

FREEHAND RENAISSANCE: CONCEPT SKETCHING FOR A DIGITAL AGE

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1 ABSTRACT

Concurrent with the rise of stunning digital representation techniques, demand for hand drawing classes and workshops is growing. On-site charrettes requiring quick sketching of evolving ideas have become mainstream in town planning practice, and the freehand story-boarding techniques of film-making are finding their way into the creative processes of urban designers. At this writing, a majority of landscape architecture job openings call for hand drawing skills. We're witnessing a pendulum swing from almost exclusive use of digital imagery to a new found appreciation for the immediacy and freshness of hand drawing.

To effectively complement technology, however, freehand design drawing must be rethought for a digital age. Shorter time frames, tighter budgets and on-the-spot collaboration have outpaced the profession's traditional, labor-intensive "hand graphics" techniques and call for rapid working methods that complement digital work flow.

This paper discusses the author's rapid drawing approach and supportive techniques that have evolved over the last dozen years of urban design projects and charrettes, and the influences of interactions with reportage illustrators, product designers and filmmakers on these ideas and methods. Working with faculty and students through teaching of invited workshops across the United States and abroad has heightened awareness of the uniqueness of this approach, and suggests opportunities for moving applied theory from private practice to academic practice.

1.1 Keywords

drawing, representation, freehand, sketching