

DESIGN LIFE NOW

NATIONAL DESIGN TRIENNIAL 2006

Podcast Transcript: Charlie Lazor

I'm Charlie Lazor, and I'm a designer.

As an architect, one of my great frustrations is how difficult it is to deliver good architectural design to people. It's inherently expensive, time-consuming and a great risk to undertake a customer's residential project with an architect. When you go to buy a car or a stereo system or any other kind of consumer product, you know what it is; you know what it costs and you know what you're gonna get.

So working from that premise, we worked backwards to rethink the modern house. One of the inherent challenges is that we're all different. Even though a group of us might come to an agreement that, yes, we like this aesthetic that is FLATPAK; each of us has different needs. We have different domestic situations. We have different needs. We have different tastes. We have different goals and dreams and aspirations coming from different people.

The other thing that is always unique to a house is the site, whether it's hilly or flat, forested or open, urban, suburban, rural; there is also a difference in climate and solar orientation of that site. We developed FLATPAK as a system that is essentially made up of parts, components; think about Lego blocks, and with our bin of FLATPAK Lego blocks, we can respond to all of those unique criteria.

So it is made of materials that I like, but also materials that perform; wood, galvanized metal, powder-coated metal, cement board, fabulous, well-performing insulation, concrete, green-engineered panels with green paint coatings.

FLATPAK, in a way, is a kind of modest, simple fellow, who doesn't scream out for attention, but sits quietly and welcomes you in and provides wonderful vistas from the inside to the outside, whether it's a view of a distant mountain or a garden in the foreground or a courtyard situation in an urban environment.

Design is something that makes our everyday life easier and, oftentimes, more fun, more enjoyable, ennobling.

Too often, we don't understand or recognize that design is around us every day all the time. Everything that we make is designed.

One of the best things that we, as a culture, can do is to keep our eyes open, keep our ears tuned, keep our minds thinking that design is probably one of the greatest, underutilized assets in our world.

Cooper-Hewitt

National Design Museum

www.cooperhewitt.org