



The Australian Ugliness: Text Classics

Robin Boyd

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Brilliant, witty, scathing, *The Australian Ugliness* is the classic postwar account of Australian society, how we live in the environments we create, and the consequences of our failure to think about how we live.

Boyd was a fierce critic, and an advocate of good design. He understood the significance of the connection between people and their dwellings, and argued passionately for a national architecture forged from a genuine Australian identity. His concerns are as important now, in an era of suburban sprawl and inner-city redevelopment, as they were more than half a century ago.

'The basis of the Australian ugliness,' he wrote, 'is an unwillingness to be committed on the level of ideas. In all the arts of living, in the shaping of all her artefacts, as in politics, Australia shuffles about vigorously in the middle - as she estimates the middle - of the road, picking up disconnected ideas wherever she finds them.'

Caustic and brilliant, *The Australian Ugliness* is a masterpiece that enables us to see our surroundings with fresh eyes. This edition is complemented by Robin Boyd's original sketches for the book and a new afterword by major contemporary architects: John Denton, Philip Goad and Geoffrey London.

Robin Boyd is arguably Australia's most influential architect. From the late 1940s Boyd wrote extensively about the importance of design in inexpensive housing. In 1952 he published *Australia's Home*, the first substantial survey of the country's domestic architecture. His masterwork, *The Australian Ugliness*, was first published in 1960 and the title has since entered the Australian lexicon. In all, Boyd wrote twelve books.

Christos Tsiolkas is the author of four novels: *Loaded* (made into the film *Head On*), *The Jesus Man*, *Dead Europe* and the award-winning bestseller *The Slap*, which has been made into a television series for the ABC.

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'Robin Boyd's book clarified for all of us that Australian ugliness - how we would bludgeon the land into fertility, cut forests so that power lines could go through, so that cars could take precedence over everything...Conservatism reigned supreme; it had to be like that regardless of whether it was logical, whether it was appropriate, whether it responded to climatic variations...The buildings were the same from Melbourne to Darwin, and they still are the same.' Glenn Murcutt

'As interesting and amusing and untechnical as a novel.' Sir John Betjeman

'An argument for an environmental approach to design and a tirade against the visual pollution of the commercial strip.' Philip Goad

'The link by which architects began to speak to the community and the community spoke back.' J.M. Freeland

'He got us. He still gets us. Boyd understands that like all peoples we are contradictory; he also understands...that we are responsible for ourselves.' Christos Tsiolkas

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