

5. What do you mean, perspective?



WHAT DO YOU MEAN, PERSPECTIVE?

If you hear the word perspective, you probably stiffen straight away. Don't do that, trust your own eyes. Sketch what you see, 'mistakes' give your sketches personality. Try it first without knowing all the rules, follow your feelings. Step-by-step I show you drawings of other sketchers who think perspective is not that important and have found their own solution. The last drawing – by Chris Lee – seems awfully complicated. But if you have seen all the previous sketches, you will understand how he made it. There is a system to it, and you can do that too. Give it a try. If you click on [a link underlined in red](#), you will see much more (except here). **That's another way of doing it.**



Tony Underhill is an urban sketcher from Cambridge (England). Tony met up with Exeter Urban Sketchers when he was visiting the city and was charmed by these office buildings in Southernhay and therefore lovingly drew them in his sketch book. 'I often choose to draw *face on* when I'm in a new location because it allows me to capture a building's character as simply and as quickly as possible. That way I get to see and sketch more.' He sits down first, he takes his time to look

around. Broadly speaking, he sees two blocks stacked on top of each other; each square has details such as the windows and frames. Then he sketches the houses with lines: first the large shapes, then the details. Because Tony was right in front of the houses, he drew almost exclusively horizontal and vertical lines. Finally, he coloured the houses. What do you mean, perspective? If you are sitting in front of the house, you can sketch only the front of it. **Flickr**

Mateusz Urbanowicz is a freelance artist and illustrator, born in Silesia (Poland). He now lives in Tokyo (Japan). Mateusz created a beautiful series of watercolours of Tokyo stores. These are collected in the book *Tokyo Storefronts* (2018). Although he makes his drawings in his studio, based on photos, he lets us enjoy his working method on his videos, from the very first sketch to the end result. We can look over his shoulder and see how he does that. On his YouTube

channel, he generously shares many videos in which you see him at work. You can do the same when you sit outside, preferably right in front of the building. Here too there is virtually no perspective. It's a matter of looking, splitting into large blocks and then sketching what you see.

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[YouTube \(book\)](#)

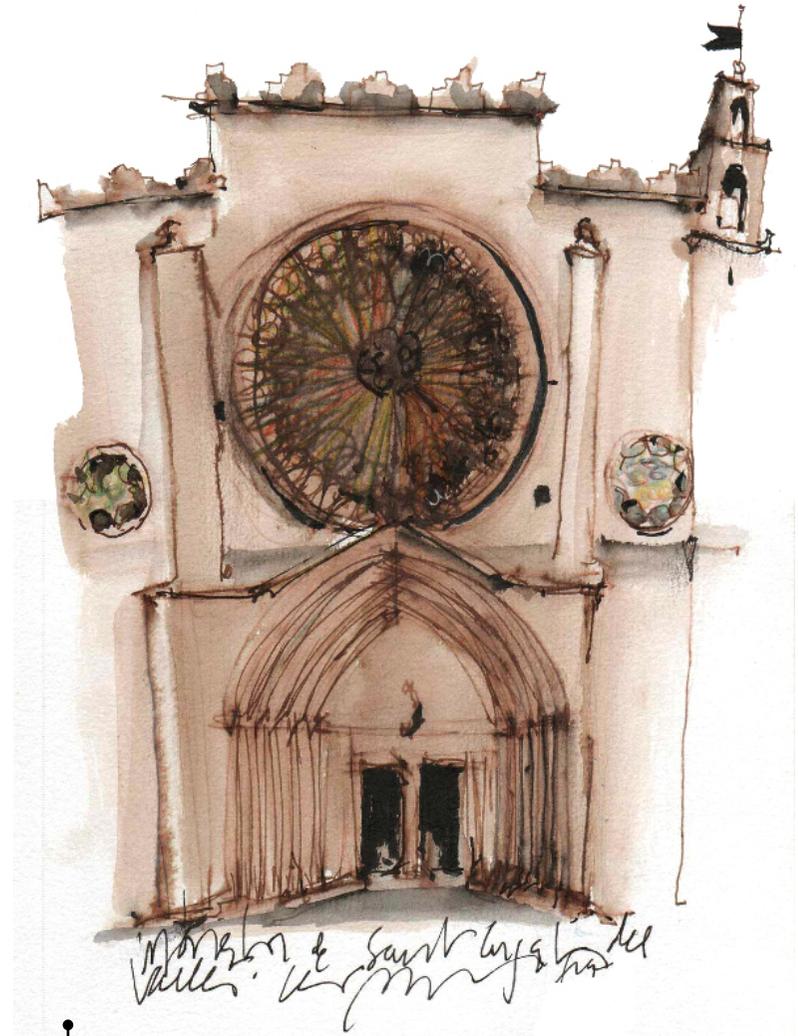
[YouTube \(sketch\)](#)

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'I want to share the art I do, but for me, the process behind the art is also a part of the story'

Mateusz Urbanowicz



Lluís Bruguera is an artist who lives in Palafrugell (Spain). Bruguera creates delicate watercolours, usually in with a few simple strokes with watercolour, sometimes with a single addition of a few lines. He is mainly concerned with the feeling that his drawing radiates; it doesn't have to be that precise. He always paints outside, on location. Here Lluís actually has the same approach as Mateusz, but he is less precise with the straight lines. At first glance we see no perspective in this atmospheric and impressive representation of the church front (*Monestir de Sant Cugat del Vallès*).

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'Drawing is fun, and we can learn about ourselves and the world around us by doing it'

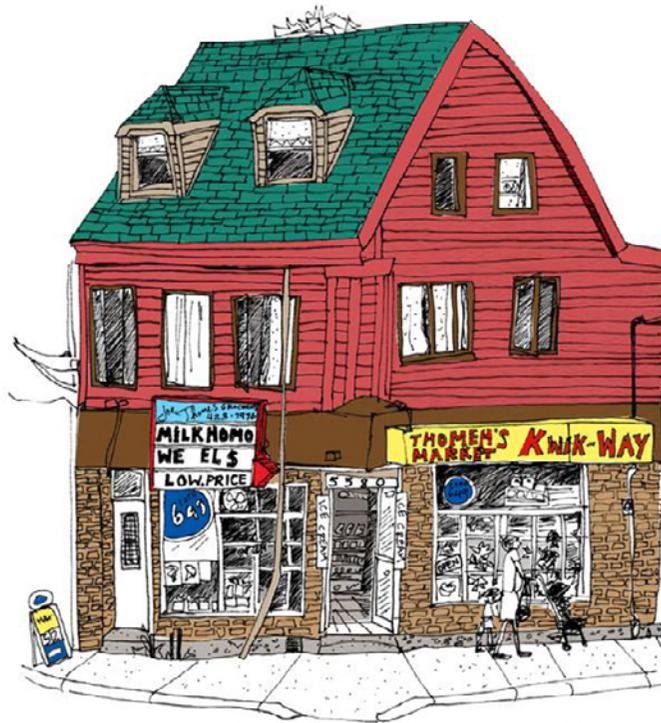
Emma FitzGerald

Emma FitzGerald was born in Lesotho (Africa). She now lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia (Canada). Emma has always loved to dance and draw, and when she was ten she decided to become a choreographer, writer or architect. She chose to study architecture and got her master's degree, but she missed sketching. Drawing from life in her own town led to her inspiring project, a book – *Hand drawn Halifax* – about the neighbourhoods of Halifax, in which she combined

two passions. This drawing is in that book.

It was such a success that *Hand Drawn Vancouver* has also just come out. Although Emma knows very well what perspective is, she doesn't always use it, she does what she wants. This gives her her own adorable style.

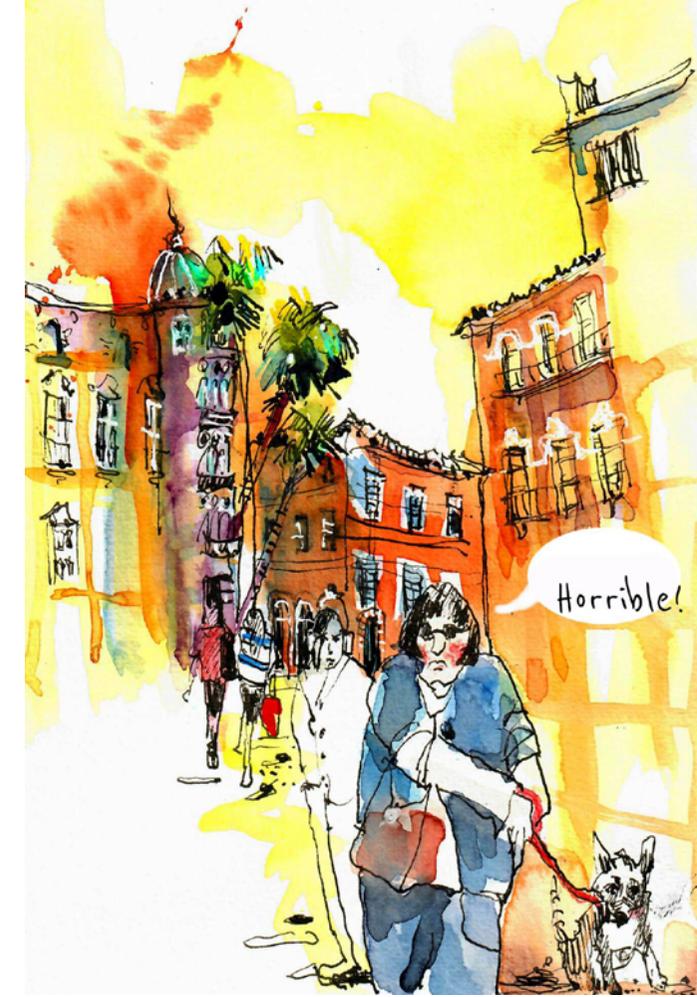
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Tine Klein is a very active urban sketcher from Zurich (Switzerland). Tine graduated as an urban planner, but is now fully focused on sketching. She has developed her own visual language: colourful, spontaneous and full of confidence.

This sketch – which she made in Malaga (Spain) – has a special story. When Tine had just started, a lady with a dog walked by: she said she didn't like it at all, she rolled her eyes. Her dog pooped right next to Tine's watercolour box. Tine's confidence was instantly gone. As a sweet revenge, she has drawn this angry lady in her sketch.

Here Tine has roughly created the background with paint, higgledy-piggledy. Why perspective? Then she placed the people in the sketch.

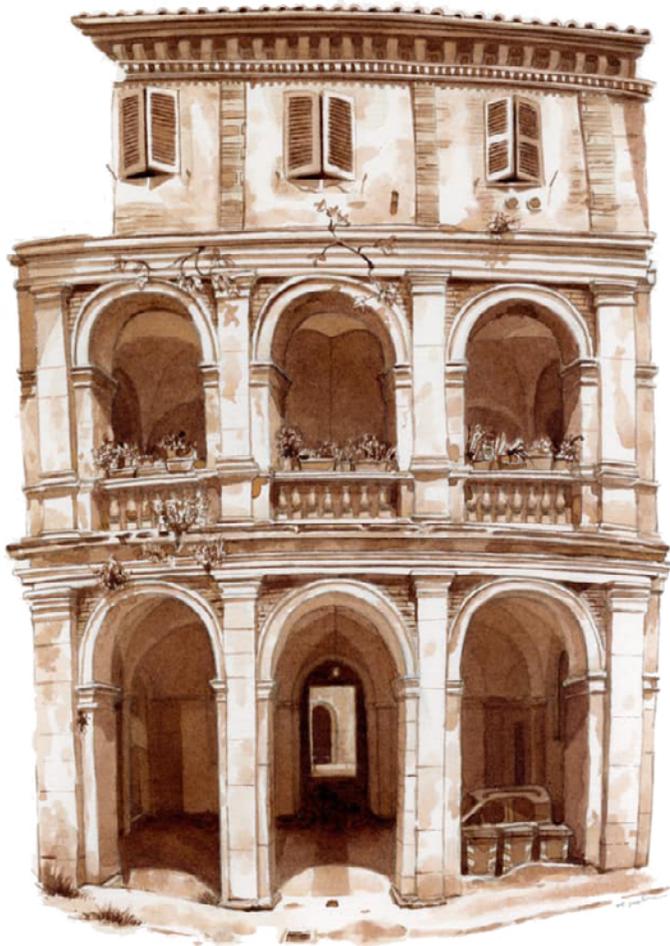


Only after that did Tine sketch a few details of the background with a pen; by no means everything is filled in. Why would she?

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'Simply draw a perspective from your hand without thinking.'

Tine Klein



'I sit, and listen, and draw for hours, with the world as a kind of stage before me'

Fred Lynch

Fred Lynch is an illustration professor and lives near Boston (United States). If he does not teach, he draws, preferably outside. During his studies at the art academy, Fred found out that he was colour blind. That doesn't mean he doesn't see colour; he can have problems with distinguishing colours well.

He wondered if he should continue with his studies. Fred commented: 'I didn't have a better plan. So I went back to work.' Over time, he realized that he could turn his limitation into an advantage. Fred developed his own style. He stopped imitating other illustrators and almost always draws in one colour. That rescued him.

Fred Lynch also first looks at the front of the building, at the large shapes, and adds details later. Perspective? Straight lines? Well, why actually? Lynch said: 'Your work is what you can't help but do. You need to push it. You need to develop it. But in the end, it's a reflection of your innate sensibilities and your enthusiasm. The search in art is to find ourselves. Try new things.'

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Eleanor Doughty is an illustrator who lives in Seattle (United States). She specializes in travel illustration and urban sketching. Sketchbook in hand, Eleanor travels her neighbourhood and foreign countries the same way, pen in hand, eyes up. After the symposium in Amsterdam (where she was a workshop teacher) Eleanor took the train to Enkhuizen, then rented a bike and went to Hoorn. She made this quick sketch of the

harbour building. First the front, again divided into blocks; then the side and the turret. If the turret was really put together like this, it would fall over immediately. But who cares? The building seems to swing, it is Eleanor's handwriting.

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Simon Taylor is an illustrator and graphic designer who lives in Curitiba (Brazil). Every Saturday he sketches in his own town. Seven years ago, Simon found the Urban Sketchers pages and started his own group USk Curitiba in 2015. He is currently the general coordinator of USK Brasil. In this sketch we see two typical Curitiba houses in the Ahú district. Simon just had bought two new Sailor pens and filled them with brown and blue ink instead of the black ink he normally works with. You see how Simon deals with perspective: he distorts reality and makes it his own style.

Simon: 'The spirit of my drawings: humor and fun first. This means that I don't have to worry about making the perspective how it really is, but how I feel it!' His buildings seem to dance.

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'Every city has a million hidden gems. If you look around you, you will find them' **Simon Taylor**

Andy Mosse is a producer and director who lives in Bristol (United Kingdom). In the few free hours he has he likes to sketch by hand. Andy sees it as his mission to prove that everyone can draw: 'People just forgot how.' In this sketch of the Radcliffe Camera, a library in Oxford, Andy draws what he sees and especially feels. 'I'm responding to the warm oranges and pinks of the sand stone against the cool shadows. I tend to push colour as far as I can go. I put the colour down first and then add in detail. I find that I like to draw big with colour then focus up the picture with line. If I do it the other way around I get stuck colouring in and don't like the results.'

Because of the smart colours, the curved lines and the lack of details, the attention is automatically drawn to the library in the middle.

[Instagram](#)



Chris Lee lives in Wells, Somerset (UK). He was previously a creative director and now has all his time free to sketch. He does this with great joy. Chris Lee said: 'When I draw these streetscapes I'm a grumpy artist. I can't settle down until the drawing takes shape, which means that for ten minutes I'm a cantankerous man muttering to himself as he balances on a tiny fold-up seat. But once the drawing starts to flow so does my confidence. I chuckle to myself and hum tuneless songs as I scratch away with my pens. Passersby throw compliments my way, and I gladly respond to their questions. Then I start thinking of the nearest, coolest beer. And I understand again why I draw.'

Don't be put off by this intricate drawing of the *Igreja dos Carmelitas* in Porto. Chris, too, was sitting almost right in front of the building and saw that the facade was made of blocks. 'I tend to draw flat on, it's more graphic for me. When I draw live, I never use a pencil or guidelines so I have to 'see' perspective in advance, it's all very intuitive.'

He then added windows, statues and pillars. Only on the tower and on the right-hand side did he add a little perspective. No straight lines, he finds that boring. Finally he takes a thick brush and adds some colour. Not too neat.

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'Take a camera and you're a tourist, take a pen and you're shown a bit of respect.' **Chris Lee**

Have you missed the previous episodes of **That's another way of doing it?** Here you can see and download the last three episodes (sorry, #2 is only in Dutch):

[2. Focus first](#)

[3. Oops, a tree](#)

[4. Coloured pencils](#)

All artists have given permission for the use of their sketches in this blog.

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YouTube:

- The [top ten urban sketching](#) books according to Teoh:
- Teoh explains how to get started [without knowledge of perspective](#):
- If you want to [learn more](#):

The Urban Sketchbook Understanding Perspective by Stephanie Bower