Have no Fear! - Let Architecture be a Common Good!

Fear is a powerful emotion needed for our survival. It is also a tool used to influence the behaviour of whole nations. A constant media barrage drives fear into our heads without mercy: xenophobia, environmental degradation, and escalation of social disparity are the daily bread of public discourse. We need a shot of optimism and realize that there is much we can do to be happier as individuals and as humanity.

How does the profession of architecture relate to this? Does it engage with these problems? What common good can architecture contribute? What are its virtues? Why does architecture matter? Florian will present examples of his own and other architects' practice to show the particular ways in which architecture can be of benefit, economically, materially and artistically.

Fundamental changes of attitudes, objectives, training and business practices are needed so the virtues of architecture can reach their beneficiaries - all of us! This shift in practice might make us happier, too.

Architecture is the most political of the arts, and the presentation will come from a personal ethical and political position that some may not share. "That's not how the world works" is a likely objection. It is good to remember Mahatma Gandhi bringing Britain to its knees with non-violence, sound principles, spiritual maturity and no fear. To reclaim responsibility for our actions is a very personal proposition, but that is how Florian wants to practice architecture. Have no fear!

Florian has an Okanagan based practice and much of his work has been locally focussed but he has also maintained a global perspective, often working far from home.

Florian has been active in aid projects for 16 years, first in Romania, and now with the charity "Himalayan Life" for their "Yangri Hope Project" in Nepal.

A powerhouse for a micro hydro plant has been built and a boarding school for 100 students is under construction. The projects are used to promote wood construction technology, a system more suitable than stone masonry in seismically active areas.

Florian believes that aid has to go beyond bringing relief: it has to give bright young people a reason to stay on the land. This is one way to make architecture a "common good", as he proposes in his lecture.