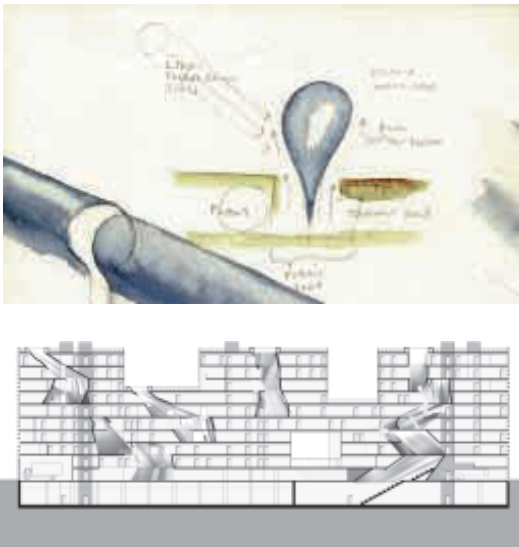


## Velika knjiga i mala knjiga

Osvrt na dvije knjige Stevena Holla objavljene prošle godine: "Teorija crnog labuda", u izdanju Princeton Architectural Pressa, te "Steven Holl: Izrečena arhitektura", u izdanju Rizzolija

piše / written by Srdjan Jovanović Weiss



↑↑

Postrojenje za pročišćavanje vode Whitney / Whitney Water Purification Facility And Park, CT, SAD / USA, 1998-2005

konceptualni akvarel / concept watercolor

↑

Simmons Hall, MIT, Cambridge, MA, SAD / USA, 1999-2002

uzdužni presjek / longitudinal section

> Nedavno su objavljene dvije knjige poznatog njujorškog arhitekta Stevena Holla: "Izrečena arhitektura", koju je pred nekoliko mjeseci objavio Rizzoli, te "Kuća: teorija crnog labuda", također iz 2007., koju je pak izdao Princeton Architectural Press. Riječ je o dvije monografije koje se osvrću na 15, odnosno 24 projekta koje su u nedavnoj prošlosti izašle iz studija Steven Holl Architects, skupine od nekoliko desetaka arhitekata vođenih vizijom istoimenog osnivača i direktora.

Na ovim je stranicama predstavljen niz primjera najinteligentnije i najpronijelivije arhitektonske prakse sjeverno-američke projektantske scene, gdje je Steven Holl predvodnik već nekoliko desetljeća. Objavljivanje vlastitih radova Stevenu Hollu nije novost; publicitet mu nije stran, baš kao ni nekim njegovim kolegama s Architectural Association u Londonu. Brojne monografije, intervjui i članci napisani o Hollu u godinama nakon njegovog prvog samostalnog izdanja kulturne arhitektonske serije "Pamphlet architecture" svjedoče o Hollovoj izloženosti i pojavi u javnoj sferi. Njegove vizije, predstavljene prepoznatljivim akvarelima koji prethode fazi projektiranja, postale su svojevrsni arhitektonski trademark. Hollova je poetika dočekana s mješavinom divljenja i povremenih neuljudnih kritika osobnih slabosti. Taj miješani prijem njegove pojave kao projektanta vizionara i pjesničkog sanjara donio mu je neočekivane izazove u obliku projekata u Europi, Aziji i Sjevernoj Americi, no rijetko u njegovu gradu - New Yorku.

Ove dvije nove knjige ne razlikuju se mnogo u pogledu vizualne prezentacije. Grafički dizajn obiju prilično je tradicionalan i suzdržan, što arhitektonskim reprodukcijama omogućava da dođu do izražaja. "Kuća: teorija crnog labuda" kraća je i posvećena obiteljskim kućama koje su projektirali ili izveli Steven Holl Architects. Druga knjiga, "Izrečena arhitektura", zamjetno je obimnija i razvrstava Hollove projekte u četiri različite kategorije. Uvod "Kuća" napisao je Steven Holl, a pogovor Michael Bell. "Izrečena arhitektura" ima drugačiji pristup, s uvodom Lebbeusa Woodsa, Hollovog starog prijatelja i kolege, u kojemu se otkrivaju dragocjeni podaci o profesionalnim počecima te dvojice arhitekata u New Yorku. Nakon uvoda slijede četiri uređena prijepisa autorovih prezentacija rada Stevena Holla na sveučilištima i u muzejima, u kojima je prikladno zaogrnuo rad vlastitog biroa u osobnu i pjesničku teoriju. Posljednje poglavlje ove knjige pregled je anegdota o pojedinom projektu. Dok su raniji dijelovi usmjereni prema tumačenju Hollove filozofije, posljednji dio sadrži možda najbolje izvore za bilo kojeg mladog arhitekta koji pokušava istovremeno djelovati u New Yorku i globalno. Dvije knjige razlikuje naglasak na različite sadržaje. Veće se izdanje bavi važnim društvenim pitanjima, a na koja Holl tvrdi da je najbolji odgovor - raditi bolju arhitekturu. Primjer ovog pristupa je prvo poglavlje naslovljeno "Pro-Kyoto". Ovdje se Holl priključuje općoj kritici vlastite, američke vlade zbog nedonošenja adekvatnih zakona o okolišu. U tom poglavlju Holl predstavlja svoj Pogon za

## The big book and the small book

A review of two Steven Holl's books published last year: "A black swan theory" by Princeton Architectural Press, and "Steven Holl: Architecture spoken" by Rizzoli

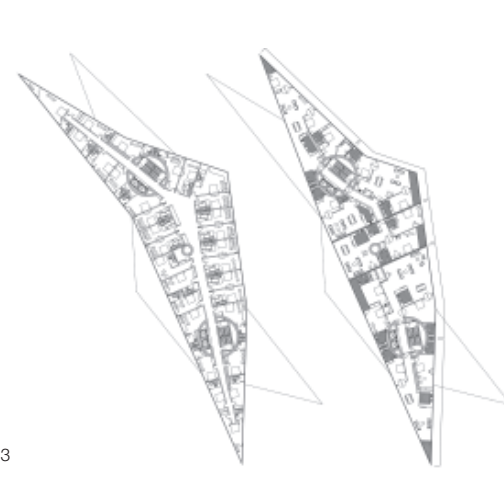
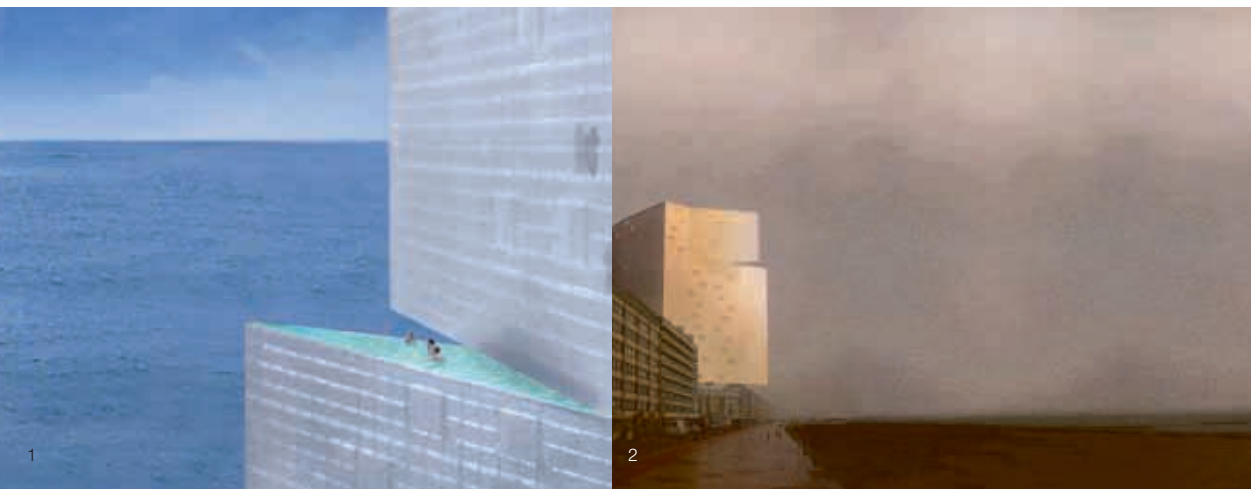
> Recently two new books authored by the famed New York architect Steven Holl came to light: "Steven Holl, Architecture Spoken", 2007 published by Rizzoli and "House: Black Swan Theory", 2007 published by Princeton Architectural Press. Each is a monograph which discusses 15 and 24 projects respectively that were executed in the recent past by Steven Holl Architects, a force of a few dozen architects and interns led by the vision of its eponymous founder and principal.

A series of some of the most intelligent and poignant architecture in the Northern American design scene is presented in these pages, demonstrating that Steven Holl stands at the very front of the field, just as he has on and off for a few decades now. Steven Holl is not new to publishing his work and like his peers who have finished their schooling at the Architectural Association in London, he is no stranger to publicity. The numerous monographs, interviews and articles that have been produced about him in the years since Holl's first self-published issue of the cultish "Pamphlet architecture" series attest to his visibility and stature in the public realm. His visions, presented in his trademark watercolor sketches that preceded the design phase, were so known to those in the architecture field as to be as common as air. His poetics were greeted with a mix of admiration and at times with impolite criticisms of his personal weaknesses. This mixed reception to his persona as a visionary designer and a poetic dreamer brought him unexpected challenges in the form of projects in Europe and Asia and North America, but rarely projects in the city where he is based - New York.

The two new books are not very different in their mode of visual presentation. They are both fairly traditional and restrained in their graphic design to allow the reproductions to express the architecture on their own. "House: Black Swan Theory", the shorter of the two, is dedicated to private residences designed or completed by Steven Holl Architects. The other book, "Architecture Spoken", is quite a bit bigger in size and heft and arranges Holl's projects in four distinct categories. The introduction to House is written by Steven Holl and the afterword is by Michael Bell. "Architecture Spoken" takes a different approach with an introduction by Lebbeus Woods, who is a friend and early colleague of Holl, in which he reveals some precious information on the early development of the two architects in New York City. This introduction is followed by four edited transcripts of Steven Holl's own presentations of his work at universities and museums in which he aptly dressed up the work of his studio in his own personal and poetic theory. The final chapter of this book is a compendium of anecdotes about each project. While the earlier sections are deeply oriented towards an interpretation of Holl's philosophy, this last section contains possibly the best resources for any young architect attempting to practice both in New York City and globally. The two books are distinguished by their emphasis on

pročišćavanje vode u Connecticutu. Zgrada začudnog obrisa u svojoj je osnovi industrijska hala, te postaje ikonom jednog ekološki svjesnog pristupa. Gotovo nadnaravan vizualni dojam ove osebujne građevine dobro služi proaktivnom stavu koji Holl zauzima, nudeći pravi ikonički doprinos, bez suvišnog raspredanja. Ovaj se projekt dobro nadovezuje na javno izgovorenu postavku Lebbeusa Woodsa da će arhitekt najbolje pridonijeti društvu u krizi proizvodeći bolju arhitekturu; bilo projektima, bilo izvedbama. I Woods i Holl smatraju da će se profesionalci najbolje oduprijeti političkom nazadovanju ako počnu postizati bolje rezultate u vlastitom radu, gdje mogu govoriti svojim vlastitim jezikom. Ova se ideja ogleda i u naslovu knjige: "Izrečena arhitektura", što može ukazivati upravo na dobrovoljno sudjelovanje arhitekata kao društvene sile,

*different content. The larger volume addresses important issues that we are facing in society, to which Holl claims the best response is to make better architecture. An example of this approach is the first chapter called Pro-Kyoto. Here Holl joins in the common criticism of his own US government for not passing environmental laws to preserve the qualities of the earth. In this chapter he presents his Water Purification Facility in South Central Connecticut. An oddly-shaped edge of what is essentially an industrial shed becomes an icon of an ecologically-aware approach. The near sublime effect of the photographs of this awkward building serve well the pro-active stance Holl is taking, moreover by not only talking about it, but by doing something iconic about it. This project connects well to publicly spoken thesis by Lebbeus Woods that an*



1  
Sail Hybrid, Knokke-Heist, Belgija / Belgium,  
2005  
vidikovac nad Atlantikom /  
lookout above the Atlantic

2  
Sail Hybrid, Knokke-Heist, Belgija / Belgium,  
2005  
zid Atlantika / Atlantic wall

3  
Sail Hybrid, Knokke-Heist, Belgija / Belgium,  
2005  
tlocrt tipične etaže / typical floor plan

no ne kao političara, nego kao boljih arhitekata. "Steven Holl: Izrečena arhitektura" govori o toj želji. Pa ipak, krajnji smisao svega baš i nije tako jednostavan, jer Hollova informirana praksa treba klijente da je pokrenu. Moćna Izrečena arhitektura sadrži odvažne projekte kao što su casino i hotel u Belgiji (na neočekivanoj strani Atlantika), komercijalnu stambenu arhitekturu u Japanu, te studentski dom za MIT, elitno privatno američko sveučilište. Arhitekt je žongler koji mora pronaći zajedničko tlo između krajnosti i iznaći načine da ih prostorno smjesti.

U središnjem dijelu knjige o Hollovoj raznolikoj praksi nalaze se zgrade arhitektonskih škola, namijenjene novim naraštajima arhitekata. Škola arhitekture pri University of Minnesota i Pratt Institute u Brooklynu veličanstveni su primjeri Hollova povratka projektantskim osnovama pri osmišljavanju obrazovne ustanove za mlade arhitekate. Time je postao jedan od rijetkih arhitekata koji su dobili priliku projektirati školu arhitekture. Hoće li škole biti bolje zbog svoga iznimnog izgleda, nije Hollova briga, barem ne na površini. No, predstavljajući ove projekte izgrađene za buduće arhitekate, knjiga nosi prikriveni izazov samim prostorima da budu sredstvo izražavanja budućih naraštaja.

S druge strane, "Kuća: Teorija crnog labuda" ima potpuno drugačije ambicije - predstavlja odabir privatnih kuća izgrađenih za pojedinačne naručitelje. Djeluje mnogo osobnije od "Izrečene arhitekture", djelomice zato što su je izdali napredni pristalice misije Stevena Holla, Princeton Architectural Press. Ova tvrdo ukoričena žuta knjižica s utisnutim dijagramom jedne neizgrađene kuće i omotom od tiskanog zlatnog lišća zastupa u cijelosti drugačije stavove od veće knjige. Prva razlika je u nijansiranju prezentacije projekata, izgrađenih i neizgrađenih, usredotočene na obitavališta koja nisu kolektivna, već osobna.

*architect shall best contribute society in crisis by doing better architectural work, both in drawing and in building. Their idea is that professionals' best resistance to deteriorations in politics is to attain better results in their own work, where professionals can speak their own language. This concept resonates in the title of the book: "Architecture Spoken", which may allude to exactly this voluntary involvement of architects as a social force, but not as politicians, rather as better architects. "Steven Holl, Architecture Spoken", speaks about this desire and tells about this experience. This may be true and honest enough, but at the end of the day the point is not as simple as that. Holl's informed practice needs clients to fuel it. The hefty "Architecture Spoken" contains projects as audacious as hotel towers for Casino and Hotel in Belgium, on the unexpected side of the Atlantic, commercial housing architecture in Japan, and a student dormitory for MIT, the elite private university in Cambridge, MA. The architect is the juggler who needs to find the middle ground between extremes and to forge ways to house them.*

*In the middle of the book on Holl's diverse practice are buildings for the schools of architecture, for the new generations of architects. The University of Minnesota School of Architecture and Pratt Institute in Brooklyn are superb examples of how Holl comes back to basics with design to house the education of young architects. With this he is one of rare architects to have the opportunity to design schools of architecture. Whether the schools will be better because of their outstanding design is not Holl's concern, at least not on the surface. But in presenting these projects built for future architects, the book carries an underlying challenge for the spaces themselves to be the medium for the expression of future generations.*

Dok listamo knjigu, slike uvjerljivo prenose dojam osjetilnog prebivanja, tako važnog u Hollovu projektiranju stanovanja. Prema Hollu, ova specifična ideja znači doživljavati životni prostor kao sigurno utočište, odvojeno od grada i gradske gustoće. Kuće u knjizi poredane su prema veličini. Najveća, kuća švicarskog veleposlanika u SAD-u, na prvom je mjestu, a najmanja i najskromnija, po imenu Round Lake Hut, izgrađena sjeverno od New Yorka, na posljednjem.

Ostali projekti predstavljaju slijed izgrađenih i neizgrađenih djela koja prikazuju raznolikost mjerila i konteksta. Također nagovještavaju jednu pomalo klasičnu želju (u Americi još uvijek živu), a to je pronaći ugodno mjesto za život izvan vreve velegrada. Uistinu, obiteljska kuća, kao tipologija, problem je američkoga grada, osobito grada



kao što je New York. Gradska gustoća nije prisutna ni u jednom kontekstu u kojem je Holl gradio, što otkriva neizrečeni dio njegova projekta, a to je bavljenje problemom urbane tipologije u nestajanju. Na ovu se točku knjiga ne poziva izravno, nego se listajući može steći dojam da možda u rukama držimo jedan od posljednjih jedinstvenih kataloga projekata obiteljskih kuća. Uvodni tekst Stevena Holla ne ukazuje na ovu namjeru. Umjesto toga nudi "teoriju" o otuđenju dijela njegove prakse povezanog s projektiranjem osobnih domova.

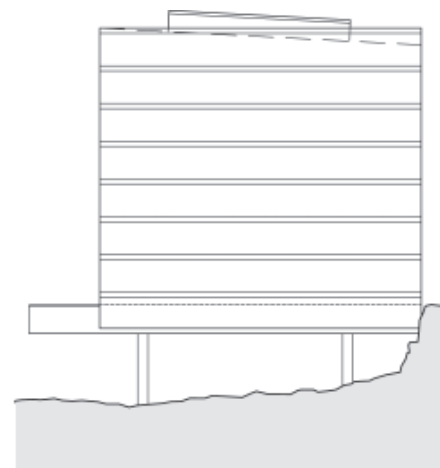
Teorija koju naziva "teorijom crnog labuda" u stvarnosti nije akademski skup istina, nego slijed zasebnih mišljenja o metafori o crnom labudu. Čudno (crno) i elegantno-lijepo (labud) protagonisti su ove teorije, koju bih prije nazvao programatskom izjavom, nego teorijom prisutnosti. Čini se da "crni labud" izbjegava sve probleme objekta, poput "crne ovce", ili čak "bijelog labuda". "Teorija" to ne spominje izriječno, no sasvim je jasno: uzvišena želja za ljepotom, sama po sebi zagonetkom, razlikuje se od prosječnog sivila stambene produkcije u Sjedinjenim Državama, najčešće građene za bogate i frustrirane. Ovdje Holl zauzima čvrst položaj čuvara jednog od američkih ideala koji opstaje još od doba Franka Lloyda Wrighta - kuće u preriji.

Njegova utjeha po pitanju čudnog i pretpostavljeno lijepog stoga je u skladu sa začecima modernog doma Novog Svijeta, koji je Wright rano kapitalizirao u modernističkom pokretu. Wright, zapravo, još uvijek drži poziciju najvećega graditelja 'kuća izvan grada', budući da ga nitko nije uspio nadmašiti, uključujući i Roberta Venturija i Denise Scott-Brown, kao i Louisa Kahna i njegove senzibilne projekte kuća u Philadelphiji. Steven Holl možda polaže pravo na položaj nasljednika ovog osobitog prijestolja, a možda na to ima i potpuno pravo.

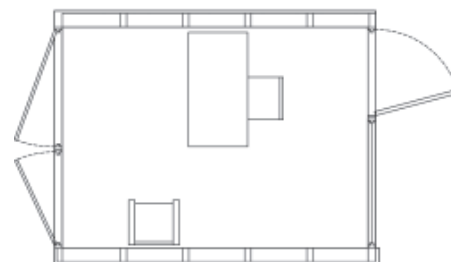
On the other hand, "House: Black Swan Theory" is entirely different in its ambition. This book presents a selection of private houses built for individual clients, for friends and for governments. The book looks much more personal than "Architecture Spoken", in part because it is published by Steven Holl's vanguard supporters in his quest, the Princeton Architectural Press. This small yellow hardcover book inscribed with a diagram of an unbuilt house, with a jacket of printed gold tree leaves, makes a completely different claim from the bigger book. The distinction is first in the tone of presentation of the projects, built and unbuilt, so as to focus on the range of inhabitation, which is not meant to be collective, but personal. When one flips through this book the images convey convincingly the feeling of sensual inhabitation that is so significant for Steven Holl's design for living. To Holl, this specific concept means to think of a living space as the one that is securely removed from the city, and from urban density to be a place of refuge. The houses are arranged in the book according to their scale. The largest, a residence for the Swiss ambassador in the United States of America, comes first. The smallest and most modest, built in upstate New York called Round Lake Hut comes last.

The projects in between are an assortment of built and un-built work that show the variety of scales and contexts that Steven Holl Architects have engaged. They also suggest the perhaps classical desire (still alive in America) to provide a comfortable place outside of the bustling metropolis. Indeed, a house as a type is a problem for the American city, especially one like New York. It is telling that amidst all of the contexts in which Holl has built houses, the density of the city is absent. This reveals an unspoken part of his project, namely to address the problem of a vanishing urban typology. This point is not stated directly in the book, but the sense that we may be looking into some of the last coherent catalogs of single house projects emanates throughout the pages. The introductory text by Steven Holl does not shed light on this agenda. Instead it offers "a theory" of the estrangement of his practice that is specifically connected to his design of personal homes.

The theory, referred to as the Black Swan Theory is not really an academic set of truths, but a sequence of individual opinions about the metaphor of the Black Swan. The odd (black), and the elegantly beautiful (swan) are confined to this "theory", which I would call a statement of action rather than a theory of presence. The Black Swan seems to avoid all the problems of the object as if it were a Black Sheep, and even a White Swan. The "theory" does not spell it out, but it is clear: the sublime desire for beauty, a conundrum in itself, is made distinct from the average dullness of the housing production in the United States, most usually built for the rich and frustrated. Holl here takes a strong position as the rescuer of one of the American ideals practiced since Frank Lloyd Wright, the house on the prairie. His consolation with the position of being odd and assumedly beautiful is thus in line with the beginnings of the modern home in the New World, on which Wright capitalized early in the modern movement. In fact, Wright still holds the position of the master out-of-town house maker since nobody since has succeeded in taking this over, including both Robert Venturi and Denise Scott-Brown as well as Louis Kahn with his highly sensitive house projects in Philadelphia. Steven Holl may be staking a claim on the position as heir to this particular throne and he might just be doing this rightfully so.



5



4  
Round Lake Hut, Rhinebeck,  
NY, SAD / USA, 2001  
pogled s jugozapada / southwest view

5  
Round Lake Hut, Rhinebeck,  
NY, SAD / USA, 2001  
presjek i tlocrt / section and plan