



OLAV KRISTOFFERSEN

Olav Kristoffersen is the founder of Brendeland & Kristoffersen architects with Geir Brendeland and also a professor in architectural design at the Department of Architectural Design and Management in NTNU in Norway and a guest professor at KADK in Copenhagen.

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But don’t be too confident. ”

As we sat in a noisy room at Politecnico, he laughed as he recounted his naive – but bold – move in the beginning of his career. He had just finished his graduation. “I did many competition during the university”, but what he was looking for was someone dedicated, clever and, well, crazy enough to work with. He had already studied other subjects and felt more mature. When they were finishing the competition, they had a really good feeling. They were so confident the result would be positive they made a crazy move: both quit their jobs to work on the project.

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But for Olav, his role as an architect does not stop at his office. The experience as a teacher is very valuable. It is a tool to reach and influence many people. He has been working as a professor since

dealing with different scales. But for Olav, his MIAW Manifesto is about seeing what is there and using what is there.

As to what his students expect for his studio, the answer was straight: “work a lot”. They can expect an intense workshop. Specially since MIAW lasts 10 days, the amount of workload should be concentrated. Nevertheless, one-to-one sessions are also very important for Olav. He tries to understand the students, their projects and approaches in order to find a point where he can encourage them. “In my one-on-one sessions I try to motivate my students. I search for something inside their projects and ideas to trigger them. For me it is very important to try to motivate them”.

But what we also wanted to know is how can we get a place

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2009. I asked him “What is the role of an architect today” and he took a second to think. Then he smiled and said “A consultant”.

The architect works as a consultant, and he doesn’t make the decisions. The architect works for the client, and therefore the client’s will prevails. Of course sometimes the architect will believe in something to be good, and when that occurs, the architect must fight for it. Fight to make it happen. But the architect needs to be competent and make sure it is worth it. He gives the advice “If you don’t believe 100% on it, don’t fight”.

For the MIAW, Olav’s approach is to establish a resilient public space. In his course description he talks about the urgency of constructing a new park for Scalo Farini by diving students into groups

inside his office. He laughs at my question, embarrassed.

“Well, we are a very small practice. Sometimes we can grow but it is temporary. It depends on the amount of workload. Right now we don’t have any opening positions, but in three months we may. It is difficult to predict. [...] But a person that wants to work with us has to have skills [...] Construction skills, drawing skills, sketching skills... You have to be open minded. But also it is important that this person shares our view. When I’m designing I doubt everything I am doing. I question myself all the time. If a person is too certain of their ideas, if the first design is not questioned, than this person does not fit into our office”.

Written by Anna Loch