



# Starchitecture: Scenes, Actors, and Spectacles in Contemporary Cities

*Davide Ponzini, Michele Nastasi*

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How and why do spectacular buildings get commissioned and procured? What are their visible urban effects? What can urban planners, architects, and policymakers learn in order to engage in more successful citymaking?

In recent years, media and critical attention has been lavished on famous architects, and the contributions of their designs to the branding of cities. The post-“Bilbao effect” global landscape is one where cities compete for the highest-profile skyscrapers, cultural projects, and high-profile developments designed by star architects whom even casual readers know by first name: Frank Gehry, Bjarke Ingels, Jean Nouvel, Zaha Hadid, Norman Foster, Rem Koolhaas. Far less is known about the decision-making processes behind these projects and their subsequent urban effects.

A unique combination of urban studies and photography, *Starchitecture* investigates projects designed by star architects in cities including Paris, New York, Abu Dhabi, Bilbao, and the architectural microcosm of the Vitra campus in Weil am Rhein, Germany. Author Davide Ponzini and photographer Michele Nastasi seek to explain and critique a growing global condition by revealing how starchitecture has been and continues to be deployed in cities around the world. The arguments they raise are vital to understanding the urban landscapes of today, and tomorrow.

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