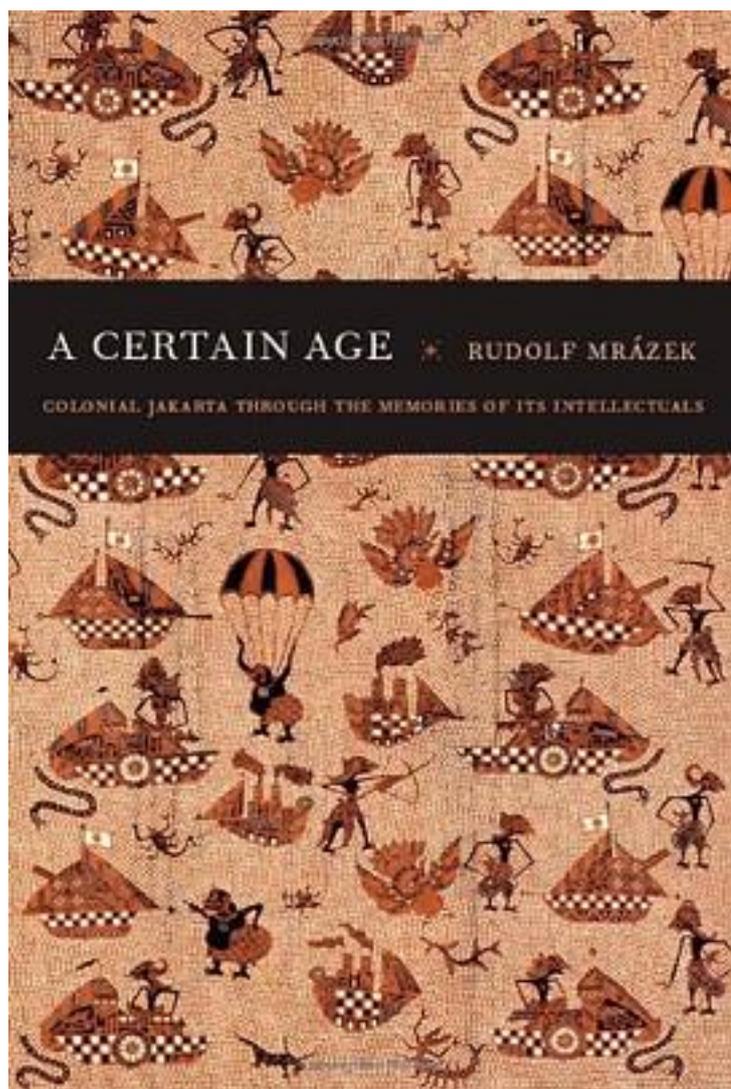


A Certain Age



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"A Certain Age" is an unconventional, evocative work of history and a series of moving reflections on memory, modernity, space and time, and the limitations of traditional historical narratives. Throughout the 1990s, Rudolf Mrazek visited Indonesia, where he recorded lengthy interviews with elderly intellectuals in and around Jakarta. With few exceptions, they were part of an urban elite born under colonial rule and educated at Dutch schools. Since the early twentieth century, through the late colonial era and national revolution, and well into independence after 1945, these intellectuals were prominent in Jakarta, where they injected their ideas of modernity, progress, and freedom into local and national discussion. When he began his interviews, Mrazek expected to discuss phenomena such as the transition from colonialism to postcolonialism. His interviewees wanted to share more personal recollections. Their stories form the backbone of "A Certain Age". Fragments of their conversations are embedded in descriptions of the locations where the interviews were conducted. Mrazek brings to bear insights from thinkers including Walter Benjamin, Bertold Brecht, Le Corbusier, and Marcel Proust, and from his own reflections on looking back at his youth in communist Czechoslovakia two decades after the end of communist rule. Architectural and spatial tropes organize the book. Thresholds, windowsills, and sidewalks come to seem more apt as descriptors of historical transitions than colonial and postcolonial or modern and postmodern. Asphalt-covered surfaces, homes, classrooms, fences, and windows organize movement, perceptions, and selves in relation to others. "A Certain Age" is a portal into questions about how the past informs the present and how historical accounts are inevitably partial and incomplete.

作者介绍:

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