

THE FLOODABLE GARDEN : From natural Disaster to ecological Hope

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In light of the growing threat posed by climate change, the issue of flooding in recent years has emerged as a critical concern.

The Diploma “Floodable Garden: From natural Disaster to ecological Hope” examines Lillehammer city center and proposes a strategy to protect it from the Mesna River’s potential floods. The project is particularly focusing on the Strandtorget area which is affected by the Mesna River and Mjøsa lake at the same time. It deals with the area’s vulnerability, emphasizing the urgent need for effective adaptation design.

Thus, the asphalt-dominated shopping area, which exceeds the typical scale of the city, was transformed into a wetland park.

The project delves into the idea that the perception of floods as disasters is deeply rooted in our social and cultural context. The floods, despite their destructive potential, also replenish the soil and contribute to the fertility of the land. Thus, by acknowledging natural disasters as a social construct, we can not only protect communities from flooding but also enhance ecological and societal resilience. Therefore, the Strandtorget design aims not only to protect the area, and improve the living conditions of Lillehammer residents but also to serve as an educational measure about the nature of climate change.

The project recognizes water dynamics, morphology directionality, and patterns as the main project drivers. The Diploma is framed around nature-based solutions as a primary mechanism for mitigating the flood. The investigation peels back the layers of history, and local knowledge to understand how cultural heritage can intertwine with nature-based solutions. By doing so, the project intends to unearth strategies that not only challenge mainstream urban development and mitigate natural hazards, but also contribute to the preservation and celebration of the cultural landscape.

The project also investigated the role of the community in the nature hazard risk anticipation. It recognized the value of community input and included a workshop with local youth as one of the project development stages. The process not only ensured a more comprehensive understanding of local needs but was also supposed to cultivate a sense of ownership and empowerment among community members.

The Diploma denies the nostalgia of a dying planet* and embraces the idea that we, humans, can still navigate in the natural balance. It proposes the shift in our perspective - from viewing threats solely as problems to recognizing them as new possibilities.



* Morton T. (2012) Ecological thought.
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