Abstracts

An Engraved Architectural Drawing at Santa Maria in Aracoeli, Rome

The use of tracings—drawings engraved on floors or walls showing an architectural detail to scale—was an important stage of the Gothic building process. Although examples of such engravings have survived all over Europe, very few Italian tracings are preserved. Two hitherto unknown examples, found in the Roman church of Santa Maria in Aracoeli, are presented here for the first time. One portrays the profile of a small base and was probably a trial drawing. The other is a two-light-and-oculus tracery pattern, and is particularly interesting because it is drawn to full scale and was cut into a reused slab of ancient marble. In this essay, I reconstruct the geometric process of generating the design and analyze the position of the tracing, with its peculiar Roman features, within the European Gothic context. I also consider the engraved drawing’s possible function (guideline for template- and stone-cutters, or slab from which the tracery was to be cut directly), destination (sepulchral monument, window, or ciborium), and dating.

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Drawing with Numbers: Geometry and Numeracy in Early Modern Architectural Design

Precision in building was pursued and achieved well before the rise of modern science and technology. This fact applies to the classical tradition as well as to medieval architecture, and is particularly evident in architectural drawings and design from the Italian Renaissance onward. In this essay, I trace the shift from geometry—the primary tool for quantification in classical architecture—to numeracy that characterizes Renaissance architectural theory and practice. I also address some more general aspects of the relation between technologies of quantification and the making of architectural forms.

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Reconstituting Chinese Building Tradition: The Yingzaofashi in the Early Twentieth Century

In this paper, I analyze several early-twentieth-century attempts to reprint, edit, and annotate a Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) construction manual, the Yingzaofashi (1103), each one revealing an aspect of the project to define Chinese architecture. As manifested in the research on the Yingzaofashi by a number of Chinese scholars and architects, the project to reconstitute and understand the text was closely connected to broader intellectual issues in early-twentieth-century China: nationalism, philological scholarship, and modern historiography. The Yingzaofashi was rediscovered in 1919 by politician and scholar Zhu Qiqian, who saw it as an important text that provided crucial...
knowledge of the tradition of Chinese architecture. It also became a central document in the construction of a modern Chinese architectural history by Liang Sicheng, Lin Huiyin, and Liu Dunzhen, which was founded on a historiography strongly influenced by the European Enlightenment tradition. Interest in the Yingzao fashi declined in the latter half of the twentieth century due to a Communist cultural policy germinated at Yan’an in the 1940s. The reappearance of the Yingzao fashi in the early twentieth century played a much broader intellectual role than the book originally had as a manual of construction and administration.

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Women and the Werkbund:
Gender Politics and German Design Reform, 1907–14

In this article, I explore the gender of everyday design in the Werkbund discourse. The German Werkbund, an alliance of artists, critics, and businesspeople, sought to restore harmony to German culture through the aesthetic transformation of daily life. Analyzing new sources that introduce the voices of women and expand the category of texts hitherto used for Werkbund scholarship, I examine the role of gender in the organization’s efforts to impose a new aesthetic discipline. In the first section, I address attitudes toward women as consumers, sellers, and producers of everyday commodities. Whether seeking to portray women as agents of reform or to dismiss them as lovers of kitsch, women and men in the Werkbund employed gender norms in formulating their notions of good design and in devising strategies for its implementation. In the second section, I focus on how contemporary theories of gender, and particularly the idea of a female aesthetic lack, contributed to shaping the Werkbund’s central design values of quality and Sachlichkeit. In the concluding section, I track the convergence of these issues at the Haus der Frau, the women’s pavilion at the 1914 Werkbund exhibition in Cologne. I discuss how the organizers of the Haus der Frau attempted to feminize Werkbund design values in their conception and presentation of female-designed spaces and objects. The pavilion’s critical reception reflects deeply divided beliefs on gender and modern design. By bringing together these elements, I seek to demonstrate that the Werkbund’s discipline, which promised a new spiritual and aesthetic unity in Germany, was grounded in conflicting assumptions about gender roles in modern society.

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