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Modern Architecture: A Critical History (Fourth Edition) (World Of Art)



Synopsis

"One of the most important works on modern architecture we have today." •Architectural Design
This acclaimed survey of modern architecture and its origins has become a classic since it first appeared in 1980. For the fourth edition Kenneth Frampton has added a major new section that explores the effects of globalization on architecture in recent years and examines the phenomenon of international celebrity architects who are increasingly active all over the world. The bibliography has been updated and expanded, making this volume more complete and indispensable than ever.
420 illustrations

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, Kenneth Frampton presents a dense and detailed survey of modern architecture. Frampton divides his book into three parts; the history behind modern architecture, a critical history of modern architecture from 1836-1967, and a critical assessment and extension into the present day. The majority of the book focuses on the critical history of modern architecture from 1836-1967. In this section, Frampton explores modern architecture around the globe. He divides this section, and the other two as well, into short chapters that introduce and explore particular architects or movements. Overall, Frampton's work is a good introductory survey of canonical architects and movements within Modern architecture, but the book lacks cohesion, is quite heavy, would be benefited with a better selection of and larger pictures, and lacks detail on specific buildings. In the first section of the book, Frampton introduces the historical influence on the modern period of architecture. These influences fall into three main categories; the

abstraction and simplification of classical features through Neoclassicism, urban planning, and technical transformations and advances. While the section that explores modern architecture from 1836-1967 continuously brings up these themes, Frampton never directly relates his chapters back into their historical context. His chapters also have no cohesive narrative. They are arranged in a rough chronology with seemingly no guiding theme throughout. This is made even more abundantly clear by his separation of sections dealing with the same architect. Frampton has three chapters devoted to Le Corbusier, two to Frank Lloyd Wright, and two to Mies van der Rohe, however these chapters never follow one another.

It is easy to see why Kenneth Frampton's *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* is a staple for modern architectural surveys. Frampton is incredibly thorough despite the vast scope of his work which covers well over three centuries of architecture in less than four hundred pages. This architectural survey takes a look the development of modern architecture as it arose from the ideas of the eighteenth century to architecture as we know it today. The book is divided into three major sections that loosely follow chronological order. Each chapter is introduced by a quote selected by Frampton to encompass the ideas of the men and buildings he discusses. The first three chapters focus on how the stage was set for modern architecture. Frampton highlights the shifting philosophy of the West during the mid-eighteenth century, the effects of major technological innovations, and the development of modern cities and how issues such as overcrowding and disease contributed to the development of modern architecture. The second section of the book is clearly centered on the Great Man theory of history. The twenty-seven chapters in this section are short, which makes this dense work more easily digestible. Each chapter focuses on well-known architects of an era and makes connections between the works and ideas of major players in the architectural world. It can be frustrating that Frampton often ignores the larger cultural, social, economic, and political context in favor of analyzing the flow of ideas from one great architect to another. The last section of the book focuses on architectural movements themselves and the many great men behind them. The most recent edition includes a chapter on the globalization of architecture and the spread and influence of ideas across the continents.

This is an expansive text that attempts to briefly define the origins of modern architecture and view the intellectual developments of modernism throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through a critical lens. Frampton's intention is to create a comprehensive text on modern architecture that draws on artistic movements, technological developments, and philosophical ideas

to explain the intellectual thought behind modern architecture's realization. In doing so, he creates a very thorough and dense narrative of the modernist movement firmly rooted in the movement's intellectual history. The book is divided into three sections. The first traces the cultural and technological developments that set the stage for modernism, taking on the difficult task of defining where modernism as an architectural style begins. The second section is intended to serve as a "critical history" of the modernist movement, tracing its intellectual development through examining individual architects, schools, and periods. The third section, which appears somewhat disjointed from the rest of the text, comprises of a series of critical essays that delve into other aspects of modernist architecture not covered in narrative of the second section's critical history. The bulk of the text is a part of this second section that presents a critical history of modernism broken up into short chapters Frampton calls "mosaics" that focus on particular architects, schools, or periods. These chapters are brief, but thorough descriptions of modern architecture, primarily focused on tracing intellectual thought, but sometimes engaging in brief formal analyses of building forms.

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