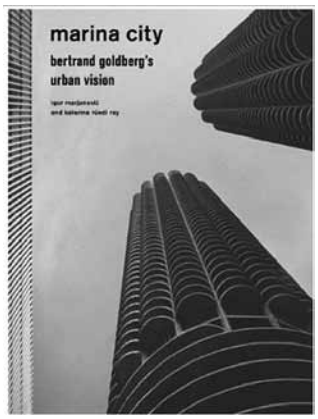
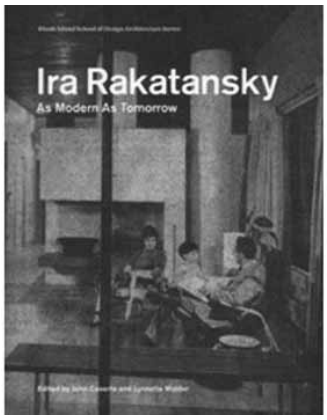
Heroic and Militant Modernisms

Ornament, technology and the articulated surface



Marina City: Bertrand Goldberg's Urban Vision
By Igor Marjanovic and Katerina Rüedi Ray
Princeton Architectural Press
New York, 2010
176 pp.
ISBN 978 -1-56898-863-4
£25 (pb)

The Marina City towers, completed in 1967 to a design by Bertrand Goldberg Associates, outline a distinctive silhouette on the Chicago skyline. This book provides a matter-of-fact account of this remarkable project, examining Goldberg's training (the last year of the Berlin Bauhaus), the genesis of the design, the wranglings surrounding the project's funding and inception, the construction technologies involved, the project's branding and marketing and its critical reception. The text is straightforwardly written, assembling a treasury of information, effectively asking how, what, where, when and why. The authors tend to prefer description to interpretation.
AS



Ira Rakatansky: As Modern As Tomorrow
Edited by John Caserta and Lynnette Widder; with essays by Joan Ockman and Lynnette Widder
Rhode Island School of Design Architecture Series
William Stout Publishers
San Francisco, USA, 2010
206 pp.
ISBN 978-0-98196-670-0
£37.50 (pb)

Since founding his practice in 1946 in the small north-eastern US city of Providence, Rhode Island – shortly after completing his studies with Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer at Harvard University – architect Ira Rakatansky has continued to demonstrate that, long before the term Critical Regionalism was coined, architects educated within that pedagogy were not dyed in the wool Functionalists but were instead open to the distillation of the universal spatial and technological concepts of Modernism through the particular tectonic filters of their locales. In the bold yet undoctrinaire buildings that both framed and reflected the emergent domestic lifestyle, work environments and aesthetic sensibilities of the educated urban middle class, then the newest source of architectural patronage, Rakatansky's attention to adaptive and innovative construction resulted in a sensual pragmatism alive with the earnest optimism of a generation of architects devoted to the palpable fulfilment *in the present* of the very promise of a brighter and more pleasant future.

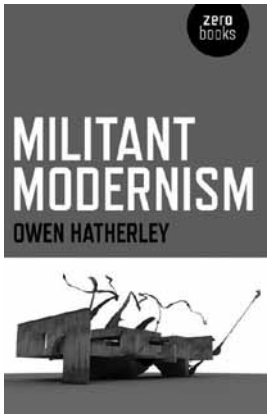
Caserta and Widder's delightful book, highlighting twenty projects from the first twenty years of Rakatansky's practice, underscores this sense of pleasure with its fresh graphic layout, recent photographs of the buildings and interiors in continued use and the construction documents that communicated the architect's original design intelligence and intentions. It could be said that the form and content of *Ira Rakatansky: As Modern As Tomorrow* is itself like a good construction detail, certain in its intentional presence yet equipped with sufficient tolerance and flexibility to be in expansive and inclusive dialogue with its broader environment.
MS

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1359135510001041 Published online by Cambridge University Press



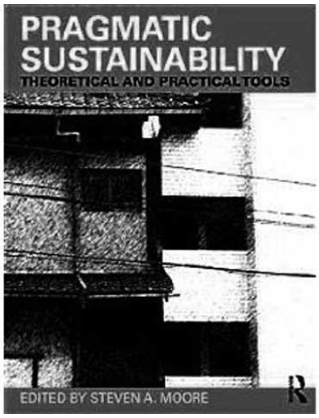
The Articulate Surface: Ornament and Technology in Contemporary Architecture
By Ben Pell
Birkhäuser
Basel, 2010
200 pp.
ISBN: 978-3-0346-0221-1
£55.00 (hb)

Wrapped boxes, perforated and layered claddings, iterative patterns – these are some of the most recognisable characteristics of the commercial and institutional architecture of the last decade. *The Articulate Surface* brings together a collection of the some of the best examples, organising the material under five headings: 'Applied'; 'Perforated/Cut'; 'Layered'; 'Formed/Cast'; and 'Stacked Tiled'. The last three sections are accompanied by explanatory texts by the architects of some of the works – Sam Jacob of Fashion Architecture Taste (FAT); Andreas Hild of Hild und K Architekten; and Alejandro Zaera-Polo of Foreign Office Architects (FOA). Some of these make good reading and add an intellectual zest. The book is well produced and illustrated with drawings and photographs, but there are too few interior shots. Why? Some of these wall or cladding treatments give beautiful dappled and layered light – this is illustrated; some distinctive if over emphatic stylishness – also shown; and some ... well probably not a lot. For anyone looking into CNC laser cut moulds or stencils, or grappling with printed patterning, this is a good place to start.
JAO



Militant Modernism
By Owen Hatherley
O Books
Winchester, UK, 2009
146 pp.
ISBN 978-1-84694-176-4
£9.99 (pb)

In its Old Labour red cover, and irascible 'angry young man' polemic reminiscent of the early Ian Nairn, *Miltant Modernism* defends Modernism against its would-be defenders. Contra Docomomo, it is more interested in sustaining a dormant Brutalist spirit of resistance, than necessarily conserving any of its works. With vigour, it articulates the vacuity at the core of much late Modernism, laying bare its lack of politics and the problem of (too much) form without that much content. The critique extends to art; the YBA (Young British Artist) movement is indicted as lacking the essential (British) component of *crapness* – 'a refusal of ease and slickness in favour of angularity and harshness ...' The photos – foggy to the point of mystery – reinforce the feeling of the book as agitprop pamphlet. It is far from lacking erudition, however, in its navigation between journalism, politics and academic history; the chapters mostly explore British Brutalism, and the formal, political and erotic aspects of Soviet Modernism.
SK



Pragmatic Sustainability: Theoretical and Practical Tools
By Steven A. Moore (ed.)
Routledge
Abingdon, UK
291 pp.
ISBN 978-0-415-77938-8
£19.99 (pb)

Sustainability in practical, political and academic discourse has become synonymous with environmental performance, climate change mitigation becoming the focal point for most of debate and action. Meanwhile, the uptake of sustainable solutions in the built environment has become widespread, at least in the developed world, with an emerging market acceptance and with much technological response perceived as opportunity for profitability. Within this interdisciplinary publication, scientists, engineers, architects, historians, philosophers, technologists and economists argue against the current uptake of a single-minded, technological, market-driven approach to the delivery of sustainability. In contrast their approach can be characterised as pragmatic, pluralist; one in which the uniquely complex and demanding environmental, social and economic positions in which we find ourselves, require, in each case, an equally distinctive and individual tool or method to identify and deliver an optimum response. The authors aim to challenge their own and others' disciplinary straitjackets and to explore how a move towards interdisciplinary thinking might enable sustainability. As the culmination of an inspiring lecture series, work brought together here by Moore provides a thought-provoking insight into the future of sustainable practice.
JG

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