YOUNG LIONS PRINT | LEMONAID

HINTERGRUND

Lemonaid setzt sich für den fairen Handel und ein positives Miteinander ein. Die Marke unterstützt mit jeder verkauften Flasche aktiv Projekte in den Herkunftsländern der Zutaten, die Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe bieten.

Inzwischen hat Lemonaid & ChariTea e.V. über 2.000.000 Euro in z.B. Agrarschulen, Ausbildungsstätten und Hochschulen für indigene Minderheiten investieren können.

IDEE

Durch den richtigen Blick auf die Lemonaid Flasche wird der Markenzweck kommuniziert.

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Tall and soft-spoken, the 43-year-old Japanese architect Sou Fujimoto makes for a reluctant iconoclast. Raised on the island of Hokkaido by psychiatrist parents, he moved to the Japanese capital to pursue his architecture studies at the prestigious University of Tokyo. Yet after graduating in 1994, Fujimoto bypassed the traditional apprenticeship route at the big offices and instead undertook a sort of monastic sojourn, spending five years "just alone… thinking about architecture." In 2000, after receiving a lucrative commission to design the annexes to a children's hospital, Fujimoto founded his eponymous firm, where for years he quietly honed his craft with smaller commissions, perfecting his idiosyncratic take on building — a fusion of traditional Japanese spatial relationships, refined organicism, and a dash of abstracted urban planning. His early projects, most of which were built in or planned for his home province of Hokkaido, quickly earned him the esteem of fellow architects and academics the world over, prompting his confrère Toyo Ito to describe him as "an architect with the talent to create rich spaces using frugal materials, with what might be called an animalistic feeling." Fujimoto himself claims to aspire to create "weak architecture" stitched together by loose, informal relationships, and pays equal attention to the logic of the natural environment and the sophisticated chaos of the urban condition.

In 2013 Fujimoto achieved considerable fame outside the rarefied world of architecture thanks to London's Serpentine Gallery, which invited him to design its annual summer pavilion. Neither building nor sculpture, Fujimoto's scheme, made from a dense lattice of white-painted steel, was structurally rigorous yet whimsical, a logical extension of his ongoing fascination with permeability and porosity. Fujimoto seemed grateful for the international exposure, which brought a slew of commissions for his 24-strong practice, from a residential tower in Montpellier to a retail project in Miami, as well as several museum and gallery commissions in both Europe and North America. PIN-UP met with the frequent flyer during a recent stopover in New York City and encountered a serenely calm and impeccably polite man who is poised to reap the fruits of all his hard work.

Kevin Greenberg — You once likened your design process to farming. How is an architect like a farmer?

Sou Fujimoto — I'm very interested in the dialogue between nature and architecture. More importantly, I consider a farmer to be someone who primarily waits. And my design process is like that too. Of course there is sketching and model making, but instead of pushing the design forward, I view good design as something you have to prepare for, and then wait for, letting it grow and come to you.

KG A little bit like you might train a plant?

SF Yes. It's a slow process. You have to be very, very patient.

KG You were raised in the countryside, in Hokkaido, which is the northernmost island in Japan. It's very wild and wintry there. Did that influence the way you approach design?

SF My father is a doctor, he treated mental disorders, and I grew up on a rural site very near the hospital, with nature all around. As a child, I don't think I realized the impact that the power of nature had on me, but of course when I went to study at the University of Tokyo I really recognized how that natural environment compared to the situation in Tokyo, which is super artificial. The truth is that it was the combination of the two, the contrast between Tokyo and Hokkaido, that was really formative for me as a design student and that helped to form the way I think about nature in my work.

ARCHITECTURE'S GENTLEMAN FARMER KNOWS HOW TO REAP WHAT HE'S SOWN

KG What did you do after finishing your studies?

SF I didn't work for anybody. I couldn't choose. Or I couldn't decide how to do it, so finally I was alone and spent five, six years just alone. [Laughs.] I was thinking about architecture, but I didn't receive any commissions or projects during that time. I was just deep in conceptual thought.

KG So what was your first commission?

SF A friend of my father's, another doctor, had started his own children's hospital, and he asked me to design the annexes to the main buildings [the Children's Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Hokkaido, 2006]. The diagram for one of them was this series of white cubes spread around in the countryside. And this was my first big break.

Model-making is central to Sou Fujimoto's architectural practice. Seen here is a study model for Taiwan Café (2014), an outdoor café consisting of a series of stairs in the city of Tainan. © Michael Holmes

KG It seemed to set the precedent for some of the projects you've become well known for since, in which you've chosen very idiosyncratic and surprising elements as a module or a building block. Was that something you were consciously thinking about when you began to develop the concept for the children's hospital?

SF At the time I began the hospital I was very, very interested in the beautiful complexity of nature, and how to recreate that kind of richness by artificial means. Ordinarily architecture relies on grids, straight lines, cubes — straightforward geometric systems for generating and organizing forms. It's really simple compared to nature! Nature is really complex. I think when I first experienced the urban condition of Tokyo I saw something of this complexity, but generated by man. In my early projects, I was trying to combine the complexity you find in nature alongside the complexity you find in a dense urban condition like Tokyo. I asked myself how I could create that kind of dynamic complexity in an architectural project.

KG In many of your projects, prominence is placed on apertures and windows. How would you describe the importance of those in your work?

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Lemonaid ist Biolimonade mit einem ordentlichen Schluck für die gute Sache. Neben dem fairen Handel unterstützen wir mit jeder Flasche soziale Projekte in den Anbauregionen.
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