
A useful and invaluable resource, this book delivers an overview of the developments in modern design over the past four decades, concluding with contemporary experiments in construction, structure, and organization of every day physical objects in space. Addressing the difficulty of pinpointing the very term "modernism," the author focuses on the revolutionary exploits of designers, placing the movement within its historical context. A wonderful scholarly work, this book is a self-reflective examination of history, drawing on publications both current and contemporary to the period, as well as important museum and gallery exhibits.

Contextualizing modernism and several subsequent postmodern movements in social, political, and economic contexts, Gura examines the impact of the Nuclear Proliferation Act, Vietnam War, Sony Walkman, and Andy Warhol’s Factory, as well as many other phenomena, on the history of design. Gura views the modernist movement globally, discussing its impact on North American and European countries. The author talks about the continuous challenge to modernism’s identity through the impact of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act and the 1993 Clean Air Act which meant that design no longer just belonged to its creator - there were new “players” involved, challenging its autonomy.

Ideal for general collections, this volume offers a visual timeline of design throughout the four decades covered. While the accompanying text is more philosophically inclined and the wording is delightful, it might not be a quick read for everyone; therefore, the visuals and the text supplement each other beautifully, offering various readers different entry points and degrees of accessibility. It is also well suited for an academic researcher, as the quality of image reproductions is outstanding, allowing for them to be easily reproduced for educational purposes. Unlike a lot of materials in the area of modern design, this book is fairly portable and not too burdensome in terms of weight. The ultra-white pages are not heavy, and the lack of gloss means that a scanning job into alternative formats could be performed with ease and minimal glare. An index of designers and addresses of image sources is quite useful. The selected bibliography is, as always, welcome!

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