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Drawing Out Gehry, an abbreviated essay

This abbreviated essay presents thoughts on the production of space within the drawing (in relation to the drawings's proximity to architecture. This reflection operates as an annotation to a set of drawings titled '*Drawing Out Gehry*.

Drawing Out Gehry is a set of drawings in dialogue with Frank Gehry's sketch included in the Boyarsky-Collection.

My interest in the sketch is twofold : it first of all forefronts the autonomy of information within a drawing, in this case, the sketch's capacity to distance itself from acquired meaning and assigned representation. Secondly, this particular drawing practice embodies the drawings' capacity to operate as a medium to reflect through.

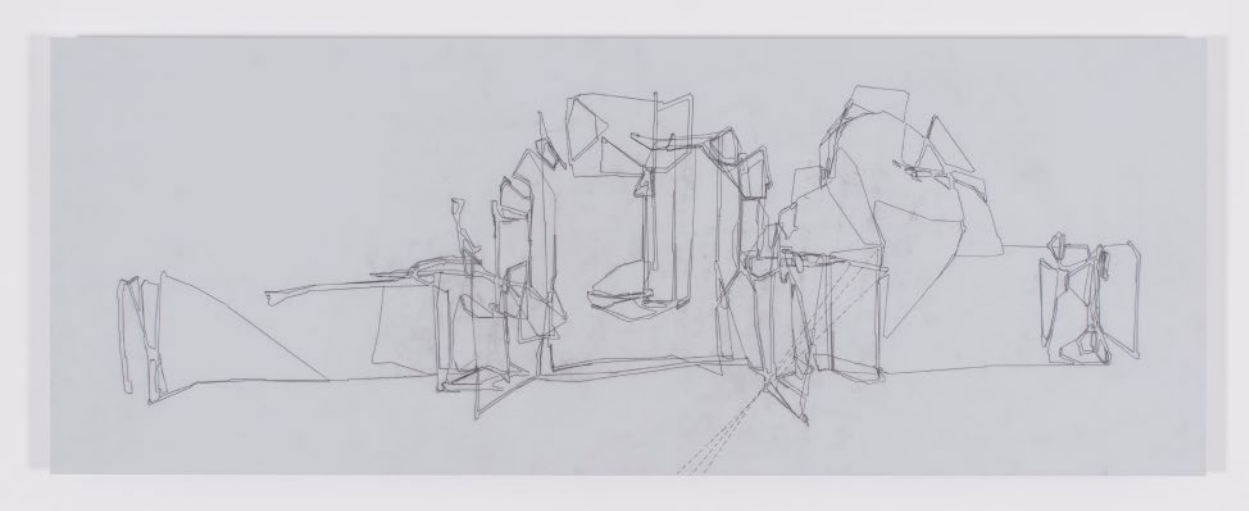

Fig 1 Drawing Out Gehry I, graphite and wax pencil on mylar, (part 1, 2017)

1. **Drawing as a reflection on spatial intend**; - The observation of a sketch

The sketch by Franck Gehry of the Goldwyn-Hollywood Library is made in 1983, three years before the completion of the building. Although this particular sketch drawing of Gehry stands present as a drawing in service of a building practice, one can detect a different background to this. The drawing is part of an intensely private drawing practice of Gehry never intended for public viewing.
The drawing demonstrates the sensuous line work that rejects traditional architectural draftsmanship in favour of what Gehry describes as a more 'open-ended' form of expression/ exploration. Gehry embraces drawing as a form of reflection, -a reflection that happens as his pen moves over the paper- his drawings have been associated with the unconscious, 'automatic' drawings of the surrealists. [1]

This sketch, a drawn section through the envisaged Hollywood library, seeks not to explore nor resolve the architectural detail at the resolution the building, rather, the sketch observes the architectural tectonics, principles and dynamics of what he conceives as the building and what he ultimately conceives as the architecture of the project.

The duality between seeing a sketch in service of a building practice in its representational role and drawing used as a tool for reflection is particular in Gehry's architecture practice. This latent duality is what interests me when I observe this drawing. He is not sketching out a particular problem or architectural detail, his sketch is much free-er than that, it seems to be searching for the architectural capacity of what is thought to become the building, it is searching for and exploring that what will make up the architecture of this building.

With this notion as a starting point I undertake a material dialogue with the sketch and I observe it. I observe the sketch by drawing it from different points of view. In this process of reiteration, I allow the embedded resolution of the drawing and its spatial depts to perform in a capacity that serves me and my search for an architectonic space.
The observation is drawn from drawing to drawing: every drawing is based on particular points of view of the previous drawing. These standpoints or iterations of the same object operate as entry points into the drawing. In this drawing process, there is a transfiguration that takes place from one drawing to another, from one point of view to another. The transfiguration of visual information from one state of the drawing to another is a process of mediation to be seen and sensed in the drawing resulting in the production of space. In this sense, although the drawings as outputs are autonomous in character and stand on their own, there are no premeditated or planned outcomes, the drawing process is in aide of understanding the investigation at hand: to interrogate this particular relationship to architecture and the nature of its architectural capacity.

When searching for the architectural capacity of my drawings, I like to lean on Hejduk and Eisenman's common ground in their reasoning on how to consider something as architecture. Although they strongly oppose each others standpoint, in their differences, they find a common ground that seems like a constructive way forward in probing the production of architecture within the drawing

Fig 2 Fig 2 Drawing Out Gehry I, graphite and wax pencil on mylar, (part 3, 2017)

2. Wherein resides the architecture? - J.Hejduk and Eisenman's common ground.

"I remember Dr. Eisenman coming to Berlin and seeing these two pieces in this great hall. They were 50 foot high ( ), they were giving off something. We talked about an aura. A thing like that. And he said to me: "That's not architecture, because you can't get int them." And I looked at him and said: "You cant't get in them." In other words, he was not in the position to get into them. You can only get into something if you understand or are willing to."[2]

Taking this statement of John Hejduk during an interview where he articulates the differences between his point of view and Eisenman's on what can qualify as architecture, as the starting point, there seems to be a common ground in the statement that one needs to be able to enter the construct to be able to verify if it is architecture. The difference in point of view sits in the expanded definition of how one can enter. For Eisenman, one needs to be able to physically enter a building. Hejduk on the other hand expands the definition of 'entering' as a form of understanding or willingness to understand.

Drawing does not have a fixed relationship with architecture, and seems to remain within the associative realm and on the exterior of spatial intent. In that sense, the drawing's relationship to architecture stays at arms length. As I am raising the issue, I nurture an understanding through this new set of drawings, Drawing Out Gehry (II). I'd like enter the drawing I am kept from at arms length and interrogate a relationship to architecture discourse to qualify the nature of their architectural capacity.

Eisenman conditions architecture with the qualifying experience of a physical entrance, while Hejduk speaks about the actuality or event of entering, which could exist outside a cartesian reality. I think here I have found an entry point to expand on my understanding of the drawings' proximity to architecture.

References

[1] Marjanovic, I., Howard J., Drawing Ambience: Alvin Boyarsky and the architectural association, The University of Chicago Press, 2014, p70

[2] online video except: Michael Blackwood Productions. John Hejduk: Builder of Worlds, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGbJXxsYm3M

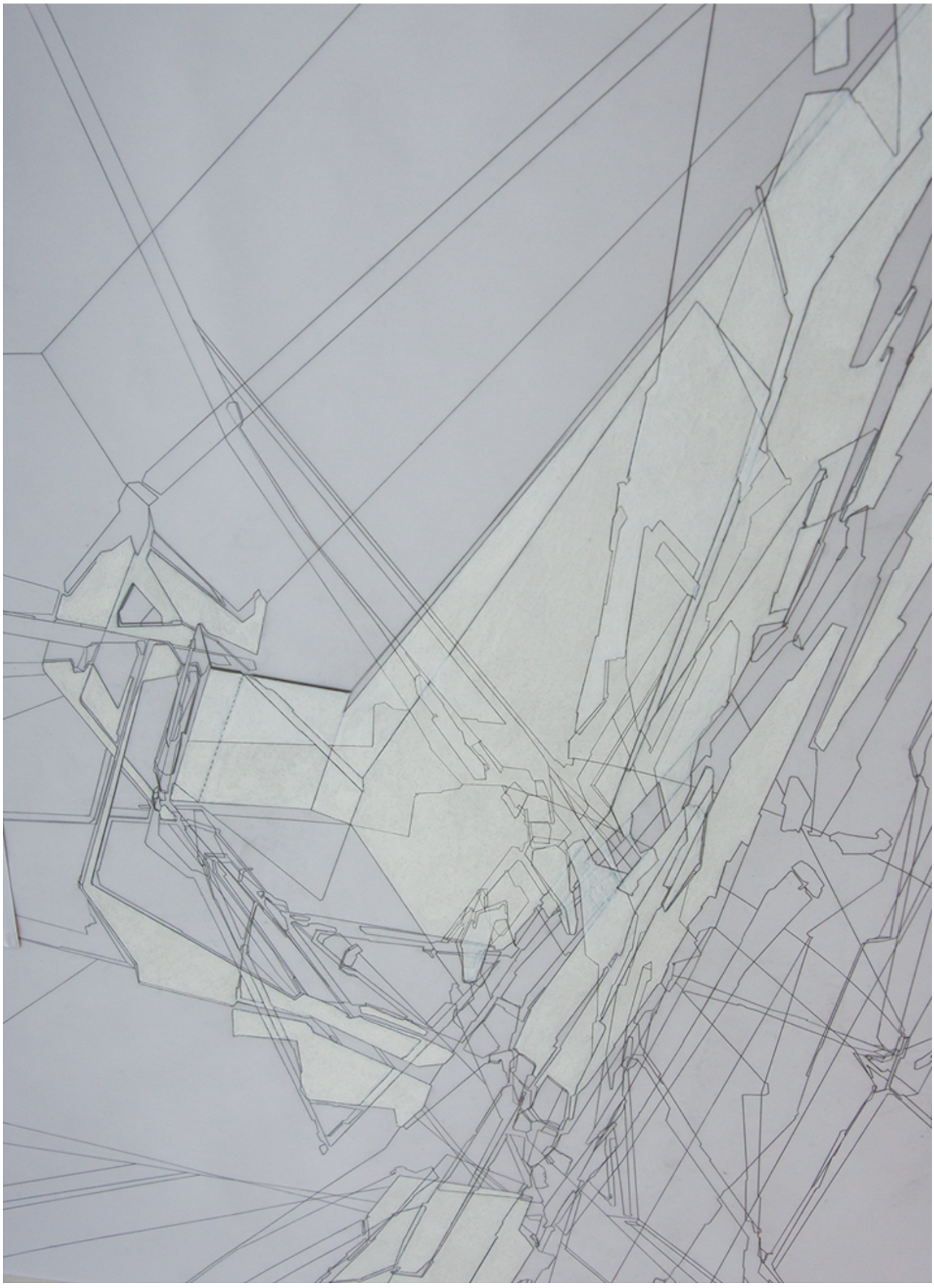

Fig 3 Drawing Out Gehry II, graphite and wax pencil on mylar, (detail, 2018)