

**PAPER VIEW****ARTS & ARCHITECTURE: THE MAGAZINE THAT CHANGED BUILT AMERICA**

IN THE DECADE following World War II, the US experienced an unprecedented technological and creative wave that promised new jobs and improvements to daily life. It was powered by the talent that had escaped European conflict and Nazi oppression and had imported new ideas in art and architecture. In the 1930s, for example, Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius joined earlier émigrés Rudolf Schindler and William Lescaze in bringing Bauhaus-inflected modernism to the US. Soaring skyscrapers became embodiments of America's new status as the world's economic superpower, while in New York City a handful of artists strived to create American modern art, including the painter Georgia O'Keeffe, who described the endeavour as the quest for "the Great American Thing." It's perhaps a good time, as the American economy nosedives, to look back on this period of unbridled optimism and ambition. Coffee-table king Taschen has obligingly just published a book that reproduces every issue of *Arts & Architecture* magazine from 1945 to 1954. Lovingly produced, modestly circulated and decidedly liberal, *Arts & Architecture* was a bubble in which earnest California modernism found a safe haven. The magazine is best known for launching the Case Study House project, a seminal series of commissions for which the magazine acted as client and which allowed unparalleled freedom and support for a host of younger architects keen to find low-cost, efficient and humane housing models for American families. Through such pioneering schemes, A&A opened the door to architects such as Richard Neutra, I.M. Pei and Schindler. The US still plays host to European architects – witness the high-profile work of Renzo Piano, Norman Foster and Rem Koolhaas in New York – but it now competes for their attention with Dubai and China. As economic and ecological fears take hold, this beautiful facsimile compendium of A&A reminds us that the US was once a place where architects and artists were able to fulfil their wildest dreams. Shumi Bose

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