For these buildings that we also face in this highlands the challenges of finding new uses buildings such as libraries, fire and police most rewarding large 20th century Canadian Art Deco Architecture in Toronto (2009) and also Art title supplements Morawetz's earlier book Canadian equivalent of the US New Deal. such as post offices, largely built under the cinemas and ‘Dominion’ or federal buildings by type, with sections on service stations, sometimes quite altered. They are divided photographs, but the word ‘stories’ in the war (and immediately post-war) buildings documents some of the best inter-war examples. Commercial and entertainment allow the inclusion of some immediately post- books) is a real masterpiece. However, it does not art. Typically Canadian motifs from First nation culture and early French settlement. The author's need to justify its inclusion as ‘its overall form is not Art Deco’ shows the drawbacks of the book’s approach. ‘The Library was renovated in 2005, without detracting from its character according to Morawetz, but it’s clear that other buildings in the book have fared less well. As in the US, it’s clear that heritage protection is fragmented at provincial and municipal levels, but some background on this issue would have been helpful.

Defining buildings as ‘Art Deco’ (or not) often means that pieces of work are omitted, or at least neglected. The book does, however, contain some of Canada’s most notable inter-war religious buildings, such as St. James’s Anglican Church in Vancouver by Adrian Gilbert Scott (1935-37), one of its best buildings, and St Benoît-du-Lac Abbey in Quebec province by the great Benedicteine monk-architect Dom Belot, built in 1939-41 – he died here in 1944 as he could not return to Europe because of WWII. Despite the question of definition referred to above, this is a really good introduction to inter-war Canadian architecture. • Robert Drake

C20 members can get a 15 per cent discount on this book from armchair.ca (not armchair.co.uk) by entering the code 20CSocUK at the checkout with President Trump wanting to build a wall, this book and the exhibition it accompanied are a timely reminder of the rich cultural interchange between California and (in particular) and Mexico. The exhibition, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), was part of the Getty Foundation’s Pacific StandardTime LASA programme, in which over 50 cultural institutions explored Latin American and Latin Art. In such an outcome of cultural and artistic expression, yet another book and exhibition. ‘The Tears are shed for the living,’ a voice on the soundtrack says, ‘we never shed tears for the dead.’

Esther McCoy returns in the final section, Modernism. Her work as a journalist and critic was frequently published in editor-owned John Entenza’s highly influential Arts & Architecture, a magazine that was ‘as a tortilla and leek as a Baguette’, and which embraced Pan-American modernism. Described here as its ‘star correspondent’, McCoy was, from the early 1950s, central to the promulgation of modern Mexican architecture north of the border – and vice versa. The dialogue was now flowing in two ways: in Mexico, the magazines Revista y Arquitectura/México were showing the work of the California modernists, such as Richard Neutra, whose Kaufmann House in Palm Springs (1946) was published in Architectural Digest in February 1950; while eighteen months later, Arts & Architecture featured Luis Barragán’s own house in Taxalco, Mexico City (1948), on the front cover. The same issue contained McCoy’s essay: Architecture in Mexico is a very large venue, and this book an excellent investigation of the architecture and design that binds these two countries (and, of ideas and inspiration might at first seem to show little from Mexico, where there was a long-established cultural heritage, to give the story away, was using the C20, comparatively little. This story begins with the Panama-Pacific International Exposition held in San Diego and San Francisco in 1915, to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal. In contrast to San Francisco, the San Diego promoters sought to show off Southern California through the use of the Mission Revival style recently amplified and simplified in a proto-modernist way by local architect Irving Gill. But it was Boston architect Bernard Goodhue who won the competition (as his Spanish Mission house in Worcester, the Mission Inn in Riverside, to comment that ‘Guggenheim’s influence was felt for generations to come in every town and village of California.’ How right he was. And so it was in Mexico, where what became known popurally as California brought ‘California’s Mission Style architecture back to Mexico’. But it was not Mexican, as Francisco Ferraz’s Pasaje Polanco (1931) and later Barragán’s (1934), both in Mexico City, demonstrate: neither red roof tiles nor round towers had been used in colonial times. Now, in post-revolutionary Mexico (the civil war that followed the revolution lasted until 1920), this was seen as American and so rejected by modernist Mexican architects, not so much on grounds of style as of nationalism.

Pre-Hispanic (Aztec and Mayan) revivals offered the opportunity to construct a purely ‘American’ and specifically regional identity. Although employed, complete uniformity in pre-Hispanic columns from Chichén Itzá, by the Mexican government to celebrate the Amalfitani’s Mexican Pavilion at the Exposición Iberoamericana in Seville, Spain (1928-29), it was Frank Lloyd Wright who most famously adapted the style in his Los Angeles houses of the 1920s. He first introduced it at the Bermuda’s ‘Holphick’ House (1921) but it was the concrete-block houses of 1923-24 (Storer, Millard, Freeman and Ennis) that he developed it as (as shown in his 1954 book, The Organic House) as an innovative design construction method. Yet these houses had about as much to do with pre-Hispanic architecture as its colonial progenitors and did not disambiguate Imperial Hotel in Tokyo (1922) and Yamazaki House in Aquisia (1924) had to do with Japanese architecture. More authentic – it is another thing entirely – was the work of the British-born and trained Robert Stacey-Judd, whose Mayan-style buildings such as the Aztec Hotel in Monrovia (1924) and the Masonic Temple in Van Noy (1915) promoted the style up until after its back date.

In the section on Folk Art and Craft, the writers introduce the architectural journal Esther McCoy was a champion of Mexican design, an epithet that could equally well be applied to Charles and Ray Eames. Their interest in folk art was central to their film Day of the Dead. Made in 1957 for the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the film took its title from the three-day religious holiday (31 October to 2 November) that combines both pre-colonial and Spanish Catholic traditions. Shot in close-ups both still and moving, it was an introduction to Mexican folk art, such as the figures themselves collected, as well as a way of exploring the holiday’s spiritual meanings. ‘Tears are shed for the living,’ a voice on the soundtrack says, ‘we never shed tears for the dead.’

Neil Jackson

In Found in Translation: Design in California and Mexico 1915-1985 ed Wendy Kaplan Prestel, £30, C20 £30

Art Deco Architecture across Canada: Stories of the country’s buildings between the two World Wars Tim Morawetz Harbour, £20, pp 185

Installation photograph, “Found in Translation: Design in California and Mexico, 1915â€“1985.” Los Angeles County Museum of Art, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA. In March, Staci Steinberger, an assistant curator of decorative arts and design at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), made a thrilling discovery on eBay. She had been furiously working to track down design objects for the exhibition “Found in Translation: Design in California and Mexico, 1915â€“1985,” which tackles the exchange of influences between Mexico and California. But she couldn’t find a good example of a Maya.