

the 44 lectures

Volume One: 1-14.

THE WINTER CAMPAIGN

scripted for



in three volumes by
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PREFACE TO THE 44 LECTURES.

Researches towards a General Architecture of Decoration, Building and Urbanity.

I do not call these 44 Lectures “written”. Writing does not inscribe three to five illustrations per page, all with long captions. Writing Architectural theory in text alone is futile. This is why I call it “scripting” and name them “Lectures”. I would have called them 'iconollects' if the word had existed. More on this in the Introduction to Volume 1.

Geoffrey Kipnis, in a Lecture to the RIBA, confirmed that no intellectually persuasive Theory of Architecture has ever existed. So when my own generation, which began their studies soon after WWII, decided to create an Ur-Architecture which would assimilate the 9,000 years of the phenomena of that name (including 20C Modernity), we knew that we would have to effectively ‘theorise’ this Medium.

Architects, when they ‘theorise’ tend to ‘prove’ their idea by building it. While this may ‘prove’ or ‘disprove’ a thesis to an Architect, it is insufficient for those, the vast majority, who have not received our peculiar training. Yet the convention has arisen that Practitioners do not write theory. Theory is written, in a curiously ‘Scholastic’ manner, by those who do not work at inventing Architecture. James Stirling, my second and third-year tutor from 1956-58, was generally admitted to be the best architect in the world when he unfortunately died in 1992. He advised “Never write about your work, John. It will only emasculate you”. This peculiar state ensures that Practitioners no longer even read Theory. Theory is merely discussed by Theoreticians.

There is a simple reason for this. It is called the project for an “*Architecture Autre*”. This is an ‘Architecture’ (so called), which owes nothing to the 9000 years of Architecture’s prior existence. These 9,000 years are now bundled as “Historic Architecture”. What we build now is called “Modern Architecture”. “History and Theory” as the academic category is termed, often bridges-over into the forbidden zone of the nine millenia. But Practice does not. So what is there for the Practitioner to read about?

It is argued by the devotees of *L'Architecture Autre* that this ‘line in the sands of time’ (usually placed at 1900), must be drawn for many reasons. One must “serve the masses” and so avoid elitism and the arcane. One must cope with all the machines, pipes and wires. One must advantage Building by using the new structures and materials. One must accept the sheer ‘bigness’ of contemporary projects. One must be ‘Green’. One must reduce costs. One must be flexible. One must use mass-production and machine-production. One must invent a New Style for this New Era. One can go on almost indefinitely. All of these are argued to be reasons why the study of Architecture prior to 1900 can be of no use to the future of our own lifespan.

These 44 Lectures argue, one by one, that all of these so-called imperatives are advantages that can best be exploited by an understanding of Architecture based upon the study of ALL its examples - not merely those built over the past 100 years! The only people whom this ‘line in the sand’ advantages are the architectural ignoramuses and incompetents who pretend to ‘educate’ the young, and the no-longer-so-young architectural ignoramuses who throw-up the trash we must live-with today. *L'Architecture Autre* was a desperate move, based upon the collapse of the *Ancien Regime* after WWI. It had some 'truth' then. Today it is ignorance, charlatanry and fraud.