

Rem Koolhaas

Quotes

*Cities, Architecture, Thinking, Two, Important, People, Beautiful, Real, Quality,
Shopping, Issues, Men, Interesting, Years, Building, Design, Political, Way,
Reality, Hands*

Evil can also be beautiful. The Coliseum in Rome, for example, a wonderful structure with an awful past. Just think about the bloody gladiator fights there.

~Rem Koolhaas

A building has at least two lives - the one imagined by its maker and the life it lives afterward - and they are never the same.

~Rem Koolhaas

Talk about beauty and you get boring answers, but talk about ugliness and things get interesting.

~Rem Koolhaas

Any architectural project we do takes at least four or five years, so increasingly there is a discrepancy between the acceleration of culture and the continuing slowness of architecture.

~Rem Koolhaas

Architects work in two ways. One is to respond precisely to a client's needs or demands. Another is to look at what the client asks and reinterpret it.

~Rem Koolhaas

It is not possible to live in this age if you don't have a sense of many contradictory forces.

~Rem Koolhaas

Architecture is a hazardous mixture of omnipotence and impotence. It is by definition a c h a o t i c a d v e n t u r e... In other words, the utopian enterprise.

~Rem Koolhaas

The good is not a category that interests me.

~Rem Koolhaas

Find optimism in the inevitable.

~Rem Koolhaas

The stronger the identity, the more it imprisons, the more it resists expansion, interpretation, renewal, contradiction.

~Rem Koolhaas

Not many architects have the luxury to reject significant things.

~Rem Koolhaas

Our society can no longer tolerate ugliness. You see that in cars, sofas and women. [But] ugliness also has a right to exist.

~Rem Koolhaas

Infrastructure is much more important than architecture.

~Rem Koolhaas

Asia is still dominated by skyscrapers. I hope that, in European cities, it will become a declining trend. They were almost never necessary.

~Rem Koolhaas

But now sustainability is such a political category that it's getting more and more difficult to think about it in a serious way. Sustainability has become an ornament.

~Rem Koolhaas

Architecture is a rare collective profession: it's always exercised by groups. There is an essential modesty, which is a complete contradiction to the notion of a star.

~Rem Koolhaas

Architecture is a dangerous mix of power and importance.

~Rem Koolhaas

The City is an addictive machine from which there is no escape

~Rem Koolhaas

Escape from the architecture ghetto is one of the major drivers and has been from the very beginning.

~Rem Koolhaas

Our office acts like a kind of educational establishment and we are very careful who we educate.

~Rem Koolhaas

Manhattan is an accumulation of possible disasters that never happen.

~Rem Koolhaas

In this branch of utopian real estate, architecture is no longer the art of designing buildings so much as the brutal skyward extrusion of whatever site the developer has managed to assemble.

~Rem Koolhaas

As an architect, I always have mixed feelings. On the one hand, your fingers are itching. As a human being, you are happy to participate in the indolence.

~Rem Koolhaas

One cannot completely avoid this landmark character with large buildings such as these. But the city itself is also gigantic.

~Rem Koolhaas

That has been another interesting discovery: that basically a city [Lagos] could recover from a really deep, deep, deep pit.

~Rem Koolhaas

We say we want to create beauty, identity, quality, singularity. And yet, maybe in truth these cities that we have are desired. Maybe their very

characterlessness provides the best context for living.

~Rem Koolhaas

The acceptance of certain realities doesn't preclude idealism. It can lead to certain breakthroughs.

~Rem Koolhaas

Designs are increasingly winning competitions because they are literally green, and because somewhere they feature a small windmill.

~Rem Koolhaas

The work in S, M, L, XL was almost suicidal. It required so much effort that our office almost went bankrupt.

~Rem Koolhaas

We live in an almost perfect stillness and work with incredible urgency.

~Rem Koolhaas

When shopping was still connected to the street it was also an intensification and articulation of the street. Now it has become utterly independent - contained, controlled, surveyed.

~Rem Koolhaas

The beauty of my profession [architecture] lies in its randomness and surprise. And don't think I can choose my projects. I have to build what's offered to me.

~Rem Koolhaas

Criticism per se does not worry me. I've always solicited it as part of the design process.

~Rem Koolhaas

The great problem of the concert hall is that the shoebox is the ideal shape for acoustics but that no architect worth their names wants to

build a shoebox.

~Rem Koolhaas

Manhattan has no choice but the skyward extrusion of the Grid itself; only the Skyscraper offers business the wide-open spaces of a man-made Wild West, a frontier in the sky.

~Rem Koolhaas

Let's put it this way: One can be happy or unhappy in a building. But some buildings make us more depressed than others.

~Rem Koolhaas

Sustainability has become an ornament.

~Rem Koolhaas

The areas of consensus shift unbelievably fast; the bubbles of certainty are constantly exploding.

~Rem Koolhaas

If you have this reputation you can sit back and endure it, or you can try to do things with it.

~Rem Koolhaas

You need to look at inequality as a typical condition of modern society.

~Rem Koolhaas

I am incredibly bad at predicting the future; I am only smart enough to observe the present and listen to my intuition about tendencies.

~Rem Koolhaas

The Metropolis strives to reach a mythical point where the world is completely fabricated by man, so that it absolutely coincides with his desires.

~Rem Koolhaas

Without a tighter union, Europe will disintegrate

~Rem Koolhaas

The luxury of our position now is that we can almost assemble any team to address any issue.

~Rem Koolhaas

Lagos was not very inviting even to Lagosians. It was considered a no-go zone, almost in its entirety.

~Rem Koolhaas

Beauty isn't what I'm primarily interested in [in architecture]. I think appropriateness is more important.

~Rem Koolhaas

In the end, there will be little else for us to do but shop.

~Rem Koolhaas

I like fashion, whether or not it's overpriced, because it creates a sense of the sublime with relatively few means.

~Rem Koolhaas

There's nothing Dutch about my architecture.

~Rem Koolhaas

Nobody should be anything, but because I once had a different profession and I'm interested in writing, I took it upon me.

~Rem Koolhaas

I wanted to disconnect from contemporary architecture

~Rem Koolhaas

Manhattan has generated a shameless architecture that has been loved in direct proportion to its defiant lack of self-hatred, has been

respected exactly to the degree that it went too far.

~Rem Koolhaas

Lagos was the ultimate dysfunctional city - but actually, in terms of all the initiatives and ingenuity, it mobilised an incredibly beautiful, almost utopian landscape of independence and agency.

~Rem Koolhaas

Nigeria [in 1990] was all rumour, an unbelievable amount of rumour - largely about crime and almost mythical manifestations of evil.

~Rem Koolhaas

When we went in the late 1990s, Nigeria was still in a dictatorship. So we didn't go with a mission. It started really with a sort of blankness and open-endedness.

~Rem Koolhaas

The architecture per se isn't at fault. The more important factor, in my view, is the political neglect of these areas, which have essentially been cut off from other neighborhoods.

~Rem Koolhaas

Journalists seem mostly interested in what brand of shoes I wear.

~Rem Koolhaas

The word 'celebrity' and the word 'architect' are basically incompatible.

~Rem Koolhaas

As more and more architecture is finally unmasked as the mere organization of flow - shopping centers, airports - it is evident that circulation is what makes or breaks public architecture.

~Rem Koolhaas

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