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Process urbanism – the city as an artificial ecosystem

The city and nature are not opposites, and cities can be planned using nature's own principles of organization. This is shown with the design of Greve Midtby in Denmark.

The city should be experienced and generate wonder. Wonder leads to awareness and further knowledge to share with others. An experience of a mood, a special atmosphere, forming a new image, which combines the city and nature and does not represent neither nature nor the city in their conventional forms.

The modernist and postmodernist urban planning principles of centrally determined functional divisions and aesthetics have proven to fail in a world of constant change. SLA greets this challenge with a landscape-inspired planning method named Process Urbanism, which uses the same logic as nature's own principles of organization. Nature and the city are not opposites or delimited units. They are diversified systems, which should be in balance with each other.

Nature is, quite simply, a system of processes. Processes of constant change; surprising and dependent on climate. Nature is metabolism, photosynthesis and evolution, which evolves, adapts and is in balance. Process Urbanism is a practice that may shape the urban plans of cities and urban spaces, according to nature's own systems and processes. Process Urbanism makes up for the division of the city and the categorical

separation of nature and culture of the past. The ultimate goal of Process Urbanism is to create systems, which can best be compared to ecological cycles.

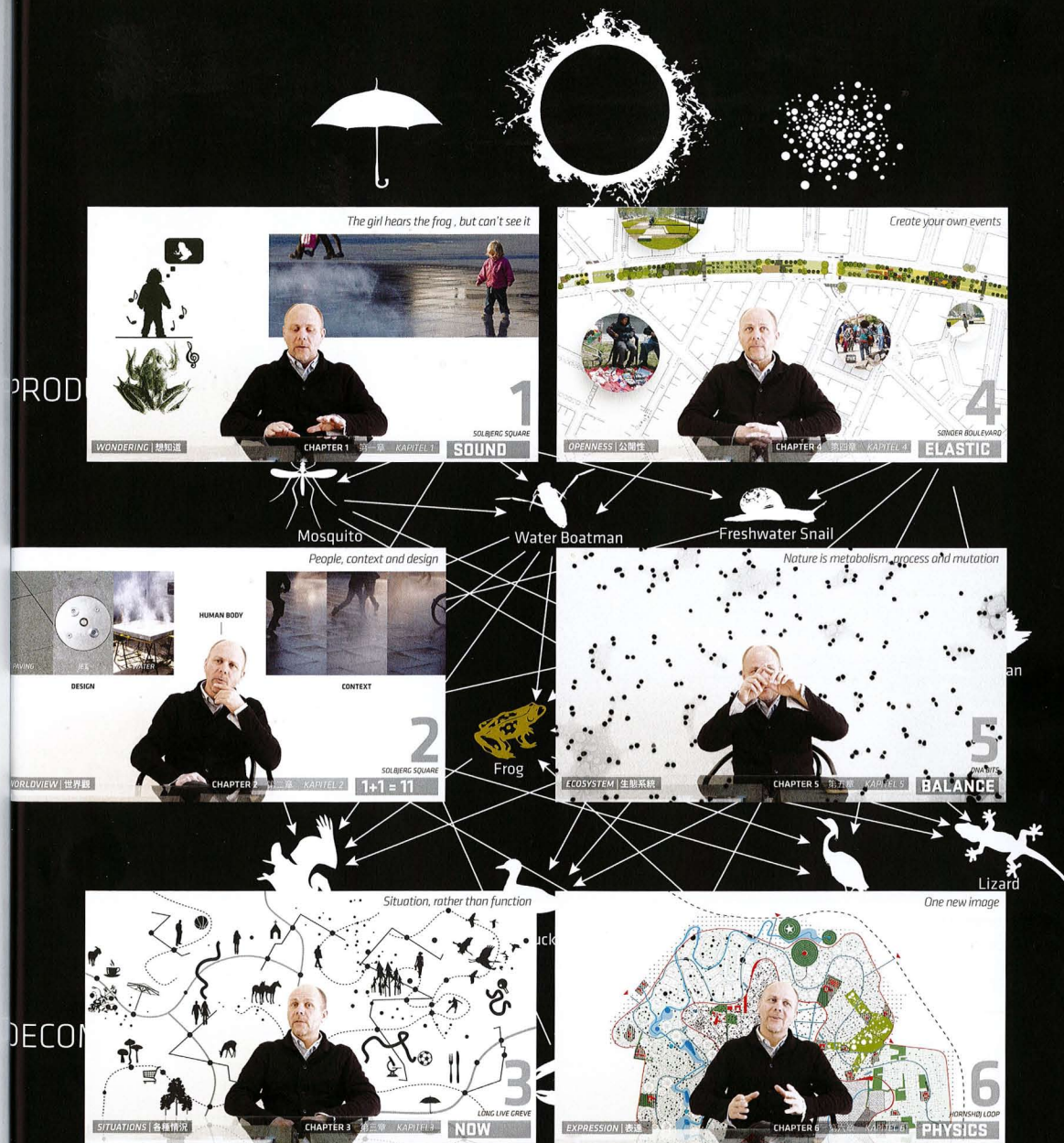
The city must constantly adapt to conditions regarding climate, social segregation, pollution and much more. It is integrated in the method of Process Urbanism to do so in a way, which allows superoptimizing before suboptimizing. This means focusing on creating an unexpected synergy between components, which are not necessarily related. For instance, between the beach and the city hall, or the hospital and the hummingbird. Knowledge of wind, water, light, energy, circulation, politics, health, urban life, density, sustainability etc. is collected into one urban ecosystem, filled with poetry and surprises.

One example is the design of Greve Midtby in Denmark, where the city centre is divided into functions, which are packed closely together, just as the structure of soap bubbles. Trylleskoven, a forest outside of Greve, is based on crystalline triangles, squares, pentagons, and hexagons, creating blurred and open spaces, and departing from the city's grid structure. To SLA the focus is on situation rather than function. Just as the Situa-

tionists, who refer to the moment and place in the city – to the 'here and now' experience. The generator for this is everyday life, where the tangible, the physical and the observational hold the potential to improve a given situation. In a city, meetings are more important than separation, making movements, urban spaces and routes very important. Intersections in Italian medieval towns can be experienced in exactly this way.

SLA designs a framework in which people can create their own experiences. The city consists of various elastic spaces, a myriad of small parts all seeking balance within the overall system. Urban space designed within the concept of open form ensures flexible application and an absence of social hierarchy. Process Urbanism brings components together in new and surprising combinations, which create interaction between urban life and its surroundings. It creates interconnected networks of potential and generates unexpected links between (perhaps unrelated) elements. It includes rather than excludes. It achieves results, which are consistently larger than the sum of the parts (1 + 1 + 1 > 3). It transforms them into poetry, play, health, and a sustainable way of life.

The text about process urbanism is a summary from a script for a movie, which is SLA's contribution to the New Nordic Landscapes during Expo in Shanghai 2010



New pictures of Process Urbanism from the drawing table of SLA show possible expressions for future cities. In Hornshøj LOOP, Denmark, residents inhabit an elastic rubber band. Cultural landscapes are positioned outside of this rubber band and hyper nature on the inside, creating a surprising town centre.