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Joan Ockman, Salomon Frausto, eds.. *Architourism: Authentic, Escapist, Exotic, Spectacular.* Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2005. 191 pp. $39.95, paper, ISBN 978-3-7913-3297-0.

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Depending upon one's perspective, architectural tourism is as old as architecture itself. Some of the earliest sites known to humankind may have had ritual or pilgrimage functions, and people traveled vast distances to encounter them. For example, the oracle at Delphi attracted pilgrims, or tourists, and the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European Grand Tour focused upon the visitation of monuments to western civilization in antiquity and the Renaissance. But that was an earlier, arguably different, time. Back then, touring the built environment was a means to an end, whether that end was salvation, knowledge, or refinement. If the splashy production and title of Joan Ockman and Salomon Frausto's edited collection of essays, exhibits, and projects, *Architourism*, is any indication, architectural tourism is now an end in itself.

A quick glance at the book reinforces this idea. Browsers cannot but help to be arrested by the book's numerous high-quality, predominantly full-color images, featuring buildings and spaces as diverse as Santiago Calatrava's Milwaukee Art Museum and a crocodile-shaped hotel in Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory of Australia. Even older buildings, such as the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt or the Pyramid of the Sun in Teotihuacán, Mexico, are depicted not as we might expect from the textbook view (as isolated monuments set in vast, arid landscapes), but closer to how they are encountered by tourists: that is, surrounded by hawkers, guides, and other tourists, who may have paid for the very same package tour that they did. From the appearance of the book alone, one might assume that the tourist industry is now--and suddenly--cashing in on the new-found global appeal of the built environment.

That images are a major feature of the book should come as little surprise. Architecture is a visual art, and tourism is often equated with site-seeing, if not also with "sight"-seeing. The so-called tourist gaze (a term coined by John Urry in his eponymous book of 1990, where tourists, through vision, objectify everything out of the ordinary from their privileged positions of power), continues to cast an influential shadow over scholarly approaches to tourism today. This remains the case whether or not the built environment is inserted into the discourse.[1]

But browsers beware: a careful reading of the bulk of the essays reveals no overwhelming preference for the role of sight. Most essays cast a wider net: one where sight is one of many faculties driving the tourist encounter; where memory, physical proximity to the built environment, and other senses can be understood as equally important. Furthermore, there are only snippets of the elitism that colored the early years of tourist stud-

ies, when tourists were typically depicted as non-thinking tools of capitalism, who experienced precisely what the travel agencies, guidebooks, or tour guides instructed them to experience.[2]

In *Architourism*, tourism itself is not universally regarded as a denigrating and shallow practice, and tourists are given far more agency than they are conventionally afforded. Many of the essays critically probe the complexity of the tourist encounter, as authors seem unwilling to assume that tourists are unaware of their status or the ways that the tourist industry attempts to shape their experiences. Karal Ann Marling's article, for one, notes the pleasure that tourists seem to take in the architectural simulacra that can be found in places such as Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, Walt Disney World in Orlando, and the Mall of America near Minneapolis. If we neglect the positive transformative powers such sites can have on people, she cautions, we miss the point (p. 125). A few of the essays, such as those by Yi-Fu Tuan and Tim Edensor, even suggest that touring the built environment--whether a grand monument such as the Taj Mahal or a decaying industrial ruin in England--can potentially provide a kind of transcendence from the everyday. And, for the most part, the articles do not re-hash the tired discussion of the alleged distinctions between traveler and tourist, which inevitably end with far more exceptions to any rule. Even if the book's visually oriented graphic design does not always reflect its written content, it remains a refreshing effort overall.

Nonetheless, there does not appear to be any widespread agreement as to what *architectural* tourism is, and whether it is, in fact, new. Mitchell Schwarzer's lively, personal, and provocative opening essay on architecture and mass tourism comes closest to defining architourism as it is popularly imagined: a worldwide, frequently urban, phenomenon where internationally renowned architects are lured to design buildings intended to attract tourists as much as, if not more than, locals. Schwarzer concedes that the desire to create an iconic structure is not new, but that the difference today "lies in the number of tourist-magnet buildings underway, as well as the global marketing considerations that go into all aspects of project planning, including design" (p. 25). Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain (1997), is considered a catalyst for this phenomenon--so much so that the term "Bilbao effect" might, in certain respects, be interchangeable with "architourism." In their introductory remarks, Ockman and Frausto acknowledge that Gehry's Guggenheim and its ability to capture the public imagination while regenerating an entire city also generated their book, in addition to the conference and exhibition that preceded it (p. 8).

Yet only Schwarzer's essay that follows delves into a discussion of the latest iconic buildings in any great detail, and the book's content as a whole suggests that architourism might be considered more broadly. A special image-based section does feature a few recently completed or proposed projects by well-known architects, but the mostly short articles, written by scholars in a variety of fields, discuss everything from politics to power, gentrification to nationalism, preservation to postcolonialism, and, nearly always, consumption. The notable figures of *Architourism* are as often theorists or social scientists like Theodor Adorno, Georg Simmel, and Guy Debord as they are architects such as Zaha Hadid, I.M. Pei, or the firm of Herzog and de Meuron. A few of the articles, exhibits, and photo essays are only peripherally about architecture (Keller Easterling's article about the special tourist zone in North Korea that marks an attempt to heal political differences between North and South Korea is one example), and others seem only partly related to tourism (Martha Rosler's photographs of travelers passing through airport security checkpoints, for instance). Some of the book's featured sites and buildings might be on some tourist itineraries today (the World Trade Center site, Dresden's Frauenkirche, and Auschwitz, for example) but

likely draw visitors perhaps less for their physical presence than for the memory of the tragic events with which they are commonly associated.

By no means is this intended as a criticism, however. The book's interdisciplinary scope and multiple perspectives helps demonstrate that architectural tourism cannot be separated from economic, political, and social issues that penetrate any other sort of tourism and, in fact, is bound to them. If a variety of critical views make the definition of architourism less explicit, then so be it. What Ockman and Frausto have effectively done is opened up the discourse on the connections between architecture and tourism, and for that alone, this book is valuable.

But it is more than that. *Architourism* is very readable, and the articles hold together remarkably well for an edited collection--particularly one put together following a conference and exhibition. With respect to the variety of perspectives offered in the completed publication, it is telling that the original name for the conference and exhibition, *Architourism: Architecture as a Destination for Tourism* (organized in 2002 by the Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture at Columbia University), was not retained for the present volume. Indeed, architecture is not always presented in the book as a destination for tourism, but often appears to be incidental to a process that finds tourists searching for the ever-elusive authentic experience, seeking the exotic, attempting to escape, or relishing the spectacular--themes which form the basic organizational structure for the book, and themes around which the conference was also organized.

Following the editors' introduction and Schwarzer's piece, the book is then organized into the four principal sections of "authentic," "exotic," "escapist," and "spectacular," each of which features an introductory discussion of the respective term and an essay or essays addressing the term with respect to particular case studies in the built (or designed) environment, each by a different author. Although, at times, a discussion of the term in question seems tacked on to the various essays rather than driving their content, it is to both the authors' and editors' credit that there is an attempt to address the term and maintain the publication's consistency. The article by D. Medina Lasansky, which exposes the Mussolini-led efforts that shaped Tuscany as a collection of medieval and Renaissance scenes now embedded into our contemporary consciousness, is a case in point in that it queries what constitutes authenticity, architecture, and architectural tourism. But Lasansky's evaluation of the authentic, with respect to the built environment, does not necessarily cohere with that of Christiane Hertel, Anette Baldauf, or James E. Young, who also contribute essays to the "authentic" section. Similarly, McKenzie Wark's essay in the "exotic" section argues that the exotic itself no longer exists (every inch of the globe has long been mapped and its potential for tourism explored), while Tim Edensor's analysis of a resort in Mauritius demonstrates that the staging of the exotic is very much alive. Ackbar Abbas is perhaps most accurate when he writes that his "ruminations on the exotic and its ambivalences have a certain bearing on the concept of architourism, an idea that is also not without its ambivalences" (p. 106). With different interpretations of the authentic and exotic (as well as that of escape and spectacle), it is unsurprising that architourism itself remains elusive, at least in this book.

Architourism has other aspects that differentiate it from a more traditional edited collection, where the graphic design of the publication is considerably less important than the writing. Here, the two are elevated to equal importance, but the graphics are more distracting than provocative. Indeed, one is frequently jolted by varying page colors, different font sizes, and images that do not always relate directly to the topics and themes discussed in the essays. Also interspersed throughout are reproductions of work from the exhibition, featured on yellow pages called "site-seers." These site-seer pages include a card stock insert of Hans

Haacke's untitled World Trade Center project, which depicts the silhouette of the buildings but, away from the urban context in which his poster-sized cut-outs originally appeared, has the unfortunate (and probably unintended) effect of lending the book a "pop-up" feel. A few projects, including a new luxury resort in Obersalzberg, Germany (on the site of Hitler's Bavarian mountain retreat), Norman Foster's proposed cultural district on the West Kowloon waterfront in Hong Kong, and two additional Guggenheim museums proposed for Rio de Janeiro and Taichung, Taiwan are featured as "detours" on pink pages and analyzed, presumably by the editors, in white text. The "spectacular" section also hones in on three recent projects by Diller and Scofidio, Ten Arquitectos, and Bernard Tschumi, with images and brief descriptions--here on black pages--only hinting at the range of meanings and functions that an "architourist" building or complex might contain. Save for Ockman's introductory analysis of the site-seer pages early in the book, readers are left to ponder the relationship of the featured projects to the themes or to "architourism" more generally--with questionable success.

If one is to understand the alleged phenomenon of "architourism" as pure visual dazzle--what Pellegrino D'Acierno calls "ecstatic, excessive, exorbitant, aestheticized, imagistic, seductive" in his probing and excellent introduction to the section on spectacle (p. 137), then the book's design is aiding and abetting this process. (In the book's preface or "point of departure," the editors find themselves "deeply indebted" to Brett Snyder for a "truly dazzling book design" [p. 11].) It is perhaps unconventional to harp on the graphic appearance of a book in a review. Yet that appearance, while making the book far sexier than the conventional academic tome, belies the variety of critical approaches in the essays, many of which divert from visual spectacle.

Perhaps the article that questions the tyranny of visuality to the touristic process most directly is the final essay by Ockman herself, where she tracks the travels of a select handful of influential twentieth-century architects. Here, we read about the significance of sketching, taking photographs, writing, and physical interaction with locals to the touristic process--experiences which, Ockman argues, not only shaped these architects' own work, but is "bound up with the evolution of the twentieth-century architectural imagination" (p. 162). Easily one of the more thorough and innovative essays in the book, Ockma's lens is nonetheless focused exclusively on architect-tourists (who, for perhaps obvious reasons, tend to pay closer attention to the built environment than others). Given Ockman's subjects, her essay shifts from the idea of architecture as a mass-audience attraction, which further complicates the notion of "architourism."

Is this problematic? Only if one approaches the book hoping to nail down a single definition for "architourism," a term which Ockman and Frausto readily admit to creating themselves (p. 9). Insofar as they chose an array of articles that approaches architecture and tourism from numerous perspectives, one must assume that the editors were less interested in defining the term than raising its possibilities and asking contributors to address it. It is too early to speculate about whether the term sticks, but at the very least, architecture should now be considered a legitimate topic of scholarly inquiry into tourism.

Notes

[1]. John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1990).

[2]. See, for example, Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Vintage Books, [1962] 1992), 77-117.

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