

# The Most Inspiring Design Books of All Time

25 of our favorite decorators, landscape architects, and artists tell us which titles helped them think, see, and dream. (A few may surprise you.)



## Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

BY LEWIS CARROLL

Alice's tale is all about metamorphosis, one thing changing into the next before her eyes. I believe in change in one's environment—our minds aren't static, so why should our homes be? Why not be a bit like Alice? I'm amazed at people who buy new wardrobes every season but can't replace their coffee table.

—Deborah Buck,  
artist and antiques dealer,  
New York City

## The Architecture of Luis Barragan

BY EMILIO AMBASZ

I was in college when this book came out, in the mid-1970s. It reminded me of growing up in Mexico City, where the color and simplicity of Barragan's forms complemented the intense urban environment, and I realized that even in a city, something like silence could be achieved.

—Michael Pierce,  
interior designer, New York City

## Avedon: Photographs, 1947-1977

BY RICHARD AVEDON

This is a book of Avedon's fashion work, but the photos really resonated with me. They have an incredible sense of elegance and line.

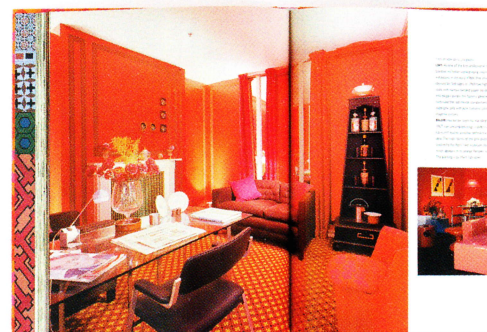
—Miles Redd,  
interior designer, New York City

## David Hicks: Designer

BY ASHLEY HICKS

Hicks's influence is evident in so much interior design today—his mix of traditional and modern elements, his bold use of color and pattern, and his attention to detail. But what has always impressed me most is how he was able to create rooms that are dramatic and, at the same time, utterly livable.

—Jeff Andrews,  
interior designer, Los Angeles



David Hicks: Designer

## The Decoration of Houses

BY EDITH WHARTON

In 1897, amid an era of excess in American design, Wharton preached restraint. She was one of the first to speak intelligently about interiors, especially in her argument that decor should be part of a building's overall design.

—Glenn Gissler,  
interior designer, New York City

## English Gardens and Landscapes 1700-1750

BY CHRISTOPHER HUSSEY

I purchased a copy on my first visit to England, in 1970. That summer I tried to visit all the gardens in the book, deciding, *This is what I want to do*. It's a compelling presentation of some of Western art's most beautiful creations.

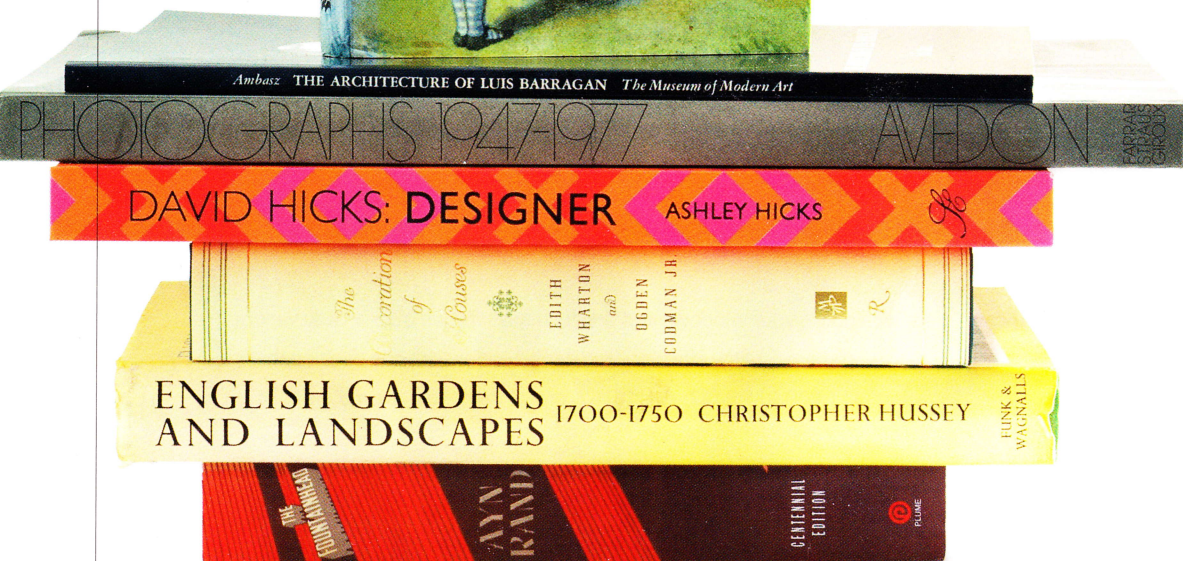
—Laurie Olin,  
landscape architect, Philadelphia

## The Fountainhead

BY AYN RAND

It's so easy to compromise your point of view under critical influence. Rand's lesson for me is to always stay true to my instincts.

—Darryl Carter,  
interior designer,  
Washington, D.C.





## Geoffrey Bawa: The Complete Works

BY DAVID ROBSON AND GEOFFREY BAWA

Bawa is a Sri Lankan architect who pioneered resort-style architecture and the inside-out concept that's been so prevalent in my own work.

—Jamie Durie,  
landscape designer,  
Sydney, Australia

## An Illustrated History of Interior Decoration: From Pompeii to Art Nouveau

BY MARIO PRAZ

History is like a mirror—we can learn so much about how we live today by looking at interiors over the centuries. Mario Praz does this beautifully, starting with the ancient world right up to the late 19th century.

—Sara Bengur,  
interior designer, New York City

## In the Pink: Dorothy Draper, America's Most Fabulous Decorator

BY CARLETON VARNEY

Draper broke the rules—with big, bold patterns; overscaled furnishings; whimsical colors—while maintaining elegance and sophistication. She created opulent spaces with a story.

—Jaime Rummerfield  
and Ron Woodson,  
interior designers, Los Angeles

## Industrial Design

BY RAYMOND LOEWY

Raymond Loewy was one of the reasons I decided to dedicate my life to design. He influenced everything from large-scale NASA projects to Coca-Cola



bottles. He demonstrated that design is not just a creative act; it is a poetic, political, and social act. Design, he said, is for everyone.

—Karim Rashid,  
furniture designer, New York City

## The Inspiration of the Past

BY JOHN CORNFORTH

When we started our business, of all the books we looked at, only this one analyzed the formal aspects of interior design from a practical standpoint. It's filled with photos of fully decorated rooms. We studied it for hours.

—Ellie Cullman  
and Tracey Pruzan,  
interior designers, New York City

## Landscapes: Selected Writings of J.B. Jackson

In these essays, Jackson's intelligence is equalled by his warmth, and by the reverence he had for everyday places. I grew up on a farm, and my parents had a great love for the land—for the

way the rational, farmed fields intersected with the equally important wild forest and meadows. They didn't go to college, but they are the wisest people I know in how they think about landscapes as both pragmatic and emblematic. All landscapes do some kind of work for us, even if that work is to make us happy. It was reading Jackson that made me realize that my parents had taught me more than anyone else.

—Michael Van Valkenburgh,  
landscape architect,  
New York City

## Learning from Las Vegas

BY ROBERT VENTURI, STEVEN IZENOUR, AND DENISE SCOTT BROWN

I studied this book at Parsons in the 1970s, and it was a shocking breath of fresh air. Venturi's famous dis of Mies van der Rohe—"less is a bore"—struck a chord in my heart.

—Jamie Drake,  
interior designer, New York City

## Legendary Decorators of the Twentieth Century

BY MARK HAMPTON

This book covers the work of the design industry's pioneers—minus my father, who wrote it—not only the popular designers, but the giants of design who, for whatever reason, are less well known, such as Elsie Cobb Wilson, Ruby Ross Wood, and George Stacey.

—Alexa Hampton,  
interior designer, New York City

## Neoclassicism in the North: Swedish Furniture and Interiors 1770-1850

BY HAKAN GROTH

I learned about this book from my friend Bill Blass, who called it his bible for interiors. I always loved the decorative arts of 18th-century France; in this book, I discovered that the Swedes took many elements of decoration



Neoclassicism in the North: Swedish Furniture and Interiors 1770-1850

from France and simplified them. I like the freshness of the painted furniture and the soft, but not sweet, mix of pastel colors.

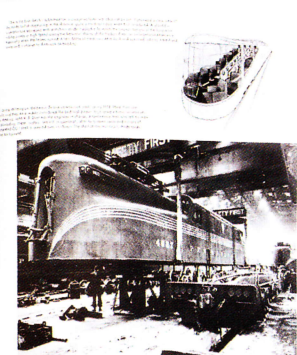
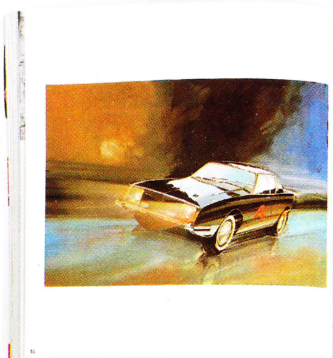
—Carolyne Roehm,  
interior designer, New York City

## Other Voices, Other Rooms

BY TRUMAN CAPOTE

Capote's incredible descriptions in this novel give a real sense of rooms in three dimensions, of color and space and light.

—Michael S. Smith,  
interior designer, Los Angeles



Industrial Design



## Parish-Hadley: Sixty Years of American Design

BY SISTER PARISH,  
ALBERT HADLEY, AND  
CHRISTOPHER PETKANAS

The duo of Mrs. Henry "Sister" Parish II and Albert Hadley is legendary. Parish is known for comfortable, English country-inspired interiors, while Hadley's style is modern and architectural, but they shared a conviction for the integrity of their projects. The book includes a red lacquer library Hadley did for Brooke Astor that's absolutely incredible.

—Jay Jeffers,  
interior designer, Los Angeles

## The Personality of a House

BY EMILY POST

A wise professor of architecture insisted that I read this book, and it has been a longtime favorite. It is just as relevant today as when first published in 1939. The entire volume is practical, authoritative, and written in a sparkling style.

—Albert Hadley,  
interior designer, New York City

## Roomscapes

BY RENZO MONGIARDINO

Mongiardino's use of textiles and an array of painted effects,

like faux wood, epitomize a lifestyle of amazing beauty and craftsmanship. My favorite room is the front gallery at the Carlyle Hotel in New York. I often have tea there while staring at the trompe l'oeils.

—Milly de Cabrol,  
interior designer, New York City

## Stuart Davis, American Painter

BY LOWERY STOKES SIMS

Davis dazzles with high-keyed color. I love his palette of red, green, black, and white, and use this book to search for color schemes for my work.

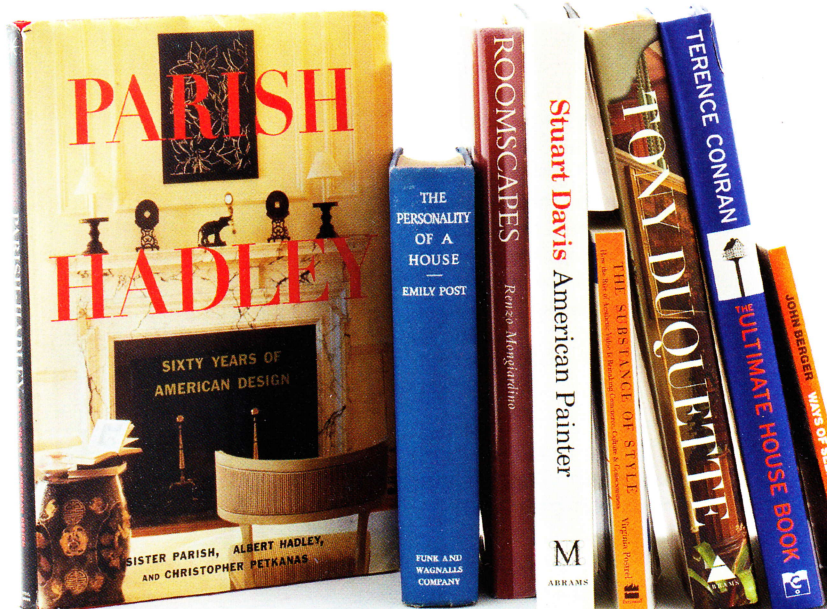
—Christopher Coleman,  
interior designer, New York City

## The Substance of Style: How the Rise of Aesthetic Value is Remaking Commerce, Culture, and Consciousness

BY VIRGINIA POSTREL

I met Virginia at a reading a few years ago and was blown away by her ability to define style not as the fuzzy abstract indulgence of a decadent consumer culture, but as something that creates industry and makes for memorable personal experiences.

—Celerie Kemble,  
interior designer, New York City



## Tony Duquette

BY WENDY GOODMAN AND  
HUTTON WILKINSON

When this book on the master of over-the-top Hollywood style came out last year, it became an instant classic for those, like me, who adore the way he drew from so many cultures and techniques.

—Julia-Carr Bayler,  
interior designer, Atlanta

## The Ultimate House Book

BY TERENCE CONRAN

Conran has the most amazing eye for the design of even the most

ordinary objects in our daily lives, and what makes them work.

—Courtney Novogratz,  
interior designer, Los Angeles

## Ways of Seeing

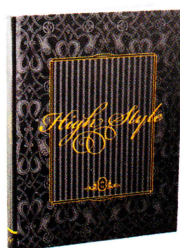
BY JOHN BERGER

Berger examines our interior monologue about what we see. I'm influenced by those elements, like color, that breathe through a place, or that make the style flow and feel completely natural. I always read a space that way—instinctively.

—Emma Jane Pilkington,  
interior designer, New York City

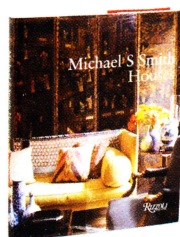
## ...and Five New Books Destined to Be Classics

In these fall releases—from confidence-boosting how-tos to edgily engaging takeoffs on the coffee-table format—designers we consulted for the list above pay the inspiration forward.



### 1 | HIGH STYLE

(Chronicle, \$60) L.A. decorators Ron Woodson and Jaime Rummerfield document their methods that helped revive the sparkling surfaces, strong stripes, and dramatic hues of classic Hollywood glamour.



### 2 | MICHAEL S. SMITH HOUSES

(Rizzoli, \$50) Walking us through the process of decorating his own California home—plus 20 others from New England to Malibu—Smith tells the story of how decor is built, decision by decision.



### 3 | THE NEW TRADITIONAL

(Crown, \$45) Washington, D.C., decorator Darryl Carter concisely breaks down the subtle art of blending classical lines and historic references with the modern bent for simplicity.



### 4 | A PASSION FOR BLUE & WHITE

(Broadway Books, \$60) Can any house survive on two colors alone? New York City design doyenne Carolynne Roehm shows us endless—and timeless—variations on this simple but eloquent pairing.



### 5 | CELERIE KEMBLE—TO YOUR TASTE

(Clarkson Potter, \$45) A ringleader of Manhattan's new salon society advocates bold interiors that express the personality and intellect of those who inhabit them.