Books Received

Tim Fife

Architectural League of New York. ***Young Architects: Second Nature.*** New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001. ISBN 1-56898-265-8 (pbk); 161 pages; color illustrations and photographs.

An in-depth summary of six architectural projects whose goals focus on both nature and architecture. This well documented (and nearly pocket-sized) collection of architectural projects is enlightening not only because it focuses on both architecture and nature, but also because of the fact that all of the designing architects are the young talents of our country. This volume should inspire all students of architecture to see the possibilities of both their work and their personal potential.

Janet Backhouse. ***The Lindisfarne Gospel: Turning the Pages CD-ROM.*** London, England: The British Library, 2001. CD-ROM.

"Turning the Pages is a unique, award winning touch-screen system developed by the British Library [using Macromedia], which enables the reader to turn the electronic pages of a digitised [sic] manuscript in real time. Now for the first time this technology has been developed for the home computer using *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, one of the greatest treasures in the British Library."

Alan Bartram. ***Five Hundred Years of Book Design.*** New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001. ISBN 0-300-09058-7 (hardcover); 192 pages; black and white illustrations.

A well-illustrated look at the history of western book design by examining the readability, functionality and clarification of meaning presented in books published in the last half-millennium, Bartram traces the transformation of the book from an ornamental sign of wealth to a deliberately designed communicative vessel. This book is interesting not only as a valuable piece of graphic design research, but also as a historical text and simply a good read.

Tom Brinck, Darren Gergle, and Scott D. Wood. ***Designing Web Sites that Work: Usability for the Web.*** New York: Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, 2002. ISBN 1-55860-658-0 (pbk); 481 pages; color illustrations and photographs.

A "how-to" for creating web sites that focus on both usability and business concerns. Written by experienced usability experts from academia and the professional world, this book tells you how to put usability first and still make your deadlines and budgetary goal. It employs helpful examples and explanations that could be used by people involved in almost any aspect of human-computer interactions.

Van Burnham. ***Supercade: A Visual History of the Videogame Age, 1971–1984.*** Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2001. ISBN 0-262-02492-6 (hardcover); 439 pages; color photographs.

A beautifully documented history of the golden age of videogames. With the knowledge of an experienced gamer and the intellect of a trained socio-cultural scholar, Burnham takes a detailed, and often nostalgic, look at some of the most important videogames and some of the most forgotten videogames of the '70s and early '80s. If you ever spent time in an arcade, you will appreciate this book.

Peter Calthorpe and William Fulton. ***The Regional City: Planning for the End of Sprawl.*** Washington D.C.: Island Press, 2001. ISBN 1-55963-784-6 (pbk); 304 pages; color illustrations.

A look at the connections between older neighborhoods and newer suburbs and the shared destiny towards which they are both headed. By explaining the importance of sustainable development, affordable housing, and broadening economic opportunities, Calthorpe and Fulton portend the merging of old and new communities that will hail the end of urban sprawl and the birth of a new type of positive, productive community.

A Companion to Cultural Studies. Edited by Toby Miller. Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 2001. ISBN 0-631-21788-6 (hardcover); 579 pages.

A collection of essays on the multiple disciplines of cultural studies. This expansive volume covers both the generalities ("What it is and what it isn't: Introducing…Cultural Studies") along with some of the more specific facets ("The Scandalous Fall of Feminism and the 'First Black President'") of cultural studies. This edition has enough to be beneficial for the experienced student or teacher, and an appropriate enough introduction for the novice.

The Education of an E-Designer. Edited by Steven Heller. New York: Allworth Press, 2001. ISBN 1-58115-193-4 (pbk); 341 pages; black and white illustrations and photographs.

A collection of essays about the additional education needed to move from classical graphic designer to computer based "e-designer." The essay topics range from "game design" to "typespace to "experimental business." And keeping true to its title, this volume includes "proven-successful syllabi" that can be used to teach both the basics and the advanced areas of digital graphic design.

Kimberly Elam. ***Geometry of Design: Studies in Proportion and Composition.*** New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001. ISBN 1-56898-249-6 (pbk); 107 pages; color illustrations.

A fantastically interesting look at the role proportion has played in all manner of design projects. Ranging from the Divine Proportion to the Proportions of Man, Elam sites innumerable examples of proportion being used in the fundamental compositions of dozens of design projects throughout the past 125 years. Her examples are both informative and insightful, and any designer could benefit from learning or revisiting the rules governing the basics of proportions.

Gerald Farin. ***Curves and Surfaces for CAGD: A Practical Guide, Fifth Edition.*** New York: Morgan Kaufmann, 2002. ISBN 1-55860-737-4 (hardcover); 499 pages; black and white graphs and illustrations.

A textbook explaining curve and surface theory in computer aided geometric design (CAGD). Paradoxically, this book is both math heavy and amicably straightforward. The textual explanations are easy to understand and the basic concepts are explained through example and history. The math and programming, on the other hand, require experience and expertise, covering everything from Linear Interpolation to Differential Geometry and Arbitrary Topology.

Stephan Fuchs. ***Against Essentialism: A Theory of Culture and Society.*** Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001. ISBN 0-674-00610-0 (hardcover); 380 pages.

A highly intellectual investigation into the arguments between constructivists and positivists as related to the social constructedness of culture. By abandoning essentialism, Fuchs sets forth a new theory that relates and defines such concepts as culture, truth, meaning, and even society itself. Intellectually stimulating and challenging, this book would prove to be an engaging read for anyone interested in social theory or philosophy.

Karen E. Goulekas. ***Visual Effects in a Digital World: A Comprehensive Glossary of Over 7,000 Visual Effects Terms.*** New York: Morgan Kaufmann, 2001. ISBN 0-12-293785-6 (pbk); 600 pages; black and white and color illustrations and photographs.

An aptly named glossary of nearly every term ever uttered in the art of designing digital visual effects for motion pictures. These well-written definitions help to make the jargon understandable, even for beginning visual effects artists. It is prophesized to become the "FX terminology bible" and is a must-read for all aspiring filmmakers.

Sarah Handler. ***Austere Luminosity of Chinese Classical Furniture.*** Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2001. ISBN 0-520-21484-6 (hardcover) 417 pages; black and white and color illustrations and photographs.

A vividly illustrated volume focusing on the art and social history of Chinese furniture. Starting with its inception in the 10th century, Handler follows the evolution of Chinese furniture design. Through extensive amounts of documentation and research, she hails it (and deservedly so) as one of the classic arts of Chinese culture. It is a beautiful book that is as valuable to look at as it is to read.

Lewis D. Hopkins. ***Urban Development: The Logic of Making Plans.*** Washington D.C.: Island Press, 2001. ISBN 1-55963-853-2 (pbk); 292 pages; black and white illustrations.

An educated look at how planning can solve urbanization problems and what problems are beyond the range of urban planning. By looking at the fundamentals behind what it means "to plan," Hopkins clarifies how good choices are made in urban planning and how they help to increase the usability of land. This volume is a must read for all architects and urban designers.

Michael Kerrigan. ***Ancient Greece and the Mediterranean.*** New York: DK Publishers, 2001. ISBN 0-7894-7832-3 (hardcover); 96 pages; color photographs.

A well-documented and concisely written history of Ancient Greece, part of a four part series. While looking a bit like a skinny remedial textbook, this slim volume covers events from the Aegean origins to the decline of democracy. It is a good source of images of Grecian art and quick summaries of the major time periods of ancient Greece.

Michael Kerrigan. *Ancient Rome and the Roman Empire.* New York: DK Publishers, 2001. ISBN 0-7894-8153-7 (hardcover); 96 pages; color photographs.

Part of a four part series, yet another well-documented and concisely written history, this time of Ancient Rome. Covering the events from the rise of Rome around 700 BC to the decline and fall of the empire in 500 AD, this volume is also slim but extremely well illustrated.

Brenda Laurel. *Utopian Entrepreneur.* Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2001. ISBN 0-262-62153-3 (pbk); 117 pages; black and white photographs.

A highly designed quasi-personal essay on humanistic design and the economics of the digital age. Laurel gives a very personal view on her successes and failures while riding the tech-bubbles, and sees society (hopefully) moving into a culture where rewards can be found in both media and technology. This small book is a strange blend of personal narrative and economic treatise that should be understandable to anyone with an eye on the world of the digital economy.

Charles Lockhart. *Protecting the Elderly: How Culture Shapes Social Policy.* University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001. ISBN 0-271-02130-6 (hardcover); 274 pages.

A cultural and anthropological look at how societies make decisions. In this text, Lockhart both explains the concept of "grid-group" theory, which relates to how decisions are reached in a political culture, and then applies the theory to the state of the elderly in the US, Japan, Germany, and elsewhere in the world. It is a text that would be as interesting to a public policy maker as it would be to an anthropologist.

Joseph Margolis. *Selves and Other Texts: The Case for Cultural Realism.* University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001. ISBN 0-271-02750-0 (hardcover); 208 pages.

A philosophical work detailing the relationship between ourselves and the "cultural phenomena" we create, such as language, history, and art. Through a very convincing and well-documented argument, Margolis first reviews the differences between "the metaphysical and epistemological features of physical nature and human culture," and then sets forth his own theory founded on the idea that humans are conceptually inseparable from our "analysis of the physical world and our analysis of ourselves." This is a truly thought provoking and surprisingly easily understood text that should be read by not only philosophers, but artists and historians as well.

Antony Mason. *Ancient Civilizations of the Americas.* New York: DK Publishers, 2001. ISBN 0-7894-7831-5 (hardcover); 96 pages; color photographs.

Another short yet well-documented history, this time of the great ancient civilizations of North, Central, and South America. Starting with the crossing of the Asia/Alaska land bridge and working all the way up to the Indian Wars of the 19th century, Mason does a quick overview of the history of some of the world's greatest civilizations. And keeping in line with the series, it contains beautiful photography and artwork reproductions.

Jane McIntosh and Clint Twist. *Civilizations: Ten Thousand Years of Ancient History.* New York: DK Publishing Inc., 2001. ISBN 0-7894-7830-7 (hardcover); 240 pages; color illustrations and photographs.

A beautifully documented (if ambitiously named) volume examining ancient cultures from around the world. In a book that would be as well suited on a professor's bookshelf as it would be on a coffee table, the authors make insightful examinations of civilizations ranging from the prehistoric peoples of Africa to the Conquistadors' arrival in Central America. The book is as much fun to look at as it is to read.

James L. Mohler. *Flash 5: Graphics, Animation, & Interactivity.* Albany, New York: OnWord Press, 2001. ISBN 0-7668-2909-x (pbk); 627 pages; black and white and color illustrations.

An educational guide to using and understanding Flash 5 for on online environment. Not only does this comprehensive guide give you the "hows" of Flash 5, it also gives you the all-too-often overlooked "whys" of the program. The text is well written and understandable, as are the exercises. This book is a great way to introduce yourself, or re-familiarize yourself, with this powerful interactive program.

Robert Morkot. *Ancient Egypt and the Middle East.* New York: DK Publishers, 2001. ISBN 0-7894-7833-1 (hardcover); 96 pages; color photographs.

A well-documented and concisely written history of Ancient Egypt, part of a four part series. Despite having the look and feel of an early secondary level companion textbook, this slim volume has a surprising amount of historical and cultural information, with topics ranging from the First Kingdoms to the New Empires. Additionally, this book is a good source of images of Egyptian art.

R. Shamms Mortier. *Creating Weaponry and Accessories in 3D.* New York: Morgan Kaufmann, 2001. ISBN 0-12-508203-7 (pbk); 294 pages; black and white and color illustrations.

A strangely engaging "how-to" guide on making 3D models of weapons and tools of destruction on the computer. This step-by-step guide explains how to design everything from simply knives to complex tanks. While the subject matter may seem a little unusual, the instructions and overall concepts are easy to understand and may be applied to less combative projects.

Eden Greig Muir, Cory Clarke, and Nam-ho Park. *Inside form-Z: Guide to 3D Modeling and Rendering, 2nd Edition.* Albany, New York: OnWord Press, 2000. ISBN 1-56690-189-8 (pbk); 652 pages; black and white and color illustrations.

A textbook explaining the ins and outs of form-Z 3D computer modeling. This well designed learning tool has specific exercises geared towards beginner, intermediate, and advanced users of form-Z software. The authors use a "learning through example" philosophy which makes the lessons both entertaining and educational. This book is a great way to introduce yourself to the world of 3D modeling and rendering.

Rick Parent. *Computer Animation: Algorithms and Techniques.* New York: Morgan Kaufmann, 2002. ISBN 1-55860-576-7 (hardcover); 527 pages; black and white and color illustrations and graphs.

A textbook examining both the math and the application behind successful computer animation. This dense volume contains huge amounts of helpful information in the field of computer animation. Both the math and the programming aspect are well covered and explain the practical applications of Parent's algorithms and techniques.

Ivars Peterson. *Fragments of Infinity: A Kaleidoscope of Math and Art.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2001. ISBN 0-471-16558-1 (hardcover); 232 pages; black and white and color illustrations and photographs.

A beautifully illustrated examination of the integration of math and art. When the left and right sides of the brain come together in the mind of an artist, the results are often times both stunning and perplexing. In this collection, Peterson visually displays how math and art can live together in works of remarkable beauty and dizzying complexity. This book is both intellectually intriguing and visually engaging.

Lynn Pocock and Judson Rosebush. *The Computer Animator's Technical Handbook.* New York: Morgan Kaufmann, 2002. ISBN 0-12-558821-6 (pbk); 464 pages; black and white and color illustrations and photographs.

A vividly illustrated and straightforward explanation of the technical side of computer animation. This handbook manages to be friendly without losing its expertise or technicality as it explains in relatively layman's terms how good computer animation is achieved. Undoubtedly, this volume would prove helpful to both novice and experienced computer animators, covering topics from the basics of digital images to the intricacies of behavioral modeling.

Ronald E. Rice, Maureen McCreadie, and Shan-Ju L. Chang. *Accessing and Browsing Information and Communication.* Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2001. ISBN 0-262-18214-9 (hardcover); 357 pages.

A well-researched investigation into the nature of human "information seeking" processes. The authors bring forth evidence from a number of disparate fields to create a theory that "accessing and browsing information and communication are multidimensional and consequential aspects of the information user's entire experience and of general human behavior." When considered in today's age of web surfing and Internet research, this theory is extremely important and well worth the read.

Jeffrey Rohlfs. *Bandwagon Effects in High-Technology.* Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2001. ISBN 0-262-18217-3 (hardcover); 256 pages.

An examination of network or "bandwagon" effects and its current connection to technology, e-commerce and digital business. Rohlfs gives us a clear and witty look at the phenomenon described as "the benefit a consumer enjoys as a result of others' using the same product or service" and how this phenomenon has manifested itself today in such cultural explosions as CDs, VCRs, and the Internet. The impact of such research can be felt in the fields of both business and the social sciences, not to mention by anyone interested in the current state of culture and technology.

Larry Shiner. *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001. ISBN 0-226-75342-5 (hardcover); 362 pages; black and white photographs.

A rethinking of the social history of art and its relationship to society. By looking at the distinctions between fine arts, crafts, artists and artisans, Shiner attempts to trace the roots of art to its birth and dissect its relationship to society and culture. The theories contained in this text are original and thought provoking—a good read for artists and historians alike.

Tom Spector. ***The Ethical Architect: The Dilemma of Contemporary Practice.*** New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001. ISBN 1-56898-285-2 (pbk); 252 pages.

A nearly conclusive essay covering the "real-world" issues often overlooked in classes of what it means to be a practicing architect. This volume contains innumerable insights into the professional world of architecture with topics ranging from "acting in the public interest" to arguing for "particular moral philosophies." Spector takes a strong look past the buildings and into the ethical make up of creating structures.

Hazel G. Warlaumont. ***Advertising in the 60s: Turncoats, Traditionalists, and Waste Makers in America's Turbulent Decade.*** Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2001. ISBN 0-275-96932-0 (hardcover); 245 pages; black and white photographs.

An insightful critique and review of the advertising styles and philosophies of the 1960s. By looking at actual advertising campaign and analyzing company strategies, Warlaumont dissects the social psyche of a decade fraught with social gaps and advertising revolutions. Both educational and entertaining, this book could be appreciated by anyone interested in anthropology, design, marketing, or social history.

Joe Warren and Henrik Weimer. ***Subdivision Methods for Geometric Design: A Constructive Approach.*** New York: Morgan Kaufmann, 2002. ISBN 1-55860-446-4 (hardcover); 299 pages; black and white illustrations and graphs.

A textbook explaining the connections and applications between geometric subdivision methods and complex computer animation. While being very math oriented, this textbook takes a major step in the teaching of geometric design by applying it directly to computer animation. By pointing the reader to examples and exercises on the books companion website, Warren and Weimer help to take the experience of learning out of the classroom and into the real world.

web.studies: Rewiring Media Studies for the Digital Age. Edited by David Gauntlett. New York: Arnold Publishers, 2000. ISBN 0-340-76049-4 (pbk); 250 pages; black and white illustrations and photographs.

An examination of the effect the digital revolution has had on the field of media studies. Thankfully, in this study Gauntlett goes beyond looking at the economic influences of the web and instead examines how digital media and e-commerce have both affected each other, how they have impacted society in general. It is an interesting look at the current media paradigm shift and makes some interesting speculations about the future.