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Walter Koditek

Hong Kong Modern

Architecture of the 1950s-1970s

In the post-war decades, Hong Kong architects - many of them having migrated from China or studied overseas - embraced modern principles when they were forced to face the problems of housing shortage, mass construction and limited budgets, problems that are still present to this very day in the city. Although economic efficiencies often prevailed over design, their buildings were rooted in their time and place, reflecting the local climate, social values, materials, technique and use in an often unique and pragmatic fashion.

Hong Kong Modern. Architecture of the 1950s-1970s provides an unprecedented comprehensive overview on the architecture of that transformative period in the former British colony. In his book, the author Walter Koditek - an urban planner and photographer originally from Germany, who has been living in Asia since 2006 - documents more than 300 buildings and ensembles. Through its combination of large-format photography, carefully researched background information and academic essays it aims to contribute to a better understanding and discussion of their unique architectural merit and social, cultural, and historic values. The publication is divided into building types such as residential-, industrial- or public buildings. While the introductory photo galleries give an impactful insight into how the facades, despite their initial monotony, can reveal a whole variety of extraordinary shapes, surprising patterns and details, the following section takes a more in-depth look at the context and background of each of the presented buildings.

Hong Kong Modern can be read as a coffee-table book, but also as an architectural guide or documentation. Supported by the theoretical essays, it can contribute to a deeper discussion on the architectural, social, cultural and historic values of this "pragmatic modernism".



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Hong Kong Modern. Architecture of the 1950s-1970s

With contributions by Cecilia L. Chu, Eunice Seng, Ying Zhou, and Charles Lai

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