

By presenting architecture as a discipline with its own unique logic, *The Autopoiesis of Architecture* provides a wholly new theoretical approach to architecture. The impact of this is far reaching. Architecture's conception of itself is addressed but also that of its development within wider contemporary society. Schumacher's innovative treatment of the subject enriches architectural theory with a coordinated arsenal of concepts that facilitates both detailed analysis and insightful comparisons with other domains, such as art, science and politics. The 'Autopoiesis' of the title refers to self-production: the term having first been introduced in biology to describe the essential characteristic of life as a circular organization that reproduces all its specific components out of its own life process. Once transposed into the theory of social systems, autopoiesis came to be understood as a system of communication capable of producing all its specific communication structures within their own internal process. It is this *autopoietic* system of communication that is being applied here to an architectural context. Architecture comprises various modes of communication, including drawings, texts and built works. These communications depend upon each other and combine to reproduce architecture as a specialized system of communication. The book explores how this system of communication forms a unique subsystem of society that co-evolves with other important autopoietic subsystems like art, science, politics and the economy.

The first of two volumes that together present a comprehensive account of architecture's autopoiesis, *The Autopoiesis of Architecture: A New Framework for Architecture* introduces the theoretical framework and traces the historical process of architecture's differentiation within its societal environment: its elevation above the craft of building, its emancipation from religion and politics, as well as its separation from art and science. On this basis Schumacher insists on the necessity of maintaining disciplinary autonomy and argues for its distinct demarcation in relation to art and engineering. Architecture's dependency on theory is emphasized and its internal separation into the avant-garde and the mainstream is explained. Styles are theorized as design research programmes that constitute architectural history as a progression of cycles of innovation that upgrade architecture to adapt to the ongoing evolution of society. This initial volume ends with the clarification of architecture's underlying societal function and *raison d'être*. The second volume completes the analysis of the discourse and further proposes a new agenda for contemporary architecture in response to the challenges and opportunities that confront architectural design within the context of current societal and technological developments.

Patrik Schumacher is partner at Zaha Hadid Architects and founding director of the Design Research Laboratory (DRL) at the Architectural Association (AA) in London. He studied philosophy and architecture in Bonn, London and Stuttgart, where he received his architectural Diploma in 1990. In 1996 he founded the AADRL with Brett Steele, and continues to serve as one of its directors. In 1999 he completed his PhD at the Institute for Cultural Science, Klagenfurt University. Patrik Schumacher joined Zaha Hadid in 1988. Since then Zaha Hadid Architects has expanded from a small studio to a global firm employing over 300 architects. Patrik Schumacher's career continues to integrate practice and theory. His contribution to the discourse of contemporary architecture is also evident in his prior writings, such as *Digital Hadid*, 2004, as well as in his curatorial work for exhibitions, such as *Latent Utopias*, Graz, 2002. His essays are available on www.patrikschumacher.com.