

12-1-2002

## Review of Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics

Michael F. Russo Etc.

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College*, [mrusso1@lsu.edu](mailto:mrusso1@lsu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/libraries\\_pubs](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/libraries_pubs)



Part of the [European History Commons](#), [History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons](#), and the [Holocaust and Genocide Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Russo, Michael F. Etc., "Review of Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics" (2002). *Faculty Publications*. 69.  
[https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/libraries\\_pubs/69](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/libraries_pubs/69)

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the LSU Libraries at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [gcoste1@lsu.edu](mailto:gcoste1@lsu.edu).

## LJ Review Cover Sheet and Survey

Your name: Michael F. Russo

Your affiliation: Louisiana State University Libraries—Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Phone: (225) 578-6823

E-mail address: [mrusso1@lsu.edu](mailto:mrusso1@lsu.edu)

Title of the book: *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*

Author or editor of the book: Frederic Spotts

This book is recommended for: public & academic libraries

Comments for your editor:

### Review

Author: Frederic Spotts

Title: *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*

Publisher: The Overlook Press

Release date: January 2003

Number of pages: pages. 488

Features: 100 B/W and 4 color illustrations; indexed

Format: Hard cover

ISBN: 1-58567-345-5

Price: \$37.50

Unlike biographies of Adolf Hitler which focus on the ideological and humanitarian disaster wrought by his intense anti-Semitism, Spotts' book posits that the thirteen-year nightmare of the Third Reich was just as much a result of Hitler's artistic nature. Though other authors have touched on certain aspects of Hitler's artistic side—Speer (*Inside the Third Reich*) on Hitler's obsession with monumental architecture, Fest (*Hitler*) on the relationship between the dictator's grandiosity and his love of Wagnerian opera—only Spotts has leapt with both feet into a full exploration of Der Führer as artist.

Spotts argues that it was Hitler's aesthetic nature that compelled him to destroy society only to re-create it according to the image in his artist's eye. All the arts felt his deadening influence, and his influence was very, very personal indeed.

While truly seminal art always envisions something new, Hitler's art—the art of centuries past—envisioned nothing new. Modern art repelled him. Spotts makes the point visually, with numerous photographs and drawings—many by Hitler himself. Hitler used Germany and, later, Europe as his canvas to make a picture his stunted mind could understand. Spotts, with scholarship and true artistry, has exposed this picture in a book that is accessible to the average reader, but that will be of interest to academicians as well.

Michael F. Russo

Louisiana State University Libraries

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Frederic Spotts has written numerous books on European political and cultural affairs. His study of Bayreuth is regarded as the standard work on the subject. *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* was written while Spotts was a visiting scholar at the Institute for International Affairs at UC Berkeley. [Read more.](#) [Product details.](#) This is an unexpected approach to the study of Hitler and Nazism and shows itself to be sophisticated and stimulating. As Albert Speer emphasizes in his memoirs, Hitler actually saw himself as an artist and in many ways his movement was a stage-managed spectacle which of course extended to architecture and art. 3,042 words. Frederic Spotts *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* New York: The Overlook Press, 2003. Leaders throughout history have frequently deployed the arts as a means by which to display their power. Hitler is unusual, however, in that art was central to his political vision. He was intensely interested in the arts (painting, sculpture, music, and architecture) and dreamed of forging a state whose artistic and cultural achievements would rival those of ancient Greece and Rome. [Read more](#)