

# Earth Architecture

*By Ronald Rael*

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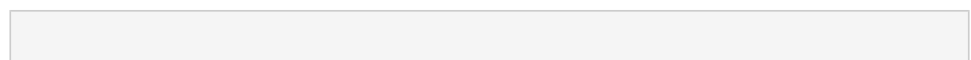
## Earth Architecture By Ronald Rael

Dirt—as in clay gravel sand silt soil loam mud—is everywhere and it's free. The ground we walk on and grow crops in also just happens to be the most widely used building material on the planet.

Civilizations throughout time have used it to create stable warm low-impact structures. The world's first skyscrapers were built of mud brick. Paul Revere Chairman Mao and Ronald Reagan all lived in earth houses at various points in their lives and several of the buildings housing Donald Judd's priceless collection at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa Texas are made of mud brick.

Currently it is estimated that one half of the world's population—approximately three billion people on six continents—lives or works in buildings constructed of earth. And while the vast legacy of traditional and vernacular earthen construction has been widely discussed little attention has been paid to the contemporary tradition of earth architecture. Author Ronald Rael founder of Eartharchitecture.org provides a history of building with earth in the modern era focusing particularly on projects constructed in the last few decades that use rammed earth mud brick compressed earth cob and several other interesting techniques. *Earth Architecture* presents a selection of more than 40 projects that exemplify new creative uses of the oldest building material on the planet.

Rael's engaging narrative addresses the misconceptions associated with earth architecture. Many assume that it's only used for housing in poor rural areas—but there are examples of airports embassies hospitals museums and factories that are made of earth. It's also assumed that earth is a fragile ephemeral material while in reality some of the oldest extant buildings on the planet are made of earth. Rael also touches on many topics that pervade both architecture and popular media today such as the ecological benefits and the politics of building with earth particularly in developing nations where earth buildings are often thought of as pre-modern or backward. With engaging discussion and more than 300 images *Earth Architecture* showcases the beauty and simplicity of one of humankind's most evolved and sophisticated building technologies.



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## Earth Architecture By Ronald Rael Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #2285771 in Books
- Brand: Princeton Architectural Press
- Published on: 2008-11-03
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.50" h x 1.00" w x 9.00" l, 2.17 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 208 pages

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

"Earth Architecture charts a grand history of architectural beauty crafted from one of the humblest of building materials. " --The Age, Melbourne: (January, 2009)

"...contains a wide range of modern earthen residences from the simple to the stunningly opulent. A beautiful book for earth-based building enthusiasts." (Fall, 2008) --GreenMuze blog

"Architectural publishers seem to produce an infinite stream of books collecting contemporary buildings, typically grouped by building types, such as the ever-popular single-family houses but also office buildings, hotels, retail spaces, housing, and cultural facilities, among others. That these categorizations of architecture take precedence over the means of construction employed by architects in their design points to the ongoing importance of typology in architectural design, but also to a gap in architectural theory, stemming from a lack of creativity in building construction. This doesn't apply to the overly expensive buildings of Frank Gehry or others whose engineered designs preclude anything but the most innovative approaches to building. This applies to the other 99.9%, where considerations of construction technique are more limited, or only apparently so. Ronald Rael's book on some common techniques of construction, ones not typically seen as contemporary, brings to the fore earth architecture and its positive impact on architectural design." -- Archidose

### **Review**

"With more than 40 different building projects from around the world, Earth Architecture provides a history of building with earth in a modern era, focusing on projects using rammed earth, mud brick, compressed earth, cob and other techniques that are becoming increasingly important with changing ecological and economic imperatives. Earth Architecture showcases new and innovative uses of the oldest building material on the planet. The Chapel of Reconciliation in Berlin, Germany and The Chapel of Rest in Voralberg, Austria were recently constructed from rammed earth. The National Wine Center in Adelaide, South Australia contains the largest rammed earth wall in the Southern Hemisphere. The \$4,000 a night Amankora Bhutan Resort in Gangtey, Bhutan, has rammed earth walls and the NkMp Dessert Interpretive Center in Osoyoos, Canada has the largest rammed earth wall (363 feet long 18 feet tall and 24 inches thick) in North America. Earth Architecture also contains a wide range of modern earthen residences from the simple to the stunningly opulent. A beautiful book for earth-based building enthusiasts."

"...a satisfying survey both for the professional "mudder" and for those who want a quick scholarly survey of earthen buildings from all over." (February 9, 2008)

### **Review**

"I would recommend Ronald Rael's book to all those people who are interested in this alternative means to architecture, existing since 10,000 years BC.....Ronald writes in simple, descriptive prose, each project is traced in a way that creates an anthology and motivates the reader to further study and research. The book is rich in content and draws in other authors, architects, historical buildings and periods. [click HERE](#) to read the full review on Building Design Online" -- Valentina Del Fuoco of Afterhours Studio (March 10, 2009)

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

**Rodney Hussey:**

This Earth Architecture book is simply not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you have by reading this book is actually information inside this e-book incredible fresh, you will get details which is getting deeper anyone read a lot of information you will get. This particular Earth Architecture without we understand teach the one who looking at it become critical in thinking and analyzing. Don't be worry Earth Architecture can bring when you are and not make your bag space or bookshelves' turn out to be full because you can have it within your lovely laptop even mobile phone. This Earth Architecture having great arrangement in word and layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

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