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Origins of the Picturesque

Edited by Wilfried Wang

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- A unique collection of essays on the origins of the picturesque as an important organic ordering sensibility
- Provides a comprehensive understanding of the picturesque that for millennia has been in constant oscillation with strict forms of geometric order
- Sumptuously illustrated and with exceptional foldouts, making the volume also a visual experience
- Based on a collective research project by distinguished scholars and practitioners from China, Europe, and the Americas at Tongji University's College of Architecture and Urban Planning in Shanghai

"Picturesque" carries a range of meanings across all modes of human expressions. From arduous agriculture to pleasurable hunting, the earliest human-made landscapes formed aesthetic and functional origins that inspired poets, painters, and landscape designers. As an aesthetic movement it culminated in the English landscape garden, representing a manicured conception of nature that has had a lasting impact on Western cultures.

Origins of the Picturesque traces understandings and conceptions of nature and how they subsequently gave rise to culturally distinct formations of landscapes and architectures. Essays by distinguished authors from Europe, the Americas, and China reveal that the picturesque as an ordering sensibility can be found throughout the ages in Andean, African, Asian and European civilizations.

Origins of the Picturesque is a unique volume that brings together etymologists, archaeologists, architects, and landscape design historians and opens a view of the rich history of a style whose power and relevance has not as yet peaked.

Wilfried Wang is a Berlin-based architect and researcher and president of the International Committee of Architectural Critics (CICA). He also teaches as a Changjiang Distinguished Scholar and professor at Tongji University in Shanghai.

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