



# ANFA 2014 CONFERENCE

**PRESENTER ABSTRACTS**  
ACADEMY OF NEUROSCIENCE FOR ARCHITECTURE

# Design and Somatic Experience: An Empirical Approach to Drawing Through Experiential Anatomy

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## 1. ABSTRACT

We can activate different parts of the brain to stimulate creativity in drawing and design. While most pedagogy has focused on right brain-left brain differences, we stimulated different levels of the brain -- cortical and sub-cortical. "Experiential anatomy," "somatics," and neuroscience provide the theoretical framework. This quasi-experimental research compares and contrasts 136 sets of drawings of handles and lamps produced in 7 trials after stimulating the neo-cortex with those produced after stimulating sub-cortical parts of the brain. The two different cognitive states produced predicted design differences: straight, small, two-dimensional drawings morphed into curvilinear, large, and three-dimensional drawings of the same objects. Implications for design pedagogy and the history of "organic architecture" are discussed.

**Keywords:** design pedagogy, architectural pedagogy, somatics, drawing, organic design, quasi-experimental research in design.

## 2. AUTHOR BIOS

**Galen Cranz** is Professor of Architecture, a Ph.D. sociologist, designer, author, lecturer, and certified teacher of the Alexander Technique, a system of body-mind postural education. Her research specialties are urban parks, chairs and body conscious design, and qualitative research methods. She teaches courses in social and cultural processes in architecture and urban design, including research methods. Current research activity includes body conscious design, the sociology of taste, ethnography for design, and post-occupancy evaluation. Professor Cranz is author of *The Chair: Rethinking Culture, Body and Design*, which received the Achievement Award from the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) in 2004. She is a founding member of the international Association for Body Conscious Design and lectures worldwide on this topic.

**Leonardo Chiesi** is a professor of sociology at the School of Architecture, Florence. He has been visiting scholar at the Department of Architecture, University of California, Berkeley. He is interested in research methods for design, architecture and planning. He has been involved in several architectural design and city planning projects. He has a strong interest in the subjects of local identity, community processes and participation methods.

He has written a book on the construction of scientific discourse (*Retorica nella scienza. Come la scienza costruisce i suoi argomenti anche al di là della logica*, 2009) and a book on the relationship between social sciences, architecture and planning (*Il doppio spazio dell'architettura. Ricerca sociologica e progettazione*, 2010). He has edited a collection of research material on community identity and its relationship with the rural environment (*Identità sociale e territorio. Il Montalbano*, 2009).

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