

## BOOK REVIEWS



### **The Public Private House. Modern Athens and Its Polykatoikia**

Edited by Richard Woditsch  
 Publisher: Park Books  
 ISBN: 978-3038600848  
 Language: English  
 Year: 2019

Spectacular photos of Athens' dense urban morphology open *The Public-Private House*, a book dedicated to the study of the high-rise apartment buildings called *polykatoikia* - *poly* [many] + *katoikia* [dwelling] – and its Greek urban context. *Polykatoikia* is studied as a building type, as an urban phenomenon and as a spatial integrator.

In the first part, “Sea of White Cubes”, a photo essay offers a complete impression of Athens and its signature housing structure, followed by a collection of maps. The second part, “(How to Build) a Type”, investigates historical developments, the democratic process of planning in the city, and compares these buildings with Le Corbusier’s Dom-ino system, as well as with external factors such as social aspects and Athens’ strict building code. The third part, “Studies”, provides an illustrated analysis of Athens’ most notable examples of *polykatoikia* packed with detailed drawings (floor plans, sections, schemes of occupation and axonometries) revealing its diverse types of uses and atmospheres. The last part offers a perspective of current developments in Greece, contributing to these buildings’ transformation facing the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Mafalda Pacheco



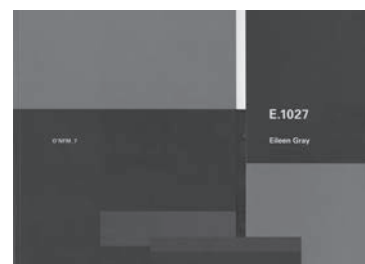
### **Beach Therapy**

Author: Martin Parr  
 Publisher: Damiani  
 ISBN: 978-88-6208-625-7  
 Language: English  
 Year: 2018

The photographer Martin Parr is renowned for his documentation of seaside culture. At the single-page preface of *Beach Therapy*, launched in 2018 by Damiani, he affirms that beaches are places where people can really be themselves. He has often used these seaside spaces as a laboratory to experiment with new cameras and techniques.

This book is the outcome of Martin’s recent exploration using a telephoto lens and it presents a global perspective on the beaches he has photographed between 2014 and 2018. Made from a great distance, the images presented show, primarily, a wider view with smaller figures on the beach landscape creating a pattern of vivid colour. Flora and fauna frame some images with the beach as a background, creating a sort of a voyeuristic angle. Gradually, the images presented get closer and closer, in a sequencing that creates an intriguing narrative. It is an interesting portrait of the beach as a natural landscape as well as a space of cultural uses.

João Lucas Domingos



### **E.1027 – Eileen Gray, O’Neil Ford Monograph 7**

Edited by Wilfried Wang and Peter Adam  
 Publisher: Ernst J. Wasmuth publishers  
 ISBN: 978-3803008312  
 Language: English  
 Year: 2017

Even though this book covers only one very small house, the study was carried out with unparalleled profoundness. Designed by the artist Eileen Gray as her first architectural work, the holiday house E.1027 was built on the French Mediterranean coast but remained unknown for a long time. Alongside Rietveld’s Schröder house and Mies’ Tugendhat house, it is one of the very rare examples of a total work of art, a *Gesamtkunstwerk* of modernism. However, contrary to these two houses, Eileen Gray created the spatial concept of the house and the garden, as well as the entire furniture, alone. So the design is more comprehensive than, for example, the standard furnished houses of Le Corbusier. “E.1027 was a built manifesto”, Wilfried Wang writes, explaining that the building is a response to the swiss architect, who, ironically, will play a role in the history of the house, but a rather inglorious one.

The book begins with two essays by Peter Adam, who personally knew Gray. On the basis of conversation reminiscences and manuscripts, he introduces her thoughts and design concepts while also describing their friendship. In the second text, he analyzes her connection to Le Corbusier and her then life partner, Jean Badovici, whom she calls co-architect of the house, although he was only involved in a few elements of the detailing. Le Corbusier admired the building with envy, or so the book argues, noting he attacked the architecture with numerous murals and by building and living next to it – much to Gray’s annoyance. In further essays, Rosamund Diamond writes about the artistic context in which the house was built, Silvia Beretta on garden design, Wilfried Wang on Gray’s architectural design methodology, Izabella Z. Dennis on color design, and Rachel Stella on the history of the house’s use.