URBAN FURNITURE: Movements in Design and Fabrication

New forms of urban landscape furniture are emerging. This session will focus on custom furniture design assisted by advanced modeling to produce compelling design and create opportunities calibrated to the specifics of the site, sustainable materials, forms of assemblage, and health in the public realm.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learn how custom furniture design can benefit contemporary ideas about active lifestyles and health.
- Gain knowledge about advancements in digital modeling software and methodologies used in close collaboration between designers and fabricators.
- Learn about material life-cycle considerations for the design and construction of urban furniture and the opportunities for experimenting with lesser-known materials.
- Learn how urban furniture can be designed to inspire social interaction and engender unique, site-specific relationships to the landscape.

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1) Introduction to ‘Urban Furniture’
   a) What defines ‘Urban Furniture’
   b) Examples of trending urban furniture design in the USA and Europe.
   c) A landscape tradition of urban furniture.
   d) Design principles; materials, forms of assemblage, context, and health.

2) Material Sourcing and Fabrication
   a) Brief history of site furniture design, materials sourcing, and fabrication modes. How has the making of multi-functional seating changed in the past decades?
   b) Study of contemporary cases which proactively engage material life cycle considerations from sourcing to maintenance to after-life of site furniture, broadly defined.
   c) Discussion of opportunities provided through smaller-scale, custom design work and local sourcing of construction materials, including experimentation with lesser-known materials.

3) Relationships to material sourcing, 3D modeling and fabrication
   a) Issues to consider with ‘off the shelf’ bench products.
      i) Schedule and budget, maintenance, and materials
   b) Advantageous material sourcing in design and construction phases.
   c) More then just a bench
   d) Harvard Plaza benches case study
      i) Designs using unique advancements in 3-D modeling technologies.
      ii) Designer and fabricator relationship
   e) New benefits to the landscape architect’s ability to design and produce furniture.

4) Furniture and Health
   a) Intro to ‘Human and Social Sustainability’
   b) How like all structures, the human body is designed to distribute load evenly throughout the skeletal system to promote optimal balance and efficiency.
   c) How movement and healing techniques such as pilates, yoga and massage can be integrated into furniture design.
   d) What role might urban landscape furniture play in sustainable cities.
   e) How do these trends directly affect our lifestyles and cultures?
PRESENTERS

Erik Prince ASLA - Northeastern University
Erik has over ten years of profession experience practicing in the San Francisco Bay Area, Boston and New York City. He holds a BS in Landscape Architecture from Colorado State University and graduated with distinction from the Harvard Graduate School of Design with a Masters of Landscape Architecture where he received the Jacob Weidenman Prize for design excellence. Erik's interest in the design and construction of urban furniture is demonstrated through his experience as a designer and project manager for award winning projects at Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Tom Leader Studio and Stoss Landscape Urbanism.

Jane Hutton CSLA - Harvard Graduate School of Design
Jane Hutton is a landscape architect and Assistant Professor in Landscape Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where she is Director of the Materials Collection in the Frances Loeb Design Library. Her research and teaching focus on the expanded consequences of materials used in construction. Hutton is a co-founding editor of the journal Scapegoat: Architecture, Landscape, Political Economy.

Sarah Gluck and Robyne Kassen - Urban Movement Design
Urban Movement Design is an interdisciplinary design firm who’s prime intention is to problem solve the building of our new world that is upon us. We work under the premise of Human Sustainability, and believe in the power of collaboration and the joining of forces to promote true innovation, which is where change lies. There is nothing new under the sun, only the power of collaboration breeds innovation. Urban Movement Design’s founders, both trained in architecture and various movement therapies and modalities, encourage team members and collaboration within all other disciplines. We consider our work a partnership from beginning to end, with client, user, fabricators and builders.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES