



New Organic Architecture: The Breaking Wave

By David Pearson

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New Organic Architecture is a manifesto for building in a way that is both aesthetically pleasing and kinder to the environment. It illuminates key themes of organic architects, their sources of inspiration, the roots and concepts behind the style, and the environmental challenges to be met. The organic approach to architecture has an illustrious history, from Celtic design, Art Nouveau, Arts and Crafts, to the work of Antoni Gaudí and Frank Lloyd Wright. Today there is a response to a new age of information and ecology; architects are seeking to change the relationship between buildings and the natural environment. In the first part of his book, David Pearson provides a history and assessment of organic architecture. The second part comprises statements from thirty architects from around the world whose work is based on natural or curvilinear forms rather than the straight-line geometrics of modernism. Each statement is accompanied by full-color illustrations of one or several of the architects' built projects.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The very term "organic architecture" may sound like some faddish throwback to the earth-shoe era, or even something completely new, when in fact it's neither. As explained in the first part of this vibrant softcover assembled by Pearson--director of the green-friendly architectural consulting firm Gaia Environments and author of *The Gaia Natural House Book*--it's been around for millennia, whenever people built things that worked in harmony with their natural surroundings, made use of local materials, or reflected the laws of science and patterns of nature in their construction. (In other words, everything from Stonehenge and Gothic cathedrals, which seized on the natural rules of physics rather than iron and concrete to reach to the heavens, to the Prairie homes of Frank Lloyd Wright and the sinuous, asymmetrical lines of Antonio Gaudi and Art Nouveau, inspired by viewing nature both with the naked eye and under a microscope.)

The second part of the book is a completely delightful, instructive look at recent "new organic" architecture from 30 cutting-edge architects in all corners of the globe (truly), made up of beautiful full-color photographs and usually smart commentary from the architects themselves. The sheer beauty and innovation of most of the works shown here--from the way they insinuate themselves into their natural terrain to the ingenious ways they use regional materials to how they turn the whole notion of interior design on its head--is an embarrassment of eco-sensitive riches; unlike most other design anthologies, there's not a clunker in the bunch here. Fabrizio Carola's Kaedi hospital in Mauritania is a warmly glowing interconnected complex of fired-brick pods and passageway. Balkrishna Doshi's Hussain-Doshi Gufa in Ahmedabad, an undulating sequence of caves, makes the cyber-desert structures of the last *Star Wars* movie look banal. Renzo Piano's impossible-to-describe cultural center for the Kanak civilization in New Caledonia reinterprets the very nature and purpose of such a site in a jaw-droppingly original idiom. And if you don't long to live for at least a night in one of the upside-down, inside-out, backside-front homes designed by Bart Prince, Eugene Tsui, Javier Senosiain, or Eisaku Ushido and Kathryn Findlay, your senses truly must be made of something not found in nature. --*Timothy Murphy*

From Library Journal

"Organic" has long served as a catchall term in architecture, haphazardly applied to topics as disparate as cave dwellings, 19th-century Gothic Revival, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Frank Gehry. Pearson (*The Natural House Book*) strives to place organic architecture in historic perspective, define the elements that bond and energize its proponents worldwide, and showcase the latest and best examples of organic building. He succeeds up to a point: the prose is flowing and inspirational, the illustrations abundant, and the selection of architects laudably diverse. The text, however, resounds with partisan rhetoric more typical of a manifesto than a critical survey. Over half the book is an anthology of architects' statements, which is interesting but doesn't make for a coherent overview of the contemporary scene. James Wines's *Green Architecture* (LJ 10/15/00) draws a more complete and balanced picture of the increasingly influential trend toward organic design and environmental sustainability, making it a first choice for public and academic libraries. This book, notwithstanding the above reservations, is highly recommended as a supplemental resource. David Soltesz, Cuyahoga Cty. P.L., Parma, OH
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Review

"If your soul longs to dwell within something other than flat walls and right angles, this book will make you say, 'Ah!' Pearson gives us the gift of seeing into the hearts and minds of these designers while sharing their sources of inspiration, the nature of their design process, their involvement with the materials, and their

passion for the spirit and form of life. In short, he gives us the gift of ourselves, reawakened."--"Natural Home magazine

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Clara Lee:

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