# Evan Ari Bronstein
## Architect

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## HOSPITALITY

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### Workflow with Concepts

I typically begin the design process with planning diagrams that help establish the basic scale of the building on the site. Once I have an arrangement that I believe works, I'll import it into Concepts. Here is where I will begin to refine the rough areas to a more meaningful plan arrangement. While this may seem a small step it is one of the most important. The ability to adjust the line is by far the most engaging and tactile part of Concepts. Rather than erase, I simply adjust the line. I'll also use this moment to do quick sketches that may begin to suggest the building form. Once I have a completed plan layout, however, I'll export this sketch as a jpeg and import into UMake. UMake is a three dimensional sketching application that allows me to quickly develop the building massing and general details. Using my Concepts reference plan and sketched elevations, I can begin to extrude lines into what will be the building massing. From this application I will export a series of model views and import these views into Concepts on my iPad. From this point I will trace the primary perspective lines from the underlay image and add more detail and entourage that breathes "life" into the drawing. Next, I apply color using Sketchbook Pro on my Wacom Cintiq. In addition to the complement of brushes available to complete a rendering, Sketchbook Pro can read and write to Adobe Photoshop files which is important for subsequent editing, layout and presentation steps. The completed sketches typically get compiled into an InDesign file with text summaries and spreadsheets etc.
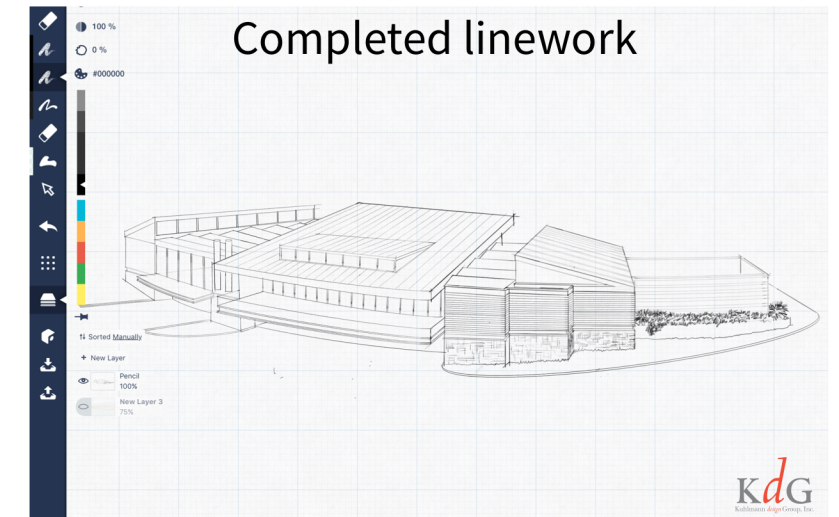


Completed sketch using Sketchbook Pro and background from Google Earth.



UMake massing study
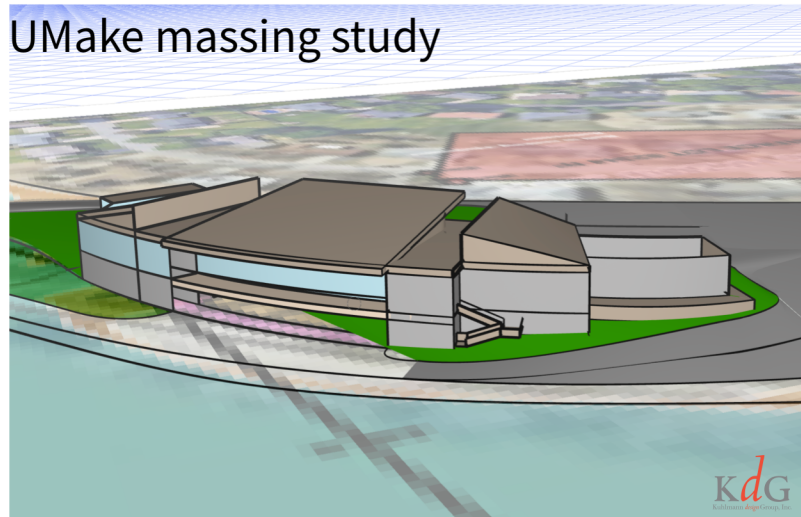


Adding detail in Concepts
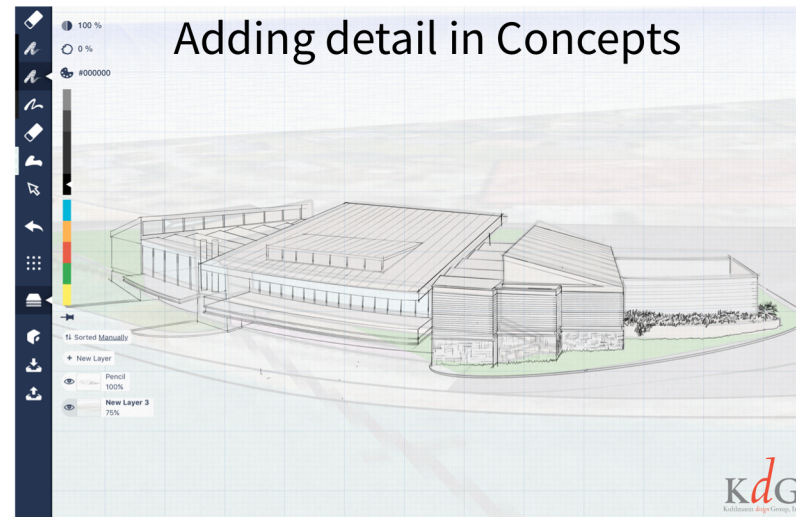


Completed linework

**Evan Ari Bronstein**

http://kdginc.com/

This article is part of a series of interviews with practicing architects who use Concepts in some part of their workflow. In each interview, we explore their design process and the tools they use to create lasting architectural designs.

*1. Tell us a bit about you—what you do, what your passions are, where you live/work, how you got to this point in your career.*

*2. What is your design process like? Where do you gather your inspiration and what prepares you for creating an architectural design?*

*3. What tools/programs do you use in your design process? How does Concepts fit into your work?*

*4. Would you be willing to share a floor plan of yours and walk through how you made it from start to finish?*

*5. Discuss the possibilities to import and export to/from standard CAD programs*

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**Evan Bronstein: I am a Father, Husband, Architect, Artist, Student and Educator.** I am approaching forty-seven years of age, and I have accumulated a range of life and work experiences that I could touch upon to characterize who I am and what I do. Probably the most profound quality that I could share, however, would be that of an observer. In its most humble sense, I believe that for any person to effect meaningful change, one must spend a great deal of their time observing the patterns of the world around them. This somewhat passive position affords the opportunity for observing the intricacies of life and allows time for reflection. For much of my life I can remember having a sketchbook and a pencil in my hand. In the beginning these were just nonsense doodles. Eventually, I acquired more patience and focus and began "drawing from life." In this mode, I tried to understand nature and buildings.

Of course it would be a misrepresentation to equate clarity of sight with effective design solutions, but at its core, the passionate designer must take care to know as much as he/she can

about human nature and the dynamics of our interactions in order to have a chance at success. Through my lens, Design is a predictive profession. And as its steward, we anticipate what should be, and create a forum for that new status to emerge. When done correctly there is something natural and inevitable about the solution.

Like so many, I find myself wearing many hats throughout the day. Regardless of the role, I always have a pen or in recent years, a stylus and a medium to correlate with the implement. Given my professional choices, my world revolves around graphic and verbal communication. I am constantly in a position of listening to ideas/challenges and assisting in navigating an appropriate solution. Tools like Concepts fulfill my need to document thoughts and ideas. I use this application primarily for quick idea sketches. The inherent flexibility of the application means that I can take advantage of the unlimited canvas to cycle through a range of design ideas as well as bring in a site plan from which I can develop diagrams. The means of grouping drawings also helps keep track of my work across multiple projects.

**In my role as an Architect is where I find the greatest use for Concepts.** I am the Senior Architectural Designer at Kuhlmann *design* Group, Inc., located in Saint Louis, Missouri. In this capacity I am involved primarily in the beginning of projects, working with clients to develop the design concepts and evolving the concept through schematic design. So while our office will handle the full breadth of design services, I typically will take our REVIT model to a schematic level and the balance of documentation gets delegated to other staff members. I remain active in the project to consult on any required design changes and client discussions and additional presentations. And while one would always appreciate the luxury of time, my effort often needs to be as efficient as possible. As a result, I find myself using a variety of applications in my workflow. Each program is vital and is in place to gain the most out of each step.

I feel most comfortable drawing in a traditional manner. Over the years I have found a comparable place through the Apple iPad and Wacom Cintiq. I will normally begin on the iPad with Autodesk's Graphic. In this step I will import a site plan with a graphic scale. I will set the scale within the settings and commence creating plan diagrams. This application is important because it allows you to create closed polygons that you can label and that can indicate the area. When working on a floor plan or site plan, this information is of paramount importance so that you can quickly lay out the design program (or inventory of required spaces).

Once I have an arrangement that I believe works, I'll export this as a jpeg to my photo library and bring it into Concepts. Here is where I will begin to refine the rough areas to a more meaningful plan arrangement. While this may seem a small step it is one of the most important. The ability to adjust the line is by far the most engaging and tactile part of Concepts. Rather than

erase, I simply adjust the line. I'll also use this moment to do quick sketches that may begin to suggest the building form.

Once I have a completed plan layout, I'll export this sketch as a jpeg and import into UMake. In UMake, elevational studies as well as plans can be imported and oriented in their respective planes (xyz). UMake is a three dimensional sketching application that allows me to quickly develop the building massing and general details. Using my Concepts reference plan and sketched elevations, I can begin to extrude lines into what will be the building massing.

From this application I will export a series of model views and depending upon where I am—at the office, at home or on a plane—I may import these views into Concepts on my iPad or Sketchbook Pro on my Cintiq. From this point I will trace the primary perspective lines from the underlay image and add more detail and entourage that breathes "life" into the drawing.

Regardless of which application I use during this step, I will always apply color using Sketchbook Pro on my Wacom Cintiq. In addition to the complement of brushes available to complete a rendering, Sketchbook Pro can read and write to Adobe Photoshop files which is important for subsequent editing, layout and presentation steps. From a completed rendering, the sketches typically get compiled into an InDesign file with text summaries and spreadsheets etc.

***Design inspiration* is a tricky place to describe.** Many clients often use precedent examples to help explain what they are thinking and often share them in meetings to be used as design direction for a project. Often this is a credible starting point, but may not be of an example that meets the building type. As a result, I spend a great deal of time talking with the client to understand what are the qualities of the image(s) that they appreciate. Often times a sense of being modern is what they like about the precedent example. Sometimes it's the use of materials etc. Once we separate the meaning from the images, we can begin to develop a solution unique to the project. From that point the mind takes over. I'll be the first to admit it is somewhat of an enigmatic place to reference someone, but the emerging design is based on the value systems that the client conveys. And I will prioritize a solution based on knowing the client, program requirements, budget, site context and any iconography that may best serve their expressed mission… it's something like that.

In principle, regarding design, I believe we honor the past by not attempting to duplicate it. The conditions that make a design valid are unique to the period and culture within which it was created. We demonstrate our respect for our generation and history by designing and building with the conditions that respond to our present culture. This allows each generation the ability to assert their own contribution to society—helping to move our collective lives forward.

Ben (CEO of TopHatch, creator of Concepts) is quite familiar with my work as an educator, developing an architectural curriculum for children at the Center of Creative Arts (COCA). The video we created available on Concepts' YouTube channel best conveys what we are doing there. It is a great entry platform for children to visually communicate. And the nice thing is that it has capacity that the students can grow into as their acumen progresses.

*Feedback on the Application and Other Reflections*

This application is awesome! Ben has done a phenomenal job growing this program into the powerful tool that it has become. Many of the features we have discussed have emerged in ways that have proven invaluable to me. That being said, there are two key features that I would love to see added.

1. Perspective Drawing Aids. Drawing aids for perspective sketches are critical. Both Procreate and Sketchbook Pro offer the type of perspective tools that are vital for the type of rapid ideation that I do. Being able to combine this with the line editing that we can do in Concepts would be a game changer.

2. Area calculations that allow adjustment. I could eliminate Autodesk Graphic if I could create polygons that could be labeled and that could show the enclosed area. These two pieces of information are vital for space planning.

Over time, I have not found a direct personal need for exporting to CAD or for using Concepts to develop final, scaled floor plans. The size of our projects and the required documentation would not make this efficient or practical. Although Concepts has a wealth of features, I find it best for me as a really great and versatile sketching application.

Respectfully Submitted by Evan Bronstein.



Evan Bronstein, AIA, EDAC, LEED GA

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Cataloged by Erica Christensen—Director of Community at TopHatch