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Abstract
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.

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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 Vitra Design Museum, housing, that, “should one choose to compare [it] to the prewar Siedlung Neubuhl 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 somnambulance 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 multiplying phrase, “post-occupancy evaluation.”
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,” *arcC@ (Architecture California)*, Winter 2003, 40–41.
5. Quoted in Frampton, 27.
8. Ibid, 28.
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. Noble among Kenneth Frampton’s colleagues in this commitment are Mary McLeod and Joan Ockman.
11. I’m thinking of Marco Frascari, David Leatherbarrow, Peter McCluskey, and Joseph Rykwert.

BOOK REVIEWS

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*; the important presence of Michelangelo and even Pirro Ligorio in his beautifully crafted “The Provocative Façade: Frontality and Contrapposto”; the deservedly famous “Grid/Frame/
Lattice/Web" essay invoking Giulio Romano (most recently found in the As I Was Saying collection); and the occasional conversation with Rowe in which subjects such as his bumping into Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown on a visit to the Palazzo Farnese constantly came up. Rowe kept an apartment in Rome, and stories are still told there of his deep appreciation of its architecture. There is, too, in a slightly different realm, that undeniable and very English obsession with Italy: Lord Burlington and Robert Adam, of course; later Ruskin and D. H. Lawrence; and today, the high-gloss films of Merchant and Ivory.

To be sure, there are many reasons to believe. But there's one big reason to doubt the publisher's assertions. Colin Rowe died on November 5, 1999. And Adam, of course; later Ruskin and D. H. Lawrence; and today, the high-gloss films of Merchant and Ivory.

As I Rowe died on November 5, 1999. And Adam, of course; later Ruskin and D. H. Lawrence; and today, the high-gloss films of Merchant and Ivory.

Thus—and to protract this point perhaps too far—Satkowski introduces Le Corbusier in *Italian Architecture of the 16th Century* only to belittle him, and, with him, all of Modern Architecture. He opens his epilogue with another epigram, this one by the 1936 L-C: "Shatter the 'schools'. . . as well as the 'School of Vignola', I beseech you" (310). Now Satkowski has written a rather fine chapter on Giacomo Vignola, and with this out-of-context L-C quote he seems to ask patronizingly why the 20th century's most influential architect did not appreciate the Italian theorist-architect as much as he, Leon Satkowski, does. He immediately provides the answer. "It was all too easy for architects such as Le Corbusier to demonize cinquecento architects," Satkowski declares. "Vignola was singled out for special criticism, most likely because of how his immensely successful treatise on orders . . . represented everything that Corbusier sought to achieve in his "Five Points of a New Architecture" (313). For Satkowski, then, petty jealousy was the root of Le Corbusier's dismissal. Le Corbusier, Satkowski insists, "misunderstood" Vignola, thus suggesting that there is only one correct understanding, that belonging, of course, to Satkowski.8 Demonstrizing, indeed. Unfortunately, Satkowski's entire last chapter is dedicated to such suggestions. The geniuses of modern architecture—Wright, Le Corbusier, and even Walter Gropius—wrongly dismissed cinquecento Italian architecture. They simply weren't savvy enough to appreciate what Leon Satkowski would ultimately find fascinating. And so a curious cap is put on the entire book. For how to accept or value "readings" of 16th-century Italian architecture from one so obviously incapable of understanding far more accessible 20th-century architecture? How to find the presence of Colin Rowe's wisdom in words and movements so obviously in opposition to his? Oh, that these were merely annoying attributes and...
not major concerns for a viable critical position that seems to have eluded Leon Satkowski.

That Satkowski both begins and ends his book with a concern for Modernism is rather unfortunate, for it frames his far larger effort in an awkward manner and we must necessarily assume that a badly formulated position toward Modernism implies a badly formulated position toward Italian cinquecento architecture. This framing, however, cannot be ignored, for certainly it is Satkowski’s attempt to answer obvious questions raised by the book: why should we of the 21st century be concerned with 16th-century Italian architecture? And isn’t it all a bit pretentious and ultimately unnecessary—not least since many of the great 20th-century masters found it so very academic and useless? Satkowski’s response is far different from that which we might imagine from Colin Rowe. Nowhere does Satkowski attempt an intelligent account of the stifling over-academic atmosphere that confronted these Modern masters; rather he views their opinions of his own preferences as a threat to the integrity of his position. Ultimately, he dismisses these masters as rubes. And the great fault of the book is exactly this. For certainly its subject, Italian architecture of the 16th century, has merit, though to architects and students of architecture who might read the book, its merit must be largely potential—comprised of far more than information of an arcane sort, a lesson concocted in a manner that encourages the reader to see “with new eyes” the great works of Italian architecture and to understand that such works are relevant to the creation of architecture in the 21st century. Colin Rowe could have written this. His influence on the making of architecture—as evinced in the introductions to monographs on the New York Five, on Stirling, and on Krier—was substantial, and one must attribute this to his essays and books that encourage the thoughtful consideration of architectural creation in relation to the great architecture of the past. Rowe’s way of writing was crucial to his capacity to encourage reflection; but despite publicity blurs that insist the book was written in “Rowe’s unmatched and engaging personal style,” in great understatement, Satkowski notes in his acknowledgement that “Colin’s unique voice may have been lost in completing this book” [vii].

If Italian Architecture of the 16th Century is not the writing of Colin Rowe (in the same way that Madison’s recently completed Minona Terrace in Wisconsin is not the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and to insist that it is is to diminish his legacy and undermine his beliefs), what then is it? Again, announcements regarding this book are of little help. In contradiction to publicity’s insistence 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),” Satkowski declares unambiguously that “the text focuses mainly on Rome and Venice” (viii), that the treatment of Florence is abbreviated, and that, unfortunately, the planned chapters on Michelangelo and Palladio were “cut short by Colin’s death” and not included in this survey (viii). Now, 16th-century Italian architecture without Michelangelo or Palladio is a bit like Thanksgiving without turkey. Despite the many benefits of a tofu substitute, it is abundantly inappropriate for the occasion and can never prove sufficient—even less so here where one of the book’s declared theses is “how authority and subversion take on many forms” (xix). So when the best chapter in Italian Architecture of the 16th Century, an excellent summation of his earlier writings and a highly intelligent portrait of the writer-artist-architect known far better for his Lives than for the ingenious Florence Uffizi or the intriguing urban stage-set loggia in Arezzo. Satkowski documents both works of architecture thoroughly, offering fascinating insight into the patronage that inspired such works and Vasari’s persistence in pleasing his patrons. This being said, Vasari simply does not suffice as substitute for Palladio and Michelangelo. The absence of this duo and of the climax they might contribute is extremely evident in the book.

Still, Italian Architecture of the 16th Century is not a bad book, but it is not, as its advertisement claims, the “finest critical scholarship on 16th-century architecture” as its advertisement claims, the "finest scholarly publication of the past 10 years"...
Italy," and its value is not that of a
Rowe text, criticism of a rare sort in
which "the possible, the probable, and
the plausibly abstract are always in a
continuous condition of intersection."
Instead, it should be valued occasionally
as "arcane-knowledge-on-a-need-to-
know-basis" and occasionally as a very
elaborate and often very intriguing
guidebook. It selects and documents
wonderful works of architecture and
provides extensive information on each,
works by Donato Bramante, Giulio
Romano, Baldassare Peruzzi, Jacopo
Sansovino, Michele Sanmicheli, Gia-
corno Vignola, and, of course, Vasari.
But Satkowski never fully investigates
the obviously Rowe-esque themes
introduced at the beginning of the
book—authority and subversion, for
instance, or painting toward architecture
(a Henry-Russell Hitchcock notion, but
directed toward Modernism, of course),
typologies perhaps, and definitely "the
city." Though such ideas are utterly intriguing, the book would be better off without their
undeveloped appearance. Indeed, were
Satkowski to edit Rowe out, he would
arrive at a far better integrated book.
For Rowe is no easy act to follow; and
he's not to be imitated or issued unfin-
ished. And Satkowski's scholarly con-
cerns seem perfectly legitimate and of
interest; his art-historical manner of
articulating these subjects is quite read-
able and often very intelligent.

Obviously, the misleading publicity
quoted above was not of Satkowski's
doing. It describes a book that was
intended. The intention was never ful-
filled. "Weed it and reap" would be
my advice to the reader of Italian
Architecture of the 16th Century, advice
that might be extended to all at the
table who have been served victuals
colossarily different from those they
had expected.

NOTES
1. Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, College City
essays," see Notes 5 and 6.

2. Colin Rowe, "The Provocative Façade:
Frontality and Contrapposto," Le Corbusier: Architect of the

3. Colin Rowe, ed. Alexander Caragonde, As I Was
Saying: Recollections and Miscellaneous Essays
(Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996). Other "Italian"

essays in this three-volume set include: "Two Italian
Encounters" (1988); "Ideas, Talents, Possibilities: A
Problem of Manifesto" (1989); "Letter: On Prece-
dent and Invention" (1986); "Roma Invisita"
(1977-1976); "Rome: Piazza Augusto Imperatore"
(1987); and, "I Stood in Venice on the Bridge of
Sighs" (1985).

4. The term "permanent argument" is employed by
Rowe in his "The Provocative Façade" (27) in
which he writes: "The existence of contrapposto

presumes a pictorial or sculptural condition of per-
manent argument. The figure is simultaneously static
and set in motion. There is the primary surface of
attack, the frontal picture plane, and, then, there
is the convoluted and serpentine territory which lies
behind." Later in this essay, Rowe describes Le
Corbusier's Villa Stein at Garches in similar terms.

5. For example, Rowe's first and perhaps his most
famous essay, "The Mathematics of the Ideal
Villa," was republished numerous times after its
initial appearance in Architectural Design in 1947.
With each republication, Rowe slightly altered the
essay, bringing it more and more into alignment
with his refined critical position. Differences
between Le Corbusier and Palladio are far more
pronounced and detailed in the "final" version than in
the original one. Not surprisingly, the illustra-
tive text of each underscores these differences.
The "permanent argument" that results—the peaceful
co-existence between decidedly different parties—

becomes the basis for an urban theory best articu-
lated in Collage City.

and Other Essays (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976),
194. This essay was first published as "Dominican
Monastery of La Tourette, Evex-Sur-Arbe\, Lyons,"

7. In fact, this letter was a reply from Le Corbusier
directed toward Modernism, of course.

8. Though Le Corbusier's quote on page 83 and quoted on page 310, the "Index" under
"Le Corbusier" (325) does not indicate this.

9. Rowe, The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa
and Other Essays, 216.

10. In Painting Toward Architecture (New York: Duell,
Sloane and Pearce, 1948), Henry-Russell
Hitchcock attempts to show the influence of moder-

n art on modern architecture while documenting
"The Miller Company Collection of Abstract Art." Thus,
a painting by Mondrian is juxtaposed with a photograph of the front facade of Oud's Café de
Unie in Rotterdam, and Wright's Hickox House in
Kankakee is compared to Kunieda's "Japanese
Actors" print. Rowe and Satkowski attempt to
show how various fivecento Italian architects
first painted a "new" architecture in various murals
and only later attempted to build something of
this earlier imagined architecture.