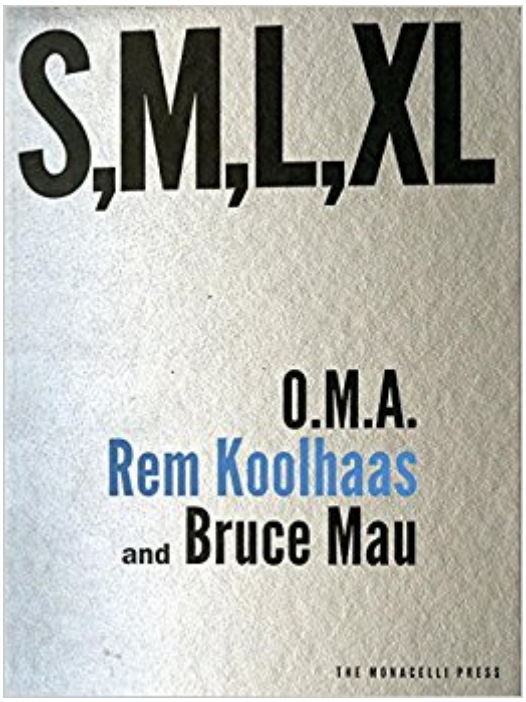
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Synopsis

S,M,L,XL presents a selection of the remarkable visionary design work produced by the Dutch firm Office for Metropolitan Architecture (O.M.A.) and its acclaimed founder, Rem Koolhaas, in its first twenty years, along with a variety of insightful, often poetic writings. The inventive collaboration between Koolhaas and designer Bruce Mau is a graphic overture that weaves together architectural projects, photos and sketches, diary excerpts, personal travelogues, fairy tales, and fables, as well as critical essays on contemporary architecture and society. The book's title is also its framework: projects and essays are arranged according to scale. While Small and Medium address issues ranging from the domestic to the public, Large focuses on what Koolhaas calls "the architecture of Bigness." Extra-Large features projects at the urban scale, along with the important essay "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?" and other studies of the contemporary city. Running throughout the book is a "dictionary" of an adventurous new Koolhaasian language -- definitions, commentaries, and quotes from hundreds of literary, cultural, artistic, and architectural sources.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Koolhaas, Dutch architect, author (Delirious New York) and cult figure, wants architecture to be "a chaotic adventure," and this massive tome certainly is. Created with Toronto-based designer Mau, it's a huge collage splicing freewheeling essays, diary excerpts, photographs, architectural plans, sketches, cartoons and surreal montages of images. There's also a running glossary of Zen-like definitions, plus fables and parables intended to shake modern architects out of conventional thinking and to dispel urban despair. In one essay, Koolhaas admires Japan's metabolist

movement, which fuses organic, scientific, mechanistic and romantic vocabularies. That approach seems compatible with his own innovative, eclectic vision as head of the Dutch firm Office of Metropolitan Architecture (O.M.A.), whose houses, villas, office towers, libraries, colleges, cultural complexes and other projects are showcased here. While some readers may be mystified by a nonlinear hodgepodge, architects, planners and designers will find this frequently outrageous assemblage a provocative repository of ideas. Author tour. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"A brick of a book ... This book tells a tale, a great contemporary architectural odyssey-the story of how this architect came to think big."

While I would have appreciated including XS and XXL, I can understand why they needed to focus and hone in as they did. Not only that, but this way they’ve left room for both a prequel and sequel: well played, indeed!

Rem Koolhaas, in terms of theoretical discourse sets the bar in SMLXL for architects, urban designers and planners at an international scale. This books is the foundation of many of his most recent work. It’s theories, mainly in regards to the ’Generic City’ are visible in our worlds largest cities to the most rural areas on Earth. Truly a must have for anyone in the design or built environment fields.

I have to say that it’s a bit difficult to go through, because it’s a GIANT book. I tried reading every bit of it from the first page, and it seemed like I’d never finish. I put it down for a little while, and now I just pick it up and start reading from any random page. I don’t agree with some of Rem’s design ideals but I’ve learned a lot from this book.Another thing to mention here is the great graphic design by Mau, it gives you a lot of ideas just from looking into any random page! I learned about Mau in school and absolutely love his designs!Very worthy book to have in your book collection!

Fantastic!

Good conceptual material. Lacks coherence.

One of the best architectures book ever written. Dynamic and fluid, this book is always great to

read.

The book is certainly fun to flip through - the design is amazing and the images say a lot. I found myself confused, however, with some of the content and overall did not find it particularly accessible / functional as a tool for understanding D.M.A. and their work.

Rem Koolhaas is one of my favorite architects, so this book is a nice addition to my collection. It’s not so much a collection of projects as it is a manifesto of conceptual and theoretical architecture. There is much that may seem like it is unrelated, but once you really read through the book, it will all make sense.

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