



The Yokohama Project

Michael Kubo

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The Yokohama Project: An interesting building usually has an equally interesting tale to tell, an epic embedded in the organization of the massive, complex amount of matter used to create the structure. This book recounts the story of the Yokokama Project, an inventive, undulating, grass-covered ferry terminal that was never meant to be built. Asked to produce some material for an architectural journal, London-based architects Farshid Moussavi and Alejandro Zaera-Polo of FOA (Foreign Office Architects) set themselves a program of entering three competitions, through which to explore design ideas they had become interested in. When they actually won the second competition, for the Yokohama International Port Terminal, in Yokohama, Japan, their plans suddenly changed. The Yokohama Project presents a textual and visual replica of the way their winning building was developed, over eight years, by FOA and a huge team of engineers and researchers in Tokyo and Yokohama. Unlike the typical architectural book, this one offers no critical texts and no theoretical analyses of the structure; instead, it aims to rediscover the linearity of the building's creation. The reader is thus moved linearly through the following chapters: Design Evolution, Building Permits, Structure, Services, Finishes, Circulation, and Final Documents. Peppered throughout with detailed plans, elevations, diagrams, and sketches, as well as candid snapshots of the design team at work (sometimes asleep at and under their desks!), The Yokohama Project is not only an homage to a building but to the many people who worked on making it real. Foreign Office Architects is a pioneering architectural practice founded in London in 1992. It has since expanded to include an office in Japan. The principal partners are Farshid Moussavi and Alejandro Zaera Polo, both of whom are graduates of Harvard University's Masters in Architecture program and former employees of Rem Koolhaas's OMA (Office for Metropolitan Architecture). Current projects include a publishing headquarters in Paju City, Korea, and a park and open-air auditorium in Barcelona, Spain. Completed projects include New Belgo restaurant and Bermondsey Antiques Market in London. This past year, FOA were among the short-listed winners for the competition to design Porto Antico in Genova, Italy.

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