
This collection of essays is presented with the unifying theme that interior design and fashion are interconnected phenomena in the modern world. In eleven case studies that represent different cultural milieus since the eighteenth century, the authors discuss changing visual culture as related to interior design and fashion with three conceptual links; the body, fabric, and space.

The volume opens with an introduction and notes on the contributors, who are from Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, and the United States. The first essay was written by one of the editors, John Potvin, who presents a study on velvet that also effectively serves as a general introduction to the conceptual premise of the collection, using theoretical references such as John Ruskin and Walter Benjamin to create a foundation for understanding the approach. Subsequent essays cover topics ranging from studies which focus on textiles, ideas of privacy, and specific individuals who are both consumers and designers. Peter McNeil discusses the idea of queer space in Enlightenment Europe and explores the relationships between fashion, interior design, and spatial planning through the lens of gender and sexuality. The role of women as representations of style is examined as Anne Anderson weaves together ideas regarding the integrated design ethos of Art Nouveau/Jugenstil. Sarah Cheang brings in a discussion of Eastern influences with a study on the use and reuse of Chinese robes and fabrics in the early twentieth century. A specific discussion of an individual is well represented in the study of Elsie de Wolfe by Penny Sparke. De Wolfe, who lived in the late nineteenth century and the first flush of modernity, was a woman who evolved from a clothes horse to an interior designer and thus a perfect example of an intersection of the topics at hand.

This collection of essays is appropriate for academic audiences, and its level of analytical sophistication would be best put to use by graduate students and faculty. There are forty-seven black and white images, some of which are full page illustrations. Each essay includes a list of works cited and notes and there is a general index at the end of the publication. Although the quality of paper is excellent, the binding is weak and it does not appear it will hold up to extended use. However, the in-depth treatment of the subject is admirable and brings a new level of understanding to visual culture studies. It is to be recommended for advanced students and academic patrons.

Marie Botkin, Assistant Professor, Georgia Southern University, marie.m.botkin@gmail.com