

International Wood Construction Forum (FBC): a brilliant 5th* edition!

1,090 participants, 110 exhibitors, a hundred lecturers, several simultaneous exhibitions pertaining to wood, 600 full pages of Acts given to participants upon arrival, a new and well-adapted setting easily accessible for those arriving from abroad (Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland), a wooden arch erected upon the square, idyllic weather... a convivial atmosphere at Nancy!



Members of the wood construction industry gathered together for three days at Epinal and at Nancy, in a unique setting streamlined to renew the exchange of information between various players. Participants testified to a recent augmentation of quotes and a springtime resurgence of private demand, while productive investments seem to be on the upswing. Though public demand remains lackluster, we expect much from the European recovery plan, which (thankfully!) will not be taken into account in the calculation of budget deficits...

Participants benefited from technical briefings, refreshed by the department of Lorraine's announcement of their ambitions in the timber industry, as well as by the detailed affirmation of the advantages of wood construction in the context of the 21st century; by the symbolic success in building a beautiful wooden arch in the Centre Prouvé square; by the friendly links forged over the course of the convention between industrials, enterprises, engineers, and contractors. The Forum's many lecturers—very often brilliant, at ease, and true pedagogues—presented a wealth of knowledge to attendees, aided by impeccable logistics and a rich store of images, delivered to the participants through the thickest Acts of the Forum to date, and complimented by the exposition space perfectly in tune with the themes addressed during the Forum.



(*) The 5th edition of FBC 2015 - co-organized by the CNDB, FCBA Technological Institute, France Bois Régions and Gipeblor for Lorraine, ENSTIB Epinal, ENSArchitecture Nancy / the University of Lorraine and IBC - Wood Construction Engineers - took place the 15th, 16th and 17th of April at Epinal and Nancy.

Above all, the impression left by this 5th edition of the Wood Construction Forum is one of the seriousness and unfazed energy of the network which will manage to absorb the shock of the current crisis and anchor itself in the French world of construction. The example of Slovenia, guest country of the 2015 edition of the Forum, shows how the emergence of wood construction is a European phenomenon which will only grow. Similarly, French preoccupations with local timber processing and with short channels find their echo in the actual development of a veritable domestic wood economy in Slovenia.



The fifth edition of the Forum was one for the architects. The new congress center's capacity for accommodation allowed for the Forum to take place in conjunction with a reunion of the Order of Architects in Lorraine. The Nancy agency Studiolada, along with Nicolas Barthes, showed how one can, from a pile of planks, rapidly create an object in dialogue with the concrete, steel, and glass of the tri-postal center of Claude Prouvé, beautifully redesigned by architect Marc Barani.



The students of ENSArchitecture of Nancy and of ENSTIB Epinal enriched the gathering with models and prototypes, such as "The Confessionals," presented with "10 Years of Challenges in Wood" and the CNDB's "The Wood Path." Like never before, the Forum has moved up a notch in architectural matters, from all points of view.

From the outset, Stéphane Cochet of the Parisian agency A003 enthralled listeners of the B1 workshop dedicated to low-energy construction, developing a critical and technical discourse coupled with an appeal for passive construction without prevarication. Simon Teyssou, Pascal Gontier, Etienne Mégard, Alain Bretagnolle of Architecture Studio, Dominique Molard, and Anouk Legendre, among others, showed the



high level of competence and skill reached by the foremost architects in wood construction today, as well as their capacity to transfer their knowledge to their peers, which bodes well for wood architecture in France. The foreign architects illuminated the specificities of their approaches: Duncan Lewis, candid in his criticism; Rune Abrahamsen, in praise of simplicity; Yichen Lu, capable of transcending a limited budget. And finally, there was Shigeru Ban.



In a rich conference lasting a little over an hour, Japanese architect Shigeru Ban presented his works through the lens of dynamic architectural thought calling into question fundamentals: the architect's helping the destitute where he might have once emphasized the strength of the powerful; where architecture stressed permanency in structures, meeting customer expectations by generating lightness, openness, and transparency. To the surprise of many, Shigeru Ban spent more than an hour in the exhibition space, where he visited numerous stands and collected information on the latest developments in wood construction techniques in Europe.

This robust presence of architects and architecture did not diminish the role of wood engineering and design firms, suppliers and their clients, specialized businesses, and higher education institutions. The "Compagnons du Devoir" demonstrated their expertise through the construction of the arch. Students from ENSTIB and ENSArchitecture were warmly thanked for their efficiency and dedication. The tributes to honor teacher Jean-Claude Bignon and entrepreneur Claude Weisrock contributed to highlighting the various complimentary facets of this industry.



For further information:

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