



3 PREFAB HOUSES

BY ARNT COBBERS AND OLIVER JAHN

It's a bit of a shame that Taschen chose for its cover Matti Suuronen's Futuro house from 1968 and not, say, Daniel Libeskind's jagged Villa model from 2009. Most people would identify Futuro's space-agey bubble on stilts as the end of the prefab era. And yet the book clips along, with 59 case studies that track the pre-built home's ongoing (though tortuous) trajectory. In the U.S., prefab hasn't yet regained its early-20th-century stride, when up to 100,000 units were ordered from the Sears catalogue. But there are sparks of life, like the L-shaped homes sold by California's Marmol Radziner + Associates. Meanwhile, it's huge in Japan, where you can have one of Muji's Kengo Kuma models airlifted to your site. Taschen seems to be saying that prefab's future is bright, so it's no longer necessary to reach back to the obsolete models of the past. ELIZABETH PAGLIACOLO

→ Published by Taschen (hardcover, 388 pages)