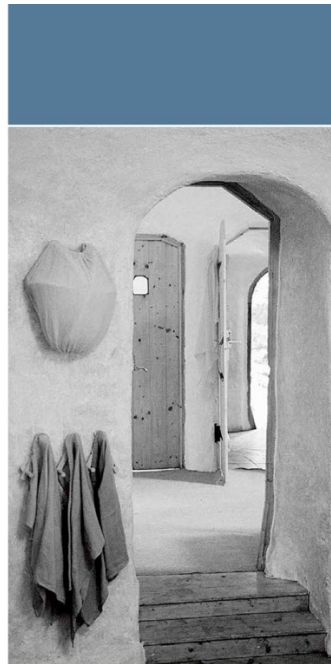


further to start designing proactively towards fostering people's health. Working on the premise that illness is linked to disempowerment, his aim is to create healing environments. But even cumulatively, these elements are not what distinguish Day's work. To understand his drives and motivations one must look deeper into his biography and his inner life.

Born in 1942 to parents who, after the second world war, ran a market garden in Pembrokeshire, Day was used to manual work – repairing, creating and improving things. He was an only child and was sent first to a prep school in Hampshire, which he enjoyed, and then to a boarding school in Bedford, which he did not. He describes his later schooldays as taking place in “a hostile environment”. He focused on becoming an artist, and when he began studying sculpture he won an Arts Council prize. There's no doubt that his design process works in and through his hands and that his architectural forms are first sculptural – as illustrated by his clay model for a Swedish eco-village. From his first Steiner Kindergarten at Nant-y-Cwm one can see that his nurturing curved forms are in direct contrast to the intimidating schoolrooms and dormitories of his youth. He has continued to build schools throughout his career, and he describes his vision in *Environment and Children* (2007).

Day studied architecture and sculpture in London in the 1960s and by the 1980s was lecturing internationally. He articulated what many people think – that they don't like living or working in architect-designed buildings. Architects design *objects* that are defined by their exterior form to fit briefs created by owners – be that corporate or government – not by the users. For ordinary people, it is the *interior* of a building that creates their environment – their *place*.

In his late twenties Day began on a new pathway that would underpin all his later work. He enrolled in a two-year course in agriculture at Emerson College in East Sussex, a centre that teaches from the basis of anthroposophy, the spiritual philosophy developed by Rudolf Steiner in the first



Nant-y-Cwm Steiner kindergarten, Wales  
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For design to be authentic it needs to synthesise multi-sensory aesthetics with multi-purpose practicality and nourish all four levels of our being



Window © Christopher Day / Routledge Press

decades of the 20th century.

Anthroposophy proposes that humans function on four levels: body, life-energy, soul and spirit. We meet the world through our senses, and they evoke feelings that nourish our soul. From that attunement grows sensitivity and empathy, so that art has a social as well as a cultural benefit. And just as we feel cheated by inauthenticity, *true* authenticity is an essential nutrient for the spirit. For design to be authentic it needs to synthesise multi-sensory aesthetics with multi-purpose practicality and nourish all four levels of our being. From that point of departure it was inevitable that Day's designs were not going to look or feel like those of his contemporaries.

Sue Roaf, Emeritus Professor of Architectural Engineering at Heriot-Watt University, calls Day a “far-seer”: “He has used his feelings and understanding not only of people but also of the ecology of places to weave together solutions that benefit both.”

That unique approach was welcomed in the early days of setting up The Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture in 1992 (now The Prince's Foundation). Day's influence survives through the educators who learned from him and in the annual residential Summer School, where students still build a yurt together – a practice he initiated.

This year's excessively high summer temperatures in Western Europe have made clear the urgent effects of climate change. As well as integrating his buildings into and in response to the existing landscape, Day has long been an advocate of creating microclimates – “We have to ameliorate conditions.” His methods come from close observation as well as from reading – he told me that Victorian gardeners were excellent at modifying the effects of weather on their plants. At which point he sent me out into the garden to experience the sheltered environment created by fences, trees and shrubs, and I noticed that the vines along the fence were interspersed with Scarlet Runners – a nice echo of the market garden. Day's next book will be on ‘place-making’. **R**

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