

Born to See, My Task Is To Draw: Cultivating Architecture Intelligence Through Observation and Hand Drawing

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The process of graphic transformation of the environment onto a two dimensional page, acts for architects and students as an explicit and remarkable analytical and design tool, and as a way to develop a higher sense of details and architecture sensibility, architect Michael Graves in his 2012 New York Times article *Architecture and the Lost Art of Drawing*,¹ explains processes of hand drawing in design as “most powerful means of conceptualizing and representing architecture” and how today it has become an generational gap. As interesting as new design technologies are, and important to the overall evolution of architecture teaching and practice, there are important aspects of cognition, creativity and tactile design processes which may be improved with observation, Attention and hand drawing, moreover develop in architecture students a strong design potential, what we shall refer as Architectural Intelligence, this concept can be described as the mental projection of form and space which occurs cognitively when we clarify the mind and thought while in the explicit act of creation and design process.

This class looks at architecture observational drawing as a tool and method to develop attention and creativity. It raises the hypothesis that extensive hand drawing exercises will improve the students’ ability to observe the world, understand architecture and act upon it with design creativity, when

tactile overcomes virtual. Such experience is enriched with a real time building sites and places, not via virtual images, but by traveling, walking and discovering new environments, all important aspects of an architect’s education and its aesthetic discovery.

If we can define concepts of what constitutes intelligence, and how it relates to creativity within the realm of architecture design, perhaps we may be able to understand how to cultivate Architectural Intelligence within students and, redefine and re-envision different methods for designing and teaching architecture.

Instead of just a statement of technique, artistic value or culture, sketching explores and helps students justify a proper project choice, an approach, or argument, a way to set a commitment within the realm of architectural choices. A significant part of the students learning process: to understand all together tectonics, space, history and theory trough this aesthetic practice. Drawing potentiates a narrative which improves Architectural Intelligence, drawings specially on site observation activates the subject into a memory driven exercise because subjects engage visually and verbally in a set of multiple components, this process can be broke into these iterative cyclical steps: (a) Being in Place, (B) Observing, (c) Attention, (D) Mentalizing, (E) Sketching and (F) Understanding.

The class methodology requires from students that they must draw nearly every day, these drawings can either be very detailed or more free hand: a process which with time and practice builds confidence and skill in observation and graphic representations towards the understanding of context, scale, and space. The exercises start with students identifying the building/place main visual characteristic, to walk and engage in their space they are encouraged to observe for a long time the same object in detail or depth and then start to record their thoughts into graphics.

NOTES

1. GRAVES, Michael. 2012. “Architecture and the Lost Art of Drawing.” *New York Times*, September 02, page SR5.

Born to See, My Task is to Draw:

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To DRAW is to analyse
 To DRAW is to recognize
 To DRAW is to understand
 To DRAW is to rearrange
 To DRAW is to be creative

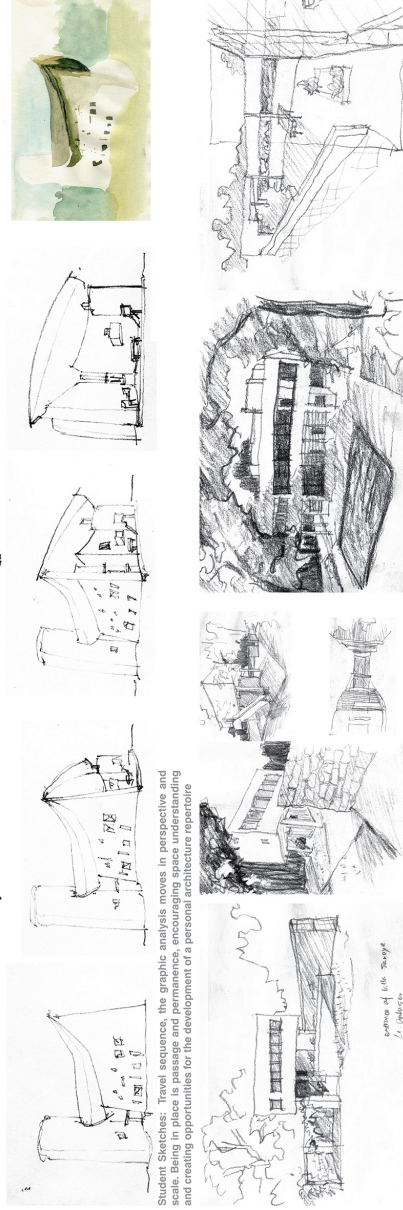
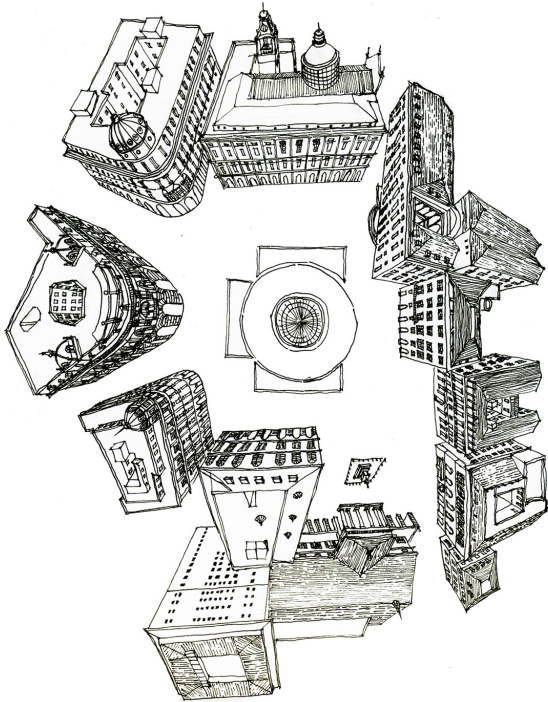
Anatomy of Consciousness

Processes of hand drawing in design are important aspects of **cognition, creativity and tactile processes** which may be improved with observation, Attention and hand drawing, moreover develop in architecture students a strong design potential, what we shall refer as Architectural Intelligence, this concept can be described as the **mental projection of form** and space which occurs cognitively when we clarify the mind and thought while in the explicit **act of creation** and design process.

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Student Sketches. Travel sequence, the graphic analysis moves in perspective and scale. Being in place is passage and permanence, encouraging space understanding and creating opportunities for the development of a personal architecture repertoire

sequence of site through / J. Caldeira

Media Investigations



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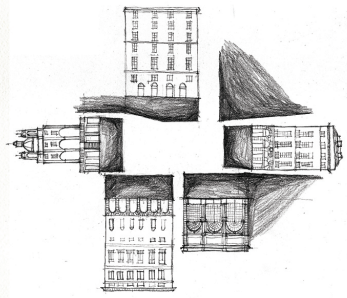
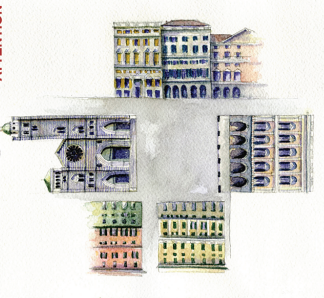
BEING IN PLACE

UNDERSTANDING

OBSERVING

SKETCHING

ATTENTION



The structure of the Piazza. A collage of multiple urban information to understand urban and pedestrian scale