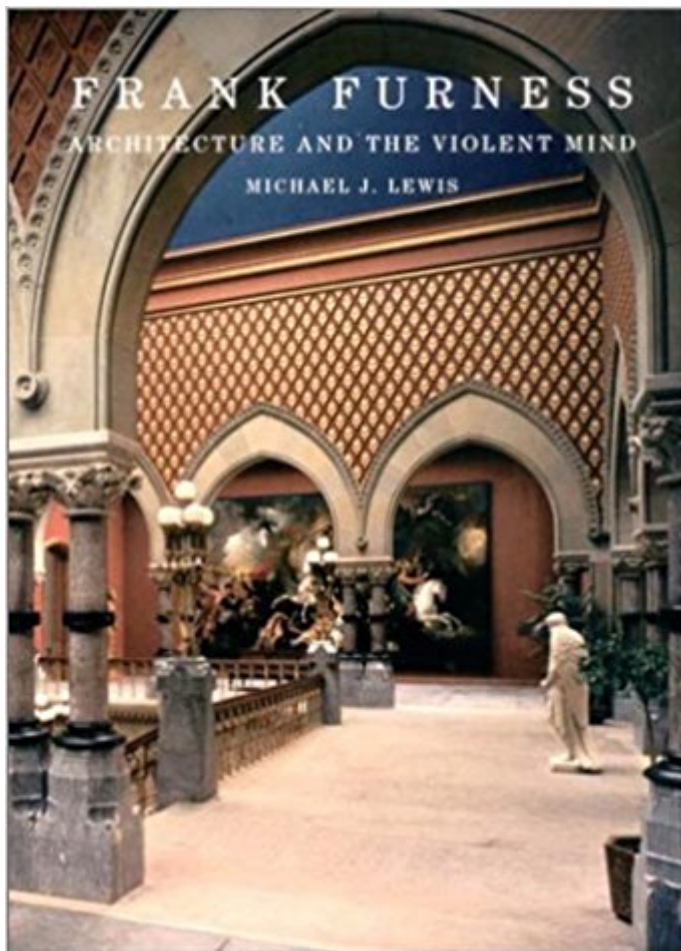


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Frank Furness: Architecture And The Violent Mind



Synopsis

Frank Furness' energy, confidence, brashness, vulgarity, and full-throated love of life vibrate in his architecture. This first biography details his abolitionist upbringing in staid Philadelphia, the horror of war and its translation into aggressive architecture - train stations, banks, and libraries - and illuminates his influence on his century and the world. 200 b/w illustrations

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A gripping read...Michael J. Lewis paints a fascinating portrait of this ill-tempered innovator taking an infectious joy in describing Furness's free-spirited buildings. --Eve M. Kahn"

Michael J. Lewis is the Faison-Pierson-Stoddard Professor of Art History, Williams College.

Wonderful overview of the life and work of one of the most interesting architects of the second half of the 19th century, by an outstanding historian of art and architecture! Very nicely illustrated....

For anyone interested in Furness, Architecture, Philadelphia or historic figures, this book is extraordinary. An extensively researched, beautifully written account of his life and work. Includes an excellent selection of photos and drawings.

Frank Furness was a self-styled eccentric and to the casual observer he appeared to have a violent

mind, hence the catchy title to this book. I found the title to be unfortunate and misleading, however, as Furness actually was mentally stable and aggressively pursued his own philosophy of architecture which frequently resulted in buildings with startling juxtapositions. He was certainly not the only architect of the era to create startling buildings. Before him William Butterfield in England, in a lengthy career, created many shocking (to our sensibilities) buildings and Leopold Eidlitz in New York City also had a unique architectural agenda. This book is well-written and well-illustrated, helping to round out the growing literature on this flamboyant individual.

This book presents history and architecture in a way that everyone can (and should!) enjoy -- it is superbly and entertainingly written. Yes, more color pictures would be nice, but the real essence of this book is that it distills Furness's biography and designs into an engrossing story that also tells us about Philadelphia and America in the late nineteenth century.

Furness must have been an intense character, and the insight this book gives on his family, childhood, history, and being a novice architect is informative, but I was hoping for a less bias, more thorough analysis and review of him and his work. And color photos! Furness's work needs to be shown with a little color, at least.

This book transcends the genres of both biography and architectural study to emerge a fully-formed captivating portrait of an American original. The book is also beautifully-produced. I couldn't put it down!

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