Drawing and Loss 2022

BETWEEN INSTRUMENT AND ART FORM – CONCEPTS OF LOSS IN ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING

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The somewhat self-evident idea of drawing as an active medium is, in many ways, foreign to its historical application in architecture. Architectural drawing maintains a uniquely precarious position between its instrumentality in the process of building and its perception as a minor art form. The result is an uncomfortable double negative whereby the creative potential of architectural drawing is absent from both of these descriptions as an instrument or an art form. This loss, as a form of absence in architectural drawing's creative potential, is examined in this essay. It traces the arguments for architectural drawing in the two seminal essays: 'Translations from drawing to building' (1986) by the architectural historian Robin Evans, and 'Lines of work: On diagrams and drawings' (2000) by the architectural philosopher Andrew Benjamin. Comparing Evans's and Benjamin's analyses of Pliny the Elder's account of the origin of painting, it is revealed that loss is a requirement to free architectural drawing from its seconded position to realisable buildings. Embracing loss enables architectural drawing to be perceived as an incomplete, insoluble medium capable of perpetual change. And, rather than operating as a medium that falsely claims to define the spatial experience of buildings, architectural drawing is argued to instead contribute as an active element to an economy of creative mediums exploring expanded ideas of spatial practice.

Loughborough
University

Double negative of architectural drawing

The relationship between drawing and loss has a particularly significant, yet somewhat under-recognised, influence on drawing in the field of architecture. One reason for its limited recognition is the very well-established presumption concerning the role of architectural drawing within the practised means of production of realisable architecture. In these means, architectural drawing is presumed to be an instrument that has been cultivated to assist the tasks of spatial design. Like all tools, architectural drawing is legitimised by and limited to the effectivity of its adherence to these qualities of utility. In practice, architectural drawing's instrumentality is used for multiple functions of the process of design. It enables the collection of visual information about form from the mind of the architect; it supports the reformation of this information into depictions of space within visual languages of extreme acuity; and it comprehensively communicates this information to realisable buildings.

Foundational to what is essentially a descriptive process of moving information from the mind of the architect through the drawing to the building, is the concept of *orthographic projection.* As recognised by the architectural theorist Robin Evans in his essay 'Translations from drawing to building' in 1986, the mimetic duplication of an orthographic description of space in the imagination of the architect, on the flat surface of the drawing page, and in construction, enabled architects to maximise claims for the ideological impact of their architectural ideas on the material worlds (Evans 1986, pp. 167, 181). What one saw in the mind could be made into form by moving it through this uniform space of orthographic projection in drawing.[1] Yet, this process of aligning spatial characteristics in the imagination with those of construction required the relegation of architectural drawing to a kind of metaphysical state of transparency between the two. As described by Evans, the descriptive goal of drawing within orthographic projection has been to facilitate 'maximum preservation in which both meaning and likeness are transported from the idea through drawing to building with minimum loss' (Evans 1986, p. 181). Ironically, the greatest effectivity of architectural drawing in the design process requires its undisputed withdrawal from impacting the discourse of architecture. When invisible, architectural drawing's surface enacts a crucial instrumentality that enables the production of buildings, yet reduces drawing itself to what Evans described as a 'truck for pushing ideas from place to place' (Evans 1986, p. 186). A process of minimising the loss of architectural ideas by maximising the loss of the agency of architectural drawing.

If we turn our attention to an art of architectural drawing without a basis in instrumentality, the drawing appears to suffer a more unfortunate fate than its limited recognition in architectural practice. In many recent considerations of architectural aesthetics in expanded spatial practices, emphases on the experimental exploration of material processes, experiences, embodiment, performativity, and atmospheres, have relegated architectural drawing to a sub-genre of *affect,* if it is considered at all. One can too easily imagine how, for example, the drawings of the wrapped fabric installations of Christo and Jeanne-Claude are indeed very beautiful, comprehensive depictions of their projects, yet speak very poorly to the immense sensation of the experiences of *Running Fence*, *Wrapped Reichstag* or any of their other realised projects. Yet it is within this diminutive state as a poor-art that Evans recognises a potentiality that is uniquely attributable to architectural drawing, based on the recognition of what it *cannot* do.

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[1] Evans appears to also refer to orthographic projection as a technique used in architectural drawing to 'counteract the rampant instrumentality of essentialism' (Evans 1986, p. 181). Yet, it is the noticeability of the line's distortion from the rigid uniformity of orthographic projection to which he refers this agency. None of which disputes the claims made in this essay about the generative capacity of architectural drawing.

Reflecting on his experience of a lighting installation by the installation artist James Turrell, Evans appears to identify the curious contradiction whereby the more accurate the attempts to describe the spatial properties of Turrell's lighting designs with drawings, the less successful the drawings are at representing the qualities of the experience of the installations. Speaking specifically to drawings made by Turrell of his early light installation *Afrum*, Evans notes that these drawings only characterise the properties of the shapes that the lighting installation projects, and as Turrell's works tend towards the spatial applications of his investigations of light, the drawings are less able to reflect the properties of his enquiry (Evans 1986, pp. 157-9).

In a footnote to this observation, Evans cites several major land art, minimalist and interventionist artists as operating with the same modality to the drawings seen in Turrell's work.[2] In spite of the necessarily spatial characteristics of their projects, which are 'geometric and apparently reducible to drawing,' Evans argues that they are in fact not (1986, p. 189). He suggests that 'they possess properties of substance and luminosity which, though they may be mimicked in drawing, cannot be developed in investigative drawing' (Evans 1986, p. 189). A point which leads him to determine that, '[n]ot all things architectural (and Turrell's rooms are surely architectural) can be arrived at through drawing' (Evans 1986, p. 159). Evans's conclusion insightfully introduces the idea that the secondment of architectural drawing to a means of producing realisable architecture—or architectonic like forms—results in drawing's loss of a relationship with qualities of spatial experience. This in turn limits drawing's contribution to discourse on the nature of architecture. Recognising these 'intrinsic limitations' of working with drawings as descriptive instruments, Evans suggests they may leave relevant qualities of spatial experience to 'only be seen darkly and with great difficulty' (1986, p. 159).

Unlike the diminishment of drawing to a transparent instrument through its mimetic duplication of the spatial logics of orthographic projection, the type of loss seen in architectural drawings as an aesthetic medium results from its inability to fulfil the experience it claims to represent. The difference between these two types of loss in each case appears to derive from the different means by which drawing is recognised to relate to the properties of the imagination and the physical built environment. As an instrument of practice, architectural drawing loses its potential through the recognition of its *similarity* to the imagination and to building; yet as an aesthetic medium, architectural drawing loses its agency through the recognition of its *dissimilarity* to sensation and to experience.

This uncomfortable double negative of architectural drawing evidences a deeper theoretical dissonance concerning its common perception and use. Indeed, the recognition of the presence of loss in architectural drawing appears to have driven Evans to call for the exploration of what unique contribution architectural drawing can make to the conceptualisation of architecture. Referring to the qualities of spatial experience seen darkly by the descriptive instrumentality of architectural drawing, Evans attests that '[i]f judgment is that these qualities in and around the shadow line are more interesting than those laid forth clearly in drawing, then such drawing should be abandoned, and another way of working instituted' (1986, p. 159). Loss underpins Evans's call to address these unseen potentialities in the current modalities of architectural drawing. And further, loss instigates the opportunity to explore architectural drawing in a new mode.

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[2] See footnote number 8 (Evans 1986, pp. 157, 189).

Representation and absence

The relationship between loss and opportunity for exploration in architectural drawing is a topic to which Evans and few others have devoted significant attention. Yet, another significant contribution is the work of the architectural philosopher, Andrew Benjamin. A contemporary of Evans in respect to his theorisation of architectural drawing, Benjamin addresses the theoretical dissonance concerning the common perception and use of architectural drawing most acutely in the chapter, 'Lines of work: On diagrams and drawings,' from his book *Architectural Philosophy* in 2000. In this chapter, Benjamin argues—like Evans—that our poorly resolved understanding of the potential of architectural drawing results from its common relegation to the role of an instrument within the production of realisable architecture. Importantly, though, Benjamin discusses the instrumentality of architectural drawing specifically as a result of its relationship with the 'field of representation' in architectural design (2000, p. 143).

Suggesting that representation—as a conceptual entity—encompasses the properties of architectural drawing in a manner unchallenged in conventional processes of design, Benjamin argues that what results is a limited capacity of architectural drawing to act in a mode that reflects its potentiality. Focusing specifically on the line and diagram as central elements that constitute the architectural drawing, Benjamin argues that their 'specificity' or their potential is precluded from contributing to architectural discourse by a 'pervasive sameness enjoined by representation' (2000, p. 143). This idea of *sameness* appears to operate in a similar manner to the mimetic duplication of orthographic projection in the imagination, page, and construction, as identified by Evans in 1986. Paraphrasing Catherine Ingraham, Benjamin suggests that this assumption of sameness is a necessary condition for the concept of representation to be instrumental within established means of production of realisable architecture, by facilitating a 'relatively unproblematic move from "modes of representation to the actual building"' (2000, p. 143).

This subduction of the line and diagram into the conceptual framework of representation is indeed problematic to architectural drawing, as it appears to demonstrate a significant instance by which loss impacts its potentiality. Benjamin examines this impact of loss by considering representation's potentiality itself, and its effect on the line and diagram, rather than considering the effect of loss on architectural drawing directly. He does this by returning, like many have, to the ancient Roman scholar Pliny the Elder's account of the origin of painting.

Drawing on Pliny's account that the mythologised origin of painting began with the tracing of a line of a figure's shadow, Benjamin infers that '[t]he drawing of the line as the origin of painting links the line to the work of representation' (2000, p. 145). He expands on this by suggesting the formulation of representation as a conceptual entity that pervades architectural practice appears to originate from the *situation* of the scene of Pliny's account, rather than from the allegory of the account itself. The relationships between various elements in the scene appear to establish representation as the result of the opening or separation of the various elements that make up the visual identity of a thing. In this case, it is the separation of the figure in Pliny's account into a figure itself as the visible presence of a thing and the shadow of the figure as the visual presence of that thing's absence. The line is introduced and subsumed within this formulation of representation as that which turns the visual ephemerality of the thing's absence—the shadow—into an ossified, static image, the drawing (Benjamin 2000, p. 145).

This relatively straightforward observation of Pliny's account is complexified by focusing on the significance of the space between the various elements in the scene. In order to characterise the

formulation of representation and its effect on architectural drawing, Benjamin cites how the idea of 'immediacy' is a dominant presumption that overrides common perceptions of the space between the figure and shadow (2000, p. 145). Immediacy is understood as a kind of negation of an acknowledgement of this in-between space itself. It appears to be based on the presumption of sameness between the figure and shadow that would make-believe they are one and the same thing, and hence collapse the perception of the space between them.

Benjamin describes this kind of immediacy as a 'fantasy within representation,' a 'desire' of representation that is one of the most pervasive characteristics dominating its common perception and, by extension, that of the line, diagram and indeed architectural drawing, which it subsumes (2000, p. 145). Importantly, this characterisation of representation by immediacy appears to contradict the very quality that Benjamin establishes as the foundation *for* representation's formulation. From Pliny's account, Benjamin infers that representation arises from the space in-between the separate elements within the scene, yet he suggests that it is also representation that desires to collapse the perception of this in-between space, with the idea of an immediate sameness between the elements that make it.

The presence of this contradiction is not lost on Benjamin, and it leads him to his summation of representation's potentialities. This contradiction is addressed by introducing the term 'interdependence' to alternatively describe the relationship between the figure and shadow (Benjamin 2000, p. 146). Interdependence appears to describe a required *connectedness* between the oppositional elements of figure and shadow. Yet significantly, this connectedness is not the same idea as the collapsing of the space between these elements into sameness, as described by immediacy. Close examination of a note made by Benjamin on this point reveals that the difference between immediacy and interdependence is driven by the idea of difference itself (2000, pp. 145-6). Immediacy requires a recognition of the sameness of these elements, yet interdependence appears to require a recognition of their differences. Although both the figure and the shadow depend on each other to define each other, they are very much not the same thing. In spite of their inter-relationship, one is made from the absence of light, the other is made from flesh and blood. Hence, one cannot be substituted for the other.

Benjamin's introduction of the concept of difference within Pliny's account addresses the contradiction of the formulation of representation. By implying that the space between the figure and shadow exists as a requirement of their difference rather than a contradiction to their sameness, representation is characterised as a means to traverse and negotiate the differences of the elements that constitute the oppositional visual relationship of figure and shadow. Rather than being the instantaneous result of sameness, the space between the figure and the shadow is necessitated by the mediation of their differences. The presence of difference reframes representation as an active agent required to participate as a generative actor in the translation of visual knowledge between the properties of the presence of a thing, and the characteristics of the visual recognition of its absence.

Evans himself writes about Pliny's account and the space of translation of visual knowledge between drawing and building, yet it is Benjamin's account of representation that speaks directly to the concept of loss in architectural drawing (Evans 1986). The formulation of representation by Benjamin as the opening or separation of the visual presence of a thing speaks to the idea of absence, or loss, as foundational to representation's instrumentality. Like the shadow and the figure, representation is characterised by things that it is not. Without these other elements—in this case the properties of the figure and the shadow—representation cannot be described, yet when described with these other elements, representation cannot be described as a thing in itself. This 'ineliminable interdependence

within representation' demonstrates its own requisite incompleteness and necessity *to refer* in order to achieve some kind of 'closure' of purpose (Benjamin 2000, p. 146). Similar to the theoretical dissonance that underpins the instrumentality of architectural drawing introduced from Evans's analysis, it can be inferred from Benjamin's formulation that loss in the form of incompleteness is a requisite condition to enable representation to be useful.

Returning to the relationship between drawing and loss, it is the incompleteness of representation that appears to cause the loss of architectural drawing's potentiality. As drawing is subducted into the field of representation, Benjamin implies that drawing, in the form of its elements as the line and diagram, is subjected to the same characterisation of incompleteness as representation is in Pliny's account (2000, pp. 146-7). The result is that the line and diagram, as traces of the visual presence of something that is absent, the shadow, are themselves seconded to refer to something they are not.

> In this context therefore closure refers to the demands made by the incorporation of the line, diagram, etc., into the structure of representation. Within that structure a line marks both itself and what it is not. A diagram envisages a realization in which the envisaged object is what the diagram is taken to represent. (Benjamin, 2000, p. 146)

Benjamin's argument establishes the idea that within the structure of representation, as an incomplete conceptual entity, the line and diagram are themselves made incomplete. Their loss is the loss of the potentiality of their own condition in order to enable the utility of representation to convey. In architectural drawing, made from such incomplete lines and diagrams, this condition of loss is experienced to a high degree of acuity. The drawing requires its interdependence with the building in order to be perceived as valuable. The drawing refers to itself as a drawing, and yet is also required to refer to that which it is not, the building. The result is a perception of an incompleteness of architectural drawing when considered as an independent entity, what Benjamin refers to as a 'closure tinged with loss' (2000, p. 146).

The only closure of architectural drawing is as the perception of a thing that no-longer maintains a self-possessed condition of its own potentiality. The aesthetic condition of architectural drawing, its potential for interpretation, and its material qualities amongst many of its other properties, are diminished in order to maximise its conveyance of abstract meaning and signs that refer to the properties of things it is not. The result is that the architectural drawing operates in a state of, and is defined by, a condition of perpetual otherness. And hence, as recognised by Benjamin, the potentiality of architectural drawing is not only subducted under the influence of representation, but also under the validity of the realisation of the buildings to which it refers (2000, p. 147). Benjamin describes this as a great *melancholia* of architectural drawing, as the 'line, drawing and diagram' are linked to a perpetual sense of loss in the form of a 'pervading sense of absence' (2000, p. 149).

Opportunity and loss

This perception of the melancholic loss of architectural drawing speaks to the resignation of drawing's potential from the point of view of established processes for the realisation of built architecture. Yet, when turning to consider architectural drawing itself, there is something within the acceptance of the pervasiveness of loss that leads Benjamin, like Evans, to find opportunity for the exploration of drawings' potentiality. Significantly, this opportunity for exploration is not led by attempts to reject loss or negate drawings' otherness to building. These conditions of rejection and negation are in fact quite common practices within architecture, and are evident, for example, in instances of architectural drawing that

depict utopian visions of buildings of impossible or unrealisable geometry. In spite of such drawings' rejection and negation of presumed relationships to buildable architecture, as noted by Benjamin, their 'fantastic possibilities or utopian projections' are themselves still only 'explained within the structure of representation' (2000, p. 148). As such, unbuildable depictions of architecture do not challenge the subduction of the line and diagram to representation. These drawings still *represent* things that they are not, even if those things have no possibility of being realised.

The approach to finding the opportunity for exploration in architectural drawing is far more complex, and is based on the rejection of the *relationship between* loss and negation. Accepting architectural drawing as an incomplete condition and loss as somewhat intrinsic to its common perception, Benjamin rejects the idea that this is in fact grounds for lament (2000, p. 150).

> *Loss loses its melancholic hold to become an original loss and thus a sustained founding state of the incomplete. And, as has already been intimated, what this entails is a conception of the incomplete understood not just as always already incomplete but as necessarily given within its own economy. (Benjamin 2000, p. 150)*

Importantly, this acceptance of loss by Benjamin does not simply appear to result from being resigned to accepting the common use of architectural drawing in practice. Rather, acceptance of loss and incompleteness appears to result from Benjamin's position that the opportunity of drawing is to explore its potentiality within an economy of design methods and practices. The architectural drawing that does not contribute to design is limited in the contribution it can make to architectural discourse, and indeed, realisable architecture. Benjamin infers that rather than reject or lament architectural drawing's loss and incompleteness, it is in fact these properties that somewhat underpin drawing's capacity to subvert its perceived subduction to representation and to realisable architecture. As Benjamin states, '[o]nce the incomplete is viewed as a mark of production then the incomplete brings with it its own generative capacity' (2000, p. 150).

Based on this subversion, the generative capacity of loss—in the form of incompleteness—in architectural drawing appears to derive from the same property responsible for the subjugation of the elements of the line and diagram introduced earlier. That is, the formulation of representation as the *opening up* of a space between the visual properties of a thing. This property of opening up is based on the recognition of difference in the visual knowledge of things and appears to be a central driving force of representation that impacts the capacity of drawing to operate as a generative medium. Benjamin suggests that the alignment of this property of representation with the incompleteness of the line and diagram introduces a kind of perpetual opening up within lines and diagrams. By extension, this perpetual opening up can be applied to architectural drawing itself. The result is a new conception of architectural drawing as a perpetually incomplete entity in architectural design.

Through acknowledging the absence and loss of its potential brought on by its subjugation to the incompleteness of representation, architectural drawing can be conceived of by the same characteristic of incomplete open-endedness that confined it. This conception subverts the instrumentality of architectural drawing to convey pre-determined visual knowledge. Instead, this incompleteness enables architectural drawing to open up as a medium for the exploration of opportunity and possibility in the visual field. Loss of the concept of completion in architectural drawing, within the field of representation, is the same driver that enables it to be reframed as a site of incomplete experimentation for the production, rather than the conveyance, of visual knowledge in architectural design.

What this means is that rather than open out by trying to stand for what they are not, the line and diagram open up within themselves. Allowing for the continuity of this opening, allowing for the continuity of an opening resisting absolute finality and thus an enforcing completion. (Benjamin 2000, p. 152)

Loss in architecture

A reclamation of sorts to address the impact of this incomplete nature of architectural drawing is re-introduced by both Evans and Benjamin to processes of architectural design. In spite of the fact that both attempts are limited, they frame how one could approach the difficult challenge of addressing the potential implications of this knowledge of architectural drawing's incompleteness on architectural discourse. The limitations of both Evans's and Benjamin's attempts to examine the incompleteness of architectural drawing within established means of producing architecture appear to result from the fact that neither essay focuses on the re-introduction of this new understanding of architectural drawing as the core subject of their texts. Both essays quite brilliantly articulate re-imagined conceptions of architectural drawing. Yet it appears that the impacts of such discoveries have yet be charted in theories of architecture.

Evans's account reflects the carefully speculative approach of his training as an architectural historian. To address the potential impact of the incomplete nature of drawing on architectural discourse, he evidences what he understands as an actual instance of its occurrence in the history of architectural design. On recounting commentaries on the design process for the 'dome of the Royal Chapel at Anet,' by the architect Philibert de l'Orme in 1547, Evans notes that drawing's 'virtual absence from our account of the making of architecture' leaves unexplained how the design was able to be conceived (1986, pp. 173, 175). The design described by de l'Orme and what was built differ in a manner that Evans deduces must have required the drawing to operate as an active, opaque medium between the mind of the architect and the building. He uses this example to challenge the perception of architectural drawing as a transparent intermediary and to demonstrate its dynamic participation in the generation of spatial knowledge.

Examining the relationship between the geometry of the tessellated floor pattern of the Royal Chapel at Anet and the curved ribs of the dome above it, Evans evidences the generative characteristics of architectural drawing. By recognising that the link between the geometry of the floor and the dome required a kind of morphological change to the shapes of the compositional elements of each in order for one to reflect the other, Evans demonstrates that the potential for such change is only possible through the graphic extrapolation of projective geometry (1986, pp. 175-8)—a process that requires architectural drawing to situate and enhance the imaginative exercise of exploring new geometric possibilities of form. From this example, architectural drawing can be recognised as a necessarily generative medium that has the potential to 'engender [...] more potent forms from less,' and—borrowing Benjamin's terminology—change that state of ideas via their interaction with the unceasing possibilities of the perpetual incompleteness of lines and diagrams (Evans 1986, p. 178).[3]

This example introduces what Evans describes as 'architectural drawing in a new mode,' where, through staging the experimentation between lines and projective geometry, 'the imagination and the technique worked well together, the one enlarging the other' (1986, p. 180). Yet, it is the broader implications of

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[3] Original quote from Evans reads, 'engendered more potent forms from less.'

this generative capacity that speaks to the greater potential impact of architectural drawing on architectural discourse. Evans suggests that what results from engaging with drawing's new capacity is 'a perverse epistemology in which ideas are not put in things by art, but released from them' (1986, p. 180). Here, architectural drawing is opened to the possibility of being the site for the generative production of visual knowledge in architecture through an inversion of the instrumentalist concept of conveyance. Freed from the type of relationship with orthographic projection whereby the drawing mimics the mind into the building, now the material agency of drawing is recognised as an independent participant in the production of spatial knowledge. Through embracing drawing's potential as a generative entity of architectural design, Evans suggests it may be used in a manner that engages complexity in architectural discourse by introducing its own unceasing intentionality towards unpredictability that ensures, '[w]hat comes out is not always the same as what goes in' (1986, p. 181).

Like Evans's perverse epistemology, a similar condition of inversion is introduced by Benjamin to speculate on drawing's effect on architectural discourse. Benjamin suggests that 'freeing the diagram from the hold of representation, though allowing representation to be present as a possible effect, opens up […] a theoretical question as well as an architectural one' (2000, p. 154).[4] This diminishment of representation to a possible effect *of* the diagram shifts the agency of architectural drawing's contribution to design processes from an instrument for mimicry within representation to a site for creative exploration offered by the perpetual incompleteness of drawing itself. Benjamin deploys this recognition of the generative potentiality of drawing's incompleteness into other troublesome spaces in-between the other types of architectural drawings used in design processes: the plan and the section. Previously smoothed over by assumptions of representational sameness, Benjamin opens up the moments of difference between these types of drawings, stating, '[o]nce the diagram is attributed a different status then areas of inquiry and indeed areas of experimentation emerge as given within the gap between diagram and plan and section' (2000, p. 154).

The impact of the incomplete nature of architectural drawing on architectural discourse can be read from Benjamin's final suggestion, that it is important *not* to consider the incompleteness of architectural drawing as an end in itself. Rather, through an engaged *working-with* incompleteness within gaps in design processes, the generative, explorative impact of incompleteness can be more deeply realised within our spatial experience of architectural form. When we lose the presumption that architecture can be a complete thing, we are opened to the possibility of its potential. Or, as Benjamin puts it:

> Once taken as internal to the object—the object as already complete and thus completed with the possible internal inscription of the incomplete—the incomplete can be understood as part of the building's actual structuration and thus as integral to the building's economy. Once located within the object the incomplete maintains itself as work. (Benjamin 2000, p. 148)

The loss of loss

Like the double negative recognised in Evans's examination of architectural drawing, it is recognised from Benjamin's examination that accepting the loss of architectural drawing's incompleteness in the confines of representation enables it to be conceived of uniquely as a discrete—albeit insoluble—

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[4] Original quote from Benjamin reads, 'freeing the diagram from the hold of representation, though allowing representation to be present as a possible effect, opens up as both as a theoretical question as well as an architectural one'.

element in architectural design. The theoretical dissonance concerning its common perception and use, that Evans's account introduces, now appears to result from the appropriation of drawing as a transitory medium in an economy of architectural design. Yet, this appropriation appears to have had little consideration for the perpetual open-endedness of the medium of drawing itself. The loss of loss that is required to recognise the distinctive incompleteness of architectural drawing speaks less to the qualities of drawing directly and more to the absence of a form of reason within the principles and practices of architectural design. Specifically, it implies the absence of a preparedness to engage with the conception of incompleteness in a productive manner. Or, perhaps better articulated with a term not defined in opposition to the negation of another, the absence of a preparedness to productively engage with the conception of perpetual change.

Recognising this, architectural drawing can more clearly be described as a mercurial entity. Far from operating as the static, ossified incantation of the visual ephemerality of the shadow, as in Pliny's account, architectural drawing appears to maintain an equivalent form of ephemerality itself. It is perhaps more advantageous to consider architectural plans and sections more like the momentary making of castles from the moving shapes of clouds than to realistically suggest they reflect a meaning and likeness of the spatial experiences that architects claim they depict. A question that arises from this recognition is: how and why did architectural drawing shift from a medium of visual *opinion* within an economy of spatial knowledge dispersed over a community of spatial practices, to a medium that fictitiously claims to define that which is spatial only by that which is visible? The breadth of this question cannot be addressed here, albeit to say that such a history is a history of a reductive force that displaces a preparedness to address the complex nature of spatial experience with a conflated conception of visual perception. And, that a child's drawing that requires words and toys to describe its imaginative events may be more native to architectural drawing than any plan or section can be.

References

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