



# SPACE FORM LIGHT: ARCHITECTURE IN PRINT

## Exhibition Statement

In the first century AD, Roman architect Vitruvius posited that a good building should demonstrate durability, utility and beauty. The exhibition “Space Form Light: Architecture in Print” references the visual artistic impact of built architecture interpreted by an artist/printmaker in two-dimensional space. What distinguishes art in architecture is not only the creation of form, but also what Vitruvius called “beauty,” the evocation of feelings of delight and inspiration. Inspired by Italian artist-architects Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) and Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778), this exhibition demonstrates in a graphic manner what makes architecture resonate in viewing without an emphasis on functional or engineering concerns.

During the European Renaissance, from about 1400, thought and aesthetics did not offer a strong division between the roles of artist and architect. From the Industrial Revolution into modern times, there developed a distinction between what is the aesthetics and vision, harkening back to the aspect of beauty in architecture as proposed by Vitruvius, and engendering the possibility of appreciating architecture in wholeness or in parts. The architectural dialog will continue to address form, function and beauty.

This separate appreciation is well expressed by noted twentieth century architect Le Corbusier who wrote, “You employ stone, wood and concrete, and with these materials you build houses and palaces: that is construction. Ingenuity is at work. Suddenly you touch my heart, you do me good. I am happy and I say: This is beautiful. That is Architecture” (*Towards a New Architecture*, 1985).

“Space Form Light: Architecture in Print “ is not an exhibition of buildings, rather it highlights the response of printmakers to the aesthetics of the original artist-architects. They share in common articulating their vision with similar compositional elements: defining space, creating form, and factoring light into both surface and form. Art and architecture often begin with two-dimensional renderings, progress to another technique, and can proceed to offer an additional visual experience, again in two-dimensional form. This multilayered realization expands the vision of the original as it presents a third relationship explored by the viewer.

A viewer can sense the familiar if they have seen something architectural in its fully three-dimensional form through a glimpse provided by another artist. Even if the building is not fully known, an allusion to the whole, provided by a particular form or element, can create the opportunity for the viewer to imagine a whole. As architecture is a part of a time period, history, society and culture, it provides, in all its renderings, a story of the human relationship to vision and needs that is an intimate and personal experience for the viewer. This exhibition allows the viewer to develop a personal relationship to the purpose and experience of the built form. In viewing the observation created by another artist, the viewer is encouraged to visually explore familiar architecture with an artist's eye: how surface captures light, how windows reveal interiors while reflecting exteriors, and how mass can be solid or fluid.

Artists in this exhibition, such as CSU, Chico Professor of Art James Kuiper, pay tribute to Palladio in echoing his drawings and exploring delicate ornamentation. The English artist Henry Moore gives architectural monumentality with human figures that do not reference specific personalities. Peter Milton delicately captures floating architectural forms in ambiguous space, interacting with a human population. Piranesi, known for both graphic arts and architecture, and whose careful depictions are a launching point for invention and fantasy, often presented with dramatic perspective. Also included are collagraphs, prints made in a collage manner, by now local artist Nancy Scott Patton. Her work presents building ornaments as treasured relics.

The selection of exhibited works was made in collaboration with CSU, Chico Professor of Art Rouben Mohiuddin who has degrees in architecture and twelve years of professional practice in New York and Los Angeles. He currently teaches in the Interior Design area. As a child of a diplomat, he has experienced a variety of the world's architecture first hand. As the co-curator, he brings a deep understanding of the architect's aesthetic vision and its translation to built form through the two-dimensional process.

“Space Form Light: Architecture in Print “ is not so much focused on the how of building, but on the powerful and moving effect the art in architecture has on life's experience. Architecture is a human product imbued with transformative power and memorial vision. The variety of printmaking techniques—lithography, etching, collagraph, and screen print—each contributes unique graphic artistic appeal. This exhibition continues in the Ayres Hall first floor cases.

Catherine Sullivan, Curator  
Janet Turner Print Museum  
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