



‘Landscaping is about feelings, not visions’

From a parking space in western Copenhagen to a barren agricultural plot in Russia, for the two architects behind VEGA Landskab there is no space too small or too big to become an aesthetic, social or biological asset to its surroundings.

By Signe Hansen | Main photo: Line Kjær

Guided by an innate understanding of the importance of landscaping in architecture, Anne Dorthe Vestergaard and Anne Galmar have spent a decade exploring the myriad of possibilities within their chosen field. “Our interest in landscaping goes all the way back to when we met each other at Aarhus School of Architecture; we always thought about the surroundings, how to connect the building to the landscape, and that’s what brought us together,” says Galmar who heads up VEGA’s Copenhagen

office while Vestergaard heads up the office in Aarhus. The two parts of the firm were founded six years ago and, since then, the two friends have focused solely on landscaping in all shapes and sizes.

From north Jutland to north Russia

One of VEGA’s signature projects is found in the municipality of Rebild. The north Jutland countryside has, perhaps slightly surprisingly, become the home of a new skateboarding hub, the Forest Jump. The

aptnly named skate track is part of a landscaping project for Skørping Skole, which borders the large forest of Rold Skov. VEGA’s landscape design aims to blur the borders between the forest and the school. “Even though the forest has always been next to the school, it has been more like a wall around it; our project has been to open the borders, and that’s why we’ve created the skate court right on the edge of the forest,” says Vestergaard and adds: “It’s funny because a lot of people associate the skate milieu with big cities, but actually there is a very dedicated skateboarding community around north Jutland, and people have been coming from all over – as far away as Belgium and Norway – to try the new skate court.”

Right, from top to bottom: Despite its small size, the Instant City Life box gives users an instant feeling of being in touch with nature. Photo: Naja Viscor

Located at the edge of Rold Skov, VEGA Landskab's skateboarding course has become a gathering point for skate enthusiasts from near and far. Photo: Henriette Klausen

The founders of VEGA Landskab, Anne Dorthe Vestergaard and Anne Galmar, have been passionate about landscaping ever since their first years at Aarhus School of Architecture. Photo: Nana Reimers

The Rebuild project led to another school project, the Smart School Meadows, in north Russia. The forthcoming project, which was won in partnership with the Aarhus-based CEBRA Architecture, will incorporate farm animals, playgrounds, vegetable gardens and rainwater lakes into the school area. All is to be created from the beginning as the project is currently set on a 21-hectare former beet field with nothing but weeds on it. "But the task is the same: to invite the rest of the world inside the school and make sure that the borders between the school and its surroundings are challenged," says Galmar.

When it feels right

Not all of VEGA's projects are of that grand a scale, however. In fact, the diversity in size and scale is one of the things which the two architects enjoy about their field. Thus, to prove that achieving a great change does not necessarily rely on scale, the team created the ten-square-metre Instant City Life box. The box, which fits into a regular parking space, is a miniature version of a garden with all that that entails: secluded benches, flowers and vegetables. Despite its small dimensions, the box gives the user an instant feeling of being connected to the earth and nature, and creating that feeling is exactly what it is all about, says Vestergaard: "Our projects are more about feeling than seeing. We want you to feel comfortable and at ease – and there should be a playful element too." Galmar continues: "Yes, it's unimportant for us to put a specific signature on the project. It is more about asking the users – the children, workers or inhabitants – what they need, and then work with our tools to make it a better place for them. That's what it's about, not what we think might look nice!"

For more information, please visit:
www.vegalandskab.dk



FACTS:

Anne Dorthe Vestergaard and Anne Galmar are both graduates of Aarhus School of Architecture, graduating in 1999 and 2000 respectively, and have worked with landscaping ever since.

VEGA Landskab has departments in Aarhus (headed up by Anne Dorthe Vestergaard) and Copenhagen (headed up by Anne Galmar).

The two departments were originally founded as separate firms, which officially joined in 2013.

In 2014 the firm changed name to VEGA Landskab – combining the first letters of the founders' surnames.

In 2013 VEGA Landskab received the Danish Arts Foundation's one-year working grant.

Vega Landskab employs eight architects and support staff.

