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Contemporary: Architecture and Interiors of the 1950s

Lesley Jackson

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Lesley Jackson : Contemporary: Architecture and Interiors of the 1950s before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Contemporary: Architecture and Interiors of the 1950s:

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Nice layoutBy Red WoodA beautiful coffee table book, with attractive color and b/w photos of several periods of the midcentury movement. There is also a bit on midcentury architecture. Not bad if you know someone who's into this, but there are probably books out there with more visual depth of the creativity of the period. Overall, though, an intelligent read.13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Great general guide to what was 'Contemporary'By A CustomerThis book is a great general guide to what was 'contemporary' - including architecture of the home, public building and office. In addition, it delves into interior design - including glass, wall treatments, flooring and furniture. The prospective reader should be made aware right off that this book is written from the British perspective - one will see British English spellings of words, and names of British companies. However, the vast majority of the book deals with American developments, which is more pertinent to the US reader. I call this book a great 'general' introduction because it digs about 75% of the way into each subject. But how many other books can cover so many subjects as well? None that I've been able to find so far. The book is richly illustrated, including some photos which span the entire page. The text is interesting and easy to understand. After reading each chapter of the book, you are left with a good basic understanding of what you've just read. The pictures themselves are generally period photos, which really help the reader see what 'contemporary' was to the eyes of the folks living at that time. If you are contemplating purchasing a 'contemporary house', or perhaps

decorating in the 'contemporary' style, this book will give you some good ideas. Overall, a very enjoyable book - it would make a good present, and look great sitting on your coffee table!9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. A serious look at a not so serious style?By Dick BjornsethThe author provides an absolutely beautiful look at a George Jetson time in architecture and interior design style that makes the 50's seem nostalgic. The abundant photography of this book is perhaps its most appealing feature. The glossary of terms is also useful for those born after the the middle of the century. Terms like "formica" and "foam rubber" and "cantilevered" are particularly appropriate for this time period. A great companion book with a "lighter" view of the bizarreness and extremes of the 50's is "Googie Fifties Coffee Shop Architecture." Between these two books, one can get a fair idea of the strange yet endearing design of this period.

This book provides a full definition and examination of the so-called Contemporary style that dominated architecture and design from the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s. It was an era of optimism and confidence, where the new ideas in architecture and design flourished alongside - and were nurtured by - the emergent consumer culture. The Contemporary style was fresh and liberating, manifesting itself in the picture window and the open plan; in vibrant fabric design and printed wall coverings; in new forms of furniture from Scandinavia and stylish light fittings from Italy; and most tellingly in the Contemporary kitchen with its fitted units and mod con appliances. Far more than a collection of Fifties nostalgia, this book provides an entertaining and revealing survey of trends in taste and interior design at the time of economic regeneration that affected not only people's homes, but their communities and their public buildings.

.com In the years after World War II, the theory-laden modern movement blossomed into popular "contemporary" design. Le Corbusier and Levitt, Brussels and L.A. reinforced concrete and Formica--all became part of a trend towards sleek, functional, pared-down design. This excellent book could have been a compendium of '50s architectural and interior memorabilia, and therefore a success with nostalgia buffs (who will also love it), but it is far more than that. Lesley Jackson has written an intelligent, entertaining book on the intersection of life and design in the postwar era. Chapters include "The Birth of the 'Contemporary' Style"; "The House"; "The Interior"; "Decoration and Fittings"; "Furniture and Furnishings"; and "Society Goes 'Contemporary.'" Its scope is broad, beginning with a beguiling, campy advertising photo showing a housewife at cocktail time, poised in her powder-blue cocktail dress, and her husband, who is reaching into a sleek, chrome-and-Formica credenza, perhaps the home of their record player. The book ends with Brasília, the capital city built between 1956 and 1960 that brought Brazil to the verge of economic collapse. In between are colorful looks at the houses and furniture of Ray and Charles Eames; the early European proponents of modernism; Frank Lloyd Wright's seminal Fallingwater; the various uses of concrete, stone, brick, and other materials for texture and color; the melding of interior and exterior space; the fun colors of prototypical Marimekko fabrics; the early idealism of designing for "the masses"; and the now almost quaint social optimism from which the pervasive culture of materialism emerged. --Peggy Moorman "Seek inspiration in... Contemporary... The familiar abstract textiles, open-plan interiors and cheesy kitchen ads that dominated the decade are all pictured here in this nostalgic and comprehensive guide to Fifties style."-Living Etc. "This book provides a full definition and examination of the 'contemporary' style... Far more than a collection of Fifties nostalgia, Contemporary' - Architecture and Interiors of the 1950s provides an entertaining and revealing survey of trends in taste and interior design at a time of economic regeneration and social renewal."-Perspectives "Persuasive re-evaluation of Fifties design... The book's clean images even make the Le Corbusier-inspired high-rise blocks of Roehampton look appealing."-Independent on Saturday Magazine "Goes beyond the usual suspects... to include Modernist expressions around the world... A masterful job."-The New York Times "An informative book whose presentation accurately reflects the era's colour and confidence."-Design About the AuthorKate Malone is one of the most acclaimed ceramists of her generation. Her work has been featured in many exhibitions worldwide, most recently at the Art Form International in Palm Beach, Florida, with others opening in Santa Fe and Beverly Hills. Lesley Jackson is a freelance writer, curator, and design historian, and a member of the editorial board of "Crafts" magazine. She writes widely for newspapers and magazines.