



UNIVERSITY
of York

**York School of
Architecture**

P O R

T F O

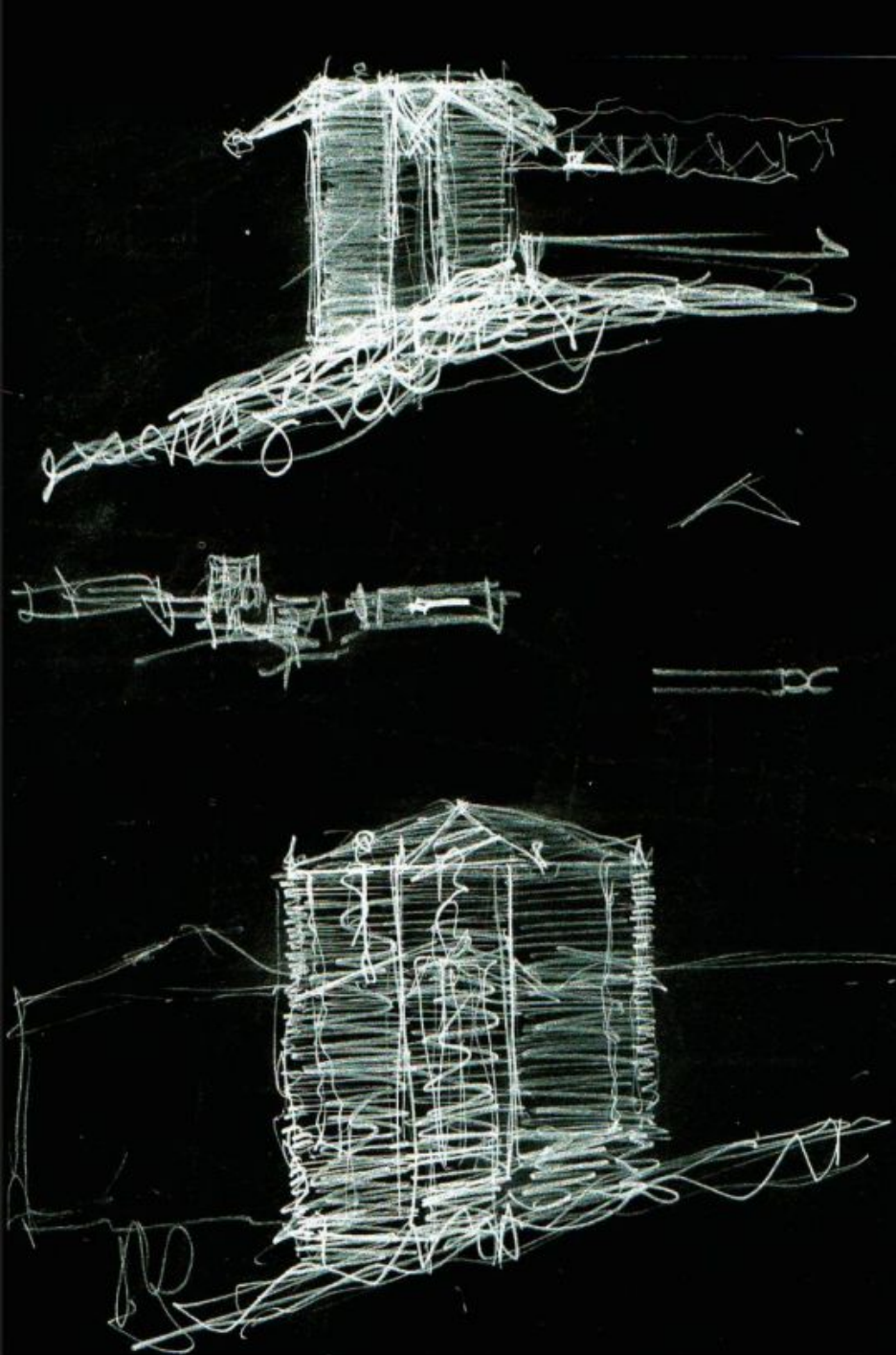
L I O

PORTFOLIO Guidance

PORTFOLIO Guidance

York School of Architecture – Applicants Guide





[Source: Farrelly, L. (2008). **Representational Techniques**. La Vergne TN: AVA Publishing]

About this book

This book provides general guidance to applicant for the BA (Hons) Architecture on efficiently compiling and submitting a portfolio of work as part of their application. It is a rough guide on what may be included in the submitted portfolio and how you may present it to showcase your skills.

The book also provides, via the displayed images, examples of sketches and drawings for inspiration.

This is not a design or design process guide; the document assumes the design work has already been done, or will be done, and needs to be communicated.

This is not a guide to technical or analytical architectural or urban studies. Any buildings or spatial contexts drawn herein are simplified for demonstrational purposes; they are not drawn to scale.

The book represents the opinions and preferences of the authors. The provided guidance should be read as suggestions and advice, and not to be perceived as a dictating template for submitted portfolios.

Any feedback on the content would be most welcome.

Content

1. Why Portfolio?
2. YOUR portfolio
3. Specific Guidelines
4. Expected content
5. Project selection
6. Narrative flow
7. Detail and depth
8. Contextualisation
9. Reflection and learning
10. Technical proficiency
11. Presentation quality
12. Personal style & expression
13. Curiosity and research
14. Declaration
15. Portfolio submission
16. Submission Cycles
17. Following submission
18. Recommended readings
19. Contacts

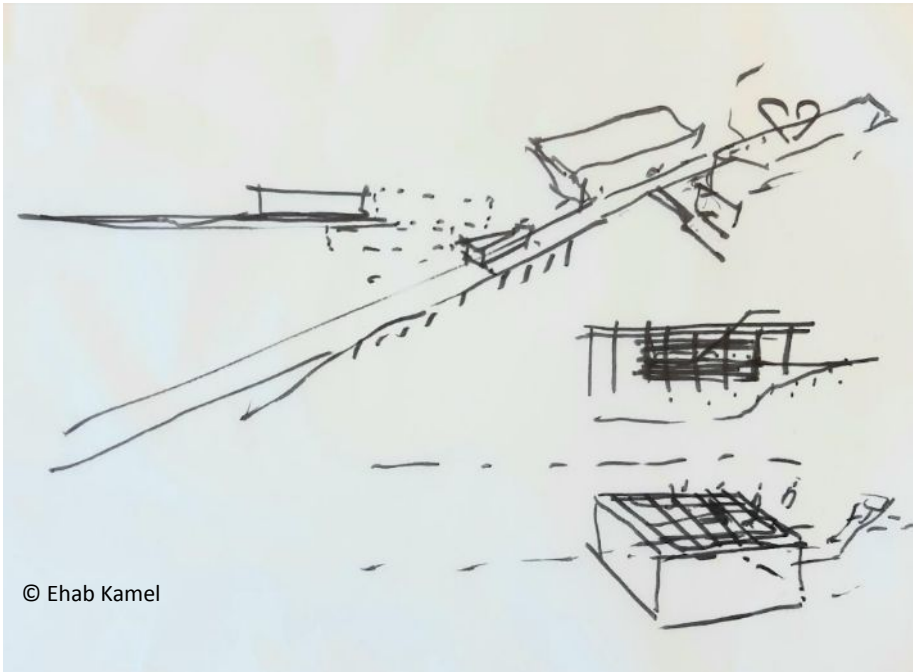


1. Why Portfolio?

Academic grades are important, yet we believe that they are not enough to showcase your full strengths. At The York School of Architecture, we don't just want to know if your skills are sufficient for studying architecture, but, more importantly, we want to know if architecture is good for YOU!

The portfolio allows you to showcase your skills beyond the rigid academic grades and allows you to demonstrate your passion and readiness to study Architecture! We are not just looking for artistic skills, but we are equally interested in applicants skilled in creative thinking, problem-solving, presentation, leadership, and any other skills that you can demonstrate are relevant to Architecture.

Eligible candidates for our BA (Hons) Architecture programme will receive an email inviting them to submit a digital portfolio of their work as part of the application process. If you are invited to submit a portfolio, please consult the guidance provided in this document as a reference. Following review of this portfolio you may be made an offer directly or you may additionally be invited to an interview.



© Ehab Kamel

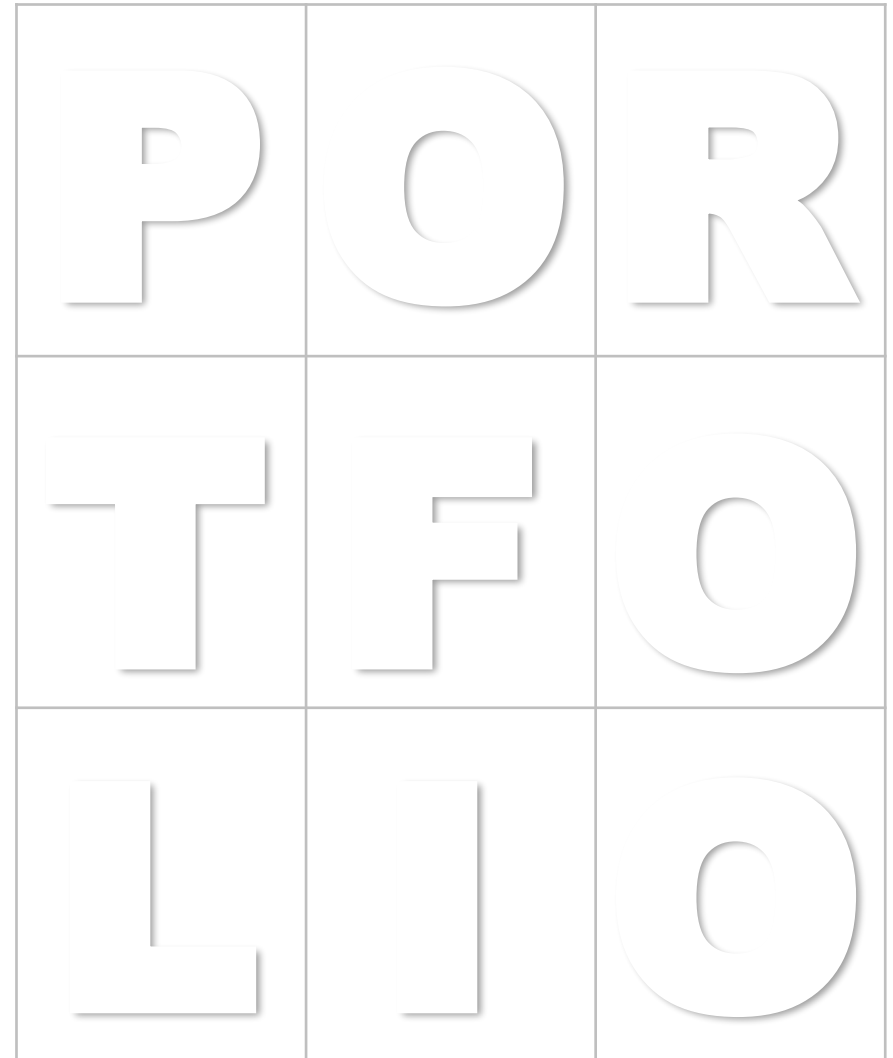
2. YOUR portfolio

Your portfolio should demonstrate creative thinking as well as technical ability.

Freehand skills are valued in architecture, therefore sketches showing creative thinking and ideas are particularly relevant, as well as 3D work such as sculpture or physical models.

Typically our applicants will be studying art or design A-level subjects (or equivalent). We will also consider applicants following courses of study that do not include art or design but that engage our physical or social environments, such as geography and philosophy, for example. These students need to demonstrate their interest and skills in art or design beyond their formal studies.

All applicants are invited to share their interest in seeing, interpreting and communicating the world around them through drawing, alongside their other visual interests, in their digital portfolio.



3. Specific guidelines

We advise that you submit a digital portfolio of a minimum of 10 pages and a maximum of 20 pages in length and contains pieces of work that best show your ability with a broad range of representational techniques.



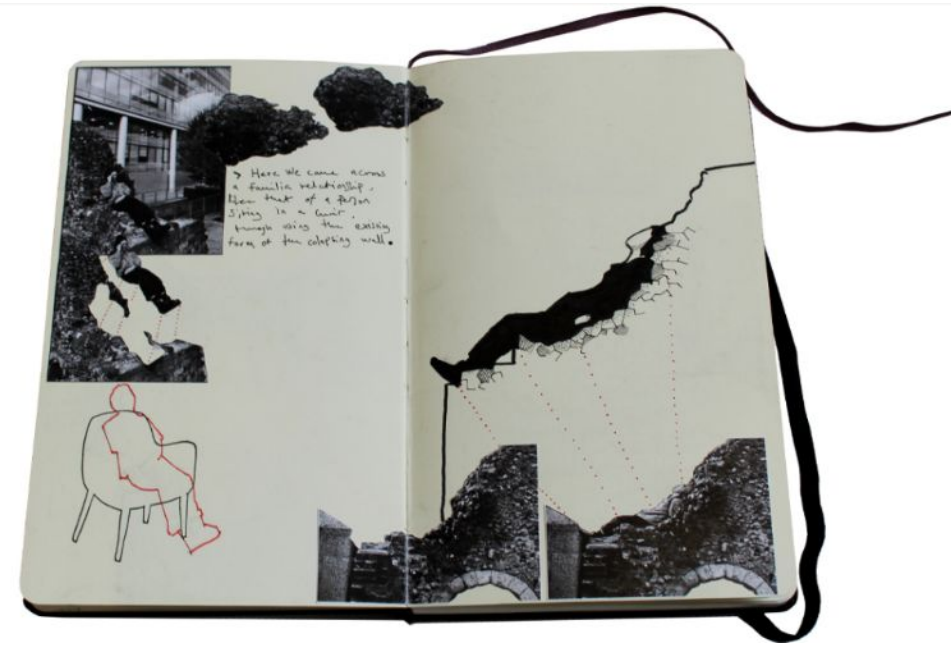
© Ehab Kamel

- Submit your portfolio as a pdf file
- Your portfolio should be presented clearly. Please carefully curate the content, including headings and annotation where necessary.
- Be selective and consider pieces that best highlight skill and reflect your interests – note that portfolios that include too much information can lose focus.
- Where possible, highlight development work that leads to a final piece as process work is valued highly. We do not need to see everything – be selective and curate the portfolio with care.
- Freehand skills are valued in architecture, therefore sketches showing creative thinking and ideas are particularly relevant. If you have drawings or other graphic representations which have been developed using any type of software, these can be included.
- Your portfolio may comprise materials from an art or design-related A level, or other relevant work. You can include work created in your own time as well as work produced on creative courses.
- Please include photographs of physical works such as paintings, models, 3D work, etc. Images should have a clear title and date of completion. If the size of the work is not obvious, please state this in a caption.
- If you don't have access to a large-scale scanner, good quality photographs of your artwork can be sufficient.

4. Expected content

We look for a range of different creative skills, which may include:

- scanned sketches / process work
- photos of work in progress
- creative writing
- precedent studies or case studies
- concept sketches
- hand-drawn sketches of places, spaces or buildings
- life drawing
- photographic studies
- collage or mixed media works
- paintings
- abstract art works
- analytical drawings/mapping drawings
- orthographic drawings (such as plans, sections and evaluations)
- measured drawings
- computer-aided design (CAD)
- images made in Photoshop or other software
- graphic design
- product design
- website design (include screenshots)
- original small-scale 3D work: sculpture, installations, models
- photographs of physical models.



This list is not exhaustive and if you have work that shows your creative skills which are not listed, we encourage you to include such work.



© Lorraine Farrelly

5. Project selection

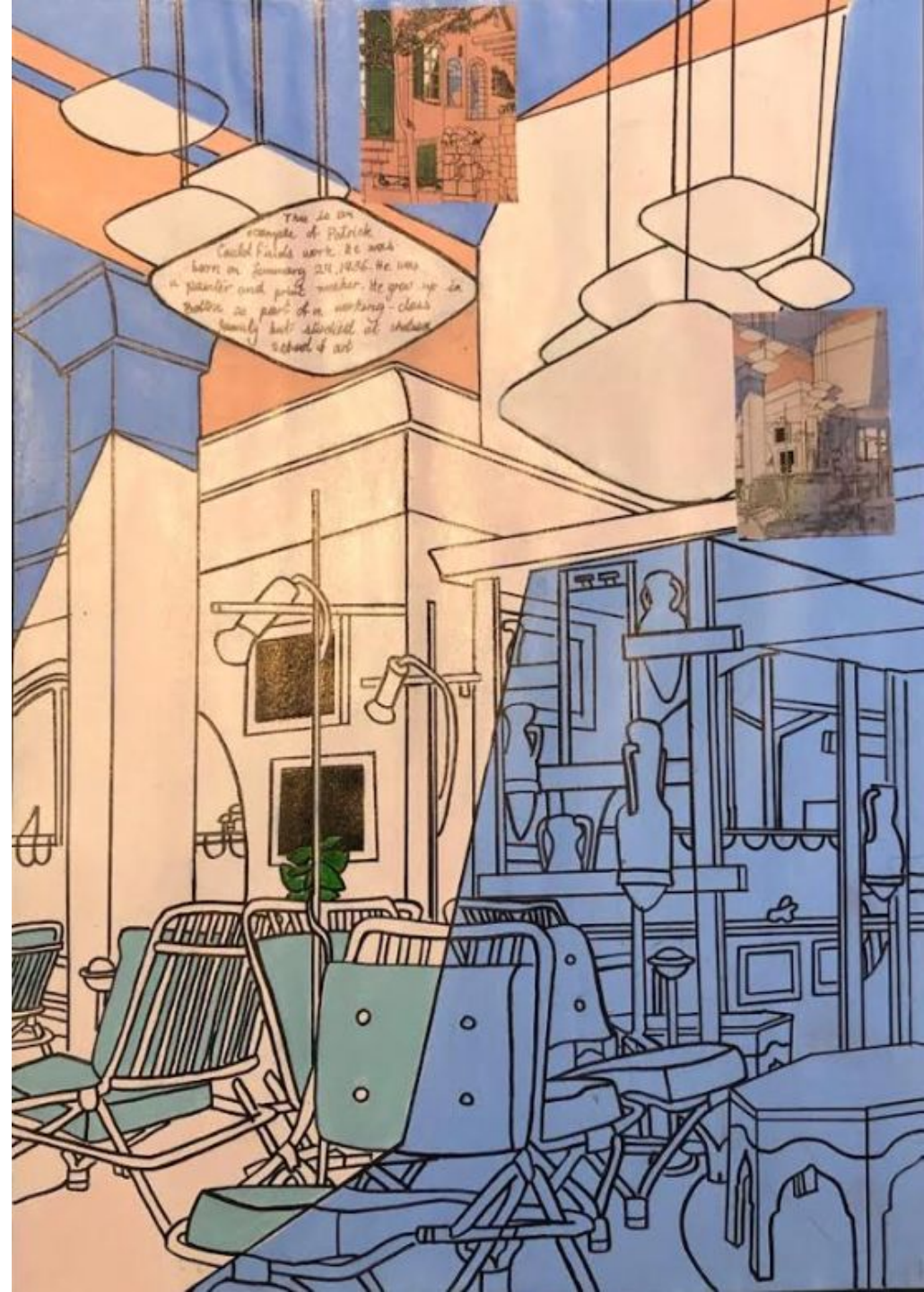
- Carefully curate your projects to showcase a diverse range of skills and experiences.
- Include a mix of academic assignments, personal projects, and any professional work or internships, if applicable.



[Source: Farrelly, L. (2008). **Representational Techniques**. La Vergne TN: AVA Publishing]

6. Narrative flow

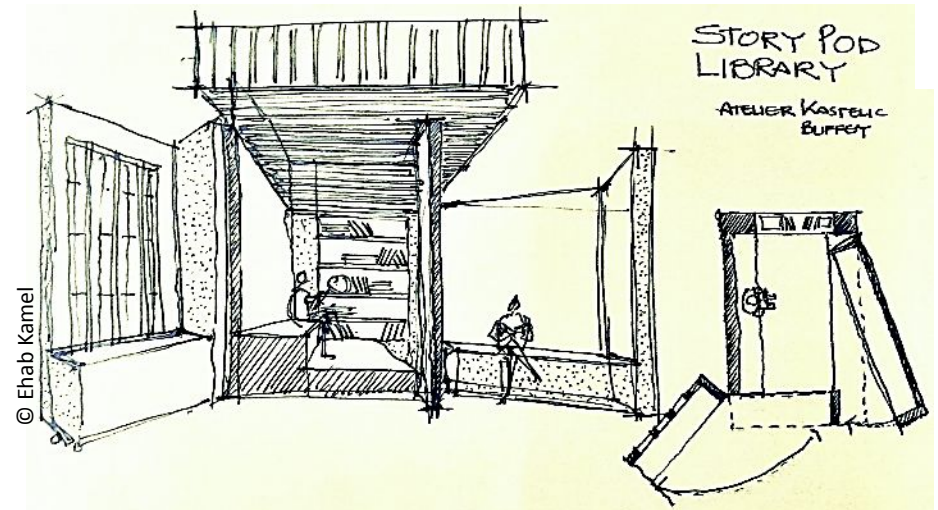
- Organise your portfolio in a logical and visually appealing sequence.
- Create a narrative flow that guides the viewer through your thought process and evolution as a designer.





7. Detail and Depth

- Balance breadth and depth in your portfolio.
- While presenting a variety of projects, delve into a few key ones [at least one project] with more detail, emphasising your design thinking and problem-solving abilities [we are equally interested in 'how you think' as much as 'what you produce'].



8. Contextualisation

- Provide context for each project by briefly explaining the background, objectives, and any relevant constraints or challenges.
- Clarify your role in group projects (if any) and emphasise your individual contributions.



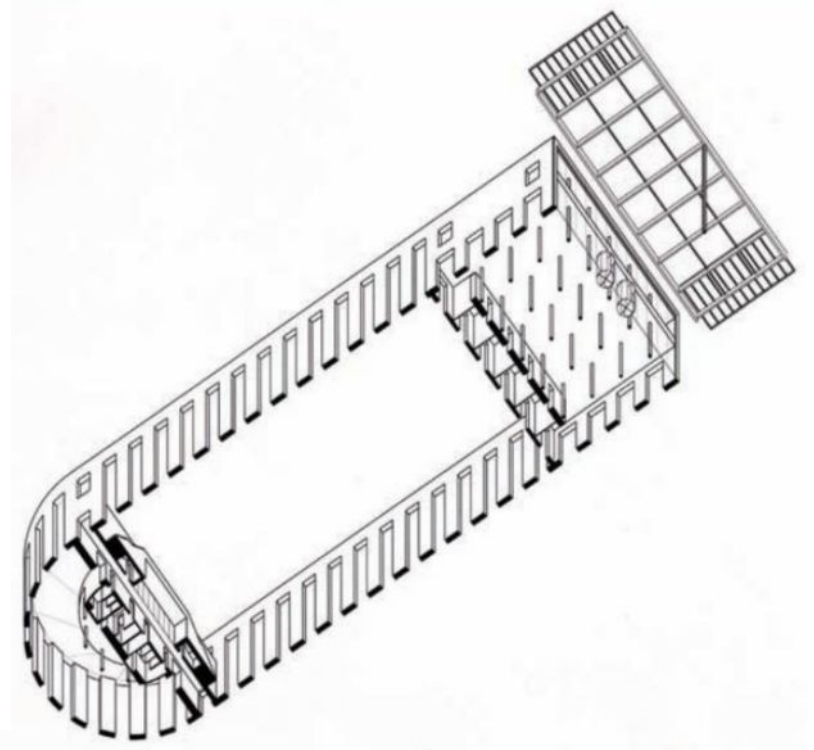
9. Reflection and learning

- Include a reflective component for the main project(s) that you present; where you discuss what you learned, challenges you overcame, and areas for future improvement.
- Demonstrate a growth mindset and a commitment to continuous learning.



10. Technical proficiency

- Highlight your technical skills by showcasing a variety of media (as applicable) to include drawings, 2D and 3D illustrations that demonstrate your understanding of spatial conventions.
- Showcase any relevant experience you had with software and tools used in the architectural field. [we are not looking for perfection, but rather interested in your willingness to learn]



11. Presentation quality

- Pay attention to the presentation quality of your portfolio.
- Ensure high-resolution images, clear annotations, and a consistent graphic style that reflects your attention to detail.
- Avoid overcrowding your portfolio slides/pages with a lot of images [white space has its beauty in balancing the page composition and showcase the strengths of your work]



[Source: Farrelly, L. (2008). **Representational Techniques**. La Vergne TN: AVA Publishing]

12. Personal style & expression

- Showcase your personal design style and architectural/artistic language.
- Use your portfolio as a platform to express your unique approach and aesthetic preferences.



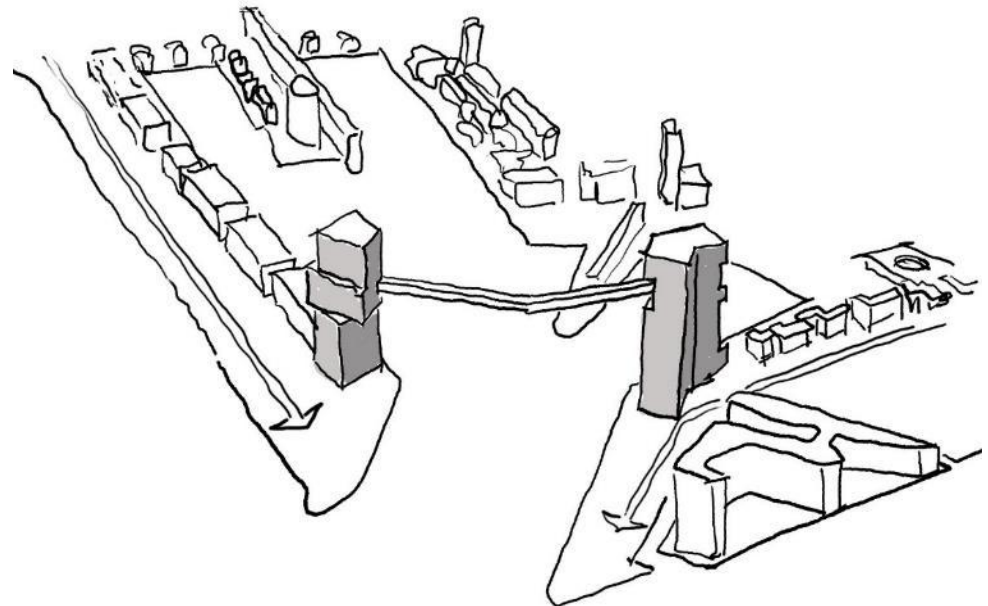
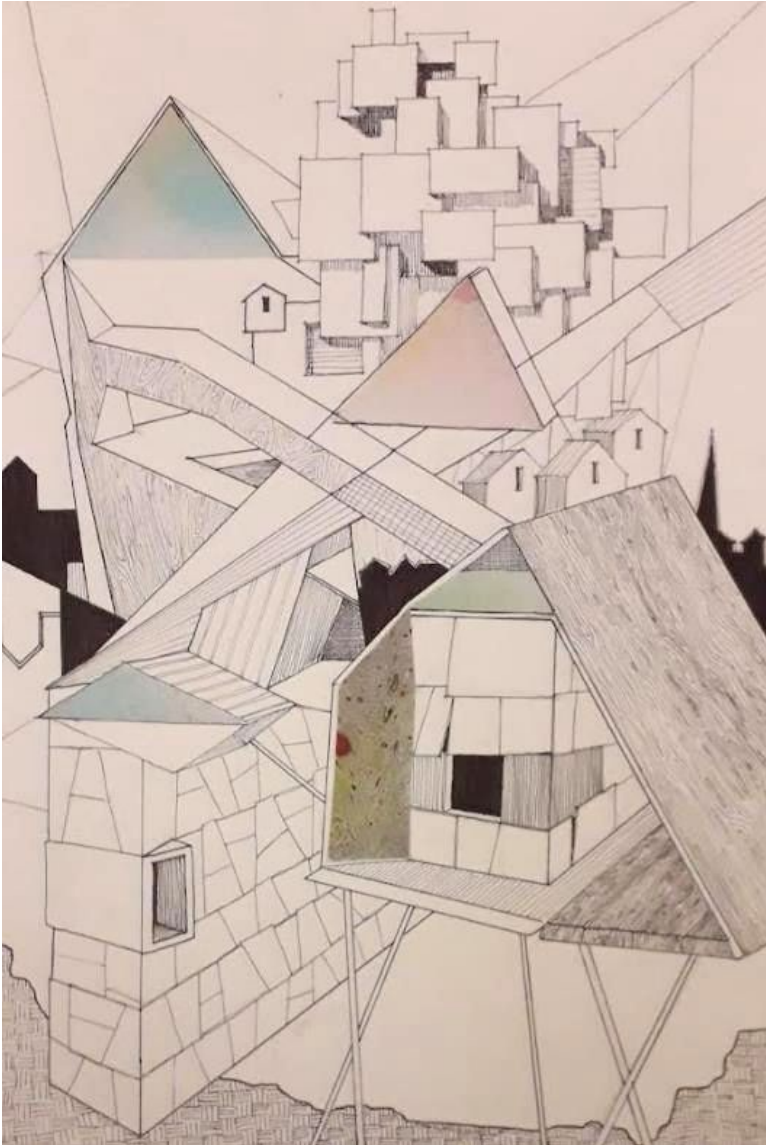
[Source (left image): Farrelly, L. (2008). **Representational Techniques**. La Vergne TN: AVA Publishing]



© Ehab Kamel

13. Curiosity and research

Illustrate your curiosity and research skills by incorporating any investigations, studies, or explorations related to architectural theories, historical influences, or contemporary trends.



© Ehab Kamel

14. Declaration

As part of the submission process for the BA (Hons) Architecture program at the York School of Architecture, University of York, you will be asked to confirm a declaration of work originality. This declaration is crucial to ensuring the authenticity and originality of the work presented:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this declaration, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Portfolio Declaration of Originality

I declare that all the work included in this portfolio is entirely my own. I affirm that I have not used the work of others without proper acknowledgment, and any collaborative projects have been duly credited. I understand the importance of maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity and ethical conduct.

By submitting this portfolio, I confirm that:

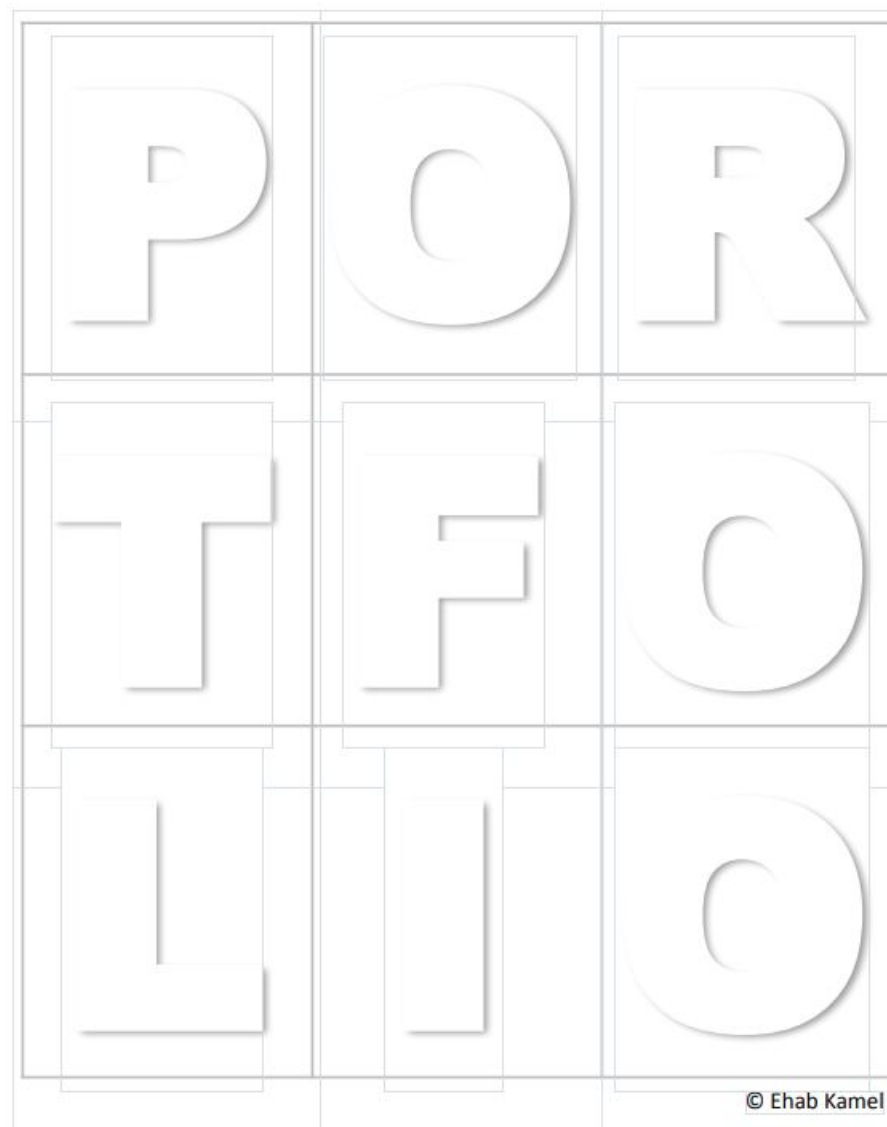
The design concepts, drawings, models, and any other representations of architectural work are the result of my individual efforts and creative input.

Any references to external sources, including but not limited to research findings, images, or ideas, have been appropriately cited in accordance with academic standards.

The collaborative aspects of group projects are clearly identified, and credit is given to the respective contributors for their contributions.

I am aware that any violation of academic integrity may result in consequences as outlined by the University's policies on plagiarism and dishonesty.

I understand the significance of this declaration and take full responsibility for the content presented in my portfolio.



15. Portfolio submission

After your UCAS application has been assessed, we'll invite eligible applicants to submit a digital portfolio.

Your digital portfolio should be submitted as a single PDF file of no more than 20MB, with a file name in the following format: **UCAS**

ID number_ First Name_ Surname, *for example*

1234567899_John_Smith

[Your name on the filename must match the name on your UCAS application]

Important: by submitting your portfolio you confirm that all work is your own unless you have indicated otherwise directly adjacent to the work (for example, including an artist's original piece as inspiration or development). See guidance notes above.

16. Submission Cycles

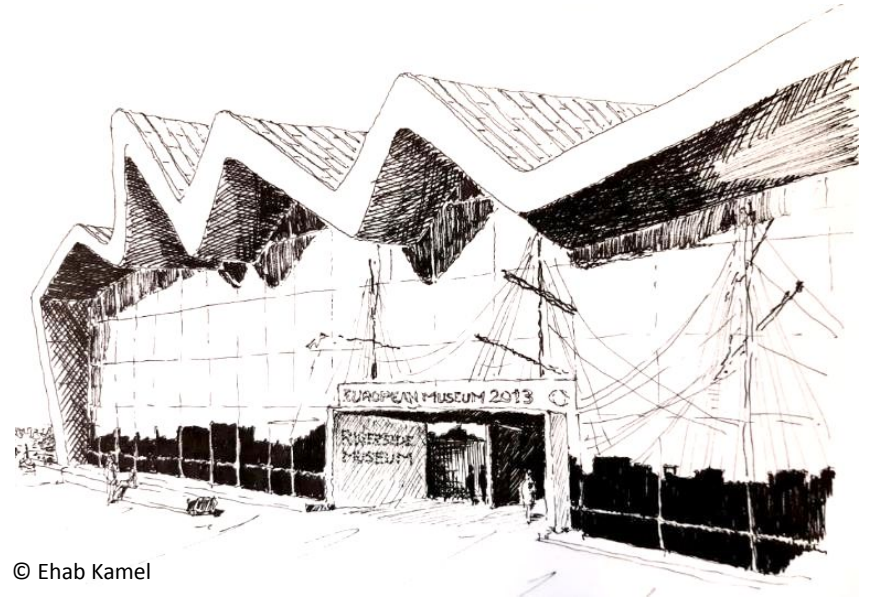
Standard Admissions Cycle

After your UCAS application has been processed, we'll invite eligible applicants to submit a digital portfolio.

Applicants will not normally be invited to interview until a digital portfolio has been received and reviewed by the York School of Architecture admissions panel.

Applicants with passing portfolios will receive an interview invites to attend an interview timeslot in-person at York School of Architecture.

Applicants who do not respond to interview invites and reminders may be withdrawn from consideration.



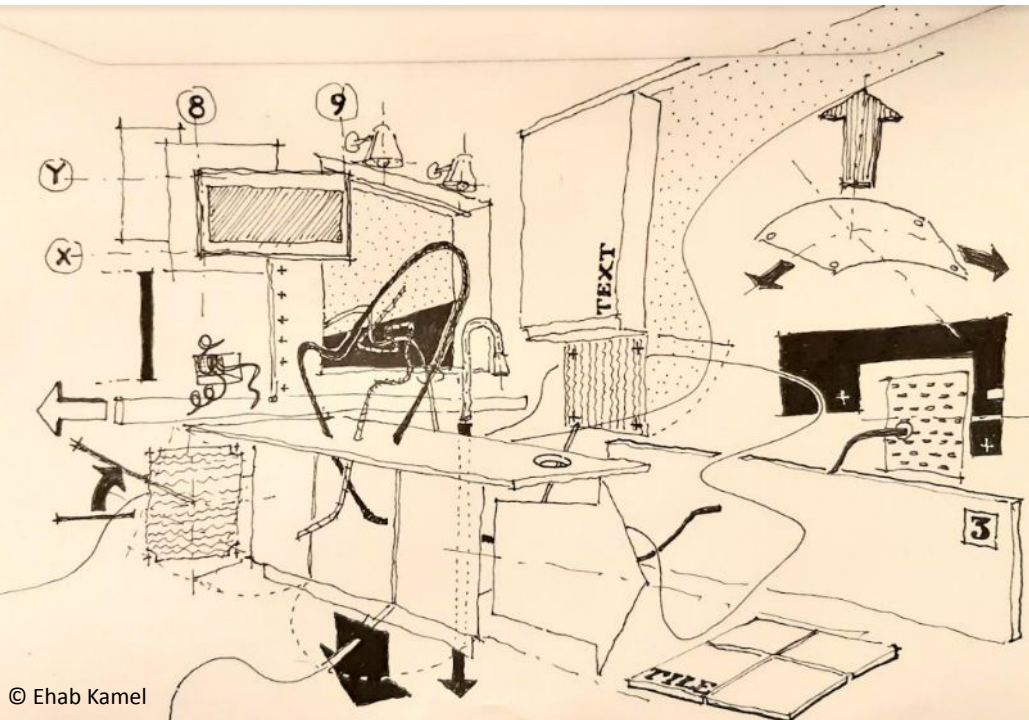
17. Following submission

Digital portfolios will be reviewed by a York School of Architecture academic panel.

The portfolio review will assess evidence of:

- creativity and curiosity;
- design thinking;
- visual communication;
- observational and spatial awareness; and
- engagement with architecture, design or related creative practices.

Applicants whose portfolios demonstrate sufficient potential and suitability for architectural education will be invited to interview.



18. Recommended readings

Ching, Francis (2015). ***Architectural Graphics***

Farrelly, Lorraine (2011). *Drawing for Urban Design*

Farrelly, Lorraine (2008). ***Representational Techniques***

Frederick, Matthew (2007). *101 Things I Learned in Architecture School*

Mertens, Elke (2010). *Visualising Landscape Architecture*

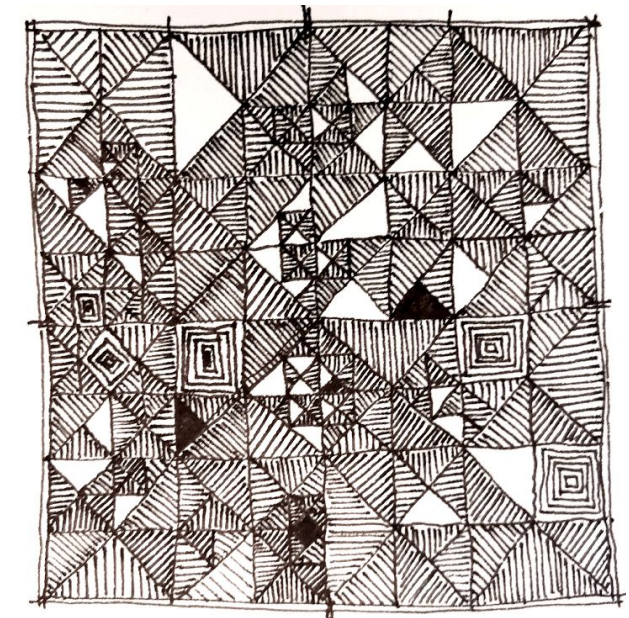
Po, Miyoung (2015). *Architectural Diagrams*

Spiller, Neil (2020). *How to Thrive at Architecture School: A Student Guide*

[Royal Institute of British Architects \(architecture.com\)](http://architecture.com)

[The RIBA Library \(architecture.com\)](http://architecture.com)

[RIBA Books](#)



19. Contacts

For any questions you may have, or if you want to chat about your portfolio, or the BA (Hons) Architecture programme, please use the following contact:

General enquiries:

ysa-ug-admin@york.ac.uk



York School of Architecture