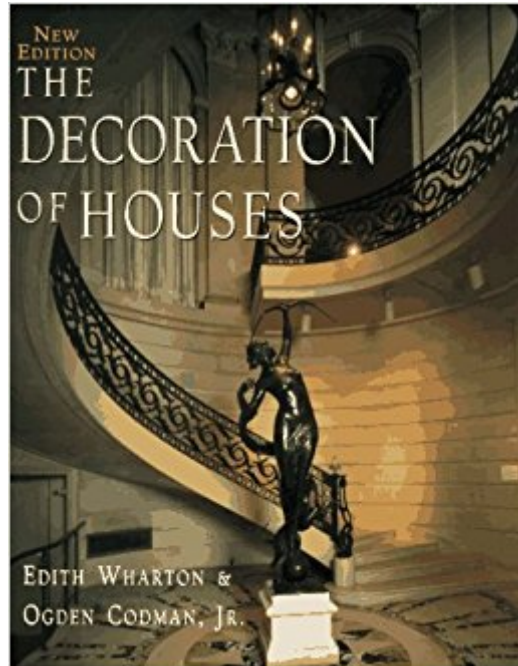


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The Decoration Of Houses (Classical America Series In Art & Architecture)



Synopsis

The original text of *The Decoration of Houses* continues without revision as an authentic classic, perhaps the most important book of its kind ever published. Its carefully reasoned chapters on such aspects of house interiors as fireplaces, ceilings and floors, halls and stairs, are of the greatest value to professionals and serious amateurs concerned with interiors. This expanded edition includes an introduction by Henry Hope Reed and three critical essays by John Barrington Bayley, William A. Coles, and Alvin Holm, AIA. Additions to the album of renderings and photographs of modern and contemporary work in the tradition of Wharton and Codman include a number of important works done in the last decade or so. A portfolio of color plates new to the expanded edition offers the work of such accomplished photographers as Bill Ray and Anne Day.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Amidst today's seemingly endless supply of domestic guides and treatises on interior decoration, Edith Wharton might be surprised that her *The Decoration of Houses* (co-authored with architect Ogden Codman, Jr.) would still be as relevant and necessary as it is a century after its first publication. Long before "simplicity" and "classic" became catchwords for branding, Wharton took a public stand against the bland, trite excesses of Victorian décor in America. Favoring the considered, informed and complex processes of design rooted in architectural principles, her graceful humility was matched only by her assertive plea against the contemporary dominance of

thoughtless, conspicuous consumption visible in New York society. As she determinately decreed: "According to the creed of the modern manufacturer, you have only to combine certain 'good' to obtain a certain style." Often associated with the frivolity connected to historical descriptions of femininity, this volume might be a surprise for those who prefer to view Wharton as a New York literary powerhouse. While her 40 books in 40 years (many of which were devoted to travels through European residences and gardens) are a testament to the force of her pen, it's the themes of beauty, pleasure, societal indulgence, cultural education and cosmopolitanism in America's modernity that make her analysis, and eventual ruling on the importance of design and space, a necessary extension of her literary thought. As she aptly begins her historical and aesthetic analysis, "Rooms may be decorated in two ways: by a superficial application of ornament totally dependent of structure, or by means of those architectural features which are part of the organism of every house, inside as well as out.

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