

MILLENNIUM MEETINGS WITH ARCHITECTURE

THE BOOK

The many faces of contemporary architecture

With the publication of **MILLENNIUM MEETINGS WITH ARCHITECTURE** Italcementi offers a testimonial to the work of some of today's leading architects, from Frank Gehry and Eric Owen Moss to Dominique Perrault and Richard Meier. It recalls a series of memorable lectures delivered by them in Italy in the last few years and also celebrates the contribution that every great designer makes to the evolution of building construction.

In describing the work of these architects, the text gradually evolved from an obligatory overview of outstanding achievements accompanied by biographical notes into a real story, a combination of analysis and narration. Through a retrospective consideration of their individual careers and a critical review of the gap between expectations and realizations, declarations and results, the architects inevitably came to be seen under a different light: not so much as stars, but as individuals, with the difficulties, shortcomings – in some cases the tragedies – of every other human being. In the best cases, the authentic nature of their work as a showcase of true talent shines through even to the disenchanted viewer, who will feel not a little admiration. Whether it is examining the restless explorations of Raimund Abraham, the provocative assemblies of Miralles and Tagliabue (EMBT) or the sophisticated compositions of Peter Eisenman – in his transition from a refined analyst of historic Modernism to architect/sculptor of plastic forms – this book reveals that being an architect is still the last resort for the utopia of a world constructed with and on ideas, inventions and experimentation.

Of course, a collection of so many and such disparate personalities in one book is not a frequent occurrence: in its descriptions of their masterpieces, in its revelations about lesser known aspects of their work, **MILLENNIUM** gradually also becomes a sort of atlas, a guide to the search for a truth, the truth about construction, which may elude a less attentive observer today. True architecture is no longer simply a physical manifestation, it is fragmented, almost exploded into a hundred different and complex directions: sustainable technologies and materials, artistic intentions, social aspiration, the relationship with the context – to mention only a few – which this book endeavors, at least in part, to describe. In the jumbled and contradictory panorama of our post-modern communities and cities, whose confusion is further compounded by the current economic difficulties, we should pay attention to the coherence of designers who manage, in this new cultural anarchy, to stay on their own original path: keeping faith with the idea of constructive innovation as a tool for evolution in our way of life, convinced they can still foster a more sensitive perception of today's great transformations through new experiences inside the architectural space.

Stefano Casciani