

ASAE03- 07

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE ASAE SYMPOSIUM 2006, THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, LTH, UNIVERSITY OF LUND

ASAE06 ARCHITECTS OF CLARITY

Definitive Architecture – Articulated with Clarity

Architecture is both a professional discipline and an academic subject.

No practitioner is able to achieve without a thoroughly consequence within the design process from the initial construct to the finalized construction. Furthermore, an architect does not accomplice alone. Working in a team requires strong skills in how to communicate the generative concept to each member of the group to safeguard compromises without diluting the definitive architecture.

Consequence is even more decisive in how architecture is taught at higher educations. In basic courses the criteria of evaluation depend on a firm framework to support an otherwise open and investigative study. On higher levels the consequence of methods chosen defines the difference between the intuitive experimentation of the individual and the acknowledged academic research within the speciality of architecture. Communication through drawing, model-building and writing is furthermore skills the student is depending on. Communicative skills are not only about presenting a scheme to others; communication is about articulating the design and defines the core competence of the architect, necessary to master to invent any piece of design and to investigate any track of research.

Consequence and communication are key virtues of the architectural education. Viewed together we call them clarity.

Definitive Architecture – Articulated with Clarity was the theme the 2006 annual symposium for architecture and education organized by the school of architecture at Lund University. The symposium was the fourth in the row and the most attended ever. The board of education at the school of architecture, with Professor Abelardo Gonzalez as chairman brought together an international panel of some of the most influential architects noticeable for their clarity in their practice and teaching.

The panel consisted of professor Peter Cook, professor Cathryn Findlay, professor Odile Decq, professor Christine Hawley, professor Ellen Dunham-Jones, professor Itsuko Hasegawa, architect Eva Wang, professor Helle Juul, professor Tina Sarap and professor Abelardo Gonzalez. Architect Morten Lund served as the moderator of the symposium keeping the focus and concluded the different point of views during the presentations and following debate.

The symposium opened with an intense parade of lectures from the participants in the symposium. Their variety in works made a huge impression. Everything from imaginative architecture of Cathryn Findlay realized through her inventive structural design in concrete and new materials via Ewa Wang's impressively big works in China covering any field of our versatile profession from product design to landscape architecture to the subtle and refined buildings of Itsuko Hasegawa where she has been able to maintain the joy and playfulness of her articulated design.

Following the previous years symposiums concerning the relation between professional practice and architectural education we addressed the panel as well as the auditorium with the following questions:

How can the Swedish architectural education evolve towards the Bologna model, and why?

How can we create an academic environment that adjusts itself after changing demands and methods?

How can we challenge the faculty for constantly adopting new methods in the educational process?

What are the demands from society on the contemporary architectural academic- and practise-based discourse, and how can we educate architects for facing and fulfilling these demands?

How can we create a well-functioning interaction of architectural educations between practice and research?

Will Sweden, as a nation, be able to offer a high qualified level concerning the architectural education as a whole, or will the Swedish students be obliged to search for other and better qualified educations in Europe, USA or Asia for being able to enter emerging global market?

The questions mentioned above are fundamental issues in the ongoing discussion in the schools of architecture all over the world, and they became the ground of the following discussion between the panel and the auditorium.

Morten Lund opened the debate by giving a direct explanation to the theme of the symposium. The subject, "architects of clarity", was given as questions to the panel. How do architects keep their intent though a project, How do we communicate our intent, and is it important that the intent of the project is understood?

The panel answered with very interesting discussions around the subject.

Ellen Dunham-Jones started by criticising Peter Cook for making a distinction between culture and architectural culture; those two positions should not be separated. She claimed that the integrity of architecture had been lost in the United States. She said that twenty years ago ambitious students took theory classes to get an edge over other students, now they take computer classes to realise their far-fetched theoretical schemes. Most of the new homes of the American middle class are designed without architects. Instead they are assemblages of the most successful imagery designed from the best selling houses by cost efficient builders and hyped event makers from the rapid growing industry of entertainment. This important field ought to be the main target for the architects. Raising the level of their housing just a little bit would make a huge difference.

Odile Decq told about a 1995 architectural exhibition in London where theory and experimentation were presented as integrated in the architectural practice. The

message was that architects needed a clear intent to guide the experimentation. The exhibition had a large impact on the profession. She stated that it must be obvious that the intent and the supporting theories behind a project change over time. The theories are based on experimentation and today all good architecture must include experimentation. Each architect states their intent and chooses their theory based on their own background.

Christine Hawley agreed that contemporary architecture should be based on experimentation and that every project must include many moments where you allow yourself to sit back and reflect. Definitive architecture is the result of those moments of reflection. Christine also talked about the great importance of communicating with clarity. She answered on a direct question from Morten that the students at Bartlett are very ambitious and accustomed to competition. The teaching of clear intents and relevant theory in architecture is an integrated element in the program of Bartlett.

Cathryn Findlay said that we can divide the good architects into two categories, one is the creative individual who makes artistic buildings and the other is the team player who understands the needs of its users of the buildings. Both positions need to be integrated in good architecture.

Peter Cook referred to other art forms. He said that just like in music played by excellent performers or in stand-up shows of a really good comedian, each of us hear something different or laugh at something different according to our individual background.

Itsuko Hasegawa wants all of her staff to be excellent model makers. She believes that models are essential in understanding architecture. Everyone who starts in her office is tested as a model maker before they are offered a contract. This practice ensures that the direct link between imaginative mind and the sensitive hand will come first while computers and similar tools are introduced at toward the end of the design process. In Japan there is a greater understanding of the crafts. Architecture is craft that just like all other art forms come from our human needs and especially the need to express.

Helle Juul assumed that theory today has an important role to play connecting the profession with the academic tradition. She claimed that the great work of an architect is to do something together with the client that neither thought they would do before their cooperation. In this way the theory can become a valuable tool guiding the design process and their work together.

Eva Wang, using her own works as reference, stated that you cannot leave out any of the different scales of architecture. Architecture is an integrated whole from the diminutive detail to the big brush of the landscape. Every scale is present. To accomplish good works you must touch the heart of the client. The work always must aim at the highest goals. Conscientiously you start working your way from the ground towards your goals and hopefully you reach the definitive architecture at the end of your process.

Tina Sarap made a point about how we develop our ideas, when we talk with other professionals than architects. It is important that we learn how to explain ourselves

with words and references that reaches further into society than the exclusive and private vocabulary of the architectural profession of today. We must master better tools for communication, not only for presenting our designs but also to enhance our design by reflecting and articulating the ideas and concepts that we already carry inside ourselves.

Abelardo Gonzalez concluded the symposium by summing up the different points presented, emphasising the importance of sharing ideas, meeting, and trying to understand each other's ways of working. He anticipated a series of meetings with a network of schools and educational programs of architecture throughout Europe, and the entire world, promoting the objective of our school of architecture at Lund University: Architectural Design, Experiment and Construction, with a defined connection to the Bologna model.

Finally, Abelardo Gonzalez thanked the outstanding panel and the vibrant auditorium for their contribution, making the ASAE symposium of 2006 a most memorable and generative event.

ABOUT ASAE,

Annual Symposium for Architecture and Education Organized by the Educational Board at the School of Architecture, Lund Institute of Technology, Lund University.

ASAE is a two-day seminar at the school of architecture, Lund Institute of Technology, Lund University. The aim of the seminar is to celebrate the beginning of each academic year as a conclusion of the international workshop that has been undertaken by students from course 3.

ASAE is the first seminar, and it will be an ongoing autumn semester event for an annual continuing discussion of international education programs and updating of architectural education strategies.

ASAE will encompass a series of meetings with different architecture schools in Europe, America and other countries, taking into consideration the objective of the School of Architecture in Lund: Architectural Design, Experiment and Construction, with a defined connection to the Bologna model.

ASAE03: The two concepts: "Experiment and Excellence", will be a common ground for the overall topic of the different architecture schools education program.

ASAE04 addresses the concept of "Architectural Investigation" as a common ground for dealing between the profession and the education where all can benefit from.

ASAE05 will continue from the previous year's seminar by updated discussions concerning the relation between architectural education and practise: "Architecture Education vs Practice"

ASAE06 edition was "Architects of clarity" with the subtitle "Definitive Architecture – Articulated with Clarity" opening for a discussion about the architect's role as a leader of an office or teaching young future architects. The subject gave many different excursions that on one hand gave a fantastic voyage for the listeners but on the other hand made it very hard to conclude. Following the previous year's seminar by updated discussions concerning the relation between architectural education and practise.

THE ASAE07: "CREATIVE RESEARCH"

Architectural Research Based on Practical Experiments

The aim of the symposium is to conceptualise the need of practically oriented research appropriate to the current market conditions and to the climate of knowledge, as it presently exists.

Why is such research needed? What does it aim at? What advantages does it provide? What difficulties is it confronted with? What needs does research activity characterized by interaction between theory and practice have? What academic requirements should be placed on it?

Can one eliminate the very considerable scepticism toward it that the more conservative directions in architectural research that tend to characterize Sweden show? Succeeding at is essential for adequately developing research of this sort, for achieving effective interaction between the input, output and feedback that are needed, and for linking such research to the market (i.g. to society generally) and to successful financing strategies, as well as for giving it a truly meaningful content. A researcher's working environment should provide the possibility of pursuing both traditional and practically oriented research. For example, interaction takes place between the school and both the city around it and both the city around it and the neighbouring cities. Malmö, Lund, cities of highly differing character, considered both as cities and as phenomena generally, are highly important for the school's orientation. Utilizing the city as a kind of laboratory is strongly anchored in the work of the school conducts and contributes to its interdisciplinary character.

Regarding the coupling between theory and practice, it is highly important. It is far more effective and meaningful to conceptualise practically oriented research in terms of the need exploring and achieving forms of knowledge.

From 2003 to today has been participated at the ASAE: professor's representatives from different schools of architecture as well as practicing architects:

Professor emeritus and practicing architect and Peter Cook, Bartlett in London.

Professor and practicing architect Svein Tønsager, Aarhus in Denmark. Professor

and practicing architect Bijan Youssefzadeh, Metropolis Architects, Arlington, in

Texas. Architect Morten Lund, Copenhagen. Practicing architect and professor Odile

Decq, Odile Decq Benoit Cornette Architectes Urbanistes, Paris. Professor and

practicing architect Helle Juul, Juul & Frost, Architect Office, Copenhagen.

Professor and Practicing architect Gert Wingårdh, Wingårdh Architects, Gothenburg.

Professor and Practicing Architect Itsuko Hasegawa, Tokyo. Professor and practicing

architect Kathryn Findlay, Uchida/Findlay, Dundee. Professor and practicing architect

Christine Hawley, Dean at Bartlett School of Architecture, London. Professor Ellen

Dunham-Jones, Georgia Institute of Technology, USA.

Architect Eva Wang, Architect Studio, Shanghai. "Arkitektur" Magazine Editor Architect

Olof Hultin, Stockholm. Landscape architect Tina Sarap, Alnarp. Professor and

practicing architect Thomas Hellquist, School of Architecture. Professor Nat Chard

Professor at the Royal Academi in Copenhagen, Chris Thurlbourne, Asst Professor

Aarhus in Denmark.

Professor Abelardo Gonzalez

Lund Institute of Technology, Lund University