

DIRECT DRAWING

sketchbook as interactive tool

W 2025

Architecture 409

Thursdays 2:30 -5:30

2108

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Premier Coup, a painting pedagogy championed by Charles Hawthorne in the early 20th century, argues for the value of “first strike,” working directly from life, in situ. Our Michigan course will slice and dice the containers of our daily lives to illuminate relationships among form, behavior, meaning, and procedures of analysis that relate technique and vision.

Design is a complex endeavor and central to that process, drawing plays many critical roles. From giving birth to mental images, to communicating instructions regarding assembly and construction, drawing is our primary language. In Direct Drawing we aim to get better prepared to use and understand these roles.

Often within a design endeavor parameters shift requiring on the spot revision, improvisation. To this end Direct Drawing will also aim to make quick drawers of each of you. This is no easy task, as quickness is achieved only with deep knowledge, of perspective rules, of proportioning and dividing, of framing and ordering. These come with practice.

Class time will include critiques and presentations, some prolonged drawing sessions of singular topics, and maybe a guest lecture. Following a sequence of drawing assignments, each student will identify a subject. Our key goals will be reconciling differences between what we see and the true measure of a place, diagramming essential structures both physical and experiential, and acquiring speed and clarity in communication. Our primary source for discussion will be our own drawn responses.

With close scrutiny and perhaps misuse of our accepted conventions (like cutting a plan in multiple planes or using poche for something beyond indicating a cut) we will expose qualities and characteristics latent and overt in the built world - the textbook that surrounds us all. Developing an interaction between yourself and places mitigated through drawing is our route to visual fluency.

For the purposes of this term I define visual fluency as an equal capacity for representing through perspective or orthographic projections. Hybridity and multiplicity of view is our main topic. How can we expand this “all at once” obligation of the architect and see more? Can orthographic projections convey emotion or experience? (to a less informed audience?)

Architecture is a combustion of opposites: concrete and physical, it is also emotional, experiential. How we may reveal this complexity through linear means is at the heart of our task. In simple terms, can measured factual drawings observed from life convey the essence of a structure or the experience of it?

Though we are not proposing buildings, we are using architectural thinking to drive visual, formal, conceptual investigations. Grounded in observational starts, our work will take crack at drawing in three different ways.

As a practice: daily, like exercise, craft and linear integrity

As a skill: conventions of projection, proportion and scaling, estimation and measure,

As a tool: analysis becomes speculative

Weekly Discussion/Class Review:

1. Seven versions of your daily drawing.
2. Sustained response to an in class prompt.
3. Random notes in search of a relating a topic, technique, and place, your final project, collection of drawings.

**Ongoing assignment becoming individual projects:
(narrowing focus encourages more variation in response)**

Daily for 20 – 30 minutes: A repetitive drawing :

Trace (track) the contours of a shrinking form – an eraser, a banana, bar of soap, ink block, over time.

Map the top of a working surface like your desk or bureau.

Draw a **dynamic view** like a window, an ongoing building project or kitchen counter
Windows offer a significant range of challenges- the frame, near and far, inside and outside, a conflation of oppositions.

Notating your experiences while drawing, what thoughts occupy your mind – the how to, or the whys: a question or theme - a collection of relations

Drawing as a form of **sustainability** possibly usurping shopping, driving, online time, by taking our attention to what is in front of you. Defined by daily practices – taking pleasure in the daily simple routine and things and spaces around you. Drawing feeds the soul, opens eyes, occupies the mind and not the pocketbook. You **make something instead of buying something**.

A modern day “**Drawing Manual**” – what might future students of architecture need to know

Revision as a recurring activity recorded through the iterative process – scanning, redrawing, scanning again, all question the notion of an “original.”

A particular **technique** or aspect of projection (location of horizon, vanishing points, cutting planes, picture planes as simulated with acetate, etc)

Your daily drawing may become your obsession.

Places of making like a wood shop or fab lab where **form and movement** are both implicit and explicit.

Architectural **Notation** – recording the act of taking in your surrounds, being as prolific and descriptive – analytical regarding aforementioned topics.

Media and Supplies:

Paper –11 x 17 (and variations on multiples) matte card stock as regular drawing paper

Line based media - Pencil, Ink, Charcoal, Oil Pastel

Pilot Gel Tec #4

Fat lead holder

Stumpy

Brush pens

Erasers

Rulers/Triangles

Evaluation and Deliverables:

See Schedule of Topics

Criteria:

Craft/Execution/Investment in the search
Achievement in translation of conceptual to linear and graphic
Alignment of means (technique) and aims (topic/idea)
Improvement over the term
Attendance and Participation

Recommended Texts:

The Art of Drawing by Bernard Chaet
Architectural Graphics by C. Leslie Martin