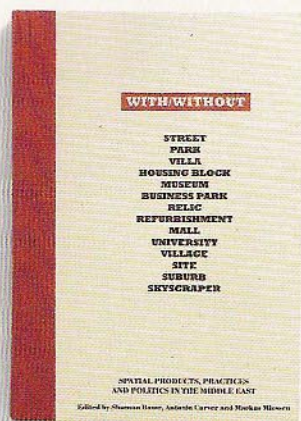


**With/Without**  
 Edited by Shumon  
 Basar, Antonia Carver,  
 and Markus Miessen  
 BIDOUN AND  
 MOUTAMARAT,  
 265 pp., \$25



In Armin Linke's aerial photograph of a massive government-planned housing complex in Cairo, the area looks like a futuristic national flag, or perhaps a computer chip. Architecture, flags, hardware—each is an exploration of space, literal or figurative. The book that contains Linke's image, *With/Without: Spatial Products, Practices and Politics in the Middle East*—produced with the Dubai-based Moutamarat agency and the arts and culture magazine *Bidoun*—plumbs the ways that design can fill, compete with, or alter that space.

Many of the writers and artists within are specifically tackling the architectural audacity of modern Dubai. The book's premise also holds up even when applied to “ethereal merchandise” like the single cigarettes (“loosies”) sold illegally on the streets of Tangier, or the religious, tribal, and cultural disputes about color and symbolism that arose when it came time to redesign the Iraqi flag. All of these manipulated spaces, as architect and writer Keller Easterling tells Nader Vossoughian in one interview, smack of “traveling through slightly different tinctures of modernism.”

It becomes clear—through all the contradictions, discrepancies, and indulgences examined here—that the people who create, inhabit, and struggle against these spatial “typologies” are participating in a duplicity that demonstrates the impossibility of reconciliation between tradition and the present for many in the Middle East. Consider the mind-boggling rationalization, expressed by architect Shumon Basar, of Dubai's ascendancy as a global capital of “free zones,” each one a “lacuna of contestable liberation.”

Such pomo-speak actually underlines the complexities of a diverse population of Arabic speakers, coping—through skyscrapers, books, and other negotiations of space—with how aspects of the Western world are encroaching on them. *With/Without* serves as the perfect title for a collection of ideas that demands multiple reads and looks, overwhelming you for the better as you begin to understand these spaces (and locations of real lives, not just points on a political map), in the editors' words, as “not either/or, but both/and.”

BUZZ POOLE

#### PRINT EDITORS RECOMMEND

**Our Dumb World** (Little, Brown, \$27.99), *The Onion's* parody of every charticle-packed Dorling Kindersley-like atlas, will make you laugh (while you cry inside). The book, which mocks ridiculous American notions of other countries, describes Namibia as a nation where “Brad Pitt once wiped his brow.” **CL** • **How to Think Like a Great Graphic Designer**, by Debbie Millman (Allworth Press, \$24.95) is full of revelations from hotshot designers, via intimate interviews by the branding advocate, star podcaster, and *PRINT* contributor. **JRK** • Did you know that some '30s photo booths made metal-framed pictures? Such tidbits, plus a gallery of deeply moving anonymous photos, make **American Photobooth**, by Näkki Goranin (W. W. Norton, \$29.95), a must-have for ephemera enthusiasts. **CD** *PRINT* contributor R. Jay Magill's battle cry for irony in **Chic Ironic Bitterness** (University of Michigan Press, \$25.95) will convince you that no matter how hard you fight them, the ironists have already won. **JG** • **Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design**, by Deborah Nadoolman Landis (Collins Design, \$75), lays out the glamour and agony of a cinematic century in 544 pages of stills, sketches, and quotes. Elizabeth Taylor on *Ivanhoe*: “My neck is killing me. Every morning at six o'clock they tape me into a wig that weighs two pounds.” **CD**

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