

# URBAN SKETCHING

MOD 1 / 2023-2024

Aimee Zvinakis

azvinakis@sequoyahschool.org

Office Hours: Room 7, Wednesday 10:05-10:40



## Course Description

This 5 week studio art class will be focused on practicing daily sketching as a fun and creative activity to capture the people, places and things around us. Urban sketching is the practice of drawing what is around you and documenting these snippets of life in a sketchbook. It does not necessarily imply that you will draw an urban scene but rather you will capture a personal vision of your immediate surroundings. Your sketchbook will be a visual narrative of your everyday life: a cup of coffee, a street you walk by daily, your neighbor's front garden, the view from a corner of your bedroom etc. Urban sketching is a means to becoming more present and observant of the world that surrounds you.

The term "Urban Sketching" came into existence in 2007 by a Seattle based illustrator and journalist and is now a global sketching movement. In this course, we will aim to follow the Urban Sketching manifesto in our sketching practice.

*The Urban Sketching manifesto is as follows:*

- 1. We draw on location, indoors or out, capturing what we see from direct observation.*
- 2. Our drawings tell the story of our surroundings, the places we live and where we travel.*
- 3. Our drawings are a record of time and place.*
- 4. We are truthful to the scenes we witness.*
- 5. We use any kind of media and cherish our individual styles.*
- 6. We support each other and draw together.*
- 7. We share our drawings with an audience.*

In this 5 week class, the expectation is that you will embrace and practice daily sketching and find joy in the process of slowing down with observational drawing by recording aspects of your life in a visual journal. We will begin the course by using fine tip pens, but students will be encouraged to incorporate color into their work with watercolors and colored pencils. The focus of this 5 week class is not on actual skills that are taught in more traditional studio art classes, but to get loose and commit to the practice of daily visual documentation. So much of drawing is simply getting over the fear that one "can't" draw and remembering that it is all about practicing hand/eye coordination. Much of this class will be spent outdoors, except when the weather permits.

In terms of our 4 class meetings a week, we will spend 1 class per week, usually on Monday, practicing new drawing/painting techniques while looking at the work of expert urban sketchers as well as updating our online portfolio with the photos of sketches completed the week before. The remaining 3 classes in the week will be open sketching time around campus or at the Gamble House. Students will be expected to commit to at least 30 minutes of sketching on the weekend for homework. At the end of the course, students will have an online portfolio of their sketches, documenting their 5 week sketch journey.

## Learning Outcomes and Assessment

In this Z block visual arts class, learning outcomes are focused on the **process** rather than the **product**.

- **LO1 Developing Craft:** My sketchbook pages demonstrate a willingness to try out, experiment and practice a variety of art media and compositions. (25%)
- **LO2 Engage and Persist:** I demonstrate persistence in daily sketching with regular practice, even when sketching feels challenging. I am engaged in the act of sketching from life during our class period sessions. (25%)
- **LO3 Documentation:** I update my online portfolio weekly with clear photographs of my sketchbook pages and brief written reflections on my sketching experience. (25%)
- **LO4 Artistic Growth / Accountability:** My work demonstrates artistic growth as I have stretched my artistic skills and committed to the regular practice of drawing from life. I demonstrate personal responsibility and a commitment to learning by using my class time productively and keeping my online portfolio documented in full. (25%)

**Weekly Sketches** -3-4 weekly sketches reflecting 2 hours of work: 2-3 sketches a week during class + 1 sketch on the weekend. Each sketch should demonstrate sustained observation and drawing for at least 30 minutes. After you finish your sketch, you should take a photo at the end of class with the sketch and the view you were sketching.

**Online portfolio “Sketchfolio”** - Each student will document their sketchbook pages weekly with photos posted online on a slideshow portfolio, the “sketchfolio”. We will have 2 class critiques during this Z block course where we will share some drawing highlights with each other and comment on what we notice in the work of others and our own work.

Students will be assessed weekly on the completion of their sketches. This Z block class will have homework on the weekend, which should reflect a minimum of 30 minutes of sustained sketching.

## Course Policies

**Readiness:** Students should come into class ready to learn.

This looks like:

- backpacks outside of the classroom or if its raining, placed against the wall
- sketchbooks out on the table and a pencil ready
- phones in the phone holder with audio notifications turned off\*
- headphones/earbuds out of your ears, put away out of sight

*\*There will be times where we will need to use our phone cameras to document project work or take photos for assignments. I will notify the class when this is the case.*

**Timeliness and bathroom breaks:** Students thrive when they are fully engaged and participate in class learning. No bathroom breaks the first and last 10 minutes of the class period. Excessive tardies or bathroom use will be noted and may result in a formal warning from the school. **Phone use is not permitted on breaks.**

**Assignments:** Any assignments completed after the due date and time will be noted as incomplete or missing on the portal. All work will be submitted on the portal. If I do not have viewing access to your document, it does not count as submitted. We will be using the school's SASSY protocol, where a verbal communication (Level 0) will take place between student and teacher after missing 1 major assignment OR missing 2 minor assignments. If you are not caught up within a week's time, there will be a recorded infraction (Level 1) in the family portal that will be sent out to the student's advisor and parents/guardians.

**Extensions:** In the event of an unanticipated emergency or personal matter that makes it difficult to meet the expected deadline for an assignment, **it is the student's responsibility** to request an extension in person or via email **AT LEAST 24 hours** prior to the deadline. Please see me during office hours or email me if you have any questions or concerns. Ideally, students will reach out to me before a project deadline so we can discuss this together.

## Art Supplies

The school will provide a **watercolor sketchbook** for you where all your sketches will be documented. This sketchbook is for you to keep once the course ends. The school will provide you with pens, drawing pencils, eraser, sharpener, ink and watercolor paints and brushes to use while working at school. For your homework sketches, you will need to use your own art supplies at home but you can keep your weekend sketches simple working with whatever you have available.

## Inclusion & Equity

We will use the following statement drafted by RJ for SIP as it aligns with what we strive for in the Visual Arts Department as well. In striving for a socially just world, it is important that we understand differences in respectful, honest, and meaningful ways. As artists, we have the opportunity to deepen our understanding of differences in access, privilege, personal identity, life experience and more amongst people both within and outside of our Sequoyah community. To create spaces, dialogues, and relationships which honor diversity, equity, and inclusion, and denounce discrimination, we will take guidance from statements in the Sequoyah School High School Parent & Student Handbook, August 2022. Any student with questions or concerns regarding these statements should seek support from an adult.

"Sequoyah strives to create an inclusive environment free of bias and welcoming of diversity. The School respects and affirms many forms of diversity to empower our students and create a culture receptive to multiple perspectives. All members of the community are encouraged to seek to understand and respect the perspectives of others with a sense of inquiry and empathy." (9)

“Discriminatory harassment of a student includes harassment based on actual or perceived physical appearance, sex, race, color, socio-economic status, religion, ancestry, religious creed, national origin, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, medical-related condition, marital status, gender identity, gender expression or veteran’s status, and is strictly prohibited. Discriminatory harassment violates this policy and will not be tolerated. Examples include but are not limited to: making disparaging statements of another group; telling jokes or using epithets, slurs or labels based on the categories listed above; using stereotypes to offend others; or prejudice or discrimination. Unintentional bias can also be harmful to others. Students are encouraged to look beyond the intentions of their actions, to understand the possible impact it has on others.”  
(13)

## Academic Integrity

We’ll use the following statement on academic integrity drafted by the Humanities Department: Students are expected to do their own honest work and give credit to the original ideas of others at all times. As per the Sequoyah handbook, plagiarism is a violation of academic integrity. Sequoyah uses the Modern Language Association (MLA) Style Manual definition of plagiarism. Plagiarism will likely result in no credit for the plagiarized assignment, and may result in loss of credit for the course or further judicial action.

The following are some examples of behaviors that violate the school’s expectations for academic integrity:

- Turning in work that is not one’s own, or only partially one’s own, and claiming it as one’s own. This includes using ChatGPT as well.
- Copying or cutting/pasting the work of anyone else and using it without assigning credit to each thought
- Copying answers from another student’s homework, quizzes or projects
- Reporting an absence or excuse fraudulently to get extra time on an assignment, quiz, or test
- Fabricating evidence in written work

*Note: The instructor may make adjustments to the syllabus by way of additions, changes, and deletions during the course of the year.*