

Podcast recommendation: Cutting-edge experts from the Words on Wood podcast

AHEC launches second season, with a focus on design, tech and deforestation



Credit: Image courtesy of AHEC

Words on Wood podcast returns – with a strong message

Following the hit successes of Design Museum exhibition *Discovered*, a showcase of emerging international design talent, and the city-wide London Design Festival project celebrating 10 hidden stories inspired by their place, AHEC's podcast returns for a second season, revealing fascinating stories about technology and sustainability through a single material – wood.

Words on Wood offers an honest deep dive into big issues surrounding our relationship to forests, the usage of wood in architecture, design and technology, and vital questions about sustainability, serving as a platform for cross-disciplinary

discussion. Drawing on the work of scientists, conservationists, forestry professionals, academics, designers and architects, this podcast is a space for frank reflection on the challenges and opportunities presented by working with wood.

The latest season of Words on Wood explores the fight to save the world's forestry from illegal logging, spotlights designers who are bringing fresh relevance to traditional woodcraft practices, celebrates cutting-edge technology and asks how wood could change the built environment.

Experts tell fascinating stories through a simple material

The American Hardwood Export Council is not like other industry organisations. Too often, the expertise that exists within a sector stays there, focusing on technical challenges, regulatory questions and other inward looking ideas. Yet, AHEC's track-record of exhibitions, platforms and podcasts highlights their efforts to champion young creatives and amplify the voice of experts.

Hosted by Disegno's editors Oli Stratford and India Block, Words on Wood creates a space for experts to tell fascinating stories about global governance, technology, craft and architecture directly through wood.

The built environment

The second series launches with a deep dive into building with timber, featuring interviews with Andrew Lawrence, a timber engineering specialist at Arup, and the architect Lina Ghotmeh. Speaking from their different specialisms, the pair explore the benefits of building with timber and engineered wood, and discuss how wood's use is perceived by the public, governments and building industries.

Between technology and tradition

Looking at how technology can push wood in new directions, there's the award winning British industrial designer Sam Hecht, convention busting Swedish designer Yves Béhar, and Elissa Brunato, who's research-driven practice explores sustainability with an emphasis on materiality. Other conversations explore how traditional woodwork techniques can renew their social relevance today, with Stephen Burks, a New York based designer committed to a pluralistic cultural outlook, and Orhan Niksic of Bosnian furniture brand Zanat discussing the problems and potential of tradition.

A world wide solution for a global problem

The World Forest ID is a hugely ambitious project using technology to track the source of wood, providing a comprehensive solution to a major factor driving deforestation. In this special podcast episode, you can hear from the people behind an inspiring project to tackle fraud and illegal logging.

A prestigious line-up

Previous guests have included critical design studio Formafantasma, renowned designer Sebastian Cox, sustainable architect Andrew Waugh, climate scientist Galina Churkina, and Sean Sutcliffe, co-founder of Benchmark, one of Britain's most technologically advanced workshops.

Key takeaways

A bold idea to save our forests – the World Forest ID

Faced with the challenges posed by illegal logging, a group of five institutions representing governments as well as the scientific, environmental and forestry sectors has now turned to science to find a solution. The World Forest ID is a new initiative that uses georeferenced wood samples to be able to analyse any timber and discover where exactly it was harvested. In this episode, the podcast talks to the people behind the project and dives into the development of this new technology, examining how greater information about provenance may lead to better governance of the world's forests.

The cutting-edge of wood

Wood is an ancient material, but one that is still providing designers with new processes, forms and techniques. In this episode, the podcast talks to designers Sam Hecht, Yves Béhar and Elissa Brunato, all of whom have worked with wood as a cutting-edge material that can continue to reinvent itself.

Against the grain: inside the fight to preserve craft skills and traditions

While technology and digital processes accelerate and permeate design, a number of designers have turned towards traditional craft processes to find contemporary modes of expression. Designer Stephen Burks and Orhan Niksic of Bosnian furniture brand Zanat join the podcast to talk about their approaches towards traditional woodwork and how 21st-century design can find fresh social resonances in timeworn techniques.

What timber can tell us about tall buildings

With architecture under more pressure than ever to improve the sustainability of buildings, Words on Wood looks at the potential for timber structures to reshape the field. Given the opportunities and challenges facing the construction of tall timber buildings, what role does wood have to play in the future of our built environment? Engineer Andrew Lawrence and architect Lina Ghotmeh discuss the complexities of the issues.

Tree shorts

Alongside this, the series will also see the release of Tree Shorts, a collection of shorter episodes exploring a particular tree, its timber, and a design project that make use of its distinct properties.

Where to listen

You can listen to the new series and back episodes of Words on Wood on Apple podcasts (<https://bit.ly/AHECWoW>), Spotify (<https://spoti.fi/3aZZ35D>) or wherever you get your podcasts.



Credit: Image courtesy of AHEC



Notes to editors

Words on Wood is a podcast by AHEC, created in conjunction with Disegno, the Quarterly Journal of Design.

For more information, please contact emily@zetteler.co.uk.

About American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC)

For over 30 years the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) has been at the forefront of wood promotion in Europe, successfully building a distinctive and creative brand for U.S. hardwoods. AHEC's support for creative design projects such as Connected, Legacy and MultiPly for the London Design Festival demonstrate the performance potential of these sustainable materials and provide valuable inspiration. AHEC has pioneered the modelling of environmental Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) for hardwoods, an approach that has since been adopted by other industries. LCA measures a number of impacts: primary energy demand (from renewable and non-renewable resources); global warming potential; acidification potential; eutrophication potential; and, photochemical ozone creation potential.

americanhardwood.org

[@ahec_europe](https://twitter.com/ahec_europe)