

Introduction

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Twentieth-century modernization deeply transformed Japanese society. On the one side, the country experienced an enormous rise in industrial productivity, bringing previously unknown levels of economic wealth and social wellbeing. On the other, it introduced increasing specialization and divisions in society, which found their most visible expression in architecture, urbanism, and territorial planning. In recent years, this evolution has been increasingly questioned by architects.

In this reappraisal, architectural drawings—the traditional tool to conceptualize, organize, and build space—have played a particular role. Besides being simply instructions for a coming building, they are also an ideal instrument to document, discuss, and evaluate architecture in a critical feedback-loop. Moreover, as in ethnography, they allow usages, needs, and aspirations to be investigated through the lens of the various actors—both human and non-human. Drawings, then, underpin a common approach in the design of individualized yet shared environments in today's globalized society. The exhibition in the Japan Pavilion showcases a collection of drawings of forty-two works from all over the world from the last twenty years, ranging from design specifications and spatial-activity charts to maps of urban hybrids and

large studies of rural farming and fishing villages following natural disasters, originating from university design studios, architectural offices, or artistic practices. They all reflect the search for a new approach toward society, which we term “Architectural Ethnography.”

The main exhibition space on the first floor of the pavilion displays the works around four approaches to architectural representation: the drawing of, for, among, and around architecture. The open space on the ground floor is organized with carts (*yatai*) and urban furniture, as a place to debate, rest, study, eat, or simply meet. This book is the catalog of the exhibition. It includes the works, as well as three texts by the curators: Momoyo Kaijima introduces the concept of “Architectural Ethnography,” Laurent Stalder and Andreas Kalpakci explore the productive role played within it by architectural drawings, while Yu Iseki looks more specifically at the architectural potential of the praxis of artistic drawing. Each of the forty-two works is presented over two double-page spreads: the first highlights the general approach through a short introduction, paired with close-ups that put Architecture (A) in dialogue with Ethnography (E); the second presents key drawings, with the aim of conveying all the life there is to be discovered in architecture.