pavilions at the 1939 New York World’s Fair and Montreal’s Expo ’67 as spectacles of representation. “Speaking for Australia” presents insights into Grant Featherston’s sophisticated Expo chair, both as a singular piece of furniture and an embodiment of the aspirations of a nation. “MoMA’s Exports” follows Australian art’s engagement as part of an anti-totalitarian Cold War cultural program. “Animating geometry” pays tribute to idiosyncratic animate art driven by challenges to perception in photography and science. “Signs of the Times” explores how lighting and signage were intimately tied to modern architecture and design.

The judiciously procured essays in Modern Times are generally well situated in respect to each other. There is no substantial duplication of content, while the essays in each part hold enough in common to justify their location, and also to support the overarching premise that modernism was broadly pervasive in Australian culture as a whole. There is cross-referencing among essays, signifying curatorial diligence, but more importantly demonstrating that there were genuine conversations among the arts and the key figures representing them. These easy allegiances are supported by the tangential reappearance of protagonists of one essay elsewhere in the book. For example, the photographer Wolfgang Sievers (from “Industrialia”) provides supporting visual material for a number of other essays.

Modern Times is not a comprehensive reader on Australian modernism, nor does it intend to be. It prefers previously incompletely documented cross-disciplinary moments over outstanding individual contributions. Modernists who have been the subject of much contemporary scholarship (including Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony, Fred Williams, Sidney Nolan, and Jorn Utzon) have either been omitted, or make peripheral appearances to illuminate a particular theme. For example, Utzon’s Sydney Opera House is portrayed as a representation of the global fascination at that time with thin-shell concrete structures, alongside other buildings.

Modern Times is a visually inviting printed artifact—a high-quality exemplar of the exhibition catalog format. The typography of the 253-page book is tidy, legible, and precise. There is a comfortable syncopation in the main text, as every numbered essay is clearly announced graphically. The generously spaced and consistently formatted sans serif text is composed into two columns, amply supported by rich, appropriately chosen and well-captioned color and black-and-white illustrations.

Ultimately, the press-release claims that modernism “transformed” all aspects of Australian culture, might be rephrased as “accompanied.” The subtitle “The Untold Story of Modernism in Australia” suggests a single definitive narrative, which does the book a disservice. It is much richer, and one is left with the impression that again as many episodes could be uncovered, connections could be established, and cogent arguments could be framed to support alternative interpretations. This is, perhaps paradoxically, the principal scholarly contribution of the book. Modern Times satisfies the claim that the modern movement was multidimensional and complex—even contradictory. It is an important contribution to the scholarship on Australian art, design, and architecture from 1917 to 1967, conducted more or less in the modern manner.

ROSS ANDERSON
University of Sydney


This massive book—over 400 closely-printed pages—was published to mark the 300th anniversary of the death of Sébastien Le Prestre, marquis de Vauban (1633–1707). It consists of six chapters, each with contributions by up to ten scholars. These chapters cover “The Art of War in Europe before Vauban,” “The Century of Louis XIV,” “Vauban and His Time,” “Vauban the Builder,” “Vauban’s Legacy” and “Vauban’s Patrimony Today.” Each is followed by illustrations and captions for the material in the exhibition that accompanied this catalog in 2007.

“The Art of War in Europe before Vauban” offers a survey of the coming of the bastioned trace. Emmanuel de Crouy-Chanel and Marino Viganò are not entirely agreed on the stages of its appearance, the former limiting it to the 1520s in Italy, but the latter finding such traces in the late 1480s in the territories of Venice, Florence, and the papacy. Both are agreed on the importance of the activity of Italian engineers in France from the 1530s onward, by which time Viganò identifies distinct schools in Genoa, Naples, Milan, Florence, and Venice.

Charles van den Heuvel follows these developments in the southern Netherlands, where the emperor Charles V had invited the aged engineer Giovannamaria Olgiati to make a tour of inspection in 1553; he was succeeded by the better-known Francesco Paciotto, architect of the fortifications not only at Turin but also at Antwerp. Moving northward, Heuvel confronts the different problems posed by the building of fortifications in the Netherlands, where the generally marshy ground precluded the use of massive masonry structures, leading instead to the extensive use of earthen ramparts and water-defenses. This Netherlands style, characterized by Heuvel as “engineers in the mud,” was formalized in the work of Simon Stevin and Adam Freitag.

Alicia Cámara contends that under the Spanish monarchy there was a huge variety of engineers and sites, ranging from the rounded bastions at Salses in northern Spain to the entirely conventional fortifications in many New World locations. Curiously, this section does not mention the very original forts constructed by Henry VIII of England in the1530s, using monies generated from the dissolution of the English monasteries. Finally, Jean-François Pernot explains how the first generation of Italian engineers in France was replaced under Louis XIII by a new generation of Frenchmen.

Chapter two, “The Century of Louis XIV,” is designed to set the background for Vauban’s work. Thierry Sarmant explains the place of Vauban in the hierar-
The article describes the contributions and influence of Vauban, the famous fortification engineer, on the development of modern military architecture and urban planning. It highlights his work in siege warfare, his involvement with French ministers, and his influence on thinkers like Bernard Forest de Belidor. The text also discusses the evolution of fortification practices and the impact of Vauban's ideas on contemporary architects and engineers.