



Elsie De Wolfe: The Birth of Modern Interior Decoration

Penny Sparke, Mitchell Owens

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Elsie de Wolfe is a 20th-century legend and is the mother of modern interior decoration. Her name is familiar to many who practice the art of interior design or who are linked to the fashionable world of tastemaking. She provided appropriate settings for the new rich in the first half of the 20th century and in the process helped to shape our understanding of what we have come to know as the modern domestic interior. I am going in now for interior decoration. By that I mean supplying objets d art and giving advice regarding the decoration of their houses to wealthy persons who do not have the time, inclination, nor culture to do such work for themselves. It is nothing new. Women have done the same thing before. (Elsie de Wolfe) Through the measured re-examination of known materials as well as the review of history-clarifying documents that have been overlooked or underused by previous de Wolfe enthusiasts, *Elsie de Wolfe: The Birth of Modern Interior Decoration* provides the foundation of a renewed interest in her groundbreaking career, her philosophy of design, and her belief that an atmosphere of beauty could cure a world of ills. This large format, profusely illustrated book covers 29 projects (including Villa Trianon, The Colony Club, Anne Vanderbilt, Anne Morgan, the Duchess of Windsor, and J. Ogden Armour, to name a few) and concludes with a timeline of her works. Written by English decorative arts scholar Penny Sparke and edited by New York Times contributor Mitchell Owens, *Elsie de Wolfe: The Birth of Modern Interior Decoration* presents the most in-depth look ever into the design aesthetic of this early 20th-century master decorator.

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