

Sat-B3: The Promise of Water?

Join Herbert Dreiseitl in his examination of strategies for balancing human needs and natural systems to avoid regional conflict and sustain life on Earth. Beyond the basic needs of adequate water for drinking, sanitation, agriculture, and biodiversity is a need to integrate nature, culture, art, and economics through innovation and discovery. It is the privilege and social responsibility of landscape architects and regional/urban planners to protect our planet for future generations through water-sensitive design.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand how water informs, influences, and transforms our lives.
- Explore how water capital shapes global water use policy.
- Examine how designing with water in urban space evokes intense emotion.



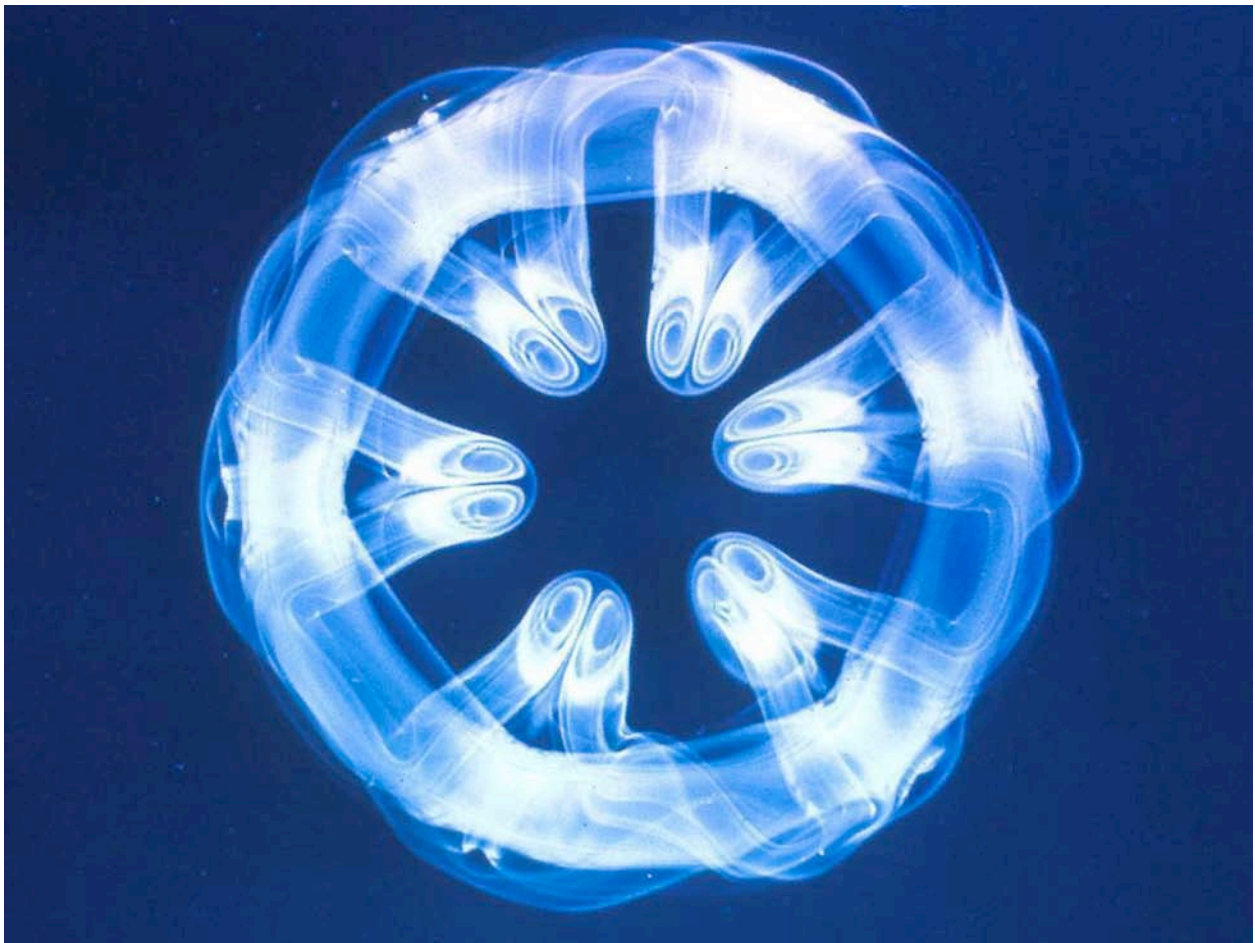
OUTLINE

Water is for me the most fascinating element in the whole world – it is constantly in motion and in a state of transformation, yet remains a constant of equilibrium. Creating balance and equilibrium between extremes, this is what water does. Whether in the regulation and moderation of extreme temperatures, the power of moving salts between states of solution and precipitation, in the shaping of landscapes or in our bodies – in all these areas water is the main facilitator.

Let us see and observe the beauty and potential of water before we try to solve problems

One of the most exciting memories of my childhood was playing behind the backyard of our house at a bank of a stream. The water was my joy that I did share with my friends. I believe that it was my love to this element that took me to Art and Landscape Architecture as an adult.

The water of this stream was not always smooth; sometimes it was full of violence when I stood respectfully in some distance – but still with curiosity. I loved to create flooding and small disasters by clocking pipes behind the farmhouse on a steep mountain in the Alps. All of that “playing” gave me a first glance of understanding its character – a necessary basis for any intervention.



As Leonardo da Vinci did, we will have a closer look at the phenomenon of water

When I started to work with water I first felt a deep awestruck: Surprising, sensitive, dramatic, powerful, loud and silent, balancing, life supporting and destroying, this is water.

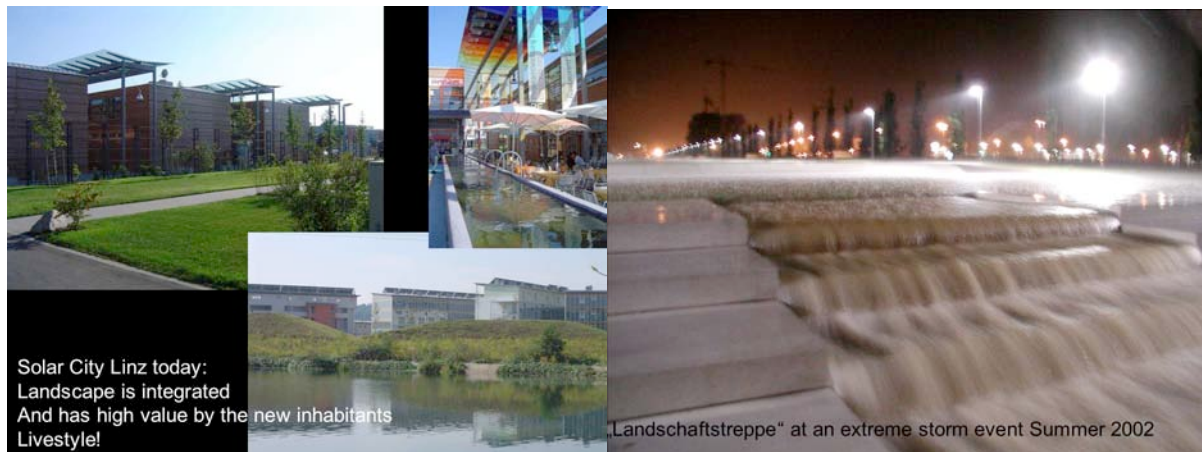
If we want to work environment-responsible and future-focused we need to understand this high dynamic and lively substance not just by facts, intellect and analytic data but with an artistic perspective, with our feelings, emotions, our spirit and our brain.

The impact of water on life conditions

Only during the last decades we are getting an awareness of the immense influence that water has on climate change, the change of agricultural conditions and food, of plants and the animal life and finally, most drastically on the conditions of the human lives. Today we are confronted with very challenging situations that we ourselves have created out of a lack of understanding. Engineering solutions are not the full answer. In fact we have to search for more and a deeper understanding of the needs of a healthy water world.

A hidden architect of our cities

Although water is one of the most dominant influencing elements of our planet, it is often hidden in our technical oriented world, in our cities. This is even more surprising as the water infrastructure is informing and shaping the cities, mostly beneath the pavements and streets. These phenomena did not change: We can study it in the history of urban settlements and we can watch this today. With regard to the future of our cities we should be aware that water would get even more relevant.



Designing water features

In this session we will explore basic elements of innovative and high quality Water Design: Starting with an overview on simple fountains in villages and small towns we continue with examples of major cities water-elements in public places and plazas. In all these cases water is the core of the design process. I will show models and water experiments to create these features. Such models are our daily work as we often use scale models in our studios.



Let Water teach us to be a Waterscape Designer

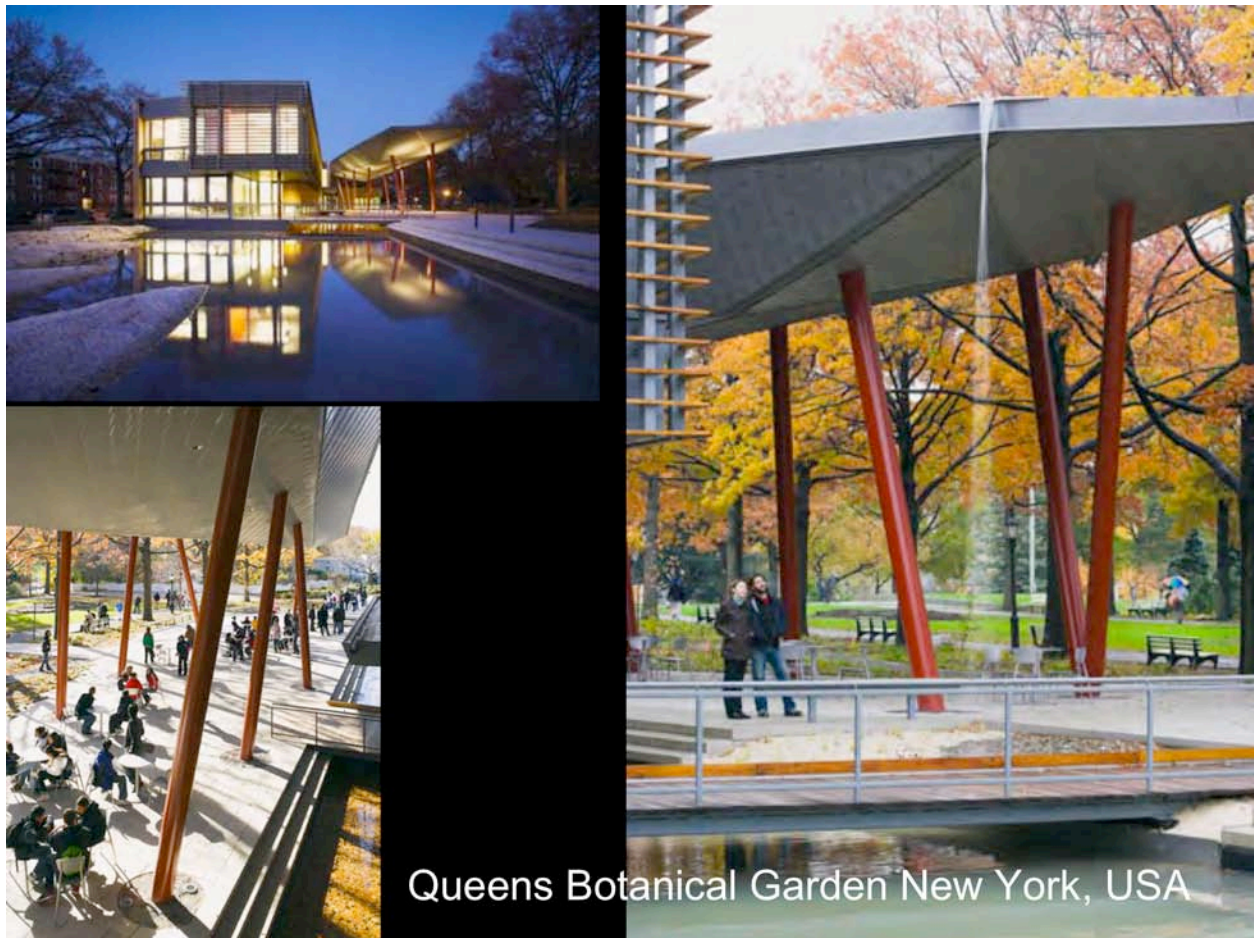
All the examples we will discuss are based on a long history of research, experience and experimentation. Our waterscape projects always start in a workshop by modeling with flowing water, shaping structures and streambeds with clay and other materials, often at a scale of 1:1.

Instead of abstract musings, the starting point of our work approach is sensual experience and observation.

Experiment with water, play with water artfully and delightfully, study water. Learn from water.

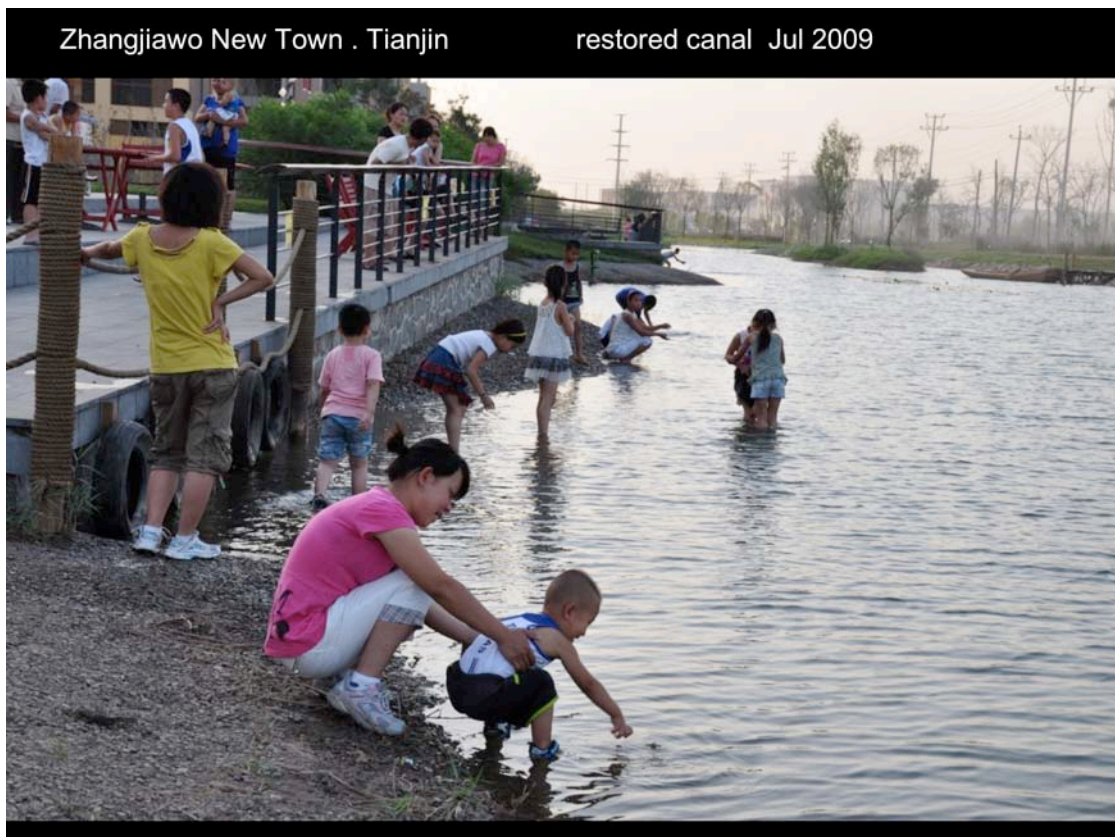
It is always surprising how water acts in, for example, the model of an artistic water sculpture or the model of a river that has to be restored using bio-engineering techniques. It is the water itself with its eddies, flow forms, its internal dynamic that shows us the way and often provides unexpected answers.

Many projects within our Atelier have been developed in this manner, where we have tried first to be attentive to the language of water and have tried to understand it. This method of awareness is applicable not just in physical models but also in urban planning, landscape architecture and bioengineering projects.



Ecological Urbanization with a hope for better water solutions

With the increase of many unexpected water crisis even in western cities by the end of the last century there is a urgent need for better solutions. We will discuss representative projects such as the urban waters at the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin (Germany) and residential urban stormwater design at the Hannover World Expo 2000 (Germany) or the Solar City in Linz (Austria), where the awareness of water was the basis of our working method. Creative projects that are successful in the long term always exist within a greater supportive context. As we work, water is developed in an individual and lively manner such as is water itself, as well as within its greater (sometimes regional, sometimes global) environmental context and within the – sometimes strained – frames of polarity typical of a city. As helpful as instruments such as LEED certificates are in motivating investors and politicians, they do not necessarily create good architecture and do not guarantee sustainable projects that can stand the test of time. Even as today eco-cities are being planned in abundance and sustainability is preached from every pulpit, unfortunately we discover that these terms are sometimes void of content and that the concept of what an ‘eco-city’ should be turns out to be diffuse.



Especially in fast growing urban cities in India, Asia and South America the water issue is extremely important and critical. It is urgent to have clear targets and best-practice examples.

The challenges of the near future will be locally and globally more acute. A healthy management and creative integration of natural resources into our living environment are life-defining for the further existence of our world.



In this session we will explore long term solutions that work with the holistic aspects of water. This includes technology, bioengineering and integrated architectural solutions as well as participation and an emotional and cultural diversity in our modern societies.

The Promise of Water is this integrated approach where art and science, technology and design, practical solutions and spiritual wisdom work together.

FEATURED SPEAKER

Herbert Dreiseitl, Int'l. ASLA

An internationally renowned, sculptor, artist, and interdisciplinary planner, with 30 years of experience, Herbert is founder of Atelier Dreiseitl. Inspired by water, Herbert seeks to awaken a new understanding of sustainability, using public art intrinsically within overall landscape planning solutions, bringing universal themes of ecology and well-being to light. He has realised ground-breaking contemporary designs in the fields of urban hydrology, water design, stormwater management, urban planning, and landscape architecture. Herbert is active in lecturing worldwide and his work is widely published.

