

(Re)Presenting Representation

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Representation is a broad umbrella that covers different disciplines such as design, the arts, architecture, cinema, literature, politics, economics, semiotics, etc... We may even say that representation is in every act of human beings whenever they think about something. This fundamental role of representation makes it very critical in the design process, thus the design process is based on the dialogue between the inner and outer representations. In this third issue of UOU Scientific Journal, we would like to focus on the nature of representation, its own ontological aspects, materiality, immateriality, and its crucial role in the design process rather than its metaphorical side related with politics and semiotics.

Hans-Georg Gadamer points out that *"representation does not imply that something merely stands in for something else as if it were a replacement or substitute that enjoys a less authentic, more indirect kind of existence. On the contrary, what is represented is itself present in the only way available to it."*¹ In this respect, representation can be the subject of research. Here two conceptions may occur: representation of the world and the world of representation. The former proposes the origins of representation for the agenda, such as the ways of representing the world during the Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Modern or contemporary periods. The latter highlights the ontology of representation and its emancipatory, participatory, imaginative, speculative, predictive, and interpretive characters.

"The tension between the productive and the creative reality of architecture may be better understood if we examine more closely the nature and role of representation. In a conventional

*understanding, representation appears to be a secondary and derivative issue, associated closely with the role of the representational arts. However, a more careful consideration reveals, very often to our surprise, how critical and universal the problem of representation really is. What we normally refer to as reality, believing that it is something fixed and absolute, is always a result of our ability to experience, visualize, and articulate—in other words, to represent so as to participate in the world. Countering representation's participatory function is its tendency toward emancipation and autonomy. This is particularly evident in areas where representation has acquired a high level of coherence and relative independence. In design, which can serve as a good example, such coherence is achieved through drawings, models, different projective techniques, and more recently through digital simulation, known better as virtual reality. (...) The limited range of emancipated representations can be challenged only by different attitudes toward culture, sustained by a different kind of knowledge that is based on the principles of dialogue."*²

In order to create a dialogue, representation may act like a pendulum between the designer and the designed thing. All the tools and techniques that we use while designing have a significant role in this fluid action. *"The creative reception and adaptive assimilation of what architectural representations stimulate all reflect the imaginative capabilities of the designer, the critic as well as the contemplating observer."*³ Therefore, questioning these tools and techniques and extending their limits may open up new worlds of representations, such as new forms of spatial qualities and architectural manifestations.

"Architectural conception and realization usually assume a one-

*to-one correspondence between the represented idea and the final building. Absolute control is essential in our technological world. Although drawings, prints, models, photographs, and computer graphics play diverse roles in the design process, they are regarded most often as necessary surrogate or automatic transcriptions of the built work. However, an invisible perspectival hinge is always at work between these common forms of representation and the world to which they refer. To disclose appropriate alternatives to the ideological stagnation plaguing most architectural creation at the end of the second millennium, the first crucial step is to acknowledge that value-laden tools of representation underlie the conception and realization of architecture."*⁴

In an architectural inquiry, we may ask what should be represented in architecture. We may also start the debate by questioning how we define architecture today. The ontological shifts in architecture have affected the epistemology of architecture. This could be defined as another pendulum between actual and virtual, material and immaterial, visible and invisible. How can we reflect these changes into architectural representations? How do we perceive space through architectural representations? Can sensation emerge within architectural representations? Can we represent experience rather than "the building"? These questions can be multiplied so as to search for new modes of representation.

In addition to these questions above, this issue of UOU Scientific Journal aims to explore the notion of representation in the field of research in architecture through the possible keywords listed below:

REPRESENTATION AS EMANCIPATION

The first article, which is entitled "**Narrative Processes in Architectural Design**", revolves around keywords such as representation as emancipation, visual representation, temporal representation, and experiential representation. This article focuses on the pedagogical approach to representation in architecture through the elective course that the authors give and presents a critical view on the role of representational practices in architectural design. The authors question the subjective and objective character of architectural representation and highlight the importance of immaterial aspects rather than merely the material aspects of architecture. By integrating everyday narratives into architectural practices through representation, the authors aim to discuss subjectivity, temporality, and spatiality in architectural design. To my mind, this approach emancipates both the designer and the designed thing, in this instance the architecture student and student work through architectural representations.

The second article, which is entitled "**A Critical Reading on Spatial Narrative in Abstract Comics**" also revolves around the keywords such as representation as emancipation, visual representation, and temporal representation. The aim of the article is to emphasize the potential that emancipates the spectator and makes the representational form open to sensations by considering the communication between the spectator and representation through abstract comics. The author criticizes the lack of experiential engagement in traditional architectural representations that are more object oriented and argues

that the experience can be made visible through the presence of temporality in representation. Abstract comics have been evaluated as a form of representation that will make the spatial experience visible by making the concept of time legible with the possibilities of representation. A participatory, emancipatory, and imaginative environment can be created through representations by making the invisible aspects visible.

The third article, which is entitled "**The Clock(s) of A Drawing and the Hermetic Time-Reader/Teller: Dreaming of Drawing dials and the Enigmatic Hour(s) of A Drawing**" portrays experimental research on the reading of time through drawings and offers a sophisticated discussion related to keywords such as representation as emancipation, representation as speculation, visual representation, and temporal representation. The article flashbacks to historical processes of time reading and states the 'hermetic time-reader' primarily as a 'drawing'. The author has experimented with this process with her students and creates time-telling drawings / instruments. The projective cast of drawings create a ritualistic dialogue between the drawer and the drawing, and this continuous act emancipates both the subject(s) and the object(s) involved in this process. This attribute of the article creates a link between representation as emancipation and representation as speculation.

REPRESENTATION AS SPECULATION

The fourth article, which is entitled "**Visualizing Complexity in Extreme Architecture**" highlights the importance of visual representation in the design process of a project

in extreme conditions. Speculations on architectural design are enabled through representations of complexities. Unfamiliar conditions, extreme situations can be comprehended through various architectural representations and digital technologies. In this spectrum, the article starts a debate on representation as speculation, visual representation, and representation of complexities.

The fifth article, which is entitled "**Drawing Spatial Movement**" questions the duality of static and dynamic characteristics of architecture and their relation to architectural representation. The authors emphasize the presence of time and movement in architecture and propose new modes of architectural representations to represent them. In order to exemplify their argument, speculative and experimental student works of "The Moving Through" master's course at the Bergen School of Architecture are presented. Inquiry into the "new" for speculative futures can be projected through new languages, new ways of drawings, and new forms of canvas. The article constructs the discussion around the keywords such as representation as speculation, visual representation, temporal representation, and representation of experience and reminds us of the importance of immaterial and ambiguous aspects such as movement, time, bodily experience and perception.

REPRESENTATION AS IMAGINATION

The seventh article, which is entitled "**Visionary Representation as an Anomaly**" discusses representation in a cultural context and asks whether local representations can be instrumentalized to handle the idea of the future,

new and cultural interactions in a Turkish context, and applies the booklet titled *Güzelleşen İstanbul* (Beautifying Istanbul) as a visual-imaginary trajectory. By mapping various trajectories, conceptual extensions are opened to redefine the concepts of “the visionary” and “the avant-garde” in the Early Republican Period of Turkey. This article also touches upon semiotics in a cultural and national context and mainly focuses on visionary and visual representations.

REPRESENTATION AS INTERPRETATION

The eighth article, which is entitled “**A Method Proposal for Mapping the Patterns of Originality in Design: Raymond Williams (RW) and the Keywords**” proposes a method for analysing and representing the evolving and changing definitions of origin and originality, as well as the dynamic conditions that created them by bringing them together contextually, semantically, and interdisciplinary. Rather than using traditional linguistic tools to define and examine words and concepts, this study encourages the use of Raymond Williams’ inspiring work *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1985) to map all the interdisciplinary relations of the keywords into a network, visualize the changes in meaning, selectively bring all the data around the keyword ‘originality,’ and reveal patterns of the concepts in relation to originality. The article revolves around the keywords such as representation as interpretation and textual representation and by visualizing textual data it also touches upon visual representation as a tool for interpretation.

The ninth article, which is entitled “**Re-visiting representations of ‘nature’ and city through the Long**

Walls zone” investigates the representation of inside and outside in relation to concepts of ‘nature’ and their relation to ‘city’ by mapping The Long Walls of Classical Antiquity, linking Athens and Piraeus in an academic study. The discussion ultimately focuses on the representation of spatio-temporal traces in a specific area of the Long Walls zone which is considered as an infrastructural palimpsest by the author. In order to understand the area and unfold its layers, representation - specifically mapping - is used as a tool for interpretation.

REPRESENTATION AS PARTICIPATION

The final article, which is entitled “**The Architectural Representation through Mapping Controversies**” concentrates on the use of mapping controversies for architectural representation in order to investigate various architectural alternatives in an integral and dynamic manner that dissolves the boundaries between conventional areas of knowledge. This transdisciplinary approach goes beyond the traditional dichotomies in architecture (qualitative/quantitative, visible/invisible, nature/culture, objective/subjective, and so on) that, when considered separately, limit the possibility of emerging opportunities that may result from their collaboration. *The earthquake housing reconstruction in the coast of Oaxaca* is presented as a case study to demonstrate the need of creating a *Map of the Local Conditions*. This map has a critical role in considering significant emerging factors (human or non-human) for the development of future earthquake housing projects in the region. Through this case study, the authors emphasize the importance of representation as participation.

Through these 9 articles, this issue of UOU Scientific Journal offers a platform for rethinking and discussing the concept of representation in an architectural context. In order to deepen and exemplify the discussion, the “Atlas” section that consists of student works is created. We wish you a pleasant reading journey that raises new questions, triggers your imagination and creativity!

NOTES

¹H. G. Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, trans. N. Walker, ed. R. Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 35.

²Dalibor Vesely, *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation: The Question of Creativity in the Shadow of Production*, The MIT Press, 2006, p.4.

³Nader El-Bizri, “Imagination and Architectural Representations” in “From Models to Drawings: Imagination and representation in architecture” edited by Marco Frascari, Jonathan Hale and Bradley Starkey, Routledge, 2007, p.35.

⁴Alberto Perez-Gomez and Louise Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*, The MIT Press, 1997, p.3.

