

The Great Hypostyle at Karnak

Angela Deuber Architect – Chur, Switzerland



Angela Deuber Architect, *The Great Hypostyle at Karnak*, study, 2017

Depicting the implied space between four columns of the Great Hypostyle at Karnak, Angela Deuber casts and inverts negative space. In the picture the columns are strongly present. However, the Egyptians did not imagine the interior as enclosed:

“Aversion to interior space—Great Hypostyle, Karnak: Columns of the side aisles of the great hypostyle, whose 134 colossal papyrus columns fill the void of the hall so that no interior space can develop. This was strengthened by offsetting the column centers in alternate row.”¹

And they didn’t imagine a roof, which means the columns directly support the sky:

“The great hypostyle halls with their forests of papyrus-columns, blue-painted ceilings, and dim lightning were not conceived as enclosed interior spaces. This is everywhere apparent from their tectonic treatment... the Egyptians, like the Babylonians, considered the temple ceiling as a heavenly vault.”²

1 Siegfried Giedion, *The Eternal Present: A Contribution on Consistency and Change*, vol. 1 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1962–64), 508.
2 *Ibid.*, 509.



The Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, Egypt, c. 1290–1224 BC