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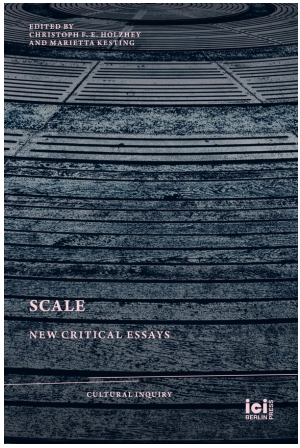

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The Hurricane in the Room

Drawing, Marginality, and Scale in Monica Bonvicini's *75 mph*

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ABSTRACT: This essay analyses drawings related to Monica Bonvicini's *A Violent, Tropical, Cyclonic Piece of Art Having Wind Speeds of or in Excess of 75 mph*. Consisting of two fans blowing air at unbearable speed in a white-cube space, the installation presented a strategy of expansion, compression, and multiscalarity. Bonvicini's drawings provide a way to read this strategy, featuring collages juxtaposing advertisements, standard architecture manuals, and theory. A framework based on the concept of marginality is developed to analyse scalar frictions, manipulations of figurability, and the reversion of outside and inside, visibility and exclusion, perspective and opacity.

KEYWORDS: installation; architecture; drawing; collage; marginality; friction; figurability; gender

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The Hurricane in the Room

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1. THE SCALES OF INSTALLATION

In March 1998, two high-powered ventilators circulating 40,000 cubic metres of air per minute welcomed visitors within a purpose-built white cube in Monica Bonvicini's solo exhibition at Galerie Mehdi Chouakri on Gipsstraße in Berlin (Figure 1). One reviewer reported their experience of the exhibition: 'It is pleasant to bathe your hair in it and let the wind blow in your face, but it is unbearable in the long run.'[1] Another wrote: 'When you stepped into it, you felt either encouraged to just stupidly let yourself go or a violent compulsion to resist the pressure. [...] No discreet small talk, no idle fondling of wineglasses, no nervously smoked cigarettes. Instead, heavy metal — nothing but roaring sound and blowing hair.'[2] The extreme conditions of wind and noise challenged the habits of the art audience. The work caused a stir, marking the first international recognition for the Italian artist, who had been living in Berlin for a decade.

1 Peter Herbstreuth, 'Der freie Flug einer Junggenialen', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 4 April 1998, p. 28; my translation.

2 Jörg Heiser, 'Monica Bonvicini: Galerie Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin', *Frieze*, 41 (1998), p. 81.



Fig. 1. Monica Bonvicini, *A Violent, Tropical, Cyclonic Piece of Art Having Wind Speeds of or in Excess of 75 mph*, 1998, aluminium studs, drywall panels, white paint, two axial fans, 350 × 600 × 400 cm. © Monica Bonvicini and VG Bild-Kunst. Photograph: Jens Ziehe. Courtesy of the artist and Museum Neues Weimar. Creative Commons license terms for re-use do not apply to this picture and further permission may be required from the right holder.

A Violent, Tropical, Cyclonic Piece of Art Having Wind Speeds of or in Excess of 75 mph encourages a scalar reading, pointing in three directions. On a phenomenological level, the work *expanded* into an environment, entering the much-debated category of installation art. At the same time, Bonvicini literally *compressed* a hurricane into an indoor experiment. The miniaturization occurred by isolating an index, namely air speed, from among the characteristics listed in the dictionary definition of 'hurricane',[3] drawing the work's title from this by

3 See *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, ed. by Stuart Berg Flexner, 2nd edn (Random House, 1987), p. 934: 'A violent, tropical, cyclonic storm of the

replacing the word 'hurricane' with 'piece of art'. The experience of the work inverted Immanuel Kant's classic example of the dynamical sublime: a hurricane observed from 'a safe place'.[4] In Berlin, this overwhelming force of nature was paradoxically enclosed in a room, and relief could only be found by getting out and leaving the space.

A second reading concerns a metaphorical scale jump. One reviewer of the show compared the axial fans to the wind machines of film sets,[5] and considered the installation's effect on visitors according to a cinematic cliché: the wind scene thus represents the turbulence of the soul and scales up personal feeling to planetary sufferance, as in Michael Jackson's 'Earth Song' music video.[6]

A third scalar reading encompasses the first two to examine Bonvicini's practice from within. Like most artists who create installations, Bonvicini devotes a great deal of time to drawing and planning — a daily paper-based activity that ensures continuity between the site-specific works created in galleries and museums and her ephemeral interventions in public spaces. The artist has described her early drawing practice as copious, occurring in various, sometimes improvised places ('during an institute meeting', 'in an airplane from NYC to Amsterdam'),[7] though mainly at home: 'my apartment looked a lot like a studio. I can't cook anyway.'[8] She would work out her ideas through annotated readings, notes, studies, sketches. To coalesce these into a coherent work, Bonvicini turned to more structured and complex drawings, often in quite large formats, that were usually finished in a single session. Sometimes, the drawings would serve to present her ideas to galleries and museums, as well as to apply for funding and schol-

western North Atlantic, having wind speed of or in excess of 72 mph (32 m/sec). [...] [1545–55; < Sp *huracán* < Taino *hurakán*]'. Bonvicini uses the speed '73 mph' in some drawings.

4 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. by Werner S. Pluhar (Hackett, 1987), p. 120.

5 Too noisy to be used in film production, the axial ventilators were in fact loaned from a factory. I am thankful to Monica Bonvicini for her help and sharing of information about her work.

6 Herbstreuth, 'Der freie Flug'.

7 Monica Bonvicini, 'A Lonely Conversation', interview by Bettina Steinbrügge, in Harald Falckenberg and others, *Monica Bonvicini: Disegni* (Distanz, 2012), pp. 319–21 (p. 319).

8 Ibid., p. 319.

arships: 'Back then, I went to the workshop with a drawing just like that, and it would be built just like that. There weren't any computer graphics back then, or at least we didn't have any.'[9] The more finished drawings present a layered materiality and sophisticated orchestration of collage, superimpositions of paper fragments, photocopies, and tracing papers, and crayon and watercolour.

With few exceptions,[10] Bonvicini's graphic oeuvre remained private during her early career, until its large-scale presentation in Mönchengladbach and Hamburg in 2012. A related extensive catalogue groups these materials according to the three-dimensional work or exhibition to which they refer. However, the status of the drawings in relation to the installations cannot be reduced to that of preliminary study or project work. In the case of the twenty-six works on paper associated with the 1998 hurricane work, functionally titled *Drawings to 75 mph*,[11] they do not clearly collocate before or after the invitation from Mehdi Chouakri; rather, they present variations, collateral developments, and hypotheses on the work, and include textual references, staging a theoretical reflection on her practice.

Looking at the drawings, scale appears as an operational device of fundamental importance. Conceiving and developing the hurricane installation, Bonvicini had to 'draw to scale', that is, represent it on small portable supports. She made use of plans, prospects, and three-point perspective, a basic architectural vocabulary that is recognizable in its virtual function to project onto a larger scale. The operation exercised by scale is a virtual shift or jump, and can be best understood by considering the etymology of the term 'project'. *Pro-iacio*, to throw forward, implies a movement of expansion as well as a distance to be 'thrown over', a material and theoretical gap between paper sheet and (imagined or realized) spatial work. Recent theories of scale have precisely highlighted its dynamic or relational nature, reading scale

9 Ibid., p. 320.

10 Some early drawings were included in group exhibitions, including 'Construction Drawings' at Kunst-Werke Berlin, 22 January to 4 April 1999 <https://www.kw-berlin.de/de/ausstellungen/1999-construction-drawings> [accessed 15 April 2026]; or else exhibited in series, as with the *Bedtimesquare* collages at Galleria Emi Fontana in Milan in 1999.

11 See Falckenberg and others, *Monica Bonvicini: Disegni*, pp. 60–75.

variance not as a continuum but rather as an articulation of 'disjunctures',[12] and as 'jumps and discontinuities' in scale variance:[13] scale itself is visible and critical only when imagined as a shift between at least two sizes or levels of observation.

A Violent, Tropical, Cyclonic Piece of Art Having Wind Speeds of or in Excess of 75 mph also declared a 'gap' in regard to its own reception, by assaulting visitors with its upscaled wind force and causing them to leave. As the critic Peter Herbstreuth put it, 'the wind installation is not suitable for visits' (Die Wind-Installation eignet sich nicht zum Schauen).[14] 'Nicht zum Schauen' can be read in two ways, denoting either the inaccessibility of this anti-exhibition on an institutional level,[15] or a phenomenological appreciation of the installation's obstruction of vision.[16] Such hostile conditions are its actual subject and eventually limited the display of the work itself: the industrial ventilators required that the electrical system be modified with higher-capacity cables; originally intended to run constantly during gallery hours, their activation was reduced to five minutes every half hour, following complaints from neighbours.

Before deepening my inquiry into the forms and meanings of a hurricane in a room, and showing how shifts in scale articulate both its anti-phenomenological and anti-institutional character, in the next section I will provide a working definition of drawing as marginal in order to frame the relationship between Bonvicini's practices on paper and in space.

12 Derek Woods, 'Scale Critique for the Anthropocene', *The Minnesota Review*, 83 (2014), pp. 133–42 (p. 135) <https://doi.org/10.1215/00265667-2782327>.

13 Timothy Clark, 'Scale', in *Telemorphosis: Theory in the Era of Climate Change*, ed. by Tom Cohen (Open Humanities Press, 2012), pp. 148–66 (p. 149).

14 Herbstreuth, 'Der freie Flug', p. 28; my translation.

15 See *The Anti-Museum: An Anthology*, ed. by Mathieu Copeland and Balthazar Lovay (Walther König, 2017).

16 In 1996–97, Bonvicini explored such an obstruction in a series of drawings for a possible exhibition where visitors would be forced to bend over in order to enter a gallery space, due to a lowered ceiling height (achieved by a horizontal drywall panel hung on aluminium studs). Among its provisional titles were 'Low short expectations', 'Bend your mind to my work', 'Submit', 'Go round the bend', the latter meaning to be unable to act in a reasonable way. See Falckenberg and others, *Monica Bonvicini: Disegni*, pp. 84–86.

2. MARGINAL DRAWING

Drawings for installation engage with space in a way that modifies traditional understandings of the medium. While a comprehensive study of this vast category of post-war Western art has yet to be undertaken, with drawing eloquently absent in most theorizations of installation art, we could approach some basic questions by returning to an early art-historical discussion of drawing for architecture. The German art historian and critic Carl Linfert's *The Foundations of Architecture Drawing* (1931) offered a detailed study of architectural drawing in eighteenth-century France, proposing a new formal and theoretical framework to address the specificities of this mode of draughtsmanship. Walter Benjamin, who was close to Linfert, praised the study for its attention to an overlooked subject, as an example of an art history 'at home in marginal domains': 'it is precisely in the investigation of the marginal case that the material contents reveal their key position most decisively.'[17] Benjamin's review was republished fifty years later in the art journal *October*, and Susanne Titz has suggested its significance as a contribution to the theoretical context of the 1980s and 1990s that was to be essential for Bonvicini herself. It was above all Benjamin and Linfert's idea that drawings do not reproduce architecture but produce it in the first place ('a production which less often benefits the reality of architectural planning than it does dreams'[18]) that resonate with debates on the visual mediation and deconstruction of architecture at this time.[19]

17 Walter Benjamin, 'Rigorous Study of Art', trans. by Thomas Y. Levin, *October*, 47 (1988), pp. 84–90 (p. 89) <https://doi.org/10.2307/778983>. See Lutz Robbers, 'Without Pictorial Detour: Benjamin, Mies and the Architectural Image', *Footprint*, 10.1 (2016), pp. 27–50 <https://doi.org/10.7480/footprint.10.1.976>.

18 Benjamin, 'Rigorous Study', p. 88.

19 Susanne Titz, 'Drawing Spaces', in Falckenberg and others, *Monica Bonvicini: Disegni*, pp. 313–18. The exhibition 'Deconstructivist Architecture' at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1988 collected the work of Frank O. Gehry, Daniel Libeskind, Rem Koolhaas, Peter Eisenman, Zaha M. Hadid, Coop Himmelblau, and Bernard Tschumi. See Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, *Deconstructivist Architecture* (Museum of Modern Art, 1988); and Mark Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt* (MIT Press, 1993).

Linfert defines architectural drawing as *Grenzfall* and *Zwitter* ('limit case' and 'hybrid'),[20] a visualization of space at the edges of architecture and painting — or at the margins of the two. These two media are radically opposed in their approach to spatial representation. On the one hand, architecture shapes three-dimensional space in discrete units that are experienced by moving bodies; it 'requires more than the eye to be fully grasped. The eye must see less than it must sense structures'.[21] On the other hand, figurative painting limits space to a single point of view and a unified vision with coherent perspective, shadowing, and other mimetic qualities. Standing in between the two, architectural drawing shares with painting a vocabulary of two-dimensional signs. However,

> the actual sensual, or rather figurative or representational skill is lacking. The drawn details do not have the drive and ambition to lead to a fully illustrative sensualization on their own. The expressive language is immediately conditioned by the *constructive* nature of each *individual* architectural object.[22]

Linfert stresses the negative qualities that define architectural drawing, as serving the 'structural, anti-image character of architecture' (tektonisch-unbildlichen Charakter der Baukunst). While correct in terms of measures and constructive proportions, it makes use of a perspectival clumsiness (*Ungeschicklichkeit*); it does not represent buildings as objects (images of objects) and often privileges schemes, diagrams, and topographical symbols.[23]

This mode of drawing (*Zeichnungsweise*) is ascribed to a 'building, not forming, eye' (bauenden, nicht […] bildenden Auge). Its practical and visual qualities indicate a 'very different meaning of drawing in rela-

20 Carl Linfert, 'Die Grundlagen der Architekturzeichnung', *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen*, 1 (1931), pp. 133–246 (p. 153); my translation.

21 Ibid., p. 143.

22 Ibid., p. 135.

23 'In topographical representations, the schematizing power of the object (whether architecture, trees, or something else) is so strong and important that it becomes impossible to recast it into the pictorial object. Consequently, what is perceived as unnatural in painting is posited at the core of architecture drawing, as a non-pictorial "objectivist remnant" and a "representational rigidity" [*Darstellungshärte*]. […] What is lacking, circumscribes [*grenzt*] the essence of architecture drawing' (ibid., pp. 144, 230).

tion to production and to the single work which the drawing serves'.[24] This last point is particularly important for locating the meaning of drawing and to displace it from the centrality, primacy, and continuity traditionally assigned to the medium. From Giorgio Vasari to recent scholarship,[25] drawing has been acknowledged and valued at/as the core of pictorial expression, the site of intimate style, the artist's hand, and direct, sincere autography. These traditional features are encapsulated by the essentialist, almost genetical paradigm behind the Vasarian definition of *disegno* as the 'father of the arts', which entails the linear sequence of conception-planning-realization. Linfert delineates a different conceptual position: 'architectural invention is not carried over into "execution" by way of "drawing" (as artistic invention is), but interrupts this path.'[26] This detour in the process of creation complicates definitions like 'preparatory drawing' and challenges the linearity underpinning the traditional concept of planning (from the project to the building). Removed from the centre, drawing is displaced to a conceptual position where it operates a critical detouring with respect to the spatial work it addresses. This position is therefore lateral, liminal, marginal. From this perspective, and in the case of Bonvicini's *75 mph*, drawing provides a material site to explore the relation between scale and marginality.

3. COLLAGE: FRAGMENTATION, INTERRUPTION, SEPARATION

The idea of working with air and architecture first came to Bonvicini during her student exchange at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts):

> In 1992 I made a series of photographs of the air-conditioning system in the main building of CalArts, where I was studying. [...] Fantastic rooms, insane. I had never seen so many filters before. Rooms filled with nothing except dirty and clean air. The air was so strong I could barely hold onto the tripod.[27]

24 Ibid., p. 143.

25 See Deanna Petherbridge, *The Primacy of Drawing: Histories and Theories of Practice* (Yale University Press, 2010).

26 Linfert, 'Die Grundlagen', p. 231.

27 Bonvicini, 'A Lonely Conversation', p. 319.

Born in Venice in 1965, Bonvicini had moved to Berlin in 1986 to study painting at the Hochschule der Künste (HdK). Her interest in the functional aspects of buildings in general, and in air conditioning in particular, may be read in relation to the teaching context of CalArts (where Michael Asher and Allan Sekula were professors) and the broader return of Conceptual art in the critical agenda of the early 1990s.[28] Susanne von Falkenhausen early on highlighted Bonvicini's relationship with Minimalism and Conceptual art, as models to draw inspiration from and to overturn. Both Asher and Bruce Nauman had created wind rooms in the late 60s and 70s, producing subtle estrangements of the sound and air conditions of indoor environments.[29] Without exception, however, they left the sources of ventilation hidden. Bonvicini's hurricane is a polemic against Conceptual art's 'rhetoric of the immaterial', as it turns 'from soft to loud, from invisible to extremely conspicuous, from immateriality to a brutally staged material presence. In its effect, however, the concept becomes a gesture — loud, theatrical, and full of itself'.[30]

An analogous lineage may be discerned in Bonvicini's early works on paper. After repudiating her painting education at the HdK, she turned to drawing, but mostly to anti-pictorial and sculptural examples: 'I was very much into the drawings of Donald Judd [...] because he cannot draw. I love it when artists cannot draw, but they draw.'[31] While

28 See Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, 'Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions', *October*, 55 (1991), pp. 105–43 <https://doi.org/10.2307/778941>.

29 See Kavior Moon, 'From Air to Architecture: Michael Asher's Early Air Works', in *Conceptualism and Materiality*, ed. by Christian Berger (Brill, 2019), pp. 57–87; and the notes on Nauman's 1970 *Wind Room* in Leontine Coelewij, 'Bruce Nauman at the Stedelijk Museum: An Exhibition and Collection History', Stedelijk, 25 May 2021 <https://www.stedelijk.nl/en/digdeeper/bruce-nauman-stedelijk-museum> [accessed 15 April 2026].

30 Susanne von Falkenhausen, 'From Concept to Gesture: Bonvicini's Play with the Strategies of Modernism, or How to Turn Minimalism from its Head onto its Hands', in Dan Cameron, Susanne von Falkenhausen, and Allesandra Pace, *Monica Bonvicini: Bau* (Hopefulmonster, 2000), pp. 75–85 (p. 79).

31 'In Conversation Monica Bonvicini / Hamburger Bahnhof', Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart, 6 December 2025 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-fbOuWjCi0> [accessed 15 April 2026]. See also Bonvicini's comment that 'Donald Judd was just as bad with drawing in perspective as I am', in Bonvicini, 'A Lonely Conversation', p. 319.



Fig. 2. Monica Bonvicini, *Drawing to 75 mph*, 1998, graphite, oil crayons, and correction liquid on printed paper, 29.5 × 42 cm. © Monica Bonvicini and VG Bild-Kunst. Photograph: def image. Courtesy of the artist. Creative Commons license terms for re-use do not apply to this picture and further permission may be required from the right holder.

Asher commissioned architects to execute his plans,[32] Nauman's drawings for installations offered a fascinating model for a basic architectural vocabulary (planimetries, axonometries, prospects) appropriated by an instinctive touch and rich materiality.[33] Both approaches can be

32 See Michael Asher, *Writings 1973–1983 on Works 1969–1979*, ed. by Benjamin H. D. Buchloh (The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983).

33 See *Bruce Nauman: Zeichnungen 1965–1986*, ed. by Dieter Koepplin (Kunstmuseum Basel, 1986).

seen in Bonvicini's *Drawings to 75 mph*, especially those executed in proximity to the exhibition: the detailed plan and axonometry on millimetre paper that is now in the collection of the Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin as a gift from Paul Maenz and Gerd de Vries;[34] and three views of the gallery installation in a large street scene.[35] Among the latter is a photocopied paper sheet reworked with oil crayons and white correction fluid (Figure 2). It presents the gallery in quite dramatic perspective and removes the roof, revealing the structure of the installation. The drywall panels are also shown from the back, revealing the supporting aluminium studs and mounting holes for the fans (electrical cables ran through the cavity between the temporary walls and the gallery walls). A door opens from the room into a second space in the gallery, which is not detailed in the drawing. Bonvicini devotes special attention to the urban setting of the street onto which the gallery faces, its exterior walls rendered in heavy strokes of yellow pastel. Sketched with a dexterous fading effect are a parked car and a truck, and two signs on the buildings adjacent to the gallery, which read *Hure* ('whore') and *Bierhaus* ('brewpub'). Together with the vehicles, they seem to allude to a distinctly masculine sphere of consumerism.

A group of eight drawings are numbered as a sequence and share their materials and dimensions (55.5 by 72.5 cm). Formally, they evince an original visual strategy that questions both style and the function of planning. Interior views of the hurricane installation are juxtaposed with various images and texts, either collaged or retraced, in a layout that recalls the format of an artist's proposal. In one drawing, a questionnaire-like presentation is introduced by the question, 'What is [it] about?':

> A corner of the museum will be closed by two walls. In the inside two big ventilators will be mounted on the preexisting walls of the institution. The ventilators will blow cold air from the air conditioning central system into the constructed room. No room thermostat will be needed. The — already cleaned

34 Two sketches with graphite, white pastel, and coloured ink on millimetre paper, each 29.6 × 42 cm (GGB 725-2022,1-2), Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

35 See Falckenberg and others, *Monica Bonvicini: Disegni*, pp. 68, 72 (bottom right), pp. 74–75.

> — air will be blow[n] with the maximum speed permitted. The two ventilators will be positioned opposite each other. The jet of air will meet in the middle of the space producing a 'collision of ventilation' (also suitable for offices & public/private spaces in general.[36]

The text reveals an aspect of the work that was possibly overlooked in the installation itself, namely, the cleaning of air brought to a paroxysmal ventilation. This technical focus expands in the collage drawings via the insertion of various illustrations from manuals such as the *Architectural Graphic Standards* or the *Complete Fix-It-Yourself Manual*.[37] With striking meticulousness, Bonvicini retraced the typologies of ducts and outlets, accompanying these with captions and numerals that are ultimately unreadable out of context, together with schemes and plans concerning the possible circulation of air in specific rooms. Immersion in the technical structure of the institutional context (an unnamed 'museum') is a trope of institutional critique; however, in these drawings it appears compromised not only by the randomness of the sources (as if Bonvicini were trying out disparate models of air circulation), but also by the marketing language clearly drawn from advertising — in one drawing, the words *Kunsthalle* and *Kaufhalle* overlap.[38] Taglines selling the hurricane installation are spread across the drawings: 'money-back guarantee! / eine gute Lösung und verursacht in jeder Hinsicht die geringsten Beanstandungen' (a good solution and causes the fewest complaints in every respect); 'it's new, it's clean, it's p.[olitically]c.[orrect], it's easy!'; 'there is nothing to understand about it, just try it!'.[39] Such contrasts in register culminate in ironic titles that are matched with images proclaiming an avant-garde attitude as if it were a commercial product: the imperatives 'Don't be middle-class! Don't be reactionary! Don't be nice!' appear on a picture of traditional painting tools; the phrase 'Support the products of proletarian's [*sic*] sweat' is written on one of the photographs of filters in the ventilation

36 Ibid., p. 67.

37 Charles G. Ramsey and Harold R. Sleeper, *Architectural Graphic Standards* (Wiley, 1988); and *Complete Fix-It-Yourself Manual*, ed. by Katherine Zmetana (Prentice Hall Press, 1989), from whose chapter 'Heating and Cooling Systems' (p. 162) Bonvicini retraced an axonometric.

38 Falckenberg and others, *Monica Bonvicini: Disegni*, p. 62.

39 Respectively, ibid., pp. 67, 66, and 65.

room at CalArts.[40] Most of the texts have been typed in various Microsoft Word fonts, then printed and collaged, so as to suggest the feel of anonymous voice-overs and impersonal discourse, amid which it is difficult to situate Bonvicini's own (ironic) position.

Another source that has undergone the fragmentation of collage is Jeff Wall's *A Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai)* (1993). Bonvicini photocopied the famous photograph and fragmented it multiple times,[41] disposing of the original composition (itself the result of a careful photomontage) and inserting the cut-out characters (the oscillating tree, the off-balance man) rather prosaically as shocked visitors to the hurricane installation.[42]

In one image, a theoretical text appears to be taken seriously as a reading that is key to the drawings. It is a quote from *Space and Sexuality*, a 1992 volume edited by Beatriz Colomina, which greatly influenced Bonvicini's practice in the early 90s and alimented her feminist reflection on architecture as an instrument of power over bodies and sexualities. The quotation merges two passages from a dense essay by Mark Wigley, 'Untitled: The Housing of Gender', a detailed analysis of Leon Battista Alberti's fifteenth-century treatise *De re aedificatoria* (*On the Art of Building*) and the construction of the female subject in the theorization of domestic architecture:

> Before it can defend the body, architecture must defend itself against the body in ordering it… Architecture is established as such a purification. It must be sited, organized, and maintained with technical strategies like drains, windows, and cremation, which preserve the 'purity of the air'. The body itself emerges as a threat to the purity of space, the 'cleanliness of building'.[43]

Bonvicini's original fascination with the compressed strength of the ventilation room at CalArts and the insistence of the decontextualized

40 Ibid., p. 63.

41 Wall's work was illustrated on two pages on the Swiss magazine *Parkett* in 1997.

42 On Wall's technique, see Fosco Lucarelli, 'Jeff Wall, Study for "A Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai)", (1993)', *Socks*, 28 June 2017 <https://socks-studio.com/2017/06/28/jeff-wall-study-for-a-sudden-gust-of-wind-after-hokusai-1993/> [accessed 15 April 2026].

43 See Falckenberg and others, *Monica Bonvicini: Disegni*, p. 62. The original passages are from Mark Wigley, 'Untitled: The Housing of Gender', in *Sexuality and Space*, ed. by Beatriz Colomina (Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), pp. 327–89 (p. 344).

and incomprehensible technical details from architectural manuals are both readable as reflecting this impulse of a paroxysmal cleaning of the '— already cleaned — air', an obsession foundational to house architecture. In subsequent paragraphs, Wigley specifies that 'this disciplining of the body is an extension of the traditional disciplining of the cultural artifact "woman", authorized by the claim that she is too much a part of the fluid bodily world to control herself'.[44]

In the drawings, Bonvicini hints at gender discrimination in the form of fictional, humorous newspaper strips reporting the comments of two male visitors, Mister Sauer and Mister Blauimmer,[45] who lament that they have caught a cold from the installation wind, to which the artist replies, 'The power of art is unpredictable', and, reversing a sexist cliché on appropriate dressing, '[you] should wear a different kind of shirt'. Another picture shows a men-only committee of the association 'Beautiful Art Is Good for Us' approving the hurricane installation.

In 1998, Gwen Raaberg recapitulated the recent history of collage as a feminist strategy. Her lineage of theories and practices since the 70s included several references of relevance to Bonvicini's practice on paper, such as Barbara Kruger's image/word combinations, Martha Rosler's insertions of war images into domestic interiors, and Miriam Schapiro's category of 'femmage'.[46] While femmage functions as a claim for the fragmented cultural past of women and for the legacy of gestures historically devalued as female (from sewing and cutting to appliqué and cooking), Bonvicini intervenes in the dominant male discourses of making. Her strategy can be thought alongside Lucy Lippard's aesthetic of collage as a form of 'positive fragmentation' that frames women's artistic agency within the logic of the house:

44 Wigley, 'Untitled', p. 345.

45 *Sauer* translates as 'sour, irritated'; *Blauimmer* means 'always blue', that is, drunk. It also seems to echo the famous architecture collective Coop Himmelb(l)au, which represented Austria at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 1996.

46 Melissa Meyer and Miriam Schapiro's essay 'Waste Not Want Not' (1977–78) is key here. For the original, collage-like layout of the text, see Melissa Meyer and Miriam Schapiro, 'Waste Not Want Not: An Inquiry into What Women Saved and Assembled', *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art & Politics*, 1.4 (1978), pp. 66–69 <https://leaf.bucknell.edu/node/461/> [accessed 15 April 2026]. Schapiro taught at CalArts in the early 1970s.

> It is supposed to be men who are 'handy around the house', men who 'fix' things while women 'make' the home. This is a myth, of course, and a popular one. There are certainly as many women who do domestic repair as men [...]. The fact remains that when a woman comes to make something, it more often than not has a particular character — whether this originates from role-playing, the division of labour, or some deeper consciousness. The difference can often be defined as a kind of 'positive fragmentation' or as the collage aesthetic — the mixing and matching of fragments to provide a new whole.[47]

These reflections echoed the Wages for Housework campaign of the mid-1970s, which was animated by many Italians, including Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Silvia Federici, among others.[48] Bonvicini literally refers to the feminist struggle when, in the drawings, her 'bauenden Auge' (building eye), in Linfert's expression, appropriates the language of *Fix-it-yourself* manuals and its gendered dimension.

One drawing, the second of the series, eloquently recapitulates the elements of Bonvicini's strategy on paper (Figure 3). It juxtaposes, from right to left: a numbered set of outlets, retraced from the latest edition of *Architectural Graphic Standards*;[49] three pieces of ventilation duct collaged onto satellite images of low-pressure areas identified by female names, cut out from a 1997–98 Mercedes Benz advertisement; and, below these, a quote from the same advertisement that captures its sexism: 'In Germany, low-pressure areas carry the names of women. Ever since, drivers know: Antje means "caution"!'.[50] At the left, above some schemes of air circulation represented as arrowed vectors, the product to be sold is presented: a 'portable' version of the hurricane fan ejecting air (materialized as thin strips of tracing paper) from a tiny box with a lid held in a lightly traced hand.

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47 See Lucy R. Lippard, 'Making Something from Nothing (Toward a Definition of Women's "Hobby Art")', *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art & Politics*, 1.4 (1978), pp. 62–65 <https://leaf.bucknell.edu/node/360/> [accessed 15 April 2026].

48 See Silvia Federici, *Wages against Housework* (Power of Women Collective and Falling Wall Press, 1975).

49 See Ramsey and Sleeper, *Architectural Graphic Standards*, p. 628.

50 'In Deutschland tragen Tiefdruckgebiete Frauennamen. Seitdem wissen Autofahrer: Antje heißt "Vorsicht"' (advertisement text), *EU Magazine*, January 1998, p. 16.

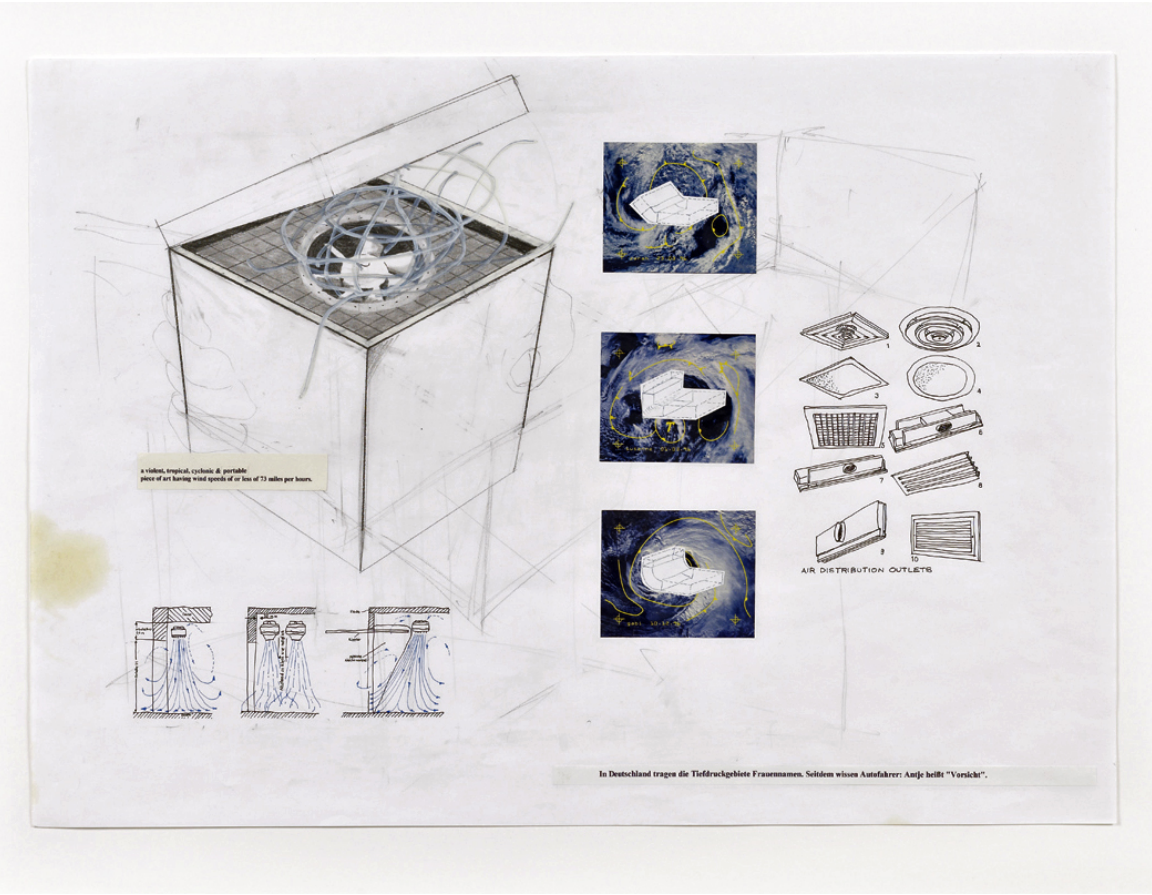

Fig. 3. Monica Bonvicini, *A Violent, Tropical, Cyclonic Piece of Art Having Wind Speeds of or in Excess of 75 mph #2*, 1997, cut-out and pasted printed paper, permanent ink pen, wax crayon, graphite, correction liquid on paper / collage, 42 × 59 cm (unframed). © Monica Bonvicini and VG Bild-Kunst. Photograph: def image. Courtesy of the artist. Creative Commons license terms for re-use do not apply to this picture and further permission may be required from the right holder.

The absence of a strict planning logic directs the observer's attention to the overarching meta-contextual references, in an open and continuous oscillation of registers. Three main repertoires merge on the page: advertising, which includes the mass-mediatic reproduction of art history; technical standards; and architecture and gender theory.

The political result of this mix, which I will explore in the next section, relates to Lippard's understanding of collage as

> born of interruption and the healing instinct to use political consciousness as a glue with which to get the pieces into some sort of new order (though not necessarily as new whole, since there is no single way out, nobody who's really 'got it all together'; feminist art is still an art of separations).[51]

4. REPRESENTING SCALES: FRICTION, FIGURABILITY, FAÇADES

The advertisement's scalar jump between women and low-pressure areas — based on a sexist association of both with danger — resonates with a key argument in Wigley's essay. Alberti's Renaissance theory drew on a Greek text, Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, which identified the male with the exterior and the female with the interior on the basis of sexuality:

> The woman on the outside is implicitly sexually mobile. [...] In Greek thought women lack the internal self-control credited to men as the very mark of their masculinity. This self-control is no more than the maintenance of secure boundaries. These internal boundaries, or rather boundaries that define the interior of the person, the identity of the self, cannot be maintained by a woman because her fluid sexuality endlessly overflows and disrupts them.[52]

The house literalizes such boundaries, in particular through its filters of purification from the body, like air cleaning (and conditioning). Bonvicini explores this theme of excess and containment, threat and surveillance, in one of the most striking drawings for *A Violent, Tropical, Cyclonic Piece of Art Having Wind Speeds of or in Excess of 75 mph*, peppered with quotes from *Space and Sexuality* (for instance, 'to control the body by isolating it from the building becouse [*sic*] it literally threatens the structure of the building, both its physical structure and its abstract order') (Figure 4).[53] On the left is the plan

51 Lucy Lippard, quoted in Gwen Raabger, 'Beyond Fragmentation: Collage as Feminist Strategy in the Arts', *Mosaic*, 31.3 (1998), pp. 153–71 (p. 157).

52 Wigley, 'Untitled', p. 335.

53 Ibid., p. 344.

of an L-shaped gallery (similar to Mehdi Chouakri), in which the installation is visualized from above, while on the right it appears in a perspectival rendering. There, the figure of a naked woman stands in the room, her womb and genitals coinciding with the ventilators on the wall. The hybridization of the female body with the structures of her containment (air conditioning) recalls another image, Louise Bourgeois's 1947 *Femme maison*, a woman whose torso is substituted by a house. In Leslie Kanes Weisman's *Discrimination by Design* (1992), another important source for Bonvicini's architectural reflections, the Womanhouse figure is read as expressing 'containment, anxiety, and the frustrated desire to escape'.[54] A reproduction of Bourgeois's drawing hung in Bonvicini's studio at the HdK,[55] and in 1997 became the direct motif of her video-performance *Hausfrau Swinging*, in which a nude woman with a cardboard house over her head repeatedly bangs against the white walls of a room corner.[56] The figure also expresses a scalar paradox: the house looks like a portable model, too small for the female body, the device of her oppression; but at the same time, the woman's womb and legs achieve monumentality. Bonvicini's strategy insists on a similar ambivalence of scale: the ventilator is inscribed in the woman's body that it contains and purifies, but it is turned into a hurricane and produces a 'collision of ventilation'. The architectural limits of female identity are breached for a moment, and the installation imagines a freed, unbearable sexuality that 'endlessly disrupts the boundaries of others, that is, men, disturbing their identity'.[57] A tiny man seen from behind appears at the woman's feet, making her look like a giantess in the space.

54 Leslie K. Weisman, *Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment* (University of Illinois Press, 1992), p. 17. *Femme maison*'s influence within second wave feminism spans from Miriam Schapiro and Judy Chicago's Womanhouse space in Los Angeles (1972–74) to its appearance on the cover of Lucy R. Lippard, *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (Dutton, 1976). For a different, positive reading, see Mignon Nixon, *Fantastic Reality: Louise Bourgeois and a Story of Modern Art* (MIT Press, 2005), pp. 53–82.

55 Bonvicini, 'A Lonely Conversation', p. 320.

56 See Monica Bonvicini, 'Hausfrau Swinging', n.d. <https://monicabonvicini.net/hausfrau-swinging/> [accessed 20 April 2026]; and Falckenberg and others, *Monica Bonvicini. Disegni*, pp. 240–42.

57 Wigley, 'Untitled', p. 335.

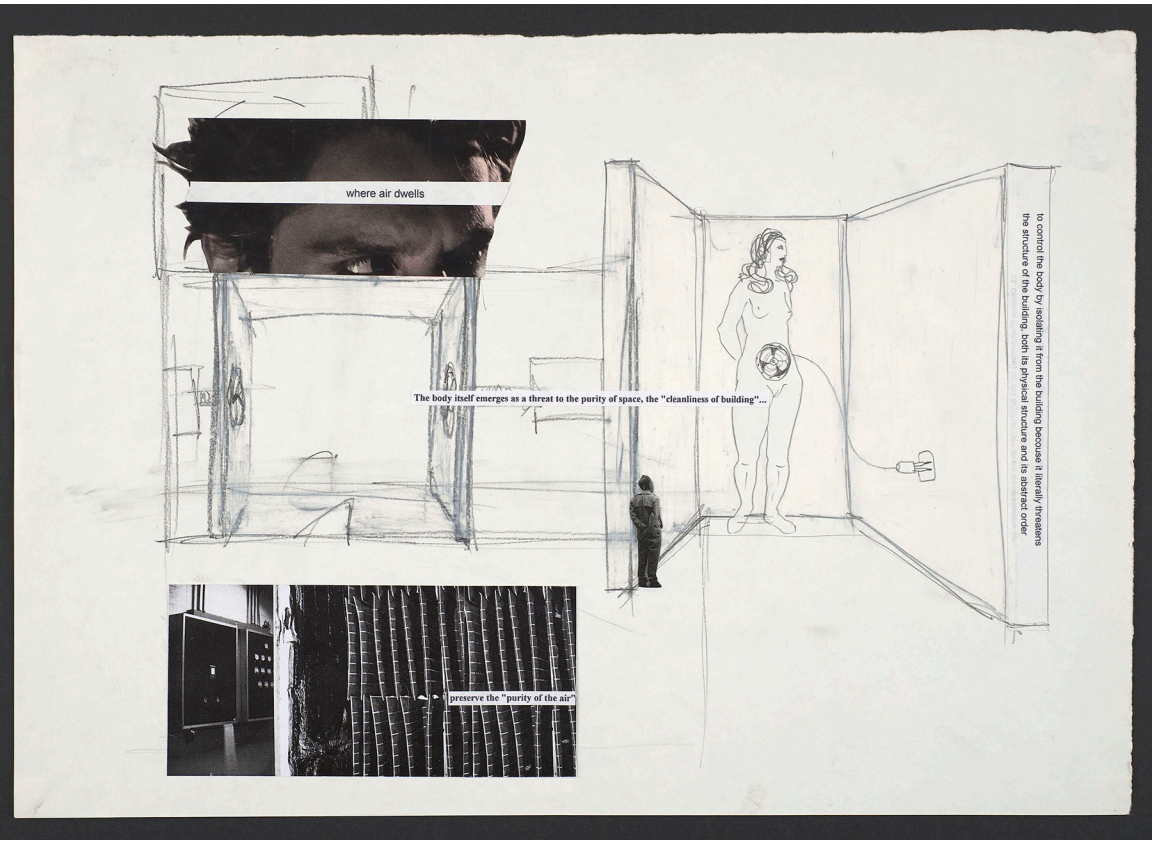

Fig. 4. Monica Bonvicini, *Drawing to 75 mph*, 1997, cut-out and pasted printed paper, graphite, wax crayons on paper / collage, 34.7 × 50 cm. © Monica Bonvicini and VG Bild-Kunst. Photograph: UMJ, N. Lackner. Courtesy of the artist and Neue Galerie Graz. Creative Commons license terms for re-use do not apply to this picture and further permission may be required from the right holder.

Collage is instrumental to this (multi)scalar strategy. A cut-out is extracted from its original scale, that is, the relationship between the viewpoint and the represented object (for instance, a view from below looking up, low-detail resolution, or wide-angle distortion that conveys a sense of closeness) only to interact to other fragments. Cut-outs are materially non-scalable; they can't be enlarged or reduced, only glued — just as retracing maintains a 1:1 relationship with the original. A composition can be arranged around them to produce coherent

proportions and perspectival foreshortening, or they can create scalar effects, for purposes both conceptual and expressive. Such effects can be analysed using two terms from a recent formal theory of scale developed by Glenn Adamson and Joshua Stein, originally in relation to sculptural examples. They define *friction* as 'resistance to a scale shift that is imposed by the tool, the material, or both'.[58] Being imported material, collaged images produce more or less friction depending on the extent to which they accommodate the perspective and size proportions already on the paper sheet. Their materiality brings with it a scale that clashes with or short-circuits the drawn-to-scale architectural project. Adamson and Stein's second concept is *figurability*, the quality of legibility and coherence that representations maintain or lose in scale shifts. The authors observe that 'representational images possess this property of figurability, while abstract forms do not. Geometrical solids and amorphous blobs have no referent; they are actually "natural" at any size, or, more accurately, are denatured with respect to scale'.[59] Architecture drawing tends to be reduced to geometry and abstraction (axonometries, plans, diagrams, and so on) in order to maximize the scalability from project to building. The cost is the exclusion of that which materially occupies and makes space, like walls, bodies — and air, which has to increase in (speed) scale to become perceptible. With the scalar shocks of collage, Bonvicini reintroduces what is not figurable anymore into the reduction of paper.

Drawing obviously belongs to the sphere of representational scales, which are set aside in Joshua DiCaglio's theory of scale. While observational scale relies on a constant account of measure (and perspective),

> In representation, scale retains the measure as the statement of a relationship to normal experience. The ratio on the map or image says not just 'this object is *x* times smaller than the landscape' but 'the view you are having of this object bears *x* relationship to your usual experience of the landscape'. It is the latter observation that permits us to use a map to maneuver through a landscape. However, this is again why we must

58 Glenn Adamson and Joshua G. Stein, 'Imprints: Scale and the Maker's Trace', in *Scale*, ed. by Jennifer Roberts (Chicago University Press, 2016), pp. 28–64 (p. 35).

59 Ibid., p. 36.

> distinguish cartographic scaling from scale here: representations inevitably have other alterations, filters, or distortions that are a product of the representation rather than the shift in observational scale.[60]

Bonvicini's drawings display such alterations, filters, and distortions, only to point out the same devices in architecture — based on theories of space and sexuality. While DiCaglio's observational perspective accounts for a mostly visual 'normal experience' of *Homo sapiens*, scalar friction and figurability can trace and represent political tensions and questions of visibility, access, surveillance, and gender difference that shape the experience of marginalized subjects. Architecture constructs the woman as a controlled, limited, reduced subject: the house is 'too small' for the captured woman in Bourgeois's *Femme maison*; and Bonvicini's paroxysmal air cleaning is too intense for dwelling in. Next to the giant woman, two collages unfold as if peeling back the ceiling of the room: at the bottom, a photograph of air filters, perhaps those photographed at CalArts; at the top, a man's eyes, perhaps cut out from an advertisement. The two devices of surveillance of the house, the male 'watchful eye' and the purification of air,[61] correspond to the vertical axis of the architecture plan.

Wigley's essay links woman and air as each escaping representation, or, rather, being only representable through their systems of control. Typical devices of architecture drawing, like axonometries, plans, and perspectives, all display a virtual transparency,[62] as if one could see through walls and around corners. The political question obliterated by this visual economy, the inside/outside division, is central to Bonvicini's practice. One complex drawing of *A Violent, Tropical, Cyclonic Piece of Art Having Wind Speeds of or in Excess of 75 mph* presents views of Galerie Mehdi Chouakri from outside, with two large windows through which the purpose-built room and the ventilators of the hurricane installation are visible (Figure 5). In the top half, two small prospectuses with white and black external walls surround a view

60 Joshua DiCaglio, *Scale Theory: A Nondisciplinary Inquiry* (University of Minnesota Press, 2021), p. 32.

61 Wigley, 'Untitled', p. 338.

62 Alberti and Xenophon's condemnation of feminine makeup 'in favor of masculine transparency' is discussed in ibid., p. 355.

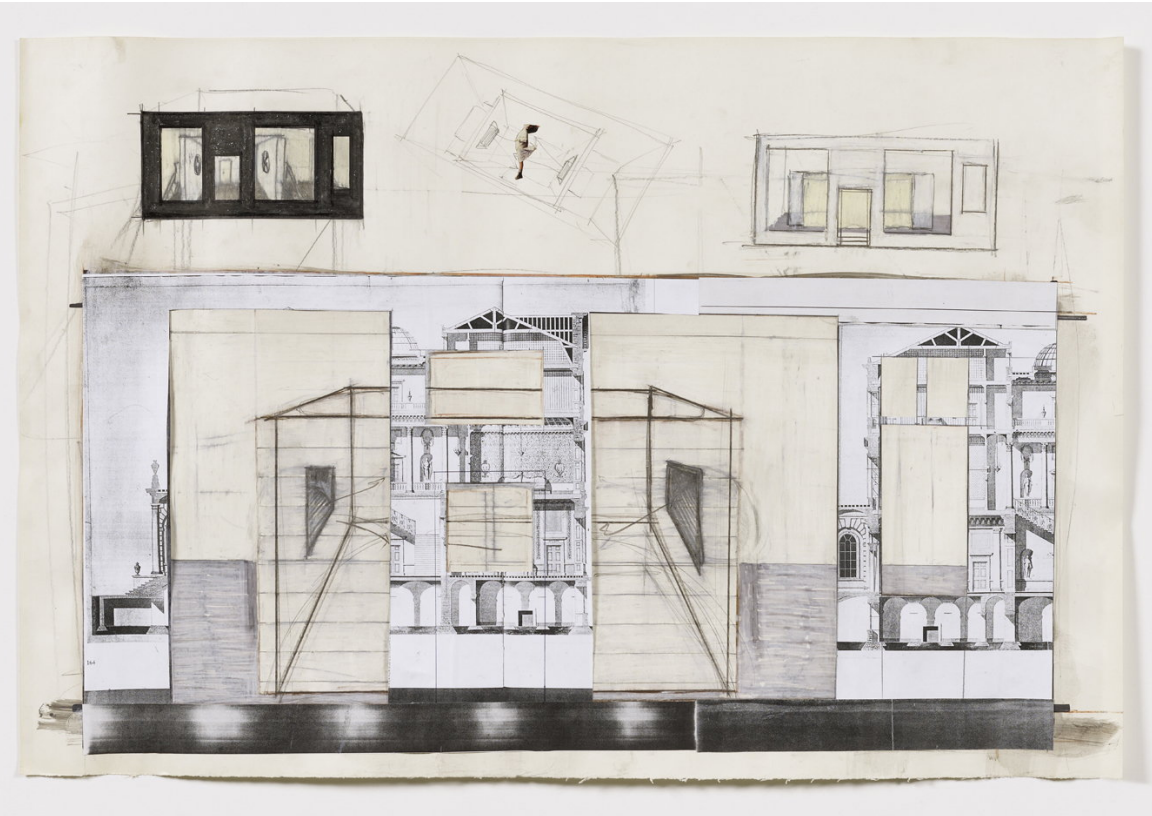

Fig. 5. Monica Bonvicini, *Drawing to 75 mph*, c. 1997/98, cut-out and pasted printed paper, graphite, colour pencil, oil, wax crayons, acrylic paint, and permanent marker on paper / collage, 50 × 75 cm. © Monica Bonvicini and VG Bild-Kunst. Photograph: def image. Courtesy of the artist. Creative Commons license terms for re-use do not apply to this picture and further permission may be required from the right holder.

from above on a collaged cut-out of a girl blown away by the wind. In the larger central image, two identical photocopies of a section of a townhouse are collaged on the external wall of the gallery, a typical Palladian and bourgeois design with furniture in a neo-Egyptian style.[63] The interior is now displaced outside, inverting private and

63 John Yenn RA (1750–1821), *Design for a town house: section, c.1775*, Royal Academy of Arts <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/design-for-a-town-house-section> [accessed 15 April 2026].

public by making a formerly transparent prospectus opaque through collage. Similarly, the installation itself reverses the functional position of the ventilation backroom at CalArts into the hurricane space.

In a group of thirteen small-format drawings dedicated to an early proposal for the hurricane installation to occupy the corner of a room, Bonvicini repeatedly collaged cut-outs of façades of windows on the purpose-built drywalls. The photographs were taken by her of buildings and skyscrapers in New York and Berlin, those of the latter in the years of the major redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz.[64] In scalar terms, the geometrical appearance of façades requires a specific distance to be looked at, and to maintain the promise of access and transparency — the opposite function of separating walls. The introduction of scale friction on the white-cube walls in Bonvicini's drawings jeopardizes the traditional view of museum spaces, that which Brian O'Doherty called 'the sanitized installation shot', where 'the eye is the only inhabitant':

> Installation shots are generally abstract works; realists don't go in for them much. In installations shots the question of scale is confirmed (the size of the gallery is deduced from the photo) and blurred (the absence of a Spectator could mean the gallery is 30 feet high). [...] The Eye maintains the seamless gallery space, its walls swept by flat planes of duck. Everything else — all things impure, including collage — favors the Spectator. The Spectator stands in space broken up by the consequences of collage.[65]

5. PLANNING AGAINST THE WALL

Bonvicini's exhibition at Mehdi Chouakri had a curiously barred title printed on its invitation card: '~~To wall up: ecstasy~~'. An etymological contrast opposes the two terms: while 'to wall up' expresses restraint, 'ecstasy' literally means 'standing outside of oneself' (*ek-hístēmi*). The title captures the artist's twofold practice of built walls and limited spaces, only to situate there an excessive experience that threatens those limits: in this case, the wind overwhelms visitors with a tactile and auditory sensation that makes them either forget about the space

64 See Emily Pugh, *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014), pp. 283–327.

65 Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube* (The Lapis Press, 1986), p. 42.

or leave (or dance, as did the artist in front of a visiting critic).[66] I read the barring accordingly, not as an erasure but as a sign of negation that still looms over what has been deconstructed. How does Bonvicini's drawing reflect this ambivalent attitude towards creation and destruction, architecture and catastrophe? How or where does her feminist theoretical position displace her practice of planning?

A strongly Derridean argument in Mark Wigley's 'Untitled: The Housing of Gender' implies that Alberti's text on domestic architecture theorizes space and at the same time positions itself within it. Although the woman is limited to the interior of the house, she does not occupy its centre. The headquarters is instead the studio, a men-only space that controls the economy and order of the building. The studio produces the figure of the architect himself, superior and detached from the dissimulating worlds of politics and sexuality. Such a centralist perspective is underpinned by the very act of planning, that is, drawing on a blank, white page.

> [Alberti's architecture] theory is bound to the ideology of the white surface [...].[67] And it is this construction of a look at a white surface which is written into each of the institutions that frame architecture in the following centuries, whether it is the white surfaces of classical statues that produce the art historical eye, the walls of the gallery space that sustain the aesthetic eye, the white coats of the student in the Beaux-Arts Academy, the white walls of 'modern' architecture, or even the white surface of the pages on which the theoretical eye is produced.[68]

It is not by chance that Bonvicini, after electing the white drywall as her signature material, disrupts it or intervenes with graffiti.[69] In the back room of Mehdi Chouakri, the video work *Hammering Out (An Old Argument)* was screened, its rhythmic sound clashing with the

66 Herbstreuth, 'Der freie Flug', p. 28.

67 For a recent reprise of this subject, see Mark Wigley, 'Chronic Whiteness', in *Sick Architecture*, ed. by Beatriz Colomina, special issue of *e-flux Architecture*, 2020 <https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/sick-architecture/360099/chronic-whiteness> [accessed 20 April 2026].

68 Wigley, 'Untitled', p. 365.

69 See Elena Zanichelli, 'Die Wand als Störgröße: Monica Bonvicini', in *Gegen die Wand: Subversive Positionierungen von Autorinnen und Künstlerinnen*, ed. by Julia Boog-Kaminski (Neofelis, 2021), pp. 241–80.

hurricane roar in the front space: 'it depicts the artist hitting a white wall with a sledgehammer, slowly and rhythmically. The wall starts to crumble and plaster trickles down, but it doesn't fall.'[70]

Correspondingly, Bonvicini's drawings displace the central position of the planning architect in front of the blank page. On a material level, collages, photocopies, and overlapping paper layer and obtrude the surface, often contradicting the images' illusion of depth; glue stains and cuts remain visible. She describes an unconventional taste for materials, such as 'a bar of soap' or 'watercolor paint made from cigarette ashes [which] really doesn't smell good'.[71] Her preference for tracing paper seems to depart from Linfert's remarks on parchment as

> the most rigorous — or, if you will, the most abstract — way to prepare the objective space of architecture, to design it by delineating its boundaries [...]. It is, in a sense, even like a transparent veil and gives the impression that the lines of the drawn architecture are floating in the air, unanchored by any foundation.[72]

Instead, in Bonvicini's drawings, tracing paper creates a thickness and ambiguity of overlappings. Even her use of white crayon is a function of obsessive and opaque thought: 'when you are really deeply depressed, you draw so that you can barely see the drawing. [...] You draw white on white or something similar.'[73]

As we have seen, Bonvicini draws into her practice on paper many languages that cannot be identified with her own. She refuses to act as an architect, as a 'form-giver, creator of hierarchical and symbolic structures characterized, on the one hand, by their unity of parts and on the other by the transparency of form to meaning'.[74] In most of the drawings for the hurricane installation, one cannot find measures or procedures for the actual realization of the purpose-built ventilator structure. Rather, her gestures are a free and compulsive mix of cutting, fragmenting, retracing, posing behind others' voices, and dissimulating

70 Heiser, 'Monica Bonvicini', p. 81.
71 Bonvicini, 'A Lonely Conversation', p. 319.
72 Linfert, 'Grundlagen', pp. 152–53.
73 Bonvicini, 'A Lonely Conversation', p. 319.
74 Bernard Tschumi, 'Disjunctions', *Perspecta*, 23 (1987), pp. 108–19 (p. 110).

her own position. Theory is juxtaposed to sexist advertisements, technical manuals to dexterous art styles, like Nauman's or Wall's. Many of these sources account more-or-less directly for the active marginalization of women in architecture. By entering this discourse, Bonvicini positions herself towards planning in a way that is similar to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's self-positioning towards 'explanation' in cultural production. Just as 'all explanations […] claim their centrality in terms of an excluded margin that makes possible the "can" of the "can be expressed" and allows "is" to be quietly substituted for it',[75] planning delineates and determines spaces by locating their margins, incorporating and obliterating them (the aforementioned shared invisibility of woman and conditioned air). Fragmenting the operative linearity of the project, Bonvicini activates the 'irreducibility of the margin in all explanation [to] displace the distinction between margin and center'.[76] Hence the artist still 'walls up', creates space, and operates within it. She once posed to a reviewer an open question that encapsulates this reciprocity: 'Does air belong to architecture or art?'[77] In Spivak's words, the strategy is 'implicating myself in that center and sensing what politics make it marginal'.[78]

> I'm constantly drawing. Sometimes I can't believe what I've done because some are messy and others are detailed and perfect; sometimes I can concentrate and sometimes not. The drawings are indeed much closer to me.[79]

The proximity of Bonvicini's practice on paper to her identity does not restore the cliché of drawing as an immediate and sincere medium. 'Identity theory is necessarily spatial theory,'[80] as Wigley suggests: in the drawings, the appropriation of images of women from popular

75 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Explanation and Culture: Marginalia', in *Out there: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. by Russell Ferguson and others (MIT Press, 1987), pp. 377–93 (p. 380).

76 Spivak, 'Explanation and Culture', p. 381.

77 Peter Herbstreuth, 'Monica Bonvicini: Sexual Architecture', *Flash Art*, Summer 1999, p. 119.

78 Spivak, 'Explanation and Culture', p. 381.

79 Monica Bonvicini, 'IV. Wallfuckin', Revisited', interview by Andrew Maerkle, *ART iT*, 21 October 2011 <https://www.art-it.asia/en/u/admin_ed_feature_e/j5hq8bot7bdwxmgi6l1n/> [accessed 19 June 2026].

80 Wigley, 'Untitled', p. 388.

culture, or the essentialist, monumental appearance of the ventilator woman, is functional for the spatial inquiry of interiority, from the margin to the centre. 'Living on the periphery of power, marginalized by male-dominated institutions, women have learned to see the world from the outside looking in.'[81]

Marginal drawing, in the case of Bonvicini's draughts*wo*manship, aligns with recent propositions of non-dominant architecture theory: from Georges Bataille's 'opposition to the idea of project', which inspired a formless concept of planning,[82] to Gordon Matta-Clark's 'anarchitecture' and its recent expansions in trans studies.[83] Ann Bergren and Catherine Ingraham have pointed to an alternative architectural intelligence, named after the Greek term *mētis*: 'Metis works by continual shape-shifting, turning the morphe of defeat into victory's tool. [...] The mistress or master of metis knows how to manipulate the circular reciprocity between what is bound and what is binding.'[84] Bonvicini's intervention in architecture standards and theory, like metis, 'does not completely revise architecture out if its dependence on foundational concepts but alters the ground upon which this foundationalism rests — the ground for example of "exact knowledge", which metis troubles with the problems of reversal, twisting, and knotting.'[85]

To include scale in such reflections, as operating in the various material and theoretical strategies of multiscalarity in Bonvicini's drawings, is to account for the shift from paper to space, a gap opened and occupied by critical moves that allow a reflection on and critique of architecture as planning. For those who did not experience the hurricane in 1998 (but also for those who did and were repulsed by its

81 Weisman, *Discrimination by Design*, p. 171.

82 See Andrew Benjamin, *Architectural Philosophy* (Athlone Press, 2000), pp. 22–35.

83 See *Cutting Matta-Clark: The Anarchitecture Investigation*, ed. by Mark Wigley (Lars Müller, 2018); and Jack Halberstam, *Anarchitecture After Everything: A Trans Manifesto* (MIT Press, 2026).

84 Catherine Ingraham, *Architecture and the Burdens of Linearity* (Yale University Press, 2014), p. 43.

85 'Metis is, not incidentally, a woman's art, and it can often be located in the working of the proper and the nonproper in the oikos, the economy of the domestic, the house. [...] Metis architecture is a provocation to the habitual [...] connections between domesticity and gender; to habitual oppositions between movement and stasis, insides and outsides; to the habitual understanding of the architectural object; to the straight line and linearity' (Ingraham, *Architecture and the Burdens of Linearity*, p. 44).

unbearable wind), the drawings are a way to think the installation, to imagine it and reflect critically on it. Their sources and theoretical insights reveal something that was impossible to detect within or outside the space; however, they do not 'explain' the work or stand as its conception or project.

Drawing to scale is not merely a smooth reduction or expansion in representation that sustains ideation in a linear sense (from the idea to the project to the spatial installation). Against this smoothness, and the linearity of explanation, scalar disjunctures provide interruptions and detours in Linfert's non-genetic reading of the relationship between drawing and the three-dimensional space of architecture. The scalar detour allows a critical positioning that supports the displacement from the centre to the margin. Architecture produces margins that, in bell hooks's terms, are political locations where radical resistance and openness can be thought and developed. Historically scaled down by male systems of representation and spatial control, the female body lacks figurability on what appears as the neutral level of observation. Gender difference entails a scalar difference: Bonvicini's practice distorts and brings excess to architecture, starting from its 'planning' dimension, a proliferation of drawings that operates on the representation of the installation, using the multiscalarity of collage to bring architecture's visual standards to an incoherent paroxysm.

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Filippo Bosco, 'The Hurricane in the Room: Drawing, Marginality, and Scale in Monica Bonvicini's *75 mph*', in *Scale: New Critical Essays*, ed. by Christoph F. E. Holzhey and Marietta Kesting, Cultural Inquiry, 40 (ICI Berlin Press, 2026), pp. 25–52 <https://doi.org/10.37050/ci-40_fb>

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