



The Aesthetics of Ruins: Illustrated by the Author (Value Inquiry Book Series 159)

By Robert Ginsberg

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This book constructs a theory of ruins that celebrates their vitality and unity in aesthetic experience. Its argument draws upon over 100 illustrations prepared in 40 countries. Ruins flourish as matter, form, function, incongruity, site, and symbol. Ruin underlies cultural values in cinema, literature and philosophy. Finally, ruin guides meditations upon our mortality and endangered world.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The Aesthetics of Ruins is both a simulation and rewarding experience in which we learn to reconsider our perspective on ruins and aesthetics simultaneously. With good humor and clarity, Ginsberg reclaims the study of ruins from the margins... A broad work, both in its size and scope...[the] extensive and definitive bibliography ... provides an excellent source for further research on ruins." -- *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 40, No 4, Winter 2006

"insightful fragments, revealing photographs, and witty poems ... [a] courageous book on life and death" -- *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism - Volume 64, Number 2, Summer 2006*

Bibliographically, this book is outstanding. Ginsberg knows much and tells it all. -- *The Review of Metaphysics*

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elegantly written, closely argued, richly documented, impressively illustrated, and exceedingly readable ... Ginsberg's book allows us to see ruins as the ever-lasting possibility of the transformation of reality, as a discovery of the past that promises to enrich the future -- *Soundings - An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 89.3-4 Fall/Winter 2006)

has real intellectual thought and quirky insights at every turn -- *The Art Book*

insightful fragments, revealing photographs, and witty poems ... [a] courageous book on life and death -- *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*

About the Author

Robert Ginsberg was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1937. From 1952 to 1960, he studied at the University of Chicago, chiefly in aesthetics (B.A., M.A.). Assisted by Fulbright grants, he lived in Paris from 1960 to 1963, continuing his explorations in aesthetics at the Sorbonne. He did additional studies in Sweden, the Netherlands Institute for Art History in The Hague, and the University of Vienna. He returned to America to complete a Ph.D. in philosophy in Philadelphia at the University of Pennsylvania (1966). Ginsberg has engaged in study missions to Italy (classics), Israel (peace studies), and China (Confucianism). In the United States, he pursued post-doctoral studies at The Johns Hopkins University (film), University of California at Irvine (political philosophy), Brandeis University (classics), the Folger Institute in Washington (history of philosophy), and Georgetown University (classics). Research grants have taken him to Norway, the United Kingdom, Spain, Greece, Hungary, and Germany. Ginsberg taught in France and Turkey in the 1960s. In the United States, he served as adjunct professor at Drexel University, Philadelphia, and Temple University, Harrisburg. Appointed as the first faculty member at The Pennsylvania State University's Delaware County Campus in 1967, when it opened its doors in the Philadelphia suburbs, he taught for Penn State for thirty-five years. He is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Comparative Literature. During a motor tour of Scotland

in 1967, Ginsberg first discovered the beauties of ruins. Subsequently, he has traveled extensively to study and photograph ruins and lecture on them (Pl. 94). To gain experience in the field, he participated in archaeological study tours in Egypt, Tunisia, Italy, Yugoslavia, Mexico, and Guatemala. In developing a career as photographer-philosopher, he has exhibited his visual works in Paris, Hong Kong, Montreal, Philadelphia, and Washington. Among Ginsberg's publications are a handbook for students, *Welcome to Philosophy!* (1977), and a monograph on sculpture, *Gustav Vigeland: A Case Study in Art and Culture* (1984). He edited *Criticism and Theory in the Arts* (1963), *A Casebook on the Declaration of Independence* (1967), *The Critique of War: Contemporary Philosophical Explorations* (1969), and *The Philosopher as Writer: The Eighteenth Century* (1987). Ginsberg edits the book series, *New Studies in Aesthetics*. Previously, he served as editor of the Social Philosophy Research Institute Book Series (SPRIBS), the Jones and Bartlett Philosophy Series, *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, and the Value Inquiry Book Series (VIBS). As an editor, he has supervised the publication of two hundred volumes. In 1962, Robert Ginsberg and Ellen Sutor wed in Paris. Since 1972, the Ginsbergs have made their home in Takoma Park, Maryland, an historic suburb of Washington, where they direct the International Center for the Arts, Humanities, and Value Inquiry.

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