



razmišljanje in ustvarjanje

intervju z Robertom McCarterjem

Paul Robinson

thinking and making

interview with Robert McCarter

Paul Robinson

Foto: Peter Krapež



Pokazala so mi [moja odkritja] namreč, da se lahko dokopljemo do spoznanj, ki bi bila zelo koristna za življenje, in da lahko namesto spekulativne filozofije, ki jo poučujejo v šolah, odkrijemo praktično filozofijo, s katero bi lahko, če bi poznali moč in učinkovanje ognja, vode, zraka, nebesnih teles, neba, ter vseh drugih teles, ki nas obdajajo, tako natančno, kot poznamo različne rokodelske tehnike, enako uporabili tudi ta in jih izkoriščali v vse namene, za katere so primerna; tako bi postali gospodarji in lastniki narave.

- René Descartes, *Razprava o metodi*¹ (1637)

[My discoveries] have satisfied me that it is possible to reach knowledge that will be of much utility in this life; and instead of the speculative philosophy now taught in the schools we can find a practical one, by which, knowing the nature and behavior of fire, water, air, stars, the heavens, and all the other bodies that surround us, as well as we now understand the different skills of our workers, we can employ these entities for all the purposes for which they are suited, and so make ourselves masters and possessors of nature.

—René Descartes, *Discourse on method* (1637)

V napovedi tematike konference Piranski dnevi je se pojavi izraz »kri-za«, s katerim je mišljena potreba po izboljšanju potencialno entropične sfere, katere sestavni del je tudi naša arhitektura, na podlagi sodbe vrednot. Vodilo konference v letu 2009 je naslednje: pojem krize je nekaj negativnega, je problem, ki ga je treba rešiti (seveda obstajajo tudi tisti, ki zastavljenih vprašanj, vključno s pojmom globalne entropije, ne bodo imeli za negativna). K popraviljanju krize, ki je okoljska, ekonomska, socialna in kulturna, lahko le delno prispevamo z načinom na katerega razvijamo in gradimo našo infrastrukturo. Kljub temu zastavljeni izziv nalaga arhitektom, da se s skupnimi filozofskimi temelji trenutne »krize« soočijo brez nostalgije in brez zatekanja k tistim alkimistom, ki jih Descartes tako vehementno zavrne. Pa je v resnici tako?

Ste dejaven arhitekt, med vsemi predavatelji, ki smo jih slišali na Piranskih dnevih, pa se verjetno največ ukvarjate z raziskovanjem, teorijo in poučevanjem arhitekture. Med drugim ste napisali kritiško sprejete knjige o Franku Lloyd Wrightu in Louisu I. Kahn, pripravljate dela o Alvarju Aaltu, Carlu Scarpi in Aldu van Eycku, poleg tega pa še arhitekturni priročnik, pri katerem sodeluje tudi finski arhitekt in pisec Juhani Pallasmaa. Medtem ko se naše skrbi, ki se tičejo trenutne krize, zdijo vitalnega pomena za globalno prihodnost, vi nadaljujete z brskanjem po preteklosti. Nedvomno so arhitekti, ki so subjekt vaših raziskav, ustvarili del svetovno najbolj prepoznavnih arhitektur. Glede tega, koga se odločite raziskovati, ste zelo izbirčni. Kar se tiče vprašanj o vrednotah ustvarjanja arhitekture, kakšno bero vam je uspelo pospraviti?

Within the thematic statement for the Piran Days Conference "crisis" is used to situate a value-based need for reparation to the potentially entropic sphere of which our architecture is a structural participant. This is the tenor set by the 2009 conference: that the notion of crisis is to be considered pejoratively; a problem to be solved (there are those who would consider the issues at hand, including the idea of global entropy, in non-pejorative terms). The redress of this crisis —environmental, economic, social, cultural— can only in part be supported by how we develop our built infrastructures. It is, nevertheless, a challenge to the architect to consider the collective philosophical underpinnings of the current "crisis" without nostalgia, without bowing to those alchemists Descartes dismisses with such aplomb. Or is that so? You are a practicing architect, and of all the lecturers at Piran Days you are perhaps the most involved in research, theory and architectural pedagogy. Your writings include critically recognized books on Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis I. Kahn and you have forthcoming books on the works of Alvar Aalto, Carlo Scarpa, and Aldo van Eyck, as well as an architectural primer written in concert with the Finnish architect and author Juhani Pallasmaa. You continue to delve into the past when our concerns, the concerns of this portentous crisis, seem most critical to a vital global future. It is axiomatic that the subjects of your research have produced some of the world's most recognizable architecture. You have been selective regarding whom you study. What does one garner from this type of research in order to consider questions of values in the production of architecture? In terms of your research and production,

S stališča vaših raziskav in ustvarjanja, še posebej v povezavi s tematiko vašega raziskovanja, kam uvrščate ustvarjene elemente vaše raziskave, ki jih obenem interpretirate in uporabite, še posebej v kontekstu prej omenjene »krize«? Ali kot zgodovinar nameravate obdržati strogo objektivnost?

Mislím, da se bo najin pogovor najlepše razvil, če skušava krožiti okrog zgorajnjega Descartesovega citata in razmišljava o vašem vprašanju o temi konference, zaenkrat pa se najprej lotiva tega drugega.

Arhitekti, s katerimi se trenutno ukvarjam so, v vrstnem redu v katerem sem se jih loteval, Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Kahn, Alvar Aalto, Carlo Scarpa in Aldo van Eyck, zadnja dva na seznamu me šele čakata v bližnji prihodnosti. Ker se nisem pogosto ustavljal, da bi se spraševal o razlogih za vrsti red, v katerem sem jih izbral, pa so mi mnogo bolj na dlani razlogi, zaradi katerih sem izbral natančno te arhitekte. Vedno sem jih imel za tiste (oziroma vsaj ene od tistih), ki so poslanstvo modernistične arhitekture videli kot prizadevanje za humanizmom (ali morda boljje humanostjo), in ki so skušali prizemljiti izkušnjo prebivanja.

Premislím Colin St. John Wilson je mnoge izmed arhitektov, ki so mene privlačili k raziskovanju, uvrstil v, kar je sam poimenoval, »drugo tradicijo modernizma«, torej med moderniste, ki so se upirali osiromašenosti »mednarodnih slogov«. Čeprav je imel St. John Wilson v mislih gibanje iz tridesetih, ki si je nadelo to ime, pa jaz trdim, da smo bili priča cele verige različnih »mednarodnih slogov«, ki jim je bilo skupno nasprotovanje prilaganju krajem in lokalni kulturi. Mednje spadata tudi tako imenovani historicistični »post-modernizem« in »de-konstruktivizem«, katerih učinke še vedno čutimo, čeprav so jima sodobni protagonisti zdaj nadeli drugačna imena. Morda je bil za Wrightom Aalto do danes najglasnejši kritik »mednarodnega sloga«, prav tako pa je bil tudi Kahn odprto kritičen do te iste tendence, ki jo je Aldo van Eyck na zadnji konferenci CIAM-a leta 1959 označil kot izdajo tradicije modernizma, kakršno nam predajajo dela zgodnjih modernističnih slikarjev in kiparjev, s strani popularnih modernističnih arhitektov. Zakaj bi »brskal po preteklosti« in preučeval te »zgodovinske« osebnosti? Kaj imajo oni opraviti s »krizami« sodobnega časa? Predvidevam, da je odgovor jasn: še vedno se moramo neprestano boriti proti tej isti tendenci sprejemanja »mednarodnega (globalnega) sloga«, ki predpisuje, da je arhitektura lahko v katerikoli kraju in v katerikoli kulturi enaka. Ravno dogodki, kot so Piranski dnevi arhitekture, nas opominjajo na dvoje: na tisto, kar si delimo v vseh različnih kulturah, pa tudi na tisto, kar nas dela tako različne med seboj. Oba opomina sta kritičnega pomena.

Pri delu zgoraj naštetih in njim podobnih arhitektov (vključno z mnogimi odličnimi sodobnimi arhitekti), gre v temelju za to, da se skozi arhitekturo vzpostavi Wittgensteinova misel, da sta »estetika in etika eno in isto«. Oziroma da, kot trdi Arendtova, arhitektura zagotavlja prostor v katerem nastaja javna podoba človeka, ki je bistvena zanj kot bitje, ki ustvarja zgodovino. Ali pa, kakor je bil prepričan Vico, da ljudje poznamo le tisto, kar smo ustvarili ljudje sami, torej zgodovino, predmete in kraje. Ali pa za Ricoeurjeva pojma »universalne civilizacije«, od katere vsakdo na svetu želi določene ugodnosti, in »lokalne kulture«, ki je potrebna za razvoj naše identitete in občutek, da smo v nekem kraju doma, med katerima moramo ohranjati ravnotežje. Kakorkoli že to razumeš, pa je še danes pomembno delo arhitektov, ki verjamejo v to, kar je trdil Aalto: »Kar šteje ni tisto, kako je zgradba *videti* na dan otvoritve, ampak kako bo v *njej živeti* čez trideset let«, morda je njihovo delo danes še celo bolj pomembno, kot je bilo kadarkoli prej. Sam sem v prvi vrsti delujoči arhitekt in učitelj, v drugi vrsti pa pisec (nekako se oteparam pojma »zgodovinar«), prepričan pa sem, da se arhitekti lahko učijo le iz del drugih arhitektov. Kot eden izmed redkih delujočih arhitektov, ki piše tudi monografije o arhitektih, se čutim primoranega, da se ne posvečam le temam, s katerimi so obsedeni umetnostni zgodovinarji, ampak, da se osredotočim predvsem na tisto, s čimer smo obsedeni arhitekti, ki skušamo graditi na tem, kar je Frampton poimenoval naša skupna »tektonska kultura«.

specifically regarding your subject matter, how do you position the artifactual elements of your research so that they may be construed or used contemporaneously, especially within the context of the aforementioned "crisis"? Or, as a historian, do you purport to be a strict objectivist?

I feel our discussion might be best served by my circling around the Descartes quote and your opening query regarding the theme of the conference, and addressing your latter queries first.

The architects I have and am currently studying/writing regarding include, in the order I have addressed them, Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Kahn, Alvar Aalto, Carlo Scarpa, and Aldo van Eyck, the latter two awaiting me in the near future. While I have not often stopped to think of the reasons for this order, the reason for my selections are more clear to me. I have always found these architects, among others, to have interpreted the task of modern architecture as being primarily a humanist (or, perhaps better, humane) endeavor—grounded in the experience of the inhabitant.

The late Colin St. John Wilson placed many of these same architects I have been drawn to study within what he defined as "the Other Tradition of Modernism," a modernism opposed to the reductivist tendencies of the International Style. While he was referring to the movement of that name that emerged in the 1930's, I would say we have been subjected to a chain of "International Styles" that are opposed to the adaptation to place and local culture, including so-called historicist "Post-Modernism" and "De-Constructivism," of which we are still feeling the effects even if the name has been changed by the contemporary players. After Wright, Aalto was perhaps the most outspoken critic of the "International Style" of his day, but Kahn also was a fierce critic of the same tendency, which Aldo van Eyck characterized in 1959 at the final CIAM conference as a betrayal by mainstream modern architects of the tradition of modernism to be found in the work of early modern painters and sculptors. Why "delve into the past" to study these "historical" figures? What do they have to do with the "crises" of our time? I submit that the answer is clear; we still have to continuously fight the tendency to accept "International (Global) Styles," that would hold that architecture can be the same in all places and all cultures. Events like Piran Days remind us both of what we share across cultures, as well as what makes us fundamentally different—both purposes are critically important.

The work of these architects, and ones like them (including many excellent contemporary practitioners), is fundamentally about establishing through architecture, as Wittgenstein said, "aesthetics and ethics are one and the same." Or, as Arendt has said, architecture provides the space of public appearance, essential for our existence as men who make history. Or, as Vico believed, we only know that which we and other men have made—history, artifacts, and places. Or Ricoeur's conception of "universal civilization," of which everyone around the world wants to have the benefits, and "local culture," which is necessary for our identity and sense of being at home in a place, as a balance that we must maintain. However you interpret it, the work of architects who believe, as Aalto said, that "What matters is not what the building looks like the day it opens, but what it is like to live in thirty years later," is important today—perhaps more important today than ever before. I am a practicing architect and teacher first, a writer (I hesitate to accept the term "historian") second, and I believe architects only learn from the work of other architects. As one of the very few practicing architects who writes monographs on architects, I feel compelled to focus not on the obsessions of the art historians, but on the obsessions of those who build, on what Frampton has called our shared "tectonic culture."

Taken together, these thoughts would seem to me to be an acceptable response to Descartes, as you quote him, and his intention to "master and possess" nature. Such sentiments would seem almost quaint, these days, if they were not so embedded in the decision-making processes that have led us to our present crisis, and many past ones—universal civilization run amok, ungrounded in local culture, as Ricoeur said, making the same banal "culture" all over the world. In our era of specialized "green" architects, when the term "sustainable" is given so many interpretations that it has no real meaning, we conveniently forget that



Skupaj gledano, se mi zdi, da so zgornje misli dober odgovor Descartesu in njegovemu citatu, v katerem govori o svojem namenu, da postane »gospodar in lastnik« narave. Takšno občutje bi se danes zdelo čudno, če ne bi bilo tako močno vpleteno v natanko tiste procese odločanja, ki so nas pripeljali do trenutne krize, pa tudi že do mnogih preteklih kriz, v katerih je civilizacija ponorela, saj je izgubila utemeljitev v, z Ricoeurjevimi besedami, lokalni kulturi in povsod na svetu razširila eno in isto banalno »kulturo«. V našem obdobju specializiranih »zelenih« arhitektov, ki izrazu »trajnosten« pripisujejo toliko različnih interpretacij, da je popolnoma izgubil svoj pravi pomen, priročno pozabljamo, da je na primer Wright oblikoval nekaj najbolj energetsko učinkovitih zgradb moderne dobe, čeprav ni nikoli usmerjal posebne pozornosti na ta razdelek svojega dela. Razlog je jasen: če v Wrightovih časih nisi pravilno orientiral svojih zgradb glede na sončno svetlobo in jih opremil s tem, čemur bi danes rekli »pasivno« ogrevanje in hlajenje, preprosto nisi dobil naslednjega naročila. Wrightu je nadaljnja naročila prinašala njegova sposobnost, da je neizmerno obogatil izkustvo notranjosti prebivanja in ustvarjal prave kraje v katere se »vračamo domov« (van Eyck), ne pa iskanje »najmanjšega skupnega imenovalca« energetske učinkovitosti, kar zmore danes res vsakdo. Kljub temu pa verjamemo, da smo veliko naprednejši od arhitektov Wrightove ali Sullivanove generacije.

Prvi del najine izmenjave zaključujem z naslednjo mislijo, ki pravi, da lahko le s pogledom v preteklost določimo najboljšo pot, po kateri bomo potovali preko »globalne prihodnosti«, vključno z vsemi njenimi krizami. Grki so verjeli, da ljudje ne moremo videti v prihodnost, to naj bi znale le slepe prerokinja (ki so se tako pogosto zmotile). Smrtniki lahko vidijo le tisto, kar se je že zgodilo, tako da so Grki verjeli, da je človek obrnjen proti preteklosti in, glede na to kar se mu kaže v preteklosti, ritensko vstopa v prihodnost.

Arhitekta, ki so tema vašega raziskovanja, torej Wrighta, Kahna, Aalta, Scarpo in van Eycka, imate za tiste, ki so »poslanstvo modernistične arhitekture videli kot prizadevanje za humanizmom«, in ki so »skušali prizemljiti izkušnjo prebivanja«. Zavračali so prevladujočo estetiko modernizma, saj so dajali prednost arhitekturi, ki je zasidrana v ustvarjanju arhitekture (pri katerem je dejanje produkcije procesno in določeno z vrednotami neke kulturne paradigme), in ki je smiselna sinteza vseh, nujnih in umetniških, človeških dejanj.

Čeprav sprejemanje vernakularnega (saj bi lahko rekli, da vsak od arhitektov, o katerih pišete, svoje delo nabije z nekim vernakularnim, ki zanj šteje kot vrednota) kot možen sodoben način delovanja vključuje določeno mero možnosti pluralizma, ali ste prepričani, da ima ohranjalni odnos potencial za ustvarjanje podlage, kakršno bi zasnoval tudi, na primer Kahn, da bi z njo podpiral neko določeno ideologijo? Kako se lahko v našem komodificiranem svetu tako imenovana podlaga, ki jo ustvarja vernakularna »estetika«, izogne pastem, ki jo vodijo v fundamentalizem, ki se nanaša le sam nase? Gotovo to zahteva preoblikovanje pojma tradicije z nezgodovinskim ozadjem?

Čeprav Wittgenstein trdi, da sta »estetika in etika eno in isto«, s čimer se strinjam, pa vseeno pušča odprto, na kakšen način bi njuno enotnost lahko ovrednotili. Če njegovo izjavo postavimo v kontekst, ki nas trenutno zanima, to vsekakor postane izziv. Sprašujem se, morda z nekaj melanholije, če ima kulturna pluralnost svoj notranji pomen, svoje vrednote in svoje človeške lastnosti vsajene v odprte konce, ki jih določajo drobtine zgodovine (kamor so bili zagledani naši grški smrtniki) in če ni morda vse kar lahko tu storimo, da le določimo dialektične povezave, ne pa da iščemo neko skupno podlago.

Zaključujem s citatom ruskega pesnika Josifa Brodskega:

Človek se podreja lastnim pojmovnim in razčlenjevalnim navadam – uporablja jezik za členjenje izkušenj in tako oropa duha prednosti navdiha, Zakaj ne glede na vso lepoto pomeni natančen pojem vselej omejitve pomena, rezanje prosto visečih koncev. In prosti konci so kakor nalašč koristi za prepletanje, še posebej v svetu pojavov.²

Wright designed some of the most energy-efficient buildings of the modern era, and yet he never once drew attention to this aspect of his work. This is because, in Wright's day if you did not build a properly solar-oriented building, with what we today call "passive" heating and cooling, you would never get a second commission. It was the incredible enrichment of interior inhabitation and experience, and making true places for "homecoming" (van Eyck) that brought Wright more clients, not meeting the "lowest common denominator" of energy efficiency, which in his day any hack could do. But we like to believe we are so much more advanced that the architects of Wright's and Sullivan's generation.

I close this portion of our exchange with the following thought, that it is only by looking to the past that we might determine how best to navigate the "global future" you mention, crises and all. The Greeks believed that humans were unable to look into the future, and that only the blind oracles could do so (and they were often wrong). Mortal men could only see what had already come to pass, the past, so the Greeks believed that men faced the past, and, based on what they saw there, they walked backwards into the future.

You consider your subjects —Wright, Kahn, Aalto, Scarpa, and van Eyck— those who have "interpreted the task of modern architecture as being a primarily humanist endeavour" and "grounded in the experience of the inhabitant." They tended to reject the ubiquitous of the "modern" aesthetic in favour of an architecture rooted in the making of architecture, (where the processual actions of production are defined by the values of a particular cultural paradigm) which seems to make sense regarding the synthesis of essential and artistic human actions.

Although the recognition of the vernacular —one can say that each of the architects you write about render their work with a certain vernacular as a value— as a contemporary operational means has certain pluralistic possibilities, do you feel that this restorative attitude has the potential to establish a ground that, say for example, Kahn was able to conceive in order to support the character of a distinct ideology? How, in a commodified world, does the so-called ground created by a vernacular "aesthetic" avoid the traps leading to self-referential fundamentalism? This certainly involves reframing the notion of tradition in non-historical terms?

Although Wittgenstein claims "aesthetics and ethics are one and the same", and I tend to agree, he leaves open how this oneness is valued. If we place his statement in the context of our immediate concerns, it seems to be a challenge. I wonder, and perhaps now move into a more melancholic place, if a cultural plurality has its core meanings, its values, its humane attributes, embedded in the loose ends defining the detritus of history (which is what our Greek mortals were staring at), and that the best we can do is define dialectical associations in lieu of a common ground.

I'll end with a quote from the Russian poet Joseph Brodsky:

One gets done in by one's own conceptual and analytical habits e.g., using language to dissect experience, and so robbing one's mind of the benefits of intuition. Because, for all its beauty, a distinct concept always means a shrinkage of meaning, cutting off loose ends. While the loose ends are what matter most in the phenomenal world, for they interweave.

The architects I have elected to study do indeed reject the uniform aesthetics of the various "International Styles" of modernism, and the lessons they offer us continue to be pertinent today when various universal formalisms are present in both the "pattern-making" and obsession with surface of the digital designer, as well as in the stylistic pluralism of certain American schools of architecture, where "historicist" and "deconstructivist" forms exist side-by-side—as if meaningful architecture was a matter of selecting from a menu. What makes the architects of the "other tradition of modernism" worthy of our continued study is that they conceived of architecture as being rooted in the making of inhabited space, as you noted. But this is not making that might happen anywhere, rather it is making grounded in a particular place. With place, and the history of construction it makes present, comes the valuation of the vernacular—a vernacular

Arhitekti, ki sem jih izbral za preučevanje, na vsak način zavračajo poenoteno estetiko raznorodnih modernističnih »mednarodnih slogov«. Lekcije, ki so nam jih dali, so aktualne še danes, tudi v času najrazličnejših univerzalnih formalizmov, ki so prisotni tako v »ustvarjanju vzorcev« in obsedenosti s površino, s katerima se ukvarja digitalni dizajner, kot tudi v slogovnem pluralizmu določenih ameriških šol arhitekture, v katerih »historicistične« in »dekonstruktivistične« forme obstajajo druga poleg druge – vse to, kakor da bi bila arhitektura, ki nosi svoj pomen, nekaj, kar lahko izberemo z jedilnega lista. Tisto, zaradi česar so arhitekti »druge tradicije modernizma« vredni našega stalnega preučevanja, je dejstvo, da so svojo arhitekturo dojemali kot nekaj, kar je zakoreninjeno v *ustvarjanju* prostora prebivanja, kakor ste opazili tudi sami. Arhitekturno ustvarjanje pa se ne more zgoditi kjerkoli, kot podlago potrebuje nek določen *kraj*. Z vključitvijo kraja in zgodovine gradnje, ki je na njem prisotna, nastane tudi vrednost, ki jo ima vernakularno. Vsaj pri zgoraj naštetih arhitekth gre za vernakularno, ki ni omejeno na kmečko in na ruralno, ampak vključuje tudi urbano in kulturno ter pomeni vzgajanje človeškega prebivanja skozi čas. Tak način razumevanja je za delujoče arhitekto naraven, teoretike pa pošteno začudi. Moram poudariti, da, če sem se zgoraj otepal oznake »zgodovinar«, pa prav zagotovo zavračam oznako »teoretik« in se v svojih delih skušam izogniti »pastem« »teorije«, ločene od prakse.

Za arhitekto, kakršen je bil Kahn, *teorija* izhaja iz *prakse* in ne obratno. *Razmišljanje* in *ustvarjanje* sta pri uresničevanju arhitekture neločljivo povezana. Nekateri sodobni teoretiki, pa tudi nekateri akademiki, so prepričani, da je arhitekturo mogoče misliti ločeno od njenega ustvarjanja, vendar pa je to možno le znotraj akademije, ne pa tudi v svetu prakse, v katerem arhitekti živimo in delamo. Z raziskovanjem Kahna se lahko naučimo tudi, da *poetike* in *prakse* prav tako ni mogoče ločiti med seboj. Šele praktični aspekt konstrukcije neke zgradbe, materiali iz katerih je zgrajena, in način, na katerega določa naše izkustvo kraja, dopuščajo prisotnost poetičnega aspekta oblikovanja. Moramo se spomniti, da so poetiko najprej zasnovali Grki kot v prvi vrsti dejanje ustvarjanja, iz katerega je zapisana tudi zgodovina ustvarjanja, prav tista, ki sestavlja živo tradicijo arhitekture. Odnos, ki ga do zgodovine svoje discipline, torej do konkretne tradicije tektonske kulture, s katero se pri svojem delu ukvarjajo, gojijo arhitekti, ki gradijo, tako kakor na primer Kahn, je popolnoma drugačen od odnosa tistih, ki se do istih objektov opredelijo skozi umetnostno zgodovinski kritikizem ali skozi filozofsko teorijo. Za dejavne arhitekto, ki se morajo ukvarjati z vprašanji ustvarjanja, ko se srečajo s krajem, kulturo, ekologijo in materiali v izkušnji prebivanja, je zgodovina arhitekture vedno pri roki v obliki tektonske dediščine, ki jo predstavljajo zgradbe, v ekološki inteligenci, ki jo predstavlja vernakularno, in v kulturnih odmevih arhaičnega. Dejavnih arhitekti se morajo s sodobnim kontekstom spoprijeti s stališča nekoga, ki je vanj potopljen. Ko je Kahn delal s svojimi študenti na univerzi, je rekel, da jih lahko nauči le »primernosti«, torej dejstva, da mora biti arhitektura *primerna* svojemu času, kraju in uporabi. Po drugi strani pa melanholija prevzema le tiste, ki svoj sodobni intelektualni kontekst vidijo od zunaj, kakor da bi bilo kaj takega sploh mogoče. Vseeno pa, kakor zapiše Brodski v zgornjem citatu, nas naše pojmovne in razčlenjevalne navade pogosto ločujejo od navdiha, od neposrednosti našega izkustva sveta okoli nas. V zvezi s to temo je francoski pesnik Paul Valery leta 1894 zapisal:

Večina ljudi gleda z razumom mnogo pogosteje kot s svojimi očmi. Namesto, da bi videli pisane prostore, opazijo pojme. Nekaj kar je belo kockasto, pokončno in česar ploskve so prekinjene s steklenimi površinami, je zanje takoj hiša – Hiša! – tako kompleksna ideja, ki je kombinacija abstraktnih lastnosti. Če se premaknejo, jim vsi premiki vrst oken uidejo, saj premikajoče se površine, katerih čutna zaznava se sicer stalno spreminja, v hipu prevedejo v pojem hiše, ki zanje ostane nespremenjen. Svet zaznavajo s slovarjem namesto z očmi ...

Brodski trdi tudi, da se moramo stalno učiti (ali znova naučiti) tega, da smo pozorni na tisto, kar je v pojavnem svetu najpomembnejše. Kakor omenjate zgoraj, sva v lanskem letu skupaj z Juhanim Pallasmo napisala priročnik za arhitekturo. V tem trenutki se nama je zdelo potrebno, da ga nasloviva

that is, for these architects, not limited to the agricultural and rural, but also encompasses the urban and cultural; the continuous cultivation of human inhabitation across time. This understanding comes quite naturally to the practicing architect, though it seems to perplex the theorist. Here I should say that, if above I hesitated to accept the label of "historian," I most definitely decline the label of "theorist," and thus endeavour in my writings to avoid the "traps" of a "theory" that is divorced from practice.

For architects such as Kahn, theory emerged from practice, and not the other way around. This comes from the fact that thinking and making are inextricably intertwined in the realization of architecture. Some contemporary theorists, as well as some academics, suggest that thinking about architecture can take place separately from making, but this is true only in the academy, and not in the world of practice where the architect lives and works. From studying Kahn, we can also learn that poetics cannot be separated from the practical. The practical aspects of the way in which a building is constructed, the materials from which it is made, and the way this characterizes our experience of a place, allows the poetic aspects of the design to come into presence.

Here we should remember that poetics was first conceived by the Greeks as being primarily concerned with the act of making, and this history of making constitutes the living tradition of architecture. The way in which architects who build, such as Kahn, relate to their disciplinary history—a tradition of tectonic culture which they engage in their work—is entirely different from the way in which those who employ art historical criticism or philosophical theory to relate to those same artefacts. For practicing architects, who must concern themselves with the issues of making as they engage place, culture, ecology and material in the experience of the inhabitants, disciplinary history is always close at hand, in the tectonic inheritance of buildings, the ecological intelligence of the vernacular, and the cultural resonance of the archaic.

Practicing architects must engage their contemporary context from the point of view of one deeply embedded within it. In his work with his students at the university, Kahn said that all he could teach was "appropriateness;" the understanding that architecture should be appropriate to its time, place, and use. On the other hand, a melancholic mood characterizes those who conceptualize their contemporary intellectual context from the point of view of one outside of it—as if such a thing were possible. Yet, as Brodsky notes in the passage you quoted above, our conceptual and analytical habits often tend to remove us from our intuition, from the immediacy of our experience of the world around us. Concerning this, the French poet Paul Valery wrote in 1894:

Most people see with their intellects much more often than with their eyes. Instead of coloured spaces, they become aware of concepts. Something whitish, cubical, erect, its planes broken by the sparkle of glass, is immediately a house for them—the House!—a complex idea, a combination of abstract qualities. If they change position, the movement of the rows of windows, the translation of surfaces which continuously alters their sensuous perceptions, all this escapes them, for their concept remains the same. They perceive with a dictionary rather than with the retina...

As Brodsky also suggests, we must constantly learn (or relearn) to attend to what matters most in the phenomenal world. As you mentioned earlier, this past year I co-authored a primer on architecture with Juhani Pallasmaa, and we considered it important at this moment in time to title the book, Architecture as Experience, for it addresses exactly this constant necessity of re-engaging, with all the senses, the phenomenal built world. Implicit in our argument is the belief that, for architects, engaging the experience of those who inhabit architecture is an ethical and aesthetic imperative. As to how this oneness of aesthetics and ethics in architecture is valued, and how the tradition of practice represented by Kahn, among others, remains pertinent for contemporary culture, I will close with a quote from the contemporary Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo:

Edification has two principal meanings—to build and to be morally uplifting... That is, edification must be ethical, entailing communication of value choices. In the present situation of thought on the one hand and



Arhitektura kot izkustvo, saj ta naslov zadeva ravno neprestano nujo, da se z vsemi čuti vedno znova udeležujemo pojavnosti zgrajenega sveta. V najinem argumentu je implicitno prepričanje, da mora biti za arhitekta upoštevanje izkustev tistih, ki bodo v arhitekturi prebivali, etični in estetski imperativ. Kar se tiče vrednotenja enotnosti estetike in etike v arhitekturi in, na kakšen način ostaja tudi v današnji kulturi aktualna tradicija prakse, ki jo med drugimi predstavlja Kahn, pa bom zaključil s citatom sodobnega italijanskega filozofa Giannija Vattima:

Edifikacija ima dva glavna pomena – graditi in spodbujati moralnost ... Edifikacija mora temeljiti v etiki, spremljati pa jo mora izrekanje vrednot. V miselni situaciji, ki vlada danes, na eni strani in arhitekturni izkušnji na drugi, je, kar se tiče gradnje, danes edina možnost za edifikacijo »oživljanje etike«, torej spodbujanje bolj etičnega načina življenja oziroma delovanje, ki temelji na podlagi ponovnega zbiranja tradicij, na sledovih preteklosti in na pomenih, ki se jih pričakuje v prihodnosti.

architectonic experience on the other, the only possibility of edifying in the sense of building is to edify in the sense of "rendering ethical," that is, to encourage an ethical life: to work with the recollection of traditions, with the traces of the past, with the expectations of meaning for the future.

Opombe

- 1 René Descartes, Razprava o metodi (Filozofski inštitut ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana: 2007), prevod Saša Jerele, p. 91.
- 2 Josif Brodski, »Manj kot človek«, v Josif Brodski, Izbrani Eseji, Nobelovci 101 (Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana:1989), prevod Janko Moder, p. 103.