
CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION

“Sketching on Location” means making a relatively brief and direct drawing of a subject within view of the artist. It means making a complete sketch on-site, rather than working from photographs or memory. Sketching on location can be done anywhere, and the subject could be a building or a public square, a piece of furniture or a person, a mountain range or a solitary tree, or any collection of these and many other elements. Regardless of the subject matter, the most essential component of sketching on location is direct observation. Carefully



Figure 1.1 Piazza Navona
Rome, IT
June 1, 2007
Graphite, Acrylic Ink (Sepia), Watercolor, on Aquabee Plate Bristol (12" × 9")
45 minutes

2 ♦ Sketching on Location

observing our surroundings and making sketches of what we observe is one of the most effective ways we can learn about and understand the physical world around us. Sketching is a way of recording this observation, and it also serves to intensify and extend the act of observing. Sketching on location has been practiced for hundreds, if not thousands, of years, and it is enjoying renewed interest around the world as people who sketch make connections and share their work through online venues. Sketching on location is a very fruitful and enjoyable activity, and it brings a wonderful sense of accomplishment and satisfaction as one develops the skill over time. As with any skill, and particularly those that involve working with the hands, sketching is best viewed as a craft, because it requires a thorough knowledge of materials and techniques and a specialized form of manual dexterity that puts knowledge into practice. Although it is a specialized skill, sketching may truly be learned by anyone who has the motivation to practice and develop their ability over time.

In addition to doing it for simple enjoyment, sketching is a purposeful activity. This is one of the distinctions between “sketching” and “doodling.” Both involve making marks on paper, but “doodling” connotes a relatively aimless activity that is intended only to occupy one’s time, with little other purpose. Sketching from



Figure 1.2 The Garden Lounge
Moscow, ID
January 23, 2009
Copic Multiliner (Cobalt) in a Moleskine Pocket Sketchbook (7" × 5.5")
15 minutes

observation, even if it is idle sketching that helps the passing of time, has, at the very least, the purpose of learning about what is being drawn or building skills for drawing. Sketching from the imagination, to generate ideas or solve graphic problems, also has a purpose, and is therefore in a different category than doodling. Sketching from observation is useful for anyone, but environmental designers (architects, landscape architects, interior designers, virtual reality designers, etc.), especially, have much to gain from the practice. The ability to capture an existing spatial environment through sketching leads directly to an improved ability to quickly convey an accurate depiction of a proposed environment. Students of design have perhaps the most to gain from developing the practice and making it a fundamental aspect of their working lives, but sketching is readily available to anyone with a curiosity about the world around them and the motivation to develop their abilities.

The focus of this book is on recording observations of existing places, whether they are grand and historic (Figure I.1) or humble and quotidian (Figure I.2). The techniques and principles can be applied to a wide variety of subjects. This introduction provides background on the subject of sketching on location, including a brief overview of its history and some suggested attitudes toward learning and developing the skill.

Brief History of Sketching on Location

Drawing has been a human activity since the dawn of recorded history, though the way we currently use the term “sketching” is relatively recent. Originally, the word appears to have come from the Greek *skhédios*, which means “done extemporaneously” or without preparation. The Italian *schizzare* (literally “to splash”) came from the Latin *schadius*, meaning “hastily made.” The word and its meaning—a “rough drawing intended to serve as the model for a finished painting”—emerged in the Dutch word *schets* during the 17th century. It has a roughly parallel meaning in literature to describe a brief, unfinished, rough draft of a story. More recently, the act of sketching has become recognized for its own sake. Today, in other words, a sketch need not lead to anything else, but can be considered a finished work on its own.

Regardless of how long we’ve been using some version of the word “sketch,” people have been making quick, informal graphic images to tell stories or simply to show what they’ve observed since prehistoric times. The oldest recorded cave paintings date to over 30,000 years ago, and these are only what have survived by virtue of their protection from the elements (for comparison, the earliest written languages that we know of date to approximately 3000 BCE). The skill displayed in these images strongly suggests that drawing was a common means of communication, and that it was actually practiced as an elevated craft even at this early date. However, there was a general lack of available materials appropriate for sketching as we know it today. Papyrus and parchment were used from ancient times through the Middle Ages for writing, drawing, and illuminating manuscripts, but these supports were generally too precious to be used for sketching and too expensive to be available to common artists. Laid paper became available and reasonably affordable in the late 14th century, and with it came a dramatic increase in the making of preparatory sketches (also known as *cartoons*) that painters and fresco artists would create in the process of designing more formal artwork. There are many “Old Master Drawings” from this period onward that show painters using drawing on paper primarily as a means of study and practice, particularly regarding human form and anatomy, and also for developing compositional strategies prior to painting. The most common media for these drawings include chalk, charcoal, pen and ink, and light washes of various pigments. The wood-encased graphite pencil first became available in the 17th century, approximately 100 years after the discovery of an enormous deposit of very pure graphite in Cumbria, England. Wove paper, which is smoother than laid paper and more able to receive fine lines and dry media, became more readily available in the late 18th century, further increasing access to sketching materials for the common artist.



Figure 1.3 Rio Terrà dei Catecumeni
Venice, IT
July 31, 2009
B Pencil on Fabriano Ruvido paper (9" × 12")
40 minutes



Figure 1.4 Santa Maria in Trastevere
Rome, IT
July 18, 2010
B Pencil and Watercolor in Moleskine Large Watercolor Sketchbook (5" × 8")
30 minutes

Sketching developed further as a form of study during the time of the “Grand Tour” in continental Europe. This was a type of educational travel, beginning in the 17th and continuing through the 19th centuries, coming to an end as the rail system allowed easier movement throughout the continent. The tour was primarily for well-to-do young Englishmen, and more rarely, for women. “Grand tourists” would be guided by an experienced traveler, who, having been paid by the young voyager’s family, would lead him to the major and minor sights of classical antiquity, primarily in Italy. For the majority of grand tourists, the trip was akin to present-day visits to foreign locations, during which the tourist is most often a passive observer rather than a more engaged traveler. For some grand tourists, however, especially those anticipating a career in architecture or an allied field, place-recording through sketching and measured drawings was a significant component of the tour. During roughly the same period of time as the Grand Tour, but extending into the 20th century, the Ecole des Beaux Arts awarded the winners of its “Grand Prix de Rome” competition with a period of study in Rome—usually from three to five years. Early versions of the competition were focused on painting and sculpture, with an architecture category being added in 1722. Winners and runners-up would be housed together in Rome, creating a sort of academy in miniature, and their primary assignment was to document the multitude of classical antiquities in and around Rome in their own sketches, drawings, paintings, and sculpture. In the mid- to late 19th century in the United States, organizations began to appear that fostered sketching skills among young architects. The Philadelphia Sketch Club was founded in 1860 to provide affordable drawing classes and to create a venue for artists to exhibit their work. While not exclusively focused on sketching, it is notable that the group’s name prominently

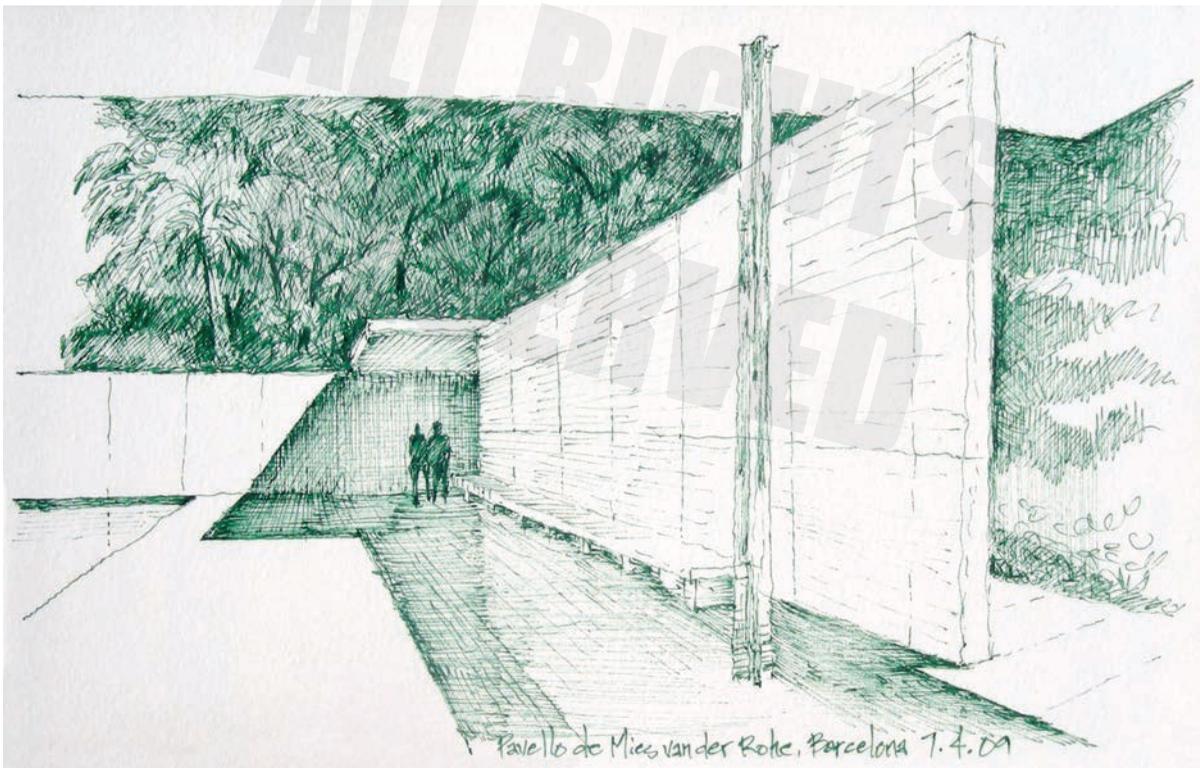


Figure 1.5 Pavillon de Mies Van der Rohe
Barcelona, SP
July 4, 2009
Copic Multiliner SP (Olive) in Moleskine Large Watercolor Sketchbook (5" × 8")
20 minutes

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Figure 1.11 Via Sermei
Assisi, IT
June 26, 2011
Derwent Chocolate Pencil on Canson Classic Cream
Drawing paper (9" × 12")
35 minutes

Sketching as a Craft

Sketching on location is a craft that can be acquired by anyone who possesses the physical ability and the desire to learn. Too often, when we see a compelling sketch, the tendency is to back away and say, “Wow, that’s amazing, I could never do that!” A much better response would be to get closer to the work and to begin the process of learning how the artist crafted the image. Sketches are never created as if by magic—it only seems that way to someone who hasn’t yet learned to sketch well, and who can’t conceive of the time and practice required to develop some proficiency. It is easier to ascribe someone else’s ability to “talent,” as if certain individuals are born with advanced sketching skills. Yet it has been my experience that anyone can learn to draw and constantly improve their skills of observation and representation. And I have yet to encounter someone who was able to draw well without first learning and practicing. What is required is not innate ability, but rather the desire, the patience, and the perseverance to learn. People who seem to possess “talent” are merely those who have taken the time to develop their skills, and to approach their work as a craft.

Craft requires a high degree of care and sustained attention to developing fundamental skills. You must care for the work you are creating, which means avoiding carelessness. Students sometimes approach sketching from the standpoint that a sketch is supposed to look “loose,” but this too often translates as “sloppy.” While a sketch is most typically created in a short period of time, this should not lead to careless, poorly crafted drawings. Craft requires one to learn and fully acquire technique—not simply to know that certain useful techniques exist, or

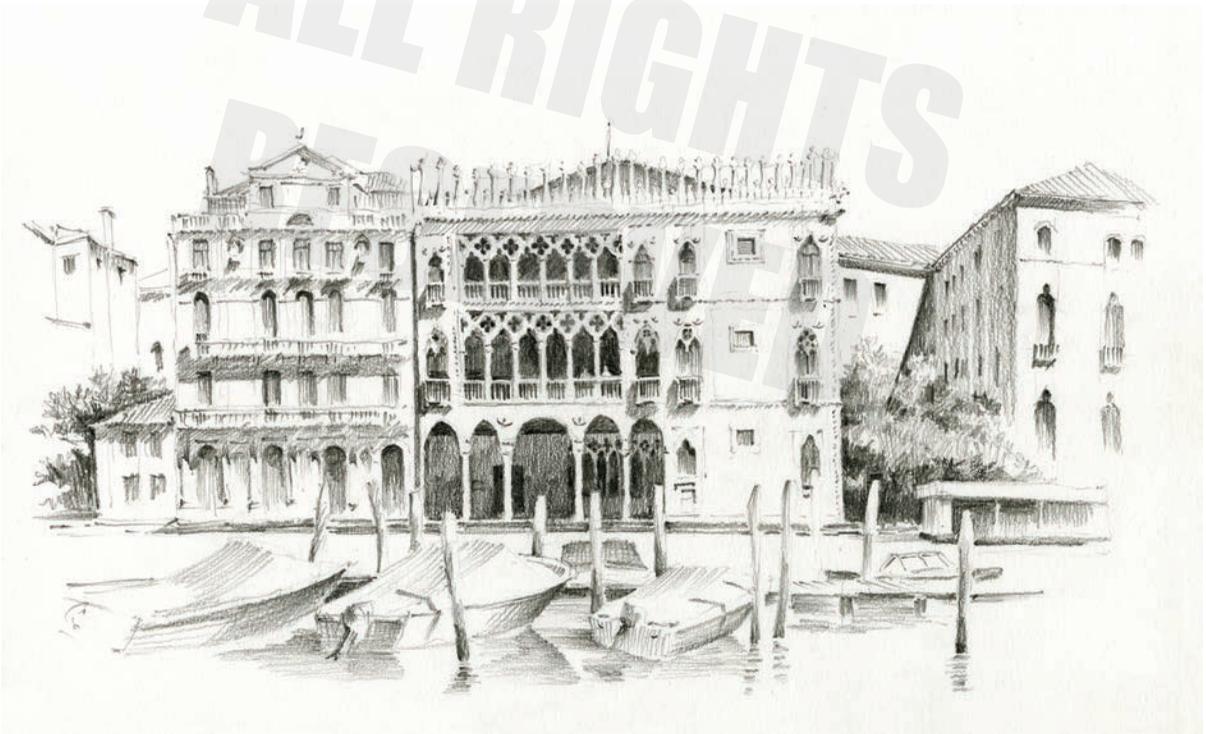


Figure 1.12 Ca d'Oro
Venice, IT
July 30, 2009
B and 2B Pencil on on Canson Drawing paper (9" × 12")
120 minutes



Figure 1.13 Hotel Window
Atrani, IT
June 13, 2010
Watercolor in Moleskine Large Watercolor Sketchbook (5" × 8")
30 minutes

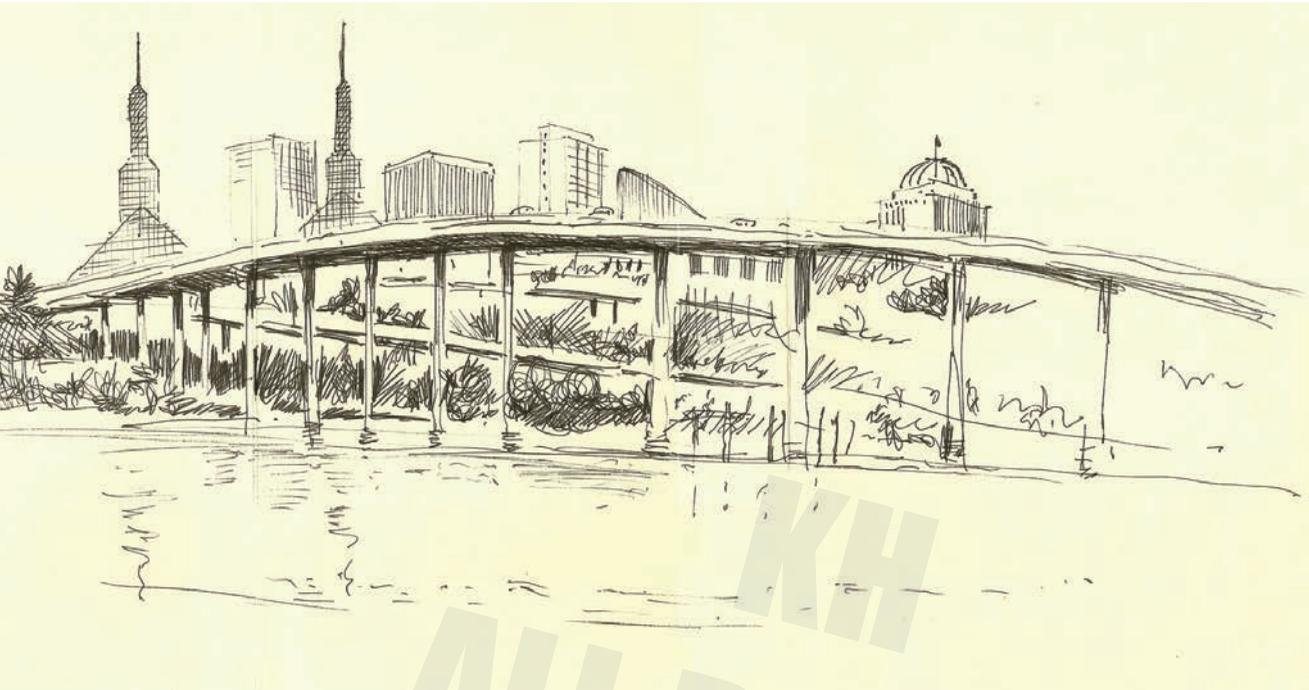


Figure 1.14 Steel Bridge
 Portland, OR
 October 2, 2010
 Uniball Vision Micro Black in Moleskine Large Japanese Notebook (25" × 8")
 30 minutes

to try a few new techniques once in a while, but to really adopt as many skills as possible and to be rigorous in their application. It is only after diligent work in building fundamental skills that someone can sketch freely and quickly without being inaccurate or messy.

This book introduces techniques that will lead to the development of sketching as a craft. But reading a book cannot produce the ability to sketch—ability only comes through doing, with concentrated work and much repetition. Making many small drawings is usually better than working for a long time on a single large drawing, but it is very important that the short sketches are not careless sketches. Every sketch is an opportunity to build skills, and to acquire, over time, the ability to become a craftsman—one who values the quality of what they are making. I've found it helpful to have a subtle, but ever-present, dissatisfaction with my most recent effort. It's not about negating the value of my drawings, but rather acknowledging that I can always do better. In every one of my sketches, I see something to be pleased about, and something that might be improved. It is this dynamic that pushes me forward in my own learning process.

In addition to some of the suggestions made below, in "Learning to Sketch," there are attitudes and habits that will lead to well-crafted sketches. Pay attention to the task, and maintain a strong focus over its duration, whether this is during a series of four-minute practice sketches or during a single sketch that takes an hour to complete. This is the opposite of "multitasking," which is often nothing more than the rapid-fire switching from one activity to another. Care for each step in the process, rather than losing patience and skipping over difficult aspects of a drawing. Be critical of the relative merits of your materials—one type of pencil will be superior to another, for example, based on your experience over time. Always strive to create something of value with your developing skills, and do the best you possibly can in any given situation. These are some of the hallmarks of the craft of sketching.

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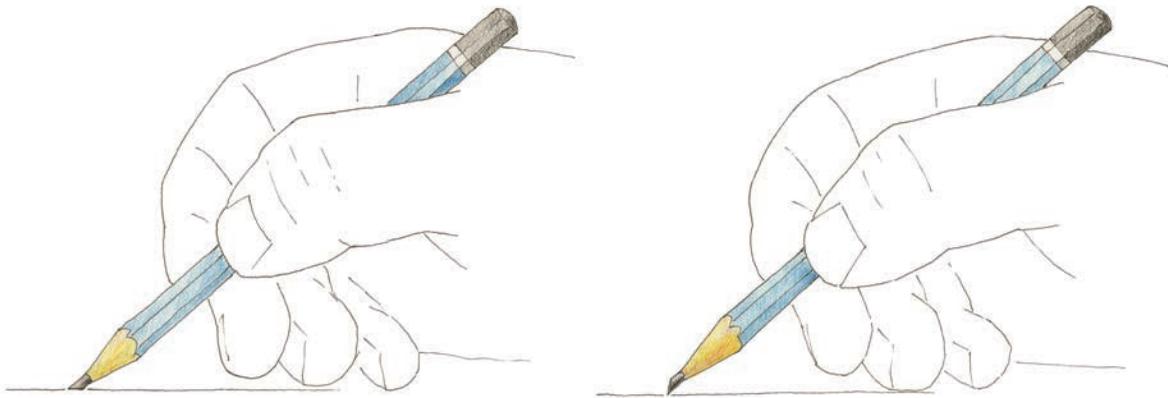


Figure 2.4 Pencil point with one side sanded down, allowing for broad strokes (left) and fine lines (right).

An advantage of using a wooden pencil is the variety of line “weights” (i.e., thicknesses) possible from a single instrument. A simple sharpening technique makes this possible. A finely sharpened pencil will work well, especially for the initial light lines made during the setup. But if the graphite is of a soft grade, the pencil will lose its point fairly rapidly. Rather than using a conventional pencil sharpener, try using a small pocket knife to shave away enough wood to expose about $3/8$ ” of the lead. Then, using a sandpaper block or a blank sheet of paper, wear the point down while holding the pencil at about a 45-degree angle. Thin lines may then be made with the sharper tip of the lead, while broad strokes can be produced with the flattened portion of the graphite. For squared strokes, the tip may be worn down to produce a straight and flat end to the point. Experiment with various sharpening techniques to get the maximum versatility out of a single pencil.

Charcoal

Charcoal pencils make for a worthwhile change of pace from graphite, but they are a bit more challenging. Because of its dusty consistency, charcoal requires more care in keeping the sketch clean, but it is far easier to produce rich, dark values with charcoal than with graphite. Charcoal pencils are typically available in three grades of density—hard (which is similar to HB on the graphite scale), medium (2B), and soft (4B). The most important characteristic in selecting a brand is the smoothness of the charcoal—it should be as free of grit as possible. Of the brands available, I have found General’s Charcoal to be the most consistently smooth.

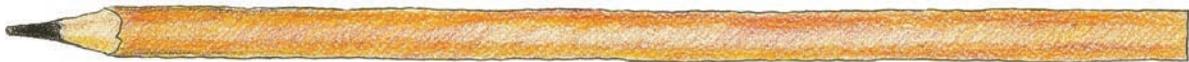


Figure 2.5 Charcoal pencils with wood casing are cleaner to work with and more precise than vine or willow charcoal.

Colored Pencils

Colored pencils may be used individually, for a monochromatic sketch, or in combination, by mixing various colors on the page. When using a single color, I have enjoyed the results of earth tones such as Derwent’s “Venetian Red” (similar to Burnt Umber), or “Chocolate” (a dark Sepia). Any relatively dark color is worth trying. It is not often practical to carry a large number of colored pencils when sketching on location, so it is important to learn how to mix colors. This will be covered in detail in the chapter titled “Color.” For now, it will suffice to

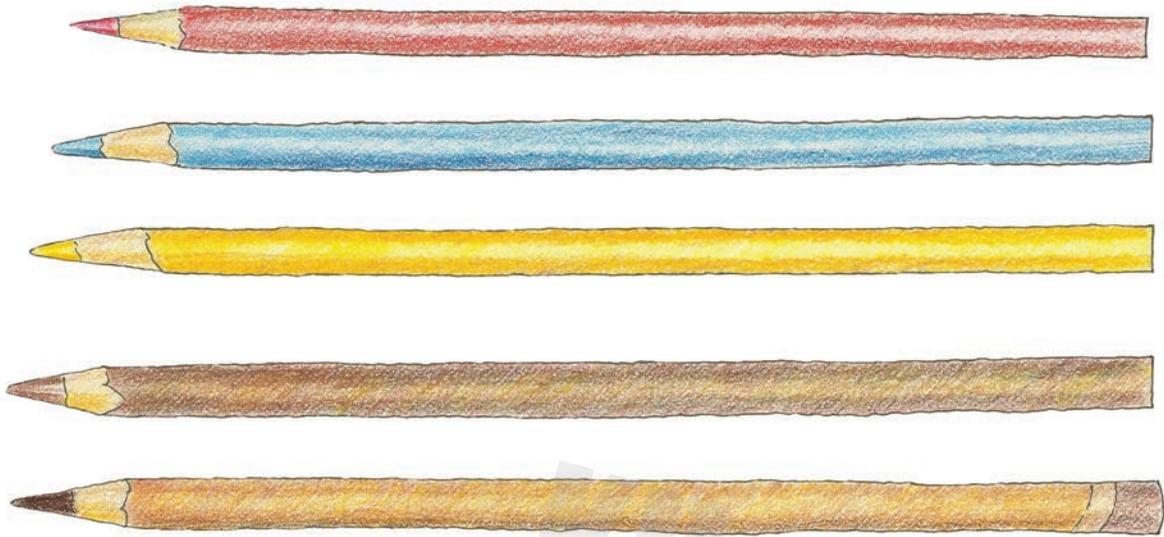


Figure 2.6 Colored pencils (top to bottom): Prismacolor Magenta, True Blue, and Canary Yellow; Derwent Venetian Red and Chocolate.

say that sketching in colored pencil only requires the three primary colors. The most widely available brand of colored pencil is Prismacolor, and within this brand the three basic primaries are most commonly understood to be “Canary Yellow,” “True Blue,” and “Magenta.”

Pen and Ink

The ordinary ballpoint pen is perhaps the most readily available sketching tool, but it is worthwhile to try a variety of pens before settling on one or a few types that work well for you. There are three basic types of pen that can be used for sketching. First, there are the disposable ink pens—ballpoint, rolling ball, and gel pens are in this category. Second are the disposable felt- or fiber-tipped pens, which are essentially like markers, but with finer points. Third are the refillable pens—fountain pens, technical pens, and quill pens come under this group. Each type of pen has its advantages and disadvantages, particularly when it comes to combining an ink sketch with other media such as watercolor.

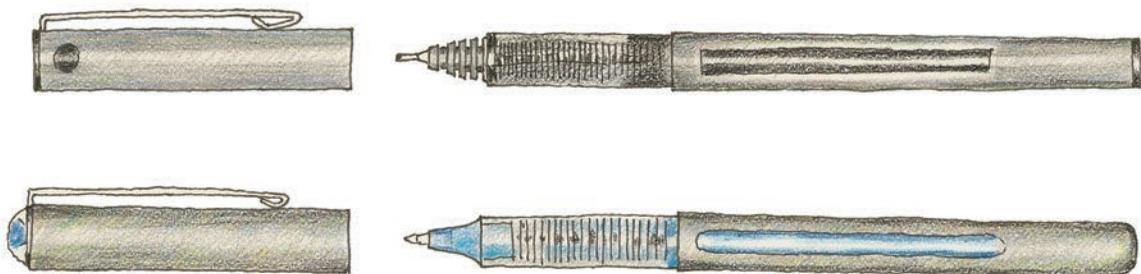


Figure 2.7 Rolling ball pens: Pilot Precise V5 Black (top) and Uniball Vision Micro Blue (bottom).

While the ballpoint pen is an acceptable sketching instrument, it doesn't always provide a precise or consistent line. Rolling ball pens and gel pens are superior in this regard. Uniball, Pilot, and Staedtler-Mars all produce excellent pens, with precise and consistent line quality. The available ink colors are somewhat limited, however, with black, blue, and red being the most common. Most rolling ball and gel pens are at least somewhat water resistant, making them suitable for use with watercolor, but individual pen types should be tested for this characteristic.

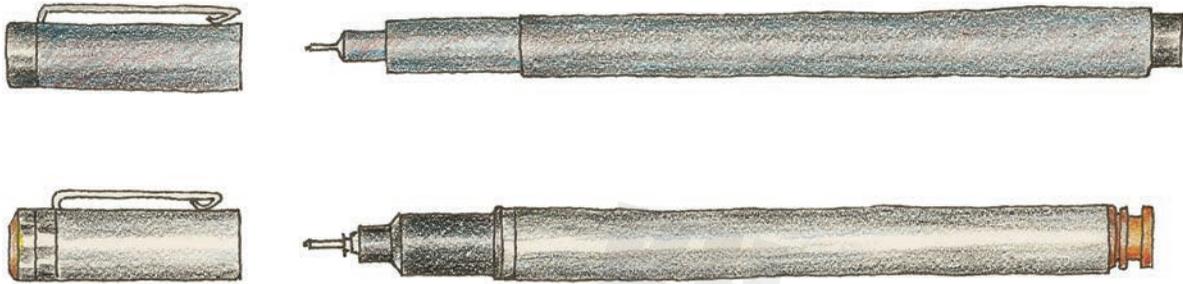


Figure 2.8 Felt-tip pens: Staedtler Pigment Liner Black (top) and Copic Multiliner SP Sepia (bottom).

Felt-tip pens are available in many sizes, and while black is the most widely available ink color, some companies (such as Copic) offer more variety. In almost all cases, felt-tip pens are disposable. When the ink runs out or the tip (also known as the “nib”) becomes deformed, the pen must be thrown away. One notable exception is the Copic Multiliner SP, which has a replaceable nib and refillable cartridges. Most felt-tipped pens contain ink that is water resistant, and some are fully waterproof—making this type of pen an excellent choice for use with watercolor. These pens are often available in a variety of sizes, from very fine points to wide tips or even brushlike tips. The Faber-Castell Pitt Artist pen is available in a variety of colors and nib sizes.

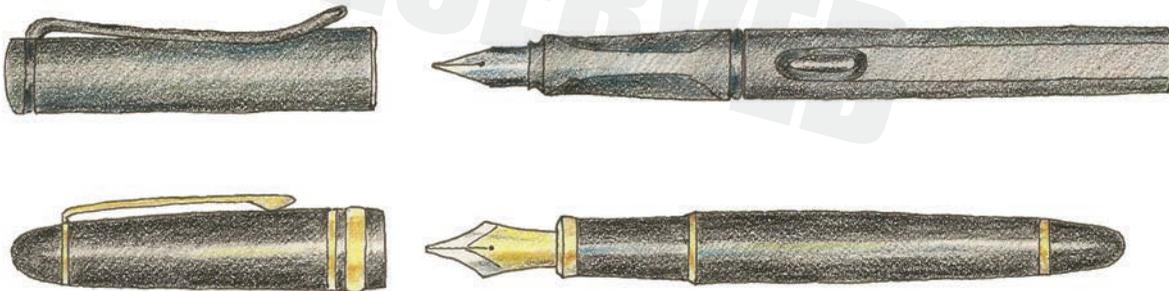


Figure 2.9 Fountain pens: Lamy Safari (top) and Yafa Iridium (bottom).

Fountain pens offer many advantages, foremost being their variable line quality and their ability to use a wide variety of inks. Though the initial cost is considerably higher than that of disposable pens, fountain pens last for years if they are well cared for, and they even adapt over time to the particular hand of the owner. All fountain pens require special care in their use and handling—if a fountain pen is dropped or bumped, it's very likely that ink will leak or splatter from the nib. They must be maintained through occasional cleaning, by flushing with cool water in between ink refills. There is an enormous variety of inks that can be used with fountain pens—different colors and levels of permanence—but all fountain pen inks must be water soluble to

some extent, or they will not flow properly and perhaps cause clogging in the feed or nib. So if watercolor is to be added to a fountain pen sketch, some bleeding of the ink on the page is to be expected. This can contribute to interesting effects, but there are some inks specially formulated to resist bleeding more than others. Most fountain pens can be “refilled” by changing a disposable cartridge. These cartridges are sold by the pen manufacturer, and the choices of ink are typically limited. Better pens will usually include a refillable reservoir for the ink, called a *converter*, which allows for a greater variety of ink types and colors to be used in the pen. Fountain pen nibs are made of steel or gold. Gold is understandably more expensive, but it is generally more flexible and more durable over the life of the pen. Nibs vary in size, from fine to wide, and they also vary in flexibility, from quite stiff to almost springlike. A medium- or fine-pointed, semiflexible nib is a good place to start when selecting a fountain pen. All nibs can produce a variable line thickness, depending on the pressure applied—more pressure will create a wider line, but be aware that too much pressure can damage the nib. One of the most affordable—and yet durable—fountain pens on the market is the Lamy Safari. These pens are readily available at many stationery and art supply stores.

Watercolor

As with pens, there is great variety and many levels of quality to choose from when shopping for watercolor supplies. Try to start simple, with only the basic necessities: a palette with a few (primary) colors, and a brush. By keeping the kit small, it is easier to justify spending the money for high-quality materials that will work well and last a long time. As your skill and interest grow, you can add to the kit a little at a time while maintaining high quality.

Brushes

Brushes can be very expensive, and can come in a dizzying array of shapes and types. As with all sketching materials, you should buy the very best you can afford. If a brush is well made and cared for properly, it will last a lifetime. If the brush is cheap, it’s more likely that it will perform poorly and fall apart too soon. The fibers of a good brush will be flexible, and thus able to hold a fair amount of water, without losing their shape. Real Sable brushes are the best, but they can be prohibitively expensive. Synthetic Sable brushes offer a good compromise between quality and price, and are what I would recommend, especially for beginners. Taklon brushes (with white synthetic fibers) also seem to work fairly well for the price. I usually just work with a single

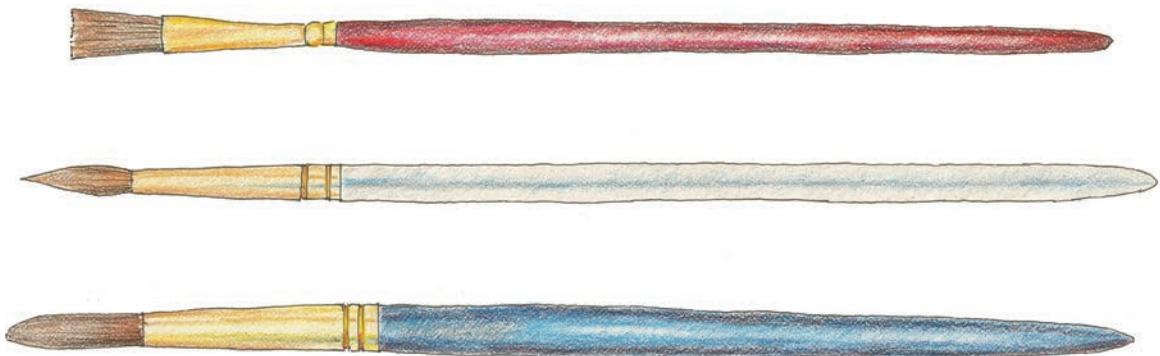


Figure 2.10 Watercolor brushes (top to bottom): Princeton Synthetic Sable ¼" Flat, Connoisseur Kolinski Sable Round #6, Blick Scholastic Red Sable #10.

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The process of sketching can be as simple as looking at a subject and drawing what you see, but there are several techniques and strategies that can be helpful when you are just beginning to make a sketch. Of course, not all of these need to be used on every sketch—the more skill you develop in applying various methods, the more comfortable you will become in using specific techniques when the need arises. Learning to sketch is very similar to learning any skill requiring knowledge and dexterity, such as the ability to play a musical instrument. It will likely feel somewhat unnatural at first, and it may seem like there is an impossible amount to learn. But with diligent practice, it will begin to feel more comfortable and natural. Your ability to process visual information will increase, and your hands will become more able to make the marks that your eyes and brain are telling them to make. So don't worry about memorizing all of the points and techniques that are presented here, and don't feel as if you have to use every technique for every sketch. Take some time initially to learn and acquire these skills, and then keep practicing even as you become more comfortable with sketching on location.

Basic Techniques

Over time, and with concentrated practice, each individual will develop their own ways of making marks on the page. Some sketchers hold the pencil or pen in highly unorthodox ways, but are no less effective. However, there are some general strategies that will assist the beginner, and it is best to develop good habits from

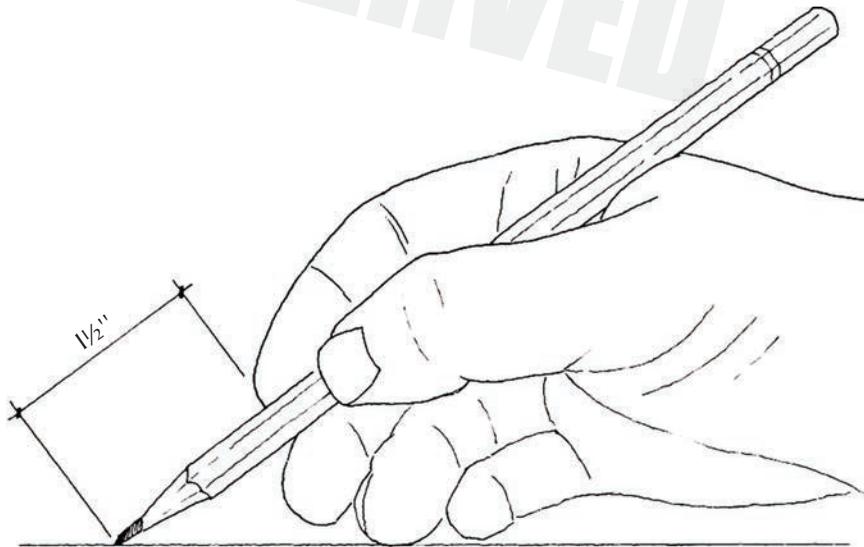


Figure 3.1 Hold the pen, pencil, or brush firmly but not tightly, with your fingers about 1/2" from the tip.

the start. Hold the pen or pencil firmly, but not tightly. If your hand begins to cramp or get sore after 10 or 15 minutes of sketching, your grip is too tight. Avoid holding the pen or pencil too close to the tip—there should be approximately 1½" between your fingertips and the point. Your hand should be relaxed but still able to control the point. For shorter or more precise strokes, your fingers will do most of the work, but for more broad or lengthy strokes, keep the fingers in a steady position and move your wrist or your forearm for the best results. Don't anchor your hand to the page too firmly, as this will prevent you from drawing effectively with your wrist or arm.

Practice making a wide variety of marks on the page. Use an inexpensive sketchbook and fill many pages with lines and patterns. It is usually most comfortable to make something resembling 45-degree lines, as this is the dominant pattern for handwriting, but you should practice making swift lines in every direction until it

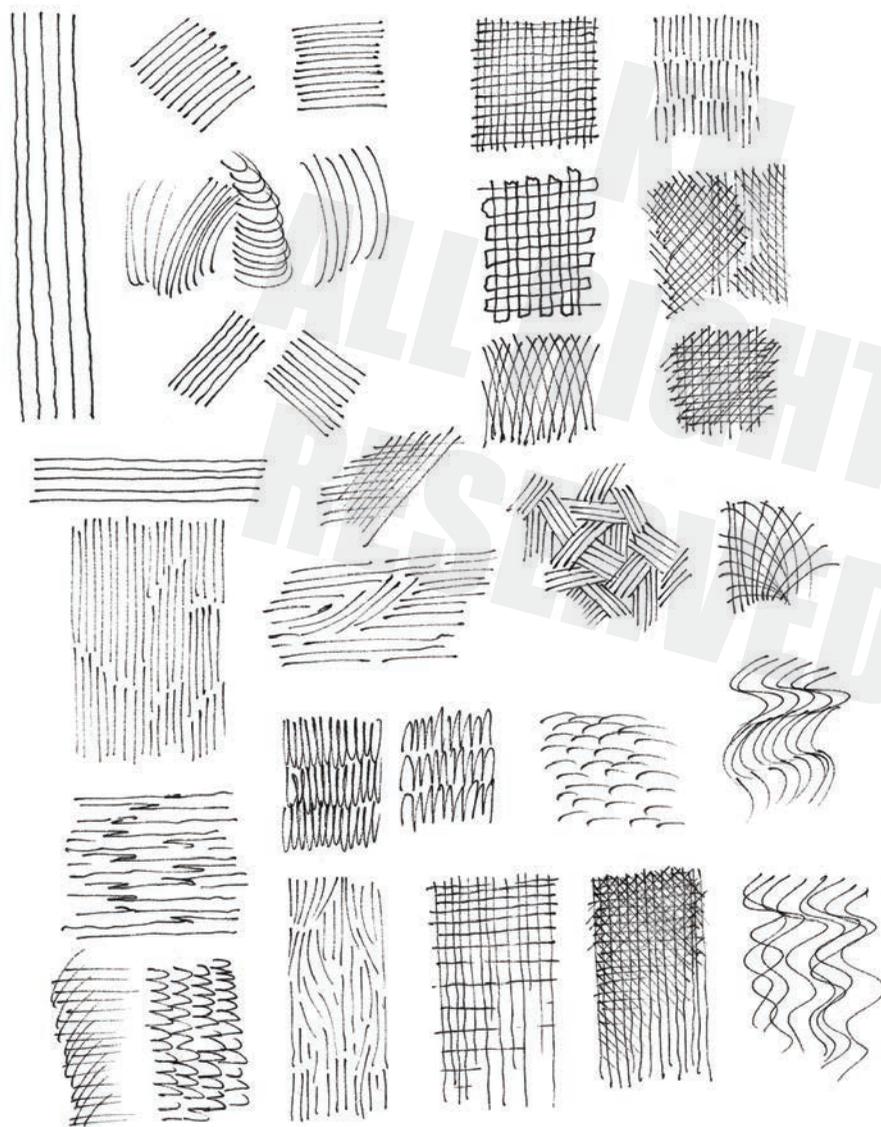


Figure 3.2 Practice marks with a pen. Strive for consistency, especially with hatch and cross-hatch patterns.

feels natural. Repeat lines side by side, trying to maintain consistent line quality and spacing. When numerous lines are drawn this way (side by side, and evenly-spaced) it is called a *hatch* pattern. When two or more hatch patterns overlay one another, at opposing angles, it is called a *cross-hatch* pattern. The process of laying down one hatch pattern on top of another is commonly referred to as *building tone*, and is an essential technique for creating value (darkness) on the page. This technique is very useful when sketching with pencil, and it is invaluable with pen and ink. Making hatch patterns can be a relatively loose operation, where each line doesn't need to be so perfectly drawn. Consistency is more important, and this can usually be achieved with swift strokes in the same direction—moving the wrist or forearm, rather than the fingers—but it does require quite a bit of practice over time.

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- ♦ **Viewfinder:** Using a viewfinder is similar to hand-framing, but with a device that will give more precise results. You can create your own viewfinder, using card stock or thin cardboard, or you can use an empty 35-mm slide frame. It helps if there are tick marks along the edges of the window at the 1/4 and 1/3 points all the way around. These marks can be used as an effective guide as the sketch progresses through the compositional stages of setup (Chapter 4).



Figure 3.6 Using a viewfinder to identify sketching subjects and to help estimate relative proportions of objects in the view. (Via della Lungaretta; Rome, IT.)

- ♦ **Sight-Sizing:** This technique is taken from academic drawing, where the viewed subject and the drawing are arranged to make them appear at the same size from the point of view of the artist. In sketching, Sight-sizing can be as simple as holding the sketchbook at eye level and comparing the developing sketch to the subject. Doing this repeatedly during the initial setup will help ensure accurate composition, proportion, and perspective (Chapter 4).

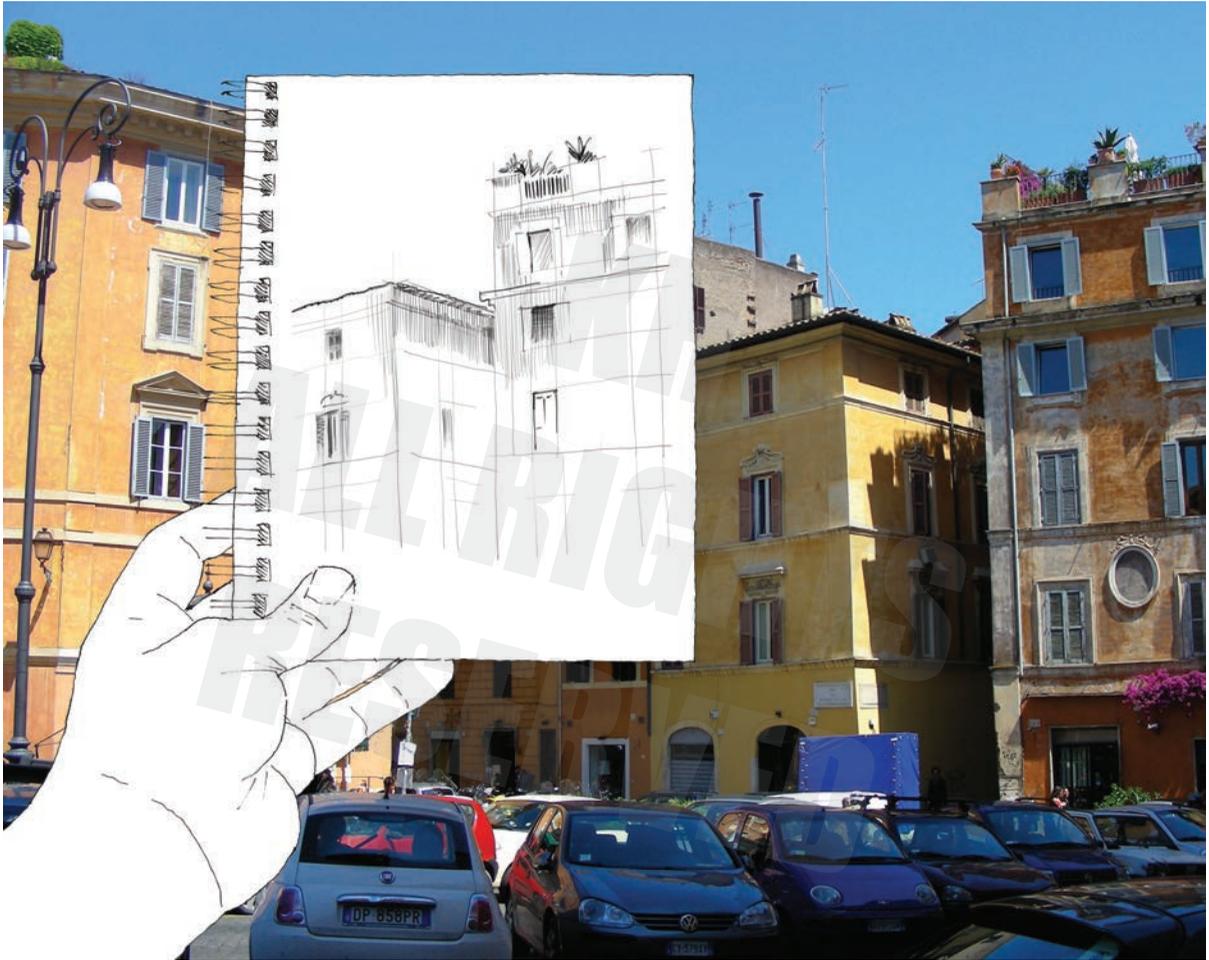


Figure 3.7 Using sight-sizing to compare the sketch to the subject. (Vicolo della Moretta; Rome, IT.)

- ♦ **Pencil-Sighting:** This entails using your pencil or other drawing instrument as a measuring tool, and can be accomplished in two ways. First, for measuring angles, hold the pencil either horizontally or vertically, next to the angle you are trying to find. Look at the angle formed between the pencil and the subject. This will help establish the correct angle on the page.

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Using the example from Chapter 3 (Figure 3.11), we can graphically describe the essential steps for composing a sketch. First, draw a rectangle, or “frame,” on the page, matching the same proportions of the viewfinder. The frame does not need to have the same dimensions as the viewfinder window, but the relative width to height must be the same. The entire page may be used as the frame, but the proportions of the page would need to match those of the viewfinder’s opening. So if the viewfinder’s window is 2 units wide by 3 units tall, the rectangle drawn on the page must also be 2 units by 3 units. The viewfinder’s window might be 6" × 4", for example. The frame on the page should have the same proportions, if not the same size—so 3" × 2" would work. After the frame has been sketched, lightly draw grid lines, dividing the frame into quadrants as shown in Figure 4.3b. Remember to hold the viewfinder a consistent distance from your eye when observing the sketch subject, and begin to look for major lines in the view that correspond to the grid. For example, the long vertical edge of the pale yellow building on the right aligns with the grid line $\frac{1}{4}$ distance from the right of the frame, and the vertical edge of the dark building to the left is approximately midway between the left boundary of the viewfinder, and the grid line $\frac{1}{4}$ distance from this boundary. Looking at the building just left of center, the ridge of the roof is just below the grid line, $\frac{1}{4}$ distance from the top of the frame. Continue making observations through the viewfinder, finding major elements of the view—prominent vertical and horizontal lines—and transferring these elements to the sketch, using the frame and grid lines as guides. Be sure to work your way around the entire sketch at this early stage, rather than focusing too long on any particular area.

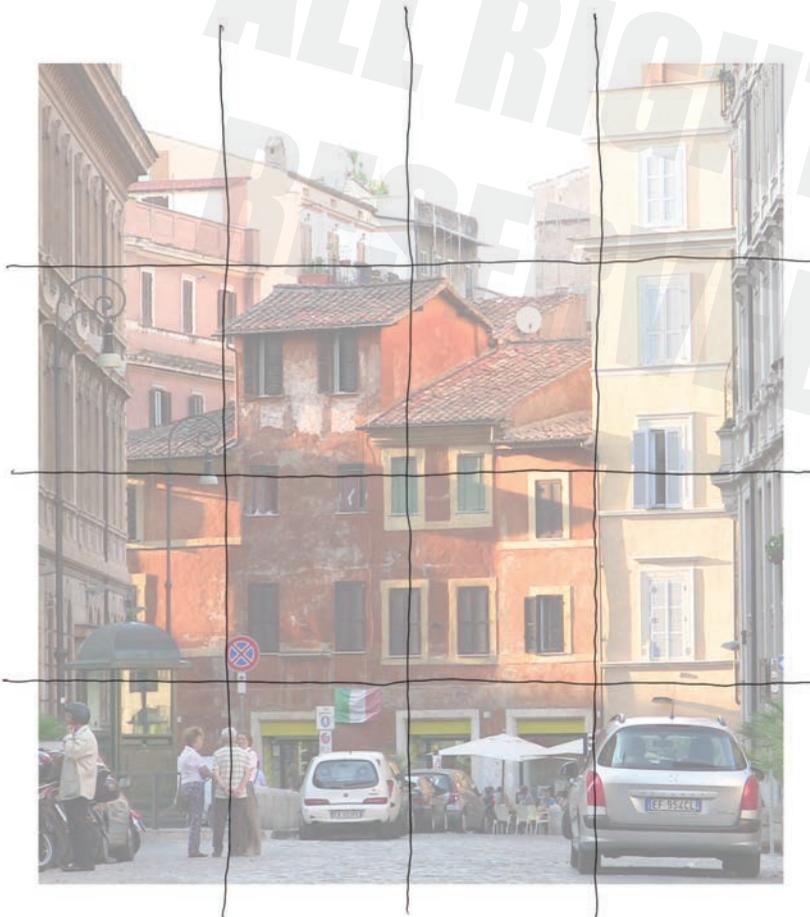


Figure 4.3a Observing a sketch subject through a viewfinder, as described in Chapter 3, and envisioning grid lines dividing the view into vertical and horizontal quadrants. (Via del Tempo; Rome, Italy.)

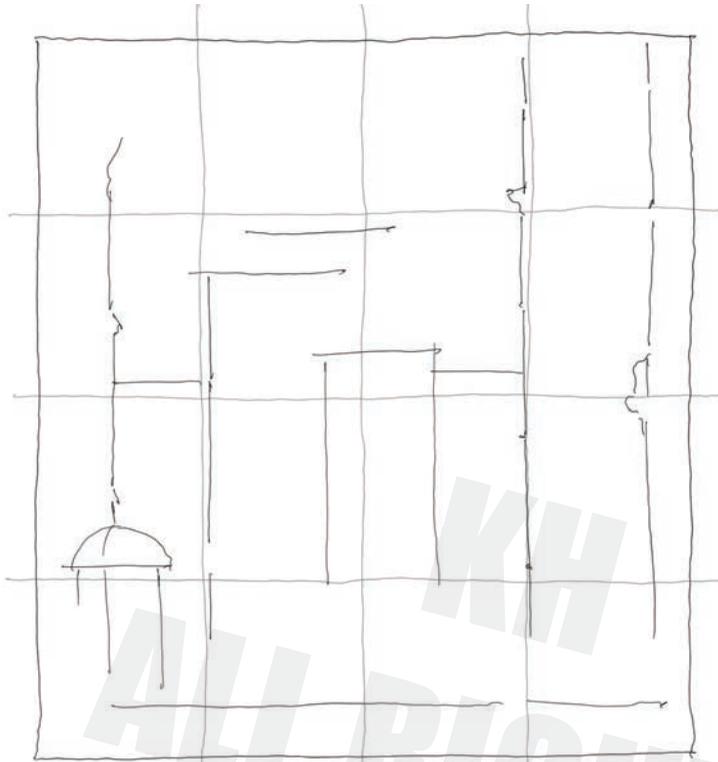


Figure 4.3b A sketched frame and grid lines, of the same proportions as the viewfinder, with several of the major vertical and horizontal elements of the view positioned with respect to the frame and grid.

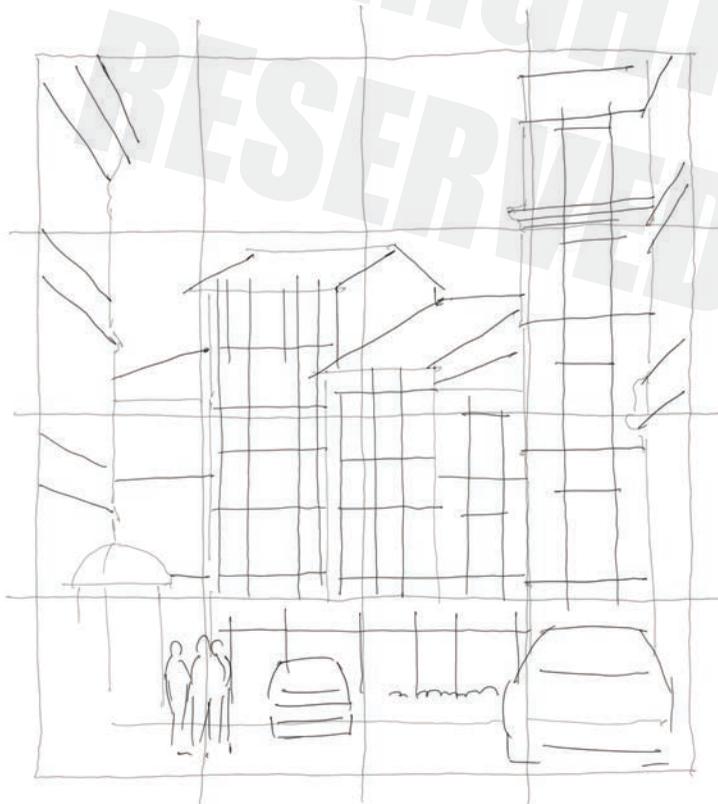


Figure 4.3c The sketch more or less fully composed, with the necessary elements in place. Notice the additional grids used to align the windows with one another.



Figure 4.3d Adding value to the composed sketch with simple hatch patterns. Notice the direction of the hatch on the roofs, and the cross-hatch patterns for added darkness in the windows.

When most of the major elements have been sketched in, you can begin to use these lines (in addition to the grid lines and frame) as your guide. Try to estimate the angles of cornice lines, as seen on the buildings to the left and right, and begin to lay out guidelines for repeated rectilinear elements such as the windows (Figure 4.3c). At this stage, it is also a good idea to rough-in some entourage elements such as people and vehicles. Once the majority of the sketch has been “set up” in this way, it will be clear where to add value and texture—Figure 4.2d shows this partially completed.

In the next example (Figure 4.4), the major horizontal lines conveniently align with the $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ horizontal grid lines. This is by virtue of the way the photograph was composed, which can be the same when you use a viewfinder—think of it as composing a photo using a camera’s viewfinder, or what is seen on the screen of a digital camera. Establish “landmarks” in the view, so that each time you need to look through the viewfinder, it is easy to recapture the view you are working on as precisely as possible. In this image, it would be easy to reestablish the view by aligning the ground line (where the building meets the ground) with the horizontal midpoint line of the viewfinder, and the roof line and the reflection of the roof line with the $\frac{1}{4}$ horizontal lines.



Figure 4.4a A horizontal composition, involving the reflection of a simple building form in water. (Chapel of St. Ignatius; Seattle, WA.)

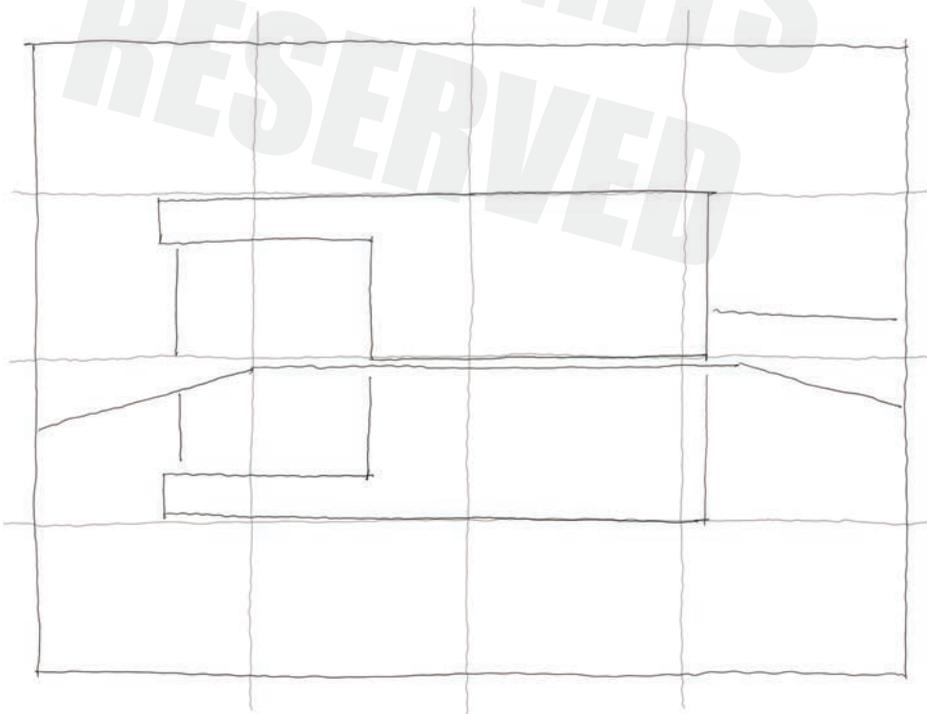


Figure 4.4b The major horizontal and vertical lines, positioned with respect to a grid.

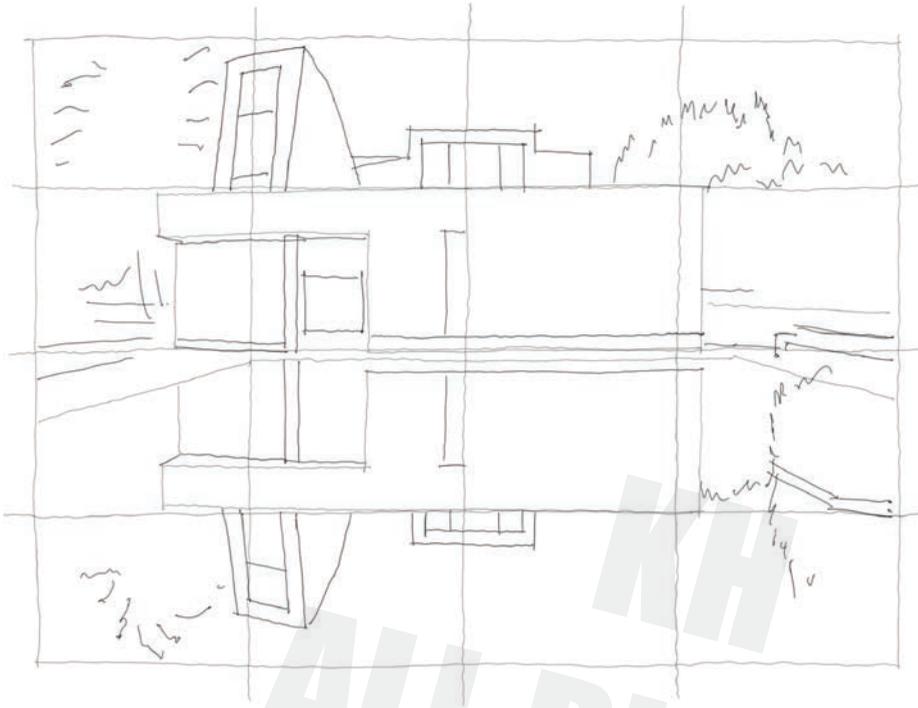


Figure 4.4c Additional shapes positioned with respect to the grid and the major horizontals and verticals in the view.

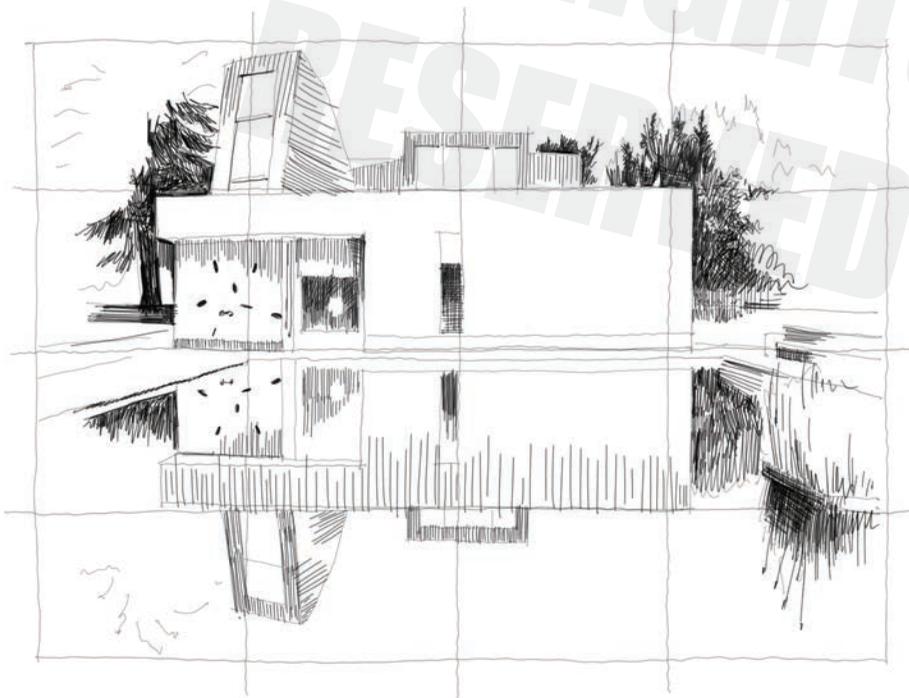


Figure 4.4d Adding value. Notice the random—but not “sloppy”—patterns used to develop the landscape elements such as trees and shrubs, providing a dark contrast against the light surfaces of the building.

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Convergence and Vanishing Points

If the wall or the line of trees were to continue, they would appear to “vanish” at some point very far in the distance—this is called a *vanishing point*. Groups of lines that are parallel to one another in space will appear to converge on the same vanishing point, a visual phenomenon known as *convergence*. In Figure 4.8, the lines or rows of objects that are parallel to one another, such as the top and bottom of the wall and the implied line where the trees meet the ground, will converge on a single vanishing point. Looked at in another way, these lines appear to radiate from the same vanishing point.

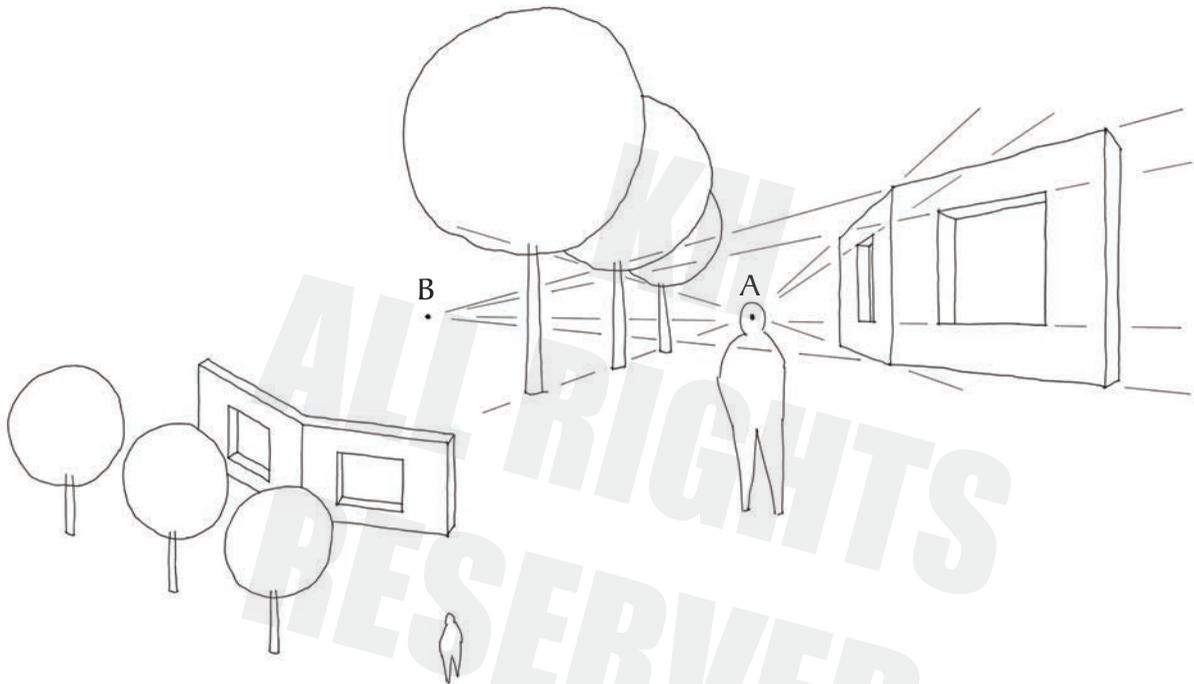


Figure 4.8 “Convergence” means that groups of parallel lines will appear to meet at or radiate from a point in the distance, known as a *vanishing point*. The point at “A” is the vanishing point for the horizontal lines of the row of trees on the left, and of the wall parallel to the trees on the right. The point at “B” is the vanishing point for the horizontal lines of the angled wall at far right.

Eye Level and Horizon Line

The next important perspective concept relates to the viewer’s position with respect to their environment. Specifically, the height of the viewer’s eyes, or one’s “eye level,” affects how objects will appear from their point of view. Think of the eye level as an invisible, horizontal plane that intersects the viewer’s eyes and extends outward to infinity (Figure 4.9). One’s eye level is not an object fixed in space; it is something that each individual carries with them, wherever they go. If we imagine seeing this plane at its farthest distance, it becomes what is called the *horizon line*. This is what we see when we stand on an ocean beach and look out to sea on a clear, calm day; it’s the line where the ocean meets the sky. In most situations, the horizon line is not so clearly visible, yet it is always there as an imaginary line at the viewer’s eye level. So the two terms, eye level and horizon line, are almost synonymous—they are not precisely the same thing, but they are directly related to one another, and in practice the terms are effectively interchangeable. In sketching, it can help to draw the horizon line on the page, and to build the sketch from this line.

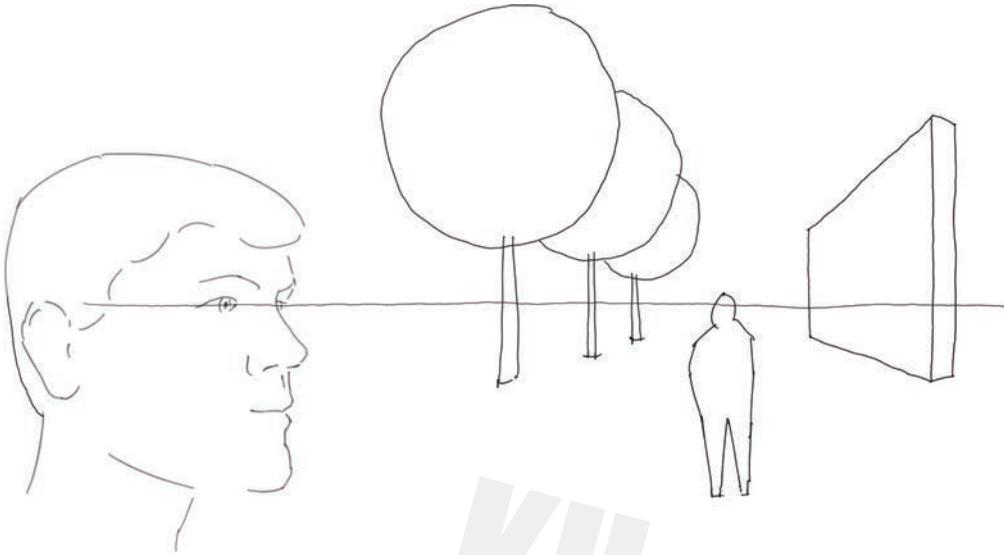


Figure 4.9 The viewer's eye level is an imaginary horizontal plane or line at the level of one's eyes. If we draw a line at this level on the sketch, it is called the *horizon line*.

Finding the Horizon Line

Since the horizon line is not always easily visible in a given view, it helps to have some strategies for locating it. Using the phenomenon of convergence is the most common method. By observing the points at which horizontal lines converge (vanishing points), a good approximation can be made to locate the horizon line. Start by finding at least one vanishing point as determined by a group of parallel horizontal lines. If you are able to locate more than one of these points, so much the better to find the horizon line. Buildings that are constructed of materials with obvious horizontal seams can be very helpful, such as those made of brick or horizontal siding. Try to see

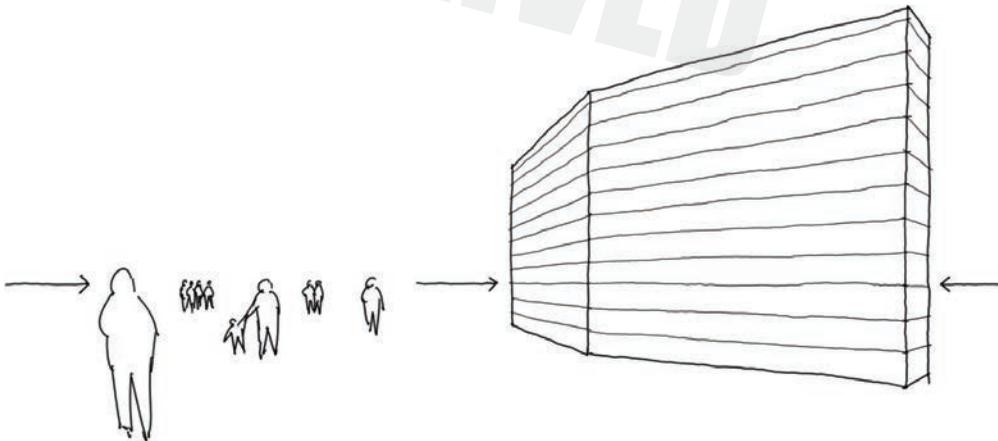


Figure 4.10 To find the horizon line, look for horizontal materials or other lines on nearby buildings. The horizon line is where the lines of materials are truly horizontal, rather than being angled up or down (at the arrows adjacent to the wall on the right). On flat surfaces, the horizon line will be where the heads of most people of average height line up.

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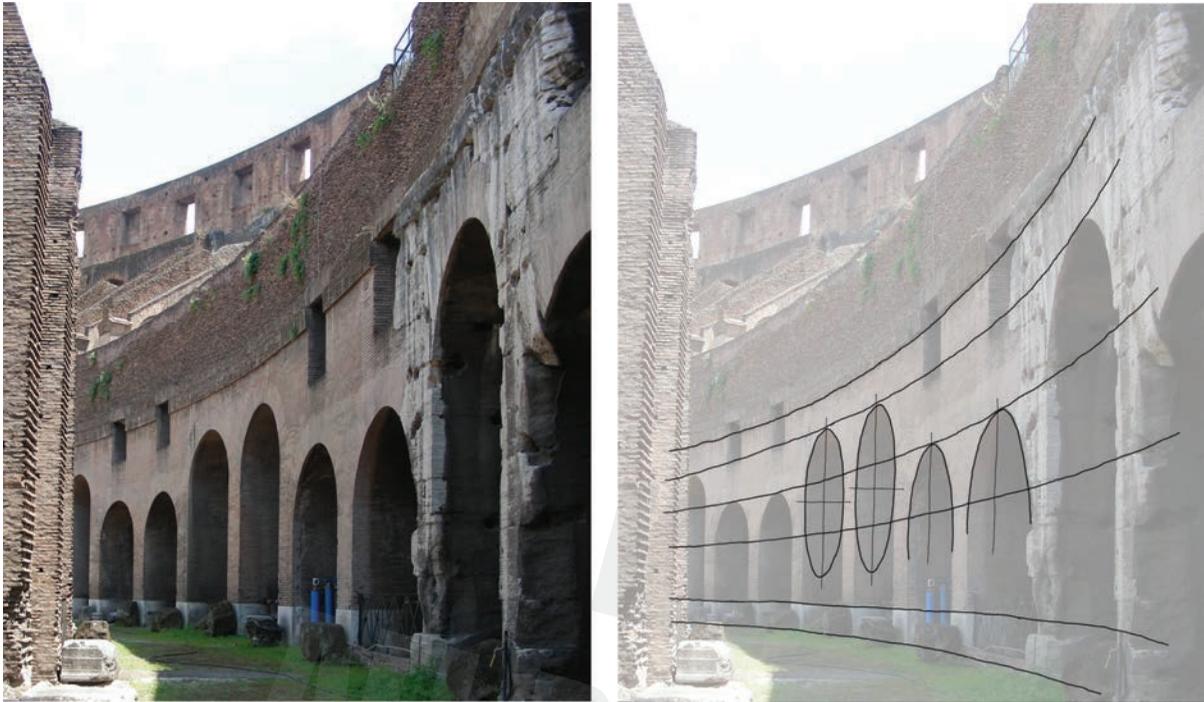


Figure 4.18 Using ellipses to sketch arches in a curving wall. (Colosseum; Rome, IT)

Curvilinear Perspective

Constructing perspectives from the imagination relies on what is called the *linear perspective*. It has the name *linear* because it requires that straight lines in space must be represented as being straight in the drawing as well. This underlying assumption forms the basis of linear perspective drawing—without it, constructing accurate perspectives from the imagination would be impossible. However, the way we actually see is quite different than the way it is replicated in linear perspective. The most important difference between linear perspective and the way we see is that straight lines in space are often perceived to be curved lines from particular points of view. The way we perceive space could rightly be called *curvilinear perspective*, and a basic understanding of this phenomenon can lead to sketches that more accurately represent our visual perception of the world. First, taking what we already know about perspective—that objects appear to diminish in size as their distance from the viewer increases—refer to Figure 4.19, which shows a long straight wall. The distance between the viewer and the wall is greater at the ends of the wall, so we would see the top and bottom lines of the wall moving toward one vanishing point to the left, and another to the right. But the lines cannot be drawn straight from each vanishing point, or the wall would appear to be somewhat diamond shaped (top). The correct way to indicate this situation, or to sketch it as our eyes see it, is to curve the top and the bottom lines of the wall—in effect, to join the left and right halves of the perspective smoothly.

This situation might seem relatively rare, but, when you begin to see it, you are likely to see it everywhere. Compared to a strict linear perspective, this is a more accurate representation of how we perceive space. In sketching on location, linear perspective is most useful when drawing subjects at a distance. But with curvilinear perspective, the viewer can inhabit the space through the drawing, because this approach allows us to draw something resembling peripheral vision.

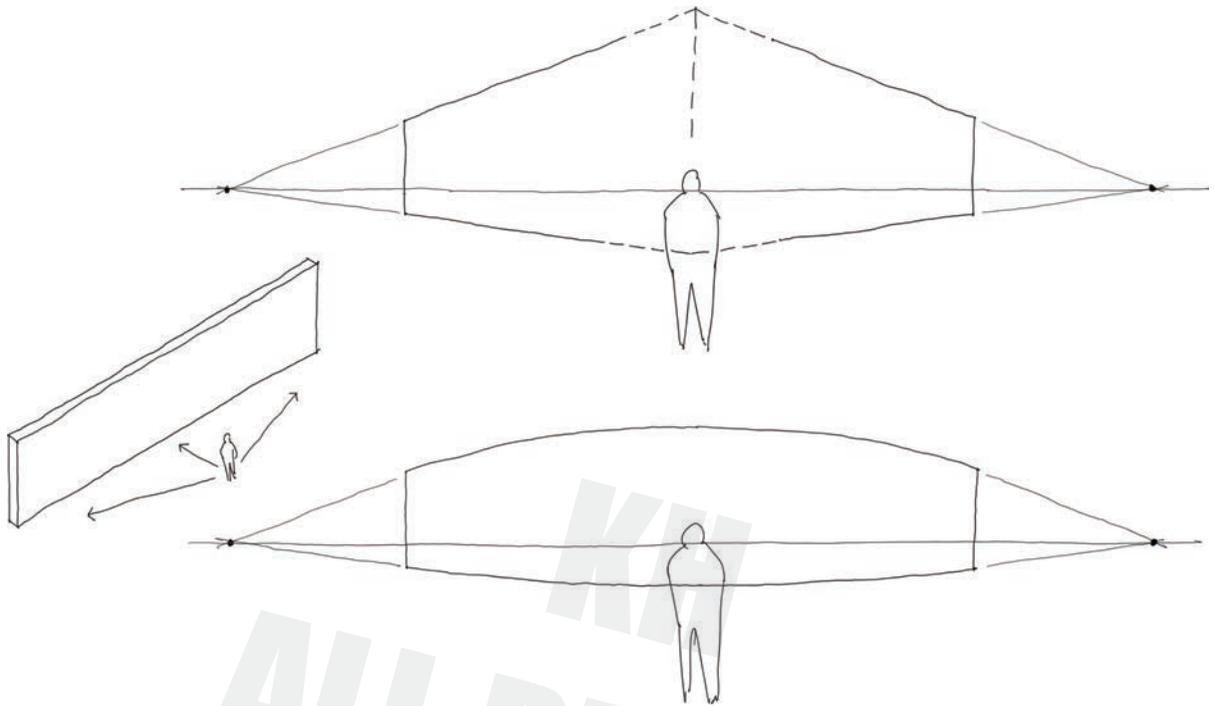


Figure 4.19 A simple diagram describing curvilinear perspective.



Figure 4.20 An example of the use of curvilinear perspective. Another example can be seen in the Trevi Fountain sketch in this chapter (Figure 4.2).

Train to Ostia Antica

Rome, IT

June 4, 2010

Uniball Vision Micro and Watercolor in Moleskine Large Watercolor Sketchbook (16" × 5")

30 minutes

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CHAPTER

5

VALUE

Light is what allows our eyes to see, and the contrast between light and shade helps us to perceive the spaces we inhabit. If a sketch consists of nothing more than the outlines of buildings and other objects in view—that is, an unshaded line drawing—it will communicate a certain amount of information regarding shape, structure, and perhaps even depth, assuming the perspective has been set up successfully. But without the indication of light and shade, the sketch will be limited in its ability to convey form and depth of space. “Value” refers to the shaded tone of a sketch and its careful application will make the sketch a far more accurate representation of what we see. Once a sketch has been properly set up, the addition of value (whether monochromatic or full color) has the potential to bring the view to life. Strong value contrast attracts and excites our eyes. From the time our eyes first begin to develop, we are drawn to contrasts in light and color. Experiments have shown that infants are visually attracted to high-contrast imagery with bold colors and patterns, and sharp, clear edges. While we develop greater sensitivity to subtle contrast with age, strong contrast between light and dark continues to demand our attention, while muted tones generally fail to provoke much response. So value is a powerful tool in sketching. Beyond its ability to describe light and form, it can also create a sense of drama, catching the viewer’s attention and drawing their eyes into the scene.

Not every sketch subject immediately lends itself to a rendering with strong value contrast. Look for situations and views where the contrasts are clear, and where the value distinctions will make for an interesting sketch. This sometimes means that a favorable subject will only be appropriate to sketch at a particular time of day, depending on sun angles. Refer to the comments made in relation to Figure 3.10, as a heavily shaded subject is often very difficult to draw in a way that describes its form clearly.

Since it is most common to sketch with dark media on light paper, what we are actually drawing is the absence of light, so we must learn to represent light by drawing darkness. This must be done selectively, however. There is often a tendency to apply value to an entire drawing. Almost everything we see in a view has at least some value—the exception might be a perfectly white wall in brilliant sunshine—so we might be inclined to apply at least some graphite or ink to every part of the sketch. This is almost always a mistake. Applying value to the entire sketch eliminates the possibility of using the white of the paper as the lightest value. With graphite or ink, if the whole sketch is some version of gray, the opportunity for a wide spectrum of tone is missed. Even when using watercolor, where very light-valued washes may be applied to the page, it is usually advisable to leave some amount of paper exposed as the very lightest value in a drawing. Another tendency is to be timid about the dark values, to not push them very far into the dark end of the value scale. This happens frequently when sketching in pencil, especially if the graphite is in the H range of hardness (see Figure 2.3), but also if the sketcher has a light touch.

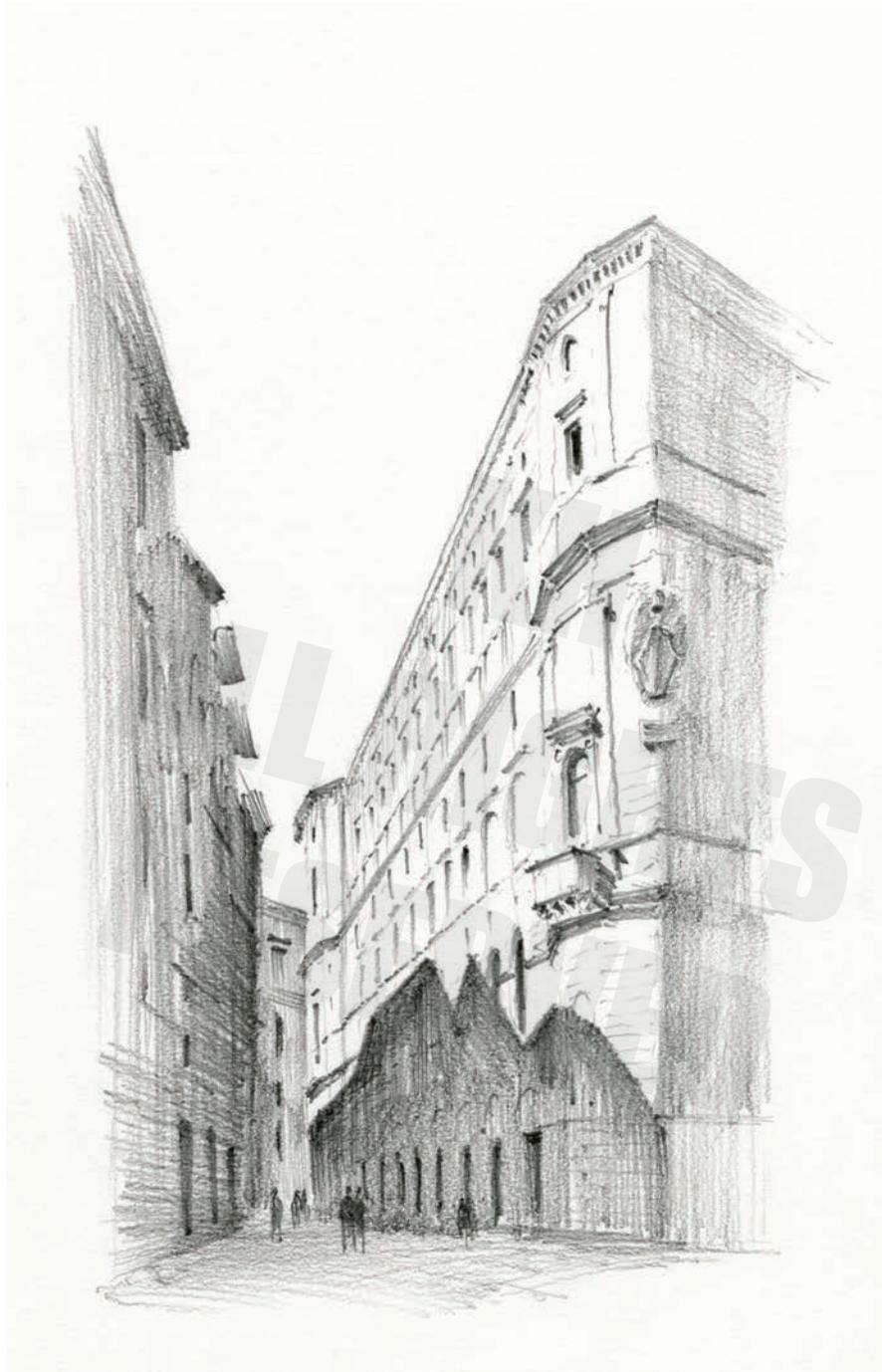


Figure 5.1 A sketch with very bold value contrast, conveying a clear sense of light and a dramatic impression of the canyon-like street.

Palazzo della Cancelleria

Rome, IT

July 19, 2011

HB Pencil on Fabriano Ruvido Drawing Paper (9" × 12")

45 minutes



Figure 5.2 A very quick sketch in charcoal, with lively hatching and bold values.

The Pantheon

Rome, IT

June 13, 2007

Medium Charcoal Pencil on Canson Drawing Paper (12" × 9")

20 minutes

To counteract these tendencies and develop skills for applying strong value, it helps to simplify the “value scheme,” at least in the early stages of practice. A value scheme is simply the range of values in a given drawing. In simplifying the scheme, we reduce the total number of distinct values. So, rather than having ten or twelve different levels of tone on the page, we reduce this number significantly. Perhaps there are only three or four distinct values—the white of the paper is always the very lightest value, and there might be only two or three tonal values besides white, with one value that is very dark and two others that are intermediate. Simplifying the value scheme is a good way to condense the sketching process, to avoid getting bogged down in detail, and to produce images that are bold and clear. In terms of media, a charcoal pencil works well because, with a moderate amount of pressure, very dark black tones can be easily applied. But simplifying the value scheme is a worthwhile strategy no matter which drawing medium is used.

An excellent exercise for practicing value, and especially for simplifying the value scheme, is to do small, very brief studies of large-scale shadows, such as may be encountered in a typical street scene on a sunny day. When you are forced to keep a sketch very small and you have little time to draw, you'll be required to simplify the values and to be bold and dramatic in their application. This is very good practice, not only as you begin to sketch but as ongoing, periodic training for working with strong values. The sketches in Figure 5.3 (and Figure 1.10) were completed as a demonstration of this exercise at workshops in Lisbon, Portugal. Each sketch is approximately 2" wide by 3" tall, and each was done in about three minutes. With these parameters, I had no choice but to work quickly and boldly, ignoring the wealth of visible detail and color in the view before me and greatly simplifying the values. In these cases, I was using an earth-toned colored pencil, but a soft graphite or charcoal pencil would have been as effective. Again, in order to show light, we need to draw darkness—to show very bright light, we accentuate the darks and leave the white of the page untouched if a surface is in direct sunlight.

In addition to making a compelling sketch, value should be used to accentuate the primary focus. As discussed in relation to Figure 3.12, every sketch should have some sense of focus, formed around the most interesting aspect of the view you would like to capture. This is an essential aspect of framing and setting up a sketch



Figure 5.3 Quick value studies of a street in Lisbon, done as a demonstration in a workshop focused on light. Figure 1.10 shows similar studies from an earlier session of the same workshop.

Sunlight Studies, Rua das Portas
Lisbon, PT
July 23, 2011
Venetian Red on Fabriano Ruvido
Drawing Paper (9" × 12")
3 minutes each

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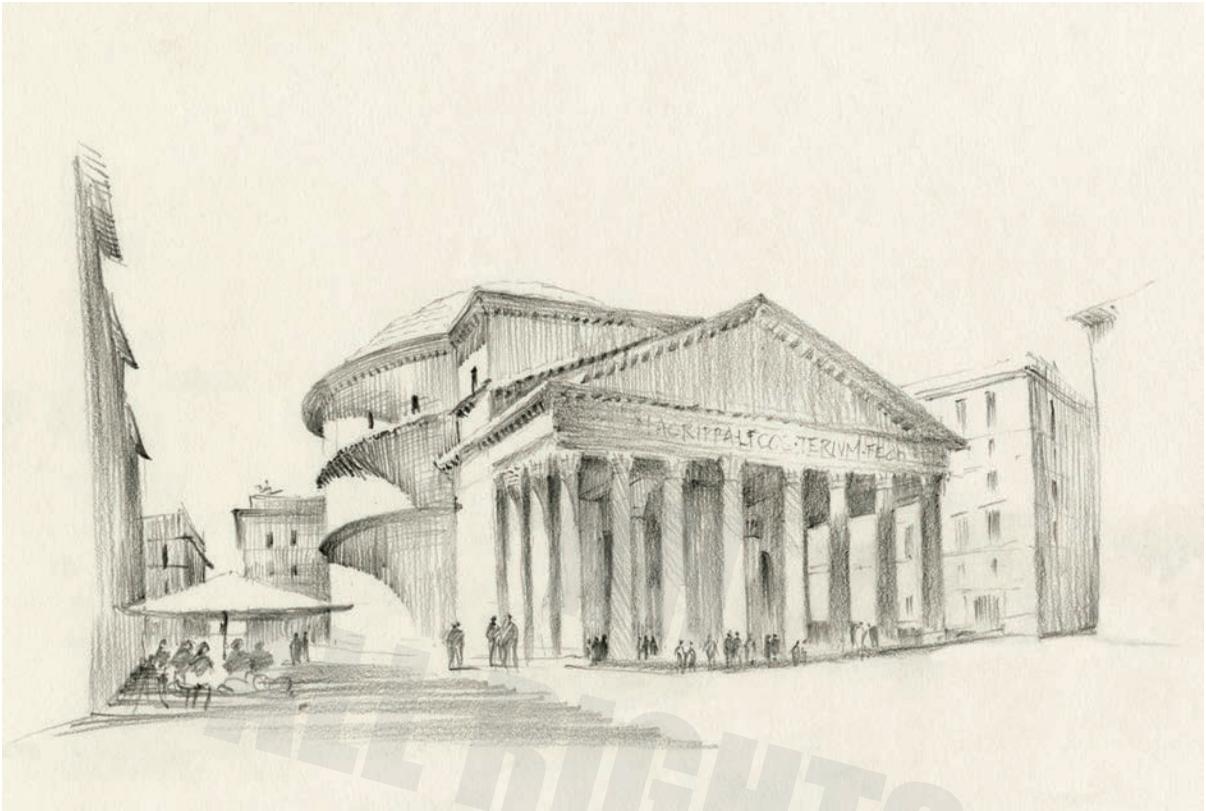


Figure 5.16 Counterpoint applied to columns.

The Pantheon

Rome, IT

July 6, 2011

2B Pencil on Canson Classic Cream Drawing Paper (12" × 9")

60 minutes

Figure 5.16 shows another example of counterpoint, and reveals that the shift from light-against-dark to dark-against-light can happen very suddenly. The columns across the front of the building did not vary greatly in value, but their background shifted quickly from dark to light, so the value of the columns had to be sketched accordingly. The brightly sunlit buildings beyond the three columns at far right required the columns to be drawn as dark against light. The shaded area behind the next three columns to the left required that these columns remain light. The very tops of the second and third columns from the right also had to remain light against their shaded background. When we look closely at these sudden differences in value, it might look odd or "incorrect." But if we step back slightly and look at the sketch as a whole, the counterpoint works to suggest light and depth of space.

Forced Shadows and Reflected Light

Drawing on the principle of counterpoint, light and shade may be strongly emphasized through a technique known as *forcing shadows*. When we look at a shadow, the initial impression might be that its tone is uniform throughout, that the shadow's entire shape is a single, dark tone. In fact, virtually all shadows contain some

variation in value—some areas are lighter or darker than others. It may be difficult to see this variation at first glance, and even upon further study, significant variation might not be apparent. The differences may seem to be too subtle to bother with in trying to make a sketch. However, although the tonal variation of shadows may be slight, by forcing the shadows we can create a more accurate representation of how light behaves. Rather than sketching shadows as though their value is entirely uniform, apply a graded tone, with the darkest part at the leading edge of the shadow.



Placing the darkest area of the shadow directly adjacent to the sunlit surface will have the effect of enhancing both values. As the shadow moves away from its leading edge—that is, deeper into the shadow and further from the light—it is common to observe some light that has been reflected from the street or other building surfaces. So, by grading the shadow away from its edge, and making it lighter, two things happen. First, the darker edge of the shadow will contrast more forcefully with the adjacent sunlit surface. And second, the graded shadow will represent reflected light bouncing off of other surfaces. An example can be seen in Figure 5.16, in the shadows cast by the cornices along the left side of the building. These shadows have a strong, clear edge where they meet the sunlit surface of the wall, and they are graded to a lighter value as they wrap around the cylindrical face of the structure.

Figure 5.17 Forced shadows on the facades along the left side of the street.

Via del Teatro Valle

Rome, IT

May 24, 2011

4B Pencil on Canson Drawing Paper
(9" × 12")

45 minutes

Figure 5.17 is another good example of forced shadows, especially along the left side of the street in view. The leading edge of the shadow is sketched with darkness and precision, modeling the columns of the facade at left. This shadow becomes lighter as it moves downward, away from the shadow's leading edge. This sketch also shows increased contrast as a way to draw attention to the central focus of the sketch—the triangular pediment at upper left and the spiral church lantern beyond. Notice that this lantern is sketched with slightly lighter



Figure 5.18 Counterpoint and reflected light on the wall at right.
San Salvatore da Birecto
Atrani, IT
June 13, 2009
4B Pencil on Canson Classic Cream Drawing Paper (9" × 12")
50 minutes

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Figure 5.22 Avoid making repeated details, such as windows, all the same. Even small variations from one to another will create a livelier image.

Piazza di Sant'Ignazio

Rome, IT

July 8, 2007

HB Pencil on Canson Drawing Paper (12" × 9")

45 minutes

dull sketch that lacks variety. Look carefully at repeating elements—windows are the best example—and see how they differ from one another. This window might have its shutters closed, that one might have its drapes open, another might be completely open, etc. Even if they look similar at first glance, try to avoid drawing them all as being identical. Figure 5.22 is a worthwhile effort in value for several reasons—shifting tones that describe building form, forced shadows that create strong contrast and suggest reflected light, directional hatching that reinforces the perspective, etc. But it is included here especially because it shows enough variety in the window treatment as to be worth studying.

Color and Value

Value contrast is not only about light and dark. Different colors will react to one another and further accentuate the rendering of light and shade in a sketch. The next chapter will cover some of the elements of color compliments and color temperature, but a few points with regard to value are appropriate here. When working in color, it is just as important to keep the value scheme relatively simple, and to apply the other strategies discussed in this chapter. Color can confuse the issue of value, so in some ways it helps to simplify values even more than you would with dry media. An example is shown in Figure 5.23. The focus is clearly on the obelisk, its pedestal, and the fragment of ancient sculpture to the right. The landscape beyond was not so much darker



Figure 5.23 Despite the variety of color in this sketch, the value contrast is very clear.

Obelisk in Villa Celimontana

Rome, IT

June 1, 2011

Watercolor in in Moleskine Large

Watercolor

Sketchbook (5" × 8")

40 minutes

than these elements, so I had to strategize on value before beginning the sketch. In an effort to bring out the focal elements, and especially the obelisk, the landscape was given a deep, dark value in greens and blues. The obelisk was colored stone (with the top half being a darker type of stone), but this color still had to be kept very light in relation to the foliage in the background. The pedestal was kept as light as possible, and I was careful to edge the steps in white, to maintain separation between these and the landscape beyond. So, even though this was a colorful sketch, the main strategy had to do with simple value contrast.

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When a sketch has been set up effectively, value can create a clear sense of light, depth, and texture. Color, whether it is added as value or in addition to value, can add a richer sense of vitality, creating a more dynamic representation of the view. There are a variety of ways to add color to a sketch, and, of course, color may be used alone. Of the numerous types of media that might be used for sketching—including markers, pastels, acrylics, etc.—my focus is on two types of media that travel well and that are quite simple and direct in their application.



Colored pencil is recommended particularly as a means of learning how to mix colors, and watercolor because it is uniquely suited to sketching quickly on location. Each requires fundamental skills and both can be used to produce accurate and compelling results. Regardless of the color techniques you use, it is important to continue the same approach to value discussed in the preceding chapter. Don't allow color sketches become "washed-out" for lack of value contrast. Color should not be seen as a substitute for value—whether it is added to a sketch that has already been given value, or if color is the way that value will be added, in either case, strong value contrast should always be present.

Figure 6.1 A richly colored sketch that maintains a clear sense of light through strong value contrast.
Rua das Portas
Lisbon, PT
July 22, 2011
Watercolor on Winsor & Newton Cotman Cold Press (9" × 12")
30 minutes

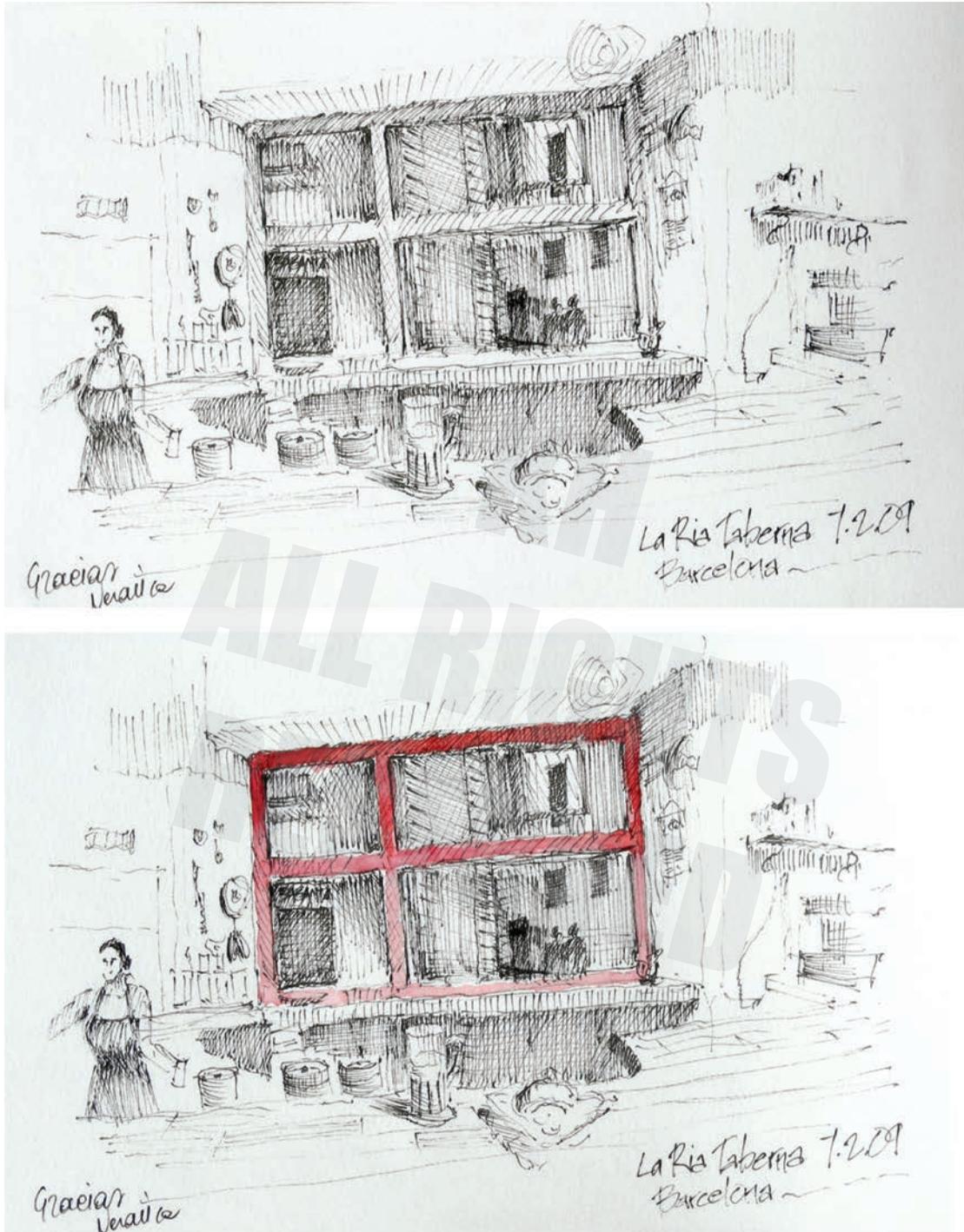


Figure 6.2 A simple pen and ink sketch, with the addition of one color (Alizarin Crimson).
La Ria Taberna
Barcelona, SP
July 2, 2009
Uniball Vision Micro and Watercolor in Moleskine Large Watercolor Sketchbook (8" × 5")
20 minutes

Starting Simply

The best way to begin working with color is, very simply, by adding only one or two colors to a sketch that has already been completed (through the steps of setup and value) in pen or pencil. Adding just one color can effectively draw attention to an interesting element of the view and it makes the process direct and uncomplicated. In Figure 6.2, I was sitting at a tavern in Barcelona that had a window behind the bar that was open to the street outside. It was an interesting spatial situation, with people occasionally walking up to the window to order a beer or to chat with the bartender. I had finished the sketch in pen, but felt that something was lacking. The focus of the sketch was the window, and it was this element of the view that drove me to do the sketch in the first place. The window frame was an intense, deep red, so I quickly pulled out my watercolor palette and in less than a minute's time I had transformed a worthwhile sketch into something far more compelling and memorable.

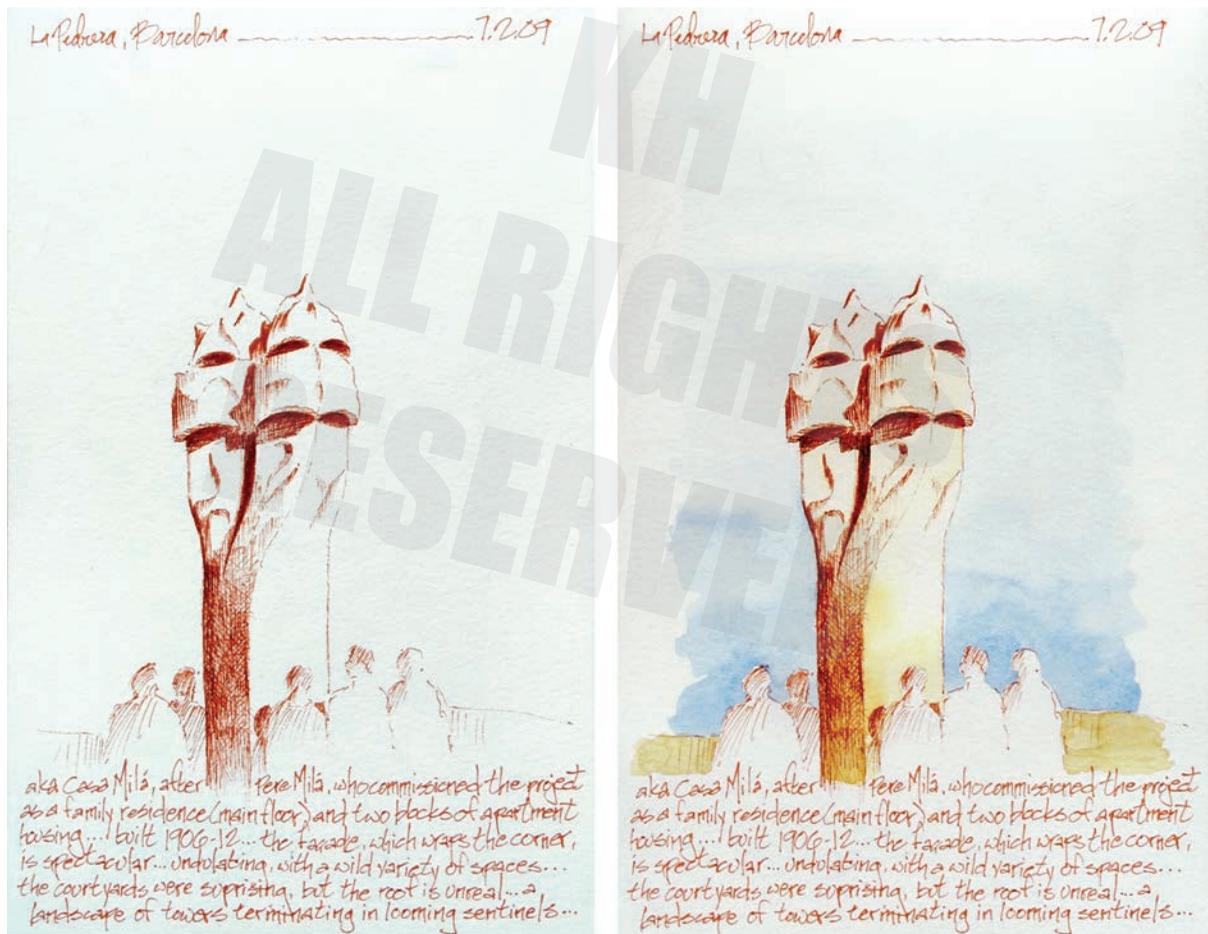


Figure 6.3 Completed the same day as the sketch in Figure 6.2. I was in a mood to work with color in a simple way and had the foresight to take photos of each sketch before adding the color. In this case, the colors were Cerulean Blue and Gamboge.

La Pedrera

Barcelona, SP

July 2, 2009

Copic Multiliner SP (Sepia) and Watercolor in Moleskine Large Watercolor Sketchbook (5" × 8")

30 minutes

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Watercolor

Watercolor, as a fluid medium, is one of the quickest and most versatile media for applying color when sketching on location. Even if you only have a few colors on your palette—typically, one version each of blue, red, and yellow—the possibilities are endless with regard to color and value. It is a transparent medium (as opposed to gouache, oil, or acrylic, which are opaque), capable of producing dazzling results with respect to light and depth. After mastering some basic techniques for handling water, pigment, and brushwork, this medium can be used to swiftly apply color and value. With watercolor, it can be a challenge to sketch with precision. But the medium lends itself to a more abstract approach based on impressions of light, color, and texture. For example, the sketch in Figure 6.13 gives a rather loose impression of the colorful flowers beneath the canopy of canvas umbrellas. The colors are pure and clean, though working with a brush prevents the type of crisp detail that is possible with graphite or ink.

To develop strong fundamental skills with watercolor, it helps to start with relatively small sketches. Fragments of views sketched as quick vignettes are more manageable than large paintings and they are a low-impact way to test strategies and procedures for painting. This approach is also worthwhile if you have not used watercolor in some time. The three quick sketches shown in Figure 6.14 are a good example—I had not used



Figure 6.13 A quick watercolor sketch with fresh colors and strong value contrast.

Campo dei Fiori

Rome, IT

June 22, 2010

Watercolor in Moleskine Large Watercolor Sketchbook (5" × 8")

20 minutes

watercolor for a few months, so I painted these fragments as a way to re-familiarize myself with the process and get warmed-up before attempting larger subjects. I sometimes find that when I try to take on too much with watercolor, the process can be frustrating rather than relaxing and enjoyable. It's better to work up to larger-format sketches instead of trying to tackle a large subject from the start. Small sketches of this type also have the benefit of exercising the eye in terms of color and value, while still taking on the relative complexity of working with a variety of colors.



Figure 6.14 Small fragmentary views are an excellent way to practice in the field. Each of these studies is just about 2" or 3" square and only took a few minutes.
Portico d'Ottavia and Vicinity
Rome, IT
June 3, 2010
Watercolor on Arches Cold Press (12" × 9")
5 minutes each

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Figure 6.22 Component colors being blended as the wash is applied to the page. This can be seen most clearly in the wall on the left—the component colors in this case are Burnt Sienna and Sepia. The sky is a more standard wet-into-wet wash, with Cerulean Blue being added to a clear water wash on the page.

Via della Scala

Rome, IT

July 6, 2010

Watercolor on Arches Cold Press (9" × 12")

60 minutes



Figure 6.23 Dry-brush technique, useful for applying textural qualities to a watercolor sketch.

Another useful brush technique is similar to calligraphy. Again, the brush should be relatively dry as you use it to draw lines and curves that vary in width. A good #6 Round brush will come to a point when it is lightly snapped, removing most of the water/pigment mixture, and allowing for fairly thin lines to be made. Use calligraphic strokes to represent trees and their branches, overhead power lines, linear building elements, and any other part of a view that requires more of a drawing technique as opposed to a wash. In painting trees like those in Figure 6.24, try to vary the color and value as you go along, to avoid a flat appearance.

Regardless of the wash techniques you use, always strive to keep the water in the reservoir as clean as possible. If you paint a wash with nothing but this water, and the wash can be seen after drying (usually a light gray or brown), then the water should be replaced. If the water is not absolutely clear, every wash will be at least slightly more dull or muddy than it needs to be. Since it is so easy to replenish your reservoir as often as



Figure 6.24 Calligraphic brushwork used for trees and other details, made with a single #6 Round brush.
 Friendship Square
 Moscow, ID
 February 27, 2010
 Watercolor in Moleskine Large Watercolor Sketchbook (16" × 5")
 45 minutes

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CHAPTER

7

ENTOURAGE

“Entourage” is an expression that architectural renderers have used for many years to describe the additional elements of a drawing beyond the architecture itself. These elements are typically people, landscape components, vehicles, street furniture, etc. Entourage is another word for “context,” or the environment that surrounds and integrates with the aspect of the drawing most important to the sketcher. So what is considered “entourage” depends on what happens to be the primary focus of the sketch. If one’s primary interest is in sketching landscapes, then perhaps architecture would be considered entourage. If one’s interest is in sketching people on the street, then entourage will consist of park benches, café furniture, and the like. While entourage may be of secondary importance to the sketcher, it should not be thought of as being extraneous or unnecessary. Whatever the focus of a sketch, its context is essential. For example, if the focus is a group of people, there is a significant difference between showing those people standing on a beach, or gathered in the lobby of an opera house, or riding public transportation. If some amount of their surroundings is not part of the sketch, then it will not appear to matter where they are or what they are doing. The same is true of buildings and public spaces. If there is no suggestion of the context or the activities associated with urban places, then the sketch will misrepresent the view. If there are no people, vehicles, or street furniture shown in a public plaza, the resulting sketch will show an uninhabited, lifeless place.

Although entourage may not be the primary focus of a sketch, this should not lead to a careless approach or lack of attention toward skill development. Drawing entourage well requires as much focused practice as any other subject. In fact, entourage typically requires more practice for a simple reason—the elements of sketching that are of less interest to the artist will almost certainly receive less attention in terms of ongoing practice. While your skills for drawing architecture might be improving (if you happen to find this especially interesting to sketch), your skills for drawing other elements might not develop as quickly or as thoroughly. This can lead to sketches where there is an imbalance between the primary subject matter and the entourage—with the former being drawn quite well and the latter diminishing the quality of the sketch.



Figure 7.1 Though the primary focus of this sketch is the tower in the distance, the context (or “entourage”) of the tree-lined street, the vehicles, and a few people, is critical to describing the view.

NW Johnson Street

Portland, OR

July 31, 2010

2B Pencil on Canson Classic Cream paper (9" × 12")

20 minutes

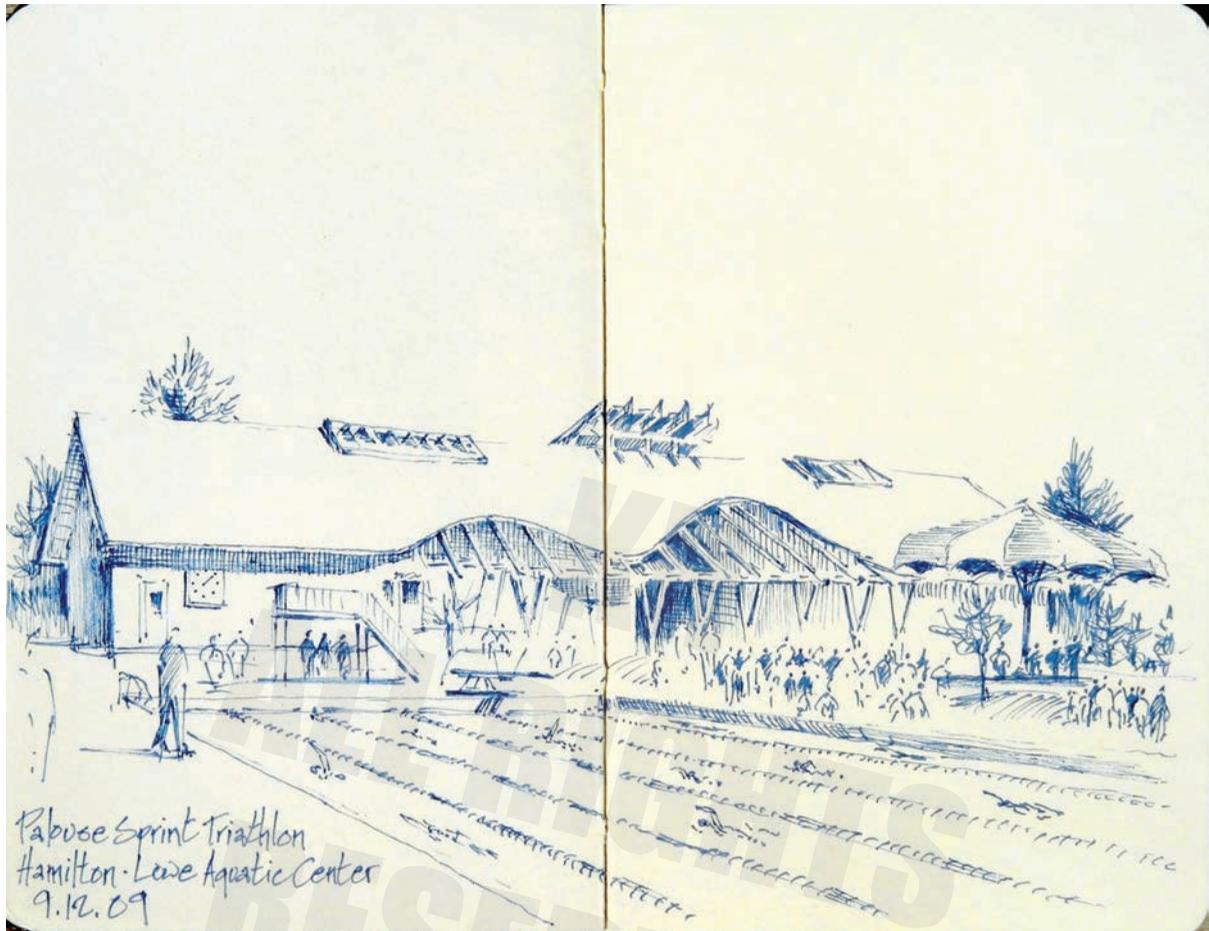


Figure 7.2 In this sketch, the building was of interest, but the activity and the crowd of people make the scene come alive
 Hamilton-Lowe Aquatic Center
 Moscow, ID
 September 12, 2009
 Copic Multiliner SP (Cobalt) in a Moleskine Pocket Sketchbook (7" × 5.5")
 25 minutes

To build skills for sketching entourage, it helps to sketch these elements as much as possible as their own subject matter. For example, I regularly attend figure drawing sessions, and occasionally sketch people in public places without sketching much of their surroundings, if only for practice. I also draw or paint landscapes without any architecture or people in the view. These may not be my primary interests as a sketcher, but it is important that I build and maintain my skills in various directions, so that these elements will add to other sketches in a convincing way.

As was mentioned in Chapter 3 (in the section titled "Planning and Beginning the Sketch"), entourage must be part of the plan for a sketch from the very beginning, because these elements cannot simply be added at the end. They must to be integrated into the original setup drawing. Entourage, because it is not the primary focus, should usually be indicated in a simplified manner rather than drawn in great detail, so as not to detract from

Pages 132-134 are not
included in this preview

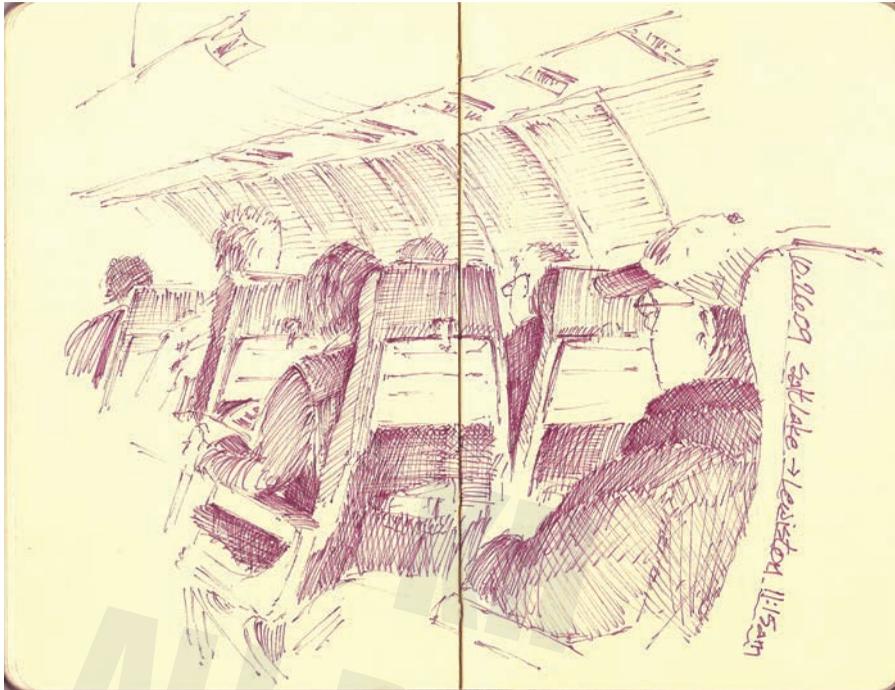


Figure 7.6 Sketching on airplanes, trains, or buses is good practice for drawing people at close range. Copic Multiliner SP (Wine) in a Moleskine Pocket Sketchbook (7" × 5.5").

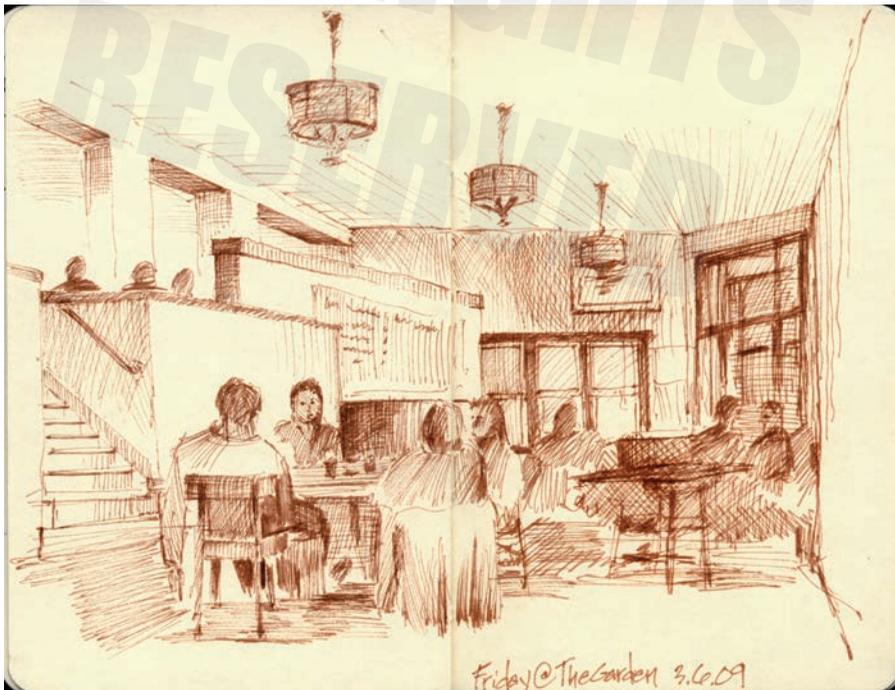


Figure 7.7 Bars, coffee shops, and restaurants are also good places to sketch people, and the surrounding environment is usually worthwhile, too. Copic Multiliner SP (Sepia) in a Moleskine Pocket Sketchbook (7" × 5.5").

Pages 136-150 are not
included in this preview

CHAPTER

8

AFTER SKETCHING



Figure 8.1 Delta Flight #130
March 18, 2010
Copic Multiliner SP (Olive) and Watercolor in Hand-Book Journal (10" x 8")
35 minutes

As you sketch more frequently, you will likely accumulate numerous sketchbooks and portfolios full of your work. Storing and protecting the physical drawings, and cataloguing the digital image files, will require you to develop some simple techniques, strategies, and habits. For some, sketching will be a purely personal endeavor, and for others, sharing their work will become more important. Regardless of your personal inclination, I encourage you to find ways to share your work as a way to build skills and make connections with other sketchers. If your sketches will be printed or shared online, then it helps to learn processes for making good digital or photographic reproductions. And finally, there are many venues through which your sketches might be displayed, from local galleries to online forums. Presented here are my suggestions for storing, reproducing, and sharing your sketches, and ideas for making connections with other sketchers.

Storing and Protecting Sketches

Sketches are most commonly drawn in sketchbooks, and it might be assumed that they would be sufficiently protected that way. But this depends on the type of sketchbook, the type of media used for the sketches, and the way the sketchbook is treated by its owner. Hardcover sketchbooks, especially those equipped with an elastic band, tend to do the best job of protecting the drawings inside. Ring-bound sketchbooks, for all their other advantages, do not offer as much protection as hardcover books. Their covers tend to slip in opposing directions, making the pages rub against one another inside the closed book. If you have used graphite, charcoal, or other dry media, your sketches may become smudged. One remedy for this is to wrap a large rubber band around the cover, or use large binder clips to hold the cover tightly in place when you are not sketching. Sketches that are drawn on loose sheets of paper are best carried and stored in a portfolio with clear plastic sleeves. Itoya is a brand that makes portfolios in a variety of sizes, such as $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 11''$ and $9'' \times 12''$, and they are of good quality. In any case, it makes sense to store all of your books and portfolios in one place for easy reference and organization.



Figure 8.2 My personal collection of sketchbooks, as of November 2010. Some are full of drawings, and others are waiting to be used for the first time. Some are not actually sketchbooks but portfolios full of loose-leaf sketches that have been removed from ring-bound pads of paper or watercolor blocks.



Figure 8.3 Tracing paper taped to a sketchbook page in order to protect dry media from smudging.

When working with dry media, such as graphite or charcoal, it may be tempting to apply spray fixatives to prevent smudging. While there may be types or brands of fixative that will not damage your sketches over time, I would not take the chance. I once used spray fixative on several graphite sketches that I drew as a student in Rome. The damage did not appear until about three to five years later, but then the paper began to turn splotchy and yellow, and the sketches were effectively ruined. Other sketches from that time—ones not sprayed with fixative—were still in perfect condition 25 years later. After this experience, I devised a simple strategy for protecting my sketches, especially those drawn with dry media. Cut sheets of tracing paper to size and tape them directly to the page with drafting tape. If the sketchbook pages rub together, the tracing paper moves with the page and prevents the facing page from smearing the sketch. Tracing paper is very thin and lightweight, so it will not add bulk to your sketchbook. It is also reasonably transparent, so the sketch can be seen through the paper, but I usually just tape two corners down, so that the paper can be lifted up to see the sketch without having to remove the tracing paper entirely. Drafting tape is preferable to masking or transparent tape, because its adhesive is not so strong, and it will not likely damage the sketchbook paper if it is removed.

Pages 154-166 are not
included in this preview

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Online Resources

- Author Blog: brehmsketch.blogspot.com
- Author Flickr Page: www.flickr.com/photos/mtbrehm/
- Urban Sketchers: www.urbansketchers.com
- Worldwide SketchCrawl: www.sketchcrawl.com
- SketchTravel: www.sketchtravel.com
- The Sketching Forum: www.sketching.cc/forum3/

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