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Painting and Architecture

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by *S. Giedion*

It is possible to distinguish 3 phases in the development of modern architecture: 1920 to 1930, the creation of new mediums of expression in which free planning and the functional conception are applied to the architectural unit. 1930 and onwards the integration of the various constructive units in more or less extensive projects: colonies, urbanism and regional planning; the third phase is only just evolving and will be characterised by architecture that will be mainly collective, endeavouring to satisfy affective as well as functional requirements. How to fulfil this task? In order to create something that lives and has an emotional value the contemporary artist has to go through the experience of modern art (the biblical needle's eye). The latter rejects precisely that isolation of feeling and art noteworthy in the 19th century and which has its origin (according to A. N. Whitehead) in the great scission established by Descartes between thought and extension, philosophy and science, whilst on the other hand, parallel to the living art of our time, modern physics restores the cohesion between the different realms of reality and breaks with the old rationalism, once more making possible universalism and the harmony of thought and feeling. Furthermore, an undoubted "optical enlargement" is to be noted. Winckelmann ignored nature and Ruskin the modern world; we embrace both. In addition aerial views, the revelations of the microscope etc. have transformed and extended our conception of the world. It is for the artist to be the *medium* through which these new elements may be fused on the human and emotional planes. As for the specific relations of painting and architecture, the same evolution coincides with an organic conception of their conjunction. About 1910 cubism abolished the hegemony of perspective (from 1420) whilst construction (R. Maillart) and architecture, simultaneously with cubism or after it, "conquered space" and emphasise the unity of the various formal elements, *surface* included. Gleize defines the latter as "the essential constructive element of the whole picture". In 1922 T. van Doesburg was to draw the interior of a house "by transparency" in accordance with a spatial conception which, later, for purely economic and technical reasons, the Rockefeller-Center will involuntarily confirm, thus proving that a strong connection unites the realities of our age with the experiments of those artists who are looked on as the most "abstract" and the least concerned with reality.

Architecture and Mural Painting

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by *Hans Hildebrandt*

Each civilization requires to a greater or lesser degree the collaboration of painting and sculpture in its architecture; where religious, this collaboration (except when vetoed as in Islam) is essential, where "temporal" the civilisation finds it desirable instead of insisting on it. The essential law of mural painting is of the simplest: all mural painting is a combination of painting and architecture, the painter being compelled, in spite of liberties which the architect does not enjoy, to complete the significance of the verticals and horizontals of the building. Mural painting should adapt itself to the aims of the latter and use the same formal language. These truths do no more than translate the obligation of unity which should govern the collaboration of the different arts – a truth forgotten by the 19th century but which reappears towards 1900. Once the collaboration between painting and architecture is admitted several principles may be set down: mural painting must accept architectural data; its task is to illustrate through its art and in the space at its disposal, the formal powers of the whole, never for-

getting that forms and pictorial colours contribute greatly to the final effect.

From Mural to Spatial Painting

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by *Alfred Roth*

Where the mutual relations between his art and the other aesthetic disciplines are concerned, the architect occupies a central position, and for this reason it is incumbent on him to familiarise himself with the problems of the other living arts, and also to be "present to the world" in his awareness of current tendencies. As far as the question of "painting in architecture" is concerned, it is to be emphasized that there is no question, as has often been thought up to now, of "placing" certain works, but, by means of a previous agreement between the architect and the painter, of "*foreseeing*" both architecturally and pictorially, the organic fusion of these arts in the building. When unhampered by "ornamental effects" modern architecture offers to the painter surfaces which are planned with deliberation. Considering the regrettable lack of buildings illustrating the unity of our culture, certain exhibitions (e. g. Zürich 1939) indicate the method to be followed in arriving at the necessary synthesis through the collaboration of the architect, the painter and the sculptor – and of the man. In the conception of *colour as a formal architectural element* it is even possible to envisage the birth of a painting which is not only mural but spatial, that is to say which assumes its own role in the function of the spatial elements constituting a building. Obviously tact and restraint are essential here; colour requires 1. plane surfaces; 2. no clashing with other colours; 3. a limitation to the architecturally essential parts of the building because of its "dignity"; 4. a functional (and not ornamental) distribution; 5. each colour should only be used in conformity with its correct spatial and plastic effects; 6. the "corporality" of a structural element is stressed by light colours and is lessened by dark colours; 7. and finally it is proposed to distinguish the *shade* (neutral), the *tone* (reduced activity), and the *colour* (maximum activity), the first being appropriate in simple houses or tenement houses and in buildings used for various purposes, and the second, even more effective psychologically, lending itself to an alternating distribution (c. f. le Corbusier). As for colour, it must only be used in limited doses to mark the *accents* or in addition the non-rigidity of the spatial units. (The Parisian studio of Mondrian, no longer in existence, was an unparalleled example.) All of these are possibilities which encourage dreams of what Valéry called "an architecture that sings".

Sculpture and Architecture

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by *Willy Rotzler*

Architectural sculpture is not mere ornament but an integrating element of a building. At first essentially cultural (the primitives), it later became constructively functional (statue-pillars of Ramses III), an organic element (classical period) and finally decorative but still closely bound to the architectural form. The Roman, Gothic and Baroque styles maintain this unity which the 19th century was to compromise. The "new art" is already confusedly endeavouring to re-establish it. And though modern architecture unwillingly admits sculpture, the latter is gradually regaining its prestige, even if the solutions are sometimes hardly satisfactory. Apparently at the moment the only form possible is that of "plastic accentuation" in which sculptured creations place the emphasis where it is required by the architecture. It is to be hoped that our democratic civilization will be able to solve the problem thanks to an awareness of the "congruence" of the different arts, in other words their *unity*.