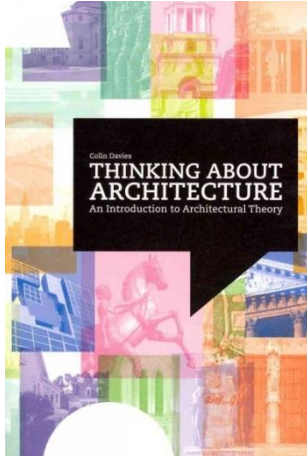


Thinking about Architecture: An Introduction to Architectural Theory, by Colin Davies. Laurence King, September 2011. 160 p. ill. ISBN 9781856697552 (pbk.), \$29.95.



For students and general readers embarking on the study of architectural theory, *Thinking about Architecture: An Introduction to Architectural Theory* by Colin Davies is an excellent place to start. The intent of this publication is to provide a stimulating introduction to architectural theory based on a conceptual and topical analysis, rather than a chronological survey of movements or an anthology of influential essays or excerpts of larger works. In this way, Davies's initiation varies greatly from the excellent introductory work on the topic by Harry Francis Mallgrave, or collections such as *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture* or *Constructing a New Agenda* (both published by Princeton Architectural Press). Rather than organize the chapters chronologically, Davies presents overarching topics and discusses various theories or philosophical constructs and the important ways in which they relate, referencing the principal documents that inform his expositions. Using this approach is

quite successful for Davies, as he draws the reader to a thoughtful consideration of his themes by using articulate prose refreshingly free of excessive technical jargon or extraneous philosophical argot.

While this is not a work that delves deeply into the various theories presented by Davies, he does a wonderful job of providing the enterprising reader (or collection development librarian) with a roadmap to pursue further study. Davies could easily get mired in minutiae, and as professor of architectural theory at London Metropolitan University and the author of monographs on the work of Norman Foster, Nicholas Grimshaw and Michael Hopkins, as well as numerous articles, he doesn't lack the necessary qualifications to produce a much more expansive treatise on the subject, yet he excelled in the creation of this brief, readable, and compelling survey.

Notable among the features that enhance this book are an abundance of illustrations, many in full color. Each chapter has corresponding endnotes and a bibliography, both invaluable, especially as a chief purpose of this introduction is to lead students of the field to the seminal sources upon which the theories are constructed. The bibliographies can even read as essential collection development lists for librarians in aligned fields. An index is also included. Production values are generally quite good throughout, with the possible exception of very small margins on the outer edge of each page, and a somewhat porous cover material. Overall Davies does a fine job of explaining an essential variety of concepts, bringing a clear vitality to his descriptions and an engaging approach to occasionally difficult material. Recommended for libraries that support the study of architecture or theory-driven studies in design, fine arts and critical inquiry.

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