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Modern Architecture (Oxford History Of Art)



Synopsis

Colquhoun, an eminent scholar in the field of architecture, offers here a new account of international modernism that explores the complex motivations behind this revolutionary movement and assesses its triumphs and failures. The book focuses on the work of the main architects of the movement such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Adolf Loos, Le Corbusier, and Mies van der Rohe, re-examining their work and shedding new light on their roles as acknowledged masters. The author presents a fascinating analysis of architecture with regard to politics, technology, and ideology, all while offering clear descriptions of the key elements of the Modern movement. Colquhoun shows clearly the evolution of the movement from Art Nouveau in the 1890s to the mega-structures of the 1960s, revealing the often-contradictory demands of form, function, social engagement, modernity and tradition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Who needs another history of the modern movement? Colquhoun, emeritus professor of architecture at Princeton, shows us why in this wonderfully succinct, readable, and opinionated account of movements and formgivers, from European art nouveau to the post-war decades in America. Each of the chapters focuses on a theme or a region, ranging from the artistry of Loos to the social engineering of Scandinavia. Though most of the examples are familiar, the author gives them a fresh spin--starting with the cover illustration of Hans Scharoun's Schminke house of 1933, now restored and used as a day care center. It embodies the daring and idealism that powered the

modern movement and is now being rediscovered."--L.A. Architect

Alan Colquhoun is Professor Emeritus in the School of Architecture at Princeton University. His other publications include 'Essays in Architecture: Modern Architecture and Historical Change' and 'Modernity and the Classical Tradition: Architectural Essays 1980-1987'.

Alan Colquhoun writes a survey of modern architecture that aims to sharpen our image of a series of architects and styles that all attempted to represent and reflect a new era in human history while advocating for an evolution in the way people perceive and interact with their environments. This narrative is presented chronologically and thematically, examining the philosophies within the progression in the development of modernism, dovetailed with global events in the early twentieth century that had a dramatic impact upon it. Colquhoun does not eschew a focus on the masters of modernism, an approach that many might consider outdated, because that was the nature of modernism, despite its many claims to anonymity. He attempts to place the reader within the mindsets of modern masters, tracing changes in the style from 1890 through the 1960s. Colquhoun's book spans continents, beginning its story in a Europe in the midst of the chaos and turmoil of the Industrial Revolution, quickly followed by a quick hop across the ocean to Chicago, where Sullivan and Burnham were building skyscrapers in a city undergoing a real estate boom. Colquhoun deftly combines context with analysis of buildings themselves, looking at architecture both as an artistic statement as well as a functional process, the creation of places for leisure and business. He does not neglect the great architects of the period. Wright, Corbusier, Mies, and Kahn are all examined in depth. Their influences, processes, and impacts are all laid out. The receptions these masters received are also studied, providing insight into the immediate reactions received by fellow architects and laymen. The book is presented in a linear fashion, with a progression occurring in modernism that increasingly disdains the classical. In this way, Colquhoun's focus on prominent figures allows him to trace the lineage of the styles in a very direct way. Colquhoun's book contains a great many illustrative images, from photographs of buildings, to floor plans, to pictures of furniture. Each image caption contextualizes what is depicted, and inserts it into the architectural conversation that was occurring in this era. The book seeks to demonstrate how modern architects attempted to understand and improve the essence of modern society. It is easily readable, and appropriate for everyone from college students to architecture enthusiasts who want to better understand the design and construction of urban environments.

This was one of two books I bought for an Art History class I took in college. I loved this book! I'm not an architect or an art history buff, but I was able to understand and appreciate the chapters in this book. There are pictures of the buildings they talk about, so you can see the message they are trying to convey. It hops around the different styles throughout the early 20th century by picking a couple of famous buildings that really accentuate the style at that time. I would suggest this book if you need it for a class or if you just want to learn a little bit about art and architecture. The book itself is pretty small compared to other textbooks. It's a good coffee table book if you are looking for some interesting reading for your home.

I'm not an architect but am sufficiently interested to know more about the recent century of architecture and the key designers who have shaped it...sadly this book is too detailed for my liking and doesn't give the "fly over" I was hoping for...

Colquhoun is one of the most significant architectural theorist and historians of his generation. His interpretation of modern architecture post dates the usual references which gives us a fresh and creative take on the subject. His role as a practicing architect also informs his insight, which is unique for an historical survey of this type. He knows what it takes to actually design and build a building, which distinguishes him from his peers.

I wanted a "basic" book, this is much more than basic. I have had to put the book down many times and fire up the ole google-fu to get definitions for the definition that are used. But I am learning a lot and I guess that's why I bought it. The only problem is that sometimes i would like the illustrations to be larger and more detailed.

Very well organized history of Modern architecture.

Great for architecture school!

Contains beautiful pictures. But it's considerably heavy because of the paper it uses.

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