



French Encounters with the American Counterculture, 1960-1980 (Ashgate Studies in Architecture)

Caroline Maniaque Benton

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French-American interrelationships in the areas of design and creative thinking have been under-acknowledged. It is normally asserted that French architects looked to North America for technical lessons in the development of modern architecture in the 1960s but that the French cultural environment was generally hostile to American ideas. This book includes interviews with French architects who visited the United States in the 1960s-1970s and then assumed influential positions in the press and education in France. Some of these architects found in non-mainstream America and its radical groups of architectural drop-outs a liberating force, free of the taint of American capitalism and the high-investment technology. Often living in alternative student communities, they saw highly innovative, low-cost technical and structural systems placed in the service of collective forms of living which represented a critique not only of professional architectural practice but also of bourgeois forms of living. Many of them also studied in American schools of architecture and came in contact with an intellectual and interdisciplinary style of architectural education unavailable in France at that time.



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