

proliferation of modernist-styled consumer goods did not wait for World War II to end, but began under the Nazis as an insidious form of propaganda, could have enriched the author's socioeconomic arguments.⁵ But despite these reservations, there is an appeal—and a logic—to following the money. What is luxury today, after all, if not the power to avail ourselves of the finest and the best, to surround ourselves and seclude ourselves with it?

FREYJA HARTZELL
Bard Graduate Center

Notes

1. For a foundational discussion of *Sachlichkeit*, see Harry Francis Mallgrave, "From Realism to *Sachlichkeit*: The Polemics of Architectural Modernity in the 1890s," in *Otto Wagner: Reflections on the Raiment of Modernity*, ed. Harry Francis Mallgrave (Santa Monica, Calif.: Getty Center for the History of Arts and the Humanities, 1993), 281–321. For an overview, see Freyja Hartzell, "Delight in *Sachlichkeit*: Object as Subject in German Design, Architecture, and Art," *German Quarterly* 92, no. 2 (Spring 2019), 256–59.

2. On cultural aesthetics, see Mark Jarzombek, "The 'Kunstgewerbe,' the 'Werkbund,' and the Aesthetics of Culture in the Wilhelmine Period," *JSAH* 53, no. 1 (Mar. 1994), 7–19; John Maciuka, *Before the Bauhaus: Architecture, Politics, and the German State, 1890–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

3. See Joan Campbell, *The German Werkbund: The Politics of Reform in the Applied Arts* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978); Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996).

4. Schuldenfrei cites Mies's manuscript for an illustrated lecture dated 17 March 1926.

5. For a discussion of the Nazi regime's promotion of modern design and its aesthetics, see Paul Betts, *The Authority of Everyday Objects: A Cultural History of West German Industrial Design* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

Etienne S. Benson
**Surroundings: A History of
Environments and
Environmentalisms**

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020,
296 pp., 16 b/w illus. \$82.50 (cloth),
ISBN 9780226706153; \$27.50 (paper),
ISBN 9780226706290

Liminality is an essential feature of architecture. Through the techniques of design and the materials of construction, liminality demarcates space as interior or exterior

and differentiates cultivated places from fractious environments. Whether defined as natural or built, architecture's intricate entanglement with its surroundings perpetually nudges its disciplinary focus from the building as object to the field.

Although from the 1950s into the 1970s critics thoroughly discussed the relational discourses between architecture and the environment, these themes have recently received renewed attention and even institutionalization. The Emilio Ambasz Institute for the Joint Study of the Built and the Natural Environment at New York's Museum of Modern Art is just one prominent case in point. The institute was founded to encourage the investigation of trans-scalar and cross-historical relationships between environments and their human and nonhuman actors, for which architectural structures serve as mediating agents.

Linking the growing interest in environments with the escalating social urgency for active environmentalism, Etienne S. Benson's *Surroundings* documents the history of the concept of "environment" as well as its implications for future ecologies. Six sweeping historical vignettes traverse temporal and geographical limits to compile a composite image of the complex relations between actors and their surroundings, emphasizing their intimate association: "We *are* environments just as much as we are *in* environments" (1). Throughout, the book engages the processes of thought and adaptation—via rhetoric, practices, technologies, or social relations—that engender ways to mobilize the concept of the environment or its derivatives, and thus to construct knowledge about the world.

Distancing itself from genealogical histories of the concept, the publication extends its scope from prehistory to the envisioned abandonment of the term *environment*. On one side, it seeks residual manifestations of how historical actors conceived of themselves and their world prior to the rising popularity of the term in the nineteenth century and across imperial projects—that is, *environment* (British/U.S.), *milieu* (French/Dutch/Belgian), *Umwelt* (German), *ambiente* (Spanish/Portuguese/Italian). On the other side, it engages various contemporary scholarly discussions of the "other"

ecologies that transgress the concept's perceived discursive limitations, given that no single definition sufficiently addresses the diversity of coexisting planetary environments—such as Bruno Latour's actorial Gaia or Donna J. Haraway's "sympoietic" Chthulucene.¹ Benson's inquiry draws from these extremes—a before and after—to inform contemporary debates about environments and environmentalisms as they converge with the ever-present and admonishing leitmotif of the Anthropocene.

By stressing the urgency of developing a conscious environmentalist position in light of contemporary discourses on climate, energy, and viral contagions, the book joins recent histories of science, technology, and the natural or built environments—such as Joy Parr's *Sensing Changes* (2010), Andrea Wulf's *The Invention of Nature* (2015), and Daniel A. Barber's *Modern Architecture and Climate* (2020)—whose attempts at seeding environmental consciousness exceed the historical project and existing disciplinary structures to argue for awareness and ultimately change.²

Steeped in an approach that emphasizes "materialized cosmologies"—following the methodological considerations of the historian of science and ideas John Tresch—the book proposes the concept of "environmentalization," seeking to transcend mere contextualization (e.g., representation, interpretation) by focusing on the material conditions between entities (e.g., organisms, species, communities) and systems (e.g., biosphere), along with the practices or techniques that form and are informed by them.³ Exploring how the relations between these various agents and their frameworks transform from one historical episode and geography to the next, Benson's chapters unfold as historically situated themes with widely differing contents, which range from French naturalists' systematization of life and the economization of organisms in the early nineteenth century to early twenty-first-century writers' confabulations of anthropozoic climate change and the planetary necropolitics of the human enterprise.

Benson's disparate vignettes, presented in a chronological progression, use a template-like structure to connect particular variations of the concept of environment to its spawned forms of environmentalism

across time and place. Postrevolutionary Paris sets the initial scene. The Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle utilized its imperial networks and the systematic classification of the natural world to exploit emerging socioeconomic opportunities, bridging different environmental conditions and moving species from their original habitats to desired locations. A subsequent discussion turns to medical statistics and the regulation of colonial lands and racialized bodies in the nineteenth-century British Caribbean. The oppressing empire justified its expansionism through an environmental theory of health that rationalized biotechnical supremacy together with scientific racism. Benson then leaps to Gilded Age Chicago, where the progressive settlement movement made significant environmentalist strides by seeking reforms to the industrialized urban landscape and, thus, the welfare of the “social organisms” that served it. Such a conscious engagement with the environment was meant to enable communities to transform their surroundings and thus their conditions of life.

Switching scales, the book next explores the coupling of extraction industries with geopolitics in interwar U.S.–Europe–Soviet relations. Western powers, in exercising conceptual and practical control over global flows of energy, abstracted human and nonhuman matter into strategic biogeochemical materials with serious implications for the larger planetary metabolic system of the biosphere. Benson subsequently turns his focus to the United States to address the establishment of environmental policies in postwar U.S. consumer culture. In response to grassroots activism for environmental justice and the universalist environmentalism extending across the lines of class, gender, and race, the era’s negotiations centered on the acceptable levels of toxic contamination (e.g., carcinogens, biocides) in foods and spaces of incidental exposure. Finally, the book returns to the precarious present with a discussion of 1990s enviro-capitalism—when atmospheric modeling and climate science only served to exacerbate the schism between the global North and global South. Now, a new master term—the Anthropocene—dictates the rules of engagement under which all human activity is subsumed as the defining agent within the imbalanced planetary system.

Set against the Earth’s volatile transition from a sphere of life (biosphere) to a sphere of death (thanatosphere), the newest discussions coax contemporary and alternative environmentalisms.

While Benson navigates *Surroundings* with an enviable ability to transition from hyperlocal to global analyses, the book’s coherence is at times threatened by extreme scalar leaps, disjunctive geographies, kaleidoscopic subject matter, protracted temporalities, and, as a consequence, tenuous connections between the scenarios the author analyzes and describes. Still, such discontinuities support a comparative synthesis of what constitute in the first place the abrupt although evolutionary changes currently existing within the embroiled history of environments and environmentalisms. The author fully acknowledges these symptomatic instabilities and notes that the book relates but one of many possible histories. The book’s eclecticism, including its citing of different theoretical approaches in several European languages, is the necessary result, Benson concedes, of his scholarly focus on the textual analysis of untranslated works. Given the salient emphasis on U.S. policy making, environmental activism, and geopolitics throughout the book’s final chapters and conclusion, the author might have enhanced his line of argumentation by recasting the geography slightly—for example, from the eighteenth-century French naturalists to the radical ecological changes imposed by European colonialists on Native Americans and the “New World” since the seventeenth century, as sketched previously by William Cronon’s foundational *Changes in the Land* (1983).⁴

Moreover, *Surroundings* exemplifies the transdisciplinary research that permeates the emerging field of environmental humanities. Each chapter aggregates a microcosm of thought, introducing readers to the topic while also serving as an essential reference for scholars who are already engaged in discourses related to the environment, whether natural or built. Historians of architecture will be drawn particularly to Benson’s discussion of the correlations between social disorder and urban developments during the Gilded Age, which expands on recent scholarship that engages the history of tenements and the settlement movement. Moreover, by pairing historical

and contemporary critiques of environments and environmentalisms, the book suggests zones of potential contact for other scholars in the field of architecture who view environments as fraught ground for corrective maneuvers on many fronts, including race, ethnicity, gender, class, disability, and sexuality.⁵ With *Surroundings*, Benson provides a compelling demonstration of the profound material consequences that seemingly arbitrary choices of concepts have for “how we think, talk, and write but also who we ally ourselves with and against and what we do and make together” (196). Thus, to piggyback on the author’s urgent plea that we recognize in our current moment future speculations regarding what the environment might become: readers may find that this book yields another important realization, that we surround as much as we are surrounded.

CLEMENS FINKELSTEIN
Princeton University

Notes

1. Bruno Latour, *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, trans. Catherine Porter (Medford, Mass.: Polity, 2017); Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2016).
2. Joy Parr, *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environments, and the Everyday, 1953–2003* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010); Andrea Wulf, *The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt’s New World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015); Daniel A. Barber, *Modern Architecture and Climate: Design before Air Conditioning* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2020).
3. See John Tresch, “Cosmologies Materialized: History of Science and History of Ideas,” in *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, ed. Darrin McMahon and Sam Moyn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 153–72.
4. William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003). For a focused discussion of U.S. environmental history, see Mark Fiege, *The Republic of Nature: An Environmental History of the United States* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012).
5. Examples include Ana María León and Andrew Herscher’s Settler Colonial City Project; Irene Cheng, Charles L. Davis II, and Mabel O. Wilson’s editorial and curatorial work on the entanglements of race and architecture; Aimi Hamraie’s critical access studies; Dalal Musaied Alsayer, Daniel A. Barber, and Carson Chan’s platform Current: Collective for Architecture History and Environment; and Esther

Choi's BIPOC-led and -focused mentorship initiative Office Hours.

Jordan Kauffman

Drawing on Architecture: The Object of Lines, 1970–1990

Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2018, 384 pp., 57 color and 44 b/w illus. \$34.95 (cloth), ISBN 9780262037372

The debate as to whether architectural drawings are to be considered works of art in their own right or solely as tools for the construction of buildings is given specific historical grounding and thoughtful consideration in Jordan Kauffman's *Drawing on Architecture*. Focusing on two critical but still largely unexamined decades in architectural culture, the 1970s and 1980s, Kauffman earnestly and ably traces a shift in the status of architectural drawings as they went from being seen merely as “instruments” of the building process to being recognized as “autonomous objects outside the process of design” (9). What Kauffman brings to the commonplace assertion that architecture “retreated” from the realm of building into drawing during these two decades is not only a thoroughly researched study of the people and places that were instrumental in bringing about this change but also an exploration of the shift's broader implications, particularly in relation to the aestheticization and commodification of the architectural drawing.

The book begins with a brief introduction highlighting the author's use of a “sociological framework” as his principal methodology and providing a cursory overview of historical collection practices related to architectural drawings. The introduction does not provide chapter overviews—a traditional conceit that would have proven useful given that the chapters are structured around complex groupings of exhibitions, individuals, and organizations.

The first chapter explores a group of exhibitions mounted during the 1970s and 1980s that, Kauffman argues, initiated the shift from the view of architectural drawings as simply professional instruments to the perception of them as works of art. The first was *Education of an Architect: A Point of View*, held in New York at the Cooper Union and the Museum of Modern Art in late 1971, but the most influential was the

seminal Beaux-Arts show held five years later at MoMA. The chapter also discusses a number of exhibitions at the Drawing Center in New York—a lesser-known institution that emerges in Kauffman's study as a place of significance. A brief discussion of the influential 1972 publication *Five Architects*—which originated in conversations at MoMA—highlights a critical moment in this developing discourse, though it fits somewhat uncomfortably with the chapter's overall focus on exhibitions.

In the second chapter Kauffman focuses on the act of collecting, arguing convincingly that this functioned as both an outcome of and a contributing factor to the increasing perception of architectural drawings as autonomous objects. Kauffman introduces the reader to numerous New York gallerists, curators, and collectors, including Barbara Pine, an initial member of the Junior Council at the Museum of Modern Art; Judith York Newman, who opened the first gallery in New York to deal only in architectural drawings and prints; Barbara Jakobsen and Emilio Ambasz, who organized the first sale of contemporary architectural drawings at MoMA; and Pierre Apraxine, who worked with Jakobsen at MoMA and went on to assemble the bulk of the Gilman Collection—more than 180 architectural drawings created for the Gilman Paper Company during the late 1970s and donated to MoMA in 2000. Perhaps the most significant collection of contemporary architectural drawings, the Gilman Collection came about after Apraxine convinced Howard Gilman to collect architectural drawings in addition to conceptual art and photography, arguing that they had value as an art form that would be “accessible” to the Gilman Company's employees. One MoMA show in particular—*Architectural Studies and Projects*, organized by Jakobsen and Ambasz in 1975—emerges as a watershed moment, a surprising fact given that the modest endeavor was mounted in the penthouse cafeteria of the museum and produced little in the way of actual sales. Kauffman's analysis of the show is illustrative of the main strength of his book: it unearths critical but previously “hidden” events and protagonists that were pivotal to the shift in status of architectural drawings.

In the third chapter Kauffman explores the influence of the well-known gallerist Leo Castelli and his eponymous gallery in

New York, focusing on three seminal exhibitions held from 1977 to 1983. *Architecture I* (1977) displayed the works of seven leading American and European architects, who were asked to submit drawings of projects already completed, for exhibition and possible sale. That the show was curated by Ambasz, Jakobsen, and Apraxine reveals the murky boundaries of the museum, corporate, and gallery worlds. *Architecture II: Houses for Sale* (1980) introduced a different set of contradictions, as architects were asked to create new drawings with a “double role”: they could be hung on the wall as art, but they could also be used to construct houses. *Architecture III: Follies: Architecture for the Late-Twentieth-Century Landscape* (1983) again asked architects to create new designs, this time for theoretically more buildable follies, which many in the artistic and architectural community perceived as purposeless structures for the “idle rich.”

In the final two chapters Kauffman addresses the “normalized” presence of architectural drawings in galleries, museums, and auction houses around the world (including in Milan, Berlin, Amsterdam, London, Rome, Helsinki, and Venice, as well as Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia). New York, however, still looms large in his extended discussion of the Max Protetch Gallery, which provides some of the most compelling material in the book. Kauffman recounts, for example, the outrage that followed Protetch's exhibition and sale of several Frank Lloyd Wright drawings in the early 1980s after Protetch had gained the exclusive rights to their sale through Wright's widow, Olgivanna. Historians decried the splintering of the archive, fellow gallerists envied the high price tags, and museum officials lamented the fact that the drawings would be inaccessible to the public (although forty years later the bulk of Wright's archive was sold to Columbia University and MoMA). The book concludes with the rise of three institutions dedicated to the collection and preservation of architectural drawings: the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal, the Deutsches Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt, and the Getty Center in Los Angeles. In buying entire collections and archives, these institutions, under the leadership of seminal figures such as Phyllis Lambert (CCA) and Heinrich Klotz