Foto | Miran Kambič

Etika lesa | The Ethics of Wood

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Prepričan sem, da bo ostal les zaradi svojih estetskih, strukturnih in okoljskih značilnosti eden najpomembnejših gradbenih materialov tudi v prihodnosti. Veliko naših najglobljih dojemanj sveta in arhitekture izhaja prav iz uporabe lesa. Po tolmačenju nekaterih zgodovinarjev temeljijo proporci grškega dorskega sloga, ki je utiril estetske kanone zahodne civilizacije, prav na razmerjih drevesa. Vendar sega odnos do lesa in do dreves še globlje v ozadje naše kulturne podzavesti. Ali, kot je dejal nekoč Juhani Pallasmaa, je drevo eden najsplošnejših in najbolj pomenljivih človeških simbolov. Govorimo o drevesu življenja, svetem drevesu, drevesu plodnosti, drevesu modrosti, žrtvenem drevesu in podobno. Vse te različne asociacije so skrite v obliki in pomenu drevesa in se še danes prenašajo tudi na naš odnos do lesa. Ob vseh naštetih mitskih razsežnostih pa je les v primerjavi z opeko, steklom ali jeklom tudi eden najdostopnejših materialov. Skozi stoletja se je uporabljal in vgrajeval na načine, ki so spoštovali njegove naravne lastnosti. Vse do konca devetnajstega stoletja, ko so razvili nove stroje za rezanje in mletje lesa, ki so se zdeli Franku Lloydu Wrightu kot orodja v rokah »mesarjev«. Brez občutka za naravo materiala in z mnogo odpadka.

Rast uporabe obnovljivih virov lesa je trajnostna, saj naraščа rast gozdnih evropskih virov hitreje od njihove porabe. Povečana uporaba lesa ustvarja tudi nove priložnosti za inovacije v gradbeništvu in arhitekturi. Les kot gradbeni material doživlja renesanso. Inovativni sistemi gradnje z lesom so v zadnjem desetletju povzročili preporod v ekološkem, gradbeniškem, arhitekturnem in ne nazadnje tudi ekonomskem smislu. Tudi zaradi odličnih ekoloških lastnosti, hitre in enostavne gradnje ter človeku prijaznega bivalnega okolja, ki ga ponujajo, postajajo upravičena alternativa betonskim, jeklenim in zidanim konstrukcijam.

Les je topel, dišeč material. Pripoveduje zgodbo. Je organski material z zaokroženim življenjskim krogom: od rasti v gozdu, do surovin in nenazadnje razpadajoče biomase ali goriva. Poleg njegove ekološke racionalnosti je les prijeten za čutila. V umetnem svetu današnjega urbanega okolja zagotavlja uporaba lesa občutek stika z naravo. Njegova uporaba pa zahteva dobro razumevanje vseh njegovih lastnosti, zato je za arhitekte dobro oblikovana lesena stavba še vedno velik izziv. Naravni les vonjamo, slišimo, tipamo, vidimo. Pri sodobnem kemičnem ali fizikalnem preoblikovanju lesa se mnoge od omenjenih lastnosti izgubijo, zato je bil že Aalto prepričan, da bo ostal naravni les v arhitekturi za vse čase žlahten material.

Danes postaja uporaba lesa v arhitekturi modni trend. Vse preveč pogosto in nekritično ga vgrajujemo povsod in vsakič le kot kultni material, kot blagovno nalepko, ki naj zagotavlja izdelkom večji tržni uspeh. Celo v avtomobilski industriji se vrednost vozila poveča za nekaj odstotkov, če so posamezni elementi notranjosti iz pravega ali celo imitacije lesa. Podobno je tudi pri oblikovanju pročelij sodobnih objektov, kjer vse bolj prevladujejo imitacije. Nasprotno temu prekrivamo v imenu ekološke senzibilnosti z dragocenimi lesovi obsežne urbane ploščadi in s tem povsem nekritično uničujemo ogrožene tropske gozdove. Potrebno bo razviti nov etični odnos do uporabe tega dragocenega materiala. Podobno kot je danes neprimerno obleči leopardov plašč, kar ni le stvar neokusa temveč predvsem nemorale, bo potrebna večja zmernost tudi pri uporabi tropskih lesov.

Ta monografija Les v sodobni slovenski arhitekturi je zato korak k poskusu oblikovanja resnično iskrenega odnosa do uporabe lesa. V njej so zbrane in prikazane dragocene izkušnje sodobnih arhitektov in tehnologov, ki kažejo pot v prihodnji razvoj uporabe lesa kot enega od pomembnih materialov in gradnikov naše urbane prihodnosti.

It is certain that wood will remain one of the leading construction materials in the future due to its aesthetic, structural, and environmental characteristics. Many of our most deeply rooted understandings of the world and architecture are based on the use of wood. Some historians interpret the proportions of the Greek Doric style, which defined the aesthetic canons of western civilization, as based on the proportions of trees. However, the relationship with wood and trees extends deeper into the backdrop of our cultural subconscious. As Juhani Pallasmaa once remarked, the tree is one of mankind's most common and meaningful symbols – consider, for example, the Tree of Life, the Sacred Tree, the Tree of Fertility, the Tree of Knowledge, and the Sacrificial Tree. All of these different associations are hidden in the shape and meaning of a tree and are still reflected today in our relation with wood. All of these mythic dimensions aside, compared to brick, glass, and steel, wood is still one of the most accessible materials. Throughout the centuries it was used and installed in ways that showed respect for its natural qualities – until the end of the nineteenth century, which saw the development of new machinery for sawing and grinding wood. Frank Lloyd Wright characterized these as tools wielded by "butchers" that lacked an understanding of the nature of the material and produced great waste.

The growing use of this renewable resource is sustainable because the growth of European forest resources exceeds consumption. The increased use of wood is creating new opportunities for innovation in construction and architecture. Wood has been experiencing a renaissance as a construction material. In the past decade, innovative wood construction systems have resulted in a rebirth in the ecological, construction, architectural, and economic sense. Their excellent ecological characteristics, fast and simple construction, and the friendly living environment that these systems create make them a legitimate alternative to concrete, steel, and masonry construction.

Wood is a warm, fragrant material. It tells a story. This organic material has a complete life-cycle: from growth in the forest, to raw materials, and finally to decomposing biomass or fuel. In addition to being ecologically economical, wood is easy on the senses. In the artificial world of today's urban environment, the use of wood ensures a sense of connection with nature. However, its use requires a good understanding of all its characteristics; as a result, a well-designed wooden building still presents a challenge for architects. We can smell, hear, touch, and see natural wood. With modern chemical or physical processing, wood loses many of these properties. This convinced Hugo Aalto that natural wood will always remain a precious material in architecture.

Today the use of wood in architecture is becoming fashionable. It has been used all too often and uncritically, constantly incorporated everywhere merely as a cult material, as a brand label that ensures better market success for the product. Even the auto industry increases the value of a vehicle by a few percents if the interior elements are made of wood or even imitation wood. A similar development can be seen in the facades of modern structures, where imitation wood is increasingly being used. In contrast, large urban squares are being covered with precious wood under the pretense of sensitivity to the environment, causing utterly uncritical destruction to endangered tropical forests. Just as it is inappropriate to wear a leopard-skin coat today, because it is not only tasteless but above all immoral, increased moderation will be necessary in the use of tropical wood.

This publication is a step towards creating an honest relation to the use of wood. It features the valuable experience of modern architects and technical experts blazing the path into the future development of the use of wood as one of the most important materials and building blocks of our urban future.