



Mysteries of the Mall: And Other Essays

By Witold Rybczynski

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A deep exploration of modern life that examines our cities, public places, and homes

In *Mysteries of the Mall*, Witold Rybczynski, the author of *How Architecture Works*, casts a seasoned critical eye on the modern scene. His subject is nothing less than the broad setting of our metropolitan world.

In thirty-four discerning essays, Rybczynski ranges over topics as varied as shopping malls, Central Park, the Opéra Bastille, and America's shrinking cities. Along the way, he examines our post-9/11 obsession with security, the revival of the big-city library, the rise of college towns, our fascination with vacation homes, and Disney's planned community of Celebration. By looking at contemporary architects as diverse as Frank Gehry, Moshe Safdie, and Bing Thom, revisiting old masters such as Palladio, Le Corbusier, and Frank Lloyd Wright, and considering such unsung innovators as Stanley H. Durwood, the inventor of the cineplex, Rybczynski ponders the role of global metropolises in an age of tourism and reflects on what kinds of places attract us in the modern city.

Mysteries of the Mall is required reading for anyone curious about the contemporary world and how it came to be the way it is.

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Editorial Review

Review

“It is the attention [Rybczynski] pays space?an enthusiastic and highly infectious kind of attention, something close to an architectural evangelism?that both freshens our eyes and grants new perspectives on the intentionality of our environment . . . A deft and sensible guide, Rybczynski charms, challenges, and finally, welcomes us into a world we may never have realized could be so enthralling . . . This one is required reading for anyone interested in the story of architecture?or the shape of the modern world.”
?Dustin Illingworth, *The Brooklyn Rail*

“[H]is writing is, like his architectural leanings, clear and civil, and full of cocktail-worthy trivia.” ?Mike Doherty, *Maclean's*

“A superb book for those interested in architectural history, written in an easygoing style by a man with encyclopedic knowledge and an obvious great love for building.” ?*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

“[Rybczynski is] an eloquent critic with a range of interests as broad as his voluminous published work . . . the prose sparkles . . . Over the course of his career, Rybczynski has proven a deft guide to the work of countless architects; here, he is just as sage a curator of his own criticism.” ?Anthony Paletta, *Publishers Weekly* (boxed signature review)

“Throughout the collection, Rybczynski’s writing is clear-headed and thoughtful, knowledgeable but unpretentious . . . the awe, appreciation and wonder that Rybczynski has for architecture can be infectious.”
?Anna Weiner, *The New Republic*

About the Author

Witold Rybczynski has written about architecture for *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, and *Slate*. Among his award-winning books are *Home*, *The Most Beautiful House in the World*, and *A Clearing in the Distance*, which won the J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize. He is the winner of a 2014 National Design Award, and is an emeritus professor of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania.

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