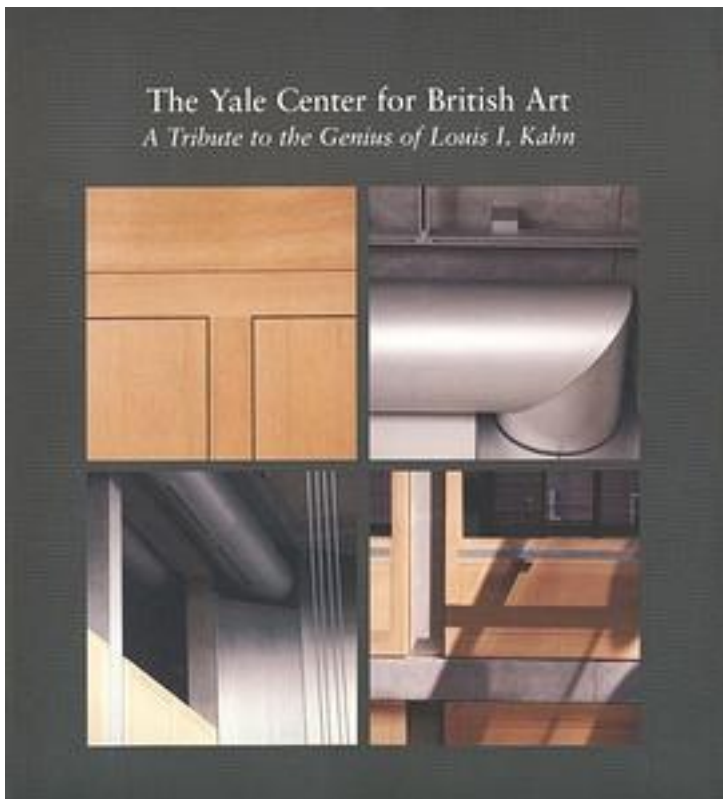


The Yale Center for British Art



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出版者:YC British Art

出版时间:1997-05-29

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9780300069723

The Yale Center for British Art, formed in 1966 around Paul Mellon's unparalleled collection of British art, became a fact in concrete, steel, and glass in 1977 with the inauguration of Louis Kahn's building, the last of his career. Now twenty years later, Duncan Robinson, director of the Center from 1977 to 1995, looks back on the building with great personal affection and an appreciation of the architect's gift for housing not only an exquisite collection but the people who work in and around the building, visit its galleries, and study its collections. With the accomplished photographer David Finn

at his side, Robinson presents the building to us inside and out -- from its formal welcoming atrium to the armchair comfort of its galleries, to the serene and well-ordered offices and study spaces -- as a successful, living museum. Along the way on this very personal guided tour, he enlightens us as only he could on the history of the museum, on the experience of viewing this particular art collection in its setting, and on a host of architectural and decorative details, from carpets and doorknobs to vaulted skylights. Throughout he draws our attention to the dual nature of the Center as both a public museum and a research institute, a concept well understood and beautifully articulated in Kahn's organization of the building around two interior courts. The Yale Center for British Art is a building that works equally well for research scholars, for third-graders on their first visit to a museum, and for seasoned art lovers. No more and no less than any great building, Robinson and Finn show us, the Center is a work of art in its own right.

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