



The Culture of Building

By Howard Davis

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The Culture of Building By Howard Davis

The Culture of Building describes how the built world, including the vast number of buildings that are the settings for people's everyday lives, is the product of building cultures--complex systems of people, relationships, building types, techniques, and habits in which design and building are anchored. These cultures include builders, bankers, architects, developers, clients, contractors, craftspeople, building inspectors, planners, and many others. The product of these cultures, which operate building after building, is the built world of cities and settlements. In this book, Howard Davis uses historical, contemporary, and cross-cultural examples to describe the nature and influence of these cultures. He shows how building cultures reflect the general cultures in which they exist, how they have changed over history, how they affect the form of buildings and cities, and how present building cultures, which are responsible for the contemporary everyday environments, may be improved. Following the development of the idea of building cultures using several historical examples, the book lays out a framework that puts such topics as craft and professionalism, the vernacular and nonvernacular, and design and construction in common frameworks. Although the book ranges widely over different cultures and historical periods, it emphasizes the transformations that took place in architecture and building practice from the late eighteenth century to the present. Finally, the book uses a series of contemporary examples that demonstrate the building culture as a living concept. These examples, which include built work as well as innovative processes that go beyond the work of architects alone, are described as the seeds that can help the emergence of a better build world. This beautiful book features over 260 color and black-and-white illustrations, most from the author's extensive collection of slides, and includes photographs, prints, and drawings from historical archives and contemporary architectural offices.

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Editorial Review

Review

"It's not often that a book appears with the potential to fundamentally change the way we think about the built world. *The Culture of Building* by Howard Davis is such a book."--*Architecture Week*

"A most welcome contribution to the field...for professionals whose work is related directly or even indirectly to building and construction...[and] for use as a text in courses dealing with the relationship of building and culture."--*Journal of Architectural Education*

"Wonderful and refreshing. It describes, for the first time, a new point of view in which the overall system and process of construction of the buildings in the world--all of them together--is viewed as a *single system*: and that system is analyzed for its capacity to create a living world, or not, in different traditional and modern societies. The depth of the examples, the beautiful detail that describes individual instances of building process from culture after culture, and the analytical insight in the hundreds of examples, make this book a landmark. *The Culture of Building*... heralds a new era in our thinking about architecture."--
Christopher Alexander

"With this insightful work, Howard Davis brings a refreshing breeze to ventilate our stuffy attics of architectural thought. He draws our attention away from the tired, singular icons of architectural history and directs it toward the omnipresent urban fabric that shapes our everyday experience."--Edward Allen, author of *How Buildings Work: The Natural Order of Architecture*

"This unprecedented book should be essential reading, not merely for architects and students of architecture, but for all who are seriously engaged in the production of buildings now, and in the future."--Paul Oliver, Director, Centre for Vernacular Architecture Studies, Oxford Brookes University

About the Author

Howard Davis is Professor of Architecture at the University of Oregon.

Users Review

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