

MOJCA SMODE CVITANOVIĆ

WHO ARE GODWIN AND HOPWOOD? EXPLORING TROPICAL ARCHITECTURE IN THE AGE OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

BEN TOSLAND

The discourse on modern architecture in Africa has had a dual trajectory. On the one hand, it is about the colonial practice whose system of knowledge, technological solutions and spatial syntax were imported and imposed on the encountered cultures. On the other hand, it is about the practice of emancipation, with a background of investments that strengthened the social standard capacities. Widely disseminated through programmes of colonial administrations and accepted by the post-independence governments, modern architecture was understood as a means of development. Numerous architects who have spent their working lives in southern latitudes have gone through the same historical course. Documenting the work by Godwin and Hopwood, therefore, simultaneously outlines the process of the making of modern Nigeria.

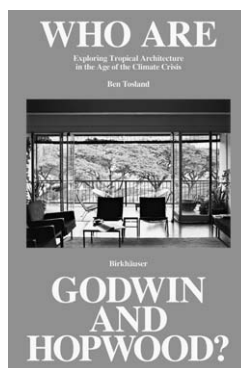
John Godwin and Gillian Hopwood, a couple who had been building a joint career since the time of their education, realized their architectural oeuvre almost entirely in the Global South. After graduating from the London's Architectural Association School of Architecture and a brief attempt to position themselves on the post-war British architectural scene, their search for stable working conditions took them to Nigeria, at that time under the British colonial rule. Acting from their home and office in Lagos, where they would eventually become naturalized, they produced an exceptionally large body of work. From the very beginning, their practice informed the widespread platform of tropical architecture, a system of knowledge by which "Western" ideas of modernism were basically adapted for the purpose of their "southern" internationalization.

The monograph provides a precise section through the work of the practice founded in 1955 and active throughout the following decades. Set according to the typologies of selected works, the structure of the book establishes a valuable source of reference with an emphasis on the climate performability of buildings. As suggested by its name, the pri-

mary occupation of "tropical architecture" was to respond to extreme climates. Its solutions were based on the sustainability of passive systems, generally avoiding the use of air conditioning. The presentation and the analysis of the selected single-family houses, residential buildings, masterplans, buildings for industry, buildings for education and office spaces, provide applicable professional knowledge in that regard.

The extensive "Introduction" chapter of the book was written by the esteemed university professor Ola Uduku, herself a Nigerian, who also came into contact with Godwin and Hopwood's Lagosian office during her formative years. Based on her immediate experience of architecture in West Africa, as well as on her own architectural research, she verifies the relevance of their work within a broader social and cultural context. In addition to the materialization of buildings, which in themselves carried a substantial source for the dissemination of knowledge, the domain of their pedagogical and social work was of exceptional importance. Generations of younger Nigerian architects have passed through their office, thereby informing the latter's own course of professional activity.

Referring to their work as "Commercial Climaticism: The Production of Economical and Energy-Efficient Buildings", the context of Godwin and Hopwood's practice is elaborated on in the second chapter. The addressed thematic units thereby range from the foundation of practice and nature of tasks in pre- and post-independence Nigeria, the overall British architectural influence in West Africa, the organization of practice, the methodology of work and possibilities of architectural materialization, the entanglements with climate and tropical architecture in general, all the way to the political situations and the state of modernity in a country whose social conditions were continuously unstable. The social instabilities and a non-linear course of development affected their practice. Nevertheless, over the epic sixty-three years of continuous activity, the office saw hundreds



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of employees and developed architectural designs for over a thousand commissions.

The "Typologies" addressed in the book indicate the sets of dominant investments in the country that aspired to modernization. Most of them were carried out in the private sector, by individual or corporate developers. The effectiveness of architecture based on rationality, precision, and fast construction was inherent to the practice operative in a capitalist context. Albeit to a certain extent limited, the available materials and means of construction, as well as the accessible construction technology, were skilfully considered through both conceptualization and implementation. In contrast to the European architecture of the same generation, largely guided by the theoretical research, Godwin and Hopwood mastered the study of climate. Their projects could therefore be read as a catalogue of climate solutions for floor plans, sections and details. Certain elements such as awning windows, pivot doors, and pierced block screen wall D all present on the façade of their famous house and studio in Lagos D appear repetitively throughout their work and might be considered as emblematic to both their own practice and the tropical architecture in general.

As a "Conclusion", the multiple relevance of the architectural practice by John Goodwin and Gillian Hopwood is underlined, distinguished and succinctly explained. On the one hand, through the active position of architects in society and on the other hand, through a design methodology which prioritizes climate considerations, their lessons can be applied to the present day. While the trajectory of knowledge transfer has so far been asymmetrical, developing its pathways from north to south, learning from the experiences of the Global South is now more useful than ever. The ultimate confirmation of this fact has been given by the Canadian Centre for Architecture, where Godwin and Hopwood's archive material has been recently stored, and put at disposal for further research.