



LANDMARKS AND MONUMENTS

The most magnificent examples of architecture often resonate with an entire culture or even across time. From the days of antiquity and into modern times, various landmarks and monuments have captured the imagination of people who can only marvel at the beauty and sophisticated engineering of such wonders. When asked to ponder architecture people often recall the Leaning Tower of Pisa or the Coliseum. Most everyone has heard of the Taj Mahal or the Empire State building. And how can anyone forget such monuments as the Statue of Liberty or the Eiffel Tower?

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Tower of Pisa; David Robert Donatucci

World of Wonders

Antiquity provides many examples of fantastic architecture. Some of these are included in what is known today as the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Strung across the Mediterranean, they represent the most inspiring structures created during that time. The list includes the Colossus of Rhodes, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Pyramids at Giza, Hadrian's Mausoleum, the Seated Zeus, the Temple of Artimus, and the Lighthouse at Pharos. While the Pyramids have stood the test of time, the other structures have not but remain important examples of form and space.

These wonders influenced architecture in presenting the first towers, tombs, statues, and monuments. These forms continue to resonate today in modern translations and still inspire a sense of wonder.

“Antiquity provides many examples of fantastic architecture.”

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Luxor Pyramid Las Vegas; Minna Donatucci

Complex Forms

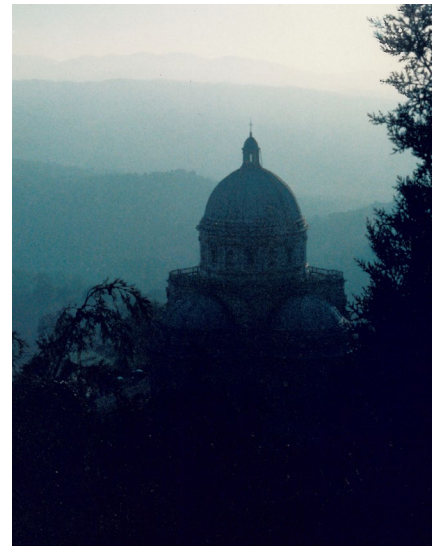
The complexity of form and space was born out of advances in technology and new types of material that have evolved over time. Since the Roman invention of concrete around 25 BC, arch and dome structures have grown stronger and taller. Ornamentation of structures evolved as craftsmen were celebrated and artists employed to embellish churches and castles.



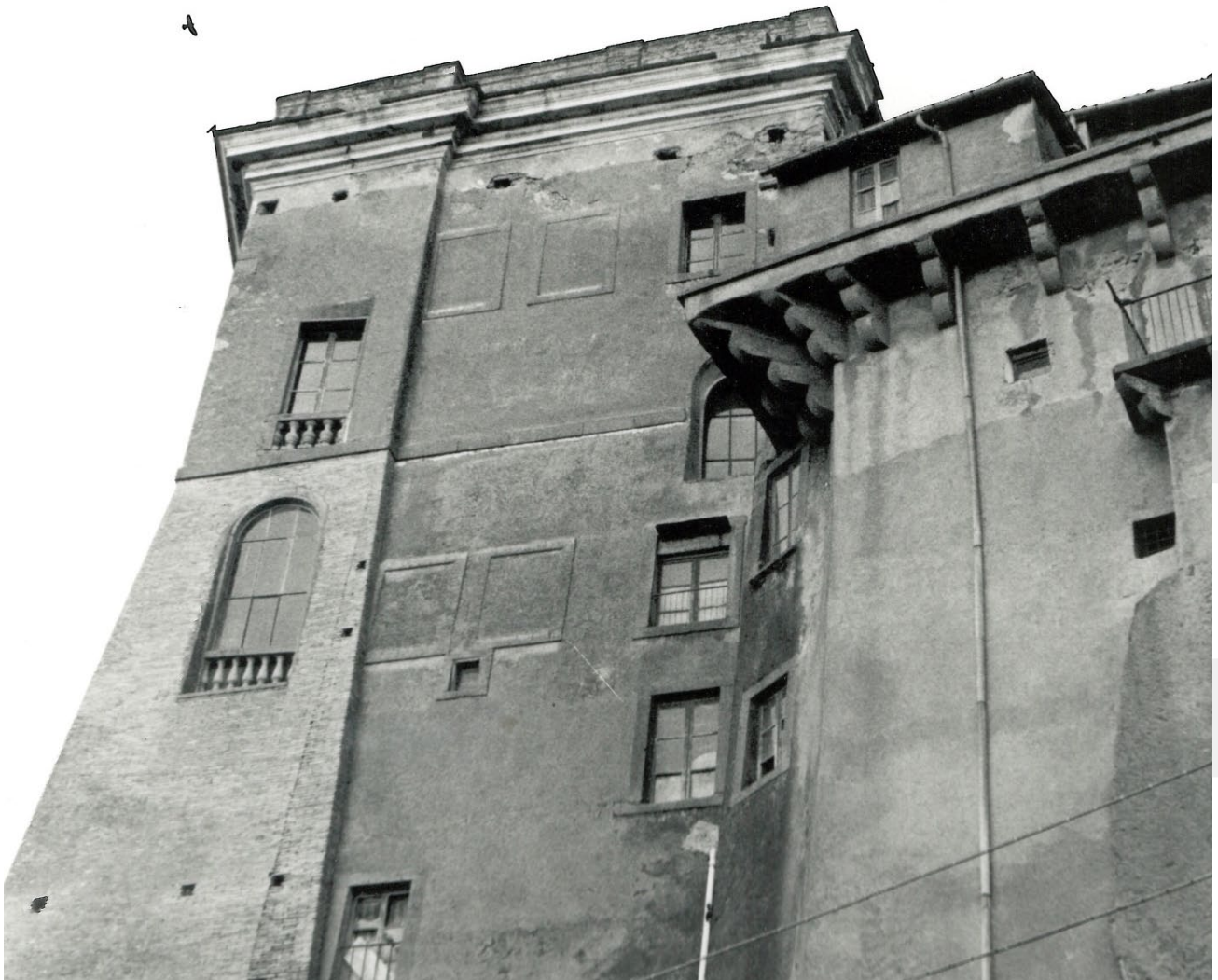
The Baldacchino; David Robert Donatucci

○ Churches and Castles

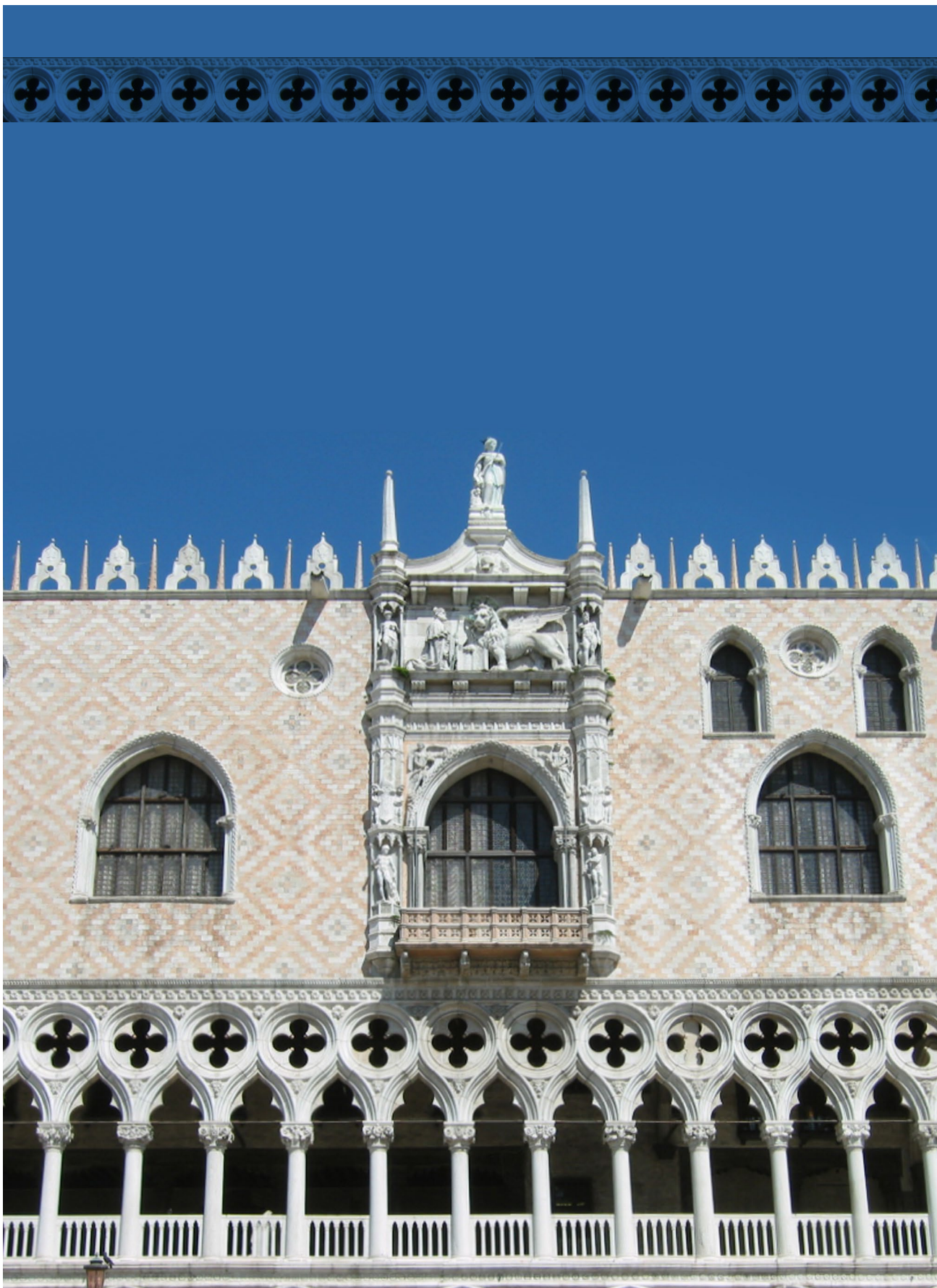
The need to ascend high into the sky with architectural grace became a competition of the ages. Each town in the landscape secured prosperity and reverence with the building of a cathedral or basilica. These projects were dangerous to construct, but the riches from clergy and noblemen ensured a more consistent flow of supplies and manpower. While churches offered salvation to the people, castles offered protection from invading forces. Belfries and watch towers covered the medieval world, and the wealthiest families soon occupied entire sections of town and built palaces that left the world to marvel.



Church at Todi; David Robert Donatucci



Castle Urbino; David Robert Donatucci

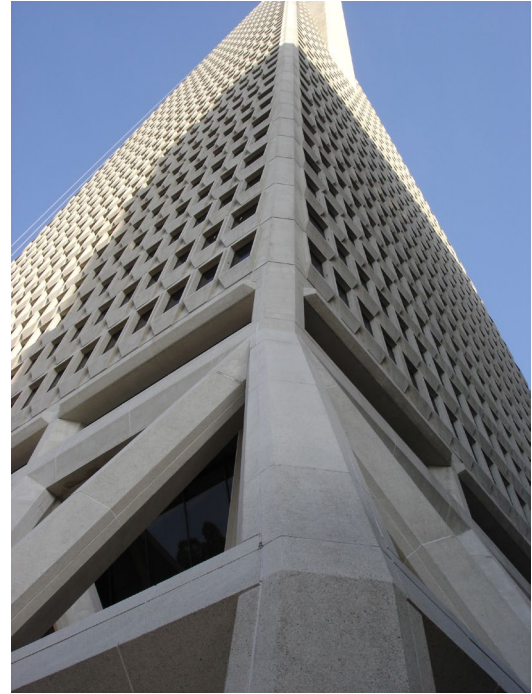


Ducal Palace Venice; David Robert Donatucci

Towers and Statues

The modern era was no different than the times preceding it. Skyscrapers became the new prospect of industry with claims to be the tallest building in the city or even the world. This was sparked by the advent of new materials and building methods at the beginning of the 20th century.

Like the ancients, modern architects also explored monumental sculpture in the form of enormous statues. While the Statue of Liberty was an incredible feat of engineering, it is also one of the most beloved icons the world has known. It became a symbol of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to thousands of immigrants. Spires and monuments have always inspired and will continue to be points in space as a beacon of architectural achievement.



Transamerica Building; Ivo Valentik



Statue of Liberty; David Robert Donatucci



Holocaust Monument Florida; David Robert Donatucci

Technology and Superstructures

Technology is an integral part of architecture, especially when it involves a superstructure or an unconventional design. For years architects have desired to build what many would deem the impossible. The ability to pursue the likes of a Hoover Dam project is a testament to the unyielding efforts of designers and engineers.

Today entire islands are created and entire rivers are diverted thanks to the advancements of technology and the design of megalithic structures.

From the earliest aqueduct to the most recent oil rigs, factories, refineries, and power stations, it is clear that these superstructures will continue to amaze and captivate. Architects are changing the face of the planet with immense projects such as tunnels that stretch across entire seas or bridges that span over giant straights to connect countries and cultures that were once separated for centuries.



Hoover Dam; David Robert Donatucci



Building; David Robert Donatucci

Design, Proportion, and Scale

The main piazza in Venice is considered one of the most beautiful destination spots on earth. The Piazza San Marco, or Saint Mark's Square, offers more than just the grandeur of a beautiful church, a magnificent tower, or an opulent palace: the landmark is a fascinating example of design, proportion, and scale. Upon first glance, the square appears to be a simple rectangular space; however, it is actually narrower at the far end of the basilica and widens as it meets the church façade. It represents some of the finest proportions of architecture in the walls that surround the piazza, but even more fascinating, the scale is something to behold. The open courtyard is of such a scale that when looking down the length one can determine the difference between animal and human, at the larger width one can distinguish between male or female across the distance, and from the shorter width, one can actually identify by face a friend known to them.



Saint Mark's Square; David Robert Donatucci

Articulation

Surfaces in architecture offer a unique opportunity to express various levels of articulation. How the surface of a wall or the façade of a building is detailed can heighten the understanding of its purpose or celebrate the efforts of the craftsmen. Through the use of different shapes or the repetition of particular elements, the surfaces of a structure can be further broken up to present patterns and rhythms within the details of its form. In doing so, the architecture takes on a more tactile presence, which often gives rise to a more sophisticated or playful display of color, texture, light, and shadow. The white, red, and green marble ribbons and patterns used in the construction of the Duomo in Florence achieve a kind of airy magical quality to its incredible scale. The various shaped windows and protrusions seemingly lift the massive cathedral while the ornamentation and geometric design of the details dance across the surface of its walls.

“The various shaped windows and protrusions seemingly lift the massive cathedral...”

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Duomo in Florence; David Robert Donatucci

Materials and Texture

Architecture has long explored different materials to best relate to a site or purpose. From early constructions of stone, wood, brick, and concrete to modern structures of iron, steel, metal, and glass, architects always need to consider the materials with regard to strength and aesthetic appeal. Ancient architecture was focused on materials that offered compressive strength while modern structures also involve tensile strength found in steel and cables.

Each material choice offers a unique textural quality to the surface of a building. Frank Lloyd Wright was so concerned with tying his architecture to the site on which it was built that he used earth from the surrounding site as an aggregate to the cement he used in the making of the Ennis House. To further enhance the texture of his material, he crafted the actual brick forms with a geometric pattern to articulate the façade of his architecture.



David Robert Donatucci

Repetition, Branding, and Appendages

The careful use of repeating forms can certainly add complexity to buildings and surfaces alike. The manner in which details are incorporated can help suggest universal themes or simply accentuate the horizontal or vertical scale of a building.



Detail, Saint Mark's Square; David Robert Donatucci



Arab World Institute Paris; David Robert

The Arab World Institute in Paris offers a delightful array of panels across the entire façade of the structure that controls the light settings within its main reading space. Upon closer examination one finds that these panels are intricate metal apertures that open and close depending on the intensity of outdoor light. It is a clever motif that calls to mind a multitude of eyes that open and close.

The need for branding and advertising has always been present in architecture from the inscriptions above the pantheon or Egyptian tombs to corporate sponsorship of skyscrapers and arenas. How it manifests is yet another component of architecture.

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Pan Am Building; David Robert Donatucci