

Ephemeral City



Ephemeral City *Cite Looks at Houston*

Edited by Barrie Scardino, William F. Stern, and Bruce C. Webb

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著者:Scardino, Barrie (EDT)/ Stern, William F. (EDT)/ Webb, Bruce C. (EDT)

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Built around characteristic features of modern life such as rapid change, built-in obsolescence, indeterminacy, media orientation, a culture of style, and instant gratification, Houston is an ephemeral city, hard to pin down and understand. Its lack of zoning (Houston is the only major city in America without it) and a burgeoning population that doubles every generation have created a new urban paradigm, where displacements of traditional patterns of stability and urban ritual are now the norm.

Since 1982, "Cite: The Architectural and Design Review of Houston" has explored the nature of Houston's evolution as an urban place by publishing commissioned articles by nationally known writers and architectural historians and high quality photography. This volume brings together twenty-five exceptional articles from Cite's first twenty years, along with 224 black-and-white photographs, maps, and plans. The book is divided into three sections: 'Idea of the City', edited by Bruce C. Webb, 'Places of the City', edited by Barrie Scardino, and 'Buildings of the City', edited by William F. Stern. The sections are introduced with new essays written by the editors to provide cohesion for the anthology and commentary on where Houston might be going in the twenty-first century. Most articles are followed by a brief update and bibliography of related articles published in Cite. The editors chose these articles to explore the developmental history and architecture of a flat, sprawling, free-spirited city that is impossible to capture through any one episode or explain through any one place. With a diversity of voices and a selection that includes both narrow and broad topics, the volume constitutes a collage that captures the essence of a remarkable place - inchoate, patchwork, full of youthful vigor, favorable to private enterprise, and one of the world's most fascinating cities.

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