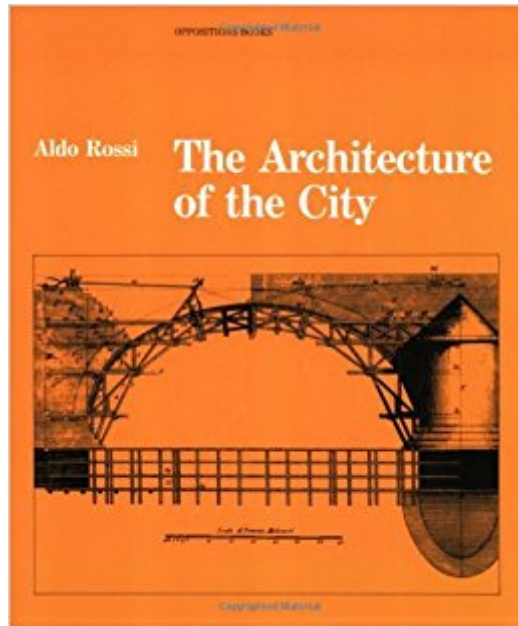




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The Architecture Of The City (Oppositions Books)



Synopsis

Aldo Rossi, a practicing architect and leader of the Italian architectural movement La Tendenza, is also one of the most influential theorists writing today. *The Architecture of the City* is his major work of architectural and urban theory. In part a protest against functionalism and the Modern Movement, in part an attempt to restore the craft of architecture to its position as the only valid object of architectural study, and in part an analysis of the rules and forms of the city's construction, the book has become immensely popular among architects and design students.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Written 17 years ago, at a time when the Italian student movement had just begun and interdisciplinary design methodologies enjoyed popularity, [*The Architecture of the City*] was one of the first major reassessments of the Modern Movement. In contrast to Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, appearing in the same year, Rossi's critique focuses not on the sterility of forms or the rejection of stylistic imagery in modern architecture, but rather, as the title suggests, on the neglect and destruction of the city, the repository of 'the collective memory of man.' Perhaps most important to Americans, who face a resurgence of idiosyncratic and highly personal designs, is Rossi's emphasis on the collective, the public realm. He reminds us that individual reputations and accomplishments are less important than our cities themselves. (Mary McLeod

Design Book Review)

Based on notebooks composed since 1971, Aldo Rossi's lyrical and erudite memoir intermingles his architectural projects, including discussion of the major literary and artistic influences on his work, with his personal history. Illustrated with photographs and drawings.

The Architecture of the City dissects the following principles: *That architecture is intrinsically connected with the overall city. *That architecture 'grows' from the past and tradition of the city and of human culture. *That there is "a clearly articulated bond between the shapes of things throughout history". *That we can search in the history of the city to find archetypes of immutable design. *That buildings lack individuality except for in relation to the larger urban context. *That relying on function alone to classify and define architecture reduces the meaning of the city. *Attempts to explain the coalescence of building typology and urban morphology.

What I have gained from this book: I have gained a more basic understanding and appreciation of the root concepts behind a city's morphological change over time. I have also gained the understanding that a city needs to be viewed, not as fragments of past history and present change, but as a perennially present organism whose parts are part of an immutable whole.

Final word: If you want to delve into the most fundamental theories behind the science of urban typology and morphology, study this work, but one would be wise to already have built a substantial understanding of urban history and theory before hoping to fully grasp Rossi's ideas.

Words/Phrases I found to be of particular relevance: Architecture of the city, locus, urban artifact, typology, urban monuments, an autonomous urban science, a total architecture

One of my favorite quotes from the book: "We may look at modern cities without enthusiasm, but if we could only see with the eye of the archaeologist of Mycenae, we would find behind the facades and fragments of architecture the figures of the oldest heroes of our culture."

Aldo Rossi talks very longer about his ideas in architecture. He is a point of connection of the Italian and American architecture. In this sense we can tell about a man who has understood the social and artistic motivations those are related to his specific interpretation of the life of the cities. The more consistent point of starting of his analysis is if the city had had a plan which determined its evolution or not. Next the author explicates the historical events whom have determined the origin of spaces or places in particular points of the city.

The Architecture of the City is the principal theoretical text by Aldo Rossi, and constituted one of the first attempts to re-examine the function of architecture within its urban context, after the reductive theories of CIAM. Despite some of its contestable aspects [the naïve interpretation of the Mietskaserne in Berlin for instance], and some of its disjointed chapters, it still presents one of the key documents on urban thought in the twentieth century, along with Le Corbusier's "Urbanisme" and Rem Koolhaas's "Delirious New York". In this work, Rossi articulates certain key notions such as 'locus', 'urban artifact' and 'collective memory'; relying on the work of urban geographers and historians, sociologists and economists to draw a comprehensive understanding of the city as a framework for life. Underlying this is Rossi's call for the revival of the humanist city as a vital ground for culture. This book is not an easy read at times, and is definitely not a textbook for undergraduates. Its lessons are still valid and timely nevertheless, and should be remembered by architects, at a time when other theorists celebrate the 'dissolution' of cities under the momentary glare of a globalized world.

It is a fundamental piece of work on the theoretical study of architecture and cities. The topic that Rossi documents and discusses is far from being concluded, which demonstrates the relevance of this publication edited for the first time about 40 years ago. I'd recommend this lecture to those involved in the formal study of architecture and urbanism, who might be looking for a solid theoretical basis towards the definition of a "urban science", or simply as a reference to understand the new "urban artifacts" ("urban facts" would be a more accurate translation in my opinion) that occur in our days cities. As it has been mentioned, this is an excellent book, although I would not recommend it as a first approach to the subject. The topics are treated more with academic rigor than practical value, this might be disappointing to anyone who only wants a simple, easy-to-read book about cities and their construction.

I enjoyed this book where Rossi laid out his argument on how architecture tells the city's history as well as creates its fabric.

urbanism renewed.

Very thought provoking read

good

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