

CREATIVE CULTURE

ISSUE 06

APRIL 2010

KDN PP16676/10/2010 (025785)

YOUR FREE COPY

The Aesthetics of
Architecture

Gaudi, Snohetta
and Bauhaus

Putrajaya and
Democracy

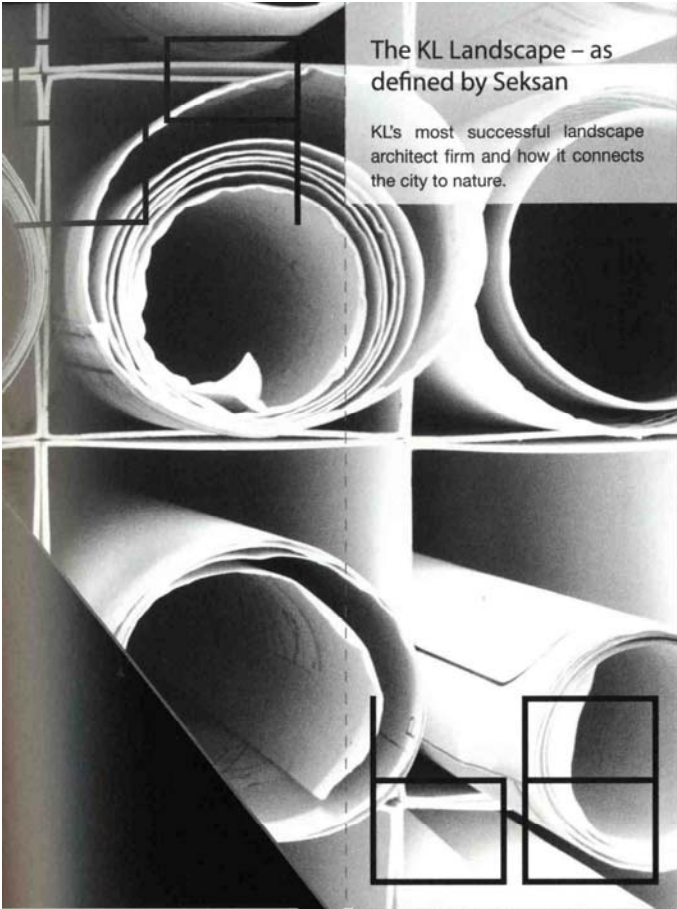
Alexander Lee
McQueen

Cool Company:
Seksan Design

www.aestheticsonline.my

aes.thet.ics





The KL Landscape – as defined by Seksan

KL's most successful landscape architect firm and how it connects the city to nature.

Fashion Blueprint – The Structured Design

Fashion designers eye on innovation to move forward in fashion. Here are four such designers.



Sustainability in a Building's Design – Dr. Stellios

As we enter a generation where natural resources diminish, sustainable buildings are rising.



Sustainable Architecture & Design

These days, Dr. Stelios Plainiotis would probably be branded by reality TV execs as a building doctor, or maybe a new build whisperer. An advisor to architects of building projects around the world, his speciality is optimising environmentally-friendly architecture.

Environmentally-friendly construction is big business these days, and as with all business, the bottom line is often not the idealism behind the idea but the cost. Making buildings that are effective in the way that they use the materials, space and environment available is both cost efficient and environmentally-friendly. Having recently worked on several Zaha Hadid-designed projects abroad, Dr. Stelios is currently advising on the new Low Cost Carrier Terminal (LCCT) at Sepang and the new proposed Sime Darby Technology Centre at Ampar Tenang.

This is where he steps in; it seems good business sense to make a building as efficient as possible whilst it's being built, rather than retrospectively greenproofing. Each building is different but the basic goals remain the same: to reduce the amount of energy, water and waste, and to utilise natural elements like sunlight, solar energy and rain for natural cooling and light systems.

Of course, designing and building the ultimate sustainable building, utilising the latest in green technology would be infeasibly expensive, just as the ultimate budget building, using cheap materials, labour and methods would fall foul of the many regulations now in place to promote sustainability and safety. And of course it's debatable as to whether aesthetics would feature in the design of either. The difficulty is in finding the middle road, where sustainability is just as important (no more and no less) as the cost, design and aesthetics of a building.

Add to the mix that as with any fledgling industry, sustainability is still the equivalent of a cowboy town; a non-

bureaucratic industry, with clear leaders in the field. The UK, Scandinavia and the United States are the countries at the forefront of sustainability development at the moment; unsurprising given that development stems from both need and capability and these countries have both. They also possess an understanding that sustainable design is a necessity in the current environmental climate rather than a choice. Many poorer countries around the world still have raw primary resources and lack the infrastructure or governmental drive to consider sustainability as a priority. For countries lucky enough to be able to participate, the sustainable design community is far more open than that of general commercial construction. New ideas being developed and shared as best practise are common.

Which brings us back to KL - one of the challenges KL faces is the development of townships and gated communities. The number of these are rapidly growing and the most important element in the future of their design, is optimising the sustainability of the township itself, not just the individual units.

And these are challenges that Dr. Stelios is more than able to meet due to his expertise - as an environmental advisor, there are lots of things other than architecture that Dr. Stelios has had to study. Engineering, ecology, chemistry and computer modelling to name just a few, and they all play their part. Everything is kept in mind when considering a building's sustainability; water, energy - even waste materials can be optimised.

At the new LCCT (one of Dr. Stelios' current projects) for example, one of the proposals is for any unused but unexpired airline food to be distributed via an outreach program rather than disposed of in landfills. This one simple change will make 1 ton of food per month available to local food banks.

One of the things in the pipeline, that will help make Dr. Plainiotis' job more productive (and probably direct a lot more work his way), is a government initiative announced by the Prime Minister, Najib Tun Razak, for the 2011 budget. Building owners or developers obtaining the Green Building Index certification until 31st December 2014 will be given income tax exemption equivalent to the overall additional capital expenditure. Given the youth of the KL skyline, the space that urban planners have to play with and the fact that new additions are being proposed all the time, it's more than likely that hardy architects and developers will take on the challenge and incorporate sustainable features into their designs. The environmental conditions and the drive in construction in Malaysia are such that there could be many more sustainable buildings, or buildings with sustainable elements; solar panels, daylighting and rainwater-harvesting systems.

Sustainable design is something that is needed, necessary and for the benefit of all. Perhaps seeking to optimise where we live and work, is seeking to optimise how we live and work. As Dr. Stelios asserts, the bottom line of sustainable design is as in all human endeavour; to find a way to improve the human condition.

*Founder of Neapoli Sdn. Bhd.
Dr. Stelios Plainiotis.*

