



It Happened by Design: The Life and Work of Arthur Q. Davis

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In 1947, a time in which few New Orleans-based architects were designing modern architecture, Arthur Q. Davis (b. 1920) and his partner Nathaniel C. Curtis established their practice in the city. The Curtis and Davis firm is best known for designing the city's iconic Louisiana Superdome and such modernist landmarks as New Orleans's Rivergate Exhibition Center, the Hyatt Regency and Marriott hotels, and the Milton K. Latter Library. Davis has designed public and private works commissioned throughout the United States as well as in Saudi Arabia, Germany, Egypt, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Davis's firm has received more than fifty awards for design excellence and, at age thirty-eight, Davis was made the youngest Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

It Happened by Design provides an affecting and thorough narrative of Davis's life and achievements. After serving in the Navy during World War II, Davis graduated from Harvard University's School of Design on the G.I. Bill, studying with Bauhaus school founder Walter Gropius. In this book, Davis explains how he fused Creole and Beaux-Arts ideas together, filtering those concepts through modernist aesthetics to create new forms while preserving the old.

The book shows Davis challenging the architectural status quo during the Cold War and beyond. Whether discussing the politics of building in postwar Berlin, Vodou masters in the Caribbean, or struggles to modernize the skyline of his beloved New Orleans, Davis crafts a narrative with wit and insight. An introductory essay by J. Richard Gruber places Davis's work in the context of American architecture and provides a thorough summation of the architect's oeuvre.

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