

Drawing as Theory

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The majority of contemporary designers and clients are intertwined within a Gordian knot of convention codes regulations and contracts resulting from an economy and legislation that see buildings as commodities rather than architecture. An investment intensive production based on a financially controlled technology, proscribed by corporate sponsorship and support, have worked out diverse construction and developing techniques, which require an abuse of graphic representations and have put an unnecessary burden on the nature of architectural drawings. By confusing data with knowledge and information technology with information, drawings have moved from being design tools to be legal instruments. Consequently, drawings have lost the power of being a carrier of architectural theory. Presentation and construction drawings have become merely tools to force visual matches between buildings and drawings: graphic documents that do not belong to architectural theory but have become legal documents which through the ease of computer drafting has brought this negative condition of drawing to its extreme. The use of electronic paperless drawing boards and similar programs, far from transforming architectural practices, has rigidified the faults of the paper-based era. Drawing is faster, more precise, but in the digital mode, drawings become purely documents of description completely meaningless from an architectural way of thinking. In the computer-graphics field, the imperative aspirations are to render "photo realistic" images that do not imitate human phenomenology of perception, but rather the photographic camera, however there is conceit in describing future artifacts with a micrometric precision that no one of the building trade can actually achieve during their construction. Highly fallacious didactic and design tools, these drawings are annoying and magnify the false traits and deceitful values of graphic architectural expression by concealing in contrived likenesses and simulated accuracy the genuinely ostensive and evocative power of real architectural drawings. These digital drawings by merely mimicking the visual makeup of traditional architectural drawings can communicate only conscious intent and do not perform any mediation. However, since they can be easily altered, paperless drawings cannot be anymore regarded as reliable documents and the buildings do not need to look as the draw-

ings and the drawings can return to be statement of architectural theory that facilitate an understanding of architectural things, concepts, conditions, processes or events in the human world. The representation techniques used can vary from two-dimensional drawings to spatial models (Filarete's *disegno rilevato* in *legname*). These representations can be derived from poetry, songs and dance, since drawings do not just reproduce physical realities, but can also transmit the nature of sacred space and the realms of desire and myth as explored by the inward eye of human imagination. Architects with their drawings will stop pretending to open the doors for the spirit to enter everyday life; on the contrary, finally they will be able again to raise the everyday to a spiritual plane, releasing the spiritual content of physical reality. Judging inference, evaluating probability, attributing causality and assigning truth values through proper electronic drawings, architects can create, or evoke the responses of the unknown others to their buildings. Included in their drawings should be an association and interconnection of culturally empowered images, ideas, situations; the contextual loading of lines, images, structural happenings and tectonic characters; plotting devices; construction markers; rhetorical structures; multi-valence; ambiguous drawings can go back to being statements of architectural theory.

Real architectural drawings are not illustrations, but pure expression of architectural thinking. They are a looking through and feeling through of future, present and past buildings. In these drawings, real architectural knowledge occurs only via the union of subject and object, in a physical-emotional identification with images rather than a purely intellectual examination of concepts. Architectural drawings are drafted in opposition, rather than in accommodation since drawings are neither expression of accession nor articulation of compromise, but something drafted using a critical sense, a sense of being unwilling to accept undemanding *modus operandi* or ready-made procedures, or smooth, ever-so-accommodating confirmations of what the powerful or conventional have to say and what to do. The main task is the effort to break down the stereotypes and reductive categories that are so limiting to human thought and communication.