

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Timber Constructed: Towards an Alternative Material History

A special issue of *Architectural Theory Review* (vol. 25, no. 1), edited by Irina Davidovici (ETH Zürich) and Laila Seewang (Portland State University)

The residual associations that timber architecture maintains with tradition, local culture and manual craft have long been challenged by its global ubiquity. This inner contradiction was already visible in the paradox of 1920s timber modernism: a locus of tangible tensions between universal commodity and regional culture, enmeshing mythical nation-building with entirely pragmatic rationales. Unlike steel or concrete, other materials quintessentially bound up with modernity, timber has widely been perceived as a corrective to modernism. As an organic, living material, it demands a more precise grasp of the transitions from natural resource to commodity to cultural artefact. Furthermore, it is now apparent that the infrastructure of timber construction extends far beyond the architectural end product. Timber is firmly embedded in global markets, not only as industrial article, but also as forestry investment, and—increasingly, if disputably—as signifier for environmental sustainability. Access to timber as resource acquires geo-political significance, as economy, policy and cultural background shape the relationship between place and the living material. Beyond the volition of architects and clients, timber architecture is dependent upon multiple scales, from global material flows, to regional, land management strategies, to the micro-performance of details controlled by building norms and standards. Addressing these contradictions demands a widening of architectural analysis to critically engage with the full range of entanglements pertaining to timber sourcing, production, and use.

This issue of *Architectural Theory Review* proposes an alternative intellectual history of timber architecture as simultaneously cultural artifact, material commodity, environmental resource, and structural element. It aims, firstly, to create a more nuanced understanding of how timber's architectural manifestations might address the inner contradictions between global standardization and regional cultural narratives. Secondly, it aims to widen the study of architectural materiality by taking into account the full range of scales, from territory to detail, deployed in design. Finally, it examines the spatial and symbolic possibilities of timber architecture in the contemporary landscape. Papers are invited to explore timber's inherent positioning between globalism and locality, natural and man-made, industry and craft, innovation and tradition, material and ideology, modernity and anachronism. Submissions that span a range of geographic, spatial and temporal scales will be prioritized.

We welcome the submission of previously unpublished, research-based papers that address these questions. Scholarly texts of between 4000 and 8000 words (including notes) will be sought for double-blind peer review. Although authors will be invited to prepare papers on people, places, and projects across the globe, all submissions must be written in (or translated into) English for consideration.

#### Procedure

The editors seek to review abstracts of proposed submissions no later than 15 August 2020. Abstracts may be up to 300 words and sent in an email attachment on which is noted the author's/s' name/s and affiliation. Submissions to the editors (emails below), cc to [adp.atr@sydney.edu.au](mailto:adp.atr@sydney.edu.au). Authors invited to submit full papers will be asked to do so by **31 October 2020**.

The editors **welcome expressions of interest** prior to paper submissions and are available for discussing possible contributions. For any questions regarding this issue please contact:

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For reference, [manuscript submission guidelines](#) can be found on the *Architectural Theory Review* website.