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THE ARCHITECT'S SKETCHBOOK

Arch 220. Spring 2021. SYLLABUS

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PREFACE: To Sketch is to Think, Learn, and Grow

When an architect is designing, he draws what he is thinking, the drawings/sketches are part of the creative process. However, when the Artist draws from life, they describe what they see and interpret in a personal way. The observer perceives the subject through the artist's eye and interpretation. Drawing and sketching are vital to the design process of an Architect. At the conceptual level, sketching is a visually pre-meditates the first inkling of a design strategy. What you sketch is what you see "In your mind" Inspired by what you can visualize around you in the physical context, or what you for see, as you "Dream". The stimulation of the visual ideas around you, the "Building Block of Design" These blocks become "Visual Learning", growing the design. Architecture is a complex and hard to define, but when the "ideas" are stimulated and communicated through sketches.

Le Corbusier

COURSE OBJECTIVES. A PRIMER FOR SKETCHING WHAT YOU SEE!

How to graphically describe the physical world around you! The intention of this course is to enable students to develop a passion for sketching and the essential graphic skills to fulfill their aspirations. The ability to "to sketch what you see", "to understand what you see", and to "love what you see", underscores the fascination and beauty of the sketchbook and the visual curiosity of its author. It is the sketch that enters directly into the soul of the viewer, enabling them to see everyday things, hitherto never seen before! Sketching will enrich your ability to envision your surroundings quickly, and let you share your visions with others. Sketching is very personal and you will develop your own visual vocabulary as an expression of your interest and skills. In addition to the preliminary list of principles described, each class will have one overriding rule for sketching.

1. SEE, UNDERSTAND, ANALYZE & SKETCH!!!

The hope is that you will develop a love for sketching, and quickly discover the pleasure and satisfaction that this reveal. You will be introduced to the fundamental and basic skills, but the single biggest factor in your success will be, continual practice, until your sketching ability becomes instinctive. Everywhere you go, everything you see, will become a potential candidate for your sketchbook. Your ability to sketch what you see, in place, or in your mind's eye, will be your personal passport and quickest way to communicate and share with others. This is not a class for artistic rendering or "flamboyant" illustration, although it is hoped that the class might serve as a foundation for further ambitious development.

The class will focus on introducing you to a disciplined approach to visually recording and sharing your world and the basic steps essential to achieving this! With the prolific use of digital computing and the abundance of sophisticated visual aid tools available, the "fundamentals of sketching" are not anticipated as a substitute, but as a parallel and highly personalized tool in your ability to develop and share your vision and graphic ideas with others.

2. THE RUDIMENTS OF SKETCHING, SEEING AND DESCRIBING THE WORLD AROUND YOU.

Initially the quest is to understand your placement or position in relation to the object/subject, you are observing and describing. This is the landscape that surrounds you; your position in the larger context is critical. This might be introduced as a series of basic principles.

2.1. VISION, LARGE TOO SMALL

Always look to the largest visual framework to describe your observation (see later discussion on limits of vision). Never start from a detail and work outward, otherwise the drawing will never close. Layout the larger frame of reference with attention to “Datums” Horizontal and Vertical, and sub-dividing Proportions. With this diagrammatic start and constant frame of reference, you can work inward, further sub-dividing and sub-dividing until you finally select the finished view you wish to develop in more detail. Now you can build the sketch with confidence that the larger “Frame of Reference” is visually anticipated.

2.2 IMPORTANCE OF DATUMS

Presumes that everything you sketch is viewed from “Eye-Level;” i.e., the primary horizontal Datum in any sketch. Eye Level or Horizon line is critically important as the observer can immediately relate to this datum. It is along this datum that familiar objects appear, large or small, human figures, trees, etc. the size of which provides your first understanding of “Depth of Field”, describing, Foreground,-- Middle ground,-- Distant ground. The size of these objects, all the same in shape and proportion provides the first clue as to how far or near from the viewer they are! The constant eye level (horizon) datum is what enables the 3rd party observer to relate to your sketch, to enter into your drawing, to see what you see! To understand your viewpoint, for example, a bird’s eye view or worm’s eye view of the context is unnatural and disturbing, unless you can explain the circumstance of this extraordinary high or low viewpoint! This is not to deny the relevance of these viewpoints, which are often used in analytical drawings where the sole purpose is to describe objects from above or below, to help explain their anatomy or disposition from a hitherto unforeseeable aspect.

2.3 SHAPE AND PROPORTIONS.

Shape, Form & fundamental Proportions of familiar objects.

A. People, The human figure, the frame and the head.

B. The Shape & Structure of Trees, Leaves. Shrubs & Plants.

C. Platonic Forms, fundamentals of descriptive Geometry, i.e., Squares, Cubes, Triangles, Prisms, Conic forms, etc.

2.4 PERSPECTIVAL VISION.

One point or parallel perspective. Where all lines on the same axis as the horizon line is parallel to each other. This only works when view is restrained within prescribed “Cone of Vision”, otherwise lines begin to bend” toward horizon. (See rules of cone of vision and limits of view). One-point perspective enables you to accurately measure depth from “here to there.” See details of how to establish measuring tools within a one- point perspective.

Two-point perspective and multiple point perspective construction.

Bending the picture plane! Concave and Convex images, “Fish–Eye” vision, constructing “Di- oramas” or continuous perspective drawings.

2.5 SCIAGRAPHY. “The art of shadow casting.”

Using shade & shadow to describe shape and form. Shadow as the determinant of the source of light! Renaissance drawing, light from within, where light was always understood to be at the source of the picture! or, light from outside, beyond the picture frame, behind the viewer. Impact of shadow and shading on variable Materials and Surfaces, Brick, Stone, Marble, Glass, etc. Opaque, Transparent or Translucent. Smooth, polished, textured or contoured surfaces & reflections.

2.7 VISUAL MEMORY.

Instant Imaging. Single line, continuous drawing, (pen does not leave paper).

Determination of critical shape and form, (see P3). Animation of shape! Thumbnail sketching! 10-minute, one minute, 30 second trees, single line portrait images, Shape of shadow as primary determinant of shape/form of object. Symbols and Icons. “Ink blots” Pools of color, leftover light, gaps within, “sparkle of light within shadow”

2.8 DRAWING, SKETCHING TECHNIQUES.

Ink drawing, single line, continuous “figure”. Shape, form & proportion of iconic symbol and meaning. Light and shade drawing, ink sketching, density of collective lines, line direction, synonymous with source of light and direction of shadow, in correspondence with, or opposing directional forces of perspective, “dynamic drawing, visual drama! Drawings without visible line edges, watercolor wash techniques, depth of field. Sparkle of “light” from the paper untouched. The space in between.

3. LIST OF REQUIREMENTS

Variable Media and Materials.

These are the tools for your portable laboratory

3.1 The Sketchbook: 9”x5” & 9”x12”, CANSON hardcover with tear out pages (spiral bound). This is the equivalent of your diary or Journal. Everything you see of interest is documented in sketch, diagram and notation, either for future reference and further examination, or, as an imaged record of a moment in time. . Drafting/masking tape and Pins for presentation reviews should also be available at all times.

3.2 Ink Pens: Black ink cartridge pens are desirable and encouraged. “Schaeffer” or “Lamy” “Pelican” and “Pentel”, all make relatively inexpensive fountain pens. (not oblique calligraphy nibs) Expensive Fountain pens like “Mont Blanc” are not required. Black, waterproof, ink will be the prevalent medium for sketching, simply because it is unforgiving and cannot easily be erased, Construction lines are part of the finished sketch, not erased as with pencil drawing. Visible construction lines, whilst not as visible as the final determined sketch lines, are, intriguing and provide a fascinating clue to the priority and construct of the sketch. Medium size, flexible nibs are preferred, this permits a variation in line weights and densities, simply by adjusting the pressure on the paper. (This is an asset not available when using roller ball pens), Ink cartridges can be easily refilled using a syringe and a bottle of black, waterproof, fountain pen ink, “Waterman” or equivalent. Like handwriting, ink sketching has a very unique personality, which should be encouraged. An ink sketch conveys the author’s identity, this is important, and is made more difficult by pens with roller ball, fixed nibs, which have less weight variation & characteristic than Fountain pens. Alternative pens will be discussed, of which the “Pilot”, roller ball, “Precise” V5 & V7 pens are readily available, in varying nib sizes. Ex Fine, Fine, Medium, Large. Also, the Uni-ball, deluxe, Micro, fine & extra fine provides a consistent nib.

3.3 Pencils: Black Graphite pencils, range, B, 2B, 4B. Do not use your mechanical pencil and/or roller ball pens as your sketching pencil.

3. LIST OF REQUIREMENTS COONTINUED:

3.4 Exploration of Pens and Pencils: At this time, you need to explore and experiment, especially with ink pens and ink to find which you are most comfortable with.

4. CLASS STRUCTURE & ORGANIZATION

4.1 Arch 220, Is a 3-hour lab/lecture class, which meets from 9.00.am until 11:50, each Friday. Time will be spent reviewing, discussing and applying class notes. The class sections, will be combined for in class presentations and reviews, with all students having access and counseling from all faculty. This is a “one on one” class with weekly assignments, which will be reviewed each week. It is imperative that all assignments are completed each week. Out of classroom studies will take place within the USC campus and Exposition Park, with further off-campus field trips to selected exceptional architectural sites within greater Los Angeles. Class attendance is imperative and in accordance with USC requirements, more than 3 absences will automatically jeopardize a passing grade.

4.2 GRADING.

Class participation, attendance, and enthusiasm.----- 25%.
Review of in-class work, out of class, field sketch assignments.----- 35%
Midterm Portfolio-----10%
Final and Final Sketchbook Portfolio review and presentation.-----30%.

4.3 STUDY EXERCISES.

The following is a broad list of studies and sketch sites to be selected from, (to be further developed) In addition to the syllabus above. Students will be asked on a weekly basis to visit various sites of Architectural interest to sketch and document details and places. In preparation for the above students will be introduced to fundamental strategies and techniques for drawing, sketching and recording images and ideas. Students should not be intimidated by their current lack of confidence or skill, as this course does not essentially demand an inherent “artistic” skill, but introduces the means to “see, understand and document” the physical world around us. General studies, Nature, Landscape, Manmade world, Figure Drawing, Human form.

Specific sites and places of interest for sketch analysis and visual documentation:

USC Campus, Rose Garden & People, individual & groups. Trees, Foliage, Sky/ Clouds.
Museum buildings, Landscape, Arches, Colonnades, Fountains, Flowers, Shrubs. Streets, Walks, Promenades, etc. Harris /Fisher & Watt Courtyards. Tables /swivel chairs, colonnades, gallery, stairs. Fisher gallery / Museum. Sculpture and Statuary, private collection.
Topping Library. Wedge skylight and light monitors, repetitive form, Mudd Hall / Doheny library, Courtyards, doorways, windows, Frieze & Frescoes details,etc.

Additional field trips of interest will be recommended, these might include:

Huntington Gardens, Natural and man-made landscapes.

Los Angeles, downtown CBD	Urban streets, thoroughfares, alleys, plazas, urban scenesH-
Historic LA buildings.	Fine Arts Building, 1926. Walker & Eisen.
7th St. and Figueroa St.	Roosevelt Bldg. (the Roosevelt) 1927. Curlett & Beelman.

The proximity of the new Metro light rail system, now makes the extended location of urban field trips feasible on a regular weekly basis).

5. NOTES ON ART AND FORM

The importance of “Center”, The determination of place, Focus, Method of measurement, Center of perception. Concentric grid versus Cartesian grid.

“Form”.- Structural manifestation of shape, not just shape!

“Art”.- Form created by a human intellectual act, easily synoptic, to be visually comprehensive, visually understood. **“A work of art is a closely coherent and consistent whole” - Aristotle.**

“A unit, like a living creature”, - Socrates.

“The sublime economy of art”, No redundancy, or obsolescence” - Henri James. “Masterpieces are dumb”! So self- centered, so at peace with themselves that nothing can enter or leave. - Flaubert.

Closed Form. Complete and purposeful, Self- fulfilling.

Open Form. Evocative. Symbolic quality and meaning, full of human curiosity and relevance. The balance between exceptional and universal.

A “DOT”, is only a short line.

DRAWING “Like the ancient god “Janus”, has two faces, one looks to the past, whatever exist, the other looks to the future, what does not exist, except in our “Minds- Eye”. This is what we do when we design, from **Frank Ching’s** introduction to “Freehand Drawing and Discovery”, by James Richards.

What is, to What can be”. A Springboard to Vision! Freehand sketching is a designer’s “Secret Weapon” at the outset of the creative process, not a means to illustrate the end.

NOTES ON USC. PROTOCOL.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>