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Review of Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics

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LJ Review Cover Sheet and Survey

Your name: Michael F. Russo

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Title of the book: *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*

Author or editor of the book: Frederic Spotts

This book is recommended for: public & academic libraries

Comments for your editor:

Review

Author: Frederic Spotts

Title: *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*

Publisher: The Overlook Press

Release date: January 2003

Number of pages: pages. 488

Features: 100 B/W and 4 color illustrations; indexed

Format: Hard cover

ISBN: 1-58567-345-5

Price: \$37.50

Unlike biographies of Adolf Hitler which focus on the ideological and humanitarian disaster wrought by his intense anti-Semitism, Spotts' book posits that the thirteen-year nightmare of the Third Reich was just as much a result of Hitler's artistic nature. Though other authors have touched on certain aspects of Hitler's artistic side—Speer (*Inside the Third Reich*) on Hitler's obsession with monumental architecture, Fest (*Hitler*) on the relationship between the dictator's grandiosity and his love of Wagnerian opera—only Spotts has leapt with both feet into a full exploration of Der Führer as artist.

Spotts argues that it was Hitler's aesthetic nature that compelled him to destroy society only to re-create it according to the image in his artist's eye. All the arts felt his deadening influence, and his influence was very, very personal indeed.

While truly seminal art always envisions something new, Hitler's art—the art of centuries past—envisioned nothing new. Modern art repelled him. Spotts makes the point visually, with numerous photographs and drawings—many by Hitler himself. Hitler used Germany and, later, Europe as his canvas to make a picture his stunted mind could understand. Spotts, with scholarship and true artistry, has exposed this picture in a book that is accessible to the average reader, but that will be of interest to academicians as well.

Michael F. Russo

Louisiana State University Libraries

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

The best book on the matter is Frederic Spotts's *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, which takes Hitler's artistic side seriously. Spotts comments: "He had a modicum of talent" at least in sketching buildings "but what technique he learned he picked up on his own. Like most amateurs, he began by painting simple landscapes. With neither innate originality nor professional training, he went on to imitate the watercolors and prints of the south German school and the postcard scenes "everyday urban views" that were popular at the time.. Moreover, he had to paint the sort of thing that a 3,042 words. Frederic Spotts *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* New York: The Overlook Press, 2003. Leaders throughout history have frequently deployed the arts as a means by which to display their power. Hitler is unusual, however, in that art was central to his political vision. He was intensely interested in the arts (painting, sculpture, music, and architecture) and dreamed of forging a state whose artistic and cultural achievements would rival those of ancient Greece and Rome. [Read more](#)

First time visiting Audible? Get this book free when you sign up for a 30-day Trial. Publisher's Summary. A startling reassessment of Hitler's aims and motivations, Frederic Spotts' *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* is an adroitly argued and highly original work that provides a key to fuller understanding of the Third Reich. Spotts convincingly demonstrates that, contrary to the traditional view that Hitler had no life outside of politics, Hitler's interest in the arts was as intense as his racism - and that he used the arts to disguise the heinous crimes that were the means to fulfilling his ends. Hitler's vision of the Aryan superstate was to be expressed. The best book on the matter is Frederic Spotts's *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, which takes Hitler's artistic side seriously. Spotts comments: "He had a modicum of talent" at least in sketching buildings "but what technique he learned he picked up on his own. Like most amateurs, he began by painting simple landscapes. With neither innate originality nor professional training, he went on to imitate the watercolors and prints of the south German school and the postcard scenes "everyday urban views" that were popular at the time.. Moreover, he had to paint the sort of thing that a