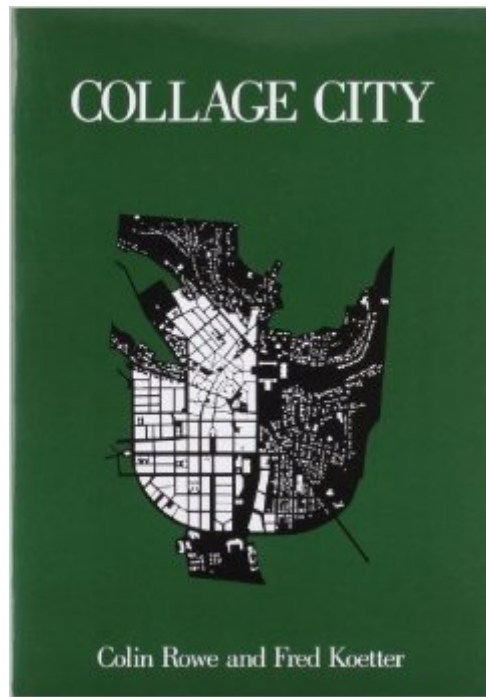


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# Collage City (MIT Press)



## Synopsis

This book is a critical reappraisal of contemporary theories of urban planning and design and of the role of the architect-planner in an urban context. The authors, rejecting the grand utopian visions of "total planning" and "total design," propose instead a "collage city" which can accommodate a whole range of utopias in miniature.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I am a second-generation Rowe disciple, I guess. I studied with a Rowe acolyte in graduate school and worked with co-author Fred Koetter in an urban design studio. Without the efforts these teachers have made to bring Rowe's ideas to urban design students, they may well have been neglected, because Collage City is a mess. It is badly marred by dense thickets of poorly-edited, idiosyncratic prose. It was one of the more frustrating books I had to read in school, but I'm glad it was required, because the close readings uncovered real gems of theory. Rowe reintroduced the complexities and possibilities of art into urban design right at the peak of Modernism's influence. Architecture was still in the thrall of La Ville Radieuse and socialist-utopian projects that aimed to simplify and disinfect cities. Jane Jacobs saw the social perils of these projects, Colin Rowe saw the architectural perils. His critique of the Modern project was among the most powerful, and among the least cogent. Still, though it requires some serious digging in prose-mud, the gems are there and worth the search. I recommend this book for graduate-level urban theorists or serious urban design

students. But there are more accessible urban design primers: Aldo Rossi, et al, *The Architecture of the City*, for example, covers much of the same ground Rowe so spottily titled [except where Eisenman is involved in the book: he is a worse prose-stylist than Rowe]. For non-specialists I also recommend Witold Rybczynski's *City Life* as a thoughtful and LUCID introduction to American urbanism, along with a critique of the last few decades of urban "development".

Important work of architectural theory. Companion piece to *Learning from Las Vegas* by Venturi, Scott-Brown, and Izenour as well as Rossi's *Architecture of the City*

it s an urban classic book, necessary and useful for arch students to read!

This book is so poorly written that it is nearly incomprehensible. Every time I think the author is about to reach a good point, he rambles on in lengthy run-on sentences. I lost my interest in the subject matter in the first chapter, and by the Third I could barely understand the purpose of his writings at all! As an architecture student, this book was useless in the understanding of architecture theory. I felt like I was reading a different language entirely. Architecture theory can sometimes be difficult enough to grasp - it doesn't help that this author makes it even more abstract through the use of wordy statements and name-drops, all of which only support the idea that he is trying to boast his self-proclaimed intelligence.

good!

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