

Intentions on Japanese Pavilion, Expo 92

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Abstract

Undoubtedly, the Japanese Pavilion at Expo 92 in Seville has a different aspect among Tadao Ando's works. This wood structure, different from his previous concrete architecture, surprised people and provoked some questions in their mind about his future attitude. At the same time, he was building the Water Temple at Hyogo, one of his poetic and original works.

This pavilion with 60 m long frontage, depth of 40 m and greatest height of 25 m, is the world's largest wooden structure. Visitors ascend to the top through an arch-shaped bridge, which symbolizes the transition from the traditional to the modern era of Japan. There are various exhibition halls which depict the past and present cultures of Japanese people.

According to Ando, although building material is an element which creates space, but it is not the architect's theme. The most important matter is the spaces involved in material.

Seeking Japanese culture and architecture, Ando found a strong source in the Ise Shrine, a severe architecture, set in thick forest, which used to be reconstructed every 20 years, to express a quest for immortality. Ando concentrated on the solemn strength, brevity and abstraction in the use of wood at Ise. On the other hand, his favorite old architecture, Sukiya style, is based on subtle control of nature, concentrating its modes of expression more on surfaces, and tea house is the archetypical example of it. In the consciousness of contemporary Japanese, wood structure is definitely represented by Sukiya and the tea house, and Ando hopes to create a more forceful contemporary expression of it.