

Oxfordshire, John Prichard (1817-86), is mis-spelled as 'Pritchard'; Brittain-Catlin is unable to decide whether William Bonython Moffatt (1812-87) was 'Moffat' or 'Moffatt'; and he does not indicate which Moffatt is being discussed, which is why dates after full names would have helped.

HIPPOLYTE O'TOOLE

BEAUTY, PLEASURE AND CONTRAST

MICHELANGELO, DRAWINGS, AND THE INVENTION OF ARCHITECTURE

By Cammy Brothers. New Haven & London: Yale University Press. 2008. £35

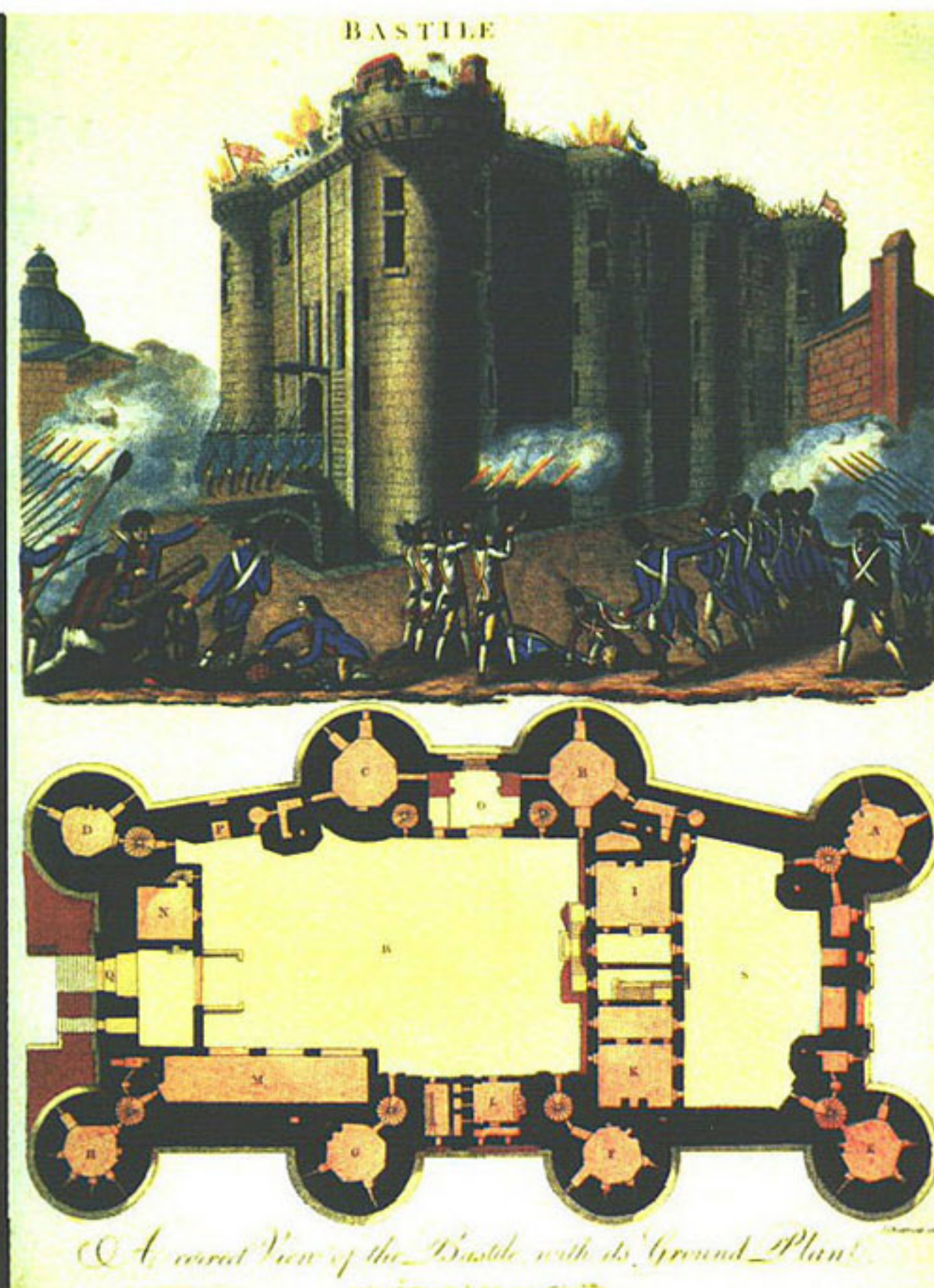
With ravishing illustrations of Michelangelo's drawings, many in colour, and of his buildings, all in black and white, this book argues that, for him, drawing was a mode of thinking which enabled him to turn the flexible drawings of the human figure in his earlier painting and sculpture into his later architecture. The title does not, however, tell us that the book deals with just two works: the Medici Chapel (1519-34) and Laurentian Library (1524-59), both in S Lorenzo, Florence. Thus his great Roman buildings, St Peter's, Palazzo Farnese, Campidoglio, Porta Pia, and S Maria degli Angeli, are all omitted.

Like Raphael and Peruzzi, he came late from painting to architecture, so in his first building, the Medici Chapel, he initially saw architecture as a frame around figures, in common with painters and sculptors. Having overcome this, he moved on in his Laurentian Library, his first architectural project in which the body was not directly represented in painted or sculpted figures. Indeed, architecture is itself the subject of this work, which has no symbolic or allegorical function.

Professor Brothers claims that in the Library staircase vestibule, the sunk columns occupy the position typically reserved for the human figure who 'does not know where to look or how to move'. I share these feelings, agreeing with the late Colin Rowe who said of this astonishing staircase that it 'impedes ascent'. In a key statement, Brothers suggests that its final design may have been generated by a drawing showing the back wall curved as well as a counter proposal in a series of convex circles, 'a modest origin for an architectural invention that has elicited such outlandish descriptions'.

Michelangelo divorced form from function or even the need to represent function, so the columns, oddly recessed behind the wall surface, appear to be decorative and the walls load-bearing, but in fact the reverse is true. He

The hyperbole from Carlton Books in respect of *Lost Buildings*, by Jonathan Glancey, has all the bravura of the non-specialist publisher: 'The leading writer on architectural history takes you on a magical journey to buildings that in reality you never can visit!' Pictured is one such, the Bastille, from an engraving allegedly made in 1798. This suggests the engraver was working from memory since, as the book notes, the building was demolished in 1789. Presumably aimed at the Christmas gift market, this well-illustrated pot-boiler might be just the thing for a relative 'interested' in architecture if they are worth the £30 price, provided their yuletide spirit can survive the dampening effect of the cover, which features the World Trade Center destroyed on 9/11. Cheerier material inside includes, surreally, images of Toad Hall from that old children's favourite, *Wind in the Willows*. Sections headed 'Demolished'; 'Destroyed'; 'Imagined' and 'Reborn', provide scope for almost anything.



inverted the Vitruvian hierarchy of strength, utility, beauty; he put beauty first, while adding the virtue of pleasure from Alberti and the concept of contrast and difficulty from poetry and rhetoric. Not a bad formula.

DAVID WATKIN

MORI POLL

TOSHIKO MORI ARCHITECT

By Matilda McQuaid. The Monacelli Press. 2008. £27.50

This book should not be judged by its cover. The thick grey card certainly offers a clue – yet it is one that proves to be strangely distracting. While it hints at a preoccupation with materials that most certainly characterise the work of this particular architect, its unusual weight and obvious connotations with rugged, industrial packaging seem strangely out of character once the book is opened and the buildings designed by Toshiko Mori scrutinised.

The book, which comes out of that familiar mould of the architectural monograph, provides a glimpse of a wide range of particular projects – houses, shops, exhibitions, civic and educational buildings in North America, Asia and Europe. They not only reveal an intense engagement with materials, but with the creation of spaces defined by light that Michael Hays has eloquently defined as not proceeding 'from theory so much as ... toward new conceptualizations'.

Toshiko Mori's new conceptualisations focus on a sustained series of studies of light and lightness that recalls the inspiration of early Modernists yet avoids slavish copying. However, with these interests it seems hardly surprising that she has been invited to design houses alongside existing buildings by Rudolph, Breuer and Wright, spaces for Issey Miyake and exhibitions like Cooper Hewitt's *Extreme Textiles*.

This book is invaluable for bringing together the body of work of an experienced, imaginative and extremely talented emerging designer. A former chair of architecture at the GSD she has been preoccupied with the education of architects. This has been splendid for architectural education but less rewarding for practice. In that context this book is not only an impressive record of built work but also a fascinating signal of things to come. Construction of several large and complex buildings in New York is under way, including her inspiring competition-winning scheme for a new centre being built at the heart of the remarkable family compound that Wright designed for Darwin Martin in Buffalo. This book offers the reader the promise of experiencing Toshiko Mori's creative consideration of materials and focus on lightness – in spite of its heavy cover.

BRIAN CARTER

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