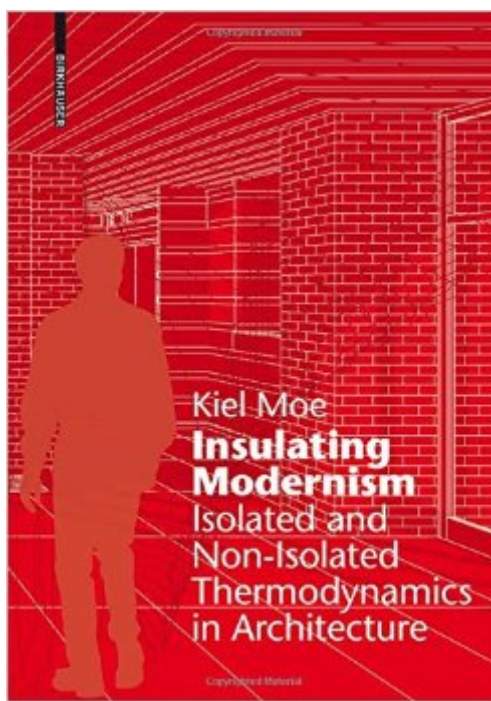


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# Insulating Modernism



## Synopsis

“No other concept has disturbed and disfigured our understanding of energy more than the seemingly innocent idea of isolation. Further, no other material practice in architecture has systemically reinforced this errant idea than insulation.” In too many cases, architects and engineers treat buildings as increasingly “efficient” isolated systems without any regard for the larger energy hierarchies of a building. This is the exact opposite of how architects should engage energy. This book is a history of a most common material/energy practice in architecture: heat transfer and insulation. But this history aims for decidedly uncommon futures for architecture: fulfilling the potential of non-isolated thermodynamics in architecture. Much more than walls was insulated in modernity: in the course of modernity, insulation became a highly active physical, conceptual, and historical agent in the determinant habits of twentieth century architectural design and its associated construction practices. Non-isolated, non-equilibrium thermodynamics drive every building, city, and form of life. Their understanding helps architects grasp century-old thermodynamic concepts that position designers to finally capture, channel, intercept, store, accelerate, and modulate the total energetic dissipation of building through design.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is a fascinating and riveting history of how energy has been viewed in architecture. Moe intersperses rigorous archival research with his clear insights. The clever word play in chapter and section headings, and at times in the text make this an entertaining read as well. However, lay

architects and students of architecture might need to inform themselves of certain specialized terminologies - such as emergy, exergy, entropy, and the maximum power principle - before being able to deeply engage with the nuances of Moe's thesis. Previous books authored by Moe and others, such as *The Hierarchy of Energy in Architecture: Emergy Analysis* (PocketArchitecture), can easily fill in this gap in knowledge. While the book spans a large swathe of time - from Vitruvius to the contemporary building industry - the sources cited are often restricted to examples only from Western architecture.

Published in time for the start of the academic year, this in-depth study, both erudite and brilliantly written, provides the fundamental background for the current controversy on insulation finishing system. Highly recommended.

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