



The Main Square of the Garbage Recyclers district in Cairo: in November 2012 LOCUS delivered a first public lighting through lanterns designed and built by Bijoy Jain, India, together with the local women out of recycled metal discs. The energy zero installation by photovoltaic cells guarantees independency from the public energy sources. "Collective desire surprises us, ever. It is not about a place, or an object, but about new ways of seeing them," says Jana Revedin summarizing the three-year-long design process.

(Photo: Gernot Gleiss for the LOCUS Foundation)

also the needs and visions of citizens and stakeholders were collected and discussed, we filtered the "most urgent" common desire to be tried out as a small intervention, an "urban acupuncture" in their public space. For the Zabbaleen this most urgent desire was lighting. So together with Bijoy Jain and his craftsmen, who LOCUS called in for this complex job, the local women started to research the adapted recycling material (result: metal disks cut out of used oil tins), to try out design and construction patterns, to call in the community for their opinion (all innovation needs a broad aesthetical approval to become sustainable!) and to imagine a possible new market of product selling. Thanks to engineering and industrial sponsors, we could even design and install a zero-energy photovoltaic system that made the Zabbaleen Main Square independent from public electricity. Last December, when by national energy bottlenecks the public lighting downtown started to be switched off after 22h, the poorest inhabitants of the megacity had their square illuminated! This year we aim to light one first residential street and to realize a self-built outlet (hopefully in a student workshop) for the LOCUS No1

Ceiling lamps made by the Zabbaleen women. I want to see these lamps hanging in the White House, soon!

BC: You have travelled the world and seen many educational institutes. Could you explain to us what you see as the role of the education institutes in 'growing better architects'

"Growing architects" would be already enough. There is a new architecture theory to be written and it will be the basement to innovative pedagogical methods, which open up to other sciences and faculties. My "Radical City" research line has this aim. Architecture or urban design, in our times of migration and change, should be "rooted only where it needs support and nourishment, as do the radical plants", overcoming bombastic narcissistic masterplans by small but efficient and affordable interventions. The growing of a new generation of architects is crucial to install this approach. The architect shall see himself as a "craftsman, who learned Latin", following Adolf Loos' simple definition. A craftsman: who knows its tools and techniques (not a hurrying marketing agent or a 3D-liar, to make myself understood). And who learned

Latin: a cultivated human being, who has the humbleness and generosity to look at the world through the Others' eyes.

"Let him be educated", was Vitruv's first wish regarding the growing of an architect...

So in teaching I believe in a comeback of true scientific and "making" knowledge and in the end of any beaux-arts star-machinery. This knowledge takes time to mature. But time is our friend.

My students ask me for internships at Rural Studio Alabama, with Carin Smuts in the townships of Capetown or in Sami Rintalas Building Workshops - not to join fancy big name offices. They look for human experience, they are ready to abandon their status-thinking and to reduce their welfare securities to discover true desires and expectations. Should we finally be reconnecting to the high times of the late Avant-Garde?

My teacher and adept Aldo Rossi used to tell us, nearly every day: "Our architecture has to exceed expectations." X

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BC: As Nepal is still 'underdeveloped' and the alarm bell in terms of 'sustainability' is yet to be heard loud and clear, could you share with us the present status of sustainable architecture in Europe?

In Europe we have started to feel the paradigm change towards sustainability defined not anymore as a high tech competition but more as a service to society, thus a holistic understanding of changing needs and expectations and a tool to fulfill these needs, to finally respect Hannah Arendt's "Human Condition". Sustainable development is not a question of technology, but of the appropriate use of it.

BC: How does an award like the 'Global Awards for Sustainable Architecture' contribute to this response towards sustainability?

We at the scientific jury of the Global Award and the independent experts all over the world, that every year are proposing grand pioneers and rebellious young talents to us, see ourselves as the researchers of a definition of sustainability as a process. Sustainability means, in forestry, not to cut more trees than that which can grow in the same time. Thus: a continuous process. A sustainable approach to architecture and urban design has no more to look for products – technocratic or glamorous marketing tools, as the architecture scene of the last thirty years did. We at the Global Award are the sonars of innovative answers to, on one hand, demands expressed in the continents of demographic explosion and the major migration of all times and, on the other hand, in the demographically shrinking Western world: Architecture for social inclusion, green energy,

architecture through the making (of traditional but innovatively treated materials and techniques, of recycling or reuse), design as a participatory empowering process, the right to the city and its public spaces as a democratic demand... are those promising answers. And a whole professional field now needs to collect these answers, to discuss them and to transform them into scientific deepness: the architecture teaching and research!

My dream with the LOCUS foundation is, from next year, to install an annual Symposium in Paris where we invite Global Award winners – and not only - together with Social and Political Scientists, Human Geographers, Philosophers, Psychologists, Writers, Biologists etc., to open a dialogue and discourse on these fields. I believe it is the moment for the CIAM of the XXI Century.

BC: In this part of the world, technology as compared to the West is still far behind (we currently have 12 hours of power cuts daily). And as we attempt to 'imitate' the West with 'modern' multi-storied concrete buildings with glass facades, it is without a doubt a disaster as compared to the traditional vernacular buildings in terms of sustainable and climate-responsive designs. The consoling fact is that this trend is largely concentrated in Kathmandu, and that most of the country is still untouched by 'development'. If you were in this scenario, what would be your plan of action?

Create a solid green energy concept – wind-, geothermal-, water-, sun energy - that provides 24 hours of power supply, use recycling as an economical source, create communication and integration

through shared public space and public transport. Who will still live and work in the glass skyscrapers in Kathmandu when even the rich and powerful will have discovered the flexibility, the beauty and the comfort of right-tech-buildings and urban design? The cultural shock of local materials seen as "for the poor" will soon be overcome! Laurie Baker in the 1970ies described brilliantly – and not without British cynicism – the mentality of his provincial Indian neighbours: "Who will marry my daughter if I live in a mud-house?" Today one of the finest Indian architects alive, Bijoy Jain, builds for Billionaires-out of mud, stone and palm wood. Innovation ever was transmitted through the emerging classes.

BC: Coming to the Locus Foundation, what innovations have been put in practice so far both in architecture and working methodology?

The Foundation gives us the chance to start and follow participative processes in communities that call us for cooperation. The Garbage Collectors of Cairo, the Coptic minority of the Zabbaleen community are such an example. With this community, who built up a true circular economy of recycling industry out of an arrival slum in only 30 years, we entered in 2010 into a process of requalification of their built, but still much improvised neighbourhood. They want to become the first eco-village in North Africa. And we have chosen a striking working methodology: empowerment by design! The starting phase was a sustainable mapping (documenting the built environment as much as the human condition inside it) done in collaboration with scientific institutions and universities – here we invested nearly 80% of the whole time and funds! As soon as

Jana Revedin (centre) installing public lights with her LOCUS team on the streets of Cairo's Gabage Collectors District. (Photos: Gernot-Gleiss for the LOCUS Foundation)



“Sustainable Development: A question of Technology?”

Prof. Dr. Jana Revedin,
 Founder and Curator of the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture

Architect PhD, Professor Jana Revedin holds the Chair of Architecture and Design at Blekinge Institute of Technology School of Planning and Media Design in Sweden. She has been guest professor at Federico II University Naples, Milan Polytechnic, Beuth University Berlin, EcoleSpéciale d'Architecture Paris and Umea University and is the author of numerous publications on contemporary architectural theory, focusing on participative sustainable processes in architecture and urban

design. In 1996 she founded her own architectural practice, which specializes in sustainable architecture and urban renewal. In 2006 she was appointed Curator of the European gaudi Student Competition on Sustainable Architecture and she is the creator of its pedagogical “making concept”. In 2007 she became the Founder and Curator of the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture and since 2009 she has directed LOCUS, the fund that guarantees the scientific independence of the Global Award and federates the winners in research and

participative urban renewal projects. LOCUS is put under the patronage of UNESCO.

Jana Revedin serves as scientific delegate to UNESCO and is member of the International Union of Architects Education Commission. Her research line “The Radicant City: Participative design for social inclusion” inside the research area “Sustainable Architecture and Urban Futures” is supported by the Swedish FORMAS Agency.