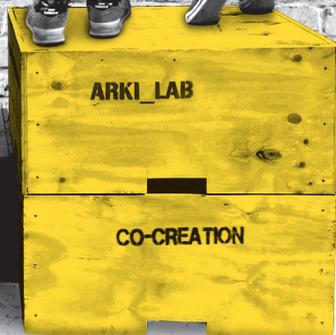


DESIGNING CITIES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



arki_lab ApS - Designing Cities With People

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1 INTRODUCTION

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WE WERE ABLE TO THINK IN A
DIFFERENT WAY,
BE CREATIVE,
AND LET THE INSPIRATION FLOW.
IT WAS NICE THAT WE WERE ABLE TO

HAVE AN OPINION

ABOUT WHAT WE WANTED
IN THE LOCAL AREA,

SO IT COULD BE A
BETTER PLACE

TO LIVE.

BJØRN, 8TH GRADE STUDENT AT BRØNSHØJ SCHOOL



DESIGNING CITIES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

On the left are the words of Bjørn, one of the young people we had the pleasure of meeting over the course of our work. His important words ring with the zeal of an engaged young citizen who wants to participate in society and help create better cities to live in. This is the essence of our work. If we want today's generations to solve the problems of tomorrow- we all should have started yesterday. We need everyone on board and PRONTO.

In debates around public spaces and urban development, children often fall into the same 'minority' categories as the elderly, the homeless, and other socially vulnerable groups. Shocking, isn't it? They represent half of the world's population! The voices of the future are silenced. The voice of youth and truth should ring loud and clear above the noise of this obvious neglect in a push for empowerment and democracy but also to improve both the physical and social quality, and sustainability of our cities. The youth are an untapped resource of knowledge about the city. They are a gateway to engage the local community. They embody the greatest creative potential we have and can supply the architectural process with brilliant and innovative ideas.

Urban design stands on the founding mantra of designing cities for people, which entails the designer creating spaces with a specific user group in mind. This is an important first step in good design practice. We advocate for taking it a step further into what we call the new paradigm of 'designing **with** people'. This means involving citizens directly in the design process through tailor-made engagement processes. This means incorporating the potential of youth in the design process. In this book, we will describe the strategies we use when designing places for young people, but more importantly we will also describe different involvement strategies in our effort to **design cities with young people**.

OUR HOPE WITH THIS BOOK is to create an understanding of the importance of involving young people and to realize the wealth of resources they offer our society. We want to inspire people with insights into how to involve citizens so that we may truly co-create our cities together. We hope to show new ways of creating exciting projects that generate valuable outcomes for everyone involved (youth included!), but also give crucial insight to the architects and urban planners. These outcomes and insights can be costly when the user involvement strategy is not done right, but more expensive is a future without them!

You might have noticed: this is an English publication. We really wanted to share the particular Scandinavian way of going about urban design as well as the keywords that make up our worldview, while also elaborating on the ideologies that have made Copenhagen one of the world's most liveable cities. We wish to share the problems that have led us to where we are, and to unfold the spatial circumstances of those problems, as they have led us to some of the things we do well. We are hoping that it will serve as an inspiration for everyone to join us in our mission of creating cities with people.



arki_lab was founded upon the strong ideological principle of getting closer to people through our efforts to create better cities. We work with education through involvement, community building, and creating spatial change that benefits the users' needs. Every process revolves around citizen involvement in as many stages as possible. We translate the needs and dreams of the citizens, activate unused spaces, and give places new life through local knowledge. We apply tools throughout all processes to activate and engage the users – including the ones that are hardest to reach. Sensitivity to context is one of the most important aspects of our work. We look at ourselves as facilitators of collaborative processes, both in the development of strategies and analysis, and in concrete physical design. We act as the link between citizens and various professional groups connected to the field of architecture, and are experts at uncovering local knowledge that is essential for the success of a project. We see ourselves as mediators of creative processes and advocates for the common people.



WHEN WE FOUNDED ARKI_LAB, IT WAS WITH THE HOPE OF GETTING CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE WHEN DESIGNING CITIES. OUR OFFICE IS LIKE OUR APPROACH - AT EYE LEVEL WITH THE EVERYDAY CITIZEN. IT'S IMPORTANT FOR US THAT EVEN THOUGH WE'RE THE FOUNDERS OF THE COMPANY, IT'S MORE OF A COLLECTIVE - SO MANY WONDERFUL PEOPLE HAVE JOINED US OVER THE YEARS. ARKI_LAB IS AN OPEN OFFICE, AND SHARING & COLLABORATING ARE OUR BREAD & BUTTER. FEEL FREE TO DROP BY OUR OFFICE TO SAY HI!

- JEANETTE & RASMUS FRISK, PARTNERS, ARKI_LAB





STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS AND BUILDING WITH ANTS

As a part of the Danish School Reform in 2013, public schools were obligated to create partnerships with external actors in the so-called 'Open School' program. This created an interesting possibility to facilitate some exciting new projects, and arki_lab has been participating in a number of integrated learning projects since then through collaborations with schools all over Denmark. This book is to a large degree based on experiences gathered through these projects. By involving schools, we create a more sustainable and holistic approach to the development of our cities. Through these institutions, we gain access to local information that would otherwise be out of reach, and therefore come up with a more informed design solution. In addition to the invaluable knowledge that we gain, this approach provides added value to schools by actively using the development of the physical environment as a tool for learning.

We're working within staunch traditions of user involvement, the democratic process, critical urban design, realization of local/social resources, and co-creation; fields in which, in our perception, the Scandinavian countries have a strong tradition and lead in the global context. This book is also an attempt to pass on some of the research, practical accounts, and know-how that have been developed in a Scandinavian context in recent years and have led to a wide range of interesting publications - many of which unfortunately aren't always available in English.

Besides these untouchable Scandinavian classics, our thoughts and practices come from all our great idols like: Jan Gehl - for being an amazing tutor in creating life between buildings; Jane Jacobs - for having an opinion about her city; Carsten Thau - for giving us crazy new perspectives on space and time; Emily Pilloton - because she, like us, is driven by ideologies and critical thinking of putting design on the school curriculum; Juhani Pallasmaa - for writing amazing books like 'The eyes of the skin,' which pairs architecture with other worlds; Marianne Jelved - for being an awesome minister of culture and creating a masterpiece of architectural policy across 11 ministries in 2014; Sir Ken Robinson - for justly arguing for how school kills creativity; Pippi Longstocking - for being an amazing character and reminding us how to 'just live in that world for a while' with odd perspectives and an alternative way of doing things. And last but not least; each other - for the unwavering support, and our wonderful employees - for being who they are.

ARKI_LAB IS TRUE TO ITS NAME: LIKE A LABORATORY, WE START EVERY PROJECT WITH A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION OF THE REAL WORLD AND EXPERIMENT WITH DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS.
- MALOU ALLAGNAT, URBAN DESIGNER

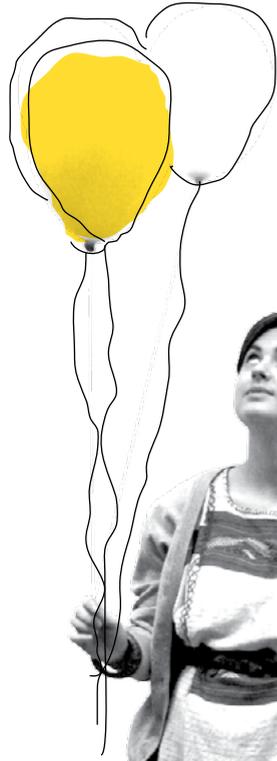


WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

In **Chapter 1: Introduction**, we hoped to have captivated you so thoroughly that you itch to jump ahead to the rest of our book... But before you do, allow us to signpost the path and offer a reading guide.

'Scandinavia' has a certain ring to it. But what is the secret to its success? We wish to tell some of the not-so-known tales of crises, and how these crises have helped shape the capital city of Copenhagen. We do this in **Chapter 2: The Scandinavian Approach**.

An important key to the charm of Copenhagen is its thriving feeling of local community. But what is local community in an age where digital networks and unlimited options form the individual's life? We try to pin down why local community is so important for creating liveable cities in **Chapter 3: Design Driven by the Local Community**.

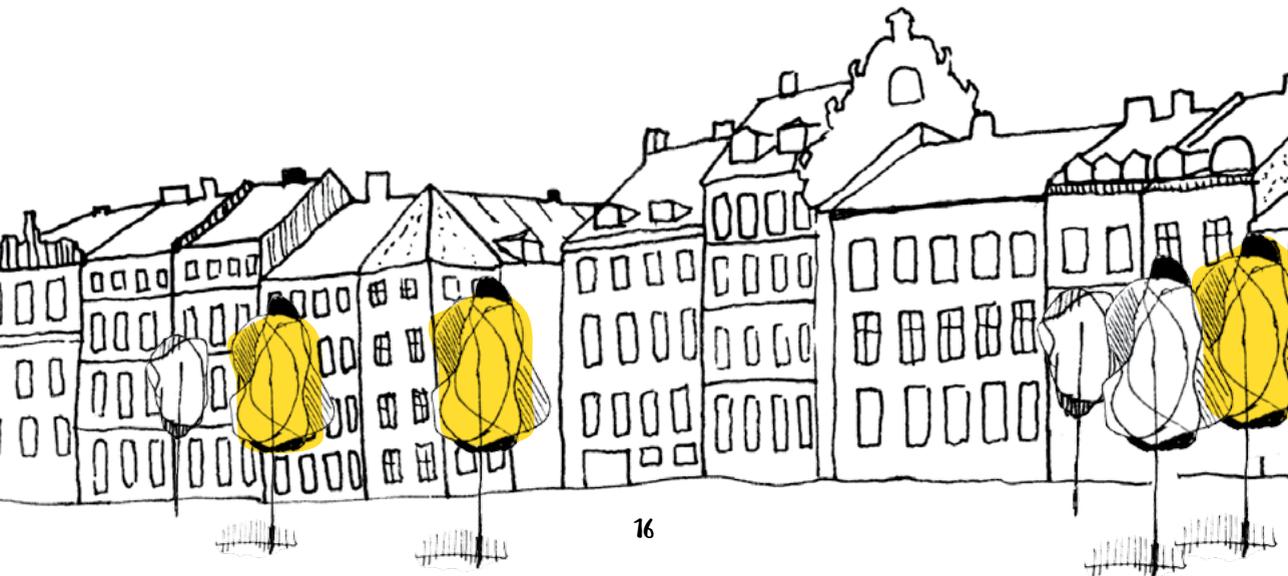


To engage with, expand, or in some cases create, local community, we need to establish a good contact with the residents of our cities. The entire idea of involving citizens and participatory design has a long history behind it. We have come a long way from careful first attempts of involving people to the complex and advanced processes that we are at now. We have grown better in this field as a society. But what is the broad concept of citizen involvement and how do you go about doing it? And how can the local school be a key in solving many of our problems? We look into this in **Chapter 4: The Death and Life of the Public Hearing.**

A pressing question is starting to build up now... We will wholeheartedly answer your question in **Chapter 5: Why Youth?**

A large part of arki_lab's ideology goes into how we can get closer to the citizens. We think that it is crucial to tailor the city to the needs of its residents. This is part of the paradigm we call designing cities for people. We want to give some examples of how we have been thinking about kids and young people in different stages of life in order to tailor design solutions for them. We also want to give examples of our design strategies in working with tweens in **Chapter 6: Designing for Divas and Bumblebees.**

This leads us to the next and much more exciting idea of designing cities with people – or in this case with young people. This is about hands-on experience with multitasking in a noisy classroom filled to the brim with rambunctious children, and



about how you guide them to success. arki_lab versus 300 kids at Lykkebo school – discover the outcome of the battle in **Chapter 7: Designing With: A Do-It-Yourself Guide**.

The first perk of integrating urban design into schools and education is that the young people are involved. Our way of working creates some innovative and important learning environments, which are an important part of learning for the next generation growing up to be active democratic citizens. Follow the progress in **Chapter 8: Young Democratic Citizens**.

But the new ways of working that we describe and practice every day are not just a tool for learning, but an important way of working as urban planners and architects. Tune in to **Chapter 9: The Professional Machine**.

Last but not least, we hope that the projects we describe, the tools we use, and the vision we have will inspire you to ask new questions for the future and join us in our humble attempt to shape new inclusive ways of working in an urban context. In **Chapter 10: Outroduction**, we invite you to think along with us about the future of designing cities with (young) people.



THE YOUTH IS THE FUTURE AND THE FUTURE IS UNDER SIEGE. NEGLECTED AND NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY, OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS LIE WITH GLOBAL CHALLENGES ON A SCALE WE'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE. MANY OF THESE CHALLENGES ARE ROOTED IN CITIES. FROM THE DEEP AND ENTANGLED ROOTS, SOLUTIONS WILL GROW IF THE CONDITIONS ARE RIGHT. CUE **ARKI_LAB.**

THIS SMALL URBAN DESIGN OFFICE, FOUNDED BY RASMUS AND JEANETTE FRISK IN COPENHAGEN, IS REVOLUTIONISING THE WAY CITIES ARE SEEN, DESIGNED AND USED. WE **DESIGN CITIES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE** IN A WAY THAT SUPPORTS AND INSPIRES THEM TO BE BETTER CITIZENS. UNLEASHING THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THIS CONSTRUCTIVE WAY ALLOWS US TO CREATE SPACES GROUNDED IN RESPONSIBILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND BEST OF ALL, CREATIVITY. BUT HOW?!

AS ARCHITECTS, WE KNOW THAT ARCHITECTURE ISN'T ABOUT CREATING MASTERPIECES BUT ABOUT HOW WE CAN BEST MAKE ALL THE PIECES FIT TOGETHER. IN THIS BOOK, WE WILL EXPLAIN THE PIECES WE NEED TO DESIGN CITIES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, OUR PARTICIPATORY PROCESS AND BEST-PRACTICE INSIGHTS FROM THE FIELD. WE WILL SHARE OUR REFLECTIONS ON CO-CREATION AND DEMOCRACY FROM OUR SCANDINAVIAN PERSPECTIVE AND HOW THIS LED TO US BECOMING EXPERTS IN CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT. WE SUGGEST A HOLISTIC APPROACH WHERE WE LEARN PRECISELY HOW TO INVOLVE DIFFERENT GROUPS, BRING THEM TOGETHER, AND NOT ONLY CREATE GREAT URBAN SPACE BUT ALSO GREAT COMMUNITIES TO FILL THESE SPACES WITH HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC LIFE. THAT'S OUR VISION FOR THE CITIES OF TOMORROW - WHAT'S YOURS?

ARKI_LAB + KIDS

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

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