

The mosque and the modern world: architects, patrons and designs since the 1950s

by Renata Holod / Hasan-Uddin Khan / Kimberly Mims · Language: EN

Summary by booksummaryai.com — <https://booksummaryai.com/country/en/the-mosque-and-the-modern-world-architects-patrons-and-designs-since-the-1950s>

Overview

Renata Holod, Hasan-Uddin Khan, and Kimberly Mims's "The Mosque and the Modern World: Architects, Patrons and Designs Since the 1950s" offers a comprehensive and critical examination of mosque architecture across the globe from the mid-20th century onwards. The book delves into how the traditional typology of the mosque has been reinterpreted, challenged, and transformed by modern architectural practices, materials, and design philosophies. It explores the complex interplay between religious requirements, cultural identity, national aspirations, and global architectural trends, presenting a rich tapestry of case studies from diverse geographical and political contexts, including the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America.

The central argument of the book is that modern mosque design is not a monolithic phenomenon but a dynamic and often contradictory field, shaped by the visions of architects, the demands of patrons (ranging from states and royal families to local communities), and the evolving understanding of what constitutes a 'modern' yet 'Islamic' space. The authors highlight how architects have grappled with the legacy of historical Islamic architecture while integrating contemporary aesthetics and technologies, often resulting in innovative and sometimes controversial designs. The book is significant for its extensive documentation and analysis, providing invaluable insights into the cultural, social, and political forces that have influenced the construction of mosques in an era of rapid change and globalization.

Key Takeaways

- Modern mosque architecture since the 1950s reflects a complex negotiation between Islamic tradition and global contemporary design principles.
- The role of patrons, including states, royal families, and local communities, is crucial in shaping the architectural expression and symbolic meaning of modern mosques.
- Architects worldwide have explored diverse approaches to mosque design, ranging from contextual regionalism to abstract modernism, often challenging conventional forms.

- Mosques built in non-Muslim majority countries often serve as important symbols of cultural identity and community cohesion for Muslim minorities.
- The integration of new materials and construction technologies has significantly expanded the formal possibilities for mosque design in the modern era.
- Understanding modern mosque architecture requires considering the socio-political contexts, national identities, and individual artistic visions that underpin each project.
- The book demonstrates that there is no single 'modern Islamic style,' but rather a rich spectrum of interpretations reflecting diverse cultural and theological perspectives.

Chapter Summaries

Introduction: The Modern Mosque Dilemma

This introductory section sets the stage by outlining the challenges and opportunities faced by architects and patrons in designing mosques in the post-1950s world. It discusses the tension between adhering to traditional Islamic architectural principles and embracing modern aesthetics, materials, and construction techniques. The authors introduce the concept of the mosque as a dynamic symbol of identity, faith, and community in an increasingly globalized and secularized world, highlighting the diverse forces shaping its contemporary forms.

Early Modern Experiments: 1950s-1970s

This chapter examines the initial phase of modern mosque construction, focusing on projects from the 1950s to the 1970s. It explores how architects began to break away from historical revivalism, experimenting with new structural systems, materials like concrete, and simplified forms. Case studies illustrate early attempts to reconcile functional requirements with a modern aesthetic, often reflecting nationalist aspirations and the desire to project a forward-looking image in newly independent Muslim-majority nations.

Regional Expressions: Middle East and North Africa

Focusing on the heartlands of Islamic civilization, this section analyzes mosque designs in the Middle East and North Africa. It explores how architects in this region navigated the rich historical legacy of Islamic architecture while responding to contemporary needs and state patronage. The chapter highlights projects that either reinterpreted traditional motifs with modern sensibilities or adopted entirely new, often monumental, forms to symbolize national identity and religious revival.

Mosques in South and Southeast Asia

This chapter shifts attention to the diverse architectural landscape of South and Southeast Asia. It examines how local traditions, climate, and cultural specificities influenced modern mosque design in countries like India, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The authors showcase examples where indigenous building practices and materials were integrated with modern design.

principles, resulting in unique regional expressions of the mosque typology that resonate with local identities.

Western Contexts: Europe and North America

This section explores the challenges and innovations in designing mosques for Muslim communities in Europe and North America. It discusses how architects addressed issues of visibility, integration into urban landscapes, and the need to create culturally appropriate spaces within non-Muslim majority societies. The chapter highlights designs that range from discreet, almost invisible structures to prominent, iconic buildings that assert a Muslim presence in the Western world.

Architects, Patrons, and Iconic Designs

This chapter delves into the specific contributions of influential architects and the impact of significant patrons on modern mosque architecture. It features in-depth analyses of iconic mosque projects that have pushed the boundaries of design, material use, and spatial organization. The authors discuss the philosophies of key architects and how their visions, often supported by powerful patrons, shaped the discourse and direction of contemporary mosque design globally.

Future Directions and Challenges

The concluding chapter reflects on the ongoing evolution of mosque architecture and the challenges it faces in the 21st century. It discusses emerging trends, the impact of globalization, environmental concerns, and the continuing debate between tradition and innovation. The authors offer insights into how future mosque designs might continue to adapt to changing social, technological, and spiritual needs, while maintaining their essential role as centers of worship and community.

Themes

- Modern Islamic architecture
- Cultural identity
- Globalized design
- Patronage and power
- Tradition and innovation
- Sacred space evolution

Frequently Asked Questions

What is The mosque and the modern world: architects, patrons and designs since the 1950s about?

The book is a comprehensive study of mosque architecture worldwide from the 1950s to the late 20th century. It explores how architects and patrons have reimagined the mosque, balancing traditional Islamic forms with modern design, materials, and global architectural trends, examining projects across diverse cultural and political contexts.

Is *The mosque and the modern world: architects, patrons and designs since the 1950s* worth reading?

Yes, it is highly recommended for anyone interested in architectural history, Islamic art and architecture, cultural studies, or the intersection of religion and modernity. It offers a meticulously researched and richly illustrated survey, providing deep insights into the evolution of a significant building type in the modern era.

How does *The mosque and the modern world: architects, patrons and designs since the 1950s* end?

Spoiler: The book concludes by reflecting on the future trajectory of mosque architecture, discussing ongoing challenges such as globalization, environmental considerations, and the perpetual dialogue between tradition and innovation. It offers a forward-looking perspective on how mosques will continue to adapt to evolving societal and spiritual needs.

Who should read *The mosque and the modern world: architects, patrons and designs since the 1950s*?

This book is essential reading for architects, architectural historians, urban planners, scholars of Islamic studies, and students of art history. It also appeals to anyone with an interest in cultural identity, religious architecture, or the impact of globalization on built environments.

How long does it take to read *The mosque and the modern world: architects, patrons and designs since the 1950s*?

Given its academic nature, detailed analysis, and numerous illustrations, reading this book thoroughly would likely take between 6 to 8 hours, depending on the reader's pace and engagement with the visual material.