


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

Follow this and additional works at: 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

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.

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

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

March 3, 2003 Issue. Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics. by Frederic Spotts (Overlook; \$37.50). February 24, 2003. Save this story for later. Save this story for later. There is something refreshing about the deadpan tone that Spotts brings to his book on Hitler the artist. He has no grand theory to push, and pronounces his subject merely interesting. At times, he takes understatement too far, as when he mentions the occasional shrillness of Hitler's oratory. But his study of the Führer's fascination with architecture, painting, sculpture, and music is for the most part elegantly com

Pre-publication book reviews and features keeping readers and industry influencers in the know since 1933. Current Issue Special Issues All Issues Manage Subscription Subscribe. Writers' Center.Â Former American diplomat and cultural historian Spotts takes seriously Adolf Hitler's claim that he made an art of politics and a work of art of the Nazi state.

â€œIf I were to assess my work,â€ Hitler remarked in 1941, sounding the two overarching motifs of his regime, â€œI would first emphasize that in the face of an uncomprehending world I succeeded in making the racial idea the basis of life, and second that I made culture the driving force in German greatness.â€