



N° 2/12

**EUROPEAN
ARCHITECTURAL
HISTORY
NETWORK**

N° 2/12

COLOPHON

The EAHN Newsletter is a publication of the European Architectural History Network.

© 2012 European Architectural History Network.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or an information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the EAHN.

ISSN 1997-5023

FRONT COVER

Palazzo Ducale, Urbino.
Archivio FMR, Castenaso.
Photograph: Gabriele Basilico

CORRESPONDENCE

Comments are welcome.

EAHN

C/O @MIT, TU DELFT
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
P.O. BOX 5043
2600 GA DELFT
THE NETHERLANDS
office@eahn.org [email]
www.eahn.org [url]

PRESIDENT

Adrian Forty

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Mari Hvattum

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Hilde Heynen

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Elvan Altan Ergut
Tom Avermaete
Andrew Ballantyne
Cana Bilsel
Jan Kenneth Birksted
Maristella Casciato
Jorge Correia
Maarten Delbeke
Davide Deriu

Rob Dettingmeijer

Murray Fraser

Reto Geiser

Lex Hermans

Josephine Kane

Zeynep Kezer

Susan Klaiber

Ilknur Kolay

Javier Martinez

Jose Medina

Christine Mengin

Daniel Millette

Jan Molema

Dietrich Neumann

Ivan Nevzgodin

Alona Nitzan-Shifan

Carmen Popescu

Giulia Sebreghondi

Nancy Stieber

Karin Theunissen

Belgin Turan Özkaya

OFFICE MANAGER

Caroline Gautier

more buildings are mentioned. The great strength of this book is that it does not present a theory argued at any length, but elegantly adds example to example. In many ways, it is therefore an anthology, a *florilegium* of buildings and authors. The main argument is never out of sight and this makes following the author a pleasurable and sometimes entertaining experience. On the other hand, the planning phase of architecture is completely absent: any meaningful discussion of drawings, models, photography, *vedute*, or digital rendering is missing (an exception is the plan). The first chapter is a sustained argument against the indiscriminate use of architectural treatises and theory.

In Kemp's eyes, architecture's defining feature is its self-reflective nature that can only be uncovered by careful description: architecture speaks about itself. This tenet (which is nowhere explicitly stated) is the underlying argument put forth in this architectural primer. Each chapter is copiously and beautifully illustrated by small black-and-white photographs of buildings from antiquity to the present day. The eloquent prose of Kemp's book is punctuated by footnotes that give a selection of literature on the subject in German and English. This selective bibliography is in itself highly valuable and Kemp often unearths positions and authors now long forgotten. Conversely, the volume has no comprehensive bibliography and no index. Only a reader venturing to read the book from cover to cover will be able to collect these bibliographical pearls and savour Kemp's aperçus. The book therefore in no way can be compared to the usual classroom handbooks. Any reader looking for a straightforward approach to the subject probably will be disappointed. Nonetheless, in a somewhat old-fashioned way it is a very good introductory text for students and teachers alike.

Matteo Burioni
Institute of Art History
Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich
Germany

BOOK REVIEW

Andreas Beyer, Matteo Burioni, and Johannes Grave, editors

Das Auge der Architektur: Zur Frage der Bildlichkeit in der Baukunst

Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2011, 607 pp., 104 b/w and 104 colour ill., € 68

ISBN 978-3-7705-5081-4

Editors and reviewers of anthologies face quite similar problems in binding together a wealth of different approaches in order to stimulate discussion. Unfortunately, edited volumes usually do not have an epilogue. And so one needs to approach the finely designed conference proceedings *Das Auge der Architektur: Zur Frage der Bildlichkeit in der Baukunst (Architecture's Eye: On Iconicity in Architecture)* like an open-ended corridor.

Editors Andreas Beyer, Matteo Burioni, and Johannes Grave wanted nothing less than to extend to architecture the theory of the image, a theory developed since 2005 by the National Centre of Competence in Research 'Iconic Criticism' (Eikones) at Basel under the direction of Gottfried Boehm. To this end, architecture first needed to be declared an iconic phenomenon; the editors already try to do this through the volume's title. But, although this iconicity catches the attention on a literary level, it actually restricts the subject matter to a personified image of architecture and to examples of eye-like building structures and the eye symbol in the self-projection of the architect (see the essays by Andreas Beyer and Michael Gnehm). The editors carefully explain theories of image and architecture, considered from the perspective of sign, surface, or spatial atmospheres. Via image theory the editors introduce a renewed concept of reception: the iconicity of architecture refreshes itself according to the situation, and independently of parts of a building, in everyday use. This may fit intuitively with the experience of architecture but raises the question as to the instrument of research: what is the use of the subjectively perceived and moreover ephemeral oscillation between building (body) and image (view)?

According to the editors, iconicity here means a surprising 'image creation' by architecture, which goes beyond the visual presentation of images and addresses the beholder. This is clearly based on Boehm's image theory, which assigns to the

work of art an ability to set off actions. Architecture's ability to generate images, postulated in this volume, through metaphors and bodily suggestions expands the discourse in ways both beneficial and detrimental. If architecture communicates via images, this supposition allows familiar material to be approached with fresh questions, although the acceptance of a *poietic* dimension of architecture may distract from historical, functional, or political intentions. But this point of view would not do justice to architecture as a *fait social*. At the same time, the concept of iconicity, according to the authors, enables critical reflection at the very place where a building, with the help of the image, distances itself from its function.

What happens when architecture becomes an image? It becomes part of the discourse about iconic representation—its intention, effect, and control. Not only the architectural drawing, but also models and photography (Alina Payne) as well as *Stadtbilder* (Hans-Rudolf Meier) become charged with narration in the perspective of the image producer. Architectural 'visual systems' such as the façade and the classical orders are presented as if congealed into a vocabulary of political power (Monika Melters), but how the concept of image is distinct from that of symbol is not clarified. Furthermore, architecture is examined as an image-generating setting that provides information on the relationship of real space and image. Whereas Gerd Blum sees the architectural framing of landscape ultimately as a renunciation of a theocentric *Weltanschauung* from the Quattrocento onwards, Johannes Grave identifies the architectural paintings of Filippino Lippi, which destabilise the framework, as a christological programme. If we compare these two essays, it becomes clear that deducing a world-view from an image may lead to contradictions.

To become image, architecture needs the body of the viewer. Matteo Burioni examines this thesis with the help of the doors (ear trumpets), benches, and cornices (sound reflectors) of Quattrocento palaces. Cammy Brothers describes bodily responses to the architecture of the Laurentian Library, Florence, reacting simultaneously to both the core and the shell of the building. And Marion Gartenmeister shows how the caryatid, which represents the implementation of the body in architecture, can undermine the visualisation of tectonics.

Carsten Ruhl wonders whether Aldo Rossi is the pioneer of the medialisation of post-modern architecture. He maintains that Rossi ignores the ideological condi-



Cover of *Das Auge der Architektur*
Photograph: courtesy of Wilhelm Fink Verlag

tions with which his image models were created and subordinates architectural form to presentational form. If picture corresponds to picture, this also sheds fresh light on Rossi's typology theory and the lack of context of his buildings. How can this be reconciled with the buildings of Rossi's pupils Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, whose diffusely gazing 'eyes of architecture' evoke images that, according to Philip Ursprung, ultimately exemplify globalisation—no criticism intended? If Rossi substitutes architecture with its 'aggregate media states' (Ruhl), then Herzog and de Meuron tie these back to architecture again.

Using works of Jean Nouvel, Henry Keazor demonstrates how iconicity can be introduced into architecture with imaging methods from film, painting, and photography, for the purpose of not just affecting the viewer, but also for the reflection of social values and of narration, which can also go astray. Other authors derive an expansion of general visual theory from the figurative architect's signet on buildings for artistic self-representation (Alexander Marksches) and from the language potential of contemporary 'communication buildings' (Wolfgang Kemp). Kemp addresses some fundamental issues that are not broached by most of the other essays. How can iconicity be examined from a communication centre like Toyo Ito's Mediatheque in Sendai, which is no *architecture parlante*? Here, iconicity perforce is revealed beyond visual offerings and accompanying visual material from other genres. Its usability generates an image in the perception of the user.

The editors formulate the thesis of a general expansion of the image concept in particular through the view of architecture. An epilogue would have settled whether or not this thesis is confirmed. This could have been the place to discuss, for example, how digitally fluid pictures behave in comparison to those of film, as demonstrated on the basis of the Windows operating system (Margarete Pratschke) or the filmic inventory of Las Vegas by car (Martino Stierli). And a conclusion should certainly have been drawn from the fact that nearly all of the nineteen consistent and well-argued essays start off in the Renaissance or in the post-modern age.

Regine Heß
Technical University Munich
Germany

BOOK REVIEW

Deborah Howard

Venice Disputed: Marc'Antonio Barbaro and Venetian Architecture, 1550–1600

New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 2011, 286 pp., 120 colour and 120 b/w ill., £ 45

ISBN 978-0-300-17685-8

During the second half of the sixteenth century, Venice became the setting for an intense intellectual debate about architectural theory and practice. This was the period when Andrea Palladio, perhaps the greatest architect of all time, produced some of his finest buildings. It was also the period when two of his most important patrons, the brothers Daniele and Marc'Antonio Barbaro, sought to translate the ideas and ideals of Roman architecture into a way of building at peace with the Venetian landscape. Palladio's villa and chapel at Maser, designed in collaboration with the brothers, are tangible expressions of this project, just as Daniele's 1556 Italian translation of, and commentary to, Vitruvius explored these ideas on paper. The church of the Redentore by Palladio, the Rialto Bridge, the Arsenal, and the restoration of the Doge's Palace also all date from this time. If ever there was an architectural golden age in one particular city, this period in Venice was surely it.

Whilst Palladio has been the topic of countless monographs over the years, the two Barbaro brothers have received less attention. There is still no English translation of Daniele's Vitruvius commentary, for example, and Marc'Antonio has been the subject of only one previous biography, by Charles Yriarte published at Paris in 1874. Part biography, part architectural history of the period, Deborah Howard's *Venice Disputed* throws fresh light on Marc'Antonio's life and involvement in the leading building projects of his time. Complex family relationships are also clarified (although two different Zaccaria Barbaros are given as fathering the humanist Ermolao the elder). And whilst neglected heroes such as the proto Antonio da Ponte come to the fore, Marc'Antonio's own legendary contributions to Venetian public buildings somewhat ironically fade on closer scrutiny. For example, Howard reconsiders Barbaro's role in the reception of Henry III in Venice in 1574, pointing out his relatively small part in the procession, and she also points out that he was