

# — ROLE OF THE ARCHITECT



**MODERATOR — OSAMU OKAMURA**

Architect, teacher and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Architecture of the Technical University in Liberec / FUA TUL. Chief manager of the projects Creation of the Doctoral Programme in Architecture and Urbanism and Completion of the F2 TUL Building. He was the chairman of the Commission of the Prague City Council for Art in Public Space (2019–2021), the curator of the final output of the European project Shared Cities: Creative Momentum (2015–2019), the programme director of the reSITE international festival and conference for more livable cities (2013–2017). From 2005 to 2012, he was the editor-in-chief of the architectural magazine ERA21. He is the author of the book *Město pro každého* (City for Everyone).



Whatever the stage of a project – from ideation to finalisation – an architect's most important job is to communicate the ideas of the architectural project. By developing narratives and diagrams, these ideas can be communicated and brought to life. It's equally important to facilitate the project's development and its adaptation to stakeholder needs. Through empowering teams of architects, clients and anyone else interested in architecture, the architect plays a key role in imparting ownership to a project. However, what is most important is being open to the process of dialogue between site, context, humans, and history and to the unknown of the future – conveying complicated structures and creations through emotion, aesthetics and experiences.

This role in communication helps architecture to be seen through project narratives, processes and experiences created along the way to designing newly built projects visualised through a selection of Snøhetta's projects.

Snøhetta is interdisciplinary. From the start-up of a new project, Snøhetta aims to work in an interdisciplinary fashion to research and test-build forms meeting the context, the site and landscape, looking for site specific solutions. The team of Snøhetta consists of architects, landscape architects, interior designers, graphic designers, product designers, and artists.

Principals of Snøhetta along with some of its projects that were discussed:

#### CONTEXTUALISED CONCEPT

Alexandria Library in Egypt — the building's main program is its library, but the public and social spaces are reflected in the city context and made available.

#### CITYSCAPE LANDSCAPE

The Norwegian Opera and Ballet in Oslo — the building was the first step in a huge city transformation from an inaccessible harbour and infrastructure to reconnect the city grid and waterfront. The building itself turned the fifth façade, the roof, into a 24/7 public space, conceptualised to blend into the cityscape.

#### GENEROUS AND FLEXIBLE

Reconstruction of Times Square in New York — reframed the city to eye height, changed the traffic to green mobility and made a flexible and reprogrammable public realm based on making a priority of pedestrian movement.

#### FORM COMMUNICATE SUSTAINABILITY

Powerhouse — is a building that during its lifecycle (60 years) will produce more renewable energy than it consumes for production of building materials, construction, operation and demolition of the building. The building will be built under commercial conditions.

ZEB — the research centre on zero-emission neighbourhoods in smart cities.

Examples from Norway: ZEB Multi – comfort house, reinventing an existing office building at Kjørbo outside Oslo and a new office building, Powerhouse Brattørkaia, in Trondheim.

#### RETHINK CIRCULARITY

Project PLASTIC — from linear to circular thinking and teaming up with local stakeholders for smarter, lower CO2-footprint furniture design.

#### SITE MATTERS

Le Monde — Newspaper publishing head office that demanded visibility in the public space on a demanding site in Paris. Bridging over structure, people communication, free speech and offering public space.

Lindesnes 'Under' — maritime research and dining - the program has a dual nature with a requirement for an underwater research space and a starred restaurant rethinking local resources and site.

#### PEOPLE AND PROCESS

Teamwork is the key factor for development of a project. Collaboration between clients, users, the project team and execution on site. Be generous by sharing ideas, secure the room and be more curious. A risk-taking client is crucial to being able to test out new solutions. Keep looking for the unhidden.

YOU CAN ALWAYS HAVE  
FRAMES, BUT TOO MANY  
FRAMES CAN RESTRICT  
YOU FROM GOING ALL THE  
WAY. IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT  
GETTING OUT THERE TO  
CHALLENGE YOURSELF  
AND EACH OTHER.

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Jenny B. Osuldsen is an Oslo-based landscape architect and Partner in Snøhetta. Snøhetta began as a collaborative architectural and landscape workshop and has remained true to its inter-disciplinary way of thinking since its inception. Today, Snøhetta has grown to become an internationally renowned practice of architecture, landscape architecture, interior architecture, graphic design, product- and brand design. She joined Snøhetta in 1995, was the managing director for the start-up of their New York office in 2006 and she works globally with all the 7 Snøhetta offices. Since 2014 she has been a professor in Landscape Architecture at the University of Life Sciences at Ås, Norway and a guest professor at SUDes Master's Programme in Sustainable Urban Design at the Lund University in Sweden. In 2017 she was appointed to be an Honorary Doctor at LTU Luleå technical university, Sweden.





# ARCHITECTURE IS AN INNOCENCE THAT ELEVATES US TO BECOME BETTER PEOPLE.

Having said this, Dworzak proceeds further to explain how architecture has a real role to play, not just in the near future but at anytime, mostly in the present. Present-day architecture has seen a shift from singularity to multi-functionality. Above all, however, the shift has been a transition from individuality to communality.

In the past two years, the world has become physically much smaller and things are not seen from a distant perspective anymore. This could be mostly due to unexpected occurrences like COVID and global warming, which have not only brought a physical change to the world but also a huge spiritual change. Suddenly there is considerable attention on the growth of differences in culture, the economy and the yawning generation gap.

Thirty years ago, architecture was all about making things look 'beautiful'. Years later, the 'construction and logical functionality' of spaces started to become important. In the past five or six years, however, the top priority for government and investors has become 'HOW DO WE LIVE TOGETHER?'

All architects in the present day must find an answer to this question, and that is the role an architect must play in order to keep pace with the social agenda. It should be considered a sense of natural responsibility for the architect to understand the social impact of his or her work. Dworzak concludes his discussion by suggesting that an extra year of architectural education must be added to study sociology, psychology and other subjects that would help students understand social welfare.

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Architect and teacher at the University of Liechtenstein. After finishing his architectural education at the University of Innsbruck, Austria and at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York in 1989 he started his own practice in Dornbirn, Austria operating under the name Architekturwerkstatt – nomen est omen. Since 2000 Dworzak is lecturing at the University of Liechtenstein, having headed the school of architecture from 2012 till 2016. He manages to keep mind and body together by combining teaching and practice, believing that one gains from other. His credo is to stay virginal – as much as possible.

The nature of the architect's profession has undergone several changes through the centuries, and so has the education of the architect. The most recent trend may best be characterised by the word 'specialisation'.

To support her statement, Oya mentions four main aspects –

Firstly, as architects we have to acknowledge the contradiction of our work: when we build, we destroy as well. As Swiss architect Luigi Snozzi emphasised, we should destroy by judgment.

Secondly, less is even more now. It is elemental to recognise the possible consequences of what we do in the present. How do we build? Why do we build? What happens when we build? Thus, architecture has to take responsibility for future generations and be sustainable/avoid excessive use of resources.

Thirdly, buildings don't stand on their own; there is always a reciprocal effect in the respective context. Good design is the product of search and re-search which also enriches context and makes living better.

Lastly, architecture has an ethical function. The architect always has a stance which is never far from politics. This is a notable paradox that students of architecture should be educated about. They must be critical about their education and serious about the social responsibility they carry.

Specialisation is in the nature of our profession. Collaboration and outsourcing are common practices. However, being generalists remains nevertheless the core skill of an architect. Architecture is above all about creating dignified, beautiful and liveable spaces.

## ARCHITECTS ARE SPECIALISTS IN BEING GENERALISTS.

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President of the European Association for Architectural Education EAAE, architect, architectural historian and educator. She is Professor of Architecture and the Dean and managing director of the School of Architecture, Design and Civil Engineering as well as Head of Continuing Education at ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences in Winterthur, Switzerland. Her teaching covers the theory and history of architecture as well as design studio. She has taught architecture and construction, urban design and architecture theory at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Troy NY, at Bilkent University Ankara, and at ETH Zurich.



# ARCHITECTURE IS NOT JUST AN ART, IT IS ALSO A TYPE OF SCIENCE AND ACCUMULATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

Despite the architectural discipline being firmly rooted in the building craft and the field of the arts, 'architecture' as a word also has a broader sense – meaningful organisation in general. The same shift can be seen, at least in the realm of the built-up environment, in the profession itself. A good understanding of buildings and their environment entails not only the construction itself, but also the processes that precede and follow it: forming the brief, using and administering the environment. In short, the whole building life cycle. This knowledge not only enhances the design itself but enables informed economic and social policies which often have a considerable effect on the whole professional environment.

Among the essential abilities of an architect – or at least some considerable portion of them – one should therefore count not only the technical and design skills, but also those usually developed and applied in the fields of social sciences and humanities: the ability to analyse data, construct theories, and practically apply them in administrative processes and management of the environment.

In the last century, European architecture and town planning have made many achievements but, at the same time, certain mistakes that could not have been avoided. However, a mistake made somewhere can be a lesson learned somewhere else. We are all part of a giant experiment, and it is all worth it if the next generation learns from these experiments.

For this reason, having broadened the school's portfolio by establishing the fields of industrial design and landscape architecture, the Faculty of Architecture of CTU in Prague is striving to expand into the field of development and management of the built-up environment. In the exact and purely technical disciplines, this arbitrariness of interpretation is not so threatening because such significant and frequent questioning of existing principles, methods and themes for permanent changes in the study of the field does not happen.

When we realise that the field of architectural education makes these changes possible thanks to the generality of the study and that their effect is not as visible in our graduates as in the exact and technical disciplines at the same time, it is neither an incentive nor a reason for an even greater escalation of changes, but rather the opposite: for their thoughtful application.

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Czech architect and Professor at Faculty of Architecture CTU in Prague. Since 2012 a head of Department of Building Theory and a supervisor of the newly accredited Architecture and Urbanism study programme at FA CTU, where he also leads the design studio and lectures. He is a co-founder of Prague-based research institute Housing Quality Centre and a co-editor of the architectural magazine Zlatý Řez. Before establishing UNIT architekti he was a partner of Jiran Kohout architekti. He is a licensed architect by Czech Chamber of Architects and author of a number of awarded projects of residential, mixed-use and public buildings.

# NATURE IS NOT OUR ENEMY NOR SHOULD WE DOMINATE NATURE. INSTEAD, WE WORK AS PARTNERS TO FIND A NEW WAY TO COMMUNICATE.

As landscape architects, we don't just communicate with people, we also communicate with nature. These are quite different things because it is a completely new understanding.

Our understanding is rooted in prehistory, when man thought of Nature as his enemy. As time has progressed, Nature has become dominated by human activities and creation. Now, landscape architecture is an extremely powerful tool capable of bringing together community and society.

Till defines the role of the architect from the special perspective of landscape architecture. This is a professional field that has changed a great deal around the world in recent decades. We began as garden designers, then devoted ourselves to designing public spaces; today we are tasked with developing concepts for adapting to climate change. Thus it is that our tasks are becoming more complex, projects are realised with a multitude of participants and under the scrutiny of the public. This makes it all the more important not to lose sight of design, the core of our expertise. Because - just like 200 years ago - we are still architects. Today, this means finding design ideas and realisations for a multitude of new issues and new elements of Green Infrastructure. Whether it is the requirements of biodiversity or stormwater management, we are finally looking for the constructed form, the character of the object. And this in different places, each with its own identity. Finding the best designs in this 'electric field' is what Till would define as the role of the landscape architect.

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German landscape architect, president of the German Society for Landscape Architecture (BDLA), and since 2017 a visiting professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the Czech Technical University. His office, Rehwaldt Landschaftsarchitekten, founded in 1993 in Dresden, since 2016 with a branch in Prague, focuses primarily on the creation of public spaces, planning leisure and recreational facilities of the city and proposals for broader urban concepts. The office's projects have won a number of awards in Germany and around the world. He worked as a teacher at TU Dresden and TU Berlin. As an expert in landscape architecture, he was a member of the Council for Architecture in Weimar, Erfurt or Leipzig.