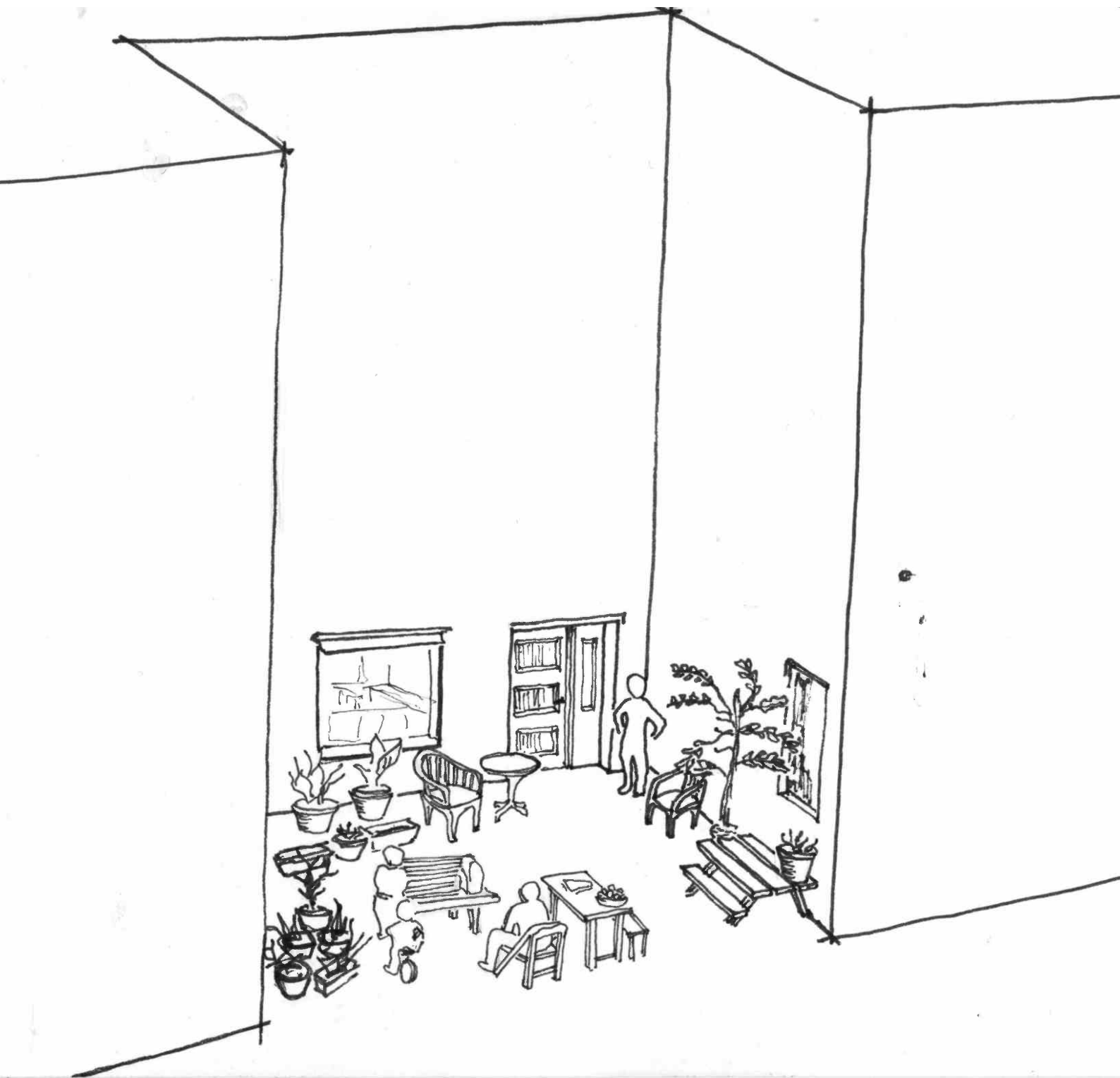


drawing architecture



Research Plan

Urban Architecture Graduation Studio

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MSc3/4 Graduation Studio 2024-25



NOSTOS

*There was an apple tree in the yard —
this would have been
forty years ago — behind,
only meadows. Drifts
of crocus in the damp grass.
I stood at that window:
late April. Spring
flowers in the neighbor's yard.
How many times, really, did the tree
flower on my birthday,
the exact day, not
before, not after? Substitution
of the immutable
for the shifting, the evolving.
Substitution of the image
for relentless earth. What
do I know of this place,
the role of the tree for decades
taken by a bonsai, voices
rising from the tennis courts —
Fields. Smell of the tall grass, new cut.
As one expects of a lyric poet.
We look at the world once, in child-
hood.
The rest is memory.*

—Louise Gluck

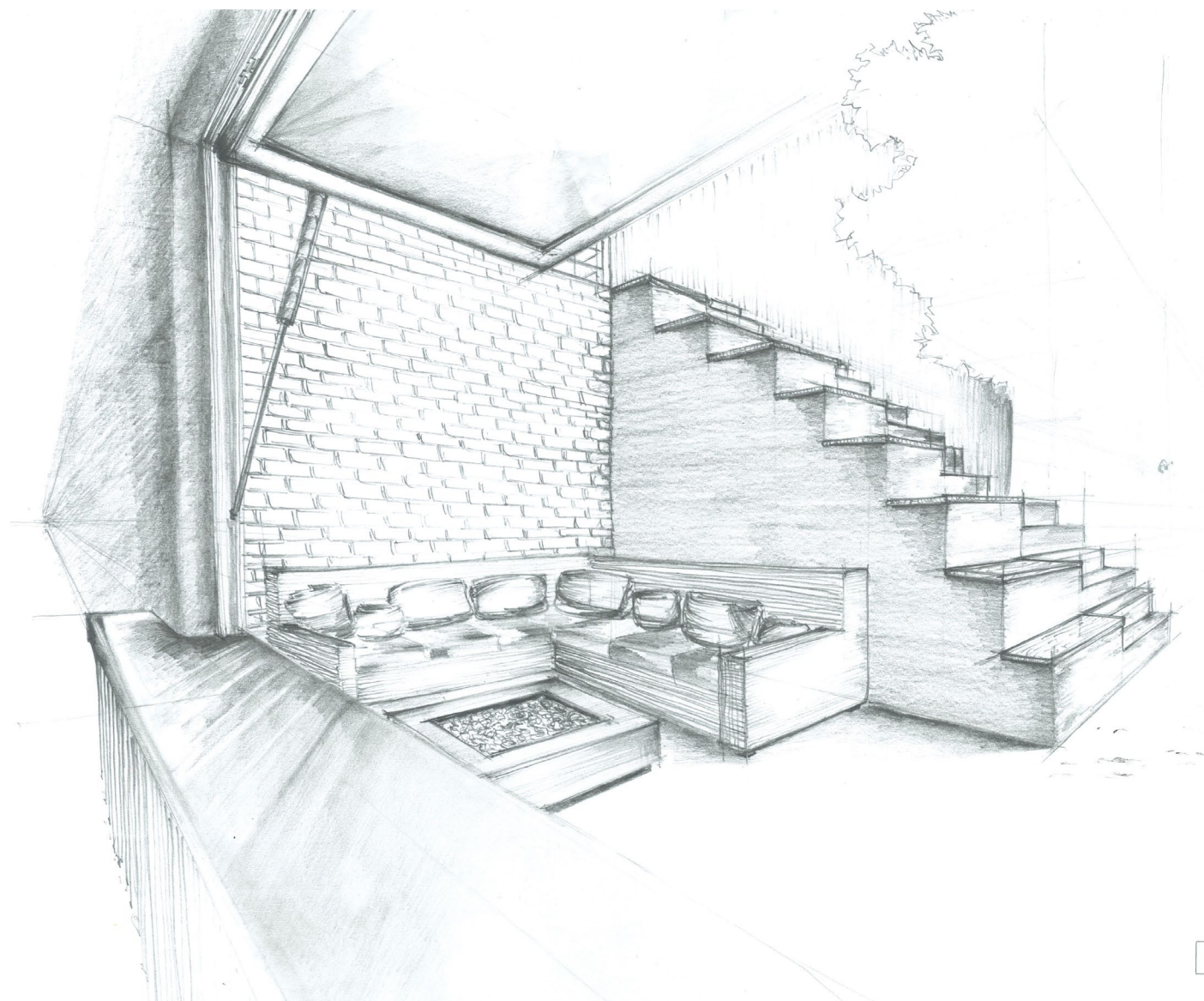


description of themes

'We look at the world once, in childhood. The rest is memory.' I noted this quote a few days ago and I did not know exactly why I found it so fascinating. Is it true that we look at the world only once? Could it be that we get so caught up in the rhythm of our daily lives that we do not take time to observe the world around us anymore? Or perhaps we create such strong visual and mental patterns as kids growing up that we do not need to look beyond the surface. We slowly lose the innate sense of curiosity...

When do you take time to stare at what is right there in front of you, as a baby stares at the ceiling fan? I do that when I am drawing. Sketching. The world stops and I gather the courage to fill a blank page. Line by line, it all starts making sense.

When you take the time to draw, you observe the world differently. All of a sudden, hidden details come to life. Proportions are understood differently. The materiality is expressed. Spaces acquire a new meaning.



How to draw architecture?

How to represent the lived space?

How to render the ideas in our minds?

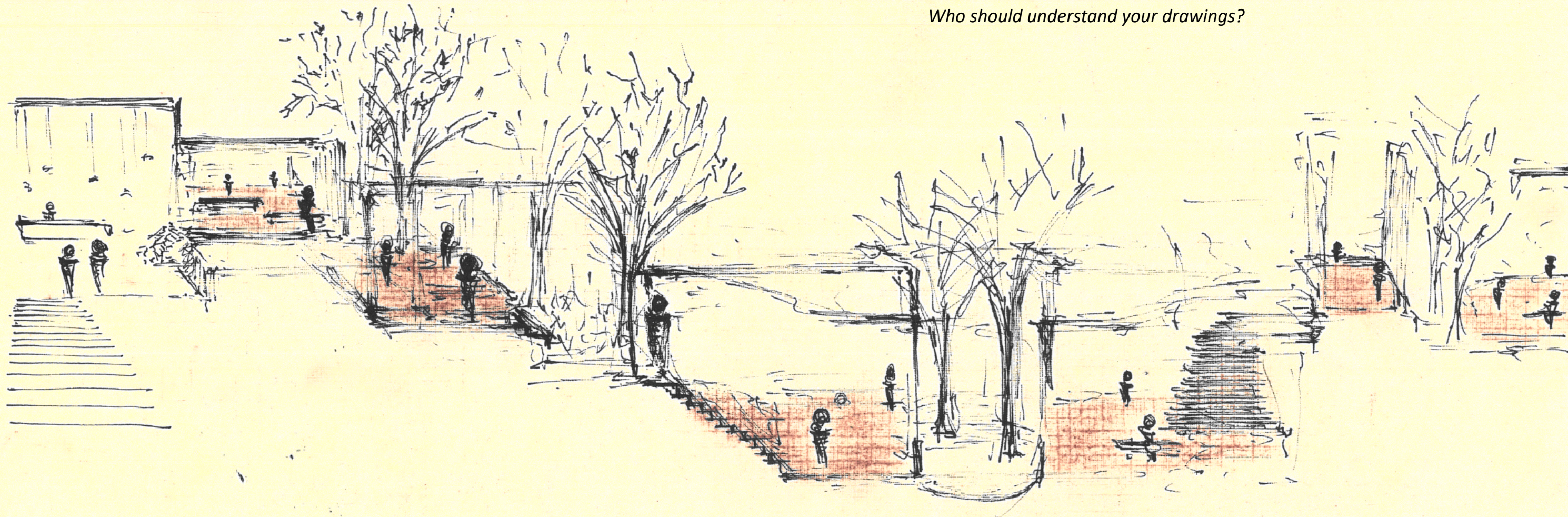
How can you convey a feeling through drawing?

What are the viewpoints that you choose to take?

What places do you choose to draw?

What scale do you choose? How is the drawing sitting in between the boundaries of the paper?

Who should understand your drawings?



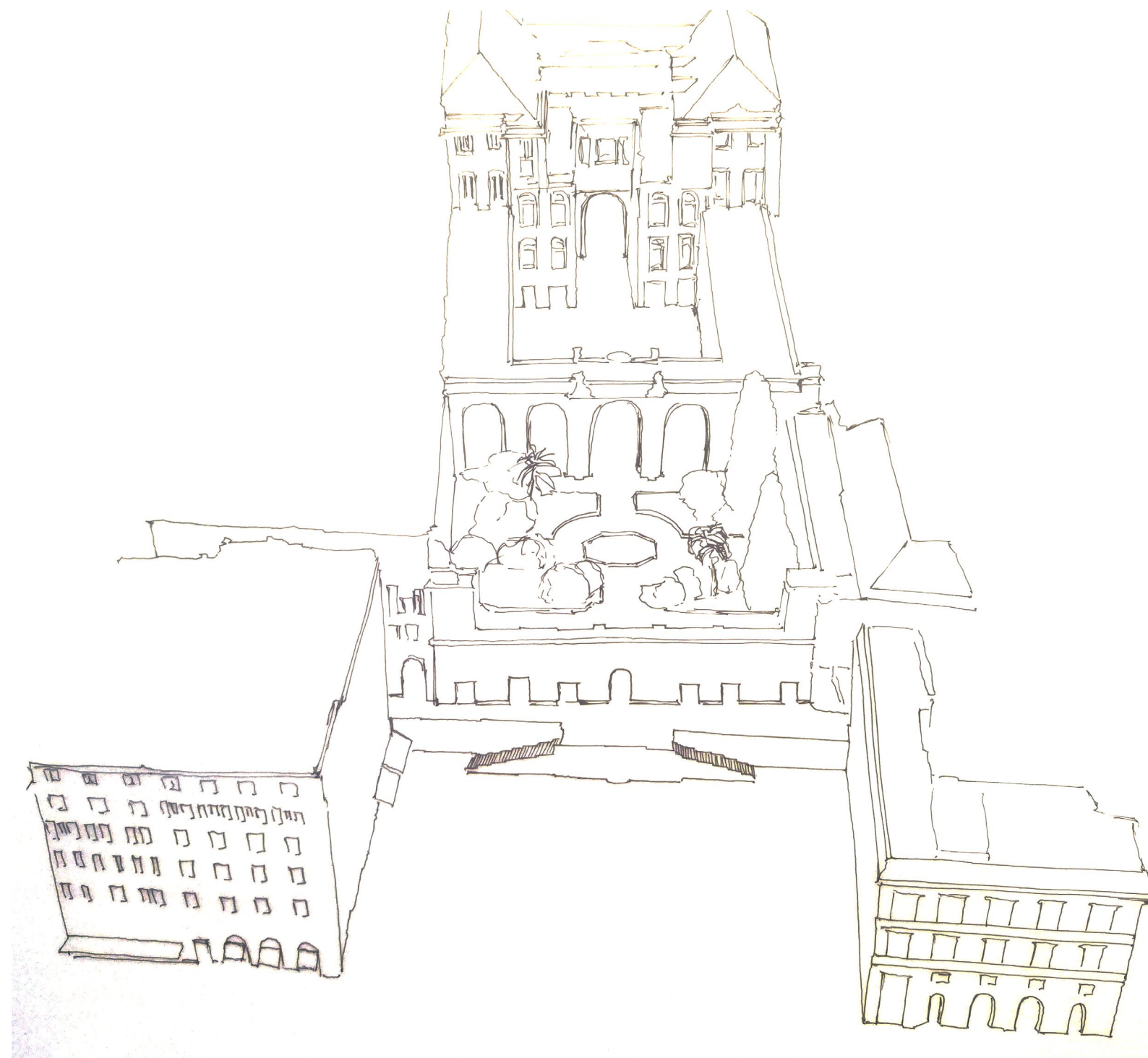
Drawing architecture is an exploration into the urban realm and a gateway towards understanding the context. The eye, mind and hand become intertwined while sketching on paper.

‘Thought happens in the hand. The hand – not the mouth or the foot – is the human tool par excellence – and it is not difficult to imagine how strongly its presence must be felt by anyone genuinely interested in the making of things.’ (Scalbert, 2013)

Drawing is also a transcription or production of thought on paper. According to Howard Gardner (1993), it is an expression of multiple intelligence, which includes both the experience of space as well as the sphere of visual abilities and manual skills. As a skill, sketching is an ability that can be greatly developed and can be improved upon only by practicing it. Above all, drawing has the ability to capture the irreplaceable qualities of places.

While Alain de Botton investigates in his book ‘The architecture of happiness’ how does a beautiful building looks like, I would like to focus my research on what are the inherent qualities of spaces and materials. What is a good space? What makes people feel comfortable? What is ‘home’? What are the elements that create the identity of a place? What feelings do different streets evoke and how do we use the human scale in the urban realm? To what extent can people intervene and appropriate the public space?

A collection of drawings might be the answer to *‘How do different architectural spaces influence us?’*.





'It has provided not only physical but also psychological sanctuary. It has been a guardian of identity. Over the years, its owners have returned from periods away and, on looking around them, remembered who they were.' (Botton, 2006)

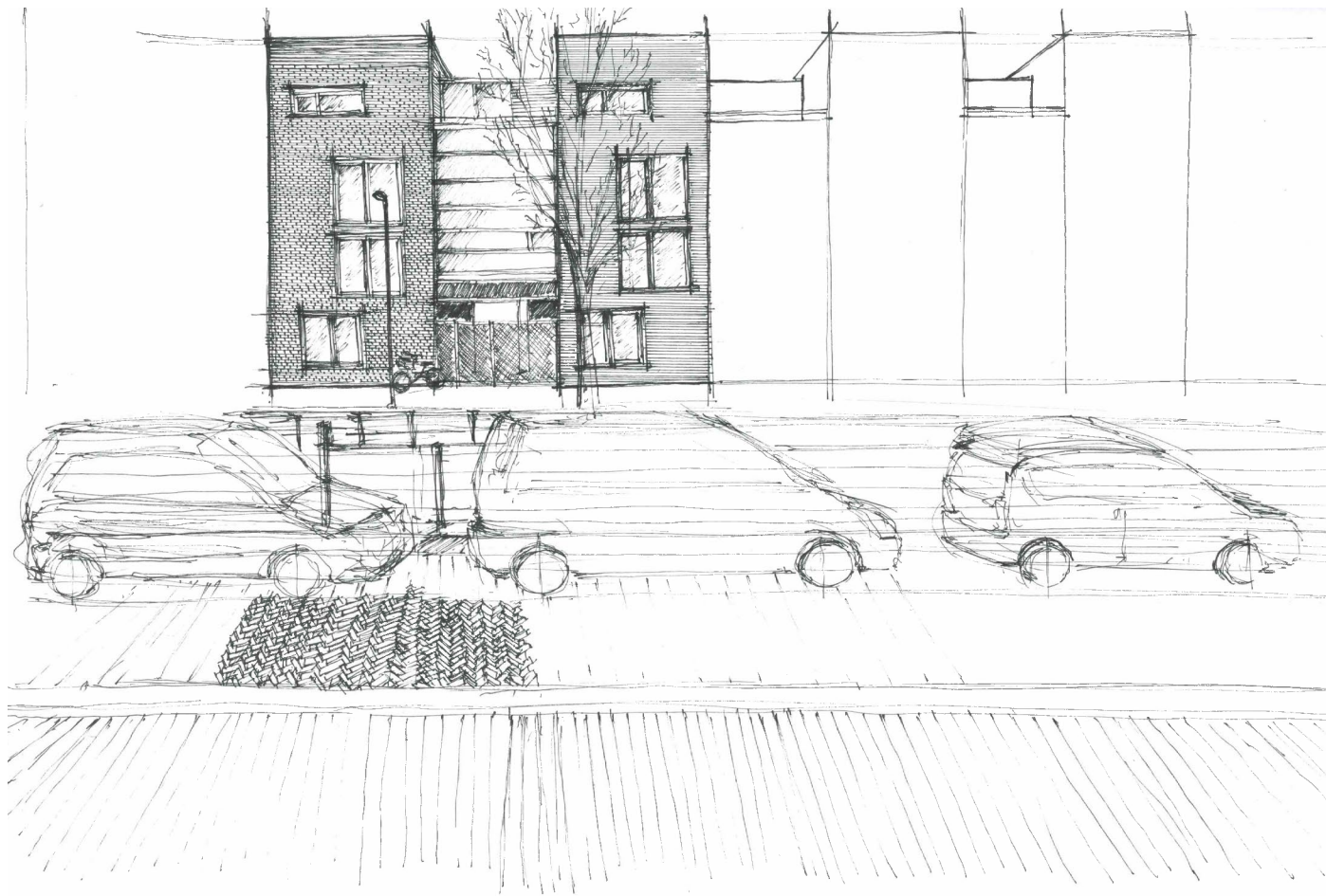
methods and approach

Visual analysis and stories of places could render the emotions and behaviors that different people have in different spaces. The beautiful and unexpected thing that happens while sketching on the street is that you awaken the curiosity of passers-by. Residents suddenly stop next to you and start asking you questions about your drawings, oftentimes accompanied by compliments. This is the perfect opportunity to start a discussion about the place and to find out more stories.

Drawing: I think that sketching is the best tool an architect can use to observe the space. I would like to create a collection of drawings that render streets, houses, interior spaces through which I can better understand the proportions, the human scale, the interventions that took place in the neighborhood.

Text description: I believe text can be very poetic / romantic and it has the power to allow someone to imagine a space. In comparison with drawings, it can formulate a very clear idea of how the space looks and feels like.

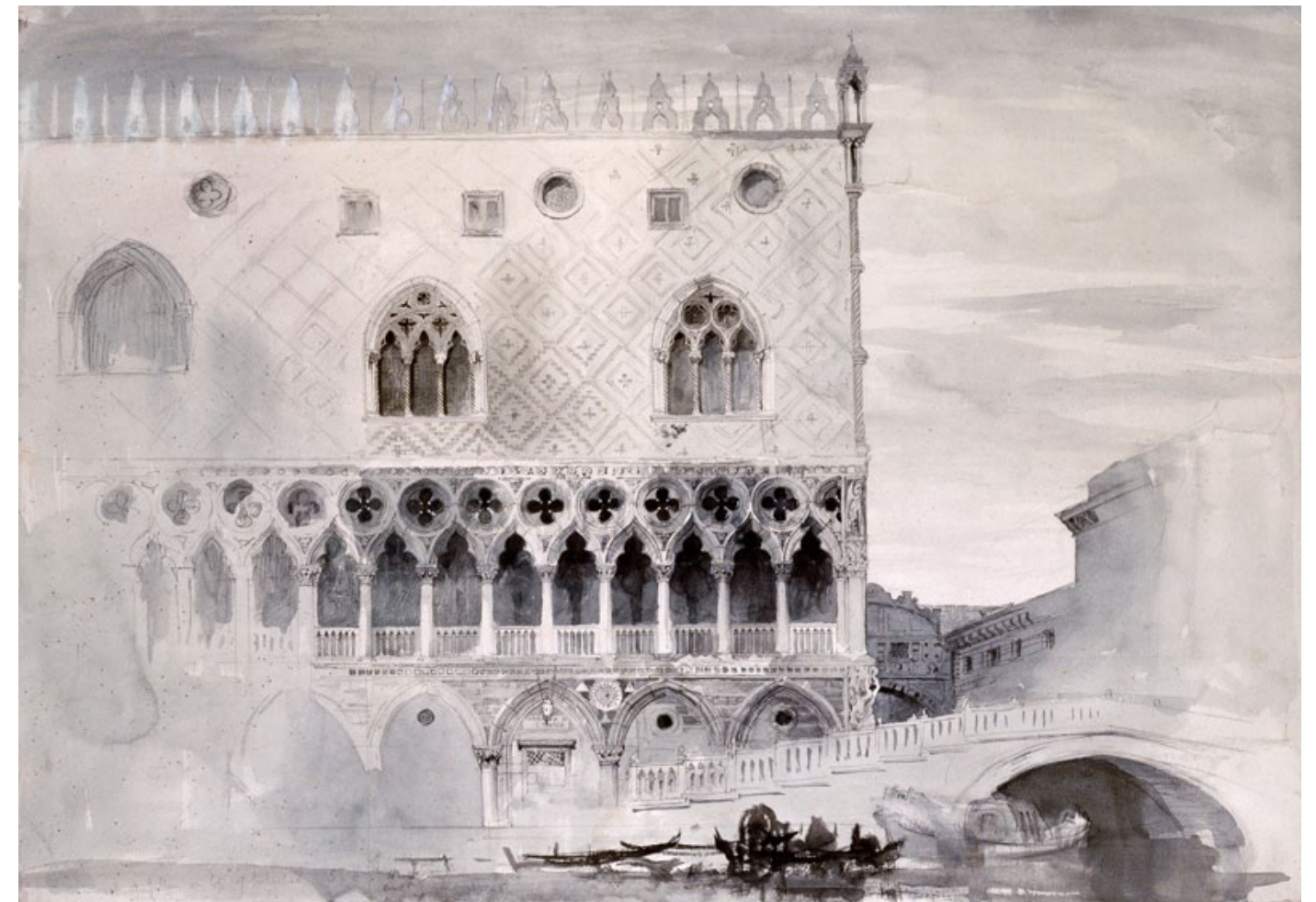
Photographs: in an instance, photographs could be the medium which represents the space closest to reality. It can give a better impression of the atmosphere but can also show the user's perspective.



A drawing can represent a building in a timeless way. A drawing will never capture all the details, but somehow, through abstraction and generalization, it manages to transmit a very coherent story about how the building looks like.

Photography, on the other hand, captures the building in a certain instance with a very specific lens. It becomes clear what time of day it is, even what time of the year. Oftentimes, there are people that create the image of how space is used.

To draw a place, it is necessary to observe it carefully, almost immersing oneself in it, whereas the photograph, in capturing the scene as a whole, does not require one to have the same mental “attachment” to analyse what a place contains (Treib, 2016)



John Ruskin, The Exterior of the Ducal Palace, 1845
Watercolor over graphite on paper

sources and inspirations

Books

Thomas, Helen. 2018. *Drawing Architecture*. London: Phaidon Press Limited.

This book presents inspirational drawings from all times. It showcases the variety of techniques, concepts and personalities of authors that transcend through drawings. It is very useful especially for the description of each drawing which helps me understand the ambitions of the drawings and the techniques used.

Flores, Ricardo, Eva Prats, and Fabrizio Gallanti. 2023. *Drawing without Erasing and Other Essays*. Edited by Moisés Puente. Köln: 2G Essays, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König.

Flores & Prats believe in the capacity of drawing by hand to generate multiple and complex strata of knowledge about a space or a place, so they use it to guide the successive steps in their design process. These essays have captured my interest because they address a lot of the topics that could answer my questions: communicating by hand, choosing the right tools, constructing a drawing.

Campbell, Hugh. 2020. *Space Framed : Photography, Architecture and the Social Landscape*. London: Lund Humphries.

This is a book about photography and how fine-art photographers frame constructed space. This could be a very good book that can answer my question about choosing viewpoints.

Bosman, Lex. 2023. *The Creation of Space : And the Connection between Models and Drawings as Design Tools*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.

The essays in this volume address the problem of translating a three-dimensional space into a two-dimensional drawing. Both drawings and models are tools very often used by architects, but sometimes it is not clear how the two go together to explain the design. I think it would help me to get a better understanding of how we use different tools to represent the creation of space.

Movies

Charlotte's Castle

2023 Documentary 1h 25m

Director: Jamie Kastner

The residents of a building in Toronto become very attached to the historical details of the building they are inhabiting. When a Dutch developer wants to renovate the place, they are revolted to find out that the vacated apartments are stripped of their historical charm. It is very interesting to see how the space in their home influence so much their life and how committed they become to preserve the building.

Rear Window

1954 Thriller/Mystery 1h 52m

Director: Alfred Hitchcock

In Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954), the main character is bound to a wheelchair and observes his neighbors through the apartment windows. Architecture becomes a framing device from which we interpret and analyze the space. It would be a valuable movie for my research because architecture also delineates conceptual and physical spaces, particularly between 'home' and the outside world.

Websites

<https://drawingmatter.org/>

Drawing matter is a repository of new and historical writing on architecture and drawing. It explores the role of drawing in architectural thought and the Drawing Matter Collection houses many thousands architectural drawings assembled over the past 25 years.

<https://divisare.com/>

Divisare is an online archive of contemporary architecture. It is the result of a careful selection and classification of projects over the last 20 years. It has many sections of interest, including 'architects' notebooks', 'architectural drawings', 'architectural models', 'photo essays'.

Running around until you fall short of breath. It is a huge space that you could get lost in. As a kid, all of it is your playground. There are tires, chairs, bundles of hay, a lonely caravan, columns that run from the ground all the way up to the ceiling. You don't know anything about what this place used to be, about the number of workers who used to make the tin cans. What a strange feeling to understand how the same space with factory lines and big machines is now a playground where kids are freely running around.

It's a wonder that nothing is falling. In an enclosed space, there are so many things lying around, and multiple levels upon which you could walk on. On the back wall it seems to be an oversized bookcase. But the atmosphere feels nothing like one would envision a library. There are corrugated steel walls that probably come from a shipping container, a wooden bridge made of scrap pallets and beams and so many tires on the cold concrete floor. There is a sign in the distance that reads 'Vroem Fabriek'. Underneath it, there is a competition podium made from pallets and some kids are jumping on top of it. This is what makes this place special. It is full of playfulness and creativity. Among chaos, kids are free. They are happy.





‘Belief in the significance of architecture is premised on the notion that we are, for better or for worse, different people in different places – and on the conviction that it is architecture’s task to render vivid to us who we might ideally be.’ (Botton, 2006)



