was essentially subjective for Pietilä; to design was to be immersed in a poetic process and to seek meaning that was inaccessible through reason alone. Such an approach required giving oneself over to the design process instead of relying on dogmatic external strategies. In Pietilä’s world, it seems that both design process and architectural experience were ultimately ineffable.

Pietilä was familiar with some of the late essays of Martin Heidegger. In “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” Heidegger wrote that “To the Greeks techne means neither art nor handicraft but rather: to make something appear, within what is present.” For Pietilä, such a process required remaining open to various and diverse stimuli: “The seizing of an idea is a process which one doesn’t seem to be able to influence consciously. Consciousness is too coarse an instrument.” The exhibition, despite its distractions, confirms that such was the path—however elusive and even mystical—that the Pietiläs chose to follow.

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Related publication

Notes


4. Ibid., 27.

5. Quantrill, ed., One Man’s Odyssey, 27.


7. Norri et al., Pietilä, 27. Italics added by author.

Palladio
Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura “Andrea Palladio,” Vicenza
20 September 2008–6 January 2009

Royal Academy, London
31 January–13 April 2009

Fondacio La Caixa, Barcelona
19 May–6 September 2009

Caixaforum, Madrid
6 October 2009–17 January 2010

Since he is about the most celebrated architect in the Western world, every generation must have its own Palladio display: For mine it was organized in 1973 by Renato Ceveze, then director of the Centro Palladio (properly, CISA or Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura “Andrea Palladio”) in Vicenza in the great hall of the basilica, breathtakingly—and still memorably—set out by the great Franco Albini. It had its more modest, if still memorably—set out by the great Franco Albini. It had its more modest, if

8. Hofstadter (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975). It also proves so popular that Canaletto did four engravings of the Rialto bridge. And it is wonderful to see the recovered “original” (before it was whitewashed by Baldassare Longhena) and rather harsh coloring, as well as an analytic one of the Vicenza Basilica. There is also a moving (in both senses of the word) computer model of the project for the Rialto bridge. And it is wonderful to have Canaletto’s capriccio of the projected bridge set between two of his Vicentine masterpieces, the Palazzo Chiiericati and the Basilica (as Palladio showed in the Quattro Libri), in the original version commissioned by the polymath Francesco Algarotti (who claimed to have invented this kind of painting), and which was to prove so popular that Canaletto did four versions of it.

Like its predecessor, the Vicenza show has moved to London, to the spacious quarters of the Royal Academy in Burlington House, where many of the drawings must have spent some time after their arrival in Britain, even if Sydney Smirke and others have left little of the town palace that Colin Campbell and James Gibbs had put together for the architect-earl, who had bought (and had engraved) the surveys of antiquities. Others he acquired through another architect, John Talman, and the heirs of Inigo Jones, who in turn seem to have gotten some from Andrea’s son Silla, and a few from his awkward disciple, Vicenzo Scamozzi, a century earlier. A later Duke of Devonshire, Burlington’s collateral...
heir, deposited the bulk of them with the RIBA which now has the largest holding of the Palladio drawings that might be regarded as the seed of the two waves of English Palladianism.

One dramatic innovation is the positive identification of the El Greco portrait from Copenhagen as an image of Palladio (still shown in the New York El Greco show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2003 as that of an anonymous scholar). It was good to see it accompanied by El Greco’s copy of the Barbaro Vitruvius, with his own extensive and careful annotations (published by Fernando Marias in 1981). These notes suggest some of the ideas that presumably guided him in the composition of the architectural treatise that he presented to Philip III, one of the lost treasures of architectural theory. El Greco’s admiration for Palladio seems to inspire the images of the temple in the various Expulsions of the Moneylenders, a gospel theme dear to him, which is clearly Venetian, almost Vicentine, and his homage to Palladio (mayor arquitecto de nuestro tiempo) also appears in the manuscript annotations of his copy of Vasari’s Lives.

For the lay visitor a great puzzle remains: how did someone who drew exclusively in two dimensions imagine so brilliantly in three? It is a puzzle to which the show does not offer an explanation. And of course there will be quibbles, as about the largest drawing on display, the composite from Chatsworth of the façade of a large three-story building which is here described as a projected restoration of the Doge’s palace in Venice after the disastrous fire of 1577 (of which a painting is appended to emphasize the point). However, the catalog does point out that neither the size nor the shape quite accord with the situation, while Giorgio Bellavitis has suggested in Studi Veneziani that it would fit the site of the Palace of the Podestà in Vicenza rather better.

But then provoking such quibbles is one purpose of such an exhibition. And this one, even if a little forbidding, is rich and varied. One innovation is the suggested Oriental connection—a link with Palladio’s contemporary Sinan, and also the documentation of his obsessive interest in battle formation and strategy which led Palladio to publish an elaborately illustrated version of all Caesar’s Commentaries and even attempt a text on Polybius he never finished.

If you have missed the Vicentine and the more airy London version of the show, you can still see it in Barcelona, or even later in Madrid.

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London

Related Publication