

Sketch Your World: Drawing The Details

[By Phil Dean](#)

'[Sketch Your World](#)' is a collaboration between artist Phil Dean and AccessArt, aimed at helping students 16 and above be inspired by their local landscape.

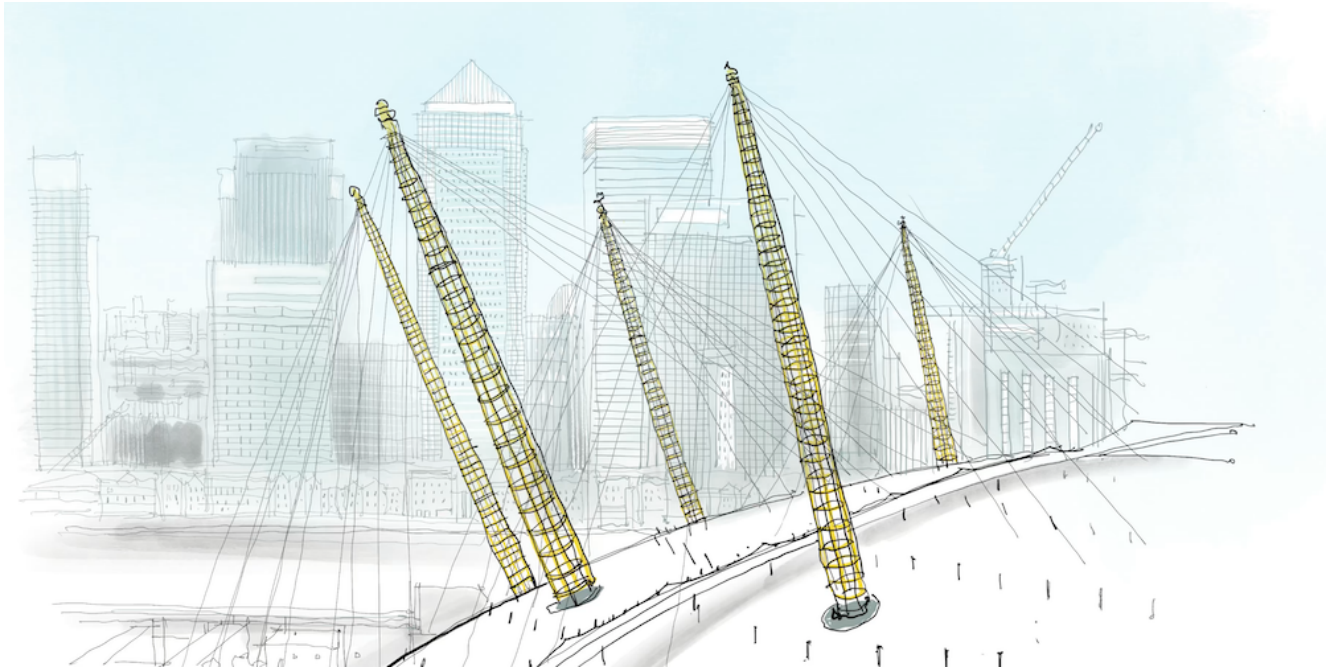
In this post Phil shares his top tricks for capturing the details of a scene to elevate his drawings. Watch the videos below and try the challenges at the bottom of the post.

Brickwork

When you look closely at bricks on a building, you'll notice that they are not entirely uniform. While they are all largely the same size and laid in the same way, they vary slightly in colour and texture, and it is important to represent this variation in your sketching. A top tip for colouring brickwork is to start with a medium colour that represents the entire wall and then add a darker and a lighter shade for the variations. If the mortar that binds the bricks is lighter than the bricks themselves (often it is), use a lighter shade or even white to draw in the brick

Texture

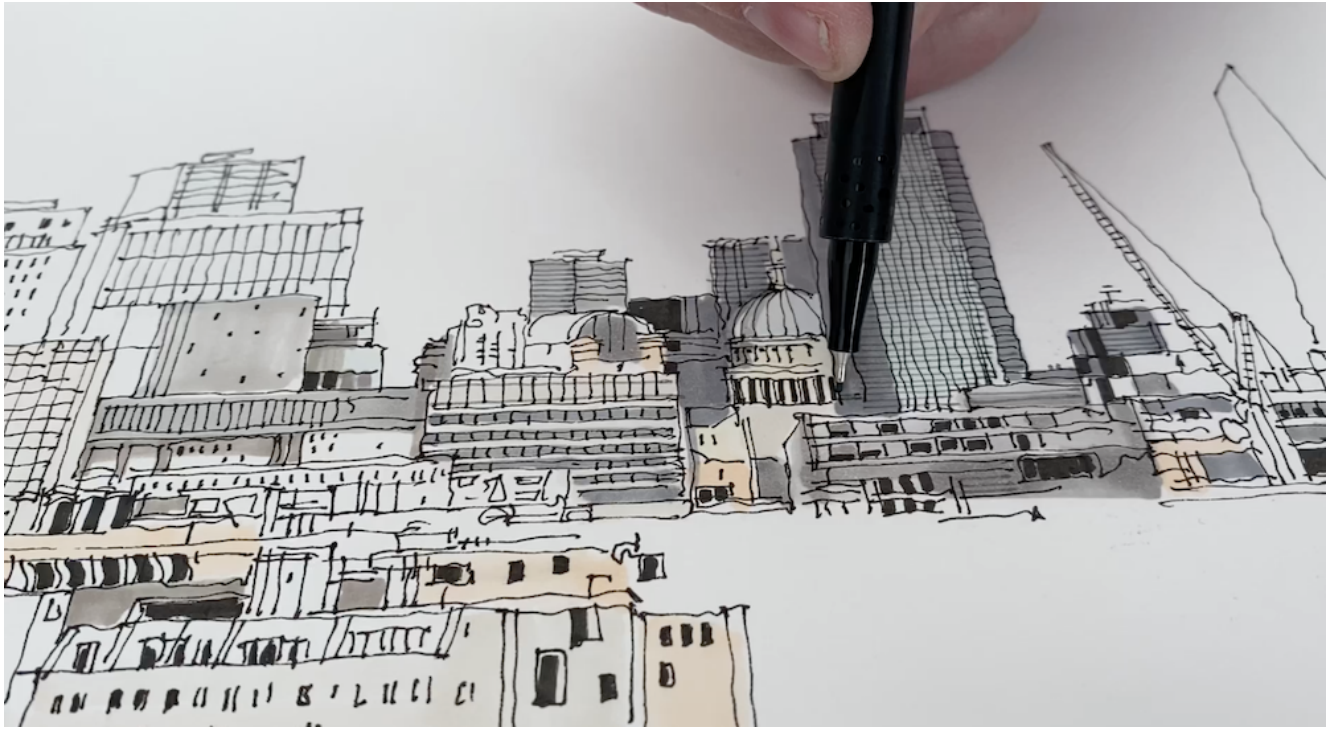
Adding further texture gives additional depth and realism to a sketch. Look carefully at your subject and see if there are details that should be added, then think about how this detail could be shown with the materials available to you. If the texture is fundamental to a scene, then make a feature of it, but if it's supplementary detail that is not essential to the story, then make it a background feature.



Wobbly Lines

A top tip when drawing the hard, clean lines of architecture is to try not to make your lines too straight. This may sound counterintuitive, but it helps you to be more relaxed when sketching imposing scenes and gives you some artistic licence to interpret what you are seeing.

This line work drawing would be quite uninteresting if all the lines of the buildings were straight and precise. It is a great example of box-like buildings getting the wobbly line treatment. The lines create character and will give you the freedom to build the scene without being overly concerned with accuracy. This technique encourages a lateral-thinking approach to sketching.



Trees and Shrubbery

Including trees and shrubbery in a sketch can provide an effective contrast to hard architectural edges. Different approaches need to be used depending on the time of year. Deciduous trees in winter become spidery and intricate, but in the summer they are almost cloud-like. Good technique is required to make them look believable, but persevere as the addition of trees is worth the effort in the overall sketch.



Winter trees can be fun to sketch, just make sure that you try to show the tree itself and how the branches get more delicate towards the outer limbs. Use fine lines and small dashes to illustrate the sparseness of winter branches.



Shadow

The addition of shadow will always add dynamism and a touch of realism to a sketch. Shadows don't always have to be completely realistic in terms of their depth and strength, but they are mostly essential to any drawing.

Hard sunlight delivers drama and impact when it hits detailed stonework. In this sketch, the shadow is built out from the features of the stonework, combining the use of a solid black marker and a white highlight pen to create dramatic contrast.



Highlights

In urban sketching, white highlights can be deployed in a number of very effective ways. The trick is to add white at the very end of the process to add that final hint of detail that will bring everything together.



White highlights need be only gestural, but their impact on a sketch can be significant. In this sketch they pick out the architectural detail, describe the lighting and create movement and contrast. In the images above, I used a white gel pen for the strong highlights and a white pencil to add softer lighting to areas such as the column.

Challenge:

Go back through some of the work created throughout the Sketch Your World project. Work back into some of your drawings, adding some of the details mentioned above and see how it changes the drawing.

Extension Challenge:

Select one or two of the techniques I've just described and create a piece of artwork from real life or a photo and use those techniques when creating the drawing itself. It can be essential to the drawing, or just a detail around it, but I want you to use the technique to really bring the drawing to life.

When you've finished, lay out your work and discuss in a group the impact of the added details and think about how adding other techniques could also elevate the drawing.

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This is a sample of a resource created by UK Charity AccessArt. We have over 1500 resources to help develop and inspire your creative thinking, practice and teaching.

AccessArt welcomes artists, educators, teachers and parents both in the UK and overseas.

We believe everyone has the right to be creative and by working together and sharing ideas we can enable everyone to

reach their creative potential.

**Sketch Your World:
Perspective**

**Sketch Your World: Choosing
Subject Matter**

Sketch Your World: Materials

**Sketch Your World:
Sketchbooks & Composition**

Sketch Your World: The Basics

Which Artists: Liz West

What We Like About This Resource...

"It's really interesting to hear how the interest Liz has in the quality of light comes from a personal place and is something she has responded to since childhood. Seeing how her work has developed over the years is therefore a really positive re enforcement that individual creative journeys, where nurtured, are so central to a rich arts education. We also love hearing Liz is always on the 'quest for knowledge' – meaning she is open to her ideas constantly evolving and the process of gathering new information and inspiration never stops!" – Rachel, AccessArt

You May Also Like...

Pathway: Brave Colour



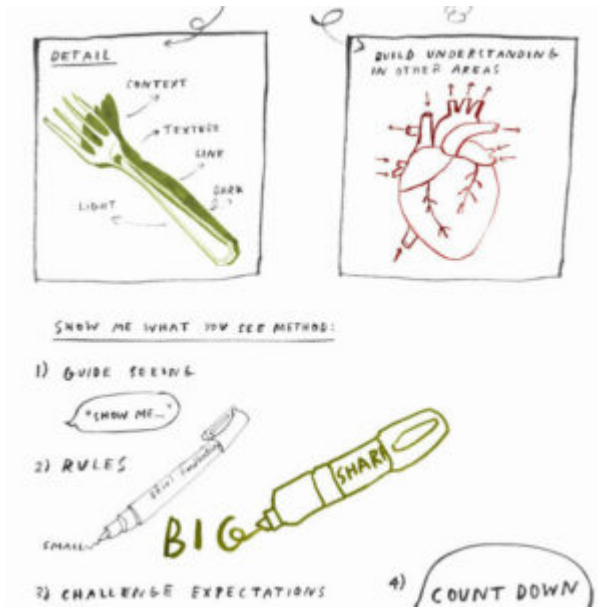
This is featured in the 'Brave colour' pathway

using sketchbooks to make visual notes



Find out how pupils can respond to artists work in sketchbooks

Show me what you see



Enable close looking and drawing with this exercise

Lightbulb Art



Mini World Light Boxes



Visual Arts Planning: Light and Dark



Shadow Puppet Making and Performance

How Middle Eastern architecture was the inspiration behind a shadow puppet show for a year 4 class. A great opportunity for

children to learn the technical aspects of making puppets, but also using narrative and story to create a performance.

Home: The Little House on West Street LockDown Project

Unesco: Celebrating the Power of Making!

Inspired by Paula's recent rousing film, 'It's in Our Hands', artist Jan Miller pulled images together from her own teaching to illustrate the things the children in her classroom do with their hands

David Parr House – “What's Your Space?”

In celebration of the opening of David Parr House in Cambridge, this resource aims to inspire children aged 8 to 12 to explore design.

Inspire 2020: Teachers

This post is based on CPD (Continued Professional Development) sessions in February and March 2019, hosted and delivered by the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge in collaboration with AccessArt, for Cambridgeshire teachers participating in Inspire 2020 Project.

Nursery Night Time Collage

Inspired by the AccessArt Village, artist Rachel Thompson works with pre-school aged children in St Matthew's Nursery School, Cambridge to make their very own night time scenes with collage and wax-resist.

The AccessArt Village and How a Small Idea can be Big

Sheila Ceccarelli from AccessArt leads year nine students from Frances Bardsley Academy for Girls on a collective drawing and collage experience exploring the #AccessArtVillage in BRG Brentwood Road Gallery. Students absorb this stunning collection of sewn houses and inspired by thread and stitches, make their own creative responses.

Installing Artwork in “To Scale” Gallery

Making an Ink and Wax Village with Pupils in Mansfield

Making a Pocket Gallery

This post shares an idea devised by Anne-Louise Quinton in which she enables children and teenagers to revisit the “ordinary” and resee it’s potential. The activity is a great way not only to inspire children as artists and curators, but also to introduce them to a whole range of concepts and vocabulary. It would be a great activity to use in a museum and gallery education context, as well as the classroom.

Ink & Foamboard Architecture

Inspired by “Amphis” by Folke Köbberling and Martin Kaltwasser at Wysing Arts Centre, this post shares how the children went

on to make architectural models based upon their exploration with Paula Briggs.

Inspired by Christo: Mixed Media Drawings

3D Drawing with Paper: Texture – Surface – Structure

Artist Andrea Butler sets teenagers the challenge to create 3D forms from sheets of paper experimenting with structure and texture using manipulation techniques.