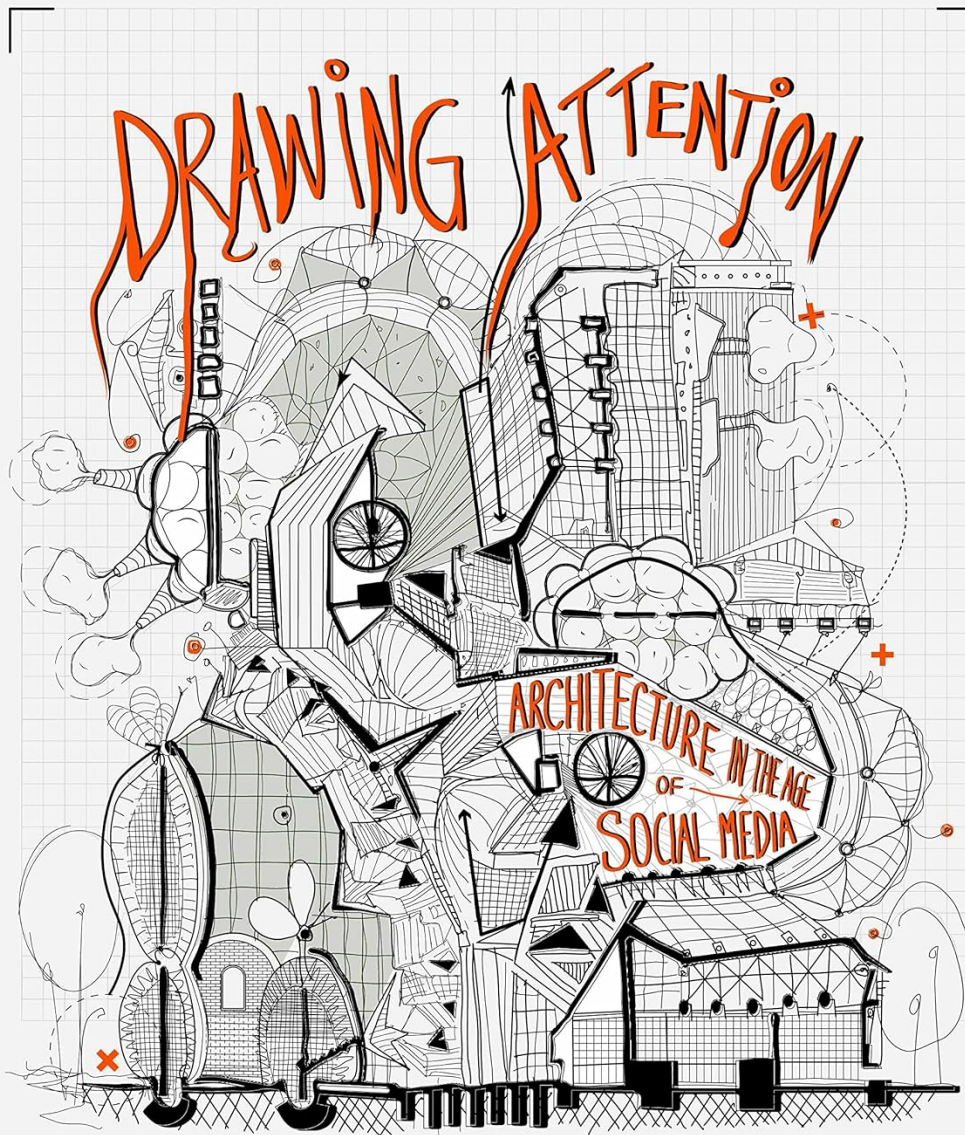


# DRAWING ATTENTION





RIBA #

EDITED BY HAMZA SHAIKH

# **Drawing Attention**

© RIBA Publishing, 2023

Published by RIBA Publishing, 66 Portland Place, London, W1B 1AD

ISBN 978 1 91412 438 9

The right of Hamza Shaikh to be identified as the Editor of this Work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 sections 77 and 78.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the copyright owner.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Commissioning Editor: Alex White

Production: Richard Blackburn

Designed and typeset by The First 47

Printed and Bound in the UK by Whitewater Print Media Ltd

Cover image: Architectural Press Archive / RIBA Collections

While every effort has been made to check the accuracy and quality of the information given in this publication, neither the Author nor the Publisher accept any responsibility for the subsequent use of this information, for any errors or omissions that it may contain, or for any misunderstandings arising from it.

All quotes from external sources in the book were made in private correspondence with the author.

All image copyright belongs to the Contributor of the corresponding chapter, with the following exceptions: pviii and p1 © Perry Kulper;

pp5, 9, 13 (c) Hamza Shaikh p120 (bottom right) © Perry Kulper and Saumon Obouidiyat;  
p121 (top left) © Perry Kulper and Mark West;  
p198 (top right) © Pauline Personeni and Barri Studio; p198 (bottom right) © Pauline  
Personeni and Microclimat Architecture; p199 (bottom right)  
© Pauline Personeni and Mesura.

[www.ribapublishing.com](http://www.ribapublishing.com)

DOI: [10.4324/9781003351740](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003351740)

# Drawing Attention

Hamza Shaikh

RIBA  Publishing

## Contents

[Epigraph](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[About the Editor](#)

[Introduction: Architecture in the Age of Social Media](#) by Hamza Shaikh

[Drawing Parallels: Architectural Drawing, Then and Now](#) by Hamza Shaikh

[Instagram as Interface: The New Picture Plane](#) by Perry Kulper

[DRAWING PROFILE #1 Vector Collage](#) by Hamza Shaikh

[DRAWING PROFILE #2 Machinic Assemblies](#) by Bea Martin

[DRAWING PROFILE #3 Creating Worlds](#) by Eric Wong

[Sketch Like an Architect](#) by David Drazil

[DRAWING PROFILE #4 Street Illustrations](#) by Yvette Earl

[DRAWING PROFILE #5 Line Politics](#) by Bryan Cantley

[DRAWING PROFILE #6 Digital Art](#) by Malavika Madhuraj

[The Basics of Healthy Productivity](#) by Sana Tabassum

[DRAWING PROFILE #7 Architecture Anomalies](#) by Saul Kim Min Kyu

[DRAWING PROFILE #8 Mega Drawings](#) by Ana Aragao

[DRAWING PROFILE #9 Drawing is Design](#) by Salmaan Mohamed

[Multimedia Representation](#) by Thomas Rowntree

[DRAWING PROFILE #10 Analogue Syntax](#) by Perry Kulper

[DRAWING PROFILE #11 Axonometric Scenes](#) by S.Y,H

[DRAWING PROFILE #12 Digital Ink](#) by Veronika Ikonnikova

[Line Ideation](#) by Fraser Morrison

[DRAWING PROFILE #13 The Procreative](#) by Ehab Alhariri

[DRAWING PROFILE #14 \*\*Pencil and Eraser\*\*](#) by Clement Luk  
Laurencio

[DRAWING PROFILE #15 \*\*Art is Artefact\*\*](#) by Zain Al-Sharaf Wahbeh  
**[Observational Sketch](#)** by Flammad Haider

[DRAWING PROFILE #16 \*\*Ghibli Effect\*\*](#) by Karina Armanda

[DRAWING PROFILE #17 \*\*Paper Narratives\*\*](#) by Pauline Personeni

[DRAWING PROFILE #18 \*\*Art of Entropy\*\*](#) by Neil Spiller

**[Capturing Culture](#)** by Areesha Khalid

**[Drawing on the Future](#)** by Hamza Shaikh

**[About the Contributors](#)**

**[Endnotes](#)**



## Epigraph

There's only one thing stronger than someone who truly believes in you and your immense potential – and that is your own self-belief. Pair that with a deep humility of knowing how little you know, and you will be an unstoppable force.

Go out quietly confident into the world ... tread lightly with truth and purpose, and don't stop.

**Hamza Shaikh**

## **Acknowledgements**

This book opportunity emerged in true serendipity and the RIBA Publishing team were the utmost pleasure to work with. I would like to thank firstly Helen Castle, whose vision and openness allowed me this opportunity; Alex White, whose guidance, patience and diligence brought this book to life; and all who helped this project progress so seamlessly in the RIBA team.

I want to mention Ele Paul and Zain Al-Sharaf Wahbeh, who helped me graphically format the template plan for this book in its earliest stages. This exercise motivated me to keep the vision going and their feedback gave me the confidence to pursue the idea further.

Of course, a big thanks to all the incredible contributors named in this book, who believed in the vision and worked hard to contribute while working on many other things. Their diligence and commitment have been a critical part of this project's success.

My good friend Adam Dudley-Mallick has supported my endless and absurd ideas with excellent honest critiques, which has been a massive support.

My parents instilled within me unwavering ambition and resilience –their endless support has picked me up in my most difficult times.

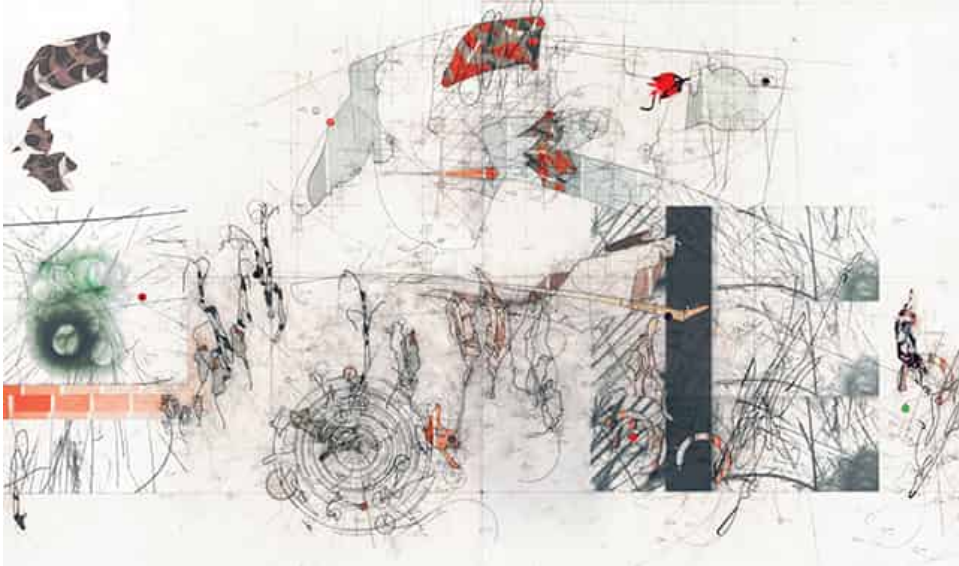
My deepest gratitude goes to my wife Naomi Shaikh, whose patience, support and belief keeps me upright.

Finally, I want to acknowledge all the talented illustrators, artists, entrepreneurs and outright architectural innovators, some who I know from social media, and some who I am yet to know. If I could have, I would have included hundreds of contributors in this book. Keep pushing the boundaries and let's hope this is just the beginning of an exciting future in our field.

## **About the Editor**

Hamza Shaikh is a London-based architect and artist. He is prominently known for his experimental architectural drawings on social media as well as his thought-leadership in the design industry. He is the host of the *Two Worlds Design* podcast series which aims to uncover the hidden potential of architecture by speaking with extraordinary practitioners. In 2021, he was the recipient of the Individual of the Year award by the Thornton Education Trust for ‘inspiring future generations’ in architecture. Hamza has been described as a rising star and an influencer in the profession and is seen as a mentor to young professionals and students. He is also a regular visiting critic at the University for the Creative Arts and the University of Westminster.

# Front Matter



## INTRODUCTION

### **Architecture in the Age of Social Media**

Hamza Shaikh

DOI: [10.4324/9781003351740-1](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003351740-1)

Instagram and social media have become primary resources for architectural inspiration for students and young practitioners. A collective shift towards social media as an ideas base has meant that traditional outlets, such as major magazines, are no longer the gatekeepers of success in architecture.

The propulsion of one's career is no longer quite so caught up with 'who you know'; instead, rising stars and influencers are emerging by sharing their work online. The era of starchitects may well be ending; however, the age of the 'architectural influencer' is upon us.

But what do we make of this algorithmic revolution? How fair is this algorithm, and what is the constant need for attention doing to the wider architectural discourse in education and practice?

Since my second year of university, I have been sharing my architectural drawings and ideas through Instagram and various other platforms. Why, might you ask?

In all honesty, it's because I wanted to build a following that I could leverage to start an architectural business in the future, I realised during university that architecture often struggles with a disproportionate balance between the skills required, average working hours and salary. Consider the almost decade-long process of becoming an architect, during which time the average income rarely rises above £35,000. However, something kept me passionate and inspired despite the lack of income and often intense hours of work. Perhaps it was the opportunity to be intensely curious about society,

politics, philosophy and art, on a daily basis? Or maybe it was realising the power of architecture to improve people's lives and cause cultural shifts?

In hindsight, the aspect of architecture that I and perhaps most others find the greatest satisfaction in is the process of communicating and conveying ideas through artistic mediums which have the potential to come to life. This is arguably also our most valuable offering as architects. The fundamental iterative struggle that we go through as designers, balancing rational thinking with an edge of playfulness, is simultaneously the most difficult and satisfying part of our profession. At the heart of this defining dilemma is a crude skill. And although in the last few decades, technological innovation has evolved uncontrollably and transformed entire sectors, the field of architecture remains reliant on this one intuitive skill...

Drawing.

Drawing is the most important skill an architect has at their disposal. While visionary thinking and problem-solving may be the hallmarks of a successful architect, there would be no vision without a drawing. How else would you communicate your idea to a client? There is only so much that your words and your writing can convey when dealing with architectural ideas. A tissue paper sketch could say more than a paragraph, a chapter and maybe even a whole book. What's more, it only takes a few seconds to see a drawing and conceptualise it.

Throughout history, architects have been held in high esteem by the profession and society as master draughtsmen, akin to knights gilded with their mechanical pencils as solemn swords and their drawing boards as sovereign shields. It's only recently that drawings have moved beyond physical paper into digital and even virtual form. Looking ahead, the development of disruptive technology and software, such as non-fungible tokens (NFTs) and artificial intelligence art generators could also make a defining impact on our profession.

The demand for digital artists is growing, and so too is the pressure for students and young professionals to learn advanced artistic skills and software. Digitisation has not just expanded the range of jobs on offer in

practice, but more widely, has propagated the notion of 'architect as artist'. Now when we consider Instagram, the most popular audio-visual social media platform in the world, powered by attention and accessible to all within milliseconds, we can perhaps understand why practices and professionals take it so seriously. Furthermore, social media's attention-fuelled algorithm has in many ways created a level playing field where people from any background can equally rise in prominence.

This digital shift and era of social media has quite rightly brought into question wider societal concerns around mental health and social value systems. But seldom do we discuss its positive effects, such as causing a communication revolution or being a catalyst to innovation and change - perhaps that's because it's obvious.

My intention is not to make any rudimentary claims as to what is good or what is bad. Rather, I hope to shine light on what I believe is a significant moment in the architectural drawing discourse. This book has been curated to include guidance, insights and tips from some of the leading and best emerging talents in the architectural drawing community - a niche that has begun to establish itself on Instagram. The aim is to gather their works and insights to concisely share how you can practically improve your drawing skills - an area often overlooked in architectural education.

Like me, the contributors selected have been sharing their explorative depictions and experimental drawing outcomes online for many years. Some of them are veterans in the field - architects turned academic artists - while others are emerging professionals, awardwinning practitioners or freelance illustrators with architectural backgrounds. The selection is truly diverse and includes people from all around the world.

Every artist in this publication has a story to tell or an idea to convey, whether it's a complex harmony of linework depicting spatial mapping experiences or endless horizons of fictional pies falling from the sky. Through the unveiling of their architectural process and by offering an insight into their styles, you will learn how to draw so that you can communicate effectively.

The book does not aim to explicitly teach you drawing styles in a prescriptive manner for you to copy, but instead, to inspire you to create your visions equipped with a broad toolset, references and tips. Most of us recognise that university education often fails to teach drawing skills and techniques - and this book aims to fill that gap. It gives you the insights and guidance to help you improve your artistic capability by trying new drawing styles and processes.

You have unique skills and interests, which if allowed to flourish, will help you define and improve your design process. You have an idea in your mind that may be revolutionary, and someone somewhere needs to see it - we live in a world where attention is the most valuable currency and drawing could be your most valuable skill.

This is your guide to drawing attention





## Drawing Parallels: Architectural Drawing, Then and Now

Hamza Shaikh

DOI: [10.4324/9781003351740-2](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003351740-2)

It's not easy to find, let alone frame, the historical discourse on architectural drawings and how they've evolved over the years. In fact, it is not even clear what the definition of an 'architectural drawing' is. The first structures built in civilisation were most likely visualised as some sort of drawing. Therefore, identifying the beginning of architectural drawing discourse is like asking 'when did architecture begin?' - and I certainly won't be trying to answer this. However, we can fast forward to the 1970s, when architectural drawing discourse went through a significant shift due to the recession, in which unemployment became rife.<sup>1</sup>

During this time, known as the 'Great Inflation', established and renowned architects alike struggled to get clients and building opportunities as the construction industry experienced financial uncertainties. Architects attempted to keep their services alive by turning to what they knew best: drawing<sup>2</sup> - something that required no procurement and would keep their passions burning. Despite the struggles, which continued for the best part of two decades, the increasing awareness around the architect's ability to create art initiated important opportunities and a change in public perception. Independent initiative from renowned architects, support from institutions, and risks from acclaimed art collectors to curate never-before-seen works catalysed this.

There were three significant events in the 1970s which Kauffmann, in his 2018 book *Drawing on Architecture*, presents as pivotal moments for the changing perception around architectural drawings. The first was the release in 1975 of a self-curated book called *Five Architects*, which displayed the

process and in-depth design works of Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, Charles Gwathmey, John Hedjuk and Richard Meier. The book -showing photographs and textual descriptions, but more significantly drawings, of the architects' works - shot them to fame and, for the first time in contemporary discourse, opened discussions about 'architectural drawing as a visual art' and 'the architect as intellectual artist'.

The second event was an exhibition curated by the director of New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Arthur Drexler, who had also played a role in the inception of *Five Architects*. This exhibition followed three years after the release of the groundbreaking book, and exhibited over 200 drawings primarily consisting of students' works from the École des Beaux-Arts. The event was controversial for many reasons, including MoMA's decision to display works in the Beaux-Arts style, which seemed an antagonistic gesture given its deep Modernist roots. The exhibition and the symposia that followed it, questioning the fundamental influence of Modernism on education and practice, seemed to stand in opposition to the MoMA mission - but it had a massive impact.

The final event that shaped the future of architectural drawing discourse was Leo Castelli's 1977 Exhibition 'Architecture I'. Castelli was a world-renowned art collector and described by many as a 'trendsetter', so his vehement promotion of architectural drawing certainly led to a change in perception by the mere fact that it was *him* promoting it. In fact, his exhibition was the first time any architectural representations had been shown for sale in a private gallery.<sup>3</sup> Castelli's eagerness to convey the significance of the social and artistic value that architectural drawings represented, although met with scepticism by the wider art world, was pivotal in effecting change. At the opening of his exhibition, the works of worldfamous architects were displayed, including Aldo Rossi, James Stirling and Robert Venturi.

The momentous decades that followed saw a domino effect take place in the architectural discourse against Modernist thought and, in parallel, the digital revolution also began to take hold. The 'Internet of Things' in time

propelled us towards yet more uncertainties, questions, debates and psuedo-styles/movements. Architectural drawing as an art is still in question today, perhaps even more so due to the immense demand for software-proficient students. However, world-class university institutions certainly continue to propagate the nostalgic notion of the architect as intellectual artist.

Architectural drawing to capture public/client attention is a fundamental aspect of our function and is what separates us from the rest of the professionals in the built industry. It is what gains us opportunities to build - and the progenitors of the 1970s knew this. Today, we see students, emerging architects and even established practices all competing for attention in the same way, but we have very different tools at our disposal. Social media has allowed us to self-publish our work in a similar way to the self-promoting 'Five Architects' curating their own works in a highly visual format. The instinct to share our worth is not only unchanged, but also has gone into hyperdrive due to the instant sharing capabilities offered by social media technology. Platforms such as Instagram have enabled individuals and companies to communicate in a way never seen before. What might have been a rare architectural feature in a printed magazine or journal as recently as the late 20th century is now an instant shot of viral pixels to your pocket - freely available for all.