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The Implications of Increased
Architectural Drawing Processes



CORBELLETTI DESIGN CHARRETTE 2020, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

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Despite the growing uncertainty of handmade drawing production within our discipline, I do not believe that the future of freehand drawings is at risk. On the contrary, there is ample opportunity for freehand drawings to be enhanced by a mixed-media production that is inclusive of digital craft.

Because application-facilitated production of architectural images is often related with “advancement,” freehand or handmade drawings are consequentially synonymous with “tradition.” As a result, suggesting that such derivatives of “tradition” could be destabilized is met with apprehension if not outright rejection. However, I do not think it is appropriate to persist with the dichotomy of “old versus new” or the “computerized versus hand drawn.” I believe that there are newfound ways for architectural image production to evolve, and that it is a mistake to be caught by the antagonisms of separating the two.

Focusing on architectural image production, it is important to consider how drawings are produced within our discipline. Architectural images can be produced with software, drafted by computer or hand, simulated through algorithms, or collaged from different media. Architectural images can also be cut, woven, wetted, folded, sewn, and layered. Handmade drawings are produced from different materials, ranging from the medium of the surface to the instrument used to mark it, and relies on the tactile experience of the craftsman. Digital drawings can be produced from an infinite number of layers, filters, and scripts, and can imitate handmade processes to a certain degree. Taking into consideration the varied formulation of architectural images, a hybridized production process combining handicraft and digitization is also possible.

Given the nebulousness of image production processes, I consider software to be additional tools within the scope of architectural drawings. Similar to analog tools, they possess advantages and disadvantages that play a role in the drawing process; in image production, designers are always inherently making compromises based on real-time limitations. My Corbelletti piece, for example, was impacted by factors like the paper’s inability to hold watercolor pigments, handling the paper with a charcoal-smudged hand, or using folds to make straight edges in absence of a drafting tool. Replicating this drawing digitally would require a different production process and create a completely different drawing. However, it wouldn’t be any lesser than the handmade, because it would be derived from a process that is as equally valid. If anything, combining these processes to create an evolved drawing is just as exciting.

