



How to like everything?

Paul Shephard - Artist in Residence 2005 / 2006
Academy of Architecture Amsterdam

Introduction

Paul Shephard, architect, writer and educator, is the international Artist in Residence of the Academy of Architecture in Amsterdam for the year 2005-2006. This Residency will take place in the context of the chair 'Art Practice and Development', an initiative of the Amsterdam School of the Arts. As part of this he will organize the lecture series 'How to like everything', curate the Winter Design Workshop in January 2006 and teach drawing class to students.

Paul was invited as an Artist in Residence because he gives a fresh impulse to the education of students on one hand and he uses study results as contribution to an upcoming publication on the other hand.

How to Like Everything

by Paul Shephard

How can people make sense of what they do? These lecture series explores action in complex environments, and how we explain it to each other. The material world and the ideal may bump along in plain view, but our pragmatics are continually crashing because of the complex of creation stories, enlightenment values and dialectical instruments that are embedded in us. My own ambition as a writer is to regard these crashes and complexities as part of the wilderness – part of nature – and to evolve an understanding within them. The people I have invited to speak are all actively working with complicated environments of different sorts, and in different ways.

Capita Selecta

10 November Paul Shephard, How to like everything

How To Like Everything

part 1

CRITISM by Paul Shephard

Things can be made by using them as well as by fabricating them, and criticism is a sort of use. The confusion between comparing someone else's work and your own is so sweet that makers can mistake their theories of action for theories of use – it's like being six feet six tall. So you go around banging into doorframes and complaining that all the doors are too small. Yes, you have to be certain to make something; but use requires tolerance.

17 November Dalziel and Scullion

Matt Dalziel and Louise Scullion are artists, based in Scotland, working in photography, video, sound and sculpture. Paul Shephard would include them in David Antin's description of the Avant-Garde as artists able to work with the present.

→ www.dalzielscullion.com

24 November Jane Rendell

Jane Rendell is an architecture art and culture critic based at University College London. Part of her activity is working to let fiction play a part in explaining and describing alongside analysis and projection. It seems such an important thing to do in working out the stasis of the academies, Paul Shephard wants to know more.

1 December Jem Finer

Jem Finer is a performer and composer and sound artist, working with all musics and all sounds. Paul Shephard first met him

when he was working on a millennial project, Longplayer – a piece of music to last a thousand years – and has recently been watching him build a radio telescope to trap interstellar sound. Paul Shephard likes the cosmic scope – but he also likes the way he exists in the present moment as a performer.

→ www.Longplayer.org

8 December Kathryn Moore

Kathryn Moore is a landscape architect, currently president of the Landscape Institute of the UK, and a professor of Landscape at the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design. Most of Paul Shephard's conversations with her spring from the collision between his studies and hers, which are engaged in clarifying the philosophical confusions that surround visual activity.

15 December Lorenzo Romito

Lorenzo Romito is part of a collaborative practice called Stalker in Rome. He works to help minorities construct environments; people whose cultures cannot be accommodated into ordinary life.

Lectures take place at 20:00 hr in the Academy of Architecture Amsterdam. Free admission.

How To Like Everything

part 2

ANAL by Paul Shephard

So Adam Sandler is sitting there in Conan's couch, shadow boxing with his celebrity, unable to contain his glee at being famous. Being very funny about it, lots of stories about his mum and dad, she apparently only ever able to see her little boy. "What film star?" She says to everyone. "This is my little boy." She was unhappy about the fact that he and his girlfriend – call her fiancée, okay? – lived together unmarried. Why? Because of the sex of course. "My mom, she's so old fashioned. I said okay, mom, look it's time to tell you,

we're getting married! We're going to the Bahamas for the honeymoon, I tell her, expecting her to be like really really pleased, but she frowns and says, well, sweetheart what's the point of a honeymoon if you've...if you've...if I've what, mom? I have to say to her – if you've already had sex! She says. Okay, I tell her. Look mom I'll tell you what. We haven't done anal yet. What if we save anal for the honeymoon?

His books

ARTIFICIAL LOVE

A story of machines and architecture

Publication 2003, The MIT Press

‘Technology is a force of nature. ‘It is the force of the human presence in the world.’

In this book Shepherd tells the story of his search for what this force is. Amidst the furor about globalization and our loss of contact with nature, he sets out to show us another way of looking at history. He describes it as a single human event – a complex cloud that started with the first humans, and has expanded together with the burgeoning

human population of the globe. The dust that makes the cloud is technology, he says – because that is what humans do. Humans rearrange nature to suit themselves. We do it with our hands and hammers and we do it with the attitudes we strike and the stories we tell. More than this – we do it not as cold hearted administrators of a program to better the world, but as animals, full of passion and excitement. That’s what makes the cloud of history so interesting, and so complicated.

Machines are us, he says. They exist alongside us in the world as our cousins. We made them, and we are their programs, so that when we use them, we are watching ourselves. He agrees with the Greek scholars who put sculpture at the original heart of architecture, and asserts that machines are the sculpture of now. He compares them to the ‘songlines’ of aboriginal people and asks ‘what are our songlines now?’ He describes the particular cast of today’s machines – the invisible bombers, the networks, the personal gadgets – as pieces of today’s American hegemony, but points to the way that inventions from previous hegemonies, the colonizing British and the crusading Spanish, are still folded into the mix: ‘new technologies don’t eliminate old ones, they just add another layer.’ The wild emergent philosophies that have invaded

the academies are discussed and the prospect of a general theory of architecture is presented. And what about buildings? Accepting that machines are architecture means that buildings can be liberated from the machine aesthetic. 'They can look like anything. Even themselves.'

THE CULTIVATED WILDERNESS

Or, What Is Landscape?

Publication 1997 by The Graham Foundation/The MIT Press

In Shepherds words, this book is about "seeing things that are too big to see." His emphasis on strategy makes landscape fundamental – he says that every architectural move is set in a landscape. Norman England, for example, was constructed as a network of strong points, in a strategy of occupation. The eighteenth-century grid cities of the New World reflect a strategy of reason. Our current strategy is the economic exploitation of the Earth, an intricately woven blanket of commerce that covers up a multitude of other possibilities, many other ways to treat the surface of the globe – some of which are landscapes revealed in this book.

How To Like Everything

part 3

RACHMANINOV'S VESPERS by Paul Shephard

In unaccompanied choral music, especially with a large choir, there is a tendency for the music to drift flat as it progresses. The change is inaudible to the participants or the audience, who are caught in the relational web of the moment. In Rachmaninov's vespers, however, the bass lines are notoriously at the bottom of the register of most singers – in the Nunc Dimittis they reach the B flat below low C – and so as the choir tends towards the flat, pressure is put on the basses to flex with the tuning. They reach a sort of human absolute of low voicedness.

WHAT IS ARCHITECTURE?

An Essay on Landscapes, Buildings and Machines

Published 1994 by The MIT Press

At a time when it is fashionable to say that architecture is everything – from philosophy to science to art to theory – Shephard boldly and irreverently sets limits to the subject, so that we may talk about architecture for what it is. He takes strong positions, names the causes of the problems, and tells us how bad things are and how they can get better.

How To Like Everything

part 4

ETHICS by Paul Shephard

Angus is sitting across the table in front of a spiced aubergine panini and a single espresso that half fills a tiny cup. He says he's a vegetarian now. No more meat for him. Why? I ask. For heaven's sake! He describes how he had taken his three year old son to a farm and had had to answer the question "Why do they keep pigs on farms? They don't give milk." Right he said, no eggs or wool, either. The conversation went on all the way home, and by the time they got back it turned out that the little boy was happy to go on eating bacon even now he knew where it came from, but Angus wasn't. His answers had not been good enough for himself. So now he was a vegetarian.

How To Like Everything

part 5

THE FEATHERWEIGHT NIETZSCHE by Paul Shephard

Who would that be? Who allows his thoughts to be buffeted by the flows of nature and of history, which are progress –

and says that progress is not a vanity against the still traditions of the world, but that traditions are a wilful jam against the flow of progress – but still cannot claim to be a big thinker because he lives in a little century. (Which is what the Victorians called the eighteenth: reason, elegance, but no bonfires).

Vormstudie

From 4 November up and until 23 December 2005

Everything places

by Paul Shepheard

This is a drawing class, over eight Friday afternoons. It will be part of my 'How To Like Everything' research for this year. The class will debate, discover and draw places that are inclusive, rather than unitary. The starting point for me was seeing fifteenth century paintings in which narratives from scripture are set amidst the turbulence of ordinary life: the following notes set a wider prospect.

Paradise

(Persian hunting parks, stocked with animals)

Paradise lost: the garden with everything in it: the fall being occasioned by desire for knowledge, which is desire, which is an ambition for more than what there is.

Carpets

Pleasure gardens (theme parks) and gloriets to look at them from: rosamond's bower.

The created world: Pre-renaissance windows on the world

Ponds

In which a complete world evolves separated from the other water bodies cradled in the landscape

The Ocean

The Celtic proposition: Ocean, Islands, Birdsong, Dreams

The Wilderness

Wilderness means desolate – but look closer (even in salt lakes, life)

Wilderness means natural, but also uncivilized, artless

Houston

No planning law

Most ethnically diverse city in the USA

Africa

To solve Africa is to unify it and destroy the potential it alone has

But not

Railway Stations (all human life is there – Family of man – humanism is a unity)

Schools (curriculums and discrimination)

The Pnyx (Democracy – tyranny of the majority)

Ground Zero (death and/or afterlife - terror)

How To Like Everything

part 6

ART by Paul Shephard

I don't know much about art, but I know what I like. I know a lot about art and I know a lot. I know everything about art, and I like everything.

How To Like Everything

part 7

EVERY MAN IS AN ISLAND by Paul Shephard

Why are the works of other humans so hard to understand? We apprehend them trusting to our sensuality like romantics, and at the same time framed by our intellect with all the reading about meaning we do: and then at the same time nailed to the customs and taboos that we call community, and at the same time again with all our tiny superstrings vibrating with a transcendence known only to ourselves: well – it is multiplicitious. It is life.

No man is an island, we say. We tell each other that we are parts of a huge global family, riven by sibling rivalries and manipulative parenting, perhaps, but a family for all that – but then why are we not islands too? Islands are the visible tips of the planet’s crust, a continuous undulating surface on which the ocean swirls and spills, pulled by the moon and bothered by the rotations of the globe. The ocean is not what separates us; it is what connects us. It could stand for everything – it could be the turbulent swell of impressions and meanings and conventions and revelations we have to swim in if we want to make sense of what anybody else does.

Confronted by the strangeness of art, we can try to make the most of this wilderness that separates and connects us. Thoreau framed humanity and nature as the same thing. The bog of our brains and bowels was what he called the wilderness – what we land animals, perfumed and imbued with culture, now see as virtual. You need your native wits to swim in it. You need it all – perception as well as interpretation, history as well as memory. What happens when you close your eyes and think of something? No, not England – when you think of a thing: a snail maybe, or a new pin, or indeed one of these images; Try it. Once thought, the flesh of the image immediately begins to dissolve like the clarity of a dream on waking. After a few seconds a dizzy vacant space is left, and it lingers supported only by the strings of mental effort. But if you give it some movement, free it into the wilderness – and is that what a fantasy is? – the image can be sustained. The snail can move down the wall, leaving its trail and waving its stalked eyes around like an insect. And join you on the island.”

International winter design workshop

From 6 up and until 13 January 2006

A National Park for the Netherlands

by Paul Shephard

The first ever national park, designated in 1872, is the Yellowstone in Wyoming, USA. Among other things, it's the home of grizzlies. The bears are so fierce and fast you'll never outrun one if it decides to attack you: the woodsmen say if you go into grizzly country always take someone with you. So one of you can call for help if the other is attacked? – Well sure, they say, but also it means that you'll only have to concentrate on outrunning your friend.

The national parks were invented as a reserve against industrialization. They could already see that the balm of nature would be needed in the future. But they were also land-grabbing days, and reservation was a federal tool to confine as well as protect. Not far from Yellowstone is the Crow Indian Reservation set up after the battle of Little Big Horn to confine and concentrate the nomadic tribes – another kind of national park, and one you could also call a concentration camp.

The idea of national park is more complicated than what we take for granted, those protected landscapes and areas of outstanding natural beauty of contemporary Europe. In the UK half a century ago areas of protected land were set up around the big cities to stifle unplanned growth – they called them Green Belts. The city parks constructed in dense urban areas were called Green Lungs by the public Health minded Victorians. In the Netherlands there is a protected area, almost mystically revered, called the Green Heart. What is this cliché of Green really about? Is it some new fairy tale? On the German Polish borders, where the land is emptying out as the next generation of humans moves towards indus-

trialization, wild bears and wolves are moving in to take their place. Whereas the old fairy tales, and we still tell them to our children, tell us what it was that drove the humans to kill all the bears and wolves in the first place.

In the beginning, a park is an enclosed piece of land, used for a specific purpose. Deer hunting for medieval kings, car parking for us; or a sacred compound, perhaps, like Paradise, the sort of place that oriental carpets are plans of. The myth of paradise is of a garden with everything that we need inside it; and the desire for knowledge is a desire for more than everything, which is why we can't live there. Places like Yellowstone are framed inside that myth.

The ultimate Green place is on Flevoland, in the Netherlands. This is new land, drained from the sea only one generation ago, and on it there is an area set aside for wild things, where no humans are allowed to go. It is a national park that's no longer for people. The Green myth has eaten itself. So now can we reorganize the understanding of what a national park is? A national park for the Netherlands might be big or small. It might be full or empty. It might be remote or in the middle of a city. What is a place with everything in it now?

Workshop and participation

The Academy's aim with this workshop is to contribute to the formation of an agenda of current and future special design issues in the Netherlands. In addition, we try to use the workshop as a way of building up our own body of knowledge. The workshop is open to all students of Architecture, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture of the Amsterdam Academy of Architecture and to students from the Netherlands and abroad. International schools and tutors can join the workshop in order to bring together a variety of international spatial design traditions and experiences, and to test to what extent they are applicable to the situation in the region of Amsterdam. Approximately 150 students can take part in the workshop activity. Visiting critics evaluate the results of the workshop and formulate the assignments.

Subscription

Please let us know before November 30, 2005 if you are interested to participate. There is only room for 20 participants from outside the Amsterdam Academy of Architecture.

The workshop will be held in English. The Academy will send out a full announcement including a program and a more detailed brief as soon as possible. The workshop itself is free of charge. You can contact us for a list of hotels and youth hostels if needed.

Organization

The workshop is being organized by the Amsterdam Academy of Architecture. The content is curated by Paul Shephard. Patricia Ruisch, coordinator of studies, and Martijn de Wit, personal assistant of Paul Shephard, are responsible for the organization. The workshop takes place in the Academy building which is situated in the heart of the city. The schedule leaves foreign students time to visit projects throughout the Netherlands during working days. The Academy will organize a special tour during the week. Students are invited to work on their assignments in international and multidisciplinary groups. Tutors are asked to comment and criticize during the work in the studios. Visiting critics will be invited to comment during the workshop.

Preliminary schedule

Friday 6 January

Start of the workshop at 9:00 hr

Saturday 7 & Sunday 8 January

Workshop all day

Monday 9 to Thursday 12 January

Workshop starting at 18:00 hr

Friday 13 January

Workshop and final presentations all day

Short resume Paul Shephard

Born November 24 1947; Studied King Alfred School, London, UK and the Architectural Association, London UK; Graduated [AA Dip] in 73.

Academic

Amsterdam Academy of Architecture, Netherlands: Artist in Residence 05/06: City Squares workshop 02: Ruigoord workshop professor, 00; University of Texas at Austin, TX, USA: Visiting Professor 96 - 02; University of Queensland, Australia: Visiting professor, spring 99; Universities of Westminster and Kingston, London, UK: Various roles from 90 to 95; Architectural Association School of Architecture, London, UK: Diploma School master with various others including Michael Gold, Peter Wilson and Jeanne Sillett, and solo, from 74 to 84.

Architectural Design

With James Gowan, 74 to 75; with Hodges and Haxworth, specialising in hospital and health care buildings, 76 to 84; Solo practice since 86 including Offices and interiors in alliance with the Hodges Jones Partnership.

Publications

"Artificial Love A Story of Machines and Architecture" published by The MIT Press, in 2003. *"What is Architecture? An Essay on Landscapes, Buildings and Machines"* published by The MIT Press in 1994. *"The Cultivated Wilderness: Or, What is Landscape?"* published by The MIT Press in 1997.

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