

This page and opposite: Winning proposal for the suburb of Lisbjerg, Aarhus, Effekt, 2003

PROTOTYPE DESIGN

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

VALUEMAP

STRATEGIC CONCEPTS

Af Boris Brormand

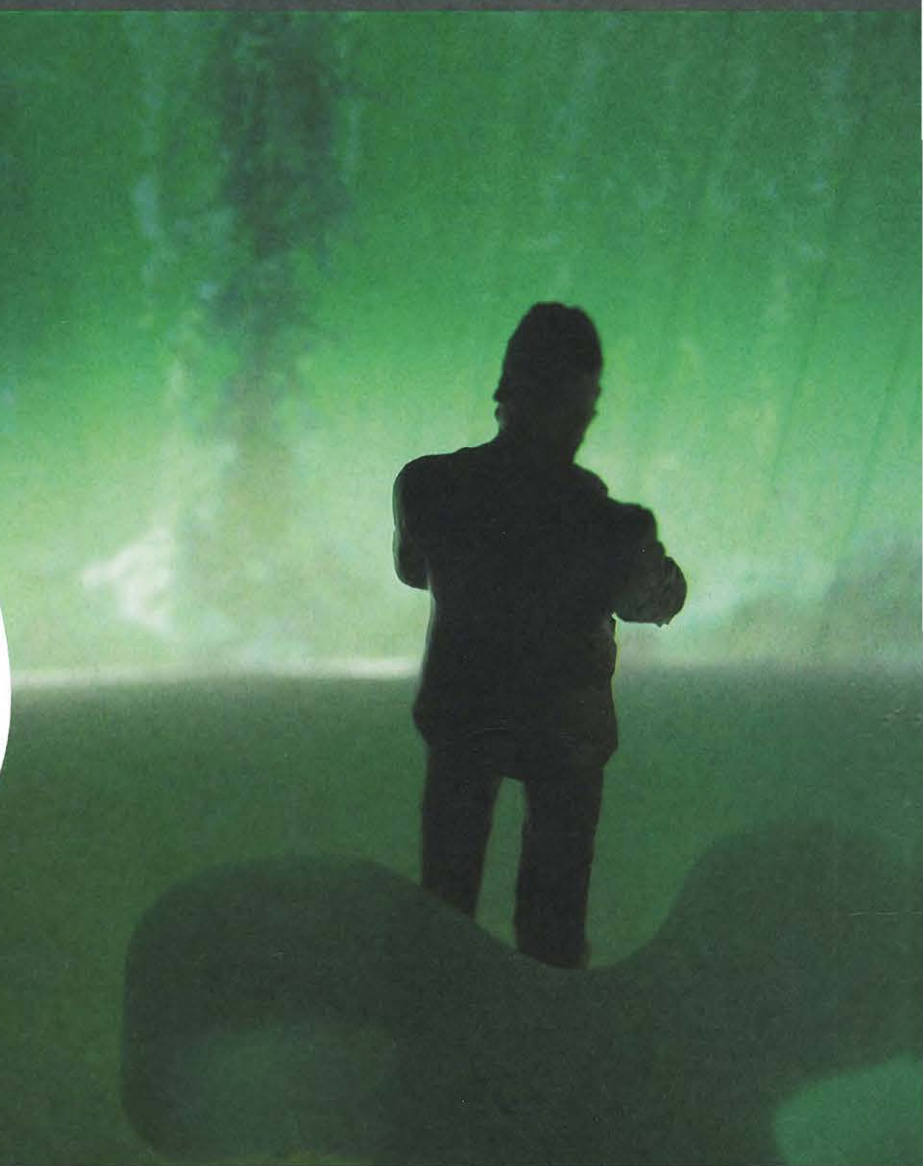
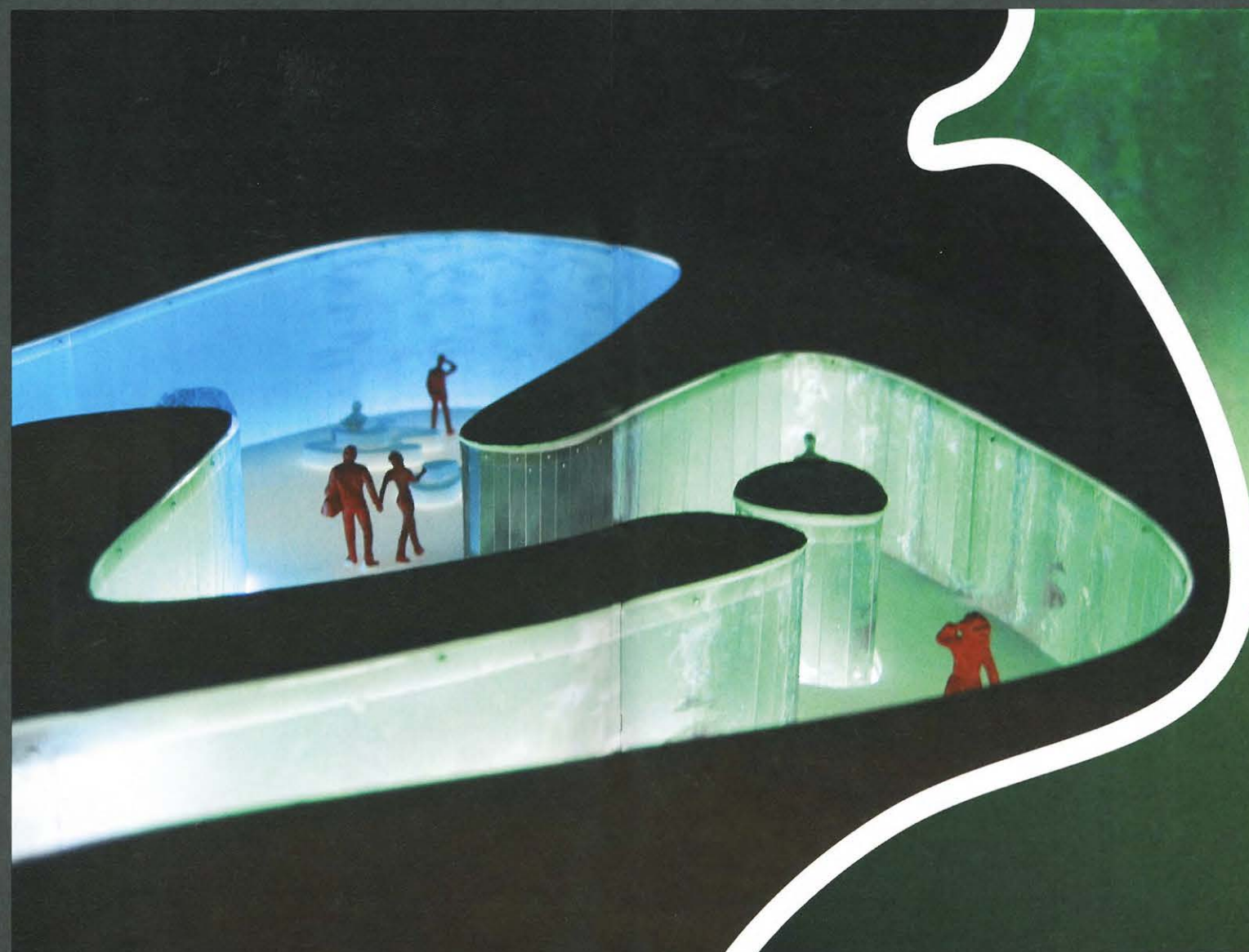
Effekt came into being in January of 2003 after Tue Foged, Kristoffer Lindhardt Weiss and Sinus Lyngé had won the architecture competition for a new city district at Lisbjerg, north of Århus. Tue and Sinus were still students of architecture at the time while Kristoffer was studying philosophy! It looked in every way like a promising start for all involved. The Århus municipality was presented with some alternative instruments and tools for urban development; The Architecture Society had, once again, concrete evidence of the vital importance of the architecture competition for self-development of the profession; and the three students received a well-earned career break. But their triumph was short-lived. Right from the beginning there were signs of skepticism and resistance. The strategic starting point and inter-disciplinary approach to the Lisbjerg project prompted

Effekt blev dannet i januar 2003 efter, at Tue Foged, Kristoffer Lindhardt Weiss og Sinus Lyngé havde vundet arkitektkonkurrencen om en ny bydel ved Lisbjerg nord for Århus. Tue og Sinus var dengang stadig arkitektstuderende og Kristoffer i gang med at læse filosofi! Det lignede på alle punkter en lykkelig begyndelse for alle parter. Århus kommune fik foræret nogle alternative instrumenter og byudviklingsredskaber, arkitektforeningen fik endnu engang håndgribelige beviser for arkitektkonkurrencens vitale betydning for fagets selvudvikling, og de tre studerende fik et fortjent karriereløft. Men triumfen var kortvarig, for der var allerede fra starten skepsis og modstand at spore. Lisbjerg projektets strategiske årsæt og tværfaglige tilgang til konkurrenceprogrammet fik daværende professor ved Arkitektskolen i Aarhus Nils-Ole Lund til at skrive en bekymret kommentar i

Behind the scenes at Effekt

Effekt's breakthrough was dramatic, and was one of the factors that led to changes in the debate concerning planning. Today young architects work on many varied assignments that include everything from showcase design to architecture in Central America

"Laksen" an exhibition design for ??, Effekt
 Today Effekt have moved beyond the abstract planning
 at Lisbjerg, and into a sophisticated experimentation
 with architectural form



Nils-Ole Lund, then professor at the Århus School of Architecture, to write a comment voicing his concern in Arkitekten (no. 5-2003). NOL could discern certain qualities in the prize-winning proposal but was unable to understand how a project without specification of concrete forms of buildings, spaces or landscape areas could possibly win an architecture competition. NOL puzzled over what Effekt's graphically appealing organization diagrams had to do with the professions' core competencies and with the suburb's actual problems. Whatever had happened to the belief in the problem solving and planning prowess of architecture? Nils-Ole Lund came forth publicly with his criticism but in the end it was anonymous opponents in the Århus municipality who discreetly saw to it that the three competition winners, in the

end, lost the decisive battle for the ensuing assignment. Later on, Effekt got a chance to prove that their ideas can be used. Some of their ideas live on in their O-by project and they have most certainly learned something from the technical knockout at Lisbjerg. But what were the reasons for this categorical reluctance towards their strategically innovative approach to physical planning?

PROBLEMS WITH THE UNPRECEDENTED

There are many reasons for a certain built-in resistance towards legally actionable experiments in the municipal system, which, quite unintentionally, keeps many new young architectural practices out – that's how it is in Denmark, even now after the repressively tolerant "Wild Card" scheme has

Arkitekten (nr 5-2003). NOL kunne godt se visse kvaliteter ved vinderforslaget, men forstod slet ikke hvordan et projekt uden anvisninger på konkret udformning af hverken bygningsanlæg, pladdannelser eller landskabsrum overhovedet kunne vinde en arkitektkonkurrence. NOL undrede sig over, hvad, Effekts grafisk appellerende organisationsdiagrammer havde med fagets kernekompetencer og forstadens virkelige problemer at gøre. Hvor var troen på den problemknusende arkitektur og planlægning mon blevet af? Nils-Ole Lund stod åbent frem med sin kritik, men det var i sidste ende anonyme modstandere i Århus kommunen som i al stilhed sørgede for, at de tre konkurrencevindere i sidste ende tabte det afgørende slag om den efterfølgende opgave. Effekt fik senere lejlighed til at bevise, at deres ideer kan bruges. Nogle af

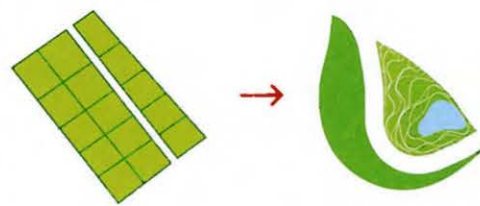
tanker lever videre i deres O-by projekt og de har ganske givet lært noget af den tekniske knockout i Lisbjerg. Men hvad var årsagerne til denne bastante modvilje imod deres strategiske nytænkning af den fysiske planlægning?

DET GALEVED DET NYE?

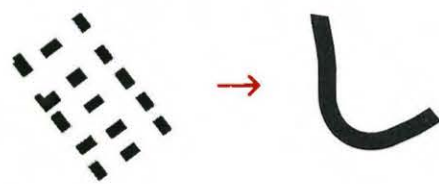
Der er af mange grunde en vis indbygget modstand imod ansvarspådragende eksperimenter i det kommunale system som ganske utilsigtet holder mange nye unge tegnestuer ude – sådan er vilkårene i Danmark, selv nu hvor den repressivt tolerante "Wild Card"-ordning er blevet introduceret. De fleste nye unge tegnestuer bliver til i trods, fordi markedet først og fremmest efterspørger byggeri der overholder budgetter og tidsplaner. God arkitektur er i mange sammen-



Det private uderum lægges ind i patiohuset som et overdækket udeareal for at afskærme for solen og minimere arealforbrug.



Overskydende uderum omdannes til fælles herligheder i form af infinity pools, bar, solterasser etc.



Alle casitas placeres side om side på skrænten og ligger dermed i første række med havudsigt.

- 1) They experimented in the periphery of the profession's field of knowledge instead of exemplifying classical virtues.
 - 2) They questioned the power of architecture's virtual influence on social development.
 - 3) They renounced representative aesthetics indirectly by presenting the possible efficiency of some shapeless tools.
 - 4) They elevated a network-organized and inquisitive shaping process over the absolute dictum of a masterpiece.
 - 5) They re-thought and turned the very basis of the competition into a problem instead of, loyally, presenting their proposal as a tangible form.
- 2) De satte spørgsmålstegn ved arkitekturens reelle magt over samfundsudviklingen.
 - 3) De undersøgte indirekte den repræsentative æstetik ved at præsentere nogle formløse redskabers mulige virkningsfuldheder.
 - 4) De satte en netværksorganiseret og undersøgende formdannelsesproces over mesterværkets absolutte svar.
 - 5) De gentænkte og problematiserede selve grundlaget for konkurrencen i stedet for loyalt at repræsentere det foreliggende program som form.

THE LAW OF GENEROSITY

The final point is actually ok, it's been seen before, but Effekt just didn't have a masterpiece in reserve that could have saved the day for the municipality. At the time, the three competitors were relatively inexperienced combatants and, to some extent, tripped themselves up. For purely tactical reasons they should have compromised on their principles and have given the municipality just a bit of what it wanted. They have now learned this tactical balancing act, but the other ambushes against modernisms solidly cast utopia have since been taken up by the three collaborators and formulated as "The Law of Generosity", which today, in general terms, comprise Effekt's strategic starting point. The law of generosity is a polemical revision of industrial society's architecture, presented as a hacked version of Neufert's "Architects Data". So, ironically, Nils-Ole's grievances are a very reasonable characterization. Effekt's works focus on knowledge sharing, interdisciplinary integration and network organization, that which can be called a creation-oriented-forming ideal and architectural principles for sustainable development. These themes are not new ideas. They were, among other things, targets for criticism of architecture in the 60's

THE LAW OF GENEROSITY

Det sidste punkt er for så vidt ok, det er set før, men Effekt manglede bare et mesterværk i baghånden, som kunne redde situationen for kommunen. De tre konkurrencevindere var dengang nogle forholdsvis uerfarne kombattanter og spændte i en vis forstand ben for sig selv. De burde af rent taktiske grunde være gået lidt på kompromis med principperne, og givet kommunen bare lidt af det den gerne ville have. Denne taktiske balance har de nu lært sig, men de andre bagholdsangreb imod modernismens helstøbte utopi er siden hen blevet taget op af de tre samarbejdspartnere og formuleret som "The Law of Generosity", der i dag i grove træk udgør Effekts strategiske afsæt. Loven om generositet er en polemisk revision af industrisamfundets arkitektur præsenteret som en hacked version af Neuferts 'fede grønne', så Nils-Ole Lunds anklagepunkter er ironisk nok en ganske udmærket karakteristik. Effekts arbejder fokuserer på vidensdeling, tværfaglighed, netværksorganisering, det man kan kalde for et tilblivelsesorienteret formideal og arkitektoniske principper for bæredygtig udvikling. Disse temaer er ikke nye påfund, de var bl.a. oppe at vende i 60'erne og 70'ernes arkitekturkritik, og det kan selvfølgelig virke dybt problematisk set fra et uforstyrret modernistisk synspunkt. Men pointen

been introduced. Most new young architectural practices start up in defiance, because the market first and foremost demands construction that keeps within budgets and schedules. Good architecture is, in many contexts, synonymous with management. Resistance to Effekt's Lisbjerg project was not, in this respect, a special case. And there were, most likely, numerous completely trivial reasons for their being phased out. But the fundamental criticism that Nils-Ole advanced in his article reflects an interesting discussion that, to my knowledge, was not really followed up. In to Nils-Ole Lund's judgement, Effekt committed fundamental violations of the modernistic architectural tradition, which can be summarized in the following grievances:

hænge ensbetydende med management. Modstanden imod Effekts Lisbjergprojekt var i den forstand ikke noget specielt tilfælde, og der var sikkert flere helt trivielle årsager til, at de blev udfaset. Men den principielle kritik som Nils-Ole Lund fremførte i sin artikel afspejler en interessant diskussion, som mig bekendt ikke rigtigt blev fulgt op. Effekt begik ifølge Nils-Ole Lunds vurdering nogle fundamentale overgreb imod den modernistiske arkitekturtradition som kan samles til følgende anklagepunkter:

- 1) De eksperimenterede i periferien af fagets vidensområde i stedet for at statuere nogle klassiske dyder.

and 70's and this can, of course, appear deeply problematic, seen from an undisturbed modernistic point of view. But the point is that Effekt's projects attempt to upend the picture of the heroic architect, somewhat in the same way that Lars von Trier obstructs the perfect person in the film "De fem benspænd" (The Five Obstructions). Effekt is definitely playing along with the post-modernistic architectural tradition. They know the plot and are in full control of the clichés but, thankfully, they cause the "film" to break at some decisive points. The projects are not driven by some ingenious theory, expected to produce the perfect result, or guided by a rational and self-assured method not open to discussion. Their architectural generosity is nourished by doubt, irony and insight from outside. Effekt's projects reflect what could be termed mild or cautious idealism. And it is in this conscious sabotage of the exacting attitude and in their precautionary measures against an (all too) strong architecture, that some fine-meshed, yet essential differences can be seen between Effekt's projects and the so-called pragmatic architecture that has become synonymous with all that presently does not confess to a particular ideal.

WHAT CONTRIBUTION CAN WEAK ARCHITECTURE MAKE?

One of the prerequisites enabling the delivery of a strong and penetrating message is the ability to reduce unmanageable issues to simple equations. Fascinating diagrammatical reductions of complexity in construction programs, social relations, environmental problems and other contextual issues has almost become an undisputed success criterion for a winning architecture. Many of the young current architects have learned from the fresh conservatism that the most important thing is to be cool, so the most obvious, of course, is to find a solution to the problems, which does not require an unambiguous point of view. The crisis of the strong utopias has made it more legitimate to consider the art of the possible. But, on the other hand, this does not mean that

er, at Effekts projekter forsøger at omstyrte billedet af den heroiske arkitekt, lidt på samme måde som Lars von Trier obstruerer det perfekte menneske i filmen "De fem benspænd". Effekt spiller afgjort med på den senmodernistiske arkitekturtradition, de kender plottet og behersker klicheerne men får heldigvis 'filmen' til at knække på nogle afgørende punkter. Projekterne er ikke drevet frem af en sindrig teori, som skal føre dem frem til det perfekte resultat, eller styret af en rationel og selvsikker metode, der er hævet over enhver diskussion. Deres arkitektoniske generositet næres af tvivl, ironi og indsigter udefra. Effekts projekter afspejler hvad man kan kalde en svag eller forsigtig idealisme. Og det er i denne bevidste sabotage af den fordringsfulde attitude og i deres forholdsregler imod en (alt for) stærk arkitektur, at der tegner sig nogle finmasketede men alligevel væsentlige forskelle mellem Effekts projekter, og den såkaldte pragmatiske arkitektur, der er blevet synonym med alt det i tiden, som ikke bekender sig til et bestemt ideal.

HVAD KAN DEN SVAGE ARKITEKTUR?

En af forudsætningerne for at kunne levere et stærkt og gennemtrængende budskab er evnen til at reducere u håndterlige problemstillinger til simple ligninger. Fortryllende diagrammatiske reduktioner af kompleksitet i byggeprogrammer, samfundsforhold, miljøproblemer og andre kontekstuelle problemstillinger er nærmest blevet et indiskutabelt succeskriterium for en sejrrig arkitektur. Mange af de unge samtidsarkitekter har lært af den friske konservatisme, at det frem for alt gælder om at være cool, så det mest nærliggende er selvfølgelig at finde en løsning på problemerne, som ikke kræver et entydigt standpunkt. De stærke utopiers krise har gjort det mere legitimt at forholde sig til det muliges kunst, men det betyder på den anden side ikke, at det pragmatiske konsensusparadigme skal fortolkes som en opfordring til kun at være forpligtet på sin egen succes. Den postmoderne erfaring siger godt



the pragmatic consensus paradigm is to be interpreted as an exhortation to feel solely obliged to one's own success. The neo-modern experience grants that ideals are inconvenient, but, for my part, I see the strength of Effekt in that they nevertheless admit this weakness. They take stances but do not have all the answers and therefore insist on remaining at the periphery of professional architectural routine in order to seek support from interdisciplinarity and network structure when formulating their ideas.

nok, at idealer er besværlige, men det er for mig at se Effekts styrke, at de trods alt indrømmer denne svaghed. De har holdninger, men ikke hele svaret og insisterer derfor på at stå i periferien af den arkitektfaglige rutine for at kunne støtte sig til tværfaglighed og netværksstruktur når de formulerer deres ideer.

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