



# Speculations

Peter Cook

Contributions by Frank Gehry

Contributions by Toyo Ito

Contributions by Thom Mayne

Contributions by Peter Wilson

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- This is the first book to document Peter Cook's drawings from student projects, in the 1950s, to work completed just days before going to press in 2022
- Presents all of Peter Cook's iconic Archigram drawings
- Commentaries from architects Frank Gehry, Toyo Ito, Thom Mayne and Peter Wilson place Cook in the Pantheon of great architectural visionaries

Peter Cook's distinctive drawings have captivated and inspired generations of designers. Freed from stylistic or functional conventions, his graphic speculations have redefined the language of architectural communication. **Speculations** spans Cook's entire career, presenting some 160 drawings that range from student projects in the 1950s, through Archigram, to new work completed shortly before going to press. Arranged chronologically, these drawings chart the course of what can now be seen as an enthralling architectural adventure. Cook's own observations about the nature of architecture and urbanism, and the concept of the buildable, are complemented by pieces from architects Frank Gehry, Toyo Ito, Thom Mayne and Peter Wilson.

As a founder member of the visionary group Archigram, in the early 1960s, **Peter Cook** (1936-) helped to project radically new possibilities for architecture. Archigram mixed Pop Art's fascination with found objects with emerging technical possibilities to imagine an architecture where the necessary guts of a building determined its imagery. The influence on buildings such as Piano + Rogers' Pompidou Centre was obvious.

With the flamboyance of a natural showman, Cook turned his fascination with 'the puzzlement of the strange thing' into spectacles. As an art-impresario at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (1969-71), and Art Net, which he established and directed from 1972-9, he introduced new ideas and people to London audiences, and stimulated discussions about the nature of art and contemporary culture. Cook has built in Berlin, Vienna, Madrid, Osaka and Nagoya. However, it was with the construction of his arts building, the Kunsthaus Graz (aka 'The Friendly Alien') designed with Colin Fournier and completed in 2003, that Cook's speculations on architecture and the concept of the buildable were finally manifested in a complex public building. His first building in the UK, a drawing studio at the Arts University Bournemouth, was opened by Zaha Hadid in 2016. Cook is also the pre-eminent architectural educator in the UK. He was for many years an influential Unit Master at the Architectural Association (AA), where he had completed his own studies. Students who came under his influence at the AA include Zaha Hadid and Rem Koolhaas. From 1990 to 2006, as Chair of Architecture (now Professor Emeritus) at the Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, he brought in staff and attracted students from across the world, turning what had been an academically solid but sober school into a leading center of creative design. London, he announced, was now a center for 'concepts, metaphors, images and design'. Cook is also a Senior Fellow of the Royal College of Art, London, and his professorships include those of the Royal Academy, London and the Hochschule für Bildende Künste (Städelschule) in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany. In 2007, he was awarded a knighthood for his services to architecture and teaching. He is also a Royal Academician and a Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of the French Republic. In 2004, his achievements with Archigram were recognized by the Royal Institute of British Architects, when the group was awarded the Royal Gold Medal.

**Frank Gehry** (1929-) is a Canadian-born architect living in Los Angeles. He is the designer of some of the world's most famous buildings, including the Guggenheim Bilbao, and the Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles.

**Toyo Ito** (1941-) is a Japanese architect widely regarded as one of the world's most innovative and influential practitioners. Throughout his early career he constructed numerous private house projects that expressed aspects of urban life in Japan.

**Thom Mayne** (1944-) is an American architect based in Los Angeles. He is the founder of Morphosis, a collective practice of architecture, urbanism and design, rooted in rigorous research and innovation.

**Peter Wilson** (1950-) is an Australian architect, based in Germany, and the co-founder with Julia Bolles of Bolles+Wilson. He is the designer of numerous cultural buildings, including the Münster City Library.

