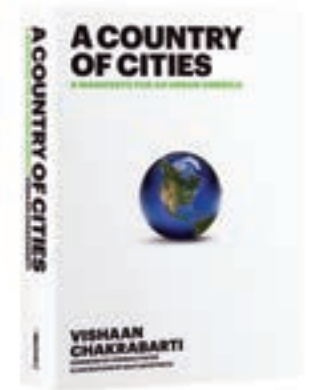




MFA BOOKSTORE SELECTS



PETER ZUMTHOR: BUILDINGS AND PROJECTS, 1985-2013

Finally released, this five-volume set presents around forty of Peter Zumthor's projects, both realized and unrealized, through Zumthor's own writing, and with photographs, sketches, drawings, and plans. A complete catalog of his works starting in 1979 rounds out the book. A must have.

SCHEIDEGGER & SPIESS, 2014, CLOTH, \$212.50,
\$250.00 FOR RDA MEMBERS

CREATING YOUR HOME WITH STYLE: TASTE IS TIMELESS

by Adolf Loos

Adolf Loos was an eloquent voice against the squandering of fine materials, ornamentation, and unnecessary embellishments. Few are acquainted with his amusing, incisive, critical, and philosophical literary works on applied design and the essence of style in fin de siècle Vienna. Loos often had a radical yet innovative outlook on life that made him such a nuisance for many of his contemporaries. This publication is now available in English for the first time.

METRO VERLAG, 2013, 128 PAGES HARDCOVER,
\$22.50, \$18 FOR RDA MEMBERS

OSCAR NIEMEYER AND NORMAN FOSTER IN CONVERSATION WITH HANS ULRICH OBRIST

The occasion of this conversation was the first and only encounter that took place between these two great architects, shortly before Niemeyer's death. Many common interests between the two are revealed, some of which were expected, while others are quite surprising. They shared, for instance, a passion for the practice of drawing and a conviction of its centrality for architectural work. A rare insight and opportunity to witness the interaction between two unmatched architectural personalities of our times.

ARCHITECTURE IVORYPRESS, 2013, 49 PAGES,
SOFTCOVER, \$16.50, \$13.20 FOR RDA MEMBERS

A+U # 515: HOUSES BY EMERGING ARCHITECTS

This issue introduces 10 of today's practitioners. In pursuing the enhancement of the individual quality of life, these architects seek to portray the innovative forms of the house typology through readings of context and culture, not to mention a manipulation or translation of its framework. With an essay by OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen, plus works by architecten de vylder

vinck taillieu, Adamo-Faiden, Andrés Jaque, Tatiana Bilbao, John Lin, MASS Design Group, and others.

A+U 2013, 135 PAGES,
\$40.00, \$32 FOR RDA MEMBERS

A COUNTRY OF CITIES: A MANIFESTO FOR AN URBAN AMERICA

By Vishaan Chakrabarti, foreword by Norman Foster, ill. by SHoP Architects

Vishaan Chakrabarti argues that well-designed cities are the key to solving America's great national challenges: environmental degradation, unsustainable consumption, economic stagnation, rising public health costs, and decreased social mobility. If we develop them wisely in the future, our cities can be the force leading us into a new era of progressive and prosperous stewardship of our nation.

METROPOLIS BOOKS, 2014, HARDCOVER,
252 PAGES, \$29.95, \$23.96 FOR RDA MEMBERS

THE CORONER'S REPORT

by David Heymann

The Architecture of Art Museums: A Decade of Design: 2000–2010 (written by Ronnie Self, Routledge, 2014, 208 pages, softcover)



Ronnie Self's eminently readable new book of case studies, *The Architecture of Art Museums: A Decade of Design 2000-2010*, provides in-depth descriptions of 18 prominent museums opened in America (mostly) and Europe during the booming first decade of the twenty-first century. Laid out chronologically by date of opening—from Tadao Ando's Fort Worth Museum of Modern Art to Zaha Hadid's MAXXI in Rome—the works are authored by SANAA, Herzog & de Meuron, Renzo Piano, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Steven Holl, Shigeru Ban, etc.; i.e., the apex predators of the architectural world, working on what was then, and still may be, the sociocultural equivalent of the Greek temple, Renaissance palazzo, Baroque church, or early-Modern housing.

Self, an architect and Associate Professor of Architecture at the University of Houston, worked for Renzo Piano for 12 years, and he brings that office's heightened common sense to his task. He lucidly dissects how each of these often complicated buildings works in its context, how it is perceived and moved through by visitors, how exhibitions can be hung given the architectural strategies (he is less clear about curation), how the buildings are structured and constructed, how mechanical and environmental systems operate, and how each is serviced. (His attention to loading docks is much appreciated.) Each entry is 2,000 to 3,000 words in length, with excellent architectural drawings, regularly

including details of how natural illumination is controlled, and just enough photographs to judiciously describe the points made.

The need to publish more on the recent avalanche of well-known museum buildings would seem to be marginal, but the initial purpose of the book becomes rapidly clear. It's useful to have all that information in one place, a great resource for architects, curators, and educators. There will now never again be the need to ask studio students to do this sort of data gathering, at least for these buildings. Though one could describe the relationship between boulders in an avalanche, Self keeps the descriptions largely discrete, allowing the reader to make necessary connections while providing clear means to do so (in setting out, for example, the four primary means of conceiving exhibition space: room, gallery, loft, and hall).

Data aside, the great pleasure of reading the book is Self's particular voice. Like a very intelligent coroner calmly reading post-mortem reports at an inquest, Self builds his cases by the slow and logical accumulation of facts. You are led in innocently: the facts amass without overt speculation on motives. Self thinks carefully, and his writing is both earnest and without cant. Occasional abrupt shifts between paragraphs and slightly stilted grammar heighten this sense of earnestness, and the book can actually be read aloud to satisfying end. There is, of course, no

innocent data. The particular skill with which Self pieces together the various skeins of site, program, experience, structure, and architectural intent invariably allows him, somewhere near the end of each entry, to quietly slip in an often profoundly critical observation without it seeming to be the sort of qualitative commentary it actually is.

So, for example, late in describing Hadid's building in Rome, Self points out: "the MAXXI has reverted back to the very long gallery type (exemplified by the Grande Galerie at the Louvre for example) defined here by continuous parallel or curved walls. The ceiling fins also follow the same geometry. Visitors are pulled through the space and past the works. At the MAXXI the experience should be more akin to navigating the internet or the changing scenes of cinematography. Movement and discovery are, however, at the expense of repose, focus, and meditation." Or, in describing Piano's use of imported materials at the Nasher—despite the architect's rhetoric of location—Self notes that rather "than 'place,' the approach in this instance might speak more of the seductive pedigree of European luxury." The text is filigreed with similar scalpel cuts.

Read the full review at offcite.org/art-museums