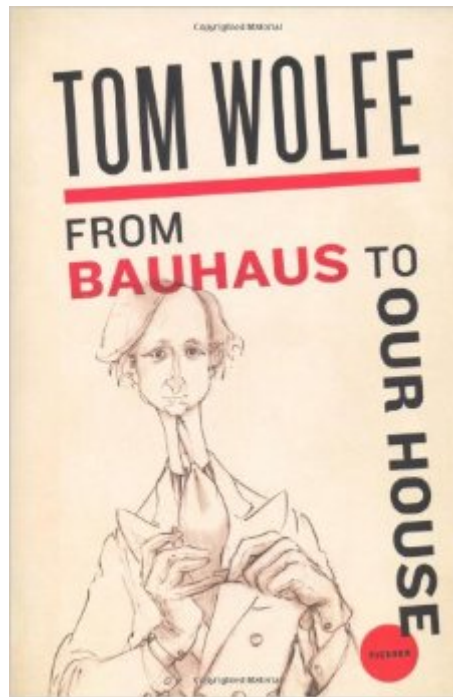


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From Bauhaus To Our House



Synopsis

Tom Wolfe, "America's most skillful satirist" (The Atlantic Monthly), examines the strange saga of American architecture in this sequel to *The Painted Word*, *From Bauhaus to Our House*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tom Wolfe's *FROM BAUHAUS TO OUR HOUSE* skewers the Bauhaus School and Modernism in general (characterized by the International Style of architecture), as well as Post-Modernism (essentially, another version of Modernism). It's an intelligent, satirical look at an early 20th century European architectural ideology that rose up to reject the bourgeois and design for the working class--which the International Style architects may have regarded as too benighted to know what it really wanted. Apparently, according to these architects, what the worker would want, if s/he knew better, was to live in unadorned, black-and-white, steel and concrete boxes constructed with mass produced materials. Architecture schools and art institutes in the U.S. not only enthusiastically embraced the ideology ("They do things better in Europe," said Malcolm Cowley), but also its principle European champions, giving places of honor to the likes of Walter Gropius (Harvard), Mies van der Rohe (Armour Institute), and Josef Albers (Yale). Much of this movement was constructed around drawings and theory vice actually building buildings. In this way, architecture suffered from some of the same scholastic claptrap as the other arts, indeed of academe itself. When Wolfe drolly comments, "For the ambitious architect, having a theory became as vital and natural as having a telephone" (p. 121), he could have been speaking in general of contemporary academics--which many of these architects, ensconced in their university "compounds," were. Wolfe's targets easily

lend themselves to such a treatment. The Modern architects' disdain for the opinions of both client and occupant are obnoxious. One wonders why the client (but not so much the occupant) kept, as Wolfe puts it, taking it like a man.

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