Projecting Urban Natures

Investigating integrative approaches to urban development and nature conservation

HANNA ERIXON AALTO

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Abstract

*Projecting Urban Natures* is a compilation thesis in critical studies in architecture. It comprises three journal articles and four design proposals in which I have taken an active part. The point of departure for this thesis is the renewed emphasis on social-ecological interaction and resilience that is currently taking place within ecological systems science, and the opportunities that these paradigmatic insights in turn have opened up within urbanism and design. The thesis argues that although they are promising, these emerging integrative frameworks are seldom brought into mainstream planning and urban design practice. Instead, the structuring of “nature” and “city” into a dualistic balance relationship still permeates not only the general planning discourse, but also makes its way into planning documents, notably influencing distinctions between professions. In response, this thesis sets out to rethink and explore more integrated approaches to human/nature relationships, through the utilization of design-based and transdisciplinary research methods. While this core aim of the thesis remains the same throughout the work, the task is approached from different perspectives: through different constellations of collaborative work as well as through parallel case-based explorations that emphasize the relational, anti-essentialist and situated articulation of values of urban natures and how these forces come into play. The work has been propelled through workshop-based, site-specific, and experimental design processes with professionals and researchers from the fields of e.g. systems ecology, natural resource management, political ecology, urban design, architecture, and landscape design, as well as planners, developers, local interest groups, and NGOs. Specifically, projects performed within this thesis include: *Nature as an Infrastructural Potential – An Urban Strategy for Järva föllet; Kymlinge UrbanNatur* together with NOD, Wingårdhs, MUST and Storylab; *Årsta Urban Natures* with James Corner Field Operations and Buro Happold; and *Albano Resilient Campus* — a collaboration between Stockholm Resilience Centre, KTH and KIT.

Key Words
research through design; interdisciplinary; transdisciplinary; resilience, legibility; landscape urbanism; ecological urbanism; Stockholm; Green Wedges; projective narratives; comprehensive narratives; prototyping; ecosystem services; urban nature conservation