

Overview

The architects whose narratives about drawing are presented in part II represent a broad range of approaches to architectural ideology and practice. Included are small offices of as few as eight people as well as offices with large corporate practices of over 200 people. Some of the offices have done little building but have published a whole range of drawings in both journals and books. Others have been responsible for the design and realization of many of the skyscrapers that occupy our contemporary urban landscape. The offices represented vary considerably in their organizational ideology: one sees itself as communal in its organization, others view themselves as conventionally corporate; one office prides itself on its self-consciously elite and academic approach to architecture, another is quite unashamedly devoted to design and development. They represent a broad range of architectural and social commitments. Clients served by the various architects also range considerably from working-class community groups to major corporations, from the builder of a small rural school in Portugal to individuals such as Dominique DeMenil.

As a challenge to my own position on drawing, architects noted for their craft-based and participatory approach to design were chosen, as well as a number of firms noted for the inclusion of engineers as partners in design. A narrative from a structural engineer who had worked with a number of the architects interviewed is also offered as another critical perspective on drawing.

Finally, architects from six countries were included to provide a cross-cultural overview and to involve a wide

range of voices. Moreover, the architects participating in the project in various ways represent, I think it is fair to say, a broad range of some of the more important and interesting architectural practices on the contemporary stage. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their generous involvement in the project and for their willingness to participate in a book that, while defining drawing in relation to the notion of control, was a book over which they had no control.

Each narrative is based on an extensive interview edited to capture the voice of the participating architect (represented in boldface type in the book). At the beginning of each interview, three questions were asked. From there on, the architects being interviewed could structure their answers in any way they felt best represented their attitudes to drawing. This process was followed to allow the individuals interviewed the greatest freedom to structure the answers their own way. In some cases, they began to express their views about drawing before questions were asked, and this was also included in the narrative. The multiplicity of ways those interviewed structured their answers is of itself interesting. To see which questions are answered in what order and with what detail provides the reader with another insight into the architects interviewed.

Clearly, the questions asked set out a direction and provided an emphasis that guided the whole discussion. All dialogue must begin somewhere and all beginnings set out

a framework for the discussion that follows. However, because those interviewed were allowed to reframe the questions, and answered only those questions they felt to be important in the order they found interesting, the questions did not rigidly structure the responses.

The questions were:

- (1) What role does drawing play for you in the conceptualization, development, and realization of design?
 - (a) How and when do you use drawings?
 - (b) What types of drawing do you use (e.g., plan, elevation, section, axonometric, perspective, sketch), and when and why in the process of design and realization do you use them?
- (2) What role does drawing play in regard to and what drawings do you use with these various groups or individuals:
 - (a) Clients?
 - (b) Architectural colleagues in your own firm?
 - (c) Architectural colleagues outside your firm?
 - (d) Engineers, builders, etc.?
 - (e) The public?
- (3) Do you use drawings produced by people outside the office (engineers, builders, renderers, perspectivists, etc.)? Whose, when, how, and why?

Along with the general questions, a project was selected by each architect and drawings were chosen to represent the various stages of design from conception through realization. The following were then asked:

- (1) Why was drawing produced in this project?
- (2) When in the process of design?
- (3) By whom?
- (4) Who used the drawing, how did they use it, and for what reasons did they use it?
- (5) When in the design process did they use it?

In some instances, the project architect for the project chosen answered the specific questions about the drawings because it was felt that he or she had a greater familiarity with the overall process or because of the pressure of time on the principal architect.

The projects themselves ranged from drawings for an exhibit in Palermo, Italy, a school in rural Portugal, a health center in London, a major museum, and a community center, through an airport and a series of large and important buildings in London, Frankfurt, and Houston.

If the selection and ordering of poems in a book of poetry reveal the author's poetics, the selection of drawings and their ordering by the various architects participating in this book, in a parallel way, reveal the architects' "architectics." The wealth of drawings for these projects provide the reader (more accurately, the viewer) with a visual panorama on which to ground the various architectural voices. They also provide a rare opportunity to compare, in the same place, a range of drawings from conception through realization of a number of architectural practices; a comparison that in itself should give the reader a better vantage point from which to enter the discourse about drawing and to understand the "architectics" of drawing.



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