

Reviews

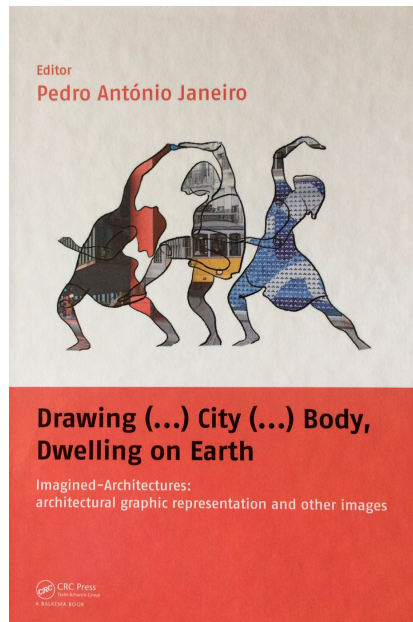
Pedro António Janeiro (Editor)
**Drawing (...) City (...) Body,
 Dwelling on Earth. Imagined-
 Architectures: architectural
 graphic representation and
 other images**

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Firstly, what is the body? The definition of *fluctuating signifier* given by structuralist ethnologists, and especially Lévi-Strauss [Lévi-Strauss 1965], is powerful in arguing the linguistic evanescence that no approach, meaning, metaphorical use, can force or block. A *mediator between codes* who violently imposes its ability to “exercise symbolic thought”. One could say that the body does not mean anything but it speaks the language of others, it is *trans*-formed, allowing to *trans*-late various codes, to enter through a *passe-partout* in different levels (natural, artificial, abstract, ...). So always *partial* but, for its energetic power, incredibly *universal* and *polyvalent*. Thanks to its plasticity, the body can “articulate itself to the articulation of language” [Gil 1978] and be the substance in the enigma of the Oedipus Sphinx (Borges). Or the space/food formula of Alice’s fall in Wonderland, the frightening profile of the Little Prince’s snake, the representative evocation of the “false tokens” for “biological locks” of which Gombrich spoke [Gombrich 1971], the allegorical dream of Dante’s reincarnation of Dick’s *electric sheep* [Dick 1968], or a *transfer of the forces of death as Baudrillard writes*.

In fact, everything seems to form a body and the volume *Drawing (...) City (...) Body, Dwelling on Earth* is an example of this. The book is the result of the fifth edition of the Internation-

al Seminar focused on the research theme *Arquitecturas Imaginadas: Representação Gráfica Arquitectónica e “Outras Imagens”*, active since 2009 at the CIAUD - Centro de Investigação em Arquitetura Urbanismo e Design - of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Lisbon. The fifth edition of the Seminar, focused on the topic *Desenho (...) Cidade (...) Corpo, Habitando a Terra* (“Drawing (...) City (...) Body, Dwelling on Earth”), was held at the Maria Antónia University Centre of the University of São Paulo in Brazil from 5 to 9 March 2018, as a joint activity between the CIAUD, the University of São Paulo and the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the Federal University of Juiz de Fora. The five days of study in which the seminar was divided were dedicated to the topic of the drawing of the city linked to the body. Among the main objectives of the seminar:

- to discuss how drawing the city and the elements that identifies it are represented and identified through the presence and/or action of the body (gestures, movements, displacements, etc.);

- to critically analyse the association between Drawing and City, starting from the perception of the Body, assuming this mediation as a condition for the particular construction of that relationship;

- to identify the presence of the Body in the Representations/Drawings of the

City, submitting this event or phenomenon to analysis, aiming for cognitive production.

Just by listing the objectives of the seminar, it is increasingly evident how the subject is being "touched" in a way that appears very similar to that which Jean-Luc Nancy defined beyond the sensory boundary, as in a *proxemics* [Hall 1988] that looks at space and memory through the body. There is, in fact, a human spatiality (intimate, personal, social, public) not geometric but experienced and made up of ethnological and psycho-sociological characters in which the body components of the human sensory apparatus are the receptors of distance toward the *distant* (eyes, ear, nose) and the immediate receptors on *neighbour* and *surrounding* (skin, membranes and muscles). Considering what is happening through an extensive analogy, it might be possible to grasp a shift towards an atomized model in which sensory components float by hybridization on computer consoles and mouse, as well as on enclosures and power supply networks. The body, therefore, in its perennial being essentially *outside itself*, develops its own non-geometric, non-neutral, non-indifferent space. The body, as Heidegger said [Heidegger 1927], has a *range*, which, unlike matter, which "stops" at the skin (that is, that which in German is expressed by *Körper* that deals with *Leib*) in the living constantly changes, has no limit, boundary, geometric measure. The *lived* space, today incessantly livable in digital, immediately leads to an idea of distance *lived* in a *proximity* alternating between phenomenology and ethics. Here, then, is how twenty-three contri-

butions present as many possible *bodily fluctuations*, inserting in the topics a *red thread* that links the legacy of Camillo Sitte (between art and morphology) with drawing as a key element of the creative process (in Architecture). This finds a relationship with the (para)metric representation and urban indicators in decision-making processes in urban design, which Hundertwasser proposed in the relationship between the human body and architectural design. But also the "Brazilian body reserve" [De Masi 2015] becomes part of this relationship, following the interpretative paths that make the city and its models of megalopolis the main field of experimentation. From collective/social spaces in the housing in Recife to the urban analysis of the city of São Paulo through the body (in the didactic experience at the FAU), passing through the "bodily shots" by Eduardo Gageiro, up to a counterhegemonic project for Rio de Janeiro.

Then in these intersections (or apparent overturning) of points of view (bodily mergers of approaches) it is possible (as Derrida writes rereading Nancy) [Derrida 2019] to cite also the Cartesian division into *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. Descartes (to whom are constantly referred the geometrical constraints on which even the greatest space representative abstraction in the orthogonal model is based), conceived a wall in the separation between thought and matter (or between mind and body). A wall that will find reinforcements over the centuries and fertile territories in technological development, in scientific hyper-specialisation, in the tenacious mechanistic tendency still at the base (for exam-

ple) of moderate medicine. Much catastrophic imagery (*allogeneic, transgenic, hybridized, cloned*) translated on the most disparate (and desperate) forms of expression in the last forty years probably refer to this never healed wound. It is an intolerant universe in which the guilty slip between the schizophrenia of science, the cataclysmic violence of nature, the misunderstood (and perhaps impossible) self-awareness of matter. The tactile dimension, precisely in the Cartesian reinterpretation of the tangible and the intangible, is among the twenty-three topics and it is proposed in the "tactile museum" (through the masks of classical theatre) as in the idea of "skin-city", which simulates the tactile identity of the place, acquired also through the kinetic, dynamic and physically measurable action of "walking". An act capable of drawing the city with the body. At the end, as in a journey, translated into the "...flowing of time inside the body, ..." [Delillo 2001, p. 201], that the action of drawing (through the analysis of travel notebooks, of perceptive modes in the teaching of drawing from life as well as in cinema and comics) still allows extraordinarily to understand.

The many contributions make the book highly interdisciplinary, interweaving the theme of drawing with the areas of art, urban planning, architecture, philosophy, sociology, and design.

It would take one of Gombrich's false tokens to trigger this biological lock.

Maybe it's still missing.

it's not sure if it's anywhere.

If it could be possible to find it around the wish for invention and discovery, between the bodies dreamed of by Swift and Rabelais...

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