett i Genève och då hade jag det i bakhuvudet, men det blev aldrig riktigt som det.

Johan: - Det här din collagemetod, när började den utvecklas?

Aida: - Jag tror att det var en tjej som sa till mig någon gång när jag började min första filmscenografi, hon hade gått en scenografiskola i Köpenhamn där de gjorde det, de kallade det "production design". Man gjorde ett collage, men det kunde vara en bild, och det är det många som gör. Plötsligt ser de en tavla, och så gör de en hel film, de är som ett collage, du ser en målning och hela filmen ska ha den atmosfären. Det verkar klokt, tyckte jag, och det stämde överens med min känsla att man inte ska drunkna i detaljer för tidigt, för det är ödesdigert. Har du bara gett lillfingret till en detalj åt någon, då börjar de bara

prata om det. De pratar inte om någonting annat, det är kört, du kan aldrig få fram de där stora dragen mer utan man börjar släsa om små detaljer. Det är livsfarligt att vissa en ritning för tidigt, den ska komma när den andra parten är mogen att se den, inte innan.

Johan: - Det märker man också i de små övningar vi har haft i skolan, kommer man med ett för detaljerat förslag för tidigt till en handledare, blir det ingen konstruktiv diskussion alls.

Aida: - Ja det ser man överallt, det är det här att den första idén ska vara stark, ett objekt eller vad som helst. Det ska vara så jäkla starkt, låt oss diskutera det först. Vad man än sysslar med, det är som med mat igen, att börja diskutera hur den där lilla rätten är. Jag menar, världens godaste mat är inte gott om du sitter dåligt med otrevliga människor och huttar och fryser, då är det ändå misslyckat. Ett jättegott vin med en taskig rätt funkar inte heller, helheten är viktigare. En mycket, mycket enkel macka med en öppen eld och gott vin det är världens godaste middag. Det är det ju, helheten är absolut det viktigaste, men detaljerna, de där små detaljerna som ger lyckorus. Det ger den där kvalitén. Jag ska ju hålla en föreläsning för Thomas för stadsbyggnadskontoret i januari, jag har tänkt utveckla det här, för jag vill nå folk med det här. Jag har varit med så många elever som har varit blockerade och det är så synd. Det ni gör är jättebra.

Christer och Johan: - Vi känner det nu, ju mer vi gräver i det, desto roligare blir det, det kommer upp nya grejer. Man får sina "aha" ibland.

Aida: - Och just att försöka tänja på gränserna och verkligen se om det fungerar i de små områden såväl som de stora, jag tror det.

Christer: - Jag tyckte att det var så intressant det här du prata om tidigare, att ni inom film måste visa historien för att man ska få ett grepp om att det är en levande miljö ni

visar. Jag gick tillbaka till Bo01 i mina tankar, de ville ju visa framtidens arkitektur vilket jag anser vara väldigt svårt, eftersom vi lever i ett nu, och man bygger ju av det som ritades igår, i det ser man ju inte alltid heller någon historia, och det kanske är fel att inte visa det.

Aida: - Det har du rätt i och jag tänkte också på det. En sak som jag skulle vilja ta upp med arkitekter och som jag då vid min föreläsning tänkte ha som ett diskussionsämne. En kvalitét som finns i gamla städer är att det finns så många slumpmässiga utrymmen som inte har någon funktion. Plötsligt är det tre steg ner och så är det en liten väggsnutt som någon har tagit och gjort någonting av, men egentligen har det ingen funktion. Det är det som gör att man älskar just det där huset, för det har den där lilla nivåskillnaden och den där sneda grejen, och det där lilla fönstret som inte är symmetriskt. Allt det där som är så svårt att förklara men som ger liv. Någon gång kanske det har varit något annat, de har fått en färdig vägg som de har varit tvungna att sätta upp. Vad det än är för en historia bakom så är den levande. Frågan är; hur bygger man in slumpen medvetet? Kan man på nåt sätt få in den kvalitén, vilket det är, i något som man gör helt nytt, med svensk byggnorm och med de kostnader det har? Det är intressant för där har man en slags framtid, att bygga in slumpen. Man ska vara medveten om den potentiella kvalitén i ett rum, och med potentiell så menar jag att t ex Malmö är så trevligt att bo i, för det är så nära Köpenhamn. Även för de som aldrig har varit i Köpenhamn är de en kvalitét som finns i Malmö. Ett rum skulle kunna ha såna kvalitéer som jag kallar potentiella kvalitéer, som man kanske aldrig använder men bara vetskapen att man kan, räcker för att ladda den miljön positivt. Det kan vara att i en låda, alltså jag tänker arkitektoniskt, om jag har ett rum som är väldigt trist fyrkantigt, jag kanske är mitt i en byggnad så jag kan inte ha det mer än så. En dörr här, och det är dötrist, man kanske bara för att skapa

den känslan gör en liten vägg här, och ett starkt ljus som kommer härifrån, och en dörr på glänt. Det finns inget men det är en känsla som gör att hela rummet känns annorlunda, och det är att bygga in en potentialitet, en möjlighet som plötsligt ändrar hela karaktären. Det tror jag är intressant att studera. Med trädgårdar kan ni ju göra det. Vad finns bakom hörnet? Det finns ingenting, men bara känslan att det kanske finns någonting.

Johan: - Jag tänkte på en park som jag tror har influerat många.

Aida: - Skogskyrkogården?

Johan: - Bland annat den men i Paris, La Vilette. Där fanns en tanke att skapa flera lager med olika historiska dignitet och ta fram det där. Där var det väldigt konstruerat på nåt sätt och för oss som lär oss av det där har det fungerat väldigt bra, men för människor som rör sig där i är det nåt annat.

Aida: - Men det behöver inte vara medvetet att man upplever det, intellektuellt kan man plötsligt, om man sysslar med det förstå, aha, ja just det. Det är så och så de har gjort, men andra kanske får den känslan utan att veta varför. Det kvittar ju.

Christer: - Ja den ger ju helt klart en slags...

Aida: - Ja, den ger i alla fall något, och sedan om man förstår varför eller vad den ger, det har mindre betydelse, för jag tror att den ger känslan i alla fall.

Christer: - Jo det händer så mycket i den parken.

Johan: - Jo, verkligen.

Christer: - Den är svår att gripa, för att den är så stor, man ser aldrig allting.

Aida: - Nä, men teater är ju roligare där, för där kan man ju abstrahera allt. Jag gjorde en film där det var en musical inne i filmen. Vi klippte ihop olika scener från musical till verklighet till dröm, den

hette "Där regnbågen slutar". Han klippte fritt mellan verkligheten som gjordes väldigt verklig, och drömmarna som skulle vara väldigt realistiska, men ha ett inslag av att man hoppar över tid och rum, men det var väldigt verkligt. Musikalen var samma sak, och då gjorde jag alla musikalgrejer med tyger. Vattnet skulle anfalla och vara aggressivt när en båt skulle komma ovanpå det. Vi hade dansare, och de hade en stor gemensam kjol med klänningar som de kunde dyka upp från, den gemensamma kjolen var vattnet. De kunde krypa in och plötsligt dyka upp och båten hängde i rå, den hängde i taket och flöt på det vattnet. På teater kan man uttrycka känslan och det blir vatten, naturligtvis, fast det är ett silvertyg som de är i.

Christer: - Det är så kul, den där upplevelsen man får just när man kommer in på teater. De första tio minuterna kommer jag inte riktigt in i det, men sedan öppnar sig allting, och då ser jag hur det ska vara och det är en härlig känsla när man kan komma in i det.

Aida: - Ja skulle villan göra mer teater, när man kommer in där.

Christer: - En som dyker upp lite då och då, är "Mama Mia". Jag såg den i London och den scenen de hade där var helt fantastisk, så enkel men ändå så användbar.

Aida: - Ja jag har inte sett den, men den har ju fått såna recensioner. Jo man blir lycklig av såna fiffiga lösningar på teater, och det är också skillnaden på teater och film. På teater vet man att vad man än ser så är det uppbyggt och man är beredd att acceptera skavanker och att en mur rör sig lite. Det blir inte löjligt på en teater, man fattar att det är ju tekniken och om atmosfären är tillräckligt stark har det ingen betydelse alls. I film accepterar man det inte, skulle en vägg börja röra sig, det är ju också uppbyggda studios, det bryter hela magin, för alltid. Då börjar det bli komiskt istället för att du ska tro på filmen. Man går ju också på en biograf och man vet, men

där vill man att det ska vara verkligt. Man vill försjunka sig i det på ett helt annat sätt och accepterar absolut inte skavanker om det inte ska ha en komisk effekt.

Johan: - Vi lyssnade på en föreläsning av en brittisk trädgårdsdesigner och scenograf som heter Jenny Jones. Jag vet inte varför hon lämnade scenografin, eller hon höll på med den fortfarande?

Aida: - Det kanske var svårt att få jobb.

Johan: - Det kan ha varit så enkelt. Hon beskrev de trädgårdar som hon försökte bygga upp, hur hon byggde upp olika scener, det var väldigt kul.

Christer: - Ja, det var väldigt spännande att se.

Aida: - Men det är väl förmodligen också hennes feedback som scenograf, jag tror att det är bra att pendla mellan olika roller.

Christer: - Hon hade ett väldigt bra öga för att placera människan i trädgården, så att människan får se det som hon har för sitt inre.

Aida: - Det blir ju det blir en upplevelsegrej. På Bo01 gjorde jag ett hus som kallades "Händelsernas Hus", som Socialdemokratiska kvinnoförbundet och Byggnads hade. De bad mig att hjälpa dem att göra de upplevelser de ville ha där. Det gör scenografer ofta, man kan översätta en känsla till form och rum.

Christer: - Hur kom det sig att du började med det här från början, när du läste till arkitekt?

Aida: - Nä men jag har jobbat som arkitekt rätt länge innan jag började med scenografin, men jag hamnade på Skanska och det var inte precis det jag hade drömt om. Jag hade läst i Genève i Schweiz men jag gjorde examensarbete i Lund. Sedan jobbade jag på Skanska och eftersom jag hade franska som modersmål så blev jag mest utnyttjad som tolk i de länderna där de behövde fransktalande. Det var mest Algeriet och jag skapade ingen arkitektur, jag förhandlade

och det var jättespännande på det sättet, men det ledde inte mig någonstans. Sedan ritade jag småhus på Småhusbyrån, det var ju ännu värre, de där matorna med småvillor. Jag hade mer kreativitet än så tyckte jag, så jag sa upp mig efter tio år. Just de där resorna var droppen, det är det bästa jag har gjort. Jag har varit gift med en operasångare, så att jag har ju alltid haft teatervärlden eller umgåtts med regissörer. Jag fick ett tillfälle när de skulle bygga om stora scenen i Malmö stadsteater, och gjorde en foajéteater, en scen i foajén och där behövde de en arkitekt som kunde hjälpa dem med det. Som plåster på såret fick jag göra scenografin för dem två, för det var så knutet. Det fanns inga kulisser och det skulle vara "Karmen" och "Oh, mein papa", som är en musical. De skulle varvas så det var så knutet till den scenen, det var två gradänger och orkestern ovanför trappan. Jag var tvungen att bygga scenografin samtidigt och sedan dess har jag inte gjort någonting annat.

Christer: - Det har bara rullat på.

Aida: - Det var -85.

Christer: - Det låter kul.

Aida: - Det ena har lätt till det andra. Sedan har jag gjort ett tjugotal teatergrejer och sedan plötsligt hamna jag med en regissör som skulle göra en tv-serie. Han frågade om inte jag kan göra det också? Jodå, jag kan alltid allt. Jag säger alltid ja. I och med det skulle Ricard Hobert börja sina sju långfilmer och så började jag med honom och sen fick jag några andra och det ena ger det andra. Men där emellan, alltså det är inget tryggt liv. En långfilm per år det är väldigt mycket, men det ger inte mig jobb ett helt år, så man måste alltid ha andra saker också.

Johan: - Men hur många är ni som jobbar? Du är ensam chef, men kanske har du en arbetsstyrka?

Aida: - Ja, jag är frilans. Jag har en rekvisita eller två, beroende på, plus en att-

ributör i filmen. Det är han som alltid är på inspelningsplatsen, och ser till att rätt saker kommer fram på rätt ställe och i rätt ordning, så inte askkoppen rör sig i bilden, det där typiska. Det är ett yrke att ha det ansvaret. Och sedan kostymören, på teater kan man göra både och. Det är nästan omöjligt att göra i film, jag har gjort det en gång men det gör jag aldrig mer. Sedan så har jag ju verkstäderna med snickare och målare.

Johan: - Men det varierar från gång till gång?

Aida: - Ja, men nu har det oftast varit en samproduktion med TV, och då har jag haft tillgång till deras snickare på Jägersro.

Christer: - Det låter inte som om det är så olikt att vara arkitekt?

Aida: - Nej, det är mycket likt. Nu kan jag visa er vilken typ av material man presenterar.

Vårt samtal med Aida avslutas med att vi går igenom några modeller och skisser från hennes produktioner.

Samtal med Henrik Schulz 10:00 24/10 2001

Henrik: - Jag jobbar under Jonas Lindvall.

Christer: - Har du läst i Lund?

Henrik: - Läst på Chalmers, på Danmarks designskola i Köpenhamn och på Konstakademien i Köpenhamn.

Johan: - Hur var Konstakademien?

Henrik: - Det var väldigt bra. Annorlunda. Det är upp till dig vad du vill göra med de resurser du får.

Henrik berättar vidare att det kändes tryggt att först ha läst i Sverige och få en grund innan han åkte till Danmark där allt är mer upp till en själv. Det var farligt att inte ha någon obligatorisk närvaro. Det är bara prestationen som räknas. Motivation är mycket viktigt.

Johan: - Vad drev dig in på konstakademien?

Henrik: - Jag hade varit två år i Köpenhamn och var färdigutbildad möbelformgivare. Jag hade ingen lust att åka tillbaka till Göteborg för att göra färdigt arkitektutbildningen. Jag gjorde det sista på konstakademien istället.

Därefter fick han arbete hos Jonas i Malmö.

Johan: - Varför började du med formgivning?

Henrik: - Sedan jag gick i femte eller sjätte klass har jag velat bli arkitekt. Jag har alltid tyckt om träslöjd och att göra grejor själv.

Christer: - Gör ni modellbyggen?

Henrik: - När vi gjort större hus har vi ibland gjort modeller här på kontoret, också när vi gör möbler har vi gjort modell här i wellpapp. Det blir inte så bra. Vi lämnar hellre iväg det till en modellmakare som kan slå ihop en möbel i ett billigt material. Man ser den bättre än att sitta själv och skära i

papper.

Jonas är den som tar emot uppdragen. Inredningsuppdragen håller han själv helst i och bestämmer hur de ska utformas. I möbelprojekten jobbar alla mer självständigt och senare kollar Jonas om det är OK. Om han gillar det eller inte. Inredningsprojekt och arkitektuppdrag är mer styrt från Jonas sida.

Johan: - Om ni har ett stolprojekt, hur börjar du då?

Henrik: - T ex, om ett företag vill ha en stol. Då formulerar Jonas hur han ser uppgiften. Då gör jag lite olika förslag på hur det kan se ut. Jag kanske gör tre förslag och han tycker att en av dem kan vi jobba vidare med. De andra två är kassa. Jag jobbar vidare och vi ses igen och går igenom, så jobbar jag vidare, osv.

Christer: - Sätts det ramar på något vis när ni får den här beställningen? Har ni fria händer?

Henrik: - Kunderna gör ett val genom att de vänder sig till en formgivare. De vet vad som gjorts tidigare och därav vilka ramar som gäller. Sen är det fritt inom de ramarna. Gör man något för extremt blir det ju inget av det. Jag försöker anpassa mig till företaget så att möblerna passar in i stilen.

Johan: - I vår lilla bransch är det mycket tävlingar. Då får man ett program att följa... men alla förslag ser olika ut...

Henrik: - De som bryter programmet vinner oftast.

Johan: - Precis! Vad är det som gör att du gör ett förslag som ser ut på ett speciellt sätt?

Henrik: - Jag försöker nog lita rätt så mycket på min intuition tror jag. Det är ju så att handskissen blir bäst. Sen försöker man förverkliga den i datorn men det blir aldrig riktigt lika bra, ett försök att närma sig den i alla fall. Man har kanske bara några streck som är en bild man har skissat upp. En bild av det man vill skapa,

den stol man vill göra, så försöker man närma sig den så mycket som möjligt med de riktiga måtten. En stols riktiga mått, alla vinklar och sånt. En bild som inte alls har något med de riktiga måtten att göra, men man försöker få dem att mötas.

Christer: - Vi kom fram till något liknande när vi pratade med Aida.

Henrik: - Man har en bild i huvudet. Det har väl ni också. Man har en bild, någon slags ... det är en bild som ju inte kan sätta ner på papper för det är en fantastisk bild. Tuff, fräsig och jävla bra! Men den ska ju ner på pappret och det närmsta den kan komma är den här skissen, den handritade skissen. Det är ur den man får utgå.

Johan berättar om Aidas kollagemetod och jämför med skissmetoden.

Henrik: - Om jag skulle rita ett hus kan jag inte göra samma sak, alltså en skiss. Då kan det vara så att man har ett kollage i huvudet. Man har sett någon grej, ett hus som är jättetufft. Man har sett något material som är jättetufft. Det är ju samma sak där, man lägger upp något slags mönster. Det som är i huvudet, de saker som man vill ha med. Med just en stol kan inte jag göra kollage med material och färger och bilder på andra stolar. Det blir lite... det blir för konkret då, med de här exemplen man tar. I ett husprojekt behöver det inte alls bli lika konkret utan då är det bara små trådar som man försöker väva ihop. Så det skiljer sig jättemycket från att göra en stol till att göra en villa, det gör det. Det är något helt annat, men det behöver inte vara lättare för det. Det kan vara minst lika svårt.

Christer: - Det är verkligen det här vita papperet och så bilderna i huvudet, och så ska den flöda ut i ett streck på pappret. Strecket ska sedan få någon slags yta och volym...

Henrik: - ...och rätta vinklar och man ska inte få ont i ryggen när man sitter där och...

Christer: - Mmm, alla de andra faktorerna.

Henrik: - Samtidigt som det ska likna den där bilden. Det är det som är det svåra.

Johan: - Jag har alltid funderat över just kroppsformer, visserligen olika ut. Finns det någon sån här ... man måste hålla sig inom de här ramarna eller?

Henrik: - Mm, det finns ju böcker om sittstolars mått. För att det ska vara korrekt för kroppen. 3 graders vinkling på sätet t ex, det ska vara 103 grader mellan sätet och ryggen på en vanlig sittstol. Det finns mycket sånt. Det är inget som man ska följa blint. Det är en grundmall. Det har man ju provat själv när man har gjort en stol någon gång som ser ut att fungera perfekt, som är som den ska vara. När man har suttit någon timme börjar man få ont någonstans. Då kan det vara bra att man har de här grundföresättningsarna.

Tystnad.

Henrik: - Det är så jag jobbar.

Skratt!

Johan: - Känner du själv att det är stor spridning på de olika projekt du jobbar med? Det är ungefär samma sätt du arbetar på varje gång?

Henrik: - Njae, jag gör ju både möbler och hus och, askkoppar och stearinljusstakar. Det skiljer sig väldigt mycket så det är klart att man arbetar på olika sätt. Men jag tror att det tydligaste är att när det gäller design så är det, bilden i huvudet, en liten skiss och ett försök att få dem och närma sig. När det gäller hus så har man ett litet mönster i huvudet av saker som man blir inspirerad av, som man försöker väva ihop. Ett hus är mer komplext, det innehåller så mycket mer delar. En designgrej ska vara ganska direkt, liksom. Den ska man förstå direkt. Ett hus ska vara lite mer som en labyrinth. Man ska upptäcka mer och mer hela tiden.

Johan: - Hur många är ni?

Henrik: - Nu är vi fyra. Det har bara varit jag och Jonas ett tag men nu har vi fått mer och göra.

Johan: - Finns det några andra yrkesgrupper som inspirerar? Finns det något speciellt ni tittar efter? Trender? Någon speciell stil?

Henrik: - Oouh! Jag tror att man påverkas ganska mycket av trender utan att man tänker på det. Man tittar i ELLE för att hitta de rätta färgerna att måla mina möbler i. Det gör jag ju inte men jag tror man inspireras, eller man vet lite grann om vad som händer just nu och så finns det i bakhuvudet. Jag tror många följer det blint, man gör saker som ska passa in i tidningarna. Då är man ute på ... djupt vatten. Jag tror det finns i bakhuvudet i alla fall. Hur mycket hänsyn man tar till det är upp till var och en. För mig handlar det bara om att göra något som jag känner är bra. Sen om det passar just nu eller inte, det är inte så viktigt. Om det är bra passar det in jämt.

Johan: - Bra? Är det framför allt funktion eller är det utseendet?

Henrik: - Nej jag är inte sån. Jag är inte så duktig på funktion. Det är något man lär sig. Formgivare som har jobbat länge de ... de vet ju lite grann. De har det i ryggmärgen. De har sina favoritmått, sina favoritvinklar som de alltid använder. Det fungerar bra. Det är sånt som man lär sig. När jag gick på skolan gjorde man nästan bara skulpturala möbler som såg fräsiga ut men som egentligen inte fungerade så bra. Nej så, följa trender det... tror jag bara är farligt för om man är formgivare ska man väl starta trender? Man ska ju inte följa andras trender. Då har man missuppfattat något.

Johan: - Hur många går ut som möbelformgivare idag?

Henrik: - Jag vet inte, jag tror det är... det kan jag inte svara på men på konstfack är det väl ett tiotal och sen Beckmans som har ett 10 - tal. HDK, också ett tiotal. I Danmark i den klassen jag gick i så var vi åtta perso-

ner. Konstakademien är väl också åtta på möbel. Det är inte speciellt många i alla fall och det finns inte plats för de som är färdiga heller. Det är inte alls många i Sverige idag som kan livnär sig på att vara möbelformgivare endast, det är nästan ingen. De gör inredningsuppdrag och de gör andra prylar. Man kan lätt räkna dem på en hand de som kan göra det. Det finns inte så mycket stora pengar i det heller. Om du gör en möbel för ett företag så får du inget betalt för att du gör ritningar t ex. Du får kanske bara betalt per grej du säljer. Då är det 5 % högst av vad den stolen kostar att tillverka. De är inte så många kronor.

Christer: - Hur tycker du att formgivarklimatet är i Sverige? Kan du jämföra med Danmark t ex?

Henrik: - Sverige ligger ju långt fram egentligen, när det gäller designmedvetenhet. Vi är hemskt medvetna i Sverige. Alla har lite ELLE -tidningar hemma eller... i varenda tidning finns det inredningsreportage eller designreportage. Det är ju inte så utomlands. Det är inte riktigt samma intresse. Det har blivit väldigt upphäusat nu i Sverige. Det har det varit ganska länge. Vi får se hur länge det håller i sig. Det är formgivarvänligt, det får jag nog säga. Det är bara det att det inte finns lika mycket pengar i det som det finns utomlands.

Christer: - Ja och finns det underlag så...

Henrik: - Då kan det utvecklas. Bara det inte blir för mycket nu, för upphäusat för länge, till slut tappar folk intresset för det, "fy fan liksom, trött på det här". Det är ju det farliga i det.

Christer: - Känner ni i branschen att det finns någon slags mainstream som alla drar sig till, att det ska vara på ett visst sätt? Det är den nordiska formen som gäller?

Henrik: - Den tror jag håller på att luckras upp ganska mycket nu, den typiska svenska formen. Den har blivit accepterad nästan över hela värld-

den så att utländska formgivare har börjat formge på det skandinaviska sättet. Nu är det inte något skandinaviskt längre, nu är det något allmänt. Nu tror jag att man måste börja öppna sig lite mer och börja formge på ett annat sätt som kanske inte är typiskt svenskt. Det är kanske vi som får ta från dem istället och bygga vidare på det. Men det har ju funnits typisk svensk form väldigt länge. Det är klart att om ett större företag börjar presentera någon slags ny förvaringsmöbel som ser lite speciell ut och som verkar fungera. Nästa år på möbelmässan har du tio andra företag som kör något liknande. Det blir nya mainstreams hela tiden.

Johan: - Det du sade i början här, att omgivningen och det man ser på film och tv spelar roll. Hur ser din vardag ut? När du inte jobbar?

Henrik: - Jag jobbar här större delen av dagen. Sen när jag kommer hem brukar jag pillra med lite egna grejor. Min vardag påverkar nog inte något större...

Johan: - Är det en stor skillnad på det som du gör här och det som du gör hemma?

Henrik: - Jag försöker väl leva mig in i det som jag gör här så det som jag försöker göra här det liknar ganska mycket det jag gör själv. Alltså mina ursprungliga skisser liknar ju det sättet jag formger på. Och sen så ändras ju det med alla synpunkter som kommer runt omkring. Men från början är det ganska likt det jag gör hemma.

Johan: - Har du också en beställare som du arbetar mot när du jobbar hemma?

Henrik: - Nej det hade inte gått i och med att jag jobbar för Jonas. Det skulle bli en åsiktskonflikt.

Christer: - Det är mer egna idéer du vill få ut?

Henrik: - Ja, jag måste hålla igång mitt eget sätt att formge och inte bara jobba för konoret då blir det inte så kul.

Johan: - Det du gör hemma. Vad har du för tänkt målgrupp? Är det alltid samma?

Henrik: - Nej det är mest grejer att jag får en idé till någonting nytt och så gör jag det. Det kan vara stolar och det kan vara allt möjligt.

Johan: - Är det nåt som fattas eller är det, så här borde det se ut egentligen? Det kanske är svårt att svara på?

Henrik: - Det är svårt att svara på. Jag tror att man är, håller sig nog till konventionerna ganska mycket. Det är svårt.

Johan: - Något som legat och gnagat länge? Varför är det ingen som gör så här?

Henrik: - Joo, det är klart fast då tänker man mer på prylar och sånt, men då är det bara att kolla på statistiken vad folk köper egentligen. För möbelföretagen handlar det om att tjäna pengar. Oftast är de rätt dåliga på att döma vad som är bra eller dålig design. De är bara intresserade av vad som säljer självklart. Det är ju lite jobbigt kan man tycka som formgivare. Det är så otroligt mycket skit som produceras samtidigt som det finns många duktiga formgivare som inte får någonting i produktion. Om man jämför med dataprogram t ex. en kille som är jätteduktig på att göra dataprogram, om någon gör ett sämre dataprogram så tar man ju inte det. Man tar ju det bästa dataprogrammet. Det fungerar bäst, men så är det inte inom design i.o.m. att det är ett så subjektivt område.

Christer: - Det är inte lika självklart. Och då går de på det gamla. Det här sålde de och de?

Henrik: - Ja de går mycket på namn, varumärken. Ett namn, en designers namn kan sälja ganska mycket. Skit samma om det är skräp. Världens största formgivare kan göra vidriga grejor men det säljer ändå för det står deras namn på. Det är som en Gucci-etikett, Gucci kan göra jättefula kläder men de säljer ändå. Det börjar bli mer och mer så att folk är mer och mer medvetna om vem som

gjort saker och ting. Kanske inte exakt om det är bra eller dåligt men vem som gjort det. Det är som en etikett på kvaliteten.

Christer: - Ja det är underligt det där.

Henrik: - Det har blivit mer och mer så. Det är precis som om varenda litet svenskt möbelföretag, varenda liten fabrik i småland plötsligt har en stor engelsk formgivare, eller en amerikansk, eller en italienare som gör grejor för dem. Som är jättekända då, den här lilla fabriksbyggnaden där uppe. Då ber de honom att göra en stol och han kanske ägnar fem - tio minuter och skickar iväg den till någon av sina anställda som ritat det. I själva verket har det suttit någon studerande här och jobbat på den här stolen i ett halvår och skickar upp det som är jättebra, men ändå tar de hans stol. Det är lite så det är på väg nu. Innan har svenska företag jobbat med svenska formgivare men nu har de fått upp ögonen för andra, det låter ju bittert.

Johan: - Ja det är verklighet.

Christer: - De kanske också lär sig av det där, jag vet inte. Man tycker ju ändå att om nu folk är så medvetna om form så borde de se igenom det där. Men det är klart, det beror på varifrån den medvetenheten kommer ifrån.

Henrik: - Klyftan är ganska stor mellan konsumenten och formgivaren.

Johan: - Hur lång tid tar det från det att du får en beställning till en färdig ritning?

Henrik: - Det kan gå jättefort till att jag skickar iväg den första ritningen, men sen kommer synpunkter och det börjar bollas fram och tillbaka, då går det långsammare. "Den går inte genom den maskinen" och "den har vi redan en form som du kan använda". Spara, spara, spara. Det är ingen som kan bedöma om det där jämfört med det där liksom är, ja vi har en databock här. Den kan bara bocka med samma radie t ex, så då blir det så.

Christer: - Jag trodde att de där datorerna är till för just det, att utöka flexibiliteten.

Henrik: - Nej så är det inte.

Christer: - Jag tycker att det är konstigt att det inte funkar om du kommer med en riktigt god idé. Det måste synas att det är en jäkligt bra idé, en jäkligt god form. Men det funkar inte så alltså?

Henrik: - Nej, det gör inte det.

Johan: - Men kan man ibland känna att, fan, det är fel krökning på den här. Nu måste vi lösa det här problemet.

Henrik: - De säger bara nej, Det går inte. Det måste vara så för att vi ska få en effektivitet i det här och det ska sparas pengar. Man får tänka på hur de tänker. De har en konkurrent som säljer en juste stol som kostar så lite. Då kan de inte sälja en som kostar 2000 kr mer men ändå vara ungefär likadan.

Christer: - Det måste finnas någon som är villig att gå mot strömmen.

Henrik: - Det finns det. Du har ju t ex Källemo som gör lite mer konstnärliga möbler. Då hänger det ju på chefen som äger det, då är det på hans nycker och hans känsla. Plötsligt får han upp ögonen för någonting som han tycker är spännande och då kanske han gör det. De skiljer sig lite grann. Där är det ingen massproduktion på det sättet.

Christer: - Det krävs kanske lite mer av det företaget då?

Henrik: - Det gör det. De vill ju också tjäna pengar men, ja det är nog tur att det finns såna som Källemo som vågar gå utanför konventionerna eller ramarna.

Johan: - Vi jobbade på bomässan i somras, båda två. Där var den där gummistolen. Den verkar rätt, den har i alla fall intresserat folk.

Henrik: - Jo det har den gjort. Det är en standardstol som man har gjort i gummi. Det har ju funnits gummistolar tidigare. Men de är duktiga

på att visa upp sig och få med den i tidningar och på bomässan. Det är ju smart marknadsföring. Det är kul att det händer sådana grejor också. Själva stolen i sig tycker inte jag är så spännande men det är bra att de kan köra fram den så. Ett annat svenskt möbelföretag skulle aldrig göra den stolen. Det hade gått utanför deras ramar men Källemo kan göra det. Källemo har det namnet.

Christer: - Ska vi dyka in i inspirationen igen? Troligtvis har vi kommit fram till att arbetsmetoden och inspirationen hänger ihop. När du jobbar, tycker du att det är så? Att de följs åt en bit? Du får inspiration till att göra en idé, en skiss, men sen så fortsätter den här inspirationen att löpande komma under bearbetningen av skissen?

Henrik: - Jag brukar tidigt ha en bild av vad jag vill göra och den bilden ändrar sig inte så mycket under vägen. Har jag hållit på med ett projekt under en längre tid brukar jag försvinna från den här bilden men det har alltid slutat med att jag kommer tillbaka till den i alla fall. Det är svårt nog att komma fram till den bilden jag har i huvudet.

Christer: - Det finns de som säger att det första som man får fram i huvudet, det skulle vara det bästa för just det projektet. Jag vet inte om det är sant.

Henrik: - Man säger nog inte att det är det bästa men det är väldigt svårt att få fram något som är exakt likadant som det man har i huvudet men du kan få någonting som liknar i alla fall. Man säger att man fått en bild i huvudet men antagligen har man fått hundratals bilder i huvudet men fastnat för en bild. Sen kommer en massa synpunkter på det och man kommer längre ifrån bilden. Den räcker ändå fram tills du har gjort förslaget sedan börjar andra att hacka på den runtomkring. Den blir till slut något annat och då är du själv inte längre chef över det hela. Då får man anpassa sig. Det är inte så konstigt, det är inte bara jag som ska köpa stolen.

Christer: - Förebilder?

Henrik: - När jag gick på arkitektskolan var jag väldigt intresserad av skulpturkonst. Det gav mig jättemycket inspiration, jag kan inte säga någon exakt, nämna någon. Att gå på skulpturutställningar kunde ge nya idéer till nya former eller helt nya synvinklar och infallsvinklar från det man brukar se i tidningar. Det är klart att jag blir inspirerad av andras sätt att jobba. Andras prylar. Man har väl en arkitekt som man tycker är väldigt duktig eller en formgivare som man tycker är väldigt duktig. Det tror jag nog alla har, en eller flera.

Christer: - Det är nog omöjligt att inte ha några förebilder.

Henrik: - Om du ser någon formgivare som du ser mycket upp till och som har gjort något otroligt bra, men börjar du verkligen kolla upp det här så hittar du något tidigare som han har blivit inspirerad av. Ingenting är helt unikt. Allting kommer någonstans ifrån. Alla har fått inspiration någonstans ifrån. Många moderna möbler har sina rötter ända bak i antiken. Det finns formgivare idag som formger möbler som nästan ser exakt likadana ut som möbler från 60-talet. Du kan inte se vilken som är vilken.

Christer: - Det kanske finns något som heter den ideala stolen? Som alltid har funnits hos människan.

Henrik: - Det jag försöker säga är bara, du ser en grej som är fantastisk originell, tycker du men de finns alltid. Var han sen har hittat sin inspiration. Det är absolut inte fel att låta sig inspireras av någon. Det är bara vad du gör av den inspirationen. Om du kan skapa något nytt med den är det jättebra. Då är du duktig.

Christer: - När ni presenterar t ex en möbel. Presenterar ni inspirationskällor till den möbeln?

Henrik: - Nej, bara möbeln.

Christer: - Den ges inte en karaktär?

Henrik: - Nej, det är oftast de som sagt att, vi vill ha en stol, då presenterar man det man kommit fram till med en datorgenererad bild. Sen är det upp till dem att säga att det är bra eller dåligt, om de vill ha den eller inte. Genom att de oftast har jobbat med formgivaren tidigare, han har gjort saker åt dem innan, så behövs inte det.

Christer: - Gör ni så när det gäller hus också?

Henrik: - Då är det så många fler aspekter man måste ta hänsyn till, det är klart. När det gäller hus blir det mer sånt. Då är det mer snack om grundidéer, material och tomten ser ut som den gör. Det är ett helt annat läge, då måste man ju berätta mycket mer, linda in det i en saga. Hus är en helt annan sak på ett annat sätt också genom att det är så otroligt många som ska ha synpunkter på det. Det är så otroligt många som bor i närheten, som går förbi eller, det påverkar så många människors vardag. Det gör arkitektur, men om du gör en möbel kan ju konsumenten välja om han vill ha den eller inte. Vill han inte går han inte och köper den. Den står ju inte där på granntomten. Man får vara lite mer försiktig när man gör arkitektur än när man gör möbler. Då kan man bli lite mer utflippad. Det är roligt med design också, man kan lita lite mer på intuitionen och köra mer rakt fram. I arkitektur är klyftan ännu större mellan konsumenten och arkitekten. Särskilt allmänheten, klyftan mellan arkitekten och folket är ju enorm. Vad folk har för uppfattning om arkitektur och vad arkitekten har för uppfattning om arkitektur. De allra flesta tycker ju t ex att Myresjöhus är vackra hus. "De är jättebra." Då är det svårt att rita en modernistisk villa.

Johan: - Det är konstigt att man kan falla in i en sän, eller varför det blir så från början? Under utbildningen förvaltar någon slags...

Henrik: - T ex på Chalmers så, arkitektskolan ligger precis bredvid väg och vatten men det var ingen kontakt över huvud-

taget mellan de två. Det är ändå de som bygger det man ritat. Klyftan är redan stor där! Vad är den inte då för de som är utanför. Arkitekter måste ju hela tiden utveckla sig och göra nya grejor för vi måste gå framåt. Men det vore nog bra med lite mer utbildning i skolan, att folk var lite mer allmänbildade vad gäller arkitektur och formgivning.

Christer: - Jag tror att det är något som kommer nu. De verkar få det i gymnasiet. Vissa program verkar ha fått det.

Johan: - Eller så blir det hela bara ännu värre. De stöps i en form redan vid 15 års ålder.

Henrik: - Det gör man på arkitektskolan, många arkitektskolor, man stöps, man formas efter lärarna.

Christer: - Det har vi också märkt att vi lider av. Hur uppfattar ni det då när ni har ritat hus. Idén ni hade, kan man se den?

Henrik: - Ja det kan man säga. Då har kunden kommit till oss för att de tycker om det vi gör. Han tycker om det men sedan när man presenterar det för stadsarkitekten så kanske de är mer så där... då kanske de inte riktigt är med på noterna. Kunden har kommit till oss för att de tycker om det vi har gjort.

Christer: - Hur funkar det med entreprenörerna?

Henrik: - Det finns ju ett arkitektförakt i Sverige bland byggare som är ganska utbrett, ganska djupt rotat. Det handlar bara om att arkitekten ska ha mera kontakt med byggarna helt enkelt. Om arkitekten har mer kontakt med byggarna så kan byggarna känna sig mer delaktiga. Gör de det tycker de det är roligare och till slut börjar de förstå det man vill uppnå och då tycker de det är bra. Kan man få dem att tycka att det är bra, kan det bli ett bra bygge.

Johan: - Har det någon gång hänt att en kund som söker sig till er blir helt förvånad, wow, det här förväntade

han sig inte alls? Det här var inte alls er stil.

Henrik: - Ja, oj, nu gick du för långt. Ja, det kan väl hända lite grann. De kanske inte säger det öppet men man märker det ändå. De kanske har sett det man gjort tidigare och allting som blir färdigt, det är ju skillnad på det från förslaget. Det är ganska stor skillnad för att det ska anpassas, det ska kunna byggas. Därför blir de kanske chockade när de ser förslaget. Man kanske har varit lite wild and crazy då. Men det måste man vara för att det ändå ska bli tufft när det är färdigt. Då tar man bort så många saker ändå så att lite av det tuffa ska vara kvar.

Johan: - Jaha, jag tror att vi har fått de svar vi behöver.

Henrik: - Ja, och så lite verklighet, kryddat med lite verklighet.

Christer: - Vi funderar ju en del över det här själva, var vi står.

Henrik: - Mmm, den svåra balansen är ju att, när man går i skolan bygger man upp idéer och ett sätt och jobba. Sen blir det ett ganska stort fall när du kommer ut i verkligheten och ser att mycket inte fungerar så som du har trott att det fungerar. Då är det upp till dig om du kan göra någonting bra av det här. Om du kan ta det som industrin säger och ta dina egna idéer och få dem att gå ihop på något sätt. Kan du det så har du lyckats.

Conversation with Matt Davies: 10.00-11.30, on a cafe across the street from his office Planet earth, curtain road 135-139.

We first meet in the office, after some minutes of waiting we went across the street for a cup of cafe and to make the interview. The cafe is a cosy and trendy place where people go in and out all the time, the cafe is ecological and very good. Matt buys me a cappuccino. I'm a bit nervous on how to put the first question, I can see that Matt is sweating a lot you start to wonder if that might be me that affect him or if just have a problem, with sweating. We sit down and the first question is coming closer:

The interview starts after a couple of seconds of arranging the md and the microphone.

Johan: - Just a first one, do you work a lot, do you have a lot of spare time? (Some laughs from us both)

Matt: - I work, I do work a lot actually, I, No I don't have much spare time. And I read a lot as well, so I suppose in the spare time that I do have, I'm probably reading quit a lot, some times I even read in the mornings before I leave.

Johan: - when do you start, is it early mornings or usually ten?

Matt: - It's usually about ten maybe later half ten, I tend to work late and then start late.

Johan: - When you get a new project, do you have the same routines every time or does it change from time to time?

Matt: - It changes actually, it's been changing quit a lot over the last few years, because I've been trying to find my ideal way of working. I guess for me I find it really important to have an input into the design. A very strong input, but some-times, just recently, because

I've been really, really busy, on actually trying to promote the practice and get more work. And I've been spending all my time, doing, tending the bits, you know. For more work! So I've had to say to Alvin "you didn't meet the other" But Alvin and Christian they been actually working on the design. But in some ways that's worked out quite well. They've done a sketch proposal and then I've come back and said well that's ok but that's not and change this and change that. And so that's been the way we worked recently, in the past it's worked that I've done the overall concept said this is what we should be doing and how we should go about it. But I've left it loose enough so that they can put their one creative input into it. I think that's the way I wanted to play it, because I didn't want to just take anything away from them, I've wanted them to feel like they could enjoy their work and be creative. So I've always, in fact I think that's one of the ways I work, is to think very much in a broad way about the design and then allow them to work within that, so it gives a direction.

Johan: - But do you have, like the first thing you do, do you have a little meeting where all you sit together and talk about the project or are they talking directly to the entrepreneur or the contractor?

"Our cafe gets put on the table by the waitress"

Matt: - No that, doesn't really, I'm usually the one that has the first contact, because I. And actually that's interesting because I've done the bid for the work and I've done the presentation so I've already kind of told the client what my approach will be to the project. And so then I feed that back to the others, but just recently Alvin has been going to meet the clients as well at the beginning, and so we have regular team meetings as well, but usually with the design it's on a one to one basis that we discuss. Because some of the projects are kind of a

manageable size you know so that one person can manage the whole project. We've had other work where we had a big housing estate, and we had to look at it in different ways with other people. Either then all of the people involved you know all the people in the office. But at the moment there only three of us there have been six of us so that was in a previous time a year or so ago, it's more one to one now.

Johan: - And when you, when you start your work, with the others. For example if you have a competition, for something what makes your proposal look a special way, do you have like something I probably do this or that or I have sort of things that appear in all my projects, or things that come back?

Matt: - Ya o ya, That's a good question, I always ask that question to people who I interview I say what's special about your work how would I recognize it. Well, I think the work is very sort of socially centred, it kind of is very responsive to a use or a function in a social way, and it's also very integrated into the context, I suppose any work should be if it's good but, "Matt laughs"

Johan: - Still it can be more or less.

Matt: - I think that's something we really try to get right, that sense of integration, and that sense of something having grown out of the place, you know, as if it were naturally evolved like that way, and that would also say look, the moving pattern of people you know and such. I suppose we try to visualize, well I don't know it has that sense, maybe we try to use the four elements, like the water and the earth and the air you know try to get a sense of the sun and all of that coming together as well that's a bit more kind of "ephemeral".

Johan: - Ya a balance

Matt: - Ya that's right balance, ya definitely, mm. When you say the look do you also mean the physical look?

Johan: - Ya everything, there is a special material, or special greenery or special something?

Matt: - O ya I think, one of the things that I would say were, specific with generosity of proportion. I don't particularly always use the same materials, I do like to use things like really good stone and timber and steel materials in their raw state, but I don't use the same material over and over again, I don't have a trademark that's Planet earth, I think generosity in proportion is really one of the things as well, maybe to leave spaces more interpretable by the user rather than being really specific.

Johan: - The name, how did you come up with that?

Matt: - I have a strong sense that the planet is a spiritual organism, and it's living and it's alive, so I want tap in to that sense of the planet as a being, and then also the fact that planet earth is all the people that live on the planet as well. And it also describes the people, and it also gives you that sense of kind of objectivity and separateness but also at the same time unity with it, so you got this kind of sense of there's planet earth and its in the solar system in the universe and I really love that kind of aspect of you that kind of vastness of space.

Laughter

Johan: - Very impressive, I just heard that they first thought that the big bang, and then the universe expands slower, but the fact is that the universe expands faster and faster for every minute.

Matt: - Really

Johan: - Its true

Matt: - Its going the other way! My good

Johan: - I heard, just two weeks ago

Matt: - Did you, and so what will happen?

Johan: - I have no idea, it

won't implode, I don't think so, it's some black matter that makes it just grows all the time, that are in between all the galaxies.

Matt: - That's amazing, I love that idea of space, it's something that, really makes your mind sort of go wow, it's really kind of awakening isn't it. It's lovely you told me.

Johan: - So when you started work, like your training to become a landscape architect what made you go to school?

Matt: - Because, when I was at school my class teacher at the time, invited in a landscape architect to talk to us, this was in our last year at school, and I was quite impressed about what he was doing and he is a really old man now he is 90 years old. He's name is Peter Jungman, you may probably not have, he is quite well known in this country, because he started work in the 1930 or 1940. And but then funnily enough I was really interested in architecture, and however, I left school and I had this really, I had a very kind of, I didn't have a definite idea of what I wanted to do. I had very broad idea of, like I wanted to do, like lots of different things. And I was really interested in the environment as well, and the general sort of ecology and environment. And I did as one of my a-levels I did environmental studies. And it was all about you know sustainable design, you know demographic, peoples you know, illness in the southern hemisphere. And all of that stuff, but it was really interesting, wow that was really interesting. So I wanted to do some kind of discipline that would encompass all that, a degree level. And I thought landscape architecture an I kind of came back to it, because having remembered this guy, and that was a really broad subject, its got everything, its about design, and its about ecology, its about? Stuff, people, social, geography and so that's how it all started really with that. It's funny because I think that, I don't know, I could, I sometimes think about architecture, I wanted to do architecture. And I was like told

that it was too mathematical, and I wouldn't be suited to architecture, and I think that it is a mistake. It is, isn't it?

Johan: - Definitely

Matt: - I think in some way that it is probably good that I'm now doing landscape architecture, because I think it suits me much better, but at the same time I've also like thought architecture at Kingston university, and I know that it is not at all, you know. It's funny that how peoples preconception can often steer you in the wrong direction.

Johan: - Totally!

Matt: - It's really bad!!

Johan: - Very misleading

Matt: - It is actually

Johan: - And you get very furious when you realize, what's wrong and its not that way, definitely not.

Matt: - I know, Exactly, so that was probably not a good thing really, but I'm quite happy with what I'm doing so.

Johan: - My first thought was that I should be a sea captain, and then I ticked landscape architecture as second choice, and I ended up with landscape architecture...

Matt: - But it is very difficult, because when I left school, I had this sense of having to make my mind up, about things that I didn't like and cause when I did my a-levels, I didn't know what degree I wanted to do and so I wanted to chose a-levels that would keep my choices open, you know and its really difficult, ya. But I was saying to my teachers I just don't know what I want to do yet. You know haven't had enough experience, very frustrating.

Johan: - They tell us during the first two years, that we should find a section that we care for more, like urban design or landscaping or whatever. We just want to take every piece of the cake. It's so very hard maybe you should

narrow down the field.

Matt: - I think you need more time, I mean also I did a foundation course in art and design after I left school and that gave me more time to experiment with my creativity and actually I think that really helped me to go on to landscape architecture, cause they liked my portfolio and that was a interesting thing actually, cause even on my foundation course they hadn't heard if landscape architecture, you know they, most people went of and did painting or sculpture, 3d-design, or graphic design and they didn't really think o landscape architecture well you know, if you are going to do that Heeee, they thought it was a bit weird. And so it's so difficult I feel really sorry for people who want to do landscape. And people don't know and don't encourage.

Johan: - Cause, you want to think that it has a big effect on people!

Matt: - O yeahh, definitely

Johan: - But sometimes I think you get a bit destroyed by people your around. You think you affect a lot of people etc.

Matt: - I mean a lot of people are doing good work, and a lot of the things we see are affected by people who have designed it but they might not be always landscape architects, they might be engineers or

Johan: - Or architects!

Johan: - Do you have any cooperation with other professionals, like do you work with biologists, or ecologists?

Matt: - Not very often, but we work with artists

Johan: - You do that, is it very good?

Matt: - Yeahh but sometimes when we work, we even work with architects on housing projects or so! With the artist we often define what her role is, so we might say this is what we want you to do. Its not so often that we

work right from the concept stage with the artist, because in a way I kind of believe that I'm an artist anyway and, you know, I've did art and design, it doesn't mean that I wouldn't be opposed to that it's just that I can't really necessarily afford to pay an artist to come in that early you know so usually its on a specific part of a project. But although that kind of goes against my whole belief, cause I don't really like to take one piece of the project separately, I mean she knows what's going on, And we did a school playground recently and we had some lovely wooden seats made by a artist and then we had this mosaic river it's a whole kind of work really and it's nicer together. So we worked with artists, we worked with architects, and engineers on bigger projects. In fact we worked with getting a engineer in and some walls we are making some concrete walls, mean that's quit important, but it's not so creative in that stage we've already made the design.

Johan: - If we go back to the books you read, which books do you read now, that would affect you in your work?

Matt: - Well, at the moment I'm reading quit a few books about spiritual psychology, and its kind of like trying to train your mind or your thoughts, its a bit like the alchemist in the 15th century. So you can train your mind to reach kind of higher levels of consciousness. So I think that does link directly to my work, because what I'm trying to do is to really clarify the way ideas come to me and the way I think about sites. So if I'm going on a site I like to really try and be aware, have a very tuned awareness on what might be happening on that site. And I'm also in to Steiner have you heard of him?

Johan: - Yes.

Matt: - Rudolph Steiner, I'm really in to his evolutionary theories, about how the earth came in to being, and how gradually different aspects of the human being began to form like a certain awareness or sort of ego consciousness

and this kind of happened over ions and ions of years. So that kind of gives me a sense of the inspiration of the universe and the human being, it's a bit difficult to sum up in a nutshell, heee "laughter from both". And the last book I kind I've read a number of books recently on that topic.

Johan: - Anthroposophic!

Matt: - Ya that's right, anthroposophic, do you know much about that?

Johan: - Ya some, we have a big seminar its called, its a centre for anthroposophy in Sweden outside Stockholm and its, they affect the entire design and environmental part of Sweden quit much actually. Because they have gardening school and they have some very successful students that have opened up two or three very successful gardens, where they have cakes and selling flowers and all that stuff. And they are all anthroposophy ground ideas in their work. They are quit popular in Sweden

Matt: - That's nice you've heard, and also biodynamic, have you heard of bio dynamics, very interesting with the planets and the stars

Johan: - Yes, if we go back a bit. When you visit a site what would you say affect you the most there.

Matt: - It is the main thing isn't it, Well, It's just a sense of the place, I mean it's so difficult to know what it is! I was talking about it to this Peter Jungman this really old lad he is very pragmatic, he just says "o you know a place is just a physical characteristic" But I think there is kind of all sort of atmospheres and you know nuances that aren't just about physical characteristics, it could be the quality of the light or the wind, or the temperature of the site, and all the subtle electromagnetic vibrations and frequencies so. So that's I think there must be something spiritual, about a site or whatever you call it, electromagnetic or whatever, different energies and that is what I

try to sense what they are. I also observe like the physical what's growing there because that's part of the living energy. So what's actually physically there, what growing there, how its been affected, and changed by different influences and I also like to look at the history of the site, I like to know what's been going on there before, because I kind of think that human interaction, I'm really interested in landscape and memory, I'm sure that landscape has a memory cause all the things that happens on it, it seeps into it

Johan: - It's like the layers of rocks!

Matt: - That's it, that's right, so I think if there has been lots of people doing some things on the site or moving across the site, or if there has been animals on the site that will affect the site. So like to try to build that up, so I look back in to the maps, go to the local libraries and look hundreds of years back, it's really interesting to see!

Johan: - But then when you get that first idea that comes out of something. How much do you think is left of your main idea in the end, do you think that's the success of the project if you can visually see

Matt: - Ya, sometimes it's more, I know what you mean. It gets diluted

Johan: - Ya you loose the concept somehow, but sometimes, maybe it doesn't matter sometimes, but I don't know, but mostly you want it to be visual, somehow you want to see the conceptual idea and you want to see....

Matt: - No for me, I have to have, there has to be a core, running all the way through, I have to be happy at the end, that I can say to somebody this is what this project is about, and this is what we have been trying to do. So I have to keep that, and if I loose that I would be very unhappy, and that's one of the things that I, I'm very fluid in the office with other peoples ideas, but as soon as it

starts to loose the central idea or the core, then I'm not happy, because I can't defend that then, I can't say this is good work, so I have to keep that. But it could just be something very simple, I mean it could just be one idea of how people could use that space, or about the history of that space. I mean as an example, there is one project we did and there is a war memorial on the site, and a lot of the other guys in the practice at the time said we want to move the war memorial. And it was quit a reactionary approach, and I guess I could sympathize with that approach, cause I thought war memorials are a bit kind of conservative and old people like them, but at the same time I want to respect that a lot of people had been there with a lot of emotions and all that, and sort of made that place special for that reason so I just wanted to just keep that in the place, So I was really insistent that it didn't move at all, And that we worked with the design and integrated it, and so just little ideas like that, you can have that's really important, you care about.

Johan: - Respect

Matt: - Ya that's it, and respect for the landscape as well. So I think, because I'm also interested in laylines and energy points and I think that if something is being put on a place with a purpose it has a lot of meaning, you know, somebody has really intended to do something, there has been a lot of that kind of human will, has made that insignificant for that reason. And then for somebody to just move it on the drawing board because they, you know what I mean, it's not right.

Johan: - No it's not right !!

Johan: - But, like when you have a contractor, do they often have much ideas of how the work should be done, or ideas how it should look like with materials and so one ?

Matt: - Yes they do sometimes! And sometimes I think that's quit fine, because they then

participate in the design, because they are the one's building it. And I find it's a problem sometimes this gap between the designer and the contractor. In some of my projects I've done, I've actually left certain things up to the contractor, because then they feel they got ownership of the design, and they often work better! So!

Johan: - That's a good trick!

Matt: - Yes it is actually! So I might say to them well do it how you think it's right, and, it actually worked quit well. I had some paving, and I wanted some, it's quit simple actually! But I wanted some stones to be thrown into this black top, you know macadam, and I asked them to just throw them in, like how they thought would be right. And they did and it worked out! I wouldn't have done it like that, but you know it was ok, and they really like cared about the job.

Johan: - Is it hard to find good contractors?

Matt: - It's really hard, and I think that's one of the things that I think lets down our work, that we have bad contractors. I just done a job recently in west London, and it's been really difficult cause the contractors have been so poor, and they have just been using subcontract labour, you know they bring in from a agency, young guys, they are there for a couple of weeks and they go off and do something else! You know it's no good. But I also know a family firm that I've worked with for ten years

Johan: - That's must be really good!

Matt: - Yes and they are really good, and they do care about the work, and they don't sort of make a big deal if something comes up that they haven't prepared for or priced for they don't make a big deal about it. And they also make suggestions just how to make something better or to redesign it,

Johan: - That's perfect

Matt: - That's what you need really, because it's funny, because landscape architecture is a skill, a craft as well as a design skill. And I think that craft element is on sight that we don't have enough experience of and it would probably take years and years to get to know how.

Johan: - You don't have anything of that in your training, like you do some months outside?

Matt: - No, we don't do any of that.

Johan: - We have, obligatory we have three months, were we have to work with contractors some how and we also have in school just a course for three weeks!

Matt: - That's good!

Johan: - Yes that's good.

Matt: - What sort of things do you do then?

Johan: - Lay pebbles, and plant trees, prune trees, garden work,

Matt: - Do you make fences and things like that,

Johan: - Yes fences.

Matt: - That's really good

Johan: - But then you can choose your own contractor, so I was really lucky to find a very good contractor, he was perfect. He had been trained in Germany for several years and was relatively young with a lot of knowledge. It was perfect. He is very skilled in stone works.

Matt: - And what was this project was for it something that you had done?

Johan: - No it was a landscape architecture in my region that had done it. His speciality was stone walls without plaster in between....

Matt: - Dry stone walls

Johan: - Exactly, it takes a long time and it's hard work but it gets nice afterwards.

Matt: - Nice...

Johan: - Do you do a lot of competition or, is there a lot of competitions?

Matt: - Yes there are a lot actually, we are doing one at the moment actually, and just recently we've had some good success in that we have been short listed for competitions, so that been like selected competitions, and that's better. Usually I always apply for a competition if there is one coming, actually it's a bit difficult not always I've missed a couple actually. I'm thinking of the most recent one's we've been asked to enter, on a list and that's been ok because then you know, well there are only a few of you. O I know we did one in Norwich, in the city of Norwich in Easter England and we were short listed for that, we didn't win! It's very difficult to win isn't

Johan: - It is, it depends on the jury.

Matt: - I remember I did a big competition in -96 I think just after I set up the practice, and it was in Berlin, we went to Berlin, and we got very excited about it, we just didn't get anywhere.

Johan: - It's hard

Matt: - It is, I know but I still think it's very important to do competitions, just simply because you know you actually practicing the art, because it does take a lot of practice to just get the arts right to the pre-quals, you refine it all the time.

Johan: - It's such a different way for working for real or doing, because you get so free in a way, you have this program and you have to do your work but you don't any obligations to anyone, just your on mind.

Matt: - Ya it's right

Johan: - If you should describe your creative process in a graphic way how would you do? Could you.

Matt: - Ok, It could be something like this. Well it might

be kind of, say, say that's me, ok, so this is kind of influences coming in I guess. So a kind of sort of sensitivities, listening, you know, could be, it's auditory as well as visual. And then I guess there is this kind of process of, I do something I really like to do I like to kind of really sort of sleep on ideas, things go round and they sort of digesting, you know sort of digestion. And then I guess then comes, this idea of well, a process of, how would I describe that. It's kind of like, really making a strategy, some kind of logical idea. Hmm in order to do that you already have the goal in mind, kind of, yea that's it, I guess I know what I'm aiming for then I'm trying to find out how I'm gonna get there. So I'm trying to put the pieces in place, so I have a sense. That's right so I already have, That's really important actually I forgot to say on this process, like the vision, the idea is kind of already there.

Here I will show your little sketch, with the additional note that you emailed

Johan: - Some blurry thing,

Matt: - Yes that's right, so I know what the idea is, but I don't quite know how to express it, and how to make it legible or understandable in the normal world, in a sense of that, cause it kind of might be a fuzzy idea. Because I really like the sense of working backwards on something, because if you take a landscape, hmm I mean it's easier if you take a sample of a building, you can take the building apart, and you can see how it's been built, the materials it's used, but you can't see the idea of the building and why they did it in that way. And I would like to think of that in the landscape, that you know, there must be an idea there, although it's hidden, somehow, but you might be able to see, the idea, you might be able to interpret the idea, by looking on what's been done. It might be legible and trying to make it legible, that would be a very interesting way of working.

Johan: - It's nice (referring to the sketch)

Matt: - Yes I don't know, ya something like that. Probably, but these two stages for me are the most important, I really need the time to think and get the entrances, and then think around the idea and then the idea might come out.

Johan: - How long could that period be?

Matt: - O this could be like days, three or four or five days.

Johan: - Funny, we have already done three interviews in Sweden, one landscape architecture, one interior designer and a scenograph. And she said, the scenograph, she said, she usually gets the manuscript, then she takes three days of doing laundry doing things. And then after three days, she has the same routine every time, she makes a collage with pictures from magazines and newspapers, with colours and hard shapes and smooth shapes, then she has her picture of what she wants to do, then she goes to the writer and they discuss.

Matt: - Quite similar, very interesting. And something else that sometimes happens to me if I'm on a site, sometimes I, and this is something else I'm very interested in and I'm also reading about this just now actually, I've got this really good book and it talks about, the imagination of images and where do images come from, and because sometimes I have an image that comes in to my head, and I'm still trying to work with that, because I don't know how valid it is, but I once, once happened very strongly with somebody's garden, I was working on there garden. And this image came to me how it could work out, and it kind of worked out ok like that. So you know it can happen quit soon though, I think. But usually there are the things I like to test out, and it does take a while to come through, definitely. Because you know you have to digest. With any decision I like to take some time! Hahahahah

After two weeks I get a mail with a more colourful answer to one of my questions;

Johan: - Ya it's god though, you should have the time.

Matt: - I know, its so difficult, finding the right way of working, because sometimes it doesn't suite you, because someone say they want a new idea the next day, it's so difficult.

Johan: - You work here in this part of London , how would you say it affects you. Do you live here as well?

Matt: - Ya I live just up the road, about twenty minutes cycle ride. Ya it does affect me actually, ya but I do like it, I like the hardness, the urban hardness of it, because I think that's when our kind of work, and ours arts can really affect people mostly. And I've had thoughts about eventually if I have children sometime moving out in a nice country sometime. A farm you know, but then I think how different would my work be, because I really find this environment very challenging, I quite like being here, but on the other hand sometimes I think, like you asked me the first question; what time do I start? And sometimes I start late because I really like to sit and be quite in the morning to read and concentrate on the reading, so that's nice as well. So I wouldn't mind in the summers I like being in the country, being quit, and concentrate but then I like this busy business as well.

Johan: - Now, I have been here only for two days now, the first thing that struck me , is that it's so much more people here and so much more noise, of course, and it affects me very much

Matt: - Do you now, I think you're right, sometimes I come out, o this is so noisy....

Johan: - But I think it's good because I think you get more socially aware., because I live at my school were we only live about one hundred people.

Dear Johan

It was great to meet you last week and be questioned on such interesting things. On reflection, I was not satisfied with an answer I gave you to the question of 'inspiration' or 'ideas process' when I drew the diagram for you. I thought you might think that I only value the physical input through the eyes and ears etc.. because I drew a head. What I really mean is more than that. I rely on an emotional response in the mind, heart and body, as well.

By drawing the head, I mean to say that thoughts are important too, thoughts and images in the mind. What I wanted was to explain that by going on site I look and listen and try to be objective and unprejudiced in what I see and how I respond. Then there is an imaginal function in the mind that I try to be sensitive to.

I observe images that occur in my mind. Sometimes these images are very strong and occur quickly while I am there. Sometimes I have to return to the site later to become more sensitive to spiritual influences. These spiritual influences are as real as any other physical influence experienced through the normal bodily senses, eg eyes and ears etc but the spiritual influences are more subtle and we have to tune our mind and emotions (soul) and body (heart) to receive them (through the body's energy centres known as chakras in some spiritual traditions).

I hope this clarifies and expands my earlier answer. I hope your research is continuing to go well. I would be very interested to know more about your studies and how they develop.
Yours Matt

Conversation with Ken
Smith 79 Chambers st.,
New York, NY. Workshop
30/11 2001 15:30

The interview starts a bit abruptly.

Ken: - All big projects, and we were able to change the deadline on one of them, *asking:* Judith, when is the Mercer residence, DD-package?

Judith: - Oh DD, December 14.

Ken: - We got a two-week extension on one. But the other two had to get out. And the one that went out today was, ok, but you know, we needed more time on it.

Johan: - Is it always like this, or is it just this fall?

Ken: - No, we are actually really busy right now. We've just in the last couple of years started to get kind of bigger projects, which is good, but it's like every day, I mean, we always have a deadline, all the time.

Johan: - When do you start in the morning?

Ken: - We generally start about nine, and we try to finish about 6.30, and we try not to work weekends, that's also rare, because you need to have time to go home and you need weekends off.

Johan: - But, do you have special routines, or do you do anything special every time you have a new project?

Ken: - No, every project is different, I think. I mean I think that generally when a project comes in, there is something particular about that project which is interesting, there is something about the client or the program or the opportunities. So generally very quickly in a project, you know, will determine that there is something that we really want to pursue as a kind of idea about this project, so that really then forms that project.

Some of the guests are leaving.

Ken: - But anyway, each project, generally it's an exploration of some ideas, there's always an artistic agenda for each project, and generally speaking we are pretty good about keeping that going through the project. I think the clients don't always know that we are doing that. Or they don't appreciate it, often times they don't get it until the end of the projects, sometimes not until it's built, they go; Ooh, that's what you were talking about. But generally we're really focused on trying to keep that idea through. For me it's important, because you know, you need the kind of idea about what a project is about, in order that all the details and all the subordinate things are sort of reinforcing something. And I think a lot of, you see a lot of work and there's nothing that holds it together.

Judith: - Right, right, it's true. People are just saying; what we need a flowerbed here, we want a swimming pool over here and we should have a fence around this part. It's true, I've really noticed that, they just kind of start with all the needs, and start doing those, without having an overall concept of how to tie it together. But don't you think it also makes it easier to think about the job when you have a strong concept.

Ken: - Sure, sure, because then when problems come up, you have a framework for how you're going to deal with them.

Johan: - You can solve it through the frames somehow. But would you call it a success when you really can follow the concept through the whole project?

Judith: - Success when they build it!

Ken: - It is a kind of success when that happens, and it's even more successful if all the elaboration and subordinate moves are also really good, it kind of all builds up. Sometimes you don't get all the subordinate things, you get kind of the one thing, and that's good. But if you could actually develop it,

I mean some clients are not interested in the development, they get the concept out and they say fine, do it. And other projects, like the one we are working on right now, the courtyard. I think that it's starting to develop in interesting ways, all the secondary moves and subtleties is starting to work with the dominant idea so, I think it's going to be a good project. We are doing a roof garden also which I think has potential of being really good, because it has a good client and good architects.

Johan: - How do you get the projects? Do they find you?

Ken: - Yeah, mostly people come to the office, they call up. I mean, what nine years ago when I opened the office I didn't have any work, there was no work at all, nothing. I was teaching and initially, people, other like young architects that I was teaching with, you know, I would start collaborating on projects with them. And it's just been a building process, each year we got a little bit better project or we got to work with a little bit better architect. So it's a building process, getting published helps, because then people are familiar with the work. I think it's best to have people come and say; I'd like you to work on a project.

Johan: - Cause then they know where you stand and within which frame it will end up.

Ken: - Yeah, there is a kind of agreement that we want to work together, it's sort of like working with architects, you want it to be a collaboration. Working with a client is collaboration also, it's good that the client wants to work with us and it's good that we want to work with the client. In the end you all have to work together, because if you are fighting all the time, it's just a big waste of energy, fighting is just a waste of a lot of stuff. It's not worth it!

Johan: - Where do you look for news, or ideas or something outside your own knowledge, where do you look then?

Ken: - For me, I'm particularly interested in art, I look to the art world. I'm also interested in fashion, clothing design. So I actually always read the fashion reviews, like religiously. I love reading about the couture shows in Paris!

Judith: - Are you interested in fashion, I would have never guessed! (He laughs)!

Ken: - You know I'm always interested in like what Rei Kawakubo is doing. Rei always has interesting ideas. Issey Miyake's craft is really incredible, and I think that someone like Martin Margiela is really incredible, because his clothes always have an incredible set of ideas about them. And so I actually find clothing collections very interesting and a clothing collection is, it expresses an idea or maybe a cluster of ideas, very kind of, very succinctly and clearly with a lot of elaboration, in a very short period of time. Because then a year later they will, you know, will have done another collection. And clearly when you look at a fashion designer's career, that's something that holds it all together. But each year they manage to take a set of ideas and develop something that is new. And I find that actually really interesting, and so the parallels between fashion and landscape interest me.

Johan: - It's also like humans, interactions, the body, land, clothes.

Ken: - It's like humans, the body, you know the earth moves, it breathes, grows, it dies, and clothing fits a moving body, and you know paving and structure fits you know a living body. There are a lot of parallels, and even the conflicts in fashion, there is a conflict between, whether fashion should reveal the body or set kind of apart from the body. And very much the same in landscape whether you go with nature or express culture. I find fashion very interesting. I'm also interested in music, I think music is another kind of good source of ideas for landscape-ing.

Johan: - A lot to do with the rhythm!

Ken: - Yeah, mostly, instrumental or non-narrative music. I actually like the modernist, the minimalist because their work is more percussive based, like John Cage or Philip Glass or Steven Reich is really good, it's sort of the way that, because music is spatial because it exist over time, there is a kind of spatial idea there. When we are doing linear projects, like streets and things, music becomes kind of an interesting way of thinking about how you move along a space in a line.

Judith: - But it is also like that orchestration of all the small parts, you were talking about the larger concept of the landscape design, and that's all those details that go in there and reinforce. It's the same as putting together a piece of music.

Ken: - Right, it's like a Mozart symphony!

Judith: - And you have more teeps (things appearing), you have more teeps that you repeating and different themes that you are repeating over a larger organisation

Ken: - And sometimes you'll have a little thing that just does "lululu" (a funny noise) on its own.

Judith: - Yeah, but that just adds a little punch in a certain place, a little emphasis where you want it, so I think there is a very good correlation between the two.

Ken: - But all of them are art, that's the bottom line, it is about art.

Judith: - It's about composition and it's about relationship to human beings.

Ken: - And in landscape, I mean the thing that's about landscape, we have a very particular medium, our medium is different than architecture, it's different than clothing, different than art, you know art or painting or sculpture.

Johan: - But it's not tradi-

tionally portable in the same way as music.

Ken: - No, it's much more contextual. I think context is part of our art, and context is probably our greatest art, but our medium is, you know, soil and plants. Our medium is actually quite primitive in many ways, I mean there are certain industrial products, but that's our medium. But space and context and...

Judith: - I think landscape architects have to be more willing to let go of control than other artists. Because a painter or an architect or a even a musician are able to control all the elements of their art, whereas landscape architects can only really set up the premise and create the hardscape, but if they are using plants at all, there is a whole cycle of change and growth that goes on, that you just can't control. And I think that makes landscape architecture very different too, you can't have a finished product in mind and know you can create exactly that finished product. You have to be willing to be loose about that, and to not be completely controlling about it.

Ken: - The traditional construct of the garden, being bounded, is more like the painter's canvas. Most of the landscapes in contemporary life are not that bounded, they are much more open and so you do have all those conflicts and all those problems of how you relate with things relationally either in time or space or...

Judith: - And it's very difficult to design that way, too, because your elements change over time. So you start with small trees spaced a certain amount apart, and eventually when you see this mature landscape it has a very different feeling to it.

Ken: - And you have to be optimistic that somebody's actually going to maintain it, it's actually going to get to maturity. In architecture it's on day one, it's probably the best it will ever be, and then it's a process of decay. In landscape on day one it often

doesn't look very good, and it's only after a period of time that it actually starts to look good, and if you don't have a good client who is going to maintain it or believe in it, then it will never happen.

Elisabeth: - You are dependent on many different people, it's not just you, you are dependent on a contractor, a client or a user; I mean there's all these other things!

Ken: - The contractors are really tough. Elisabeth has been working on the construction site a lot recently, and just being able to work with the contractor to get them to do what you want. I mean a lot of it, in some way you beat them up to a certain degree, but a lot of it is just having a good relationship with the contractor and sort of getting them to do it the way you want and getting them to understand what it's about.

Elisabeth: - Yeah, it's definitely the understanding of the concept.

Johan: - Selling the idea to the client is one problem, but to the contractor is a totally different thing.

Elisabeth: - And they can definitely, if they don't do the correct detail, it can totally change the nature of your intention, and it can totally change the intention of your design. It can be two different things of what you have drawn and what's actually...

Ken: - But it's interesting on the project on 110th street, the contractors really understand what the design is about now, they didn't when we started. But we've gotten into it far enough, they actually really understand the organisation of it all. And now the contractor will call us up, and say; I have a question, I think that it should be this way, they'll explain, and say is that right? And nine times out of ten it's right, he's actually figured out enough that he knows how it should be solved.

Judith: - But Ken, Elisabeth has the paint. (She spend a

lot of the time at the construction site)

Ken: - We spent so much time on the construction site.

Johan: - But is it always the same contractor?

Ken: - Every time it's a different contractor, every time.

Johan: - Must be hard.

Ken: - But I like contractors, I mean, contractors really know how to build stuff. And if you respect the contractor and listen to them, and if they trust that you actually know what you are doing, you can actually do good stuff.

Johan: - So if you do a competition, what would you say is special about your work, or the work that comes out of this firm? How would you differ it from other proposals?

Ken: - Oh, gee, (laughter), I don't know.

Judith: - I can tell you why I wanted to work here. It's a very creative firm and there is a lot of interesting ideas and bringing in influences from a lot of other fields and there is an excitement to that. And there is a willingness to try new ways of doing things and Ken really know how to build stuff, so you could come up with ideas and figure out how to build them, but then there is also a very strong conceptual idea that's applied to the project, it's really important, I think. And I think that's a lack in the field of landscape architecture, and that helps drive things forward in a really good way, be working for a firm like this. I just find that the work Ken does is some of the most interesting work I've seen, and I think that this firm is really going to continue to do more and more interesting...

Ken: - Yeah, that, and burn out totally! (He laughs)!

Judith: - Or we'll all burn out trying to do it. What a way to go! I mean it's so enjoyable to work on projects that are interesting and that

you want to do and you want to see completed and you know are pushing the boundaries, because there is a lot of conservative work out there. And that is really not of much interest to me.

Ken: - But the competitions are usually about ideas, I mean, people run competitions because they want something that's different and so competitions are really a good opportunity to be provocative, and to take an idea and make it very pointed. We had on that one, the city had actually asked us to look at that thing as a real project, before this project and we had actually developed this idea for the city, and it didn't go anywhere. And then we decided we'll do the competition, and we took the idea and made it much more provocative, had a much stronger dialectical aspect to it, because in a competition you want the ideas to be very sharp. But the other thing about competitions is the whole judging process is interesting, how the jurors work. Competitions have to have a very strong kind of frontal quality that gets your attention, they also have to have enough depth to them, to support, you know once you look at them closely

Johan: - Read the text or...

Judith: - Yeah, well it certainly did grab them...

Ken: - Yeah, but competitions are these little things that we are doing on a pro bono basis for the rebuilding of New York, are really ways of exploring new ideas. Often, this is a kind of research and development, and I think often times, then what we do here then we will bring those ideas into more mainstream projects for a client that has a budget, and going to be built. It's useful to have a kind of, explore them, kind of that they are extreme...

Johan: - Another medium to work in...

Ken: - Yeah.

Judith: - It's an excuse to play with materials and ideas and push them to the most

extreme. You can, because it's a competition. And you don't have to worry about...

Elisabeth: - I see it as a laboratory, it's where the experiments happens, when you are an scientist you can go and do and make something, create something here, and then a scientist would probably use it in the automatic way if they are working on films or something, you know how to do something, and then the application would be for this application here...

Ken: - And you never know when that application will come up...

Judith: - But the ideas have cooked...

Ken: - The other thing is that, starting up the firm, I'd never imagined the trajectory, that it's taken, because, I sort of thought that you get important projects and you do them, and in fact, you don't get important projects, you get shit. You know nasty sites, bad budgets and you have to make something out of them, and you do competitions and so you end up going places you never imagined. But in fact those places then form the work in a way you can't expect going into it and I think that's what actually makes the work original, because you couldn't anticipate it, and in some degree it's a product of circumstance, taking the circumstance and making what you can out of it.

Judith: - Well, I think those difficult circumstances often bring out very original and interesting solutions. If it's a really difficult circumstance, you're forced to really twist your brain around and come up with something interesting, and not something you would necessarily think of...

Ken: - Well it's like when we did the Fifth Avenue project, you know we were trying to make landscape on Fifth Avenue. And there just isn't any room on Fifth Avenue for landscape, and so the idea was to do chandeliers, to put the landscape up on the ceiling. It never occurred to me before that the landscape had

a ceiling, which is a great horizontal plane, and that project, just because its very nature forced us, you know to that position and then kind of go, Oh that is a really good idea, that. And then that comes back in something like the scaffolding project, which is not the same as the chandeliers, but has a similar kind of attitude about making a landscape that's part of a ceiling, a kind of floating landscape overhead, kind of flying carpet if you will.

Judith: - Or the pattern over the basketball court, that kind of thing.

Ken: - But the other thing that, I think really has shaped this office, is being in New York City and the complete urbanism of the place, the fact that it's completely built, I mean it's all structure, and making landscape here is just like really difficult, it's like a constant fight to find a place where you can make landscape, it's really hard. It has challenged us all to come up with new ways of doing it, so that we end up thinking about things like dumpsters. I mean nobody in their right mind would go out there and start looking at dumpsters and say, this would make a nice garden. But in New York City you know it suddenly makes a lot of sense, we've got a lot of dumpsters, we need gardens and so, and they hold soil.

Judith: - I still remember that project you showed me the first time I came to the office, which was for the subway stop, with that slope and there is this kind of whole vegetation area, for there is a little ecology in there.

Ken: - Birds, birds!

Judith: - Birdhouses on top, and there was this tiny little space, and then there'd be a glass wall so when you're in the subway station you're looking out on this very steeply sloped landscape that was going back up to the street. And that is squeezing a landscape into a tiny little unpromising space, but it's an original and interesting idea.

Johan: - Do you feel alone here, are there many competitive firms in New York?

Ken: - In New York, no, it's not a very strong landscape community in New York. When I worked in California there were a lot of landscape architects. There it was much more competitive, you had a real community, it was actually kind of nice cause you could meet with people and you could talk about stuff, but in New York you are really much more alone. And we are much more likely to talk to artists than landscape architects or musicians or architects, or who knows what. The great thing about New York City is that it's a great kind of social hive, it's like a beehive. You know there is just all these interactions and things, just going down the street, you'll meet people, and you'll talk to people and their ideas. New York City is just a really great place because of the density of culture. And a lot of people don't like that, I mean there are people who couldn't absolutely live in New York City. They just hate all that. But I think it's a great thing. It's a great place to have an office in that way. I moved here because the arts are here, and I just thought that's where I want to be. And New York City has really shaped us, we are the kind of practice we are because of this place.

Johan: - Do you ever work with like other professionals, engineers, ecologists or biologist or whatever?

Ken: - There is a lighting designer I worked with a lot, who I like collaborating with, and there is an architect I like collaborating with. On the East River ferry pier project, we are starting to do a project that is about river ecology, and so we are starting to work with the natural resource people at the parks department, so we figure out how we make this work. We don't really know exactly how to make it work. Alex has a better idea than I do, but these people are really experts, and they actually like our project and so they are very helpful, and

say actually you should think about this or this might be a good idea. That's actually very good, but I think all the people we end up working with, you know, help us a lot.

Johan: - Where do you go to vacation?

Ken: - Oh, I love to go, mostly I don't travel so much in the United States, although I've travelled a lot in United States. Mostly I like going to Asia because I think, growing up in America which is largely formed by European culture, and European culture is what I know more through history, Asian culture is more different, and so I actually like going to Asia because it sort of opens up my mind in ways that I can't imagine. I've been to Japan a number of times, and I've been to China several times and Korea and India. I like going to Asia, but recently I've been going to Europe more, and particularly the last couple of years I've been spending time in the Mediterranean, Italy and Spain. I like the Islamic garden tradition a lot, southern Spain is really rich for that, and I like the French gardens a lot, and I like the Japanese gardens. But I always travel to traditional gardens.

Ken: - I'm told that in Sweden there is this kind of idea of the landscape, as a walk in the woods. When I was in Denmark, they have a kind of pastoral ideology of kind of grassed land, and of course the French draw lines across, and the Dutch build, build it. The Germans have an idea also about going to the woods, that's very strong.

Johan: - They really love Sweden, Germans, they always come up there and they like the woods and the freedom.

Ken: - They like the woods.

Johan: - They like the idea of, it's free everywhere, there are no fences, you can always walk around.

Ken: - It's an interesting idea, a kind of walk into the woods.

Johan: - There is so much woods, but there is also woods here, not close to here of course.

Ken: - Actually on the north-east there are woods, but I grew up in the Midwest where there is all prairies, so it's big, flat and open.

Johan: - Where?

Ken: - Iowa.

Johan: - Do you think you have found your ideal way to work?

Ken: - I don't know, I just make it up as I go. The office has changed. We used to just build models of everything, big models, and now we're starting to work more with computers, and that is changing things. And the office is growing, I mean it used to be Elisabeth and me, and then it was Elisabeth and June and me. And now it's, you know, five people. And so just the size of the office changes the way it works. When it was smaller, I used to spend much more time drawing or working stuff out. Now it's more of a collaborative effort within the office, different people will take different parts of the project and develop them, and so it's just the level of work and the number of people is changing the way it operates, and we are starting to work with more consultants, and that's changing it's also, so I don't know where it's going to lead.

Elisabeth: - Actually, right now is a big transition.

Ken: - Yeah, big transition going on right now.

Johan: - So you've been here all the time?

Elisabeth: - Only for five years, I guess half the time.

Ken: - But I mean the first couple of years of the office, it was just me and then there was a period where, we kind of had people, a transitional period. But you were really the first employee that was kind of, full time. And really the core office, and then June came and it was basically for several years a

three person office. And now it is just kind of, you know...

Johan: - Poped! (Got to be very much all of a sudden)

Ken: - Yeah, we have so much work that we can't see what we are doing, we are just doing stuff. The economy is not good now, so that worries some.

Elisabeth: - We're actually opposite of the trend.

Ken: - Yeah, well for now, we have lot of work, we are really fortunate.

Johan: - How would you graphically describe your design process.

Ken: - Graphically, graphically.

Johan: - Is it impossible?

Ken: - I don't know, never thought of that, Haa, that's an interesting one. I mean when I did a design studio at the GSD, where at "the Graduate School of Design at Harvard", where I took the studio and I graphed it graphically, "like graphed it graphically" hmm, and it was interesting. It actually ended as a whole series of overlapping strips and things like that and then there was some kind of things that went along with that, but there was a kind of linear thing, with all these overlapping pieces, and I think I was sort of inspired by Steven Reich's music, the kind of overlapping strips and things getting in sync and out of sync and actually the in-sync, out-of-sync is kind of interesting, because life is like that, there are moments when it all seems to work and then it all kind of falls apart. But yeah, I would guess it would be some kind of linear bands that overlap and some unexpected things.

Johan: - A more personal question, do you have a partner, a wife?

Ken: - Yeah, I have a wife, we've been together for, oh, a good long time, I think maybe fifteen years, although we haven't been married that long, we've been married a

much shorter period of time.
We have a loft, it's three
blocks from here that we
live in, and Priscilla likes
to travel, so every year we
travel places. She's in pub-
lishing, she publishes text
books, and no children.

Johan: - That's all, that's
all my questions actually.

Ken: - What's the idea of the
muse right, that here is some
other thing that you kind of
think about at the same time,
that helps inspire you.

Conversation With Simon Kringas, Can- berra, Australia 2001-11-15

The interview

Simon starts showing me his work while we're having coffee.

Christer: - How long have you had this firm?

Simon: - I was practicing here in Canberra about 1995 - 97 and started my own practice in 1997. Then went to New Zealand in 1999 and was teaching over there at the University of Targa. Came back here last February and won a competition so I sat up this practice in one week.

Christer: - All right!

Simon: - But the ideal for me is to continue teaching and practice together if I can, because I find that practice after a while just turns into a bit of technical exercise and teaching sort of reinvigorates that and it also provides for research. Teaching is fun but it entirely to is really frustrating to, not being able to...

Christer: - I guess doing both is the ideal...

Simon: - Yeah, it's the ideal, well, maybe you end up doing just simply two jobs and overworking, but it's the ideal for me, because research and teaching is great but not entirely and practice is great. I'm not really interested in bread and butter building just for the sake of making money, for a business. I'm really more interested in architecture, what I would describe as the top end, a more innovative end. This house is the first project that I did. It's in rural New South Wales down south near Albury, where you might have come through. It's half an hour from Albury, on a cattle farm there. This is a building that employ solar passive principles in turns of having a good northern exposure, and the roof angle is based entirely on solar angles to exclude summer sun, put

shade around the building and invi the building. This spine wall that runs down the back of the house, provides thermal mass and creates a microclimate. The prevailing winds are from the south so it creates a sheltered living platform to the north.

You then get the north light, and the wall is punctuated with slots all way along, and they correspond with ventilation slots in the north wall so you can pull ventilation through the building. That was one of the earlier projects. I also did a big urban design for which we got a price for, but didn't win, which is also in Canberra. An urban design next to the lake down at Kingston; high-density living, people living and working in the same environment, minimizing transport and creating a cosmopolitan precinct that can be self-sustaining and getting away from the idea of zoning. Everyone's moving from their residential suburbs at nine a clock to... moving back at five pm.

Christer: - Is this a big problem here in Australia?

Simon: - Yes, zoning is still entrenched in the mentality of the planner and planning authorities. Still in Canberra, we look through the paper of buildings or land for sale and there are very strict controls of what you can and can't do in those areas. That then creates zones of industrial, residential and commercial zones, and it's only, I mean despite those ideas of hybrid urban systems being around for what, 20 - 25 years, it's still only a scratch on the surface here in Australia. Australia is getting into the planning and getting over the planning rules and regulations.

Christer: - When you teach in the university, is planning what you teach about?

Simon: - I tend to bounce around through a few things, probably from design at the core and just running design studios, and setting up design projects. And I suppose trying to race some critical theory ideas through the projects.

Sustainable design at one end but I'm not a militant environmentalist. In Australia we've got a plethora of buildings, that's just simply long skinny buildings facing north and I think the design is let at rest at that often, and thinking that that is the solution, where as there are many ways to get light and ventilation through a building. I think for me, sustainable design is about creating an experience within a building, and not just trying to satisfy a connotative thermal performance of the building. I've been to conferences for passive energy and architecture conferences and things like that and you sit through lecture after lecture and all you see is graphs of energy performances in a building, and there is no discussion on the actual experience of that building at all. So to me sustainable design is about clever shelter creating, and that should create opportunities to liberate the building. If you provide efficient shelter in a way that will keep the interior warm and things like that, then that should create opportunities for a greater experience in the building. For example, that Jencins farm, it has by putting so much work in to that spine wall and creating the mass there, the ventilation, the large roof and things like that, that is creating protection.

You use a lot of material and you spend money on doing those things but what that then allows, is you to have a lot more glass in the north wall and things like that. It creates opportunities for a better experience and interaction between the building and the outside. Otherwise, to me again, it's more just a technical exercise where objectives create a nice even energy chart and that doesn't speak for what the building really is.

This was reconciliation place, You may have seen some of the images.

Christer: - Yes, I saw it in a magazine.

Simon: - Yeah, the idea was that it is a very broad land-

scape, and Canberra is a planned city. It was design by Walter Burley Griffins back in the early nineteen hundreds. Although they departed from his concept in many ways, and this is within the parliamentary zone, which is the central government precinct. His design was actually quite an urban design. It was buildings three to six stories high, streets separated by greenbelts or parks and native bush. But it wasn't what you see in Canberra now, these securities roads and very organic planning in the roads, which isn't really a part of his design. His was quite strong axial design based on mountains around Canberra creating a triangle. Quite formal.

Christer: - But those are there.

Simon: - Yes that's there, exactly. The broader, the triangles and around the center of the city. From each of those triangles you have a radial point and the streets radiate around that. It's quite geometric. That's pretty consistent with what he had, but then new suburbs, if you just look at the map you'll see streets that snake around and try, I think, from the air to create an organic esthetic, but if you're moving through those places, you're always turning from left to right, you very rarely get vistas or anything like that. This is in the parliamentary zone that is the central part, the parliament house, national institutions, the high court of Australia, the art gallery and the national library. Behind us is the parliament house and in the distance, the war memorial. Very broad landscape and surrounded by buildings that really are monuments and positive forms in the landscape. This project was about the reconciliation of indigenous aboriginal Australians and white colonials, or European. I'm not much into symbolism, to me symbolism is something that flows from experience of a design. I think it's quite artificial to try and resort to preexisting symbols and that just limits the capacity of the design. Foremost

in our minds here, was that the project should be a place where people want to go, and there would be events there and things to do, rather than being a memorial were you go and simply read some text or something like that.

Christer: - Was that also something that they wanted in the competition?

Simon: - If you read the competition brief, it was very much towards symbolic gestures, although you know, briefs are very opened to interpretation. They didn't really say what events would go on, or wouldn't or things like that. But certainly the word symbolism comes up a lot during the brief. Realistically, for reconciliation it's only something that Australia is really just started to enter into. The idea of reconciling with the previous owners of the land, and so, to create a symbol would always be a fairly superficial thing to do, because the process is not complete. This is the beginning of a process, not the end, so if it requires meaning over time, that's great and we'll see what happens. This might go on for decades, for a long time. So what we did is a very broad landscape, and very subtle changes in level, this drawing that is the long section through the design, is probably the most important. At one end we have the national library, which exists and is up on a raised podium, about three or four meters above the natural ground. At the other end, the high court and the art gallery, at a similar level above the natural ground of those points you ramp up to those areas. What we tried to do with the design was to create a first of all a landscape design that wasn't trying to compete with the big buildings around, it was working from the ground and upwards. We created a level datum across the side between those two podium levels, if you like, and the design works, from those elevated positions you don't see anything, all you see is a mosaic difference of shape and form going across the landscape. It's only once

you descend into it and move through the gaps between these objects, that it comes alive. It's really a design that works in elevation and not as much from side to side. It's an experience of descending into spaces, and then at the center of the design, there is a mound, and its principal function is to provide a change in elevation at the center, or a relief.

This is the design in plan and that was in the same orientation as the section, that's the national library in one end and the high court here. So you drop in to the scheme there, and at the center is the mound which is a very subtle, it's a hundred meters diameter, and it rises to about two or three meters at the center. So you gradually then emerge out of this promenade which is strained with these objects which we call slivers, which is basically just irregular three dimensional fragments of objects, which then have artwork or inscriptions, or have audiovisual or sound, or whatever soundscapes coming through them. As you're moving through, you can take any different path through these forms and at the center you continue your rise up above, and you can look back over the top, you can look down to the lake or connect down to this place, which is called Commonwealth Place down on the lake edge, and then continue on. So the idea was that there is a single promenade, but there were multiple journeys within that promenade, and there was a relief point at the center. What they're building at the moment is just stage one, so we're only building five of these slivers. The idea is that those future slivers would happen over time and different groups or communities would get together and say, we want to sponsor one of these, we want to tell this story or present this persons work, or whatever. Our design didn't prescribe what would be told, but that left it open to huge risk, because then the government has really stepped in, and at least for the first objects, taken control of what the subject matter of the first slivers is. It's quite a political issue. I think

that's unfortunate in many ways but then again, we've lost some things and we've gained some things.

Christer: - You'll start other discussions by not having the control of it...

Simon: - Exactly. There is no reason at the moment, and I would hope that it can happen that people can come if they disagree with the work that goes down now, then they could tell the same story, but in their eyes, on an other object within that. See, we haven't done the exhibition design or the graphic design that goes on these objects, we've done the architectural, which is just the construction and that was something that was, again taken control of by the government at the time, and a steering committee as well, which is full of representatives by indigenous people. But probably because of the timetable for the stage one, there hasn't been as much consultation as, I suppose we believed, in the project. But it's a start. What's happening and will be opened in December is a start of Reconciliation Place. What we've achieved at least is the broad framework, and the quality of these objects is good. If you saw some of the earlier proposals from the planning authority, they were talking about very ordinary materials and, we have at least achieved that we have high quality materials. We have stainless steel, optic glass and things like that. Hopefully that sets a standard for the rest of the project whereas, if we'd gone for larger or more objects, then there is a chance they would have been entirely concrete or rendered brickwork or something like that, which would have been quite horrible.

Christer: - How will these objects be put out? Have you already placed them in your drawing?

Simon: - Yes. Well, basically we've worked on this master plan, which I suppose appears random, but these are the objects... and what we are trying to do is to create spaces. So the thing works spatially, the design works

spatially in the gaps between these objects, and the more of these things that get built, the more it starts to work as an environment rather than individual sculptures. The whole idea of this design was that it was fragments of a whole. There were spaces in between, rather than these things being seen as individual sculptures that you walk around. We were more concerned with the space between the objects than the objects being a positive form in between. So, some of the spaces are very tight, 4 meters high and only 2 meters wide. A narrow corridor space, but then, on this open edge, more room and space, and that's perhaps were activities and events can go on. From personal spaces to more open areas. We have a master plan in terms of a form and a layout but we haven't gone so far as to say what goes on which object or in which location. We thought that it would be important to have some sort of a master plan of a curatorial sense, to say, ok, if we are going to group stories, and we identified probably seven different ways that stories could be told within this place, and that included paths through the objects that might link like stories. Let's say one subject was stories of the land, very important to the indigenous people, links with the land and concept of the land. In fact that's probably the biggest issue or principal underlying every other story, but lets say that was just one. That a path goes through the entire place, from the east end to the west end could create a path through the elements. The other way would be to just select regions or zones or patches within that, and you would move into an area, then there would be subjects within that, or related subjects. Of course, individual slivers, themselves can tell different subjects, but that's the most basic levels of the way of handling this, and that's something we've tried to work against, so that instead of being just a group of individual objects, there is some thought given to the whole thing that experiences are being created beyond that individual sculpture idea,

or individual memorial idea, that there is some broader vision. But you got to be careful when you're designing something like this too, because this might go on for decades, and, you know, as a memorial, the brief says it needs to last a hundred or two hundred years, and things get out of date very quickly, and ways of looking at things get out of date. There is a difficult issue there in trying to prescribe something that at least will amplify the experience of it, instead of being just an ad hoc thing; which has no combined effect at all. It's just one object and another, and it would be like going through a used car sales lot, you know, but without saying exactly what's going to happen, and leaving it a bit open. I mean it might be that after we've done this stage one, we have only very little involvement in what goes on after that, and that will depend on, I suppose, how I feel at the time, how much I want to stay involved, how much I want to try and prescribe what goes on. At some point I imagine I'll probably just sit back and let it unfold, but I'm trying to set at least some possibility of interaction between the forms. So, we're saying that the slivers for example, are based on similar geometries. Each time we have an angle that is either vertical or at 60 degrees leaning out, or 60 degrees leaning back. What that then sets up is, when you start to have more of these things you will get alignments in parts, and corridors will line up, so instead of just individual objects they will tend to link, from one to the next and create a larger scale and you get variations in scale. What we've set up also is the three different types in principal, moving from quite a solid stainless steel clad element, to a semi-transparent frosted glass, to clear objects. They move generally, but still there's randomness to it from one edge of the promenade to the other edge, but there will be always inflections or contradictions to that. A clear glass one might appear deep and close to one of the solid ones as well,

so it's not an even gradation of them.

So there are the sorts of things we try to set up. I suppose there is some framework, and that this isn't just one sculpture of something and this is a sculpture of something else, where there is no interaction there between the two, they're being read as completely isolated objects where as here, as the design unfolds, someone may play off or may see what was done on this surface and look at this and say, ok, well I'm going to continue that or reject that, but at least get some combined effect out of it, which surely would be greater than just treating everything in isolation. There's a bit more of a holistic idea.

We've tried to play down all the surfaces and materials into quiet, so that we get a consistency, so that when artwork or inscriptions, or what ever happens on these objects, it comes forward, for example, the concrete is dark. There is not a lot of patterning in the concrete, all we're doing is working with different textures through that. And likewise, the steel and the glass are very neutral in color, so when any color is applied with artwork the idea is that they will have a very good presence and come forward. We're not really trying to compete with that, we're really trying to set up a landscape, that then gets adorned or marked and described, and it might be to, that you make one of these things. Some of these they may stay their life blanc, with nothing on them but being a material that can be engraved, it can be engraved later, someone may do art on this at one point, and then it can be added to later.

Certainly audiovisual where we have audiovisuals, either within these objects or projected from one to another. That allows for a change in aerodynamic quality to it, and that is something that I feel comfortable with because then that can be updated to reflect contemporary views. But it will be quite interesting I think, if you look at the war memorial here, it's incredibly revealing to see the perceptions of war clearly reflected. When people revert

to over-symbolism in their designs, and their morals and their agendas is very clear in that, whether war is a good thing or a bad thing, or whether they tend to handle it more abstractly or however. So it'll be quite interesting if someone inscribes something here, or a quote or an image, or a way of seeing something, and then that, as it provides a counterpoint to a contemporary projection of an image or something. I don't think that's bad, I think it's good to, in some way set those things in stone, because it's like looking at an old newspaper and go, my God, that's the way they thought back then, rather than the hole thing being only a function of the time.

Christer: - I really like the idea when I'm getting in to it.

Simon: - Yeah, well, as I said, working with governments is a very trying experience. The client representative for the government is a planning authority, and they certainly feel that they have the right to get in and make changes to the design if they see fit, and there is not as much respect for the integrity of the design as I think there should be. So it's been a battle to try and keep hold of the elements within this that are important. There have been some compromises, but the way I look at it is, well, we won the competition and within six month we've had stage one built. That's good, because in government projects you could win a competition and nothing may happen for five or ten years after that, and I personally wouldn't want my life dictated by that for the next five or ten years. So at least we have something in train and it's obviously only a partial of work towards it. It would be devastating if this is all it ended up with, what they're building now. There is a potential for that, but there's not much I can do about that.

Christer: - I should have a look at it...

Simon: - Yeah, but you can see it's all earth work at

the moment, but you'll be able to see the central mound which, again, the idea was that it was an elevation, a relief from the rest of the thing. I think when you look, it's quite successful, it's got sort of a magnetic, it's quite an inviting place. It's strange because it's incredibly broad, a hundred meters diameter, and three meters high at the center. So it's got this pronounced camber to it but it's still very subtle. There is this urge to go to the top of it, and from there you can look down to the lake, or look back along the promenade, things like that. I think that has worked quite well.

Christer: - I guess it's been a long way to get to this stage, idea wise. Do you remember really where you and your associates got the inspiration, or the ideas from the beginning?

Simon: - Right at the beginning? I got the sketches there, but first of all; getting an understanding of a site and the scale of the site was very important. I think in terms of attitude, it was always important that the centre be a positive form. There where so many things in the brief saying that this thing should either just be flat or negative, a cut out to not interrupt views and things like that for surrounding spaces. But in my mind there was always this desire that there's a positive form in the centre, or be it very subtle, just a very slight camber, rather than being a dugout which I think would have negative connotations and be a function purely of what they, or views around and links to surrounding spaces and things like that.

I don't know the moment of the idea, of the datum. It was fairly consistent across a lot of scales. This was burly Griffins east-west promenade, so that axis was clear before. There was a subtlety in dealing with, that in fact the way this is being constructed. This building is cantered on the axis but then these buildings are off to the side. The brief suggested that this axis should kink or something, or

shift, or, at the middle, and looking at that, we were never comfortable with that. So the promenade, that east-west axis, was part of Burley Griffin design, so we're trying to be consistent with that, but as far as the level change I think it was just simply through walking through the site and trying to conceptualise these objects, also understanding, that ...trying to stay away from a single monument, or a single object, like for example, if you took this away and you put a single memorial at the middle, then that would never be satisfactory because it was really about an individual process towards this and something. The other real difficulty with this project of course was that, and that's something I've always had trouble explaining to the government or to the client, it was that, ok we've laid out all these object across the place and it is not appropriate for us to divide that up into subjects, like I gave the example of the subject of the land before. But, even our view of that is probably a western view of it, and the minute you divide something literally into a subject, you've put huge values in, just simply into the way that was divided. This project was a collaboration between ourselves and a local indigenous woman, Sharon Pane, and who's not a designer, but I think certainly understood those issues and helped with the critical evaluation of the design and the forms of the land that we were coming down with.

Christer: - Is she some kind of caretaker of the land or..?

Simon: - No, and she's not a local woman too, the local indigenous group is the Nunnawal council, and she's not even a part of those. She's from up in Queens land. Frazer Island is her traditional land. But she's quite positive and was very constructive to work with. I have to try and check my sketches. I had a group, I had some students, a Uni-helpout, and I can remember drawing up this concept. It was very dense at the very beginning; it was a very tight space and effectively cre-

ated a wall across the whole site. This was much less fragmented then it is now, it was quite a dense set of block of forms with paths, I was very much around having a block, if you like, and then cutting paths through it and gradually it fragmented, because what we didn't wanted to do was to create something that was entirely a wall across two parts of the site. And where we have taken that further is, if you see all these lines here, these blocks are trying to anticipate potential future buildings or institutions. Those buildings don't exist now. What we did was, create this network of these fine paths that extend out beyond Reconciliation Place that could link to these future sites. They're only very small tracks and they go through bush, and there'll be trees and individual designs along each of those paths. What they do is that they are used to fracture the Reconciliation Place. So, where ever a path comes through and crosses the promenade the slivers divide and stop there. If you're here and looking through you'll get a narrow visual corridor through that, and likewise when you're moving along the promenade and you cross this path, which is inscribed in the promenade, a pattern. You get a visual relief to the left, and to the right a long vista view to those; even now it's quite narrow. So it does open up all the way through it, with different orientations, the idea is that in experience now it's not entirely claustrophobic or condense space. It provides relief at these points all the time and that then gives you visual clues to move to another space.

I can remember drawing it up on a whiteboard, and the group I was with was sort of fairly sceptical of the idea. They thought it was to big and to bold and things like that, and then it was tuned from there. But in principal that concept was already there and it stayed the same. It's only the spacing and the number of the objects and the exact alignment and things like that, and then the materials only came once we won the competition . We had said that these might

be stone or steel or glass in the competition, but we didn't really say... I mean there was a desire to have consistency in them and that they weren't all just completely different objects, but some variation to. So we came up with that with this more neutral material, moving from whitish stainless steel to a very clear glass. We're using optic glass, which has no colour in it at all. So we hope that there will be a bit of a consistency through that, and the artwork will come forward from that, as oppose to using, lets say, natural stone, which will be red, perhaps, something else might be black. That would then start to compete with the artwork, and it would also break down the potential to create this larger environment, that would tend to create more of these objects, that would be my guess, and the level fragmentation that we've gone to now, with the spaces. These things are probably average about three meters high. They vary, because the ground changes, they all line up at the top. But, it's probably at the minimum there, to be able to create spatial effects within that corridors of spaces, if you have a look, I suppose this right here, something like that, where you start to get tighter spaces but a transect through. You'll be able to see people in the distance moving. And the other development was to get some transparency, or varying levels of transparency so that people will form part of the composition, and you'll be able to see people moving through it, or images, or ghostly images of people behind things, and then they'll emerge and you'll see them solid, and then they'll disappear again. Light, changing light condition coming through the glass or playing on the different sculptural form of the sliver. I have to say, the scheme doesn't start to work until you get a minimum quantity of these things. That may take years.

Christer: - I'll have to come back then.

Simon: - Yeah.

Christer: - You said something before that you started to read design theory when you started working at the university. What kind of theories was that?

Simon: - Well, I mean, just deconstructivism. When I went through university I didn't, that was pretty much, I mean, we all detested it but it was in the hey days of postmodernism and that's why, I suppose, where I got my version to symbolism or linguistic ideas of trying to apply them towards design. You know, my attitude has always been that architecture or design generates experience and then we have put labels on those things that's trying to explain, and that's where symbols come from. Deconstructivism is still linguistically based, so I'm still sceptical to that. The other big influence for me has been environmental design, and sustainable design and there's quite a strong school in Australia of buildings. Glenn Murcutt and Rick La Pastro, if you know their work. Very much about the native Australian landscape, and trying to come up with forms that are symbiotic with that, in terms of light and form and trees and things like that, and they're quite unique, the forms that they come up with, because they are very peculiar to the Australian landscape. The funny thing with deconstructivism, really, its core is challenging preconceptions, which is what design should do anyway. Vittorio Grigotti is another Italian writer whom I admire a lot, and he argues for modernism, the post-modern view was an attack on modernism and dismissed it but he sees it that, the modern project is the way, he calls it, it's not modernism as a style, as an international style. He sees it as an approach to a project and that it's a... for the first time, not for the first time but one of the unique things about modernism was that at it's core was a critical... a questioning of the project where as previously buildings were fairly formulaic, they were designed, churches had this set out, and bow arch and renaissance, and there were formulas that

prescribed buildings. So he argues that the modern project starts with the questioning of the conditions of the time, and what the program is for the project. It's part, I suppose, of the scientific tradition as well. You're trying to come up with an answer and you recognize that that's an answer only at that time and it's frail and will be superseded. He argues that that's still an essential way to go, otherwise, he is very sceptical of linguistic views and things like that, and sees it as relatively aimless, or a lack of consistency in the project. Very wordy stuff when you read what he writes, you take each sentence and it might take you five minutes to trying and even start to understand what he's saying. I don't know if part of that is the translation into English but every word he uses is pregnant with thoughts. He is very good. Tschumi, Bernard Tschumi. I think his early ideas on superimposing, I mean, I'm still, with all of these things, you know, personally, you find weaknesses in those positions but they are still ideas that are good. His ideas are good for challenging preconceptions. Grigotti is likewise. My education in architecture was all about that were all just about challenging preconceptions, and that was like the foundation of architecture. So I'm very much in favour of the idea of architecture, it's vocation or it's duty is to question what we already have and that's its job, and it's not trying to solve problems for every one and the masses. Its job is to be out there, so it's that avant-garde view of architecture. That's what its role in society is, is to do that, because without art or anything doing that, it basically stagnates. The disappointing thing with deconstructivism in practice is that the questioning is quite superficial, instead of looking at form or space and the program that goes in it, trying to create a new relationship between those. One example is this computer architecture where we generate new forms. There's an unpredictability to do that and on this project that was one

of the things we looked at. Random number generation for the layout of these objects, but, it was a curious mix, it was a random number generation, and then applying over it an equation that also graded the patterning of the slivers across the side, we used a random number generator to generate random numbers throughout the site, and also put different sizes on these objects, like we had different types. In the end you always have to create definitions for each of these things, but then laid a second equation over it that spaced them so the spacing increased in this way, and in this way. So it was a function of two; it was a random but we did have our composition, if you like, over the top as well. So... Those things are exploration. I think as far as process, that what I impose on the students is, to be very mindful of the processes that you're using to design, and what limitations they're creating for your design. There has been a lot of understanding of that by designing purely in plan. That we gained up with buildings that are planned based buildings, they were just extruded up. Some people naively will say; a well, and they think, we will design in section, in profile is the better way to go. But that of course that just has the same limitations swell, but it even applies to model making. The model, the material that you use will have an agenda, and will start to create the building, or the form recording to it's limitations, so it's very important to be mindful of that and saying, what if all the time. What if I just grabbed this and twisted it, and snapped it in half. What if! I think one of the strongest parts of the process is to always be challenging, so at least you have an awareness of what the options are. If you ask me thou what the reason is for choosing one over the other, that's when it gets much more difficult to understand. Certainly in teaching students, the biggest failing, I think, is this linear progression of a design, were I start with something and I move from this broad concept

to a detail concept. I don't accept that. I think details occur and are embedded in the early concept whether they are critical resolved to that point it doesn't matter, but I don't accept that the idea that there's a start from this fuzzy thing and work to the precise.

Christer: - That's exactly what I've learned during my studies.

Simon: - Yeah, so you work through a building and you come to the details at the end. I think in times of resolution that may be so, but I think there are details very early on in your concepts that are critical, and just because you don't resolve them at that point it doesn't matter. They are still essential to the idea. That's the thing that I find orthodox, students working, and they pull it up and then, they don't challenge it. A lot of it is that accidental element in it as well. When you grab something and you twist it and challenge it and it's really about that, just saying; what if, what if I did this? Even if though it seems the unconventional thing to do. What if I did do it? What implication does that have? If I took these and lay them down aside, and if I did that and that's the critical part for me. If you come back and say; well now I was on the right track, that's good. You've learned something by knowing what not to do, or it informs you about what's closer to the idea or the quality that your after in the design. In terms of design processes. I'll sit with A3 paper and just sketch after sketch after sketch of very small drawings and little studies. I tend to work mostly in sections in my designs, like this one is about elevation more than plan, I would say. This latest building that we've done is again, all about elevation and section, having spaces lodged at different heights within a large canopy, rather than the plans so much. But I end up just getting A3 papers and sitting first thing in the morning, as soon as I get up, just sketching little... working through. What I'm trying to find is the, trying to

distil down in its simplest way, because the drawings are only this big. You cannot have something that relies on to many circumstantial factors to resolve it. It works in principal at that level and therefore can only be embellished later.

So I do that, you know. There will be 20 pages of A3, of just doodles which look meaningless after a while, but then there will be one or two that just brings an understanding of what a relationship of a part is to another part, or an order or something like that for a way of handling things. And the only other thing that I suppose I believe in is that architecture is about, it goes back to the idea of the avant-garde. Architecture produces diversity in the end, because it produces exceptions to the rules. We have rules, and then architecture looks at breaking those to see if there is better ways of doing it, rather than just accepting those preconceptions. The more precise we can make design, the more diverse city areas, because if I've got something that's vague and imprecise, it's more difficult to distinguish it from something else that's vague and imprecise. The more precise I can make this thing and carry it through to its essential quality, or its distinguishing quality, then it distinguishes itself from this other thing. So in the end, what we have is diversity and more to choose from. I think the idea of precision doesn't necessary mean fine or sharp details. That means understanding the nature of the beast, or the design that your doing, and if there is a quality in that, taking it to its endth degree and carrying it all the way through. I suppose that implies consistency in some ways, but then the concept or the quality of something might be that it's disunity. It doesn't necessary mean that it's a single idea that gets carried forward. But I suppose that's something that I think, and although I would say that I do, I'm a proponent of minimalism in that way, but I'd call it more essentialism, in that it's about finding that unique quality rather than

just stripping away parts for the sake of them.

I see architecture or design very much as a customizing process, and that's what it does best. It deals with specific conditions, on specific sites, for a specific client and that's what it does best. I think there's something anti-architecture about trying to solve all the worlds' problems, or come up with generic designs. I think that's what its forte is, is to take a specific site, specific circumstance and come up with custom solutions for those things. The chairs in your house might have high backs, because that came from a specific circumstance, rather than saying a chair is this high and has this particular conditions because that's the way it was done every were else. The windows in your house might be very tall or they might be exceptionally long and narrow slots, rather then more orthodox, rectangular form at windows. You might cut holes in walls on angles for the specific circumstance on your site. So I think that's what architecture does best, and if you were a client, I would think that that is one of the things you want. If you come and you got a house, or you got a land, or a site, you're a particular person and you're at a particular stage in your life, and things like that, that architecture tries to deal with those things. But I'm sure there are universals as well. I'm not getting into that, that's where I am at the moment, in the design and the housing. What drives the peculiarity of architecture is the trying to find what's unconventional about the circumstances, and that's its role, again getting back to this avant-garde ideas that architecture, especially today, when we're in a society with globalisation and media and information, saying that we think we are more and more diverse, but we're not. We're becoming more and more homogenized in to a single society. So it's very critical now to recognize that art and architecture's role is to provide counter points to that to keep some level of diversity.

Christer: - Did you have the

same thoughts and ideas when you were sketching on the living area?

Simon: - The urban design?

Christer: - The urban design.

Simon: - That was a bit early, it was in 1997 that I did that, and probably less critical. I mean, all I knew really at that stage was sustainable urban design and hybrid living, so I was just trying to create a mix. Those were the primary principals there, and also, a frustration, or a rejection of the zoning ideas that are so strong here. The intent there was to throw down something that questions the idea of having industrial here, commercial there and residential there. What happens if you try and put it all into one? We come from this premises, one of the planning rules in Canberra, and probably in Australia always starts from this idea of consistency. It says that when you do a new development or a new building, it will be consistent with what surrounds it, the scale or the character of the area. If you do a house here, the planning rules will tell you that you need to be consistent with the scale and character of this area, and we take that for granted and go, oh yes, and then the questions are, well, what is consistent, and the people will argue, and they'll say, well my design is consistent, and things like that. Very few people question the value in being consistent in the first place, before they even start with that. I mean, what's to say you can't have a 30-story building next to a two-story church? What actually says you can't do that? I don't know why there are some circumstances where, like, some of the best streets in London are rows of terrace houses that are all the same. Then there are many other examples where it's the variation between the two things that is the stepping out of line. That's where I am very much anti planning rules. There's some fundamental flaw in the idea of planning, because it's all about sameness in the end. It kind of creates a lowest common denominator, and there's very

much anti-architecture in the end. What it allows is buildings, or design that needs... lets say there are five criterion for minimal, that the planning law says you have to have to get over that bar. So I create a design on one level that just gets over that bar, but architecture will often be up here(Simon gesticulates with his hands) on two levels, but down here on one. It won't get over that lower level so it will fail, but at the cost of having something that was quite exceptional in other regards. This is a homogenizing thing. It's saying these things will be their entire minimum on those five equal levels and there is no balancing there, of quality. Trading off! I don't know how you do that, but planning laws in this country are very prohibited. Maybe in every country, I don't know, but we're also at the end of a century, and historically at the end of centuries societies become conservative because they worry about what's going to happen in the next century, but we've past that now (hehehe). I would hope that in a few years there is some more optimism, and some more confidence. I think one of our local architects, who was a modernist, Harry Sidler said; this is the first generation that has actually looked back, to a past generation in terms of design, and the idea here being that people looking back to designs that were in the early nineteen hundreds. Heritage design, heritage style. He said; this is the first time in history that people have looked back to a design from a hundred years before, and thought it was better then what they were capable of doing now. It's selfpepetuating thou that, if we get poor quality modern buildings, then that creates that need to look back, but then you try and replicate something from a hundred years ago. You'll see that just down the corner down here, it's hollow and meaningless. So I hope that in five years, or something like that, people will have more confidence. Certainly in the bigger cities, Melbourne and Sidney, there is that. Canberra is being dominated in

the last decade by this heritage style, and very conservative or superficial design and design levels. But at the same time, I don't expect architecture to be applied everywhere in all circumstances. If every house here was architectural designed I'm not sure if that actually would be a better thing.

Christer: - I think you have covered all my questions.

Simon: - Have I? Good!

Christer: - I think so.

Simon: - But as far as the actual process of design, whether it's a moment of inspiration or hard work, I don't know. I think that the fundamental thing is, not taking things for granted. Preconceptions, and so questioning those, and finding processes that do question it. But then having the discipline to be able to distil those ideas into lucid forms of some clarity and legibility, because in the end that produces diversity. I think there is a difference between saying that, I wanted to design something here, and I wanted to have a bit of that, a bit of that and a bit of everything else in that design. That's trying to make 'you're building the hole world' and have all the diversity of the world, where as, perhaps it's better to make your thing quite clear in a reduced set of qualities. So at least those things can be done well. Let it's neighbour create a counter point to that, and in the total mix there is a diversity to that, rather then saying every building and every door and roof have to be from a different mentality. OK

What it means...

Agenda: a plan of procedure

Resolution: a program
the act or process of reducing something to a simpler form

the act or process of solving or resolving something

Conversation with Sinatra & Murphy 2001-12-05

I CONTACTED THEM THE DAY WE CAME TO MELBOURNE HOPING FOR A MEETING THE DAY AFTER. AS ALWAYS, PEOPLE IN THIS BUSINESS ARE VERY BUSY, BUT FORTUNATELY THEY AGREED ON TALKING WITH ME OVER A LUNCH. ME AND MY GIRLFRIEND FRIDA, WHOM I'VE BEEN TRAVELLING AUSTRALIA WITH, CAME TO THEIR OFFICE TWO DAYS LATER, FINDING JIM IN AN EXCELLENT MOOD AND PHIN BEHIND THE COMPUTER, WORKING ON A PRESENTATION AND AGAINST TIME. SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE I GUESS. WE STARTED OFF WITHOUT PHIN BUT HE JOINED US LATER ON.

Jim: - They asked if it was possible that he (Phin) could do a project in the northwest, so we made a number of telephone calls and over a few months' time, one of the communities called, Beagle Bay. We should give you one of the publications if you're interested. They turned around and said; we would like to have some landscape architects to come in and do a community development plan for us. So that's the way we started working together, and after Phin graduated, we just continued working. We wrote a book along the way and a few other things. That's been the history of how we met. I used to be head, of course, at that time, too.

We worked out in the Gibson Desert with the Pintupi people. On a number of occasions we've been out there and our work, what I'll do is just give you a general background and then Phin will join us, with the Pintupi, and most of our work had to do with shade and shelter, even though they originally called us in to do dust suppression based on windbreak planting. When we saw how harsh the environment was and how hard it is to get trees growing, and how hard the people are acting, the kids especially, on the trees, we decided this would be a better strategy. So we also have a publication about what happened and all the issues involved. We'll give you one of those, too, before you go. We've also worked up in Cape York, which is the top of Queensland. Broome is in the northwest. Way up here in the

northeast is Mapoon, on Cape York. Do you know Cape York?

Christer: - Yeah, way up in north Queensland.

Jim: - The Barrier Reef and all that. We worked at that and we've also done a community plan for that community (Mapoon), based on some of the things we learned elsewhere, which was how much space each family should have around them. Up in that part of the country they grow crops. A whole variety of vegetable crops, whereas, in the desert area, people don't grow crops. We also saw cultural differences in different places, because some Aboriginal people were missioned, or the missionaries tried to, you know, give them a new direction. We've also seen very big dietary differences, because the people up here in northwest, in Broome, have a very much rice diet, because of the Japanese and all the different cultures. Also the Dutch were there very early, because of the Broome pearls and so forth, and also the explorers. We've worked in different parts of the country, understanding some of the indigenous issues. Today, Phin is working on a Reconciliation kit for the city of Darebin, which is trying to show how different cultures can respect one another, and the kids can get together, but they have to understand each other's cultures. That's what Phin is working on today. That's one side of our work, doing community planning, but recently we've done more design work, because governments change and different values come into place, and this government is based on different perceptions then the previous Labour government. A few years ago we did a project called Riawunna Aboriginal Studies Centre, which is in Tasmania. We'll show you some of that material, too. We worked with members of Riawunna to develop a garden for their new centre, and it's quite, well, the building is beautiful, and our landscape has actually won a few awards.

Christer: - Yeah, I've seen a picture of that.

Jim: - Yeah, it's basically a series of monumental stones, but the stones have certain meaning, where they're placed and what they mean, and the same with all the plants that were selected. They have food values and other values from a cultural viewpoint. So we've done that.

Now, in addition to those types of things with indigenous cultures, we have to...I nearly said we have to, I shouldn't say that. We also do mainstream work. We're doing this fountain for a country club based on golf balls--68 golf balls! So, we work, of course, with fountain consultants. We do things like that, but we also do some residential work, just a few each year because they're quite interesting to do, and it keeps us aware of materials. The materials you use is very important. We learn about materials by doing some of our small residential projects.

We're doing an art installation, which is based on series of windsocks. Giant windsocks that are lit at night, that cross the roadways and go up and down the hill on the other side. We're doing two of those.

This is under construction now. We're doing this garden here, which is a small courtyard garden. A lot of our work is based on doing paintings; the landscape, the paving material is what we consider to be a painting. But it also happens to be someone's courtyard. We just won an award for one of our other 'paintings'; which is using grasses in a similar way, but different colours, from indigenous grasses, and also some from New Zealand. They are very beautiful, some of the New Zealand grasses. So, our work has an artistic side, parts of our work have social and cultural sides, and then, some of our work is mainstream oriented, which actually makes the money to drive everything else. Those are the different things that we work on.

We have some projects on the

ocean, by the ocean road, where you might be going, and we have some photographic exhibits as well. Some of them are quite beautiful.

He shows us pictures from their travels in the country.

The thing is we have a very diverse office, so it's very hard when people ask us what we do. You do a little bit and you see all the issues, and basically, whatever project is interesting, that people want us to respond to, we do. We don't worry about if we have experiences or not, we figure we'll pick it up along the way.

Jim shows some projects they've been involved in and he talks about materials. Since they started the office he has been aware of some issues that he used to be very pragmatic about, but had to change his relation to when business is involved. He also talks about another garden they've done.

This is the landscape, and the house fits within the base. It fits within a bigger idea. It looks like the garden was built first and then the house went into the artwork. Now I want you to turn around and look at the Aboriginal painting. Now see, a lot of our work actually comes from our experience with indigenous people and that painting is really about that part of the country, which has lots of lines in it. A lot of our work has the experience that we've had from the interior country, represented in urban scenery. We've been marrying our experiences in Australia with our work in the suburban city.

The painting he points at looks exactly like the garden on the photo.

Christer: - Is that the main inspiration you have for your design, even for mainstream?

Jim: - Part of it, even for mainstream, yeah.

Christer: - So you could say that that is your style, if we talk about styles?

Jim: - Maybe, if you talk about styles. The other thing is, like we're doing this place here. Half the house is a stable and the other half is for living. We're doing the landscape around it, and they did this painting on it. We decided in doing the landscape on it again, and we did a rectangle and how do you set a rectangle in a bigger idea? We have done a series of shapes, maybe that's Roberto Burle Marx here. There is a lot of symbolism in this. This rectangle fits within these other geometries and contrasts strongly with the rest of the rural landscape. We start out with a design like this.

He points at the drawing and talks about characteristics of different features.

We don't do a lot of construction drawings on some of these projects. We actually work with the graders. It costs more to do it this way but we work with the graders, and we work with them until it looks about right. We redid one part of this three times. What it is, the house is set within the artwork. We consider that to be an artwork that the house is intercepting. So I think our work does have some sort of overall feeling of... even this plaza here, the fountain is set within a bigger plinth. You might say that, that paving is an artwork, and within it there's a fountain that takes place. So I don't know if that's a style or not.

Jim tells us about another project, a project in a fast-growing area with lots of youth of different cultures. The area is flat and the wind is the dominating factor, so they work with it and construct giant windsocks that also represent these different nationalities in colours. The windsocks are also used along a highway. He shows the publications he was talking about earlier and we got one copy of each. Jim is curious about what Frida does and asks her about her work and finally Phin joins us.

Christer: - It seems that you are very inspired by the indi-

genous cultures and the rural landscape of interior Australia--the landscape that you have been travelling through. Are there any other inspiration sources that you have?

Phin: - Probably. Primarily, when Jim and I first started working together, I was still at school. We went to Broome and we went to Beagle Bay. At that time there weren't many people from a landscape background that were really getting involved in the planning and development issues in the communities. We decided to basically follow the lead that was given to us. To try and search out what the journey was going to bring us. So really, the first five years of Jim and I working together, we didn't do anything else but trying to learn about what the issues were, and work in some projects around the country. Jim was still teaching at RMIT so we still had a tight affiliation with the course at RMIT. I think that that's the primary one, and also from having the opportunity to sit down with people from a culture that is still very traditional, and still has a living memory from the first time they saw white people. I suppose the spiritual connection to the land and the profoundness of the landscape is still very important in many of the aboriginal cultures around the country, and that's what inspired us. And from having the opportunity to visit some of those places after talking to people like Linda and Paddy Roe and Mrs. Bennett sort of moves you in a way that in your creative projects you want to, not replicate it, but to use that inspiration in how you design. I think it's from both a cultural aspect and from a natural aspect. From going to places that are remote and just being blown away by the landscape. Those are the type of experiences, although it's hard to do it in an urban scene, but that's what we're trying to. When Jim was talking about the landscape plinth for certain projects, it's trying to identify one or two essential qualities what the landscape is about, that is strong enough to carry the whole

project basically. It's almost like poetry.

Christer: - You kind of concentrate the landscape into what you build.

Jim: - And the important thing is that, maybe not in all projects, but we believe that there are stories to be told from our landscapes. In the Riawunna project, it's not just rocks sitting around a building, there are stories to be told. For example, some of these rocks come from one part of Tasmania, and therefore, when people come to visit, they can talk about the different family groups that come from different parts of the country by looking at the rock, because that rock comes from this part of Tasmania and that one from another part. I think that's true with many of our projects, they have an artistic sense but they also have stories that can be told.

Phin: - Yeah, and I think the difficulty is, you're going to have the client that is opened and willing for you to sort of explore, but I think Jim showed the project with the grasses. Well, I was talking to the contractor whom we worked with in installing the landscape. He said that the client likes sitting up inside on these day beds and she loves sitting there and watching the wind blow through the grasses. It's those types of experiences, I mean, they're on a very exposed part of the coastline and it's really windy. To use the wind as a part of the expression in the landscape. That's something that we didn't design, that's something that the client has come up with, that's one of the things that she enjoys about the landscape.

Christer: - Are you given any creative space in your work?

Phin: - We've been lucky enough. It's only in the last 18 months or two years where we've starting doing more domestic work, and we've been lucky enough to have the opportunity to have clients that have allowed us to do that. That's primarily because a lot of our work comes through

word of mouth, through some of the architects who have designed the houses. They are aware of what we are doing and they like to get us involved. Generally the clients have been fairly creative in some way themselves, but also allowing the architects having freedom over the design so allowing us to explore the landscape. I mean, it's not that easy, we've been lucky to a certain degree.

Christer: - When you are doing these designs where the Aboriginal people have inspired you, do you consult them regularly, do have an ongoing contact with them?

Phin: - No. It depends on the project. The Riawunna project was done in consultation with the local group. When it comes to working on non-indigenous projects and design projects, it's us, it's how we've been inspired by working with indigenous groups. But it doesn't make any specific connection, it may on certain projects, but it's more about how we've changed as a result of those experiences. It's not trying to be faithful to any particular view, it's the creative process basically. The creative process, it's us.

Jim: - We were going to this project and they said; this was done by somebody else and we look at it and go; oh, my gosh, it looks so straight. The person who came in she had a flowery outfit and then she is given this controlled landscape, and you could see that there is a mismatch between the two. She knows what she wants, she wants something that's soft and natural and using native plants. This isn't using native plants. She wants something that's soft and fits into nature. This is a very controlled view. Not to say that we wouldn't do something like this, but there is a mismatch with the client and what you see here. So we've been asked to redo this, to give it a soft, generous, interesting, natural scenery, as oppose to something that is a stereotype of what you expect a garden to look like.

Frida: - When you look upon your own backgrounds do you

know why you're interested in the aboriginal culture?

Phin: - Why? Well, it goes back to Broome. When Jim took 18 students to Broome for a design studio. I'm from Melbourne...

Frida: - But you continued this work. Why you and not anyone else?

Phin: - No, a lot of people have. That trip of the 18 students, in some way everybody was affected. One of the students is now working for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), buying land back to communities. Since he has left and during RMIT he has only been interested in working with these groups. In some way, I'm not to say that everyone is doing it now, but in some way.

Jim: - But it influenced a social conscience...

Phin: - We were going through the courses at RMIT and there was no contact with indigenous people at all. I think from the fact that landscape architecture is about the land, there is going to be a connection somewhere along the line. When we did go up to Broome it was the first time the students had contact with Aboriginal people, even though there's indigenous people in Melbourne. The other side of it is that the person that we had contact with, Paddy Roe, was an extremely profound and important, and nationally famous person. He's got an amazing history, and then the landscape of Broome is vivid and amazing. The landscape just blew everyone away, and then having the opportunity to learn about the indigenous perspective of the landscape just totally blew us away. Because of that, even though, it may be argued as having a romantic contact in terms of the stories in the landscape, but that's how we got involved in hard issues, working with housing issues and stuff. From that initial experience we've just been totally moved.

Jim: - And there were a few other things that drove it also. Indigenous people gene-

rally live 17 - 19 years less than non-indigenous people. Life expectancies are quite different. You feel that it's wrong for a culture that's so family oriented. The other one was that the number of housing issues that were associated with non-indigenous people designing housing for indigenous people. From an architectural standpoint, and in a lot of things there was a, and there is still, a mismatch. But the other side is that some of these communities are extremely remote, and there is not that economic activity to allow young people to build up business in some way. I mean, if you are 500 km from the nearest town. You have 500 people here, 500 km from the nearest town. On a day to day basis, what do you do? You do your culture and you do your law and you do those basics, but as far as generating income, that's why the art movement was so important to indigenous people. It helped generate income as well as some tourism.

Phin: - That's what I meant, when we first went to Broome was like the emotion experience of going to Broome to meet Paddy, but as we started working with communities we became aware and learned more about some of the real issues that exist. Like Jim says; in some of these communities boredom kills people. Three year olds sniffing petrol. How do you deal with that? As a planner or someone who's involved in designing communities and houses, how do you deal with that? Is it going to solve the problem? It's all those things that become more and more evident.

Christer: - Have you done this trip with many courses or is it just that course that did the trip to Broome?

Phin: - RMIT is very different now. When I was there, Jim was a head of course, and one of the things that Jim instilled in the program at the time was the opportunity for students to experience rural and remote areas of Australia. Predominantly all the kids were coming from the city, so in an effort to make sure that

the students would get a broad education about the issues of the landscape in Australia, Jim made sure that there were connections made to rural towns in Victoria and up to Broome and to various places around the country. That sort of doesn't exist any more. It's more on the initiative of the student to do it themselves, rather than a course. It's more urban based at the moment.

Jim: - Part of the strategy for that, which I think you would appreciate, is that it was always known that the students would get jobs at local councils and in the city and in the urban design units. That was easy. There were a lot of students that actually didn't come from the city there. They came from rural areas. The idea is that, in the long run they had to be catered for, they had to be able to not have to move to Melbourne to find a job. They should be able to find a job in rural remote sceneries. But in order to do that, they have to educate that part of the landscapes, and what needs there are for landscape architects, and what landscape architects can make in contribution in rural remote sceneries. So it's a chicken and egg thing. I can't go around and just tell people why they need a landscape architect. They actually need to hire one of our students and see what they bring with them before the next person is hired and so forth. That's exactly what is happening with a number of past students and probably some current ones that are working in remote sceneries, because that's an option if they don't want to live in a big city like Melbourne, or Sydney, or Brisbane and so forth, they can live in Ballarat, someplace small, which is very beautiful. It's a different lifestyle. If that's the lifestyle you're interested in. Some they want to make a stake; I'm ready to move to Tasmania and start an apple farm. There is a point where you want alternatives, especially from a job standpoint. That must be true in your country too?

Frida: - There is a mass con-

centration of landscape architects and everything in the bigger cities, doing work for 1000 km away. They stay on a site for one day and then back to the city to work on it and they don't know much about what really is out there.

Phin: - The other thing, like what Jim is trying to tell you. Especially in a country like Australia, where the landmass is pretty big and there are a lot of landscape related issues. As in arid areas, rural areas and agricultural areas. It opens up the doors for students to actually go into other careers, but have a landscape architecture background. A past student of Jim's is now the national coast care manager of the country, which is an environmental avenue rather than designing landscapes. That's probably where that part of the course made its biggest contribution, it's not only working with aboriginal groups it's also on the environmental side and so forth, and really expanded what landscape architecture is in Australia. It's not just about design. It may have nothing to do with it.

Christer: - It sounds as if that is quite common in Australia, that you may take a program or a course but when you finally have your degree you are not an architect, you're into another area.

Jim: - You broaden out...

The minidisk recorder went out of power so there is a gap here

Christer: - The power wasn't on.

Jim: - The power is going through the landscape as oppose to seeing it as a point, here you drive through it. I think that is a part of our work as well. The landscape extends beyond the boundaries of the site. So if you look at the site with those lines. You look upon the same plants as in the natural landscape, it goes beyond, it's not just there but in different ways it crosses.

Christer: - How do you look

upon landscape architecture of today?

Jim: - If you just look at what wins awards in the practice of landscape architecture, which is quite different from teaching, I think the design work generally is quite good.

Jim describes what one award-winning firm has done around the Melbourne area and he seems quite pleased with their design.

If you look at some of the new works that have been done in the US, they're a bit ahead in style, not necessary in theory, but in styles. Just because there are more clients, and there are more wacky clients, that allows you to do things. If Martha Schwartz didn't have wacky clients, she couldn't do wacky things. That's the reality. No matter how good you are at selling things and your ideas, you also need the client base to give you the opportunity for those ideas to become reality. So I think the US has more wackoes that allow you to try yourself out, to do crazy things.

Jim starts talking about the revolutionary "Ginger", the platform that is computer steered and moves by sensing your muscle movements. He continues into another area about scientific news and then he gets into different global movements.

The question is how we become part of these movements, whatever they are. Which I think we all do because we all have such similar information these days and how we extrapolate that into our design work, and what we feel we should be doing in the first place. I'm not sure that I should be spending my time working on someone's barbecue in a garden, except I sort of resolve it in my mind that I learn about materials while I'm doing this. I learn about lightning, I learn about these other things, but there are sometimes when I think that the work that Phin and I are doing initially, working with the indigenous Australia is the most important work

we've done. That we should return to it because it's so important, but the government platform is not as good as in the labour days.

Phin: - It's not so much the government. To do some of the stuff that we were doing we need nothing less than a quarter of a million \$ to set up a program. I don't know if Jim told you about the Wilytja project, but when we were working up in Kintore that project was the ideas coming from a four-year process. Lots of it was learning about the community, there were a lot of issues out there and we were trying to develop some sort of direction from the landscape aspect. It was four years of making it and when it gravitated to the big Wilytja idea, it was two weeks of building and basically four days before it had to come down. The kids went on top of the structure to use it as a trampoline, and to get to the top they cut slits in the side panels to climb. It lost tension and it became dangerous. Now at that point, the project stopped, but what should have happened is that it should have been revisited and prototype number two should have been developed, which it would have if it had lasted much longer. But because the issues are so entrenched out there, it needs a long protected commitment to work, and address issues as they come up, resolve them and then move on to the next stage. To do that you need funding. But because it was categorized in the housing arena, you can't get money for that because no one has ever succeeded in the past and the government has made a lot of mistakes, or they don't want to make mistakes. So you can't get money from them and you can't get money from any other organisations, because it's too risky and they only want to be associated with something that's going to succeed. We were talking directly to the minister at the time and we had a lot of support and letters from the government but nothing really came out of it in terms of funding.

Phin tells us how they developed these humpeys with an

architectural view that looked back on the traditional ways of living and the connection with the landscape. Unfortunately they were destroyed by kids climbing and playing on them.

We were invited out to this community to develop a landscape plan for the community to address dust. Because these people are very traditional and planting trees isn't a part of their culture, and there was someone out there who had been there for seven years, planting trees, but still, when he left the trees died. People wouldn't look after them. Well, we're not going to be there for another seven years so we got to figure out a way of dealing with this. We started looking at the humpeys that people were building themselves. That was their way of dealing with housing that wasn't working. We used architecture as a way of developing these shade-cloth structures that provided basic shelter, but from a cultural aspect there were a lot of things that housing wasn't doing. It wasn't saying that these things were going to replace houses, all we're saying is that something like this should be developed along side every house, because it would help address the environmental issues from the standpoint of the people. We were developing a project that was actually looking at one of those Big Wilytjas being built next to every building in the community, and including the outstations and so forth, but the fact of the matter is, like we were saying before, these people were very traditional and they are living 500 k west of Alice Springs. For the old people there are a lot of meaning and importance to the landscape, they're on their own country. The Law is strong, the dreaming is strong and the language is strong. All that is really strong. What Jim was saying before, the young kids are growing up and are hooked up to the rest of the world by satellites and TV, whatever. They know that there is something else out there, so the sense of profound importance of the landscape is maybe not so real for the young people as it is

for the old people. So that's where boredom, having nothing to do part of football and you know, driving 500 k's to Alice and get drunk, there is not much to do. The young kids end up sniffing petrol and the whole social thing, which is still traditional but not traditional, starts to break down.

We finished building that Wilytja and we're back in Melbourne. On a Monday we had a phone call from Kintore saying that there is forty kids jumping up and down on it as a giant trampoline, and they cut slivers in the side of it to get up, which some people would say is vandalism, but it was only to get on the trampoline, to the top. So it had to come down because the kids were in danger. Even though we were heartbroken at first, the thing that we really came to realize is that in all of these communities, until all of those social issues are sorted out, the projects that are involved in physical things like houses or physical planning are not going to have the success that they deserve, because they are not designed for the social problems, they are designed for something else. That's where it gets really complicated, and that's why you need a really long timeline on projects. There needs to be commitment, there needs to be support from every way possible. The issues are so entrenched that it's going to take a long time.

Christer: - There is a story in your book about a community where a man collected litter and spread it out...

Phin: - Same place. He was the one who was there for seven years planting trees. The reason why he started collecting litter was to try and ensure that those trees had every opportunity of surviving. He needed mulch and he needed to protect them. There is litter everywhere, so he uses what he had in his hand to do it. He found that it was working very well, but when Nigel left, he actually went to Broome. He was a white fella. When he left, because it was a 'white-fella-job', it wasn't seen as a part of a cultural thing to

do. When he left the work in the trees basically stopped. That's why we were looking at that Wilytja, because we knew we could draw as many trees as we wanted in a plan, it may look good, it may read well in books and stuff, but on the ground it wasn't going to work. We believe that the concept of the Big Wilytja still can work, but given the fact that all those social things have to be sorted out. Given the right environment that has a lot to offer. But it won't until all this other stuff is sorted out.

Christer: - Do you think that there will be a time when the traditional ways of living, and western way of living will somehow find a mutual, a meeting point? That you can live in both ways?

Phin: - I think a lot of people do. You know, Yothu Yindi from up in the top of Arnhem Land, not knowing them at all, there is a lot of people to look up to who bridge both... a...

Jim: - And that will continue. When we worked in our project in Tasmania a lady picked us up in a red BMW, and she smiled. I don't know why, we might have expected another car, but anyway. She smiled and then she taught us for two days about her culture, and she was able to retain so many traditional stories, feelings, and be a good teacher to us, she is a part of the land.

Conversation SueAnne Ware, RMIT, Melbourne 20011207

Christer: - It's been a while since we talked. Do you remember what this work is about?

Sueanne: - You might have to brief me. Is it about design?

Christer: - Yes, I work with a classmate and we are interested in the creative process, how we get into it. Where we find our inspiration.

Sueanne: - It's a passion.

Christer: - Yes, to some people it is.

Sueanne: - I believe very much it is about passion.

Christer: - We've been trying to follow the path or if you like, the black box. Inspiration goes in and something else comes out.

Sueanne: - The American way is a very conservative linear way of looking at design; they probably call it conceptional development. On RMIT, we talk about it as your agenda. You're testing your agenda with new ideas. How that occurs or how it inspires is a pretty amazing thing, and it's just as varied as there are designers and projects. Landscape has probably things that are specific to it, different to architecture or other disciplines.

You have to take into consideration the fundamental things of landscape that makes it different. If you read Rosalind Krauss she would describe the difference between the object and the field. Landscape considers the object but it's primarily about the field. That is a very basic and distilled reading of her.

Landscape has this enormity of time associated to it. Corner writes quite well about it, he is not dealing with time and process. If you're thinking about what inspires your ideas, because of those fundamental fluxes, those kind of inspire your passion about landscape as a media, and then taking these things into

that. Time and the fact that landscape is fundamentally a process, the way that one is conceptualising and playing with the big ideas of an agenda, is actually looking and thinking deep fundamental ideas about how landscape works. That is actually what makes it fairly different to architecture. It makes it similar to interior design. One of the bigger things that landscape architects in particular have to deal with is the whole specificity. If you are a modernist, specificity and regional contextualism was one in the modernism but it was very much against international modernism. So how does one look at those ideas deal with landscape, because it's quite specific to where you are in the world? It's climate, it's culture etc. One could argue that architecture doesn't have to be sensitive, whenever landscape doesn't respond to its context, it dies. Or it has to be so artificially maintained that it becomes unsustainable.

When people are conceptualising landscape as a whole, they start thinking about the bigger ideas. Perhaps then they start to think about more specificity into the site. Central questions as, what is unique about this site? What can I draw from? That then leads into, where again when we defer from something of the architectural world and interior world, there is a program, a program is fundamentally a part of what architecture is. Landscape has a program without us assigning one, just by the virtue of being landscape. We don't have to assign landscape a program, it actually has one in itself. Even if you can have an open framework in architecture, landscape has automatically an open framework. We can say that the program of this is a park but we know that the way that people use a park is very open. Everyone uses a park in a different way and one can say that about a building as well but it's a different relationship to program then to say something that is fundamentally defined by program. Architecture is very much divided, it's domestic, it's

commercial and people can kind of say that about landscape. They can say it's a garden or it's a park but that's based on a scale, and the way it's appropriated can be totally diverse to that. Landscape exists without us naming it.

Do I offer a flexible or a very set framework? Fundamentally, that's another way the light bulb goes on. There is this whole idea about a formal language in the landscape. Landscape doesn't have to have a particular form whereas building has to have a structural form. Landscape can be quite diverse in its horizontal format. I suspect that is where the ideas in the head and the ideas that goes out on paper and in the models or into the computer become quite... that's the hard part. The hardest bit is conceptually what I believe and what I'm thinking, then the physical formal response to that. I find that, and you will find that, first year of doing it is incredible rough. What you are talking about and the complexities of your ideas versus what the formal outcome or the thing on the page can be incredibly distinct. Then you get more refined, you get better able either to communicate or you're probably a bit more lateral about how you think. You start to be much more comfortable of taking this to the paper. Things that are fundamental to landscape the other disciplines take for granted. We are questioning the very nature of those things, which in traditional design are basically accepted. Here is a program, here is the site, come up with a formal response that deals with this kind of perimeters. In landscape, you can dictate those perimeters but they are quite loose. That's probably why landscape as a profession doesn't have this nerderiaty or seem as a bit more open disciplinary. It doesn't seem as defined and everyone is going; - Why do you need a landscape architect or what is landscape architecture? That question has been around for 200 years, it's a bit boring and I'm tired of answering it. I suspect because we are so able to deal with that in a number of ways whereas build-

ing is fairly recognisable. Landscape is much more interesting, it's always changing. I find it really fascinating and trying to work out when you're going into the black box, how, but I think that it is fundamentally based on what's different about landscape, what makes landscape interesting to engage with. That's not to say that you can engage with it the same way you do with architecture, I think some people do that incredibly well the same way they do art or the same way they do other things. It is a fundamental question about when you are conceptualising something. I don't know any landscape architects or designers that don't contemplate landscape. Landscape, especially public landscape always has a politic associated with it. It's very different to the other things that are allied in design - What does public mean? What does culture mean? Whereas an architect might struggle with that and say a museum is something of a public symbol of culture. Landscape is always engaging with ideas of our culture. You cannot separate them. It is incredibly complex and that's why it's so hard to define. The whole range of scales that landscape deals with is also to diddle with, to what the way you think. Distilling the facts is probably time, scale, program or not to be program, process. These are all really different energies or synergies of landscape. Even if you just want to deal with composition, those things come into play. There is also a regime of maintenance, which many of us think is generative for the landscape. You still have a very drawing-centred way of design and thinking of space. That is certainly a rigorous way of letting the physical product of ones communication also be generative. Rather than saying; - I have an idea and I'm going to draw it, say; - I'm going to make a collage and whatever kind of spatial roundifications that has, that's the design. For example, let the material dictate the surface, design through making and that can be quite a

formalistic thing. Martha Schwartz is someone who is playing with materiality and engaging in a level of materiality that can be playful, but it's also about the materiality and what materials can do and the compositions of materials, rather than about specificity of place. Certainly, how she would engage in a design is to have a bit of a play, there is a lot of buildings that are of that way too.

I reckon that a pure composition of landscape is truly difficult to do. I have seen some really amazing examples of landscapes that are incredibly compositional; they tend to fail. It's depressing when something looks incredibly compositional but then the regime of care is not taken into account. Landscape isn't instant, a good landscape is fifty years or more, and in a society where virtual is automatic and everybody wants immediate gratification...we are in the wrong profession! But I think that landscape architects are well equipped to play with virtual spaces and consider that, not as an alternative landscape, but another kind of landscape. Think about computer games. The first thing I notice in a game is the spatiality and the graphics. Our knowledge about space and how we represent it is different to someone whose object is a game. Why don't landscape architects design game platforms? A fundamental 3-dimensional spatial discussion has to happen in those games. How many Internet sites do you go to and find them just flat graphics? If they were spatially organised, you might engage in them in a very different way. I think that landscape architecture in particular because it's so spatial, it is so used to rapid change and so used to deal with things that may or may not have a program, is incredibly well equipped.

Crister: - Which games have the best graphics?

Sueanne: - The ones that are very spatial. If you wander off a bit and stay alive you can see these other things the game designers have put in. Tomb Raider is one of

those games that are very detailed. One of the issues that is central to this is, if you take the tools that landscape architects get in terms of digital tools, they are incredible specific. The problem is that slight undulations and perturbations get cleaned out when you represent them. Computer tools are powerful but they still haven't developed a modelling system that has that flexibility.

Christer: - Is this what you are working on now?

Sueanne: - No, I just have an interest through experimentation. I'm doing a PhD on memorials. My work is looking at and redefining memorials. They are very static, they don't change but landscape is always changing so why are we using something in the landscape that doesn't change? We reconceptualize and rethink history but memorials stay the same.

What can you do on a public ground that gets people to challenge their worldview, which I think memorials can do, but also has flexibility and is ephemeral?

Christer: - How do you start your projects? Where do you get your ideas from?

Sueanne: - I tend to do projects that I personally have a state in. I don't do projects I can't be passionate about. I'm an academic and my time is quite limited and I don't have a practise so I don't have to make money so I tend to choose the no-hopers, the project that someone who would want a fee wouldn't choose. That is how it starts. I grew up in the south of L.A. and I have this wealth of experience of drugs, gangs and public housing cultures behind me. If you spend your life doing something you should bloody well care about it. The first thing is to work out what I am passionate about and then to see if the public is interested in that. Then I will see who is crazy enough to let me do it, and then the ideas start flowing. Part of what I do is looking at what is contentious in today's society. That is what landscape architecture can do,

sometimes it gets just aesthetics and sometimes it's ecological obligations, that is just as valuable but it's nothing I would do. That is how it starts. Then the formal language starts with; I'm an everyday person in a public practice, walking down the street, what do you see? How can you engage with the things that you see in your everyday life and twist them ever so slightly that they have a different meaning? You don't have to go over the top to make a point. You can actually use what is at hand and do some pretty amazing things, or you can be incredibly sympathetic to a place and the ways a place operates and add something or insert something ever so slightly different that people start to think about the form.

I also tend to believe that teaching is very much a practice. Teaching is very much about design and you have to design to be engaging in what you are doing.

You reinvent the process and you do a new process every time you design. It's all based on what you are doing and it's totally specific to what you are engaging with.

Christer: - What type of modern landscape architecture inspires you?

Sueanne: - The idea of dealing with things in a more ecologically sound way and dealing with things that are fundamental to landscape is quite interesting but not separating landscape from humans. The traditional thoughts of nature are one thing I think landscape has moved quite a bit since I was educated. The landscape itself is a medium that we have been engaged with in a number of ways now and because of that, people can conceptualise it. Then it was all about compositional things, Hardgreaves, Schwartz and Walker.

Landscape follows fads for about two seconds but it takes to long and people gets tired of it when it doesn't grow fast enough. They move quick away from fads and return back to what landscape really is but you still see gardens that are a bit passé. The best

all time garden though is Dan Kiley and the Miller House. It's modernistic but the way he engages with the landscape and space is amazing for the time. The way the Californian modernists carried ideas about landscape through. They just had a really interesting sensibility, part of it is compositional, but part of it is a real amazing understanding of grading. It's so fundamental. It's Illinois, it's flat, therefore, let's play with the flatness. Expand upon it and exaggerate. That whole idea seems pretty easy, but to do it and to do it well...

Conversation with Mirek Sztuka2002-02-15

Johan: - OK, lets start. Just for the record Mirek, when do you start working in the day and how does your days look?

Mirek: - It varies. Sometimes, when a project is being build and we have to be present on the site then I have to get out of bed at six a.m. to be on the site at seven. If I have a choice I am in the office not before ten sometimes later. It's never a fixed time. I like my mornings to be slow and I don't wake up fully till probably midday. First, I do some paperwork check emails etc. To do conceptual work, like designing, the best time for me is from around three, four in the afternoon, till around six, seven. Than I have a break, and from eight or nine I can go on till three to four in the morning. I'm really an evening person mornings don't inspire me.

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Johan: - How much time of the week do you do design work, like drawing and finding out ideas?

Mirek: - Again it depends. If you are running an office, you work on projects when they come. There are weeks, like just now, when there is design to be done every day. There are weeks when you only administrate contracts and you've got meetings with clients, but saying this, it only looks like designing is not being done. What I found and realized is, that practically even if I don't design in the office, meaning drawing and creating something tangible, I think about design whether sitting at the table or driving a car. If there is a design, which I'm supposed to execute, I design all the time, I eat and I think about it, I walk and I think about it and I often think about it when I go to sleep. Very often the process starts the very moment I see the site. It's like an unstoppable avalanche. It just goes and goes. If the site is easy and inspiring, or if I got a feel for it, within two or three days I know what the project

is going to look like. There is not a single line put on paper, but I know what it will look like. Sometimes, I have slight arguments with Dorota (Mireks associate) about all this designing in my head. It usually goes something like that: she says: we have to do a design for so and so, and I say: well we've got a design; it's in my head. And she says: well that is not good enough, who is going to see it when it is only in your head, and I would like to know what are we going to talk to the client about. At the beginning when I was doing first designs, I used to do two or three versions. Nowadays, it probably comes out of experience; the first (idea) is always the one I keep, because I know that every other will be just a struggle, forcing yourself into doing something that really does not fit. Coming back to the question, designing on paper or computer, drawing and producing a design takes on average about 20% of my time in the office but it varies. However, I would say, to be a designer is not a profession it's a lifestyle. You are a designer non-stop, 24 hours a day.

Christer: - Would you say it's a passion?

Mirek: - Definitely! If you don't have a passion, don't come to the profession. It has to come from within yourself, otherwise you will just be putting on client's ideas or you will be repeating other designer's work.

Christer: - That means that you wouldn't do something that you don't believe in, or would you if you needed the money?

Mirek: - No. I always try to find in client's philosophy and approach, something that would inspire me to do something with what I would be pleased and satisfied as well. If I cannot find within client's approach something that would be interesting, I try to persuade him or her that perhaps we should slightly change the approach. Usually it works, I've never, ever in my life presented to a client a design with which I would not be pleased, and convinced that

it is the one for the site and of course for the particular client, never.

Johan: - * The first input you get from a client, what would that be? Do they show you the site or do they show you intensions?

Mirek: - There are different ways. Sometimes it is a meeting with a client in the office, sometimes it is a site visit. Any contact with a client is an input into a design process, because when you design something for a client you design something for a particular person. The more you know the person the better your design will fulfill their expectations. Every contact with a client brings new things to the project, even if you meet them just for a coffee for five minutes to drop the drawings. It's still an occasion to get some new information about the person you are working for. As I told you yesterday, in my opinion designers, especially the ones that work for private clients should be like a good hairdresser. The client should be able to come and talk to you about their family, their problems, about work problems. He or she should be able to relax and be themselves. Only then you know what their lifestyle is like, what moves them or makes them get up at the morning. A good design is possible only when person for whom you work can relax and stop being only a client, when he comes out of a shell and allows you to see a real person. You know you have done a good job, when they see the executed project, and it moves them. You really have to know what the client is about to make an impact on him with your design.

Johan: - Could you define a typical design for your office?

Mirek: - No. We do all kind of designs. Anything, which pays enough... I suppose. It's not only because of the question of money. We do various works because I think a routine is the worst thing that can happen to a design office. I like projects that have something new in them, something we have not done before.

A challenge that makes me learn more about different things. It pushes my boundaries further. I like feeling stretched to the extreme when I'm working. I don't like this kind of, warmish, easy, repetitive work. If the work is hard and it makes you sweat, it's worth doing.

Johan: - Today, what are the extremes that you have done so far?

Mirek: - If you are asking about the extremes in terms of technical difficulties, there were two projects which stretched me to the extreme, mentally and physically. WARTA (Polish second biggest insurance company) Tower courtyards and AGORA (Polish publishing and media group) headquarter. Both intensive green roof type projects, both involving new technologies, co-operation with many other specialists, in both cases we had to take into consideration hundreds of restrictions influencing our design, and both involving complicated stages of working on the site. We also where in both instances experimenting with planting schemes which where quite new for this country. Bamboos where used there on a quite big scale, both internally and externally. I think we might be responsible for introducing this plant into big scale projects to Poland. But if you are asking for extremes in terms of variety and scale; from a twelve square meter balcony on one site, to this logistic center park we are doing now with huge warehouses on the other end of scale. Each one of them is different. We do things, which are very classical garden designs, and business parks that are very modern, almost of a land art type projects.

Christer: - Would you say that, even if your projects are different, there are certain routines that you use?

Mirek: - No, I've never been able to develop routines in my life. I'm the kind of person who gets very easily bored if something is repetitive. One of the nicest things about this profession is that every project is different. Even if

the site would be the same or similar, the clients are different. Every time it's a new start, from the beginning. And I think one should start like this with every project, to give each project its own personality, because if you go into routine then you will start repeating yourselves. If you repeat the method the effect will be also a repetition of what you have done before. It might be a longer way but I just come into every project with a clear mind and adapt method to the project.

Johan: - If you would say that there is something special about your work. If there were a competition, how would your work be different? Do you have some kind of specialty, in a way?

Mirek: - I think what really brings us out is our graphic presentation, that is one thing which is recognizable, at last in this country. Somebody once criticized us that it's too realistic, and I said that clients wanted to know what they would get, it has to be realistic. Some clients simply do not read plans and cross sections, so presentations have to be as realistic as possible. Perhaps attention to details is our other characteristic. The one thing I find when I'm designing is that when I design a general layout of a garden for example, very often I have to solve, at the same time, the problem with the curb or a little detail in the fountain, in order to be sure that ten meters further it will look OK. So we put a lot of attention to details even in an early stage of design. It is the same with designing which goes in my imagination, I'm very early thinking about species, which will have the right feel for the place and other details. It progresses often in the geometrical order, in my head it grows very fast, and very often I put it on paper, not because I don't see it but because I have to give a definite shape to the thoughts and test them.

Christer: - So in a really early stage, the details are important.

Mirek: - In my opinion, yes. And I got the confirmation from the architect whom we are going to meet later, he does exactly the same thing. We were working once on the Agora project and there was a meeting where we were talking about some pillars. And suddenly he jumped into the air, because there was a little opening two floors up from the element we where discussing, but for him both where connected and he could not make one decision before solving this additional one, otherwise he would not feel that the design is correct. So it's not only me, a lot of people work like this.

Johan: - These details that you come up with, could you say that they are new ideas every time or do you find them somewhere else?

Mirek: - Well, there is nothing totally new, ever. You always base your work on your experiences, visual or other projects or descriptions you read. What can be new is the way you assemble different elements. The elements are always old. Innovative design very often comes from people who can marry two disciplines, which are lying very far away.

Dorota calls for Mirek and leaves us for a few minutes and after his return we try to get back into the interview.

Johan: - Where do they come from or assembling them in different patterns.

Christer: - We were thinking about if the details are new or if you've seen them in a book or somewhere else.

Mirek: - For sure! Many details I've seen, sometimes I know I've seen them somewhere, but I don't know where.

Christer: - And you are aware of it.

Mirek: - Yes, as I said, it's ridiculous to expect that somebody will invent something completely new. It's always patchwork of things somebody has seen earlier. We even use it sometimes as a design method with private clients. We basically take two, three

books and ask them what they like, because otherwise, clients very often are not able to express themselves, what they really like. When they see the pictures they say, oh! I really like this, no, I don't like this, oh! this is excellent. Then one can start building a design portrait of the client.

Johan: - Which books do you use?

Mirek: - One which I find very useful for showing to clients because it includes a wide range of different designs, it's Terrence Conran's "The Essential Garden Book". It has been co-written with Dan Pearson, who is quite a good British garden designer, he is not a landscape architect, and few other people including very good friend of mine Isabelle van Groningen, a wonderful plant woman and a designer. This is a book where there are lots of very good photographs, which have different characters. The book encompasses a wide range of styles. With this one book I can judge what a particular client likes.

Christer: - Do you talk to the client about today's trends, do you use magazines?

Mirek: - I only use magazines if there is something in them I like and I think it will be worth showing to a client. I very often buy magazines and read them because, even if you only look through photographs, you build up a mental library that your sub-consciousness can use. The pictures stay somewhere in your sub-consciousness and sometimes they automatically pop up when you design. Sometimes they mix themselves up and come out as something new, nice and different. Also, one of the most important things for a designer is to know what is going on, what is happening, what others are doing. Even if only to say 'that is terrible!' This is also our inspiration to see what other people are doing. To be a designer in a void, first of all, it's very hard. I find working on my own, physically painful. Secondly, it's pointless. We are flock ani-

mals. We live in groups and we should bounce our ideas against each other. I found that such a dialectic method, forming new ideas from clusters of older ones and this way creating new qualities, is very effective in design. So sometimes we have little design revolutions in our office in form of heated conversations about particular projects.

Johan: - Could you graphically show how your design process works?

Mirek: - No. It works different every time.

Johan: - Do you see different phases in the process? Is it first thinking, then producing?

Mirek: - There is no pattern. Sometimes it's like that: I see the place and I know immediately what it should look like. Sometimes I look at the place ten times, I look at the plan, it just doesn't work. I scribble something on the drawing, nothing, nothing! But accidentally, I see in a book, an element, a detail, and it gives me an idea for the whole thing. Sometimes I sit down and draw different shapes and it works. Every time is different; there is no pattern whatsoever.

Johan: - What if you have a problem and you don't get anywhere?

Mirek: - I leave it. There is a certain point beyond which you should leave it because you are just getting tired and frustrated. If something like that happens I sometimes call people that can give me an idea. Sometimes, if I cannot get anywhere, I try to give a theme to the design. Sometimes it's a word from a client that inspires. Sometimes, in fact very often, it is the function of the place, which leads the design process. I really cannot put one pattern to the way I design.*

Christer: - If we go back to the Insurance Company Warta, what inspired you there?

Mirek: - One thing was what the interior architects said. They wanted something,

which will be in character with these little gardens in Parc Citroën in Paris. That is where the inspiration for the form of bamboo courtyards came from. Also the division of the internal façades. I had to put the tall plants in between the windows. That was the first two. The organic labyrinth? From the moment somebody said labyrinth I knew that one of the gardens would look like this, with floating hedges. I knew that it would be this organic shaped box hedge. I don't know why, I just knew. Probably one of this sub-conscious popping up pictures. The last courtyard? I did not know what to do. We were coming up with the strangest designs, but then I decided that, if we got two bamboo courtyards on one side, we really should have two labyrinths on the other side. Similar but not the same just like the bamboo gardens. In plan it looks a bit like a Chinese puzzle. A simplified, distilled almost, Chinese labyrinth. I came later to a conclusion that they both look like orient influenced because these organic shaped hedges are very much in use in Japanese and Chinese gardens. At the end many people said that all the design is Japanese/Chinese influenced, but the truth is that the bamboo courtyards form was dictated by function, and only by accident, the dominant plants (bamboos) gave it this Asian feel. The bamboos came because I wanted plants, which are not heavy (roof gardens) but evergreen and tall. Bamboos were the only plants that really fitted the bill. So, the final form sometimes suggests something different as its inspiration, then the inspiration really was. With the metal constructions it was the direct demands of the client to put the garden on the height of the first floor, which made us to design them. We designed the construction ourselves; we also put it through our construction office because of the winds on the site. We had to make sure that they would not collapse. Although we have professional indemnity insurance but we would not like to use it ever. The worst thing to happen is to have your design not work-

ing, especially with such an important project.

Christer: - The organic shape in those hedges, how did you come up with that?

Mirek: - The placement of the hedge was dictated by function and an effect I wanted to achieve. First of all, most of the courtyard had to be visible from the main hall, so we had to graduate the height. I also had an idea, which I quite often use in the design, to make the hedges working like a theatre where you've got stage wings encroaching from both sides into the stage. The hedge forms such wings. I also like very much when you can see people moving behind plants, when only upper half of them is visible. That hedge was design to create sort of stage and when people enter it they become almost like puppets used in a spectacle. Once I got the general idea, then it was down to practicalities, final details and touches. Where do you view it from? How do you maintain it? Which views do you want to preserve? The final stages are very often connected with the practicalities of the site.

Christer: - If we talk about this site, it seems that, from the beginning when you had the idea to what is really there, you can clearly see there is no mismatch somewhere in between.

Mirek: - There was one courtyard with which we had four attempts before we solved it. The rest went very quickly. When I came up with the idea of the bamboos I thought, great, it will look like a gothic cathedral because they will arch. From the hall they will reinforce this feeling of entering this monumental building.

Johan: - Do you think that this location of your office somehow affects your work?

Mirek: - Probably not (he says after a long silence). It's nice when you want to have a break to go out in to the garden, but what happens with me when I design, it's almost like I am going into a

space within myself. I close myself and the process happens inside. This is probably the reason why I like working at night, it's quiet, nice music plays and nobody calls. I can switch of everything and just concentrate on design, on pictures coming in to my head.

Johan: - The word inspiration, what does it mean for you?

Mirek: - Probably every time something different. I would say, if your life is not inspiring you couldn't be a good designer. Your whole life should be like this. You cannot switch and become a designer for one hour and then be someone else. It has a lot to do with good imagination and fantasy. You have to live a little bit in the cuckoo-land to have a good inspiration, be not too serious. Otherwise you will just do what people expect you to do and in my opinion what one has to do is something unexpected.

Christer: - Do you find it easy to persuade the client into your ideas of things?

Mirek: - It might sound awful but I find more and more that I have got a talent in persuading people. Some even might say it is manipulation. In all of my life I have been interested in people. Every person in the world is interesting; you just have to find it in them. There is always an interesting story to every person. When you meet the client it's the same, you have to find the interesting story and through this story you can reach him and explain him, you just have to find a method of explaining. Sometimes you go the wrong way but before you hit the wall you realize that is a wrong way. The problem is how to make a complete U-turn without the client realizing that you are changing completely. This is something which one learns. Another problem is when nothing comes out of the client, and that is a tragedy. I only once have had a situation like this; we were supposed to do a work for a big American landscape company. The representative for this company was a Japanese woman. In Far East business culture the

tradition is not to show emotions. I could just not judge whether this woman liked what we were saying or not. It was the most tiring meeting I've ever had. Her face was blank. Absolutely blank! It was horrible, absolutely horrible.

Johan: - Could you say that the unique story about the client takes you through the process somehow?

Mirek: - It might. As I said, if you know what ticks the client, what moves him, what really is the force driving his life, then you've got the philosophy behind design. Sometimes there are clients who want basically that the design will look expensive. They want to show their wealth, but in a very subtle way. There are some designs, which are supposed to have this stink of huge money but at the same time they do not want it to be vulgar, which is not an easy task. Some people just want to have a nice place to be able to live outside in the summer. You have to judge their esthetics, some clients want a masculine design, whatever it means. Some people say, I want to have a modern one. The problem is when the client says, I've got this favorite plant, and it just does not fit in your design. Every story is different. It is what I find fascinating in this profession every time is different. There is no repetition. It's probably what drives me in life.

Christer: - Do you always feel that the projects you do comes through well and you feel good about it?

Mirek: - For me the biggest challenge in the design is at the end to satisfy myself. To satisfy the client is easy. Recently when I talked to a client he asked me if I was happy with the design, and I said, if I wouldn't be happy with the design I would not have shown it to you. So you would design this for yourself? He asked. I said that I didn't know, but for this building most probably yes. At the end the final measurement of a successful design for me is whether I'm happy

with what I'm putting in front of the client. Because if I'm not, I would not be able to persuade him that it is great, that would be false and I believe that clients can sense whether you are 100% behind the design. You have to believe in what you are doing; there we are again, going back to passion. If you are not driven by passion you are just drawing pretty drawings.

Johan: - The source of your passion, where do you think it comes from?

Mirek: - In my opinion life is the source and the object of passion. I think life is one of the greatest things in the world. I think it's tiring and bloody difficult, and I think mine will be awfully long, which is not necessary good. I come from a family where people are long lived. My grand mother is 96. I still think that passionate life is one of the most exiting things, which can happen and it makes every day different. The most exiting thing in life is that you never know what will happen tomorrow. It can be the greatest shit ever that happens to you or it can be something wonderful that shoots you to the sky. It's why life is worth living. And in life the only real things are emotions, all the rest, all the material things, we appreciate because other people appreciate them. What we really feel, what moves us is really the most important things and I never understand people who run away from strong emotions. I feel that I'm alive when life is very hot or very cold; there is no middle way to life. Take it as it comes, all the way, or not at all. If you do something you have to put yourself into it, otherwise, how will you know your limits? I like stretching life to the limit. Life without risks is a safe cage. You will never know what is there if you don't take the risk. The worst thing in life is fear. It's a powerful and destructive force. I agree with what the Buddhists say; in life you got two forces, love and fear. The rest is only a mix of the two. One of them is creative the other is destructive. I

probably also use passion as a creative force in life.

Johan: - *Why did you choose this path? Landscape architecture.

Mirek: - I was thinking about it yesterday and I came to the conclusion that it was there in me from the beginning, I just didn't see it. I always have been interested in plants and liked biology a lot. I was gardening from a very early age in my grand mothers place, in fact, I persuaded the family to start a garden. My first chosen profession was to be a veterinarian but I didn't pass the entry exams. Then I started reading horticulture in Warsaw, but really, between the age of 18 and 28 I didn't have a clue what I wanted to do. I traveled, I studied and I learned languages. I experienced life and I think it was a good path. I've done that. At the age of 28 when I put my papers to four universities in the UK, they all accepted me. Three of them unconditionally but one put the condition that I have to pass language exams. That one was landscape architecture and of course, they made it challenging for me so... I went for that. When I have chosen horticulture in Warsaw I also thought about landscape architecture but there was no market here and I didn't want to be stuck in a local authority office. Once I started studying landscape I never ever had a doubt that this is the thing that I want to do. The complexity of this profession where you deal with people, with plants, with technology, with design and with graphics. It appeals to me. It's almost like encapsulated life, its little essence. Really what you sell to the client is not the design, it's a lifestyle. If I talk to the client about the garden I'm not telling them: there will be roses. I say that, in summer you will be able to put a table there with candles, and I get the client to imagine a nice warm summer evening and their beautifully laid table. I let their imagination to run, to work for me. There are friends in this beautiful garden, with roses that smells lovely and that

is what it's about. It's not about form; it's about how you can use it, and what kind of emotions you can evoke by it.

Johan: - What is the difference between craft and art?

Mirek: - I have two friends who always argue, one says that landscape architecture is an art, another says it's a craft. I don't think of myself as an artist, I think that landscape architecture is a craftsmanship. Art is much more abstract. We are creating utilitarian things. It's like a table, it can be beautiful esthetically, but it's still just a functional thing. We create spaces to be used. Spaces where people are supposed to enter and things are supposed to happen. They rest, they are entertained, they look at it, they are impressed, but there is always a reason to do it. Even in the business parks where they put sculptures, those are big businesses wanting to impress their clients, like Versailles, which was really one of the first corporate landscapes. For me landscape architecture is a craft, very complex but it's still a craft. As in every craft it's extremely important to know your profession, to know the elements, to know the technicalities, to be very precise. I always argue with people who say that it's an art. Artists are free to do what they want. We are not. We suppose to create something that pleases the client. Of course we want to please ourselves as well, that is one of the challenges but we work for the client whom we want to please and we never do it for the sake of doing. In fact, I would find it difficult if somebody would give me a piece of land and say, do something. Where to start?

Johan: - What is the best way to learn the craft?

Mirek: - Practice, like with everything, practice. Then you have to have the need to find new things, if you don't have this approach of searching for things you will not learn. You have to have a need to learn.

Christer: - What kind of books and designers do you favor?

Mirek: - Recently I buy a lot of cookery books. I find cooking very similar to landscape design and to gardening. It's about lifestyle and pleasure. They are luxury things. If you cook for yourself it's because you want pleasure, not because of hunger. If you garden, it's not to grow vegetables but for pleasure. Those two professions are very similar and a well-written cookery book is wonderful and I also like cooking, when I got the time. I also like good criminal stories, what I enjoy in those books are the complicated constructions of stories. With books it is a bit like with cinema in my case. When I go to cinema; I don't go for intellectual, heavy, existential movies. I want an escape from reality. Something light fast, and as unreal as possible. Why? When I was young I loved the intellectual stories with high drama of real life. Whether in books or in cinema, then later life it self becomes heavy with problems and dramas and it's better then any story you have watched or read. Life is always better, much more interesting and much more unexpected. At least mine is. I say that my life would probably be good for few film scripts. So I don't need more of that. When I buy a book or go to cinema I want something that will surprise me.

Christer: - What about computer games?

Mirek: - They are too addictive. I had a period in my life when I was Tomb Riding with Laura Croft, but I stopped. It takes to much time. I'm not an addictive personality because there is always a moment when I say it's enough. So no more computer games I have done it. The pleasures I came to appreciate most in life are a good dinner with a group of friends and a good bottle of wine, when I can sit for five hours ad just talk. I'm lucky enough to have a reasonably big group of very good friends. This is probably what I appreciate more and more. What I call my extended

family, the people you meet in life and they stay with you for ever.*

Johan: - This is what you do when you not at work or on vacation?

Mirek: - Yes, or I sleep. I love sleeping. If I go for holidays I go to a place where I can lie on a beach for two weeks and do nothing or I go for a very active holiday, like skiing, and I ski every day for eight to ten hours. My work is the passion of life and it's a good life, but it's also a curse, you never know when to leave the office. So there is not much spare time left. You have to have a really good alternative that will drive you out of the office.

Christer: - So there is no difference between private life and working life or one life takes over the other?

Mirek: - Oh no! There has to be a difference. There are ways of balancing them but only if both of them appeal to you in the same way, they have to be equal. If one of them does not offer you as much as the other, the first will suffer. There are ways of having both ways, the problem with private life is that people are often jealous of your work if you give it to much passion, so to find someone who is balanced enough to not be jealous about your work is not easy.

Johan: - If you would say that there are any trends today, what would they be?

Mirek: - In general there is this modern design current that is riding high. It will never be as modern as it was in the sixties. It will forever have this touch of post-modernism. Never pure function, there are always stories added to it. There is this big trend with a mix of prairie style with Piet Oudolf, this huge sway of perennials. It's a style that evolved in an interesting way, it came from Scandinavia and Holland and then it went to the States, mixed with the prairie style and then it came back. I like it very much.

It has nice and very natural look, it's almost ecological. It never was ecological thou. Now there is this very strong trend, and one of the big propagators of it was Martha Schwartz putting out gold bagels and the frogs in geometric patterns in her schemes. In my opinion it descends in direct line from French and Italian formal gardens. There is no one pervading trend, and it's probably good. There are plenty of people who do things, which are not in any particular style, and they are still very good doing they own unique designs. There are traditional things that are excellent. We live in this multicultural era where everything is mixing. Probably in fifty years someone will say, this was the time of this and that, but now we are in the middle of it and for us it is not easy to judge, we lack the distance.

Johan: - Do you think it's possible to say that we are now taking so much input from different countries and cultures that we are getting more and more unified?

Mirek: - Would you?

Johan: - It's a thought.

Mirek: - Look at all those pictures in the book. They are all different.

Johan: - But they are covering the whole word.

Mirek: - Yes, but they are different. I think it's good that influences are mixing. It's like New York or London, many influences are being mixed there and what comes out are really vibrant and new things. Designers come popping from left and right like fireworks, and suddenly something completely new is happening. The danger I can see in landscape profession is the profession enclosing in its own circle and becoming dead. We should take much more lead from fashion design. When they design something they get inspiration from fields far away, they go to industrial sites, they go to different cultures. In landscape there is a tendency of being a landscape designer

looking only between landscape designers, not taking inspiration from what's happening in technology, in science or in literature. I think those crosses are always very fertile. What is a modern design? It's a design, which takes the latest lifestyle trends and the latest technologies and uses it in the design. Capability Brown was probably the first modern landscape architect. He didn't do it for esthetic pleasure, he did it to simplify the maintenance. He used the newest philosophy, which was there at that time and he used agricultural technology to create a landscape. He was very modernistic, the form was directly driven by the function. If anything, we are recently too much preoccupied by form, not why it's supposed to be like this but how should it look. We want it to look like something. I think this global influence is very good.

Johan: - * Norwegian music artists have a simple theory, dig where you stand. Could this be applied to landscape design?

Mirek: - You can do it but at the end you never will manage not to be influenced. There is no way. It has always what driven the human kind, the discoveries. I got the impression that in design, the same idea pops up at the same moment in different places, independently. The development reaches certain level in a few places at the same time and there is no way that this idea wouldn't pop up, it's supposed to. It's like with these organic shaped hedges. I did it and the same year I discovered it was done in Chelsea flower show and in some other designs. It's like it was the time for it to happen.

Johan: - Maybe there are sublime emotions that affects you due to global influences and therefore it happens in different places at the same time.

Mirek: - Yes, we work with the same patterns, we have similar inputs and get the same outputs, like in a computer, but we are not computers, and that is exiting in life.

That's a rap!

Mail from Mirek 2002-08-23
Hil managed so far go through the main text of the interview. I made it slightly more clear. I did not know that my spoken English can be such a mess. The name of the Architect is Jerzy Szczepanik-Dzikowski and he is a co-owner of architectural office called JEMS Architekci. One of two best offices in Poland (in my opinion). I am attaching the corrected interview. I was also thinking about visiting your school. Maybe in spring. I hope it would be possible. All the best Mirek

Jerzy Szczepanik-Dzikowski
Title: Architect
City: Warszawa
Country: Poland

Mirek S arranged a meeting. We meet in one of Mr Szczepanik-Dzikowski and Mireks most recent buildings, Mr Szczepanik-Dzikowski draw the house, one of the corner stones in the building were the green repetitions, this is where Mirek made his work he designed four interior light shafts and a couple of atrium yards and also surrounding climbers and trees, a very interesting project. The architect a fifty year old architect schooled on Poland in the modernistic school, unfortunately he was very tired and also very stressed he was going to have a meeting with one of the owners of the house and also have a guided tour but we got sixteen minutes with him.

The conversation
20020216

Jerzy: - Probably I am a very difficult partner to talk about those matters, because generally, I'm this kind of person who is not oriented to see to much or to find, a pattern for my creative work so generally I prefer to use the brain and to see the bar and to think I don't know generally some rules who is important for the work generally whatever it is. But I'm not oriented to see what how works Johnsson or any very known architect so if you have hundreds books, doesn't matter what type of books, and you read those hundred books, then practically, probably you have enough information to find any solutions, if you have the brain if you have not, of course you have to read the proper book. I don't know if it's clear, I would like to say that first of all, everyone who wants to create something should ask himself what is interesting for him, shouldn't ask other person. What is important, nothing comes from nothing, then of course we have to observe the world around us, and we have

to interpretate, and we have to feel of course building in each city, we have to understand this city and we have to understand people living there, and we have to try, I don't know, atmosphere, and for these reasons I liked those bars, cause hmmm, looking through the window through these I can observe allot, ok, maybe it's a joke

Christer: - Or maybe it's not.

Jerzy: - I don't know how to because if you ask me about the source of inspiration. I would say only, in my understanding the source of inspiration is the world which is around us in generally. And each of us should find his one way of interpretations, each of us should try to answer the question, what is important, what is not important. Such answer means nothing....

Johan: - For another people

Jerzy: - Because, anyway I wouldn't say I know any architect who is most creative and I would try to do something like he is doing. I don't know such person, of course there is allot of buildings, that are beautiful and very interesting and I want to learn them, not to find the source of inspiration but to learn them and to understand how the outer of those buildings solved simply the problems, sorry I'm tired.

Christer: - That's ok

Johan: - But for example if you have a problem with a design, that are hard to solve, how do you get around problems?

Jerzy: - Depends to the type of problem.

Johan: - For example how to put the wooden drapes,

Jerzy: - You mean technical problems, or more intellectual problems.

Johan: - More design problems.

Jerzy: - Ok so we have to think about the philosophy

of design, Ok. If you ask me how to use for example those timbers, it comes I think in case of this building, comes from the philosophy of the building. So what I think is important is that each detail says the same what says the whole, or should try to say the same. And probably it's hard to clarify the process, my understanding is that, detail is type of language, to say what you think about whole building. So detail and whole building should be compatible, and should represent the same way of thinking. I don't like details that are, that you can very often observe in Warszawa. That the detail is created for it self, it's something that can be separated, I have to solve the problem the shape of this screw and it is very sophisticated shape, it could be very sophisticated if it comes from the idea of the building. If I have like say the building in which so many screws or screws generally are important, and I'm using to I don't know, to show the structure or a rhythm. So in this case it might be such a big screw, the head of the screw. But it should come from the general idea.

Johan: - How do you produce this general or main idea for this idea for example for this house?

Jerzy: - Ok, this house, I think that's very easy to say, because this building was very clearly defined by the client. We knew that, yes, what they wanted, a very flexible, they wanted to have a building which creates special environment for the office space. Then we have studying for very long the environment around each work station, not each but generally around the workstation, and how to met some problems like flexibility, like acoustic problems and allot of light and to solve the problem that this light shouldn't disturb the computer screens and so on and so on.

Christer: - So it kind of started from the inside and worked its way out.

Jerzy: - Yes, yes generally yes. I'm sorry I have to go

The interview stops he gets torn away from us, for another meeting. It was short but intensive I think it gave a quit clear picture of his work.

West 8 landscape architects & urban planners b.v.

Marc Lampe

Title: Architect

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West 8 is a big office with roughly 50 employees. They do projects in all scales and often they are provoking in some way!

After a quick mail we got an interview with people at west 8. Marc is one of Adriaan G closest working companions. After two days in Amsterdam, we walked out to Hotel New York on Wilhelminakade. In the harbour were the office is situated. The office occupies the third floor, of a old warehouse, were they have plenty of space, which is good when you work a lot with big scale projects Marc says, "so making models is no "spatial" problem".

A quick walk around the office looking at models being built and models of ongoing projects. After 20 minutes we start the interview at one of the lunch tables.

The conversation
20020218

Christer: - We should just start with the word inspiration, we were thinking about one thing, like are you very free in the way you work here in your office, do you have to search your inspiration, do you have a special method when you search for inspiration or can you be very free and creative and personal in your expression?

Marc: - There is no method, I guess there is 45 people coming from different places, who are having different backgrounds, we have landscape architects, architects, industrial designers, artists. It's

more images in people's minds and the way they come together, because every project that leaves this office is not a product of the genius of the boss. But it's something were everybody puts something of them selves in it. And in terms of were does inspiration come from, it has a lot to do with the Dutch landscape, with vast horizons and the clouds, ya it's the whole tradition you also find in landscape painting from the more classical period. And has a lot to do with the transformations in landscape and mobility and asfold and big boats.

Johan: - Big cranes!

Marc: -Ya ya ya, you can see it from this whole area, where this whole city you just stare out of the window and there, your inspiration is. I also guess this office has not a very specific way of writing, like a writer have, we don't have a style, we have more a way of how we compose space and we have a style in detailing.

Johan: - If you would see a West 8 work somewhere how would you recognise it if you compare it to other solutions in a competition.

Marc: -Ya ya, you would recognise the sense of skill, there is pretty much always some sort of reference to infinity, sometimes very literal in the sense that you can see a horizon and sometimes by emphasizing the contrast between small intimate spaces and bigger endless spaces, this is something that you pretty much always find, further more there is a strong sense of making a texture in spaces, giving it a sense of smaller scale, the texture is always, like you put a carpet in your house or you put wallpaper its giving a sort of a smell or a sense to a space.

Johan: - Like the wooden floor on the Schourbourglein, for example!

Marc: -Ya, for example.

Johan: - When you first started to become a architect what

made you go to school?

Marc: -Ahh this is a personal question, my personal background comes from a fascination with building from actually felling my heart beat when ever I pass a construction site, I want to do this, and when I started, even before I started to study architecture, I asked somebody who was in the architectural school, if it would be possible that I would be trained as an architect and then build my own designs, it was something that really fascinated me at the time, I still like my favourite part of work actually visiting building sites and see projects grow, actually I'm a lot more fascinated during the process when you can actually see things grow, then afterwards, when something is there I usually loose interest.

Johan: - How would you compare yourself towards the landscape architects here in this firm is there a difference or could you see a difference, when you work together?

Marc: -Yes of course there is a difference!

Johan: - Are they as good?

Marc: -It's nothing about who is good or not. Actually the difference stands out much more clear when you are in the process were creativity is not so important anymore, when you actually preparing a construction and you need all this information to go into one project like how do I put this tree and can I put this here and how big can I plant on this. The stage of a project where it is clearer that we are very different and we have different sorts of knowledge. Personally when I work with Adrian Geuze, he has a very efficient way of designing, he really, he is very aware of as a landscape architect how little is necessary to make a plan work, when were as a I'm trained as an architect, I usually start to imagine a project by putting something up. On the other hand when you work with the urban planners here, you see that they have a very general knowledge about buildings, and they for that

reason a very clear typology; "OK we can do it like this, or like this, or like this, or like this!" and if you'd asked me to come up with such a distinction, I would have, kind of come up with this but in this you'd have to really! Hmmmh there is lots of, so for me it works, because most of the time the people I work with make things easier for me to understand. And then when you really actually are talking with the contractors or the civil engineers, then I'm the one "Why don't we just do like this, why should we make a difficult"

Christer: - Just twist it totally!

Marc: -Ya Ya, so that's a very nice way of working, you can really see that the result is not coming from somebody's mind or somebody's knowledge, but it's really.

Christer: - You are working in different countries, you said, and does your projects look similar in other countries or do you take a lot of inspiration from the culture were you are working for the moment, for example Korea, are you staying on site?

Marc: -There is always, specially in the bigger landscape scale projects, there is always an inspiration from the site. I don't know that much about Korea, it's not really my project. But for instance I'm working on a project in Switzerland, in which we, which is at the south tip of the Lake of Neuchâtel, which is a very horizontal space, water forever. But there are two ranges of mountains on either side of the lake, and we sort of recreated this landscape of flatness and mountains in an artificial, very very artificial landscape, very horizontal with artificial hills that we plant with flowers. So there is a sort of twist of, ok what do I see in the surroundings and how can I use these surroundings to create something come up with a design proposal. But it's never trying to give a scientifically sound interpretation of the landscape there is always a lot of analyse, analyse but then always some

weird twist were something artificial or something exaggerated or something weird comes in which makes people go hmmmmmm. You will never be able to say oh ya they thought it A and B and then C and then they come up with D and then they had their design.

Johan: - But what if there is a problem in the design you can't do it the way you want to, or if the design process doesn't start up, it doesn't happen anything.

Marc: -Within the office.

Johan: - No for yourself if you have a problem, like I have this site and I'm going to do this for a client and then you can't make up a idea at all nothing happens what do you do then, or does it ever happen.

Marc: - No it never happens, of course we are stuck, ah, the best solution is to stop do what you are doing and go to have a beer. When you are stuck in a project is never because we fail to come up with the right ideas, I would say we have enough designing skills to solve whatever, the problems are always when you are in a process which is very complicated and were you can't refer to the logic of the design to get things solved you have to really find a strategy in which you make Mr. A agree with Mr. B that C is the best solution and D has to pay it. A really different sort of creativity comes in like that you try to understand how the process is constructed who is having what agenda, and who are you going to address to in order to solve a problem. That's a kind of creativity that had absolutely nothing to do with sort of design inspiration, that's just what am I going to do to bloody hell make it work. If I do it like this, I do it like this but if this is the solution I'll do it like that.

Christer: - Do you sometimes find that there are three or four or several solutions and you just have to pick one they are all equal and you have to pick one of them, does it happen?

Marc: -Its one of the things I actually learned while working here, when I came here, I wouldn't have a problem at all to go to a client and say; ok we have worked on several proposals which I want to present to you now, not in order so that they could choose but just to take them by the hand in the process in which we'll say ok we are not going decide straight away were we are heading, but we are going to study these options and see where we end up. And sometimes this is a very good way of working but when a project is, yes this a strategy that works in sort of complex urban situations but when we are asked to do a landscape or garden we don't come up with, of course we work on, quite often, several ideas. But usually Adrian or someone say; lets do that! Its also you should imagine my boss he's a bit of a gambler he says it's all or nothing, he's not like the carefully, studying, considering, he says lets do that. And sometimes you really break your back on that, and you end up with nothing.

Johan: - But how far goes the design process, first you come up with a overall plan or overall concept and then you go on and do the screws, how far do you design, can you say so?

Marc: - Ya you should imagine that its very much depending on the project and it's also very much depending on how much you are able to stay onboard during this whole process, like any designer we very much appreciate to be involved from the first sketch to the last screw being put in. Not that we want to make a Swiss like precision and draw every screw but its usually very good for the design quality if you can keep putting input into it, how far do you go. There are two answers to the question, one is that we are the kind of landscape architect that, first of all, we're not just landscape architects we also do urban planning. So quite often we enter a process at the very beginning, and quite often we enter a process at the very end, because the building is there and somebody has to do

the garden. We are not too happy to be put in, in the end, we really like being in the beginning, we find it's very fruitful for every body mostly for us, basically for everybody, if we can get to put the buildings were we want them, if we can make a design which covers all these areas and not just fill in residual spaces, so I think the question is more how we manage and if we manage to get in at the beginning and if we manage to continue our involvement to the end, that's usually not the hardest part. But ya it's very different for a landscape architect or for urban design, I mean urban design you are the middle man you are making something in which you hope the architects will find the right concept or the right inspiration and make what you had in mind and because we know they never do because they are architects, we also in principal we, if we do an urban project we insist on doing supervision of the architecture. A lot of the work is actually doing supervision its lots of comment on plans and making proposals. So in that sense we try to keep control during the whole process, but its not so much a control which makes us, puts us in a position were we can decide about every screw, but it's more that we can actually comment or do proposals on what other designer or other peoples are doing within the project.

Christer: - Would you say that in general in your projects you can really see, you can follow the idea clearly from the first beginning to the end?

Marc: - No, maybe I can, because I know how the office works.

Christer: - So an outsider wouldn't see that ehheh?

Marc: - That it's our project.

Johan: - No but if you see the first sketch and then you see the final drawing, ohh its the same!

Marc: - Hmm again it makes a difference if you are talking about a garden or if you are talking about an urban plan.

Johan: - Or a house.

Marc: - We don't do houses, ehheheee, hee

Christer: - But you said that you had some you supervised the architects, so in some way you try, you influence them in their design.

Marc: - It's not so much influencing them as giving them directions we try to give them these directions not in the sense you should do that you must use that, we try to also give them design kind of in which they can put there own interpretation or creativity. But quite often we say we don't accept this, I mean you don't fight one and another, you simply say we don't accept this if you are in the position.

Johan: - But how do you, if you propose them to do something how do you make them feel happy about what they are doing, encourage them to do something good, how would you give them cocaine if you could say so?

Marc: - During you mean, when you are actually face-to-face

Johan: - Ya working, showing pictures or?

Marc: - No but by stabbing them a bit, but also you should compliment them, it's also what does somebody need, you can't avoid sometimes you end up just fighting. Its also why we also try to influence the pick of architects, we try to put in ideas, why don't we do this, *showing with the pen in the air*, its not like we ahh ya *leaning back just looking* at us. We actually take a pen and a piece of paper and work together.

Johan: - I find that the hardest part to find the first sketches to make the first, cause when you have nothing it's very hard, when you have just some ideas it's much easier to start working, when you have some keywords or?

Marc: - Ya but you should imagine, when an architect comes in he works within an urban plan, and in an urban

plan we don't define a house, saying like this is the house. We really give lots of specifications for what this house should be and we describe these specifications in sort of open characters so that they can still put their piece of creativity in it. Like for example Borneo, Do you know Borneo Sporensburg, there is two sketches which explains it all. One is the typical raw house in Holland there is a garden house, garden, the garden has a problem of when you are in the garden you are always out in the open. So way don't we make a house with gardens in it? And then architects started making thousands of proposals for where these wholes are drilled, what these wholes are, if there are two wholes, three wholes, are they like this are they like this, there are tons of proposals. But in terms of the facades they had to met very precisely formulated materials in order to make streets have, they are all the same bricks, all the same height, it's a very controlled street. So we try to address the architects creativity, ok if this is the principal what solution can you come up with and I can really literally show you two hundred different proposals, and the architects went crazy over it. So it's not like ok we have an urban plan there's a house and there's a house come up with something. You really ask them to react on something that we have, for instance we've worked on a villa park in the south of the country, and we said this is your lot, you have to proof that the garden is around the house, cause if you ask any architect to, if you give him this much information like the house is here they will put a door here and the owner will put a fence here, and a fence here. And this is his private garden and this is his front garden, if you are lucky he takes care of his front garden well enough to make the street nice. But his life is here in terms of his life in the garden, so we said ok we are going to put, whatever you do the door is here, the entrance to the garage is there and the first floor is lifted one meter, so that privacy is not coming from fences but you

are already lifted, so we give them a set of....

Johan: - rules!

Marc: - You could call them rules, but I would say they are not very rully, they don't rule things out, they much rather rule things in, and with this they start working, hopefully they surprise you and they give you some sort of twist, usually it's hard, there's always a few who give it a twist in which you really, I never thought it would work out that way. It's always the best way to work together.

Johan: - Now when you already are holding the pen, could you graphically draw your creative process, like explain it in a graph?

Marc: - Oh that is a hard one, cause if you are just sitting alone in your office, it's something like there is options and generally there is less options and you arrive somewhere. In here it would be much more fuzzy, because it's not like even if I do my own project, and I'm here and everybody's happy my boss comes says ya but let's do that. So I think it would be a process with a lots of, in levels of how we put attention, that's maybe a nice way to draw it there's a sort general amount of attention and then poughh it's only let's discuss this and then everybody's grabbed, I'm not happy with the result on this project, can we give it an impulse. So it's not like what you would imagine in an architects office were you are working very steadily and running a marathon, here its more like sprints, sprints, sprints of and also these sprints lots of ideas come up, but also people get really, gets some pepper up there (in the arse). Ya and in terms of how options are, I think there is allot of not exactly dead ends, but radical brakes it's not like Adriann spends his weekend to make a sketch and then drops this sketch on my table and is absolutely convinced that I will do what he had in mind, because I have worked here six years and I know him so well. Usually if we don't start he doesn't

come, so we make a proposal and show it to him and then he, first time he pretty much always sweeps it of the table and comes up with another idea, but this idea never comes if we don't feed him.

Christer: - It's hard to get ideas when the page is blank, I mean if you don't have anything to grab.

Marc: - Ya ya ya ya, I'm not sure, I can see my self as a student being absolutely stuck, but here you are in an office, if you work for half an hour and nothing comes up, I get frustrated with this, what do you think, so I don't, it really doesn't work that way, there's always things popping up.

Johan: - What makes those peaks, what makes it go up just?

Marc: - Usually Adrian interfering

Christer: - Would that, even if somebody else interfered it would go up, like someone from an other project comes in and say well why don't you do like that.

Marc: - Ya ya, but if you should know Adriann you would understand why these peaks are so high, because he is this incredibly fast thinking, incredibly aggressive character who can't focus on one and the same thing for more then ten seconds. He needs to have lots of impulses and information and then he reacts and heats up, so it's not like ok let's discuss this for an hour, he is on your back and knocking on you and two minutes later he is gone. But he can leave a lot of impulse behind.

Johan: - What makes you go to work everyday, what is it that makes you want to be a architect?

Marc: - Instead of in my bed, I'm not so sure about that, ya its like a faith more than a choice.

Christer: - Would you say it's a passion

Marc: - Ya and it's a passion that's very much related to creating, I mean you are creative or you are not, if you are creative you have to live with depressions you have to live with frustrations. This is also the graph, if this is the general I feel ok feeling then my mother would generally stay around this line, And again you would see this extremely in Adrian he really knows with this all or nothing approach how to push them up high and make them go deeper.

Johan: - But how do you do if you like go very deep and need a vacation, what do you do then?

Marc: - Do you mean, like do I go to Paris and see all the -----, I used to, but the fun thing for working for this office, is that when I was an architect, I had a ABC of good buildings, le Courbosiér, Frank Lloyd Wright so I spent a lot of my holidays going to this and this city to see this and this building of this and this architect but now sometimes I find I m in Rio de Janeiro and I didn't even go see the very famous museum by, what's his name, because I m much more interested in getting the sense of the city, I mean having a beer and dancing all night Is as important as seeing this and this building by this and this architect. I find that I'm more and more interested in an atmosphere in an urban place.

Johan: - It's very important the atmosphere, if you can solve that you can solve everything, probably.

Christer: - Would you say that you have a certain philosophy here at the office?

Marc: - Ya ya, And it's about, we are design for, to creating a certain authentic experience in people, it's not like this is neatly done oh this is cute, no it should be we really try to make them fall of their chairs, its about reaching, addressing directly to the heart or to the mind. Adriaan is always telling me you are from this Delpt school of architecture, (with a very incompetent voice, irritating). He describes

it as inflicting or organising authentic experiences and authentic means without the mind being in between. Ahh I see he thought A B and then C, no it should be. These experiences have a lot to do with what I explained earlier, sense of infinite, or sense of intimate,

Johan: - But how do you get people working here to create these kind of experiences, to make so that you feel it with your heart and not seeing it with your eyes. How do you make people doing that? By throwing away the bad ones and just waiting for the good ones.

Marc: - Ya, just push people just long enough till they either leave your office which doesn't happen very often I must say, or they come up with great ideas. There are lots of ideas, they come from Adriaan or from other, and people work on these ideas, and come up with their own interpretation, or explanation so it has a lot to do with what they put in the computer of other ones. It's a criteria if I don't fall of my chair then why bother, if you don't make me fall of my chair then it's probably not good. And eventually you will find that there are projects that never ever will make somebody fall of their chair because you didn't manage to get the client to accept or whatever, and you still have to finish and this is not so funny because you are in this quiet corner of the office trying to finish this project and still do the best you can, even though you are not as happy as you imagined you be. This is also a day-to-day practice.

Johan: - How important are the clients do you think, are they sometimes inspiring?

Marc: - Ya, although you must, you have to realize, that, there is this saying; you will never make a brilliant project without a brilliant client. There is not many clients that have clear idea or extremely ambitious in what they want they are really a minority, we work a lot for Dutch cities, your client is then a city, quite often I find myself at

the table with people that have no love for what we are doing, because the major or the councilman wanted to work with west 8, but there is lot of; we rather stay with (their cousin). So ya quit often you are dependent on yourself.

Christer: - And you have to explain for them why this idea you have is good!

Marc: - And sometimes you manage to get there enthusiasm, and sometimes you don't, you have to go by yourself, it's important to be self supporting, not be dependent on somebody else to light your fire.

Johan: - Would you say that there is a big difference between doing a competition or working for a client, when you do a competition you do it mostly for your self.

Christer: - You have a certain freedom that you can't have with a client.

Marc: - That's why a competition designs are much more authentic, if you see Showurbourg plein, you see a nice idea and a very bad level of technology solutions. It's not what we wished of course. When we made our first models.

Johan: - Do you have anything to add?

Marc: - No I think we pretty much explained what this office is about.

Christer: - Just wondering about a certain, or maybe that is the method, the method that you work, when you work you discuss the project and the ideas and then Adriaan shows up and he throws in something else and you take that part that he throws in and keep on working with that.

Marc: - Ya he is the boss and usually he is right I have to say, ya this is bullshit, and sometimes it is bullshit, but more often he hits the right spot.

Johan: - But if you sometime are looking for trends like what's happening right now where do you look then?

Marc: - I think that would be nothing to artistic, when we discuss trends its very down to earth, how does the market work, where do money come from, how do certain organisations work, it's more a architectural approach or its definitely not a west 8 approach, ok what's the architectural interpretation of these times it's nothing that bothering us.

Christer: - I find that your work is very avantgardistic, am I right or wrong?

Marc: - Avantgardistic I find that a difficult word, we are trying to push limits and cross borders, that sounds very avantgardistic, we are also very aware that we are in a business with a very long tradition, most people here have read there classics, it's a difficult issue, in a sense we are very not old fashioned but we have a great sense for comfortable atmosphere, The Showbourg plein is really from our youth its cold and windy and barren and steel and its nothing that we will do again.

Johan: - If you would say that you have a favourite project here what would that be?

Marc: - Favourite in the sense what we are most proud of?

Johan: - It is what you expected it to be, your idea is

Marc: - Borneo-Sporensburg is very much what we imagined it to be, for a large part because we had a very good client they where first; Oh we will never sell these houses they are so narrow, so they built sixty and they were sold and from then on, oh this is a good project we are going to do it. Oh also some private gardens for offices that we have done like in Tillburg the Interpolis garden, they want high quality and pay for high quality so that gives you a much more comfortable situation, and then when you know that you are going to push the limits of the clients budget, and push the limit of the clients intellectual capacity to keep track of what you are doing. Right now we are very happy with a project we

are doing in Chissek, business area London, we also have a very serious client he is very aware of what he wants, he wants to offer a top environment for office and.

Johan: - Are they building right now, or?

Marc: - Ya, check the website, if it's on,

Conversation at Big House in Amsterdam 2002-02-20 13:00 With John Lonsdale

John came to Holland because he found more work there he enjoyed doing work that allows him to be reflective. He was educated at AA in London.

John: - This question...how do you create, I'm not an architect or a landscape architect to solve problems. Scientists solve problems. I create them and I'm trying to create interesting problems or another way to look at it I try to create different possibilities. I do not like to consider myself as a problem solver. I don't want to solve other people's problems, if I do solve problems I like to solve my own. If I solve problems, it's problems I've set for myself. It is making up that question which is highly creative. You set the framework in which you are working. You set the parameters. For me that's a creative act. What that means in terms of a project is that you try not to design; you set up some understandings of how you understand a site, the different political bodies involved. I always held back from designing but then I went to Norway last year and I met two architects from Oslo, Lasse and Anne Stein, and they said; why don't you just design, so I did. Instead of trying to justify everything with strategies, I simply started shaping things and giving myself the freedom of being a sculptor. All these other strategies of framework are very important, however, at a certain moment it's great just to do a thing. That was a huge breakthrough to allow myself to do that. Before then, I was justifying and determining a framework.

John shows the model of the glass house that has got its design inspiration from the Dutch Westland landscape. Digging in the ground and looking at the different layers, letting them get in

contact with each other. He says it's an example of the freedom he is given to play. That's what the Norwegian duo told him; just do what you like. He also shows a piece of wood that he found at home, a form that might give inspiration one day.

I'm becoming much more interested in giving myself the freedom as an architect in a formalistic way, pure forms. I also believe that every project should be located to its specific site.

Christer: - Do you have many ideas collected in a box, to choose from?

John: -That box used to be clearly defined. It used to be called the portfolio of my studies at the AA in London. There is two years work there of asking questions, and I've been going through each one, exploring them. This box of ideas is less clearly a box. I work with students and each year there is a new student, a new box. Big House is another box. There is a shelf in the box in Big House with shapes and forms. There is also home, at home I have another little box. On the weekends, I started running in the heath lands. That's another box that puts you in touch with the landscape. That is what I really miss.

Johan: - What made you start studying at AA?

John: - It's very boring, very banal. My dad is an architect. It is quite common, it says a lot about the profession. It's tradition. He always thought that I should be an engineer, so he was steering me away from it. I think I could not be anywhere else, you find your place. The creative act is very illusive, very illusive. There is a certain moment in a project, which I call the crunch time. When you have to make decisions, and that's the most exciting moment, the scariest moment. I see complete darkness at that moment. I used to withdraw and stop, I used to be scared of it. Now I am seeking it, that moment.

That's the moment when you take decisions, when you create. That's the moment I ask my students to encounter, often they leave it to the last week. Then it becomes even darker.

Christer: -Would you say that, that is the moment when you are the most frustrated?

John: - I wouldn't say frustrated I'd say the most vulnerable. You really have to dig deep, right in to your heart, and open up. If it's frustration it's because you want to close off, you can't create. Frustration is a sign that you can't express yourself. If you are actively seeking that moment, you get to embrace it. I'm talking ideally; it's never as good as that. Some times, it gets close.

Johan: - Do you do competitions?

John: - We used to do competitions. Since the last competition, which was the prix de Rome, we decided to focus on buildings. Building landscape, building buildings, but rather building ambiguity between buildings and landscape, astonishing ambiguity.

Johan: - Is it possible to make a graph of your process?

John: - No, if you do that it becomes formulaic. Then it becomes routine. As soon as it becomes routine it dies. I'm sure of that. For each project, you have a different team, different client, and different site. The way of working or the creative moment will grow specific to that scenario. The thing to do is not to leave that moment until too late. Then you can't have the time to communicate, to produce drawings, which communicate to the outside world. These great creative ideas don't mean anything unless you communicate.

In a competition in Greece, Thessaloniki, John spent three days looking for the site but he couldn't find it. He ended up walking along the old city wall and in the end; the city wall of Thes-

saloniki became the model, which he transposed as the competition site. The project was set through his "bad" navigation. Walking the city wall gave him a measure of the city and an experience that gave him a feeling of the site. The name Big House comes from them naming their project in the competition "big houses".

John: - The metaphor of Big House is the different urban roles, sometimes as a cornerstone supporting a piece of urban fabric, some times as a bridging piece crossing a void and sometimes as a buttress to stop a void from collapsing in. These are all metaphors that I found in the existing city wall where I found fragments of Roman and Greek architecture embedded in the walls. This became a metaphor for the urban project. It's often very accidental, you are not very conscious of using this. It's only lately that I realize what I've done.

Christer: -When you look back on your projects, does your inspiration come from being on the site?

John: -In that instance, yes. In another project in Turkey, we didn't have a chance to visit the site but we were sent good documentation of it and we walked it through the maps. The jury were convinced that we had been on the site.

Johan: - Do you collaborate with other professions?

John: - I've always wanted to do that more. I used to do that more, once with a photographer. We've had recourses to collaborate in earlier projects. Now we are looking at ways and means of establishing this collaboration on a more formal basis. To set a foundation where we can ask for funding if it's non profit making as an angle it's possible, and in this way to collaborate and in this form. In other words, this creative process is taking care of informal structures. If it's not capable to do within the office, then we must create another structure outside the office to establish this possi-

bility. The older you get the more political things become. It becomes as much about creating this structures as about doing the work itself.

Johan: - How is the atmosphere here in Amsterdam for architects?

John: - I find it very healthy. I don't have much contact with the other offices but in terms of subsidies and in terms of clients, it's rather good.

Johan: - How many clients do you have?

John: - If you came a month ago we didn't have any. Now we got about four and it's going rather well. We are small but ambitious.

Johan: - How would you define the typical work that your office does?

John: - Large scale competitions and small domestic projects. I'm working towards those two meeting and they are not too far apart. The way of thinking is more or less the same. It's a question of scale. You can apply the same strategies, the same way of working for one as well as the other.

Johan: - We try to investigate our own minds how we do and how can we evaluate this. Can we do it another way and does it work for us. After every interview, we try to do a workshop.

Christer: - For us it is a way to get input and try new ways of thinking.

John: - ...and a way of travelling.

Christer: - It's not to be underestimated

John likes the museum plein because of the ice rink but he says he's more interested in inhabited landscapes. He is fascinated of Scandinavian designers and talks about Sten Hoyer.

Johan: - Do you think you have found the best way of working?

John: - No. I should create freedom to make more models,

bigger models, to do that I need a workshop. And to collaborate with different disciplines, that's not there either. I'm looking for ways and means for achieving that. That is frustrating!

Christer: - Now that you know more of what you want to do, have you developed some kind of philosophy?

John: - I don't think I'm the sort of person who writes a book about it. I do this work, it is what it is, and I explain what it is, and how it came about. Right now, I'm not in the position to writing it into philosophy. If there is a philosophy, my philosophy is, slow down. There is no hurry to build. I've never built, not yet. There is no hurry. There is a kind of a fallacy that you have to build as soon as you can. It's probably the same way with philosophy. I think philosophy will come later, with old age. I can't push it. It's like you can't push buildings. I like to think that they arrive like children; there is a right time.

Christer: - Can you follow your ideas from the beginning to end in your projects?

John: - If you have an idea, you stick with it. That is the thing. As a student, all the ideas that I had, was never good enough. I would always abandon one and take on a new idea, thinking that it would be better. Often your first idea is clearly from your intuition, and you follow it. You don't give it up; you keep on trying and testing it out.

Christer: - I wonder what happens, why do the idea get blurred and disappear?

John: - Because you want to be sure that it's not something else. I don't know.

Johan: - You try to test the limits I think.

Johan: - Do you see any clear trends in today's architecture?

John: - What I see is the architect struggling with his or her role in society. They

become far less powerful, even less powerful then they were. Their role has been marginalized in the building process and in the process of creating or recreating the urban and rural landscape. I see our role now is, first of all redefining our role. Finding a new role for our self, reinvigorate the role. That's why I like to collaborate with other people.

Rather then looking at lovely sites to build in, put more objects in this lovely sites, beautiful sites in the city or beautiful country sites, I'm looking at abandoned territories, forgotten or overlooked spaces. Looking at means and ways of restoring those landscapes through vegetational means, plants and so forth. Then introducing an architecture that's founded on how you restored that landscape. The architecture will belong to that process of restoration. It will belong to that place. An architect can't do that, only as a team can you create that.

I'm weary as an architect to simply put forms and objects in places. I think it's important to create that place first.

Where do you think this will lead? Do you think it will lead to a declaring the crisis in the confidence of the architect, or do you think it will be much more positive? They're just like artists.

Johan: - When we started we didn't have a clear picture of the aim. I thought of an inspiration engine on the net where you see how other people find their inspiration.

John: - That you could adopt a way of working, adopt a creative process?

Johan: - No, through that engine you can find your own process, your own ticks.

John: - Maybe a website is the best thing for that.

