



Toward A Minor Architecture

Jill Stoner

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Architecture can no longer limit itself to the art of making buildings; it must also invent the politics of taking them apart. This is Jill Stoner's premise for a minor architecture. Her architect's eye tracks differently from most, drawn not to the lauded and iconic but to what she calls "the landscape of our constructed mistakes" -- metropolitan hinterlands rife with failed and foreclosed developments, undersubscribed office parks, chain hotels, and abandoned malls. These graveyards of capital, Stoner asserts, may be stripped of their excess and become sites of strategic spatial operations. But first we must dissect and dismantle prevalent architectural mythologies that brought them into being -- western obsessions with interiority, with the autonomy of the building-object, with the architect's mantle of celebrity, and with the idea of nature as that which is "other" than the built metropolis. These four myths form the warp of the book.

Drawing on the literary theory of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Stoner suggests that minor architectures, like minor literatures, emerge from the bottoms of power structures and within the language of those structures. Yet they too are the result of powerful and instrumental forces. Provoked by collective desires, directed by the instability of time, and celebrating contingency, minor architectures may be mobilized within buildings that are oversaturated, underutilized, or perceived as obsolete.

Stoner's provocative challenge to current discourse veers away from design, through a diverse landscape of cultural theory, contemporary fiction, and environmental ethics. Hers is an optimistic and inclusive approach to a more politicized practice of architecture.

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