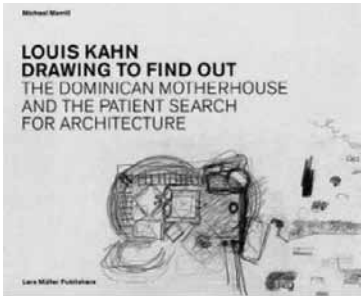
Discovering through drawings

New debates on sustainability



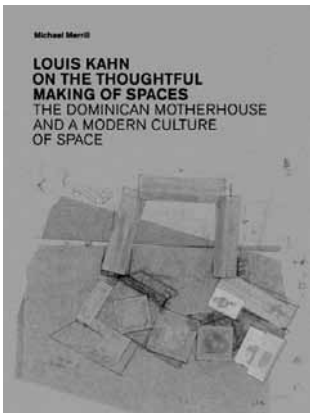
Neutra, Complete Works
(special edition)
Barbara Lamprecht, Peter Gössel (editor)
Taschen, New York, 2010
464 pp.
ISBN: 978-3-8365-1244-2
£44.99 (hb)

If you don't already possess a book on Neutra, I would advise you to buy this book. It is copiously illustrated with both archive and recently shot photographs. The layout is straightforward, but good; the reproduction quality is good. There are redrawn scaled plans – no sections; some original drawings – both sketches and blueprints and a good proportion of the book is in colour, which is revealing if you are used to seeing the original black and white photographs. The materials, colours and light make the buildings quite warm. The commentary is perhaps frustratingly concise, it has to be given that the book carries both French and German translations alongside the original English text. But there are references should you wish to delve further into Neutra's life, architecture and philosophy. This is an alluring architecture of silent poise.
JAO



Louis Kahn: Drawing to Find Out. The Dominican Motherhouse and the Patient Search for Architecture
By Michael Merrill
Lars Müller
Baden, 2010
240 pp.
ISBN: 978-3-0377-822-1
£60 (hb)

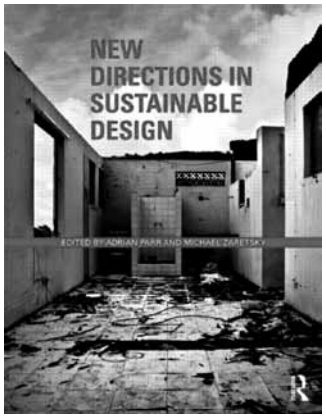
Louis Kahn on the Thoughtful Making of Spaces: The Dominican Motherhouse and a Modern Culture of Space
By Michael Merrill
Lars Müller
Baden, 2010
320 pp.
ISBN: 978-3-03778-220-0
£35 (pb)



Louis Kahn's plan for the Dominican Motherhouse must be among the most reproduced and difficult to comprehend of his projects. Although it had to be cancelled due to the Sisters' diminishing numbers, the project underwent a protracted development over three years. Michael Merrill's two books are based on a painstaking analysis of the surviving drawings and the results are a revelation.

Drawing to Find Out offers an exhaustive analysis of the archival material and Merrill raises provocative questions about Kahn's 'culture of making' at a time when hand-drafting has given way to digital media, and with it the cultivation of the plan as 'generator'. Merrill sees the Motherhouse as the quintessential demonstration of Kahn's contention that 'Architecture begins with the making of a room' and it is this 'modern culture of space' that he sees as Kahn's central contribution: it is discussed at length in the second book.
RW

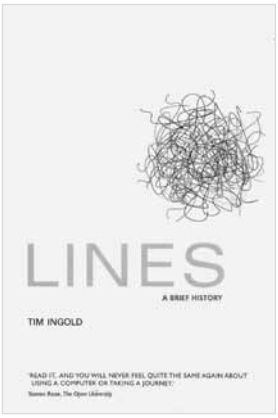
https://doi.org/10.1017/S1359135511000169 Published online by Cambridge University Press



New Directions in Sustainable Design
Edited by Adrian Parr and Michael Zaretsky
Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon, 2010
262 pp.
ISBN 978-0-415-78037-7
£29.99 (pb)

The editors of this book aim to address a perceived gap in writing about sustainability that provides designers with the conceptual tools needed to deliver environmental and socially conscious outcomes. It is true that the majority of sustainable and environmental design publications have, to date, focused their attentions on the politically emphasised carbon reduction targets. However, in order for the human species, to which the editors refer, to achieve adulthood and embrace sustainability, and here the focus is on design, it is necessary for writing and debate surrounding this topic to direct itself, in appropriate language and form, to this audience.

Themes addressed by the authors, designers and academics, place core concepts of the theory and practice of sustainability, within the conceptual realm of design, including insights into John Rawls' concept of social justice; integration of social, economic and environmental measures of development; application of landscape ecology within the city and exploration of the ecology of connections of conceptual thinking itself. This publication provides a creative exploration of the relationship between theoretical and design thinking and has the potential to promote a new conceptual debate on sustainability among designers.
JG



Lines: A Brief History
Tim Ingold
Routledge
Abingdon, Oxon, 2007
186 pp.
ISBN 0-415-42427-5
£21.99 (pb)

Lines gets most obviously architectural in the final chapter when – with an ominous inevitability – we learn in 'How the Line became Straight' of a masculinised culture of ruling Albertian grids, and the crudity of the nature/culture split: odd, when D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson proves how nature teems with regularity. But to read only the last chapter would be to miss the point of this engaging history of lines. From an anthropological perspective, we are led by traces, threads and surfaces through music, world-cultures, map-making, and the *line*age of ancestries, learning much about the loaded character of these marks that architects use all the time, while forgetting their consequence. Ingold barely gets into the repercussions of CAD, but is troubled by aspects of its instantaneity – for even the coldest hand-ruled line has to be *made*, it is an act with a beginning and end. Ingold also makes a nice distinction between *guidelines*, which are constitutive *of* the surface, and the *plotlines* made *on* the surface, with their different origins in weaving and land measurement: think of the ruled lines embodied in parchment (like the warp-threads of the loom), and the land-surveys of Ancient Egypt. Seduced by the plotlines on the surface we miss the ruling guidelines – there is something to ponder on in our plotline-obsessed situation.
SK



Writing on Drawing: Essays on Drawing Practice and Research
Edited by Steve Garner
Intellect, Bristol/Chicago, 2008
188 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-84150-200-7
£34.50 (hb)

Drawing, the act of delineation, remains central to architecture; from the sketch to the diagram to highly-codified production information. But, as Deanna Petherbridge suggests in this collection of essays, attempts to define drawing remain notoriously unsatisfactory, perhaps because it is simultaneously both medium and message.

Authors collected here come from a range of disciplines, from practising artists to academics working in literature, education and the history of childhood. While architects tend to view the advent of digital draughtsmanship as a distinctive break in drawing practice, it is striking that this book treats the conception of drawing and its habits as a continuum.

There are some gems here, including Petherbridge's clear reflections and James Faure Walker's amusing reading of twentieth-century pencil advertisements for insights into the culture of drawing. However, just as definitions of drawing have been rather unsatisfactory, this book proves that – in the end – maybe writing about drawing tends to feel somewhat unsatisfactory too.
AS

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