



Living Complex: From Zombie City to the New Communal

Niklas Maak

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Cities today have become portfolios of investment properties with token patches of green. The cost to live in a fortress-like luxury housing complex in London or Manhattan is so high that most of us can't afford it. As the masses move to the suburbs, the construction industry responds by churning out clusters of the same barracks-style row houses, ensuring that, there too, one can live in utmost privacy and security. But what do these buildings say about us? Do they have anything to do with the way in which most people actually want to live?

Niklas Maak provocatively argues that the construction industry and a number of outdated or poorly thought-out policies have prevented us from rethinking how we live in the city. Yet many of our current crises—from the mortgage crisis to global warming—are closely connected to problematic forms of accommodation in our cities. And the problem will only get worse: Over the next twenty years, influx into the world's cities is expected to create the need for an additional one billion units of housing. Fortunately, Maak shows, there are practicable solutions. In Europe, Japan, and the United States, the author explores promising new forms of housing.

Cities should be reflections of their inhabitants—not forces to be contended with. Controversial, yet well-researched and wryly funny, *Living Complex* is a call for change from the “comfortable defense lines” that epitomize the current sorry state of housing.

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