



**TWENTIETH  
CENTURY  
ARCHITECTURE  
AND MODERNITY  
OUR PAST,  
OUR PRESENT  
PATRIZIA MELLO**



ORO

# Twentieth-Century Architecture and Modernity Our Past, Our Present Patrizia Mello

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- This book touches on the significant stages of "modernity" in 20th-century architecture and how, in some cases, its initial effervescence was undermined, gradually leading to forms of closure rather than opening to the world
- In the field of history and theory of architecture there are no texts that treat the subject with a similar slant (even with reference to key authors such as Summerson, Paz, and Berman together), and that combine the analysis of the past with that of the present
- Re-evaluating the theme of modernity with respect to the contemporary design field can contribute to rediscovering the social and the new needs that characterise it, also in relation to the emergence of the Coronavirus

The theme of "modernity" was the launching pad for architecture in the 20th century, to the point of completely revolutionising our way of life. By causing in its development absolutisations and misunderstandings, actual motives linked to the profound desire to improve everyone's life were reconsidered. Against the theory that the 20th century connected the objective of modernity to that of the Modern Movement, this book deals with the theme of a present continuity by revealing those "open visions" that characterised modernity at the end of the 19th century. By critically reviewing the main stages of development over time—as well as the intense debates of architectural historians, architects and contemporary scholars—the thesis of modernity as tradition, research, criticism, place of contradictions is supported. Further echoed by that of "architecture tout court," enhancing the present environment in its current fragility of views—even more so today with the appearance of a virus capable of undermining our way of living. These are "contemporary modernisms" aimed at recovering the essence of a recent past to project it into the present, restoring to architecture that long-neglected role of critical construction and formation of society in an era, ultimately defined as "of Rembrandt beauty."

**Patrizia Mello** is interested in history, theory, and criticism of contemporary design; topics on which she carries out in teaching and researches with regard to the publication of her books, numerous essays and articles, as well as the organisation of conferences and study seminars. She currently teaches Contemporary Architecture II at the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Among her publications: *Progetti in movimento. Philippe Starck* (Firenze: Festina Lente, 1997); *L'ospedale ridefinito. Soluzioni e ipotesi a confronto. Aart International – Aalto – Colboc – CSPE – Fainsilber – Groupe 6 – Ito – Koolhaas – Le Corbusier – Nouvel – Reichen & Robert – Sottsass – Petre-Souchet – Riboulet – Vasconi – Zublena* (Firenze: Alinea, 2000); *Metamorfosi dello spazio. Annotazioni sul divenire metropolitano* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2002); *Ito digitale. Nuovi media, nuovo reale* (Roma: EdilStampa, 2008); *Design Contemporaneo. Mutazioni, oggetti, ambienti, architetture* (Milano: Mondadori Electa, 2008); *Neoavanguardie e controcultura a Firenze. Il movimento Radical e i protagonisti di un cambiamento storico internazionale* (Firenze: Angelo Pontecorvoli, 2017); *Firenze e le avanguardie Radicali. Un seminario di ricerca* (Firenze: DIDA press, 2017).  
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