The Anatomy of the Architectural Book
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Shifts in technology launch us into unexplored territories, causing a visceral sensation which cannot help but induce both fascination and loss. Though disorienting, these are often the best moments to reflect on what was left behind, and what continues, but differently. This volume by André Tavares arrives at such a juncture, between print and digital media: the one has yet to find a way to coexist with the other.

Architectural books are special objects, or rather projects, as we discover following Tavares's careful dissection of the bibliographic corpus produced during another such moment in the middle of the nineteenth century. Authors and architects' experiments with photography and chromolithography revolutionized the presentation and interpretation of both ancient and contemporary architecture, from the buildings of Egypt and Greece to the Crystal Palace. These striking compositions of text and image—their colors, texture, rhythm and structure—shaped the reading experience and, in doing so, communicated certain ideas about architecture.

Why do we do books? As Phyllis Lambert has observed, books are references to return to, a type of long-term work to which the Canadian Centre for Architecture is committed. But this particular book, with its meticulously selected images, is also A Sentimental Journey through the CCA's collection, where Tavares has conducted the better part of his research, spending some months sitting through the library's many shelves and quietly flipping through 500 years of architecture-related publications.

We have to thank him, not only for dissecting in the following pages part of a collection whose goal is to serve research and the production of knowledge, but also for his provocative insights into the very production of some of the means by which this knowledge is disseminated.

Mirko Zardini, Director, Canadian Centre for Architecture
Prologue
Cross-Sections through an Endless Library

In the summer of 1995, bookshops throughout Europe and North America displayed Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau’s hefty volume, *S,M,L,XL.* The book repeated the claim made by Le Corbusier (1887–1965) in his *Vers une architecture:* “This book is unplaceable. It is unlike any other.” But why would these architects pride themselves on making a book that goes beyond the norms of book production? Isn’t their job to design unique buildings?

Some architectural books are unconventional because they are made by architects who are personally engaged in the process regardless of the fact that they are largely unfamiliar with how books are made. An architect’s strategy of reasoning is shaped by architectural practice and the constant need to compromise between contradictory wills and technological constraints. Hence, when an architect sets out to make a book, despite his or her possible ignorance of the publishing industry, he or she knows how to find out what is needed and is not afraid to break with the protocols of publishers or editors. The results are often surprising.

Another possible factor that makes an architect’s book different from an average book is that architects who make books often think of them as spatially equivalent to buildings. In buildings as in books, architects set up sequences and logical paths that generate meaning for those using them and thus both formats offer similar strategies by which to physically grasp spatial experiences, from page to page as from room to room. El Lissitzky (1890–1941) offered an explanation for this ambivalence between architectural and book knowledge when he noted Vladimir Mayakovský's
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3 "For this is irreplaceable. It makes us think..." (ibid., 11).
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The book is meant to be read at the level, the page as an instrument to project the author's intended meaning into the reader's space. This spatial action recalls the fact that, before Gutenberg's movable type, the advent of scriptwriting prompted earlier technical revolution in writing the invention of papyrus, which became an essential tool in the production of buildings. Landsey blurred the spatial limits of architecture, painting, and sculpture with his presence, and Dada-inspired ideas for poetry, rejecting Mayakovsky's oral delivery by placing words within visually intense pages.

The volume's physical qualities were not intended to guide the eyes or hands but were conceived directly for the voice. The poet, when read aloud, becomes a shared experience.

The books of Le Corbusier and Koolhaas were conceived for large prime time, unlike the typical "artist" book. Their uniqueness rests on the means used to disseminate their messages. Unlike many architectural books, they were not monographs that present the authors' designs as models for other architects, but polemics against the core of architectural debate. They were not to be read in drafting studios and classroom but in cafés, in the corridors of architectural schools, on the streets, and especially in libraries. Their authors appealed to the resources of bookmaking to draw readers into the argument, producing an engagement difficult to achieve through the written word alone. The successful use of visual effects to enhance both text and image makes them unique, surprising the reader while still conveying a comprehensive narrative. The point of each of these books consists across physically, without even reading the words, so they are really architectural arguments that have gone underdeveloped as books.

A book is more than just the object itself. As Robert Venturi explained, we must consider it within the circle that links the many players involved in its existence, from printers to readers, from paper suppliers to booksellers. In the case of architectural books, architecture itself becomes a major player and thus the books by Le Corbusier and Koolhaas are as unique as their buildings. There is no need for economic bookish statements in the presence of the Villa Savoye or Villa TALÀ. In the wider history of architecture, studies of architectural books have naturally focused on their content, rather than on their editorial strategies. And in the wider history of books, books of architectural theory like Vers une architecture and S.M.A.X have been overlooked because they are part of a niche category that is highly specific and technically demanding, but my purpose here is merely to evaluate their tactics not to analyze the content of these books. I am concerned with how they were able to produce them. Recalling Leisk's self-identification, this book is about the special ways in which architects have engaged with the techniques of bookmaking to become book constructors.
across physically, without even reading the words, as they are really architectural statements that have gone underground as books.

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Industrial crossovers

Architectural bookmaking has been exposed to disciplinary debates, just as building construction has been exposed to the charms of book culture. By examining the transverse relationship involved in this double exposure and dissecting the anatomy of architectural books, I argue that, despite their being independent, the forms generated by building and bookmaking are interconnected and affect books just as much as they affect buildings. Examining the crossovers between book culture and building culture makes visible the axes along which architectural knowledge circulates through books into buildings and back, from the celebration of specific architectural practices to the production of unique books, using pages and print to convey architectural ideas.

My aim is to demonstrate how architectural books attempt to materialize knowledge specific to the field. To do so, I focus on the processes of making books, rather than on architectural or book history, and explore the limits of one hypothesis: that the book forms produced by architects derive from a reasoning that is more architectural than editorial. It is not a one-way relationship: books and their forms—and not only their textual and iconographic content—have informed original architectural ideas.1 Even though bookmaking and architecture have little professional parallels, the material qualities of books—their weight, size, texture, etc.—are close enough to architecture to make a parallel between the two material cultures possible.

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Architectural bookmaking has been composed of disciplinary debates, but as building construction has been exposed to the charms of book culture. By examining the transverse relationship involved in the double exposure and dislocating the anatomy of architectural books, I argue that, despite their being independent, the forms generated by building and bookmaking are interconnected and affect books just as much as they affect buildings. Examining the crossovers between book culture and building culture makes visible the axes along which architectural knowledge circulates through books into buildings and back. From the celebration of specific architectural practices to the production of unique books, using pages and print to convey architectural ideas.

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Though Robert Maxwell and Roy Cloudsley illustrate the history of bookbinding with book covers, authors like Adrian John and Lucy Jenkins note that the advent of the printing press was also a major milestone in the history of book binding. The book binding that accompanied the printing press was a new art form, and the interplay between the two industries was complex. The printing press allowed for greater quantities of books to be produced, and this, in turn, increased the demand for bookbinding techniques that could handle the larger volumes.

The industrial revolution introduced new machines for manufacturing paper and steel printing machines that made large-scale print runs possible. This, in turn, led to the progressive division of labor in the printing industry. By the 1800s, new genres of books emerged. In every field of the book trade, the changing habits of readers and consumers, increasingly complex distribution networks, and the need to manage a constant production flow led to a sharper separation between printer and editor. A shift took place where the author was further away from the presses. The separation increased with the introduction of the editor as an important intermediary between author and printer, at which point the book trade started to become a serious commercial endeavor. Although architectural books were somewhat marginal to these dynamics, because their ambitions did not usually aim at a mass audience, their physical qualities and the cultural context of architectural production were not unaffected. And, an industrial production was changing the form of architectural books, architecture itself was also being transformed by industry.

If the 18th century established a new framework for publishing, a further step that distinguished the architectural book took place in the early 19th century. At the time, architects were striving to develop an aesthetic language that could translate the qualities of the new industrial era into design, an effort enthralled in the mythology of the modern movement. Myth of the modern architect acted within a field where communication was instrumental to achieving their goals. Production and reproduction were two sides of the same coin, and print was the medium of communication, both within the profession and with a wider audience. The industrial aesthetic became an intrinsic aspect of the design of architectural books as it was for buildings.

These two moments, separated by almost a century, confront us with the rise of the industrialized book (and the editor) and the configuration of the book as a unique visual device (with the designer taking part in a complex chain of decision making). Hence, they suggested possible reference points for my argument, from a seemingly endless list of architectural books and within a long historical timeline, these two precisely moments in time mark instances where significant developments in publishing were synchronized with significant developments in architecture.
maps the social relations produced throughout this process of specialization, from authors to readers via publishers and paper and ink suppliers, and from readers to authors via booksellers, promotional strategies, and even censors. Since architectural production also takes place in this complex social context, with the final results being a synthesis of the ambitions of the many people involved, it seems a worthwhile scholarly gamble to consider book production and architectural production within parallel lines of reasoning.

The Industrial Revolution introduced new techniques for manufacturing paper and steel printing machines that made large-scale print runs possible, another step in the progressive division of labor in the printing industry. Beginning in the 18th century, new genres of books emerged in every field of the book trade in response to the changing habits of readers and consumers. Increasingly complex distribution networks and the need to manage a constant production flow led to a sharper separation between printer and editor,13 a shift that took even further away from the press. The separation increased with the introduction of the editor as an important intermediary between author and printer, at which point the book trade started to become a serious commercial endeavor. Although architectural books were somewhat marginal to these dynamics, because their ambitions did not usually aim at a mass audience, their physical qualities and the cultural context of architectural production were not unaffected. And, an industrial production was changing the form of architectural books, architecture itself was also being transformed by industry.14

If the nineteenth century established a new framework for publishing, a further step that distinguished the architectural book took place in the early twentieth century. At the time, architects were striving to develop an aesthetic language that could transmute the qualities of the new industrial era into design, an effort enshrined in the mythology of the modern movement. Myth or not, modern architects acted within a field where communication was instrumental to achieving their goals.15 Production and reproduction were two sides of the same coin, and print was the medium of communication, both within the profession and with a wider audience. The industrial aesthetic became an intrinsic aspect of the design of architectural books as it was for buildings.

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13 Robert Douglas and Roger Chartier encouraged the investigation of changes in the field concerned with book history, authors like Adrian Zirin and Lewi Pines have commented on the appearance of printing bringing together art historians and social scientists, placing books in the context of trends in society, and this is where we are now. See Daniel Defoe and Antonia Coley, eds., The Book in History 1450–1640, (London: British Library, 2000); The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Cambridge University Press, 1996; The Book in the Making, Cambridge University Press, 2010.
Endless libraries

The library of this book is a European one. The main geographic axis along which the books discussed were produced runs between Paris and London (with frequent connections to Germany, Russia, and America), and working with specific locations helped to relate limited cultural fields and dissimilar architectural environments. Wherever the location, the main question remains the same: What is an architectural book? One answer comes from Hyman Peli, whose work on the nineteenth century identified a "representative sample of genres constituting the discursive field of architecture" composed of "history texts, treatises, encyclopedias and dictionaries, journals, sketchbooks, builder's guides, construction handbooks, specifications, and catalogs." To this, he adds two major genres, the portfolio and the architectural journal, each a fundamental tool for the education, professional practice, and promotion of architects.

A consideration of journals and magazines was instrumental in establishing the boundaries of the architectural book field for the purposes of this study. Although books and magazines share production techniques and are often intimately connected in content, their formats have different purposes. Magazines are often produced collectively, are released at set intervals of time, and are served by logistical networks that separate them from authored books with their illusion of permanence. Despite the similarities and the usual transfer between the two media, they belong to different fields. Still, one can find traces of architectural book production in magazines.

A simple example: by browsing through book reviews in magazines, one can reconstruct the publishing history of a given year to discover, for instance, that in 1925 one of the most acclaimed books—virtually unknown today—was Swedish Architecture of the Twentieth Century by Hakon Ahlberg (1899–1964) and Francis Verhey (1887–1950). From their position outside the field of architectural books, magazines attest to the functions of such a corpus, documenting the critical reception of books and their effects on architectural practice.

Book genres, from the theoretical treatise to the monograph or portfolio, evolved according to their functions and changes in practices of printing and distribution. Following these mutations is fundamental to charting the field of architectural books, as is mapping the relevance of these genres to libraries developed for personal, professional, or public use. However, my focus is not so broad. I consider instead how books have been used, in the hands of the author, as a support and form for architectural ideas—how attempts to materialize a specific knowledge—rather than how they have been used as vehicles by which to disseminate content, in the hands of the reader. Although the main purpose is not to discuss equalize books, the selection of examples tends toward books that are out of the ordinary, made in such a way that the form engages the uniqueness of the architect's ideas.

The years 1850 and 1925, chosen early on as anchors for the research, cannot be considered benchmarks or threshold moments after which one can trace an aftereffect. If one may borrow a term from wine production, they are akin to possible vintages. The climate of

16 Most of the research was done at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal, the Royal Institute of British Architects and the National Art Library, London; the Cabarette, Jacques Rouxel and the Jean-Claude Carrière of Paris, and the British Library and the Victoria and Albert Library, London.


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My plan to concentrate on 1870 was 1925—and not the period between them—eminently in this work. It was faced with a wealth of other books, including those suggested by secondary sources. The purpose thus shifted away from examining the historical framework of specific books to concentrate on the circulation of knowledge within the world. Architectural books are like imaginary buildings that meet on a reading table, where fifteenth-century pages are next to a twentieth-century layout. Such a physical proximity permits strategic insights across time that dissolve chronology and allow one to consider all architectural books as an interwoven corpus. Navigating their relationships strengthened the possibility of verifying my hypothesis that the forms of architecture books result from a reasoning that is specifically architectural.
1853, marked by the opening of London's Crystal Palace, an architectural achievement often considered "a perfect vantage point" or "the mid-nineteenth century touchstone." However, such disparate books as John Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice, Jacques Ignace Hittorff's *L'Architecture polychrome chez les Grecs, and Julian Rea's *Philadelphia Pictorial Directory & Panoramic Advertiser. These samples were enough to justify a survey of architectural books published in 1853, which resulted in one hundred bibliographic references for that year alone in a single library. Overall, apart from a few little-known opera prims and several rare and exquisite publications that have been largely forgotten, the overview revealed a draft copy of homogeneous books. In selecting the early-twentieth-century counterpart for 1853, an exhibition again led the way: the Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs held in Paris in 1925 condensed the debate on the image of industrial production sparked by the London exhibition. Among that year's books was Le Corbusier's *L'Art d'habiter, which appeared just before the Exposition. This book, along with "The Life-Work of the American Architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and the First Volumes of the Bruno Paul/Nachfolger series," edited by Walter Gropius and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, *International Architecture and Makers, Photographs, Films, a quick survey of a few architectural journals from 1853 uncovered references to four or five hundred architectural books published that year. Why not choose different years? What about 1853, with Eliel Saarinen's *Elia Pops and Le Corbusier's *Von der Architektur? It soon turned out that 1853 and 1853 were no more than arbitrary references that framed a wider exploration.

The history of architectural books is not unknown. A great deal of bibliographical information has already been published, from reference books and catalogues of libraries and collections to comprehensive works based on national surveys. Furthermore, triggered by the English translation of Mario Carlo's seminal essay *Architecture in the Age of Printing, *Catherine de Sere's research on Le Corbusier, and Richard Witter's inquiries on the relationship between printing and the public sphere, many case studies of specialized methods from book history in order to extend the scope of architectural history. However, the focus on the material history of books has somehow left unexplored the complex relationship between books and buildings.

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The anatomical hypothesis

This book is organized in two parts. Part one comprises two essays focusing respectively on one building and one book. The building is the Crystal Palace. If, as in construction in Hyde Park in 1851, the building absorbed from books the effects of experiments with chronophotography and debates about the polyhistoriography of Greek architecture—the book traveling toward the building—or the manner of its representation at Sydenham in 1854, photography returned the building back to the book realm. The book is Giuseppe Bellini's *Vedute di Roma* et al. 1792, in which the architectonical historian drew upon the arguments of modern housing to turn the book itself into a powerful object. These two case studies assert how buildings can embody printing knowledge and books can embody architectural knowledge.

Part two departs from the chronological cross-sections of 1851 and 2013 to take an architectural approach to the dissection of the corpus. The book is a five concepts—texture, surface, rhythm, structure, and scale—that help to analyze the material qualities of books in order to assess their transgressions with architectural knowledge. This approach attempts to elude the temptations to identify technological determinants—for example, that a precise printing technology propelled a certain architectural principle—and to turn direct metaphors regarding a building as a book. Although metaphors can result in arguments that are as beautiful as they are meaningful, and are often used to conceive books, the purpose of this research was not to analyze discursive practices. In fact, a focus on metaphor can obscure one's view of how an architect might struggle to embody their ideas in book form. Dissection can through the metaphysical layers of discourse to get at the mechanics of architectural books and architectural reasoning.

Books and buildings are quite obviously different in purpose and form, but they are also similar in many ways. Both are manifestations of a specific knowledge that are materials available to construct meaning within the fields of social behavior that justify their forms and uses. To explore these intersections, was the intent of better understanding the relationship between our physical experience of buildings and our physical experience of architectural books—especially how they are configured to deliver architecture to the reader—in the premise of this book.
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