The Architecture of Failure

Douglas Murphy

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Against those who considerarchitecture to be a wholly optimistic activity, this book shows how the history of modern architecture is inextricably tied to ideas of failure and ruin. By means of an original reading of the earliest origins of modernism, *the Architecture of Failure* exposes the ways in which failure has been suppressed, ignored and denied in the way we design our cities. It examines the 19th century fantasy architecture of the iron and glass exhibition palaces, strange, unprecedented, dream-like structures, almost all now lost, existing only as melancholy archive fragments; it traces the cultural legacy of these buildings through the heroics of the early 20th century, post-war radicals and recent developments, discussing related themes in art, literature, politics and philosophy. Critiquing the capitalist symbolism of the self-styled contemporary avant-garde, the book outlines a new history of contemporary architecture, and attempts to recover a radical approach to understanding what we build. Douglas Murphy blogs at http://www.youyouidiot.blogspot.com/

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