

»v malem biroju delam velike projekte«

intervju z Wang Shujem

Kristina Dešman, Miha Dešman

"I have big projects and a small practice"

interview with Wang Shu

Kristina Dešman, Miha Dešman



Foto: Peter Krapež

Wang Shu, kitajski arhitekt in profesor arhitekture, je s svojim predavanjem na Piranskih dnevih arhitekture presenetil občinstvo, ko je pokazal tradicionalno kitajsko slikarstvo in z njim primerjal svojo arhitekturo. »To je moje duhovno ozadje,« razloži kasneje v intervjuju.

Skupaj z ženo Lu Wenyu vodita uspešen arhitekturni biro, Amateur Architecture Studio (Studio za amatersko arhitekturo). S pomočjo le dveh sodelavcev se lotevajo največjih projektov. Njegove najpomembnejše arhitekture vključujejo kampus Xiangshan v mestu Hangzhou (2008), Keramično hišo (2006), kavarno v spominskem parku v mestu Jinhua, ki je nastala v sodelovanju z umetnikom Ai Weiweijem in šestnajstimi kitajskimi in mednarodnimi arhitekti, Muzej sodobne umetnosti Ningbo (Ningbo Contemporary Art Museum) (2005) in Muzej zgodovine Ningbo (Ningbo Historic Museum) (2008).

Njegov prispevek za beneški bienale leta 2006, ko je v Benetke pripeljal tisoče recikliranih kitajskih strešnikov, ki jih je nabral med ostanki porušenih hiš širom Kitajske, mu je prinesel mednarodno prepoznavnost. Za svoje arhitekturno delo je prejel mnoge kitajske in mednarodne nagrade, med drugimi tudi Globalno nagrado Holcim (Holcim Global Award) za trajnostno arhitekturo na področju Jugovzhodne Azije leta 2006, leta 2004 akademsko nagrado za Arhitekturno umetnost Kitajske in leta 2003 nagrado za arhitekturno umetnost Kitajske. Wang Shu je vodja Oddelka za arhitekturo Kitajske Akademije umetnosti v mestu Hangzhou (China Academy of Art), oddelka, ki ga je ustanovil sam leta 2001.

V intervjuju smo se pogovarjali o kitajski tradiciji gradnje in načinih, kako bi se iz nje morali učiti tudi sodobni arhitekti. Wang Shu je kritičen do prehitrega razvoja na Kitajskem, pred katerim ni varna nobena zgradba, ne glede na svojo starost. Kot trdi sam, se njegov arhitekturni biro umešča nekam med polje spontane arhitekture, ki nastaja izpod rok obrtnikov in rokodelcev, in profesionalno arhitekturo. Skratka, da projektira amatersko arhitekturo. Njegov pristop zaznamujeta skrb za lokalnost ter želja po novi interpretaciji kitajske gradbene tradicije, ki bi pomagala oblikovati nove tipologije gradnje za prihodnost.

Skrbi ga tudi, kakšna bo tradicija, ki jo bomo mi sami prepustili bodočim generacijam. Prihodnjo tradicijo kitajske arhitekture, ki bo na voljo bodočim

Wang Shu, Chinese architect and teacher of architecture, surprised the audience with his lecture in Piran Days of Architecture showing traditional Chinese painting and comparing it to his architecture. "This is my mental background," he explains later in the interview.

Together with his wife Lu Wenyu, Wang Shu has a successful architectural practice, Amateur Architecture Studio. With the help of only two employees, they take on the largest projects. His most important architectures include the Xiangshan Campus, Hangzhou (2008), Ceramic house (2006), a coffee house for the Memorial Park in Jinhua, a collaboration between artist Ai Weiwei and sixteen Chinese and international architects, Ningbo Contemporary Art Museum (2005) and Ningbo Historic Museum (2008).

His contribution for the Venice Biennale in 2006 when he brought thousands of Chinese roof tiles recycled from demolition sites all over China to Venice in turn brought Wang Shu international recognition. For his architectural work, he has received numerous Chinese and international awards, among them the Holcim Global Award for Sustainable Architecture in Pacific-Asia in 2006, the Academic Award from the Architecture Art Award of China in 2004, and the Architecture Art Award of China in 2003. Wang Shu is also the head of the Architecture department of the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, the department he established himself in 2001.

In the interview, we discussed the Chinese tradition of building and how today's architects should try benefiting from it. Wang Shu is critical towards the rapid development in China from which no building, no matter how old, is safe. He is trying to position his architectural practice, as he claims, somewhere between the spontaneous architecture built by craftsmen and the professional architecture to do amateur architecture, as he calls it. His approach is marked by the concern for the local, the reinterpretation of the Chinese building tradition, and the creation of new building typologies.

He is also concerned with what tradition we are going to leave to the future generations. By reforming architectural education and educating generations of architects, as well as practically, by creating exemplary buildings, he is creating a new tradition of Chinese architecture which will be there to use by the future generations of local architects.



generacijam lokalnih arhitektov, skuša izoblikovati s preoblikovanjem izobraževanja arhitekture in izobraževanjem novih generacij arhitektov, pa tudi praktično, torej skozi gradnjo vzorčnih stavb.

V Evropi obstajata dve glavni tradiciji arhitekture oziroma gradnje: klasična tradicija in gotska tradicija. Prva je umerjena, urejena in natančna, druga pa je bolj organska, spontana, načrtovanje je prepuščeno sleherniku, tako da ni tako zelo natančna in nikoli ni mogoče natančno predvideti, kaj se bo iz nje izcimilo. Včeraj smo poslušali dve predavanji, ki sta govorili o spontani arhitekturi: predavanje Francisa Kéréja, ki je govoril o gradnji šol v Burkini Faso, in predavanje Milтона Brage, ki je govoril od spontani rasti São Paula. Kakšna pa je tradicija gradnje na Kitajskem, ali je določena s pravili ali je bolj spontana?

Kéréjevo delo je lokalno zelo pomembno. Zna nadzorovati spontan proces gradnje. Profesionalni arhitekt zmore nadzorovati največ deset ljudi, spontani delavec pa jih lahko nadzoruje mnogo večje število.

Oba sistema gradnje, spontani in nadzorovani, sta popolnoma različna, vendar moraš, vsaj po mojem mnenju, kot arhitekt obvladati oba. Kitajska je, vsaj tako mislim, mešanica obeh tradicij. Razlikuje se od Afrike, Oceanije ali Evrope. Vsaka struktura, ki jo zgradimo, ima jasen, lahko bi rekli pravilen sistem gradnje, vendar pa je sam sistem nastal spontano. Torej je oboje – spontano in pravilno – med seboj prepleteno. Zanimiva je hierarhična urejenost obeh sistemov. Vendar pa se tudi znotraj sistema gradnje vedno znova pojavljajo majhne spremembe, saj se od kraja do kraja razlikujejo podnebni pogoji in okolica. Na žalost pa je tradicionalni sistem gradnje trenutno zelo šibek. Kar se gradi danes, nima nobene povezave s tradicijo, niti v mestih niti na podeželju. Tradicija je vse šibkejša.

Tradicija je v nevarnosti ...

Da, v nevarnosti je. Kitajska tradicija gradnje je zelo ekološka. Je poceni, uporablja lokalne materiale, vse je možno zgraditi v zelo kratkem času. Ljudje pa dandanes želijo pokazati, da imajo denar, in zato gradijo hiše v zahodnem slogu, le zato, ker stanejo več.

Spomnim se misli, ki jo je zapisal Kenneth Frampton o različnih načinih gradnje. Frampton opisuje dva tipa gradbenega procesa: gradnjo, ki izhaja iz skeleta, torej zračni način gradnje in gradnjo, ki izhaja iz nosilnih zidov, torej telurski, zemeljski način gradnje. Na kakšen način poteka gradnja v kitajski arhitekturi?

Kitajska arhitektura zopet uporablja oba načina gradnje hkrati, hkrati se opira na sistem zidov in na skelet. Sistema sta med seboj ločena, uporablja se ju pri različnih tipih zgradb, včasih pa nastopata tudi hkrati. Gradnja se začne z nosilnimi zidovi, na katere se potem postavi leseni skelet.

Kakšen je odnos med kitajsko in zahodno arhitekturo?

Arhitektura v strogem pomenu besede na Kitajskem obstaja šele od leta 1927 dalje, pred tem smo gradili na drugačen način. Imeli smo filozofe, učenjake, gradbenike, rokodelce, ne pa arhitektov. Filozofi so razmišljali o družbi, o redu in o filozofskih vprašanjih. Poleg njih so obstajali rokodelci, ki so bili več kot le delavci. Mnogi od njih so bili podobni arhitektom: znali so risati načrte, znali so izdelati maketo, poleg tega pa so znali tudi graditi. Poznali so materiale in jih znali dobro uporabljati. Rokodelci so bili hkrati arhitekti in gradbeni delavci.

Ali so torej rokodelci zgradili vso tradicionalno kitajsko arhitekturo, na primer Prepovedno mesto v Pekingu?

Najbolj slaven arhitekt v kitajski zgodovini je mojster mizarstva in tesarstva Yu Hao. Živel je v obdobju dinastije Song, pred več kot tisoč leti. Izhajal je iz družine mizarjev, od katere je podedoval svoj poklic, počasi pa je postal največji mizar-arhitekt na vsem Kitajskem. Yu Hao je gradil širom Kitajske, bil pa je mizar in tesar. To o kitajski arhitekturi pove zelo veliko.

Zelo veliko dela ste vložili v to, da bi spremenili kitajski sistem arhitekturnega izobraževanja.

Na Kitajskem moderni, torej zahodni, način izobraževanja obstaja od leta 1927 dalje. Prva arhitekturna šola je nastala v Nanjingu kot del Inštituta za

Europe has two main architectural or building traditions: the Classical tradition and the Gothic tradition. The first one is measured, ordered, and exact, and the other one is more organic, spontaneous, allowing anyone to do the planning, so it is not that exact; you never know what's going to come out of it. Yesterday, we could hear two lecturers talking about spontaneous architecture – Francis Kéré talked about building schools in Burkina Faso and Milton Brage talked about the spontaneous growth of São Paulo. What is the traditional building process in China – is it more regulated or more spontaneous?

I find Kéré's work extremely important locally. He knows how to control the spontaneous construction process. A professional architect can only control ten people at most, but spontaneous workers can control many more people.

The two building systems, the regulated and the spontaneous, are fundamentally different, but as an architect, you have to grasp them both. I think China is a mix of traditions. It is different from Africa, or Oceania, or Europe. In every structure that we build, there is a clear, regulated if you will, system of building, but the system itself is spontaneous. So the two – the regulated and the spontaneous – are mixed together. There is also an interesting hierarchy of the two building systems. But within the building system, many small changes occur, since the climate and the landscape and the environment are different in different areas. Unfortunately this traditional system of building is now weak. What's being built nowadays has no relation to these traditions, neither in the cities nor in the countryside. The tradition is getting weaker and weaker.

The tradition is endangered...

Yes it is endangered. The Chinese tradition of building is quite ecological. It is low budget, it uses local materials, and everything can be built quite quickly. But these days, people want to show they have money, and since Western-style houses are more expensive, that's what they build.

I remember Kenneth Frampton's writings on different building processes. He describes two types of building process, construction that begins from constructing the frame, i.e. the aerial way, and construction that begins from bearing walls, i.e. the telluric, earthen way of building. In which way is Chinese architecture built?

Chinese architecture again uses the two systems of construction at the same time. There is the wall system and there is the frame. And these two systems are separate, depending on the function of the building, or sometimes used in the same building. The construction begins with the bearing walls, on which a timber structure is erected.

How does Chinese traditional architecture interact with Western architecture?

Architects in the narrow sense of the word have only existed in China from around 1927. Before that time, the way we built was different. There were philosophers, scholars, builders, craftsmen, but no architects. Philosophers were thinking about the society, about its order and about its philosophical problems. Then there were the craftsmen. A craftsman is not just a worker. Many of them were similar to architects. They did the drawings and they did the models, and on top of that, they knew how to construct as well. Besides, they knew the materials they were using really well. The craftsman was both the architect and the worker.

So it was craftsmen who built all of Chinese traditional architecture, for example the Forbidden City in Beijing?

The most famous architect in Chinese history was the master carpenter Yu Hao. He lived during the Song Dynasty, more than a thousand years ago. He was from a family of carpenters, he inherited his profession and gradually became the greatest carpenter-architect in China. Yu Hao constructed buildings all over China – and he was a carpenter! That says a lot about Chinese architecture.

You've worked very hard to transform the system of architectural education in China.

In China, modern – Western – architectural education has existed since 1927. The first architectural school was opened in Nanjing as part of the Institute of Technology, which is where I studied. But what China was doing in the late 1920s

tehnologijo, šola, na kateri sem študiral tudi sam. Vendar pa je Kitajska v poznih dvajsetih le skopirala zahodni sistem arhitekturnega izobraževanja. V začetku je posnemala Šolo lepih umetnosti (Beaux-Arts) v Parizu, pozneje je posnemala modernizem, postmodernizem in tako dalje. Čeprav so obstajale šole, na katerih si lahko študiral tradicionalno kitajsko arhitekturo in umetnost gradnje, pa so bile vse te šole usmerjene teoretsko oziroma zgodovinsko in niso učile oblikovanja. Toda, kar je najpomembnejše v tradicionalni kitajski arhitekturi, je ravno tisto, česar se iz nje lahko naučijo arhitekti danes, to, kar jim danes lahko ponudi. Obstajal je le sistem, ki je predpisoval iz česa se sestoji kitajska tradicija, sistema, ki bi nas jo naučil uporabljati, pa ni bilo.

Tradicija ne bi smela postati prazna formalna tradicija, temveč bi morala še danes pomeniti način življenja v različnih okoljih, na različnih področjih in v različnih pogojih. Ravno to je tisto, kar je v katerikoli tradiciji najbolj pomembno in tudi edini razlog, zaradi katerega bi jih morali ohranjati. Moji bodoči kolegi bodo gradili na podlagi današnjega kitajskega lokalnega sistema gradnje. To pomeni, da je na nas, da sestavimo sodobni lokalni sistem gradnje, katerega ime o njem pove skoraj vse: mora biti sodoben in mora biti lokalni.

In mora biti sistem.

Da, sistem. Tudi to je zelo pomembno. S tem v mislih sem na naši akademiji ustanovil nov oddelek za arhitekturo. Izbral sem umetniško akademijo, saj imajo umetniške akademije na Kitajskem več svobode. So nekoliko izven sistema, saj so umetniške!

Leta 2001 sem ustanovil oddelek za arhitekturo na Državni akademiji umetnosti v mestu Hangzhou, ki je najboljša na Kitajskem. Počasi se je oddelek razvil v arhitekturno šolo. V okviru šole sem želel preizkusiti toliko reči. Seveda mi je bilo v začetku zelo težko. Nisem imel učiteljev, ki bi znali poučevati. Moral sem povabiti umetnika, znanega kitajskega umetnika Ai Weiweija, da mi je pomagal pri poučevanju.

Prvo leto sem imel le dvajset študentov, profesor pa sem bil sam. Poučevati sem moral čisto vse, torej sem jih učil oblikovanja, učil sem jih zgodovine. Včasih sem poznal vsakega študenta, danes pa jih je preveč. Eden od problemov, ki se pojavi, če ima šola malo študentov, je financiranje. Če imaš premalo študentov, ne dobiš dovolj denarja. Danes pa nas je 40 profesorjev in 1200 študentov v štirih oddelkih: arhitektura, urbanizem, krajinska arhitektura in okoljsko oblikovanje. Na Kitajskem razvoj poteka zelo hitro.

Kako shajate s tako bliskovitim razvojem?

Gradbeni proces lahko poteka tako bliskovito, širiš in razvijaš se lahko zelo hitro, pri poučevanju pa to ne gre. Procesu učenja ne moreš prehitovati. To je tudi eden od razlogov, da je tako težko zgraditi nov sistem izobraževanja. Sam sem razvil nov sistem poučevanja. V prvem letu, na primer, se študentje učijo mizarstva in tesarstva, in v drugem letniku se učijo o zidovih in o konstrukcijah. Učijo se postopoma – prvo leto o tramovih, drugo leto o sistemu zidov. Tekom celotnega izobraževanja študente usmerjam v praktično delo, učijo se stvari oblikovati in jih izdelati.

V začetku študija, študentje o arhitekturi ne vedo ničesar, zato se mi je zdelo, da mora biti začetek študija usmerjen v gradnjo. Njihova prva naloga je, da nekaj zgradijo. Zgradijo objekt v naravni velikosti, ne da bi pri tem smeli uporabljati materiale, ki štejejo kot arhitekturni, uporabijo lahko le neformalne materiale. Predmet je usmerjen v iskanje primernih materialov in njihovo neposredno uporabo v praksi. Študentje sami izdelajo projekt in poiščejo prave materiale za izvedbo. Tekom procesa projektiranja na rednih srečanjih razpravljamo o zamislih in o projektih študentov. Na koncu z glasovanjem izberemo, katerega od projektov bomo izvedli, saj je možno izvesti le enega. Odločitev katerega, je demokratična.

Po mojem mnenju je to eden najpomembnejših predmetov. Študentje pridobijo arhitekturno znanje, predmet spodbuja njihovo izvirnost in željo po eksperimentiranju, poleg tega pa jih nauči razmišljati realno. Študentje se prav tako naučijo, kaj pomeni debata in kaj pomeni demokratično glasovanje. Na

was copying the system of architectural education from the West. In the beginning it was a copy of the Beaux-Arts school in Paris, then a copy of Modernism, then a copy of Postmodernism, and so forth. Although there were schools where you could study traditional Chinese architecture and the art of construction, this was only in theoretical or historical courses, never in design courses. Yet what's most important about the traditional Chinese architecture is what it can offer to architects today, the difference it can do today. There was only the system of describing what Chinese tradition is, but no system of putting it to use.

The tradition should not be just plain and empty tradition, but it should mean the way of living in different environments, areas, and circumstances today. This is the most important aspect of every tradition and also the reason why one should preserve them. My colleagues in the future will build from the contemporary Chinese local system. This means we have to build a contemporary local system. Its name says it right there: it's contemporary and it's local.

And it's a system.

Yes, it's a system. This is also very important. So with this in mind, I established a new department for architecture in the art academy. I chose an art academy to do it at, because an art academy in China enjoys more freedom. It is a little bit out of the system. It is art!

In 2001, I established the department of architecture at the National Academy of Art in Hangzhou, the best one in China. It gradually evolved into an architectural school. There were many things I wanted to try and do with the school. Of course, in the beginning, it was extremely difficult. No other teacher but me knew how to teach. I had to invite an artist – the famous Chinese artist Ai Weiwei – to help me and teach together with me.

In the first year, 2001, there were only twenty students and one teacher – me. I had to teach everything – I taught design, I taught history. I used to know all of the students, but now there are too many. One of the problems with having few students was also the financing. If you have too few students, you aren't given enough money. But now we have 40 teachers and 1200 students in four departments: architecture, urban design, landscape, and environmental design. In China, everything is developing very fast.

How do you cope with such rapid development?

The building process can be very fast, you can expand very quickly, but teaching is different. You cannot rush the teaching process. That is also one of the reasons why it is so difficult to build a new educational system.

I have developed a new way of teaching. For instance, during the first year, students study carpentry, and in the second year, they study about the walls and the construction. They learn gradually: the first year about beams, and the second about the wall system. Throughout the whole course, the students are directed to work – to design and to work.

When the students begin their studies, they don't know anything about architecture. I thought that the first course should be aimed at construction. The first assignment the students are given is to build. They have to build something in the 1:1 scale without using any material that is usually considered an architectural material; they can only use informal materials. The course is aimed at choosing suitable materials and using them directly to produce a building. The students need to think of a design and find materials that could be used. In the course of the design process, we have regular meetings where we discuss different concepts and designs. Finally we vote the best design that is going to be built, because only one of designs can be actually constructed. It is a democratic decision.

In my opinion, this course is one of the most important courses. It gives the students architectural knowledge, it encourages their authentic expression and the will to experiment, and it teaches them how to think real. Students also learn what discussion is and what democratic vote is. But in the end, they have to decide on the best plan, paying special attention to its feasibility. In China, the time is always limited in the construction process. So the students also have to finish the construction within a time limit. If they cannot finish it they get no money. The financial support of the department is very meagre, so it depends on the



koncu pa se morajo odločiti za najboljši projekt, pri tem pa morajo biti še posebej pozorni na njegovo izvedljivost. Ker je na Kitajskem čas za gradnjo vedno zelo omejen, morajo tudi študentje z gradnjo zaključiti v določenem časovnem roku. Če projekta ne morejo zaključiti, ne dobijo denarja. Oddelek ima zelo majhno finančno podporo, tako da je v veliki meri odvisen od samega sebe, torej je učitelj odgovoren za delo svojih študentov. Študentje dobijo denar za gradnjo, le v primeru, da jo pravočasno zaključijo.

Ali ima šola tudi delavnice, v katerih so študentom na voljo orodje in materiali?

Seveda imamo delavnice, mislim, da so najboljše opremljene na Kitajskem. Nujno jih potrebujemo v našem izobraževalnem procesu. Ko sem projektiral kampus, sem pustil veliko praznega prostora, kamor študentje zgradijo svoje projekte.

Ali so vsi predmeti tako praktično naravnani?

Ne, ne vsi, takšno je le mizarstvo in tesarstvo, ostali predmeti so drugačni. Študentje se naučijo kitajske umetnosti, smo pa tudi odprti svetu. Ena od reči, ki jih študiramo, je kitajska kartografija, ki je neke vrste osnovna vaja iz kitajske forme. Znanje, ki ga pridobijo pri tem predmetu, je zelo pomembno, saj se zaseda globoko v njihove možgane. To je trenutek, ko študentje začnejo razmišljati na drugačen način, v njih se nekaj spremeni.

Študentje morajo skozi dolg in obsežen tečaj risanja. Na Kitajskem se arhitektura večinoma poučuje na tehničnih šolah, kjer imajo študentje le eno leto umetniške izobrazbe: pol leta rišejo s svinčnikom, pol leta uporabljajo barve, večinoma akvarele. Si to lahko predstavljate, arhitekti z enim samim letom umetniške izobrazbe?! Le eno leto za vse barve. V moji šoli izobraževanje poteka drugače. Študentje so deležni štirih let pouka umetnosti, ki jo poučujejo profesorji, ki so tudi sami umetniki.

Prva tri leta smejo študentje risati le na roke, računalnika ne smejo uporabljati. Na roke lahko narišeš zelo zanimive stvari. Študentje imajo v svojih sobah seveda lahko računalnike, ne pa v šoli. Vsak od študentov ima računalnik in ga tudi uporablja: za analize, za raziskovanje preko interneta, vendar pa nanj ne sme risati načrtov.

Tudi jaz pripadam generaciji, ki riše le na roke.

Z računalnikom lahko kateri koli študent doseže enako kvaliteto risbe kot vsi ostali, vendar jih le malo ve, kaj zares počnejo na računalniku. Risanje na roke daje veliko boljši občutek za razmerja in za detajle. V tem smislu je uporaba računalnikov lahko škodljiva.

Tak način dela zahteva velik vložek dela in veliko predanost profesorja.

Kdo so vaši pomočniki? Kako pa so z načinom dela zadovoljni študentje?

Študentje so zadovoljni z načinom dela, poučevanje pa je vseeno zelo zahtevno. Je zelo razburljivo, pa tudi utrudljivo. V začetku ni znal poučevati nihče razen mene, sedaj pa imam nekaj pomočnikov, svojih bivših študentov. Prve generacije sem poučeval čisto sam, postopoma pa sem vzgojil pomočnike.

Poleg tega, da skušate preoblikovati kitajski izobraževalni sistem, pa vodite tudi uspešen arhitekturni biro po imenu Amateur Architecture Studio, ustanovljen leta 1998. Od kod izhaja njegovo ime, Studio za amatersko arhitekturo?

Ime izhaja iz male knjižice francoskega filozofa Rolanda Barthesa. Prebral sem nekaj njegovih del in ugotovil, da mi je zelo podoben. Samega sebe šteje za amaterskega pisatelja, za anti-pisatelja, ki ni profesionalen. Pomen tega mi je bil všeč.

Barthes pa ni edini strukturalist, ki sem ga prebiral. Še posebej je name vplivala filozofija Claude Levi-Straussa in njegov pojem dveh ravni sistema, ki sta na delu znotraj človeške družbe, torej globoke plasti človeških podstruktur, na katerih se gradijo kulturne razlike. Spominja me na razmere na Kitajskem. Na Kitajskem se zelo veliko gradi, vendar pa to počne relativno malo arhitektov. Profesionalni arhitekti projektirajo zgradbe, toda ne gradijo. Jaz pa, po drugi strani, želim graditi, želim delati hiše, torej nisem profesionalni arhitekt. Zato moram biti amaterski arhitekt.

self-management, which supports the students' works with the teacher being responsible. Students only get the money if they finish their building in time.

Do you have workshops where students can find tools and materials in your school?

Yes, we have workshops; I think they are the best in China. We need them in our education system. Also when I designed the campus, I left many small empty spaces for the students to build their designs.

Are all of the courses so practical?

No, this is just the carpenter's course, we also have other courses. The starting point for the students is Chinese art, but we are also very opened to the world.

One of the things we study is Chinese cartography. This offers the basic training about the Chinese form. This knowledge is very important as it has a very deep rooting in the students' brains. It's at this point that they first start thinking in a different way. This means it changes something in them.

They receive long and extensive training in drawing. In China, architecture is usually taught in technical schools where students only get one year of art education: half a year of pencil sketching and half a year of working with colours, mostly watercolour. Can you imagine that?! Architects with one year of training in art. Just one year for all the colours! In my school, this is very different. Students get four years of art education, which is taught by professors with art background.

In the first three years, the students can only use pencils – no computers. Quite interesting things can be done drawing in pencil. They can have computers in their rooms, but not in the course. Every student has a computer and uses it. They use computers to do analysis, to do the research on the internet, but not for drawing, and not in the course.

I also belong to the generation that only used hand drawing.

Every student can use the computer for drawing and achieve the same level of quality of drawing on the computer but few of them know what they are doing when they use the computer. Hand drawing gives you a better sense of scale and of details. In this way, the use of computers is not beneficial.

This type of work requires a lot of hard work and devotion from the teacher.

Who are your assistants? Are the students happy with the system of work?

Yes, students are very happy with the way we work. But it is quite demanding to teach such courses. It's very exciting, but also very tiring. In the beginning, nobody knew how to teach but now I have some young assistants, my former students. I taught the first generation all by myself, and then I've gradually "raised" my assistants.

Beside trying to reform the Chinese architectural education, you also have a successful architectural practice. It was established in 1998 and it is called Amateur Architecture Studio. Where does the name come from?

The name comes from a small book by French philosopher Roland Barthes. I read some his texts and I found him similar to me. He considers himself an amateur writer, an anti-writer, as opposed to a professional. And I thought it had a good meaning.

Barthes was not the only French Structuralist I read. I was struck by the philosophy of Claude Levi-Strauss. His is the concept of the two different levels of systems that operate in the human society – the deep layer of human substructures, upon which different cultures are built. This could be paralleled with the situation in China. I think that in China, a lot of constructing is done, but there are very few architects that actually do it. Professional architects are doing the buildings, not the construction. I, on the other hand, want to do the construction, to do houses. Therefore, I'm not a professional architect, I'm an amateur architect.

My practice is very small. There are only four people. One of the partners is my wife, and the other two assistants are my students. But the number of people varies between two and ten.

Yet the projects you do are very big.

I have big projects and a small practice. If you want have control over a project where a lot has to be done in very little time, the thinking becomes very complex, and only a few people can share your secret. So it helps to have few people. I

Moj biro je zelo majhen, v njem delamo le štirje, midva z ženo in dva pomočnika, ki sta moja bivša študenta. Število ljudi se spreminja, vendar nas je vedno nekje med dva in deset.

Vaši projekti pa so zelo veliki.

V malem biroju delam velike projekte. Če želiš nadzirati celoten projekt in moraš narediti zelo veliko v zelo kratkem času, lahko svoje skrivnosti deliš le z nekaj ljudmi. Bolje je imeti manj ljudi, mislim, da smo štirje čisto dovolj. Vsakdo od nas ima bogate izkušnje in vsakdo je odgovoren za del projekta.

Vaša arhitektura je odprta za lekcije dediščine modernizma in vplive evropske in ameriške arhitekture ter nosi njihov pečat. Je kakor, da bi hkrati gledal Le Corbusierja in Kahna in celo Herzoga&De Meurona. O instituciji razmišljate podobno kot Kahn: šola je šola, katere bistvo je poučevanje. Arhitektura mora prav tako razmišljati o bistvu svojega programa. Vendar pa vaša arhitektura v svojem bistvu ostaja kitajska.

Morda je to zato, ker sem z vsemi od njih pogosto razpravljaj o arhitekturi ... Obstaja pa tudi skrivna povezava: Louis Kahn je bil sošolec mojega učitelja. Neki drug profesor, ki je prav tako poučeval na moji šoli, pa je bil v petdesetih Le Corbusierjev študent.

Včeraj smo si na koncu dneva ogledali tudi projekcijo dokumentarca o fotografu Juliusu Schulmanu. On in Ezra Stoller sta fotografa, ki sta na nek način oblikovala podobo ameriškega modernizma, ki je veljavna še danes. Vi pa sodelujete z Iwanom Baanom, enim od fotografov, ki bi lahko bil eden tistih, vsaj po mojem mnenju, ki bodo oblikovali podobo, s katero se bo današnja arhitektura predstavila bodočim generacijam. Iwan Baan sodeluje z najbolj vplivnimi arhitekti, od Kazuyo Sejime do Herzoga&De Meurona in Amateur Architecture Studio. Kako se začeli sodelovati?

Srečala sva se pred približno dvema letoma. Italijanska revija Domus je želela objaviti nekatere moje projekte in zato so poklicali Iwana Baana, da jih fotografira. Pred tem sem fotografiral sam, sedaj pa to dela Iwan Baan, jaz pa lahko prihranim nekaj časa.

Ali na Kitajskem izhaja veliko arhitekturnih revij?

Obstaja jih kar precej, vendar pa so le redke od njih kvalitetne. Na Kitajskem revije ne morejo preživeti, če so preveč strokovno usmerjene, tako da je res strokovnih zelo malo.

Najboljša od njih je Time+ Architecture iz Šanghaja, ki je strokovna in tudi precej priljubljena. Izdaja jo univerza in zadnje čase se izboljšuje, tako da je zdaj že postala dobra. Druga, ki je bolj neformalna, se imenuje Beat in China, njen urednik pa je moj nekdanji študent. Je zelo kvalitetna revija o kitajskih mestih. Še ena revija izhaja v Pekingu, pa ni zelo dobra. Revij je veliko, toda niso kritične.

V zadnjih dvajsetih letih na Kitajskem gradi vse več tujih arhitektov, z minulimi pekinškimi Olimpijskimi igrami pa se je zgodil pravi izbruh tujih zvezdnikov, vsi so gradili na Kitajskem. Kakšno je vaše mnenje o prihodu arhitekturnih zvezdnikov na Kitajsko?

Mislim, da to ni slabo, saj je le malo kitajskih arhitektov, ki bi bili vsaj tako dobri. Ko tujci pridejo na Kitajsko, so nekateri od njih zelo dobri, mi pa se moramo s tem sprijazniti. Mnogi domači arhitekti s tem niso zadovoljni, še posebej ljudje iz velikih državnih arhitekturnih ustanov, iz Inštituta za oblikovanje (The Design Institute) na primer. Mnogi arhitekti že zelo dolgo le rišejo izvedbene načrte za mednarodne zvezde, tako da nikoli ne dobijo priložnosti, da bi projektirali, vendar pa z delom za mednarodne zvezde zaslužijo več, kot bi z lastnimi projekti.

Mislim, da imajo kitajski arhitekti dovolj priložnosti za gradnjo. Jaz sem kitajski arhitekt in projektov imam dovolj, torej to ni težava. Seveda pa je podobno, kamorkoli greš. Ko so tuji arhitekti prvič vstopili na Kitajsko, so delali projekte, videli da tu ni toliko denarja, in so odšli. Danes pa se na Kitajskem toliko gradi, da mnogi tujci pridejo le zaslužiti denar, in to je problem. Ne menijo se niti za umetnost, niti za gradnjo. Poleg tega pa ne poznajo niti kitajskih gradbenih zakonov. Sodelovati morajo s kitajskimi podjetji, ki zanje

think the four of us are enough. Each of us has rich experience and each one is responsible for one project.

Your architecture is very open to the Modernist heritage and the influences of European and American architecture, and shows their imprint. It feels as if you are at the same time looking to Le Corbusier, or Louis Kahn, or even Herzog&De Meuron. The way you think about the institution is in a way the way similar to Kahn. School is school and its essence is teaching. And architecture must think about the essence of the programme it builds for. But in its essence, your architecture is still Chinese.

Maybe this is because I've had discussions with all of them in my mind many times. There is also the secret connection. Louis Kahn was for example my teacher's teacher classmate. And another professor that thought at my school in the 1950's was Le Corbusier's student.

Yesterday, there was a screening of a documentary about photographer Julius Schulman. He and Ezra Stoller were photographers who have in a way constructed the image of American Modernism that we have today. You work with Iwan Baan, who in my opinion may well become the photographer that will create the way the architecture of today is going to be presented to the future generations. He is working with the most influential architects of the moment – Sejima, Herzog&De Meuron ... and yourself. How did you start working together?

We met about two years ago. Italian magazine Domus wanted to publish some of my works. And they called Iwan Baan to take pictures of my works. Before that, I took all the pictures myself. Now we have Iwan Baan so I'm spared the trouble.

Are there many architectural magazines in China?

Yes, there quite a few, but very few of them are good. In China, if an architectural magazine is too professional, it cannot survive. So there are only a few professional architectural magazines.

The best one is Time+ Architecture from Shanghai. It's professional and it's quite popular, too. It's published by the university, and it's been getting better and better, so now it's good. The other, more informal one is called Beat in China. Its editor is my former student. It's a very good magazine about Chinese cities. There's another one in Beijing, but it's not very good. There are a few magazines, but almost no criticism.

Foreign architects have been gradually building more and more in China in the last twenty years. But with last year's Olympic Games there was a boom of foreign star architects building in China. How do you see this arrival of international architectural stars to China?

I don't think this is a bad thing. Very few Chinese architects are this good. So when foreigners come to China some of them are really good and we have to deal with that. Many architects are not too happy about this, especially people from the big national architectural institutions – The Design Institute for example. For a very long time, they've only drawn construction plans for the international stars. This way, they never get the opportunity to design, though they earn more money by doing construction drawing for the international stars than they would by designing themselves.

I think good Chinese architects still have enough opportunities to build. I'm a Chinese architect, and I have enough projects, it's not a problem. It's similar everywhere, of course. When foreign architects came to China for the first time, they designed, but then they saw there was no money in China and they left.

But with so much construction going on in China now and in the future, this can become a problem as many foreigners can do nothing but capitalism. They ignore the art and the construction. Besides, they do not know how to construct according to the Chinese construction laws. They have to collaborate with Chinese companies to finish the designs and when the Chinese company is not all that good, you can't expect good results. This is what often happens with competitions. Foreigners just do the concept design and competition projects, and then their work is done as far as they're concerned. At the moment there are countless such competitions underway.



zaključujejo izvedbene načrte. Toda, ker kitajska podjetja niso preveč dobra, ni mogoče pričakovati zelo dobrih rezultatov. Pogosto se to dogaja pri natečajih, ko tujci napravijo le idejno oblikovanje za natečajni projekt, potem pa je njihovo delo, kar se njih samih tiče, opravljeno. Trenutno se odvija nešteto takšnih natečajev.

Vi ne sodelujete pri natečajih?

Sodeloval sem le pri parih. Ko sodeluješ pri natečaju, moraš razmišljati na način natečaja, moraš tekmovati. Zato natečajev ne maram. Pri natečajih je način razmišljanja drugačen. Na primer pri projektu za Muzej zgodovine Ningbo (Ningbo Historic Museum) nisem vedel, da gre za natečaj, in sem pripravil projekte. Potem pa sem izvedel, da je šlo v resnici za natečaj. Tega mi niso povedali, le naročili so mi projekt. Seveda sem izgubil mnogo projektov, ker na natečajih ne sodelujem, pa se mi to ne zdi problem, saj jih niti ne potrebujem toliko.

Ker se na Kitajskem toliko gradi, se verjetno precej zgradb tudi poruši. Porušili naj bi celo nekatere vaših arhitektur. Kako se ob tem počutite?

Po eni strani je stalno rušenje in gradnja na novo seveda zelo zanimiva, po drugi strani pa se mi to zdi zelo potratno. Na Kitajskem ne rušimo le starih ali zgodovinskih stavb, ruši se tudi relativno nove zgradbe, takšne, ki so bile zgrajene pred petnajstimi ali petindvajsetimi leti. Že nekaj časa opazujem kmetijo blizu mesta, v katerem živim, ki so jo v tem času že trikrat ali štirikrat prezidali, hiša pa vsakič dobi čisto nov slog. To se mi zdi nekoliko noro in mi ni čisto nič všeč. Vendar pa je na Kitajskem pač tako. Trudim se, da bi vzpostavil razpravo o vrednotah, tudi s tem, da skušam uporabljati čim več recikliranih materialov. Zadnjih sedem ali deset let jih pogosto uporabljam, saj gre če ne čisto preveč materiala preprosto v nič. Ne maram, da gredo stvari v nič.

Uporaba recikliranih materialov je vznemirljiva v več pogledih. Po eni strani opozarja na etično dilemo stalne zahteve po novostih, ki na koncu končajo kot odpadki. Po drugi strani pa zgradbam daje neko dimenzijo spontanosti, celo naključnosti. Nikoli ne moreš vedeti, kakšni materiali ti bodo na voljo in v kakšnem stanju bodo, tako da ni mogoče predvideti, kako bo zgradba videti, ko bo končana.

Kitajska ima dolgo tradicijo uporabe recikliranih materialov. Zaradi podnebnih razmer, torej zaradi pogostih tajfunov, se hiše pogosto porušijo in jih je treba zgraditi na novo. Obstaja posebna tehnika, s pomočjo katere je nastalo že ogromno prelepih zgradb. Tehniko recikliranja sem dodobra raziskal, veliko pa sem tudi razmišljal, kako bi bilo to znanje mogoče povezati s sodobnimi tehnikami gradnje. To moramo vsekakor šteti za dobro investicijo.

V mojem biroju vedno delujemo na dveh področjih hkrati: eno je oblikovanje, drugo pa je raziskovanje. Celotno, kadar področji nista v neposredni povezavi, skušamo odkriti nekaj novega. V zadnjih desetih letih smo veliko časa posvetili raziskavam na kitajskem podeželju. Širom države je raztresenih na tisoče vasi, med katerimi jih je mnogo res prelepih. Vanje je vpletenih toliko arhitekturnih procesov, materialov in tehnik gradnje, da so preprosto čudovite. Še naslednjih deset let bi lahko porabil, da bi potoval po državi in obiskal vsako od njih.

Ali zaradi vaših raziskav in zaradi iskanja navdiha veliko potujete? Večnoma potujete po Kitajskem ali v tujini?

Po Kitajskem sem veliko prepotoval, obiskal sem mnogo vasic na podeželju. Potovanja so tudi del kitajske tradicije: tradicionalno si moral, če si hotel postati modrec, prehoditi več kot 10.000 milj poti in prebrati več kot 10.000 knjig. Izven Kitajske pa sem bil prvič leta 2001.

Videti je, da ste že prepotovali zahtevanih 10.000 milj, kaj pa je z 10.000 knjigami? Ali veliko berete? Ste mnenja, da se je arhitekture mogoče naučiti iz knjig?

Mislim, da je to mogoče, vsaj jaz se znam iz knjig naučiti arhitekture. Vendar pa se je ne učim le iz arhitekturnih knjig. Berem mnogo različne literature. Berem leposlovje, filozofijo, zgodovino, torej karkoli, od koder se lahko naučim česa, kar je povezano z arhitekturo. V zadnjih desetih letih sem se veliko arhitekture naučil iz knjig, in to dobre arhitekture. Nekateri pisatelji jo znajo

You don't participate in competitions?

No, I only entered a few. When doing a competition, you have to think like competition, you have to compete. I don't like competition. The thinking is different, you have to think competition. For example, for the Ningbo Historic Museum, I didn't know it was a competition, so I did the design and then I found out it was a competition. They didn't tell me it was a competition, they just ordered me to do the design. Naturally, since I don't participate in competitions, I've lost many projects. But this is not a problem. I only need a few projects.

With so much rapid construction taking place, I suppose a lot of buildings are getting destroyed in China every day. Even some of your own architectures have been demolished – ten or so. How do you feel about this?

On the one hand, I think the constant demolishing and rebuilding is very interesting, but on the other hand, I think it's a big waste. In China, we are demolishing not only old or historical buildings, but also buildings that have been built quite recently - things that were built fifteen or twenty years ago are destroyed and rebuilt. I have been observing a farmer's family near my city, Hangzhou, who have built and rebuilt their own house three or four times now. Each time, they wanted their house to have a new style.

I think this is a bit crazy and I do not like it. But this is the situation in China. I am trying to generate some discussion about the values, also by using a lot of recycled materials. I've used them often in the past seven or ten years, there is just too much material being wasted. And I do not like things to be wasted.

The use of recycled materials is fascinating from many points of view. On the one hand, it draws attention to the ethical problems of constant demand of ever new things which at the end produce nothing but waste. But on another level, it also gives a dimension of spontaneity to building, even a bit of randomness. You never know which materials you're going to find, in what state they're going to be, so really there's no way of knowing how exactly the building is going to look in the end.

In China there is a long tradition of using recycled materials. Because of the climate conditions, namely the typhoons, buildings often get demolished and rebuilt. There is a technique which has produced a great many beautiful recycled buildings. I did a lot of research on this subject and then thought a lot about how to connect this knowledge with the modern techniques. It's an investment. In my practice we always do two parallel types of work: one is the design and the other one is the research. Even when they are not directly connected, we try to find out something new. We've done a lot of research in the Chinese countryside in the last ten years. In our country, there are thousands upon thousands of villages. Many of them are really beautiful. There are so many architectural processes, and materials, and construction techniques involved, they are amazing. I could spend the next ten years just travelling around and visiting every one of these beautiful places.

Do you travel a lot for your research purposes and inspiration? Do you travel around the world, or mostly in China?

I travelled a lot around China, I have been on many trips visiting the villages and the countryside. Travelling is also a Chinese tradition: traditionally, you need to complete two basic trainings as a scholar: one is to walk more than 10,000 miles of roads and the other is to read more than 10,000 books. But the first time I travelled outside China was in 2001.

It seems that you've already travelled 10,000 miles, but what about those 10,000 books? Do you read a lot? Do you think you can learn architecture from books?

Yes I think you can - at least I can. But I do not learn architecture only from books on architecture. I read many different books. I read literature, philosophy, history - anything where you can learn something that relates to architecture. This is my way learning and developing. Actually, in the past 10 years, I've learnt a lot about architecture from books, great architecture. But it was in the field of philosophy, history, Classical history, many different things. Some of the writers really have the ability to write architecture. For example Italo Calvino, he is a

zares dobro zapisati. Italo Calvino je na primer odličen pisatelj, brati ga morajo tudi moji študentje. Prebrati pa morajo tudi argentinskega pisatelja, Luisa Borgesa.

V svojem predavanju ste nam pokazali nekaj izjemnih kitajskih slik, naslikanih v 10. in 11. stoletju in nekaj lepih fotografij tradicionalnih Kitajskih vasi.

To je moje duhovno ozadje. Vendar ne zato, ker bi bile te slike tako lepe, temveč zaradi tega, ker so resnične. Kitajske pokrajine na nekaterih krajih še zdaj takšne, kot je na teh slikah. Naša dežela je kot slika: je resnična in dejanska. Umetniki, ki so te slike naslikali, so jih naslikali tako, da predstavljajo pokrajino, kakršna je v resnici bila, hkrati pa so pokrajino tudi oblikovali tako, da je postala čimbolj podobna slikam. Na Kitajskem obstaja vsaj 3000 let skupne in prepletene tradicije slikarstva in oblikovanja krajine.

Še pred tridesetimi leti je bila večina Kitajske takšne, zdaj pa je več kot 90 odstotkov te tradicije že izginilo. Kar je zgrajeno na novo, pa je večinoma zelo slabo. Ohranjanje tradicionalne kitajske krajine je torej zelo pomembna naloga, ki pa je hkrati precej kontradiktorna, saj je tradicijo nemogoče zgraditi znova. Obstaja legenda o Feniksu, ptiču, ki živi tisoč let. Po tisoč letih zažge samega sebe in v ognju umre, samo zato, da se lahko ponovno rodi iz pepela in zaživi novo življenje. Kitajska je trenutno v ognju. Vendar pa bo ponovno zaživela, o tem sem prepričan.

Kako se počutite v Piranu?

Piran je majhno mesto, vendar je zelo lepo. Mislim, da so majhni kraji zelo pomembni. Na Kitajskem se je zapustilo mnogo majhnih krajev, saj imajo ljudje raje velika mesta. Prepričan sem, da ima vsaka dežela bogato tradicijo, ki pa se skriva v malih krajih, ne pa v velikih mestih. Zato pa so majhni kraji tako zelo pomembni.

great writer. My students have to read Calvino. The other is the Argentine writer Luis Borges, whom my students also have to read.

In your lecture, you showed us some exquisite paintings from 10th and 11th century, and photographs of some beautiful villages.

This is my background, this is what supports me. This is not because the paintings are beautiful but because of the Chinese landscape: it is not a painting, it is real. Even now, many places are similar to these paintings. Our country is like a painting. And it's real and it's true. The artists painted the images that were like the landscape, and they formed the landscape to become like the paintings. There is the mutual tradition of painting and landscape design going back at least 3000 years.

Only thirty years ago, most of China was still like that. But now almost 90% of it is gone. And what is built anew is mostly rubbish. So preserving the traditional Chinese landscape is a very important issue. But it is also contradictory, because it's very difficult to rebuild. There is the old story about the Phoenix, the bird that lives for 1000 years and then sets itself on fire and dies only to be reborn again and live another life. Right now, China is on fire. But it will be reborn, I'm sure of it.

How do you like it here, in Piran?

Piran is a very small town, but it is very beautiful. I think small places are extremely important. In China, many small places are being abandoned, people seem to prefer large cities. I believe that every country has a tradition that is rich, but it lies in the small places, not in the big cities. That's why the small places are so important.