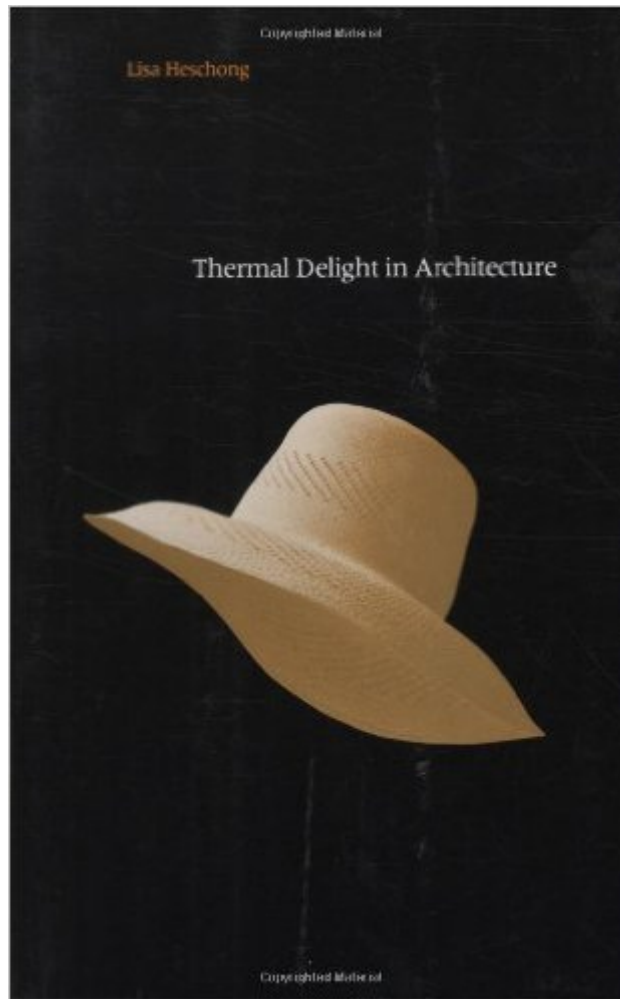


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# Thermal Delight In Architecture (MIT Press)



## Synopsis

Our thermal environment is as rich in cultural associations as our visual, acoustic, olfactory, and tactile environments. This book explores the potential for using thermal qualities as an expressive element in building design. Until quite recently, building technology and design has favored high-energy-consuming mechanical methods of neutralizing the thermal environment. It has not responded to the various ways that people use, remember, and care about the thermal environment and how they associate their thermal sense with their other senses. The hearth fire, the sauna, the Roman and Japanese baths, and the Islamic garden are discussed as archetypes of thermal delight about which rituals have developed -- reinforcing bonds of affection and ceremony forged in the thermal experience. Not only is thermal symbolism now obsolete but the modern emphasis on central heating systems and air conditioning and hermetically sealed buildings has actually damaged our thermal coping and sensing mechanisms. This book for the solar age could help change all that and open up for us a new dimension of architectural experience. As the cost of energy continues to skyrocket, alternatives to the use of mechanical force must be developed to meet our thermal needs. A major alternative is the use of passive solar energy, and the book will provide those interested in solar design with a reservoir of ideas. Lisa Heschong earned a degree in Environmental Planning from the University of California at Berkeley and once in Architecture from MIT.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Thermal Delight in Architecture is an inspiring look at the thermal aspects of architecture (temperature and humidity), a frustrating and unexciting topic for many designers. Although this work came out of the energy crisis of the 70's, its implications could not be more relevant in our time. When most architects view thermal design as efficient heating and cooling systems, heat gain and heat loss and the challenge of creating an envelope with a high R-value, Heschong approaches this topic from a completely unique and refreshing perspective. Her focus is not on the technical and monotonous aspects of thermal conditions, she looks at this subject as an architectural designer, not a mechanic or an engineer, focusing on the social, emotional and experiential significance of the thermal through a historic and cultural lens. Her thesis, although not entirely resolved in this short work, makes an argument for a new approach to architectural design, where thermal aspects are not treated with neglect and contempt but are used to enrich the experience of the inhabitant both physically and emotionally. Heschong begins her case with a look at the fundamental need for humans to stay warm and cool, dry and humid. She explores the history of mankind and how it dealt with this issue, the making of fires, shelters and places of protection from the heat of the sun. She makes a case that the human of the past dealt with this issue simply, but their solutions were full of rich experiences and allowed for a strong connection to nature. In a description of the igloo she explains how nature itself provided the protection from harmful aspects of nature and the fire was a central aspect of the home, it not only provided warmth but was the center of activity, the source of comfort and light.

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