

The Slowness From Latent Aspects to Relevant Agency

ZORANA PROTIĆ

Faculty of Architecture, University of Zagreb

KEYWORDS

assignment, substance, technique, awareness, alternative

Most of the artificial assembly that surrounds us is made through a series of processes, and the finalised objects emerge from an operation of multitude of devices. Since each space carries with it something of the being that designed it, every artefact hides some technical invention. The general trend of market uniformity, technological mass, and a constant flow of materials that stimulate our senses, reduces our ability to consider alternatives and possible deviations from the omnipresent. One of the potentials of education is to slow down the process and draw our attention to a material world. Material world itself can be considered from two sides: as a structural matter or as a conceptual strategy. In such a way, the material character of architecture and concentration on the matter becomes a substantive medium of design. The research course operates outside of contemporary tasks, slowing the pace and providing time for perception. A collection of short assignments under a common name The [sub]Stance uses a slow process of recognizing the material as a potential starting point for contemplation. Considering the relationship between forms, materials, space, and processes, students develop a specific sensibility for physical substance around them, while simultaneously expanding their area of knowledge. By exploring alternative approaches that develop a new look at the standard construction and its unquestionable role in architectural practice, they broaden conceptual reflections in the field of materiality, skill, and technique. Such alternative strategies do not tend to develop or establish new constructional approaches, but to research already existing possibilities and use the usual techniques for achieving innovative solutions. The main assignment was focused on exploring construction strategies such as ready-made, bricolage, boundary vs. condition, living systems, and time. Thus, they become a didactic model for the interpretation of materials of everyday culture that enable students to create their design tools. In the end of the course there are two short assignments, speculative and experimental, which are — using a set of strategies — emphasizing the process rather than the product.

THE PREFACE: MODEL — NORM — SYSTEM

Does building make an architectural gene? Do we know how to use the technique? In what way do we use the technique? What is material knowledge? How to transmit an abstract idea with that knowledge into the material world? Can the technique be a design tool? Does the architect need to be an expert to use it? How important is the bond between pragmatism and technique? What is the importance of knowing the origin of

the material or of the technology? Can the material have its meaning or narrative, and that way can it play a key role in the project? Which Question is important; what material is it or what does it provide? Should the built-in material be more than what it is — a finished product or raw material? Is the material more than its appearance or its physical specificity?

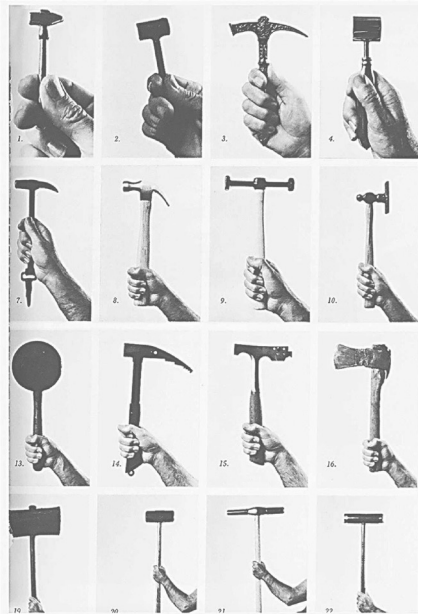
THE INITIAL ASSIGNMENT: FROM PHENOMENON THROUGH MATTER TO PROCESS

Last year's exhibition of The Thirteenth Triennial of Croatian Sculpture brings together the works of around one hundred authors that make up a cross-section of the three-year work. By visiting the exhibition, it is necessary to change the focus of observation from aesthetic appearances to material reality. Now the sculptures no longer represent the reflexive of the author, but they are just artificial objects. Artistic pretension is transmitted into an act of production. Each artefact is preceded by technique, a certain skill or a technological process that differs in the complexity of the design. By contemplating at the exhibits, it is essential to separate three examples of a study with some common relation such as a form or material or technique or something else. Through the analysis of selected sculptures, it is necessary to distinguish and relate its initial concept and production technique with the emphasis on re-discovering the direct relationship between craft and design product.

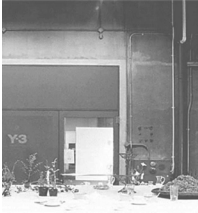
'ON THE LEVEL OF CONTENT, MY CONCEPTION WAS BASED ON THE OBSERVATION THAT WE HAVE FIXED IMAGES IN MIND THAT DON'T MATCH THE REALITIES THEY STAND FOR. SAME THING WITH BREAD: THERE'S AN IMAGE OF WHAT BREAD USUALLY LOOKS LIKE. SO WE PUT UP A DISPLAY EVERY MORNING OF "DAILY BREAD" FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD THAT DEMONSTRATED HOW THERE ARE ASPECTS FAR BEYOND THE ROUND LOAF OF BAKED DOUGH THAT GO INTO WHAT BREAD LOOKS LIKE: FROM STORAGE PRACTICES-WE HAD CRISP

BREADS THAT WERE CIRCULAR DISCS WITH A HOLE IN THE MIDDLE-TO THE USE OF BREAD DOUGH TO EXPRESS SEXUAL SYMBOLISM. WE WANTED TO DISPROVE THE NOTION THAT "FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION." WE ALSO EXHIBITED A WIDE VARIETY OF HAMMERS, FROM SURGEON'S MALLETS TO AN AUTO BODY WORKER'S HAMMER, WHICH WERE ALL BASED ON THE SAME STANDARD FORM BUT THEN DEVIATED FROM THAT STANDARD DEPENDING ON THEIR SPECIFIC FUNCTION.
Hans Hollein

Man Transforms, VARIATION OF A PRODUCT: BREADS and HAMMERS, Hans Hollein, Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design, New York, 1976



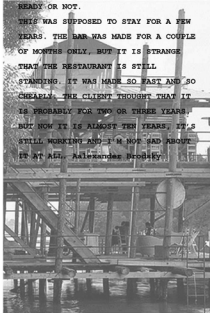
THERE ARE MANY SUCH THINGS ALL AROUND THAT WE DON'T QUESTION. CREATING SOMETHING THAT WOULD MERGE INTO THIS NORMALCY THAT SURROUNDS US INTERESTED ME. WITH "TABLE" I WANTED PEOPLE TO GET NO IDEAS AS TO THE PRINCIPLES OF HOW THIS COULD WORK. I WANTED PEOPLE TO ACCEPT THIS THING BEFORE THEIR EYES. EVEN IF THEY FOUND IT STRANGE. WHEN SOMETHING IS UNDEFINED IN TERMS OF MECHANISM OR CONCEPT, IT CAN EXIST FREE OF PEOPLE'S DECISION TO ACCEPT OR REJECT THE MEANING OR CONCEPT. FREE OF ANY JUDGMENT BASED ON AN INDIVIDUAL'S EXPERIENCE OR SUBJECTIVITY. THIS 'TABLE' IS ONE ATTEMPT AT THAT. Junya Ishigami



Table, Junya Ishigami, 2006

I WAS ALMOST SURE THAT THIS WOULD BE HOWEVER, THAT I WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO BUILD. I WAS ALMOST ABSOLUTELY QUIET ABOUT IT, BUT OF COURSE SOMEWHERE DEEP IN MY MIND I WAS ALWAYS THINKING THAT MAYBE SOMETIME THERE WOULD BE A POSSIBILITY TO MAKE SOMETHING, EVEN A SMALL THING, JUST TO CHECK THE FEELING OF GETTING INSIDE A BUILDING THAT YOU'VE DESIGNED. THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT THING THAT YOU CAN STEP INSIDE THE SPACE THAT YOU'VE CREATED AND TO SEE WHAT THE DRAWING WAS AND HOW IT LOOKS IN REAL LIFE. IT'S A VERY STRONG AND STRANGE FEELING. OF COURSE, I WAS THINKING ABOUT THIS, AND AT SOME MOMENT I UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS IS THE DAY WHEN I CAN TRY, REGARDLESS IF I'M READY OR NOT.

THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO STAY FOR A FEW YEARS. THE BAR WAS MADE FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS ONLY, BUT IT IS STRANGE THAT THE RESTAURANT IS STILL STANDING. IT WAS MADE SO FAST AND SO CHEAPLY. THE CLIENT THOUGHT THAT IT WAS PROBABLY FOR TWO OR THREE YEARS, AND NOW IT IS ALMOST THE SAME. IT'S STILL STANDING AND I DON'T KNOW WHY AT ALL. Mikhaila Bredsky



30 Degrees Restaurant, Alexander Brodsky with Oleg Ovsy, Hippocore Resort, Moscow Region, Russia, 2000

ECHOING THEIR USE OF STANDARD ELEMENT BUILDING PRODUCTS, THE EXHIBITION IS ORGANISED IN A SEQUENCE OF ROOMS BUILT USING DRYWALL. TODAY'S MOST UNBQUITOUS STANDARDISED CONSTRUCTION SYSTEM, NORMALLY HIDDEN BEHIND LAYERS OF PLASTERBOARD IN OFFICES, SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS, THE EXHIBITION USES SLENDER STEEL STUDS LEFT EXPOSED, FRAMING ARTWORKS, VIEWS ACROSS GALLERIES AND THE FURNITURE WITHIN THEM. INEXPENSIVE, EASY TO CUT AND QUICK TO ASSEMBLE, THE DRYWALL STUD IS THE NATURAL DESCENDANT OF AMERICAN BUILDING PRODUCTS. FOLLOWING THE EMERSEAN TRADITION, THESE EVERYDAY COMMERCIAL MATERIALS ARE TURNED TO CREATE A PLAYFUL AND OPEN SPATIAL NARRATIVE THROUGH ONE OF THE MOST

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO TWENTIETH CENTURY AND CONTEMPORARY DESIGN. Tom Ehnsson



The World of Charles and Ray Eames, EA Architects, Fashion Art Gallery, London, 2015

THE SKEGSHALL KONSTRALL, 2008SKEGSHALL, SWEDEN SKEGSHALL IS A SMALL COMMUNITY IN SEARCH OF AN IDENTITY. UP UNTIL NOW, ITS IDENTITY HAS BEEN STROBOLY IDENTIFIED AS A PAPER MILL TOWN. IN FACT, MOST OF SKEGSHALL HAS BEEN BUILT BY THE PAPER MILL, INCLUDING MOST OF THE HOUSING AND THE CHURCH. I PROPOSE TO DESIGN AND BUILD A NEW, CONTEMPORARY STRUCTURE TO HOUSE THE NEW SKEGSHALL KONSTRALL. THIS STRUCTURE WILL BE BUILT COMPLETELY IN PAPER PRODUCED BY THE PAPER MILL, IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS. THE DESIGN WILL REFLECT THE BEST OF CONTEMPORARY SWEDISH ARCHITECTURE IN ITS MINIMAL ELEGANCE AND RESPECT FOR

THE ENVIRONMENT. IT WILL ALSO REFLECT THE GENEROUS COMMITMENT OF THE MAIN LOCAL INDUSTRY IN THE CREATION OF A FORWARD LOOKING STRUCTURE AND INSPIRATION THAT WILL PROTECT SKEGSHALL INTO THE FUTURE. BY ITS PAPER NATURE AND DESIGN, THE SKEGSHALL KONSTRALL WILL PROBABLY BE ONE OF THE MOST ADVANCED CONTEMPORARY PAPER STRUCTURES EVER CREATED FOR CONTEMPORARY ART. Alfredo Jaar



The Skegshall Konstrall, Alfredo Jaar, Skegshall, Sweden, 2008

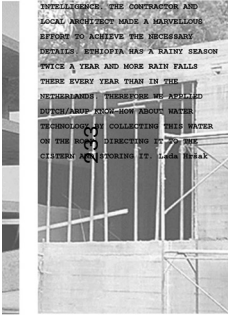
THE SINGLE - WALL HOUSE, CHRISTIAN KEREZ, BIRICH, SWITZERLAND, 2004 - 2007 'REDUCTION MAKES ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS MORE RADICAL AND VISIBLE'. THE TOPIC OF REDUCTION DOES NOT MEAN SIMPLIFICATION BUT QUITE THE CONTRARY BECAUSE THAT WALL HAS TO DO EVERYTHING: IT LEADS THE STAIRCASE FROM ONE TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HOUSE, IT IS A LOADBEARING STRUCTURE, IT CONTAINS ALL INSTALLATIONS AND IS THE ONLY ELEMENT OFFERING THIS GLASS PAVILION INTERIOR SPATIAL EXTENSION AND QUALITY, AS WELL DIRECTING THE SPACE TOWARDS THE COFFEE. THIS ONE WALL IS INTERESTING ONLY BECAUSE OF ITS MULTIPLE SIGNIFICANCE. Christian Kerez



The Single - Wall Haus, Christian Kerez, Zurich, Switzerland, 2004 - 2007

WHEN WE WERE CHOOSING THE MATERIALS, WE STUDIED WHAT ETHIOPIANS WERE GOOD AT MAKING AND CONCLUDED IT WAS CONCRETE. OF COURSE, IT CANNOT BE LIKE SWISS CONCRETE, BECAUSE THEY ARE SIMPLY UNABLE TO DO THAT, SO WE MADE THE BEST USE OF WHAT WAS AVAILABLE AND OBTAINED AN EXPRESSIVE OUTSIDE TEXTURE. IN EVERY PROJECT COLOUR AND TEXTURE ARE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE, AND I OFTEN USE ONLY ONE COLOUR AND ONE TEXTURE. THE COLOUR OF THE EMBASSY WAS THE COLOUR OF THE LOCAL REDDISH SOIL. SOME PEOPLE THOUGHT IT WAS MADE OF EARTH, BUT THE COLOUR CAME FROM THE COPPER OXIDE WE USED AS A PIGMENT. FROM THE BEGINNING THE DESIGN WAS FORMED UNDER THE LOCAL CONDITIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL

INTELLIGENCE. THE CONTRACTOR AND LOCAL ARCHITECT MADE A MARVELLOUS EFFORT TO ACHIEVE THE NECESSARY DETAILS. ETHIOPIA HAS A RAINY SEASON TWICE A YEAR AND MORE RAIN FALLS THERE EVERY YEAR THAN IN THE NETHERLANDS. THEREFORE WE APPLIED REINFORCING BARS HOW ABOUT WATER REINFORCEMENT IN COLLECTING RAIN WATER BY THE HOUSEHOLDERS TO THE CITIZENS. FOR HIM IT WAS GREAT



Royal Dutch Embassy, Dick van Gasteren, Sjaime Haxtonczsky, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1998 - 2005

THE SLOWNESS: FROM LATENT ASPECTS TO RELEVANT AGENCY

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS FOR INSTANT INVENTORY, ALTHOUGH STILL IN THE SPHERE OF 'DO IT YOURSELF' PRINCIPLE CAME CLOSER TO THE INDUSTRIAL METHOD OF MARKING THE SHAPES. IN THIS CASE, THE NEGATIVE FORM OF THE MOLD IS REPLACED BY A POSITIVE, OR THROUGH THE MULTIPLICATION TOOL. USING A HOT FORMING DEVICE, A THIN LAYER OF ELASTIC MATERIAL (HIGH IMPACT POLYSTYRENE SHEET) IS FORMED BY A POSITIVE MOLD OR BY THE TOOL MENTIONED ABOVE. INSTEAD OF CASTING ANY LIQUID MATERIAL THAT WILL SUBSEQUENTLY HARDEN IN THE NEGATIVE BY THE CHEMICAL REACTION, THE RIGID

MATERIAL IS NOW SOFTENED BY HEATING AND THE HARD, FADED PLASTIC MASS BECOMES A POLISHED "SHEET" THAT IS FOLDED OVER THE TOOL AND THEN VACUUMED IN A DISTINCTIVE SHAPE. THE INITIAL CONSTRUCTION ELEMENT IN INSTANT INVENTORY, THROUGH THE MULTIPLE LOGIC, OR MASS PRODUCTION OF EQUIVALENT PIECES, CONVERT TO THE FINAL PRESENTATION MODE. INSTANT INVENTORY REPRESENTS A NEW POINT IN COMING CLOSER TO THE INDUSTRIAL MODE OF PRODUCING ARTWORK. Predrag Pavić

Instant Inventory, Neven Bilić, The Thirteenth Triennial of Croatian Sculpture, Zagreb, 2018

