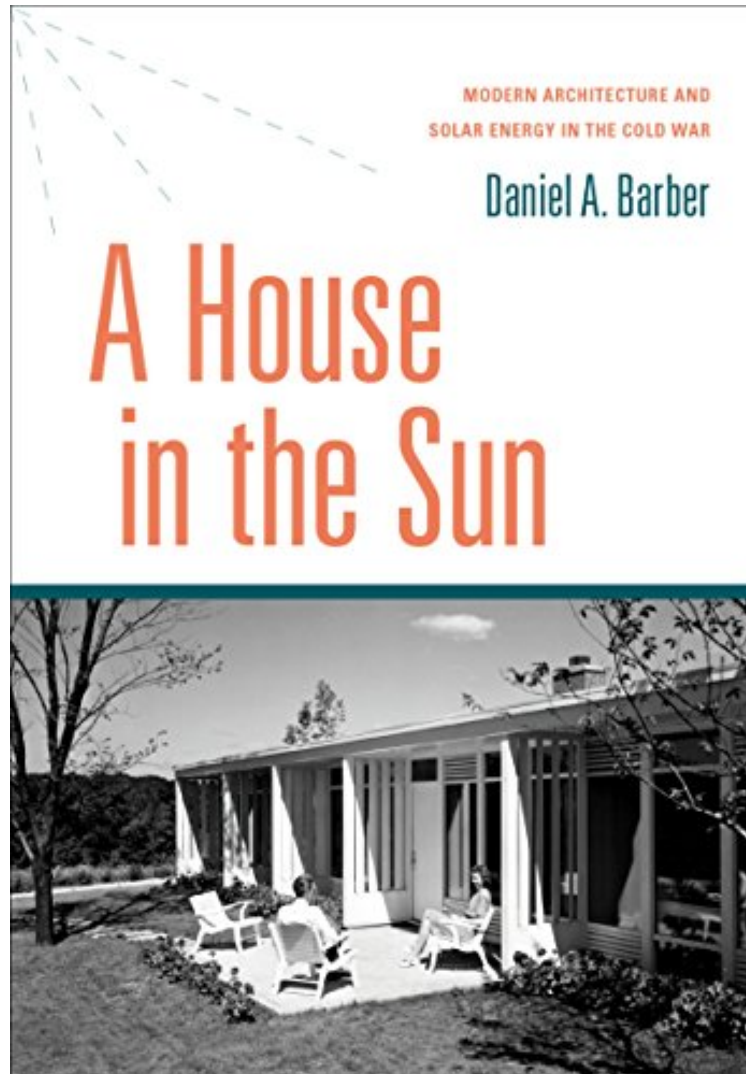


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A House in the Sun: Modern Architecture and Solar Energy in the Cold War

Daniel A. Barber

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Daniel A. Barber : A House in the Sun: Modern Architecture and Solar Energy in the Cold War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A House in the Sun: Modern Architecture and Solar Energy in the Cold War:

A House in the Sun describes a number of experiments in solar house heating in American architectural, engineering, political, economic, and corporate contexts from the beginning of World War II until the late 1950s. Houses were built

across the Midwest, Northeast, and Southwestern United States, and also proposed for sites in India, South Africa, and Morocco. These experiments developed in parallel to transformations in the discussion of modern architecture, relying on new materials and design ideas for both energy efficiency and claims to cultural relevance. Architects were among the myriad cultural and scientific actors to see the solar house as an important designed element of the American future. These experiments also developed as part of a wider analysis of the globe as an interconnected geophysical system. Perceived resource limitations in the immediate postwar period led to new understandings of the relationship between energy, technology and economy. The solar house - both as a charged object in the milieu of suburban expansion, and as a means to raise the standard of living in developing economies - became an important site for social, technological, and design experimentation. This led to new forms of expertise in architecture and other professions. Daniel Barber argues that this mid-century interest in solar energy was one of the first episodes in which resource limitations were seen as an opportunity for design to attain new relevance for potential social and cultural transformations. Furthermore, the solar discussion established both an intellectual framework and a funding structure for the articulation of and response to global environmental concerns in subsequent decades. In presenting evidence of resource tensions at the beginning of the Cold War, the book offers a new perspective on the histories of architecture, technology, and environmentalism, one more fully entangled with the often competing dynamics of geopolitical and geophysical pressures.

"The author provides a thorough, in-depth historical study of the rise and fall of solar houses, the key players (ranging from architects to academics) involved, and the extensive innovation and experimentation generated and relayed through exhibitions, publications, and competitions. Detailed black-and-white and color illustrations are strategically placed to enhance the text. A well-researched prequel to any book on mid-century modern or postwar energy policy Recommended."--CHOICE "A House in the Sun carefully articulates the complex, and often tacit, role of architects in the postwar entanglement of technology, politics, economics, and ecology, especially in the United States. With clarity, breadth, and great detail, Barber articulates the bright prehistory of the transformations of the architect in the solar-house era. A House in the Sun is a robust and generous contribution that will help architects and historians to better conceptualize and situate their practices within the complexity of architecture and energy in the United States."--Kiel Moe, Constructs From the Back Cover Advance Praise for A House in the Sun