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Drawing



Dean Fisher and Josephine Robinson

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Praise for the Teach Yourself VISUALLY Series

I just had to let you and your company know how great I think your books are. I just purchased my third Visual book (my first two are dog-eared now!) and, once again, your product has surpassed my expectations. The expertise, thought, and effort that go into each book are obvious, and I sincerely appreciate your efforts. Keep up the wonderful work!

—Tracey Moore (Memphis, TN)

I have several books from the Visual series and have always found them to be valuable resources.

—Stephen P. Miller (Ballston Spa, NY)

Thank you for the wonderful books you produce. It wasn't until I was an adult that I discovered how I learn—visually. Although a few publishers out there claim to present the material visually, nothing compares to Visual books. I love the simple layout. Everything is easy to follow. And I understand the material! You really know the way I think and learn. Thanks so much!

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I am an avid fan of your Visual books. If I need to learn anything, I just buy one of your books and learn the topic in no time. Wonders! I have even trained my friends to give me Visual books as gifts.

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I write to extend my thanks and appreciation for your books. They are clear, easy to follow, and straight to the point. Keep up the good work! I bought several of your books and they are just right! No regrets! I will always buy your books because they are the best.

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Acknowledgments

We hope we have created a book which will inspire the reader, through the ideas and imagery presented, to find the process of becoming a skilled artist less frustrating and more enjoyable.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of all the artists who took part in this project by generously allowing us to reproduce their work.

Also, thanks to our editors Pam Mourouzis and Donna Wright from Wiley Publishing for their friendliness and patience during this process.

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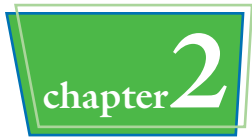


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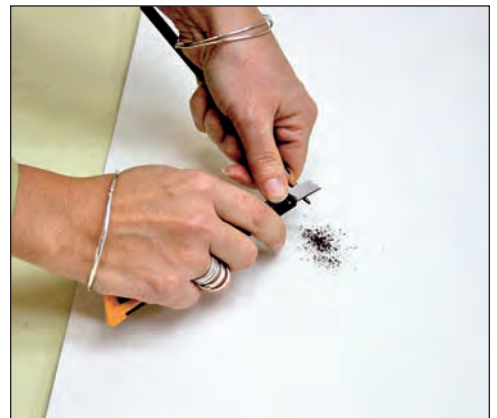
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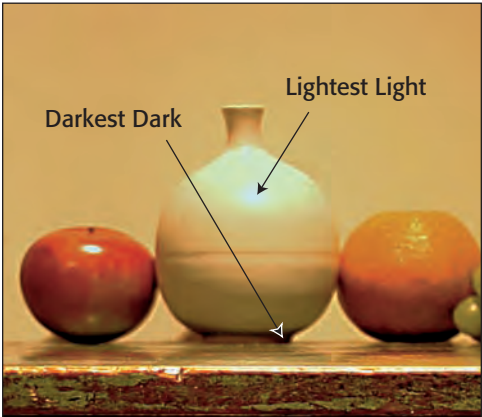
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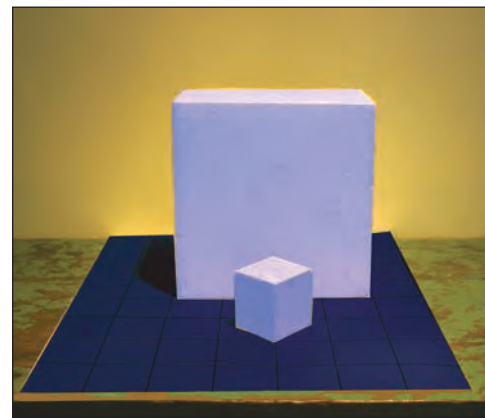
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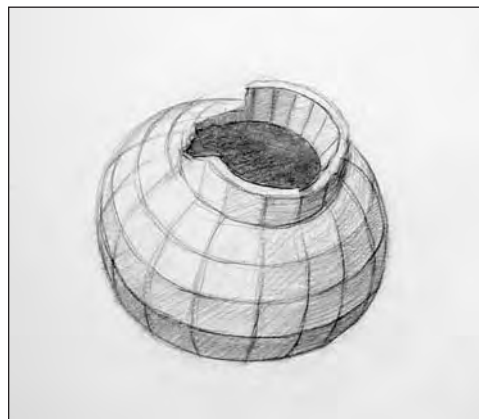
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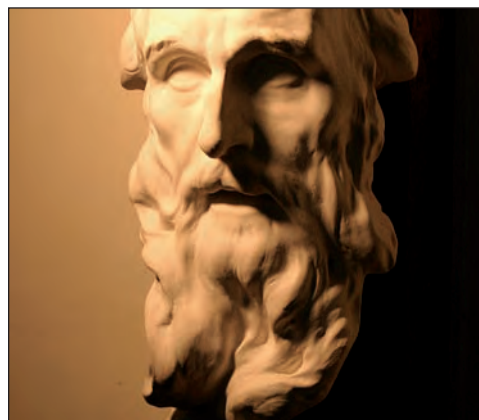
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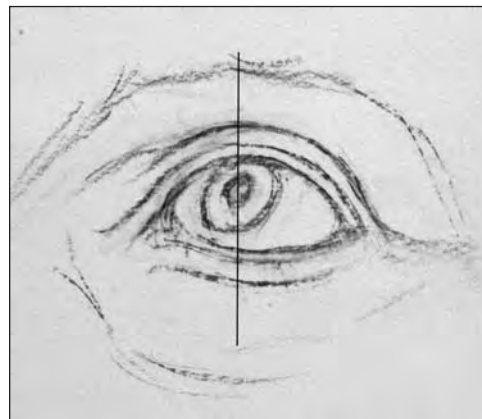
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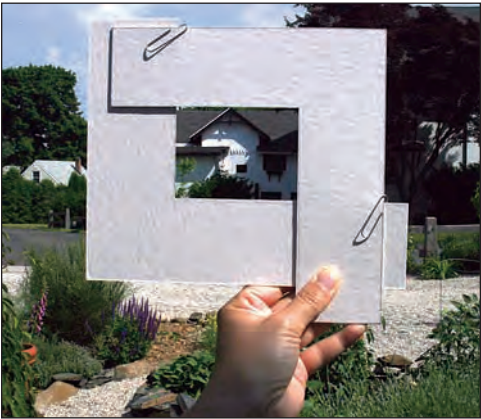
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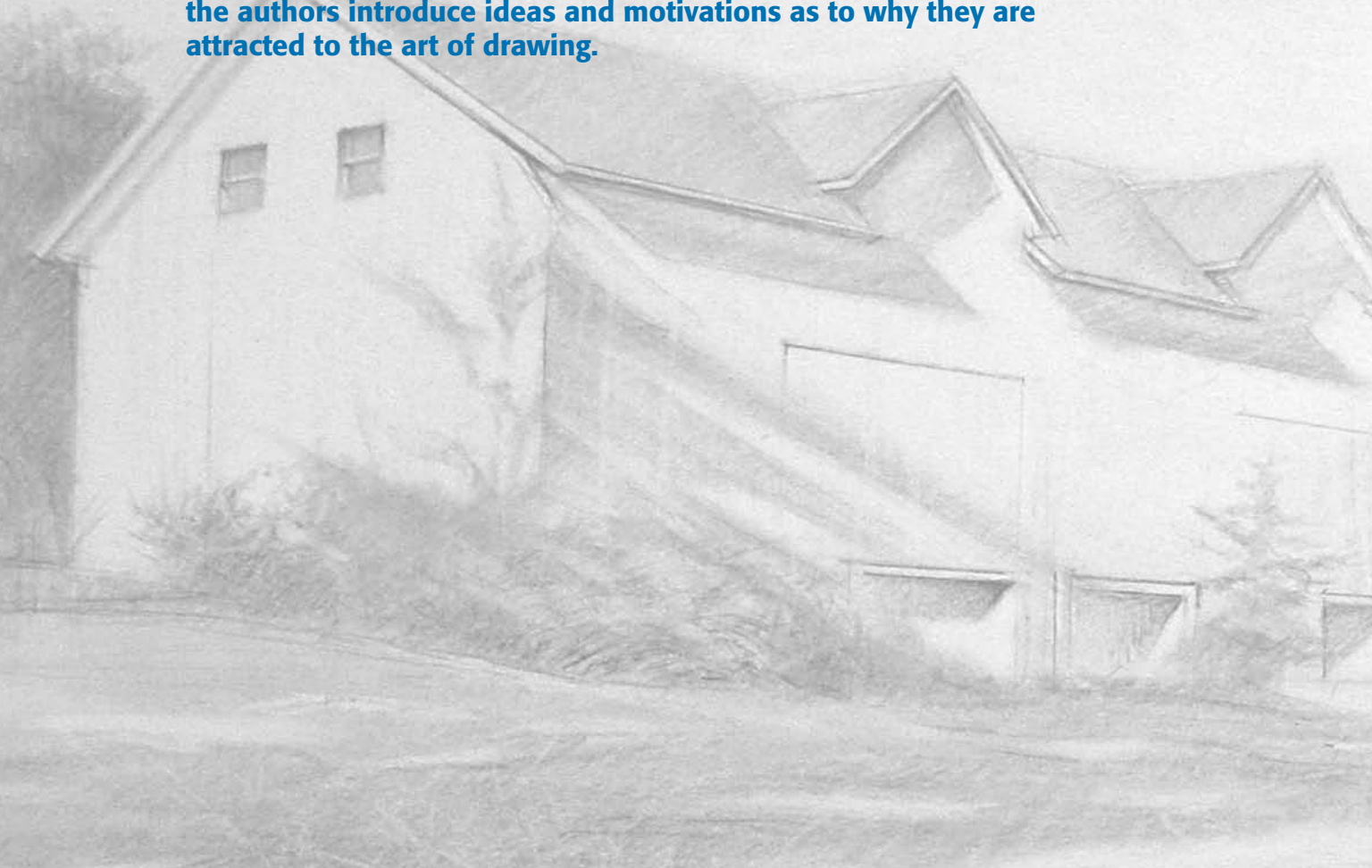
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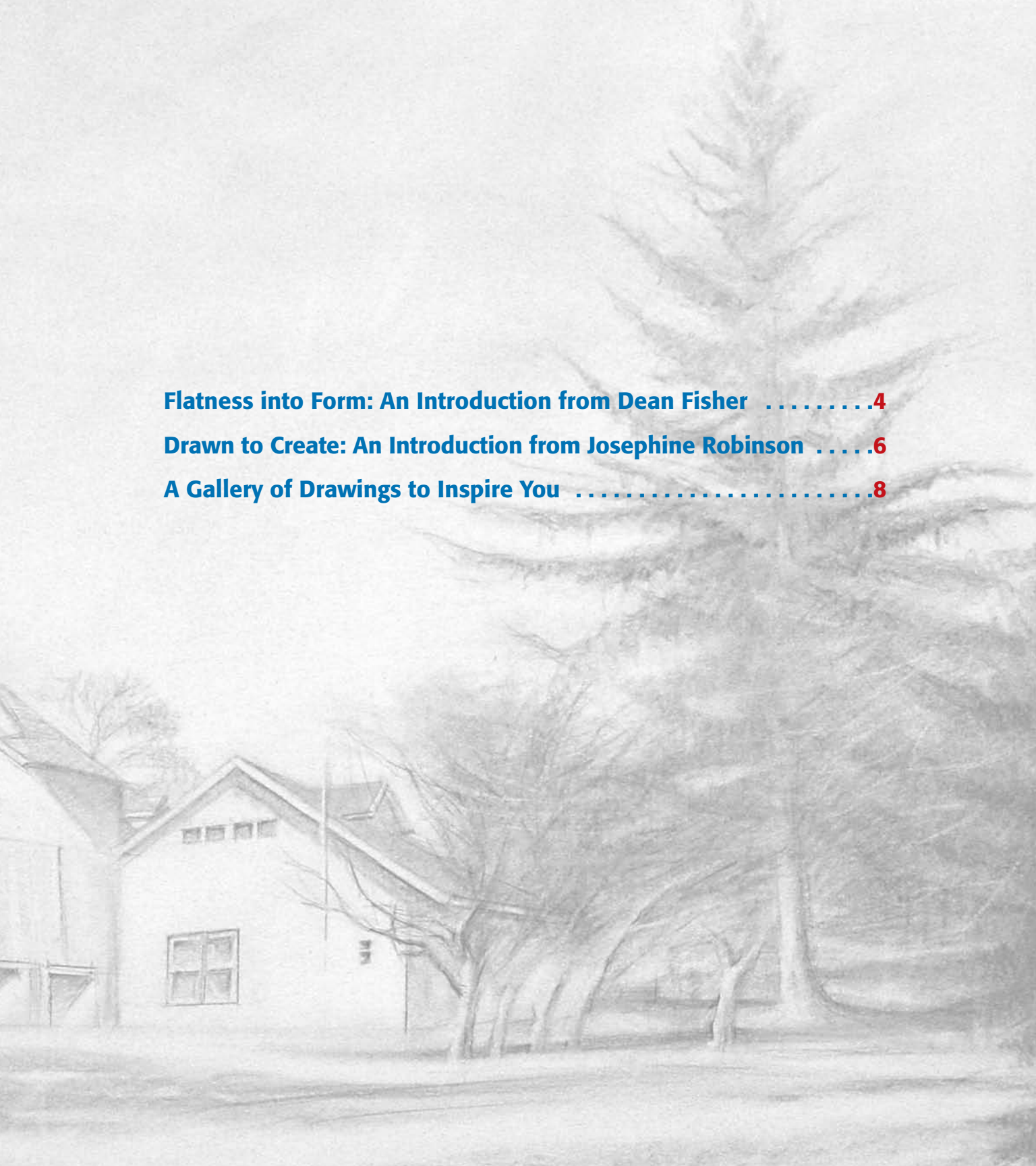
chapter

1

What Is Drawing?

Drawing is a very personal endeavor. Here, in this short introduction, the authors introduce ideas and motivations as to why they are attracted to the art of drawing.





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Flatness into Form: An Introduction from Dean Fisher

The creation of the illusion of reality on a flat, blank surface always has and still fascinates me as an artist. With some good instruction, practice, and basic tools such as a pencil and a piece of paper, one can make images full of life and personality. We're glad you have joined us on this journey into the amazing world of drawing!

A Quest to Become Informed

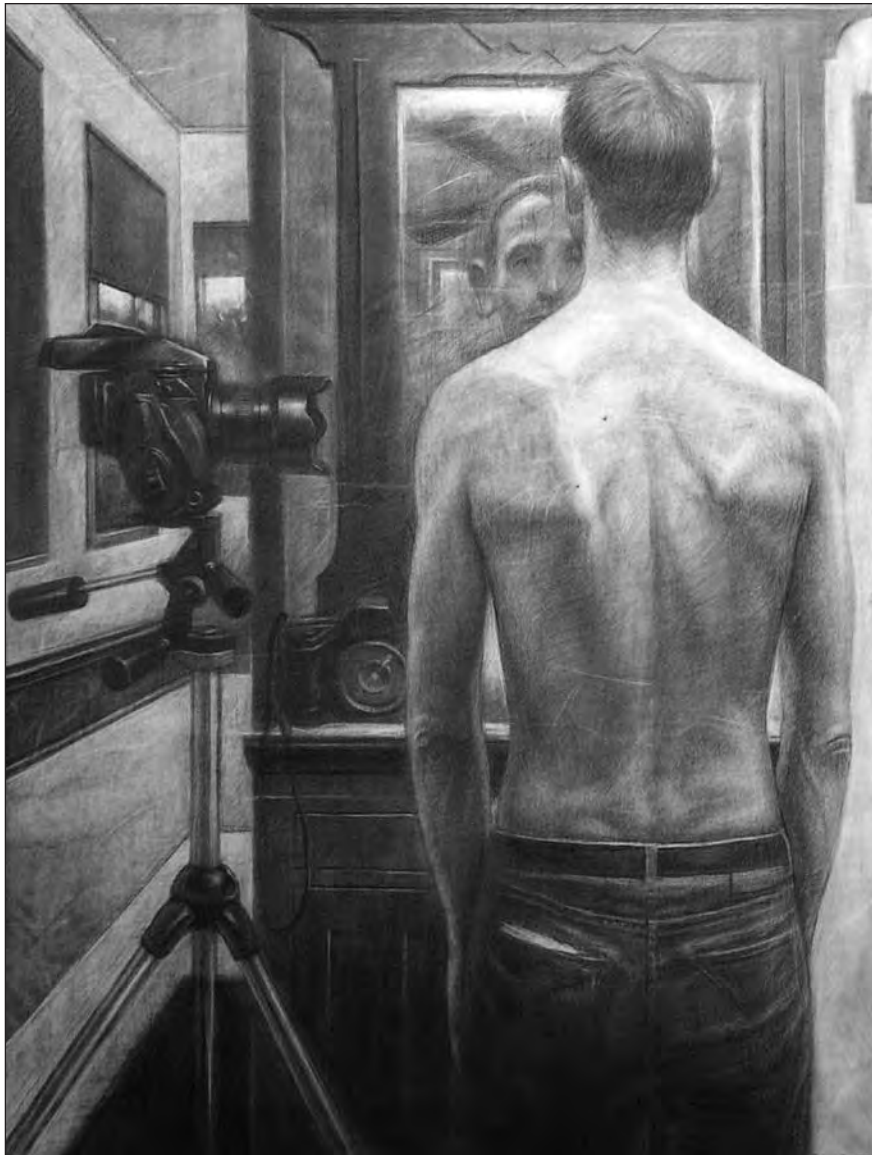
One of the greatest thrills of my childhood was watching my father draw a picture on a blank piece of paper. Within seconds, and with a number of carefully placed lines and a hint of shadow, the image of a face would miraculously appear. It seemed magical that a drawing could be so three-dimensional and full of personality.

To this day some 40 years later, this phenomenon of creating the illusion of reality on a flat, blank surface still fascinates me as an artist; it brings me back to my easel every day. My father's voice is always repeating the same thing in my head: "Draw often, as good drawing skills will be the foundation for any art form you pursue."

Being a representational artist who describes objects and the world around me—in a realistic way as opposed to an abstract way—and who follows my father's advice to continually practice my drawing skills, I'm linked to a long tradition of European art. From the time of our earliest ancestors, humans have felt compelled to record the world around them. Motivated either by practical or aesthetic reasons, the artist has had to cultivate the technical skills of his craft to succinctly convey his impressions to others. Whether it was early humans attempting to capture the power and grace of an animal's leg or a twenty-first-century artist drawing a sleek, modern bridge, a single line drawn by a well-trained draftsman can communicate as much about the subject as pages of the written word.

A drawing can be so many things: It can be a rapid notation of something glimpsed out of the corner of an eye; a means to develop an idea for a painting; a way of exploring the formal properties of the medium employed; or a highly finished, detailed rendering of a subject. All have the potential to be powerful works of art. Nature is full of richness and subtlety. It seems to follow that the artist who has a breadth of skills at his disposal will be better equipped to respond to the great variety of visual stimuli that he encounters and to his emotional responses to them.

We have designed this book to assist those individuals who are interested in exploring the fascinating world of representational drawing. This book will convey what we believe are the fundamental principles behind learning to draw what you see. You will be introduced to the building blocks of recording what is in front of you. We will begin by introducing basic drawing principles using simple subject matter. These ideas will then be developed by using more complicated subjects. Rather than teaching formulas on how to draw, the focus will be on teaching concepts through explanations, exercises, and demonstrations. We believe this will take students much farther in their education, as it will hopefully instill methods of seeing more carefully. The acquisition of these skills will serve as a springboard to the student artist to further explore the technical and creative potential of the various media and techniques introduced in this book.



The Photographer, by Dean Fisher

Drawn to Create: An Introduction from Josephine Robinson

There is no more satisfying experience than to stand back from a piece of work that you alone have succeeded in creating. The sense of accomplishment cannot be equaled. Once experienced, it is impossible not to want to repeat it again and again.

The Visual Language

The visual language of painting and drawing has a rich and complex vocabulary, which artists have created and used to express a whole array of ideas and emotions. Through this language artists have often challenged accepted truths and long-held beliefs. They have done so not only by their ability to use this language as a basis for comment but also by their ability to re-invent the forms of the language itself in order to offer differing viewpoints upon our world.

Seeing art as a language inspires me to experiment in its possibilities of communication. My work as an artist is concerned with the formulation of a personal statement, like most other artists. It is akin to a journey, where the end of the journey is less important than the traveling itself. It is the experimentation, the manipulation of materials, and the exploration of the forms of this language that I find exciting, fascinating, involved, and ultimately inspiring. It is the freedom to form my own vocabulary for this language that makes me return to my easel every day.

I draw in large part on the great artistic culture of past civilizations and societies. These past cultures provide me with a rich and varied source not only to use but to experiment with, invent from, and to learn from. Great art, for me, is art that endures. I am inspired by all art that has the power to cross our linear boundaries of time and speak to us in the present-day world. This sense of endurance is art's most powerful and enduring legacy. It arises as a consequence, in part, of the artist's formation of a language, which is able to transpose their own unique and intimate vision, beyond the personal, to a shared universal human experience.

This visual language of images, even in this twenty-first century, is a vehicle still capable of further exploration and invention. I am grateful to all artists, everywhere, who have taken this journey to make the mundane unusual, to make the personal, universal, and to make the passage of time less baffling. Their inventiveness, exploration, perseverance, and artistry have allowed everyone of us, whether actively or passively, to take part in this conversation. Enjoy it!



Looking Downtown from Midtown, by J. S. Robinson

A Gallery of Drawings to Inspire You

This beautiful portrait by Michelangelo shows a simple elegance in its execution and design. The lines and marks Michelangelo used in this drawing are both economic and precise in terms of draftsmanship and expression. His expertise as an artist enabled him to develop a quality of line and quality of mark, which not only renders a likeness of the young man, but also renders a suggestion of his mood and character.



Portrait of Andrea Quaratesi, by Michelangelo Buonarroti,
© The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved.

In this phenomenal drawing by contemporary Spanish artist Antonio López García, his acute vision, skills, and patience have enabled him to create this seemingly simple depiction of a real space. While the degree of realism is very high, he has managed to create a breathable space and sense of warmth by sharply focusing only on certain selected objects. This is a scene that is perceived by a human eye, rather than by the lens of a camera.

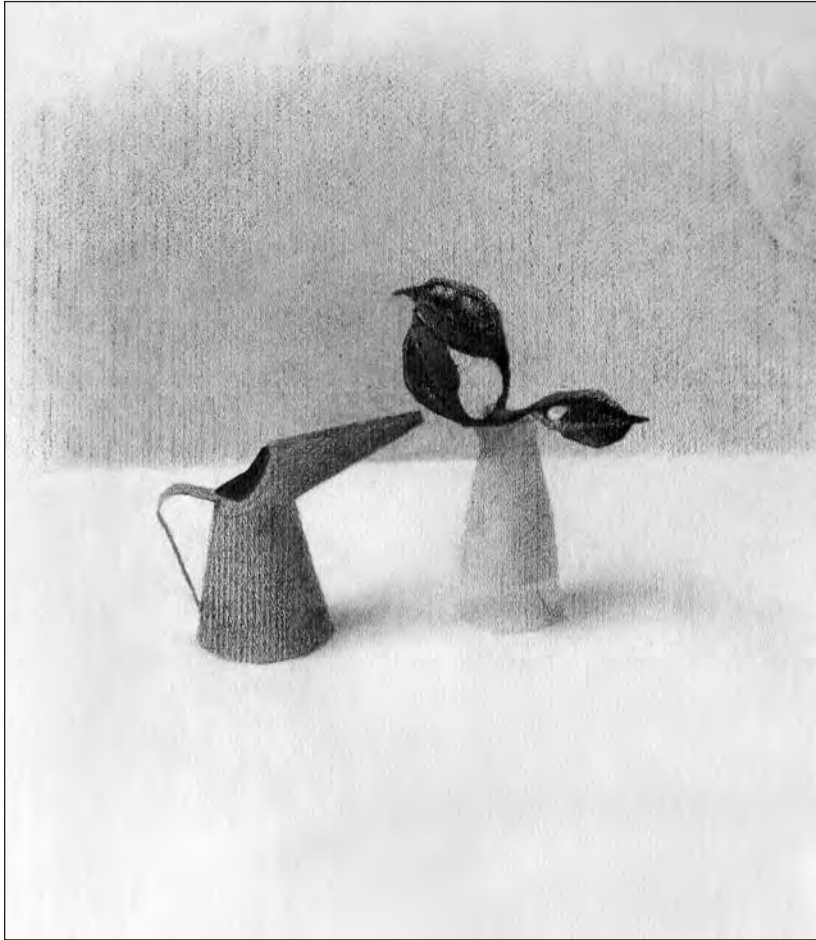


Antonio López Torres' House, by Antonio López García, © VEGAP

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

A Gallery of Drawings to Inspire You *(continued)*

The artist has drawn these two objects with a great deal of restraint. She has used the texture of the paper to suggest the surface of both the objects. By her careful use of tone alone, the artist has intriguingly managed to differentiate the material composition of two objects and the surface on which they sit, even though they all share the same texture of the paper. She has beautifully, and delicately, manipulated the most basic drawing tools of pencil and paper.



Roman glass 1, by Rita Natarova, courtesy of the artist

In this elegant line drawing, the artist has used very economic means to depict the model as if she were in motion. The high level of realism comes through the accuracy of the line and, to a large degree, through the careful depiction of a very believable human gesture. The feeling of vitality and movement is also conveyed through the varied thickness of line.



The Russian Girl, by Silviu Krecu, courtesy of the artist

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

A Gallery of Drawings to Inspire You *(continued)*

This formal, yet subtle, composition fixes our gaze on two objects that are bathed by a soft directional light. The light is gently portrayed by soft tones of gray. The few dark tones in this drawing, and the rectangle of gray behind the objects, are strategically placed to act as weights to anchor the objects into the composition. The gray tones subtly contrast the light and the half light. This creates a shimmering effect, so that there is a gentle vibration throughout the whole composition.



Still Life, by Constance Lapalombara, courtesy of the artist

In this image, the artist has frozen a moment in time. The tumbling cups have been prevented from falling and are locked in position, defying gravity. It is an illusion created by the artist but made believable by his reference to real objects. There are no strongly differentiated tones in this drawing. Instead there is a gentle progression from the white of the cups to the grays of the cloths to the blacks of the cups. It is this use of measured tones that persuades the viewer to contemplate a seemingly unimportant action.



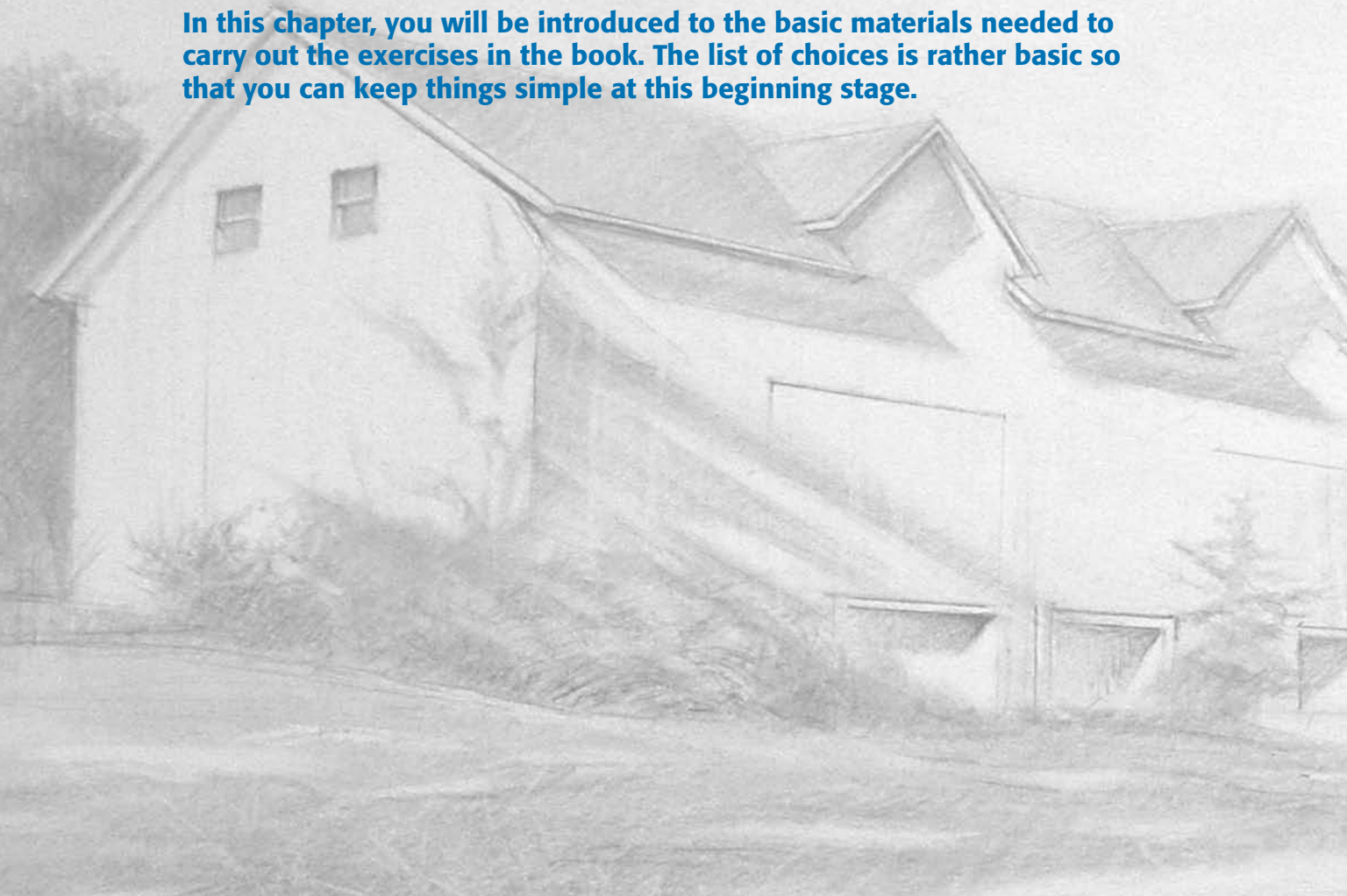
Cup Still Life, by Roger Van Damme, courtesy of the artist

chapter

2

Drawing Materials

In this chapter, you will be introduced to the basic materials needed to carry out the exercises in the book. The list of choices is rather basic so that you can keep things simple at this beginning stage.





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A Sample of Drawing Tools

This is a sampling of the many tools that are available to use in drawing. The items presented here have proven to be indispensable to artists. In this section, you will learn each tool's different applications. Take special note of how the tool is used differently by each artist in the gallery sections throughout this book, and practice what you see.



Various Mediums

GRAPHITE PENCILS

Graphite pencils are probably the most common drawing tool. They are available on a scale from hardest to softest. The scale ranges from 10H to 9B, where H denotes hardness and B indicates softness (the B refers to black). An H pencil makes a sharp and precise line. As the H number decreases, so does the sharpness. With the B range, the higher the number, the softer and more blurred the line becomes.

You can also buy water soluble graphite pencils. You draw out your image with the pencil, and then paint over areas with a brush that has been dipped in water to soften passages of tone, or line. This will give your drawing a more “painterly” look.

Note: Graphite can be easily erased, as long as you don't press really hard when you draw. A jar of graphite powder (see the photo on page 36) is excellent for creating a ground, or tone, on your paper. You'll learn more about tone in Chapter 4.



CHARCOAL

Charcoal is available in sticks as willow or vine charcoal. Both charcoals range from soft to hard and are easy to use to create tones. Charcoal can be messy but produces a velvety, rich, dark tone on the paper. You can sharpen the end into a point with some fine sandpaper or a small sanding pad. You will use a lot of it, as it wears down quickly. Charcoal can be very easily erased, and so it must be made permanent, or “fixed,” with a fixative. You can buy fixative in an aerosol form to be sprayed onto the surface of your completed drawing. “Workable fixative” is also available, and as the name suggests, you can spray it onto your drawing and then go back and work into it again. It is therefore not permanent.

Note: Fixative is extremely harmful to inhale. If you apply it to your drawing, always do so in the open air, and never indoors.



CONTÉ CRAYONS AND PENCILS

Conté crayons and pencils are available in earth colors. *Sanguine* (red) is probably the most popular color, and a variety of Sanguines are available. Because the pigments are mixed with kolin clay, *conté* is a hard medium. This makes it somewhat difficult to erase, and so it is not the best medium for a beginner. However, *conté* is a lovely medium to use—practice and persevere, and you will be rewarded!

White chalk is useful when working with tone to emphasize highlights, and pastels are softer than chalk and bring an element of color into your drawing. You can use them as a basis for adding a tone to your paper (see Chapter 12). Of course, they can also be used as a drawing medium in their own right.



KNEADED ERASER AND CHAMOIS CLOTH

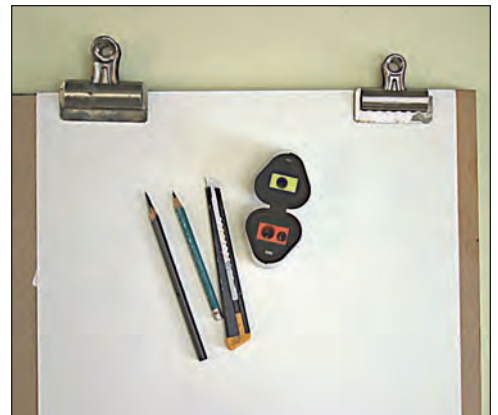
The eraser and the chamois cloth become drawing implements when working with tone. (In Chapter 4, you will learn how the eraser is used to create tone.) The chamois cloth's purpose is to erase large areas of tone, while the kneaded eraser can be manipulated to erase a variety of shapes and sizes. Next to the chamois cloth are some *tortillons*, or "shading stumps," which come in different sizes. They are rolled paper with small to large points on both ends.

When working with charcoal or graphite, you can use *tortillons* instead of your fingers, as your fingers do not have such small points. They are useful for softening and moving around the charcoal or graphite into very small and precise areas on your paper.



RAZOR KNIFE, PENCIL SHARPENER, AND DRAWING BOARD

There is nothing more annoying than drawing with an uneven, stubby pencil, so make sure that your pencils are sharpened and ready to use. The pencil sharpened with a razor knife is on the left. You can obtain a very long point by carving the wood away. This gives you the ability to not only use the point, but the whole length on the side of the point. The second pencil from the left is sharpened by an ordinary sharpener. The point is a lot shorter, and this is actually the only part of the pencil that you can use to make a mark. Drawing boards are essential to give you a firm foundation. Any hard board will do, as long as it is stable. Here, we have used a piece of Masonite, which is available at your local hardware store. You will need strong clips to attach the paper.



Different Papers

In this section, you'll be introduced to a variety of papers. The surfaces of each paper are demonstrated visually in the photographs. The marks on the papers give you a "feel" for the different textures. However, when you buy your paper, make sure you feel its surface. This helps you to understand how your drawing tool of choice will react to the surface's roughness or smoothness, hardness or softness. The marks shown in these examples are made using (from top to bottom) the side and point/tip of a small piece of charcoal, the side and point/tip of a stick of conté, and the side and point/tip of a graphite pencil.

SKETCH BOOKS AND PAPER ROLLS

You can buy your paper in sketch books or in big rolls of paper. With ring-bound sketch books, it is easier to detach the paper from the ring rather than tear it out of the book. Rolls of paper enable you to determine the exact size of the piece you want. A smooth paper is shown here. There is no interruption from the surface of the paper to disrupt the drawn lines.



PAPERS WITH SURFACES THAT GRAB OR GLIDE

This paper is rougher. The line does not flow so easily and continuously. Think about the subject matter you are drawing and how it is suited to the surface you are using. If you want to draw a subject with fine detail and the quality of the line is important to you, you should use a smooth paper. If, however, you will not be concentrating on fine detail but an overview of the subject, then a less smooth paper will best suit that need. There are no hard and fast rules; just be aware of the possibilities, and always experiment.



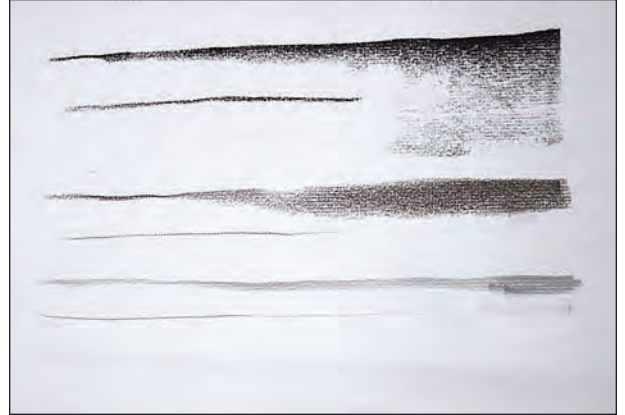
NEWSPRINT PAPER

Newsprint is the most economical paper to use and is available in pads. This is not the best-quality paper, but it is great for practicing. It comes in large sizes and gives you a great sense of freedom while drawing. As you can see from the examples using the side of the tools only, it has a very smooth surface. If this is a drawing that you want to keep, do not use charcoal or pastel, or any other soft medium on this surface.



CHARCOAL PAPER

This is paper that is made for charcoal. It comes in a variety of colors and is not extremely smooth, like newsprint. The texture of the paper grabs hold of the charcoal particles, and so consequently, it retains the charcoal. Notice that the graphite pencil is not such a successful medium on this paper.



WATERCOLOR PAPER

Watercolor paper comes in varying thicknesses. As the name suggests, it is made for watercolor paint. It has a much rougher texture in comparison to the other papers listed in this section. As you can see, the lines created here really reveal the surface of the paper.



PRINTMAKING PAPER

Printmaking paper is excellent for drawing. It comes in different shades of white, cream, and ivory, among other shades. Its beautiful warm or cool shades can emphasize your drawing medium, and so enhance the drawing as a whole.

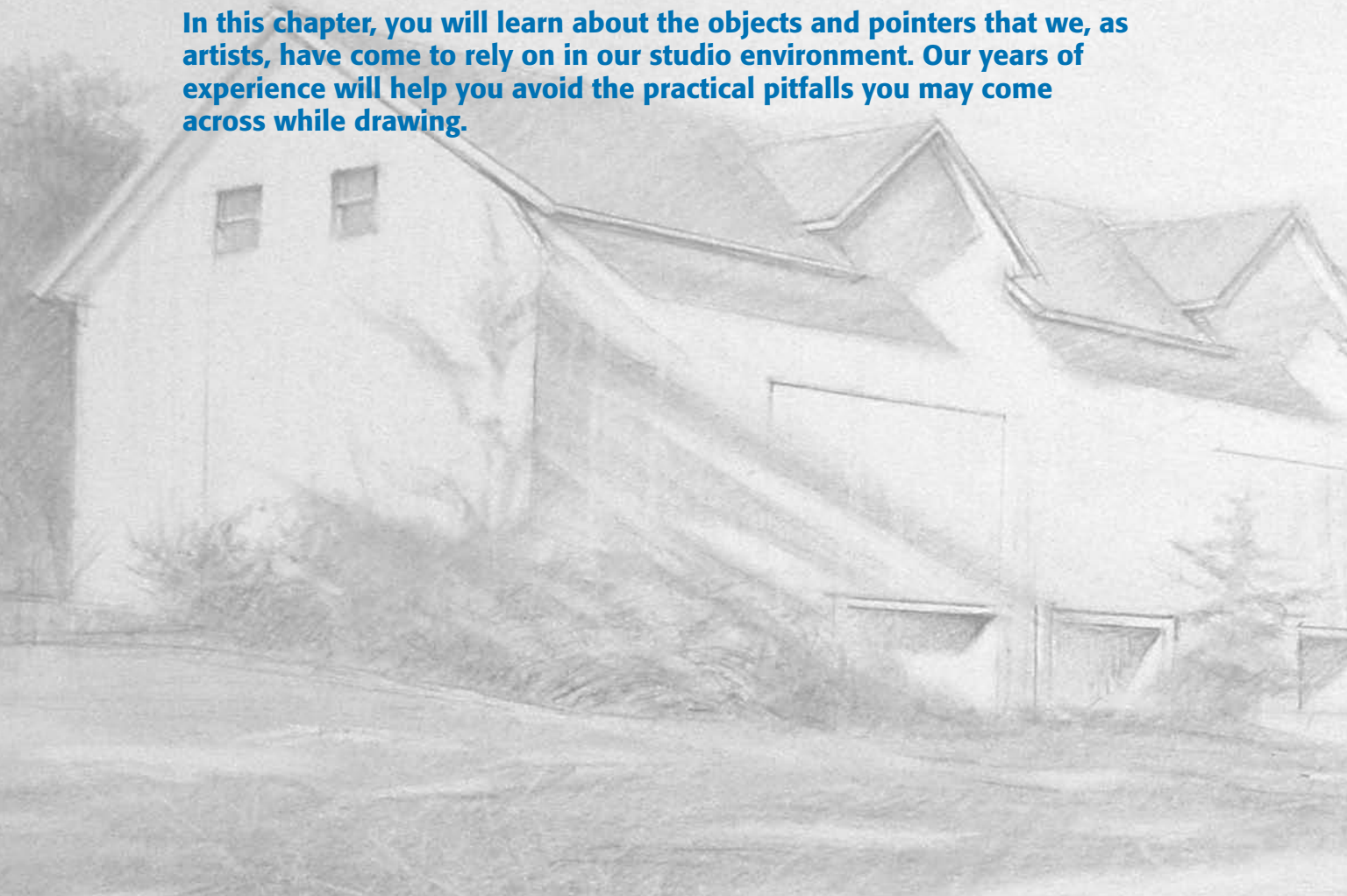


chapter

3

In the Studio

In this chapter, you will learn about the objects and pointers that we, as artists, have come to rely on in our studio environment. Our years of experience will help you avoid the practical pitfalls you may come across while drawing.





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Lighting

Lighting is an extremely important aspect of drawing to consider. Drawing is about what you see and how you see your subject. Light is the most important element of drawing because it reveals the structure of an object. Only by accurately drawing the lighting on your subject will you be able to convey a sense of space and dimension.



Lighting Sources

ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

When you set up a subject to draw, it is helpful in the beginning to control your light source. The photo on the right shows a jug lit by artificial light. Can you tell what direction the light is coming from, judging by the shadows it is creating? (The answer is at the bottom of this page.)

To provide a readily available light source, you can buy an artist studio light that you can easily move around with its lightweight stand. It has a pivoting head so that you can move the light bulb up and down to suit your needs. It is easy to identify the shapes of light and shadow in this setup. The light does not change because it is constant—you control it. Consequently, when you arrange your lighting setup, you control the design element of your drawing. Notice the long shadow to the right of the jug. If you accurately draw the shape of this shadow, you will define the jug because the shadow is an integral part of the jug. It is like putting a puzzle together; every piece interlocks with every other piece.

The lighting source on the jug is coming from the left.



NATURAL LIGHT

Natural light is another term for daylight. It is a beautiful, soft light that gently glides over objects, giving them a softer appearance than that from artificial light. Edges of objects are not sharply defined, as they can be when using artificial light. This lighting creates more subtle and gradual changes in tones on objects. It can therefore be more difficult to render an object with this type of light.

As you gain more experience in your drawing, we encourage you to use natural light. An important point to remember is to light your objects by a window where there is no influence from direct sunlight. This will enable you to work for a longer period, as you will not have to deal with disturbing bands of sunlight or shadows across your paper. Draw from real life and not from photographs. This is simply because you can alter things in life by adjusting the objects to your light source. You cannot change or “investigate” anything in a photograph if you do not fully understand its form or texture. There is no substitute for the real object in front of you.



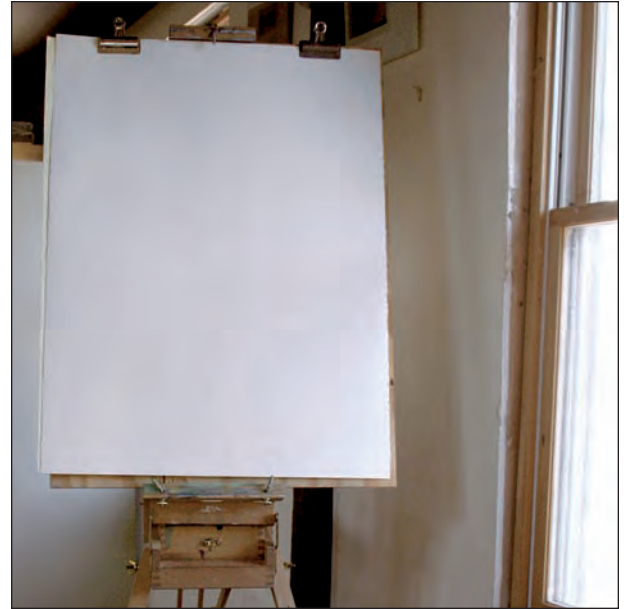
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Lighting

(continued)

LIGHTING AN EASEL

Not only do you have to consider the light on the object you are about to draw, you must also consider the light on your easel. It is an easy factor to forget, but it is important. You have to be able to see clearly what you are drawing. When using natural light, make sure when you begin that your easel is being lit by a north-facing window, as it will provide you with the most constant source of light that is unaffected by the movement of the earth around the sun. The different types of easels available are discussed on page 26.



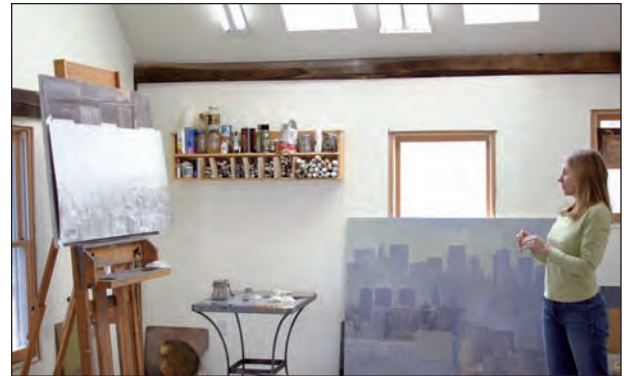
If you prefer a constant source of light, and have no north facing windows to light your studio, then you must use artificial light. Light your easel as well as you can. Here, the artist has used 4-foot “fluorescent style” daylight temperature tubes. He has angled the light bulbs down toward the easel. The light bulbs in this overhead setup are called *daylight bulbs*. These light bulbs simulate daylight and radiate a cool light, rather than the hot light of ordinary light bulbs. (This is normally a consideration when using color in your work.)



As you draw, you can become very involved in minute and unimportant details, particularly in the early stages of a drawing. Make sure that you have plenty of space to stand back from your drawing and walk around your subject. When you do so, you can judge your drawing objectively.

WALK AROUND YOUR DRAWING

It is very important that you are able to work with space around you. We cannot stress this point enough: You need room to back away from your drawing to review your work from a distance. It will give you a fresh “eye” on your work and also reveal how the drawing is coming together as a whole structure. Good observation is learning to see how everything fits together, not simply how a few parts fit together.



WALK AROUND YOUR SETUP

It is also valuable to have space around your subject matter. It may happen that you do not fully understand, visually or mentally, what is happening with the objects you have set up. If this happens, you need to be able to approach your setup to study it. It is actually impossible to draw something well that you do not understand. This situation probably happens more often when drawing from a model, but it can also occur in other settings.

Never be afraid to really examine your subject as closely as possible. A lack of understanding of your subject cannot be hidden in your drawing, and it will become apparent no matter how you try to hide it. Working from photographs will not allow you this freedom of investigation.



Types of Easels

An easel can make your life a lot easier. It is important to have a good support for your work. A table, while providing support, does not give you the chance to stand back and look at your work. It is best to have your work parallel to your eyes, supported on an easel.

FRENCH EASEL

The French easel is one of the most versatile easels, and the one that we recommend. The photo on the left shows an easel with its legs fully extended so that you can stand while you draw. Notice that its legs can be shortened so that you can sit down and draw. The photo on the right shows the easel folded. You can see how compact it is and how easy it is to carry.



METAL AND WOODEN EASELS

Metal and wooden easels are the cheapest easels to buy. Both have exactly the same design. The legs telescope down to adjust to your height, and a ledge supports your drawing board. You can adjust the angle at which you view your drawing by moving the back leg of the easel closer or farther away from you. These easels are not recommended for outdoor drawing or painting; they collapse easily in windy conditions.



TABLE EASEL

A table easel is exactly the same as a French easel, but it simply comes without legs. It also has a drawer to hold materials. Consequently, it is not as versatile and cannot be used outdoors unless you can find a flat surface to place it on.



Mirror Use

Look at your work in as many different ways as possible. One method is to detach yourself from the drawing so that you can judge it more effectively. Using a mirror will turn your drawing “inside out,” and any mistakes, or elements, that you do not want in your drawing will become glaringly obvious. The mirror is useful for checking symmetry, proportion, and measurement. It is also helpful in simply looking at your drawing in a new way.

A Different Angle

This is a complicated drawing. Looking at the drawing through a mirror can offer the artist a fresh look at the work. If there are any glaring mistakes in the drawing, they will become obvious in the mirror image. In this example, the artist wants to check the symmetry of the buildings. It is important to her that the vertical lines are vertical and not slightly angled. It can be difficult to see this when you have been looking at the drawing for a long time. You can also see the drawing's composition (the way you have create your drawing) more objectively because this image in the mirror is unknown to you.

Note: Another way to see your work in a different light is to turn your drawing upside down. It is up to you to decide which method is better.



As a beginner, you will want to keep things simple. Don't buy a lot of different drawing materials. It is probably best to concentrate on using one or two drawing media so that you can become proficient with them before you try others. Learning to master one medium, such as graphite, will give you more confidence to use other media. The following are sources for purchasing your art supplies.

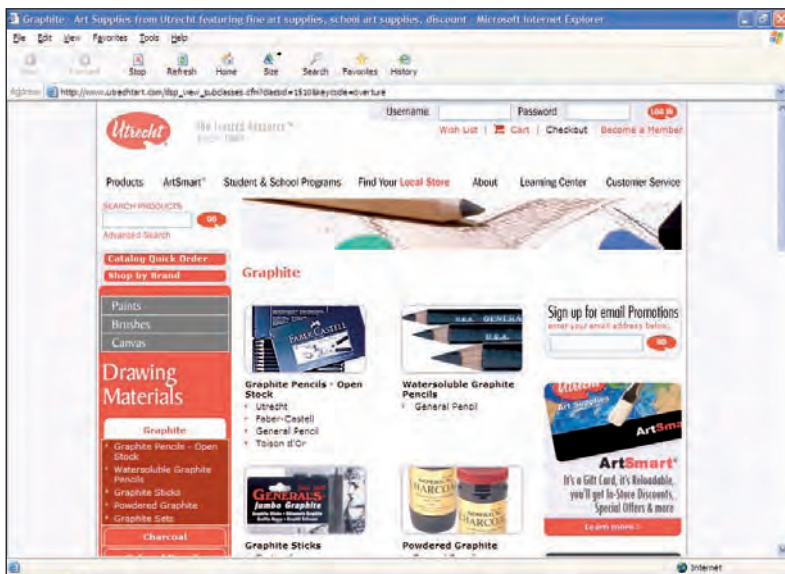
IN ART STORES

Going to an art store is a very enjoyable experience because it is exciting to see all of the available materials. As mentioned in Chapter 2, when buying paper, it is better to go to a store and buy it than to buy it online (see below). This way, you can make an informed decision, because you can feel the texture of the paper and determine whether or not it suits your needs.



ON THE WEB

The Internet has made buying art materials very simple. You will find that most bricks-and-mortar art stores also have a Web site like Utrecht (www.utrechtart.com). An online catalog makes it easy to locate what you want and to see everything that is available. Most online stores also deliver. There is often no charge for delivery if you spend over a certain amount of money on materials. You could team up with other artists to make one order to reduce your costs.

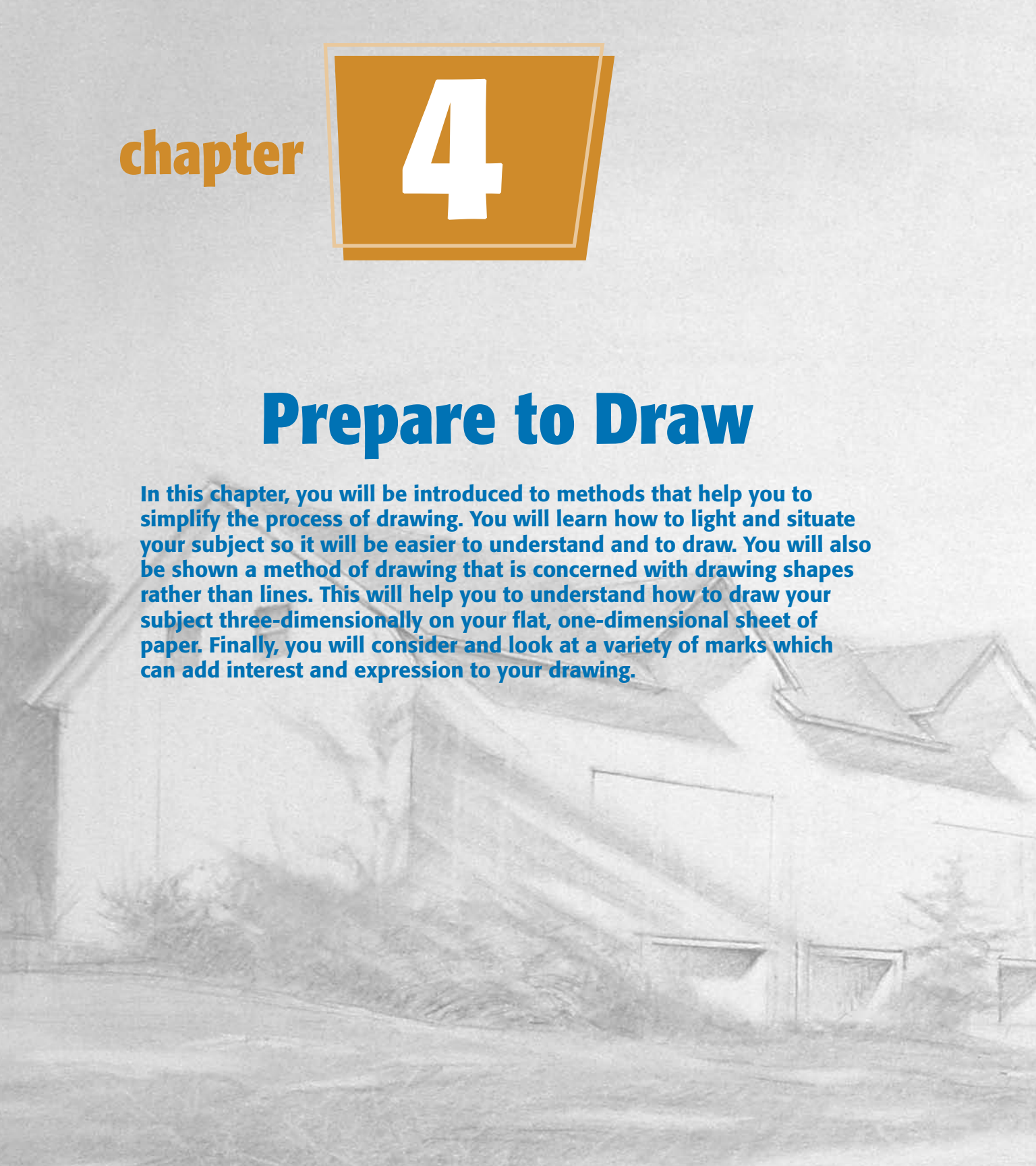


chapter

4

Prepare to Draw

In this chapter, you will be introduced to methods that help you to simplify the process of drawing. You will learn how to light and situate your subject so it will be easier to understand and to draw. You will also be shown a method of drawing that is concerned with drawing shapes rather than lines. This will help you to understand how to draw your subject three-dimensionally on your flat, one-dimensional sheet of paper. Finally, you will consider and look at a variety of marks which can add interest and expression to your drawing.





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Arrange and Light Your Subject

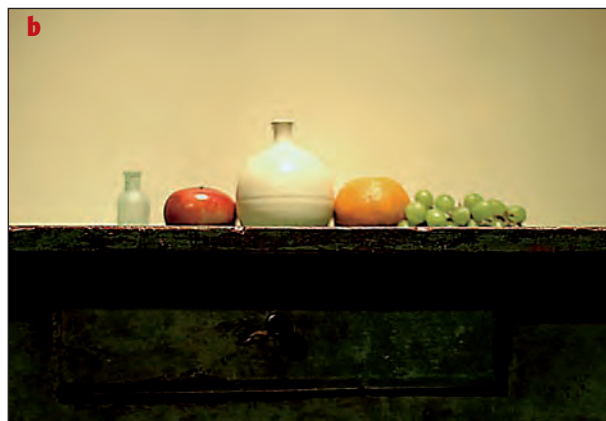
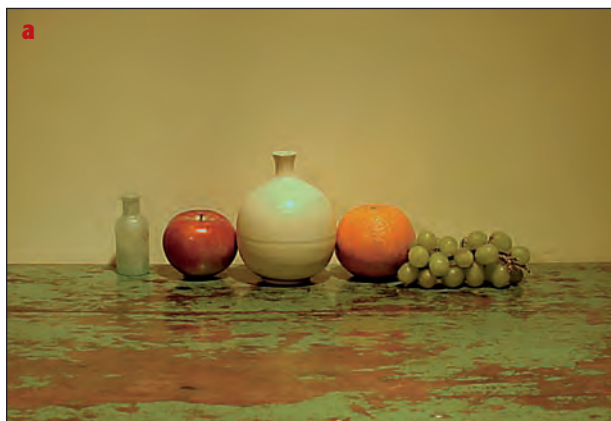
The subjects that you choose to draw, the way in which you arrange them, and the way in which you choose to light them are very personal choices. In this section, you will be shown different setups as examples only. Be aware that if you don't like the setup, you can rearrange it to suit yourself. The directions given can apply to any situation.



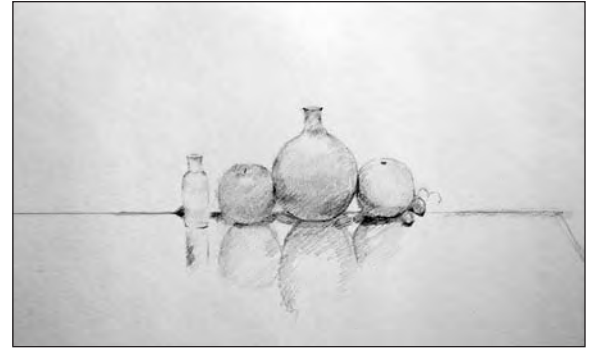
ESTABLISH YOUR EYE LEVEL

Look at the above arrangement. From what angle are you looking at these objects? Think about where the person who took the photograph is standing or sitting in relation to these objects. This is an important consideration because where you sit or stand determines your vantage point. It is very important to maintain the same vantage point when you are drawing. Moving around changes your vantage point, and consequently you have to change your drawing. In the above setup, the person viewing the objects is sitting in front of the table and looking directly at the objects. Notice that you cannot see the tops of the objects. You can see them from the side only. You can also see just a small portion of the tabletop. Notice the height of the back of the table in relation to the objects on the table.

Here are two different eye levels. In the first image (a), you are looking down on the objects. Consider which portions of the objects you can actually see. How much of the table can you see? In the second image (b), your eye level is lower. You cannot see the tops of the objects, and the table is obscuring the bottom of the objects. You cannot see the surface of the table. Remember that what you can see determines what you draw.

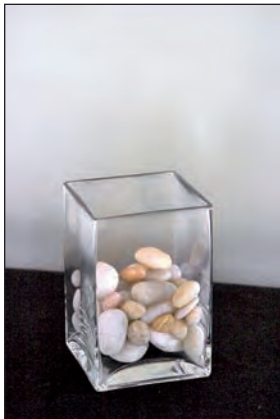


This is a sketch of the objects as they appear in the image (a) at the bottom of the previous page. There is enough surface of the table here to show reflections of the objects on the table's shiny surface. Notice the level of the back of the table, compared to the objects. Determine exactly where this level lines up on the objects. Compare the height of the objects. Measure across to see if the height of the apple and orange are the same. Notice the shape of the tabletop. The strongest light on the largest object is toward the top; this is called the *highlight*. All of the above points are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. This is an introduction to start you thinking more about what you can actually see, because you cannot draw what you cannot see!



Eye Level: A Quiz

When you look at an object, you do so from a particular point and a particular level. Imagine that your eye level forms a horizontal line in connection to everything you see. To help you, consider the following examples. Where do you think the person who took the photograph was standing? The answers are on the next page.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Arrange and Light Your Subject *(continued)*

Eye-Level Answers

Here the viewer is looking down into the jar; consequently, your eye level is above the jar. Notice that you can still see the pebbles only through the glass; you cannot see them directly from the top, as the viewer is sitting back from the jar, not leaning over the jar.



Now, the viewer is looking directly at the jar, just about three-quarters of the way down the jar. You cannot see down into the top of the jar. However, because the jar is made of glass, you can see the back of the jar through the front of it. Notice the bottom left side of the jar, and see how it is arranged at a 45-degree angle. The angle is less vertical, and more horizontal, than the same side of the jar in the previous example.



The viewer is looking slightly up at these objects. The table is obscuring your view of the bottom of the objects. You are unable to see the tops of the objects; and they are visible only from the side. A small part of the objects' lids on the left are showing, but they are very small. Notice that the lids are curving down slightly.



Here the viewer is sitting lower and farther back from the objects. The eye level is lower, the table appears higher, and the bottom portion of the objects is obscured by the table. The curves of the lids are curving down more noticeably than in the previous example. These differences are slight, but keen observation is an important tool for an artist—you must practice it constantly.



LIGHT YOUR SUBJECT

Lighting is an important factor in drawing. Obviously, it is only with light that you can see and only with light that you can draw. Light reveals the form, or structure, of an object. Here, you consider two different lighting setups.



The different types of lighting are discussed in Chapter 3. Now, you can decide on the appropriate lighting for your situation. Here, a spotlight is pointed at the still life setup. It creates a strong sense of light and shadow. This dramatic light is very good for a beginner because each object is defined by its own shadow, as well as shadows from other objects. It is easy to see a jigsaw arrangement of light and shadow when the light is strong.



This scene is lit by light coming through a window. As you can see, it is a very soft light that simply filters over the objects. It is a directional light because it is coming through the window. However, the window is a lot larger than the metal frame of the spotlight. Consequently, the light isn't as concentrated as it was in the previous example. This light presents a more difficult situation for a beginner. It is simply not as easy to see the structure of the objects when the light is softer.



Tone Your Paper

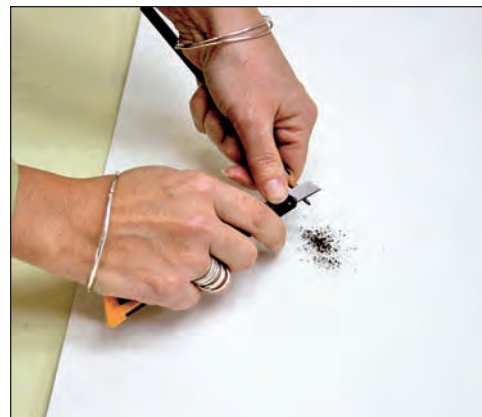
Toning your paper is one of the many available methods of drawing. In this section, you will learn how to prepare the surface of your paper to begin the drawing methods that will be introduced in Chapter 5. Descriptions of all of the materials mentioned in this section can be found in Chapter 2.



Apply the Tone

Make sure you have an even, flat surface on which to lay your paper. In this preparation, do not use a smooth piece of paper. It is better to use a paper with some texture, or some tooth.

You need the following materials: a razor knife, a 4B or higher-B-number pencil or a graphite stick, and a paper towel. As in the example, you will sharpen your pencil or graphite stick over your paper. Remove the shavings of wood, but leave the shavings of graphite on the paper. Doing so serves two purposes: You obtain graphite to make the tone on the paper, and you sharpen your pencil to a nice, long point. Alternatively, you can buy graphite powder in a jar (shown in the photo above) and simply shake some onto the paper. The powder is more expensive than a graphite stick or pencil and can make a very dark tone, so use it sparingly.



Use your paper towel to smooth the graphite over the paper. If you are using powdered graphite, smooth it in very lightly. Make sure that you obtain an even tone over the whole surface. It is important that you cover the whole page. Do not leave any of the white surface visible.



Here is the finished result. The tone has to be workable and not so dense (heavily rubbed in or dark) that it cannot be erased easily. You may find that using a pencil and razor knife enables you to obtain a lighter, more airy tone. Even though it takes more time, you may prefer the tone it gives you. Using the graphite powder gives you a darker and denser tone.



Light tone



Dark tone

Now you can use a kneaded eraser to test how dense the tone is on your paper. Erase a small area. It should be easy to erase the tone so that you can see the white surface of the paper. If it is difficult to erase, you probably rubbed the graphite into the paper rather than smoothing it over the surface.

In this quick sketch, the artist used an eraser to take away the large shape of the model's belly. Because the chest was also being lit, tone was erased in strokes rather than in shapes. The artist wanted the light to be a little more subdued on the chest than on the belly.

In the next section, you will learn that using your eraser to make marks rather than large shapes can add even more variety of tone to your work.

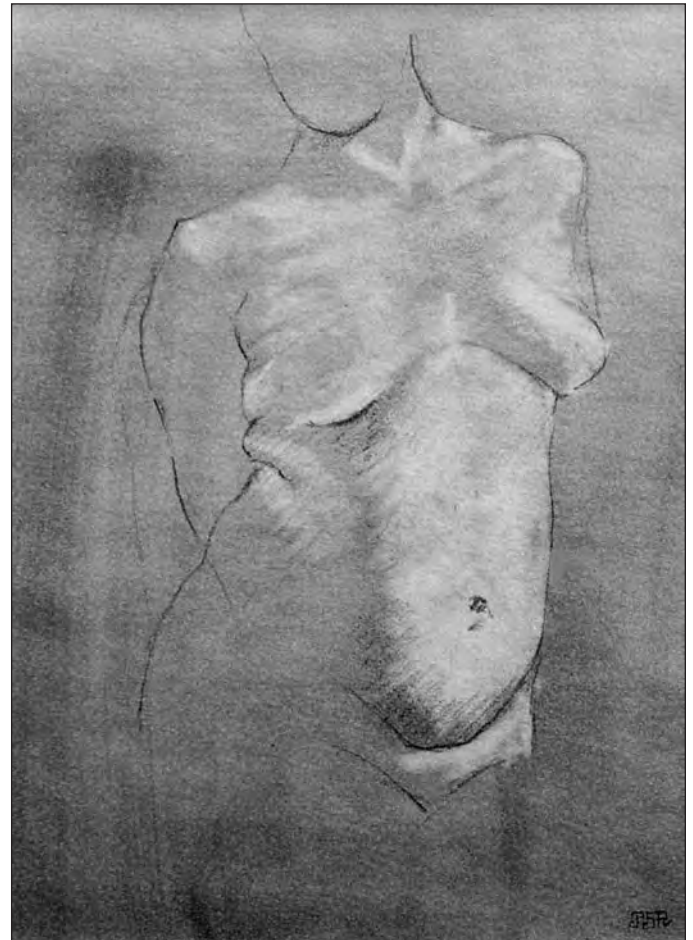


Figure Study, by J. S. Robinson

Make Your Marks

A drawing holds the viewer's interest because of the marks that were used in its creation. As you gain more experience drawing, you will notice that there may be a preponderance of certain marks in your work. These marks will come to characterize your style and make the work individually yours.

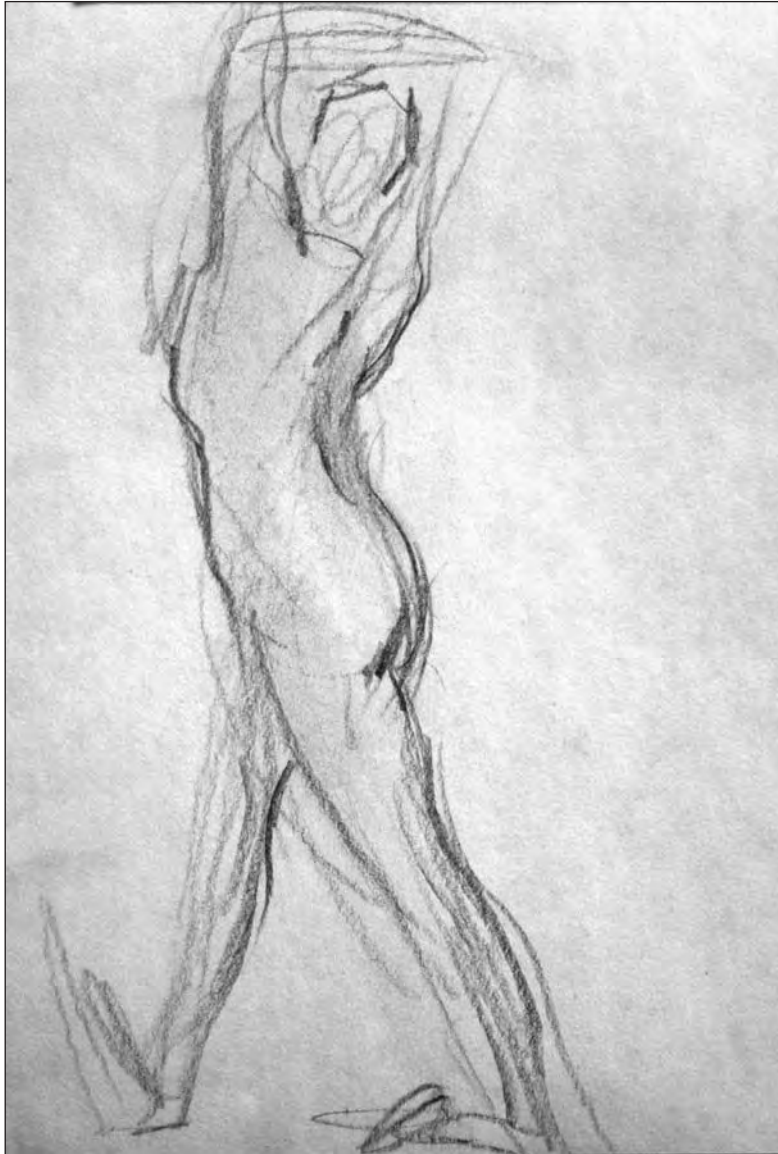
Marks of Spontaneity

In this drawing, the model has taken a pose that will last for only a few minutes. The artist had to work quickly to relay the information in front of him onto his paper. In this exercise, intuition and spontaneity come into play. Consequent on having a short time to work, the marks are more energetic. Notice that the lines drawn are used to convey a general sense of shape and not to delineate any details. The lightness of the marks gives the drawing a gentle quality. The fluidity of the lines reinforces the curvature of the whole pose. The transition from light to darker marks relates to the action of bending over. The darker marks and the marks of the shaded areas are located within the closed, curved area of the body.



Kneeling, Quick Study, by Dean Fisher

This drawing is a spontaneous response to a figure in motion. The weight of the body is carried by the left leg, but is about to be transferred to the right leg. This motion is skillfully realized by the almost continuous angled, dark, and thick mark along the torso and on the left side of the body. There is no one continuous line in this figure; rather, the line is broken into different marks, which nicely convey the sense of action. The marks arching out from the left leg reinforce this impression of a forward motion.



Striding Figure, Quick Study, by Dean Fisher

Examples of Graphite Marks

Look at the variety of marks made in these four examples. The paper and hardness of the pencil are given under each illustration. The completed drawings are on pages 42–43.



Smooth sketching paper and a 4B pencil



Smooth sketching paper and a 4B pencil



Smooth sketching paper and a 2H pencil



Smooth sketching paper and a 4B pencil



Smooth sketching paper and a 2H pencil



Smooth sketching paper and an H pencil



Smooth sketching paper and a 4B pencil



Smooth sketching paper and an H pencil

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Examples of Graphite Marks *(continued)*

All of the marks made with a 4B pencil are used in this drawing. The softness of the pencil gives this drawing an airy quality. The static quality of the pose has been interrupted by the energy of the line.



Seated Figure, Quick Study, by Dean Fisher

All the marks made with a 2H and H pencil can be found in this drawing. The details of the face have been given more attention, as they have been finely delineated with careful lines and marks.



Portrait Study, *by Dean Fisher*

Measure Your Object

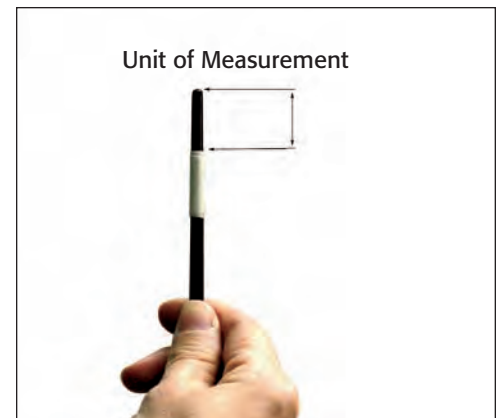
Before you begin to draw, you need to determine the correct proportions of the object you are going to draw. In this section, you will learn to use a simple tool as a visual measuring aid.



The Process

When you measure your subject, it is essential that you either sit or stand in a fixed position. You must also maintain the same position that you intend to have for your complete drawing (see page 32).

Holding an implement with a long handle (such as a paintbrush, a knitting needle, or a long pencil) as a measuring tool, extend your arm completely. Align the end of your measuring tool with the top end of the object (in this example, a vase) and then use your thumb to mark the position of the bottom of the object on your measuring tool. You have now created a unit of measurement, or a *scale*, that represents the height of the object as seen from where you are sitting or standing. To record this measurement for later reference, you can put some tape (opaque, not clear) around the measuring tool to mark this point, which is shown in the photo on the right. You can then hold the tool horizontally (arm straight) to line up the end of the tool with the left side of the vase. You can see where the tape ends. Now you have established the relationship of the height of the object compared to its width.



To the right is a diagram showing two different ways to measure the height and width of the vase. The unit of measurement, denoted by black lines, compares the height of the vase to its width. Note that, as a comparison, the measurement of the width of the vase only reaches to the bottom of the neck, vertically, on the vase.

The red lines denote a measuring scale, using the width of the vase's spout. Note that the height of the vase is four-and-one-half times the width of the spout. When you draw, you can plan out the proportions of your subject with this information. This plan lets you achieve the right shape and proportion.

Of course, you can designate any portion of the vase as the unit of measurement. To maintain consistent measurements, always have your arm fully extended, not bent at the elbow, and maintain the same standing or sitting position each time you measure your subject.

This figure drawing shows you an example of how this technique can work in different situations. Here the length of the head, from the top of the hair to the bottom of the chin, has been used to determine the height of the figure.

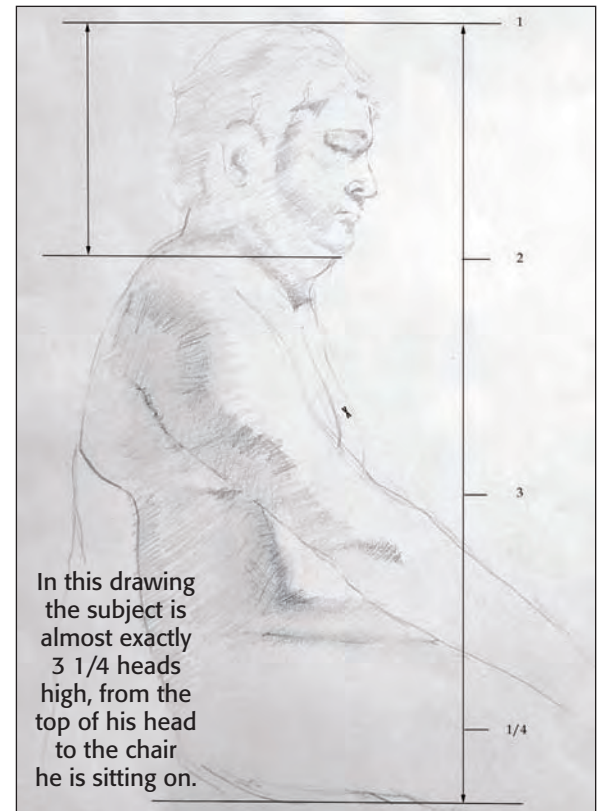
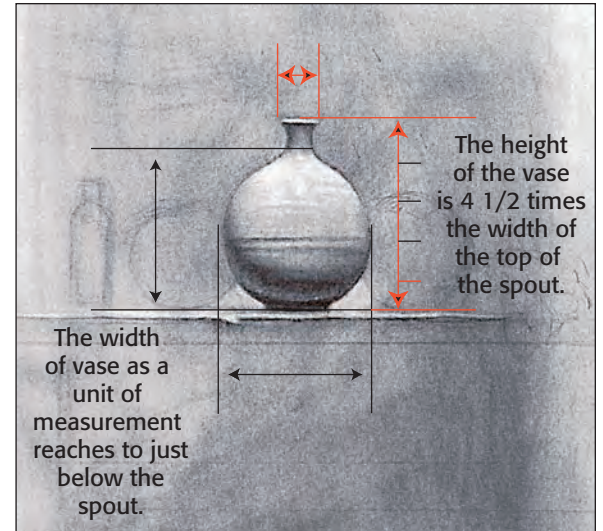


Figure Study, by J. S. Robinson

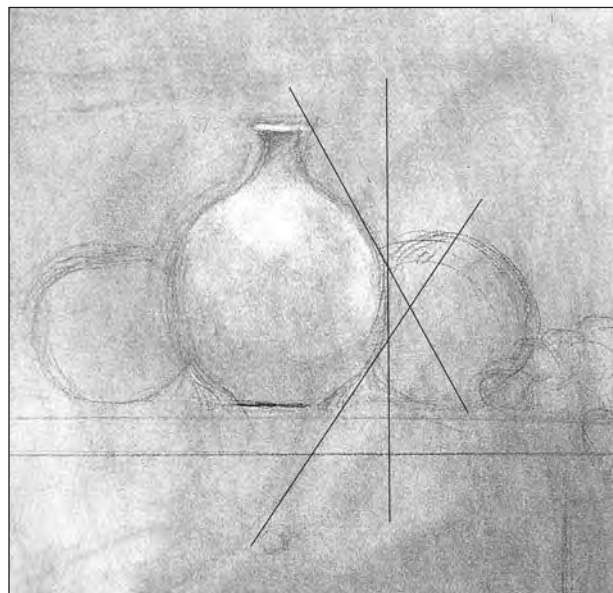
Find the Angles

Correctly measuring your objects is only one part of drawing exactly what you see in front of you. You also have to consider the angles of the contours of objects. Doing so can be tricky, but there are methods that you can use to determine these angles. The method shown here is a simple one.

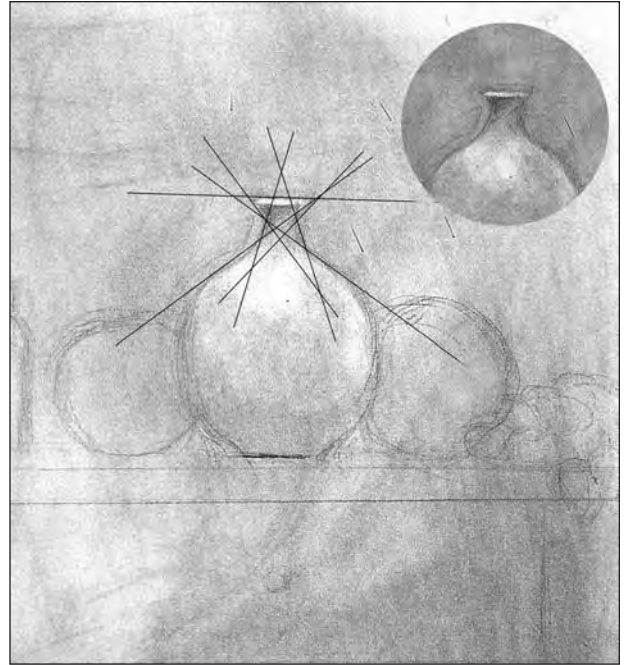
Look for the Angles

With the same measuring tool that you used previously to determine a scale, you can also find the angles of objects that are not horizontal or vertical. Fix your position and extend your arm straight out. Hold your tool in front of the curve, or angled contour, of the object you will be drawing. You can either remember the angle and add it to your drawing (visualizing it with your measuring tool can help you remember it), or you can transfer the measuring tool to the correct position on your drawing paper by keeping the tool in the same position and marking the angle directly from your tool onto the paper.

Look at the curved form, and you can see two or three angles, representing various aspects of the curve. You can then lightly draw these angles on your paper. Doing so will assist you in finding the exact shape of the curve.



When you try to represent a more complex contour or form, draw multiple straight lines to represent each section of the shape that you have observed with your measuring tool. You can repeat this process as many times as you feel is necessary. It helps you to see the objects that you draw more clearly. You will be surprised at how much easier it is to record difficult shapes if you use this method. Feel free to lightly draw these straight lines on your drawing to use as a guide. You can also leave them on your drawing. Some artists, such as Euan Uglow and his teacher William Coldstream, left guidelines on their drawings or paintings in the form of lines or tiny crosses. They felt no need to remove them, and, in turn, these marks became a part of the work.





chapter

5

Discover the Pattern of Light and Shadow

In this chapter, you will learn very simple ways of establishing the shape of light and shadow areas in your drawings. You will also learn how to achieve the illusion of three-dimensionality. The techniques in this chapter are used to create a *reductive* or *tonal* drawing, as the shape or pattern of light is removed from previously toned paper. A beautiful oval-shaped vase is used for many of the drawing examples because it has a simple round form, which lends itself well to the principles being demonstrated here.



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See the Value of Squinting

Squinting, which is easy to do, is an important technique that helps you to view your subject in simplified shapes. Look at the picture on the right. We have purposely blurred the image to show you how details are no longer clearly visible. They become blurred, and you can see only large forms. If you squint at the image, it should become even more simplified.



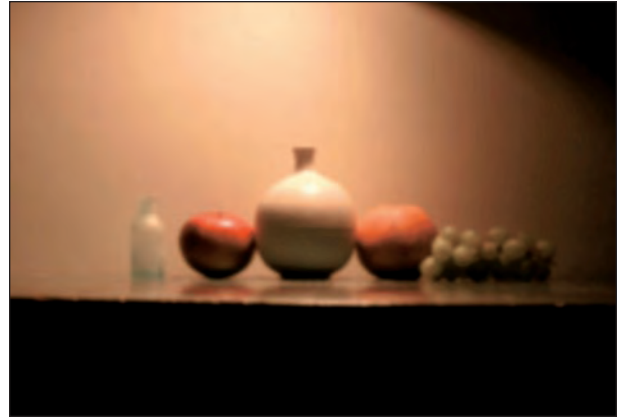
In the initial stages of your drawings, try squinting as often as possible when you're looking at your subject. Eventually, squinting will become second nature to you. The reason for doing this is to concentrate your attention on the large shapes. Many beginners become overwhelmed by details, and details are not important in the first stage of a drawing. What is important is to map in the structure of what you are drawing. You will not find structure in details. The level of realism you achieve in your drawing is based on analyzing and drawing the structure of your scene or objects.

The painting here demonstrates how large shapes are an integral part of the work. Notice how the artist here uses just three large main shapes to define a young girl looking down: the side of the face, the head of hair, and the side of the body. Within the large shape of the head, there are three or four smaller shapes that define different sections of light on the hair. You can also find smaller shapes within the other two larger shapes. Basically, there is really no detail, and yet you can tell what the object is right away.



Lakewood, by Tim Lowly, courtesy of the artist

Squint at the image on the right. How many large shapes do you see? Do you see four large shapes of shadow? There is a large rectangle of shadow in the lower half of the image. There is a definite triangular-shaped shadow in the top-right corner. There is also a lighter rectangular shape of shadow joining the triangular shape to the rectangular shape in the lower half of the image. The bottom halves of four of the objects (with the bunch of grapes as one object) are all in shadow. This shadow is punctuated by triangles of light.



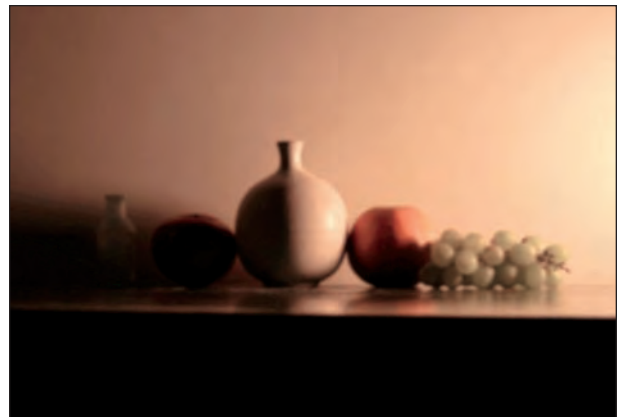
In this piece, the artist has drawn in the shapes as she sees them. In doing so, she has simplified the information that her eye is receiving. She has eliminated the details and concentrated on connecting the shapes of shadows together. The subject matter has been observed as a completed jigsaw puzzle. The pieces of the puzzle are comprised of the shapes of light and shadow, which fit together from the darkest shadow to the lightest highlights.



Still Life Study, by J. S. Robinson

Here is the same subject as above, but the lighting has changed. Take a good look at this image and decide what shapes you can see in this jigsaw puzzle of light and shadow. When you think you can see the large shapes of shadow, make a sketch of these shapes. You can either outline the shapes that you see or simply fill in the shapes with a light or dark tone. We discuss tone on page 53. Keep it loose; it doesn't have to be exact. Over the next page you can see the sketches that the artist has made of this image.

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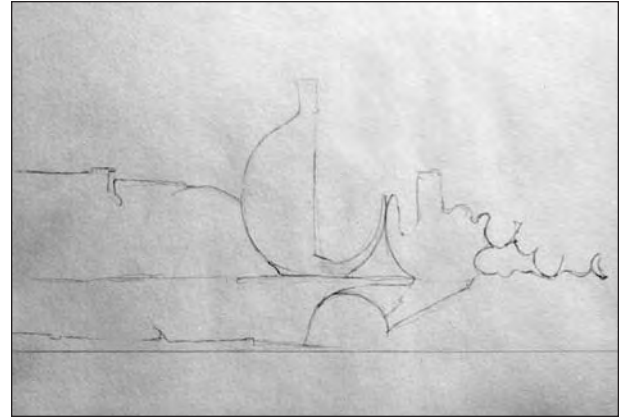
See the Value of Squinting (*continued*)

Here is a sketch using only line. The line encompasses the area of shadow that you see when squinting. Notice how the grapes are treated as one large object. The artist has introduced only a tiny amount of detail to suggest individual grapes. The apple was incorporated into the dark shadow on the wall, but not differentiated from it. This will happen when the drawing is further refined.

When you think about shadows rather than individual objects, you can refine your drawing and know that the apple must be in shadow. Light, unfortunately, does not always form strongly defined shapes. It is up to you, as an artist, to make a decision about the size and configuration of the shapes based on your observations.

Here is a sketch with the shapes of shadow filled in with a soft 2B pencil. The artist has drawn three large shapes of shadow.

Do you notice that by shading in the shadow areas only, you have instantly created the shape of the light area? You have created your own jigsaw puzzle! You are now on the way to understanding how to create a sense of depth and volume in your drawing.



Still Life Study, by J. S. Robinson



Still Life Study, by J. S. Robinson

TIP

Step Back!

Remember to continually step back at least 6–10 feet from your drawing to make sure that you aren't overemphasizing the details and, in turn, compromising the "big" forms.

In order to obtain the illusion of reality in your drawing, you must be able to portray the light that you observe on objects or scenes. Previously, you have considered light and shadow as shapes fitting together to form a jigsaw puzzle. You must now consider the quality of that light in those shapes.

Ask yourself the following questions: Is the light strong? Is it, therefore, making very defined shadows? Or is it weak, with less defined shadows and a lot more grays? The tonal range on the right demonstrates a series of tones from white to black. Nine tones are shown here, but many, many more are available to you. In order to draw any light situation that you will encounter as an artist, such as a sunny or cloudy day, you should have a wide range of tones available to you. Take a 4B pencil and, using squares as shown here, see how many squares of tone you can obtain with your pencil. Start with the white of your paper as your whitest white.



Tone: From Dark to Light

The images in this section will help you identify the many varied tones of gray that can be found in a drawing.

Here is a tonal sketch of a woman's head. The tone on the paper has been erased to reveal the light on the woman's head and neck. Look closely and you will see that within that area of light, there are tonal variations. In the large shadow area on the left of the head, there is also a large variation of grays down to black.



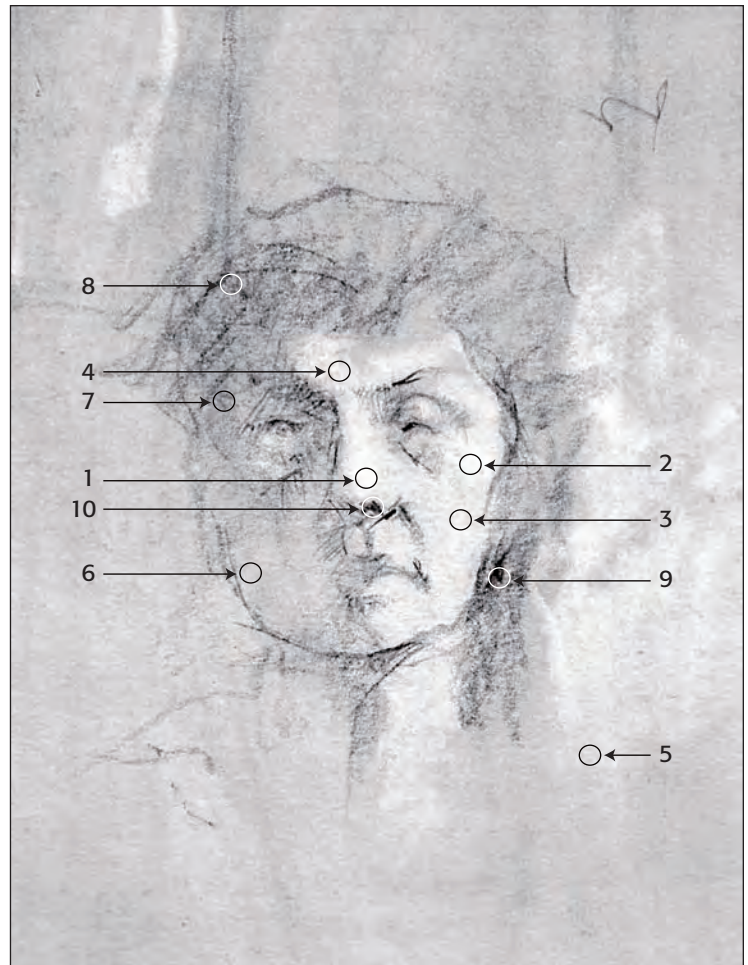
Head Study, by Dean Fisher

Now the image has ten different tones circled. These tones range from the brightest (white) to the darkest (black) on the head. Some of these transitions can be very subtle. The more variation of tone you use, the higher the level of accuracy you will achieve in your representational drawing.

The ten different tones are identified in ascending order from lightest to darkest in this image, with lightest being 1 to the darkest being 10. Can you see the range of gray shades that you can obtain from your graphite pencil? The lightest area can be seen on the tip of the nose. A nose usually displays the lightest area of tone, as it is the one feature that sticks out farthest from the face.

Consequently, it is closest to the light source. The inner corner of the mouth is receiving the least amount of light, so a dark tone is used there. The darkest area of the face is located in the nostril. This area receives the least amount of light on the face, as the light cannot enter enough of this space to light it up.

Notice that the artist has also drawn out the shapes around the eye in the light. While squinting, he saw two large shapes of shadow: one shape at the outer corner of the eye and one shape at the inner corner of the eye.



Set Up the Still Life

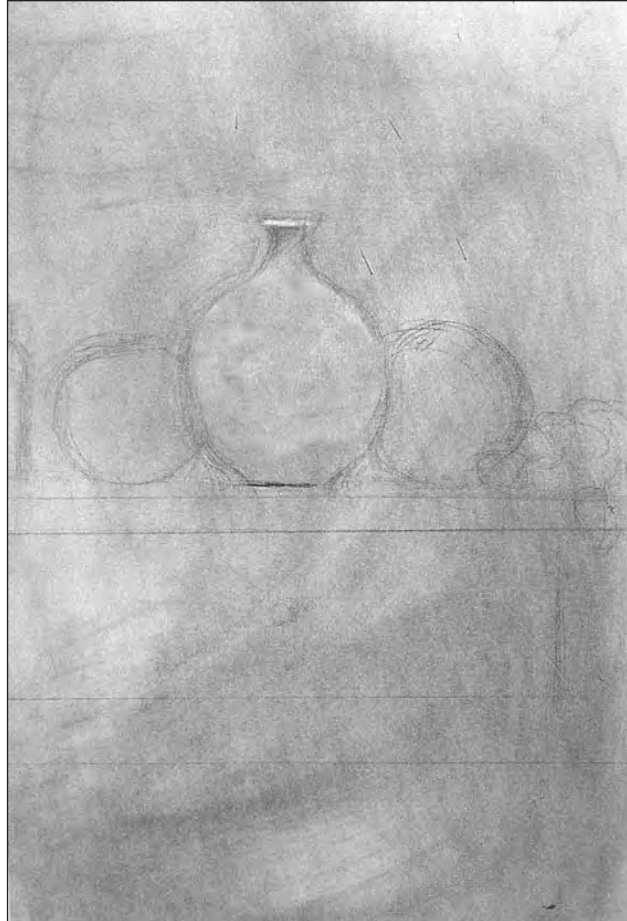
You can draw a beautifully round, solid object by following the directions given here. Be sure that you have read and understood the previous sections in this chapter. You will need to understand the terms used in the previous sections in order to complete the drawing.

Artists refer to an arrangement of objects as a *still life* because the objects do not and cannot move unless someone moves them. Consequently, you can be sure that if you do not finish your drawing in one session, you can return to it at any time, knowing that it hasn't changed.

Try to set up your own still life by choosing any round object that you would like to draw—for example, an apple, orange, or white ball. Use a spotlight on your object (see page 35). Place the light to the right and above your still life. Use the same vantage point that is shown here. You will probably need to sit down to get this vantage point. Make sure that you have a tone on your piece of drawing paper (see page 36), and that you secure the paper to a board. After the board is mounted on your easel, you are ready to begin.



Map out the shape of your object. Don't worry about obtaining a perfect outline of your object. This is not necessary. Draw several lines if you have to, and keep them light so they do not distract you. Be aware of the proportions of the object. Remember to measure. If you cannot accurately draw the curve of your object, refer to "Measure Your Object" in Chapter 4.

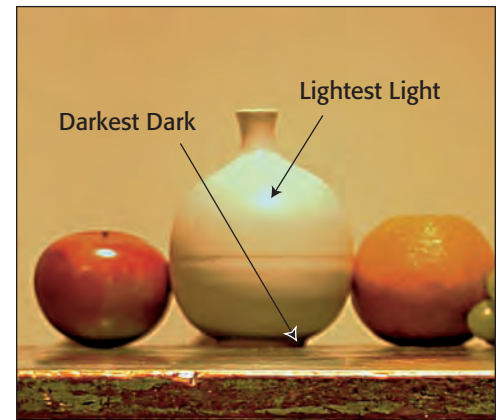


Key Your Drawing

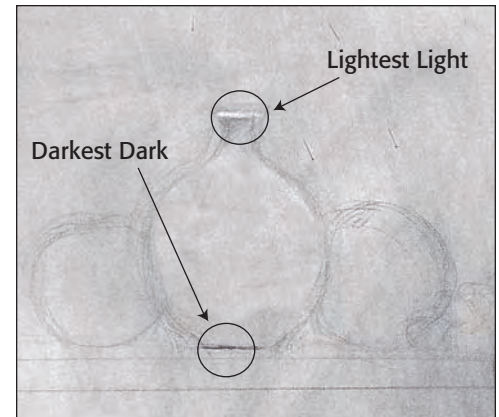
To key your drawing means to create a tonal range in your drawing. Tonal relationships (see pages 54–55) show you how the lightness or darkness of one area relates to the lightness or darkness of other areas in your subject. This development of tonal relationships is essential to building the illusion of space and form in a drawing.

Squint and Observe

While looking and squinting at your entire still life setup, determine where the lightest light and the darkest dark are (see page 55). The lightest light usually appears on the lightest or most reflective object that is closest to the light source. The darkest dark usually appears in the area that is farthest from the light source, such as a crevice or under the object (as in the still life). If you find it difficult to see the lightest light or darkest dark with your eye alone, consider where the light is coming from and which portion of the object it is shining on. Also consider the texture of the object receiving the light.



Once you have determined where the lightest light and darkest dark are, indicate them on your drawing. With your eraser, erase the shape of the lightest light area. With a 4B pencil (or higher B number), draw the shape of the darkest dark area. Don't press too hard on the pencil. You may want to refine this shape later, or you may want to make it a little lighter later on. Now that you have two reference points, form a scale from lightest to darkest with which to compare all of the other areas of tone in your object or objects (see page 53). If you are using more than one object, you will still choose only one area for the lightest light, as you are establishing only one tonal scale for the whole drawing. If you see a tone in the light area that isn't quite as bright as your lightest light, you can observe to what degree that area is darker than your lightest light.

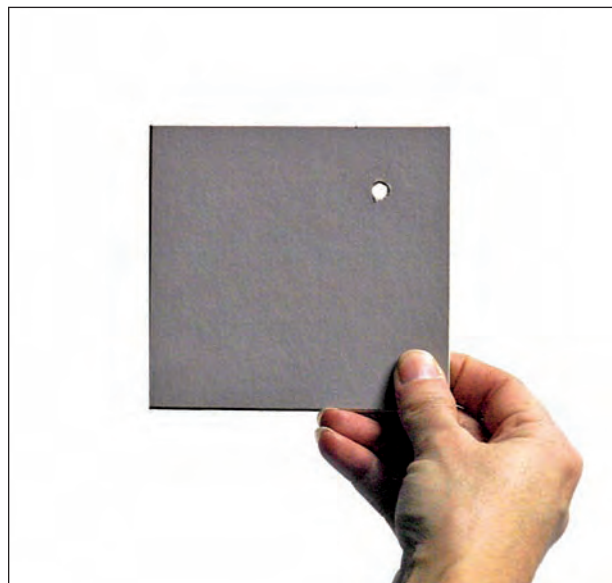


A helpful technique to aid your eye in establishing the scale of your tones is to use a peephole.

Help Your Eye to See

Peepholes are easy to make. Take a square piece of cardboard and punch a small hole through it. Look through the hole with one eye to isolate various areas in your subject. You can make comparisons between tones that you are unsure of. The peephole concentrates exactly on a small area. Your eye will therefore see only what is necessary and will not be influenced by all of the other tones in that area.

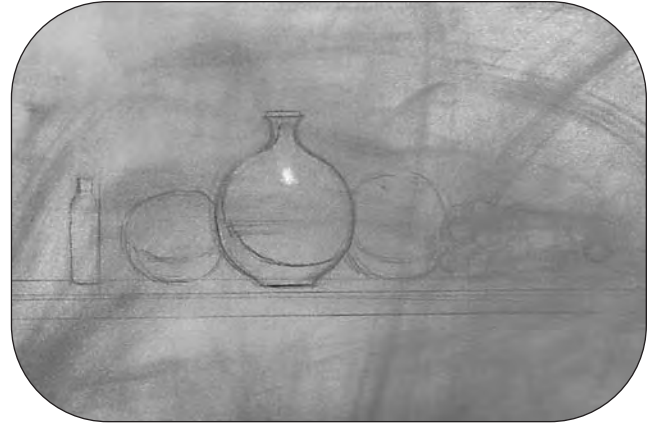
If by chance you forget to bring your peephole tool with you, you can always create one with your hand, as demonstrated in the photo. This method is helpful when you just can't determine how light or dark any given area is next to another area. You can also use this method to double-check your sight, as there are often surprises in the world of tonal relationships.



Develop the Tonal Range

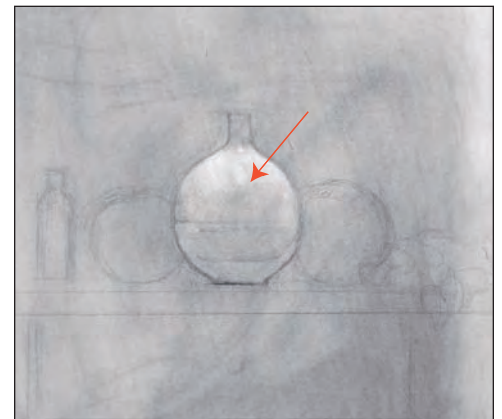
You have now established your lightest light and your darkest dark. You have also mapped out with lines the shape of your main shadow area.

You are now ready to develop the tonal range of your object in order to achieve a three-dimensional object. Make sure that you have a 4B pencil and a kneaded eraser.

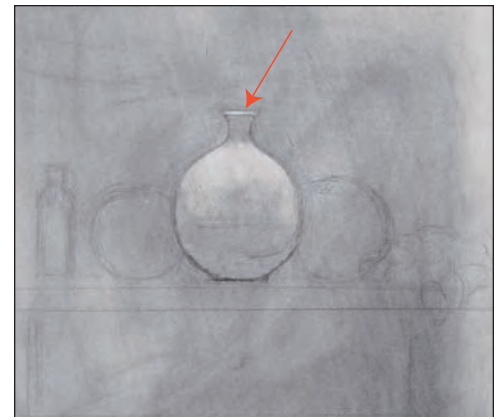


Erase and Add, Making Shapes

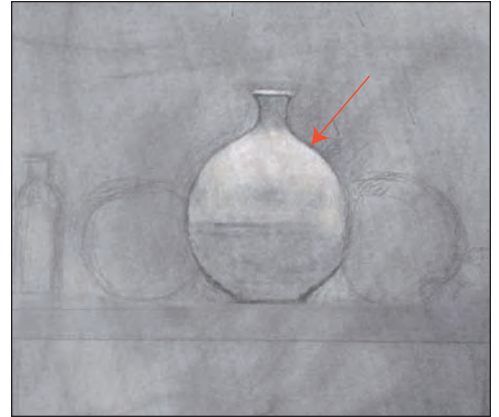
The light on the still life setup is hitting roughly the top quarter of the vase. To achieve a lighter light area, you need to take an eraser and gently erase the shape of the large lit area. Do not erase too much. This area should not be lighter than the lightest light. You need to create a tone that does not conflict with the lightest light. If you do not make this tone slightly darker than the lightest light, the illusion of light, and therefore the illusion of form, will be destroyed.



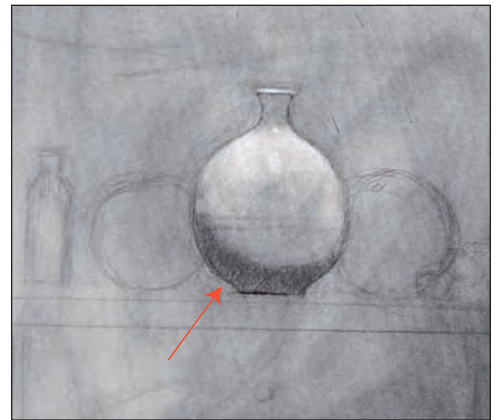
In this image, the artist is indicating the top lip of the vase. The artist erased the shape that is catching the light. Again, do not make this area lighter than the lightest light or highlight. Check your proportions, and make sure the height of your object is proportional to its width. (See "Measure Your Object" in Chapter 4.)



To further emphasize the light on the top half of the vase, the artist added more tone to the area around the outside of the top half of the vase. He used a 4B pencil to add more tone onto the paper. This facilitates the illusion of the lit area of the vase coming forward and “popping out” at us.

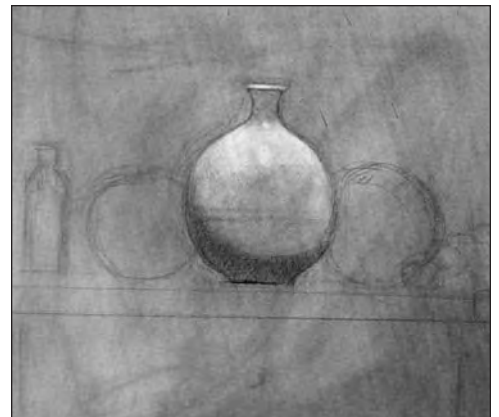


In this image, the artist added more tone again, but this time he added a shape to suggest the shadow area at the bottom of the vase. The tone of this shadow is not darker than the darkest dark. By making the tone slightly lighter than the darkest dark, the artist has enabled the bottom half of the vase to come forward. If the tone was the same as the darkest dark, the vase would appear flat and, consequently, have no form.



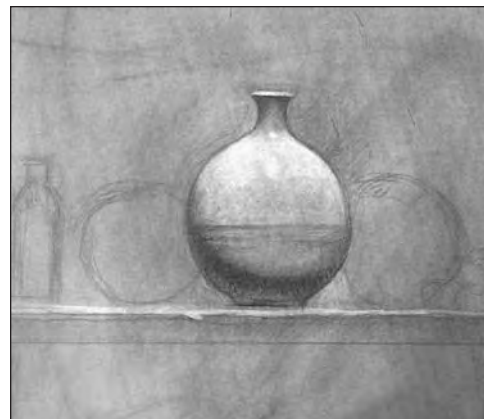
The shape of shadow was lengthened on the left side of the vase. This tone is very close to the tone used at the bottom of the vase.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Develop the Tonal Range *(continued)*

The short neck of the vase is more fully formed with the addition of shapes of darker tone to the sides of the neck of the vase (as shown here). These shapes on either side of the neck seem roughly triangular. When you add tone with your pencil, keep the edges soft. Do not use a line of any sort to suggest the end of the shadow area. If you do, you will flatten out the form and will not be able to achieve the roundness of the form.



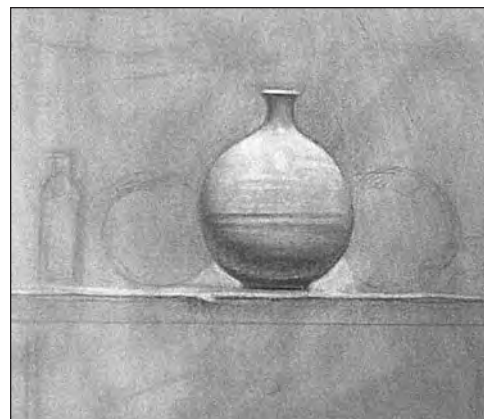
The middle of the neck of the vase was also in shadow. This was not a deep shadow but was certainly a darker tone than any tone in the light area. Therefore, a soft tone was added to the tone that was already on the paper. While the artist added the tone, he kept standing away from his drawing to check all of the tones at a distance. This is very important. If you do this often, you can see and correct mistakes before they become very large mistakes!



The Half Tones

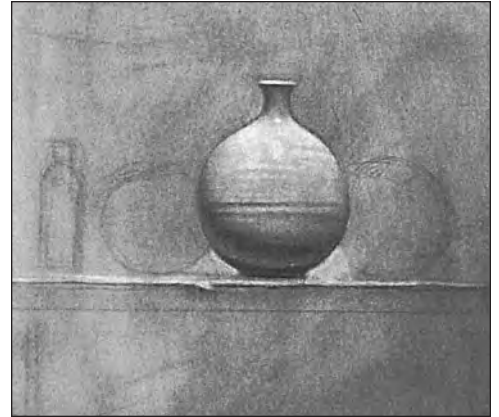
The artist noticed that the light area of the vase gradually darkens as it approaches the shadow area. This darker area within the light area is called the *half tone*. Careful observation and rendering of the half tone is crucial to successfully render the vase's volume. The quality of this half tone will describe whether the form turns gradually or abruptly. As more graphite was added, the artist used a tortillon (see page 17) and his finger to smooth out the transition from one tone to the next.

For larger areas, you can use a chamois cloth or paper towel. If you use your finger, make sure your hands are clean; otherwise, your skin's natural oils will mix with the graphite, making it difficult to remove later. Graphite has been erased in rough triangular shapes around the outer edges of the vase to emphasize the shadow on the bottom of the vase and to prepare for the rendition of the other objects.



Observe the object at its edge. As the form turns toward the edge of the object in the light area, notice that the tone of that area begins to get slightly darker. This is difficult to distinguish, as it is often a very subtle change of tone. The addition of these shapes of slightly darker tones will help the form turn, which adds volume to the object you are drawing. These darker shapes of tones within the light area are referred to as the *light half tones*. Remember that the light half tones cannot be as dark, or even get close to being as dark, as any tone within the shadow.

Note: To erase small areas, shape your kneaded eraser into a point.



The artist continued to develop the drawing, observing all areas in relationship to each other. Notice how the light on the wall begins to show a gradation of tone that indicates the direction of the light. The shape of the light on the table further enhances the direction and quality of the light, by defining the shape of the shadows of the objects sitting on it. (See the final stage of the drawing on page 65).

**TIP**

Keep your kneaded eraser clean by continually kneading it! If you don't keep turning the eraser in on itself, it will not be able to erase more graphite, as the surface will already be overloaded with too much graphite. Keep finding a new surface to use.

Reflected Light

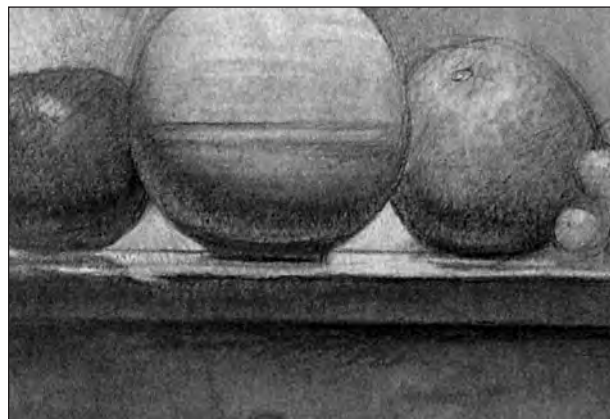
The reflected light is the area of the shadow on an object that is lighter than the darkest part of the shadow. This lighter area within the shadow receives more light because the shape of the form in that area turns in a particular way or begins to face a new direction, and so can be influenced by light that is bouncing off other nearby forms or surfaces. The reflected light may also be caused by a secondary light source.

Dean, as an art instructor, has a saying that he finds himself often repeating to his students: “Don’t fall in love with the reflected lights!” The reason for saying this is because many students tend to overmodel or overstate the lightness of the reflected light by making it as light as, or lighter than, the tones in the lit part of the form.

The most likely reason for this overstatement of lightness is the tendency to focus only on the tones within the shadow and not consider the shadow in relation to the light part of the form. The result of overmodeling a form is that instead of enhancing the volume of the form, it does the opposite and flattens it out. It is an understandable phenomenon. In the quest to heighten the three-dimensionality of objects, we try to use all of the devices at our disposal to create the illusion of reality. We see that seductive reflected light in the shadow, and we “run” with it. This is an example of why it is so important, when looking at your subject, to try not to look “into” one small area, but to compare a given area against all of the other areas of your drawing in order to create a scale of tonal relationships. This will render convincing light, form, and space in your work. Look at drawings by great masters. You will see how they understate the reflected light.

The detail above illustrates the use of reflected light on all three objects—apple, vase, and orange—from the still life used as a previous example. Notice how the reflected light helps give the illusion of the form turning away from the viewer, thus enhancing its voluminous quality.

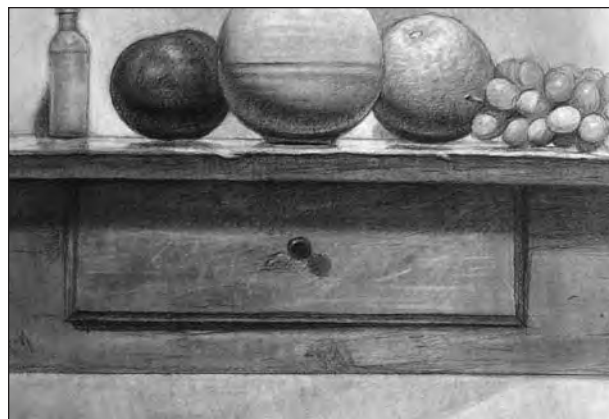
In the portrait, the reflected light is functioning in a similar manner. It allows the center of the face, where the features are, to come forward, while the reflected light in the shadow recedes spatially. Notice that the tone of the reflected light is substantially darker than the tones on the light side of the form. The use of reflected light also adds a transparency to the shadow.



Head Study, by Dean Fisher

The feeling of the *texture* of a material is achieved in large part through the fine-tuning of the multitude of tonal relationships in the drawing. We will refer to these differences as *nuances*.

The final stages of your drawing will entail carefully observing the small variations in the topography of your objects. These variations could include details such as the subtle ridges in the vase, the uneven edge of the table, the bumps in the peel of the orange, or the nicks and dents in the antique table. The rendering of such features will add clarity to your drawing and enhance the feeling of reality in your work.



In this final stage of the drawing, the shadow on the wall and the shadow underneath the ledge of the table are now more fully rendered. Notice how airy the shadow appears under the table ledge. You can achieve this quality only by carefully controlling the value of your tones. Further attention to crispness or softness of edges between objects helps to add realism to the image.



Arrangement in Graphite, by Dean Fisher

Gallery: Examples of Light and Shadow

Energy and drama define this drawing. There is a tremendous sculptural quality which is achieved through a strong contrast of tone and a vigorous application of the charcoal. Notice the great economy of means used to render the figure.



Figure Study, by Kenneth Pace, courtesy of the artist

In this drawing, the range of tone is quite small. The artist used only about 40 percent of the tonal scale (from white to black). The minimal use of contrast suggests the very round large mass of the back. There are no sharp angles or bony protruberances here. The few lines used can hardly contain the volume of the figure.

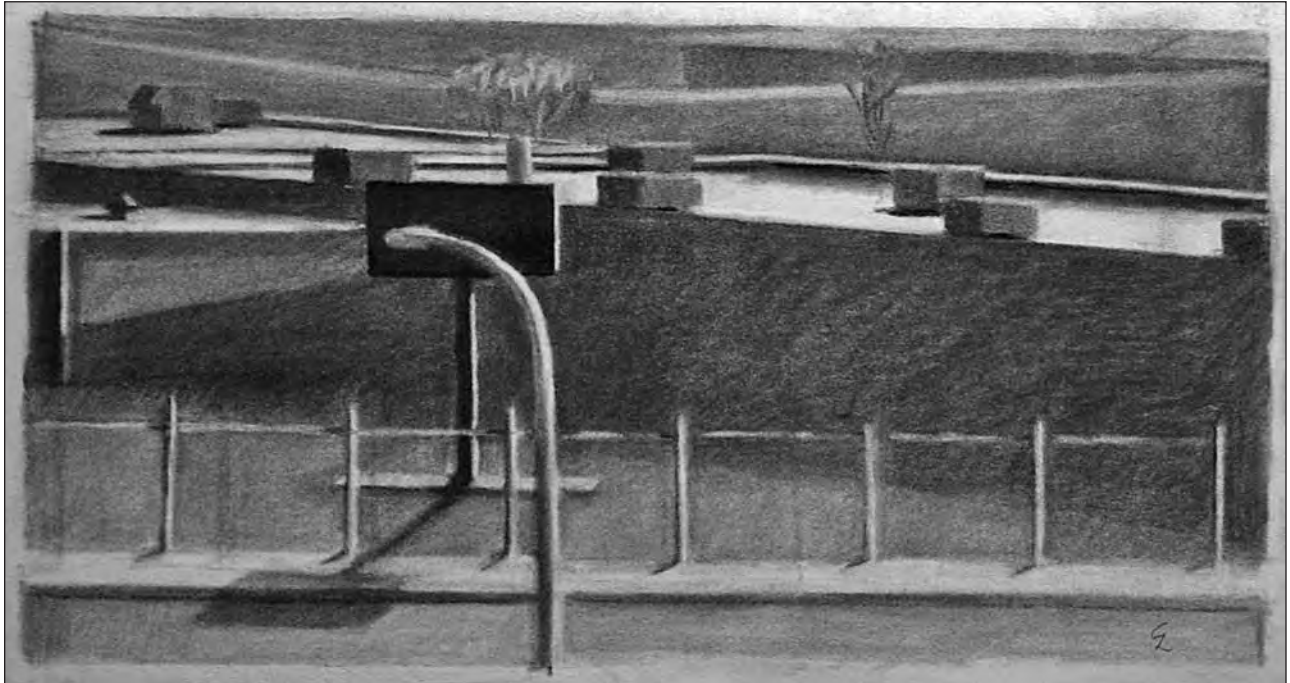


Seated Figure, by J. S. Robinson

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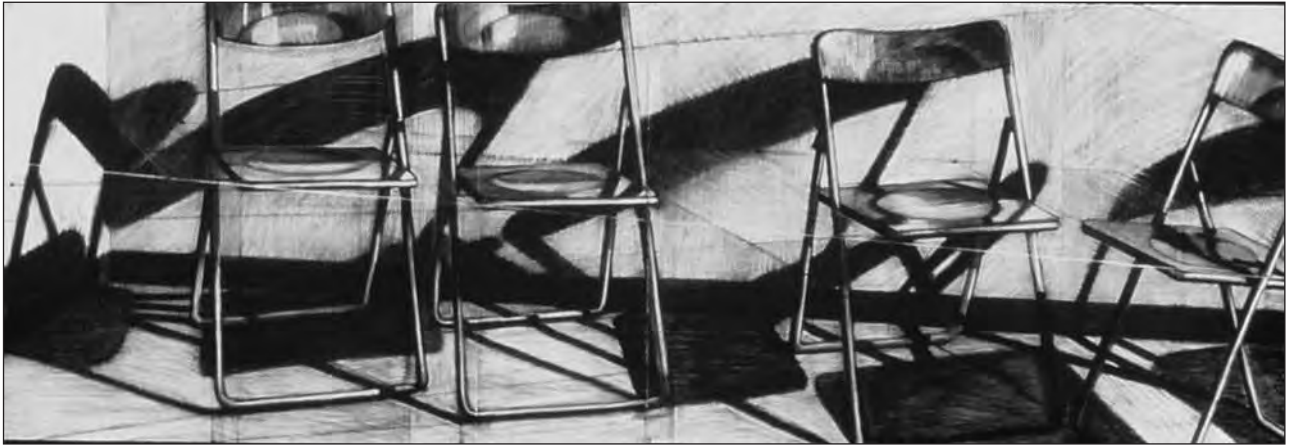
Gallery: Examples of Light and Shadow *(continued)*

In this drawing, there is a strong feeling of mystery that is achieved through an extensive use of shadow. The area that falls in shadow comprises about 80 percent of the drawing. Within the shadow area, there are interesting shapes and spaces that act as a lure to pull the viewer in. The dark shadows also act as an excellent foil to the glaring light on the rooftop, giving a great deal of visual impact to this drawing.



Street Scene, by Constance Lapalombara, courtesy of the artist

In this strongly patterned drawing, the white of the paper and the darkness of the charcoal are used extensively to maximize visual impact. The feeling of direct sunlight blasting through a window and hitting the chairs creates a powerful interplay between the light and shadow.

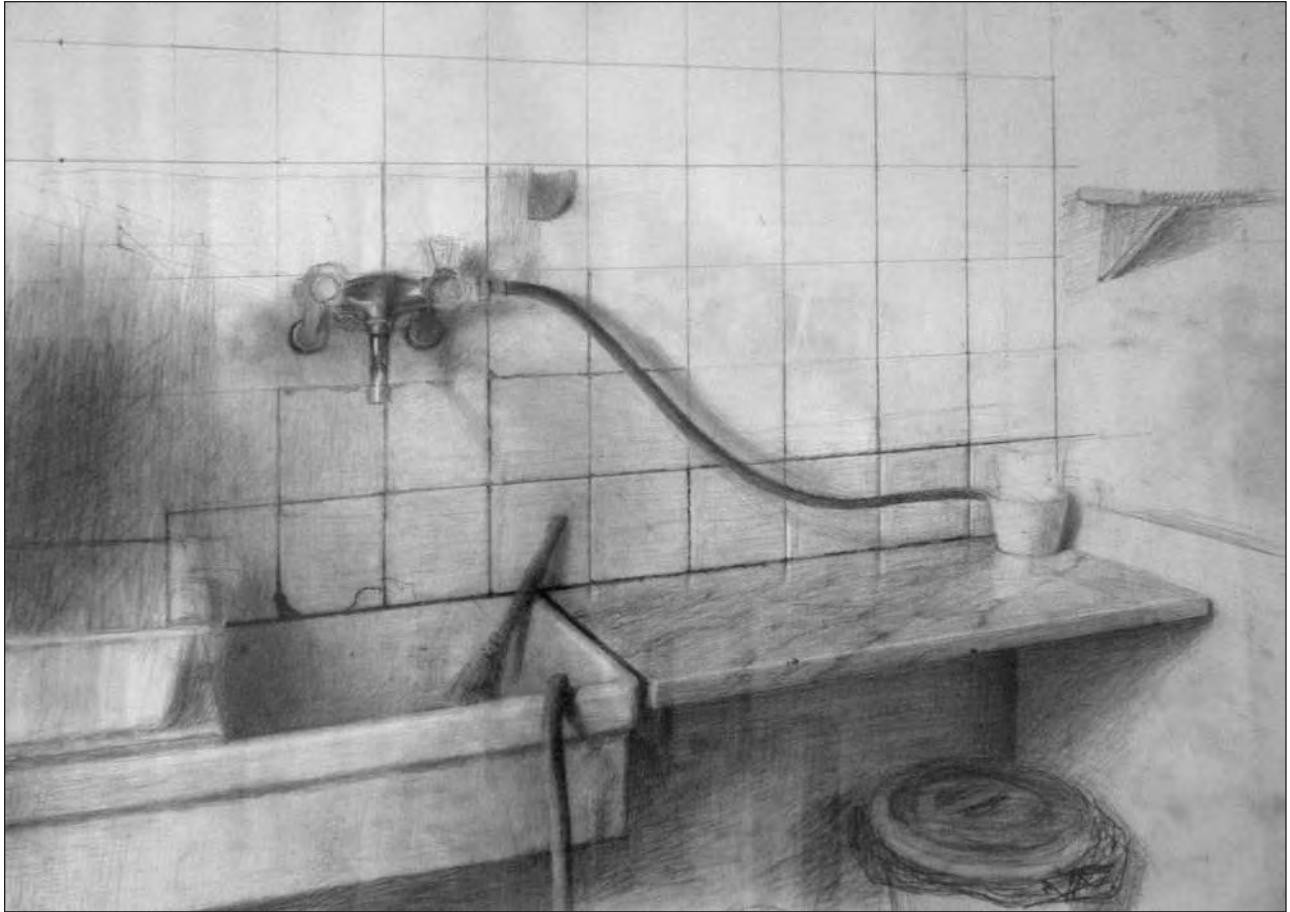


Chairs #2 by Eileen Eder, courtesy of the artist

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Gallery: Examples of Light and Shadow *(continued)*

This drawing shows a corner of a room being lit by natural light through a window. The light sifts gently over the objects and casts soft shadows. There is a shape of darker tone, running under the sink and the countertop, and in the left side of the sink. The darkest area defines the separation of the sink and the countertop. The artist has kept his shadows light to impart the sense of daylight filtering into every object and onto every surface.



Kitchen Sink, by Richard Maury, courtesy of Claire Maury and Forum Gallery, New York, NY

This drawing also uses natural light to reveal form. There is more than one light source in this drawing. There is a wide range of tones. The artist has used his tones extensively to suggest the form of the figure, the textures of different objects in the room, as well as the room itself (including the walls and floor). All of these elements receive the light in a different manner, which creates a large variation in the tonal scale.



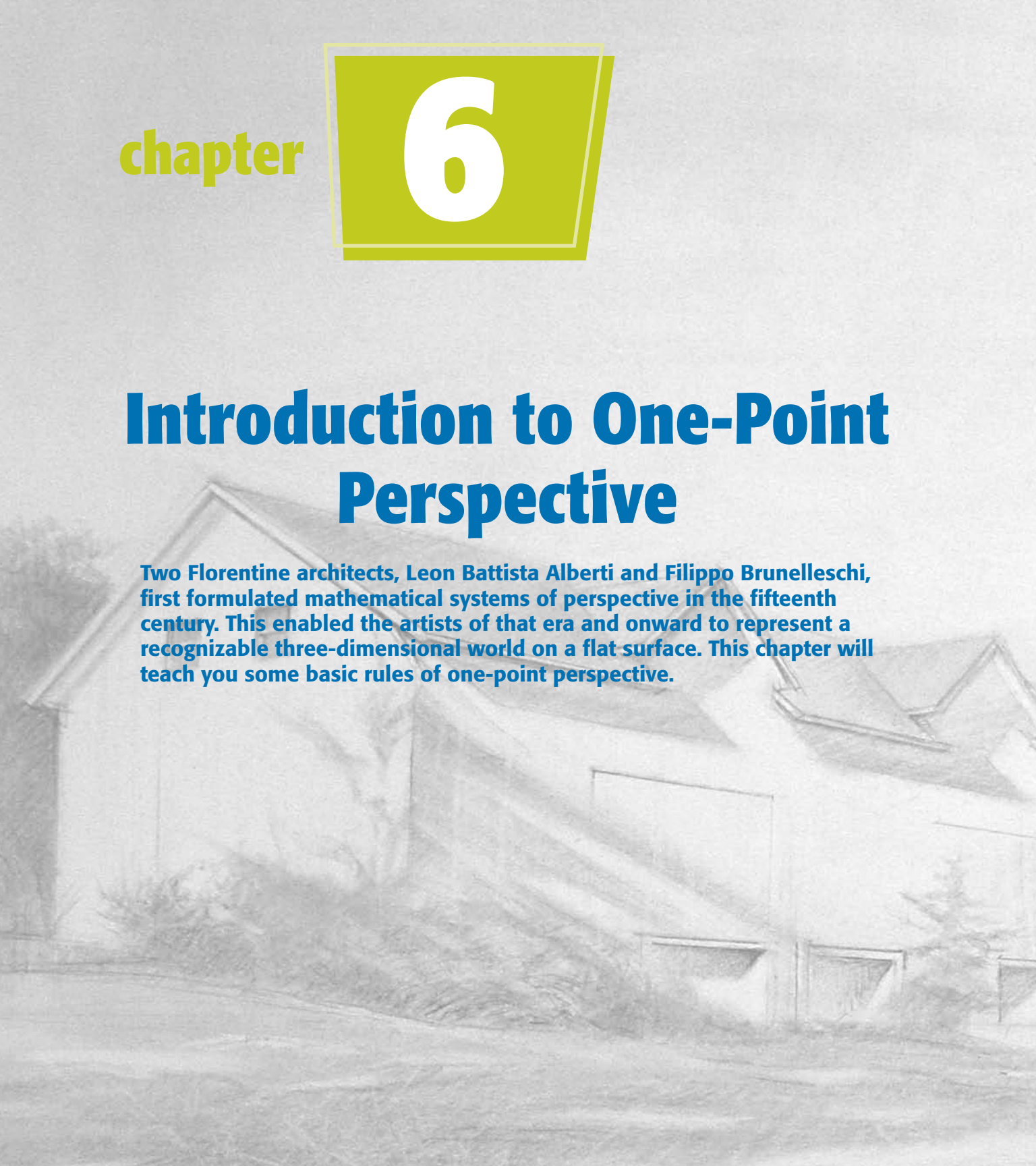
Figure at Rest, by Dean Fisher

chapter

6

Introduction to One-Point Perspective

Two Florentine architects, Leon Battista Alberti and Filippo Brunelleschi, first formulated mathematical systems of perspective in the fifteenth century. This enabled the artists of that era and onward to represent a recognizable three-dimensional world on a flat surface. This chapter will teach you some basic rules of one-point perspective.





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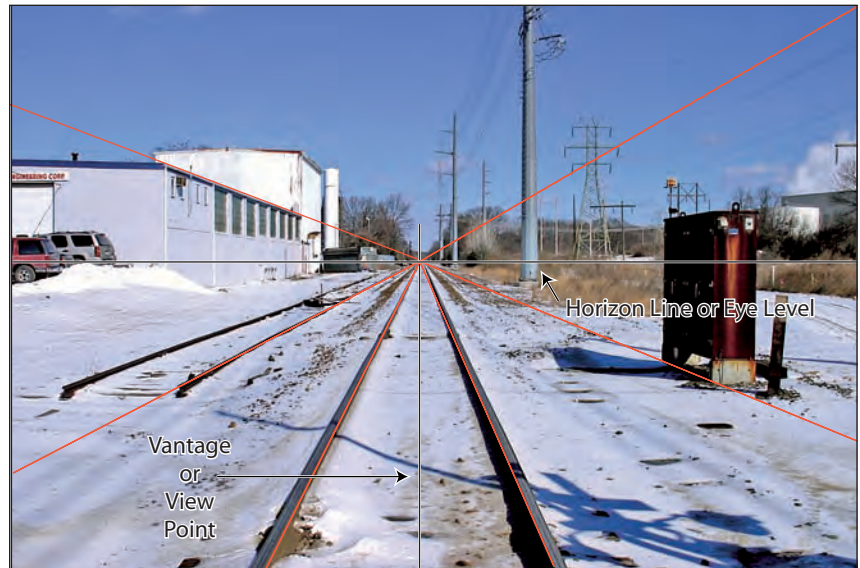
What Is One-Point Perspective?

When drawing, the laws of perspective apply to everything that you look at. In one-point perspective, the front of an object is parallel to your plane of vision. This means that the object is directly facing you. There are several examples in this chapter to illustrate this point, beginning with a classic example of train tracks.



This example of one-point perspective shows train tracks disappearing into the distance. You can immediately comprehend this scene as indicative of distance because the train tracks become narrow. The distance between them becomes so small that the tracks appear to meet. This doesn't really happen in life; however, it is what the human eye sees. The point where the tracks appear to meet indicates where the viewer is standing in the scene and is referred to as the *vantage point* (or *viewer point*).

When you look at train tracks, you see that the sides of the tracks converge. In perspective rules, the point where the two sides meet is called the *vanishing point*. The height from the ground to your eyes is called the *eye level* (or *horizon line*). Notice that this point is at the exact height of your eyes, neither above nor below them. You look at everything in this world from the height of your own eye level. Everyone has a different eye level except for people who are the same height!

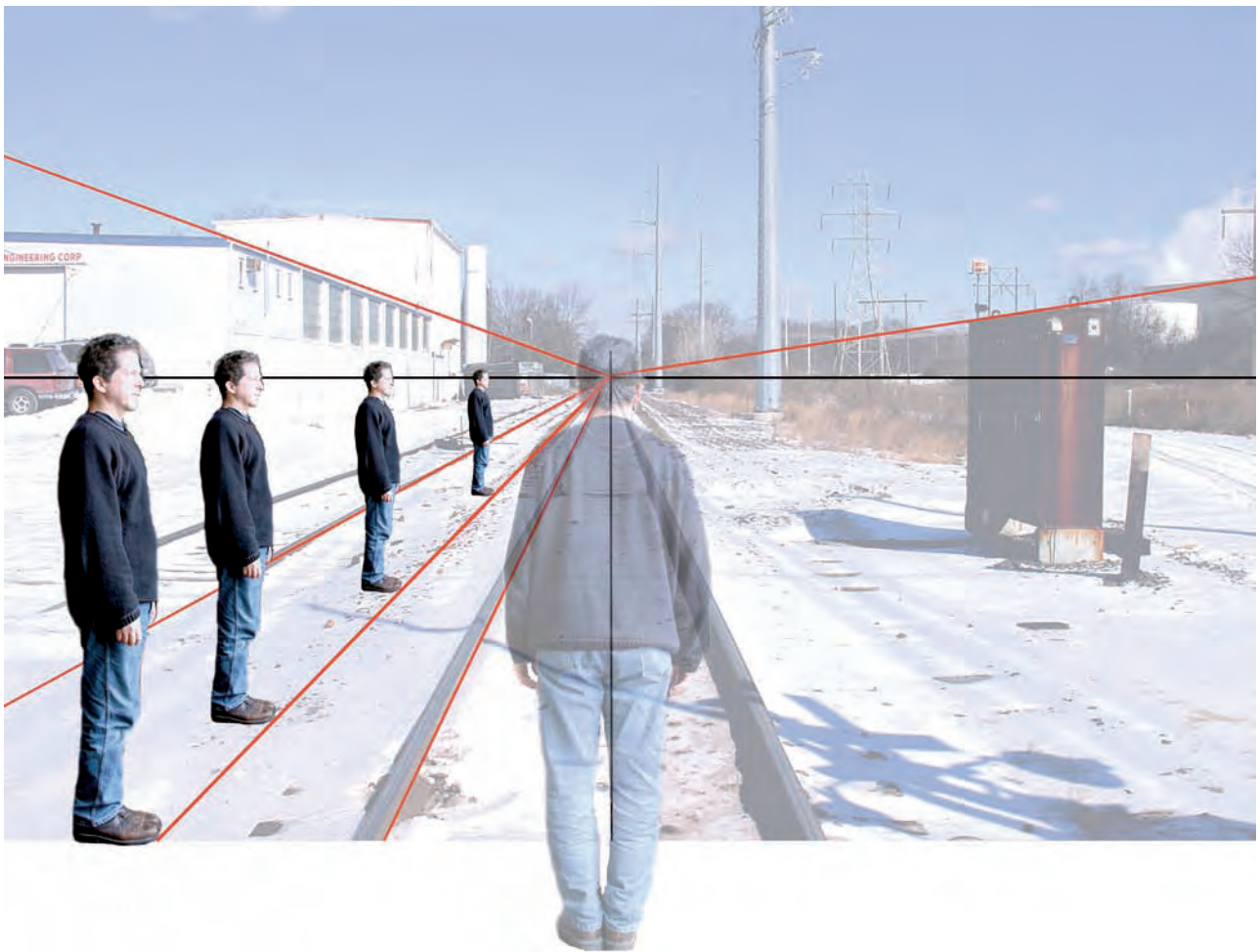


The photo above has a superimposed diagram of black lines to indicate the horizon line or eye level. The vanishing point is where the vantage point and the horizon line meet. The red lines indicate how all of the sides of the buildings, the train tracks, the telephone poles, and any object that is perpendicular to the horizon line converge at the vanishing point. Another way to describe this phenomenon is that all parallel lines converge in the distance at the vanishing point. Notice that the vertical lines remain vertical.

This is a demonstration of the *field of vision* (also referred to as the *cone of vision*). The viewer is positioned in the center of the photograph. His eye level forms the horizon line in the photograph, and he is transparent, so that you are able to see the vanishing point through his head. The vanishing point remains constant as long as he stays in the same position. If he moves to the left or the right, even slightly, the vanishing point changes. His eye level, of course, remains the same, as he cannot change his height.

The figure in profile is the same person of the same height. He is standing on an artificial line on the ground, which is referred to as the *ground plane*. Notice that as he is placed farther into the distance, he becomes smaller. However, his eye level remains fixed at the horizon line because his eye level is identical to the viewer's eye level.

If you take a strip of wood with the same height as your eye level and place it anywhere—some distance away from you—you will notice that the top of the stick always remains on the horizon line.



One-Point Perspective in Everyday Life

Keep an eye open for your own examples of perspective. The more you look for and study these ideas, the more coherent they will become. Try to determine where the vanishing point and the horizon line are in the following examples.

Scenes of Everyday Life



This example is taken from the authors' kitchen. The photographer is standing in front of the island, looking down. Consequently, the eye level of the photographer is above the island.

Note: The eye level does not change, even though he is looking down. (See "Establish Your Eye Level" on page 32.)

Look at the sides of the island. They are converging quite dramatically to a vanishing point, just like the train tracks. The vantage point is located at the height of the eye level of the person who took this photograph. Can you accurately pinpoint the horizon line and the vanishing point? Look at the baskets holding the fruit; the sides of these objects are also converging, as their sides are parallel to the sides of the island. As the baskets move down in the stack, below the eye level of the view, you can see more of the top of each one.

Rule: All parallel lines converge to the same vanishing point.



Here, the rugs on the floor, the top lines of the skylights, and the banister all meet at the same vanishing point because all of these lines are parallel to each other. Can you tell where the vanishing point is? Realizing where the vanishing point is allows you to draw the correct angle on the sides of your objects, making them decrease in size. This gives a sense of three dimensions to your drawings.



In this bathroom, the horizon line is just above the bottom ledge of the window. You can see a small part of the inside of the sink, and a part of the top surface of the small dividing wall on the right. The vanishing point is a little to the left of the sink on the horizon line. Keep this simple rule in mind: Everything that is nearest to you is large, and as objects move away from you, they become smaller.

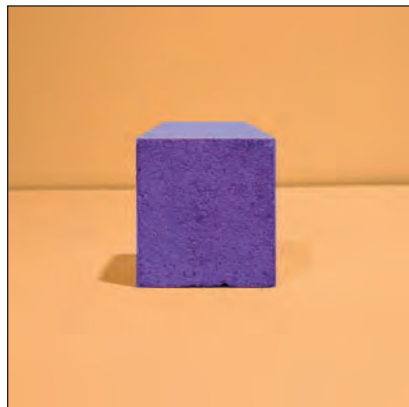


This is a very dramatic example of one-point perspective. Can you work out where the vanishing point is? Review the photo before you read the answer in the next paragraph.

The eye level of the photographer is a little above the sign on the lamppost in the left foreground of the photo. If the photographer moved to the right, say 15 feet, her eye level/horizon line would remain the same, but the vanishing point would move along the eye level/horizon line, as her position would have changed. The angles of the parallel lines of the building's architectural ornamentation would be less steep, and less dramatically inclined.

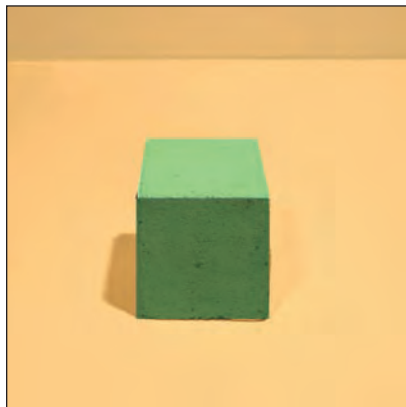
Determine the Perspective

The diagrams in this section use cubes to help further explain one-point perspective. The front of the cube is directly facing you, and so you are only dealing with one vanishing point. All of the horizontal sides of the cube are parallel, and the cube is seen from three different eye levels.



The eye level of the viewer is above the cube. Although the top of the cube is visible, notice that you can only see a small portion of it. This means that the eye level is not that far away from the top of the cube. Both sides of the cube, being below eye level, must therefore come up to a vanishing point at eye level.

To better illustrate this point, take a ruler, lay it along the two top sides of the cube, and join those lines together. You now have your vanishing point and the eye level, or horizon line. See how you can create a sense of depth by making parallel lines converge? The vertical lines (front and rear) on the front sides of the cube always remain vertical. This situation is similar to the photograph of the kitchen island; the island is simply a long cube.



Here, the top of the cube is now even more visible than in the previous example. The eye level must therefore be higher. The parallel sides of the top of the cube are again converging to a vanishing point, but they are doing so less abruptly, because there is a greater distance between the eye level, or horizon line, and the top of the cube. As shown in the photo on page 76, the rugs are similar in perspective to the top of this cube.

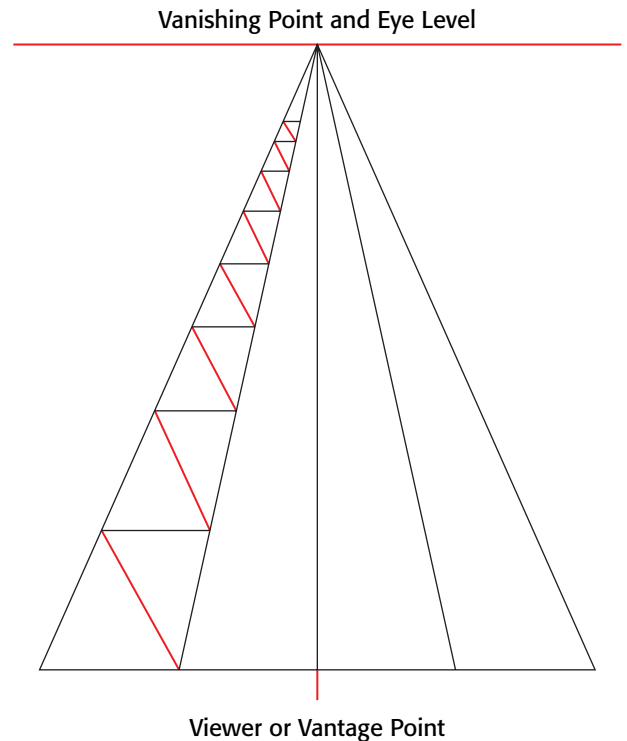


Where is the horizon line in this example? Is it above or below the cube? It is actually in the middle of the cube. You can see that the top side of the cube is angling down. However, you cannot see the bottom of the cube, as it is obscured by the table. This can occur in everyday life (see the photo of the building on page 77). If this does happen, you can make a well-informed guess about the angle of the line that is obscured, because you now understand the laws of perspective. This knowledge relieves you from unnecessary frustration when drawing. Understand these simple points, and you can spend more time concentrating on the quality of your drawing instead of trying to determine the correct perspective.

Invent Your 3D World

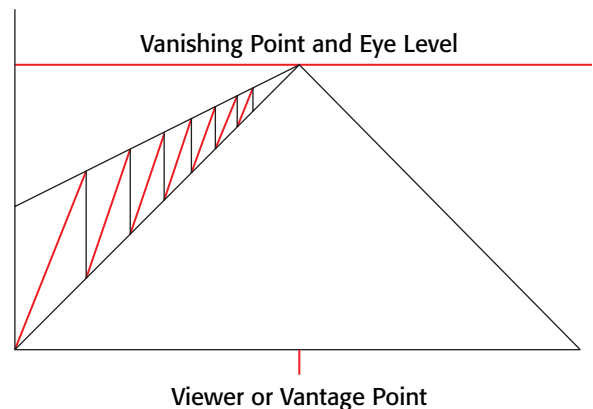
These diagrams show a simple technique to help you determine the proportions of your object as it recedes into space. You can apply this technique to either a vertical or horizontal plane, as shown.

The first diagram uses the horizontal plane. To draw this diagram, first draw a triangle, and then draw some converging lines within the triangle. These lines correspond to the sides of an object that you may be drawing (such as a tabletop or the top of the kitchen island shown previously), which are receding to the vanishing point. Draw a horizontal line across two lines in the bottom on the left. Now you have a top surface of an object. The red line represents the width of that top surface of the object, from corner to corner. If you repeat this diagonal with the same angle, so that it is parallel to the first and all subsequent diagonals all the way to the vanishing point, you can see how the top surface of the object becomes smaller and smaller in width and length.



In this diagram, imagine that the square nearest to you is the back of a chair in perspective. Notice that if you move that chair farther away from the viewer and closer to the vanishing point, along the trajectory that is mapped out, it becomes smaller. Its proportions are correctly portrayed as the red diagonal lines. Just as in the previous example, all of the diagonal lines are parallel to each other. In this example, the diagonal lines form the correct width of the chair back. You can drop a vertical line where the diagonal meets the top side of the chair. (The top side is parallel to the bottom side of the chair.)

An example where this technique is useful is when you are drawing windows on a wall of a building that is receding into the distance.

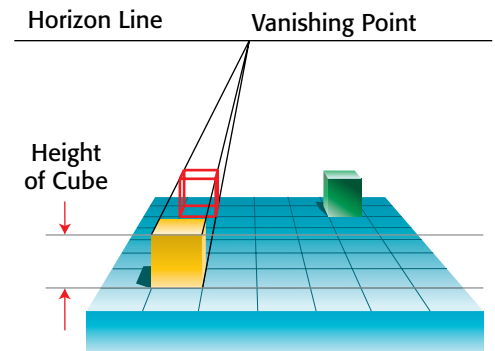


Create a Perspective Grid

Once you understand the terms *vanishing point* and *horizon line*, you can move an object around within a space, even if it doesn't happen in real life.

Here is a diagram of two cubes in a three-dimensional space. These cubes, which obey the laws of one-point perspective, are the same size. As you can see, if you place an object on a surface (floor or table) and draw lines to its vanishing point, you are able to place it anywhere between the foreground and background and still maintain its correct proportions.

This is a very useful technique for constructing a room with furniture that does not exist in reality. If you apply the laws of one-point perspective, you can convincingly achieve the illusion of reality. Practice this exercise by drawing a cube, placing it in a grid, and moving it around your space.



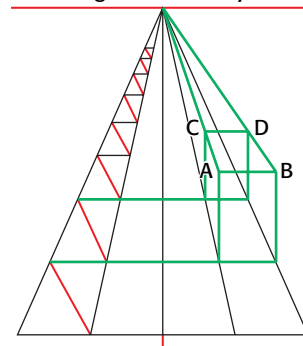
CREATE A CUBE ON A PERSPECTIVE GRID

Once you have determined the width and depth of the cube in perspective, as seen in the diagram above, it's easy to transform this into a three-dimensional cube. The first thing to determine is the height of the cube that you would like to draw. This is achieved by drawing two vertical lines starting on the two front corners of your cube to the determined height. In this case, it's an arbitrary height. The next step is to connect the two tops of the vertical lines (A and B) with a horizontal line. Now simply draw the two top corners back to the vanishing point. Next, repeat the same procedure on the two rear corners of the footprint, bringing them up to the lines that you drew to the vanishing point. Now connect these two points (C and D) with a horizontal line, and you will see that you have now drawn a cube in perspective.

Applying the lessons from the previous two pages, you can construct a cube on your grid at any point within the space of your grid.

In this image, the cars are all parked along the side of the street. Just like the cube example, they recede toward the vanishing point at the same height, because most of them are the same height, more or less. You could draw in another car near the corner, and you would know its exact height and the size of the wheels, if the cars were a similar size.

Vanishing Point and Eye Level



Viewer or Vantage Point



The Ellipse in Perspective

Introduction to One-Point Perspective

chapter 6

An ellipse is simply a circle in perspective. The cube examples show how the top surface becomes more visible as the eye level or horizon line becomes higher. The same effect happens with the tops of rounded objects.

The horizon line in this example is in line with the top of the object. You draw this simply as a straight line.

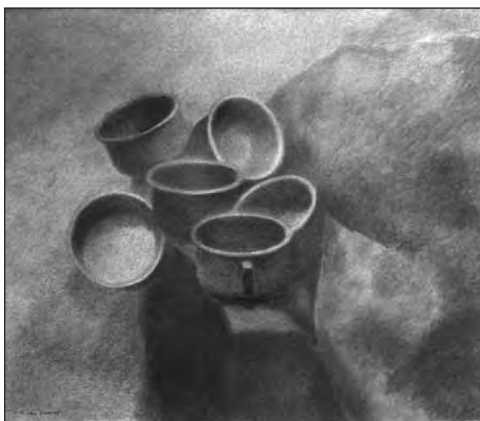


In this drawing, you can see more of the tops of the objects. You cannot see the ellipse of the back of the jug because it is leaning slightly away from you.



Aidan with Vases, by Dean Fisher

Look at the array of ellipses in this drawing. Notice how round and smooth the edges are. A common mistake is to make the edges pointed. These edges become rounder as the eye level moves up.



*by Roger Van Damme,
courtesy of the artist*

Try creating a tonal drawing of a similar object from the same eye level as shown here. You may have to practice the shape a number of times, as it can be difficult to draw curves. Pay attention to the shapes of the shadows within the object, and draw the shadows first. In this photo of the same still life setup as the first example, notice how much rounder the ellipses become in the lip of the small bottle and the bowl when the eye level becomes higher.

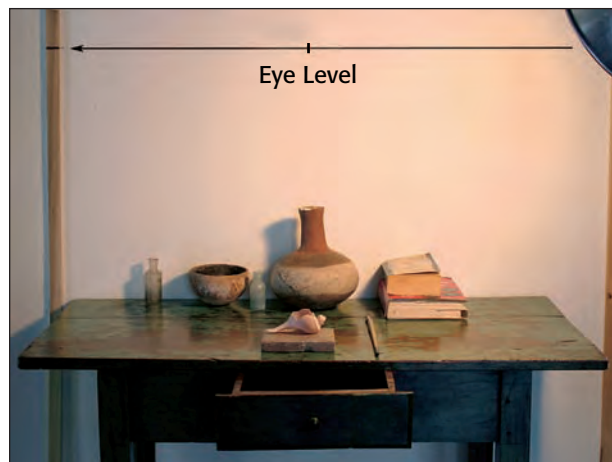


Draw Tonally in Perspective

In this section, you begin a complete drawing using everything that you have learned so far about perspective. You must first set up a still life of your own. Use objects that are square or rectangular in shape, as well as objects with a round top if you want to practice drawing ellipses. Then use a spotlight to light your objects, as shown in the first image. You need to tone a sheet of paper (see “Tone Your Paper” in Chapter 4), a selection of graphite pencils (using H to 6B or softer), and an eraser.

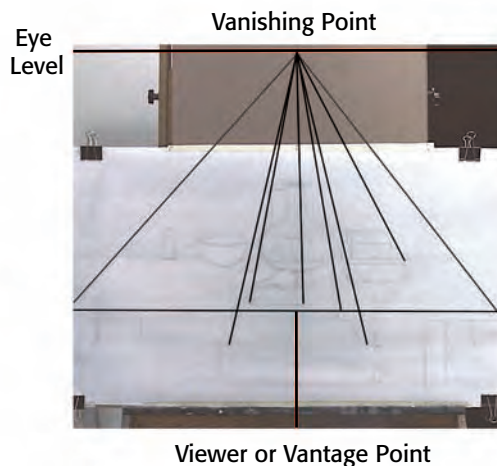
The Horizon Line

The objects on this table are below the horizon line. The horizon line (eye level of the viewer) is the level where all of the sides or lines of the objects that are perpendicular to the viewer converge. Judge accurately, with your eye, the level of your horizon line and place a mark on the wall behind the still life. It is good to place a mark somewhere, so that you do not become confused and forget where it is. You can also mark your eye level on a stick and place the stick next to your setup, so that it is always clearly visible. This is useful when working outdoors in a landscape where the horizon line is obscured. You can place the stick vertically against a structure, up against a tree, or allow for an extra 6 inches at the bottom and stick it into the ground.

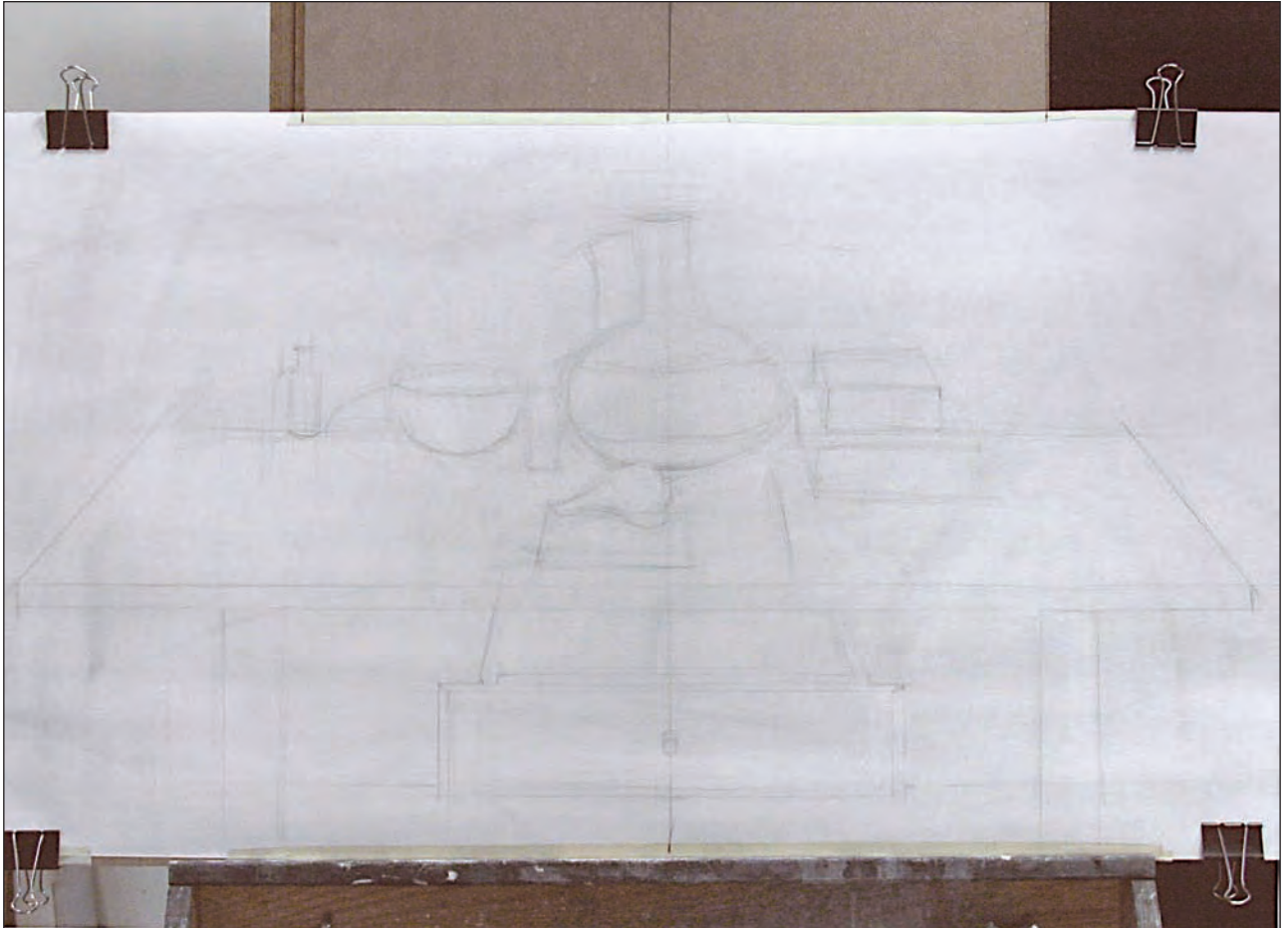


Create your vanishing point by holding up a ruler along the side of any object that is perpendicular to you. If you continue the line of trajectory, it meets the horizon line. If you do this to the other side of the same object, then you will find that this line meets the other line of the object on the horizon line. You have now established your vanishing point.

You can attach a board behind your drawing, as shown here, to indicate the eye level. The eye level is measured here using a scale that is the size of the central pot. The eye level is about two pots high from the surface of the table. Map out your drawing with light lines. Remember to measure (refer to page 44) and draw in your converging lines if you need to, but keep them light!



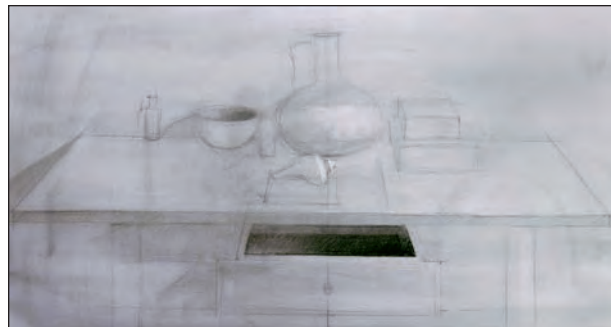
Establish more of your drawing by adding other objects to practice ellipses. Add some differently shaped objects that have curves. Add objects of different sizes to add interest to your arrangement. For this image, the artist has added some of the objects that he loves to draw and paint: a small bowl, a small glass bottle, and his favorite large pot. To help you to find the curvature of round objects, see “Find the Angles” in Chapter 4.



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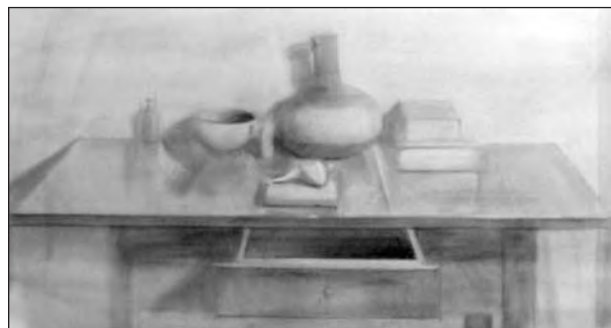
Draw Tonally in Perspective *(continued)*

In the initial stages of learning perspective, it may be useful to draw out the subject with lines fairly extensively, before you begin to shade or erase. In this manner, you can concentrate on the tonal aspects of the drawing without having to worry about problems of perspective. Before the artist began to shade, he “keyed” his drawing by indicating the lightest light and the darkest dark. See “Key Your Drawing” in Chapter 5 for more information.



After the artist established keying and perspective, he could begin to give the subject form and space by rendering it in light and shadow—that is, he could develop the tonal relationships of his subject. The artist kept all of the tones very soft here, because he wanted to be able to judge the whole drawing before he defined his shapes.

Note: Remember to develop the entire drawing together, working from large shapes to small shapes. Don't forget to squint (see page 58); it helps you to judge your tonal relationships without the influence of insignificant (at this stage) details.



TIP

Build Your Tones Gradually

Try not to get too dark too fast, especially when working with graphite. Otherwise, if you want to lighten an area, you may find it difficult to erase.

With the removal of several large shapes of light and the addition of the darker areas, the drawing begins to look more three-dimensional. The artist has sharpened up the shapes of tone by giving everything more definition. With careful observation of the tones that you see in front of you and careful decisions about what tones you place where in your drawing, you can also capture the quality of your light and create depth in your drawing.



The tone of the paper can serve as the half tones in your scale of value (see “The Half Tones” on page 62). Continue to develop the areas that are darker than the tone on your toned paper. The objects will take on a greater sense of form and weight as the darker tones are added to your drawing. The darkest and lightest tones generally occur in those areas that are closest to you, thereby forming the greatest contrast. These highly contrasted areas create the illusion of objects coming forward, and those areas with the least contrast tend to recede.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Draw Tonally in Perspective *(continued)*

To develop the multitude of tonal relationships in your subject, use the peephole method (discussed in Chapter 5) of comparing areas of tone. The more carefully the tones are observed and rendered, the more realistic it becomes. Look for the half tone or transitional tones between the lights and shadows, as these areas help to add volume to your forms.



Now that you have rendered the large forms in relation to each other and have constructed a feeling of space and light, you can add a further dimension of reality to your drawing by rendering the individual textures, topography, and nuances of each object.

This is the time when careful scrutiny helps to reveal the individual characteristics of each object. Do not over-render these “secondary” details, or let them interfere with the large areas that you have established; keep them subordinate or else you will lose your foundation.



TIP

Remember to continually stand back at least 6–10 feet from your drawing to see if it is working well.

This is the finished drawing. The artist has carefully portrayed the objects with different tones. This portrayal of the light has enabled the artist to create depth, volume, space, and a tactile quality in the drawing. By using one-point perspective, he has rendered all of the objects in a believable space. Light has been revealed through tone, which gives a sense of solidity to the objects. You can see that texture has been created by acutely observing the transition of light and shadow on the surfaces of the objects.



Still Life #5, by Dean Fisher

Gallery: One-Point Perspectives

In this pen, ink, and wash drawing, Guardi has skillfully rendered a vast Italian plaza. With great knowledge of rendering light, form, and space, and an understanding of perspective, the artist has used very abbreviated forms to capture the essentials of his subject.



Piazza San Marco, Venice, by Francesco Guardi, © Cleveland Museum of Art

In this very precise one-point perspective drawing of an interior, Antonio López García has masterfully controlled the value of his tones to depict and juxtapose a lit room next to an unlit room in an extremely realistic manner. The value of the light slanting across the unlit room is observed with great precision. Every element is carefully considered within the composition as a whole. This sense of unity and completion opens the drawing's meaning up to interpretations, which reach beyond the "realism" of the scene.



Interior de Water, by Antonio López García, © VEGAP

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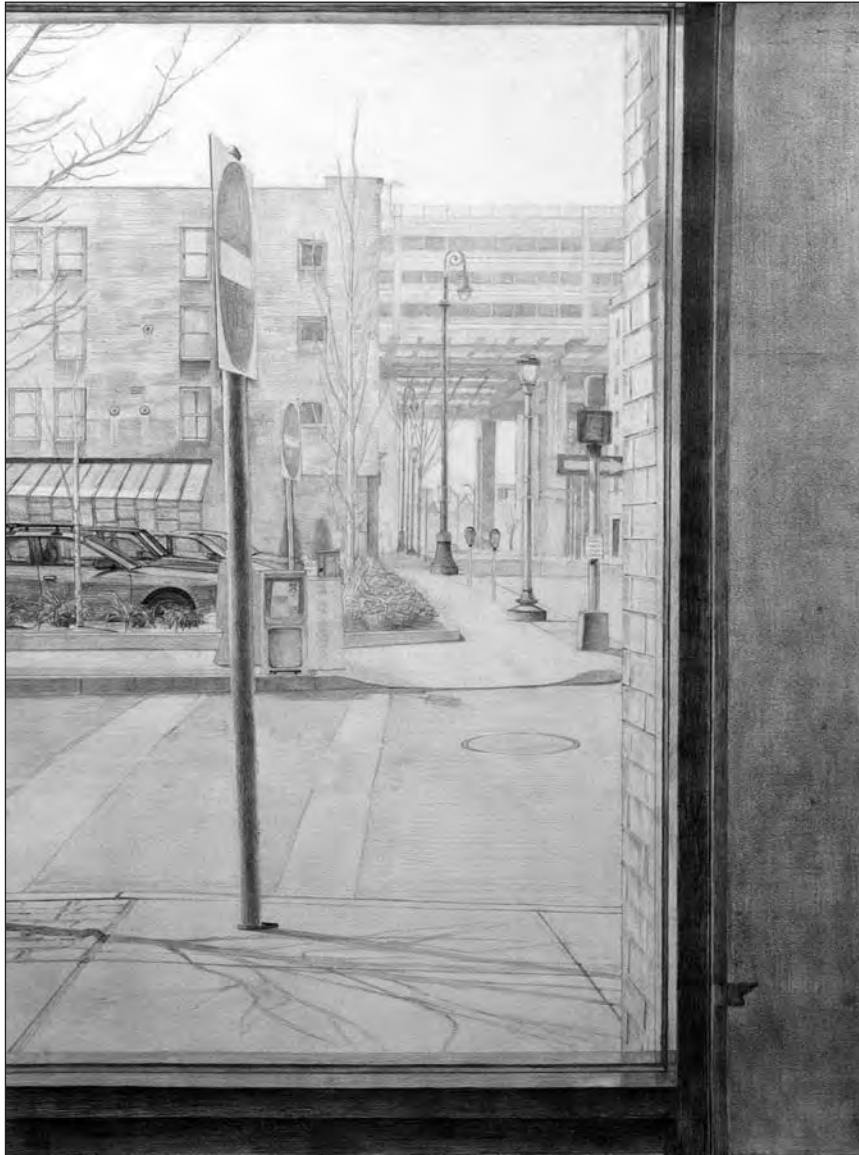
Gallery: One-Point Perspectives *(continued)*

Although this image is a painting, it is included here because it displays the artist's knowledge of perspective. Once you have mastered the rules of perspective, you can create a believable space such as this. One-point perspective is used to dramatic effect to suggest the wide, lonely, seemingly never-ending road of a Texas town. The painting has a precision of drawing objects in perspective which adds to its very believable sense of realism. Through its accuracy, you can get a very clear sense of the vantage point, eye level, and the horizon line of the artist as he viewed his subject.



Passing Storm/McGregor Texas, by Rod Penner, courtesy of the artist and OK Harris Works of Art

In this precise, formalized street scene, the artist has an acute sense of observation. The lamp posts and sign posts are emphasized with a darker tone. This accentuates the curve of the sidewalk, which leads our eye, first around this curve, and then toward the vanishing point. In contrast to Penner's painting (on the previous page), Gaetjen has suggested a more closed and narrow space by using this compositional device.



Crown and Orange Streets II, by Josh Gaetjen, courtesy of the artist

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Gallery: One-Point Perspectives *(continued)*

In this arresting drawing, Eder has used the full tonal range of the medium, from white to black, to create an image with a strong visual impact. The chair seats are drawn in one-point perspective, but the compositional element is directed by the pattern of shapes of light and shadow. The mysterious red lines seem to be incongruous at first glance but in fact give a visual strength and added structure to the drawing.



Musical Chairs, by Eileen Eder, courtesy of the artist

In this drawing, the complexity of New York City is surveyed from a high vantage point. New York was built on a grid; consequently, this is mainly a one-point perspective drawing. However, not all of the streets were incorporated into the grid, and so there are also some two-point perspective examples here (see Chapter 7). Distance is suggested in this drawing, not only through perspective and proportion, but through drawing the prevailing atmosphere. The concrete, solid buildings turn to shimmering cutouts in a late-afternoon light.



Looking Downtown II, *by J. S. Robinson*

The background of the entire page is a light gray, semi-transparent illustration of a row of houses. The houses are drawn in a two-point perspective, with their roofs and walls converging towards two different vanishing points on the horizon. The style is sketchy and artistic, typical of a preliminary drawing or a conceptual illustration for an art book.

chapter

7

Add More Dimension to Your World: Two-Point Perspective

While one-point perspective was most often used by artists throughout history, it is more common for artists to view reality in *two-point perspective*. Two-point perspective takes into account an object's visible side angles versus the face-on appearance of an object in one-point perspective.

For this reason, it is important to understand the rules of two-point perspective and to see, when applied well, what a useful vantage point it is for creating very interesting art.



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Introduction to Two-Point Perspective

The major difference between one-point and two-point perspective is that one-point perspective has one vanishing point, and two-point perspective has two vanishing points in different locations on the horizon line.

Three-dimensional rectangular forms, such as buildings, cars, and tables, have vantage points where the two sides of the object are seen at the same time, as in the example of the barn pictured here.

When objects (whether in a landscape, city, or townscape) or an interior are placed at different angles to each other, you will find that their parallel sides converge toward different vanishing points.

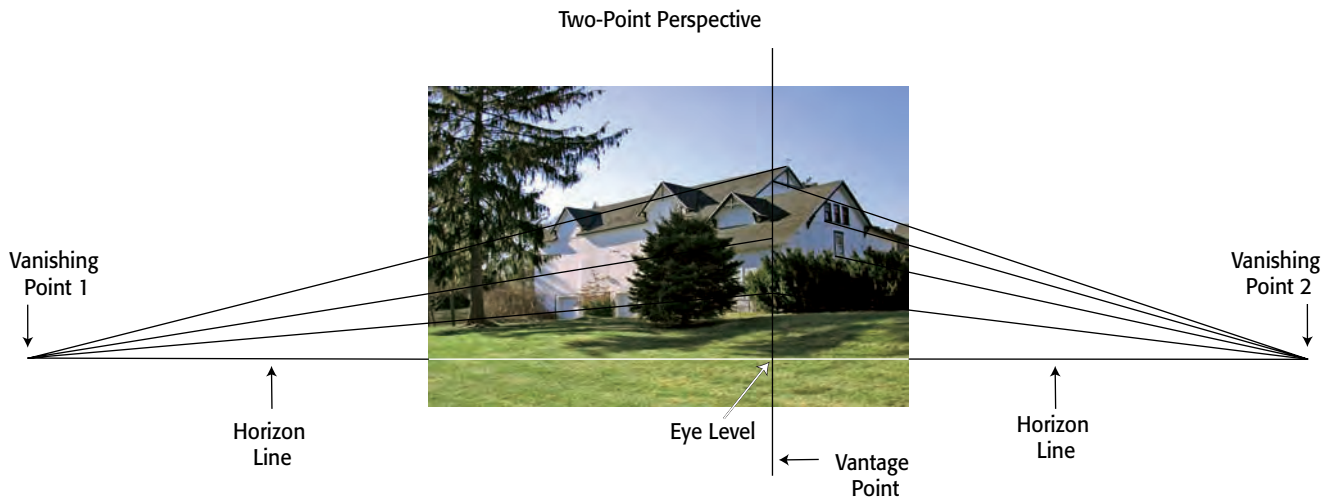
Even though these examples have multiple vanishing points that fall on the same horizon line, this is still referred to as two-point perspective.



Now that you are familiar with the principles of one-point perspective, understanding those of two-point perspective shouldn't prove too difficult for you. As you can see in the diagram below, all of the familiar terms are being used: vantage point, eye level, horizon line, and vanishing point.

As shown in the diagram of the barn, the vanishing points often fall well outside the field of vision of the viewer or the camera lens.

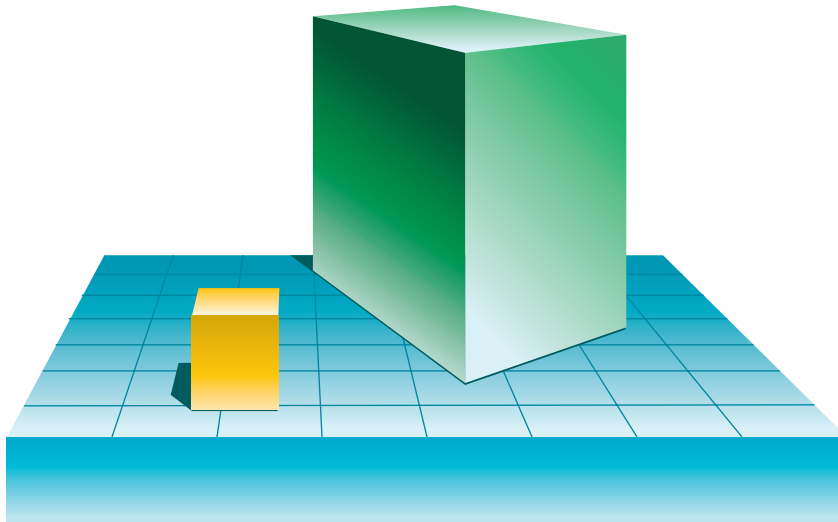
When trying to determine where the vanishing points are, it is helpful to tack pieces of paper on either side of your drawing paper, or to place your drawing paper on a large board when constructing objects in perspective. You can use this technique in the drawing demonstration on the following pages.



Cubes in Space

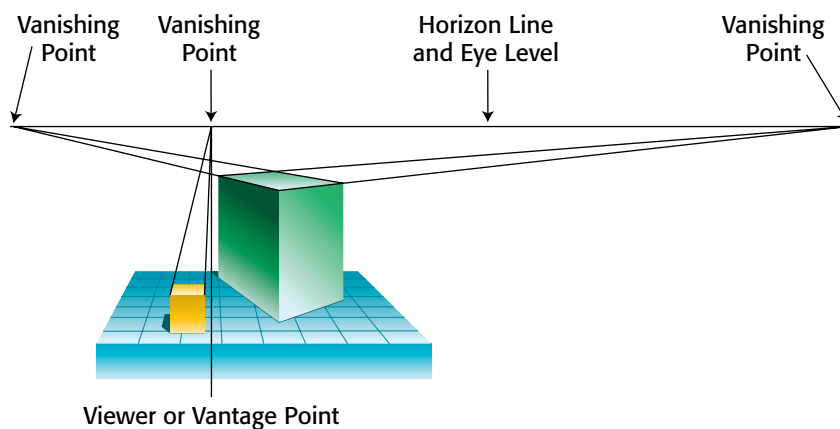
To reinforce some of the concepts of two-point perspective, you will look at some arrangements of basic cube-like forms, placed at different angles to each other. These cubes convey these concepts very clearly.

The cubes below could represent a chair and a large cabinet in a room, or a large and small building in a cityscape. In this example, the yellow cube is placed with its front plane directly facing us; this illustrates one-point perspective. As a result, it has a single vanishing point on the horizon line, and your eye level is directly above it. The green cube is turned on an angle, with each of its sides receding at different angles toward their respective vanishing points. The vanishing points for both cubes fall on the same eye level and horizon line.



The diagram clearly indicates that once you determine your eye level, which is the horizon line in your view, all of the vanishing points will fall here.

Whether you are standing in a landscape or in a room, a great technique for always being able to determine your eye level and horizon line is to cut a length of wood (1" x 1" or 1" x 2") that is the length from the ground to the height of your eyes as you are standing erect. When your eye-level stick is placed vertically anywhere within your subject, you know where your eye level and horizon line are.



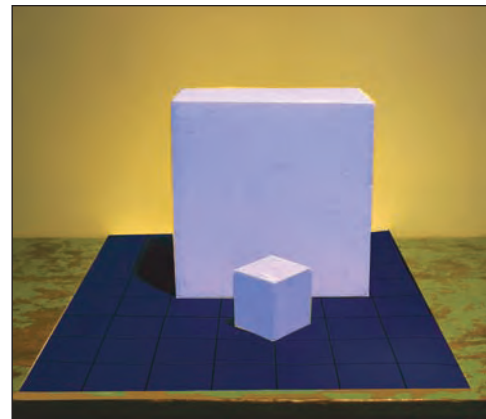
TIP

Know Your Eye Level

The eye-level stick (or marker) is especially helpful when there are hills in a landscape, or buildings or houses obstructing your view of the horizon line.

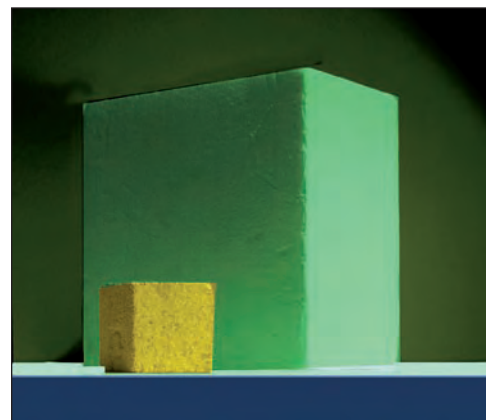
Practice Two-Point Perspective

This exercise will help you to gain a more complete understanding of two-point perspective. You will study three photos with different eye levels, where the cubes are placed at different angles to each other. After you complete this exercise, you will be on your way to drawing any object in front of you in accurate, two-point perspective.



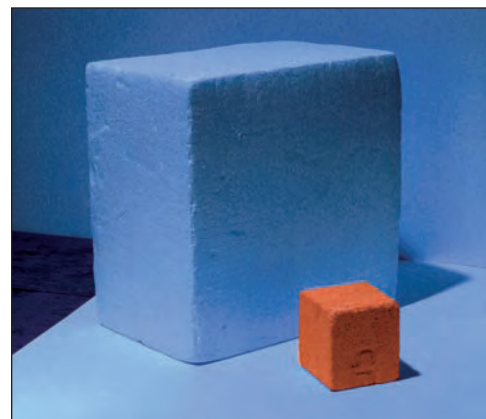
Tape a 16" x 20" sheet of tracing paper over the photos on this page and trace each configuration of cubes. Remove the tracing paper from the photo and place it on a table or flat surface. With a ruler or straight-edge, construct a perspective diagram for each of the photos, similar to the one on the previous page.

As shown in the two-point perspective demonstration on pages 104–113, an artist has constructed a similar diagram to precisely draw a barn in perspective.



The diagrams that you are creating in this exercise are similar to the diagrams that the masters of the Renaissance used to construct their drawings and paintings.

As your eye becomes more trained and your drawing skills more precise, you will be able to combine the methods discussed here with direct observation to accurately draw objects in perspective.

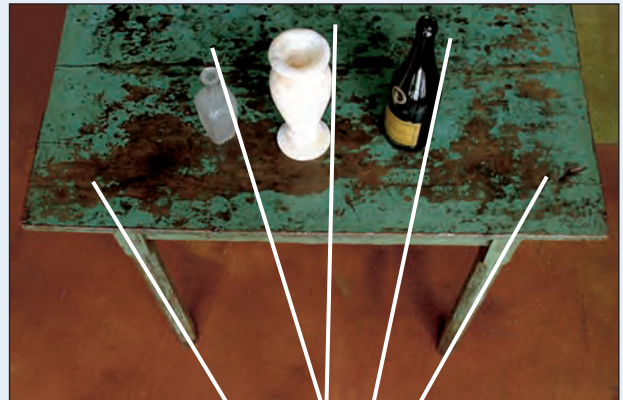


TIP**Three-Point Perspective**

There are some instances where three-point perspective can occur, such as when you are drawing cityscapes and you are on the street looking up at a tall building, or when you are inside a tall building looking down at the street. In the first example, both sides of the buildings are visible, as in two-point perspective; the third vanishing point occurs as the vertical lines of the building converge up in the sky. When looking down from a building, the vanishing point occurs below the ground level.

In a more common example, the same three-point perspective occurs when you are standing above a table and are looking down on the tabletop (pictured in the photo at the right). You will notice that when the legs are visible, they too converge toward a vanishing point somewhere below the floor. Also notice that the bottles and the vase are converging toward the same vanishing point.

Vertical lines of building coverage toward third vanishing point below



Two-Point Perspective in Everyday Life

Here are several examples of two-point perspective, any of which could be an excellent subject to base a work of art on. There are similar two-point perspective subjects all around you, with which you can apply the principles that you are learning here to create some beautiful drawings.



This interior photo is entirely in one-point perspective, with the exception of the open door, which is neither parallel nor perpendicular to the viewer, but on an angle. This gives it its own vanishing point.



This aerial view in New York City is also mostly in one-point perspective, with the exception of the one building that is on an angle and whose sides converge toward their own vanishing points on the same horizon line.

This photo of a coffee table is an example of two-point perspective, with the front and back of the table converging toward one vanishing point, and the two sides converging toward two different vanishing points. However, if you look carefully, you will notice that the books are slightly skewed, and if you were to draw them accurately, their sides would converge toward a separate vanishing point.



The cappuccino maker has its own two vanishing points, and the salt-and-pepper shakers have their own vanishing points (each of them is at a different angle to the cappuccino maker). However, as all of the elements in this photo are viewed from the same eye level, all of the vanishing points fall on the same horizon line.



Drawing Demonstration: A Barn in Two-Point Perspective

In this exercise, we are going to draw a building in two-point perspective. There is a barn located near us, which we will use for this exercise. Find a building in your own vicinity, so you can follow the same steps to create your own drawing.

The Barn Under Construction

We will begin this drawing in a careful, methodical fashion, making sure that the initial “construction” lines (or guidelines) that you use to place your building in two-point perspective are precise. You will be happy that you took the time to do the preparatory work, especially when you begin to render your subject in light and shadow, as you will be able to concentrate on the rendering of the drawing, knowing that everything is in its right place. This can potentially save you a lot of time in the long run, as you will not have to redraw portions of your drawing that are incorrect.

Because the initial drawing of the barn, or building you choose, in two-point perspective is quite technical, it is a good idea to draw the building on a very lightly toned paper so that the guidelines remain visible.

After this stage, we can do a more elaborate line drawing, keeping the lines very light. We will proceed to render the light and shadow by erasing the light areas with the kneaded eraser and by adding graphite (gradually) with the pencil. We will then smooth it out with a paper towel and tortillon. Follow these steps along with us, as you draw your own building.

Begin by establishing the vantage point (where the viewer is standing) and the eye level, which determines the horizon line and vanishing points. Then, very lightly draw the large forms of your building, as we have done with our barn (see photo on the next page).



TIP

Employing the measuring methods used in the section “Measure Your Object” in Chapter 4 can help you to achieve the correct proportions between the trees and the barn, as well as each individual element of the subject.

If the vanishing points of your building, like our barn, fall outside of the paper on each side, you should work with a drawing board (or on a drawing table) that is wide enough so that you can plot the position of the vanishing points as a guide for the construction of your drawing. Remember, when in perspective, all horizontal lines of the building converge at the vanishing points.

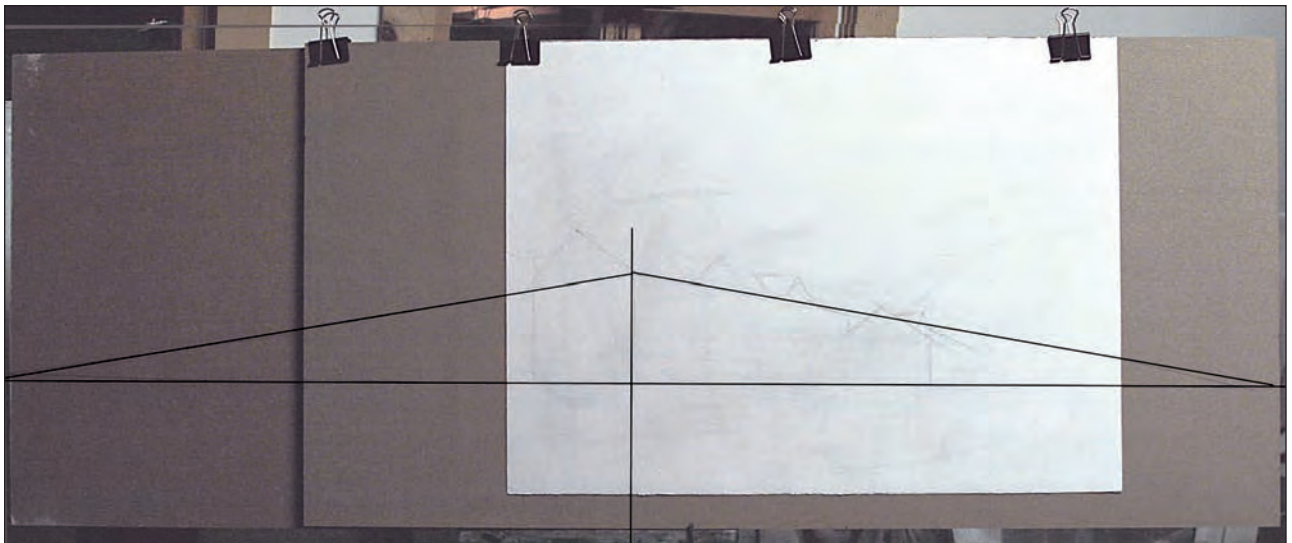
In this exercise, we will draw a *high-keyed* tonal drawing of our barn and its surroundings. We want you to do the same with your building. High-keyed means that you will render the majority of the drawing within the light end of the tonal scale, which is about the lightest 50 percent of the grayscale, from white to 50-percent gray. There will only be a few select dark tones or accents in the drawing, which will impart an atmospheric and airy quality to the image.

You can continue to lightly add more subject information, always checking the horizontal lines on the sides of your building to make sure that they converge to the vanishing points.

The large shapes of the trees surrounding our barn, and in the background of our drawing, are indicated in this initial stage of the drawing, as they are useful in establishing the proportions of the barn itself. Look around you and see if there are any elements in your landscape that you can use to help establish the scale of your building.

As you gain more experience observing the world around you, you will start to notice when something is “off,” especially when it comes to architectural forms. Even the smallest shape that should converge at a particular angle will stand out when it’s incorrect.

There really is a lot to be said for a work of art that includes architectural forms that are drawn accurately. It can make the difference between houses and buildings looking as if they’re made out of soft, weightless cardboard or something more solid and substantial. Aside from creating firmness and a sense of weight in your structures, it also firmly plants the buildings, homes, cars, and other elements on the ground and effectively defines the ground plane. Taking the time to understand the laws of perspective and to employ them in your work will make your drawings more convincing and impart a higher level of realism.



TIP

Even though the topography in this subject is somewhat hilly, it is more or less a flat plane that is also affected by the laws of perspective.

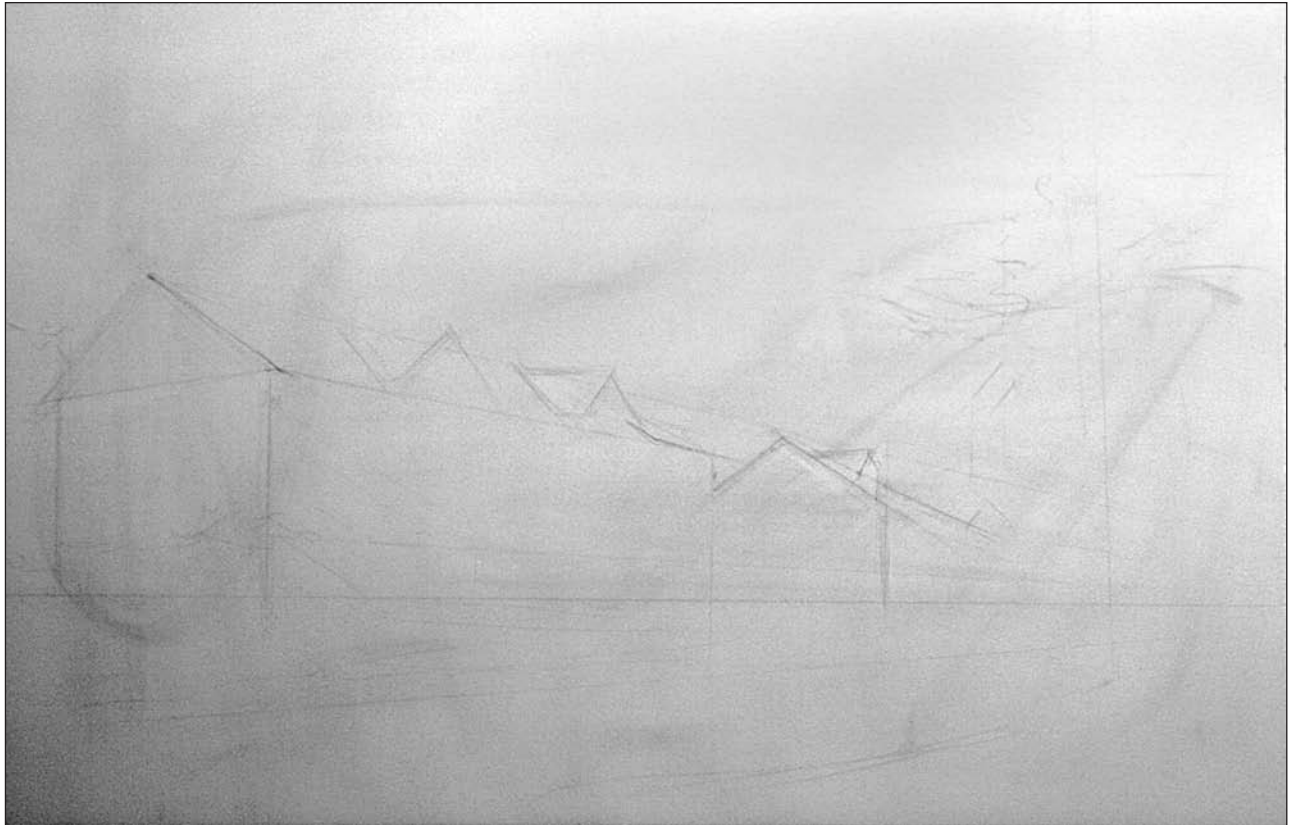
Notice that the long shadow that is cast in the left foreground also converges toward the vanishing point on the right side.

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Drawing Demonstration: A Barn in Two-Point Perspective (*continued*)

Now lightly draw in your building and any other elements you want in your composition, as we have done here. Even without any shading, because of the accuracy of the lines, the building and tree already have a sense of form.

The shape of the tree is carefully observed, and it's "gesture" captured, which also lends it a natural feeling.



TIP

If you look carefully at the overall shape of each tree, you will notice that every tree has its own "personality." Each has a unique shape, character, and "gesture." Be careful not to fit your trees into your picture by shrinking them down or cramping them, because they will lose their grace and elegance. Observe how branches in most cases taper very gradually. Tapering the branches too abruptly gives them an artificial look.

More information on the drawing and three-dimensional modeling of trees is discussed on pages 272–273.

In this stage of our drawing, more of the tree and barn are developed in line after checking thoroughly that all of the angles of the barn converge correctly toward their prospective vanishing points. As the tree is developed, each branch is carefully observed for its particular shape and how it fits into the overall rhythm and gesture of the tree.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Drawing Demonstration: A Barn in Two-Point Perspective *(continued)*

LIGHT AND SHADOW

Now that the drawing of the subject is more advanced, you can focus attention on developing the drawing tonally. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this will be a “high-keyed” drawing by focusing on the lightest half of the tonal range, from white to about 50-percent gray. This means that you will have to gradually and selectively develop the darker areas of your subject.

By pushing most of the tones toward the light end of the tonal spectrum, notice how you can create the illusion of a dark tree by only shading the tree to a mid-tone (gray). It appears to be dark because it's surrounded by so many light tones.

This is another example of how each area of the picture influences the way the rest of the picture is seen.

Building on what you have learned in Chapter 5, you can establish patterns of light and shadow throughout your entire drawing. In this image, notice how quickly a sense of atmosphere and space are created using just basic light and shadow shapes.



After more tonal development, we have placed a few darker accents in our composition. These dark accents help to stress the lightness and airiness of the drawing, by making the light areas appear even lighter.



TIP

Recognize Tonal Differences

Because this drawing is rendered in a small range of tones, the changes between tones are subtle. Achieving the subtle differences between tones is easier if you smooth out the graphite with a tissue or a paper towel.

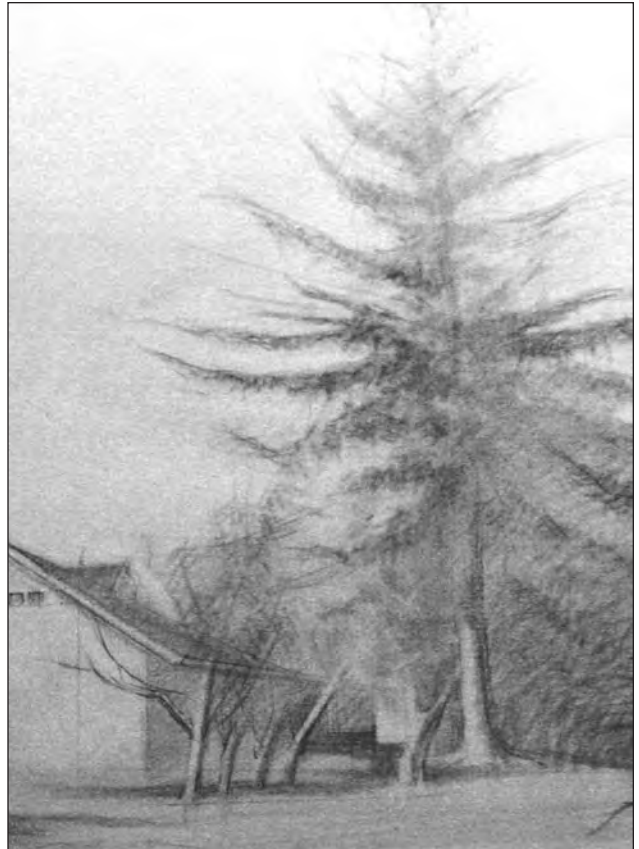
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Drawing Demonstration: A Barn in Two-Point Perspective *(continued)*

In this stage, more detail is included. Always check to make sure that these elements conform to the perspective that you have already established. It is highly recommended that you use a long straight-edge to draw all of the horizontal lines to their respective vanishing points to ensure accuracy.



In these images, you get a clearer idea of how the illusion of reality is developing. It isn't developed through the use of countless details, but through an approximation of the various tonal relationships between all of the elements in the drawing. The realism is also brought about through accuracy in the drawing.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Draw a Barn in Two-Point Perspective *(continued)*

Now that all of the large forms are in their correct perspective and look solid and lit, it's time to give the drawing a sense of completion. Adding the subtle nuances in tone and incidental details in each area imparts a sense of texture. Notice how breaking up the large area of tone in our drawing that represents the grass, by drawing some individual clumps of grass in a few areas, begins to create a sense of focus; it also helps the illusion of dimension by bringing the foreground closer to the viewer.



TIP

As discussed in Chapter 6, be careful not to add too much detail to your drawing. By not adding a lot of detail, you will give your drawing a more natural quality. Remember that the human eye actually sees a small area of focused detail at any given time. If, however, you like your drawings to look like a photograph, as though the subject is being seen through a camera lens and not a human eye, then add as much detail as you like.

Here is the finished drawing. The addition of some detail and texture gives a sense of completion to the drawing. Special care is taken to not overmodel the areas of detail. If the light areas had been punctuated with darker detail marks that were too dark, then the feeling of light flooding the area would be lost. A good example of this is in the vertical slats of wood siding on the barn. They only have to be subtly indicated to explain the nature of the structure to the viewer.

The best way to test whether the details that you're adding to your drawing are either working or hindering the work is to periodically step back at least 10 feet from your drawing. If it jumps out at you too much, it's either too darkly or crisply drawn, or the accuracy of the perspective is incorrect.

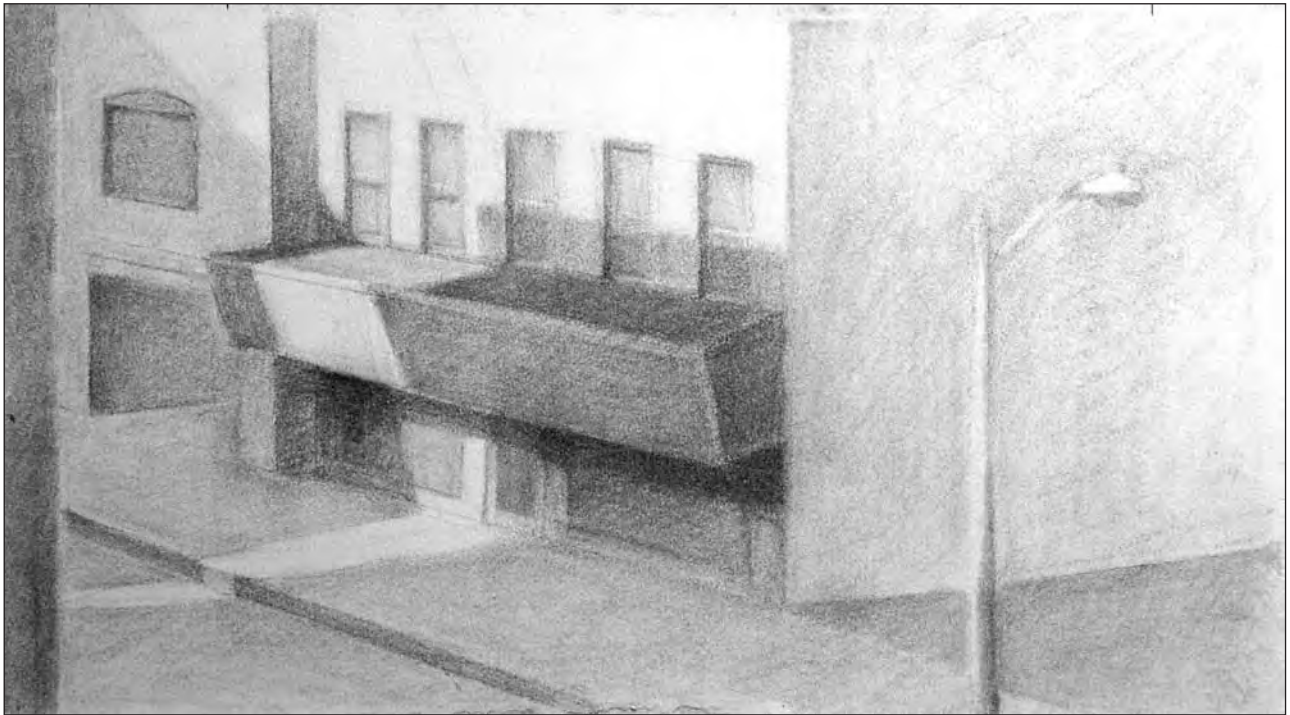


Stowe Barn, by Dean Fisher

Gallery: Two-Point Perspectives

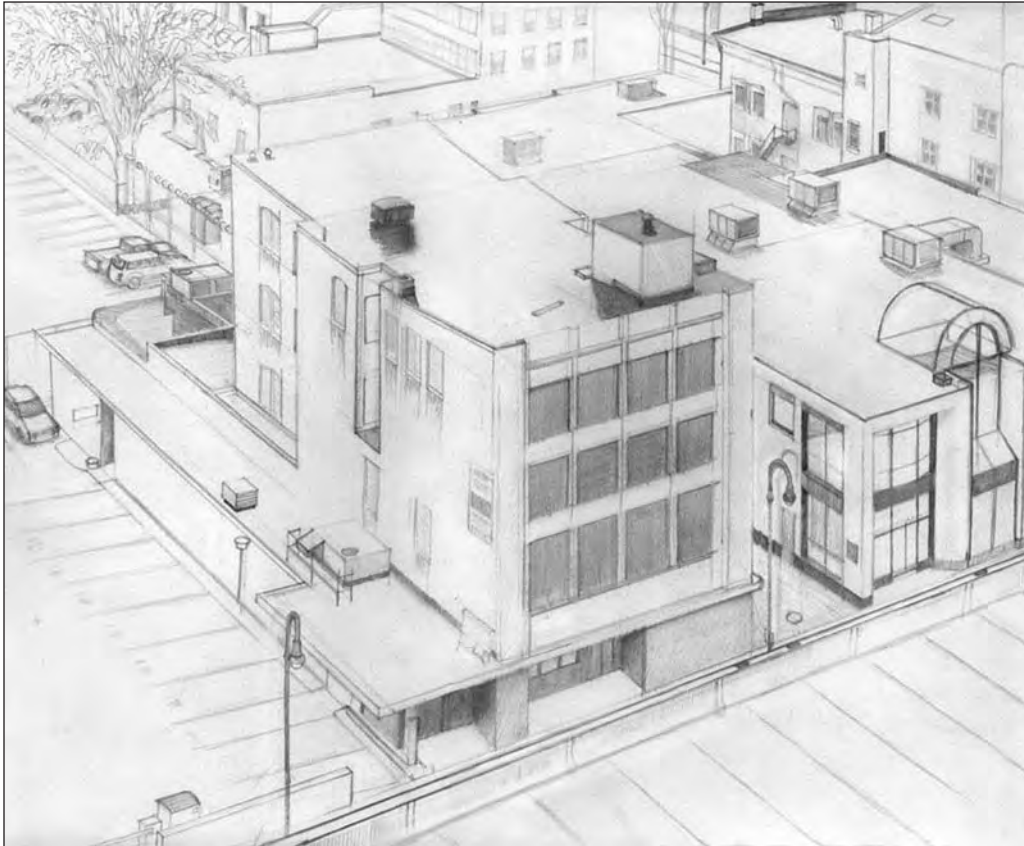
In this gallery of drawings, you will find several of the many ways that two-point perspective can be used to create very interesting drawings. As an exercise to sharpen your understanding of the principles of two-point perspective, place a large sheet of tracing paper over each of the examples and construct a perspective diagram, as discussed on page 100.

In this diffuse, mysterious urban landscape, the artist has added to the sense of ambiguity through the use of the two diverging roads going off to each side of the paper into an unknown space. Adding to this feeling is the driveway that enters the building on the left, which also looks empty and undefined.



Afternoon on Crown, by Constance LaPalombara, courtesy of the artist

In this extremely precise, two-point perspective drawing of an aerial view of a city, the artist has created a crisp and clear rendering through the use of very defined lines and shapes. The extensive use of the white of the paper adds to this feeling of clarity.



Building on Orange Street, by artist Josh Gaetjen, courtesy of the artist

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Gallery: Two-Point Perspectives *(continued)*

This is a beautiful pen and sepia study for a painting. The use of two-point perspective in this work is subtly and effectively used. Beginning with the rug on the floor, which is placed at an angle at the bottom of the drawing to put it in two-point perspective, an arrow has been created. The arrow is a device to lead the viewer into the work. The box on the table is an important element for this theme because it is also placed in two-point perspective and is seen from above to accentuate its volume with the figure reaching into its mysterious depths.



Pandora, by Justin Wiest, courtesy of the artist

In this drawing, which is a study for a portrait of a young boy, the architectural forms are in two-point perspective. These forms are being used as a device to help carve out a three-dimensional space in the picture, which enhances the form of the figure in the composition.



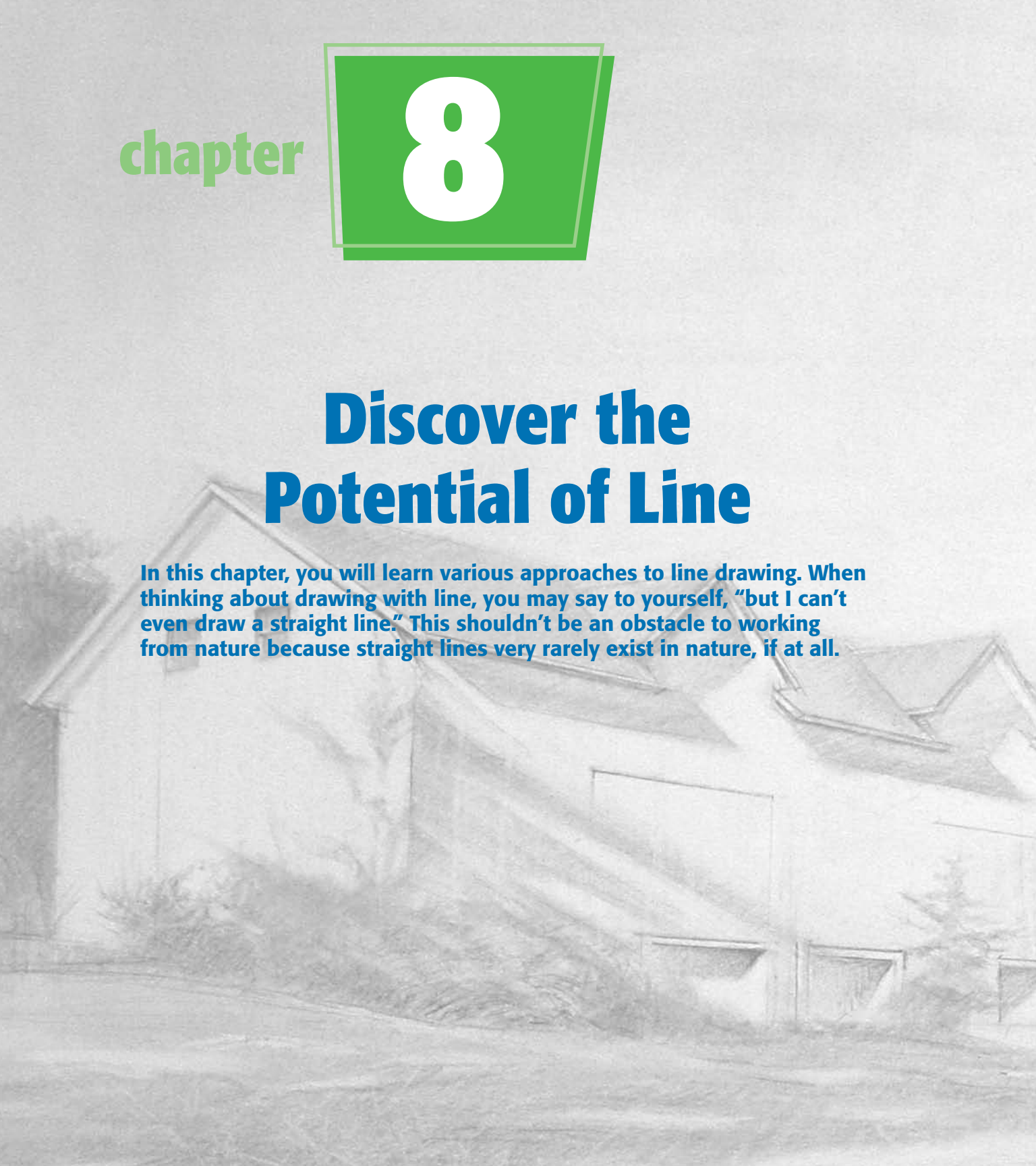
Portrait Study, by Jack Montmeat, courtesy of the artist

chapter

8

Discover the Potential of Line

In this chapter, you will learn various approaches to line drawing. When thinking about drawing with line, you may say to yourself, “but I can’t even draw a straight line.” This shouldn’t be an obstacle to working from nature because straight lines very rarely exist in nature, if at all.





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Introduction to Line Drawing

Based on the archaeological evidence, it appears that approximately 25,000 to 30,000 years ago, line drawing was one of the visual ways our earliest ancestors employed to record aspects of the world that they inhabited. To anyone who has seen images of cave drawings, in books or in the actual caves in southern France and Spain, it is clear that these individuals were skilled. These line drawings are pure examples of artistic expression.

Practice to Develop Your Style

Humans perceive reality in terms of relationships between shapes of tone. The junction where one shape of tone meets another is evident as the edge of an object meeting another edge. Early humans perceived this and in their desire to give representation to this phenomenon of the edge of one object meeting another edge, visually, they drew a line. With a leap of creativity, early humans invented a language for a visual shorthand, which to this day is still practiced by artists in a multitude of ways. It remains one of the most expressive, varied, and disciplined ways of drawing.

There are so many ways that artists have used line drawing that an entire book could be devoted to displaying examples of them, yet the book would only scratch the surface of the subject. In this chapter, you will find a number of examples that are quite different from each other and that are intended to start you working with and thinking about line drawing.

The more you practice to develop your skills and experiment with different methods of line drawing as an artist, the more you will be able to see your own personal drawing “signature” begin to emerge in your drawing. This is a natural process and shouldn’t be forced; otherwise, you run the risk of hindering the learning process and developing a contrived style in your work. If you work diligently, with an open mind and a spirit of exploration of study, you will find that new surprises will materialize in your work as you evolve technically and artistically. This is what it means to work as an artist.

Leonardo da Vinci’s great technical skills are evident in this copy of “The Head of Saint Philip”. He has achieved the illusion of a human head in profile with sparse shading and one dominant line. The majority of the drawing consists of this single line of varying thickness that describes the profile of the young man. The minimal amount of shading gives volume to the head, but the accuracy and control of line are responsible for this very natural and lifelike portrait.



*Copy after Leonardo da Vinci's
Head of Saint Philip, by Dean Fisher*

In this section, you can view examples of line drawings. Each drawing has an explanation that describes just some of the qualities of line that are possible. A close-up on a portion of each image is also provided. The quality of line that is achieved is the result of many factors that came together to create an image that is a unified drawing representing a focus of *artistic intent*. This artistic intent is the blending of what feeling or idea the artist wanted to communicate originally, with the technical means to clearly convey it.

Aside from the personality of the artist and what the artist wanted to say about the subject, there are other factors that helped to determine the outcome of the work. One of them was how much time the artist had to complete the work. For example, an artist has to work much faster when drawing a horse, which is in continuous motion, compared to a tree, which is planted firmly in the ground. The amount of time a drawing takes to complete greatly affects the energy and strength of the line. If you look closely at a drawing, you can get a sense of the speed with which the line was created.

Another factor that determines a drawing's outcome is what materials were used in its creation. Chapter 2 introduced examples of a variety of types of marks, and showed how the texture of the paper and the type of drawing medium used determine the quality of the mark that is made.

Over time, as you experiment with different materials and develop your drawing skills, you will find yourself gravitating toward the drawing media and papers that best suit your personality as an artist.



Children on a bus, by Dean Fisher



Children on a bus, detail

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Examples of Line Drawing *(continued)*

This is an example of a continuous line drawn with a black ball-point pen. In this type of drawing exercise, the pen (or pencil) is never lifted off the paper, and the goal is to capture the feeling of the pose rather than the details. A close-up of the drawing on the right shows how even the smaller shapes of the figure are drawn to indicate expression more than accurate representation.

As an exercise, create a continuous line drawing—first a still life and then, as you gain confidence, try to draw a landscape or figure.



Figure Study, by Dean Fisher



Figure Study, detail

These are rapid pencil drawings of a horse in motion. The artist had to work quickly as the horse changed its position every few seconds; as a result, the line is forceful and fast. The line changes from thin and light to heavier and dark, creating a sense of energy and movement. As you draw moving objects, you may notice similarities appearing in your lines.



Study of Horses, by Dean Fisher



Study of Horses, detail

In this example, notice how this heavier “searching” line imparts a completely different feeling from the two previous examples. It appears that, after establishing the gesture of the pose, The artist worked around the figure gradually, in short segments, refining the marks to make them more descriptive of the model. Also notice how the repeated double or triple line conveys the illusion of a figure in motion.

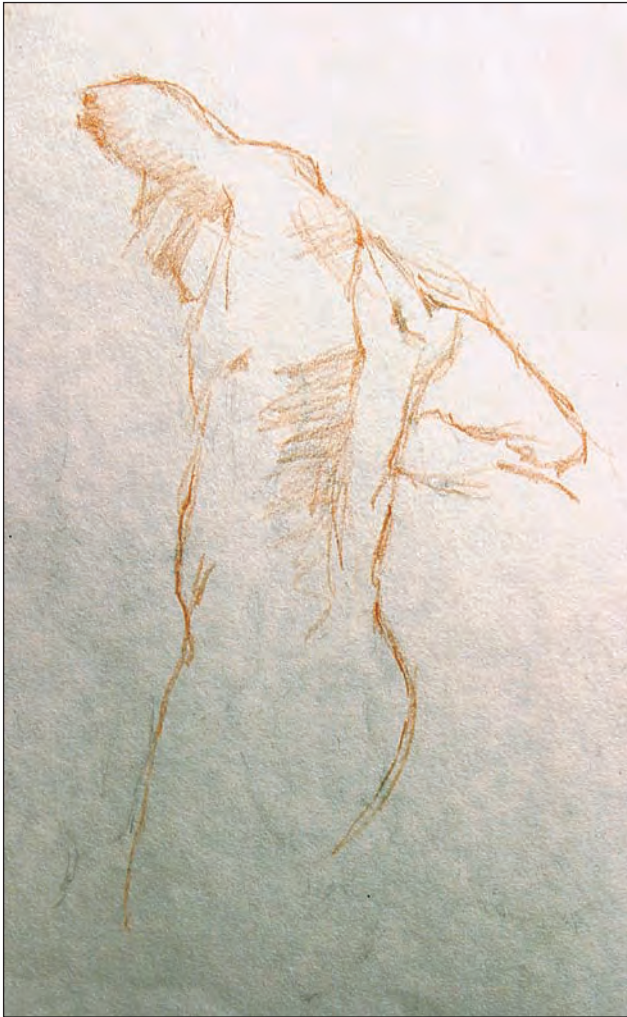


Figure Study, by J. S. Robinson

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Examples of Line Drawing *(continued)*

In this drawing, there is a combination of long fluid lines that accentuate the slightly elongated proportions of the subject, and shorter hatched lines that often follow the direction of the form to indicate the shadows. There is a range from very thin, crisp lines drawn with the sharpened tip of a pencil, to lines that are broader and softly drawn with the side of the pencil point. This softer line quality can be seen mostly in the hair, and helps to convey its soft texture (see the close-up image on the right).



Portrait Study, by Dean Fisher



Portrait Study, detail

This figure is drawn using sepia conté crayon. The drawing has a beautiful, light fluid line that is punctuated by a number of carefully placed darker accents. These dark accents serve two functions: First, they indicate deeper recesses of the form and in contrast allow other forms to emerge. Second, they help to create a rhythm in the drawing, based on their spacing from each other and the variety of sizes leading the viewer's eye around the drawing in an orchestrated fashion. The orange-brown color of the conté crayon imparts a feeling of warmth and light to the drawing.



Horizontal, by J. S. Robinson



Horizontal, detail

In this charcoal drawing, the figure has a visual impact, and its dynamism is created through the use of decisively placed heavy lines and marks. In some instances, the point of the charcoal is used, and in others, the line is drawn with the edge of the point of the charcoal stick. To indicate shadow, the side of the piece of charcoal, or charcoal stick, is used to different degrees of lightness or darkness, depending on how softly or firmly the charcoal stick is pressed against the paper. Of course, all of these confident marks have an effect because they are placed on a sound *armature*. Consequent upon this, the gesture is very believable and natural looking.



Figure Study, by Frank Bruckmann,
courtesy of the artist

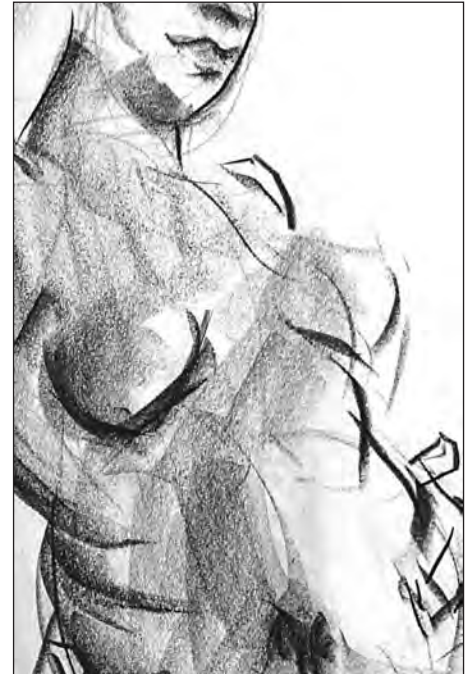


Figure Study, detail

Irregular Objects as Still Life

In the previous chapters, the objects used for drawing exercises were not overly complex forms. In this chapter, you will be introduced to irregular shapes, often referred to as *organic* forms. These are objects that possess shapes that don't conform to the geometric forms (spheres, cylinders, and cubes), and that have a more random appearance.

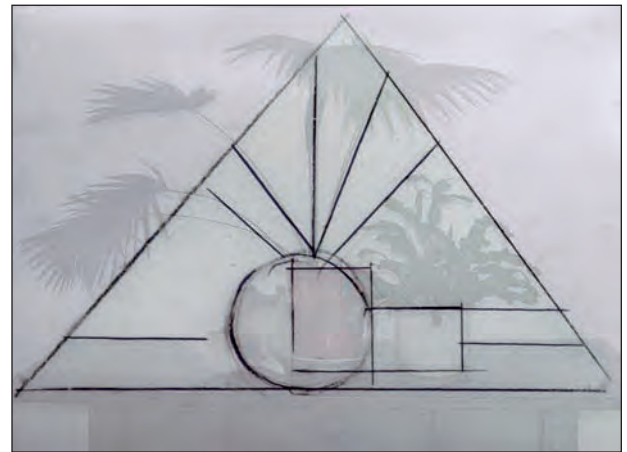
As you can see, a beautiful palm was chosen as the main subject. It has very elegant, graceful lines and shapes, and perfectly lends itself to a line drawing exercise (see pages 132–137). The other objects in the still life setup—the Christmas cactus, seashell, and broken pot—are other examples of organic forms.



You can consider this still-life arrangement as organic by nature because each object doesn't outwardly conform to a large geometric form. However, when you look closely, there are a number of unifying rhythms to be found in the setup, which then tie all of the objects together.

Once the drawing exercise begins on page 132, you should attempt to create a rhythm in your own drawing, based on what you find in your still life.

As well as a rhythm that links the objects together, it is also possible to impose some geometric forms on the arrangement as a whole. In the diagram on the right, a triangle and some rectangles (few shapes) have been placed over the still life setup to indicate some geometric forms. When attempting to create a unified composition, it is useful to break the subject down into its basic geometric forms. It is also helpful, when establishing the proportion of one object to another, to simplify what you're observing into basic squares, rectangles, triangles, and circles.



Using a Grid for Accuracy

Because of the complexity of accurately drawing the objects in this still life setup (see page 126) and their relationship to each other, this would be a good time to introduce the *grid* as a tool to assist you.

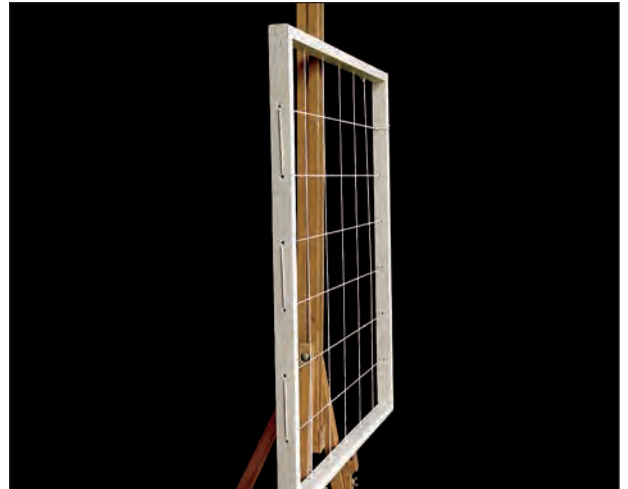
This is a great system for beginners, or for those individuals who struggle with proportions, to achieve a very high level of accuracy in their work. The grid is a great way to initially “map out” the forms of your subject. You can also use the grid throughout the entire drawing process to help you find even the smallest of shapes and their relationship to each other.

While this may seem to be an overly mechanical method of drawing for some, it is a great way to begin training your eye to see shapes. As you become a more trained artist, you most likely won't feel the need to use the grid the entire time, or you can just use it as a way to check for errors in your drawing.



This section provides the instructions for constructing your own grid. You can also purchase a wooden picture frame or artist's canvas stretchers for this purpose if you don't have the tools to build the frame.

- 1 To make the grid pictured on the previous page, construct a simple 28" x 20" wooden frame from a 1" x 2" piece of wood cut to length. Be sure that the corners are perfectly square when joining these pieces together.
- 2 Drill $\frac{1}{8}$ " holes every 4" on all four sides of the frame. You'll need to be accurate in your measurements because otherwise, the lines of the grid will be off.
- 3 Run string or heavy thread through all of the vertical holes to form the horizontal lines, and then run a separate thread or string through all of the horizontal holes to form the vertical lines. It's essential that the string be pulled taut to accurately create 4" squares.



- 4 To use the grid, you can clamp it to the table in front of the still life, making sure that the frame is vertical from both the front and the side.

Note: Before you attempt to clamp the grid to the table, make sure that the tabletop is level; this makes it much easier to place the grid level and vertical in front of your still life.

TIP

Alternatively, you can draw the 4" grid of squares on a transparent piece of acetate with a black marker and then staple it to the wooden frame. This might be easier to construct, but the drawback is that the glare of light on the acetate might be distracting while observing the still life through it.



How to Use Your Grid

You can use this method to draw your still life's actual size. If you would like to draw your picture at less than life size, then smaller squares can suffice as long as you measure them accurately.



After you place your grid in front of your still life setup, carefully measure and then draw 4" squares on your paper to mimic the squares on your grid. The goal is to have a proportional grid on your paper to match the one in front of your still life.

The photo above shows several squares from the grid, which demonstrates how effectively this tool breaks down the still life into fragments or small frames of the entire setup. By focusing on the placement of the shapes of the palm *frond* (leaf) within each square, the grid enables you to see the subject as a series of abstract shapes. This helps you to render a more accurate and sensitive depiction of the palm frond. In effect, you are actually zooming in on the plant and scrutinizing each area to assist you in drawing what you see, rather than what you think the plant should look like.

It is also very important that once you begin drawing, you should stand in the exact same spot the entire time when measuring your drawing through the grid (just like the other forms of measuring, which are discussed in Chapter 4). Any slight change in where you are standing alters the view of the still life in relation to the grid. To ensure that you stand or sit in the same place each time, you can use masking tape to mark the position of your feet or the chair that you're sitting in.

As you continue to draw the shapes that appear in each square, the entire subject gradually emerges and should be in complete proportion to reality.



While you are looking at the *positive* shapes of the leaf within the squares, you should also look at the *negative* shapes that are formed around the leaf within the shape of each square. It is often easier to “find” the positive shapes of the objects that you are drawing while focusing on the negative shapes.

The yellow color around the leaves indicates what some of these negative shapes look like in the setup, as seen through the grid. This is what the drawing looks like in the initial “mapping-out” of the forms of the palm frond.

Notice that the first shapes are generalizations of the complex frond. After you establish the overall shape, it is much easier to find the shape and position of the small, spiky forms of the frond.



TIP

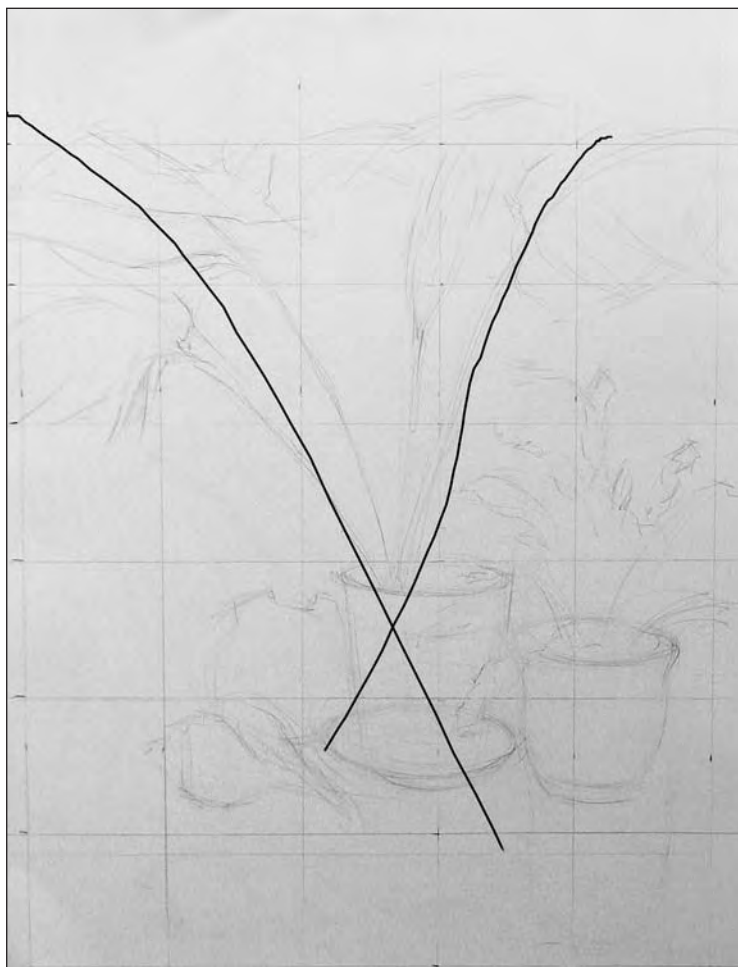
Make sure that you draw your initial lines very lightly so that you can easily erase any mistakes.

Block In the Setup

With the still life setup of the plants, the seashell, and the pot, and the grid clamped vertically to the table in front of the objects, you can proceed to “block in” the entire drawing.

Capture the Gesture

While you continue to focus on the shapes that fall within each square, look at the entire shape of each object and how they relate to each other. The plants especially have very beautiful, sweeping forms, and at this time, you should try to capture the gesture of each plant. The *gesture* of a tree, plant, or figure is the general overall movement of the main forms; this can usually be represented by a couple of long, flowing lines. Notice that every plant, tree, or figure has a unique gesture, which is a key quality to capture in your work. It is one of the main things that give the subjects you draw a sense of believability and character.





In this stage of the drawing, the artist mapped out all of the objects in the setup and their relation to each other. Be sure to check each square on the grid to ensure your drawing's accuracy.



At this stage, while still using the grid, you can begin to refine the shapes of the objects, attempting to make each line descriptive of each object. In this example, some lines were erased and redrawn, as they became too heavy in the earlier stages.

The artist also varied the thicknesses of the lines, using a heavier, darker line to give the illusion of objects emerging in the drawing, and a lighter, more delicate line for those areas that needed to spatially recede. The artist was also beginning to develop the design of the drawing. While looking at the entire still life setup, the artist searched for a rhythm of shapes and an internal structure between the objects. There are lines that flow from one form into another, which the artist began to exploit for the sake of creating an interesting pattern of marks that keep the eye of the viewer moving in an interesting way throughout the drawing.

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Map It Out (continued)

At this stage of the drawing, the artist chose to remove the grid from the table in order to view the still life setup unobstructed and in its entirety. The artist was confident that the proportions of the objects were accurate and placed on the table using correct perspective. You'll notice that most of the corresponding grid lines on the paper have been erased; this is because the artist felt that they were no longer necessary.

The overall design of the drawing was defined by the lightening or de-emphasizing of lines. The artist wanted some of the lines to remain in the background and strengthened those lines that gave a sense of form to the objects and the drawing's composition. The shapes of the objects have also been refined, including more of the details in the palm fronds and specific characteristics pertaining to each object.



At this point, it's important to be very selective about what you add to and eliminate from the drawing. Here, the artist almost completely focused on the rhythm of shapes throughout the picture. With a little shading in the shell, the plant, the interior of the pot, as well as the central vertical frond of the palm plant, more strength was added to the design, which also enhanced the drawing spatially. There are many ways of shading a line drawing, some of which you have seen in the various examples shown earlier in this chapter.

In order to retain a consistency of technique, the artist chose to use thin, parallel lines placed closely together which follow the form.

**TIP****Lighten an Area**

Inevitably, there will be areas of your line drawing that you'll want to lighten, without completely erasing what you have drawn. To do this, you can take your clean, kneaded eraser and blot the areas that you feel are too dark. You can also lightly rub the eraser over the lines to take away some graphite.

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Map It Out

(continued)

Near the final stages of the line drawing, the artist continued the same process from the previous step—lightening some areas considerably to allow them to recede and form a less important role in the drawing. The eye of the viewer is naturally attracted to the contrast that was created between the darker lines and marks in the drawing and the white paper. Because of this, the dark accents and heavier lines play a key role in directing the path the viewer takes in the work.



Still Life in Line, by Dean Fisher

Of course, it is always difficult to decide when a work is finished; this is undoubtedly one of the most difficult aspects of being an artist. You may feel the work is finished one day, and then a week later, you may see several things that you'd like to change.

Time is always the best test to determine whether a work is finished or not. (Perhaps if you're working with a model, they may cooperate with your need for additional time!) When you return to the work a number of times and you are at a loss as to what you can do to make any improvements, then that is when it's complete.



Variations on a Palm Frond

In this section, you can see four different approaches to drawing a portion of the palm frond. These are only a few of the many ways that you can approach this subject using line drawing. Notice how each of the examples creates an entirely different effect from the others.

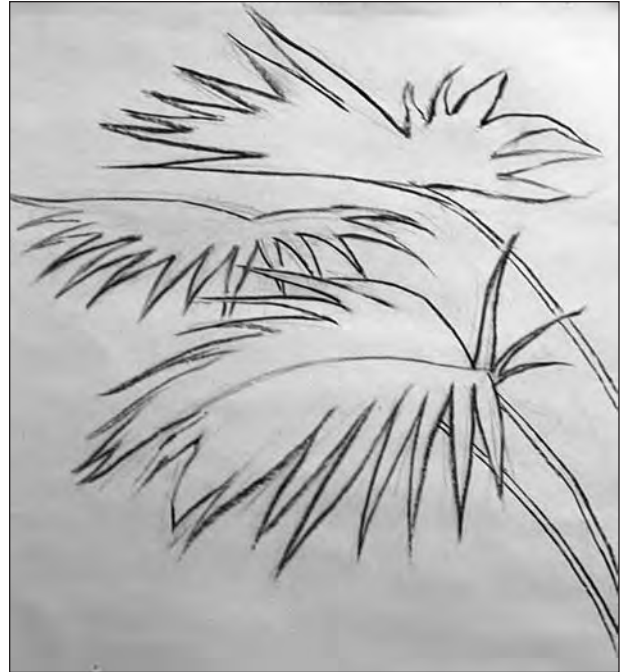
This drawing was made with a thin, black ball-point pen. There was a conscious effort to keep the pen on the paper, with one unbroken uniform line, while drawing each individual palm frond. The pattern of positive and negative shapes shown here was created by the overall forms of the leaves, rather than by attempting to precisely describe each form. When attempting a drawing such this, you can very lightly draw the object with an H or 2H pencil to give yourself a guide to use.



This example was drawn on a lightly textured paper with medium-hard charcoal. The artist wanted to draw the shapes of the palm frond quickly and energetically, with a fair amount of variation, from very dark and heavy to lighter and thinner. The shapes of the palm frond lent themselves to energetic, sweeping lines in this drawing. It is often the subject that sparks the idea to experiment with a new technique.



This drawing was intended to make a bold statement in almost a graphic way with its continuous heavy, black charcoal line. Because of its uniform line, it is perceived in a flatter, more two-dimensional way than the drawings that have a more varied line. The strength of the line and the emphasis on the spiky shapes of the palm fronds give the drawing an aggressive appearance.



This line drawing was executed with a 2H pencil on lightly textured drawing paper. It was drawn with repetitive light, sweeping, gestural lines. The artist consciously tried not to find the correct line the first time, but rather to approach the correct form through a succession of lines. Notice how the numerous gentle lines impart a feeling of movement. The initial lines that were drawn to capture the overall shape of the fronds were left, as they enhanced this feeling of movement.



Palm Frond Studies, by Dean Fisher

Gallery: Line Drawings

In this still-life line drawing, the artist used a fairly consistent, heavy line throughout. However, on careful observation, you can see subtle breaks in the lines, as well as a number of darker, accentuated lines. On many of the openings of the objects, the far side of the ellipse was drawn more lightly, along with a few carefully placed interruptions in the lines. This gives the effect of the shape receding in space. Notice that the reflections were also drawn more lightly; this is an effective device that separates the solid objects from their mirror images.



Containers #2, by Eileen Eder, courtesy of artist

In this drawing of an elderly woman, there is a unity created, with the darker, rhythmic lines representing the outline of the face and features. The lighter, fluid lines represent the recesses and lines of the woman's face. The quality of the line is skillfully varied for visual interest, as well as describing the structure of a human head. The top portion of the head diminishes into the whiteness of the paper, which gives the effect of light falling over the form. You can almost imagine the parts of the head that weren't drawn due to the accuracy and sensitive observation of the portions that were rendered.



Portrait of an Elderly Woman, by Shell Fisher, courtesy of the artist

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Gallery: Line Drawings *(continued)*

In this deftly executed figure composition, Rubens has masterfully rendered a scene of a group of figures in motion by using a flurry of lines of varying thicknesses. This was most likely a preparatory sketch for a painting, with the artist working from memory. Notice the complete unity between the quality and direction of lines, the gestures of the figures, and the composition. Because of the swiftness of the line, it is as if the drawing was blown across the page in a moment. Notice the faintly drawn figures in the distance, and the great effect of atmosphere and space that is created.



The Feast of Herod, by Peter Paul Rubens, © Cleveland Museum of Art

In this economically drawn rendering of a reclining figure, the artist has used so few lines that you can almost count them. However, because of their proper placement and linear accuracy, the illusion is successful. In most cases, the darker lines are placed in areas where the artist wanted the form to emerge, but a dark accent can also be used in an area that recedes, such as the recess of the right armpit. Contrasted with the light falling on the top of the torso, this dark accent, skillfully placed, gives a great three-dimensionality to the form.



Reclining Nude, by Silvius Krecu, courtesy of the artist

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The Gallery: Line Drawings *(continued)*

A wiggly, almost trembling line was used throughout this still life drawing, which animates the objects drawn and gives them great character. There is a clear feeling for the speed with which the drawing was executed. The similar line, which changes from light to quite dark and heavy, is used to create a different local color or tone in each object, and at the same time, it literally ties all of the objects together.



Bottles and Vases, by Constance LaPalombara, courtesy of the artist

In this sensitively drawn back pose, the artist used very simple and economic means to draw a convincing figure. There is a subtle rhythm to the line, with carefully placed darks. Of special note is the darker line used to draw the left hip and pelvis area, contrasted directly above it with the more lightly drawn rib cage and side of the torso. Because of the clear differences in line here, the rib cage tucks neatly behind the hip and pelvis. The three deftly shaded areas of the drawing greatly enhance the solidity of the figure.



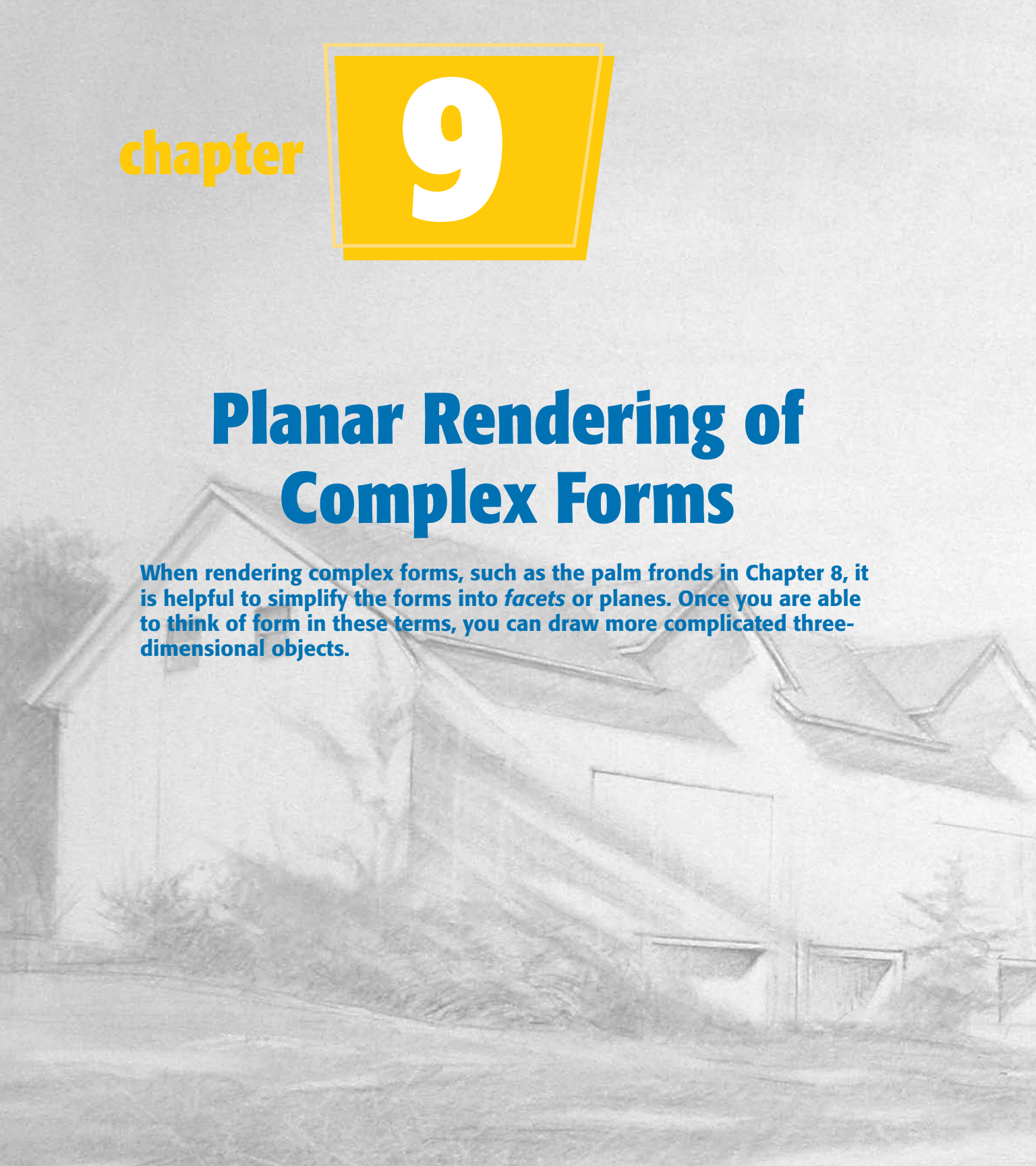
Resting Figure, by J. S. Robinson


chapter

9

Planar Rendering of Complex Forms

When rendering complex forms, such as the palm fronds in Chapter 8, it is helpful to simplify the forms into *facets* or planes. Once you are able to think of form in these terms, you can draw more complicated three-dimensional objects.





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Interpret Form Through Planes

The subjects that we have been rendering so far have included objects that for the most part can be analyzed in terms of basic geometric forms such as the sphere, the cube, or the cylinder. In this section, you will be introduced to some concepts that will help you render your own organic or irregular shaped objects in tone.

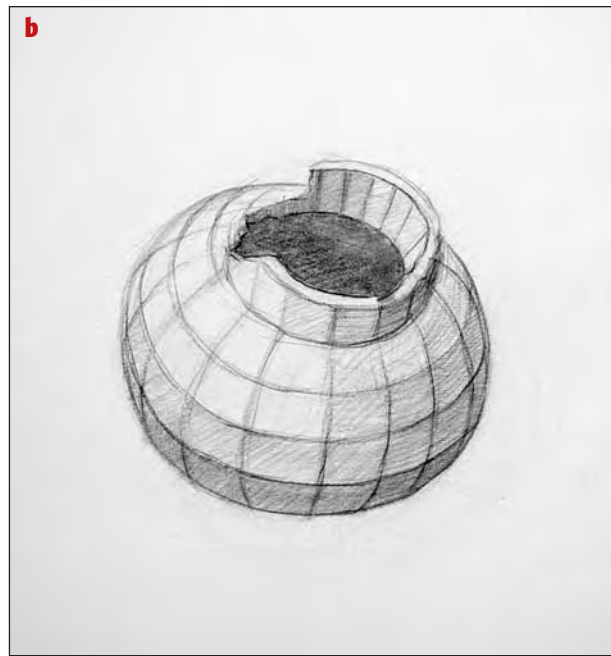
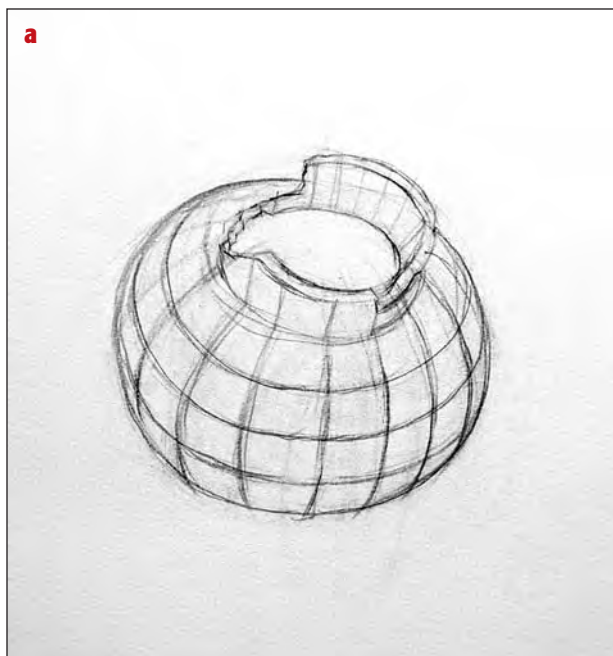
The Facets of Form

As we lead up to drawing the human head and figure in subsequent chapters, which can be intimidating subjects for the student because of their complexity, here are some ideas that will help you break down objects into simplified facets. Notice how the addition of gradated tone impacts a greater level of realism to the object.

As an exercise, try rendering basic objects like the pot pictured below as a series of planes. As you gain confidence, move on to more complicated forms such as a shell, plant, hand or even a human face.

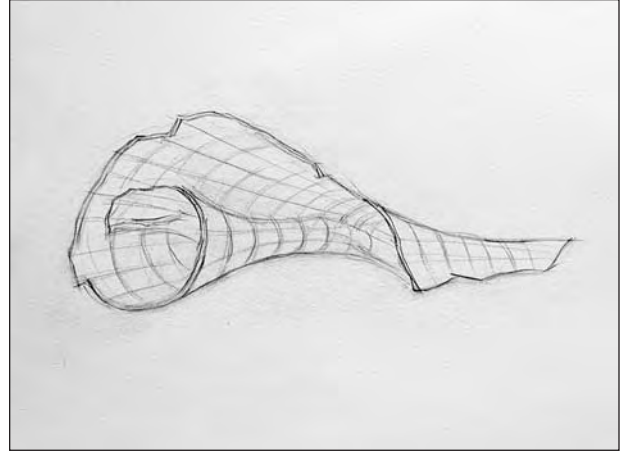
As seen in the examples in this section, you can break any object down into simplified *facets* or planes. You can see in this drawing of the pot (a) that, just by drawing the lines that indicate the planes, the illusion of three-dimensionality becomes much stronger.

If you consider the nature of the form that you want to draw and the direction of the light source, you can create a series of planes. These planes can depict the form as increments of gradated tone across the surface of an object, as in this shaded version of the faceted pot (b).

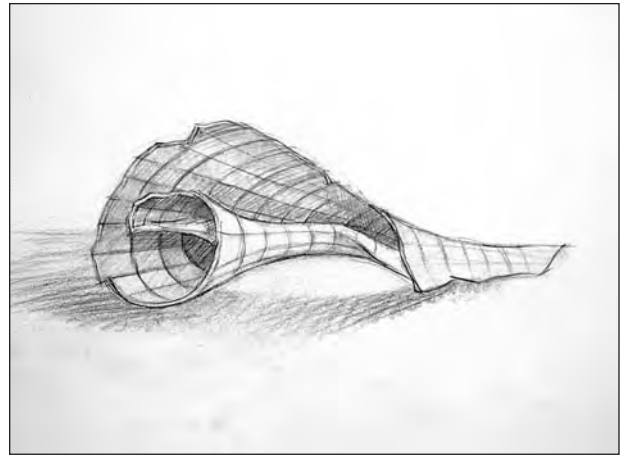


Study, by Dean Fisher

In this example, the form of the seashell is more complex than the pot. With careful observation and application of the methods of measuring that you learned in the previous chapters, drawing these types of objects won't be too difficult. The planes that follow the form greatly enhance the shell's three-dimensionality.



After shading is added to the faceted drawing of the shell, the sense of form becomes even stronger. With the facets following the outline of the shell as a guide, a strong directional light source with extreme light and shadow isn't necessary to render the form.



Study, by Dean Fisher

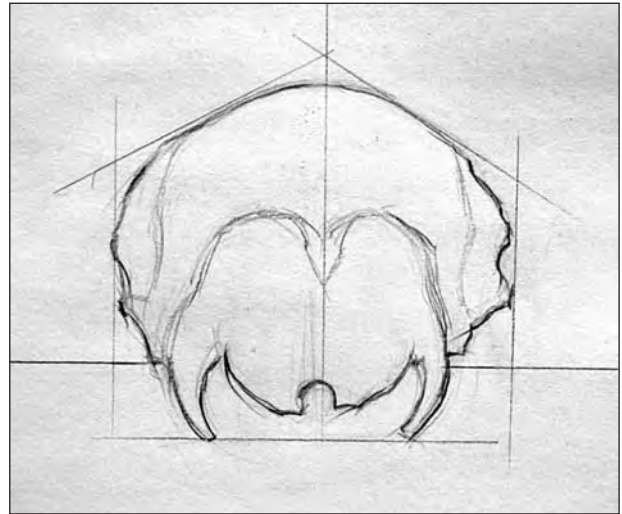
TIP

Remember, breaking down objects into facets or planes is a simplification of reality that will help you understand the nature of forms. As you gain more drawing experience, your interpretation and rendering of objects will become more intuitive and require less analysis.

Cross-Sections of Form

Another method to analyze the planes of a complex form is to imagine a vertical cross-section of the form. When you have a three-dimensional understanding of an object, the rendition of the object is more convincing.

Imagine slicing an object into vertical sections. This would create cross-sections of the object when you view these slices from the sides. Instead of actually slicing up the object before you begin to draw, you can obtain a conceptual understanding of an object's cross-section by moving around the object and studying the object from various angles.



Study, by Dean Fisher

In this diagram, the entire deer skull is drawn with a series of cross-sections from front to back. This is the angle from which the skull will be drawn in the section, “Drawing Demonstration: A Palm and a Deer Skull,” on page 156.

You can see in this illustration how important it is to be able to view an object from all sides before drawing. This is one reason why viewing your subject in real life is so crucial to creating convincing, realistic images. Photographs only give you a “flat” image of your subject, which demonstrates the shortcomings of working from photographs.

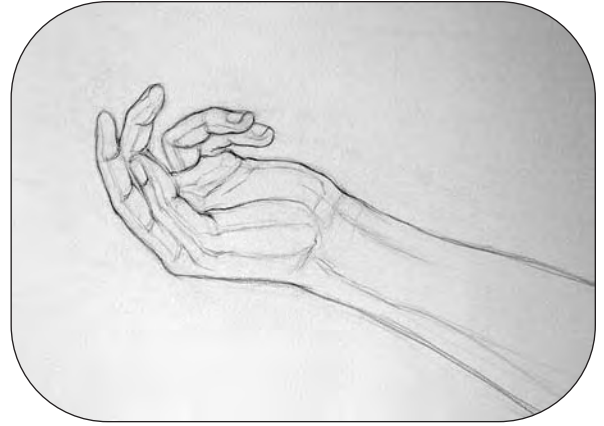
At the beginning stages of your drawing, try to draw cross-sections to help you get a feeling for the topography of the object. If you draw cross-sections lightly, you’ll be able to erase them at a later stage of the drawing.



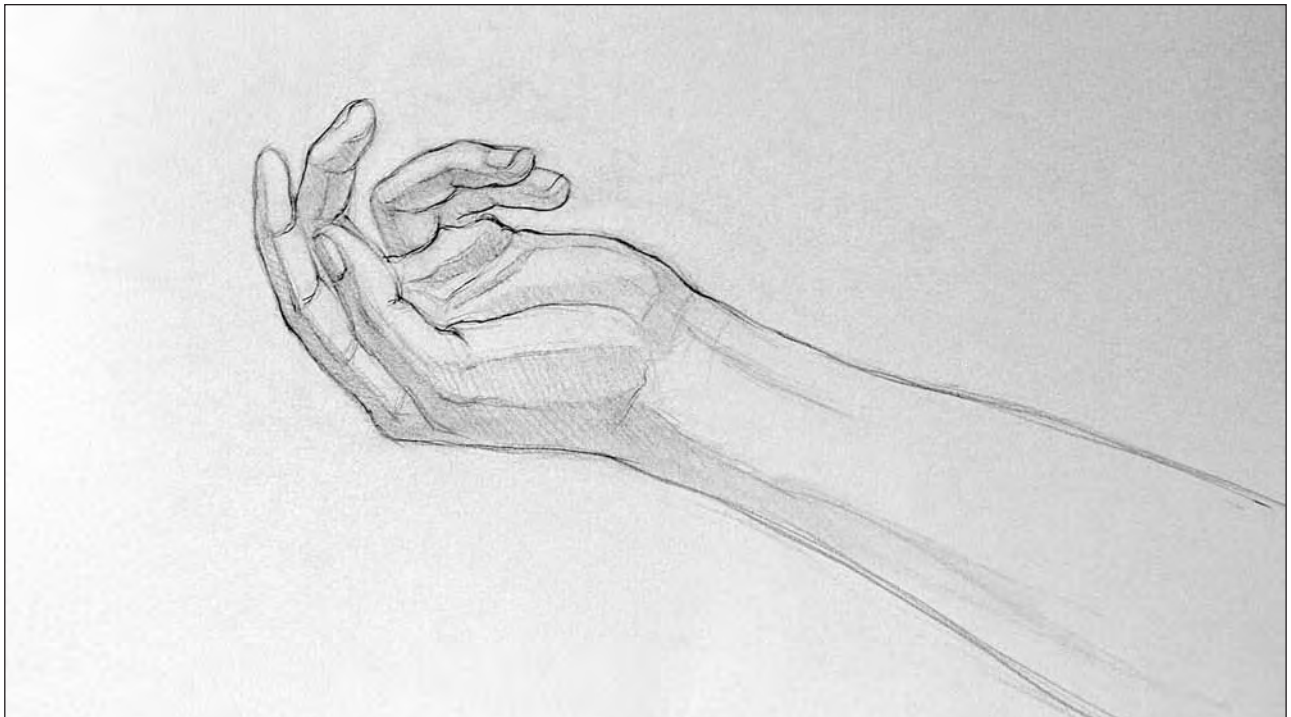
Study, by Dean Fisher

The Planes of the Hand

Up to this point, you have learned how to accurately draw different types of forms. To draw a human hand, you would also apply the same methods of measuring, including using the grid mentioned in Chapter 8. This method will show that the hand is also a series of shapes, just like other forms. You can use your own hand in this exercise.



At first glance, a hand might seem like a very irregular-shaped object, to which it is difficult to apply a form of logic. However, if you analyze the hand in terms of basic geometric forms, you will see that the palm and base of a hand can be thought of as a couple of rectangular blocks, and the fingers as more elongated rectangular blocks with joints. After the big planes of the hand are added to this drawing, you can get a feeling for the geometry of the hand. For more discussion on the human hand, refer to page 233.



Study, by Dean Fisher

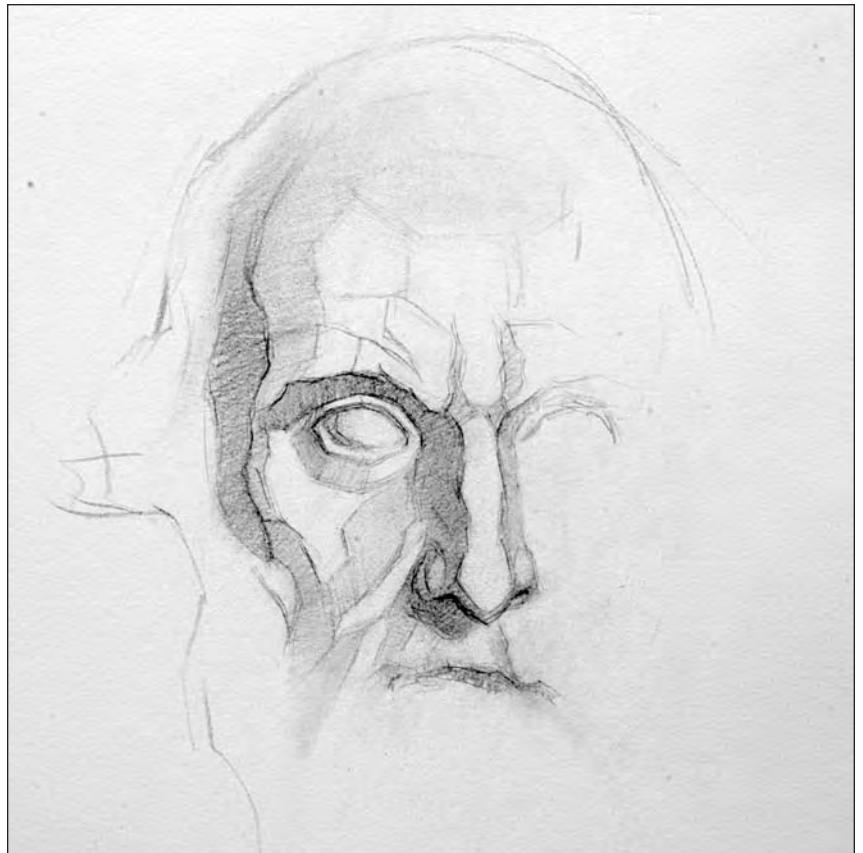
To draw the human head, you should follow the same approach as with other forms. It is also important to try to depersonalize the subject, if possible, at least in the initial stages of the drawing. You should look at the head as a series of shapes. In this drawing of a plaster cast replica of a nineteenth-century sculpture (see page 174), you should identify the large planes that fall within the overall shape of the head, rather than attempt to render its individual features.



After you establish the foundation of large planes, it is much easier to render the features, as you will have already constructed a place for them on the face.

Because of the great variety of angles of facial planes and the slight shift from one plane relative to the next, it is important to always consider the position of the light source in relation to the sitter (or in this case, the plaster cast). Being conscious of the angle and intensity of the light source to the various planes helps to make clear which planes of the head are receiving more or less light.

There is more information on drawing the human head in Chapter 11.



Study, by Dean Fisher

Choose Your Subject and Prepare Your Materials

In this demonstration on the planes of a subject, a palm and a deer skull have been chosen. This still life is viewed from a high vantage point in order to create a composition that fans out across most of the sheet of paper. This creates the opportunity to display the beautiful characteristics of the plant. Try to find similar, somewhat complex objects for your own setup.

The deer skull is a fascinating form to draw. This is the most complex object that we have drawn so far in this book, with its many shifts of form from one plane to the next and its considerable detail.

The palm has less obvious planes, and for that reason, it is difficult to find its internal structure. This will create the opportunity to give form to a complex object through simplifying it into basic geometric facets.



Let the Light Reveal the Planes

Planar Rendering of Complex Forms

chapter 9

Before you begin to draw, shine your light source on your still life from various angles. This will help you to find the various planes of your subject by revealing its intrinsic geometric structure.

The light in this photo is in a different position from the photo on the previous page. The form is revealed by the light in a very different way; it was especially difficult to see the planes within the shadow in the photo on the previous page, but in this example, the planes are clearly visible.



The palm, with its gently curving fronds, is a subject that is more difficult to break down into planes; nevertheless, the form can still be simplified into planes.



In this image, the light moves into another position so you can see that each of the strands that make up the frond have two separate surfaces, which creates a "V" shape.



Drawing Demonstration: A Palm and a Deer Skull

Using the image on page 154, the artist began this drawing on a new, un-toned piece of white drawing paper. Using an HB pencil to draw very light lines, the artist blocked in the large shapes of each form by establishing the proportions and placement of each object within the paper. As previously mentioned, this image is seen from a high vantage point, so that the sweeping forms of the palm fronds fan out across the paper.

Stage 1

This is a very crucial stage of the drawing, so use whatever method you feel will aid you in creating accurate shapes, placement, and proportions. When you draw your still life arrangement, you can use either the grid method or extensive measuring. Be sure to check the different angles within your objects.



Stage 2

At this stage, the artist continued to draw the different objects, while striving for precision in the shape of each element. The palm is extremely graceful and elegant, and so it's important that the proportions and gesture of the palm be correct; otherwise, those qualities won't be conveyed well. Capturing the gesture is really nothing more than recording the overall shape of each frond accurately, and then the curve of the stem as it comes off the frond. The artist also started to indicate some of the various planes within the frond. With the deer skull, the artist established the big forms as accurately as possible. This made "finding" the small shapes much easier as the drawing progressed.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**

Drawing Demonstration: A Palm and a Deer Skull *(continued)*

Stage 3

In this slightly cropped version of the drawing, you can see that the artist progressed in a logical fashion, by finding smaller shapes within the bigger shapes. However, the big shapes were further adjusted at the same time, which heightened the sense of naturalness and realism of the objects.

The various geometric planes of the skull were mapped out, enhancing the solidity of the form.



Stage 4

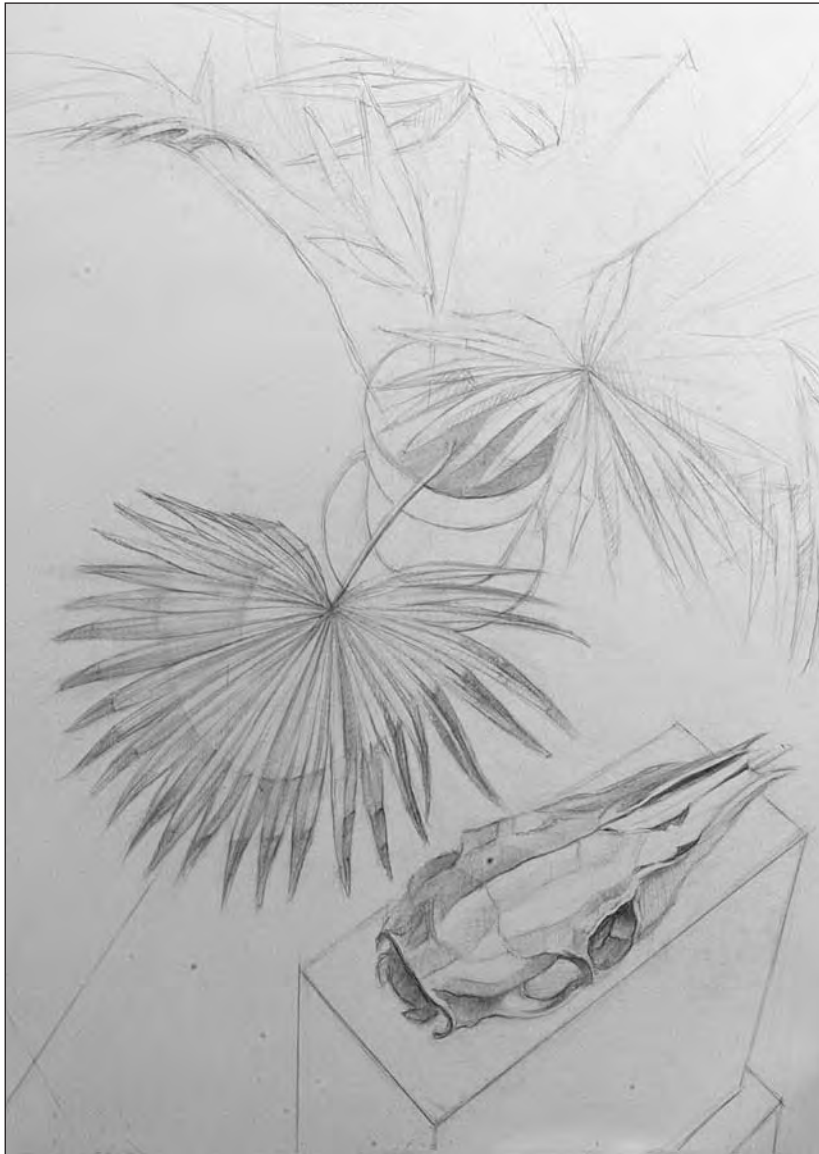
In this stage, the artist continued to elaborate the form of the objects by searching for the various planes that represented the structure of each object. The artist also began to shade some of these planes a little to enhance the three-dimensionality of the still life.

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Drawing Demonstration: A Palm and a Deer Skull *(continued)*

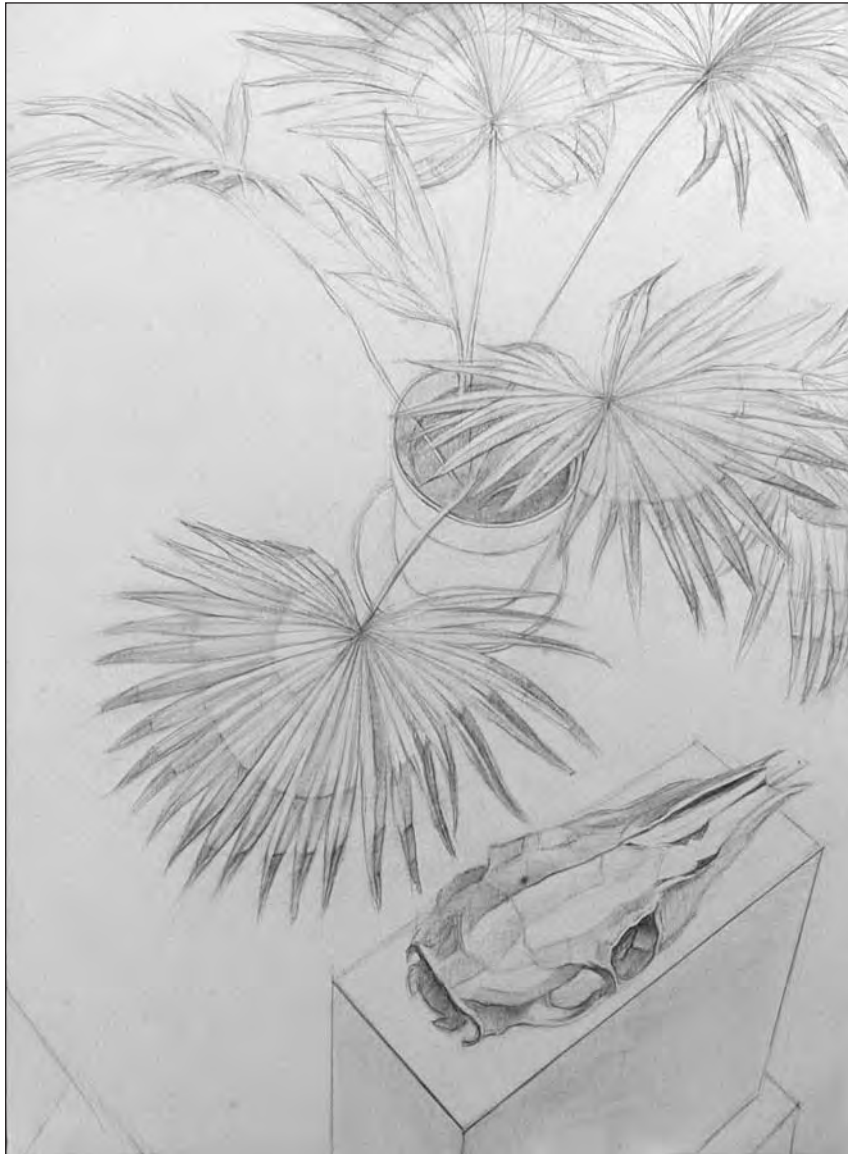
Stage 5

More planes in the skull have been defined and the contrast from one plane to another has increased, especially on the shadow side of the still life. More structure was added to areas of the fronds, in the form of smaller planes; this increases the level of solidity and realism. The increasing contrast between the light side and the shadow side introduces a feeling of directional light in the drawing.



Stage 6

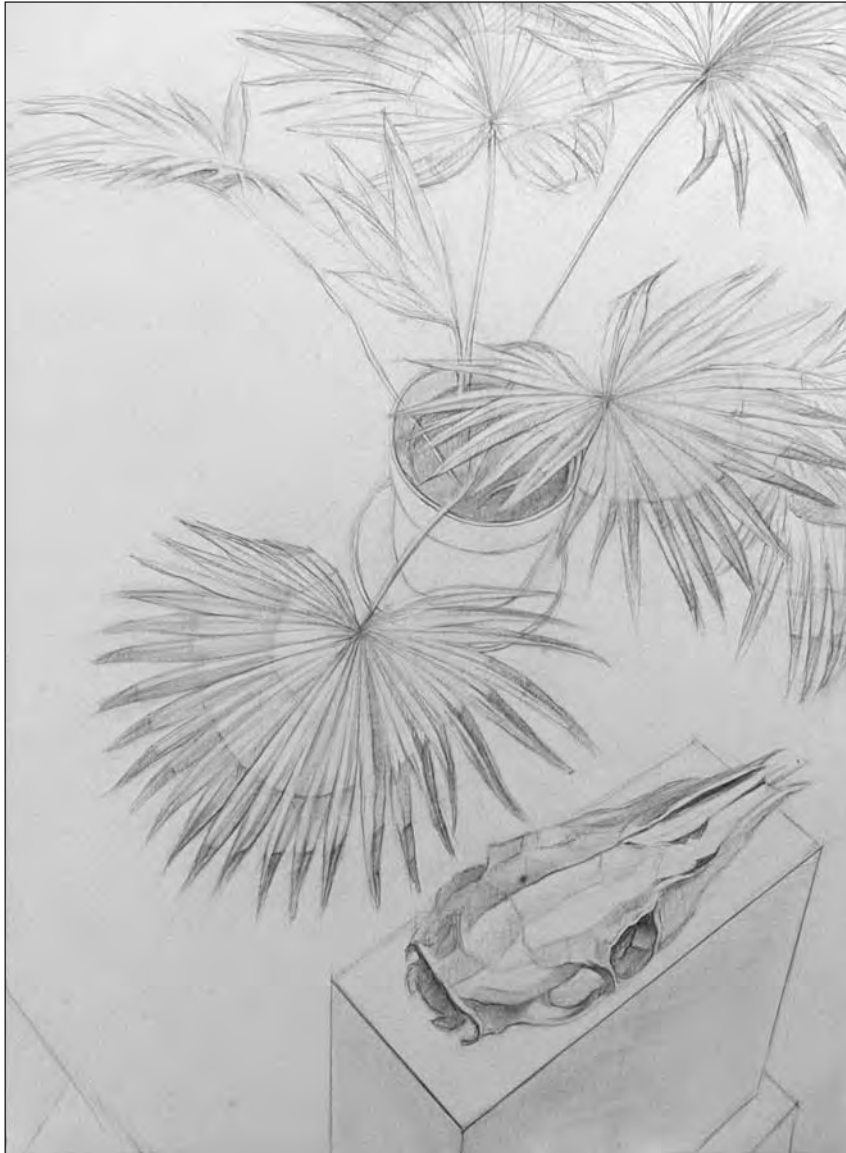
The planes of the skull and one of the fronds have been fully defined and shaded in this stage. This is as far as the artist went before adding the transitional tones between each plane to finish the rendering. The artist now continued to bring the rest of the drawing up to this level.

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Drawing Demonstration: A Palm and a Deer Skull *(continued)*

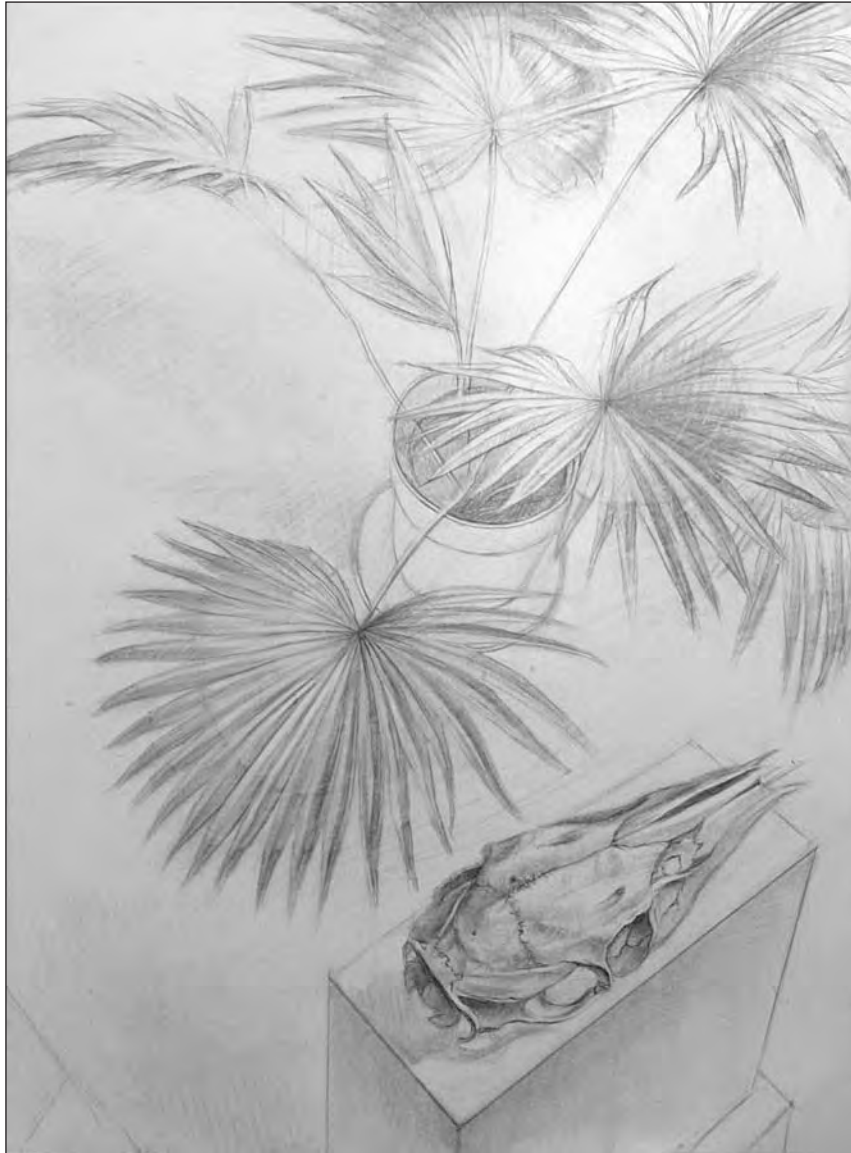
Stage 7

All of the planes throughout the still life have been defined and shaded at this stage. The artist worked hard to define each shift of form with a plane. The artist was tempted to call the drawing finished here because he liked the geometric interpretation of the subject. For the sake of this exercise, he proceeded to soften the transition between the various planes to enhance the naturalistic quality of the drawing.



Final Stage

This is the finished drawing. The contrast between the tones hasn't been altered, but transitional tones were added between each plane to further enhance the level of realism in the drawing. More details were added to the deer skull, while ensuring that the overall feeling of form wasn't compromised. The artist also added some shading in various areas on the floor around the objects to suggest cast shadows. Doing this also helped to define the plane of the floor.

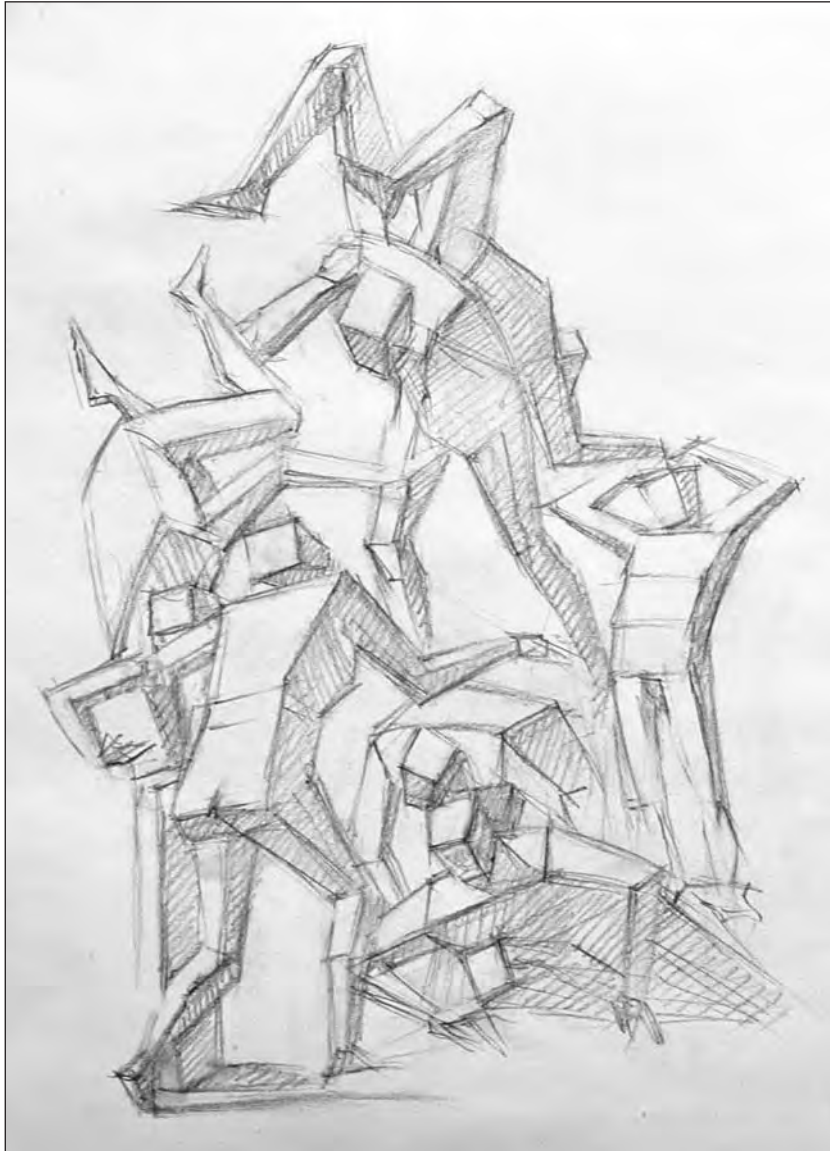


Still Life from Above, by Dean Fisher

Gallery: Geometric Drawings

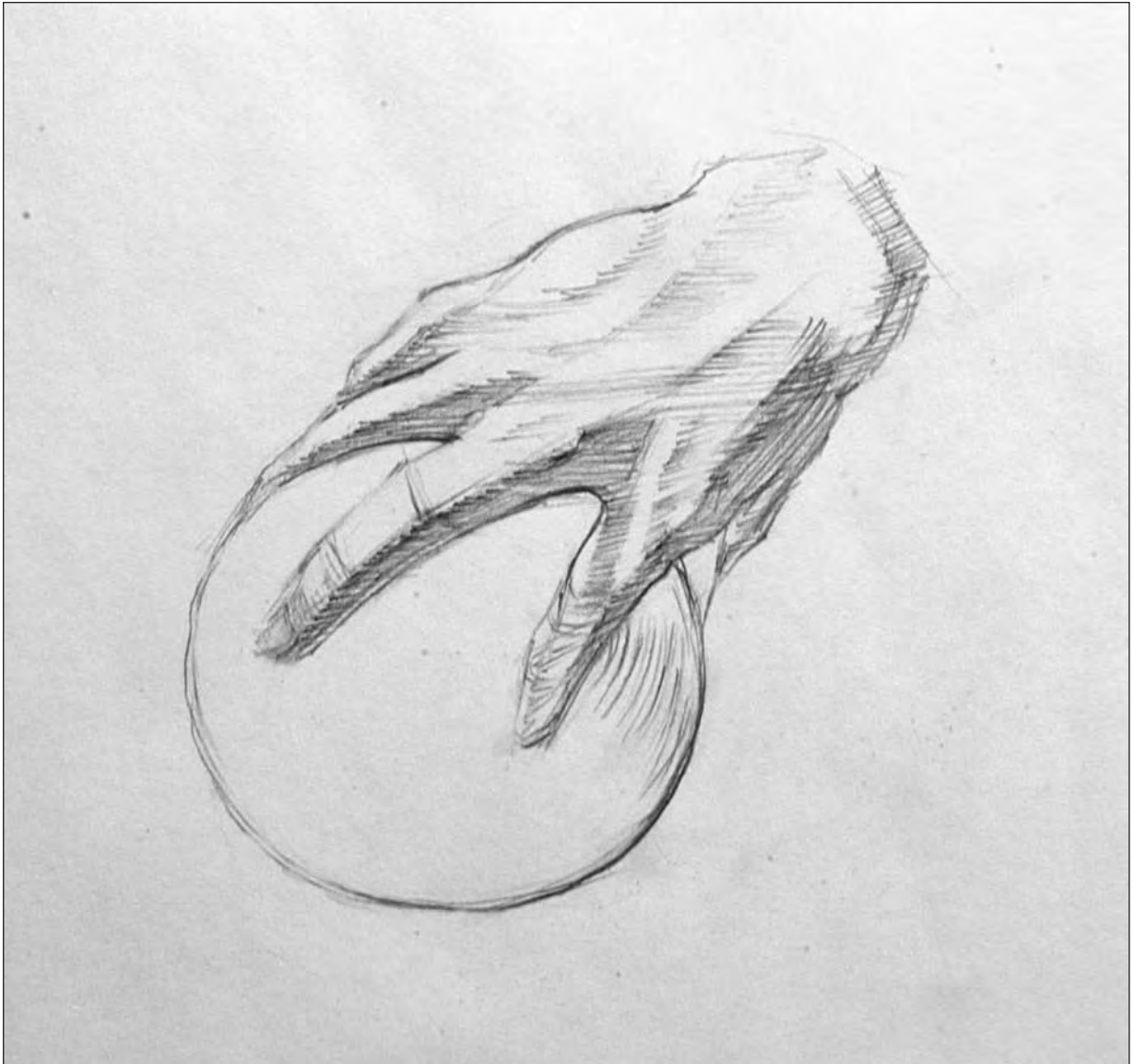
In this copy of a fascinating sketch by the nineteenth-century artist Luca Cambiaso, you can see how the artist literally built the figures of this composition out of a variety of rectangular blocks by considering the large planes of the figures. With a great knowledge of the mechanics of the human figure, Cambiaso created a very believable group of figures in motion and gave them a feeling of solidity and light through the use of these simplified forms.

This could have been a preliminary study for a large-scale figure painting, or simply an exercise in the gesture and movement of the human figure.



Copy after Luca Cambiaso's Group of Figures, by Dean Fisher

This is a copy of a beautifully simplified hand study by a seventeenth-century Italian artist. See how the artist aimed to render the essential structure of the hand. All of the large planes of the hand and fingers are “chiseled out” on the paper, omitting all detail. What remains is a very solid hand in a convincing gesture of holding a sphere-like object.



Copy after Bartolomeo Passarotti's Studies of Hands and Nude Figures, by Dean Fisher

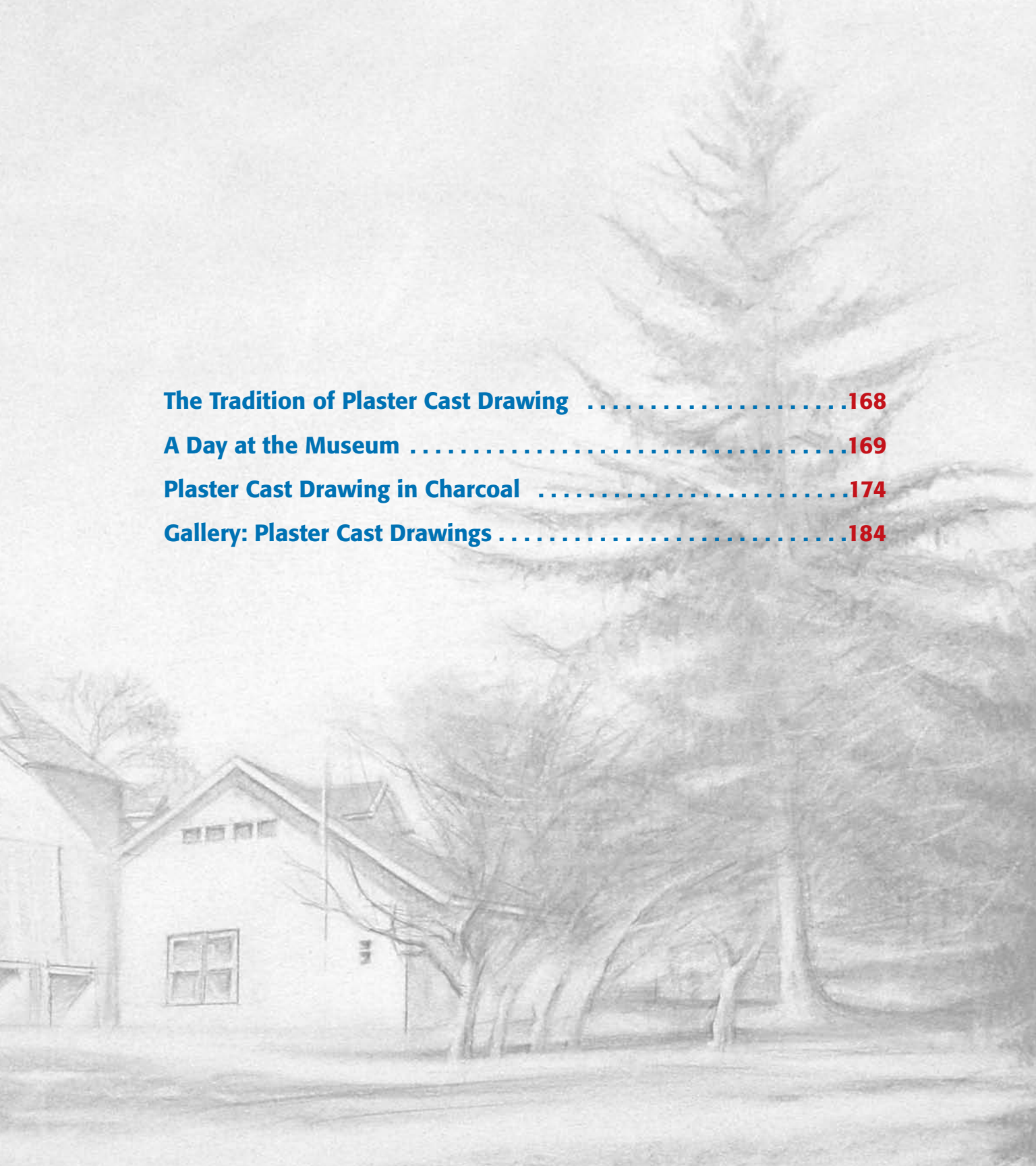
chapter

10

Draw a Plaster Cast

The drawing of sculptures and plaster casts is a tried-and-true exercise that has been practiced by artists for centuries. It is the perfect bridge between drawing a still life and a portrait or human figure.





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The Tradition of Plaster Cast Drawing

At the heart of the Renaissance, there was a revival of and fascination with the proportion, form, and beauty of ancient Greco-Roman sculpture. Artists of the time steeped themselves in these qualities by making copies in various drawing media.

The tradition of training artists through drawing great sculpture continued throughout the nineteenth century. After a relatively short decline in the twentieth century, it is now experiencing a revival in art academia. As a form of training, not only does it bring an art student closer to the aesthetic interests of the sculptor who created the work of art, but it is also an excellent way for a student to become acquainted with drawing the human form. In the art schools of the past, a student would often spend a minimum of 2 years drawing antique plaster casts before moving on to drawing the human figure from live models.

Drawing a replica of the human form (from a work of art or an anatomical cast) is one of the best ways to learn how to render complex three-dimensional forms. It is highly recommended that the serious student acquire at least one or two high-quality plaster casts of sculptures, and complete multiple renderings of them under different lighting conditions. This will prove to be invaluable experience as you advance to the drawing of the portrait and figure from live models.

The great antique Greco-Roman and Renaissance sculptures are of such a high order of beauty and expressiveness that they continue to inspire us centuries after they were created—although in many cases they are only fragments of their original form.

The artist can gain insight into the human figure by observing proportion and anatomy, and the rendering of light on the form. To achieve the desired result, as shown in this example, the artist must also consider the aesthetic concerns of what the sculptor had decided to emphasize and de-emphasize.



Copy after a Luca della Robbia sculpture, by Jack Montmeat, courtesy of the artist

TIP

Practice Makes Perfect

While Dean was in art school, he was fortunate to have several plaster casts to work from. Eventually, he could draw two of them from memory because he had drawn them dozens of times. Both were anatomical casts made by nineteenth-century sculptors: One was of the planes of the human head, and the other was a life-sized sculpture depicting the musculature of the human body.

The drawings on pages 170–173 are the result of a day that the authors spent in the Antique Sculpture rooms at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Most museums allow their patrons to bring a sketchbook and drawing materials to draw the sculptures and paintings without needing a permit.

Museums are overflowing with inspiring works of art. It is highly recommended that the serious student spend many hours studying, sketching, and absorbing the great works that are there.

All of the drawings on the following pages were drawn on 12" x 9" lightly textured drawing paper with graphite pencils, ranging from H to 2B, and a kneaded eraser.



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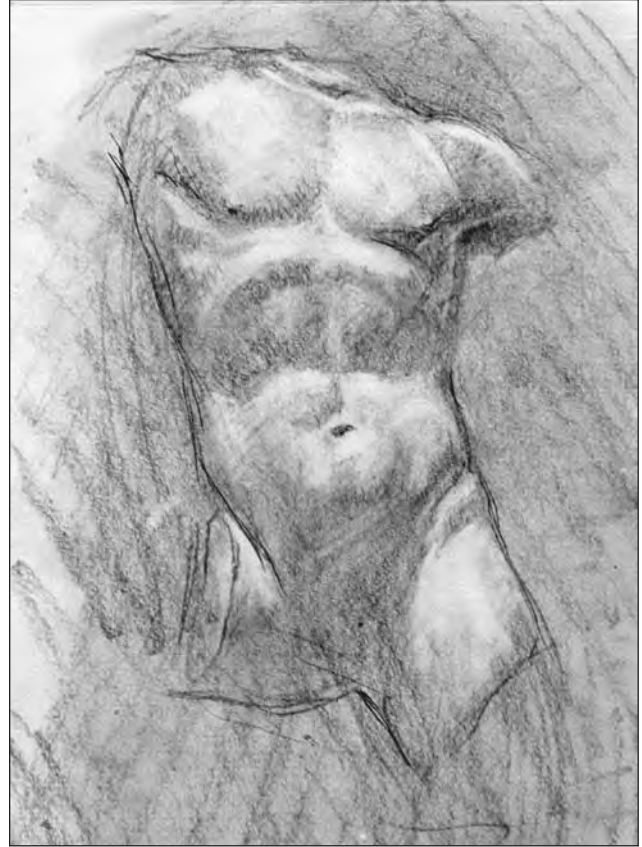
A Day at the Museum *(continued)*



Copy after a Greek statue, by Dean Fisher

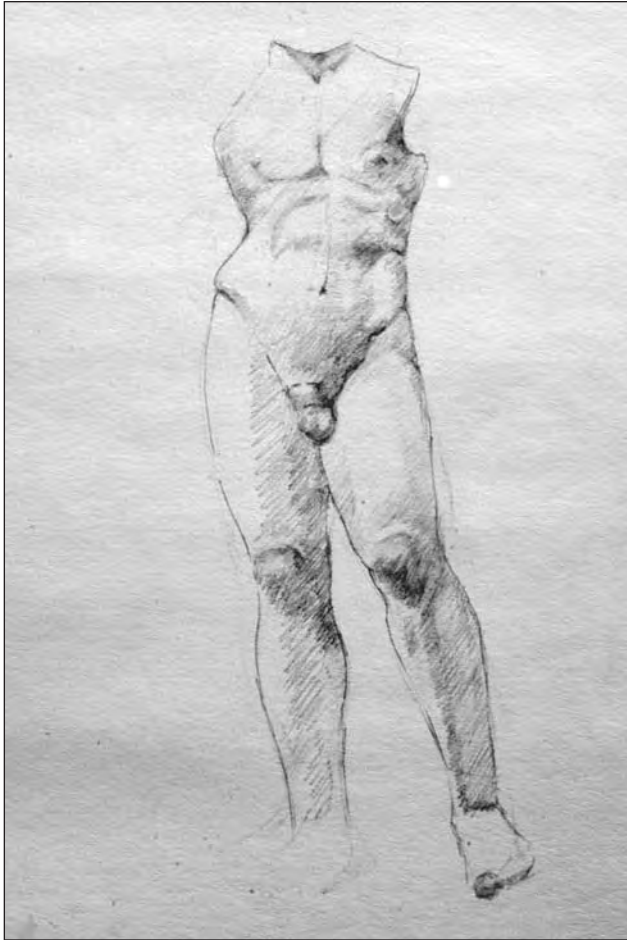
In this Greek torso of a male athlete, there is an incredible feeling of gracefulness in the subtle gesture of the figure arching backward. Even though the musculature in this figure is flexed due to the fact that this is a sculpture depicting a male athlete in motion, those qualities were subordinated to the elegance of the overall pose.

The artist tried to capture the movement of the pose through a fairly loose tonal-and-line rendering. Starting with mid-toned paper, the artist lightly drew the figure and then erased the light shapes. The next stage was to work back and forth, adding more graphite with the pencil and erasing other areas until the artist was satisfied with the level of refinement in the drawing.



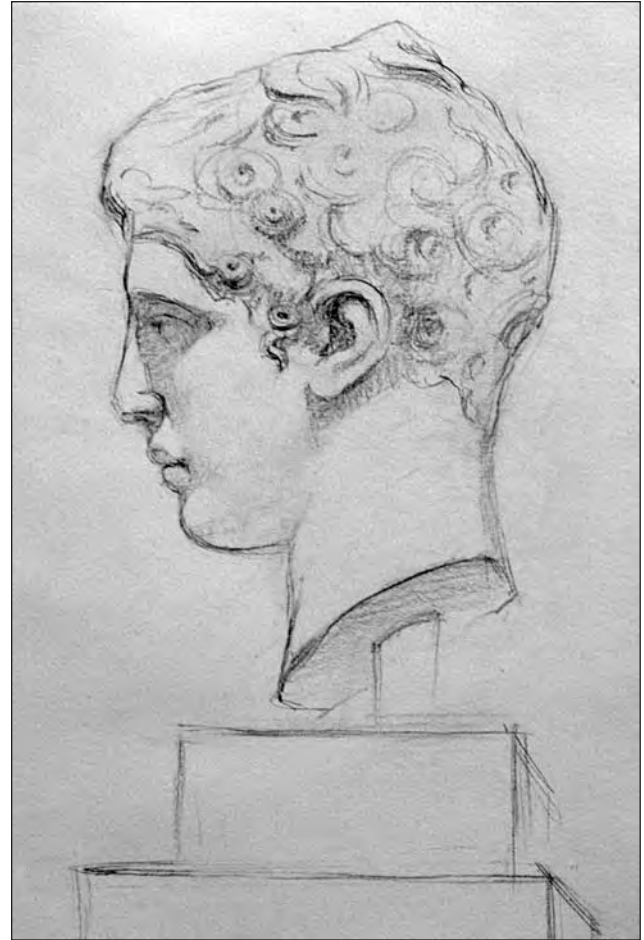
Copy after a Greek statue, by Dean Fisher

This is another angle of the sculpture on the previous page. It's really amazing that the figure has such a quiet dynamism and grace, even without a head or limbs. In this drawing, the artist tried to capture the movement of the pose through a fairly loose tonal-and-line rendering. After starting with mid-toned paper, the artist lightly drew the figure and then erased the light shapes. Like the previous drawing, the artist proceeded to work back and forth, adding more graphite with the pencil and erasing other areas until reaching the level of refinement that he was seeking.



Copy after a Roman statue, by J. S. Robinson

This Roman statue shows a *contrapposto*—first used by the Greeks and so called because the weight of the whole figure is supported by one leg, which makes the hip move outwards—which is somewhat demanding to draw. In order to understand this pose, when you are drawing, make sure the hip of the body is placed correctly. You need to make sure that your measurements are exact. It is a very subtle pose and demands careful observation and restraint. In this example, the artist has drawn a line to conform, as near as possible, to the curvature of the sculpted body. This is an important exercise to practice, if you want to draw an object accurately rather than in a general manner.



Copy after a Roman statue, by Dean Fisher

Here, the artist has sought to capture the simplicity and beauty of this classical portrait—a head of a Roman athlete—with a simple, fairly crisp line and a minimal amount of shading. The tip of the nose was broken off, but instead of detracting from the beauty of the face, it only seemed to add to it.

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A Day at the Museum *(continued)*

This Greek sculpture of a male torso from 450–400 BC has a freshness, vitality, and degree of realism that completely transcends the passage of time. An important aspect of its vitality is the subtle lateral swaying motion of the sculpture.

The sketch was executed with an HB pencil and a kneaded eraser. The line around the figure was intentionally varied to help capture the rhythm of the figure.

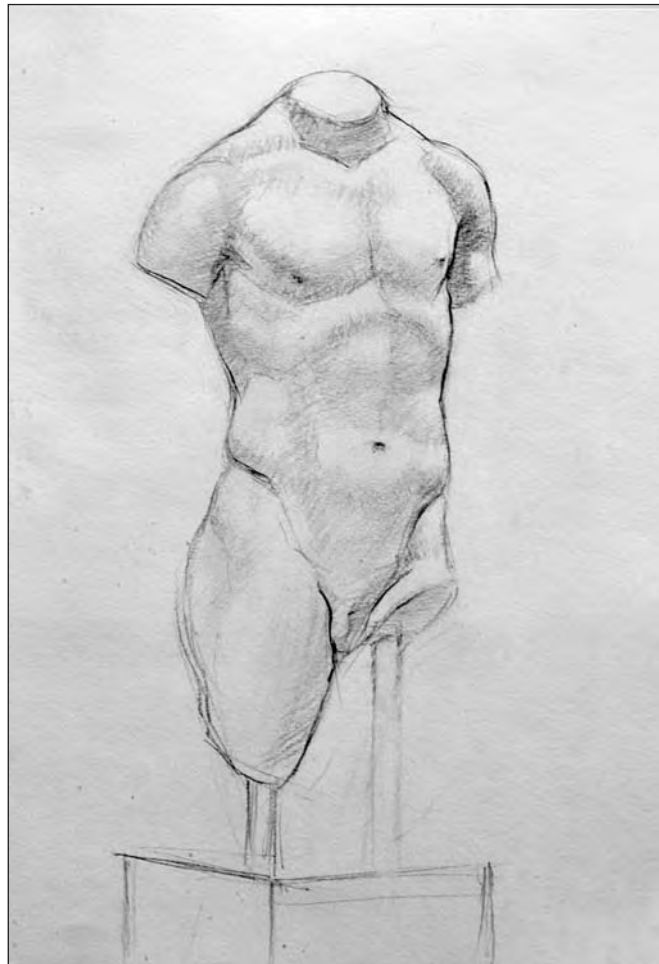


Copy after a Greek statue, by Dean Fisher

This drawing of a Roman sculpture is another perfect example of contrapposto. For the figure to maintain its balance and shift the center of gravity over that leg, the shoulder on the same side drops. This is a completely natural pose and was a favorite of the Ancient Greeks and Romans for its subtle grace.

The line predominates in this drawing as a means to describe the contour of the figure, varying from light to dark to add a rhythm to the drawing.

This drawing was done with an HB pencil and eraser. The artist used a finger to blend the graphite to create smooth transitions of tone.



Copy after a Roman statue, by Dean Fisher

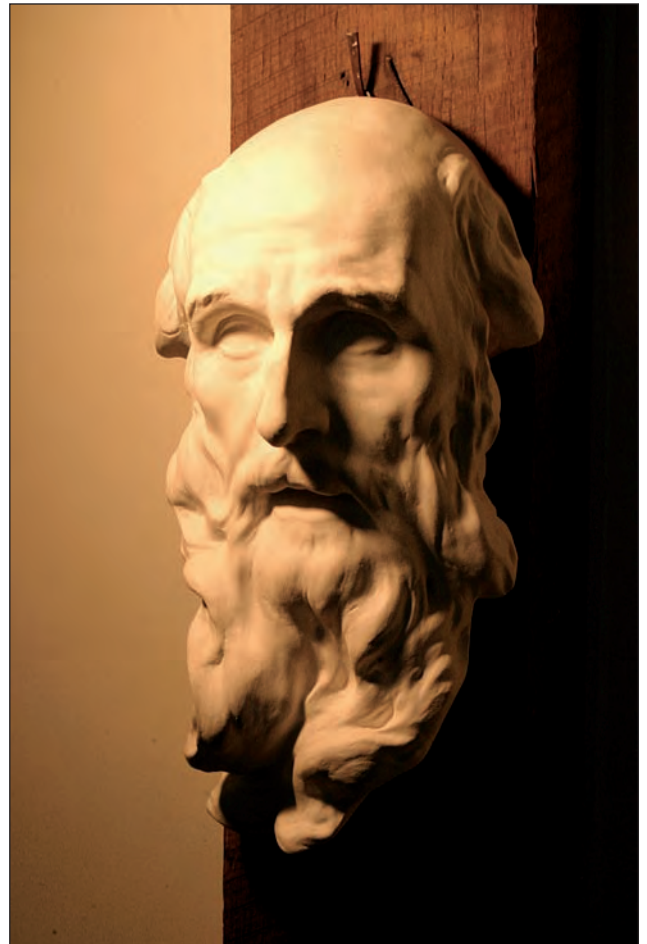
Plaster Cast Drawing in Charcoal

For this demonstration, the plaster cast shown here will be used to create a tonal drawing in charcoal. This is the first time that charcoal is used in the drawing examples in this book.

Using Charcoal

Charcoal has some benefits and some drawbacks compared to drawing in graphite. One benefit is that charcoal is generally considered similar to a painting medium, because it remains fairly loose on the paper and can be easily manipulated and blended. Also, because of its extreme blackness, you can achieve a full range of tones from the darkest dark of the charcoal to the white of the paper. A drawback of charcoal is that because it is so changeable and easy to erase, it requires a more delicate touch than graphite to control. After the drawing is completed, it is also susceptible to smearing.

There are three grades of charcoal: soft, medium, and hard. All three were used in the following drawing examples, and explanations of the benefits of each are provided.

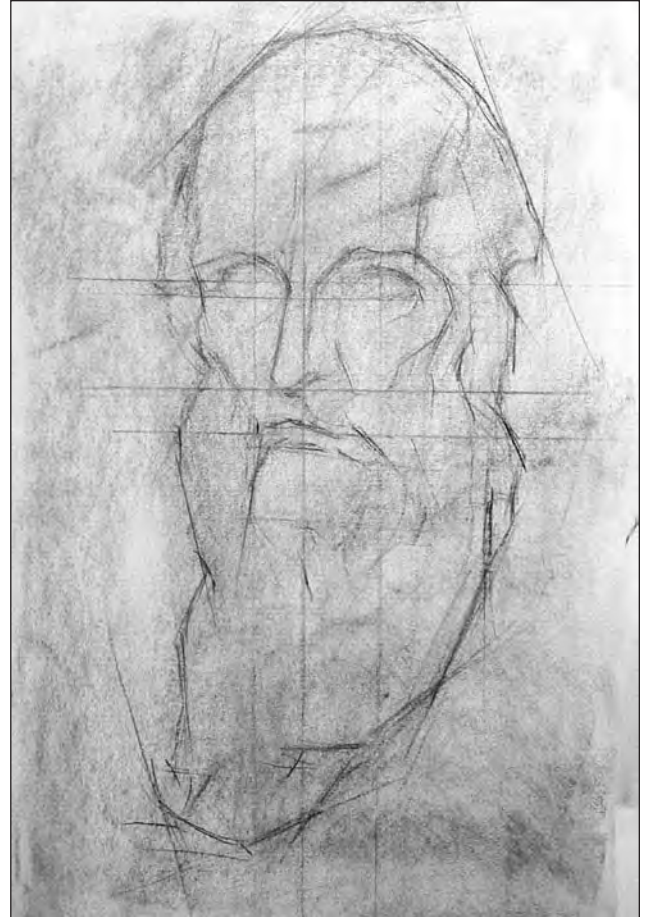


Stage 1

In the first stage of the drawing, using the soft grade of charcoal, the artist applied a mid-tone of charcoal to the paper in the same way that the graphite tone was applied in the section “Tone Your Paper” in Chapter 4. The artist was then able to block in the big forms of the plaster cast using a delicate line with a medium-grade charcoal.

At this stage, the focus should be on establishing the overall proportion and shape of the head, and the placement of the features within the shape. Once the overall shape of the cast was drawn, a centerline of the face was lightly drawn; in this case, it was to the left of the center because of the $\frac{3}{4}$ -view-point that the artist had. The centerline of the head was easy to determine as this is the line where the nose falls. The artist also indicated the horizontal lines where the eyes and bottom of the nose and mouth would be.

By employing the measuring methods used to help with proportion, the artist could determine the major angles and their relationship to each other (see “Find the Angles” in Chapter 4). Also note that the artist was intentionally simplifying the forms by making them more geometric, which helped the artist determine the shape of the large forms.

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Plaster Cast Drawing in Charcoal *(continued)*

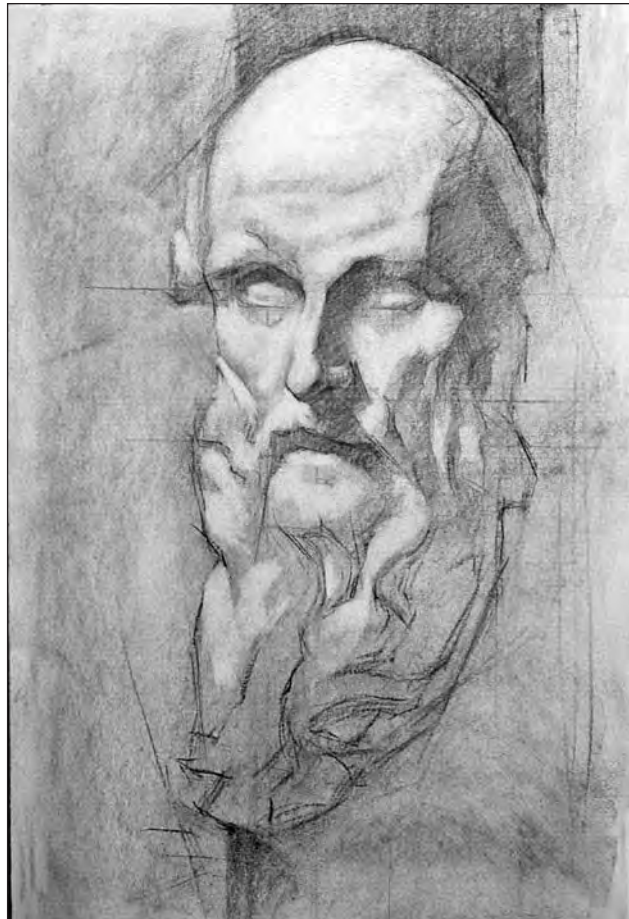
Stage 2

At this stage, the outline of the head, the features of the face, and the planes of the head were further developed using a sharpened stick of medium-grade charcoal. The proportions and angles of all forms were continually checked. The drawing still has a geometric feel, as the artist sought to record the precise angle as each contour changed direction. With the linear definition of the planes of the head, the drawing begins to take on the appearance of solidity.



Stage 3

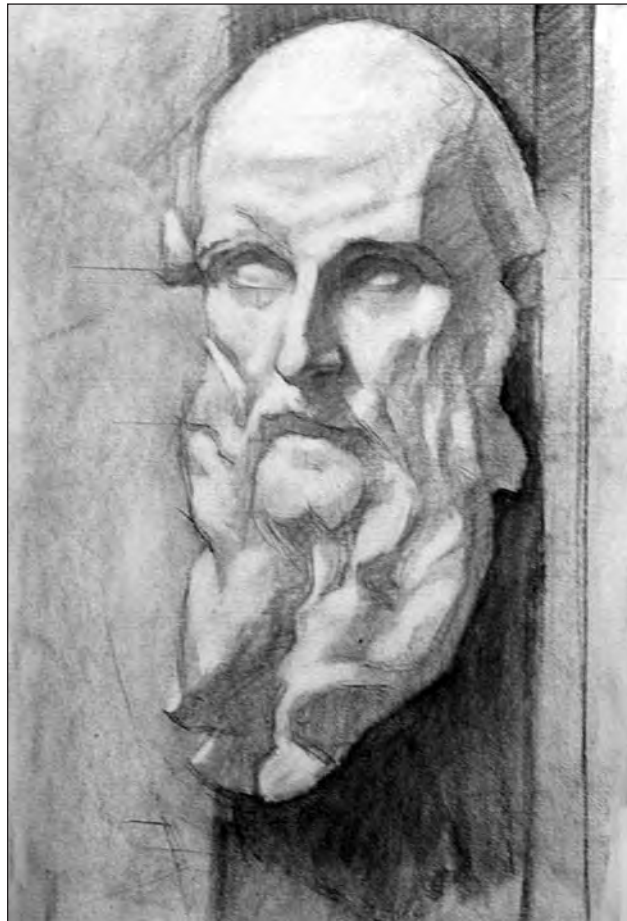
Here the drawing clearly begins to take on a sense of form. The large shapes of light have been erased using a kneaded eraser, and the shadow area and part of the background have been darkened using the soft grade of charcoal. The goal at this time was to keep the tone of light and shadow very simple, with an emphasis on making these shapes as accurate as possible. It is very important to squint (see page 50) as you look at the plaster cast to help you simplify the forms and see only the big shapes.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**

Plaster Cast Drawing in Charcoal *(continued)*

Stage 4

Once again, there was no attempt to render the nuances of tone at this point. The artist continued to focus on the accuracy of shape. The drawing is "keyed," as the lightest light and darkest dark (using the soft grade of charcoal) are indicated on this image. With these two tonal reference points indicated, the artist knew that all of the other tones in the subject would fall within this tonal range.

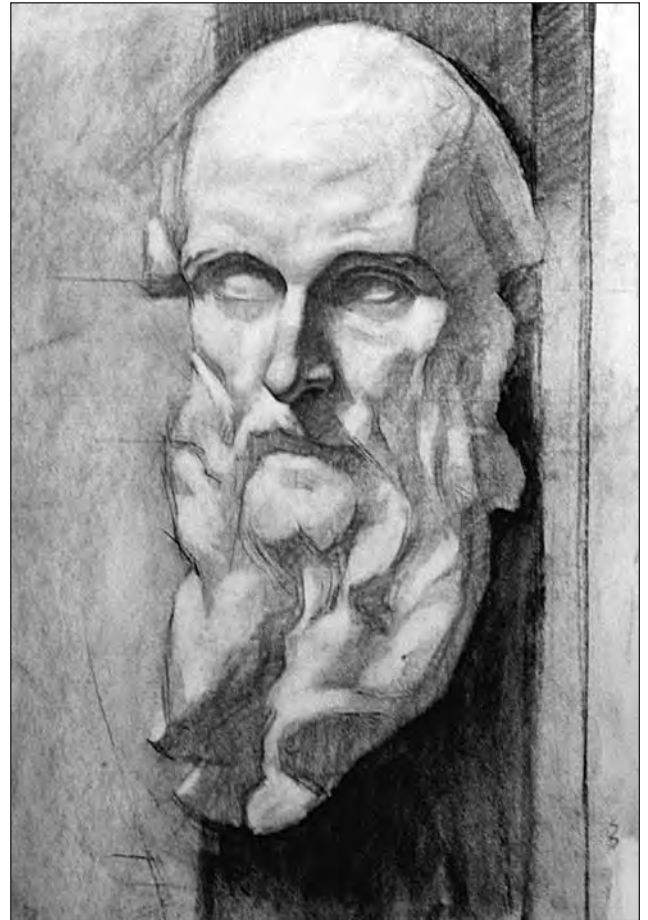


Stage 5

The range of tones in the shadow has been established at this stage. Some of the deeper darks have been indicated, as well as some of the lighter reflected lights, which gives the shadow more depth and a feeling of transparency. It is crucial to remember that none of the tones representing the reflected light come near to approaching the lightness of the tones in the light area of the subject. By overstating the range of tones in the light and shadow, you will overmodel the form and consequently lose the quality and texture of the surface you're rendering. Also, the darker accents within the shadow should always be compared to the darkest dark in order to gauge their precise tone. More of the dark tones around the cast are indicated, which gives a greater sense of relief to the head.

TIP**Gauge Your Accuracy**

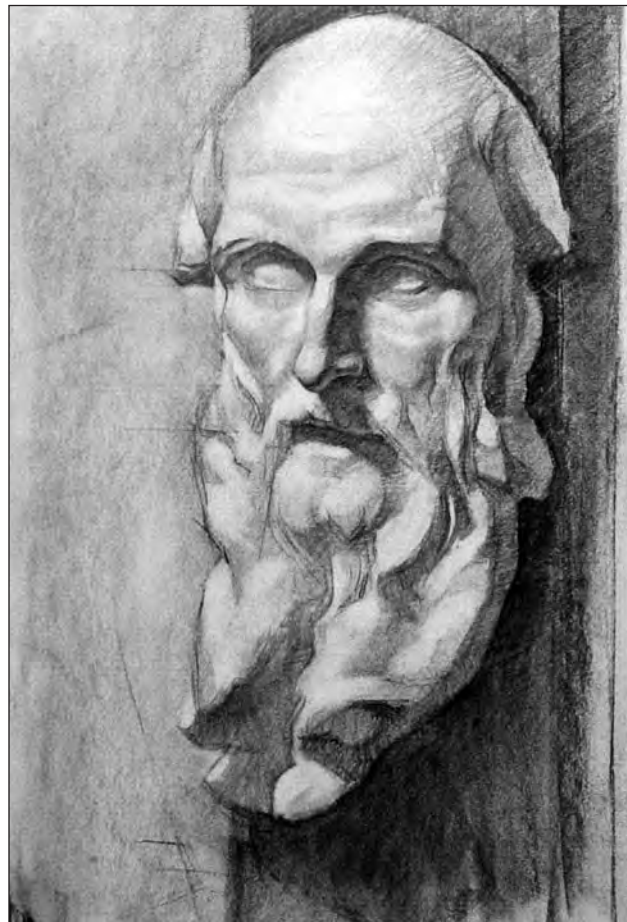
At this stage, it is very useful to frequently place your drawing next to the actual cast and step back at least 10 feet to compare them side-by-side. This is the best way to gauge the accuracy of drawing and tones in your rendering.

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Plaster Cast Drawing in Charcoal *(continued)*

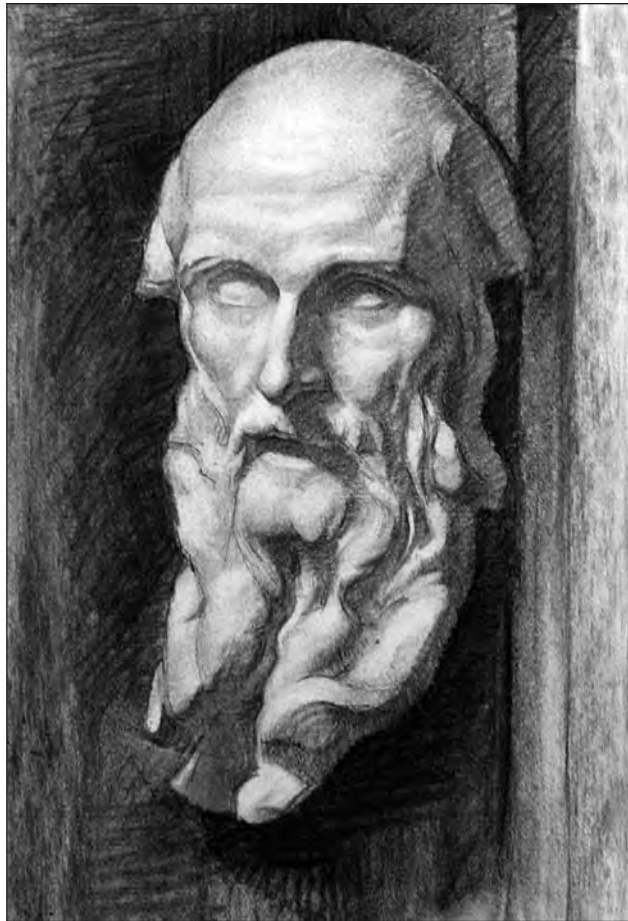
Stage 6

Now, more of the half tones in the light area have been drawn using the medium and hard grades of charcoal; the artist was careful to not overstate them. If you draw the half tones within the light too dark, they'll merge with the shadow and the separation between the light area and the shadow becomes lost, and the feeling of solidity in your drawing will become compromised. Always compare the half tones in the light against the lightest light to gauge their tone. There is also more elaboration of the shadow, with the structure of the cheekbone, temple area, and beard being defined. With the addition of curved contours, notice that the contours of forms that were once more angular have become more varied. Again, having first blocked in the contours in an angular fashion made it much easier for the artist to "find" the curve within the angles.



Stage 7

The drawing continued to progress in much the same way—the artist worked back and forth between the shadow and light areas, adding more tonal information to the entire drawing. When subtle changes of tone are desired, it's best to use the medium and hard grades of charcoal. More shapes have been defined, which refines the structure and increases the illusion of realism in the drawing. More of the subtle curves of the various contours have been carefully added. The artist decided to darken the entire background using the soft grade of charcoal, because the light and darks behind the cast in the previous stage were detracting from the focus on the form of the sculpture.

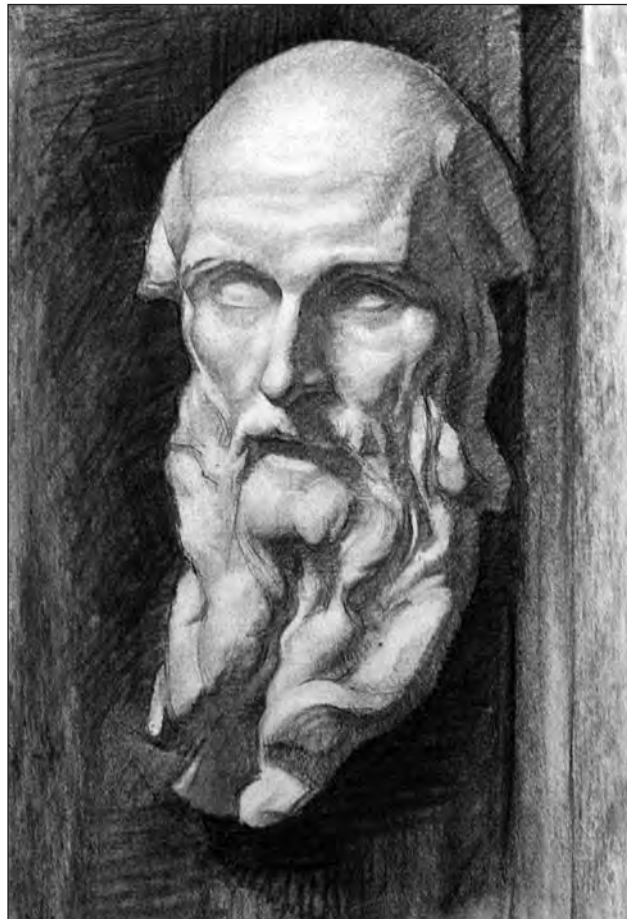


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Plaster Cast Drawing in Charcoal *(continued)*

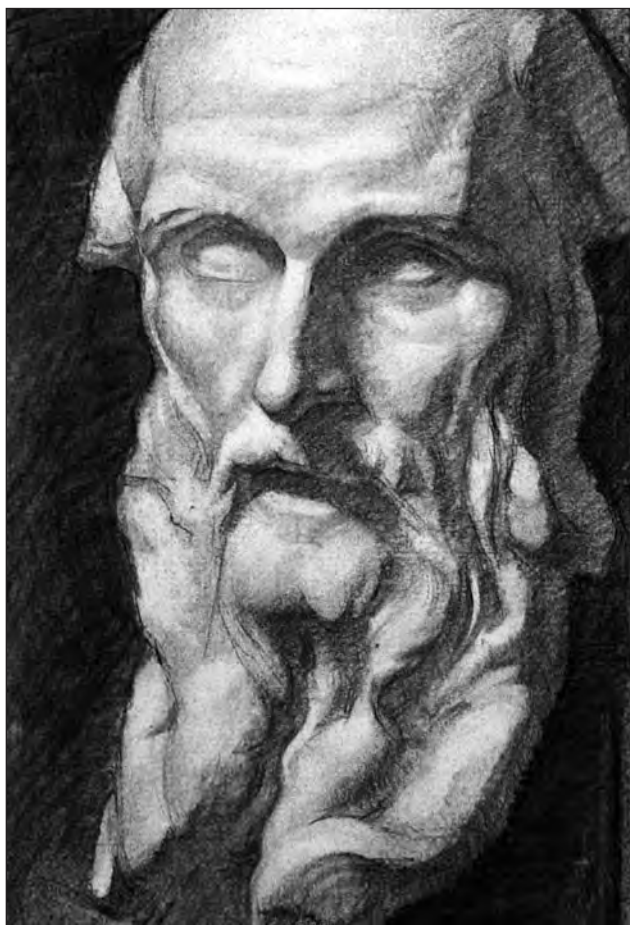
Stage 8

In this stage, the artist was striving to create the subtle textures in the plaster cast, making sure that the quality of the material was depicted clearly. The textural qualities are achieved as a result of the subtle play of light over the form, as well as some minute detail in the surface topography. The artist also tried to gradate the light across the entire plaster cast to show a greater concentration at the top left, where the light was more concentrated, and gradually becoming darker in those areas that were farther from the light.



Final Stage

This detail image of the completed drawing clearly shows the texture of the charcoal on the paper, as well as the way in which the charcoal depicts the surface of the plaster cast.



Cast Study, by Dean Fisher

Gallery: Plaster Cast Drawings

This is an example of a plaster cast drawing in charcoal and white chalk on gray paper. The color of the paper is most evident in the background to the left of the sculpture. It is also present to varying degrees in the light areas of the sculpture, where thin lines of white are hatched to represent the lighter parts of the form and highlights. The use of vertical and hatched lines of charcoal represents the shadow and half tones, which gives the drawing a unified appearance. The artist has achieved a compelling illusion of light and solidity through the skillful use of tone, with virtually no detail.



*Cast drawing after a Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux sculpture,
by Jack Montmeat, courtesy of the artist*

This highly finished plaster cast drawing was executed in charcoal on white paper. All of the strokes of charcoal have been smoothed out, and the transitions of tone are gradual and subtle, which conveys the texture of smooth white plaster.

The artist achieved a dramatic feeling of light by keeping the areas of light very separate from the shadow areas. The most contrasted areas of the face are where the light areas of the eyebrow, nose, moustache, and beard meet the shadow. This effectively brings those areas forward and heightens the illusion of three-dimensionality. Notice how much darker the reflected light in the shadow is compared to the light areas of the cast.



Cast drawing after an unknown nineteenth-century artist's rendition of Moses, by Yumiko Dorsey, courtesy of the artist and Aristides Classical Atelier

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Gallery: Plaster Cast Drawings *(continued)*

In this light and airy plaster cast drawing, the sense of form is achieved through precision rather than a dramatic use of tone. The artist achieved a great feeling of “correctness” in the drawing by considering the proportion and shape through extensive measuring. If you look closely at the drawing, you can see numerous faint vertical and horizontal lines that the artist used as visual guidelines. The delicate use of tone conveys a feeling of gentleness that echoes the expression of the portrait.



*Cast drawing of the head of the Callipygian Venus, by Joshua Langstaff,
courtesy of the artist and Aristides Classical Atelier*

In these plaster cast block ins, you can see how the artist has built the forms of the sculptures through their essential large shapes and planes. The gestures are carefully observed by comparing the various angles and thrusts of the various components. Without any detail, you have a strong sense that these objects have a “correctness” about them. Without the accuracy at this initial stage, all of the detail in the world wouldn’t help to infuse these studies with the sense of realism that arises from this foundation.



*Cast drawing of the hand of Michelangelo’s David,
by Annie Rosen, courtesy of the artist and
Aristides Classical Atelier*

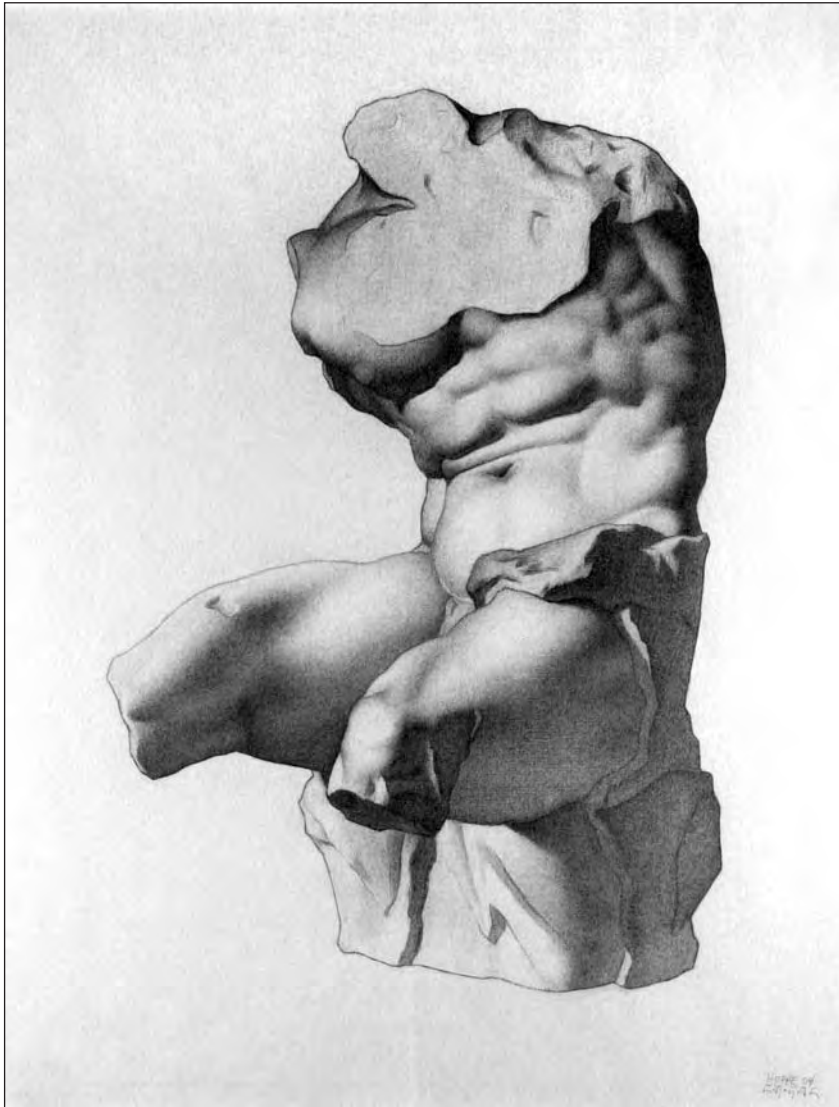


*Cast drawing after a Greek sculpture of Venus,
by Annie Rosen, courtesy of the artist
and Aristides Classical Atelier*

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Gallery: Plaster Cast Drawings *(continued)*

In this charcoal plaster cast drawing on white paper, there is a clean, crisp look due to the firm, hard edge around the entire drawing and the flat, white background. The very clean look of the drawing shows off the precision of contours and musculature of the sculpture, and the dynamism of the gesture. It is striking that even though the head, arms, and lower legs are missing from the sculpture, the drawing emanates power and expressiveness; a true testament to the sculpture as a great work of art.



Cast drawing after Charles Barque's Belvedere Torso, by Michael Hoppe, courtesy of the artist and Aristides Classical Atelier

This is a drawing of a Luca della Robbia sculpture that is considered a *high-relief* sculpture because the sculpted forms emerge at least 180 degrees or more in the round from a slab of stone, instead of 360 degrees in the round as in a free-standing sculpture. The sifting of light over the form is beautifully conveyed in the drawing. The very strong feeling of light comes through a very definite separation of the shapes of light from the areas of shadow, and a very minimal use of reflected light in the shadows. Another effective device to convey form is the numerous lines that are used to shade the drawing, which often follow the direction of the form.



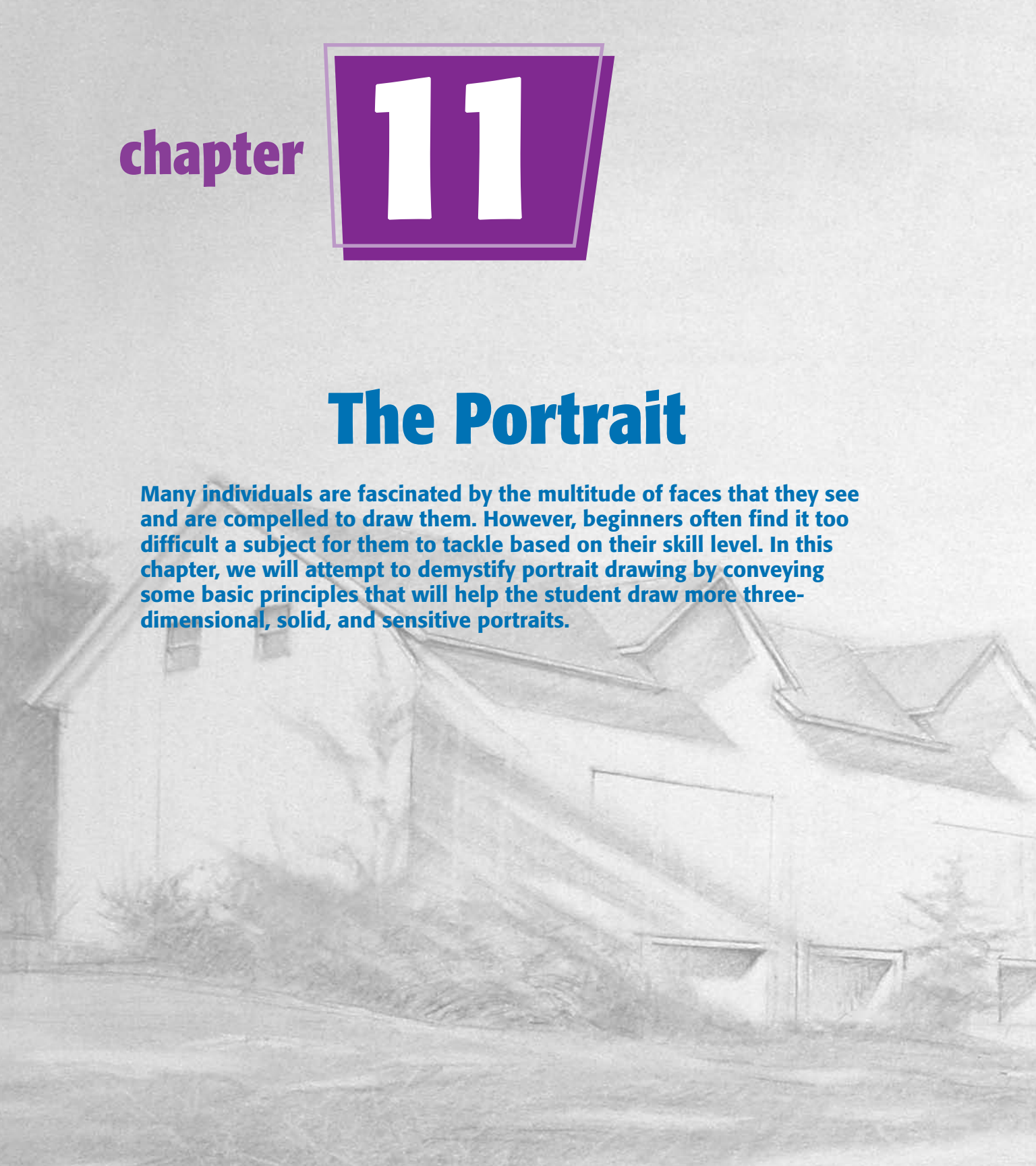
*Cast drawing after a Luca della Robbia sculpture,
by Jack Montmeat, courtesy of the artist*

chapter

11

The Portrait

Many individuals are fascinated by the multitude of faces that they see and are compelled to draw them. However, beginners often find it too difficult a subject for them to tackle based on their skill level. In this chapter, we will attempt to demystify portrait drawing by conveying some basic principles that will help the student draw more three-dimensional, solid, and sensitive portraits.





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The Allure of the Portrait

Without a doubt, the human portrait is the most frequently drawn and painted subject throughout the history of art. We seem to be endlessly fascinated with our faces and the faces of others, based on the vast number of self-portraits and portraits that have been created. Obviously, there are many reasons for this. One of the more significant reasons is that the face provides visual artists with an enduring form with which to express aspects of the human condition. Being the social creatures that we are, we can experience another human being in a personal way when that conveys the inner world of another individual.

We are so tuned into the many subtle expressions that the human face can convey that the artist may feel certain that a successfully rendered portrait will communicate a particular mood or state of mind to whoever views the work. Viewing a well-executed portrait that conveys warmth and personality allows us to experience another individual in an up-close and personal way. It is truly remarkable, when you consider the endless number of faces that exist; we are similar in so many ways, but at the same time, each one of us is distinctly different. Faces are also fascinating to artists as assemblages of shape, color, and form. Because of the immense amount of variation from face to face, formulas, such as a set of measurements that apply to drawing all faces, will not be used here. Instead, you will learn ways of thinking about rendering the human head and ways of seeing more accurately, to help you achieve a higher level of realism and better likenesses in your portraits.

The drawing on the next page is an excellent example of how a successful portrait allows us to get close to another individual. The artist has created a very sensitive rendition of his mother, which is made all the more believable because of the degree of realism in the drawing. We can sense the presence of this woman who has been rendered three-dimensionally with a subtle light sifting over her form. Her carefully observed gesture and facial expression say so much about her, not only at the present moment but in the culmination of all the years that have led up to this moment.



*The Artist's Mother, by Jacob Collins,
courtesy of the artist*

The Portrait in Three Dimensions

The drawings in this section were chosen to illustrate this subject because they represent concise and beautiful examples of the principles that you will be exploring in this chapter. The first example is a copy in charcoal of a painting by the great seventeenth-century Spanish artist Diego Velázquez de Silva.

When drawing the human head using line or tone, it is essential to have a clear mental concept of the big forms of the head. It is much easier when you set out to draw a three-dimensional portrait to place the smaller forms—that is, the features of the face—on a well-rendered foundation. If you don't understand this form, then the results are often renderings of individual features that are disjointed and floating within the shape of the face. Even if the features are well drawn, the form of the head won't be convincing.

Once you establish a mental image of the large forms of the head and you consider the direction and intensity of the light source, you will more clearly understand the manner in which the light falls on the form of the face. In return, this will enable you to convey this concept of form and light in your work.

TIP

Find Shapes to Simplify

The portraits on the following pages have been reproduced large enough for you to be able to make copies of them. It is recommended that you construct your copies in the same way as shown here: Form simple rectangular boxes, progress to the main planes, and finally consider the light and shadow.

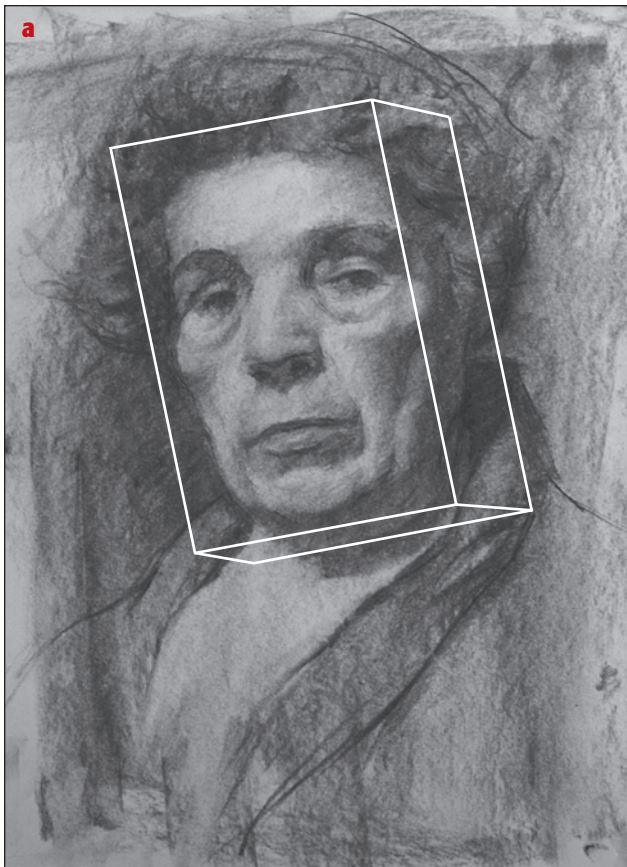


*Study after Diego Velázquez de Silva's Aesop,
by Dean Fisher*

When the form of the human head is broken down into its simplest terms, it most closely resembles a rectangular block. The front of the face represents one side of the block, and the sides of the head represent the other sides of the block (a). As it is rare for a person to hold his or her head completely vertically, there will inevitably be some tilt to the head in one direction or another. This tilt or gesture is an essential quality to capture, as much of the mood and personality is conveyed through body language. You can see in the diagram (b) how the three-dimensional rectangular block conforms to the gesture of the subject.

Also, to the surprise of many beginning artists, the most important aspect of achieving a likeness in a portrait is establishing the overall shape of the head accurately; in this case, it would be the proportion of the width to the height of the rectangular block. If this initial stage of the portrait isn't well established, you can never achieve a likeness, even if you draw the features perfectly. This is further discussed in the section "Drawing a Tonal Portrait," later in this chapter.

Having established the large form of the head as a rectangular block, you can anchor the features, the forehead, cheeks, and chin, into this framework. It is helpful to think in terms of breaking this topography down into facets or planes, as we did in Chapter 9. Once again, this is all for the sake of helping the artist understand why the light falls on the form in the way that it does, so that this may be clearly conveyed in the drawing being created.



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The Portrait in Three Dimensions *(continued)*

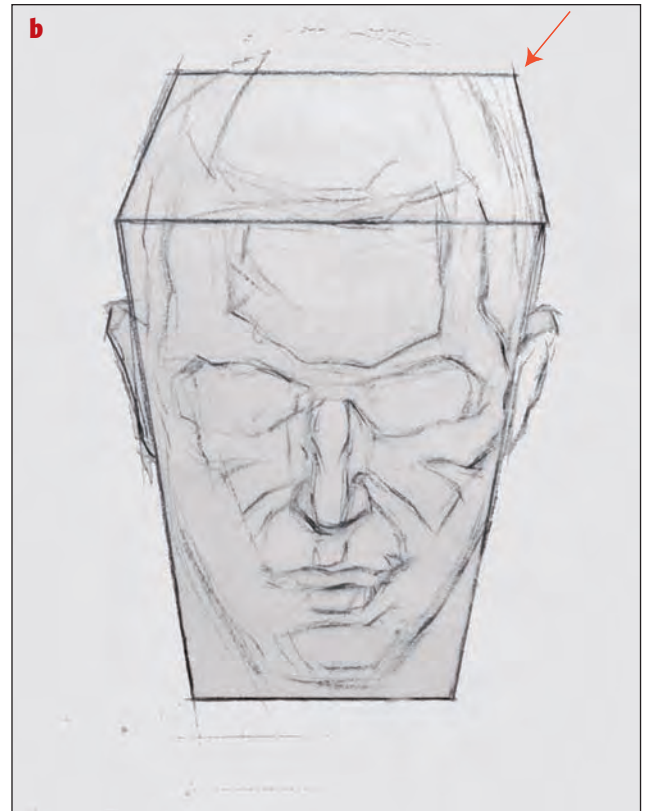
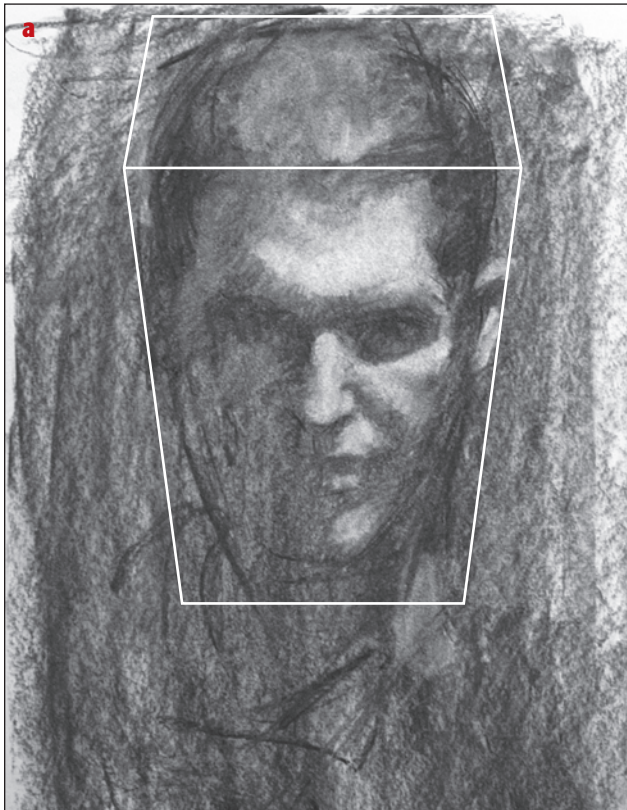
Here is an example of a head with a viewpoint from above. The light is squarely focused on the top of the head and forehead. A strong sculptural quality is created when the strongly lit, main frontal planes emerge from a dark background.



Self Portrait, by Dean Fisher

Thinking in terms of a rectangular box in perspective with a high eye level is very useful when constructing a drawing such as this (a). The laws of one-point perspective come into play, with the sides of the face converging toward a vanishing point that is well below the chin.

In the second image, the main planes of the portrait have been mapped out (b). When looking at the large planes that are most parallel to the light source—in this case, it is overhead and to the right—it becomes clear why these areas are the most brightly lit.

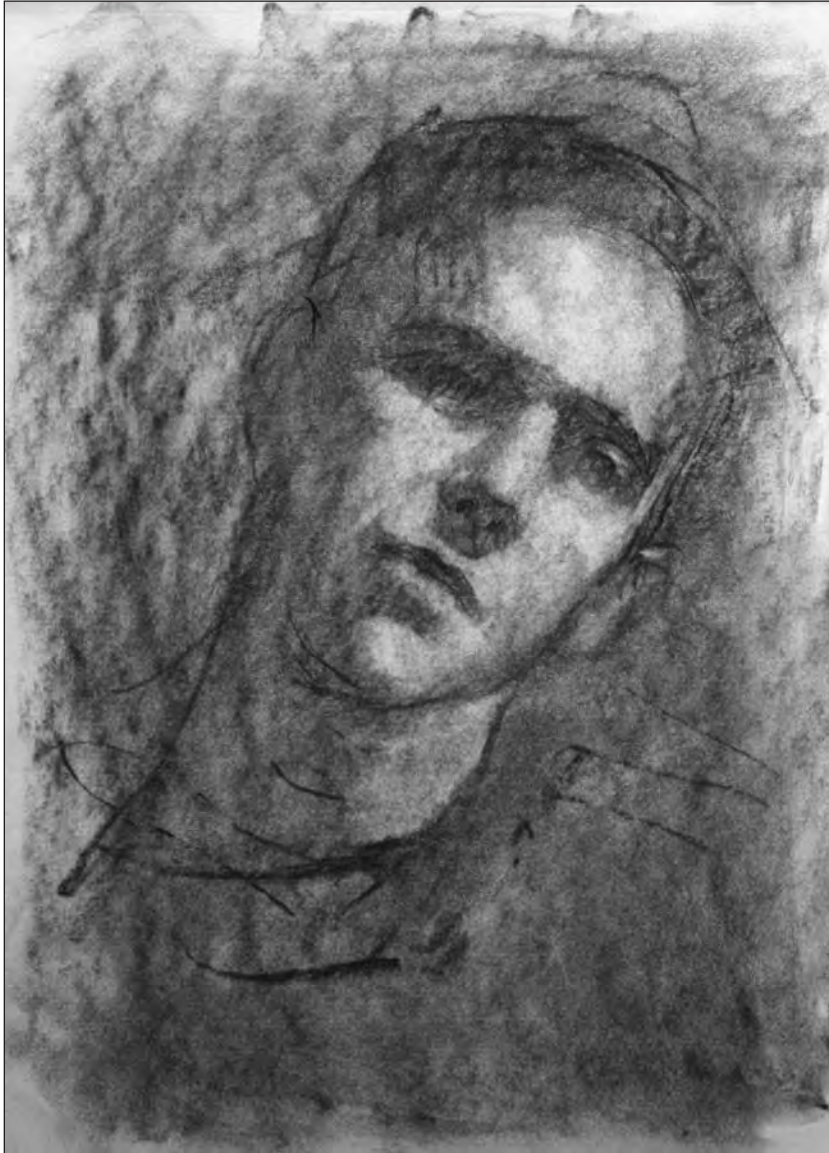


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The Portrait in Three Dimensions *(continued)*

This example is a portrait with a strong tilt to the right, where the light source illuminates the face from above and in front. Notice that the clear demarcation between the front and side of the face clearly conveys the idea of a head as a box-like form.

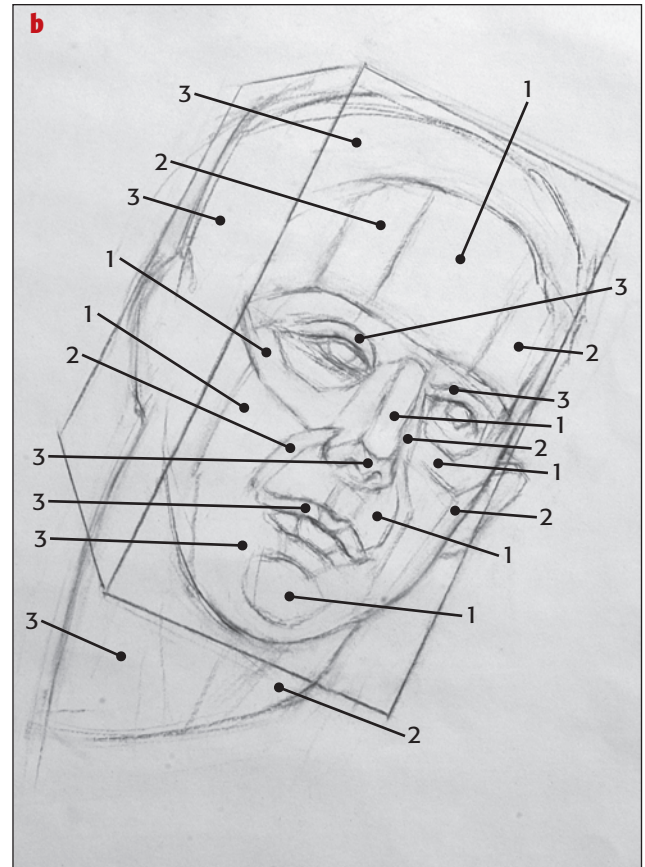
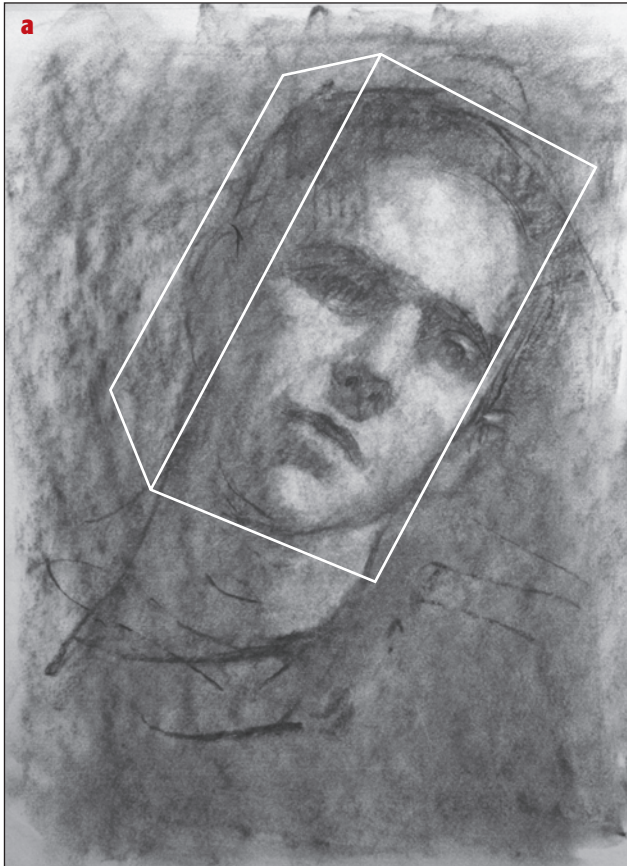
A sense of three-dimensional realism has been achieved by drawing the pattern of light accurately on the head. Notice that this was created with simple large planes and virtually no detail.



Self Portrait with Tilted Head, by Dean Fisher

As mentioned on the previous page, the tilted rectangular box is clearly indicated by the strong separation of light and shadow between the front and side of the head (a). It is almost superfluous to draw the diagram of the box with such forms that occur naturally.

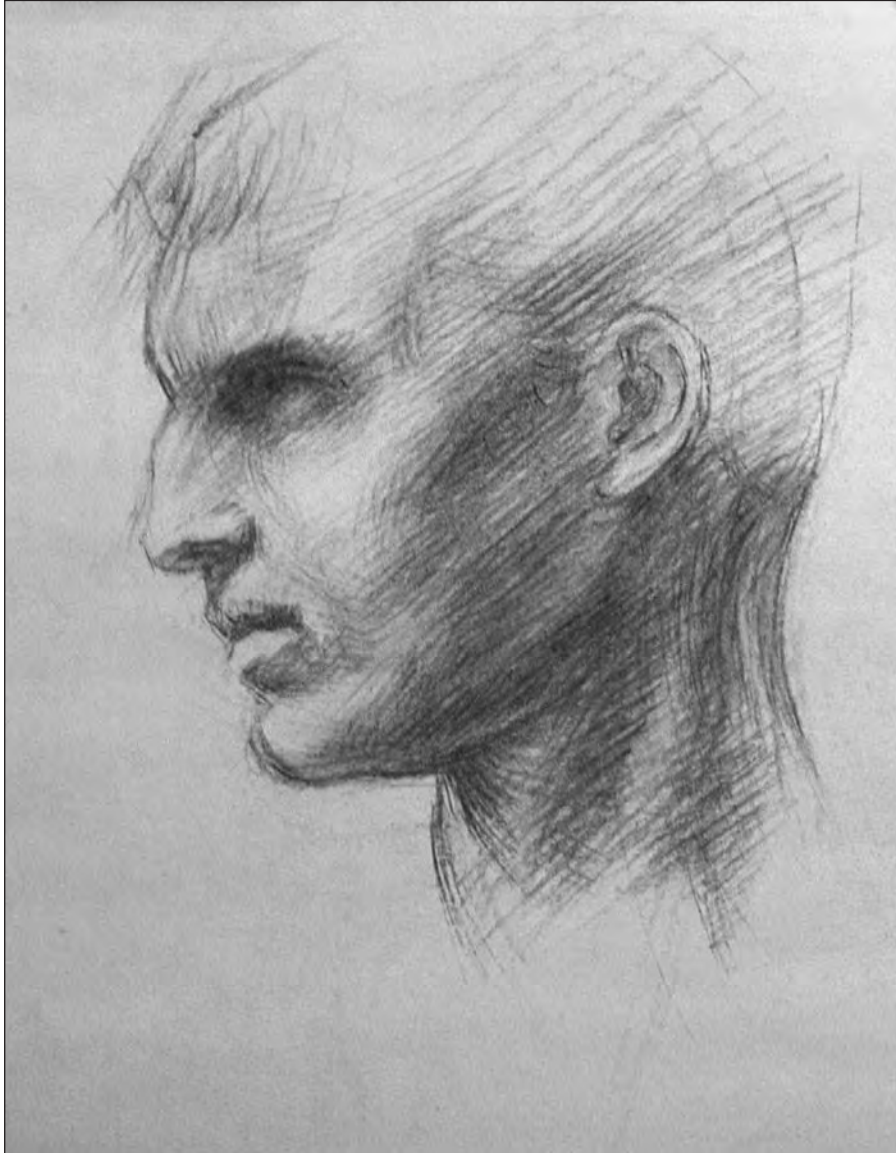
With the planes of the portrait defined and the direction of the light source known, you can number the various planes according to their position relative to the light source (b). The planes most parallel to the light source and that receive the most light would be labeled 1. Those surfaces that are at an angle to the light source and receive less light would be 2, and the planes that are perpendicular to the light source would be 3. (This would be the shadow side of the form.)



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The Portrait in Three Dimensions *(continued)*

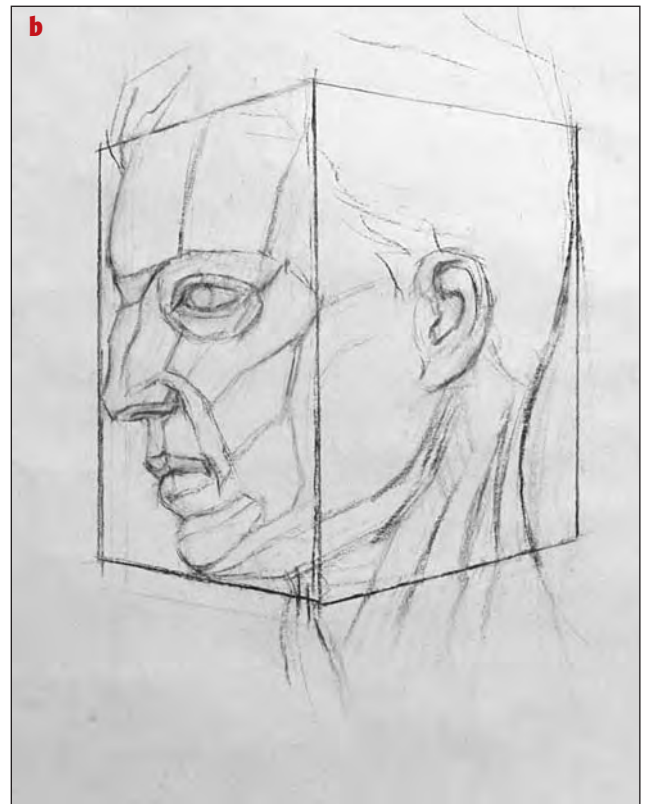
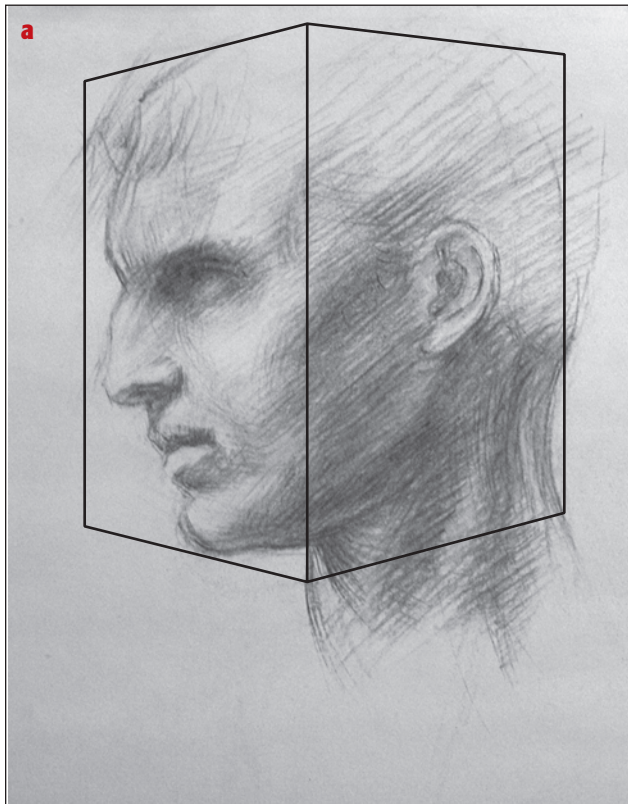
This is a copy after Andrea del Sarto. It is drawn in charcoal. One of the overriding qualities that define this work is its universality. This drawing seems to be a portrait of “Man” rather than a specific man. This feeling of universality is achieved by subordinating the details of the features to the large form of the head. Thus, we are struck by the power and beauty of the form most of all.



Copy after Andrea del Sarto's Head of an Apostle, by Dean Fisher

The del Sarto portrait fits neatly into the cube-like form (a). It is remarkable that with only two large shapes of shadow, in the eye socket and on the side of the head and neck, del Sarto has rendered a solid three-dimensional head. You can see how deeply the eyes are set underneath the brow bone by the darkness of the tone in the shadow.

It's interesting that the portrait with the planes mapped out (b) appears so much more detailed than the finished drawing. Of course, the planes are meant to indicate slight shifts in form within the face. This clearly illustrates how much information del Sarto conveyed through apparently simple means. With subtle changes in tone, the artist rendered the small structures of the face, while the higher-contrasted tones were used to "sculpt" the big form of the head.



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The Portrait in Three Dimensions *(continued)*

This portrait, which is also a profile, achieves its sculptural illusion of form with more or less two tones—one that represents the light and one that represents the shadow. The strength of contrast of the tones clearly separates the front from the side of the face. The level of realism comes from the accuracy of these shapes rather than detail.

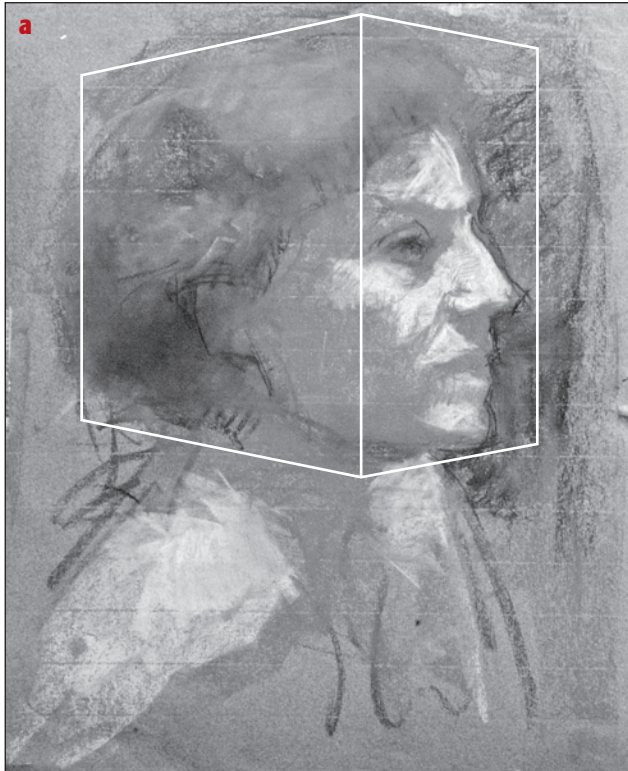


Profile of a Woman, by Dean Fisher

In many portrait drawings, a common occurrence that compromises the form of the work is *overmodeling*. Overmodeling occurs when you complicate the value of different tones in the shadow area, or in an area that is lit. You will not only lose the quality of the surface that you are rendering, but you will also lose the sense of three dimensions; consequently, the form of the head will appear flat. Very often, a student becomes fascinated with the range of tones within the shadow, or in the light, and overstates, or complicates them. This drawing shows that the shadow, even though treated very simply, as a large area of tone, can achieve the desired effect of rendering a major change in the form of the head. As usual, the goal is to separate the front plane from the side plane of the head (a).

After you become familiar with the large forms and planes of the head (b) and you have some experience accurately observing and drawing the shapes you see, you can start to omit visual information for the sake of aesthetics and still make your drawing believable.

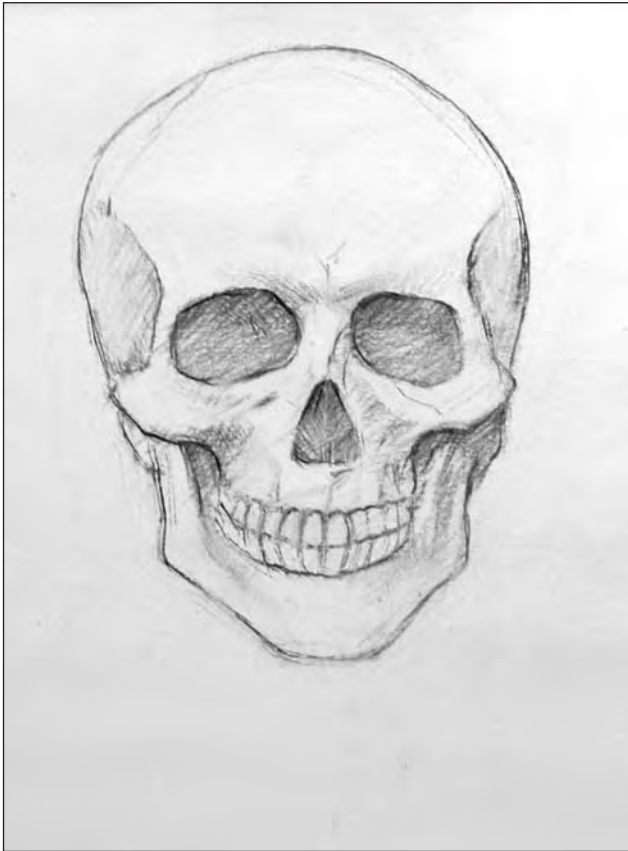
Very often, if a work has too much information (or detail), it becomes overly literal and dull. A skillful artist knows that suggesting fewer aspects of a subject can allow the viewer to “fill in the details.” Limiting the details often makes for a much more engaging work of art.



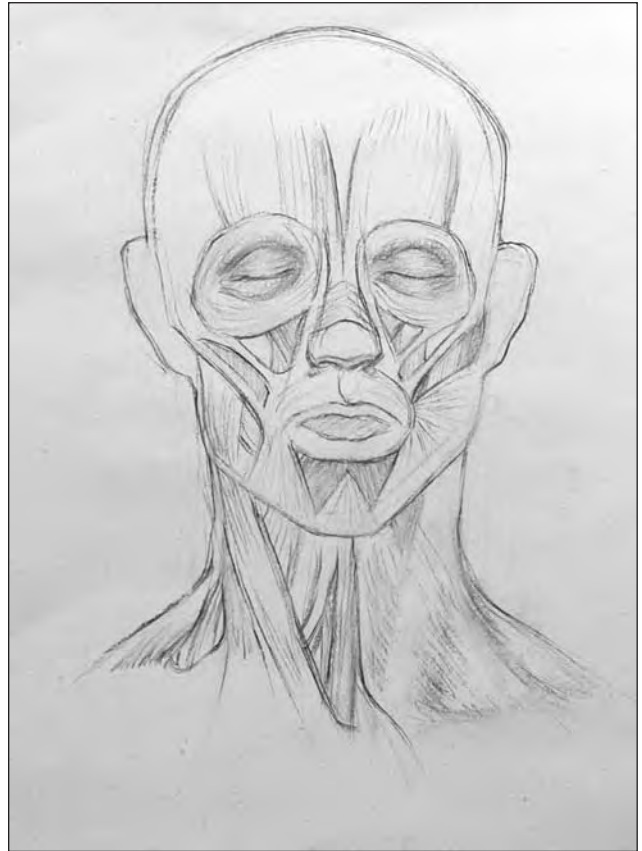
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The Portrait in Three Dimensions *(continued)*

While it isn't necessary to know every bone and muscle in the human head and figure in order to draw it well, "the more you know about what's happening on the inside, the more you will see on the outside." This may seem to contradict thinking of the head as a simple block (as noted on the previous pages), but actually it's a progression of ideas. It is logical to work from the basic to the complex. You can "jump in" and begin drawing the human head based on the concepts that were previously discussed and gradually add pieces of information about anatomy to deepen your knowledge.

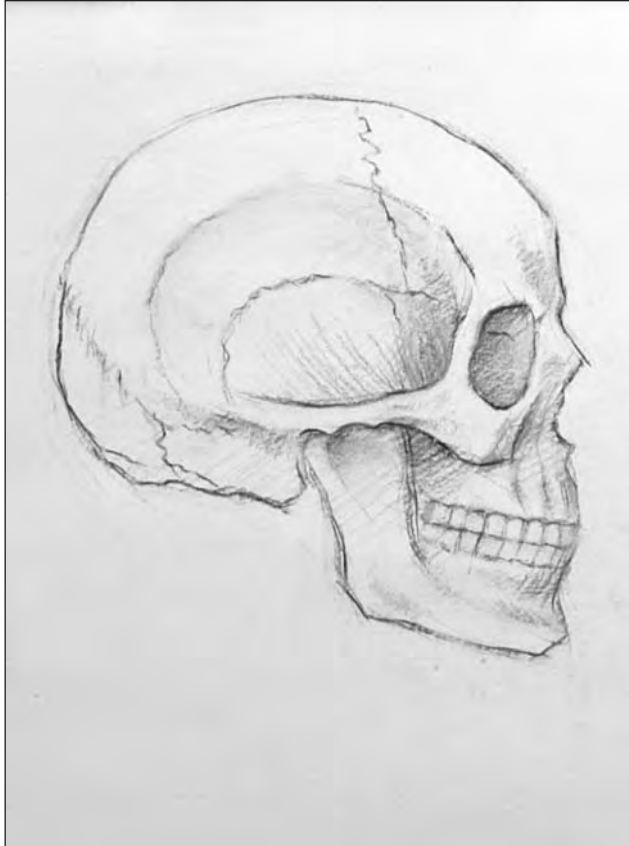


Anatomical Study, by Dean Fisher



Anatomical Study, by Dean Fisher

It is a very good idea for the student who is serious about drawing portraits and the human figure (see Chapter 12) to purchase a book on artistic anatomy. You can use it to refer to while you're working with a model. You'll be amazed at how much anatomical information you'll internalize by doing this. Over time, you will also discover how much more sense the shapes and shadows that you observe in your subject make with some basic knowledge of anatomy.



Anatomical Study, by Dean Fisher



Anatomical Study, by Dean Fisher

Facial Features

Now that you have an understanding of the “foundation” for building a human head, you can move on to giving it an identity. After all, a portrait should convey an ample amount of specific information about the subject.

The subjects of this section are two beautiful Degas portraits, which will be used to help explain some particular points when you observe and draw facial features. It is important to stress, however, that the principles being discussed about human facial features are not meant to be rules to draw all features but rather a guide to help you see more and better understand the particular features of the people that you will draw.

All of the copies in this book were copied by the authors. This is a practice that they urge you to follow because it is an excellent way to discover how a master artist resolved issues that you will be dealing with in your own art.

Note: *It would not be practical in this book to show each facial feature drawn from every angle. However, you will find many different portraits in this chapter that you can study.*



*Copy after Edgar Degas' Head of a Man,
by Dean Fisher*

First Portrait

THE EYE

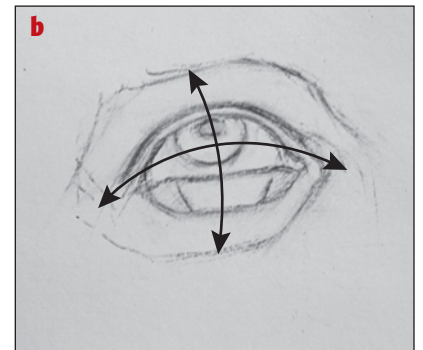
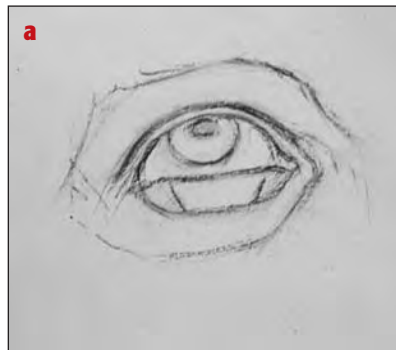
This image of an eye, which is the right eye from the portrait on the previous page, is a good example of an eye to study. It clearly demonstrates the form of the eye because the vantage point is shown from below.

The compound curvature of the eye is clearly visible from this angle—both horizontally and vertically. Even when an eye is rendered from a straight-on vantage point, it creates the illusion of the roundness of the eye. The eyelids can be thought of as bands of flesh that holds the eyeball in the eye socket. Because the eyelids follow the curvature of the eyeball, they have to be shaded accordingly. If you shade the eyelid with the same tone all the way across the lid, it appears flat and, in turn, flattens out the form of the entire eye. You will notice where the light source is coming from, based on where the highlight is placed on the eyeball and how all of the other shading of the eye corresponds to that highlight.

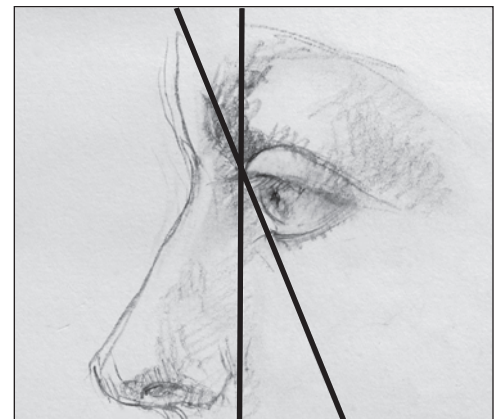


In this simplified drawing of the eye (without shading), the eyelids conform to the eyeball, and the eyeball is nestled in the eye socket (a).

This diagram (b) is designed to show the compound curvature of the eyeball and eyelids. Always keep this in mind when drawing an eye from any angle.



In this profile of the eye, notice how the upper lid and lashes protrude farther than the lower lid, effectively creating an awning to protect the eye. This is why when the head is lit from above, the upper lid receives more light than the lower lid and often creates a cast shadow on the eyeball. It is also clear, based on their different angles, how eyelids conform to the curvature of the eyeball.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Facial Features

(continued)

THE NOSE

It's important to have a clear understanding of the forms and proportions of the nose. It is often the area of the face that is closest to the viewer, and therefore, it has to be rendered with clarity. If clarity of form is achieved, the nose becomes a device that brings this part of the face closer to the viewer spatially, allowing the other parts of the face to recede.

With a view of the nose from this angle (a), you can see some of the distinct surfaces, or planes, of the nose. The underside of the nose is at a dramatically different angle from the two sides and the frontal plane; therefore, when the head is lit from above, it receives the least amount of light. Because the nostrils are deep recesses on the underside plane, in most cases, they will be darker than the general tone of the underside of the nose.

It is always crucial when rendering the features to think of the basic planes of the form and how they relate to the light source. In this case, the light is coming from above and in front of the head. The greatest concentration of light is indicated by the highlight, which is where the lower-right side of the front plane meets the lower-right side of the bottom plane.

This diagram demarcates the main planes of the nose (b). Even though there is a great multitude of nose types and sizes, they can usually be broken down into these basic planes. Of course, the sizes and proportions of the various planes, relative to each other, will differ from nose to nose.



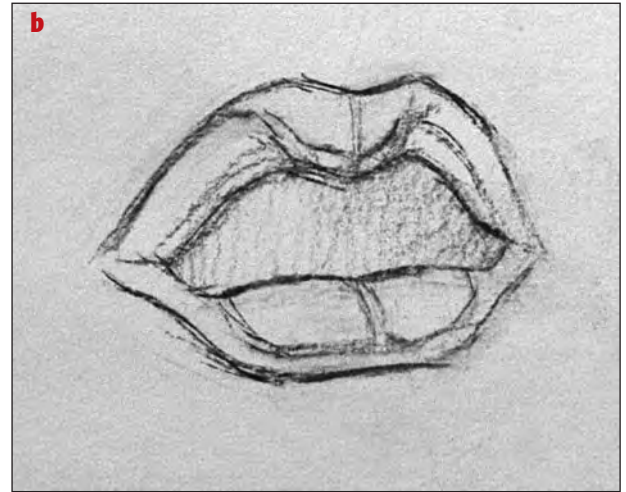
THE MOUTH

The mouth is, without a doubt, the most flexible feature of the human face and is capable of an enormous range of expressions (a). At first glance, you might think that the mouth is a simple structure to render, but with careful examination, even when the mouth is in a natural, relaxed position, it consists of a series of complex forms and planes.

Of course, there are an infinite number of types of mouths (as is true with any of the features), but this example shows some of the principles that pertain to understanding the form of the mouth.

In terms of the large form of the mouth, it's helpful to think of the lips as conforming to the curvature of the teeth. In many, but not all, individuals who are viewed in profile, the top of the upper lip protrudes slightly beyond the lower lip. The upper lip often has more distinct planes, while the lower lip has rounder, broader, more gently changing forms.

As depicted in the diagram (b) below and diagram (b) on page 213, the top and bottom lip are at very different angles to each other. When seen in profile, the top lip is angled downward, with the center and highest point of the upper lip being the farthest point out. The lower lip is the exact opposite, being angled upward and with the center and lowest point being the farthest out. This is why when the light is coming from above—which is most common—the upper lip is in shadow and the lower lip is receiving direct light.



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Facial Features (continued)

This copy after another Degas portrait of the same individual will be used to further examine facial features. You will notice that it is a very different view of the same model, and shows the same features from different angles. This is a very sculptural view of the model's head, as the light is strong from above and in front of the face, creating strong tonal contrast between the front and side planes.



*Copy after Edgar Degas' Head of a Man,
by Dean Fisher*

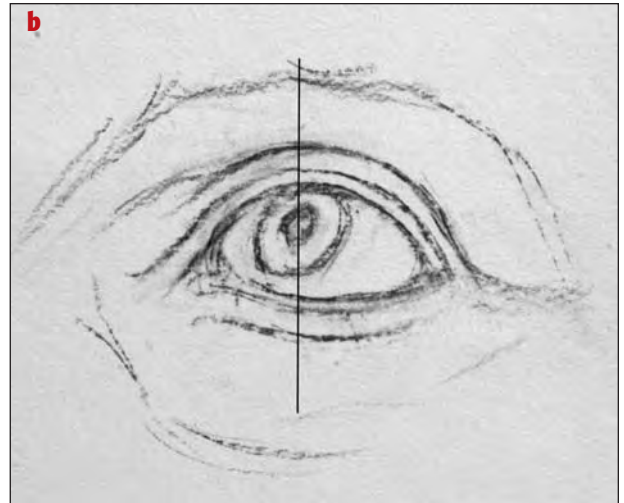
Second Portrait

THE EYE

From this angle (a), it becomes clearer how deeply the eyeball is set in the skull, with the eyebrow, nose, and cheekbone surrounding it for protection. The difference between this view and the front view is that if a vertical line were drawn down the middle of the eye (through the pupil), the left half would be considerably shorter than the right half.

Because we are seeing a $\frac{3}{4}$ view of this eye, the eye is actually foreshortened. *Foreshortening* (which will be covered in more depth in Chapter 12) occurs when part or most of a form obscures the rest of the form that is behind it, thus giving the illusion that the part of the form in front is coming toward us (b).

Also take note of how much of the eyelids are visible and how the light and shadow changes on them, giving further roundness to the eye.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Facial Features

(continued)

THE NOSE

In this $\frac{3}{4}$ view of the nose (a), the triangular side plane is defined as the shadow side of the nose. Of course, the shape of this side plane will vary greatly, depending on the character and shape of the nose you are drawing. There is a clear demarcation of the front and side plane, with the light coming from the front-right side of the model's head. Also, the angled underside plane of the nose is visible as a darker shadow that follows the length of the nostril. The greatest amount of contrast occurs where the front of the underside plane meets the front plane at this point, which optically helps the nose advance toward the viewer. Take note of the point midway down the bridge of the nose, where the sharpness of the light and shadow becomes the greatest. This is a point where the nasal bone is closest to the surface and often creates more abrupt changes in the planes of the form.

This diagram (b) delineates the three main planes of the nose that would be seen from this view.

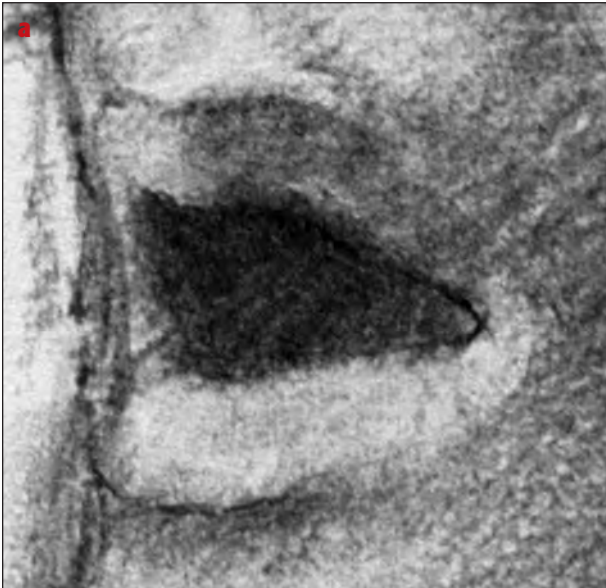


THE MOUTH

Here the mouth is shown from a $\frac{3}{4}$ view which, as with the eye shown from the same angle, foreshortens its shape (a). It is especially accentuated because of the far side conforming to the shape of the teeth, which makes it turn back on itself. The difference in how the light influences the lips is noticeable, with the lightest area being the lower lip because of its angle relative to the light. There is some direct light on the far side of the upper lip because the light is coming from that side of the head.

This diagram (b) indicates the main planes of the mouth, which helps to make its foreshortening clearer.

Because of the many shapes and sizes of features from person to person, the most fail-safe method to draw them well is careful observation coupled with the use of the various methods of measuring that were discussed in the previous chapters. All the verbal descriptions of the “nature” of the features can only take you so far. An artist’s vision is their greatest tool; all preconceived ideas must be avoided to make art with truth at its core.



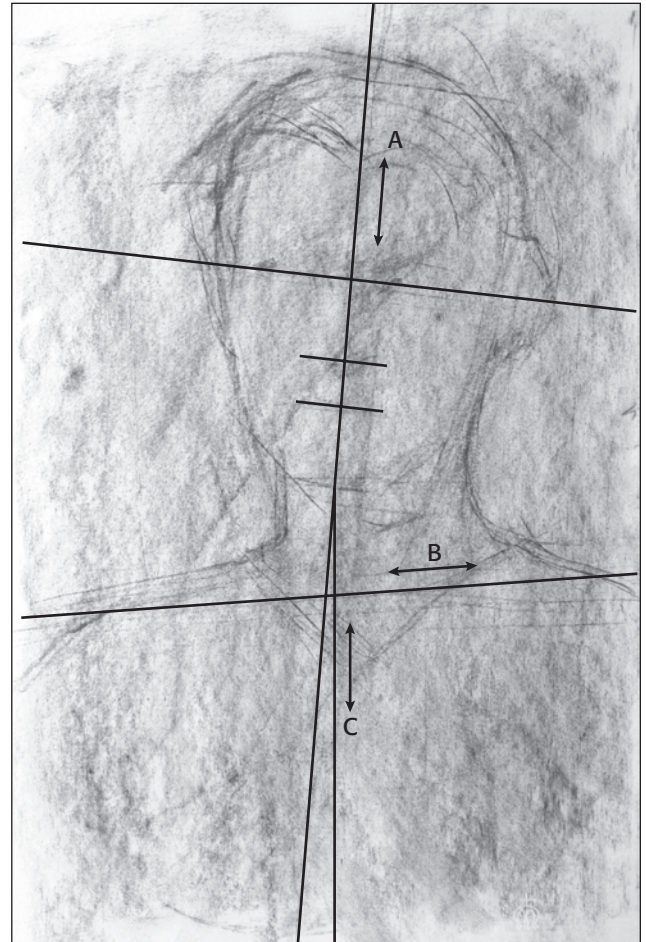
Drawing a Tonal Portrait

As this is the first drawing demonstration of an animate subject in the book, you might be surprised that the approach is identical to that of other subjects. Although it may seem a little calculated or cold, using careful observational methods is the best way to achieve a convincing depiction of your subject in realistic, three-dimensional terms.

This tonal charcoal portrait begins on a good-quality piece of charcoal/pastel paper. The first step is to create a medium-value tone on the paper by using the side of a piece of soft vine charcoal and then lightly smear the charcoal with a paper towel to make the tone more uniform.

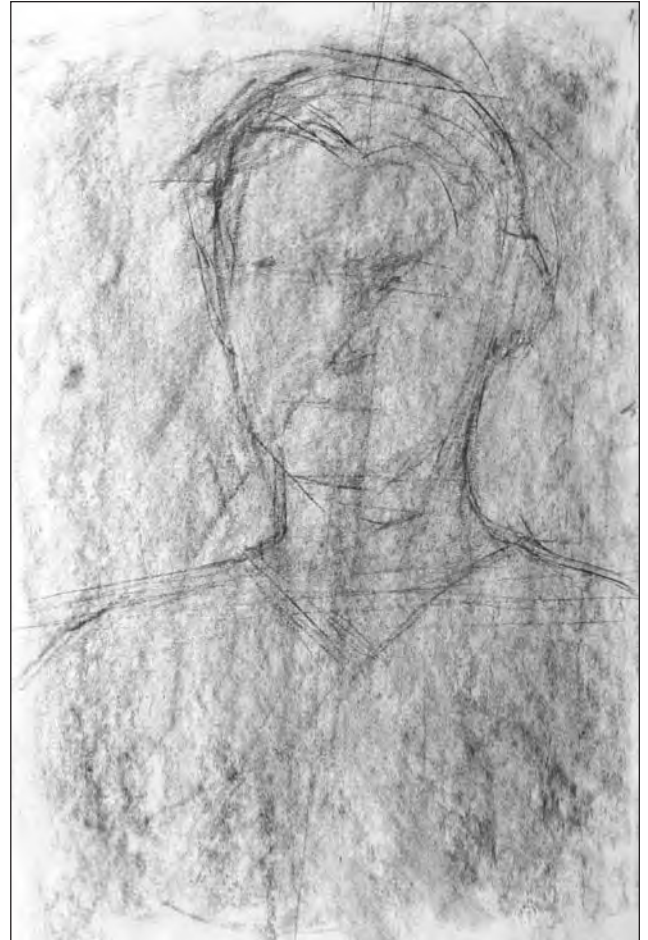
Carefully observe the model (or sitter) to take notice of his/her posture or gesture. A large part of achieving an excellent likeness comes from capturing this aspect of your subject. A useful technique is to look at the tilt of the model's shoulders compared to the tilt of the head. Most people don't sit with their shoulders exactly horizontal or with their head and neck completely vertical.

To see this subtle relationship of angles more clearly, you can use a long, straight instrument such as a paintbrush or $\frac{1}{4}$ " dowel rod. Hold it through the center of your model's head (the center of the top of the head to the center of the chin). In the diagram, this line is labeled as A. Then place the brush or rod in front of his shoulders (at the tops of the shoulders) and label as B. Compare these angles. Also check the angle of the neck, C—usually less tilted than the head. Record these three angles on your toned paper with very light lines. After you have done this, you can begin to build the shape of the head and its placement on the shoulders and torso of your model. Once you have very roughly placed the features, you can put a line through the center of the eyes and mouth, and at the end of the nose. This will make you draw these features at the right angle for the head. These lines are parallel to the chin.



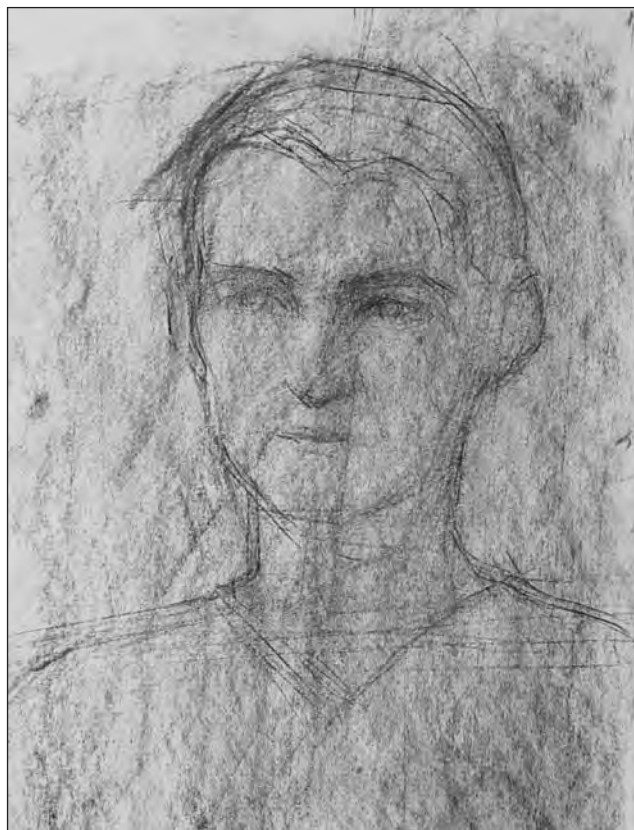
The best example of achieving a likeness can be considered in this way: You are walking outside at dusk, and it's slightly foggy. Someone you know is walking toward you, and you are able to recognize this person based on a bare minimum of information. What you're registering and recalling about this person is the overall shape of his head, the placement of his features, and his posture. When you think about it in this way, it does seem remarkable that someone could be recognizable based on such a small amount of information . . .

In this stage, the artist mapped out the shape of the model's head, the width and length of the neck, and the width of the shoulders using the measuring methods in Chapter 4. It is crucial to establish the correct width of the head versus its height because this is another very important aspect of achieving a likeness. At this all-important stage, failing to draw the shape of the head correctly can adversely affect the placement of all of the smaller components and features. After this was done, the artist found the line of the eyes, placement of the nose, and the line of the mouth and hairline using the measuring methods. Feel free to draw these lines in your drawings to use as guides. As long as you draw them lightly, you'll be able to eliminate them later.



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Drawing a Tonal Portrait *(continued)*

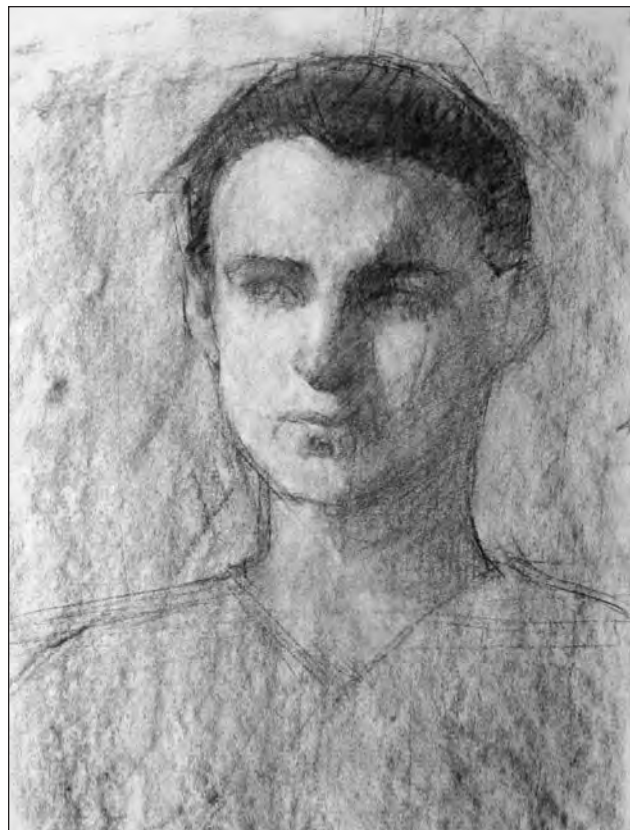


In this stage, using line, the shape of the head and the placement and shape of the features have been refined. At this point, there is no need to rush into using tone until you are satisfied that you have approximated what you are seeing.

TIP

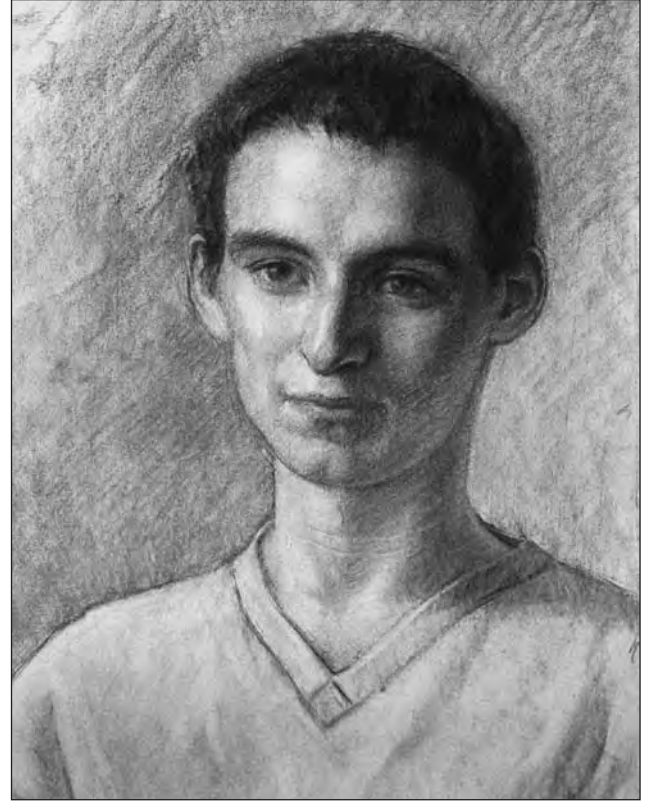
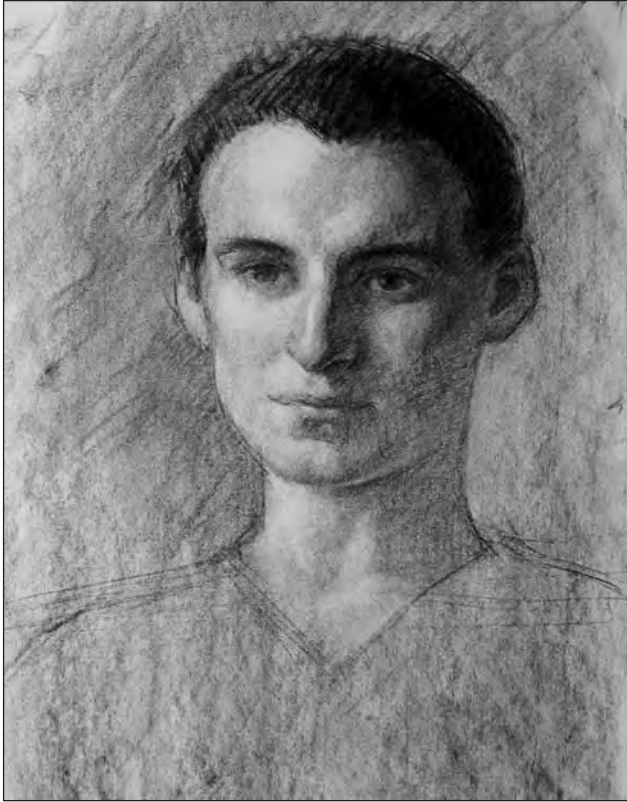
Comparisons

It is highly recommended that you move your easel and drawing next to the model and step back 8–10 feet to compare the two side by side. Doing this often is the best way to check your drawing for proportional errors.



The drawing undergoes a big transformation with the development of the pattern of light and shadow, and darker tone for the hair. Suddenly, with the use of these three simple tones, the drawing takes on a sense of form and light. For now, all that is necessary is the development of these basic shapes of tone without all of the variations that take place within them. At this early stage, even without the inclusion of extensive information about the features, we can sense the eyes in the eye sockets and the nose and mouth being fairly well developed. This is because the artist has taken the time to establish the pattern of light and shadow fairly accurately.

Remember that you are working from large shapes to smaller shapes. The best way to see your subject in these basic terms is to squint. This is a simple but extremely effective and important technique to practice!



Portrait of Tommy, by Dean Fisher

Here the artist has begun to develop some range of tone. The drawing has been “keyed” at this point, indicating the lightest light and darkest dark. Every other tone in the subject will fall between these two tonal points.

Because the model has very dark hair and the darkest dark occurs there, the entire shape of the hair has been darkened, which in turn makes the light side of the face appear lighter. Be careful not to overstate the lights in the hair; the highlights, may appear light, but if you compare them to the lightest lights, you will see that in reality they are usually considerably darker. As the shadow is darkened in the central area of the face close to where the shadow meets the light, the face begins to appear rounder because of the increased tonal contrast. Remember, contrasted tones will emerge and less contrasted tones will recede.

In the final stage of the drawing the artist proceeded to refine the features, mainly the sitter’s right eye. It’s crucial to pay special attention to the eyes, as this is usually the first place the viewer of the portrait will look. Much of the expression is carried by the eyes, but it is very important that the mouth and musculature throughout the face be rendered to be consistent with the facial expression that is being sought after. The half tones in the light area of the face are added to give form to the cheek and mouth, which are slightly flexed to help render the gentle smile of the sitter. More attention is given to the rendering of the hair and shirt, keeping in mind that these areas must also be modeled with solidity, with a consistent light source to the rest of the drawing.

Gallery: Portrait Drawings

This beautiful portrait was drawn in charcoal and white chalk on orange/brown paper. The artist achieved a wide range of tones, from the black of the charcoal to the white of the chalk and many subtle gradations in between. The artist skillfully allowed the warm mid-tone color of the paper to show through in the lights, mid-tones, and darks to make a more efficiently executed drawing, as well as to impart an overall warmth to the work.

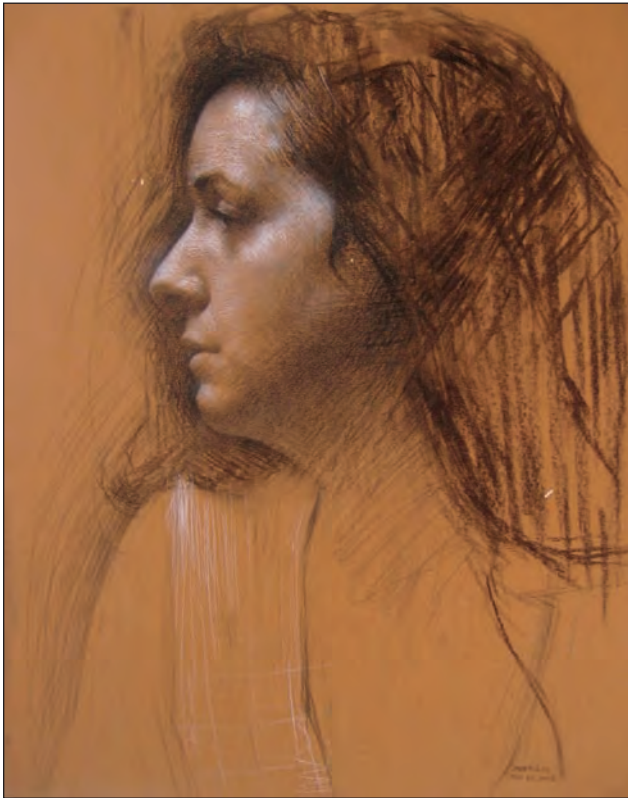
The white chalk and charcoal was applied with a variety of hatched and parallel lines, which remain “transparent” throughout the drawing, thus allowing the color of the paper to show through. This quality would have been lost if the medium had been smoothed out.

TIP

Learn from the Work of Other Artists

The history of portraiture is a long and rich one, with hundreds of dazzling examples throughout the centuries. Art students are so fortunate to have an instant opportunity to view a museum’s entire collection online. They can also go to the library to find wonderful art books or, best of all, visit many great museums in person.

Seek out as many drawing examples, and glean as much technical and artistic insight from these works, as you can. Study, take notes, and make copies of the art that inspires you the most. Then, apply what you learn from other artists’ work to your own art. After all, you can be sure that this is the way that the great artists of the past developed their skills.

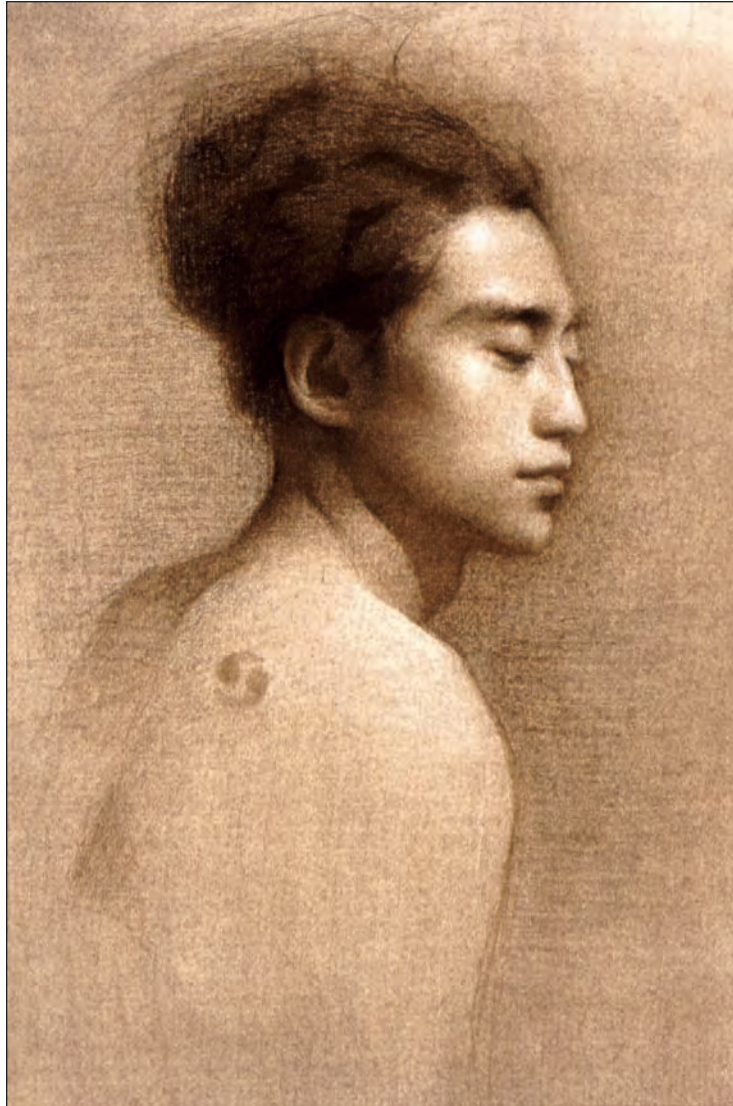


Portrait of Sue, by Jack Montmeat,
courtesy of the artist

This poetic drawing has a wonderful, almost shimmering quality of light that is the result of the almost complete elimination of hard edges. The only really crisp edge is at the point where the shoulder meets the neck and on the cast shadow on the neck.

Even though this is a portrait of a particular person, because of the lack of detail and the diffused quality of the shading, the subject becomes much more about form and a gently sifting quality of light.

The forward lean of the subject and the wispy strokes around the hair suggest a feeling of movement that adds to the ethereal mood of the drawing.



*Pan, by Juliette Aristides,
courtesy of the artist*

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Gallery: Portrait Drawings *(continued)*

This is a very animated pencil drawing that conveys a clear feeling that it was drawn from life. There is even the feeling that the artist might have been in conversation with the model while the drawing was being done.

Eventually, when you reach a high level of skill, you'll be able to draw models that might move a little, for example, while in conversation. These slight movements of the mouth may be a little disconcerting at first, but try to capture them when you can. The more you do so, the more proficient your skills will become. Movements such as these give some animation and liveliness to your drawing.



Portrait of Mary Crisp, by Heidi Harrington, courtesy of the artist

Because this contemporary (modern-day) portrait has a serene otherworldliness and a marked emphasis on the two-dimensionality rather than the three-dimensionality of the form, it is reminiscent of early Renaissance portraiture. The high level of realism comes from the sensitive linear rendition of the face shape and the features.

This portrait is drawn with charcoal and white and grey pastel on a cream-colored paper. The layering of the darker gray pastel over the lighter pastel gives a shimmering, luminous quality to the skin.



Portrait of Rosa, by Silvius Krecu, courtesy of the artist

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Gallery: Portrait Drawings *(continued)*

This portrait, which was created with diluted black acrylic paint and brush, demonstrates a sureness of touch that comes with years of experience. The darks in the drawing were created mostly with vertical brush strokes using various opacities of paint, and varied in tone by the strength or delicacy of the touch of the brush.

There is a dramatic quality of light created by the use of dark shadows and a dark background, with very light lights that mostly come from the white of the paper.



Portrait of Sergei Rachmaninoff, by Shell Fisher, courtesy of the artist

When a drawing is cropped this closely to the face, you can create a very immediate and personal portrait. It's as if you are 10 inches away from the subject, which is a closeness that only occurs with family and the closest of friends. When this format is chosen, it gives the viewer a chance to really explore the face, and ideally the internal world of someone previously unknown.

The closeness of this portrait is further intensified by the very direct gaze of the model. Another form of immediacy comes through the asymmetry of the mouth, as if the little girl were biting her lip.



Portrait of Jorge, by Frank Bruckmann, courtesy of the artist

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Gallery: Portrait Drawings (continued)

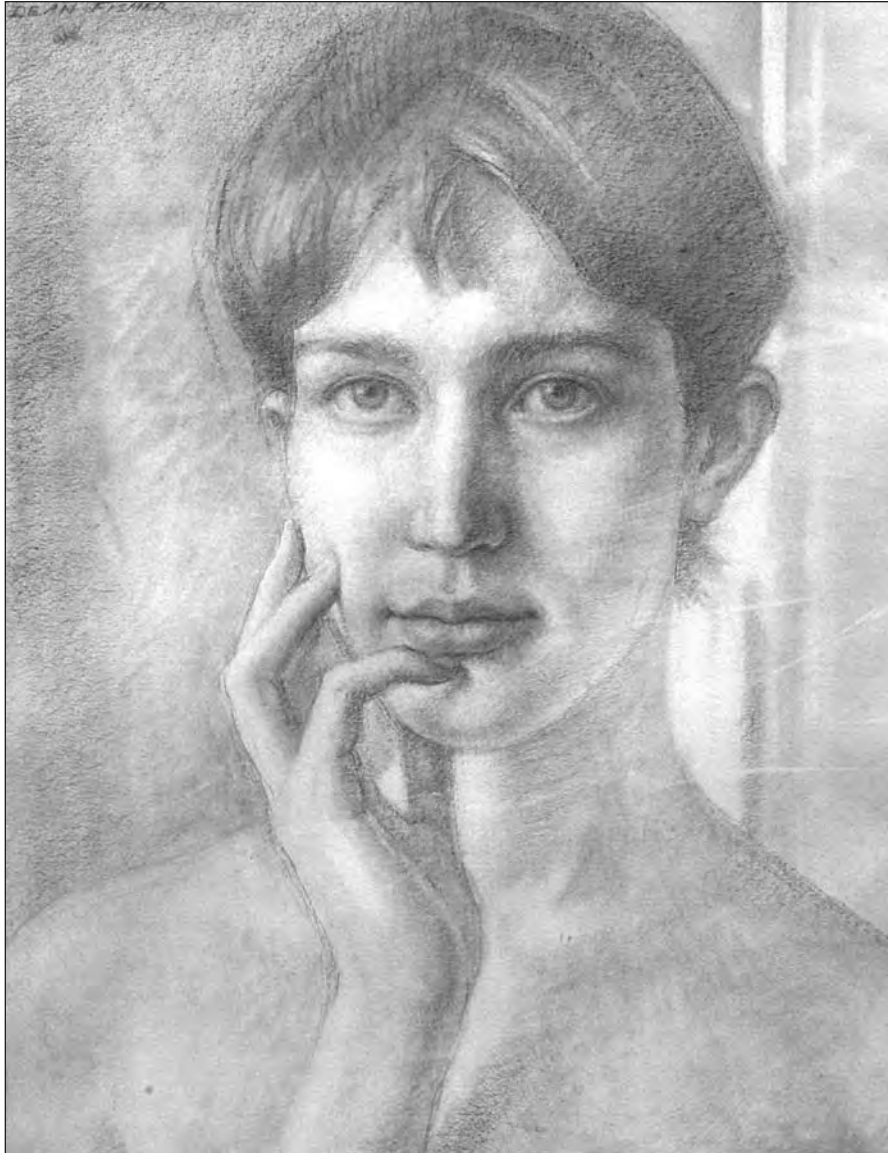
This is actually a reproduction of a painting that was created along with a number of drawings as studies for a larger composition. This work was included because of its similarity to many of the drawing examples that have been shown so far, in terms of the rendering of the form. The only difference is that the medium was oil paint applied with a brush, instead of graphite or charcoal. You can see that the leap into painting isn't that far away!



Study of a Figure, by Dean Fisher

In this graphite drawing, a small range of tones was used for the sake of creating a particular mood. Only the first third of the tonal range is used, which allows for a light and airy quality.

Because of the high-keyed tones and soft transition from one tone to another, there are no barriers to stop the flow of light and feeling of movement.



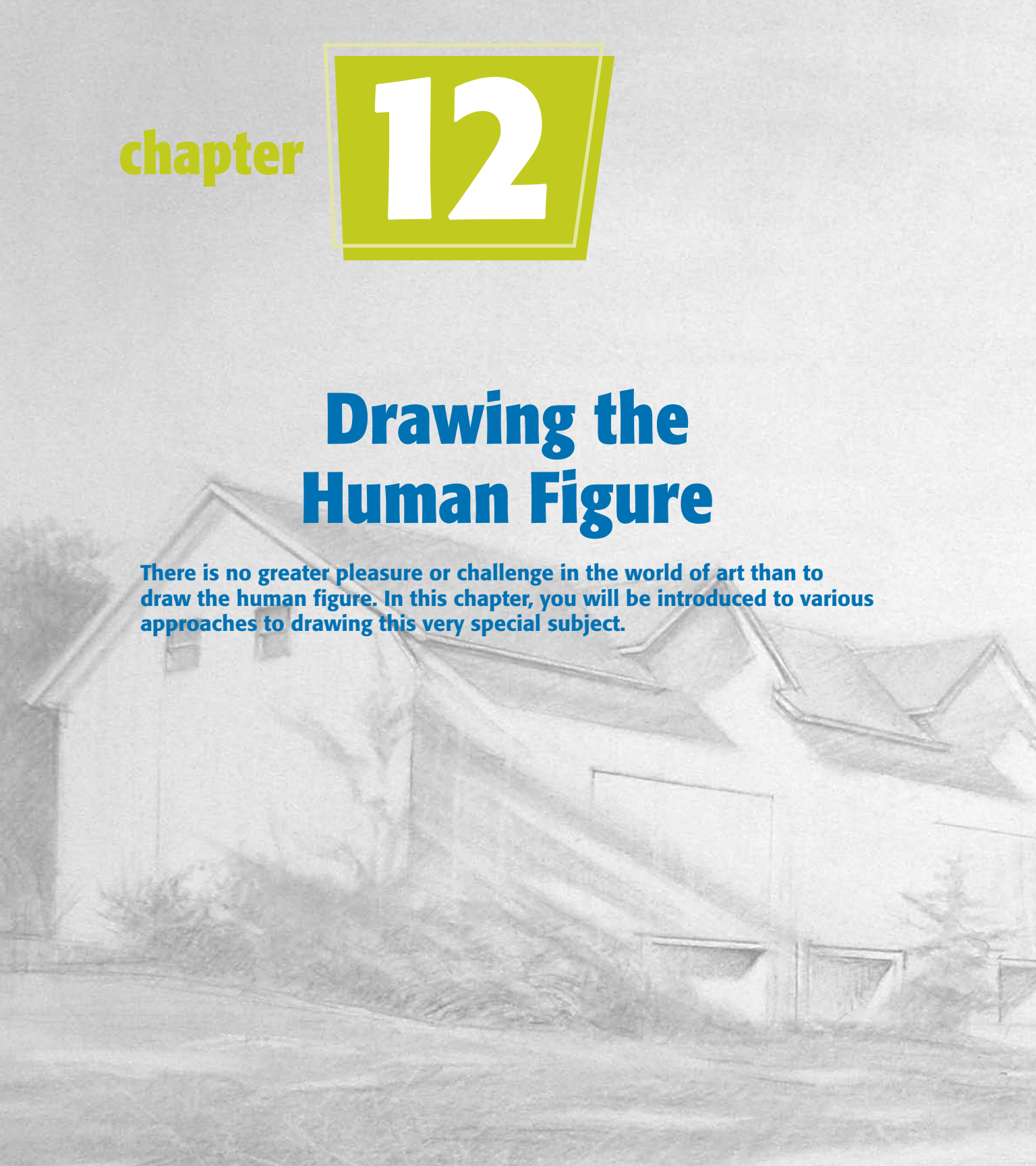
Portrait, by Dean Fisher


chapter

12

Drawing the Human Figure

There is no greater pleasure or challenge in the world of art than to draw the human figure. In this chapter, you will be introduced to various approaches to drawing this very special subject.





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Set Up the Model Pose

Drawing the human figure is an excellent way to improve and expand on your observational drawing skills. In Chapter 11, you were advised to draw a portrait of a real person in front of you and not use a photograph to draw from. Drawing from a live model is a good foundation on which to build your drawing skills and your skills of observation. Drawing from a live model will also enable you to understand what is in front of your eyes from many different angles.



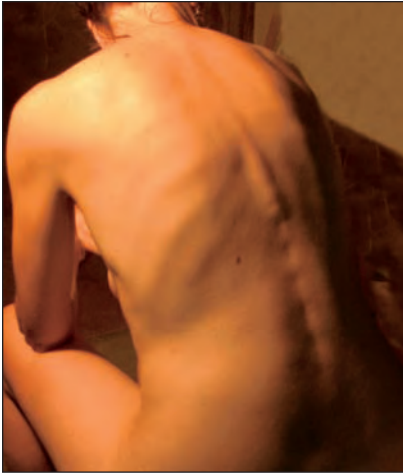
Figure at Rest, by J. S. Robinson

Some Points to Consider

It goes without saying that in order for your model to hold a pose, he should feel comfortable in that position. The model should be able to hold the pose for 3 or 4 hours, with breaks. Unless you are a skilled artist and can work quickly, a contorted, difficult pose will not be possible. For those dramatic poses, artists often draw quick sketches. (You can find examples on pages 244–247 in this chapter.) People who use their body everyday in their work, such as professional dancers or athletes, will be able to hold interesting poses for extended periods of time. If you are lucky enough to find people who can do that and are willing to pose for you, seize the opportunity. Not only will you be drawing someone with mastery over their body movements, but you will also get an excellent lesson in anatomy.

If you have a model in front of you to draw, then you have the opportunity to observe and record accurately what you are seeing. When the model takes a break, do not rely on the model to remember exactly how he posed. Instead, you can use masking tape, as shown in this photo. Place the tape around the edges of the model's body if they are sitting on a surface, or feet if they are standing on a surface or floor. Do this while they are still in position, before they take a break.

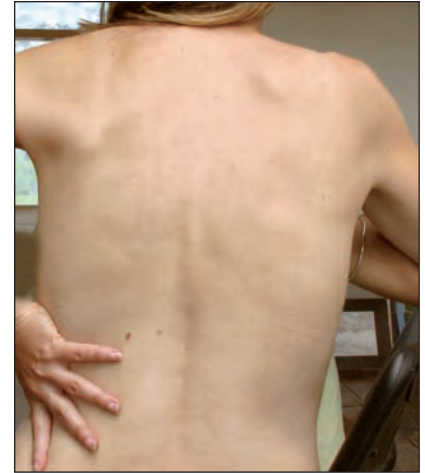




This example shows the best lighting situation for a beginner. Remember that light reveals form. When drawing the human figure, the same principles that were discussed in Chapter 5 also apply here. The only difference is that there is a lot more information in the human figure to absorb. You may want to study a book on anatomy for artists, to view the skeleton and muscles of the body. This will lead you to a greater understanding of the internal mechanisms of the human form. The more you draw, the more you will increase your understanding.



Consider this lighting situation, in which there are numerous sources of light. Notice how difficult it becomes to draw the form, as compared to the previous example. The different sources of light flatten out the form because there is no definite pattern of light and shadow. (See Chapter 5 for more information on light and shadow.) Of course, it is still possible to draw this figure, but in order to do so, you have to rely more on a mental awareness of the planes of the body to draw the form in three dimensions. In this situation, the light may confuse you, instead of helping you.



Here the model's back is lit by daylight. As noted in Chapter 3, this is a soft light. The form of the back is lit very evenly. A knowledge of anatomy greatly helps in this situation, and remember to imagine the back as part of a cube, which will help you to impart the illusion of solidity with this type of lighting. However, the more you practice at drawing a form like this, the more successful you will be.

Note: It is a good idea to keep the first drawings you do, and then compare them with the drawings you are doing 6 months or more later.

Light Reveals the Form

To help you understand how to approach figure drawing, this section contains copies of old master drawings. These are drawings by artists of the past who were recognized in their day, and are still recognized today, as great artists. The examples succinctly show the main points to keep in mind when drawing the human form.

The most important point to remember when you want to draw a figure three-dimensionally is that you must think in simple forms. Poussin rendered these figures very simply, as blocks. This is a good way to begin thinking about how to draw the human figure. In this work, you can clearly see the sides of the subjects' bodies and also the front and back of their bodies. Each limb has been defined in the same way. The arms, legs, and heads are all blocks, and each side of the block is fully lit, in shadow, or half lit. By simplifying in this way, you can more easily deal with the complexity of the form. This is the lesson of Poussin: Simplify.



Copy after Nicolas Poussin's The Holy Family on Steps, by J. S. Robinson

This copy after a drawing by Taddeo Zuccaro also shows the human figure as a block, although it is more detailed than the drawing by Poussin. Zuccaro defined the planes that are facing the light and the planes that are facing away from the light, just as Poussin did. You can see how all the planes of the body, which are in shadow, face the same direction. There is no conflicting light source. Zuccaro has portrayed a direct light source and has consistently obeyed it in his drawing. The back, the backs of the legs, and the side of the right arm are all planes facing the same direction—away from the light. Consequently, they are all in shadow. On the side of the body that is in the light, the left side as we look at it, Zuccaro has to make a distinction between the back, side, and front planes of the body in order to construct a block; in other words, give the figure a sense of three dimensions. He has defined the side of the block, or the side plane, by some very carefully observed modeling, or shading, of the lower part of the scapula and the rib cage, and by placing a shadow under the armpit. He is not forming a straight, clean edge with this shading because the planes of a figure are rounded. This is why drawing the figure is a challenge. Consider a building, where one wall or plane meets another wall or plane, and forms a clean, straight edge (unless the building is old). It is easy to define walls or planes here, as they have edges. A human body does not have such a defined edge. The job of the artist who wishes to represent the figure three-dimensionally is to find ways to differentiate the front plane of the body from the side plane of the body, and the side plane from the back plane. He has to shade or use line to suggest the edge of the plane. Zuccaro defined only a small section of the front plane of the figure. He ended the front plane by using a broken up dark line to trace the curves of the chest, torso, and stomach. He has also used small shapes of shadow under the left arm to show the underneath portion, the underneath plane of the arm, to distinguish it from the side and top planes of the arm.

As you draw the figure more and more, you will be able to practice drawing a line to follow the contours of the body. Note how sensitively Zuccaro draws the line around the form of the body. This line is not the same value everywhere. It is broken up in places. A flat uniform and complete line drawn around the whole body will not appear three-dimensional. Note that this is an unfinished drawing, so the torso has not been completed.

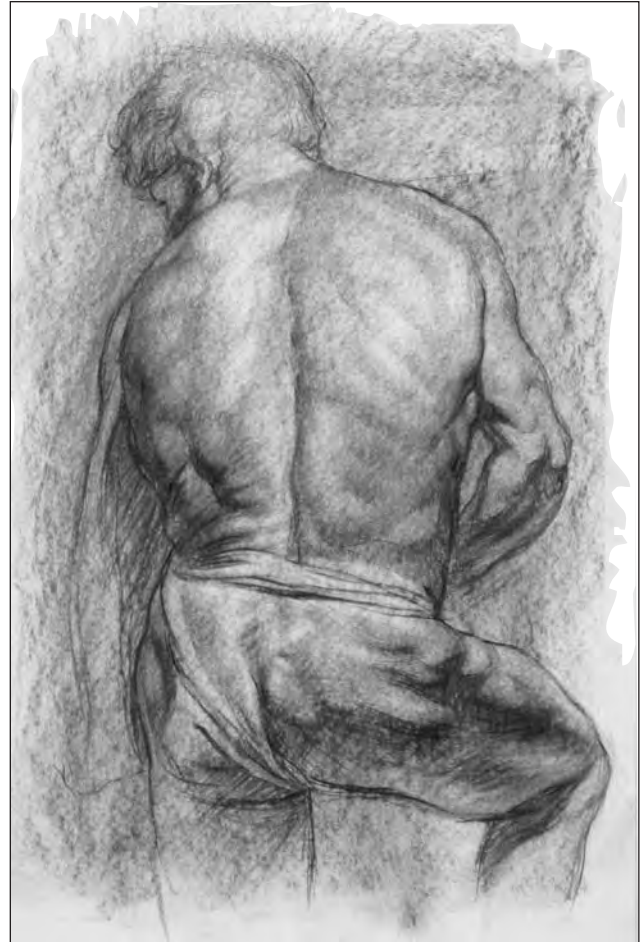


Copy after Taddeo Zuccaro's Nude Male Figure with Upraised Arms, by J. S. Robinson

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Light Reveals the Form *(continued)*

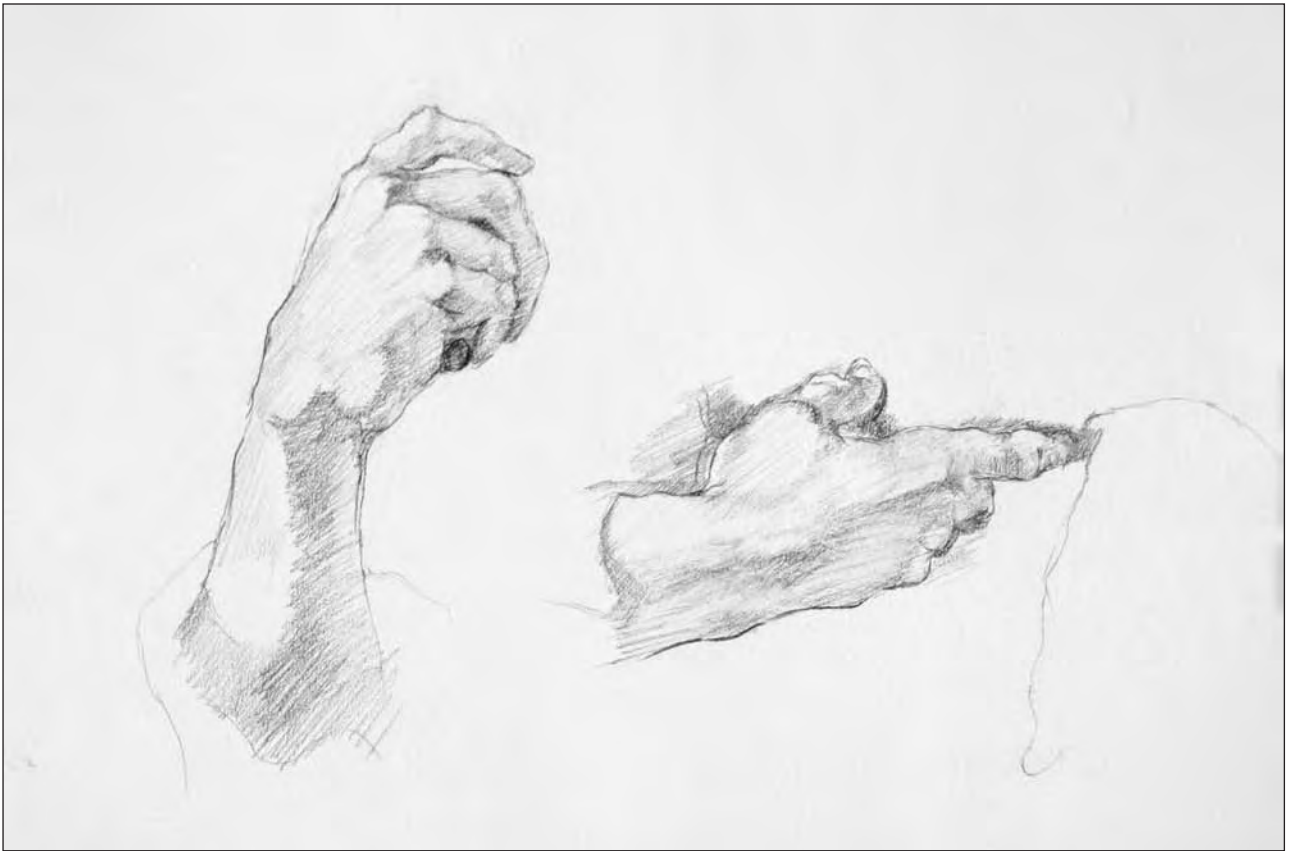
In this copy after Peter Paul Rubens, we can see what a major role the spine plays in the body. Every gesture or action our bodies make will be revealed by the placement of the spine. When you draw the figure, be acutely aware of the position of the spine. This will ensure that you draw the gesture or movement and weight of the figure correctly. Ruben's technical skills and knowledge of anatomy allowed him to create a wonderful sense of the mass of a back in this drawing. The light falls directly onto the back. Rubens has rounded the upper area of the back, especially the right side, by concentrating his lightest tones in this area. Squint at the drawing and you will observe the roundness in this area. Due to the back being fully lit, Rubens has to describe the anatomy of the back with fairly light tones in his shading. You will notice how he uses mostly soft gray tones. He hardly uses any dark tones, except for the left side of the back. On the left side he is showing the slight bend and twist at the waist. Note the dark contour line used to emphasize the twisting motion. He also darkly shades the *Obliquus externus* and *Aponeurosis of latissimus dorsi* muscles, to reveal the pressure put on these muscle groups due to the weight of the body being carried by the left leg; notice how they bulge. Look how Rubens has suggested the side plane of the body on the right side. To do this, he has emphasized the rib cage with dark accents and used darker shading in the area to the right of the rib cage to denote a different plane. The contour of this side plane is drawn with a very dark line. This has the effect of pushing and rounding that plane, away from the viewer and into the distance. This dark plane is moving away and is strongly contrasted from the brightly lit plane of the back.



Copy after Peter Paul Rubens' Study of Male Figure, Seen from Behind, by Dean Fisher

This copy after Andrea del Sarto shows some examples of hands. Many beginners find hands difficult to render, but they are really no different from any other part of the body. Remember to try and simplify the forms; view the hands as a block with sides, a front, and a back. The first hand shows the arm with its front and side planes separated from each other. This is because the light is shining on the back of the hand. The side plane of the arm, the wrist and the palm, are all in shadow because these planes are facing away from the light. The first phalange of the forefinger, along with the knuckles and the back of the palm, are all facing toward the light. The last three fingers are bent down away from the light and are shaded to show this difference. Notice how the side of the raised forefinger is defined by a subtle, darker shade of tone.

When drawing the hands, follow the line of the bones very carefully with your eye. Do not make the lines around the fingers heavy; keep them soft, unless you see a dark shadow between the digits. You should draw the shape of the shadow, as portrayed here. See how the shadow between the second and third digits is triangular in shape. In the second example, the light is shining along the side of the arm and hand. The side of the hand is receiving more light, while the back of the hand is receiving less light. Place your own hand in the same position as shown in the drawing, and take note of how the light differentiates and separates the planes of the figure or hand for you.



Copy after Andrea del Sarto's Studies of Hands, by J. S. Robinson

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Light Reveals the Form *(continued)*

There is an even light on the whole back of the figure. Rubens has decided to rely more on the use of line rather than shading, to describe the structure of the body. Observe how he sculpts the figure by varying the quality of the line around the perimeter of the figure. Notice where the figure or limb is bent, Rubens has thickened his line to emphasize the gesture. Dark shading is used in roughly four parts of the body, under the buttocks, the left knee, under the left calf, and at the waist on the right. Rubens, being the superb artist that he was, pinpointed these areas as crucial to depict the gesture or stance of the figure. The shape of the shadow under the left buttock is lengthened, which shows the viewer that the left hip is lowered. The shading under the buttocks beautifully illustrates the roundness of each cheek of the buttocks. Take note that the shadow in this region retains an airy quality. There is far too much light hitting the figure overall for the shadow to be dense and heavy looking. Consequently, the shading or tone is made up of slanted lines. This allows some space in between the lines, which conveys the effect of a light and airy shadow.

The solidity of the legs is achieved by the shading of the outer contour of the right leg and the shading underneath the muscles on the thigh and calf. Notice the slight difference between the calf muscle on the left leg and the calf muscle on the right leg. The left knee is bent, and so the left lower leg appears at a different angle from the right leg. As a result, the left calf appears rounder as we see it pulled forward by the knee rather than straight on, as is the case with the right leg. This is slightly exaggerated by the very dark shading just above the back of the knee. This, along with the rounding of the left calf, serves as a signal that the leg is bent. This is the shorthand which artists use to create their illusions of space and depth.

When you are drawing, be very attentive to how the posture of the pose affects all the muscles of the body and observe how the weight of the body is distributed.



*Copy after Peter Paul Rubens' Nude Woman,
by Dean Fisher*

TIP

Shadows in the Light

Find a way to draw subtle modulation values of gray tones to suggest light in a well-lit area of the subject.

There is no better way to learn to draw than to copy the works of master artists from the past and the present. We have seen in the previous section how great artists solved their own drawing problems. You can learn a great deal from both past and contemporary artists by viewing and copying great works of art, firsthand. Major cities usually have great collections, and smaller cities also have their own treasures in smaller museums. Most museums allow you to draw on-site. However, you should find out if they have any stipulations concerning drawing in the museum before you begin.

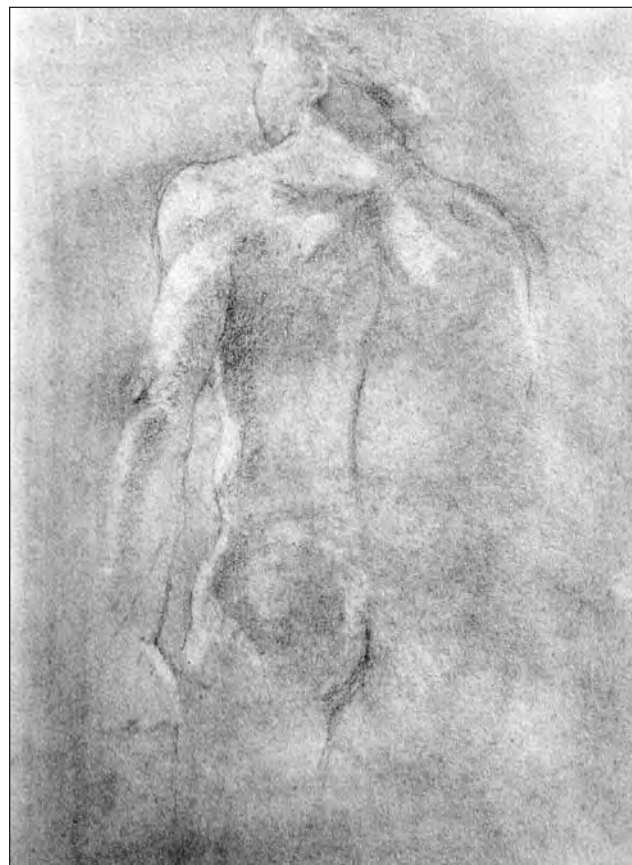
Studying Techniques of Drawing

Copying from master drawings allows you an intimacy with the work that you cannot obtain by simply looking at a reproduction. The more you draw, the more you will notice how differently you will approach looking at a work of art. In time, you will view art works with more knowledge gained by your own attempts at, and study of, drawing. This sense of inquiry will only add to your pleasure of looking at great art.

When you look carefully, you will begin to understand and appreciate the techniques that these old masters employed to overcome any technical difficulties they may have encountered. In the fifteenth century, artists wanted to create the illusion of space, and so invented perspective. In the example on the opposite page, in the copy after Rubens, you can see how a shadow in the light was suggested, or drawn, without destroying the illusion of the light itself.

All of the previous examples in this chapter have shown how the artist has tried to simplify the complicated form of the human figure, while still suggesting the illusion of space and volume. Each artist found their own personal solution. You can observe this through the unique way each artist drew. No one else draws with a dramatic, bold line like Rubens, and no one else has the gentle, flowing line of Andrea del Sarto. Draw often and you will find your own characteristic technique of drawing. The way in which you solve technical or compositional difficulties will build your own character into your work. Of course, this can be very challenging and frustrating, but it can also be immensely interesting and rewarding. This is where you will find the joy and creativity in your work.

Note: Some museums allow you to bring in a chair and a drawing board or easel; check with each museum for their particular rules.



Study of a Back, by J. S. Robinson

Find Your Guidelines

When drawing the human figure, measuring parts of the body against one another will certainly help you draw correctly. In this section, you will learn how to make sure those parts of the body are aligned correctly for the pose you are drawing. You can use a pencil, or paintbrush, as discussed on page 44 in Chapter 4, to act as a guide for your straight and horizontal lines. With more and more practice, you will be able to imagine these vertical and horizontal lines, with no guide, so that you will be able to line up one part of the figure with another part to draw the figure with the correct proportions. You will be training your eye to look for connections that you normally would not think about.

This drawing of a standing figure may seem quite straightforward. However, the lifted head, the raised arm, and the bent arm all need to be properly aligned to suggest that the body's muscles and skeleton are working in sync, and also to create a believable gesture. Using the finished drawing shown here, the following examples have some imaginary lines inserted that the artist may have seen with his own eye to use as a guide to draw this convincing figure composition.



Figure at Rest, by Dean Fisher

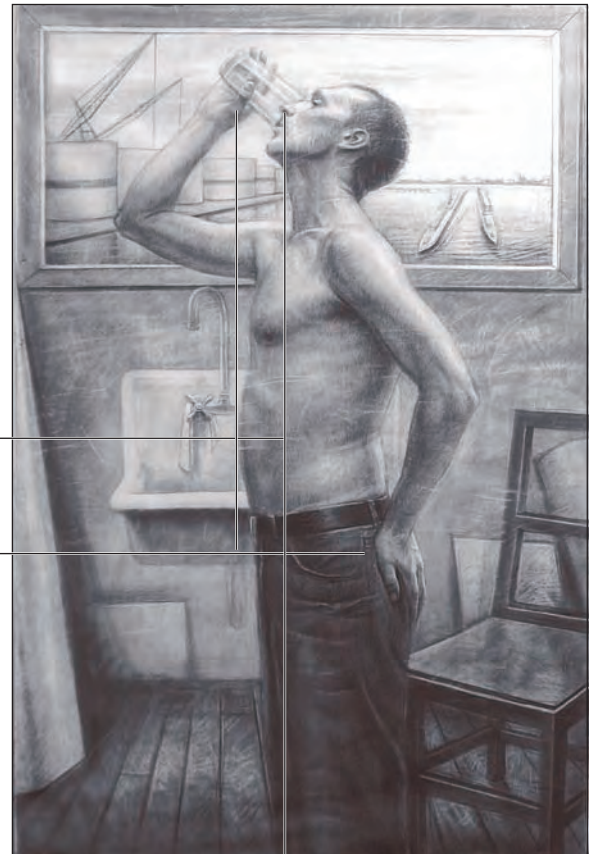
Train Your Eye



In order to render the tilt of the head correctly, the artist may have used the features of the face as coordinates with which to line up other parts of the body. The artist may have roughly drawn out the whole composition. If he then established the features of the head, he could then line up parts of the rest of the body against these points. For example, imagine drawing a vertical line from the bottom of the nose, where it meets the face. This line could then act as a guide for the placement of the clavicle and the edge of the rib cage.

Stomach
protrudes
to the left

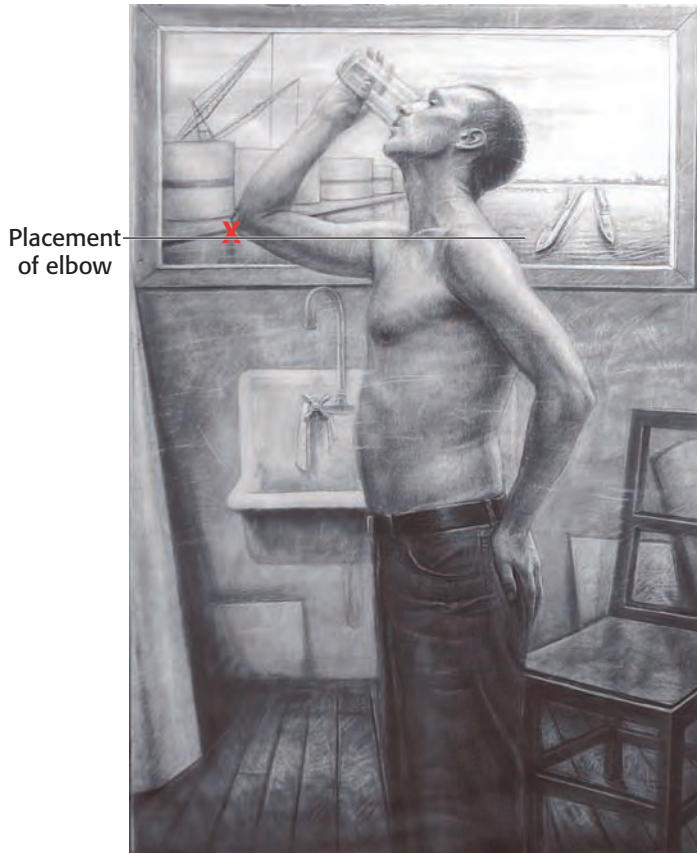
Edge of
pocket



As our imaginary vertical line continues, the edge of the pocket becomes aligned with the bottom of the nose. This confirms to the artist the placement of the hip in relation to the head. The stomach is not in line with this vertical guide, but is in line with the outer edge of the thumb. The artist therefore could see the width of the protrusion of the stomach. It was important for him to get this right, in order to show that the body is slightly bent at the waist and that the back is arched.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Find Your Guidelines (continued)



Placement
of elbow



Mouth
to ear

The artist could have checked the alignment of the elbow of the model by drawing or imagining a horizontal line from just below the top of the left shoulder. The bottom of the elbow falls on this line. Notice that the end of the front of the neck also lies on this line.

To ensure that the artist drew the ear at the correct angle, he may have imagined how it was positioned in relation to the shoulder. You can see that the lobe of the ear is nicely aligned with the bony clavicle at the top of the shoulder. The top of the ear is aligned with the belt loop of the trousers and the front of the hand. All these coordinates show the artist that the ear should be drawn almost horizontally because the head is tilted back. Notice that the artist could have used a horizontal line drawn from the lower lip, to show him the placement of the top of the ear.

In this copy after Zuccaro (see also on page 231), observe carefully the alignment of the limbs of the figure. In order to align the top of the body with the legs, Zuccaro may have imagined a vertical line from the inside of the right wrist. The inner left and right legs lie on this line. This could have given Zuccaro a coordinate with which to position the legs in relation to the right arm. He may have used the thumb on the extended left arm to align the foot of the right leg. Lining up these two limbs ensured that Zuccaro was able to draw the foreshortening (see next page) of the left arm convincingly, as he saw that he only had a small space in which to draw the forearm and hand. The back of that right arm may have served him as a coordinate, to show the angle of the extension of the spine before it curves out further into the buttocks.

At this stage in his career, Zuccaro imagined these lines to help him plot his measurements correctly. The ability to do this comes with time and practice. Be aware of this when you draw. Always make comparisons using your own eye or with the aid of an instrument or tool, not only when you draw the human figure but with any subject matter you encounter. Making these comparisons when drawing the human figure will enable you to draw the body correctly and with the model's own proportions.



Examples of Foreshortening

Foreshortening is a term artists use to describe the drawing of the human body in perspective. That is to say, parts of the body are shortened or drawn smaller, in order to create the illusion of a limb projecting into space. With this technique, the artist can create a sense of depth and space when working with the human figure. The following examples all display a mastery of foreshortening. Measuring and alignment, as described in the previous section, are your keys to be able to do this successfully.



Foreshortening the Torso

This beautifully fluid drawing, copied after Tiepolo, illustrates a human figure seen from below. As a consequence, the whole body is foreshortened. Being a beginner, you may actually find this quite difficult to do, especially when you do not see a limb or the body face on. Your brain may tell you that you could not possibly draw the chest so near to the chin, as Tiepolo has done. This is where you have to believe your eyes and draw exactly what you see in front of you. Do not draw with pre-conceived ideas of what something should look like.

Tiepolo has successfully conveyed the illusion of a figure sitting above the viewer through the use of measuring. Vertical and horizontal lines are useful and necessary for aligning parts of the body, when drawing a figure that is foreshortened. In these examples, measuring the distance between certain parts of the body becomes crucial. Take a tool and measure out this figure in the following way. See how the body, from the chin to the top of the thigh, is the same length as one head. The chest cavity and the torso must fit into this length. The thigh to the middle of the knee is also more or less one length of the head. The distance from the middle of the knee of the left leg to just below the calf muscle is also one head in length. The bent right leg, from the top of the knee to the small toe, covers a distance of two head lengths. The right leg is nearer to the viewer, and so it appears larger.

Try to think in very simple terms and remember that the object nearest to you will always be larger than objects that are farther away.



*Copy after Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's
Two Bacchantes, by J. S. Robinson*



This Tiepolo copy is used to help explain the mechanics of foreshortening. The vertical and horizontal lines drawn here, as in the previous section, are to align parts of the body in order to foreshorten correctly. When you are drawing a figure, you should try to imagine such lines on the figure, especially when you encounter a foreshortening problem. This is the only way you will be able to solve the problem. A vertical line through the left nipple shows you that the side of the frontal plane of the thigh roughly in half. It also goes straight through the middle of the head. The line separates the front plane of the head from the side plane of the head. A line drawn from the forehead (b) shows how the edge of the left thigh is aligned with the forehead.



A horizontal line from the model's left knee was drawn (c), so that you can see that the heel of the right foot begins on this line. The toes begin very roughly, halfway up the thigh, and end at the top of the kneecap (d). Within this very short distance, Tiepolo was aware that he must describe the underside of the foot, and therefore he had to shorten the heel. Notice on the right leg how near the calf is to the lower leg. Tiepolo has not drawn the ankle because he could not see it in this position. Therefore, the foot appears directly in front of the shin. When you draw you may find this difficult to do. Remember that foreshortening is all about one form overlapping another form. Tiepolo has convincingly suggested the correct size of the foot for the angle from which we are viewing it. The front part of the foot is roughly the width of the lit part of the left knee.

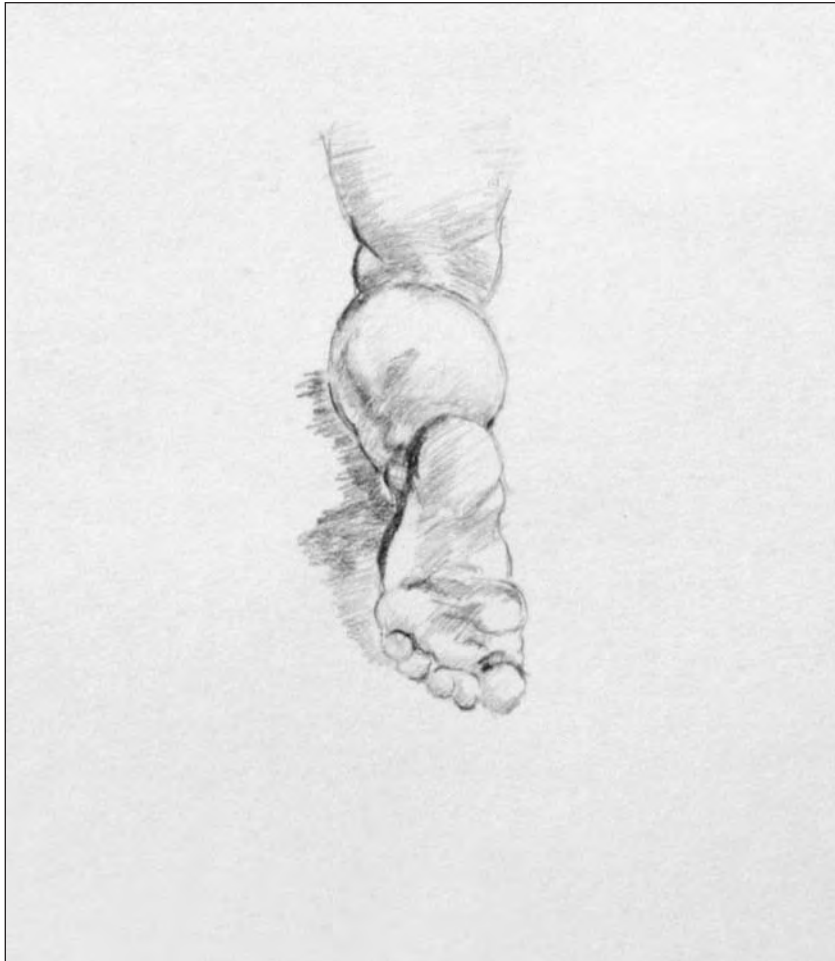


The vertical line drawn from the outer corner of the right eye is lined up directly with the side of the left kneecap (e). Notice also that this line separates the front plane of the lips from the side plane of the lips. The line running vertically from the inner corner of the eye (f) shows where the chest and rib cage divide the frontal plane of the body from the side plane. This vertical alignment may have acted as a guide for Tiepolo to show him how long the chest and rib cage should have been. The calf muscle of the left leg also ends on this line. The left side of the neck (as we look at it) is in line with the inner thigh (g). This may have served as a coordinate for the placement of the whole head in relation to the right leg (as we look at it). If you pay attention to this kind of information and look for it when you are drawing, you should have fewer, if any, problems with foreshortening.

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Examples of Foreshortening *(continued)*

In this copy after Rubens, in order to show the foot coming out toward the viewer, Rubens had to shorten the calf. The calf is only half the size of the foot when seen from this angle. You can draw or imagine a vertical line from the inner side of the thigh, down through the calf and the foot. Rubens may have drawn the foot first and then created the calf and thigh in proportion to the foot. Remember that in foreshortening, parts of the body overlap other parts, so it is important that their size be considered and observed carefully. For example, the heel is obscuring the ankle, and so Rubens attaches the foot to the calf with a small part of the ankle showing on the left side. Notice that the foot is considerably larger than the lower leg when seen from this vantage point. This is because the foot is nearer to the viewer. Think about perspective. See “Foreshortening the Torso” on page 240.



Copy after Peter Paul Rubens' Study of Lower Leg and Foot, by J. S. Robinson

In this study, as in the Rubens drawing, Michelangelo shows his mastery in overlapping one form on top of another. Notice how the upper arm has been shortened. This makes it project forward to the viewer and creates a great sense of depth. The lower arm overlaps the upper arm. Michelangelo had to severely foreshorten both the upper and lower right arm (as we look at it) to achieve the sense of the arm projecting toward the viewer. Michelangelo may have measured the position of the wrist in relation to the features of the face. He also foreshortened the back arm to show it receding back. Notice how short the upper arm is, in this case.

From all of the examples in this section, you can see how important it is to compare and see relationships between forms in order to obtain the right proportions, and the illusion of three-dimensionality. Make studies often and observe carefully.



*Copy after Michelangelo Buonarroti's Studies for the Crucified Human,
by Dean Fisher*

Find the Gesture of the Pose: Quick Sketches

To draw the human figure convincingly, you must be aware of the gesture, or the movement, or position of the body. This gesture gives movement and direction to your drawing, which makes it appear more lifelike.

Observing the gesture carefully helps you to understand the placement of the spine, which serves as the center of movement for the whole body. You can also think of this in the opposite way: Observe the placement of the spine, and you will understand the gesture.



Reclining Nude, by J. S. Robinson

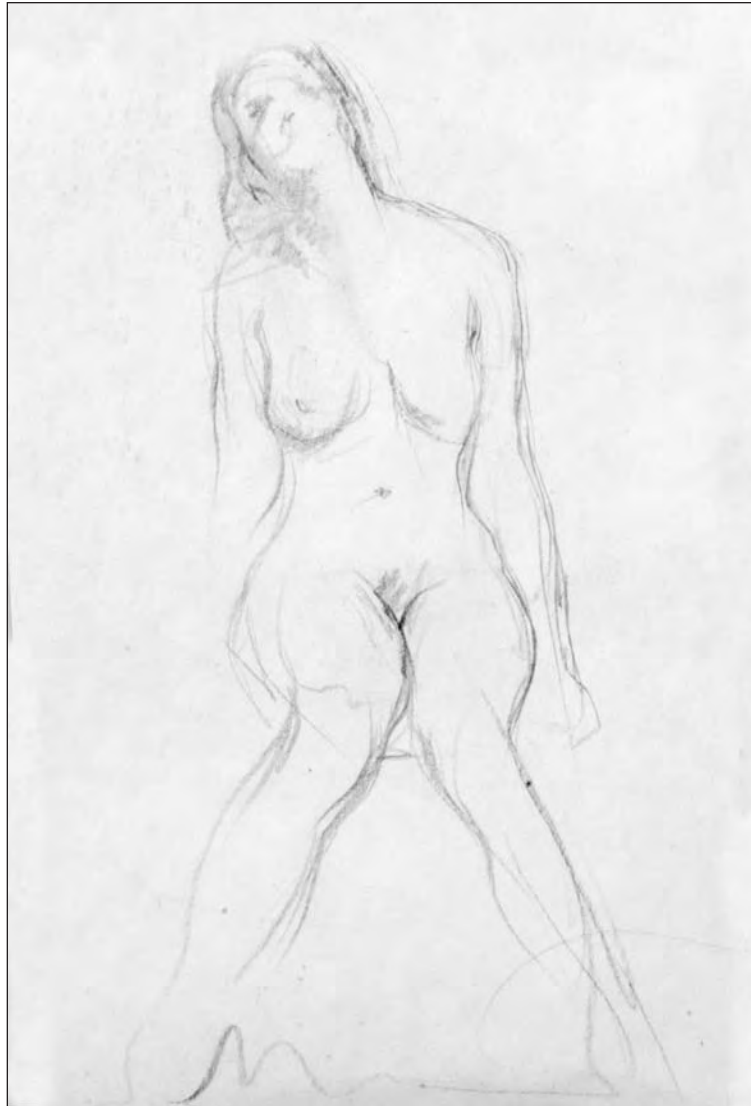
This quick sketch concisely conveys the gesture of the pose. The dynamism of the body lies in a forward movement caused by the inward arch of the spine. Notice how the artist is trying to find the correct line to describe the arch of the back. Do not be afraid to draw many lines in order to record the information precisely. The thick line representing the curve of the stomach as it extends outward reiterates the arch in the back. The curve of the stomach is accentuated, not only by the lovely use of line to describe its shape, but also by the positioning of the front leg, which completes the direction of that curve to the ground. The back leg supports the weight of the body, and the small, dark line at the back of the model's right thigh gives solidity to this supporting leg. The artist has shaded the right side of the body to show a pattern of shadow. This gives more weight to this side of the model's body, whereas depicting the light on the left side of her body emphasizes the flowing quality of the curve.

When you come across a pose that inspires you, observe it well, but try to feel the pose as well as see it. The appreciation this artist had for the pose is evident in the use of line and limited shading. This drawing depicts a gesture, not a model.



Twist, by Dean Fisher

The gesture in this pose lies in the tilt of the head to the left, and the extension of the neck back and sideways. This seemingly small movement gives this pose dynamism. The swift and concise line drawn on the left of the model's neck shows and emphasizes the direction of movement. That direction is carried through the pose and is emphasized by that same quality of line in the drawing at the waist, the outer side of the left arm, and the outer side of the left thigh. The stretch in the neck is portrayed by the shadow underneath the jaw, which is angled in line with the direction of the head and serves to emphasize that tilt of the head.



Seated Figure, by Dean Fisher

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Find the Gesture of the Pose: Quick Sketches *(continued)*

The direction of movement in this sketch is captured with few details. The artist has simplified the pattern of light and shadow to convey a figure about to stride forward. Shadow and light have been used here to describe the form, but line has been used mostly to describe and accentuate this sense of movement. The only line drawn to describe the back is a short, dark line that pronounces the curve of the back as the figure steps forward, its darkness accentuating this movement. The small accent for the elbow on the right arm provides just enough detail to let the viewer understand that the arm is bent toward the back of the body, which emphasizes that the figure is leaning to the left and moving her weight forward onto the left leg.

The sense of capturing an unfinished movement is very strong in this sketch. Look at the line to the left on the back. This does not describe form but makes a lovely sense of tension when juxtaposed with the curved, broken line describing the outer side of the right arm and the right leg. This point of tension holds the movement of the figure in check, so that she will always seem to be about to stride forward. Techniques like these give a sense of timelessness to art, because the action is never completed.



Figure Study in Motion, by Dean Fisher

This is a relaxed, peaceful pose. The gesture has been emphasized in this example, not through line or tone, but mainly by composition. The emphasis is on the head, which is framed in two ways.

The arms make a “V” shape formed by the line drawn along the bottom of the left arm, and the line drawn along the top of the right arm, which is outlined in the example. The head becomes framed in the widest area of the “V” shape. The back and side of the body form another “V” shape, with the head situated in the open end of the “V.” There is a repetition of direction, which guides the viewer’s gaze to what the artist felt was the most important aspect of this sketch, the sense of peacefulness contained in the position of the head and the expression of the face.

You can use compositional devices like this within your work to emphasize what you feel is important in your drawing. Often this will happen quite naturally, and you will unconsciously accentuate what attracted you to the subject in the beginning. The more you draw, the more this will happen. If you consciously add elements to make your point understood, these elements can become obvious and too mechanical looking. Therefore, it is important that these elements be subtle, so that the viewer is not always aware of how you are directing their gaze. This sense of mystery will involve the viewer in the work, and make them return to the work again and again.

As stated earlier, draw often and these compositional devices will become apparent without you forcing them into position. This compositional device of the open-ended “V” leads the viewer to a calm, serene face, which is the only detailed part of the drawing. This reinforces the aim of the drawing—to suggest a sense of calm and peace. Accordingly, all of the features of the face are softly drawn, with the exception of the curved, darker lines to suggest the closed eyelids, and the downward, darker accents at the corners of the lips to suggest the muscles relaxing around the mouth. Darkened lines are kept for use as a framing device and for emphasis. The softness of the shading underlines the sense of tranquility and comfort.



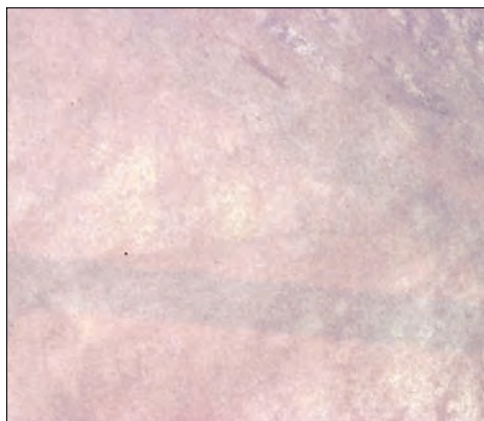
At Rest, by J. S. Robinson



Add a Color to Your Paper

In Chapter 4, you were introduced to creating toned paper using graphite. Using a similar process, you can add some color to your drawings by adding a tone to your paper using soft pastels. After following the steps below, you will be ready to draw a figure on colored paper.

In this example, the easiest type of pastel to use is a soft pastel because it can be easily erased.



Unlike pencil, you do not have to sharpen your pastel stick. Simply choose a color that you would like to use. Unwrap the paper binding around it, and use the length of the stick to apply the pastel to the paper.



Then, with a paper towel, rub the pastel gently into the paper until you obtain a nice, even finish. If your finish is not even, just add some more pastel over the rougher areas and rub in gently again.



You can add another color on top of the color you have already used by following the same procedure. The first layer of pastel will not come off because you have already rubbed it into the paper. This example has two colors rubbed into the paper.



Using a pink pastel as the main color to which some ochre pastel was added, the artist began his drawing with a rough outline of the figure in charcoal. You can see that he was trying to get the right shapes and proportions by using several lines instead of just one perfect line.

Using charcoal allows you to easily wipe away something that you don't like in your drawing. You can always replace the pastel underneath if you need to erase a lot of charcoal. In the beginning, keep your marks light and do not press down hard on your charcoal or graphite. Patiently work out your model's proportions at the start of your drawing. If you do not do this, the problems you have ignored will plague you as you continue drawing. It is best to lay down a solid foundation in order to feel free to explore more creative possibilities. Drawing the correct proportions of anything, especially a human figure, takes time, patience, and practice.



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Add a Color to Your Paper *(continued)*

To continue this drawing, the light on the top half of the left side of the body has been erased. This includes the shoulder and half of the upper left arm, as well as the side of the face, neck, and top part of the ear lobe. Although the arm is being lit, all of the pastel cannot be erased because the form still needs to be explained. This is where the pastel works beautifully as a mid-tone. The color of the pastel is light enough to suggest the light, but darker than the white of the paper. In this example, the artist used pastel to create a beautiful mid-tone to set off the lit areas. If you keep this in mind, you will not have to shade in any mid-tones, as the pastel is doing all of the work for you.

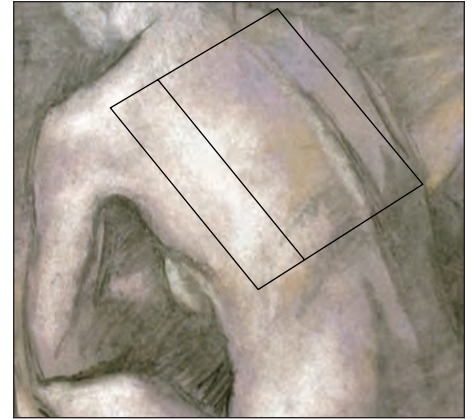
The artist has begun to shade in the shadow areas, using charcoal to do so. The pastel has been shaded over in the top-left corner, as the light in this area is not as strong as the light on the figure. Here a darker tone is needed to provide a contrast to the mid-tone area on the figure. Notice how quickly you can suggest the solidity of the figure by simply concentrating on the basic light-and-shadow pattern. Having an existing tone on your paper provides you with a basis on which to base your range of tones, from lightest to darkest. If the tone in this example was very dark on the paper, it could have been used as a basis for the shadow area, rather than as a mid-tone.



To further refine the drawing, the artist has erased the pastel completely in areas on the left side of the body. He has used white pastel to emphasize the highlights on these areas and also added charcoal to the left side of the buttocks, to show the underside of the form as it turns away from the light. Notice that the shading does not go straight up to the edge of the perimeter of the figure. The mid-tone was very slightly erased to reveal the reflected light. This reflected light rounds the form (see "Reflected Light" in Chapter 5). The artist also developed the left leg by erasing some of the tone to reveal the light shining on it. Also notice how some shading was added with charcoal to the left side of the spine, which suggests the form of the rib cage. This gives the back a more rounded appearance.



The highlight on the top half of the back differentiates the back into two separate planes. The plane that the spine lies on is shown by the square. The smaller rectangle shows a different plane of the body. This plane is turning away from the plane of the spine. Of course, this is a rough approximation, as the body is curved and not square. When you draw a human figure, you have to be aware of the body's round forms. There are no hard edges to distinguish one plane from the next. Of course, you can simplify the form as much as you want, just as in the Poussin example (see page 230) and those of many other artists. Successful simplification of the figure reveals an extensive knowledge of it. When you begin to draw the human figure, you want to gain as much knowledge through observation as you can. With this knowledge, you will be able to simplify these complicated forms and make them appear believable.

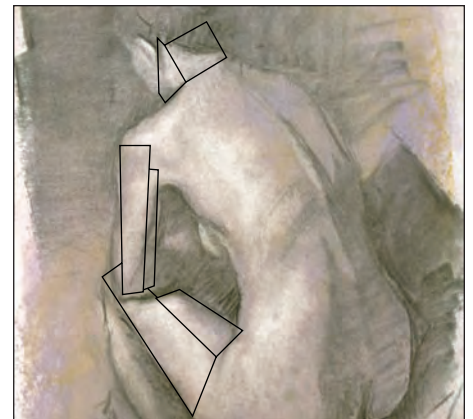


Here are some more planes of the back's surface. The smaller square shows that the back is facing a different direction from that of the previous example. If you find this difficult to understand, sit in the same position and feel your own back. You will feel how the top of your back is facing upward. As you move your hand down your back, notice how the angle of the back changes. It assumes a different plane to the top of your back. The larger shape shows the back rounding to the side of the body. This lower half of the body is facing a different direction, compared to the top part of the body, which is outlined in the previous example. This lower part of the body is now more vertical compared to the top half of the back. Be aware of how the surface of the back changes direction. If you understand this concept, and are aware of the resulting tonal changes, you will achieve a solid three-dimensional form.



Here are more planes of the body, indicated at the top and side plane of the thigh and along the top and side plane of the arm. The neck can also be treated like a block too. Two additional planes, the side and the back of the neck, are also shown. To make all of these areas appear round, you must subtly vary your tone from one plane to the next, to distinguish them from each other. If you do not, the area will appear flat, and you will not achieve a roundness of the form.

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Add a Color to Your Paper (continued)

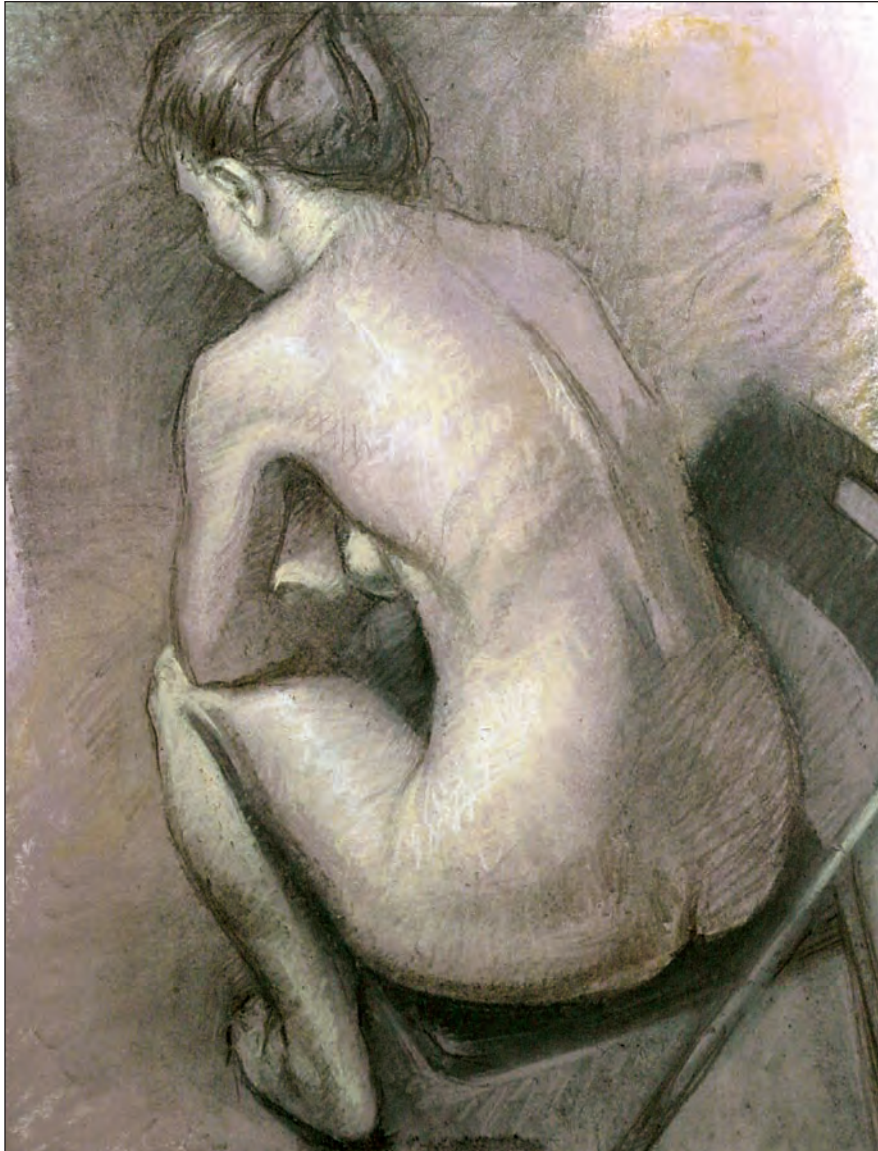


This is a continuation of the drawing starting from page 250. The chair that the model is sitting on has been defined here. Some additional shading was added to the side plane of the thigh and to the center area of the lower back. The artist did not make this area too dark in tone, as there is still light on this area; however, the light is not as strong as the light on the upper back.

Now you can see the development of the foot. The ankle-bone is defined by shading around the protruding bone itself. The artist has suggested the toes by using a few simple lines and accents. Notice that the light is hitting the heel strongly, and white pastel is used on top of the white paper (where the pastel was rubbed off) to emphasize this. Likewise, the shadow underneath the foot is quite dark because hardly any light is able to penetrate this area. The area formed by the arm on the leg is also shaded to show the shadow the arm is casting.

Note: If you find that erasing the pastel does not give you a white enough white for a highlight, you can use white pastel instead.

This is the completed drawing. The artist further defined the foot by showing the toes as slightly bent. The hair was developed by adding more dark accents and lines. Overall, the artist has added more white pastel to the light areas and further developed the top half of the back. This was done by adding a very light tone with charcoal. However, note that this area of the back is well lit. Any addition of charcoal here must be applied very lightly, as you do not want to destroy the illusion of light. Notice how the further addition of white pastel emphasizes the rib cage and hip area.

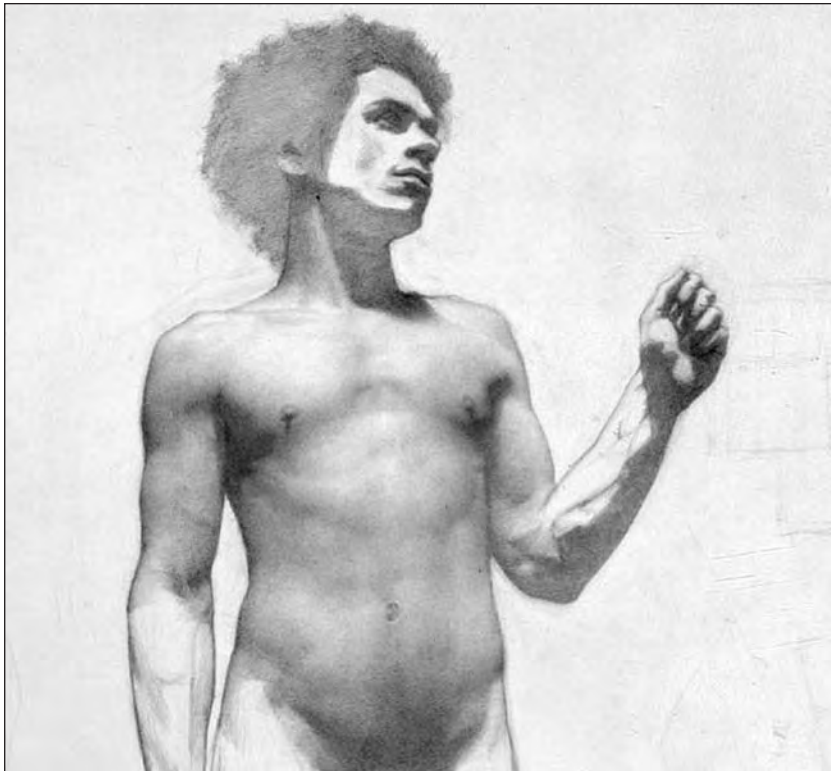


Back Study, by Dean Fisher

Gallery: Human Figure Drawings

The next few pages contain some figure drawings by various artists, which show some different approaches to drawing the human figure. Always look at as many drawings by different artists as you can. This will help you to solve technical drawing problems, and identify and define your own aesthetic.

This is a partial image of a toned figure drawing by Jacob Collins. It shows a mastery of technical skill. The figure is evenly lit. The only shadows occur on those planes of the body that do not receive any light, such as under the chin and jaw, the bottom of the nose, the eyes as they lie underneath the brow bone, and the underside of the raised arm. Collins has drawn this figure, in terms of blocks, just as in the Poussin image (see page 230). He has developed his blocks by subtly modeling the areas in the light. Notice that the highlights are limited to the side of the face, the forehead, chest, and upper torso of this drawing.



Nikoma, detail, by Jacob Collins, courtesy of the artist

This drawing has a very solid sculptural quality, which is the result of the very definite pattern of light and shadow. The sensitive rendering of the half tones between the light and shadow plays an important role in creating a feeling of roundness in the various forms of the figure. This is especially noticeable in the head of the model, where there is a very gradual transition from shadow to highlight. Another effective device that enhances the three-dimensionality of the head is the manner with which Aristides allowed the shadow side to be “lost” in the cast shadow adjacent to it, which makes the form turn away from the viewer. The final result of this skillful rendering is a figure that has a great sense of weight and appears to be firmly resting on the surface on which it is lying.

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Sutherland 3 Resting, by Juliette Aristides, courtesy of the artist

Gallery: Human Figure Drawings *(continued)*

This figure drawing by William Bailey shows a very gentle approach to describing the form of the model. The tones that he uses are close in value, and the model is lit by an even light. Notice how he uses his tones on the right side of the figure, as we look at it, to delineate the side of the figure and differentiate it from the front of the figure. Bailey continued using this tone on the right side of the neck and the side of the head. Look carefully at the features of the face. They are very subtle and beautifully drawn. The model's direct gaze draws the viewer gently into her world.

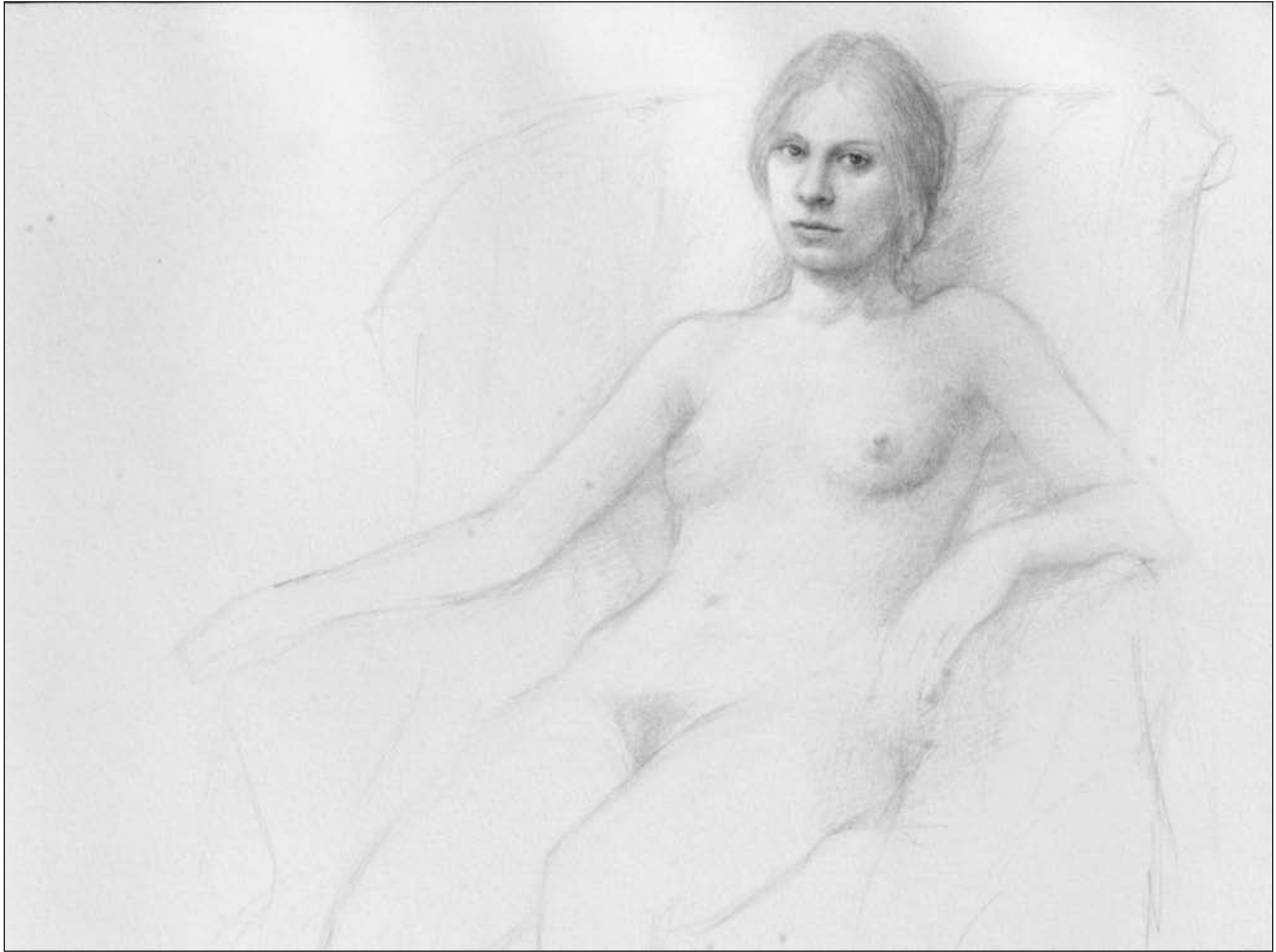
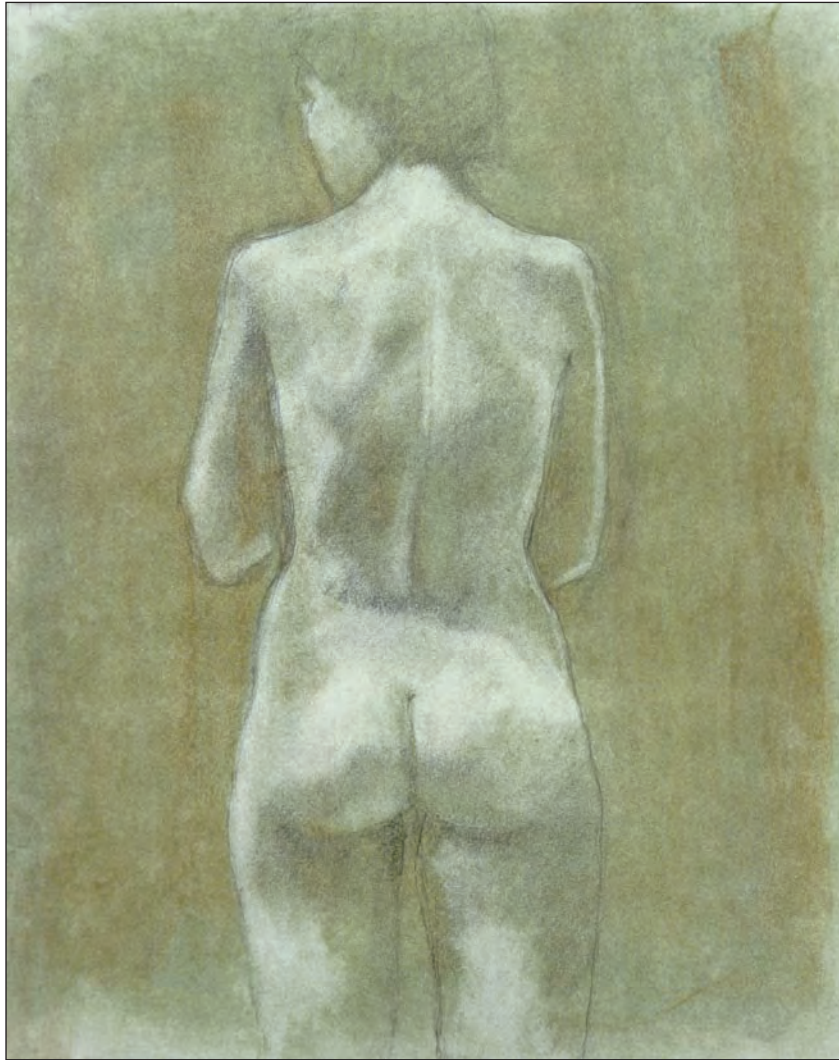


Figure Study, by William Bailey, courtesy of the artist and Roger Van Damme

In this drawing, the artist used graphite on top of a toned sheet of paper. The tone was made with two different colored pastels—green and ochre. The highlights are represented by erasing the pastel to reveal the white of the paper underneath. The back is lit evenly, and the shadows are very soft. To suggest the shadow, the artist used a graphite pencil to lightly shade over the pastel, which served as a mid-tone. The line was kept somewhat light, as the artist wanted to achieve an airy quality through the line but a more solid and statuesque quality through the use of the tone.

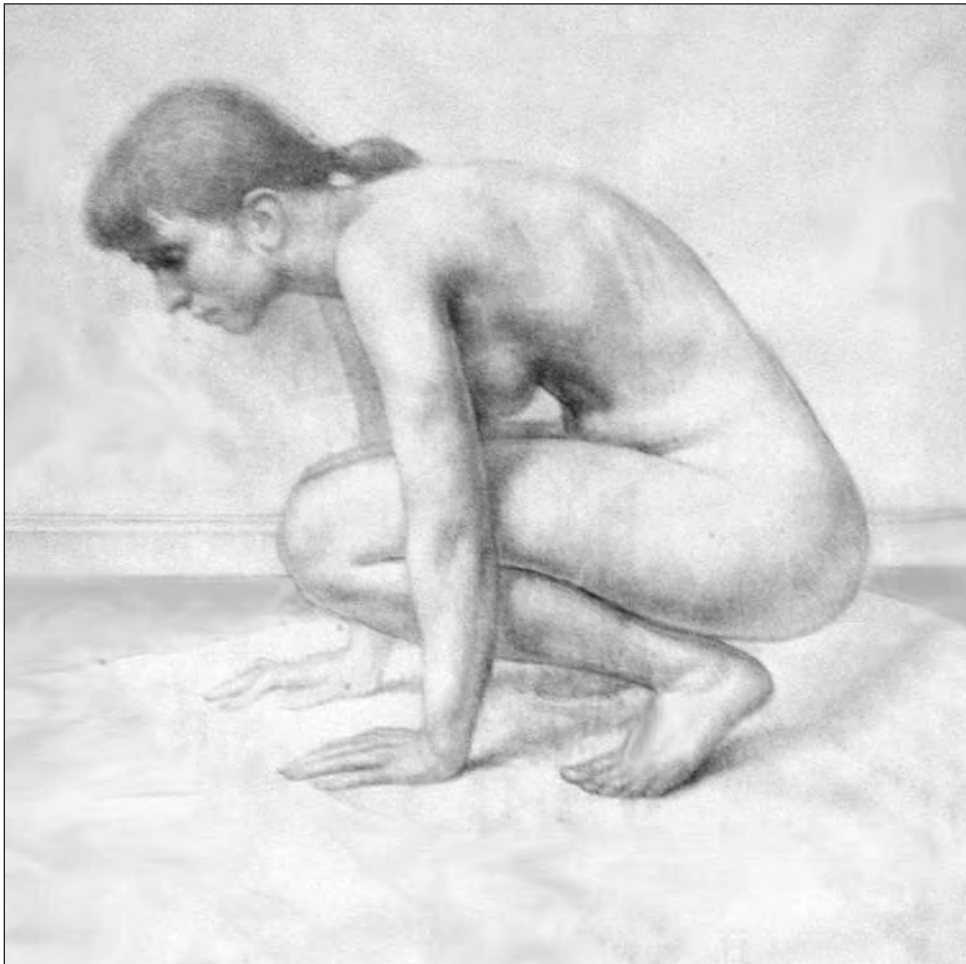


Standing Figure, by J. S. Robinson

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Gallery: Human Figure Drawings *(continued)*

This crouching figure began with a model and was completed using a photograph. This was due to the fact that the model could not hold the pose for an extended length of time. As stated earlier, it isn't a good idea for a beginner to work from a photograph. When you feel that your knowledge of the human figure is improving, then by all means, use a photograph. However, do not stop working with live models, because practice is very important. Here the artist used light tones throughout the drawing to gently model the form. There is a repetition of curves in the drawing; the curve of the back is echoed in the curve of the thigh, in the curve of the calf, and in the curve of the underside of the leg. These curves are reminiscent of a fan unfolding, and act as a compositional device to impart to the viewer a sense that the figure is about to move or, as a fan would, unfold.



Crouching Figure, by Dean Fisher

In this quick sketch, the artist's main intent was to capture the expression of this older woman, which is similar to the expression of her small dog. This similarity obviously caught the artist's attention, and so he focused on her face and only very simply suggested her clothing. The dog was treated in the same way; the dog's expression was developed, but the body was drawn very economically. This sketch has captured an expression forever!

TIP**Take Your Sketch Book with You**

You can practice your drawing skills on trains, at airports, or whenever you are sitting around and waiting. Learning to draw quickly will sharpen your skills and force you to simplify what you are seeing in front of you.



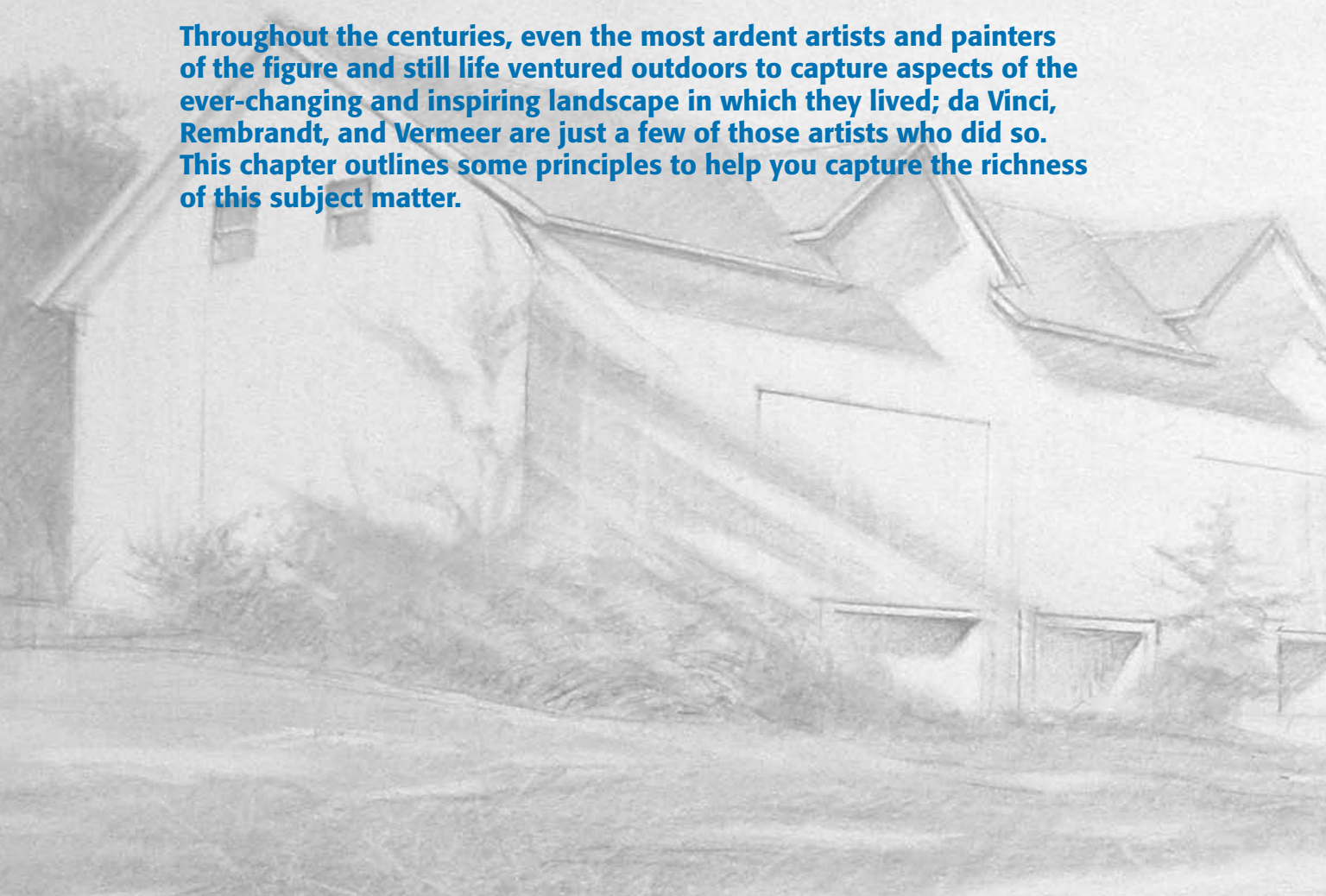
Woman with Companion, by Dean Fisher

chapter

13

The Landscape

Throughout the centuries, even the most ardent artists and painters of the figure and still life ventured outdoors to capture aspects of the ever-changing and inspiring landscape in which they lived; da Vinci, Rembrandt, and Vermeer are just a few of those artists who did so. This chapter outlines some principles to help you capture the richness of this subject matter.





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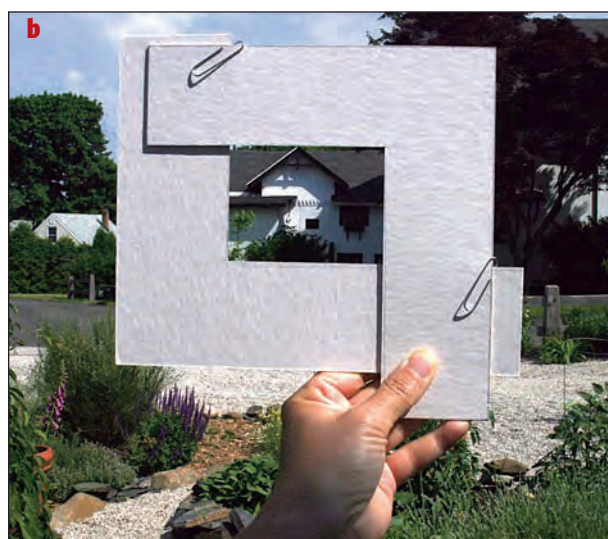
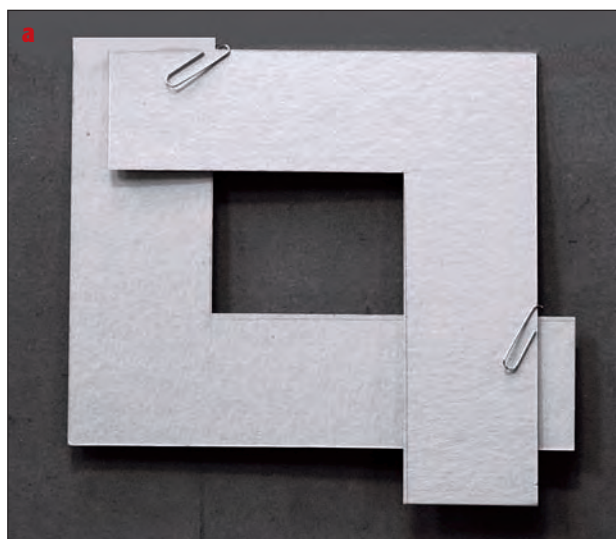
The “Nuts and Bolts” of Landscape Drawing

Many of us are inspired by the overwhelming beauty of the natural world. However, you may find that once you are in the landscape, the subject, with its vastness and complexity, is very difficult to scale down to a sketchbook-sized image. For this reason, one of the most useful tools of the landscape artist is a viewfinder.

A viewfinder is to the artist what looking through a camera’s viewfinder is to the photographer. It’s a way of isolating a subject and seeing how the arrangement of the big shapes of your subject, once scaled down, is going to look within the format of your paper.

You can make a readily accessible and inexpensive viewfinder using two right-angle corners of mat board, held together with paper clips to mimic the format of your paper (a).

You can hold up the viewfinder with one hand and view your subject through it while sketching the landscape on your paper with the other hand (b). By bending your arm, you can “zoom in or out” to either crop your subject closely or to allow a lot of space around the objects that you would like to draw.



TIP

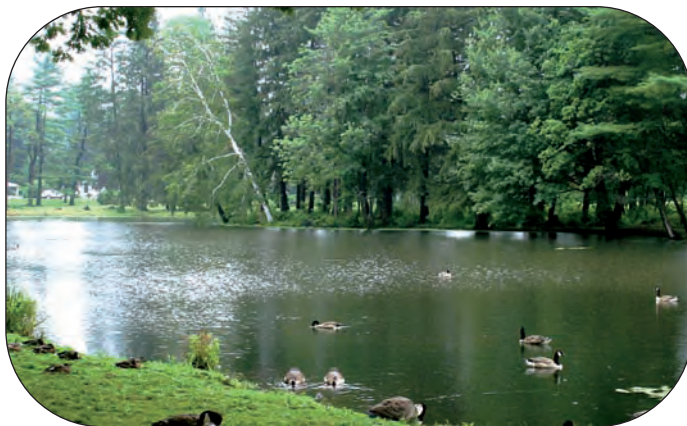
This drawing of some boats in the water was most likely drawn in about 90 seconds, while the artist was on a painting trip. The drawing might have been the beginning of a larger drawing or painting, or simply a feeling of light and movement that the artist wanted to capture. It is highly recommended that you carry a small sketchbook with you at all times, and when something catches your eye, for whatever reason, you should make a record of it. It is one of the best ways to train your hand to respond to visual stimuli, and a wonderful way to gather ideas for future works or simply to keep a visual journal of your experiences.



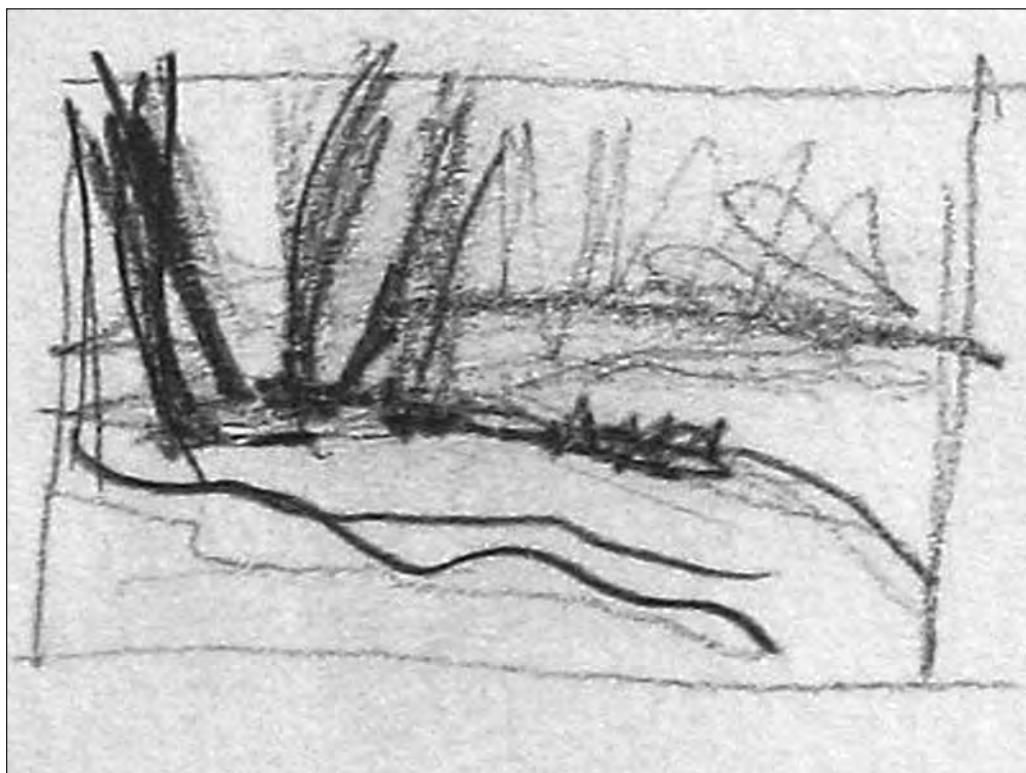
Monhegan Boats, by Leonard Moskowitz, courtesy of the artist

The Thumbnail Sketch

The thumbnail sketch is a very small sketch (approximately 2" × 2") of your subject as you are viewing it through your viewfinder. The purpose of this type of preliminary sketch is to visualize how your subject will look once you begin drawing it larger on your paper.



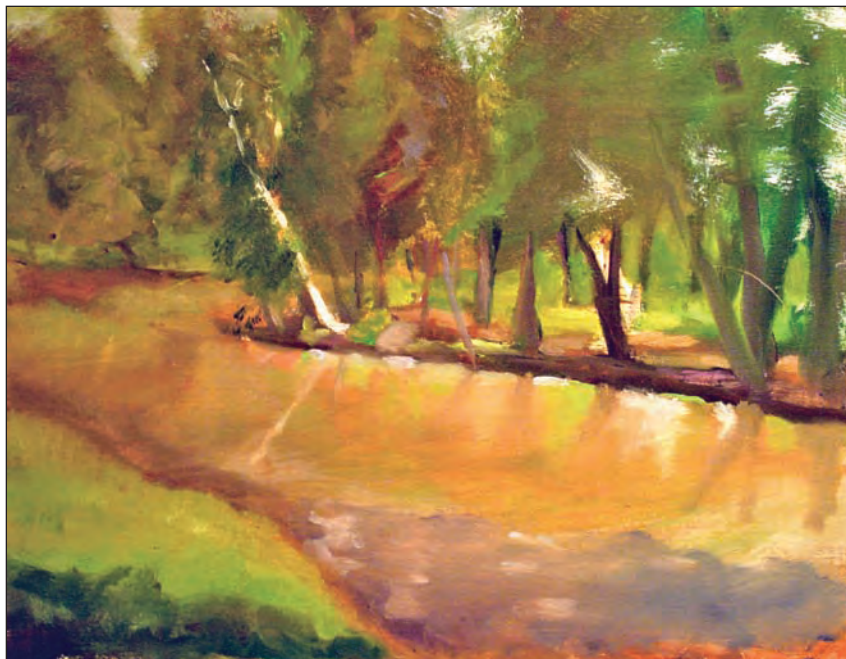
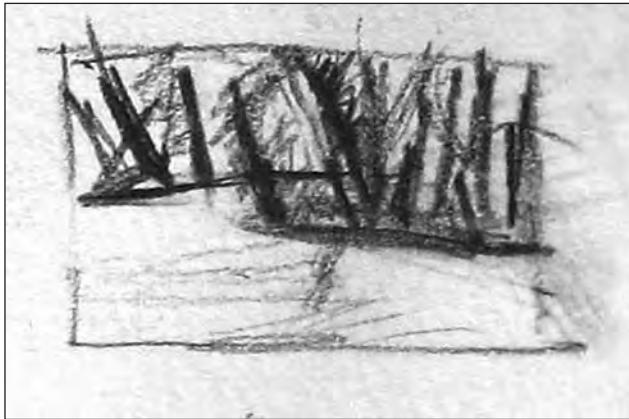
Because of the simplicity and rapidity of execution, these sketches are very useful for experimenting with the arrangement of your subject within the format of your paper. It is recommended that you do two or three thumbnail sketches of your chosen subject before you begin your larger drawing.



In this series of thumbnail sketches, you can see that the artist was exploring three different compositional possibilities, based on the same subject matter. Each of these sketches was drawn in a matter of minutes, which gives them a feeling of great immediacy.

There are times when the thumbnail sketch will have more vitality and spontaneity than the final drawing because of it being executed in a flash of inspiration.

The final work (an oil sketch) is shown below.



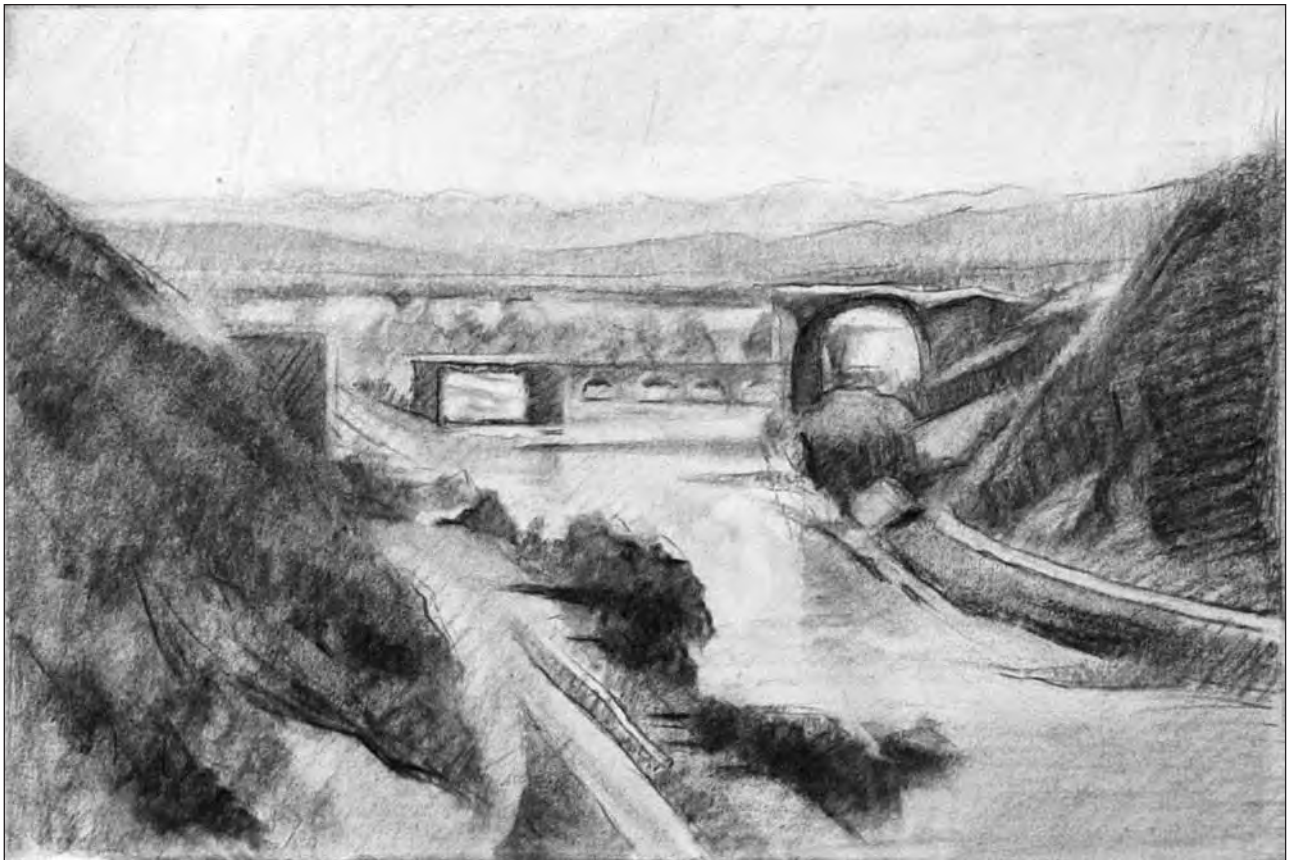
Thumbnail sketches and painting by Annette Voreyer, courtesy of the artist

The Structure of the Landscape

There are some structural properties of the landscape that are important to think about when you are interested in rendering light, space, and atmosphere, as well as solid objects within the landscape.

Here is a drawing sketched after a painting by the great French landscape artist Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. This drawing represents, in charcoal, the simplicity of means that Corot used in the actual painting.

You can see in this small sketch that a convincing illusion of reality was created through the use of broad shapes with virtually no detail. The sense of light and atmosphere comes through a very careful observation of the tonal relationships between the sky, land, man-made objects, and water.



Study after Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot's The Augustan Bridge at Narni, by Dean Fisher

The amount of complexity that exists in nature can be bewildering; therefore, thinking of the subject conceptually will help you make simplified and more convincing statements in your work.

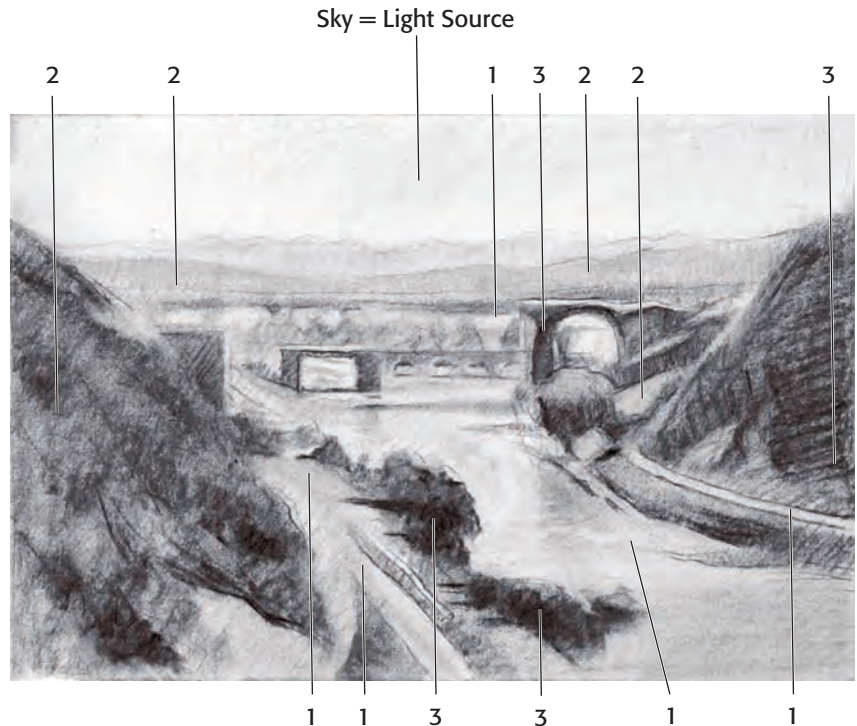
As mentioned throughout this book, it is always helpful to think about where the light source is coming from and how it affects the various planes of the subject being drawn. This rationale also applies to working with the landscape.

As the light source in the landscape is the sky and is usually, but not always, the lightest element of the landscape, it is logical that those planes that are most parallel to the sky will receive the most light. This would include the ground, flat rooftops of buildings, bodies of water, and any other object that fits this definition.

Those surfaces that are perpendicular to the sky, such as trees, the sides of houses or buildings, or any similar plane, will receive the least amount of light.

It would follow that the planes of objects that are in between being parallel and perpendicular to the light source, such as sloped hills or mountains, and sloped rooftops, will receive less light than parallel planes and more light than vertical planes.

However, there are times when elements of the landscape other than the sky will reflect the lightest light. This usually occurs when direct sunlight is falling on an object or material that has a light local color, such as snow; a light-colored tree; or a light-colored, man-made object such as a house, building, or car.



- 1 Planes parallel to Light Source = Lightest
- 2 Planes angle to Light Source = Darker
- 3 Planes perpendicular to Light Source = Darkest

Linear Perspective

In Chapters 6 and 7, the laws of one- and two-point perspective were discussed. These principles pertain to the landscape, even when man-made, geometric objects are not present.

Now that we know the eye level and horizon line are vital to creating a convincing three-dimensional space, it is usually difficult to recognize where vanishing points might occur, unless a landscape contains fences or rectangular plots of land, such as those you would find on a farm.

However, look very carefully, and there are almost always some clues showing you shapes converging toward vanishing points. A few of these shapes would be clouds and cast shadows from objects such as trees, clusters of flowers, or similar growth.

Of course, all objects, whether concrete or amorphous (such as clouds), will diminish in size as they converge to the vanishing point on the horizon line. This is called *scale*. Having the correct scale of objects as they recede in space is crucial to constructing a believable three-dimensional space. This is why determining your horizon line and vanishing point is so important. It will help you reduce objects as they recede spatially so that they remain proportional to each other.



Study after Peter Paul Rubens' A View of Het Steen in the Early Morning, by Dean Fisher

In the study after the Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens detail, you can see that the artist, who had such an interest in movement, was really trying to exploit the properties of linear perspective to rapidly move the viewer in a curving, undulating fashion from the foreground to the background of his picture.

There is a clear sense of where the viewer is standing and where the eye level and vanishing points are. Also take note of how the various planes of the landscape, trees, and shapes of the clouds all become smaller as they approach the horizon line.



*Study after Peter Paul Rubens'
A View of Het Steen in the Early Morning,
detail*

This study after Monet demonstrates how clouds converge toward a vanishing point on the horizon line. Take note of how dramatically the clouds decrease in size as they move into the distance. This clearly demonstrates that a well-drawn sky requires a sense of form.

It is especially important to keep these principles in mind when working with clouds, as they are in constant flux; they require a good amount of memory and theory to render well. It's also worth mentioning that to render clouds that are three-dimensional, there has to be a light and shadow side to them (and often some reflected light). As with any form that is lit by a primary light source, if the shadow sides of the clouds are left out, they will look flat.



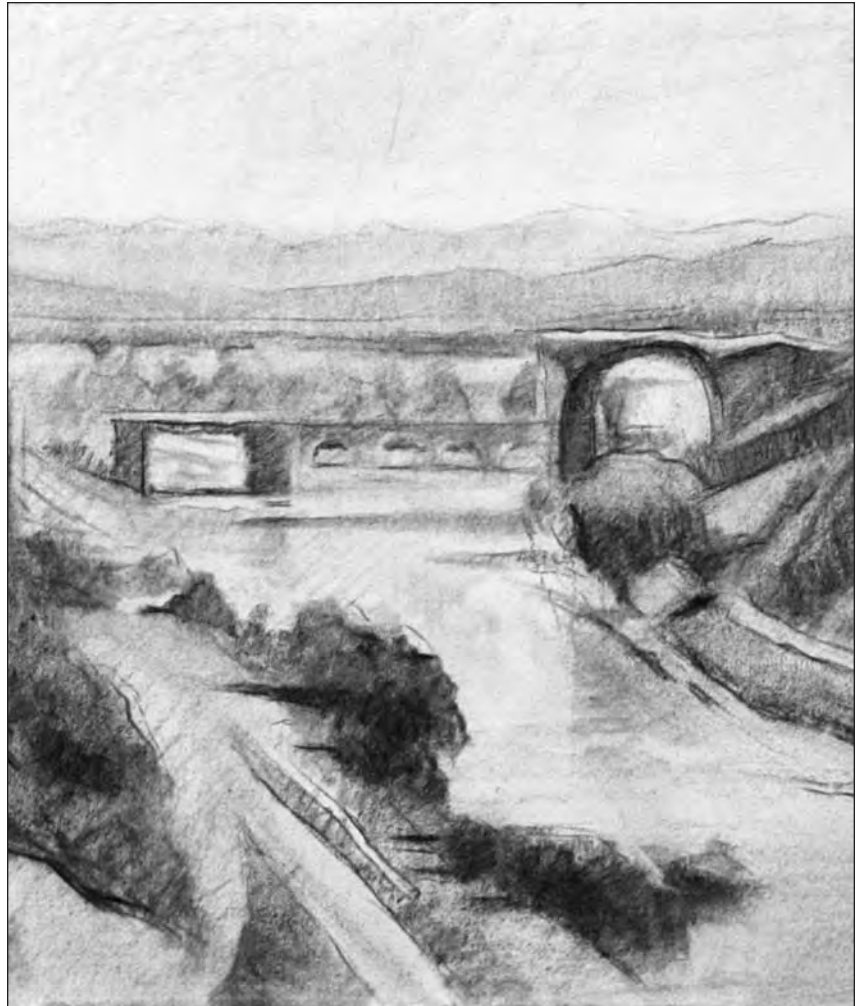
*Study after Claude Monet's Sunday at Argenteuil,
by Dean Fisher*

Aerial Perspective

The term *aerial perspective* refers to the manner in which tones and colors of objects are affected by the atmosphere as they recede spatially. Because of humidity and pollution in the air, the tone (lightness or darkness), or intensity of color of an object, lightens as the object recedes into the distance.

Looking once again at the study after Corot, you can see how faint the gray tones of the mountains are in the far distance. The same would hold true for color. If an apple were hanging on a tree right in front of you, it would be a much lighter shade of red than if it were 300 feet in the distance. The apple would be an even lighter red if the level of humidity in the air suddenly increased or the apple was placed farther in the distance. The next time you're in a mountainous landscape with a vast panoramic view, notice how light (and blue or violet) the mountains are far in the distance; they're often just a shade darker than the sky. An experienced artist can convey the precise quality of atmosphere present on a particular day, including a feeling for temperature and humidity level, based on the sensitive observation and careful rendering of the tonal relationships present in the landscape.

It is said that the artist Claude Monet had such acute vision that he could tell the precise time of day—within a few minutes—based on the quality of light that he saw on a wall outside his studio window. He is quoted as saying, "I'm only an eye, but what an eye!"



*Study after Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot's
The Augustan Bridge at Narni, by Dean Fisher*

The effects of aerial perspective are usually more pronounced in cities where there is a higher level of pollution. In this drawing you can see how the tones of the buildings lighten as they recede spatially. There was a combination of a high level of humidity and pollution present as the artist created this drawing during the summer in Manhattan.

Notice that the amount of tonal contrast is greater in the foreground buildings where the darks are darker. This contrast between the lights and darks reinforces the illusion of three-dimensionality by making the foreground buildings advance, and the background buildings recede.



Looking Downtown from Midtown, by J. S. Robinson

The Form of Trees

Trees have the beauty and power to captivate us with their graceful, elegant forms. They are often a dominant element in the landscape. This section will focus attention on trees to help you draw them with greater understanding.

Very often, beginning artists will be so fascinated by the complexity and beauty of a tree that they will overlook the large “concept” of its form and try to draw every leaf and branch. In order to think about the form of a tree in geometric terms—that is, to simplify its shape—one can say that the tree’s foliage comes closest to being a spherical form. The lower portion of the sphere is normally where the darker tones are when lit from above by the light of the sky. When the upper portion of the sphere begins to turn, its surface becomes more parallel with the sky, and it receives more light.

If you model your trees accordingly, they will appear rounded instead of as flat cutouts against the sky. The drawings on the following pages illustrate this gradual modeling of spherical clusters of foliage.

When the tree is illuminated by direct sunlight, look for its light-and-shadow pattern. Remember, it is much easier to see the simplicity of this pattern if you squint! This drawing of a grouping of trees, with its defined pattern of light and shadow, has a clear feeling of roundness and light.



Study of a Tree, by Dean Fisher

Trees are infinitely varied in character, just as every human face is a unique arrangement of form and features. The first aspect to consider when drawing a particular tree is its gesture—that is, the overall quality of its shape. This is where the “feeling” of the tree comes from. Look for the main line, or the sweep, from the trunk through the main branches. Also avoid making your trees symmetrical; although this can sometimes occur, too much symmetry in groupings of trees will create a manufactured look in your landscape.

A common error when attempting to fit a monumental tree on a small piece of paper is to discover, after drawing the lower portion, that in order to fit the entire tree within the format of the paper, the upper half has to be reduced in size. The result is that a once-graceful form becomes clumsy and artificial looking.

With careful observation, you will notice that in most cases, tree trunks and branches taper very gradually, so that if a tree’s trunk has a substantial girth, you can be sure that the upper branches and foliage will also be very large.

This drawing of a grouping of three trees illustrates all of the principles mentioned in this section. Each tree has its own character, yet they work together as a natural grouping.

Careful observation will reveal that common rhythms between forms in the landscape are frequent due to each element having been exposed to the elements of nature, including light, wind, and rain, in a similar way. Capturing these subtle and interesting rhythms will help you to create unity in your work.



Stowe Barn, *detail*



Study of Trees, by Dean Fisher

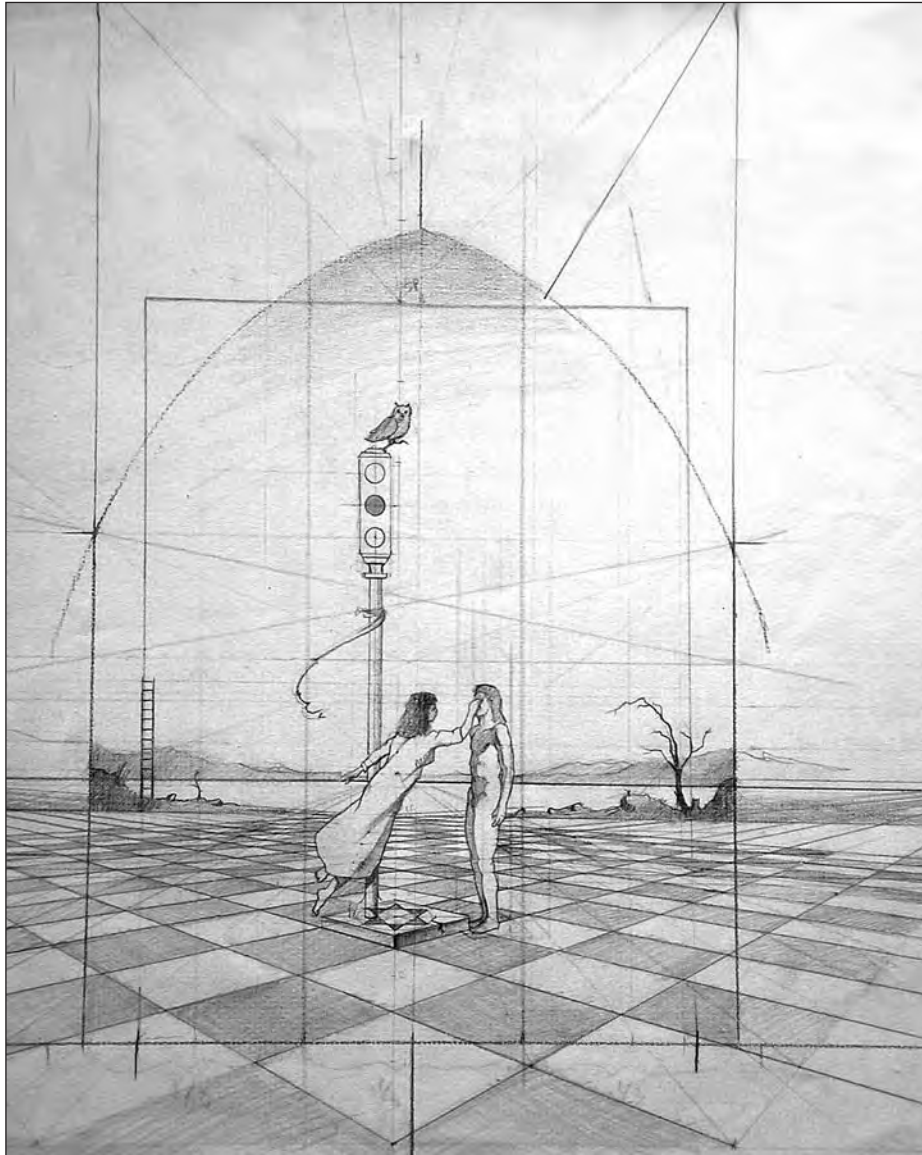
Gallery: Landscape Drawings

In this intimate landscape drawing, the artist created a flowing sense of movement. This seems to be in step with the internal rhythms of the various types of growth depicted and their relationships to each other. This drawing enters the world of abstraction as much as it does the world of realism.



The Edge of the Field, by J. S. Robinson

This is an interesting example of a perspective construction that would normally be used to develop an interior space. In this case, the artist has combined man-made elements with the natural world by using squares in two-point perspective on the ground plane to carve out a deep space. There appear to be the beginnings of an architectural structure in the foreground that, in this unfinished state, frames the figures and helps to create a sense of scale. You often see this blending of architecture and landscape in works of the Renaissance. The artist said he was looking for “Piero della Francesca meets Big Sky Montana.”



Perspective Study, by Warren Prindle

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Gallery: Landscape Drawings *(continued)*

This cityscape has a fluid quality in the way in which the buildings seem to flow together. In many cases, the boundaries of each building within a cluster of buildings are eliminated for the sake of making a larger form fit together with the other shapes in the drawing, like a jigsaw puzzle. The fluidity of the tones was produced by the medium employed—a water-soluble graphite pencil (see page 16).



London Skyline, *by J. S. Robinson*

In this drawing, the artist has interestingly juxtaposed contrasting images of winter and associations of summer together. She has composed the background with soft gray tones to delineate the buildings and the shadows created by the soft sunlight of a winter's day. The dark accents are used very sparingly here to keep this area distant from the viewer. She directs the viewer's gaze to the barbecue by placing it prominently in the foreground of her composition. Its importance is underlined by the strong contrast of light and shadow on its surface. This is the only object in the drawing that has this degree of contrast, and consequently it seems to shimmer with a barely contained energy. The artist may have been depicting her own longing for summer and her certainty that summer must return in defiance of the bare branches of winter.



Backyard December, by Erin Raedeke

Glossary

Aerial perspective The effects of humidity and pollution on color and tone as objects recede spatially.

Block in To roughly draw in the subject using big shapes.

Contrapposto First used by the Greeks, it is a pose where the weight of the whole figure is supported by one leg, which makes the hip move outward. The shoulder on the same side drops lower than the opposite shoulder.

Cross section The representation of the shape of an object when it's "sliced through" at a given point.

Dynamism Movement or thrust of a pose.

Field of vision (or cone of vision) The area viewed that encompasses the sight of both eyes.

Foreshortening Creating the illusion of a part of the body either projecting forward or backward in space, or drawing a figure that is seen from a severe angle.

Gesture Pose or movement of a figure or model.

Guidelines Points or lines of reference.

Horizon line Where the earth seems to meet the sky, as determined by the eye level of the viewer.

Linear perspective The diminishment in size of objects as they recede spatially.

Line drawing Using only lines to create a drawing.

Mapping Roughly sketching out the subject matter.

Modeling Using shading or line to produce a naturalistic representation of a subject.

One-point perspective The front of an object is parallel to your plane of vision, which means the object is directly facing you.

Overmodel To add too much information or exaggerate the tones in an area where it isn't necessary; this, in turn, exaggerates the effect of the light source and can flatten out the subject or alter the texture of the surface being rendered.

Peephole technique Looking through a tiny hole to isolate a part of the subject in order to judge a tonal value or color relationship.

Planar Lying in or related to a plane.

Planes (or facets) A flat or level surface on an object.

Plaster cast A replica of a sculpture, which is cast in plaster.

Portrait The artistic representation of an individual. Historically it can be a bust (head and shoulders), a three-quarter figure, or a full figure.

Still life (or setup) An arrangement of dead or inanimate objects.

Three-point perspective Using perspective to define parallel sides of an object and the height and depth of an object.

Thumbnail sketch A very small-scale rough sketch.

Tone The value of a shade of color, that is, its lightness or darkness.

Two-point perspective Using perspective to define two perpendicular sides of an object.

Vanishing point The height and position of your eye level on the horizon.

Vantage point (or viewer point) The position of the viewer's eye level.

Appendix

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www.aristidesarts.com

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www.fbruckmann.com

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www.jacobcollinspaintings.com

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www.eileeneder.com

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www.deanfisherportraits.com

deanmfisher.googlepages.com

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www.shellfishers-artgallery.com

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www.joshgaetjen.com

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www.galeriamarlborough.com

VEGAP Image Bank: www.bi.vegap.es/EN

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www.heidiharrington.com

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www.silviuskrecu.com

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www.constancelapalombara.com

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www.timlowly.com

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www.forumgallery.com

Claire Maury Curran, Forum Gallery, New York, NY

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www.jackmontmeat.com

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www.lennymoskowitzart.com

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www.ritanatarova.com

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Contact authors via their Web sites

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www.okharris.com

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www.warrenprindle.com

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www.erinraedeke.com

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jsrobinsonstudio.googlepages.com

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www.justinwiest.com

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Roger Van Damme

Contact authors via their Web sites

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Figure Study, p.256, courtesy of Roger Van Damme;

William Bailey, artist, www.bettycunninghamgallery.com

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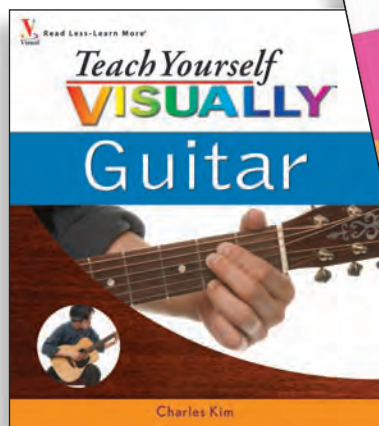
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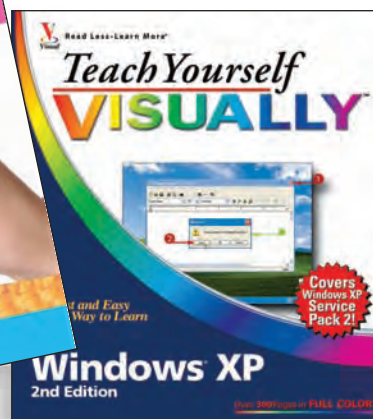
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