

It's all in the details

Liz Steel

Urban Sketchers Symposium 2018
Porto, Portugal

When it comes to sketching complex buildings most people start with the details and have trouble fitting everything in. Working structurally (starting with the structure) helps with this, but you still need a good knowledge of details as these can affect the relationships of the main elements

Details

Pick a detail from the building and do two versions of it from different directions. Add shadow shapes if there are any. Think about:

- Changes in planes
- thicknesses and depths of different elements
- relationships between parts - where they intersect.

After doing these sketches do a few diagrams which simplify the main part of the details and see if there is a structure within the details. Then do a sketch of it at half size and quarter size (ie. how would you draw it from a distance).

Details and Structure

- Next we are going to look at the structure of the building - how many bays/ storeys does the building have, are there any columns of horizontal bands which define these?
- A basic knowledge of classical architecture helps a lot!
- Do a diagram of the main structure and then look at how the details inform the relationship between these main structural elements.

Putting It Together

- Start your final sketch by painting some guidelines of the structure. You could do this in pencil but it is more fun in paint!
- Draw the structure first, being aware of the thickness of the elements and how they intersect.
- Add details intentionally so that they are telling a story about the building eg. more detail at the area of focus?

For more in-depth instruction:

<https://sketchingnow.com/buildings-course/>

All content and images © Liz Steel 2018

w. lizsteel.com sketchingnow.com

e. lizsteel@gmail.com

