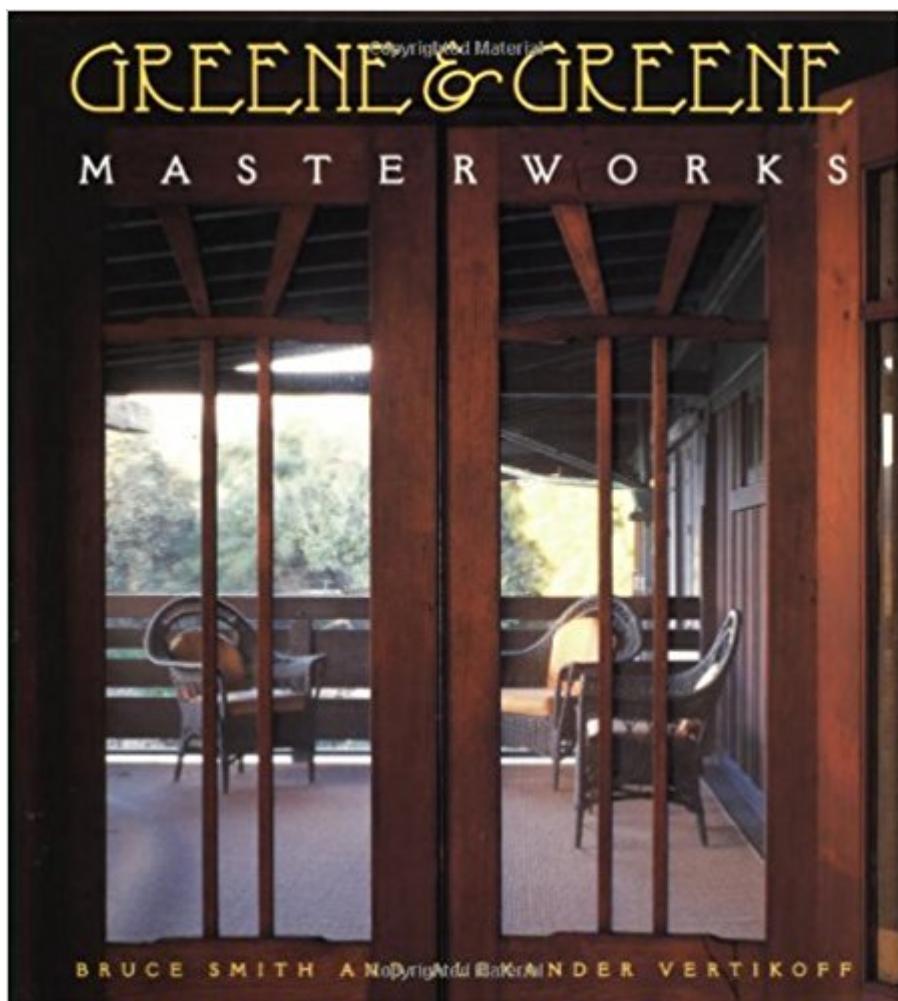


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# Greene And Greene: Masterworks



## Synopsis

In the first decades of the 20th century, Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene almost single-handedly defined the Arts and Crafts aesthetic in America as the architectural firm Greene & Greene. The only full-color survey of the firm's greatest works-including several newly restored to their original grandeur-Greene & Greene reveals the consummate artistry that ensured the brothers' place among the most brilliant of American architects. An in-depth tour of 25 magnificent homes, this book examines the creative evolution of their style. From the Gamble House in Pasadena, California whose director contributes the book's foreword to lesser-known gems throughout the state, Greene & Greene is a wonderful introduction to the brothers' work, and a warm homage to the charms of this refined domestic architecture.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

With Gustav Stickley and Frank Lloyd Wright, Charles Sumner Greene and brother Henry Mather Greene defined the Arts & Crafts movement in America. From their offices in Pasadena, they created "Ultimate Bungalows," finely crafted homes characterized by the integration of architecture and interior design into a harmonious whole. Though both brothers had long and distinguished careers, the highpoint of their work came between 1903 and 1909, when they created such lasting masterpieces as The Gamble House in Pasadena, the Pratt House in Ojai, and the Thorsen House in Berkeley. Greene & Greene: Masterworks presents their work in this era in loving detail. Bruce Smith, who wrote the text for the book, is an authority on the Arts & Crafts movement, and is currently working on a biography of Charles Greene. Alexander Vertikoff's lush photography is the

perfect accompaniment to the text, beautifully capturing the sweeping grandeur of each house as well as capturing the subtle details that make each Greene & Greene home a treasure. After an overview of the Arts & Crafts movement and a brief biography of the brothers, the book turns its attention to various details that characterized the brothers' style. In the section on entryways, for instance, they point out that Rarely in a Greene and Greene house is there an abrupt division between inside and out. One enters by transitions, in stages. Brick steps may lead up from the garden to a porch. Shelter comes from a gabled overhang or sleeping porch that extends from above--one is covered but still able to feel the breeze. The pattern in the door's art glass evokes the natural world being left behind. Stepping inside, one still does not feel totally enclosed; across the entrance hall are doorways framing a vista of gardens beyond. After exploring the details, they move on to the houses themselves, looking at 24 houses ranging from the modest, unassuming Brandt-Serrurier House in Altadena--a single story cottage built in 1905--to their greatest creation, The Gamble House in Pasadena. A short history and examination of details is given to each house, but by and large the houses are allowed to speak for themselves through dazzling photos. One of the most striking features of each house is the honey-colored light that fills each room as it pours through Japanese-inspired stained glass chandeliers and is reflected from rich mahogany and teak floors and furniture. To walk through a Greene & Greene house was to walk through a work of fine art. As Henry Greene said, "The idea was to eliminate everything unnecessary, to make the whole as direct and simple as possible, but always with the beautiful in mind as the first goal." As Greene & Greene: Masterworks clearly shows, they succeeded brilliantly. --Laszlo Simonyi

"The architect brothers who took the Arts and Crafts movement in America to unsurpassed heights of refinement--Charles Sumner Greene (1868-1957) and Henry Mather Greene (1871-1954)--were in several respects the equals of their greatest contemporary, the similarly long-lived Frank Lloyd Wright. The Greenes' reverence for the classical culture of Japan, belief in the complete integration of architecture and interior design, disdain for historical styles and profound understanding of natural materials were all values they held in common with their more famous colleague. Regrettably, the fraternal partners did not share Wright's indomitable resilience or genius for late-life transformation. All three men went into a precipitous professional decline by the outbreak of World War 1, when the Arts and Crafts style fell out of fashion, but only Wright's fortunes ultimately revived. The Greenes, who worked in the idyllic Los Angeles suburb of Pasadena, where they built most of their houses, dissolved their joint practice in 1922 and struggled on separately until the Depression finally ended their careers..." -- New York Times'Greene & Greene' is the first book to survey the remarkable

architecture of Charles and Henry Greene, California architects and brothers who embraced the American Arts and Crafts Movement at the turn of the century. The Greenes mostly designed private homes for their neighbors in Pasadena, California, and frequently fashioned windows, light fixtures and furnishings for the houses they built. Splendid photography shows how they blended an interest in Asian art with their Eastern Shingle style training to create a genre all their own. Any reader interested in the Arts and Crafts Movement will find ideas for furnishings and inspiration from the artistry of these architects. -- *Country Home*[D]espite the beauty of Alexander Vertikoff's color photographs of the Greenes' sophisticated bungalows, their autumnal tonalities also project a certain poignancy. In his intelligent text, Bruce Smith, a specialist in Arts and Crafts design, recounts the personal histories of the architects' enlightened upper-class clients. -- *The New York Times Book Review*, Martin Filler

A good architectural design - especially as one as in-depth as the Greenes', which at times included furniture as well as architecture and landscaping - is like a hundred-piece orchestra. Each cloud lift and ebony spline is like a note being played by a skilled musician, with the Greenes conducting. Like any work of art, each has its own design grammar; and like any design grammar, theirs is not monolithic. Over time, it evolved, picking up some elements and discarding others. Certain elements were used in some contexts but not others, according to the state of the design grammar at the time, as well as how the elements worked as a part of the whole design. There was a certain understated quality - the Craftsman movement was partly a rejection of the overwrought Victorian designs that preceded it - and so everything was laid out just so. There are many examples of people admiring the Greenes' work, and deciding that they want similar furniture (or a remodel, or an entirely new home) that looks as though the Greenes designed it. However, these are often executed with only a poor understanding of the Greenes' design grammar, or the particular expressions of intention that were built around it as it matured over the years. If you are interested in understanding the Greenes' design grammar, and how it evolved over the years, and how they wove their intentions around it in different contexts and for different purposes, you have to load up your brain with as many of their patterns and sequences as you can. You have to learn about their personal history, where they were educated, and how. You need to know about the Craftsman movement, including what parts of it they embraced (such as its architecture, and the craftsman as the end product, not just the finished work) and which they didn't (socialism.) You need to understand that they were trained in woodworking as teenagers, and in the Beaux-Arts style at MIT, and that they found the social atmosphere of early 1900s Pasadena to be far less conformist and

restrictive than what they left behind on the opposite side of the country. You must also be aware that Charles was fascinated with Japanese architecture and other forms of art. Their masterpieces were designed as though they flowed naturally from and with their surroundings; each design worked with the particulars of each site. You have to look at every photograph and drawing you can get your hands on, so that your brain can start to intuit what belongs where - and what else it relates to - and why they most likely did it that way, and not some other. You must learn the particulars of each element, but you must also learn their sequence. The style changed over time, and there is real meaning in those changes. There are things they did earlier in their careers, but not later. There are things they did in the Blacker House that they never did again - not because they came up with something better, but because they thought of that house as their magnum opus. Likewise, there were elements they used in their mansions that they didn't use in their regular houses. If you could actually watch Charles Greene sit down, draft a design, erase a part of it and replace it with something else, then throw away the entire sheet and start anew with something better, you would eventually find yourself able to predict what he would do next. Over time, your predictions would get more and more accurate. You would not only see the patterns he used, but the sequences in which he used them. That is precisely the way the human brain operates internally, and so presenting it with data in that format is the best way for it to learn. Unfortunately, this is not possible. However, with this book - which should NOT be your only source of information, I might add - you can derive a lot of benefit. It highlights the design elements - exteriors, interiors, staircases, fireplaces, furniture, etc. - and then it shows a nice selection of their houses in chronological order. So, you get a vast array of patterns, as well as the sequences that organize them relative to one another and relative to the particulars of each house. Seeing the order in which the elements were added makes each one stand out in a design - in form, function, and relation to other things. Now, you can view their work in a whole new light. You can see that it's beautiful - but you can also see WHY it's beautiful. You can become intimately familiar with as many details as you like, and the whole piece will seem that much more nuanced and gorgeous. This is what you really need before you can ask yourself, "How would Charles and Henry have done this?" You won't necessarily get the answer 100% right, but the more information you have memorized, the better your intuition will be able to serve you.

Not really what I was expecting based off the other glowing reviews. This book is NOT a book that will teach you the Greene & Greene style, where you're provided with plans or instructions on construction methods. Is this book a good inspiration? Yes, it is. I do like how they adapted the Asian style to the Arts & Crafts movement of the time as that was pretty clever and interesting. There are

nice photo's throughout the book, and it would seem that they are focused on a few of the fully restored homes, as you can see different shots and different angles of the same home recycled throughout the book. Very little of this book is directed towards the furniture design, and mostly towards architecture. It's a good coffee table book with a bit of history thrown in, which could easily be gleaned through a search on the internet. If I could rate it at 2.5 stars I would. I don't hate the book, but I don't love it either. It doesn't warrant a 3 star rating either.

I really love this book. I'm the type of person who really gets lost in these types of books, and this one is no exception. I could look through these photographs for hours. The detailed descriptions of each project are also very impressive. As other reviewers have mentioned, it would be really nice to see scale floor plans of the homes, but I understand why they were not included. I'd bet they don't exist anymore for most of the houses. The book gives the reader great insight into the development of the Greene and Greene style and the relationship between the brothers. I'm glad that the craftspeople who were contracted to build the houses were also discussed in many cases. That information provides avenues for more exploration and research. I would HIGHLY recommend this book to anyone with a budding or developed appreciation for Greene and Green or the Arts and Crafts movement in general. It's a wonderful addition to my library.

The story of the Greene brothers is bittersweet. Greene and Greene built, in their day, houses that rival Frank Lloyd Wright's. Their day was short, however, and their fame never reached Wright's. You will agree after reading "Greene & Greene: Masterworks", that their art was as brilliantly creative and harmonious as that of Wright. In this book we sample what remains of their work, both the almost-forgotten houses, and those better-known, in particular the houses in Pasadena, CA, including the Gamble House. (This house is open to the public and anyone who finds himself south of the Tehachapi should make the pilgrimage.) Until then, "Greene & Greene: Masterworks" will give you a feel for the smooth, integrated beauty and grace of the creations of these arts-and-crafts architects. Their genius can be seen in the details, which make a Greene and Green house akin to a wooden puzzle, each piece of which is entirely necessary to the whole. The book presents photos of the warm beauty of the wood used by the Greenes and the detail that integrates the rooms inside with the porches, roofs, and doors outside and relates the entire house to its site. The Greene brothers' work glows with extraordinary creativity and this book, with words and pictures, helps us to understand what they were doing and to grasp their importance. The careers of the brothers were dissipated by the depression, denying us the larger body of work and the public buildings we might

have had if they had continued working into their full maturity. Greene & Greene: Masterworks is a fine begining of a more widespread knowledge of the Greenes and their beautiful houses.

## Favorite style

This is one of the most enjoyable books I've seen. It came recommended by a woodworking instructor in Southern California.

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