Foreword

Architecture is an intellectual and physical endeavor. That is, architecture is the amalgamation of intention (idea) with iteration (the process of problem solving with each investigation building upon the preceding one) manifest in a building or space. Architects illustrate and study their intentions and ideas through drawings and models. These architectural representations exemplify a visual language with rules, conventions, and meanings. These visual tools convey ideas, reinforce concepts, and otherwise try to persuade others. They are essential tools for designing, describing, and exploring your surrounding environment.

This book is an introduction to the visual language of architectural representation. It is intended to familiarize readers with basic concepts of architecture through a series of design exercises that develop necessary skill sets supplemented with examples, references, and research recommendations. It will challenge your preconceptions about architecture while enabling you to become critical of your built environment. This book explores architectural representation from the point of view of a designer. It is a foundation course book that is ideal for someone who is debating about attending architecture school, starting at architecture school, or generally interested in the creative aspects of architectural design.

Through a series of three-dimensional design problems, the reader will explore issues of proportion/scale, space/volume, composition/sequence, and material/texture while simultaneously learning the language of architectural representation. In addition, a series of exercises that explain the process of conceptualizing architectural ideas and how to represent those ideas in both drawings and models is provided.

Much like the process of architectural design, the approach of this book is cumulative in nature. Skills are taught incrementally and build upon prior exercises.

Architectural representations are utilized both for processing ideas and documenting those ideas for presentation. They are both a means to an end and an end in themselves. Ideas conceptualized in your head need to be translated onto paper so that they can be tested. When ideas are manifest in physical form (on paper or as a model), those ideas are forced to address questions. By physically representing your ideas, you can begin to see them for what they are, make changes, and revise them. When you draw or build your ideas you can react to them physically and visually, but when they are isolated in thought you can only react to them conceptually. This suggests a process of recording all of your thoughts and ideas in a physical manner. While making representations of your ideas, ask yourself the question “why?” Why this size, this shape, this many, and so on. At the end of the iterative process, these models and drawings are finalized and presented for particular audiences.

Architecture is taught through design, process, and technique. With the use of precedents, background information, clear instruction, examples, and exercises, this book will have you investigating your surroundings by being a curious observer. The goal is to urge you to think and see spatially, in three dimensions.