

Fogo Island Inn

The story:

Fogo-island: fishing-island in icecold sea between New Foundland (Canada) and Greenland. Its inhabitants have Irish or Scandinavian ancestors and in the old days (till the 1960's) boys had to leave school when 9 years old to work with their fathers on the ships in the icecold sea from very early mornings till late evenings. The fish got smaller and the big trailers came. Fishing from the island became more difficult, young people started to leave the island.

One fisher had six sons and one daughter and he managed to get her to university in Ottawa. Her name is Zita Cobb. She set up a company in fiber-optics, she sold the company about 10 years ago, started to do projects on illiteracy in Africa and then thought about her island where many boys (and her old friends) did not go to school very long as well.

With architect Todd Saunders (originally from New Foundland now working from Norway) she initiated some artist-residencies on Fogo island: small, very nice, plain and iconic architectural studio's. From there the idea arised to set up an inn where visitors could stay arriving by waterjet (because of isolation), but where the inhabitants of the island itself could also get together for music evenings and celebrate their special days or for instance weddings.

More background on Zita Cobb to read [here](#) and [here](#)

Our work for Fogo:

Early 2011 I was asked to design **wooden** furniture for Fogo Island Inn. Specifically for the entrance, the lobby, some other public areas and the rooms. Part of the request was a rocker and a bench.

Another request was to work with the people **from** the island: boatbuilders & coopers. Most of them are not professionals, but only worked with wood in the winter when not fishing and learned the techniques – word by mouth – from their fathers. The men (most of them once boss on a ship) are used to freedom (slightly anarchists!, nice!) and had no experience with producing items on a larger scale or making furniture from complicated drawings.

The women have weekly gatherings working on quilts, communal knitting, rug-hooking etc.. Shorefast Foundation asked different designers for lighting or textiles etc. but our cooperation on furniture for the inn worked so well that we were asked to work on more furniture for the surroundings of the inn.

What did we do?

1. Fogo-inn indoor furniture

There are traditionally many windsor-type-of-chairs on the island and a lot of woodspinning is still

going on. I wanted to play with that and – feeling a bit odd coming all the way from the Netherlands to tell Fogo-people what to do – I also wanted to give the men the opportunity to get some of their own creativity in the proces.

Therefore some area's of the woodturning were defined in size and in between these area's it was more open to create shapes by the woodworkers themselves.

By splitting the turned-parts in half, nice flat and supportive areas for your back arised to the chairs. Special patterns and techniques that the woman were using to knit traditional warm and strong mittens and socks were used to make soft seats on the wooden furniture.

There are four models of wooden Fogo-chairs: **a.** easy chair **b.** rocking chair **c.** long bench and **d.** 'get-your-feet-up-chair'. The last one exist also in mirrored version that makes a cosy seat with its mirrored relative.

The arms of the wooden furniture are rather wide and comfortable for your arms, or to place a cup of coffee on. The furniture was coloured according to colours that are traditionally around on the island.

2. Fogo-inn outdoor furniture

After furniture for the interior I was also asked to design outdoor furniture for the terraces and the roof. Based on the planky-ness of the colourfull wooden houses simple plank seats, highseats, tables and chaise longues were designed. All fitting neatly under eachother and easy to be made by the men in the workshop.

3. Fogo public seating

A last thing we worked on is simple furniture based on the basic plank structures and fences you find everywhere on the island. The benches are very ad hoc looking and will randomly pop-up in public areas on the island where visitors and hikers could have a short rest.

Please find some info backgrounds on the Fogo Island Inn via:

<http://www.fogoislandinn.ca/>

<http://www.fogoislandinn.ca/fii/room-to-dream/>

<http://www.fogoislandinn.ca/fii/zita-cobb/>

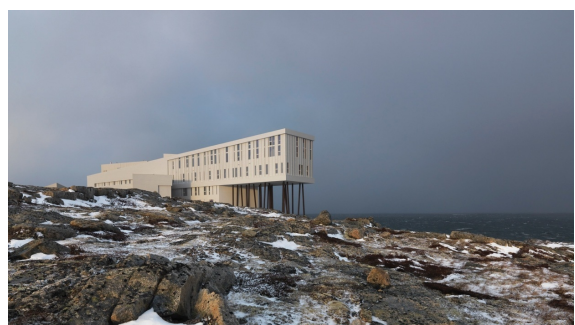
<http://www.shorefast.org/>

http://www.nfb.ca/film/children_of_fogo_island/ (nice film on kids in the 60's on fogo island)

I have attached some pictures on my visits and to Fogo and our projects

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via www.inekehans.com backgrounds can be found on 1. [a trip to Fogo](#), 2. [furniture for the interior of the Fogo Island Inn](#), 3. [furniture for the exterior of the Fogo Island Inn](#), 4. furniture for Fogo Island





^ 1. furniture for the **interior** of the Fogo Island Inn



^ 1. furniture in lobby



^ 2. furniture for the **exterior** of the Fogo Island Inn



^ 3. furniture for Fogo Island