William Hall trained at Central Saint Martins and began his career in the office of the minimalist architect John Pawson. Formerly a Design Director at Phaidon Press, Hall now runs his own design practice in London, working with clients such as Calvin Klein, Henry Moore Institute and Tate. He is the author of Concrete (Phaidon, 2012) and Brick (Phaidon, 2014).

Richard Mabey is the author of some 40 books, including the Whitbread Award-winning biography, Gilbert White, and Beechcombings: the Narratives of Trees. For 20 years he was the custodian of an ancient wood in the Chilterns. Now he lives in a 16th C. half-timbered farmhouse in Norfolk. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, and a Visiting Fellow at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

Wood is a fresh, insightful and surprising look at one of the world's most familiar and popular materials. Since the Neolithic people have lived and worked in timber buildings. Since then the list of great wooden architecture has grown to include medieval agricultural buildings, fairytale tudor manors, Japanese temples, and religious buildings from all over the world. Their variety is extraordinary, making for an accessible and vivid collection of buildings.

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FORM
Visitors to this home are taken on a journey which begins in proximity to the rugged rock face of a former quarry. The house itself is framed in rough larch cladding, stained black. Within the frame smooth, unstained larch cladding leads visitors to the highly refined interior. Hideg House, Köszeg, Hungary, 2013, Béres Architects

This tea room is part of Kuma’s contribution to a forty villa estate designed by twelve Asian architects, each asked to respond to the site’s proximity to the Great Wall of China. Kuma chose to reflect the way that building relates to its topography, rather than simply being an isolated object in the landscape. But while the ancient structure is defensive and secluded, Kuma’s interpretation is transparent and unifying. Great (Bamboo) Wall, Badaling, China, 2002, Kengo Kuma & Associates

This church sits on bedrock on the edge of Norwegian wilderness, while overlooking a village of 5,000 people. Its apparently unfolding angular form is softened by the use of mottled pine heartwood. Heartwood is wood from the centre of a branch or trunk. Once fully formed it dies, while the outer sapwood continues to grow. Heartwood is often much darker than the surrounding wood. Knarvik Community Church, Knarvik, Norway, 2014, Reiulf Ramstad Arkitekter
The construction of this extraordinary half-timbered Tudor house is typical of grand houses of the period. The oak framework is infilled with wattle and daub – a woven lattice of thin branches daubed in a sticky combination often including mud, clay, manure and straw. Once in situ the material is weather-proofed with a lime wash. In 1610, a century after its completion, a glazed third floor gallery was added, likely causing the compression seen in the lower floors.

These ten structures, connected at ground level, stretch for 250m, and house offices and exhibition spaces in celebration of the indigenous Kanak population of New Caledonia. Inspired by traditional Kanak huts, their form has an unplaceable prehistoric quality, yet the construction is entirely scientific: Their orientation defends from the prevailing Pacific wind and their durable iroko wood slats moderate sunlight and heat. Jean Marie Tjibaou Cultural Center, Nouméa, New Caledonia, 1989, Renzo Piano

Echoing Frank Lloyd Wright’s endeavour to create a regionalist American architecture, and influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, the Greene brother’s Californian bungalows were products of the local climate and landscape. They became known for producing unpretentious but exceptional buildings which typically had a lateral impression, with long shallow roofs accentuating the horizontal. The deep overhang provided cover to fashionable ‘sleeping porches’ – seen here at the back of the house – adjacent to bedrooms. Gamble House, Pasadena, CA, USA, 1908, Greene and Greene.
A discreet, plain and boxy exterior belies the organically undulating interior of this sauna situated on Lake Huron. Computer modelling was required to mill the panels which were then assembled on site as parts of a giant jigsaw. The parallel graining contributes to a sense of solidity and an apparently excavated interior. Grotto Sauna, Ontario, Canada, 2014, Partisans

This carefully composed plank stack houses a piece of conceptual theatre. Four visitors perform a play by reading from elements within the structure. The structure itself draws visitors in and provides an intimate venue for the performance while maintaining a palpable relationship with the surrounding landscape. Khorloge Temporary Theatre, Venlo, Netherlands, 2012, Breg Horemans for TAAT
The architects endured a series of competitions and votes over more than a decade before winning the right to build this public shelter. Situated on a plot left unresolved for almost a century, and latterly used as a car park, its giant double-gabled ends feel familiar and traditional yet the monumental, asymmetrical form is undeniably contemporary.

Glass panels protect the timber from the elements, while a chimney and fireplace in diagonally opposed piers hold fireplaces to warm visitors during festivals. Market Hall, Ghent, Belgium, 2012, Marie-José van Hee and Robbrecht & Daem

Slits reference the landing stages used by this once vibrant, now ailing fishing community. Echoing local vernacular structures, this timber hotel has two purposes. It supports the local community and provides jobs and focus. Secondly, it aims to be a contemporary refuge, not just from the beautiful but unforgiving terrain and climate, but also from the modern world.

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The largest timber framed building in England, this remarkable oak-framed tithe barn is 59 metres long and 11 metres wide. Built in the early 15th century, it is thought that 95% of the framework is original. The grand scale and basilican plan led the poet John Betjeman to coin it the ‘Cathedral of Middlesex’. Harmondsworth Great Barn, Harmondsworth, UK, 1426

This pavilion is clad in woven wicker panels, the form of which was conceived and prototyped in Spain and handmade in China, thereby bridging the cultural and manufacturing traditions of both countries. Supported by an externally invisible warped steel web, the building has the ‘dynamic, open, transparent’ quality architect Benedetta Tagliabue desired. Spain Pavilion at Shanghai Expo, Shanghai, China, 2010, Miralles Tagliabue
Wood

Wood is a fascinating, insightful and visually-rich collection of the world's best timber architecture, featuring 175 structures from the last 1,500 years, and some of the most innovative and inspirational new architecture from across the globe.

Since at least the Neolithic period, people have lived and worked in timber buildings. Over the centuries architects have created exquisite tree-top retreats, fairytale Tudor manors, and majestic religious buildings all around the world.

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Carefully arranged to promote comparison and discussion, each project includes an extended caption providing an informative and perceptive commentary on the building. The book opens with an introductory essay, offering an accessible, engaging and analytical response to the theme of wood architecture.

Following the success of Concrete (2012) and Brick (2015), Wood presents an assembly of the world's most creative and innovative architecture – demonstrating the startling variety of structures the material has inspired.

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