

Responsible Architecture: Relational Approaches to Sustainable Behavior in Design

**Vol. 2
Appendices**

Responsible Architecture:

Relational Approaches to Sustainable Behavior in Design

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Appendix 1: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS ORGANIZED BY THEMES

CHALLENGES

Profit-oriented conservative culture

And some other things that I talked about also, sometimes the projects are designed like, the task you're given by the client is like, you have to deal with something that's not really thoughtfull.

Yeah, of course you have to have some projects going on. But I think the projects can be too expensive to have going if you have a client that you basically disagree with. when you end up disagreeing on everything and it's dissatisfying for the architects to do work that they don't, doesn't fit very well with this artistic red string. In order to do the process of user involvement and etc, you have to have some kind of sensitivity about how crazy is this client ready for it? Are they control freaks? Are they open to new ideas? And I did one process with user processes where it was very clear that the client wanted to like, control it. They were afraid that it would run out of their hands. If we were too open in our approach. That is okay, but it's not.. for me its like, okay, there's not going to come anything innovative out of this user involvement process, because it's ran too tight. So maybe you should just.. a lot about the screening is also to screen more for the how much is the interest in making something innovative?

So everything I had the users say, was like calling for less square meters, calling for more flexible solutions. But the plan was always set for too many square meters, and much more fixed solutions. So what we did at the studio was saying, okay, the management team and the top organization, they're not ready for the change that their staff members are, they are saying something different. But it's not. It's not for us to say the management team, you're actually doing this thing wrong.

I think the industry has a problem in building too much with too little quality. Too little ambition in it.

I think it starts with the building code, I would say, because building code is often purely technical aspects of a building. The building code does not include social aspects. Basically, there's not a social requirement in terms of, of course, there is in terms of public spaces outside the building and stuff like that. But it's really not a requirement in terms of making it work. If you have a back system or ventilation system, that's a requirement, and it's tested how it works. That doesn't apply to the social stuff in the public spaces. I think, once we get there, and it's actually required that it should work. And of course, people would laugh, but why should we guarantee this? but and how can we guarantee this? but that is the core issue, I think is that is not taking serious the social aspects of a building and how much you can actually change a building and how it can change you, how you live in that space, and work in that space or relax in that space. So I think the social social parts are not emphasized enough, because it's basically not a requirement. And in this kind of economy, once it's not a requirement, then it doesn't get valued, I will say. So we have this sort of like checkbox, architecture style at the moment. And once you check all the technical aspects, you really don't want to add something else to it. Because you cannot make money on it. Basically.

because there's so much emphasis on all the technical aspects, but not not on the social aspects. And actually, if you look at the social aspect, they are just as important for sustainable building as the technical aspects as well.

The interest is super low. So actually, you have to pay money to have it in the bank. Basically, if you have a savings account, you have to pay money. And that means the pension companies. in Denmark is basically the ones who are developing the series. The other one investing in these big building projects. And the building projects is historically the most safe investment. And once you maybe have a somewhat, during corona you have a somewhat unstable maybe financial market. It's much more sound to invest in locally, a building project that will create a certain surplus in 30 years, that is guaranteed. So a lot of of everyone's money basically because that's the pension companies money

are being put into this city development and that is the The paradox of city development in Denmark that is everyone's money that is doing these projects that maybe needs to social stuff and stuff like that.

There's a program and sometimes you receive this program. And what we find is that 80% is probably a copy of a copy. It's something that we know already that was from the brief we received before. So it seems like that things are more based on what has happened rather than what is going to happen. And that's like a signal that makes us a little bit alert because if we are not conscious about what's currently going on, the way people interact with spaces, how they collaborate, how they actually learn, and so on. And that has come into light with all the research that has been done in the past, let's say two decades about brain research and so on, the psychology of space. Then we are actually more interested in architecture for the sake of architecture and not the people who's who are using it. And that also means that when we are basing design on 80%, that has become like the conventional part of let's say an educational space, the 20% that's left, and that's not like a scientific split, it's like our impression that most of what we get in the brief has already been done, considered, and so on. And the space left for innovation and thinking forward is, has been limited.

But sometimes when you actually base everything on what has happened, this space again, left for innovation, has become very limited. So you actually, you're actually designing on something that has been, rather than something that is going to be

So the daylight demands actually has a huge influence on how you can solve the program. So that impact is very predetermining for the architecture.

There was a lot of NGOs pointing out that the challenge and the change in different ecosystems and so on, but wasn't part of the scope. The scope was us putting it into play at that time. And the investor said well, as long as it's economically sustainable as well, I don't give a shit

Do whatever you want. Today he's a protagonist of sustainability. He changed, he's understanding. So you can also influence a client, over the years. So today it's, that project is a reference project for a lot of people.

Those are the people who are electing the the local government who are taking as much money as possible. Also, the same people who are investing in the retirement funds, it's not the retirement funds and they're not local in government. It's the people who choose with how they use the money. So the whole discussion is really biased. So we need to have a game board so we can have a discussion about how we actually create the best practice. Cuz right now it's only arguments based on half of the facts.

Of course we want to do better but everybody needs to do better. I would say that they should be in for the long run instead of the short run. Because the difference between the urban project in N-place and inside the N-place here is that in N-place, the money goes into a fund, that goes into the city, that goes into fund, that goes into the city. So it's all at all times reinvesting into the city to create a better and better city.

So that's the contrary to what you sometimes see when you have somebody who's in for the short thing and fast money. Those are optimizing the the turnover. Why not? It's because that's if they're allowed to do it, that's, some people think that way. So of course it has to do with how the local government acts. But it's a complex situation and therefore if it's if the turnover over is not interesting enough, they'll just invest it in stocks instead, if they don't get enough for the land prices they need to raise the taxes and so on, they don't get elected. So you see it's a complex

that's the thing about circular economy and circular design, you need to change like every layer or every link in the value chain to try to change something. Because if I take just design something that's built for the disassembling, but if the contractor doesn't build it like that, then everything is lost. And again, if it's not operated and maintained regularly then it's also just lost. So like all layer needs to be represented.

So after finalizing the design, there's been a lot of just bureaucracy around getting the local planning permits. And also we have had to tender it out. Just as another challenge. We because , reliable with the client is a social housing organization, they have to tender everything out to the market. So actually we didn't finalize the design, but sketched it. So we had the volumes of, and also all the building system in place. And then we tendered it out to give it to a new team of consultants and contractors. And then they had to finalize and actually build it. So we did a whole process of also tendering the project out. And now a new team has responsibility of actually finalizing the design and getting it built.

But you are, you're completely right in your analysis. And also that system is not there yet.

But we are, all those mechanisms are not in place yet. Like a lot of companies don't have takeback systems and we can't reuse all the materials. . There's a lot of things that we can't do yet, but we want to have in the future

One thing is of course, that it's a very conservative business and, also people want as low risk as possible. So they basically just want to do it as they used to do it.

So what we, and also then there's price as another thing, it's very cost focused in our business and people just want to build, if not as cheap as possible, then at least as cost optimized as possible to fit their needs. So we are struggling..

but we are aiming to get all these sustainable products and ideas into projects, but without it costing more or looking different. So basically I just wanted to be something that is implicit that, of course we are building sustainable, but just get a building that looks traditionally, you can say, but it's just way more sustainable. So that is sort of my goal. It is just that you get the building you want, but you just get a lot more, it's more sustainable, it's more flexible, it's more healthy because the materials that we put in is better and it's better documented. Like basically I just want to create more value, but not yeah, in that way creating a eco-design.

Also I think we're struggling a lot with in C-house because we are using so much design for disassembly. It's just getting things not certified, but there's a lot of demands for fire and instructions. The regulations. Yeah. And some of them it's just because it's not done before, we don't know how to react. For example, in C-house they don't know if the building will be, because there are these blower door tests, so they don't know if it's air tight as it should be, like when using another type of mortar than they used to. Maybe it's fine, maybe it's not. But they can't take the risk of not like putting on an extra membrane to make it more air tight. Maybe it's obsolete, maybe it's not. We just don't know yet. So there's also just something that we need to overcome. Then it's the engineers that don't know if the fire is okay and they haven't just done the fire test. So there's just a lot of regulations and then also we're talking about re using materials, like what materials are reusing what's inside? We don't know because nobody documented that 50 years ago. And so it's really difficult to, to yeah, reuse materials in new projects. That's also just a lot of struggles in that. So there's a lot of barriers.

And also, again, it's a push and pull and also just knowing that we never talked about legislations.. they're not moving first. Like they also need to see that there is solutions before they can actually start to to legislate around it. They wouldn't tomorrow come with the a law saying that everybody, everything needs to be designed for assembly from tomorrow. Not knowing that it's also possible to actually do it. So, yeah, also, it's just it's a long process and we just need to be patient , even though it's difficult.

Yeah. And one thing is that we have again, the legislation says that you can only have 20% of the interior surfaces that is wood.

Yeah like the exposed wood. So like we're building everything in wood and then covered in the gypsum afterwards. So it's yeah... So again, coming back to legislation like it, it can be done better, but again, we also. Apparently the industry needs to get the experience so the legislation can change. We can't look to the outside of borders apparently. And in S-place where the house is getting built they also have Denmark's tallest wooden structure, which is what it five stories or something. It's also just insane that it's so low. .

I think it probably depends on who are the contractors. Or who are the decision makers in the process who has the money. If it's a private apartment buildings, and they know, whatever we're going to do, we can rent it out. Because there's such a high demand for housing, then what are their motivation for doing it as an extra good project? If they can just do it the cheapest one with the highest profit? Right? So I think that's that's one thing to discuss, who are the decision makers and what kind of restrictions are put on content to really do their best, or just to do it most profit profitable.

a lot of the public projects they're doing it better around the processes, and they are more more and more aware of the importance of having a good process around it. And then it's probably more in the private sector, where they just can, you know, developers and investors are just building houses for profit. I think that's probably where the biggest issues are.

And then you ask about what are the main challenges? I think I think actually the private sector on the developing houses and stuff like that is a big part of it. And also, like this, so much thought about profit, as like the single factor, especially in the biggest cities. And then you have a little bit of sustainability and this and even have some goals, or some stickers you can put on your project, but it's, it's very focused on the economy. And you can build something sustainable only if its good for the economy right. And I think that's pretty short term, the way of developing our cities, especially the large ones.

time and challenge of money. And the political landscape, of course, maybe is the main source of the challenge right now. Because right now we have a political agenda that also focuses on decentralization. And in some ways, that's good, but when it's only used for enhancing your own possibility of being reelected, then that agenda can quickly change. And then there won't be that much focus on the outskirts and the smaller cities and stuff like that. A challenge can also be that you don't focus on it as much in the larger cities, I think it would be a general thing, a general tool. And I think a big challenge is our democracy that I think is really threatened. Because basically what this is, is that it's practical democracy in a way, you give people direct access, to make decisions, and to be part of our society and democracy. And I see in many parts of our world today, and also in Denmark that democracy is threatened. So that is a big challenge. So even though what we do actually now works into a both a national maybe also global agenda of revitalizing smaller towns and areas and the focus on on democracy, then that could quickly change.

what are the constraints or the challenges? There is within I think, all human choice behavior, there is biases. So there's always a bias of what is the cost now, compared to what can we gain in the long run. So a cost today is always viewed larger than the sum of what we can gain.

there is one challenge, there's not main challenges, there's just just one challenge. And that's the economy, short term economy. So as I said, this was an investment from us, obviously, the business model for companies that do what we do kind of entering competitions and things like that is always or not always, but usually, I think the competitions are an investment. I think that's general for most architectural companies that that's not how they make their money.

And I think it's, it is really interesting because we spent billions of Danish Krona on these on these issues and on it's actually it's also, again it's quite a complex thing explaining the finances here because a lot of the money that are being used for the architectural transformations come from something called the National Building Fund. and it's actually money that the people who are tenants in the affordable housing sector pay through their rent. So it's not it's not taxpayers money. It's money from the people who are renting, and basically we're using them to remodel the estates where these people live and actually push some of them out of the places they're living because we want them to move to live in different patterns than we, than they're living in currently. And there's also a paradox in that, I in that money has been like taken again with the logic of serving greater good and serving the nation. But again of course it's used politically and it's I think it's also worth discussing, whether that is okay, and whether that is the right use of that money. Whereas maybe you could make people happier or better off if you spent that money on refurbishing old buildings and making them more inhabitable, brighter whatever or lowering the rents for some of the people who have the least money or building common spaces that were useful in some way to the local communities or investing

in local communities in different ways than just changing the buildings, which is of course, which might be in some ways might be a good way of going about it.

It is a little bit old school. And I think, of course, it's not just architects, it's, it will also working with, for example, entrepreneurs and engineers that are maybe practices that are even more conservative somehow in the way that they think. And they're slowly starting to, you know, accepting that we need to think in other ways and they accepting that they need to build in new ways. It's hard for them to change the way that they build, but it's coming slowly. So somehow it's step by step. And of course, the municipalities that they are actually sitting down and demanding sustainability is really good for speeding up the process.

hopefully the awareness is increasing also among architects. But there's definitely, like parts of answering that question should be found in psychology rather than in architecture I would say, and how humans work, basically. And basically we work as fear of change, right? That's part of it, right? We're quite scared of things we don't know anything about. And a lack of knowledge creates fear. And fear creates resistance to change. And so that's one part, I see that we have to raise the bar of knowledge.

And it's really up to the, the stakeholder in this, example, DTU, they've set the stage, we didn't, right, they decided they wanted true participatory design processes. They wanted everybody's work at the same time, all the time. So they put money aside for that, right. But often, it ends up in a question of money, right? Because it is more expensive. They pay me a lot more to sit at meetings with engineers talking about ventilation. And but I'm there, right?

They have ideas about sustainability. But usually when to show them sustainable projects, or products, or sustainable materials, it ends up being way too expensive. So can we do something else, there's a little bit cheaper. So sustainability is always killed by economics. It is a big problem.

And that evolves into a discussion of how to use the money we have differently, we also have a tradition of how to structure building processes, and where to put the money into different phases, right? For instance, things like the inventory part is usually sometimes separated from the, from the money allocated to the building process, which means it ends up being the whatever is left.

People look at us and say what we've never done that. I said, Well, you should try it, at least if you want us on our team. We have to put that in from the very beginning. So the stakeholders knows, that some of the money goes into that, which has nothing to do with architecture itself.

it is much more challenging in, in terms of fire regulations still. It's primarily like an administration building.

I guess I think that the challenge we face is a challenge that is really generally present in the context of working as a practice today, which is about developers not being as idealistic as we are. And that's, of course a challenge because we can't survive on doing competitions alone. And the amount of competitions that we can do or that are being offered is actually decreasing a little. So that's a tendency that brings us more in collaborations with the private clients and developers and that segment of clients. And that's a challenge, having that as an idealistic approach to creating architecture as we do, and then convincing our maybe more shortsighted clients that they need to think about the projects in another way. That can definitely be a challenge and it can it can make it more difficult to engage the impact team, but also just to work with architecture in the quality that we want. So that's actually something we are struggling with and what we can see as being more important is to have argumentations of strategies that is maybe developed with the impact team based on economic argumentations and facts.

So it's a tough reality, having that idealistic agenda as we do but we are pretty confident that it gets more and more momentum and I think also currently we are seeing so much poor design and short-sighted, developed architecture that hopefully there will get a, like a some kind of rebound of architecture that has more ambitious agendas and offer something more than just being densification projects.

Yeah. I think that one of the, like general problems is the fact that for instance, if we took A-city as a case, there's a bad combination of the municipalities willingness to densify and the developer's willingness to do the same. So just boosting like a developer's business strategy in the name of densification is such a bad cocktail because that makes the architecture, as the municipality more positive minded towards projects that we as practitioners, would actually advise against. Because they are they're too out of scale. And it's often seen as the same kind of very entrepreneurial short-sighted kind of element based architecture that you see all over the place. So it has a very negative impact both on the close context, but also it's decreasing the different identities of the city, there are a lot of variation and causes of different identities that are being blurred out by the same kind of developer driven, identification based architecture. And that is such a challenge. . Hopefully, or I know that is also a concern from the municipalities side of the table. So that's hopefully something that will be changed a little in the architecture politics in the future.

the Danish market, which is a lot more restrictive, because the concrete industry has got some monopolies

because it's quite difficult to build over four storeys. It's not impossible, but it's difficult.

it will be difficult, it will be probably okay to start with, but they're sort of like the gear turn in a way that every two years they would do a tightening of the rules. But yeah, it is a change that's really good for timber buildings.

we have quite a lot of just called normal buildings like normal speculative housing, where it's a developer, and they just want 20,000 square meters of apartments that you can sell or rent. Yeah, it happens every day.

We had some other projects where we've, like speculative developers, they're usually quite difficult to work with, can be difficult to work with, not always. But find solutions to the problems so that we can work architecturally with it.

And the building sector is quite conservative, where it's a lot easier just to do what you used to do. That there's like always a bit of inertia, when new things come along, and how you get them integrated. And it takes a long time before everything sort of fits together in some way.

and in the mainstream modern architecture, I don't think it's unfair to say that we have a tradition that the profit was going to the developer and the needs of the users were not seen that much.

And it's about just investments and like to sell to somebody like the user was not seen that much in the process of design was more economy driven.

but economy is always.. it is one of the decisive issues of how much can we be ambitious? But I also do, I like a lot low budget projects. But I would say, sometimes it is so low with a very ambitious program, that level of providing for healthier building materials or add my align that extra layers of values and make more interesting spaces for people, which is not just boxes, day light, it's many, many subjects that we can talk about how to add quality to the architecture. And I always think that we push ourselves to be creative in a design level, but it would be interesting to talk about how can we rearrange it and be creative in a financial, finance of the project.

Green-and-people washing

But then you have to do a lot of work along with the architectural process.

I think that's hard to tell the same thing happening, if you have groups of people running around with concepts. You may get their ideas and perspectives with the gathering of the group, and then building up a vision idea is often really hard when you have people working actively with concepts.

They need to enter a different market. So I'm having a hard time trying to explain it to them. But from where I see things, architecture comes, like, way down the line of the process.

I think that's the frustration that is really familiar to a lot of architects. And right now we are doing... we have a really good clients that we are helping with their new office building. And it is like, why didn't we enter the dialog at a far earlier stage than we could have challenged them about building all those square meters when we are in corona, or looking for a different organization model..but the client had already a fixed idea, lots of square meters.

So we had some really interesting discussion at the studio saying, well, I, I've been listening to you architects. There's something that you always claim that that's unethical we are not doing that, that's bad taste... But in my field of work, there's also something that we just don't do. We don't invite people into processes that are not real. We need to be interested in what they're saying, give them a chance. not to just hold up people and give them the one shot to participate.

that same project where we were invited into the project far too late I think.

There was an expectancy of a much longer time span, when you when you drew a building, that meant also meant there was a lot more time in the planning phase. And there is today where it's very much about doing it as efficient enough efficient as possible. And then only maybe using a small amount of time on actually the design. And then using a lot time or quickly, a lot of time, proportionally, at least to build the building, and then tearing it down maybe in 40 or 50 years, that is really not a sustainable way to go about it.

So 40 years is nothing in terms of how much energy that is put into the materials. It's quite ridiculous.

So sometimes we are hired in terms of a competition team to do the social stuff and stuff like that. We only been part of one thing, I think, so it's not really something we have been successful with. And sometimes it's also very much just a very fixed role we have in that competition team. And it's very much not maybe guaranteed what effect it could have. And it's not very much a requirement for it for things to work, I would say, and also to go back and see if they work. So we still need that long understanding of how to do a change in terms of, of maybe the local community, and that we don't have at the moment,

we only want to do a safe development, where we talk to people to maybe use involvement, but then we move on. And I think that is one of the issues today that it's very much the fixed role. And that's how the professionals are working at the moment, in terms of the big projects

The idea of having a lot of competence is, becomes explosive, removes the eye of ..it's difficult to actually frame the relevance of why, and then it stalls the process a lot. So the right people at the right place is very crucial, but you don't know who's the right people until you get like a blurry image of the overall thing.

And so basically we started with this four years ago actually designing the project. So it is quite an interesting process, but also quite not difficult, but challenging. Because we had to do a traditional architecture sketching process where we actually like designed the project, but also at the same time designing the building system that is going to be constructed off. So it was like this yeah, circular process of actually not knowing what we are designing and not knowing what we're building it from, and then designing those two things together.

climate is not just a carbon, it's also biodiversity it, but it's super complex to think about it all. And that can maybe also be like just a lesson. Because when we talked a lot about C-house, but in that project we are actually only looking at one thing. And that is how can we design a building using the disassembly so we can take it apart again and reuse materials. We are not looking at it all.. we are but it's not the main focus. Like how is people doing inside? Are we using reuse materials? Are we, how is biodiversity? There's tons of other sustainable areas that we could have been focusing on, but now we just chosen one to actually like push that a lot. So it's also just knowing that we don't have

to do everything all the time. If it's just if it's becomes a burden, like just, if you can just push one thing, really find one project, that's also fine.

Another part is the projects are pretty big today. So the school that is being built in C-city is not a school for 100 kids, it's like schools for 1500 kids. And it's really large. And I think like, it seems like there's a distance to the user. And sometime I've talked with people often like, So who are the users? but we don't have the users yet, because we haven't built the house yet. It's like, there are kind of users, what do they use today or other users somewhere else we can talk to. So I think also as a part of the practices are like, okay, we need to build it before someone can be using it. And we can't involve them before we have built it. So it's a paradox in that way

Typically, if you are like a consultant, then you're going into a project you are developing it, and then you are handling it over kind of like a gift you are giving, you've been paid in return, and then you're leaving, you're moving on to the next project. And you're taking all the knowledge you have been collecting and developing to deliver the product, you're taking that with you. And you're not leaving very much behind.

so when we're working as an architect, we're actually not taking people into consideration in our process of designing, but we talk as if we're doing it, we, we acknowledge that, that our built environment has a huge impact on people's lives.

I think sustainability, when it's discussed within our business, it is narrowed down to materials. then I think we can constantly and constantly discuss how we can minimize CO₂. But I think we will never get there if we don't notice that it starts with how we work and the process also.

I realize that there's a lot of the holistic design or holistic concept which is broken along the way, because there's a lot of other considerations that then take priority. So I sometimes it would be really interesting to see what building or project would how it would perform in the end, if we actually kept the concept whole through the whole of the project, what how would it end up working? And I'm pretty sure that it would end up working a lot better than it does today. Because there's, as I said, there's It seems as if there are a lot of decisions, a lot of kind of cuts, kind of cutting a heel cutting a toe, this this and that. And then the holistic the way that everything in detail kind of fits together. And the way that it was thought you just, you ended up missing that, I think. that's very much an impression, and not some I don't have any kind of empirical material on that.

It's a good question, but I think one of, one of the issues is how much time it takes, because a lot of these plans were made 10 years ago and they haven't fulfilled them yet. So this one thing is that the politicians are rotating, you know, every four years as an election. So you'll get new politicians, you get new people. So the people who are involved in the plans change. And the residents change of course, as well. Some people move out, others move in.

And there are definitely issues about communication and involvement, which are which is something I've looked into through my research and one of the things that was interesting to me as a researcher, but was a point of frustration to many of the residents was that they initially were invited to, you know, workshops with architects and with municipal officials and sometimes politicians, and they'd be talking about all of these plans. We want to include you, we want you to be part of this plan. You have to feel ownership over this place. You have to be part of the solution. Basically, they want the residents to be part of the solution and be part of the planning. But increasingly as these processes become more concrete it's like the residents are kind of pushed out because then it's about financial concerns. It's about what can be done, what is allowed within Danish land is legislated quite heavily.

So there's a lot of technicalities in making things real where it becomes very difficult for the professionals to include resident. So often you will have ideas about what something is gonna look like and what is gonna be part of the final product, but then there's like a maybe five years from the residents were involved to something is finished. And over those five years, things will change in the process because of whatever financial means, legislation, people who are changed, who are like different people who come in the process and so on. So there's something about the timeframe.

So that's one thing. And I think where the municipality has, I don't know, failed as a big word, but I think they were actually quite good at having people come in the beginning. And trying to say that we want you to be part of this, but then it's initially there's been allocated less and less resources to involve people along the way.

So there's a lot of pragmatic concerns, that kind of rules out the involvement of the resident, the residents, at least in the eyes of the decision makers. And I think it's actually it seems pretty banal but I think it is actually mostly pretty banal. It's about it's difficult to involve people and it's difficult to keep on having that level of communication and involvement that they had in the beginning cuz it requires a lot of people on the ground. It requires some kind of moldability in planning processes and that is difficult because most engineering companies and architects and so on are used to being able to make their own plans. And when you hire, when you have contractors, you have all of these subcontractors. And then I'd used either to having to be in a constant dialogue with someone else who is not a professional. So I think that is a very big part of it.

But then, and that actually points back to the residents feeling that they were promised something that hasn't been delivered. And basically that promise that they thought that they were given was about influence. And it was about being involved. It was about being part of the process.

And then experiencing that we are not having that say or it, we are like being pushed out slowly and then it's something else, suddenly the project is different, and no one really asked us whether we were okay with that. And I think that is actually the big issue for many of the people that I talked to in G-area, that they felt that they were increasingly pushed away from influence. Increasingly decisions were made without them being involved.

And that was something where people said, but you said that you were gonna hire, locals wanted to, instead of the young guys making trouble in the streets, they would be working and they would have jobs, but they're not getting jobs. So that's one thing, and that's just an example of the types of promises, in quotation marks that the residents felt were broken or were not delivered upon

But it, that's all, that whole uncertainty on whether what the plan we agreed upon has suddenly changed and become something quite different. And of course part of it is pragmatism. Part of it is political issues on a national level and so on. But it feels like to the residents at least, or some of the residents that the promises they were made were broken. And that kind of rubs them the wrong way, right?

because what they were supposed to be communicating to people has been changing all the time, Right. And they haven't always had all the information they needed and the politicians have changed their minds and so on. So it's been a very difficult task to to communicate. And I don't think that enough resources have been allocated to communication and or to conversation or whatever you want to call it, with the residents. And I think that's, that would've been a good thing to have that along the way

And you mentioned the iterative processes and I think that's also it's like, the length of the process in the eyes of the municipality is different than when you look as a resident. One year is quite a long time, but in, in complex transformations like this one, one year is nothing, right. And to architects one year is nothing. So there's also this clash between different time perceptions, which means that you might think as a municipality we are gonna talk about the next five, 10 years, 20 years, right? And for the people 20 years from now is, you can't imagine that you don't know whether you be living in the same place. You might be dead. Right? So it's quite a different time perceptions of time and what we're looking at in the horizon, right?

So that was his interpretation of what was going on in the clash in the ways that people imagine what you can do and what you can't do. And that is also something I remember when talking to some of the other engineers who were involved in the work.

I think that's a lot about that where you could, where it would be possible to improve on the communication. And I think what is general, at least to a lot of the engineers and also to quite a lot of the architects and generally specialized professionals I've talked to, is that they're very much inside their own world, right? So they know why you can't do this, you can't do that. And they don't always understand why people can't see that, and they're not used to being confronted with the end user like the residents who will ask, why isn't it here and not there.

And that was another thing where there was a lot of grand plans a lot of visualizations like this is going to be, this is the mosque, it's going to be here with the minaret of all of that. And it's easy to take that as the visualization, as a promise of what it's going to look like. But in an architect's mind, when it's a, an architectural visualization of something, it's not how it's gonna look in real life. It's a picture of what it might look like, what it could look like. So there's also that difference in what people think an image is. And I've recently, I work as a consultant also, and I've recently had a case where a meeting was canceled. It was actually a presentation to some local politicians. And the reason why it was canceled was that there was an architectural company involved in the presentation and they were going to show some ways that a park area could be remodeled or re landscaped. And it was kind of, it was hypothetical. It was just, you know, it could be done this way. But the reason why it was the meeting was canceled was that the officials were afraid that the politicians wouldn't be able to, you know, understand that it was hypothetical, that it was one possible way of going about it, it was not how it was actually going to be

because the problem with visualizations is that words, people can interpret them in different ways. And I think most of us are aware that words can mean different things and also at different times and coming from different people. But an image is a different kind of promise, right? It's very concrete in a way. It's easy to understand. And it's easy to understand that this building is red, it's not green, it's not blue, or it's eight stories. It's not 10 or 15. So then it's, it becomes something very concrete to relate to a lot of people when they see an image. And you get primed to think that this is the right way, right? So when you see a markup of a new building, then you think, oh yeah, I can see that. It's gonna be nice. And then maybe the material the surface material will change and it's gonna be red instead of green. And then you're like no, this wasn't it. It's not how it's supposed to look. You showed me this image, it's different from this one. And then you can't do anything about it because it's built right.

there's a lot of these debates about visualizations and that when people kind of see the initial visualizations they imagine that is the end result as well. And often it changes. And of course it might sometimes be about people who make a prettier image or a different kind of image in order to be allowed to build. But I think in most cases it is about, again, about pragmatics. It's about it's about money. It's about maybe political decisions. It's about what you're allowed to build and so on. And what is possible more than it's about lying to people as it's sometimes interpreted by others or breaking promises. So I think there's also that, which is interesting about the way that we imagine processes differently and the way that people who build, pay for buildings and the people who live next to them or live in them how they experience these processes, and I think they experience them very differently.

And the other part, I think, is the path of least resistance, which is a typical psychological term, right? We always choose the easiest way. And building trying to work with sustainability, both socially and environmentally. It's not easy. It's difficult. It's really difficult, right? Because there's so many new factors. And we don't really know what sustainable materials are still, because we don't do all the Cradle to Cradle, it's just that muddy field.

okay, LED light is good, because it uses less power. But how is it produced? Where's it produced? who produced it? So this whole chain of production? When we start asking that question, which is kind of new, right? There's this long tradition of people focusing only on their own field, right? Yeah. I'm a technician. So I focus on technique. I don't, I don't care. I don't know nothing about production, for instance, right. I'm in acoustics, so I only focus on acoustic environment. But I'm not interested of where the materials came from. And then they're the materialists. And so there was also because architecture is such a, for me, at least as I see it a very complex discipline that has this multitude of disciplines related to it. It speaks for a way better integration of disciplines, which still doesn't really happen.

And we often see solutions where you started out with the intention of that this space should be used for this. But then when it actually is going to be put into use, you find that this kind of activity is not actually suited for this room, either, because of the indoor climate, the fixed lighting, so they have to find some other space that is more suited for this behavior. And then you sometimes end up with a space that is not active, it creates these passives, I've seen a lot of schools, where they got this brand new school, and then we have this, they promised us this really cool room, but we can't use it. Because the activities we wanted to put in that room was not part of the the analysis of the architect.

there was one school where the idea was that they were supposed to do physical activities. So they wanted more or less a naked space, right. And the because the the space was placed with a nice view, the architects have created a huge glass wall. And that's beautiful, right? We know that people react positively to to looking at nature. But they didn't really talk with the people that were working on the indoor climate, which meant in practice that this space like heated up to 50 degrees, and connecting a really, really warm space with physical activity

only for hot yoga, and they did not do hot yoga at this school, which meant they couldn't use the space. Yeah. And then there were other restrictions, architectural principles that you couldn't work with blindings, because that would ruin the whole like, like the sense of the basic architectural idea of this space, right? So it ended up you have this room 500 square meters cost a hell of a lot of money. Nobody have been in there, nobody used it. And it was just sitting there. And it ended up being a depot where they just move stuff in. They didn't know where else to put right. And and for me that that's an example of what happens if we don't work in more integrated design processes, where we have this constant dialogue, not separated dialogues, where somebody delivers something to me, and then I have to have a dialogue with him on what he thought and I have to build upon that and adapt to that.

And, and that sometimes revealed a lot of problems, right? Because we can have a pedagogical idea of children that has to, let's say, we come to, to the finding that, from a pedagogical perspective, children's should not be sitting at the same table on the same chair all the time, they should be able to move around in class, which is not very typical. But we've figured we want to do that. But that, again, affects the physical space, because it could lead to that the space that have to be bigger, or it has to have different furniture. So when we do that, it can affect the way we organize ourselves, because then we find that managing 60 kids that are not in a fixed seat, means that we have to have two teachers at the same time. Which means then we kind of touch on the way we organize ourselves, which again, affects the culture

And that's our problem, too, I would say where we fall into the same category as anyone else. And that's in terms of measuring the impact of the actual use of physical space and architecture, does it actually work? The whole evaluation process, the whole collecting data, which is not very much part of the architectural tradition, either too. we don't know if it worked. We just finished and finish and, and why do we do this all? Because we did that before? And before and, and the stakeholders were happy? Yes. But do we know if it worked? No.

So when we get into one of my sort of best interests is that I think there's been a tendency to the architecture with too much glass buildings, in relation to what is sort of reasonable, usable, and that creates loads of negative problems

So the big the big problem in Denmark now is that our buildings are so well insulated, that we have massive problems with overheating in badly designed buildings because it's just too much glass facing south.

So trying to avoid this sort of.. we call it sort of mash-stick architecture, where it's just like aluminium panels glued together with like, sealant, which represents quite a lot of modern architecture unfortunately.

We again , that is a Danish peculiarity that post occupancy evaluations, they basically don't exist in Denmark. So there's other countries like the UK, they're sort of widely used and in the US. That doesn't really happen.

one of the major barriers is that these new buildings are much, much, much more complex than they used to be. So the technical demands to new buildings are a lot higher than they were 10 or 15 years ago, there's a lot lot more building services in buildings than they used to be of all types. Yeah, so whether it's ventilation or heating, cooling,

electrical systems, building management systems, there's just there's a huge amount of things that didn't used to be in buildings that we have to accommodate. And it's sort of changing at some sort of pace.

And the new things are really not working. So my personal opinion is there's still a lot of problems around ventilation, mechanical ventilation in buildings, it takes up a huge amount of space. And they cost quite a lot of money. So this is these huge ducts under this over the suspended ceilings, with loads of dead space up there. And seemingly huge ventilation rates in buildings, it's very difficult to get engineers to work with different solutions to minimize that. There's a lot of reciting this belt and braces like saying, you know, having making sure it's 20% over dimension and then having an extra 20% safety margin. And so things are probably a lot more bigger than they need to be. But because of the uncertainty about what might happen, it's a lot easier to say, Okay, well over dimension things to get them just to make sure it's okay. Then we've heard this a lot of constructions, concrete constructions that are vastly over dimensioned. Because it's just easier to use a standard product and know that it's too big for what's needed. So the scene in the complexity of buildings, and the fact that it's the complexity of the technical side is increasing. That's like the biggest, biggest problem there is.

But that is the paradox that a lot of these buildings services are supposed to be there to minimize energy consumption, improving comfort, but in reality, sometimes they seem to make it worse than it would have been. And I think my personal feeling is a lot of the requirements we have today, they're more the result of good lobby work by the engineering branch and the certain companies to get new standards into the building sector so that money has to be spent on these new things that are technical.

And there's a new Danish standard for lighting, that will end up, what it does, it basically replicates how it is in Germany, which basically, she needs an extremely high amount of artificial lighting everywhere all the time, the uniform, there was a lighting like 500 Lux everywhere, all the time. And that's probably really good for certain lighting companies and certain lighting engineers. But it's maybe not really good for holistic approach to buildings. But there's obviously some engineers that have done some good sloppy work to get get it into the standards.

I mean, it's again, if you look at what's happened over the last 15 years, like go back to 2005, we had to, we had an energy regulation that only regulated space heating. In 2005. If we went over to a regulation that regulates the primary energy for heating, cooling, ventilation, and technical equipment, and lighting. So that's like that was a bit of a paradigm shift, you went from doing one thing to five things. and now that energy, we've reduced by 50 to 75%. So you say over like 15 years, we've made a huge change. So like the buildings that we build today, on paper, like much, much better performing, then what we used to build. So what we call normal today is sort of cutting guard cutting avant garde 20 years ago. Yeah, so yeah, because a lot of things we did is sort of greenwashing. But at the same time, we've got some new this new daylighting regulation that came in in 2017. We've got this sustainability, there's a lot of new things that are sort of in the system, there's a much better description of the regulations for thermal comfort in buildings. So the intention is to know what they're calculating or should be calculating that much better description of the work. So you could say at a certain level, there's, definitely greenwashing but another level, the buildings are better than what we used to build. But then on the other side, there's another problem, because we've been instigated a lot of changes for a short period of time.

The other point is that we are in the era of which is global warming and climate change. And it's an agenda for everybody to be aware of it. And in in the context of greenwashing is so easy, to be honest, and to show how they are aware of this co2 footprint is 40% of the co2 footprint that the building industry has

When the terminology become more and more, like become some subjects in universities that, the cliché of sustainable or passive housing is some houses, which has a wind diagram and solar diagram and not that much interesting. I can't say it's more interesting architecture, but we all have had an idea of passive houses, which is just focused on environment, and how can you bring the energy down? And maybe that element of design and fun design was not seen in it. So that maybe was something that was pulling the students towards more iconic architecture.

I would say what is really deeply bugging me and hurts is greenwashing. And how easy it is to do it. I think the next big issue is green washing.

greenwashing come from.. it is very soothing, because they see Oh, everything is solved, and how many tons of CO2 we save and what? But being ignorant about the consequences of this claims. And, it exist in everywhere, is in fashion industry. It's the food industry. Like it's very easy. And that's why it became so, so much mainstream in every field, in every industry, I think that is the most which hurting me.

Architects lack power and unity

It sometimes it could be just the thinking of the room, like, If we look at meeting places, if you organize the use of a place, by booking rooms, that would be very traditional way of someone who has a booking function. But from the perspective we work, first of all, you don't get the meetings between users, because you always meet with the people around activities you already know. But then you are left with space that is unused, outside opening hours, whatever it is. So the same stiffness, about the way you use the room because you think something to be good

And then we started when we did some part of the projects you can see on the website, and is, as I know, so close to getting the funding to build the project... is taking years to connect with foundations. So it's not perfect, but it's hopefully, about to be realized.

I really hope we'd get financed, because I would just love to see it real.

I think besides time, the price levels are just.. there's not enough money for the architects in the projects. I think this is not a new thing, but we expect architects to be artists and happy to just be allowed to draw or design and I think that that's something that really needs to be addressed. Because it's other players in the building process that are better paid and they have more profitable work.

I think it's definitely about getting on board on terms of the of the building code, I would say because once once it's a requirement for things to work socially, then it also becomes something you have to pay. And something you have to address, when you do a budget for building,

I think at the moment is almost always an afterthought. It's not something you can really market a building on, I know you can do maybe a somewhat marketing of all the great lives that can go on in this building, but it doesn't necessarily have a... there is no requirement for the developer, to go back and make the social stuff work, once they sold the apartment of once they have moved on to our next building project. They really don't go back and change stuff that doesn't work socially, at least. So I think one of the biggest challenges is getting it valued more in the profession and in the building industry, and see the development that is actually a requirement rather than just being an afterthought.

And once it becomes a requirement, I think, then the economic side of doing this kind of architecture is much more sustainable.

we work wo so much, so many hours, that is not the of interest, you could say almost because it's impossible at the moment to get if you need to get a good understanding of the client and stuff like that and local community. It's extremely difficult to get that totally financed, you can get a small part of that funded, but but the whole, it's very very difficult. Yeah, it's very difficult. But it also time requiring afterwards, after building and following it up on what worked, what didn't work. There's completely no money for that as well. So the documentation side of that process and stuff like that is very, of very low value in the Danish building sector, I would say. It's very high on terms of the technical requirements, but it's not so high on the on the social side.

Yes, we still do it. And we still work with the projects. But it's of course, we also do more classical projects. Because we have to do that as well, in terms of creating a sustainable company economy.

is a good question. I would say it is about the building code, I think we need to work a lot more about the building code to be honest. It's definitely on our minds to challenge the building code. But it's also a super time requiring task. And it really needs to be on our architect Association level that we need to address this stuff. And I think the building code has been not challenged enough by architect the last 30 years, I would say, it's become way more technical than it ought to be, I would say, at least when you don't have the social aspects as well, I don't mind technical stuff, having to have all these kinds of requirements. Sometimes it's a bit extreme, because you spend a lot of money on it. but to not have the social aspects in it, I think is a big challenge. So we need to, as a profession, and also maybe as a society to have a requirement for social stuff to be a requirement, but also a requirement for it to work.

And of course, once you talk social values and more values, you could say it's extremely difficult. It's extremely intangible. So it's so difficult to do a legal format or for that, but I think we should try.

But it's very easy to measure in terms of if you take photographs before and afterwards, it's super easy to count what you say the activities and stuff like that. And they maybe do a documentation style, hire an anthropologist and stuff like that to do a feedback on this process and how people use the space before and afterwards. It just requires money.

I think at the moment, with the building industry being as it is now. The architecture profession is really not in terms of how important it is, in terms of a national level, you will say, it's not making nearly the amount of surplus, money that other professions are making. And because it's such a shrunk industry you could say, there's really not a lot of money to go around to take out in terms of maybe doing a taskforce that want to do this. So it's really a difficult time at the moment because people don't have time because they don't have the money to have time sort to say.

it's very hard to have the Unity I would say, and it's really not going on, in terms of changing stuff together. It's not present at all. It's very much local. People try to do stuff like that. And then it's super hard to get unity around it, I would say is one of the biggest challenges.

It's very much dispersed. So but I still think we need the big dogs as well, in terms of making that change on a political scale. Definitely so.

That would be the social aspects into the building code, definitely. So if the social aspects are a requirement to work in the building code, that would be awesome. I would say that would be the greatest thing ever.

yes, let's work for a social architecture section in the building code! It started out sounding crazy but then it's not so crazy once you do you hear about it, I think.

Well, it has to do with people, and it has to do with you and I and how we can understand this whole thing, and nobody talks about it right now. People are just pointing thinkers and it doesn't help anything. So that's one part of it. And everybody needs to be engaged and and take the, take action and then take the responsibility in changing. And it also helps when you have a common project that you know is going to be circular. Because like when we did the book, like we theorized about how should we do it and we could do it like this and have a lot of ideas, but you can only get so far when it's only an idea. But like when we had a common project and a client saying that we are going to build this in a couple of years, like everybody pushed themself to the last bit to actually come up with solutions that were yeah, practic, practically buildable. And especially goes for like also the engineers and the concrete industry. Because we could have just settle at an earlier point of just saying this should work, but actually going actually like, will this work? Can we build this in a couple of years? That helped a lot in pushing the last bit.

The way we're building now we are destroying our climate. Come back to the why it is urgent. That's just how it is. And that is not responsible. So if you want to have responsible architect, you need to take responsibility and actually building something that is not just sustainable, but actually creating a better environment.

I've had that discussion with other like minded architects, that maybe it is also a result of a general lack of self confidence in the business. Because I think also we are being not threatened, but we get competition now from different angles and other professions. And I think it's time for us architects, to actually, you know, realize that we don't own certain areas, that we can open up and in taking input from others, and it would just strengthen our position and not weaken it, in a way, but it's also I think, it results from a culture, a male dominated culture, in our profession.

but it is, it does take a long time. And in that way, it costs more money for the client.

it's actually because we've experienced that which I think over the years, also, before we started J-architects that we were part of making these big reports that often ended up in the drawer, because they were not implementable. And I think that's a good argument for clients. And so if you actually want to avoid this ending up in someone's drawer and have spent half a million or whatever on it, then we should do this and that as we go along. Then it will, you know, be implemented as we work

If you asked me half a year ago, I would have said that it was that municipalities and clients in general, were not willing to pay what it costs to do process of high quality and do involvement of high quality. But I think something is changing now, because I can I can tell you that we are very, very busy right now. And and that's a good, that's a good problem.

And also, because it's not a foolproof science, it's not as if I can say that if you build the atrium, you will be certain that you will have students that will learn this 3% more than if you didn't do I mean..

especially to convince in a world where numbers are key. And that's one thing. And another thing is that it's usually two different money boxes. so the money box that goes into building and construction is one. And then there's a completely different money box that goes into what do you gain from actually having pupils students in a school gaining better grades? That is two different worlds. So it's like, in that way, it becomes actually hard to make that decision, to motivate that decision.

I've learned that there are a lot of different architectural ideals and a lot of different ideas about what architecture can and cannot do and how it should be doing it.

And that is one of the places where some architects disagree with the municipality or people from politicians and so on, because a lot of the architects on, some of the architects at least have talked to in G-area , really think that the buildings are beautiful and that the aesthetics of the buildings is it's well made.

You don't feel like you can fit in as a human being because it's too large, too much concrete and so on. But on the other hand, a lot of architects say that it's actually quite well done. And that's one of the conflicts about G-area where architects also play a role, I think, and where architects disagree also, because some architects are very much for mixing different styles of buildings, which they're doing now in G-area while others are more purist about it than they want to keep it the way the buildings and the aesthetics of the buildings and the layout of the buildings and are very critical of the way that the municipality are going about it now, whether like building buildings in between the old buildings and demolishing some of the old buildings.

How the engineers and the architects are talking about what they're doing and how they're like sometimes clashing with residents over what is beautiful and what is not, and what is necessary to have and what is not necessary to have or what should be maintained and what should be demolished and that kind of stuff, and how much should be demolished.

So there's a lot of these discussions going on, but I think part of what I learned about them is that it's very much political. What's going, and everyone wants to discuss when it's political. Then the architects the engineers the municipal officials, the politicians, the residents, everyone has an opinion. Because a lot of it is discussed in like a political sphere. So everyone can discuss architecture, everyone can say whether they think a building is beautiful or ugly.

Everyone can say what they think about what places look like or the materials are made of. Everyone has an opinion or entitled to have an opinion. So it's like it's architecture taken out of the architectural domain and discussed as something which is an engine for something political.

And that was quite interesting because one thing is what the politicians say they're doing, the municipalities saying they're doing, but it's quite a different thing when you ask the residents about what's going on. So there's a lot of the ideas and the lot, a lot of the goals that the municipality would be talking about, which would, you know, upset some of the residents even though they would say, we are doing it for the residents as well, but the residents didn't feel they were doing it for the residents. So that was one of the big conflicts I think in my material was this idea of that the municipality was attempting to be representative for everyone, basically for society for everyone living in A-city including the people in G-area . And that's kind of the role they saw themselves in. But at the same time Making decisions and attempting to make transformations that had negative impacts for a lot of the people who lived in the estate, or that at least were experienced as negative changes by many of the residents. So there's a lot about, also about the welfare state and how the state of localize state acts and interacts with its residents in this work. And there's a lot about, also about in Danish integration policies

often, it's the economy that has the power and argumentation about where a project is going, and it's finally the last say, that's the economy. So think then we as architect doesn't have the right arguments for how to measure the social layers in a project, and if we're not able to explain the value, also the economical value of the social layers, then I think it's often hard to, you know, get our ideas through. And it takes a long time, somehow too often, it takes a long time to learn how to convince.

if there is not conflicts with us then they can be internal conflicts within the team or internal political questions that we cannot answer. And then that's, of course, annoying for the project. But we as architects are very seldomly participating in that, you know, conflict, because it's political.

And we are an office led by a group of partners that are all really hands-on architects. And it's actually interesting because currently that is something we see as an advantage because the reality is now that a lot of offices are being bought by big engineers, engineering companies. And we really believe that we have to maintain that position of being like an office run and led by architects with an agenda that is very free in relation to thinking about how architecture actually can create a positive difference.

And then we are also in dialogue with the municipality because we need some external like policy to actually, to help us and also to help us get more like quality in some of the architecture we are proposing that's something that's important. Having these, yeah. A helping hand from the municipality is always important for us.

otherwise we can sometimes be struggling alone and if we struggle alone too much or too long with a client, the client would probably just choose someone else. Because there are always, practitioners or offices that are more hungry for, getting something, getting a client on board.

You feel like you are a gear in the capitalistic machine, and still all of us are. To be honest, these gears are replaceable. So, if you need.. because also, It is not that the project will stop because somebody stopped or somebody didn't like it. So, but the machine is going forward, but I am happy that more and more the environmental impact, like they can see economical benefits in be aware of environments.

Starchitecture culture

And I think it was my influence in a team that actually got them to see, well, we're actually doing something now, but we're not reflecting on it. So it's more like it has been there all the time. He's wanting to build for the people and, but it has not been made explicit in the way it became when I entered with a different profile. starting to, for instance, they have built all these conference centers, church community buildings, but as architects, they have understood

them, like singular projects. So but I saw these things as meeting places, like you can connect all these projects under the term meeting place.

like, I'm more of a humanist, rather than..I think, I don't know where I got it from, but I am more of a generalist. And I'm extremely curious, I love to learn. So I know a little about a lot of things. And a big part of what works for me is to interact, communicate with people. Whereas I would have known now is that architects are more much more introvert. Yeah, they're more into details.

It's very hard to change! And who wants it? The architects, of course, wants to build, and the more we build the bigger the revenue is but...

It's like the overall threat is that we will not be building new. Like, I think this sustainability agenda, in itself is a big challenge or big threat to architecture. But it can also be helpful in a way that there will be a quest, a logic quest for good architecture that can transform old, boring, worn out buildings into something useful in a sustainable way.

Make sure that.. don't go for yourself, architect. Like leave the ego at home, and give the building to the people who will actually use it. I think the less architect's ego you can see in the building, the better.

I would like them to be able to think less as an architect and more as the human beings they are. we have a lot of interns from the architecture school at the studio and once in some of student projects, maybe you have your assignment is to work with old people in a challenging neighborhood, and then you come up with your idea. And then you express it, you visualize it. And then you put into a designer's chair, in a context where it looks good, but it makes no sense to the people.

is a problem if the architect school provides the world with architects to arty farty and to ego, because he sees is the opposite. it's basic skills, like you need to know how to draw, to plan to, there's much more, hard working less artistic part of the skills you need. so I guess he would have something more like being able to do a lot of things and not only create artistically.

no, I would not say so because it's very much a one way street in school, you could say because you're always, you don't actually have a case in terms of like having a fictive client, you could say it's always a one way dialogue basically, between you and your, your teacher. So I think that could be interesting to see also how the school could change or the education could change in terms of understanding better what it is to have a constant dialogue with the client,

No, And it's also super hard. I mean, I also understand that you cannot get everything in school. And I don't think that should be too minded towards the business. I think it's also great to get new ideas, I would say, and also have like a safe space in school where you can develop ideas. Maybe we could do some workshops with clients and stuff like that, that maybe would be interesting and do some small discussions about maybe that could be relevant, but I don't think we should have like a client every time to approach it. I think that wouldn't work.

of course, I mean, we need to address and a need to have a discussion about it first, and then maybe people will make time, take out time from their lives. But at the moment, everyone is like in the big companies at least super stressed because there's so much work to be done. And everything is flying so fast. It's very quick architecture. So we create these loops of constantly being going in this project mode. And then you don't step back and actually maybe reflect on on your profession and your working life. I think that is the challenge today.

So learning, that's what I mean, by mistakes, like if we go too much into our own design offices, and close the doors and the windows, And we are not letting anyone disturb us in our process. I think that that could be a mistake in itself.

but it's also a symptom of stress in a way, right. Because if we are under stress, then it's quite common for people that they close down, that they don't make a project more complicated. And what really is a help for a stressful situation is to have people to help you and open it up. So that's a dilemma itself, right? And I think if we have created a culture where as architects, we go inside, and we decided ourselves to have like, I don't know what it is, but more clean process, perhaps or something like that, then I think we can we can end up less good way, more or less good place, then if we actually have continued the dialogue for longer.

I don't know for the rest of the world. But in Denmark, a lot of architects were carpenters or plumbers or had some kind of craftsmanship before they became architects. And that was the way to do it. And now we can just go the academic way as what I did. So they had a dialogue with the builders. At that point. They were one themselves, and they probably saw them just as much as a carpenter, that was what they were as much as they saw themselves as an architect. So they had like, the identity was also a part of this the construction site. I could guess. So I think that's one part of the answer.

There's like this culture that starts at University at the School of Architecture. And where the teachers really wants to teach the students the building competencies, but they don't learn the rest of it. They don't learn how to go deeper into what are the needs, what are the resources, how to not only analyze the fiscal structure, but also the social the organization and all that kind of stuff. How do you analyze that? If you work with city development, for instance, and what I missed at the School of Architecture

And I've been interviewing a lot of Craftsman builders as well for another project. And they've talked also about why that's one of the best things in their profession. It's like they can show what they've been doing. It's not just something they are type writing in a document and then sending off in the mail, but they are actually producing something. And I think it's it's probably a need also for a lot of architects and it probably is also a part of, and what do we choose, to be different people with different interests than for the ones who are choosing architecture field it's probably also to produce something and then it is a discussion whether not to produce a building also is a production you could say, right, is it also something that you can show off?

the architect should move out and not be in the center as a master, as an artist. I think that's how we are often in the in the debate and in the public debate about architecture and star architects, and you know, that whole rhetoric is based on the idea that the architect is in the center of everything

I mean, a lot has happened since I graduated. I graduated in 2005. And I was studying at this very conservative faculty, where, you know, I think I had like this crit, once a week, for half an hour, the maximum, there was no academia, there is no guidance through a professional language and research. Nothing was revealed for us, it was only about the masterpiece we're designing, and how beautiful it was. And I was like, I know, there's more to it. There's something missing here. Right? How about, you know, interdisciplinary approach? How about the other paths of architecture that's not just aesthetics and construction. Because I know that our profession really has a huge impact on people's lives, and go across a lot of disciplines, but when I was studying, that was only something you had to guess.

I think it's it was a, based on a curiosity, and a clear lack of people focus in the education that was then it was the elephant in the room, it was clear that that was the missing focus.

Because I mean, we were never stimulated to go in that direction. Because even at the critiques, no one was asking us, so have you studied it? Or did you go and visit someone? Or did you have you talked to I mean, it was all about the aesthetics, right? And how the plan was laid out..

And I think up until now or recent years, it's been a very masculine, and not only male dominant, but masculine kind of culture that where, you know, its shape and its volume, and its, you know, power and those kind of values, and we should let go of them and embrace and acknowledge other parts of the profession.

The ideal scenario is that our conversation about architecture is not about Bjarke Ingels, or how tall something is, or how amazing something is to look at. But it's about how our conversation and process of building our living environments actually is a issue for everyone. And it is not about only aesthetics, it's also about our everyday life. And that we are able to be as passionate about a small space in a small town, that actually works well. And we are as passionate about talking about that as we are about a new opera house or something like that, or that we're even more passionate about talking about the smaller space in the smaller town and the value of that as a more important topic than a new opera house built by Bjarke Ingels.

if you read into one of the most popular jobs, being an architect is high up as well as a doctor. And and I think that is also part of a problem. we are still a part of a profession that is looked upon as artists and magicians, and something that is very distant from everyday life and everyday people. i'm not saying that I would like architects to be part of a non popular list of non popular jobs. But I think it also says a lot about how we view architecture as something out of our reach and something you know, very far from ourselves something that belongs to how do you say, the intellectuals and and fine culture, museums and opera houses and stuff like that. No, it's it's all around us. It's our everyday life, it's school yards. It's back gardens, it's infrastructure.

if you've done a good job, and if you're very lucky, and everything kind of falls into place. it actually has the potential of changing somebody's life positively, but also kind of adding the dimension that, Okay, so we actually ended up having something physical kind of having a mark not just having a process and having knowledge, which is really abstract. And we actually end up having something very concrete, I think I get that. it's not what has been driving me, it's not what is driving me right now. But I kind of get that it adds another dimension to kind of wanting to make a difference and leaving a mark.

the dilemmas can be a lack of understanding of how, because architects traditionally are not academics. So even though as it is now I think Denmark anyways, there's..and you actually do get a bachelor's degree or master's degree, it's not academical in the same sense as it if you, you know, do like some of the old traditional university studies. the idea of how knowledge production, how does that happen? So how do we actually create these insights? The amount of time you know that the idea that you can just know things

And in order for me to actually deliver something which is qualified and not just, you know, oh, I stumbled across this text, and now I'm reading that and it's the only text I'm going to read and I'm just going to, you know, give the results to you as if this is what the field knows. So this whole kind of idea of what is qualified knowledge, what is knowledge that we can use or insight that we can use.. so what are the quality measures in order for me to kind of take something from academia and kind of abstract, the main insights, bring it into the world of architecture, delivering it.

So one of the challenges is that architects are so used to just picking and choosing, this is very, very stereotypical. And obviously, there are a lot of architects who are different, but because they don't have the same academic training in in being very critical on what is knowledge? And what is actually knowledge of quality? What can we actually used? So you are just picking and choosing and then kind of as a big bricolage, kind of just putting things together

Yeah. And as long as it's supporting their original hypothesis. So that's, that's something that I need in my team, we need to be very aware is that we also challenge the architects, because you can bend numbers, you can find research saying one thing, and you can find reaches saying exactly the opposite. And as long as you kind of just doing like, small, around in the different fields or discipline, you will never get like a full impression of Okay, so what are we actually agreeing on within this field? Cuz usually, nobody's agreeing on anything. So what are the main positions within here, and where can we place ourselves?

Of course, the Camden bench has been seen as a challenge to graffiti painters and skateboarders and so on. Because if someone builds something that we're not supposed to be able to use, let's find a way to use it. Let's find a way

to do what we would do to a normal bench or how we would use a normal bench. So they're like videos on the, on YouTube where you can see people who are skateboarding on them anyway, even though it's supposedly impossible to do it. And I think that's one of the places where you could say that architecture promises a lot of things about what it can do and what it can change in the world, but it will always be confronted with social life with humans and with the ingenuity, with the all the ideas that humans have in order to change their environment or use it differently than what it was meant than how it was meant to be used.

And so of course in this particular idea of the idea of how you can change things, of course the state puts up a framework, but then actually it's supposedly it's the people themselves who kind of do the work. And I think that is, is quite interesting. And I think no one's really talking about that level of logic which is involved in that because it is not really discussed whether it's gonna work. It's just, you know, taken for granted that by doing this, we'll make something that's better.

And that would be my concern about the way that we are going about this, is that actually B-area where G-area is situated, is a quite diverse in terms of socioeconomic levels. So down by the lake, the, some very large houses they're quite expensive. But the kids there, they don't go to the public school next to G-area, they go to other schools, go to private schools, maybe the people who live there don't go to the bazaar. Or maybe they do that sometimes. I don't know. But it's kind of segregated even though people are living very near each other. And I think that's an issue that is not really discussed that segregation is not only about how close we live to each other, it's also about individual behavior and values and where we go to school where we work where we shop, and so on. So there's a lot of I don't really see the support for integration being bigger just because we place rich people in the same building as we place poor people. It doesn't mean that they're gonna be friends or that the rich, resourceful people are gonna help the poor people, it might be completely different.

H-project was competition that we won. and this is also a little bit sad that in competitions, it seems like you know, all the teams that are competing with each other, they kind of, you know, in making it secret what they're doing. But the most important thing is actually that it's good building or, or urban space that is created. So we think it's an actually, we just talked about this, it is a little bit sad the way that we're doing competitions, where it's very secret what each other's to each other doing, instead of just making it you know, an open book.

we have kind of a small office. So we have, you know, to get some references, because you need references to get into, to be pre qualified to get to be allowed to do competitions. And to get references, you somehow need to do projects. So from the very beginning, we needed to collaborate. And this is also of course, how you enhance the collaboration thought because it's also a need, we needed to collaborate with bigger practices, that has more experience and has more references. This is why we have been collaborating with offices that are better at doing details, for example, that has more experience in doing details and have a lot of more references in bigger projects. So often is this type of collaboration seldomly, it's too small offices that are collaborating since, both practices probably doesn't have that many references. And for example, today, it's very hard for architecture offices to start up because somehow this EU system where you have to have five references for how cohousing of this exact square meters in this exact region. It's hard to get if you're not already in the loop somehow. So this system is very excluding for young emerging firms somehow,

When it's somehow sometimes just an XLR where they need to check, check, check, check, check. And the best reference is the one that, you know, is exactly the same square meters and exact the same assignment. And then the municipalities, of course, they want security, I understand that they want security, this is why they would like practices that has reference within exact that area or that topic. But often you can be a very good architect, often you can easily do a renovation of a school, even though you've only been doing renovation of daycare centers, for example. So, somehow, it is the EU system but sometimes it's also the municipalities that, you know, turn up the volume for how specific they want the references, because they want more security in the processes.

sometimes in the brief they ask for that they would like to see these team up, because then it's a young fresh architecture, or new ways of looking at it or new ideas. So I think the more established architecture firm, they can sometimes

see an idea and teaming up to get, you know, other type of architecture, plus, I guess also energetic people that wants to work harder for less money.

It depends on the size for us, we cannot manage these giant projects. So we need to team up to do that. And then, of course, at some point, you reach a level where, okay, now we can do these type of projects ourselves. But in larger scale, we still need help to get in.

That's maybe the egoistic part of every one of us. or it's that we have to learn how to do that. Because back in the days, architects were, you know, there was a master that was drawing the ideas and in creating the projects. And somehow the role of an architect has changed slowly, were we becoming more curators of how to develop architecture and cities and urban spaces, or curator of ideas, and maybe it's about accepting that role, and then starting sharing

Also, in architectural schools, as just many of the architects and friends I have that work very high up in the architectural industry partners at DM-architects, we joke about it, because they say, Kesper, we don't read books. Architects don't read books. So we don't actually know anything. We have ideas, we have ideas of concept, we have tools, but actual scientific knowledge, or that's not part of the whole tradition.

they don't read books on environmental processes, or psychology or how people work, no. Even though Jan Gehl was talking about cities for people, right? It still hasn't really influenced the whole field, right? So that's part of it, right.

from a historical perspective, something to do with that architecture, basically, for many decades, as far as I seen, is looked upon as an art and art doesn't it doesn't have people as an interest field. Artists, something that individuals create, to tell others something about their own ideas, right, or their perception of the world. And as long as we see architecture as like, just a field of art. I think there's a barrier there in terms of involving the user of it. You would never ask an artist, well, at least I think a lot of artists when they talk about working as an artist or creating art, they don't have an specific user in mind, they don't know how this will impact the people in a general sense. if that's if that's the mindset too when it comes to architecture, it's very difficult to, to create this architecture that has evolved around people and not evolved around the architect himself or herself. So there is a question there of integrating fields.

it can be very provocative to say, but I often find that architects can have difficulties putting language on their decisions. language that is more than just the language around aesthetics or aesthetical concepts. Like what will language more related to, and the interaction between space and human? Which, again, would demand a knowledge on, for instance, some aspects of psychology, some aspects on sociology, anthropology.

this basic idea of this room is dialogue between two people and dialogue we know demands eye contact, the possibility of reading the mimics. So that's that's the whole functionality of this room. That's the basic value of this room. That's what it's intended to do. And then you put up wall like. That works exactly the opposite way, right, right. That's just it's very low key practical example. But it serves very well as an example from another standpoint, beautiful wall, works well acoustically, but conflicts completely with the value of the space right?

Well, I can come with solid scientific research saying kids cannot sit for 45 minutes. Look at these MRI scans. Look at this. Survey. Look at that. And these, they say, well, but in this school, kids should sit down when they learn. That creates a conflict, because they're completely, they can be completely intolerant to sound knowledge and insist on staying on this idea that they don't even know where comes from. Why is a classroom arranged like this? Why I don't know.

If the client comes with a more or less finished concept, and where we can't see that there are sound evidence or sound knowledge behind that. We have to tell them to call somebody else. If they say well, for instance, we we just want we have 16 classrooms, we just want new you to renovate these classrooms with some newer furniture. Then we say call somebody else. We don't create space, we develop space and if this developmental aspect is not part of the job, you're you're better off with somebody else, because we would just ignore you.

it is, and his artistic perspective. Still, I would say focus of architecture as most as aesthetical monuments, are aesthetical object. And actually not a living machine or machine for human development. Maybe from a long from a distance, because it looks good. Sometimes we talk about chopper architecture, architecture that looks very nice from a chopper, or helicopter. But works like hell for me in this scale, where I am.

we are actually on a project where the partner of another a big architectural company, addressed us at a meeting saying, well, when you've done what you're doing, then the real architects can step into the scene and create. And I got so mad. yeah. And so so there is also still an idea of what is the architect. and the architects at our office are educated the exact same place as she was..

it also pushes to the idea of the architect and the architects responsibility. And the architects role within a building process, which again, I would say is, should be looked upon is way more complex than just an artist creating a really beautiful building. Which of course, is a little bit superficial. I know that there's way more to it than that.

You know, sometimes we're in a dilemma, because we love to talk about it, we love to, to show it. And, but of course, we're also in this world of competition all the time. And our concern sometimes is that someone else, or maybe some of the big engineers are just gonna say that they're gonna do the same,

And when you design Yes, of course, it is some joy of architecture, to design those, but there is always a big why involved in it. And, and, like, you know, when you draw a plan, you tell the story of Okay, this person, like, as an architect you have to narrate the life in that house in your head, and why you're designing it, and if you cannot relate to that life... or asking a big, why is always there?

So the joy of doing architecture, I think, is for many, the reason that they say and maybe they ignore that why, but should be aware of that, that is also the mainstream market of architecture, and it is more and more getting, with the inequality everywhere is going up. Like also in England, in the last 10 years, I can see that it come more and more value to social housing and council houses and quality council houses. So it is things are changing.

I was also lucky to be in this environment that it is a value to like, you know, it is you should go against some of the egos that they teach you in architecture school that architect is this puppet layer, like modernistic view of architects that is a superstar and decide that, yeah, you should do this, this is I have the answer for all the questions. And when you want to say yes, it is, you change the role of that one who has the key to all the locks, to somebody who is more a catalyst, who is adapted to the, to the question like it is, like, should I make a cool architecture for my portfolio with the money of the client? And people pay for it? Or should I have a more humble one? This may be the portfolio wouldn't be that flamboyant in the portfolio but the benefits goes to people? or How can I keep this balance between these two that I give the quality of the more interesting architecture to people? why I keep economy and social benefits for them?

Other challenges

I think if we look on a national level in denmark, I know, some of the big foundations in denmark are having a really difficult time doing community projects and doing what you say, collective projects in not the big cities, but in the cities for maybe 50,000, and stuff like that, because a lot of the young people moving there are only moving there, because they can afford the housing. And once they have worked for maybe 10 years, they sell the house and move on to a bigger city or a better house, you could say in terms of at least its how they view it, and that makes it incredibly difficult to get a backbone in some of those semi large cities in Denmark, while in the cities, there's usually a strong backbone of people and also a community of people knowing each other. And that is also the case in many rural areas, I would say as well. Of course, there's challenges everywhere. And it's not a perfect illustration, but usually it is the medium sized cities in Denmark that struggles with the community projects and also having, so they become these sleeper cities, you could say, where people only go to live, and then they go, they go to work, and then they really don't get involved in the neighborhood, because they know they're gonna move in five or 10 years, and then they

don't want too many relationships. So it's very much what you said this sort of like understanding that the suburbia is like a place where you only have to go out of your loadge where when you want to be social, its not something that is required for that community to work

I think that is one of the core challenges is that if you're only required to be social, when you want it, I think that is where the many things challenges happens, because then you only involve in the surroundings once it fits you. I think that is something that is leads to maybe a broken conversation, I would say locally.

Maybe the suburbs, I know in the suburbs is way harder to do community projects than the city center, for example, the city center is rather somewhat, it's easier to do a community project in the city center than it is to do maybe in the outskirts of A-city, and also in maybe some the major medium sized cities in Denmark is very difficult as well.

Definitely so. I mean, once you have to have a certain amount of money to buy an apartment, you create a very homogeneous resident neighborhood, I would say.

today what we base it on, it is actually maybe an anthropologist that's been visiting the building for a week and doing studies. Maybe it is three stakeholders that has experienced the use of the building. And then they come up with ideas and requests for the new building, that's to be done. But that's a very small amount of knowledge, right? So therefore, the consultant usually takes what comes from another program and stamps it into it at that on top of it. Not yet from the data, from the schools, because we are still looking into those . No actually because of the covid and the lockdown of the schools it's just recently they have been, we started before COVID and then we restarted. Yeah. So one year and a half has been the behavior has been totally different than because people have been grouped in different ways and so on.

I think that the artistic approach needs to be addressed as a sustainable way to actually approach architectural properties. But it's a weak, it's for the sensitive people. It's a difficult way, it's difficult to communicate an art piece because if you can communicate it, it's often because it's not good enough to explain itself.

If it gets the upper hand, usually numbers get the upper hand of feelings. So we have to be the guardians of those who don't have numbers, I would say.

It was initiated by something that was tangible. Yeah so yes. And I think really, we have to, because there is a process of it, which is a natural process of the technical technological development, that we are making things imaterial because we're putting them into computers. So we have to have some something to counterbalance that. Because if we don't, and we can always see we've all already lost contact to nature. Like we are totally disconnected from nature, right? We live in cities. And and we move to cities. Right? And, and a lot of kids in Denmark hasn't have never been out in the woods. They don't know, they can't tell the difference on mushrooms. And like they have no idea of birds names, whatever. And so, counterbalancing this imateriality, I would say ask the question of, yes, the physical world as educational, or, because because we need to get the world back into our hands. If we are to understand because it's not getting less and less complex this world, right? The complexities is rising. And if we have to help ourselves, reconnecting, we have to reconnect through our hands. And as an architect you can do that, if we do it right.

that's a more physiological perspective that humans are not, we're not designed to sit in the same position for a long time, at the same. We're designed to move, but most spaces are created on fixating the body.

it's not natural, but the architecture around you doesn't really allow you to behave differently. And if you started to behave differently, and listening to your body, it might come into conflict with with a building and the other uses of the building. Because a building also is a keeper of culture, right? And a keeper of values, as you said before, right. And if there is a general idea of the value in here, and you kind of hack that because your standpoint, or your point of departure is you need of your body and not that the idea of values or culture in the building, there's this constant

clash. So either you adapt, and your body lose, or your body wins, and you are in some kind of constant conflict, or you start a cultural change if you want to do that, right.

from a perspective of language, what does a long hallway say to a kid, it says run. So that's the impulse. And that's what the space says. So the kids run. And that's the naturally impulse. and everybody tells him not to run. So here you have a conflict about pedagogical values and regulations. And then the actual invitations or the affordance of the space, right. So we have to have these to fit together. So either we change the space. So it fits the pedagogical regulations, and we have to make a space that does not invite us to run. Or we said, okay, we don't have money to change the space, then we have to change the pedagogical regulations saying, Okay, in this hallway, you can run and then we solve the conflict.

Yeah, a conflict between the language of space and the language of values. Or the ideas of behavior, and then the behavioral affordances

Well we will create conflictual spaces, right? which will take a toll on us. And we never necessarily see it. And we always try to adapt. And we always try to fit into anyway

So a common complaint in Denmark when you do competitions is that the traditional engineers, they're much too slow. So they can't work in the early phases, because they have tools that are sort of designed between project documentation and calculations. And they can only work in the later stages when everything is fixed.

The problem with most engineering companies that will give you results to three decimal places. That's not the sort of thing you need when you're doing the competition. Now, you need something that shows you're going in the right sort of direction. So like the traditional experiences, you ask the engineer to do energy calculation in the competition. And they come back two weeks later, with a number of three decimals. And your design is totally different at that point.

And there's, there's always this issue that the engineering sector there, they're divided up into separate like mechanical, electrical, and there's like construction. And then there's probably some subdivisions within those. And in the large engineering companies, these areas that are totally independent sectors, where they never talk to each other, and it's usually us architects that have to end up trying to, to make everything to merge yeah, and that sort, you can see, the complexity creates a lot of problems in the running of new buildings where things don't quite work properly and you cant figure out why.

The problem for the architect branch and the architect schools is this balance between architecture and the technical content of buildings, because you can sort of see this process where like the engineers, they've been very good at increasing the number of areas that are needed in buildings. And when you do that, you get to pay more the fees. So they're able to..so you could be scared, one could be scared, that's like, traditionally, materials, Yeah, that's always been the architects role constructing detailing. Now, where we have to do LCA, if it's the engineer who do the LCA, then you could expect or that is going to be the engineers that start specifying the materials. So then, there's definitely some dilemmas there. So the way I think there's quite a lot of people here in the office, they don't think the two Danish architect schools, they're not producing people with high enough technical quality competencies. There's too much focus on heart architecture, rather than real architecture. Well, you know, the reality of having to work in the architecture branch. So we have a lot of people coming from D-school, for example, the School of Architecture there, because they are really good architects, and they can do some of the technical stuff and understand it. It's it's a bit worrying for the two schools, I would say.

it's really difficult, isn't it? I think the problem is that.. in my experience when I was in architecture school, there was like, a lot of the old professors, they were totally against having anything technical, involved in anything to do with anything on any projects. And there was like this, it was almost like an insult to say that you should think about anything like that. And I'm not sure whether it's the same still but, maybe you need to be a bit more pragmatic, yeah.

ARCHITECTURAL APPROACHES

Critical architecture

And quality in architecture is a big thing now. I've been like, the outsider, stepping in, I understand that they don't want to produce.. it is not the quantity of square meters, it's the quality of square meters, that it's important to them, there's not the ambition to build more, it's, it's about building better. They have, there's always this dialogue between business and architecture as art. I think if you can look at different studios, with obviously less weight in the everyday workplace, but I think art is important. the Artistic of architecture is very important to them. from how discussions run at the office, it's very often it's about this

So I think his values being very only , how to say in english.. like no tricks, no fake, no greenwashing, you know, like,

keeping it honest, and open approach to every client and project. Yeah, honest is a very good word,

we are bringing partners together for projects. we are facilitating the vision making, idea making process, we're helping them fundraise for their project. So it's, and so like, if you have traditional building process, we have like, expanded it, so that we are much more engaged in the early stage. And what I bring in, we also engage me with the stage after the built project. So that's, I think, we have broadening the perspective of architecture. That's a process.

And I think the studio has become very aware that when you like, the organization cycle that you grow, and then you die. That's tough when you're mature organizations, and you need to reinvent yourself. like, you have to add new things on or throw some things away. So the studio has become more aware of what which projects not to take on. And that's part of the process of becoming more aware of its core competency, and their mission.

Yes, I think the priority is we want clients who want quality.

That's less interesting, unless the job is to make new ways of housing, to be interesting, it has to have some kind of ambition and quality or the newness of new ideas. So we try, the architects try to distance themselves from mainstream. that's what I sense that they are, and as a more mature company, they have built market precision that no longer need to take all those crappy jobs that you that you need to take in your your early stage of business development.

And of course, you distanced yourself from a lot of market opportunities.

would like to look back on works that have this red thread, or the string going through so... you cannot buy into building everything. there's an artistic ambition of you can follow on work as a continuous play and development from a starting point to an ending point.

Yeah. And I think what they experienced now as architects is that as you find yourself your mission and your take on architecture, then people choose you, because of your references. So this more mature stage of the studio's life. People come because they like what you do. So that gives you some kind of space to move on in the artistic work into others more as... architecture as an art.

So you can actually improve the use of the building just by changing the way you organize it. So for instance, making space free, and perhaps emphasize,

So in some buildings, you don't need to change a lot, its just about the way you think the building or the daily use. And yes, the joke at the studio is that actually an end goal or maybe where architects need to end is that we don't build anything new. We can continue building or we can fix them in a sustainable approach where we should never build new buildings. You can see that now in the market that everyone is talking about transforming buildings rather than building new.

So the project is there on the website is like okay, we will reuse these buildings, we will just add flexibility to it from what we have.

So, I'm trying to convince them that you could actually send some.. you are in another market, this is more like organizational management, leadership, whatever, where price level is higher the margin is better. You should think about integrated into your existing products. Yeah, like you have these stages as an architect, where you know that I cannot expand the design process too long. But if you think of it as this is not part of my design phase or ideation phase, this is before this is a different product. This is entering another market field, which today belongs to management consultancies organizational.

And counseling, as part of the process that I'm familiar with, is higher priced. It's like, the checks we send are just bigger. And so they're, by entering early stage of the process, architects can benefit from more time, higher price of the product, the better quality of the project

But it can also be helpful in a way that there will be a quest, a logic quest for good architecture that can transform old, boring, worn out buildings into something useful in a sustainable way.

and that's why I think entering other marketplaces is a great way of dealing with this challenge.

putting a focus on the value of architecture. architecture has becomes something that people actually know a little bit about. that they take an interest in. So I think that more and more people are aware of architecture as a quality and want more quality in architecture

I think that's, that's actually a need, you need to be able to add some more strategic thinking. Because that's where the clients start their projects. Its is in their organization in the field of work,

I think it's about explaining the idea. Right now, we're just trying to describe my role in the company and my services better, to make it clear to the client, that we do something different, it's a usefull service product.

But this is different, this is something that you will ordinarily have your own department, HR strategy, doing or you would consult someone, management consultants. So we need to make it clear to the client that this is not a product that we can sell to you at the normal price, or as an integrated part of the traditional building process. This is something different. But it makes really good sense that it is integrated into working with architecture and the building.

And I think what we're doing right now we're taking the right approach, because we're introducing the new service to projects. So clients will, along the way, get to know that we can give them something different, from what they expect from architects.

I think from my outside view in coming into the office, something I can tell is that there was a change in their screening of clients has become much better. So they are experiencing to say no to someone.

But do they want an innovative solution to that? So it's not only about how the client think about architecture and the budget large enough to secure a quality architecture, It's also about are they ambitious? Are they front runners? And I think that comes down to where we started. The mission, the core values. It's about moving on and beyond.

which to me is only a legitimizing way of doing things. And ethically, that's wrong, we're not doing that.

But we can take it on our part, to make sure that there is not the starting point to the client, but to the users, that they're actually able to see that if time changes and management idea vision strategy changes, then we already prepared the building for different views.

nothing crappy, like, please don't put crap more crap into the world! quality, aim for quality and then of course, you can define quality in many ways, but quality would be something that is somehow timeless in its aesthetics. Or maybe maybe just interesting over time, it can be a modern interpretation of something, but with overlasting value

Not building if not necessary. Not tearing down to build new.

I think responsibility in architecture is also the subtle approach. I think I said something in one presentation that its the impact of architecture instead of architecture itself, that is important. So if I enter a space, it should be the way it feels, looks, smells, rather than the tools and tricks the architect did to create this atmosphere or impression, I guess, rather than being starstruck over the architecture.

Of course, I hope everyone will want more beautiful architecture that you have not don't end up building, as you said, like the fool in the building industry with a lot of the same fucking boring in less quality buildings and see that are the same thing whether it's in Copenhagen, London, Dubai, like there's so much mass production of square meters, that I hope we would be able to not see that in the future and i hope that would be a quest for architecture to be a completely different kind of products.

So you have always have to distill, whatever it's given to you of information, maybe from social worker, maybe from the antropologist, and stuff like that, and then transform it into a physical space. That is our key role, in society. So it shouldn't go through too much into this because then we lose our skills in our profession. So it's hard, fine line to balance, I would say, and, of course, different from project to project how far you go.

well, I'm super curious in terms of programming architecture. And in order to program architecture, well, it's extremely important to know the user behind it. And I think that is this curiosity that really drives the the work in terms of how to explore the program and how to challenge the program, how to always work with the client, how to challenge the client, and all this, I think is extremely interesting in terms of creating a good foundation for a project. So it's curiosity, I would say is the driving force behind what we do or want to do.

they wanted to have a new entrance space, basically. And then we changed that in terms of Okay, can we make it, instead of only focusing on one aspect? Why not focus on what's the core issue here? Is that is so strangely planned. So it's like, how can we keep the quiriness of this? Because it's also has its charm that you have to go up through all kinds of stairs and all kinds of stuff, but how can we make it more powerful maybe to come to the school? And how can we make it more logical for new students or parents when they enter, how to enter that space and stuff like that.

Yes there is. But of course, it's always about the financial part of it as well. what we really looking for is financial freedom in terms of also being able to say no, because how you spend your time is, for us the most important part. And, of course, we want to be paid fairly. But we also want to spend our time on the projects that we feel are giving back to us as well. So it's not purely about doing architecture, because that is the just what, what needs to happen. But it's also about having the great projects because through experience you find out that the right client and the right side is super important in terms of having a nice working life.

Yeah, you're basically we could say, you say you become what you eat, you also become what you draw and what you're engaged with, and that is tottaly true.

think it's on a project to project basis, basically. But I think as if we talk provided responsible architecture on then it should be up to the architect to have a certain standard or a certain code of how, how the profession works. I think there should be an understanding of the greater good within the profession, and that responsible architecture should be discussed constantly. But it cannot be defined, I would say, I don't think it can be defined, just like sustainable architecture cannot be defined. On a universal level, it can be understood and evaluated on a project or project level. I would say,

Yeah, sometimes it's possible, sometimes it's not. And then it really must depend on the client, I think. But sometimes, we also work in a very pragmatic way, I would say in some clients. Of course, when you have a certain philosophical standpoint, you can only move them so much. But sometimes I also believe there is value in moving them in a small bit, rather than just ignoring them totally, I would say. So some clients, you can move further, but some some...it is also important that if maybe if it's a big organization that you are just moving slightly. So I think there can be value in both. But of course, if you look at it from a universal perspective, I don't think it's possible to have a certain standard to what to do, I think it needs to be on a case to case level. And it will need to evaluate if this is okay for you to accept working under these restraints

We also know that different learning styles is often related to educational spaces, but in our world, just as much to a space related to work, right? Therefore those learning styles has also learning styles are something that has been developed, like the understanding of them two decades, three decades ago by Dunn and Dunn.

So the most sustainable building you can actually build is actually not building right, at all. Maybe it's probably, the next is actually retrofitting something that is good. And then if you have to build, you have to build for a very intense use. Meaning that right now 50% of all spaces in homes are probably, maybe even more, are probably empty. What's going on at your home? And when we leave office, what's going on at the office, right?

But what we did was to take all the space, the 20% plus what we do have, and start to make new functionalities in the office. Meaning that we were to stimulate the collaboration between our employees, the very reason for them to go to work.

The new thing is that we overlapped actually the material collection together with a space you can actually have a meeting in.

So the idea is actually related to that place has something to do with memory. That's one part of it, creating the space. Then of course, the whole design about , what type of learning? We talking about active learning here because this is a, at university level.

We do have a research unit. Most offices being architecture, being anything today has a research unit because we are in a sort of like accelerated evolution. There's a lot of things going on right now.

So that makes it a fast-paced thing. So therefore the whole idea of understanding contemporary society and possibilities and technology is a competitive edge in, many companies.

The innovation and space in the center, that's actually our real research, right? Because then we start to look into brain studies and so on, and how the psychology of space and so on. And we've talked to a lot of different researchers over the world and compile it into the publication that we are almost finishing now.

But feeding back into this idea or the technology platform, common sense is that we think that currently we have an unhealthy way of understanding densification of the city environment. So what I came from is saying that we have a lot of idle space or inter spaces that are not working right now. If you could start to program in a different way, so you could densify the city more without building means that you just have to use each square meter more. So instead of talking about the quality or the value of a square meter, you don't say euros per square meter, you say, activity per square meter. That's the quality of space

So the last part of it is of course, how can I was saying how can we make a dense city without building? And the whole idea here is like what we did here. We've removed 20% of the working spaces in our office by actually excavating them at home, which means that you could actually build less, 20% less floor meters if you just took it as a general idea. If you needed to have community spaces, you could actually use meeting rooms from an office. Which if they are not inside the office, but if they are at the entrance. And then you don't need to build that.

So the whole programming of the city starting to use things more, but it needs to, you need to have an understanding what's available.

it feels like urgent and we need to do it. So for me it's some way it's not a question if we should do it, it's more like we should do it. Yeah it's difficult to say like when it started but also because it started so early in school it feels like we need to do this and it feels important. And also give more of a purpose to the architecture.

And also working with it for so many years and all the way through architecture school and now in C-architects, what interests me in the architecture is what's behind the actual looks of the building. I'm an architect, so of course I think the building should look good, but for me it's only good architecture if there's also something behind the facade. So it's interest me like how to put together and how it works. For example, if, is the facades self shading or does it produce its own energy? Does it like, again, push biodiversity or does it create a positive impact on the environment, but also the people inside? Like for me, the architecture needs to do more than just be good looking. So I've dedicated myself to all the knowledge behind the architecture because I think that's important. But also, again, I'm an architect, so it needs to look good. But now I just know that there's people that are better at designers than me, but I can supply all the knowledge behind it.

So basically what we are doing through our design is just we are enabling stuff for the future. Just, we are just enabling a lot of possibilities. Like we are enabling first of all, like we just want the buildings to change because that's the most sustainable that if we don't take them down. So we just want to make them as flexible as possible to make them as relevant for as many years as possible in the future. So you can say the plan B is that we can then take down our building and reuse the materials.

I think there's different levels of it. When you're responsible, the least you can do is just be sustainable in the, in it's also sounds very depressing, but like at least you can be as sustainable as it's possible within the frame for your projects. I think that's like a bare minimum. But I think to be actually responsible it is to do as much as you can and... I want to have that at least climate neutral building is like the minimum because otherwise it's not responsible. my hope is just to we get a much better building culture than what we have now. I really think we have a very low key and also kinda of stupid building practice. I really want to inform it a lot more that we are building a lot more consciously, both in terms of climate, biodiversity, also, like they can actually adapt people's need. Like we are looking at the people inside, how are they doing? How can they do better? Is it a nice environment? How can they interact with their surroundings? I just think we need a much more intelligent building culture than than we have now. And then we just I want us to think before we draw actually, because I don't think we're doing that all the time right now, sometimes we are just drawing cause we need to solve a program or something like that. I really, yeah. Want us to think before we draw, maybe it can be sum down to that.

it would like to just say yeah, think before you draw and what interests me is the thinking that is behind the drawing. Also what I touched upon before, like what interests me is all the thinking that's behind the architecture, not just how it looks, but how does it affect the world around it, but also the people inside it. And I think we need to think about that to have responsible architecture. And that for me, building is only interesting. If we think about all these things like it can look good, but for me it's only good architecture if you've thought about all the things that behind it and how it affects people and plants and environment and climate and biodiversity. Everything else, yeah. Again, you just need to think about the impact you have on your buildings. And I don't think it's enough that it just, that it's only looking good. You need to think about all your other implications that a building have.

And so, so we are pretty reflective, I think compared to a lot of architects who are more like in physical elements of what shapes and what materials and that kind of thing, we are more like, Okay, what is the use? And who do we need to bring together? Who are the people who has the needs? Who has the resources? How can we mix this? How can people and get the best platform to have a common ground?

helping people through methods to reflect and come up with new solutions for the work life, but also for the personal life. That's, that's really interesting for me, and I think that gives meaning to my job, or my work life as well, to help people in this way. And with this projects, interns we have had, and people we've had that on different summer schools and courses and stuff like that.

So I think it's not so much about, maybe being better than than other people, but giving them tools or sharing, you know, knowledge so they can reflect and they can they can give more meaning to their life. I think that's important for me.

Because there we are also interested in the holistic approach itself. So it's not only the physical ways also, how do we organize? How, how do we meet together with other people? What a the social life around it? What's the economy around it, the economy is a key factor in our society, how do we think that into the projects as well. So thinking about all kinds of different areas that are not related to architecture, but are essential if these physical structures is going to work.

So we need to bring everything in. Who has then the power to drive it? or How can I make it more authentic? So people can go out and see as you realize. this also is kind of a dialogue or an exchange between the very facilitated form and then the history and the people that are there today? How can we mix this so it gives a higher meaning. So it's not just a shell, I think that's that there's also meaning inside, it's not just nice on the outside. And sometimes we have the best intentions, and then we do it, like a nice concept.

I think that's a really good example of how to not always start building something but start using something before it's actually there to find out what our needs, can we use a snow suit? Is that a better alternative for a building? And in 90, 80%, it is a better solution.

it's important to understand what is the meaning? Why do we do it? What's the purpose? And not just do something, it's not just doing the tasks that you are handled? But you're like, Okay, but is this the right task? It's important for me not to make a good solution to the wrong problem. And but actually to find out what is the core in this area? What is the inner core, what we need to understand here?

I think that's more important for me to to help people in strengthening this meaning in the way that it is for me to build something that I think is beautiful. So I don't have this drive of putting my mark somewhere, I have more of a drive to actually maybe strengthen what they already have for helping them to do better, or in a nicer way or support something that they think is valuable.

I think, like building sustainable is important. But it's but that's one part of the sustainable solution. Another part is to build not more than what we need. So I think there's some future experts saying like, we're going to build double of our square meters within the next 30 years or something. And I think it's also important to look at what resources do we already have? Can we use them?

Okay, is that the solution you're looking for? Or do you need to organize in some other way based on what you already have? I think that sometimes the architecture is the solution to it. But not always. And I think that people need to have that reflection time. And they can use that also to find out if they are like, okay we would really like to have this common house, and then you say, okay, but then start trying to work like you had it, they will then have some learnings about also, okay, when we're going to build it, then this needs to be thought into the project. So they will learn something from just doing it. Even though it doesn't really work, it work like 30% of the way, then it would still be a lot of learnings that are valuable to the actual building afterwards

And when you must ask yourself also, is this a project where all my dreams come through of what I think is important? Or is it a project where I have some competency that can highten the quality and add value to it in my way. I think you would die of stress, if you should be frustrated about all projects that are not like living up to your stan-

dards, because that's also a part of being a specialist with nerds, with competencies and stuff, that you, if you roll out everything, there really needs to be a special project. And often it's like, okay, now we are focusing on these 20% or something. Right? So, I think it's, you need to find out okay, what's what's interesting in this project, and where can I make myself of use?

Yeah, so I think, yeah, part of it is solving it out itself, because they don't even know that my competencies could be a part of the project, right. So I don't need to be frustrated about that they are building the way they are, and for the process, whatever they are doing. So yeah, I think it was choose your battles, and try to find the spots where you feel like you're doing the most meaningful job

I will say, if we are in a project, where we think, Okay, if this should be a test we should do, then you should implement this or that in the process, then we would say it, we are honest to the people we're collaborating with. So it's not like we need to have all the say, but we also have a duty in telling them what we think is the best way for a project. And if they would then rather do something else with some other companies, then they should do that. So if you don't like our method, then you should choose someone else because that's the way we are working. So we would always give them our best advices.

I think that's important also, that you do your counseling on what you believe is the best way to do it.

sometimes you need to ask yourself, where you want to make the biggest change, if it's together with someone who doesn't see the value in what you're doing, or you want to work together with someone who really sees the value. And then you can get further and you can make a project of example, that maybe the one that cannot see the value, maybe they can learn from it afterwards. So I think that's also important to decide with yourself, where do I put my energy? what's important for me? What do I want to change? Where do I want to put my apples

I think with just the process competences, is just like having people to talk about stuff that's out of their eyesight, then you're already enriching the project. So it's also about saying, okay, not all projects are like 100%, nice projects with all this sparkling dust and all that kind of shit around it. Sometimes it's just, it's just a job, where you are a really good a counselor in helping them to a better project. And then you can still lift the project. So if it was like 15% good seen from a vision point of view, then maybe you can add on five points, or maybe 10 points or something. So it's not like you need to scale up all the way to 100. So if they already are ambitions to like, maybe 95%, then how can I add on 15 points to that? And lift them up? So how can I make the projects better, but not like out of proportions to what they are ready to accomplish better.

I think it's sensible, mostly, like, I think we should always act responsible. Sometimes we need to do something, maybe not so responsible to learn something, you know, go out of our comfort zone, it could seem like it's not responsible. And but in the end of the day, I would say like, what is responsible? It could be a lot of things, right? you could build something completely strange. But then in the end, it turns out that it's really good for the community. And I think that will still be responsible architecture.

So I think you need to know, the different phases of your project and ask yourself, can I take responsibility for this part. And I think the most of us know with ourselves if we can take responsibility for bits and parts in the process if we care about them. And sometimes, we're just like, closing our eyes, because we can't handle it. And I think that's also what I mean about not being so afraid about the complexity of projects, we want to understand and we want to know more and then by understanding it we can have better solutions.

I think that you should continue to be curious. Curious about all kinds of stuff. I think that's the most important. And then ask people, what's important for them. Also along the road, not just in the post. If you are given a task, and then you can integrate that into a process that you can be curious, I think that's important that you can make space for people to also give their opinion and tell what's important for them. I think that makes them stronger project with a broader common ground. And I think that's that's a good starting point. And I hope we will have society were is

perhaps less materialistic, where we see the core values more clearly, as our starting point. It was all about growth in the last decade, I would like to have something else in the center that is not just growth. I think that is a poor value itself... But yeah, always interested in discussing different views with people. So like, make a debate or whatever to discuss whatever is important for people and how they see the world

I think it's also based on the the need of in going to work every day you want it to be fulfilling. And I thrive with the actually having a connection with people getting to know people. So often what happens also is that we create personal relationships with some of our clients, or some of the people we are we meeting up in the different communities we're working in. And, you know, they become friends afterwards. I think it's paths part of it, that you want to meet people that you are curious about people that you, that also helps you maintain a dialogue and a conversation.

And then a need for actually wanting to create relationships and understanding people and yeah, a curiosity

it's really satisfying. When you work like we do, you get a lot of knowledge. And it's slowly when you then you know, working with these design processes, the problems they appear, and the solutions appear quite naturally. And then, of course, the leaping point in a way is that we because we ask.

I know other architects throughout my career in J-architects, that has asked me so what are you, you know, what is the role? What is your role? If you are only facilitating in basically then are you giving people the job of being an architect and what about you? we still have a very clear responsibility, I think, and it may be an even stronger responsibility to make sure that all of these identified issues and all of these ideas that we are able to collide them and to give them shape and to make them valuable and aesthetically beautiful still, and we're and still be able to be realized within the budget and within us. So, we still have a very clear role. And I've never met anyone in the processes that we have done that felt I was not clear in my role as an architect, I often feel that people have very much respect for what we do, and they listen and, but I think it's also in the balance of us listening to them, and then advising or saying, but we have two problems here that are relating a little bit, you have 10 ideas that actually, for me looks like they're in the same category, we could then, you know, do this. And then you actually solve more problems than one and you satisfy more people than just one. And people are like, Oh, yeah, that's a, we can see that, it becomes clear, right? And our role as architects become very clear.

So so there's sort of often in the office building a bridge between I think, our different professions, but throughout throughout the years, we can clearly see that we become hybrids. So of course, I get experienced with the different disciplines within Ethnology or anthropology, and vice versa. That doesn't mean that our ethnologists are doing the designing, and we're doing the you know, the data treatment and the data conclusions and the whatever but still in a way, we are collaborating and understanding each other's language and different sort of fields of operating

it was conflicting because in our contract with the municipality, we were not allowed to design projects that would increase the budget for maintenance for the city. And I mean, so, it took us a long time to convince the municipality that well then we can hardly design anything because everything we do need to maintenance but you have a golden opportunity now because you have a community that supports the idea of for instance, trash cans. And this is actually a good solid sustainable solution came out of our potential conflict. So now we are always aware, you know, in our contracts, what kind of space to maneuver and do we have in terms of making decisions, or who are we allowed to talk to when do we need some kind of authorization before? Is there someone we need to communicate with every time? so based on our experience, we're very clear on how our contracts should be designed. So we have the space to maneuver in these possible conflicts that, of course, arise when you work that closely with the community and your client on the one side, often being a municipality, and then a group of citizens

But I think also, we've learned over the time that conflicts are a source of knowledge, and not something that you should stay out of, actually you should face it, face it head on, because it gives you sometimes creative and sustainable solutions. But it also gives you insight into different interests. And yeah, and as I said, it's a source of knowledge more than something you should avoid, or that is dangerous.

I think it's constantly improving our tools and communicating the value of the process over the final physical product.

So that's one thing is, is the curiosity of trying to understand what is the world about, what are kind of like all the little building blocks? What are they made off? And how could we put them together in different ways.

you're kind of working in that cross field, but the idea that if you actually make an effort to try and understand.. So this curiosity of the other, trying to understand the other and kind of translating that understanding and that knowledge into a new solution just makes a lot of sense to me.

So value wise it, it's, it's completely kind of within my set of values that the whole curiosity I get to learn every time we do a project.

So I think that very much boils it down to how I use the anthropology and kind of a little bit saving the world, but obviously in kind of more realistic, pragmatic baby steps. And just being driven by a wish and a need to kind of make a difference in the world.

I think a lot of people can have a job and do like, have a profession and kind of divide between their personal life and personal values. And obviously, they can't be conflicting, but

Yeah, but I think but then that is when people get stressed, that's when people get ill. And when they change their jobs. I mean, that leads to something that can't be like a steady equilibrium for a very long time. So for me that is the main, the main motivation, or the main driver for the work that I do is that it kind of needs to be aligned with my personal values. Because otherwise, there's no point in the world for me to spend that much time of my life having a job.

then at the same time, I'm very pragmatic, so I'm very, I am flexible. So I'm also very good at spotting and kind of focusing on those may be sometimes very thin, very thin, spreaded values that are somewhere and just kind of like focus on that, but I think the good thing about being an antropologist is that if you're doing antropological work anyway, if you're kind of doing research, then anything can be interesting because you're trying to understand, so if that is in place, I think that can be that can kind of keep me going for a long time, but I also need the kind of changing the world making a difference. And if that doesn't happen within a kind of reasonable amount of time, then I need to do something else.

Well, as I said, with the example of the children's hospice, I think the the projects that they take on is one thing. So what kind of projects do they engage themselves in. But other people acknowledge that we are the kind of company who will take on projects like the children's hospice, which is really, really small project, but which we actually invested heavily in having me and also my employee being involved.

So I think this idea of taking on these projects, these kind of different projects, which economically, that's not, my impression is that is not necessarily how we make our money. But obviously, it's also seen as an investment, because we are a company, it's not like we would take on a lot of projects just do not because we're good people, obviously there it needs also to be some kind of business aspect within it. So it needs to be good reference or prestigious, blah, blah, all of this, which I think is also very important as a company is that you you actually make these worlds, you make them meet and make it because that makes it sustainable.

whole mindset of respect of the limits of your own knowledge, and your own profession, your own expertise, the curiosity of then having an approach where you actually invest in trying to understand the users and the different stakeholders, I think those are kind of the most important alignment, so to speak.

to research into a kind of map the whole value chain of architecture, kind of how does architecture create behavior and practices? And how does that then create value? value, meaning different things, but also economical value?

we started out doing is is always to do an analysis of the building program or the if there's not a building program, the project description or whatever to do an analysis on what is it? What kind of impact are they looking for? What is the implicit hypothesis within the building program? Where are the holes in the building program? So what do we know from research that would be relevant that maybe hasn't been put into a building program? In this case, the building program was very thorough, and they had very much kind of designed the building program based on a lot of research already.

And we did some more research well, desktop research, doing literature reviews, trying a literature searches and found that there's not that much literature and children's hospice connecting to architecture and the kind of physical...but we did find some really interesting research which Very much showed us that we needed to focus on the staff rather than the building program, which is obviously very sympathetic because it was the staff who had done the building program. So obviously, they were focusing on the patients and the families. But what what research showed was that you actually need to focus on the staff and their well being in order for the quality of the treatment to be good. So this was kind of like a hole that we found through research that we could then dive into as architects together and say, Okay, so what, what should that mean, and this kind of became a focus point in our in our concept, and there were different holes that we kind of saw.

And then we did some, a field visit to the only other children's hospice in Denmark, in Copenhagen, and did an interview, thorough interview and had a kind of a tour, and realize that homeliness in this context is something completely different. And without going into depth, that kind of gave us more knowledge. And then we did another field was a visit to an ordinary hospice, the whole team again, so this kind of diving into the context and trying to understand it, it's the work that we did there, and helped the architects to kind of thorough... so I did a workshop together with them, where we presented all this knowledge that we had and and help them translate that into design questions and spaces of possibilities that we they could then base their focus, they're following a design process on. In the meantime, they obviously had started sketching, and there was also a field visit before all of this started with the architects and one of the my employees or my colleagues, who was also taking part in that. So all of this was going on, but kind of like in a very compressed time frame. And then we took, we took part in all the different both like phone meetings and workshops with team but also kind of like all sorts of kind of ad hoc decision points. So should we do this? Should we do that? And so our role was always to be kind of like, so what, from a user point of view, or from a staff point of view? What do we know about their needs? And so what should we do? so basically what we provided was a decision support knowledge for the architects and the project manager to kind of because there's so many decisions that you kind of do in these processes, just kind of qualifying the decisions.

And then we helped write the material for the brief of the presentation helped to do the presentation, actually, I was part of then presenting the project and the ideas, both our process, how had we done this, and also the research knowledge that we built the project based on that.

the initial user involvement process, which was just very short and brief. And also, because I think that the project was small, but also because we've done so much homework, but the need to actually adjust the project a lot was was very small. And I think what what they said was that they felt very much heard and seen. So I think they felt quite safe with the suggestions or the concept that we had come up with.

and my colleague on board is just yet another investment into the competition. And having said that, the general idea was actually that we, with the work that we put into, it can help optimize the process and make decision making faster and maybe get a bit obviously more qualified, but but maybe also faster, so that you don't make a decision and then have to go back on that decision. And then spend time getting the project again to that level so that you can more or less kind of like a waterfall. That's the idea anyway

So we could have done all the work that I did, and still have a crappy project in the end. So what it takes is really really gifted architects who actually managed to take the knowledge or the insights and transform it into architecture, which is convincing, which is actually when people see it when the staff look at it, and when the management look at it, and other kind of experts look at it, they can actually say okay, so this would kind of work.

And I think that the business model is not in place yet for this type of process and this type of work. So one thing is actually kind of doing the work within the concept development, as we did with the children's hospice. Another part of it is doing the revisits which you know, there's nothing to win. It's just an investment. It's not like you're getting a project out of it. In the end, it's just basically an investment. So that is an investment into like, a whole portfolio of potential new projects.

our solutions are actually more impact, they have more impact than if you you know, use another architectural firm, but then that idea is quite novel and quite new as well. So in that, in that case, it's work in progress, trying to find out what the business model is. And there's not just one business model. It's it's different business models that we need to kind of look into.

it's all sorts of different disciplines that I kind of need to cut. When I do my literature search, it kind of goes all the way around engineering, psychology, anthropology, biology, economy. And in order for me to kind of know, okay, so what do we agree on as being knowledge? What do we agree on as being quality? What do we agree on that we actually know, and can we actually use within each discipline is, this is a huge task.

aesthetics that can be form, but as a means to a goal, and not as a goal in itself, but bettering the architectural quality understood as impact, like, so what is the whole purpose of building something, I mean, the purpose is more than, you know, providing shelter and what is like very, the basic purpose of a building. So, and especially in a in a wider sustainability context, I think, if you're going to spend shitloads, of co2 building stuff, and this building is going to be there for the next, I don't know, 100 years or 200 years, you really, really, really need to think and and act responsibly towards what is the purpose of this building. So how do we see the time and resources being both money and co2 as an investment as something that we can get a lot out of, or we can get nothing out of. So for me, it's very much a matter of when we work in this way, we get better buildings and Better Buildings for the users. And then also, we get better a better situation for society as a whole, both on a social value, a social impact, but also economical impact. I think some of the stuff that we're trying to show at D-architects is also that this is not just like a do gooder project. It's also actually we can see like with the P-house where we're sitting, we can we can actually see that as far as I know that, you know, the sale of the building. So there was like an initial investor and quite quickly, and well, they got the building sold to a pension. So there's also money to be made, if you actually do quality, but quality here being more than you know, the material as such, or the aesthetics as such.

what we want is to redefine what qualifies as architectural quality, what is good architecture. And that links back to what I was just talking about good architecture is architecture that has the most impact for the users, for the developers for society as a whole. I think that's, that's the stake that I would like to take part in anyway, I would be quite happy to take part in that.

this way of thinking that architecture and the physical environment is not the main purpose is not from an architectural point of view is not necessarily impact, that there could be other purposes, like aesthetics or form or whatever, for me, is just so nonsensical. So for me, I think I've just taken it for granted that obviously, everybody acknowledges that this is the purpose of architecture is to be as impactful as you know, as possible. So I think for architects, both students and architects in general, I think that you would have to excuse me, because I'm curious and I want to understand how could be a practitioner within architecture and not necessarily have it as your highest goal and purpose to create solutions, buildings, whatever you're creating, that empowers the people using it in ways that you know, worthy intentions, just thinking about what is the intention? what is worth building this building for ?

So I really, really hope that that is the development or whatever that architecture is taking is kind of like, what is the higher goal here? I mean, yeah, kind of being more critical about the means and the ends. So impact for me is the end. And we've kind of need to, in the beginning of a project be very clear on what kind of impacts are we seeking to create? And then, as an architect, what kind of means do you have and as I said, I think aesthetics, this is not something that we should not worry about or not use strategically. But for me, it's a matter of using it strategically towards an end, I think a lot of architects would be very provoked by that way of thinking.

also architects need to hold on to, as I said earlier, there's the decision support, there's the research, there's all that stuff that that we supply to the architects, but doing the transformation into architecture, is not something that you could put on a formula. So you really need to have good intuition that I mean, there are a lot of skills within architecture that has nothing to do with just knowledge and insight, in which you can't kind of put two lines under and say that is like the one right way to do it. And I think as architects, you need to be very careful not to become too absorbed with numbers. And, you know, you need also to still be architects and not try to become like pseudo anthropologists or pseudo economists or psychologists,

There are a lot of wanting to put a number on everything, so that you have the arguments when you're, you know, talking to the engineers, because that's a whole different world and the developers and and i think instead of kind of wanting to go onto their playing field and just accepting, okay, then you need to be able to put a number on everything, because that is kind of the way that their world works, you need to be able to show the qualities of the way that good architecture works, which is not necessarily by putting a number on it, but can also be a matter of showing how people's life quality enhances, there's a lot of different ways of doing that which is which still acknowledges the quality of the competencies and the expertise which is within architecture. So you shouldn't become like statisticians or evaluators. I mean, you need still to be proper architects, and then just understanding the different disciplines of surrounding architecture and bridging and working together with them, which I think architects are really good at.

But there is just this universal idea that this is what we need to do, which I think is problematic because I can certainly see part of the reasoning behind what they're doing in G-area. And I think also a lot of the people who live there can. But there are also places in Denmark where it doesn't make sense to demolish buildings that are popular. In C-city they're moving people out of some of these affordable housing estates with are long waiting lists and they're quite popular. And then you have to demolish them and build privately owned apartments instead, which are expensive. And where the people who are living there now would not be able to afford to live. So there's also something about which types of housing do we want in our cities.

And I think part of my, at least my professional identity is the reason why I put curiosity is that it's basically part of as part of my toolbox, you could say, as a professional anthropologist, I'm professionally curious about why people do what they do and why they behave like they behave in why people respond differently to different things. But it's, it also of course, connected to how, what I am as a person or who I am as a person. And I think that basically it's also about seeing this whole thing about promises and feeling that people have made a promise that maybe they don't think they made a promise and so on. I think there is something important in understanding the way people think and the way people act in order to make things happen or do things together or do things for someone. So I think it's, you need that first in to build action on. so I think it's extremely important to me both professionally, but also I think in processes where, at least where I am, have some part to be curious about logics, about values, about actions, about why people, the why of it basically. But also of course about the how and the constraints and so I think it's very important to me and I think it is also in the projects I'm involved in to understand how people work basically. Not as in work but how people work in their heads. So it's I think it's something that is the basis when I attempt to to do a new research project.

I think the issue is generally not so much about how you do it, it's more about the mandate you have in order to involve and of course are different methods that might be more useful in some cases than others. But I think a lot of it is about, at least my experience, is about the mandate you have for making a workshop where you are involving people. So it's more about that you can actually use whatever is worked on in the workshop in something real and

not just about it being a place where we heard what you said and now go away. Right? So I think that is an important thing. And that's of course also something that I could contribute with in processes, is also talking to decision makers about the way that their actions are interpreted.

I think, again, if we go back to the curiosity part, I think it's extremely important to be curious about other disciplines and why they're thinking the way they're thinking. And I think that could be important to be that as an anthropologist in regards to, because we, as anthropologists, we also have our own ideas about what the world should be like and how people should interact and so on. And we sometimes have a hard time understanding people who come with different disciplinary ideals. Just like people from all sorts of disciplines. And I think it's also important for anthropologists to understand the reason or the logics that, that architects and other disciplines work by. And the same basically goes for architects, is that there are many ways of thinking about buildings, about landscapes, about place and space. And some of it is represented in architectural theory and in architectural practice,

but there's also a lot of ways of thinking and acting and behaving in space that is not incorporated in Jen Gehl counting how many people are going from here to there and how many people are sitting there and comparison to there.. which, which is more about the why of fit. Because you can say that if you sit and observe a plaza or somewhere for 10 days and you note how many people are sitting here and how many people are sitting there, then you can easily conclude that the bench in the sun is the place where those people are. And then you'll say, okay, all benches should be in the sun or whatever. But that's not really, I think, the important point in it, because then you would need to go to the next level, which is about the qualitative side of things. And you could ask people why are they sitting there? What about the people who are sitting in the shade? Why are they sitting in the shade? There might actually be something important about the reason why there are few people sitting there which would be important to take into account, into planning processes or why you are placing or where you're placing benches or whatever. Because yeah, I think it's easy to fall into some types of traps when you just observing behavior, which is I think a relatively typical architectural practice or way of collecting data on places. And I think the risk is that you kind of stay on the surface of things and that things change over time. And the people have many different rationalities behind what they're doing and why they're doing it, how they're doing it that you can miss out on if you don't add the qualitative level of this type of investigations. So that would be one recommendation.

at least this stairs where people meet that's very tangible way of, of working with community or a platform where people can meet. So we try somehow in each of the projects we're doing, we're trying to make tangible solutions for a kind of theoretical idea about making communities but for people all creating platforms for meetings.

And then we have been also studying a lot of sharing, we have this Friday event where we sharing ideas at the office. And when we dive a little bit into this community thought we've been diving into theories about communities. So we all kind of get knowledge about the thoughts from Elinor Ostrom, who is this economists that won the Nobel. And she talks a lot about the success of Commons, there is this story about the tragedy of Commons. But she really likes the thought about the success of commons, where she actually says that she believes in the success of Commons, as long as you somehow know the community that you are part of. So it's also being able to, you know, see each other or see the community that you participate in. This is, of course, also something that we can then take with us when we're developing architecture. so somehow, we're sharing all the time these ideas and diving into theories as well as of course, then practicing concrete ideas.

I think what we'll try to do is dive into different ideas. It doesn't need to be only architecture could be economists, there could be no political statements, materials, whatever it is.

there's a lot of organizations that you can also dive into, is there been ways of looking at it sharing resources or, or creating communities. And it's not, of course, that far away in Denmark to these these ideas. And then, of course, how to translate those ideas into architecture is, sometimes you can do it. And sometimes it's just an idea laying in the back of your head meanwhile, creating architecture, and sometimes a very concrete idea, or something very theoretical becomes a very concrete idea when we're developing.

But I think we could be way more open in our processes, or honest in our processes. And I think that would help. You know, the common brain because in the end the idea is not that we are architects winning a lot of projects. The idea is that as the society becomes better, or the we're helping, the climate change, or we're creating a more sustainable cities, or more sustainable world in general.

So yeah, if you If you do the math, and I haven't done the math, it could end up actually being cheaper. And being faster. If we do these, if we had a more Cradle to Cradle approach on building processes, not in terms of environment, environmental Cradle to Cradle, but in terms of the quality of the of the final product, in terms of use, and focusing on how many hours that we actually using, it might end up being cheaper.

what would happen if we had academics like me, working together with classical architects, not as two different teams coming in together, put together by stakeholders, but actually, as a company, trying to work more interdisciplinary work more on evidence, evidence based approach or scientific approach to the decisions that we're making? Because there is science out there. And, and we should use it. Yeah, otherwise, its personal opinions, and traditions and copy paste, which there is a lot of. tons of opinions

And try to have this red thread all the way down, we work with something called we call the design hierarchy that I designed, which starts with the overall ideal, which is also visually it is drawn as a triangle, a triangle upside down. Alright. So instead of starting with the architecture, we start with the big idea, what is the big idea? and not the big idea about architecture? But the big idea about life about learning about schooling about kids? And if that's the big idea, and if that's what school should be like in a society in the 21st century, then what kind of skills should we develop for these kids? And if that's the skills set that we want them to, to have, then we move down to the question of practice. Okay, so what's the everyday practice? And if that's the everyday practice, how should the physical spaces look? And if that's how the physical spaces should look, because that's where the interaction happens. Then we end with the question, then how should the architecture be? So which working there is a very clear framework, it's a very clear framework, and from one point, it's working from the inside and out. We start here between the two of us and then we build a world around it. from another perspective, it's working from a top down approach, right? Where we start with the world and we end with the table, which works.

I have parts in this process down. And, of course, I'm very much involved in the big question, because my formal background is also in in terms of learning in schooling, and the ideas of learning, right? So this whole work around what should schooling be like that, that, that conversation with stakeholders and teachers, usually, I'm very much part of that, because I know what it is to be working in a school. So I have practical experience about it with me

And, and then we when I, then we help them working their way down. And I'm very much part of that we are others in that process, too. And we have different tools for more or less each step. And then when we come to the, the real, what can you say, the unfolding of the physical space? That's where the architects at the company takeover, right? Where we actually have to find the real solutions, right? I'm still part of it. And I am part of that, because I do have knowledge about physical space, I do have knowledge about design, because my background is material culture.

So I have I bring some design principles to the table scientifically based, and the architects try to create an actual space and some actual decisions around furniture, for instance, based on those principles we have something called the club of nerds, yeah, which happens once a month, okay? Where it's, and that's something I do, where I educate the rest of the company with different approaches each time. Last time we had architecture in autism or autism in architecture. We have dived into the field of autism and tried to find how architecture can help and support people with autism for instance, we can't have everybody in the company studying that, that would be very expensive. So I do it. And then I kind of put it forward. So as we go along, every one of us gets better and better, of this whole design hierarchy.

But basically, the idea is that, in order to do that, we have to work as some one that is not only architects, we can't just be architects, we also have to be knowledgeable about learning processes, and organizational development, politics, around schooling, knowledge about educational history, how teachers are educated, because that is a problem, too, right?

Okay, so we started trying to figure out if it actually works. So in sense of this whole, the wish of creating a more solid knowledge of the actual impact. We haven't gotten to that yet. So the only the only way I can see that these tools and these structures around these processes work is by the impressions, and and what feedback we get from stakeholders, saying that they thought they were supposed to build a school, but they actually build a whole institution, in terms of all the non physical aspects was part of this. And they saw that they, developed as professionals, as teachers, as leaders. Because they were involved in a process that they thought would be about tables and chairs and walls. So from from that perspective, yes, there works more or less every time and has worked on more or less all our projects.

We want 16 classrooms, for instance. And that can come from past experiences, or traditions or whatever. So that that's their initial starting point, right. And then as we work along, they often end somewhere else, completely different place with a whole other structure than the initial idea that they have. So there is a mental rebuilding, as we start the physical, actual building, right? And so yeah, an example could be this. they've already decided what types of spaces they want. And as we go along, figuring out ok, if this is our values. Okay, that translates into this type of practice. And if this is actual practice, then it's not 16 classrooms. No, it's not. It's grouped around subjects maybe. So instead, we end up creating a school where all scientific related subjects are pooled to one place all subjects around culture are pooled somewhere else.

Yeah, and somebody would have to be very clear on the decisions from the very beginning, which again, leads us back to that we would have to be very clear of questions that doesn't relate to architecture at all. Yeah, like, Who are we as humans who do we want architects to be? How do they function as students? And how do they function as just physical beings? And then do this math all the way along? So we don't just create open spaces because we haven't

Sometimes we have to find a way around it and meet each other halfway. We usually never just build a school because the stakeholders said it has to look like that. We always bring in our own knowledge, say, Well, there are really no arguments for doing it that way. There are arguments for doing this way. So we would advise you to go more in this direction. And often, because knowledge do have power, knowledge is power. And if it's delivered the right way, they will end up seeing where we can see that because branding wise wouldn't be very good

So yeah, but but basically comes down to the conflict between personal opinions, and scientific knowledge. And even scientific knowledge is not objective, right? Because you could also just have to look in another direction or looked at another study. But at least it has a broader scope in its perspective, it's not created by one single person. Personal idea, springing from a summer day at the beach two years ago, where he had this vision about something around school architecture.

If the client comes with a more or less finished concept, and where we can't see that there are sound evidence or sound knowledge behind that. We have to tell them to call somebody else. If they say well, for instance, we we just want we have 16 classrooms, we just want new you to renovate these classrooms with some newer furniture. Then we say call somebody else. We don't create space, we develop space and if this developmental aspect is not part of the job, you're you're better off with somebody else, because we would just ignore you.

it also pushes to the idea of the architect and the architects responsibility. And the architects role within a building process, which again, I would say is, should be looked upon is way more complex than just an artist creating a really beautiful building. Which of course, is a little bit superficial. I know that there's way more to it than that.

The way we approach the question of what is architecture and how is it created, not the architect, it's him or herself or she, he or whatever the gender they might have. But this person in a system that needs to be changed, not the person itself, but the system around it, right? Because we, we can't really we're always part of these systems, and we

can't break out of them. We try some of us try, others don't. And so we are formed by them. So we think we have to, and it's way more difficult. But but we need to change this whole mindset around processes, design process, and building processes, which is taking place, I think

the question of thinking from from inside and out, or insisting of that questions, and architecture doesn't start within the architectural realm. But somewhere else, it starts in the question of what do I want, should happen between us? What would I want you to know? And what do you want me to know? Or develop? And if that's what you want to develop in me that raised awareness of responsibility responsible architecture for me, then must be architecture that actually animates to do exactly that.

read books. a lot of books. The most skilled... architects are problem solvers, like all other kinds of industries, I would say, the best problem solver is from a historical perspective have always been the ones that are capable of integrating different fields of knowledge. like Einstein, he read a lot of poetry, ingsbo, read a lot of poetry and was very much into art knew a lot about religion, knew a lot about science. So, broadening the scope of taking in other approaches to the world is extremely important I think. architects do themselves could do themselves and the world a great deal or if part of this schooling was about broadening their view of the world through other disciplines, there are tons of architecture in World Literature. It sounds weird, maybe. But why is poetry not a part of architecture? Why is religion not a part of architectural schooling? Why is science not? psychology? So if not being too specific, I would say broadening the scope of the world by integrating and adapting other disciplines that are not just engineering.

It's the integration of fields, it's the integration of knowledge, the integration of perspectives. Because the world is not divided, but we divided education. It's constructions, we construct the barriers The world doesn't have them. I can't see where antropology starts here and where architecture ends in this room. It's it's all part of the same. And maybe this more holistic approach doesn't have to be hippie sounding. Actually, the contrary, it's more or less have way more structured integration of of these different fields, I think that would would do something I would do that if I was an architect.

And we are very focused on being very aware of how our architecture can make a positive impact in what we do. And we are very curious on how to do it and how to get even more out of what we have.

No, the bief didn't, but the brief were very precise and the briefs always are very precise and specific on how many square meters of what. And I think having another agenda and the intention of creating something that felt more social meant that we tweaked the brief and the functions described in the brief a little differently. Instead of just doing what the brief said, we decreased the sizes of the individual rooms and increased the sizes of all the shared facilities in common areas. And then the flow areas were worked within a way where every, like common area were linked together. Both internally and externally. So that became also a part of the facade design. And that was done with the help of some anthropology students actually. Just doing interviews and research to back that thesis up that maybe if we change something, we can actually address an issue that is super important. And that became a very powerful narrative also in the competition delivery. And after having won the competition that was done a revisit and that and the difference between this visit and the early one I described was that this was a little more based on that an anthropologist way of of gathering data. It was interview based and it was also based on interviews on similar youth residencies in the close proximity. So we had something to benchmark up against. And that discovery was actually that it had worked and that the feeling of loneliness were lower in our proposal than some of the other ones that hadn't had that same agenda.

So we have this like knowledge bank that we always are a very interested in keeping up to date and full of valuable information based on the users that use our architecture. And that is something we always use as a kickoff as well. So when we do the first like workshops or meetings when we are gonna develop something new, a new concept or competition, we bring the impact team to the table and talk about if we have some knowledge already we need to implement, or if there are some research we need to do to maybe see the brief in a different light. I think that is that's something that we are getting better and better at doing.

there was a brief describing that everything had to be on one level because of accessibility, a lot of the users were in wheelchairs and disabled in different ways. And on that research phase and early stages of doing the competition we spent a lot of time on collecting information of what the users actually were wishing. And some of the important inputs, and that was also done in collaboration with the anthropologists. And we as architects also brought ourselves into the position of the users having a day in a wheelchair driving around with disabled people and talking about limitations and what was important. And one wish that was really interesting was the wish for not feeling disabled. And maybe having that, that feeling of freedom and that gave us ideas that was not as flat one level design as the brief told us to do. So we wanted to do something more three-dimensional, more, more free and working. With maybe the possibility of getting higher above the ground, even though you were in a wheelchair and maybe having a view over the great belt and bringing in some qualities to the project that you wouldn't expect and qualities that could bring that sensation of being free and or less disabled actually.

And that idea of combining the big arena space with this spiral with pauses on the way and really this more three-dimensional take on it became like an answer to an environment where you would have some experiences and some views and some feelings that was totally not expected of what we could achieve if we just followed the brief as some of the other teams did. So it was almost like having that feeling of knowing a little better. because we had been in this direct dialogue with some of the users and that also became like the driver of the design of the project.

but in the municipality has this challenge of actually having a high amount of sick leave amongst its administrative workers. So that was something we actually wanted to address with architecture. How can we bring that down? Can we do something differently? And it's not just about space planning. Maybe it's something else that really can impact us as human beings in an environment where we spend a lot of hours every single day sitting down, working on a computer. And then we just were really curious about that.

And the latest thing we did to make all of this with integrating the agenda of impact in our project is a compass. Maybe you have seen it, but in it's it's like a compass that almost, it's like a blank canvas to begin with, but it's something we integrate in the early stages of our conceptual design or competitions. And we use the compass to begin to describe how we want to work with the intention of creating the maximum amount of positive impact in the projects we do. And the compass can have different agendas. It can also have a hierarchy. So there's maybe one theme that is more important than others.. And we, we actually just start by describing our intentions in the compass, in some early workshops in collaboration with the impact team. Sometimes the compass develops in the early stages or some of the first weeks of a competition design, and then it gets more and more like concrete and defining for what we do. And we use it as a part of the delivery. And if we win a project, the Compass is also like a guiding tool for us internally. So when a project shifts from the competition development team to the detail project team, the compass is a part of the project so we are all..

So we don't lose track. So everyone is familiar with what was the most important, what is some of the key like elements of a project that we can, save or live without? So that's super important for us because we're always, when we go from conceptual ideas into the hardcore reality of meeting the client and maybe the process where the budget says that we need to cut some of the costs. It's super important that the team in stages like that, know which battles to fight. So it doesn't compromise the initial ideas of what the project really is about.

The impact team is like following it and using the compass, and also if it's a different team that does the detail project development, there's an onboarding session facilitated by the impact team where they say, this is like, what was important for the competition and this is what the project is about. And for us to be able to revisit it, the project when it's done, and talk to the users and ensure that we get the knowledge into our knowledge bank, it's important that we keep these different designing elements because they're really the ones that we need to work with at, at the later stages.

It's it's very dynamic actually. we have different compasses to different projects. It's a combination of, if I could say, take for instance a B-youth residency project I talked about, which is very much about bringing the feeling of lone-

liness down. It would be that, describing that intention in the compass. Then of course, the question is how do you do that? And that's pretty concrete in that project. That's about how we manage the square meters and the different functions and how we link flows together. And that's something we can't compromise. So if that was being developed today, that would be, how the project would look, or compass would look. There would be these different intentions described. And then on a sub level of the compass, that would be an explanation of how we would do it in an architectural strategy. Very yeah, not as, as fluffy as the big intentions, but very specific on how we manage the project and the square meters of it. And that's something we just, we would just continue throughout all the design status.

Yeah. I mean, the brief is always super important. But we always say that we think about briefs as something we need to read between the lines.

And question and sometimes challenge because we have as I mentioned some very, some of our very most important or key projects in relation to impact has been developed in processes where we have actually challenged the brief and set ourselves in another position. And the impact team is super valuable in that sense because they can also help us take more informed decisions. When you are at a crossroad, you don't know which way to take a concept. There are pros and cons in different directions. Then we can sometimes invite the impact team and based on their knowledge and user insights, we can get that feeling of one direction being more like right to go than others. So we use it that way as well. And it's actually our first parametrically developed dynamic diagram. So it's because it the layout task of designing an individual diagram for each project would be a waste of time if we had to do it. Also, we have actually developed a system where you can write what's important and then the diagram develops itself according to that, and that becomes then the diagram that follows the project. And that wouldn't have been possible if we hadn't had that mix of different of competences, of skills

we don't have an an aesthetic like guideline or an intention of wanting to create architecture where everyone can see 'oh this is an E-architects project'. That's really not what it's about. That's not what's important. What would be amazing would be if people could say, 'ah, that's something that really works, that must be an E-architects project'. But but I think the aesthetics of our projects are very different because the projects have different agendas and we always say that's, that's okay. And especially if some of the decisions are actually also informed of, for instance the M-project where the intention of creating something that invites for movement suddenly becomes like the aesthetics of the exterior experience and interior experience of a space. Then it's it's great. Then I think we really succeeded. So it's not something superficial. It's just something that goes hand in hand with what we do.

I think personally it has to do with being curious, wanting to it, it can sound so banal, but actually wanting to make the world a better place through your work. That's something that I find very important and fulfilling.

I think we, we have an honest dialogue about it. More and more clients know what we do and what we stand for. So that helps us, so we don't have to say No too much, but we have a no strategy. We don't want to do projects that is Not as ambitious as we want them to be.

It just has to do with, if we get in a process where we just feel that we are too far from each other and we can't see, any of our intentions or ambitions having a chance to be a part of the project we're gonna propose, then I think it's just a waste of time. And we want to do something else or work with someone else or so yeah, we do that sometimes as well.

It's still a little early stage in relation to how formalized we are and how structured we are beginning to be when we create architecture together with the impact team. So my hope is that we are gonna be able to do that even more and grow as an office that really insists on creating architecture with that ambitious agenda. And also have the impact team as something that actually could grow even more and inform even more of our projects. And and the more we do that, the more we communicate it, the more ambition ambitious clients we can get. That's really what I'm hoping for that, that we can just manage to continue this positive momentum that has already started.

somehow we would think insisting on creating architecture with an agenda like that. I think too many unambitious developers are having it too easy currently. It would be amazing if we could like, really as a whole community insist on creating an architecture that is aware of and really based on bringing a positive impact. That would be amazing. But we do what we can definitely. Yeah.

And then the other one is that for an architecture company to last 100 years, that's pretty amazing. I like to see the way that the trends and you know, models, how quickly things shift. And like, like new architects set up and start and then disappear. And so like, we've managed to stay like more than modern and relevant for such a long time, through so many different shifts. That in itself is sort of quite a nice an interesting thing to sort of, say, how is that possible? So like the, I perceive certain things that sort of go through, like, how we describe what we do so. So we don't have a style, we have a method and process. And so that's sort of like, pretty important.

some architects have a signature style that they use. But we don't do that. So it's like very much driven by the process and the context and the brief.

And like, then there's, that sort of modernist tradition of the functional tradition, where it's like a holistic approach, where it's like the method way of analyzing the brief analyzing the program, analyzing the site, and then putting like an architectural interpretation on the top of that, and having this really strong focus on like, functionality and creating value for users

was when you draw a plan, and you draw a servant room, and, you know, that sort of like, the plans, which is not the normal family housing plan. And I remember I was talking with my colleague that with the salary of one month of us, we cannot even buy one square meter of this house that he drew. Yeah, that was, we laughed about it, but it is the sad truth

But I think it was like, when I'm thinking about being more and more like, now in most of my projects I am into retrofits and reuse. And that was also some vision that I grew during this years, but it was, I think, here at B-architects, my shift, if you want to call it ideology, or I don't know, it was very gradual, project by project you learn to stop, and from a very detailed point of view, ask a why, for example, and then you challenge the material that is used in market and, Okay, this one never, rule of thumb never we use this, this is it.

Or even the people like some architects that I used to admire, and now I see their work and I have a...I think I like it that I ask a big question of what was about it that I liked? I can ask them like, yes, so your heroes change and champions change, and I like it. It is a new me, yeah.

Yeah, I think we are architects like, the project should be relatable. And as the project is, like, you can also design based on fantasy and imagination, like that is super fun. And I went to bottle that it was our project, but when suddenly that type of lifestyle comes out in reality, and also in that big scale, like in the central London super big scale, and you can see that this is mostly an investment architecture or, but it's changing at that time I was on the project which had the profile. Yeah, but when you cannot relate to that, everyday life of that household. It is, it is still you can design something that the client likes and something which works, but yeah, that big why is always bugging, you know?

So, there are some of the high profile projects that they are also.. It doesn't mean that it is high profile so it is immoral to work with this..it is about more if you can justify the everyday life in that project, and what is carrot that we are running for? Then yeah, I think it is good to go. It's actually very much exciting to have a high budget profile with a very interesting program for people and for the environment. So it is not very binary..

And we tried to reuse material as much as we can to bring the cost down.

for example, we had some sport Hall floor to use it for flooring and to make this timber floor ready

Some of these blocks should get demolished. And also, it's a very modernistic repetitive housing blocks, which lacks some public spaces. And we try to minimize demolishing. But also when we are going to demolish it is how we are going to reuse all this concrete. With the minimum interference where can we reuse them in sites

we firmly believe before demolishing, you should ask, can we not demolish it? Or is there any way that we can use something, or change the functionality change the body of architecture so we can avoid demolishing. That's the best.

So to minimize the energy use, like always it's good to also start with the option of not doing anything. Like, what if I just go to client, I say the best solution is not to do any project?

let's be honest, we should ask the question of is the project rightly defined or not?

how can we minimize and now that we have to demolish some, what are we doing with the concrete? Can we use them locally with a minimum interference? So the embodied energy can be kept at a minimum

One very good strategy is to be totally honest. Like have no strategy, just say how you think the project can be benefiting from this.

I imagine, even if a very large client with a more a lot of contrast in values come, the hope of like, like compromise like you can, maybe you can make a project which is not 100% aligned with your values, but maybe with being involved in a project you can prevent from a bigger loss, because we are all replaceable.

Yeah, exactly. And it is everywhere, like in Theran, or in London, or what... when the projects come you say, Oh, it's not really in my alley, but if I don't get it, maybe, yeah, the other one could make it worse.. like you can still.. yeah..

exactly, but what I can think of, if your compromise is too much, it's best if you don't get involved, because you don't want to unhealthy relationship. And it doesn't work like that, if the contrast in the values is too much. And I never experienced that. But I think that is also clients find their own offices who is in this, who has the profile.

I think one thing which is really important is about being honest where we cannot make an impact.

Yeah, we should, like start that we are in the middle, we are not in the top, and we are not in the bottom either, our decision making level is in the middle. And with being so super honest about what we did wrong in the project, and take responsibility for it. But furthermore, is to say what we learned from the mistake. And like a greenwashing come from.. it is very soothing, because they see Oh, everything is solved, and how many tons of CO2 we save and what? But being ignorant about the consequences of this claims.

many subjects that we can talk about how to add quality to the architecture. And I always think that we push ourselves to be creative in a design level, but it would be interesting to talk about how can we rearrange it and be creative in a financial, finance of the project. To add to, for example, we have this A-housing project, which people who want to move in it is rather low rent housing, but they have to sign a contract that they get involved in the maintenance after. So in that way, it is creating a finance of the project. And also it brings the users involved. And that is very interesting for me.

exactly or the idea of Baugruppen, which basically bring the developer out of the formula. It's a German model called Baugruppen. So the architects and users and an organization who arranged in our one to one involvement in the process. And I think this models of financing that project is very interesting, because it makes the dynamic of the stakeholders in a way that all the profit goes to people, and the creative part is also the financing, how you have the economy of the project runs

We have some researchers as residents of our office and they change from subject to subject. Some of them have more technical expertise. And some of them have more social studies with universities and PhD students

I would call like, responsible architecture, if it is from many aspects that you question the project, it will be honest, and have an answer to Okay, what was the environmental impact of the project? What is the social impact of the project? what is the economic impact of the project? And, yeah, I think also responsible architecture would mention boldly where it went wrong, and not cover the mistakes.

Like a very dream project would be that ..you know what, my dream project is a project that it's scalable, and it is creative on many aspects, economy, architecture, like the social organization, but also scalable, like because you can, you can do a lot in the smaller scale. But in a larger scale, it's usually the clients that are having the word. but a dream project will be that you can keep the agenda and values in a largest scale.

Social responsibility

It's locally based, and it's important to the studio. This is home based, yeah.

we took the initiative to to create a new kind of meeting place in our local community. So we did, we teamed up as architects and social scientists to try to develop from an idea we had, so we, we produce the prototype of a new social space.

We had a project in our school, our project was focused more on culture. Whereas some of our new projects, aimed more in community building and social housing areas, sports facilities, as meeting places. So we've been working closely together for the past 10 years.

to move beyond place, how is the a place becomes a social space for people to meet. And that's not only about architecture, it's about how you facilitate space, how you involve users in what we call social space making. Maybe that's making small or larger improvements to the physical place that has a social dimension of integration and participation.

What we know a lot about is how to make young people become intrapreneurs by using place in space, how to include vulnerable young people with different psychosocial problems, and how to integrate foreign women in a Danish culture.

Its short for inspiratorium, that was the main idea how could we in a community create a place less institutionalized and more as a platform for activities. Instead of inviting or addressing a certain target group, how could we make a space open to all? and strategically, how could we connect institutional stakeholders like municipality, the business environment, other cultural institutions, to be part of the platform to make use of it. if we were able to gather a crowd of people in the local community, how could other players or stakeholders strategically use the access to the crowd, you can say it's like an analogue Facebook idea. We would provide everyday users with a free service. And then we build the business model, saying, well, we can, we can make sure there's a base of people. So if the municipality, for instance, have a public service, to young vulnerables, then instead of providing the service in their own physical settings, they would bring the young into our city and pay for the access. Just as on Facebook, you have advertisers paying to target all of us. So that's like the abstract idea of what we did. And we proved it was possible. That was our main purpose was to build a prototype. And actually, right now we got funding to have a PhD students, also, to continue the work beyond the prototype. So we're going to elaborate on our findings with the students from B-University

I think the, the mission of the company, the studio is about providing, in Danish we say 'architecture to the folkening' - architecture for the people, and for people and community activities, that's important to us.

The current strategy that the running is not about growing bigger. It's not the ambition to have a big studio. Right now we have 14 in the studio, maximum ambition would be 20 people there. So I think it has matured over the last couple of years, found itself as a more of a high end product, moving a bit away from only designing and building the buildings or urban settings, more into a very early stage planning, consulting. And that's what I mean by more impact driven. That is not someone coming in with a project, ready to design and built but with a vague idea, and an ambition of making a difference or obtaining certain goals, and that's the dialogue, that the studio is engaging in now, on a very early stage,

it's the one-on-one component to it. One thing is that they are very, the management team are very, they want to take part of the creative process, on every project. If we grow, you will have, you will distance yourself from the projects, and 20 people is like the span of control that is possible for the management team.

And it's important to everyone at the studio to be close to the projects. So to build relationships with the clients and the users.

So it's the closeness to the client, and the project is important. If we grows and maybe we have projects everywhere and it becomes difficult.

the uniqueness and the quality and vision, and to make this more awareness of people and the public, you need to be closer.

to me, it's linked with if you've spent the time planning for the relationship between the architect and the client and the user, then you need to be close to build the relationship. So if you have the ambition to expand the length of collaboration, then you also strengthen that process by being inclusive. I think the studio has had experiences with building projects a little further away, and it's dissatisfying. the project becomes something that you check up on, rather than have the dialogue and on being able to meet with people.

So the idea of the coffee bar was to see if we could make an informal place to meet. And that is the early stages of the idea about the connection of the room and a host function or the way of organizing it. and it was very successful, surprisingly successful. And it had a lot of great effects like integrating your organization, different departments would get to know each other. Meeting facilities were less formal meetings changed into informal meetings, people coming from outside from around the country, visiting for meetings have a place, they felt more as part of the organization.

I think there's a change of focus into if you have this early stage dialogue with your customers and your users, then you can also have a dialogue about Is it really necessary to build? Like, do we have space in square meters that you can use in different ways? Can we with smaller means reach the same effect? If you involve users, then you get a much better like, the close and active involvement of users in the process, make sure you don't build too many square meters, it helps you understand how flexible you have to build.

instead of thinking space, or rooms, as places as fixed designs, think about space as the process, so the space lives beyond the design

And that's a way of making buildings more sustainable. If you make them adjustable to the changes that inevitably will come. user groups change the functions change. So, bringing that into a very early stage ideation sketching is from a sustainability perspective, really important. And N-person

and I have been very eager to, to put more emphasis on social sustainability. Also, having a dialogue about how people should be included, also how people less resourcefull could be included in projects. And that has design solutions coming along with it. So how does a space become inviting, inclusive? If you only talk to the resorccefull of users, then you tend to forget that others have other needs. And that's important for you social sustainability.

And when we enter these early stage dialogues, it's also about getting the financial sustainability as part of the projects.

architects also need to be able to address other kinds of budgets, like the development costs, beyond the architecture. How does the sustainable business model could decline afterwards... for instance, as each project is designed, we know there's a business case, renting one of the buildings on its own, you know that a building is you can have different incomes views, so that you can run it sustainably as a business. So I think there's a lot of implications of this way of working, where you engage in discussion and solutions. And it's much more than just the green sustainability

as we did with the coffee bar by saying, well, we're better off with more shared space and less specific place because a lot of the things we would do in our separate room are actually benefited by entering and being in the same room, because that's when they can fertilize each other.

by working in this way, you're already from my perspective, you're already building organization, because you have the users and the managers interacting, the girls already all fired up, they want this project. They are excited, they are talking to their friends. So it's a way of mobilizing the resources that will be very important in the next stage of a project.

For function, it's also about create space for more social relaxation and interaction. So and, and if we took that approach, then you actually create a space that is attractive to all. And so it's, it could be like the answer to not becoming too general, generic is to make it the social function itself. And then, on top of that, you can add different kinds of functions. But if you keep forgetting the social aspect, is that make sense? The lowest level of the hierarchy would be social, like, make sure that it is designed for social, and then you can add on. And so it's like, the lowest bar you can set is the social

That's the minimum, that's the basis and that was actually the working at f-project as well, saying we want a meeting place, so it has to be social, we have to design for something social, in order to bring people in, then it means the next layer would say what sports activity is the most social.

But also, when we adapt the room, what activities is more open for other activities. So if we prioritize dancing, then we don't exclude a lot of other things. Because other activities can still take place besides dancing, so we want to have family sports, that's important to the users, well, family sports on top of dancing activities, that also fits well. we kind build up. So to some users, this is 100% perfect, and then to others, maybe 80, or 60. But when you have like this 100% user group as a way to start out..

Yeah, and tone it. That's actually what we learned from ENSP as well. It was this inviting to all spaces and then we've wandered, N-person and I wanted it to be a cultural development or cultural setting center. And so we added a guitar and a piano and some food and then it took off from there. But if you could transfer the the idea into a sport setting, say, okay, it's really nice to hang out here, but we added a football and then the football goal or some gears on the wall, then we facilitate users into using the resources. But I totally agree that super flexible means nothing. Yeah, you have to choose some kind of the 'toning' of the space, that is particularly inviting.

we had the everyone ambition, which is similar to super flexible, 'everyone is no one'. So we figured out it was the best way of getting started was to invite the young people in the community, which was turned out to be really smart because when you have young people going then a place just becomes attractive to more people.

so the younger themselves are attractive for this, so the most mature activities that it is in today are also those that are mostly creative, entrepreneurial, youth, but also vulnerable youth are coming.

Well, we had an idea, we made a prototype and now the prototype is that local communities center. It's a, it's a real life prototype, you can enter a door. And you can see people cooking, playing, meeting, workout, or whatever, it's there. It's a one to one.

Yeah, that's kind of part of the finding is that it was the perfect-imperfect space. contrary to designing the perfect space, which architects like to do, this place was challenging. It didn't fit with what we wanted for the place, but then it was a better invitation to the users, because then they had to fix things or invent solutions to a not perfect surrounding. And it was a driver for innovation. and it was a driver for creating meetings between people because they would have to enter a room where other people would be sitting or there's some certain lack of comfort in the room. Because it's not designed to fit. So I think one of main learning was I don't need to design perfect. So when we started out, I picked something like Louisiana, that was the idea, we were testing this, and then we would build something wonderful. And then we put the activities into it. But as time went on, and people just show how happy they were with the space and they connected with this stupid, uncomfortable setting that was like, well, that's not what we need. We, the users want something completely different, they want something trashy and worn out. So they feel invited to participate and they could dream.

And the process with only users. It was a three day workshop with everyone, I think 700 people coming. And we asked them to, to like not always talk about the needs right now but just forecast ideas that other people after them could come with, like all the ideas that you can talk about it all these years. Bring them on, and then we made this new typology about the fixed space and free space, empty spaces. And then we try to make the design the proposal out of that typology, and then we added like a test of does it really fit with the only user needs and ideas. We brought it back to the users. And then we took all the ideas and said, well, this idea, how would that be able to take place in this design and in designing the building? And suddenly, a 1000 sprung ideas were tested.

but I think what it was like as a more abstract level of working, saying, well, we're not designing for their particular ideas. It's the ideas of ideas coming in the future. So the ideas are coming. And that's just representative of other people come in with ideas. Do you understand? So it is a forecast, you are helping us trying to be open to what comes in the future that we don't know. So now we're as good as we can, at this stage, we're trying to include things that we don't know.

It's about helping people organize.

actually, I'm a bit tired of workshops, because now I just think having dialogue is more valuable. And maybe I'm just getting old...Yeah, I think I just prefer the open dialog where you listen and get to get inspired from other people's and then you can build something, you can create a good room, time and space for dialogue. And then you can form ideas, and you can listen to other people's needs, and so on.

So I really prefer to create a very soft, tranquil setting, giving people time, AMPS as a method. Try to make a process different, for instance, meeting Tuesday, having meeting Tuesday every two weeks ahead.

Because from what I've learned, it takes some time for people to digest. And some of the great ideas they come up with the first meeting, you have to give the process some time, and yeah, incubating the good idea.

It's so familiar to me, because it's, that's where organizations start their process, even long before they think about putting an architect This is where you start maybe thinking about space or we should build something useful, these sort of things.

It's very much about addressing the core issues in in architecture and the core issues that are in a community. So it's very much about addressing and trying to, like, focus on that issue, instead of always trying to maybe do a nice project, we really want to address the issue, and engage with the issues at hand. So that's why it's called L-architects, we condensed the conversation I would say

So I mean, in terms of just also understanding user needs, I think the process is such an important tool. And I think there's not enough emphasis in architecture to understand user needs, I think we have far too little time to understand user needs. And that leads to, in my mind, somewhat bad architecture, because it has to be transformed maybe 10 years after when you enable enough money to do that. Or it's actually not nice for the workers to work in that building and such and so on. So I think understanding user needs is one of the core challenges in architecture and doing great architecture.

I think it's a constant strive for inclusion. So how to create an inclusive space. And I think that is the most important part of this offices, we always try to look at the values that is not represented in that space and how to get them into the mix as well.

So that is our, basically our main. So it's really much about how to get more inclusion in terms of the public space.

But also, we use that knowledge from maybe our cultural public space projects into single family houses, I think there's a lot to be taken from understanding a community that can be also interpreted into understanding our family needs and stuff like that. So I would not say it doesn't work together, it actually works very well together. Because you constantly get to know a lot more about people's needs and people's desires, I would say, in maybe the big projects, and then we take it into the smaller projects and, and have a great understanding on what's working and what's not working and how to read people basically, is also very much about reading the client. What, what and asking them the critical questions about, Is this actually something you want? And if they also missing out on something, and what are their family patterns and stuff like that are you the morning family or the afternoon family and so on, in terms of how to divide the spaces and stuff like that, it's important to understand in terms of creating a great home for them as well. And that is something we are taking from what you say, the more public projects we have done.

So I'm very much interested in how architecture can address different issues on a neighborhood scale

very much interested in, in how architecture can move people as well. More so than only as a pure, pure art form, I would say, I think the aesthetics and the artistic stuff is just as important. But it's also important to understand the social sides of architecture.

And I also think the time now enables architects to do that, I think 20 years ago, it would not have been possible.

I think that profession was much more classical back then. I would say now, it's very way more leaning towards anthropology. So I think now is also the time you could do it. And you also see it very much a lot of us engagements and stuff like that going on a national level, and also on a global level,

And also on a social level, it's way more socially sustainable to have a great space that will actually address maybe the loneliness, it could address different kinds of rather big societal issues on a local scale.

And then, through other ways, to another projects where we had to do like , instead of using 100% of the, the the road renovation budget for roads, we could use 50% for social stuff, and then only do 50% Road basically, through a Housing Association.

And then through this process we really had a discussion about Okay, how can we actually show all these discussions because we were either meeting in the town hall, or we were meeting in kindergarten on the second floor of the building. So there was really not a lot about this conversation was really hidden. And there was only a certain group of people involved in this discussion and we're usually ethnic Danish, plus 35, educated who took part of this project while a lot of the community was very diverse, and especially in terms of the Danish somali community was not very well represented in this discussion. So what was proposed was that we did this temporary community House on the square, which was a really basically two containers welded together and then clided with wood and then having a platform on top of it, where the conversation could be happening. And we also had the mayor move his office out

there for two days during the financial discussion, and actually having to meet the local community and on a local level. So this was very much about taking what everyone could agree on both from the rich, suburban neighborhood, and also the Housing Association, neighborhood residents, they both hated the square. So that was something that was a common denominator. Like it was named A-city worst square in the newspapers and stuff like that. So I think, we took that core issue, I would say, of everyone hating that square and feeling unsafe in that square and turned and said, Okay, let's put the project here, because this is the worst place in the neighborhood, basically.

And we could try to change that. , so we did this small scale Community House where you could come as a resident and co build with the office, and we build everything ourselves.

it was a totally eye opening experience, because all the adults who signed on, basically only showed up for two or three days. And then we were left to do everything else, because we signed a contract with the municipality. And then suddenly, in August, when the school started opening, there was a school, right behind the super market, once the school started opening, all these seventh graders came to the project and want to help out because they thought it was super cool to be able to, to do some physical stuff and build and do something for the community, I would say. So that's how the office really changed also focus a lot on youth and architecture,

So how to maybe change at least some youth view on public space and how we can change public space.

And people also really much hated that gas station. And what basically also showed was that because we did the one project, the first project, it actually created a momentum to address the gas station. I think if we before we did the project would have addressed the gas station that would not happen.

So, so this also showed that you can start small with the conversation or having activity and then in turn, they can actually create a greater change and that happened when we found money to turn down the gas station

There was also for example, in Denmark, there's a tradition for, once you become a student, you ride the wagons around the country and visit every parents. And this is called totally blew my mind that, of course, when you live in an apartment, because I never lived in an apartment when I was growing up, basically. it was always in a house, but when you live in an apartment, you don't have the ability to have all all your friends from this wagon come up. So you're really excluded from that feeling. So what they did, they actually turn the trucks into this square and then used the space for, for having all their friends from school come into the space as well, which was really super cool. And something we did not see a need for. But this process really turned it into, I think this also speaks to how making a frame and people having just to have being able to use it is so powerful in terms of a local community that can just have an idea and have maybe a wish, and then can be able to use it very quickly.

It's totally, and also, how you can change a project in the process as well. I mean, sometimes it's even the smallest changes can make a big influence on that person. So they feel they are being heard, for example, we have two kids with bikes, and they asked if they could have a place to wash them. And then it really much challenged in terms of, of not having a place to wash their bikes. And then I said yes, we can just do a fountain out here from the building. And then we just paid maybe a small amount for a guy to come and take a water hose outside the building and stuff like that. And then it was free to use. And they thought it was the coolest thing ever that they actually were heard in terms of this conversation. And I actually just met this, this kid who's now not a kid anymore, but it's grown almost a grown man. I just met him five days ago, basically, and he still knows me and stuff like that, even though it's probably three years since i saw him last. But I think it's great that you can do these small, what seems small in terms of the Grand project, I would say changes in the process that can actually create such a big impact on at least a certain group in the project. And then that can lead to maybe a more positive understanding of the space.

Yes, but also being on site. I think it's critical on ground because a lot of the time architecture is done behind a desk. should also be, of course, you cannot sit outside and draw the entire project that would be impossible. But to be on ground and to actually talk to people you meet on ground is extremely important. I think it's something that's not

done enough. If you only design behind a desk and you never meet, you could call it your true client. Because, of course, these kids and this Danish somali and other residents were not the one directly funding the project or paying our fee. That was the municipality. But of course, they are the true client, I mean. but you never get to meet them If you're only sitting in the office all the time.

And that is also the power of one to one architecture, I think, because the building side is a great, great, great place for user involvement. because something is happening, and you're not dressed in a typically architects clothes, I would say, which is very intimidating for people without a long education to talk to you, that is at least what I experienced so far. They've once you put on the architecture suit, you are also very much limiting who you talk to, or how they talk to you. I had experienced talking to the same person basically in my carpentry clothes, and then on my architecture clothes, and there's a totally different conversation, because people let their guard down once you are not formally dressed

And then we suggested with the local user group, okay, we could do actually a project on the square instead. Because right now the conversation is really hidden. So we suggested with the local residents that we do, like a community house, where you can actually see the conversation going on. So it was very much this user group we were involved with, with the local residents and us and then addressing this common denominator of a square everyone hated.

but then we had discussion about what the needs were and stuff like that. We had a workshop in a one to 20 model, basically. And then we were moving around big boxes and stuff like that and looking at the site and seeing what were the potential of the site, and how do they actually do events and stuff like that.

And there was something that came up with the discussion with the client and also with the city architect of A-city who also is very much engaged in this process as well.

a lot of models, the physical models where you can talk and discuss and discuss freely, and everyone understands the space basically, because as an architect, sometimes you take for granted your education and how you read a drawing, perhaps greed issues in the drawing

Yes, and that is often not the case. People cannot understand the vertical spacing, the drawing maybe, which is where the model come in, basically. So we really enjoy doing analog models, where you can discuss stuff. And basically, in this project with the, with the youth culture house, it was basically a MDF board. And two table feet, basically, when you put the table on, we put on another table, and then that created the bridge. And that's that's basically what was needed for that workshop was, was these three things, and then some boxes, to move around, underneath. And then talking about how to use that space and how to use that giant infrastructure in the in the positive way, rather than just seeing as a limiting factor.

And also creating a conversation around the model, I would say, it's very important for us to have a model. So everyone can point and everyone can see and everyone can understand what is going on. And one to 20 is an excellent scale, I would say. Because everyone can put their hand in it.

Yes. So we did a huge user workshop with the teachers. It's an after school. So It's a boarding school for basically after primary school,

And we did this huge user workshop, where there was two workshops with the users basically. And we did this program for the school how to transform it.

But we did this great user workshop, and we 3d scan the whole building as well, in terms of this space, being crazy in terms of basically starting out in two previous centuries, and then being added on like a corebuilding of 200 years old.

yes. and what was the issues? Because if you speak to the janitor, if you speak to the English teacher, if you speak to the physics teacher, they will have three different answers in terms of what is needed. And that is also a prioritizing what is what is most important, and stuff like that.

Yeah. Very much through analog tables. where people can touch, write and see a big map, a big model, a big drawing, basically, where people see it live and discuss live and sit around a table. And we break it down to smaller groups as well. I would say this is what we do,

I think that is the power of the collective, I think is that you, you meet each other and have fun together, and also just discuss and meet in a different way in different setting.

Democratic potentials. It was a workshop we did with high school students. So that's high school association and is basically not a high school is gymnasium in Danish.

for example, there was someone working with loneliness, and then they were talking to people in O-space, about them enjoying isolation, for example.

And also to put good public spaces into the primary education would also be great

I think what we always work on is trying to get angles that is not shown or people's issues that are not shown into the public space discussion. So that is always what we think we contribute with is that we try to work with inclusion and architecture.

But we are also really keen on not being experts in all situations. So sometimes we are experts ion something. Other times, it's people that are experts. It can be and it can also be nerdy nerdy people that we bring in because they have some knowledge we don't have, it can also be like fishermen that know the beach better than the engineering field itself does. So sometimes, you know, local people they often know better than all the experts. So how can we mix these different perspective and let them meet each other in an eye height? So it's not this hierarchic it's often this when we do projects, and it's like, there's a hard structure where the organization is closed around the project and it's not open towards people, how can we open it up? How can we discuss it more openly? So we don't make so many mistakes?

We have this big project in B-place, in Denmark, it's it's a concrete slab. And it was like a discussion in the project group like, okay, we need to have it here. And all the fishermen said, No, you need to put it on the other side, because there will be a lot of sand going into the project. And, and they were right. So today they are spending a lot of money a year to to dig out the sand from the structure. And I think that's interesting, right? How can we use this local knowledge and incorporated into the project? It's not like the project was bad, but it just it could have been built smarter, right?

And and then going the whole way around not being afraid of people telling you about, okay, we don't organize, in our different cultural projects, or institutions or unions or whatever, we don't have an organization. And perhaps that's the finding, then I think it's important for us also to acknowledge that that's a part of the solution, that it can be a part of the solution to make an organization.

But if people can't meet, if they can't coordinate if they can't collaborate across different organizations, unions, cultural institutions, whatever, if they can collaborate, if they can't coordinate, like make a calendar and find out what to do when, then it won't be very successful life on the Squarespace. So I think that's as big a part of the solution as the Squarespace itself, if not even more. It could also be like fundings, if it's now we're talking about culture, if you would like to make some cultural activities, then is often you, you often need some kind of external funding. And then you could have applied for the local municipality for some kind of further support. If that's too much of a fussle if you don't know how to do it. So that that is keeping you away from actually holding activities. So that's also a part of the problem. Therefore, it needs to be a part of the solution as well. So I think we cannot we cannot just look upon the physical structure, we also need to look upon the structures around it, how to make this a success. It's not like the

materials on the Squarespace that will make people come itself. It's not because we chose a model that that is going to make it the best citysquare ever. We all know that, right? We all have been in some places where it was not the nicest materials, but it was so nice to be there. So how do we make that? How do we actually make a space where people can interact, where people will take some initiative to make the city also theirs.

it's not just the municipality that needs to arrange barbecues, but it's actually people that are doing it. So I think that's important for us to have as a part of our approach. And that's also why we work with this what we call strategic action planning, and where we then combine this strategic long term perspective with a very short term action, and say, okay, so if we want to make what is a parking lot today, as a public space, it could be a park, it could be whatever, then we need to find out if it's a good idea, Can people actually see that that's the value to them. And we could make a test, like trying to make the parking lot to a public space or to a park and have trees have grass, have a barbecues have a concert, have some soup enrichment, whatever, to bring people together to see how can this not as a visualization, but as a one to one test? How can this actually work? What kind of value it would add to our community? And this method has shown a really high value to both citizens, also the politicians, because they can then have a dialogue about it. what they don't like, if you design something that they think is a pretty bad idea, then they can tell more, why is it a bad idea? And let's see if it is a bad idea. We can test it one on one. And if it's a good idea, then people will probably say, wow, I have never imagined that it could be like this, and I can see possibilities

So I think this, this testing, combined with the strategic long term perspective, has a really nice way of bringing people together in a constructive dialogue.

is the physical structure in a simple form, I will say so, do something that is is a more low cost. Like a temporary design. but what we do is also be combined them. so it's not just the physical structure as a temporary design, it's also the activities, the events in space is also the communication around it. What do we say to people? What do we want them to discuss? It's also putting articles in the newspaper and on Facebook and stuff like that. And then the third, the fourth thing is the evaluation design to actually evaluate on how does it work? All these temporary designs with whatever testing we're doing here? How does it work for people? And who are these people? So making a test out of it, so we actually learned something from it

temporary design is not something new. But I think combining it with a long term strategic perspective, is something that really adds value to the process. It's not just about making it temporary space, but it's about the discussion around it. How do we want to develop our city? What do we want this to be? How would we like to take part of it?

And something it also does that are overseen in the process. If you start with a really solid process in the start in the beginning, you also start building up the organization. So the structure around the architecture is actually building up during the process. And that's a big advance, because then people can have the talk about how do we share this? How do we work here? How would I imagine that we could collaborate? How does that interfere with something else? So starting building up this organization is.. that's where they are going to meet afterwards. That's where the conflicts and solutions is going to be found. So I think having this relationship to other people in other organization, in your own organization is going to make so much easier on the life afterwards. I think that's that's really a valuable part of the process output as well.

Most important for us is to say that there are qualities everywhere, and we don't believe that it's either or, we believe that it's both and. that these different places in our in our map of Denmark, they are all important. They all have values, how can we treat them valuable and be of interest to what what are their resources and needs? So that's our main approach to different places, I would say and there's also why we are called K-architects, we both care about the entire country but also about healing the country.

and then we're social architects because we are not only interested in the physical structure, we are really interested in people, and we often we go like we meet one and we say okay, who is important in this city, who do we need to talk with? and people know, people have a map. And like, just by talking with some people you map out who are actually

important in the city. And I think it's important not just to ask the mayor, or someone in the project department of, of the municipality, but also to ask other people. What do you think is important? Who do you think we should involve?

And also in O-city they have the same that been talking about this parking lot being some kind of connection between the big supermarket and their main street with all the small shops, and for 15 years or something like that couldn't make a decision, then they had this test. And then within a year, they took a decision about now we're going to make it. So I think also like having this test. And this learning this common understanding of we learn something we tried it, it's not so dangerous to do it. We can live without these 40 parking spots or whatever it is. it calms people down, it makes it more, I don't know, doable in a way. Now we saw that we can do this. Okay, let's try it.

J-architects is founded on the beliefs that we should put people in the center of the process of design, and the architect should move out and not be in the center as a master, as an artist.

the idea that the architect is in the center of everything, and we're trying to reverse that saying, no, it's the people that's in the center, we should listen to them, we should give them a language to express how the surroundings affect them, and then what is lacking. And that then is our source of information, that is the source of architecture and design. And another thing is also that, yeah, when we talk about what we do at J-architects, we don't talk about the design as the main product, we talk about the community as the main product.

when we have a huge focus on the process, we know from experience that we are actually not designing community because that sounds artificial in a way and it sounds like you have a lot of power, but in a way our processes, the way they're designed and way our methods are working, actually has that side effect that it connects people, it creates network, it strengthens community, existing strong communities become stronger, or new communities, they sort of become a product of our process

then whatever we're designing, whether it's a strategy or a an actual physical space, that is the future physical framework to nurture that community. So we often talk about something immaterial, not physical as our main product, and then the physical product as a framework for nurturing that community in the future

an important part of how we design our methods and how we work is also that we acknowledge that this language that we're talking about that we need to create a common language. Within that, we also know that doing participatory processes and doing involvement and co creation is a learning process we need, you know, in order to create that common language we have to start with acknowledging that this is new to a lot of people, for instance, when we do workshops, we don't start by asking, so what do you want, I mean, we need to start somewhere else we need to give the community or the people the ability to start from the beginning to talk about their existing conditions, pinpoint challenges and problems.

And then in that very sort of a clear process that so they can identify saying, Oh, this is the analysis path. And now we're moving into identifying potential solutions. And now we're moving into actually deciding then the design and the future framework. So we often lean up against the design thinking process, and with the 4Ds discovered dream design develop, because that is a very accessible method and accessible language already existing. That works well, it's very clear for people to understand the process of working as a designer in that way. We're also breaking down the barrier from being a professional and being a lay person and giving people access into our methods and our work process. And I think that's also a way of creating trust. So we're not just, you know, forcing ideas to people's reality, but we are giving them an insight into how we got there, because we're doing it together.

I clearly recognize that we are different as architects also. some function better by sitting behind the computer, and, you know, doing the drawings, and that, I need those kinds of relationships. I need, I'm curious, you know, I like the conversations I need the people contact. So of course, not all of us should be how I am, you know, and I realized that, but I also feel that if I weren't doing it weren't having that people focus, I would be, I would be blindfold.

But we were trying to push an agenda of bringing kids and young people into the process of our planning. So we got funding from the A-foundation for experimenting with these different types of learning projects in schools. And I remember some of these kids we were working with, when they realized how big an impact their urban environment had on them. And when we need me maybe when we sort of tried to stimulate a curiosity into them, you know, asking themselves, okay, I'm looking now at my, my everyday surroundings, I'm looking up when I bike, I'm looking around when I walk, and all of a sudden I see a bench and I think that's great. But why is it placed where it is? Why does it have the color does and why is it turned the direction, I don't want to look that way. Those small things,

I remember activating a kind of a awareness in these kids and young people, were also a part of our journey, where we realized that we have a huge part of our population that we do not involve and that we don't pay any attention to when we design our cities that are actually super users and have an should have an equal right in participating even though they cannot vote yet. So that is also kind of a crucial point in to where we are today. Because we can see now that there's momentum, in the focus on kids and young people that actually gets us projects and jobs now, especially in the in the sort of outskirts in the world where they have realized the politicians that they need to work with the kids and the young people to give them ownership over their community as a way of maybe getting them to move back when they've gotten an education in the larger cities.

It's also a gateway into the rest of the communities to the families and the parents that we have a hard time reaching, actually doing that through the schools and to the kids helps us create a gateway in a way into to the dinner table.

I think importantly, when you look overall on a project or process, we always design them in a way so we make sure that there's room for feedback loops. Because in the beginning, we need to understand the context. We often in the beginning, we use a board game we have designed, a method called A-nopoly, which is a board game. not a capitalistic way of developing the developing places, but it is centered around developing places. So we, in Danish, you would say we bring the people into the game of developing their spaces or their cities, their communities. And I think there's two layers of that method. One is the atmosphere created around a board game is shoulders down. It's collaboration. It's not competing within the contestants that within your group, but it's yes, sometimes you can we stimulate motivation by having different groups competing against each other. And that's especially with young people. So you motivate them to actually identify issues and solve them and stuff like that and get points and there's prizes and stuff. But basically, what it does is that it also creates a space where you first off you read each other's faces, you are slowly and sort of pedagogically, taking by the hand through the process of analysis.

because you physically draw on a map, you point out where you live, or your you draw your route, or you point out to a certain problem, and then you start sharing it, it all materializes in this map in front of you. So everyone becomes part of it. And then we use the psychology of the traffic light signal. So red is, of course, challenges, and yellow is potential solutions, and green is the sign that now we have agreed on a solution. And then at the end, you share with the rest of the groups. So we have examples where we have played several hundred in the same room, we've also used it a lot digitally during Corona, where we start, I think we had an example of a workshop with more than 100 people digitally. So starting with a shared session, then breakout rooms where you have the board game, also digitally, and then you meet up again. And then each group shares their findings

And what happens is actually that people realize that there's a lot of similarities, but also the differences are being put out there. And they are then taken seriously. So there is a psychology behind the game, or behind this method that really works well with the communities.

then most importantly, also there is or equally important, is the data that we get. So we can map areas with this method. Very clearly at the all the information on our maps.

we can already from those first sessions, identify the themes and categories of issues. And then we do a feedback loop after a session like that. We haven't done anything yet. We haven't drawn up anything we haven't put in anything

into shape, we haven't concluded anything, we've only helped sorting out all the information, again, as a way of creating community around the future development, right.

We have one example of a very extensive process that went on for a year. Normally we worked with four default feedback loops. And that was because the municipality we were working for hadn't chosen anything, not even a site for change. So we were given the task of doing an involvement process that would map out potential sites. And then having the community decide where what should be happening.

And then afterwards doing the design with the community. So we were narrowing sites down from 30 to 9 to 4 to 2, and then designing those spaces. Yeah, so in that way, it becomes, you have one original sort of state of mind or idea but you start creating a community around and that change, and people they work together.

But the game in itself is something that it's a method we use initially. Because it helps us map out areas and identify themes in the beginning. And then we use other methods like life drawing, sitting down with people and drawing live, when they speak, we draw what they talk about, and then immediately, we become a medium in a way. So they're leading our hand, as you can say, and it's really effectful. Because they indicate immediately, you know, if it's no, that was not what I meant, or Yeah, that's, that's great. I haven't thought about that. And you know, and we could do it with groups, or individually. So that is a way of sort of narrowing down, going to the desk design phase with people working in the design

then we have another tool that we sometimes apply to the game, or a general campaign, that's an app that gives people the ability to take a picture of a place and then make these collages that sort of, it's more, it more gives you an atmosphere then. But it gives us a lot of data, a lot of information. Because if we have like a campaign running where the majority of the collages being made, have something with green, or have something with play, or you know, we can all we also use that as a tool to understand the different themes. So and it's a great way of giving people easy access to a creative tool.

And then a questionnaire is also a standard questionnaire is, you know, what is also a great tool, sometimes used in the very beginning of a process to make like baseline measurements, but also later on in the process, actually using the questionnaire as a way of getting people to vote or express their opinion towards a certain direction. So then it becomes more visually, and then people can vote for ideas or for themes or sort of overall strategies and do it in their own time.

We've actually experienced that we get more young people and women to participate if it's a questionnaire, and not a workshop at seven o'clock in the night, there's something about also paying attention to what kind of activities drawn certain types of people, the event I was talking about before, where a lot of people showed up last weekend, actually, a lot of seniors showed up to that. It was in the morning, you know, breakfast and coffee. So we have to now pay attention to how can we also get more younger people to participate here. So that also is important when you plan the activities in a process. And a questionnaire is just you know, a digital tool or method is a great way of getting more women and young people to participate.

And then we moved into phase two, where the same young people were developing temporary projects around the city. Because often with these, especially with a strategy like that, where you only see drips and drops of changes over 10 years. You mean you use people so use placemaking and temporary activities as a way of materializing the changes quickly, and to motivate especially the young people.

And the young people were developing kind of prototypes of how to activate that area. And so they brought ideas to the table, and we try to, how to say, draw them up one to one

So an urban lab, where we actually were setting up a physical platform. we activated a rundown building, in train station in this town so people would know where we were, where they could contact us, we had exhibitions and

different activities from working out from this building. And what happened was that people were then starting to dream about what could be, they dreamed about a place for doing their homework, or a small cafe, run by volunteers in the community, a place where they could have concerts and stuff. So by activating this building, people started dreaming about that it could be kind of a cultural house for the city.

And they also by themselves applied for money from R-funding to make that happen. But in that project we built sort of a more permanent version of a temporary installations throughout the city. And we were collaborating with the local carpenter, and blacksmith. So those students were bringing the sort of the more professional aspect into these temporary installations. But we were building them together with the with the young people.

And I remember at the inauguration, the families of those young boys showing up, being really proud of their son having actually, have been part of the project. so we've done that both in sort of a small scale version and large scale version building, and it has a huge impact. And it's very effectful with young people to build, bring them into the building process, but it is, it does take a long time. And in that way, it costs more money for the client.

in the far beginning because that's what we use to map out the possible sites in the city. But actually also to make people realize that there were more places in this area that could potentially be developed.

And I think it indicates that, especially the agenda for the smaller towns, and that whole polarization between, you know, our big cities, the urban way of living and the more rural way of living, that conflict. And that contrast and that distance between those two. I think what we do actually have resonated now within the municipalities in the outskirts as a way of not solving the problem completely, but at least be part of the solution of strengthening our town centers and strengthening the smaller cities, and the town centers in smaller cities.

I think responsible architecture is architecture that's developed by the people that is there or uses it. And that it when it is developed in a process where people are able to participate and express themselves, and where you create a sense of community around that change, then I think it's responsible.

And then another thing about anthropology is that historically, it's it's very much also the study or the science of wanting to save the world.

And one of the reasons why I chose to agree to come and work with them, when they asked me was this impression, in Danish way of saying it is that they have the heart in the right place. So there's a lot of really interesting projects with user groups that are either disadvantaged in one way or the other. And the idea that architecture and through understanding these people and their needs, and the whole complexity about it never being just about one user group, but there's always like a whole complexity of users and stakeholders and develop, I mean, this whole complexity

I always find it interesting to dive into trying to understand something and someone but then when it at the same time is something as a children's hospice, which is just so obviously a good thing. It just makes all the sense in the world trying to help build something that can not obviously take away the pain or take away the sorrow or the sadness for for the people who are in need of a hospice, but can help alleviate it and can help make a positive difference.

community relevant place social projects, but without it being like, Oh, we want to save the whole world but it's just, you know, again, project with the heart in the right place. It's a project that actually makes a difference for people who actually need to have someone making a difference for them, well, together with them, because that's another thing. Obviously, everything is in partnership.

But the reason why D-architects won, they had a wild card within an international competition. So as a very young small company, they were then invited in on a wild card. And as we did with the children's hospice kind of found a gap, which was that, that when it comes to students, so this was like, in the beginning of the 2000s, that when it

comes to students, there's actually a huge challenge with loneliness. And this was something that was like, slowly acknowledged at that time, which was, I think, and has been kind of afterwards more and more. But which is something that is actually quite surprising for a lot of people, because a lot of people kind of look at the the best time of a young person's life, as you know, time of their lives and party, party, party, friends, friends, friends. And then it actually turns out that there's a lot of students that are really, really lonely. And it's a huge problem, both because of health. But obviously, it's not healthy, being lonely, but also on a societal level, because it actually affects how many people have been carried out their education. So the dropout rates can actually be connected to loneliness. So what they did at that time was then to say, Okay, so how could we actually do? How could we build a student residence that helps counteract loneliness.

So how can we build a student residence that kind of have a more default community and supports community and, and we did a revisit of that, which was really, really interesting. So that the basic idea is to transform individuals square meters to communal square or common square meters, but also to make sure that you have like, every day, kind of ad hoc of friction, everybody has like a small apartment. So you have the possibility of kind of privacy as well, but in order to get to your apartment, you need to go through the common kitchen, all the common functions like laundry, and there's also a gym, and there are different common functions in the building, instead of kind of just hiding them in the basement as you would maybe do, they've actually dispersed them through the building, so that people in order to kind of get their everyday stuff done, they need to move around the building.

It's taking a task just you know, digging just a little bit deeper trying to find out Okay, so we're not just making homes for students, if we're going to do this, what is actually going on with students now, okay, there's actually a challenge or a problem that we can maybe help solve. Let's try and think about that. So that's kind of the way that they've been working like all the time since we met so that's That's one project, but with a lot of different elements.

And that is actually what I think is the important part. It's not so much whether there's, the road is going in a different like 10 meters this way or 10 meters this way. It's not about that. It's not about the strawberries, it's not about flowers. It's not so much about whether it's three or it's five buildings or what was demolished. It's more about the feeling that they promised that we would be part of this, that they would be considering us equals in this process, and that we would have a say.

And they've had, you know, monthly meetings with officials and planners and so on. But despite them having so many meetings with that level of planners, they still haven't felt that they were involved and informed in the way that they were maybe 5, 7, 8 years ago. And that is also interesting because are they actually being less involved or less informed, or is it just about the process being in a different place in regards to what you can do?

I think quite often it's about having people on the ground explaining why it is, and if you have an engineer who knows everything about why is this not working why can't you put it here and not there? but I think that's a lot about that where you could, where it would be possible to improve on the communication.

So there is also something about that, which I think is a general issue in terms of construction, landscaping, whatever designing spaces which is that, that the architect and the planner, the engineer is maybe in touch with the end user, like the resident or whoever's going to inhabit it or use it in the early phase of the project. But then they kind of disappear out of it because then you have to plan and you can't have lay people involved in the planning because they don't understand the deeper processes. So they kind of disappear and then you build, and then there's pragmatical, you know, challenges. There might be something you find some underground water, whatever water level is higher than you thought or whatever it is. And then you change according to that. But you don't involve the resident or the end user again until you finish the product. And then they'll say, but this wasn't what we expected, or whatever, and then you're gonna be like, but we talked about this five years ago.

and the people living there know something different. Again, they know how it is to inhabit it, and we rarely do. So I think that's extremely important to keep in mind. And that respect is of course part of that. It's about respecting that

people have different types of knowledge and different experiences. And some of them are quite useful in a lot of processes. I can't remember what I put next.. diversity, yeah, kind of speaks into the same, right. And yeah, it's also respecting that people are different and have different views. And again, it doesn't necessarily mean that you should accommodate everyone's ideas, but I would say listening to them and taking them into account and taking them seriously enough to say that it's a good idea, but it's not gonna work here because that is also taking people seriously. It would be nice to have eight trees here, but we actually do have something that we have to put there. So it's not gonna happen, but it's a good suggestion. We could consider it somewhere else. And that, I think that would be something that could accommodate at least some of the types of complaints that I've seen. Not everyone, and people will always complain, so I don't think you can avoid that but I think some of it could be avoided by taking a different path. of course there's an environmental sustainability that's about not using or reusing materials or about not using materials that have a high toll on the environment, but it's also about social sustainability. And what I mean about that is that you should, of course you should build for the people who are there, but you should also build for someone who isn't there yet.

Well, I think it's extremely, it's a very difficult task, but it's also extremely important. And I think it's undervalued because I think some of the conflicts that are present in G-area, not all of them, but some of them could have been avoided through better involvement, more involvement more communication different communication. And it's not to say that the people who have been tasked with the communication or the involvement have done something bad or done something wrong. But it's more about the allocation of resources from the municipality that I think have been, yeah, it hasn't been, the commitment to involvement in communication hasn't been big enough. It hasn't been deep enough, I think.

But in working with these transformation projects in communities, existing communities, I think it's extremely important to, to constantly be in a dialogue and be involved and be present actually also where the building is being done or the landscaping or whatever it is, so that you see for yourself, what the issues are and what might make people concerned or angry or whatever. And be accessible to that. Because if you sit in your office, and it doesn't really matter what you're doing, whether you're an architect or you're a municipal official, it's very easy to , you know, brush off complaints and say it's because they don't know enough about what's going on, and it's because they don't understand the big picture or it's because they don't understand the legislation or whatever. But when you're actually confronted with people in real life and you go and look at things and you see it from other people's viewpoints, then you see, then you're actually able to see things differently. And it doesn't necessarily mean that you have to change what you're doing, but then you will have a new perspective by having to explain why it is the way it is. For instance, if you can say, if something is a way that it has to be, then you will be able to explain that. It also will create some level of reflection about your own practice, I think, which is also important.

So we're very keen on listening to the users, or the place where the building or the planning is taking place, the environment, and then the client, of course. So we're working also with them trying to create these common platforms in our architecture. So it's not only the way that we develop it, and who we develop it with, it's also the architecture that we develop. So for example, when we develop a educational house, maybe we enhance the communal spaces, or the possibilities for creating platforms where people can meet and interact. And the same in cultural spaces, we've done what I just talked about was an educational space on R-campus, in R-city, where we made a huge stair, where we gathered five different educations and that stare led to all these different educations, but this stairs was not only, you know, a transportation or circulation purposes, it was also for meetings.

So we also had places to sit or interact or look at each other, then they could also be giving something back to the environment. And not only creating, you know, the architecture that we were doing, creating something for the users for the architecture, but also the ones that are, you know, surrounding the city surrounding.

But we also created a transition between the entrance area and the green area in the back of the backyard, so that the people in the city or the nearby surroundings could actually suddenly use the green areas behind. So it was not only for the ones using the building, but it was also for the people in the city.

tangible design as for us, it's also about when we talk about this community, then for us, it's not just about making a theory about that it's a community or we working with the community, it should be tangible, somehow it should be, you should feel that it's concrete, helping something or helping people meet.

we're doing a lot of public housing. And when you're doing that, you also need to involve the users a lot. They need to feel heard somehow. So that was also very closely related to how to develop the working together with them, and listening to the users wishes.

it's also, of course, context. And so it's, you know, somehow as many restraints you can get on a project, the better it is, somehow, of course, it's more work, you need to somehow figuring out how to solve this project within those constraints. So, it might be a harder assignment. But when when you solve it, it's the best solution somehow, because then, you know, it fits to the place that it's where it is. And it fits to the users that are involved, and often also makes the client happy because the users are happy, as well.

But of course it's shaping the architecture that we create, because we are focusing every time on seeing so what is that social extra layer? How can we somehow, you know, work with the social problematics in this project, or the social layer, in many ways, it could also just be the communal layer, which is, for example, social resources or common resources.

if you listen to the stakeholders, and if you listen to the users, it's very seldom that you end up in a conflict. Of course, then you should argue you should be good at arguing for whatever you believe in. But when you open up for the process, they are also listening to, you know, the internal argumentation for why we are choosing something. And of course, this sounds like we never have problems in the processes, of course we did. I think often the conflict emerge when you are not listening to each other somehow.

the fact that listening to what they actually want from the project, listening to understanding what they want, right. So it's not necessarily a lot of talk but it's, a lot of understanding somehow.

I always say the same way. It's about you know, trying to involve them in our thoughts. And as soon as you do that they know and understand what it is that you want to. What do you want to create with the architecture. And as soon as you understand also the limits of what you can do as an architect, then it's very seldomly coming to a conflict somehow. It's somehow...I don't have the answer. I just think that there is... I think the answer is opening up to for our own discussions, opening up for the process, is really helping convincing in the right direction. And then yes, sometimes then you cannot convince the client about certain things. But then it's also not logical somehow, if the client doesn't want that, why would you need to pressure him on doing something that he doesn't want, or the users doesn't want with the architecture you're creating for them, then somehow, it's also about as architects really listening to collaborators, and clients and users, and not just having an idea in your head and then kind of force force that onto them?

we often talk about, you know, what the different stakeholders wants from the project. And then, of course, in the end, it's about who's using this. And, of course, the budget of the project. And then you cannot, you know, the argument for how the users wanted is very strong, and how they, they would like to, to use the building or the open spaces.

And then, of course, there's also, you know, the economy. And of course, there's also trying to push the limits for sometimes the users doesn't know what they want, or at least they don't know what they want in the future. So we should also, of course, help them they're getting a knowledge of that. And that is maybe more the client that is interested in in doing that. Right. Again, I think it's a hard question. Yeah, I think it's I think I'll go back to again that is very much about involving, because often everyone can see the, the idea or the purpose, if they understand each other's platforms somehow.

When we work with architecture, we often include a lot of different actors at the same time. At the very, very start. So if it's, let's say it's the school, then we would facilitate processes where we invite both students, teachers, pedagogues, leaders, stakeholders, putting them at the same table. And first and foremost, to create this common understanding common knowledge on what is schooling? Where do we want to go? From a societal perspective, starting there in the biggest of questions that has nothing to do with architecture. So we start somewhere else, but we start with them addressing questions of what's the meaning of life almost right? Because that must be the meaning of schooling. So if that's the meaning of schooling, what does it actually look as a practice? And if that's the practice, how should we then build the architecture around it? So we support that practice, right?

Generally, it's important in every design process and in creating architecture, but here even more to bring everybody to the table from the very beginning. Otherwise, you will never be able, well, you will never be able to, I would say create a true universal design. You can't make architecture for everyone. Somebody will benefit more from this architecture than others will. But we could at least try and have that as an ideal trying to meet as many people as possible and as many needs as possible.

Which means then we kind of touch on the way we organize ourselves, which again, affects the culture. Because before we had a culture where I was the single teacher making all the decisions by itself, but now I have to co teach, which means the culture change to right now I'm I'm not alone anymore. Now I have to talk to others. So always working around is wheel of domains and insisting on looking at a building as an organism consisting of these five domains. It's also very systemic approach. All the way back from lumen's idea of systems in in relation to human systems, right.

And then we kind of map this looking for places to focus or start working. And then we take all that and place that into the paddock model. And then we can see okay, there's a lot of issues here around organization, but not very much around around culture, they seem to have a common agreement of what are the values what are the culture, but in our organizational terms, we have a problem. And so we have to fix that problem. If if that is fixed, does then something happened with the ideas of the pedagogics that they formulated and again around this base rate.

we can do that, but only if we see how the space related to something that is not space. And the things that are not space are, for instance, people's values, people's way of talking to each other communication, ways of organize in yourselves as groups. So, it's so important that we, as architects, always keep that in mind, which means from a M-architects perspective, we do that too. We also work as what you would call consultancies in organizational development, we help organizations develop. And that's for us to see it's part of developing architecture that's developing architecture is developing people, which are in a frame of either political or societal frame that we call education, right?

there's so much more than architecture going on. So we're trying not to separate architecture from what's happening within..

i think responsible architecture is an architecture that, at least tries to include as many people as possible, and as many needs as possible, and starts out in the question of the user, and not in the question of anything else. Not in question of economics, not in cases of politics

But but we are an Scandinavian oriented practice. We have an office here where we are today in A-city, one in Copenhagen, one in Osland, one in Stockholm. Sometimes we do competitions and pitches in other parts of the world. If someone yeah, invites us or there's a, something super interesting that we can't say no to. But otherwise we are more oriented in towards Scandinavia. And we are currently 180 people spread over the different location I just mentioned.

Which is like a youth residencies in C-city. Because that competition was developed with the intention of addressing a topic, a social topic that was important at that time, that was about loneliness between or amongst young people living in youth residencies. And that intention of trying to create something where the young people living there

would feel less lonely, became like a driver and a narrative for the project. And it also informed the design in ways where we allowed ourselves to actually treat the brief a little different than was expected.

So that became also a part of the facade design. And that was done with the help of some anthropology students actually. Just doing interviews and research to back that thesis up that maybe if we change something, we can actually address an issue that is super important. And that became a very powerful narrative also in the competition

And that became a very important project as well as something that convinced us that this take on architecture is actually really important and powerful. And of course it's important for us to keep on winning competitions because that's what we live off.

There are different ways of doing it. We have also talked about using the impact team as almost like a social commissioning strategy where we talk about, introduce the architecture and maybe the thoughts about the project to the users from the beginning. So like an introduction, this is our intentions..And that's one way of doing it. That's of course something very like opposite of nudging, that would just be the direct way of having an open dialogue on what the intentions are. And I think just by doing that, I think we could have eliminated that big surprise we had in the B-housing project. If we had really talked about the fact that energy is still energy, and you have to be very aware of that even though you are in a new house that has a very sustainable stamp on it. You have to think about the fact that how you use it is very much impacting the overall sustainable impact it has. But I think it was an important discovery. And it's something we, we often talk about.

And then of course it's all based on the often the, maybe you could say that's the Danish way of working with architecture. Honesty is important for us. Honesty in architecture is important. That, and that's something that also goes very well hand in hand with working with the impact because it's the honesty of what we want that creates the expression of our architecture usually.

Yeah, I, having that architecture that meets people in eye height, that is something that is inviting, that is easy to read, that you can, touch and feel and what you see is actually. This is a piece of wooden, this is a piece of concrete, and if you touch it, that is the tactile impression you get. That's important for us. That's what, brings us the most joy. So that's something we always seek. And it's usually also an important design strategy when we're in doubt. Then the question would be, what is the most honest thing to do? Or what is the, most simple solution to our design challenge? And that's some of the best architecture we know of is based on that philosophy.

an impact architecture can have in a context, for instance. And sometimes it can be something as banal as working with a ground floor that is more inviting, that suddenly can bring a totally different atmosphere to a community or to a context or where people interact in another way compared to if it wasn't as inviting. So we talk a lot about the do you know the kenstuen idea. I don't know why, how it would be translated in English, but it's like the place where our building meets the floor of the city. Or the context that is super important. And that's something we have experienced many times as a place of focus where people meet our proposals or our architecture. And that's something we design that impacts our..and you can see it just here in P-project, the way that we have placed all the extrovert functions in the ground floor and have this setback and an arcade and benches where people can actually take shelters under the building. So it's also about generosity in the way we see the importance of the ground floor as something that can make a positive impact for the context. And that can change a community or an atmosphere in an area. That's something we are very aware of as one of the important places. And a lot of E-architects project has that detail in the facade is something we, we have seek to develop in a way where the architecture we do actually welcomes people. And it can be small details, but it's a, it's an important agenda and we have seen that it can almost work as a catalyst because the more welcoming it is, the more people gather around it and suddenly, there's a change for something else to emerge. So that's that could be an answer to it I guess.

But that's a project with a lot of user involvement in terms of, you know, working out what they actually need, and how the space is put together. So we have, we have a couple of people, obviously, that are very good at the sort of this

sort of early stage participatory design sort of getting out of the client, what they actually need, in terms of spaces and organization and converting that into a sort of architectural program.

Yeah, it's workshops. So, actually, we've got two projects present where we use what's called a school. It's workshops. Yeah. So it's, you know, a big piece of paper, and like, cutout blocks, showing the different spaces and trying to get people to organize them, which direction they want to face and where they will be sitting and what the view is getting them to understand that the interrelationships between the different functions.

And then we have another one called the log, which is like the sort of basically, decision log for this sort of participatory process in the early stages where you need to get documented who said what and more decisions to be made and etc.

But we always in B-architects in the projects, we try to put responsible architecture towards that, that the architecture should function in a way that is more fair for people, like they could get more quality out of the investment for users

When we talk about sustainability, it is not only about environment, it's also about social sustainability.

But how can you have more I don't say iconic architecture, but more quality and more quality also in the design in the sustainable architecture, because if it's socially sustainable, it is more interesting, it's more beautiful, it will be also more lovable. And if people wants it will be possible to be more long lasting

and in when you compare classical architecture to modernistic to post modernistic, it is interesting that is three different areas why mostly the classical architecture get listed? And the people, like, in general, people admire that era more. Is there something in aesthetics of design that makes it also sustainable? And is it what is unseen in today's sustainable? Like, why we don't talk about social sustainability? As much as we talk about environmental or economic

I would like more and more people be aware of environment and social sustainable, the fairness of the business that we are on, and that the profit goes to people and the users...I would like to see and go to architecture festivals and see more and more it become mainstream and don't think it is in my bubble or is the reality

Sharing and partnership

within the first half year, I ended up being on all different kinds of projects, because somehow bringing new skills into the office showcased to them what they did not know about or what they thought that they would never think.

And I think what N-person learned from our work at INSP, was a new role for the architecture, less designer, more a guide to users.

So she was someone we drew upon, I pulled her into the project, when the users had ideas for changing the physical building. So she would guide and advise the users on how to change things. Like say, well, this is not legal, you can't do that, because the building would crash or... But we gave the building to the users and the architect to be their helper.

But in both these projects I mentioned with the sports facilities, it is actually part of the project, to have us advise them about how to organize the use of space to educate users

How can you use space differently, and especially in a school setting, as some schools mentioned that staff is a little bit reluctant to take on new ways of working. Like they, they have some bad examples of new technology introduced at schools, and then teachers just keep doing what they've always done. So the value of a new technology or new space needs to be paid attention. How can we actually use it so you get the impact of it. So that's what we got to do in project to help them to use it. That's my favorite role, I don't think the architects would settle in this goal, that's me.

So I think that by doing the process with a high degree of user involvement, and you're already preparing for what, what's going to happen after the building is there. So it's a way of educating, mobilizing and forming the idea, also in practice. So I think that's one thing to the client, more specifically, this is a really great way of working, because you don't have to spend all the time on a building project. And then afterwards, you have to take care of the organizational issues. You can integrate it both side by side, particularly when you're looking at new activities, new user groups that is the end goal.. everyone wants the building to be a success from the beginning, that is when you see a lot of users and happy users

So that is also interesting, the architecture can bridge this bridge between some different views and client and consumed or users.

And, and that is, I think a good example of like, if people want comfortable chairs and sofas and when they you should not call it a lounge, because that's not what they're trying to tell you. Think about yourself going home relaxing. So my point is that even though you have the skills, and the, the ideas and whatever, well use as an architect, and remember, to think as a human being as well, and you're also ordinary. You're like everyone else, keep that in mind.

And also with architecture, I think, because architecture is a great form of communication in terms of you can see a really great project that communicate, change and enables the local community to really flourish. And then you can see a really shitty project that does the exact opposite. So it communicate, maybe we say isolation and stuff like that. So it's such an important tool in terms of communicating change, I would say, both good and bad.

because client architect relationship is one of the also one of the most critical parts in terms of doing great architecture. If you have a really bad relationship with your client with your client, I think it's really difficult to do a great project. It will take a toll on both

I think once you narrow in on what is the core needs of the users, how you work with that, how you are involved with them in the process, in terms of designing a great space, and also a space where they feel they have some say in, I think it makes it so much more sustainable in terms of the user maybe taking better care of the building, feeling better, having a better well being in that building, and also, having a building that actually function on a social level as well, that will not be torn down maybe in 30 years or 40 years that is the current trend now, when you tear down a lot of buildings.

So if we can get a greater understanding on how to do a building that can accommodate user needs, I think that will make building stand longer, basically. And once it stand longer, they are way more sustainable on a material level, at least.

So but also creating a stronger bond. Through a lasting architecture, you could say, in terms of, of just having a building that will be lasting for for maybe 100

How somehow address it on the national level, I would say that requires a lot of people involving in the same direction, and working towards that.

So that is also what we talked about beforehand, a place you could start in terms of maybe changing society is also getting public space or good public space, that discussion into the, I'd say primary education

Yes I still communicate with students from the school and also was very much involved with the Danish somali community and still talking to them and having a great discussion about the community.

Yes, they took over. Yes, and some of them have a small fee to maintain the building. And there's also worker from the municipality who is running the the Community House at the moment. So she also got a job through this, you

could say because now she certainly has a role in the community, which is super great, she is an anthropologist actually.

very much in the beginning in terms of the big group. And now we are working very closely with two from that group, basically, one who takes care of the management of the project, and one who's doing the music part, basically. So we create, like a Task Force, basically.

but that's because looking at people, what can they contribute with who can do what, how do you enable that, how to use that skill set best and also, who steps up basically, for the challenge as well. Who wants to take on that stuff. If you find out also through the process, but this also really much goes to say that in this case with A-volume, they have been such a great client, I would say. And, especially true for the task force has so many great professional abilities, I would say that makes my job way easier than if I had to maybe do more of what they're doing than that it would not have been a great project, I would say, because then I could have had the same amount of focus on the architecture side.

Yes, definitely. So, and not being, being the one doing everything is extremely important if you want to do a great project.

There are always dilemmas, I think, you talk and sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't work. And then sometimes you get upset, sometimes the client get upset. Sometimes it works out for the better. Sometimes it doesn't. I think it's very much. It's hard to say straight. What is the answer to one? I think it's, that is the client architect relationship, basically.

If it's possible, we actually have stakeholders available. And I would say unfortunately most of the users, for instance, if you're talking about schools, are students, they're actually the last to be heard. So there we have, we are guardians for the interest. because of what we know of different preferences. Of course we we try to involve as many users, but also the stakeholders, which usually are then teachers and the administrators and so other decision makers.

So yeah, otherwise, I'm not sure whether we've experienced something that we wouldn't do, because I think that with our mindset, we like to change things actually. So if it's something that is born, it's a bad idea, we try to change it or convince, and usually we come around it or get, all of a sudden we don't see client no more.

Today he's a protagonist of sustainability. He changed, he's understanding. So you can also influence a client, over the years. So today it's, that project is a reference project for a lot of people.

the understanding of that project is that our client understands that he's not going to outlive the project. We made a timeline saying to him, okay, if you build, as much as that was built, being built at the harbor side during the crisis, that was when we had the most cranes in Europe per square meter, most activity here. If you built that every day, then you'll be about done, so to speak. You're not, you're never done with the city, but you're built the most of the area in 2070, and the client is I think he's mid sixties, so you can, if you do the math that's more or less like 50 years, then he's going to be 111 years old. Maybe he can, but I don't think he's going to work at that time. And then we said, okay what can we predict about from now to 2070? We can start to talk about climate change and also climate refugees. We can talk about collapse in biodiversity. We can start to talk about new economies, blockchain, and so on. We can start to talk a lot of different stuff and how does it influence the way that we actually do the planning? And his person, he said, this is very abstract for me. I need something that I can act on now. Exactly. The butterfly, the way to do it make it a concrete, but that's the way to direct response to collapse in biodiversity. But it's planning, it's looking ahead. But he came back and said for instance that I don't need to earn money. It's for the long run. It's just like when you have a kid.

Also knowing that we as architects, we are not specialists in operating a building or we are not specialists in taking, building down. We're not specialists in the different building materials. So actually working together with the people knowing the most about different layers was really a big help.

and then since that we have trying to expand the knowledge and knowledge share and get it out in the industry. And as you maybe know, like the industry also have moved a lot. And now there's moved from being just like a niche subject right to be like quite mainstream and if not something that all companies are looking at then at least most. So we would say, but how is this a solution for the problems on your work environments? Isn't there another place we could we could start? Could we start somewhere else where you don't need to be at work like 20 hours in a row, because you can't leave before your boss is leaving. And then they were thinking, Okay, how can we do this more democratic. And I think this journey on helping people through methods to reflect and come up with new solutions for the work life, but also for the personal life. That's, that's really interesting for me, and I think that gives meaning to my job, or my work life as well, to help people in this way. And with this projects, interns we have had, and people we've had that on different summer schools and courses and stuff like that.

So I think it's not so much about, maybe being better than than other people, but giving them tools or sharing, you know, knowledge so they can reflect and they can they can give more meaning to their life. I think that's important for me. So I'm always interested in what are your perspective? What are your reflections upon your perspective? How can we have a dialogue about it? How can we reflect upon it together? But also, how can we challenge it? And how can we come up with something that's even better as model? And that's probably one of my key starting points for my work life.

And it's not like the shop owners are tuning their business accordingly to the strategy for the city, or the museum inspector are in making an exhibition that match the strategy of the city development. But if we open it up, if they know and also are part of the development, then they can see how they can use it in their work. And that's the thing, I found that are really valuable for people

And also find stakeholders that can really implement this afterwards. Who can be the first implementers. one thing is the users like, just regular people living in the city, they will come then they will use it, but who will actually drive it and who will develop on it? It's not people going down the city to buy a cup of coffee. It's the one owning the coffee shop. So how can we involve them better in the process so they have this ownership to the strategy and can help implement it?

you could think it would be more expensive, because the process before would be more expensive. And then you could discuss if it pays back afterwards, right. And I think that we make more value in a better process beforehand, we actually building. we had a project in a therapy garden where they thought they needed the biggest greenhouse for doing this is therapy,

And of course, you cant do that with all projects. If it's a youth housing, then it's a little little bit difficult to say to people, you can start living here, and then afterwards, we'll do the house. But then you could go out and study something and maybe have a discussion with people one, I don't know, to do other things. But I think it's just by I don't know, maybe paying a little bit more attention to the process, how can we make it better? How can we learn more before we build it, I think that would be a good idea.

three months later in the process, they're like, oh, okay, I changed my mind a bit, right? Because I had some new experiences. So if we can help them also with this reflection process, with actual experiences like doing it, and then maybe we can also move them faster, instead of they're going to have all these learnings after they move into the building, then we can actually perhaps take a lot of them on beforehand. So I think, in that way, hopefully, also, it's sustainable, that we will build something that is more precise, and it is better used

Maybe there could be more learning attached to it. Oh, that's a good idea. Let's make space for the learning process about waste shortening, on that kind of stuff. So I think it also brings out potential if we try then to do something that we most likely would experience something new.

I think we are the first movers on a lot of our methods and our approach. So for us, it's important that we have customers that actually see the value in our knowledge and our competencies. That's probably the first thing to have like a really good collaboration. Because if they don't really understand it, then then you are, I don't know, four steps backwards, right? And, and if you have someone who actually wants to, okay, I really want to do like a cross disciplinary, holistic project where we try to combine as much as possible and create as much value as possible within the project, then we are some somewhere else, then if they just say, Oh, can you help us being certified for dtbn? Gold or Platinum or whatever, right? So if it's just like something we need to do in order to live up to a law or I don't know, whatever, then it's, it's hard for us to do real value. But if it is someone who actually is a project, where you really want to implement and think like cross disciplinary and as they create more value than I think it's the exciting project for us, because we are also looking for all possibilities at all time.

Especially also now with the climate crisis and also political crisis, I think, really, our profession has the possibility to break down barriers and to minimize also polarization in our society.

that's the culture, that is the existing culture for these kinds of events, right, but so what we were doing was to say, but we have to share, start sharing our different thoughts. We cannot maybe start with bringing ideas to the table where we can start about, you can start by explaining how your everyday life works. And then in connections to that, how do you how do you move around? What is missing? Where do you see challenges. And then we have these method cards, that is red on one side and green on the other side. And you start by writing your issue or your challenge down on the red side, and you pinpointed on a map. So slowly, these sort of challenges start appearing on this huge map that then visually drags people into the conversation. And then suddenly, because it's in a, in a group way, group structure, people start inspiring each other, and then the conversation starts, right, then ideas start appearing on to how to improve these challenges that they have identified. And then people were saying when they were leaving, it's amazing, I didn't have any idea when I came here, but i am full of ideas now and then people started expanding inspiring each other and, and the shoulders are sort of lowered, and the conversation is much more constructive and creative

in terms of social sustainability, it's very clear that what we do help that, that alone. But I think that there's so much potential and actually activating, I mean, all of the sustainable aspects, also within the financial sustainability and within the materials and how we build, because you can actually use the project to enlighten people to make decisions based on financial framework and, yeah, and resources

you can use it again, I think as a catalyst for empowering people and making them understand the impact of our built environment, not just as a social framework, but also as a big center in our climate crisis.

I think democratically, when, you know, giving them the possibility to make decisions based on the financial framework, we do that in some of our projects, saying, but this is the, this is what we have. So within that, we have to make as many people happy, and some will maybe disagree, but giving people the power to make decisions based on that is, I think, helps the sustainable issues along, you could actually use it as a platform to educate and enlighten people.

that journey, and that focus on on the schools have also given us an insight into how our educational system is working, or is not working. That when we we've designed these different learning projects, we often get reactions from the teacher saying, but I mean, he would never have been that engaged. And wow, I thought he would be you know, falling behind, but he's actually... so we activate, maybe the people also that are the students that would normally not fit in to the norm. So the way we do things. In general, the young people, they get experienced practical hands on experience, they say how to use math or history or so. So you can again, use Architecture and Planning as a catalyst for getting that sort of practical hands on experience of how different subjects in school actually collide, right and fit

together. And again, I think most importantly, you give them an experience of participating in a democratical right to your education.

yeah, so discover dream design. And at the end, it becomes very clear to people that even though we were five people sitting down, and we all had different issues, we actually now have shared our everyday life, we have collaborated in solving those issues, we we learned that my issues are not more important than the other issues we have our issues are equally important. And sometimes I moved away from my own point of view and into a sort of larger group mentality in a way.

So the idea is that you move away from yourself and you move into an awareness of a larger community. And in that way you can, you can move, how do you say, bigger issues, right? You can, you can mobilize people, when you when you work with that process, and you start by moving the individual into a group and then into a larger group. And I think that how it happens is that you very clearly in the beginning has to be yourself and still be yourself within the group.

because the municipality actually chose us as consultants, over Ghel or Cobe, and some of the larger consultancy firms, because we had to focus on the young people. So it was actually an active choice from the municipality to work with the younger community. And how we did it was that we collaborated with the school. So there was a high school in O-city, and there is a public school. And we we designed workshops for both, because there are different age groups and stuff.

so a development plan and such for the city center. So we design the process in order to start internally in the municipality, but stimulate them to collaborate across departments, because it would never be a success, if they didn't start already now. and only within the department of urban planning or whatever, right and not across the culture department and the school department..so we hosted these workshops across. And immediately the municipality could also see that that they needed to be better at collaborating across if they were to implement change in the future. Because they cannot deal with social issues or with the changes in the school system, or with enhancing the cultural activities in the town center if they don't have those departments with them. So that those workshops were sort of our initial point in that project, that gave us a sort of a very solid, how to say, overview of everything that was going on within the municipality that helped us steer the rest of the process, it also helped us identify who we should contact within the community, you know, to point out these sort of gatekeepers into the different types of, you know, business associations, or schools or culture and, and stuff like that.

yeah, that's our ambition. every time we work with the schools to collaborate with teachers, and maybe members of the community, they have a certain knowledge, because that is a way also to make it for them to work in the future.

Yeah, and what they realized was that they had to, we had to extend the contract with them, because they wanted to help to facilitate a future process where they would be working across the silos to different departments. and they realized that through the first workshops, that that was a real value and they needed tools to be able to do that in the future. So again, you can see new community, but also way of organizing in a way of thinking and way of working in the future also becomes, which is more sustainable part of the product of these kind of processes.

it does take a lot of time. And it does take a lot of resources, but it is worth it. I mean, they still there, those those furnitures that was either built by wood or metal, they are still there in the in the urban landscape. And then the permanent project, was actually also built in collaboration with these schools. So it was a more tough building process. And we needed to be more part of the detailing and overseeing the construction site and stuff like that. But we worked, we collaborated with a local professional carpenter, who was the main entrepreneur for the permanent projects, but then bringing in the students.

But the municipality did not want to put up trash cans because it costs money to empty them. So out of this project, we applied more trash cans to the city, because the youth signed a contract with the municipality to empty the trash cans themselves.

Again, ownership, empowerment. And, you know, making those kinds of the new types of partnerships between municipality and in the community.

In S-city, we had a long process of a learning project with them in the school. So for, I think it was throughout half a year, every other Wednesday. So every second week, we were teaching them to do our job. So we're teaching them to do interviews, we're teaching them to urban analysis, we're teaching them to design, to sketch into design into detail, build models, and then we made a competition. So they had to use all the data for the different sites. And then they had to design urban furniture to accommodate those needs. And then four teams won, and those were the four furnitures being asked for temporary projects being built. Yeah. So they were doing our job in a way.

I think every time we remind them of the project description that they have made beforehand, saying, if you want this and this and this to be the result of this process, if you want value for your money, then we recommend that you do this and this. And sometimes I think it happens quite easily. I mean, also, because we have a lot of experience that we drag with that we can sort of pull from. saying, so last time, we had a similar situation, what happens was actually this and that, or we know how to ask those questions in the beginning, when we draw up the contract saying, so what is our hierarchy of, you know, what is our organization of how we work, we have a steering group who has a mandate of this and that, okay, then what is you say that you want this and in order to get there, you do know that you have to do this, and that, and I think very often they are aware of it. And if they're not, they realize that during the process, because they can often see the value of it, as it happens, right.

sometimes we have had experiences with a client, setting aside a couple of hours, internally, to collaborate with us. And then extending that to being even more hours because they can see the value of using resources internally, to implement the changes or to collaborate with us. That you get much more value out of your money by actually having a collaboration with us. So we are not just an external consultant, working parallel with whatever's going on internally in the municipality, but actually having that collaboration, make sure that you anchor the changes, and you can implement them easier over time.

In order to maintain the relevance of us, as sub consultants, or you know, sometimes we are the main consultants, and sometimes with sub consultants, for other architectural firms, supplying them with the skills of doing the involvement in the process, and then doing the design, I also have to acknowledge that if everyone was doing what we're doing, then we would be out of a job

I don't think we should be that afraid of listening more than talking. Or more than drawing, I think, I think listening in every aspect of life, but especially also, when you're an architect is something we should do more, that everyone to do more.

trying, working with experts working trying to, you know, spending time in a wheelchair, kind of getting around all of these things, which is very much about Yeah, curiosity as well. And respect and kind of acknowledging that if you're an architect, you have a lot of qualities and knowledge and, you know, professional expertise, but then there are the users that you can have, you know, you need to put put yourself in their shoes, so to speak, in this case, not their shoes, but their wheelchairs.

Obviously, everything is in partnership. And that was my maybe objection towards anthropology Originally, the whole idea that we have to kind of we, as anthropologists, Western white antropologists need to kind of give voice to a whole group of people think it's much better to kind of work on actually, together with people instead of kind of representing people. That's, again, it's not a whole different story, because it actually is important in the work that we then do now is actually the idea that we're working together as equal partners on this and your knowledge is not more important than my knowledge. But my knowledge is not more important than your, we kind of need to get it all integrated together.

the Curiosity but also, I think the acknowledgement from D-architects side that they as architects also need to learn to keep on learning is very, very well suited with my whole idea of we should never stop learning. We should always be humble towards the all the things in the world that we don't know. And that's a cliché, but the more that we know, the more that we know that we don't know

I would then do I've done some material that the architect or the project manager can then bring into kind of the discussions with the board without me being present necessarily in a meeting or in a workshop or anything. So it's as you can hear, it's very different scales that we can take part. And then obviously, we do the revisits, which is kind of disconnected from the architects and the project managers, because then they've kind of left the project, and they're doing something new. So the way that we get that knowledge back into it is that we within do talks where we invite the whole company, to Yeah, to take part

that is my assumption, because it's it has been so well thought through from the beginning, and also the team because this was it was in Danish, it's called to total interprise. So obviously, there are different ways of doing projects and different financial kind of constructions.. a turn-key project.

or in this case, it was really important that this company was also on board, because obviously in the end, they were our customers, so we couldn't just as architects decide, oh, but we want to do this, they kind of needed to be on board why this is an important investment? Why should we invest in wooden floors, which are more expensive or like all of this. So in order to optimize that process of negotiation, just within our little team, it actually made as I see it, a lot of sense that we took part and kind of gave the feeling or the impression, which was also true, that, you know, all the decisions that we were making, we were making for a reason. And everything was kind of founded on knowledge or research or experience. And obviously, they had a lot of experience as well to put into it. So in that way, then we become like a whole team and one team and not cuz there's a lot of... there can be a lot of negotiations and pushing responsibility around and kind of pushing the monkey around and stuff like that. But in this case, it actually kind of became more like we're whole team and everybody's on board with the decisions that we're making.

But for them, it was actually very different. So the qualities that they then pointed out in the process, were kind of new to me that they were qualities, for me it was just like, okay, obviously, this is the right way to be working together. Because otherwise it's not constructive. You're just, you know, making a lot of noise.

I think within this particular project, those dilemmas did not occur, because the project was so aligned. I mean, the project is like one big bleeding heart. Because it's a children's hospice. So in this case, it and I think we saw it as an investment. And the entrepreneur, the company also saw it. I think our values were quite aligned. So they did not see it as a money making project either. So I think in that way, because it was such and it is a every small project. So I think the level of risk was maybe not too big either. So there weren't actually any dilemmas.

And, you know, you need also to still be architects and not try to become like pseudo anthropologists or pseudo economists or psychologists,

So of course it was made with the interests of the residents in mind in the end, right? But there was no involvement. There was no you know, they didn't ask them whether they wanted to rewire the systems and pay a higher rent. And that is also because of the technicalities in the way that finance is run in, in these types of housing states. So it's very complicated sometimes to involve people. And you can involve people in a lot of things that, that might not be possible to fulfill the way that they would like. So I think a lot of it is also about framing these processes and involving people in what they are, what's possible to accommodate and not like involving them in stuff that politicians will overrule or that finances will overrule. All that pragmatic concerns will overrule and also being honest about that. Because part of, again, if we go back to the promise, which you also noticed I was talking about before, was, is the, I think a lot of the residents had an idea that the estate was also going to be remade in a way that they kind of look forward to, in a way that accommodated their ideals and desires.

it's very much about understanding that first and then not coming with a preconceived idea about how things should be or ought to be, because I think they should be like that, but about understanding where I am and how it's situated in the world. So I think that's important and that is also why I said that thing before about all of these estates being different. So I think it should be different solutions for each estate. And I can't say what the right solution would be for any particular estate, but I think that is also part of the point that we shouldn't be pointing out as politicians or experts are saying that this is the right way to do, because it's rarely like that.

And like you said with building projects on one thing we have in common, which is values, but what we also have in common is that they're different, right? So we are all different but that is also part of what makes us, or should make us relatively equal, is that no one should have precedence because they think that they're better than anyone else. And I think that's important to bear in mind in these processes, that even though of course there will be issues where you as an engineer would know more than I did or as an architect would know more than I did about angles of a building or whatever. And I'm not saying that any residents should just come off the street and draw a building or something like that but we have to take both the values and the specific knowledge that different people have into account in projects and also in architectural projects, I think. because of course, architects know a lot that other people don't. Engineers know a lot. The people who are actually building doing the building work, know things that we don't know about,

is also talking to decision makers about the way that their actions are interpreted. And the way that the way that they do things is sometimes counterproductive to getting the results that you want. And I think there's a lot of very typical role for anthropologists is quite often as mediators or as people who kind of yeah, mediate between different worldviews and realities and so on. And I think that would be interesting to be allowed to be that more, to be more involved in it on a study basis

So as I-architects, as the name also indicates, then we work a lot with a community or on the idea that architecture is not created by one genius doing a drawing, it's created by a common interest for architecture or common interest for developing cities. And so it's created by not only one, but a lot of people involved. And that's, of course, people at the office, where everyone can participate in the discussion. It's very much also the client, of course, and it's the users involved in the projects.

of course, we're working very closely together with, users, the client, municipalities, but often these days, we're also working with the T-foundation (job foundation), and then it's very important that you work closely together with the entrepreneurs, and somehow understand what they want. In other words, otherwise, it's a hard process.

Suddenly, it's actually a value for everyone in the process as well as the users. So the entrepreneur, they can see the value in that they don't need to spend money on a lot of dead hallways or dead space in hidden hallways, and and the users they get the social spaces.

if you can understand all stakeholders at the same time, you often get a solution that is the best for everyone. So if you understand entrepreneurs at the same time as the engineers and users and the client, then you might end up with the solution where everyone is happy.

I think it's being open about the process as well. So it's not each topic that sits with their own knowledge field, but they're actually sharing knowledge. And I think it's very important when you go into meetings, or projects like this, that you're sharing all the way around. We have this thing about calling it the common brain. So the common brain is more clever than we are. So we often talk about, let's ask the common brain, because then, you know, everyone around the table is the common brain. Yeah, so we would like as many participants in the project development as possible, because that is just making the project better. This is also why to start with we inviting them to be a part of the design. So we're not telling the entrepreneurs how we wanted it from the beginning, we're asking, How can we

help this process? Or how can we make this building hit the economical target, for example. And this is where we start.

sometimes it's very concrete, we just ask, Is there any specific goals and also for the engineers, and especially according to the timeline, and sometimes it's more smooth. And then it's just about, you know, taking it slowly, one step at a time when the process develop, depending also on the project, of course, but the most important thing is that they feel that they we are listening, as simple moves, you know, we're showing the plans, meanwhile, talking drawing on the plans, and then that's actually a part of our referendum, there's just a small effect, it's apart, then suddenly, that becomes a document that is a part of our referendums, for example, so they can see that what they're saying is literally put in, it's put into the project right away.

we just experienced that this was where project became best, somehow, where everyone had a say in the project. And over time, we also, of course, enhanced it all, or dived into this thought of collaborating or creating together or creating these common platforms. And so it's somehow become a mantra for us. And then you just dive into theories about it, and then you know, and then we're working on developing, you know, this common way of developing projects. So I think it's very concrete for us how we actually started up that we started off by creating together.

the common pool of resources that, in general we have on Earth, I think it's really important that, you know, if we work together, it might sound a little bit, hippie, but it is like this, the more somehow work together and use the common brain as well, as I talked about, then, at least my experience is that when you share ideas, then often the response is that there's other places where they have been working with some of the same or they're developing something. And then just we actually just talked about as a, we should share way more, because there's people out there that that is working really interesting, with interesting ways of using materials or working with sustainability. So I think the common thought about sharing knowledge is is really important or crucial for the climate, for example, sustainability in general

And in this case, we also have all these meetings with users. And in this case, we're actually also using the project meetings, for user involvement meetings. So there's always users participating project meetings. is it these normal meetings that you have with the client every, let's say every 14 days, normally then, or internally, you actually normally have it internally in your team, normally, the team consists of architecture, landscape architect and engineers. And then in this case, we are involving the client and the users at the same time. So all the internal meetings, we're inviting them in. So all the processes becomes an open process, and open book basically, so that they can see you know, the whole development in the project.

But I think in general, as a collaborations are fun. And, of course, it's not only just architecture firms, but also, you know, in other practices. This is often where you learn a lot. We just, we just collaborated with S-architects from Norway. And they're a huge, corporate firm. And actually, I think what we really learned from from from S-architects was the way that they, you know, organize their processes. They had a very specific way of organizing processes, where, you know, they're focusing on the beginning of a project where, in my mind, there was just a very good way of doing it, where all ideas came into the table, and they call it sprint week. So you know, they were really focusing on the first week with all new bombarding the ideas into the common brain. And then that really created some energy for the project. So, and I think they somehow you can learn a lot from these big organizations because they have certain processes organized. And you know, in general they are more organized I would say..

So right now we are working in we're collaborating not with an architecture firm but with a factory in southern part of Italy, it's an it's an old family factory, they are creating paper for, you know, these all ceilings, how to regenerate all ceilings in a paper machine powered machine.

I think in general, architects would share more, I think we're not that good at sharing ideas. It's, of course we collaborate. But I think we could be way more open in our processes, or honest in our processes. And I think that would help. You know, the common brain because in the end the idea is not that we are architects winning a lot of projects.

The idea is that as the society becomes better, or the we're helping, the climate change, or we're creating a more sustainable cities, or more sustainable world in general. So, yeah, I think it would be the process, or the process would speed up, for example, of how we think sustainability if we were just sharing everything we know

because there's nothing to be afraid of sharing, because, you know, you can still obtain a very good office and practice and, and create a good architecture, you can create even better architecture by sharing these knowledges. And you even have the possibility of, you know, in moving the world to be more climate friendly or sustainable, together, somehow.

I think it's about sharing knowledge completely. I think it's about just putting all ideas into a common pool of ideas, and and sharing what we know about sustainability or sharing what do we know about architecture and building? I think that would speed up the process a lot.

responsible architecture for me is architecture that enhances these social platforms, and possibilities for a platform for where people can meet. It's also sharing knowledge. This we just talked about, you know, how we see sustainability, or new ways of building architecture, creating architecture, new ways of using materials, or reusing materials. So this, you know, as we just also talked about, not the strategy of commons, but maybe the success of commons as a main idea, where you know, you should be able to somehow, you know, put your energy into this common and trust the common pile of resources and that is actually everyone wants to share, when it comes to the end, everyone will really want to share, if they just know where, where they can see this community and know why they're doing it.

we have different ideas on how we can start sharing. This is one part and it's just in, of course, in small scale, how we can start sharing our thoughts. But we also participate in network where we, together with municipalities and stakeholders at the University are sharing knowledge about for example, reuse, we're doing a school S-city and we're trying to reuse all the buildings that we like, almost all the bricks on all the material in the building that we're tearing down right next to so we want to share how the process has been during, you know, on this project, where how can we share with the municipalities in other municipalities how to do this, how can we share with other architects how can we share with other entrepreneurs how to do this because there's many things that right now people doesn't know how to do it, it's the first time we somehow we all do it. So it's participating in these things. It's it's sharing knowledge and, not preaching, but at least you know, talking about it. So that we can learn from each other.

And, of course, then you need to put in hours in sharing. Because many of the projects where you're sharing knowledge is not something that you're paid from, it's partly funded by funds. And, but something is also something that some of the hours you give. And I think that's necessary right now, just to give, that's, maybe that's exactly responsible architect, that you share your knowledge, and you will participate with that time where you share knowledge. The ideal scenario would be that we're all sharing our knowledge about especially it's very urgent with sustainability. And it's very urgent to share ideas on how to solve these things. And not only for architects, but also for the entrepreneurs that I think I would wish for the whole building industry to, you know, speed up the process a little bit. And that's, again, as we just talked about, that can only be done if we're really sharing a lot of knowledge. And it can only be done by talking about it all the time. And then, of course, for the municipality, or the state or whatever it is to, you know, create projects where it's not an option whether or not it could be sustainable

I would say that I think it's very important for now, we've been talking a lot about sharing, I think it's very important to share knowledge. And I think it's very important to collaborate with everyone you can collaborate with, because there's always new knowledge coming from collaborations that can improve architecture. So I think the messages, the collaboration, and sharing knowledge is the most important thing of developing architecture.

from my standpoint, space can never be either neutral, nor can it not be nudging us in in one way or the other. I often talk about this, the language of space, that every space has a language, and every architecture has a language, and that language or that it can, every room every architecture communicate something to us and we might interpreted it differently, but it will always say something.

we're always being nudged. We are always being influenced by everything in here, even though we see it or not, most of our thoughts processings are more or less automatic. And we relate to spaces differently in terms of where we come from, memories, prior experiences that we have. But nevertheless, we always, every time we enter a space, which we constantly do, because we can't really be in a non space doesn't really exist, we're always spacially situated somewhere. And, and in that sense, we are always interacting with the space, either consciously or unconsciously. And that's, that's one of the things I find really interesting. What is that language? What does that communication look like? And can we actually can we see it? Can we write it down? Can we observe it? And of course we can. And we try. And we call it different things, nudging, for instance. That's a way of trying to create a grammar around space

Yeah, and manipulate you. Because space is also manipulation, right? And it's power.

hopefully the awareness is increasing also among architects. But there's definitely, like parts of answering that question should be found in psychology rather than in architecture I would say, and how humans work, basically. And basically we work as fear of change, right? That's part of it, right? We're quite scared of things we don't know anything about. And a lack of knowledge creates fear. And fear creates resistance to change. And so that's one part, I see that we have to raise the bar of knowledge.

the idea was to work as a consultant for architects, or be the translator between the stakeholder ideas, wishes, and the architects ideas, but only in educational design. Because architects don't know very much about learning. And they don't know necessarily very much about kids, or pedagogics. And the stakeholders don't necessarily know very much about architecture, because it's the first the project manager at the municipality has never been part of a building project before, right. So the idea was to act as some kind of translator between ideals or wishes, or visions, from the stakeholder and trying to merge that and create a common language between these different actors.

one of the main principle, at least would fit the term cocreation. both internally and externally. And internally within the company, it means that we never work alone, we have an ideal of always making decisions together, and always creating our solutions as a team. So I can't sit in the project alone, and I never have, even though I'm the partner, I don't necessarily have the final word. So we we kind of force each other to be in this constant dialogue.

because we work as we work, we try to, can you say, educate the people involved from the very start, because they don't necessarily know very much about..you can have teachers there, that doesn't really know where society's going. And you can have stakeholders that doesnt know very much about what the new rules are for the subject Danish. So so we try to bring in as much scientific knowledge, as we know, and also societal knowledge of what are the major issues globally, nationally, and locally.

So we try to not create these silos where too much knowledge is stored some one place, meaning I have everybody has to come to me every time but trying as much as we can to distribute knowledge all over. But we always know who really knows a lot who's very specialized in one thing, right?

And then, of course, we have rules, where I'm very much part of one process and less part of another process and this whole design process, right? And I know R, that would be typically where he would step in here. And I would involve him there and say, Now we have come to this stage, we really need you. So it's Yeah. And that's another discussion, which is interesting, the whole discussion about being a generalist or specialist. Because basically, the whole idea of M-architects is super specialized. We don't do anything else. A lot of our typical companies are generalists. Right? One day, they build a hospital the other day, they build a library, and then they build some private residential housing. We don't do that. We only work with space and architecture that are related to some kind of educational purpose. So in that sense, we're specialized. But we are I wouldn't say we're generalizing internally, but we're trying to what this idea of distributing knowledge, of course, and being able to think, between and above different disciplines

Yeah, so that's one value. Yeah, I would say the co creational part, both internally and externally, right.

all teachers are educated in spaces that looks like a completely normal classroom, they've never seen anything else, you have to know that if you want to introduce them to a whole different kind of learning space, otherwise, they will never use it.

Ownership, respect...and the knowledge of how to actually use it, which means less conflicts in the daily lives, right? Instead of I, as an architect, give you a building that you've never seen before, you know nothing about, and I kind of just give it to you, and then I run away. And I don't even spend my time telling you how to use it. I don't create a user guide, every buildings should come with a user manual, where everything is written down, how to use that how to use and when we have teachers in that process, they actually create that user manual as we go along. So they're part of of the creators of this user manual. So when the school is finished, they know how to be how to use it, and they They forget, we wrote it down. So they always have a program they can go back to. And that helps a lot creating these, we call them pedagogical architectural concept programs. It's not a normal building program. It's a program that focuses on relation between behavior and architecture.

I think it definitely raised my awareness of the impact architecture can have on the most smallest of behavioral decisions to very grant movements of huge groups of humans, like a society or community or country.

what is actually can do the power, I would say the power of architecture. And and of course, with that comes also that the knowledge of that we can actually solve problems. Also environmental but not only environmental problems

how it can be used as a tool in either to increase or decrease human development. Right. architecture can make people grow, and it can diminish them. It can solve problems, as well as it can create more problems, which it often does too

Sometimes we have to find a way around it and meet each other halfway. We usually never just build a school because the stakeholders said it has to look like that. We always bring in our own knowledge, say, Well, there are really no arguments for doing it that way. There are arguments for doing this way.

So yes, I do made it I also meet other types of stakeholders that says, hey, inspire us, we actually don't know where to go. So bring your best people to the table, bring your best knowledge. And we will listen to it. And we will find a way around it economically, politically.

for me, responsible architecture is an architecture that reconnects humans to nature. Because as the whole idea of immediacy, what society is creating, responsible human beings, and especially human beings that are responsible to how they interact with each other, and interact with the surrounding world, taking responsibility of their actions, and their decisions. And if we just look at it in terms of the global environmental crisis, which is way more pressing than anyone else wanted to be responsible architecture, must be architecture that educate and develop people to act responsible. and to nature and the surrounding world. But yeah, that's funny. So responsible architecture would be architecture, that creates responsibility in every individual, and there are many ways I guess, to do that

I think the whole obstacle around talking about it from a purely economical perspective is, is possible only because we have a rather narrow focus on what responsibility is, let's say that responsible architecture is architecture that makes it easy and possible for people to help each other, create or be more responsible, and create awareness of the effects of their actions, that doesn't cost money. That's something that happens between the two of us, right in here. This is a rather inexpensive room. But it's more what happens inside that room. And that doesn't have to be very expensive in terms of building materials. It can be very expensive in mental reprogramming.

let's say we have 200 square meters. We can either use all the money on facades, expensive materials, or we can use a lot of money. Figuring out what develops human responsibility in terms of teaching or learning or interaction, what

type of interaction raises my awareness of being a responsible human beings? And if we start there, and answer that question, we know what has to be in that space.

Well, it's to sound as a cliché, but if we could, if architecture could be a central part of solving the big issues and creating a better life for more people, I would say it has fulfilled its goal but not before that. Then it's just statical aesthetical objects.. in worst case, just withholding old structures. So, yes, if architecture were to do something, it for me it would be to help people reconnect to nature help people raise awareness about the consequences of their actions and solving the issues around inequality. Exactly how I don't know. But I would love that architecture started with the questions of like, we talked about that we have three key problems from a global perspective, we have a climate crisis, we have a problem, a huge crisis of inequality, economical and social

Well, I just we started out talking about play. It really is. It's funny. It's a lot of play going on there, right? Building brick Lego having fun on another planet. While this one is burning. So yes. Creating a better world meaning creating a stronger connection and bond between humans and nature. I think if we reconnect to nature, we also reconnect to each other. Because that's where we all met. And that's where we all came from. And that's where we were all going to reconnecting this bond to, to our I would love, I really would love a bigger vocabulary. Yeah, if we could, if architecture could help us do that. So we never forgot where we came from, and never forgot where we were going. I think something would change there. And I also think organization would start looking differently than it does today.

We have some topic talks each Friday where they can talk about something we need to be aware of. It can be something related to a project or it can be something in society, or it could be a new way of working parametrically with some inputs from research that can generate a facade design or something. So we have a culture where we really want the knowledge and the findings of what we do to flow and be available for everyone also on, on other teams as well.

we have projects where we do strategic collaboration, and that's typically where we would team up with maybe a smaller office that's got a specific competence in a certain area. So we're doing sort of teaching building with G-architects, we're doing a large sort of master plan school urban design project with one architect company, we're not allowed to say who it is a present because it's not public. But they are experts in space planning and dialogue processes with the users. So it's more at a strategic level. So I doubt very much we would do a project competition together with X-architects for example..

And if we think about it, in this big scale, where the role of architecture is in, we are in the middle, like if we say there is a grassroots movement from people, and people should start to change. Or if we look at it, that the change should come from the top, and politicians should decide. And architect is somewhere in the middle. So we are involved in both ends. through municipalities and politicians and through the clients and users. So the role that we can play is somewhere in the middle, we stand here.

And we also had users involvement in it, that was a very interesting project process as well to be very close contact with users and also they helped and actually while when people are more involved in the process, and maybe you as an architect also practice losing control in different levels and but people would like it in a long run more because they were involved. So they have this history of being more like have had a hand in practice, yeah.

it doesn't need that much expertise. So we asked people to come and help us to make them ready, and clean and... And so it is also a matter of life insurance. You cannot ask unskilled people to work at the site. But there are some jobs that actually cost a lot if a carpenter does it, but you don't need a carpenter to do that. So, he could make ready and site adjacent to our building site for people to come and help or to make it as they had also a rocket oven with the plastering on it that also didn't need, they could do it under supervision of somebody who is expert and there is a rocket oven that is basically a fire like open fire the chimney goes horizontal in the beginning. So in the winter, they can sit on part of a chimney. So the bench is warm, it's a hub for people get around and have a huggly good time

In the very first we had the program so we came with some compositions of this containers and in spaces, and we ping ponged a lot between us, also the clients, and with the users and they would rather than decide the size of this spaces and fillings and.. yeah..

I hope that we have more one to one user involvement in the future, and it is still in the process. So but so far, we had some cafes with users. And we made some placards of like the directions that for example, they would like that we designed the facade and what they can see as the the activities in the ground floor, and they could come in these cafes and then get more involved in idea generation, like brainstorming and yeah

Yeah, one thing is that those both projects had clients which are aligned with the values..

in the H-project, actually, the municipality was the client, and in the second one is social housing organization . And both of them are like to share values. And it's very important, like architect can push the agenda a little bit. But if the client is not aligned, you cannot go very far. What is the needs of the client? And yeah, the world is going around by money and economies. With the T.project, we got funding from this philanthropic organization. And with the H-project, we were linked with, we had a sort of a dream team, entrepreneur, the developer, and also the engineer, we were... because the scale of the project was not that huge, that extra hours, we would happily donate to make the project better. And yeah, that I think also entrepreneur had experience with user involvement. So they organized it, yeah..

One very good strategy is to be totally honest. Like have no strategy, just say how you think the project can be benefiting from this. Yeah, it is, when is this organization involved, It's different when is the private client. I think, yeah, it is many, many, many meetings when you have like contrast in the values and interests. And usually it comes to that compromising right? either the architects compromise, when it is a big contrast, or client should compromise. I think with how urgent is this climate change, this negotiations get more and more easy, it was more difficult before, but it also maybe I don't know again, I am in the bubble of people who share the values are around... because the clients are not that different.

for example, I'm very like when we talk about reusing as much as possible of this concrete, we should add to that always say how much we couldn't reuse. And what is the plan for the ones, that amount of concrete we couldn't reuse? Like, we didn't have capacity for it , can it be a road fill

but it this is equally important for the holistic about it, and say what were its backfired or where you couldn't influence

Yes, exactly. And nobody would benefit from you share a new nice image of oh this my achievement, but many people would benefit from if you say what I learned from this process, and be open also about it.

I think one of the main driving power that is not in our hands but it is mostly in the hands of the client, the financial creativity, like how can the finance of the project be also creative in a way to give the best added layer of quality, like quality architecture, like we can go for healthier material, bringing down the co2 level, like you can add or giving more interesting architecture to so that a creativity in financing economy of architecture, I think is a key to that you can translate it to too many of these values that we talked about. Behind all the interest in project, I think it's a healthy economy.

Holistic approaches

So what the studio knows something about it is how to create the architecture as the hardware. But what I know something about is how to provide the software to actually increase the impact of a building in various ways. Depending on the impact you want to make.

And so it's you can think of it as architects do the hardware, I do the software, you think it's it's important to integrate those different perspectives, in order to find more sustainable solutions. The studio had designed and built a lot of cultural centers, community spaces, but what has been less interested in how they actually work in beyond the built project. How the users make use of space, it is over time also that it solve the client's ambitions or make the client's ambitions of creating meeting places and more activities. So that's the tuen the studio is taking, becoming, from my perspective, it's becoming more of impact driven studio

They don't like to compromise, they value the uniqueness of every project. Always looking for the context and making something fit with the specific context.

There was like, Okay, this is a great graphic, why don't we copy paste it in a different settings, like no, that's a no-go, every project takes place in a unique setting. And that can be not only physical, but historically cultural. And then I found out that I should add organizational context, that was like the way we were able to integrate our perspectives.

And then they started to understand what we've been doing, we've actually been doing, and providing communities and society with meeting places. Let's move on further, and develop our thinking and concepts and designs for meeting places. So I think it's the outside viewer, inserting the team, rather than the architects, apart from N-person, inviting me into the team. So it's more of an effect from entering the team as a motivation for inviting.

somehow I saw architecture as a way of scaling the innovation we did. Like, who would be able to bring the idea to a larger ground, that could be architecture, because it's actually architects that are invited into projects. So architects could bring the software thinking into the practice, and that has been proven right. So for me it was about wanting to do move on with the idea, to scale it somehow.

So they, we joke about it that I see the space from the inside out, whereas they start from the outside in. I don't know, N-person and I have been discussing creativity, almost every day. Like that it is a different kind of creativity I create. I don't draw but I use words. And when we work together, it's actually..it's fun. And it's fitting, because I think he's creative work works very well with the storytelling. So it fits very well that we have both types of creativity working together.

I think its implicit in the practice at the studio, that of course, you choose stainable materials, we think about climate and energy optimazing, and there is nothing new about that. that's just, it's become mainstream.

we are adding different models to it... By entering an earlier stage, you are also entering in a different kind of process. I don't think architects actually know this, there's not necessarily a word for this, a term for this very early stage process.

So I think what's bottom line is that what we're trying to do is now integrating two fields of work, that expands the period of time architects can connect with the clients and the building itself.

they do need to know more about how the world operates besides building processes. And it's like, cross disciplinary work, whatever.

I took the key components, for instance, and we're not only going to meet with the users one time, we need to give them the possibility of understanding the project or the idea, and then come back within some time to think of their own needs and so on where the client would actually have been satisfied with one workshop and then that's it. More as a legitimizing process.

My point was that I insisted on having a process split into parts, because I wanted to make sure that the users had the time to think. Where the client would have been satisfied with just one workshop, as like, that was the user's chance of getting their views into the project

The context built with respect of the context, whether it's physical, historical, cultural, social.

I hope architecture will be a much more integrated discipline, like architects are important in the design of the future society, I think you also have skills that are important. Especially the ability to see what's not there. That's something that really strikes me as a skill or ability that architects have. We're able to imagine something that is new, I think that's a key role needed in a key moment also where we are in our society

I think it's connecting more with the societal development or transition in these cross disciplinary work, so my hope would be that architects join conversations in other fields of work, whether it's health or culture or business, I think you have important skills there that are needed.

and also how we as architect can work together with maybe a social worker, we can work together with an anthropologist to understand our community better and to create a much better and much more refined project on a local basis. That could be totally different in another neighborhood. And I think that is the key part of this office.

I think we should embrace other professions in our projects, definitely. Because you can only know so much, but of course, it's very important to have an understanding and also very important to have an understanding of economics and how to apply which and how to prioritize which needs is most important, I would say.

But it's super important to have other professionals as well, that has a totally different background, and that will inform you off of things you didn't know.

And to be interesting, I think in terms of how they also get to use architecture afterwards, and how building a relationship between the architect and the client can be through to a constant dialogue also about the building and also later on, hopefully, user feedback in terms of what what works, what doesn't work. And then I can also grow as an architect.

we were actually more compiling research other people had done. Trying to connect the dots to understand the whole picture rather than diving into something very specific. We took all the specific elements and trying, tried to connect them through conversations with the different researchers, our contribution to this is of course the technology we developed where we try to take all this theory and all this research understanding and put it into a technology that sort of collects it and re renders the image so to speak.

the very reasoning for the approach has been multidisciplinary, because those people come from a lot of different professions. Both those where we talked about the workplace educational space, but also research institution F-institution in san diego, which is architecture and neuroscience institute. They actually talk about brain research related directly to, and we did lectures there as well. So yeah, it's a multitude of professions. going forward, of course when we are doing projects, we also understand that when working with the biodiversity, it's not the idea about biodiversity that is more important. It's having those people who actually know a lot about it, the specialists coming in. But we need to have still have the overall understanding that we need to have this person in, we need to know why we have to have this person and not just to do it.

the biologist. Also, we are using their methods. But when we were talking about the planning and the interaction of the natural environments and the city. It's of course a collaboration between architects, engineers landscape architects, biologists people who work with water and so on. So yeah it's, of course multidisciplinary.

Looking at how do we use our buildings and then we adapt them to fit the current needs of the building users. And then moving into behavior design is what, what we wrote about in 'mind your behavior' is that we have people doing PhD in it. But it is like how we call it also, we actually call it architecture shapes behavior. And we also looking like behavior shapes architecture. So how can we design buildings to affect people behavior in also in, in the way that we think we do it. Architects are good at saying like, I've done this, so people will feel that, but we also go back in our

buildings and actually look at if it's also what is going on. So are also doing what's called post occupancy evaluations, and also looking at research projects and research within the field to actually see what does research say on behavior and how can we then make that into to architecture.

So yeah, focus a lot on what, how our buildings is actually affecting people inside and working with that and creating some tools and design strategies to get that into architecture.

Just coming back to where we started at, cradle to cradle. We need buildings that is creating a better environment for our climate, but also for the people inside. We haven't talked too much about the, about people even though that is your focus, but that is also why we're building. We just need to build, to create a better environment for our planet and for people, and I think that is the only responsible thing to.

And, one thing is the building itself. But another thing is the process before and the process after. And in our field, it's it's very much about a developing the construction, if it's like, if it's a building, but it's very much about the design of the structure itself. And I would say not only, but we are really interested in the process that begins before we even know what is the structure, but also how are we going to use the structure afterwards. And that's really important for us.

And for us, it's one thing is that we are nerds upon processes, and how to have people have this kind of discussion and develop together with people.

if I also look back, I would really like some more cross disciplinary tasks, where I didn't necessarily need to do all the interviews, but someone studying antropology or something, they could do the interviews, and then we could use it for something else. But like the cross disciplinary teams, I know that it's more work for people to plan the student programs, but I think it would really be a good learning point for the students to mix this. Not just by having lectures from people outside telling them what you can do but actually working together with other students that need to train in their field. And I don't see that very much in Denmark, I would say.

Like, a summer camp or something, where you can sign up if you can find someone with another competencies than your own, if you can do it by yourself, but it's not like something from top down that says, okay, we need to have more cross disciplinary training. So I think it would strengthen also the discipline in, in each field, if there was more cross disciplinary, I think that the competence within architecture would be strengthened if you also had more cross disciplinary. it's fine to train something that's not cross disciplinary but then using it together with someone from another field. It also trains you in having the dialogue around what's what's important, and what to be interested about, and what to challenge and what not to challenge.

And then we are mapping out all these interests to find out who are key stakeholders to the project. And it's, it's not only to involve then people from inside, it's also to figure out why it's actually important for the city from the outside. And how can we mix this? How can we integrate that into the project. So we, when we then design a process and involvement process, we are very clear about who do we want to involve, in what, at what point in the project. So that's, that's something we do all the time like, and it's in the back of our mind, we have all these different, like the relevant perspective, we need to add at a certain time, and then that's what I talked about these resources and needs.

We're interested also in beign better as a consulting to collaborate with people from the area, both from the top down, but also from the bottom up to have more of a learning process within the process, where they know, why are we doing this, and how does it give meaning, because to make a plan or strategy, and then give it as a gift and nobody knows how to use it or understand what's the purpose of it, then it will more likely end up in a drawer.

so when you involve people, then I think it's needed that you also ask yourself, who am I going to involve? When in the process and how? not everyone needs to be fully involved in the process, someone just need to have the information, others needs to be some kind of consulting person to give the feedback to the project. Others again, they

could be co creators or they could be a valuable partner in the innovation process. So I think that's, that's also really important when you do the process design to think about how do you actually involve who and when. And also, now we perhaps have 10 different stakeholders, but then say, Okay, do we have a broad enough of competences? Or do we only have people that are used to only making decisions? Or are they all developers? Can we have a broader range of competencies within a group? I think that would be really nice, to work with, like four different user competencies

it's just as important to us when we go into an area to make a business development to help people with strengthening their businesses, as it is to create a new space. So I think we always look not to reduce complexity, but to understand it. and we are not afraid of the complex reality. And just to narrow it down, for we want to understand it, and then make some, hopefully more simple illustrations of how it all works, and help people to make it work better.

And I would like to see more holistically planned. So it's not just housing, but it's also a part of the social strategy. It's also a part of the health strategies, also a part of an Education Strategy, and all that kind of stuff.

So so we mix up more things, and we say, Okay, if we're going to have a school, then who can they collaborate with, in that community that gives more meaning to the learning process for the students. So that could be an example, they could then work with shovelnose, or companies or people living there, and they could have like, exchange of Somehow, just thinking in more combinations than just like, monofunctional. Now, we're going to solve a problem within this one grand spot, and then I'm not looking to the sides. Or maybe there are some lines, but you know, I'm not really looking to the sides of how can I collaborate with people? I think that's, that would be something that could really improve city development. If we could integrate more, make it more holistic.

So it's very important that you also and that's why we are interdisciplinary, we have an ethnologist as part of our team, also, because we need to know how to interact with people. And we need to understand the psychology behind these group dynamics and how we can actually create an atmosphere where people are willing to and have the language to participate and inspire and inspire each other, right?

I can exemplify with how we work in the office. We are very clear in what our different professions are, we have an ethnologist, and then we have architects and somewhere in between, we have planners, that are sort of in mixed between having a more theoretical practice and a more sort of overall planning view, and not being that much into the design,

and sometimes then we take care of certain, I think areas of our different professions. When that said, of course, we all we always say clearly and out loud when we feel that we are stepping out of our own profession and doing things that should not be handled by whomever. My point was that our collaboration become fruitful, and more efficient, because we know each other's different professions and skills and disciplines. Some we then become able to take care of to a certain level. And then we of course, acknowledge that whomever should be dealing with this takes over. I think it's also a matter of our professional self confidence that we are actually I don't feel threatened when our sociologists or ethnologists at the office staff saying I see a clear tendency of something originates over here, maybe we could design something like this. And I take that as a very solid input. But of course I'm doing the design. So I'm sorry if it's a little bit sort of blurry, but I think in narrowing it down. I think it only strengthens our ability to collaborate across disciplines and I think even though we sometimes take care of each other's different disciplines within the profession, we also become very aware of when we should not continue down that path

First off, we started internally within the municipality. And then arranged some workshops that went across the different departments within the municipality, the different silos, because they wanted a sustainable development strategy for their town center, that should be functioning and working over the next 10 years. So that the product in itself was supposed to be a tool for change over the next 10 years

And then slowly, we were working our way out from the municipality into the community. So we were hosting some workshops with the community, making sure that it had a broad representation, both in gender and age and stuff like

that. And we also brought politicians and the mayor to participate, get, you know, stimulating or motivating them to move closer to the people.

So that sort of collaboration, and then they were putting up their speech bubbles on under the different themes for the posters, those posters were then the background for the workshops with the young people. So they were able to see the issues that the adult population were putting up, and either disagreeing or being inspired by or whatever. And then so we did a series of workshops that took a whole day with the young community, where they were given tours around the city, with from people from the museum, the local museum, giving them an insight into how O-city was developed over the last a couple of 100 years, and why it looked like it did today.

And that actually was very inspiring, because that inspired them a lot for the future solutions. So not just working with, you know, I want to football court, I want a place to hang out, but actually giving them some solid knowledge to work out from

I think we had two phases in that project. And then we had a steering group that was following the project throughout all the phases, and it was carefully designed to be a mix between, to represent the city, also with the young people. And within those steering group meetings, we were drawing up solutions as they were talking, so it was sort of a making visual note taking? And yeah, and then have a huge impact on them. Also, they've really felt that they were part of the machine room and actually given a mandate to make decisions. So that was a I think that involvement process was run over a period of half a year.

the thing about the blank canvas is not stimulating. the stimulus are all the challenges and all the good ideas, and then start grouping them and sorting them out. And then I think, because I'm a passionate architect, I'm able to actually see the possibilities of design based on all of these

I think the more that realize that it will help our position in society and will actually I think, be then a more trustworthy, when we then go out and we say we acknowledge that we are part of the problem, you know, with buildings, or the built environment, exceeding 40% of co2 and, and all that. And then when that is said, saying, so we know that we need to work with an awareness earlier in the process of sustainability and involvement and all of that, as a way of solving the problem. And not just focusing on sustainable materials.

So there's a lot of, of the genius, I would say, a lot of the holistic thinking, which really goes well, with anthropology, which I really, really experienced in architects as well, the need to kind of look 360 degrees or another, obviously, I only know from D-architects, and I'm not sure whether that is true for all architectural firms, but I really have a deepest respect for the architects in our company, they are really gifted, really good at making solutions that kind of consider shitloads of details and things that I have no idea how they can kind of keep all that in their heads. And then at the same time, I don't think they have any idea how I can keep all my stuff from these anthropological research, some things that I do my head,

But so that's actually also one of the things that I've been hired is to help support decisions through the whole of the project, keeping a focus on what was the intention? And why did we do like, in a school Why, was it important to have this atrium, for example, not just because it looked nice. And not just because it had daylight qualities, but because we actually had a hypothesis in the project, which we build on research or whatever, that this particular architectural element would lead to certain types of experiences and behavior, which then again, would lead to accumulated effect, if you kind of start messing with this, then you will miss out on this effect. So that's, that's also a part of my role is to actually help to shed light on these effect chains, as we call them, to make sure that everybody are actually on board and acknowledges that, okay, there are actually these important architectural elements that we kind of need to consider very, very thoroughly before we just kind of say, Oh, well, the atrium, yeah, blah, blah, it looked nice, but it's also really expensive. Because if you then have the research to support why it's a good business case to keep it, then it might be a different story.

And the idea of having someone like me in the company, as well as informing the projects from the beginning of the design phase, and then also revisiting them at the end.

we're across disciplinary team. So we call it the e-team, because that's basically our work, is to create, make sure that the buildings that we create as architects are as effect full are effective, but not effective not necessarily in the kind of usual sense of the word, but should be impact. So kind of increasing the impact of the buildings. So it's in English, it would be called the impact team, not the effect team. So that's, yeah, different languages, different meanings. So making buildings with as big an impact as possible. And we are now two anthropologists, one engineer, and we're one architect, and we're one as she's just cross disciplinary, as well. But she's originally she's the landscape architect, slash forestry, slash economy. She's doing an industrial PhD. So we, we have two PhDs as part of the team. So it's a cross disciplinary team, which also is kind of the idea of the team is that we need in order to research into a kind of map the whole value chain of architecture, kind of how does architecture create behavior and practices? And how does that then create value? value, meaning different things, but also economical value? you need different different disciplines to kind of go through because that's like, a very wide disciplinary field, or it kind of goes across different disciplines. Yeah, so cross disciplinary. But as it has been, it's been very focused on the anthropology because I was kind of the anthropologist, and the first one.

But so the children's Hospice is actually the product of the first project that we've been part of kind of like all through the projects, and which we're now looking into how can we then revisit it once it's built? So we will actually have full circle from the impact team. But in that case, it's a matter of the partners kind of taking on a project agreeing that yeah, this is a good project. And then when they set the team, it's then a matter of is this a project where the impact team should be take part. And the idea is that we should take part in all our projects, but kind of different scale. So in this case, what we ended up doing was we ended up being like fully integrated in the team and the competition team or the design team, doing participating in all meetings also with the entrepreneur. So together with with that whole team, and then what we started out doing is is always to do an analysis of the building program or the if there's not a building program, the project description or whatever to do an analysis on what is it? What kind of impact are they looking for?

if we've revisited one of our projects, and a new project comes in where that knowledge is relevant, I would then do I've done some material that the architect or the project manager can then bring into kind of the discussions with the board without me being present necessarily in a meeting or in a workshop or anything.

I think architects and anthropologists are a match made in heaven in the sense that, as I started out, saying, anthropologists, were trained in deconstructing, and architects are very much trained in construction, or constructing. And I think those two match each other very well. And also the the drive or the need, recognizing, acknowledging the need for a holistic approach and like holistic understandings in order to make good solutions, I think is something that is also connecting these two disciplines. And in that way, I think there is a lot that we have to offer each other, which I think is important.

research that I do when we do the revisits and things like that, obviously, built on anthropology, but it also needs to bridge into different disciplines, because the answers that the architects are seeking, doesn't constrict themselves to anthropology. So I think cross disciplinary competencies, or multi disciplinary competencies are very much useful when we're trying to inform architecture and kind of build a knowledge base or decision support, providing decision support for architects.

Of course, there are some things where you can find some evidence that this might work better than something else. And of course we should base decisions on that as well. But every place every estate is different and it's in different cities, it's in different neighborhoods, it's different people living there. It's different municipalities different companies working there. So it's gonna be different no matter how many rules you stipulate to make it the same. And I think that is extremely important to take into account.

of course there's an environmental sustainability that's about not using or reusing materials or about not using materials that have a high toll on the environment, but it's also about social sustainability. And what I mean about that is that you should, of course you should build for the people who are there, but you should also build for someone who isn't there yet. So of course, the people who are there now should have some say in what's going on, but it should also be moldable. It should be the spaces that we build shouldn't be single use. They shouldn't be mono functional basically. So they should be able to accommodate different types of inhabitants and different types of uses.

but it's, it is about using what we know of people's inputs and of residents inputs, maybe potential future residents inputs about what they would like to have in an apartment, what they're using in their current apartments, what is important to them and what they have and what they imagine could be nice in a different way.

Well, I think it's extremely important for architects to get into the field and to talk to people. But of course, also being able to, to put it into a context or to understand the perspectives. And it's not to say that architects should necessarily do the type of field work I've done or do 60 interviews with people or something like that, but it's also about maybe sometimes also different disciplines working together. And it could, I know some architectural companies in Denmark are employing anthropologists to do something like what I described here and to work with the involvement side of things. So work with kind of field work like situations. And I think that is a useful way of going about it.

But that is also what I've been able to do is kind of create part of the discussion that we've been having through this conversation or discussing some of the topics through my research by being, taking part in interviews and making presentations to municipal officials and to others working with the more technical side of things. And bringing up these issues in these types of gatherings. So that's the way I've been trying to put it on the agenda is through using the chance that I have as an academic. And yeah, try to bring forth the issues that I think are important. But I'm probably not the type who will be standing with a banner outside a building and shouting more involvement or something like that. But there are residents who are doing that and I think I think it's fine that people are trying to tell the politicians when they think something is not right.

Well, I think maybe what I could help with or be a part of would be the dialogue part of it or a mediator in a sense between the architect and other disciplines and also between architects and residents. And by helping with that contact level or whatever. I think that would be interesting. And I, of course I don't really feel equipped to be part of anything that's about the technical side of things. But I think it's important to, to be part of creating the dialogue about yeah there's a different, all sorts of different ways of doing these things.

So somehow, you need to take into consideration all these other also engineers, of course, to somehow succeed in in a project development. But depending on the project, we could also take in other users, it could be what have we done lately? Then we've been working on a project where we needed to understand biodiversity and then you you take in people that knows a lot about biodiversity and nature, for example, where you can work together with, you know, traffic engineers, specifically about traffic or some that knows specifically about if we're working close to a harbor, find someone that knows specifically about, you know, how water react. And I think the key is to understand what they're saying and actually use it. And this is where the architecture becomes interesting. If you're really listening to what they're saying, somehow.

So I think the way that the practice works is that this is just how we are at the office, that everyone has a voice. And so this is very natural, I don't think that we could have developed it differently. And we couldn't have developed it like an office where there's one person that creates this is how we create architecture it's a renovation. And it's a modernization, and it's a rethinking of actual space. And it's organized as a total Partnership, which means I as a learning expert, and somebody engaged with behavioral psychology, in terms of space, is sitting at the same table, as the engineer engineers, and also the electricians and the architects from start to finish. And, and that's where it has to go. It's extremely difficult. Yeah. And it takes a long time, and a lot of meetings and a lot of discussions. But I can see, because we're all there from the start, that I had to do a lecture on learning spaces

and behavioral psychology for a bunch of electricians, they were sitting there there, they may only understand, like, a little of it. But they were there. And I'm there every time they discuss whatever installations and I don't know anything about it. But it keeps us in this interdisciplinary mindset constantly.

And we also start seeing how important every decision is, because he says, okay, the easiest part is to make, we have to have the cables running here. And he makes that decision in terms of what's happening under the floor, the easiest ways of finding or.. based on the knowledge that he had , but because I'm sitting there, I can say well, that's not possible, because we're going to have 50 people in this room. And they only have one direction to look at which is there, which means the big screen is gonna sit there, man, he said, really says yeah, really. Okay, so I have to move it, yes, you have to move it. And then this whole chain starts because then he has to move. And then he has to talk to another engineer, that has to talk to a construction worker, bla bla bla. But But constantly having this holistic perspective, I find will create better architecture for humans. Because often it's it's more separated, right? He would put his thing there because it works. And I would come in two months later..

And it creates this whole domino effect on everything else in the room, right. And so when we separate these processes, and I come in here, but I'm not part of this process, and then I come in again, nobody gets what they really want. Kind of right, because then I have to adapt to him. But I can't really speak to him. I just have to adapt my solutions to his solutions to what was already there. instead of building something together, which is co creation, right?

from a user perspective, I only see the surface of the building, right. But from an engineer's perspective, they see the nervous system that runs behind the walls under the floors. And we were looking in the whole meeting was around this 3d model made in Revit, where they kind of removed all the walls, and they kind of peel the skin off the building. And then you could see all the electricity, all the ventilation running, everything. And it was, first of all, it was beautiful. It looked amazing. It was really like somebody peel the skin off a human, you could see all the veins and all the muscles and all the all the blood running around and they have made it in different colors, you can actually see the flow of all this. And I suddenly I realized that if that nervous system doesn't work, it doesn't make sense anyway to talk about behavior, psychology, or didactics, or learning or learning principles or organization of students, if the building is not functioning. And so that's a perspective I often forget, because it's not part of my field. And it's not something I'm often confronted with. I'm confronted with four role walls that are functioning, and I have to fill them out. And, and they're all never confronted with this space, they're always confronted with what's behind the space. Right? And so us sitting together there, it's difficult, but it's very interesting, right.

because somewhere else in this process, somebody made a decision that forces others to put the door there and putting the door there changes in terms of putting there changes our flow around the space our experience around the space. But it started somewhere else far away that I didn't see. And so yes, it sure does create a lot of value in terms of if we are going to talk about universal design, if we're going to talk about sustainability in a broader sense more than just environmental sustainability, right. And in terms of not user involvement, but just general involvement of all actors.

the spaces is better because it's a space adapted to people instead of people adapting to the space. Right? That's the whole difference. And, and you can have two engineers talking about acoustics. But if they do it from a very narrow perspective, saying, okay, we're gonna have 50 people in here. And then they have some kind of, we call it a scheme, calculation where they go, Okay, 50 people, we need so much acoustics. But they never ask about the behavior of the people. There's huge difference. If there are 50 people in a space designed for research, or a space designed for workshop work, right?

So but so this whole, this whole section or this part in terms of all the behavioral studies around humans, types of humans, activities that this space is intended to facilitate, right, should also inform the acoustic people. So it's not just about getting the resonance down. It's about how we can use resonance to support what's intended to happen in there.

again, leads to what I've already talked about another value is a very holistic approach. We never, we don't see the space itself as the final solution. A space in its itself cannot solve a complex problem within a school. So we work with a model that I call paddock, which is a model for analyzing an institutional building as an organism. So and it did it exists of five domains. One is about organization of humans. That's how we organized in our teamwork, right? Do we always work group of two groups or four, that will influence the size of the spaces for instance, the domain is culture, what are the values of this, the values here could affect the other domain called pedagogics, that, again, affects didactics that again affects architecture, right? So this holistic approach of never seeing space as an isolated island, but always affected by and in relation to these other four domains.

But on a global level, because as you said, we can solve a problem here in Denmark. But if we, and that's where I get a little bit pessimistic, if we don't start to think of ourselves as one collective species inheriting one world, how would it ever change? And that sounds like utopia...

but certainly it's kind of its outer parameters that are forcing us to understand that we can't do anything alone, right? we have to work together. Otherwise, nothing will ever change. One human itself can do nothing. But a lot of humans can do a lot, right? If we could move there...

And we are a combination of architects and constructing architects. And also a couple of engineers and anthropologists. And that mix is something that we are really benefiting a lot from. And that is becoming more and more an integrated way of working with our projects working cross-disciplinary.

And bringing that cross-disciplinary approach to the table when we do competitions is something we have benefited a lot from and something we are beginning to be more formalized and structured about. So that's something we see as actually what we are now. that is a way of working with architecture that is informed on some other levels and developed in ways that we couldn't, if we hadn't had this cross-disciplinary approach to what we do.

And then I think we have a because we are, the partners that are the ones responsible for the final decisions are so much hands-on. I think we have a very flat hierarchy, because when we all sit, at the same table discussing concepts and ideas, some of the ideas or the concepts can come from everyone. That's just something we find super important, to not have this..to have a very informal, non hierarchy way of sketching and developing concepts.

sometime after the competition was won and and the founding partners decided to revisit it, just to ask the users, how does it work? does it work what we did? I mean that, that curiosity was leading them back to the one of the first revisits. They had a super interesting talk with the users. They were very happy about the project. And then one of them said that they have, they had made a very interesting discovery themselves. And that was the fact that there was almost no, like the amount of sick leave was very low compared to some of the other institutions they knew of. So that was a super important discovery about an unexpected value of having taken a design decision on the type of typology, because that all of course meant that they had a better economy and it was more easy to manage everything. And that became like the starting point of thinking about architecture as something that can really make a difference.

Yeah, I think it's always important for us to do the revisit , of course to ensure that what we set out as a goal is succeeded or, and also just to gather some very important inputs of what works well and what could have been done better.

And we did a revisit of course afterwards, and we have gathered a lot of of interviews from the users and it's amazing to hear how they experience it and how actually some of them mentioned the fact that finally we are in a building as disabled where we don't feel disabled. So that a yeah, that's an, that's an important case as well.

And I remember a colleague I talked to who was very interested in sustainability as well said the most sustainable performing square meter isn't really sustainable if the users doesn't use it correctly or if they're not interested in using

it at all. So I think it's, we have that, we have a deep interest in the social aspects of sustainability. And we have looked into that because sometimes we get some unexpected outcomes. An example could be the project we did together with I can't remember that collaboration, but it was B-housing project, which is our single family house in L-city. It's an old project, but it's a project we did to showcase and experiment with, at that time very innovative, sustainable solutions. And what was interesting about that project was that there was a test family living in the house for, I think it was a year. So we could we could gather a lot of information on their behavior in a very sustainable project. And it was one of the first if not the first active houses in Denmark, so that the philosophy was that it's, it would actually generate more energy than it used. So it was feeding electricity back on the grid.

But what was the big surprise in that project was actually that after this family have lived there for a longer period of time and we could gather some data, it showed that the energy consumption was actually much higher than ordinary buildings in the same size. And we were like, what's up with that? And I think it had to do with the fact that the feeling of being in a very sustainable house for the users meant that, energy was just free. It was like green energy. You don't have to think about it. You can just, turn up the heat, walk around in your underwear open all the windows, and it was just a hid behavior of of that test family taking very long, hot showers and stuff like that.

and I think that was a pretty important discovery because it, we, as architects, we really need to ensure that the users use our architecture as we would like them to really make something sustainable. And that's something that a spinoff of that whole experience became a work we did, which is about sustainable behavior in architecture, which is no another story, but that is very much about how we nudge people in ways that we would like them to think about their behavior in what we do. And that is that knowledge actually became a publication we did. That's something we always bring into our design strategies. So it doesn't backfire.

I think we use it in as something we are aware of. It's raising a flag and saying, how can this actually, can this backfire? Or do we need to do something here so it doesn't become something that is being used in a totally different way than we expect. Sometimes it's just small tweaks to a design. It can be about working with a flow in another way or .. It's difficult to answer in like in general, but it's a part of our, but it's something we have in the back of our minds when we are designing. Always thinking about the social aspects of sustainability and how the users, or how we could expect the users to engage in use in the projects we are designing.

We have J-person as head of it , and then we have I think it's three PhDs ongoing..And then we have S-person, who is the head of our sustainability agenda. She's an engineer actually, and then we have an architect K-person. And we have another engineer, which and he specialized in parametric design and just have a completely different way of.. Yeah. It's really like a interesting, a mix of architects and engineers and anthropologists. And it's also a mix of practitioners and more maybe academic theoretical ways of thinking about architecture. And it's in that synergy between the different understandings and different oriented curiosity in the big context of what we do that sometimes unexpected and super interesting narratives and takes on projects can emerge. So it's something that has grown like organically. I think when we decided on going for more formalized impact team, we were not sure exactly how crossdisciplinary would be. That's something that it currently just have developed itself into.

I think it's it's a great advantage because we have this culture of allowing ourself to bring each other into play when we just need to like, in this very informal way. it's very easy, when you are under the same roof just to drop by and ask, oh, is there something I need to be aware of? Are there any articles related to this or any research that can back this thesis up because I really want to do something different in this project, or I think that open environment is super important.

And also just this culture that we have here in E-architects as I mentioned in the beginning of doing like competitions and developing concepts as something that is like an ongoing thing that is very much like driving a dialogue of always seeking new ways or better ways of doing projects and getting some different disciplines perspective on that is is super, super interesting and valuable. And engineers can also help us do some of this the work that we would normally need to collaborate with some other engineering companies. So we can also just just save some time on

it actually. And every hour we save on not collaborating with someone externally. We can use internally in our own favor. Yeah. So it's its valuable on, on many different levels.

And and also, having that agenda where unexpected answers to complicated questions can bring something new to the table. I like the fact that we don't have this way of doing it every single time. when we start a project, bring all these different agendas and research and having that cross-disciplinary approach to what we do is also just personally what makes it more interesting and inspiring to work with architecture. I think that's that's something I really like. I think what's really important is to continue to use your imagination. I think imagination is sometimes such an underrated thing, especially when you enter the real world as a practitioner. So continuing to have that as a driver and something you can use to to generate unexpected ideas or takes on how something can be achieved is so important. And that's something that is really separating us from the engineers actually. We are the ones that can really orchestrate a lot of complexity. And through that, with the use of our imagination, create architecture and projects where everything comes together in sometimes unexpected and very positive ways. So that's important.

how you balance between all the values, and the techniques, and environmental and social justice, and architecture quality? So, yeah, it is an every project has its own question and its own answers. So it's interesting, but this is not a one formula that can solve it. It's very general.

we have one who has been with us for four years of collaboration, it was about different types of living and how can you define flexible units, and how does this work? They mostly have a regular meeting with these partner so they can more precisely name what are these other fields that are involved

Green building and technology

buildings or urban settings, where people use for everyday use..it can be public buildings, like schools, you think institutions, but it can also be coferece centers, community houses, in contrast to building office building, for instance. So giving quality architecture to ordinary people, that would be I think that would be how then could be used.

So if someone wants an office building, and they are ready to put in the resources, making the quality building and of course, it's not a no... But if you compare with housing, building housing, to public shared spaces, then they they are more interesting.

I think, two of the projects that I'm quite interested in, they are both supported by the foundation l-funden, and I am familiar with them. It is a public foundation supporting building in cultural sports. And they are very focused on user involvement and more innovative solutions. And these two projects that could be examples are both sponsored by them

So in 2015, the buildings we had were sold to a new buyer, which was a public housing company that we already knew. So N-person and I made a deal with them, that if we could buy the buildings from the big part of the New City development process. Right now, there's now 500 people living right next door to it.

And then also trying to have this is actually a project done, like designing for disassembly, so it can be moved, as well. But it's very much about using sustainable materials, reusing materials and stuff like that. So that is the big project we are working on at the moment

how can we communicate and share some of the ideas that we actually have experienced through the years, but also think about how can we contribute to actually make architecture better? Not just by being architects, but also be observant about society. What's going on right now? And I think that what we experience is that there's a lot of work been done before you actually receive a commission.

And then, also there's been a lot of talk about evidence based design probably which is also naturally a way to make buildings better.

so our work with our research has been about looking into the future. So, F-architects comprises of like a tripod. So we have the we have the future part, which is, or the research part which is wise.

And then you also have a third leg, which is technology. And we've been working the past couple of years developing a technology that, that maps architectural quality in a different way than what you usually understand by mapping. Usually you'll understand it by mapping acoustics, daylight temperature, humidity, CO2 levels, and so on. What we'd look into is to try to understand what makes people prefer one space instead of another based on the per person's individual profile.

So those individual preferences, those are the ones that we are trying to see how they correlate with physical spaces because you cannot say, Oh, you're this type of person and you're this type of person, and you're this type of person. Your preferences is more like a fingerprint. It's very complex. it's very individual. So while you could be a person who likes to work in the evening under small lamp or something like that because it creates a warm small space. There might be others like to working right next to a big window during daylight, and then that accounts also for how you design a space for patterns, texture, and so on.

So all these differences, those are the diversity that we try to promote as architectural properties that we need to incorporate into spaces in order to get the best out of an everyday making a meaningful everyday for each people or each person. So what we've done so far is that we created we created an app that is like the user interface of the technology. We have currently a thousand sensors placed in three different schools here in A-city, different types of sensors. It's an overload of sensors because what we are looking at is to understand what sensors are relevant what do we need and which ones can we actually discard? And what we found out was that we can actually discard a whole lot of them, because if we turn this thing around and say, okay, doesn't matter about the sensors. Actually the only interesting thing about sensing is the person who senses it. Sensors are, can either be sensors that are recording sound sources. The level of sound, but not the content of the sound. Of course, it can be cameras that are using infrared mapping. So you can see groups of people and how they are arranged and so on. And that you can correlate with the with the sound, whether people can maintain a concentration in and what type of learning, if it's, is it active learning or is it passive learning and so on.

if you work together, what's the situation like and how can we design according to that particular situation? There we are reversing the whole scenario and saying, skip the sensors. The sensor is the person. we leave measured values and go towards experienced values. So it's not about how hot or warm the room feels or how busy it feels, it's how you experience it, or it's measured, it's how you experience it

I guess that, that, different cultures, but I was also, that's the point about the individuality that relates to it. So the whole idea here is of course how can we make buildings that corresponds to the needs of the people actually using them. And for us it's so let's say when you open the app, you start to configure the app you like, in particular quiet spaces. It's good when they're tiny, but some like large spaces, right? And you usually work best during daytime then, , you'll see some images and then you'll say, okay, this image I find is minimalistic or sterile. Or quiet. What's the best describing word for this? And then you see another image. So then your word is translated one on one with your preferences. Because what I describe as being warm is something different from you, right? So your way of understanding warm is how you relate to this image. But we know that the image corresponds with you.

And while I might use another word for it, we know we're talking about the same image, right? So when you start to use a building, you gradually uncover how people's preferences are corresponding to the space. The people's use of the building is actually informing about the architecture. You can also see what spaces are preferred the most and why. So that starts to give us an information about how actually how architecture corresponds with the behavior and the use of the building. And therefore we can take that understanding, put it into the front. When you, instead of when you receive a brief that's based on something that has happened you base it on what's actually happening, but also an understanding of what's going on after the architecture actually leaves the project and the building's life starts.

In this way, you actually take a lot of knowledge about what's actually promoting different behavior and putting it into the start. And thereby you are gaining a much more value out of the design process. It's not an evidence based way of designing. It creates a platform for inspiration to see how can we use this type of behavior in a way to actually promote let's say joy

Well the first part of it is like getting an overload on information. And then finding out which informations are relevant. Because if you start to look for instance, if you work with artificial intelligence, you'll find patterns that the human mind can't, that are too complex for the human mind to understand. But with the artificial intelligence, you might find correlations in the data sets that are actually relevant.

But the data set that we actually can look at, for instance, you could say one thing it's just like looking into big data. But for instance, vegans they never miss a flight.

I don't know if you can use it for anything but what you'll find is that I'm just stating the point that when you have the process of actually having an overload of data, instead of saying, no, we want to look at this, and this, and then you have three sets of data and saying, okay what can we deduct from this? Then you already have a limited possibilities of understanding a huge complexity, and you define the level of the complexity. So that's the reason why we actually looked into receiving as much data as possible. What I'm saying is more about the the process of understanding the school. Then you can start to correlate it with, for instance, meteorological data numbers from the weather institute the health ministry and so on. Open data and see if there's correlations there as well. maybe you can actually start to forecast that you'll have larger peaks of people staying at home because of they have a sickness or something like that, the flu.

if we talking about schools to look into how does wellbeing correlate with funding and physical space? So if you can cut funding and it works very well still, it's it says that it has nothing to do with it. Maybe wellbeing has, but it probably has, right? If you cut down on the physical space, you can see if it has something to do with the wellbeing. So basically what you do is that you put on the numbers and then you remove let's say religion and you can discuss it based on what's action there on the table, right? We are not trying to make some kind of technocratic approach to it, but we are trying to look at facts and what matters of well being and productivity correlated with physical space, right? When we're talking about the workspace, we are more talking about the way that people start to use, book different spaces according to the preferences. They're the ones telling us this space is good for that. We are not telling them that this space is good for that with they're gradually getting more and more precise recommendations for what space. But in the beginning, it might be off. But not all off right. In the beginning it might be say, okay, we think this space is good for quiet action or quiet interaction. So we'll start to say, okay, this is probably good for quiet work concentration. And those who book that they'll get that space, but if it's not good for that they will say it's not good, and next time they'll book something else that is better. So their preference will start to paint the picture of the qualities of space based on the individual preferences. And then you'll see how the individual profiles will overlap. So the ones that are looking for a specific type of space that might accommodate 80% of their request looking for a certain space, and that will tell you how it's being used and who prefers it.

It's counterbalancing the program that has been, let's say, derived from maybe technical description of a building that says, these are the acoustics, these are the The daylight qualities these are and so on. Today daylight, the properties in Denmark actually defines a space so much that it's almost designing the space.

So our way of looking at it is trying to counterbalance that way of looking at architecture that it can be based on pure measured values that we can look into experience values.

So you should probably understand that this for us, this this way of doing stuff is a tactical defense. It's not trying to promote architecture into a spreadsheet. it's trying to, saying that what we are met with a program can actually be disrupted by the architect playing the same game, a numbers game and saying, nope, experienced values are more

important because they're actually based on the user. What you're saying here is physical data that comes, it has an impact. We understand that, but there's also a whole other set of data that is just as relevant.

if we are looking for four elements in the work that we do at F-architects And you could say that the first one would be human insights. That's what I just explained to you. That it departs and ends with the user. It's actually for people we are doing these projects. It's not for ourselves

we talk about forward thinking into into the future that what we do has to be better than what we did before. That's the only thing that legitimizes our existence as architects

So I'm saying that if you're just trying to optimize, sub optimizing buildings by using this data you're completely wrong. What you have to use is to give you an understanding of the, of what architecture actually is for different people. And we have an intuition already, but intuition is weak compared to an engineer's data sheet.

But if I can put a price on what architecture actually does in the long run and saying you don't have to tear it down and if it loses immediate functionality due to the way that we organized it, we have a space that has qualities that are universal, that people would like to retrofit and use for something else.

But the first thing we do is that we have a query where you, we actually ask a lot of questions to get an overall impressions. And in that one that's what we call a fingerprint. So there's a layout of the space we're talking about. And then people are saying, pick the five places according to your, and they can leave a fingerprint. Pick the most quiet space pick bla blabla, and then people actually mapping what's the best space to do different activities. We overlay it so you get like an overall impression for the group as a whole.

The table is going to be a like an Android smartphone technology. So it's a full size smartphone. So you can actually, together with the client, work directly on the plans with your fingers as well. So that whole meeting scenario is based on on, on framing the discussion, right? Either as a pin up situation, either as having a strategy or having elements that you want. For instance, if you are doing a presentation to find the narrative, you can just move it around on the pin board, right?

What is an architectural studio 2021. And what type of technologies are we using? Are we actually creating technologies as well? Are we limited to only talk about what used to be the realm of architecture or can we expand it into a virtual environment as well? Can we expand it even further into understanding how people actually interact with architecture in creating technologies that bridge the gap between the end user and what we do.

More processing of data, you can easily come around with simulations because of computer power. You can distribute knowledge in a way that you couldn't before. Usually you use, you trace back the sources of something like a book or the origin of certain kind of knowledge. but you could never trace it forward. What happened to this book? So I was sitting, I could be sitting here in Denmark and then the person in China could be sitting researching the same thing. Coming into to different understanding. Today you can actually talk together about it.

And we also talk to a lot of the leading companies in the world, how they're coming about with workplace management how they're considering it. It used to be how many persons can I actually fit into a space? And so it's its the cheapest solution by capita. today It's how can I make the best day for my employee so that their productivity is the best? I don't get that by putting as many people into a space as possible, because then they start to disturb one another. I am doing it in providing the best possible work environment, or how can I get the best grade from my students, creating the best space that stimulates.

Needless to say that we also consider all types of sustainable action. In particular how we work with different types of materials that has an LCA calculation, that lifetime analysis, we look very much into biodiversity in our projects. Plan for biodiversity as well water quality and so on.

We have projects that have been going on for the last 15 years. City planning right outside of A-city, which are probably the most advanced water urban planning in Denmark. recycling water onsite and using it for toilets and for the laundry machines as well. We have a biodiversity that has multiplied explosively. We have endangered species coming into the built environment, staying right next to housing now..It's, right now it's I guess the first hundred houses are built out there. It's in the end it's going to be a city part for 15,000 people. And it's an ongoing project. What we're proving is actually that we are proving that you can actually build in a way that allows biodiversity to happen within the built environment.

We are not laying saying that we want to increase biodiversity by 200%, a thousand percent. We're saying that we want this butterfly to come to this area and we know if this butterfly comes to the area, then it's a proof of the soundness of the whole, of the health, of the whole ecology. And then a lot of other things will happen as well. But in focusing and planning for this particular butterfly, it's easier to saying what step do we need to go to get here? And you can sub five steps, right?

but the infrastructure about it, because you might be able to talk about it on your own site, but you also know that if it needs to go there, it needs to have a corridor to where it actually exists now to be able to get there. So you need to look abroad your own sort of site to understand that Sustainability doesn't start

Yeah. The CO2 levels are sort of a global thing. It's not something that just is a sort of a column of air on top of you

Exactly. I think the sort of underlying reasoning for us developing technology is also to become adept, to become native with regards to technology. Because if we don't engage us in the development of technologies, other people without an architectural approach to it, we'll do it right. And as an architect, we have obligations of serving a common good. Actually, in Denmark, we do have, it's like a doctor's oath, that architects have to look into the into the wellbeing of society. And I think that seeing all these possibilities and also understanding the ways of technology, how it's been the whole ecology around technology makes us a bit more versatile. Understanding how we can actually use it for creating better architectural solutions, but also being a more, being more resilient in how that certain elements of technology can actually endanger architecture.

I would say, this urban planning outside A-city was a commission started in 2006. And that is highly sustainable. It's one of the most sustainable projects probably in, in Denmark because it's on all levels. At that time we, we started planning it. People weren't really talking about sustainability. We referred to a G-report from I think from the seventies.

That's why we use technology. That's, technology has always been like a driver of improvement or understanding, or that's also why we research.

So circular design where I work is a lot, is inspired by circular economy in just for the build environment, which I call it circular design. ut it's to good starting point in cradle to cradle design. So creating these close loop resource systems. So everything from Boosting biodiversity in design, creating closed water loops, working on energy design, looking at what materials we put inside our buildings and how do we put our buildings together. Working a lot with design, but it's simply like, how can we, yeah, the building materials that we put into our buildings, how can we also take our buildings apart again, or like at least put in, get them out and recycle them. But also using desing for disassembly to optimize on the flexibility and the operation and maintenance of our building so they are more adaptable when in use. Which also overlaps you can say mostly with the behavior design.

And then technology, digital design is started a lot around parametric design, using Grasshopper to actually, because if you've seen some of C-architects buildings you can see that they are a lot of shapes. So how can we actually go from a, yeah, an more form in rhino to actually getting it build, and how can we use parametric design or parametric tools to get stuff built. So it's not about that, but also to create internal digital tools to make different programs work better together. Create, yeah, workflows in the digital tools. But now it's also starting to move more into the physical technology like sensors and also, again, overlapping to behavior. Like this, putting sensors up in buildings

and learning from how rooms and buildings are used. It can also be simulations and then getting that into the architecture. So yeah, so it's gone from parametric design and now it's getting more and more into simulations and sensors and actually learning from building behavior, but also people behavior and how that can then affect our design.

I think is the best example of that is the C-house that I've been working on for the last three, four years. And here overall, the project is a social housing project with 60 housing units. And the overall goal is that 90% of all the materials that we put in the project we should be able to take them out again and reuse them at a high value. And when we say high value, we mean that we should be able to use the material as it is as a building component. For example, like we want to be able to take out a concrete element and reuse it one to one as a concrete element, not to grind it down and reuse it as aggregate in a concrete element because there's a huge resource loss when redoing or re-manufacturing building materials. So want to be able to construct a whole building and be able to take out all the building materials as they are and we use them again in other buildings.

And basically while doing this has to focus a lot on design for this disassembly, so looking at the building in all the different layers it consists of, and designing it in a way the different lifetimes of the building layers doesn't like.. they're independent and they don't overlap. So basically that if when the technology you put inside a building is outdated, you can change it without, you have to remove some wires that is like casting into walls, but also like, you know that the windows are going to be changed sometimes during the building's lifetime, so that you're able to take these out and replace them, but without having to remove large parts of the facade because the screws are mounted from inside and something like that. So just looking at the entire building, divided into the layers and making them independent of each other using design for disassembly joints.

So during the design process, we actually integrated all links in the value chain. So everything from building material manufacturers and contractors and demolition companies and other consultants and other building owners than just our client. So basically we had 30 different companies to be part of the actual design of the project to actually get the best knowledge from all the different stakeholders.

Of course we hope that it would just be standing because it's such a nice building, and that's also what we have learned in the process. That was our thought in the beginning, that we would be able to take it down and then we would see if the circularity works. But, and maybe that also ties a bit into the whole social behavior part and how people use these buildings. Our horizon of looking at the circularity has come closer. Cause in the beginning we were thinking about how do we take the whole building down? But actually most building owners can only see like maybe five, 10 years out in the future maybe 20 when they've paid off the building, they don't look 50 years ahead. They want to have value now. Which is also where we started to look now, like how do we create value now and not just in 50 years because yeah, again, they don't look that far in the future. . So we started to look a lot like, how can we use the design for disassembly to create value now, for example, how do we create a flexible interior? What if family structures change within 10 years? What if we all want like super small apartments or like very large apartments? Like how is our, how can our building take up this change?

That could actually just it's like back in the days, like when you could change the cover of your mobile phones and that that could do that with your interior walls. That could give some flexibility and some identity and some new type of architecture. So we are starting to look at how can we actually use this to create value here and now, and not just in yeah, 20 years or in 50 years when the buildings are taken down.

but actually when you say it looking at the value here now and how we can create the interiors is actually what have resonated the most with our more mainstream clients, like people building offices and stuff like that. And speaking about designing for disassembly and how they, because offices are, they are changing a lot. Like I think in its other countries it's maybe five years. But in Denmark, I think it's five to 10 years is where people or where offices are changing layout. And if they're getting a new a new tenant tearing everything out and putting up like a new interior for that for that tenant, so they can actually see a lot of value in that it's super easy to change. For example, layout of offices and reading rooms and you can use reuse the materials because there's just a lot of waste involved with that. So

actually also, when we are creating input for the mainstream projects, it is the short horizon design for disassembly that has created the most impact in projects.

But just the whole notion of that we have thought about how is the building going to change over the years? And is prepared for that.

it's something that we have have discussed a lot also will we get like a new new aesthetics and a new way of design when we are getting a a more circular design? And in, in some ways I think we are. also now we just talked about the room you are in. Like I think we are going to see more joints and more like screws and bows and stuff like that. Like we are better able to see how our buildings are put together because when we see how it's put together, we can also see how we can interact with our buildings. So I think we'll get more, a more a more honest architecture.

but I also think that's this honesty is also reassuring and it's a bit more, you're more confident about the buildings you're in, that you can like, you know how you can interact with it. Also, like if a lot of architecture, it's just if you get into a room and it's just all white. No joints, no nothing..I think it could also be kind of alienating, but if you're in a room, you can see there's some and that's also how we did it. Traditionally, like you can see beams, you can see how it's put together, and you can see joints, you can see screws. You can better understand the room you're in and how to put together. So I think in some ways we are going to get another type of architecture because we are able to, it's going to also that you can, I'd want to have more honest materials and more clean materials. We don't want to paint everything or cover everything. So I think we are getting more joints and more materials in the, in our design in the future, at least when working on circularity. But that said, I also think we, we should find solutions to do it most explicitly, if you want a plain white wall, we should also find a way of doing that. But also just knowing that there are some disadvantages of doing that in terms of circularity. And that's also something that we are very keen on. We don't want to be material fascist. There's no bad materials. That's just bad ways or the wrong ways of using them. Of course, that's bad materials because we don't want to use anything that is toxic or off gasing a lot of a lot of bad stuff. But generally there's no bad material.

For example, we have the green solution house on B-city right now we are constructing an extension to it 2.0 entirely in wood. But the great thing about that project is that it's sort of a catalog of sustainable and circular ideas.

It is in, it hasn't been like our primary focus the last couple of years. But we had previously a project called called Urban Green, where we actually worked together with biologists to actually you can say design nature, but actually design some.. you could contact Urban Green and you could actually buy a piece of nature that matched certain biotopes in Denmark. You could actually have a certain, yeah, biotope when you are building, knowing that this is local plants representing this type of biodiversity. And that is also something that I see as very important that basically think about this one when we build to actually use the surface on the buildings to to have biodiversity. I think just having roofs that is not activated either by people or by nature is It's a waste basically, and a missed opportunity. So I think biodiversity is super important, and that is also another part of our climate, we have a tendency to just focus on carbon and bringing down the temperature, but that is not mentioning biodiversity, which is also just another crisis that we are having and avoiding. And it's also part of building responsible.

I think that's very important that we're not only just talking about it, but we actually also very concrete doing it, or it could also be now that we all talk about sustainability, I think it's very important that we also use each other's knowledge about sustainability or our reuse of materials. Then reuse materials locally, they could also be very tangible way of working with common pool of resources we can say.

Basically, my whole idea is inspired by the design of the forest, and biometric design, trying to take all the the values of the natural world and putting, creating design principles that are possible to adapt and use within the build world. Right. And that's not a new idea. We have biomimicry, we have biophilia. But often, it just translates into creating the same shapes of a. And in from a construction perspective, we figured that if we make a construction as the structure of a snail, we get a stronger construct whatever. But just basically taking, for instance, from the forest and why it's the forest is because it's one of the most suitable rooms for humans, right? We have a measurable lowering of anxiety,

stronger production of serotonin. And so we can't all move into the forest, it is not necessarily the shape, no, it's function. It's how it's designed. And if you look at the design of the forest, the whole idea is not strong contrasts. But all these small differentiations, right? forest is not green, it's 1000 nuances of green. So it's the whole idea of nuances. The forest never has a completely clean floor, there's always some kind of nuances. And everything, in that sense, keeps the senses alive. Which again, tells us a little bit about what should a space be like. you can position your body in 1000 ways in a forest. And in this space, you can position your body in one way. So looking at the forest in terms of how we design, create, I would say it would help us not only reconnect, and then we're back. But also just from an almost neuro physiological perspective, set us free and awaken us might be too big a word but at least make us stay awake. Because there's so many spaces where we just fall asleep, right?

Before that, they've sort of been through the process to like, get to the values. and that's to improve the life of the people and the planet.. you know, to make better buildings where people use the buildings for the people use the buildings

and then for the planet, because like, the environmental thing has been important for quite a long time.

So we, we use this sort of funnel approach like this, where you sort of go, and then you narrow it down. So it's sort of a design methodology approach. Where we start out, we basically say, Okay, how could we solve this? And do 20, or 30 different versions? exploring different ways of doing it, And then sort of analyzing them, And how do they answer what the brief is and what the context is, and then narrowing down and then maybe ending up with like 2-3-4, or five variations, and then working them up to the next level of detail, and then repeating that process. And we have the one that we think is the best, and then that's the one that we go forward with. So when we do competitions, we have a very fixed method in terms of how we actually work in the process. That was some sort of very fixed deadlines for the different steps as much as possible.

So one of the things that we do on most projects is sort of quite a big focus on indoor comfort. Yeah. So now we're getting into the more like the sustainability, like what makes a good building. I would also just add that we use the, remember the UN Global Compact. And as part of that process, we use the SDG Sustainable Development Goals, sort of documenting how we work. And we have like, four design related ones, where one of them is to do materials, one of them is about the I think it's number three about healthy and living healthy environments or whatever living healthy doing.

So we have sort of introduced this process where we early in the process, since to say, working out how much daylight do we actually need to make these buildings sort of acceptable or usable and nice.

And then using that as a design parameter from the start using that as a sort of primary driver for indoor comfort, because if you've got okay daylighting and then you can start to work with minimizing, overheating, too much so against two buildings.

So like, we've been doing it for a few couple of years now sort of on every competition doing daylight estimations from the earliest stages a to make it an integral part of the sustainability story be too. If it's like office buildings or whatever, there's quite often, there's legal requirements to having certain amount of daylight in the workspaces. So it's like, it's a design parameter in terms of making your effective floor areas. Because you can't have more workspaces than there is light. So it's quite an effective tool in terms of making the projects like fulfill the requirements and the brief effectively.

We do quite a bit on the daylighting, and reducing solar gains to buildings, there plays quite an important part that's quite complex and difficult. So research to try and develop ways of doing it relatively straight, relatively simplified in the early phases. We are using Rhino grasshopper tools extensively. So we only use Rhino for competitions in early stage work. And that means we can use the sort of grasshopper world to do parametric analysis.

So we basically employed some engineers and developed our own tools. Let's take a different approach to that on one side, you've got the speed of doing the analysis. Now, though, you've got the precision. We want speed. And we don't think we need to be so precise, right at the start.

So basically, we're trying to make sure that we are like, short circuiting that problem by doing it ourselves, so to speak, and to get away with how we design and this would have integrated into the process.

basically A-architects is divided into two. we have something called A-architects- lab, which is a competition departments. That's basically architects that are specialized in early stage work,

I work in both. So that's like the rhino grasshopper week and not so precise, precise enough. And then we have the normal project design, which is with revit, and all the attendant tools there. That falls about 80% of the company and Lapidus 20% 10 or 20%. But like that's a way of doing specialization and visualization of functions so that the people good at doing competitions do competitions, and the people good at doing project details are doing project details. I think we were one of the first companies in Denmark to sort of introduce this split and sort of formalize it in how the company works.

So previously, doing competitions that was just something people just did ad hoc when something came in, and they found a couple of people to do it and did it, so to speak. So we just because we're big enough, we can do that sort of specialization.

Yeah, so that is this exploring variations, that's the parametric stuff, we want to grasshopper that there are four illustrations that from the Ministry of Environment in B-city, that we won last summer. And that was, that was a project with some ridiculous client demands that comprise a lot of square meters on a very small site, right in the middle of B-city. So the the competition architect, he produced like 20 different sketches in Rhino, of how to get 50,000 square meters onto this site. And we did these daylight analysis on all of them right at the start.

Those are four of them are shown that, like, what we learned really quickly is that the solutions that had little courtyards, they were totally useless because it was just too dark in there and the only ones that work and that's like the upper left with a sort of sleek like format, we have these open courtyards, it was that sort of approach, you needed to be able to get some daylight into the buildings. And that was basically the basis of how the design worked. So that's something that sort of went through the project all the way right from the start, sort of like one of the winning aspects of the project.

And then the third thing is documenting sustainability. And that's to do with that when we get the projects up and running, then they were able to do the full set of things for the green building council, which is a lot more complex, and like technically demanding under the project design.

So that has to do with that we have a lot of projects that are... like public sector, like hospitals, and schools, and like, you're sort of like all the basic fundamental buildings that you need in the Welfare Society, that we have to just sort of like, need to be there so that everything works. And I can load of those projects, this will have a very high architectural quantity. And the sort of, how would you say, make it better for the people who have to use the buildings because they sort of have very high levels of architecture and quality.

Craftsmanship, again, that has to do with the...so we have quite rigorous project design procedures when we're doing in Revit, and actually doing all the detailing. So that's simply that we have quite an extensive libraries. technical documentation for making sure that there's like a high level of quality in the construction solutions that we get building solutions we are presenting can get build.

Sometimes we have projects where there's clients who are really interested in that sort of high quality, we get to build things that are extremely high quality. So we're just doing for L-company, we're doing a new headquarters for them in B-city. Where it's extremely high quality materials and quality, the finishes, the quality, the detail, etc.

And finding out how to rationally build in timber, like the basic concept is, it's not seen publicly, but basically the timber structure is the same everywhere. And all the variation is done in the facade. So it's a very, very rational construction that minimize the complexity of the area that's got the highest risk, so to speak, and the complexities are in the facade, and that's like standard timber frame elements that are widely used already. So that gets a good trade off between complexity and risk analysis

So yeah, so we were really happy with that. So that's, the two big projects, this projects 30,000 square meters, it's actually pretty big. I think I've looked around I think this isn't gonna end up being one of the largest timber buildings in Europe when it's finished

Yeah, we again, we have two tools in the design process. One is called sketchbook, which is like a collection of all the drawings that are produced. So like when I say we do these 20 variations, like all of those come in, and they document the process. And you end up with something that's like 300 pages long.

And we're also doing a LEED certification on this project. And looking at doing sort of, like, facilities management certification for the running of the building afterwards as well. So that's like, the first time we look been on a project with post occupancy evaluation.

Yeah it started where they were seeing like whether the, you know, the air was blowing in the right way, and the lighting was enough? its like small things to do with the running of the building. Because the large buildings like that are so complex, there's always a pretty extensive process of getting everything adjusted and working.

So we we think we've played an important role in getting timber buildings higher up the political agenda for and for the construction sectors agenda. So we think there's going to be a lot more timber buildings moving forward. So we think we've had a lot of meaningful impact in that process. And we think that means that we're going to get the opportunity to design a lot more timber buildings. So we know when we do timber buildings, we're minimizing the co2 about 40-50% fully loaded which is pretty good.

And there's loads of projects with passive solar. And all the experiments show, we ended up with appalling buildings with massive amounts of overheating, because there's just too much solar again in these buildings. So I've spent a lot of time in this last three years making sure that we don't design buildings with 100% glass facade. And I think that's a really good thing, that people are going to be in the buildings and I was thinking, architecturally, it's a lot better because the glass facade that's just like, cheap and easy solution. Like when you start working with facade, design and daylight and modulating the facade, it's a lot more interesting process.

And I think we got some good projects on the way where we've done a lot more interesting facades than maybe we would have done five or 10 years ago.

so we definitely want to see more timber buildings, pretty happy that we have buildings with less glass.

I have a dream that we should be doing something with, like functionality and buildings. And so we've seen like the something that you can use artificial intelligence to sort of do this optimization process of when you design certain types of function, like how big they are, and their relationship between each other and that sort of thing. And I think i would quite like to have a look at that.

The early design process to sort of work the functionality and how we could..so we think a lot of these tools are quite interesting to work with that either beat the game with this, because if the requirements are higher, we can see there's

been a lot more an almost explosive growth in the use of the sort of parametric tools, finding out how they can be used. The Rhino grasshopper coupling is really, really interesting. So we think we can like use the software to sort of start solving problems, or maybe you really solve previously in the early stages, because the computing power and the software is there.

and how much CO2 you can save that because, yeah, it's economy, environment and social aspects of the project going equal, because it also has some PCB, which is toxic sealant around windows, and how can we clean that and reuse it? So part of this come also economy aspect where we can be creative in the financial, how things can be reused

we applied and we got some funding from R-foundation, a philanthropic organization and about how can we reuse this concrete and what is the economical and environmental consequences of reusing it? So we have everything ready and the analyzes and take it to the next level to practice and see what can we do.

Lobbying, marketing and competitions

And therefore, when we talk about, for instance, workspace related to things, those who actually own the buildings, they'll start to see that the investment that is actually put into a building like this, 90% of the investment is actually salaries for the people working in the building. 9% is the building and 1% is actually the energy consumption. So if you are looking from a totally commercial point of view, return of investment, you should look at the 90% you invest in the people actually using it, and how they have a better every day making, having a meaningful every day, a productive every day. How you can make sure they're not. That they're not understimulated or overstimulated, but they are making using a space like they want to have it. So in that sense, we are at the same time looking at a more precise way of designing buildings according to the use, right?

when the user gets there at the end instead of the real estate dealers way to look at what people want because. It's not true. It's based on what people have purchased in the past. But they only purchased what, or bought what was on the market because that was available because a real estate dealer said, this is what's what they want. This is what they want. And if you start to look at what people actually buy and what they want is something that speaks to them. So some prefer tall spaces. Some prefer low spaces. Some would like having a lot of small spaces. Some would like just one large space.

we work only with sustainability and we work in the forefront of the field and has been pushing the boundaries of our sustainability is when I started seven years ago circular design as an area didn't exist basically, and we have been part of like shaping it and actually, yeah, coining it, you can say. we did the book Building a Circular Future back in 2016, I think it was published and I was part of the project behind it. And there's the three main chapters, which is design for disassembly, material passports and circular economy. And basically I was just asked what chapter do we want to start with? And I chose design for disassembly because I didn't know about circular economy at the time. And like when we had to dig up best case or best practice examples. There was very few and really had to dig deep. And right now there's it's everywhere. And all practice basically has its own examples of it. And there's like a conference each week on circular economy and stuff like that. It has developed a lot. And we also been part of actually developing this field.

And also why we were able to to push the industry and push the design. So yeah, we did that four years ago, and then since that we have trying to expand the knowledge and knowledge share and get it out in the industry.

But that is also why we are just prepping all these companies and just massaging these ideas into their head so they can see that this is new business for them. Also, because of resource scarcity in the future, they can't get the raw material that they can now, so they also have to find out different ways of getting raw material. And that can be through reuse. But again, it's not in place yet. So it is also something that is going to take place over the next many years. But we are seeing that more and more companies are taking this way of thinking into their business and are establishing takeback arrangements, stuff like that, because they can also see, like, the positive we're looking is also that they are securing their flow of raw material and they can create a closer relationship to their customers.

the top goal of this is also maybe to establish some sort of leasing of building materials. So instead of they're selling something for a fixed price and then never see that custom again, they're just leasing a material out. So they have a steady income over the years. And then we also like, they can take some material back and refurbish it and send it back and stuff like that. That is like the top code of it. It is that they're not just selling something. leasing it out

because then they also have a responsibility of putting out some clean material that they then get back and that it's keeping its value over time.

We are just hoping that people can see that again as we started, this is urgent. This is something that we need to attend and you need to do. Then it's also just to get ahead and get into make it a good business.

It's basically it's push and pull. So it's about finding the solutions and then present it to the market and say, here there's some solutions. And then having a market ask for them also, because they, again, it's about pointing at what value it creates and spreading the knowledge and also spreading the, also just the, just a lot of focus on environmental sustainability and just environment environmental impact at the moment. So we also helped a bit about that, that people are starting to just ask for sustainable solutions. It's a lot of different areas and a lot of different directions that is demanding this.

Also, that's, and one thing is the research, but we also need some clients, frankly, that wants to build it in a large scale. Because if, again, people legislating but also other clients can't see that it's, but this, we can do this and we can build a building in five stories that is designed for disassembly. then maybe they won't do it but if they can see it. Then they're also more willing to do it, maybe. And also just coming back to my title at Circular Building Practice I want to see things in practice. Cause when things are in practice, people can see it and it has much more impact than. And that's we are a big help in C-architects where we are a small division and working with this, and we have a lot of research projects where we are like discovering this new knowledge and then we have other projects where we can implement this knowledge when it's more matured and more mainstreamed. So we can say we have a research project that's very innovative and like high risk and we don't know what the answer is and whether this works, then we have our own a bit smaller project where we can experiment a bit more and again, have clients that are willing to take this risk. And then we have the inputs we do for C-architects, which is very large scale and low risk, stuff like that. So we also have this pallet of risk and maturing of ideas. So basically it's not just knowing it, we need to do things at a smaller scale before we are able to to blow it up into mainstream, large scale projects. So with this, just also having this test bed of where we can take risk and know that.

I think as an architect it's very important that we also somehow think utopian ideas that can be made into concrete examples, sometimes. I think it's very important that we create a utopian ideas that can turn into real reality, somehow reality in the end. And sometimes it takes crazy ideas to move borders. And that could be thinking about these days thinking about using different materials. Right now seems like the whole building industry is moving towards reusing materials. But I think it took a long time for the whole building industry to understand that this is what we need to do. Somehow you need utopian ideas to push clients to understand that this is the way to go. Yeah, this is also how sometimes you get the best results in architecture, not only instrumental sustainability wise, but also in getting the best ideas, combination of ideas, that's thinking a little bit out of the box, as well.

Yeah, the log is somehow that these days, co housing you know, we're doing some elder care co housing projects. And somehow that thought is, getting more and more popular in Denmark, at least, I guess, all over the world. So it's, getting easier somehow to argue for these social social layers or social spaces. then of course, some collaborators understand better than others. and then they also know that they need to please their users. So it's a mix of a change in in society. And and then, of course, us being able to convince that it has a great value. It is easier if you can drag in a project an example of where it kind of works.

the same interest in working in the early stages, like developing concepts and competitions. And I say that because that's actually quite an important part of our culture in E-architects. That is the discipline of making competitions and thinking about architecture as something we develop and create in that innovative space where, you know competitions are being created.

Also the change or the way to describe how we can make the economy better in the long term if we do something differently to begin with.

And also the fact that we have this the competition culture here in E-architects , because I see that as a discipline where, innovation really thrives the best.

And sometimes I guess it, it works amazingly well if we can actually succeed in having that argumentation ready as well. Because a lot of what we can offer or do in architecture that makes an a positive impact also has a economic upside. But that's something we need as architects really need to be better at. And that's something we are working on. So it's on different levels.

Okay, so I think the most important thing for us is I'm just opening the home page, so I say the right things that is it's like, we're 100 year old architecture firm.

And like that says two things. The first is that we sort of have like our roots in like the the sort of functional tradition in Danish modernism, back to like the 20s, and 30s, and 40s. And that sort of very sort of important for, like, self understanding, to sort of have that history to sort of build on and rest on and look back on.

that sort of modernist tradition of the functional tradition, where it's like a holistic approach, where it's like the method way of analyzing the brief analyzing the program, analyzing the site, and then putting like an architectural interpretation on the top of that,

So that's, so I would say that it's a sort of like taking this Nordic approach, which has got this historical roots pretty still modernist, and then like expanding that around Northern Europe.

That's good, that's the functional modernist tradition. So, again, that goes back to this idea of understanding the brief and making the spaces work. So the activities that should be there work, when you can sort of see that in a lot of the buildings from especially the 30s 40s 50s. And that sort of as the aesthetic architectural expression that you see in a lot of the work from that time, where it's sort of a simplified modernism, with sort of, maybe a little more regional focus on building materials, a lot of brick, reasonably areas of glazing, a lot of projects with a good understanding of daylight, especially in the 20s and 30s, and 40s. In terms of orientation of buildings, sort of a honest approach, I would say you could call it.

This thing about Danish design that sells quite well abroad. So like we just opened an office in Germany two years ago. And that's going really well. There's a lot of interest for like, the way how we work. So hospitals, schools, various projects, where it's a sort of different expression to how we are working compared to what is currently available on the German market, you could say. And that definitely sells well. Yeah. Because we have the track record. And we have some good projects in our CV and it's definitely something that sells well. Definitely. Yeah. Because like it's the, you know, the welfare state and that sort of background, modern and efficient, well designed.

then the advantages, and now that it's a lot more mainstream, so that like this, like we have voluntary sustainability class in the building regulations, which got introduced last year, the year before. We think like LCA, and advanced light calculations, they're a part of that standard. So basically, the idea is it become a normal regulation within a couple of years. So this is like transition of about five or 10 years now were things that were a bit weird and different, suddenly becoming much more mainstream, and getting totally integrated. So it's like a really good opportunity to get those things into one of them much bigger stuff he takes with a really good CV and a long list of really good projects we're working on.

Yeah, and we can see that the last two years especially, there's been a huge shift in more or less every project now, some sort of level for sustainability, that's a lot more ambitious than it used to be. And you can see this like, as a parameter for winning competitions now.

So when you do projects, there's usually like three or four categories. It's like the price. It's like the design and architecture, the sustainability, this process and series. So usually, there's something that has a certain weight in.. that's can be quite high. So then is basically about having using sustainability as a winning criteria projects. So that is like an integrated part of the architecture rather than something that gets bogged down afterwards. yeah, it's part of the storytelling, we do the competitions.

So it's like, added extra in a certain way. That's the thing like on our homepage, I don't know whether you looked at where it describes sustainability. we sort of have just three points. This is like how we work is realizing the vision. So that's just like the the architectural vision. That's the important thing that should be driving it for sustainability. that's quite often that like, first in the sketch that gets done. That sort of encapsulates the vision for the project. Then we have the exploring variations.

And we've had our Swedish office sort of did their first timber building in 2018, then they see part of my work has been to take the experiences they've had from from Sweden, where it's quite normal to build on timber and get it into the Danish market, which is a lot more restrictive, because the concrete industry has got some monopolies on. So we spent a couple of years working politically for getting some of the building regulations changed and doing a lot of pr work.

So again, it's like quite a long term investment from us in terms of cultivating various contacts in the construction sector in relation to timber, because we know timber is really good with co2

So we know this projects are liked by the government, because we got this social democratic government has got quite a relatively good green agenda, that they basically pushed for this project to get sent out as a project. So we know it's going to have a lot of political interest when it starts getting built. And we think it's like, it was really important for us that we won the competition. So we used a lot of efforts to win. So that was like, the like I say, it's very much to do with the process of getting the experiences from Sweden, where we've done quite a lot of timber work and getting them like translated to Danish conditions.

so the work that we've done with the lobbying, that's to do with how the fire regulations work, basically, and there's like that, we were with some of the, the other engineers and the Danish Technological Institute and the basically like the timber sector, timber sector in the Danish confederation of industries to put pressure on the political system. There's basically, so this is what we started to three years ago. To, on the one hand, to say that we need some changes in the way the fire regulations work, because it's quite difficult to build over four storeys. It's not impossible, but it's difficult. And on the other side, to get a voluntary sustainability class introduced with LCA, because we know if you get this voluntary sustainability class with LCA, then that gives a great advantage to timber.

Yeah, so in a certain way, it's like a really lucky, because we've got a lot of climate debate the last couple of years, a lot of political interest. We could see there's a lot of people in the political world, they weren't really aware that construction materials used so much energy had so much co2 to them. So when we had some meetings with some politicians were sort of explained how much co2 you could save. And then you could sort of see their eyes sort of light up, because they were sort of in they were in discussions for having taxes on seats on airplanes, which is like really difficult to regulate, to introduce. And then suddenly, they realize that there's this huge area of co2 savings that could be made, that wasn't regulated at all and can actually be regulated pretty easily.

So like, so we have the will get this voluntary sustainability class, become law within two years. And suddenly, it'll be a fixed rule in our building regulations that co2 emissions from building materials mustn't be more than eight kilograms per square meter or something.

So this, this, this project is like really important for us, because we spent two or three years being involved in this sort of lobby work on the two sides that I mentioned.

doing the political lobbying, sort of made us like known, within the field. Yeah, that we work with this. And then I think that helps us win that sort of competition.

So we we think we've played an important role in getting timber buildings higher up the political agenda for and for the construction sectors agenda. So we think there's going to be a lot more timber buildings moving forward. So we think we've had a lot of meaningful impact in that process.

We're starting to do quite a bit with microclimate around the buildings, you know, working with, like wind and shade and comfort outside. I think we've seen quite a few larger scale projects, master planning, where it's sort of beginning to be an important requirement when we win projects.

But I think most important for me is more like the process. Yeah. So ensuring that we're like, a bit ahead of the competition in having a good idea where we think things are going. Yeah, so the timber buildings, we think we've got ahead of the majority of the competition there. We think we've got a pretty good grip on like doing lifecycle analysis and that sort of thing, we think that will become a totally normal design criteria within the next couple of years. And we can use it now as a competition winning factor.

We think the sort of things about the outdoors, microclimates, biodiversity around the buildings in the landscape, we think that's going to get more important. And we like working on ways of using that in our design. So we can like show that what we're doing would be better than what we might have otherwise have done.

Others

If we just doing something for the purpose of just building stuff, I don't think we are architects. I think also that the difference between building and architecture is the art. That architecture is a sublime art. Artistic leadership is also an element.

We need to show that architecture as an art form makes a difference for people. And that's actually what we try to do with human insights and technology to show that art is really important.

Sustainability has to do with people taking ownership of a building people relating to a building. I would should actually say to architecture because I don't think that buildings in general are sustainable, but architecture is sustainable. I think that time shows that buildings that last for centuries, they last because they have very distinct and powerful architectural properties. You want to keep them. Buildings that have been torn down is because they lose the relevance. They were important one time in the history, but they're obsolete now. But those buildings that have architectural properties and architectural elements, those are being kept. We care about them and therefore it's a sustainable way to look at architecture. It needs to speak to you. You need to take like pure universal properties into consideration.

If you have a generic building, that is hugely flexible. People will hate it over the centuries, so I think that's the way to look at genuine architectural sustainability.

we were about, about a lot of things. And we think that architecture is a serious endeavor. And therefore it should also beginning the attention that it needs. It is complex. And saying that it's, we do landmarks as one office says, that's not, we can do landmarks, but that's not it. We also need to do the other stuff. I do landmarks then what? why do you do landmarks for you, for the sake of architecture? For creating a moment of enjoyment and then what, it's like we need, there's a whole spectrum of needs that we need to address to make architecture that is that's coherent. We are working with realistic as well as abstracts presentation. Right now we are working much to actually develop sculptures. That will be our way of communicating some properties of architecture. We think that there's been a lot of discussion about the measurable things. but the things that actually makes us relate to architecture are not always measurable. Those are probably more based by experience or, the dialogue between the architecture and the person in a way that one could be experiencing a sculpture or one could be in a certain kind of ambience created by, let's say, music or other tactile elements, right? Architecture has everything

So I think that the one part of it is actually the whole process in creating the architecture. How is the process how does it start? And for instance we have clients that sometimes come up with a traditional brief. We want this, and this. And then you're doing the project. But we have also have client where we know that we are going to do housing. Then we start out about saying, we designed this, but we didn't do any floor plans. But this is the idea, what it should look like, how it should feel to be in that space. How the common areas should feel if you want to promote, social interaction here and so on. But we don't design the plan in a metrical way. It's a statement that evokes certain emotions rather than an academic understanding of the project.

We start the project from there and saying, is this what we want together? The client and the client saying, I think this feels good. And then we say, okay, then we'll make the floor plans work. And it's just another way around, prioritizing the feeling of the place

And if you put that into the same neighborhood, you start to have people with different preference, and you create a society instead. Instead of a place of people who are only like-minded and think the same way you actually create a ghetto. The diversity is actually, where you have life, that's where people start to interact and have something to say to one another, right? When they share opinions, but also when they don't. So that whole thing is how can you actually stimulate both diversity and aspiration by actually making art be the first thing that you actually care about when you're doing a project.

The data thing that I talked about initially is the argument for the art, if you understand what I mean. Because the tools of architecture that we consider as art are not those immediately, easily measurable things is not the amount of the light, it's the quality of the light. How do you describe the quality of light if you're not measuring it? You describe it by how people experience it, right? That's the difference.

And those situations that we are creating, of course they have physical properties, not all material texture or spatial properties but has something to do with how you arrange the space. of course, the functionality of it, but atmosphere that we try to add to this creates a sense of place that this space is special and it's very distinctive if you take the space right next to it. So I know what kind of experience that I'm going to have if I go to this space or this space. I start to use the school as a tool, architecture as something that I can use actively. To actually stimulate the group of students that I want to do something in particular, trying to raise an awareness that architecture is actually something that you can use for particular situations if you have an understanding of how the property influences the group of people you are creating decision for.

And in these two realms, work and education, it's very visible because there's a bottom line, there's an outcome, right? But if you can understand that, you also know that it works in buildings that relates to culture to housing and so on, because it's the same architectural properties at stake. So just to touch you off, the last thing there, I would say that the sustainable approach here is embedded in this understanding

I see the architectural industry around educational architecture in Denmark, there's definitely an increase of awareness of the responsibility that architecture can play, and also the possibilities they can play in terms of raising awareness around environmental issues. And practically it comes out as policies around creating a stronger connection between inside and outside, thinking landscape much more integrated into the built environment, in schooling. So instead of having a playground, you have environmental learning spaces. So you move from playground to a concrete learning space. Designed for raising awareness around environments, and that translate into chickens, and pigs, gardens, apple trees, that's one part of it I see

And, and the other part can also be I don't know, if it's actually I had a term that I used, I don't know, what I call it inside out architecture. It was like, I really wanted buildings to be educational in themselves by flipping them, turning them inside out. So all the things we don't see that they came out, this is, for me, this is part of what I would call an inside out architecture, right? Where you take all the things that usually are invisible, and make them visible,

but create a practice around it, it's not enough that that you can just see it, you'll have to create a practice around as using it, integrating it into the curriculum, for instance, into the usage of the building. So you use the building as a didactical object, with the goal of creating a greater awareness around environment for instance. Think about what what would happen if kids could see where the water went, and how much water was actually going and where it was going. And what happened when they flushed. Life would change if you could see our own

but this thing about architecture as a didactical object as a learning object in itself, I find very interesting. And has huge potentials, both from a formal learning perspective, but also from an informal, like, educational cities, right? Where architecture was part of education. And we were getting we, it's it's coming, right? Maybe in a small scale, but it's there. Like the way we integrate waste handling in urban spaces, the way we raise awareness around environmental crisis by creating floodways instead of putting everything underground, now we try to use it and make combined creational spaces with spaces to solve problems around. I find that to be educational. That's for me to see an educational approach into into the whole realm of the built environment.

You know, people are very physical, we're physical beings in a physical world. But in today's world, a lot of things are being immaterialized, a lot of things are disappearing out of our hands, and into the screen. Money. For instance, I haven't touched money in 10 years. And and this thing, what happens to us when the world slips out of our hands, when we can't have a real grasp on things. And it's not only symbolic, to actually be touched by something we actually also, touching things is, is a central part of the whole process of recognition, and understanding and learning. So this thing, this question about, how can we get things back into our hands? In terms of understanding, right? There's certain research projects, that shows the importance of physical objects, just in terms of memory. Like, a lot of the memory processes we have, as human beings are related to physical objects, even though we don't think about it, we can read a lot of the things we recall, we often recall them in relation to something that we sense either smell or touch

From a more theoretical standpoint, when we work as designers and consultants, we very much, our approach to match reality, which schools usually are not aware of, is a principle of surrounding kids with as many tactility ease as possible. Like we find it in the forest, we have rough surfaces, we have soft, we have warm, we have cold. So creating this diverse material universe, is for from that standpoint, extremely important.

But there is a principle at least that we work upon, trying to create as many materialities as possible, in terms of keeping the senses alive, which is basically the idea of that architecture shouldn't dull, our senses, but it should weaken us, it should keep us alive, it should keep us open to keep our eyes open, basically, right? Because it invites us to interact, it invites us in it connects us as human beings to the surrounding world. So that's an approach to materiality that is usually something we bring to the table. If they bring it to the table. It's from more or less a narrow standpoint of sustainability.

And and right now in Denmark, and most of it is from an economical perspective, I think is how do we get society to use school buildings, so they don't close off at three, and then they just stand there. So this idea of Yes, community or meetings, translated into this central space or heart, usually called the heart, where everything comes from and everything meets again, right, is a way of definitely where architecture can, can initiate or facilitate this idea of, or answer the question of how do we create a stronger bond between each other. But I don't think I've been part of a school where we haven't done that. more or less, the last five programs I made, there was this type of space, where we then put in functions that can be used in formal schooling, during the day, but the same, putting the same type of spaces that can be used outside of schooling for local community, to workshops, library.

Basically, it's the idea of differentiation in terms of body in space, that trying to set the body free, instead of fixating it, and where it's allowed, because you can have a free body everywhere. But we want it to be at spaces where it's possible and where it's allowed.

When people hack buildings, why they hack is actually trying to set the body free, right? We want spaces to enclose ourselves, we want spaces to lie down to sit high to sit low, sit soft

But I see there is a dialect or dualism between what we call flexibility, and what we call multifunctionality, which for me, is two very different things.

So in a flexible space, it's the human that rearrange space, but in a multifunctional space, it's space that rearrange humans.

I think one way of getting around this question about flexibility at least from my field of study, which is architectural design, is using science, scientific knowledge, because the whole question is about future. Well, is it still relevant in 50 years? Then we have to ask ourselves, how does what does this society look like in 50 years. And we actually have way more knowledge and possibilities of coming up with with better predictions that we were 200 years ago, because we didn't have the technology, we have big data with a lot of possibilities of actually seeing quite far into the future. Just look at the whole thing about environment, right. So one way of addressing and solving the problem about flexibility, and which bases on the question for how long is the building still valuable? Or is by using the scientific knowledge to see what can which direction are things moving in. And if that's the way things are moving? What do we need and if that's what we need, then we have to build the architecture, that are fitted to this knowing that we will need to change things at some point, but we can't, the worst thing that can happen that I see is that we are focused so, so much about flexibility, that we want to create a space that can do everything. But it ends up being able to do exactly the opposite of nothing, right? Because we don't know how to use it. And there is no guidelines, there are no guidelines, the language of the space is so confusing, or so poorly written, that nobody understands the grammar of it. So I don't know what the solution is. But I think that it's important to to differentiate between flexibility and multifunctionality. For one part, multifunctionality is just way harder to work with. Because in multifunctionality, everything is fixed from the very beginning. And if everything has to be fixed, you have to be very certain of what exact behavior you want in that room.

There's no doubt about that society change very fast. Yeah, but one thing that changes very slow, are humans themselves. Our brains more or less still look like as they did 2000 years ago, we still have the same neural connections. We still react the same way to towards fear. All our basic instincts are more or less unchanged

Yeah, exactly. So we have a society that that changes very fast. And then we have humans that change is extremely slow. That gives us an opportunity, I would see an advantage in answering the question of flexible space, because some things actually stays the same. If we look at it from a human perspective, we might have this world around us that changes. But there are some ways, the way our perceptual system works, the way we are affected by different types of the light, the way you get confused with all the information on the wall here, that doesn't change. If we sat here 2000 years ago in this room, I would have the exact same experience. So we might also have to be more aware of what we talk about when we talk about flexibility. Are we talking about flexibility in relation to societal change? Are we talking about flexibility in terms of human change. And that part is not that difficult, actually. Because we are not that different from each other. It's very, at least if we talk about our, our physiological system.

Yeah. And we also have to design for the things that does not change. Because otherwise, again, we make an architecture that are suited for society, but society as an idea constructed of all different kinds of things that are actually not part of the human organism.

if we had to create an architecture that was constantly adaptable and plastic, and we know it's not going to happen. So I think it would be a better idea of looking at what is not changing that fast and trying to create an architecture that was adapting to that, and fitting those needs. And that's basic human needs. or basic human reactions to this around the world, and especially the physical world and smell touch. Light. tactility haptics, kinesthetics.

And then we stumbled upon like the biophilic design philosophy and how nature and plants can actually help us create more working environments that are something you can, spend more hours in every day and feel, in a more positive mood and fresh. And also not I think we, we found some reports that also mentioned that the fact that it could actually be something that had a positive impact on your immune system. And we begin to work with that as a strategy just to to work with an interior design where plants and greenery were an integrated part of design and equally as important as everything else in that concept.

I think it's different because we are really trying to pull nature in the building. And it's nature and greenery is such an integrated design of the interior spaces that it's something we had to think about for almost every decision we made. And also the question of course then is, okay what do we need to take into consideration to actually make an environment where the plants can thrive as well? So we began to look at the roof structure and have in introduced some very big skylight to let natural daylight in and. and that goes hand in hand of course. That, that became like yeah, I think when you see the renderings and the images of it, you're not in, in doubt of the fact that nature is playing an important role in the project. And it's designed, it's not something that is placed afterwards. It's it's integrated in seating furniture and in ways of yeah..

But it's also often our knowledge of what would be the future challenges or what is the, economic possibilities of a project that sometimes narrow that amount of different possibilities down. So I think it's often.. it's between that dialogue of architects and anthropologists and engineers actually, that we can bring the consensus of what to do because there are always so many limitations that it can help us, not go for too many different agendas, but actually pinpoint the most important ones and then the most realistic ones to achieve because we know, the economy of a project. And I think it's that knowledge of having been through a lot of processes that we know what is most realistic or we choose the direction where we can get the most out of less so we don't overdo it. And it's in that forum of having the different takes of it, we always, I think, managed to have a consensus of where to take it and what is most realistic.

PERSONAL BACKGROUNDS STORIES

Yes, I studied at A-University at first, I have a law degree from A-University. An then I did a master in the University in social science in a more broadest sense. So yeah. But for the past 10-15 years, I've been working with space more strategically, how to use space in the societal context. How do we think space as more as a tool to obtain something we want to do, yeah.

Well, 10 years ago, I had a very special collaboration with N-person, whose partner and as CEO of the C-store, we were, we took the initiative to a to create a new kind of meeting place in our local community. So we did, we teamed up as architects and social scientists to try to develop from an idea we had, so we, we produce the prototype of a new social space. And we both left the project three years ago, we spent eight years working together. And then we moved our collaboration to this studio, trying to further develop with the knowledge we now have from practical experiences, and how these other learning from one place can be taken into new projects.

I worked at the Ministry of taxation, which is really far from architecture.. At one point, I was in the strategic HR department. And there were some large scale organizational changes going on, we needed to change the physical settings into virtual settings in the organization, and becoming more virtual-organized, then there was I grew an awareness of the importance of physical meetings. And if you organize your organizations with people, everyone would need to support their social relationships better. This is 15 years ago, I'm so ahead of time

my first design architecture project was to build a coffee bar at the Ministry of taxation. And it was the headquarter with 1000 people. And the overall organization is 7000 people, for employees. So the idea of the coffee bar was to see if we could make an informal place to meet. And that is the early stages of the idea about the connection of the room and a host function or the way of organizing it. and it was very successful, surprisingly successful. And it had a lot of great effects like integrating your organization, different departments would get to know each other. Meeting facilities were less formal meetings changed into informal meetings, people coming from outside from around the country, visiting for meetings have a place, they felt more as part of the organization. So that was where I started.

I don't know where I got it from, but I am more of a generalist. And I'm extremely curious, I love to learn. So I know a little about a lot of things. And a big part of what works for me is to interact, communicate with people. Whereas I would have known now is that architects are more much more introvert. Yeah, they're more into details. So they, we joke about it that I see the space from the inside out, whereas they start from the outside in. I don't know, N-person and I have been discussing creativity, almost every day. Like that it is a different kind of creativity I create. I don't draw but I use words. And when we work together, it's actually..it's fun. And it's fitting, because I think he's creative work works very well with the storytelling. So it fits very well that we have both types of creativity working together.

I think also, I think that is the starting point of that is probably the personal attend as well and always feeling a need to to have some ways of expressing thoughts about society and stuff like that. And then I when I got into architecture school, it was very much an eye opener in terms of like having what do you say a communication form in terms of trying to communicate all these thoughts, which was really a game changer for me. And then when I started my thesis project, before the last year of high school, I met W-professor, who is no longer at the school, but is in the in C-city now. He was very much influential on me, I would say in terms of just having this constant discussion about inclusion and how architecture can move people can communicate and can change change communities, but also for the worse, I would say could also lead to some bad stuff. So he's always been very critical in terms of directed me I would say, and also having a great influence on me. And I did my thesis project in Detroit and that was very much about community and not so much about the decay, would say, because I was very much interested in Detroit as a, as a phenomenon as a city that has gone bankrupt, and now there is no longer a public safety net. And that's what happens on a community scale, when that happens, and that's really what I started over there.

So that's how it started. Basically, I did my master thesis. I was so much interested in the social aspects of architecture, and how it actually can be used as inspiration to do the project.

Yes, I think unlike my background, as well. And always, I mean, I'm not coming from a rough neighborhood, I wouldn't say I'm not it's basically not in what is a global context. But, of course, there was always some social issues present in that neighborhood. And I think where I come from, I've always felt privileged in terms of coming from regular family you could say, so and, and with a strong social conscience, I would say so it's always been how to use that fuel, you could say into something good. And that's why when I met architecture, I started mixing it up. It was very much interested in, in how architecture can move people as well. More so than only as a pure, pure art form, I would say, I think the aesthetics and the artistic stuff is just as important. But it's also important to understand the social sides of architecture.

Yes, my my mother was, what do you say, a school worker, a teacher. And my father was a architect. So, but before that, he was also a teacher. So there's always been this. You could say they come from the, from the flower movement, basically, there has always been this new changing pedagogic of how to talk to fields and stuff like that. That has very much inspired me, I would say.

I don't know if it still exists but I graduated from a studio that J-person had at the time and don't think that is there anymore. But it was called regenerative architecture. That regenerative means something is reproducing itself, so it wasn't inspired by cradled cradle. So basically yeah, just I could check that produces more good then it then it takes away like the whole creative cradle thought just as a studio. So it was about, again, creating close loop boosting biodiversity on site and creating buildings that they made a positive impact on the side where they were placed. So that was also where I was first introduced to C-architects and sort of brainwashed into this kind of thing.

Yeah, actually I did. No but it was a revelation for me, this way of thinking about sustainability. I think all the way, I can't remember like when we had our first courses in sustainability in the school. I don't know. Is I-person she also works with sustainability and she was my first introduction to sustainable architecture. And we had A-person with her and back then was like the building regulation was nearing zero, just like using zero energy and bla bla bla. And so back then was just like, but what happens when we reach zero? We basically don't know. And then suddenly credle

to cradle had an answer to that, that we want to create more positive and just be, want be a hundred percent positive building. And that was like a revelation for me that we. Do something good with our buildings and not just try to minimize the impact. So that's just, yeah, ignited something in me and been following that since.

So let's start there. I'm an architect from the A-School of Architecture. Before that, I'm from the middle of Jutland brought up and went to high school there, and then afterwards moved to A-city and during my architecture studies, I was more or less always interested in who are the users? What, are the other subjects around the architecture? What's the meaning for the architecture, you could say? And I think that this perspective or these interests has brought me in ways that are around the architecture itself. So during the last year, I think of my architects studies, I also take this process consultant courses on the side, I was doing my internship, I was also a part of developing school methods in design processes used in the public school and the high school in Denmark as a course for teachers. And it was about using design methods as a problem solving methods in the school for cross disciplinary subjects, and taking some real problems in the area where the students are living. So they can they can point out Okay, we have a problem in our own perspective of a child, this is a problem on my way to school, it could be like, a dangerous way or something. And so starting in a perspective where they could really see themselves with the problem. And, and with this pedagogical learning tools we traveled a lot. we went to Seoul, China and India, Finland, Sweden, Norway, also Denmark a lot and and we brought it different places and it was really interesting always to see how this approach opened up people's mind.

I asked someone at the a-school of architecture, I had a project when I was a student, and would like to do an involvement projects. And they said, oh, we're going to work with the triad and A-street. And I'm like, Okay, so we're going to involve? No, no, no, we're not going to involve anyone, because there's no one to involve yet. And I was like, but what do you mean? people are living along the A-street and people are taking the bus today, we could talk with people taking the bus, but we could also talk to people perhaps living in the city where there was this kind of train? and they were like: Oh, yeah, you're right. Now, but we're not doing that we are we are that kind of architects that build first, and then we see how it's used afterwards. And I think I'll never forget it, because I was surprised in a way. Like they were so clear about it. So they should have know when I challenged them, but they didn't really feel that it was something for them to care about.

K-architects was founded by S-person, N-person and C-person, and S-person and I have known each other for 12 years to something. And I was on a leave with our second child, and then they finished architecture school and they met with C-person and they were like, we really want to do something with you. And then we talked about making something like having a company of our own before, and then the three of them started K-architects. And it's really founded upon the big discussion about the big cities, the Centrum cities, and then the one that are more outskirts. And there's a lot of you know, outskirts in Denmark and rotten bananas, and all that kind of metaphors.

That's a really good question. I think I've always been pretty reflective also as a child, like, Okay, why is this the way it is? And I think that's probably what I've been taking with me along my own journey. Like, for me

I would say, I think it's a combination of skills from the architecture field itself. And then from a lot of different other fields. I think it's been also by age, I think, been more aware, you're gaining more and more knowledge. So you can be more more holistic in your approach, and along the road. So I think that's something you're building up all the way. And of course, if you are starting by being a holistic architect, then you are not like a really good star architect, and then a holistic architect, right. So it's also about, if I'm in a project where something is going to be drawn, and it's not me who's going to draw it, it's another architect, we have a dialog, and I can inspire and I can help, but it's, I'm not so interested if it is this window, that window, how it's put into the facades and stuff like that, what kind of tools that are used? I can have opinions, but I think there's architects that are more much more into the details than what I'm

I guess that J-architects, in a way, originates from a wonder from a very early stage for me and my partner, R-person and me, when we were, at least from my point of view, when I was studying to become an architect, already there wondering of the practice, wondering about the role of the architect, based on how we were taught, and how we

were mentored by our professors, and how we were giving feedback and stuff like that, and remembering thinking that there was something missing, an important piece of the puzzle. And I think later on that came to me quite clear, when I became a professional after getting my degree, working for a big Nordic architecture firm, having those meetings with the entrepreneurs, or the contractor in a way, feeling I mean, my position was wrong that my professional moral compass was, was going in all directions, looking for a direction. And then I think it sort of slowly originated into a belief that we were missing an important part of the puzzle, which was the people that we were designing for, I mean, we often have a tendency in the profession to put our profession higher up on a pedestal saying that we are actually we are building for people, we, you know, we have a huge impact on people's everyday lives. I mean, from other professional perspectives, like from sociology, and, you know, people like thinkers, like F-person and stuff, they, you know, they acknowledged that people are shaped by their surroundings. So why shouldn't people be allowed to shape their surroundings in order to empower people? Right? And I think that every profession, besides the architecture professional has actually been able to, to point that out. Long before we started talking about the, you know

already from studying it, I was wondering where the people, where the conversation about the different types of people where that was at. I remember what I loved about the studying was that every little project I did, whether it was a nursery or private home or hospital, whatever kind of projects we're doing, I felt like, because I wanted to, I was studying that either that user group or something. I was studying to get some insights into that particular group or segment or a history of the, whatever it was. And I quickly realized that of course, that was the quality of my education, getting a small education and insight into a problem or a user group or whatever, every time I did a project, but it was only because I sort of was seeking it out on my own.

I choose, for instance, I remember doing a nursery at a point. So I started, I found some research based on, you know, the culture of pedagogy in that, and some kind of child pedagogy, understanding the age groups, and you know, and need for actually understanding who is going to be using this these buildings.

One thing, but that's after we started. I mean, what happened was that is my husband and me that started J-architects, we are both business partners and partners in our private life. Well, I mean, on a very personal level, we lost our first child. So we have a big trauma in our life. That also gave us how do you say, some years of course of trauma and grief, but then also created some kind of space to reflect upon the career and what we wanted to do with our life, both professionally and privately. And that is, was of course intertwined. Because we met each other at work, and we share the passion for architecture in our profession. So it had to make sense. So it was after our that sort of personal trauma that we were able to make a more active choice in what kind of direction we would go and you know, to be very true to our ideology and our values. And, of course, that being very people focused is of course, also related to our own tragedy. But of course, it also started before that, that was sort of that helped us along creating, making an active choice into starting J-architects. Then I remember some of our first projects, because for some years, in the beginning, we were funded a lot by the A-foundation. Because we actually, we used starting up the company as a personal journey of being able to bring ourselves back into a more professional and more everyday life. I don't think people realize how many years it actually takes to get up on your feet again, and just be able to go to work every day. So we were able to for some years to, to do it in our own pace, and to reflect and think and, and some of our first projects was not that well funded.

okay, so I think, going through my life, I come from a family with very strong community values. And a very strong sense of responsibility. I come from a family with very strong women, and also a sense of worth, even though historically, perhaps, women have had, and still have some disadvantages, in relations to how strong can they be, and how much power can they have, but the women in my family have been very much aware of their own worth and kind of boundaries and what they wanted. So my grandmother was very much working class, also my grandfather, and had six children and, but has always worked as well, and was very good at what she did, she was a teacher, Taylor, and was very good at this, and was equal to my grandfather, both in intellect and in power, so to speak. And I think, and also socialists, my grandfather was a union and all, he started out as a communist and became very involved in the Union. So this idea of community and rights, but not just rights, but also obligations, I think it's something that is very much part of my history, and my values from my family, on my mother's side, and then on my father's side,

it's very much values about everybody being equal. So more in a kind of human to human way that you should be able to talk to everybody, and you should, yeah, the opposite of being arrogant and a snob. But kind of recognizing different kinds of worth. So even if people are different from you, it's always a matter of being curious and looking at them and finding kind of their contribution or what kind of person are they and what is their worth. And then also, intellectually, is so the whole kind of curiosity or more academic curiosity, very much comes from also my father's side, but actually also my mother's, the bettering of yourself the How can you not being restrained or constrained by your situation, but kind of how can you How can you better yourself? How can you, even if it's not the most obvious thing to do, it wasn't in my family in my mother's family it wasn't the most obvious thing to do to get an education but every all the children got an education. And I think they've passed this on to me and my sisters that not it's never something that's been said that we should go to university. And that's never been something that they that we've talked about, actually, I think it just, it just seemed like the natural thing to do. But there's also always been a respect that I've also always felt that if I had if I had wanted to do something thing different than academia, that would have been perfectly fine as long as I kind of took advantage of my possibilities and the strengths that I have. So kind of not pissing it all away.

So I think these values about community and equality and and also very much a sense of the widest shoulders having to kind of carry the heaviest load is something that I've been brought up with, and something that is very much a part of the way that I see the world. Yeah, so having strengths and having opportunities, having the recognizing that not everybody had the same opportunities that I had, even though my family I mean, I don't come, my family's not wealthy, we didn't have a lot of money growing up, but I've never kind of missed anything, or we were very normal middle class. But I think also because my dad is English. So we spent a lot of time in England. And I think that has given me also from a very early start the impression that things were different, people live different lives. People have different values, different cultures, and could still be very good, nice people within both cultural systems. So the curiosity of understanding why do people why are there different norms and different values here?

I did, actually, but not at all in the same sense as I do here, I was part of an innovation and innovation team within all whose community and actually worked together with an architect, but we were very much process. So what we did was very much the design thinking process. So she wasn't kind of an acting architect in that way. And then before that, I worked at the E-institute where I also did projects together with architects.

I've worked in some of the Danish housing associations before and I've had some yeah, a bit of work with architects before but nothing like this. And I've always worked the social side of things with people, the people who inhabit the buildings. But the buildings of course always been there and the parks and the outside areas and so on. So architecture is of course also place in on the way people behave. And of course that has also meant something before in my work, but it's not something that I've studied before before my PhD.

Yeah. I think it's a mix where they come from, but it is of course, it's part of what I have from my own upbringing and what I think is important as a person. And it's also based on what we talked about, what I've seen and what I've experienced while working in G-area and other places. And I think part of my, at least my professional identity is the reason why I put curiosity is that it's basically part of as part of my toolbox, you could say, as a professional anthropologist, I'm professionally curious about why people do what they do and why they behave like they behave in why people respond differently to different things. But it's, it also of course, connected to how, what I am as a person or who I am as a person. And I think that basically it's also about seeing this whole thing about promises and feeling that people have made a promise that maybe they don't think they made a promise and so on. I think there is something important in understanding the way people think and the way people act in order to make things happen or do things together or do things for someone.

Yeah, I think part of it is, I know the part about curiosity and respect I think I've had that in my upbringing or, well, it's been an important part of how my parents thought was important to be a and I think it, part of it comes from that and also comes from my professional training as an anthropologist where it's also been a part of it and where it's been useful to me as a method and as a tool in order to engage with people. So I think that comes from. From there,

and then maybe more about the social sustainability diversity issues. It might be more about what I've seen in G-area, what I've worked with there. And I think I wrote involvement somewhere. I think that's also from there because, and communication, which we've also talked about earlier.

So I don't know if it has any impact, but I grew up in a collective when I was little. So that thought of common resources is not that far from how I grew up somehow. So in that sense, for me, at least, it makes a lot of sense. But I can also feel that everyone at the office, they share the thought, even though they didn't grow up in a collective

I think, was maybe one of the most theoretical departments at the architecture school, and they were at least trying to teach us the theoretical part as well that it can, you know, help creating or help developing architecture, the thought about communities was maybe not that popular at that time, it was more Deleuze and rhysome structures, but maybe the idea about you know, how to connect theories with concrete ideas and finding concrete solutions for these more, you know, utopian theories.

my background in in learning processes and the whole science around working with, yeah, all kinds of objects in all different ways. And I chose the relation between physical learning spaces and actual learning processes. Which, again, is a kind of cross cultural field because it involves psychology of perception, psychology of behavior, social semiotics, cognitive science and memory. And so it's very wide, in my approach it ended up being very interdisciplinary, drawing from a lot of different fields.

But often here with a scope related directly to educational institutions. Even if it's either universities or so it's, with a primary focus on educational architecture, or just space, learning space, spaces for learning, yeah, or spaces for play. Because the whole question about play really, in relation to learning is getting more and more present in the whole discussion around learning

playing has some certain qualities that formal learning processes does not have. So the whole question around play as both a tool and a phenomenon in regards to learning, with all the problems related to that, because there's this whole group saying, well, play is just play, and it can't be put on any formal.. and other says play is never just play. We always play for a reason, even though we don't know what the reasons are. And it's, it's built into us. That's how we came into this world, playing. And regardless of if we're conscious about it or not, we play, as when we enter this world, and then some of us lose the ability to play and others keep that, partially due to what kind of education system they had, what their background is, which families they have what the culture is, in families. So this whole question about play in in terms of learning, and then again, in terms of learning spaces, there's this project going on in Denmark called playful learning that LEGO has initiated. where spaces for learning are looked upon first and foremost through the idea of play, and not from a more formal didactic standpoint of certain learning goals or certain subjects but with play as the very core of everything that happens, which is a whole new approach in Denmark. It was there in the 60s, and then it kind of just evaporated, disappeared into discussions on learning goals and teaching to the test..but now, it has some kind of revival, which is amazing. Because play has qualities that you can't find anywhere where else

Well, I actually, after I finished university, I started a company called language of space. And nobody have ever used that name. If you searched in Google, not even language of space was a term. And the idea was, it was some kind of a assigned spaced consulting company, where the idea was to work as a consultant for architects, or be the translator between the stakeholder ideas, wishes, and the architects ideas, but only in educational design. Because architects don't know very much about learning. And they don't know necessarily very much about kids, or pedagogics. And the stakeholders don't necessarily know very much about architecture, because it's the first the project manager at the municipality has never been part of a building project before, right. So the idea was to act as some kind of translator between ideals or wishes, or visions, from the stakeholder and trying to merge that and create a common language between these different actors. And then I had that for eight years. And then we merged with a classic architectural company here in Aarhus, and then it became M-architects, we merged. And of course, we did that, on some of the same based on some of the same ideas that we've always already discussed, seeing what would happen if we had

academics like me, working together with classical architects, not as two different teams coming in together, put together by stakeholders, but actually, as a company, trying to work more interdisciplinary work more on evidence, evidence based approach or scientific approach to the decisions that we're making? Because there is science out there. And, and we should use it. Yeah, otherwise, its personal opinions, and traditions and copy paste, which there is a lot of. tons of opinions

I came out of a background and family background that has nothing to do with anything in relation to this at all. My parents did he do we have educations from a totally non educated background.. And it's a good question. I often ask myself that. I think I've always been interested in aesthetics. First of all, art, literature. And and I've always been interested in the question of how we learn and finding this bridge of where we learn, and how we learn? And how, where we learn affect the way we learn ..it is interesting. But it's a very good question. Because it's a question I can feel that it's a long time since I've asked myself that question. I have a memory of that it was a question that was very present to me 10 years back. But as you asked, now, I can be a little bit more uncertain of what it actually.. was very much about to say, well, it's my job. Which means it doesn't have a value at all, it just means that brings me money to the table so I can feed my kids. But it did start out as a higher purpose, it did start out as it started out. And it still is, because that ignites it every day, in general wish to create a better world, basically. And for me, that has always been through education. Not through politics, not through whatever. But through education. For me to see education is the very cornerstone of, of human development.

After. when I started my undergrad, I was just interested in teaching kids something about the world. And after that, I think it actually came from being a teacher. And constantly being aware of how the spaces I was working in was working against me, all the ideas I had of what I wanted to do with these kids. And what I thought would work very well. The spaces I was supposed to do it in was not created on that didactic, or that idea of learning, which meant I was constantly meting resistance from from the architecture, which tired me like hell, and created a lot of basic conflicts too, I would walk into a classroom, rearranged the whole thing, because it worked better for what we wanted to do forgot to put it all back and almost got fired. Because one of the older teachers just freaked out, because I rearranged his classroom, right. Yeah, so it must have sprung from, from the actual experience and knowledge of being a teacher in a physical space, trying to change the world through education with these kids. And just seeing that I needed the architecture to do it. I couldn't do it without the architecture. And everybody says, Well, you can learn everything anywhere. Well, yeah, maybe and then maybe not. Because w we're physical entities in a physical space, we can't take that out of the equation. And I could just see firsthand that it ruined my work. It ruined the ideas I had, it ruined my vision of what is good learning process, right? So it must have come from that, which makes sense. Because I have learning here on one side with a higher idea of creating more responsible, more empathic humans. And then I have the architecture on the other side that has to help me doing that. And now I'm not a teacher anymore. So I don't really have the actual contact with students in that situation. But now I facilitate at least I try to or think I do, facilitate or make make better learning possible. And then we there's another that's another discussion of what is good learning. But yeah, so yeah, I think came out of that.

I think it definitely raised my awareness of the impact architecture can have on the most smallest of behavioral decisions to very grant movements of huge groups of humans, like a society or community or country. The city. Yeah, I don't think I paid that much attention to the physical world before, the build world, I was very much into nature. We're very much into fiction. novels. But this idea of, of the impact of the built world, I don't think I saw that before, before I actually felt it. So it has changed my view on what is actually can do the power, I would say the power of architecture. And and of course, with that comes also that the knowledge of that we can actually solve problems. Also environmental but not only environmental problems, we can also solve problems around like, and I that's something I see all the time, we can solve problems around sex, in terms of gender, just this whole right now, this probably I can't get anyone out there to create other type of toilets that either for men or for women. I said, Do you know, don't you read anything, don't read newspapers? Don't you follow what's happening around the world. We need other types of toilets too, for people that don't fit into those old categories, and there is architectures power, right. And architecture is restraint. And architecture is politics and architecture is suppression, which we know it's

not new, right? Like, Hitler knew the idea of architecture as a suppressor right? By building huge monuments. and search for sure it has changed my view.

I don't know how was it called in A-city, but when I moved to C-city, I was in something called Department eight. And that was for me, super interesting because they worked on a lot with parametric design. Working a lot on new ways of creating architecture with digital tools. And yeah, a lot of collaborations with CITA. That was really interesting for me because the school in A-city at that time were struggling with a lot of old teachers not really having an idea of how it was or worked in practice. And the teaching philosophy in C-city was totally different at that time. Almost all the teachers had a, some kind of ongoing work in practice as well on the side. And they were teaching in small groups minimum two, sometimes three. And they had like internal discussions about your project while tutoring you. So it became more like a dialogue and a discussion between different individual architects. So it was something much more dynamic, in A-city you just had your tutor and they followed you all the way, and a lot of them had no clue on how to organize a process or how to, get the best start as a new architect in practice at all. Not really hands on, more like their own agendas.

E-architects is a practice that is 20 years old. Founded by three founding partners. And they were actually working together in another practice doing competitions when they decided to try for themselves and began to develop competitions on the side. And they succeeded in winning some. And that became like the starting point of starting their own practice. They were all from the same school. So they were friends and colleagues. And they had the same interest in working in the early stages, like developing concepts and competitions. And I say that because that's actually quite an important part of our culture in E-architects.

it's also about being creative, I like just to visualize stuff. I've always drawn a lot. I had an uncle who was a teacher at the school, in A-city actually. Okay. Unfortunately he's not here anymore, but he was very much an inspiration to me. But he was super theoretically interested. He wrote a lot of books and was very into theory and almost so much that he couldn't draw anymore because he was overthinking everything or but he was such an inspiration and he just showed me around and in the school. And I think I fell in love with that environment of creative freedom, almost like seeing all the sketches and models and it looked very complicated, but still at the same time, super interesting. And then I just went for it and applied and started and got that feeling of being in the right context. Everything made sense. And it has made sense since then. It's insisting on having that, that free approach to it. is something that I really enjoy. And that's also why I'm personally, I'm more into the early stages of design.

So I got an architecture degree and I was in research for about 15 years. I used to actually work in the School of Architecture before we moved there. At A-school, back in the 1990s.

It was like building technology construction technology, I think? I'm not sure. I think the structure is totally different. Yeah. It was about sustainability. Building Materials, like lifecycle analysis, etc. And then I went to the B-research Institute in Denmark. I was there for 15 years. Got a bit bored. Because like all the sort of obscure things like LCA and they sort of start to become more mainstream. So in a certain way, there wasn't so much need for research anymore, or into getting things into practice. So I got a job with another architect based in A-city. And then after a year, then I moved to A-architects, because they have a much better architecture, like, historical roots. And so that's like, so he's basically getting everything that I spent 15-20 years doing his research into practice.

It's a good question.. hum.. well something I've always been interested in since I started at the School of Architecture. Because I'm British, I used to be British when I lived in england, now I am Danish, obviously. I studied in oxford and then I did a postgraduate and PhD at Cambridge.

It was in sustainable housing. So I just thought it was really interesting to work with it. I'd done a lot of when I was starting, I ended up working with two people used to build timber framed houses. And that was like, really interesting. And that just sort of, sort of like, I got to work on a couple of interesting projects that were like timber frame houses with, like, you know, that cellulose insulation and sort of like the German tradition of building ecology, back in the 80s 1980s. And that was like, just really interesting. And at the same time, it was really obvious to do this, you

know, you could buy these German products that was supposed to be ecological. But the documentation of what that actually meant was zero. Yeah, basically. So it was just interesting to do a PhD that sort of went a bit more detail looking at LCA. And like the water cycle, materials cycle, like energy on indoor comfort.

I can really not remember. Just it's just yeah, there was a bit when I did the undergraduate there was actually quite a bit about energy then. That was like very basic energy design. we did all that. And that was quite interesting. But it's first when I did my postgraduate and started working on building timber frame house, that he got interesting to start thinking about materials. Sort of that way around, I think.

danish architects and all that sort of thing. They were quite big in England in the sort of 60s and 70s. So there's always been a line or tradition in the UK. There's been very much interested in like the Nordic approach. Because although it's not really that far from UK, to Denmark and Norway, it's sort of felt like it because like, it's such a different sort of society, or even then, like the Nordic is, we're sort of sort of known for like this sort of really high standard of living and the welfare state and has a difference obviously to the UK, which is sort of a bit rundown on grotty. A lot of poverty, that sort of thing. So like the Nordic thing was sort of something that if you want to center left politics, it was always something that's sort of how things should be.

And the other side is, like when I was a researcher, I did an awful lot of stuff on like energy day lighting or thermal comfort. And I spend a lot of time looking at effects in the 1990s like passive solar energy that was really hard. And there's loads of projects with passive solar. And all the experiments show, we ended up with appalling buildings with massive amounts of overheating, because there's just too much solar again in these buildings. So I've spent a lot of time in this last three years making sure that we don't design buildings with 100% glass facade.

Yeah, before coming to Denmark, I was working in London for four years. And before that, I was working in Tehran for four or five years. So, it is with the change of the country, you also change first of all climates and design culture. And also the rules and politics in every country is different. So yeah, I was very much into Danish architecture, like I like it because it is very playful. And I think the rules and regulations here are and also the main culture of architecture, allows architects to play. And that was very interesting for me, but parallel to that to put emphasize, like, always, in my university projects, my personal projects, I was always interested in user involvement, how can the user decides and why architects role is to dictate the lifestyle? like with the wall will say, Okay, here, you sit here, you slip here. And for me, it was always how can we bring users more involved in the process of design? And that was my project back in Tehran, why we're first project so from beginning I shared some DNA values with B-architects. At the moment that I joined B-architects, I wasn't so so much aware of the B-architects history and DNA and the movement from 70s. But we could very soon align because we talk the same language architecturally. And during the during the years, I also got better in Danish language and understand better, but we talk the same architectural language, yeah.

Yeah from beginning it was like...in architecture, you can get many different subjects like designing schools to public spaces to Theatre, Arts, but many architects we are very much... my favorite was always a living and home because it has a real rhythm of everyday life was very interesting me. Yeah. And that was also my project that I did in my masters in London, it was about how architecture can reflect the rhythm of everyday life. But when the mainstream architecture culture that I experienced in London and also in Theeran was based on economy and profit, and it is still everywhere, it's like that. We cannot divide economy from architecture, so many, many things in the world is driven by economy, including architecture. But to be very much, like, in London, the projects I was involved, it was just, like, projects were in the middle of like, high profile project in middle of London for investors from oil money and Russia, and like, General English people couldn't afford to live there. And when you design Yes, of course, it is some joy of architecture, to design those, but there is always a big why involved in it. And, and, like, you know, when you draw a plan, you tell the story of Okay, this person, like, as an architect you have to narrate the life in that house in your head, and why you're designing it, and if you cannot relate to that life... or asking a big, why is always there? And it's about just investments and like to sell to somebody like the user was not seen that much in the process of design was more economy driven. So it is experience of learning skills and techniques, but that big why I couldn't ignore it.

in both the projects that I did for my final bachelor and my master project, it was about user's involvement. And both of the subjects I chose it myself, it was not something that, it was actually in my bachelor in Theran, it was more for the iconic architecture. And my bachelor project was super non iconic and super, how to call it, planless house, how a user can design a plan themselves, and a flexible plan. And it was something it was always in me in the beginning, I cannot I don't know where it came from. From childhood I really like to play and every organize my room, in a way to make it multifunctional or something like that, but it was very much against main mainstream culture of university and school where I was studying.

Practical examples

One is a gymnasium in a High School in r-city, living next door to public municipalities, sports, facilities for football playing and so on. and there's a girls football club saying, well, girls get the least attractive fields to play on a time of the day that no one else wants to play football. And they have a problem that it's hard to recruit and keep girl players at the team, and actually they have a sports club with great ambitions. So they thought they need some kind of a meeting place, a clubhouse or something and everyone has rejected them that 'we don't built for separate users' and so on. So we have been helping them addressing the management at the high school saying well your sports facility actually are right next to the field where the girls are playing on. So could we perhaps try to develop an idea or vision of how we could open the school facilities and connect with the girls activities. And this is taking place in the spring when we've interviewed girls from the gymnasium from the sports club, the football club, invited them to a workshop where they have elaborated on the needs, and wants and ideas that they already had. So we have skipped out their input. at the same time in a institutional level, we've brought in the municipality sports club, the management to build the vision of the project. So now we have a vision proposal for from that day and we will be supporting them in their fundraising activities. So that was this early stage where involvement was less about talking about the concrete idea. It was more about fertilizing the ground for collaboration between some awkward partners

Yeah, what is the problem and also like it's not sustainable to try to build a building just for the girls. It's more sustainable to live in these two bracing halls in this existing facade and then add on a facility and it would increase the usage of existing facilities if we added the girls activities to it. So that's an example of the way we're working. And by working in this way, you're already from my perspective, you're already building organization, because you have the users and the managers interacting, the girls already all fired up, they want this project. They are excited, they are talking to their friends. So it's a way of mobilizing the resources that will be very important in the next stage of a project. The other project that comes to my mind is a office sports facilities in f-neighborhood where there's an old gymnastic sal that in Denmark 100 years ago, someone made like a model project of a gymnastic sal for how a school's sport facility should look like. So when you visit schools in denmark, nine out of 10 will have a facility looking exactly like this.

Yes, yes. And that's also really interesting, that you have had, like an idea of sport, and physical activities, that someone built in this quite simple room, or concept. And the business has been scaled so crazily and if you say gymnastic sal to a dane, it's like you could smell it right away. Remember the smell of it. So they are really long multifunctional rooms, but they are missfitting with modern teaching, and they are, like most boxes, they're not that easy to use outside school hours. So the ambition is how can we change or transform these facilities into something more modern, more supportive of ambitions to the school to be a local community center, etc. And in that process we've been working with the sports associations in the area, the school of course, all different kinds of staff members. And the municipality, both the cultural department and the school department. so bringing them together, discussing and it was so fun. The first workshop, it was like, you have this simple room. And they just started to throw in ideas of what should be in that room, like everything, you would end up with Tivoli..

Inside the room, yeah. And so it was something like, this is going to be the craziest room ever, if you put all these things and activities. And so in the process, we actually, the dialogue with the user was about emptying the room. So let's let's think about this differently, instead of putting things into the room, let's open it to other spaces around it. So that you instead of have one room overfilled with activities. Let's give you other rooms so you actually have more

space. Now, the projects and they love the idea. Because they, they themselves, were able to see that this is going crazy. It's not, it's not going to happen, you're actually ruining actually the nice room that you already have.

I think in the in the girls project, that it became very obvious for us that all typical sports facilities are designed by men with a very functional approach, like very, and what the girls and also the researchers was telling is that girls wants, or prefer spaces that are more social, if it's not enough to check in and out of the room.

It was to create an inspiratorium. The idea was that there's a lot of resources and potential in the community, that you are not able to unfold or not make use of because there's a space lacking, there's the 'what to do next' point where you don't know which hobby you want to take or which new friend you would like to make. You see it sounds maybe a bit crazy, but the target group was not those who were already fishing, playing guitar, whatever it was all the rest of them. Like the rest of us who don't have a hobby but have time. Yeah, it's a surplus of time. So we wanted to create this inspiratorium where you could get inspired to what to do next. So the whole development process was about how to create a space that was inspiring and bringing people together that could inspire each other, inviting people to... like those who already played guitar and invite them to come and play and see if that would inspire others, and then bring all these people together. And when they had ideas, when they had something, they had ideas for something that was not already a service in the community, then we would encourage them to try to test your idea and we'll help you find the resources or connect you with partners who can help you bring your idea into practice.

we had the everyone ambition, which is similar to super flexible, 'everyone is no one'. So we figured out it was the best way of getting started was to invite the young people in the community, which was turned out to be really smart because when you have young people going then a place just becomes attractive to more people. if they were senior citizens it would become less interesting to others.. so the younger themselves are attractive for this, so the most mature activities that it is in today are also those that are mostly creative, entrepreneurial, youth, but also vulnerable youth are coming. So in 2015, the buildings we had were sold to a new buyer, which was a public housing company that we already knew. So N-person and I made a deal with them, that if we could buy the buildings from the big part of the New City development process. Right now, there's now 500 people living right next door to it. And then we started when we did some part of the projects you can see on the website, and is, as I know, so close to getting the funding to build the project... is taking years to connect with foundations. So it's not perfect, but it's hopefully, about to be realized.

Well, we had an idea, we made a prototype and now the prototype is that local communities center. It's a, it's a real life prototype, you can enter a door. And you can see people cooking, playing, meeting, workout, or whatever, it's there. It's a one to one.

It didn't fit with what we wanted for the place, but then it was a better invitation to the users, because then they had to fix things or invent solutions to a not perfect surrounding. And it was a driver for innovation. and it was a driver for creating meetings between people because they would have to enter a room where other people would be sitting or there's some certain lack of comfort in the room. Because it's not designed to fit. So I think one of main learning was I don't need to design perfect. So when we started out, I picked something like Louisiana, that was the idea, we were testing this, and then we would build something wonderful. And then we put the activities into it. But as time went on, and people just show how happy they were with the space and they connected with this stupid, uncomfortable setting that was like, well, that's not what we need. We, the users want something completely different, they want something trashy and worn out. So they feel invited to participate and they could dream. So the project is there on the website is like okay, we will reuse these buildings, we will just add flexibility to it from what we have. And the process with only users. It was a three day workshop with everyone, I think 700 people coming. And we asked them to, to like not always talk about the needs right now but just forecast ideas that other people after them could come with, like all the ideas that you can talk about it all these years. Bring them on, and then we made this new typology about the fixed space and free space, empty spaces. And then we try to make the design the proposal out of that typology, and then we added like a test of does it really fit with the only user needs and ideas. We brought it back to

the users. And then we took all the ideas and said, well, this idea, how would that be able to take place in this design and in designing the building? And suddenly, a 1000 sprung ideas were tested.

And right now we are doing... we have a really good clients that we are helping with their new office building. And it is like, why didnt we enter the dialog at a far earlier stage than we could have challenged them about building all those square meters when we are in corona, or looking for a different organization model..but the client had already a fixed idea, lots of square meters.

And this is also what we started out, trying to do, in A-city as well, with our O-project where we wanted to attack that square where we did a project on and we really wanted to create this sort of like local neighborhood addressing issue with architecture, you would say, on a local scale.

Well, if you take the first project we did is called turning point in O-place. And it's, it's on a square in the suburbs of A-city. And it's a project that is situated between one of the poorest area and Denmark and one of the richest areas in Denmark. And I think that's what's really interesting about this project is that it sits on a shopping mall, you could say, with a huge parking space, where over 50% of the shops are closed, because it's really not a great place to run a business. So you only have like a supermarket and you have a pharmacy, basically. And now you also have a fitness team. So basically, a lot of the shops are closed, because it's not possible to run a business and have some drug sale and stuff like that on the square as well. And then, through other ways, to another projects where we had to do like , instead of using 100% of the, the the road renovation budget for roads, we could use 50% for social stuff, and then only do 50% Road basically, through a Housing Association. That project was really much derailed because there was a scandal within the municipality, technical department with the leader of that. So that was part.. And then through this process we really had a discussion about Okay, how can we actually show all these discussions because we were either meeting in the town hall, or we were meeting in kindergarten on the second floor of the building. So there was really not a lot about this conversation was really hidden. And there was only a certain group of people involved in this discussion and we're usually ethnic Denish, plus 35, educated who took part of this project while a lot of the community was very diverse, and especially in terms of the Danish somali community was not very well represented in this discussion. So what was proposed was that we did this temporary community House on the square, which was a really basically two containers welded together and then clided with wood and then having a platform on top of it, where the conversation could be happening. And we also had the mayor move his office out there for two days during the financial discussion, and actually having to meet the local community and on a local level. So this was very much about taking what everyone could agreed on both from the from the rich, suburban neighborhood, and also the Housing Association, neighborhood residents, they both hated the square. So that was something that was a common denominator. like it was named A-city worst square in the newspapers and stuff like that. So I think, we took that core issue, I would say, of everyone hating that square and feeling unsafe in that square and turned and said, Okay, let's put the project here, because this is the worst place in the neighborhood, basically. And we could try to change that. , so we did this small scale Community House where you could come as a resident and co build with the office, and we build everything ourselves. And it was a totally eye opening experience, because all the adults who signed on, basically only showed up for two or three days. And then we were left to do everything else, because we signed a contract with the municipality. And then suddenly, in August, when the school started opening, there was a school, right behind the super market, once the school started opening, all these seventh graders came to the project and want to help out because they thought it was super cool to be able to, to do some physical stuff and build and do something for the community, I would say. So that's how the office really changed also focus a lot on youth and architecture, you would say. So how to maybe change at least some youth view on public space and how we can change public space. So that is also what we talked about beforehand, a place you could start in terms of maybe changing society is also getting public space or good public space, that discussion into the, I'd say primary education system. So but that was not planned at all, I mean, by no means so it was something that happened and something that showed up and was really valuable in terms of the office that we work together with kids to design the square and stuff like that, and to build a square. And I came with suggestions and I took that into the design phase and build a new community house or facility house next door in the phase two, basically. so it is a serial architecture, incremental architecture, that we first build the conversation house, very good show to the conversation,

they had different kinds of meetings, food, study groups and stuff like that. All kinds of local initiatives happening in there, there was a eighth grader that had a study club for kids who were not doing so well in school, there was a baby music group, where they played music with their babies, and there was heckling group for for mainly women. And there was all kinds of things happening. And then through this process, through this space, and through this project, there was a need for having a bathroom and there was a need for having maybe a space where you could do workshops and stuff like that. So we did like an uninsulated shell you could say transparent shell in a former gas station which we had torn down which was not used for like 20 years. And people also really much hated that gas station. And what basically also showed was that because we did the one project, the first project, it actually created a momentum to address the gas station. I think if we before we did the project would have addressed the gas station that would not happen.

So, so this also showed that you can start small with the conversation or having activity and then in turn, they can actually create a greater change and that happened when we found money to turn down the gas station and after doing this, toilet building, where are those two toilets, and there is a big covered open space for workshops, where it can be a bit messy. There was also for example, in Denmark, there's a tradition for, once you become a student, you ride the wagons around the country and visit every parents. And this is called totally blew my mind that, of course, when you live in an apartment, because I never lived in an apartment when I was growing up, basically. it was always in a house, but when you live in an apartment, you don't have the ability to have all all your friends from this wagon come up. So you're really excluded from that feeling. So what they did, they actually turn the trucks into this square and then used the space for, for having all their friends from school come into the space as well, which was really super cool. And something we did not see a need for. But this process really turned it into, I think this also speaks to how making a frame and people having just to have being able to use it is so powerful in terms of a local community that can just have an idea and have maybe a wish, and then can be able to use it very quickly. So this was the basically the first project we did was the serial stuff, we also did have ramp for accessibility and stuff like that. So it's very easy to move on this grass, basically, you could now move diagonal on the square. Before that was a big bridge in terms of the parking lot. which enabled people to cross the square basically, this sounds crazy in a way, that you cannot cross a square. But that was basically the case, you had to move around the square, as it was before.

At the moment, we are doing a youth culture underneath the bridge. And that's very much also in terms of building with with the local youth here. And also a big local youth association. youth events Association, called A-vollume. who is doing events locally, and also trying to get a lot of upcoming artists into their scene in A-city, great music scene on a national level actually. And then this project is very much about creating a space for them. And then also trying to have this is actually a project done, like designing for disassembly, so it can be moved, as well. But it's very much about using sustainable materials, reusing materials and stuff like that. So that is the big project we are working on at the moment trying to.. we have funded the project now and then we need to have it approved by the municipality and stuff like that.

from scratch, yes. So they had 1 million to begin with, but then we had discussion about what the needs were and stuff like that. We had a workshop in a one to 20 model, basically. And then we were moving around big boxes and stuff like that and looking at the site and seeing what were the potential of the site, and how do they actually do events and stuff like that. So we came up with this design where there's a big gate that can be opened in a 14 meter long gate. So you can actually have a small space in the winter time that sort of like hibernating and they can have a concert for maybe 100-350 people. And then in the summertime, you have a big gate that can open up and then you can play under the bridge, basically, for summer event. So that is the big..the expression of that building is that you can have a small hibernating space, and then you get what maybe an unfolding space in the summer that can create events underneath the bridge. And there was something that came up with the discussion with the client and also with the city architect of A-city who also is very much engaged in this process as well.

Yeah it is a material library. But it's very it's very organized, so it's going to look more like a physics room. And this means that you can go in here and have a meeting, not even talk about materials, but if you're talking about materials, you don't need to stash the materials. You just go in here and then you have the workshop here and saying,

that's not something new. The new thing is that we overlapped actually the material collection together with a space you can actually have a meeting in. You also know that the very textile elements, when you do have the material in the sense this is 10 times more powerful than you actually print out a piece of paper. And you look at that. Look at it. If people come in with Corian, in their mind, they might walk out with natural stones because of the power of tactility. They can touch it. And then we are talking again, it ucks back into what's architectural quality. You need to show people, make them experience it, and actually, instead of just showing them the numbers, right? Experienced values. Next thing was the you saw the coffees out there. The reason why it's called coffees is that most cantina spaces are only used half an hour a day. So this is currently being developed. It's not finished at all. The idea here is to make a cafe that's so inviting that you would actually prefer to go there and work. So it's just like sitting at a Starbucks or whatever. People do a cafe and work. The rule is there's always music out there. So you cannot go out there, have a meeting and then turn down the music. You are the one visiting a social space and doing your work there. And it also means that it's such an attractive space. It's being used the whole day rather than only that half an hour, meaning that it's being more intensely used rather than only at lunchtime. It's a better use of the square meters. It's not empty.

So each of these boundary objects has its properties. And then the other thing we did was actually, the meeting space behind here it's called Studio C now. It used to be our meeting room. Now it's a a broadcasting studio. So we have a green screen We have virtual reality as well. The green screening we start to use during the covid. So we could actually do presentations, live presentations for pitches in Canada where we were inside a model that was broadcasted real time, with leaves falling down and people walking behind us in front of us. So it was like choreograph made that we made a choreography that corresponded with the presentation. And outside is going to be the whole sort of production area. That's the way that we are going to use that. And since it's already hooked up with a lot of Data. It's also our conference room. It's also a our when we do photo shoots of models and so on different stuff, it's in there. We are doing that stuff. So now that changed just from a meeting room to becoming a studio, right? Then we took the model space, physical, the workshop used to be in the back. Now we exposed it and made a maker space. So we have print farm right now with resin printers and filament printers. And then we have the laser cutter in the backspace. We have the wood shop in the backspace and so on. But everything is getting exposed and becomes a part of the environment. So we are starting to recreate an atmosphere that once we're actually looking more like an office to reinvent it into becoming something that ask when we ask ourselves What is an architectural studio 2021.

for instance, if you take a project like the instructional center in T-city, which we currently are building, just broke ground. It's like three dimensional princess Tray. You know what a princess tray is? the Gutenberg printer that was the first ways of creating mass communication. And that was the printed word. And at a certain time the way of printing became obsolete because we started to communicate in other ways. Different types of medias were faster communicating less books. We went onto the internet instead. We still print. But it was the first part of mass communication that, tray where you had the letters in, right? most people actually started to put it up on the wall. And put in small elements that maybe something that had from a trip to somewhere. Something was a small thing they got from the kids or, so it was became like a small memory palace. It was small, like a diary made out of elements that. You relate it to. Make sense? It's if I'm putting a seashell into where you used to have in small frame, it reminds me of a day that I was at the beach with somebody. So it's also, it's almost a diary made out of found objects. So the idea with this three dimensional princess tray was to take out what used to be letters. then you had the objects, take out the objects and put in atmospheres instead. So that you relate a cert, certain learning experience to a certain environment. So for instance, if you have history and you go into the same kind of classroom as you have let's say math, and everything is based on flexibility and it's white. The learning situation is pretty difficult to actually make a distinction between what was this class and what was this class? I can remember the content from the notes that I wrote, but if you enter a room that has a certain impact on your emotions, next time you enter that space, you recollect what you actually did there last time. It's called the scuba diver test, meaning that if you learn something about what's underneath the sea level, when you're down there, you remember it better, likewise on land, but the things underneath the sea, you don't recall as easy being on land and the things that you learn on land you don't recall as easy being under the water. So the idea is actually related to that place has something to do with memory. That's one part of it, creating the space. Then of course, the whole design about , what type of learning? We talking about active learning here because this is a, at university level. So active learning is of course creating a spaces that where the student are not just sitting and

receiving a lecture, but they are communicating and collaborating at the same time as they're being lectured. And they're interacting with the teacher either online while the lecture is going on or in a breakout sessions and so on. And therefore you design it in a different way. Also the whole idea of about creating more intimacy. There's theater in the round, which means that you have the space that used to be lecture room, but now it's, the seating is all around the the teacher. And what does that mean? It means actually that you're looking at. Some of the fellow students on the other side, rather than you're looking at the back of them, you can see their facial expressions. You're also having the distance from the back row to the presenter. It means that the whole situation gets more intimate. And those situations that we are creating, of course they have physical properties, not all material texture or spatial properties but has something to do with how you arrange the space. of course, the functionality of it, but atmosphere that we try to add to this creates a sense of place that this space is special and it's very distinctive if you take the space right next to it. So I know what kind of experience that I'm going to have if I go to this space or this space. I start to use the school as a tool, architecture as something that I can use actively. To actually stimulate the group of students that I want to do something in particular, trying to raise an awareness that architecture is actually something that you can use for particular situations if you have an understanding of how the property influences the group of people you are creating decision for.

So for instance, we did we did one project in G-place and we are doing another one right now. Those are very cheap, actually. Also tiny apartments. But it's not for flipping, the investors are actually keeping them for a very long time. And the reasoning behind that is that the whole urban planning in G-place is like a revitalization of, I don't you probably know about it. The whole thing. They want to have a lot of new people coming in so that the city will have a more more diversity in the population. And so these housing projects is economically affordable. So they're actually done for something like 25% of what's being built in here, but we are trying to actually achieve the best quality. But that's a rationale behind it because, the investor needs to minimize the risk because he's the first one putting something into the area and therefore it's, for him, it's damage control. It's not a speculative, he needs to prep and make sure that he actually has people because he, if he has empty apartments, it become a ghost town. If it's, the apartments are too bad. That condition be a ghost town. So his understanding of doing it is the same interest as the government. You need to have a lot of people coming in order to create a dynamic that, that actually make a progressive movement in G-place. Yeah. So that's the reason. But and the reason behind what that we received the commission was actually, the more social aspect of the agenda, which we think is really interesting. Creating new sort of urban tissue in a challenging city part.

We have an example and there was, it's actually done before we started to think like this, but it's become a very good example of it. And I think we won the competition just before I started, but at large projects in Sydney the k-tower. Basically it's I think the story goes that in Denmark we are not super good at designing high rises, but we are really good at designing small offices, like in, in five stories or so. So basically it's stacked danish offices on top of each other and with an atrium. But as High-rise square meters are very expensive. So to carve out a large piece of the floor plate to to create an atrium didn't resonate with the client because we are just cutting away expensive square meters. So basically they invented the system where they could fill out the atrium with the a lighter floor plate and a system that could go into the freight elevators. So they didn't need to take off the facade so they could cover the atrium if the tenant didn't want it, or like they wanted to divide the billing into, instead of having five stories and have two and three stories between two clients they could do that. So it created a lot of the client felt a lot more safe about choosing this solution instead of just covering it all. So it gave them a lot of flexibility to, to rent out the high rise in different setups. So here we used desing for disassembly to create safety in the investment.

For example, we have the green solution house on B-city right now we are constructing an extension to it 2.0 entirely in wood. But the great thing about that project is that it's sort of a catalog of sustainable and circular ideas. The whole point of the, it's a hotel and conference building, conference place. So their business strategy is to attract conferences around sustainability. So they're using the hotel as a test bed an exhibition of sustainability, so you can actually go there and experience a lot of different sustainable solutions. Yeah. So it's also like for us, we have just gotten the possibility to introduce a lot of sustainable and test out a lot of things there. And right now we are building a climate positive extension to it completely in wood. And as you might know that we are not that good at building in wood in Denmark, apparently.

Yeah. Yeah. It is in, it hasn't been like our primary focus the last couple of years. But we had previously a project called Urban Green, where we actually worked together with biologists to actually you can say design nature, but actually design some.. you could contact Urban Green and you could actually buy a piece of nature that matched certain biotopes in Denmark. You could actually have a certain, yeah, biotope when you are building, knowing that this is local plants representing this type of biodiversity. And that is also something that I see as very important that basically think about this one when we build to actually use the surface on the buildings to to have biodiversity. I think just having roofs that is not activated either by people or by nature is It's a waste basically, and a missed opportunity. I was doing my internship, I was also a part of developing school methods in design processes used in the public school and the high school in Denmark as a course for teachers. And it was about using design methods as a problem solving methods in the school for cross disciplinary subjects, and taking some real problems in the area where the students are living. So they can they can point out Okay, we have a problem in our own perspective of a child, this is a problem on my way to school, it could be like, a dangerous way or something. And so starting in a perspective where they could really see themselves with the problem. And, and with this pedagogical learning tools we traveled a lot. we went to Seoul, China and India, Finland, Sweden, Norway, also Denmark a lot and and we brought it different places and it was really interesting always to see how this approach opened up people's mind. So in China, for instance, there was like, students that were in university and also were educated people that said, we have really big problem in my office where I need to sleep because I need to be there until my boss goes home. And then I'll take a nap. And I'll always have like, Oh, it hurts my neck, or I'm sleeping really bad because there's too much slides and stuff. So they put up like, the problem was a bad work environment. But there are solutions for it, where perhaps like a helmet, I could put on that could support my back while I was sitting in my working chair and taking a nap during the day, a maybe with a cover to put around so I wouldn't freeze and stuff. And it was it was stunning, It was eye opening for us, as well. that these different perspective, depending on our culture, how we would look upon them. So we would say, but how is this a solution for the problems on your work environments? Isn't there another place we could we could start? Could we start somewhere else where you don't need to be at work like 20 hours in a row, because you can't leave before your boss is leaving. And then they were thinking, Okay, how can we do this more democratic. And I think this journey on helping people through methods to reflect and come up with new solutions for the work life, but also for the personal life. That's, that's really interesting for me, and I think that gives meaning to my job, or my work life as well, to help people in this way. And with this projects, interns we have had, and people we've had that on different summer schools and courses and stuff like that. Then when they came back, and they say this has been life changing to me, like being on a four week summer school has been life changing for me and I will use this method to plan my entire life. And I was, wow, ok, that's really big, right? So I think it's not so much about, maybe being better than than other people, but giving them tools or sharing, you know, knowledge so they can reflect and they can they can give more meaning to their life. I think that's important for me.

We work really much with this model that you see here, and we call it four different perspective. When we look upon a place, it could be a city it can be like nature's space it could be all kinds of stuff. It could also be a project. But saying there's a perspective that comes top down it's like the state the municipality, different ministries, you know, all kinds of law stuff, they come from top down. There's something from bottom up, and it's people living there the users. It can be small shop owners, that kind of stuff from, some unions, a sailor club or something, whatever. That's that's of interest to the project. And then there's also the outside and the inside perspective, where you then divide from the top down who is coming from top down outside to the project and who's coming from top down from the inside to the project. And and also from the bottom up who's putting up inside who's actually living in the city who are the use of that's not like organized in a more like a lonely riders or something like that. moving freely and who else The outside bottom up the all the guests, the tourists, the maybe nerdy people with.. birds or it could be kite surfing or whatever. And then we are mapping out all these interests to find out who are key stakeholders to the project. And it's, it's not only to involve then people from inside, it's also to figure out why it's actually important for the city from the outside. And how can we mix this? How can we integrate that into the project.

For instance, we're building a new Squarespace in a city. And a part of the Squarespace is to have like the city life and the city life is not to have an empty space is to have people coming and use it. And it's also to have markets or to have concerts or to have some kind of activities at the space from time to time. Maybe it will change during the week, maybe it will change during seasons. But if people can't meet, if they can't coordinate if they can't collaborate across

different organizations, unions, cultural institutions, whatever, if they can collaborate, if they can't coordinate, like make a calendar and find out what to do when, then it won't be very successful life on the Squarespace. So I think that's as big a part of the solution as the Squarespace itself, if not even more. It could also be like fundings, if it's now we're talking about culture, if you would like to make some cultural activities, then is often you, you often need some kind of external funding. And then you could have applied for the local municipality for some kind of further support. If that's too much of a fussle if you don't know how to do it. So that that is keeping you away from actually holding activities. So that's also a part of the problem. Therefore, it needs to be a part of the solution as well. So I think we cannot we cannot just look upon the physical structure, we also need to look upon the structures around it, how to make this a success. It's not like the materials on the Squarespace that will make people come itself. It's not because we chose a model that that is going to make it the best citysquare ever. We all know that, right? We all have been in some places where it was not the nicest materials, but it was so nice to be there. So how do we make that? How do we actually make a space where people can interact, where people will take some initiative to make the city also theirs. So it's not just the municipality that needs to arrange barbecues, but it's actually people that are doing it. So I think that's important for us to have as a part of our approach. And that's also why we work with this what we call strategic action planning, and where we then combine this strategic long term perspective with a very short term action, and say, okay, so if we want to make what is a parking lot today, as a public space, it could be a park, it could be whatever, then we need to find out if it's a good idea, Can people actually see that that's the value to them. And we could make a test, like trying to make the parking lot to a public space or to a park and have trees have grass, have a barbecues have a concert, have some soup enrichment, whatever, to bring people together to see how can this not as a visualization, but as a one to one test? How can this actually work? What kind of value it would add to our community? And this method has shown a really high value to both citizens, also the politicians, because they can then have a dialogue about it. what they don't like, if you design something that they think is a pretty bad idea, then they can tell more, why is it a bad idea? And let's see if it is a bad idea. We can test it one on one. And if it's a good idea, then people will probably say, wow, I have never imagined that it could be like this, and I can see possibilities or Okay, what kind of possibilities What can you see? If they were afraid that they will have the lack of parking lots that we can test it Okay. Is it a problem that you cant park where you always park? No, maybe it's not such a big problem. If I think about what do I gain on the other hand? So I think this, this testing, combined with the strategic long term perspective, has a really nice way of bringing people together in a constructive dialogue.

we had a project in a therapy garden where they thought they needed the biggest greenhouse for doing this is therapy, and they fundraise, and they didn't get any money to do the therapy garden. And then they came and they asked if we could do something to help them. And then we said okay, let's start by just the stage 0.5 not even a stage one, but this stage half. Can we start there? Can we start like this? Tring out what can we do on this existing site by not doing anything else to the structure but just trying it out and we had a collaboration with a garden that are part of the university where they study all the methods and stuff. So we went down with the people actually going to work there. from different areas in the organization and the municipality, they came out and they found their own personal best spot where they thought this really give the right calmness or this is where I feel in a good place. They marked it, and then afterwards, they then went together as a group, and then they found the best place to meet as a group. And they marked this. And we we started working with this just to as a part of mapping out where are the good spaces in the garden, but they also have a training and Okay, this is the mindset of using the garden in a way that doesn't cordinate with the therapy. So we started with this is stage 0.5. And then if the meaning was more clear to everyone also to the bosses in the municipality. So that meant that it became a part of the health strategy. And then they could actually see that it should be integrated within the organization within the offer they have for the citizens. And they would then put aside some money to also make small structures that permitted. So they started just put some small structures and they started learning how to use it. And then afterwards, after a couple of years, they found out okay, we really could need a small house. So we could go in, but they were so much longer in using it. It was not the house itself that were a part of the key solution. It was their working methods, their practices, their approach towards the different citizens in the garden. So I think that's a really good example of how to not always start building something but start using something before it's actually there to find out what our needs, can we use a snow suit? Is that a better alternative for a building? And in 90, 80%, it is a better solution.

We made these tests in a strategic test in H-city and M-person who is a museum inspector of C-organization, told me that afterwards, we closed the part of the city square, and we first of all, we actually filled in more parking spaces on Squarespace. And then after that we just, had like 200% of parking, then we had like, three weeks but with non parking like 0%. And just to try Okay, today, there is some parking, should we either make more parking, or no parking at all, just to start the discussion. people working in the municipality, were worried, what if people like the parking option better than the blank Squarespace? and we were like, we need to test it, we need to hear what people actually need. and people liked the Squarespace best, because they'd really like to have a space where they could meet like this cultural space. And what M-person then told me like a year after is like today, it's been some kind of common knowledge. Now we have tried to have a full parking spot at the Squarespace we have also tried the other things. where before it was like someone say, Oh, I would like I would rather have this, I would rather have that. It was just a discussion. Now there were some learnings attached to it.

for instance, an example was last weekend, I was hosting a kickoff event for an area renewal, we are doing in in the part of northwestern part of Zealand, the small community of 1500 people. So we were hosting this event. And a lot of people came really surprisingly, a lot of people came, were serving breakfast and coffee and trying to create a nice environment. And then people saying in the beginning, I don't really have many ideas. But I do have a complaint about this or that, right. That's normally how politics works these days, and how these traditional citizen hearings are designed.

that's the culture, that is the existing culture for these kinds of events, right, but so what we were doing was to say, but we have to share, start sharing our different thoughts. We cannot maybe start with bringing ideas to the table where we can start about, you can start by explaining how your everyday life works. And then in connections to that, how do you how do you move around? What is missing? Where do you see challenges. And then we have these method cards, that is red on one side and green on the other side. And you start by writing your issue or your challenge down on the red side, and you pinpointed on a map. So slowly, these sort of challenges start appearing on this huge map that then visually drags people into the conversation. And then suddenly, because it's in a, in a group way, group structure, people start inspiring each other, and then the conversation starts, right, then ideas start appearing on to how to improve these challenges that they have identified. And then people were saying when they were leaving, it's amazing, I didn't have any idea when I came here, but i am full of ideas now and then people started expanding inspiring each other and, and the shoulders are sort of lowered, and the conversation is much more constructive and creative.

we use a board game we have designed, a method called A-nopoly, which is a board game. not a capitalistic way of developing the developing places, but it is centered around developing places. So we, in Danish, you would say we bring the people into the game of developing their spaces or their cities, their communities. And I think there's two layers of that method. One is the atmosphere created around a board game is shoulders down. It's collaboration. It's not competing within the contestants that within your group, but it's yes, sometimes you can we we stimulate motivation by having different groups competing against each other. And that's especially with young people. So you motivate them to actually identify issues and solve them and stuff like that and get points and there's prizes and stuff. But basically, what it does is that it also creates a space where you first off you read each other's faces, you are slowly and sort of pedagogically, taking by the hand through the process of analysis. And yeah, so discover dream design. And at the end, it becomes very clear to people that even though we were five people sitting down, and we all had different issues, we actually now have shared our everyday life, we have collaborated in solving those issues, we we learned that my issues are not more important than the other issues we have our issues are equally important. And sometimes I moved away from my own point of view and into a sort of larger group mentality in a way. Do you know you theory? So the idea is that you move away from yourself and you move into an awareness of a larger community. And in that way you can, you can move, how do you say, bigger issues, right? You can, you can mobilize people, when you when you work with that process, and you start by moving the individual into a group and then into a larger group. And I think that how it happens is that you very clearly in the beginning has to be yourself and still be yourself within the group. But because you physically draw on a map, you point out where you live, or your you draw your route, or you point out to a certain problem, and then you start sharing it, it all materializes in this map in front of

you. So everyone becomes part of it. And then we use the psychology of the traffic light signal. So red is, of course, challenges, and yellow is potential solutions, and green is the sign that now we have agreed on a solution. And then at the end, you share with the rest of the groups. So we have examples where we have played several hundred in the same room, we've also used it a lot digitally during Corona, where we start, I think we had an example of a workshop with more than 100 people digitally. So starting with a shared session, then breakout rooms where you have the board game, also digitally, and then you meet up again. And then each group shares their findings. And what happens is actually that people realize that there's a lot of similarities, but also the differences are being put out there. And they are then taken seriously. So there is a psychology behind the game, or behind this method that really works well with the communities. And then most importantly, also there is or equally important, is the data that we get. So we can map areas with this method. Very clearly at the all the information on our maps.

we can already from those first sessions, identify the themes and categories of issues. And then we do a feedback loop after a session like that. We haven't done anything yet. We haven't drawn up anything we haven't put in anything into shape, we haven't concluded anything, we've only helped sorting out all the information, again, as a way of creating community around the future development, right. And then we ask people to vote for the most relevant issues, within a knowing the time ahead, knowing the financial possibilities. And then in a way, they start collaborating and making choices. Then we start concluding saying so we can build a bridge here or a new park here, or we can do you know, then we start putting solution under these different categories, and collide that into either a strategy or a master plan or specific design. We have one example of a very extensive process that went on for a year. Normally we worked with four default feedback loops. And that was because the municipality we were working for hadn't chosen anything, not even a site for change. So we were given the task of doing an involvement process that would map out potential sites. And then having the community decide where what should be happening. And then afterwards doing the design with the community. So we were narrowing sites down from 30 to 9 to 4 to 2, and then designing those spaces. Yeah, so in that way, it becomes, you have one original sort of state of mind or idea but you start creating a community around and that change, and people they work together.

I think O-city it's interesting because it's an example of these sort of smaller towns in the outskirts of Denmark. It's a good example, because the municipality actually chose us as consultants, over Ghel or Cobe, and some of the larger consultancy firms, because we had to focus on the young people. So it was actually an active choice from the municipality to work with the younger community. And how we did it was that we collaborated with the school. So there was a high school in O-city, and there is a public school. And we we designed workshops for both, because there are different age groups and stuff. So we what we did was that we First off, we started internally within the municipality. And then arranged some workshops that went across the different departments within the municipality, the different silos, because they wanted a sustainable development strategy for their town center, that should be functioning and working over the next 10 years. So that the product in itself was supposed to be a tool for change over the next 10 years.

so a development plan and such for the city center. So we design the process in order to start internally in the municipality, but stimulate them to collaborate across departments, because it would never be a success, if they didn't start already now. and only within the department of urban planning or whatever, right and not across the culture department and the school department..so we hosted these workshops across. And immediately the municipality could also see that that they needed to be better at collaborating across if they were to implement change in the future. Because they cannot deal with social issues or with the changes in the school system, or with enhancing the cultural activities in the town center if they don't have those departments with them. So that those workshops were sort of our initial point in that project, that gave us a sort of a very solid, how to say, overview of everything that was going on within the municipality that helped us steer the rest of the process, it also helped us identify who we should contact within the community, you know, to point out these sort of gatekeepers into the different types of, you know, business associations, or schools or culture and, and stuff like that. And then slowly, we were working our way out from the municipality into the community. So we were hosting some workshops with the community, making sure that it had a broad representation, both in gender and age and stuff like that. And we also brought politicians and the mayor to participate, get, you know, stimulating or motivating them to move closer to the people.

So we had all these different themes on process. And people were working with the board game, not with questions around the edge, but with question cards, using dice to put down red dice for issues, writing down the issues and then turning the dice to green when they had solutions. So that sort of collaboration, and then they were putting up their speech bubbles on under the different themes for the posters, those posters were then the background for the workshops with the young people. So they were able to see the issues that the adult population were putting up, and either disagreeing or being inspired by or whatever. And then so we did a series of workshops that took a whole day with the young community, where they were given tours around the city, with from people from the museum, the local museum, giving them an insight into how O-city was developed over the last a couple of 100 years, and why it looked like it did today. And that actually was very inspiring, because that inspired them a lot for the future solutions. So not just working with, you know, I want to football court, I want a place to hang out, but actually giving them some solid knowledge to work out from

So in the final report, we were also given the municipality recommendations of how to continuously involve the schools in the development of the city. And then we moved into phase two, where the same young people were developing temporary projects around the city. Because often with these, especially with a strategy like that, where you only see drips and drops of changes over 10 years. You mean you use people so use placemaking and temporary activities as a way of materializing the changes quickly, and to motivate especially the young people.

and especially with one site that was sort of more relevant, they had moved the city hall, to the outskirts of the city. So there was like, an open wound, as we called it in the in the urban realm or the context. And the young people were developing kind of prototypes of how to activate that area. And so they brought ideas to the table, and we try to, how to say, draw them up one to one, there was tall grass growing, so they were sort of planting flowers. And they were doing these pathways and trying to actually make a temporary mock up of their idea for the future? so I think we had two phases in that project. And then we had a steering group that was following the project throughout all the phases, and it was carefully designed to be a mix between, to represent the city, also with the young people. And within those steering group meetings, we were drawing up solutions as they were talking, so it was sort of a making visual note taking? And yeah, and then have a huge impact on them. Also, they've really felt that they were part of the machine room and actually given a mandate to make decisions. So that was a I think that involvement process was run over a period of half a year.

So strategy chapters, and then certain places around the city that were then examples of how to implement and design those different strategies. Yeah, and what they realized was that they had to, we had to extend the contract with them, because they wanted to help to facilitate a future process where they would be working across the silos to different departments. and they realized that through the first workshops, that that was a real value and they needed tools to be able to do that in the future. So again, you can see new community, but also way of organizing in a way of thinking and way of working in the future also becomes, which is more sustainable part of the product of these kind of processes.

yeah, yeah. In the S-project. So an urban lab, where we actually were setting up a physical platform. we activated a rundown building, in train station in this town so people would know where we were, where they could contact us, we had exhibitions and different activities from working out from this building. And what happened was that people were then starting to dream about what could be, they dreamed about a place for doing their homework, or a small cafe, run by volunteers in the community, a place where they could have concerts and stuff. So by activating this building, people started dreaming about that it could be kind of a cultural house for the city. And they also by themselves applied for money from R-funding to make that happen. But in that project we built sort of a more permanent version of a temporary installations throughout the city. And we were collaborating with the local carpenter, and blacksmith. So those students were bringing the sort of the more professional aspect into these temporary installations. But we were building them together with the with the young people. It is, it does take a lot of time. And it does take a lot of resources, but it is worth it. I mean, they still there, those those furnitures that was either built by wood or metal, they are still there in the in the urban landscape. And then the permanent project, was actually also built in collaboration with these schools. So it was a more tough building process. And we needed to be more

part of the detailing and overseeing the construction site and stuff like that. But we worked, we collaborated with a local professional carpenter, who was the main entrepreneur for the permanent projects, but then bringing in the students. And I remember at the inauguration, the families of those young boys showing up, being really proud of their son having actually, have been part of the project. so we've done that both in sort of a small scale version and large scale version building, and it has a huge impact. And it's very effectful with young people to build, bring them into the building process, but it is, it does take a long time. And in that way, it costs more money for the client.

Yeah, in the far beginning because that's what we use to map out the possible sites in the city. But actually also to make people realize that there were more places in this area that could potentially be developed. for instance, there is a place in S-city where, where the young people meet up every Friday, and drink beers and party. And within the young community, a lot of them, maybe half felt they wanted to be part of the community but not actually drinking, and that made it clear to us that we had to help them activate other places in the city. So there would be more options of having youth communities or gathering points within S-city that was not just related to alcohol. And there was actually also a lot of conflicts around the party activities were a lot of adults was, you know, very angry with the young community. but what happened was that the young community realized that and they were then reaching out to the the neighbors, and having what we call dialogue coffee. So they invited the rest of the community at onto this place, and then had a conversation about that, you know, they were sorry, they wanted to be able to clean up after themselves, but they were lacking trash cans. And, and so they made sort of a set of rules, so they could continue having the parties at every Friday. But what it also made us clear to chose was that the lack of trash cans in the city was a problem, because the youth actually wanted to clean up after themselves. But the municipality did not want to put up trash cans because it costs money to empty them. So out of this project, we applied more trash cans to the city, because the youth signed a contract with the municipality to empty the trash cans themselves.

Again, ownership, empowerment. And, you know, making those kinds of the new types of partnerships between municipality and in the community.

So we did a project on the children's hospice, I then got to learn about children's hospices, which is a field that I've never looked into before, and being really curious about what is actually at stake for both the personnel, the management, the children who are admitted into the hospital, their families, their siblings is just for me, the most interesting thing to be doing, and then when it's at the same, I always find it interesting to dive into trying to understand something and someone but then when it at the same time is something as a children's hospice, which is just so obviously a good thing. It just makes all the sense in the world trying to help build something that can not obviously take away the pain or take away the sorrow or the sadness for for the people who are in need of a hospice, but can help alleviate it and can help make a positive difference.

with the example of the children's hospice, I think the the projects that they take on is one thing. So what kind of projects do they engage themselves in. But other people acknowledge that we are the kind of company who will take on projects like the children's hospice, which is really, really small project, but which we actually invested heavily in having me and also my employee being involved. And I mean, it was a project with, I can't remember how many square meters but it's, it was like four family units, like for sport flats, and a common area is like a tiny, tiny, tiny project, but still they choose to take it on, and they choose to invest actually putting me and my efforts into it. And also, I know from earlier projects, before my time, that the approach that they've had is actually one of again something like M-project, for a disease. And there's the Danish foundation called M-foundation and they have this, it's actually like a holiday resort kind of place. And the general idea was to say that you just, it just needs to be accessible. And, and it doesn't actually need to be, it shouldn't be a place where it's, you know, very obvious and, and clear that, oh, it's for a special kind of user group with special needs. It's just, you know, the architecture should just be accessible. So the whole universal activity kind of thing, idea, obviously, this was before my time, I wasn't part of that, that process, but I know that the women that worked with it was you know, trying, working with experts working trying to, you know, spending time in a wheelchair, kind of getting around all of these things, which is very much about Yeah, curiosity as well. And respect and kind of acknowledging that if you're an architect, you have a lot of qualities and knowledge

and, you know, professional expertise, but then there are the users that you can have, you know, you need to put yourself in their shoes, so to speak, in this case, not their shoes, but their wheelchairs.

so the children's Hospice is actually the product of the first project that we've been part of kind of like all through the projects, and which we're now looking into how can we then revisit it once it's built? So we will actually have full circle from the impact team. But in that case, it's a matter of the partners kind of taking on a project agreeing that yeah, this is a good project. And then when they set the team, it's then a matter of is this a project where the impact team should be take part. And the idea is that we should take part in all our projects, but kind of different scale. So in this case, what we ended up doing was we ended up being like fully integrated in the team and the competition team or the design team, doing participating in all meetings also with the entrepreneur. So together with with that whole team, and then what we started out doing is is always to do an analysis of the building program or the if there's not a building program, the project description or whatever to do an analysis on what is it? What kind of impact are they looking for? What is the implicit hypothesis within the building program? Where are the holes in the building program? So what do we know from research that would be relevant that maybe hasn't been put into a building program? In this case, the building program was very thorough, and they had very much kind of designed the building program based on a lot of research already.

And we did some more research well, desktop research, doing literature reviews, trying a literature searches and found that there's not that much literature and children's hospice connecting to architecture and the kind of physical...but we did find some really interesting research which Very much showed us that we needed to focus on the staff rather than the building program, which is obviously very sympathetic because it was the staff who had done the building program. So obviously, they were focusing on the patients and the families. But what what research showed was that you actually need to focus on the staff and their well being in order for the quality of the treatment to be good. So this was kind of like a hole that we found through research that we could then dive into as architects together and say, Okay, so what, what should that mean, and this kind of became a focus point in our in our concept, and there were different holes that we kind of saw. And then there another thing that they were talking a lot about this particular building program was homeliness. So we kind of needed a hospice, to be homely have a homely feel. And as a team of what 8-10 people with kind of like sat there with each, like 10 different ideas of what homely meant, and felt that always it should almost look like a private home, and so and such. And then we did some, a field visit to the only other children's hospice in Denmark, in Copenhagen, and did an interview, thorough interview and had a kind of a tour, and realize that homeliness in this context is something completely different. And without going into depth, that kind of gave us more knowledge. And then we did another field was a visit to an ordinary hospice, the whole team again, so this kind of diving into the context and trying to understand it, it's is the work that we did there, and helped the architects to kind of thorough... so I did a workshop together with them, where we presented all this knowledge that we had and and help them translate that into design questions and spaces of possibilities that we they could then base their focus, they're following a design process on. In the meantime, they obviously had started sketching, and there was also a field visit before all of this started with the architects and one of the my employees or my colleagues, who was also taking part in that. So all of this was going on, but kind of like in a very compressed time frame. And then we took, we took part in all the different both like phone meetings and workshops with team but also kind of like all sorts of kind of ad hoc decision points. So should we do this? Should we do that? And so our role was always to be kind of like, so what, from a user point of view, or from a staff point of view? What do we know about their needs? And so what should we do? so basically what we provided was a decision support knowledge for the architects and the project manager to kind of because there's so many decisions that you kind of do in these processes, just kind of qualifying the decisions. And then we helped write the material for the brief of the presentation helped to do the presentation, actually, I was part of then presenting the project and the ideas, both our process, how had we done this, and also the research knowledge that we built the project based on that. And then we were lucky very happy that we actually won the project. And then I took part in the initial user involvement process, which was just very short and brief. And also, because I think that the project was small, but also because we've done so much homework, but the need to actually adjust the project a lot was was very small. And I think what what they said was that they felt very much heard and seen. So I think they felt quite safe with the suggestions or the concept that we had come up with. And then I've also taking part ad hoc, because I've been sitting close to the..so then the project kind of

changed from design phase to project team to the more kind of detailing and getting it built phase. And in D-architects, that means that it actually changes project managers. So it then moved departments so to speak. And I was also sitting very close to these people. So I was kind of just ad hoc, also being engaged in different decisions that needed to be made. When there were changes that needed to be made. They would ask kind of So what was the background? And what would you suggest or what kind of if we did this, then what would the consequences be or kind of how do you feel that that kind of now we're in the dialogue of how can we revisit the hospice once it's taken into use. So it's kind of like, as I said, a full circle, but this is a project that we've been very much involved in. Whereas most of the other projects that were involved in is more, maybe doing some research kind of collecting some research and then presenting it and then kind of going out of the project again, or doing more like just sparring with the based on some previous research or providing material with results from some of our other revisits. So if we've revisited one of our projects, and a new project comes in where that knowledge is relevant, I would then do I've done some material that the architect or the project manager can then bring into kind of the discussions with the board without me being present necessarily in a meeting or in a workshop or anything. So it's as you can hear, it's very different scales that we can take part. And then obviously, we do the revisits, which is kind of disconnected from the architects and the project managers, because then they've kind of left the project, and they're doing something new. So the way that we get that knowledge back into it is that we within do talks where we invite the whole company, to Yeah, to take part

believe. So I think..well lets see when it's finished, and we've done the revisit, but that is my assumption, because it's it has been so well thought through from the beginning, and also the team because this was it was in Danish, it's called to total interprise. So obviously, there are different ways of doing projects and different financial kind of constructions.. a turn-key project. So there are different ways of doing, so in some projects we work together with, we're like the main supplier to the customer. In other projects, we're sub supplying as our sub advisors to the company who will be kind of building it all. And in this case, that was the case that we were just the architects, and then we had this company that was our partner, but also kind of our employee, so our customer, and they actually, when we did the competition, the material that we turned in, had to be like the price that was going to be the price. So we needed to know everything, they kind of needed to know what kind of doors, what materials, all these sorts of things. So that the total price will be this to the customer in the end, the children hospice in the end. Whereas in other other processes this early on, you don't need to have that level of detail, you kind of make kind of like a budget on so this project would cost so and so. But it's not, you're not obligated on that price, then you go into kind of more detailing and you go into negotiations about price and all of this, but in this case, this type of project, or this type of competition, you give an offer. So the competition, the materials, you kind of give an offer, or in this case, it was really important that this company was also on board, because obviously in the end, they were our customers, so we couldn't just as architects decide, oh, but we want to do this, they kind of needed to be on board why this is an important investment? Why should we invest in wooden floors, which are more expensive or like all of this. So in order to optimize that process of negotiation, just within our little team, it actually made as I see it, a lot of sense that we took part and kind of gave the feeling or the impression, which was also true, that, you know, all the decisions that we were making, we were making for a reason. And everything was kind of founded on knowledge or research or experience. And obviously, they had a lot of experience as well to put into it. So in that way, then we become like a whole team and one team and not cuz there's a lot of... there can be a lot of negotiations and pushing responsibility around and kind of pushing the monkey around and stuff like that. But in this case, it actually kind of became more like we're whole team and everybody's on board with the decisions that we're making.

But the reason why D-architects won, they had a wild card within an international competition. So as a very young small company, they were then invited in on a wild card. And as we did with the children's hospice kind of found a gap, which was that, that when it comes to students, so this was like, in the beginning of the 2000s, that when it comes to students, there's actually a huge challenge with loneliness. And this was something that was like, slowly acknowledged at that time, which was, I think, and has been kind of afterwards more and more. But which is something that is actually quite surprising for a lot of people, because a lot of people kind of look at the the best time of a young person's life, as you know, time of their lives and party, party, party, friends, friends, friends. And then it actually turns out that there's a lot of students that are really, really lonely. And it's a huge problem, both because of health. But obviously, it's not healthy, being lonely, but also on a societal level, because it actually affects how many

people have been carried out their education. So the dropout rates can actually be connected to loneliness. So what they did at that time was then to say, Okay, so how could we actually do? How could we build a student residence that helps counteract loneliness. So how can we build a student residence that kind of have a more default community and supports community and, and we did a revisit of that, which was really, really interesting. So that the basic idea is to transform individuals square meters to communal square or common square meters, but also to make sure that you have like, every day, kind of ad hoc of friction, everybody has like a small apartment. So you have the possibility of kind of privacy as well, but in order to get to your apartment, you need to go through the common kitchen, all the common functions like laundry, and there's also a gym, and there are different common functions in the building, instead of kind of just hiding them in the basement as you would maybe do, they've actually dispersed them through the building, so that people in order to kind of get their everyday stuff done, they need to move around the building. So in that way, you create that friction in a default kind of unconscious way. Another thing is that we have a glass, the building looks like this and it's glass in the middle. So you can actually see the different levels. And you can see who's in the kitchen. And the common areas obviously, are placed towards the glass middle. So you have all the common stuff going on, where people can see it, and you can open it's not further away, then you can actually see people's faces. So it's not just a matter of being able to see that there are somebody on the sixth floor doing something that looks kind of nice, because that is not necessarily that useful if you don't know who they are. And if you don't know if it's someone that you do know that you actually want to go and join. So what the students said though, the residents said that it's actually kind of it's really neat, that you connect, you can actually see who it is and then you know whether it's someone that you want to go and join. And people not just for our benefit, but it was really fun. People were like waving and dancing and doing stuff to each other. So there is a lot of interaction going on even not kind of face to face or physically. Yeah, so there are a lot of qualities in the physical space, that supported community. So for me, that makes a lot of sense. That's for me, that's a typical D-architects project. It's taking a task just you know, digging just a little bit deeper trying to find out Okay, so we're not just making homes for students, if we're going to do this, what is actually going on with students now, okay, there's actually a challenge or a problem that we can maybe help solve. Let's try and think about that. So that's kind of the way that they've been working like all the time since we met so that's That's one project, but with a lot of different elements.

Social mix among the residents, but architecture is used as one of the ways of attempting to change the estate socially. So the talking about, or when they were beginning the work on changing, transforming, G-area from a disadvantage to state to an attractive neighborhood as like the big saying about the estate is one of the methods to do that was through making groundbreaking architecture that could bring in people from the rest of the world and that would attract people to come there both as visitors, as tourists, but also as people who would want to live there. Because of the architecture, because of the possibilities in the estate. For me the way of thinking about G-area architecturally was a subject of research. So I don't know that much about architecture. I've learned a bit by the, by reading about it and by talking to architectures and looking at architecture. And I think it's been very interesting to, to begin to look into architecture and the values and ideas that are behind architecture as something being able to change behavior and being able to change the way people behave socially. And how architecture is considered as something that can be used in order to also to transform cities and neighborhoods from one thing to another.

I've learned that there are a lot of different architectural ideals and a lot of different ideas about what architecture can and cannot do and how it should be doing it. When I was in London at the University College London, for my environment change in my PhD and in London I also looked at a lot of buildings and a lot of places where the municipality or someone else had been working with architecture in order to change people's behavior. And there I encountered what is called hostile architecture, which is basically you make a bench, which is impossible to sit on, which is impossible to sleep on, which is impossible to hang out on or skate on or do stuff on. And there is a very good example of that in the Camden municipality where I lived when I was in, in London, which is called the Camden Bench. And the Camden bench is a piece of architecture which is meant to stop people from behaving in particular ways. So it's meant to keep homeless people from sleeping on them. It's meant to keep homeless people from sitting too much or too long on them. It's meant to keep vandals from spray painting them. It's meant to keep kids away from skateboarding on them. It's meant to be impossible to hide stashes of drugs in them and so on. So it's, it has 21 different functions where it's kind of stops people from a particular kind of behavior. And I think that's

extremely interesting because some of these ideas about architecture, being able to prevent or to change the way that people behave in particular places is very interesting. and it's also something not it's a very extreme case, that bench, and they've only made three or four of them at least in Camden. But it's, I think it's interesting to think with which is a very anthropological way of talking, I think to see them as examples of the way that municipalities politicians and the architects who work to help politicians and municipalities and so on, to create particular places and to change particular places from one thing to another, the way that they're thinking about human behavior. And of course with the Camden bench and the same would go for a lot of other places. I think. Of course, the Camden bench has been seen as a challenge to graffiti painters and to skateboarders and so on. Because if someone builds something that we're not supposed to be able to use, let's find a way to use it. Let's find a way to do what we would do to a normal bench or how we would use a normal bench. So they're like videos on the, on YouTube where you can see people who are skateboarding on them anyway, even though it's supposedly impossible to do it. And I think that's one of the places where you could say that architecture promises a lot of things about what it can do and what it can change in the world, but it will always be confronted with social life with humans and with the ingenuity, with the all the ideas that humans have in order to change their environment or use it differently than what it was meant than how it was meant to be used.

Yeah, that's also a very interesting aspect of what is going on in G-area because there are many different ideas of what the main problem is and politically one of the main Main ideals of the new G-area is that it's gonna be different than the old one. So that is like the basis for a lot of what the politicians want to be done in G-area is that it should be different from the old G-area and the old G-area is functionalist. And it's based on some of the modern ideals of Le Corbusier and some of the other modernists in architecture. Though it's kind of modeled also on, on some core Danish architectural values where there's a lot of, there's a lot of green. It's not not as clear cut as Le Corbusier large ideals of these straight boulevard and large buildings and all of that. It's not like Brasilia or something like that. So it's kind of adjusted to Danish, yeah. To Danish size or to Danish. Some Danish values, at least in Danish architecture. And that is one of the places where some architects disagree with the municipality or people from politicians and so on, because a lot of the architects on, some of the architects at least have talked to in G-area, really think that the buildings are beautiful and that the aesthetics of the buildings is it's well made. It's well made because the light is they're turned east, west, most of the blocks there. So there's light in the morning on one side, there's light in the evening on the other side, none of the buildings shadow each other in the original plan. So you have the light all the time, even in the ground floors. the rooms are bright and spacious. So the apartments are actually quite well thought out. They're quite well planned in many ways. And then there's the question about materials where a lot of the discussions in Denmark about ghettos have been about concrete. And as I've heard some architects say, is one architect say that we all live in concrete, but many places we just place bricks outside, or we place wood or steel or glass or whatever. But most buildings today are made by concrete of the, at least concrete in the core. It's concrete. But concrete has still become this revived material, which is considered quintessential. It's like part of the ghetto to be concrete because we imagine places that are made of concrete to be bad. They're not nice to be in. They're not they're different from they're, they don't have a human scale that kind of stuff. It's what a lot of people have been saying about G-area is that it's not, the scale is too large. You don't feel like you can fit in as a human being because it's too large, too much concrete and so on. But on the other hand, a lot of architects say that it's actually quite well done. And that's one of the conflicts about G-area where architects also play a role, I think, and where architects disagree also, because some architects are very much for mixing different styles of buildings, which they're doing now in G-area while others are more purist about it than they want to keep it the way the buildings and the aesthetics of the buildings and the layout of the buildings and are very critical of the way that the municipality are going about it now, whether like building buildings in between the old buildings and demolishing some of the old buildings. But it's also, I don't know, I probably talked somewhere out here and not really answering your question, but I think it's been extremely interesting because you could say that I, as an anthropologist, my role has been. pretty much as an observer. So I haven't, you know, given any inputs to designing anything. I've just, you know, been looking at what's going on and how how everyone else is talking about it. How the engineers and the architects are talking about what they're doing and how they're like sometimes clashing with residents over what is beautiful and what is not, and what is necessary to have and what is not necessary to have or what should be maintained and what should be demolished and that kind of stuff, and how much should be demolished. So there's a lot of these discussions going on, but I think

part of what I learned about them is that it's very much political. What's going on and everyone wants to discuss when it's political. Then the architects the engineers the municipal officials, the politicians, the residents, everyone has an opinion. Because a lot of it is discussed in like a political sphere. So everyone can discuss architecture, everyone can say whether they think a building is beautiful or ugly. Everyone can say what they think about what places look like or the materials are made of. Everyone has an opinion or entitled to have an opinion. So it's like it's architecture taken out of the architectural domain and discussed as something which is an engine for something political.

And then experiencing that we are not having that say or it, we are like being pushed out slowly and then it's something else, suddenly the project is different, and no one really asked us whether we were okay with that. And I think that is actually the big issue for many of the people that I talked to in G-area, that they felt that they were increasingly pushed away from influence. Increasingly decisions were made without them being involved. And I think on the other side of the table, what I heard was that it was about necessity. It was about what was necessary. It was about finances. It was about you couldn't have forced companies to take on. That's one of the issues was in the beginning, they kind of promised that it would create jobs for the locals. So they would be, you know, hired by the contractors and subcontractors, but you're not allowed to force companies to hire particular people, so they couldn't deliver on that. So for the first three, four years, it was only like 1, 2, 3 locals were working on the projects and then 50% Polish workers were hired to be working on the projects. And that was something where people said, but you said that you were gonna hire, locals wanted to, instead of the young guys making trouble in the streets, they would be working and they would have jobs, but they're not getting jobs. So that's one thing, and that's just an example of the types of promises, in quotation marks that the residents felt were broken or were not delivered upon. And sometimes it was about the buildings, because in the beginning they said, okay, we have to demolish three buildings in order to have room for new streets and a new park area. Then it was five buildings because it was cheaper to demolish them and build something new, the last two buildings, right? And that was also okay because the residents had to move out of them anyway, so it wasn't like they would be staying there. Okay, then you could say, okay, financially it made sense, so on. But now it's an additional nine buildings that are going to be demolished without the residents being involved in which buildings it's gonna be, why do we have to demolish nine buildings? How are we going to find new accommodation? And of course, there's again, there's a lot of legal issues in that and, The municipality is can't just, you know, put people on the streets so they will be offered new apartments and so on. But it, that's all, that whole uncertainty on whether what the plan we agreed upon has suddenly changed and become something quite different. And of course part of it is pragmatism. Part of it is political issues on a national level and so on. But it feels like to the residents at least, or some of the residents that the promises they were made were broken. And that kind of rubs them the wrong way, right?

for example, when we develop a educational house, maybe we enhance the communal spaces, or the possibilities for creating platforms where people can meet and interact. And the same in cultural spaces, we've done what I just talked about was an educational space on R-campus, in R-city, where we made a huge stair, where we gathered five different educations and that stair led to all these different educations, but this stairs was not only, you know, a transportation or circulation purposes, it was also for meetings. So we also had places to sit or interact or look at each other, then they could also be giving something back to the environment. And not only creating, you know, the architecture that we were doing, creating something for the users for the architecture, but also the ones that are, you know, surrounding the city surrounding. For example, we made a culture house in northern Sealand, where we actually tried with the new building, it was a new building that we had to do, we kind of made a new foye for the users where they could meet and platform where they could meet.

an example could be this cohousing project, we were doing an old elder care, cohousing projects in three stories. And then they really want something communal. So instead of making, you know, a huge common space, what we're doing is we're having these galleries out in front, we're making them extra large. This is a cheap way for the entrepreneur to build it just you know, galleries in front, and they don't have to invest in a lot of dead space inside the projects with internal hallways, then instead, we have these galleries in front where we make bigger areas for common terraces. Suddenly, it's actually a value for everyone in the process as well as the users. So the entrepreneur, they can see the value in that they don't need to spend money on a lot of dead hallways or dead space in hidden hallways, and and the users they get the social spaces. So of course, if we can, if you can understand all stakeholders at the same time,

you often get a solution that is the best for everyone. So if you understand entrepreneurs at the same time as the engineers and users and the client, then you might end up with the solution where everyone is happy.

R-project was a school and daycare, and kindergarten, that moved into the same house. So that was really a project where we had to take in consideration all the three stakeholders and somehow creating this learning furnitures where all of the users could use. So it was basically kits from 1 to 3 years old, and then kids from kindergarten, up to six, or five, and then also school kids. And at the same time, this learning furniture should somehow enhance their movements, and enhance, you know, sitting in smaller clusters and sitting in smaller niches. Plus, it should also be a small little library, where the teachers could go, and a Learning Center where the teachers could go and learn about how to teach and learn. So basically, somehow this furnitures should be for everyone at the school, basically, which means that we needed to take into consideration all the wishes from the smaller kids to the grown ups. So it should be in this space, that it was also flexible. So it could also not only for the one of the users, but actually the local society should also be able to use it for bangle or events in the weekends. So it's basically everyone in the city that should be able to use this. And at that point, then you really need to listen to what they're saying, and trying to combine those wishes to create this furnitures that can contain, you know, activities for all these stakeholders, all these users. And at that point, we you know, we had a process where we like instead of having project development, we basically had user involvement meetings instead. So all the users had a representative that was a part of all these project teams.

And the same thing, we're actually practicing now, in H-city, that we just won this realdania project. It's the culture library house that's on the front page, when you go in on the website, and there's also a lot of users in this house. It's the old townhouse, where now they're moving in as a library and tourist center and youth library and a what was it more flexible space like culture space, which means that right now we also sitting and involving, you know, all the users, for example, the library, how would they want that for you to be but also the other users in the four year should also have a say in in what they want. And we actually also in this project, now, when I talk a lot about it seems like we're always making stairs have a lot of functions. But in this case, we actually also made a stair that could contain functions is smaller spaces for meeting for the employees at the library, or tourists. They could sit and look at the harbor front meanwhile, listening to the history of h-harbor and, you know, fun Have fun climbing areas for kids. And also, of course, a functional stair. And in this case, we also have all these meetings with users. And in this case, we're actually also using the project meetings, for user involvement meetings. So there's always users participating project meetings. is it these normal meetings that you have with the client every, let's say every 14 days, normally then, or internally, you actually normally have it internally in your team, normally, the team consists of architecture, landscape architect and engineers. And then in this case, we are involving the client and the users at the same time. So all the internal meetings, we're inviting them in. So all the processes becomes an open process, and open book basically, so that they can see you know, the whole development in the project.

So right now we are working in we're collaborating not with an architecture firm but with a factory in southern part of Italy, it's an it's an old family factory, they are creating paper for, you know, these all ceilings, how to regenerate all ceilings in a paper machine powered machine. And then, the son of this factory, he developed now a solution or material where you can actually fireproof and waterproof the material and use it for outdoor facades. So we're collaborating with him about making a house in paper. And this is a really fun way of collaborating outside the architecture field. And that's also really pushing us to how can you work with, you know, a new type of material that doesn't have the same restraints as you know what, what we're working with today, you can shape paper as you want. Basically, it doesn't need to be flat, it can be bended, it can do the same, almost as concrete, but it's light as a feather. And you can, even as a concrete is, is you cannot see through concrete. But if you make the paper as thin as a small piece of paper, you can actually create, you know, light coming through the walls, if you want that internal wall, for example. So you can work with shape and light in a complete new way. That normal, you know, how to work with normal houses, is somehow exceeding that normal way of working with normal walls and ceilings and in light. And I think that is really pushing the way that we work with architecture, when you work with material that somehow gives the possibility of, you know, working differently with light than just window or not window, or wall, and not wall.

I'm part of a big project right now, at D-University, around one building, which is the biggest renovation project in the history of D-U. But it's only one building. And it's a renovation. And it's a modernization, and it's a rethinking of actual space. And it's organized as a total Partnership, which means I as a learning expert, and somebody engaged with behavioral psychology, in terms of space, is sitting at the same table, as the engineer engineers, and also the electricians and the architects from start to finish. And, and that's where it has to go. It's extremely difficult. Yeah. And it takes a long time, and a lot of meetings and a lot of discussions. But I can see, because we're all there from the start, that I had to do a lecture on learning spaces and behavioral psychology for a bunch of electricians, they were sitting there there, they may only understand, like, a little of it. But they were there. And I'm there every time they discuss whatever installations and I don't know anything about it. But it keeps us in this interdisciplinary mindset constantly. And we also start seeing how important every decision is, because he says, okay, the easiest part is to make, we have to have the cables running here. And he makes that decision in terms of what's happening under the floor, the easiest ways of finding or.. based on the knowledge that he had, but because I'm sitting there, I can say well, that's not possible, because we're going to have 50 people in this room. And they only have one direction to look at which is there, which means the big screen is gonna sit there, man, he said, really says yeah, really. Okay, so I have to move it, yes, you have to move it. And then this whole chain starts because then he has to move. And then he has to talk to another engineer, that has to talk to a construction worker, bla bla bla. But But constantly having this holistic perspective, I find will create better architecture for humans. Because often it's more separated, right? He would put his thing there because it works. And I would come in two months later..

But the interesting thing is that it has actually been, so for almost the beginning, and it started with one of the first competitions E-architects did after having been established as E-architects, which was a small kindergarten called N-project. But what was really interesting about it is that E-architects did the only concept where it was more based on the idea of several small individual volumes. So you had to go out before you enter the next volume. So it was very much based on the idea of bringing inside and outside together. So the landscape and the buildings became like a something that were seen as almost as equal and important. And some years after, or maybe not years, but sometime after the competition was won and and the founding partners decided to revisit it, just to ask the users, how does it work? does it work what we did? I mean that, that curiosity was leading them back to the one of the first revisits. They had a super interesting talk with the users. They were very happy about the project. And then one of them said that they have, they had made a very interesting discovery themselves. And that was the fact that there was almost no, like the amount of sick leave was very low compared to some of the other institutions they knew of. And and their thoughts were that it had something to do with the climate and the fact that it was a little more fragmented and you were a little more outside and you got some fresh air. But also the fact that you had divided it into these individual small units, of course meant that you couldn't contaminate each other as easily and stuff like that. So that was a super important discovery about an unexpected value of having taken a design decision on the type of typology, because that all of course meant that they had a better economy and it was more easy to manage everything. And that became like the starting point of thinking about architecture as something that can really make a difference.

And another case I could mention as something a case where it became a little more formalized was the competition for B-collegium. Which is like a youth residencies in C-city. Because that competition was developed with the intention of addressing a topic, a social topic that was important at that time, that was about loneliness between or amongst young people living in youth residencies. And that intention of trying to create something where the young people living there would feel less lonely, became like a driver and a narrative for the project. And it also informed the design in ways where we allowed ourselves to actually treat the brief a little different than was expected.

No, the brief didn't, but the brief were very precise and the briefs always are very precise and specific on how many square meters of what. And I think having another agenda and the intention of creating something that felt more social meant that we tweaked the brief and the functions described in the brief a little differently. Instead of just doing what the brief said, we decreased the sizes of the individual rooms and increased the sizes of all the shared facilities in common areas. And then the flow areas were worked within a way where every, like common area were linked together. Both internally and externally. So that became also a part of the facade design. And that was done with the help of some anthropology students actually. Just doing interviews and research to back that thesis up that maybe if we change something, we can actually address an issue that is super important. And that became a very powerful narrative also in the competition delivery. And after having won the competition that was done a revisit and that and

the difference between this visit and the early one I described was that this was a little more based on that an anthropologist way of gathering data. It was interview based and it was also based on interviews on similar youth residencies in the close proximity. So we had something to benchmark up against. And that discovery was actually that it had worked and that the feeling of loneliness were lower in our proposal than some of the other ones that hadn't had that same agenda. And since then, it's just been like some, something that has become like a very integrated part of how we think architecture and work with it. And we have done a lot of collaborations with A-institute, which has been great as external consultants. But that was up till the point where we actually said, okay, we, we actually need to do this even more and we need to have someone in house who can really help us with it. And that was the beginning of the collaboration with J-person and setting that whole effect or impact team as we actually call it in English. Another example of a competition we did and had a win was the M-project, which is a holiday resort for disabled young people and their families. On the sealand side east of the Great Belt, there was a brief describing that everything had to be on one level because of accessibility, a lot of the users were in wheelchairs and disabled in different ways. And on that research phase and early stages of doing the competition we spent a lot of time on collecting information of what the users actually were wishing. And some of the important inputs, and that was also done in collaboration with the anthropologists. And we as architects also brought ourselves into the position of the users having a day in a wheelchair driving around with disabled people and talking about limitations and what was important. And one wish that was really interesting was the wish for not feeling disabled. And maybe having that, that feeling of freedom and that gave us ideas that was not as flat one level design as the brief told us to do. So we wanted to do something more three-dimensional, more, more free and working. With maybe the possibility of getting higher above the ground, even though you were in a wheelchair and maybe having a view over the great belt and bringing in some qualities to the project that you wouldn't expect and qualities that could bring that sensation of being free and or less disabled actually. And just brainstorming about that some early concepts were developed and one of them became this very defining strategy, which was this spiral, of course based on a slope that was manageable for a person in wheelchair, but then with some stops on the way where you could actually overlook different situations in a peak, there was this big arena, which is one of the main buildings where you can for sports activities and gatherings and concerts and different, like a multipurpose arena. And that idea of combining the big arena space with this spiral with pauses on the way and really this more three-dimensional take on it became like an answer to an environment where you would have some experiences and some views and some feelings that was totally not expected of what we could achieve if we just followed the brief as some of the other teams did. So it was almost like having that feeling of knowing a little better. because we had been in this direct dialogue with some of the users and that also became like the driver of the design of the project. So you can almost read when you see the building from the outside, you can read movement. And that became a very important project as well as something that convinced us that this take on architecture is actually really important and powerful. And of course it's important for us to keep on winning competitions because that's what we live off. So that was one of the important cases. And we did a revisit of course afterwards, and we have gathered a lot of interviews from the users and it's amazing to hear how they experience it and how actually some of them mentioned the fact that finally we are in a building as disabled where we don't feel disabled. So that a yeah, that's an, that's an important case as well.

Our V-project is an example of a competition we did recently for the municipality of A-city, where we have worked with sustainability on different levels. It's a primarily a timber construction project. But it's like this ship, roof building.

I think it's four floors because it's..yeah you are right it is much more challenging in, in terms of fire regulations still. It's primarily like an administration building, but in the municipality has this challenge of actually having a high amount of sick leave amongst its administrative workers. So that was something we actually wanted to address with architecture. How can we bring that down? Can we do something differently? And it's not just about space planning. Maybe it's something else that really can impact us as human beings in an environment where we spend a lot of hours every single day sitting down, working on a computer. And then we just were really curious about that. And then we stumbled upon like the biophilic design philosophy and how nature and plants can actually help us create more working environments that are something you can, spend more hours in every day and feel, in a more positive mood and fresh. And also not I think we, we found some reports that also mentioned that the fact that it could actu-

ally be something that had a positive impact on your immune system. And we begin to work with that as a strategy just to work with an interior design where plants and greenery were an integrated part of design and equally as important as everything else in that concept. And that is something that, that we introduced, backed up by research and where we had this super interesting collaboration between the impact team and the competition architects. And that became like the narrative of beginning to think about how to rethink like ordinary office environments. And that again, became like a driver for both design and also the narrative about the project. And it was very well received. And we are actually now in, I think, the final stages of design. So that's something that's gonna be super interesting to revisit that and see if our thesis actually works.

An example could be the project we did together with I can't remember that collaboration, but it was B-housing project, which is our single family house in L-city. It's an old project, but it's a project we did to showcase and experiment with, at that time very innovative, sustainable solutions. And what was interesting about that project was that there was a test family living in the house for, I think it was a year. So we could we could gather a lot of information on their behavior in a very sustainable project. And it was one of the first if not the first active houses in Denmark, so that the philosophy was that it's, it would actually generate more energy than it used. So it was feeding electricity back on the grid.

It was a smart house. There was a, like a screen where you could monitor your own energy consumptions and a lot of technology. Right now or today it's outdated. But at that time it was like very much all the latest technology. But what was the big surprise in that project was actually that after this family have lived there for a longer period of time and we could gather some data, it showed that the energy consumption was actually much higher than ordinary buildings in the same size. And we were like, what's up with that? And I think it had to do with the fact that the feeling of being in a very sustainable house for the users meant that, energy was just free. It was like green energy. You don't have to think about it. You can just, turn up the heat, walk around in your underwear open all the windows, and it was just a hid behavior of of that test family taking very long, hot showers and stuff like that.

the Ministry of Environment in B-city, that we won last summer. And that was, that was a project with some ridiculous client demands that comprise a lot of square meters on a very small site, right in the middle of B-city. So the competition architect, he produced like 20 different sketches in Rhino, of how to get 50,000 square meters onto this site. And we did these daylight analysis on all of them right at the start. Those are four of them are shown that, like, what we learned really quickly is that the solutions that had little courtyards, they were totally useless because it was just too dark in there and the only ones that work and that's like the upper left with a sort of sleek like format, we have these open courtyards, it was that sort of approach, you needed to be able to get some daylight into the buildings. And that was basically the basis of how the design worked. So that's something that sort of went through the project all the way right from the start, sort of like one of the winning aspects of the project.

G Ministry of Environment. Yeah. That's what I was telling you about. Yeah. This was like a big project we did. So we have this site where it's 12,000 square meters and up to 50,000 square meters. Do you see the building is the sort of tree like structure? And then there's a lot of roof gardens around on it. So this is like the view from the southeast. Like, the basic concept is that it has the image of a tree in the plan. And then the facade, we did this with a daylighting design, where we varied the amount of glazing, so it was more glazing down here, where it's in the open context and less glazing up here, where you don't need it. So like, the amount of glazing sort of varies in relation to the context, and we use the sort of triangle of fence to shade from the sun. So that it's more like you slide into more north light into the room rather than direct sunlight. Oh, yeah, this is this is the sketch that I like the idea of the tree in plan and the section and making it sort of green heart, and you can see on this facade, like there's a lot of those green roofs on top, it's green roofs on it as well. It's a bit too much, too many trees as we found out, but that was a big project. It was like a two stage competition where there was like, 20 architects to start with. So that's, that was like the concept behind that project. And it was like a two stage competition where we got a joint first prize. And then we had another six, nine months to do the second round. And then we won. And that was like the first major project where we used a lot of our sort of analysis tools, etc.

now, the German system, there's eight stages. And I think we're completing stage two now. So like going from sketch design to like, project design, then, but it's an extremely complex building, because there's a whole load of things

from the Second World War underground, and there's a whole load of things from the Cold War. And there's like a metro line just underneath the building, and there's a whole load of central government hopes and regulations. So it's going to take I think, three, four years to design and five, six years to get it built.

I had it explain that there's like, in this whole of a central B-city, there's like three major building sites left and this was one of the three. So it's like a sort of quite an important site and project. So it's, there's so many things you have to take account on. So that was that's the first big project

and another project is this is government hub in O-city which we won in June this year, just before the summer. So it's 30,000 square meter timber office building, for the state property agency. And the demand was that all the load bearing construction should be in timber we did it with N-company so it was one of the large contractors and we've m-engineers from our house. And we've had our Swedish office sort of did their first timber building in 2018, then they see part of my work has been to take the experiences they've had from from Sweden, where it's quite normal to build on timber and get it into the Danish market, which is a lot more restrictive, because the concrete industry has got some monopolies on. So we spent a couple of years working politically for getting some of the building regulations changed and doing a lot of pr work.

And yeah, it's sort of people come to us if they need something with timber. So N-company came to us and said that they knew this project was on the way and they thought they should team up with us. Because they'd heard we were good at timber. And we suggested they shot m-company on the team, because they're the best to timber in Denmark.

So this was a competition that was issued in August, September last year. And then we gave our offering in 2018. In January, February, and then we got was some negotiation notice that we'd won in June. I think it was beginning of June. And we're just starting up the project design now.

So the client which is called B-agency, which builds and manages all the buildings for the state. For like, universities and central government and the legal system, the courts, they did the competition and said all that the load bearing construction need to be made of timber.

So that's, the two big projects, this projects 30,000 square meters, it's actually pretty big. I think I've looked around I think this isn't gonna end up being one of the largest timber buildings in Europe when it's finished, and it's been done in a way so there's no concrete in the, there is some concrete service cores, but in for something like the floor decks they usually done with concrete in a lot of buildings, so we're doing it in a sort of dry construction with like timber and some sort of layers of different materials to get the weight and the build up needed.

And I think I think they're going in the ground towards the end of next year. So there's, there's an existing building that's got to be knocked down first. But yeah, it's gonna happen pretty quick. All the contracts are signed, and it will be build.

Having said that, the building we're doing for L-company, so this is with the first two phases are finished with the third phase has been finished now. So this project that's had a lot of user involvement in terms of figuring out what they wanted and getting it in. But they they're doing running like post occupancy evaluations sort of every six months, the first phase of starting up the building as they move in, and finding out what, how it is, so previously, they were all spread out in lots of different buildings in B-city. And this is like, combining everybody. And they're sort of introducing more open more, like modern ways of working. So there's a lot of stuff to do with that. And they're doing regular surveys to figure out how it's, how it's working, what changes need to be made, etc.

L-company is doing it, It's getting fed into the management of the building, they have quite an extensive facilities management, people. And we're also doing a LEED certification on this project. And looking at doing sort of, like, facilities management certification for the running of the building afterwards as well. So that's like, the first time we look been on a project with post occupancy evaluation.

We are seeing the results of the first phase. I think they are using that to do small adjustments in the areas there, they'd be moved in. But they're going to get like a full results for three phases before they introduce any sort of major changes.

Yeah it started where they were seeing like whether the, you know, the air was blowing in the right way, and the lighting was enough? its like small things to do with the running of the building. Because the large buildings like that are so complex, there's always a pretty extensive process of getting everything adjusted and working.

We had some other projects where we've, like speculative developers, they're usually quite difficult to work with, can be difficult to work with, not always. But find solutions to the problems so that we can work architecturally with it. So we've done a new housing complex in A-city, it must be quite close to the a-school between the a-school and where the main railway line comes in. And there's a big bridge that comes over the railway. We've done some new blocks that are sort of got some orangey brown balconies on, and there we sort of have found this way of doing the balconies so they don't shade each other. So they sort of vary from floor to floor, and start finding ways to sort of architecturally accommodate the requirements. There are that sort of thing and made it into something that looks quite okay, architecturally.

So, I started with working a lot on container housing, for student housing, and that was many of my first project. And like, for example, I can talk about all seven in H-city, which is a very despite that is very humble project, and but it encapsulates many of the values that we have in sustainable responsible architecture, which was mainly very low budget project ,was a workshop for young people, and also people that are socially challenged. And we tried to reuse material as much as we can to bring the cost down.

it's actually a workshop is it was a big hall next to new rock music museum. And it was a workshop so people can go there. And there are some clubs, they have some different activities for young people, it's two groups of people. It's containers. So because this project was temporary, anything was built. Afterwards, it will be cast out. So we came up with the idea of why don't we make some independent cells that after this temporary period is over, they can still take it and reuse it somewhere else. So we'll get half life after this time is over and they won't be demolished. And we also had users involvement in it, that was a very interesting project process as well to be very close contact with users and also they helped and actually while when people are more involved in the process, and maybe you as an architect also practice losing control in different levels and but people would like it in a long run more because they were involved. So they have this history of being more like have had a hand in practice, yeah. that project I really liked.

for example, we had some sport Hall floor to use it for flooring and to make this timber floor ready, it doesn't need that much expertise. So we asked people to come and help us to make them ready, and clean and... And so it is also a matter of life insurance. You cannot ask unskilled people to work at the site. But there are some jobs that actually cost a lot if a carpenter does it, but you don't need a carpenter to do that. So, he could make ready and site adjacent to our building site for people to come and help or to make it as they had also a rocket oven with the plastering on it that also didn't need, they could do it under supervision of somebody who is expert and there is a rocket oven that is basically a fire like open fire the chimney goes horizontal in the beginning. So in the winter, they can sit on part of a chimney. So the bench is warm, it's a hub for people get around and have a huggly good time.

In T-project there are three main challenges. One is very repetitive. And, like, it's hard to find where you are, because you is like 20 blocks following each other. And there is not that much public space, like not very certain public spaces available. The other thing is, at the time of this building, they used not so healthy material and not much insulation.

T-project because of it has a brick wall which is old, it doesn't have that much insulation, also not good of material use. So from beginning, we were pretty sure that we should do something about it. It is not going to remain the same, but to demolishing, the rule is that you should keep 40% social housing either sells 60% to private or in some way you should make that 40-60 ratio working. So it was really like what we did in T-palce, it was like couting with the adjacent sites to keep as many as social housing in these scene and so all the private housing companies in the

neighborhood. So in that way, we kept as many as possible, but still some of them couldn't get that ratios, but we try to minimize the numbers that were demolishing. in a way that also this repetitive rhythm, one thing that is making these neighborhoods isolated that they don't connect the adjacent urban context, so how can we direct minimum demolishing in a way T-place has hands to left and right and open up to those spaces? So yeah, I agree with you demolishing it should always be the last resource.

APPENDIX 2: 'IN SEARCH OF RESPONSIBLE ARCHITECTURE' PARTICIPATORY DESIGN WORKSHOP

WORKING GROUPS

TEAM 1- TUTORS: Alicia Lazzaroni and Annika Lyon (BARD)

(X) PARTNER: The Gateways (Yurt Village + FEM): The Yurt Village has evolved into a collective, encompassing the Hendriks family and others, which accommodates an array of functions. Among these are workshop spaces and various studios related to architecture, sound, art, performance, and bodywork, resulting in the creation of numerous products and outcomes. The collective collaborates with the design studio FEM, a young, interdisciplinary team that emphasizes context understanding, materiality, and tectonics in their architectural work across multiple scales. (Website: <http://tegnestuenfem.dk/>)

STUDENT'S WORK GROUP

F1A: Ben Nepomuk Klages, Rasmus Gregor Jørgensen, Sophie Bygballe Mikkelsen, Christian Rønholt, Johan Frederik Thomassen, Emilie Wu, Lene Nilsen Årskaug, Emma Helene Rishøj Holm

F1B: Morten Hansen, Amalie Beier Vadsholt, Nanna Hagedorn Olsen, Ida Rud Krogh, Majken Haugaard Nielsen, Carl Justus Fuchs, Malene Sundbøl Jakobsen, Hans Gerrit Kristian Maria St Line Østergaard Poulsen, Mads Maagaard Lyhne

F1C: Miriam Reistad, Siv Ravnsbæk, Lars Håkon Nerbø Wettestad Anne Katrine Petersen, Jens Rudolf Ugelstad, Aske Hartje Jakobsen, Sif Knudsen, Lukas Peter Björn Wassberg, Tanja Grau Tychsen

TEAM 2- TUTORS: Nikola Gjorgjievski and Martin Dannesboe Singh (BARD)

(X) PARTNER: The Drum Wagon: Regarded as the "African Diamond" of the Institut for (X), The Drum Wagon is a collective of musicians specializing in drumming and dance. This space houses drums from around the world, as well as individuals proficient in crafting, playing, and dancing to their rhythms. In addition, it serves as a hub for community, friendship, and no-expectations socializing, where visitors might enjoy a cup of coffee, partake in a jam session, or experience the West African traditional tea "Ataya." (Website: <http://forening.ngatchfallsabar.dk/>)

STUDENT'S WORK GROUP

F2A: Marieke Stritzke, Jenny Rishovd, Laura Veje Gottschalk, Andrea Ravn Beirholm, Frida Ahlqvist Riemann, Amber Dumont, Mai Blichfeld-Grosen, Lotte Vindum Fredensborg Odin Olesen

F2B: Selma Lindhardt, Karoline Lindebjerg, Amanda Falck Weber, Daniel Hoang, Stine Bang, Josefina Arriagada, Nabi Yousaf, Hans Gerrit Kristian Maria St Line Østergaard Poulsen

F2C: Alex Juon Yi Quach, Torgerd Lydersen, Lars Håkon Nerbø Wettestad, Anne Katrine Petersen, Charlotte Sandbrekke, Emil Thorup Holm, Mette Jee Holm, Pernille Kinch Andersen, Iben Tranberg-Jensen, Svea Bäckström

TEAM 3 - TUTORS: Kasper, Troels Rugbjerg and Melissa Bacher (BARD)

(X) PARTNER: FEUM: Foreningen for Elektronisk Undergrunds Musik (FEUM) is an association dedicated to promoting underground electronic music in all its facets. Recognized as a significant player in Aarhus nightlife, FEUM primarily focuses on booking talented and respected producers and DJs worldwide. However, the association aspires to expand its artistic performances into new areas such as talks, lectures, workshops, podcasts, and interviews, ultimately deepening the world of underground electronic music. (Website: <https://feum.net/>)

F3A: Pauline Blanc, Fie Krogh Sommer, Tale Nixon, Oliver Guldal Streit, Halvard Hauge Hornes, Sophie Robinson, Athena Wyller, Odin Olesen

F3B: Sika Kirstine Wilhjelm File, Villads Birch Hastrup, Nanna Benedikte Leth, Maria Cole, Kristian Pedersen, Bauke Pelicaen, Nete Virkelyst Olesen, Ilse Svortevik Hviding, Sara Sadeghian Pedersen

F3C: Tina Julianne Marzano, Nora Salvesen, Michelle Høglund Andersen, Andreas Lyngsøe, Aske Svane Enevold, Klaus Schytt Simonsen, Christian Simon Reese Rein, Nick Cole

TEAM 4 - TUTORS: Antonio Bernacchi and Hedvig Holtmann (BARD)

(X) PARTNER: Yard Shop: The Yard Shop is the epicenter of Aarhus's graffiti culture, offering an assortment of spray paints, markers, cigarettes, sodas, beers, and toasts at affordable prices and with unparalleled service. (Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/yardshoppen/>)

F4A: Florian Faucheur, Emma Stenderup-Jensen, Nilagshana Maheswaran, Julia Sophie Sætre Hammer, August Schollain Birckner, Mikkel Lars Kiildsen, Trine Mellemstrand Jarstø, Anna Maja Sigsgaard Juul

F4B: Emilie Enné Lykkegaard, Amalie Andreassen, Bent Kanstrup, Julia Reffeldt Schuster, Otto Graabæk Arlien-Søborg, Vera Bjørg Rognvaldsdottir, Elinborg Trondardottir Durhu, Rosalina Broberg Foroughip

F4C: Nanna Louise Holmberg, Nikita Dalsgaard Andersen, Rikke Hankil Andersen, Frederikke Adamsen Hamm, Christian Buske Nielsen, Jon Haga Grov, Karla Citlali Steninge Herna, Johannes Møller Christensen

TEAM 5 - TUTORS: Naime Esra Akin and Alexander Hugo Shackleton (BARD)

(X) PARTNER: UAC: Useful Art for Communities (UAC) is a nonprofit organization comprising artists and activists from diverse backgrounds and disciplines. UAC strives to empower individuals and communities advocating for social and environmental justice by supporting and facilitating the development of their ideas and implementing a wide range of community-oriented artistic projects. (Website: <https://uacartplatform.com/>)

F5A: Sofia Weidner, Ida Lina Amati-Aagesen, Tonje Louise Søyland Karten, Celina Sascha Holck, Margit Sandberg Mikkelsen, Andrea Bjørnløw Kjelstrup, Asger Brix Pedersen

F5B: Mathias Gaardsted Braae, Peer Tue Nähnke, Asta Enevoldsen, Asbjørn Lien-Iversen, Jie Li, Glenn Gundelach-Taabel, Katarina Bramsen Buhl, Liva Katrine Ohrhammer

F5C: Jonathan Klit Sørensen, Ask Astrup Søfelt, Maria Kristoffersen, Christian Bjerrum Poulsen, Laura Lykke Nygaard, Nie Tyra Nanna Matilda Rex, Signe Immerkær Dalgaard, Emma Skelander

LECTURE CONTENTS

Day 1- Lectures: Sustainable Architecture and Participatory Design

The inaugural day of the workshop commenced with a lecture by Elizabeth Donovan from TP3, titled 'The Umbrella of Sustainable Architecture.' In this lecture, she presented her research on state-of-the-art architectural practices in sustainable projects, showcasing examples of diverse approaches, including both technological and social, with no undue emphasis placed on one over the other. While most students were already familiar with the concept of sustainable architecture, several were in their first year and had just embarked on their education. Therefore, we elected to begin with an overview of basic concepts related to sustainable architecture, supplemented by a few examples, to ensure a common foundational understanding from which everyone could proceed.

Following Elizabeth's presentation, I delivered a brief presentation on my research topic, Responsible Architecture, and the relationship between architecture and sustainable behavior. I also introduced my personal background and values, illustrating how I have intertwined these values with my professional practice, to provide clarity on my stance within the sustainability debate. Moreover, I outlined the workshop content and timeline, detailing its objectives, exercises, workshop phases, and a succinct introduction to the stakeholders and the site.

Day 2- Lectures: Exploring relational tools

On the second day, the workshop featured three concise lectures addressing various human science approaches to architecture. The initial two lectures were delivered by two PhD Anthropologists who work within the architectural field. Mia Kruse Rasmussen, employed in a local architectural firm as part of a multidisciplinary team tasked with evaluating the social impacts of architectural projects, introduced her office's impact-driven approach to architecture. Her methodology centers on user involvement to create architectural solutions that generates impact, cultivate values, and shape sustainable behavior. The second lecturer, Jonas Strandhold Bach, a researcher and consultant for Danish municipalities on urban renewal and development projects, introduced the concept of the Anthropology for Urban Planning. He introduced to students how architects can use anthropological techniques to understand and work with users to develop project.

Subsequently, I presented a brief lecture on 'participatory design strategies', providing some theoretical context for participatory design and introducing specific tools that the students could select for engaging with their stakeholders. The lecture emphasized the importance of fostering trust, maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders, and addressing communication issues. I also provided a brief overview of the stakeholders and demonstrated how each tool could yield different modes of engagement and data types, such as games, map creation, model making, notecards, and conversations.

The lectures primarily aimed to impart knowledge on the significance of social sciences and the comprehension of human behavior for the impact of sustainability in architecture. They provided students with theoretical approaches to the relationship between human behavior and the utilization of spaces, as well as tools for studying and understanding users as a starting point for the design project. The lectures sought to highlight how human behavior, user interactions, and social issues influence architectural projects and can either constrain or enhance a project's sustainable impacts. They also equipped students with some of the tools they would require for the forthcoming stakeholder involvement, such as researching social issues and engaging with people.

Day 2- Getting ready to meet stakeholders and site

Following the series of presentations, I acquainted the primary stakeholders whom the students were slated to meet in person on the subsequent day. This process involved providing a succinct description of each stakeholder. Additionally, I disseminated among the students a PDF presentation that the stakeholders had prepared prior to the workshop. This presentation encapsulated fundamental information about their respective organizations and their aspirations for the duration of the workshop. Furthermore, the students were given access to an array of files shared by the stakeholders. These included documents, maps, plans, digital materials, photographs, and various other resources containing pertinent information about the stakeholders and the site in question. This granted each group the opportunity to familiarize themselves with essential information about their respective stakeholders.

Subsequently, the students were tasked with formulating a list of information they likely needed to acquire from the stakeholders, including potential questions to pose and possible methodologies for engaging with the stakeholders in their inaugural meeting. The intent of this exercise was to encourage students to consider relationship-building as the initial phase of their design process. Rather than commencing with spatial or design considerations, students were instructed to contemplate the stakeholders' stories, desires, fears, and values to identify pathways for establishing a human connection. Students were also required to strategize about how they might collect data through site exploration, space utilization, observation, conversation, or interaction with local users and materials.

The students were further required to reflect on their individual roles and how each might serve a significant function during their discussions with stakeholders and site visitations. For instance, during stakeholder meetings and negotiations, I underscored the importance of the Rogue's role in fostering critical thinking, while the Cleric's responsibility was to sustain positive relationships with the stakeholders. The Paladin was tasked with facilitating consensus on shared community values and ensuring their voices were represented in the process. Simultaneously, the Scribe was to record the key topics of discussion to maintain an accurate record of the process and agreements. During the site exploration phase, the Artificer, Ranger, and Tech Wizard were urged to be particularly mindful of their roles in beginning to compile an inventory of existing elements such as materials, colors, resources, and undiscovered features that could be leveraged in the design process.

Day 4 - Lecture and workshop on prototyping methodology

On the fourth day of the workshop, students engaged fully with the project site, collaboratively developing design program ideas with stakeholders. The day began with a lecture by Heidi Lyng from Helle Landet Architects, proponents of 'social architecture' and participatory methodologies. Heidi introduced a range of tools, such as model making, drawing, and 1:1 prototyping, to evaluate diverse architectural solutions. Emphasizing on-site experimentation with users and stakeholders, these methods aimed to create design solutions grounded in local experimentation, linking the project's vision and solution. The lecture also explored the architect's role as a mediator and translator in the project, with parallels drawn to the roles of the Bard, Cleric, Rogue, Paladin, and the Artificer in the workshop.

The Artificer's role was highlighted as essential in translating abstract ideas into material form, supported by the Tech Wizard, Ranger, and Scribe.

Day 5- Lecture and reflection upon environmental psychology and design development

Following a weekend of hiatus for the assimilation of the information acquired during the initial week, the students resumed their design development on the fifth day of the workshop, with an input from environmental psychology. In the morning, Professor and psychologist Kirsten Kaya delivered a brief lecture on the fundamentals of Environmental Psychology. She emphasized the factors that demand careful attention due to their potential impact on human behavior within the context of the students' project (pertaining to the Action element of the VAR exercise). The lecture posed critical questions for the students to contemplate before proceeding with the design phase. The students were prompted to consider how their proposed designs might influence people's behaviors to achieve the desirable sustainability effects envisaged in their proposals. Consequently, students were encouraged to progress their design proposals, taking into account their newfound knowledge, and to present their development in the VAR framework to their Bard and tutors.

Day 7 – Lecture and reflection upon infographic and design development

The seventh day of the workshop commenced with a lecture by the infographic specialist, Professor Ary Moraes from Brazil. His discourse focused on the use of infographic design as a representative tool in the design process. Subsequently, the students embarked on the development of their own infographics, which were required to convey not just the final outcome of their design, but also their unique design process. This process was expected to illustrate not only the evolution of design structures and physical spaces, but also the intricacies of data collection and interactions with stakeholders and various actors on site. Apart from preparing the infographic for the final presentation, this task was aimed at assisting students in reflecting on the participatory process, the challenges overcome, the triumphs achieved, and ways to graphically represent 'soft concepts' such as relationships and social impacts of their projects. Furthermore, they were required to demonstrate the Value-Action-Design Response tool and how it informed their design decisions.

Responsible Architecture Participatory Workshop

Teaching Program 3, September, 2020

What are your responsibilities as an architect to design projects that will be a catalyst for change? During this next 2 weeks you will have an opportunity to work in a live-project with real clients and real challenges to practice responsible architecture. Are you ready?

Responsible Architecture is based on environmental psychology. Studies have shown that in order to design spaces that are more sustainable, we need to understand people's behavior more deeply and their motivations for using the space in a certain way. In environmental psychology, it was found that pro-environmental behavior is related to people's values. The more architecture acknowledges these values and incorporates them into the project, the better pro-environmental behavior of users we can expect.

Therefore, participatory design offers us a great opportunity to work more closely with the final users and develop with them shared values to be the base of our design. Participatory design can also increase people's sense of belonging, empowerment and responsibility towards the project, increasing sustainable outcomes.

In this participatory workshop, your group (a fellowship) will develop a design project with a community from Institut for (X). You will work with the community to develop the program which meets their needs and values. You will be responsible to develop an internal space for working/meeting space, and also develop how it opens to the larger (X) community through landscape intervention. You will also produce an infographic of the design process.

All the projects will be exhibited at Institut for (X) and open to the public. Institut for (X) will be using this proposal as a base for the future development of the area, and one of the proposals will be build in a building workshop in 2021. Will it be your design?



The Design Teams

Your participation is mandatory, and the success of the workshop requires participation and collaboration from each group member.

Participatory design projects are complex, and the roles architects can have in them is still unfolding. To explore different possibilities, we will experiment different roles inspired by the Role-Playing Game (RPG) Dungeons and Dragons (D&D):

We will work with 5 TEAMS. Inside each team we will have 3 *fellowships* containing around 7-9 students each. Master students will be the TEAM leaders and play the role of the **Bard**. Each TEAM will also be assisted by one tutor. Each *fellowship* will have 7 different roles. These include: The **Tech Wizard**, The **Scribe**, the **Rogue**, the **Cleric**, the **Artificer**, the **Ranger** and the **Paladin**. These roles can be distributed according to people's choice. Collaborative projects can become chaotic, so making sure you stick to your role during the process will be essential to a coherent group work and outcome of the project.

Task 1: In search of the sacred oath

- Understanding different roles in the participatory project
- Anthropological approach to architecture
- Negotiation and consensus making with different stakeholders
- Producing a graphic with shared values (the sacred oath)

Task 2: Unfolding the magical structure

- The value-action-design response scheme
- Prototyping and translating values to materiality
- Architecture and psychology, designing spaces to produce desirable behavior
- Design development

Task 3: Forging the ultimate scroll

- Incorporating feedback from stakeholders and doing adjustments
- Using infographic as a tool to understand the participatory

- process
- Final exhibition and presentation

Learning objectives

- Skills in developing participatory design between different stakeholders
- Skills in communication and inclusion of clients and non-architects in design process
- Skills in the use of infographics as communication and presentation tool
- Basic skills of anthropology applied to data collection for architectural projects
- Awareness of environmental psychology applied to design

Assessment and documentation

Three main outcomes are expected to be uploaded in the group folder:

- A graphic of agreed shared values (sacred oath). Should also contain a text explanation of each values and value-action-design response scheme.
- Images of your final design product.
- The final pdf of your infographic (and printed version for exhibition). Should be in A0 size and 300dpi.

Each phase will be represented in your final infographic. The infographic will include both drawing and writing as a way to expose the design process through narrative development.

Added to that, an individual reflection log (the scroll of the wise) will be produced by each student. This will contain their thinking, feelings and experience during the workshop.

A clear and comprehensive archive of the workshop is essential for the tutor's research and stakeholder's assessment.



I. The Bard (Master's Student)

The Bard is an inspiring magician whose power echoes the music of creation. With their voice, they tell stories that make people believe in the future and restore their dreams.

Bards use their artistic talents to induce magical effects, they are good with words and use their presentation skills to convince the public that the fellowship knows what they are doing (even if they don't).

Your job is to speak for the group and make sure the message is transmitted clearly. Your leadership skills will ensure good communication between the members of your group, and between your group and stakeholders. You will also make sure the final presentation will be a song never forgotten!



III. The Scribe

Scribes come from all walks of life. Some dress in fine silks and writes beautiful calligraphy. Others sit at dusty public stalls writing correspondence for the illiterate poor. But, they all write for a living. In addition to their skill with the quill, scribes have the power to document all they see and hear through photographs, graphics, writing magic scrolls, and even casting a spell or two.

Your job is to document the design process. Make a collection of photos of collaboration, the work in progress, scans of the sketches/doodles, field notes, etc. While everyone is fighting over where the main entrance should be located on the first floor, you have the power to step back, see the scene of that is happening and document it for posterity. Your role is essential for the group to understand how they build their path and where improvement can be done. This will assist your infographic narrative as well as your storytelling and sense making of the process. Documenting the now is making history!

Roles in the Fellowship
8



II. The Tech Wizard

The Tech Wizard is a scholarly magic-user capable of manipulating the structures of reality. They have the power to transform any ideas into 3D models, astonishing drawings, graphics and images that shows beyond the reality to what is possible.

Master of all technology, they can fix corrupted files, manipulate programs, fix bugs and make sure all the correct files are uploaded in the team folder.

They are also responsible for handling the documents, like the scrolls of the sacred tasks. They also good at collecting data with technological apparatus, like photography, video and holograms.

Responsible Architecture Workshop

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IV. The Rogue

The Rogue is a scoundrel who uses stealth and trickery to overcome obstacle and enemies. They are the joker of the group, the one ready to poke the bear and reveal the true path.

Your job is to ask questions, specially the ones that will trigger friction. Why are we doing things this way? Why did we say yes to this? Why did we choose this shape or this material? Why is this a good approach? Can we bend the rules? Can we do it better? If you have fun annoying your friends, this is the job for you.

Remember when you were a kid and you kept asking your parents WHY non-stop and they were annoyed because actually they had to think about things harder then they usually did? By stirring the pot, you have the power to provoke critical thinking and avoid easy answers.



V. The Cleric

Clerics are powerful healers due to the large number of healing and curative magics available to them. They wield divine magic in service of a higher power. While the Rogue is creating friction, the Cleric makes sure there is group cohesion and mutual understanding between stakeholders. They have the power to mediate conflicts and make sure everyone all the voices are being heard. They are the builders of consensus.

They also have divinely-granted abilities over life or death, they are also able to repel or control undead creatures. That's right, if you see some undead/ghost students in your group, you have the job to summon the god of motivation and make sure their energy is restored.



VI. The Artificer

Artificers as master of unlocking magic in everyday objects, they are supreme inventors and builders. They have the power to transform abstract ideas into actual products and to make things happen.

They are the masters of material expression and tectonics. Your job is to assure the design outcomes has symbolic resonance with the values your group is working with. With many minds working at the same time, many ideas will rise and you have to make sure all things come together and make sense in the materialized form.



VII. The Ranger

Rangers are hunters and skilled path-finders. With their eagle vision, they have the power to find the best references of projects, materials and resources that are usually overlooked by others.

Equipped with a bow and arrow, the ranger always has their eyes on the target. They are the ones who make sure the group in working according to the plan and schedule. The ranger has a goal-oriented mind, and your job is to make sure that the group stay focused and goal is reached. Deliver, deliver, deliver!

Schedule - Week 1

	Tuesday, 1. September Day 1, Task 1	Wednesday, 2. September Day 2, Task 1
9:00 - 10:00		Presentation of Fellowship's Values to Bard and tutors. 10 min per fellowship (E1C/AAA)
10:00 - 11:00		AART Methodology for Impact Mia Kruse Rasmussen (Lecture/AAA)
11:00 - 12:00		An Anthropology of Architecture or Architectural Anthropology Jonas Strandhold Bach (Lecture/AAA)
13:00 - 14:00	The Umbrella of Sustainable Architecture Elizabeth Donovan (Lecture/AAA)	Participatory Design Strategies Ricelli Laplace (Lecture/AAA)
14:00 - 15:00	Responsible Architecture Ricelli Laplace (Lecture/AAA) *Bard's meeting after the lecture	Preparation for: The Assembly of the Seven Realms (E1D/AAA)
15:00 - 16:00	Forming Fellowships (E1A/AAA)	Preparation for: Scouting the Unknown Land (E1E/AAA)
	Fellowship's Values (E1B/AAA)	Sharpening the Swords. Presentation from the Bard to the tutors. 10 min per TEAM (E1F/AAA)
16:00 - 16:30	Reflection Log	Reflection Log

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VIII. The Paladin

The paladin is a holy knight, crusading in the name of good order, and is a divine spellcaster. They are bound to a sacred oath.

This oath is the design strategy that your fellowship and the stakeholders agreed upon, and can never be broken! Dragons and enemies will come along the way, and you will have to put up a fight and find other paths to make sure your fellowship reaches the destination. But never forgetting where we came from, we need to know what we are fighting for and stick to it!

Being a warrior of the people, the Paladin is also a liaison of the community and the primary responsible to speak with/for the community.

Thursday, 3. September Day 3, Task 1		Friday, 4. September Day 4, Task 2
<p>The Assembly of the Seven Realms (E1G/AAA/stakeholders)</p> <p>1 Bard,</p> <p>1 Rogue, 1 Cleric,</p> <p>1 Paladin & 1 Scribe per TEAM)</p> <p>maximum 15 students</p>	<p>Scouting the Unknown Land (E1H/X/Stakeholders)</p> <p>Other students will have a tour at the site and collect data</p>	<p>Hele Landet's Methodology and Prototyping Workshop</p> <p>Heidi Lyng (Lecture/X/Fellowship)</p>
<p>Alchemy Laboratory. Everyone meets at X. (E1I/X/Team)</p>	<p>Alchemy Laboratory (E1I/X/Fellowship)</p>	<p>Design Development: Value-Action-Design Response. Present to the tutors. 10 min per fellowship (E2A/AAA/Fellowship)</p>
<p>The Sacred Oath Presentation to the tutors. 10 min per TEAM (E1I/X/Team)</p>		
Reflection Log		Reflection Log

Schedule - Week 2

Monday, 7. September Day 5, Task 2		Tuesday, 8. September Day 6, Task 2
9:00 - 10:00	<p>Environmental Psychology</p> <p>Kirsten K. Roessler (Lecture/AAA)</p>	<p>Design Development (E2E/AAA/Fellowship)</p>
10:00 - 11:00	<p>Design Development (E2B/AAA/Fellowship)</p>	
11:00 - 12:00		
13:00 - 14:00	<p>Open Call</p> <p>Kirsten K. Roessler (Lecture/AAA)</p> <p>Only Bards on Zoom</p>	<p>Feedback from the Seven Realms (with your community. X and Municipality will be moving around, don't leave before their feedback) (E2F/X/Stakeholders)</p>
14:00 - 15:00	<p>Design Development (E2D/AAA/Fellowship)</p>	
15:00 - 16:00		
16:00 - 16:30		Reflection Log



Members of the Seven Realms
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<p>Wednesday, 9. September Day 7, Task 3</p>	<p>Thursday, 10. September Day 8, Task 3</p>	<p>Friday, 11. September Day 9, Task 3</p>
<p>Infographic as a Tool for Participatory Process Ary Moraes (Lecture/AAA)</p>	<p>Design Development (E3D/AAA/ Fellowship)</p>	<p>The Final Strike: Putting Up Exhibition & Uploading Files (E3E/AAA/X/ Fellowship)</p>
<p>Design Development (E3A/AAA/ Fellowship)</p>		
<p>Design Development (cont.)</p>		<p>Presentation to The Seven realms. 15 min per fellowship & 15 min of feedback. (E3F/X/ Stakeholders)</p>
<p>Open Call Ary Moraes (Lecture/AAA)</p>		
<p>Design Development (E3C/AAA/ Fellowship)</p>	<p>Reflection Log</p>	<p>Reflection + Party Time!</p>
<p>Reflection Log</p>	<p>Reflection Log</p>	<p>Reflection + Party Time!</p>

INSTITUT FOR (X)

Institut for (X) is a culture, business and education platform founded in 2009. It is an independent and not-for-profit culture association arising from citizen initiatives. X has 90 studios & workshops, 43 businesses and 15 associations. The outdoor spaces and park areas are public and we invite everyone to use and co-produce them. The platform produces events and products of cultural and commercial nature, with an estimated yearly turnover of DKK 20 mill.
<https://institutforx.dk/about/>

AARHUS MUNICIPALITY

Bydelskontoret (neighborhood office) has for the past years been a part of the development at Godsbanen and Aarhus K. Through involvement and dialogue of diverse stakeholders, Bydelskontoret creates a platform for coordinated actions towards making the best possible neighborhood for everyone.
<https://nyeveje.aarhus.dk/nye-veje-til-velfaerd-og-vaekst/medborgerskab/de-forenede-byivshuse/bydelskontoret/>

THE GATE WAYS (YURT VILLAGE + FEM) – TEAM 1

The Yurt village has become a collective of the Hendriks family++ which accommodates several functions. Amongst Workshop spaces, different studios relating to Architecture, sound, art, performance, and bodywork. Therefore, the collective creates many different "products/outcomes". They are working together with the design studio FEM, a young, interdisciplinary design studio that works with context understanding, materiality and tectonics as pillars in the work with architecture on several scales.
<http://tegnstuenferm.dk/>

THE DRUM WAGON – TEAM 2

"The African Diamond" of Institut for (X), a collective of musicians focusing in drum and dance. A place where you will find drums from all over the world - and people who know how to make them, play on them and dance to them. It is also a place for community, friendship and no-expectations-hangout. You may be lucky to find a cup of coffee or be invited to jam while the sweet West African traditional tea "Ataya" is prepared for you.
<http://forening.ngatcchfallsabar.dk/>

FEUM – TEAM 3

Foreningen for Elektronisk Undergrunds Musik – is an association which aims to promote underground electronic music in all of its aspects. Considered today as a credible actor regarding Aarhus nightlife, FEUM is therefore mainly centered around the booking of talented and respected producers and DJs from all over the world. Yet, FEUM is aspiring to extend those artistic performances to new horizons such as talks, lectures, workshops, podcasts, interviews. The final result is to deepen the universe of underground electronic music.
<https://feum.net/>

YARD SHOP – TEAM 4

The Yard Shop is the heart of Aarhus's graffiti life. A place where you will find sprays, markers, cigarettes, soda, beer, toast. All for cheap money and with the city's best service.
<https://www.facebook.com/yardshoppen/>

UAC (USEFUL ART FOR COMMUNITIES) – TEAM 5

UAC is a nonprofit organization of artists and activists from various backgrounds and disciplines that empower individuals and communities that aim to advocate social and environmental justices by supporting and facilitating the development of their ideas and the implementation of all sorts of community-oriented artistic projects. UAC is an art platform for activism.
<https://uacartplatform.com/>

LECTURES

Mia Kruse Rasmussen
Anthropologist and Head of Impact, AART architects. <https://aart.dk/en>

Jonas Strandholdt Bach
Anthropologist and Postdoctoral Researcher at Center for Rusmiddelforskning, Aarhus University.

Heidi Lyng
Architect MAA, partner consultant at Hele Landet. <https://www.helelandet.dk/>

Kirsten K. Roessler
Professor of Environmental Psychology at Southern Denmark University.

Ary Moraes
Professor of drawing and infographic design at Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. <https://arymoraes.myporfolio.com>

Elizabeth Donovan
Sustainable architecture researcher, educator and architect at Aarhus School of Architecture.

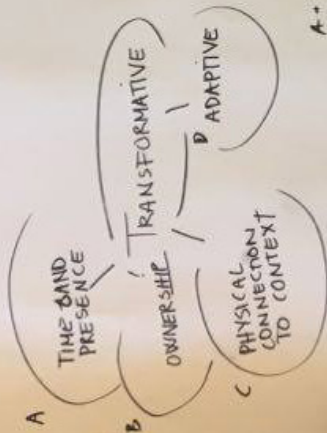
Ricelli Laplace
PhD fellow in sustainable and responsible architecture at Aarhus School of Architecture.



EXAMPLED OF VAR EXERCISES

F3A

VALUES



ACTION in space

A: Adaptable and changes over time. A place for different users and functions.

C+A: Users feeling safe and free of judgment. Feeling comfortable and makes a positive atmosphere. *(nighttime (woman))*

B: A design that evolves with the community but also are open for "outsiders". A place that fulfills FEUM's needs but belongs to the X. Everybody is welcome.

B+C: Accessibility

A+C: Interact with the environment that include the seasons, nature and the cycle of the community.

D: satisfy different users and needs, so it can be used day and night.

D: expansion possibilities.

DESIGN RESPONSE

A: adaptable panels, sliding doors to common roof that belongs to everyone.

A: entrances is specified good lighting, user pathways. (includes many women)
A spot area that includes everyone.
Lighting
Biking p-spot
Visibility

B: a design that adapts to day and night contours.
Hangout spot. An environment they recognize and is comfortable in.

B: materials that reflects in the rest of X. storage room and headquarter for FEUM, everyday within contours. Common plaza as event space in night time. But in day time hangout. A mobile furniture. Mobile hangout.

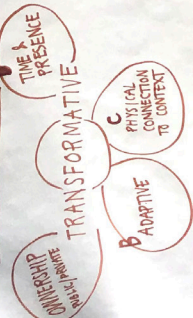
B+C: Different entrances for day and night-time. All 3 on day, 7 on the night control and safety, of an event.

A+C: using the wall and existing buildings in the new space.

The roof makes it easy to change. Common roof. Easy to share and come together. Natural light. → Daylight. Keep the trees and flowers. Nocturnal light. → the community can change and play with movable contours. Possibility for expansion.

D: roof that stays and the community can change and play with movable contours.

VALUE: →



INHERENT VALUES:
 - SUSTAINABILITY
 - EMPATHY
 - EQUALITY

ACTION: →
 IN SPACE

- A: ENABLES USERS TO EASILY TRANSFORM/ADD TO THE STRUCTURE
- A+B: INVITING PEOPLE TO LITERALLY FEEL AT HOME AND CARE FOR THE SPACE
- A: USER-INVOLVED PROCESS

D+B: CHANGES THROUGH THE DAY (FUNCTION + PHYSICAL) DIFFERENTIATION OF PUBLIC / PRIVATE

A+C+D: THE USER EXPERIENCES CONNECTION WITH NATURE WHILE IN THE STRUCTURE. WELL-BEING, ATMOSPHERE, FEELING "HOME-Y".

C: SPATIAL SEQUENCE, FLOW AND CONNECTIONS TO X AND ARCH. CONSIDER THE BUILDING-CODE OF X - BOTH OLD AND NEW CONSTRUCTIONS. CONSIDER THE ROLE OF THE SITE.

A+B+C+D: CREATE VALUE FOR NEIGHBOURS, REMOVING TECHNO-STIGMA

DESIGN-RESPONSE:

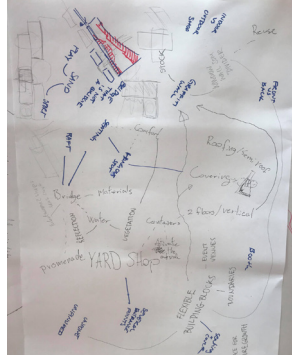
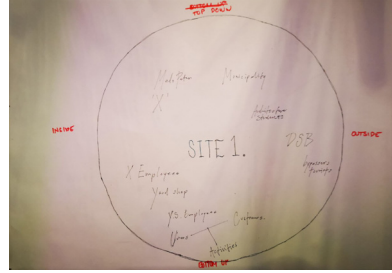
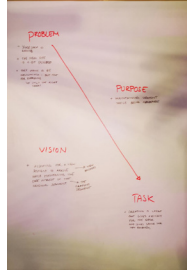
- A+B: LEAVING GAPS, DESIGN FOR DISASSEMBLY (MANUAL).
- A: MATERIALS - ROBUST, RAIN, AFFORDABLE. ARTICULATED HIERARCHY IN THE STRUCTURE. LITERAL TRANSPARENCY: DISPLAY.
- A+B: REACH COMMON SET OF VALUES PRESENT OPTIONS → USER DECIDES

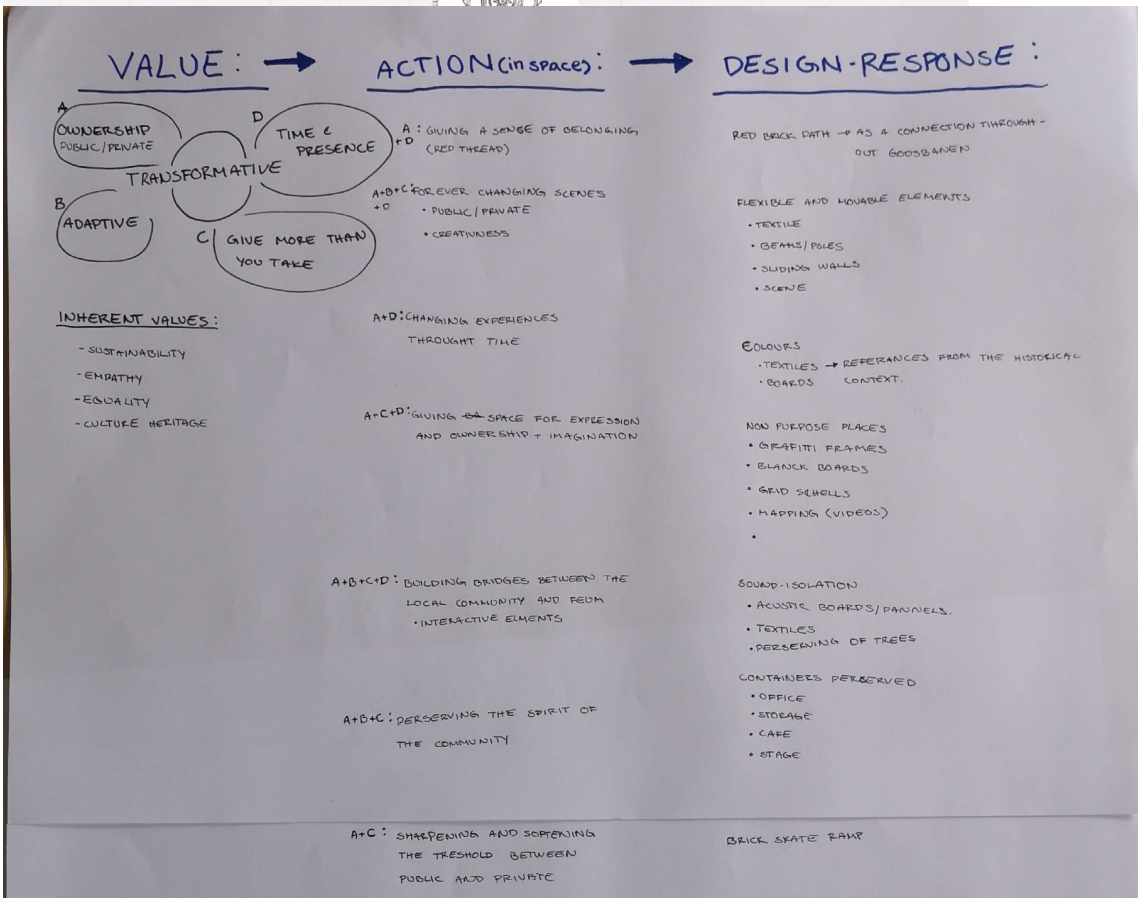
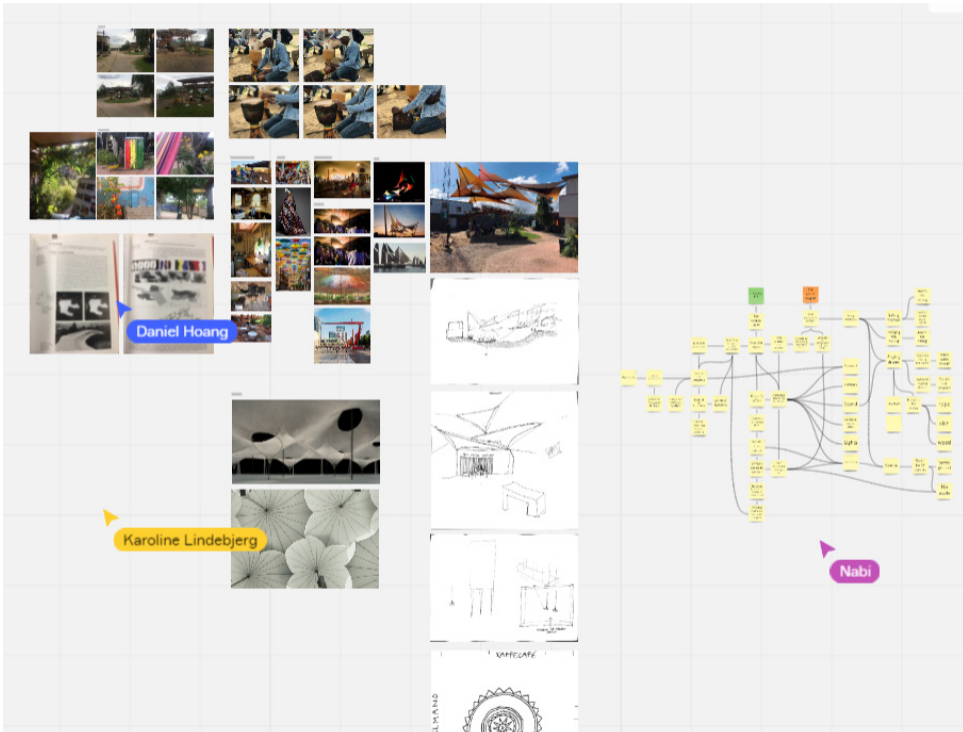
D+B: SLIDING DOORS/WALLS, DIFFERENT SPACE CONFIGURATIONS, CURTAINS, DIFFERENT LIGHTING SOLUTIONS FLEXIBLE FAÇADE

A+C+D: GREENERY, VISUAL CONNECTION TO THE OUTSIDE, PRESERVE EXISTING VEGETATION, NATURAL LIGHT,

C: (BRIDGES) - SEVERAL LEVELS, CORRIDORS, (WILLOW?), NON-CURATED FLOW - ORGANICALLY EVOLVING, 'LABYRINTH',
 • DECIDE - CONTRASTING TO X-AESTHETIC OR 'BLEND IN'?
 VARIATION IN SPATIAL QUALITIES/SCALE

A+B+C+D: TECHNO-PLAYGROUND, SOUND & LIGHT INSTALLATIONS, WORK ON DISPLAY, DAYTIME EVENTS.



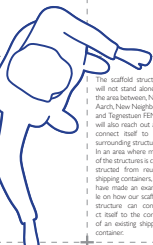


SCALE 1: [X]

Our project represents an ever-changing urban, build as a timber and metal scaffolding structure, which forms a connection between Institute for [X] and the New School of Architecture. Its heart is a permanent platform which expands over the flood basin and functions as a space for creative use. From there on the permanent scaffolding structure expands in a movement of constant change. By grapping onto the surrounding buildings and structures, it shows its parasitic habits. While creating adaptive spaces for several uses on the inside, its aim in the out-

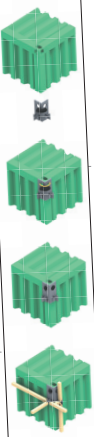
spread, is to be echoing Institute for [X] and New Aarch, and thereby becoming a place of creativity and knowledge exchange. We have been working with the project through plan and section. Our section is focusing on the life that is going to be in the ever-changing structure. On the plan we have shown one way the structure could be presented, and then the dashed blue, and red lines are representing how the structure could be placed in alternate formations.

The scaffolding allow an everchanging playful structure that can be altered to meet its users needs and wishes. There are many opportunities and possibilities and you can fabricate the spaces how you see them. The structure consists of metal joints, wooden beams, and floorboards of reused wood. We imagine that walls, boundaries and roof can be developed and used in all sorts of interesting manners that the user finds interesting.



The scaffold structure will not stand alone in the area between New Aarch, New Neighbour and Nagestean. It will also reach out and connect itself to the surrounding structures. In an area where most of the structures are constructed from reused shipping containers, we have made an example on how our scaffold structure can connect itself to the corner of an existing shipping container.

CONTAINER JOINTS



VALUES

-(EVER-CHANGING)

Our structure should be everchanging. This we will achieve by making our structure easy to assemble and remove. This will together with our universal joints give the structures of Institute for [X] and the Architecture students, the possibility to change the structure to fit their ever-changing needs.

-(PLAYFULNESS)

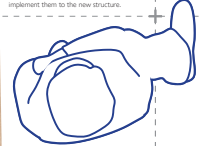
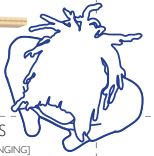
Our structure will welcome a variety of people to play and explore the different spaces of the scaffolding. The new area and the open space under the sun will accommodate numerous types of activities, from dance and climbing to pinups and lectures.

-(SHAPING WELL-BEING THROUGH NATURE)

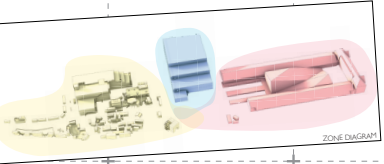
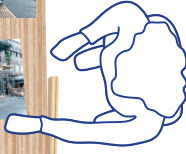
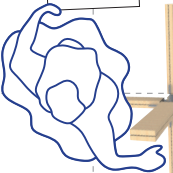
In the new area, we have made it possible to use natural materials, we have made the scaffolding so that you can change it to fit your need, and in that way create a well-being environment. It is up to you if you want a public or a private space, you decide if you want 4 walls or a roof or nothing at all.

-(Companionship through knowledge exchange)

The new spaces will be developed and built in companionship by the different inhabitants of the area. The public Institute of [X] and the architecture students will in collaboration express their wishes and use their different skills to implement them to the new structure.



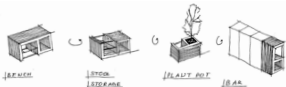
Left: Top / Right: Bottom / Below: New Aarch / Nagestean / Nagestean / Nagestean / Nagestean



The area in which our structure places itself is the meeting place of the different communities of Aarhus K. Here we meet the creative society of Institute of [X], the community of architecture students and the public consisting of users and tourists visiting Gadebøl and the rest of the Aarhus K area. The meeting point of people, knowledge and skills will be the foundation of this area and scaffold structure.

FINAL INFOGRAPHIC F2A

A D R U M M E R S M U L T I V E R S E



The Drum Wagon is a small association located in the heart of Institute for X. The association is founded upon the African culture, where the act of drumming, dancing and performing is worshipped. The Drum wagons have created a space that opens up for various types of activities such as workshops, markets, festivals, dancing- and drumming classes. Whether you are participating as a musician, dancer or visitor you are always welcome.

The association values the community of Institute for (x), and how they accept and involve all people. For them it is important to accept each other and take care of and be connected to the nature. As an open society they want to bring joy and provoke smiles through their acts. Every Monday the sound of drum fills the heart of X and spreads joy and movement into the village. The dancers are gathered around the drums, dancing their hearts out, while the people walking by are affected of the energy and can't help but to share a smile.



The Drum Wagon announced their dreams for the society to expand. They wished for the opportunity to create an outdoor stage with flexible elements and a beautiful landscape where the dancers and drummers can chill and relax.

Furthermore, they want a space that includes a flat landscape where the dancers can perform and rehearse under good circumstances. An office space and an outdoor African styled kitchen is also on their wishlist. We saw a big potential in developing some of their dreams that could form an even greater environment for the association.



The core values of our project are respect, responsibility, empathy and inclusion. We believe taking care of people as well as nature is important.



Ground
Right now, the space is influenced by the ground. Grass and topography shape movements and the red brick path leads visitors through the area. While these elements function perfectly, there are several problems with the gravel between the grass areas. This material doesn't work with the functions of the area. The rocks prevent kids from playing in it, hurt the dancers and make it impossible for them to dance barefoot.

We expanded the red brick way, so it surrounds the whole area. By that we also increase the communication, because visitors are led through different parts of the area. The brick path also acts as a frame for "A Drummer's Multiverse". We decided to fill the whole area in between with sand. It is a great space for connecting all the different types of functions, and act as the heart for Institute for (x). A space for kids to play in and for dancers to dance barefoot.



Roof
To enable the use of the space in different weather conditions we created a roof. As the furniture, it can be adapted to different kinds of needs. It consists out of eight metal poles that are embedded in the ground. The two opposite poles are each connected with a wire. Furthermore, there are two water-resistant fabrics that are hung up with a technique that reminds of roman shades. The result is that the roof can be completely open so one can see the sky but also adjusted to different kinds of needs concerning rain and sun protection. The slightly inclined fabric leads the rainwater of the roof and creates shade. The poles are also used as streetlights, so darkness does not affect the use of the area.

Furniture

The developed space is located right in the center of The Institute for (x). It serves as a meeting point as well as a space for other activities such as drum playing, dancing, markets and kids playing. For that reason, many seating areas are needed in order to enable people to rest, communicate and enjoy the place. To meet all the needs, we created different kinds of seating possibilities.

Two permanent benches are hugging the topography of the playground and the hammock hill. Inviting people to the area. These benches get thinner and fades out behind the hills. The other end of the benches points at each other and forms a connection. The benches have an organic shape and creates an inviting atmosphere as well as encourages communication.

In addition to the permanent benches, different kinds of movable furniture will be added to the space in order to make it usable and attractive to everyone. It does not matter if children, visitors, residents, or in this case, the African drum players and dancers use the area, the furniture can be arranged to meet each demand.

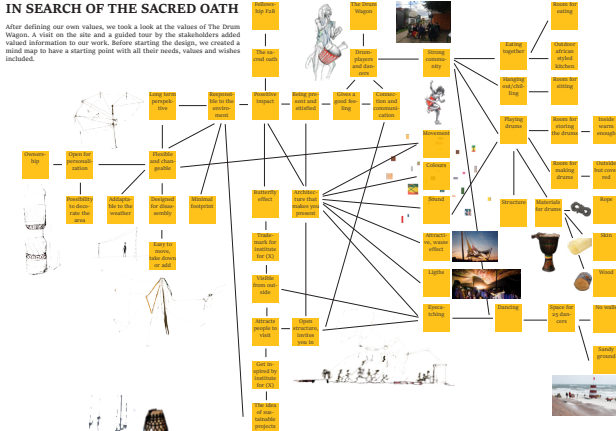
- For example, the benches can be used as a sitting option for two. By turning it, seating for one adult and one child is created. At the same time, it is easy to set up a bar or a counter for different kinds of occasions by arranging the benches vertically. One vertical element alone can also generate a table. Standing on the side, they can also be used as plant pots.
- Additionally, a stool can be used as a sitting area for one or as a table. The kids' stool can be used as a seat for children, and by turning it around, also for adults. Both stools are half as wide as the bench and can be carried easily.
- You can also stack up the benches and stools to create a wall or a tribune.
- The furniture is constructed out of wooden planks, that interlocks in the edges and are screwed in the same place.



FINAL INFOGRAPHIC F2B

IN SEARCH OF THE SACRED OATH

After defining our own values, we took a look at the values of The Drum Wagon. A visit on the site and a guided tour by the stakeholders added valued information to our work. Before starting the design, we created a mind map to have a starting point with all their needs, values and wishes included.



VALUES OF THE DRUM WAGON COMMUNITY

- ANARCHY:** Our space is for everybody to be able to use it the way they want it. A place in town, where noise with drums or loud music is appreciated.
- ACCEPTANCE:** Our space is a co-creation. We all come with our different cultures and we want to make space for everybody to feel at home.
- COMMUNITY:** We have a strong social community - a social meeting point. We help and back each other up in individual projects.
- NATURE:** We thrive in natural surroundings and we want our space to include and protect the wild nature. We don't need a lot of fancy equipment to do.
- CONNECTION:** In spatial terms, we like to know what everyone else is doing, to get inspired from others.
- FLEXIBILITY:** A lot of different things are going on in our space and we want possibility for everything to happen simultaneously. Physical surroundings should create possibility for many different purposes.

NGATCH FALL FAMILY

African dance and drum association in Aarhus.

The association concentrates on the cultural phenomenon Sabar, which is dance and music style from Senegal in West Africa.



The group is centered around and inspired by Andy Ngon, whom is a high respected Sabar dancer and drummer from Senegal, living in Aarhus.

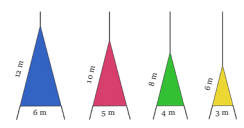
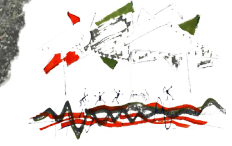
The group meets every monday for practicing. They dance, play and drink out together afterwards. They also meet two times a year for a whole weekend practice and sometimes they go on a study trip to Senegal to learn even more about Sabar and the culture.

The group values a strong community and appreciation crosswise different levels.



ROOM FOR BEING PRESENT

A visible meeting point for institute for (X). A place to hang out and get the positive impact from The Drum Wagon. Experience architecture and a room that makes you present in the moment and the power of the dancing and drum playing.



SAILS 12000 There will be 4 different sizes of sails, but the rope is long enough for every sail to fit in even the longest distance. This makes it possible to set them up in different forms to fit the purpose.



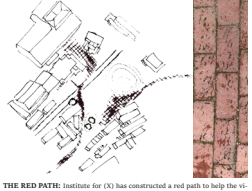
THE TRANSITION FROM BRICKS TO SAND: Since the sand is a moveable material, we chose to go with the overings to make sure no bricks are getting hurt. We was inspired by Den Rode Plaas, Hvide Sande by Schobert Landscape.



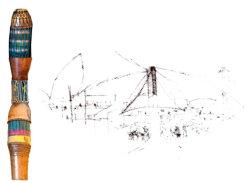
JOINTS: The sails will be joined to the pole, a tree or an existing built structure by tying the rope to a hook. This concept is inspired by the analogy and tying system of the drum.



FLEXIBILITY: The hooks on the poles and other existing structures will be placed so that the sails can overlap each other. The overlapping will make it possible to create a completely covered area in case of rain or strong sun. If necessary it is also possible to make vertical sails by using to hooks on the same pole.



THE RED PATH: Institute for (X) has constructed a red path to help the visitors navigating through the area. The red bricks also indicate what is most public. By adding small islands of red bricks we can activate the south east part of the meeting place. These small islands also invite people in from north east.



TRADEMARK: The spectacular look of the installation and the decorated center pole functions as a flagpole of the whole Institute of (X). Hopefully this will attract people to the area and inspire them to be present in the moment and gather together. We also hope that the values of Institute for (X) and the idea of the simple life, where sharing is essential will be the butterfly effect and positive impact of this project.



NGATCH FALL FAMILY DOME

We initially started the project by defining our own values. These values were then brought up on a conversation with the stakeholders about the direction of the project, and we found many common values that both parties had, which are: sociability, engagement, dynamic architecture and inclusiveness.

With our core values in place, we then started our research phase. Where we analyzed the stakeholders cultural background, their architecture and different factors on the site such as; materials, flow, and points of activities.

Our project aims to create a place for unity, for more than just the drum wagon. The flexibility of the pavilion is intended to be an architectural gesture to all of the parties' institute for x. The drum wagon will have a place for dancing with a surface of sand in the middle of the pavilion, whereas the other elements will be placed in the outer circle. The inner circle is constant. The outer circle is flexible and aims to break the rhythm, with different programs such as: toilets, a kitchen, places for seating, etc.



NGATCH FALL FAMILY



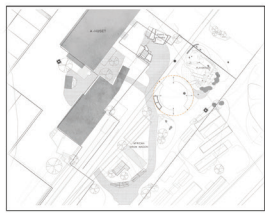
REFERENCES : SENEGALESE ARCHITECTURE



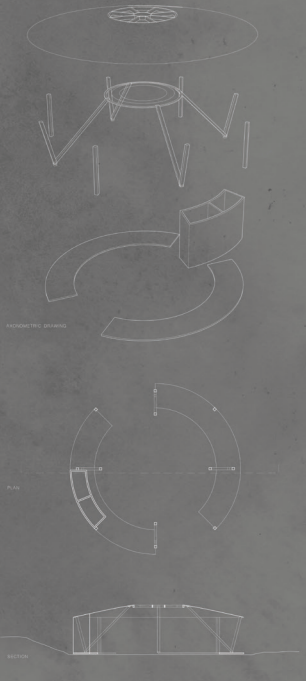
MATERIALS AT INSITUT FOR X



FLOW DIAGRAM
This is a diagram showing the flow of our pavilion. The diagram helps us to figure out where we should position the structure.



SITUATION PLAN
The site plan shows the location of the pavilion. We marked the areas of different program spaces for the pavilion. It also shows the location of the site for the pavilion. The legend is used to identify the location for the pavilion.



FINAL INFOGRAPHIC F3A

THE HABITATION WALL

A vertical neighbourhood

Our fellowship started by deciding which values we would like to pursue and emulate in our work. By combining the values we each wanted in the group, we agreed on the four values of appreciation of the presence, honesty, sustainability, and equality. Now it was time to meet our stakeholders and visit the site to gather information for our project. In the larger team, we combined our values with the values of our stakeholders, to establish our main values.

Our core idea at this point was to create a roof structure on our site, which would house different people and activities throughout the day and night, creating a transformable space that could evolve and expand through time. The common roof was our way to express adaptability, equality and ownership.

We believe in creating a design that grows with the community, a place that fulfills the needs of the community while also welcoming outsiders to experience the space. Therefore we want to provide spaces with different types of intimacy.

We consider that the intervention on the site should interact with the environment already in place, including the seasons, nature and the cycle of the community.



We value a design that emphasizes the creation of special moments and atmospheres, encouraging a safe and judgment-free space that attract a creative mindset.

We value strong framework with flexible components to host different users and functions. The space can adapt to day and night situations seamlessly by having a constantly evolving structure.



The common area is partly covered by a constant roof that allows playful changes with the containers and activity under it. When the space is used as a venue, only one point of entry will stay accessible in order to have a better control of the crowd.

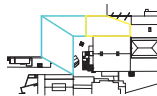


The ground floor containers will be covered with fireproof materials.



Container area

The main focus of our project is to consider different atmospheres and uses for the site. The space transforms from night to day. The DJ will be able to open the container's side during events. The main zone under the room will serve as a dancefloor, and other smaller dancing areas within the higher floors of the habitat wall will open. In the day, the music setup can safely stay in a closed container on the ground floor. The space will be a hangout hub and a nice place to work during the day, for the whole community of Institute for (X) and outsiders to enjoy.



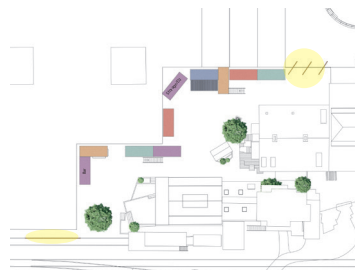
Expansion

We want the project to have the possibility for expansion and change within the community. Therefore we imagined different stages of development.

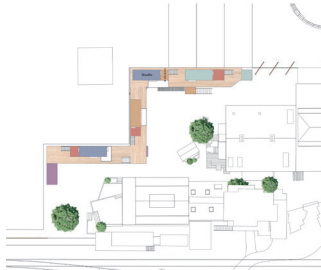


Connecting with the rest of (X)

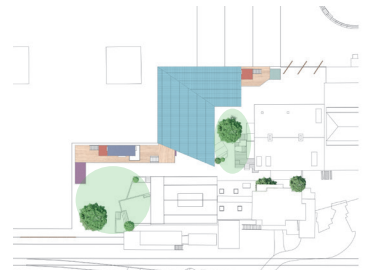
The Institute for (X) has a soul and a certain spirit. It was important for us to keep the essence of Institute for (X) and that reflects in our architecture and the materials we have chosen. The habitation wall is very much inspired by the container buildings on different sites at (X). Wood and containers are all connected by the red brick road that will expand from the rest of (X) into the plaza of the site.



Ground floor plan
1:300



Second floor plan
1:300



Roof plan
1:300

Mobile Panels

To allow the site to change its functions from day to night and allow it to be flexible we have created a module with sliding panels to open up and close the space in different ways. There is multiple entrances to the site which creates a good flow and welcomes the public into the area in the daytime. During the night, it is important that the site can change to a venue perfect to hold concerts and parties. The mobile panels are a major part in this transformation. They will slide on rails in the ground to get into place. The site can close other entrances and keep control over the guest through one main entrance. The panels can also be used as walls under the roof and the outside plaza turns in to an inside dancing room. The mobile panels when not in use make perfect exhibition walls, where artist can express themselves or where posters on coming events can be hung up.



Garden

The old stage on the area will be used for small concerts. The containers wall expands through the area and hosts a bar with a terrace. We want to transform this area in a garden to hang out and listen to music. During events, this zone will only be accessible through the venue entrance.

Sequential backyards at (X)

Responsible Architecture Workshop 2020
FEUM

TRANSFORMATIVE

COMMON VALUES



ADAPTIVENESS
By having a constantly **evolving** or partly "unfinished" **structure**, we allow communities to easily apply themselves to (X). As FEUM usually reinvents their occupy spaces for different events - we value strong **framework** with **flexible components**.



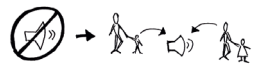
OWNERSHIP
At Institute for (X) the border between **private and public** is quite blurry. It is important to us that we design spaces with **different levels of intimacy**, so that visitors always feel **welcome and take ownership of the area**, but without disturbing the work of FEUM.



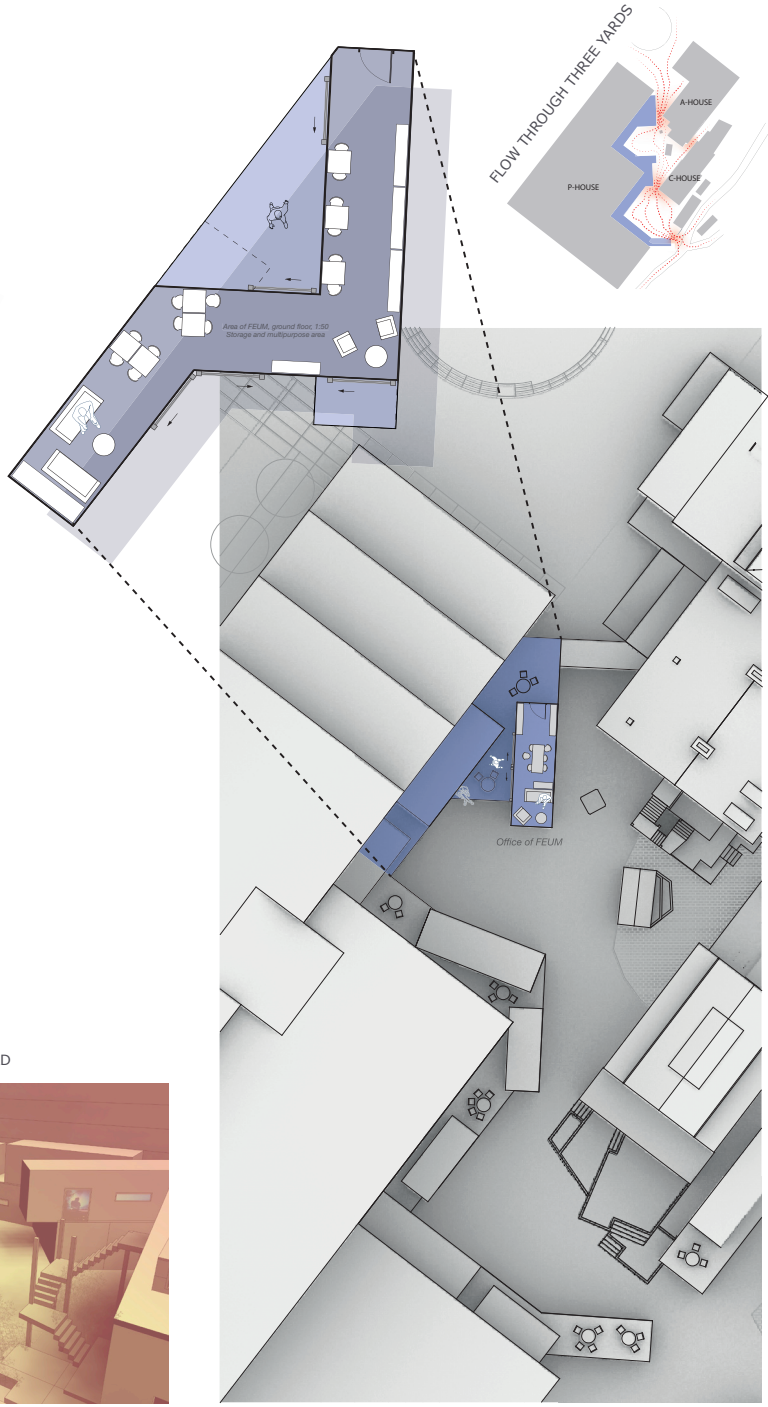
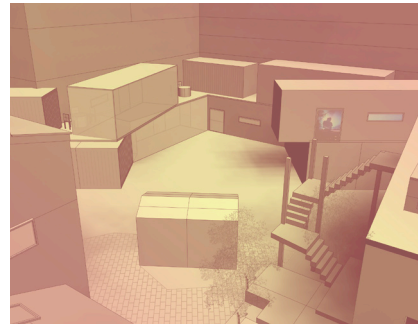
PERCEPTION AND TIME
The atmosphere and function of Institute for (X)'s spaces change dramatically during **different parts of the day**. We value a design that emphasizes the creation of **special moments and experiences**. Since FEUM are hosting late night events, it is important to consider how our design affects the surroundings.



PHYSICAL CONNECTION TO CONTEXT
One of the core values of Institute for (X) is good **neighbourship**. To **give more than we take**, and to tap into the great value of (X)'s common spaces. It is important that our design **physically connect** with the rest of the area. By connecting FEUM to the A-House, we **expand the possibilities for all local event-makers** - not just FEUM.

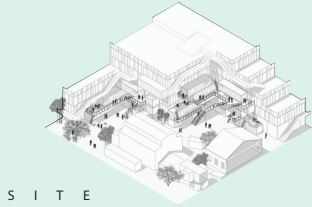


VISUALIZATION OF THE BACKYARD



Courtyard behind the A-house 1:100

TRANSFORMATIVE



S I T E

F A B R I C
S O U N D
A B S O R B I N G



S A I L / T A R P A U L I N
W I N D A N D W A T E R
R E S I S T A N T



S U N B L O C K E R



G L A S S / P L E X I G L A S S
T R A N S P A R E N T



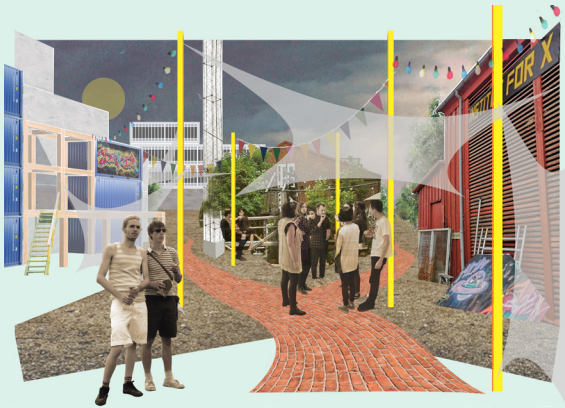
BY STUDYING THE USES AND EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT MATERIALS TEXTILES AND HOW PEOPLE INTERACT WITH THESE

OUR PROJECT AIMS TO CREATE DIFFERENT FEELS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE MUSIC

OUR GOAL IS THAT BY USING THE RIGHT MATERIALS (SOUND-ISOLATION) OUR PROJECT WILL CREATE BETTER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND DEUM



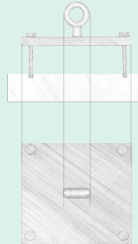
USERSCENARIO



BY USING FLEXIBLE ELEMENTS IN A SOLID GRID SYSTEM

DIFFERENT SCENARIOS CAN BE CREATED DEPENDING ON THE OCCASIONS

THIS WILL GIVE THE USERS A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP OF THE PLACE



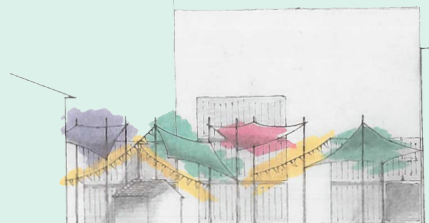
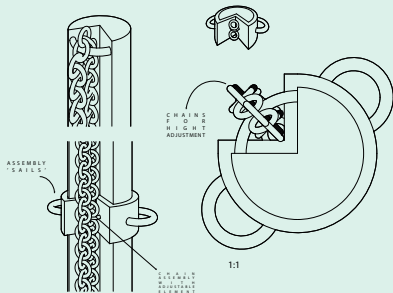
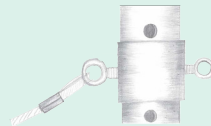
T R A N S
F O R M A T I V E

O W N E R S H I P

T I M E A N D
P R E S E N C E

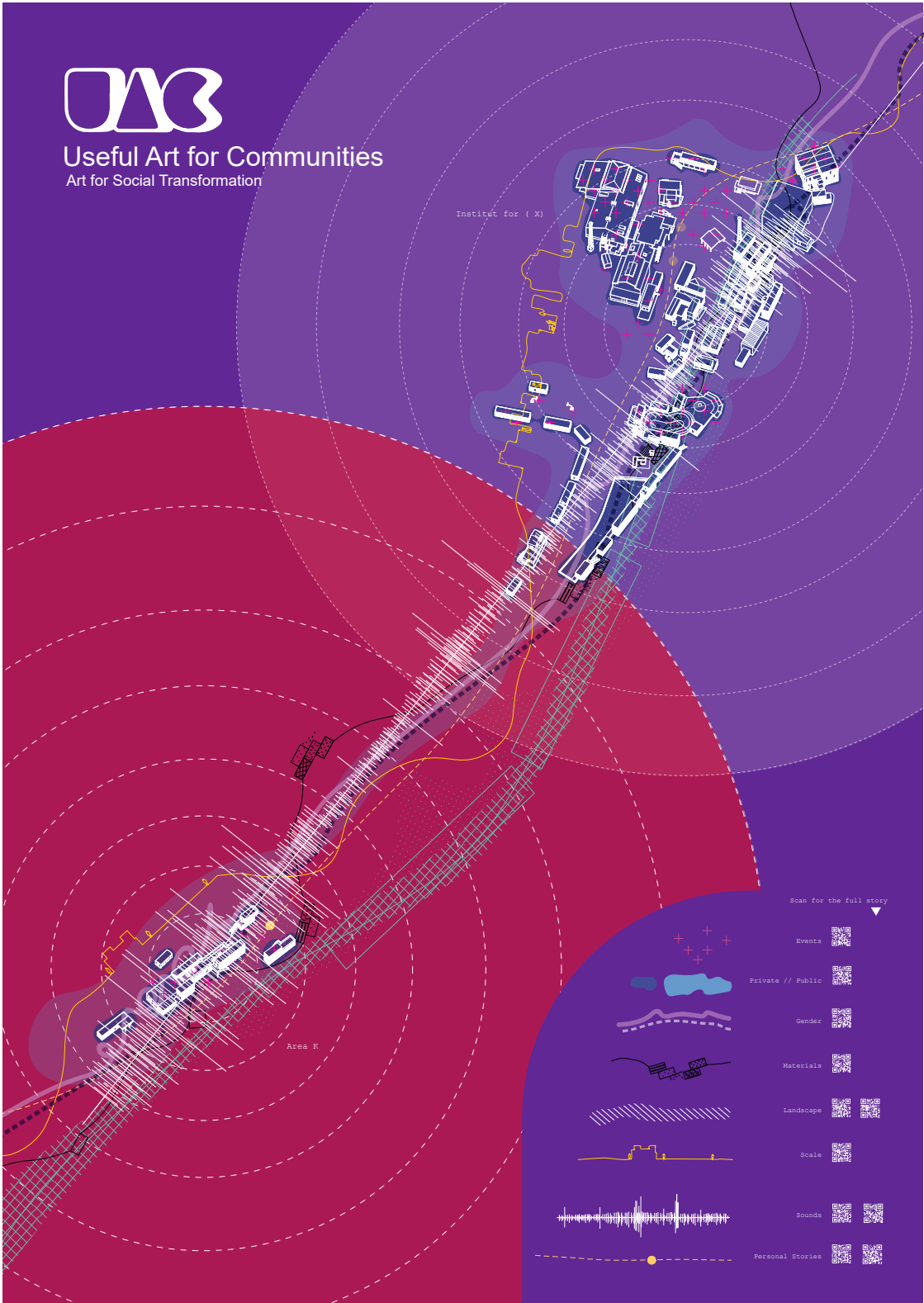
A D A P T I V E

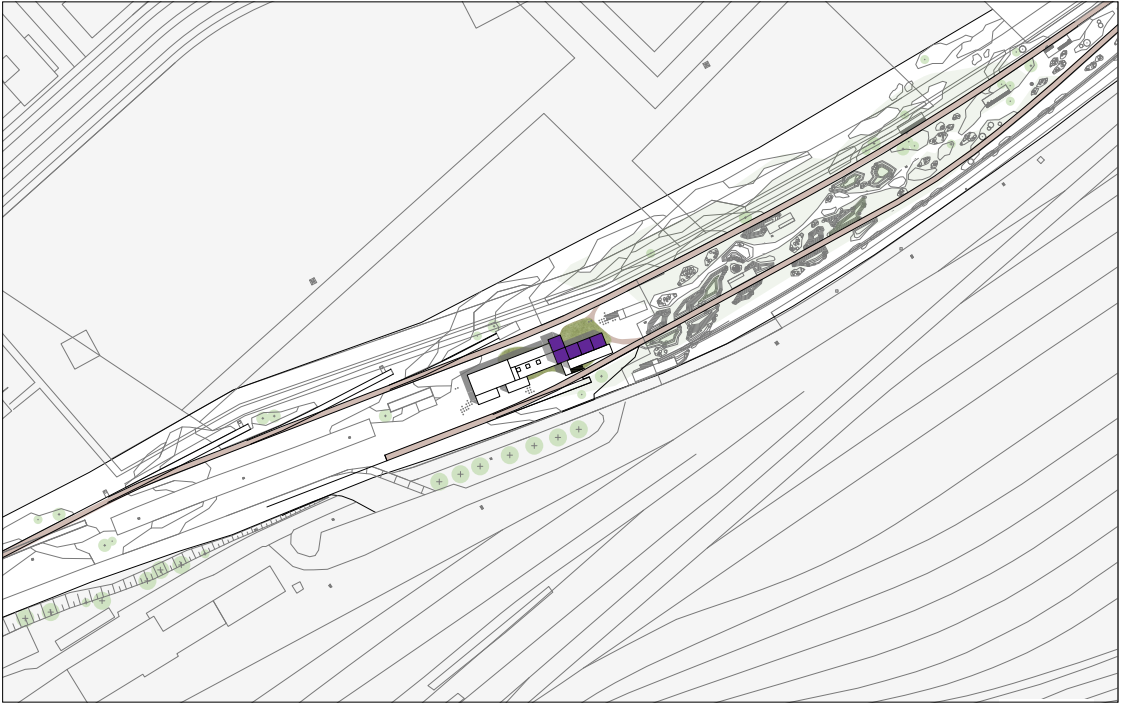
G I V E M O R E
T H A N Y O U
T A K E



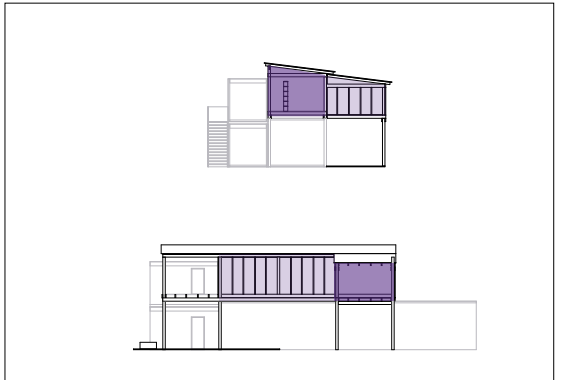
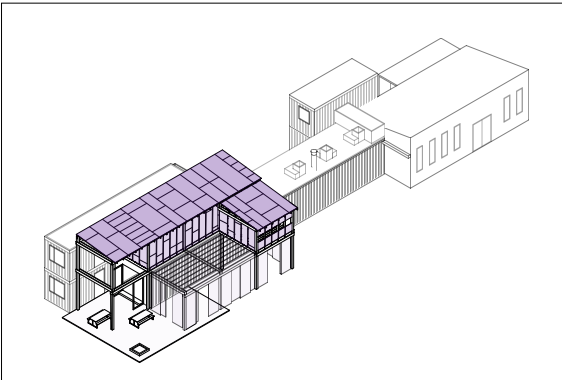
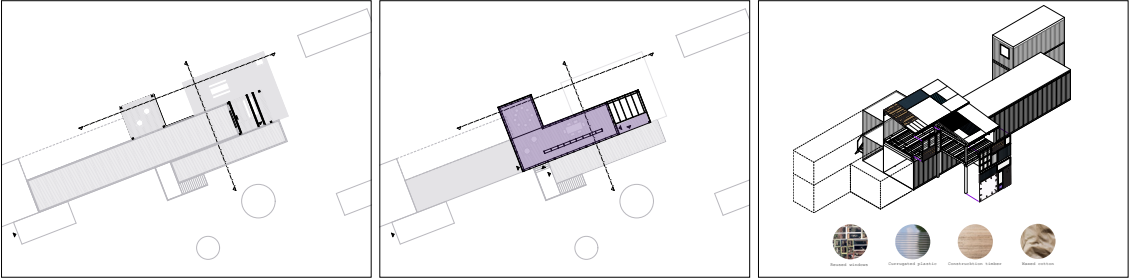
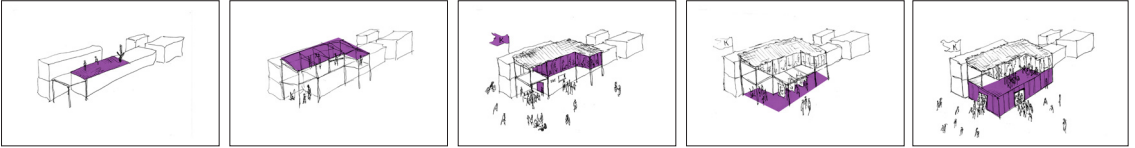


Useful Art for Communities
Art for Social Transformation





SOFIA WEIDNER	KAROLINE FREDERIKKE HYELED-NIELSEN	IDA AMATI	TONJE LOUISE SØYLAND KARTEVOLL	CELINA SASCHA HOLCK
MARGIT SANDBERG MIKKELSEN	ANDREA BJØRLØW KJELSTRUP	ASGER BRIX PEDERSEN	MATHIAS GAARDSTED BRAAE	JIE LI
PEER TUE NÄTHKE	ASTA ENEVOLDSEN	ASBJØRN LIEN-IVERSEN	LIVA KATRINE OHRHAMMER CHRISTENSEN	GLENN GUNDELACH-TAABEL
MARIA KRISTOFFERSEN	KATARINA BRAMSEN BUHL	SIGNE IMMERKÆR DALGAARD	JONATHAN KLIT SØRENSEN	ASK ASTRUP SØFELT
	CHRISTIAN BJERRUM POULSEN	TYRA NANNA MATILDA REX	EMMA SKELANDER	HUGO SHACKLETON
				LAURA LYKKE NYGAARD
				NAIME ESRA AKIN



FINAL INFOGRAPHIC F4 ABC



THE BREAKING WALL

THE NEW PLACEMENT FOR THE YARDSHOP
 AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE NEW PLACEMENT FOR THE YARD SHOP, THEIR NEIGHBOUR TO BE, DSB, HAS PUT UP A NEW FENCE WITH BARBED WIRE TO MARK THEIR TERRITORY. IT CARRIES A LITERAL AND FIGURATIVE MEANING, SUBDIVIDING THE SPACE INTO ZONES, PROTECTING THE ONE SIDE FROM THE OTHER. THERE'S ALREADY AN UNDERLYING CONFLICT BETWEEN DSB AND THE GAFETTI COMMUNITY, WHICH MAKES THIS AN INTERESTING ENCOUNTER.

THE FENCE AS A STATEMENT
 AS A RESULT, WE WANT TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH THE FENCE AS A STATEMENT AGAINST DSB, INSTEAD OF VIEWING THE FENCE AS A DISABILITY. WE WANT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT. WE HAVE WORKED ON DIFFERENT PROPOSALS ON HOW TO IMPROVE THE YARD SHOP BY CREATING NEW HANGOUT SPOTS, OPENING UP FOR THE SURROUNDINGS AND NEW POSSIBILITIES, BUT ALSO KEEPING IT INTIMATE AND PERSONAL.



HOSTILE ARCHITECTURES

THE WALL IS ONE OF THE OLDEST AND MOST ELEMENTAL FORM OF CONSTRUCTION, SUBDIVIDING A SPACE INTO ZONES.

FIRSTLY, NO MORE THAN SOME SYNTHETIC SHORT STRINGS OF BARBED WIRE ASSEMBLY DRIPPED ON THE IMAGINARY LINE OF THE SITE, ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SYMBOLIC EFFECT WERE INFINITELY MORE POWERFUL THAN ITS PHYSICAL EXPENDED METAL SECURITY.

POWER, ISOLATION, RESTRICTION

THE YARD PEOPLE, NOW GLIMPSED OVER THE FORBIDDEN OBSTACLE FROM AN AGONIZING DISTANCE, MAKING THEIR OBJECTS OF DESIRE EVEN MORE UNDESIRABLE. TRAPPED, LEFT BEHIND ON THEIR THIN SMALL STRIP OF A PLAT, OBSESSED WITH VAIN PLANS FOR CHANGE.



FENCE STRUCTURE



TOUCH

MESH OF MESH

FENCES HAVE A NATURAL GEOMETRIC COMPOSITION AND RHYTHM GIVEN BY THE MESH - USUALLY A REPETITION OF SQUARES OR DIAMONDS. BASED ON THIS ELEMENT WE CAN CREATE DIFFERENT ARTISTIC COMPOSITIONS, WHICH IS IN CONFLICT WITH SHARPLY MET. ADDITIONALLY, A FENCE CAN BE ATTACHED WITH WOODEN BOARDS, PROVIDING THE SHOP WITH WALLS WHICH PAINTING CAN BE PRACTICED ON.

TRICK

THE BEST SHOWS DIFFERENT WAYS TO TRANSFORM THE FENCE FROM ITS ORIGINALLY FUNCTION - IT BECOMES A 3-DIMENSIONAL SPACE, PROVIDING A FEELING OF INTIMACY.

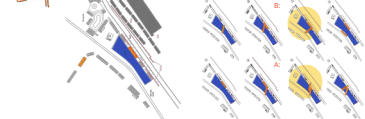
CHAIN

ANOTHER OPTION IS TO CREATE A CURTAIN BY SOLDERING IRON WIRES TOGETHER IN SQUARES. THIS PROVIDES FLEXIBILITY TO THE FENCE WHILE MAINTAINING THE OVERALL STRUCTURE. WIND CAN CAUSE SOUNDS WHEN THE CURTAINS COLLIDE, ADDING ANOTHER ASPECT TO THE PRODUCT.

TRAP

PLACING FENCES ON TRACKS CREATES A MORE FLEXIBLE SOLUTION WHEN THEY BECOME MOVABLE, BUT WITHOUT PROVIDING THE "BARRIER" DSB HAS PLANNED.

PICTURE



WHO ARE WE?

The yard shop is a place for the community to meet, work, and play. It is a space where people can connect and create something together. We want to create a space that is open and welcoming to everyone.

THE YARD SHOP

The yard shop is a place for the community to meet, work, and play. It is a space where people can connect and create something together. We want to create a space that is open and welcoming to everyone.

PROTECT THE CORE

WITH THE YARD SHOP AS A BASE WE CAN CREATE SPACES WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ACCESSIBILITY WHERE PRIVACY AND EXCLUSION MEET OPENNESS AND HOSPITALITY.

MEAT GROWS ON BONES

IN OUR PROPOSAL WE WANT TO COMBINE THE IDEA OF A SET IN STONE STRUCTURE, UTILIZING THE **CONCRETE** STRUCTURE OF THE **CONTAINER**, ALLOWING THE YARD SHOP TO CONTINUE ITS GROWTH.



CONCRETE CONTAINER

SPLITTING THE CONTAINER ALLOWS HARNESSING ITS MATERIAL, STRUCTURAL ABILITIES AND FUNCTION - MORE THAN YOU GET FROM A SIMPLE BOX. THIS WOULD MAKE THE CONTAINER MORE SUSTAINABLE AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDITIONAL SURFACES IN THE SHOP.

AFTER STUDYING THE STRUCTURAL ABILITIES OF THE CONTAINER IN QUESTION WE CAN START CUTTING OUT SOME PARTS, AND THOUGHTFULLY PLACING THEM ELSEWHERE, WHERE THEY SERVE TO THE YARD SHOP'S NEEDS, SUCH AS A BRIDGE OVER THE WATER WALLS TO PLANT ON, WOODS OVER OUTDOOR SPACES.

SPILT OF SPACE

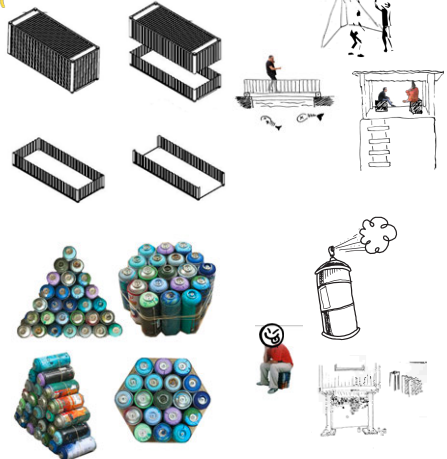
IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE "DESIGN LANGUAGE" RESEMBLES THE EXISTING AREAS, MAKING IT EASILY INTEGRABLE.

FUNCTION FUSION

THE YARD SHOP WILL BE EQUIPPED WITH MULTIFUNCTIONAL BUILDING BLOCKS THAT ARE EASY TO BUILD, REARRANGE, CHANGE AND REMOVE. ALL TO FIT THE SHOP'S NEEDS FOR EVERY OCCASION. THIS CAN BE A SIMPLE AND SUSTAINABLE WAY TO CREATE BARRIERS, BUILD EVERY VESSEL, CREATE COZY HANGOUT SPOTS OR EVEN HELP KEEP THE SHOP WARM.

INSIDE OUT

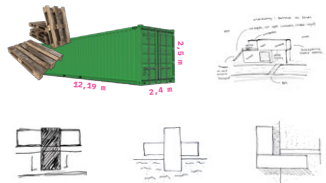
THE YARD HAS EXPERIMENTED WITH BUILDING WITH SHARP CORNERS MAKING GEOMETRICAL FORMS THAT CAN BE USED AS COMBODOS FOR BOLDER STRUCTURES FOR THE YARD ARE AN ABUNDANT MATERIAL FOR THE YARD SHOP, AND USING THEM FOR HANGING MADE AT THE SAME TIME AS MARKING THE SPACE MORE FUN AND FLEXIBLE "REARMS" THE GAFETTI COMMUNITY'S ESSENCE - SPRAY PAINT - ON THE OUTSIDE.



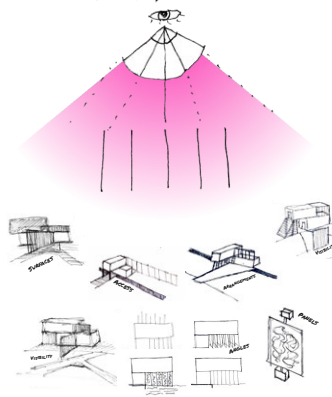
(X)CLUSIVE INCLUSION



REVIVING CHEAP, ACCESSIBLE MATERIALS IN THE SPIRIT OF INSTITUTE FOR (X)



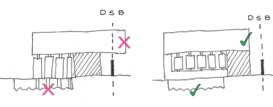
PLAYFUL PERCEPTION



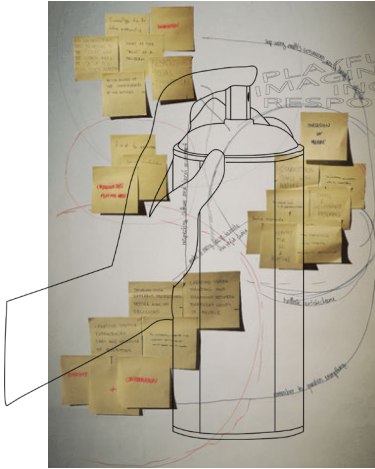
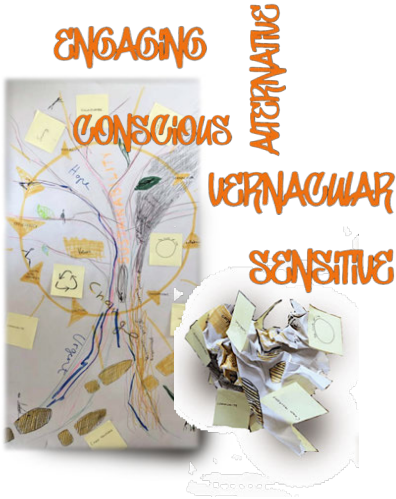
OPEN (CLOSED)



THE TOP OF THE FENCE CAN'T BE OPEN. THE DSB-FENCE THE TRAVEL SHOULD NOT BE DOWN INTO THE WATER SINCE. INSTEAD FROM ONE SIDE TO THE OTHER!



PERSISTENT



GROUP VALUES



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY FREEDOM AND POWER CREATIVITY

A MEETING POINT FOR EVERYONE

REUSE

DATA

FLEXIBILITY

THE SWITCH

We swear to protect the core of the community and build a mask to open up to the surroundings.

ACCESSIBILITY

THE SACRIFICE

CREATIVITY

FLOW

THE FENCE COULD BE USED AS A GREEN WALL, MAKING THE OUTSIDE AREA MORE INVITING TO THE PUBLIC. LETS GROW SOME FENCES.



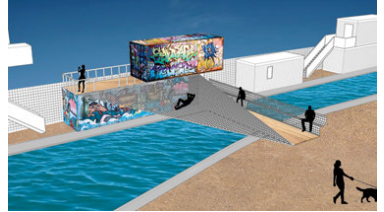
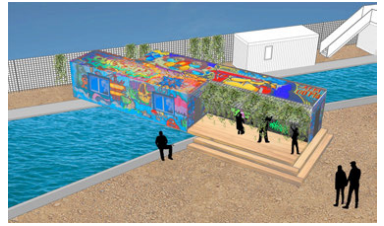
PLAN

IN THIS PROPOSAL WE'VE MADE A WALL FOR THE YARD SHOP TO DO GRAFFITI ON, WHICH CAN ALSO BE USED AS A HANGOUT SPOT. WHEN THE YARD SHOP IS CLOSED THE WALL CAN ALSO BE CLOSED.

WHEN THE WALL/SHOP IS OPEN IT WILL CREATE A FACE/IDENTITY FOR THE SHOP, ARISING CURIOSITY FOR PEOPLE PASSING BY. WHEN THE WALL/SHOP IS CLOSED IT WILL PROTECT THE SURROUNDINGS THAT ARE NOT THAT EXCITED ABOUT GRAFFITI.



COMBINATION OF TOOLKIT



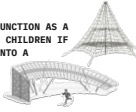
THE HANGOUT

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE EXISTING FENCE, WE HAVE INVESTIGATED SOLUTIONS ON HOW TO HARNESS THE FENCE AS A MATERIAL TO CREATE A HANGOUT SPOT.



CLIMB

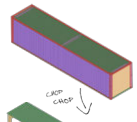
THE FENCE COULD FUNCTION AS A CLIMBING WALL FOR CHILDREN IF TESTED OR MADE INTO A SCULPTURE.



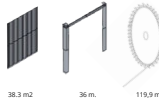
EPILOG

THIS PROPOSITION IS MADE AS A STARTING PACK, AN IN-DEPTH TOOLKIT FOR PROMPTING IDEAS AND INSPIRATION IN CREATIVE MINDS.

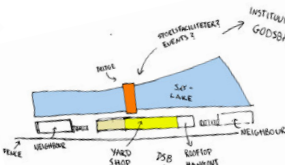
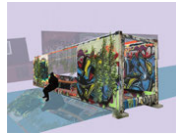
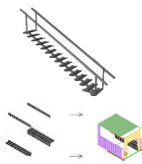
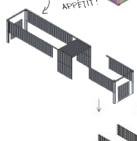
THE FENCES CAN BE BUILT TODAY. IF NECESSARY IN SEGMENTS, PERHAPS WITH A MODIFIED LOCATION, PERHAPS WITH THE SEGMENTS DROPPED LIKE STONES, APART FROM EACH OTHER, AND ONLY CONNECTED BY THE OVERLAPPING RIPPLES CAUSED BY THEIR IMPACT ON THE URBAN POND.



BY CUTTING UP THE CONTAINER WE UTILIZE ITS LOAD BEARING CAPACITY AND USE IT WHERE IT'S MORE NEEDED PLUS WE GET MORE SURFACES TO WORK WITH.



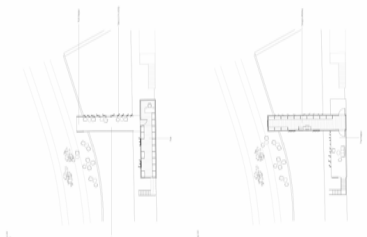
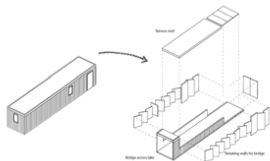
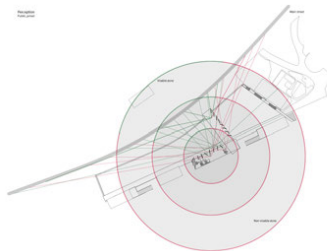
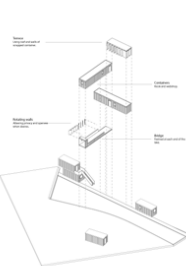
IT IS POSSIBLE TO USE ALL THE CUT CUTS FROM THE 'BRIDGE'/CONTAINER AND BUILT A STAIRCASE, BENCHES, PILLARS TO SECURE ROOFED HANGOUT SPOTS, SPORTS FACILITIES ETC.



FINAL VISUALISATION OF THE PROJECT ON SITE



REUSING SPRAY CANS FOR BUILDING IS A CONTINUOUS PROJECT FOR THE YARD SHOP



EXCEL SHEET WITH IMPUT FROM STUDENT'S LOGBOOK (38)

The image displays a large, complex Excel spreadsheet with a grid of approximately 30 columns and 30 rows. The spreadsheet is divided into several distinct sections, each with a different background color: a light blue section on the left, a light green section in the middle, and a darker green section on the right. The cells within these sections contain various data points, including text, numbers, and possibly formulas, though the text is too small to read. The overall layout is highly structured and organized, typical of a detailed data collection or analysis tool.

Appendix 3: 'Materializing Collective Futures' PARTICIPATORY DESIGN WORKSHOP

Working groups

Group 1: Victor Lindegren Jakobsen, Oliver Juul Jensen, Ida Leonhardt Jespersen

Group 2: Ida Hertz Gufler, Jacob Hoe Knudsen, Monique Riis Henriksen

Group 3: Karoline Bonde Larsen, Magnus Lynge Damgaard, Kasper Carlsen

Group 4: Anne Kristine Haagen, Khosal Arghestani, Mathias Vang Christensen

Group 5: Karl Berg Pedersen, Celina Camille Grabowski, David Sime, Linda Pordi B. Robertsdottir

Lecture contents

Day 1- Responsible Architecture and Participatory Design

I delivered a brief presentation on my research topic, Responsible Architecture, and the relationship between architecture and sustainable behavior. I also introduced my personal background and values, illustrating how I have intertwined these values with my professional practice, to provide clarity on my stance within the sustainability debate. Moreover, I outlined the workshop content and timeline, detailing its objectives, exercises, workshop phases, and a succinct introduction to the stakeholders and the site.

Day 3- Worlding futures

During the morning session of the third day, Joel Letkemann delivered a presentation on speculative world-building. This was to introduce the science fictioning methodology to the workshop and the 'article of hope' exercise, which the students then focused on in the afternoon session. The entirety of day four was devoted to design development. In the afternoon, students convened a meeting with stakeholders to present their progress and discuss design decisions. Their 'article of hope' served as a starting point for conversations about ecological challenges and future aspirations for the site. On day five, the students spent the morning working on their design. In the afternoon, they gave a brief presentation to the tutors to discuss their progress.

Day 6- Materializing Futures

This day we did a lecture to introduce different methods to translate conceptual ideas into materialized design. We introduced different materials and design tools and digital tools so students could use to produce sketches and tests on their ideas.

Overview

As architects, we approach a new building project with big aspirations - often around things like sustainability, equality, participation, or community. But these aspirations do not belong to the architect alone, there are many participants involved in the success of a project, both as it is built, and also over the long life of a building as a community forms around the building. However, the success of a project is not in its aspirations, but in its materialization.

Therefore, we ask: How does an architect align values of practice with the design decisions of a project? How do decisions on the level of material, fabrication, detail, and tectonics impact the success of a project? How does an architect make decisions to ensure a project's lasting contribution to its inhabitants and community?

This course will present a toolset to make decisions about building technology on the basis of a community's aspirations for a responsible architecture. The correspondence between material and community is explored through exercises in participatory design and speculative worlding-building, before materializing as a proposal for relationship between the Aarhus School of Architecture and its neighbors at Institute for (X).

The course is divided into 3 Phases:
Phase 1 - Aligning Futures
Phase 2 - Worlding Futures
Phase 3 - Building Futures

Materializing Collective Futures
2

Cover: Olalekan Jeyifous,
Crown Heights Bodega
EcoHaven



In this course, we are situating the discussion of materiality and tectonics alongside the ethical directives of practice. We are trying to set the stage to understand and critique design decisions on a basis that includes an attention to a project's stakeholders, both human and non-human, and to the futures nascent inside each decision.

Your project in Samsø starts with a wood frame farmhouse, and we will take up our discussion with an attention to (but not limited to) wooden building practices. As such, this course will inform you about some concepts in wooden building. Additionally, as we take up the discussion of wooden structures, we wish to consider how your interventions not only affect the aesthetics of the building, but also how it will work now and in the future.

Monday, 15. February
09:00 - Course Intro
11:00 - Responsible Architecture
Lecture
13:00 - Introduction to Site
14:00 - Tutoring/Work

Tuesday, 16. February
09:00 - Meeting with Stakeholders
10:30 - (Tuesday Lecture)
13:00 - Site Research

Wednesday, 17. February
09:00 - Presentation of Phase 1
11:00 - Phase 2 begins

In the first phase, we will investigate Responsible Architecture, an ongoing research project to understand how shared values are understood, communicated and translated into the culture of the built environment. We begin with examining our personal motivations for practicing architecture. Then we learn from stakeholders in the community, and think about how nature can be integrated as a stakeholder. Online tools like Miro are great for collaborating with diverse community members.

Phase 1A - Understanding Personal Values.

articulate personal values, and how they might influence your practice in architecture, share them with your group. Name your Group. (3 minute report)

Phase 1B - Site Values

using Miro, investigate your assigned RA value, discuss architectural precedents, and prepare for community consultation.

Phase 1C - Community Values

Starting from your Site Values document, continue to develop the implication of your values based on community participation and research.

Inputs:

- Responsible Architecture Lecture
- Introduction to Site
- Stakeholder Collaborations

Leading Questions

- What personal values drive your practice? what about your group, your collaborators on site?
- How did your idea of values and site change after consulting with stakeholders?



Phase 2: Worlding Futures

Wednesday, 17 February

11:00 - Speculative
Worlding
Lecture
(Professor
Lecture)
14:30 -
Work

Thursday, 18. February

09:00 - Tutoring
15:00 - Stakeholders

Friday, 19. February

13:00 -
Presentation of
Phase 2

In the second phase, we investigate what agency we have in defining the future by producing an “article of hope” showing the site in the year 2071. We will start from an initial scenario to define the context of our worlding practice. Remember to keep your team’s and your community’s core values from Phase 1 at the centre of your article of hope.

Phase 2A - Localize the Scenario

Discuss how the given scenario will impact your site. How is your assigned value implicated in the local context?

Phase 2B - Worlding

Taking into account the given scenario and your consultations with stakeholders on site, create an article of hope for our new neighborhood, 50 years from now.

Inputs

- Speculative Worlding Lecture
- Stakeholder Meetings

Deliver

Use a combination of images and text to tell the story of this article of hope. At a minimum, you should have one ‘hero’ image - which synthesizes all the hopes for the space using a combination of drawing, collage, and rendering. Also consider other media (text, serial vision, graphic novel, etc.). Your presentation should also cover your process, including your continued consultation with stakeholders and their response.

Phase 3: Materializing Futures

Monday, 22. February	Value/Action/Space Exercise
09:00 -	Building
13:00 -	Lecture
14:30 -	Tutoring/Work
Tuesday, 23. February	Grasshopper (Tuesday Lecture)
09:00 -	Tutoring/Work
10:30 -	
13:00 -	
Wednesday, 24. February	Work
09:00 -	Grasshopper
10:30 -	Consultancy
13:00 -	(Professor Lecture)
14:30 -	Tutoring/Work
Thursday, 25. February	Work
09:00 -	Tutoring/Work
13:00 -	
Friday, 26. February	Work
09:00 -	Final
13:00 -	Presentation

What does it mean to build for tomorrow today?

Your job in this phase is to design a material intervention in the space shared by New AArch and our neighbors at the Institute for (X). Your interventions are the *first step* in realizing the “articles of hope” you defined in the previous stage. Working primarily with dimensioned timber, your design should take into account how choices in material, joinery and fabrication can reflect your assigned value. Each team will have specific responses to the previous phases, which will be unfolded in dialogue with each other, the stakeholders, and the tutors.

Joel will be available to discuss how to support the project with technological processes as a consultant.

While you will develop the project together, we ask each of you to also be responsible for an individual role in the team, remembering that each role is strengthened by *collaboration*.

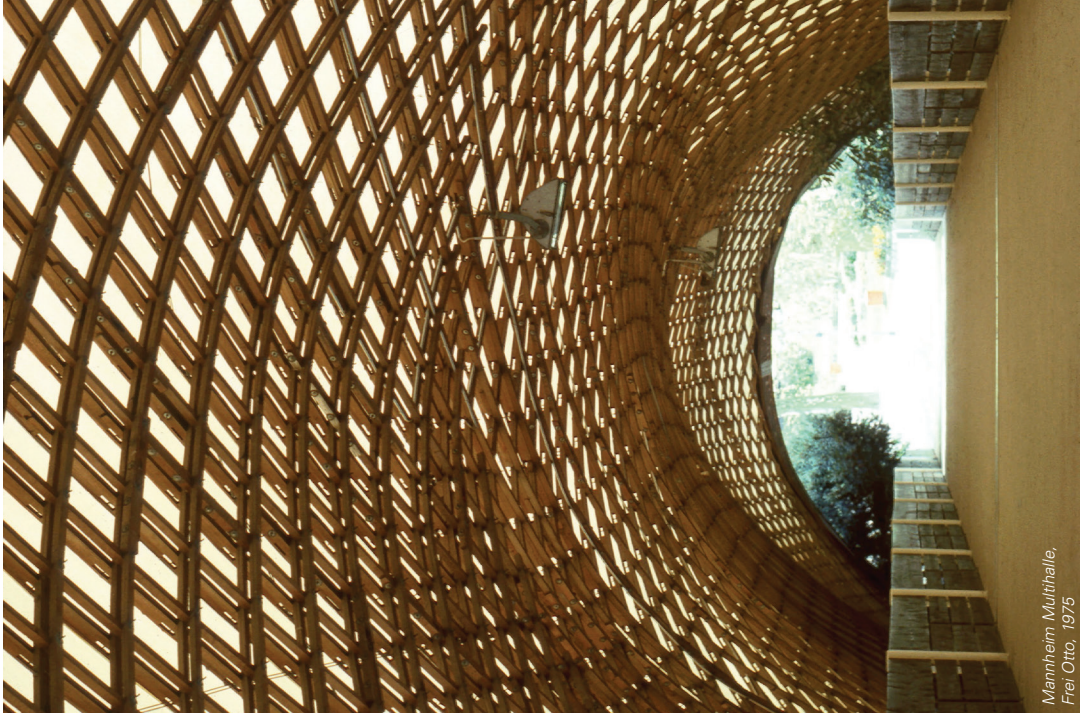
- Architect as Bridge will maintain and develop the relation to community values
- Architect as Constructor focuses on the technological development of the project
- Architect as Storyteller will maintain and refine the articles of hope as project develops



Image: Matthew Barrett

Learning Objectives:

- Participatory and collaborative design strategies
 - Probing and articulating shared values
 - Documentation and collaboration with digital media
- Strategies in speculative worlding to create 'articles of hope'
- Concepts in how technical systems align with values and design intentions
 - How architectural technology material is the physical expression of community values.
 - How choices in building can support or undermine intended values
 - Concepts in wood frame construction



Mannheim Multihalle,
Frei Otto, 1975

Participation

This workshop works through participation, collaboration, and group work, so you need to show up for your group and for our outside collaborators at the appropriate times.

Digital Protocol

- We will use the same channel every day (for tutoring/presentations/discussions). This is so we can use stable breakout rooms. We will have all presentations on Teams.
- Before each presentation, we ask that each group upload a PDF of the presentation to the R-Drive before the presentation. This is in case of connection issues, so we can all follow along. Each exercise should include a PDF presentation. use R:\BachelorUnit 2-3 A\Digital Literacy Course (access the R-Drive: cloud.aarch.dk)

Publishing Permission

As this workshop uses knowledge from the PhD research of both tutors, we would like to publish the results of this workshop, both in our respective dissertations, and also in lectures and journal articles. If you prefer to opt out, or if you prefer your name not be published, please let us know.



Ricelli (Richi)
PhD Fellow
rlr@aarch.dk



Joel
PhD Fellow
ji@aarch.dk

Links:

Teams: <https://teams.microsoft.com/channel/19%3a9d744183c59848c0a7ff9c9df9080606%40thread.tacv2/General?groupId=1761f769-0cdc-444b-b082-d980535393dc&tenantId=4b5112b0-c5f7-42e6-8e9c-ccc449c20dfa>

Moodle: <https://moodle.aarch.dk/course/view.php?id=411§ionid=3681>

R-Drive: R:\BachelorUnit 2-3 A\Digital Literacy Course (find it at cloud.aarch.dk)

Week 7

15 - 19 February

	Monday, 15	Tuesday, 16	Wednesday, 17	Thursday, 18	Friday, 19
09:00	Workshop Introduction	Stakeholder Meetings (15 minutes per group)	Presentation of Phase 1	Tutoring	
10:00		Tuesday Lecture			
11:00	Responsible Architecture Lecture		Speculative Worlding Lecture		
12:00					
13:00	Introduction to Site	Site Research	Professor Lecture		Presentation of Phase 2
14:00	Tutoring				
15:00				Stakeholder Meetings (10 minutes per group)	

■ Lectures
 ■ Stakeholder Meeting
 ■ Presentations
 ■ Tutoring

Week 8

22 - 26 February

	Monday, 22	Tuesday, 23	Wednesday, 24	Thursday, 25	Friday, 26
09:00	Value/Action/Space Exercise	Grasshopper Lecture			
10:00		Tuesday Lecture			
11:00			Grasshopper Consultancy	Grasshopper Consultancy	
12:00					
13:00	Materializing Lecture	Tutoring	Professor Lecture	Tutoring	Final Presentation
14:00			Tutoring		
15:00					

RESULTS GROUP 1

OUR VALUES

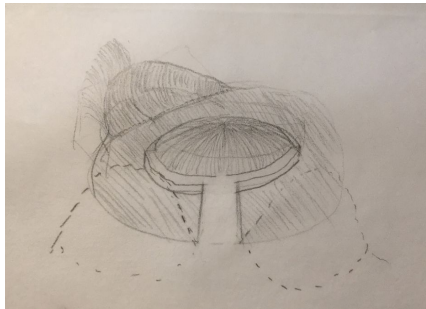
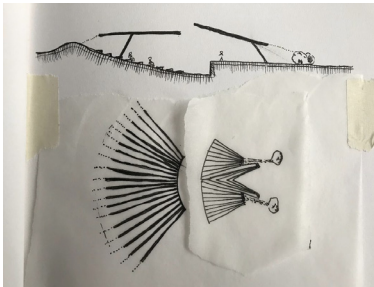
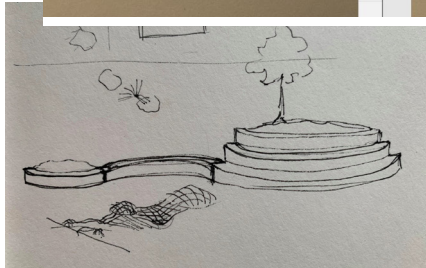
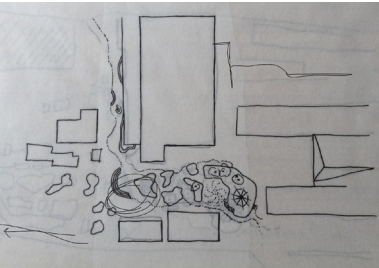
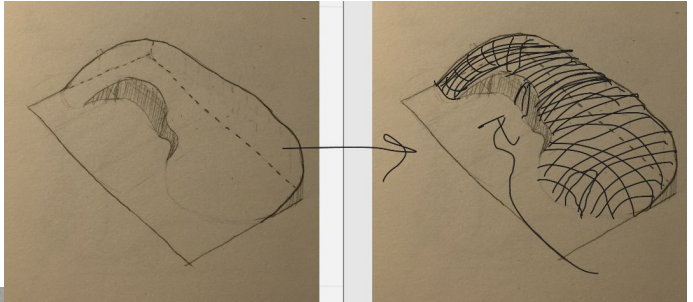
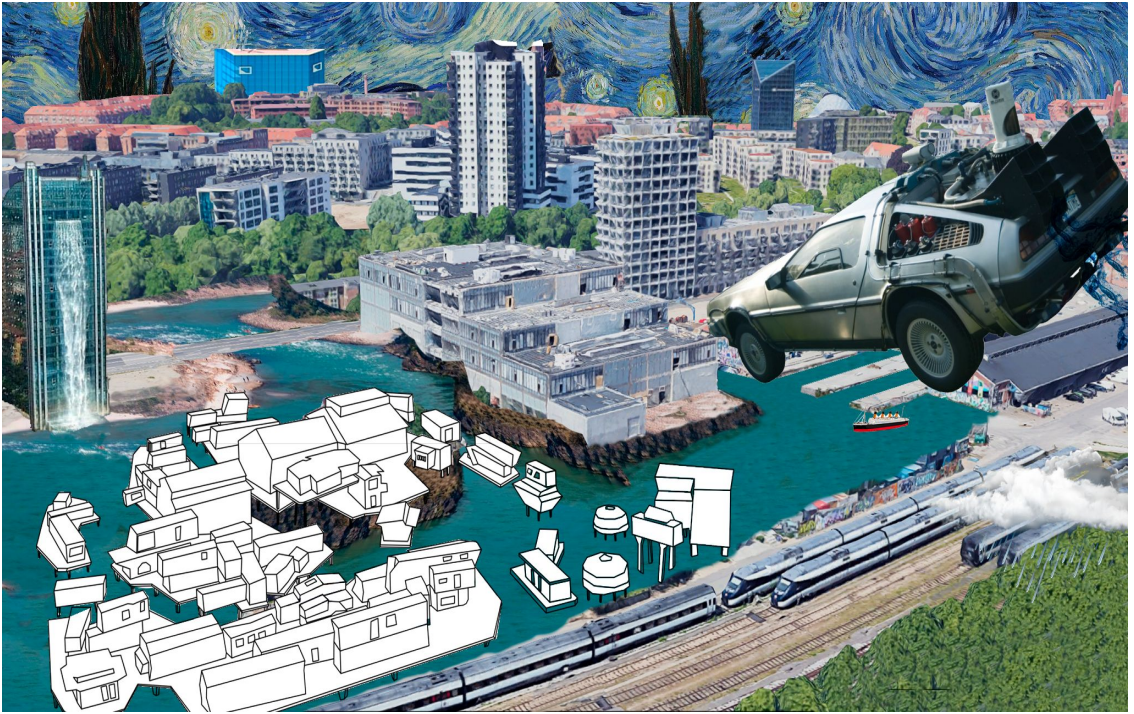
We think that sometimes the individual has been replaced by the masses - that some architecture only addresses people as a group and forgets to meet people as individuals. We want to rediscover building in the right scale and thereby foster the relationship between people and the space, but also the relationship between the people in the space.

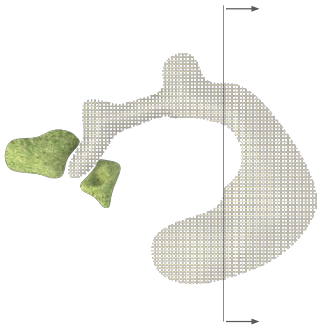
We want to think about building for forever and not just for now. By this we mean giving a building a timeless function and building with sustainable and long-lasting materials.

MANIFEST

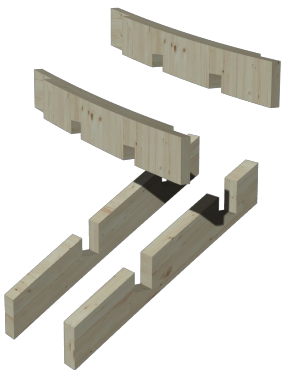
We see the common ground of the current stakeholders as a wish for ongoing growth, maintenance of the spirit and to further the creative freedom. Our intervention aims to actualize the shared values by creating a space that equally belongs to everybody, and enables ongoing changes. We wish to encourage an interaction between the stakeholders on different levels, but at the same time allow for individual artistic unfolding.

VALUES	ACTIONS IN SPACE	DESIGN RESPONSE
Ongoing growth of site	Transformable and adaptable (depending on nature and the people using the space)	Exhibition space
Maintenance of the atmosphere (playfull, fun, fluid, creative)	Greetings and meetings	Incorporate nature (small hills, nature from the site)
Foster creative freedom	Encourage participation through creativity	Visual connection to the green wedge
	Accessibility	
	Multifunctional	

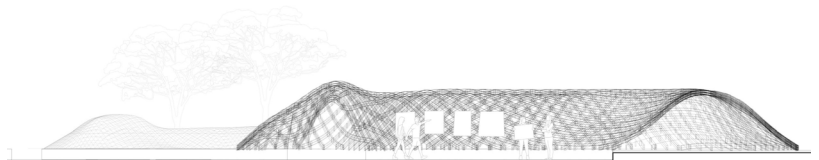


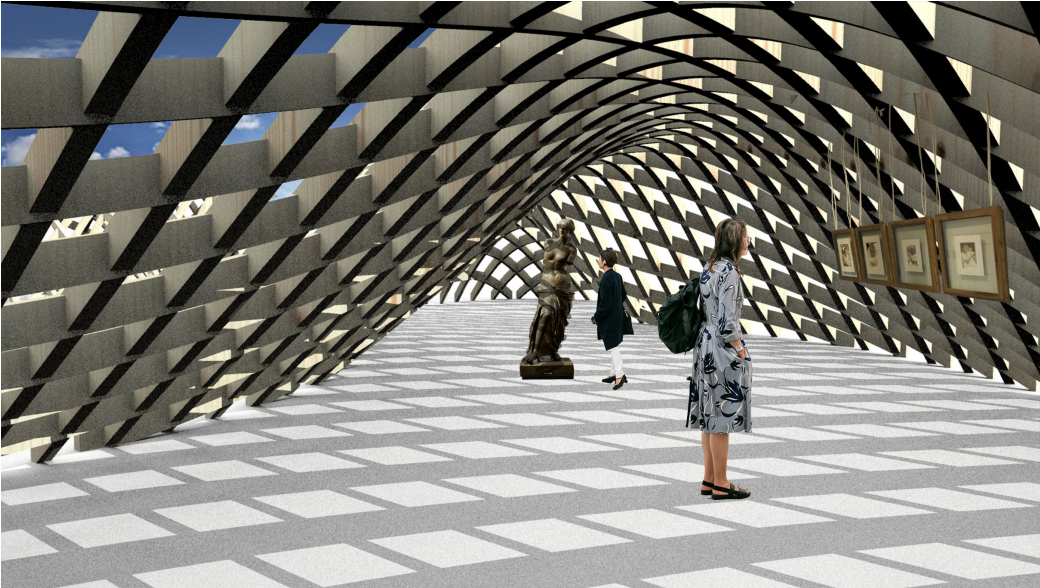


JOINTS

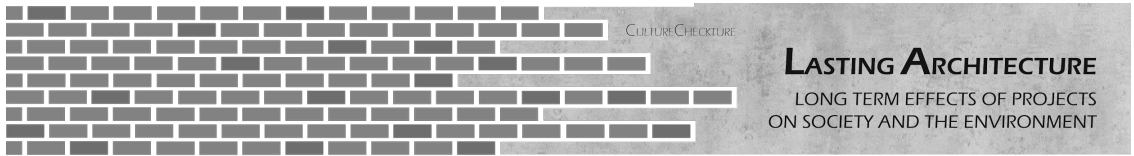


OUTDOOR EXHIBITION





RESULTS GROUP 2



RED BRICK PATH

WEAVING
Will show people that they are welcomed

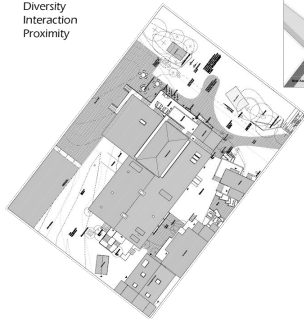
CONCRETE

OUR VALUES

- New vs. existing
- Change
- Inclusion
- Needs and desires
- Relationships
- Unfoldment

SHARED VALUES

- Togetherness
- Desires
- Infrastructure
- Diversity
- Interaction
- Proximity



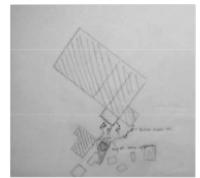
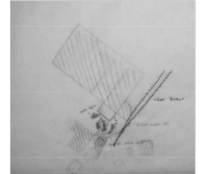
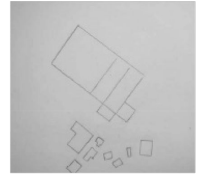
MATERIALS



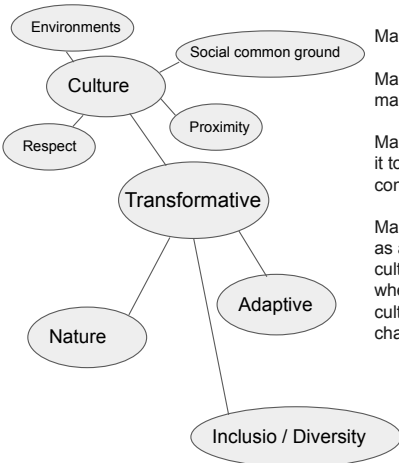
NATURE AS A STAKEHOLDER
Use of locally source species



CULTURAL GROWTH



VALUES

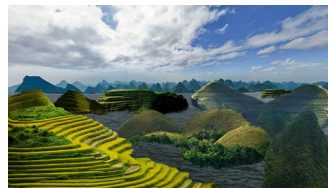
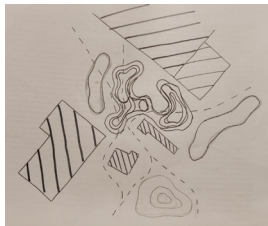
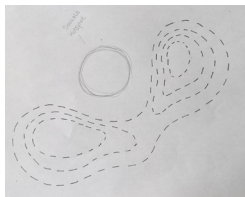
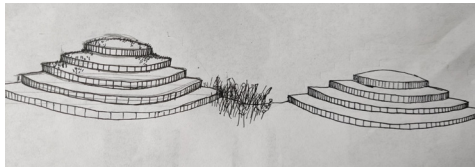
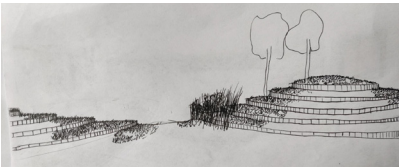
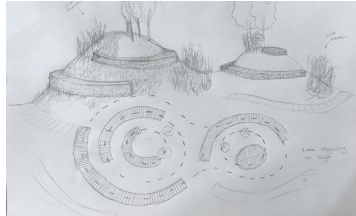
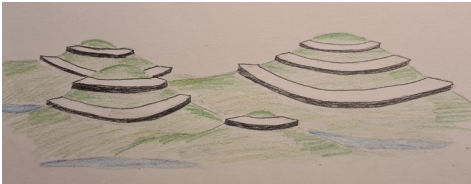


ACTION

- Make people feel safe in the space
- Make a loosely defined space that will make people want to space it
- Make nature a stakeholder and allow it to form the space and secure conditions for furthering biodiversity
- Make stakeholders value this space as a significant part of the site's culture; still be significant in 50 years when the stakeholders and the culture between them will have changed

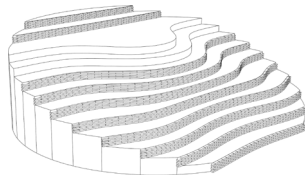
DESIGN RESPONSE

- Weaving existing materials together to connect the stakeholders and make a common ground
- Nature and water, stand out as not belonging specifically to either of the individual stakeholder, but a third in-between space of equal ownership
- Hills, breaking and slowing down the flow of movement in this gap and making people stop and remain in the space rather than passing through it

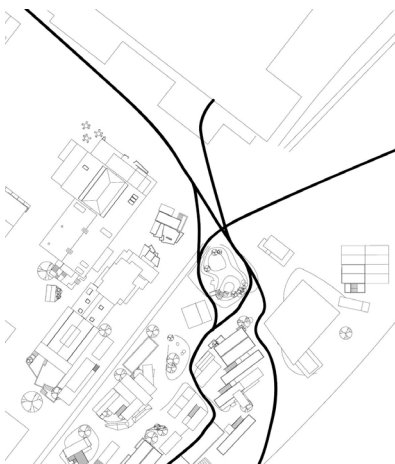




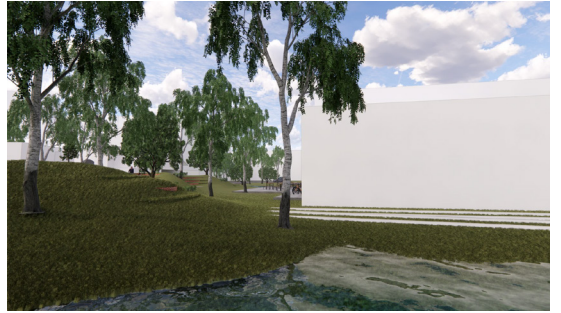
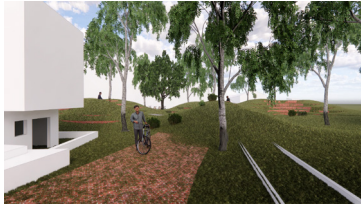
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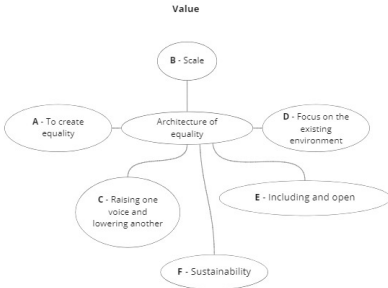
Transformed



Life in-between buildings
Slow down the pace
Create spaces



Value Action Design

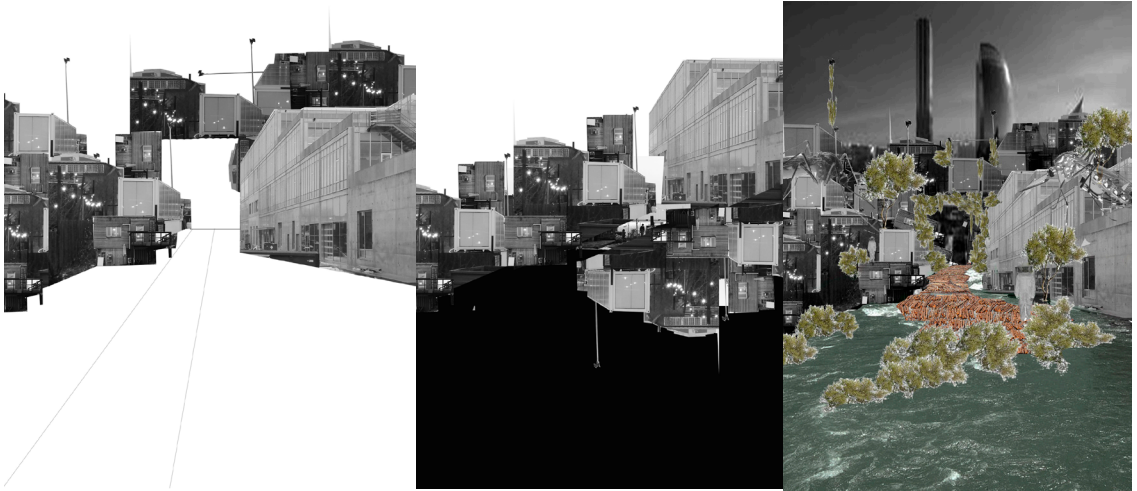


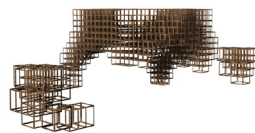
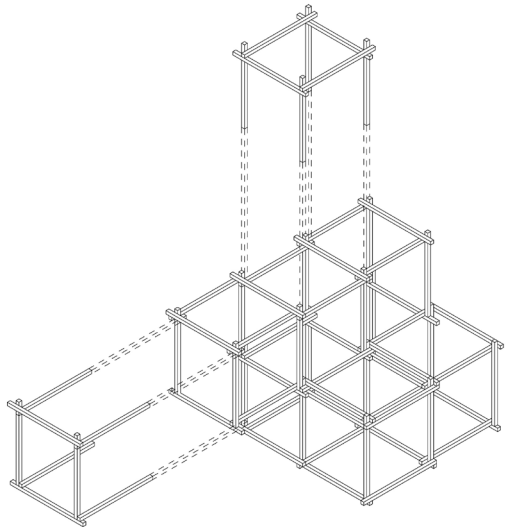
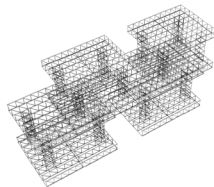
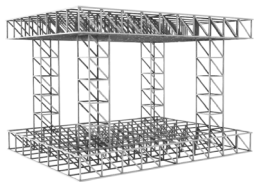
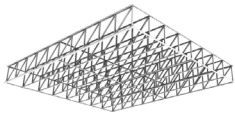
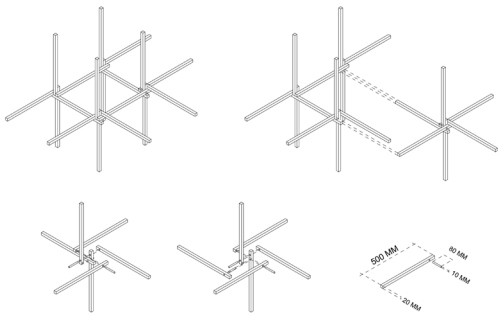
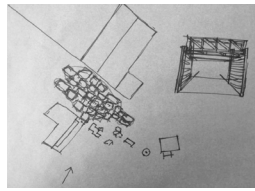
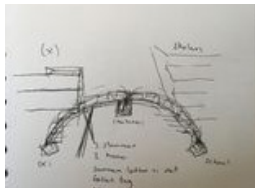
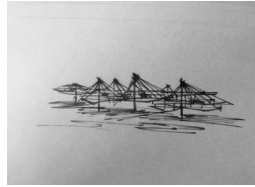
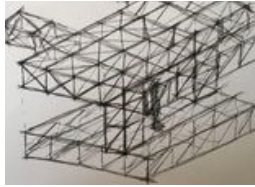
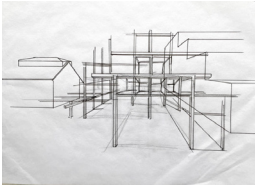
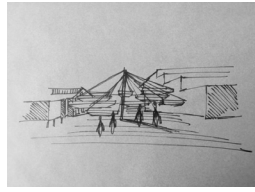
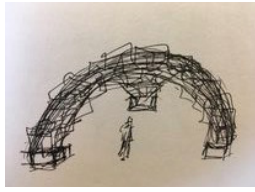
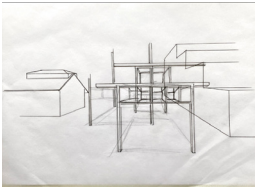
Action

- AE** - To accommodate all stakeholders' needs and requirements and ensure they all have a voice.
- AE** - All stakeholders should be a part of the construction proces.
- B** - Work in a scale that meets both sides - Institut for X' s slightly smaller scale and New Aarch' s large scale.
- C** - Ensure that all stakeholders are equal and have the same vote regardless of the scale or position of power.
- C** - Raising the voice of nature as a stakeholder (LAARCH). When raising this voice we might ensure equality between the two other stakeholders as nature already contains an amount of equality and attaches equally to both stakeholders.
- D** - Highlight the existing qualities of the site both in regards to the physical environment and the atmosphere.
- D** - To have a dialog with the stakeholders and acomodate their desires
- AE** - The atmosphere of the place should be including and open towards everyone. Everyone should feel welcome and as a part of the place. A place that accomodate everyone and creates a sense of equality.
- F** - Focus on social and environmental sustainability

Design

- A** -By making a new layer, we create a framework for collaboration between the stakeholders
- A** - The architecture/intervention must be placed on the border between the two institutions. It must accommodate both institutions and open equally to both sides.
- AE** - The design of the construction is open for expanding as the development between Nature, New Aarch and Institute for X progress - our design is not finished but it is the very beginning. The construction is changeable and supposed to grow just like nature.
- BE** - We want to create a new level that connects X and New Aarch and evens out the boundary between the scale of the buildings. The level could be a roof or an extra floor. The site is surrounded by tall buildings and does not really accomodate the human scale. By making areas covered with a roof, the construction can speak more into a human scale and give a sense of security.
- C** - Nature as an equalizer - letting nature controle the architecture and the meeting between the stakeholders.
- BC** - The construction should be lightweight and aims to guide nature in a direction but nature should have the opportunity to take over and controle the construction.
- C** - New Laarch is a lab so how can we use this in our architecture. Can our intervention/architecture contribute to New Laarch and the lab.
- C** - How can New Laarch highlight the nature?
- E** - The space is open and is easy accessible. We can create small rooms in the bigger room with plants that gives transparency, in that way you still feel the equality of one community.
- DCF** - Our design is inspired by the way they build on Institute for X to represent their voice at this place. But also to show a more sustainable a creative way of building contra New Aarch
- F** - Reuse of materials - when making the construction out of reused materials the design will seem more growing and it will show the proces - the proces between our stalkholders

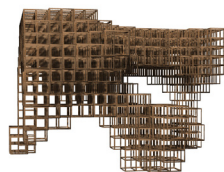




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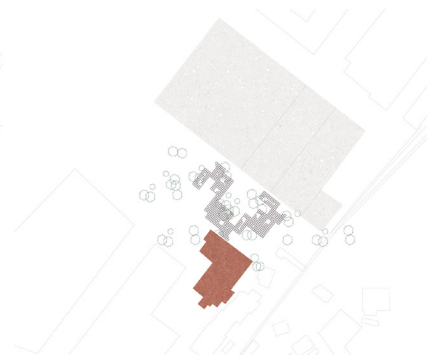


dimension: 20mm



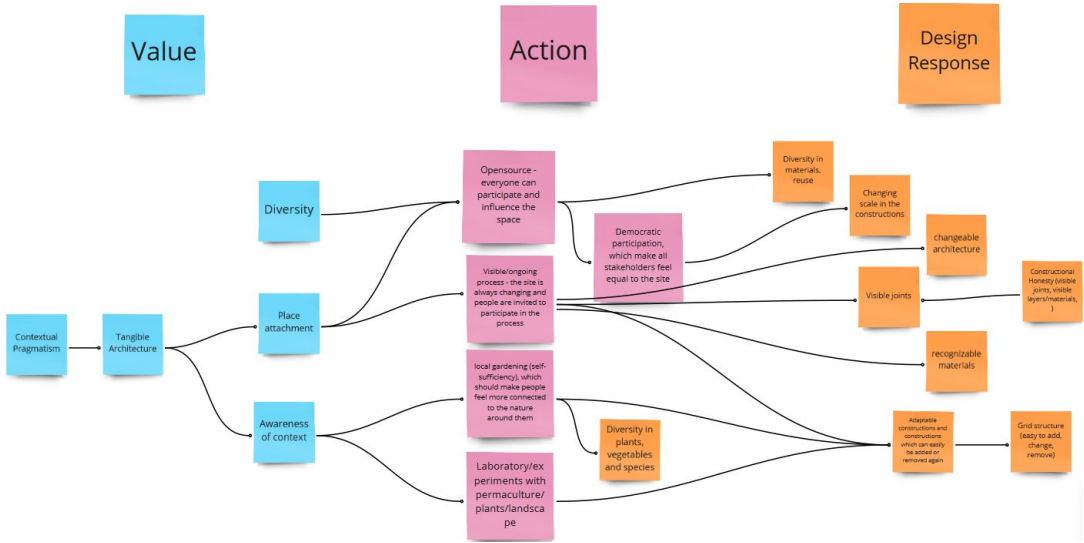
2022

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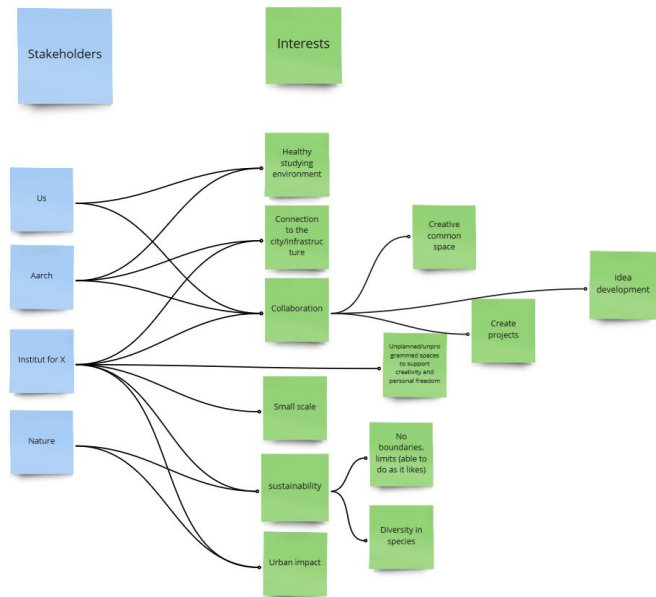


RESULTS GROUP 4

Value → Action → Design response



Stakeholders

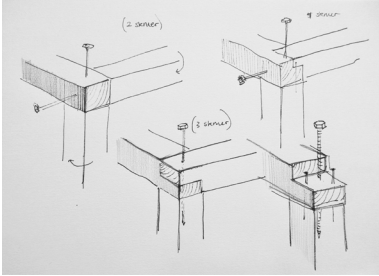


The site in the future world

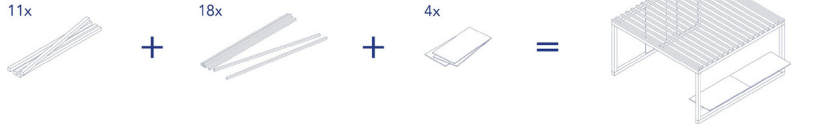
- Food produced locally → awareness of the origin of our food and more sustainable food production
- ecology, self-sufficiency, food markets → more tangible relationship to the nature around us
- diversity in culture and background → reflected in a diversity in building styles and use of materials
- visible that the city is made by people and for people → ongoing process



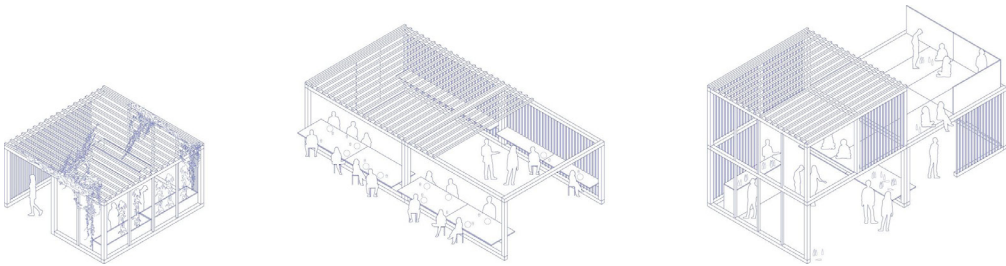
Joinery and construction



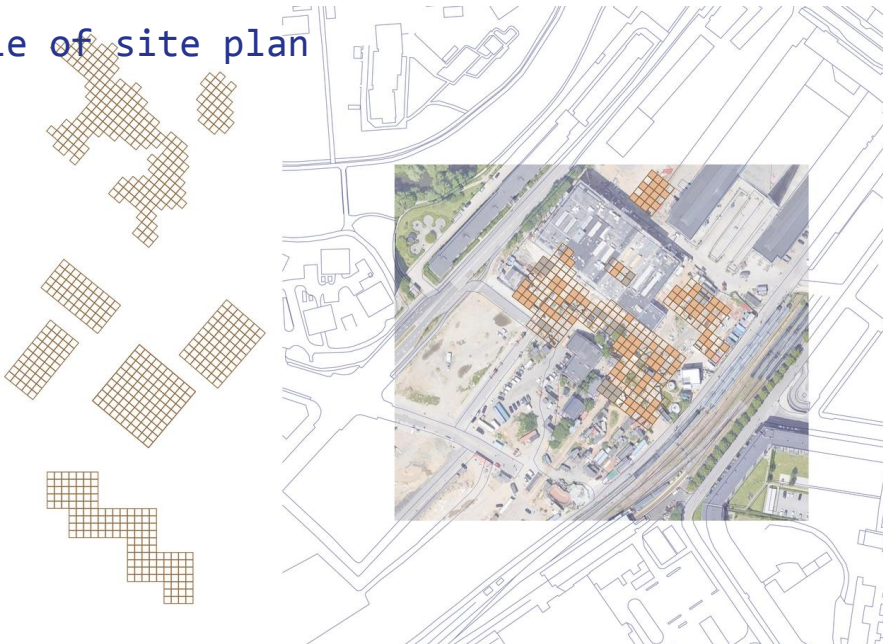
Assemble guide



Examples of different situations

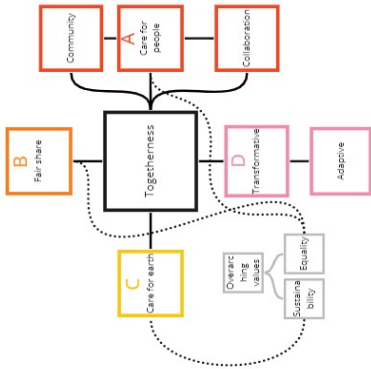


Example of site plan

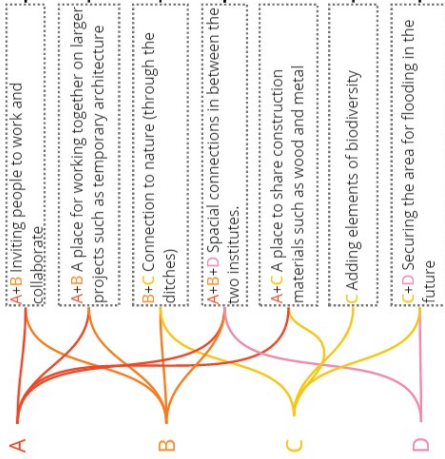




VALUES



ACTIONS



DESIGN

Designing areas where people can come together and collaborate and use the space equally

Designing one big area with space where both institutes can play, such as a gallery or an amphitheater

Ditches moving water during storm floods add an element of wetlands to the design of the space and biodiversity

Bridge like structure connecting the two sites in the air, not restricted to one singular level, add an element of space for the creation of conversational areas, also where plantlife can climb up to.

Different levels of wireframed bridge structure

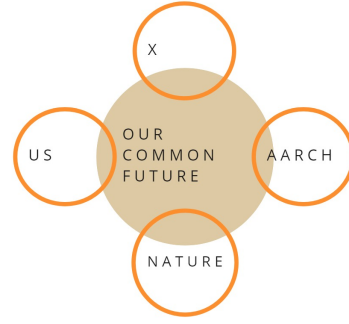
Creating structure in light materials / transparency

Different plants growing on the wire structure

TOGETHERNESS

togetherness
noun **LU**
US /təˈɡeðər.nəs/

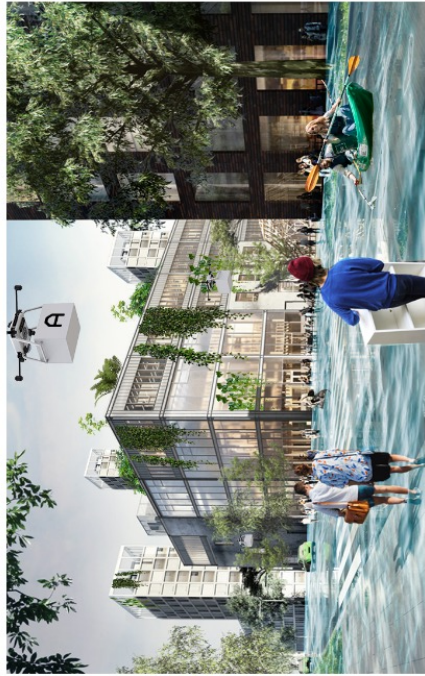
the feeling of being friendly and close with other people:
The project encourages family pride and togetherness.



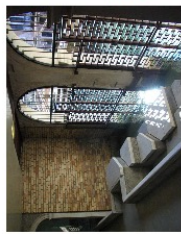
ATMOSPHERE



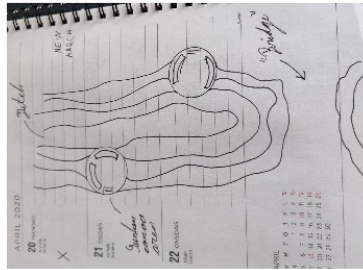
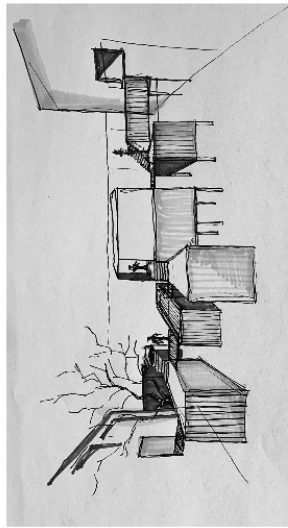
FUTURE



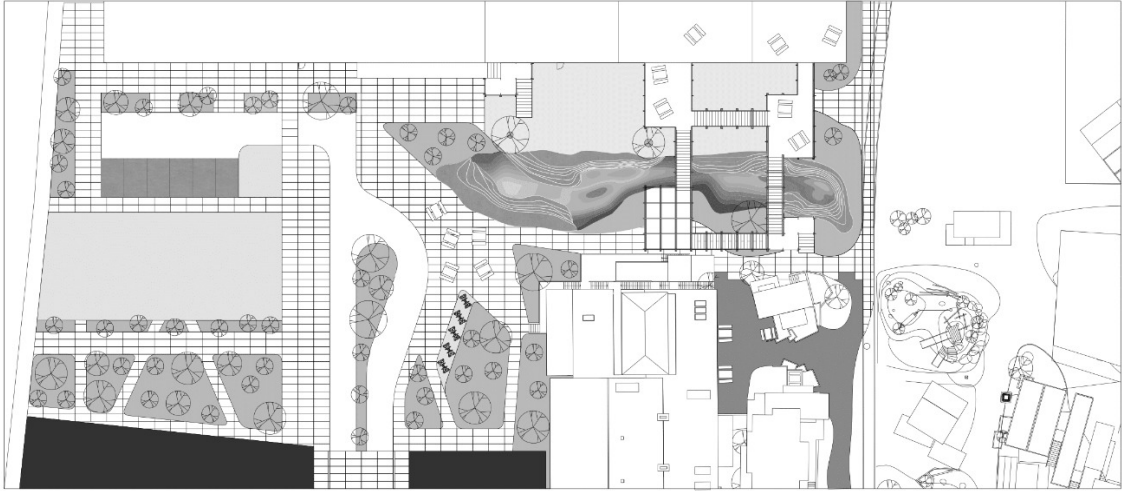
ADAPTING TO NATURE INSPIRATION



SKETCHING AND PROCESS



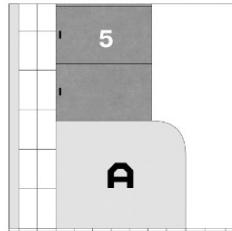
The Site



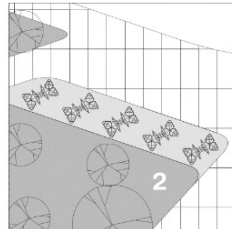
The Site



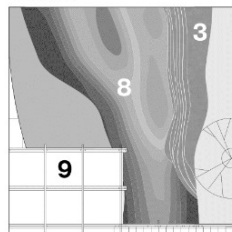
Drone drop off area & driverless car pickup spot



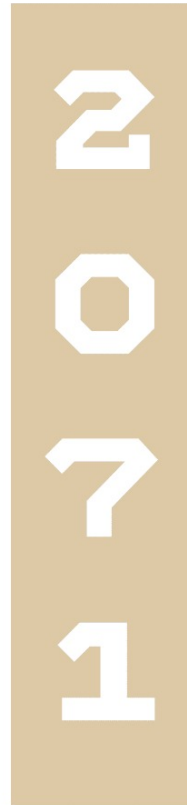
Planters & Drone charging area



The Ditch

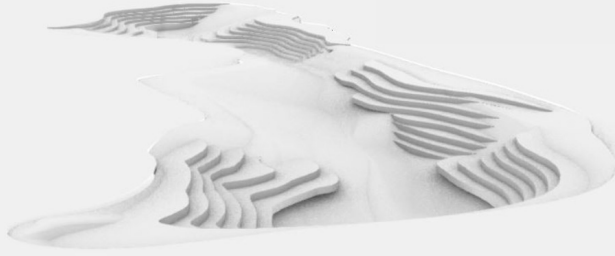


- 1** The red brick path
- 2** Planters
- 3** Concrete Stairs
- 4** Workshop areas
- 5** Driverless Car Area
- 6** Exner Plaza, Turnaround
- 7** Recycled concrete slab path
- 8** Ditch
- 9** Wood Structure
- A** Package Drop off spot



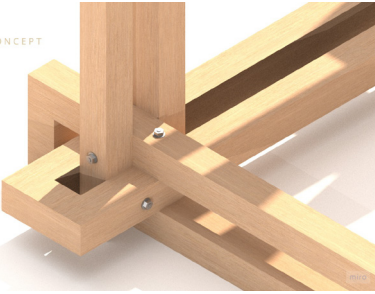


MANMADE DITCH

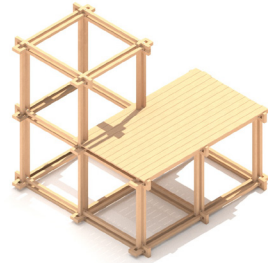


miro

CONSTRUCTION CONCEPT



1:1 PROTOTYPE



miro



EXAMPLES OF EXCEL SHEET WITH INPUT FROM STUDENT'S LOGBOOK (DETAIL)

DAY 1-Monday 15			DAY 2-Tuesday 16			DAY 3-Wednesday 17			DAY 4-Thursday 18					
responsible architecture	personal values	professional values	thoughts	feelings	learning points	nature as a stakeholder	your role as a stakeholder	thoughts	feelings	learning points	wished for future society	thoughts	feelings	learning points
For me responsible Architecture is about more than just factual things. For a	At present, what matters to me is mostly Building with thought and	I believe I can translate these values into my practice. Building with thought and	Interesting workshop, but a bit unsure of it since weren't told much	It was nice and exciting. I think it was nice to have something different from I'm	A lot to take in, a bit unsure of this question.	I imagined nature as a person, and how that person might have some values they	I can contribute with my ideas and thereby become an active	I really liked it. The method of using terms such as stakeholders was new to	I learned a lot about involving stakeholders – something we have not done to this	The term stakeholders and how we can use them in the process.	The idea of making a collage of the future seems interesting. The reason	We want to build a society that fosters creative freedom.	Another meeting with the stakeholders where we have to take action and ask questions that helps as	It pushed us into a position where we are allowed to take action and ask questions that helps as
• For be that it needs to adapt and respects its context. • Should be designed so Sustainable architecture – to built with Sustainable and long-lasting	• Equality/relationships – There should be a form for user in the process. • To be open, honest, inclusive and a great listener. • Be respectful	• The architecture needs to be honest. • Involve the user in the process. • Be aware to whom and where you are building. • Be respectful	• Was a bit confused. But it was nice to have something different from I'm	• It was nice and exciting. I think it was nice to have something different from I'm	• I have a lot to take in, a bit unsure of this question.	• The group and I took to the site and notes and pictures of the environment. The silent stakeholder. Organic and sometimes difficult to control. Let it grow.	• For me it is important to understand and interact with the different environment. Engage in the environment, be curious, ask questions.	• It was fun to visit and talk with some of the stakeholder. The visit to Godsbanen I learned a lot by talking to Mads, Peter and Karen Kjergaard. Learned both	• It was fun and learning. It was different and we got a lot of options to interact with	• I learned that I should have prepared to ask questions and hear all	• The idea of making a collage of the future seems interesting. The reason	• I don't want to build a different society. I just build a bridge between the	• We worked on this decision by we were working separately.	• A bit confused. Talking to the stakeholders made us confused
for Sustainable architecture to be responsible there needs to be design elements	The most important thing to me and my life is the community and safe relationships I form. I truly	By creating architectural framework for the community and safe spaces	That when forming an actual lot of company or entering a company with	Honestly, I felt rather anxious since I had to work with some very new people and	That personal and professional values matter just as much as mutual	We went to the site and took notice of the environment of the space; how did it	By seeking to interact with the community and culture at this site. We are all	One should always visit the space, when intervening, I don't believe I could have	I felt less afraid of the future and the challenges we will be facing,	That climate and social conditions of the future might not be a frightful scenario but	I or we want to build a society that respects the culture of Institute for X and invites	I thought it would be very interesting to try to work with the	I felt less afraid of the future and the challenges we will be facing,	That climate and social conditions of the future might not be a frightful scenario but
Sustainable architecture - relations and family, trust, honesty and curiosity.	Close relationships and family, trust, honesty and curiosity.	I think all my values easily translates into my architectural practice as it is important	In the beginning of the day, I was a bit skeptical as a bit	I felt this would be exciting - A little bit hard it is in English, not very good in	The different ways of thinking architecture; gives it a title, for example	I understand nature as a stakeholder we need to give attention to and be a part	We talked with Karen about the atmosphere and environment at the	I find the project very interesting and I'm looking forward to learning and	I felt good when I'm looking forward to moving on with Phase 2 tomorrow.	I think Joel's lecture was really exciting and I learned about the term	Personally, I want to build a society that meets the existing environment and builds on	I think we got some good comments on the presentation of phase 1	I think Joel's lecture was really exciting and I learned about the term	I think Joel's lecture was really exciting and I learned about the term
Architecture that is sustainable in both material and aesthetic values (then Architecture that serves to push for a healthier way of living.	Close relationships and family, trust, honesty and curiosity.	make architecture that are close to you, in the small scale, architecture that you can feel that I am	very interesting - wish that we could try to mock-up something - excited what	I felt this would be exciting - A little bit hard it is in English, not very good in	Learned a lot of things from the lecture in particular	I tried to discuss the potentials of the other stakeholders	Mainly worked within the scope of tangible architecture and how this	It was nice to have the meeting with the stakeholders. That it can be a	felt excited when we were talking with the stakeholders. I was a little bit tired the	I was introduced to the verb "world-ing" but I don't know if I have learned	an equal society where every who want to hang out and chill	an exciting presentation difficult to predict the future – about what to consider,	Felt fine. Sometimes a little bit confused about going to do, maybe	I was introduced to the verb "world-ing" but I don't know if I have learned
Architecture that is sustainable in both material and aesthetic values (then Architecture that serves to push for a healthier way of living.	Close relationships and family, trust, honesty and curiosity.	make architecture that are close to you, in the small scale, architecture that you can feel that I am	very interesting - wish that we could try to mock-up something - excited what	I felt this would be exciting - A little bit hard it is in English, not very good in	Learned a lot of things from the lecture in particular	I tried to discuss the potentials of the other stakeholders	Mainly worked within the scope of tangible architecture and how this	It was nice to have the meeting with the stakeholders. That it can be a	felt excited when we were talking with the stakeholders. I was a little bit tired the	I was introduced to the verb "world-ing" but I don't know if I have learned	an equal society where every who want to hang out and chill	an exciting presentation difficult to predict the future – about what to consider,	Felt fine. Sometimes a little bit confused about going to do, maybe	I was introduced to the verb "world-ing" but I don't know if I have learned

EXCEL SHEET WITH IMPUT FROM STUDENT'S LOGBOOK (16)

DATE 17/06/2017		DATE 18/06/2017		DATE 19/06/2017		DATE 20/06/2017		DATE 21/06/2017		DATE 22/06/2017		DATE 23/06/2017		DATE 24/06/2017		DATE 25/06/2017		DATE 26/06/2017		DATE 27/06/2017		DATE 28/06/2017		DATE 29/06/2017		DATE 30/06/2017		DATE 01/07/2017		DATE 02/07/2017		DATE 03/07/2017		DATE 04/07/2017		DATE 05/07/2017		DATE 06/07/2017		DATE 07/07/2017		DATE 08/07/2017		DATE 09/07/2017		DATE 10/07/2017		DATE 11/07/2017		DATE 12/07/2017		DATE 13/07/2017		DATE 14/07/2017		DATE 15/07/2017		DATE 16/07/2017		DATE 17/07/2017		DATE 18/07/2017		DATE 19/07/2017		DATE 20/07/2017		DATE 21/07/2017		DATE 22/07/2017		DATE 23/07/2017		DATE 24/07/2017		DATE 25/07/2017		DATE 26/07/2017		DATE 27/07/2017		DATE 28/07/2017		DATE 29/07/2017		DATE 30/07/2017		DATE 31/07/2017											
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Appendix 4: Critical Concrete and the SSA course information and focus group's transcripts

Critical Concrete and ESAP

ESAP (Escola Superior Artística do Porto) is a non-profit higher education institution that's part of the Cooperativa de Ensino Superior Artístico do Porto (CESAP). Established in 1982, ESAP is one of UNESCO's associate schools located in the historic center of Porto. Its main focus lies in engaging with the local community within the urban landscape of this world heritage site. ESAP offers a range of courses in various artistic fields, including architecture, visual arts, audiovisual courses, and communication. A multidisciplinary approach is favored to seamlessly integrate different fields and various media into contemporary artistic and architectural production. Students are urged to build their education upon diverse experiences, incorporating numerous theoretical and practical perspectives. ESAP also emphasizes the collective construction of knowledge and societal change, which are reflected in the numerous projects and partnerships they establish with various institutions, such as the SSA course in collaboration with Critical Concrete (CC).

Critical Concrete is a cultural association and non-profit organization that employs around five people and hosts 6-10 interns funded by external organizations like ERASMUS. Since its inception in 2015, CC has been organizing theoretical and practical educational programs to research and develop sustainable urban design strategies, as well as refurbish socially relevant locations around Porto. Starting from a small group of socially engaged activists and architects, CC has been running sustainable construction summer schools, involving international students to renovate homes for local Portuguese families. The use of low-tech solutions, recycled and sustainable materials, and participatory design has been integral in refurbishing these homes for the past four years. In 2020, in partnership with ESAP, CC launched the first edition of the SSA post-graduate course, which is now in its third edition. In 2021, CC launched an online learning platform (criti.co) focused on sustainable education used in the SSA course. This platform offers a variety of online courses given by individuals and small organizations working in the field of sustainability.

The CC headquarters is situated in the Ramalde neighborhood, in a historic Carmelite patronage building from 1950, which was later transformed into a kindergarten. This building has historically been an educational hub, a public service space, and a landmark in the neighborhood. CC continues this legacy by providing education in sustainability, hosting about 60 people each year who learn about sustainable living and construction. The facility houses co-working and co-building facilities like office spaces, wood and materials workshops, and laboratories. Leveraging the building's need for ongoing renovations and maintenance, CC uses it as a living laboratory for hands-on construction, focusing on recyclable and locally sourced materials. Over the years, educational workshops have facilitated the construction of a wood workshop with a green roof, natural flooring with rammed earth, and insulation with various natural materials like cork, among others.

Aside from the SSA course, CC also serves as a community hub and runs a design studio that offers architectural solutions from conceptual design to construction. They use a participatory design approach, focusing on housing renovations and urban public spaces, employing natural materials and adhering to their 'just sustainability' ethos. This ethos promotes inclusive, affordable, and accessible approaches, with a focus on human rights, inclusivity, and democratic participation. Their multicultural team collaborates with individuals and entities from around the world, promoting cultural sustainability by recognizing diverse heritages and vernacular technologies. In their workplace, they promote sustainable living by providing vegan and locally sourced food and fostering a sharing culture. In CC words: 'we advocate for environmental sustainability by taking responsible choices at our workplace'.

In addition to its educational role, the building also serves as a dynamic community center. Regularly, it hosts a variety of local social events, including workshops, film screenings, and vegan dinners. These activities aim to engage the local community and foster an environment of sustainable living and knowledge exchange.

An example of the events held at the hub, and one that I was fortunate enough to participate in, is the 'Repair Festival'. Held monthly, this event transforms the building into a bustling workshop for a day. Individuals with an array of creative and repair skills take up residence in the building, setting up a multitude of workstations that cater to a wide variety of repair needs.

The festival offers a spectrum of services, from electronics and clothes repairs to bicycle mending, DIY natural cosmetics crafting, and even food stations. Members of the community are encouraged to bring in items in need of repair, and guided by skilled tutors, they learn the art of fixing these items themselves. To facilitate these repairing activities, the office provides access to a host of machines and materials, such as drills, woodworking tools, and sewing machines. This hands-on approach doesn't just restore items to but also imparts valuable skills to participants, fostering a deeper connection to the objects in their lives and promoting a more sustainable approach to consumption. In essence, the Repair Festival embodies the philosophy of Critical Concrete, fostering a culture of sustainable living through practical action and sharing.

Course curriculum and pedagogical tools

The Sustainable-Sustainable Architecture (SSA) postgraduate program is a year-long curriculum, conducted entirely in English. The program's structure is a blend of interdisciplinary online theoretical courses (90 hours) and two hands-on workshops of three weeks each (210 hours).

The online courses are hosted on the 'criti.co' platform, developed by Critical Concrete (CC). This platform presents a blend of theoretical inputs, interactive communication tools, and practical assignments. Each course lasts between 4 to 8 weeks, with a workload of approximately 10-15 hours per week. The courses are spread throughout the semester to evenly distribute the academic demands.

Course materials are primarily pre-recorded and released according to a set schedule. However, they are interspersed with live sessions where students can interact with their peers and course tutors, discussing questions, addressing concerns, or working through assignments. The assignments themselves are varied, some with a theoretical focus, while others encourage practical application. Students may be tasked with conducting case studies in their local area or country, promoting a connection between their learning and the environment around them.

The program's two construction workshops are its core components, providing students the opportunity to apply the theories and concepts learned during the semester to real-world projects, gaining valuable hands-on construction skills. These workshops took place from January 31st to February 18th, and June 13th to July 1st, 2022.

During these workshops, students work together, co-designing and collaborating with local residents on a variety of construction projects. These projects aim to improve the local area and may include the renovation of CC's facilities, revitalization of public spaces, urban landscaping, refurbishment of homes for low-income families, or improvement of community spaces.

The SSA program strives for a balanced understanding and application of both material and social sustainability. As per CC's website, the program's objective is to lay the foundation for an ecological and socially responsible approach to architecture and urbanism and help students to develop competencies in the following areas:

Ability to start and manage interdisciplinary construction projects

Gain awareness of the need to change conventional building and designing methods/techniques

Understanding of principles and strategies for environmentally friendly construction

Acquire knowledge and practice on diverse methods that are ecologically conscious, using natural building materials, as well as low-tech and low-waste applications

Ability to recognize and apply vernacular construction techniques to contemporary needs

Capacity to implement sustainable and inclusive design in architectural and construction projects

Consciousness about the need for intersectional and inclusive approaches in neighborhood and city planning

Understanding the need for bottom-up approaches and how to engage local populations and institutions

Ability to empower communities through participatory design and increasing involvement for people at risk of social exclusion

Acquire the necessary frameworks to run and fund a sustainable and/or social project

In pursuit of these goals, the curriculum is structured into two primary components: one concentrates on sustainable materials and the other on social sustainability. This results in interdisciplinary learning modules spanning from highly technical subjects such as rammed earth construction to social architectural perspectives like participatory design.

The courses centered on sustainable construction delve into the use of natural materials as substitutes for harmful components in structures, insulation, finishing, and treatment. These include construction with mycelium, raw

earth, rammed earth, and straw bale, as well as the deconstruction of buildings to recycle and reuse materials. This part of the curriculum also considers vernacular architecture and the renovation of historic structures. Students are encouraged to explore the potential and applicability of traditional techniques within contemporary contexts and learn how to tackle renovation tasks sensitively.

The courses focused on social approaches to architecture explore a range of topics related to the social responsibility inherent in architecture and construction. Community participation plays a crucial role in the program and is addressed through courses on ethnographic methods, the psychology of sustainability, and participatory processes. These courses equip students with the tools and strategies necessary to engage with communities while challenging their biases, preconceptions, and current worldviews. The “Social Cities” module also offers courses on militant architecture and social urban movements, exploring the links between sustainability, social justice, housing, and access to public spaces.

Bridging these two areas, the Ecological Urban Development module delves into urban practices and strategies to address current environmental and climate crises. It includes courses on regenerative thinking, circular economy, sustainable urban food systems, water systems and infrastructure, and relates these concepts to democratic engagement. Finally, the program equips students with courses on ethical leadership and management of sustainable enterprises, providing them with the tools to initiate and manage a social project ethically while ensuring economic stability.

During the in-person workshops, students work together, co-designing and collaborating with local residents on a variety of construction projects. These projects aim to improve the local area and may include the renovation of CC’s facilities, revitalization of public spaces, urban landscaping, refurbishment of homes for low-income families, or improvement of community spaces. The courses centered on sustainable construction delve into the use of natural materials as substitutes for harmful components in structures, insulation, finishing, and treatment. These include construction with mycelium, raw earth, rammed earth, and straw bale, as well as the deconstruction of buildings to recycle and reuse materials. This part of the curriculum also considers vernacular architecture and the renovation of historic structures. Students are encouraged to explore the potential and applicability of traditional techniques within contemporary contexts and learn how to tackle renovation tasks sensitively. Another notable aspect of the course name is its nod to the program’s praxis approach, which emphasizes the integration of theory and practice. While students are introduced to theoretical concepts and methodologies, they are also encouraged to apply these in the hands-on workshops. These practical sessions mainly concentrate on small-scale projects that benefit lower-income clients and communities in the vicinity of the Critical Concrete facility. Some projects also focus on improving the facility itself, a structure dating back to 1950. The building serves as a dynamic experimental space, where each renovation, floor, and wall are constructed using varied materials, tools, and techniques, allowing students to experience 1:1 scale construction firsthand.

Transcripts with group 1

Students: Helen/Netherlands/architect, Dia/Serbia/architect, Sue/France/product and interior designer, Mari/Glasgow/architect

R

So why did you decide to take this course?

Sue

Like for me it’s just like I wasn’t working full-time and I wanted to do something else. I was like, I was studying to do since like a year some architectural projects. So yeah, I just wanted to learn more about it because I didn’t want to do five years of architectural students.

Mani

Well, basically I knew about critical concrete from the beginning, from when they started. Actually, I never participated, I never like talked to anyone, but I was kind of watching and I just, I wanted to really explore these topics and experiments they’re doing. There’s no real opportunity to do that in the architecture school, like hands on and real-life situations, projects. So I really wanted to do the internship actually, but the UK and Brexit made that not possible. And, and then this course came as a result of that.

Dia

Yeah, I just came across like the site while I was trying to find something for masters or something else, because like we didn't do anything really connected with sustainability in our school, and I really wanted to go like that part. And like Mani said, likes hands on assignment and doing anything that's really real and not just on paper. I missed that experience through the school and I started working and didn't feel really comfortable like we are doing a bunch of stuff because I don't know how that is really done. And yeah, this was an opportunity to do all that.

Helen

Yeah, for me that's like the main reason was building real things. Because until my graduation I... right now is really when I'm seeing what we are building, but I draw like super cool stuff but no can ever build this. It was mostly details I wasn't really into. And, you know, in the end of the design I always got a bit bored. Details, have to finish it up, but I actually didn't know really how to, I mean, I know how to draw them and I have no clue how they were building it. It's like some machine and poof. But, uh, then it's really nice to actually do it.

R

So when you say like, real project, to me there's this practical aspect of it, of seeing things in reality, how they are built and stuff. But is there something else when you mean that?

Mani

Um, like not just you know, like just prototype something that's really, like, for example, the roof that you're doing is like someone's roof and you have responsibility of that person's roof. And I mean, architecture is all about responsibility. So even like this wall is more of a research project, but it's still gonna be this wall for the bathroom.

Helen

Yeah, it's bit of a mindset, main side of helping other people and mostly reusing. I think that's what I really like it.

R

So what has been like very different during this course that you learned so far that caught your attention that's really different from other things that you've learned in this field?

Helen

So beside the practical part then, yeah, I think actually I found the online classes super good organized. In the Netherlands, maybe it's also because they just started when there was covid, they really had no clue how to manage. Also, because we had design projects and then one morning in the week we had a meeting with our teacher and all of it was like, whatever you wanna do in here, it was super structured. Like you get tasks every week and do whatever whenever you want it. This is somehow guidelines and I found the platform super well done.

Diana

Yeah, I think for me, like topics, because there are a lot of things they cover in the course, which I never heard or just somebody mentioned, and here is a whole class going on that. So like discovering new things that I didn't really know existed and I like that every project needs some research, so you can just go to who know where to send you, like they put you some assignment and then you follow it and go to discover something you probably wouldn't if somebody wouldn't guide you. Well, like mycelium, for the first time, like participatory practices in Serbia is non existing. It's not never heard of it, but it's like we have urbanism and things like that, like in architectural school and nobody really mention it in some projects like so yeah, things like that. What else? Like, militant architecture was a new topic..

Sue

Yeah, for me it was kind of the same, like, to have a very really broad view of the subjects. Like, it's not only about the buildings like really we call architecture, but you also have like the food systems. Yeah, also I really like militant architecture and I found that it's like subjects that I'm not only if you can apply it to architecture, but I can also use for design.

Mina

Yeah. I don't know. It's like not so totally to do with architecture. I mean, it's like architecture doesn't have these boundaries. It's like, not like a subject like this or that, specific to itself. I mean, interrelates with everything we engage with. So it's so nice to have like urban food systems in parallel with like ancient buildings, which, you know, so all of these subjects are really like, almost like there are things that in architecture school I had to really discover, like find out from scratch and then you went kind of, you search and you find people doing certain things. But it's really in this like self-taught...and I feel like for everyone, these topics are new and they're emerging from people that go

outta their way to find and discover. But yeah, I'm really kinda grateful to have the opportunity to have kind what feels like a foundation in these.

R

it sounds like it's kind of like marginal thing that you're doing? But with this there's like a common place?

Mina

Yeah. Yeah.

R

So everyone like mentioned that you were looking for something different when you were enrolled for the course, like. different topics that were not covered in your education before and stuff like that. So I feel like there was a concern with like sustainability already, right? So during the course, after you started taking it and now that you're here, like how do you, like, how do you feel about it?

Helen

That's so hard, good question. I mean, I was super excited. I was still super excited. . Yeah. Uh, I think some courses I liked and I think the courses that I like, I maybe wasn't expecting to, like in the courses I was expecting to I liked less. But maybe because the courses that I liked, I already knew some, and then it was a bit in the line of what I knew and the ones that I had no clue. So... I didn't know what to think. They were actually super cool. Um, I don't know. Freedom is not really a feeling, right? But , it feels like it, you know, because we can set our own time and do whatever we want in the meantime. And then come here for the workshop. I really like it.

R

So what was your impression when you entered this house, like this place ?

Helen

For me, it felt like, uh, students association, house, because everyone is super involved and maybe because of that (pointing to the dog who enters the room)

Mina

They really, they really make it feel like home

Sue

but also like in contrast with ESAP you were just before where like in the morning.

Helen/Mina

Yeah it is a big contrast

Sure

Yeah. Everything is new, is a new building white and clean and like they showed this promotional video (all laughing)

R

that was pretty funny. Like why is he showing that? Did you guys feel tense, like when you were there in that morning?

Helen

like in a school. Yeah. Yeah. You, you feel that atmosphere?

All

Yeah, Yeah. So much more.

Mina

You felt like I was going to university. Yeah.

R

and is that a good thing, or not really?

Helen

Not really...

Mina

actually, I mean, just really random personal thing. But I missed out from like, in Glasgow, my architecture school is just crumbling. And they really, they really didn't, in my last year, there was no access and I just felt like I missed it. So I had this feeling of like, Oh, yes, I remember this. Like, I don't know, I had some kind of...

Helen

oh, because of Covid, you couldn't go or?

Mina

we couldn't go because of, they were really cowardly. They could have made us go in like they could have done so much, but because of Covid, they were like, okay, we can't have you in many room here at the same time

Helen

Yeah that's true. I haven't had been to school in two years. This was like my first day of school. . Yes.

Mina

So, so I'm coming, coming here. Actually, I'm really, I had this big like relief. Critical concrete is really not polished at all. . It's all ramshackled and like as you go along out it's, and it's like it really embodies this experience. It's really very comfortable.

R

do you guys feel similar or something different?

Diana

Yeah, very similar. When first day when we came after five minutes, I always felt like I, I've been here like, like this is, I could relate to the place and it doesn't feel like it's strange or like it's first time you because of the energy I think and people..

Helen

But I was still a bit like overwhelmed. Because even though it's super like, uh, how do you say? Like, easy, accessible, anyone, you know... it's huge. It's really big and there is so much going on and more people involved than I thought, so I was still like impressed even. Feels really handmade. It's really good, nice.

Mina

it's amazing to see how they, how this kind of organism works. Like it's, I don't know, sometimes hard to find something like this that's successful. Yeah. And they retain, like everyone retains a really nice image.

Helen

Yeah. It's not for growing in money, it's for growing in... let's say expanding the projects, no one is benefiting Really? Sue

Yeah. Actually, I never saw something, an organization like that.. that works on with research with like biology, and other things in the project. You feel like it's not like other companies that this is not really linked to future professionals.

R

Yeah. It is very hard to work also in the field of sustainability, you know, because like you said, you're kind of in the periphery. Like most people are interested in something else, and then you need to like do by yourself and go after everything by yourself. Nowadays we're very worried about the environment and all these things. So we call this like echo anxiety. A lot of people have this feeling and it's very difficult, like to also be working with sustainability and dealing with all those feelings. You know, it's easy, like some people, they just choose to like, okay, I'm not gonna worry about that. I'm gonna leave my life in a way. So working sustainability is also very hard in a way. How do you guys feel about that, do you think? You ever felt that, and if you felt that during the course and if that changed during the course or how, you know, I don't know if you have any thoughts on that.

Sue

I think, yeah, for me it's, it was already there, but uh, with these studies and also with my work, like if you really get into working with sustainability, you learn to sometimes just step back and like, cuz you always want to do better and more sustainable and really be something perfect for the planet, but, yeah.. sometimes you just have to like, uh, do what you can.. and just having experience with it here, you also learn how to deal with it, I think.

Helen

My university in Netherlands was super into sustainability. You couldn't make anything which was not sustainable already from the first year, but I think before it was upcoming and when I was in my first year of bachelor, it was really inside integrated in every course. So it's a bit the same as I already had, like, the amount of sustainability, everything should be sustainable.

Diana

That's, that's like really nice to hear, because I had totally like opposite, like I was... all that, even before I started architecture. And like for me, I remember my first project when I started like, why can we do that? But like, that's not sustainable. Like it couldn't exist...there's so much waste? Like teachers just look at me and like, Hmm. Like it's, it's not your problem, said something like that. So I get to that bar here, like for through my whole education. When I

start work also, so like I really feel like anxious about that and have that thought that it could be really easily changed to be better and people don't want to like go there because they are not used to it or like it's just putting the effort they don't know why would they do that? Changing people mindset it's hard.

R

so did you feel like, did you have any thoughts about that during the course since you started the course? Like did that change at all or?

Diana

Um, it helped give me like maybe more knowledge. I think I always was trying to get better arguments. So when people ask me to, I can persuade them or see them difference or maybe like usually it should be that economic aspect. So like if you do that, that you will save that amount and that's enough for them, then it's great. But to find, to explaining better so I have more knowledge probably. That's one of the things I was hoping for, yeah so I can do that.

Mina

Um, very similar to you.. mean, I've had, yeah, I definitely had this feeling and I've had it for, for a long time, like during maybe like evolved during my architecture studies, which was actually fragmented. I took two in total, two years out between four years of study. And I guess, uh, for me what's important is really, I mean, I just, I want, I really wanted to exist in this field. Not just work, but like really be involved in this stuff. And yeah, it's about knowledge and about being, feeling. For me it's actually really about feeling confident in my, in knowledge and in experience to be able to be sure what I'm doing is in more better directions, and then yeah, and also have more sustainable way, like maybe bring that sort, carry that to other people so...

R

And do you guys share this feeling that maybe the course gave you more motivation or in that sense...?

Sue

Yeah. Because in all of these processes you could see a lot inspiration from reading different countries also, and like, I think like everyone would see something they would be inspired by, because like in my previous school, we were only learning and still learning, like just doing project. We didn't have a lot of the different perspectives and reading, I mean like that in this course

Mina

I really liked, um, I really felt that because of it.. like this summer I graduated, I didn't like, didn't know if I was doing this this year. I was kind of stuck. I didn't really know how to progress, like I wanted to learn, I had so much more, so more to learn. And I didn't know if like a masters in architecture would lead me anywhere like that or even working, and I felt a bit alone as well. And then starting this course and being in a position with like so young people similar and just being able to have the space to talk about these issues. Um, like very motivating and it really broke that sense of loneliness, because you're not like, yeah, I don't feel so isolated in the only one who cares about this thing.

R

And do you folks think like you'll be able to apply the things you're learning here, like in the work you're gonna do afterwards in your career, or it might be difficult?

Helen

Definitely., yeah, for sure, because at first, I was already into renovation. And I will work a bit in renovation also, or like, maybe even restoration. Okay, because my university in the Netherlands is really like, sustainable, but really into innovative like design, like super high tech and not in low tech or reuse, they don't really do this. So my graduation design was about reuse and I had one year of fight with my teacher cause she was like, we're not gonna reuse. And I was like, we are gonna reuse . So, uh, . I think it's some, maybe it's even two mindsets, like the high tech and low tech and I feel more into the low tech than the high tech. So I think that's a bit what I was missing before on knowledge.

Sue

Originally when I came here because I was starting my first practical project, and before this year I didn't know anything about how to structure a building and I also the foundations and all these things.

Diana

Well, yeah, I agree. Like I also could really relate it what Mina said earlier, about the feelings and seen people like-minded. Is that like finding that group of seeing like-minded, people and, yeah, for using it, I think it's really depends like what we are working on next. But I think that this knowledge will help in some way and can direct...

I'm so not sure like what I want to do next. So I'm not sure how could I incorporate this, but it'll definitely be used in some way.

Mina

same. I mean, I will carry this food.. but it's also a question of what am I actually gonna do?

Diana

Yeah, that's the good part

Mina

But I found this one... I do each course, and I'm like, I'm going to do this one. I'm gonna dedicate myself to this. But it happens for all of them. Um, but it's, yeah, cuz I mean we are watching people who are kind of experts in the field in what they're showing. And it's really encouraging to know there's like real developments within everything. So I'm in this really like naive state, like I wanna do everything .

R

And any challenges that you can foresee, things that you learned that maybe you like very much, but you think that's gonna be a challenge to apply or to work with?

Mina

participatory design is hard, yeah, I think it's like in real life. Once you finish the course, I mean, yeah, I like it very much, but I mean this was really when you see people who are very good at engaging with all sorts of people, and bringing out everyone, yeah, it's really impressive. But yeah, I think in this particular case it's a lot of people skills.

Helen

yeah, it's not easy. . Yeah. You also have to...society constructions almost, if you want this, like with the rules and everything. I mean, if you want something as just a civilian, you can say whatever, but you need like, the right people, the right, organizations to get through, like the whole system.. I mean, going from being the municipality is easier to go down then.

Sue

I think it would be more like...because about the specific material, like mycelium. I Don't see how I would apply to what I'm doing. Because we're doing this a lot cause I'm working with reuse, because I was doing a bit of a service design, so it's close to the users but the materials, I wouldn't be confident. Like even though I had the courses, I wouldn't be confident to really start a project about it.

Mina

what is your work?

Sue

Right? I work in a session that builds things like mostly furniture with reuse materials. But we are also selling to like, we are doing a warehouse experiments with reused materials also and we do another building later

R

Okay, so last thing. Anything that you would like to see more or to have that you didn't have during the course so far?

Mina

you really want more all the time just, but I found that I didn't manage my time so good in the very beginning, but I was very overwhelmed with the amount of work. So it's hard to imagine having more in that timeframe. Um, but yeah, I'm really interested in the topics that you mentioned that you think so...

Helen

Yeah, I think we had some courses that really overlapped with the topic and we could have had like mycelium completely different, something like that.

Sue

But also I found that some courses were really similar, so it was really surprising to have like vernacular and sustainable building so..

R

And besides content, like is there something that could be better, like way of learning or tools

Diana

I think would be nice to have more shared projects. Like there is one photography that we do share, but maybe we were to have some to really discuss like in personal people about, uh, if we have under approved like some separate

like rooms, discuss more people, but maybe to have that newer subject, not just forums. In person, like discussion about something.

R

Have more time to talk to each other?

Diana

Yeah. More time to address the issues..

Sue

But the forums like, we like not really using it well, I think not really. We're all like posting stuff a little bit, but no one is really responding, it's not really a conversation

Mina

We're just all in slightly different places in time. Yeah. So, there was project, yeah. And also you don't get a notification to say someone's replied to your new thing, so you have to go and check. So there's no, and if you don't check, then you don't know even so there's very little like actual dialogue happening. It would also be nice to have more from the teachers. Cause some courses you don't get any feedback.

Diana

Yeah. Like, I also hate, like writing and everything, so like forums were just like, I really hate to when I have something to write. So I didn't use it that much because it was really not for me, but.

Transcripts with group 2

Students: Fran/Italy/architect in Vietnam, Iaza/Jordan/urban planner, Lia/Germany/urban planner, Dia/Germany/urban planner, Mark/Belgium/architect, Neha/UK and Gana/architect student, Mila/India/architect in UAE

R

what are the main motivations that you had to do this course?

Fran

Uh, for me it was really because I did quite a lot of construction workshops, and sustainable construction workshops, so I had already a little bit of experiencing the construction aspect of it, and the biggest reason why I did it was more for the courses and theoretical approach to it, and the fact that it was coupled with the university. Uh, yeah, like a proper structure and full graduate program rather than just a construction workshop like I have done already a few times.

Iaza

Uh, for me, what I enjoyed working on studying in architecture, mainly like sustainable approaches and say vernacular architecture and so on, and also bottom up, urban development and alternative development strategies of cities is always was interesting to see it all combined in one course. And the flexibility of doing this online. Also having some like practical, like the practical part here was also something that made me convinced to try this out. I've never done something like this before and I didn't have any practical experience with equipment or building stuff on my own. So I thought it would be enriching for my personal and also professional life.

Fran

If I can add one thing for me also, like there was one particular course that I was interested in that we will have in the second semester, and that was about like, I think from from Sam about how to start a sustainable place, organization, project, because I've been, yes, searching a few and, and not really succeeding. Like, to be financially sustainable and to be able to develop it the way I wanted. So I was also interested in seeing how critical concrete is managed and organized and, and how they deal with the money and the fundings and yeah, the organizational aspect.

Lia

So my motivation, so I was getting out of my bachelor's in march and then I actually wanted to make a long break of studying, um, and of working as well, because I was a bit bored by my job and I was also not really wanting to go into a master's because it seemed too much commitment in terms of time and uh, also I wasn't, or I'm not yet really sure in which branch of urban planning or in which branch in general I want to work in. I'm still very open for new experience and for new, like, let's say inspiration. And I've been also being involved in different projects, but more like music festivals where I did small, simple constructions and, let's say arts coordination, decoration things. I want-

ed to learn a little bit more how to, yeah, how to really construct. And I also really enjoyed about this program that it has this practical part, the workshop part, because I really feel this like wish to be in my work with my body and also for the future. I think it might be interesting for me to have a mix of these things. I can't really see myself sitting on a computer, uh, 40 hours a week. So this is kind of a, like, more like, let's see how it goes and feel into it and learn some skills for the future maybe, but I don't yeah, really know for what yet.

Mark

Yeah, but for me it's a bit different because I'm not following the SSA class. But, yeah, at the beginning I did apply for the master. But I was especially interested about the construction stuff. And so I wanted really something maybe a bit longer than the three, the six weeks of the masters. And, I call Sam, but he told me that they were looking for architects sometimes. And so it's why I came for six months and it's internship and I was really interested because for me it's, I did many working, in construction in France for two years ago. And, for me it was the best way to learn how to do it. Like do it by yourself and, um, yeah, it's why I am here to learn by myself and with the others. And yeah, it's, it's good.

Dia

That's, yeah, for me it also is different aspect. I think it's for sure this thing that an urban planning, you get an idea of a lot of stuff, but it's always really conceptual and really, wide somehow. And I always had the feeling that I don't know really specific stuff and not really practical stuff. And I was always into concepts and so on and with my work. And also like in my private activism, it's always about concepts and politics maybe, but it's nothing really hands on. And I missed that. And I was also a little bored by my job and I actually wanted to travel and then Covid happened, so I was also seeking for some inspiration. And for some, um, experience which would be more international somehow also to get some more perspectives, but on a practical and concrete basis, and I really enjoy, or I really like this idea of one year and you get some input and then you are there and you have this, yeah, this practical input, but also the communication with so many other people, different perspectives.

Neha

And what motivated me to join is that similar to Lia, I didn't want to straight away after finishing undergrad, we jumped into another educational commitment. So I said I'll take a break, but it's not really a break. Um, but I thought this would be a good opportunity to explore something I was really interested in without necessarily a long time period, but within a short time period gaining the practical aspect of it and a bit theoretical aspect of it as well, and actually what drew me to this course, I saw that I did the Rammed Earth, was it a wall or a floor last year. And I was quite, I was like quite excited about seeing that actually practically happening. Cause I don't think I've ever had the opportunity to do that at all. Even if I did, I couldn't go because of Covid. But it was, this was the kind of the next best opportunity for me to kind of join and learn something more practical in something I was interested in doing in short.

Mila

I work in UAE(United Arab Emirates), the most unsustainable thing. Um, so I'm working there as an architect. So I got into a company and then mainly doing architecture, and then I shifted into interiors and also architecture. And, um, the more, I was doing a lot of designing concepts and stuff, and the company also had like a production team, but the architects were completely not really involved in it. And then I did see a lot of how the factory work, and I always wanted to go more into sustainability, but then the more I saw how the factory functions, it really got me motivated to say like, okay, we need to really see how we can be more resource conscious and more material conscious, think about alternatives. And I guess it was a lot about aesthetics, which I really started feeling like I need to move away from that as well and start exploring this. And, I think things really aligned because, or maybe because my mindset changed, I started coming across a lot of companies in UEA also who were trying to divert away from the very, um, consumerist take materialistic thing and trying to explore more of the materials. And so I came across this course also like that I started googling and searching and because I didn't want something like a concrete master's program before I actually knew that this is the right thing I wanted to do. So this kind of came at the right time and I thought, okay, let me see how it goes. And if I like it, then I can you know explore it further. So it was a, I mean, it's working out well so far and, I think it was like this workshop which they presented was like a really big incentive because I never really got to be very hands-on. So learning on the go and, yeah, that's it.

R

what you said now, and also talking to other students, I hear this very often, like people usually like are searching for something practical or sometimes they use the word 'real'. And it feels like in our education, usually in architecture, we, although it's a very practical work that we have to do, like there's, there's that thing missing, right? So it feels like it's a common thing here from everyone.

Mila

I can actually relate to that because for example, in the previous company I was working for, it was like, design team, and then there's production team. So once it finishes the design stage, we produce all the drawings, then it's like the project manager. And there's always a clash between the project manager and the architect saying: you don't think about this when you're designing it. So you know, you guys should have thought about it, but the reality is that maybe if there was a bit more of like the visual and the hands-on experience, maybe in design itself, it could have been included. So I do understand that, and that's, I think maybe why it's important.

Neha

I also agree with what she said, it's hard, thing is just conceptual and then you know how it's supposed to be defined. You know how it is, you know how it's supposed to be, you know how to plan the space, you know how to do it by drawing, but then when it comes to actually apply it, it's a bit different actually seeing it like a lot of the times, um, I'm trying to absorb everything that's happened because I don't, I have not had any like, practical experience at all. So, for me, it's really eye-opening in terms of... it helps, it allows me to understand what it would actually look like, what I'm thinking about, what it would actually look like in real life, and understand that there might be differences from what I'm thinking and how to go about it. Practical, practical aspects.

Dia

But I feel it's, it's not just an architectural issue actually. Yeah. I have the feeling or I am, I'm for example, doing that way more for my personal life than for any job, because I know when I'm working as an urban planner, I will never, ever build up a house. But it's more like for all projects or, um, I don't know, to get closer to the material, to have like a closer idea of sustainability. It's something which I think is really interdisciplinary, useful, and it touches a lot of topics, so it's not just the architectural field and the studies, which are lacking something because I think a lot of people are also nowadays searching for something they could do with their body or their hands and something they see they produce.

Dia

Yeah. And I think it's also got me thinking how, like maybe something which I would've probably like gone and bought something. I always, now I'm really concerned like how can I DIY it or how can I make my own.

Fran

But I think it's always a bit of a balance because yeah, when I finished my studies like six, seven years ago, I started doing a lot of those practical workshops because I had this need for, okay, stop studying and do more practical stuff. And then I did practical stuff for five years and now I'm like, ah, actually, there still need to have some, some theory behind and some extra knowledge I can learn and, and so you always go a bit back and forth between the two and this was a nice way of balancing kind of the two aspects in one course.

Neha

I think looking back, if I was to do my whole educational pathway all over again, I'll choose to do the apprenticeship route. Um, I don't know how works in most countries, but in the UK there's a route where, you would work with firm and they would fund you to go to university in like part-time for on their behalf. And I feel like, it's a bit longer, but I think that that'd be more, more helpful because it wouldn't be just intensively theory and coming out with no experience really. But I think looking back, I'd go for that with that approach cuz it helped me be hand in hand best of the worlds really. Yeah.

R

So regarding like the things that you learned during the course so far, and I'm talking about the online courses and everything, something that got your attention that you thought like was very different or that you, you know, usually don't see or didn't see in your experiences before?

Fran

I think the kind of seminar way of working was working quite well, at least for me. Like there were some lessons that were very lessons, like you have a teacher and it's a recorded video and you just listen and you take notes and then you do exercises. It's very close to what we used to do in school or in university. And then you had other approaches,

a bit like what John Lucas is teaching or Carsten with the food that were a lot more discussion based. And I think we were maybe a bit of a big group but the limit of being a big group where we are able to all talk to each other within a group and be able to exchange and yeah, that, I don't think that would've been possible with a bigger group. And I found it quite interesting as a format, because I was not really used to it. Uh, even in school we used to be like 500 students in, so you couldn't like even ask a question to the teacher.

R

So you mean this frame and this time to discuss with each other?

Fran

Yeah. And the teacher, like at the end we were almost, I felt like sometimes we were doing the class by itself, just talking to each other and the teacher was just kind of guiding a little bit or asking questions, but we were like learning from each other, more than just one way, top down way of teaching.

Neha

What I think for me in the class is the most challenging thing also, but also most interesting thing was really to take the theory into your practice or into UK studies. For example, with ancient buildings like that, you learn how roof is built up or like how a wall is made. Maybe also because I don't know, or I was, I didn't know before, but, and then to go to choose a building and to have a look on all those stuff and like to, to really get an idea and dig deeper and deeper and to explore a building differently and, um, like to draw them, and like yeah, getting really close to the content by doing it on a, yeah.

Fran

The case studies were quite nice, yeah, because it was very quick. It was a very quick jump from what we were taught in the lesson to like directly applying it to something that we were quite free to choose by ourselves. So it was, yeah, given in the choice of what we could focus on or study, we were quite free to find our own interest in what we were deciding as a case study.

Iaza

Can I add to this? I think I would add the word, like how you can personalize your own experience and for example, in my studies, I was often irritated by some courses that were supposed to do because it's part of the curriculum. And like, you need this to get the certificate and so on. And this is very like, it's very formal, you know? And with this course, not having the urge to like, oh, I have to finish every, every course. Like you just actually choose how much you get involved in each course, but made it different when an example, you would get an assignment and then, yeah, I could choose this kind of case study, I could learn this much of, but if I find it interesting, I could dedicate more time for it and learn much more. So, I like this individual approach to each course, and also to what you said, like learning from each other. Um, somehow us being all at home and like having access to the same videos made us all equal. And like the interaction made this peer interactions, the platforms that we were using. Maybe not the digital ones, like in sense of, seminars and so on really allowed me to at least to learn a lot from my colleagues and what they're doing because if I was choosing to do this course cause of these reasons, I'm sure others have other reasons, but we have so much like mutual interest, interest that it's for me, this creates the added value of having it in a course where we're all sitting to the same curriculum cause we're being forced to it somehow because we want to have this degree. Yeah, I dunno if it made sense.

Dia

But I think like whoever's joined this course has some reason or the other, there's no compulsion, you know, I think that's also like a driving factor because everyone has their own reason there, there's an intent. It's not like a, like a checklist that's coming, you know, after school, university, nothing.

Iaza

Yeah. You got the master's checklist. Yeah.

Dia

Yeah it's not like that, yeah.. you found it.

R

Uh, and the other thing that I wanted to know, like from what you said, uh, all of you sort of already had this like concern about like how to work with sustainability and also that's why you chose this course. And in my, in my research I've been dealing a lot with the issues that people working in the sustainability field and architects work in the sustainability field there's a lot of like stress when you work with, you know, with sustainability. So I just wanted

to know from you, if you had any reflections up upon that and you know, if the, you felt that during the course and if the course addressed that somehow, and, how do you feel about that now, if that makes sense.

Izara

I think I faced a lot of frustration when I started working, whether in architecture or urban development because what you learn is somehow different from what you practice. But also when you learn, you have this motivation. Some kind of like a bigger goal if you like, yeah, I wanna do this, this, this in life, or this is the change I want to do in my surroundings. And for me it was a bit disappointing to see how dissatisfying that is. Cause you end up doing something very small and a very big process that you sometimes don't believe in or you don't think that's a good thing. And doing this, this course, um, kind of gives me new perspective because many of the instructors are practitioners themselves and they give insight of their own work that they really practice, and they give you examples that you see, like, here you can do this and this works. Actually, I think this is something that I would consider inspiring, that gives me like a better attitude towards working again in those fields.

Lia

You have this connection to the real world somehow, right? Because when you are then in a company, it's always, ah, now we are not doing this. This is too expensive. Like, especially working habits are so different, like men or woman power, it's treated in another way, like it's much more expensive to have like a lot of people trying and building stuff up. So everything is standardized and it's, it's always this... so it's great to see how people go in a professional way, in another direction, but I still see a struggle there because even what we are doing here is somehow real, but also not real because we are not in a project or like in the end to really get this like a little bit scaled up and like economically working. I think this is still a big challenge. And I still see you have some gaps there.

Dia

And sometimes like, I was thinking about this, money vision, this discourse. And sometimes a bit frustrating also because in big scale you see the people sometimes do it just because it's standards and you need to be green and you need to do this. And then they don't really share the value that uh, all of this work can have. But it's more that, okay, the façade now is this so maybe I can get my more public funding. Maybe I need to do this. So sometimes this be the frustration. We're doing great job here because, in little scale, we can still make balance in between the budget you have and the resources. But when you look a bit bigger, it's not always really because you really share the values.. it's more like or I need to do is then I can put the lable that it is greener, you know?

Mila

Yeah and then is often not really sustainable cuz just the product is sustainable, but the process is maybe not, but that's not what counts.

R

So how do you feel towards this? How do you feel when you, when you realize that and when you see that?

Dia

I try to do better..

Fran

I quit my job.

Iaza

Me too. (laughs)

R

So there is some kind of frustration, like..

Dia

yeah, I mean frustration, I mean, it's a big, it's a big word. Cause also when you once, twice too, you know, is a bit like this. So you can prepare to the process and um, so you fight where you can and you cannot say when, when you're not leading the project. When you are leading, like I think you have more margin of action.

Iaza

Yeah, I think I quit my job after five years because I realized like in those five years I was working as an architect and then on the side doing all these workshops and, like increasing my knowledge on sustainability and what I really wanted to do. And after a point it was too much frustration and seeing that the people I was working for didn't really share the same values. So I quit and started looking for other people that shared the same values, even if it means at the end, like scaling down a lot, the type of projects you work on or, or the money you work with, or the salary or

the life conditions or whatever, yeah, I feel more at ease with working with people that I know I share some kind of values with.

R

Cool. So when you are done with the workshop, what do you think would be the things that you will have most easy time applying in your work, in your daily life, and what things will be more challenging?

Iaza

For me, it's the same thing. Yeah, looking forward to apply, but also is like, now I know more what I don't want in my job, you know? Yeah, and now the challenge is to finding what I want or finding something that suits at least my expectations.

Fran

Yeah, but I think it's already a big start to know what you don't want.

Others

Yeah.

Neha

I also think so

R

to be able to articulate that and yeah, make it clear somehow. Maybe because you maybe already knew, but now it's just clear?

Iaza

Yeah. And sometimes you just know that you..

Fran

sometimes you don't know.

Iaza

Sometimes. Maybe you're not sure you don't want this. You feel wrong about it, but you don't have the motivation or the energy to say like, no, I don't want this because I don't know if there's anything else that suits what I need. Uh, yeah, it's kind of like a, how to say, a reinforcement for your values.

Neha

I'd say, um, I'm coming outta this with a bit more confident, not a bit more, actually a lot more confident. in terms of seeing the projects, especially seeing actual examples of people like he mentioned that work in this and believe in what they're doing.. the correct thing. I think it gives me as more motivation to actually stand by what I would like to do and be like, you know what? That's what I wanna do. I'm gonna put in my all to do it, and if no one else actually agrees with me, potentially, or if no one sees it the way I see it, I know that I am gonna be able to find people that feel the way I do and I'll still go ahead with it. Like I won't just drop it or that I'll actually keep going and try to solve it, yeah.

Transcripts with group 3

Students: Greg/South Africa/engineer NGO rural development, Gin/Iran/architect, Rita/Ireland/set designer and artist, Aki/Japan/architect, Jade/Brazil/architect, Heri/Portugal/architect

Greg

And the reason what attracted me to the course was the, um, all the instruction on participative practice that, so I've done some of that work before. I'm not very good at it, in fact, I'm notoriously bad at it. And, um, and that's what I was looking for, from the course.

Gin

I'm Iranian, but, um, that's just, I think about four years. Just four years ago I've moved to United States and my background is architectural engineering and, but most of practice I was in the, you know, presentations, documenting, just developing the process of the design and not that much in construction field. I had just some project as a freelancer designing and going through the constructions. But, always I was considering, my concerns was about the, how we can, you know, reduce the footprints as a human, how we can be more sustainable in our life, not, not just in architecture.. and before just, we had the plan to move to Portugal, so just I was looking for the program that,

I can get to here and maybe more of the title. Just I was looking to, how can I get my fed with here and just find the connections here and how can I be in this field in Portugal. And in United States I got the lead certificate. It's the leadership in environmental design. And, these are just, all of them are ended to sustainability and environmental designs and this is just that the title was eye-catching for me. And, I found that, okay, this is gonna be really cool. Uh, it's gonna be international events and you can find worldwide connection and yes, that's it.

R

Cool. Is it very different from the one that you did before the lee certification?

Gin

The lead is just that the exam, I had to study and get the certificate. And, but the lead is, um, just in, you have to know about the steps that they're going to, how they want to. For example, it's a five, six different lead. What I got is the ab, BD plus C building design and construction. So the focus is on the building design and how you should, use the materials from the source and then the productions and, then you are using on sites and transportation. It's seven, six steps, categories that you have just to learn and pass the exam to get the certification they can use. You can just practice as a lead BDC in construction site and observe any things that, okay, these are just matched with the standards or no? Is the process going through it's okay or no?

Rita

Um, my background is very mixed. I suppose most recently I've been doing set design. I've done lots of work in film in different departments, and I suppose like after I, my first degree was a business studies in Polish, so I kind of went into like a corporate job from there. And then I started working in film. And, I suppose one of the things that struck me was that film is a super wasteful industry. And like that upset me and I've always been very creative, but when I chose my path of study, I didn't really indulge that side. So at the time of choosing film, that was like, that was for me a good crossover where, where the creativity and the like business can meet. But I wasn't happy in that industry. Um, I still do, I do set design for. Events for tv, film, photography, all of the things with the camera basically. Um, I spent a year before Covid doing a furniture design course, which unfortunately we couldn't finish because of the lockdowns. And I suppose my journey with organic materials began around that time when I discovered the mycelium process of creating like forms, and thought, like, blew my mind. And that's probably how I found critical concrete cuz I was searching around for things that incorporated mycelium and people who were doing it. And I looked in the Netherlands and I looked all around the world really. And, and I'd been to Porto before and it was a familiar place. So when I found it, when I found this course, I felt like it was a really good fit and that it incorporated a lot more of the things that I want. Cause I'd love to build my own house someday. I'm not an architect at all, but I'd, I really, I've always dreamt about that process. Um, so yeah, for the past, five, six years I've been building a body of artwork myself as well. And for me, I wanted to always incorporate the mycelium into that. So I've been trying to do that myself from home, but it's pretty difficult with the techniques that I was taught. In general, this just expands on all kinds of interests that I have. Like definitely sustainability is like the number one, like driving force behind anything that I choose and natural materials. I just remember watching a lot of grand designs as I was growing up and you know, like girl was like, oh, this person is like a nightmare because they don't have any experience. What the hell are they doing? You know? Yeah.

Aki

Uh, I studied architecture, undergraduate and master's course. And, yeah, I studied architecture design, but I also was doing volunteering for children's painting class when I was a university student. And I got very interested in the children's facilities and buildings. So after finishing my master's course, I started to working for the company that specialized in designing for children's, buildings like nursery and kindergarten or, your furniture or something. And during my job, I had a chance to visit Germany and, I visited several kindergarten and I was very impressed by first kindergarten, there was a very, very simple building made by container and the children spending their time almost day in the forest. And I was, yeah, very impressed by that. And I started thinking about, how we can live, live in harmony with nature and using organic materials for children. So I searched on the internet and I found the critical concrete article and I decided to learn sustainable here.

Jade

I graduate, uh, in 2005. I work more with design, interior design and one thing I have to worry about today is sustainability. In projects I work more with, cooperative projects, so it's very important for us to think about how we are going to design projects, things from the creative part to the finish. So, it's something that is coming in. We can't

go back with this. So for me, it is an opportunity to understand this situation from other people of the world and to, and also it was an opportunity to do workshops and do something that I never did which is, produce something with my hands, and not just with our brain. Uh, so it's really good for me because we don't have this situation in our academic studies and it's also really good for me to practice in my English, cuz it's not good. And also I'm moving to porto. So it was all check, check, check. And, uh, I found the course, and I realized that is something that I wish to do, even if I was in Brazil. And, but it was meant to be, I choose the cards, of course, because I was moving to here too. And what else?

Heri

I work in an architectural office and a city nearby where I live. The reason why I'm here is that I came across critical concrete by chance, and I found it super interesting. Um, the themes they work with, the sustainability aspect, the social work mainly that is something that I'm interested in and I just thought, why not? And I'm here. So, and of course it's also appealing to meet new people from different backgrounds and, the practical aspect of the work as well. And that's pretty much it.

R

Cool. So I would like to know from you folks, like until so far, not only the course here, but also the, the classes that you had online and everything, the structure of the course. Like, what was the things that most caught your attention that was like, more strong for you? The things that you learned, what was most different?

Jade

This workshop, for example, something really unique for me, I don't know for you guys, but we don't have this in Brazil.

R

You mean hands on work?

Jade

Yeah, yeah. I search for courses and we can't found something like this in architecture and specialization for architecture. You don't find like something like this there..

Rita

yeah. I mean, for me, the whole thing is really different because like that the online format is something totally new, I think in the world in general. Like it's really developing now. I haven't found it very easy to get used to or more like engaged in person and, I definitely appreciate the efforts that were made to make some of them more engaging, like with the urban food. Like it was very much about sharing with each other, like across the globe and producing these of that way, which was really nice. And I think there's great potential in that kind of a format. Um, I guess like when I was studying furniture before Covid, the atmosphere in the workshop was really different as well. Like we would move a lot slower and be more like every step at a time. And there would never be a situation where it's like, okay, do you know this machine now show somebody else. Like, that's, that's really new for me. Yeah.

R

And that's a good thing or?

Rita

it feels empowering in some way. Yeah, it's cool. Um, but it's also nerve wracking, I don't wanna be in charge of somebody else... but it works really well.

Greg

Like you've got 25 people from all over the world operating in an environment of respect and cooperation and that's, I mean, it's gotta be acknowledged. And we are learning a little bit of technical stuff, but the way we are interacting and the, I think that for me has been the most empowering or enlightening aspect of this course, of this part of the course

Rita

Yeah, going together as a team, like immediately

Geg

and the, the very sort of liberal, um, environment that you are operating in.

Jade

Yeah. It's so nice to work with different cultures and learn and each day a little bit more and understand and work very well together.

Gin

Yeah. This is the most, um, I think achievements of this workshop that we're all together from the different backgrounds and, but I can't find the better workshops in Tehran. And that there is a organization or.. there are. Uh, like here with they have some cooperations between each others and, but you know, maybe in your own country you can't find these international communications, just they are all Iranians or all from that city. This is, I think, the most important of this workshop that you can learn from each other. And, um, I found, online courses very, very helpful. I didn't expect that the online courses might be more, you know, intense and more educational for me, just when I was searching on internet, just I was thinking that, okay, this is a workshop and I would love to just do the hands-on project and I didn't expect that wow we are going to... passing this many courses and we have assignments and this and that, but the, the online courses was really helpful for me and educational and the workshop, I mean the working with the students and it's a really cool environment, but just we were talking, with the others that I know that this is the first year or they're in a transitions series. I expect more organizing, you know, for the space and for the arranging. The, just the space is kind of mess around this. This is really things that I need if we wanted to have from the all over the world, to have the minimum standards for serving them. I mean, the basic things, the toilets, the, you know, the place that we wanna sit, we wanna eat. These are the basic things. But in general, yeah. Just being around these many students and these many people from all over the world, different culture and the different levels of knowledge. If every person's or professional in somehow, in some specific points. And we can learn. For example in our team, I've learned a lot from Greg because he knows all the machine. He knows, you know, he was on a construction site and for example, maybe Jade is so detail oriented, and that he knows about detail and furniture. So this is I think the really important parts that we can learn from each other.

R

When you say cool environment, like, or you said something about liberal, what exactly do you mean by that?

Greg

So I use the term liberal in an American sense, maybe? No, so I come from a management background where I manage by imposing parameters and restrictions and what's been, and I'm not sure that's sustainable. So what I found here is an environment where there's a spirit of cooperation

Rita

instead of hierarchy

Greg

and yeah, a flat non-hierarchical environment. And I think that, to me what has been interesting. I don't believe for a second that sustainability lies in technical detail.

Aki

Yeah

Greg

I think that's all bullshit. I wouldn't go and do a course where I'm taught how to insulate a building, for example. . I don't think that's.. sustainability is how you expand and en masse (in a group) sustainable practice. How do you involve 50 million people who haven't had a square...for the last? So that's the environment I come from. Very different to the environment perhaps that Ari comes from. And, and in an environment where there's cooperation and commitment, it's, you stand a chance. And I've seen that here, you know, people from different social backgrounds, committing, cooperating, working together.

R

You guys want to add to that or something else that you noticed?

Rita

No, I think it's a really interesting point, like, yeah, I don't think it's more interesting for more conversations, not about critical.

Gin

Yeah. Yeah. And in our team, I dunno, maybe in the solar water heating team or in the roof, they can find the connection between the sustainability, but I dunno. For me, uh, designing the furnitures, I've learned many techniques in working with the boots and machines, but doesn't relate it to sustainability.

Greg

But it, but it does.

Gin

I mean, the, the online courses was 100 percent related

Greg

but that's a very narrow minded position or take on sustainability. You, creating a facility for a social, uh, institutional, social installation that is going to do training and development and surely that sustainability in that way.

Gin

Yeah, in that way, yeah. But I mean that, for example, the material or the techniques that we're using, it's not making the objects, it's not related to sustainability. But yes, we are, you are making this for the place that they are one to using for maybe, I don't know, they're selling events, secondhand clothes they're making food for, yeah, and in that aspect, yes.

Rita

I think, I think like for the furniture specifically, like it, it was sustainable from the outset because of the way that the wood was ordered. The wood was ordered, it was five trees that were found, they were specifically chosen, and we have then marked out how much usable material we get from that, right? And obviously maybe, maybe there's some loss in the fact that we are not absolute experts as we map this out, but I think rather than being like, oh, like I'm ordering this many planks.. Like, yes, what happens with that waste? How is it, how is it treated in between, like we have ultimate control over, like this wood. It's just the tree. Like that's it. So I think that's very sustainable.

Heri

But, and the techniques in itself are somewhat sustainable, the way which the joints are made, just using gravity or the same material to do the toilet pieces without nail or screws, being careful, you know

Jade

so the, the perceptivity process that we have to create something in common, so everybody has your voice since from the beginning..

Heri

The managing of the waste that reproduce, yeah. The way we can reutilize it, that is also sustainable

R

And for me, I've been working with this for many years and sometimes what is very hard for people that are working with sustainability or like trying to do things differently is that there's a lot of feelings of maybe anxiety or like, especially when you see the states of the world and the impacts of the construction in our environment, in our society and everything. So did you guys like had these feelings or these thoughts about this before or did you have this during the course and how did you, I dunno, did this come up at all and or the things that you're learning and things that you're doing during the course had any impact in?

Heri

It's not really breaking news at this moment for me. So I didn't have that feelings now, maybe years ago.

Rita

I think it feels a bit like a safe cocoon where you're like, we're doing our best here. And when you think outside of that cocoon, then it's like, fuck, but we're in a bubble now. So it's, it's nice,

Greg

but it's quite enlightening because through the course you exposed to a lot of solutions and mitigating methodologies that can solve a lot of the problems that we know about, as Jade said. So, yeah, I think it was more enlightening than stressful for me.

Rita

I think it's stress that brought us here maybe. (all agree laughing) Yeah, that stressful part, Yeah.

R

You said that you already passed this phase of like having this, so you were working with sustainability or doing, trying to do things differently before also the course and then this is like a add on or?

Heri

yeah, this is a add on for sure...that's a good question. Maybe, just a posture of, uh, a little conformism.. it and, just trying to do little things at a time and knowing that we are not going to change the world or resolving anything, that it's just a culture that we have to take and to try to improve, always.. have that kind of way of living and doing things and in my case, practicing architecture. It's just being, um, an optimist-pessimist...

Rita

Yeah. I think there's kind of like, for me, I kinda had the phase of like realizing that the system that is destroying the world is so ingrained that you can't like say, okay, I'm out of the system. In order to change anything, you have to actually work within the system to change the way that it flows. If you can change, you know, more than your own activities or more than your own behavior, than you've already done something big. But you have to work with it to do anything. So yeah, I think the pessimism is when you say, okay, I'm out, but the optimism is like, okay, I'm in, but I'm doing this, you know?

Greg

But there, there's lot of opportunity for cooperation amongst like-minded people. And so here we are, all with similar, mandates or aspirations and we can get together and kind of duplicate what we are doing rather than just be working on our own within the system.

Gin

Yeah, we can make your house and our house just, I wanna make one too.

Rita

Yeah, let's do it!

Jade

Let's do a mutirao!

R

that's a good word we use in Brazil.

Heri

Yeah, we learned from the course, mutirao, in militant architecture.

R

Ah, it's funny because I did research in different countries and in Indonesia they also have a word for that. And it means the same and it's the same take. And in Mongolia they also have a word for that. But in English, I can't find one... I think the best I should say, like mutual help or something like that? But mutual aid, but it's not exactly that self help. But that's not, yeah. But it's not like when a group of people get together to do something. And it can be for a family or for a person, but it can also be for the community, like some people are cooking for everyone and some people are doing the job and some other people like...

Jade

and when you get your house done. You will have to to build another house for your neighbor. Pass it on. Yeah.

Rita

Yeah. Mutual aid, maybe, Yeah. I hope that we will all be in touch in this group and the wider group. After this period, because what we have is so valuable.

Gin

You know, maybe for example, 10 years ago, just that was a on a news or you can hear that. Okay, this is, we should do this for better life, for better environment. I dunno, for saving the earth. But now I think it's gonna be like more than a trend. And the people just, they found that, okay, if they don't want to on the unsustainable way, there is another choice that they can choose. The abc, the materials, the, I don't know, the productions, the, everything that we have right now, we can make a choice. So I think it's gonna be more, touchable for everyone these days.

Aki

Um, yeah, first of all, I, uh, work this experience. I design for design building by using the steel structure, so I know about the steel structure and can design that, but I didn't know that about the trees or, somehow make materials and, but we have many trees in Japan, but I didn't know that I realized that. So, I felt I need to know more about the natural materials and when I visit, Germany, I, I run into different education system from Japan, and I'm also impressed by that. The other countries, a culture or the ideas or thinking, so I wanted to learn international environment. So what sustainability is, I think, thinking about sustainability is like a black hole... to find the answers to that question. But one thing we can do is try making something, try doing with other students. So, yes, so I am here. .

R

Cool. And the last thing that I want to know from you is like, uh, what are your ideas from once you finished the course? You would be able to apply in your work straight away., what would be the easiest thing to apply and what do you think would be the challenge?

Heri

For me, the tricky part is to, since I work for another person, I have a boss, you know.. uh, if he is not in the same mindset as I am, or the other workers, of course. Uh, a concept that I like is the Trojan horse, and you try to put things that you believe in the work, in the subliminal way. Um, saying same things, about them that they are not really true, but you know what they do and try to in that way and implement your small things, some this kind of things, this, this way of Trojan horse.

R

So do you think that the course give you tools to do that?

Heri

uh, maybe I'm not thinking anything in concrete, but, I was just thinking about sustainability.

Rita

do you have an example of what you mean by the trojan horse?

Heri

like maybe insinuate or I'm always thinking about spatial organization and in the way in which that can affect the relations of very simple things. For example, Sam was always talking about or talked twice about how can we deconstruct the patriarchal with the furniture we are making. He was saying about putting the kids in the middle of the moment that.. so things like that, you can say different things about why that thing is there, or why the space is organized that way. But you know that you are trying to do something else that it not literal. For example, proposing it a round table instead of rectangular one, because it is a rectangle form of an hierarchy, to tops and instead of circular has non hierarchy. So that kind of stuff, yeah. You don't need to explain that, you can just propose it and it could be a accepted and it's making this place be more equal.

Jade

But if you plan to explain, or just always use the trojan horse?

Heri

If they are not prepared for the explanation you cannot explain... That's the trojan horse..

Jade

and for me it's been so amazing this opportunity to collaborate with you guys because this is something that I must always have in mind in Brazil, because in Brazil we have a fight of egos, it's really hard to work with someone else, it's horrible. because of the competition, because of your background, because of your name, because of many things, and here we are all the same and it is really good. It's something that I will always remember and this is inspiring me to be a better person in my work area, in my life. So being in Portugal is something really different from Brazil. In Brazil we had a situation completely different from this and it's really good to work with in being a better person.

Am I clear?

R

Yes. And what do you think would be the challenge for you to apply the things that you learned here?

Jade

Oh, the challenge, uh, because I've been trying to apply the sustainability system concept since I was graduated because this was my thing for my last project. And it was 16 years ago, and at that time, no one talks about it. And now it's something that you can't do a building without talking in this situation. So, it is more for me, it is something that I can be more, trust, I can trust more in me, because I have this situation that I'm learning from other countries, I'm learning new technique and that is something that helped me a lot in new projects.

Rita

For me, the things that I will take away immediately, the positives are the working with the heavy machinery . I can apply that immediately, not that I have a table saw waiting for me or anything. And the challenge would be I have a very long-term goal that I'd like to, I mean, I'm looking at this model of critical, I'd love to have to have something similar, kinda educating people in the area of like the idea of organic growing food, organic materials as like practical, usable materials for more everyday stuff. So like, just taking the mycelium, working maybe with algae, although I've never, I don't have any experience with that, but there's lots of, um, different materials that can be taken from organic. I look a lot at Mary Oxman, did you come across her in MIT? Amazing, amazing work. Everybody should look at that. Um, yeah, so like developing the kind of self that's parallel to what she does and trying to like work with people on the ground to like, how can they actually use this in their life as well as like having a passive building,

having an edible, a building that can kind of accommodate for edible plants and closed sustainable, self-sufficient system. that's my long term goal. And the challenge, I mean, there's so many challenges in that, just like loads of skills that I don't have, loads of people that I don't have, so, yeah. But plenty of things that I can apply now.

Aki

one of the most challenging part for me is to using English, yeah. It's very difficult for me, and sharing the, sharing earlier, read others is also difficult. I think also culture might be different from Japan. So there at the beginning of the workshop, we have design discussion to make furniture, to make this design furniture. And yeah, that was, that was the most challenging bit for me

R

You are not used to do that in Japan, you mean?

Aki

Yeah, I usually do my projects alone. So, in that process of sharing ideas, I couldn't imagine in that, what we are going to make. So yeah, it was very diff difficult for me, but as I am sharing in this group, I can gradually imagine what we make?

R

So this thing about co-designing something new although challenging?

Aki

Yeah. So, for me I always decided design at the beginning completely. And we have, we had a clear image of what we would make, but in this process we didn't have a clear image. But we have some idea but we didn't do it precise. So yeah, I was a bit confused about what are we doing this for, but while we were doing the work it helped me to see and sharing their angles and their abilities, so I could do this activity.

R

So you think in Japan it would be a little bit harder to apply the, more communication design wise, because people are are doing their things individually, is that what you mean?

Aki

Yes. And in my job experience, I think almost every Japanese people there is always a boss and the boss has all this work of making this building, and I design the building but every time I have to ask him, and make such a clear visual of building. I can make details or so yes, the process is a little bit different.

R

And did you like learning a different process or...?

Aki

Yeah, yeah. I like yeah, but I had a question about the process that I experienced in my company. So I want to learn other process, so it was very interesting to me, and I think it is good process.

Greg

So my position is really similar to Aki. I am, I also have, my takeaway is the process. And what I don't do is trust the process because I'm rational and I am too clinical. I think I am rational but... I try and pre-empt or try and chase the process. I know where I am going to land up. But instead of allowing the process to take its course and respecting that process, I try and push it along. And what I've gotta learn to do is take my hands off the wheel and listen and watch and hear. And so that's what the course has done for me, and particularly so I knew what this furniture was going to look like. I knew it was going to be way more rational than the initial design ideas, but the process was important. And I've seen the process working, yeah.

R

So what was different from this process, from the other process that you're used to?

Greg

So I come from an hierarchical environment where I'm the boss and I lead, and I lead from the top of a triangle and people follow. And that's not the right way to do it, that's not sustainable because you're not developing people to move with you. And it's lonely at the top there.

Jade

I agree! I have the same situation. I'm the owner of my company in Brazil and it's lonely there. Yeah, maybe I should ask for somebody's opinion before doing something. This is why I'm thinking about doing now...

Greg

but at least hierarchical environment, a more participative environment has to be more sustainable and has to be, I mean, who cares whether the bloody building has insulation or not, or whether there's double glazing. What is important is that the people involved can replicate it and can have capacity and are learning and are... it's opposition.

Jade

And also everybody in the process must have the feeling of their importance in the process, not just being part of, but being something important for something that you are building together.

Greg

So, so in summary, my position has moved away from the design and the technical detail to the process.

Gin

But I think you can't just erase one side that is called design. I think the sustainability, it should be involved in both and process design in the participatory design and a design, because the result that the people and your client wants is the design, but the process that you and the team is going through, it's the participatory design. So we can't say to the client that we don't care about the for example, the insulations that we're using in your building it's gonna be the sustainable material or not, because this is the goal that as an architect we want to use the sustainable material. We want to, one of my goal is that how, and the challenging part, how can I expand this mind process? how can I persuade and how can I encourage people to, for example, instead of using the polyurethane insulation, using the hemp or using the I know mycelium and the... and you are true. And a team, how we can enjoy this process. It's not like this fact, okay, this is boss, this is the intern, this is, I don't know, the HR and, um, how we should enjoy through the design and through the working to do it together. And finally the most challenging part is that how, as an architect can I expand this to the society, to the bureaucracy, you know, just, maybe for example, in a municipality, in Theer-an, in Iran, in Japan, I don't dunno, in South Africa, even they don't know that we can use this material and they don't want to bring it because, they don't have the factory, they don't have the, you know, the basic steps to start this process. So I think this is the most challenging part. If you wanted to expand this mindset and expand this courses anywhere. So, for example, just in the weekend you are talking about our cultures, about the politics in our country. We are just, it's at the same point, just the same shit's happening in Iran, it's happening in South Africa, it's happening in Brazil then, you know, just, malfunctioning and leading the systems and leading the country. So I don't know if we can do this in or expand this as a maybe, the team that we learned something here can be like a grant to expand it to the other countries or, stick to this roots to maybe encourage people too, I know this is another way of thinking.

Rite

Can I ask you Greg, cause I don't really understand, I'm hearing, thought there's kind of two pillars to it. Like if we say that the sustainable materials are a given, that's fine, we use sustainable materials and don't think about others, but the process itself is bringing more sustainability because it's not only one set of contractors who are able to make houses, people who need the houses can make the houses kind of, is that what you're saying?

Greg

Yeah. So I'm looking for a flatter, more inclusive implementation environment. So my architectural environment is completely different as the images I haven't set in an office designing a specification, designing a building. My environment has been implementation where I've, in the last two years, I've built three and a half thousand houses. And my focus has been on trying to deliver those houses in a sustainable and an inclusive way. So that's where my focus has been, and that's where my focus will continue to be. And the course has provided me with insight and intuition on how to improve my performance within that environment. So I'm not saying for a moment that what Gin is saying is not correct. I'm talking from my own personal perspective and my own background and um, yeah.

Rita

Uh, the two of you kind of laid down two pillars of sustainability, like yeah. Your process and then materials like, but with your, if you delivered tree a thousand houses were they built in materials?

Greg

They were sustainable enough. But, but what frustrates me and what has come very clear from the course is that the environment that we live in is exclusive. It is designed by budget gatekeepers that are intent on keeping people out because it's within their financial interest to do that. And I'll say, fuck those gatekeepers. Open the gates, let people perform, let people take the lead, yeah.

Heri

Yeah. For me, one of the things that I take off the course is the complexity and multidimensional aspect of the concept of sustainability. Greg was talking about the relation, social relation aspect of it and Gin was talking about the construction aspect of it. There's also the economical and political that is social. So that's for me the biggest eye opener of the course. It's the complexity of the term, the transversality of it. So it's not just what Greg says or what Gin says?

Gin

No, it says both about, I mean, that we should integrate both of it, you know, the sustainable design is the point that you start thinking to the..

Heri

So a project that implements sustainable material, it's not sustainable if it doesn't sustain the social relationships and process is not sustainable in itself?

Gin

Exactly. Started when the idea that's bringing to your mind and then your talking with your team and then the process and then the results. So, but, you know, just, in Iran I, of working in many companies, a small beacon and I can see that in those private companies and that the guys are graduated from the other cities and then they came back to the country and they run the company. So you can feel that, okay, they, we have some, brainstorm sessions in middle of the designs. But on that time, I didn't know that, okay this is a participatory design process. This is, you know, this is kind of the sustainable thinking and the, this is part of the sustainable process. But in the governmental companies, not at all. This is just from top to bottom. Do that, do this, do that. So I think maybe from the small companies, and it's small firms, this can be expanded and this can be learned to the others. And maybe someday we can see it in all the companies or in all over the world.