

TOVE SÖDERBERG

SCORCHED GROUND  
ARCHIVE OF A LANDSCAPE



DESIGN FOR ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

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The thesis investigates architectural design for a transforming landscape in a hinterland context. The intention of the thesis is to design an archive of a landscape and to argue for the cultural heritage held in the forest. Bergslagen has been inhabited as primarily a farming, forestry and farming area for centuries. In 2014 sparks from a forestry vehicle caused a forest fire which in a week would spread to become the largest single fire in Sweden in modern times. Beyond the devastation of property, the fire changed the landscape to the extent that people who have lived, worked, and been in the forest for generations no longer recognize it. The archive is placed in the burnt landscape left after the forest fire. From the idea of the forest as a room, as a frame, and as a landscape, the intention of the archive was to collect the knowledge, memories, and stories of the forest - before, during and after the fire - in one location. The choice of a rural location was made as a comment on where society chooses to manifest collective memory and commemorate events in built form, with priority skewed towards the urban. Anchoring

design choices in contextual analysis, the architectural goal was a building with a narrative that would shift from a structure originating in the burnt landscape into a space that belongs in the re-grown forest.

The combination of a program that inherently relates to the cultural context with a site described as an “unrecognisable landscape” was at the core of the thesis. These two components allowed the thesis to address the challenge of how architecture relates to place and context on an additional level beyond topography/site. The desired impact of the thesis is to contribute to knowledge about and care regarding architecture in non-urban places. Using architectural design strategies combined with an ethnological approach, the building belongs in and has a connection to its place while residing in a landscape unfamiliar to locals and visitors alike.

Key words: archive, transforming landscape, narrative architecture, cultural heritage environment, place