

Detail as Material Entanglement

A conversation between
the Editorial Committee members

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Invited Editorial

AKP: If the micro-space of the detail is understood as a material entanglement rather than a simple junction - what qualities of drawing or creative research disclose invisible stories and foreground hidden interactions between material, matter and everyday life?

JAB: From my point of view, in Architecture, matter and its construction depend on the way they are put into operation. Materials and their durability adapt to the envelope of the overall design.

The detail is the smallest constructive unit that implicitly contains the seed of the future project. The generation of construction details, within the design process, brings us closer to the modern architectural project. To build the architectural product, one must stop, detail, discard, and continue — on one hand, to ensure nothing is overlooked, and on the other, to gradually adapt matter to object systems. It is a continuous process of trial and error, accompanied by cross-disciplinary research. Translating the definition of 'detail' means engaging in an ongoing investigation in which constructive proposals are expressed non-linearly and through diverse, unconventional techniques (related to disciplines other than architecture).

Form, derived from the detail, is part of its definition. In the ship *Argo*, on which the Argonauts accompanied Jason to Colchis to seize the Golden Fleece, the parts were gradually replaced to the point that they ended up with a different, new ship without changing its name or its form. Processes of change occur upon a clearly defined and identifiable form. Inhabitants identify with the object and become part of its maintenance and endurance. In public constructive situations, we must focus on developing physical elaborations that have nothing to do with conceptual ideas or diagrams. A working method

must be established in which responses are produced directly through the act of material selection or elaboration. Working with the material implicitly carries the form, structure, and representational nature of the object. The current form of architecture is a continuous work process developed across cultures and generations, adapting cultural and technical production methods to the needs of each specific cultural condition.

The relationship with other fields of knowledge opens up closed architectural structures, which have nothing to do with a contemporary conception of creating this model. For its real construction, relationships with other disciplines must be fostered, incorporating aspects and possible points of connection with History, Mathematics, Structures, Construction, and Installations... Without this commitment, the project lacks the character of a global construction and ends up being a product made in parts and stages, with little practicality. The architecture of the 'Object' arises from a common core of knowledge we handle in its entirety — a core that relates to culture, social systems of interaction, materials and their methods of assembly. The structure that makes objects real, and the management and production of the project for its transformation into tangible material. This core allows for the growth and updating of knowledge levels, generating architecture in a filamentous way, always from the individual order developed by each architect through the management of that core. The construction of public systems cannot be defined from outside the project; it must be generated in its conception and from within itself. On one hand, there is the elaboration of the project's 'base detail', developed collectively by all participants. Through this process, data concerning construction that can be established in this public system would be fixed. On the other hand, decisions about materials — which materials are envisioned, and what are the processes of material representation of the project — must be determined.

Two questions arise for me regarding the definition of the architectural object: Can a situation be drawn only with the materials it is composed of? Can an action be carried out solely with the matter constructed during it?

MLN: Architecture can be understood as a systemic field in which three fundamental dimensions intersect: the programmatic dimension, conceived as a sequence of actions; the structural and material dimension; and the spatial configuration of spaces. These dimensions are not autonomous but deeply intertwined, and their interaction generates the architectural object as a complex and dynamic entity. Within this framework, architectural drawing is not merely a representational tool but an operative device capable of selectively foregrounding one of these dimensions while still holding the others in tension.

The architectural detail emerges as a critical micro-space where these dimensions converge. Rather than being a simple technical junction, the detail can be interpreted as a site of negotiation between matter, construction processes and everyday practices. It is within the detail that material decisions become spatial conditions, and where programmatic actions are translated into tangible forms. As such, the detail operates as a condensed field of architectural intelligence, capable of revealing latent relationships that remain invisible at larger scales. In this sense, drawing plays a crucial role as a form of creative and projective research. When understood as a three-dimensional and temporal device, drawing allows for the investigation of material behaviours, spatial sequences and human actions simultaneously. It becomes a tool for situating actions in space, testing material configurations and imagining alternative realities, rather than merely describing an existing or predefined solution. Through drawing, the architectural project can be explored as an open system, where details are continuously redefined in relation to use, transformation and time. The project by Natalia Józefczyk – included in the ATLAS - exemplifies this approach by proposing a mode of drawing that starts from the careful reading of existing conditions and their spatial potentials. By mapping actions and material conditions within space, her work demonstrates how drawing can function as a tridimensional and operative instrument, capable of generating new spatial interpretations. Here, the detail is not fixed or resolved once and for all, but remains an active component of the design process, enabling the imagination of different spatial and material scenarios. From this perspective, the architectural detail becomes both a design tool and a critical lens: a means through which the complexity of the architectural object can be understood, constructed and reimagined. Drawing, therefore, does not simply communicate architecture; it actively participates in its formation, transforming material entanglements and everyday interactions into spatial propositions. The answer to these questions is not given in advance, but unfolds through the projects and reflections presented in this issue, curated by Angela Kyriacou Petrou, we invite our readers to navigate "IN DETAIL" as a shared field of inquiry.