



People, Place, Purpose: The World According to Mecanoo Architects

Francine Houben

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Since 1984 Mecanoo has been committed to creating architecture that contributes to a better world. From an office that started out designing social housing, the practice has developed into an international firm with projects all over the world. Mecanoo has 30 years of experience in the design of buildings, urban plans, landscapes and interiors in which public space always plays a key role. People, Place, Purpose describes the specific architecture Mecanoo explores, illustrating the way they seek identity in a globalised world, via the texture of a local stone, colours of fruit trees or rituals of inhabitants. Mecanoo is driven to design buildings with “strength to earth”. Through 17 projects, all built in different conditions, the reader is given insight into what drives Francine Houben in “making architecture on strange ground”. The book is introduced with an essay about Mecanoo’s hometown of Delft, describes the parallel development of the university campus and their office, and shows the way time affects the purpose of buildings and landscapes. People, Place, Purpose then goes on to show how Mecanoo designs places for people. The office begins by exploring the physical urban context and observing the life that inhabits it. Mecanoo’s ultimate goal is to make buildings that want to be used.

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