Prelace

Drawing is a precursor to language. It is a symbolic representation of the world as experienced or imagined. It also is an analytical tool of great power.

As a student of architecture, I was educated to think spatially. The conception and realization of form was taught as a process that started out as a two-dimensional diagram pregnant with three-dimensional possibilities. To heighten the awareness of spatial notation, I was immediately confronted with the problem of the flatness of the sheet of paper where the illusion of depth depended on the location, size, texture and overlap of objects in relationship to each other. All depended on the role of the contour to reveal shape, form or depth.

Thus the investigations into spatial relationships has always for me been a question of line and depth cues.
Gettitt devices such as the manipulation of figure/field or figure/ground relationships and the use of reversals to force a greater awareness of spatial issues became second nature to the design process. A simultaneous manipulation of figure and field by means of contour, edge and color is ultimately understood as a metaphor for the completeness of the world as we want it to be. Nothing useful is left out, all is pertinent and all is accommodated.

Paul Klee’s The Thinking Eye may well be the inspiration for the drawing shown here. Drawing is a purposeful act. One that hides as well as reveals. Klee’s research (and research it was) tells how the eye and the mind connect to express content whimsically, allegorically or analytically.

The exhibit documents some of my graphic thinking over the years in a variety of mediums and scales. What lies there is a dialogue about line, color and form, to communicate a value or narrative idea. They are a result of direct experience and expression of the world in its conceptual and emotive state, drawn often from memory. Vasari said that “drawing is an apparent expression, or a visible image of the thoughts of the mind (esprit) and of what one has formed first in the imagination.” Perhaps Rudolf Arnheim said it best in his introduction to Art and Visual Perception: “All perceiving is also thinking, all reasoning is also intuition, all observation is also invention.”

Drawings

The Hand (cover) is a self-conscious act of drawing while watching oneself draw. It is about the power of concentration necessary to see and to create simultaneously. Does the eye and muscle coordination already possess the knowledge of the line before the mind understands? Does our finger recoil from touching the hot object before the mind registers pain?

This type of drawing for me suggests the power of the self-reflexive act. A balance exists between acute observation and expressive invention.

The Chicago Tribune Late Entry Competition (2) is more about figure-field manipulation, but also has devices found in later drawings.