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ITSUKO HASEGAWA

*Architecture as Another Nature*

After working in the offices of Kiyonori Kikutake, one of the founding members of the Metabolist group, and Kazuo Shinohara over the 1960s and 70s, Itsuko Hasegawa (b 1941) formed her own practice in Tokyo in 1979. She took with her the essentially Japanese and Metabolist view that sees human activity and technology as a part of nature. Her works, such as the Shonandai Cultural Centre (1990) make use of crystalline and organic forms, often using her trademark perforated metal, to create a diverse landscape of the human environment.

One of my aims is to reconsider architecture of the past, which was adapted to the climate and the land and permitted human coexistence with nature, and to see human beings and architecture as part of the earth's ecosystem. This includes a challenge to propose new design connected with new science and technology. We also ought to think seriously about restoring architecture to the people in society who use the architecture. It has long been my wish to explore ways of allowing users to participate in a true dialogue with the architect . . .

A building that is used by many people, whatever its scale, ought to be designed not as an isolated work, but as a part of something larger. In other words it must have a quality of urbanity. The city is a changing, multifaceted entity that encompasses even things that are in opposition to it. My second major aim has been to try to eliminate the gap between the community and architecture by taking such an approach to public architecture and to give architecture a new social character.

I believe any new building must make up for the topography and space that is altered because of its introduction and help create a new nature in the place of the one that used to be there. I feel any new building ought to commemorate the nature that had to be destroyed because of it and serve as a means of communicating with nature. The theme of my work is 'architecture as another nature'. We must stop thinking of architecture as something constructed according to reason and distinct from other forms of matter. In creating spaces we must recognise that human beings are a part of nature. Architecture must be responsive to the ecosystem as all of human existence is ultimately encompassed by nature.

To put it another way, architecture ought to be such that it allows us to hear the mysterious music of the universe and the rich, yet by no means transparent, world of

emotions that have been disregarded by modern rationalism. We need to harness both the spirit of rationalism and the spirit of irrationalism, pay heed to both what is international and what is local, and recognise the nature of contemporary science and technology in trying to create an architecture of the society of the coming era . . .

I have consistently taken an ad hoc approach to architecture rather than an exclusionary stance. Having completed the Shonandai Cultural Centre I realise quite clearly now that I want to create an inclusive architecture that accepts a multiplicity of things rather than an architecture arrived at through reflection and elimination. The idea is to make architecture more realistic through what might be called a 'pop' reasoning that allows for diversity as opposed to a logical system of reasoning that demands extreme concentration. Such an approach represents a shift to a feminist paradigm, in the sense that an attempt is made to raise the consciousness of as many people as possible.

Human beings were born to live in a relationship of interdependence with nature. We are adaptable to change and are physically and spiritually rugged enough to live practically anywhere. I believe this 'feminine' tolerance and consciousness can help to dissolve the system in which we are presently locked and bring about a regeneration.

To sum up, buildings as well as human beings are born of nature, receive their images from nature, and return to a more profound form of life through death and destruction. Another nature will come into being when ideas of the global environment, traditional modes of thought and the 'feminine' concept are married to today's technology. The idea of 'architecture as another nature' is one I will continue to espouse until the arrival of the meta-industrial society and the creation of spaces that are both natural and comfortable to human beings. (pp14-15)

Extracts. Source: Andreas Papadakis (ed), *Architectural Design*, Profile 90, Academy Group (London), 1991. © Academy Group Ltd.