

Designer Takes

# View the Beautiful Drawings of Design Talents Who Still Work By Hand

For these architects and designers, sketching and painting on paper is an integral part of their process

By Jessica Ritz

October 28, 2020

In this digital age, masterful draftsmanship and hand drawing are less of a requirement when powerful high-tech tools are at the disposal of architects and interior designers. Clients can now see astonishingly photorealistic renderings and even VR projections of their projects. But for the following seasoned pros, doing things the old-fashioned way isn't just a charming throwback—reaching for paper, pencils, and paints is an integral part of how and why they design. Rare is the design practitioner who doesn't keep a sketchbook accessible at all times, after all.

Below, hear from eight creatives who still work by hand. The ultimate goal is bringing three-dimensional spaces to life, but sketches, drawings, and paintings can be more than a means to an end. The creations are often works of art in and of themselves.



Drawing by Andre Mellone

## Andre Mellone, Studio Mellone

Fortunately for [Studio Mellone](#) clients, who relish the experience of engaging with [Andre Mellone's](#) beautiful perspective drawings and sketches, the firm founder remains deeply committed to the analogue realm. As seen in this piece created for a home that Mellone is working on in collaboration with Los Angeles architecture firm [Woods + Dangan](#), the New York City designer begins “by creating these washes, and sometimes [I] get quite specific about what I’m sketching,” he says, pointing out furnishings and objects that figure into his images. “I feel a hand sketch is sometimes the best way to express the true concept of a project. They are more evocative and make the imagination fly, as opposed to a hardcore computer rendering.” Mellone also amusingly mentions that CAD was still an elective—rather than required—course option during his time in architecture school.





Drawing by Jaime Rummerfield

### **Jaime Rummerfield, Woodson & Rummerfield's House of Design**

“We embrace all outlets, old and new,” says Jaime Rummerfield, cofounder of [Woodson & Rummerfield's House of Design](#) with Ron Woodson. The duo also runs the historic preservation advocacy group [Save Iconic Architecture](#), so it's no surprise that Rummerfield's passion for retro-tinged glamour is best expressed via pencil, watercolor, and markers. “Not a project goes by where I do not communicate ideas through hand sketching or rendering,” she says. This method resonates with Rummerfield and Woodson's predominantly entertainment-industry clientele too. “The effort put into hand rendering and sketching forces you to think about each detail, color, material, scale, texture, and how they all relate to one another. It truly is an expert art form as a part of our trade.”

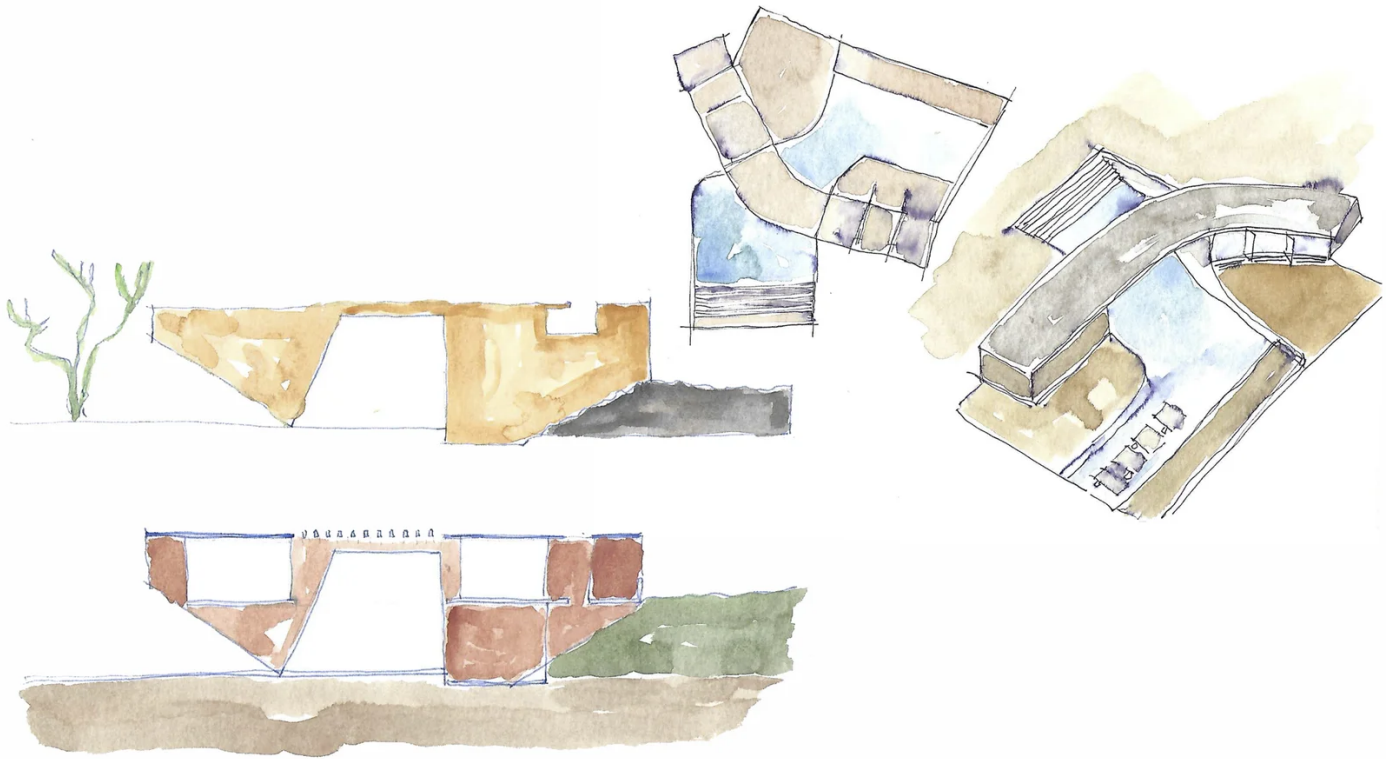


Drawing by Adam Charlap Hyman

### **Adam Charlap Hyman, Charlap Hyman & Herrero**

“We develop a sketch of the room that becomes the watercolor. It is based on reference images that clients and I have selected for mood,” [Adam Charlap Hyman](#) of the multidisciplinary firm [Charlap Hyman & Herrero](#) explains. The selected image depicts a library for a project in Los Angeles, where cofounder Andre Herrero maintains a studio in addition to the company’s Manhattan base. “I furnish the room as I work through the watercolor. It is our way of fleshing out a space for the client to react to and gives us a way to move forward with further clarity on what the clients like and don’t like,” Charlap Hyman says. “We always present them in pairs—two options for the same room—so that the client is able to choose and mix and match. In some cases we make computer renderings when precision is required, but often the watercolors are more efficient to make and more helpful to me.”

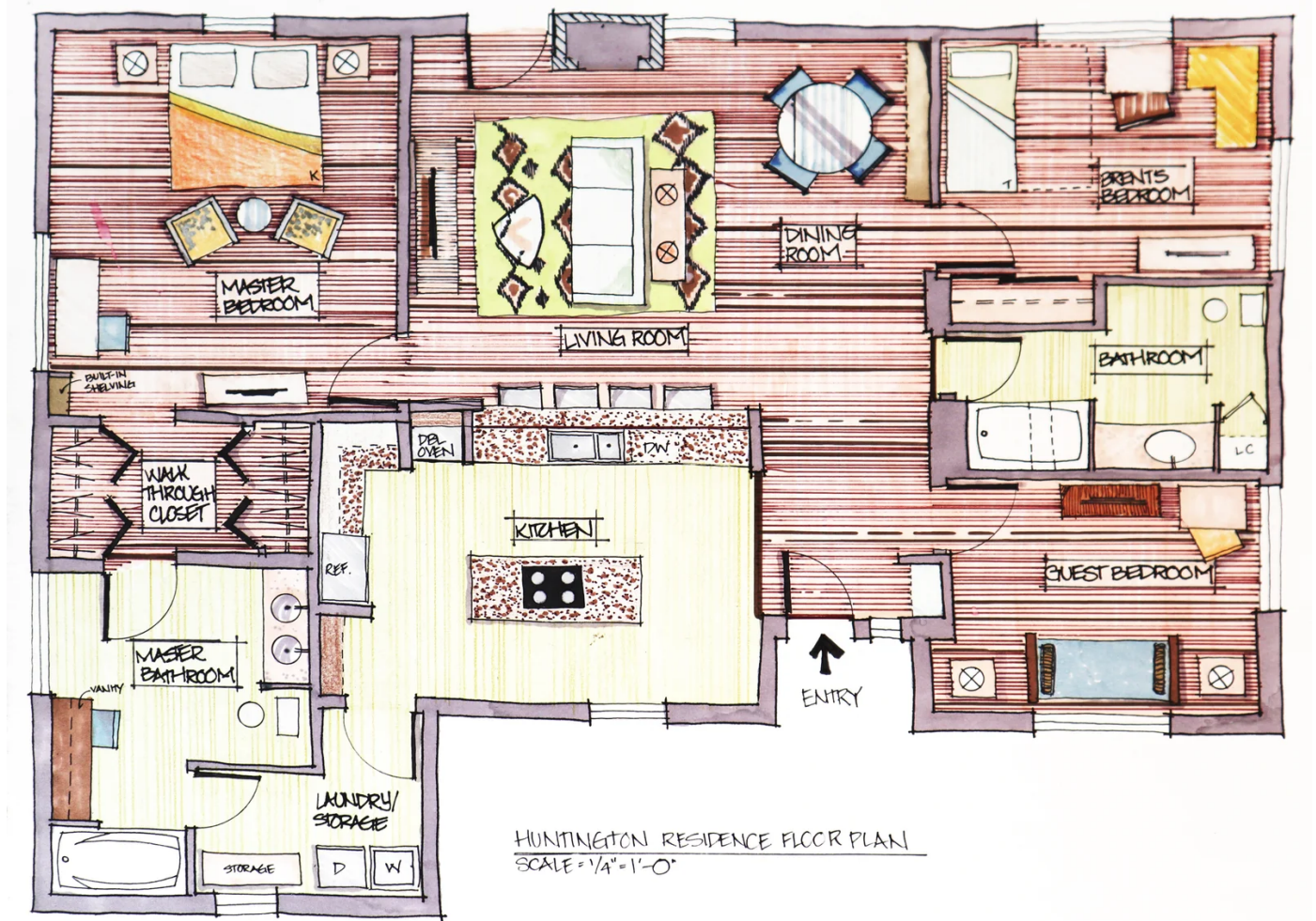




Drawings by Ezequiel Farca

### **Ezequiel Farca, Ezequiel Farca + Cristina Grappin**

“We are very much inclined [to ensure] that the clients see the process and how each project has its own soul,” explains designer Ezequiel Farca, CEO and founder of [Ezequiel Farca + Cristina Grappin](#), which has offices in Mexico City, Milan, and Santa Monica, California. The firm is known for its range of projects, from hospitality to product design, and custom furniture often handmade in Mexico for its ground-up residences. Farca and colleagues take “a holistic approach and a very human one, so we like the clients to perceive that in each presentation,” he says. With watercolor, “I like how layers of color are added and the transparency makes it a very sublime expression,” Farca adds. He and business partner Grappin include hand sketches and watercolors in the book they produce for clients at the conclusion of each project.



Floor plan by Eneia White

## Eneia White, Eneia White Interiors

New York City-based designer [Eneia White](#) believes there's a tangible advantage in putting pen to paper. "I rely on hand renderings to relay my ideas to clients in a way that feels personal and intentional," she notes. "I've noticed my clients really value the time I spent—picking up a pen and developing a creative thought—specifically for them. I love utilizing 3D renderings, but hand sketches are a nod to the 'old-school' approach." The medium can also be crowd-pleasing when shared via digital platforms. White has been posting drawings of her One Room Challenge charge, an [imagined office](#) for Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, on Instagram.

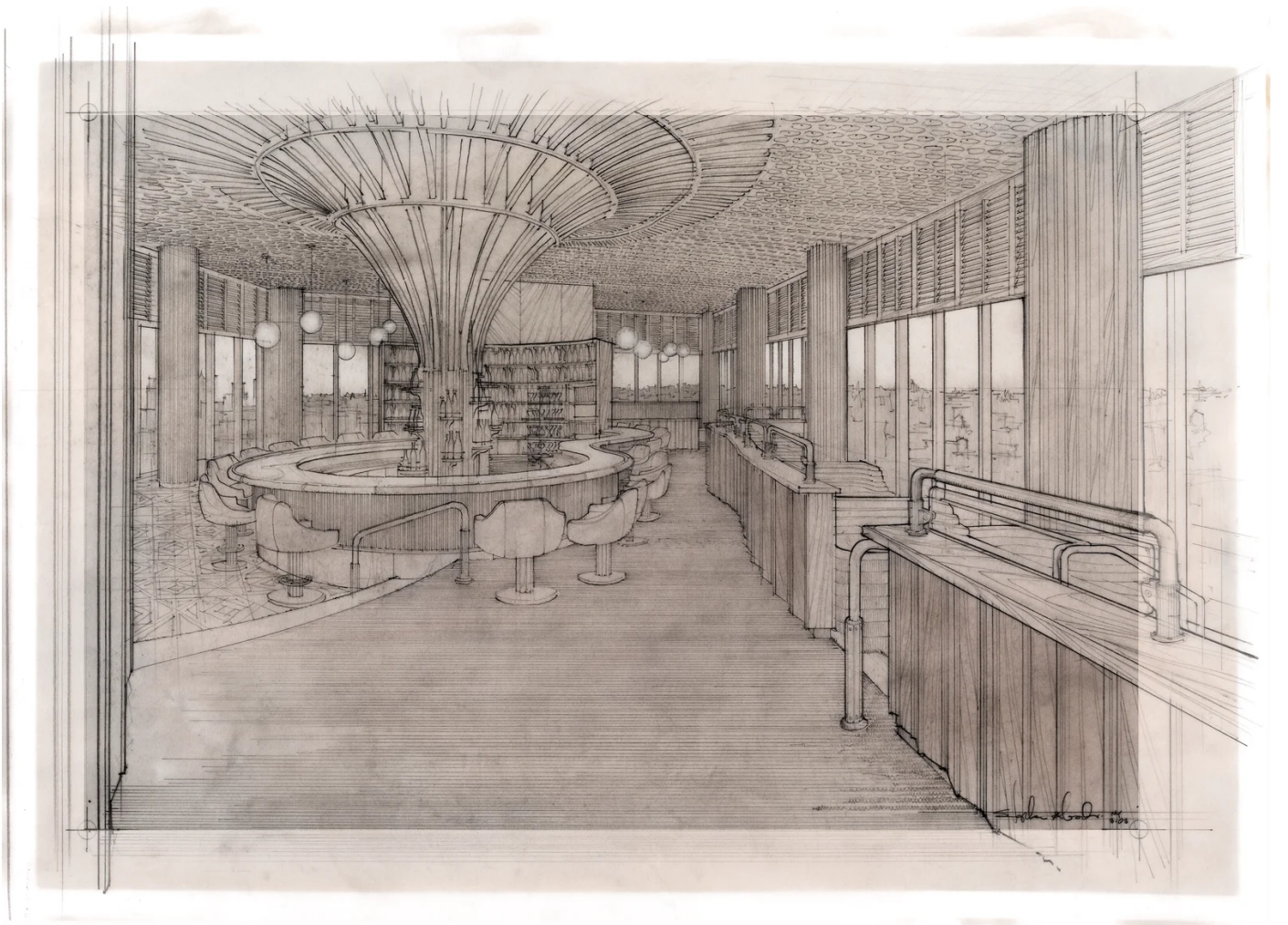




Drawings by John Gachot

### **John Gachot, Gachot Studios**

For some well-established interior design professionals, drawing taps into the root of their creative identity. “I am an artist and draw frequently in my free time, so incorporating that into my design practice happens naturally,” says John Gachot, **cofounder** with wife Christine of the AD100 firm **Gachot Studios**. “There is a freedom of imagination that comes from such a flexible medium that is helpful when designing a room, a piece of furniture, or even a small architectural detail. There is also a deeper, more human connection to the finished product,” he shares.



Drawing by Stephen Alesch

### **Stephen Alesch, Roman and Williams**

The lush and intricate drawings that Stephen Alesch produces are an essential element of [AD100](#) firm [Roman and Williams](#)' varied output and are used in tandem with state-of-the-art resources. "For most of the projects at RW, I will produce a hand-drawn perspective and floor plans of the initial concept," he says. These get more involved as the work continues and are eventually a key component when producing CAD drawings, construction documents, and shop drawings. In comparison with intensely realistic renderings that can be "too much information too soon," hand-drawn drawings "ease people into things and leave room for adjustment. The real mojo that we look for comes from the quiet time at the drafting table and from what the hand decides to do." This 2005 drawing of New York's Top of the Standard, a.k.a. the Boom Boom Room, shows what Alesch recalls would have been done in the early- to mid-design development phase.





Drawings by Ike Kligerman Barkley

---

### **Become an AD PRO Member**

Buy now for unlimited access and all of the benefits that only members get to experience. →



---

### **Margie Lavender, Ike Kligerman Barkley**

“Hand drawing is an essential and revered part of the design process of [Ike Kligerman Barkley](#). It gives us the freedom to explore ideas in a fluid and organic way before we get caught up in the technical detailing of a project,” says Margie Lavender, senior architect at IKB, the AD100 firm based in New York City and Berkeley, California. “A hand drawing is more evocative than a digital rendering, and it allows room for the imagination of both architect and client. It is a tool we use at the beginning to communicate our conceptual ideas to a client but also one we use internally throughout the course of the work as a shorthand for solving design challenges.”