

## Architecture as interconnections Shoreline intervention in Trékyllisvík in Árneshreppur

Árneshreppur is an Icelandic municipality, located in the Westfjords peninsula of northwestern Iceland. This municipality has one of the smallest communities in Iceland but comprises a large area. The inhabitants earn their income by raising sheep and by tourism. The landscape is breathtaking and an attraction by itself. The inhabitants and their culture and sagas are also a great attraction. It is rich in history with Icelandic Sagas, sorcery, witchcraft and witch-hunts, herring adventures and folklore. Nonetheless, there is little to none infrastructural development in this northwest shire of roughly 53 people, job growth is non-existent, young people are fleeing the area, and what few people remain are almost all well into their old age. The general sentiment of this community is that they simply don't matter to Reykjavík or the national government, and have essentially been abandoned to wither away.

The main problem in Árneshreppur is poorly functioning road infrastructure that results in bad connections to other parts of Iceland. This is something that the community has been fighting for to be improved. One public harbour is located in Árneshreppur by a small town named Norðurfjörður, translated Northfjord. The harbour in Norðurfjörður is located in between two small capes, from north to south. This harbour is mainly used for fishery and transportations but used to serve a ferry and a rich community in the mid-20th century that has been decreasing continually since the ferry stopped 50 years ago.

Norðurfjörður harbour and the small town of Norðurfjörður is where I've located my project. I envision using the old harbour where a ferry connects Árneshreppur to Sauðárkrókur, a small town located in Skagafjörður..

I propose a design for the local community but also to host arriving visitors consisting of six elements: a path, dryinghouse, bathhouse, boat workshop, a bench, and lastly six mountain ash trees.

In these elements I've investigated architecture in relation to themes of the ecosystem and intertwine it with the area's rich history and its natural surroundings. It's richness is found in wood material drifting to shore from the rivers of Siberia and rocks and stones that have been there since land formed. These materials are locally resourced and become the center of my architectural view in this project. From there my goal is to interpret and serve animals, plants, humans and other organisms in the area with historical themes revived in the use of the inhabitants and visitors.

### **Path**

From the end of the harbour where the ferry arrives, located south east from the main town of Norðurfjörður, a gravel path begins. It leads you through an outdoor structure of a dry house for flowers made from driftwood sourced from local shore lines. It bends around the only natural

coastline to Norðurfjörður from the harbour. The untouched rough cliffs confront the cold blue nordic ocean and give a sense of how nature used to be pre-evolution. Venturing onwards the path splits, offering you to walk down a ramp into a bathhouse that leads you to the ocean. The alternative path, that is ground leveled, takes you through the building. Once you are through the building you are halfway to the town which you can now see clearly ahead as well as the two farms in the midst of the fjord. A few more steps along the path leads you through another building. When entering its driftwood construction the acoustic of the ground's gravel changes as you go through its triangle shape with a 66 degree wall on your right hand side. You are now on the other side of the building getting closer to town and the gravel path changes to pavement. At the end of the road, two pieces of driftwood are balanced on stones forming a bench where overwhelming views of mountain Reykjaneshyrna in the far south east and Urðartindur's straight lines lie ahead. Through a few mountain ash trees, a small stream flows, traveling from Krossnesfjall in the back and underneath the path dissolving into the ocean. You've arrived in Norðurfjörður town.

### **Dryinghouse**

A dryinghouse is located on the landfill next to the ferry's arriving harbour. It's rhythmic structure in driftwood material gives the path a shelter down a little ramp from each side of the house. In the middle of the ramp the building invites you to enter.

Through the entrance you can see flowers hanging from the ceiling, under preservation. They are believed to possess healing powers and as such were used in sorcery before being banned in the late 1700s. In the center of this house there is a kettle on a traditional stove where tea is made from the preservation flowers into wooden cups. Stories of people being burned for practicing sorcery and magic are rich in the area and gives the surrounding landscape another perspective and atmosphere.

### **Bathhouse**

Second house on the path is a bathhouse with a triangle shaped roof that flows into the ocean. It functions as a shelter for eider ducks and it gives a dynamic contrast to the rocky landfill on each side of the house. Underneath the roof you enter a bathhouse after walking a long ramp which starts at the end of the untouched rocky shore. The bathhouse is in the same degree as the roof and leads you step by step into the cold ocean. The space is ever changing with the ocean tide, in high tide you would have to dive under the roof edge. On your left side facing the ocean a narrow part of the roof extends further into the ocean and serves birds to enter from the sea.

Sea swimming is a big part of Westfjord culture and tradition as a contrast to all the unique lava heated water in the area. An old folklore in Árneshreppur tells of a child swimming in the sea and shifting shapes into a seal, and roaming the farmlands.

### **Boat workshop**

Ófeigur is a rowing boat built from driftwood in 1875 and was used for shark fishing in Trékyllsvík and other fjords in the area. The local community takes great pride in this boat and its handcraft building technik named Súðbyrðingur, clinker in english.

The last house on the path is a boat workshop in honor of keeping alive the traditional hand craftsmanship knowledge of Súðbyrðingur. Similar to the bathhouse it has a sharp triangle shape. The wall facing the road shelters birds and is set to a 66 degree angle with a roof opening to view the polestar, which rowing boats used as a compass. On the other side of the wall driftwood dries before entering the workshop. Inside the house is an open work space with natural light reaching in between driftwood edges and the roof which is lifted with wooden columns. The workshop can be opened up facing the sea to a boat ramp leading to the sea. When not in use for rowing boats the ramp can be used for seals to rest.

### **Bench**

A resting place to reflect on your surroundings and the knowledge you've gained from your walk from the harbour is placed at the end of the path before entering the town of Norðurfjörður. Two raw materials being rocks and driftwood are balanced onto each other forming a bench and a table in different levels. Underneath the table two wooden columns have been placed for sitting across each other.

### **Mountain ashes**

I place six mountain ashes for Red Wing migratory birds to rest and fill their bellies of seeds that they carry off to the mainland and close the life cycle of wood.

On this path the relation between architecture based on local resourced materials have been explored and interpreted to be used by plants and local and visiting people and animals. My intention was to be influenced by the history of the people and the land and its ecosystems cycle. To find a balance in use of materials and their users. My clear frame in this project has driven me to question architecture in its core. Can architecture be a locally sourced structure and serve all of the living and nonliving organisms in a balance with a history of a place.