

**The Architecture of Aftermath** / Terry Smith.—Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2006, November, 2006.—280 p.: ill.—ISBN 0-226-76469-9 (pa., alk. paper): \$30.00.



To Terry Smith, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Contemporary Art History and Theory in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at the University of Pittsburgh, buildings are more than inhabitable structures; they are also symbols of culture, politics and power. Building upon his research in destination architecture and exploring what he coins as *the iconomy*, Smith surveys how modern architecture gave rise to buildings of compelling disbelief, grandeur and economic currency, that may be seen as vulnerable and self-indulgent in the aftermath of September 11th or 9.11.01, as he refers to the significant event.

The text is separated into two collections of essays. Part I, "Displacing Time," focuses on Jørn Utzon's Sydney Opera House, Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum (Berlin), Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and Richard Meier's Getty Center. Smith opines that the architecture of both The Getty Center and Guggenheim Museum Bilbao eclipse their art collections. With regard to The Jewish Museum, Smith discusses how architecture often must negotiate cultural sensitivities of

great magnitude, and sets the stage for his in depth examination of the World Trade Center (WTC). In Part II, "Targets and Opportunities," Smith traces the rise and fall of the WTC, beginning with the erasure of twelve blocks of neighborhoods required to create the site. The two gargantuan, bland office buildings, designed by chief architect Minoru Yamasaki, gained extreme value in *the iconomy* as symbols of capitalism. Their dismemberment on 9.11.01 left a repelling scar of a greater charge than the buildings that once stood there. As Part II unfolds, Smith deconstructs the painful challenge of redesigning the site and concludes by envisioning a new sort of building for entry into *the iconomy*: buildings that tread lighter on the ground, with a heightened awareness of security, ecological sensibility and a softer facade.

Although Smith's writing style is often non-linear, he successfully communicates his ideas by comparing and contrasting the buildings he discusses, and placing them within their cultural context. The book's many black-and-white photographs range from chilling (bodies plunging from the Twin Towers) to comical (Claes Oldenburg's skyscraper design, modeled after "Death"). Smith has developed a philosophical treatise that will be relevant to students of pop culture and visual anthropology, even more than to architecture students. This publication is recommended for inclusion in most academic libraries.

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