



Gotham Restored: The Preservation of Monumental New York

James Rudnick

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James Rudnick moved to Brooklyn, New York, in 1977 to attend graduate school and almost immediately began to photograph two nearby landmarks: the Statue of Liberty and the Brooklyn Bridge. Both structures were approaching their centennials, and Rudnick was soon drawn into the resulting restorations as a documentary photographer. He followed this work, in the 1980s and 1990s, with similar projects at the New York Public Library and Grand Central Terminal. These four monuments are emblems of America's transformation at the end of the nineteenth century and, more particularly, of New York City.

Rudnick's photographs -- both color and black-and-white -- are a unique exploration of the great architecture of New York, from "before" shots showing sadly ignored structures to fascinating in-progress images of craftspeople and techniques to spectacular views of the gleaming, post-restoration monuments.

Accompanying the photographs in this beautifully designed volume is text by Thomas Mellins that discusses the history of New York City, notably the period from 1865 to 1915 in which the four landmarks were built, as well as the development of the city's historic preservation movement, both popular and institutional.

Rudnick himself describes the details of each restoration in informative captions; his evocative afterword beautifully recounts his own engagement with the spectacular architectural legacy of New York.

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