



What Is Architecture? An Essay on Landscapes, Buildings, and Machines: An Essay on Landscapes, Buildings and Machines

Paul Shephard

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British architect and critic Paul Shephard is a fresh new voice in current postmodern debates about the history and meaning of architecture. In this wonderfully unorthodox quasi-novelistic essay, complete with characters and dialogue (but no plot), Shephard draws a boundary around the subject of architecture, describing its place in art and technology, its place in history, and its place in our lives now. At a time when it is fashionable to say that architecture is everything -- from philosophy to science to art to theory -- Shephard boldly and irreverently sets limits to the subject, so that we may talk about architecture for what it is. He takes strong positions, names the causes of the problems, and tells us how bad things are and how they can get better. Along the way he marshals some unlikely but plausible witnesses who testify about the current state of architecture. Instead of the usual claims or complaints by the usual suspects, these observations are of an altogether different order. Constructed as a series of fables, many of them politically incorrect, *What is Architecture?* is a refreshing meditation on the options, hopes, possibilities, and failures of shelter in society.

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