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course, I have no quarrel with that. As for Cerdá, they know him not and only have occasion to mention Barcelona as number seven among the top ten European cities for "quality of life." But Barcelona is not merely the city whose enlargement in the mid-19th century was the occasion for Cerdá's coining of the term and notion *Urbanización*, which thereupon entered common speech. The plan that his method dictated was powerful and farsighted enough to have been maintained as a guide to current development there. The recent administration of the city has been cunning enough to manage a partnership with private capital without being bullied by it.

Barcelona suffered the trauma of a siege and three decades of oppressive dictatorship in the last century. Its continued growth, its increasing prosperity and vitality, its ability to reinvent itself, and even its mistakes offer a lesson in urbanism that is not academic and self-referential but concerned urgently with the interaction between the fabric of the city and its citizens. That is something to be envied. The city fathers of New York could learn a thing or two from the way the relationship between public and private is managed in Barcelona.

NOTES

1. Alfred Stieglitz in conversation with his father, as reported by Dorothy Norman in *Alfred Stieglitz: An American Seer* (New York: Random House/Aperture, 1973), quoted by Thomas Bender in the book under review.
2. First published in *Lippincott's*, March 1896. Reprinted several times during Sullivan's lifetime, last in the *Western Architect* in January 1922, with a note: "Mr. Sullivan himself states that he has nothing to add nor subtract from his earlier statement." In *Kindergarten Chats and Other Writings*, ed. Isabella Athey (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz 1947), 8 ff, 206.
3. Norman Mailer, "Only in America," *New York Review of Books*, March 27, 2003.

REVIEWED BY TIM CULVAHOUSE

Labour, Work and Architecture

Collected Essays on Architecture and Design

by Kenneth Frampton

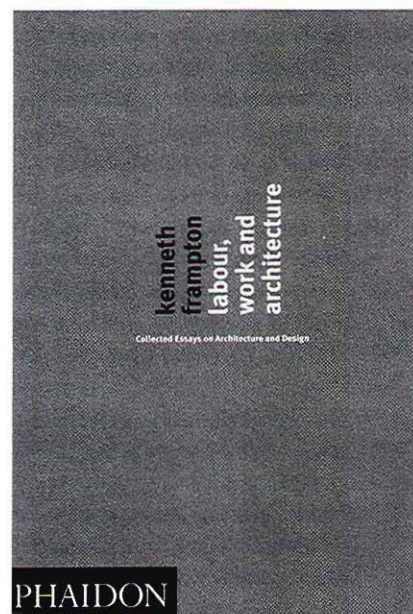
London and New York: Phaidon, 2002

The virtues of Kenneth Frampton's critical writings, as collected in *Labour, Work and Architecture*, are many. One is his clear political philosophy, which locates meaning in the interactions of humans in a world of our shaping. A second is his love for the rich particularities of buildings. Mediating the first two is a third: a method—or perhaps a temperament—that is rigorous enough to find substantive connections between philosophy and fact, but loose enough not to sacrifice either for the other.

Add to these a fourth, more personal virtue: Frampton's fond acknowledgment of the intellectual encounters that have shaped his thinking. These acknowledgments—of the recommendation from a mentor that he read Hannah Arendt; of the time spent as a colleague of Argentine painter, graphic designer, teacher, and theorist Tomás Maldonado at Princeton in the '60s; of the lecture presented at Columbia by Volvo director Pehr Gyllenhammar—remind us that intellectual work takes place in the world, in actual exchanges among actual persons. Rather than abstract principles, it is the shared enthusiasms of thinking people that bring ideas into play in the world of practice.

Frampton organizes the essays in three sections—"Theory," "History," and "Criticism." Within each of these sections, essays are ordered chronologically. The obvious liability of the division is that it makes it difficult for the reader to follow relations among the three, but it does make the threads of thought within categories clearer.

The earliest essays in the collection are, not surprisingly, in the "criticism"



section ("Leicester University Engineering Laboratory" of 1964 and "Genesis of the Philharmonie" of 1965). Versions of the earliest historical and theoretical essays first appeared in 1968 and 1969, respectively, amid a political upheaval that clearly helped focus Frampton's thinking upon the social and political consequences of building.

The distinction among the three categories is based not so much on the level of abstraction (there is plenty of concrete analysis in the "theory" section) but rather on the breadth of implication. For example, while each critical essay focuses on a single building, so does the theoretical essay, "The Volvo Case." The difference is that the critical essays stick close to the buildings themselves and, while certainly not isolated from social, political, or historical context, are not chiefly concerned either with drawing or supporting broader conclusions. "The Volvo Case," by contrast, looks at an innovative automobile production plant at Kalmar, Sweden, built from 1972 to 1974, as a test of a theoretical paradigm, Jürgen Habermas's critique of scientific rationalization and its consequences for the human experience of place. Frampton moves

fluidly from abstract argument to concrete conditions, and his remarks here deserve quoting at length:

While at Kalmar the team workshop areas function only too well for free discourse within the terms of the technostature, the somewhat restricted personnel or coffee-break rooms on the perimeter of the building, far from serving as adequate areas for "symbolic interaction," are clearly only intended to function, like the saunas in the washrooms, for the instant restoration of the will to work. And it is surely no accident that these rooms are inadequately represented and that they open not so much to a social prospect as to a landscape of amnesia—that empty terrain of communication that serves to separate the reality of work from the pleasure of family life. This clinical separation of the reality of work from the pleasure of life—so much of an anathema to Charles Fourier—speaks for itself. The preoccupation of modern industry with abstract linkages, rather than concrete adjacencies, seems at this juncture to be far from accidental, for only through their being masked by the opportunism of their dislocation may the so-called value-free abstractions of exploitation be kept open and intact. (75)

This essay is noteworthy for at least three reasons. First, the building Frampton has selected for analysis is by no stretch of the imagination stylish. It looks like any other industrial building from the early '70s, and the implication of studying it is that the lessons learned here are relevant to normative, mainstream—as opposed to boutique—practice.

Second, Frampton is not concerned primarily with visual characteristics. Instead, he asks how the building shapes, for better or worse, the workers' social and political experiences. And he bases his conclusions on direct observation of those experiences. We could do with more such analyses by critics of Frampton's

stature and insight, to help us get past our slavish attention to fashion and to lend validity to the idea that we might take seriously the experience of a building's inhabitants over time.¹

Finally, while the explicit reference in "The Volvo Case" is to Habermas, in fact the essay serves as a fine concrete development of Frampton's primary philosophical touchstone, Arendt's *The Human Condition*. "The Status of Man and the Status of His Objects," the opening essay of the collection, is an extended exploration of the implications for architecture of the distinction Arendt draws there between labor and work. Arendt writes, "Labor is the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body. . . . Work is the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence, which is not embedded in, and whose mortality is not compensated by, the species' ever-recurring life cycle. Work provides an 'artificial' world of things, distinctly different from all natural surroundings. Within its borders each individual life is housed, while this world itself is meant to outlast and transcend them all. The human condition of work is worldliness."² As Frampton explains, Arendt argued that "work, by virtue of being the precondition for the reification of the world as the space of human appearance, is by definition static, public, and permanent."³ Around these three terms, Frampton weaves an understanding of both the potential of architecture and its troubled status in the contemporary world.

The immobility of building and the durability of building's materials make possible lasting places, and such places constitute the public realm.⁴ Frampton's defense of the public realm is rooted in an idea, also articulated by Arendt, about the relation of place to political power: "The only indispensable material factor in the generation of power is the living together of people. Only where men live so close together

that the potentialities of action are always present can power remain with them, and the foundation of cities, which as city-states have remained paradigmatic for all Western political organization, is therefore indeed the most important material prerequisite for power."⁵ The relation between power and place is reciprocal. Arendt continues: "Power preserves the public realm and the space of appearance, and as such it is also the life-blood of the human artifice, which, unless it is the scene of action and speech, of the web of human affairs and relationships and the stories engendered by them, lacks its ultimate *raison d'être*. Without being talked about by men and without housing them, the world would not be a human artifice but a heap of unrelated things. . . ." ⁶ Frampton summarizes: "For architecture at least, the relevance of *The Human Condition* resides in this—in its formation of that political reciprocity that must of necessity obtain, for good or ill, between the status of men and the status of their objects" (42).

For a concrete example of what Frampton means by "political reciprocity," the reader must turn to perhaps the most famous of Frampton's essays, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," first published in Hal Foster's 1983 *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post-Modern Culture*.⁷ In it, as in "The Volvo Case," Frampton is critical of the universalizing tendency of modernism and of the superficial representations of postmodernism:

Architecture can only be sustained today as a critical practice if it assumes an *arrière-garde* position, that is to say, one which distances itself equally from the Enlightenment myth of progress and from a reactionary, unrealistic impulse to return to the architectonic forms of the pre-industrial past. A critical *arrière-garde* has to remove itself from both the optimization of advanced technology and the ever-present tendency to regress

into nostalgic historicism or the glibly decorative. It is my contention that only an *arrière-garde* has the capacity to cultivate a resistant, identity-giving culture while at the same time having discreet recourse to universal technique. (81)

His insistence on the term "*arrière-garde*"—or on any sort of *garde*, for that matter—is an unnecessarily restrictive and self-conscious appeal to partisanship in what could—in fact, should—be a broadly applied set of principles. Perhaps Frampton would not himself insist on it now, given what, in a lecture at Columbia University in February 2003, he refers to as "a worldwide technical and aesthetic brilliance that may be seen as an unexpected, *de facto* indication of Critical Regionalism."⁸ (He does not cite examples in the transcript of the lecture, but Renzo Piano's Tjibaou Cultural Centre in Nouméa, New Caledonia, of 1999, springs to mind as a building Frampton has elsewhere

realizes how thoroughly the notion of critical regionalism is dependent upon Frampton's earlier reading of Arendt. Not only is the idea of the place-form derived from this reading, the other two concrete principles of critical regionalism are as well: the "directly dialectical relation with nature" realized through a careful attention to topography, climate, and (one of Frampton's loveliest phrases), "the temporally inflected qualities of local light"; and tactility.

The importance of local particularities to the establishment of a resistant place-form is clear enough, but the importance of tactility requires teasing out. For Frampton, an understanding of tactility begins with Arendt's understanding of the relation between the public and the private realms. Frampton explains, "Arendt conceives of the private as the essential 'darker' ground that not only nourishes the public realm but also establishes its experiential depth." He emphasizes "the medi-

seen, but also *felt*. "One has in mind a whole range of complementary sensory perceptions which are registered by the labile body: the intensity of light, darkness, heat and cold; the feeling of humidity; the aroma of material, the almost palpable presence of masonry as the body senses its own confinement; the momentum of an induced gait and the relative inertia of the body as it traverses the floor; the echoing resonance of our own foot-fall" (88). In this vivid and compelling catalogue of qualities, Frampton is at his best as an architectural writer (the term he prefers over the specialized alternatives: theorist, historian, critic).

Frampton offers two examples. The canonically architectural one is Alvar Aalto's Säynätsalo Town Hall, where a brick-walled and paved stair passage leads to the timber floored council chamber. "This chamber," writes Frampton, "asserts its honorific status through sound, smell, and texture, not to mention the springy deflection of the floor underfoot." He notes that "the liberative importance of the tactile resides in the fact that it can only be decoded in terms of *experience* itself: it cannot be reduced to mere information, to representation or to the simple evocation of a simulacrum substituting for absent presences" (89).

But tactile qualities are not only important as an aid to recognition. They also enable action, as Barragán's words above suggest, and as does the other example Frampton offers, of "Luchino Visconti, [who] was well aware of these factors when making the film *The Damned*, for he insisted that the main set of the Altona mansion should be paved in real wooden parquet. It was his belief that without a solid floor underfoot the actors would be incapable of assuming appropriate and convincing postures" (88). In both Aalto's town hall and Visconti's imagined mansion, the ability to act in relation to others, interpersonally and politically (the two are not separate for Frampton: political activity is

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admired for its synthesis of sustainability and aesthetics (15).

Frampton cites Arendt in "Critical Regionalism" to support his idea of "the resistance of the place-form," that is, the ability of the clearly defined domain "to stand against—and hence literally to withstand in an institutional sense—the endless processal flux of the megalopolis" (85). (The awkward term "processal" refers to the tendency to become so caught up in the means [of production, of consumption, of transport] that one loses sight of valued ends—driving, as it were, without a destination, in either the geographical or purposeful sense.) Reading "Critical Regionalism" hard upon having read "The Status of Man and the Status of His Objects," one

at once realizes the capacity of built form to articulate the [public realm] from the [private]" (29).

His "corroboration" of Arendt's conception comes, somewhat surprisingly, in the form of a quotation from Luis Barragán: "Architects are forgetting the need of human beings for half-light, the sort of light that imposes a tranquility, in their living rooms as well as in their bedrooms. About half the glass that is used in so many buildings—homes as well as offices—would have to be removed in order to obtain the quality of light that enables one to live and work in a more concentrated manner" (29).

The critical insight here is that the definition of place-form requires qualitative differences, differences not just

interpersonal activity), depends on the ability to find authority in one's physical situation. You mount the soapbox, you find your mark, and you can speak.

Aalto's town hall is the more telling of the examples, because it more explicitly recognizes that the qualities of spaces that enable speech and action are not absolute, but relative. The honorific status of the council chamber depends on the differences between its qualities and those of the preceding hallway. It is felt in the passage from one set of tactile qualities—the hard, unyielding, no doubt echoing, brick-lined passage—to another—the active, resilient wooden floor of the chamber itself. One is not simply *there*; one has *arrived*.

In “*Rappel à l'Ordre*: the Case for the Tectonic,” the final essay in the “Theory” section of *Labour, Work and Architecture*, Frampton makes a similar case for the importance of the tectonic in the establishment and maintenance of the public realm.⁹ “Within architecture the tectonic suggests itself as a mythical category with which to acquire entry to an anti-processual world wherein the ‘presencing’ of things will once again facilitate the appearance and experience of men” (103). The tectonic category is “mythical,” because, “As Sigfried Giedion was to remark in the introduction to his two-volume study *The Eternal Present* (1962), among the deeper impulses of modern culture in the first half of this century was a ‘transavantgardist’ desire to return to the timelessness of a pre-historic past; to recover in a literal sense some dimension of an eternal present, lying outside the nightmare of history and beyond the processual compulsions of instrumental progress” (102–103). To put it more simply, the tectonic promises to secure our attention, pull us out of the flow of information exchange, commodity consumption, and goal-less progress, and draw us back to the here and now.

Lest this promise founder on its

apparent unrealizability, I would emphasize Frampton's implicit recognition that our sense of an eternal present does not require any absolute condition of permanence. We realize that all things pass away, but we don't on that account dismiss the value of endurance. As with all human experience, we honor the absolute by way of the relative—the ideal of love in our imperfect attempts to love, the ideal of permanence in the knowledge that all earthly things will one day collapse into the sun.

It is crucial for Frampton's thesis that we remember that the conditions he evokes—the definition of domain, consonance with climate, material textures—are discovered in the world not as absolute qualities but as relative ones (“the *intensity* of light and darkness, heat and cold; . . . the *relative* inertia of the body as it traverses the floor” [88]). The faculty required to effect such qualities is not the faculty of choosing, but that of judging. Not “whether,” but “how much?”—how dark? how rough? (There is no such thing as a “perfectly” rough surface.) Experience is always nuanced.

I have dwelt at length on the “Theory” section of *Labour, Work and Architecture*, neglecting the sections on “History” and “Criticism,” because it seems important to understand the systematic nature of Frampton's thinking. For me, it has been particularly instructive to see more clearly the connection he draws between the tectonic and the political in his insistence on the importance of the tactile characteristics of space in enabling us to act with authority in the world. Some years ago, I had the privilege of reviewing Frampton's *Studies in Tectonic Culture*, and I expressed then some disappointment in the distance that seemed to have opened between Frampton's commitment to the political dimension of architecture and the focus in that book on the material and formal articulation of buildings. It was the disappointment of an admirer who had come to count

on this thinker for an otherwise usually neglected point of view. I would have preferred that he stay focused on the political/social organization of space—what I had come to see as the proper domain of Columbia's architecture history faculty, whose commitment to the ethical responsibility of historical study stood and continues to stand as a beacon in an academy too readily blown about by consumerist fashion.¹⁰ He could leave the study of tectonics to the very able folks down at Penn.¹¹ But I see now that political space and tectonics are, for Frampton, not separate concerns but reciprocal ones. I will look forward to rereading *Studies in Tectonic Culture* with this thought in mind.

It is also worth reiterating that Frampton's philosophical convictions don't limit his interests or his investigations. Frampton loves buildings—he measured Chareau's *Maison de Verre* himself—and buildings are irreducible to any single system of thought. Architecture itself can't tolerate the reduction of its concerns. It challenges us to understand a superabundance of possibilities, which will always outstrip our synthetic prowess, at least intellectually.

The many other essays collected in *Labour, Work and Architecture* range over pedagogy, the Modern Movement, and competing definitions of “function.” The “History” section includes instances of Frampton's fascination with Russian Constructivism and analyses of the diverse work of Team 10, Kahn, Loos, Wright, and Aalto. As an example of the unexpected insights that characterize these histories, “The Usonian Legacy,” which traces the work of Schindler and Neutra and their L.A.-region descendents, brings to light, in work that is typically appreciated on formalist grounds, “a concern for a socially committed, bio-climatic architecture.”¹²

“Criticism” includes critiques of buildings by Stirling, Scharoun, Moneo, Siza, Hertzberger, and others who share, in their non-internationalist versions of modernism, a latent critical

regionalism (though Frampton does not emphasize this point). There is tough criticism here, not merely appreciation. In "Minima Moralia: Reflections on Recent Swiss German Production," for example, Frampton observes, regarding Herzog and DeMeuron's Pilotengasse housing, that, "should one choose to compare [it] to the prewar Siedlung Neubühl completed outside Zurich in 1932, one is compelled to acknowledge the passage of some kind of inescapable decadence. Strange that the vision of the radical should depend upon a gratuitous impoverishment of the act of dwelling" (328).

He concludes this essay, and with it the collection, by saying, "One perhaps needs to add that one does not indulge in critique for the sake of a gratuitous negativity, but rather to spur the critical sensibility, to sharpen the debate, to overcome, as far as this is feasible, the debilitating dictates of fashion, and above all to guard against the ever-present threat, in a mediatic age, of sliding into an intellectual somnolence where everything seems to appear to be for the aestheticized best in the best of all commodified worlds" (331). Against the gratuitous, the aestheticized, the commodified, Kenneth Frampton offers an understanding of architecture's significance for human action in the world. He does so as an intellectual who addresses not the intellect alone, but the embodied mind, a mind that is—and can only be—formed and understood in its mutual relationship with the political and physical world.

NOTES

1. And perhaps suggest an alternative to the stultifying phrase, "post-occupancy evaluation."
2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958, 7; quoted in Frampton, 25–26.
3. Quoted in Frampton, 26.
4. For a further exploration of the theoretical implications of architecture's obduracy (and of its interiority), see Patrick L. Pinnell, "Theater Knowledge, House Knowledge, and the Place of Architecture," *arC* (Architecture California), Winter 2003, 40–43.
5. Quoted in Frampton, 27.

6. Ibid., 28.

7. A closely related—and usefully complementary—essay, "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism," appears the same year in *Perspecta* 20, 147–162. The *Perspecta* essay looks at concrete examples in the work of Alvaro Siza, Ricardo Bofill, Raimund Abraham, Luis Barragán, Mario Botta, Tadao Ando, and others.

8. From manuscript sent by Frampton to *Harvard Design Magazine*.

9. As far as I am aware, Frampton nowhere offers a simple definition of "tectonic." In his *Studies in Tectonic Culture*, he traces the use of the term from its origins in the Greek *tekton*, meaning "carpenter" or "builder," through its use in 19th-century German architectural theory, and into the 20th century. He notes the complexity of the term, which implies both constructional logic and aesthetic discipline. It may perhaps be understood as representing an unrealizable aspiration: the inseparable interdependence of poetry and construction.

10. Notable among Kenneth Frampton's colleagues in this commitment are Mary McLeod and Joan Ockman.

11. I'm thinking of Marco Frascari, David Leatherbarrow, Peter McCleary, and Joseph Rykwert.

12. I can't help mentioning a signal fault of the volume, one not, I think, attributable to its author: the lack of illustrations that did appear in earlier publications of many of the essays. The original printing of "The Usonian Legacy," for instance, included twenty-seven illustrations. It is reprinted in *Labour, Work and Architecture* with eight. Some omissions are debilitating. They cannot be explained by printing costs; the graphic layout of the book, with significant margins, affords ample opportunity for more images with no increase in the number of pages. One hopes minimalist graphic sensibility is not behind the exclusions—this would put the cart before the horse. Three possibilities remain: the cost of high-resolution originals and scanning; the cost of reproduction rights (but many of the images are by now in the public domain, and, as support for Frampton's critical arguments, could in any case be reproduced under the principle of "fair use"); and the time needed to track down the originals. Whatever the combination of these or other factors, the publisher has hobbled Frampton's work. Phaidon should consider a restoration of the missing illustrations for future editions, of which one hopes there will be many.

REVIEWED BY DANIEL NAEGELE

Italian Architecture of the 16th Century

by Colin Rowe and Leon Satkowski

New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002

Released in January 2003, *Italian Architecture of the 16th Century* promotes itself as a book written by Colin Rowe and coauthored by Leon Satkowski, professor of architecture at the University of Minnesota. Embossed on its cover beneath the title and in large font is *Colin Rowe*. Below this, in smaller font, is *& Leon Satkowski*. Its advertising mentions Satkowski only once, describing him as "a Rowe student." Much more prominently, it heralds the book as the "last published work of the legendary Colin Rowe, . . . a testament to the buildings, architects, and artists [he] most deeply appreciated . . . , subjects that captured Rowe's heart and challenged his fertile mind." It goes on to state that the book "is written in Rowe's unmatched and engaging personal style," notes that the book "emphasizes the leading subjects of the 16th-century Renaissance: the architects (Bramante, Vignola), the patrons (Leo X, Cosimo I de' Medici), the artists (Michelangelo), and the cities (Rome, Venice, Florence)." It ends by declaring the work the "finest critical scholarship on 16th-century Italy, and an accessible guide for the non-scholar" and by insisting that "this book is destined to be regarded as one of Rowe's most important."

Now there are certainly reasons to believe that a book by Colin Rowe on cinquecento Italian architecture could fit this description. There are, for instance, the many references to Palladio in Rowe's earliest essays and the ubiquity of Rome in *Collage City*¹; the important presence of Michelangelo and even Pirro Ligorio in his beautifully crafted "The Provocative Façade: Frontality and Contrapposto"²; the deservedly famous "Grid/Frame/