Chapter 22
Big drawing

Norman Kelley

The introduction

The year is 1506 and the 27 year old architect and painter Baldassare Tommaso Peruzzi begins construction on the Villa Farnesina in Rome. The suburban villa is typical of a time when it was not only fashionable, but practically required, for an architect to adorn a patron with a range of services that went beyond bricks and mortar—a time when architectural services were at their most dimensional, perhaps. Peruzzi would not only design the building, but after its construction would also paint the walls of the second floor ballroom (1518–1519). Through a two-dimensional marble colonnade, the "Sala delle prospettive" presents the observer with a view of attenuated villages dotted across rolling hills. The wall painting, though routine for this style of residential architecture, is compelling not for *what* is being observed, but instead, for *how* it should be observed. First, the view's proper standing point is not inside, but outside of the room. For the perspectival trick to work in which painted marble columns appear aligned with the physical walls, doors, and windows of the ballroom, one must stand in the anteroom. From this vantage point, an interior wall transforms into a veranda—a painting is rendered architecture.

Peruzzi's now famous projection typifies how, by way of scale and great craft, two-dimensions transcends two-dimensions. On this occasion, the painting goes beyond basic trompe l'oeil styling by offering instructions on how best to look at the building's insides. Like Hans Hollein's *The Ambassadors*, where an anamorphic projection of a skull is believed to have signaled a secret passage within the room where the painting was originally hung, Peruzzi's strokes are as fundamental to circulation, program, and spectacle as anything physical he built at the Villa Farnesina. What is on the wall is as important as the wall itself. It is here, at the joining of two- and three-dimensions, where our work is motivated.

Like Peruzzi, Norman Kelley's story begins with Rome. Unlike Peruzzi, Norman Kelley is not a painter. For now, Norman Kelley is a draughtsman who likes to draw on buildings. Most recently, we have been allowed to project the limits and liabilities of architectural drawing on the surfaces of four prestigious non-profit institutions: American Academy in Rome, Architectural League of New York, Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, and the Chicago Architecture Biennial. At each venue, the act of drawing was the event and the drawing itself was the architecture.

A closer look reveals our genuine interest in context, the drawing a form of visual essay on the history of the site. In Rome, an anamorphic projection cuts through the wall of the 1914 designed McKim, Mead and White Building, revealing an impossible view through a narrow corridor, down into the adjacent library one story below. In New York, an elevation drawing transports the observer from a 5th Avenue art gallery to Marcel Breuer's Whitney Museum with a view of Madison Avenue from its largest trapezoidal

Baldassarre Peruzzi Villa Farnesina, Sala delle prospettive (1518-19).

window. In Brooklyn, a beating one-point perspective reorients a Beaux Arts dome 90-degrees downward so that its ornament is perpendicular to the observer's natural gaze. At the Graham Foundation's Madlener House, a tapestry drawn in the style of Andrea Mantegna leaves its mark on the corner of a music room. And most recently, 65 windows of the Chicago Cultural Center are clad in white vinyl with 65 flattened window dressings. In all but two of the instances the technique is intentionally anachronistic in that it recalls a Renaissance painter's use of the cartoon, or stippled sketch, to guide the final work. In our case, however, the technique is reversed. The cartoon is first drawn digitally and then traced over twice by hand, first in graphite and finally with ink. Medium, however, is only part of the trick.

Similar to Agnes Martin's work, the drawings are designed to mask their precise beginnings and confound the observer into collapsing the gap between the analog and the digital, or the intuitive and the composed. Resolution is both mined and tested through distance as well as pixelation. Most importantly, however, the drawings reveal a contradictory economy of media. The digital component is intentionally slowed down by drawing attention to its analog counterpart. For a discipline with unlimited resources to the latest in computer assisted drawing and building information modeling software we find comfort in restricting media. We are curious why.

Consider drawing in its most basic form—the only prerequisite is your hand. Like a conductor without an orchestra, anyone can do it. So, drawing is therefore democratic. Drawing is also crafty. Drawing is always transdisciplinary. And above all, drawing is economical, right? Software companies such as Autodesk, Robert McNeel & Associates, and Adobe would not entirely agree, and for good reason, too. With the aid of the computer the hand draws faster, precision is heightened, and the language of drawing is made more accessible through graphic standards. Drawings become smarter and so do the buildings they communicate. Yet, architecture still takes time. The drawing must balance its digital fixations with an acute nostalgia within the delay between architecture's ideation and its building,

Drawings, however, tend to die alone or surrender to three-dimensions. History teaches us this much. Consequently, we elect to forego paper, defy attention spans, and draw big. The bigger the drawing,

the higher its chances to exist on its own, free from the scrutiny of medium and over wrought symbolism. By intentionally scaling up our drawings to the size of walls, sometimes entire facades, we release the drawing from the charge of having to convey something bigger, or other, than itself. With scale jumps also come orientation flips and fresh canvases. Our drawings, like murals and frescos, are oriented vertically and applied to surfaces so that they not only share, but consume, the picture plane of origin—graphite, ink, and vinyl replace plaster, paint, and glass. Similarly, the drawings are designed to be consumed by what you see and how you see it. We encourage observers to move their feet, shift their gaze, and return for another look. Thankfully, the drawings are not restricted by recommended screen resolutions but informed by looking closely and increasing our audience's attention span.

Somewhat unfortunately, none of the five drawings described in the subsequent pages of this book remain today. Most of the drawings were drawn in the span of a week or projected onto a wall for the time it takes you to down your cocktail. Like a Blinky Palermo wall painting, even the longest lasting work survived only three months, never to appear again. Soon after the drawings arrive, they are either covered up, peeled away, or simply turned off. As if not wanting to be the last partygoer to leave the party, they disappear without trace. Though the drawings hint at building, they are still just drawings. And while all drawings are precious like some buildings, our drawings sidestep pretention and accept their audience's fleeting awareness.

Alone, each of the five drawings is a half thought and designed to be short-lived. As a chronological set, the five drawings require further examination. In the following pages each drawing project is presented identically. A brief text initiates each drawing by explaining the drawing's anecdotal history, its technique, and our impression of its value. The text is followed by three similarly formatted images. The first image is always a scaled version of the final drawing, represented sharply—clearly a digital production. The last image is a black and white photograph of the drawing in its commissioned location—a corridor, a music room, a ballroom, an art gallery, or a once public library. In the middle of these two images, almost like a retroactive go-between or a preview for a film post-release, is an ideogram that glimpses at the drawing's intent, or genesis. The anatomical sets of images aim to uncover or dispel themes on escapism, historicism, storytelling, technicality, and more, maybe. Look closely to piece them together but remember, they are just drawings of bigger drawings (Figure 22.1).

Corridor (View 1): View of the Arthur and Janet C. Ross Library

Medium:	Graphite and ink
Dimensions:	381⅝" x 90"
Dates:	May 2014–July 2014
City:	Rome, Italy
Building:	McKim, Mead, and White Building
Institution:	The American Academy in Rome

On the second floor of the American Academy in Rome's 1914 designed McKim, Mead and White Building sits a peculiar corridor. This corridor measures approximately 100 feet long, 12 feet high, and only 32 inches wide. On the eastern side of the corridor is a row of eight identical doors that open into eight distinct scholars' offices. On the western side of the corridor is nothing at all, save a blank white wall that

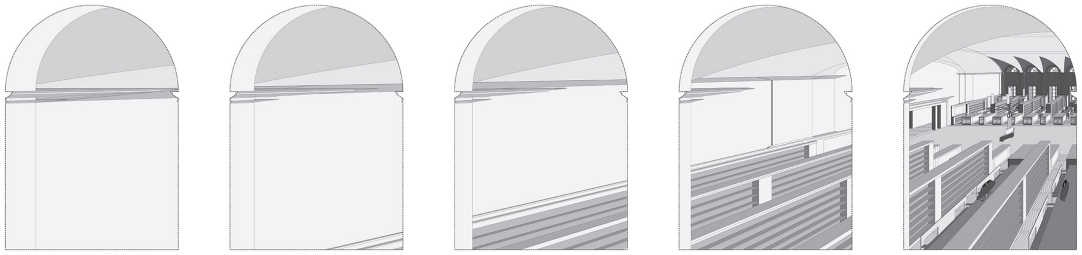

Figure 22.1 Drawing, elevation of single-point perspective.

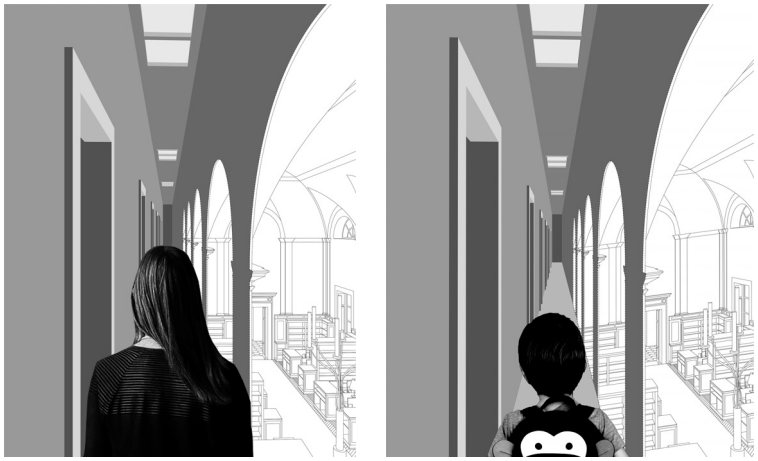

Figure 22.2 Left, single-point perspective from point of view of an adult measuring 65 inches tall. Right, single-point perspective from point of view of a child measuring 40 inches tall.

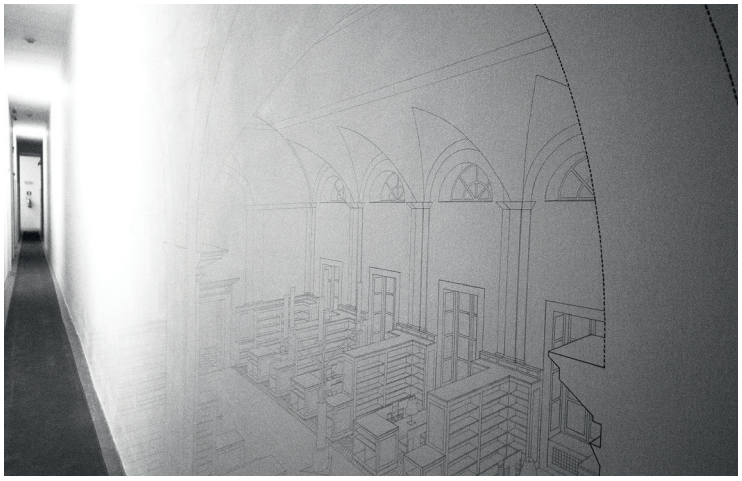

Figure 22.3 Photograph by Thomas Kelley.
Source: Courtesy of Norman Kelley.

runs the full length of the confined space. If you could look through the wall you would be looking down into the main reading room of the two-story Arthur and Janet C. Ross Library which is home to a rare books section designed by Michael Graves. Although separated by a wall in perspective, the hallway and the library are adjacent in plan and section. As is the case with certain Mannerist buildings, the entry façade is of primary importance to the architect and will sometimes yield residual aberrations—the corridor was clearly an afterthought.

Using graphite transfer paper and some ink highlights, the corridor is transformed and a view is liberated. Stand at the northern end of the hallway and look west at the once blank white wall, again. With the aid of attenuating line work, you can look down into the library, one story below. The corridor and the library are connected by way of a projection, or view, using the often-derided technique of anamorphosis. More a dynamic viewing process than a conventional form of literal representation, anamorphosis allows for an image or object to be reconstructed only when observed from a specific vantage point. Like the Perspective Hall in Peruzzi's Villa Farnesina, this type of drawing orients the observer in a way that inverts expectation. The result is a new outlook of and from the corridor.

At first look, art historian Ruth Noyes describes the illusion as one that draws the viewer into a "tighter, more restricted view, folding together into a tripartite collapse of subject, picture plane, and Subject-beholder, who finds themselves so close to the picture's surface that the image itself almost disappears from sight." Distances collapse by allowing the vanishing point to occupy the same space in the corridor as the standing point. To the scholar. walking into their office, the effect is strange, even revelatory. For a moment, the library does not appear too far.

Window (View 2): Whitney's View

Medium:	Graphite
Dimensions:	140" x 146"
Dates:	July 2014–December 2014
City:	New York, New York
Building:	Arnold and Sheila Aronson Galleries, Sheila C. Johnson Design Center
Institution:	The Architectural League of New York
Drawing Assistants:	Matthew McMahon, Cyrus Penarroyo

For the 2014 Young Architect's League Prize installation, we appropriate a photograph with a familiar background to construct a scene centering on two chairs from our collection of American Windsor chairs. An ordinary gallery wall on the ground floor of the Sheila C. Johnson Design Center located at 2 W 13th St. is elevated to a view one would find uptown about sixty blocks north, and one block east—Marcel Breuer's Whitney Museum from 1966. Standing on center within the gallery's entryway, the observer is transported, in time and place, to a setting where Breuer himself once sat, some 50 odd years ago, in the foreground of his famously oversized trapezoidal window.

Once observed, the scene entices the observer to approach and take a seat. Fulfilling the reenactment, the observer advances towards the chairs, turns and sits. The limits of the scene are now revealed. The setting has once again shifted, and the observer has turned participant.

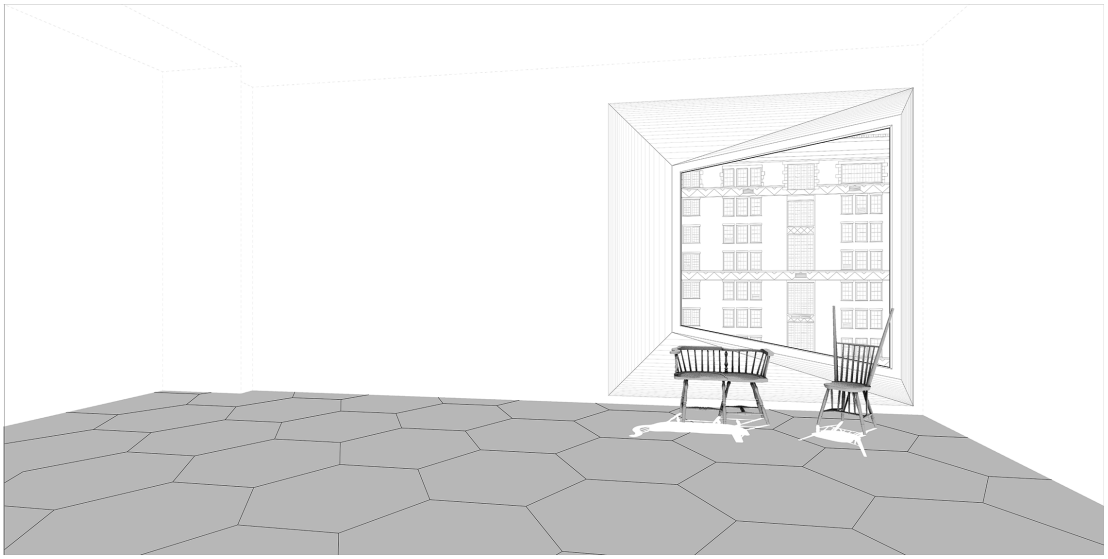

Figure 22.4 Drawing, single point perspective.

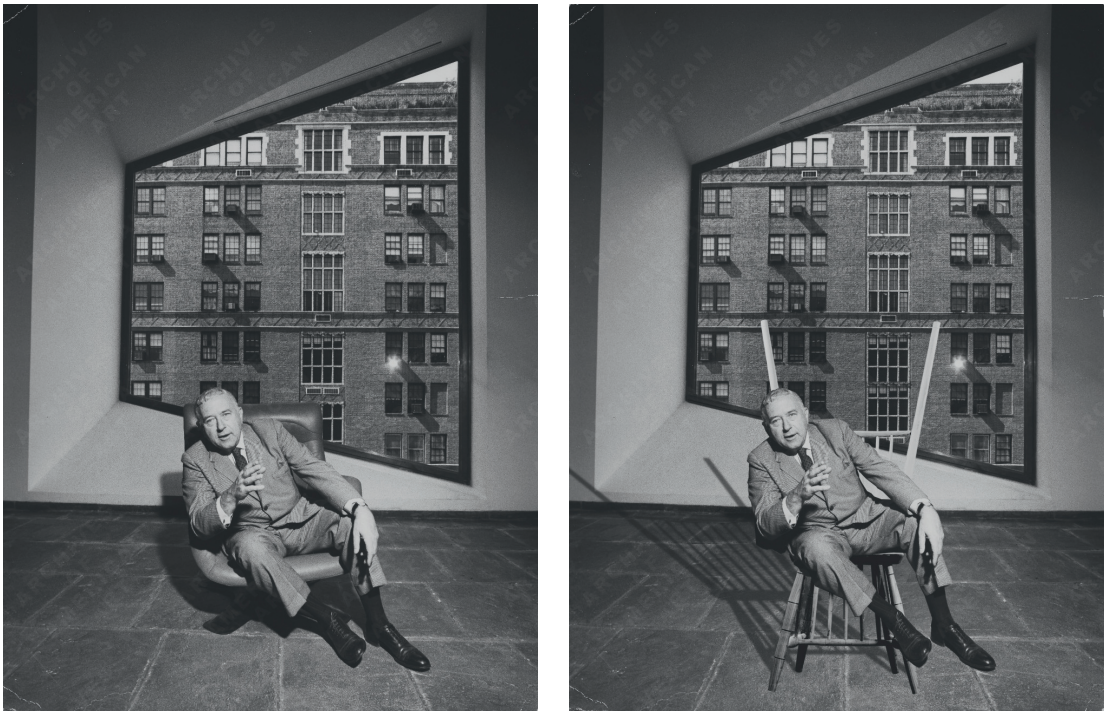

Figure 22.5 Left, photograph of Marcel Breuer; courtesy of the Smithsonian Archives of American Art. *Right, collage of Marcel Breuer seated in rod back side chair by Norman Kelley.

Figure 22.6 Photograph courtesy of The Architectural League of New York.
*Image rights have been secured.

Architecture, like film, is often driven by escapism. During the nineteenth century in London and elsewhere, panorama buildings preceded the movie theater. To enter these fantastical spaces, observers would pay only a few schillings to ascend a spiral staircase and occupy a continuous 360-degree painting (i.e. panorama) depicting another place, another time, or sometimes both. In a moment's notice, London could become Jerusalem. By drawing a two-dimensional replica of Breuer's famous window we aim to simulate a similar experience. To heighten the illusion, we add white shadow projections (matte vinyl) to the hexagonal floor of the gallery space. On the one hand, we are very proud of the award, its recognition, and the opportunity to exhibit our work for the first time in a New York gallery. On the other hand, we think our chairs may have looked good supporting Breuer's weight.

Dome (View 3): A Dome observed on its side

Medium:	Digital projection
Dimensions:	816″ c 413¾″
Dates:	September 20, 2014
City:	New York, New York
Building:	Williamsburg Savings Bank
Institution:	The Architectural League of New York
Projection Consultant:	Nuit Blanche New York

Following our collaboration with The Architectural League of New York several months prior we are asked to return, now to Brooklyn, with a bigger drawing for a bigger venue. For the 2014 Beaux Arts Ball, we

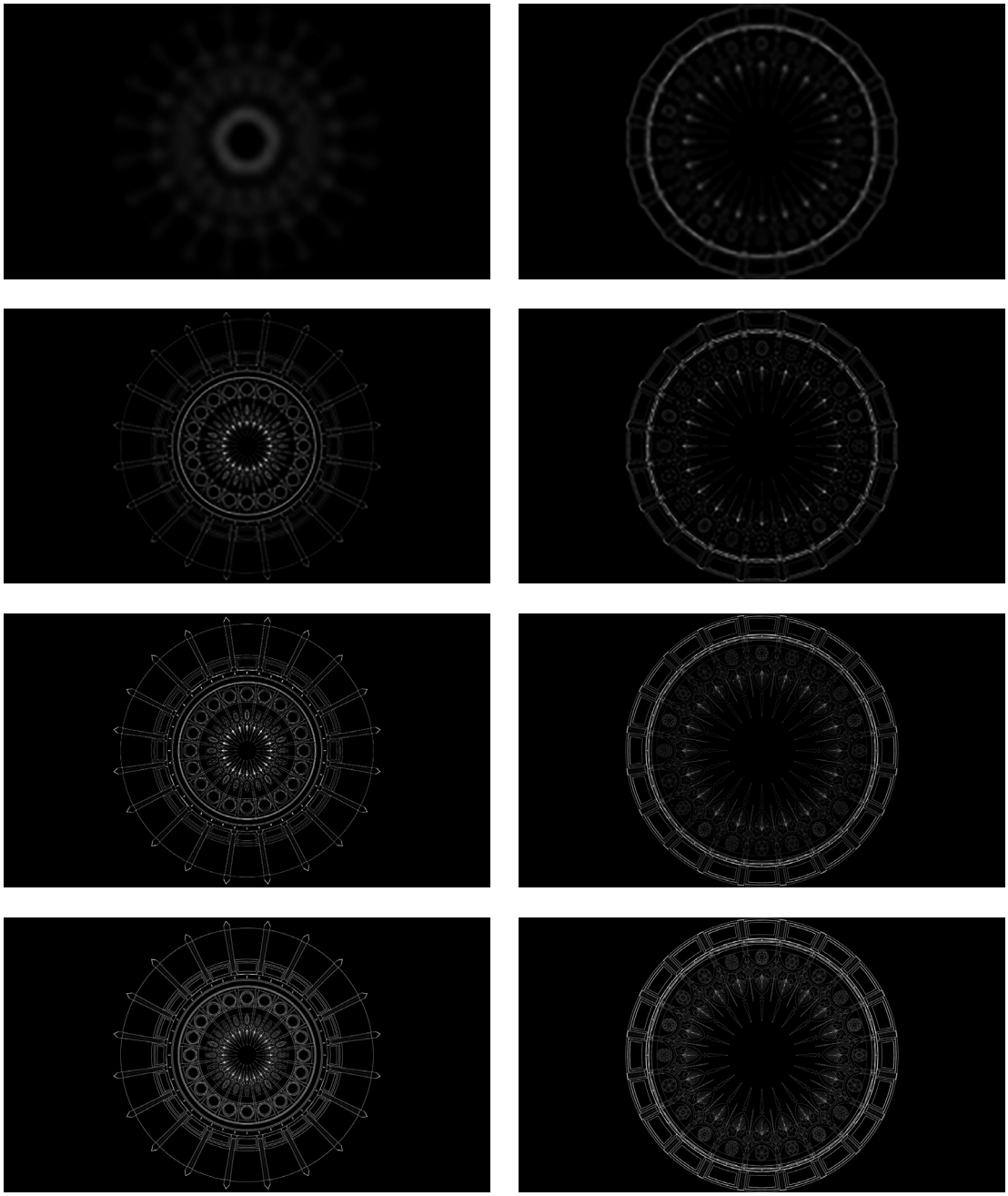

Figure 22.7 Point perspective, four quarters of different resolutions and lens lengths (animation stills).

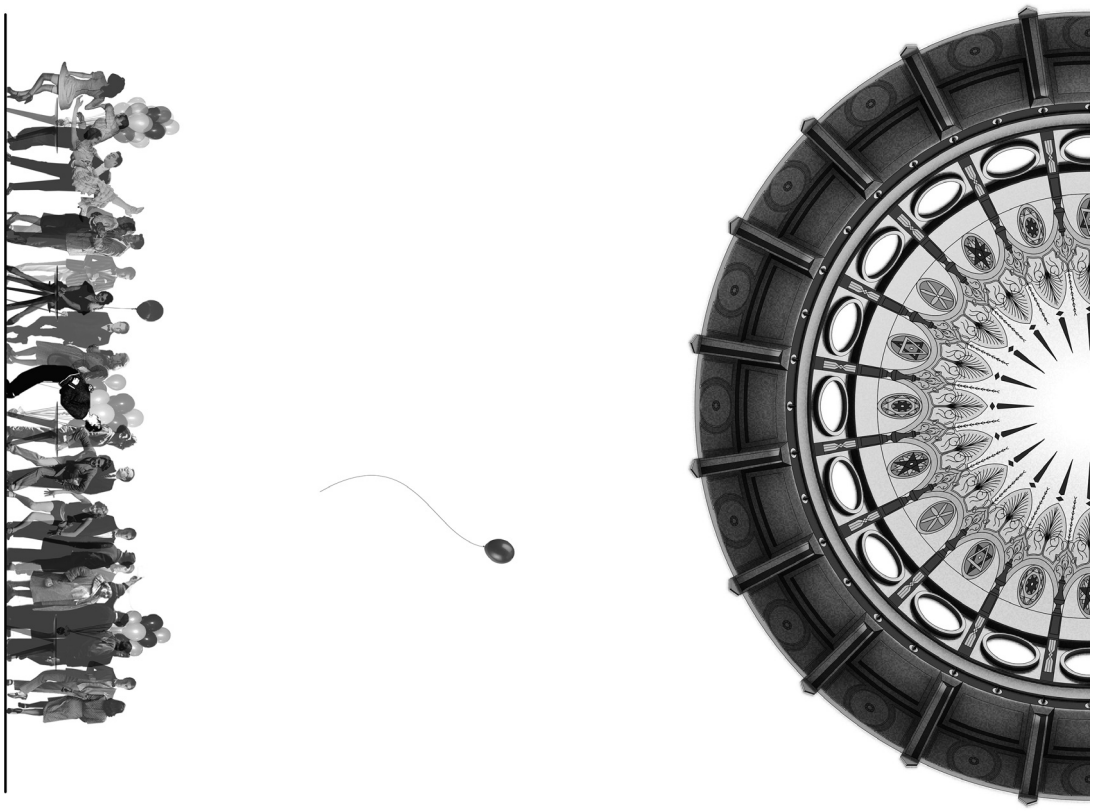

Figure 22.8 Left, elevation of a cocktail party rotated ninety-degrees. Right, elevation of a dome rotated ninety-degrees.

Figure 22.9 Photography by Mercedes Noriega.
Courtesy of the Architectural League of New York.

survey the recently restored Peter B. Wight Dome at the Williamsburgh Savings Bank of 1875 and find beauty in its trabeated drum and its monogrammed glass oval oculi. In collaboration with Nuit Blanche New York, a digital projection company, we are asked to design an animated drawing to be projected onto the archway just below the dome (Figures 22.7–22.9). Unlike our previous collaboration with the League where the given context was not as rich in history, we find much to admire in the banking hall and its hovering dome. The Landmarks Preservation Commission even writes that the 115-foot high space is "one of the most monumental spaces surviving in New York from the Post Civil War era." Having spent time in Rome staring at one too many domes, we understand that elevated beauty like this comes with a price: neck cramps.

In order to examine the dome's orientation and architecture's rationale for adorning such grand spaces with heightened ornament despite their difficult to admire from the ground, we redraw the dome and all of its decorative appeal onto a digital model where orientation, lens length and resolution are easily controlled. 1,250 frames at ten separate resolution proportions (54px × 30px to 3840px { × 2160px) are outputted. Contrast those figures with a single-point perspective in which camera and target position are static, but lens length varies from 5 mm to 100 mm and you have an animation which runs for approximately 42 seconds. The projection, however, is masked by its new picture plane, the archway below the dome. The digitally drawn dome is partially observed, but shares its radius with the dome above.

At first glance, it may seem as though we are skeptical as to why a dome must always be looked at from below. Given some patience, the observer comes to realize that we are mostly interested in avoiding a strain on our necks when appreciating crafty shape and decoration.

Door (View 4): Alice's door

Medium:	Graphite and ink
Dimensions:	214 in. x 115 in
Dates:	January 23, 2014—March 23, 2014
City:	Chicago, Illinois
Building:	Madlener House
Institution:	Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts
Drawing Assistant:	Spencer McNeil

The Madlener house was designed by Robert E. Schmidt in 1902 (Figure 22.13). From a distance it is severely proportioned, yet intricately ornamented up close. It was once a home to a family and now its 9,000 square feet are devoted to office and exhibition space. Some look at the house and see cues from Louis Sullivan, maybe Frank Lloyd Wright. When we look at the Madlener house two periods come to mind: Italian Renaissance and German Neoclassicism.

As part of the book series and exhibition, *Treatise: Why Write Alone?* curated by Jimenez Lai, we propose a wall drawing for a room that was once home to the Madlener family's grand piano. Here, our picture plane is split by a monumental fireplace. Two halves are observed, one left and one right (Figures 22.14–16).

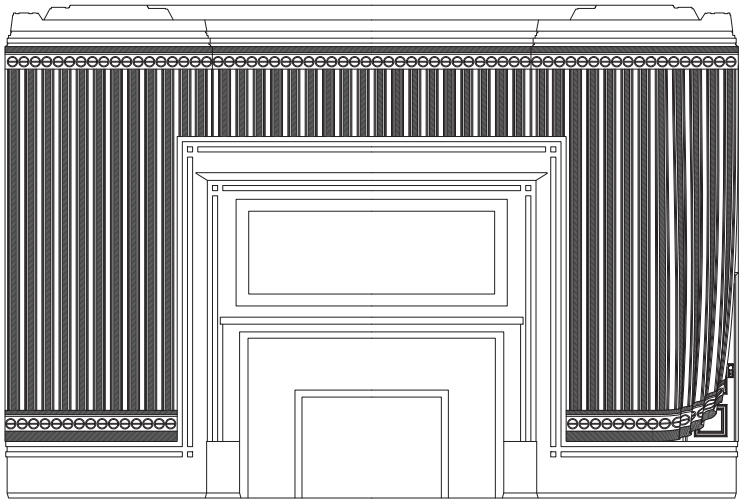

Figure 22.10 Image 1: Elevation, Music Room north wall.

Figure 22.11 Left, view of a doorknob. Right, view through a keyhole.

Figure 22.12 Photograph by Matthew Messner.

Source: Courtesy of the Graham Foundation.

Borrowing from Karl Friedrich Schinkel's vertically striped wallpaper in the Tent Room of the Charlottenhof Palace and Andrea Mantegna's painted curtains from the Ducal Palace's Bridal Chamber, we draw a two-dimensional illusion that is at once surface and not. Looking from left to right across the wall's two halves, a repetitive wallpaper made up of vertical and 45-degree lines is freed from its static picture plane to reveal a small door. The wallpaper, now a curtain, is drawn back and upon this discovery, the drawing's limits are exposed. At first glance, part of the drawing remains foregrounded; it could still be mistaken for wallpaper. These assumptions remind us that, as grown-ups, not only is our sight diminishing, but our height might not take in the full picture—like film before Yasujir{_} Ozu. Now, the observer is invited to kneel to the height of a child, and look again where one might see more than just gum stuck to the bottom of tables.

Façade (View 5): Chicago, how do you see?

Medium:	White matte cut vinyl
Dimensions:	1,478,462 square in
Dates:	October 3, 2014–January 3, 2016
City:	Chicago, Illinois
Building:	Chicago Cultural Center
Institution:	Chicago Architecture Biennial
Drawing Assistant:	Spencer McNeil

"Chicago, how do you see?" It takes many conversations with many cultural and political gatekeepers, many of whom we never meet, to arrive at such a simple question which simply replaces the all too familiar greeting, "how do you do?" The banality of the question, however, is its most provocative quality. By calling into question the way we look into and out of architecture, the audience in question is immeasurable (Figure 22.17).

For the inaugural 2015 Chicago Architecture Biennial, we are tasked by the organization's curators to make a drawing (or drawings) that is one part sign, one part invitation, and all parts spectacle. The site is the Chicago Cultural Center, designed in 1897 by the Boston firm of Shepley, Coolidge, and Rutan and

Figure 22.13 Elevation, Chicago Cultural Center East Façade.

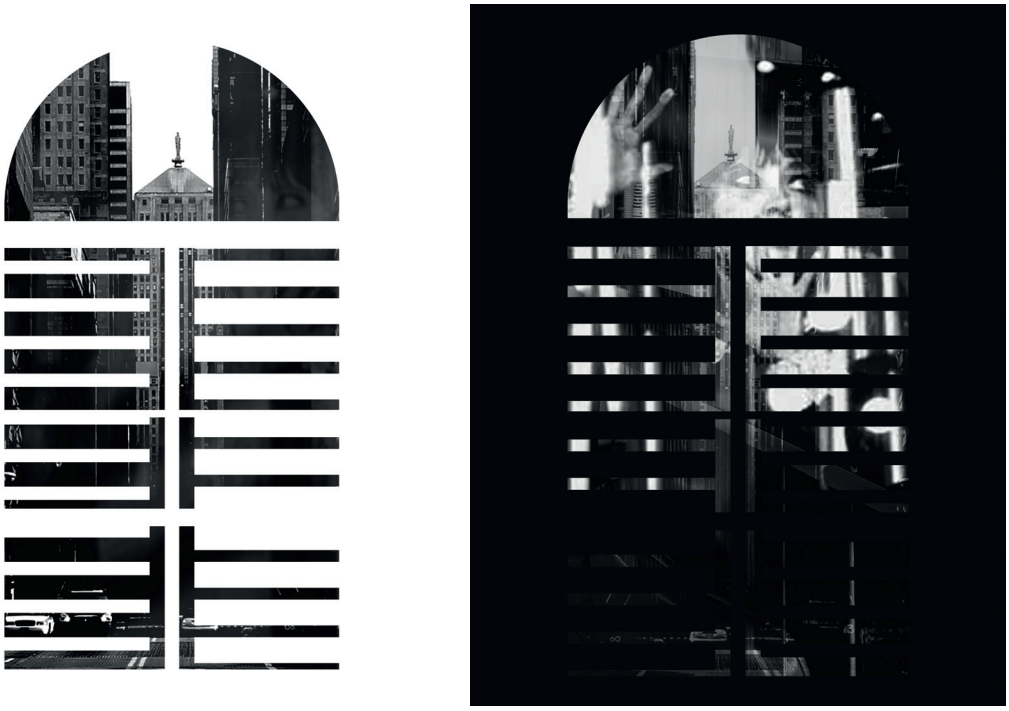

Figure 22.14 Left, view looking out from window C-10. Right, view looking in from window C-10.

Figure 22.15 Photograph by Spencer McNeil.
Source: Courtesy of the Chicago Architecture Biennial.

the home of Chicago's original public library (a.k.a. the People's Palace). More specifically, our site(s) are the exterior surfaces of the 65 reflective windows on the Michigan Avenue façade of the Chicago Cultural Center. For this drawing, or drawings, each window is lined with opaque white matte vinyl to moderate how one looks into the building and out onto the city. The graphic motif is fully visible from Michigan Avenue's east sidewalk and presents an oversized survey of historical window mullions and dressings, ranging in style from Arts & Crafts to Chicago Schools (First and Second), as well as a range of vernacular window treatments, such as Venetian blinds and pleated curtains.

At times, the drawings represent other windows. For example, the transparent surface area of an upper window is reduced by 75 percent when the vinyl applique emulates an aperture from Harry Weese's Metropolitan Correctional Center of 1975. At other times, the windows face inward and onto the exhibition space. For example, line work is fattened to represent a cartoonish set of curtains in front of Jimenez Lai's set of cartoonish furniture. This is not to say that the project is entirely indexical of what has happened or is happening. At times, the drawings exist only to mitigate views or light—no burdensome references required.

By sourcing new, old, historical and common ways through which Chicagoans look into and at their city, we aim to present a collective vision of any city; not simply Chicago (Figures 22.18–22.20).