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# BEAUTY AND MONSTROSITY IN ART AND CULTURE

Edited by  
CHARA KOKKIOU  
and ANGELIKI MALAKASIOTI

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# Beauty and Monstrosity in Art and Culture

Edited by Chara Kokkiou  
and Angeliki Malakasioti

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To Panos, Yannis, and Anastasia  
(Chara)

To my beloved Evangelos and Calliope  
(Angeliki)

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## 7a Architectural Representation as a Body without Organs

*Ozan Avci*

### Architectural Representation

Representation is an area of interest for various disciplines in order to decipher the relationship between the author of the representation and the represented thing and the meaning that is produced through it. In the context of architecture, architectural representation becomes a research area for scholars such as art and architecture historians, designers, architects, and academics in the field of architecture. Art and architecture historians are investigating the roots of architectural representation to understand the design and construction processes of architecture.

Before focusing on architecture, the conventions of architectural representation were investigated in the history of “design.” Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), who was the founder of Accademia del Disegno that was considered the first fine arts institution, describes design as “a visible expression and clarification of the concept that was in the soul, imagined in the mind and fabricated in the idea” (Didi-Huberman 2005, 78). Here design (*disegno*) is considered “drawing” in Renaissance Italian which was the translation of Vitruvius’s word “graphida” into Italian in that period. This Italian word comprises not only the drawing and the physical artefact but also the idea and the metaphysical concept (Emmons 2019, 2).

Paul Emmons says that “To design is to make visible the invisible” (Emmons 2019, 1). Here the invisible refers to the ideas in the designer’s mind. In the case of architecture, the fantasies and imagination of the architect appear in his/her mind initially as an ephemeral idea and becomes crystallized through architectural representation. *Disegno* is always looking towards the future and architectural representation is a projective representation of doing and interpreting signs to foresee a future (Emmons 2019, 5–6).

According to James Ackerman, architectural drawing is an incomparable place of active thinking where a drawing emerges from within the drawing effort, and it is a rich source of ideas itself. He highlights the common misconception that architectural design drawings are the only documentation of something that has been fully defined in mind. “Instead, drawing activity is the site of design creativity.” As the record and the source of architectural thought, drawing is a very significant guide for the imagination of the architect. While the design is evolving, the drawing starts a dialogue between the drawing and the drafter that are informing each other (Ackerman 2000, 25).

Paul Emmons makes a similar statement: “Drawing is not only an aid to imagination; the locus of invention is within drawing. Contemporary approaches to human thought do not limit its location to the brain; thinking is suffused throughout the body” (Emmons 2019, 2). This holistic approach is very important in the context of architecture. The body

of the architect is not separate from the body of the design. The embodiment process of design consists of the designer and the design itself as a folded and unfolded entity. Alva Noe describes this embodiment process and states that “Architectural drawing is a double act of embodiment. It includes both the drafter’s physical engagement with a drawing under construction as well as the imaginal body projected into the drawing of a future building. In performing a drawing, the architect feels as well as sees a design, uniting body with understanding” (Emmons 2019, 12).

If we go back to the origins of architectural representation, we can realize how the body of architectural representation has been described since the thirteenth century onwards. Some of the Villard de Honnecourt’s Reims Cathedral drawings that date back to the thirteenth century mark a milestone in the formation of conventions for architectural representation. The roots of modern architectural representation can be found in numerous drawings that could manage to survive since the sixteenth century. Very few examples are inherited from earlier times such as the plan of the abbey of St. Gall drawn on parchment, the full-scale elevation of the Pantheon’s pediment that is recently discovered, the plan of Rome drawn on marble, and some Egyptian papyruses. Wolfgang Lotz states that the convention of orthogonal drawing was founded by Renaissance architects. According to Leon Battista Alberti, perspectival representation, which distorts the dimensions of the objects, belongs to the field of painting, and architectural representations should be orthogonal because architects should be able to take measurements from their drawings (Ackerman 2001, 28).

The obsession with measurability defined a very rigid body of architectural representation that consists of orthogonal drawings such as plans, sections, elevations, and axonometric drawings. In this way of thinking, architectural representation is mainly regarded as an objective entity. This objectivity concern defines its own “beauty” in the context of aesthetics. The drawings that are formed according to the rules of this orthogonal world were considered “correct” and “beautiful,” while the others were “childish,” “ugly,” and “wrong.”

Maurice Merleau-Ponty points out a similar situation in the field of the arts. He says that modern artists and thinkers are often said to be difficult. Picasso is harder to understand, even harder to love, than Poussin or Chardin. He contrasts with Marivaux and Stendhal, and the same goes for Giraudoux and Malraux (Merleau-Ponty 2004, 49). Modern artists were criticized for being meaningless because meaning was attached to classical arts and its rigid body defined by the rules, such as the mathematical world of central perspective. If you break the rules of this body, prefer to be against the system, and become a body without organs, then the works of yours become beastly.

The same approach mentioned above is valid for architectural representation. The late eighteenth century introduced a rationalized theory of architectural drawings superimposed on pre-existing practices. This theory derives from Cartesianism and denies the tacit embodied approach. Descartes’ radical division of mind and body is persistently incorporated into architectural drawings by rejecting marking as unnecessary for design thinking. This reduces the architectural drawing to a diagram that only provides information about the design (Emmons 2019, 13).

Architectural representation is not restricted to the body of architecture but extends its limits to other disciplines. This reveals a notion of architecture as a powerful network of meanings and sensations open to interpretation and play, an ambiguity associated with certain challenges. Being suggestive rather than being exact fosters the development of architectural ideas and their realization (Søberg & Hougaard 2020, 246).

Architectural representation creates a dialogue among the architect, clients, and builders but this chapter focuses on the architectural representation that architects make primarily for their own use during the design process so as to advance their imagination. As a design tool, architectural representation should have a subjective character besides its objective aspects. What is to be subjective? Being subjective does not only mean the style of the architect or his/her drawings but also the subject’s presence in the representation. At this stage, architectural representation becomes related to bodily experience and every experience has its own deformations. Since experience is formed as a result of perception and sensory processes in the unity of body and mind, it is inevitable that bodily deformations will occur. The presence of bodily deformations in architectural representations transforms its rigid body into a body without organs. This “new” body may be defined as “monstrosity” rather than “beauty.”

### A Body Without Organs

In *The Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari see the body as a diverse surface with skin-like layers. A body without organs is not an empty body stripped of organs, it is a body functioning as organs, in the form of molecular diversity. It is not dead, on the contrary, it is alive and filled with diversity and multiplicities (Deleuze & Guattari 1988, 30). The body without organs is based on the singularity and autonomy of each organ. On the other side is the organism based on the organic organization of organs, which corresponds to the familiar notion of the body. The body without organs, which is the productive dream of schizophrenics, deals with the body only in its externality, in its relationship with other bodies, in its perception through relations of surface, difference, effect, and passion, in its functioning as a virtual and smooth space associated with the flow that flows along or across it (Sasso & Villani 2003, 62).

Deleuze describes the body without organs as flesh and nerves. A variable wave traverses the body without organs, forming regions and levels in various variations. Sensation emerges with the encounter of external forces with waves at this level, and when the sensation is transmitted to the body by wave, affective athleticism, it ceases to be representative and becomes real. It would be incomplete to define the body without organs, as the body without the organism, only in terms of the existence of an indefinite organ, it is also necessary to define it in terms of the temporal and transient presence of certain organs. The body without organs has become a tool with multi-purpose indefinite organs, enabling temporal transitions (Deleuze 2009, 49–51).

### Architectural Representation as a Body without Organs

Architectural representation as a body without organs associates with space, time, and body. Opposing the orthographic order of traditional architectural representation, freeing the space from these constraints and re-presenting and designing it in a more dynamic way with some temporary interventions will mediate to reveal the sensation. What turns into a body without organs is the representation itself, because the relationship that the representation establishes with what it represents has been liberated and included the audience in this relationship.

Creative thinking is triggered by shifting various fields such as painting, photography, cinema, sculpture, fashion design, and iconography to the field of architecture. Hybridities formed by field shifts are also critical in terms of creativity and the discovery of new

knowledge. Thinking architectural representation through encounters and hybrids with different fields mediates transforming its ontology and epistemology. Critical thinking is very important in this transformation process. Every encounter determined through relational thinking is questioned through critical thinking. Thinking without preconceptions, pushing the limits of each field, and leaving the patterns, that is, considering every example encountered as a body without organs liberates thought. With the liberation of thought, the field of creativity is opened, and representation and, therefore, design are also emancipated. Through this emancipation, the structure of both design and representation is opened, and through the open structure, the representation and design process gain a heuristic character.

Bodily deformations become a part of architectural representation as the architectural representation goes beyond the limits of objective reality and turns to the subjective. Sensation, which is the agent of bodily deformations (Deleuze 1999, 230), is also important in this respect. The emergence of sensation indicates the existence of body-space. The existence of the body-space is also an indication that the body and the space are united, that is, the designer and the designed are constantly changing places. These displacements activate thinking and mediate the emergence of creativity. As Rollo May says every encounter is a creative act (May 1994, 56) and through the pendulum-like movement between the designer and the designed, they both rediscover each other, unfold and fold again and start a creative process.

Expressing what will enable the architectural representation to play an active role in the design process and to have a positive contribution to the process of transforming the internal representations of the designer into external representations is the displacement between the subject and the object, the body and the space. The transformation of the body into space means liberating the architectural representation and transforming it into a body without organs. This body without organs has a fluid character between the designer and the designed. The fluidity transforms both the body and space and creates vibrations. The sensation emerges through these vibrations. The continuous movement between the body and space in this body without organs creates consistent encounters. As each encounter is a creative act, it triggers creativity and helps architectural representation to gain a heuristic character.

The primary purpose of representation is its mediating role between the designer and the designed, and this role can also be described as participatory because it enhances our ability to participate in phenomenal reality. But the process of representation can move in the opposite direction towards the liberation of results, ultimately their separation from their original communicative content. This tendency can be seen in the efforts of avant-garde movements to create a new language in expression and representation. This new language has been completely liberated from the conventions imposed by history and tradition (Vesely 2004, 19).

Architectural representation's performative and communicative aspects emphasize the notion that drawing acts like a subject and operates with an effect and agency. As a sensorial, material, and epistemic object, this agency participates in social processes (Bryant 2018, 165). This active role of architectural representation is necessary in today's interdisciplinary world. We cannot restrict architectural representation to its canonical body. Technological developments help us to emancipate architectural representation and discuss it in-between virtual and actual, analogue and digital, material and immaterial.

In their book titled *The Artful Plan: Architectural Drawing Reconfigured*, Martin Søberg and Anna Katrine Hougaard point out that the dominance of conventional orthogonal projection is challenged by a new post-digital condition. By combining aesthetic

sensibility and technical know-how, customized digital design softwares and their materialization and production make a progressive research field. In addition to that, Building Information Modelling (BIM) softwares digitally associate the possibility of transmitting architectural information and conventional building with drawing techniques and standards. By challenging the conventional architectural communication, BIM allows architects to work together with other members of the interdisciplinary team simultaneously on one digital model by shifting the design process from a 2D representation to a 3D simulation which is a recursive mode updated by parametrically related data continuously (Søberg & Hougaard 2020, 131–132). BIM constitutes a new body, which could be considered a body without organs, because it is not dominated by merely a field-like architecture but creates a common and collective space for all the actors in the design process such as architects, engineers, and technical subcontractors.

BIM is a good example of the design process as a body without organs. Besides BIM there are some other architectural representations that could be considered body without organs so as to highlight its emancipatory and participatory characteristics that may trigger creativity. Perry Kulper, Daniel Libeskind, and Bryan Cantley are good examples to extend the discussion in this context.

Perry Kulper states that representation enables a continuous critical discussion in the discipline of architecture, underlines the mediating role of representation, and provides movement between the language of architecture and the language of representation. Kulper says that representation in academia allows someone to work on things that are not yet known how to spatialize. Similarly, Aristeidēs Antonas states that representation is not very interesting when only a single thought that is accepted as correct is better understood or emphasized, and that the representation of a problem has a constructive character (Pohl 2012, 65).

As an architect and professor Kulper defines his way of drawing as follows: As I work, I ask specific questions about when and how to make design decisions; some project topics become important now, some later, some both now and later. Ultimately, I try to develop representations and design methods in accordance with what works and how. I use traditional drawings, but I often develop subject-specific drawings as well. Some of my drawings are more abstract, some are more figurative, while others may use more than one representational language at the same time. In my search for an alternate world, drawings proliferate on my desk, where many moving parts fuse together. Types of drawings include as follows: thematic drawings that visually establish the title and sometimes the scope of the project, often a universe of ideas without scale and hierarchy; strategic drawings that visually convey things, concepts, and behaviour over time with words, diagrams, footnotes, and indexes; different views that do not need synthetic solutions of perspective and construct the figurative features of architecture, and mysterious drawings that visually articulate the chromosomes and genetic character of the project (Kulper 2016, 60). You can see his works on his Instagram account (@pkulper/https://www.instagram.com/pkulper/?hl=en).

The spaces designed by Perry Kulper and the way he represents these spaces are inventive. In this context, as Vesely puts it, Kulper's drawings, images, and models can be considered liberating architectural representations in terms of translating reality into an image constructed with our inventive ability. Kulper states that he tries to reflect the complex world of his architectural ideas in his multi-layered drawings. Drawings appear as a cosmos of knowledge and possibilities that resist the banality of architectural representation. Many different materials and techniques such as polyester film, ink, tape, X-ray,

graphite, transfer photo and film, foil, paper cuts were used together in these drawings (Archinect 2012).

Like Perry Kulper, Daniel Libeskind's "Micromega series" (1979) and "Chamber Works" (1983) could be an example of a representational body without organs. These drawings can be seen on Daniel Libeskind's website: <https://libeskind.com/work/micromegas/> and <https://libeskind.com/work/chamber-works/>. He describes his drawings as "deconstructive structures" (Libeskind 1980, 2). These drawings of Libeskind are important in terms of liberating both space and representation. The atmosphere created by the combination of the familiar spatial references and the unknown in these drawings triggers the imagination. They have a fluid spatiality-like dream. I think it is the oscillation between known/unknown, visible/invisible that provides this fluidity. Spatial boundaries have an ambiguous character and open themselves to the temporal. This opening makes it easier for the body looking at the drawing to be involved in the drawing in different ways, thus increasing the possibilities for experience. I believe that the use of such drawings in the architectural design process will enrich both the designer and the designed.

Form:uLA – founded by Bryan Cantley – is practicing experimental design, attempts to blur the undefined space between architecture and its representation, and examines the role of drawing in this process. Combining architectural, graphic, and industrial design drawings with applications of music theory/notation and kinesiology, Cantley asks viewers and users of these spaces not only where they are but also when they are at the same time. While many architects use drawing as a tool to describe spatial situations, Cantley's work often attempts to collect the products of knowledge and experience notation (such as the ghost note in music), which prefers to remain in the unexplored, or often unseen, space (Battelli 2014). It is possible to find both spatial and temporal traces in the drawings, which consist of the unity of the familiar and the unfamiliar. These drawings, which are formed by architectural representations such as plan, section, elevation, and perspective, both push the boundaries of architectural representation and mediate the production of all new temporal and spatial information they reveal. Since the drawing includes the body looking at it, the space of the drawing turns into the body-space. You can see his works on his Instagram account (<https://www.instagram.com/bcantl3y/>)

### Epilogue

The number of the examples may be extended but all of them have a similar feature. They are all questioning the body of conventional architectural representation by challenging its rules and trying to emancipate themselves by becoming a body without organs. These bodily deformed architectural representations may create or start a new debate on the aesthetics of architectural representation and redefine the "beauty and the beast."

We have been witnessing various changes and developments in emerging technologies and materials through transdisciplinary research on biology, genetics, engineering, and architecture. Within this scope, Ray Kurzweil portrays a near future in his book "The Singularity is Near" and envisions a time where drawings and images in our minds will be directly interpreted by "neurological nanobotic" scanning systems within our brains. These scanning systems will then use "nano mechanical and/or chemo-biological" technologies such as protocells and synthetic proteomics to bring these images to life in the physical world (Kurzweil 2005). In periods of change, like we have been experiencing, there is an opportunity for the development of fresh concepts, the cultivation of analytical thinking, and the reorganization of established methods. The interplay between theory and practice

is manifested through representation, which serves as a means of connecting and integrating the two (Agrest 2000, 163–178). As Diana Agrest highlights, the future projections on architectural representation will also transform the future of architectural practice.

The concepts of "post-human" and "cyborgian" are frequently explored in theories of emerging and future technologies. These ideas suggest the potential for not only living, evolving, and intelligent images but also those that are (sometimes) partially autogenic, automatic, autonomous, and self-evolving. Given these possibilities, it is important to reconsider how architecture can accommodate these more radical and literal forms of technologically mediated instances in the future (Garcia 2013, 30). I believe that thinking architectural representation as a body without organs is a good start for mediation between technology and architecture.

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## 7b Exploring the Urban Jungle

### Making Space for Wildness in Cities

*Siân Moxon*

#### The Beauty and Utility of Urban Nature

Cities rich in nature benefit wildlife and humans. Urban areas can foster significant biodiversity. Species such as hedgehogs and bumblebees are more successful in urban than rural areas (Hayhow et al. 2019) (Samuelson et al., 2018), while species including peregrine falcons have become city specialists (Kettel et al. 2019). Targeted conservation measures can boost urban biodiversity and have led to increases in bat species (Hayhow et al. 2016) and urban ponds attracting more species than rural ones (Hill et al. 2017). When declining global biodiversity has put one million species at risk of extinction (IPBES 2019), urban areas are rightly recognised as an ecosystem of importance for biodiversity conservation (Keith et al. 2022).

Addressing this ecological imperative would also benefit humans. Inhabitants of more biodiverse cities enjoy better health and well-being (Maas et al. 2006; Maller et al. 2006; Fuller et al. 2007). This can be linked to "biophilia", an innate love of nature (Dembe and Lundberg 2000), which explains the desire for contact with nature among city residents (Van Den Berg, Hartig and Staats 2007) and the perceived enhanced appearance of city greenspaces with high biodiversity (Gunnarsson et al. 2017), prompting higher property values in cities with more greenery (Ye et al. 2019). Inhabitants further benefit from "ecosystem services" afforded by biodiverse urban greenspace (Costanza et al. 1997) (Harrison et al. 2014), natural processes that mitigate urban environmental challenges, from air quality (Janhäll 2015) to climate-change resilience (Gill et al. 2007).

The amount and ecological value of urban greenspace should therefore be increased to help wildlife and people by harnessing its beauty and utility. "Urban rewilding" has been advocated (Prior and Brady 2017) as a cheap, low-maintenance, flexible way to achieve this (Pettorelli 2022).

#### Threats to Urban Nature

But urban nature is being lost to development (Haaland and van den Bosch 2015), which a growing urban population will only exacerbate (UN 2018), and its habitat value diminished in some contexts by altered management practices (Smith 2010), indicating that its benefits are not widely understood. Meanwhile, some people are resistant to rewilding, with the "terrible beauty", or monstrosity, of nature – inherently encompassing untidiness, death and decay – contributing to an image problem even in rural areas (Prior and Brady 2017). Large-scale urban rewilding experiments in post-industrial sites in Dessau and Duisburg in Germany have had mixed success in terms of their perception by local

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