Specific Artists and their Technique/Architectural Illustrators

Until about twenty years ago, the business of architecture was practiced by drawing. It was the way a designer communicated their ideas. Doodles became sketches, sketches became roughs, roughs became preliminaries and preliminaries became construction documents. From paper to reality it is an amazing progress. The computer is but one tool in the box that can be utilized to reach success. Much of the traditional hand-drawn world of architecture is going away. As universities direct more attention to digital and computer classes within their curriculums, traditional media and drawing classes have become fewer and fewer.

Drawing skills as a way to communicate one’s ideas effectively cannot be over emphasized. Drawing skills will make you a better architect. Therefore, take the opportunity to train yourself to be a proficient visualizer. The three keys to success are; practice, practice and practice.

The following books listed below are books on architectural illustration, which I have collected over the last fifteen years. I consider them to be of great value in my education as an illustrator. They provide an excellent outline of various successful techniques and styles. I have provided some comments to direct the reader to the books that may interest them the most. Some of these listed are from the twenties and thirties and may be difficult to obtain. My suggestion is to try used bookstores and book search on the web.

The definitive book on the colored pencil and marker technique. See also the older edition from 1981 with the same title.

An excellent book that revisits the traditional Ecole des Beaux Arts way of painting architectural subjects in watercolor wash. Excellent examples of Mr. Schaller’s polished technique.


The second book from Tom Schaller, New York watercolorist. Explores the creative process as it relates to architectural rendering. Gallery of various artists and historical rendering examples.
Frank Lloyd Wright Drawings. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer; Harry N. Abrams. 1990. An excellent compilation of the perspective drawings of the office of Frank Lloyd Wright. Very good reproductions that clearly show Wright’s use of various media including colored pencil and watercolor.

Drawing with Pen and Ink. Arthur L. Guptill; The Pencil Points Press; 1928. The best book you will find on the pen and ink technique. Excellent library of examples. An edition of this book is still in print but the original edition is still the best.


Color in Sketching and Rendering; Arthur L. Guptill. Reinhold Publishing Corp. 1946. A clear and concise text on rendering traditional architectural subjects in color in a variety of media. Excellent full color examples.


Pencil Drawing. Frank M. Rines; Bridgeman Publishing Co. 1940.

Design and Construction in Tree Drawing. Frank M. Rines; Bridgeman Publishing Co. 1936.

Drawing in Lead Pencil; Frank M. Rines. Bridgeman Publishers. 1937. All three of these books offer insight into an amazing full tone pencil style. A recent reprint of Mr. Rines work was published by Sterling Publishing in 1991 and entitled, Landscape Drawing with Pencil.

The originator of the broad point pencil rendering technique, Kautzky expands his expressive style into the watercolor medium.

A continued look at Kautzky’s watercolor style as it relates to entourage.

An excellent how-to book on traditional watercolor technique. This team utilizes some interesting uses of composition and reference to past historical paintings and styles.

Outlines Rochon’s photorealistic use of colored pencil and airbrush to create some truly amazing drawings.

Composition and Rendering; A. Thornton Bishop. John Wiley and Sons, Inc. 1933.
This book details ways to enhance the composition of architectural drawings. Great pencil sketches.

An older book with good rendering examples from the 20’s and 30’s.

Acrylic fine art paintings of various architectural subjects.

Another excellent pencil illustrator demonstrates his technique.

The best book to date fully explaining the charrette process and high-speed design drawing. Excellent resource for those who want to learn to visualize their designs.

Compilations of Various Artists Works
The following books provide excellent visual reference and expose the reader to a diverse body of work. I find the key to becoming more proficient at visualization is to learn from looking at the work of others. I do not see this as copying or a short cut but rather a simple way of answering the many questions
that arise when one starts out trying to learn something new. Train yourself to be a good observer and really see and study reference material as well as the natural world around you…the answers to most questions can be found there.

The Art of Architectural Illustration. Edited by Gordon Grice; Rockport. 1997. Profiles the works of various artists with examples of their work.


Architectural Rendering; Philip Crowe. Quarto Publishing. 1991. Great examples as well as some how-to sections by some of the foremost Illustrators working today.


On Painting in Watercolor and the use of Color

This section lists a small number of fine art type books on watercolor painting. They add great value to the development of style in our business.

Watercolorists Guide to Mixing Color. Jenny Rodwell; North Light Books.1997. The best book I have found on color mixing in watercolor. It contains illustrative examples that are diagramed to show how each of the colors were mixed. Basis for mixing is the Winsor and Newton color range.


A good book in which the artist utilizes a looser style.

Good examples of how to achieve controlled color washes and accurate rendering in watercolor.

The greatest of the American watercolorists, his use of color is an excellent source of inspiration to the artist.

Tom Lynch is the contemporary painter whose work with color I most associate with.

Watercolors on Location. Tom Hill; North Light Books. 1996
This is an excellent book on plein air painting and the logistics of working outside. Tom Hill is on of the great masters of the media and has written many books of which all are valuable.

David Curtis is one in a long line of great British landscape watercolorists. He shows great control with a very subdued palette.

Seng has an unusually rich yet fresh technique. Most of his work is done plein air, which makes it even more impressive.

Loire Valley Sketchbook. Paintings by Fabrice Moireau; St Martins Press. 2003.
Wonderful architectural details and compositions. Beautiful use of color.

Useful Website

www.asai.org
Best resource for information about architectural rendering.
**www.handprint.com**  
- Website on watercolor painting technique.

**www.cgarchitect.com**  
- Resource for digital architectural illustration.

**www.youtube.com**  
- Allows you to look up and view great watercolor and other art demos.

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**Art Supply Outlets**

**www.cheapjoes.com**  
- Excellent quality proprietary brushes.  
- Makes complete line of paints, papers and sketching supplies.

**www.danielsmith.com**  
- Excellent proprietary line of paints.

**www.dickblick.com**  
- Great selection  
- Good place to find odds and ends

**www.jerrysartarama.com**  
- Good selection and range of goods.