

WICONA MEETS: Steen Elsted Andersen



It was the wise Marcus Aurelius who advised us to look beneath the surface. Since then, that dictum has been served up in countless versions: don't judge a book by its cover! Beauty is only skin deep...

Indeed, surface has gotten a bad rap throughout the centuries. For architects however, surface is rather emerging as one of the ways to solve the most fundamental design challenge of our time: how to build sustainable and beyond.

Of course, facade systems have always allowed us to track the development of architecture, from the most basic straw and mud envelopes to the ornamented domes of the Renaissance and the geometric complexity of 21st-century design.

And so, what about today?

The shift toward sustainable facade design is, 'on the surface,' a much more subtle one than the most distinctive shifts of the past. After all, a new office dressed in a glazed curtain wall might look very similar to one built in the '80s — the only (major) difference being that the building is essentially a battery harnessing the power of the sun.

And solar windows are only one out of many ways in which facades are becoming essential components in the quest to green the building industry: the list also includes biomimetic design, vertical gardens and a whole range of other energy-producing envelopes.

More importantly, as concepts of 'green' and 'organic' are becoming integral parts of the design landscape, we're forced to ask ourselves what should truly count as a sustainable facade: What materials will emerge as key to our quest to restore the equilibrium of our planet? How will the assembly and delivery of building parts change? And what role will recycling play in our increasingly circular approach to construction?

We launched WICONA Meets to provide some answers to what architecture has in store for us, but also as an effort to inspire and spark a conversation about the endless possibilities of **building beyond tomorrow**. Today, the professionals shaping our cities are more than ever required to find new, creative solutions to balance aesthetics with the demands for environmental stewardship and a rapidly growing urban population.

In the latest episode of WICONA Meets, our team traveled to Copenhagen to meet one of Europe's leading facade designers. Steen Elsted Andersen is the Head of Façade Design at Henning Larsen and has, throughout his 20-year career, participated in the design of buildings like The Copenhagen Opera, Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Centre and Nordea Bank Corporate Center.

