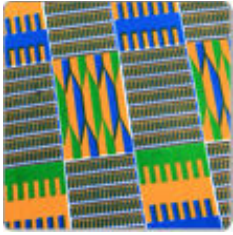


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Architecture

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Introduction

This bibliography approaches the topic of architecture from a broad perspective, subdividing it into the disciplines of architectural history, building technology, urbanism, and conservation. In this bibliography, “architecture” is defined as the expression of planning, design, and building on the spatial environment, from the scale of landscape to the individual dwelling, and encompasses both academically and non-academically (i.e., vernacular) planned, designed, and executed architectural works. The bibliography of African architecture is broad and complex. The African continent consists of more than fifty nations, which all have their specific history and character. From the viewpoint of climate and geographic conditions, Africa can be subdivided into three major zones: the northern Maghreb between the Mediterranean and the Sahara, the huge central part south of the Sahara and north of the Kalahari Desert, and South Africa. The second divide, on religious lines, follows roughly the geographic zones, with the Islamic north, Christian south, and Animist center. However, the East African coastal zone, stretching from Somalia in the north and the middle of Mozambique in the south, has developed a strong Islamic Swahili culture. The third, linguistic, divide into English, French, and Portuguese, caused by the colonization by European powers, has created a pattern more or less independent from the first and second divisions and was superimposed on the numerous existing African languages that are, by and large, spoken up to today. This mosaic has evidently created a great variation in culture and, what is more important for a bibliography, a varied historiography. On the Maghreb and South Africa, writing on cultural and technical subjects, including on architecture, goes back to the early-19th century, whereas the rest of Africa had to wait until the 20th century to see the first written records and studies to be produced. This is mainly due to the fact that African culture south of the Sahara was predominantly oral.

General Overviews and Architectural History

General overviews of the topic of African architecture in its full breadth, encompassing history, contemporary theory, technology, conservation, and urbanism, are non-existent. Logically, this is due to the multidisciplinary breadth itself. The closest to come to a general overview are works on architectural history on the continent. Writing on the history of African architecture did not commence before the 20th century, with the exception of Egypt and the Maghreb. Until the 1950s, architecture was a topic of research that formed part of the tribally oriented anthropological studies on African cultures. The anthropologists studied traditional (pre-colonial) architecture, which has been referred to as “vernacular”, “indigenous,” or “ethnic” building or architecture as opposite to academic, European-originated architecture. The division between traditional vernacular or popular architecture and monumental, professional, or academic architecture has been maintained in this bibliography for the sake of clarity. This notwithstanding the fact that this division is judicious and that, in the recent approach to architecture, convincing moves are being made to bridge these two historically opposed worlds. The first works that introduce the topic of African architectural history in its independent value date back to the late 1950s and form part of general publications on African history as in Davidson 1959 or focused anthropologist studies such as Bascom 1958 (cited under Urbanism). Monographic writings on the subject by architects and architectural historians began to appear in the 1960s with Kultermann 1963 (cited under Modernism, Late Colonialism, and Independence (1940–1975)), and it was only toward the end of the century that the first historical integral overviews of the continent from an Afro-centric perspective appeared, with Elleh 1997 from the anglophone perspective and Fassassi 1997, from the

francophone perspective. Since then, African architecture has become part of the family with inventorying overviews, starting with atlases such as Frampton 1999. The first critical studies have since commenced to appear regularly, reinforced by, in particular, the establishment of the African Centre for Cities in Cape Town in 2007.

Davidson, Basil. *The Lost Cities of Africa*. Oxford: Currey, 1959.

Davidson, though neither an architectural historian nor an expert on urban development, is possibly one of the first authors who attempts to share observations on spatial development in Africa from a perspective that differs from the Eurocentric approach by most earlier and contemporary historians. His introduction to the African urban culture was, in its time, completely new, as the existence of historical African cities was insofar ignored. The book reads like a novel and is beautifully illustrated.

Elleh, Nnamdi. *African Architecture: Evolution and Transformation*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997.

The value of Nnamdi Elleh's work can difficultly be overrated, as he is the first African author who dared to approach the topic in a kaleidoscopic way, by bringing together all countries under one umbrella, combining both academic architecture, originated from the Global North, with historical and traditional vernacular architecture while offering analysis that departs from mainstream writing. An important reference work for the architectural historian who wishes to broach the subject.

Fassasi, Masudi Alabi. *L'architecture en Afrique noire: Cosmoarchitecture*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997.

Fassasi's book attempts to create a dialogue between modern architectural thinking from the Global North with African spatial concepts. Different traditional urban and architectural African morphologies are analyzed and compared in text and in crisp plans drawn by the author that form the basis for an essay on an architectural design approach for future Africa. Although not always systematically presented, the book provides highly original inspirational ideas.

Fernando-Galiano, Luis, ed. *Atlas, Architectures of the 21st Century: Africa and Middle East*. vols. Bilbao, Spain: Fundación BBVA, 2011.

The various regions on the continent are introduced with essays that briefly describe recent history, the current state of affairs and some prophecies on the future; followed by a selection of realized and projected buildings. The sections on South Africa, the Maghreb, and Egypt provide some in-depth material, whereas sub-Saharan Africa is only touched on in a summary way.

Fisher, Roger C., S. le Roux, and E. Maré, ed. *Architecture of the Transvaal*. Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 1998.

Although this work only concerns the small geographical area of the Gauteng province (Transvaal) of South Africa, it is a rare example of a well-researched architectural history that covers both modern and older times.

Folkers, Antoni. *Modern Architecture in Africa*. Amsterdam: SUN, 2010.

This book questions the notion of modernity as an exclusive product of the Global North and, through a number of case studies, describes and analyzes the European architectural principles against the backdrop of African cultural and political reality. A manual for the reflective practitioner and an invitation to further understanding and analysis of the current state and future of the African architecture of the early 21st century.

Frampton, Kenneth, ed. *World Architecture 1900–2000: A Critical Mosaic*. 10 vols. Vienna: Springer, 1999.

The volumes 5 and 6 of this tour-de-force by Kenneth Frampton and a number of other authors deal with Africa. They provide a cross section through emblematic built projects on the African continent, with basic information and images. The selection is limited, unbalanced and incomplete, due to the obvious difficulty to unearth documentation on African architecture, but valuable as a starting point for the exploration of the subject from a broad perspective.

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