

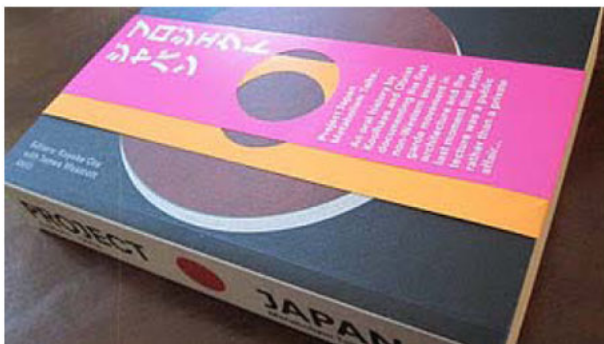
The Oxen of the Sun: Project Japan: Metabolism Talks (Rem Koolhaas and Taschen)



Today we'll take a look at Project Japan: Metabolism Talks, an exciting but esoteric new tome published by German luxury-publisher Taschen. It's fascinating to see how Taschen has progressed in the past few years. In most cases, it seems they're trying to refocus their books onto a broader, more general audience, and rightfully so--if they intend to open a growing number of bookstores, they'll need their shelves full of books they can easily sell. Perhaps they've traded their

former, out-of-this-world quality and daring mindset with accessibility, but there is something admirable about spreading the appeal of a beautiful folio to those who'd normally never encounter such a thing.

Lately, I've been grumbling about the lack of coveted books from Taschen. The excitement I have towards my enormous Ingmar Bergman book is nowhere to be found when I peruse their new book on Pedro Almodovar. The beauty that was 2009's MOONFIRE is not nearly matched by their new collector's edition on Marilyn Monroe.



But, then they slip this book out onto shelves: Rem Koolhaas and Hans Ulrich Obrist's Project Japan: Metabolism Talks. This is a dense, beautifully produced softcover compiling oral histories of Japan's Metabolist movement. There is so much to learn in this book's 700 pages-- with a mild interest in architecture and a ever-expanding interest in Japanese culture, Project Japan is doubly exciting for me. The book points an incredibly detailed eye onto the small group of

architects and designers who had hopes of re-imagining the post-war Japanese lifestyle. With architecture these days unfortunately focusing on designer names and locations (though I confess I dream of moving into Richard Meier's slick Prospect Park building) it's incredible to see an era when architecture and design moved so closely in step with a nation's societal developments.

While the design of this book is really quite nice, at \$60 I can't imagine many people will snag this one, as it doesn't have the beautiful spreads that many have come to expect from a Taschen book. I hope I'm wrong, though: this book is a reminder that the edgy Taschen is still at work somewhere. I think this is the most daring, unexpected book they've done all year.



This copy is signed by Rem Koolhaas from a launch event in New York City. Take a look:

Currently reading:
Parallel Stories by Peter Nadas

Currently listening to:
M83, "Hurry Up, We're Dreaming"