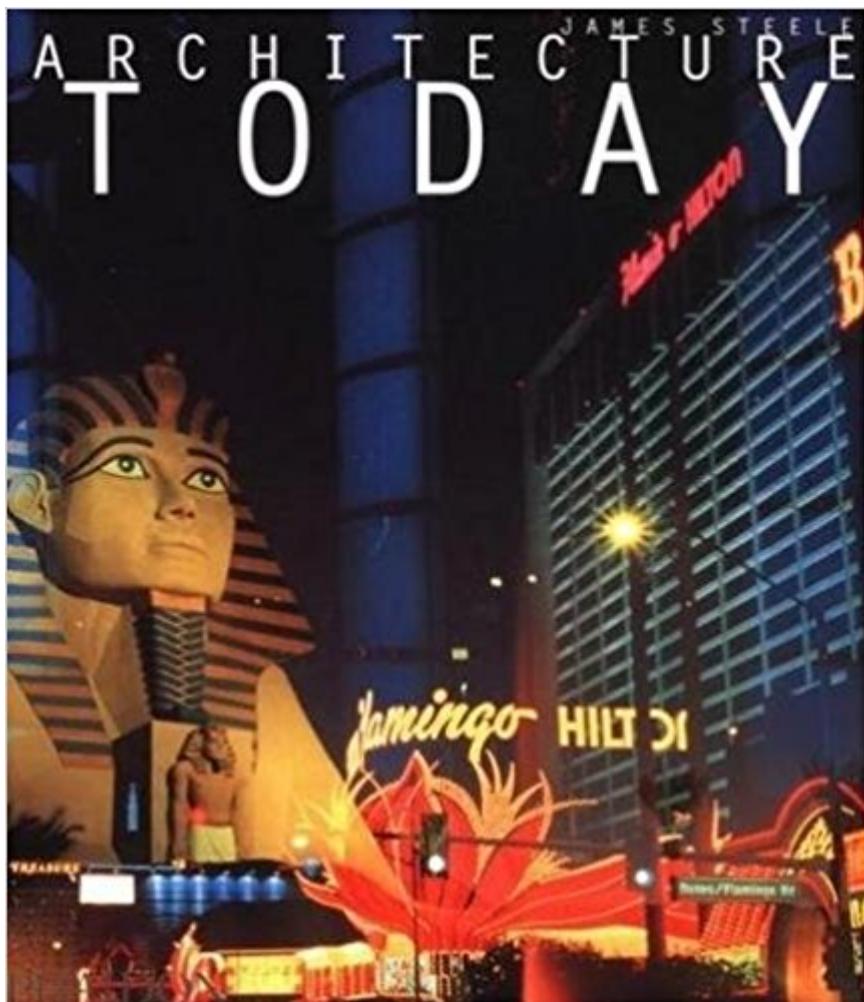


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# Architecture Today



## Synopsis

This work is a comprehensive overview of architecture worldwide since the 1960s. A guide to the many and varied contemporary architectural trends, it leads the reader through the styles and movements of architecture in the latter half of the 20th century.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This lushly illustrated, 500-page compendium is indispensable for any student of architecture, and many professional architects should find it a handy, although heavy, reference guide. James Steele covers the world of contemporary architecture with style, insight, historical perspective, and--perhaps most helpful--a powerful sense of organization. In his capable hands, a vast amount of information falls neatly into place under sixteen chapter headings: The Modernist Legacy, European Rationalism, High Tech, Minimalism, The Classical Revival, Post-Modernism, Deconstructivism, Contemporary Vernacular, The New Expressionists, Ecological Architecture, The New Moderns, Populist Architecture, Megastructures, The Los Angeles Avant-Garde, Experimentation in Japan, and World Cities. The balanced text is multi-faceted. Steele can list the sources of Post-Modernist architecture (correcting the popular view that the movement was an attempt to do away with Modernism) or suggestively draw a correspondence between the roofscape of Gustav Peichl's Federal Art Gallery in Bonn and the use of nature in David Lynch's film *Blue Velvet*. As with so many architecture books from Phaidon Press, the picture editors and book designers have carefully matched the photographs to the text, and have given precisely the right

kind of caption information for each one. The back of the book includes brief architect's biographies, chapter notes, a lengthy bibliography, and a chronology from 1945 to 1997. This beautifully produced book is a one-volume course on postwar architecture and the social and political milieu in which it exists. --Peggy Moorman --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"As a beginner's guide to the trends of the last 25 years, *Architecture Today* is invaluable. Accessible text and a preponderance of colour pictures go a long way toward doing for architecture what Gombrich did for art."-Creative Review "Exceptionally handsome. A lavish look at some of the best building trends since 1960."-Met House "An ambitious guide to the trends in architecture over the last 25 years. In other words, a romp through all those tricky isms, from Vernacular to Deconstruction."-The Sunday Times

James Steele's mammoth compendium of modern architecture is as definitive as can be imagined. The book combines fascinating text, highlighting his years of professional knowledge, with amazing color photographs, to yield one of the most breathtaking large-format architectural books I have ever seen. Most stunning in this book is the photography. The breadth of buildings photographed is amazing, and all developments in modern architecture including minimalism, post-modernism, European rationalism, and deconstructivism are well covered. I particularly enjoyed the sections on megastructures, world cities, and populist architecture. I noted that London seemed a tad over-represented, but I didn't mind as the examples showcased (The Ark and The Circle, for instance) were so interesting. Also displayed heavily is the deconstructivist Bernard Tschumi, whose Parc de la Villette is modestly interesting, but who otherwise seems a bit more conventional than his reputation would tend to indicate. My favorites in the book include all the works by Michael Graves, particularly the Benacerraf House Addition, and Ken Yeang's Menara Mesiniaga Tower in Kuala Lumpur, which is a peculiarly skeletal, yet overstated building. Of course there are many other wonders in this book, and I highly recommend that anyone with an interest in contemporary architecture buy it today.

This book provides fabulous insight into contemporary architects and designers. Also provides fab. design ideas for almost any space formal and informal.

I had James Steele for many of my architectural professional classes at the University of Southern California. He has a monochromatic voice, funny cold humor and is very knowledgeable as a

professor. This book is set up very similar to some of the subjects he teaches at USC and in somewhat the in same chronological order. This book is complementary to Trachtenberg's "Architecture: From Prehistory to Postmodernism." which was also a very thick and insightful book. As an architectural student I had to get Trachtenberg for a class, but flipping through Steele I knew they were both on the same highly written quality. Where Trachtenberg left off describing architecture of the past, Steele brings us up to speed with the architecture in the modern era. Steele explored many of the architectural style architects fall into today like: Deconstructivism, Vernacular, Expressionists, Minimalism, etc. He smoothly stratifies how architectural ideology emerges from evolving from one another and sometime on its own. The projects he uses for his reference are many well-known and some less popular, but all benchmark in architectural innovation and importance. Steele's descriptions of architecture are helped from outside references. He cross-references architecture with the community, pop culture, people, philosophies that shape, influences and constitutes architecture over time. The photos are of high qualities with good angles. Some are small and some fill up a whole page. I used this book for references in many of my writings at USC. This book is a great insight into architecture and Steele leaves few stones unturned. For the price, knowledge and pictures, this is one of the best architectural book out there.

James Steele has assembled an impressive compendium of contemporary architecture up to 1997. The photographs are glorious and rightly dominate this book. The chapters correspond to various currents, more or less stemming from Modern Architecture, which is given a rather cursory review in the first chapter. The aim is to help readers chart the often tempestuous waters of contemporary architecture, as it branches into numerous streams of thought that seem to grow ever more divergent. Steele's chapters are a little too tidy in that they encapsulate, rather than expand on the attitudes of the architects. One's appetite is barely wetted before Steele brings a chapter to a close. He offers some alluring examples of Green Architecture of both the hi-tech and lo-tech sort, illustrating the different attitudes that emerged in the 90's. This seems the direction architecture is heading as sustainable development becomes an ever more pressing concern. It is a sharp contrast to the various intellectual movements covered in this book that deal almost exclusively with abstract architectural ideas. Steele also takes in the various popular movements such as historic revivalism, contemporary vernacular, and the theme park architecture of Disney and Las Vegas. I was drawn to his concluding chapter on "World Cities," in which he discusses the urban impact of globalization, a recurring theme in the book. He touches on some of the current popular theories on urbanism, various urban renewal projects and the unchecked sprawl of Asian cities like Shanghai. James

Steele is a committed writer who has published numerous works. I particularly liked his book on Los Angeles Architecture, which is given a chapter in this compendium. Although a Modernist at heart, he offers an even-handed treatment of the various approaches to architecture, including the ever-contentious Post-Modernism.

This book is 5+ years old now, but it doesn't show it, besides possibly missing some of the most recent developments in the field - the book starts with a brief introduction to modernism, and moves quickly to the iconic photo of the felling of the Pruitt Housing project in St. Louis- symbolizing the end of modernism. Post-modern examples quickly give way to the best of contemporary architecture around the world. As other reviewers have mentioned, gorgeous, ALL COLOR photographs in large format dominate this book, as any book about the visual and contextual aspects of architecture should. As another reviewer also points out, the writing is more critical art-historical than typical coffee-table book banter, and makes for a coherent review of architecture, who's size and strength make it a piece of architecture itself. 5 stars - surprised I'm only the 10th reviewer.

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