Strathmore 2019 ONLINE WORKSHOP SERIES

URBAN SKETCHING ESSENTIALS

with **Alphonso Dunn**

PART 2: Approaching the Scene

In this Part 2 we will focus on some essential aspects of urban sketching that will help with our design and composition, as well as the visual impact we can create. Simplification is an essential aspect of sketching. We cannot recreate everything we see in a scene nor should we try. Sketching challenges us to capture the essence of a subject, so that we present a simplified version of it while still preserving its character. Breaking down scenes to flat shapes is essentially an extension of the simplification concept. But in this case, we are simplifying the entire scene as a preparatory step to make all the details and information we encounter less intimidating as we think about the design of our sketch. How we frame a scene can give it character and help to make a statement about our point of view, and ultimately the viewer's as well. Linear perspective can play a key role in helping us convey believable space, as well as helping us to organize that space. Vanishing points, horizon, eye-level, and making divisions are key concepts we will look at. And finally, we will see how thumbnails can help us to explore and experiment with different aspects of the composition of our sketch before we actually begin the final piece.

OUTLINE

- Simplifying Things
- Breakdown Scenes to Simple Flat Shapes
- Ways to Frame Your Scene
- Linear Perspective Basics
- Using Thumbnails

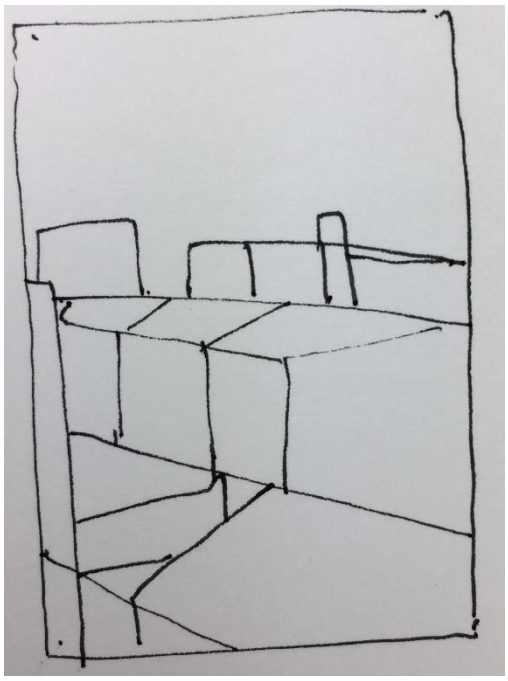
MATERIALS

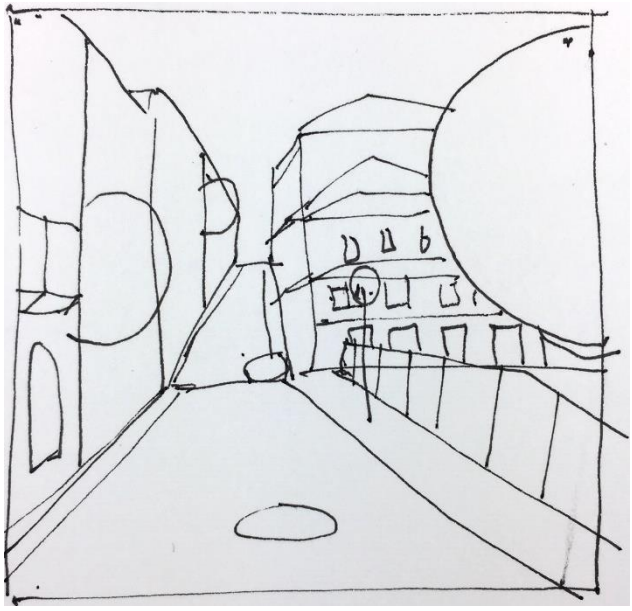
- Strathmore 300 Series Bristol Smooth Pad (9”x12”)
- Lyra HB Graphite Pencil
- Sakura Pigma Micron 005
- Sakura Pigma Micron 03

EXERCISES

Breakdown Scenes to Simple Flat Shapes

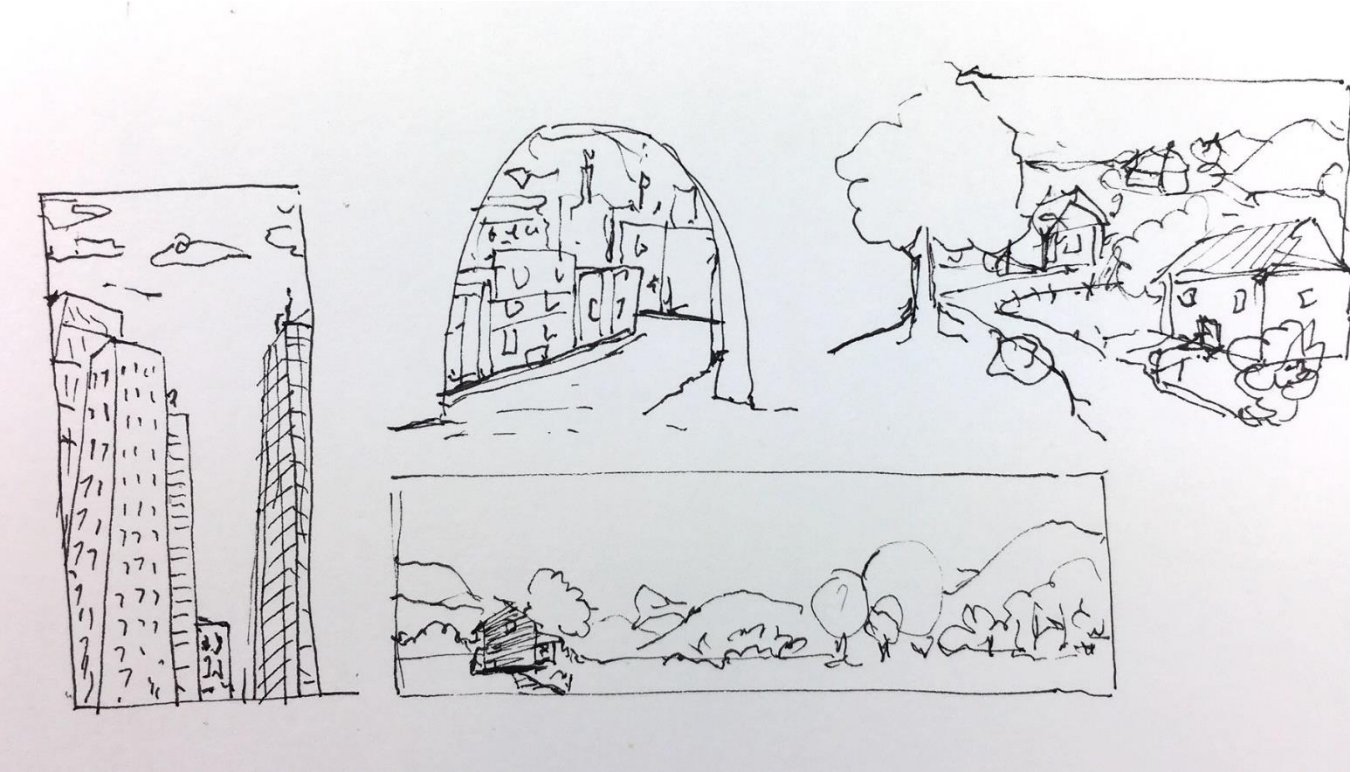
Look a scene or reference image and reduce it to simple flat shape by focusing on the major elements, which dominate the plane. Think of it as a large jigsaw puzzle, which you are breaking apart. Negative shapes of areas like the sky and other "empty" spaces are just as important as the shapes of buildings, trees, and other features.





Ways to Frame your Scene

Have fun with coming up with a variety of ways to frame a scene. To see the visual impact on your sketch try out different ways of framing the scene. Try portrait, landscape, square, circular, or even something irregular. You can sometimes use features of the scene to frame the sketch.

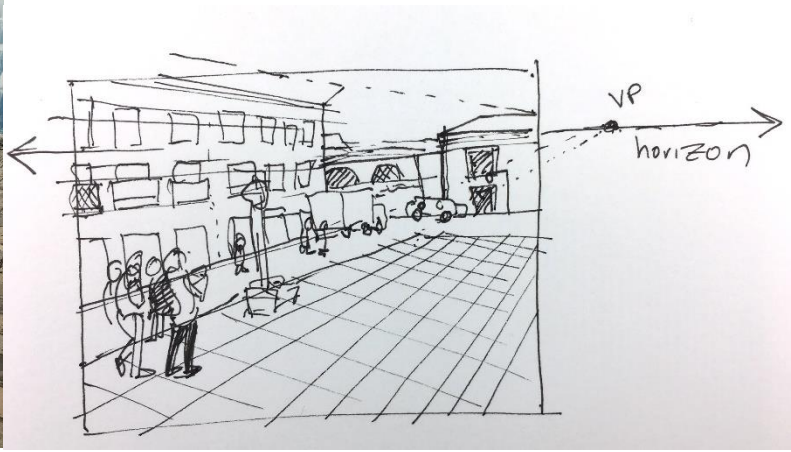


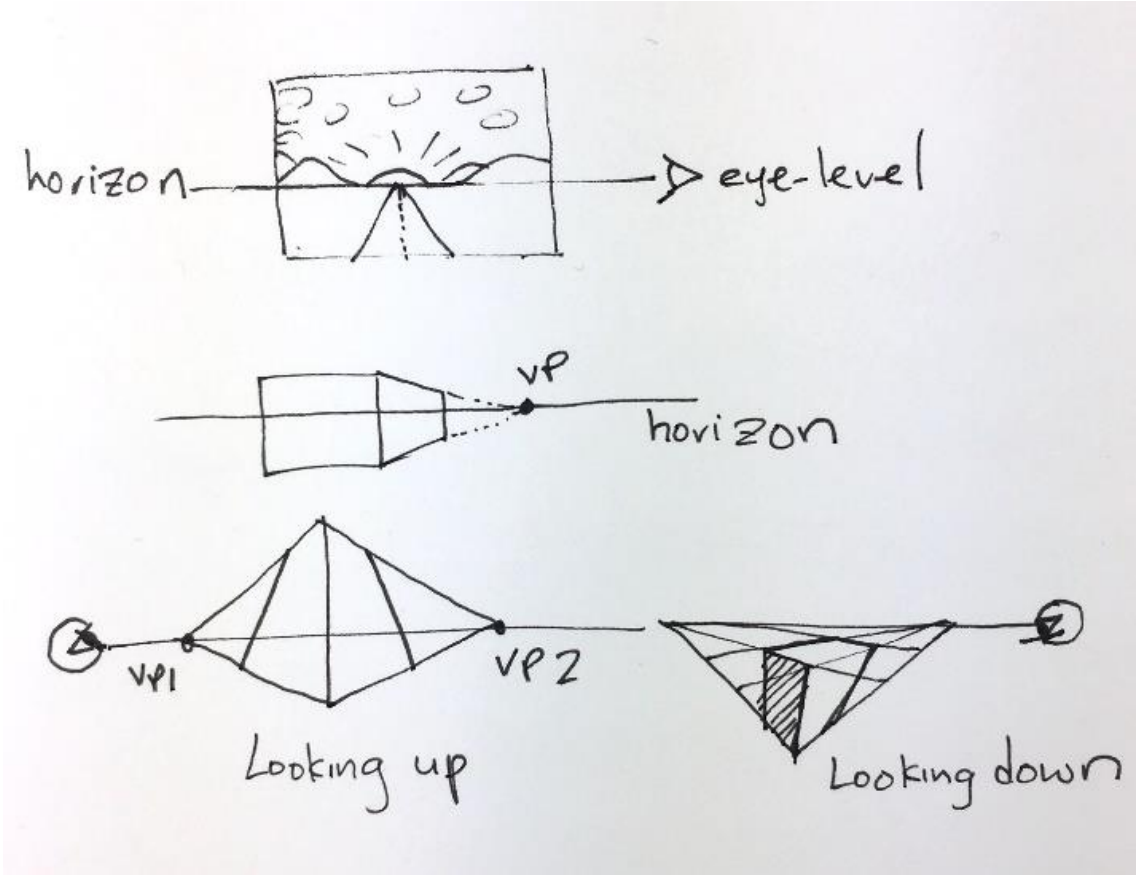
Thumbnails

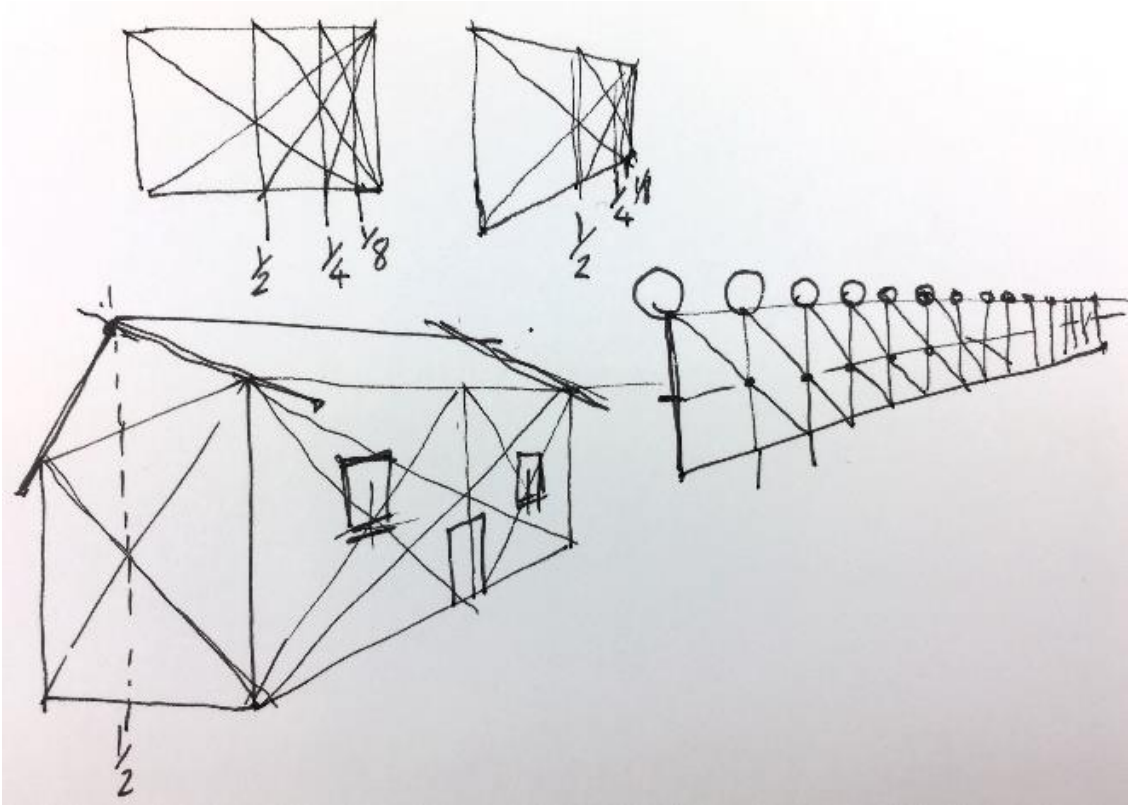
Use thumbnails to explore different aspects of the scene. From decide where you will put the focal area, to how you will frame the sketch, to even working out details. The uses of thumbnails are endless.

Linear Perspective

Based on the scene, create sketches where you focus only on the linear perspective aspects, like identifying horizon, estimating the position of the vanishing point(s), and determining where is your eyelevel.




horizon
eye-level
VP
horizon
VP1
VP2
Looking up
Looking down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