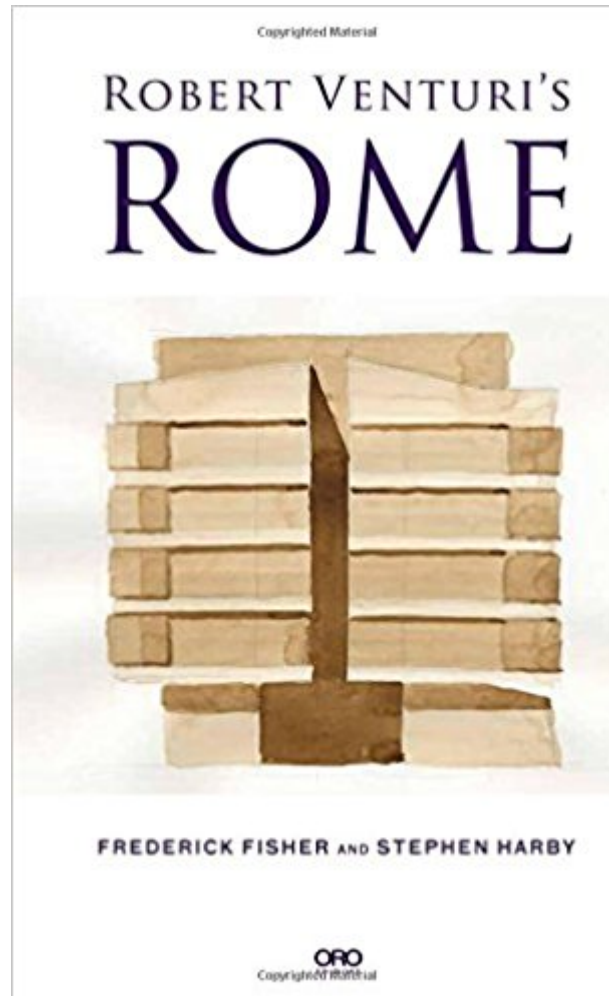




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Robert Venturi's Rome



Synopsis

Robert Venturi's *Rome* is a guidebook to the city of Rome as seen through the eyes of Robert Venturi and his classic text *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* by two subsequent Rome Prize fellows and architects, Frederick Fisher and Stephen Harby. Fisher and Harby take the reader on a journey back through time by visiting and discussing the Roman buildings and places that exemplify Venturi's revolutionary ideas. The buildings and what they meant to Venturi are re-examined with the perspective of fifty years of architectural advancements. The volume is full of imaginative and analytical watercolor illustrations painted exclusively for the book and inspired by the small black and white illustrations in Venturi's work. In the original book, published in 1966, Venturi viewed architecture, landscape and art as different manifestations of common aesthetic themes. Venturi wrote this seminal publication following a two-year Rome Prize fellowship at the American Academy in Rome, and there is no doubt the city had a profound influence on his thinking. Many buildings in Rome serve as examples that illustrate his theories. From the Pantheon, through works by his favorite artist, Michelangelo, and on to 20th century buildings by Armando Brasini and Luigi Moretti, Venturi reveals Rome as a complex and contradictory city. *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* became one of the era's most significant theoretical works on architectural theory and is still fundamental to the development of every young architect's outlook on architecture. Thus, Fisher and Harby's *Robert Venturi's Rome* pays homage to the design influence this publication has had, and will continue to have, on the design world.

Book Information

Paperback: 112 pages

Publisher: ORO Editions (September 1, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1939621879

ISBN-13: 978-1939621870

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.4 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: Be the first to review this item

Best Sellers Rank: #59,772 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #12 in Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > Regional #43 in Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > History #302

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Like all arts, architecture has linguistic properties. Within each language (Classicism, Modernism, Post Modernism, etc.) there are words and syntax understood by a community. In architecture, the words are elements such as walls, windows, roofs. And architectural syntax is the way in which elements are assembled. Venturi was acutely interested in the linguistic dimension of architecture and his fondness for the Baroque and Mannerist periods may have stemmed from the rich application of linguistic irony. He applied linguistic analysis to work that wasn't associated with this approach and may not have been conceived with this dimension in mind. In particular, he exposed the supposed rationality of Modernism as having the same kind of rhetorical intentions as the Classical language disdained by Modernists as superficial. He embraced this rhetorical approach in his own practice, to the consternation of much of the profession at the time. Exploring Venturi's interpretation of the language of architecture and subsequently re-interpreting it with Stephen has been a highlight of my architectural career and passion. I hope you enjoy exploring the beauty of architecture through our interpretation of Venturi's Rome as much as I did.

Driven to create fulfilling environments, Frederick Fisher approaches architecture as a collaborative process. Frederick gained stature in the art and academic worlds by designing exceptional spaces for the practice and exhibition of art. He is a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, where he combined his passions for art and architecture in the exploration of museum meaning and design. A registered architect since 1978, Fisher received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Oberlin College in Art and Art History and a Master's of Architecture from UCLA. Stephen Harby is an architect who practiced with the late Charles Moore and was a Visiting Lecturer at the Yale School of Architecture from 2001-2016. His professional activities are concentrated in various realms, all focused on furthering the understanding and appreciation of the built environment: As an artist, Stephen Harby is an accomplished and recognized painter in watercolor. His work is in many collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago. He has been recognized through grants and fellowships, including those from the MacDowell Colony, Western European Architectural Foundation (Gabriel Prize), and the American Academy in Rome (Rome Prize).

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