Sketch Chicago!

For designers, the deep seeing and understanding developed through urban sketching becomes a springboard from experiencing “what is” to envisioning “what can be!” Urban sketching is a global phenomenon that combines passions for drawing, travel, cities and social media in a way that’s truly addictive.

This year’s session will be an all-day sketch walk through one of America’s best urban environments! Join veteran urban sketchers and fellow drawing enthusiasts for a short urban sketching workshop, then discover and celebrate the rich urban fabric of Chicago through sketching on-the-spot. Bring your own drawing materials; sketchbooks and bottled water will be provided. Lunch will be provided at the Chicago Architecture Foundation. Participants’ sketchbooks will be displayed in the ASLA Commons during the conference. This session is for intermediate and advanced sketchers.

Session Leaders:
James Richards, FASLA
Richard Alomar, ASLA.
Chip Sullivan, ASLA
Robert Chipman, ASLA
Craig Farnsworth, ASLA

Learning objectives:
1. Learn how drawing enhances our ability to see and increases our visual perception of the environment.
2. Learn a variety of the best road-tested materials for urban sketching.
3. Learn to use thumbnails, rapid sketching and other field techniques to quickly explore alternative compositions and to capture the essence of a scene.
4. Learn to use editing, composition, detail and color to support a central sketch idea.
Enhance your sketching experience:

- It may be cold; hats and fingerless gloves are recommended. Some sketchers carry folding stools for comfort.
- The best subject matter is what you find personally compelling. We often begin by walking around the area and using quick, small, 2 inch by 3 inch “thumbnail” sketches to explore different subjects and compositions. When you find the subject / composition you want to develop, try keeping the simplicity and strength of the thumbnail composition in the larger sketch.
- One of the great advantages of sketching over tourists’ photographs is the ability to edit—choosing what to feature and what to omit to best communicate our impressions or ideas about a scene. Focus on the part of a scene that interests you the most, and only hint at the rest so that the viewer’s mind “fills in the blanks.”
- Sketching rapidly results in drawings with a sense of life and energy. Try to avoid erasing; simply redraw over lines as necessary.
- When pressed for time, consider using color sparingly in key spots to emphasize a particular aspect or focal point of a scene.
- Notes on date, time, weather, and your personal impressions lend a sense of uniqueness and authenticity to your sketches.
- Consider bringing a glue stick to add “found objects”—train tickets, drink coasters, leaves etc.—to your page for their storytelling value and to add interest to the composition.

Detailed Itinerary:

9:30 am  McCormick Place: Greetings, introductions, “buddy-up,” walk to METRA station @ McCormick Place

10:00 am  10am SHARP departure via METRA electric train. Arrive Van Buren Station 10:09. Walk south to corner of Michigan Ave. and Congress Parkway.

10:15 am  “The City (Beautiful)” contextual overview: Craig. Lesson #1: Richard (quick sketching exercises). On-location sketching: The Bowman and The Spearman sculptures, train yard, axial views to Buckingham Fountain and Lake Michigan, Grant Park.

11:00 am  Walk north on Michigan Ave., left on Van Buren to Wabash St. “The Gritty” contextual overview: Craig. Lesson #2: Jim (quick 1-point perspective) On-location sketching of urban street and overhead train lines with long views to Trump Tower.

11:45 pm  Walk north on Wabash, east on Jackson to Chicago Architecture Foundation. Box lunches (Corner Bakery) in the Morse Room; bathrooms. Discussion of morning session, review sketchbooks. “The Grid-dy” contextual overview: Craig Lesson #3: Chip (Drawing as Invention; The Genius of Louis Sullivan) Sketching of CAF interiors, Art Institute South Garden, AIC Lions.

1:30 pm  Walk north on Michigan, west on Adams, right on State Street to State @ Madison. On-location sketching of theater district marquees, flags, Macy's clock, Carson Pirie Scott facade.
2:30 pm Walk north on State St., east on Randolf, south on Michigan to Washington St. Cross Michigan Ave. and enter Millennium Park.
“Pretty” contextual overview: Craig Lesson #4: Bob (subject TBD). On-your-own sketching of Millennium Park: Lurie Garden (Gustafson), Nichols Bridgeway (Renzo Piano), Crown Fountain, Cloudgate sculpture (The “Bean”), Peristyle, Pritzker Pavilion (Gehry), BP Bridge (Gehry), Maggie Daley Park (MVVA) / Cancer Survivors’ Garden, Stock Exchange arch (Sullivan).

4:00pm MEET AT "THE BEAN" FOR SKETCHBOOK SHARING AND GROUP PHOTO.

4:30pm Walk to Millennium Station, depart METRA back to McCormick Place. Trains leave at 4:25, 4:34, 4:45 and 4:48.

5:00pm Arrive McCormick Place; session dismissed. Session leaders and ASLA staff hang sketchbook exhibition in the ASLA Commons.

Session Leader Bios:

JAMES RICHARDS, FASLA, is an Associate Professor at The University of Texas at Arlington and cofounder of Townscape Inc., a town planning and urban design consultancy based in Fort Worth, Texas. He is a member of the Board of Directors and a blog correspondent for the international non-profit Urban Sketchers and founder of Urban Sketchers Texas; he teaches sketching workshops internationally. His book, Freehand Drawing and Discovery: Urban Sketching and Concept Drawing for Designers, won a 2014 ASLA Honor Award. Email: jim@townscape.com Cell: 817-999-1522

RICHARD ALOMAR, ASLA, RLA is a licensed landscape architect, an Assistant Professor at Rutgers University and founder of Urban Sketchers NYC. Mr. Alomar’s current work uses sketching and field notes to inform decisions on sustainability and design. He leads frequent SketchCrawls in New York. Email: Richard.Alomar@rutgers.com Cell: 917-224-8373

CHIP SULLIVAN, ASLA. A Professor at University of California Berkeley, Chip Sullivan is an artist and landscape architect who maintains a lifelong commitment to exploring the potential of the garden to create sustainable environments. Chip Sullivan has devoted his career to promoting landscape architecture as an art form. His work, which illustrates the delicate balance between humans and nature, has been exhibited in galleries throughout the United States, Canada and Italy. Email: csully4@yahoo.com Cell: 510-320-8256

ROBERT CHIPMAN, ASLA has been developing innovative, user-friendly freehand techniques for pen-interactive computer displays to creatively address a wide range of landscape architectural applications. He still sketches on paper too, or on his hand or on a napkin or in the dirt with a stick if needed. Bob is based in Austin, Texas. Email: rchipman@austin.rr.com Cell: 512-569-3569

CRAIG FARNSWORTH, ASLA, PLA (Hitchcock Design Group, Chicago, Illinois) has helped design and graphically record Chicago urban and park spaces since 1995. His drawings and paintings have been published in several books and articles and his commemorative watercolor paintings for the ASLA Centennial (1999) and the ASLA Chicago 2009 annual meeting both received President’s Awards from the ILASLA. He also teaches architectural watercolor illustration and sketching classes at Judson University. Email: cfarnsworth@hitchcockdesigngroup.com Cell: 630-408-2124
Field Session FS 012
Sketch Chicago!
ASLA 2015 Annual Meeting

10:00 METRA
10:09 VanBuren Station
“The City” - Lesson #1 (Richard)
Exercises at Congress Plaza

9:30 McCormick Place, Room E262, Level 2
Introductions
10:00 METRA

11:00
“The Gritty” - Lesson #2 (Jim)
Exercises on Wabash Street

12:00 Lunch
“The Grid-iy” - Lesson #3 (Chip)
Exercises at Chicago Architecture Foundation

2:30
“The Pretty” - Lesson #4 (Bob)
Exercises in Millennium Park
4:00 “The Bean” for reviews and group photos
4:30 METRA return to McCormick Place

1:30
Exercises on State Street

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