

Power up! New and quick ways to power up your creativity and approach to making art

Creative resource pack



Image: Print from showing a life drawing class at the Royal Academy, Somerset House, London, 1808.

Credit: [RIBA Collections](#)

This is not the only way to draw!

Introduction



Image: Students in a studio, Chelsea School of Art, London, 1965.

Credit: [RIBA Collections](#)

Art can happen anywhere, not just in an art studio.

In this resource we use a range of media and techniques. We understand not everyone will have access to the same equipment so we will suggest basic materials throughout. Using images from the RIBA's world-class architectural collections and the work of architects, we will show you step by step how to engage or re-engage with your creative side.

There is no single way to make art and it can take place anywhere. Whether an experienced professional or amateur who hasn't attempted any artwork for a while, practicing new techniques or familiar ones in different ways can help refresh your practice and provide an easy way of getting back into creativity. We can break down artistic boundaries, communicate new ideas, think differently and have fun through techniques that don't rely on drawing the world or our ideas exactly as they seem. After all, not everyone draws the same way and we all have individual styles. Are you ready?

New ideas and techniques



Image: Queen Elizabeth II in front of a display of drawings from the RIBA Collections during the official opening of the RIBA's Heinz Gallery, London, 1972.

Credit: [RIBA Collections](#)

Remember you're creating art primarily for yourself, it doesn't have to go on public display.

Feel free to try as many or as few ideas as you want from this pack. Attempt them in any order. We encourage you to share your work: send originals or photographs of your work to relatives, colleagues and friends; perhaps make it a social activity even if you're not physically together by making art at the same time virtually via video call or telephone; share your work online to inspire others and get feedback from friends or even the world. If you are on social media, use the #ArchitectureAtHome hashtag and include [@RIBALearning](#) to your picture on Twitter.

These activities have no set time, but to shake up your practice or fit it easier in your timetable, see how you get along with set times. Challenge yourself and limit your art making to 10, 5 or even 1-minute sessions.

Resource pack techniques

- A. Draw with an eraser
- B. Shadow drawings
- C. Draw at a different scale
- D. Draw with scissors
- E. Go bold
- F. Pencil on a stick
- G. Draw with stitches
- H. Plasticine – model making with fingers
- I. Draw with tape

A. Draw with an eraser



Image: (left): Electric eraser. Credit: [RIBA Collections](#)

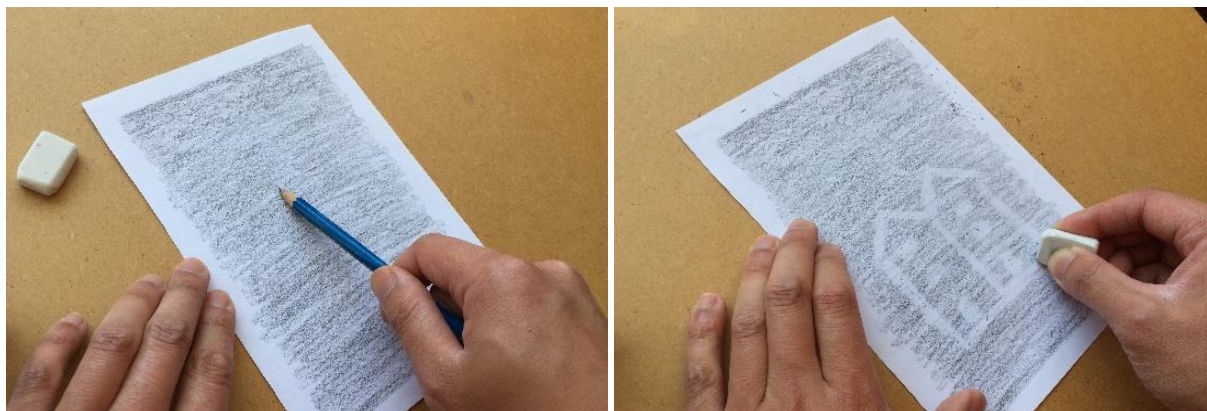
Image: (right): Holly Villas, Goudhurst, Kent. Credit: [RIBA Collections](#)

What you will need: Pencil, eraser and paper

Electric erasers were useful for rubbing out large areas of pencil. They operated by rotating the rubber end when pressed on. This eraser belonged to the architect [Carl Franck](#) (1904-85) and was manufactured by Ariel in the 1950s. Such equipment was used by designers and artists in the studio and is now obsolete, but erasers are still useful today in other settings. Using an ordinary eraser, we can do more than remove our mistakes. Use this technique to actively draw, changing not our technique – rubbing the surface of a piece of paper – but our intentions.

Once you've finished, think about:

- Why not try this with different colours of paper, or even different types of paper like newspaper or a page of a magazine?
- Is your drawing how you imagined it? How does it surprise you?



1. On a piece of paper, use the side of the pencil - preferably a dark one like a B6 or B5 shade pencil - and rub over several times until the paper is covered in graphite. Think of a subject or a shape to draw, use the eraser to draw it into the paper. We used an image (right) of a house in Kent, from our image database [RIBApix](#). You are drawing by removing rather than adding. Using an eraser is not precise and it will lend itself to abstraction, so keep your idea simple and focus on the outlines.



2. The eraser will get dirty, so clean it regularly as you are drawing by rubbing it on a scrap piece of paper or rub it clean with your finger. This was drawn on A6 size paper, to create more intricate eraser drawings draw on larger pieces of paper or use small blobs of Blu-Tack or putty to erase in finer details.

Credit: RIBA Collections and Wilson Yau, RIBA

B. Shadow drawings



Image (left): Park Hill Estate, Sheffield: an access deck, 1965. Credit: [RIBA Collections](#).

Image (right): Redrawn to show just shadows. Credit: Wilson Yau, RIBA

What you will need: Paper and pencil/pen

Architecture, nature and everyday objects can cast strong shadows that photographers and artists use to add drama or depth to an image. Why not just draw the shadows in a scene? In this case, we drew the striking shadows created by the concrete balustrades on the access decks of the Park Hill Estate (above image).

Firstly, look around you, are there any shadows in the space you are in? They will probably be most obvious near a window or a lamp. Alternatively, look outside or from books and online sources like [RIBApix](#) for images. Artist Emma Stibbon traced shadows in her garden to create pieces of art using ink, find out more via the [Big Draw](#) blog.

Once you've finished, think about:

- Why not use manipulate shadows further by using artificial lights from a torch or mobile phone?
- You could draw the shadows from the same scene or object at different times of the day – how do they compare?
- What if the shadows themselves can be made into temporary art? Arrange objects to exaggerate shadows and curate a still life with unusual shadows.

C. Draw at a different scale



Image: Badges on sale in Carnaby Street, London, 1967.

Credit: [RIBA Collections](#)

Refresh how you draw by going much larger or smaller than you would normally, or at least avoid standard A4. Badges, stamps and postcards can be beautiful objects and prove artworks can be small. It can be intimidating being given a large sheet of paper, so why not fold your paper into halves, quarters or smaller, or cut small pieces to draw on.

Once you've finished, think about:

- What is the smallest paper or canvas you can draw on? Some are readymade, such as a Post-It note or the back of a business card.
- Try creating a series of drawings on small paper each with a different detail or part of the same object or scene, put them together, what do they look like as a group?
- You could experiment drawing on different shaped paper, e.g. circular or star shaped- what affect does it have on your drawing?

D. Draw with scissors

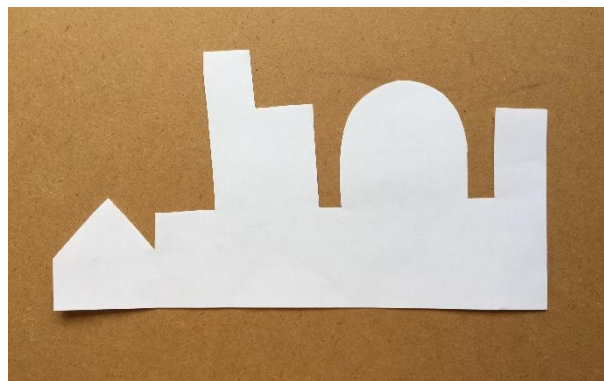


Image (left): London skyline. Credit: [RIBA Collections](#).

Image (right): Skyline drawn freehand with scissors. Credit: Wilson Yau, RIBA

What you will need: Paper, scissors/craft knife and pencil/pen

Drawing with scissors creates a silhouette, which you can do freehand with scissors or draw in pencil or pen first, just make sure all the pieces are connected somehow unless you intend to stick the pieces onto another piece of paper – ideally use a different coloured background paper for contrast. When choosing a subject, find something that has a clear or easily identifiable outline - buildings and skylines are particularly suitable.

If this technique feels unfamiliar, start off by cutting basic shapes instead. Folding paper into halves, and quarters before cutting are good ways to get mirror images and to reduce the amount of cutting.

Once you've cut out your shape, you can work further by cutting in the details, for a building this may be openings to represent windows and doors or opening shaped like any of the building's architectural details. These can be cut by scissors, but this can be done by slightly folding the paper to snip a hole, or insert a pointed object like a compass, pen or knitting needle to allow the scissors to cut into the paper. Craft knives can be used instead of scissors.

Once you've finished, think about:

- What would it look like using different kinds of papers or even ones with a pattern printed/drawn on them?
- Why not create several cut outs and combine them to create a larger image?
- How does the finished piece look compared to the subject you looked at or your design?
- Combining it with another media to create a collage.

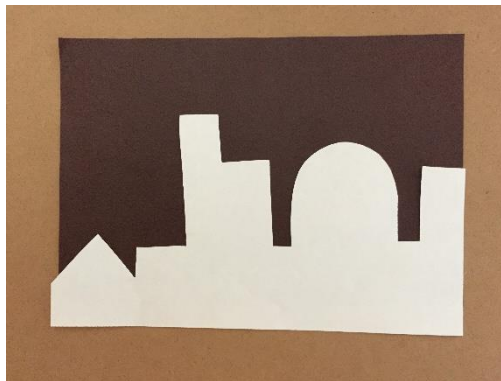
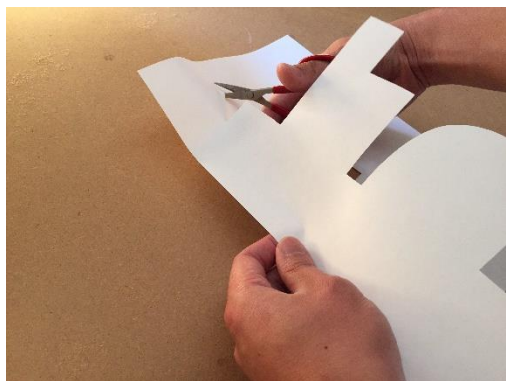


Image (left): Use scissors to cut freehand or draw in pencil the silhouette design.

Image (right): Use another piece of paper with a contrasting colour can be used for the background for you completed piece

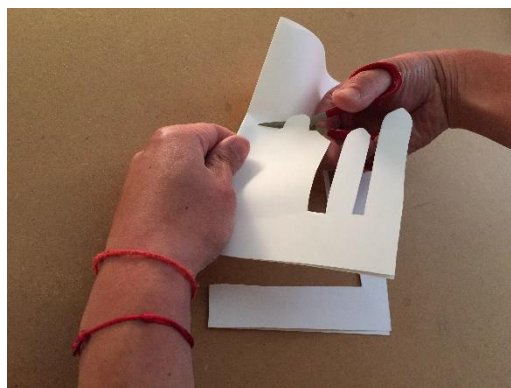
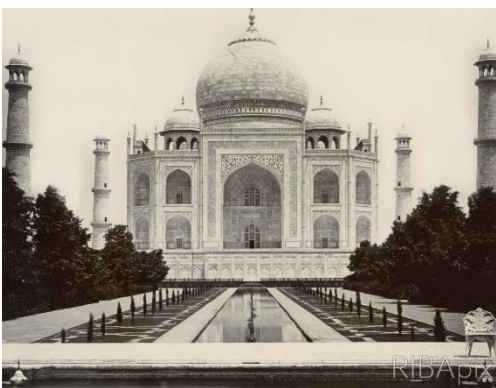


Image (left): Taj Mahal, Agra. Credit: [RIBA Collections](#)

Image (right): For symmetrical subjects, fold the paper in half and cut out the silhouette of one side of your subject.

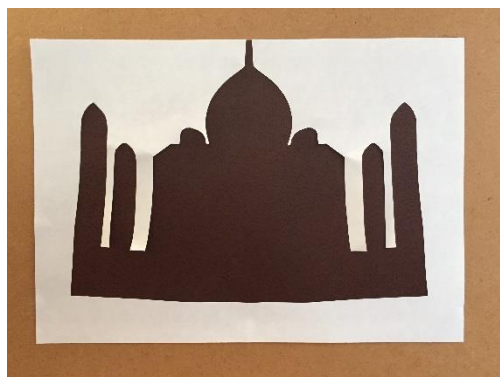
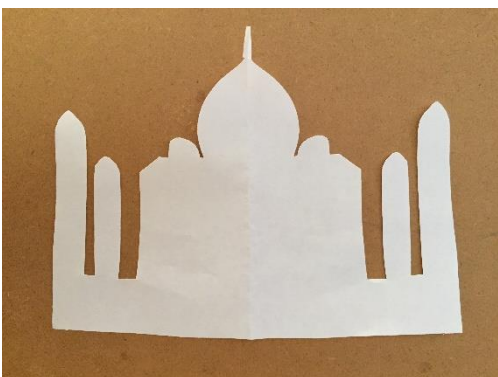


Image (left): Open your cut out and you have your completed image drawn with scissors

Image (right): The offcuts from your drawing is also a piece of art, use coloured paper behind to create a contrasting background. Credit: Wilson Yau, RIBA

E. Go bold



Image (left): Blue pattern incorporating house motifs, by Oliver Jasper Cox, 1951. **Credit:** [RIBA Collections](#)

Image (right): Design for a kitchen by Andrew Holmes, 1981. **Credit:** [RIBA Collections](#)

What you need: Paper and coloured pencils

Use blocks of colour to draw. Or just draw in one colour. We live in a world full of colour and different tones and this can be distracting. Why not simplify what you see and focus on the forms by drawing completely in one colour to change the mood or feel of your drawing like Oliver Jasper Cox (above left). Use the different tones of a single colour to convey the relative light and darkness of what you see or imagine.

Alternatively, reduce everything you see into a few colours such as Andrew Holmes (above right), and you don't need to use the colours you see – why not colour code what you see by type, material or even personal preference?

Once you've finished, think about:

- Do colours influence your mood or perception of an image?
- Could changing the colours you use change your drawing?
- What kind of colours have you chosen and why?
- How would you describe the colours, are they vibrant or sombre?

F. Pencil on a stick

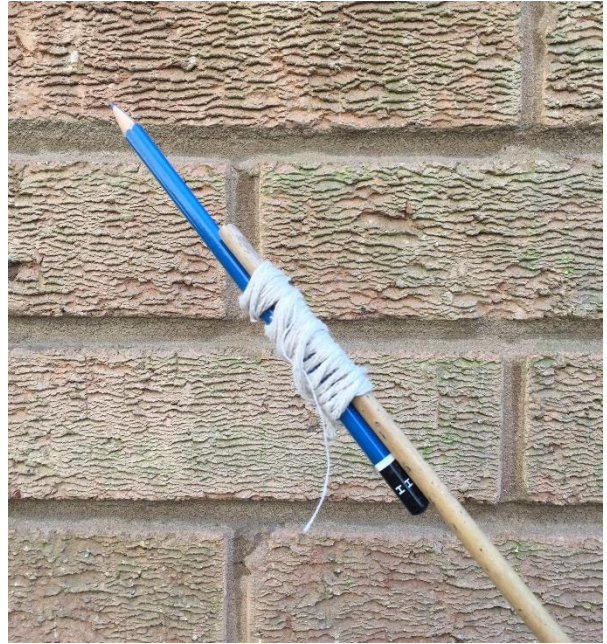


Image (left): Drawing using pencils on sticks, at the RIBA, London. **Credit:** Elizabeth Adams, RIBA

Image (right): Closeup of your future new drawing instrument, a pencil on a stick. **Credit:** Wilson Yau, RIBA

What you will need: Pencil/pen, large paper, string/tape and a stick/bamboo cane

Using a large stick or cane as your drawing instrument can change the way you create. To create the marks you can use a pencil, but a piece of chalk or even a paint brush can be used too, as long as it can be attached to one end of the stick or cane with tape or string. Hold the other end of the stick or cane to direct it to start drawing across a piece of paper, you may need to use both hands to control it. Use masking tape or place objects like books to hold the corners of the paper down. Large paper is best for this; if you haven't got any, just stick several small pieces together with tape on one side along the edge and turn over.

You may find this task helps to focus your attention on holding and directing a large object, liberating you from concentrating too much and making it look accurate.

Once you've finished, think about:

- Did you enjoy drawing like this?
- How do you imagine drawing with a longer or shorter stick would be like?
- Do you think with more practice you would draw differently?

G. Draw with stitches



Image (left): Adding artistic stitches to an existing image, a postcard of a kiosk. Credit: [RIBA Collections](#).

Image (right): A slightly different but similar drawing is created on the reverse. Credit: Elizabeth Adams.

What you will need: A printed image, pencil/pen, needle, compass/pin, thread of any kind colour and scissors

Here we used a printed image, in this case a postcard, though old photographs, magazine cut outs or print outs from the internet could be used too. If these are not available, just draw something on paper. Use any colour thread to sew into the paper, remembering to tie a knot at the end to stop the thread coming loose and do the same once finished with the other end. For an image on thick paper or card, it might be useful to punch small holes, using a pin or compass, before sewing for the needle and thread to pass through.

Your thread can either follow the outlines and highlight details of your design, or it can add new patterns or forms to a pre-printed image.

Once you've finished, think about:

- The tactile qualities of your work - could you draw in thread to create different textures, by layering stitches or stitching in a pattern?

H. Plasticine – model making with fingers



Image (left): Model of a house at Oxshott, made of clay, wood and glaze, 1920. **Credit:** [RIBA Collections](#).

Image (right): Plasticine architectural models made in a Memory Café workshop with the RIBA and Age UK

You can also create in 3D. Plasticine, clay, putty/Blu-tack or even dough can be modelled with just fingers into shapes. Start by manipulating a small amount of material into a cube or cuboid. This could easily be adapted to become the basic shape of your house or even create small models to recreate your own street. Rolling material between the palms of your hands will create cylinders, or sphere if the movements are circular. Use a toothpick or pencil to scrap in details like windows or to add texture. If you're not sure about the roof shape of your building, use your imagination or go online and check the satellite view of [Google Maps](#).

You can also create your own models of objects or buildings you've visited or something completely imaginary. Plasticine and putty/Blu-tack remain malleable and can be reused later, whilst clay will air dry and kept indefinitely in its final shape.

Once you've finished, think about:

- Why not try to create the same building in both 2D and 3D and see how they compare? Do you notice anything different about them?
- Do you prefer working in 3D or 2D?
- Could you add texture to your model by pressing a side of your material on different surfaces, for example a brick wall or wood? How does it change your model?

I. Draw with tape

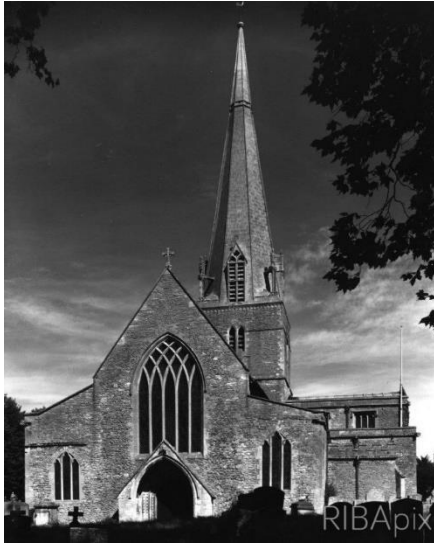


Image: St Mary, Bampton, Oxfordshire
Credit: [RIBA Collections](#)

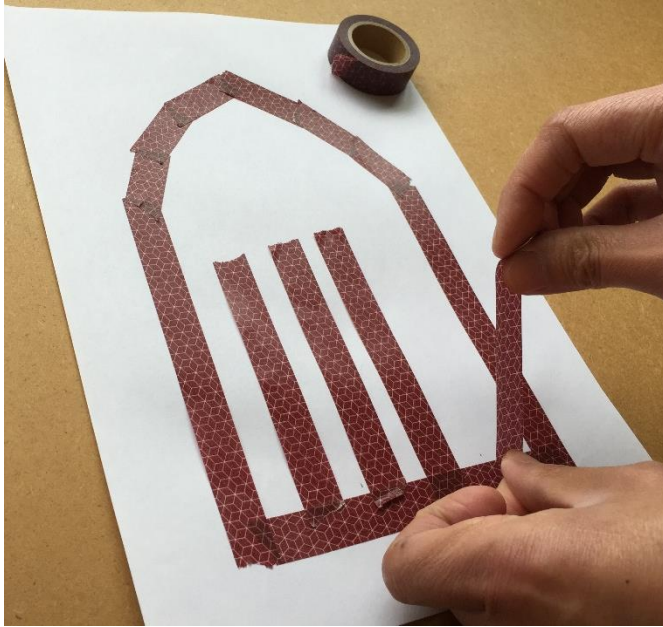
What you will need: Tape, paper and a pencil

Before you draw with tape, look for strong lines in your chosen subject or simplify the forms you see. Alternatively, think of some simple shapes or create your own design and pattern. Tape is a bold way to create images. There are different types of tape, the easiest to use is brightly patterned washi tape or plain masking tape, as they can be ripped easily from the roll. Make sure there's contrast between your tape and paper, so on white paper use colourful or dark tape, if using masking tape or light-coloured tape use a darker paper.

If you have only white paper and clear sticky tape – the most likely stationary at home – you can create drawings with the help of a pencil, just shade over the tape and the taped areas will remain white/clear. Carefully remove the sticky tape from the paper to reveal the 'white' image beneath. If you use water-based paint instead of pencil, e.g. watercolour, the paint will not hold to the taped areas and the tape can be left on the paper.

Once you've finished, think about:

- What do you think of the result, how could it be developed further?
- Was using this technique easier or more difficult than you expected? What were the challenges?



Images: The main window of St Mary, Bampton, and its tracery pattern drawn in short lengths of overlapping coloured tape.

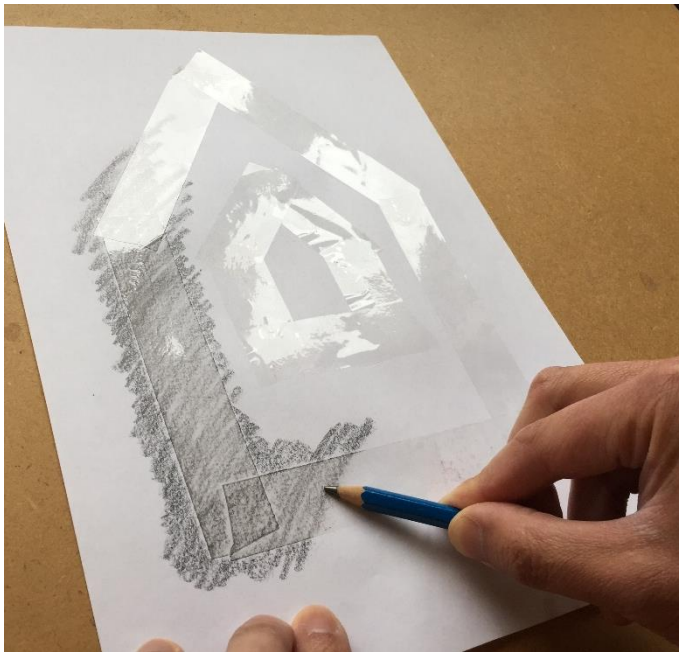


Image (left): The main part or nave of St Mary, Bampton, drawn in clear tape which is then shaded in using a dark pencil

Image (right): The tape is then carefully removed to reveal a reverse image using negative space.

Credit: Wilson Yau, RIBA

Additional resources

Online

Big Draw

The Big Draw is a visual literacy charity that promotes the universal language of drawing as a tool for learning, expression and invention. Their website has lots of ideas, links and activities.

<https://thebigdraw.org/>

RIBApix

Search RIBApix, the RIBA's online image database, for over 100,000 inspiring images on architecture.

<https://www.architecture.com/image-library/ribapix.html>

Victoria and Albert Museum

The Victoria and Albert Museum also has a collection of half a million images on art, design and architecture.

<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/>

Additional ideas

The Barings Foundation has a blog post with links to a range of useful links to creative resources: 'COVID-19: Arts and creative resources for older people (and anyone else) in isolation'

<https://baringsfoundation.org.uk/blog-post/covid-19-arts-and-creative-resources-for-older-people-and-anyone-else-in-isolation/>

Drawings, books and photographs

Bookshop

RIBA Bookshops also has a range of books about drawing.

<https://www.architecture.com/riba-books/search.html?searchterm=drawing>

RIBA Library and collections

The RIBA Collections has the world's greatest architectural collections, with books, drawings, photographs and models available from the RIBA Library, 66 Portland Place, London, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Free entry.

Please check opening hours and access policies before visiting.

<https://www.architecture.com/about/riba-library-and-collections>

Alternatively, view online some of the highlights from the collections via RIBApix.

Pack created by the RIBA (RIBA Learning), 2020.

More online resources available from www.architecture.com/Learning

Twitter: @RIBALearning

Instagram: @riba