

## A Deconstructed Andrea Palladio

### Description

*The A+A interview with Peter Eisenman, whose “Palladio Virtuel” exhibit opens on Aug. 20 at the Yale School of Architecture Gallery, concludes today:*

#### **How many projects are covered, and how are they organized? Why?**

There are 20 villas.

If you trace the Palladian villas from the Rotunda to the end one, the Palladian villa goes from the ideal villa to extensions into the landscape. In 60 percent of his work, the main villa body becomes disassociated from its rooms into the landscape, until there's no villa left. Thus the title, “Palladio Virtuel.” That's Peter Eisenman having some fun. It's no villa and all outbuildings.

Our reading of Palladio as the ideal is wrong.

We're showing Palladio himself not following Vitruvian ideals. Palladio began to deconstruct, to disassociate, to transform Vitruvian principles to another ideal. There's a transformation of Roman prototypes. This is what Jefferson did. Not only did Jefferson, but Palladio did it too.

We did 700 drawings, all hand drawn and now on computer. Only a portion is in the 300-page book, due out next spring.

#### **What does all this say about where we are in the evolution of architecture today?**

Architecture is in a terrible state today, because nobody knows what it is. There's a whole new idea – parametrics – where you can take a concept and multiply into an infinite variety.

I make students draw by hand, and make models by hand.

We don't know what architecture is because we don't know what our society is.

#### **Where's the tension in Palladio's work?**

It's a synthesis in the ideal versus the modern dialectic. Breaking apart the ideal into pieces begins in Palladio. After the ideal we get mannerism.

#### **Where did you find the inspiration for an exhibition like this one?**

I was taught by Colin Rowe. We met while teaching at Cambridge. He wrote “The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa.” He stood me in front of a Palladian villa and said: “Tell me something that's there but that you can't see.” We saw *all* these villas in 1960 and '61.

I've been working on it for 10 years. The exhibition corrects: it gives a real Jeffersonian view of

Palladio.

For more on the exhibition, go to [www.architecture.yale.edu/exhibitions](http://www.architecture.yale.edu/exhibitions)

For more on Peter Eisenman, go to <http://www.eisenmanarchitects.com/>

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