



IT'S SPRING! LET'S DRAW TREES

An urban sketcher sketches what he sees. Besides drawing buildings and people, it fortunately also means sketching trees. A tree gives depth to your drawing and that organic structure is beautiful next to a sleek building. But how do you actually draw a tree? If the tree is (half) in front of the building, first draw the tree and then sketch the building around it. Start with the lightest coloured foliage. Then see where the light comes from. Where is the sun? You will immediately know which part of the tree should be the darkest, usually one of the sides and the bottom. Pay careful attention, and draw what you see. Do not fill the entire tree with color; leave bits open so the sun can shine through, especially at the edges. In this edition you will see trees drawn by ten different urban sketchers. **That's another way of doing it.**



Reuven Dattner from Petach Tikwa, near Tel Aviv (Israel), is an artist. This tree with young leaves, which he drew in Ein Shemer, looks convincing, even though he merely suggests the light green leaves on the tree, he doesn't really draw them. Reuven: 'I like to make things simpler. I cannot say how I came to draw in this style; it just happened.' Reuven usually draws in and around Petach Tikwa. 'Our three sons and their families live in different parts of Israel. I always take my sketch book along when visiting them, so that I can draw on the way there.'

'A while ago I was afraid that I have already sketched everything there is to sketch in my city, but the more I look, the more I see. I must admit that it is more beautiful in my drawings than in reality. I work fast.' Reuven is a member of the Urban Sketchers Tel Aviv: 'Normally we meet once a month. Our organizer is a magnificent artist, Marina Grechanik.' To know more about Marina, you can read the edition on [colored pencils](#). [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) [Flickr](#)

'If I can do this, anyone can do it' **Reuven Dattner**



Anne Watkins is an artist with a big love for watercolour. You can see that immediately. She lives in the Upper West Side of New York City with her husband and 'a few bossy cats'.

'A watercolor set is easy to take along, and for me painting takes less time than drawing. You do not have to paint everything, my work invites the viewer to fill in the gaps in what I have painted.'

'I had a great teacher, Mario Cooper. He taught me many things that I still make use of. His advice: "Keep it simple" and "Let them finish it with their eyes".'

That is exactly what we see in this sketch. The trees are rendered quickly and powerfully, in only one color. However, if you look closely, you will see that she used different shades of blue. Perfect in one go.

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'Painting is my addiction. It's as important and simple to me as breathing'

Yong Hong Zhong

Yong Hong Zhong was born in Guangzhou (China) and emigrated to the United States when he was twelve years old. He worked at MTV Animation Studios as a storyboard artist and background designer. The knowledge and experience that he gained in the animation industry remains invaluable to him.

After fourteen years, Yong decided to go in a different direction and concentrate on his passion for traditional painting. The beautiful Oregon landscape convinced him to move to Portland: 'I want to raise my kids at a slower pace and really enjoy my time with the kids, without getting caught up in the busy big city lifestyle.'

'I am fascinated by color and light. I can already see my drawing in my mind's eye, before making the first mark. I try to leave out everything that is irrelevant. I like the spontaneity of watercolour.

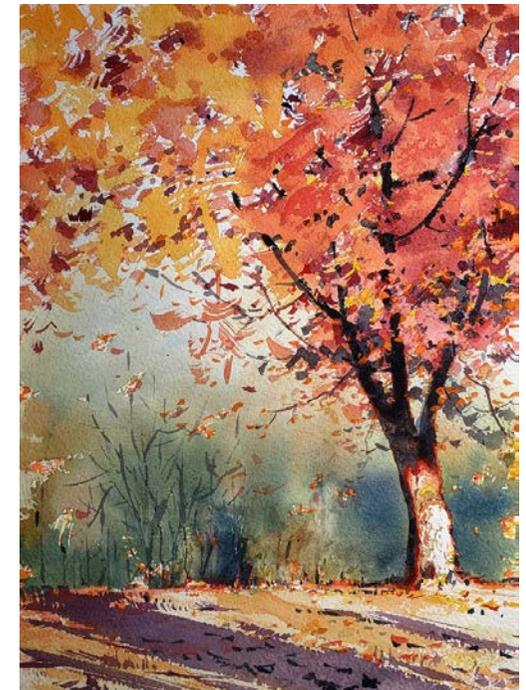
I enjoy the process.'

Yong Hong Zhong knows exactly what he is doing. It looks so simple, but he is a master when it comes to reproducing the incidence of light.

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James Richards from Texas is an urban designer, travel artist, author and former professor of architecture. On his sketches we usually see busy cities, lively squares and detailed buildings, he gets positive energy from that. This time, the enormous oak on the farmers market, in the center of Austin (Texas), attracted his attention. He drew the tree with only a few, powerful strokes and some accents in the branches.

James has his own style that, according to him, has been heavily influenced by the comics he read as a child.

'I like to sketch outside. I learned from Urban Sketcher Veronica Lawlor to first walk through a place and make a few small miniature sketches before I make a larger drawing.

That advice is invaluable. When I see a story

with a strong composition in one of the thumbnails, I know that, that is the subject for my large drawing.'

'I usually start off with drawing a line for the horizon. Then, to add life and depth to the scene, I add some people. Then I draw the buildings: first the large forms, then the details.'

His advice: try to draw whenever you can, but also, try to find a group to draw with. Drawing in a group accelerates the learning process and contributes to the pleasure.

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[Liz Steel](#) (book)

Stéphane Prévot always wants to draw, anywhere and at all times, so that he can capture the beauty of the world around him.

Stéphane is originally from Vittel, in the Vosges (France). He moved to Paris for his studies, where he became passionate about drawing and watercolour. After his studies he worked as a graphic designer and organized watercolour workshops. Stéphane drew this tree in a botanical garden with pencil. Here too, the contrasts are considerable: from bits of paper left open to almost completely black areas for the darkest parts. All with one pencil. Since 2013, Stéphane has been living in Tours, in the heart of the old city. 'My sketchbooks describe the nature that I see around me, with the curiosity of an explorer, the eye of a designer and the ambition to document it that a naturalist would have.'

His last book, *La Loire, de Nantes à Orléans*, is a visual journey from the outfall of the Loire river to its source, from Nantes to Orléans, in the footsteps of William Turner, who went on the same journey in 1826.

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Books: *Tours, cœur de Loire* (2018) and *La Loire, de Nantes à Orléans* (2019)





Besides the crown of a tree, it also has a trunk from which the branches spread upwards. **Jim Morris**, an avid sketcher from Malvern (England), keeps on coming back to drawing the trunks. I find this is one of his most beautiful drawings: the mighty trunk of a sycamore on the Bellevue Terrace, that suddenly splits into many branches. Drawn on a sheet of wrapping tracing paper, with two different colours of water soluble ink and shaded with a touch of watercolour wash.

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*'I can think of few things in life I enjoy more than
 |the challenge of painting outdoors with my simple
 array of brushes, paper and paint'*

Mike Kowalski

Mike Kowalski grew up in California and lived in Washington for many years, before moving to Melbourne. Mike is an artist and independent illustrator, specializing in architectural illustration. He does most of his painting on site, in nature.

'As an artist you are a lifelong student', he says. 'When you work in watercolour, you learn how to mix the colours you see, using your brush effectively, understanding your surface, and knowing 'when to strike' and put on the next stroke. Watercolour requires your full concentration.'

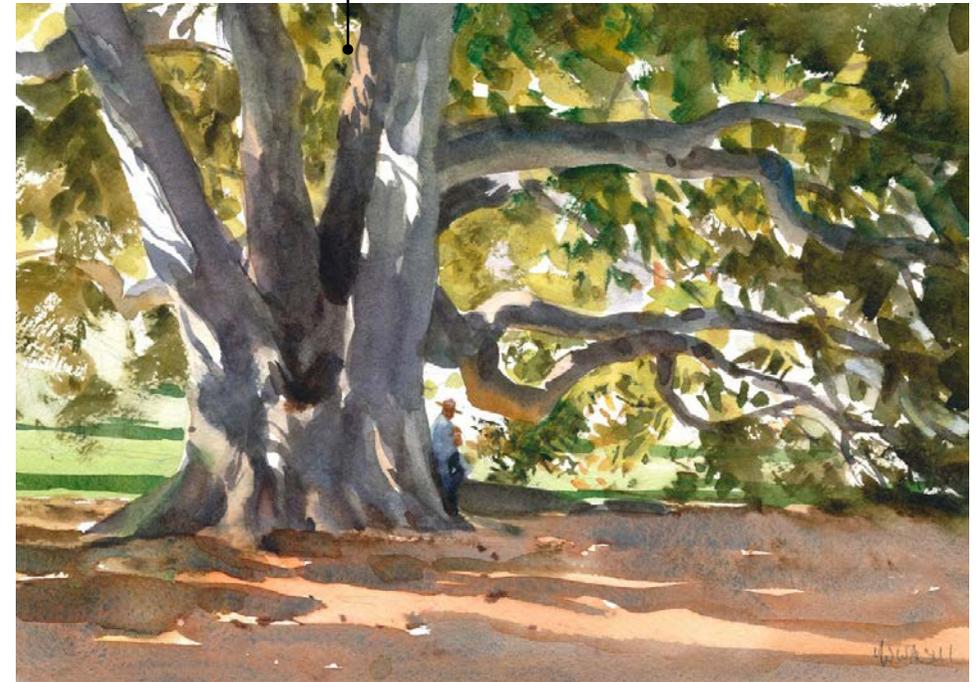
Mike finds that his best watercolour paintings are the ones painted with confidence and a sense of immediacy, using bold colours.

Kowalski paints quickly, lively and directly. He is especially fascinated by changing light and unpredictable weather conditions. This watercolour painting of a huge fig tree in Melbourne was purchased by the city

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Don Terlinden from Long Beach (California, United States), designs animations. He describes himself as follows: 'I am a commercial artist. I love drawing, reading, writing, playing the guitar, singing and conversing.'

Don: 'My favorite thing to draw is people, yet I also like to draw other living things. For me, trees are the people of the plant world. I have a fondness for their irregularities and organic curves, and despite the fact that they remind me of people, they lack the rigid symmetry of humans and animals.'

That can be seen in the way in which Don draws a tree. He uses a surprising selection of colours. This is partly because he likes to work with disposable fountain pens (from the brand *Pilot Varsity* or *Zebra Zensations*) that are only available in seven colours. He must therefore make do with the colours that he has. For the shading he uses brushpens.

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'Don't be afraid to repeat yourself, that will help you to get better'

Don Terlinden



'Drawing subjects are everywhere, even the paper punch at my office is worth sketching'

Caroline Manceau

Caro(line) Manceau, graphic designer, lives and works in Marseille (France). She is a correspondent for *Urban Sketchers France*. She regularly goes out to sketch with *AixCroquis*, her group of sketchers.

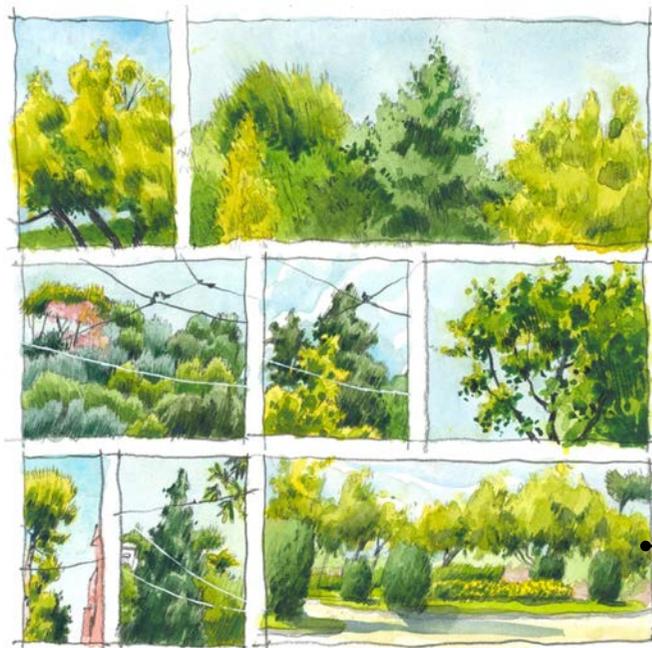
'I like to explore new drawing materials. It is good for my sketches, and I can also apply it to my work. I always look for the interaction between light and shadow, and how small details can enhance my sketches. I do these investigations daily. It builds my knowledge.'

'I no longer look at the subject – the landscape, portrait, architectural element, still life – as an object, but view it as a set of elements, shapes, lines, colors, even impressions. I take pleasure in experimenting, to have total freedom to explore. I don't have to travel far for that, the most beautiful subjects are close to my home.'

When you see her tree drawings, you immediately understand what Caro means.

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DIFFERENT VIGNETTES WITH GREEN SCENES. JUNE 19. BARCELONA



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Santi Sallés, independent art director, graphic designer and illustrator from Barcelona (Spain) has immersed himself in 'green' drawing, especially trees. During the international Urban Sketchers symposium in Amsterdam in 2019, he gave an impressive workshop on this topic (*Green Microsketching*). He has even written a book about it (*Verde al natural*). It is not a step-by-step book, but his personal vision of illustrating nature. It's written in Spanish and French, although one can, with a little perplexity, follow it quite well. Santi Sallés has always been fascinated with nature and its colors. 'As a child I helped my grandmother plant and garden during the long summer days, and I think it was there that I developed the pleasure and respect that I now feel when I draw in nature.'

He can draw trees with whatever art supplies he has available: pencil, colored pencil, pen, water, gouache. According to Santi, each artistic material has its own secret. It is simply a case of proving it. On the left he can see a collection of ecological studies. Below you can see a recent drawing (*Plaça de la Vila de Gràcia* in Barcelona) that I couldn't resist including. That is another way to draw a tree! There is a YouTube channel with very interesting demos!

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[YouTube](#) (book)

[YouTube](#) (demos)

'I think the secret of a good drawing is: enjoy, experiment and work loosely'

Santi Sallés

YouTube:

Shibasaki, [tree painting tutorial](#)

This is how **Geoff Kersey** [draws a tree](#), recommended

Nitin Singh: Easiest way [to paint tree](#) in watercolor

Steve Mitchell in *The Mind of Watercolor*, How to

[Paint Tree Studies](#) in Watercolor

and Getting to [Know a Tree](#)

Read: **Liz Steel** does [research](#)

Anne Watkins loves the chapter on trees and foliage in

[Tony Couch's book](#): *Watercolor, You Can Do It!*

Have you missed the previous episodes of

That's another way of doing it?

Here you can see and download the last seven episodes (#1 and #2 are in Dutch only):

3. Oops, a tree in front of the building

4. Colored pencils:

[what can we do with it?](#)

5. What do you mean, perspective?

6. White is also a colour

7. Sketching in your car

8. It rains. Bah, now what

9. No time. Really?

The Dutch blogs have appeared on [the website of Urban Sketchers Netherlands](#).

You can find all episodes and downloads at [urbansketchers.nl/vind-pagina](#) under the heading 'ZO KAN HET OOK'.