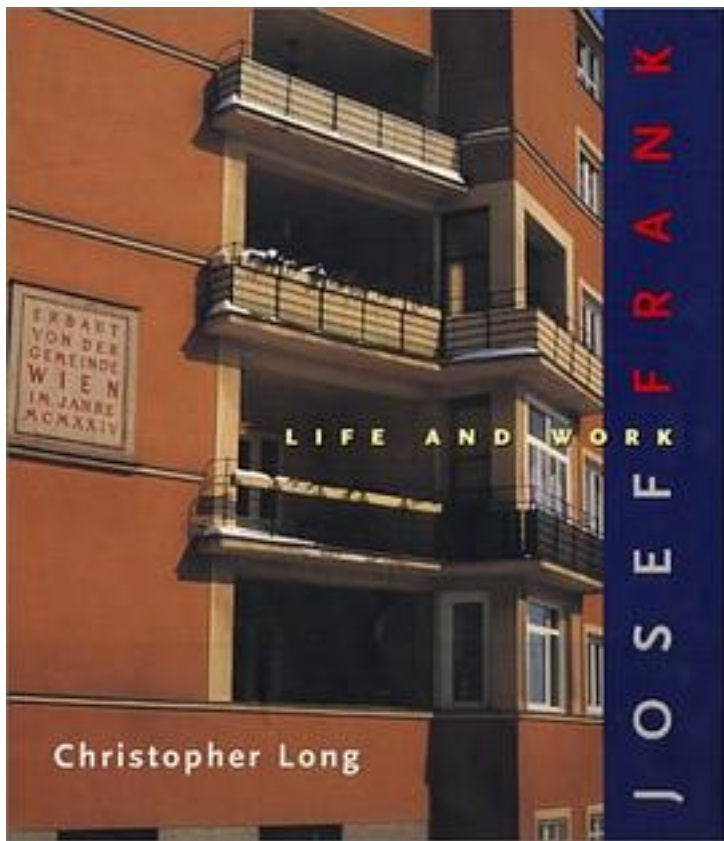


Josef Frank



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Architect, designer and theorist Josef Frank (1885-1967) was known throughout Europe in the 1920s as one of the continent's leading modernists. Yet despite his tremendous contributions to the development of modernism, Frank has been largely excluded from histories of the movement. This is the first English-language study that comprehensively explores the life, ideas and practices of this complex and controversial figure. Educated in Vienna just after the turn of the century, Frank

became the leader of the younger generation of architects in Austria after the First World War. But Frank fell from grace when he emerged as a forceful critic of the extremes of modern architecture and design during the early 1930s. Dismissing the demands for a unified modern style, Frank insisted that it was pluralism, not uniformity, that most characterized life in the new machine age. He called instead for a more humane modernism, one that responded to people's everyday needs and left room for sentimentality and historical influences. He was able to put these ideas into practice when, in 1933, he was forced to leave Vienna for Sweden. There his work came to define Swedish (or Scandinavian) modern design. For more than 30 years he was the chief designer for the Stockholm furnishings firm Svenskt Tenn, producing colourful, cozy and eclectic designs that proved a refreshing alternative to the architectural mainstream of the day and presaged the coming revolt against modernism in the 1960s. In this insightful and sensitive study of one of the 20th-century's seminal architects and thinkers, Christopher Lang offers new insight into Josef Frank's work and ideas and provides an important contribution to the understanding of modernist culture and its history.

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