

Twenty five years: a psychodynamic perspective on an architectural practice.

Congratulations to Richard Murphy Architects on the occasion of their silver jubilee. Perhaps a silver medal could be cast for supporters?

The gift that the practice has given us is to make us all students of architecture. After every RM event we return to our bookshelves to read again about Frank Lloyd Wright, Scarpa etc. and to follow up on the internet some of the great architects you have introduced us to.

When we visited the FLW houses in Chicago, when I stayed at Wingspread in the 1980s because the Johnson Foundation was sponsoring our conference on dialogue and discussion, I didn't think that our house would one day be connected to that tradition. In the Autumn sunshine when the trees are thinning and the space looks its best we thank you and your colleagues for your creativity.

However, I want to say something different and draw your attention to important dynamics which might be significant for the future.

What distinguishes you from others is that the practice is based on the continuum that Bill Black mentioned in his vote of thanks. We know that autobiographical competence is a sign of a healthy, grounded life. RMA has that. Every event, every newsletter builds an invisible community and documents a biographical development which affirms that everything is connected to everything else. You are engaged in building a sustainable system which embeds loyalty and empathy with colleagues and clients alike. It is a great gift.

Here is the originality. Murphy Architects have developed the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills inherent in creating the best architecture. The foundational process is building a web of relationships which will sustain each project. Recognition of the borrowings are part of that - they 'flash upon that inward eye which is the bliss of solitude'. My medical practice, my dementia experience, my cancer care, the way I live is accounted for and validated. I am asked for my permission to participate in the creative process and grant it willingly.

After the building is completed the process is not forgotten. It is re-lived, documented, positively reinforced by others and we are inducted into the continuum.

It seems to me that in architecture you have a choice. Where you place the technocratic imperative and where you place the dialogical imperative within the project web will be crucial. I think Richard Murphy Architects gets it right most of the time.