Extended Drawing[1] Within (Embryonic) Design Processes
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While we evaluate design through the designed objects the designing process generates, designerly thought processes are mainly judged through the production and interpretation of designerly graphical artefacts: drawings, images, models and diagrams.[2] Where design sketches used to dominate embryonic[3] thinking within design it now seems that the outcome of explorative processes is driven through an intuitive layering of drawings, (graphical) manipulations, processing techniques combined with the designer's creative interpretation of the produced artefacts which, together, generate designerly decisions. The afore mentioned evolutionary process has constituted a shift in paradigms when considering graphical exploration and thinking processes within emerging design. The proliferation of digital drawing and editing tools, the emergence of online search engines and the easy availability of digital photography has changed the way designers and certainly novices perceive the preliminary designing process and from there on altered the status and value attributed to drawing as a commodity of design.[4] Within the following we will explore some intentional and conceptual (research) strategies to re-approach drawing as a hybrid and integral activity within design and it's education and propose a, to some extent, interdisciplinary approach to reflect the alleged changes in attitude towards the designerly assessment of embryonic explorations. Through combining research within design and teaching practices, applied thought processes through extending traditional drawing and the formulation of a "conceptual framework" our research project intends to re-opproach and re-position the concept of drawing within design and it's teaching.

To inquire alternatives within drawing we conceptualised MWM [Messing With Media]. MWM was introduced as a research alter ego and is fuelled by a personal and active trajectory within design, teaching, music and research. As a research project MWM messes with media, design, research, teaching, communication; as a practice MWM messes with devices, tools, carriers, itself and whatever useful to the concept. MWM explores designerly and creative edges from an instrumental point of view in order to inquire the making and doing within creative processes. The intuitive mixing and blending of concepts, practices and approaches is at the core of MWM's research strategy. The "Messing" in the title should be read as a pejorative shorthand for artistic expression, improvisation and following one's gut when working towards emerging creative solutions. The "Media" one supposedly messes around "with", consists of a big pile of instruments, tools, carriers, interfaces and what not to enable creative minds to "materialise" embryonic ideas. Research-wise, our "Media" inquires different ways to layer, communicate, visualise and disperse ideas. MWM defines "Media", to paraphrase Marshall McLuhan, as "any extension of one's self".[5] From there on MWM finds it's main field of inquiry amidst the unlimited combinations of (designerly) extensions to express designerly thought. Since MWM is conceptually fuelled thanks to a big variety of people, MWM regards itself as a plural entity rather than a personal venture.
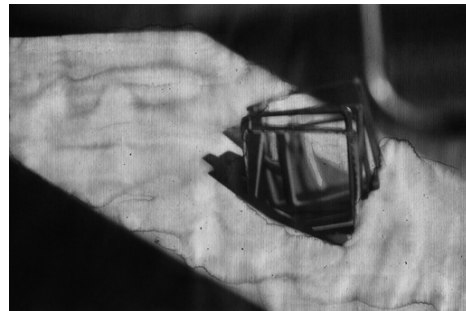

image 01

MWM embraces the hybrid character of contemporary graphic approaches within design. We took on the layered complexity[6] of preliminary designerly activities as a reality in order to enable us to inquire some of the opportunities these changes bring about within our models of instruction and design. Thinking about drawing within contemporary design implies questioning it's importance, status, value and use within contemporary design practices as well as within our teaching practices in order to define a certain position for the craft. Thinking about drawing within contemporary design education implies reviewing and reconsidering the medium for a digital generation, a generation which grew up in an era where analogue thinking and doing has become an oddity, almost alien. It is our contention that there is a need to rejuvenate the craft to

keep pace with current evolutions within the medium and maintain it's place amidst the seemingly constant stream of novelties and possibilities which are being developed to aid designers to explore graphical thinking in one way or another. While software designers are searching for intuitive interfaces which try to mimic the freedom of freehand drawing, our project turns things around through exploring combinatory processes of freehand drawing allied with different interfaces, techniques and approaches to see what it is capable of and if the process is able to inspire designerly decisions.
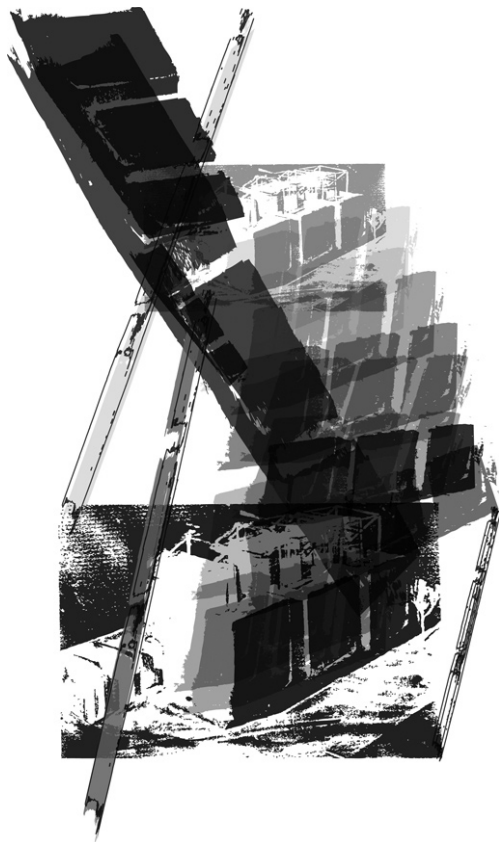

image 02

Within design and certainly within curricular approaches there is a tendency to consider the medium as an isolated and ascetic activity. We tend to disagree with this view since the tendency to isolate the activity seems to ignore the medium's position within design practices today. Drawing, within contemporary practices, is regarded as a (valuable) graphical alternative amidst a myriad of graphical possibilities enabling designers to communicate

designerly thinking. A lot of design curriculums maintain to approach drawing as an isolated craft in the centre of design; introductions within drawing keep focussing on developing formal and technical skill to express spatial thinking. This view ignores some of the opportunities of designerly drawing as a process.[7] While we certainly won't disagree upon the fact that developing skill within drawing forms an important asset in order to explore graphical spatiality we started questioning whether developing the ability to draw well, still constitutes the primary base to explore designerly thinking or to develop one's self as a designer.[8] While it is clear to most of us that contemporary designers and novices within design have to develop skill within expressing design through accumulating drawing techniques, Computer Aided Drawing, digital modelling and rendering, image editing and whatever useful to generate designerly imagery, most educational programs fail to adopt an integrated approach towards developing the ability to express designerly thought through a layering of preferential and individual graphical techniques. Admittedly, such an approach implies a personal development from students and teachers alike to deal with differences on many levels but we have to acknowledge that our designing practices have changed massively and that it is our responsibility to reflect these changes within curricular approaches. Investigating alternative approaches towards drawing and representing design seems to be the only way to maintain the craft's value within the process.

In order to re-evaluate drawing's current state within practice and designerly education and propose alternatives MWM conceptualised the idea of extended drawing. The idea of extended drawing is inspired by the idea of extended techniques within musical practices and takes improvised music as a guiding practice.[9] Within musical practices, extended techniques are inquired and used to change the aural manifestation of existing instruments or instrumental techniques through manipulating it's sound with external devices or deviant playing techniques. Within improvised music extended techniques are considered and used as a way to broaden the musical scope of an instrument and/ or playing technique and, as such, augment the musical capabilities of the players within the act of improvisation. Likewise extended drawing inquires alternative, deviant and layered approaches to treat or manipulate drawings in order to broaden the scope of designerly drawing. Specifically within the embryonic phase of design exploring spatial possibilities is an activity which thrives

upon externalising personal, instant and intuitive responses triggered by a certain design question. These instant and intuitive characteristics drove us towards the practice of musical improvisation. While the practices may seem far apart, closer investigation reveals that the act of exploring design graphically and the act of instant composing have a lot in common.[10] Both practices think within the act of doing and/ or do within the act of thinking and both the thinking and the doing are interconnected, inspiring each other's creative elaboration. On top of that the practices share a reliance on one's creative qualities such as personality, moment within time, available and embodied information and instruments, external stimuli, collaborative thinking and skill within the making and doing.
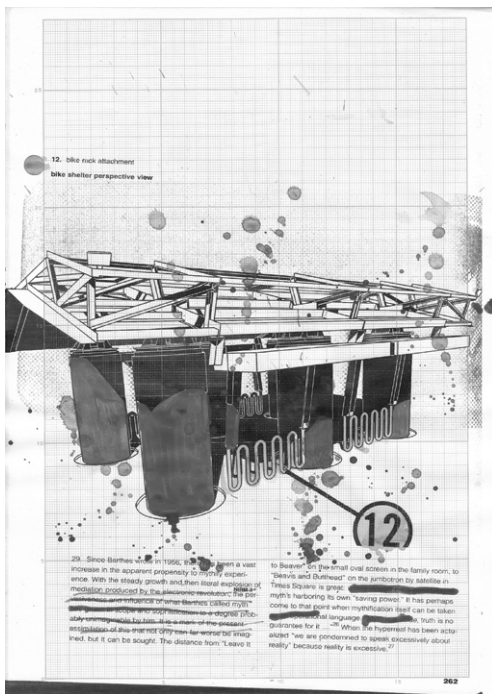

image 03

Extended drawing, as a tool to generate designerly thinking, (ab-)uses mixed-media approaches as a catalyst to inquire whether the concept is able to generate intuitive and instant reactions triggering decisions leading to design conceptions. The concept is being inquired within curricular activities as well as within personal experiments within architectural thinking. Through research within making and doing we intend to inquire and nourish integrated paths within curricular development through investigating alterna-

tive learning processes within designerly drawing. Through repositioning designerly drawing as a (valuable) starting point or intermediary tool within a process rather than as a autonomous activity the concept is looking for an updated approach towards aproaching media within design realted education. Extended drawing draws upon one's individual capabilities (and shortcomings) within drawing combined with a personal quest to augment one's thinking by processing preliminary representations through thinking and doing, through combining and layering different media. As such the project tries to get away from general contention that expressing design is a matter of learning how to draw well through embracing evolutions within graphical media and (re-)searching an adapted position for drawing within the myriad of possibilities designers can attend to within the process of exploring design.

The concept of extended drawing is directed towards the moment where action drives the thinking and how that moment possibly is influenced through the use and outcome of graphic manipulations. Within our conceptual developments, we are comparing the activity with the active improviser's state of mind in order to inquire whether this state is able to explicit and inspire strategies to deal with a certain intuitive freedom within the act of expressing preliminary thought. Freedom within improvisation, and we have to be clear about this, doesn't imply one does as one pleases. Improvisation is mainly regarded (or misread, depending on one's vantage point) as a quality to creatively deal with unforeseen hazards or the practice is (mis)interpreted to allege in defence that a certain activity is subdued to possible failure. The appearing chaotic and unruly nature of improvised performances (and music), certainly doesn't help here. While it may seem that musicians appear to act within ill defined goals and intentions and have a tendency to break with every possible rule defined within our, dominantly western, musical guidebooks[11]; it's precisely this tendency to attack and/or question certain doctrines within practice which is potentially able to offer starting points to question our very own dogma's within designerly drawing and it's teaching. Underneath the seemingly unorthodox character of the practice and it's performances lies a dedicated attitude of "constant preparation".[12] Manipulating certain artistic rules is done through practice within the characteristics of a musical concept, through the development of reflexes and skill to instantly deal with (pitfalls attributed to) certain rules and characteristics within performance.[13] Which in turn takes practice, discipline and

a dedication to deal and augment personal preferences, explore and expand boundaries within one's own capabilities as well as within the musical boundaries of a certain musical ideology in order to develop a individuality and expertise within the subject material. This dedication is what extended drawing is aiming for in order to develop personality within expressing designerly thought. Through exploring improvisation as an attitude within design the project searches for a more critical approach towards the concept of drawing and whether inserting concepts, practice models and intuitive reactions inspired by the practice of musical improvisation is able to open up opportunities for another approach towards intuitive decision making within designerly expression.
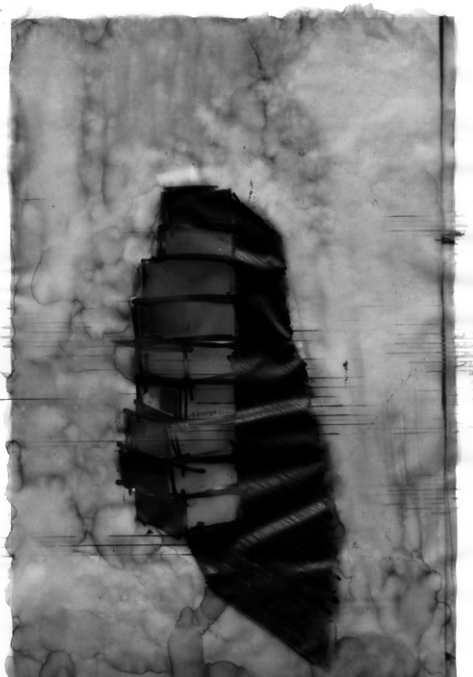

image 04

Currently we are defining and building a MWM-lab set up to inquire the practical implementations of our conceptual propositions.[14] The lab intends to, in time, replace the traditional drawing room while keeping drawing at it's very centre. Through the fusion and blending of cutting edge, vintage, mechanical, analogue, digital, experimental and instrumental extensions the lab intends to instigate and investigate different instant expressions within design. Through considering the fusion of different media as as

an integrated pedagogic approach MWM is interested to see what will happen to the teaching of basic designerly drawing and the designs within the designing studios, if the concept is able to have an effect on designerly thinking and if it is able to (re)define developments within our educational program. Through setting up collaborations with design (studios) as well as seeking informal collaborations with external areas of drawing and graphics the lab searches for new directions to approach freehand drawing. The MWM-lab is set up to inquire and develop the concept of extended drawing through making, doing and acting within a more or less contained environment, isolated from certain constraints of daily practice such as clients, project deadlines and so on. Through conceptually extending the drawing process MWM inquires whether our concept is able to open up or change personal (graphical) vocabularies and/ or affect (the development of) drawing and reactive skills towards designerly questions.

Research-wise our lab-based activities are complemented and fed by the structuring of a "conceptual framework". In order to delineate the concept of MWM and it's idea of extended drawing the framework investigates practice based and conceptual levels which are communicated within a printed and self-published medium. The MWM-zines are written, illustrated, designed and fabricated to give an account of the project's proceedings, findings and inspirational aspects.[15] Through adopting a more informal writing style, as opposed to a more academic approach, the zines intend to inform and draw a broader, practice oriented, audience consisting of colleagues, teachers, students and practitioners within allied fields. The idea of producing zines was developed as a personal strategy to get on with the (research) work and in order to develop our framework through exploring and communicating concepts, vantage points and whatever may be of interest to the research project and/ or considered worthwhile to share with an audience. The zines travel along wherever they can generate value and/or input to the project (conferences, interviews, schools, tutors and promoters) and provides the project with a visual identity to the world outside. Producing zines forces us to externalise developments outwardly in order to generate feedback towards developing material and actively broadening the project's interest group. Both the framework and the lab based activities are used as tools to investigate alternative approaches and processes to explore, express and think within embryonic design processes. The combination of research and practice

searches for a mutual amplification of the concepts and practices governing the project.

MWM and it's concept of extended drawing isn't intended as a conclusive study. Rather than that it is intended to gain and produce knowledge through defining on-going investigations within contemporary (designerly) drawing and embryonic graphical thinking, to redefine the process of designerly drawing. As such the building of the lab, the deliniation of a guiding framework, together with the broadening of the research and interest group has to assure a continuation of the concepts and thoughts developed within the project. The, more or less, personal vantage point and writing direction, inspirational practices and sources intend to add and expand knowledge to research communities within design, design based drawing as well as to the practice of improvisation and beyond. MWM isn't looking for a definition, theory or exploration of improvised design; rather than that the project is looking for an understanding within process based thinking where creativity prevails over object-oriented solutions. Through consciously approaching graphic explorations within design as an improvised act the project searches for a better understanding and practical application of the intuitive creative processes which govern personal, meaningful design decisions and improvisations. (designerly) Drawing finds itself in an an adaptive and hybrid state of evolution, in order to keep track and maintain the medium's status, value and evolution within design practice (and it's education) MWM searches for a possible strategy to re-approach activities within exploring embryonic design through the medium of drawing in all it's forms.
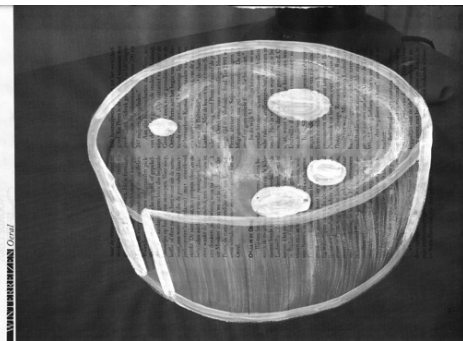

image 05

All images were generated during the course "analogue vs. digital" 2nd bachelor (interior) architecture. The course inquires exchanges between analogue and digital image editting techniques. The drawings combine freehand and/ or digital drawing, printing techniques, coloring techniques and graphics which alter the visual display of raw explorations. Based upon experiences within the course MWM now will inquire whether manipulating the drawing process is able to change or influence the way designers perceive the representation and, as such, change decisions within the designerly process. Images by: Daphne Janssens (image 01 and 04), Tim Bastien (image 02), Stijn Jonckheere (image 03), Katleen François (image 05), images courtesy of MWM, Sint-Lucas School of Architecture.

(1) The notion of extended drawing is based on the notion of extended techniques within the musical practice: extended techniques are performance techniques used in music to describe unconventional, unorthodox or "improper" techniques of singing or playing musical instruments. [source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extended_technique]. See also R. Schaeverbeke: Extending Technique (MWM-zine#02, 2009) for an exploration of the concept and further references.
(2) Alberto Pérez Gomez/ Louise Pelletier: Architecture and the Perspective Hinge [2000, MIT-press]; Bryan Lawson: What Designers Know [2004, Elsevier Ltd.], Dalibor Vaserely: Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation [2004, MIT]
(3) Embryonic is used here as a metaphor to define the early stage of design where the (design) problem is stated and no explicit designerly actions have been undertaken. Within this stage everything is possible and ideas are built upon intuitive concepts. Extended drawing inquires varieties of graphical explorations of designerly ideas within this preliminary stage.
(4) see Bryan Lawson: What Designers Know [2004, Elsevier Ltd.]; Marc Treib (editor): Drawing/Thinking [2008, Routledge]: there is a concern amongst researchers, practitioners and tutors within design that the devaluation of the act of thinking through drawing is changing the way designers think within design processes. While authors acknowledge the change, it seems uncertain as to what it implies for the future and the development of graphical thinking within the practice.
(5) Marshall McLuhan: Understanding Media/ Media Begrijpen [1964-2002, Gingko press/Uitgeverij Nieuwezijds]
(6) Since these hybrid approaches are in se individual and dependant on different parameters such as: personal approaches within the act and towards design, collectives attitudes within a designing team, embodied tools and approaches of the designer(s) involved in the process, possible launches of yet another interface to facilitate our activities amongst other things which may influence the graphical process. The difficulty to pin down an exemplary approach makes the process a complex one to study. Part of the MWM strategy is to reveal parameters in order to build a framework to deal with the complexity within teaching.

(7) The statement is based upon personal experiences within our department and several interviews and net searches revealing that introductions within drawing still are regarded as an isolated medium. See: *how to draw a cup of tea within the MWM-zine#02*, recently the project interviewed Saidja Heyninckx who teaches sketching and drawing within K.H-.Limburg (Belgium) who revealed a similar approach towards introducing drawing within design. Also see: Francis D.K. Ching: Design Drawing [1943-1998, Van Nostrand Reinhold], Koos Eijssen/Roselien Steur: Sketching [2007, BIS].

(8) Practices such as Greg Lynn's Form or Kas Oosterhuis's ONL (amongst others) prove that one can generate fascinating architecture by using nothing more than computers and mathematics. Who are we to judge their lack of freehand skills, if any?

(9) Free improvisation or free music is improvised music without any rules beyond the taste or inclination of the musician(s) involved; in many cases the musicians make an active effort to avoid overt references to recognizable musical genres. The term is somewhat paradoxical, since it can be considered both as a technique (employed by any musician who wishes to disregard rigid genres and forms) and as a recognizable genre in its own right (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_improvisation); Next to free improvisation the project also inquires the practical and theoretical development within the practice which searches for a broader base through game-pieces, graphical scores and so on. Within these advanced improvisational concepts musicians and composers search for freedom within agreed boundaries in order to avoid genre-specific traps.

(10) Eddie Prevost: No Sound Is Innocent [1997, Small Press Distribution], Derek Bailey: Improvisation (It's nature and practice within music) [1993, Da Capo Press]; George E. Lewis: A Power Stronger Than Itself [2009, University Of Chicago Press]; John Zorn (editor): Arcana I, II, III, IV (musicians on music) [2000, Hips Road/Granary Books, 2007, Hips Road/Tzadik, 2008, Hips Road/Tzadik, 2009, Hips Road/Tzadik]

(11) for instance concepts such as harmony, structure, instrumental techniques, instrumentation, scales, rhythm, pace, composition, style,...

(12) David P. Brown: Noise Orders: Jazz, Improvisation, and Architecture [2006 University of Minnesota Press]

(13) Bailey (1993), Prévost (1997), Zorn et al. (2000, 2007, 2008, 2009)

(14) The lab will located within the Brussels campus of Sint Lucas, school of architecture. The development of this lab is supported by the department in order to inquire new strategies within representation and will be paralleled by a more digitally oriented lab within the Ghent department. The two labs will closely work together to exchange knowledge from the different media-related research projects within the department.

(15) A zine (an abbreviation of the word fanzine, or magazine; pronounced [zi:n], "zeen") is most commonly a small circulation publication of original or appropriated texts and images. More broadly, the term encompasses any self-published work of minority interest usually reproduced via photocopier on a variety of colored paper stock. [source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zine] An example of the MWM-zines is send along with the proposal to illustrate the medium's state of mind. MWM is working on a new issue to be launched at the conference.