



Disciplining Bodies in the Gymnasium: Memory, Monument, Modernity (Sport in the Global Society)

Sherry Mckay, Patricia Vertinsky

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Architecture and design have been used to exert control over bodies, across lines of class, gender and race. They regulate access to certain spaces and facilities, impose physical or psychological barriers, and make particular activities possible for specific groups.

Built in 1951, the War Memorial Gymnasium at the University of British Columbia is a prize-winning example of modernist architecture. Although conceived to honour the dead of World War II, it was far from being a neutral memorial and gymnasium for everyday athletes.

This collection shows what the design, construction and shifting functions and spatial configurations of the building reveal about the values and aspirations of the university in the post-war years. It shows how the building reflected the social and power relations among university administrators, architects and planners, faculty, staff and students, and demonstrates how the culture and structure of the gymnasium responded to changing attitudes to competition, discipline, profession, gender, race and health. As the editors explain, built form has politics, and culture - sporting culture - is just politics by another name.

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