



**Architectures of the Near Future**, edited by Nic Clear (Architectural Design/Wiley, £22.99)

Architecture is utopian, says Nic Clear. From the ideal cities of the Renaissance to Le Corbusier's soaring verticals, architects offer us glimpses of tomorrow's urban world. But with the eco-crisis, the war on terror and the global recession, the future looks bleak. Through multimedia projects and speculative essays, this visionary volume explores the architectural shape of things to come. Matthew Gandy considers the causes of urban deprivation, arguing that architects need to transcend "speculative myopia". Geoff Manaugh's chilling essay describes the "feral city" - how an increasing number of cities have gone wild, slipping into a state of lawlessness and medieval squalor. No longer the fantasies of SF writers, these post-apocalyptic cityscapes are the worst nightmares of military planners. Most of the contributors are pessimistic: the future is Ballardian. Simon Sellars hopes architects will learn from Ballard's dystopian narratives so that those of us who live in their buildings "do not have to expire to prove a point".

**PD Smith**