

# MAKING

**TEXT: NICOLAI BO ANDERSEN**

**IT MAY BE ARGUED THAT THE EXISTENTIAL DISCOMFORT OF MODERN MAN COMES FROM BEING REDUCED TO JUST A CONSUMER LED BY THE FLUX OF IMAGES. USING THE MAKING OF THE BARCA AND THE STACKS PAVILIONS AS CASES, THIS ARTICLE ASKS HOW WE CAN GET A MORE AUTHENTIC RELATION TO THE WORLD THROUGH THE MAKING OF ARCHITECTURE. IT IS ARGUED THAT BARCA AND STACKS BRINGS AN ARCHITECTURAL CONTENT TO PRESENCE THROUGH MAKING – CONNECTING BUILDING HERITAGE, PHYSICAL MATTER AND THE HUMAN BODY IN AN AUTHENTIC WAY.**













## Introduction

One of modern society's greatest problems might be disconnection. Alienation to nature. Distance to the body. The Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa argues that architecture has been reduced to images without contact to the language of the body (Pallasmaa 2000). One might argue that the existential discomfort of modern man comes from being reduced to just a consumer led by the flux of images. More than ever, we need to reclaim elemental experiential qualities in architecture. Building should not just be a question of looking good, it should talk to all the senses, the whole human body. The question is, how can we get a more authentic relation to the world through the making of architecture?

Barca and Stacks are attempts to connect to the deeper qualities of architecture. To physically understand the qualities tectonics and to feel the properties of materials. The design of the two pavilions are based on traditional building techniques. They are inspired by historic references. And they re-present experienced architectural phenomena.

## Barca

The Barca pavilion is designed by Nicolai Bo Andersen and Christoffer Harlang. It was built in the summer 2016 by students at the Master's Program in Architectural Heritage, Transformation and Conservation (KTR) at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation, School of Architecture (KADK) under the supervision of Morten Gehl.

Barca means boat and is inspired by a technique: A light structure, tied together with rope and wrapped by a thin fabric was traditionally used to construct simple, lightweight boats. In the Barca the boat-like structure is turned upside down and placed on top of the building as roof. The pavilion gives the impression of an object floating on the pier. The wall structure is made of timber columns carrying an elliptical beam to which the roof have been secured. The outside is clad with metal sheet panels making a dynamic play of light and shadow as the sinus geometry of the cladding meets the curving geometry of the pavilion. The thin fabric of the roof allows the light to be filtered through the structure and light up the interior.

## Stacks

The Stacks pavilion is designed by Nicolai Bo Andersen based on the artistic research project "Stabel" (Andersen 2017). It was built in the summer 2017 by students at the Master's Program in Architectural Heritage, Transformation and Conservation (KTR) at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation, School of Architecture (KADK) under the supervision of Morten Gehl.

The project is inspired by a historical reference: the material, the geometry and the experiential effect of timber stacked for drying as photographed by the Danish architect Ole Meyer (2000: 6-7). The structurally stable but visually dynamic form and the play of light and shadow in the façade are motifs that has informed the design of the pavilion. Furthermore, works by contemporary architects Peter Zumthor (Durisch 2014) and Gion Caminada (Caminada 2008) have served as inspiration. The pavilion is a re-interpretation of a traditional building technique: The timber logs have been joined in the corners by a technique called "lafting", more specifically the joint called "sinknov" (Drange, Aanensen and Brænne 1992: 113), or what in English is known as a *dovetail*. The stacked timber logs create a space with a specific strong experiential quality when the light gets filtered through the structure.

## Making

The content of a work of art comes to presence through a specific technique. Heidegger points out that to the Greek, the word *tikto* means "to bring forth or to produce". According to Heidegger the word for technique, *techne*, does neither mean art or handicraft, but rather: "to make something appear, within what is present, as this or that, in this way or that way" (Heidegger 1978: 253). Making is letting appear, it brings the intrinsic content of the work to presence among the other things in the world. The two pavilions are a synthesis of a technical, a historic and a phenomenological approach. They combine practical, theoretical and artistic dimensions. They also address questions we are normally not closely connected to in the studio: working environment, production conditions and resources. One might say the pavilions are models of how to work architecturally with sustainable building heritage, robust structures and environmentally friendly materials reflecting the sustainable development goals of UN (2016).

Eduard Sekler argues that it is all about "the tectonic statement: the noble gesture which makes visible a play of forces, of load and support in column and entablature, calling forth our empathetic participation in the experience" (Sekler 1965: 92). The understanding of a building is not just a matter of visible form, but rather a bodily experience of space making us understand gravity and feel the quality of materials. We are never just spectators but rather participants in the experience, connecting us to the physical forces of nature. Barca and Stacks can in this sense be seen as models of how traditional building techniques, historic references and experienced architectural phenomena can be the starting point of a progressive architectural design. The architect re-presents an experienced architectural phenomena through a concrete, physical material. The building re-actualizes a historic motif to a contemporary attention.

In this way Barca and Stacks brings the intrinsic content to presence through making – connecting building heritage, physical matter and the human body in an authentic way.

## Acknowledgement

This article is a part of the research project "Sustainable transformation – transformation models, strategies and methods", which is about the transformation of existing buildings, historical knowledge and technical mastery into a contemporary architectural practice. Stacks is based on the artistic research project "Stabel" (Andersen 2017).

## References

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