

ARTICLES

Shaun Murray
Drawing Architecture

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4887-1684>

University of Greenwich

University College London

shaun@eniatype.com

CONTRIBUTOR'S DETAILS

Shaun Murray, ARB, has been the founder and editor-in-chief of the peer-reviewed journal *Design Ecologies* since January 2011. The journal is published in print and online bi-annually through Intellect Books. *Design Ecologies* has been used to develop the field of research ENIAtype. Dr Murray is developing a design research field entitled ENIAtype, which is concerned with the interrelationship of ecological, notational, instructional, and aesthetical types in methodologies of communicating architectural design. The research unpacks the totality or pattern of linkages between drawing architecture and environmental constraints. The focus is on the art of transfer or conveyance from one place to another by simultaneously considering the human body and its surroundings.

Abstract

Can we surpass the representational nature of architecture drawing to consider and discuss the agency of architectural drawing in process and result?

Over the course of three years from 2019, a cohort of architect-drafters, architect-theoreticians and a curator are meeting every six-months in a reflective exchange to discuss the production and exhibition of a collection of drawings and drawing-related artefacts. The varying cast of the bi-annual symposia are participants from US, Canada and Europe including Michael Webb, Perry Kulper, Laura Allen, Bryan Cantley, Nat Chard, Mark Dorrian, Arnaud Hendrickx, William

Menking, Shaun Murray, Anthony Morey, Mark Smout, Neil Spiller, Natalija (Nada) Subotincic, Mark West, Michael Young and Riet Eeckhout.

Surpassing the representational nature of architecture drawing, a group of architects and I consider and discuss the agency of architectural drawing in process and result. Drawing Architecture implies materialising an architecture within the drawing, where it can be sought, found, and experienced. This refers to an action in the present progressive, an action by the author in the process of bringing into the world through drawing, - architectural research through drawing. The artefacts we are looking at are an end in themselves and not a preparatory means to a build environment.

These symposia aim to reveal and come closer to the individual agency of each practice within the drawn discipline of architecture, to establish a way in which we can show this agency in an Exhibition at Montreal Design Centre in August – December 2022. The bi-annual symposium days were structured by round-table conversations and discussions that take place based on drawings or drawing related artefacts brought in by the participants.

In Drawing Architecture session 1 in New York, we had an in-depth introduction of each participant' practice with Michael Webb, Perry Kulper, Bryan Cantley, Nat Chard, Arnaud Hendrickx, William Menking, Shaun Murray, Anthony Morey, Neil Spiller, Natalija (Nada) Subotincic, Mark West, Michael Young and Riet Eeckhout. Participants expanded on their bodies of work, tools, and the nature of the drawing practice.

For Drawing Architecture session 2 in London, we sharpened the conversation between the participants by:

(1) establishing an angle from which we talk through the artefact(s) (drawing or drawing practice related artefact), each participant from the standpoint of their practice.

Angle: Talking through the drawing or drawing practice related artefact, can you expand on the agency of the drawing (practice) within the discipline of architecture?

Questions that might be helpful: 1. How does the drawing work as a tool of investigation (technique of leveraging knowledge). 2. Where and what is the architecture within the resulting drawing/artefact? When is the architecture in the process? Is there architecture within the drawing?

(2) By placing the drawing or artefact central during the symposium talk and organise a group conversation around it. It might be that you bring one or more current drawings/artefacts enabling you to expand on the specific drawing practice investigation.

The artefact might be resolved or unresolved, finished, ongoing or just starting and in the thick of things. The presence of the drawing allows the group to come closer to and understand the agency of the artefact itself, supported by talking us through and unpacking the artefact.

Keywords

Architecture, Drawing, Landscape, Ecology, Context, Field Theory, Cybernetics, Editor, Reader.

Figure 1: Shaun Murray, *The Screen, The Spectrum and the Pendulum, 'Ineffaceable Illuminations', The preliminary 'scaffolding drawing' – a cacophony of ecological notations in featureless space, 2021.*

Introduction

'Nature is an infinite sphere whose centre is everywhere and circumference is nowhere.'

– *Blaise Pascal, Pensées*

My contribution for the 'Drawing Architecture' group was a direct response to my immediate urban and riverine topographies in my local area: the jetties, bridges, riverside pathways, and public spaces of the Thames at Battersea. The drawings aim to connect different parts along the River Thames from Wandsworth Bridge to Chelsea bridge which is a two-mile stretch.

Drawing architecture is about revealing the potential of an idea that is consistent of how we engage with new spaces. Throughout the history of drawing architecture from the ancients to the Middle Ages 'shifts in the use of drawing presaged subsequent changes in the way architecture was produced' (Robbins 1997: 10). In Robbins book entitled 'Why Architects Draw' he state that the architectural drawing could be seen as 'a language in which we can critically understanding of what the drawing is and what role it plays in the creative and communicative processes that architecture entails' (Robbins 1997: 4). The project presented in this article approaches to address drawing as an instrument of necessity towards a full understanding of architectural drawing. (Rawson 1987, Lambert 1984, Blau and Kaufman 1989, Evans 1989, Blomfield 1912, Ching 1985, Zukowsky and Saliga 1982, Gebhard and Nevins 1977, O' Gorman 1986, Porter 1979). The consistent issue with architecture drawings as Robin Evans has argued

when dealing with architectural representation: “Drawing in architecture is not done after nature but prior to construction; it is not so much produced by reflection on the reality outside drawing, as productive of a reality that will end up outside drawing” (Evans 1986: 7). Architecture originally wasn't a taught subject but learnt through practice, by inherently linking architectures to the natural environment through orientation, placement, and scale. Architects developed a particular sense of place and time and knew the vital importance of honouring the primeval forces and fields. Fresh approaches need to emerge that can purposefully 'couple' the relationships between the natural and artificial – an architecture that somehow can be synchronised with the natural forces and fields within our environment, an architecture that can couple with environments at various scales through drawing in architecture.

The series of drawings in this article are entitled 'Ineffaceable Illuminations' which is immersed in a space of uncertain ground and ambiguous depths that focus on the land/ city parks and monuments. The drawings literally 'illuminate' the unable to be erased or forgotten presence to a site's past, present and future and allow architects to act as the editor of situations on the indelible spatial canvas of our environment. Through this series a different spatial balance is set, with chthonic depth and surface perspectives colliding and fusing in a shallower, lower region of the image, to support a greater attention to height: the air, the space of flight, a choreography of levitation, the trajectory of projectiles and aerial constructions. The drawings literally illuminate this choreography of unerasable events as 'fields' (Sheldrake 1981: 12, Sheldrake 1995: 97, McTaggart 2003, Hesse 1961). 'The Field' as Einstein once put it succinctly. 'is the only reality'. (Capra 1991: 319). Through drawing architecture, we can reveal and unpack how we are attached and engaged, indivisible from our world, and our only fundamental truth is that is our relationship with it. The drawings can become the scaffolding for the architecture through the presence of these fields – a revelatory melting away of the discernible ground toward the hidden layers of the landscape across empirical and mythical registers. The drawings incorporate a great complexity and are trying to find ways to represent new things within a process of exploratory mapping and draw forth into visibility through invented visual languages, previously inaccessible data. There are many contradictions in the process which reflect the nature of the critical and professional identities of the architect. The real site is continually visited and researched throughout the drawing process to allow a sense of urgency to communicate the empirical and scientific registers. In many ways the drawing is inhabited as a part of the drawing process where material and immaterial ideas are combined.

Figure 2: Shaun Murray, *The Pendulum*, 'Ineffaceable Illuminations', *The Pendulum over Battersea Bridge* (colour-tagged in cerise) generating a fragile dialectic balance at the centre of the construction, 2021.

Sketching for potential

The starting point of the project was to sketch and draw the daily walks through the park. This constant revisit to sketch on-site, built up a set of sketches that incorporate the experiential, visual, historical, geomorphological, and geophysical study in Battersea Park. The sketches are journeys, they are linear and question the landforms, monuments, and weather. Some sketches become other things, some reside in the sketchbook and don't go anywhere else. Site sketches could become the fragments in the final airbrushed drawings, which are a constant search to find ways to represent things and design a framework of thinking through drawing which is called 'an ecology of mind' or 'mind of ecological settings' (Bateson 1972: xxiii). The drawings strive to discover a set of rules from which we can derive principles about the environment, and the relations between human activity and the environment. To adapt the conclusion of Brian Harley and David Woodward's seminal book entitled *History of Cartography*, space undergoes 'cognitive transformations,' and analysis of it reveals how a 'developing picture of reality – what was actually perceived – was modified' (Harley and Woodward 1987: 504).

Among the influences of this approach were the annotated maps, diagrams and topographic sketches of landscapes made by Alfred Wainwright that make up his *Pictorial Guides to the Lakeland Fells* (1955-66). The striking quality of the *Pictorial Guides*, and of great relevance to my work, through the combination of different techniques of the line, through drawing and writing, on the same page. To follow the Guides, one must become accustomed to a constant shift in the value of the line as it transitions from the delineations of the map view to the contour and hatching of the topographic portrait, to the directional arrows that aide Wainwright's annotations, to the varying status of text, both within and separate from the illustrations. I occupy a similar space of slippage between more conventional, spatial representations.

Like Wainwright, I don't draw as a conclusion in a sketch pad, when I draw, I'm drawing for potential, to think of something becoming something else and letting my imagination develop through the sketchbook. I use moleskine pads for their quality of paper because you can see through it, and I can edit a composition on the next page. The sketch becomes iterative through the sketchbook pages, and I bring things through from one page to the next. The right-hand

page is usually the starting point for something, the left-hand page can be brought through from a previous page. So, what I draw is layered already in the way I work with drawing.

Sketching in architecture is akin to an open and more 'reflexive architecture' (Spiller 2002), one that is in search of physical form, but derived and controlled by the physical stimuli of the environment. Sketching becomes an intermeshing of differentiated local stimuli as control factors for the construction of architectural environments. What matters most in sketching in architecture is not ideas as such but the sketches resonance and suggestions, the drama of the possibilities and impossibilities.

The sketching transforms substantially with the pen and airbrushed acetate layers of the final drawings of what appears to be incommensurable complexity of forms and trajectories. The colour in the final drawings is not coded, it does not bring a system into play, but is colour-tagged parts. Colour as 'tag' is therefore an identifier of the given form and is deployed through an intuitive control of varied transparencies and opacity, in a selective overlapping, masking, slicing, movements of parts and planes between the levels and types. Colour tagging is used in these restless compositions which is informed by the preliminary practice of sketching.

Figure 3: Shaun Murray, Mirror Curtain, 'Ineffaceable Illuminations', A schematic ecology of forms gathering at the north-facing 'screen' of Battersea Park. 2021.

Editor of Situations

Drawing architecture could be viewed as a 'dance of interacting parts' (Bateson 2000: 21) that is always about editing and re-editing situations which are 'pegged down by various sorts of physical limits' (Bateson 2000: 21) and by those limits which environments characteristically impose. Editing a situation in architectural drawings is about making changes to the design as you understand more about the context its histories and futures of the space. It's important to note that drawing architecture is about a specific time when the drawing is being communicated in design and result. Becoming an editor of situations through drawing is about a process of managing uncertainty between context and designing. This relationship is dynamic and time-based, like buildings, in that it constantly being refined and reshaped by the environment and participants in the environment of the drawing. To edit within this relationship is about negotiating and refining decisions or different marks and shapes in the drawing as you discover new information. More than any other artefact drawings in architecture should improve with time

if they're allowed to. To begin a project, I edit the context as I walk through it by sketching, studying, and reflecting on my intellectual level of intuition and active purposefulness from what I discover. I study the context through my experience, its histories, and projected futures to draw and communicate tools for determining the effects of these types of interaction between space, participant, and environment.

Drawing architecture could be seen as 'the emergence of ongoing couplings' (Maturana 2004: 119) with the environment. Gregory Bateson would call it the 'patterns which connects' (Bateson, 2002: 8), and Kiesler would describe this as 'the visible trading posts of integrating and disintegrating forces mutating at low speeds' (Kiesler, 1939: 61).

It is through the determining effects of interaction within the system of varying power that the drawer can become the editor of environments and operate as 'scribes of space' (Goldie 2019). Goldie states 'that space changes throughout history by defining attributes even in paradigmatic ways, not merely types of space, such as cities, parks and built structures' (Goldie 2019: 1). Editing situations in 'space is neither a fact of nature nor the result of material alterations to space itself but instead are bound up with modifications in human understanding, observations, and experience' (Goldie 2019: 2). I consider drawing architecture as a structurally coupled system between drawing and context which I use as a learning system to keep interacting with the environment through the drawing.

Through drawing I believe drawers in architecture can become editors of the situation through the network of ideas from the evolving interrelationships between an architecture drawing, participant, and environment. For example, from positioning yourself within environment within a drawing, as seen in an inhabited sand mandala, we can gain a different understanding of our relationship with this field of relations.

The components of drawing architecture in my practice have a thematic integration of ENIAtype, through context, design, and communication. The relationship between the context and design can be described as the *Editor*, whilst the relationship between the design and communication can be described as the *Reader*. The relationship between context and design is looking towards the coherent qualities between the relationship of drawing architecture, participant and environment within context, design, and communication; to be engaging and become wholly informed in all fields of knowledge and institutions that work with all sources of fieldwork data through the process of constructing our built environment. The role of the editor is to make a

difference between our built environment and us. This would need to be a role that is based on a complex systems approach should contain the following elements:

1. Engage with key processes of existing studies in the environment to be disturbed by the design and link these indicators into field strategies within the design project through its respective ENIAtype, which comprises of ecotype, notational, instructional and aesthetical strands.
2. Apply a response methodology for integrating the constructing effects of the proposal as drivers of change in the states between working drawing, participant and environment through the ENIAtype.
3. Enable the development of a proposal by implementing a dynamic spatial model of the physical processes through the ENIAtype.
4. Design and integrate a dynamic model showing the changes occurring in a target area, whilst interfacing physical and non-physical subsystems through the ENIAtype.

Together, these four elements are important because they relate to major methodological research issues and questions that are faced by transdisciplinary design approaches.

The fact that when architecture can fully exchange information with natural phenomena, with a mutable field of quantum fluctuations, architecture's capabilities for knowledge and communication would be far deeper and more extended than presently understood. It also would blur the boundary lines of our individuality – our very sense of separateness with the built environment.

Figure 4. Shaun Murray, Allusive Figures, 'Ineffaceable Illuminations', Choreographic agents of moulded clay in process, figures that emerge to command and pivot networks of local symmetry within the wider construction. 2021.

Figure 5: Shaun Murray, The Choreographies of Ineffaceable Illuminations, 'Ineffaceable Illuminations', The play of Ineffaceable Illuminations entering from the northeastern limits of the site, an expression of the Thames as the consistent context of human endeavour – industrial, social and cultural. 2021.

Levels/ Types of Communication

A given site for drawing architecture could have many variables that are usually unconsidered in the design of architecture, from the site's geological histories to its everyday social interactions. This idea of developing a drawing language that incorporates 'all that's known' implies the existence of an infinite hierarchy of levels or types. At the lowest level of this hierarchy come the members of the site from the types of ground to types of trees, types of wind, rain, sun. At the next level up, we have classes of members or sets, for example granularity, strength and rigidity of ground, particularities of trees in response to the conditions of the site to wind from weather patterns to moving air currents from a moving body. At the next level, we find 'metaclasses', for example, the class whose members are themselves sets. And so on. The drawings are composed of four layers from foreground to background. Incorporated onto these layers are the codification of a hierarchy of types and levels of the various parts to be considered.

Bateson describes levels of communication as 'the combination of the message' (Bateson 2002:133). Levels of communication have been used in the practice of psychology, sociology, linguistics and anthropology for some time. It has been suggested that the 'levels' of communication provide a way of grouping communication theories, but they inevitably leak from one to the other, or fail to find a group at all. Robert Craig, Communication Theorist, has suggested that there are seven traditions of communication theory including rhetoric, semiotic, phenomenological, cybernetic, socio-psychological and socio-cultural and critical. The interlacing of these levels of communication through drawing, participant and environment, between people and built systems, between built systems and their infrastructures or between these infrastructures and the ecosystem is evident in my practice. A related problem in the evolution of communication between drawing, participant and environment could be understood through Alfred Korzybski's seminal phrase 'the map is not the territory'. For example, the drawing is not the architecture, the environment is not the architecture, the participant is not the architecture and vice versa. Somehow the architecture evolves through the relationship between the levels of communicating the architecture, and hence architecture seems to mediate between all these levels. Bateson could be deemed a pioneer in distinguishing the levels of communicating architecture, which are somehow indeterminate through his realization far ahead of his contemporaries that the primary source of error in ecological design lay in the false presumption of an ability to 'control' and 'manage' ecosystems through quantitative measurement' (Harries-Jones, 1995: 8). We measure architecture on many levels and the current quantitative measurement within working drawings is not the architecture.

From Jakob Johann von Uexküll's *Umwelten* to Rene Thom's Catastrophe Theory, we can distinguish those participants in the built environment have different *umwelten*, even though they share the same environment, for example, every individual has separate needs of the lighting and heating in a building. This is the same for drawing architecture that continuous action on the drawing can produce a discontinuous result when articulated for the architecture in the environment. An example of this can be identified through Bateson's project on the reflexive thermostat. In the model sketched by Bateson, an ecosystem is a common set of communication events. It is built upon a prototype that Bateson called a house thermostat, but was, more properly, a 'reflexive thermostat.' The ecologist, John Todd, in 1978 asked Bateson whether there are possibilities of treating an ecological climax as a set of communication events. Bateson's replied that there are obvious contrasts between the type of events one can call 'communication' in a natural ecosystem and the sort of events that human beings usually refer to when speaking of 'communication'. Bateson suggests that communication needs to be defined exclusively in terms of 'reported' conversations or events. Communication between coupled sub-systems can be said to exist in the more limited sense of 'linkage' in a network of events – as in a network of signals having the values of 'commands'.

Bateson proposed to contrast Howard T. Odum's brother, Eugene Odum's energy-driven model of an ecosystem with an 'entropic model' of an ecosystem. Energy driven models of ecology presume that the planet is some sort of biomachine. The release of energy from biomass drives the cycling of materials in the biosystem. Bateson's model proposes that organisation of information is fundamental to ecosystem survival. He called this the 'entropy economics' of biological forms. (Harries-Jones, 1995: 235)

A feature of the Bateson model is a 'multi-level system' with boundaries or thresholds registering several different types of sub-systems. The types of sub-systems include participants, a physical structure, an energy flux within the house sub-system and a feedback device, which connects to various levels of the system. 'As in real ecosystems, the whole system is linked by feedback loops which rise and fall depending on the succession of events' (Harries-Jones, 1995: 238-240). The different levels are between the house and system, participant and system, system and system. The thermostat is composed of participants; it is reflexive over its various boundaries. The larger system includes its house and residents.

The Bateson model highlights the nature of systemic interaction in ecological organisation and the importance of feedback to the multi-level structure of a holistic system. It also poses interesting questions about feedback as linkages within the system. Finally,

ecological stability is affected by our own understanding of the organisation of stable ecological processes. Only a change in understanding the fittedness of ecological stability will alter a highly organised non-linear ecosystem. It is these communication regularities that we must discover, for it is they, which constitute its structure and form a unity in which we make our home.

There are always five physical layers to my drawing which allow me an exchange of ideas, forms shapes, lines and to redesign back and forth as an open system drawing – to allow drawing to become stoppages in designing ecologies. My practice of drawing has been developed over the past twenty-five years through a network of developing drawing strategies and tactics to help me evolve interrelationships between drawing and context in architectural design. The drawings are composed of five layers which include the matrix, ecotype, notation type, instruction type, aesthetic type.

Background is called the **matrix** of the drawing, something that holds the layers and types to our focus. Even though we often neglect this stepping stone, this element is the principle step that even comes before the composition as it is not a solid object or patch of colour which you must put behind your drawing to support it. Background is the space that surrounds your drawing as Evans describes this layer through Leonardo Da Vinci's work, 'Leonardo was fascinated by maelstrom, deluge, and vortex, destructive forces that overwhelm the order imposed by human agency – an investigation of geometry and the avoidance of it, through layers of pentimenti' (Evans 1995:168). Layers of pentimenti, which is the visible trace of earlier paintings beneath a layer of layers of paint on a canvas, is used on my drawing of architecture through context. The background establishes the territories for opportunities in the drawing.

The **ecotype** has been developed to reveal the shifting relationships of the existing context. Every step in the communication of my architectural drawings is the addition of information to an already existing system. Because this is so, the combinations, harmonies, and discord between successive pieces and layers of information will present many problems and many directions of change in the communication of architecture. The ecology of the projects not only specifies its structural changes; it also specifies *which disturbances from the environment trigger them* as you can never direct a living system you can only disturb it. One is the notion of a architecture existing in the form intended as a result of complex inter-relationship with it, or through it, or on it, where the drawing itself exists in the relationships between things, not the thing themselves. The other is the reflexive space of the drawing itself through cause and action being triggered by the occupant or disturbances in the environment.

The **notation type** is to unpack and denote notations to the rhythm in the outside world, some of self-absorbing intuitive and poetic acting out a battle with the elements. Notations in a architectural drawing are mostly take as given, as a neutral code towards the final design. I aim to challenge and reverse this well-worn assumption to design notations to suit a new vision of how we can communicate our architectures, spatially and experientially, as a scaffolding of an architecture before the building, not to suit the arbitrary specifications of the notation. Notations can be spatial and embedded in our environment – these are called physical notations. Physical notations are incredibly important in understanding how sentient beings perceive their environments, and in mediating the experience of the design towards building. My interests reside in a synthesis that proposes that notations adapt best when constantly refined and reshaped by their occupants, and that architects can mature from being artists of space to becoming artists of time. In the development of form, we should not think of this system of operation in architecture as just a set of changes in the architecture in a particular location, but instead as constancy in the relationship between working drawing and environment.

The **Instruction type** is to reveal the editor of situations as a process of managing uncertainty – the ‘in’, ‘off’ and ‘by’ spaces of the drawing canvas. The blurred edges of a design project are not redefined through a computer screen, but rather through a vast web of relationships. More than any other artefact, drawings can improve with time, if they are allowed to. Drawings can become the space to edit the environment through the reader of the drawing. Drawing forth the idea of drawing being embedded ‘within’ environment, we can begin to describe the event before the architecture as architecture. Through a sequence of prompts or combination of each prompt in a drawing would enable an infinite sequence of spatial notations that could be edited for types of communication – a reflex for future architectures playing as a response to whatever has already occurred or is now occurring. Design is set in motion as a function of what is anticipated or probable – pre-emptive, in a sense, managing uncertainty comes before the changes in the environment, whereas the architecture comes after the changes to the environment.

The **aesthetic type** is to reveal the consequences and outcome of the design depending on the elements involved in the three other layers in the drawing. This layer is to show the reader of the drawing to notice difference between the layers. The *reader* of the drawings is encouraged to describe this relationship through the final composition. Are we as architects reading the reading from our experience of the environment or are we reading the reading of the environment

through a drawing? If neither of the above is true, then how do we communicate our designs a priori to building? A priori to design? A priori to architecture? The action of reading a drawing is about transferring knowledge and encourage discussion and not delude ourselves that we construct the architecture; we merely put readers in place to translate the complexity and beauty of the world.

Coupling of the layers in the drawing is a preparation for construction to broad notions of architectonics, and on the outer limits of the conventions of architectural representation. The drawings are complex and critique of convention and existing architectural construction. The approach of the drawings is not research of some future construction that would add or augment of the present built environment. It is more like a fundamental revision of the act of excavation and divination through drawing, that would provide the preconditions and the deeper knowledges for any genuine 'construction' to happen at all.

Description of this condensation of information is to form a new kind of spatial cartographies and mapping entitled ENIAtype through diachronic and synchronic forces. Diachronic approach considers the development and evolution of the site through time, while the synchronic approach is concerned with something as it exists at that one point in time. The difference between the synchronic and diachronic forces is their focus and viewpoint of study in a particular environment. For example, in the way that how a past geological formation of the site is not present on the immediate ground of the promenade of Battersea Park. The drawings give presence of pasts that are not visually or tacitly evident in the present experience of the site. The drawings map real sites while giving figure to utopic desires. They draw on the empirical and scientific registers of diagramming, but also approach shamanistic intensities of invention, what I term the 'inhabited' drawing processes referencing the Navaho sand mandalas. They deal fastidiously with the embodied and the material whilst invoking an impossible, corporeal liberation from such constraints.

Figure 6: Shaun Murray, *The Screen, The Spectrum and the Pendulum, 'Ineffaceable Illuminations'*, The riverine topography of Battersea Park and Chelsea Bridge, with the totality of colour-tagged parts in dynamic process. 2021.

Context as conclusion

'We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.'

—T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets

Context is important to me, if we are to understand context as the circumstances that form the setting for the architecture to be fully understood, then drawing architecture surely must be open and reflexive with the inclusion of time in process and result. Context as a conclusion to the final drawing is a process in which it is designed as a reflexive response to its specific site over a specific period. The architecture should have a particular set of values that incorporate not only the immediate but the wider context in the design. Stretching the vocabulary of the drawing and communication of architecture is about including context as all its qualities. I work with photographs of the site context to develop the drawings and the background to the layers in the drawing is directly related to the photographed element. The reediting of the background or foundation of the drawing from the photograph is about my engagement with the context. To edit the context and privilege certain things that I want to design a relationship with and begin to manifest an architecture through.

I live next to the river and all the drawings that I have done recently are on that site that I visit every day. It is my regular shopping route, walking route, running route. Sketching is about seeing things through different lenses, different angles, different times of the day. I usually run in the morning before breakfast then I draw. It is about trying to capture that moment of moving past something or through something all the time. Sketching is to propose propositions that allude to parts that are real and draw you in rather than gestural. Airbrushing for potential in the final drawings is an ineffaceable technique of drawing architecture always going forward and unable to erase the past.

Construction of the drawing is the editor of situations and contains a speculative hope for a future that the drawings seek to bring closer and establish the conditions for and initiate a move toward a form of construction from within the drawing process itself. At an advanced stage in the evolution of the drawing forms I begin a phase of three-dimensional modelling. These could be said to perform a kind of reification of the play of abstraction within the drawings toward something more solid and artefact-like. Not so much a selection of a particular moment or detail from within the drawings, but something more akin to a distillation from its totality. The modelling aims to create a three-dimensional agent born of the new abstract space created in the drawings. It facilitates a slow performance of breaking the frame of representation in a radical

sense: not simply a movement from the picture plane to the three-dimensional object, but the creation of a choreographic agent that *stands in* for a future of 'construction' and of the material transformation of the external reality.

In terms of levels and types of communication I have been trying to be open and honest from when I visit a site and about what you're doing there. Because I think that when you produce drawings, you feel like you're a part of it in a weird way and you get sensitive whenever you do anything good or bad, you always think it's not very good. And so, the collaboration between drawing, context and environment through your experience is that feeling that there's an aim and an opportunity and a way for people to see it.

The drawings are trying to describe in words something which is kind of indescribable because it involves their relationship to words — for example, considering a rock face as a rock climber. Words and drawings are two separate things. The drawing is much more inhabited through its layers where I compose things as I move through them. The drawing starts to rethink what is below the ground through ideas of exhuming things from below the river Thames, above the river Thames and thinking about how we can construct things as a way of manifesting that tentative relationship between the above and below. So, it is kind of a delicate dance of interacting parts — it is always about editing; you are the editor of situations, and you are not the director of anything. Editing and privileging things while you are thinking. Even in the design of buildings, I am editing to get the best possible result out of a whole range of possibilities.

Through conversations about the work, I gain more clarity about the drawing itself. And that clarity allows me to be strategic and think specifically about what I'm doing. I've never put objects in drawings before physically. It is an outcome of a conversation because I was talking about it more. I was talking about this idea of architecture as a non-primed canvas as being the starting point of drawing — even though that looks ultimately quite detailed and complex — thinking that we're dealing with this constant residual as a starting point. I'm always trying to give everyone my full vocabulary, even though it sounds absurd. And that changes me because it's about feeling what people like or just how they put it. I suppose that makes me want to move forward with that and change maybe the rhythm or the way I'm working.

The photograph is sometimes the result of the drawing is the drawing. The photograph is what everyone else gets to see, but that's a construction in of itself. And how you do it and when you do it and where you do it and what time you do it. So, the physicality of the photograph is very

different because it's flat, because I use a cheap iPhone. So, the photograph appears very flat, and I don't mind the flatness. I'm a bit more carefree about taking the photograph in a way, because it's kind of thinking of a studio, like, maybe you should take that in the back garden when the sun swings around. But there is agency there because of the light and the contrast. And depending what time of year, I like light to literally be direct onto the canvas and I'm taking a photograph because it produces... the colours just become a lot more vibrant, and I'm not interested in taking it in a studio. Sometimes if you move a couple of steps back from where I'm taking photographs, it's the drawing placed in a car park somewhere on a chair that I eventually frame. So, you don't see the world around it, which I think is quite nice.

The drawings change colour depending on what season it is or what the park's looking like when I'm going through it or the river. I don't take photographs in a room, but when I go for walks, I do. And then use them as guiding things.

The drawing process is analogue, and time based, and I suppose the drawings are the collapse of that in time and in scale and it's about seeding and reseeded ideas. And then the drawing takes time, like sometimes a long time when I'm teaching or whatever, when I'm focused on other things. Then you make different decisions as you go along because you need to get re-excited about your work.

So, the reason why I'm making physical objects now is because the drawing wasn't offering anything more in terms of colours and the layers and the lines. And now I've created these little figurines that are dancing between the sheets, like fairies at the bottom of the garden that are kind of fragments of parts. It's like designing a tool which becomes part of the drawing, and that is like little things that are kind of dancing. And I want to put them in the drawing rather than having them as a separate thing. Sometimes I would make them and then photograph them in their context or a similar type of context. But now I'm thinking the drawing is the context for these little figurines to dance about.

It's important to consider in drawing architecture of How do you bring things forth? Why do they take that form? What it does? What does it refer to? Where is it going?

References

Bateson, G. 1972. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, New York: Ballantine Books.

Bateson, Gregory. 2002, *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*, Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Blau, E., and Kaufman, E. 1989. *Architecture and its Image*. Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal, and MIT Press, Cambridge.

Blomfield, J. 1912. *Architectural Drawing and Draftsmen*. Cassel and Company, New York.

Capra, F. 1991. *The Tao of Physics: An Explanation of the Parallel Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism*. London: Flamingo

Ching, F. 1985. *Architectural Drawing*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York.

Elliot, T.S. 1949. "Little Gidding," *Four Quartets*. Gardners Books; Main edition, April 30, 2001, Originally published 1943.

Evans, R. 1986. "Translation from Drawing to Building." *AA Files*, no. 12:3-18. Architectural Association, London.

Evans, R. 1989. "Architectural Projection." In Blau and Kaufman (1989):18-35.

Evans, R. 1995. *The Projective Cast: Architecture and its Three Geometries*, Mass: MIT Press.

Gebhard, D., and Nevins, D. 1977. *200 Years of Architectural Drawing*. Whitney Library of Design, New York.

Goldie, M. B. 2019. *Scribe of Space: Place in the Middle English Literature and Late Medieval Science*. Cornell University Press

Harries-Jones, P. 1995, *A Recursive Vision: Ecological Understanding and Gregory Bateson*, London: University of Toronto Press.

Harley, B. Woodward, D. 1987. *The History of Cartography, Vol 1, Cartographies in Prehistoric, Ancient and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hesse, M. B. 1961, *Forces and Fields*, London: Nelson.

Kiesler, Frederick. 1939, 'On Correalism and Biotechnique: A Definition and Test of New Approach to Building Design', *The Architectural Record*. pp. 60-75.

Lambert, S. 1984. *Reading Drawings: An Introduction to Looking at Drawings*. Pantheon Books, New York.

Maturana, Humberto R. 2004, *From Being to Doing: The Origins of the Biology of Cognition*, Verlag: Carl-Auer.

Mc Taggart, L. 2003. *The Field*. London: HarperCollins Publishers.

O'Gorman, J. 1986. *Drawing Towards Building*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

Porter, T. 1979. *How Architects Visualise*. Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York.

Rawson, P. 1987. *Drawing*. 2nd ed. University of Pennsylvania Press. Philadelphia.

Robbins, E. 1997. *Why Architects Draw*. Cambridge Mass., and London: MIT Press.

Sheldrake, R. 1981, *A New Science of Life: The Hypothesis of Morphic Resonance*, London: Blond and Briggs.

Sheldrake, R. 1995. *Presence of The Past*. Park Street Press, Vermont.

Spiller, Neil. 2002, 'Reflexive Architecture.' *Architectural Design*, Volume 72 No 3 February.

Wainwright, A. 1955-66. *A Pictorial Guide to the Lakeland Fells*, Westmorland Gazette Publishers and Printers (Kendall).

Zukowsk, J., and Saliga, P. 1982. *Chicago Architects Design: A Century of Architectural Drawings from the Art Institute of Chicago*. Rizzoli International, New York.

Figures

Shaun Murray has asserted their right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as the author of this work in the format that was submitted to Intellect Ltd.