



The Seduction of Place: The History and Future of Cities

Joseph Rykwert

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No other place on earth is as full both of promise and of dread as the city; it is at once alienating and exciting. These concentrations of people have not, however, come about as the result of vast immutable, impersonal forces, but because of human choices. The worsening or betterment of urban life will also be the result of choices. Our choices.

That cities display and represent the *personal* desires of their inhabitants is central to Joseph Rykwert's argument in **The Seduction of Place**. Insisting that they are the physical constructs of communities, he travels through history to trace their roots in ancient times and outlines current attempts and future possibilities to improve the metropolis. Rykwert includes a broad range of urban landscapes: 18th-and 19th-century Paris and London, the current sprawl of Mexico City and Cairo, planned cities like Brasilia, and, finally, New York, the world capital.

Always opinionated and often controversial, Rykwert assesses how and why urban projects from the past succeeded or failed and what lessons can be drawn from them for the future. Ultimately, **The Seduction of Place** is a deeply felt and powerfully reasoned call for a commitment by every citizen to the creation of a more humane place to live.

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