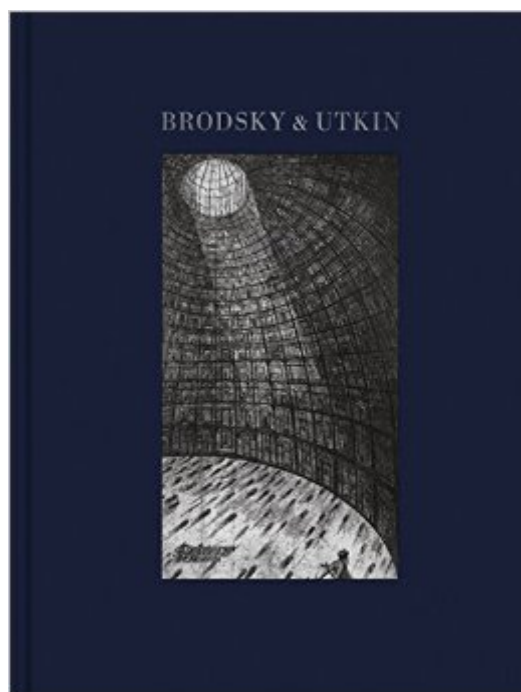


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Brodsky & Utkin



Synopsis

From 1978 to 1993, the renowned Soviet "paper architects" Alexander Brodsky and Ilya Utkin created an incredible collection of elaborate etchings depicting outlandish, often impossible, buildings and cityscapes. Funny, cerebral, and deeply human, their obsessively detailed work layers elements borrowed from Egyptian tombs, Ledoux's visionary architecture, Le Corbusier's urban master plans, and other historical precedents in etchings of breathtaking complexity and beauty. Back by popular demand following the sold-out original 1991 edition and 2003 reprint, Brodsky & Utkin presents the sum of the architects' collaborative prints and adds new material, including an updated preface by the artists' gallery representative, Ron Feldman, a new introductory essay by architect Aleksandr Mergold, visual documentation of the duo's installation work, and rare personal photographs.

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Customer Reviews

If you are familiar with the esteemed history of paper architecture, the unrealized visual fantasies of artists like Piranesi, with his carceri series, of Etienne Boullée, Ledoux and Lequeu, and into the modern era with such talents as John Hejduk and Raimond Abraham, then you are likely to be impressed by this great collection of etchings, done by the talented Russians Brodsky and Utkin. As students in Moscow, they created these amazing drawings, often as competition entries for Japan Architect's yearly conceptual design competitions. But there really was no competition; this work is in a class by itself. Like Brodsky and Utkin, I too was educated in the dark and confused time of 'postmodern' architecture, and it has left a legacy most would like to forget. There is very little left of

lasting value from this era, and most of it is intellectual, theoretical. Robert Venturi's Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture is one important book, Aldo Rossi's Architecture of the City and A Scientific Autobiography some others. Rem Koolhaas' Delirious New York and Massimo Scolari's drawings also. After that, there is a yawning chasm of real quality, sad to say. But Brodsky and Utkin's work stands as a great contribution to paper architecture AND postmodern thought. Let me try to parse out why this is so. The postmodern condition was one of self conscious awareness, a mode of production deeply aware of its historical context. Venturi's catalog of his favorite architecture detailed many subtle formal aspects of space the moderns ignored; spatial ambiguity, different scales of formal intent in one composition, and more subtle attitudes about symmetry. He also discussed the value of signs in space, with his 'duck' and 'shed' polemic.

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