

nomics (1953) as much as his failure to revisit his critique of John Maynard Keynes. Hayek's critique had not to do, of course, with Friedman's preference for markets and limited government, but rather with his belief that economics could be turned into a rigorously empirical and predictive science. Caldwell notes that while econometric methodology has become far more sophisticated, and game-theoretic models ever more complex, economics' promise to cumulate knowledge about universal laws of human behavior has remained largely unfulfilled. Thus, the highly mathematical and ahistorical turn that academic economics has taken in recent years would have been, for Hayek, as much an abuse of reason as the socialist planning of earlier generations.

Hayek's Challenge is, as its subtitle implies, a purely intellectual biography that seeks to interpret the body of Hayek's written work. One finds virtually no details of Hayek's personal life—why he divorced his wife, or how he reacted to being awarded the Nobel Prize alongside the leftist Gunnar Myrdal. Instead, the book begins with a lengthy and informative intellectual history of Austrian economics, touching on such issues as the debate between Carl Menger and Gustav Schmoller of the German historical school. This exposition is critical to understanding the intellectual milieu in which Hayek studied, as well as interesting in

itself because it anticipates the controversies that continue to divide contemporary positivist social science from more historical and ethnographic approaches to understanding things human.

Caldwell, an economic historian at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, ends his book by plaintively noting that the un-Hayekian agenda of turning economics into a rigorous science has driven all other approaches, including the study of economic history, out of American economics departments. But the damage done by this positivist approach is, in fact, much greater. Economic methodology has colonized political science too, eliminating individuals with knowledge of real peoples, cultures, and history—for example, experts on the Middle East—from the country's top schools. We are thus presented with a rather depressing picture of human progress. Although the particular brand of intellectual hubris that elevated central planning over markets is gone, other forms persist, and indeed have grown stronger. Hayek's challenge remains an open one.

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Cities by Design

*THE NEW CIVIC ART:
Elements of Town Planning.*

By Andrés Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Robert Alminana.
Rizzoli. 384 pp. \$85

Reviewed by Witold Rybczynski

A title such as *The New Civic Art* raises the question, What was the *old* civic art? The answer lies in *The American Vitruvius: An Architects' Handbook of Civic Art* (1922), a 298-page practitioners' atlas of urban design. More than a glossary and less than a primer, *Civic Art*, as it was popularly

known, includes some 1,200 plates—town plans, building plans, diagrams, drawings, sketches, photographs—culled from a multitude of sources. The authors, Werner Hegemann, a German city planner, and Elbert Peets, an American landscape architect, made no attempt to provide a continu-

ous text, so reading *Civic Art* is a bit like leafing through a compendious, wonderfully eclectic scrapbook.

According to Hegemann and Peets, the design of cities—the “civic art” of the title—should reflect a “living heritage from classic, medieval and Renaissance times.” They traced this heritage from Trajan’s Forum in Rome and Renaissance piazzas to famous city spaces such as the Place de la Concorde in Paris and the squares of Madrid, Vienna, and Berlin, and then segued into American examples. When it came to town planning, American architects had traditionally sought inspiration in Europe, especially Paris, where many of them had spent their formative years studying at the École des Beaux-Arts. *Civic Art* showed models closer to home: Jefferson’s magisterial University of Virginia, Frederick Law Olmsted’s plan for the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893, Daniel Burnham’s vision for Chicago, and McKim, Mead & White’s great Municipal Building in New York City.

The same year that Hegemann and Peets published their book, an unknown Swiss architect and painter, Le Corbusier, exhibited his visionary plan to replace parts of Paris with huge, freestanding skyscrapers, producing “a contemporary city for three million.” Le Corbusier had sent his proposal to Hegemann, who responded that it struck him as economically unsound and aesthetically monotonous. But Le Corbusier persevered, and his doctrinaire teachings eventually replaced the more catholic approach of Hegemann’s generation. As urbanism became more and more futuristic and disassociated from the past, learning from history appeared hopelessly old-fashioned. Books such as *Civic Art* languished on library shelves, largely unread. A 1972 edition of *Civic Art* ended up remaindered—which, unexpectedly, led to the book’s second spring.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the failures of urban renewal and modernist planning, as well as the advent of postmodernism, encouraged a revival of interest in the work of early-20th-century town planners. For students and young architects, the inexpensive, remaindered *Civic Art* was a treasure trove of useful information. One of those who discovered tra-

ditional town planning was Andrés Duany, who saw his first copy of *Civic Art* in 1978. In the years that followed, Duany and his wife, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, planned the Florida resort village of Seaside, promoted traditional neighborhood development, cofounded the Congress for a New Urbanism, and became the best-known and most accomplished town planners in the United States.

Now, after more than two decades of practice, Duany and Plater-Zyberk, together with Robert Alminana, are tipping their hats to their forebears. *The New Civic Art* could have been titled *Civic Art II*, for it is not an update but a sequel. Six years in the making, this ambitious project has grown well beyond the size of the original, with more than 1,400 images and 384 pages. Duany and his coauthors have consciously copied *Civic Art*’s encyclopedic format, its international scope, its blending of past and present, and its eclecticism, yet *The New Civic Art* is a manual, not a history book. Duany has described the contents as “anything old or new, good or bad, so long as it’s relevant to today.” Some novel juxtapositions result: the Disney Company’s new town of Celebration, Florida, and the Islamic city of Qairouan in Tunisia; Western Plaza in Washington, D.C., and the Plaza del Toros in Barcelona; Raymond Unwin’s Hampstead Garden suburb outside London and Coral Gables, Florida.

Most readers will discover something here. I learned about the interesting new towns built by the Italian Fascist regime in the 1930s. The Piazza della Vittoria, in Brescia, shows how art deco buildings can be successfully integrated into a medieval urban center. And my favorite photograph is an aerial view of the famous Bauhaus building, designed by Walter Gropius during 1925–26. The modernist icon, usually seen as a sculpture in the round, is shown to have been carefully fitted into the German town of Dessau, facing a central square and bridging the main street leading to the railway station. Who’d have thought?

The plates are accompanied by extended captions, most written by Duany, that range from instructive and provocative to arch and sometimes smarmy. New urbanism is often

attacked for being stylistically retrograde and sentimental about the past. In an apparent attempt to defuse this argument, *The New Civic Art* plumbs a variety of non-traditional architectural sources, including not only Gropius but Alvar Aalto and Louis Kahn, as well as more recent practitioners such as Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, and Rem Koolhaas. The authors even feature a photograph of



A model of the proposed Daniel Libeskind building to be constructed at the World Trade Center site in New York City.

Frank Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim on the jacket, although it is unclear what this expressionist building has to do with civic art, old or new.

Like its predecessor, *The New Civic Art* is about urban design, with the emphasis squarely on design. "Expert design is a necessary element of urbanism," the authors write in the introduction. This sounds obvious, but it bears repeating. Since the 1950s, city planning has become a bureaucratic profession, based on the belief that good plans come from the right policy decisions, tempered by an inclusive public consultation process. The mediocre urban settings that have resulted demonstrate the fallacy of this approach. The correct disposition of buildings to create beautiful urban places, whether streets, civic centers, or public spaces, requires design expertise. Whence comes this expertise? "The methodology of emulating successful models is at the heart of successful design," argue the authors, who contend that good urbanism is derived from historical examples.

But isn't good urban design about originality, innovation, and personal invention? In

the debate about the future of the World Trade Center site, the public has wanted such fireworks. Under planner Daniel Libeskind, the result has been a cacophonous scheme that, even in model form, is confused and confusing. Recently, architectural superstars such as Jean Nouvel and Norman Foster have been tossed in the mix, as if adding individual buildings of striking appear-

ance could save the situation.

The New Civic Art is unequivocal in rejecting this viewpoint. "There is a contradiction between unbridled expression and a viable urban environment," writes Duany. He illustrates this maxim with a view of Nexus World, a new residential project in Fukuoka, Japan. This ambitious development brought together some of the most celebrated architects in the world, among them Pritzker Prize winners Koolhaas of the Netherlands and Christian de Portzamparc of France, as well as Steven Holl of the United States and Arata Isozaki of Japan. The result is a grouping of interesting and unusual buildings that doesn't quite cohere—precisely because the parts are so unusual. "Architects who permit themselves to be assessed primarily as artists usually find themselves ignoring the disciplines and concerns of urbanism," observes Duany in *The New Civic Art*. Libeskind and company should read this book.

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