

Architecture with it's environment

by Ilpo Vuorela

I teach architecture at Jyväskylä Art School, Jyväskylä Art School, which was given teaching the art of architecture as part of its teaching field in 1996. The school provides curriculumbased teaching that is targetoriented and progresses from one year to the next primarily for children and young people according to its general and extensive syllabus.

In the school's teaching, a broad view is taken of architecture so that design and fine art also form part of the content of the teaching in architecture. The teaching is based on the learning by doing principle.



Summer camps

For two consecutive summers, the cultural department at the town of Jämsä has organised an environmental art camp for children and young people. In a week's time, the participants at both camps have designed and constructed a large-scale installation made up of many elements on the banks of the Jämsänjoki river, under the leadership of Pertti Karjalainen who is an artist and Ilpo Vuorela who is an architect. Each of the camps concluded with a party at which the installations were unveiled.

The first leap

The first of the camps was named 'Alkuloikka' (The first leap) and its theme was the emergence of life from water onto land during evolution. Work began by studying the development of the frog and doing sketches in different techniques on this basis. The work to be implemented on the riverbank was divided into four parts: frogspawn, the tadpole emerging from the water, the adult frog and the frog of the future. Each part had its own group working on it. Form, structure and materials were studied using models, which also acted as guiding principles when building the work on the riverbank. Materials were, for example, bubble-wrap, tights, stones from the riverbank, timber, off-cuts of felt from the local felt factory and boards from demolished buildings.



Hidden head and big-hat bee

The second camp, 'Kätköpää ja Isopipomehiläinen' ('Hidden head and big-hat bee') dealt with the development of winged flying life forms. The stages of development of insects and the colourful metamorphosis of butterflies were examined in detail. After drawing and painting a series of sketches, wing construction was studied by building models of 'butterfly skeletons'. Once these kite-like models had been constructed of sticks and string, they were scaled up and frames were constructed for four large butterfly wings. These wing structures were taken down to the river and covered with wooden shingles and different coloured cloth. The wings were made into butterflies using old hay stakes and painted using paint that the children cooked up themselves.

The idea is to make these environmental art camps an annual summer event, each one revolving around a different theme.

PLAYce