



# **A Critic Writes: Selected Essays by Reyner Banham (Centennial Books)**

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## **A Critic Writes: Selected Essays by Reyner Banham (Centennial Books)** Reyner Banham

Few twentieth-century writers on architecture and design have enjoyed the renown of Reyner Banham. Born and trained in England and a U.S. resident starting in 1976, Banham wrote incisively about American and European buildings and culture. Now readers can enjoy a chronological cross-section of essays, polemics, and reviews drawn from more than three decades of Banham's writings.

The volume, which includes discussions of Italian Futurism, Adolf Loos, Paul Scheerbarth, and the Bauhaus as well as explorations of contemporary architecture by Frank Gehry, James Stirling, and Norman Foster, conveys the full range of Banham's belief in industrial and technological development as the motor of architectural evolution. Banham's interests and passions ranged from architecture and the culture of pop art to urban and industrial design. In brilliant analyses of automobile styling, mobile homes, science fiction films, and the American predilection for gadgets, he anticipated many of the preoccupations of contemporary cultural studies. Los Angeles, the city that Banham commemorated in a book and a film, receives extensive attention in essays on the Santa Monica Pier, the Getty Museum, Forest Lawn cemetery, and the ubiquitous freeway system.

Eminently readable, provocative, and entertaining, this book is certain to consolidate Banham's reputation among architects and students of contemporary culture. For those acquainted with his writing, it offers welcome surprises as well as familiar delights. For those encountering Banham for the first time, it comprises the perfect introduction.

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