

## RT#3 (BUILDING WITH CLIMATE AND LANDSCAPE)



### Participants:

**[Fernando Menis](#)**, Architect, Professor at the European University of Canarias and Chairman of the Laboratory for Innovation in Architecture, Design and Advanced Tourism of Tenerife, he also participates as a jury member, director of workshops, lecturer at Harvard, Columbia New York, ESA Paris, TU Berlin, Akbild Vienna and speaker in Architecture Festivals and conferences in Switzerland, Australia, Singapore, South Africa, Croatia, Italy, Colombia, India, etc. He is the author and co-author of a large number of projects; some of the already-built projects are: CKK “Jordanki” in Torun, Poland (2015), Bürchen Public Square in Bürchen, Switzerland (2015), Insular Athletics Stadium (2007), Magma Art & Congress (2005), Swimming pool on Spree River in Berlin (2004) and Presidency of the Canary Islands Government Building (1999). Some of the on-going projects are: Urban / Coastal Seaside Planning in Boa Vista – Santa Mónica and Chave (Cabo Verde), Three Villas in Lijiang, China, Auditorium in Pájara, Agora Garden and Aurum House in Taiwan, the Holy Redeemer Church in Tenerife, and the Bürchen Mystik Hotel in Bürchen, Switzerland.



**[Kim Lenschow Andersen](#)**, Architect, Graduator from The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation, Copenhagen, Cofounder of Lenschow & Pihlmann, Participant of international exhibitions.



**Paulo Carneiro Fernandes**, Architect, Post Master Degree in Sustainable Development and Earth Architecture by CRAterre Institute, Cofounder of CAS (Lisbon, Portugal). Began his professional career in Barcelona where he worked in several architecture studios: Enric Miralles / Benedetta Tagliabue (EMBT), Ramón Sanabria and Alfredo Arribas.



**Tatiana Afonina**, Art historian, Researcher, the author of publications, a participant of International and All-Russian science conferences, Editor-in-chief at BERLOGOS.

**Tatiana Afonina:**

-The theme of our discussion is «Building with climate and landscape». How to create the holistic image of sustainable cities, using urban land art/landscape and architecture? What are the best examples of coincidence between architecture and landscape nowadays?

**Paulo Carneiro Fernandes:**

-I suppose through education we can arrive to interesting results. Architecture and art have the power to educate, to question people and to inspire them. Instead of a strong and hard catastrophic posture, we should embrace a positive opportunity for transforming cities. There is the example of the “Waterfall house” of Frank Lloyd Wright and Alvaro Siza’s Leça swimming pool. Two different examples of how the boundary between building and landscape is very thin. Landscape is transformed for better. But there are several other good examples. Lucien (*Lucien den Arend*) and Fernando have also very good examples. Like an homage to nature without imitating it.





*"Waterfall house", Frank Lloyd Wright*



*Leça da Palmeira swimming pool, Álvaro Siza*



**Fernando Menis:**

-The first important aspect to take into consideration is the harmony between urban environment and landscape in order to find the proper density between the city and the land. We have to always remember that land art is different in every place, we must adapt and react to it. Moreover, land art is sometimes not visible. It is the architect's responsibility to create continuity between the existing site and the architecture to be built on or under it.

Our latest project – CKK Jordanki in Torun, Poland – may be an example of the coincidence between landscape and architecture. The site is set in a green ring around the centre of Torun, an UNESCO protected Polish town that borders the new development of the city. The project site is designed to cover the half of the area of the site. This is to give the remaining area to the park. A green arc is created to create views onto the Auditorium as well as to make the park appear larger. The views- to the river stay untouched by having kept the building's height the smallest possible; 60% of the building is underground. The small height, on the other hand, allowed the building to blend with the neighborhood and the site, the visual effect achieved is that of a natural object, a rock.



*CKK Jordanki in Torun, Poland, Fernando Menis*

-I admire Paulo Carneiro and Alina Jeronimo's work. The way they integrate the community and the landscape with architecture, is astonishing. It is the best example of nature and the building working together. They use natural materials and this gives a great value to the built work; as time passes by they get better and better.

**Kim Lenschow Andersen:**

-I believe a key aspect of this discussion is what you say, Paulo, examples where the boundary between building and landscape is as you say "very thin". I think that if we truly want to create a holistic sustainability, we need to leave the nature/culture divide behind us. We then have to work with what we as designers know how to do, as you point out Fernando, but we also need to work more closely with natural (and "un-natural") processes, and developments. I am thinking then of projects of Anne Holtrop, and Anne Holtrop & Bas Princens Batara project, where they try to step aside and let nature give form. This is of course a sculptural take on this question, but I believe there is much to learn in this way of approaching a design.



*Temporary Museum (Lake), Anne Holtrop*



*Batara, Anne Holtrop & Bas Princens*

I also think the term “ecology” is an important one, not only more classical natural ecologies, where we try to keep away and let the nature be untouched and unspoiled, but new and more complex ecologies where we accept what that is there now, and go from there. This might be slightly utopian, but I believe it is a good place to start.

**Fernando Menis:**

-These are very important aspects, Kim. It is very important to adapt and respect the natural development. However, we have to adapt to nowadays way of living as well and consider the dimensions, position and history of the buildings when designing cities. Sometimes, for big buildings, it is almost impossible to use exclusively recycled and natural materials while designing small projects allows you to establish a more direct relation with the building site and its environment, with the local resources and the local building systems and strategies and it even allows the architect to closely work with the builder, on site, like in an atelier, a workshop. Indeed, every situation requires different solutions and with the wish to adapt to particular situations, we are moving towards a more sustainable future architecture.

**Paulo Carneiro Fernandes:**

-As Kim said ecology is the basis for all.

Architecture is also a living being that should be connected in different ways with its surroundings through climate, sun and wind, materials and energy.

The examples given by Kim are very interesting because they complete nature instead of destroying it. The architect and the artist complete it and accelerate this process that nature takes by its own several years.

As Fernando says the large scale should be a major and complex challenge as integration between architecture and its context.

**Tatiana Afonina:**

-Kim, refusal from “nature vs culture” divide and acceptance more complex ecologies are interesting. How to find the balance between existing cities and existing nature?

**Kim Lenschow Andersen:**

-That is a big question Tatiana, which can take all kinds of directions. One direction as I see it, and what is also being done at the moment, is working within the all ready established realm of architecture. Here we can work with replacing which materials we use, and adding value, as you Fernando point out in Paulo’s work: to make materials more precious by emphasizing their qualities in a new context.

**Fernando Menis:**

-As we all have mentioned before, it is important to react to the nature in the city and be able to transform it in order to adapt it to the new situation of the city. We cannot destroy and completely change the appearance and the complex of the urban nature. Furthermore, we have to think about the cohabitation of the past and the present in the urban environment. We have to preserve the identity and the heritage of the city. The aim is to achieve a fluent integration between built and unbuilt, between tangible and intangible conditions, between new and old and so on.... The approach should be a holistic one.

**Kim Lenschow Andersen:**

-I think you are very right, Fernando, that this is a question of scale, of course. I think another problem lies in the word "holistic". I am thinking of master-planned cities like the garden-cities of England, and now for instance the Masdar city project, where we as "master" designers try to foresee all implications of what we do. I believe in projects that rely more on separate interventions (also maybe by separate architects), working together to form something.

**Fernando Menis:**

-It's true, Kim, it is a very wide question, which we may approach from very different perspectives, but we can always try to find the harmony and work together with the natural resources in order to adapt them to the city. Nevertheless, the city is always changing and mistakes may occur in the process. We should keep rather flexible about our urban plans and projects in order to be able to adapt them in the fast developing future. It's an interesting idea, Kim, working together with different architects. Although, it is a real challenge to integrate the ideas of different people into one project. We could compare it with creating continuity between landscape and architecture, what we have talked about earlier.

**Kim Lenschow Andersen:**

-Exactly, Fernando, I think that by bringing in different people, and different opinions takes on the same problem, you also get a diversity that is needed and celebrated in cities.

**Paulo Carneiro Fernandes:**

-This relation between heritage and nature in city is fundamental.

Ancient cultures built with more natural materials because their technology was different. It will be difficult to build today exactly as it was built in the past but we can upgrade our technology and make it more sustainable and less harmful.

We can use similar technologies as in the past, connecting our times architecture with heritage but improving and adapting these technologies to our time comfort requirements.

**Kim Lenschow Andersen:**

-I think this is also a challenge, in the same way as you say Paulo: Our way and pace of building has drastically changed since ancient cities were built. A real challenge is to propose a way to bring people and designers together.

**Tatiana Afonina:**

-If talk about "holistic image" and future: In your opinion how do you imagine the cities of the future? Are we moving toward to a controlled high tech urban fabric; or a more spontaneous city that integrates natural surroundings and increases natural spaces within to mitigate and balance the impact of construction and traffic to become more breathable?

**Fernando Menis:**

-It is of course clear that technology is fast developing and is taking over the cities and even the natural landscapes of different regions. On the one hand, it helps to sustaining and improving our way of living, but on the other side it blocks some aspects of the past that we should not ignore.

I imagine the future city as highly controlled (traffic control, electricity management, etc.), but at the same time I imagine cities using innovations to sustain both nature and historical heritage.



**Paulo Carneiro Fernandes:**

-That's an interesting vision, Fernando. There are several movies about this technological evolution. The cities of tomorrow are already being built today.

As it was said before by Kim and Fernando, we should embrace different architects and interventions and areas of knowledge to build something in common, that's the fundamental point!

That's what we talked today about "ecology" in a non-classical term, connection and not division of people and nature.

In our days we have more than enough knowledge to study each case to make it sustainable in a balance between social, economic and environmental way.

We can use our day's resources, through technology and art to improve abandoned places or less used sites such as urban interstices (highways, farms, industrial zones, etc...) to create value in the city.

I like more to imagine that Cities will overpass this classical dichotomy "culture vs nature" and become more a hybrid scenario, with natural landscapes inside of cities and cities "invading" rural areas. No borders between urban and rural landscape. Maybe a little bit utopic!

**Fernando Menis:**

-I agree with you, Paulo. We should not get rid of the common sense when balancing nature and technology or architecture. We have to consider coexistence and in my opinion, highly creative professionals such as architects, designers, engineers and artists, are more than able to achieve it. Moreover, we should not forget that we are already living and creating the future. Therefore, let's involve the advantages and technologies it offers now to worship and reveal the natural heritage the world has got!

**Kim Lenschow Andersen:**

-I also think that we are moving towards a highly controlled / high tech city.

I do however hope that we can learn from our past, so that we can respect surroundings and heritage as you both say, Fernando and Paulo, and work by adding new value to something existing.

**Tatiana Afonina:**

-We mostly talk about city and nature, and now have an imagination about this. What If we take a particular issue, announced in our discussion, – climate. Do you experience its influence on construction process, used materials, technologies (achievement of thermoregulation, natural ventilation, climate-control systems)?

**Fernando Menis:**

-I think it raises again the question of adapting. Obviously, the climate is different around the world and we have to be aware of it in order to produce sustainable and valuable architecture. Considering the opportunities and technologies we have nowadays, we can be very flexible regarding the climate issue in architecture. You can definitely feel its influence. Designing a project is a continuous process of researching into the suitable materials and technologies, into culture, values and nature. All these aspects are also shaped by climate, we have to always take it into consideration. Nowadays we have the opportunity to create buildings able to save energy and to help reducing dangerous climate changing processes.



**Kim Lenschow Andersen:**

-Choosing the right material, the right power source, and the right technologies to regulate how our structures adapt to their local climate have a great impact in a calculation of for instance overall CO2 consumption.

**Paulo Carneiro Fernandes:**

-This is interesting Kim. It's not about being low tech or high tech but the "right tech".

**Kim Lenschow Andersen:**

-If we as architects focus on, as you say Fernando, the permanence, the afterlife, and the close incorporation of our projects in the given place for a project, the emphasis on these technologies become secondary, and we are able to use "the right tech" as you say, Paulo.

**Paulo Carneiro Fernandes:**

-This is fundamental in the design of the building and its cycle.

In that sense it's important also to preview the complexity and possibilities of reusing materials (the afterlife) but also the adaptation and flexibility of functions.

Climate understanding is important for the energy efficiency.

We can take in account simple approaches as ancient buildings but also introducing technology to control and motorize this efficiency as Fernando said.

It will be interesting to introduce progressively in architecture the studies that are being made by universities all over the world.

**Fernando Menis:**

-As both of you, Paulo and Kim, say, we don't have to make a thick border either between nature and architecture, either between climate and nature, and with this mind-set we will be able design precious and valuable projects, which "suit" both the past and the future.

**Tatiana Afonina**

Original link – <http://berlogos.ru/interview/stroitelstvo-s-uchyotom-klimata-i-landsha>