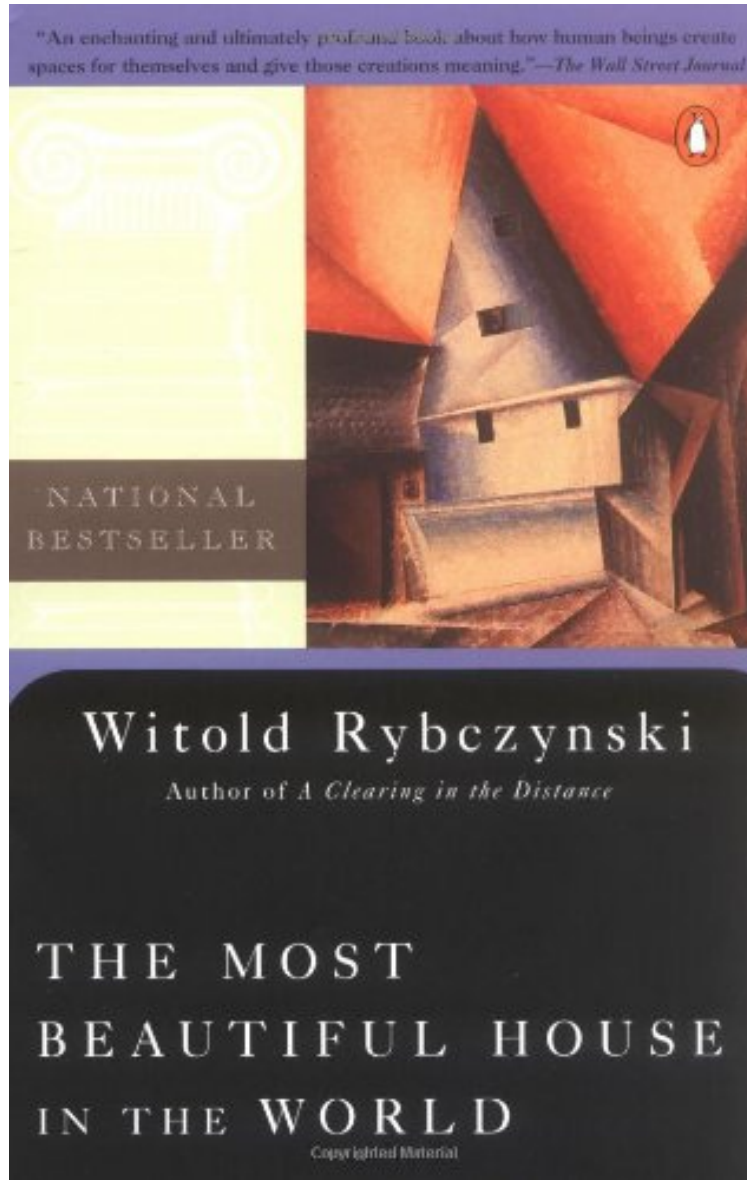


[Ebook free] The Most Beautiful House in the World

The Most Beautiful House in the World

Witold Rybczynski

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Witold Rybczynski : The Most Beautiful House in the World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Most Beautiful House in the World:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. A subjective essay on the subjective task of home-buildingBy Charles S. HouserThis book by the author of "Home: A Short History of an Idea" (1986) is a more subjective and less disciplined examination of that same topic. Professor Rybczynski uses his experience as an immigrant trying to "fit in"

as a lens for looking at what it means to build one's own home. The skeleton of this story is the author's own decision to build a shed to which he can retreat on weekends (for more on weekends, read the author's "Waiting for the Weekend," 1991) and build a boat he can sail away in. At some point the shed becomes more of a barn and then, when he finally abandons his plan to build a boat, it becomes a permanent home for himself and his wife. For me, the book is less about architecture, the act or craft of building, and more about morphing and the unpredictable ways life unfolds. Taken in that vein, Rybczynski's story can be appreciated as a spiritual journey with many sidetrips and gentle awakenings. He is self-critical, but not self-deprecating. And he infuses his tale with enough humor to keep the reader interested without taxing credibility. I especially enjoyed his description of his wife, Shirley, who does some morphing of her own. At the beginning (when the couple was building a mere boathouse), she is little more than an extra pair of hands; when the couple decides to make the structure they have been building into their home, Shirley suddenly becomes a full-fledged "client," full of opinions and demands. Although, Rybczynski describes several impressive architect-conceived and built houses (such as Wright's Fallingwater and Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth house), it is the houses built by their owners that he most celebrates--Mark Twain's home in Hartford, Connecticut, Sir Walter Scott's Abbotsford, Robert Lewis Stevenson's Vailima in Samoa, artists Carl and Karin Larsson's much-documented Lilla Hyttnas in Sundborn, Sweden, and Carl Jung's home in Bollingen, Switzerland. "It is no coincidence," writes Rybczynski, "that Stevenson, Scott, Clemens, Larsson, Castrejon, and I were less than forty years old when we built our homes.... The process of building, for all of us, was a process of installing ourselves in a place, of establishing a spot where it would be safe to dream. We had to be old enough to recognize the particularity--and limits--of our dreams, but not too old to believe in them.... My house had begun with the dream of a boat. The dream had run aground--I was now rooted in place." (pp. 190, 193)

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. world's best architectural write-up
By Customer Anyone living in any sort of dwelling couldn't help but enjoy this fine book. And Rybczynski is an exceptionally clear writer; he's a pleasure to read. I wish I had found this book 20 years ago. Don't build or buy another house until you read this. If you're really hot for a new place to live, be sure to read Rybczynski's "Home" also.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The book provided some history and foundation of architecture in ...
By John J. Holahan III The book provided some history and foundation of architecture in an enjoyable manner. I've become a fan of this author.

"A winning book, a pleasure to read, a revelation about what architects actually do and how they go about doing it." Los Angeles Times
Witold Rybczynski takes us on an extraordinary odyssey as he tells the story of designing and building of his own house. Rybczynski's project began as a workshop; through a series of "happy accidents," however, the structure gradually evolved into a full-fledged house. In tracing this evolution, he touches on matters both theoretical and practical, writing on such diverse topics as the distinguished structural descendants of the humble barn, the ritualistic origins of the elements of classical architecture, and the connections between dress and habitation, and between architecture and gastronomy. Rybczynski discusses feng shui, the Chinese art of placing a home in the landscape, and also considers the theories and work of such architects as Palladio, Le Corbusier, and Frank Lloyd Wright. An eloquent examination of the links between being and building, *The Most Beautiful House in the World* offers insights into the joys of "installing ourselves in a place, of establishing a spot where it is safe to dream."

From Publishers Weekly
Rybczynski here describes the act of designing and building a house, questioning the nature of architecture and the architect's role. "This delightful ramble through the creative process will beguile architecture buffs and general readers alike," remarked PW. Illustrated. 75,000 first printing. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal
Young architect decides to build boat, needs boat house to work in, ends up years later with country place and no boat, and meditates thereon. An extended reflection on the meaning of a house to its inhabitants, this personalized extension of the author's earlier *Home* (LJ 9/1/86) does reveal some of what an architect does, albeit when the same person is architect, client, and builder, and it is simply written. More revealing, more detailed, more particular, and preferred is Tracy Kidder's *House* (LJ 8/85).- Jack Perry Brown, Ryerson Burnham Lib., Art Inst. of Chicago
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About the Author
Witold Rybczynski of Polish parentage, was born in Edinburgh in 1943, raised in Surrey, and attended Jesuit schools in England and Canada. He received Bachelor of Architecture (1960) and Master of Architecture (1972) degrees from McGill University in Montreal. He is the author of more than fifty articles and papers on the subject of housing, architecture, and technology, including the books *Taming the Tiger*, *Paper Heroes*, *The Most Beautiful House in the World*, *Waiting for the Weekend*, and *Looking Around: A Journey Through Architecture* (all available in Penguin), and most recently, *City Life*. He lives with his wife, Shirley Hallam, in Philadelphia and is the Martin and Margy Myerson Professor of Urbanism at the University of Pennsylvania.