

Architectural Icon

The Shrine The Votive The Gesture

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"The Icon, then, is not only an aesthetical entity. It is the result of the faith and of the prayer. It is the life. The saving truth is not communicated by the word alone, but by the fact of awakening vital forces of life through the presentation of beauty. The icon carries with it the love of this beauty, and the beauty of this love." (Byzantine Bible)

The idea is simple. Gesture gives grace, space gives grace, image gives grace, sound gives grace. Icons give grace. Vital energy, electric impulse, passes through grace to the beholder. Behold, to be held. This vital energy is present in echoes, ancient shrines, whose purpose is now missing, whisper. Walls built to enact transformations which poets feel when they are impelled—what music casts over the mind. Spirits that exalt and glorify, spirits usually rare and capricious should be permanently fixed, working miracles perpetually for every one. Spatial humanism—humanity at magnitude—value in light and shadow—true perspective. That art whose attempt is delineation of the divine mirror. That subtlety which is more fine because it abjures extravagance or fantasy. Our need for votive architecture never died. Time changes the abstract order motivated by our need for intellectual security with which to summon inspiration. Inspiration sustains the purpose of living. The demands of each epoch's external pressures on the biological frames encasing our spirits press from us an architecture of expedience like wine from grapes. "Every epoch is a sphinx which plunges into the abyss as soon as its problem is solved." Roman walled gardens yielded a further retreat within Romanesque cloisters. Roses bloom in secret spaces. Votive—fragment—a fragment of gesture—stones of a wall running through an empty plain to the rock mountain. Ridge—snow—votive—gesture. The gesture of respect. A marble seat for the priestess set in the center of the front circle of the amphitheater. Stone fall—blue sky—empty space. A bench encircled the outer walls of a building and clay votive objects lay on it. Hieroglyphs of information—puzzle pieces—spaces out of the architecture of gestures. Stones laid for liturgy—before the column came the gesture of the column. On the trail of imprints, of gestures left long ago in air. A sound, the corner of the stairway, the lock on a gate, flowers in the ruins. The way the foot fits in a stone path which loses outline in vanished direction. Cows within temple precincts, wandered from India. A roof given way to sky illuminates mosaic squares, formal elements—natural elements—the elements. When you look at the sphere of our sun is it conceived differently if you stand in the exact center of a square? If you separate candles into a red glass, a blue glass, and a yellow glass, does your perception give the retina a different neural message for each color? Are we always composing processional spaces to approach our intuition? When you walk between columns toward the center do you begin to feel the effect of your progress toward the conclusion? Is geometry perhaps the repository of ancient sacrificial gesture? The Chinese, who have had a long time to think, have over a hundred names for differing shades of blue. Where do colors come from? Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? Liturgies are a logical order for progressions toward their fullest possible human form—*mundra*. This is an invocation. A statement of presence within defined votive space. A rejoicing. A statement of belief. A blessing and a recession. The perfect logic of respect. Biotechnology. The body as media, simplifying and clarifying ways to receive natural energies. Images which travel from era to era and are electric. Human needs are warmed by that same ancient fire. The walls we create are the containers and guardians of our continued relation to the light source. Electric affinities. "Each mortal thing does one thing and the same: deals out that being indoors each one dwells."