ARCHITECTURE & UGLINESS: Anti-Aesthetics and the Ugly in Postmodern Architecture

Edited by Wouter Van Acker and Thomas Mical

BLOOMSBURY
Architecture and Ugliness
Architecture and Ugliness
Anti-Aesthetics and the Ugly in Postmodern Architecture

Edited by WOUTER VAN ACKER AND THOMAS MICAL
CONTENTS

List of Figures viii
List of Contributors xii

Introduction: Retracing the ugly and the anti-aesthetic as a productive force in postmodern architecture 1
Wouter Van Acker

1 Ugliness, the anti-aesthetic and appropriation: With some remarks on the architecture of ARM 19
John Macarthur

2 On ugliness (in architecture) 39
Bart Verschaffel

PART ONE Ugly and monstrous 57

3 Instrumentalizing ugliness: Parallels between High Victorian and Brutalist architecture 59
Timothy M. Rohan

4 Monstrous becomings: A minor cartography 77
Heidi Sohn

5 Traces of ugliness in Bofill’s Les espaces d’Abraxas 95
Thomas Mical
6 Post-communism and the monstrous: Skopje 2014 and other political
tales 107
Mirjana Lozanovska

7 Here be monsters 125
Andrew Leach

8 To make monsters 137
Caroline O’Donnell

PART TWO Ugly and ordinary 151

9 ‘Ugly’: The architecture of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown 153
Deborah Fausch

10 Camp ugliness: The case of Charles W. Moore 175
Patricia A. Morton

11 Architecture in El Alto: The politics of excess 193
Elisabetta Andreoli

12 The critical kitsch of Alchimia and Memphis: Design by media 209
AnnMarie Brennan

13 The immediacy of urban reality in post-war Italy: Between
neorealism’s and Tendenza’s instrumentalization of ugliness 223
Marianna Charitonidou
CONTENTS

14 Ugliness as aesthetic friction: Renewing architecture against the grain 245
   Lara Schrijver

15 Ugliness, or the cathetic moment of modulation between terror and the comic in postmodern architecture 257
   Wouter Van Acker

Index 279

AnnMarie Brennan is Senior Lecturer of Design Theory in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne. She teaches architectural history, theory and design studio subjects and her research focuses on twentieth- and twenty-first-century architecture, with interests in the political economy of design, machine culture, Italian design, the history of computing and media and architecture.


Deborah Fausch is an architect and architectural historian and theorist whose writings on modern and contemporary architecture and urbanism, and especially the works of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, have appeared in many journals and essay collections.

Andrew Leach is Professor of Architecture at the University of Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning, where he is also Associate Dean, Research. He writes on contemporary issues in the fields of architectural history, theory and criticism. Among his books are Manfredo Tafuri (2007), What Is Architectural History? (2010) and Rome (2017).

Mirjana Lozanovska is Associate Professor at Deakin University. Her research deploys multidisciplinary theories of space to examine migration, mobility and exchange in architecture and the city. Her books include...
CONTRIBUTORS


John Macarthur is Professor at the University of Queensland where he is Chair of Research in the School of Architecture. His research focuses on the intellectual history of architecture, the aesthetics of architecture and its relation to the visual arts. He is the author and editor of numerous books including The Picturesque: Architecture, Disgust and Other Irregularities (2007).

Thomas Mical is commencing as Professor of Architectural Theory at the Shanghai Jiao Tong University. His research focuses on the historical, qualitative and transformative attributes of spaces, with interest in the logical and sensory models and processes used in the production of spaces, and how these spaces then produce meanings and identities.

Patricia A. Morton is Associate Professor in the Media and Cultural Studies Department at the University of California, Riverside. She is the author of Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 International Colonial Exposition in Paris (2000). Her current project, Paying for the Public Life, focuses on work by Charles W. Moore.

Caroline O’Donnell is the Edgar A. Tafel Associate Professor and director of the M.Arch. program at Cornell University. She is the sole principal of the design practice CODA: Caroline O’Donnell Architecture. Her first book, Niche Tactics: Generative Relationships Between Architecture and Site, was published in 2015.

Timothy M. Rohan is Associate Professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. His research focuses on European and American modernism, especially of the post-Second World War era, on subjects ranging from brutalism to disco architecture. He is the author of The Architecture of Paul Rudolph (2014).

Lara Schrijver is Professor in Architecture Theory at the University of Antwerp Faculty of Design Sciences. Her research focuses on twentieth-century architecture. She is the author of Radical Games (2009) and co-editor of Autonomous Architecture in Flanders (2016) and the annual review Architecture in the Netherlands (2016–19).

Heidi Sohn is Associate Professor of Architecture Theory at the Architecture Department of the Faculty of Architecture, TU Delft. Her main areas of investigation include genealogical inquiries of postmodern and post-human
theoretical landscapes. She is co-editor of *Critical and Clinical Cartographies: Architecture, Robotics, Medicine, Philosophy* (2017).

**Wouter Van Acker** is Associate Professor of Architectural History and Theory at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB). He is director of hortence, ULB’s research centre for architectural history, theory and criticism. His research focus is the history of epistemology and aesthetics in architecture in the twentieth century.