

Sydney Opera House

Part 1: Drawings of the Sydney Opera House to be developed into moving images

The built environment in which we live sets an important backdrop to what we are and what we do, because we build architecture, but in return architecture builds us.

Marco Frascari

UNSW Built Environment students have been invited to draw the Sydney Opera House, and in doing so to view the building afresh and restore a sense of wonder. Students are invited to look closely, armed with an extraordinary tale, and to be astonished by what is before them. We invite students to draw deeply, to draw darkly; to draw with conviction and with voice. To draw upon its contrasts, its subtleties of tone, and its textures. To draw the space that they *sense*, that eludes both camera and eye; the space that defies description and that is a product of their unique understanding and expression. Students are asked to gather their tools and draw *here* and *now*, in *this* sun and *this* shadow, and then in reflection, memory, and imagination.

Through an extensive series of field studios in and around the Sydney Opera House, students are developing a sequence of live architectural drawings that reflect their reading of this extraordinary building. The process of live architectural drawing revolves around the simple premise of being genuinely present in the moment in a real, physical, sensory place and of consciously looking, seeing, conceptualizing, interpreting and registering a complex range of spatial sensations. The drawings they will produce are a projection of their architectural mind, and are active records of their sensory and intellectual engagement with the built environment.

UNSW Students will prepare a sequence of A3 drawings that focus on form, material, texture, light and atmosphere in charcoal, graphite and ink. The drawings will be displayed in the Red Centre Foyer Gallery from May 31 – June 3, and incorporated into a moving image work for public display at Opera Australia's production of *Sydney Opera House – The Opera* in November 2016.

Part 2 The Sydney Opera House in moving images

Short films are created, which offer insight into the Opera House. These will be organised into three topics:

Topic A: Architecture and the city of Sydney

Films explore the roles of monumental buildings in the making of cities, including Sydney. This encompasses consideration of the ways people approach the Opera House.

Topic B: The significance of the site; the platform and the superstructure; sculpture and architecture; materials, tectonics and light

Films addressing the site focus on spaces for people to gather outside and inside the building. The platform is addressed in films that identify Utzon's sources of inspiration. The Opera House is linked to ancient sacred buildings.

Films concerned with the superstructure take into consideration the concrete structure and the external tiles. The building's tiles are viewed in terms of materials that reveal light. The relationship between water and architecture is explored in terms of shimmering surfaces.

Films analysing the theme of sculpture and architecture argue that the Opera House was conceived as a pure object, to be viewed in the round. Beholders circumvent the building to appreciate different views.

Topic C: The making of a room and an ensemble of rooms

Films consider Utzon's scheme for the concert hall in terms of interplay between two rooms, one inside the other. The timber hall is related to the encompassing space defined by the concrete shell.

Films also address the ways individual rooms are linked. Key connecting elements are the circulation spaces running to the sides of the concert hall.

Alternative text. A shorter version:

The aim is to create short films, which offer insight into aspects of the Opera House, including:

- The commission to create a monument for Sydney;
- The design brief and the assessment of the submitted competition entries;
- Utzon's conception of the institution and the site;
- The ritual of moving towards and into the building;
- The rhythm of the spaces comprising the interior;
- The organisation of the plan of the building;
- The shape of the concrete roof;
- The choice of materials and the role of ornament.