



The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form Through History

By Spiro Kostof



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The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form Through History By Spiro Kostof

The City Assembled is a history of the elements of cities: streets, public places, urban divisions (religious, political, and social), and the frontiers of city and countryside. Kostof follows the evolution of city components to modern times. He discusses "urban process": the effect on cities of natural disasters like the Great Fire of London and the Lisbon earthquake, war, and comprehensive redevelopment, compared with traditional patterns of growth and change. The current recovery from modernist extremes has made us look again at what we treasure in traditional urban life, and how we can recharge the old forms with contemporary common sense. Over 300 drawings, prints, paintings, and photographs help to tell the story, illustrating both patterns and uses, from the colonnaded streets of ancient Palmyra to gentrified London squares. A fitting testament to the wide-ranging intellect of Professor Kostof, *The City Assembled* is at once an exercise in architectural and social history, a case study for the present, and a pointer for the future. 346 illustrations, 40 in color.



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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

This final book by noted architectural historian Kostof, who died in 1991, is a companion to *The City Shaped* (LJ 10/1/91; LJ's Best Books of 1991, LJ 1/92, p. 56). Here he considers the parts that make up the city through time--walls, urban divisions, public places, the street, and the urban process. The book is wide-ranging in time and space and presents the fruits of a lifetime of looking, but it is fragmented, appearing to be almost an assembly of notes for a more considered work or for *The City Shaped*. Still, the author is an astute observer, and his remarks are frequently illuminating for specialists and novices alike. This survey of the microparts of cities will be of interest primarily to professionals and historians but also to urban inhabitants, the same audience addressed by William Whyte (*City: Rediscovering Its Center* , LJ 2/1/89).

- *Jack Perry Brown, Art Inst. of Chicago Lib.*

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Review

Kostof...writes with tireless intelligence and commanding powers that never cease to surprise...tough, brilliant, and rewarding. -- *The Observer*

About the Author

Spiro Kostof (1936-1991) was Professor of Architectural History at the University of California at Berkley, and also taught at Yale, Columbia, MIT, and Rice universities.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Debra Rubino:

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