

Article/Interview: Amelia Groom and Nick Currie, "Past Futures", Frieze Magazine



The newest issue (145) of *Frieze Magazine* includes a discrete review/interview by Amelia Groom and Nick Currie entitled "Past Futures", exploring the fascinating legacy of 1960s Japanese architecture group "Metabolism" and containing an interview with Rem Koolhaas, co-author of

Project Japan: Metabolism Talks together with Hans Ulrich Obrist, published by Taschen last year.

Following just after the close of the first major exhibition of the Metabolism's work at the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo (2011-2012), Groom reviews the offerings found at the retrospective *Metabolism, the City of the Future: Dreams and Visions of Reconstruction in Postwar and Present-Day Japan* and provides a snapshot of the collective's history from their post-war manifesto days to the current crumbling and derelict fate of the techno-futuristic structures which were built to their plans. Contextualised by the undeniable intertwining of the recent Fukushima nuclear disaster (as well as the recent revelation of the government's deliberation over mass Tokyo evacuation) and Japan's World War II history from which this manifesto-defined architectural movement took shape, the Metabolism movement and its revisitation taps into the intricate relation between complete destruction and pure creation.

"Devastatingly aware of the impermanence of built spaces and the destructibility of cities, they responded to the widespread housing crisis of postwar Japan by calling for more flexible and dynamic urban models. Promising to design spaces for living bodies that would be more in line with the metabolic processes of those bodies, they conceived of cities as living, moving and evolving creatures. Buildings would be adaptable organisms perpetually rejuvenating themselves; the metropolis would be a verb rather than a noun."

Currie's interview with a slightly laconic but engaging Koolhaas follows Groom's report, tracing the currents of power, government and Asian industry in and through the Metabolism movement.

Posted by Ky the Spy at 14:47 