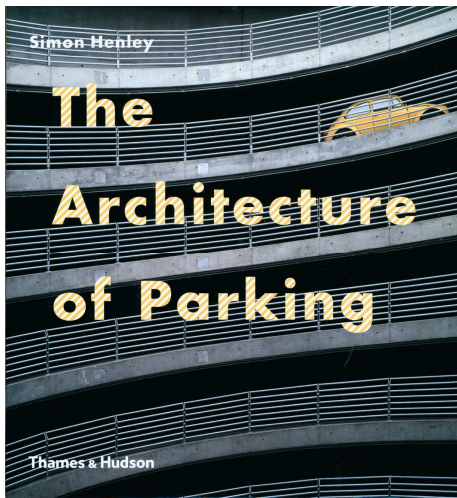


The Architecture of Parking / Simon Henley.—New York, NY: Thames & Hudson Inc., dist. By W.W Norton, November 2007.—256 p. : ill.—ISBN-13: 978-0-500-34237-4: \$45.00.



Ever since he was a child, Simon Henley has been fascinated by the mysterious and dynamic environments of parking structures. A principal in the London-based firm of Buschow Henley Architects, Henley's enduring love affair with the "car-park" has resulted in the first in-depth look at this underappreciated building type, from mundane piles of aging concrete to exhilarating structures by such well-known architects as Zaha Hadid and Frank Gehry.

For Henley, parking structures reflect the evolving twentieth-century zeitgeist, embodying "ideas about building, about what is technically possible, and what is emotionally interesting." In his survey of these possibilities, he describes the development of a unique building type that began with the 1948 debut of Robert Law Weed's car park in Miami, enjoyed a heyday in the 1950s and 1960s, slowed after the 1973 oil crisis, and currently features a clash between the German concern for form and the Dutch desire for impact.

The book is comprised of an introduction; description of the aesthetic influence of parking structures; examination of the basic design elements of matter, elevation, light, and obliquity; conclusion; and bibliography. The individual chapters on design elements consist of a photo essay by Sue Barr, an essay by Henley on the individual element, several project descriptions and illustrations, and case studies.

charge the abstract space of the structure as they fragment into didactic forms."

Moreover, the book is organized for cumulative effect rather than information finding. Although Henley cites many examples in his essays, unless the structure is part of a case study, there is no immediate indication that an illustration is included. Unlike the projects, case studies are listed on a separate page within the chapter rather than in the table of contents for the chapter. The index is merely a list of architecture firms and their websites.

Yet, the book has much to recommend it. Sue Barr's photo essays, as well as the other photographs and diagrams are superb. Henley's identification of the essential design elements for analyzing and discussing this new building type is invaluable. His detailed case studies feature informative and well-written analyses. These factors and the uniqueness of its topic render this book an important addition to art, architecture, and photography collections. Recommended.

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