Abstract

Tracing visual narratives in the architectural sketch

For centuries and centuries architects form their first idea of an object, a room or a construction on the basis of a specific sign system: the freehand drawing or sketch. Not unoften, they try to describe existing sites by jotting down words in the blank spots around the sketch. By simultaneously taking notes and creating sketches they become visual reporters. Operating under specific situations, they generate a (personal) visual narrative, oftentimes with a well delineated public in mind. But how does this visual narrative work? Is it possible to dissect the very mechanism it operates by?

In this paper I will argue that the architectural reportage can only be fully understood when it is looked at as being part and parcel of narratological processes. Traditionally, a sketch laden with words can either envision a dialogue, produce a fact oriented narration or serve a didactic purpose, thus being an exposition. To illuminate these persistent narratological scenarios, I will look at the exact way in which drawing lines and handwritten words are interwoven by an architect. Secondly, I will discern the relation between the narratological intention of the sketcher and the graphic techniques he relies on. Doing that, a better understanding of how the intuitive registration sketch can turn into a tool to read and understand sites and situations will be reached.

The methodology in this paper is based on a combination of secondary literature and my own field work as a sketching architect. Specifically, I did select three ‘rooms’ (the ‘room’ in a broad sense) from different time periods, all with peculiar connotations (a museum, a coffee bar and a public square). The ‘experiment’ I will unroll is as following: all three rooms are drawn by me in the same amount of time, with the same graphic equipment. Three different zoom factors (macro, meso, micro) and the already mentioned narratological scenarios will function as variables. Confronting my own sketches with insights taken from secondary literature on narratology, will learn that a better understanding of the (inter)action between sketching and writing not only helps to understand the spatial qualities of the sketched room. It will reveal the perceptual paths along which these qualities are created and consequently situates the architect within the visual reportage he is creating and not at the outside.
TRACING VISUAL NARRATIVES IN THE ARCHITECTURAL (observation) SKETCH
COVENTRY dd.231014

arch. Saidja Heynickx - assistant Professor
University Hasselt Belgium - faculty arts and architecture
Michael Borremans

In the Louvre - The House of Opportunity
Date: 2003
Medium: Watercolor, pencil, and oil on paper
Dimensions: 10 1/2 x 11" (26.6 x 27.9 cm)
a CAT as-perceived by S

neural causes and correlates of consciousness

neural representation of a cat

light rays

a CAT as perceived by an external observer

a subject (S)
**historical dimension**: freehand drawing (in art and architecture)

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**drawing** as a tool for **exploring the interior**

Drawing as a **methodology for analysis** of the place:

- **The anthropological diary**: From headnote to fieldnote and back
- **The military map**: Scale and focus

**Inclusion of time and body**

- **the body** as an instrument for **registration**

- **freehand drawing on location**

**a new term**: Vivisection

**actualised dimension**: freehand drawing as a registration tool

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**STARTING point**

**FOCUS shift**

**PARALLELS in methodology**

**defining the EMBODIED dimension + genius locii**

**IMPLEMENTATION in studiowork**

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EN KUNST
There are two roof making groups in the village: one in
Isamura consisting of Kitagawa old man, Sakaguchi and two Kuroboji
(Choiuchi's brother and Suzuki).

Another group consists of Kinetsu, Ishikawa and a Kono man.
They are usually invited to work by regions—i.e. Isamura in that
bureau and neighboring, Onda for this region. But I heard people
say that the Onda-Kami is better.

I watched a Kawara group of children play 'kichi int'. At first
a set of small squares are made like this

Some children vary this and make her base lines curved, or the whole
set in a circle.

A small stone is put in some square at either end and one
must cover the entire surface knocking the stone with a finger trick
from one square to another. As one covers the course one rubs out
lines between squares already covered, which makes it that much
harder for the next person who had to shoot longer distances between
squares. When all lines have been rubbed out, the whole square is

1. A page from Camilla Wedgwood's Manus field notebooks, 29 July 1933, entry on “Kame magic,” (Size: 7.5 by 11.25 inches.)

2. An index page from one of Wedgwood’s field notebooks.

3. A page from Ella Embree's Suye Mura fieldnotes. (Size 8.5 by 11 inches.)
vivisection
intuition and tool
“By contemplating the optical-physical appearance, the ego arrives at intuitive conclusions about the inner substance.”
Paul Klee
position: part and parcel of a process
GABRIEL FARCÍA MARQUEZ
EL "CAÑO DEL PATRIARCHE"
DEBOLSILLO
ISBN 9788497474413

KRANT BETONBLOK
"TORRE LA VÉRA"
Those who want to use qualitative methods because they seem easier than statistics are in for a rude awakening.....

-Taylor and Bogdan 1984: 53 , discussing the use of field notes in anthropology