WEST 8 AND MVVA

MVVA

MVVA is a landscape architecture firm that creates sustainable places across a wide range of landscape scales, from city parks to gardens.

Founded in 1982, MVVA maintains offices in Brooklyn and Cambridge, Massachusetts. Its earliest works were basically gardens, plazas, and other smaller institutional projects. Only in the next decade, they expanded to a scale in which it was possible to achieve an “ecological urbanism”.

The most influence in the formation of the firm was the work of American earth work artists. They provided a powerful model against the reductive and functional design of postwar modernism in American Landscape architecture.

Van Valkenburgh's leadership of MVVA is an extension of his passion for landscape as a living artistic. Having spent his adult life in and New York, he has combined his love of cities and the energy of urban living with the lessons of his childhood on a dairy farm, where economy of means was prioritized.

WEST 8

West 8 is an international office for urban design and landscape architecture, founded in 1987. They have extensive experience in large-scale urban design, landscape interventions, waterfront projects, parks, squares and gardens.

West 8 develops projects relating contemporary culture, urban identity, architecture, public space and engineering within one design.

According to Adriaan Gueze, founder of West 8, “Nothing is so culturally determined as the perception of landscape, Dutch people believe you can make nature. English people believe that nature exists -- it was always there, and we have to take care of it.”

But how are those two firms related to each other?

We can see several tendencies in MVVA and West 8 work in the last decade and a half, as it responds to changes in the conditions of the practice of Landscape architecture. Both have a very similar response to the 21st Century Challenges, concerned with the protection and regeneration of the natural and cultural environments in distinctly urban settings.

Urban land in need of remediation and reconstruction

During the last two decades, major Americans cities have been in transition from industrial to service economies, leaving behind urban land in need of remediation and reconstruction.

Brooklyn Bridge Park is an ambitious project to revitalize more than 2.1 km of Brooklyn waterfront with open spaces that return the area to public use and create a sustainable multi-use civic space.
West 8 also works with projects that try to restore the lost balance between nature, city and men. These types of projects are transforming a “lost site” into a sustainable one.

For example, Governors Island has a long military history, despite its central location close to Manhattan, Governors Island was invisible to New Yorkers for two centuries. They propose a dramatic transformation of this once-abandoned island, including the restoration of the historic district and a new park.

**Multidisciplinary approach and Technology**

Working closely with urban planners, architects, engineers, and ecologists, MVVA has emerged as an innovative leader of multidisciplinary design teams.

In 1994, the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust commissioned MVVA to create a riverfront park bordering Pittsburgh’s Downtown. The challenges of the site became the strengths of the final design, vastly different elevations and periodic flooding, led MVVA to create an innovative technical response for the park.

Over the last 25 years West 8 has established itself as a leading practice with an international team of 70 architects, urban designers, landscape architects and industrial engineers.

‘Rotterdam central station’ has been redeveloped to be part of the European train network. West 8 is involved in a team of architects, urban designers, transport engineers and landscape architects.

**Intense Materiality**

The balance between nature and humanity is generated by the fundamental belief of both firm’s practice, which is to create places where people feel embraced, welcomed and comfortable.

Teardrop Park is a public park in downtown Manhattan. It was designed in collaboration with play experts from the Natural Learning Initiative to allow city children to interact with natural materials such as water, plants, rock, and sand.

The West 8 approach to landscape has translated into a fearless use of shapes, scales and radical twists, as seen in the wavy boardwalk on Toronto's Central Waterfront. The Simcoe WaveDeck is as artistic as it is functional. Inspired by the shorelines of Ontario’s Great Lakes, It is unusual and dynamic.

**Bibliography**


Part of MVVA’s response was to recognize the inherent urbanity of the site and to anticipate the space’s future need to provide for a diverse population. The landscape architecture firm says they took snippets of inspiration from their Union Square plan, a well-recognized and heavily-trafficked part of New York’s East side. The area is a stop along several subway lines and is home to a farmers’ market that takes place four out of seven days out of the week. The other finalists for the competition included: Work AC with Balmori Associates, West 8 with Mathews Nielson, Gustafson Guthrie Nichol with Allied Works Architecture, and Hargreaves Associates with Ten Arquitectos. Hudson Yards Development Corporation. Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates. If a 500 MVA, 11 kV 3-phase generator at 50 Hz feeds through a transfer impedance of $(0+0.605) \Omega/\text{phase}$, an infinite voltage also at 11 kV, then the maximum steady state power transfer on the base of 500 MVA and 11 kV is:

\[ P_{\text{max}} = \frac{E^2}{X} \]

where:
- $E =$ Sending side voltage
- $V =$ Receiving side voltage
- $X =$ Reactance of the line

Maximum steady state power = $11 \times 11 / 0.605 = 200 \ \text{MW}$

Maximum steady state power in pu = $200 / 500 = 0.4$ pu.

For 800 MJ stored energy in the rotor at synchronous speed, what is the inertia constant $H$ for a 50 Hz, four MVVA and Adjaye’s team also includes Utile, Mobility in Chain, Emmanuel Pratt, and local partners LimnoTech, PEA and NTH Consultants. It was selected from a shortlist that included James Corner Field Operations, Hood Design Studio with Diller Scofidio + Renfro, and Gustafson Guthrie Nichol. Related story. The West Riverfront Park forms the second phase of the project...