



Rewriting Architecture

10+1 Actions: Tabula Scripta

Floris Alkemade, Michiel van Iersel, Jarrik Ouburg, Mark Minkjan (eds.)

Rewriting Architecture explores and embraces the potential of place. The book claims that the idea of ‘tabula rasa’, or creating from scratch, is no longer a viable option. It considers the quality of the existing urban and social fabric—the tabula scripta—as an inspiration, motivation and starting point of design. How can this context be read, understood, valued and further developed?

Rewriting Architecture is activating and enriching the architectural discourse and wider public debate with a series of verbs, or actions, that show how we can respond better to what is already there: Eliminate; Continue; Obscure; Reconfigure;

Repurpose; Densify; Copy; Overlay; Reimagine; Restart and Abstain. These 10+1 Actions are illustrated by compelling examples from a broad range of places and design practices all over the world, from Asia to Africa, to Europe and the US. The editors relate these challenges to a wide array of makers and thinkers through stimulating contributions by architects and other specialists working in the arts, biology, fashion, ecology, pop culture, nanotechnology and philosophy.

Rewriting Architecture proposes new narratives to describe and discuss design practices that work with what exists, with the people who are already there and with respect for the natural resources that are left.

On the editors:

Rewriting Architecture is an initiative by Floris Alkemade (heading FAA Architect, Chief Government Architect, Architect of the Year 2018), Michiel van Iersel (urbanist, curator, initiator Failed Architecture, teacher) and Jarrik Ouburg (HOH Architects, teacher). In the Tabula Scripta research group (2014–2019) at the Academy of Architecture, Amsterdam, these editors have conducted in-depth research into the role, tools, and craftsmanship of the architect in the condition of ‘Tabula Scripta’, or the ‘inscribed page’. In this approach the existing context—both material and immaterial—is not regarded as a limitation of the designer’s options, but rather as an opportunity to utilize the potential of a site and of the local urban and social fabric, a complex interaction of social, material, and political elements. This also makes the book an enquiry into the foundations of the architectural profession and a plea for redefining the brief, the range of options, and the strategies of architects/spatial designers.

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Info: Publisher: Valiz, Amsterdam with publishing partner Academy of Architecture Amsterdam, Lectorate Tabula Scripta | Design: Haller Brun | paperback | 440 pp. | English | November 2020 | ISBN 9787-94-92095-70-1 | € 29,50

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