

Questions of scale sensitivity, experience and branding culture in and beyond Hans Christian Andersen's House

Annette Svaneklink Jakobsen¹, Anders V. Munch¹, Fátima Pombo²

The article explores how scale, experience and branding design culture are balanced and argues that the museum of Hans Christian Andersen was created with a sensitivity towards different scales that form the relations with its contexts. How such scale sensitivity is connected to the materiality and experiences of the space is analysed through theories by Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Celia Lury. The design of the new house was inspired by experiential qualities found in Andersen's fairy tales. Instead of giving answers, the fairy tales provoke questions and leave the reader to wonder about the meaning. (Figure 1). This performative aspect of Andersen's work was a source of inspiration in the spatial design of the museum and garden and key to a translation from literary to phenomenological experiences. The visitor is involved in the intertwining of content, material substance, shape, texture, colour, light, sound that by coalescing together, create the environment's temperament or atmosphere. Thus, the intention was to set up architectural spaces and exhibition installations that

provoke questions by confronting differences and performatively *do as* in Andersen's fairy tales, instead of providing an institutional and curatorial version of truth *about* the author and his work. The museum complex consists of primarily round building volumes reaching above and below ground level. The multilevel garden flows between and on top of the building volumes. (Figure 2). The architecture and the urban garden form a focal point in the exhibition design but are also central elements in a larger transformation project in Odense. With a new museum, the Hans Christian Andersen's House, the Danish city Odense has intensified the relations between the 19th century author and son of the city and the architectural spaces of today. The museum opened in 2021 but has drawn much attention since 2016 when Kengo Kuma & Associates were announced winners of the competition for this new house of fairy tales. The combination of Andersen, a cherished author read worldwide, and Kuma, a world-famous architect, seemed a perfect match to secure attention from a wider public and attract local and international visitors.

¹ – Department of Media, Design, Education and Cognition, University of Southern Denmark.

² – ID+ & Department of Communication and Art, University of Aveiro.

FIGURE 1

The fairy tale Nightingale by Hans Christian Andersen.

FIGURE 2

A view towards the underground 'secret' garden from the outdoor café area.

