

FOREWORD

Here is the proof. Buildings, ones that have lived a while at least, are a vessel for the unexpected, hidden within. Given the correct channels, we may find hope, entertainment, a route for our desires, a mirror for our grief.

Meanwhile, we, the 'master-builders', look for absolute resolution, to craft exactly, first 'on paper', and then pushed out into the world. Rejoice is found in the next interlocking corner joint, the reassuring field test of a successful water-tight seal. To us (and not to all) an index of 'Balloon Framing' (p.198) and 'Coat Rooms & Equipment & Bed Closets' (p.391) already pulses, words without images. Who knows what importance these restrained single line-weight guidelines contain? After all it is a wholesome, honest pursuit. Who could question the honorable intentions of explaining every possibility, with no bias or gossip? And this quiet compendium of pieces will form an infinity of places.

But, it seems, there are other chiefs. Our controlled discipline could allow for other lives, worlds even, to flourish between the mortar joints. Bursting from the pages, gods now appear who thrive on this dry terrain, savoring implied richnesses.

In this extra layer, somehow channelled through their artist, I have seen flues that funnel desire, a strident flower-man on Squared-stone Granite, a ballerina from a terra-cotta world, abundantly blossoming cornices and the Miscellaneous Steel Shapes that make up a human torso. Too I met harvesters of the smoke pipe, a magician and sun goddess who live in a Clay Tile Wall, the multi-headed dog who guards Intermediate Floors, he who swims, literally, through a pool of concrete decks, and she who sits with her baby on the folded gutter as the flowers take over. Here are the places that welcome the dysfunctional, the moments where bricks do not fit neatly together after all.

Metrics are at the heart of architectural pursuit. Implicit in our detailed studies is the touch of a human, the bearing of a hand on the door knob, but perhaps best not to go there, explicitly at least, and just let the drawing suggest? Modular Man tried to bridge the gap between buildings and our souls, to find a new truth by designing out the mystery. But he was all alone, this machined prototype, and we seemed to crave the places he had not been programmed for, and in a range of forms and sizes that did not exist in his well crafted but cold body.

So is there a way to measure our feelings, our darknesses, a graphic standard for that? Perhaps here it is. Calibrated against the known world, driving through, from traditions and conventions, the mystical seems to gain traction. Motivations, desires, uncomfortable edges, strange stellar powers and predestined outcomes do seem to be in some way partly quantifiable in a symbiotic fashion.

So now I look to these architectural pages for a different type of advice: on how to find my lost friend maybe, to forge new ways to build, against the odds, or to search for collaborations that are not perhaps easily formed and to welcome their difficult results. Distant hopes, close infatuations, these new standards dance through shifting times. They will be a useful guide to me.

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