



*Austrian
Cultural
Forum
New York*

THE PROJECTIVE DRAWING

*Curated by
Brett Littman*

February 6

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Measuring the Potential of Drawing

There is a discrete charm that only a drawing holds: that of the intimacy of hand and mind, of the most immediate expression of one's thoughts, of conceiving a plan, in which all is already inherent. Drawings are radical, reduced to the maximum, quintessential.

At the same time, another prominent feature of this artistic medium is the sheer abundance of different forms of expression, of narratives in alternative worlds it can take. In this regard, the present show *The Projective Drawing* is a survey of the potential role of drawings across the art disciplines.

I am excited to have won Brett Littman, Executive Director of The Drawing Center, as curator of this exhibition. The show he has put together explores the nature of contemporary drawing by assembling an array of ten bold approaches: from walks through drawing "sculptures" that invite us to lose ourselves in a sensorial experience; over visualizations of architectural space and personal history, as well as projections into multi-dimensionality—in this case in dialogue with the ACFNY's extraordinary setting of Raimund Abraham's iconic skyscraper; to establishing relationships with rituals and the natural world.

Brett Littman's thoughtfully experimental approach to curating this exhibition offers both pleasant surprises and challenges for the audience.

Christine Moser

Director,
Austrian Cultural Forum New York

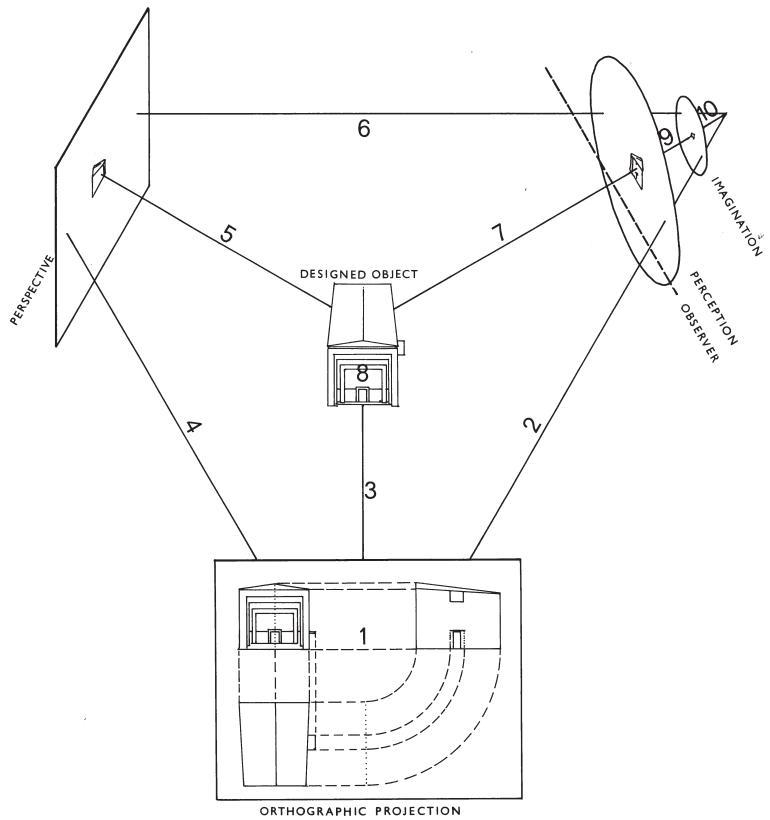
BRETT LITTMAN

The Projective Drawing

The architectural historian Robin Evans published *The Projective Cast: Architecture and Its Three Geometries* in 1995, a book that calls for a reevaluation of the centrality of Euclidean drawing in architectural representation.

Evans's alternative theory, the "projective cast," posits that representations of architecture should show the relationships between things rather than a two-dimensional geometrical drawing. Evans's diagram illustrating the projective cast can be found on the following page. One can read this diagram as a tetrahedron with the "designed object" as an unfixed point at its center. The exchange between each component (perspective, perception, and orthographic projection) is coequal and multi-directional, in other words: there is no necessary starting point or sequence.

Through the projective cast, Evans accommodates the vagaries and inconsistencies of perception, vision, and imagination in architecture. Using Evans's method, problems like reflection, luster, refraction, luminosity, darkness, color, softness, absorption, liquidity, atmospheric density, and instability of shape, which have often been hazards for geometric and architectural theory, can be absorbed into the descriptive lexicon of the field. In *The Projective Cast*, Evans's end goal is to define a new way to explain how we "see" architecture that is cognizant of a balance among sensations, motor activities, culture, physiology, pathology, and psychology, all of which underpin the human experience of built structures. Interestingly, Raimund Abraham's building for the Austrian Cultural Forum New York (ACFNY) is an architectural landmark that Evans probably would have described as projective; the full experience of the building only unfolds when one walks through the structure.



Robin Evans, *Projection and its analogues: The Arrested Image*, from *The Projective Cast: Architecture and Its Three Geometries*, MIT Press, 1995.

The speculative and experimental exhibition that I have curated for the ACFNY, entitled *The Projective Drawing*, builds on my own personal history of probing new ways to understand how we experience and interpret drawing. For the past ten years as Executive Director of The Drawing Center in New York, I have presented a series of exhibitions that question and problematize how drawing operates in contemporary culture. Rather than diminish, damage, or dispute traditional understandings of the primacy of drawing in artistic practice, my goal is to provide alternative readings that accommodate and absorb ideas that may at first seem counterintuitive, including creative practices that approach drawing as universal (everyone draws), as inherently reproducible, as “readymade,” as sound, and lastly as collaboration.

The exhibition *The Projective Drawing* considers how Evans’s projective cast, which is skeptical of drawing at its core, can be recuperated and applied to expand how we understand drawing as a medium. Taking the cue from his diagram of interconnected and non-hierarchical ideas, which forms a basis for understanding the built object, I chose work by ten artists, five of whom are based in Austria. Each artist requires viewers to activate a matrix of complex, and maybe untraditional, ideas to evaluate the drawings on view. These approaches to drawing might include locomotion, new geometries, spirituality and physiology, sound and other media, ideas of race and gender, and the way networks of information are visualized while embracing the inherent incompleteness of drawing as a way of representing ideas and the world.

Drawing installations by Judith Saupper and Lionel Favre, for instance, require the viewer to walk around, into, and even crawl under the works to fully experience them. James Siena, Brigitte Mahlknecht, and Seher Shah,

likewise, break with traditional geometry to create new visual spaces and forms that can only exist as suspended in our imagination. Leopold Strobl, who works with Galerie Gugging in Austria, creates miniature landscapes on old newspapers. Strobl's signature dark voids, which partially occlude the drawn landscape, prompt viewers to contemplate the essentially incomplete and partial nature of drawing. Katrín Sigurdardóttir's drawings for sculptural projects follow the artist's practice from concept to execution and each work points to drawing's inherent potential to impact the built world.

The Projective Drawing also foregrounds artists who use drawing to visualize life systems and abstract structures. Drawings created using plant extracts by the Shipibo artist Sara Flores are deeply tied to her relationship to the vegetal world and the healing ayahuasca ceremonies performed by shamans in the Peruvian Amazon. In a similar manner, series of collages and drawings by William Cordova amalgamate images in order to represent the body's relationship to vernacular architecture, sound, pop culture, and politics. Lastly, Simona Koch's large-scale genealogical maps highlight how drawing can visualize and make visible research, history, and networks.

Since 2007, Brett Littman has been the Executive Director of The Drawing Center, based in SoHo, New York. His interests are multi-disciplinary and he has overseen more than seventy-five exhibitions over the last decade dealing with visual art, craft, design, architecture, music, science, and literature. Littman is also an art critic and lecturer, an active essayist for museum and gallery catalogs and has written articles for a wide range of United States-based and international art, fashion, and design magazines.