

The Architecture of Universal Beauty

AUB Seminars¹ with
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The Architecture of Universal Beauty (AUB)

About AUB

The *Architecture of Universal Beauty* is a *Spiritual Research & Schooling Initiative* concerned with Art & Architecture as potential forces for “*Truth, Beauty and Goodness*” in the world. It is based on the anthroposophical view of the Universe researched and taught by Rudolf Steiner.

AUB is concerned with theoretical foundations, artistic perception as well as practical application. The courses offered will explore such questions as:

1. How do spiritual contents manifest in physical form?
2. How can we artistically raise to a higher level, what is merely functional and utilitarian?
3. What is “Universal Beauty”?
4. What is the Language of Form and the Creative Process at work in Nature? What are the formative signatures of the 4 Ethers and how do they inform our architectural and artistic practice?
5. How and why does Universal Beauty affect us on a deeper level?
6. What is the nature of artistic inspiration and by what processes does it lead to inspired works of art?
7. How can works of Art & Architecture, in R. Steiner’s words, have a role in “*transforming evil into good*” and “*pouring a spiritual fluid into our hearts and souls*”²?

² R. Steiner, *Ways to a new style of Architecture*, p.60

AUB Principles

1. Spiritual Universe:

Contrary to the assumption that Life arose out of matter, from a spiritual perspective it is the other way round: matter arises out of life forces, which arise out of spirit. Just like ice condenses out of water, so matter condenses out of a living, spiritual universe. The physical universe therefore is the creation of a much larger, underlying spiritual universe. Matter is condensed spirit substance. Form is condensed spirit movement.

2. As Above, so Below:

The spiritual universe is governed by multiple hierarchies of higher dimensional beings working through certain universal laws that apply both, on a spiritual *and* physical level *and* on all magnitudes of existence. In the ancient Hermetic tradition this phenomenon was described in the saying: “*As above, so below*” or: “*the microcosm is a reflection of the macrocosm*”. In modern times the same phenomenon has been described as a *holographic* universe. The analogy of the hologram is an appropriate one since the holographic plate contains a picture of the whole in everyone of its smallest parts. The principle of “As above, so below” allows us to make comparisons between the macrocosmic and microcosmic processes of manifestation. It is the principle through which “universality” enters into our inquiry.

3. Universal Beauty:

Whilst “*beauty*” in a general sense may lie in the eyes of the beholder, “*Universal Beauty*” is “universal” because of its affinity with certain laws of the spiritual universe. These laws, however, are not to be found in mechanical or mathematical formulae but in such realms of spirit that are of a deeply moral (as different from moralistic) nature and which we associate with the qualities of “*the Good, the True and the Beautiful*”. *Universal Beauty* therefore arises whenever there is a successful interaction between the mechanical, material world below and the moral, spiritual world above. To a certain extent this is what we see in nature.

4. Nature and Art:

We experience examples of *Universal Beauty* every time we admire the beauty in nature. The beauty in nature is “universally” sought and acknowledged by most people, unlike manmade objects, whose beauty is the subject of much discussion and disagreement. There are however so called “great works of art” - few and far between - which transcend fashion, which have stood the test of time and which are regarded as beautiful by most people. It is their *universal appeal* which great

works of art have in common with the phenomena of nature. Both can have an uplifting effect on our souls. Both are universally beautiful, but not in the same way. Nature's aims are different, which is why copying her produces no such effects.

5. **Transformative Effects:**

The uplifting effects we can experience when contemplating great art or when we are surrounded by un-spoilt nature are connected with the experience of "*Universal Beauty*". *Universal Beauty* is universal because it bears within itself an echo of something greater than us, which has the power to touch us in our innermost humanity. This is the spiritually transformative power and potential of *Universal Beauty*. There can however be no such spiritual effects without spiritual causes, which is why *Universal Beauty* can only be "universal" through its relationship to spirit.

6. **Bridge between Spirit and Matter:**

Our artistic relationship to spirit cannot be one way. Whilst there can be no doubt that true artistic inspiration comes "from above", it needs to be met with our will, our understanding and our action and purposes from below. The point of transformation is not to *channel* what comes from above but to *raise* that which exists in its un-transformed state from below. The artistic process therefore comprises two tasks: to inspire from above and to raise from below. This is what builds the artistic bridge between spirit and matter. To "*inspire from above*" is connected with the type of "*Creative Process*" we strive towards, "*to raise from below*" is connected with the "*Language of Form*" we can learn from nature. "*Language of Form*" and "*Creative Process*" therefore form the artistic link between spirit and matter.

7. **ARCHITECTURE OF UNIVERSAL BEAUTY:**

The common theme underlying all AUB courses is "*the transformative power of Universal Beauty*", which in turn creates the potential for the forms of art & architecture becoming forces for "*Truth, Beauty and Goodness*" in the world. The method by which we may approach such goals lies in our appreciation of the spiritual nature of the *Creative Process* and the study of the *Language of Form* spoken by nature, which above all is the study of etheric forces. The architecture of the *Creative Process* and the etheric nature of the *Language of Form* are not to be misunderstood as a set of generic recipes posing artistic restrictions; just like music theory, while revealing the architecture behind music, is neither substitute nor hindrance to creativity. Both, *Language of Form* and *Creative Process* are but two different sides of the same coin. Together they form the bridge towards Universal Beauty and the artistic transformation of our architectural environment.

AUB Seminars

AUB was originally taught as three separate one year part time courses, which is however no longer practical. The seminars, depending on their length, represent concentrated summaries of the yearly courses.

- Classes can be held in either English or German
- The seminars are both theoretic and practical, allowing for presentations and open discussion, including artistic exercises and practical/architectural applications.
- The recommended workshop length is 7 days. This could be shortened or extended, or split into several weekend workshops, depending on time availability and local needs.
- If you are interested in hosting a seminar or workshop in your area refer to the section below.

Organizing a Seminar in your Area:

AUB Seminars are regularly held in Melbourne, Australia, and in 2016 are planned for Dornach, Switzerland; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

If you are interested in attending an AUB seminar but are unable to travel to the above locations, you may be interested to facilitate a seminar in your locality. Particularly if there may be other interested architects, artists, or students, it might be preferable to host a seminar locally rather than travelling long distances or to other countries. To organize a seminar you would need:

- at least 6 – 12 or more other interested participants (the bigger the class the easier to meet expenses)
- an appropriate venue
- cover Johannes' transport and accommodation costs (billeting is fine) plus a tuition fee that is appropriate to your circumstances and local rates and conditions
- communicate with Johannes to check dates and discuss the program

Seminar Options:

I. The Architecture of Universal Beauty

This is the foundational AUB Course which introduces the topic of “*Universal Beauty*” and “*morally transformative Architecture*”. The central themes of the workshop are the 4 Elements, their relationship to the 4 Ethers as well as their associated form signatures and resulting language of form.

The course also introduces Rudolf Steiner’s cosmology and the macrocosmic, spiritual dimension behind form creation and outlines the transformative structure by which function and utility are raised to a higher level. This will be relevant to both, artists and architects and anyone interested in exploring form creation through a spiritual paradigm.

Upon successful completion of this course, participants will have gained practical and theoretic insights on the following questions:

1. How can art & architecture, in R. Steiner’s words: “... *teach us how to love*” and...”*pour a spiritual fluid into the hearts and souls of human beings?*”
2. How does “morally transformative” art & architecture differ from other forms of art & architecture and what are its methods and aims?
3. What are the archetypal qualities of the 4 Elements and how are these related to the spiritual nature of the human being and our cosmic past and future?
4. What are Life Forces and how can we recognize them within ourselves and in Nature?
5. How does the dance between physical and etheric forces come to expression in the forms of Nature and in the man-made forms of art & architecture?
6. What is the method by which “Human Warmth” is incorporated into our creations and why is warmth the foundation for everything?
7. How can “Light” be transformed into a vehicle for creating “truthful/authentic” spaces which at the same time are also “interesting” and “awakening”.
8. How do “Musicality” and “Levity” express themselves in the forms of Nature and how can we incorporate such forces into our own creations?
9. What are the core ingredients for “individuality” and “wholeness”, both in living Nature and in our artistic creations?
10. How can “wholeness” provide us with a framework for “Universal” Beauty?

II. The Architecture of the Creative Process

This seminar further explores R. Steiner's picture of the macrocosmic process of creation and how this is mirrored in the microcosm, such as in plant growth and in our human acts of creation.

The key question is how to find and recognize the spiritual essences which stand behind both the phenomena of nature, as well as great works of art, and learn to appreciate the unique stages by which a spiritual content "descends" and manifest physically from a formless to a formed state. We will also look at practical examples from Nature, Art & Architecture.

Upon successful completion of this course participants will have gained practical and theoretic insights in the following questions:

1. How do the stages of plant growth mirror the stages of cosmic evolution and what can we learn from this in the way we create?
2. How do nature's creations differ from human creations and what do they have in common?
3. What are the two 4-step processes of the cosmic creative act and how does 4+4 add up to 7 ?
4. How are "fractals" connected with the ancient esoteric notion of "as above, so below"?
5. If morally transformative art & architecture touches us on a spiritual level, where and how are we to find the spiritual causes that are able to produce such effects?
6. Which qualities characterize the inner processes by which we allow ourselves to be touched by spiritual causes?
7. What are the stages by which spiritual causes descend into physical form and how can we recognize them?
8. What is the process of transformation by which matter is raised to a higher level and what makes it universal?
9. What are the practical results connected with spiritually aware processes of creation?
10. What is the aim, the language and the process of morally transformative art & architecture?

III. The Language of Formative Forces of the Planets and Zodiac

Please Note:

This seminar is currently in preparation. It relies on the collaboration of an interested, participating Eurythmist in the local area.

After exploring the language of form connected with “*etheric forces*”, the next point of focus are “*formative forces*.” This workshop looks at the difference between etheric and formative forces and seeks to map the formative gestures of the planets and signs of the Zodiac. Ernst Marti compared the 12 Zodiac signs and their Eurhythmy gestures with 12 different gestures of plant growth.

Looking at the various associated gestures and relationships we try to gain an experience of the archetypal quality and underlying formative impulse behind different star signs and how such qualities and gestures come to expression in the realm of Art & Architecture. The nature of this work is ongoing and the length of the workshop will depend on the degree of depth and number of star signs and planets being explored.

Upon successful completion of this course participants will have gained practical and theoretic insights on the following questions:

1. What is the difference between “etheric” and “formative” forces?
2. How can we experience the three force fields that create our sense perceptible reality?
3. What can vowels and consonants teach us about the formative qualities of the planets and the Zodiac?
4. How are the Zodiac gestures mirrored in the 12 archetypal stages of plant growth?
5. What can formative forces teach us about life, colour, tone, form and substance?
6. What is the essential formative gesture behind each of the 12 signs of the Zodiac?
7. What is the essential formative gesture behind each of the 7 planets?
8. How can the forces of nature practically guide our artistic forms of expression?
9. How do nature’s ways and our artistic creations differ and what do they have in common?
10. What is the aim, the language and the process of morally transformative art & architecture?

AUB Tutors

AUB was founded by Johannes Schuster, who in collaboration with his partner Sue is offering seminars and courses in Australia, Europe, Asia and South America. The principles connected with *AUB* also form the heart of Johannes' work as *Biosculptural/Architectural* Consultant. (<http://biosculpturalarchitecture.com/consulting/>)



Johannes and Sue originally trained as Waldorf teachers. Their experience in education and involvement with anthroposophy goes back more than 30 years, when they were part of the group of founding directors of the Little Yarra Steiner School in outer Melbourne. (www.lyss.vic.edu.au)

Johannes was the founding class teacher of LYSS and as subsequent administrator he designed and project managed the school's buildings during the first two decades of its establishment phase.

Sue is a secondary trained Art teacher with broad experience in the primary and secondary schools as well as in teacher training and adult education programs in Australia and overseas.

Both Johannes and Sue's life long professional interest has been focused on the phenomena connected with etheric forces and the exploration of Nature's Language of Form, which is an expression of these forces. For Johannes this lies at the heart of his involvement with *AUB* and *Biosculptural Architecture*; for Sue it has been the inspiring source behind teaching and practicing art.



What Participants are saying:

You can sense that Johannes has been pondering this work actively for a long time and it comes through in his delivery. Nothing glib or dryly intellectual. He has lived it in his architectural work and speaks from the viewpoint of a practitioner. This work feels real. Highly recommended.

This course nourished me each and every week, encouraging me to look at the world with fresh eyes, ...Each week was exciting, refreshing, thought-provoking and nourishing!

You feel like you are part of important, current research, and have the possibility of transforming parts of your own artistic practice with it. That makes it exciting and relevant for me.

I felt this schooling to be modern day Initiation which takes us way beyond our customary concepts and percepts.

I have worked with art and form nearly all of my life. Johannes' classes have given me a clearer perspective and understanding of formative forces and a new way of looking at nature.

I feel I am now able to perceive a more subtle reality more clearly than before this course, and the world is ever more fascinating! I'm looking forward to more.

Throughout the year I have found the content to be inspiring,. moving.. and fascinating.

I find the course refreshingly interactive and informal.....I feel there is the possibility of discovering something new.....and that makes the course alive!



Schwenk, *Sensitive Chaos*, Set of Vortices