

ANDO
COMPLETE WORKS
Editor: Philip Jodidio

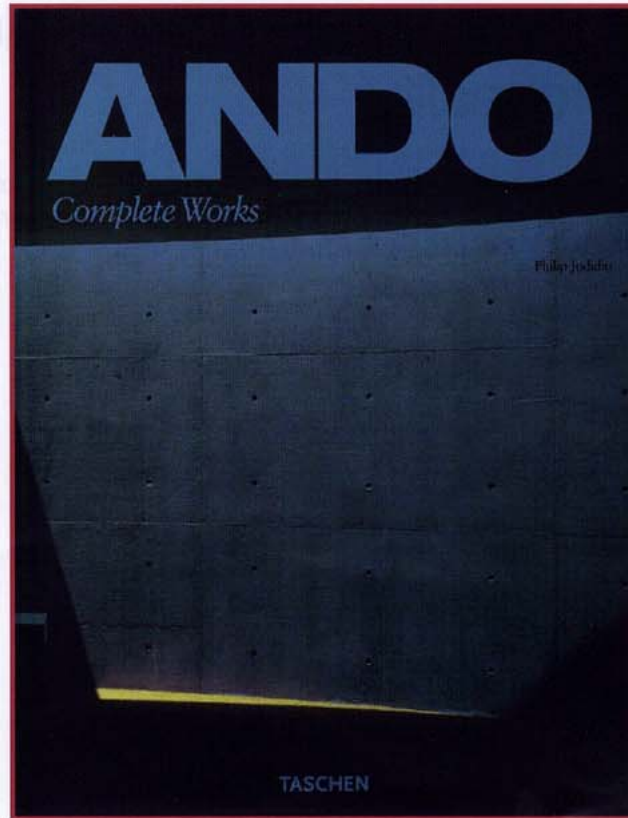
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In 1976 a small concrete house was built in Sumiyoshi, Osaka. Set between traditional Japanese wooden row houses, the 'Azuma house' -with its blank façade- has only four rooms and a courtyard. The unusual thing about this house is that in order to move between the rooms, you have to go outside. Each time the courtyard is crossed, the changing light, the weather and the shifting seasons are experienced. This small house is a declaration of belief by its architect that we must restore our connection with nature. Known now to architects all over the world, the 'Azuma row house' is the first project featured in the new book ANDO Complete Works.

Over the last thirty years, amidst the excesses and deconstructions of architecture, Tadao Ando has remained resolute in his approach. Typified by the 'Azuma house', he believes, " the role of architectural space as a spiritual shelter is crucial." Thirty-six buildings -the majority of which are of Ando's recent design- are shown at length out of the architect's enormous output of almost 200 buildings and projects. From the tiny 'Azuma house' to the current wave of international museums, Ando's work is expansively documented and illustrated.

Selected by Ando, the featured projects use numerable sketches, drawings, models and photographs that reveal the diverse variety of locations, briefs and clients that Ando has worked with over the years. The XXL format gives the closest impression you will get of what an 'Ando building' is like, without visiting them. But visit them you must.

Relatively ignored outside Japan during the 70's, Tadao Ando was first championed by Kenneth Frampton in the mid 80's as part of what he termed 'critical modernism'. There is now a very large selection of publications and magazines covering Ando's work -all of which are listed in the detailed appendix of this book.



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ANDO Complete Works catalogues the output of Ando's office from 1969 to today. The opening essay 'The Simplicity of Perfection' traces Ando's thoughts and projects throughout his career, from his small early domestic projects in Osaka to his current international profile.

Ando grew up in Osaka in the wake of the destruction of World War II and was brought up by his maternal grandmother -who's name he has adopted. Living opposite a wood workshop, he spent time there as a child discovering the nature of wood and how to shape it. With no formal education in architecture he is self-taught. Travel and such inspirations as an early encounter with a second-

hand book by Le Corbusier "...traced till the pages turned black", guided his personal journey.

Not serving the traditional architectural apprenticeship, he describes himself as previously unemployable due to his "stubbornness." What is less known is his talent as a championship boxer, with winnings from his time in the ring funding his early architectural travels.

His Atelier in Oyodo in central Osaka, is converted from one of his early houses (Tomishima House) and is shown filled to capacity with models, drawings and a huge library. This is Ando's 'inner sanctum' and the

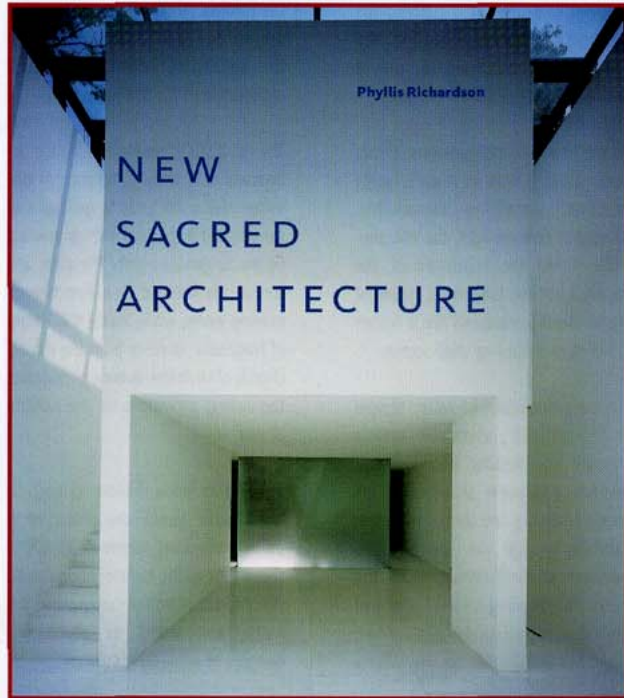
NEW SACRED ARCHITECTURE

Phyllis Richardson

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► centre than place of worship, it illustrates another difficulty: architectural egotism. Of course the ecclesiastical buildings which have most fascinated us and stood the test of time are structurally exhibitionistic at some level - and may often deliberately try to evoke architectural awe - and that is well and good, but they have to be 'look at me' and 'look above', as it were, at the same time. Some of the buildings shown here look more like calls to consider the architecture and architectural exercise alone. Perhaps the leading culprit in this regard is Architecture Studio's painfully perfectionist Our Lady of the Ark of the Covenant Church in Paris - one picture shows the galleried building full of worshippers and they look decidedly uncomfortable in the rigid interior; the space appears to rein them in - to consider the perfect cuboid in which they sit (awkwardly) - rather than free them up to breathe, pray or worship in a generous space.

But to the strengths: the introductory essay is informative and thought-provoking; and the selection is wide-ranging across major faith communities: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, which is a welcome broad brush. There is an Irish inclusion: the Islamic Cultural Centre by Michael Collins Associates in Dublin (although, despite a few nice touches, this is not an especially loveable scheme). Some of the projects are tours de force: Estudio Sancho-Madrídejos' Private Chapel in Valleaceron in Spain is geometrically weird and wonderful in the barren landscape; Tadao Ando undoubtedly handles materials masterfully and the inclusion of the Komyo-Ji Temple in Saijo, Japan, shows the delightful results he makes possible with timber,



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while the inclusion of his Church of the Light of 1989 in the Introduction reminds us of the possibilities of concrete; and Renzo Piano's Church of San Giovanni Rotondo in Foggia, Italy, with its massive stone arch, does appear to be as the text states 'a loud affirmative', successfully marrying humility and grandeur. There are also rather clever and pleasing smaller projects to consider: Daniel Bonilla Arquitectos' Los Nogales School Chapel, a box whose side wall is a large portal that can open up to a large outdoor congregation; and a charming little gem of recycled

materials wedded nicely to the landscape in Antioch Baptist Church, Alabama, by Rural Studio.

So, you might find some decent source material here, but likewise the book might inadvertently lead equally to questions about how not to design sacred space, or to question what it maybe truly involves. ●

Paul Harron

New Sacred Architecture
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PERSPECTIVE