



Witness

The Practice of Duvall Decker

Duvall Decker Architects

Jordi Erdman

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- **Witness** braids together observational testimonials, critical illustrated essays, and in-depth studies of milestone projects through text and images to tell the story of the Mississippi firm, Duvall Decker and their pursuit of an architectural practice in search of public good

Witness braids together text and image to tell the story of Duvall Decker, an architecture office rooted in Mississippi and committed to a practice in search of the public good. Spanning from the firm's early beginnings to the completion of the Greenville Federal Courthouse, the book illuminates ten milestone projects that reveal the breadth and depth of their built work. Seven critical essays offer textured readings of the firm's ethos, placing their work in cultural and temporal context. Written from the perspective of an attuned witness who shares a love for the South and its people, the essays explore themes of kinship, resistance, regional identity, tectonics, and orchestration in architectural practice. Visual and textual marginalia thread through the book, standing on their own while enriching the primary essays and project narratives. Observational voices from those who have collaborated with or been shaped by the firm provide rare and intimate insights. A sister to *Foundations*, **Witness** is both a deep dive into Duvall Decker's work and a broader meditation on what it means to practice architecture as witness in and from the American South.

Jori Erdman is an architect and architectural educator with a 25-year career, primarily in academia. Her work centres on researching, supporting, and promoting the architectural design culture of the American South through scholarship and teaching. She is currently Professor of Architectural Design at James Madison University in Harrisonburg. **Duvall Decker** was founded in 1998 by Anne Marie Duvall Decker, FAIA and Roy T. Decker, FAIA. Neither were from Mississippi, and they had no economic, familial, or political subsidy, but they were inspired by the place and its people. With the shared belief that the privilege of designing the built environment, no matter the source of funds, is a public act, they posited that given this responsibility, architecture must be both a radical act of service and a hopeful artistic speculation.