

Interviews Pavilions

Interview with Kosmos Architects as part of the "Microtools" exhibition series.

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Interviewee [Kosmos Architects](#)
Interviewer [KoozArch](#)
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Pavilions (from L. papilio "tent", "butterfly") – temporary structures, usually built with tight constraints and big aspirations. We believe that they serve as testing ground of architecture, its driving force and as tools of its inspiration. We would like to exhibit a collection of tiny pavilions that either have never been built, or built, but already demolished. Pavilions are shown like butterflies in a display box: evanescence caught, pinned and categorised by an architectural entomologist.



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KOOZ How do you define inspiration?

KA We do not really believe in the general definition of inspiration is an "unconscious burst of creativity"; in our practice "inspiration" is rather a "resonance"- of a specific site and our own experience; of project constraints and potential solutions; personal choices and external references.

KOOZ What are your micro-tools? Are these fixed or do these changes for very project?

KA We often use as a reference what we call "texture" – temporary and infrastructural architecture such as scaffoldings, temporary construction site structures and learn from its radicality, simplicity and usage of utilitarian materials. For instance, in one of our projects, EMA (a transformation of an old factory), we used as a façade material insulation foil, which is traditionally used for wrapping MEP ducts and pipes. The new silver façades were cheap and served both functional and aesthetic purpose: they secured the old walls of the factory and at the same time gathered people by creating a new shiny and metallic ambience of the space. We used other examples of "texture" in other projects: in Air Box Msk, we used as a reference billboard structures; in Garage pavilion – 'debris netting' for scaffoldings.

KOOZ How do you collect and archive these tangible moments of inspiration?

KA We are currently in the process of making a book called "texture" which will be a full research publication compiling both our references and projects.

KOOZ How did you approach the brief?

KA As for the brief, we did not want to focus on our "inspirations as such". We decided to focus on the topic "pavilion" – temporary architecture as the source of inspiration for permanent architecture. We are revealing all the projects of temporary pavilions we have designed throughout last several years (both built and unbuilt; and also those built but already demolished). The reason to do so was the fact that we believe that throughout the history, temporary architecture has always been a testing ground, a polygon for new, and innovative design ideas. The idea of a limited life span is fascinating because it allows a form of experimentation, which perhaps a permanent building doesn't. Temporary structures are like maquettes, to be experienced in one-to-one scale. The word "Pavilion" comes from Latin papilio "tent", "butterfly", so we decided to exhibit them like butterflies in a display box: evanescence caught, pinned and categorised by an architectural entomologist.

KOOZ What is your take on the role of image platforms within the creative process?

KA They have both positive and negative roles. We believe that they are great because these are libraries of knowledge accessible for everyone. At the same time the amount and accessibility of information makes it less valuable and can lead to a dangerous overdose of references.

KOOZ What is your relationship to these? How and to what extent do you use these?

KA It is fun to look at image platforms, to surf through millions of interesting ideas, but at the same time, we try not to use them as a source of a direct reference or inspiration. We try to use references outside of the design field, and through a process of rethinking them and resonating (see answer number 1) with them, to come up with our own ideas.

KOOZ How and to what extent has the mediation of architecture through social tools as Instagram impacted the very practice of this?

KA Since the invention of Instagram everyone is his own media, and this is refreshing in a sense that one doesn't need journalists, censors, media connections or curators to promote his own work. At the same time the concept of "Like" as an appreciation leads to simplification and populism in architectural publications. It is very easy to replace content by cuteness and depth by likeability.

KOOZ How do you as an architect approach the idea of 'instagrammable' architecture?

KA We believe that the image in architecture is as important as space. The power of "image" has always been important in architecture and we do not think that it is only contemporary architecture that is obsessed with production of image and "Instagrammability". The greatest architectural pieces of all times have always had an image as a driving force. Nowadays the easiness and accessibility of these images helps their quick spreading, and popularizes them.

KOOZ Is this new accessibility to architecture productive?

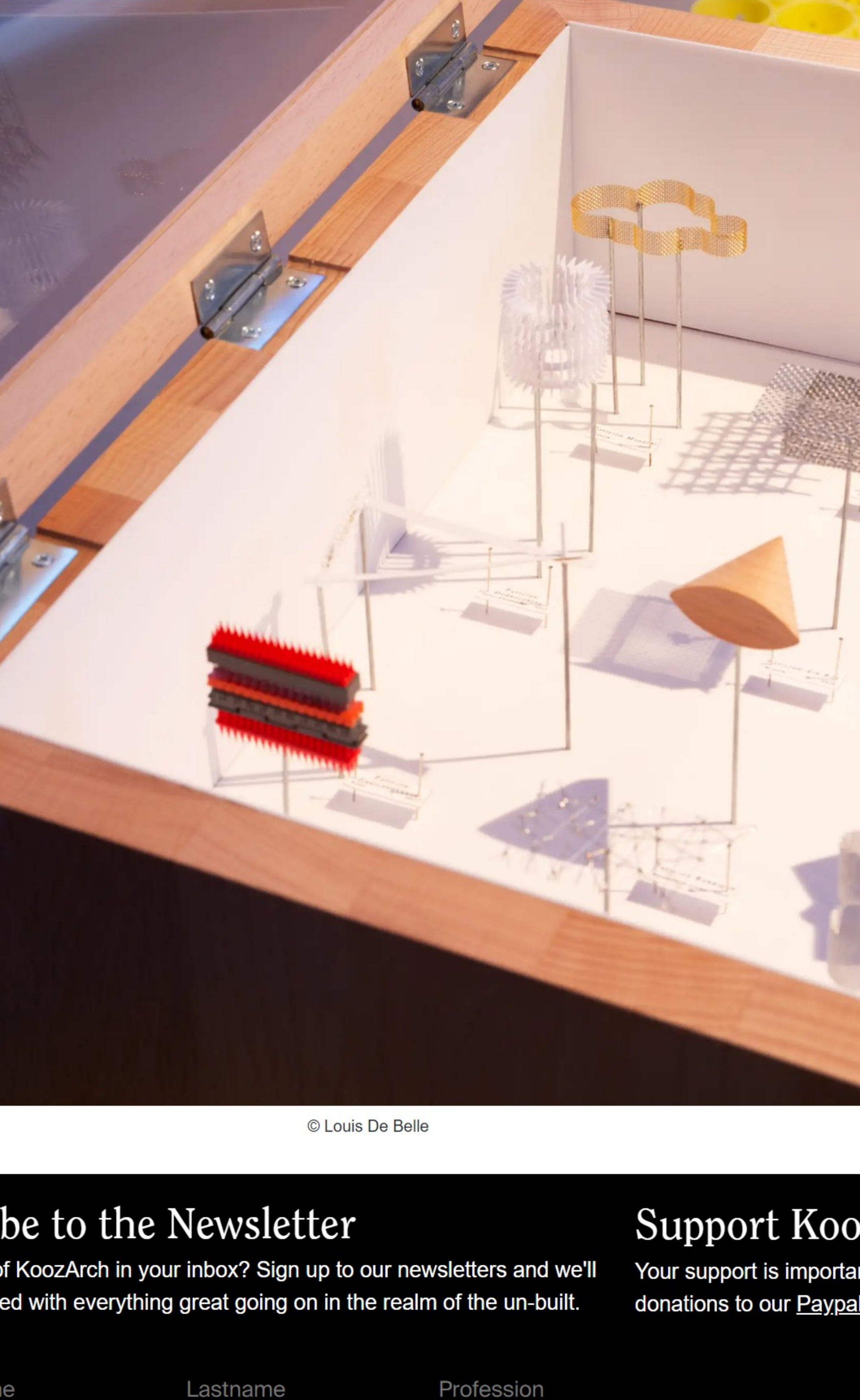
KA There are good points about it, but there are problematic points too. For instance, the importance of an image and its popularity in media sometimes narrows down a whole architectural experience to a single cliché "moneyshot", without which it seems that the user experience would not be complete. One of the funny examples is the iconic view of Frank Lloyd Wright's falling water house. If you look at the instagram feed of this geo location, you will find out that 95% of visitors tend to make the same shot as if the whole house was a backdrop screen, a 2D wallpaper. (see attachment)

KOOZ How do you choose to mediate the work of your practice through social tools as Instagram?

KA We try not to overdo it, and to not use it as a purely commercial or marketing tool. We mediate the important moments of our work to create a "log" of our practice, not just an advertisement platform.

KOOZ Between a printed and a digital publication of your work, which one do you prefer? Why?

KA It depends on the situation. It is of course pleasant to open a nicely printed publication to read it on a Sunday morning, but it is also extremely useful to have a digital publication – which can be accessible by anyone at any moment in any location.



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