

The designer as social archisculptor.

*The intent of art is different from that of the latter, which must be functional. If a chair or a building is not functional, if it appears to be only art, it is ridiculous. The art of a chair is not its resemblance to art, but is partly its reasonableness, usefulness and scale as a chair.*¹

Architecture is a form of design. With the simplest reason that architecture —first of all— is built with the intent to have a function. It can be a hospital, a school, a house, ... Design it is not made with the idea to have aesthetic purposes—good design often creates an aesthetic pleasing form—An archisculpture, on the other hand, is a different story. A sculpture does not always have a function, a sculpture can be made only with the idea of form. But where do we stand with archisculpture? What is the primary aspect? Function or form? I want to discuss this in the context of social design and participation. To look at archisculpture as design and not as art. Can we as designers participate with the local communities to create an archisculpture? The designer as social archisculptor.

Sol LeWitt made his first Wall drawing in 1968. He took a blank wall and filled it up with his drawings. He made this wall drawings with simple instructions.

If you followed these instructions, you would get your wall drawings. It is his peace of art—or as I see it, his design piece— but he didn't physically made it himself. Other people drew the lines, he gave the instructions for the lines. For me, this is an archisculpture in the most interesting form there is. He didn't put something that wasn't there in the space. He changed something in the space and so he created something new. He recycled the space in some sort of way. Heidegger speaks of not filling space but making space. I do think filling space is an option. With his wall drawings, Sol LeWitt answers on one of Heidegger questions: *Does not modern graphic art also follow this challenge insofar as it understands itself as dealing with space?*² I think so. LeWitt has very graphic work and knows how to handle space.

*Different kinds of walls make for different kinds of drawings*³.

Not every wall is the same, so it shouldn't be handled the same way. Otherwise, it is a waste of space. As a designer the most important thing is to look for the best possible function of space and not try to be a capitalist copycat. Another important part about Sol LeWitt's Wall drawings is that he didn't do it alone. So here we meet the second part: participation. The importance of cooperation⁴. Sol LeWitt understands this. He knows that this aspect of cooperation changes every wall drawing he makes.

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1. It's hard to find a good lamp, Donald Judd, 1993

2. Art and space, Martin Heidegger, 1973

3. Centrepompidou Metz, Sol LeWitt, p219

4. Report concerning the interrelation of the plastic arts and the importance of cooperation, Aldo Van Eyck, 1947

*Each person draws a line differently
and each person understands
words differently.⁵*

He knows that when he asks seven different people to draw a line, that there is the possibility that you will have seven different lines. This is the power of participation. And this is a great way of filling space to their function. He could have made wall drawings with the local communities adjusted to their open space. With instructions which fitted perfectly with the function of the space that already existed. He made a design program—even if he wasn't fully aware of it—and he can change his design program for every different kind of space or environment there is.

In Paris, there is a basketball court called Pigalle Duperré that is filled with color. The court is a cooperation between Pigalle, Ill-Studio and Nike. It was not made to be some street art project, but it was made to play basketball on it. It is a good design for a basketball court because it was designed to be a basketball court. It was not made to be a piece of art! It was made for the local community to play basketball. Like you see here: good design with a good intent creates great form. They could have made the court perfectly with instructions like Sol LeWitt's wall drawings. It would be interesting if designers created design programs for locals to update their playgrounds etc. This was not the case in Paris, but this could be done in all sorts of kinds of playgrounds all over the world. Instead of some working men who put basic play lines down, let people from the neighborhood make their basketball courts. Let them put the line of the court, with the instructions from the designer. How beautiful would a world full of colored basketball courts be?

We had talked about the part where participation can be used in function of an archisculpture. How can we as designer go further into the social design part? How can we do this without direct participation? How can we do this in a sustainable way? This is another important aspect of changing space and not creating a new one. The aspect of participation in the next example is less direct than with Sol LeWitt's wall drawings. Participation where it is a port of using space and changing space for the community. The idea of 'recycling' space is a cooperation between the designer and the community who see the space as theirs.

How can they develop contact with people, if all public works are in the hands of "routineers" and businessmen? In earlier periods it would have been possible for the artist to tackle the problems upon the site from the very beginning of the work.⁶



In the next example the designer was not at the beginning of the original process. He starts a new process. It is sad because he could have probably made his idea for the space possible from in the beginning. The interesting thing that social design can have is the possibility to create a function in different area's or fields of society.

Studio Roosegaarde does this in different projects. In the Netherlands, the problems of climate change are getting real. The Afsluitdijk is important to protect the Netherlands from flooding. Daan Roosegaarde did a project called Gates of light. He placed reflective tape on the Lorentzsluizen at the Afsluitdijk.

5. Centrepompidou Metz, Sol LeWitt, p226

6. Architect, painter, sculptor, Sigfried Giedion, 1958

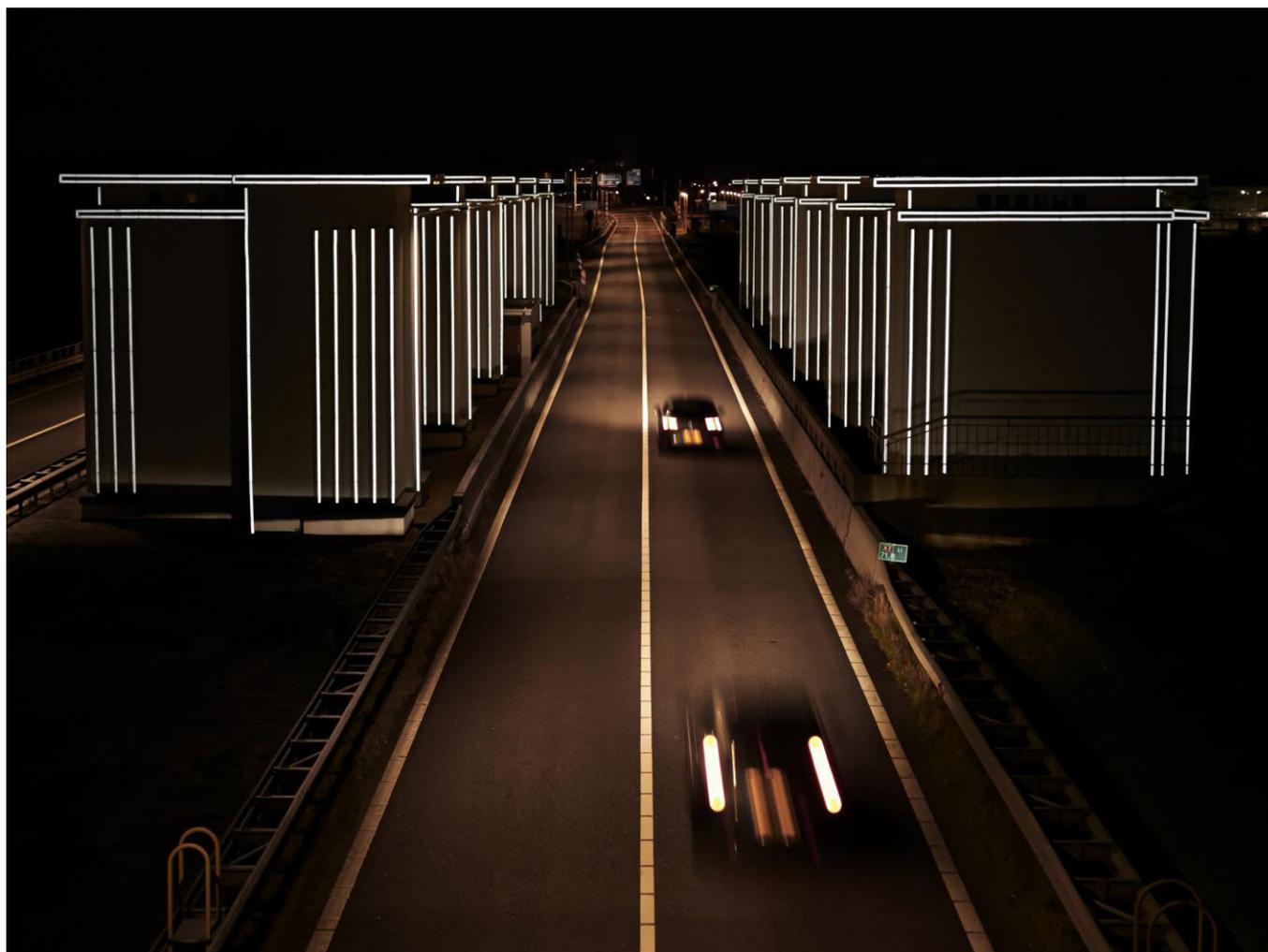
Reflective tape is the kind of tape that is used in our day-to-day traffic signs. Now Afsluitdijk has an ecological way of street lighting. When cars pass by at night, their lights shine on the long strokes of reflective tape so you create your own lightsource at night. It is a simple and small intervention, but it works. The best designers are lateral thinkers; this kind of lateral thinking is something we need more in our society. Daan Roosegaerde went from architecture to archisculpture. He also did the same thing with a bicycle path. He put glow in the dark pigment in the path. This paint charges itself during the day with the energy of the sun and releases this energy at night. Again, he recycles something we use every day and changed it into a social archisculpture.

Of course, if a person is at once making art and building furniture and architecture there will be similarities.⁷

You can see this archisculpture that studio Roodegaerde did as art, but don't get confused. It is design. I hope that in the future, there will be more archisculptures in our daily landscape. Not as art but, as design. I hope that in the future designers can work together from the beginning with architects, businessmen, politicians, ...

Place always opens a region which it gathers the things in their belonging together.⁸

Give things double functions, participate with communities, create archisculptures and most importantly: have the intention of making functional design, otherwise you are making art! Don't limit your design to small and wealthy groups. The design needs to work for the community who walks by the archisculpture every day. It should not just be a work for your personal resumé. It should —or could— have a social function.



7. It's hard to find a good lamp, Donald Judd, 1993
8. Art and space, Martin Heidegger, 1973

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