

SOLLERTIA, A CLEVER SENSE, IS THE CARDINAL VIRTUE IN BOTH THE PRACTICE AND THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE. SOLLERTIA IS THE FUNDAMENTAL VIRTUE FOR A PRUDENT, RESOURCEFUL, WELL EDUCATED AND INGENIOUS ARCHITECT. GOOD ARCHITECTURE IS POSSIBLE ONLY WHEN AN ARCHITECT IS EXPERT (PERITUS) AND GIFTED WITH A QUICK AND DEXTEROUS INTELLIGENCE (INGENIO MOBILI SOLLERTIAQUE) (VITRUVIUS V, 6, VII). HAPPILY (FELICITER) CONCLUDING HIS TREATISE, IN THE LAST BOOK, THE ROMAN WRITER GENERATES A REMARKABLE PROPAGANDA LINE FOR THE PROFESSION. IN THE LAST PARAGRAPH OF THE BOOK, VITRUVIUS DECLARES THAT, DURING WARS, CITIES CAN FREE THEMSELVES FROM ENEMIES BY RELYING ON THE CUNNING INTELLIGENCE OF THEIR ARCHITECTS (ARCHITECTORUM SOLLARTIES SUNT/LIBERTAE) (VITRUVIUS X,16,XII).

Sollertia is the Roman translation of what the Greeks called **Metis** (Marco Frascari, *Sollertia*, pp. 51-52 of full article pp. 51-54, "Offramp", Vol. 1 No. 5 Southern California Institute of Architecture, 1992)

This whick-wif is a crucial mental operation for any compassed architect who hurries up slowly. Aldo Manuzio, the great publisher of the late Venetian Renaissance, printed his books under the logo of an ancient Latin saying: FESTINALENTE, hurry up slowly. To mark his productions in a meaningful way Manuzio used an emblem taken from an illustration of the "Hypnerotomachia Polifili" (Poliphilo's Strife of Love in a Dream) printed in Venice in 1499. This is the most mysterious book printed by the Venetian publisher, a book that reads very slowly but whose narrative develops at a dreamlike speed.

The Hypnerotomachia Polifili emblem is composed by a sinuous dolphin quivering around a heavy anchor. The books published in Manuzio's printing shop are characterized by a slow elaboration anchored to a tradition of printing accuracy while their reading will quickly stimulate quivering thoughts. The book art of speed. To discover speed, it is necessary to discover slowness, unless they are reached through a slow elaboration, human outcomes turn out to be utterly convulsive efforts. The objects equipped with speed can only derive from slow and meditated construction. Meditated construction is a building event quickly executed whole the construction of an object for speed is slowly executed. This polarity of execution is to be found in the measuring unit that switches from a spatial to temporal condition. Sollertia is mobility of thought and caution of execution, or seeing in the past and in the future of the same time. This multiple dual nature of sollertia is essential to any craftsman in producing contrivances that will become significant attributes for those who possess them. On the one hand, sollertia is a particular kind of intelligence which is based on a compassed prudence. On the other hand, sollertia requires a quick mind, able of presaging the problems of artful constructions. Accordingly, sollertia is a wily knowledge which dwells between slow formulas and quick metaphors. For instance, the Orders are defined by metaphoric references to female and male bodies, and by formulas defining the proportion existing between the diameter and the other dimensions of the column and the intercolumniation. Sollertia is forewarned prudence, meditated procedure of construction enlightened by flashes of intuition. We can represent speed metaphorically through the swift movements of the hands of a mason building a brick vault destined to be eternal, while we can represent slow execution with the slow construction of a racing car which will allow us to speedily move from one point to another. Both processes yield a saving of time to move around as much as we want. On the other hand, our moving from one place to another is nearly immediate nowadays, and as a result, we can spend our time contemplating the eternity of a swiftly built brick vault.

An Architectural Biography

Dueling Dualities for Daniel Solomon

EUGENE KUPPER¹

Abstract: An Architectural Biography is a personal life story. It may be the biography of an architect, or the story of an architectural idea – even that of a single house. It can be the history of a city, from its geological formation to the latest event happening in town. When we think of architecture as “an ethnic domain” (Langer *Feeling and Form* 1953) then it is a community of dwelling in a place. Biography might be the transformation of a given place in time, or at a specific moment, or a Foundation Myth: “the primitive hut”. Romulus plowed a ditch to encircle Rome. Gold was discovered in the American River. Biography is story-telling.



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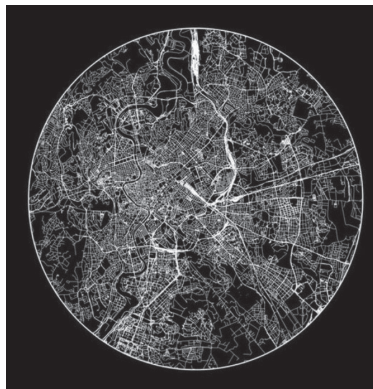
PROLOGUE: SAN FRANCISCO

1848: The earth cracked open; the river flowed with gold. A faraway country suddenly rushed into prominence and a city was born.

1906: A young city was filled with *Hope* as the earth again ruptured; fires scorched the terrain. Volunteers immediately rushed in Re-Building their city of *Love*. *On The Edge Of The World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century* is a story beginning at the turn of the century of 1900: American Architecture in transition from Victorian and Academic Eclecticism to Regional Modernism active to the present day.

1939: San Francisco had become a regional metropolis. Two sons were born to tell us their stories – Daniel and Eugene. They are here to tell us a tale of a struggle between tradition and modernism. The period from 1906 to 1939 had experienced very dramatic changes in America, affecting San Francisco in specific ways.

1949: the San Francisco Museum of Art held an exhibition and debate on the *Bay Area Style*, in which International Style influences squared off against the prevailing architectural norms of the San Francisco Region. Ideological fault lines continue to rupture the territory of discourse. Daniel Solomon finds himself positioned in what Colin Rowe called *The Present Urban Predicament*. This rupture sings those *Global City Blues* well known to students of urban life today.



PROLOGUE: ROMA

1748: The City, a glory of Antiquity, now being once again rendered a Cosmic Myth. Two young architects have produced great representations – one lovingly accurate, another outrageously daring. We observe the effects of Nolli and Piranesi in mapping the lessons of continuity and rupture in Rome and in the more recent histories of America and westernized architecture – or should we say – the West and Americanized architecture. Nolli is the loving caretaker of his city, Piranesi is the brilliant and unpredictable publicist of “new ideas” – a modernist. In so many ways, the history of architecture is the history of Rome. It is appropriate that our report from San Francisco may refer to Rome as a benchmark for urbanism. Kyoto or Beijing could also serve as another place of comparison – but that is yet another story.

2019: Daniel Solomon’s broad, deep experience reports from many years of professional and academic life, especially in the San Francisco Region. This unique region with a colorful and varied history may seem quite young from the perspective of Rome, but because of this the stories are still fresh in our memory. Today even aging modernists are fighting the “old-timers”, while more conservative urbanists are seeking value in historic continuity. We enjoy the antics of *Roma Interrotta* and those who are engaging in shocking innovations on paper, just as we anguish over the constant worrying over every façade up for review in the Roman *Centro*. “The Present Urban Predicament” – indeed.

TWO CITIES

Daniel Solomon on the occasion of his recent book *Housing and the City: LOVE versus HOPE* wherein cross references between words / works weave tales of the two cities to tell us what architecture may be achieved as dwelling places from times past and times present. Debates that have asked for ways to draw from the city and to ReBuild its housing as the continuous or ruptured fabric of inhabitation. The Tradition of the New joins debates with Other Traditions in a balancing act that makes simple choices seem more complex for the innocent who desperately need a place to lay down their heads and to raise their families in peace. The Shape of Time must be understood again as concrete direct views of the cities, not by generalizations that name abstract theoretical concepts.



THE BRIDGE begins in Oakland near water's edge across mud flats rising slowly as a causeway lifting on piers then steel trusses – directly toward the island named “Yerba Buena”, “Goat” or possibly “Treasure” depending who is doing the naming. We don't arrive at the island. We penetrate at its mid-height – right on through – but to where? There is sea air, but not the scent of mint as the Spanish thought they could detect on this island. Goats might roam the ridge, but probably not. Treasure awaits. **1939** Double-masted, cross-braced and silver-painted, the bridge now looms and towers, marking rhythms crossing westward into a misty city having a shaggy profile partly terrestrial, partly constructed – then swerving downward into the mist mixed with roasting coffee. We are again on solid ground surrounded by gray verticality. Arrival.

THE CITY as my father called it, and where my mother was born: San Francisco. Fathers and Mothers raise their sons and daughters to become architects. Two sons of the San Francisco Bay Area to become two kinds of architect.



THE TRAIN rattles through a slow curve slowing to its Terminus. Arrival. Before we can enjoy the splendors of the Eternal City we are propelled forward into the jumping modernist waves of Rome's Stazione Termini. **1950** An “urban situation”: Diocletian and the railroad station stare at each other with conspiratorial glee across piazza offering a hemicycle among its choices. A natural way of thinking about Rome is solidified, with continuity through extensive overlays in an ecology of urbanity; the landscape written in travertine, brick and marble. Changes written as geological texts, sanpietrini ripple the floor; the walls rise in masonry radiating light and heat of the day. The occasion of this visit **1980** followed next at the American Academy in Rome **1983**. The study was urban architecture while the practice was drawing/painting/theory called *Linee Occulte*. An adjacent studio was Barbara Stauffacher Solomon's. One day a man named Daniel smiled a greeting. We remembered this exchange that would resonate years later. “There are (at least) two kinds of Dualism.”

RE BUILDING 1992

THE SPLIT between a coherent and CONTINUOUS CITY and a disconnected RUPTURED CITY formulates an opposition we find in Daniel Solomon's three books and in the terms LOVE versus HOPE. He traces this back to the projects from a hundred years ago that were encouraged by planners who in later times had little regard for either architectural traditions of the old or those of the new. Noting a rift between avant-garde modernism and today's situation, he urges us to identify what kinds of continuity *or* rupture can be identified as we find more workable approaches for the future city.

SAN FRANCISCO: A city of many hills, drawn in cross-sectional grids, disappearing in the mist, returning as a magical dream, remaining through its changes. A wooden city, earth-shattered, burning, claimed from waters, re-built, destroyed, restored, huge concrete intrusions and then erased. Built for Change. ReBuilt. Changed.

GEOGRAPHIC URBANISM in San Francisco, was learned by Daniel Solomon from Nolli via Colin Rowe: *Collage City* 1979 more effectively by Anne Vernez Moudon: *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* 1986] Solomon's collaboration with Moudon in a research in meticulous cultural geography led to important early achievements: *Pacific Heights Town Houses* 1977, Glover Duplex 1981, Castro Common 1980, Amancio Erigina Village 1985, Biedeman Place Town Houses 1989, Fulton Mews 1991. [*ReBuilding* 1992] Solomon's work and Moudon's research together form a model of "reflective practice" of the highest order. Bravo. During this period a New Urbanism was named, a program of neo-traditional city design. Daniel Solomon's work was representative of the trend. Yet for Solomon this was hardly anything new. From Ernest Coxhead to Joseph Esherick or Charles Moore, San Francisco has had a vital regional ethos joining traditional urban patterns with modern ones; Daniel Solomon clearly leads in this ethos. However yet an exhibition of 1990 *Visionary San Francisco* contrasts historical ideals of the city with an all-too-typical shock treatment of ruptured *Distopia*. Solomon finds the graphic play and pretentious "theory" of today's "youngish" architects to be out of touch with the possibilities of an engaged urbanism, even if the museum walls are nicely decorated with exciting texts and images.

ROME: A natural way of thinking about Rome solidified continuously on successive overlays, an ecology of urbanity. The landscape is written in travertine brick and marble. Change occurs in geological texts: *sanpietri-ni* ripple the floor, the walls rise in masonry, radiating light and the heat of the day. GEOGRAPHIC URBANISM initiated in 1577 by Leonardo Bufalini and perfected in 1745 by Giambattista Nolli gives us a loving appreciation of the city of Rome as a work of topographical study. Places of actual inhabitation and community focus were clarified. This was modified quickly in 1748 by Piranesi who sought not just scientific rigor but mythical speculation. From *Forma Urbis* to *Campo Marzio*, from practical document to experimental design. A complex entity that is deeply historical in its urban form might be willfully ignored by means of clever graphics however. A contrary development taken from Nolli was proposed in *Rational Architecture* 1978 showing that the dense fabric of residential Rome could fill the empty spaces of modernist projects, as was also demonstrated vividly in *Roma Interrotta* 1979.

By comparison, the 1980 *Venice Biennale* featured "Post Modern" architecture, yet without a significant shift from either "traditional modern" or "not-modern" i.e. traditional architecture. Another view was *Roma Sbagliata* 1979. Rome has been resistant to changes in its central city. A re-examination of quarteriri that have sustained a lively sense of place is occurring however, and the value of some "new old lessons" may be offered. The availability of such models point up the actual challenges to architectural urbanism today.

GLOBAL CITY BLUES 2003

THE GLOBAL CITY / THE REGIONAL CITY We think of the city today as a regional series of domains having many and varied connections. In central San Francisco there are the boundaries of the Pacific and the Bay, yet the Contra Costa has always been co-extensive spatially and socially. Lazio is also Rome and Rome has always been is a *territory of the imagination*. The GENIUS LOCI persists in every mythic city. Yet the physical region extends into space of non-place. Melvin Webber's papers *Order in Diversity: Community Without Propinquity and The Urban Place and the Nonplace Urban Realm*, published in 1963 and 1964 while we were students at Berkeley. At first we were upset at the implications for architecture. Now we are benefiting from an enhanced concept of connection. Daniel Solomon reminds us in *NEARNESS* that we were brought up under the powerful influence of *Toward Making Places* 1962 by Charles Moore, Donlyn Lyndon, Patrick Quinn and Sym Van der Ryn, a True Manifesto of phenomenology for architects. Solomon is clearly quite skeptical of a VR version of urbanism with its easy acceptance by Rem Koolhaas *S,M,L,XL* 1995 or Lars Lerup in *After The City* 2000. There are Regional economies and there are Global economies; for advocates of *NEARNESS*, the scales and boundary conditions remain for us *ecological* and somehow architectural.

Global City Blues 2003 sings of promises broken and love unrequited. Yet in the blues there is always the possibility of another morning. Daniel reflects (page 123), "*Spending most of a lifetime in a nice little city like San Francisco is especially good training for a urbanist If all architects and town planners were forced to have such an experience before they built anything, the world would look different and probably much better.*" This is the central message of Solomon's wisdom and his frustration. "Eichlers" (page 31) a Suburban version of Frank Lloyd Wright's "Usonian House", locates Solomon (and Kupper) within regional distance from San Francisco – in Sacramento and Walnut Creek, a California utopia of what is now called "mid-century modern." He and I learned modern architecture before we came to understand and appreciate the historical city. What Californians have learned is that sprawl is not any longer a practical enterprise.

THE REGIONAL CITY: SAN FRANCISCO
No more housing subdivisions! No more shopping centers! No more office parks! No more highways! Neighborhoods or nothing!" This slightly tipsy rant was chanted by the planners of Seaside Florida in *Suburban Nation*. Solomon's detailed, daily experience has clarified the ways of finding a broader regional view of the central city.

We view *Roma Sbagliata*: urban neglect with an aching heart. Repair, reconstruction, replacement. the mending of damaged urban tissue needs to be achieved. We repeat here the old saying: "*When in Rome, Do as the Romans Do*". An example to stimulate this appeared in *Vaisseau de Pierres: Roma*, 1985. Passionately Roman, these projects remain with a view of *urbanitas* while the consumerist Rome broke its boundaries after WW II. There is the territorial extent of a city; we think of those fragments of walls standing or buried in the archeology the *Centro (antico vs. vecchio vs. moderno)*. Possibilities within and outside the center offer a more flexible definition of the transformations taking place – but not the California version of suburbia. *Fuori le Mura, Sacro GRA 2003* and beyond, the dispersed a-spatial virtual city, and situated places of historical continuity are becoming features of present-day extended Rome.

THE REGIONAL CITY: ROME

Darkness and light make the City; a dystopic *Suburra* is surely with us. Yet there are infinities of "invisible cities" within realization, especially for urbanists. Every city has a regional history, otherwise Hadrian would not have built his Villa. As Picasso reminds us, "*— the imaginary is indispensable.*"

MODERNISM VERSUS HISTORY OR MODERNISM IS HISTORY?

The status of the debate on “modernism” is not settled. There seem to be several definitions and several points of view – not “postmodernism”, but modernism regarded as *another* continuity. We San Francisco architects can look back at the failures and successes of modernist architecture *here* as a legacy or as a warning — as an agenda for the future. We have this in common with today’s architects in Rome. Bay Area Modernism has enjoyed a regional flavor that counters avant-garde separatism or rupture. Not every choice has led to harmonious resolution, as we hear Solomon’s stories of *Site versus Zeit*; the *Blues* will moan mournfully in ways that only San Francisco can sing. Signs of the Times suggest that the *Site* of San Francisco stubbornly resists any modernist *Zeitgeist*.

TIMES (pages 28 – 75) Solomon persists in his view that cities benefit from a strong contextual fit with the surroundings, near and extended. He tracks his passage from the 1940s on through the process of learning modernity, then modernism, then with a retrospective view – a greater respect for how a city such as San Francisco was built and how it should be built. Our personal history is mingled with received ideas during a short period: the rise and fall of urban housing, expansion into the metropolitan hinterlands, and the loss of landmarks from San Francisco’s brief history: *Lost San Francisco* 2011. Meanwhile we learn that “*Eighty percent of everything ever built in America has been built since the end of World War II*” [*The Geography of Nowhere* 1993]. In “those times”, we innocently went along with our elders’ ideas of progressive transformation. Now that we have “got over” the avant-garde approach we may include it in a broader repertoire of ideas for the evolution of our cities. We might pass on from the crisis mode of stylistic aesthetics and return to bigger problems. This is what Daniel Solomon learned in time to be of service to his City.

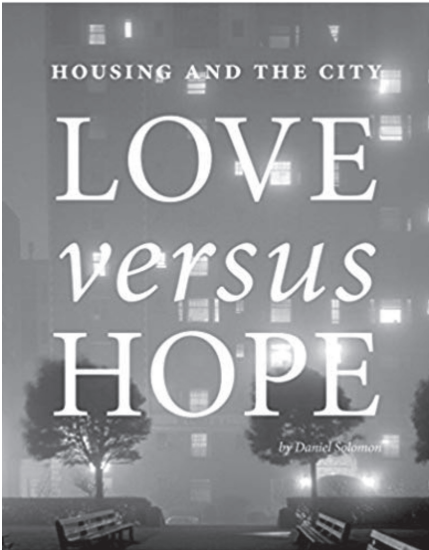
ROMAMOR persists with our boyhood nostalgia: as Fellini’s *Roma* 1972 and *Amorcord* 1973. Just as we have been perplexed by our personal histories – our tempi – public dreams have taught so many contradictory lessons. “America!” has an exotic lure from Hollywood. The Italy of 1940 swayed a turn toward neoclassical modernism that is still a puzzle for architects. A consumerist big-box “future” of SuperMercati succeeds, but Futurism was promoted by Marinetti in – 1909 ! Now an architect’s re-evaluation of those “lost” eras is taking place and “the old world” remains attractive for sophisticated Italians today. After all, tourism was invented by the Romans – and let’s face it: Italians love the future as well as the ancient legacy. Everywhere it has become a sport to trash International Style Modernism, and Solomon has done his part. In the next phase of our history may find much to re-learn from “The Heroic Period”. We recall that Le Corbusier tipped his hat to Team 10 1958, when a group of youngsters claimed a broader humanist agenda for CIAM. Margaret Mead once reminded us that “We may know more about things today, but I dare say that we have forgotten much more.”

HOUSING AND THE CITY: LOVE VERSUS HOPE**TITLE: HOUSING AND THE CITY**

This book is actually about URBANISM, of which “housing” is a part of “the city”. Daniel Solomon immediately addresses another major concern in his presentation of *The Central Freeway* (4,5) in which his participation led to the repair of an urban sector: the *Market Octavia Plan* 1989 now being completed. Housing – that bureaucratic necessity – will be discussed, but as the opposite of embedded community life in cities. Housing as a hopeless *Hope*.

TITLE: LOVE versus HOPE

These emotionally powerful concepts extend far beyond Solomon’s use of them in this book. The “versus” introduces us to Duality, Dualism and Opposition. To this reader, all three terms are far too complex to be limited to their use in the book; therefore we must find appropriate alternatives when addressing these concepts.

**PART I:**

The Continuous City and the Ruptured City
Solomon urges the significance of Continuity as a principle of Urban Design. This is a great strength in his work and philosophy. We shall try to get an understanding of this principle through Solomon’s examples and our own. Continuous physical form joins with building typology in this approach. “Rupture” is taken as the opposing approach, as the case of the Central Freeway that ripped into the older and continuous fabric of San Francisco.

CHAPTER 1:

Love versus Hope: Ameliorating Force or Wedge? A Jeremiad theme of contrary possibilities for the city is an autobiography for Solomon. It is the autobiography of the American City, for Paris, for Rome, for China. We are living in a period of “*Complexity and Contradiction*”, with opposing views of architecture being ideologically expressed. A ‘gentle manifesto’ of our times was written by Robert Venturi: he prefers “both – and” to “either – or”. The twentieth century has been subject to “*Modern Movements*” (the phrase is in the title of Charles Jencks’ first book 1965. Peter Collins’ title was “*Changing Ideals*” also 1965. Note the plural in both.) The *versus* or the *war* of conflicting points of view in this book is what I have called “dueling dualisms”, and my own preference is for a pluralist point of view. However – I must agree that Solomon has a point; we have been battered by ideology, and so much verbal combat has tried to pass as “theory”, which it is not. Theory should take into account the variations in philosophical context that appear in each setting. Later in Solomon’s book he will make a plea for diversity and for close observation of subtle *differences that make a difference*.

CHAPTER 2:

The Story: “**front porches with pretty flowers**”: Solomon’s image proposed as a foil for the development of a (political) history of housing. This image is what we call “The American Dream”. We North Americans *Love* houses that face the street, that are friendly neighbors. When in Italy, we photograph balconies with over-hanging flowers reminding us of Shakespeare in Verona. We react negatively to old slums and the new slums that replace them in “the housing projects”. Yet – we have built them in the *Hope* that “the greater number” can find some kind of (minimal) “housing”.

For students of Housing, Catherine Bauer was required reading. Confession: I have never read Bauer, because my view of her view of housing has *always* been negative. Daniel Solomon bravely undertook to study housing. My compliments. One’s admiration of well-design and livable residential sectors of the city is the possible subject of the present book, which we now read with great interest and sympathy. Most important is his actual, in-the- trenches experience in **ReBuilding** parts of San Francisco, each decision measured against the actual site for real people. For all our Love of the American Dream, these houses create multiple identities within the urban context and not as dreamy escapes in suburbia (also a valid urbanism; Berlage’s Amsterdam was a suburban idea as well!) Twenty-first century Architectural Urbanism needs a broad and rich critical typology from which to make its choices, it is here emphasized. Very true.



CHAPTER 3: Thinghood: Making things is – and should be – an urban designer’s preoccupation. “Why urbanism is not an Art” was written to warn us not to take our Camillo Sitte or Hegeman and Peets too seriously. “The map is not the territory” – the aphorism of the great semanticist Alfred Korszyski; a model is a metaphor and vice-versa, however. How we critique the model is the task of critical theory – however not a biased “critical theory” as certain under-graduates and professors pose.

CHAPTER 4: Roots: Fred Lyon and Anne Vernez-Moudon to the Years of Rupture : A heart-full tribute to two who have closely observed and documented the city of San Francisco – a photographer and a research urbanist. Both seem to be tributes to another documentarian, Giambattista Nolli. However, Daniel first had to prune back his modernist roots to see the growth of another insight. A photographic and geographic urbanism in learned by Solomon from Nolli via Colin Rowe **Collage City** 1979 then more effectively by Anne Vernez Moudon in **Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco** 1986 Solomon’s collaboration with Moudon in a research in meticulous cultural geography led to important early achievements: Pacific Heights Town Houses 1977, Glover Duplex 1981, Castro Common 1980, Amancio Erigina Village 1985, Biedeman Place Town Houses 1989, Fulton Mews 1991. **Re Building** 1992. Solomon’s work, Lyon’s and Moudon’s research read together formed a model of “reflective practice” of the highest order.



CHAPTER 5:

Roots Sprout: This continuation of “Roots” was reinforced by the **1980 Venice Biennale**; it travelled to San Francisco in 1982 with an invitation for Solomon to join in the presentation. His *Strada Novissima* exhibit is rendered as a *Vienna Rossa* in San Francisco. Nolli figue-groundmaps played a significant role, as Solomon’s working tool for his groundbreaking 1978 Pacific Heights project.



Solomon joined Eugene Kupper from the 1980 presentation, selected by Paolo Portoghesi and his distinguished colleagues. A homecoming!



CHAPTER 6:

A Reconstructed Diary: From time to time we must reflect on our progress; rather it is our *perception* of progress. How we should proceed may require an autobiography that differs from our life story. Solomon here takes a tip from Fellini: *Amarcord*. We all had a copy of *Space, Time and Architecture* didn’t we? Then we drank espresso coffee and read Beat poetry. We watched Fellini in amazement. A beautiful brick *Family Apartments* was not what we were admiring in 1960. But in 2019?

CHAPTER 7:

On Deceit: Perhaps only Frank Lloyd Wright can defend his motto: **Truth Against The World**. Solomon retains a bit of that righteousness in Love versus Hope. In order to defend our perception of truth we occasionally need to work to change others’ perceptions. The willingness and ability to wrestle with perceived opposition requires a certain sense of humor. It also requires certain magic tricks of misdirection that Solomon offers to explain in his *Disappearing Giraffe*. Here and in other parts of his work he gives case-study examples of remarkable feats of urban design and architecture. Study them!

CHAPTER 8:

From Hope to Love: **Hunters View and Jordan Downs** are case-studies in such Solomonic Legerdemain. The stories of these projects are narrative disclosures that must be read in full; we shall not paraphrase. Like the *Zygmunt Arent House* these tell the personal experiences of the people of their cities. Architectural photography and colored plan drawings may be the expected medium, but here they seem almost beside the point. In other words, the “deceit” and “tricks” don’t work unless they are invisible. We don’t mean to disappoint. The photos are here, beautifully presented in this chapter, “before” and “after”:



Hunter View / San Francisco, as it was 1943-2012

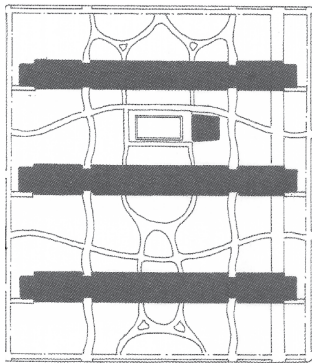


Hunter View / San Francisco, as it is 2014-present

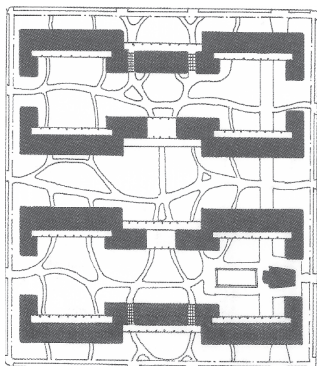
CHAPTER 9:

Hybrid 1: Carl Mackley Houses

This chapter tells part of the story of a project in 1930 by reports that are current to today, a successful case of social housing. We see two designs for the project, one early and one as built. Surrounding these designs are the stories of “influences and credits” so well known to architects. The top scheme seems to be three double-loaded parallel slab blocks, and the lower is a more developed plan with four single-loaded and more articulate massing. The site has been formed into more distinct zones, with a sense of varied courtyards. One agrees that this is a better plan regardless of authorship claims. We mention a significant change in scale and proportions of the buildings, offering varied views, spaces, daylight characteristics. That the project has been well-managed and maintained, lovingly inhabited – that is of the greatest significance.



Storonov's design



Alfred Kastner's design

CHAPTER 10:

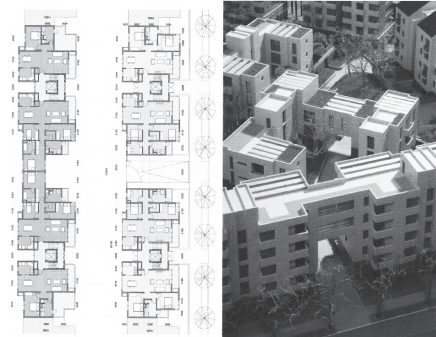
Hybrid 2: The Chinese Puzzle

From Philadelphia in the 1930s – to today's China, the theme remains of housing as either false hope versus true love: the bad guys and the good guys. The added complexities of social anthropology makes it more difficult for a California boy. Here Solomon again finds a qualified collaborative researcher at Tsingua University: some beautiful courtyard houses by Wu Liangyong. The model for houses in Beijing that very closely resemble traditional practices and forms.

The administrative and political challenges are similar – it seems that 1930s China endured a period of “rupture versus continuity” as well. Now, a large development in Hexie on open land shall be called a “New City”. Solomon's experience in careful interwoven urban design is revealed – one that surpasses what he calls “Lego blocks” – yet ready to achieve a new urban synthesis.



Ju'er Hutong by Wu Liangyong



PART II:*TWO BATTLEGROUND*

Two-ness and opposition; versus continues. Daniel reminded me that we once had a conversation where we called out a friend for his dependence on saying, “There are two kinds” – of something. Our reply: “Yes, there are (at least) two kinds of dualism.” Architecture and Urbanism contains an infinity of important issues, expressed along another infinity of spectrums, in complementary mixtures of many hues. Or – we can take them as two battlegrounds.

CHAPTER 11:

PARIS: Two Pasts, Two Presents: There is the real Paris and the new Paris (just as there is the real San Francisco and the new San Francisco, the real Rome and the new Rome). We mean by this that Paris / Rome etc. are known to the world as charming towns of a previous era or century – the coherent image that was supposed to represent “essential” and “eternal” qualities. Any deviation from that ideal is the unreal, i.e. modern city. The global modern(ist) city is a hodge-podge of conflicting tendencies and experiments. Once called “progressive” it has over-stayed its visit and slipped into social ill repute. In the USA it is called “The American Dream”.

CHAPTER 12:

ROME: Prologues

The Translucency of Fingers: Red-Orange
The Choice: Cheeses that Smell Success
Romanità: Wearing the Textures of the City



CHAPTER 13: ROME:

The Continuous City Achieved and Abandoned:

Today, the range of possible residential urban building types is a subject of a very limited architectural research. The “continuous city”, as Daniel Solomon invokes it, is a value that deserves study and further development. Here he penetrates into Rome’s “secret life” in those neighborhoods usually taken for granted as being real in the ordinary sense. Ordinary Reality is an overlooked value in this age of over-stimulation in architectural circles! The depth, complexity and extent of Rome’s history makes a selection difficult; should we begin at the Palatine hut, in Ostia? “Modern” has another dimension here. Twentieth century architecture flows along with the Tiber. We have visited exhibitions (always exhibitions!) at A.A.M., *Piranesi Nei Luoghi Di Piranesi*, and EUR. Daniel Solomon points out that Arthur Brown and Louis Kahn were “born again” here; so again – a young San Francisco architect will lead us in tour of “forgotten Rome”.



For this reader of Solomon's book this chapter is the most satisfying. In 30 pages he has packed in a reconnaissance of Rome today as seen through another era: Camillo Sitte, Gustavo Giovannoni, Marcello Piacentini, Margharita Sarfatti, and the communities of Garbatella, Piazza Mazzini, Prati and Testaccio, Tiburtino, Monteverde Nuovo, Parioli, Olympic Village, Casalino – followed by a coda meditating on Italian Rationalism then *Monditalia*. Such a list will bewilder the American who expects to visit MAXXI and snap a postcard photo. As a resident in only one of the above districts, I can recall well the gentle *dolce far niente* of morning strolls pushing a stroller with my baby. The other residents would call out to me “*O – povero Americano con piedi nudi!*” as we stopped for coffee or a small purchase in a one-room shop. My daughter convinced the owner of the restaurant to use his oven to bake a model birthday cake of the Pantheon. The simple and the complex are joined in such moments of Dwelling – the mysteries and secrets of Rome.

PART III: IDEAS

CHAPTER 14:

Three Giants and a Midget

The Giants: Fellini, Nabakov, Heidegger – to which we must add Joyce and Eco. Midgets proliferate, beginning with the fan of dueling dualism Rene Descartes. Solomon's enjoyment of dichotomy notwithstanding, he preaches a pluralism worthy of my friends Jencks and Norberg-Schulz. We join you, Daniel.

CHAPTER 15:

What Ever Happened to Modernity?

Excellent question. When did modern become “modernism”? Even Piet Mondrian painted lovely landscapes and loved to Boogie. My tentative answer is that we must take the entire twentieth century into account in order to truly understand the Modern. From Theosophy and Dada to Monte Verità and Carl Jung, from Joyce and Cage to Woodstock. We folks from San Francisco never had a big issue with modern thought at City Lights Bookstore.

As Solomon pointed out in his previous chapter even slab blocks can be nice places to live – if Quaroni designs them! The persistence of good places throughout architecture is what Paolo Portoghesi called the ***Presence of the Past***. It really wasn't Post-anything. Love and Hope persist to make living cities.

CHAPTER 16:

Meet a Force of History:

“Pre-Fab” versus “Ticky-Tacky”? All through the long history of building there have been ways to take advantage of standard units, and how they might achieve some interest and variety.

Bricks, wood framing, precast concrete, etc. can be all employed with tectonic integrity and Heideggerist Place-fullness. No argument.

CHAPTER 17:

CBU

The Thirty Year War —The New Urbanism and the Academy: “Nostalgia” is a word that makes modernists shiver. The film by Tarkovsky makes me shiver in another way. Solomon need only return to early San Francisco for his example that shows what continuity can do for a city that builds well:



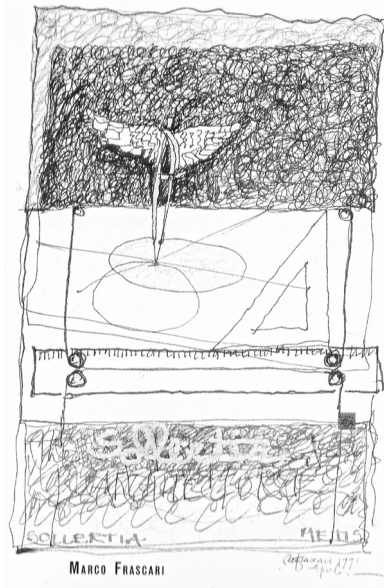
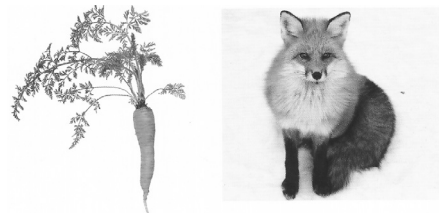
“New Urbanism” was a subject that intrigued and irritated me. It seemed both self-evident and provocative. If it differed from Raymond Unwin or the New Town planners one couldn’t decide. A lingering folkloric feeling joined to some postmodernist polemic, it was redundant in terms of current architectural thinking. As the examples and program-statements grew, everything settled down. We knew Daniel Solomon’s projects in San Francisco, and they seemed to be straight-ahead Bay Area Style work with a planning twist. That twist showed his willingness to roll up his sleeves and wade through developers and city hall, and that was laudable but frustrating. My teaching at UCLA tried to mix art and architecture with a regard for history; that should be enough, I thought. In retrospect, Solomon’s efforts, both ambitious and overlooked by the fame-seekers and grand-standers of my acquaintance, seem just right.

CHAPTER 18:

Métis

This word was not familiar to me. Since Solomon didn’t offer his definition / interpretation, I resorted to what we use for a dictionary these days. If one is Canadian, it refers to a slightly French mode of thinking, like Creole in Louisiana. It carries an inflected

bias that is unique – somewhat like *territoire* is for wine growing. Or maybe like *Genius Loci*. Maybe I could catch on. We can thank Daniel in urging us to misuse this word. He points out how Brasilia was not the fault of Le Corbusier, but might have been. Charles Jenck’s *Le Corbusier and the Tragic View of Architecture* gave us an alternate reading that doesn’t quite the master off the hook. Daniel Solomon concludes with a fox and a carrot; is this the *The Hedgehog and the Fox* in another guise?

*Sollertia*

In the first paragraph of the first chapter of the first book of his architectural primer, Vitruvius suggests that construction is a mediated carrying out of buildings. Then he advances the idea that theory is a graphic illustration devised to explain cunningly constructed objects. *Sollertia*, an act of cunning judgment, is an essential intellectual procedure required to build any construction.

CHAPTER 19:

Place and the Displaced

“Whatever Space and Time mean – Place and Occasion mean even more”

“Architecture is – Built Homecoming”

These pronouncements by Aldo Van Eyck in 1959 at the CIAM Team X meeting announce a revised agenda for contemporary urbanism – Solomon would repeat with melancholy in this concluding chapter “Place and the Displaced”.

The Dream of a “good life in a good place” has been replaced by the dismal conditions of political terror. This may not be historically very new, but we are living in such a time.

Housing – not Homecoming – is confirmed as an administrative and political imperative. Nabakov’s warning against systems, not situations, asks us to reveal the actualities.

Are these the quaint traditions of “well building”? Is this the Vitruvian heritage a Resistance in the face of a Philistine “reality”? Does that ancient Roman yet answer to times of tumult and rupture? A millennial NU cook book? Suzanne Langer has called Architecture an “ethnic domain”. In his book, Daniel Solomon calls this: *mêtis: the special intelligence of great city builders.*

He also calls this LOVE, versus HOPE, the *failed* version of LOVE in his book, However for this reviewer, we can look anticipate constant mixtures of both LOVE and HOPE, according to definitions that we use every day.



This image of well-intentioned but fatal housing has become a cautionary tale that we know so well. It has been repeated in every age of urbanism.

Housing is the term of bureaucracy. It replaces a better word: HOUSE, and an even better word: HOME. Yet even this story can have a happy ending for architects. HOPE springs eternal. The Eternal City was not built in a day. The archetype HOME has many forms, and the children of humanity have survived so many transformations. HOME is a word often degraded into a sentimental commercial version name for almost anything. A restoration of semantics is needed, and words will suffer– as will cities – from time to time. We are writing this from Phoenix – a city not built in a day – but certainly in need of RE-BUILDING. We remember well this title of Daniel Solomon’s *first* book.



AN ARCHITECTURAL BIOGRAPHY

is a personal life story. It may be the biography of an architect, or the story of an architectural idea – transformation of a given place in time, or at a specific moment, or a Foundation Myth: “the primitive hut”. Romulus plowed a ditch to encircle Rome. Gold was discovered in an American River near San Francisco. Biography is story-telling, even that of a single house. It can be the history of a city, from its geological formation to the latest event happening in town. When we think of architecture as “an ethnic domain” (Langer Feeling and Form 1953) then it is a community of dwelling in a place.

Biography might be the TRADITIONS that merge, morph and transform cities and places in cities. In San Francisco there are histories and folklores that persist despite any attempts at “modernism” – which has its own traditions as well. Styles of buildings or of cities can be identified. Guide books and travel literature tell us where and how to look – and what we might see there.

PLACES AND REGIONS locate us within a city and tell us of the (surrounding) country. A Place might be a single room: “the oval office” in “the white house”, in “Washington”. The quote-marks carry metonymic extended significance. Likewise, “Rome” is an Empire and the name of a store-front pizzeria. In the twentieth century, America had “suburban sprawl” outside the cities; urban regions now have cities within a connected network of relations. Today there are some American cities such as Houston and Phoenix that are almost entirely “suburban” in physical form.

A PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY:

Eugene Kupper was born in 1939 in Oakland California. His father graduated from Northwestern College of Law Portland Oregon; his mother was a librarian in San Francisco. Eugene attended Las Lomas High School in Walnut Creek, then University of California Berkeley after a three-year enlistment in the US Navy. He married and had three children in the 1960s, graduated from Berkeley in 1966, then Urban Design at Yale. We was a Fellow of the Center for Advanced Study, University of Illinois, then was appointed professor at UCLA, where he taught until 1994. He married again in the 1980s, and with two more children. After UCLA he taught in Switzerland, Virginia and Arizona. He and his wife conduct an art, design and architecture program for pre-school and elementary students: the Vitruvius Program.

He has been an Architect in the San Francisco and Los Angeles areas, was project designer for Frank Gehry for Concord Pavilion, California; since then he has been in private practice. He was selected to the Venice Biennale and is a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome. He now resides in Phoenix Arizona, working as a painter and writer.

Eugene Kupper, Phoenix, Arizona

