

BJARKE INGELS GROUP



CONTENT

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10	BIG NUMBERS
12	BIG: THE NEXT GREAT AMERICAN PRACTICE
14	COMING TO AMERICA / HAPPY THOUGHTS
16	BIG WIN!
18	BREAKING THE LAW OF JANTE
20	BIG INTERNS
22	ANY PRESS IS GOOD PRESS
24	PYRAMID SCHEME
26	GLOSSARY: BIG
28	BIP (BJARKE INGELS' PORSCHÉ)
30	TEAM JIYO
32	BJARKE @ OMA
34	BJARKE @ GSD
36	BJARKE: A FAIRY TALE AS SOME WORDS IN EXCEL
37	ARCHITECTS! OUT OF IDEAS?
38	POWERPOINT FORMALISM
40	REPRESENTATION
42	MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE
44	BIG FONT
46	YES IS MORE OR LESS
48	WHOGOTTHEBIGGER.DK
50	A FEW THOUGHTS ON YES IS MORE
52	GREETINGS FROM 1973
54	[TRANS]PLANTED / [RE]PLACED
56	BIG ICON LIBRARY
58	PASSIVE / AGGRESSIVE
60	LET'S GET SMALL
62	SACRIFICES MADE FOR THE DIAGRAM
64	KIBISI
66	WORKING WITH BIG ARCHITECTURE
68	THE ROMANTIC FUNCTION OF GREEN ARCHITECTURE
70	THE HOUSE OF ADAM
72	SHANGHAI WORLD EXPO 2010
76	THE MERMAID EXCHANGE
80	SUPER 8
82	THE PRAGMATICS OF CONTEXT
84	DECORATION
86	THIS WASN'T THE COOL WE WANTED?
88	FOOTNOTES TO A MANIFESTO
90	A LETTER TO BJARKE INGELS
92	DON'T HATE THE PLAYER, HATE THE GAME
94	CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES
98	CONTRIBUTOR SURVEYS / IMAGE CREDITS
102	BJARKE INGELS' RESPONSE

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I CAN'T HELP BEING ATTRACTED BY THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE CROSS- BREEDING BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND COMICS.

YES IS MORE OR LESS
[ZOOMI//ZZZZRRRTT//THUDI//BLAAMI -
ME NOT]

"If the passage falls below the levels of ponderous literacy and pedantically accurate spelling... the use of imagery has a knowing exactitude which overleaps conventional architecture-magazine rhetoric of the period, by-passes the reader's normal verbal defence [sic] mechanisms, and thus produced a distinct shift in sensibility."

Had they not been written around 1976 by Reyner Banham to qualify the success of Space Probe!—the comic-collage that Warren Chalk produced for *Amazing Architecture* 4—these words could belong to any contemporary critic's review of BIG's first monograph, *Yes is More*.

Since Le Corbusier wrote his storyboarded *Lettre a Madame Meyer* in 1925 comics have maintained an incestuous love/hate relationship with architecture or, better, with canonical architectural representation. Iconic power of the comic image aside, graphic narrative has an inherent appeal due to its capacity to combine the traditional tool of flat, linear drawing with the representation of timespace, and to permit the cohabitation of sequentiality and simultaneity.

I can't help but feel attracted by the possibilities of the cross-breeding between architecture and comics, of the condensation/articulation of time and architectural/urban space displayed by Winsor McCay or Frank King in their early but mature understanding of Thierry Groensteen's sequence in praesentia / of the spatial play of non-linear narratives deployed by Chris Ware, Lewis Trondheim or Victor Moscoso / of the experimentations with the architecture of the page by

KLAUS

OuBaPo's Patrice Killoffer.

But BIG's *Yes is More* is none of these. Nor should it be. Bjarke Ingels takes comics at face value. *Yes is More* is not an experiment on the ability of graphic narrative to represent architectural space, but a straightforward, use of comics to tell architecture. In a field pervaded by the artificial construction of the-project-as-a-narrative, BIG chooses to openly present the work within a narrative constructed ad hoc, using the very architecture of comics as a natural way to combine the texts and images through which architects develop work into a consistent ideovisual (if I may use the pun) discourse. *Yes is More* is a nicely crafted work of/on narrative that plays with alliterations and takes its time to domesticate the source material, effectively succeeding in fostering a certain closeness between the viewer and the buildings: Softened by the voice of Bjarke Ingels as the story's narrator, the usual coldness of architectural renderings gets replaced by a sense of familiarity, conjuring in them an aura not of represented spaces, but of lived places.

Of course, as usual in BIG, there is a tendency to excess, to oversize the communicational apparatus with an overabundance of words, pictures and diagrams rather skillfully inserted without much self-censorship. If in his seminal short story *Here Richard McGuire* condensed a lapse of billions of years in 6 pages—that could have been reduced to a single, wisely designed panel—in *Yes is More*, Ingels unfolds a few years of practice in four hundred busy pages. But Bjarke Ingels is not McGuire. Nor should he be.