

Elementary Observations on Drawing*

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The relationship between drawing and architecture is one of the historical issues of the *art of building*. Considered by some historians, critics and architects as a simple tool, it is, however, regarded by other scholars and designers as a much more complex area, to the point that it would not be possible to write a history of architecture while eliminating the results of this graphic exercise. Many works which have remained on the drawing board are, in fact, milestones necessary for describing the significance of a period in the history of architecture which, if it were illustrated only by the buildings that were actually constructed, would not be able to reveal the fabric of the ideas being confronted at the time. To better understand this statement, I would like to immediately clarify that, although it is true that architectural

drawing has construction as its primary outcome, it is equally true that this objective involves the execution of a large number of different kinds of drawings each of which, besides their value in relation to architecture, can also have, as will be discussed later, a series of cognitive and aesthetic contents that present the graphic work as a complex work, not rarely a work of art. This expressive dimension should be evident while it is, in fact, as was said at the beginning, the object of a historical controversy in which those who do not attribute an intrinsic meaning, unrelated to a constructive result, to architectural drawing, oppose those who do recognize it. In the following notes, this matter will be entered into, in order to more fully understand the nature and contents of the graphic exercise for architecture, in addition to the par-

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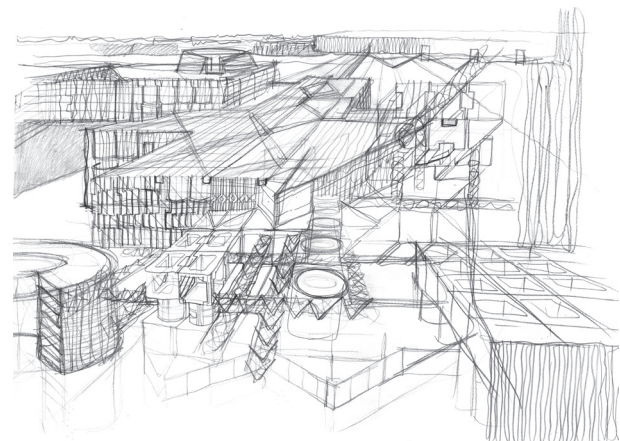
ticular issues of this endless dispute. Even though I am here anticipating something that I will focus on later, it should be said that, as a whole, drawing is a *text made of texts*, each of which is specific to the design process. This plural structure of drawing gives it, as Manfredo Tafuri stated in a well-known conference in Parma in 1980 organized by Arturo Carlo Quintavalle, an *ambiguous* character produced by the stratification and interference of the various contents proposed by all of the graphic texts. From the points outlined in this premise I will try to demonstrate, in all their amplitude, the problems related to the relationship between architecture and drawing, with the intention of outlining a sort of map of the central issues that have marked and that still govern this founding relationship today. Lastly, I would like to point out that every architect has several ways of making projectural choices, all legitimate. One can start from an empirical method, making one attempt after another, working on examples to be reworked. It is possible to strictly follow a theoretical path, as well as hybridizing architecture with other forms of knowledge, such as sociology, among others. Some architects prefer to experiment through a series of models, while others prefer to work on neo-functional themes or to adopt parametric methods. As far as I'm concerned, I chose drawing at the very beginning of my studies since, in my opinion, it is the most complex cognitive and creative space in which all the just-mentioned directions of research can be comprised.

A contradiction

While it is true that Italian architecture presents, throughout its history, an intense and constant relationship between the compositional and constructive exercise and drawing—a relationship documented by a vast tradition of treatises—it is also true that for many reasons, there does not seem to exist, especially in regard to modern and contemporary architecture, an equally continuous interest for this fundamental relationship by those who actively follow the evolution of this disciplinary debate. Obviously, one continues to speak of drawing but the discourse tends almost always to remain outside of theoretical issues and in-depth critical analyzes. Remaining, for what regards time, in the last few decades, it is important to remember the important yet isolated interventions by theorists, historians and critics such as Francesco Moschini and Gianni Contessi. To the work of these *historical* observers of the relationship between mod-

ern and contemporary architecture and drawing should be added the contributions, also significant, of professors such as Fulvio Irace, Antonella Greco, Giorgio Muratore, Franco Cervellini, Ghisi Grütter, Carlo Mezzetti and Livio Sacchi. It is also worth mentioning the role of exploration and communication exercised by several exhibition establishments in recent decades, such as, in Milan, the Galleria Solferino, active in the 1970s, and the Galleria Jannone, while in Rome it was the AAM Gallery (*Architettura Arte Moderna*) of the above-mentioned Moschini, to be the main driving force of the so-called *Architettura Disegnata* (Drawn Architecture), which I will return to further on. Lastly, various magazines must be mentioned: Luciano Patetta's *Il Disegno di Architettura*; *Controspazio*, especially in the period in which it was directed by Paolo Portoghesi; *XY. Dimensioni del Disegno*, by Roberto de Rubertis and *Disegnare. Idee, immagini*, by Mario Dozzi. Alongside the activity of the galleries and magazines listed, some of the more rare and less-thematic initiatives proposed by structures such as the Venice Biennale, the Triennale of Milan, the *Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica* (National Institute for Graphic Design), professional associations, *In-arch* (*Istituto Nazionale di Architettura*—National Architectural Institute), the UID (*Unione Italiana per il Disegno*), founded and animated, until his death, by Gaspare De Fiore. This list, at least, would seem to deny what I previously said at the beginning of the paragraph, but if one thinks about the extent of the role of drawing in architecture, it is undoubt-

Fig. 1. Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, *Study for the compact city*, 1966.



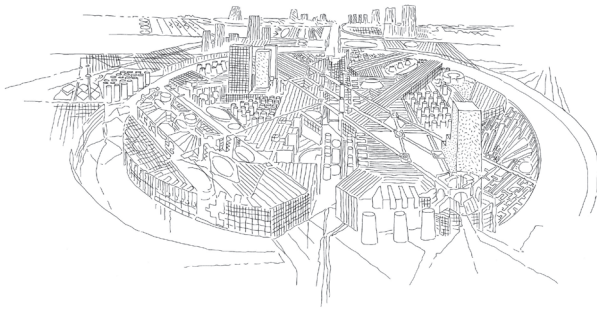


Fig. 2. Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, *Compact city*, 1966, perspective view.

edly small quantitatively, even if the persons mentioned are certainly among the best nationally and internationally to deal with this topic. Even several architects who draw have given significant contributions to a wider understanding of the contents of the graphic exercise.

A misunderstanding

The marginal presence of the relationship between architecture and drawing in the Italian historical, theoretical and critical reflection has, among several minor motives which it is not possible to discuss here for reasons of space, a major reason. This consists in the fact that the majority of historians, theorists and critics dealing with architecture—think of Bruno Zevi—consider drawing a simple tool which, once the work prefigured by it has become a physical reality, completely exhausts its function. Within this more than reductive concept, which appears to be a true *ontological misunderstanding*, drawing is considered, at best, only a *document* related to a particular design stage. Thus, for this reason, it would not possess its own aesthetic autonomy, not being able to present itself, even when its formal quality is high, as a work of art. This idea does not seem to take into account either the cognitive and creative complexity of graphic research, or, above all, the fact that, while a drawing refers to something other than itself, that it *represents*, it expresses its own reality as an artifact. A reality that must be evaluated independently of the meaning and content that architectural work can assume. From this point of view, an architectural drawing, when it is conceived and

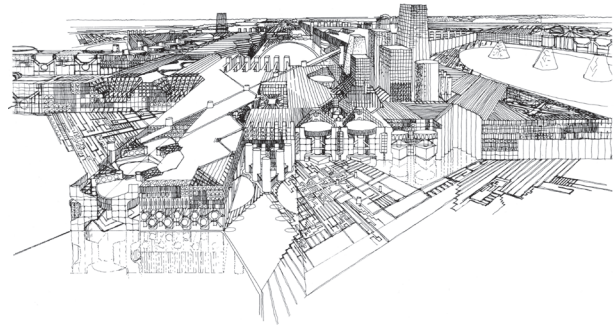


Fig. 3. Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, *Compact city*, 1966, perspective view.

executed to the maximum of its potential, as I have already said, is a complex text which, beginning with the signs with which it is drawn, is articulated in a series of expressive planes in which different thematic areas cross, all polarized by a specific formal intention. The general disinterest towards drawing does not diminish even when it becomes an object of appreciation by historians or critics who normally deal with arts other than architecture. Indeed, even in this case, architectural drawing is not evaluated positively for its intrinsic qualities, but only because it is, for example, the result of various *trespassings* into other specifics, in a process of appropriation of aesthetic dimensions which, in itself, it would not possess. In other words, it is the *self-subversion* of its role which would in this case constitute a motive of interest, and no longer its internal functionality within a range of values that legitimize it in its own theoretical and practical identity.

Architectural drawing can be thought of as a *measuring device*. Surveying the world, designing a building and then building it involves actually putting into what you are seeing, imagining and realizing the metric paradigm, a tool that allows you to confer to existing things, or to things whose construction is planned, a coherent logic extended to the individual parts of the work and to their entirety. In the Vitruvian treatise the term *symmetria* means precisely the metric dimension as a *quantitative correspondence*, ie as reciprocal comparison, starting from the repetition of elements, of a modular unit. From the quantitative evaluation, which is certainly a bit mechanistic, it is then possible to pass, through a *poetic transmutation*, to *eurhythmia*, that is to say, the harmony arising from the recurrence of elements

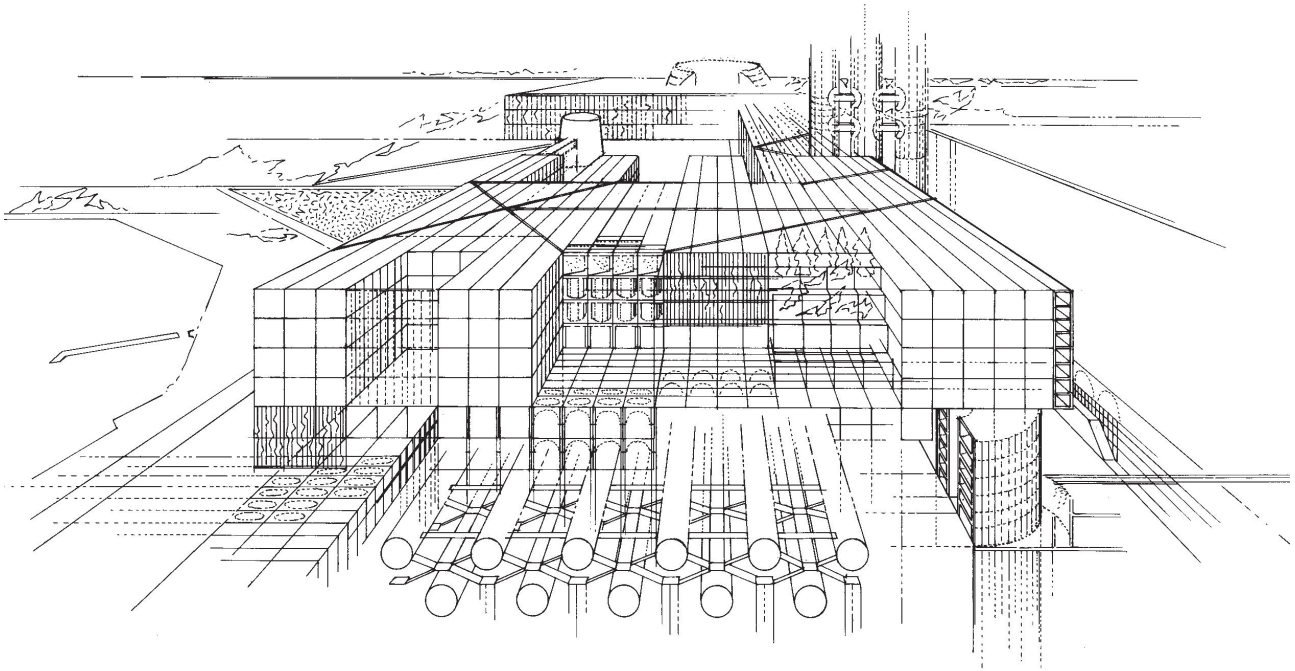


Fig. 4. Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, *Compact city*, 1966, perspective view.

and their composing themselves in the superior unity of form. When an architectural work reaches this dimension—when it ‘sings,’ as Paul Valéry has written—the measure loses any *normalizing, rigorous, restrictive, material* content. It may reverse itself into the allusiveness of the infinite, into the imprecision that becomes scalar oscillation, dimensional vibration, constituent ambiguity. In this way, an architectural work inverts its intrinsic rationality in a multiform and variegated complexity. A complexity which, remembering that in the meaning of the idea of reason there is also that of division, produces separation and distinction to then arrive at that unpredictable fusion of its components in an *unpronounceable unity* that transcends every possible measurement.

The sign, which is the very essence of the signature, could be defined as the primary outcome of an energy that the mind and the hand emit at the same instant. The sign establishes the graphic field, creates the *light of the drawing*, fuses

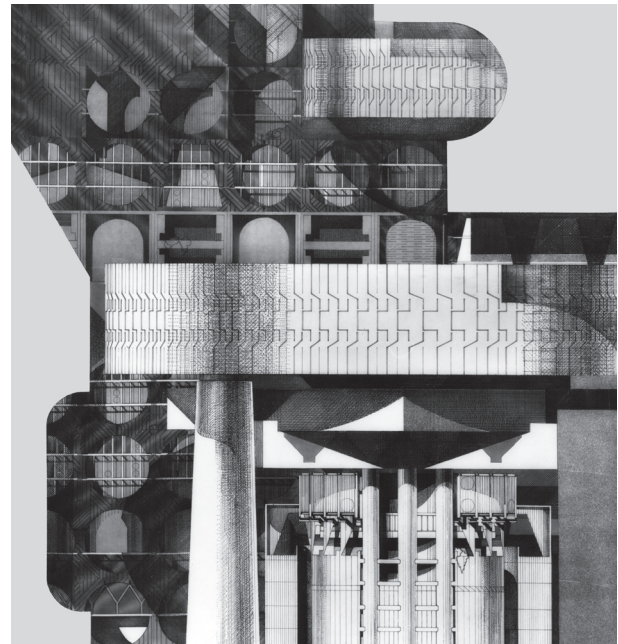
space and time. The sign is somehow opposed by the *gesture*. If the sign, in fact, establishes writing as an action within a total projectuality, which thus presupposes a legitimizing temporality, the gesture, instead, seeks expression in ignition, figurative excess, a destabilizing drift with respect to the intrinsic rationality of the sign. This rationality, which derives from the sacred action of *ploughing*, and that for this origin (which, incidentally, gives life to *bustrophedon writing*) presents the sign itself as *constructive*, is opposed by the destructive nature of the gesture, its unpredictability, its genetic possibility of expressing irrationality. A manifestation, as is the sign, of a primal energy, the relationship between gesture and sign is like that between disorder and order, or between chance and necessity.

The sign and the gesture are joined by the *tracé régulateur*, present throughout the history of architecture, loved by many architects, including Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Figini and Pollini, Maurizio Sacripanti, Oswald Mathias Un-

gers, Vittorio Gregotti. The *tracé régulateur*, which has the task of *differentiating the indistinct*, presents itself as an isotropic grid within which the elements subordinate their autonomy to the place they occupy, triggering an intense dialectic between locational equivalence and positional hierarchy. The *tracé régulateur* is similar to a tensional field, in which the conflict between uniformity and polarization is staged. Architectural drawing takes on different forms, each of which illuminates a particular problem of a project. There is survey drawing, without which it is not possible to know a building or any other man-made object, such as a table or a chair; just as, if they were not drawn, no one would ever know how the elements of the world really are, such as, for example a flower, a tree, a rock, a stream, a cloud, a landscape. Then there is the sketch, the most important kind of drawing because within it there is the idea of what one intends to design. This is a drawing whose character lies in the speed with which it is done. A speed that is the result of a sudden synthesis of themes and motifs accumulated at the beginning of the design process as clues. A sketch is like the DNA of a building, a system of a few essential features that describe the appearance of the future work. Drawings fundamental for the development of an architectural idea are the plans, in which the ponderal, proportional, quantitative and qualitative relationships are established that ensure the *magic* of the building's formal correspondences; the sections, which are also subject to the invention of dimensional equilibriums, the elevations on which the *tectonic machine* that governs the object comes to the surface. Axonometries, perspective views, perspective sections, aerial perspectives, show a construction in different ways, thus highlighting the singular aspects of buildings, their relationship with the context and the territory. Sometimes drawings are produced that do not have an explicitly projectual content but are confronted as completely formal works that pose freely compositional themes. Themes that could in time be used in an architectural work. Taken together, these graphic forms are not really separate, as it would seem from the words used to describe them. They cross and hybridize. So a sketch can regard a plan, an elevation, or a perspective view as well as a detail. It is up to the architect to decide on the best graphic strategy for solving problems and for making the right decisions at the most appropriate moments of the design process. When, between the 1980s and 1990s, digital drawing made its sudden appearance in architecture, it was enthusiastically greeted by those critics more alert and more open

to the innovations of the discipline. Bruno Zevi held that it would have finally freed architects from the burdensome and, in his opinion, conformistic commitment to composition, since this new kind of graphic expression was almost automatically able to transcribe, in transmissible forms, the designer's intentions, favoring his innovative potential. Even the dreaded homologation induced by the computer with the consequent, yet misleading, end of authorship, was deemed an essentially positive fact, because it would have favored a widespread and shared theoretical and operative renewal of architectural culture. At the same time, several scholars, including Antonino Saggio, Luigi Prestinenza Puglisi, Livio Sacchi, Maurizio Unali, drew attention to the fact that digital drawing favored not only an improvement of an instrumental nature, but opened the way to a *new imagery* of a neo-naturalistic matrix. Phytomorphic, zoomorphic and mineralogical elements; star clusters and clouds; continuously changing, densely structured surfaces that evolve in

Fig. 5. Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, Study for the façade of the compact city, 1966.



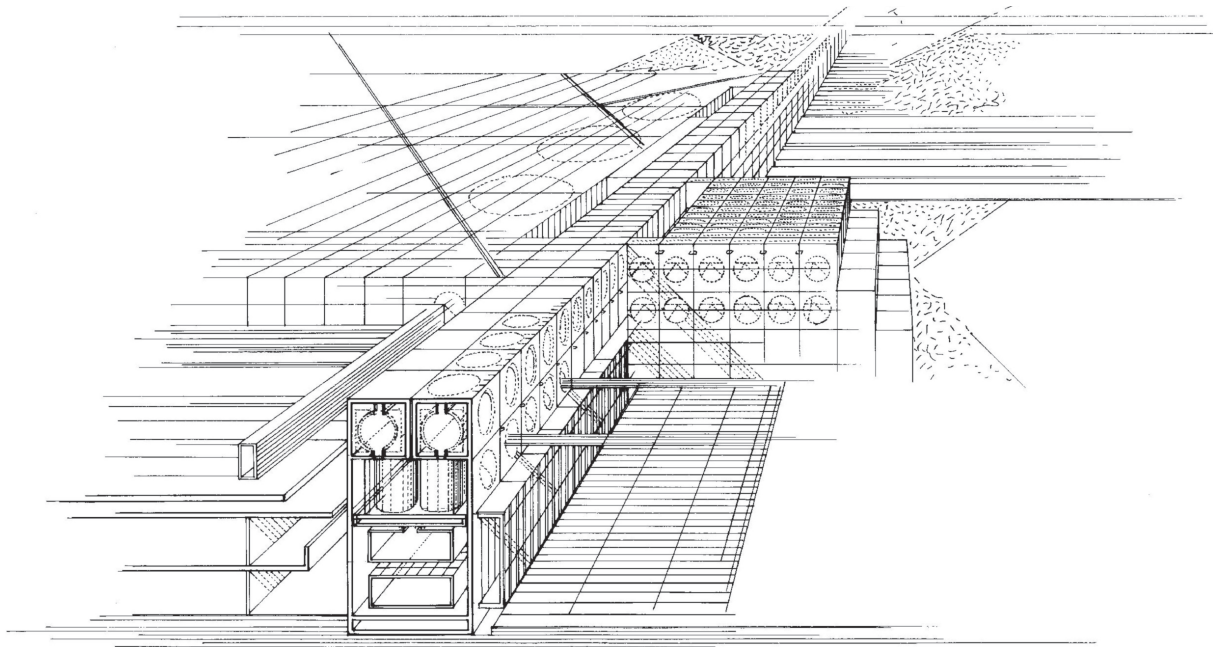


Fig. 6. Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, Preliminary studies for the section of the street built between Rome and Latina, 1967.

every direction of space are some of the materials that defined a figurative horizon that architects could refer to. In this regard, I think that, deprived of a space and a temporality, since its basic cell, the *pixel*, does not have the possibility of representing luminous and chromatic variations, digital drawing, despite many contrary opinions, does not exclude the autographic dimension. In fact, if understood in an integrally linguistic key, it can give rise to autonomous and original stylistic solutions, taking on the artistic value which manual drawing can reach, and often does reach, and, certainly, its own formal content. Naturally, the sign and the gesture will be lacking, but the intentionality of the expressive writing will, in any case, be recognizable. Obviously, I believe that the absence of sign and gesture is irremediable. Drawing not only represents what has existed, what exists and what will exist. It is also able to make visible what has never existed in the past, but which could have or could not have existed. At the same time, I think drawing is capable of representing a landscape, a city, a building for the

present or for the future that could exist or not exist because technically not constructible or because they would overlay pre-existences which could not be demolished. This undoubtedly elemental observation implies that the dimension in which architectural drawing exists is not 'real' reality but a *reality proper to drawing itself*. An autonomous reality that blends concrete existence with what can only live in the imagination. At the same time, in this *reality of drawing*, the past, the present, and the future meld into each other in an allusive continuity of a unique, somewhat immobile temporality, unless this would be a logical paradox. A paradox that in the space of art is, instead, possible. Drawing is therefore much vaster than reality, comprising the impossible, that is, the unreal, the fantastic, the astonishing, the prodigious. Joseph Michael Gandy's drawings of the Bank of England in which the artifact still to be constructed is represented in ruins expresses, in exemplary fashion, this mysterious and evocative interlacing of thematic resonances.

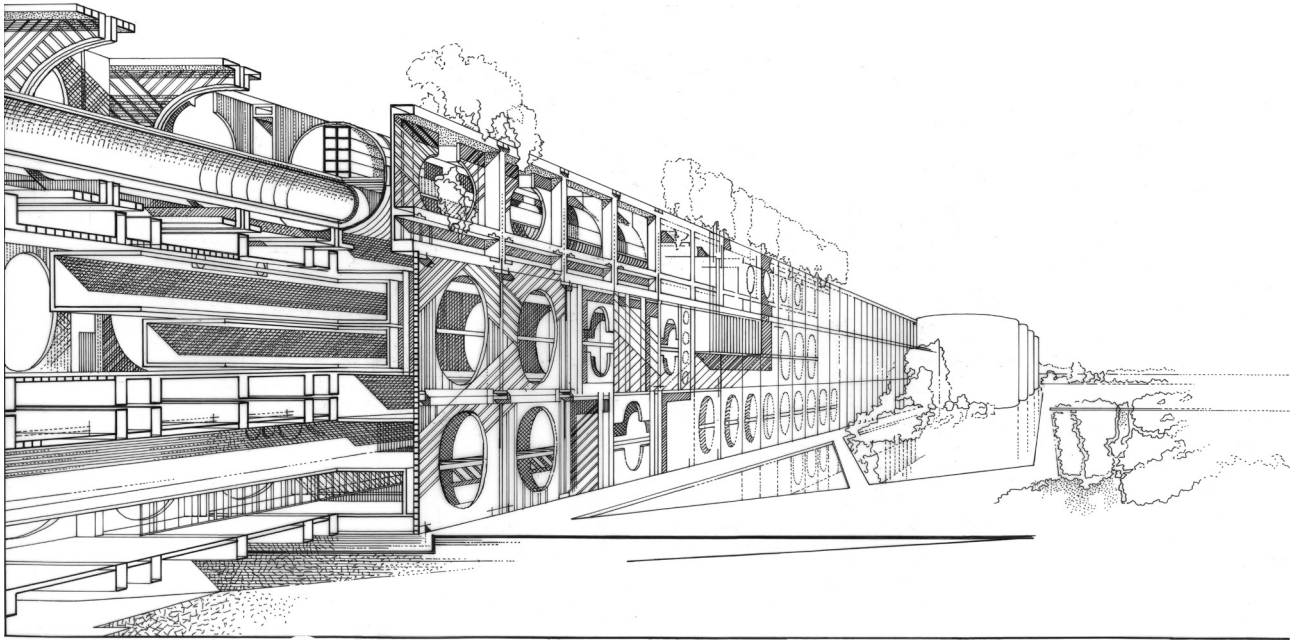


Fig. 7. Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, Project for a street built between Rome and Latina, 1967.

The main contents of drawing

An architectural drawing proposes three main contents. The first consists in its being *the formulation of an idea*. It is precisely this cognitive and propositive essence that makes it impossible to consider it as a simple tool. Drawing is, in fact, both the physical and ideal place in which an image, which only the architect can see with the eyes of the mind, the 'internal drawing' according to Federico Zuccari, reveals itself in a system of signs, making itself *external and objective*. This is, always according to Zuccari, 'external drawing.' The second content concerns the *communication of this same idea*. Drawing allows the architect to share what he has thought of with his interlocutors, allowing a certain number of operators, whom he might not even know, to realize, at the end of the project, the works he envisaged. For this reason, each drawing *speaks in the absence* of its author. The third content is recognized in the *memory*

that the drawing incorporates. During a project there are many choices made, choices that involve the exclusion of a large number of solutions. Reconsiderations, accentuations, compositive emphasis or subdued weavings of elements leave their own traces in the body of the drawings and of the work, making it possible to trace back through the genetic process that had been followed, reconstructing the most significant moments, the secondary stages, the indecisions, the stops and the restartings. The fact that architectural drawing is idea, communication, and memory does not exhaust all the potentials it is capable of expressing. Narrative elements, iconic suggestions, diversions, symbolic and allegorical arrays mingle, transforming the drawing into a sort of *infinite palimpsest*, in some cases explicit and coherent, in others implicit, mysterious and contradictory. Always pervaded by an artistic intent, architectural drawing can undoubtedly be a work of art, as is made evident by the observation of the drawings of Leonardo, Michel-

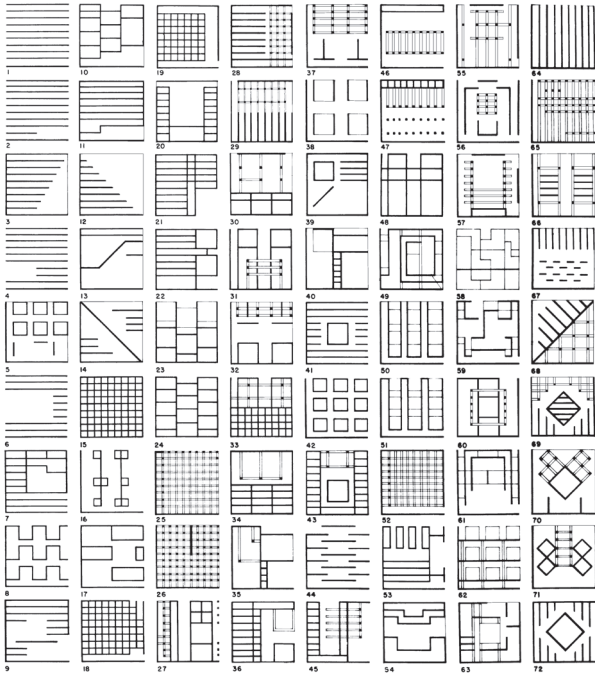


Fig. 8. Franco Purini, *Classification through sections of spatial situations*, 1968.

angelo, Antonio Sant'Elia and so many other architects who, even greatly reducing their number, would be too many to mention.

Types of drawing

I would now like to go back to some of the previously outlined points and briefly explore them. Architectural drawing is not univocal. It addresses a multitude of interests. There is a kind of drawing meant for understanding the structure of the physical environment, from the territory to the city, and from this to buildings and their furnishings. This is *survey drawing*, a rather complex practice through which the architect *looks* at the world, going from simply *observing* it to *seeing* it for how it is in the truth of its external and internal reality. Palladio's surveys of the Roman baths, the extraordinary drawings by Eugé-

ne Viollet Le Duc related to Mont Blanc; John Ruskin's inspired *reportages*; the Mediterranean impressions of Carl Friedrich Schinkel, Alvar Aalto, Le Corbusier; Giuseppe Samonà's sketches and drawings of the Cathedral of Cefalù describe a universe of graphic restitutions aimed at understanding and communicating the complexity of materials and interweavings in the physical world. There is then an architectural drawing that has as its objective the best possible communication of the decisions made by an architect. This is *professional drawing*, which, by being accurately and consciously based on the conventions related to *graphic writing*, builds a fabric of comprehensive information, profoundly studied in all its parts, strictly defined in the individual themes into which it is articulated. This type of drawing, related to realism, contrasts with a type of drawing that could be called *theoretical*. This is drawing conceived as the site of an advanced experimentalism on form, a place somewhat foreign, at least apparently, to reality, as it aims to reveal *space theorems*, to propose unusual and astonishing images. Revelations and proposals, as in John Hejduk's diagrams or in Peter Eisenman's analytic schemes, which in their enigmatic nature pose the problem of being recognized as something having to do with architecture. Forms different from theoretical drawing, which can also be considered as a *landscaping of interiority*, that is to say, as the result of a radical awareness of the primacy of imagination, are *visionary drawing*, that makes utopia transmissible and operative, even when it only lives on sheets of paper; *diagrammatic drawing*, in which an architectural program proposes itself as that which is common to graphic expressions such as the morpheme, the *logo*, the diagram, the ideogram, visual elements in which the graphic weights, the distance of elements and their reciprocal placement assume the role of a conceptual device capable of governing a compositional process; and *notational drawing*, which identifies the components of a particular architectural language rather than those of a building.

The meanings of a drawing

A drawing always has at least three planes of meaning. The first one could be called *directly referential*. These words are meant to indicate the *subject* illustrated by a certain graphic work. For example, a drawing can represent a landscape, a city, a building. In this case, the directly refer-

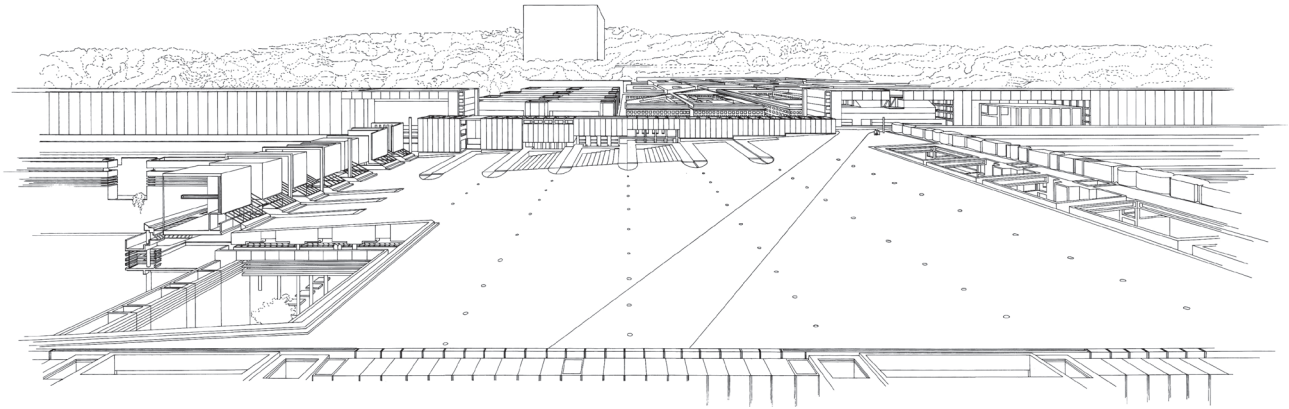


Fig. 9. Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, Bridge at San Giovanni dei Fiorentini in Rome, 1968, perspective view.

ential value would be recognized very simply in what the drawing itself would show. More complex is the second level of meaning, which can be defined as *metaphorical*. This includes all those thematic values which, by extension, are assumed by the parts of the object represented as well as the result of their coming together to form a whole. The word metaphorical points to the fact that the architectural object becomes an emblem of a certain relation to reality and its interpretations. A *closed* building would then allude, through an exclusive and space-separating conformation, to the idea of a community that defends itself from the rest of society with insurmountable doors and fences. On the contrary, an open artifact would speak of the various and complex relationships that would arise if this same community opened up to other social groups. The third level of meaning is referred to as *autonomous*. At this level of meaning, both the object in its typological and functional determination, as well as its metaphorical potentiality, disappear. Only the values of *form* remain, reduced to the purest abstraction. As though they were no longer architectural, the dimensional relationships, the scalar declinations of the parts, their modeling are presented from this point of view as a gravitational system that sees a number of elements approaching or distancing themselves, giving rise to some sort of *artificial cosmic order*. It is at this third level that a drawing can demonstrate, through its autonomy, its own artistic value.

Reading a drawing

The reading of any drawing, including an architectural drawing, is never a simple operation. Indeed, it is necessary to identify oneself with the image that is being observed and at the same time defend oneself from it, nurturing in its regards a kind of *prejudicial hostility*. Only after a series of interpretive rituals can this hostility, or if you prefer, this *distance*, be overcome. This resistance is opposed by another, this time expressed autonomously, of the graphic work, which for this reason would be protected by a true *guardian*. The task of this entity is to prevent those who want to interpret the image to enter those three planes of meaning, introduced in the preceding paragraph, which it itself proposes. The reading of a drawing also includes accelerations and slowdowns, stops, deviations and mistakes. As in a labyrinth, the eye must explore the image from far away, from up close, in its graphic layers, in its relationships with its own borders, often changing the itinerary between these ways of reading, starting from the same direction as the gaze, which is often subject to sudden reversals. Some parts of the image are not, for example, essential, but serve as *fillers* of the narrative pauses from which any text, including the graphic text, is always characterized. Fillers are not occasional, but necessary for distancing the main *places* of the representation. There is therefore an internal hierarchy to be understood, as there are compositional

traces, including some, explicit, and others, implicit. In addition, a drawing lies on a *plane* because it is usually done on a two-dimensional surface. In fact, besides the three-dimensional space it can represent, a drawing is the bearer of a virtual depth given by the nature of the sign with which it was created and by the interweaving which the sign itself gave rise to. By weaving together all these aspects, a multidimensional, thematically multifaceted, intrinsically *open, parallel text* is produced, a text which translates into a *visual narrative* that is non-coherent and linear, yet simultaneously continuous and discontinuous, positively contradictory, diversified and metamorphic.

The cultural areas of Italian architectural drawing

In Italian architecture there are four major cultural areas, which find a near-exact correspondence in four concepts of architectural representation. This polycentric structure causes the architectural identity of the Italian peninsula to have a *composite* character, due to the co-existence of traditions and trends regarding different procedural methods. The multipolar nature of Italian architecture does not weaken its identity but instead strengthens it, articulating it into specific issues. The first and historically most important of these areas is the Florentine area. Here, the found-



Fig. 10. Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, Urban Center and Management Center of Latina, 1972, floor plan.

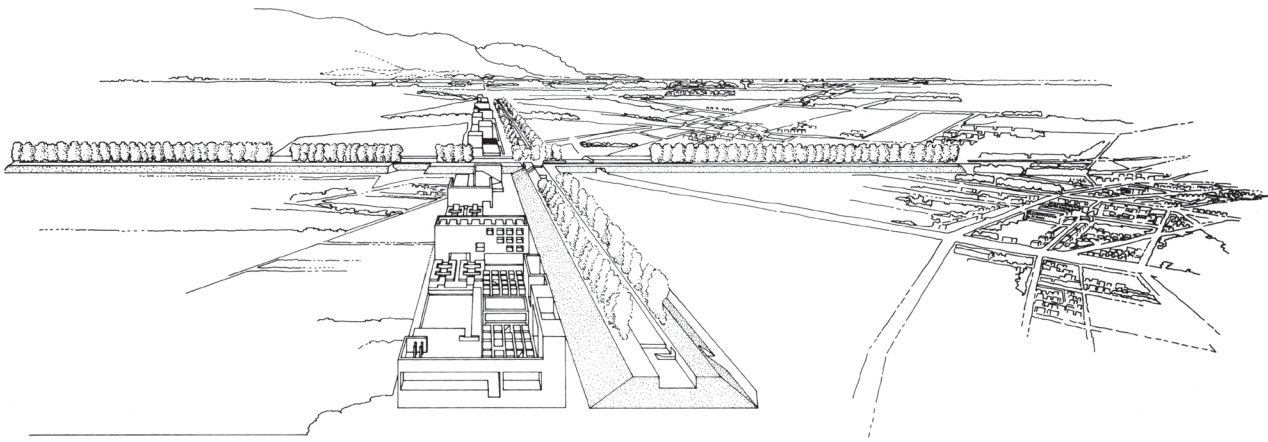


Fig. 11. Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, *Urban Center and Management Center of Latina*, 1972, perspective view.

ing element is *drawing*, that is, the result of the way in which landscapes, objects, bodies are rendered through the *line*, which is taken as an ontological principle. Theorized mainly by Giorgio Vasari, who built the *Accademia delle Arti del Disegno* (Academy of the Arts of Drawing) on it, this discipline appears as something eminently *conceptual*. Drawing is, in fact, the mental essence of physical things as well as fantastic simulacra. In addition to its intellectual aspect, the graphic exercise, as was the case in Michelangeloesque art, traces the path of a spiritual research on the world, destiny, life, death, and on what might exist after death. Inside the Florentine area, drawing, inspired by Neoplatonic themes, appears as the primary emblem of reason, reflecting the *divine design*. Florentine culture, and by extension, Tuscan culture, strongly influenced the Roman area, though this is dominated rather by the *idea* of mass, materialized in dense, compact, closed volumes. In fact, Rome inherited from Florence that character of strength assumed by its buildings, a stern and almost reclusive tone that was to astonish Stendhal. This idea of *severity* encounters in the Roman area another conceptual suggestion, that of the *ruin*. Hence *section imagery* as a Roman theme *par excellence*. The mass, the stratification, the ruination, which *opens* buildings to external space, have represented and represent the essence of Roman architecture, which in the eighteenth century found in Giovanni Battista Piranesi its most illustrious interpreter. Ludovico Quaroni's 1987 project for

transforming the Vittoriano into a ruin is one of the latest and most convincing examples of this cultural character. The components of Roman architectural identity, in which an attitude of rational thinking winds like filigree, as in Giuseppe Valadier and in Adalberto Libera, contrasted silently by the formal vertigo of the Baroque, confirmed in the twentieth century by an expressionistic vein, are resolved in a type of drawing with strong imaginative energy, approaching visionariness, as in the proposals of Maurizio Sacripanti. The Roman theme finds a complete and radical overturning in the Milanese area. Pervaded by still-operative Gothic mementoes, such as the scintillating Torre Velasca built by the BBPR architectural partnership, the architectural culture of Milan has been deeply marked by the Enlightenment and Neoclassicism. The *civil architecture* of that season, situated between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, constitutes the programmatic outcome, is the emblem of a collective choice of order, balance, formal composure, the representative capacity of society, of constructive correctness. The place of the elaboration and transmission of these architectural features has been and still is the *Politecnico*, a school in which reason is presented as a theoretical paradigm and as an expressive horizon. Consequently, the architectural drawing of Milan is essential, precise, analytic and altogether synthetic, with no illustrative intent nor allusions to anything else not of a compositional and techno-



Fig. 12. Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, *Urban Center and Management Center of Latina*, 1972, detail of a building.

logical nature. In thinking of twentieth-century Milanese architecture, certain examples come to mind: the thematic solidity of Giovanni Muzio's graphic works, into which a pale metaphysical tonality penetrates; the mathematical rarefaction that animates with essential lines the visual world of Giulio Cattaneo; the restrained disruptiveness of Giuseppe Terragni's severe, limpid views; the didactic clarity of Franco Albini's drawing; the analytical dryness of drawings by Ignazio Gardella; the wide scope of Vittorio Gregotti urban visions, in which a strongly Cartesian sense of space is confronted in a vital contradiction by the preoccupied closure of Behrensian architectural works; the conceptual seduction and descriptive severity of the architectural representations of Giorgio Grassi and Antonio Monestiroli. An exception is Aldo Rossi, whose sketches and pictorial compositions are like poetic autobiographical surveys to which daily life offers its objects and its atmospheres, now serene, now painful, all in a scenographic stillness that is not limited to, as in Muzio, evoking an underlying metaphysics, but that places at its own center an explicit re-reading of the De Chirico-esque world. The fourth major cultural area of Italian architecture is the Venetian area, dominated by color, or rather by the tangentiality of drawing in favor of the decisive role of tonalism as the dissolution of the environment in a chromatic irides-

cence in which everything is blurred, modified, with moving and transparent shapes, becoming pure feeling. Exemplarily represented by the drawing of Carlo Scarpa, suspended between textual stratifications and material evocations, this architectural identity has been captured with remarkable results by Le Corbusier in the project, unfortunately unrealized, for the Hospital in the San Giobbe neighborhood of Venice. The four areas, Florentine, Roman, Milanese and Venetian, have obviously not remained intact in their genetic profile. Over time, they have been in dialogue, exchanging themes and compositional methods. Milan and Venice have established a sort of alliance that has sought to dominate the Italian debate, starting with the *Politecnico* and the IUAV (*Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia*—Higher Institute of Architecture of Venice), as recalled by the history of the *La Tendenza* movement. Milan then found support in the Naples school, while Rome tried to enter the lagoon city's thematic-formal area, opposing the south-north axis to the east-west Venice-Milan axis. The Romans Bruno Zevi, Saverio Muratori, Luigi Piccinato, Giuseppe Samonà—a Sicilian who had moved to the capital city in the 1930s—Carlo Aymonino and Manfredo Tafuri taught for many years in Venice, introducing motifs into that cultural context which were different in respect to the *environmental colorism* that governed architectural research there. The Roman presence balanced, in a certain sense, that of Milan, since most IUAV teachers, including Ignazio Gardella and Giancarlo De Carlo, came from Lombardy's capital city. In Venice there were three primary architectural areas, with the result of making IUAV a determinant pole in the international disciplinary debate. The other contexts gave rise to cross-alliances and the most diverse filiations. The school of Rome reproduced itself, so to speak, together with that of Milan in Pescara, while by itself it profoundly structured the Faculties of Reggio Calabria, Bari and Ascoli Piceno. Turin has always remained in its strange dimension of *extraterritoriality*, while Florence has maintained its autonomy by defending itself firmly from external influences. In this purpose, it has been aided by its world-wide fame, which, especially since the nineteenth century, has made it a city that hosted colonies of foreigners, especially English and Americans, a tradition that still persists today. In brief, the condition described, referring to four major cultural matrices, has created a complex system of interferences and superimpositions. However, it can be stated that, apart from the many contaminations and modifications of orientations that have

intervened over time, these matrices are still quite recognizable and operative. They govern, even in the digital age, the situation of drawing throughout the peninsula, giving it that *composite* character that reflects the polycentric nature of our culture.

Drawn Architecture

In the 1970s and 1980s, Italian architecture was the protagonist of a world-wide phenomenon, the so-called Drawn Architecture. This was a phase of research that was not homogeneous, but instead, strongly differentiated internally, in which a large number of architects, observing the effective depletion of the original themes of the Modern Movement, gave life to a season of advanced experiments, using architectural representation. Drawn Architecture had a dual content. It was, in fact, theory and image together, holding within itself both the new conceptual frameworks proposed in the debate of the time, and the unusual linguistic forms that those same frameworks demanded. In Florence, Andrea Branzi and Adolfo Natalini, in continuity with historical stararchitects such as Giovanni Michelucci, Leonardo Ricci and **Leonardo Savioli**, gave life to a radical season by producing iconic apparatuses inspired by the then current revival of interest for Utopian thinking, of fundamental importance for a general rethinking of territory, city and architecture. Alongside them, other Florentine architects should be mentioned, such as Roberto Maestro, Remo Buti, Francesco Gurrieri, who played an important role in the renewal of drawing. In Rome, Drawn Architecture was also enlisted in a thematic continuity with the role that architectural representation had always played. In this context, Piranesi's work has never ceased to exert a decisive attraction, as it recalls, to simply remain in the twentieth century, the architecture of Armando Brasini, but also that of designers such as Alessandro Limongelli, Pietro Aschieri, Innocenzo Sabbatini, the authors of works with dramatic plasticity in which echoes are perceived of the *colossal*, as well as expressive, atmospheres alluding to the evocative power of ruins. Due above all to Maurizio Sacripanti, a visionary architect to whose drawings is assigned the testimony of a research remaining almost entirely on paper, is the welding of the years spanning the 1930s, the 1940s and the 1950s with the new scenarios of the 1960s and 1970s. Mainly to his example, but also to the minor contribution of Mario Ridolfi, Ludovico Quaroni and Carlo



Fig. 13. Franco Purini, *The architectural orders* 1990.

Aymonino, a series of fundamental experiences must be referred. Among these are Paolo Portoghesi's inspired work on the memory of architecture; the *ante litteram* radical experiments of the GRAU group, which Alessandro Anselmi and Franco Pierluisi took part in; the graphic conceptualisms of Vittorio De Feo; the geometric meditations suspended between *simplicity, linearity, complexity* of Costantino Dardi; my own urban proposals, of a futuristic tone, suspended between form and construction; the *metropolitan fragmentism*, veined with neo-avantgardism, of the Studio Labirinto; creative surveys into *the past as*

future by Dario Passi; the poetic abstractions of Lauretta Vinciarelli; the *adventurous spatiality* of Franco Luccichenti, the *contaminations* between painting and architecture of Silvio Pasquarelli. Also participating, with remarkable success, in the Roman experience were Claudio D'Amato, Francesco Cellini, Giancarlo Micheli, Giangiacomo D'Ardia, Mario Seccia, Franz Prati and Aldo Aymonino, architects to whom we owe creative experiences whose effects on contemporary debate are still noticeable today. In Milan, Aldo Rossi, Giorgio Grassi, Antonio Monestiroli, Arduino Cantàfora and Massimo Scolari, founders of *La Tendenza*, have made a worldwide contribution to Drawn Architecture. From Rossi's biographical subjectivism to the *mineral objectivity* of Grassi; from the *hyper-stylized neo-classicism* of Monestiroli to the *thoughtful and interiorized realism* of Cantàfora and to the *enchanted utopianism* of Scolari, we have witnessed an extraordinary flowering of works that have refounded architecture under the sign of its autonomy. Although they belonged to the radical era, even Ettore Sottsass, Alessandro Mendini and Franco Raggi should be counted among the Milanese architects who made a significant contribution to the story of Drawn Architecture. A story that in Turin saw Pietro Derossi involved with his *situationalist* drawings and in Venice, the second center after Milan of *La Tendenza*, Gianugo Polesello with his *taxonomic drawings* and Luciano Semerani with suggestive compositions divided between appropriation and allegory. Guido Canella, more concerned with the contamination between the avant-gardes and the twentieth century, than with the re-proposing of the themes of reason in Illuminism and Rationalism, has been present, in a less frontal way than the exponents of *La Tendenza*, with striking assemblies of architectural fragments in the rediscovery of the theoretical and militant value of drawing. In Naples it is necessary to remember Uberto Siola's *typo-morphological* alphabets and the geographical and architectural views of Salvatore Bisogni. Diffused throughout the world by the Triennale

of Milan, the Venice Biennale and many other exhibition sites, among which I mentioned, at the beginning of this text, Moschini's AAM and the Galleria Jannone in Milan, Drawn Architecture formed the link between the *criticism* of the Modern Movement, which had marked the beginning of the 1960s, and Postmodernism, born at the end of the 1970s, a movement that it influenced significantly. The same digital revolution, with the primacy of the image that distinguished it, has found in the iconic heritage brought together by Drawn Architecture an important, and now historic, precedent.

The last observation I would like to propose concerns the relationship between manual and computer-aided drawing. Bruno Zevi's illusions on the end of traditional representation as an elective site of research have been attenuated in recent years. Today, digital drawing has become contemporary architectural drawing, required for purely technical reasons by the totality of commissions, but this does not mean that the practical benefits that it presents have been joined by truly new imaginative resources. Simply stated, creative processes seem to always evolve in the same way, starting from a *thematic-poetic nucleus* that finds, in the dialectic between 'internal drawing' and 'external drawing', mentioned earlier, the secret laboratory in which the embryo of an architectural work finds its primary form, the founding idea that will govern the whole design process. In conclusion, manual and digital drawing have established a sort of alliance that sees them co-exist, the first as an ideal genetic space, the second as an advancement of the instrumental aspects of the graphic exercise in architecture, a principally communicative exercise that can find its inspired iconic dimension only if carried out with the wisdom and sensibility without which an architectural drawing able to remain in our memory would not be possible. The revelation of something that, despite being thought of at length, when translated into a drawing, always reveals something unexpected and surprising to us.

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