



The Seduction of Place: The City in the Twenty-first Century

Joseph Rykwert

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One of the most highly respected architectural historians of our time takes on the question of whether or not we have the cities we need and what we can do to create them.

To understand why people love or hate their cities and why cities succeed or fail their inhabitants, Joseph Rykwert examines a broad spectrum of urban centers. Among them are Mexico City, the world's largest metropolis, sprawled around its old center; Berlin, newly reunited and furiously rebuilding; New Delhi and Islamabad, new capitals that exist alongside older towns; grandly planned cities like Chandigarh, Canberra, and Brasília; and more modest new towns like Columbia, Maryland, and Celebration, Florida, built in an attempt to correct the problems endemic to big cities.

Rykwert looks at image, style, and ornament; at public space and buildings; at infrastructure and street layout; at the visual qualities of contrast, strife, and energy that contribute to a city's appeal. Discussing both successes and failures, he suggests ways in which we can retain--or return to--the sense of place and individuation that determines the nourishing character and soul of the urban landscape.

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