

UTILITAS  
EFFICIENCY, FUNCTIONALITY, UTILITY

1. FROM PROJECT TO PROCESS
2. FROM CLOSED DESIGN PROCESS TO OPEN SOURCE SOLUTIONS
3. FROM EGO TO SHARED STEWARDSHIP

FIRMITAS  
DURABILITY, SOLIDITY

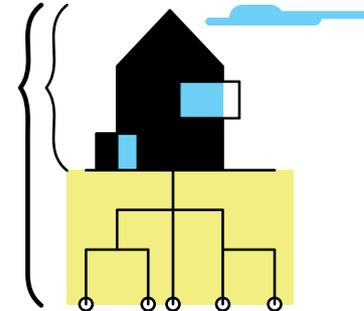
4. FROM CONSTRUCTION TO LIVING ENVIRONMENT
5. FROM ISOLATED TO INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS
6. BEYOND WASTE, OR ACTING WITH THE NATURE OF THINGS

VENUSTAS  
BEAUTY, AESTHETICS

7. FROM AESTHETICS TO ETHICS
8. TOWARDS AN APPEALING CREATION NARRATIVE
9. RECOGNITION OF DIVERSITY AND IDENTITY

## 1. From project to process

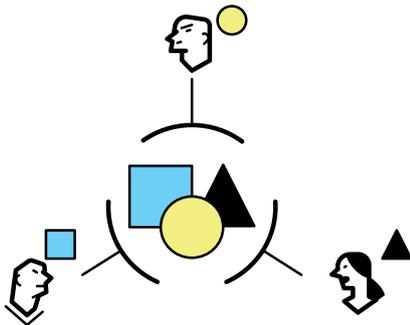
Design must go beyond the production of an end product. A building, bridge or other civil engineering work is not just an end in and of itself, but also a source of possibilities for generating spatial and economic solutions that anticipate future development. A project becomes an effective process when it transcends the task at hand and proactively lays the foundation for further development of the living and working space.



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## 2. From closed design process to open source solutions

Design briefs often neglect to take full account of the numerous dimensions at play in a project. The know-how of a design team, regardless of how expert it may be, may fail to incorporate the broader scope of an assignment, i.e. the context, into the design process. Human thinking – whether at the individual or the collaborative level – cannot consider all of the social consequences or environmental impacts that a design may have. The challenge is to incorporate and employ everyone's knowledge throughout the course of a reflective development process.



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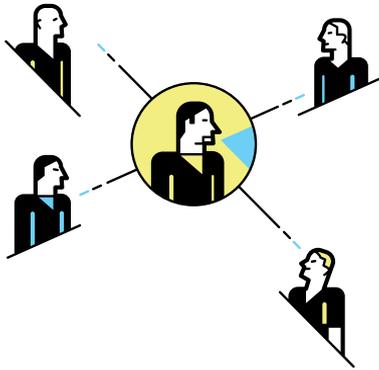
***'THE CHALLENGE IS TO INCORPORATE AND EMPLOY EVERYONE'S KNOWLEDGE THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF A REFLECTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.'***

A design only becomes better through the dialectical process of thesis and antithesis. Every project infringes upon an existing set of circumstances (social, economic, appearance, nature, etc.) and disturbs a – not infrequently vulnerable – status quo. Assuming that all parties have had the chance to apply their knowledge and expertise, the change that a project threatens to bring about can be the impetus for thoroughly re-examining a situation involving a city or a landscape. This can lead to the discovery of synergies and new prospects for a better living environment.

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### 3. From ego to shared stewardship

Integrated design calls for a new discipline to be included alongside the architect, the contractor, the financier, etc. This new role is reserved for a mediator who would shepherd the project and promote it as something that will create new opportunities for everyone. The mediator not only oversees the exchange of information between the various parties involved – each with their own interests and specialised knowledge – but is also constantly giving full consideration to the common interest.



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### 4. From construction to living environment

A railway line can become a bicycle path, or a bridge can become a footpath.... The way it is used changes, but the way it is integrated into the landscape, whether urban or rural, leaves its mark for centuries to come. A structure derives its durability (and thus sustainability) not only from its materiality, but also from its capacity to adapt over time to new problems and new demands that impose a spatial context upon it. In fact, integral design links the structure to its urban planning, economic, social and cultural contexts, and it sees this as an inextricable part of an ultimate task: the feasibility of improving the surroundings and creating a better living environment. In some instances, the assignment may even turn out to be superfluous, and then the adage “not building is architecture too” applies.

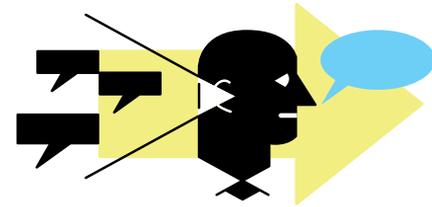


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## 5. *From isolated to integrated solutions*

Architectural and civil works projects always have a social impact. External criticism and inquiry must not necessarily be seen as resistance and obstruction, but instead as a constructive and enriching contribution to the design process. If you look at a criticised design as you would a body that is beset with illness, then you can see how the organism defends and repairs itself, and often becomes stronger. Sometimes it does this by producing antibodies to the virus it has contracted, and other times through physical adjustment. It is precisely this adaptive mechanism and the build-up of resistance that must form an integrated part of design thinking in order to take the project

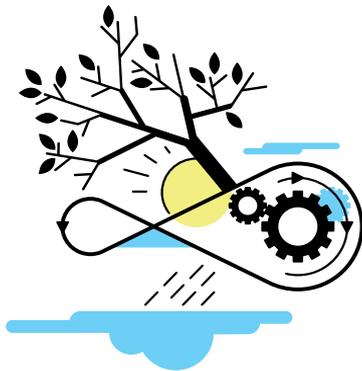
***‘THE MORE THAT PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED IN THE TESTING OF THE DESIGN ELEMENTS, THE STRONGER THE DESIGN CAN BECOME.’***



to a higher level. The more that people are involved in the testing of the design elements, the stronger the design can become. This vigorous pursuit of a total solution also addresses the need to strive for greater efficiency, to strive for the highest return on the materials and energy that are brought to bear. The more integrated the process, the more sustainably the project is able to organise the space.

## 6. *Beyond waste, or acting with the nature of things*

Integrated design derives inspiration from nature as mentor, from the natural law of the continuous cycle of the creation, degeneration, and recycling of materials and energy. Integrated design is related to the principles of Cradle-to-Cradle, the philosophy of recycling in which waste, rubbish and irreversible damage to nature do not actually exist. Acting with the nature of things means being part of an organism, part of a greater harmonic whole. As utopian as this aspiration may seem, every design must preserve the future and must leave room for sustainable development.



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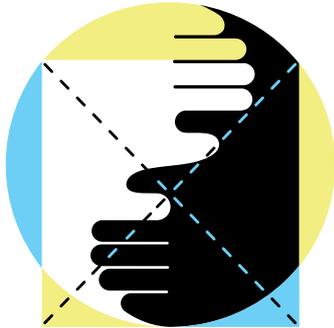
## 7. *From aesthetics to ethics*

The design of a structure must strive to emulate the obvious, albeit complex, beauty of nature. A bridge is at its most beautiful when faithfully adhering to natural flow of forces and in turn translating this flow into matter. Beauty, efficiency and durability automatically lead to an ethical result that transcends thought and design. The beauty of a structure only manifests itself once it has meaning within a larger whole. Joseph Beuys advocated an “Extended Concept of Art” and “Social Sculpture”: an artistic concept in which art plays a social, constructive role. Just as Beuys expanded art into the realm of a social project, integrated design shifts the focus away from an aesthetic “objet d’art” to an ethical act. A humanistic mindset underlies every act, and as such, underlies the design as well. Ethics presuppose responsibility

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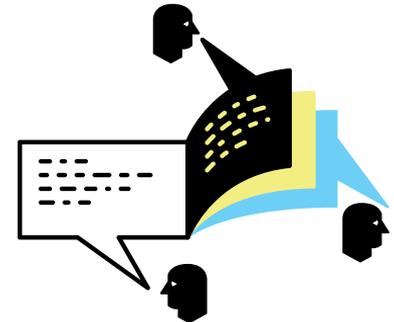
– for everyone. The public space is also for everyone: it is “ours”. Each public design must arouse enthusiasm because every project combines the collective interests into a single common interest in an open process.



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## 8. *Towards an appealing creation narrative*

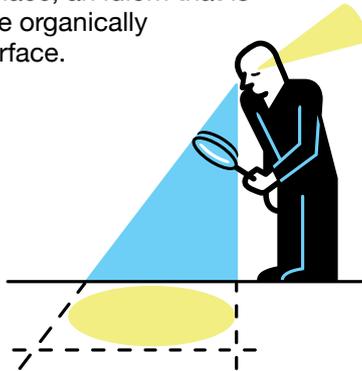
The ancient Germanic peoples used a single word for building and being, which is an indication of just how fundamentally they saw building as a part of the human identity. Building and integrated design write the story of how a society chooses to represent itself. Stories embody hope and future. The world is shaped according to the ideals embedded in stories. Integrated design benefits from an open story, a discourse and a transparent communication that does not so much promote the tangible structure itself as much as it does a story in which aspirations reverberate, so that the social message itself will sustain the project. The story is not a rhetorical means to persuade opponents, but is instead the context within which criticism can help write the story and thereby turn opponents into supporters.



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## 9. Recognition of diversity and identity

Regardless of how pervasive the intrusion of globalisation might be, each assignment and each location nevertheless offers unique avenues of approach. Integrated design works with the “pure” or ingenious richness of a place, the so-called genius loci. Integrated design recognises and makes use of the different spatial identities as a product of various histories, geologies, cultures, economies, social contexts, etc. Even though contradictions and tensions between incongruent atmospheres and identities may emerge, the richness of a project can actually be found in the new identity of spaces and landscapes, which are grafted onto and derived from this unique context. From a radical observation of the diversity and the characteristics of a place, an idiom that is endemic to that place organically bubbles up to the surface.



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[Reference](#)

'Naar een integrale ontwerppraktijk'  
Ney-Poullissen & Atelier Veldwerk, Artists in  
Residence, Besiendershuis Nijmegen January, 2012