

Forms of Reciprocity

Raising appreciation for the Danish nature



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“In the age of the Anthropocene, humanity’s impact on the planet is undeniable. By destruction and even by conservation, all ecological systems are impacted by human action. We are now at a crossroads where we can either continue a narrow view of technology, informed by our distance from Nature, or we can acknowledge that this is just one way and not the only way for humans to live.”

Julia Watson (2019) *Lo-TEK: Design by Radical Indigenism*

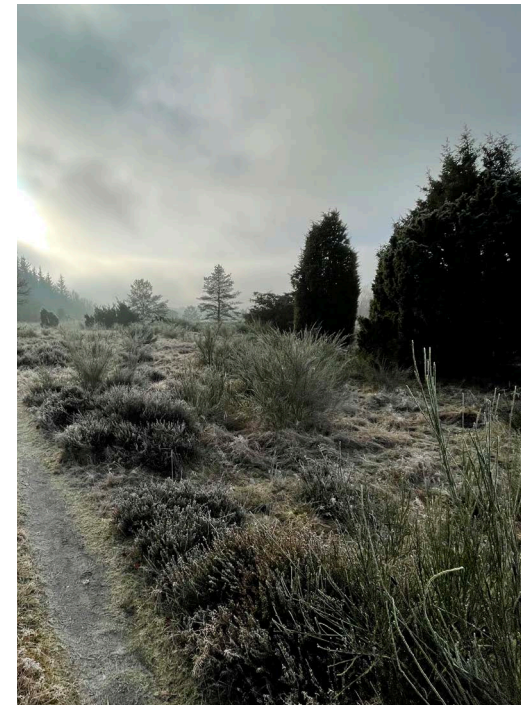
Nature, a shifting understanding of landscape and its resources

The Holocene, represents the most recent interglacial interval of the Quaternary Period, a time that is characterized by the rise of humanity.

The Anthropocene, represents the later part of the Holocene epoch, a time that is characterized by humanity's domination over the planet's ecological systems and biogeochemical cycles.

Throughout the past centuries, generations of agricultural farming have influenced the general appreciation for the Danish landscape. The anthropocene era concerns the time where human civilization has impacted the Earth's ecosystems, diminishing natural resources and threatening biodiversity. Today, we see a shifting understanding of nature's value that influences the perception of what *nature* is and how it should be used. Focusing on the extremities of the matter, one point of view is seeing *nature* as a purely functional resource, a production material, supplying human industries. Contrasting this point of view is the idea leaning towards a sense of self awareness, and a *nature* that is preferably untouched by humans. This perspective sees nature as broken and in need of protection from human interaction. But none of these views are particularly preferable. Without an objective description of *nature*, the concept takes form through a subjective spatial perception.

The nature discussed in this project is an evolving definition, moving from an industrial orientation and the anthropocene, towards a more symbiotic relationship between people and their experiences with nature.



Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to define a symbiotic relationship between three parties; the Danish landscape, the built environment and the traveler. In the age of the anthropocene, a time where the perception and the culture around nature are shifting, we are searching for forms of reciprocity. Creating architectural frames that encourage the underappreciated experiences of domestic nature.

With the decreasing importance of the Danish agriculture, the landscape poses a new possibility concerning outdoor life. With the context of Central Jutland and a specific site close to Salten Langsø, the creation of accommodation in close relation with the landscape will inspire a greater enthusiasm towards travel in nature. The project aims at encouraging engagement between urban citizens, and what, to many danes may be, the undiscovered landscape of domestic nature. Creating access and raising awareness towards the Danish nature, its beauty and historical context.

How can we give back Danish nature its appreciation by
facilitating existing phenomena?

Abstract

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Domestic Tourism

A survey published in 2019 showed an increasing interest in danish tourism pointing towards the untapped market of domestic travel. The research done by VisitDenmark made it clear that Danes, with increasing rates are spending their vacations in Denmark, and that the international interest is rising. The data discovered led to the creation of the 2020 action plan Meget mere end bare Danmark enabling Denmark to develop into one of Europe's top outdoor destinations. The campaign focuses on the potential of health-oriented and sustainable tourism in Danish nature.

As the growing interest towards outdoor life develops, there are countless campaigns encouraging people to enter the danish nature, but close to no initiatives are addressing the lack of accommodation. Options on places to stay are rather restricted. Getting close to nature is not the same as staying in a summer house area, nor is it a weekend at a luxurious seaside hotel. Accommodation in the landscape is limited to the choice of a rather primitive shelter, excluding a diversity of people, in particular those who normally don't feel comfortable sleeping on the cold ground. The aspect of security and the notion of privacy is also at stake in an open structure, becoming a breaking point for many female users entering the landscape.

Setting foot in nature should not be viewed as an extreme sport, but rather an informal attaining experience, attainable to everyone. Due to the lack of alternatives that complement the outdoor initiatives, **Denmark is in need of accommodation options that encourage the underappreciated experiences of domestic nature.**



Veljefjord Hotel



Shelters in Gudumkær Plantation, Herning

Staycation

During the ongoing pandemic, our lives have increasingly been lived from home. Within the tight space of our new home-office, social distancing and restrictions have created a new pressing need to move outside of the compressed spaces of our apartment buildings. In the contexts of the city, green pockets and parks are no longer sufficient in providing spaces for ventilation, or cater to the vast number of people using them. We are now turning towards the domestic landscape as a space of recreation, or simply to escape uncertainty and the gloomy reality. When taking into account the current situation of the second lockdown this spring of 2021, the prospect of domestic vacation in Denmark becomes increasingly relevant.

It has become apparent that the aftermath of the situation, not only concerns our everyday leisure time, but that the long-term effects of the virus will have a massive impact on how we will spend our holidays in the near future. As the coronavirus is dominating public places and transits, affecting the crossing of borders, travel abroad has been put on hold and staycation is tourism's new destination. Searching away from the crowdedness of the cities and towards where we will spend our next holiday, the landscape of Denmark seems strangely unfamiliar...



Himmelbjerget



Gudenå

Understanding the Danish landscape

Through time, ideas of how nature should be defined and treated have taken countless forms. Provoking strong attitudes and different opinions, humans have favoured some forms of nature over others. The different perspectives divide the rather homogeneous Danish society in two, separating farmers from the urban citizens and utilization from preservation. When questioning the use of natural areas there are many conflicts of interests, and to understand the complexity of these it is crucial to take a look at the history of the Danish landscape and how the resources and its value have changed over time.



The Holocene, an overview of the current geological epoch, characterized as the age of the human species. One can easily imagine that prior to the holocene epoch, a purer *natural* state of the earth and its landscape existed. A virgin idealized form of *nature*, untouched by humans

7 000BCE /
1750BCE



Neolithic Period

A major change in the history of humankind was the settlement of the first farming societies. As the cultivation of land required space, areas of Danish forest were burnt down and replaced by cultivated plants. Animals were kept as livestock and supplemented with gathered and hunted goods. The living situation changed during the period, but the shared characteristics of small-scale, family-based communities remained the same.

1700CE /
1800CE



The Danish Agricultural Reform

By the 18th century, Danish farming had evolved into a more organized form of domestication and was an integrated part of the village community. With the agricultural reforms, *Landboreformen* that was aimed at improving conditions for farmers, the vernacular communities changed dramatically. Both through the increased agricultural production, as well as the merging of farmers land into fewer and bigger plots. Despite these changes, the biggest influence on the landscape in this period was caused by the vast demand for wood. Areas that earlier had been covered by forest, were now left with stumps, projecting from the ground, resulting in massive deforestation.

1800CE /
1850CE



The Golden Age

As an artistic period, *guldalderen* had a great influence on the perception of what Danish *nature* consisted of. Danish society had established a confidence in its artists and painters, firmly believing that their inspiration only came from the *true Danish nature*. Through the artistic production and the distribution of paintings in this period, a common agreement of what *nature* truly looked like, was established. The image of heathlands and meadows, engraved into Danish culture, has rested up until today, even though this *natural landscape* is the result of decades of human cultivation and is characterised as a cultural landscape.

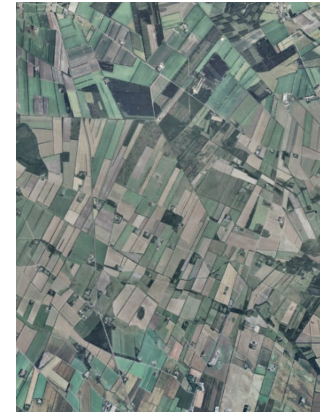
1850CE /
1950CE



Modernism.

The great changes in the social position and role of agriculture began shifting with the industrial revolution. By the 20th century, the once free range domestication was long gone and livestock was kept inside to increase efficiency. A critical aspect of the agricultural progress was the economic crisis of the 1930's, together with the settlements of the *land gaining projects* and the *land improvement law*. The projects were authorised and publicly funded, reconstructing agricultural landscapes to enable maximum production capacity and growth. In its totality the legislations caused the draining of nearly 100.000 lakes, fjords and wetlands, areas that today are subjects of nature restoration projects.

1950CE /
2021CE



Present Day

Not until the end of the 20th century did Denmark recognise the negative effects on the landscape, as a result of the intensity of agricultural production. It has taken time for the rising concern and the conservation of nature to be directed towards the active protection of nature's biodiversity, plants and animals. The appearance of the Danish landscape is without doubt a result of the intense and heavy cultivation taking place on the land and there is little to nothing that remains untouched.

Big Rocks and Old Trees

Accompanying the current anthropocene era is the feeling of guilt connected to the diminishment of natural resources and its biodiversity. One can assume that the legacy of *eco anxiety*, the feeling that one should do more to help 'save' the planet, has informed several pro-environmental behaviors such as the establishment of nature conservation unions.

As a unique example, The Danish Society for Nature Conservation is the only privately owned union in the world that independently can raise conservational issues and ensure the protection of Danish natural areas, both private and publicly. Since its creation in 1911 and the establishment of the first conservation law in 1917, the union has been the proud executor of many nature conserving legislations, such as securing the public access to the Danish coastline.

Taking a closer look at the details of the conservations and the values ensured by The Danish Society for Nature Conservation, a more critical awareness is adapted. The unique and great power they have to ensure natural environments and biodiversity is crucial, and yet we have close to nothing reporting on how successfully they have been at ensuring this with their legislations.

Due to this lack of evaluation, the final proposal of this project should take a critical position concerning nature conservation laws, especially when it comes to people's access to experiences in these conserved natural environments, posing important questions such as;

When conserving and protecting nature today, for whom are we really creating value?



The Experiences

These are our notions and experiences of existing phenomena informed by the surroundings of the site, and will be further developed through the project and its architectural interventions.

The Moment of Return

The familiar sight of the camp you earlier left behind

The Bath

Getting back the heat and cleaning yourself

The Supper

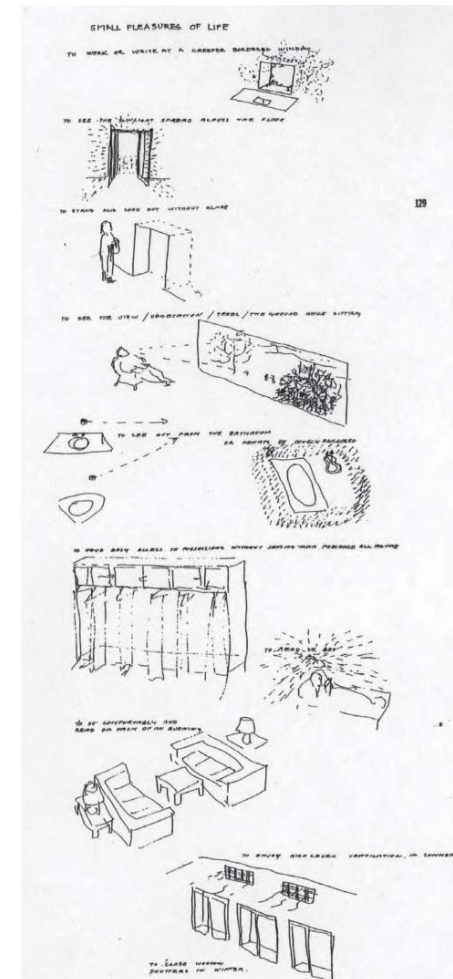
The warm meal being prepared at the end of the day

The Fire

A heating source at the center of the camp. Drawing people together

The Snooze

A place to lay down and rest, without the concerns of the hours of the day



Small pleasures of life, Alison & Peter Smithson, London 1993

Reclaiming Nature

The vision of this thesis is to create a symbiotic relationship between three parties; the Danish landscape, the built environment and the traveler. Reintegrating nature and architecture as one human culture, where architecture is the tool used to facilitate human interplay with nature in a humble and respectful way. The project will create better accessibility to the Danish landscape, encouraging enthusiasm towards outdoor life and tourism, especially in regards to the urban citizen, conceivably feeling estranged outside the city context.

Through an overall architectural strategy in close relation with the surrounding landscape, the aim is to develop an alternative accommodation in the area of Salten Langsø. The intervention will contain several smaller lodges, spread out in the landscape, joined together by connecting paths. The passage will function as a guide, leading travelers towards the different lodges and experiences of natural phenomena, allowing surrounding nature to thrive and unfold, without unnecessary tearing of the terrain. A concept of protecting nature through the built environment.

The lodges will be designed based on fundamental needs when being in nature, such as shelter and heat, as well as the possibility to close off and create privacy. It will be accessible throughout the whole year, giving people the opportunity to discover and experience the beauty of the different seasons in the landscape. The architecture will help facilitate a closer and intimate contact with the surrounding forests and lakes on site, provoking new perspectives on danish nature.

When creating hospitality for the majority, it is important that the accommodation becomes affordable for everyone. The project is all about developing a diverse and shared outdoor life and for that reason; camping with tents on site should also be a possibility. As an important point of departure, the area should be accessible for any traveler. Considering the hiker, the site will be an obvious stop along the famous monastic route, *Den Danske Klosterrute*, a tourist and pilgrimage route through Jutland, with thematic focus on churches, history and nature. In regards to travelers with cars or public transportation, Gammel Rye would be an evident starting point to access the natural areas around Gudenåen.

UN Goals

In relation to the Sustainable Development Goals, the project will focus on creating a built environment that protects a vulnerable landscape and its biodiversity through architectural structures that guides travelers in an enduring way. Creating awareness towards the anthropocene landscape and its development.

In need of reducing the ecological footprint, sustainable and eco-labelled materials will be used. The construction of the architecture will show respect and sympathy towards the landscape, leaving no scars behind.

In relation to economic growth, the project will help support tourism in the local community close by, as well as giving local craftsmen labor during the processes of construction.

Spending time outside in nature is shown to have a positive influence on personal health and quality. An outdoor life accessible for all, secures physical well being to a majority of people, in a time where gyms and arranged sport are no longer an option, due to the current pandemic.

Related Projects

From cultivated land to a rewilded shared nature

The natural areas of Denmark, understood as uncultivated land, covers only a quarter of the total area of the country. Rising concern towards the heavy cultivated lands have opened the dialog on how the Danish landscape should be managed and preserved. The Danish Society of Nature Conservation together with the Danish Agriculture & Food Council proposed a joint initiative at the beginning of 2019, suggesting a new reform involving the utilization of agricultural land, a strategy where cultivated land is being converted into diverse natural areas. The initiative will ensure a sustainable utilization of land, expanding the *untouched nature*, lowering climate impact and benefiting the exposed industry.

As of today, 70 percent of the Danish land is owned by private actors. The new suggested reform implies, in a general matter, that farmers gradually will change roles from producer to nature manager. The framework will take action in river valleys and low lying agricultural areas where the soil is difficult to cultivate, where the farmer struggles with low financial return. By transforming and rewilding the agricultural areas into *untouched nature*, new agendas can be taken into account; giving access for public use, as well as facilitating outdoor life in the growing diverse landscape.



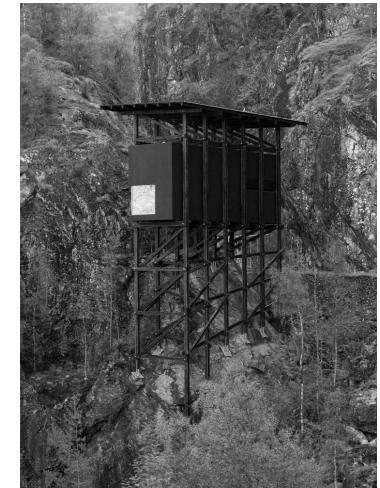
Rewilding project at Knepp Estate in Sussex, England
Left dated 2001, right dated 2017

Building in nature

Due to the limited and precious natural areas in Denmark, strict regulations have generated boundaries for outdoor life to unfold and the possibility for people to move freely in the landscape. Taking into account the restrictions and criticism towards building in danish nature, shaping architectural structures in respect and sympathy with the terrain, forms a symbiotic relationship between the architecture and the landscape. When we acknowledge nature and understand its value, we take better care of it.



Juвет Landscape Hotel, located in Gudbrandsjuvet, Norway, designed by Jensen & Skodvin Architects. The hotel consists of nine lodges spread around in the landscape. An old farm building on site is restored and transformed into an associated restaurant. Despite the location on a nature reserve, conservation authorities gave permission to realize the project, given that there were no use of dynamite or change of terrain during construction work. Each lodge is resting on massive steel rods drilled into the ground, leaving existing topography and vegetation left almost untouched. The landscape hotel is seen as a guest at site and can be removed without leaving any scars in the landscape.



Allmannajuvet Zinc Mine Museum, located in Sauda, Norway, created by Peter Zumthor. Through the architecture, the museum raises awareness towards the abandoned zinc mines and the events that took place at the end of the 1800s, displaying the strenuous and exposed labor of the workers at that time. The interiority calls upon the notions of the historical context, designed as dark, narrow spaces. The three pavilions are positioned in the terrain of the ravine, supported by large timber frames, recalling the structures of the mine industry which used to occupy the site.

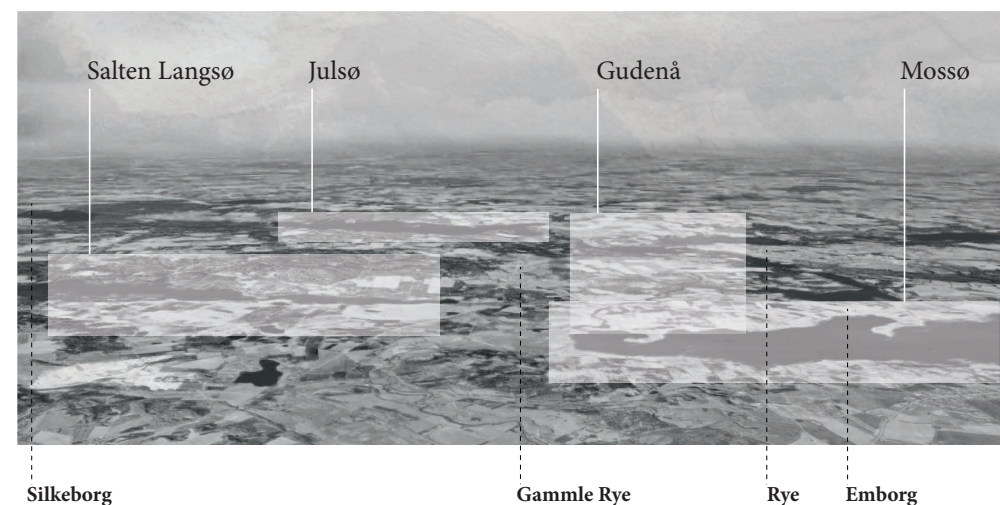
Context

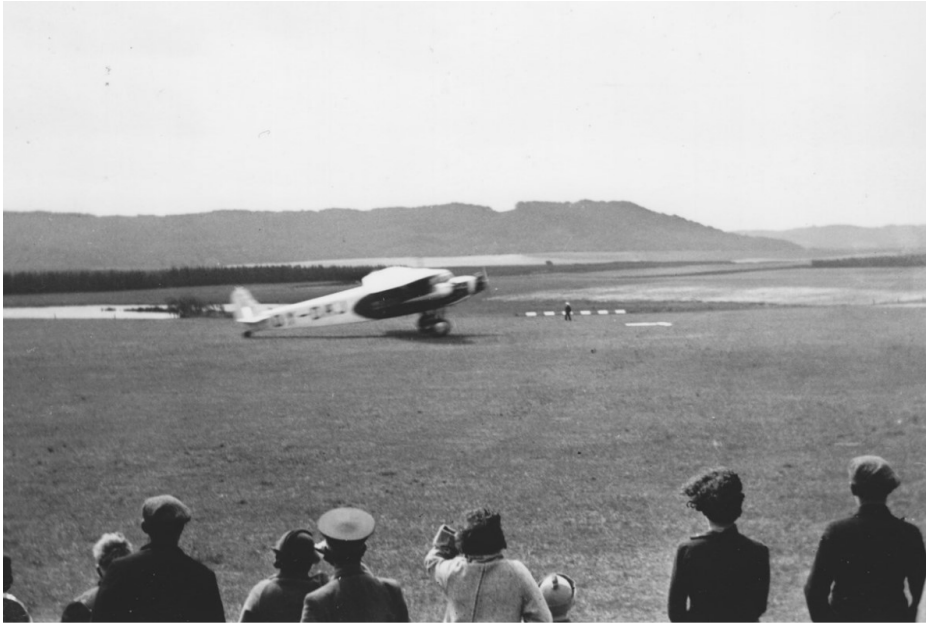
Situated in the east part of Central Jutland, the steep landscape of Søhøjlandet is marked by the last glacial period and characterised by its many highlands, ravines and lakes. The area contains the largest continuous forest landscape in the country, as well as the highest density of lakes.

Unfortunately, the agricultural settlement close to these waters such as Gudenåen, Mossø and Salten Langsø, dominates the landscape, taking up space which should have been devoted to nature and a public outdoor life. As a result of the heavy cultivation, the soil in the area is hard to cultivate and farmers are struggling to maintain an efficient agriculture. With the strategy of transforming poor cultivated lands into areas of rewilded nature, the landscape will benefit the biodiverse environment and the outdoor life, expanding the natural areas around the lakes.

The local area presents itself with a number of attractions such as the famous hiking route Klostertruten, Gudenåen river, where activities such as kayaking is popular, hiking to Himmelbjerget and Sukkertoppen and a visit to the Klostermølle museum, makes the location around Salten Langsø appealing to potential tourism.

Within these frames we wish to establish an accessible outdoor life around Salten Langsø, creating comfortable accommodation for travelers visiting the historical and cultural areas around Gudenåen. Lack of places to stay nearby, makes the location around Salten Langsø an obvious choice for this project.





Rye airfield 1943

(...) the world's most beautifully placed airfield – the statement is naturally up for debate, nonetheless it was how the airfield was described in Silkeborg newspaper, 28. Marts 1939.

The Site

Southeast of Salten Langsø lies the remains of the old airfield, Rye Flyveplads. With a history dating back to 1935 and the time when property owner Gunnar Larsen decided to establish his own private airport. Larsen frequently traveled to Copenhagen for business, and was therefore in need of fast transportation. At the beginning of its history, the airfield was primarily used by Gunnar himself, but this quickly changed when daily operations were taken over by the Danish AirLine Det Danske Luftfartselskab. During the German occupation of Denmark, troops gained control of the airfield and in the years that followed used it to gain a strategic influence in the attack on Norway. When the war finally ended, the airfield began functioning as a refugee camp, housing the many German fugitives remaining after the war. Rye-camp closed in 1948, and has remained deserted ever since.

Today the old airfield is made up of natural growing heather, trees and shrubs. The site has a good connection to Salten Langsø and scenic views towards both Rye forest and the hilly landscape of søhøjlandet.

Hidden in the corners of the site, covered by trees and shrubs there are several ruins of old bunkers and barracks, both from the war and the time of the refugee camp. The old remains of the hangard foundation is somewhat intact, and the individual pieces should be investigated with the possibility of becoming part of the overall design strategy.

The Accommodation

The primary function of the intervention is accommodation in the landscape around Salten Langsø. The project will explore existing architectural structures around the lake, considering potential buildings to be brought within the program.

A central, communal building will be the anchor of the project with a number of smaller lodges spread out in the terrain, carefully positioned in relation with particular natural phenomena found on site. Each cabin has an individual and unique approach to its surrounding nature, emphasizing the relationship between the human body and the experience of nature. An extended continuous path is connecting the lodges, leading visitors through the scenic landscape around the lake.

The main building will be a common denominator, gathering people in informal spaces, where everyone is equalized. Besides the concept of facilitating accommodation for travelers, the project will investigate additional programs to be included in the architecture, encouraging a higher interest towards outdoor life. The functions will enable visitors to come up close to different natural moments, praising the undiscovered or perhaps underappreciated Danish landscape. The human senses will be crucial to study further in the process of development.



Salten Langsø

Materiality

When it comes to the symbiotic relationship between architecture and nature, choices of material matter. Each decision in the architectural process produces its own environmental impact, and understanding how to reduce these consequences are essential in ensuring long-term sustainability. As architects and designers, an essential part of the profession is to conduct detailed research on the origins of the materials we work with. In this matter, wood becomes an obvious choice, as the great building material of the future. Wooden buildings are preferable to other options such as concrete, aluminum and steel, due to its ability to capture and store carbon dioxide. Even when taking into consideration the issues of deforestation, wood is still an extremely sustainable material, as long as it is retrieved and treated in a conscious and respectful way.

The use of wood as the central building material opens up the possibility of creating new jobs in the local community. The forestry around Søhøjlandet has a long tradition and history dating back to the 17th century, where Silkeborg holds the biggest forest in Denmark. Today several producers are certified by the PEFC and FSC standards, ensuring the sustainable production and utilization of wood, as a renewable raw material. As part of a bigger forest strategy, Silkeborg Forestry Council are working to secure local species and promote the use of native trees, as a preferred building material, providing a local anchor.

It is no secret that when investigating the possibility of building in connection to the landscape, the choice of natural building materials gives the project an advantage concerning conservation laws and potential skeptics, as it is recognized as a sympathetic alternative.

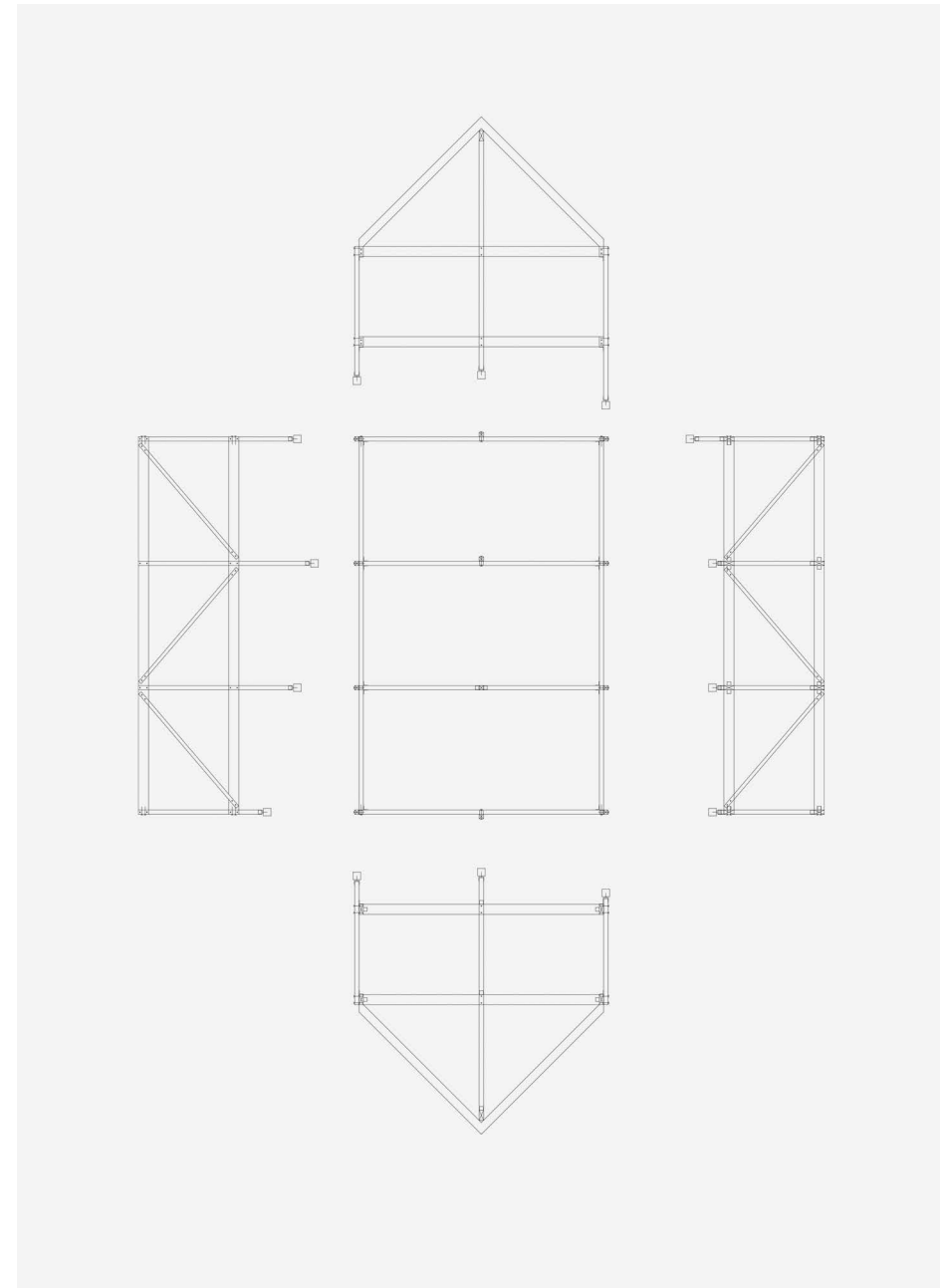


Villa Schreiner, Sverre Fhen 1959-1963

Building techniques

The quality of material is of importance when designing for a greener and more inclusive future and the same is true for the method of how to build. When building in nature, a sustainable alternative to common contemporary construction methods are needed and the reinterpretation of traditional typologies in a modern context is a favourable position. An important part of the project should be the investigation of local building techniques, where history is the source of inspiration, informing new design. Where natural or primitive techniques have a positive meaning and an interest in sustainability, renewing vernacular construction techniques can be a way of including the local community, increasing affiliation and attachment to the site, creating awareness around old techniques and knowledge.

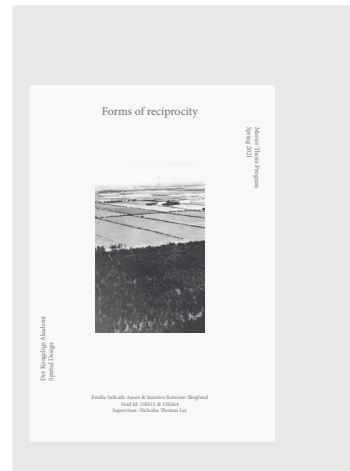
With the philosophy of seeing our intervention as the guest on site, the concept of temporality is indispensable to the final proposal, where the success of the construction is measured by its capacity to be removed, without leaving any traces. Detailed drawing materials and a strategy for the building narrative should be developed.



Semester schedule

The material produced during the course of the semester should reflect the overall strategy and methods described in this program. The timeframe of the project is connected to Spatial Design deadlines and critiques, where the collection of end materials, composes a bigger body of work, a four pieced Projects Atlas.

11/02
Program Submission + Crit 1



Programming & positioning

Programme submission (part 1)

Outline *The experiences*
Establish the research questions
Select specific site
Define the meaning of nature
Outline interventions and vision
Frame context and site
Name requirements for final exam
Print *program booklet (part 1)*

25/03
Crit 2



Preliminary investigations on site

Atlas submission (part 2)

mapping
textures
typologies
biology
scales
anthropological investigations
interviews

Detailed situation plan 1:100
The experiences visualizations
Print *atlas booklet (part 2)*

06/05
Crit 3



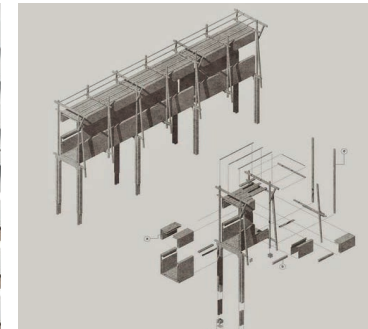
Material & model making

Model atlas submission (part 3)

Photographed collection

Initiate *exhibition plan*, draft
Digital presentation, draft
Large scale *site model* 1:100
Model fragments of building techniques in wood
Material samples 1:1
Define intervention through modelmaking
The experiences drawings
Initiate final drawing material
Initiate *presentation script*, draft
Print *model atlas booklet (part 3)*

26/05
Exam



The narrative of building

Technical rapport submission (part 4) Digital presentation submission

Detailed drawing material of building narrative, *plan of realisation*
Detail construction drawings
Visualizations
Final *project models*, large scale and detail
Final *exhibition plan*
Final *presentation script*
Print *technical rapport booklet (part 4)*

Exhibition plan

11/02

- 1 *Program booklet (part1)*
- 2 *The experiences outlined*

25/03

- 3 *Atlas booklet (part 2)*
- 4 *Mapping*
- 5 *Interviews*
- 6 *Detailed situation plan 1:100*
- 7 *The experiences drawings*

06/05

- 8 *Model atlas booklet (part 3)*
- 9 *Exhibition plan draft*
- 10 *Digital presentation*
- 11 *Site model 1:100*
- 12 *Model fragments of building techniques*
- 13 *Material samples 1:1*
- 14 *The experiences visualizations*

26/05

- 15 *Technical rapport booklet (part 4)*
- 16 *Plan of realisation 1:50*
- 17 *Detail construction drawings 1:10*
- 18 *Visualizations*
- 19 *Project site model*
- 20 *Project detailed models*
- 21 *Exhibition plan finalised*
- 22 *Presentation script*



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Footnotes

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- Page 5 Sunniva Skogland, Emilie Aasen (2021) personal image
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