



The Architect's Tour: Notes for the Design Traveler

Ben Jacks

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If you want to be a good designer, set aside the glossy magazines, turn off your computer, and seek out first-hand encounters with good design. When it comes to cities, buildings, and art, actual experience is almost always better than the virtual kind. No image can replicate Le Corbusier's Ronchamp when the light is just right, or capture the silent speech one hears on a stroll through Ian Hamilton Finlay's Little Sparta, or explain hours dissolving in Peter Zumthor's baths at Vals. That is the reason for this book: to encourage you to actively pursue direct aesthetic experience in the built environment, and to reflect upon the best reasons and ways to be a dedicated design traveler. Traveling to learn is an integral part of the education of student architects and designers. It is vital for designers to know how to be effective design travelers, to know how to seek out and encounter places, buildings, and objects, and to develop a capacity for looking, drawing, and, above all, discerning. But to be a student is only to be "one who is studying," which means all of us who, if we are truly alive, delight in the application of the mind to the acquisition of knowledge.

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