

REALIZING REPRESENTATION

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Realizing Representation is a piece of research by design that unfolds through a two part investigation. Partly design-based in a tangible and metaphoric instrumentalization of the architectural drawing's picture plane and partly a written and analytical investigation, which criticizes the conventional relation between representation and realization.

The project addresses the relation between representation and realization in the context of architecture and visual art. This consideration is approached through a critical reflection on the role of the representation in architectural design, and is specifically provoked by an often unchallenged assumption of the architectural drawing as belonging to a class or secondary corner of reality separated from its more substantial realization in the spatially concrete and stable building by an insurmountable divide. In the dissertation such an understanding of the role of the representation as being unambiguously a model for a subsequent realization is seen reductive. The project attempts to instrumentalize sensibilities related to body and touch: concepts and actions that by their elusiveness are without symbol, scale or unit of measure familiar to architectural drawing since the tools and conventions of the architectural practice and epistemology that only with difficulty manage to inspect and instrumentalize the values of such phenomena.

A corresponding critique addresses the preference for geometrically unambiguous forms of representation in the practice of architecture. This preference is seen as part of a visual hegemony bound by conventions that prescribe and influence how architecture and buildings take form through the tools of the drawing but also partakes as a visual regime that dictates the visual apparatus' registration of reality. To counter this the

dissertation focuses on processes, techniques, and works of art where the relation between representation and realization is present in a tangible and ambiguous complexity.

The project develops these considerations in a two-part research approach where the interaction between design, text-based analysis, and reflection illuminates each other. The design takes place through a number of sub investigations. First in drawing, then in photography, these investigations explore the subject of the project through various design and representational techniques. An off spring of the design process is the accumulation of different understandings of the dissertation's drawings where the changing optics impregnates the drawings with a fundamental ambiguity and vibration of meaning.

The analytic part develops and discusses the topic of the dissertation through studies of specific works of art and architecture and related phenomena in a broad historic perspective with focus on the relation between representation, depth, and the body as an active component in the process of drawing. The layout of the written part of the dissertation reflects the discourse and reflective approach in the juxtaposition of a parallel and consecutive image- and text-part.

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METHOD

The project is inscribed in a tradition similar to *research by architectural design*[1] where research interest emerges and working method is decided upon, invented and adapted according to the need and interest unfolded through design-based investigations. This holds the complication, or particular potential, that the investigation addressed at the drawing as architecture's fundamental media happens through the drawn media itself, in an attempt to reconsider and criticize the conventional tools and forms of projection from within.

The methodological optics of the dissertation can be seen to distance itself from the topic it aims to investigate. Partly by the subversion, challenge, and reinvention of the form and tools of drawing, and partly by insisting that the instrument to measure and calibrate the drawing is itself a drawing.

The proposal to investigate drawing through a process of drawing appears paradoxical but turns out, in the design-part of the dissertation, to be less contradictory than this discussion suggests. The reason being that the dissertation's investigation of the architectural drawing aims at unfolding the idea of drawing and to reconsider it through an idiosyncratic working method. Thus the drawing and its process are not mainly targets for analytic and articulated discourse—that from the perspective of a

conventional research approach presumably is compromised by the drawing being scale and measurement to itself, but an attempt to map, stage, and cast the architectural drawing in the role where it approaches a disengagement from its conventional use as a tool concerned mainly with visual representation. As such the research field of the dissertation is assign an area where the work method is investigative and inquiring before it attempts to define a problem and address it as in need of a solution.

CRITIQUE

The dissertation finds its theoretical point of departure by criticising the role of the picture plane in architectural drawing and representational practice where the picture plane's unappreciated presence and submissive absence of intention in general and specifically its generic design and mute acceptance in the geometrically defined linear perspective, renders it visually invisible and functionally unappreciated; seen as nothing more than a necessary backdrop.[2]

A more general critique is addressed at the practice of architectural drawing: architecture happens as we are present and experience it, but little in the drawing process yields justice to the sensual presence in the in drawing contrasts the experience of built space since the main function of the drawing is assumed to be the visualization and prescription of the final work. It thus becomes an intention to examine and destabilize the conventionally accepted cleavage, which the architectural methods of drawing and projection sustains between the drawing's representation and the drawings realization in a built state.

The traditional disciplines of drawings associated with architecture are optimized to process ideas related to scale and form. They support and sustain a mode of thinking that focuses on visual characteristics. Following this experience I argue that the methods of projective drawing thereby disregard the investigation of time and space and turn them into a static process. The potentials and directions of the drawing are predefined; prescribed in the drawing's instruments and methods in a way that assists in confining the area of thought to an extent that is unsuitable in the attempt to investigate and construct an architecture and a space concerned with ideas and sensibilities on the periphery to the visual on their way toward a statement regarding a haptic architecture.

I am not concerned with the fiction of architectural drawing's impartiality but with the experience of the drawing method's ideological currents that outlines a specific field as belonging to and delineating architecture as well as a particular mental horizon. This favours spatial and social phenomena that translate well into metric and visual units and thus do without those particularly enjoyable and attractive both subtle and

indeterminate characteristics overruled in the crudeness of such a conversion.

DRAWING

The dissertation engages in the actual depth of the drawing, which becomes active and tangible through manipulation of the curvature of the drawing's picture plane. The picture plane is mediating and instrumental in reducing the gap between representation and realization as a result of the picture plane's particular adaptation to an idea related to body, touch, and the mechanism of association that hinges represented depth and metric distance.

The concrete and conceptual tools of drawing thus become of particular interest. They manifest tangible consequences of conventions of architectural drawing and projection. In this tangible incarnation the conventions are seen to be available for a design based manipulation and subversion.

The tools of architectural drawing are something actual to push off from in the investigation of the drawing's potential to distance itself from the accepted convention that architectural drawing always refers to a realization that encompasses a reality of a more substantial and dominant quality than the experience of the drawing itself: that which can be called architecture's representational yoke.

The drawing, which seduces the spectator into its indeterminate but recognizable landscape, that simultaneously veils and exposes itself. The construction of the partly indeterminate drawing is part of a study that seeks to activate and operationalize the associative mechanism of the spectator.

The study attempts to connect the spectator's projection into depth and narrative of the drawing with a seductive mechanism similar to that of the erotic mechanism.[3] Herein the erotic is understood as the desire and longing for meaning and significance.

The erotic comes in two categories: as an abstract idea connected to the motion that in its veiling simultaneously reveals part of itself and thereby further ignites a desire for its elusive and ephemeral appearance, and as a tangible phenomenon linked to bodily fascination and longing.

The design part addresses the production of meaning and presence in a drawing that consists mainly of points of connection made to facilitate and provoke the association of meaning and the ascription of meaning through reconsideration. From this originates an idea of the connection between the spectator's projection into the partly determinate and an instrumentalization of the erotic mechanism.

It becomes a quandary whether the indeterminate is an interest in itself: instrumental in the reconsideration of the familiar by reopening its meaning and significance, or if the ambiguous and indeterminate are mainly tools to involve the spectator with the intention to see his associative projection as a catalyst for the meaning that is only suggested in the picture plane of the drawing.

PHOTOGRAPHY

A consideration in the dissertation is how the drawing and its content become intimately present and gain significance—how the perception of an object begins to correspond to that of a body that reacts upon reality with a mixture of disgust and desire.

The reconsideration of the dissertation's drawings depends mainly on the perspectival fixation and the spatial and temporal cropping that follows from photographic registration. Photography has particular stubbornness that impregnates the drawings with new meaning. Through the mediation of the photography thus comes an attempt to stage the drawings as bodies, and is if they are loaded with a meaning that goes beyond and below but is provoked singularly by the ornamentation in the surface of the picture plane.

The document published as part of the dissertation has two parallel elements. One track shows text accompanied by small illustrations. The other consists of drawings and photographs from the dissertation's design track. The text contains several attempts to articulate and present various perspectives on how the drawing is used to investigate itself. The images in the design track show the drawings in different states and setups. The intention is to establish a consecutive connection between text, illustrations, photographs, and drawings from the dissertation's design production in order for them to illuminate each other through relations of proximities.

The two tracks are separated and the discourse rarely address concrete examples from the dissertation's design production. This is to avoid interpretations that risk leaving the drawings uncovered and essentially less. The intention is to allow the reader the choice to establish idiosyncratic connections among the discussion in the text and the tangible production. The use of the spectator as a catalyst for the meaning of the dissertation's drawings is thus at the expense of articulated reflection and knowledge related to exact verbal description of the work conducted in the dissertation's design track.

The material laid forth through examples and quotations in the dissertation's written track documents that the understanding that I expose the architectural drawing to, exists within theory and pictorial art.

If the text track can be said to have a defined aim, it is to document this resonance between the dissertation's tangible production and similar ideas, phenomena, and works within art and architectural theory.

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[1] Further information on research by architectural design as an academically sanctioned programme:
http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/research/architecture/mphil_phd.htm.

[2] The critique of the picture planes conventional application in Realizing Representation is supported by literary critique from theoretics as Jonathan Crary, Robin Evans, Jerzy Rozenberg and Jonathan Hill while sources for the tangible encounter with the idea of the rectangular, flat and submissive picture plane is located in works of art and essays from architects and pictorial artists such as Nat Chard, Yves Klein, Robert Irwin and David Hockney.

[3] The understanding of the erotic in the dissertation is influenced by the writings and image analysis of the philosopher Georges Bataille in The Tears of Eros (1961) and by the analysis of classic Greek poetry by the poet and essayist Anne Carson in Eros the Bittersweet (1986), in which Carson gives a model for erotic triangulation that encapsulates desire and eroticism in an apparently abstract mechanism far from the body.