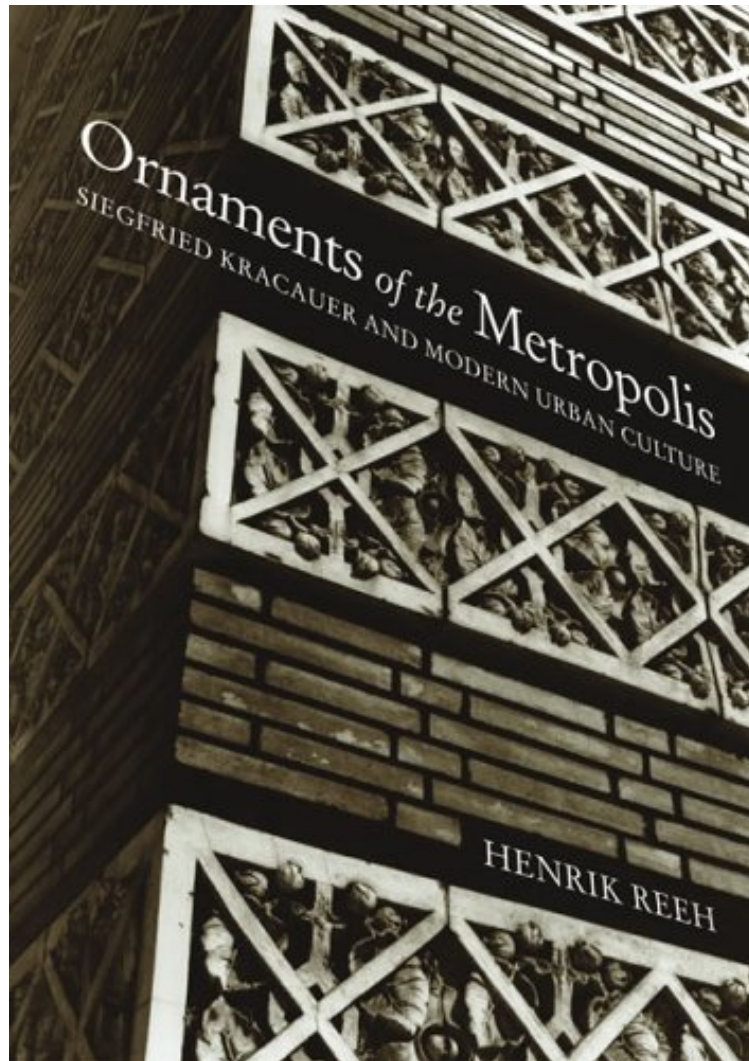


(Download free pdf) Ornaments of the Metropolis: Siegfried Kracauer and Modern Urban Culture (MIT Press)

Ornaments of the Metropolis: Siegfried Kracauer and Modern Urban Culture (MIT Press)

Henrik Reeh

*ebooks | Download PDF | *ePub | DOC | audiobook*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#1632989 in Books 2006-09-08 Original language: English PDF # 1 10.00 x .60 x 7.00l, 1.33 #File Name: 0262681633264 pages | File size: 47.Mb

Henrik Reeh : Ornaments of the Metropolis: Siegfried Kracauer and Modern Urban Culture (MIT Press) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ornaments of the Metropolis: Siegfried Kracauer and Modern Urban Culture (MIT Press):

For Siegfried Kracauer, the urban ornament was not just an aspect of design; it was the medium through which city

dweller interpreted the metropolis itself. In *Ornaments of the Metropolis*, Henrik Reeh traces variations on the theme of the ornament in Kracauer's writings on urbanism, from his early journalism in Germany between the wars to his "sociobiography" of Jacques Offenbach in Paris. Kracauer (1889-1966), often associated with the Frankfurt School and the intellectual milieu of Walter Benjamin, is best known for his writings on cinema and the philosophy of history. Reeh examines Kracauer's lesser-known early work, much of it written for the trendsetting newspaper *Frankfurter Zeitung* in the 1920s and early 1930s, and analyzes Kracauer's continuing reflections on modern urban life, through the pivotal idea of ornament. Kracauer deciphers the subjective experience of the city by viewing fragments of the city as dynamic ornaments; an employment exchange, a day shelter for the homeless, a movie theater, and an amusement park become urban microcosms. Reeh focuses on three substantial works written by Kracauer before his emigration to the United States in 1940. In the early autobiographical novel *Ginster, Written by Himself*, a young architect finds aesthetic pleasure in the ornamental forms that are largely unused in the profession of the time. The collection *Streets of Berlin and Elsewhere*, with many essays from Kracauer's years in Berlin, documents the subjectiveness of urban life. Finally, *Jacques Offenbach and the Paris of His Time* shows how the superficial -- in a sense, ornamental -- milieu of the operetta evolved into a critical force during the Second Empire. Reeh argues that Kracauer's novel, essays, and historiography all suggest ways in which the subjective can reappropriate urban life. The book also includes a series of photographs by the author that reflect the ornamental experience of the metropolis in Paris, Frankfurt, and other cities.

Henrik Reeh's *Ornaments of the Metropolis* uncovers the previously hidden history of Kracauer's intellectual development and provides an invaluable portrait of one of the key critics of 20th-century Weimar Germany. In this clear and very well written account, Reeh shows Kracauer in all his complexity and brilliance as he wrestles with the emergence of the modern metropolis and modern urban mass culture. (David Grahame Shane, Graduate School of Architecture, Preservation and Planning, Columbia University) Henrik Reeh's interpretation of Kracauer's neglected urban writings is brilliantly argued from a humanistic perspective. Written as a series of variations on the theme of the metropolitan ornament, the book deftly demonstrates how Kracauer's urban investigations integrate the many-faceted ornament into the experience of modernity. Similarly, Reeh intricately weaves the strands of Kracauer's own words and perceptions, the experiences of both writer and reader, and the process of individual and collective memory into a subtle and admirable work. His illuminating perspective reveals how Kracauer extended the field of the ornament beyond the merely decorative and art-historical to include everyday items, the transitory and traumatic, vision and writing. (M. Christine Boyer, William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor, School of Architecture, Princeton University) The enduring importance of Siegfried Kracauer as writer, social critic, and urban theorist is amply confirmed by Henrik Reeh's *Ornaments of the Metropolis*, which is arguably the most intelligent and persuasive account of architecture as process, and one of the most incisive and subtle critiques of commodity culture in recent memory. At the same time, Reeh's analyses open up intriguing possibilities for more balanced and historically more richly nuanced reassessments of Kracauer's contemporary, Walter Benjamin. (Donald Preziosi, Department of the History of Art and Centre for Visual Studies, University of Oxford) About the Author Henrik Reeh is Associate Professor in the Department of Comparative Literature and Modern Culture at the University of Copenhagen.