news story. Two guys with axes are breaking protective glass to get at some precious work of art. It turns out to be the Shroud of Turin! However, the men in red rubber coats and helmets are firemen saving the “icon” from an adjacent fire. “Thus, we can define an iconoclasm as what happens when there is uncertainty about the exact role of the hand at work.” It is hard to believe that the average reader is not completely convinced, but Bruno Latour cannot wait and raises the rhetorical question, “Why do images trigger so much passion?” Seven pages later we are told that “iconoclasm is neither an art show nor a philosophical argument, but a cabinet of curiosities.” I went forward to page 324, to “The Holy Shroud: How Invisible Hands Weave the Undecidable,” a contribution by M.J. Mondzain, which I had hoped might follow up on the lead example. However, she makes an unconvincing argument, seemingly unaware that the late Walter C. McCrone debunked the Shroud of Turin as a religious relic, on physical and chemical grounds.

There are loads of images that will catch one’s eye on a coffee table. But try as I did, I could not get beyond the impression that this is indeed a “cabinet of curiosities” whose prose compares sadly with Schiller’s.

ARCHITECTS + ENGINEERS = STRUCTURES

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In looking at certain historical prints (nearly any wood engraving by Gustave Doré, for example), it is evident that there are two signatures. One is that of the artist, who made the initial drawing, while the other is that of an unknown craftsman, the engraver, who converted the drawing into a finished print. The concern of this book is with a comparable asymmetry in the practice of architecture: the architect is almost always listed as a building’s sole creator, while the work of the engineer goes unacknowledged. Sometimes they are one and the same person, as when architects have also been trained as engineers, or vice versa, but even then they still perform distinctive tasks, both of which are indispensable to the process. Ideally, argues Czech-born architect Ivan Margolius, it is neither the architect nor the engineer who should be credited with the authorship of a building (or bridge or monument), but the seamless collaborative efforts of both. Throughout this articulate, elegant book, he discusses and illustrates nearly 50 examples of extraordinary structures that resulted from balanced, collaborative ties between architecture and engineering. Many of these are well known, such as the Crystal Palace, the Johnson Wax Building, the Sydney Opera House and the Pompidou Center, while others are largely unheard of.

In the book’s lucid narrative, among the observations made is that to some extent, both architecture and engineering are about the defiance of gravity (or at least the persuasive appearance of such), both spiritually and physically. In a related photograph, we are shown an ingenious method devised by the Spanish architect Antonio Gaudi for harnessing gravity, or (as Marcel Breuer said) for using “gravity to defeat gravity.” Functioning as both architect and engineer, Gaudi built upside-down models of his vaulted structures, from which he suspended weights, structures he later inverted to form his eccentric church steeples.

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ENVISIONING SCIENCE: THE DESIGN AND CRAFT OF THE SCIENCE IMAGE

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In the introduction to this book, two statements are purposely made to stand out: one advises the reader to “read the images as if you were reading text”; while the other boldly states that “this book is intended to teach you to see.” The book’s title was almost certainly derived from Edward Tufte’s Envisioning Information (1980), which advocates similar attitudes toward the communication of statistical data. That book is recommended in the bibliography of this one, as are a number of memorable works such as Charles and Ray Eames’s Powers of Ten, the stroboscopic photographs of Harold Edgerton, Peter Steven’s Patterns in Nature and Cyril Stanley Smith’s From Art to Science. Books of that genre (which began to appear in the 1950s) were less technical than inspirational, and encouraged an almost poetic regard for the startling resemblance between Modern-era scientific and abstract artistic images, a view that Gyorgy Kepes called The New Landscape in Art and Science (1956). This book differs from those in the sense that it can also serve as a technical handbook for scientific photographers, a manual that the cover states “should become a standard tool in all research laboratories.” Written by an MIT research scientist, it is primarily addressed to other scientists, with the purpose of showing them how to produce (for illustration and presentation) documentary images that are both accurate and effective. It includes specific sections about the basics of photography (point of view, composition, lighting, etc.); on photographing minute phenomena through stereo microscopes, compound microscopes and scanning electron microscopes; and on presenting or printing the final results. There is also a visual chronology of the history of scientific images, compiled and annotated by Scientific American columnist Phylis Morrison, who with her husband, MIT physicist Philip Morrison, was an early important contributor to science education. This is an exceptionally beautiful book. Artists, particularly graphic designers, will be delighted by its typography and page layout, designed by Stuart McKee, and the rich, expressive impact of its wealth of images.

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TOUCH: SENSUOUS THEORY AND MULTISENSORY MEDIA

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Haptic, from the Greek haptos, refers to the sense of touch and implies taking hold of an object, grasping it, binding it or hanging on to it. Rhetorically spea-