

Yes is more! – a theory of evolution

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The traditional image of the radical architect is the angry young man rebelling against the establishment. The avant-garde is defined by what it is against rather than what it is for. This leads to an oedipal succession of contradictions where each generation says the opposite of the previous. And if your agenda is dependent on being the opposite of someone else's - you are simply a follower in reverse. Rather than being radical by saying fuck the context, - the establishment, - the neighbours, - the budget, or - gravity, we want to try to turn pleasing into a radical agenda. The Danish welfare state is the culture of consensus. The socially most egalitarian country in the world, it is ruled by the good principles that everybody has the same rights, every point of view the same value. Besides the obvious societal virtues, these principles have had a significant side effect in the realm of architecture: a gray goo of sameness accounting for the vast majority of the urban tissue, where most attempts to stick out have been beaten down into the same non-offensive generic box, and all libido invested in polishing and perfecting the ever finer details. The sum of all the little concerns seems to have blocked the view of the big picture. What if trying to make everybody happy did not have to lead to compromise or the lowest common denominator? It could be a way to find the ever elusive summersault that twists and turns in order to fulfill every desire and avoid stepping on anyone's toes. Rather than revolution, we are interested in evolution. Like Darwin describes creation as a process of excess and selection, we propose to let the forces of society, the multiple interests of everyone, decide which of our ideas can live, and which must die. Surviving ideas evolve through mutation and crossbreeding into an entirely new species of architecture. Human life evolved through adaptation to changes in the natural environment. With the invention of architecture and technology we have seized the power to adapt our surroundings to the way we want to live, rather than the other way around. This is what makes it interesting to be an architect: as life evolves, our cities and our architecture need to evolve with it. Our cities are not polluted or congested because they have to be. They are what they are because that's how we made them. So when something doesn't fit anymore, we architects have the ability – and responsibility - to make sure that our cities don't force us to adapt to outdated leftovers from the past, but actually fit to the way we want to live. Viewed in this way we architects don't have to remain misunderstood geniuses, frustrated by the lack of understanding, appreciation or funding. We won't even be the creators of architecture but rather the midwives of the continuous birth of architectural species shaped by the countless criteria of multiple interests. The whole world insists on conflict. The media craves conflict, and the politicians craving media presence need to engage in conflict to get there. Currently the biggest conflict in Danish politics is that the social democrats and the liberals (left and right) promote identical political programs which in any other context would be the very definition of harmony! In politics, it's the opposite. What if design could be the opposite of politics? Not by ignoring conflict, but by feeding from it. A way to incorporate and integrate differences, not through compromise or by choosing sides, but by tying conflicting interests into a Gordian knot of new ideas. An inclusive rather than exclusive architecture. An architecture unburdened by the conceptual monogamy of commitment to a single interest or idea. An architecture where you don't have to choose between public or private, dense or open, urban or suburban, atheist or Muslim, affordable flats or football fields. An architecture that allows you to say yes to all aspects of human life, no matter how contradicting! An architectural form of bigamy, where you don't need to choose one over the other, but you get to have both. A pragmatic utopian architecture that takes on the creation of socially, economically and environmentally perfect places as a practical objective.

Yes is More, Viva la Evolución!

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