EDITORIAL

Drawing Time

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This issue of *Spool* – 'Drawing Time' – departs from the observation that the metropolitan landscape is subject to time, in many ways. The metropolitan landscape, as it has been studied in *Spool* over the years, is conceived as the interrelation between urban, infrastructural, rural and natural formations: a dynamic, intertwined and layered urban-landscape structure. The urban condition is viewed from the perspective of the landscape as a permanent underlying substructure and as physical open space with its own spatial, compositional and perceptual characteristics. Time aspects of the metropolitan landscape can be found in processes of growth and decay, seasonal manifestations, disruptive forces of wind and water and also in the ways in which humans inhabit and use space or in which urban development processes take place. Designing for the metropolitan landscape means dealing with a wide range of dynamic phenomena, unstable systems and variable conditions. It implies the exploration of future situations, bridging time spans from seasons to decades and design tasks from small-scale interventions to large-scale strategies. It connects landscape operations that build upon the garden, the park and the forest to complex, layered design strategies for transformation, migration and climate change. This *Spool* issue discusses the importance of time in such design processes, and its reciprocal relation to representation.

When forecasting dynamic external influences, exploring scenarios, pointing to if-then relations, striving for robustness, or framing change as an attractive factor, designers work with time. However, design drawings often follow a conventional scheme. Time aspects remain implicit, even though exploring issues of time in drawings in several stages of the design process could strengthen the position of those time aspects in the outcome. Yet, in the past decade, we have seen a tentative change and a theoretical and practical basis for incorporating time into the design process is emerging. The key question in this *Spool* issue is how strategies for visualizing ideas address time aspects, and thus inspire resilient, adaptive design, and enable the sharing of knowledge among the partners in design processes. This refers both to design processes and to design products; to drawing as a verb and to drawing as a noun. The aim of drawing time is to create awareness, understanding, documentation and representation and, most of all, to move beyond documentation and to inform the process, the focus and the intention of the spatial design itself.

Current discourse

A quick scan of today's literature on drawing time demonstrates a changing attitude towards the relation between time and its representation in the design. Several issues of time, representation and landscape are discussed from a theoretical, visual and practice-based angle. Some authors discuss how specific representational modes (the diagram, the transect, film) are in their own way capable of revealing, researching and presenting time. Others point to the act of drawing and its relation to observing and recording time-based phenomena in landscape. In addition, the design process itself is addressed since any design process unfolds in time. Moosavi (2021) speaks about 'stories of projects' because the making of designs is in itself often a fuzzy negotiation with dynamics and uncertainty. Some recent contributions state that uncertainty, dynamics and open-endedness have become more and more inherent to the spatial design

disciplines, and specifically to landscape architecture. This forces designers to explore new tools for handling uncertainty and to work iteratively and incrementally. This also implies taking a critical look at how we use drawings in the broadest sense. Traditional methods such as the plan drawing need to be enriched with test beds, prototypes and more. As Macken and Harrison state, a growing awareness of time-related issues is not yet always matched by the representational tools of design and that needs to change: 'time must be central'. Korneeva and Turanli (2021) even arrive at a new conceptual framework for landscape design and time, coining the term 'earth choreographer' to describe a notion that beautifully expresses the *who* and *when* in relation to changing landscapes.

Contributions

This issue is built around two types of contributions: papers and visual essays. The papers take a specific project as their point of departure, using it to deepen, comment on and add to concepts of the interrelation between time and representation. The visual essays are experimental design proposals or collections of student work that explore relevant ways of representing time. The submissions cover a range of approaches to the theme of drawing time. They address drawing as a vehicle for observing, understanding and exploring change per se, certain aspects of change, and the complexity of processes that take place in the metropolitan landscape, in its physical and societal dimensions.

The shift towards more time-based designs is already reflected in design education, as we can see in the first three contributions in this issue. Students were asked to explore *how* to research time-based phenomena by drawing, and to look for new, appropriate representational approaches. They experimented with representational modes, with the different roles of the drawing and with drawing media, and studied the ability of the materials used to display or generate change and unpredictability. The recent discourse as reflected in journals and books, and the way time issues are explored in student work, underscores a key observation: whereas traditional landscape architecture drawings build upon the notion of *what* and *where*, representational approaches that explore temporal issues shift attention to *who* has to act, and to *when* a certain action has to be performed. That does not replace the drawn research of spatial and compositional aspects, but it does put these 'fixed' parameters in a dynamic field of growth, evolution and change. Mateja Kregar, Valentina Schmitzer and their students show in their visual essay how the act of drawing can strengthen the observation and understanding of changes over time, such as the ephemerality and stadia of plant growth. The authors stress how shifting the focus to change over time creates attentiveness to the small, continuous and unstoppable transition of the landscape that often goes unnoticed in our usual presentation techniques. Students had to find a new and personal drawing language to be able to recorcd the perceived changes. Tomaz Pipan and his fellow authors address complex processes in landscapes and discuss how representation can be instrumental in understanding these complexities. Referring to professional history, the authors ask whether the limits of visual expression have already been tested. No, is their conclusion, and not in the experiment they describe either – the authors note that the drawings achieve 'with varying success' a relevant representation of time. There is still work to do. Interestingly, the scale and complexity of the subject leads to a shift of focus from the landscape to the actors and actants that cause or influence processes, confirming the important role of the *who* in time drawings. Luis Maldonado describes how students learn to work on the expression of landscape dynamics and temporality as a fundamental dimension of the discipline of landscape architecture. However, using art, cinema and comics as well as biology and ecology as inspiration demonstrates that dynamics and temporality play a role in all fields that deal with understanding, interpreting and transforming the world we live in.

The next section presents several design proposals that explore relevant ways of representing time, using the drawing as a tool for design, ranging from design experiments, to executed designs, to the construction site. Lotte Oppenhuis presents an experimental design proposal that explores possible connections between

humans and nonhumans, concentrating on three time-based design principles. She reflects on her design process, and how drawing time helped her gain new and necessary insights. She also discusses different modes of representation and their specific contribution to the exploration. Marijne Beenhakker, Jasper Hugtenburg and Jaap van der Salm search for forms of representation that can foster a better understanding of uncertain dynamics in large-scale landscapes. Inventions such as the 'water calendar' are used as analytical tools for understanding landscape systems rather than as components of the design and the design drawings. As they note, time is implicitly rather than explicitly present in the drawings. Lisa McKenzie examines the role of drawings in exploring possibilities, for example by incorporating dynamics into a design, and supporting a conversation with the audience. In her paper she reflects on the afterlife of the completed work and suggests new drawings that could have underpinned the continuing and relational opportunities of the space. Anne Wagner highlights the role of representation in situ. The drawings she discusses do not actively engage in the conception of the design, but play a role in its reception. While any drawing is by its nature an abstraction, in this case they are also concrete and real. Although the projected future and the present that will disappear are two different realities, their simultaneous presence in the situated drawings juxtapose what they are and what they represent, and what is there and what is projected.

The contributions identify concrete themes that time drawing can focus on, such as erosion, plant growth, decay or urban expansion. Directly related to this from a design perspective, are concepts such as resilience, adaptivity, robustness and what-if scenarios. What is little addressed is how designers can get a grip on the instability of complex processes of change in the landscape through the act of drawing, the drawing itself, and the necessary innovation in drawing forms. Is it perhaps not fitting in the culture of design disciplines to reflect on what may seem instrumental, which is to say the act of drawing, the drawing itself and the tools or techniques by which drawings are made?

The role of the drawing varies across the contributions. Those from the educational domain speak about drawing and drawings as a learning experience. Drawing is used to augment awareness of time aspects among future professional designers. Interestingly, the articles are less clear about what exactly supported this: the *act* of drawing, the knowledge explored in the drawings, the chosen mode of representation, and/or the materials and techniques used. Contributions from the domain of professionals and researchers also speak about drawing as a learning experience, but in their case it is a conscious act to stretch or confirm their expertise on the subject, or to look for new roads that seem to be important. Moving from education to experimentation, design and realization, the role of the drawing shifts to a communication tool to create public awareness of time aspects. Professionals have to interact with their clients and their audience. Therefore, drawing is also seen in its role of communicating very directly – see for example Wagner. Both McKenzie and Beenhakker et al. discuss the need to interact, via drawings, with the client and the audience, while noting that in their experience there are only limited possibilities for such interaction. Drawings openly discussing time aspects may be too difficult, disturbing or simply seen as off topic. In that sense, the authors also make clear that drawing time has yet to be conquered.

Future challenges

This Drawing Time issue of *Spool* poses the question how strategies for visualizing ideas address time aspects in the design process, inspire resilient, adaptive designs, and enable the exchange of knowledge between partners in design processes. The contributions show that this question can be approached from many, very different perspectives. As such, the contributions confirm that discussing drawing time is no longer viewed as exotic. A decade ago, confronted with the definitive takeover of the computer, not only in drawing but also in construction, the relevance of the drawing was questioned. Today we see that it is as relevant as ever. Drawing media, drawing techniques and the position of drawing in design and construction processes have changed and continue to change. This issue leaves no doubts about

the relevance of the drawing, whether by hand or digital. The contributions related to education in particular suggest that drawing, and more specifically drawing time, is nowadays integrated into design teaching. This issue also shows clearly that drawing time in itself is not difficult. Yes, one may venture into new territory and test out innovative representational options. But in essence, important questions related to time can also be researched using known vehicles such as the plan drawing or the section. It would seem that the first and most important step lies in the realm of attitudes and conventions: to embrace drawing time as obvious and as necessary.

There is still work to do. This issue of *Spool* shows that the theoretical basis is still in its infancy. Notions of how to draw time are emerging. But there is still no contemporary theoretical work to underpin this. That is the challenge we are facing and this issue is an invitation to scholars in this field to fill that gap.

References

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