

COP-GLOBAL COMPACT

BIG - BJARKE INGELS GROUP

BIG



OUR COMMITMENT

At BIG, architecture is not about building monuments, but about creating possibilities for human life.

Architects have to become more than just designers of two-dimensional facades or three-dimensional architectural objects. We have to become designers of ecosystems, systems of both ecology and economy. We need to stop seeing our presence, like the human presence on Planet Earth, detrimental to our ecosystem, but actually try to integrate and incorporate our consumption patterns and our leftovers into our natural environment. Sustainability can't be a moral sacrifice or a political dilemma or even like a philanthropic cause. It has to be a design challenge. We work to create an environment in which all people can be free to be who they want to be, culturally, socially, politically and environmentally conscious.

We choose to continue to contribute, being at the forefront of framing a lasting humanity. In 2012, we, the 8 partners of BIG, are pleased to again place our signatures to assure Global Compact that we are committed to the continuous respect for the human race and to the integrity of its environment.

Bjarke Ingels, Founding Partner

Sheela Maini Søgaard, CEO, Partner

David Zahle, Partner, Recruitment

Finn Nørkjær, Partner

Jakob Lange, Partner

Thomas Christoffersen, Partner

Andreas Klok Pedersen, Partner

Kai-Uwe Bergmann, Partner



OUR INTRODUCTION

Historically the field of architecture has been dominated by two opposing extremes. On one side an avant-garde of wild ideas, often so detached from reality that they fail to become something other than eccentric curiosities. On the other side there are well-organized corporate consultants that build predictable and boring boxes of high standard. Architecture seems entrenched between two equally unfertile fronts: either naively utopian or petrifyingly pragmatic.

Rather than choosing one over the other, BIG operates in the fertile overlap between the two opposites. A pragmatic utopian architecture that takes on the creation of socially, economically and environmentally perfect places as a practical objective. In the big picture, architecture is the art and science of ensuring that our cities and buildings fit with the way we want to live our lives. Architecture is not about building monuments, but about creating possibilities for human life.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

Buildings are complex networks of diverse systems operating on multiple scales across time. Our architecture explores ways to artfully interweave these systems around the programmes they support. This systems approach can often enable the selective removal and replacement of one with minimal disruption to others. These strategies allow for ongoing life cycle value by reducing material, money and time dedicated to maintenance. We are proud to be rooted in the Danish tradition of seeking alternative means to balance the energy resources we use in our everyday and would like to bring this innovative spirit to all of our projects.

We have always incorporated sustainable initiatives into our projects. In almost every instance these initiatives are not discretionary or additive in nature, but constitute the formative acts around which subsequent design solutions are conceived. Interior and exterior finishes are often comprised entirely of self-finishing materials which require little or no maintenance. Our buildings are usually sited to optimize solar orientation and many integrate inventive day-lighting measures through the use of atria, light wells, light monitors or skylights.

On the smallest of scales and on a daily basis, BIG follows the “reduce, reuse and recycle” principles in the office, and its large windows allow for minimal consumption of electricity for light and air conditioning, especially in during the summer. When making architecture models, we save material by optimizing the space on a block of foam or wood, and reuse leftover material whenever possible. Leftover material that cannot be reused is systematically recycled according to type—wood, paper, foam, plexi and other plastics.



BIG's approach to sustainability is at once locally rooted in the Danish tradition of energy conservation but has since grown to incorporate a global approach with our projects seeking and being certified in LEED, Green Mark and Passive House Standards. Our 600-unit West 57th project is an 800,000 square foot mixed-use building in Manhattan aiming for LEED Gold and thereby becoming a hallmark for residential construction in New York City. We begin every project with a climatic analysis which then allows us to choose the appropriate sustainable strategies and technologies.

From Old Meatpacking to Sustainable Food Production

Having established itself as an environmentally friendly and sustainable architecture firm, BIG was recently commissioned to design a food-producing complex in the meatpacking district of Copenhagen that includes a main production kitchen, greenhouses, school gardens and a kids' kitchen. The goal is to create an environment that inspires and teaches children about modern, sustainable food from production to the dinner table, and at the same time optimizing the greenhouse visibility from the railway area and thereby contributing to making Copenhagen a visionary green capital.





West 57th - Merging Greenery and Sustainability with High-End Design

With its dramatic slope and carved out center, West 57th is clearly an eye-catcher. Resulting from the improbable blend of a Manhattan high-rise and a European perimeter block typology, the residential form captures the advantageous essence of each while still taking on its own identity. The building is BIG's inaugural North American project. The building's program consists of over 600 residential units of different scales situated on a podium with a cultural and commercial program.

The building will strive for LEED Gold Certification. "It's extraordinarily exciting to build a building whose architecture will attract visitors from around the globe," said Hal Fetner, CEO of Durst Fetner Residential, the developer of West 57th.

"BIG's design is innovative, evocative and unique and the building's beauty is matched only by its efficient and functional design that preserves existing view corridors while maximizing the new building's access to natural light and views of the Hudson River. West 57th will establish a new standard for architectural excellence and its creative design, sustainable-construction and operations, breathtaking views and distinctive amenities will make it New York's most sought after residential address."

"New York is rapidly becoming an increasingly green and livable city. The West 57th project's transformation of the Hudson River waterfront and the Highline into green parks, the ongoing effort to plant a million trees, the pedestrianization of Broadway and the creation of more miles of bicycle lanes than the entire city of my native Copenhagen are all evidence of urban oases appearing all over the city. With West 57th we attempt to continue this transformation into the heart of the city fabric – into the center of a city block." -- Bjarke Ingels, Founder, BIG.





OUR LABOUR RIGHTS

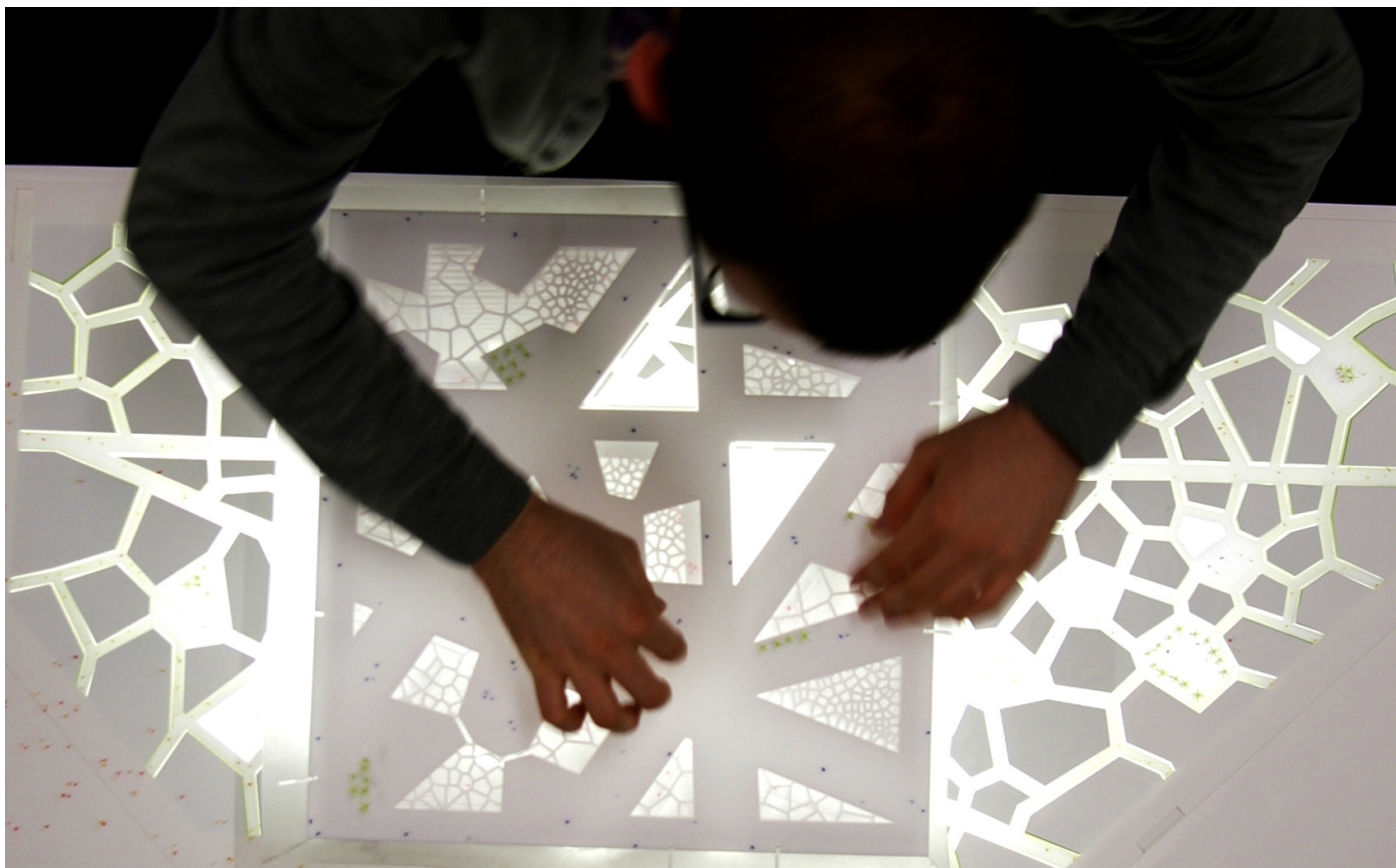
BIG's greatest asset is its employees. At BIG, we take employee satisfaction as seriously as we do architectural design. The larger we grow as a company, the more we strive to create a workplace that encourages input, dialog, interaction, and collaboration across the cobweb of relations of BIG's flat hierarchy. Global Compact's principles relating to labor rights are considered literally and so followed. BIG opposes any form of forced and compulsory labour, condemns child labour, effectively recognizes the right to collective bargaining and does not practice discrimination of any kind.

Right to collective bargaining

The unions which exist in the Danish architecture industry are extremely strong, and should employees choose to join any of these, this choice is respected. However, it is not actually necessary for employees to become members of any such unions to benefit from collective bargaining. BIG is a member of Danske Arkitekt Virksomheder, the Union of Danish Architect Companies and is therefore bound to implement the benefits negotiated by the architects' unions for architects.

BIG's CEO Sheela Maini Søgaard has been actively involved in Danske Arkitekt Virksomheder for the past years, pushing strongly for better benefits for employees, particularly in terms of salary. Currently, the salaries of architecture employees in Denmark are rigidly determined by the employee's seniority, and not performance. However, BIG believes that salary can be an important form of reward for employees who perform outstandingly, especially at a young firm such as BIG, and therefore has been pushing for a more flexible salary scheme that also takes merit into consideration. This proposal was finally approved by Danske Arkitekt Virksomheder in April 2012 and is to be implemented starting 2015, marking a significant milestone in the history of labour rights for architecture employees in Denmark.





Safety in the workplace

BIG is an architecture studio, so in addition to the facilities of an average office, BIG also houses workshops fully equipped with the most advanced laser cutters, wood cutters and various other tools and materials necessary to produce the elaborate architectural models that showcase our designs. Needless to say, we have strict guidelines for the use of the model workshops and take extreme precautions to ensure the safety of anyone handling said tools and machinery as well as the health and well-being of the office's employees in general. Good ventilation is provided for the spray painting and foam cutting areas. The office first aid supplies are kept on an easily accessible shelf in the center of the office and regularly checked and restocked.

Elimination of forced labour

There is neither forced nor compulsory labor at BIG, and we neither condone nor tolerate this within the framework of its own studios or its collaborators. Should any managing partner be informed that employees are forced to work, the situation is solved with swiftness and seriousness. We neither seek out companies which employ forced labor, nor do we condone this type of behavior towards our colleagues or collaborators. In countries where this could be an issue, or may even be prevalent, and where we are able to influence the construction process, forced labor of any kind would not be tolerated whether the collaborators be from the private or public sector.

Abolition of child labor

BIG is not involved in any projects which make use of child labor, nor will we ever seek to be. The epitome of BIG's philosophy of hedonistic sustainability is the opposite of children forced into a situation of labor. Hedonistic sustainability is about creating tolerable situations in which all peoples may live happily for the longest period of time. BIG will never tolerate child labor and will always support all efforts to abolish it.



A great place to work

At BIG, one of our most important goals is to keep our employees happy at all times. This year BIG is launching a new employee benefits program called “Great Place to Work.” This program will include opportunities for employee development (such as training courses for our architects in addition to our ongoing BIG Picture lecture series), a periodically updated book of discounts for gyms, swimming pools and restaurants, etc., and extra budget allocated to team events and activities outside of the workplace, just to name a few.

All BIG employees, regardless of position held or field of expertise, are given a voice - a voice which can be heard when required - happy, concerned, suggestive, or cooperative. The employees become more aware of their importance to the company by being encouraged to communicate with the management regarding all areas of the growing company, and to contribute ideas and guidance when the company associates itself with unions or standards in countries with which they are themselves familiar. We are also establishing an intern evaluation system, which allows interns, who are generally at BIG on a short-term basis (usually 6 months), to discover their strengths and weaknesses following the completion of projects as part of their architectural education.

Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

BIG upholds this principle by choosing to not practice discrimination of any kind. All employees are chosen on their talents and skills alone, as well as the requirements for the project. We follow the employment and labor laws of the countries in which our employees are employed. BIG has no tolerance with regard to discrimination in or outside of the workplace.

Beyond discrimination is bullying and harassment of colleagues – this also is an issue which cannot be taken lightly. Therefore we have a simple policy in the personnel handbook against bullying. It is a practice which is greatly denounced at BIG and will not be tolerated.



OUR HUMAN RIGHTS

BIG firmly believes that human rights are indisputable universal truths. We are unwavering in our determination to, as far as we are able, provide all humans the rights and freedoms they wish to enjoy. BIG will never voluntarily be complicit in human rights abuses, and instead always seek to uphold the rights and freedoms of all, contributing where our reach allows.

Superkilen - Multicultural issues playing out in a public space

Denmark has a long political tradition and wide political support for its human rights activities, and as a Danish firm, BIG whole-heartedly supports in spirit and in practice the fundamental rights of every human being, be it freedom of speech, thought, conscience and religion, or equal rights between people of different genders, races, nationalities, and economical and social backgrounds. As an architecture firm, BIG consciously strives to integrate our principles of humanitarian care into our designs as part of our efforts to promote a harmonious and equal society free of racism, abuse and disrespect.

While the issue of multiculturalism is certainly not new in Denmark, it is surely a pressing issue in the 21st century, where the large influx of foreigners, particularly immigrants from Muslim countries, has stirred up a certain degree of resentment from Danish people. BIG's Superkilen project in Copenhagen, which is completed in June 2012, takes multicultural issues and let them play out in public space.

Like any large city, Copenhagen has its share of difficult neighborhoods, ones where social and economic mobility are limited. Some of these areas are where, alongside the native population, a multifaceted immigrant population exists, with some discomfort between these parties. Superkilen is located in Nørrebro, just north of the city center and home to many inhabitants who are first and second generation immigrants, from a wide range of countries. The response to the issue of multiculturalism is sometimes the removal of objects that mark difference. The Superkilen project is an important part of the larger urban design strategy to address difficulties in Nørrebro through spatial means.



For many years the site of Superkilen was overgrown and vacant, partially adjacent to a disused rail terminus. The area had problems with street crime, and organized gang activity. The site of Superkilen was known as the “shooting gallery” for the number of violent incidents occurring in the vacant scrub. It was clear that the space needed to be redefined and integrated into the surroundings. Superkilen’s design creates nodes of interest in their immediate area, while elements like the Copenhagen green cycle routes strengthen the connections in the city. Part of the cycle route cuts all the way through Superkilen on its way through Nørrebro, integrating both into the broader, citywide context.

At its simplest, Superkilen is a park in three movements, with site furnishings and objects borrowed from around the world. The park contains over one hundred different elements of site furniture, play equipment, sculpture and lighting, from over 60 different countries. Through an intensive process of participatory meetings and even travel, the local population worked directly with the designers to choose the objects. Benches from Prague and Iran, trash cans from England, bollards from Ghana, lamps from Italy, a pavilion from the American South are present on the site. Elements of advertising, including neon signage, are included as equally important cultural markers. All these things converge on the site in a riot of culture.

Superkilen is the wish of the city of Copenhagen and BIG to address the challenges of multicultural issues through spatial means. Superkilen is the leverage of urban public space as an instrument of power. Through its design, BIG wishes to provide every person with the basic human right to feel safe, free and accepted as an integral part of their own neighborhood.





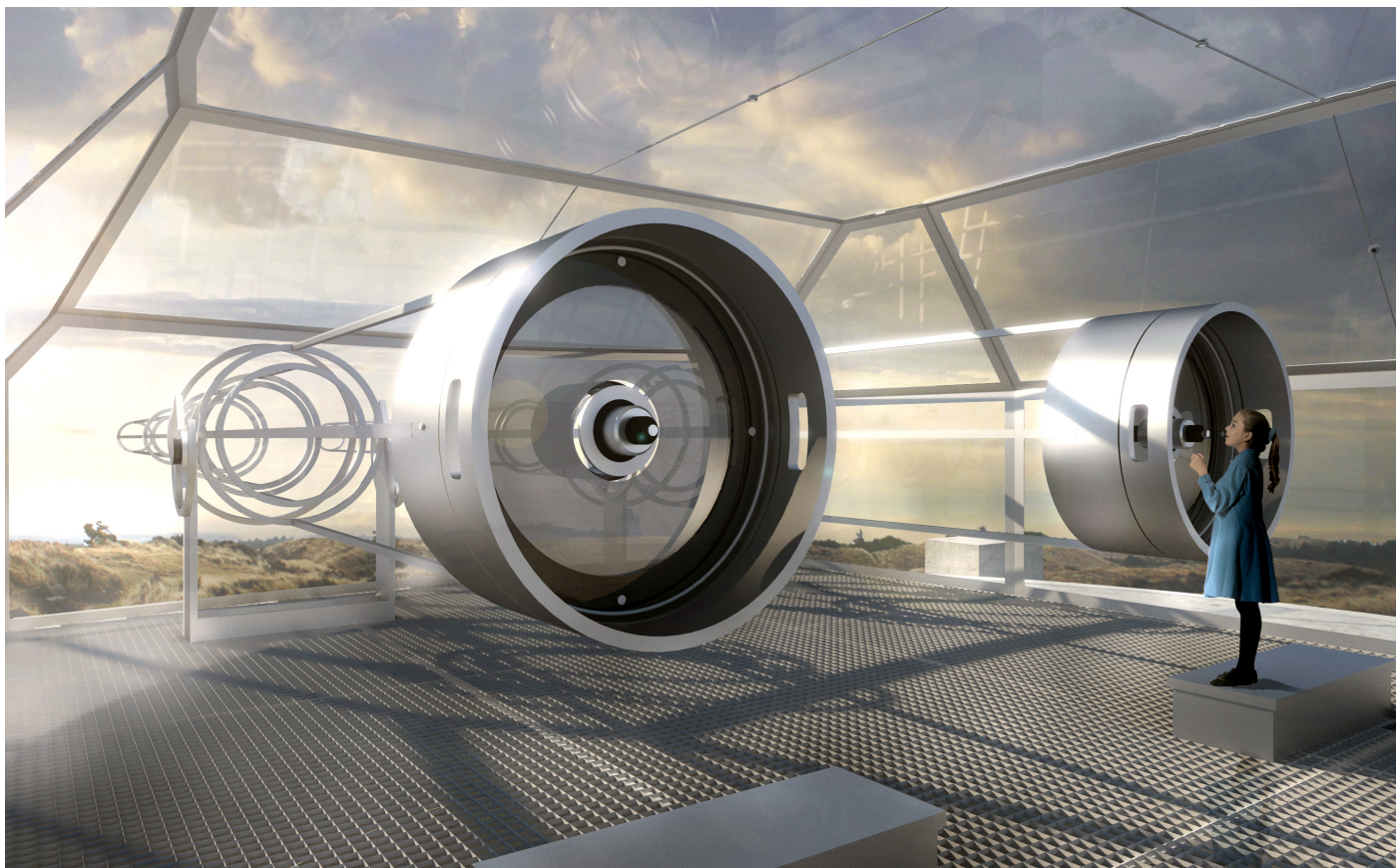
BIG♥NYC Times Square Valentine

In February 2012, thousands of New Yorkers and tourists traveled to Times Square to celebrate love in front of an interactive glowing red heart sculpture created by BIG. Over the last four years, Times Square has hosted an annual heart sculpture to celebrate Valentine's Day, selecting a special architect to design a romantic public art installation in Times Square for all to enjoy. This year's Times Square Valentine sculpture "BIG♥NYC" by BIG utilizes the flow of people, air and touch to bring its heart to life.

The 10-foot tall glowing sculpture consists of 400 transparent, LED lit, acrylic tubes that form a cube around a suspended red heart. The transparent tubes refract the lights of Times Square, creating a cluster of condensed city lights around the heart. As people touch a sensor in front of the sculpture, the heart will glow brighter as the energy from their hands is converted into more light. The heart will glow brighter and beat faster as more people interact with it.

The heart reflects what Times Square is made of: people and light - the more people, the stronger the light. Like a daisy chain of human contact, the more people who hold hands or make contact with others while touching the heart, the brighter and faster the heart will pulse. The fact that such a sculpture is installed in Times Square is particularly symbolic, as it is a place where all kinds of people come together from all corners of the world regardless of race, sex, language and religion. The "BIG♥NYC" is an indicator of human unity and togetherness in one of the most diversified places on earth.





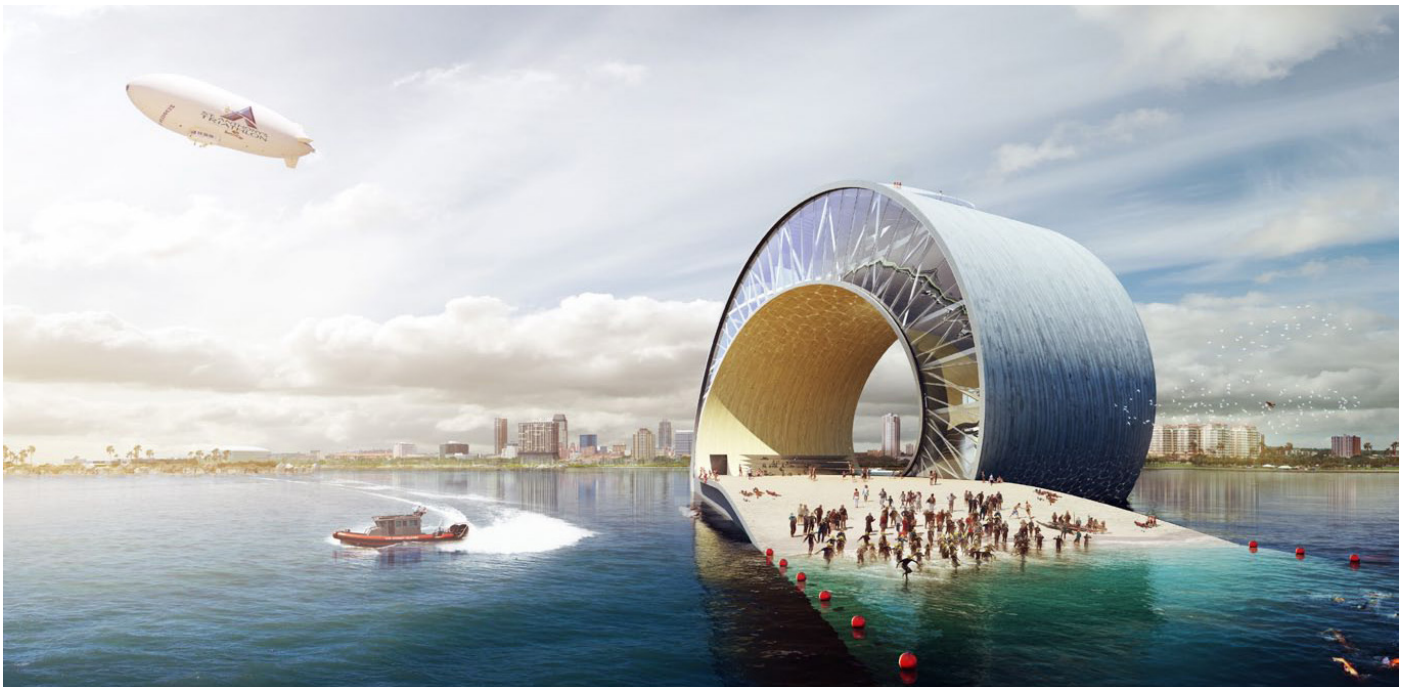
Blåvand Bunker Museum

BIG recently unveiled its design of Museum Center Blåvand, which integrates 4 independent institutions—a bunker museum, an amber museum, an experimentarium and a special exhibitions gallery—in an exhibition landscape embedded in the dunes of western Jutland, Denmark. The building itself encapsulates the old earthen ramp that the German occupiers used in 1945 in the construction of one of the largest gun bunkers on Denmark's west coast, Tirpitzstillingen.

Instead of being removed, the bunker's gun is restored as a ghost or a reflection of the war machine it was meant to be. It serves as a reminder of the mistakes that mankind should never repeat, the horrors of war and atrocities that were committed during that dark period. As a crystal artifact in "wireframe"—the cannon is re-created in glass and steel framing—it is a skylight over the raw setting of the bunker where visitors can experience the strategic position the gun would have played in the fortifications of the Atlantic Wall and see as far out over the water as a cannon could have reached out with its ammunition. But here the gun is replaced with a telescope.

As the antithesis to the heavy volume of the bunker, the museum appears as the intersection between a series of precise cuts in the landscape. A block in the landscape—and a corresponding absence of the dune. The new architecture is at once critical and respectful of the existing bunkers. As an antithesis—vacuum rather than volume, transparency rather than gravity, it represents the new architecture of a light and easy antithesis of bunker architecture. Simultaneously, both the glass cannon and invisible museum will add sensitively to the existing landscape and nature which only on closer inspection—a walk in the dunes, or a visit to the bunker—unfolds for visitors.





ANTI-CORRUPTION

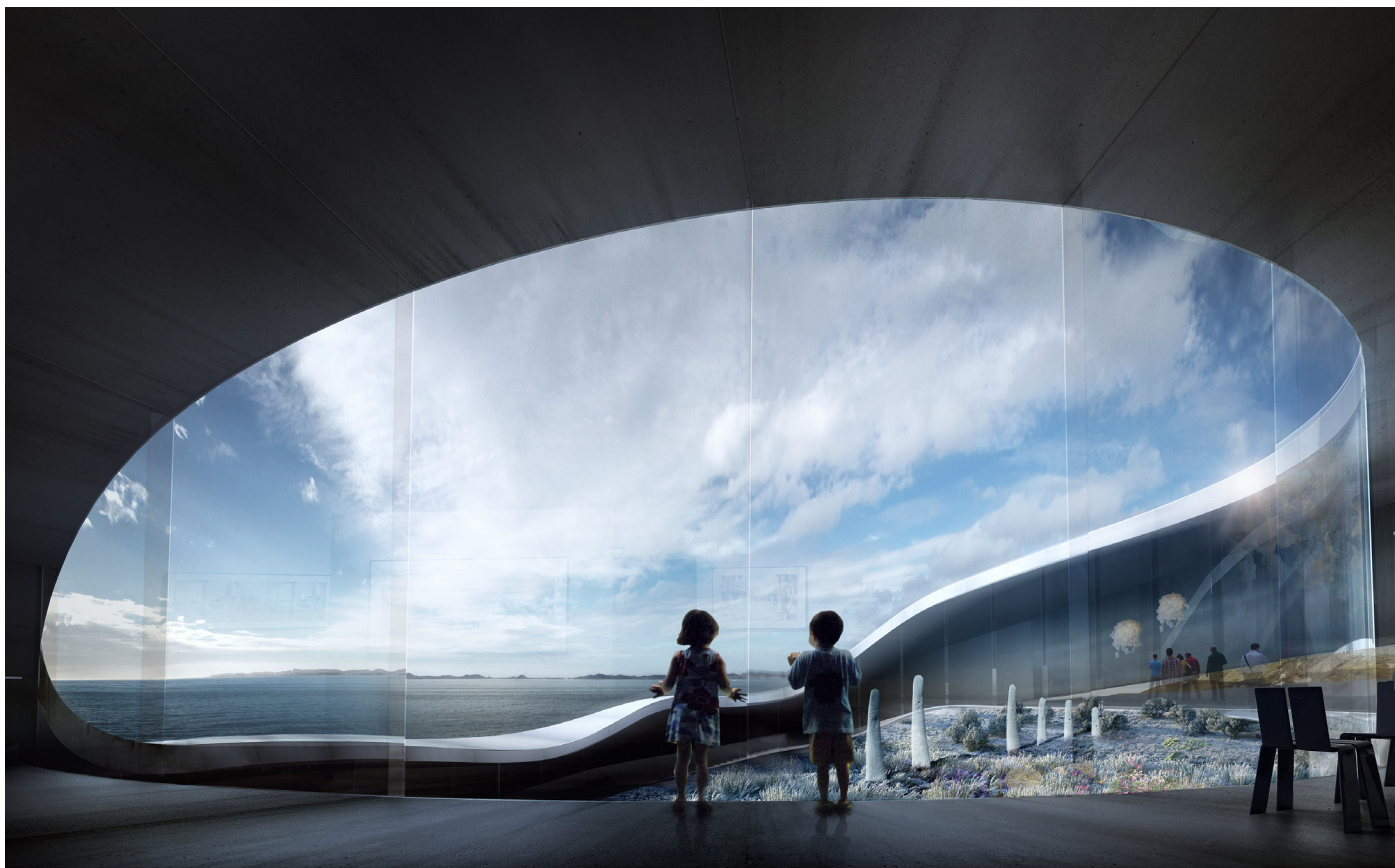
BIG is a company that values transparency and does not tolerate any form of corruption. Internally, we hold a BIG office meeting at least once a month, during which Bjarke Ingels, founder of BIG, and the CEO report the status of the firm to all employees and give answers to any questions that are raised. When choosing projects to pursue, BIG also makes sure that our collaborators and clients are not involved in any activities that suggest corruption.

A few months ago BIG participated in a competition to design a replacement for a pier in St. Petersburg, Florida USA. It was organized by the city government looking to revitalize a popular but aging tourist attraction, with the hope that it will bring in more revenue to the recession-struck municipality. Because the USD\$50 million project was to be funded by the city taxpayers, the adjudication process to evaluate winners became an interesting approach towards transparency and public accountability.

BIG became part of this process, from the open Request for Qualification (RFQ) stages, through the jury presentations, to the public exhibition of design proposals. What was fairly novel, however, was the use of live video feed of the entire jury deliberation process via the city government's website. It was very interesting to have been able to observe as the jury addressed the strengths and weaknesses of the design proposals, especially from the perspective of a competition entrant. As the competition was organized during the height of the Occupy and Tea Party movements in the US that protested for minimized government interventions,



it was also observed that the jury's conversations – under the watchful eye of the public - weighed heavily on the issues of cost and subsidies, over the design merits of the entries. An advisory task force made up of various public stakeholders was also established to provide development alternatives, evaluate economic viability, and to represent the community's feedback and reactions during the evaluation process. The entire competition documentation is currently available on the city government's website at <http://www.stpete.org/pierdesign>.



OUR GOALS

ENVIRONMENT

We have always incorporated sustainable initiatives into our projects by thinking outside the box. In the coming year we will continue to strive for what we call “hedonistic sustainability,” which is sustainability that improves quality of life for everyone while minimizing the impact on the surrounding environment.

Our public infrastructures for transport, industry, energy, waste, water, sewage etc. are major investments in our public budgets. However they always appear as grey areas on the city map. Like black holes in the urban fabric lost for the public realm – they are big ugly boxes that cast shadows on the neighbors or block the views.

What if we could harness those massive investments and imbue them with positive social side effects from the get go rather than in retrospect? What if we could turn a highway interchange into a man-made valley with a public park? What if the massive volume of a waste-to-energy power plant could become a mountain with ski slopes in a city full of snow but without hills?

Having tested these ideas for a handful of projects in Copenhagen and Stockholm, we are now preparing to take them to the developing world. Where sudden growth and social inequality contrasts a small affluent population of key players in the economic development with large populations living in informal settlements.

LABOUR RIGHTS

In 2012 we are introducing a new employee benefits program called “Great Place to Work.” This program will include opportunities for employee development, extra budget for team events and activities, and a periodically updated book of discounts for gyms, swimming pools and restaurants with the hopes of enticing employees to spend less time in the office and interact more with other individuals than colleagues.

Our ongoing goal is to ensure that human rights are developed and supported in the designs of our projects. We will also continue to encourage feedback from all employees and aim to better integrate our employees into the countries in which they are employed as we branch out from our home base in Copenhagen into the rest of the world.



HUMAN RIGHTS

Our ongoing goal has not changed from the previous year – we continue to work to ensure that human rights are developed and supported in the designs of our projects.

BIG continues to give students from across the globe the opportunity to work as architects on our projects. As part of this teaching process, BIG invites internal and external experts to lecture on a variety of areas. BIG will always seek to uphold the rights and freedoms of all, contributing where our reach allows.

ANTI-CORRUPTION

Our goal is unwavering : BIG neither subscribes to nor encourages any form of corruption. BIG will not participate in corruption; BIG will not contribute to corruption; BIG will not support corruption.





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