

## Review: The Other Modern Movement: Architecture, 1920-1970

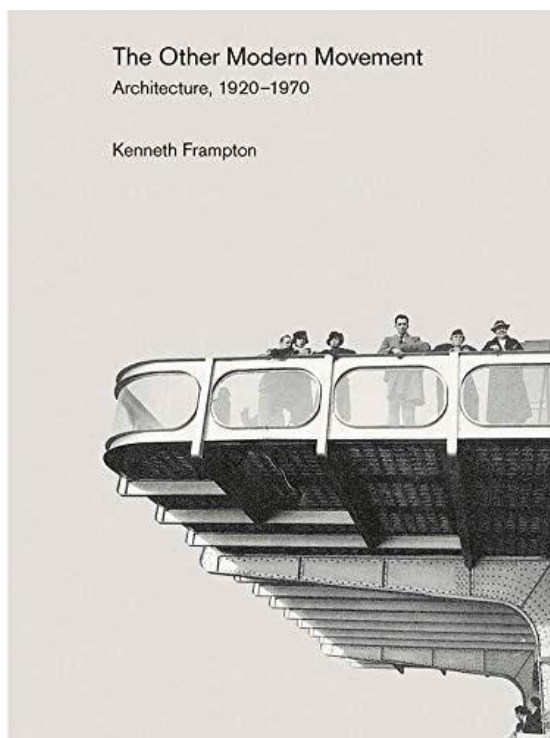
by Kenneth Frampton. Yale University Press, January 2022. 344 p. ill. ISBN 978-0-300-23889-1 (h/c), \$50.00.

Reviewed March 2022

Paul Glassman, Director of Scholarly and Cultural Resources, Yeshiva University,

[paul.glassman@yu.edu](mailto:paul.glassman@yu.edu)

<https://doi.org/10.17613/pnf5-rz74>



In 1982, when this reviewer was a novice instructor for a course in modern architecture at Boston College, the assigned course text was Kenneth Frampton's *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (Oxford University Press, 1980). The sole alternative was William Curtis's newly issued *Modern Architecture since 1900* (Prentice-Hall, 1982). Fortunately, instructors now have more options, including the author's acclaimed *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture* (MIT Press, 1995), on the relation of structure to form as seen in the work of six modernists.

Like *Studies in Tectonic Culture*, this volume devotes each chapter to an architect, from Rudolf Schindler to Alejandro de la Sota (eighteen in all), and the author tells us his aim is to rescue them from their marginal status in the modernist canon. For example, the chapter on Erich Mendelsohn examines key works, from the sculptural Einstein

Tower in Potsdam to the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill-on-Sea, England, heir to his work in Mandatory Palestine. A sub-chapter focuses more deeply on an exemplar (in the case of Mendelsohn, the pavilion) not only verbally, but with adeptly chosen photographs, sections, and axonometric projections.

While advanced undergraduate and graduate students will benefit here, they may become weary of the author's monotone and at times inscrutable prose. As an example, "this exceptional work" (in reference to Mendelsohn's pavilion) fails to explain what sets it apart from other modernist buildings of its time or from the balance of the architect's oeuvre. Though entirely black and white, photographs feature rich tone gradations, and the generous number of plans, sections, and detail drawings will provide valuable documentation to historians and designers. Each chapter begins with a full-page illustration of the featured sub-chapter building. Regrettably, illustrations are unnumbered, rendering their discovery accidental, rather than intentional.

The basic apparatus includes a bibliography arranged by chapters and an index of personal names only. With thick, glossy paper serving as a suitable support, the resulting heavy text block is likely to peel away from its covers, and dark gray, rather than black, print is likely to cause eye strain.

Ultimately, this newest work from a prolific architectural historian is not so much about "others" as it is a second volume to his *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, the very book explored so long ago. For those still looking for suitable undergraduate course texts for modern architecture, Professor Frampton's latest effort will serve well as a complement to the more accessible and inventively die-cut pages of *Modern Architecture* by Anthony Hassell, David Boyle, and Jeremy Harwood (Metro Books, 2008).