

Field Sketching

for environmental designers



Chip Sullivan



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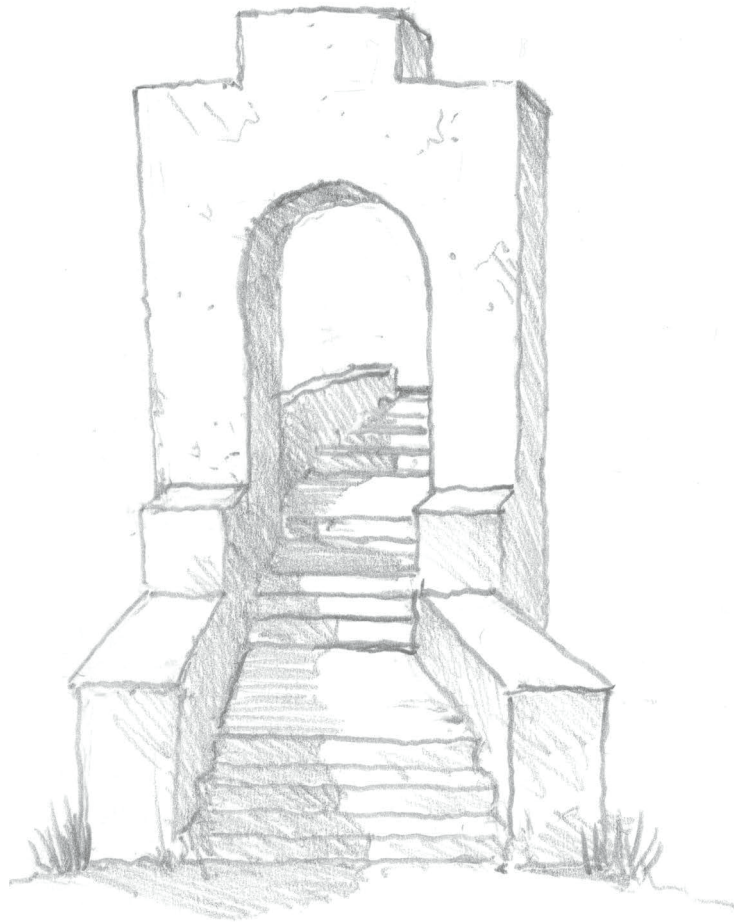
This book has been prepared from camera-ready copy provided by the author.

For Richard Alomar, Bob Chipman, and Jim Richards—
my brothers in the band
of Graphic Magicians and Drawing Wizards

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INTRODUCTION

Since I always have a notebook within reach, and I draw no matter what, I preserve everything which passes through my head...There is a great appetite to work, and then my sketchbook serves me as a cookbook when I am hungry.

Georges Braque

Inspirations and Legacies

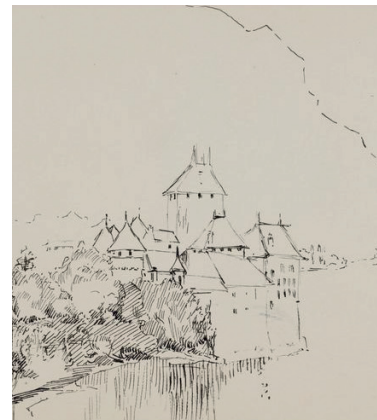
My sketchbook is my constant companion. I have been keeping one for as long as I can remember, and throughout my career I have never been without some type of sketchbook. When I was in 2nd grade my grandfather gave me a Weirton Steel Calendar Diary Memo Book which I immediately filled with sketches. These annual gifts from my grandfather became treasured grounds for my imagination to wander. In high school I stuffed three-ring binders with doodles, daydreams, and imaginary landscapes rather than class notes. As an undergrad in the landscape architecture program at the University of Florida, professor Herrick Smith introduced me to what he called the “daybook”—a classic 8½” x 11” hardbound sketchbook in which we students were required to make daily design journal entries and then hand in for comments. I continue to use these large sketchbooks, but for convenience I also carry small memo books in my back pocket that I can reach easily. When my mother noticed me using memo books, she started to buy 3” x 5” marbled, mini-composition books for me in bulk from the Walmart Supercenter. These small books became my portable travel journals. My arsenal of sketchbooks continued to grow as my creative output expanded.

I have always believed in the power of drawing, not only as a tool for observing and recording my surroundings but also as a pathway to achieve a higher level of awareness. Field sketching is an essential part of this formula. The knowledge gained from field sketching not only enhances perception, but also provides a springboard for creative design solutions. The popularity of field sketching dates to the 17th century when the “Grand Tour” of Europe and Italy was an integral part of the education for artists and architects. Their field sketchbooks helped ignite their imagination and laid the foundation for a new genre of landscape painting.

This tradition continued when Julia Morgan traveled to Paris from America in 1897 to begin her architectural education. After three attempts she was the first woman to be admitted to the architectural program at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. During her stay in Paris she recorded her observations of architecture and landscape in her travel sketchbooks. She was quite adept at the use of pencil for quick drawings and pen and ink for longer studies. Upon her return to California, she became one of the leading architects of her time.



Julia Morgan's sketches of her travels through Europe capture the sense of place through quick gestures and tones. (Image courtesy College of Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley)



Contour lines and hatching create spatial depth in Julia Morgan's sketch of buildings and landscapes. (Image courtesy College of Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley)

Other pioneering women who were instrumental in promoting field sketching as a valuable design tool include landscape architects Beatrix Farrand and Geraldine Knight Scott. Beatrix Farrand was one of the first woman landscape architects in the United States and a founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Much of her work was inspired by her European travels and landscape studies. She compiled extensive sketches from her journeys which served as important references for her decades-long practice and remarkable landscape designs. Geraldine Knight Scott taught in the landscape architecture department at UC Berkeley from 1952 until

her retirement in 1968. She firmly believed that her travels through Europe observing, sketching, and measuring gardens and urban spaces was a transformative educational experience. In her planting classes she incorporated landscape painting as a method to see and interpret the character of the landscape as a basis for design. The significance of her travels during the 1930s inspired her to endow the Geraldine Knight Scott Travel Fellowship to fund students' landscape research abroad.



Tonal contrast and confident linework in this sketch by Geraldine Knight Scott describes the topography of this hillside village. (Image courtesy College of Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley)

Field Curricula/Drawn to Learning

Field sketching has been an integral part of the landscape architecture curriculum at UC Berkeley since the program's inception. This book was inspired in part by the course *Introduction to California Landscape Regions* which was taught for over a decade by UC Berkeley professors Burt Litton Jr., Michael Laurie and Joe McBride in the 1980s–1990s. The course focused on observing the variety of landscape ecologies and characteristics within a region and recording the material in a sketchbook. Each year the class would explore one of the six California landscape regions culminating in a popular

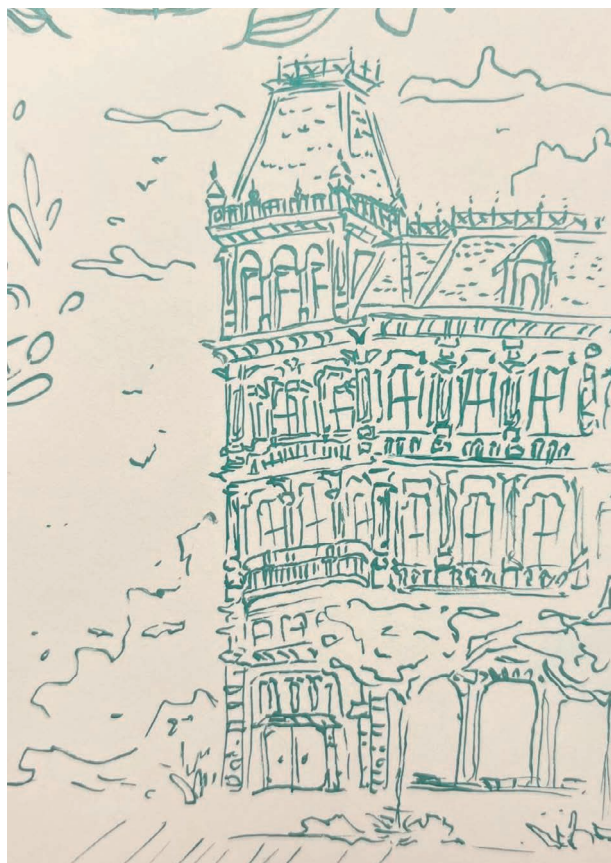
three-day camping trip. Burt Litton was immensely supportive of my commitment to field sketching and his mentorship was invaluable to the development of my pedagogy. The last time I saw Burt, he charged me to “*Keep them drawing!*” Following his death in 2007, the College of Environmental Design held a retrospective of Burt’s field sketches and watercolors in the gallery. Students were so inspired by the work that they lobbied for the return of the field course. To witness the revival of *California Landscapes* after its long absence from our program was heartening. Joe McBride and I gladly took on this assignment and for several years co-taught a new version of the class. Teaching this course helped me further refine my field drawing and watercolor techniques and develop new methods of teaching while on the move.

The global popularity of the Urban Sketchers™ movement and the booming interest in plein-air painting groups also influenced my vision for this book. Ironically, as drawing courses are being canceled in universities and colleges across the nation, there is an upsurge in grassroots drawing groups, “Drink & Draw” gatherings, figure drawing salons, and cartooning clubs like the “Sketchy Bug” group in Los Angeles. As of this writing, there are more than 70 different drawing meet-up groups in the San Francisco Bay Area alone. Concurrent with the exponential growth of drawing societies is the prevalence of the Moleskine sketchbook. The original French manufacturer went out of business in 1980 but the brand was reintroduced in 1998 by an Italian firm and it rapidly dominated the market. William Powers in his provocative book *Hamlet’s Blackberry* commented on the phenomena of Moleskins:

Moleskins were a rarity. Today I see them everywhere...why Moleskins and why now? Their resurgence coincided exactly with the rise of digital connectedness...This humble tool gives me a sense of mental order and control. Unlike my screen... my paper notebooks project no information at all. The pages are blank and invite me to fill them with information.

Next Gen Trailblazers

High school is generally a time when many young people begin keeping some type of journal. Cassidy Shannon used her high school sketchbook for drawing studies, cartooning, finished artwork and travel sketches. For high school senior Sophia Wigginton, her drawing journal is not only a personal diary, but also a medium for her drawings, collages and studies for larger artworks.



Cassidy Shannon's gesture drawing of a historical building in New York City's SoHo depicts the patterning and proportion of its facade.

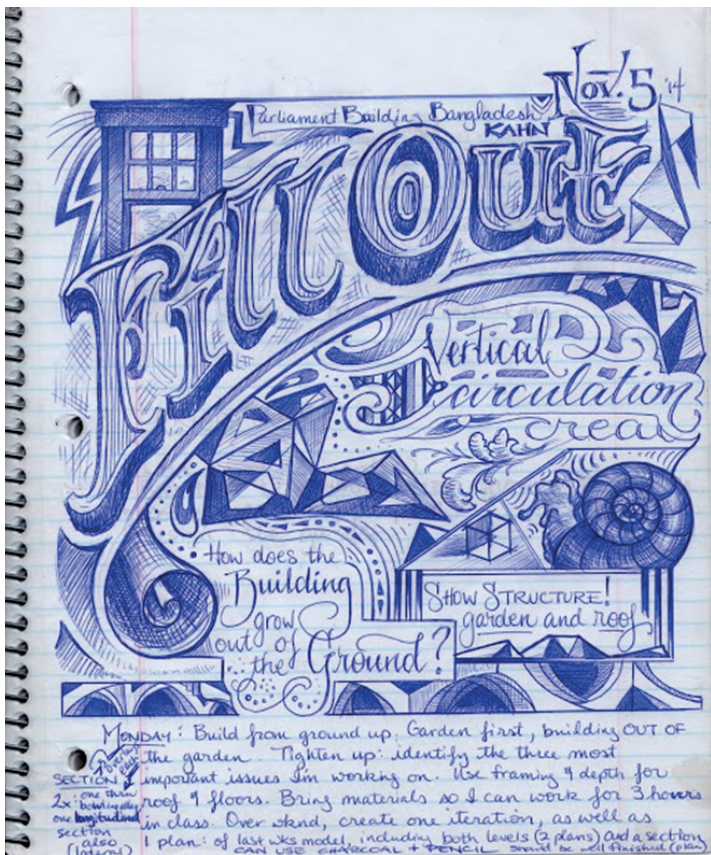


The variety of expressive media in Sophia Wigginton's sketchbook reflects her personal sources of inspiration and curiosity.

Recent research has found that visual notetaking (using images and symbols rather than words to represent an idea) promotes the retention of information. Our brains are more efficient at processing visual information than verbal language. Drawing helps us give meaning to content more effectively than writing alone. Design student Katie Sellergren incorporated iconography and distinctive typography in the visual notes taken during a history lecture. In a professional context, visual notetaking is often applied in the graphical recording and facilitation of live presentations and meetings.



Katie Sellergren uses a ballpoint pen to take visual notes during lectures.



Katie intricately weaves imagery with stylized lettering to create dynamic compositions like those shown here.

In her capstone landscape design studio, graduate student Mina Fardeen utilized her sketchbook as a resource for her research. Mina's sketchbook is a laboratory for analyzing and processing information, a place for her to experiment, explore, and record her design process.

In her sketchbook Mina Fardeen studied the similarities between motifs on Persian carpets and Medieval illuminated manuscripts.



Mina Fardeen personalized the cover of her sketchbook with tape, stickers and collaged imagery.



Taking It On the Road

International travel and study can have a huge impact on a person's world view and personal growth. The Rome Fellowship changed my life forever and was such a positive learning experience that I longed to share my knowledge of Italian art, architecture, urban design, and gardens with others. As soon as I had the opportunity, I organized and co-directed independent Summer Study Programs in Italy. These excursions focused on observing, drawing and interpreting landscapes, art and architecture, and established an early structure for my field sketching techniques.

My first formal "sketch crawl" took place at the 2013 Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture convention in Austin, Texas. I was invited to help organize and lead a seminar on *Exploratory Physiocartographies of Place and Time* with Paula Horrigan, Kathy Kambic, Joern Langhorst, Caroline Lavoie and Joni Palmer. We mapped a route through the city and focused on promoting real time investigation of one's immediate surroundings through drawing. The event concluded with an exhibition of all the participants' work at the Art Alliance Gallery and a summary presentation of the experience by the organizers.

Due in part to the success and popularity of our CELA event, Susan Apollonio, former education director for the American Society of Landscape Architects invited me, Jim Richards, Bob Chipman and Richard Alomar to debut a similar workshop at the 2013 annual meeting. *Sketch: Boston* was a hit, and for ten years we planned and conducted a field sketching session at the annual ASLA Conference on Landscape. As a result of this experience I have taken part in or organized field sketching events at many educational institutions and professional organizations across the country and overseas.

A Textbook in the Making

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to develop an academic course based on my experiences. *Drawn from the Field* employed the annotated sketchbook as the primary tool of investigation and documentation of fundamental principles and elements of landscape and urban design. The course was a success beyond my expectations as students were eager to engage in this kind of visual literacy. Encouraged by the students, and boosted by the success of our many sketch crawls, I considered expanding the course reader into a textbook.

Since the course was tailored specifically to the landscapes of the Bay Area, I had to think of ways to adapt its objectives to a wider audience. I faced a similar issue during the Covid-19 pandemic when UC Berkeley, like many other universities, pivoted to remote instruction. I wondered how I could teach a Field Sketching course virtually when we were all at different locations. My solution was to provide precedents and general examples from which an individual student could find comparable sites. Concepts and principles were introduced through preliminary exercises which prompted students to discover analogous sites within their own region. By comparing and contrasting examples from the course reader to their local environment, they were able to develop a personal vocabulary of form and create their own individual textbook. The outcome of these unique circumstances inspired me to develop the material as a universal guidebook on sketching as a means to learn about the principles and elements of landscape and urban design.

One of the prime objectives of this text is to help readers develop a personal graphic shorthand while refining their ability to represent and interpret landscape form. Analysis of spatial phenomena in the built and natural landscape is promoted through visual notetaking and journaling. The book is structured with illustrative examples of the design principles and elements that are the focus of each chapter. A wide variety of graphical conventions and representational methods are presented with step-by-step instructions to help readers construct meaning from their on-site observations. *Tips from the Plein-Air Experts* presents techniques that can enrich observational skills. There are a wide variety of exercises and *Visual Primers* to spark readers' imaginations and help them explore new dimensions of visual expression. Each chapter concludes with *Further Explorations*—a list of books, films, and ideas for readers to expand their libraries, discover new creative resources, and set off on their own journeys. While *Field Sketching for Environmental Designers* is a great personal companion, I also aim to encourage readers to share their passion for drawing with others by providing tips for organizing group outings and events.

To learn to really “see” what you draw is to go beyond merely copying what you observe; the ultimate goal is to find the soul and meaning of the landscape.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The creation of this book has been truly a collaborative effort made possible by all the artists who graciously and enthusiastically contributed their innovative drawings and visualization techniques for publication. My appreciation ultimately goes out to all my students who participated in my *Drawn from the Field* course. They helped make it one of most rewarding experiences of my teaching career. Their encouragement and enthusiasm were a prime motivator in the decision to create this text.

I would like to thank the many people who were involved in the early stages of the development of the book. Meg Lidd conducted research essential to my initial proposal. Isabelle Doerschlag was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the book's design and set the project off on solid footing. Olivia Haag's sublime weaving of the text and illustrations resulted in a beautiful visual narrative. This work could never have been accomplished without her skill and perseverance in preparing the manuscript for publication.

I am indebted to all those who introduced me to and advanced the "sketch crawl" model of learning. Paula Horrigan, Kathy Kambic, Joern Langhorst, Caroline Lavoie and Joni Palmer invited me to participate in my very first sketch crawl at the 2013 Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture conference in Austin, Texas. This event helped launch my further adventures in field sketching. Susan Apollonio, former Education Programs Director of the American Society of Landscape Architects originated the idea of integrating a field sketching element into the ASLA annual conference. I treasure the camaraderie and decade-long partnership of my drawing compatriots Robert Chipman, Jim Richards and Richard Alomar with whom I have been privileged to co-lead ASLA's field sketching sessions each year. Whitney Mitchell, ASLA's current Professional Development Manager, expanded our collaboration to organize live drawing "jam sessions" at the annual conference.

The support of the Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning department at the University of California has been invaluable. Louise Mazingo encouraged me to create a new course on field sketching which became the foundation for this book. LAEP staff Christina Hausle and Jill Fujisaki continue to provide immeasurable assistance to me in negotiating university policies and processes; Jill also shares my passion for the films of Hayao Miyazaki. Last, but not least, the Beatrix Farrand Fund was essential to the publication of this book.

Throughout the development of this book, Professor Emeritus Joe McBride shared with me his wisdom and experience in teaching ecology and field drawing. My graduate student teaching and research assistants were equally involved in the success of the field drawing course: Hannah Pae helped develop the initial *Drawn from the Field* course, Bradley Tomy helped refine the course format, and Isabelle Doerschlag contributed additional innovations.

A big thanks goes to landscape architect Zuzana Ambrozova for her invitation to lead a drawing workshop and sketch crawl in the Czech Republic in 2019. The experience provided an opportunity to refine these field drawing techniques for an international audience. Professor Emeritus Marc Trieb has offered sage advice in navigating the convoluted world of writing and publishing throughout my career. I thank him for being a strong proponent of my work and for our long friendship. I am grateful to Waverly Lowell, Curator Emeritus of the Environmental Design Archives who located the essential images I needed, and to Jason Miller who prepared the scans for publication. It is always a pleasure to work with Tony Molatore, maestro of the Berkeley Giclee printing studio, who created beautiful reproductions of my drawings.

I appreciate my engagement with many like-minded artists, particularly Joe McGrane, drawing enthusiast and creative shaman for sharing his sketching methodology, and Professor Kelly Curl who helped me push the boundaries of field sketching on my many visits to Fort Collins, Colorado.

I would like to thank Routledge, and in particular Senior Editor Kathryn Schell, for her belief in the potential of this book and her guidance in the development of the manuscript. Editorial Assistant Megha Patel adeptly stewarded the preparation of the manuscript for publication. My deep appreciation goes to Charles Cunningham, owner of Prepress, Inc., who prepared the manuscript and artwork for printing. Additional gratitude to Amanda Goldsmith and Dominic Vavra-Edwards of Goldsmith Studio for putting the final touches on the design of the front matter.

I am eternally grateful to my partner, Elizabeth Boults, for her continued support and faith in me. Her insights into the representation of the content were central to its realization. I could not have undertaken this work without her. Finally, as always, I remember and treasure the encouragement that my mother, father, and grandfather gave to me to keep me on this creative journey.

Thank you all!



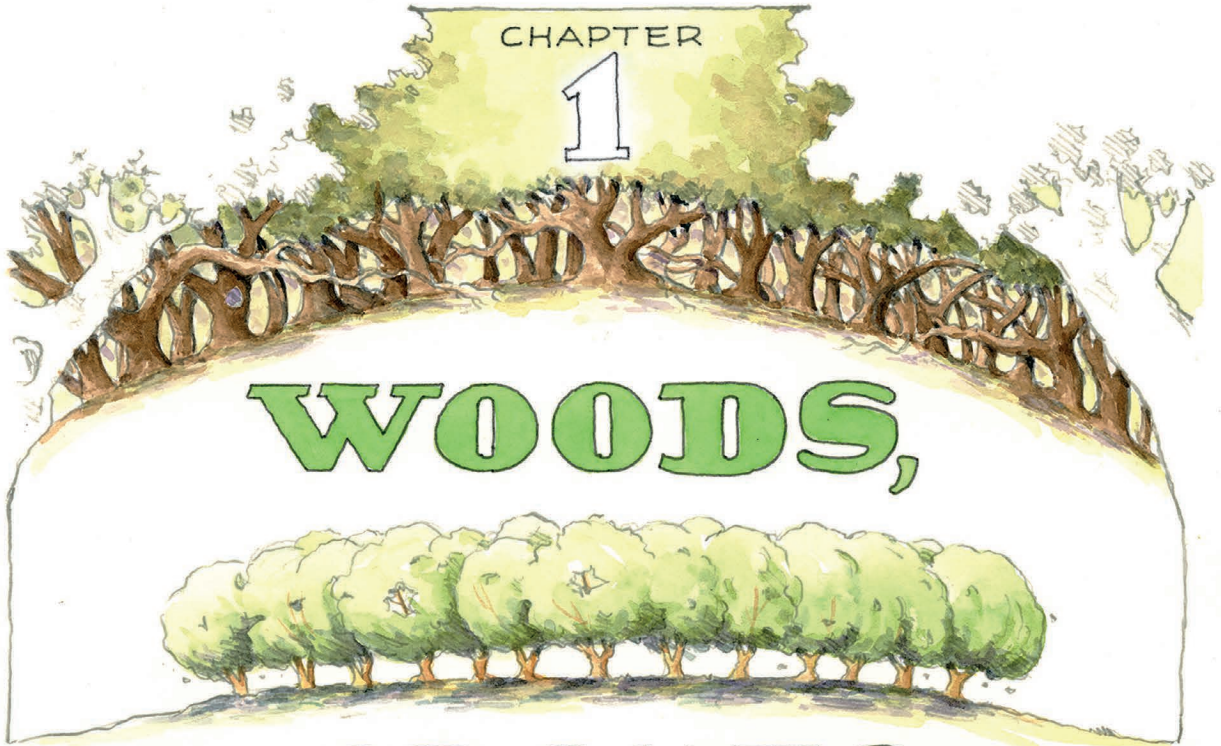
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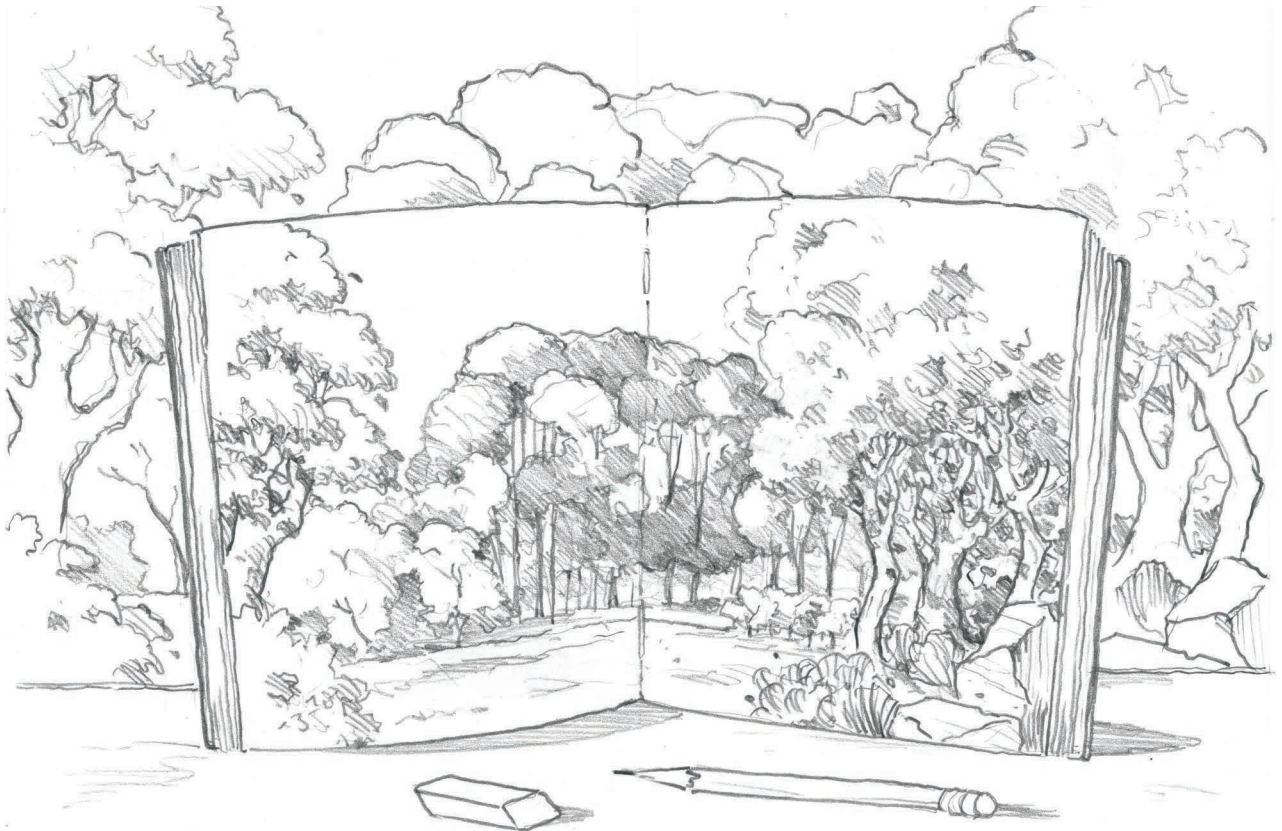


WOODS,

GROVES,

and

GRIDS



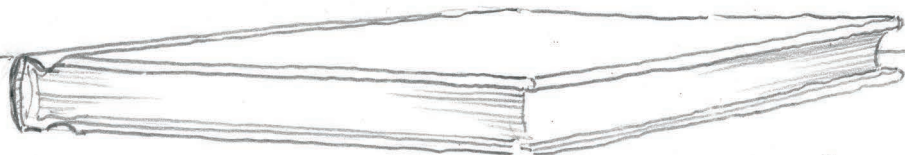
"A great part of every artist's life must be employed in collecting material for the exercise of genius. Invention strictly speaking is little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in memory."
Sir Joshua Reynolds

WE BEGIN OUR THRILLING JOURNEY WITH A SERIES OF PREPARATORY EXERCISES & FUNDAMENTAL CONVENTIONS TO REPRESENT & INTERPRET A VARIETY OF WOODLAND SYSTEMS. WE START WITH THE FORESTED ECOSYSTEM BECAUSE IT IS A FOUNDATIONAL BUILDING BLOCK FOR FIELD SKETCHING & THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PERSONAL VISUAL VOCABULARY.



THE PLAN & SECTION WILL BE USED AS AN ANALYTICAL TOOL TO STUDY & COMPARE THE SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE TREE SYSTEMS. THE ABILITY TO QUICKLY DRAW PLANS & SECTIONS IS ESSENTIAL FOR UNDERSTANDING SPACE & HELPING ORIENT YOURSELF IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE LANDSCAPE & THE PAGE.

THIS CHAPTER WILL ALSO INTRODUCE OTHER TECHNIQUES USEFUL FOR OBSERVING & RECORDING THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ARBOREAL ENVIRONMENT.



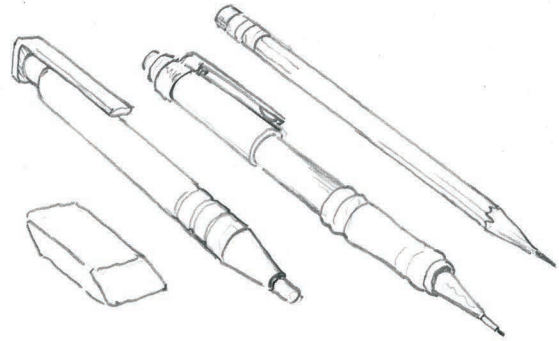
GRAB YOUR SKETCHBOOK & LET'S GO!

PREPARATIONS

Tools & Techniques

TOOLS

TO BEGIN WE WILL USE THE OLD RELIABLE PENCIL, WHICH WAS ARTIST J. M. W. TURNER'S FAVORITE INSTRUMENT FOR FIELD SKETCHING. THE PENCIL IS VERSATILE, CHEAP & SHOULD BE AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF EVERY FIELD SKETCHING KIT. ANY TYPE OF 2B PENCIL WILL BE FINE. AN ERASER IS ALSO A DRAWING TOOL SO GET ONE YOU LIKE TO USE.



 DRAW ALL OF YOUR SKETCHING TOOLS ON THE FIRST PAGE OF YOUR SKETCH BOOK.

A MECHANICAL PENCIL IS ALSO HANDY, AS IT NEEDS NO SHARPENING.

PENCIL SKETCHING TECHNIQUES

• LINE WEIGHTS



• LIVELY LINES



• ACCENTS



• SITE BOUNDARY



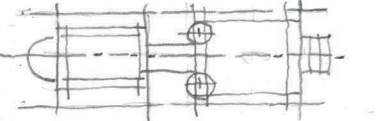
• GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING PROPORTIONS



• CENTER LINE



• LAYOUT LINES FOR DEFINING GEOMETRIES



 PRACTICE THESE LINE CONVENTIONS

• PARALLEL HATCHING - GREAT FOR SHADOWS



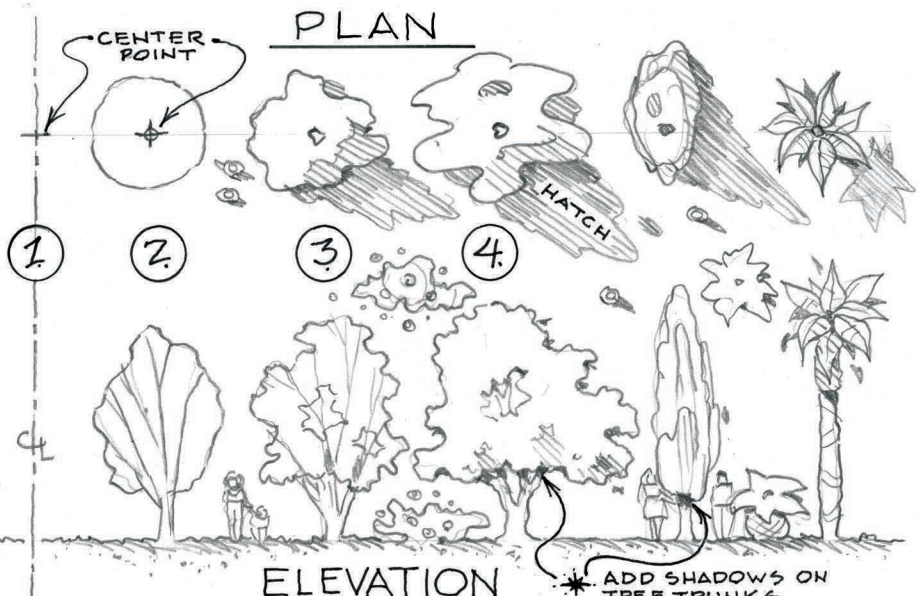
RAPID TREES IN PLAN & ELEVATION

1. DRAW A CENTER LINE IN ELEVATION & A CENTER POINT IN PLAN VIEW.

2. LIGHTLY DRAW AN ABSTRACTED SILHOUETTE OF THE TREE & ITS BRANCHING FORM

3. DRAW THE LEAF TEXTURES. ADD THE TRUNKS & CANOPY OPENINGS.

4. ADD SHADOWS. ACCENT LINE WEIGHTS. FINISH WITH PARALLEL HATCHES FOR SHADOWS.



 PRACTICE THE EXAMPLES ABOVE. ONCE YOU CAN DRAW THEM QUICKLY, INVENT YOUR OWN STYLE.