

# modern architectures in history

'Gwendolyn Wright's splendid book updates, revises and enriches everything we know about the development and influence of American architecture with new material, brilliant insights, and the perspective of a new century. She makes the story so new and compelling and writes it so well that it will supplant older versions to become the standard reference.'

– Ada Louise Huxtable, Pulitzer Prize-winning architecture critic of the *Wall Street Journal* and author of *The Unreal America: Architecture and Illusion* (1997)

'I am always amazed at Gwendolyn Wright's ability to bring excitement and positive joy to urbanism and architecture in a rare way. Her enthusiasm for historical examples surely inspires others to take a deeper look and to reflect. In this moment of rapid urbanization worldwide, that reflection is needed more than ever.'

– Steven Holl, architect

'At last, the book I have been waiting for: the story of modern American architecture deeply contextualized in the history of the last century and a half. Wright is that rare scholar who understands how intricately the built environment is laced into larger historical trends. This is a wonderful book for all who care about architecture and the long history of modern work, housing, and public life in the United States.'

– Lizabeth Cohen, Professor of History, Harvard University, and author of *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (2003)

In this book Gwendolyn Wright contends that American Modernism is not merely a branch of the European Modern Movement brought across the Atlantic by émigrés and often misinterpreted, but rather an exciting and evolving hybrid of distinctive ambitions, sensibilities and cultures. From early suburbs and skyscrapers in the aftermath of the Civil War to Art Deco and other experiments that flourished in the 1920s, to postmodernism and major new projects of today, Wright explains the dynamic relationships between social and political issues, broad cultural trends and changing concepts of modern life. An insightful, concise and richly illustrated account, this timely book will be essential to all those interested in the history of architecture and its future, both in contemporary America and the larger world.

Gwendolyn Wright is Professor at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University, New York. She is co-host of the PBS television series *History Detectives* and is also the author of *Building the Dream* (1981) and *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (1991).

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