

ANNE  
ROSE

## I FORGOT MY SKETCHBOOK!

You are on the bus or train, on your way to a sketch crawl or you're meeting up with some friends to draw together. As you stare out the window, you find that you are a little bored and decide to make your first quick sketch. But your heart sinks as you open your bag: your sketchbook isn't there, it is still at home on your desk!

All is not lost, you can after all, buy a pen and some paper at the train station, however, you can also adapt to the situation and sketch on what you have on hand or come across during your day.

In this article you can see what some other sketchers chose as a substitute. This is also urban sketching.

If you click on [a link underlined in red](#), you will see much more (except here). Let's take a look.

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



For inspiration on sketchbook alternatives, you can take a look at the work of **An Wang** from Urban Sketchers Beijing (China), an urban sketcher through and through – sketching with others inspires him.

He sketches on anything at hand: on a bag from a hamburger kiosk, a paper coffee cup, a supermarket receipt, paper plates and even on a shell found at the beach. It started over ten years ago, when An Wang was a bit early for an appointment with a friend. 'It was very cold that day. I bought a cup of soy milk to warm my hands. As I walked under a bridge, I looked up and saw a golden roof, which was particularly dazzling. I wanted to draw it, but I didn't have a sketchbook with me. So I drew on the soy milk paper cup instead. That paper cup was thrown away, but the golden scene of that morning will remain in a photo and in my memory.' Nowadays he likes to get a few empty cups, draws on them and then gives them away to friends as souvenirs. He usually spends ten minutes on such a sketch.

The blank reverse-side of beer coasters also work great for sketching, as an added bonus you can draw on them with almost any material. Here are two examples from An Wang; his social media pages also provides for lots of inspiration.

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**Mariya Suzuki** is an illustrator artist from Tokyo (Japan). 'I originally come from Nara, but I went to college in Long Beach, California, where I studied illustration. Upon my return I moved to Meguro-ku, Tokyo. In 2014, I lived in Meguro-ku.' She does commissions for books, magazines and musicians, and also collaborates with interior designers to create murals in private and public areas or drawings on shop windows, such as for the VanMoof store in Tokyo.

'I've always known that I was going to be an artist. It felt like there was no other choice when I was a kid. It has always been line drawing specifically – that's the style I feel most comfortable with. I don't like to throw things away and often find stuff that I can draw on, so I just go ahead and do that. I started drawing on cups when I was at university, talking to a friend in a

local cafe. I had a white cup in front of me and thought, I will just draw on it.' *Drawing-to-Go*, is what she calls these sketches. She persisted this practice whilst studying in America and upon her return to Japan.

While she drinks her coffee, she takes the time to look at the world around her. For her, drawing on a cup is more a diary entry, than just decorating the cup. She writes her impressions of the day on the bottom of the cup.

Mariya: 'I enjoy drawing everyday life moments, objects, and scenes, because I think they are beautiful. I suspect that, for lots of people, those moments and scenes could easily go unnoticed.'

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**James J.C. Wei** lives in Taipei, Taiwan. He often takes to the streets to sketch his surroundings, usually in his small Moleskine sketchbook. Sometimes he draws and paints on a paper plate, as in this example (below), drawn in Keelung, a city in the far north of the island.

He sketched it with a simple graphite pencil, no more is needed. His social media pages, also displays his beautiful watercolor paintings. James' motto: 'I draw and paint what I see.' Wonderful! Now we can enjoy looking at it.

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*'It makes me realize how beautiful life can be. Every time I capture a moment like this, it makes me happy'*

**Mariya Suzuki**



**Peter Rush** is an architect in Sydney (Australia). Peter doesn't care for a sketchbook; he often draws on the inside of a cereal box. He unfolds the box and even uses the flaps for his drawing; paper is paper. This is evident in this sketch he made of a shopping street in Bexley, Australia. Peter: 'Drawing on boxes really came by accident. I was caught out once without paper and I fished a box from a rubbish bin. Essentially I'm cheap; I also used a novel as a sketch book during a time in Berlin because the novel was cheaper to buy than a sketch book. I am very comfortable

with my colored pencils. Cereal boxes are good quality card and they allow me to use the lighter colors more effectively. Mostly, I view my sketches to be better when I finish them on the street; these have more energy and are less labored.' Peter believes that as an architect, who works so much with straight lines during the day, he therefore needs to have a sketchbook at hand, in order to draw as much as possible.

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*'With my sketching I generally start slow, firstly mostly just looking, seeing the space in front of me, noticing the light, watching the people. Then I go for it'*

Peter Rush

*'I love architecture, fountain pens, and sketching till my fingers fall off...'*

Eric Schunk

**Eric Schunk** is a project designer in Atlanta, Georgia (United States).

Eric often sketches on a napkin, as shown on his social media pages. A napkin is nice and soft and it is amazing how well you can sketch on it. Moreover, there's no pressure to make a beautiful work of art, you just scribble, which often leads to a better result. Many famous architects made their first sketches **on a napkin** after all.

Eric made this sketch of the Georgia skyline on a napkin with a simple Platinum Preppy fountain pen. Eric about sketching: 'I love architecture, fountain pens, and sketching till my fingers fall off...'. It seems that Eric prefers to draw on napkins, he even takes a stack along when he goes to watch (and draw) his son at basketball practice.

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**Wen Yi** stole my heart. He lives in Dali, Yunnan (China) where he often gets on his bike to wander through the alleys of the Old Town. Dali is a famous and beautiful old town with a rich cultural heritage and natural resources. However, lots of trash litters the streets. Wen Yi usually rises early and takes a drawing board, a pen and sometimes some extra drawing supplies, along. No paper though, he'll find that on the street. 'I collect waste paper. Once I find some paper or cardboard, I unfold the wrapper, flatten it, and draw the architecture in front of me onto it. I then stick it to the wall where I picked it up so that it can be seen by more people.' That's urban sketching! More of Wen Yi's work is shown in the full article on [Bored Panda](#).

*'I want people to see art in their everyday lives, even if it's on wasted paper'*

Wen Yi

**Teoh Kim Seah** and his wife **Yap Yeon Yee** own *Luna Solutions* (an interior design consultancy) and live in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). Their social media reveals that they draw their surroundings almost daily, mostly when they go somewhere to eat, usually places with lots of people. While visiting the island of Penang (Malaysia), they met urban sketcher Jin-Jin Saw. They shared dinner together at China House where to their surprise, the table was covered with a paper tablecloth. So what do you do as an urban sketcher in such a situation? You use the tablecloth for your drawing. Teoh on one side, Yee on the other – apparently there was plenty of inspiration surrounding them.

**Teoh Kim Seah:**

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**Yap Yeon Yee**

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**Mariela Luis** from Icod de los Vinos, Tenerife (Spain) is an architect with a passion for drawing. She uses her hands, arms, and even her legs as canvases for her incredible architectural drawings. At first glance you would think that it's beautiful architectural tattoos you are seeing, but then it turns out to be humble ballpoint pen drawings. She sometimes also uses a white gel pen for her drawings. People sometimes marks their hand with a cross in order to remember something, however this goes much further – Mariela draws large, historic buildings on her body. She then takes a photo to post on her Instagram page. Most impressive is that the majority of Luis' sketches take no more than 10 minutes to draw, yet she is still able to include lots of detail. Take a look at her Instagram page and be amazed.

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**Johnny Lemoine** is a packaging and graphic designer, architect and artist, living in San Diego, California (United States). He's a great sketcher. Johnny says: 'Although I have years of experience in architecture, I remain incredibly interested in it. However it's not just architecture that I'm insanely passionate about. I also harbor a passion for illustration, graphic, packaging, and furniture design. Yet I always take my architectural notions back into those other areas of design.'

This drawing of the square (*Piazza del Campo*) in Siena, drawn on a toilet roll, reveals how far Johnny takes this. It's not easy to sketch on such a round surface, but clearly, it is possible to draw on almost anything.

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**Richard Briggs** is a British architect and designer residing in Sydney (Australia). Some recall him as the workshop instructor with the blue adhesive tape, from the 2019 Urban Sketchers Symposium in Amsterdam. At the end of the symposium you could donate a drawing to be sold at the auction. Richard found a discarded bike saddle and drew his vision of Amsterdam on it in waterproof marker. His rules were only to draw on an object that he found, and the seat was very perfect. What a beautiful tribute to the city.

Richard often sketches on a wall or a found object. The use of tape initially came about when he was looking for a way to legally place artworks in public spaces without damaging any property. Unlike tagging, or other forms of graffiti, the use of painter's tape allows the artworks to be placed quickly, and if required, removed easily. Given that the

tape is similar in thickness to the strokes of a large wide paint brush, the scale of the works could be expanded to be quite large. Aligning perfectly with his aspirations. The city became Richard's sketch book. The temporary nature of this tape-based medium means that once the tape drawing is complete, it becomes the property of the city. It can be a great way to bring people together and communicate an idea about public spaces, people and places.

A tape drawing on a wall in Sydney is shown in the top-right. Below shows Harry, a guard, who asked for a tape illustration to be made on his door. Previously, he had gotten quite angry, thinking that Richard had taped something to send a secret message or convey something offensive. What a fascinating man!

[Instagram](#)  
[Website](#)

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):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <a href="#">3. A tree in front of the building</a>          | <a href="#">7. Sketching in your car</a>   |
| <a href="#">4. Colored pencils: what can we do with it?</a> | <a href="#">8. It rains. Bah, now what</a> |
| <a href="#">5. What do you mean, perspective?</a>           | <a href="#">9. No time. Really?</a>        |
| <a href="#">6. White is also a colour</a>                   | <a href="#">10. Let's draw trees</a>       |
|   | <a href="#">11. Pencil only</a>            |

The Dutch blogs have appeared on [the website of Urban Sketchers Netherlands](#). You can find all episodes and downloads at [urbansketchers.nl/vind-pagina](http://urbansketchers.nl/vind-pagina) under the heading 'ZO KAN HET OOK'.

*'Through my drawings I aim to provoke and inform discussion on the built environment'*

Richard Briggs



**YouTube:**

**Picasso** [draws with light](#)

**Picasso** draws [on a mirror or window pane](#)

**Xiong Qingzhen** draws on a mirror [with toothpaste](#)

**Watch:**

**David Hockney** draws [on a phone](#)

All artists have given permission for the use of their sketches in this blog, with the exception of Wen Yi.

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