



# Iconography and Electronics upon a Generic Architecture: A View from the Drafting Room

*Robert Venturi*

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Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* and *Learning from Las Vegas* (the latter coauthored with Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour) are among the most influential books by any architect of our era -- the one celebrating complexity in architecture, the other the uses of symbolism in commercial and vernacular architecture and signage. This new collection of writings in a variety of genres argues for a generic architecture defined by iconography and electronics, an architecture whose elemental qualities become shelter and symbol. The voice is personal -- eloquent in expounding on the unglamorous side of practice; sometimes vituperative and corrective in addressing clients, theoreticians, and critics; often amusing and humorous in looking back on past projects and opportunities; instructive in describing early influences and tastes; and reflective in assessing his own impact on the profession. The essays include Venturi's 1950 M.F.A. thesis, published here for the first time -- a work that foreshadows many of the themes that were later to make him a controversial and ground-breaking architect and writer -- and a series of vintage Venturi aphorisms.

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