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Toward A New Interior



Synopsis

Interior design, as a relatively young discipline within the academic world of design, has historically been interpreted as an extension of other fine arts. Narratives exist, but they all too often treat interior design as a function of architecture or display rather than experience. An independent interior design theory is virtually nonexistent. Professor Lois Weinthal envisions a future where interior design is treated with parity to architecture and industrial design, a future with a new interior. A reader for architects and interior designers, Weinthal has carefully curated a collection of forty-eight essays that will form the foundation of interior design theory and shape future interior space. Her introductory essays illuminate each source, prefacing and directing discussion of the material as it relates to interior design theory. Alluding to Le Corbusier's classic text, she has organized this material into a framework that inspires conversation, marking a break with the past and forming a new vocabulary for the discourse. Contributions to the book's eight sections include essays by David Batchelor, Aaron Betsky, Petra Blaisse, Andrew Blauvelt, Beatriz Colomina, Le Corbusier, Robin Evans, Adolf Loos, Ellen Lupton, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Michel Serres, Henry Urbach, Wim Wenders, and Mark Wigley.

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Customer Reviews

"If you are looking for good books on interior design theory, the pickings are quite slim. Lois Weinthal's massive 648-page reader redresses this with a carefully curated collection of 48 essays, with texts by Wim Wenders, Le Corbusier, Beatriz Colomina, and (my favorite) Juhani Pallasmaa.

While there is an almost too heavy reliance on essays from the field of architecture (and you can't really blame Weinthal for that), she divides the book into eight chapters, pulling from many fields: fashion, philosophy, film, and art." - Paul Makovsky, Designers&Books

As the head of a graduate 3D Design program, I began using this book with my students for our weekly reading/discussion seminar. My group has people from diverse backgrounds including industrial design, architecture, craft, and sculpture. Since my students are mostly here to make furniture and objects, I wanted a book that would broaden the discussion to include the role of furniture within the interior, and larger theoretical ideas about the perception of space. This book couldn't be more perfect for us. The book is beautifully structured to explore ideas about space starting with the scale of the body and progressing to the scale of the building. The selection of essays mix older 'classic' texts alongside more contemporary ones and pulls equally from the fields of design, architecture and fine art. Designers often look to architectural discourse for theory, but most architectural theory won't even acknowledge the existence of things like wallpaper or curtains. This book does. These elements of the interior are not only acknowledged, but fully explored for their imaginative potentials. This book has very directly energized the discussion and the making in our studio. This book would be inspiring for any furniture designer, product designer, interior designer, architect or fine artist whose work questions human perceptions of space and the built environment.

I have so many notes in this book that it is clearly the "go-to" book in my library when I need inspiration in the form of design theory. I was required to read this in my last semester of interior design school at NYSID and give a presentation on a select number of chapters. I'm so GLAD I did. It's a book you have to dive into despite the size and almost meditate over. The information, quotes and contributors are invaluable. One really has to read it in sections to absorb what they're looking for. I can read the same chapter three different times and take away something unique each time. Thanks Lois for such an inspirational book!

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