



# COMMUNICATING ENERGY



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# OBSERVATION

In a world where every day feels rushed and schedules are jam packed, one's surroundings often become a backdrop for everyday life. Taking the time to observe can lead to a greater understanding of the experiences that shape place and allow one to create their own personal meaning within it. One of the best ways to slow down one's eye and observe is through drawing. Drawing from observation is a method of seeing, paying attention to detail, and gaining an understanding of the way people and places interact with one another. Throughout the year I observed and drew in variety of locations on campus. Through design my drawings have now taken form as posters in which I explore methods of meaningful observation and a way to capture the energy that life on the University of Michigan campus embodies. My posters act as advertisements for places around campus, yet call attention to feelings and aspects of the place that may go unnoticed.

Subjects for my pieces include libraries, coffee shops, street corners, the diag, and the campus museum. I want my subjects to seem unique by telling stories and creating a conversation both within the piece and with the viewer. Through digitally layering my observational drawings I am able to capture the beauty and intricacies of each setting as well as the people and action that transform them.



# DRAWING

As an artist I have a strong background in drawing and sketching. Recreating a place or a person through my own eyes and with my own emotions excites me. Once I begin to draw a person he or she takes on a new life in my imagination. An artist always must choose consciously what he or she is representing whether it be an object, a place, or a person. Realizing that I have such control of my representations, I set out to choose an assortment of settings on the University of Michigan campus to create my series of works. I draw quickly with active gestures, and through these pieces I aimed to refine my style of

observational drawing and explored a variety of mediums including pencil, pen, and oil pastels.

My drawings are responsive to my surroundings and my thoughts. I believe that drawing is one of the most raw forms of expression. While many artists draw as a means of sketching and planning for a greater piece, drawings are where ideas take on life and form. They are the original idea that finally has come out of ones mind and taken form on a surface.



Pierpont Commons, North Campus



Bursley-Baits Bus

# PRECEDENTS

In creating my drawings and contextualizing my project, I studied the work of many artists. I looked at drawings by expressionist artists such as Alberto Giacometti, Ernst Kirchner, and Willem de Kooning. In studying these precedents I explored forms of mark making and of creating contrast within my drawings. By using cross-hatching and layering different mediums in my drawings I have experimented with both color and the organization of my compositions. I also sought to make my drawings feel complete to the viewer and find the difference between sketching and drawing. I have been influenced by the work of George Bellows, an American artist who depicted many gritty scenes of New York and of boxing matches. The subjects he chose to depict made him a “reporter of life” and he was always focused on finding a hidden story or a spectacle within a mass of humanity. He captures emotions within groups of people many of which are in public locations and records their faces immersed in the activities and excitement surrounding them. I have looked to find the same meaningful subject matter in my work and capture the emotions of people in the same way that he has.



Ernst Kirchner



Alberto Giacometti



George Bellows



Willem de Kooning



# PEOPLE

My drawings all take on real life study and a consciousness of an experience being created in a place. People become a dominant force in my pieces and the way they interact with their surroundings gives meaning to the work. A person's facial expressions and stride as he or she inhabits a place take the form in the marks on my paper. I am interested in the way groups of people occupy a space and how being in a crowd evokes an emotion in that environment. I also want to capture the variety of emotions that are present on our campus and how certain locations have associations with these feelings. For example the undergraduate library on a Sunday afternoon has a melancholy feeling as stressed students labor for hours over their work for the upcoming week. Differently, a coffee shop such as Espresso Royale, which is located in the center of campus, has a much more vibrant and energetic atmosphere as people are constantly passing through in a rush or meeting to catch up with friends.

Through my observations of people and places around campus I compiled a library of people. While I have not captured everyone on campus by any means, my small slice of the university population represents those who inhabit the places in my drawings. These people are the life and essence of any activity occurring within my pieces and I have explored a number of techniques in crafting them. Many of my people are drawn in a just a few seconds with very few lines. On others I spent a number of minutes crafting and shading their faces and bodies. In some cases I created multiple drawings of the same person as he or she moved over time.



Shapiro Undergraduate Library, Central Campus



Espresso Royale, South University

# MOVEMENT and ENERGY

As a method of observing people, I worked on ways to convey motion and the passage of time through a series of gestural drawings. Gestural drawings use quick meaningful lines to build the feeling of the person and the way their body is moving. While a drawing typically captures a single moment on paper, my pieces intend to create a sense of the experience. I digitally layered a number of drawings on top of one another, through the use of Photoshop, to create movement, action, and depth within the scene. The repetition of forms and figures vary in each environment; however, they are intended to show life in these spaces and how people and their interactions transform the space. By digitally layering my work I am able to easily alter the compositions in conjunction with my intentions for what the piece communicates.



Egon Schiele



Oskar Kokoschka



Engineering Arch,  
Central Campus

The drawings I have done of people have taken a variety of forms, the most prominent being gestural contour drawings. I feel that the contour drawings allow me to capture the essence of the person in as short as a few seconds. The drawings can then be easily layered and manipulated. I found there are a number of ways I can use these contours in my drawings by altering color and contrasting them with any less dynamic figures that may sit behind in the background of the image.

In my exploration of gestural drawing I have looked at the work of a variety of artists to inform my practice. Drawings by Pablo Picasso, Egon Schiele, Oskar Kokoschka and Frederick Franck are among many whose lines and methods have inspired my work. Examples of their linear qualities can be seen in their works on the left. Line can be very powerful and I have sought out to find how my lines can be purposeful and constructive.

# ADVERTISEMENTS

As I created a series of drawings and digitally altered pieces, I began to consider the purpose and meaning behind my works. I feel that my conscious observation acts as a means of recording an experience and telling a story of these people and places. Through my drawings I aimed to inform the viewer about these places and the energy and environment they take on once inhabited by people. In this way, my drawings can be considered advertisements. However, they do not aim to advertise and promote the place but rather the experience of being in this place and what it has to offer. Such experiences may include the gathering of people at the University of Michigan Museum of Art to discuss works, or the friendly man who sells hot dogs on the corner of South University.

Due to my interests and skills in graphic design and typography, I am including typography in my drawings as a way to create a visual message about the experiences I am depicting. The text will give information that will guide the viewer to certain aspects of my drawings or imply situations that one may find in this specific place. Through the inclusion of the typography I am able to add this new design element into my work and find a way to transform my layered drawings into posters. I can use my posters to connect to my viewer because I am sending him or her a message. The role of a poster is to keep the viewer interested as long as it takes to convey a message. The text in each piece is intentional and meant to reflect the energy and meaning of what I am depicting.



Diag Dogs, South U and East U



Pierpont Commons, North Campus



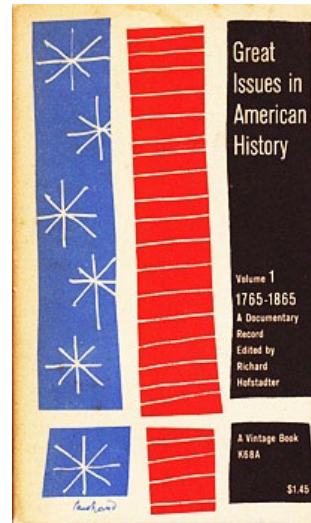
University of Michigan Museum of Art, Central Campus



# POSTERS



Jules Cheret



Paul Rand



Heiri Steiner



David Kramer

In studying the work of graphic designers I looked at a variety of poster styles from the past century. I greatly admire work by artists such as Jules Cheret and Alphonse Mucha, in addition to some more contemporary artists such as Paul Rand and Stefan Sagmeister. I also looked at the ways artist David Kramer paints text into his works. Through my studies I investigated ways that images and text interact and how to communicate visually with a viewer. My posters contain text that adds a new aspect to the visual meaning of the poster. Because my drawings were so dense with information, it was important for me to explore whether my text would become part of the drawing or act alone as its own element in a different part of the poster. The text will either inform the viewer of information or

call his or her attention to a certain part of the design or drawing. My methods for including this text varies in each poster and design.

My drawings act as the central point of focus in the posters and because of the process and observation involved in creating them, they have a number of layers, both physically and mentally. I have spent time in each place observing without drawing and using all of my senses to take in and capture the energy and feeling of these environments. My goal for my posters is to create visually compelling designs that initially attract the viewer, yet maintain the intricacy of my drawings and a greater meaning behind the pieces in order to sustain the viewer's interest.



# FINAL PRESENTATION

My final project, consists of a series of 10 posters of a variety of places and experiences on campus, 9 of which were presented for the Integrative Project show. The works are printed in a large poster format of 16” by 23” and presented framed in a line. The posters take on both horizontal and vertical orientation. The intent is that each poster has its own purpose and message; however, they will all work together to create a sense of the campus experience. In the center of my arrangement is a poster designed with all the of people I drew on campus. This image is intended to show the variety of people I have encountered through my observation as well as increase the interest in the same figures which can be found as the viewer searches through my other eight posters. People who came to view my work were excited to recognize the places in my posters and possibly even themselves in my drawings of people. My project has allowed me to combine both my interests in drawing and graphic design to create a narrative about life on campus and the meaning behind each of my subjects. My posters are both a reflection of my reaction to life on campus and my experiences with people and different environments in each of these places.



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