

## BLACK PENCIL

As an urban sketcher you often take a lot of stuff with you when you draw outside: your sketchbook, a pencil, all kinds of pens, a brush, water and your watercolor paint. Some sketchers do with less: they only bring paper and a pencil. That's it, not even an eraser. A sketcher may also take a kneaded eraser or a blending stump with him.

And of course a sharpener or knife to keep your the point of the pencil sharp.

If you want to give that a try, first think about which pencil you want to take with you. B pencils especially give a nice, dark line. The higher the number on your pencil, the darker and softer the line will be.

In this edition you will see ten beautiful examples of work by urban sketchers.

**That's another way of doing it.**

ANNE  
ROSE

## Werner Krämer from Berlin-Lichterfelde (Germany)

is an architect and urban planner.

You can see that immediately in his sketches and the ease with which he manages to capture complex buildings on paper. He made this drawing of the *Brandenburg Gate* and the *Pariser Platz* when a few sketchers from Mestre (near Venice, Italy) were visiting Berlin.

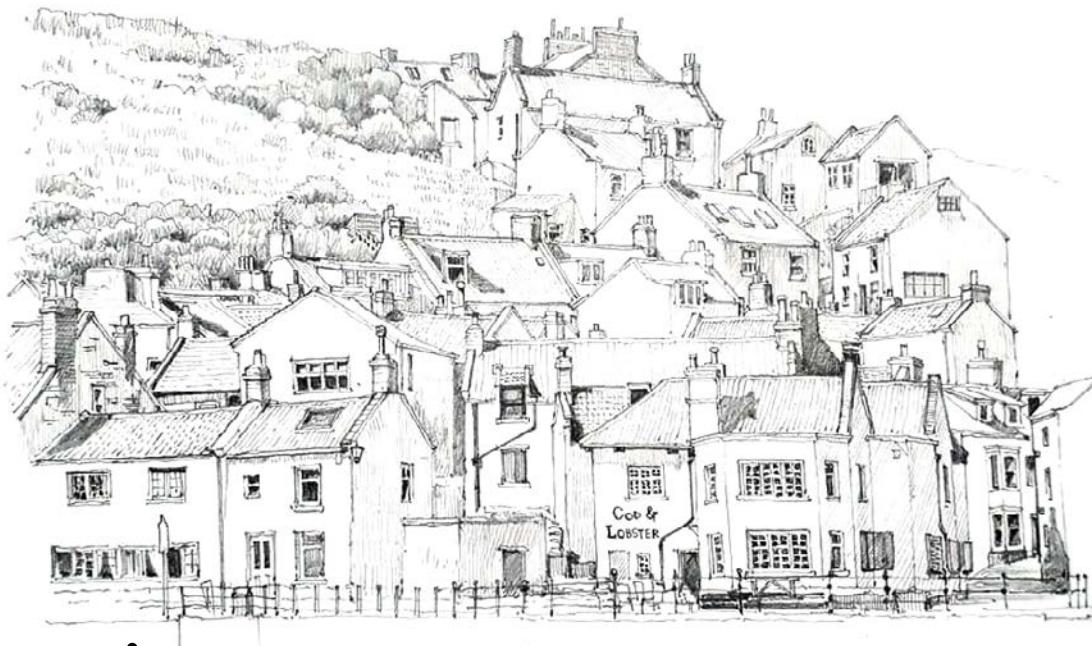
Werner draws very quickly, and his sketch is often ready within fifteen minutes. He makes clear lines with his pencil, but also solid, dark patches, such as in the front near the pruned trees and the chariot on the gate. Sometimes Werner adds some colour, but you see, that is not always necessary.

Werner prefers to bring only a pencil (2b), sharpener and sketchbook of 8x15 cm, so they all fit for putting in a breastpocket.

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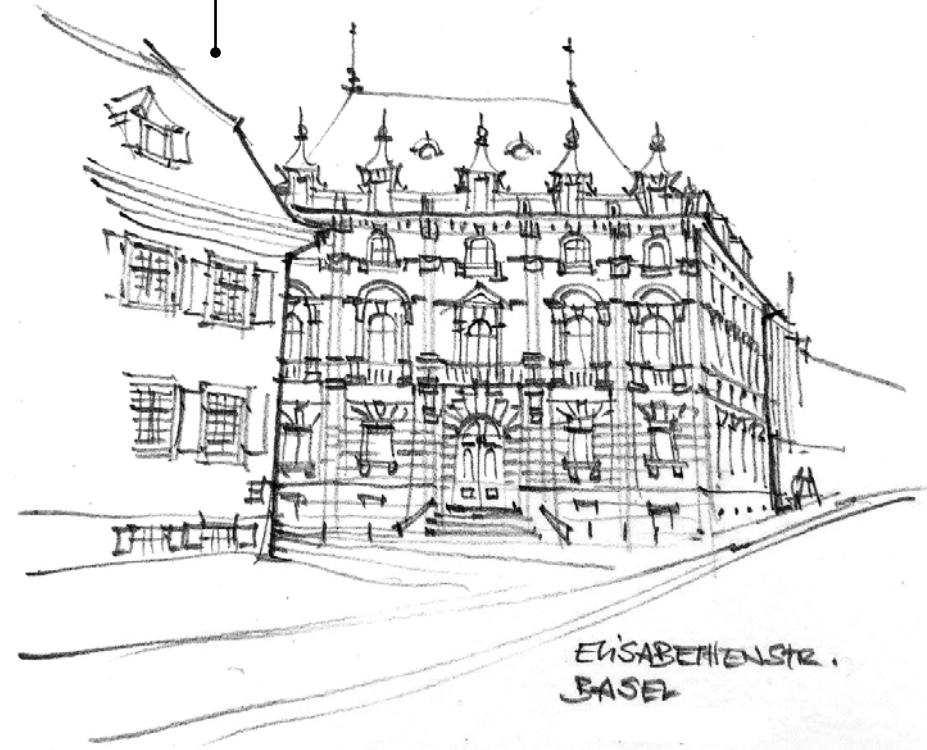
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**Allan T. Adams** from York (England) is an illustrator specializing in architecture who draws mostly old buildings rather than worry.  
 'I retired from *Historic England* (formerly *English Heritage*) in 2016, having worked on a range of projects illustrating historic buildings from all periods. Much of my work included reconstruction drawings, bringing ordinary buildings back to life as well making measured drawings for recording purposes.  
 Since retiring I have turned my attention to urban sketching and topographical studies.'  
 'I have always used sketchbooks to gather information for use in my work and done drawings for the joy of it. You can see how well he does this in this drawing of the village of Staites; it is well worth seeing more of his work. Then you immediately see how he manages to keep his drawings so clean: there is always a tissue paper under his drawing hand.'

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**Boris Zatko**, an illustrator and writer from Basel (Switzerland) has been drawing, painting and storytelling since childhood. Boris likes to sketch quickly with pencil; take a look at his confident lines. Sometimes he adds colour to his drawing, but that is not always necessary. The simplicity of the pencil line is often enough. Boris: 'My eyes and ears are always open for new things that lead me to untrodden paths.'  
 'I try to be as disciplined as possible. I wake up early in the morning every day, even on Saturday and Sunday. And every Monday morning I write myself a strict plan in which I note what I have to do on every single day of the week. I work at my home and I have two kids, both boys, and during lunchtime I cook for my family, which is a good distraction from work. I have a very structured life.' Boris's advice: 'Go your own way. That's very simple advice but when you think of it it's very hard to walk that path.'

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I saw these two sketches of **Jonathan Dixon's** *Lichfield Cathedral*. Jon originally comes from London (England); he currently lives in Scotland. I was intrigued by its cheeky, intriguing lines. Jon studied architecture and later studied *intensive drawing* at the Royal Drawing School; he has been a member of Urban Sketchers London for years.

He now works as a gardener at Aldourie Castle & Estate.

Jon: 'I believe nature is very important in urban settings. I use drawing in my garden design work too.'

These sketches are quickly drawn with just a pencil: lots of sharp lines and an occasional accent with a softer pencil. For the blending he used just his fingers. Sometimes he uses a tissue to gently smudge too. Jon about that: 'I often finish a drawing with very messy hands!' Don't forget to check out Jonathan's work on Flickr, it's really worth it.

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*'Sketching is not just about copying a building but representing the life in the streets and their relationships to architecture'*

Norberto Dorantes

**Norberto Dorantes** is a Mexican-born architect and educator, currently teaching at the College of Architecture of the University of Buenos Aires (Argentina); he loves to share his knowledge with others.

'For years, I wanted to devote full time to the graphic arts, but I did not dare. So I chose architecture as a profession, since it was so close to one of my deepest passions: drawing.' Look how he manages to create beautiful contrast in his sketch with simple hatching, just by pressing harder or less hard with the pencil on his paper.

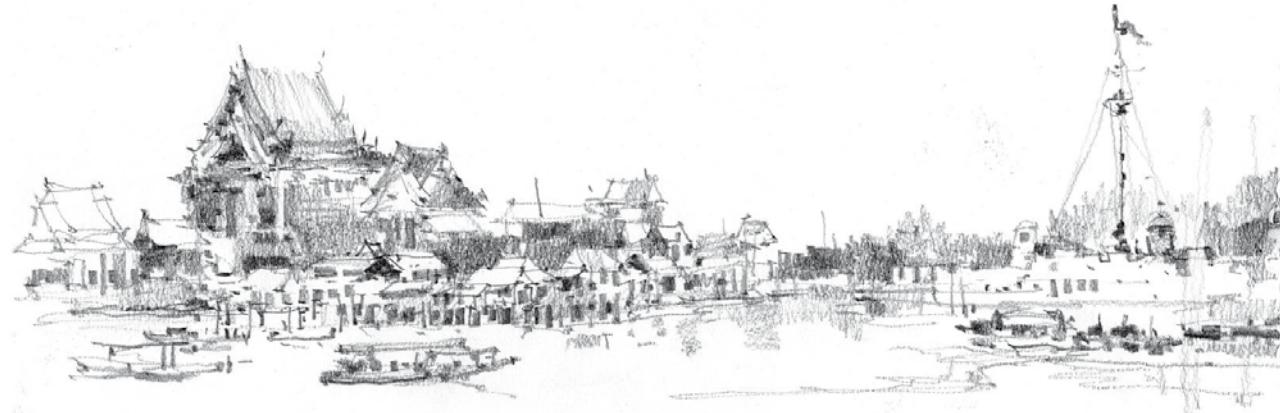
'I discovered as a child, while copying all possible images from books, magazines, pictures, people and even TV, that a few simple lines or spots may communicate many aspects of daily life and my own being. At the University I was inspired to draw en plein air, especially architecture and urban spaces. I clearly remember those hours walking and exploring sites that caught my attention. Hours drawing in pencil and watercolor painting. The most rewarding thing for me is to have the opportunity to convey to others an enthusiasm for hand drawing and sketching outdoors. I can see progress in their own expression, which fills me with pride. And it is a personal way to continue learning and experimenting all the time.'

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**Asnee Tasna** from Bangkok (Thailand) lived and worked in Singapore for over 25 years, since its building boom days in the early seventies. Asnee moved back to his hometown, Bangkok, in 2003 to enjoy a slower pace of life and to re-discover his love in drawing and painting. Asnee is a founder of Bangkok Sketchers and has a wonderful hand for sketching.

'Sketching helps me discover another side of life. I find happiness in doing something that's devoid of monetary value but gives me meaning no money can buy: walking in unfamiliar places, observing crowds, and talking with total strangers who care to take a break and want to look at what I am drawing.'

During the symposium in Chicago, Asnee gave a workshop on the importance of *Painting with Pencil*. In this drawing Asnee sketches with fast, searching lines; by moving the pencil flatter over the paper, he makes broader, soft lines, creating grey areas. By pressing harder on the pencil, he adds dark accents. Usually Asnee uses a soft pencil, between 2B and 6B, and he prefers to sharpen a flat, chisel-shaped point on it.

His advice is to first take your time to feel the place before starting to sketch. 'You are not at that place just to copy what it looks like, but rather to build your own version of it'. Wise advice from a great sketcher.

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*'When you sketch, draw what you feel,  
how you would like it to be'*

Asnee Tasna

*'Teaching drawing is one of the most gratifying experiences for me'*

Behzad Bagheri

**Behzad Bagheri** from Isfahan (Iran) does not use pencil, but something that has the same limitations: charcoal. With charcoal you can draw both lines and solid surfaces; by rubbing through it with your finger, a blending stump or a kneaded eraser, you create grey areas. Behzad qualified from Tehran University of Art with a Master's Degree in Architecture. In this drawing we see the *Jameh Abbasi Mosque* (the King's Mosque) in Isfahan.

'My work was becoming a means for me to connect with myself and my surroundings and share these impressions with others, communicate with others.' At the same time, it is a quest to determine which elements he can omit in his drawing, so that it becomes his personal representation.

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'Sometimes I only see in my drawing how special my environment is.' **Eduardo Bajzek** from São Paulo (Brazil) graduated from the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning Mackenzie, then worked as an architectural illustrator, also teaching courses in Architectural illustration.

Eduardo has developed his own way of sketching with pencil, highly recommended. He focuses on masses instead of contours and shapes instead of lines, which you wouldn't expect when using pencil. He builds up the drawings with grey areas, which you can make with the help of a wad of toilet paper with which you brush the lines of the soft 3B pencil over the paper. He uses a blending stump for the details. He draws on good watercolor paper, and the structure of the paper plays a role. Eduardo calls it a painterly form of drawing. He mainly looks at the grey values of his shapes, adding smaller shapes, layer by layer. Right away, using a kneaded eraser, he lightens some surfaces, adding details. Due to this way of drawing, he hardly needs to add lines to complete the drawing.

In this drawing we see the *Igreja Nossa Senhora do Ó* in São Paulo.

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*'Teaching drawing is one of the most gratifying experiences for me'*

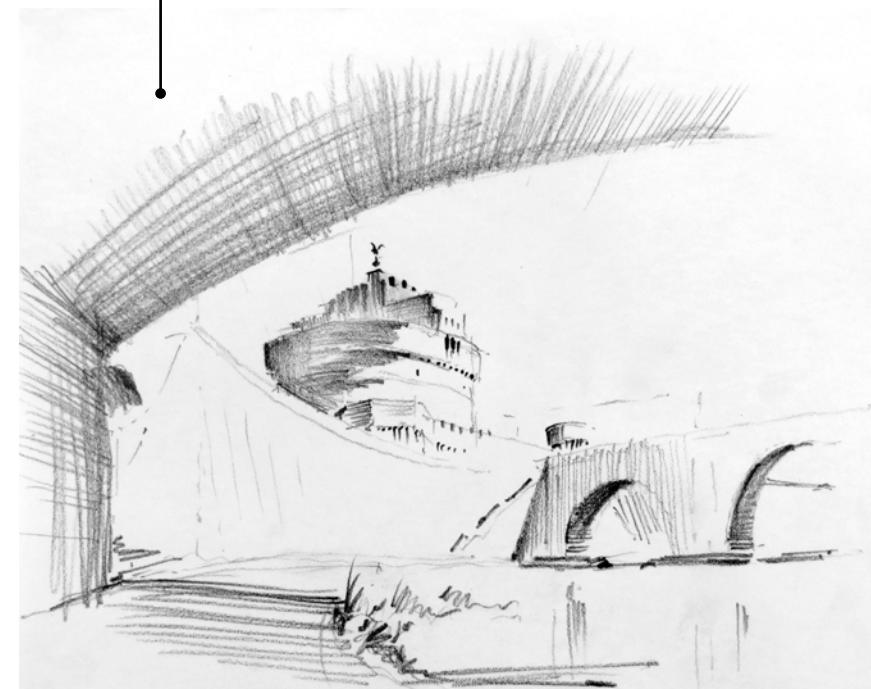
**Eduardo Bajzek**

**Matthew Brehm** from Idaho (United States) is a professor of Architecture. Matt believes it is important that future architects and designers can still draw by hand. He also wants to inspire his students to observe and understand the world around them by sketching it with simple means, such as pencil and charcoal. Students of Matthew Brehm quickly learn that sketching on location means there's no *Command Z* to fall back on.

Brehm speaks with passion about how we use our hands, eyes, and minds to explore and develop ideas. 'Sketching from life is about critical thinking, making judgements based upon a previous judgement.'

Each autumn he conducts a 3-month architecture program in Rome, Italy, with location drawing being a central focus of his teaching.

That's where this drawing of *Castel Sant'Angelo* was made. Matthew uses just the tip of the pencil for the first lines, and a very light touch. For shading, he is always using the broad side of the graphite, as you can see in this sketch. [See next page >>>](#)



It is very subtle, there is not that much in the sketch, but we know exactly where we are and how high the sun is in the sky.

Matthew: 'This was a demonstration sketch that I did in about 15 minutes while talking about various sketching strategies for this subject, so it's a bit incomplete and rough.'

I was especially trying to demonstrate the use of directional hatch patterns to reinforce the perspective, and how to make those hatch patterns as energetic as possible by using one's arm to make the marks, rather than only the fingers or wrist.

On this page you see a few more examples from that same morning. The right one is made with charcoal.

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[Book](#) on YouTube: *Sketching on Location* by Matthew Brehm

[Book](#) on YouTube: Book Review: *Drawing Perspective* by Matthew Brehm

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11. Sketching with only a black pencil



*'Sketching can be a primary means of "loading our minds" about art and architecture, and in doing so using the act of drawing by hand as a way to more thoroughly absorb the world'*

Matthew Brehm



**Shih Ing Chan**, more widely known as **Si Chan**, lives in Penang (Malaysia). She studied Fine Arts (in Malaysia) and Interior Design in London (England). Si Chan joined Urban Sketchers Penang in 2014 and is an active member of the Penang Watercolour Society. She doodles freely with bold lines en plein air to capture the rhythm and movement of city life with bustling human activity. Usually she draws on 300 gram acrylic paper, size A4. She has developed an impressive style of her own, with a high contrast. Si Chan comments that plein air sketches allow her

to develop good observation skills and discover a personality in her sketches. She starts with the lines, in her characteristic style. She pays attention to the large shapes, looking at the negative and positive composition space which are related to perspective rhythm. She then darkens the windows and some roofs, creating a beautiful balance between the light and dark areas. Si Chan made this drawing on the Oude Turfmarkt, when she was in Amsterdam for the symposium.

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All artists have given permission for the use of their sketches in this blog, with the exception of Asnee Tasna, who was unreachable. I thought he could not be missing in this episode.

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Have you missed the previous episodes of **That's another way of doing it?**

Here you can see and download the last eight 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?](#)

[10. Let's draw trees](#)

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'.

#### YouTube:

- Book Review: [Pencil Art](#) Workshop by **Matt Rota**
- Pencil [sketching on-location](#) and practice with **Mateusz Urbanowicz**
- Sketching On Location! [Plein Air Drawing Tips](#) and Tricks to Make You the Boss of your Sketch Book! with **Steve Atkinson**
- [Travel Sketching](#) with Watercolor Pencils with **Gasper**