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HISTORY— Theory of Architecture

Abstract

This article examines the development and understanding of theory in architecture in the context of historical and philosophical considerations. While the ancient, simple concept of theory was open and included speculative elements, through ‘scientification’ and systematisation it has developed into a more narrowly defined one the closer we come to the present.

Theory, though, is to be understood as a dynamic and practical, indeed very lively concept that correlates with reality but goes beyond mere experience. Action and reflection, science and art, practice and theory together form the Aristotelian ‘habitus faciendi cum ratione’. For Vitruvius, too, building, i.e. the ‘fabrica’, and the ‘ratiocinatio’ belong together: the ‘ratiocinatio’ accompanies and explicates the practice. Theory is therefore not independent, but an explanation and introduction to practice! Committed to people and society with house and city, architecture and the reflection on it in the knowledge of history are necessarily also a part of history.

Keywords

Practice, Epistemology, Ethics, Vitruvius, Kant, Aristotle, Flight of Thought