

In Holland a third way is emerging between those architects who view building as essentially an attack on nature 'as victim', and the mainstream with built-in tendencies to see environmental issues as a necessary irritant. This third way includes the Smart Architecture Foundation, whose philosophy of 'smart being inherently sustainable' outlines this intermediary path. Their co-founder Jacques Vink explains.

Smart and sustainable: Holland's Smart Architecture Foundation

The mission of the Smart Architecture Foundation is to create and discuss concepts and ideas for buildings and cities that combine optimum performance with a minimal use of materials and energy.

Many of the so-called 'green architects' tend to look upon nature as a victim, brutalised by the fierce attacks from 'unnatural' technology. Others look upon environmental issues as a nuisance, a complicating factor in the design process. The Smart Architecture Foundation rejects both views. It is their belief that nature and technology should be looked upon as allies, not enemies or victims. Thus, truly sustainable, integral, smart solutions can only be found by rethinking the starting points, concepts and typologies of architecture and city planning itself. The Smart Architecture Foundation searches for powerful, green, smart ideas that deliver the much-needed innovations in architecture, design and urbanism.

Founded in 1998, the Smart Architecture Foundation built its website, www.smartarch.nl and published in several international architectural magazines. The co-founders are now working in their own practices on concrete projects. 'Process Practice', part of the publication *Smart Architecture* contains some of their work.

Process Practice

(from *Smart Architecture*)

Buildings are not inert things, they are alive. This insight seems to be radically altering the way architects work. While many still feel that their buildings look their best on the day they were delivered and ruefully watch their spiritual offspring age from that day on, more and more are grasping the fact that buildings are not some lifeless end-product but that they change over time. These architects often work at practices where environmental issues are addressed on the road to a sustainable architecture.

If we examine the spectrum of so-called sustainable or ecological architecture, we see a 'deep-eco' attitude at



one end and a 'high-tech' approach at the other. Both stances locate architecture in time but in fundamentally different ways.

The ideal behind the deep-eco attitude is a cyclic time frame. Just as primitive peoples live in ever recurring cycles of seasons and generations, so too should we, for the sake of the environment. The deep-eco attitude rejects progress, seeking instead to at least maintain the status quo from a defensive, conservative position. Instead of the efficiency, momentum and renewal inherent in the process of modernisation, it propagates reduction, inactivity and even a return to a pre-industrial era. Buildings designed on the back of this ideal, one might assume, should be fundamentally different from those being built today. In reality, the distinction is not that great. Aside from reinstating many neglected materials and developing eminently usable construction and installation techniques, these buildings still look familiar to us.

At the other end of the spectrum is the high-tech attitude; whose state-of-the-art application of climate-responsive techniques sets out to lessen the building's negative impact on the environment. It slots into the generally accepted time frame, which is linear instead of cyclic. Its practitioners seek to achieve an ideal situation in the future. Everything will be better then, they claim. And if the climate-control equipment doesn't do its job properly, well, just add some more. This strand too has provided many, largely technical innovations. For one thing, innovations in eco-tech have lifted the ban on