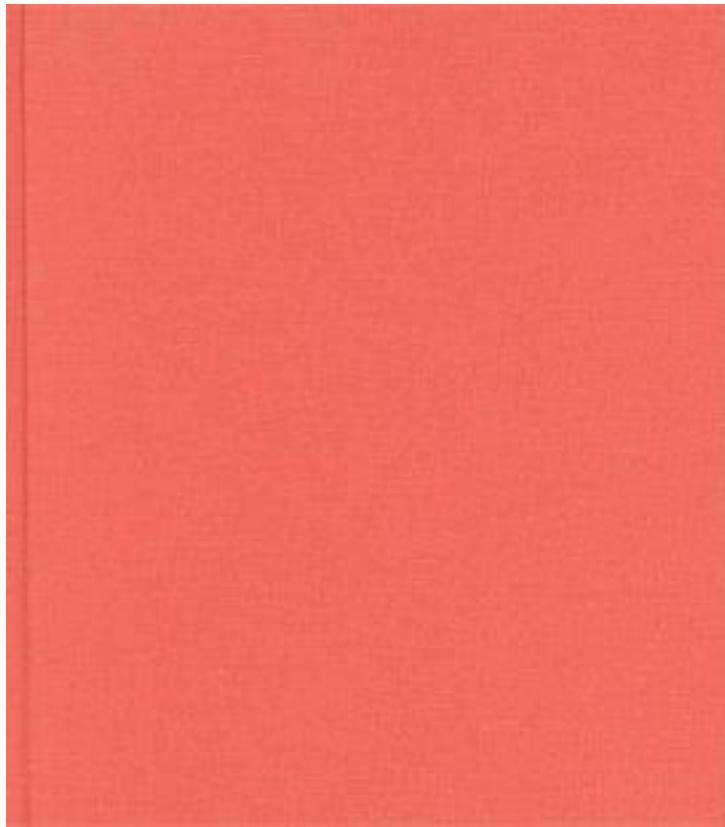


The Hand and the Soul



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The essays in "The Hand and the Soul" explore the question of how ethical ideas guiding the design process -- a concern for the environment or for social justice -- relate to the beauty of our buildings, cities, and artworks. The book presents a range of viewpoints and does not ignore the perils of an easy association of ethics and aesthetics. Yet the majority of contributors, among them historians, theorists, as well as practicing designers and artists, argue passionately in defense of the idea that the

good and the beautiful can and should be able to find a common ground in the design disciplines. The book begins with an exploration of recent difficulties in pairing ethics and aesthetics. Can one effect a philosophical convergence of these elements, or is it dangerous to conflate moral and aesthetic terms? The discussion continues with considerations of the overlap that occurs between the fine arts and the design disciplines, the intersection of aesthetic theory and practice with sustainability and environmental science, and the concept of "open works" -- projects whose design processes are flexible, nonhierarchical, and attuned to the unique features of a particular place or cultural situation. The book concludes with a look at several contrasting ideas developed in the essays and examines ethics as a desire for community, as well as a sense of responsibility, an obligation to contemplate not only what buildings offer us but also what they may take away. In juxtaposing the work of historians and theorists with that of practicing designers and artists, "The Hand and the Soul," whose title is drawn from an essay by American artist Philip Guston, seeks to bridge the divide between theory and practice, between abstract ethical or aesthetic concepts and practical ways of making tangible artifacts. In a field dominated by esoteric studies and, at the other extreme, primarily illustrated works, "The Hand and the Soul" offers a vital discussion that is at once theoretically rigorous and grounded in the practice of art, architecture, landscape architecture, and urbanism.

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