

WOMAD 2011

Date: July 2011
 Location: WOMAD, Chippenham, UK
 ASF Team: A. Edwards
 Partners: Fourth Door, Tangentfield
 Donors: N/A
 Project type: Exhibition & Event

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

A team of architects, engineers, timber framers and builders were charged with coordinating 4 teams of volunteers and students to design and build 4 stages in 4 days for performers at the World Music and Dance Festival in 2011. All materials used were reclaimed and scavenged or donated from local reuse centres and scrap yards. Willow was also made available, coppiced from the Charlton Park Estate. With a very limited pallet of materials and minimal time Andy Edwards worked with Bill Flinn of the Centre for Disaster and Emergency Practice (CENDEP) at Oxford Brookes University to facilitate a team of 16 architecture to design and build the third of 4 stages which had to be interconnected in some way, yet individual in character.



GOAL ACHIEVED

The result was a fantastic series of performance spaces which enabled artists and musicians to transition from ground level up to a high platform, interacting with the audience and linking the dramatically different levels of each neighbouring stage.



METHODOLOGY OF WORK

The group worked to first collectively define for themselves what the nature of a temporary performance space should be and a series of key words which would encapsulate the final design. The various materials were introduced and used to create constraints in the possibilities for form, scale and character. This created an exciting tension between aspirations and constraints which the students worked through proactively. The design process was almost entirely organic, favouring the method of 1:1 testing of ideas and 'sketching in wood' rather than adhering to the limits of the sketch books and conventional technical drawings.



FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

The process was lively and fun and introduced to many the value of a design process rooted in real, practical constraints where limited time, resources, skills and time had to be aligned with aspirations for ambitious function and beautiful outcome. These lessons are relevant and directly transferable in every future context and serve as a valuable counterpoint to the typically safe, detached and didactic learning environment of the design studio. Tangentfield have developed an excellent programme for these workshops which will hopefully continue for many years to come.