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ASMARA

AFRICA'S SECRET MODERNIST CITY



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Asmara Africas Secret Modernist City

**Britt Baillie, Marie Louise Stig
Sørensen**



Asmara Africas Secret Modernist City:

Asmara Edward Denison, Guang Yu Ren, Naigzy Gebremedhin, 2006 Asmara the capital of the small East African country of Eritrea bordering the Red Sea is one of the most important and exciting architectural discoveries of recent years Built almost entirely in the 1930s by the Italians who transformed it into a hotbed of radical architectural innovation Asmara has one of the highest concentrations of Modernist architecture anywhere in the world This superb building by building survey illustrated with previously unpublished archival material and specially commissioned photography chronicles the colonial past and remarkable survival of a city that has evocatively been described as the Miami of Africa White Supremacy, Settler Colonialism, Modernist Architecture, and Contemporary Preservation Robert Flahive, 2025-06-27 This book examines the afterlives of the built environment produced through early 20th century settler colonialism The author analyzes contemporary architectural preservationists narrative strategies to remake what were designed as racialized European zones in opposition to Indigenous zones as white cities through the documentation preservation and addition to the UNESCO World Heritage List This book interrogates the fashioning of white cities through ethnographic methods with local architectural preservationists and primary sources such as World Heritage Committee meeting notes and World Heritage List nomination files and inscription materials in the preservation of built form in Asmara Bras lia Casablanca Rabat and Tel Aviv The book is aimed at scholars and students interested in the politics of the built environment spatial politics urban studies architectural history international relations urban geopolitics settler colonialism international organizations and the politics of commemoration **Asmara - an urban history** Belula Tecle-Misghina, 2015-02-11 Like any city Asmara a young city even by the standards of young African capitals is a stage set where the drama of history has unfolded in the most intense and eloquent manner The territory of Asmara stands at the edge of a space of almost mythical civilisations ancient religions and proud empires It is also a natural acropolis in the vastness of Africa an astoundingly high crest that looks down from above on the coast of the Eritrean sea coming to a halt where the Afar Rift expands and year after year rips into the heart of Africa where lions and gnus still roam free However in its body and thus in its history Asmara is also a fragment of Europe imported atop the undulating highlands of Hamasien by the presumption of the most fragile and thus most presumptuous of colonial nations Italy Less than 130 years later history appears to have intentionally concentrated a host of events projects interests delusions conflicts and hopes in Asmara that within the vaster expanses of historical time could have filled dozens of centuries These metamorphoses were similar to immense waves lapping at a resistant soil introducing and withdrawing diverse foreign armies peoples languages and cultures and adversities The results of so much labour have forged the identity of Eritrea jealously defended for decades and jealously guarded to this day Looking carefully in libraries among printed works dedicated to particular aspects of this identity numerous and some very important it is impossible to find a history of Eritrea that is scientifically complete and up to date This is a serious shortcoming Yet everything has remained impressed

upon the land and even more eloquently on the city on the face and limbs of Asmara Hence the reconstruction like that made by the author of this book of the difficult process of planning the city signifies not only restoring similar to an animation the history of the complex growth of an urban organism Lucio Valerio Barbera UNESCO Chairholder in Sustainable Urban Quality and Urban Culture notably in Africa Sapienza Universit di Roma At the end of the Thirties from Naples to Massawa the Port of Empire since 1890 an important commercial base and natural access point for anyone wishing to reach Asmara and the Eritrean uplands the voyage took five days from the port one could reach the capital of the Colony by train on an intrepid mountain railway or by a motor road Road n 1 from Dogali Asmara was only 120 km away If one wanted to make the journey by air it took three and a half days thanks to the Empire Line which involved taking a seaplane from the Carlo Del Prete base in Ostia to Benghazi in Libya and then a plane to the Umberto Maddalena Airport in Asmara with stops at Cairo Wadi Haifa Khartoum and C ssala on the Sudanese border And right next door to the Airport stood the Teleferica Massawa Asmara an extraordinary cableway for transporting goods up on to the plateau at a height difference of 2 326 metres the cableway had been built in two years between 1935 and 1937 and at a length of 75 km was the longest industrial cableway system in the world It could move in one day the equivalent of thirty train loads but it was at its full operational capacity for only a few years in 1941 it was damaged in the war with the British and ten years later when Eritrea became a British Protectorate it was unexpectedly decided to dismantle it capital of the new country These events act as a backdrop and form a solid framework for Tecle Misghina s research which is not only meticulous but emotionally involved of which this book is a well documented summary Her research is important in that it reconfigures and puts in order various documents both known and unpublished in order to build up a chronology and an armoury of references that are indispensable for anyone wishing to carry out further studies on the Eritrean capital For a project developed within a Doctoral programme this is in my opinion the most important outcome of her research Piero Ostilio Rossi Director of the Department of Architecture and Design Sapienza Universit di Roma

African Heritage Challenges Britt Baillie, Marie Louise Stig Sørensen, 2020-11-27 The richness of Africa s heritage at times stands in stark contrast to the economic health political and societal challenges faced Development is essential but in what forms For whom Following whose agendas At what costs This book explores how heritage can promote secure or undermine sustainable development with special focus on sub Saharan Africa and in turn how this affects conceptions of heritage The chapters in this volume identify shared challenges good practices and failures and use specific case studies to provide detailed insights into varied forms of heritage and heritage defining processes on the continent By critically analysing the often romanticised discourses of heritage community engagement and sustainable development the volume suggests ways of harnessing aspects of heritage to tackle some of the socio economic and political pressures facing heritage practices on the continent including the legacies of colonialism

Global Heritage Assemblages Christoph Rausch, 2016-11-25 Based on multi sited anthropological fieldwork this book describes how various

governmental intergovernmental and non governmental actors engage with colonial and post colonial built heritage found in Eritrea Tanzania Niger and the Republic of the Congo showing how this engagement produces problematizations of the modern which ultimately indicate a need to rescue modernity from its dominant conception as an all encompassing epochal and spatial culture

Asmara Edward Denison, Guang Yu Ren, Naigzy Gebremedhin, 2003 Asmara the capital city of Eritrea is one of the most exciting architectural discoveries of recent years built almost entirely in the 1930s by the Italians it became a prime location for architectural innovation This groundbreaking and superbly illustrated study reveals the full extent of Asmara s remarkable survival and confirms its status as one of the world s finest Modernist cities

Modern Architecture and its Representation in Colonial Eritrea Sean Anderson, 2016-03-03 Modern Architecture and its Representation in Colonial Eritrea offers a critical assessment of architecture and urbanism constructed in Eritrea during the Italian colonial period spanning from 1890 1941 Drawing together imperial projects modernist aesthetics and fascist motives the book examines how the merger of these three significant influences yielded a complex built environment that served to emulate if not redefine Italian colonial pursuits As Italy s colonia primogenita or first born colony Eritrea and its capital Asmara not only bore witness to the emergence of politicized interiors and international expositions the colony became a vehicle that polarized issues of race and gender Exploring discourses of modernity in Africa this book moves between histories of architecture urbanism literature and media to describe how Eritrea and Asmara became a crucial fulcrum for Italy s ill fated pursuits in Ethiopia and other neighboring countries Consequently modern architecture inscribed Eritrean subjectivities while redefining technologies that affected constructions of the colonial interior Modern Architecture and its Representation in Colonial Eritrea demonstrates how architecture in Asmara reshaped the creation and reception of Italian East Africa

Modern Architecture in Africa Antoni S. Folkers, Belinda A. C. van Buiten, 2019-07-22 This book offers unique insights into modern African architecture influenced by modern European architecture and at the same time a natural successor to existing site specific and traditional architecture It brings together the worlds of traditional site specific architecture with the Modernist Project in Africa which to date have only been considered in isolation The book covers the four architectural disciplines urban planning building technology building physics and conservation It includes an introduction with a historical outline and an analysis and comparison of a number of projects in various countries in Africa On the basis of examples drawn from practice the author documents and describes the hybrid architectural forms that have emerged from the confrontation and fusion with pre modern Western architecture and urban planning and in so doing he also narrates the history of African architecture

Urban Planning in Sub-Saharan Africa Carlos Nunes Silva, 2015-06-03 Cities in Sub Saharan Africa are unequally confronted with social economic and environmental challenges particularly those related with population growth urban sprawl and informality This complex and uneven African urban condition requires an open discussion of past and current urban planning practices and future reforms Urban Planning in Sub Saharan Africa gives a

broad perspective of the history of urban planning in Sub Saharan Africa and a critical view of issues problems challenges and opportunities confronting urban policy makers The book examines the rich variety of planning cultures in Africa offers a unique view on the introduction and development of urban planning in Sub Saharan Africa and makes a significant contribution against the tendency to over generalize Africa s urban problems and Africa s urban planning practices Urban Planning in Sub Saharan Africa is written for postgraduate students and advanced undergraduates researchers planners and other policy makers in the multidisciplinary field of Urban Planning in particular for those working in Spatial Planning Architecture Geography and History

Fascism, Architecture, and the Claiming of Modern Milan, 1922 1943 Lucy M. Maulsby, 2014-01-01 Fascism Architecture and the Claiming of Modern Milan 1922 1943 chronicles the dramatic architectural and urban transformation of Milan during the nearly twenty years of fascist rule The commercial and financial centre of Italy and the birthplace of fascism Milan played a central role in constructing fascism s national image and identity as it advanced from a revolutionary movement to an established state power Using a wide range of archival sources Lucy M Maulsby analyses the public buildings from the relatively modest party headquarters to the grandiose Palace of Justice and the Palazzo del Popolo d Italia through which Mussolini intended to enhance the city s image and solidify fascism s presence in Milan Maulsby establishes the extent to which Milan s economic structure social composition and cultural orientation affected Il Duce s plans for the city demonstrating the influences on urban development that were beyond the control of the fascist regime By placing Milan s urban change in its historic context this book expands our understanding of the relationship between fascism and the modern city

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