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*David Pascoe*

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In his celebrated manifesto, 'Aircraft' (1935), the architect Le Corbusier presented more than 100 photographs celebrating aeroplanes either in imperious flight or elegantly at rest. Dwelling on the artfully abstracted shapes of noses, wings, and tails, he declared: 'Ponder a moment on the truth of these objects! Clearness of function! In Aircraft, David Pascoe follows this lead and offers a startling new account of the form of the aeroplane, an object that, in the course of a hundred years, has developed from a flimsy contraption of wood, wire and canvas into a machine compounded of exotic materials whose wings can touch the edges of space. Tracing the

aeroplane through the twentieth century, he considers the subject from a number of perspectives: as an inspiration for artists, architects and politicians; as a miracle of engineering; as a product of industrialized culture; as a device of military ambition; and, finally, in its clearness of function, as an instance of sublime technology. Profusely illustrated and authoritatively written, *Aircraft* offers not just a fresh account of aeronautical design, documenting, in particular, the forms of earlier flying machines and the dependence of later projects upon them, but also provides a cultural history of an object whose very shape contains the dreams and nightmares of the modern age.

'eclectic and intelligent ... a thought-provoking analysis' - Financial Times 'the scope of Mr Pascoe's rumination is impressive' - The Economist  
About the Author David Pascoe is Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Glasgow. He is the author of *Peter Greenaway: Museums and Moving Images* (Reaktion, 1997) and *Airspaces* (Reaktion, 2001).