

Architecture, ornament and pictorialism: notes on the relationship between the arts from Wölfflin to Le Corbusier

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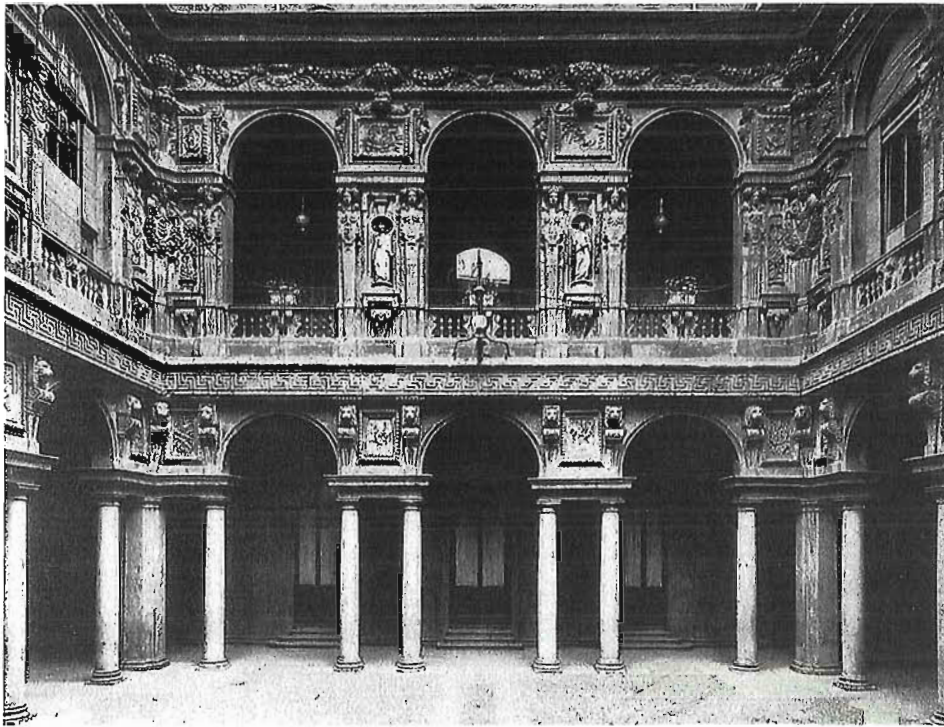
In his seminal volume *Architecture in Italy 1500–1600* of 1974, Wolfgang Lotz characterized Galeazzo Alessi's work at the Palazzo Marini in Milan as 'pictorial' (Fig. 3.1). He did not elaborate on this statement, yet it was patently clear that the label was attached to Alessi's treatment of ornament.¹ Indeed, Lotz described his ornament to be 'drowning the structure' and found the origins of this 'painterly architecture' in the Raphael circle in Rome. The trend, he concluded (epitomized at mid-century by Pirro Ligorio's exuberant façades) yielded to the more austere style of Michelangelo and Vignola, but in Lombardy 'with its innate love of lavish decoration of flat surfaces, it flourished'.² He had already acknowledged as much at the Galeazzo Alessi *convegno* in Genova where after drawing attention to Alessi's innovative urban solutions and palace designs as 'autonomous [read, free-standing] structures' he had admitted perplexity before the 'pictorialism of the sculpted wall' in the Milanese work.³

Such an evaluation was no isolated phenomenon, raised by the oeuvre of a difficult architect. In his 1973 monograph on Palladio, Lionello Puppi had used the same term – pictorial – to define the architect's late work. The same association with ornament was evident here, too. When discussing the heavily sculpted wall of Palladio's Vicentine palaces of the 1550s and 60s (Iseppo Porto, Barbaranno, the Loggia del Capitaniato), Puppi described it as an example of 'exaggerated pictorialism' (Fig. 3.2). Here too the pejorative was only just below the surface: encountering difficulty in reconciling such excesses with the spare vocabulary of Palladio's earlier villas – of the 'neo-classical' Palladio – he attempted to reduce their importance by describing them as 'minor works' or works where the circumstances of the commission had not allowed the architect's true intentions to come through.⁴

At one level the meaning behind these statements is plain enough: Alessi's and Palladio's deep carving of the façades and their scattering of ornamental



3.1 Andrea Palladio, Loggia del Capitaniato, detail, Vicenza



3.2 Galeazzo Alessi, Palazzo Marini, courtyard, Milan

devices such as herms, brackets, shells, niches, broken pediments etc. created a shimmering chiaroscuro surface that could be construed as 'pictorial'. However, though true, these were nevertheless loaded statements, for in associating ornament with the immortal *malerisch* of Heinrich Wölfflin, Lotz and Puppi had essentially defined these works as aberrant in their protagonist's oeuvre (Alessi's in Milan, Palladio's *ultima maniera*) and therefore dismissed them without using as much as a single pejorative term.

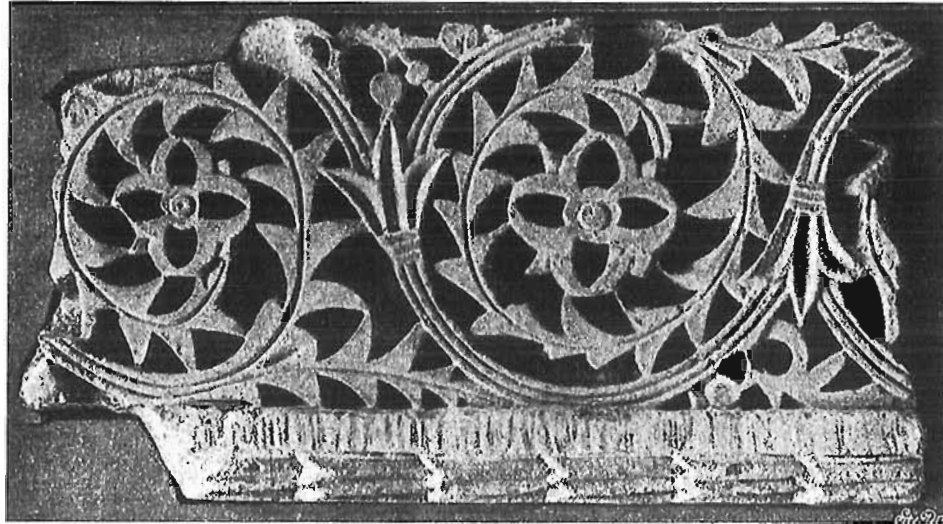
That ornament had been on the architecture index for some time is a well-known fact. Indeed, at the turn of the century it had risen to prominence in the arenas of architectural production, theory, and criticism and ignited debates only to be dismissed altogether from the modernist project. Yet the pejorative association of painting with ornament is perhaps less easy to understand. Judging from the examples cited above, it seems that it is precisely its 'painterliness' that made ornament objectionable, and positioned it outside true architecture. But why should the association of ornament with painting be construed as such a powerful pejorative? After all, the mutual relationship between architecture and painting had always been viewed

positively. Indeed, the three visual arts had traditionally come together under the single umbrella of the academy (the Renaissance academies *del disegno* and later the Ecole des Beaux-Arts), that is, they were brought under the ægis of the same institution, a fact which openly acknowledged their harmonious and stimulating cohabitation. Moreover, even when the Ecole-type of teaching lost ground, the basic association of the sister arts continued to be enacted by such modern school icons as the Bauhaus. In his seminal *Space, Time and Architecture* of 1941 Sigfried Giedion himself consecrated this association when he presented painting and architecture as mutually reinforcing instruments to explore and display the essential structures of life as intuited by science.⁵ Yet the very fact that painting and its practices should elicit such a range of responses among historians and critics suggests and records a more complex situation – and one that hints at an effort to (re)position architecture within the arts. *When* this re-alignment occurred, *how* the issue was formulated and, most importantly, *where* the debate was located are the questions this essay will raise.

The debate on *malerisch*

The term painterly (*malerisch*) – especially its application to architecture – was challenged almost as soon as it was formulated. Indeed, this turning point in the relationship of architecture and painting was actually articulated in a debate. In 1888 Heinrich Wölfflin had published his momentous re-evaluation of the Baroque as *Renaissance und Barock. Eine Untersuchung über das Wesen und Entstehung des Barockstils in Italien*. The principal features of the text – and perhaps its most lasting bequest to generations of art historians – were the characteristic categories he identified for each period style. *Malerisch* was central among them: according to Wölfflin it was the defining feature of the Baroque, a meta-category that applied to all the arts, architecture included: ‘As there exists a painterly architecture, there is also a painterly sculpture; even painting distinguishes a painterly period in its own history.’⁶

Yet, although he dealt with all the arts, Wölfflin imperceptibly privileged architecture. Not only was architecture his main (and first) example illustrating the stylistic shift from Renaissance to Baroque, it also accounted for *all* the images he included in the text (Fig. 3.3). Indeed, the opening sentence of the book set out the concept of painterliness with reference to architecture: ‘Art historians agree that the most important feature of Baroque architecture is its *painterly* character. The art of building abandons its characteristic nature and seeks effects that belong to another art: it becomes painterly.’⁷ Although a term of some currency, *malerisch* was not sufficiently defined in Wölfflin’s view, and he set out to fill this gap. According to him the



3.3 Fragment of a Frieze, Gizeh Museum. Illustration from Alois Riegl, *Spättrömische Kunstindustrie*, 1901

illusion (representation) of movement was the principal feature of the painterly style and it depended on effects of light and shade, of mass rather than linearity, of infinite extension and rejection of rules (e.g. oblique viewing angles).⁸

Less than ten years later, in 1896, and again in 1897, in his books *Zur Frage nach dem Malerischen* and *Barock und Rokoko, eine Auseinandersetzung über das Malerische in der Architektur*, August Schmarsow picked up Wölfflin's category and used it as a starting point to investigate the mutual relationship between the visual arts. Under the influence of Adolf von Hildebrand's *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst* (Baden-Baden, 1893), which took an intense look at form-making, especially as it pertained to sculpture, and in the tradition of such a monument of German criticism as G.E. Lessing's *Laokoon, oder Über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie*, Schmarsow wished to draw attention to the characteristic features of the individual arts. Not unlike Wölfflin, Hildebrand had also found a single, all-embracing impulse driving all the arts. *Architektonisch* was his term and the similarity between sculpture and architecture in creating form – *Daseinsform* (actual form) and *Wirkungsform* (effective form) – was his particular focus.⁹

For Schmarsow, any attempt to treat all arts as the result of a single aesthetic impulse – whether spatial as in Hildebrand's case or pictorial as in Wölfflin's case – illustrated a trend that needed to be reviewed. Not disputing overlaps between the arts, he nevertheless wished to re-establish a discourse

that acknowledged their distinct identities, the better to understand their mutual relationship.¹⁰ Most important, he wanted to resist the effects of the then current empathy theory that exalted anthropomorphism and apperception, and that increasingly led critics and art historians to blur the boundaries between the arts.¹¹ Schmarsow put it down to the persistence of the *'plastisches Ideal'* associated with the equally persistent fascination with ancient art. Earlier he had pointed to the impact of the Pergamon altar recently brought to Berlin – and to the series of works on relief sculpture from the 1880s that had popularized the concept of pictorial relief.¹² For him the category *malerisch* seemed central to such a confusion of concepts (*'Begriffsverirrung'*), and therefore in urgent need of re-evaluation (Fig. 3.4).¹³

Architecture became Schmarsow's principal target. Neither pictorial nor sculptural, for him it was essentially the art of shaping space.¹⁴ Wölfflin, who defined architecture as 'the art of solid [physical] forms' (*'die Kunst körperlichen Massen'*) naturally came under attack.¹⁵ So did Burckhardt (Wölfflin's teacher), whom Schmarsow saw as the originator of the analogy between architecture and organic forms.¹⁶ For Schmarsow, the analogy body (organism)/building and the ensuing anthropomorphism was faulty, and was only appropriate to sculpture (*'Körperbildnerin'*), not architecture, for it does not account for its spatial qualities.¹⁷ Indeed, he posited the view that it



3.4 Pergamon Altar, view

may be precisely this shift from an organismic conception of architecture to one that recognizes it as a phenomenon of crystallization – typical of inorganic matter, producing ‘rigid stereometric spatial objects’ (*‘starres stereometrische Raumgebilde’*) – and therefore alien to the experience of the ‘warm, living body’ that lies at the root of the real thread developing from antiquity to the present.¹⁸ As a result he attacked the psychology-based empathy theory – he quoted Vischer, Volkelt, Lotze, Wundt, but Wölfflin was the real target – that was fundamentally dependent on anthropomorphism as its jumping off point.¹⁹ Although he himself subscribed to a psychology-based methodology and promoted a synthesis between sensory experience and spatial imagination, these scholars, he argued, missed out on a fundamental characteristic of architecture by shifting its discourse into that of sculpture.²⁰ All architectonic forms, even the columns, beams etc., he continued, remain in the domain of abstraction and resist direct equivalence with human limbs (members).²¹ In the final analysis, for Schmarsow the issue was one of figure and ground: the essence of architecture is not its solids but the voids they shape.

Even more revolutionary was Schmarsow’s resulting conception of period style. Again he took on Wölfflin – and *mutatis mutandis* Semper – who had argued that the birthplace of a new style lay in ornament.²² In his view the *Formgefühl* (feeling for form) was not the determinant feature of a new style but rather the *Raumgefühl* (feeling for space), even though (he agreed) it may first make itself felt in decoration (*Dekoration*). ‘As if the activity of the architect,’ he argued, ‘started with the development and evaluation of architectural members, whereas it is clear that the foundation of all architectural styles, the common root of all architecture, must be sought in the formation of space.’²³ And, upsetting a tradition that went back to Vitruvius and beyond, in lieu of the traditional definition of architectural styles according to the columnar orders, Schmarsow proposed a new taxonomy based on *Raumstile* (spatial styles).²⁴

In his *Barock und Rokoko* of the following year (1897) Schmarsow returned to these issues and reinforced them by moving in on Wölfflin’s own territory and working with one art (architecture) and one historical period (Baroque/Rococo). Indeed, his sub-title is very specific in defining his target: *Eine kritische Auseinandersetzung über das Malerische in der Architektur* (‘A critical argument on the painterly in architecture’).²⁴ Armed with specific examples he again takes on the fallacies of *malerisch*, its ambiguities (indeterminacy) and the scholarly prejudices that privilege it. Instead of allowing *malerisch* to become the category through which all art is evaluated, he argues, the business of art history is to examine the reciprocal relationship between the arts in order to understand the true character of stylistic periods. For such analyses to be at all possible, the individual identities and

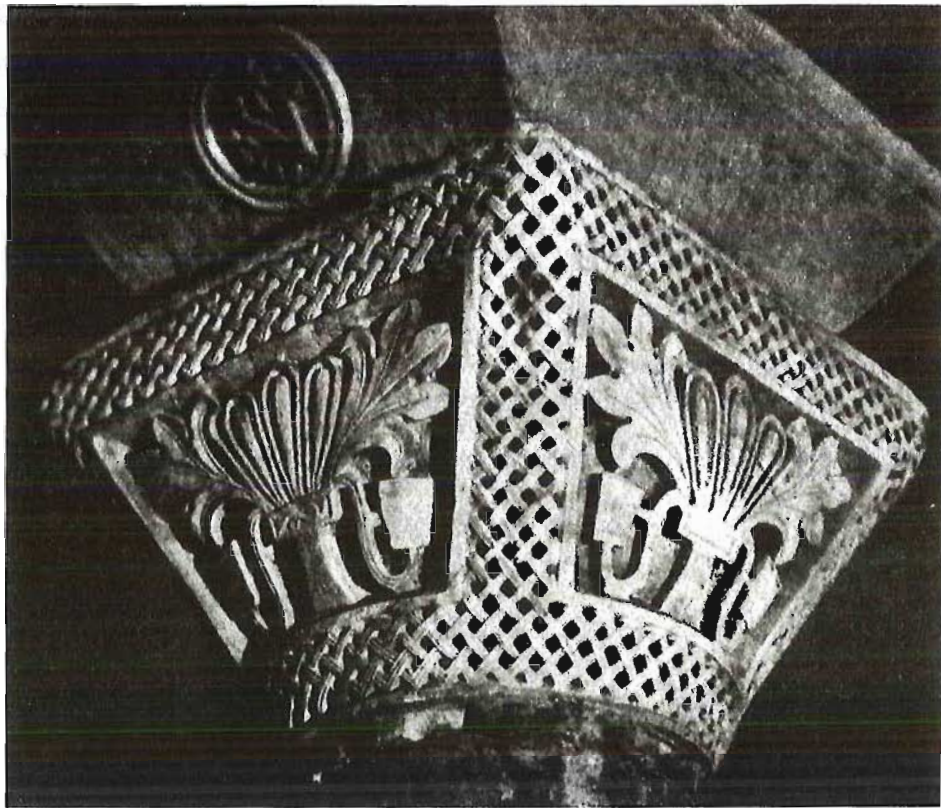
peculiarities of the arts must be well understood.²⁶ In his *Renaissance und Barock*, Wölfflin was forced to admit that one term cannot sufficiently describe Baroque art, Schmarsow triumphantly notes, yet he nevertheless persisted in his definition of the new style as a transition from 'severity to freedom and painterliness, from form to formlessness'²⁷ Ultimately, Schmarsow's conclusion is not one inimical to painting. Rather, he asks scholars to recast the question: not to ask how painterly architecture may be, but to ask what role painting played in the stylistic definition of a historical period. Throughout, his definition of architecture as spatially determined remains unchanged.

Riegl and the carpet analogy

In the same period when Schmarsow was taking on Wölfflin's definition of the painterly, the better to draw attention to the spatial characteristics of architecture, Alois Riegl proposed his own variation on this theme. Ever since *Stilfragen* of 1893, his work had been concerned with *Kunstwollen* and therefore with what brings the arts together (as the driving impulse behind them), rather than what sets them apart. This project culminated with the publication of *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* in 1901. Although all arts shared fundamental characteristics in a given historical period, Riegl identified architecture and the decorative arts as the most representative of a particular *Kunstwollen*.²⁸ Thus, in his view, in late antique art they displayed most powerfully a colouristic (*Kolorismus*) conception of the work.²⁹ Although Riegl's term 'colouristic' was not interchangeable with Wölfflin's 'pictorial', both notions shared a reference to painting and its characteristic practices, particularly to the concern with patterns of light and shade and relationships of figure and ground (Fig. 3.5).

That Riegl should privilege a pictorial lens through which to examine architecture was no coincidence caused by the particular features of late antique art. Indeed, such a prejudice was already apparent in his work of 1897/9 – published posthumously under the title *Historische Grammatik der bildenden Künste* – that is, in the lectures he gave at the University of Vienna in precisely the same years when Schmarsow was publishing his response to Wölfflin. In these lectures Riegl sought to establish his *Kunstwollen* concept as the true foundation for the new *Kunstwissenschaft* (science of art) and to do so he needed to identify a set number of fundamental features that, once tested against all the arts in a given time-frame, could help identify and define the specific character of a single, overarching artistic impulse.

Neither Semper's proposal of materials and fabrication techniques as the foundations for all art-making, nor the more recent *malerisch* (painterly) and



3.5 Marble Capital, S. Vitale, Ravenna. Illustration from Alois Riegl, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie*, 1901

plastisch (sculptural) explanation of art sufficed in his view. Nor did the answer lie, he argued with a ricochet to Schmarsow, in investigations of the individual arts.³⁰ Only their common elements or laws could provide the necessary insight. And for Riegl these were: use (*Zweck*), material, technique, motif (content), and, finally, form and plane.³¹ The emphasis on plane and form – the only formal categories included in this list – already indicates a fundamentally different conception from Schmarsow's, whose definition of architecture as the art of shaping space he openly criticized for being too narrow.³² For Riegl the sculptural relief was the 'first stage towards a *Raumkunst* (spatial art)' By thus locating the origins of architecture in the plane he could claim that pattern and the relationships of figure and ground were essential for all the arts and at all times.³³ Clearly such a move allowed Riegl to connect the monumental with the decorative arts and, ultimately, to place the latter at the core of his *Kunstwollen* theory as its primary signifiers.

That the decorative arts lay at the core of Riegl's conception of *Kunstwollen* was noted from the outset. In his *Grundbegriffe der Kunstwissenschaft* of 1905 Schmarsow reminded readers that Riegl's real starting point was relief sculpture and *Kunstgewerbe* and argued that he only retroactively applied his findings to the other arts, especially to architecture.³⁴ The fact that Riegl used ornament, particularly column capitals, to illustrate his argument about 'colouristic' architecture, certainly validated such a view. Moreover, the painting/decorative arts/ornament connection embedded in his emphasis on plane and form and on figure and ground effects was itself the result of an earlier deep engagement with the decorative arts in the shape of oriental carpets.³⁵ Indeed, the carpet had recently risen to prominence as a test-case for definitions of art and artistic production and been placed in the foreground of the debate on the identity of the arts by Riegl himself in his *Stilfragen* of 1893. Of course, in so doing he was responding to Semper who, in 1860, had first set architectural theory on its head by proposing that the woven fabric, the carpet, had been the prototype for architectural form instead of the traditional Vitruvian tectonic model.³⁶

Though engaging Semper's material-based theory, Riegl twisted the discussion into another direction. For Riegl the carpet was not an example of fabrication, of manipulation by the hand, tied into an anthropological explication of the development of shelter-making as it had been for Semper. Instead, he looked at the carpet as a decorative, painting-like surface, displaying a will-to-form that reached all artistic production and manifested itself in the predilection for a particular range of decorative motifs (e.g., arabesques, tendrils, palmettes etc.) (Fig. 3.6).

Certainly, Riegl attempted to correct the Semperian view of the development of ornament, and his argument ultimately was a negative one. After a careful historical investigation he was able to show that the family of



3.6 Border from a Persian Carpet of the Safavid period. Illustration from Alois Riegl, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie*, 1901

motifs displayed by carpets and architectural ornament (that had led Semper and his followers to see a cause and effect relationship between the two arts) belonged to different periods, and most importantly, that the stone ornament had predated the textile one. This enabled him to oppose the theory that materials and fabrication techniques held a determining role for architecture.³⁷ However, despite this polemical intent, the features that had first attracted Riegl to the study of carpets, and allowed him to compare them with architectural motifs, resurfaced in his later work as the key elements for the analysis of all arts. Thus, the carpet's patterns translated into his 'plane and form' (*Form und Fläche*) element, into his interest in figure and ground and, ultimately, into the *Kolorismus* feature he identified in late antique art. According to Riegl, this light-and-shadow (colouristic) tapestry effect constituted the principal formal characteristic of late Roman art. Drawing together architecture, minor arts and sculpture, it testified to a consistent period *Kunstwollen*.³⁸

But there was one other facet to Riegl's argument. Alone among his contemporaries he viewed sculpture as the more primitive art, that predated surface-bound and geometry-based ornament.³⁹ It is therefore not surprising that in *Spättrömische Kunstindustrie* he privileged architecture and decorative arts as the true indices of *Kunstwollen*. Their shared feature was ornament. It is here that the laws of *Kunstwollen* were most clearly perceptible, not in the figural arts (painting and sculpture) where content (poetic, religious, didactic, patriotic etc.) invariably superseded the 'pure' manifestation of form preferences. In the debate on the identity of the arts so lucidly formulated by Schmarsow, Riegl connected architecture with the minor arts (*Kunstgewerbe*) – shortly to become the mass-produced arts – and therefore released architecture from its association with sculpture that had driven the empathy-based theories of historians like Wölfflin.⁴⁰ Riegl did not follow Schmarsow in his attempt to detach architecture from the other arts and define it – prophetically – solely in terms of space.⁴¹ Nor did he forego ornament with its painterly associations; indeed it remained at the very core of his thinking. Yet, paradoxically, Riegl relocated architecture among the visual arts in a way that also affected the path of modern architectural discourse. Though we have long associated Riegl with a formalist conception of art, by lifting the decorative arts into the foreground and linking them to architecture, he had in fact opened a door that ultimately led to Peter Behrens and the AEG experiments, that is, to the *Industriekultur* of the twentieth century.⁴²

Modern architecture and painting

Historians like Wölfflin, Schmarsow, and Riegl were not the only ones to engage the issue of architecture's relationship to painting at the turn of the century. Architects did too. In 1894 Hendrik Berlage published the article 'Architecture and Impressionism' in four sequential issues of the Dutch magazine *Architectura*.⁴³ Here he addressed the issue of the city, a particularly critical topic as a result of the runaway expansion it was experiencing. Dissatisfied with the results, Berlage pointed to old cities as models: 'What is the reason for our enthusiasm for views of old cities? What is the beauty that animates these paintings?' he asked.⁴⁴ And, using the analogy between building cities and painting canvases, he proceeded to develop a theory of painterly architectonic composition. His argument was fundamentally sympathetic to Wölfflin's painterly theory, for he too identified an architecture that worked so successfully as a painting that it existed as 'a reproach to the painter'.⁴⁵ Discarding picturesque, classical (symmetrical) and romantic strategies he advocated an impressionist mode:

We are referring to a kind of representation that pays less attention to detail (as it is subordinate to the whole) than to the larger, overall effect – or rather impression . . . This disregard for details does not merit disapproval; on the contrary, the impressionistic manner of representation is very much a correct one . . . the impressionists also exaggerate and purposely omit things . . . I state my conviction that architecture, too, must take that direction.⁴⁶

For Berlage, architects have, once again, something to learn from painters: simplicity, moderation, and a concentration on essentials. 'The characteristic quality of noble splendour has at all times been moderation.'⁴⁷ Most importantly: 'When designing details, one should exercise the utmost moderation and use a greater richness only in those places that are particularly conspicuous.'⁴⁸ Such an approach also made economic sense: 'The architect discovers that he has to use simple but characteristic means in order to create any effect. He should therefore become an impressionist, for only an impressionist style will make it possible.'⁴⁹ His final description of the city was entirely pictorial and literally the equivalent of a Monet or a Caillebotte view of the Parisian boulevards: 'There it stands, the plane of the wall with its grey and red lines, darker on top, cut out against the sky with angular, beautifully simple lines. It makes a splendid, naturally elaborate, multicoloured but quiet background for the motley bustle on the street.'⁵⁰

If for Berlage painting not only still supplied a valid design strategy for architecture, but could generally inform the aesthetic of the city, for Adolf Loos the white walls of Zion were the only antidote for Potemkin town, the painted city.⁵¹ Ornament was the target of this dismissive accolade. Like Berlage, Loos also made the connection between ornament and painting, but

whereas for Berlage contemporary painting (Impressionism) showed the way out of the ornamental impasse, for Loos any addition to the built surface was the equivalent of body painting and graffiti. Although Loos did not formulate the full argument against ornament and its pictorial associations until 1907 in 'Ornament and Crime', most of the ideas and images were already present in the series of articles he had published in the *Neue Freie Presse* between 1898 and 1899 (and republished some twenty years later as *Ins Leere Gesprochen*). His well-known tirade against the tattoo – or body painting – from this period (and re-used in 'Ornament and Crime') was a direct and deliberate reference to an equally well-known discourse. Immanuel Kant, Gottfried Semper, and most recently, in Loos's own Vienna, Riegl had used the image of the tattooed Maori to demonstrate the presence of an inborn will-to-art and its deep-seated association with ornament (Fig. 3.7).⁵² However, for Loos 'the urge to ornament one's face and everything within reach is the start of plastic art. It is the baby talk of painting . . . the modern man who tattoos himself is either a criminal or a degenerate.'⁵³

Nearly two decades later, the connection between carpet, painting, ornament and surface that recurred intermittently from Semper through Riegl to Loos was not lost on Le Corbusier at an important moment in the gestation of his architectural vocabulary. In *Après le cubisme* (Paris 1918) he and his partner Amedée Ozenfant used it to construct a polemical argument



3.7 Maori facial tattoos. Illustration from Alois Riegl, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie*, 1901

against Cubism and set out the goals of Purism.⁵⁴ What is important in this argument is not so much the aesthetic and moral ambitions of the movement thus launched, but its architectonic underpinnings and the powerful critique of Cubist painting as a 'decorative/ornamental carpet' By inference, the art of the future, of post-war construction and clarification ('la guerre finie, tout s'organise, tout se clarifie et s'épure') – and this includes architecture – rejects ornament and its appeal to pure experience.⁵⁵ To be sure, Le Corbusier and Ozenfant were not rejecting ornament for being pictorial; they rejected a particular form of *painting* for being ornamental. Yet a critique of painting and its too ready conversion into ornament remained embedded in their argument.

Indeed, the Purist project was paradoxically a denial of painting, an attempt to reach beyond it, to challenge the limiting two-dimensional surface and to enter the world of architecturally drafted objects. A counterpart to Wölfflin's painterly architecture, this was an architectonic painting, a painting 'that abandons its characteristic features and seeks the effects that belong to another art' as he had so crisply described this phenomenon of transference several decades earlier. Far from being a matter of plane, form, and pattern as it had been for Riegl, for Le Corbusier painting, like architecture, was 'the magnificent play of forms under light. Architecture is in everything, sublime or modest, which contains sufficient geometry to establish a mathematical relationship', he concluded some seven years later in his *Decorative Art of Today*⁵⁶

By 1940 the position was clear. For Sigfried Giedion the

feeling for space is the basis and the strongest impulse for original architectonic creation Working in their studios as though in laboratories, painters and sculptors investigated the ways in which space, volumes, and materials existed for feeling . These discoveries offered architecture the objective means of organizing space in ways that gave form to contemporary feelings.⁵⁷

Architecture and painting could only meet on the terrain of spatial configurations.

If in the 1880s Wölfflin could posit the existence of a painterly style, that is, a style whose features, though characteristic to a single art, were recognizable across all artistic production, by the turn of the century, such totalizing readings had begun to be challenged. At the very same time as Art Nouveau dramatized the dissolution of individual artistic media into a single aesthetic experience, the relationship between the arts had become a burning question. One important terrain where it was being worked out was that of art history. Some, among them Wölfflin, Hildebrand and Riegl, sought to uncover single governing aesthetic impulses across the arts – pictorial, sculptural or decorative. Others, like Schmarsow, tried to distinguish between them.

Always a somewhat distant third in the triad of the visual arts, architecture was a natural focus for these scholars to test and demonstrate the validity of their arguments. The practitioners felt a similar pressure. At a moment when architecture's slow but sure move away from the arts towards engineering and the sciences had reached a moment of crisis, its redefinition had become imperative. Ornament was a stumbling block in this process of identity construction. Both *malerisch* and *plastisch* (as defined by the art historians), sometimes deeply cut and sculptural, sometimes incised, as if drawn on the surface of buildings, likened of old with jewelry and make-up, ornament literally embodied a shared territory between the arts. Moreover, associated as it was with manual production it could not be reconciled with an architecture that embraced technology.

The worlds of art history and architectural theory/criticism were not insulated from each other.⁵⁸ A student of Wölfflin's, as familiar with Riegl and Schmarsow as he was with the writings of architects like Berlage, Loos and Le Corbusier, Giedion acted as a conduit through which categories developed in art history passed into modern architectural theory.⁵⁹ His own immensely popular book *Space, Time and Architecture* transformed architectural discourse and redefined architecture for architects and historians alike. In this new vision, the term 'painterly', although harmless on the face of it, when coupled with ornament denoted an architecture that had not entered the chain of steady and cumulative innovation that was to lead to Modernism as to some form of epiphany. From the latter-day perspective of Giedion-inspired architectural theory, Alessi's and Palladio's innovations, based as they were on ornamental configurations rather than spatial relationships, did not mark the right path. Of course neither Lotz nor Puppi stated such a view outright and their choice of terms had more to do with a desire to avoid the equally loaded epithet 'mannerist'.⁶⁰ Yet, the fact remained that though the Scylla of Mannerism had been successfully circumnavigated, the Charybdis of 'pictorial' ornament remained and disclosed the modernist underbelly of much Renaissance scholarship. Several decades later, art history still recorded the moment when architecture had detached itself from the other arts.⁶¹

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Notes

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- 1 L. Hydenreich and W. Lotz, *Architecture in Italy 1500–1600*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex 1974, p. 291.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Mario Labò had first raised the issue of Alessi's pictorialism. Wolfgang Lotz, 'Introduction' in *Galeazzo Alessi e l'architettura del cinquecento*, Genova: 1975, p. 4.
4. Lionello Puppi, *Andrea Palladio. The Complete Works*, Milan, 1973; translation 1986, p. 236: '... it [Palazzo Barbarano] can be fairly described as a minor work, harmed not so much by Palladio's absence from the site (he supervised personally only the erection of the façade) as by the actual circumstances of the commission, which may well have considerably impeded Palladio in his task.'
5. Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture*, pp. 12–17 and *passim*.
6. 'Wie es eine malerische Architektur giebt, so giebt es eine malerische Plastik; die Malerei unterscheidet in ihrer Geschichte selbst eine malerische Periode.' Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, p. 15.
7. 'Übereinstimmend wird von den Geschichtschreibern der Kunst als wesentlichstes Merkmal der Barockarchitektur der *malerische* Charakter angegeben. Die Baukunst verlasst ihr eigentümliches Wesen und geht Wirkungen nach, die einer andern Kunst entlehnt sind: sie wird malerisch.' *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 16–20. See also p. 58 where Wölfflin identifies the representation of movement as the essential feature of Baroque architecture.
9. '... weder der Architekt noch der Bildhauer ist insofern Künstler, als er eine reale Form an sich gestaltet, eine Daseinsform schlechtweg-sonder erst dann, wenn er sie als eine Massgabe des optischen Eindruckes bewertete auffasst und darstellt, also als Wirkungsform, so dass der Bildeindruck von ihr ebenso lebendig zur bestimmten Bewegungsvorstellung anregt, als sich diese wieder zum lebendigen Bilde einigen. Von Hildebrand, *Das Problem der Form*, p. 135.
10. '... auf der anderen Seite kann die einseitige Bevorzugung der Malerei ... oder die ebenso einseitige Beachtung der Kunstgewerbe, der Dekoration oder Ornamentik ... nur jeden Weg zum innersten Verständnis des geschichtlichen Prozesses verschliessen. Die gemeinsame Voraussetzung für unser Urteil muss sich überall in der Kunstgeschichte auf das Verhältnis der drei Hauptkünste zu einander gründen.' In Schmarsow, *Barock und Rokoko*, p. 2.
11. 'Es ist also eine Verirrung der ästhetischen Lehre, wenn sie, den Grad von Belebung übertreibend, die Analogien unserer Körpergefühle überall sucht und dieses objektiven Widerhaltes vergisst. Für die Anhänger dieser Auffassung geht ein grosser wichtiger Bestandteil der Architektur als Kunst verloren ...', *Ibid.*, p. 22.

12. 'Ich sehe in dieser Einseitigkeit, wie gesagt, nur das Weiterwirken des plastischen Ideales, das in der Antike herkommend ihren Masstab für alle Baukunst nur vom hellenistischen Tempel entlehnt.' Schmarsow, *Zur Frage*, p. 23. Schmarsow quotes archæological works of the 1880s by Heinrich von Brunn, Alexander Conze and Guido Hauck who, following the same trend, define a 'malerisches Relief', *ibid.*, p. 2. Even Wölfflin was tempted to discuss the 'ancient Baroque' in his *Renaissance und Barock*, presumably intending to follow in their footsteps and draw parallels between their *malerisch* as it applied to Hellenistic art and his own (Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, preface to the 1888 edition). For Hildebrand's use of a plastic conception of the arts see Hildebrand, *Das Problem der Form*, p. viii: 'Architektur fasse ich dann nur als Bau eines Formenganzen, unabhängig von der Formensprache.'
13. 'Der Begriff des Malerischen gehört zu den wichtigsten, aber zugleich auch vieldeutigsten und unklarsten, mit denen die Kunstgeschichte arbeitet'. Schmarsow quotes a contemporary art historian (Schmarsow, *Zur Frage*, p. 1). Schmarsow refers to Guido Hauck as one of the first to draw attention to the consequences of the use of *malerisch* across the arts. See Guido Hauck, 'Die Grenzen zwischen Malerei und Plastik und die Gesätze des Reliefs', *Jahrbuch der königlichen preussischen Sammlungen*, 1885.
14. 'Die Architektur ist in ihrem eigensten Wesen Raumgestalterin. Schmarsow, *Zur Frage*, p. 14. For an analysis of Schmarsow's conception of architectural space see Mitchell Schwarzer, 'The emergence of architectural space: August Schmarsow's theory of *Raumgestaltung*', *Assemblage* 15, pp. 50–61
15. 'Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, p. 56. His first formulation of this concept had been in his dissertation, 'Prologomena zu einer Psychologie der Architektur', 1886, in Joseph Gautner, ed., *Heinrich Wölfflin: Kleine Schriften (1886–1933)*, Basel: 1946.
16. 'Indeed Wölfflin credited Burckhardt's influence in the Preface to the second edition, (1906) of *Renaissance und Barock*, *ibid.*, preface, n.p.
17. 'Schmarsow, *Zur Frage*, p. 19.
18. 'Ibid., pp. 19–20.
19. 'We judge every object in analogy with our own bodies' was Wölfflin's succinct formulation of this idea (Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, p. 56). For a review of the empathy discourse in German aesthetics see H. F. Mallgrave and E. Ikonomou, 'Introduction' in *Empathy, Form and Space. Problems in German Aesthetics 1873–1893*, Santa Monica 1994, pp. 1–85.
20. On Schmarsow's participation in the discourse of psychological phenomenology see Mallgrave, *Empathy, Form and Space*, pp. 60–6.
21. Mallgrave and Ikonomou (as in n.19), pp. 23–4.
22. On this issue Schmarsow quotes Wölfflin's 'Prologomena zu einer Psychologie der Architektur', 1886, p. 50, in Joseph Gautner, ed., *Heinrich Wölfflin: Kleine Schriften (1886–1933)*, Basel: 1946.
23. Schmarsow, *Zur Frage*, p. 17.
24. 'Die Raumbildung ist das stilbildende Prinzip der Architektur zu allen Zeiten und nicht die Formbildung im einzelnen oder die Behandlung des Materials im kleinen.' *Ibid.*, p. 16.
25. Schmarsow, *Barock und Rokoko*.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
28. 'Architektur und Kunstgewerbe offenbaren die leitenden Gesetze des Kunstwillens oftmals in nahezu mathematischer Reinheit. Riegl, *Kunstindustrie*, p. 19.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
30. Alois Riegl, *Historische Grammatik*, p. 208.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 213.
32. 'Schmarsow hat kürzlich als Zweck aller Architektur die Raumbildung hingestellt ... Es ist klar, dass Architektur und Raumbildung ursprünglich nicht identisch sind.' *Ibid.*, p. 301

33. In his 1899 notes he stated: 'Das Relief ist also die erste Etappe auf dem Wege zur Raumkunst ... Das Verhältnis zwischen Figur und Grund, oder wie es man es in der dekorativen Kunst nennt, zwischen Muster und Grund, ist also sofort ein Grundwichtiges.' *Ibid.*, p. 299. At the end of his 1897/8 notes he had defined *Baukunst* as *Formkunst* (*Ibid.*, p. 202). Evidently his efforts at finding red threads connecting the arts went through a development, and the 1899 version represents a more worked-out position. Riegl's focus on the relief and the concept of 'Form und Fläche' owed to Hildebrand, though at the same time he tried to avoid the prejudice in favour of classical relief sculpture as aesthetic norm for all art production that permeated *Das Problem der Form*. On Riegl's relationship to Hildebrand see Margaret Iversen, *Alois Riegl: Art and Theory*, Cambridge, MA. 1993, p. 75.
34. Riegl, *Kunstindustrie*, p. 408.
35. Not only was Riegl the curator of textiles at the Vienna Museum für Kunst und Industrie, but he had also published several articles on carpets, and a book. *Altorientalische Teppiche*, Leipzig: 1891
36. Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen Künsten; oder praktische Aesthetik*, Frankfurt-am-Main: 1860–3. This view was already adumbrated in his 1852 essay 'Industrie, Wissenschaft und Kunst'. See Gottfried Semper, *Industrie, Wissenschaft und Kunst*, edited by Hans M. Wingler, Mainz and Berlin: 1996. On the relationship between the carpet paradigm and the birth of abstraction in painting see Joseph Mashek, 'The carpet paradigm: critical prologomena to a theory of flatness', *Arts Magazine* 53 (September 1976), pp. 82–109.
37. 'In the case of the Geometric Style, it is especially necessary to dispel once and for all the misconceptions surrounding its purely technical, material origin and the allegedly ahistorical nature of its development.' Riegl, *Problems of Style*, p. 6. Elsewhere he is more direct: 'However, the propositions concerning the spontaneous generation of the Geometric Style at various locations from weaving techniques not only went unchallenged by these efforts but actually began to receive greater support.' *Ibid.*, p. 19. Wölfflin had made a similar argument (probably the source for Riegl) when he defined his concept of *Formgefühl* (Riegl's *Kunstwollen*): 'Die Natur des Materials, die Art seiner Bearbeitung, die Konstruktion werden nie ohne Einfluss sein. Was ich aber aufrechterhalten möchte – namentlich gegenüber einigen neueren Bestrebungen – ist das, dass die Technik niemals einen Stil schafft, sondern wo man von Kunst spricht, ein bestimmtes Formgefühl immer das Primäre ist.' Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, p. 57. The Riegl/Semper confrontation has been a recurrent issue in the literature on both scholars. For a synopsis see Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper*, pp. 372–81. Although as Mallgrave notes, Riegl is ambivalent *vis-à-vis* Semper's ideas, his real concern is with Semper's ahistorical analysis and not so much with his materialism – which he rightly attributes to his followers. Indeed, Semper was quite clear about his own, non-materialist view of art-making. 'allein es ist nicht absolut notwendig, dass der Stoff als solcher zu der Kunsterscheinung als Faktor hinzutrete.' What he rejects is the position that 'die architektonische Formenwelt ausschliesslich aus stofflichen konstruktiven Bedingungen hervorgegangen und liesse sich nur aus diesen weiter entwickeln; da doch vielmehr der Stoff der Idee dienstbar, und keineswegs für das sinnliche Hervortreten der letzteren in der Erscheinungswelt alleinig massgebend ist.' Semper, *Der Stil*, pp. xv–xvi.
38. Riegl, *Kunstindustrie*.
39. 'We will find ourselves forced a priori – in the face of considerable opinion to the contrary – to conclude that three-dimensional sculpture is the earlier, more primitive medium, while surface decoration is the later and more refined.' Riegl, *Problems of Style*, p. 14.
40. Wölfflin had also pointed to the decorative arts as an index of *Formgefühl*, yet he had not made the connection to architecture that Riegl made: 'Den Pulsschlag des Volksgemüts muss man dann anderswo beobachten: nicht in den grossen, schwerbeweglichen Formen der Baukunst, sondern in den kleineren dekorativen Künsten. Hier befriedigt sich das Formgefühl ungehemmt und unmittelbar und von hier wird man dann auch die Spuren einer Erneuerung des Stils vermutlich immer zuerst entdecken.' Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, p. 58.
41. Schmarsow reached even further and offered a critical position for Giedion's space/time reading of architecture. 'Von der Architektur ausgehend ist immer schon ein Stufengang durch die Künste der räumlichen Anschauungsform zu denen der zeitlichen hinüber beobachtet worden.' Schmarsow, *Zur Frage*, p. 9.
42. On Behrens' exposure to Riegl's writings see Stanford Anderson, 'Modern architecture and industry: Peter Behrens and the cultural policy of historical determinism', *Oppositions* 21 (Summer 1980), pp. 79–97. On the influence of Riegl on Behrens' work at the AEG see Fredric J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund. Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War*. New Haven: 1997, pp. 21–5, 67–9. On Riegl's formalist position arising from his attempt to bring the decorative and fine arts

- together see Margaret Olin, *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art*, University Park, PA, 1992, pp. 129–32.
43. The article is reproduced in translation in Mallgrave, ed., *Berlage*, pp. 105–121.
 44. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
 45. '...malerisch sei das, was ein *Bild* abgebe, was ohne weitere Zutat ein Vorwurf für den Maler sei.' Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, p. 15.
 46. Mallgrave, ed., *Berlage*, pp. 113–14.
 47. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
 48. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
 49. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
 50. *Ibid.*, p. 114. Such readings of an Impressionist conception of hasty vision continued to be invoked, as for example in the early Werkbund definition of commodity signs and the trademark. See in particular the work of Werkbund member Richard Hamann, *Der Impressionismus in Leben und Kunst* (Cologne: 1907). For this discussion see Schwartz, *The Werkbund* (as in n.42), pp. 203–4.
 51. 'See the time is nigh, fulfillment awaits us. Soon the streets of the city will glisten like white walls. Like Zion, the holy city, the capital of heaven. Then fulfillment will be come.' Adolf Loos, 'Ornament and crime', p.20.
 52. Riegl discusses the issue in *Stilfragen*; for Kant's attitude to ornament see Kroll, *Das Ornament*, pp. 13–18.
 53. Loos, 'Ornament and crime', p.19.
 54. 'Qu'est-ce qui différencie l'esthétique d'un tapis et celle d'un tableau cubiste? ... Malgré leurs théories, les cubistes ont simplement peint des tableaux composés comme des tapis, avec des éléments pris à la nature et dissociés . . . Le Cubisme n'a fait que remettre en honneur dans la peinture un très ancien système, le plus ancien de tous, l'esthétique ornementale; il a confirmé qu'on peut faire des panneaux non-narratifs, et il s'en est tenu à ce système.' Le Corbusier and Ozenfant, *Après le cubisme*, p. 11
 55. '... les tableaux cubistes procurent des sensations délicieuses à ceux qui cherchent le ravissement des yeux . . . Ayant démontré que la pure sensation, brute, n'est que le moyen du grand art, nous admettons une hiérarchie des arts: Sensation pure: art ornemental; Organisation des sensations brutes-couleurs et formes pures: art supérieur . . . Lavé de ses ambitions théoriques, mal fondées et irréalisables, le Cubisme étant remis à sa vraie place (d'art d'ornement), il est loisible de regarder ses productions comme il convient, c'est-à-dire comme on regarde un tapis: cet art, alors paraît vraiment délicieux.' *Ibid.*, p. 19.
 56. Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today*, Cambridge, MA. 1987 (1st edition Paris: 1925), p. 207.
 57. Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture*, p. 26.
 58. For an analysis of the reciprocal relationship between art history and architectural theory/criticism see Alina Payne, 'Rudolf Wittkower and architectural principles in the age of modernism', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53 (1994), pp. 322–42.
 59. On Giedion's debt to a variety of intellectual circles see Sokratis Georgiadis, *Sigfried Giedion, Entwurf einer intellektuellen Biographie*, Zürich: 1989.
 60. For Wolfgang Lotz's argument against the use of the term 'mannerism' in architecture see Wolfgang Lotz, 'Mannerist architecture', in *The Renaissance and Mannerism: Studies in Western Art, Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art* (Princeton, New Jersey: 1964), II, pp. 239–46.
 61. For the consequences of this separation see Alina Payne, 'Architectural History and the History of Art a Suspended Dialogue', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 58, 3 (1999–2000), pp. 292–9.

The Built Surface
Volume 2

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