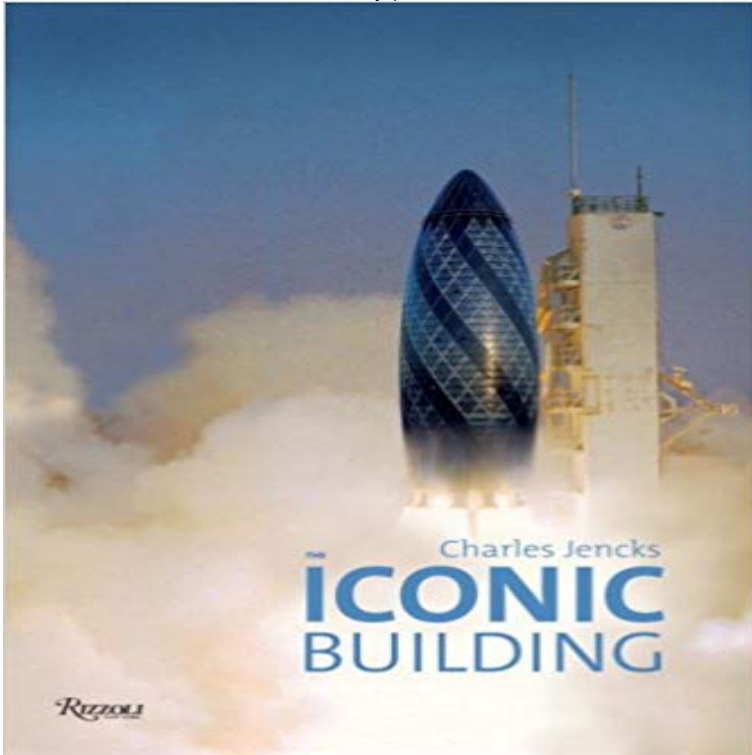


The Iconic Building



Charles Jencks, the leading architectural critic and writer, takes on trendiness in architecture: namely the rise of the iconic building, instantly famous and distinctively recognizable structures like Norman Foster's Gherkin in London or Daniel Libeskind's Ground Zero designs in New York. Although there have always been buildings built to be instant icons such as palaces and cathedrals, Jencks sees this latest trend as being fueled by the real estate industry's thirst for profit and architects' outsize egos. Since the debut of Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao, a roster of international architects has created iconic buildings that court publicity and controversy in equal measure. Some iconic buildings are successful creations that fulfill their contradictory requirements, while others make the public and the critics wince. In addition to Foster, Gehry and Libeskind, Jencks also discusses recent works by Peter Eisenman, Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, and Renzo Piano. Anyone interested in contemporary architecture and the direction of urban design will be interested in Jencks' witty, irreverent and sympathetic insights into how buildings can become good architecture that enhances the cityscape—and are truly iconic.

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