Contemplating Inspiration

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A moment of sudden inspiration, a moment where every consideration and detail seem to fall into place behind a larger idea, thereby setting the real work into motion. It is the moment that at once brings relief and excitement, confidence and purpose to a project. Design requires inspiration.

But what is the source of this inspiration? Could it be simply an instant reaction, an intuitive genius, or nothing more than a stroke of good luck? The seeming instantaneity of inspiration might support these possibilities.

Yet could it only be through hours of careful research and thoughtful analysis, hours spent sketching and diagramming, hours spent constructing and reconstructing, hours spent in conversation, hours of questioning, that a truly inspired concept is achieved?

The moment one finds inspiration is often paralleled to the switch of a light or strike of lightning. Its fleeting nature makes one rush to capture its essence with urgency, before the moment is lost forever. Psychoanalyst and writer Adam Phillips argues, "...we still don't know where many of the best things about us come from, that many of them may not be teachable, and that we can't always recognize them — or rather, say what we recognize — when they turn up." The inability to predict the timing or definite origins of inspiration further increases the pressure to preserve its character in the moment. Therefore the intuition to recognize a potential idea is of greater necessity. Inspiration that goes unnoticed will have no influence on the work.

When one hesitates at the moment of inspiration, the instinctive response may be to immerse...
INSPIRATION CANNOT BE FORCED; THE PRIOR WORK MAY ONLY CREATE A CIRCUMSTANCE IN WHICH THIS INSPIRATION CAN TRANSPIRE.

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