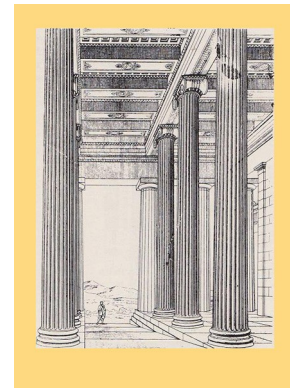


*Arcade*



*Portico*

### Arcades & Porticoes

One of my favorite elements from the history of architecture is an arcade. The technical definition of an arcade is a series of connecting arches raised on columns. Of course the very form of an arch is lovely, a graceful curve spanning between two columns. Combined in a row to make an arcade the columns and arches can bring to mind ceremonial groups such as a line of buglers welcoming a head of state. However what really makes the arcade wondrous to me is the space between the columns, the openings that frame views in both directions. The spaces between the columns can frame views of people walking through an arcade or objects displayed in windows opposite the arcade. Looking from within the arcade views out are magnificently highlighted and contained by the columns and arches. Frequently architects placed arcades next to large open spaces between a group of buildings know by the Italian name of piazza. Arcades have also been inserted inside of buildings to create a private interior space known as a courtyard. Interestingly when an arcade is used on a small scale inside a single building it most often creates a very peaceful private space, that is valued for it's quite and solitude. On the other hand the exact same element , the arcade, when used on a much larger scale, lets say to define a piazza in the heart of a city, in n such situations the arcade then creates a space that can be packed with people and vehicles, and is valued for its life and vitality.

Arcades can work wonders architecturally. Lets say you want to rehabilitate an existing building with an array of mis matched windows and doors, and with worn out siding that looks messy. By adding an arcade in front of the troublesome wall, you can completely disguise the problem windows and siding while at the same time creating a very pleasant and useful covered space for people to use and enjoy. Architects have even varied the spacing of the columns to create the appearance of a regular ordered façade in front of a totally chaotic building.

Porticoes are closely related to arcades, the major difference being the portico substitutes a horizontal beam or roof in the place of an arch. Everything that was said about arcades in terms of framing views and defining edges of spaces applies equally well to the portico. Porticos can also be used to disguise and re furbish old worn out buildings without the need to totally dismantle them and start form scratch.

Some of the most elegant and inviting spaces in the world are defined by arcades and porticos and today they can still add value to any architectural composition.