



What is your contemporary and future practice of drawing as the essential tool of communication, investigation, and representation? → 1

What is your academic/pedagogical approach compared to your applied/professional attitude of drawing? → 2

What role does your drawing play according to your thinking and acting? → 3

Monika  
Annen Fig. 122

Architect and curator at BALTSprojects in Zurich.

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1

Two years ago, we discovered the work of the Hungarian-Swiss architect Elemér Zalotay. Zalotay's drawings are direct, immediate, and precise despite the abundance of information, and they reflect the evolution of an architect's life and work. The idea of light, low-cost megastructures occupied Elemér Zalotay all his life. As he could not realize any of these projects, the more insistently he drew them. His drawings were always an expression of a search for harmony between technology and nature. Perhaps, for this reason, they seem like messages for the erection of a kind of bio-idyllic cathedral of the twentieth/twenty-first centuries.

ments to a certain concept. At the same time, however, drawings are also an attestation of insight and knowledge and a means of communication.

## Raphaëlle Golaz

Fig. 125

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1

My practice has become more and more connected to visual arts, with a specific interest in the human body. As an architect, I find it is essential to place the human being at the heart of the process. The main challenge is to observe how people occupy, sense, and move in space.

I like to draw and work with a human scale in order to understand the dimension of things. For example, when we go outside with the students to study a building, we use our bodies as a measuring tool. We walk a lot—counting steps, for instance—and experience the environment with our senses.

It arouses our ability to better understand where we are, to “embody” the object, and to represent it in a direct and spontaneous drawing gesture. When we find this state, then we are totally present and ready to communicate.

“What is meant to be seen (on a page) will surface, now or at some point, through some hand, somewhere.” Kelvy Bird

2

In both my teaching approach and applied practice I strive to enlarge the scope of experiences through the realms of thinking and feeling.

I like to draw ideas from painters who open three dimensions with colors, from minimal artists who play with perception, from the aesthetic of certain filmmakers, and from the movement of dancers who transmit their communicative energy.

Like breathing in and breathing out, it is a movement between the inside and the outside.

Whatever the object of study, analysis always comes first. Usually this stage results in a set of black-and-white line sketches in pencil or ink. These are often technical observations that can be used as a personal memory aid or shared with others. We then can continue to expand the research by exploring, as if in an open site. I encourage students to develop awareness and curiosity, to share their own universe and their own interpretations.

Drawing becomes a means of learning by doing. Students experiment and compose with a wide variety of materials, formats, and techniques to learn different modes of expression. The use of color is introduced to convey the atmosphere related to mood and emotion, allowing students to discover and perceive with their own sensitivity to better communicate.

3

To draw is to be present.

The practice of drawing and painting helps me to focus. It is a way to incorporate the world around me. It is a movement that connects the mind to the gesture and reflects the energy that transits through the here and now. It is a spontaneous act that leaves no room for the superfluous. It must be essential and imperfect, like an impulse. Otherwise everything freezes.

In this sense, I find there are many similarities with architectural issues.

Architecture is to move into space. Drawing is to move onto a piece of paper.

Both practices explore the living and poetical space by playing with color, light, and composition in an essential attempt to keep the flow and bring together the inner and the outer worlds.

## Ludovica Molo

Fig. 126

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1  
I don't draw anymore.  
I fill up sketchbooks with words.  
Sketchbooks everywhere.  
Words like sketches.  
A forest of words.  
In sentences, all alone, with dots,  
with arrows  
looking for an order  
or for freedom.  
Whenever I look back at them, I  
remember the search—hunger and fear.  
And I feel at peace.

2  
I don't draw.  
But I need sections and plans to  
imagine a space  
Maps to grasp a territory  
Diagrams to understand how the world  
works.  
I love reading images, and I couldn't  
talk about a project without  
drawings.

3  
I don't draw, but whenever I draw  
it is to explore the space between  
the earth and the sky in section  
how architecture touches the ground  
it is to investigate the movement  
streams in plan  
how the users can take possession of  
a place and make it their own.  
I believe in an architecture which  
is rooted into the earth and gives  
shelter to those who inhabit it.

## Lucia Pennati

Fig. 127

Doctoral assistant at the Università della Svizzera italiana – Accademia di architettura in Mendrisio.  
Architect in Zurich.

1  
As a trained architect, I have learned to work with drawings, convey ideas through graphic means, and choose the appropriate style of representation. More recently, I embarked on a PhD in architectural history, where drawings shifted from a subjective means of expression to objects of observation and reflection. In the archive, in the concrete estate of the architect and ETH professor Dolf Schnebli (1928–2009), I search for drawings, analyze, study, and sometimes redraw them. In my research, drawings are objects of investigation and evidence for historical

narratives; I examine drawings to find arguments and inconsistencies. Since “there is no writing before reading in architectural practice,”<sup>1</sup> I study and read drawings before making arguments.

1) Elke Couchez, “Architects Who Read, I LAUD and Reading as Direct Experience,” in *The Hybrid Practitioner: Building, Teaching, Researching Architecture*, ed. Caroline Voet, Eireen Schreurs and Helen Thomas, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2022), 95–109, here 106.

2  
In Schnebli's estate at the gta Institute of ETH Zurich, I face the distributed presence of drawings, the reappearance of similar motifs in different collections, the recurrence of particular themes, the irony of daily sketches, and the quantity of technical and executive architectural drawings. As one would expect in an architect's archive, drawings form the principal documentary presence in Schnebli's estate. Within my professional attitude as an historian, I consider them as “ways of recording, storing, and retrieving thoughts and systems of knowledge that exceed the finitude of any single individual life.”<sup>2</sup> Considering the role that drawings played in “the formation of an architect's visual memory,”<sup>3</sup> I attempt to define the network of ideas at stake when developing and enforcing a specific concept. In my practice as an architect, I have experienced that design decisions can be documented through the development of sketches and drawings. On the other hand, I counter the absence of these preliminary drawings in Schnebli's archive by remapping contexts and creating a discourse based on the existing tangible drawings. Archival materials, especially when considered in distributed networks, provide a new way to craft history.<sup>4</sup> Following Yaneva's proposition, the concrete materiality of archival drawings—different from the case of digital archives—allows me to make connections and extract new knowledge through their display on the archive table, next to one another. Discarding the traditional linear understanding of the development of the architectural drawings—from the preliminary sketch to the executive detail plan—I bounce from drawings intended as an act of registering to drawings as a continuous attempt at design solutions and definitive working plans.

2) Zeynep Çelik Alexander and John May (eds.), *Design Technics: Archaeologies of Architectural Practice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 227.