

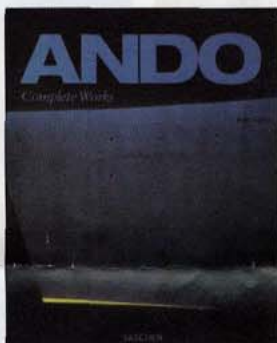
Books

GENIUS WRIT LARGE

ANDO: COMPLETE WORKS
Philip Jodidio
Taschen, £69.99
Reviewed by Bradley Quinn

Since the publication of Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau's S,M,L,XL in 1995, books and monographs by and about architects have assumed monumental proportions. The 613 pages of Frank Gehry's The Complete Works followed in 2003, while Zaha Hadid's recent monograph, a weighty 448-page published last November, feels more like an architectonic detail than a book.

But these, and other architecture monographs, are dwarfed by Philip Jodidio's examination of Tadao Ando's career. Jodidio's 492-page book measures 40cm x 32cm and is nearly 5 cm thick, but is even more impressive in its delivery of a large-scale survey of the architect's works that unfolds through texts, plans, preliminary sketches of projects and a selection of



MUSEUM OF WOOD, MIYAJI, HYOGO, JAPAN/MITSUO MATSUOKA

photographs, many previously unpublished. Although many of the projects can be found in other Ando publications, the opportunity to see them in these large photographs lends a new sense of space to familiar projects, while new projects seen for the first time include

the striking 4 x 4 House and Ando's vision for Ground Zero.

With a career spanning nearly four decades, Ando's projects in Japan, Europe and North America reveal him as one of the most prolific architects of our age. But as a practitioner without a degree in architecture, or even an architectural apprenticeship, many of his contemporaries are bewildered by his ability to pioneer such a unique building aesthetic. Ando claims that he taught himself architecture by reading extensively and taking study trips to Europe and the US to visit historic buildings. He kept detailed sketch books throughout his travels which gradually shaped his ability to use water, wood, light, space and concrete in a way that had never been seen in architecture before. Buildings such as the Church of Light, the Church on the Water, and the influential Buddhist Water Temple are often described as examples of land art rather than architecture.

At 63, Ando seems to be in his professional prime. He lives and works in Osaka, where he was born and grew up. When he was named winner of the Pritzker Prize in 1995, most of his projects had been in the Osaka area, and the international appeal of what had previously been regarded as regional architecture exposed unexpected dimensions of modern Japan.

One of the book's most striking – and unexpected – features is its visual survey of Japanese life, seen through the eyes of one its leading architects. Ando's modernist houses, streamlined factories, minimalist museums, and quiet temples, appear to juxtapose nature with culture, polarising subtle spirituality and vociferous capitalism without attempting to soothe the ruptures between them.

One of Ando's first commissions was Azuma House, a small terraced house

completed in 1977, which won a prize from the Architectural Institute of Japan in 1979. He went on to design a number of significant one-family homes as well as commercial/residential units and apartment complexes. Ando's three-storey Ishihara House in Osaka, a concrete structure, encases a unique central courtyard within a membrane of glass blocks. The three-storey Horiuchi House uses glass blocks to create a free-standing barrier between the house and the traffic on the street.

These projects introduced a philosophy of creating introspective domains rather than individual boundaries, interpreting the urban home as a space where refuge could be found from urban chaos. Ando used contrasts between shadow and light, wind and water, to build homes with a sense of sanctuary.

Although Ando is acclaimed for designing and casting smooth, clean, and perfect concrete forms, he is also a master of traditional Japanese wood construction. Ando trained as a carpenter's apprentice for short time and his appreciation for wood is reflected in wooden structures such as his Japan Pavilion for Expo 92 in Seville, the Museum of Wood in Hyogo, and the Komyo-Ji temple in Ehime. The expert techniques and attention to construction detail in these reveal him as a master builder as well as an architect, with craftsmanship an important aspect of realising his forwarding-thinking designs.

Jodidio's monograph reveals that Ando has accomplished an extraordinary body of work. It ably illustrates Ando's powerful inner vision and his ability to work outside conventional movements, styles or schools. Ando's buildings inspire new shapes and fresh forms that promise to have lasting effects, long after their original constructions are forgotten.



CHURCH OF THE LIGHT, IBARAKI, OSAKA, JAPAN/MITSUO MATSUOKA