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Architecture: From Pre-History To Postmodernism



Synopsis

With more than 1,000 illustrations, including 74 plates in full color.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a university student of art history and a visual thinker, I especially appreciate the dedication of Hyman and Trachtenberg to explicitly revealing the form and function of Western architecture, past and present. Organized by historic period and region, this survey clearly traces the flux of cultural aesthetics and developing technical advances in architectural construction since ancient times. Text, diagrams, and both color and black/white images are married to full effect, illuminating not only the means by which builders chose to erect monuments and structures, but more importantly, the attendant human values their achievements represent. Of all the books purchased for my schoolwork, this one stands out for its breadth, painstaking attention to detail, and egalitarian treatment of successive time periods. This classic reference book lends a fluency to the understanding of architectural dialogue and, as such, should be a cornerstone of any serious architectural library.

For the past five years I have used this book to teach beginning architecture students - the first two semesters of a three-semester survey - and found the parts that I use (pre-19th century) very valuable, although the discussion of post-Medieval Spanish architecture was weak. My major complaint, however, is the absence of any maps! There should be several of them - one for each major section of the book.

This book summarizes over ten thousand years of architectural history in such a practical and clear form. Ignoring its price, I would recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in architecture. However, though the book briefly studies such vast expanses in the history of architecture, it fails to even touch architecture in the eastern world. Asia still continues to remain much of a mystery and covering it would truly enlighten the human imagination. Yet, doing so would also probably double the size of the book, thus increasing its cost to over a hundred American dollars. The book also, I feel, seems to enter into too much detail in the forms of modern architecture. In buying this book, one most likely seeks to learn more of history not 'postmodernity,' nevertheless it can be interesting to learn how modern architecture has come to pass.

I am a Registered architect(with National Certification), Registered Interior Designer and instructor of Architectural History. Trachtenberg and Hyman have written the definitive history of western architecture in this tract. The reading is awkward at times, but the ideas conveyed comprise the foundation of today's architectural theory. There are few, if any textbooks on this subject which maintain a consistent thread of thought all the way through. This one does. If you are vitally interested in the underpinnings of today's designs, you should read it.

Purchased as a textbook for my Architectural Theory class. While very in-depth and expansive, Trachtenberg postulates opinions as fact, without a second opinion. Being a textbook, everything said is drawn out and convoluted. This has the potential to either leave the reader with a deep understanding or completely bewildered. Being an architecture student, this book is giving me a historical design base I plan to build off of for the rest of my life.

This book is an excellent blend of factual information, ease of understanding, and philosophical insight for the beginning student of architecture. There are other books which offer more information and/or insight, but few which are as good for the uninitiated.

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