

Local Architecture in a Globalized World

Today, architects around the world face an unprecedented series of challenges. Issues such as the rapid growth of populations, societal and political instability, and climate change present those working on the built environment with new levels of complexity. This impacts the myriad decisions that go into any architectural assignment: selecting materials and organizing labor, the use of space, and the interaction between a building and its surroundings.

Globalization brings faster and more streamlined knowledge-sharing and integrative solutions, but also the risk of standardization and homogenization. This is particularly true in our ever-expanding cities, where skyscrapers and high-tech construction systems define our image of what cities “should” be, dominating not only the skyline but the headlines and prevailing academic discourse. In this context, the progression of architecture continues to be shaped by an overtly



Western perspective. Size, technological advancement, territorial dominance, material innovation, and engineering prowess are often privileged in the professional conversation, according to a Western idea of what constitutes progress. Even beyond these borders, in regions where colonization has marked the architectural landscape, systemization and mass production—the pillars of our integrated international culture—threaten to neuter local knowledge and tradition.

Architectural practitioners are, then, presented with a unique opportunity. Beyond satisfying the basic human need for shelter, the profession now has the potential to profoundly reshape the way we live in the twenty-first century. The tools of the global economy—the powers of communication and production—equip designers and builders to make decisions that will affect our future livelihood and that of the planet. *Beyond the West* explores the diversity of global architectural cultures and, in doing so, proves that this approach is possible, and indeed will flourish.

This book investigates architecture that challenges our current grasp of the discipline, looking beyond the Western world to discover alternative solutions to globally relevant issues such as sustainability, transport and migration, material innovation, and even wellness. It aims to uncover the architecture of regional cultures and unpack what localization can mean in a global context by investigating how regional social, cultural, and economic conditions can produce intuitive and original architectural strategies. *Beyond the West* looks to thriving practices and projects in parts of the world that are seldom recognized in this arena. We highlight what progress looks like in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, with a focus on vernacular applications. We discover