

OVER YOUR CITIES GRASS WILL GROW



Sensitive light-touch upcycling of an old locomotive works.

Curated rewilding and planting for biodiversity.

Working with the past, bridging past and present. Designing landscapes with sensitivity to ecosystem.

Manifestations of an archaeological sensibility and acting-with nature [Link].

The opening in 1998 of the bridge across the Storebaelt, connecting the two biggest islands in Denmark, brought to an end the ferry business between Nyborg and Kørsor.

The old Danish State Railway workshops by the ferry landings have been turned into Nyborg Destilleri with Restaurant Remisen, while the landscaping witnesses the absence of past urban industrial transport systems with an aesthetic of return of wild plant species.

Environmental aesthetics [Link]. Green urbanism.



Steam locomotives once ran through this building.





The building fabric is kept raw and mostly uncoated, with many original details left visible. Original rail tracks remain (as they do throughout Nyborg). The spatial volume of the shed is conserved – a big indoor space. New insertions are recessive and legible against the historic shell. Copper stills are deliberately staged to be seen through the original north-facing locomotive doors—so passers-by read “production” from the street. Selected new skylights bring daylight deep inside.

The complex at Holmens Boulevard 11 was built 1865–1909 as workshops for DSB (Danish State Railways – freight locomotives and wagons) by the old Great Belt (Storebælt) ferry piers. Yellow-brick industrial architecture; the long “shed” structure survived largely intact after closure in 1998. The works also had a *rundremise* (roundhouse) with turntable (from 1890). The restaurant name “Remisen” nods to that railway history.

Past traces add to the character, the *haecceity* (hereness), the spirit of the place. The municipality also frames the project as maintaining a connection between town and harbor.



What is especially appealing about the plantings is sometimes called “New Nordic Nature” in landscape design – a blend of the New Perennial movement, ecological awareness, and climate adaptation strategies. It is both aesthetic and ethical: beauty that looks wild, but is deeply thought through, sustainable, and resilient.

One might call it a garden aesthetic of working-with nature, with the world.

Away from clipped lawns, regimented flowerbeds, and imported ornamentals, toward ecologically informed, semi-wild, biodiverse planting. Reduced mowing, wildflower meadows, and pollinator corridors.

One might note overlapping names and movements.

The New Perennial Movement

Associated with designers like Piet Oudolf (Netherlands), Henk Gerritsen, and Noel Kingsbury.

Emphasizes perennial plants, grasses, and long seasonal interest rather than short bursts of floral color.

Plantings are designed to look “naturalistic,” with plants intermixed rather than

grouped in rigid blocks.

Famous examples: the High Line in New York, Lurie Garden in Chicago, Oudolf's own garden at Hummelo.

Rewilding / Wild Urbanism

Responds to ecological concerns: biodiversity loss, pollinator decline, climate adaptation.

Gardens and parks are designed to look wild, but are carefully curated—"controlled wilderness."

Incorporates native species and ecologies, while also introducing resilient non-natives that can thrive in northern climates.

Naturalistic Planting Design

Developed especially in Germany, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. Treats planting almost like an ecological painting—layers of groundcover, mid-layer perennials, and taller grasses. The aesthetic is loose, less formal, sometimes deliberately allowing for decay (seed heads, dried grasses left standing in winter) (I recall cultural geographer David Lowenthal promoting such a garden aesthetic in a discussion at our Interpreting Archaeology conference at Peterhouse in 1992 [Link]).

Climate-Sensitive Gardening

Aware of climate change, rising seas, droughts, and intense rains. Designers choose resilient, drought-tolerant, salt-tolerant plants (e.g. prairie grasses, Echinacea, sedums). Rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable plantings blur the line between engineering and horticulture.

Aesthetic: Semi-Wild Beauty

Designed naturalness: irregular drifts, mixed textures, grasses swaying with perennials, flowers peeking in irregular rhythms. There's a strong seasonal awareness—winter silhouettes, spring bulbs, summer meadows, autumn seed heads. Philosophically it draws upon a Japanese aesthetic of wabi-sabi (beauty in imperfection and transience) and the northern European tradition of valuing wild meadow and heath landscapes.

















An old postcard of the ferry port dominated by railway tracks. The DSB roundhouse

and turntable is at bottom right by a rusty water tower, with the workshops behind.











