David R. Ravin School of Architecture, College of Arts + Architecture, UNC Charlotte

<u>Secondary Application Materials: Bachelor of Arts in Architecture Program, Fall 2025 Admission Cycle</u>

Undergraduate applicants to the SoA are neither required nor expected to have any particular skills or knowledge base. Our program provides its students with everything they need to pursue their interest in architecture. We seek curious, rigorous, ambitious, and passionate students, regardless of whatever exposure they may (or may not) have had with architectural drawing, design, or thinking.

Our secondary application process is therefore designed to evaluate creativity and critical thinking, not professional skills. The required process involves:

- Completing two critical thinking exercises
- Creating a pre-recorded video interview

Each required item has specific instructions and format requirements, described below.

Submission instructions for all materials, including an *optional* portfolio of design and/or creative work included on Page 6 of this document.

We kindly ask all applicants to upload a brief resumé along with their main application to UNC Charlotte (it is an optional upload in the main application). This resumé should include any specific coursework, jobs, or extracurricular activities that may contribute to our evaluation of applicants to the SoA. If you submitted your main application before seeing this request, you may email it to admissions@charlotte.edu asking for it to be added to your main application.

The FAQs at the end of this document cover the content of the exercises and submission instructions.

Exercise 1: Lines on Paper
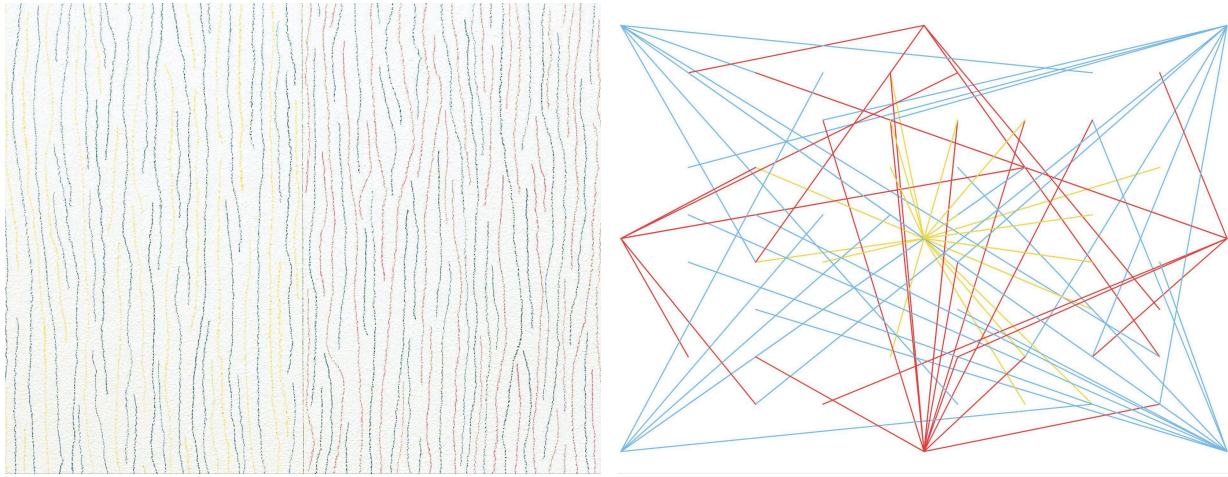
Sol Lewitt

Exercise Instructions

Using blank white paper (copier or printer paper is fine), and different types of pens and pencils (different colors or thicknesses), make several drawings composed of lines.

Experiment with different techniques (long lines, short lines, many lines, few lines, using a ruler, drawing freehand, etc). Try different approaches on different sheets.

Make about ten drawings, and select two that allow you to reflect on the effects of differences and similarities between different approaches to the exercise.

In about 100-200 words, write a reflection on your creative process while you were drawing and on how you selected the two drawings. Consider the following questions, or anything else that occurs to you:

- What types of differences are evident in the two drawings you selected?
- Do subtle or obvious differences appeal to you more?
- How did applying different approaches to different drawings affect your creativity?
- Did you find yourself being intentional or spontaneous during the process; in other words, did you make a plan and stick to it, or did you let the process lead you? How do you like to work?

Remember: there are _no right answers_, and these are not trick questions! Don't overthink your reflection or try to predict what we want to hear. We simply want to hear what _you_ think.

Prepare for Submission

In Google Docs, Microsoft Word, or a similar program, insert scans or carefully-taken photos of the two drawings you selected, and then enter your reflection on the drawings on the same page (similar to this page, but you are free to orient the page, select the page size, and layout the information differently, as long as everything fits on _one page_).

Export the page as a PDF, and name the PDF: "Lastname_Exercise 1.pdf"
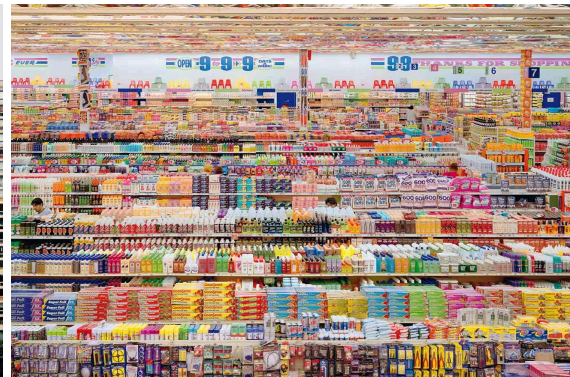
Exercise 2: Pictures of Buildings

Exterior view by Ezra Stoller

Interior view by Ezra Stoller

Exterior view by Andreas Gursky

Interior view by Andreas Gursky

Exercise Instructions

Using any type of camera (phone-camera is fine), take photographs of interiors and exteriors of different buildings using several arbitrary rules to limit you:

- Explore different types of buildings: houses, public buildings, big ones, small ones, etc.
- Explore different lighting conditions: daytime, nighttime, well-lit, dark (with/without a flash), etc.
- Explore different types of occupation: spaces filled with people, spaces empty of people, spaces with one person or a few people, etc.
- Explore different types of composition: symmetrical, asymmetrical, close-ups, far-away pictures, horizontal oriental, vertical orientation, etc.
- Explore different filters in your camera settings (if available): color, focus, exposure settings, etc.

Focus on how using your camera gives you a different perspective of the buildings, and consider how to frame the same space in different ways.

Select two sets of two photographs (four photos total): in each set, include one exterior view and one interior view, like the given examples of photos by Stoller and Gursky. The exterior and interior views in each set may be from the same building or different buildings. Similarly, the photos in each set may have similar qualities or different qualities. There are no rules to your selections (other than including one exterior and one interior view in each set).

As you make your selections, consider how two things:

- How the two views in each set complement each other (whether and how the two views in the set are similar to or different from each other.
- How the two sets complement each other (whether and how the two sets are similar to and different from each other).

In about 100-200 words, write a reflection on your creative process while you were taking the photos and on how you selected the photos for the two sets. Consider the following questions, or anything else that occurred to you during the exercise:

- How do the two images in each set complement each other in order to make what you consider to be a good pairing?
- Does the pairing of views in each set tell a story (or send a message) about architecture?
- How do your two sets compare and contrast to each other (did you try to create the same type of pairing or a different type of pairing)?
- Did framing the views of the buildings through your camera help you to understand the qualities of the buildings better or differently, either objective qualities (like geometrical qualities, size, materials, etc) or subjective qualities (like how people use the building)?

Remember: there are _no right answers_, and these are not trick questions! Don't overthink your reflection or try to predict what we want to hear. We simply want to hear what _you_ think.

Note: when taking pictures in public, be respectful of people who may not want to be photographed, and make yourself obvious (don't be sneaky!).

Prepare for Submission

In Google Docs, Microsoft Word, or a similar program, insert the two pairs of photos of the two drawings you selected, and then enter your reflection on the drawings on the same page (similar to the title page of this exercise, but you are free to orient the page, select the page size, and layout the information differently, as long as everything fits on _one page_).

Export the page as a PDF, and name the PDF: "Lastname_Exercise 2.pdf"

Pre-recorded Video Interview

Still from the film *Trainspotting*

Interview Instructions

Go to a space that you experience on a regular basis, and record a video of yourself speaking about how the space impacts whatever routine you do there. We use spaces everyday, often without considering how it is designed and how design affects us. Take a closer look at one of those spaces in your life, perhaps a room, a building, a park, or a public space—any place at all that impacts you.

Consider how your video shows us the space and yourself. If you feel uncomfortable showing yourself in the video, you may put yourself off-camera, as long as we hear your voice!

The maximum length of the video is ***60 seconds!*** Videos longer than 60 seconds will not be viewed. Be mindful of how you use the time you have, and give special consideration to how you begin and end the video (your first and last impressions!).

The video may be a single-shot, selfie-style recording, or it may be edited in some way. Regardless of the style, it should be well-crafted and carefully made, but we are not expecting professional-quality videos. The main objective is to hear your voice speak about an environment that is somehow significant to you.

Prepare for Submission

Upload your final video to YouTube (you'll need to have a free Google account to do this). In Settings, set the "Visibility" of the video to "private" (so that you control who sees the video). Create a shareable link for the video (using the "get shareable link" command). This website explains these instructions in detail.

Note: video files cannot be uploaded to the application or emailed to the SoA. Only YouTube links are accepted.

Secondary Application Materials: Submission Instructions

Pneumatic tube delivery system

All three of the required secondary items (PDF of Exercise 1; PDF of Exercise 2; and YouTube link of the Interview Video) must be uploaded to an applicant's Future 49er Portal. That portal is accessible after an initial application to UNC Charlotte is completed, and it includes an "Applicant Checklist" that identifies additional steps that an applicant needs to do for their application to be reviewed.

Applicants who select "Architecture" as their intended major will see, in addition to anything needed for their general application, the three required items for the SoA secondary process:

- 1_SoA Secondary Application Exercise 1
- 2_SoA Secondary Application Exercise 2
- 3_SoA Secondary Application Interview Video

These items are visible only to applicants who selected "Architecture" as their intended major; if your Application Checklist does not include these items, you did not select "Architecture" and will need to change that selection by contacting admissions@charlotte.edu (the SoA cannot change that setting).

For Exercises 1 & 2: use the "Upload Materials" pulldown menu and "Choose File" field (located below the Applicant Checklist) to upload two PDFs (one-at-a-time using the appropriate line in the pulldown menu). Make sure your files adhere to the file-making and file-naming instructions provided in the exercises.

For the Interview Video: use the provided "YouTube Link" reply form (located below the Applicant Checklist and above the Upload Materials section) to enter the shareable link of your YouTube video. Make sure to follow the link-making instructions provided in the exercise.

Once an item is submitted and processed, it will appear as completed in the Applicant Checklist (it may take up to 30 minutes to register as complete, so be patient!).

<u>Secondary Application Materials: FAQ</u>

How long should I spend on these exercises?

We suggest that you spend no more than one hour on each of two exercises and the video interview, after you have prepared what you will need, and before you prepare the submission to be uploaded. That means, all three items can be (and should be) completed in about 6 hours (excluding the time spent preparing to begin and preparing the submission materials for upload).

Can I submit my secondary to you via email or by using a link to a cloud server?

No, all secondary materials must be submitted through your [Future 49er Portal](#) and verified as complete in the Application Checklist section of that portal (if you do not see that section, you did not select "Architecture" as your intended major, contact admissions@charlotte.edu to update that).

I'm not sure I understand the point of the exercises, can you explain more, so that I know I am doing them right?

Our exercises are not tests, and there are many "right" ways to do them, including ways we don't expect and can't predict. They are not designed to trick anyone! Read (and re-read) the instructions carefully, do some practice experiments, and then just have some fun with them. We are looking for passion and potential, and we understand that critical thinking is an open-ended practice that different people do in different ways. We are open to your interpretations of the exercises as given.

Do you have tips for photographing, scanning, and/or manipulating digital images?

- If you don't have access to a flatbed scanner, use a scanning app linked to your smartphone camera instead of the camera app itself (this will produce a more scan-like image).
- When photographing or scanning images, be sure that they are well-positioned, well-lit, in-focus, centered, and appropriately cropped (if needed).
- Use a neutral-color backdrop for your work (avoid patterns or bright colors).
- All images should be sized at least 1024 X 768 pixels (landscape) or 768 X 1024 pixels (portrait). Smaller sized images may not exhibit necessary detail; larger may be difficult to upload.
- All images should have a resolution of 72 dpi/ppi (dots/pixels per inch).
- Save JPEG files as "Quality 10" images using a "Baseline Standard" option.
- Always save an original copy of your image and create a back-up of each to ensure that you always have a record of your work.

Does submitting the optional portfolio increase my chances of admission?

No, the SoA Admissions Committee is not looking for any specific type of experience in their applicants, and it gives the same full consideration to all applicants who complete the required secondary materials.

What are the format guidelines for the optional portfolio?

- PDF format; name your file: "Lastname_SoA_portfolio.pdf" (must be a single file)
- Page size: Letter (8.5" x 11") or Tabloid (11" x 17"), either vertical or horizontal orientation
- Page limit: no more than 10 pages, including covers
- File size limit: 20 MB maximum

What are the content guidelines for the optional portfolio?

Regarding content guidelines, note that evidence of drafting coursework and/or CAD skills are considered "professional skills" that are not evaluated during our review process, as the SoA Admissions Committee looks only for evidence of creativity and critical thinking skills. Architectural drawing that is part of a creative process is more relevant, and all work included in the optional portfolio should show evidence of your creative activities, which may or may not include architectural design.

I forgot to (or didn't realize I was supposed to) submit the resumé with my main application to UNC Charlotte, can I upload it with my secondary materials?

If you submitted your main application before seeing the request for a resumé (or simply forgot to do it), please email it to admissions@charlotte.edu asking for it to be added to your main application.

What are the links to the SoA's various websites?

- [Main website](#)
- [Undergraduate Program website](#)
- [Main Admissions website](#) (includes information on visiting)
- [Undergraduate Admissions](#) website