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Theoretical Anxiety And Design Strategies In The Work Of Eight Contemporary Architects (MIT Press)



Synopsis

The internationally acclaimed architect Rafael Moneo is known to be a courageous architect. His major works include the Houston Museum of Fine Art, Davis Art Museum at Wellesley College, the Stockholm Museum of Modern Art and Architecture, and the Potsdammer Platz Hotel in Berlin. Now Moneo will be known as a daring critic as well. In this book, he looks at eight of his contemporaries -- all architects of international stature -- and discusses the theoretical positions, technical innovations, and design contributions of each. Moneo's discussion of these eight architects -- James Stirling, Robert Venturi, Aldo Rossi, Peter Eisenman, Alvaro Siza, Frank Gehry, Rem Koolhaas, and the partnership of Jacques Herzog and Pierre De Meuron -- has the colloquial, engaging tone of a series of lectures on modern architecture by a master architect; the reader hears not the dispassionate theorizing of an academic, but Moneo's own deeply held convictions as he considers the work of his contemporaries. More than 500 illustrations accompany the text. Discussing each of the eight architects in turn, Moneo first gives an introductory profile, emphasizing intentions, theoretical concerns, and construction procedures. He then turns to the work, offering detailed critical analyses of the works he considers to be crucial for an informed understanding of this architect's work. The many images he uses to illustrate his points resemble the rapid-fire flash of slides in a lecture, but Moneo's perspective is unique among lecturers. These profiles are not what Moneo calls the "tacit treatises" that can be found on the shelves of a university library, but lively encounters of architectural equals.

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Customer Reviews

Theoretical Anxiety and Architectural Strategies in the Work of Eight Contemporary Architects...keeps the "live" feel of a master performance. The result is an exacting but easy read that unfolds like a novel by Italo Calvino....Moneo moves beyond the common denominator of form to touch on the rich complexity of what architecture is. In the sense that architecture is between the lines, you have to read between the lines of this book. (Bernard Tschumi The Architect's Newspaper)Moneo's insights and analyses are often brilliant, and his perspective as a Spaniard and as a former chair of the GSD (Harvard Graduate School of Design) is a unique one. He conveys his ideas in lively prose, peppered with anecdotes. (Architectural Record)

José Rafael Moneo is an internationally renowned architect, in practice since 1965. He has taught in both Spain and America, and from 1986 to 1990 he was Chairman of the Architecture Department at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. He holds the Gold Medal for Fine Arts awarded by the government of Spain, the Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize for Architecture, and the Schöck Prize.

This book is really useful for who study architecture, sometime there were some stories behind the architect that we didn't know, and always wonder how and why they approach to their design work. Nice to know this book, it helped me a lot in doing researching also! Nice, strongly recommending!

Rigorous insights of the some of the best.

Very nice book, the only strange thing is that the pictures are sooooo small, but i guess it was the writers choice, not related to services.

it is a very helpful book to study contemporary architects. moneo explains the architects's philosophy with theoretical basis well. this book will be a good text book to understand 8 world class architects' ideas and works regarding architecture.

I purchased this book because I was interested in only two architects. One was Siza and the other H+Dm. Going over again Stirling/ Venturi/ Rossi was just too much and I wasn't interested in the rest of three architects. But thanks to Moneo's great writing, I was able to read all of the architects with great interest and enthusiasm. Reading Siza was like reading a poetry. Moneo constructs that mood

by comparing Siza with a Poet Pessoa. Due to their contemporaneity, analysis on H+Dm is still on going. But Moneo explains well on the foundation of H+dM's work. Like the comparison of Siza to Pessoa, it is interesting to read H+Dm's relationship/influence with conceptual artists such as Joseph Beuys. In terms of Venturi and Rossi, unlike crash courses in architectural history, Moneo delves into more on their individual projects than on the theoretical manifestos of their books. I gained most reading Koolhaas and Eisenman. I never liked their writings (one being too sarcastically light and the other being too narcissistically heavy) and I hated their buildings. Moneo actually helps overcome these misreading. Overall, the book really stimulates thinking in that every line in architecture has a meaning. Moreover, it helps to see the landscape of contemporary architecture. As the title suggests, the book really is a theoretical anxieties. And like all anxieties do, I guarantee that this book will stir the stagnation of your spirit; as it did mine.

There are Architects who write eloquently about Architecture, but whose built works disappoint, then there are those whose buildings inspire and yet seem unable to communicate clearly about their ideas, but Rafael Moneo is the rare architect who appears in easy command of both realms. A colleague who studied under him said that Moneo could look at a project and tell exactly how it was designed, and this book seems to substantiate this ability to understand both method and reason behind the work of some of the most important Architects of the last third or the 20th century. Moneo's prose is informal, yet studied, and this book serves as a once in a lifetime conversation with a master Architect. His ideas seem better defined when dealing with James Stirling and Aldo Rossi, and more speculative when dealing with relative newcomers like Koolhaas, and Herzog+DeMeuron, but the book is always insightful. Moneo comes across as someone who loves his profession and who, despite earning international renown, approaches the work of his colleagues with the same fascination of a brilliant student. This fascination is contagious, and the book is a worthy addition to the library of anyone who loves contemporary architecture.

In this deceptively thick volume, Moneo presents a compilation of lectures he gave during the early 90's while at Harvard's GSD. Digging into his archives, he reassembles slides and text specific to the work of eight individuals that Moneo believes to be among the most influential contemporary architects of the late 20th century. Don't let the title intimidate you. Moneo is simply referring to the mechanisms, operational strategies, formal devices and procedures that architects utilize in their design process and their unwillingness to reveal those systematic theories of design. Rather, he believes that the current architectural discourse assumes a more reflective or critical posture rather

than revolving around the process of design. Moneo manages to reveal to varying extents the working process of each architect by analyzing a body of work over the course of their career, identifying key changes in strategies. As an architect, learning the working process of such significant architectural figures is quite useful, allowing one to locate themselves (or others) within the greater architectural sphere. Here, connections begin to reveal themselves and linkages to architects past and present become evident. The project images are often a bit too small to be incredibly useful especially since Moneo often refers to specific features within the drawings and photos to explain his thoughts. However, this remains an excellent and recommended read.

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