



USA: Modern Architectures in History

Gwendolyn Wright

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Since the turn of the twentieth century, the American built landscape has epitomised modernity. From towering skyscrapers, movie theatres, theme parks, shopping malls and factories, to mass-produced, moderate-cost housing, both iconic and generic examples of American architecture have become quintessential images of modern life. In this new volume in the "Modern Architectures in History" series, Gwendolyn Wright contends that American modern architecture is not merely a branch of the European Modernism brought across the Atlantic Ocean with European emigres, but rather an exciting hybrid of cultures, sensibilities and style. From the neo-Gothic aftermath of the American Civil War to the Art Deco that flourished in the 1920s, to postmodernism and the major new projects of today, Wright investigates how each movement reflects the social and political issues of its time. She takes full account of how architects in the US have had to share their domain with clients, financiers and politicians, media and advertising interests, an ambitious middle class of consumers, and upwardly mobile workers and immigrants, and consequently how they developed an architecture that was and remains diverse, contentious, competitive and creative. Wright applies this understanding to a number of famous and lesser-known buildings across America, and explores popular trends as well as public responses to architecture. Ultimately, she reframes the history of American modern architecture as a constantly evolving sensibility that reshapes a richly diverse melange of ideas into something uniquely American. An insightful, concise and richly illustrated account of American design and culture, this timely book will be essential for all those interested in architecture and its place both in contemporary America and the world.



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