

From divine to human: the machine celebrated by architecture and music and the everlasting search for Plato

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Abstract

This paper reflects on why and how artists in general, and architects and musicians in particular, stopped following the laws of nature, through natural mimesis, and, after changes introduced in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries - with the Scientific Revolution -, switched to following the laws of the machine, the fruit and contribution of progress. A machine that was now human, in opposition to the previous world machine of antiquity.

It looks at how Renaissance Humanism was, on the one hand, a period that placed major focus on Platonic geometries and highly intellectualised thought, following doctrines based on ideals, and, on the other, was an epoch in which a new paradigm associated with the machine (human invention par excellence) was able to take form.

In addition, it draws a parallel between the emergence of fascination with the machine - fed by the notion of Progress - and a vision of the world as a gigantic machine devoid of Divine intervention.

In this shift towards positivism and functionalism, artists from many fields were also responding to an appeal and a need for an outlook that established a connection to an ideal, eternal world.

Keywords: the idea of progress, machine, platonic geometry, geometrical beauty, Futurism