



ARCHITECTURE NOW! 4

ED. PHILIP JODIDIO

TASCHEN, 2006

£19.99

ISBN 3 8228 3989 2

If the millennium spawned the phenomena of juicy surveys – each one purporting to give the reader a full overview of a certain mode of cultural production at this moment now – six years on this shows no signs of slowing. Taschen was one of the first to give architecture the 'top twenty treatment', but is the exclamation mark in the title of the fourth volume of this series justified? Does Philip Jodidio really make our fingers yearn to snaffle it off the shelves or is this just more of the same old survey mush? Luckily it's not all boutique houses and hotels (although there are a few) as a tree house, memorial, cinema studio, nomadic museum, theme park, temporary sandbag shelters, virtual buildings, as well as proposals that won't ever be realised (Asymptote's Guggenheim Guadalajara for example) are included. The decision to include artists such as Bill Viola, Frank Stella and Anselm Kiefer is also one that lifts the book from mediocrity. As always with these compendiums the images are pivotal. Taschen certainly gets the visual endorphins pumping; drawings are displayed alongside sumptuous photographs and the book succeeds most where more examples of the work of each architect are displayed, allowing for a deeper introduction. The design is simple and the architecture speaks for itself which is a good thing as the short blurbs that accompany each entry are informative but basic, and this isn't helped by the fact that each page has to accommodate German and French translations as well. *Architecture Now! 4* whets your appetite, maybe not for the next in the series, but for an architectural pudding with a bit more substance.

ISABEL STEVENS