



Photo: Fernando Alda

House, Dover Heights, Sydney, Australia;
Architecture: Durbach Block Architects



Factory/House, Kyoto, Japan; Architecture:
Eastern Design Office

"The house," says the Swiss architect Mario Botta, "is intimately related to the idea of shelter. A cave carved out of the rock is like a mother's womb. This is the concept of the house that I defend. When I am tired of the world, I want to

go home. There I can regain my energy to prepare for the next day's battle. As long as there is a man who needs a house, architecture will still exist... A house should be like a mother's womb." Though there may be distinctions between a house and a home, the fact remains that the fundamental ideas of shelter, life and death are intertwined with the architecture of the commonplace in every place of dwelling, from cave to castle. The house can be a measure of civilization, wealth or, indeed, intelligence; it is barometer of existence. Not every famous architect has chosen to design houses. I.M. Pei, for example, has always privileged civic buildings, first and foremost the museum. Santiago Calatrava, Renzo Piano or Jean Nouvel, likewise, have indulged little in the art of the private house. Other famous figures of contemporary architecture find it essential to continue to build homes, in the image of Tadao Ando for example. Builders of cities and new worlds of architecture, from Wright to Niemeyer, have again and again come back to that most fundamental of architectural acts, the design of the house. Depending on the architect and the client, a house can be at the cutting edge of architecture, casting aside notions of the past in search of a new paradigm; it can accept the rules of urbanism while standing

them on their head. It can float in the air or emerge from the depth of the earth. Where factors of cost may limit civic architecture to tried and trusted methods, some houses break all the rules, and help architecture to move forward. It should be readily apparent that this book is not about decoration, nor it is a practical guide to building one's own house. It is, rather, a search that may lead the reader from Patagonia to the cliffs of Dover Heights to see some of the most remarkable houses built in the past five years.under way in Griesskirchen on the biggest school complex in Austria; a vocational school for tourism is presently being planned for Villach in the province of Carinthia. Again in this region at Fresach, they are at present engaged on a Toleranzbethaus (tolerance prayer house) with adjoining diocese museum. In 2009, they won the competition for the conversion and enlargement of the Österreichisches Schlösschen (Austrian Castle) in Radolfzell on Lake Constance.

Of castles and caves

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