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Lamm, Bettina

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Making places in 1:1

Co-creation and local transformations through temporary projects

Bettina Lamm, bela@ign.ku.dk, Associate Professor, Research Group for Landscape Architecture and -Urbanism, University of Copenhagen

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In 1931 the Danish landscape architect C.Th. Sørensen first introduced the ideas of the adventure Playground¹. His ambition was to create play areas filled with scrap building materials from which children could create their own environment as a way to "to stimulate the children's imagination and their potential for self-expression"².

While the visual expressions according to Sørensen were not the most appealing, the transient visual aesthetics of the DIY (do it yourself) movement, has become apparent in the contemporary western city. The phenomena of co-creating environments by hand from what is available has emerged in urban design as a way to utilize vacant sites and as a process to involve citizens in the production of space in 1:1³.

At the University of Copenhagen we have explored methods of creating new public domains through making and building temporary small scale spaces in 1:1. We have initiated projects involving both children from a youth club and with our own landscape architecture students. The drafting table was replaced by a strong presence on site developing projects in an almost hand crafted process that allowed for adaptations and alterations to be made in the moment.

The initial aim was to investigate how relatively low budgets and simple physical alterations could set transformation in motion reprogramming and redirect the discourse of a place. We experienced how the method also had some interesting implications for the design process and particularly for learning about space through the act of hand crafting it. The making itself seemed to embed spatial knowledge into the students and children on a much deeper level than had we worked in a more classical representational mode through drawings and models.

This phenomenon of embodied learning is backed up the anthropologist Tim Ingold and his theories around "thinking through making"⁴. As Ingolds states "in the art of inquiry, the conduct of thought goes along with, and continually answers to, the fluxes and flows of the materials with which we work [...]. Here, every work is an experiment: not in a natural scientific sense of testing a preconceived hypothesis, or of engineering a confrontation between ideas "in the head" and facts "on the ground", but in the sense of prising an opening and following where it leads." It seems that these small scale hand crafted spaces suggests a process that points towards alternative design and production methods through which we can learn about space itself.

In this paper I will investigate how our empiric observations of hand crafting spaces can be examined as a didactic tool through the lens of Tim Ingolds theories on making. Also I want to explore if Sørensens ideas of the adventure playground from 1931 still has something to teach us about the pedagogy of building places from scrap.

¹ Sørensen C.Th.: *Parkpolitik i Sogn og Købstad, 1931*

² Sørensen C.Th.: „Etagehusets Have" in *Arkitektens Månedshæfte, 1935, p. 61*

³ Oswalt P, Overmeyer K, Misselwitz P, *Urban Catalyst: The Power of Temporary Use, DOM publishers Berlin, 2013*

⁴ Ingolds T.: *Making anthropology, archaeology, art and architecture, Routledge 2013*