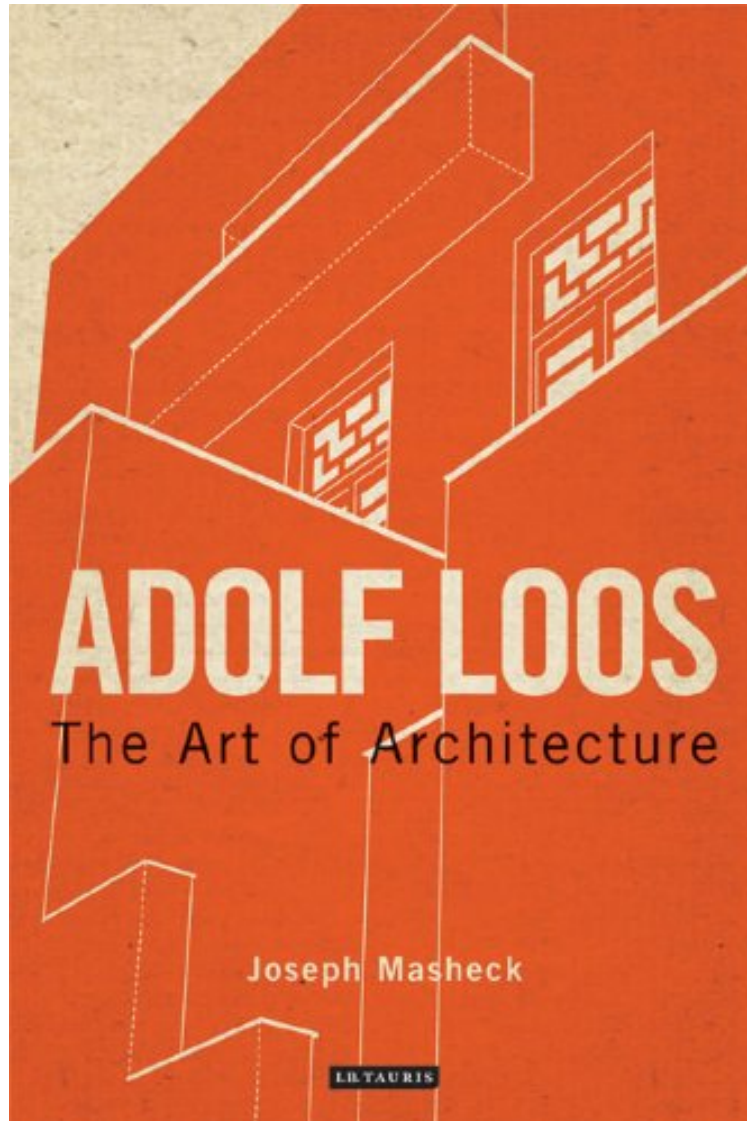


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Adolf Loos: The Art of Architecture

Joseph Masheck

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Joseph Masheck : Adolf Loos: The Art of Architecture before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Adolf Loos: The Art of Architecture:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I bought this for my son who works in Manhatten ...By Susan BezI bought this for my son who works in Manhatten in the field of architecture. He was thrilled with this book.

Widely regarded as one of the most significant prophets of modern architecture, Adolf Loos was a star in his own time. His work was emblematic of the turn-of-the-century generation that was torn between the traditional culture of

the nineteenth century and the innovative modernism of the twentieth. His essay 'Ornament and Crime' equated superfluous ornament and 'decorative arts' with underclass tattooing in an attempt to tell modern Europeans that they should know better. But the negation of ornament was supposed to reveal, not negate, good style; and an incorrigible ironist has been taken too literally in denying architecture as a fine art. Without normalizing his edgy radicality, Masheck argues that Loos's masterful "astylistic architecture" was an appreciation of tradition and utility and not, as most architectural historians have argued, a mere repudiation of the florid style of the Vienna Secession. Masheck has reads Loos as a witty, ironic rhetorician who has all too often been taken at face value. Far from being the anti-architect of the modern era, Masheck's Loos is 'an unruly yet integrally canonical artist-architect'. He believed in culture, comfort, intimacy and privacy and advocated the evolution of artful architecture. This is a brilliantly written revisionist reading of a perennially popular architect.

'Joseph Masheck is the most imaginative art critic of his generation, one of the few art writers of any time or place whose work should and will be taken seriously by anyone interested in highly original writing. His prose is as bold in its experimentation, and refusal to settle into predictable patterns, as the best 'postmodernist' art. His great, to my mind almost unique, achievement is to rethink fundamental questions: How can a text describe a visual artwork? How can a commentator place such an artwork within its (historical and social) culture? His erudition is amazing: his ear for prose-style is as unique as his 'eye' for original visual art. His writing is sheer magic.' – David Carrier, professor of philosophy at Carnegie Mellon University and author of *Artwriting* and *Principles of Art History Writing*