It is a sad but inescapable truth that for some time now, academic disciplines have been drifting apart, carried along by the energy of their increased specialization. The recent rise in the number of conferences, publications, and exhibitions that attempt to bridge the gaps and that proclaim a new awareness of the merits of crossdisciplinarity is only the paradoxical confirmation of a status quo and the discomfort it has engendered. In this scenario, architecture's slow but sure distancing from the center of art history as a discipline is a fact so well known that it requires little restating. One need only think of the session slates for the College Art Association, the International Conference for Art History, or the Renaissance Society of America, or of theme-based conferences like “The Renaissance in the 20th Century” (I Tatti, 1999), where architecture is virtually (and often entirely) absent. Nor is architecture present at the sites where the rethinking of the discipline of art history is in progress. Publications such as the volumes edited by Norman Bryson, Michael Holly, and Keith Moxey (arising from Getty Summer Institutes in Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Rochester) or by Donald Preziosi (The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology, 1998), to name only two examples, amply attest to this fact.¹

No one can dispute the fact that some specialization is inevitable and indeed desirable and that, as result of the discipline’s growth over the past century, neither publications nor conferences can encompass the whole field any longer. Indeed, the division of the field by media or historical periods, vividly displayed by the numerous societies gathering ancient (American Institute of Archaeology), medieval (International Congress of Medieval Studies), Renaissance (Renaissance Society of America, Sixteenth Century Studies), architecture (Society of Architectural Historians), and other specialist scholars, is a natural response to a complex condition. However, if the presence of specialized scholarly sites is a positive and inevitable feature of a developed discourse, the absence of dialogue among them is not. To be sure, isolation is problematic in all cases, but that this absence of dialogue should be particularly true of architectural and art history—especially the closer we get to the modern period—calls for an assessment because it reflects on the state of the discipline as a whole and raises some important questions. Is this split a recent phenomenon, or was it built into the very foundation of the discipline? Are its causes methodological, or is it due to the different natures of the objects studied, whose research demands specialized techniques and expertise? What are the consequences of this split for architecture and the academy? And finally, is it endemic, or can (and should) it be checked?

Of course, the gradual withdrawal of architecture from the heart of academic art history should not be read in negative terms only, for if there have been losses, there have also been gains. Thus, in the centrifugal movement that has swept the humanities in the past two or three decades, architectural history has found a second home in the schools of architecture and in the discourses they foster.² Unlike art
history, whose relationship with the practice of contempo-
rary art has remained distant, architectural history has been
able to operate in two arenas and so to address a wider audi-
ence in a variety of contexts and ways.\textsuperscript{3}

In itself, this development need not have brought about
the simultaneous distancing of architectural history from
the history of art. Yet both the way a discipline is taught and
its location in the university affect its discourse; more
importantly, they also constitute important public state-
ments about its aims and thus shape its reception by the
academy. In this case, the fact that since the 1970s archi-
tecture schools have embraced history once more in their
curricula, after a hiatus of several decades, has paradoxically
contributed to the fragmentation of the discipline. For
example, such an association with the professional schools
suggests that specialized expertise is required to engage the
study of architecture and raises psychological barriers that
often discourage students and scholars from entering the
field. The appropriation of history by a profession-driven
discourse has also added fuel to the perennial debate on the
relationship and location of history vis-à-vis theory and crit-
icism, traditionally the domain of architects since Vitruvius
at the very least. The presence of an alternative vantage
point from which to examine architecture’s past has cer-
tainly enriched the discourse, but it has also caused a divide
within the field. It is true that in a world that has lost its
faith in the Archimedean vantage point of the historian, the
separation of history from theory and criticism and their
location in different university departments and publication
venues is ever more difficult to defend. Yet, old sins have
long shadows, and the limitations placed upon the objects of
art history at the height of its positivistic self-definition still
cause drawn lines within the field.\textsuperscript{4}

However, one of the most serious consequences of the
reinsertion of history in architecture schools has been the
reconfiguration of the modern field. Most often, the his-
tory and theory of modernity (variously defined as the
period from c. 1750 or c. 1900 to the present) are claimed
away from art history departments and are thus separated
from the study of architecture of earlier periods. Split
between two homes, the discourse of architecture thus loses
its unity, and the internal logic of a self-referential art that
requires both a synchronic and a diachronic study is
obscured from view. This temporal split also effectively sev-
ers architecture from the research and teaching of the mod-
ern period in the field of art history, yet in the last decades
this has been the real growth industry for the academy, and
the separation has been a loss for both.\textsuperscript{5}

Publication venues have come to mirror and therefore
reinforce this split. Important architecture journals such as

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure1}
\caption{Giorgio Vasari, Cosimo I and His Artists, 1559. Sala di
Cosimo I, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence. Courtesy of the Soprintendenza
per i Beni Artistici e Storici, Ministero per i Beni Culturali et Ambien-
tali, Florence}
\end{figure}
also changed and consequently also its location within the academy. In a move that accelerated in the nineteenth century, architecture gradually embraced the world of science and technology, so that by the 1930s, to the image of the engineer as culture hero, modernist critics and theoreticians like Sigfried Giedion held up a refashioned architect who had left the world of the Beaux-Arts behind and inhabited that of the social sciences, environmental and urban planning, and industry (Figure 2). Inevitably this shift in the definition of architecture also affected history writing, even when the scholars themselves were not campaigning for a cause and even when the object of their study was not modernity. It affected the questions asked, the projects chosen, the vocabulary used. Although in the 1960s architects initiated a radical revision of earlier modernist agendas, the growing autonomy of architectural discourse was further reinforced. To check a functionalism run riot meant redeeming history (as memory) for the practicing architect; but the path to the development of such a discourse did not lead to art history. Studies of typologies, the columnar orders, mass culture, tectonics, materials, the vernacular, urban issues, and professional tools and processes took precedence over the issues of style and iconography that loomed large in art-historical studies and thus signaled a divergence of interests.

It cannot be denied that the modern redefinition of architecture and history’s location within it has broadened our spectrum of concerns and even contributed to the discipline’s health and growth by expanding its field of action. However, the realignment of architectural history within the academy has also resulted in a real breach in the discourse—not an outward breach, but a fissure, more serious because not immediately apparent. Split between fields, architectural history appears to be a conflicted academic terrain and thus it mystifies students and scholars alike. In a world of diminishing resources such a perception has also had less intellectually based (but more dangerous) repercussions. At a moment when art history departments have embraced non-Western cultures, contemporary art, and historiography, new positions in these fields are not created but are reassigned away from the traditional core. In such a zero-sum game architectural history has often been the loser. With twentieth-century and contemporary architecture firmly located in the professional schools, one or at most two architectural historians are deemed sufficient for most art history programs to add what remains essentially a lateral perspective on a predominantly painting- (and less sculpture-) oriented curriculum.

But cultural pressures, university administration trends with their economic and political origins or publication policies, are ultimately only the superficial signs of a deeper rupture. What is more alarming is the absence of architecture from the core of art-historical inquiry, or, better put, the absence of conversation and a shared problematic between the two fields. This has not always been the case. At the turn of the century, when the historical study of art became established as an academic discipline, architecture made a substantial contribution to the ways art historians set out to interrogate the past. Indeed, architecture played a prominent role in the imbrication of Stilgeschichte (history of style), Geistesgeschichte (intellectual history), and Kulturgeschichte (cultural history) that shaped art-historical discourse in the first decades of this century. Thus Alois Riegl took architecture as his departure point in establishing the concept of Kunstwollen that revolutionized the discipline of art history (1901); and Dagobert Frey in his Gotik und Renaissance als Grundlagen der modernen Weltanschauung (1929) and, even more famously, Arnold Spengler in his
Untergang des Abendlandes (1918) used conceptions of space as a historical ordering device. Similarly, it was to architecture that Heinrich Wölfflin turned in the 1880s when he translated theories from aesthetics and psychology into his own seminal empathy concept. From Bernard Berenson's “tactile forms” (1896) to Wilhelm Worringer's “abstraction and empathy” (1908), the notion swept the visual arts, affecting both historical scholarship, connoisseurship, and the course of art making itself.

There was also a more sachlich (objective) trend to the inaugural scholarship of the discipline. Works by Heinrich von Geymüller or Hans Willich and Paul Zucker on the Renaissance, for example, or the pioneering architectural archaeology of medieval historians fall more readily into the category of Baugeschichte (building history). This direction was more akin to that of classical archaeology, itself notoriously difficult to locate in the academy. Yet, though Baugeschichte survived and blossomed in architectural scholarship and added to the perception of architecture itself as a technically intensive discipline, it also was the fountainhead of much art-historical methodology. In the years that saw the fledgling discipline of art history attempting to position itself within the academy as Kunstwissenschaft (science of art), the technical rigor of architectural scholarship, well established since the mid eighteenth century, was particularly appealing. Art historians Adolf Goldschmidt and Wilhelm Vöge, who trained Erwin Panofsky, Rudolf Wittkower, and others of their generation, started their own research careers with the study of medieval architecture. The Baugeschichte tradition of careful firsthand study of monuments was translated by them into an art-historical methodology that paid close attention to documents and primary sources and shaped the field for generations to come.

Architecture also played an important role in the fine-tuning of historical/stylistic periodization that preoccupied scholars from the 1920s onward. The amorphous “classical period” that stretched from the dawn of the Renaissance to the eighteenth century and beyond was gradually broken up into periods distinguishable by their apparent stylistic unity. In order to confirm their validity, it was imperative to show the Hegelian Zeitgeist (or, alternatively, Riegl's Kunstwollen) at work and thus to find similar characteristics and trends across the arts. A case in point is the invention of Mannerism as an intermediary phase between the Renaissance and the Baroque. Proposed for the mimetic arts by Walter Friedländer and Max Dvorak (1922), Mannerism was also shown to have affected architecture by Pevsner (1925) and Wittkower (1930s). Thus established, its application could then be expanded to include all aspects of culture and serve as a fixed coordinate in its historical unfolding. Although Mannerism was ultimately found to be unhelpful for the study of architecture and was in effect discarded as a central concern, architecture had played its part in establishing an important category for art-historical research. The definitions of Baroque, Neoclassicism, and Rococo were reached by way of a similar cooperative effort between architectural and art history—the proliferation in the 1960s of books on these period styles marks its apogee—before each field went on to refine its respective applications.

Finally, the vocabulary of art history itself, its lexical field, is partly indebted to architecture. The prominence of the monument as object of study and the ensuing categories for its analysis stem from a tight incription of discourses that goes back to Johann Joachim Winckelmann and the classical tradition that he inherited. Since bodily qualities were understood to constitute a bond across the arts, categories developed initially for the analysis of sculpture traveled easily to architecture. The impulse to privilege the monument and its features could find no better home, and it is here that much of the critical vocabulary to describe it was developed, sharpened, and refined. Reabsorbed into the larger discourse of the visual arts, it furnished the field with a critical/analytical language that bespoke a shared problematic and invited exchanges among fields.

Architecture's early use of photography offered a visual counterpart to this verbal orientation toward the monument. Architectural photography itself was an offshoot of a preservation campaign, particularly that of the Monuments historiques with its focus on the medieval French heritage. However, photographs such those by Edouard Baldus that recorded, aestheticized, isolated, and monumentalized buildings institutionalized a genre of representation that survived in the ubiquitous art history slides and thus affected the very tools with which the field was studied and the lens through which the art objects were seen.

However, in the first half of the century architecture and art history were at work on a common project, their paths soon diverged. Over the subsequent decades other issues took over the attention of the art history academy: among them iconography and style held pride of place, and from the later 1960s on social history and linguistic theory have also much affected its course. In the last two decades iconography has been recast into image theory and visual/verbal issues, and the cultural “other” (as defined in gender and colonialism studies) along with historiography have joined a renewed panopticum of art-historical concerns. Yet not all these trends find easy or relevant application to architecture, the exceptions being social, gender, and colonialism issues. In fact, even when concerns such as
these are shared, art-historical research rarely intersects with architectural scholarship. Elsewhere, the continued relevance of once shared methodologies has been diverse. Despite a steady stream of patronage studies, the social history of art has lost the leadership role it once held in art history. In architecture, however, social history and Marxism in particular have not only furnished powerful models for its historical discourse ever since the 1960s, but they continue to do so. As an eminently public art form, more directly affecting social and political behavior than the other visual arts, architecture remains an ideal subject for the application of Marxist and social-history methodologies.

The embrace of wider cultural issues within art history has also led to a sustained effort to reconfigure its discourse (and the departments where it is taught) into visual and cultural studies. Architecture does not fit easily in this expanded field. The painted or printed image can be readily consumed as one among many exempla of material culture, unlike buildings, which are complex, three-dimensional objects that often take generations to build. Such a process unfolding over the longue durée causes authorship and period style to recede and consequently makes architecture far less useful as a snapshot of cultural trends and mindscapes.

If image production and reception studies have claimed the lion’s share of attention in art history of late, recent work in cultural history on the history of practices—collecting, reading, writing, gifting, scientific inquiry—are now slowly finding their way into the discipline. Yet, here too, architecture and art history are moving on parallel but separate courses. For example, the relationship between science and the arts is dealt with in separate volumes in two recent collections of essays, Picturing Science, Producing Art (1998) and Architecture and Science (1999), although they share both an editor and similar themes.

Yet, despite moving on a different course from art history, architecture has not been isolated from the shifts shaping contemporary discourse in the academy. In an intellectual environment where sociology and cultural anthropology have led the way, architecture has figured prominently. However, because of its relevance as a form of cultural “deep structure,” it has developed stronger ties with the social sciences. After all, Michel Foucault’s seminal first essays took architecture as their departure point: the clinic, the asylum, the prison may have been institutions according to his definition, but what made them apparent and materially present were the buildings in which they were housed. In these narratives architecture becomes the ultimate document: not only does it represent, but it contains, codifies, and shapes behavior and therefore cultural and social practices. These new perspectives have been very fruitful for architectural history in giving a new orientation and impetus to building-type studies. Yet they have done little to reconnect it to an art history more concerned with the representation of society and culture than with the active agents of societal change.

Of course, these are only a few instances of a disjunction within the discipline undertaken primarily from a North American perspective; the list cannot even begin to be exhaustive. But they describe a pattern where opportunity and loss stand side by side. On the one hand, art history has developed discourses and tools—particularly relating to representation, image construction, and visual narrative—that architectural history has been less attentive to but which may serve it well; on the other hand, both fields have tended to ignore the exchanges among the arts, the sites that facilitated such exchanges, and their consequences. Ultimately, the slowly widening chasm between architectural and art history does not seem to arise either from any particular technical expertise that they require or from a diversely defined historian’s craft (where we find evidence and how we marshal our arguments). The real divide lies in the nature of the objects we study, for they guide what we choose to raise to the status of problem and where we find our conceptual models.

It also lies in our different relationship to the present. “If historical narratives are inevitably freighted with the ideological assumptions of the period in which they are composed, what is the cultural function of history?” This question, raised at the 1999 Getty Summer Institute in Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Rochester, expresses art history’s conundrum at the turn of the millennium. For architectural history—that is, for a field that continues to be relevant for the practice of architecture—this question may have an answer: history interacts with the present and its discourses actively, through dialogue, in a Habermasian sense. The history of architectural history shows that the discipline has always been closely tied to the performance of architecture: its migration in and out of architecture schools and art history departments has always coincided with upheavals within the profession itself. It is not a coincidence that architectural history entered art history departments in America in the 1940s just as it was eliminated from its traditional home in the schools of architecture; it is also no coincidence that the Society of Architectural Historians separated itself from the College Art Association in the early 1970s, at the very same time when history was reclaimed by the schools of architecture, when journals like Casabella and Oppositions reasserted the importance of history and claimed an autonomous discourse for architecture, and when the star of architectural history
within art history began to fade. Indeed, it is this fundamentally self-referential nature of architecture that causes the constant reinvention of history in the present and inevitably and productively offers new insights and questions not only for critics and theoreticians but for historians as well. That history matters to practice in the present propels us all forward, below the surface of discourse, regardless of whether we work on the Renaissance, antiquity, or the modern period. Perhaps sharing this insight into the workings of our own field with art history could be the beginning of a renewed dialogue at a moment when the discipline stands poised to turn a new page at the beginning of a new millennium.

Notes


3. The separation of studio from art history studies within most university curricula testifies to this chasm, as does the absence of a dialogue between criticism and history even when performed by the same scholar. There are exceptions, of course, for example, Craig Owens, Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power and Culture (Berkeley, 1992), in which categories of currency in recent art-historical studies are applied to contemporary art.

4. In 1988 Trachtenberg noted that this antagonism impoverishes the field and concluded his review of architectural scholarship with a quotation from James Ackerman: “willingly or not, we [architectural historians] are all in the writing and for bibliography on the subject, see Alina Payne, “Rudolf Wittkower and Architectural Principles in the Age of Modernism,” JSAH 53 (September 1994): 322–342.

5. There are important exceptions to this pattern, as evident in the work of Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Hal Foster or in exhibitions like Metropolis (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1992). However, such examples are few and twentieth-century scholarship remains fragmented. See, for example, leading journals like October or the interdisciplinary Critical Inquiry, where the issues of modern and contemporary architecture are generally missing; similarly, the important Getty Texts & Documents series locates German architectural theory in the intellecutal culture of the period though not in that of the other visual arts.


7. For a case study of this phenomenon as it concerns Renaissance history writing and for bibliography on the subject, see Alina Payne, “Rudolf Wittkower and Architectural Principles in the Age of Modernism,” JSAH 53 (September 1994): 322–342.

8. Seminal for the development of this discourse (especially of historical typology) was Colin Rowe and in the 1960s and 1970s the School of Architecture in Venice, particularly Saverio Muratori, Aldo Rossi, Carlo Aymonino, and Massimo Scolari. See Colin Rowe, “The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa,” in The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), 1–28 (first published in Architectural Review, 1947). A later statement of the importance of history for practice was made by Demetri Porphyrios in his introduction to a volume of AD exclusively devoted to the topic: “This experience led me to a growing realisation of the need to raise the level of consciousness of the epistemological foundations of the various architectural histories; especially in a period like ours, burdened as it is with epidermal, ad hoc and surreptitious ‘theory-hunting’. Bearing this in mind, it becomes clear that the study of the methodology of architectural history is as important for the non-theoretically oriented designer as it is for the student of architecture himself.” Demetri Porphyrios, “Introduction,” On the Methodology of Architectural History, Architectural Design 51 (1981): 2.

9. For example, see the proliferation of mass-culture-oriented studies that span the spectrum from Robert Venturi’s polemical Learning from Las Vegas (Cambridge, Mass., 1972) to Richard Longstreth’s investigation of new “building types” such as the highway or the commercial strip: Richard Longstreth, City Center to Regional Mall: Architecture, the Automobile, and Retailing in Los Angeles 1920–1950 (Cambridge, Mass., 1997). The prototypical study for the genre remains Nikolaus Pevsner, A History of Building Types (London, 1976). For a comprehensive and still valid review of trends in architectural history scholarship, see Trachtenberg, 208–241.

10. Symptomatic of this situation is the fact that Trachtenberg (as he himself notes) was invited to review all architectural scholarship for the Art Bulletin State of Research series because the art historians who reviewed the literature on the individual historical periods had left architecture out entirely: Trachtenberg, 208. Another symptom of the absence of communication between fields is evident in the reference apparatus used by scholars: the works cited in architectural and art history publications rarely intersect even on the occasions when they are published in the same journal.

11. “... aber nicht alle Gattungen sind diese Gesetze [des Kunstwollens] mit gleich unmittelbarer Deutlichkeit zu erkennen. Am ehesten ist dies in der Architektur der Fall und des weiteren Kunstgewerbe, namentlich soweit dasselbe nicht figürliche Motive verarbeitet: Architektur und Kunstgewerbe offensichtlich die leitenden Gesetze des Kunstwollens oftens in nahezu mathematischer Reinheit [. . .] but these laws [of Kunstwollen] cannot be identified with equal clarity in all artistic media. It is most readily apprehensible in architecture and the decorative arts, that is, to the extent that the latter do not develop figure-based motifs: frequently architecture and the decorative arts display the leading laws of Kunstwollen with a near mathematical purity.—author’s translation. As a result, Riegels starts his Spätrömische Kunstindustrie with a chapter on architecture. See Alois Riegel, Spätromische Kunstindustrie (Darmstadt, 1976; 1st ed., 1901), 19.

12. Much was owed to neo-Kantian trends in contemporary philosophy. See especially the impact of Cassirer on art-historical inquiry: Ernst Cassirer, Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1906–1908). Schopenhauer’s Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung (especially his concept of Anschaulichkeit, of forma substantialis as ultimate knowledge, Erkenntnis) also marked art-historical discourse.

13. Heinrich Wößlin, “Prologomena zu einer Psychologie der Architektur (1886),” in Kleine Schriften, ed. J. Gantner (Bazel, 1946), 13–47. Some of the sources Wößlin cites are Friedrich Th. Vischer, Ästhetik oder Wissenschaft der Schönen (Reutlingen/Leipzig, 1856–1858); Hermann Lotze, Geschichte der Asthetik in Deutschland (Munich, 1868); idem, Mikrokosmos.


25. Scholarship in this area was deeply indebted to the work of Julia Kristeva, Homi Bhabha, and Edward Said.


29. For the impact of social history on architectural studies, see, for example, the Penguin 1960s series *The Architect and Society* edited by John Fleming and Hugh Honour of which James Ackerman, *Palladio* (Harmondsworth, 1968), is an outstanding example. For seminal contributions to a Marxist discourse in architecture, see especially Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture* (New York, 1980), and idem, *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976); for Marxism's continued relevance for the field, see most recently Eve Blau, *The Architecture of Red Vienna, 1919–1934* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999). The popularity of Theodor Adorno and the Frankfurt School with architectural theorists and historians is another manifestation of the recognition of the political role of architecture.


31. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Per-

32. See, for example, Chandra Mukerji, Territorial Ambitions and the Gardens of Versailles (London, 1997); Sharon Marcus, Apartment Stories. City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London (Berkeley, 1999).

33. See Jürgen Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 296–298. I am referring to Habermas's theory of the participant in his critique of Foucault's emphasis on the observer. Habermas attacks Foucault's focus on the reflexive attitude of the subject and argues instead that a performative situation exists, an interaction akin to speech of "reciprocally interlocked perspectives among speakers" and a "reflection undertaken from the perspective of the participant." This position should not be confused with the long tradition of militancy in architecture's historical discourse, of which Giedion and others have been outspoken apologists. See, for example, Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture, 5–7.