



# Sidewalk Critic: Lewis Mumford's Writings on New York

*Robert Wojtowicz*

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## **Sidewalk Critic: Lewis Mumford's Writings on New York** Robert Wojtowicz

Best known for his "Sky Line" column in the *New Yorker*, where he served as architecture critic for over 30 years, Lewis Mumford (1895-1990) is still revered as one of America's leading cultural critics and an international authority on architecture and urbanism. His provocative and polemical pieces were as well known for the emotion of his writing as for the wit and clarity of his style. A man of letters and part of Manhattan's intellectual elite, Mumford wrote more than 20 books over 6 decades, bridging the seemingly disparate disciplines of architecture, technology, literary criticism, biography, sociology, and philosophy, which he synthesized into a highly original body of work.

*Sidewalk Critic* collects over 50 of Mumford's writings that were originally published in the *New Yorker* between 1931 and 1940. These seminal essays focus almost exclusively on the New York metropolitan area, providing an unusual glimpse into one of the formative decades in the city's history. They cover all aspects of New York's architecture, including museums, theaters, bridges, tenements, parks, and recreational areas, and they range from a short musing on a midtown luncheonette to an extended series on Rockefeller Center.

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