

# Beauty

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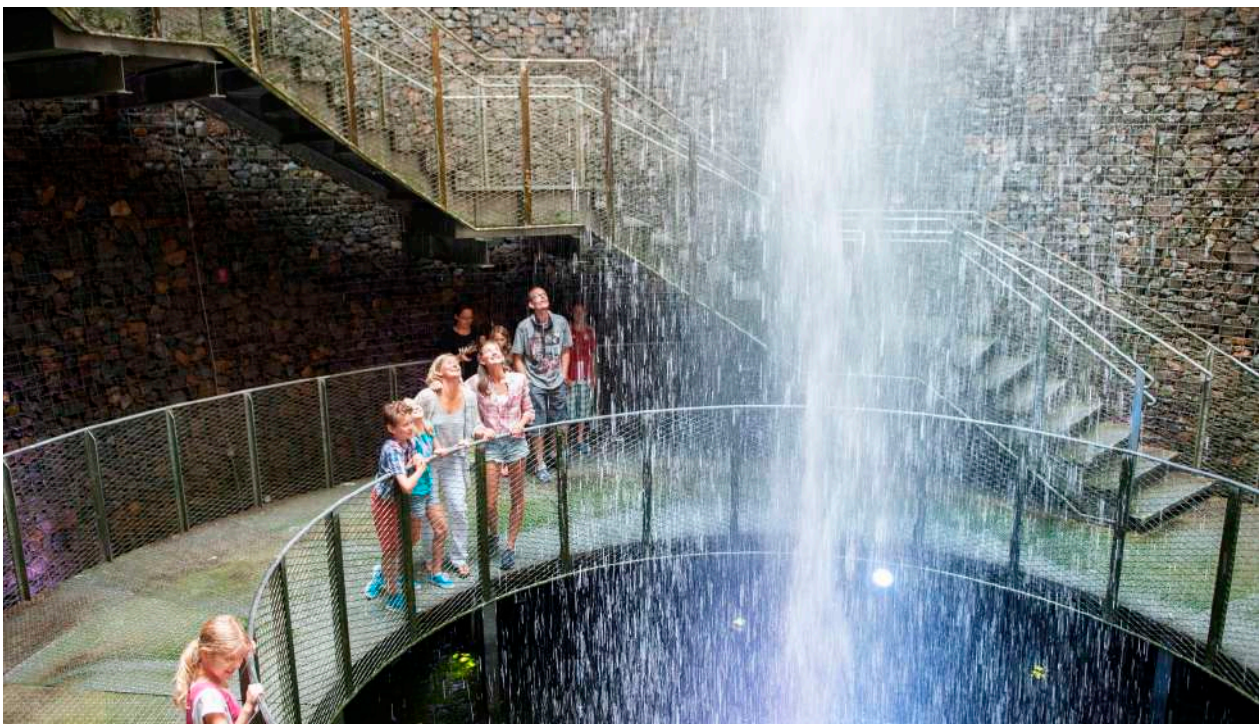
Research by Marlies Doesburg

*How to design spaces to experience the beauty, wonder and mystery of nature? How to construct aesthetic experiences?*

The spotting of fireflies during my holiday was the start of this research. I learned the difference between beautification, which is just decoration and experiencing beauty, a potential life-transforming experience. The moment people experience beauty they forget about themselves and are reconnected with their surroundings. If people feel connected to nature they will

also take better care of it. It's a multi-sensory experience that includes the entire body and all the senses. Landscape architects can construct spaces to experience beauty. Different types of beauty vary between generations and cultures. I learned for instance about Wabi-Sabi, a Japanese aesthetic, that sees beauty in the imperfect and incomplete. A new type of beauty, Super- or hyper nature, creates new artificial nature that exaggerates a natural element or process. For instance the Wasserkrater in Germany, the exploding water source is artificial but still evokes a natural experience.

By reading literature and studying references I created a toolbox that I as a designer can use to construct an aesthetic experience. For instance, Juxtaposition, where you place two opposites next to each other. Depending on the location different tools can be implemented to create a site-specific design.



Wasserkrater in Aqua Magica Park in Bad Oeynhausen by Agence Ter Landscape Architects (P. Hübbe, n.d.)



1. Juxtaposition



2. Thresholds



3. Position visitor



4. Movement



5. Underfoot material



6. Displacement



7. Exaggeration



8. Leave room for imagination



9. Manipulate time



10. Show decay



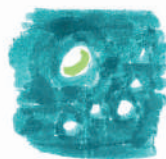
11. Trigger senses



12. Reflection



13. Add clues of care



14. Create darkness

# Living Lights

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Design Project by Marlies Doesburg

Living lights is about experiencing the beauty of the temporary show of fireflies. A natural phenomenon that can only be witnessed in the provinces Gelderland and Limburg in the Netherlands in June and July from 10.30 till 11.15 pm. At the city edge of Heerlen a new pedestrian route along the stream, Geleenbeek, connects six gardens that emphasize the experience of the firefly.

The central European firefly, *Lampyris splendidula*, lives 2-3 weeks. The females can't fly but attract the males by illuminating. The larvae live 2-3 years and eat snails. The firefly needs a sheltered, moist, and dark habitat. It can be observed in orchards, open spots in the forest, and hollow roads. The new pedestrian route connects two spots where the fireflies already exist. The fragile habitat will be strengthened by planting new trees along the stream and adding hedges along the fields.

The mosaic landscape at the doorstep of the city will be preserved and protected. The firefly can be a flagship species for the entire habitat, like the polar bear is for the north pole. By making people experience the beauty of nature, they will also take better care of it.



