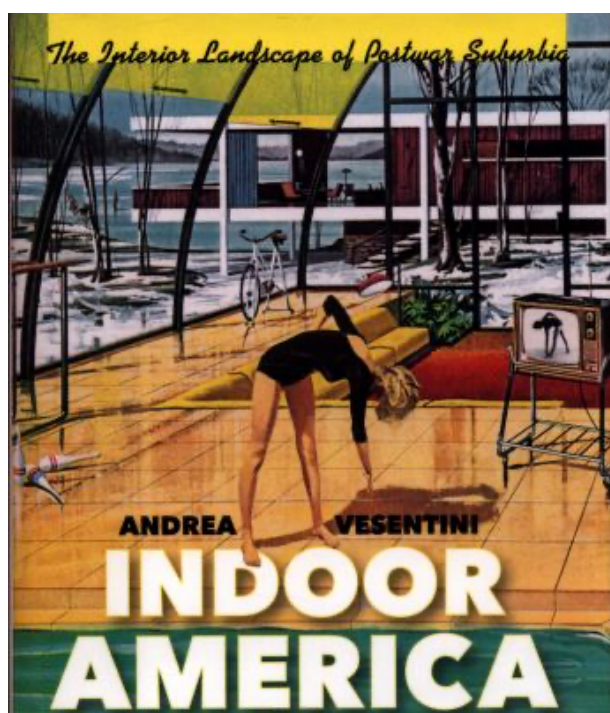


## Indoor America: the Interior Landscape of Postwar Suburbia

by Andrea Vesentini. University of Virginia Press, November 2018. 321 p. ill. ISBN 9780813941585 (h/c), \$49.50.

Reviewed March 2019 Hillary B. Veeder, Architecture Public Services Librarian, Texas Tech University Libraries, hillary.veeder@ttu.edu



Andrea Vesentini's *Indoor America* is a delightful exploration of postwar society, with the author providing the reader with a well-defined framework in which they contextualize the three key tenets of the discussion of suburbia, its architecture and interiors. The concepts of encapsulation, introversion, and interiorization are mapped to developments within society such as automobiles, air-conditioning, fallout shelters and subterranean living, and shopping malls. Advertisements of the times, film stills, plans, and interior and exterior photographs are peppered throughout the critical discussion and aid in supporting the author's argument of the cultural and societal factors that birthed the postwar suburban American way of living. Vesentini does an admirable job of drawing attention to what would be considered by

many to be societal norms and the manifestation of those norms in our cities, suburbs, homes and public spaces. Postwar society is the central actor of this book, and the topic is presented more so from a cultural-centric point of view, rather than that of an architectural historian or practicing architect.

Vesentini's writing style is accessible. The author writes with a sense of authority, yet also as a thoughtful observer, making a point to define their relationship with American society like that of an acquaintance. The author also does a masterful job of embedding sources seamlessly into the discussion without sacrificing their own voice. The notes and bibliography are a testament to Vesentini's thoughtful research and presentation of the topic and serve as a treasure trove of

sources for further exploration. An index and list of illustrations is also included. The chapters can be read consecutively or as stand-alone essays. The book is hardbound with coated paper signatures. Illustrations are predominately in color, with some black and white as well, and serve to tell a complimentary visual story of the postwar decades of the 1940s through the 1970s, with a critical sociological look at American society through advertisements in magazines and catalogs that informed daily living standards and innovations.

This title is part of the University of Virginia Press Midcentury: Architecture, Landscape, Urbanism, and Design series. The book covers subjects such as architecture and society, urban and architectural history, communities, and domestic architecture. It will find a good home on the shelves of an academic library or a personal bookshelf, alike. Students of architecture will especially benefit from *Indoor America* because it serves as a reminder that people inform spaces, architecture, and environments, and that the attitudes, beliefs, and desires of the people are expressed in the places that they call home.