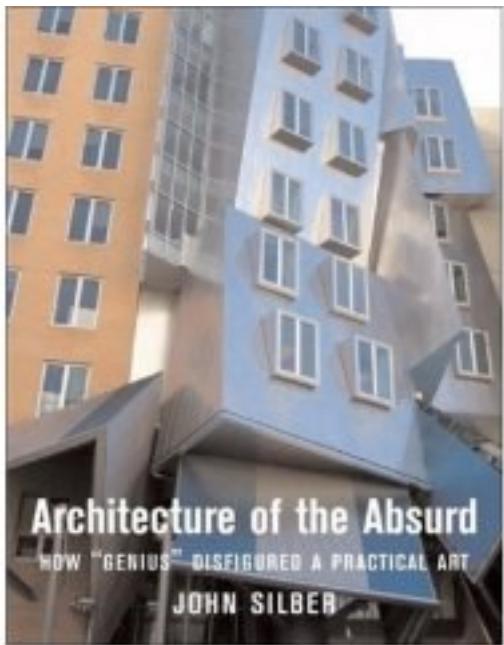


Architecture of the Absurd



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出版者:W W Norton & Co Inc

出版时间:2007-11

装帧:HRD

isbn:9781593720278

Have you ever wondered why the Guggenheim is always covered in scaffolding? Why the random slashes on the exterior of Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum, supposed to represent Berlin locations where pre-war Jews flourished, reappear, for no apparent reason, on his Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto? Or why Frank Gehry's Stata Center, designed for MIT's top-secret Cryptography Unit, has transparent glass walls? Not to mention why, for \$442 per square foot, it doesn't keep out the rain? You're not alone.

In "Architecture of the Absurd," John Silber dares to peek behind the curtain of "genius" architects and expose their willful disdain for their clients, their budgets, and the people who live or work inside their creations. Absurdism in a painting or sculpture is one thing--if it's not to your taste, you don't have to look--but absurdism in buildings

represents a blatant disregard for the needs of the building, whether it be a student center, music hall, or corporate headquarters.

Silber admires the precise engineering of Calatrava, the imaginative shapes of Gaudi, and the sleek beauty of Mies van der Rohe. But he refuses to kowtow to the egos of those "geniuses" who lack such respect for the craft. Absurdist architects have been sheltered by the academy, encouraged by critics, and commissioned by CEOs and trustees. They stamp the world with meaningless monstrosities, justify them with fanciful theories, and command outrageous "genius fees" for their trouble.

As a young man, Silber learned to draw blueprints and read elevations from his architect father. In twenty-five years as president of Boston University, Silber oversaw a building program totaling 13 million square feet. Here, Silber uses his experience as a builder, a client, and a noted philosopher to construct an unflinchingly intelligent illustrated critique of contemporary architecture.

Le Corbusier's megalomaniacal 1930s plan for Algiers, which called for the demolition of the entire city, was mercifully never built. But his blatant disregard for context and community lives on. In Boston, Josep Lluis Sert's unprotected northeast-facing entrance to the B.U. library flooded the first floor with snow and ice every New England winter. In Los Angeles, sunlight glinting off the sharply angled steel curves of Gehry's Walt Disney Music Hall raises the temperature of neighbors' houses by 15 degrees. And of course, Libeskind's World Trade Center plan, with its spindly 1776-foot tower and quarter-mile-high gardens, proved so impractical it had to be re-designed, in an exasperating negotiation hardly worthy of the complex tragedy of the site.

Dr. Silber, an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects, asks all the questions that critics dare not. He challenges architects to derive creative satisfaction from meeting their clients' practical needs. He appeals to the reasonable public to stop supporting overpriced architecture. And most of all, he calls for responsible clients to tell the emperors of our skylines that their pretensions cannot hide the naked absurdity of their designs. 103 color illustrations.

作者介绍:

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标签

设计

建筑

评论

一个神经病@小五的姐姐给的礼物。没想到这样一段讲话也能编成一本书，作者是个十足的实用主义者，自大而又固执。初读起来让人感到不适。但是作者从甲方的角度出发，在书中提出的问题却不能不引起思考：建筑的艺术性和建筑师的自我表达究竟应该被纵容到何种程度？

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书评

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