



Cognitive Architecture: Designing for How We Respond to the Built Environment

Ann Sussman, Justin B Hollander

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In *Cognitive Architecture*, the authors review new findings in psychology and neuroscience to help architects and planners better understand their clients as the sophisticated mammals they are, arriving in the world with built-in responses to the environment that have evolved over millennia.

The book outlines four main principles---Edges Matter, the fact people are a thigmotactic or a 'wall-hugging' species; Patterns Matter, how we are visually-oriented; Shapes Carry Weight, how our preference for bilateral symmetrical forms is biological; and finally, Storytelling is Key, how our narrative proclivities, unique to our species, play a role in successful place-making. The book takes an inside-out approach to design, arguing that the more we understand human behavior, the better we can design for it. The text suggests new ways to analyze current designs before they are built, allowing the designer to anticipate a user's future experience. More than one hundred photographs and drawings illustrate its key concepts. Six exercises and additional case studies suggest particular topics - from the significance of face-processing in the human brain to our fascination with fractals - for further study.

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