



# The Bureaucracy of Beauty: Design in the Age of its Global Reproducibility

*Arindam Dutta*

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*The Bureaucracy of Beauty* is a wide-ranging work of cultural theory that connects literary studies, postcoloniality, the history of architecture and design, and the history and present of empire. Professor Ananya Roy of UC Berkeley calls it a "fantastic book," and in many ways this is the best description of it. *The Bureaucracy of Beauty* begins with nineteenth-century Britain's Department of Science and Arts, a venture organized by the Board of Trade, and how the DSA exerted a powerful influence on the growth of museums, design schools, and architecture throughout the British Empire. But this is only the book's literal subject: in a remarkable set of chapters, Dutta explores the development of international laws of intellectual property, ideas of design pedagogy, the technological distinction between craft and industry, the relation of colonial tutelage to economic policy, the politics and technology of exhibition, and competing philosophies of aesthetics. His thinking across these areas is ignited by engagements with Benjamin, Marx, Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham, Kant, Mill, Ruskin, and Gandhi.

A rich study in the history of ideas, of design and architecture, and of cultural politics, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty* converges on the issues of present-day globalization. From nineteenth-century Britain to twenty-first century America, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty* offers a theory of how things - big things - change.



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