



Paulo Providência

3.1. What does drawing and sketching bring to the design process?

Architecture may bring culture and civility to people, say Florian Beigel and Philip Christou in their abstract to this colloquium. In a time where computer generated conception (and not only representation) are taken for granted in architectural design – shortening the time spent in the conception phases of architectural design – the culture and civility that architecture may bring comes from a special attention to the aims and purposes of architecture, to the reflexive approach through tracings, to learning processes of slow rendering of drawings, in short to the “reflection in action” process of design. Florian and Philip approach fosters a design methodology that privileges the previous interpretation of topographic, social and cultural contexts of intervention and implies what could be called a hermeneutic approach to the design process. And it is very much this “methodological” approach, based on history and drawing as tools for understanding our surrounding world, that allows escaping from the normative practices of the modern project (function and technology as purposes of architecture) and claims for the freedom and self-realization of architectural design proposals as producers of culturally significant artifacts. This very same idea may be observed in the marvellous drawings and sketches through which Florian and Philip communicate their projects, never misunderstanding endings with means (in which would result a kind of formalism), and giving new purposes to hand drawings, which not only represent ideas but also present or produce them – by the way, we may think that many of the computer generated drawings so common nowadays have lost their architectural purpose in part due to a zooming conception that takes a part for the whole, to pre-programmed activities implied

in software computer programs, to shortening the time spent in conception phases, and finally due to the “automation of section” produced by 3d drawings.

This session selected a group of communications that questions the use of drawing in the design process. Drawing is here understood as an orthographic architectural representation practice as well as a sketch expression that allows exploring, conceptualizing, and visualizing the spatial and compositional relationships of architectural design.

The communication by José Adrião is a reflection about the beginnings of data collection in design studio briefs where architecture-in-the-landscape is the main concern. The design studio brief, as Adrião conceives it, is mainly concerned on exploring diverse ways of architectural drawing and sketching that converge in design proposals. Starting from a site visit that allows students to get empirical data through various types of records (sketches, photographs, annotations, video and sound recording), students have to select and edit those elements in order to produce a presentation/synthesis mainly concerned on site first impressions. Besides these haptic recordings, students have to recollect objective data as: previous plans for the area, flora and fauna, geology, population, history, cartography, heritage, and finally to produce a model of the area. What's the role of hand drawing in the presentation/synthesis implied in a design proposal? Observations, descriptions, perceptions, data collections, all these things may be done through writing a report which connects what was previously apart; but hand sketching, hand drawing and hand mapping do have a specific role in the design process diverse and

complementary to writing, photographing and recording? And what's the specific role that drawing as projecting has in the design process that cannot be achieved through other means?

Monika Stumpp and Claudio Clovi Pereira communication reflects about the sketches of architectural conception of Andrea Palladio, the architect that, in a way, defined the modern architectural practice through orthographic representations, as we still conceive it today. In spite of few hand drawings presented, the communication makes a state of the art about the "design process" of Andrea Palladio. But it is not yet quite clear that Palladio would have a tri-dimensional architectural conception and the role that orthographic representations (which, in fact, are bi-dimensional representations) could have in his design process. For instance, and thinking about orthographic projections, what's the role that section has on his design process?

Tânia Clovi Pereira communication is centred on a reflection about Max Bill, the architect, teacher, and artist particularly interested on sculpture in public spaces. Addressing the role that Max Bill sculptures have on his architectural work (a conceptual role instead of a formal one), Tânia highlights the relationship between some themes of Bill architectural conception of space (continuity interior/exterior, topographic incorporations, etc.) and their sculptural counterparts which are the product of sculptural actions ("concrete artworks") as carving, cutting, and moulding forms. But couldn't this be more clearly revealed through orthographic representations, namely drawn sections? Meanwhile, the broadening of the meaning of function in architecture ("the more an artwork or building is confined in itself the less functional it is, and the more it is connected to its surroundings, both conceptually and practically, the more functional it is", says Tânia) raises precisely what was the design process of Max Bill, and specifically the role that sculptural work (as "connections to its surroundings") has on his architectural design process.

This double "return to the origins", the return to the origin of "modernity" in Italian counter-reform Andrea Palladio's work, or the modernity of modern movement in architecture in Max Bill's work, allow us to think about the limits, thresholds and possibilities of drawing in the design process as orthographic projection or as sketching of a birthing idea. The way in which Andrea Palladio went to Rome in quest of the "ancient buildings", and how those buildings were redrawn by him through orthographic representations, had a huge impact on architectural culture, and through those "projections" that were later engraved and book printed, Palladio brought culture to people. As about Max Bill, the way in which he included his sculptural work in his architecture is a statement about bringing joy and happiness to everyday life, about including spiritual values in a functional practice as architecture, in short, a way to give civility to people.

These communications allow us to think about the cultural and civilizing potential of architecture to construct tools adapted to the ends it pursues, and also be aware about the limits those instruments impose. We can also think about the role that orthographic projections as drawings do have in architectural conception, as for instance Robin Evans used to say.