Self Sufficient Housing

"Well we know where we're going, but we don't know where we've been." So says the lyrics of a certain 80's pop song. And where we are going, is of course hyper-fast into the future. But with one minor problem: little fuel left in the tank. This realisation is slowly beginning to dawn on us.

Meanwhile visions of the future have never looked so good - now that we can see them with the aid of a few hundred Gigabytes and high-resolution screens. But what will it be like to live there? What kind of houses will we be taking our virtual mortgages out for?

Certainly they will have to be sustainable, low energy and eco friendly. We will be plugging our composting toilets and wind turbines into the ultimate machines for being 'green in'.

Self-Sufficient Housing is an excellent little pocket book that gives us a fast forward glimpse into what may lie ahead in this eco-topia. A dense compendium of ideas, it began as an international architectural competition to research different approaches to the theme of sustainable dwellings.

While some projects do look like the uncertain progeny of unhappy couplings between submarines and space ships, others - that are more land based - rise as vertical communities of plug-in eco shocks, precarious cliff dwellings, organic blobs and rooftop lookout's. Cows and chickens populate the eco imagery, and wander happily between the gadgets through virtual space to remind us of our rustic roots. Even the most basic proposal comes fully equipped with grey water collection, photovoltaic panels, green roofs and solar chimneys as standard.

As architecture faces up to more sobering responsibilities, this dynamic excursion into future visions for Self-Sufficient Housing helps direct us on our way as a hitch-hiker's guide to finding our self-sufficient future.

Paul Clarke

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E-mail and web contact details are given for each architect, so that you can if you wish pursue a conversation and maybe a commission direct with the designers. Here the internet is used as a useful natural extension of this compact book for research, exchange of ideas and documentation.