



Rem Koolhaas

Founding partner of OMA, architectural theorist, urbanist and Professor in Practice of Architecture and Urban Design

Rem Koolhaas founded the Office for Metropolitan Architecture in 1975 together with Elia and Zoe Zenghelis and Madelon Vriesendorp as a collaborative practice. Having worked as a [journalist](#) and script writer before becoming an architect, Koolhaas graduated from the Architectural Association in London, and in 1978 published *Delirious New York*, a Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan.

Rem's biography

Rem Koolhaas' background

In 1995, his book *S,M,L,XL* summarized the work of OMA and established connections between contemporary [society](#) and architecture. At this moment Rem Koolhaas is heading the work of OMA as well as AMO – the conceptual branch of OMA, a think tank focused on social, economic, and technological issues. Rem Koolhaas is a professor at Harvard University where he conducts the Project on the City, a research program investigating the world's changing urban conditions. The projects include a study on China's Pearl River Delta (published as *Great Leap Forward*), an analysis of the role of retail and consumption in the contemporary society (*The Harvard Guide to Shopping*), and studies on Rome, Lagos, Communism, preservation and Beijing.

In 2005 the Casa da Musica concert hall in Porto was completed and was recognised as one of the most important concert halls in the world by the *New York Times* (April 10th 2005). Recently, OMA has completed the Netherlands Embassy in Berlin, a campus center at the Illinois Institute of [Technology](#) in Chicago, the Prada Epicenter in Los Angeles and the Public Library in Seattle. The Seattle Library was chosen by *TIME Magazine* as The Best Architecture for 2004 and was described by the *New York Times* as: *'At a dark hour: Seattle's new Central Library is a blazing chandelier to swing your dreams upon. If an American city can erect civic project as brave as this one, the sun hasn't set on the West.'*

In Asia, OMA is currently constructing the office's largest project to date, the 575,000m² China Central Television Headquarters CCTV, a Television Cultural Center TVCC in Beijing and [media](#) park. On 26 December 2007 the two towers of the CCTV building were joined, marking a crucial and exciting moment in the project. In November 2007, construction started on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange and is expected

to be completed in 2010.

Awards and accolades

The work of Rem Koolhaas and OMA has been celebrated by several international awards, including the Pritzker Architecture Prize (2000) and the RIBA Gold Medal (2004). In 2005 Rem Koolhaas received the Mies van der Rohe Award for the Netherlands Embassy, Berlin. In making their decision to award the Netherlands Embassy, the jury commended the 'quality of the urban reflection and intelligence of the concept implemented, especially as regards the unprecedented concept of 'trajectory' and the new potential it brings to this project of great complexity'. In 2007, The Royal Institute of British Architects awarded the Casa da Musica concert hall in Porto, Portugal, the European Award and nominated it for the coveted Stirling Prize.

In 2001 Rem Koolhaas was awarded the French Legion of Honour and 2007 the University of Leuven, Belgium, honoured him with a doctorate honoris causa. In the same year Rem Koolhaas was elected to the European Council of Foreign Relations and in December 2008 he was asked to join the EU Reflection Group, a European think-tank dedicated to strategizing the future of the European Union. In addition to the architectural work of OMA Rem Koolhaas also addresses theory, [culture](#) and politics with the creative think tank AMO.

Further information

Recent AMO projects include a visionary masterplan for the Hermitage State Museum in St. Petersburg, a study for the European Commission on the visual identity of the EU, image restructuring for Condé Nast magazines Lucky and Wired, a study on the future of the automobile for Volkswagen and a study concerning preservation for the city of Beijing. By combining AMO and OMA Rem Koolhaas is seen as one of the most important thinkers of the last decades. Nicolai Ouroussoff critic for Los Angeles Times underlines this by: *'There is little question that Rem Koolhaas is one of the most influential architects of the last 20 years. As an architectural thinker, his cool analytic approach to design, sprinkled with a healthy scepticism, has informed the profession that his fingerprints can be found on the work of almost any young architect today.'*

Koolhaas' work was the subject of various overview exhibitions, the most recent being Content, which opened at the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin in 2003 and at the Kunsthal (built by OMA) in 2004. In conjunction with the exhibition, a book of the same name was published in 2003 by Taschen Books. Content illustrates the ways in which Rem Koolhaas and OMA-AMO interact with the world and how the world in turn influences their work. An exhibition by AMO on representation in and the perception of Europe was on display in Brussels and at the Haus der Kunst in Munich. For the Biennale in Venice Rem Koolhaas in 2005 curated 'Expansion & Neglect' and in 2006 'The Gulf', exploring the vast urbanisation at the Gulf coast.

More recently, Rem Koolhaas and AMO have produced Al Manakh, a study of the Gulf, which was published in autumn 2007 and coincides with OMA's continued architectural and theoretical presence in the Middle East. This year Koolhaas curated 'Dubai Next' at Vitra Museum Basel – an exhibition exploring the balance between change and tradition in Dubai.

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