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REVIEW

## Reviews Spring 2019

Paul Emmons, Bernd Kulawik, Paul Ranogajec, Hanneke Ronnes and Andrew Leach

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Emmons, P. A review of: Jordan Kauffman, *Drawing on Architecture: The Object of Lines, 1970–1990*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018.

Kulawik, B. A review of: Kaspar Zollikofer, *Die Cappella Gregoriana. Der erste Innenraum von Neu-Sankt-Peter in Rom und seine Genese*. Basel: Schwabe, 2016.

Ranogajec, P. A review of: Eric Mumford, *Designing the Modern City: Urbanism since 1850*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018.

Ronnes, H. A review of: Merlijn Hurx, *Architecture as Profession: The Origins of Architectural Practice in the Low Countries in the Fifteenth Century*. Turnhout: Brepols.

Leach, A. A review of: *Zevi's Architects: History and Counter-History of Italian Architecture, 1944–2000*, curated by Pippo Ciorra and Jean-Louis Cohen, Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo (MAXXI), Rome, Italy, 25 April to 16 September 16 2018.

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### Valuing Architectural Drawing

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Jordan Kauffman, *Drawing on Architecture: The Object of Lines, 1970–1990*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 384 pages, 2018, ISBN: 9780262037372.

Architectural drawings participate in a large variety of cultural practices grounded in the diverse intentions and interpretations of countless individuals. Jordan Kauffman's book, *Drawing on Architecture: The Object of Lines, 1970–1990*, is not so much about architectural drawings as about their reception, collection, and commodification (**Figure 1**). Collecting architectural drawings is not new. Drawings were kept for any variety of reasons, from preserving information to aesthetic appreciation or ritual action. With the origins of modern architectural drawing in the Renaissance, architects commonly acquired drawings for their own use as a reference that contains and communicates the expertise of the field. *Drawing on Architecture* briefly outlines this tradition, beginning with Giorgio Vasari.

Kauffman's book focuses on the 'profound change' in collecting practices of architectural drawings that emerged in the two-decade period from 1970 to 1990. Prior to this time, Kauffman explains, architectural drawings were conceived primarily as 'a means to an end' for building construction. Beginning in the 1970s, however, interest in collecting architectural drawings as part of the art market increased

dramatically. Architectural drawings became collectible commodities. This shift, while widely acknowledged, has not been carefully documented (but see Lepik 2014). Kauffman deftly untangles a complex network of architects, collectors, galleries, and institutions that he locates primarily in New York, but which reaches across North America, to Europe and beyond. Kauffman frames this change as 'the genesis of architectural drawings as autonomous objects'.

A thorough study of archives, a review of personal papers and 45 interviews underpin the book and the personal stories that enliven it. Other important published sources are exhibition catalogues and reviews. Of the book's 100 images, most are installation photographs of gallery exhibitions, as well as catalogue covers and exhibit posters (77); about twenty percent are reproductions of architectural drawings (21). The predominant black and white installation photos record the hanging of drawings on gallery walls. Two diagrams at the outset announce the book's focus: one depicting the interrelationships between the primary actors in the network Kauffman unpacks, the other a timeline of events including shows and collecting activities.

Kauffman begins with the 1970s because of the reconsideration of modernism at that time and a number of 'seminal' exhibitions of architecture drawings. Outstanding is *The Architecture of the École des Beaux-Arts* curated by Arthur Drexler at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) (1975–76) with over 200 architectural drawings. The display of eloquent ink washes produced by Beaux-Arts architects and students rekindled interest in the expressiveness of architectural drawing. Other exhibitions highlighted the growing status of drawing among the fine arts. These exhibits provided the groundwork for considering architectural drawings for their own merits.



**Figure 1:** Book cover of Jordan Kauffman's *Drawing on Architecture: The Object of Lines, 1970–1990*. Photo credit: The MIT Press.

Four different types of collectors are described: private collectors, corporate collectors, commercial galleries, and major art institutions. According to Kauffman, these architectural drawing collections, beginning in the 1970s, gave rise to 'understanding architectural drawings as autonomous objects' as they began 'to be understood as art'. An entire chapter is devoted to the impact of architecture shows at the Leo Castelli Gallery. Already respected for launching careers of leading modern artists, in 1977 Castelli mounted the second commercial show in New York of contemporary architectural drawings. Despite a lack of commercial success, but with much critical attention, Castelli hosted two more shows, *Houses for Sale* (1980) and *Follies* (1983), which offered the purchase of either a drawing or an entire project built under direction of the architect. This approach to commissioning architectural services failed to attract buyers, though it intriguingly linked the commodification of drawing with building.

Following Castelli's first architecture show, other galleries in the US and Europe quickly began developing the architectural drawing market. The opening of galleries outside of New York also involved a greater range of

architects. In 1979 the Max Protetch Gallery in New York opened a group show of artists and architects who all considered architecture as subject matter; the gallery followed this approach of commingling artists and architects thereafter. It would be interesting to know if any of the architect/artist collaborations that have developed since then, such as that between César Pelli and Siah Armajani, resulted from these exhibitions. At this time, architectural drawings were considered aesthetic objects, similar to painting and sculpture.

By the late 1970s, major art museums as well as a number of academic institutions began holding architectural drawing shows, in New York, Washington DC, Ottawa, Montreal, Helsinki, Berlin, Köln, Frankfurt, Paris, Rome, and Venice. Specialized architecture museums appeared in part because architecture drawings were accepted as legitimate historical research. Leading auction houses such as Sotheby's and Christie's entered the architecture drawing market as well. This aggressive collecting ended around 1990 when the market for 'architectural drawings had collapsed and the discourse surrounding drawings had diminished'. Kauffman explains this was because fashions changed with the 1988 *Deconstructivist Architecture* show

at MoMA and also because of the shift in drawing technology to computerization. However, he writes, 'though the period of inquiry had ended, it was given a future' because institutions continued to collect architectural drawings as historical artefacts.

This elegant volume is primarily a book of lists: the exhibitions and collections, each of the architects appearing in them, and the particular works displayed. This detailed organization of information is itself a substantial contribution. Appendices with more lists capture valuable information at the end of individual chapters, though they would be better located at the end of the book where they would not disrupt the flow of the text. The thorough documentation of this historical moment could be augmented with more discussion of the underlying intellectual and cultural positions. For example, Pierre Bourdieu's publication of 1979, for example, is a critique of art as appropriation of symbolic capital to construct social class identity through intangible factors such as prestige and concrete monetary values (Bourdieu 1984). His ideas could aid in exploring the implications and motivations of a relatively small group of interconnected architects and others who, according to Kauffman, instigated this fundamental change in attitude toward architectural drawing.

Part of the book's success is its clear definition of the two-decade period under study. However, if amplified across a broader time frame, it could provide further illumination. Kauffman already notes the founding of MoMA's Department of Architecture and Design in 1932. He also describes the Royal Academy exhibitions in London, which since the academy's founding in 1769 have included architects' drawings (Hallett et al. 2018). By 1935, the architect W.R. Lethaby used the phrase 'paper architect' to articulate the dilemma that Kauffman locates in the 1970s and '80s: 'There are two ideals: sound, honest, human building; or brilliant drawings of exhibition designs' (1935: 125). Rather than minimizing a larger temporal horizon, it may be more revealing to embrace it.

The commodification of architectural drawings as artworks resulted in fundamental changes in how they are conceptualized. But what is the impact when architects are self-consciously reaching for 'artistic' content? The conclusion that drawings become 'autonomous objects of art' would be more informative if the significance of 'autonomous' is unpacked. Kauffman seems to accept architectural drawings as artworks when they are framed and hung on a gallery wall. A similarity of display does not establish a categorical identity. Paradoxically, at a time when contemporary architectural drawings are treated like art because they are framed, contemporary art moves in the opposite direction, away from this narrow idea of display. Simultaneous approaches like conceptual art de-emphasize the importance of the art object.

In the same time period that Kauffman studies, the philosopher Arthur Danto (1964) introduces the concept of the 'Artworld' which George Dickie (1974) and others developed into an institutional theory of art. The artworld comprises all those involved in producing, commissioning, presenting, preserving, promoting, chronicling, criticizing, and selling fine art that allows one to distinguish art

from non-art. This definition appeals not to connoisseurship to judge the appearance of a drawing, but considers instead the artworld or defining context of a drawing. The thorough descriptions in this book make one wish for a more refined reflection on the complex nuances at play in changing ideas about architectural drawings. Nonetheless, Kauffman's work will remain a primary resource on the history of the commodification of architectural drawing.

### Recovering the Importance of the Cappella Gregoriana

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Kaspar Zollikofer, *Die Cappella Gregoriana. Der erste Innenraum von Neu-Sankt-Peter in Rom und seine Genese*, Basel: Schwabe, 382 pages, 2016; ISBN: 9783796533501.

The Cappella Gregoriana is the domed space located on the north-east corner of St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, constructed in the 16th century under the auspices of Pope Gregory XIII (1572–85). Notably, it was the first chapel within St. Peter's to be built and fully decorated. While contemporaries of the late 16th century admired this space as an exemplary creation, its reception today does not reflect this importance. This may in part be because the sources do not allow scholars to attribute its design and construction to a definitive artist or architect. But Zollikofer's rich and concise study should redirect the historiography of the chapel. Covering 230 pages of text, including 72 pages of transcribed sources, 18 pages of bibliography and 36 pages with illustrations, the author systematically analyzes all aspects of the remarkably interesting space (**Figure 2**). He begins with the architectural form – almost, but not entirely defined by the overall *gestalt* of St. Peter's developed by architects from Bramante to Michelangelo – describing the interior with its many complex relations to objects inside and outside the building. In doing so, he draws attention to the many far-reaching cultural aspects Pope Gregory XIII and his advisors considered – from the location and geographical orientation of the chapel, to the history of the Catholic and Orthodox churches and contemporary developments in the sciences. Through carefully chosen and interpreted sources, and a multi-perspective, interdisciplinary examination of the building, Zollikofer demonstrates that, although no single 'author' of the chapel is known, it must have been developed according to a coherent, well-planned project. Even beyond the study of St. Peter's, Zollikofer's book is an exemplar of thorough, detailed scholarship and might be used as a model for further studies of this kind, especially in regard to overlooked structures of early modern architecture.

In the book's introduction, Zollikofer situates the Cappella Gregoriana within the complex planning and construction history of St. Peter's Basilica, and describes its contemporary state during the time of Gregory XIII, as it



**Figure 2:** Book cover of Kaspar Zollikofer's *Die Cappella Gregoriana. Der erste Innenraum von Neu-Sankt-Peter in Rom und seine Genese*.

emerged between the still standing parts of Constantine's ancient basilica and the new Vatican palace. Zollikofer's reconstruction and interpretation of the chapel's rich decorative programme demonstrates that it was intended to spur further, meaningful decoration within the new basilica and did so at least in a formal manner. In the same way, the chapel also became the model for new Baroque church decoration from the late 16th to the 18th century. The Cappella Paolina and Cappella Sistina in Sta. Maria Maggiore, Rome, are prime examples of this. There is hardly any church dating after the final quarter of the 16th century that does not feature walls decorated with coloured stones or stucco, real or imitation, which cannot be traced back to this model. Another important decorative element are the mosaics, which appear in the chapel for the first time since medieval Rome, with the notable exception of Raphael's Cappella Chigi. Zollikofer investigates both the coloured stones and the mosaics in relation

to their original cultural contexts in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, as well as to the Cappella Chigi, which, astonishingly, does not appear to have served as a model for the Cappella Gregoriana. Rather, he shows that the later chapel's decoration was inspired by ancient Roman examples, still visible at the time. As most of these were destroyed prior to the 19th century, the important and meaningful relationship of the Cappella Gregoriana to such examples was forgotten or went unrecognized by art and architectural historians and archaeologists, until now.

The novelty of the chapel's decoration is underscored by the fact that neither Antonio da Sangallo the Younger nor Michelangelo, his adversary and successor at St. Peter's, had planned anything similar for their changing and constantly developing projects. And this novelty also becomes clear when one takes into consideration the nearby church of St. Spirito in Sassia, finished only a very few years before the Cappella Gregoriana was begun, and

typically viewed as an exemplar of mannerist decoration. Zollikofer's discussion of the possible models for the new decorative scheme and technique using coloured stones taken from ancient ruins is bounded with a reconstruction of the pope's motivations. In this, the author only seems to have overlooked one crucial detail: the fact that several of the leading individual persons involved in the project – including Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola (architect of St. Peter's during the chapel's construction), his biographer and editor of his treatise on perspective, Egnatio Danti, and cardinal Sirleto – had also worked together in the so-called Accademia de lo studio de l'architettura. This academy, usually confused with the Accademia della virtù, executed the vast programme described by Claudio Tolomei in 1542, regarding the comprehensive assembly of information on ancient Roman architecture and its context. By uniting this knowledge with the superlative achievements of contemporary architecture, the academy sought to establish a firm ground for future architecture.

While the publication programme outlined by Tolomei is usually regarded as having been far too ambitious, it can be shown that many of its parts were in fact realized, and the Cappella Gregoriana might well have been one component. According to Giorgio Vasari and Danti, Vignola measured 'all the antiquities of Rome' in the service of an Accademia di architettura, which was headed by Marcello Cervini. Cervini, in turn, was a friend of Sirleto and mentor of the future pope Gregory XIII, and was himself strongly interested in reestablishing close relations with the Eastern churches. It is also notable that among the surviving drawings from the academy's work are careful documentations of ancient decorations. Many of the subjects displayed in these drawings must have still been visible, as, for example, in the Baths of Caracalla, which were systematically plundered after 1545 for the construction and decoration of St. Peter's. By understanding the link between Tolomei's project and the Cappella Gregoriana, and recognizing the immense influence the latter had on subsequent architectural developments, one may reasonably assume that Tolomei's project not only succeed in the collection of an incredibly vast, still understudied amount of material, but also achieved its practical aims: to 'revive the noble study of architecture' for the future. The Cappella Gregoriana may thus be considered as the first attempt to revive imperial Roman decoration in a new context and with a new, 'catholic' imperial intention. Already in Antiquity, the ostentation of precious materials imported from all parts of the empire was used to demonstrate its far-reaching power. A similar motivation could have stood behind the decoration of the Cappella Gregoriana. Yet this decoration also demonstrated the aim to unite Eastern and Western churches under Roman leadership, establishing the Catholic Church as the theological successor of the Imperium.

This interpretation is supported by Zollikofer's careful analysis of the pictorial and sculptural decoration and the chapel's theological programme. Notably, Gregory XIII transferred the remains of Gregory of Nazianzus to the new chapel, as well as an old, miraculous icon of Mary from Old St. Peter's. Both of these relics were intended, as the

author shows, to reestablish a closer relation between the Catholic and Orthodox church – a central aim of Gregory XIII's papacy. Even Gregory's plans for the further decoration of the greater St. Peter's Basilica reflect these aims. Zollikofer compares the existing decoration with other possible arrangements, convincingly showing that no alternative scheme for the chapel's decoration would have supported the pope's agenda in a similar manner. Even so, Zollikofer is guarded in his language, using the subjunctive to show that his interpretations are, although highly probable, still hypotheses. One would wish such a carefulness were the standard in art and architectural history.

As previously mentioned, Zollikofer uses many sources in his interpretation of the chapel's decoration, including texts from the Bible and the history of theology, liturgy, and the church, as well as architecture, geography, and topography, and contemporary reports. Synthesizing this extraordinary body of information, the author reconstructs a network of meanings and correlations that provides astonishing insights. For example, he explains how the East–West orientation of the chapel and the original location of its entrance – close to the Vatican palace and for a long time the first direct entrance into the new St. Peter's Basilica – were used by Gregory's advisors to allude to the separation of Christianity into Orthodox and Catholic churches, and to suggest their reunification under Roman authority. As Gregory's central, guiding aim, this message was to be further propagated in the decoration of St. Peter's. In many instances, it is still possible to reconstruct it in the basilica's decoration, despite later changes.

Despite the complexity of its subject matter and erudition of its interdisciplinary analyses, Zollikofer's *Die Cappella Gregoriana* is easy to read. And despite its many extraordinary findings and far-reaching results, it is written in a pleasantly unspectacular language. This is a book that deserves not only to be read by scholars interested in the history of St. Peter's Basilica, but also to be taken as a model for similar monographs that interpret buildings and their decoration. In its interdisciplinary approach, its careful and precise interpretation of sources, and in its clear argumentation, Zollikofer's study presents a standard for future research.

## A Consensus History of Modern Urbanism

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Eric Mumford, *Designing the Modern City: Urbanism since 1850*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018, 360 pages, 125 illustrations, ISBN: 9780300230390.

Eric Mumford's *Designing the Modern City* is an important survey of the theory and design of cities and urbanization in the modern period. It charts a coherent narrative of urban design around the world, with special focus on the trajectory of international modernism to the present. Mumford organizes each of his eight roughly chronological chapters around broad themes and includes a wide

selection of figures and places, giving a synoptic view of the field. The book presents a more consistent narrative than found in typical survey books and will appeal especially to advanced undergraduate students. The book's lack of a scholarly apparatus — there are neither endnotes nor a full bibliography — means it will have limited value for scholars, except in regard to specific historiographical issues, addressed below. At the same time, Mumford's reliance on the art-historical survey format and a limited conception of urban design's place in complex historical processes puts the text out of step with the best current literature. The book cogently presents the field to students, but does not advance it.

In Mumford's view, the history of modern urbanism begins in the middle of the 19th century. In the opening chapter, he shows how London, with its concentration of imperial political and financial power, grew rapidly in a short time, sprawling out from its medieval riverfront centres. The theory and practice of architectural and urban design resulting from this experience of extraordinary growth mark the beginning of urbanism proper. London is the paradigm because it was the first 'global metropolis', a theme which Mumford implicitly develops as one of the defining attributes of modern urbanism.

After this scene-setting opening, the remainder of the first chapter surveys late 19th-century urban developments elsewhere in Europe, particularly Paris and Barcelona, with the expected attention given to Baron Haussmann and Ildefons Cerdà. The following chapter concerns the City Beautiful Movement and the emergence of large-scale urban design proposals from the early 20th century. This turns to a discussion, in chapter three, of the specific issue of tenement reform in London and New York and the beginnings of regionalist planning concerns, exemplified by the Garden City Movement.

With chapter four, the book shifts from a focus on broad thematic and historical issues to address the development of modernism and its aftermath. Here Mumford is concerned with what he calls 'avant-garde urbanism', a term covering a miscellany of topics including Constructivism, Le Corbusier, German *Siedlungen*, and the pre-war International Congress for Modern Architecture (CIAM), which occupies a central place in the chapters that follow. This central set of chapters also examines urban decentralization in Britain and the United States, International Style architecture, and case studies of large-scale transformation in Beijing and Chandigarh. Team 10, Metabolism, and mid-century critiques of CIAM and mainstream modernism also find places in these dense chapters.

The overarching framework of modernist critique continues into the book's third and final section. Chapter seven, on the theme of 'crisis', features sections on Archigram and New Urbanism, while also providing profiles of the key figures of postmodernism: Kevin Lynch, Jane Jacobs, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, Charles Moore, Aldo Rossi, Manfredo Tafuri, and Rem Koolhaas, among several others. The book's strikingly brief final chapter brings together a slew of widely divergent topics spanning almost 60 years, from the late 1950s to the present: the 'sites and services' approach to informal settlements; the transformation of Curitiba, Brazil; and the rise of 'global Chinese-type high-rise commercial cities' such as Shanghai and Singapore, to name a few (**Figure 3**). The sheer range of issues raised in just a few pages might have been more cogently addressed over several chapters.

Among the book's most fully explored themes are the role and scope of professional expertise, design and planning movements and institutions, and the architectural components of modernism. In particular, the extended discussions of CIAM, the work of Patrick Geddes and



**Figure 3:** Moshe Safdie, Habitat, Expo '67, Montreal, 1965–67. Wikimedia Commons, John Lambert Pearson.

Jane Jacobs, and the urban theory of Rossi and Saverio Muratori balance exposition of complex ideas and events with concise considerations of broader issues. This adds up to a lucid, relatively jargon-free discussion of the major people, places, and themes of urban modernism.

In the vast literature of 'urbanism', which spans history, sociology, anthropology, economics, and other disciplines, the word has come to encompass a broad array of issues: the design of city plans, of course, but also policy-making; the procurement and distribution of resources; access to public space and civic rights; exclusions based on class, race, ethnicity, gender, or disability; ecological concerns; and many others (Bridge and Watson 2013, Douglass and Friedmann 1998, Fainstein and DeFilippis 2016, Krissoff and Steven Corey 2011, Miles et al. 2000). No single book presenting a chronological narrative of urbanism can possibly cover all this. Mumford limits the scope of urbanism to an act of 'conscious design' by professionals who arrange physical urban elements into 'rational patterns whose design expresses the cultural aspirations and responds to the social needs of particular cities and regions'. While this profession-centric perspective brings a clear focus, it necessarily limits the book's purview to official plans and discourses. The lived experience of the urban environment, the contributions of non-professionals, and most of the issues listed above appear, if they do at all, as background context to the focus on formal plans. Further, the key element of Mumford's definition of urbanism – 'rational design patterns' – makes urbanism into an effort on the part of professionals to harmonize and ease conflicts in the pre-existing social and political order. This view emphasizes the professional responsibility of planners to progressively rationalize and improve the human habitat but does not address the role of design interventions in directing the course of socioeconomic activity and in producing many of the inequalities and injustices Mumford periodically identifies.

In an alternative, interdisciplinary view to Mumford's, urban design plays a central role in exacerbating political and social conflicts and enabling the destabilizing forces of capitalist investment and disinvestment (Platt 2015; Ravetz 1980; King 1990; Parker 2004; Sassen 2018). This view comes into relief when counterposed to Mumford's constant use of the word *outcomes*, as in 'social outcomes', 'hybridized urban outcomes', 'relatively socially successful built outcomes', and many other variants. But 'outcomes' is a static word denoting the product of a linear process. It has the effect of erasing both the agency of nonprofessionals and the complexity of the social, political, and technological conflicts and transformations with which urban design is implicated.

Although Mumford expresses some doubts, he accepts capitalist development as the field on which urbanists act, rather than as a condition and set of processes with which they are implicated by their very interventions. In the final chapter, for instance, Mumford praises the 'new synergies' of 'the economically successful global cities' of Western Europe, the United States, and parts of Asia as incubators of both innovation and ecological sensitivity. In addition to its implicit endorsement of the status quo,

this sanguine view of economic innovation and purportedly sustainable development is, to say the least, controversial as a description of the current state of mainstream urbanism's ecological impact.

In his brief concluding paragraphs, Mumford notes the numerous fraught debates that characterize the theory and practice of contemporary urbanism. But by tacitly downplaying conflicts as 'outcomes' throughout the text, and by advancing both the old story of heroic individual designers and the myth of modernist rationalization, *Designing the Modern City* appears behind its time. Its conventional art-historical survey method cannot account for the contestation resulting from the collision of top-down planning and community resistance, all of which are also questions of power and justice. Whatever the author's own politics, the book's historical approach and presentation leaves unexamined the complex ways in which the professional fields of urban design and architecture too often collude with and produce inequalities and injustices in society.

### An Overlooked Renaissance: Dutch Architecture and Building Practices in the 15th Century

Hanneke Ronnes

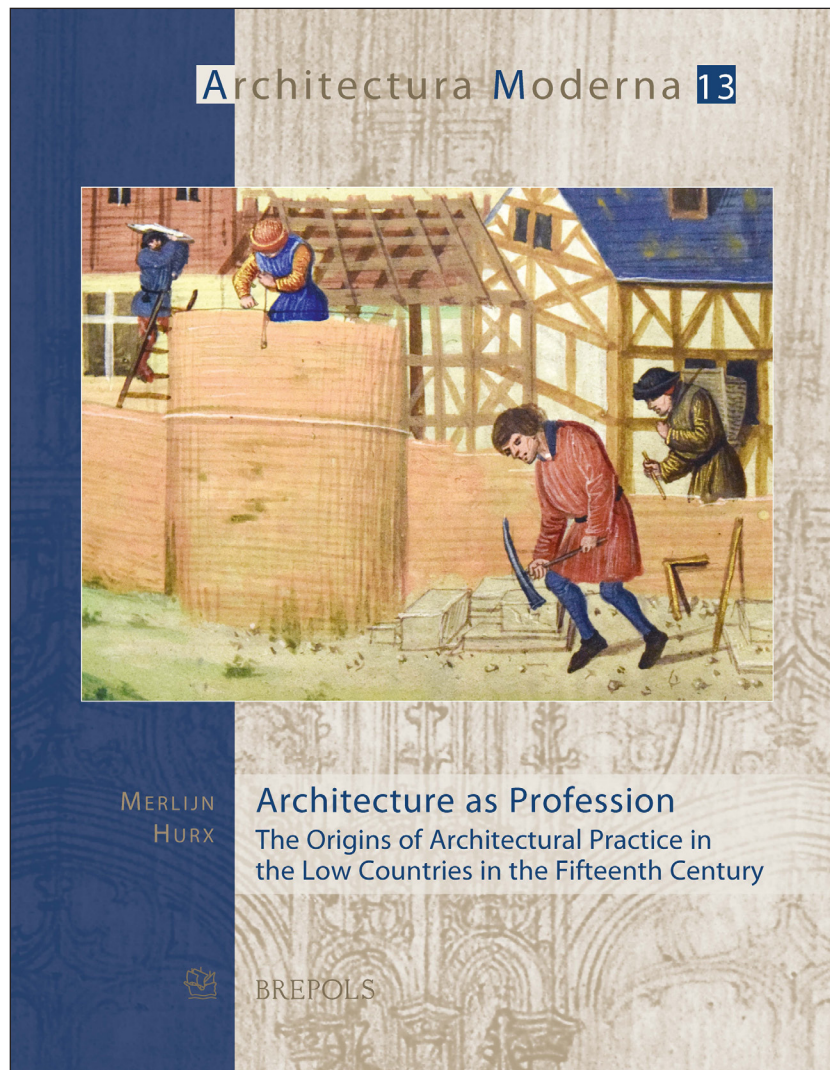
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Merlijn Hurx, *Architecture as Profession: The Origins of Architectural Practice in the Low Countries in the Fifteenth Century*, Turnhout: Brepols, 459 pages, 2018; ISBN: 9782503568256.

The building boom that the Low Countries experienced in the long 15th century was colossal, almost unprecedented, Hurx asserts in his recent book on the architectural practice in the Low Countries (**Figure 4**). In this period of rapid urbanization more than 40 large churches were built in Brabant, Holland, and Vlaanderen alone, as well as numerous guild halls, municipal buildings, ecclesiastical institutions, city walls, and princely residential buildings. Hurx juxtaposes his study with Richard Goldthwaite's seminal *The Building of Renaissance Florence* (1980), the economic perspective of which Hurx seeks in part to emulate. It is through the close examination of the economic and organizational aspects of the building practice – subjects that have previously received too little attention – that the scale and implications of this boom in the Low Countries come to light.

Hurx's *Architecture as Profession: The Origins of Architectural Practice in the Low Countries in the Fifteenth Century* centres on the argument that it was not the 16th century that hallmarked great building projects and the glorious rise of the architect, but rather the underestimated and understudied 15th century. The oft-cited distinction between the medieval 'craftsman-architect' and the Renaissance 'artist-architect' is unmasked as a fallacy. As underscored by Hurx, the profession of the architect had evolved well before authors like Sebastiano Serlio or Coecke van Aelst published their widely popular treatises. Notwithstanding the fact that van Aelst introduced



**Figure 4:** Book cover of Merlijn Hurx's *Architectura as Profession: The Origins of Architectural Practice in the Low Countries in the Fifteenth Century*.

the neologism 'architect' into the Dutch language, this term did not refer to a new profession. Hurx shows that already in the 15th century a division of labour existed that allowed a designer or architect figure to oversee multiple projects at the same time. In minimizing the importance of the 16th century, Hurx's thesis fits into the recent trend that diminishes the magnitude of the Renaissance. As accentuated by scholars like Jacques Le Goff, William Caferro, and Margreta de Grazia, the medieval period was not as dark as is often believed, and not only in the case of architectural practice; the period of the Renaissance, in turn, was less novel than has long been claimed (Le Goff 2014; Caferro 2011; de Grazia 2007).

So how exactly did architecture in the Low Countries change after 1350? According to Hurx, the substantial economic changes that complemented the region's role as an early centre of capitalism spurred urbanization and the need for prestigious buildings, and ultimately, these developments also incited changes in the construction market. Beginning at the quarries, white limestone from the area around Brussels became increasingly popular in the 14th century, significantly diminishing the use of stone from the Eifel region, which had been the prevalent

building material until then. This geographical reorientation dovetailed with a change of management. While previously rulers had owned the quarries, in the 14th century, independent contractors became increasingly active in the quarrying industry, not only quarrying the stone, but also transporting and finishing it. The advantages of an independent supply of ready-made stone blocks were threefold. The system reduced costs, simplified the organization at the quarry, and streamlined the logistics involved in transporting the stone from the quarry to the building site. Hurx cites historical records that show the satisfaction of patrons who could now outsource jobs and 'would not have to do anything, except provide the money' (p. 145). The quantity of stone that was quarried and brought to the regions of Brabant, Vlaanderen, and Holland was comparable to that in the 16th and 17th centuries. Hurx speaks of the stone production as a 'near-industrial enterprise'.

Hurx's examination of churches similarly underscores the 'proto-modern' aspects of the Dutch design and building industry, challenging narratives that characterize these structures as being 'provincial'. Although few architectural drawings survive, it is evident that graphic documents were used in the building and design process – both rough



sketches and highly detailed, scaled drawings. Furthermore, building fragments from churches, such as the mouldings from column bases and arcade arches, demonstrate a certain level of standardization. The exact measurements of the architectural features vary, yet the high degree of formal similarity they display indicates that 'ready-made building kits' must have existed (p. 322). The 'star architects' who were responsible for the design of the great Brabantine churches were also involved in the creation of the churches in Holland, which do not owe their apparent simplicity to a provincially, but to the use of rather advanced prefabricated building fragments that reduced costs and simplified and streamlined building processes.

At various points in the book Hurx refers to the 'competitive climate' of building patronage, as wealthy patrons routinely attempted to outshine their peers in the construction of palaces, houses, churches, chapels, and mausoleums. This climate, according to Hurx, propelled the developments in the changing architectural practice in the Low Countries. Yet in so narrowly focusing on the economic and social factors involved in building patronage, it is possible that Hurx discounts the aesthetic motivations that stirred patrons in their building campaigns and contributed to the building boom. Evidence for the importance of building aesthetics is cited by the author himself. Several times in the book, Albrecht Dürer is mentioned as an enthusiastic commentator on architectural production, praising the beauty of the buildings he saw in the Low Countries. A further hint that the appearance of architecture mattered and was probably a driving motivation for builders comes from one of the main protagonists of the book, the architect Rombout Keldermans. When designing the castle of Vredenburg in Utrecht, Keldermans recommended the construction of two expensive but 'plus belles' towers. Aesthetics are not hot in academia today, power, status, and competition are, but in overlooking the importance of aesthetics in the early modern period, contemporary scholars may be obscuring, or artificially simplifying, the various motivations that drove building campaigns.

A hint of anachronism can also be discerned in the author's readily apparent focus on building within the urban context. Notwithstanding the almost unprecedented growth spurt of cities in the period under discussion, life and building also continued outside of the cities. The building types discussed by Hurx include city walls, urban churches, ecclesiastical institutions (monasteries and convents), trade halls, town halls, and princely urban residences. Castles and other elite residences situated outside of the city do not feature in the book. While Hurx's emphasis on cities is justified given the rapid urbanization of the period, neither the book's title nor the introductory chapter hint at a specifically urban perspective. This bias reaffirms Dutch historiography, which traditionally favours the urban over the rural, as well as long-established boundaries within academia, by which scholars dealing with castles (archaeologists) are separated from those examining city buildings (art historians).

This and a few minor inaccuracies aside (such as the consistently incorrect capitalization of surnames in the footnotes), Hurx's *Architecture as Profession* deserves an

unusual level of praise. The book can only be evaluated as impressive. It reveals a mastery of a tremendous amount of archival data, and likewise shows an intimate familiarity with the physical buildings. Perhaps most impressive of all is the fact that Hurx proved it possible to combine the two subjects of analysis, thus opening up a historical world that has long remained hidden. The author's ability to cross-reference between archival entries and realized building forms is supremely demonstrated in the book's final chapter, where facing pages show a reproduction of the 1521 bill regarding the entrance facade Antwerp's 'Het Steen' – part of the city's defence works – and a photograph of the actual building as it stands today. One of the posts in the bill reads, in a 16th-century hand, 'waapen' (coat of arms). The 21st-century photo bears witness to the actual realization of this coat of arms. The striking comparison fills the reader with a feeling that combines historical awe with a sense of time-travel.

### Returning to Zevi

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*Zevi's Architects: History and Counter-History of Italian Architecture, 1944–2000*, curated by Pippo Ciorra and Jean-Louis Cohen, Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo (MAXXI), Rome, Italy, 25 April to 16 September 2018.

The centenary of the birth of Bruno Zevi (1918–2000) has given rise to a wide-ranging evaluation of his legacy as a critic and historian of architecture and as a cultural presence in and beyond post-war Italy. This programme has included a major conference in Haifa (May 2018), events at the Kunsthistorisches Institut and Villa I Tatti in Florence (March 2018), and *Zevi's Architects: History and Counter-History of Italian Architecture, 1944–2000* at the Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo in Rome, which may well be one of the largest-ever treatments of an architecture critic at a major museum.

*Zevi's Architects* serves to remind its audience of Zevi's importance in his own time as a cultural figure in Italy (especially in Rome): historian, urbanist, curator, teacher, publisher, and, of course, architect; an unapologetic advocate for a form of modern architecture that fully grasped its place in history; and a major popularizer of those architectural principles, derived from history, that he thought should remain in play in the present. In books, magazines, articles, and exhibitions, and on television and radio, his intellectual life was staged for a public that spilled from the lecture hall and the studio out into the city.

Curated by Pippo Ciorra and Jean-Louis Cohen with the cooperation of the Fondazione Bruno Zevi in Rome, the exhibition follows two parallel tracks – both spatial and curatorial in nature – that interact largely by inference. The first track (walls rendered orange, hugging the right-hand edge of the gallery) cuts a chronological path through Zevi's life, punctuated by televised interviews and

lectures that force his maxims off the page and into the consciousness as one contemplates his public life as an intellectual and critic (**Figure 5**). For some, the rich array of material will introduce Zevi and position his work in the world between the end of the World War II and the end of the century – particularly in Italy, and to an extent farther afield (including Israel, where he was a significant cultural presence). For others, it will recall the sheer volume of criticism and history he published and facilitated, and hence the vitality of his project to propagate those values in architecture and urbanism in which he most firmly believed. This first track is frenetic and close, both visually and aurally. While it is possible to focus on one of the half dozen or so televised lectures blaring out into the space, there is constant interference as Zevi's multiplied voices from across the years intermingle. His emphatic pronouncements bleed out into the exhibition's space; they are one's last contact with it upon leaving the gallery, when the aphorisms and keywords (*spazio!*) finally turn into background noise.

The second track (white, generously laid out) is comparatively measured and serene (**Figure 6**). It outlines a history of Italian modern architecture, featuring works by major architects active during Zevi's professional life (the second half of the *Novecento*), figures who were in one way or another treated by him. Here, Ciorra and Cohen have amassed a rich collection of drawings, models, photographs, and video documentation that involved 38 projects (no more than one per architect or office). Each selection is at once spare and intense, a product of careful selections and minimalist presentation. Connecting each case to Zevi is a short passage from his criticism, or, in later examples, to criticism by others published in his journal *L'architettura. Cronache e storia*.

Figures presented here include Franco Albini, BBPR, Ignazio Gardella, Sergio Mesmuci, Luigi Moretti, Pier Luigi Nervi, Renzo Piano, Ludovico Quaroni (et al.), Aldo Rossi, Maurizio Sacripanti, Carlo Scarpa, Paolo Soleri, and Vittoriano Viganò. Zevi's fascination with figures like Erich Mendelsohn and Frank Lloyd Wright is not exercised here. This is a show about the relationship between Zevi and his immediate architectural scene – a scene over which he exerted direct influence. That said, Paolo Portoghesi is largely and pointedly absent. Despite the significance of their difficult relationship, he is consigned to an acknowledgement on the 1964 show *Michelangiolo architetto* – a major modernizing moment in Zevi's work that is passed over quickly in this setting.

This spatialized division between intellectualization and practice and criticism is enacted, too, in the catalogue, which excludes large amounts of material from the section concerned with the history of Italian architecture. Published in both Italian and English editions, it contains essays on Zevi's positions, his import, and his relationships. These expand significantly upon Roberto Dulio's essential *Introduzione a Bruno Zevi* (2005), exploring biography alongside the import of Zevi's activities and positions. Three short reminiscences by Frank Gehry, Peter Eisenman, and Zvi Hecker capture something essential in the tone of an interview response – a recorded call or an edited email.

Back at MAXXI: the sketches for Giovanni Michelucci's San Giovanni dell'Autostrada are a treat to encounter alongside the bronze casts made by the architect as part of his design development. Models in the show are mostly drawn from the archives, although the experimental Casa Albero (Giuseppe Perugini, Ugo de Plaisant, and Raynaldo Perugini, Fregene, Rome, 1968–95) is



**Figure 5:** *Zevi's Architects*, exhibition installation at MAXXI. Photo by Andrew Leach.



**Figure 6:** *Zevi's Architects*, exhibition installation at MAXXI. Photo by Andrew Leach.

a welcome commissioned model which adds to the material of this period. The 'edificio polifunzionale' in Rome's via Campania (Studio Passarelli, 1961–64) offers a rare intersection of a work presented in textual terms included, too, in televisual footage. Zevi's television and radio appearances spanned from contemporary architectural and urban criticism to discourses on the principles of architectural composition and apprehension, to lessons in the history of architecture. Speaking on the 'edificio polifunzionale' in a lengthy and didactic television segment, then, Zevi explains the urban sensibility of the stacked functions (retail, commercial, residential). When there is documentary footage for these projects, or interviews with an architect, headphones are provided so that his voice can be heard.

The show constructs a 'counter-history' to read against the canonical works of post-war Italian architecture. The depth and breadth of Zevi's wide-ranging activities as a writer and editor permit the curators to move past the most famous works of these decades to explore the archive of schemes both realized and not, from discrete buildings to city planning, as they figured in Zevi's media. Given the difficulty between Zevi and the younger Manfredo Tafuri, it is curious that the show's attention to the 1940s includes the two major post-war works that Tafuri positions in *Storia dell'architettura italiana 1944–85* (1986) as projects that signal two competing stances in Italian architecture after the war. But here BBPR's memorial at Milan (1946) and the monument to the massacre at the Fosse Ardeatine by Mario Fiorentini, Giuseppe Perugini, and others (1944–47) are dispersed among things, no longer subject to the rhetorical device used by Tafuri.

Two small sections are included within the larger televised biographical section. One concerns Zevi's activism as an urbanist, with material concerning the urbanism of

Biagio Rossetti, the 1962 *piano regolatore* of Rome, and the project for the new hospital in Venice (Zevi 1960). The other concerns Zevi's exhibitions, with a selection of three — on Biagio, Michelangiolo, and Brunelleschi (*anti-classico*). Zevi's porous boundaries and capacity to return to settled subjects with new insights shows in the curators' presentation of the first of these shows. A first edition of Zevi's book on Biago is separated off from its two later, much more 'instrumental' editions, as the early monographic study is overshadowed by the lessons drawn from it in *Saper vedere l'urbanistica* (as *Biagio Rossetti* was named from its second edition onwards). A library at one end of the gallery includes recent editions of Zevi's books alongside volumes published by the Premio Bruno Zevi, which each year invites scholars to explore Zevi's principal themes.

(A parenthetical observation: the modest show *Oscar Savio: Michelangelo 1964* (Lodispoto and Spinazzè 2018), which was likewise staged in the early months of 2018 in Rome's Galleria Prencipe, offered a subtle counter-point to MAXXI's *Zevi*, showing the construction through photography of Michelangelo as modernist historical subject and of his (its) audience in Rome's Palazzo delle Esposizioni — a show in which Zevi had a heavy hand, mediated by Portoghesi's design and Savio's lens).

At one end of the gallery, an older Zevi is somewhat tragically portrayed in an undated televised interview. This is tucked around a corner as if an afterthought — as indeed Zevi himself had become by this time, in no small part due to the aggressive response of figures like Portoghesi and Tafuri as his intellectual 'children'.

In many respects, Ciorra and Cohen have attempted to resuscitate Zevi's legacy, positioning him as a figure of political action, a major cultural figure, and a teacher to the masses. The largest photographic reproduction concerns Zevi's departure from his chair in Rome to pursue

life as a 'private' critic – and the crisis it appeared to induce among those for whom the absence of a strong public voice at the university was a loss. The show asks us to consider those factors that put Zevi so firmly in the public eye: his clear vision for the history and historiography of architecture and urbanism; his uncompromising sense of what needed to be done; and his refusal to compartmentalize academic and public life.

The curators foster nostalgia for a moment in which someone of Zevi's stature used media as he did to build a mass audience and put the history of architecture at the centre of cultural debates. His clarity of mind advanced the language of modern architecture, which for him was like any language that could be learned and spoken with degrees of elegance and command.

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