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978-0-521-82275-6 - Architecture and Truth in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna

Leslie Topp

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ARCHITECTURE AND TRUTH IN FIN-DE-SIÈCLE VIENNA

This book examines one of the key notions of modernist architecture as it was formulated in Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century. Providing a close analysis of four major buildings – Olbrich’s Secession building, Hoffmann’s Purkersdorf Sanatorium, Wagner’s Postal Savings Bank, and Loos’s Michaelerplatz building – Leslie Topp investigates how “truth” could be interpreted in a variety of ways, as truth to purpose, symbolist or ideal truth, and ethical notions of authenticity. Drawing on newly uncovered archival materials, Topp offers a new interpretation of familiar buildings that are shown to encompass utopianism, hyper-rationality, and subjectivism. She also explores the connections between Viennese modern architecture and contemporary painting, psychiatry, fashion, labor issues, and anti-Semitic politics.

Leslie Topp is Senior Lecturer in the History of Art at Oxford Brookes University in England. A scholar of early modernist architecture and design, she has contributed articles on Vienna and Central Europe to exhibition catalogues and international journals.

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LESLIE TOPP
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For my parents, Bob and Elizabeth

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