



# Reconstructing Architecture: Critical Discourses and Social Practices (Pedagogy and Cultural Practice)

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To create architecture is an inherently political act, yet its nature as a social practice is often obscured beneath layers of wealth and privilege. The contributors to this volume question architecture's complicity with the status quo, moving beyond critique to outline the part architects are playing in building radical social movements and challenging dominant forms of power.

The making of architecture is instrumental in the construction of our identities, our differences, the world around us—much of what we know of institutions, the distribution of power, social relations, and cultural values is mediated by the built environment. Historically, architecture has constructed the environments that house the dominant culture. Yet, as the essays in *Reconstructing Architecture* demonstrate, there exists a strong tradition of critical practice in the field, one that attempts to alter existing social power relations. Engaging the gap between modernism and postmodernism, each chapter addresses an oppositional discourse that has developed within the field and then reconstructs it in terms of a new social project: feminism, social theory, environmentalism, cultural studies, race and ethnic studies, and critical theory.

The activists and scholars writing here provide a clarion call to architects and other producers of culture, challenging them to renegotiate their political allegiances and to help reconstruct a viable democratic life in the face of inexorable forces driving economic growth, destroying global ecology, homogenizing culture, and privatizing the public realm. *Reconstructing Architecture* reformulates the role of architecture in society as well as its capacity to further a progressive social transformation.

Contributors: Sherry Ahrentzen, U of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; Bradford C. Grant, California Polytechnic State U, San Luis Obispo; Richard Ingersoll, Rice U; Margaret Soltan, George Washington U; Anthony Ward, U of Auckland, New Zealand.

Thomas A. Dutton is an architect and professor of architecture at Miami University, Ohio. He is editor of *Voices in Architectural Education* (1991) and is associate editor of the *Journal of Architectural Education*.

Lian Hurst Mann is an architect and editor of *Architecture California*. A founding member of the Labor/Community Strategy Center in Los Angeles, she is editor of its bilingual quarterly *Ahora Now* and a coauthor of *Reconstructing Los Angeles from the Bottom Up* (1993).

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