

HOW TO START DRAWING

“Drawing is taking a line for a walk” (Paul Klee)

- Making a drawing is first about communicating with yourself.
- Everybody makes mistakes, but Masters are not using the eraser.
- When mistakes occur, do not be afraid to leave them in and draw more lines alongside.
- On many Master drawings corrections and restatements are deliberately left. Drawing is a vital, changing process, a voyage of discovery.

“SPIDER WEB” (organizational drawing) is the most liberating drawing technique. By using this “invisible” method, you will begin to draw with ease, spontaneity and freedom. Use this technique to question and explore basic composition elements, perspective and proportion.

To start drawing, hold an HB pencil loosely, so that you can make broad, sweeping lines. Do not press the pencil, leave it’s own weight to hardly touch the paper. LET THE DRAWING APPEAR “BY ITSELF”.

Draw everything and anything using different line qualities: body parts



DRAW AS MANY DIFFERENT LINES AS YOU CAN

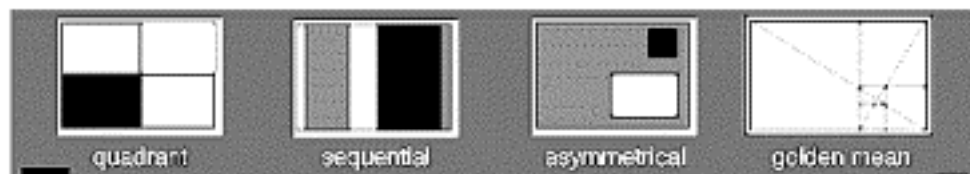
Surprise yourself: find a theme, mood or concept... indulge yourself

COMPOSITION is a puzzle of visual elements.

Every composition is a statement about HARMONY.

Before starting your composition, take few moments and think about your ideas. SKETCH few ideas quickly (not more than 1 min per sketch).

Make a SKETCH. Please read "Sketchbook Ethics" on the website.



Some standard compositional layouts are shown above. Basic composition rules are invented to be changed. A good basic composition will often either be asymmetrical or will lead the viewer's eye around the work.

The Fibonacci Sequence is a numerical convention that can be translated into many forms. It has been used in mathematics, architecture, poetry, music, art, and even as a system for predicting the growth of the stock market.



COMPOSITION TIP: When designing a drawing, divide the paper into sections

based on this principle, and then place your subjects into these divisions. Do not follow the lines so exactly that they are evident, but allow for some natural flow to extend beyond the boundaries that you have drawn. You'll find this effective in making your drawings more interesting.

Storyboard sample:



DRAWING PROCESS

Always start a drawing by sitting quietly and studying your object until you are relaxed and prepared. Allow your eyes to receive the information, rather than pursue it. You are trying to feel the solidity and volume of the form. Start in the "center" of the form by pressing the crayon slowly and lightly in a relaxed, circular motion, as though you were building the object with clay. Continue to "build" the form in outward circles, gradually reaching the outer edges of the form. Work overall figure first, before you go back to refine your drawing. Do not worry about proportions or edges – you are only thinking of the mass of the form. When you have the whole form roughed in, go back over it, slowly increasing the pressure in the bulkier areas of the form, where the weight is.

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Organizational drawings by Giacometti

Tip: always leave time & space to add details (never intend to finish drawing)
Remember: detail is the ambush for inexperienced artist

Introduction to Perspective

In paintings and drawings, artist often create the illusion of depth. When you look at these artworks, you see objects and shapes - some of which appear to be closer to than others. You seem to be looking through a window into a real place. This idea - that an artwork should be like a window to the real world - has dominated traditional Western art since the early Renaissance.

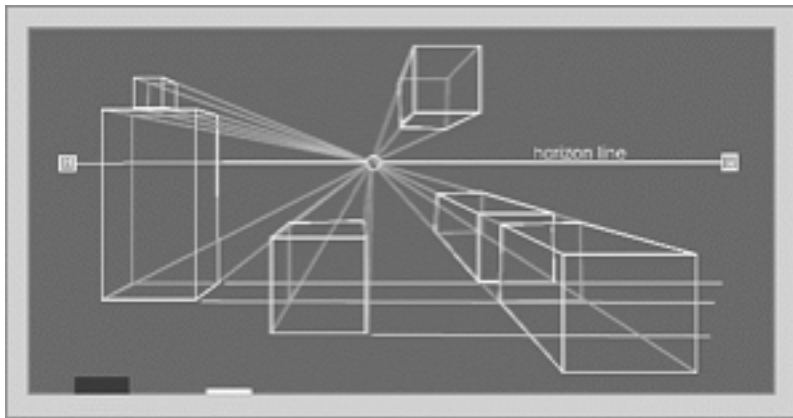
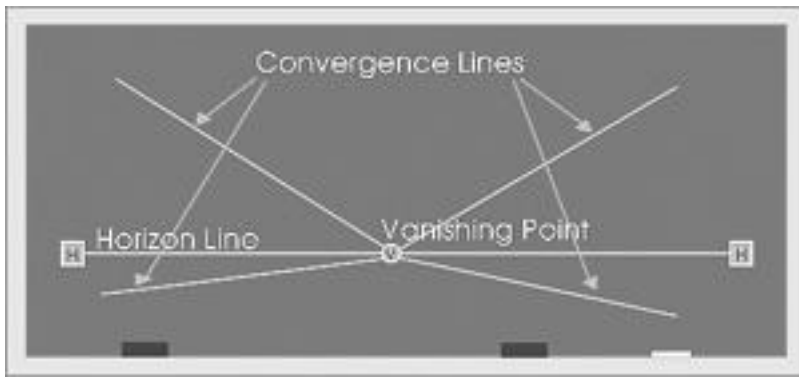
Perspective: Creating the illusions of depth on a two-dimensional surface.

Foreground: the part of the picture plane that appears nearest to the viewer

Background: the part of the picture plane that appears farthest away from the viewer

Middle Ground: the area between the foreground and the background

One point perspective



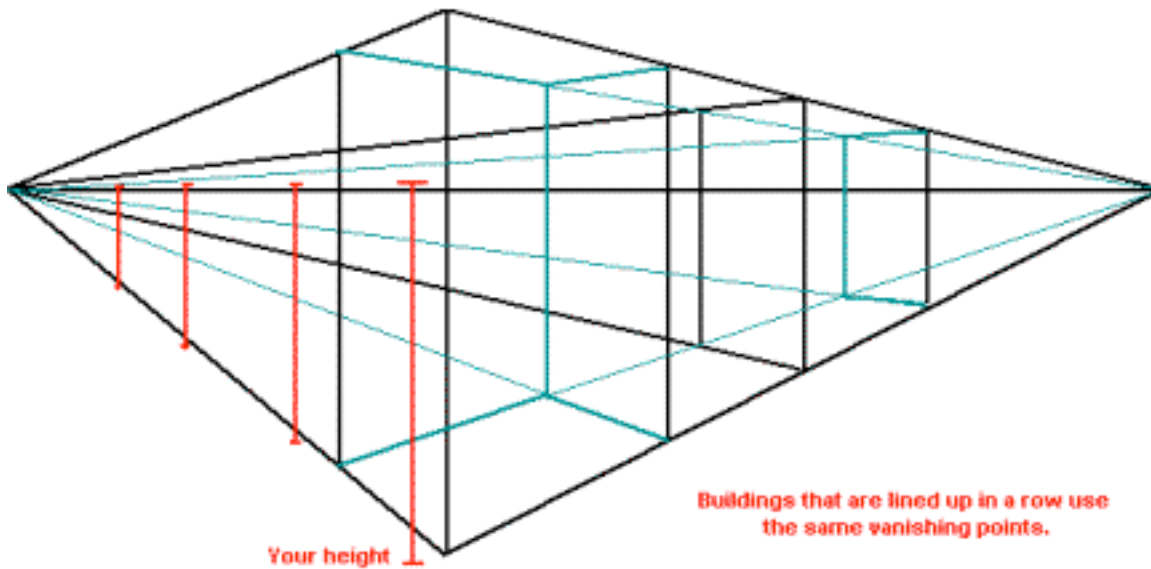
Reminder: Perspective is a “collective agreement”, not a real situation. Perspective does not exist in nature. Do not draw what you see.

Tip: vanishing point(s) are at your EYE LEVEL (so called the line of HORIZON)

In the diagram above, you will notice that all the diagonals recede to the central vanishing point. In one point perspective all horizontals and verticals do not change. Objects that are above the viewer's horizon line are viewed from underneath (they are above your vision). Objects that are below the viewer's horizon line are viewed with their tops showing. Any object that straddles the horizon line, like the large object on the left, does not show top or bottom because these are obscured from the viewer. Remember that this system will only work if you are parallel and perpendicular (90 degree angles) to the objects that you are drawing.

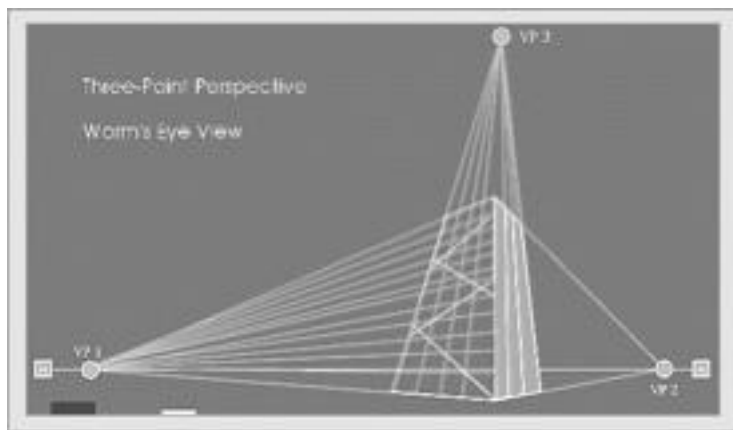
Two points perspective

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This system is used when you see two sides of the object. Perspective grid is drawn FROM THE VANISHING POINTS (your eye level). Objects are “attached” to the grid lines.

Three points perspective



This perspective is used to draw large-scale objects (city, buildings). Aerial point is over the object (when we look up in the sky); terrestrial point is below the object (when we look down from the top of the building).

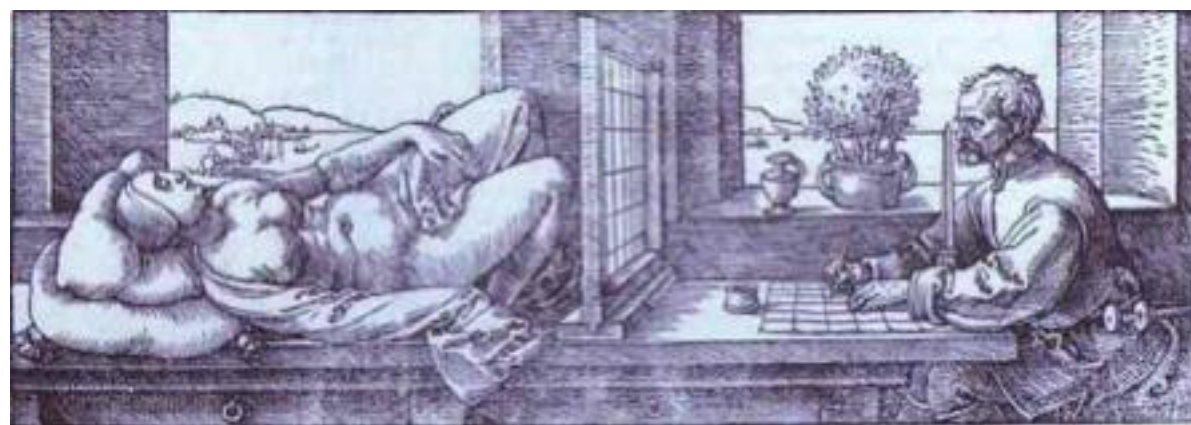
There are no parallel lines in 3 points perspective system.

ANALYTICAL DRAWING

A certain amount of drawing is mechanical in nature; that is, it is done more on

the conscious level, and even in the left, or analytical, side of the brain. Therefore, this part is a little easier and faster to learn, because it consists of practical, more easily comprehended steps. And it involves manual dexterity, eye/hand coordination, and simple practice; and is more objective, less subjective. It comes in handy for those who are interested mainly in accurate depictions of people and objects - likeness, correct proportions, and other quantitative measurements.

Getting an exact likeness of the subject is not the usual main purpose in art. Unless a camera is used, a perfect likeness is not even possible. The naturalistic preoccupations of the Renaissance, and those of some artists since, comprise a relatively brief period in the history of art. Most cultures throughout the rest of history have produced art concerned with other intentions than verisimilitude, whether for religious, political, aesthetic, or personal reasons. Since the camera was invented, the exact likeness produced by an artist has become unnecessary, freeing the artist to once again try to explore more profound concerns than capturing outward appearances.



The above example by Albrecht Durer illustrates the painful drawing method of analytical drawing

Contour - The outer edge of forms, which implies three dimensions, in contrast to an outline, which is a boundary of two-dimensional, flat form. Also, a type of line drawing which captures this three-dimensional outer edge, with its fullness and recession of form.

CONTOUR DRAWING should be done very, very slowly. Place your chosen object in front of you, where you get a good view of it. You will be starting to draw anywhere on the object's edge - but you will be aware of how the object

doesn't end at that edge, but continues behind it, usually as a rounded contour, unless the object is geometric, for instance, a cube. (An outline of the object would be two-dimensional, or flat; a contour is three-dimensional.) Keep your eyes on the object as much as possible (try not to look at your paper), and concentrate on what the contour does, every single little curve or meander. Don't worry at this time about getting an exact likeness or correct proportions. If your edge goes into the form, follow it until it ends, and then pick up the contour where you left off.

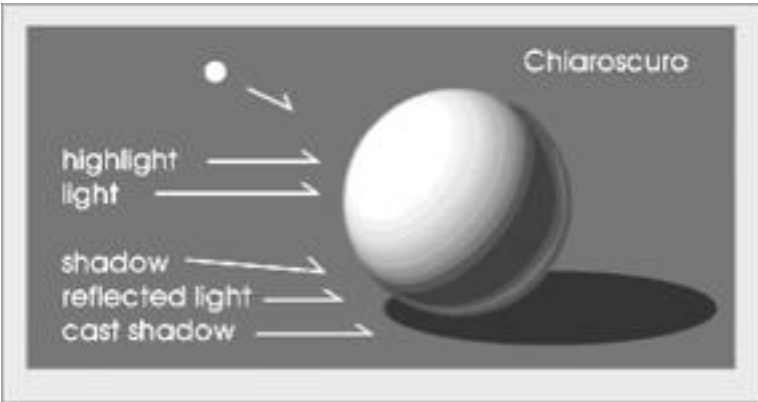


NEGATIVE SPACE

In a painting or sculpture, the areas where there are no forms (the "empty" areas). In a painting, this means the areas, which have no forms or objects (sometimes also called the 'background'). In sculpture, this means the "holes" between forms or within a form (e.g., Henry Moore sculptures). Negative space is the other side of the coin of positive space, which is space actually occupied by forms in a painting or sculpture (the figure in a portrait). The notions of positive and negative space were advanced during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, replacing the more traditional notion of a 'background' which was subordinate to and separate from the subject image - portrait, still life, etc.

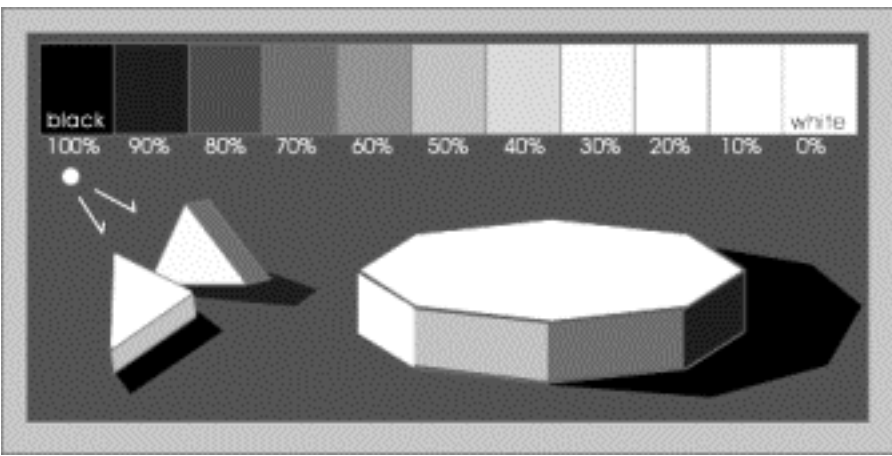


CHIAROSCURO (light & dark)



Chiaroscuro is a method for applying value to a two-dimensional piece of artwork to create the illusion of a three-dimensional solid form. This way of working was devised during the Italian Renaissance and was used by artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael. In this system, if light is coming in from one predetermined direction, then light and shadow will conform to a set of rules. A highlight will mark the point where the light is being reflected most directly. This is most often bright white, although in my illustration it is 10% Black. As one's eye moves away from this highlight, light hits the object less directly and therefore registers a darker value of gray. In my illustration there is a regular transition until you reach the point where the shadowed area of the form meets the lighted side.

GRAYSCALE AND TONAL VALUES



A High Key drawing is one that has mostly light values, probably with no value of more than 60% at the darkest points.

A Low Key drawing would be one that has mostly dark values. In both Low and High Key pieces this system of chiaroscuro can be used to create the illusion of three-dimensional space in a drawing.

Hint: The background color and any plane adjacent to the object being drawn will influence the value of the form being rendered. It is important to consider the background value with the object being drawn because it will directly influence decisions in the drawing.

Tonal drawing techniques

1. Stippling with ink and scratches – stippling creates dots
2. Modulated ink lines and scratches – the black lines themselves get thinner to create more white space
3. Crosshatching with long lines– the lines cross over themselves at 30-60

degree angles

4. Crosshatching with short scratched lines

5. Modulated lines – varying line quality

6. Crosshatching with lines at different angles to create a moiré effect – looks like fish net.

Volume/Value Still Life

Value refers to the relative darkness or lightness of an area. Using gradual changes from dark to light in an area creates the illusion of three dimensionality on a flat surface.

Drawing Volume:

The largest, simplest planes are first blocked in with a mid-range value. Move from the middle ground towards dark and light. Identify your light source. Look for the shadows, and how they relate to the form itself. Look for the lightest shapes, think of the lights and darks as puzzle pieces that fit together. The edge quality of value shapes are different depending on the form; some edges end abruptly, some are gradual transitions



INK DRAWING

Paper choice depends on your pen selection and whether you are using washes. Many pens work well on sketchbook paper, but I find that the fine nib tends to catch on its rough surface - sometimes a fun effect, but to avoid spatters, I use a lightweight (185 gsm), hot-pressed (smooth) watercolor paper. Watercolor paper also takes a wash well.

Tips Put enough ink to load the nib in the bottom of a small jar for dipping - that way you will not have a penholder dripping ink everywhere.

Try doing some small, thumbnail images first.

Keep washes simple - two or three layers, light, medium, dark.

Let the texture match the subject - spiky grass, curly leaves.



Ink drawing by Italian renaissance artist Guercino

Action drawing

This exercise works best with figures or animals. You are essentially trying to capture the action the figure is performing. Once again, a likeness or correct proportions are not important in this exercise,

nor is the exercise meant to result in a finished drawing. This is an exercise to get you to learn to identify the action the figure is doing, with his/her body. Individual body parts are not important here - only the curve or direction of the main bodily movement. You are not capturing what the figure or object looks like, but what it is doing.



Leonardo: action study of the horse



Gesture drawing

Gesture Drawing

Gesture drawing is related to action drawing, but it goes further. I see the idea of gesture as the essential character of a figure or object, a kind-of eastern philosophy viewpoint. That is, everything has a gesture. As Nicolaides wrote, "Everything has a gesture - even a pencil." On the physical level, the pencil's gesture is a "shooting" straight line, very quick. That physical movement has an intangible counterpart - its essence - its movement identity, personality, or essence.

FANTASY DRAWING

Surrealist automatism is spontaneous writing, drawing, or the like practiced without conscious aesthetic or moral self-censorship. Automatism has taken a

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great many forms, from the automatic writing that was the initial automatism practiced by surrealism to later adaptations to the computer. There are many similar or perhaps parallel phenomena, such as the improvisation of free jazz.

In automatic drawing, the hand is allowed to move 'randomly' across the paper. In applying chance and accident to mark-making, drawing is to a large extent freed of rational control. Hence the drawing produced may be attributed in part to the subconscious and may reveal something of the psyche, which would otherwise be repressed.

Imaginary landscape



Contemporary art - The term contemporary describes the most recent art, in this case as distinguished from modern art, which is generally considered to have lost its dominance in the mid-1950's.



Drawing from a Photograph:

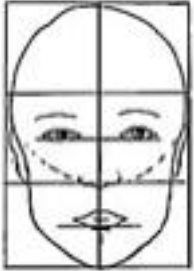
Find a black and white photograph (newspaper is OK), which has a good range of white to black values, and an interesting variety of shapes, without too many flat or empty spaces in it. Take a pencil or pen, and measure a grid of approximately 1" squares across the entire photo, marking out the lines with your pen. Then take a piece of white or off-white drawing paper and measure a piece of the paper that has exactly the same proportions as your photo (For example: if your photo is 4" wide by 6" tall, measure a piece of paper whose side is 2/3 the size of its height - 12" x 18", for instance.) Then, mark the same number of grid lines on your drawing paper as are on the photo, so that there are the same number of squares on each.



Portrait drawing

Proportions of the Human Head

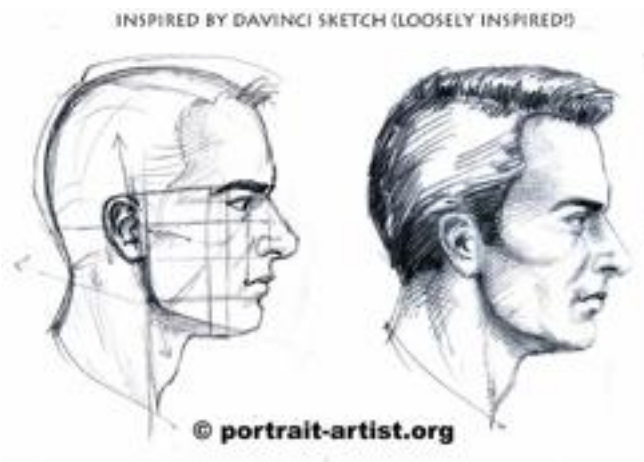
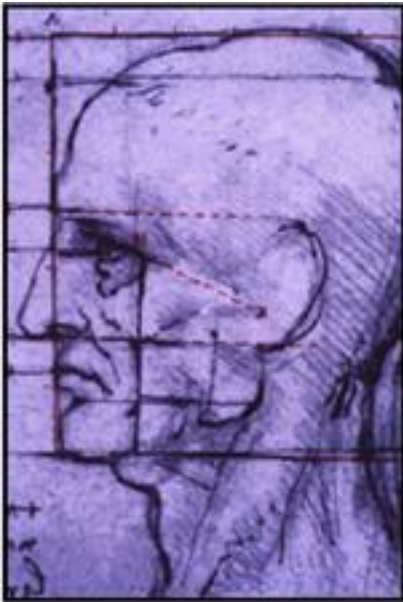
Drawing the Structure of the Head and Face



To draw the human head accurately, first become familiar with the basic proportions. Traditional rules of proportion show the face divided into six equal squares, two by three. The upper horizontal division is roughly at the 'third eye' level mid-forehead, the lower at the base of the nose. The eyes sit on the horizontal centre, the mouth on the centre of the lower third.

Tips:

- Practice drawing the head from many different angles. Observe how the facial muscles change as an expression changes.
- Try taking your own reference photos.
- Adults are easier to draw than children, as their features are more sharply defined.
- Try doing some studies of a skull if you can, (try the local museum, art school or school science department) as this will help you understand the planes of the face.



BODY PARTS

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Some examples of body structure

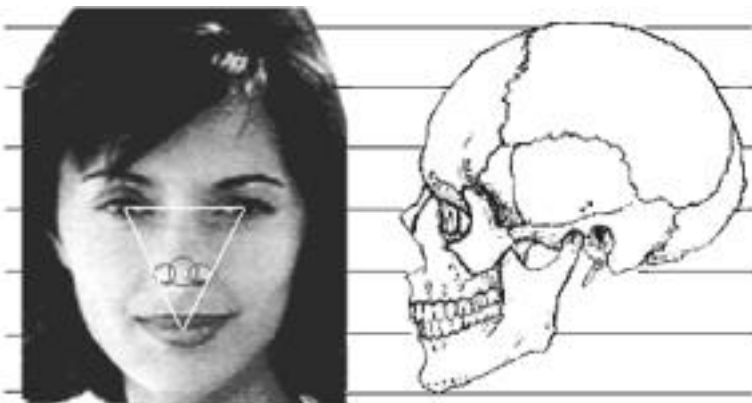
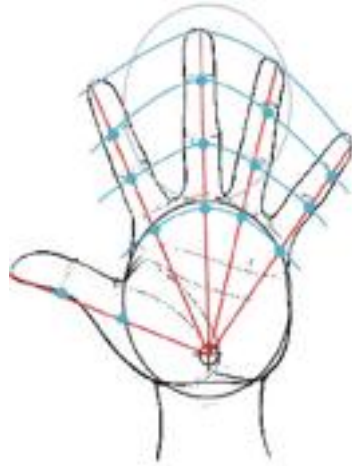
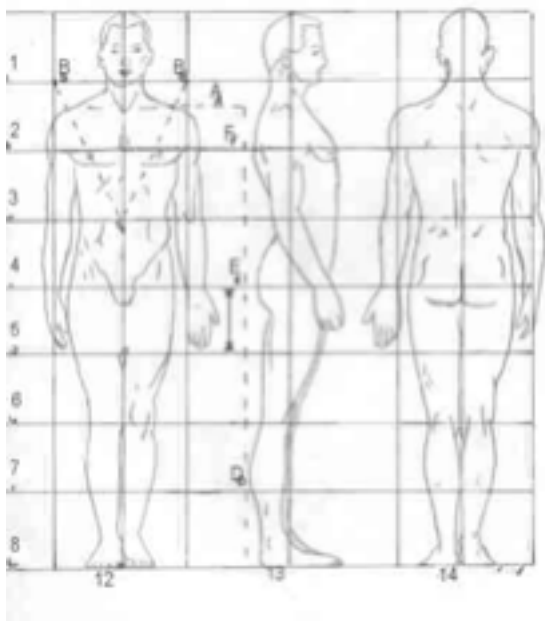


FIGURE DRAWING

"With a single stroke, light is separated from dark, and space and scale are evoked from a void. In the beginning of all the arts lies this graphic act by pen, pencil, brush or chisel with which, and from which, all else follows." [Colin Eisler, *The Seeing Hand*, New York: Harper & Row, 1975. p. 7]

"Drawing evokes a dialogue between itself and the viewer. Becoming familiar with the physical structure of point, line, and area is like learning how to spell and pronounce a few essential words of a new language. . . .

"[Crofton, Ian, ed. New York: Schirmer Books, A Division of Macmillan, 1988.]



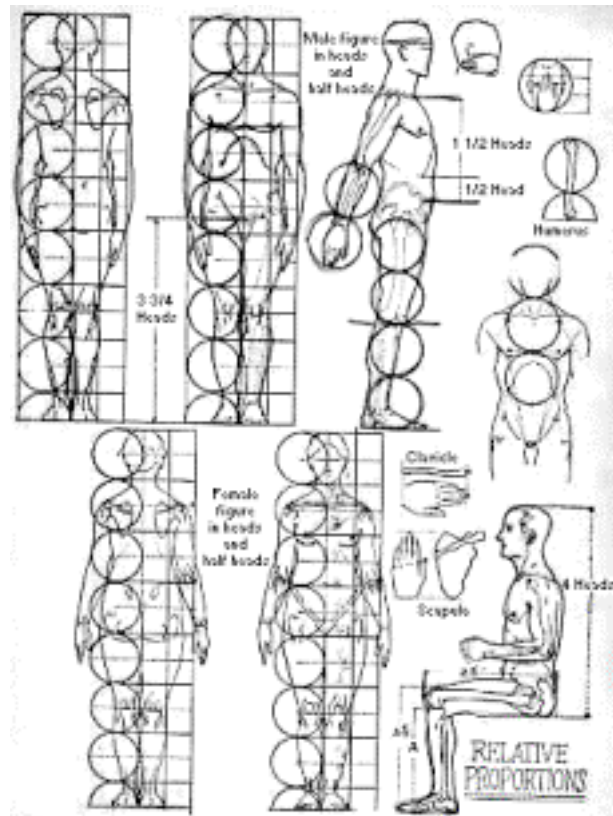
When the person takes the pose (action pose - as though suspended in the midst of a strong movement, like a basketball player reaching for the basket, for instance), imagine a central wire, or axis, which goes inside the figure from the tips of the fingers in the air to the bottom of the ankle. This is the action line you are seeking - and you want to do this quickly, in a matter of seconds.

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Body proportions



Da Vinci after Vitruvius



Head size used as reference

MOST COMMON DRAWING MISTAKES

Drawing With a Hard Pencil.

If you have no very dark shadows and the whole picture is rather pale, check your pencil. Are you using a Number 2 (HB) pencil? These are too hard to draw with (though they are handy for light shading). Get a B, 2B and 4B for darker values.

Incorrect Head Proportions.

Because of the way we focus on a person's features, we usually draw them too big and squash the rest of the head. Learn about the correct head proportions.

Twisted Features.

Because we are used to looking at a person straight-on, we naturally try to make their features look level when we draw them. If their head is on an angle, this results in strange distortions in the picture. Sketch guidelines first to ensure that the features are on the same angle as the rest of the face.

Being Afraid of Black.

Often when shading, the shadows don't go past dark gray. If your value range is restricted to in some cases half what it ought to be, you are limiting the modelling and depth in your drawing. Put a piece of black paper at the corner of your drawing, and don't be afraid to go dark. Really dark. Improve your range of tone.

Outlining in Value Drawings

When value drawing, you are creating an illusion with areas of tonal value. When you use a hard drawn line to define an edge, you disrupt this illusion. Let edges be defined by two different areas of tonal value meeting.

Drawing on the Wrong Paper

If your drawing is pale, it might be the paper. Some cheap papers have sheen on the surface that is too smooth to grab the particles off the pencil. A thick notepad has too much 'give' under the pencil to allow you to apply enough pressure. Try a basic photocopy/office paper, or check the art store for cheap sketch paper. Place a piece of card under a couple of sheets to give a firmer surface. If you are trying to do even shading, some sketch papers can be too coarse, giving an uneven texture. Try a hot-pressed Bristol board or similar smooth drawing paper.

More Practical Tips on Drawing:

1. Try to work in larger sizes and different types of paper. 18" x 24" is a good size for a beginner; it will seem very large at first - but you'll get comfortable with it, and soon the small sizes will seem too small for you. Try charcoal and pastel papers, rice papers, and the many kinds in the art supply store.
2. When working on a longer study, leaving it and coming back later can help you see it fresh - the parts that work and those that don't.
3. Try to work on the whole drawing at once - as opposed to starting in one place and going from there - establish the main structure, main movement, etc., as described in the previous lessons in contour, mass and gesture drawing.
4. When trying to get the correct proportions, try comparing relationships in size between forms and parts of forms, in units of measurement, with your eye. For example, the vase is 1 unit wide, 2 units high, etc. (twice as high as wide). If you compare all the relationships this way, you can find the correct proportions. A similar method can be applied to determining the angles of objects - what are they in relation to a right angle, or 90 degrees?
6. You don't need to define the subject with only one, correct line. There can be two or more, loosely defined lines to define the contour of an object or figure. For example, in Cézanne's figure drawings - there is a searching, sketchy quality to them, and this searching quality and multiple contours give his figures an expressiveness, and actually contribute to their sense of three-dimensional form, since they convey the reality that the figures are not flat, with a hard outline, but continue in three dimensions behind the contour line.
7. Correcting proportions and relationships: You can perfect the proportions of, and relationships among, the object(s) you are drawing by comparing them visually. This can be done by systematically comparing the locations of forms; in a figure, for instance, you can compare the positions of the elbows - which is higher? Are they located within the figure, or are they to the left or right of the figure's contours? In a landscape, is the lower edge of a tree trunk higher or lower than a patch of flowers? etc. This can seem tedious, comparing all forms

to all the others - but it works!

8. Work mostly from life, as opposed to photographs - especially when a beginning student. Continue this way for many years.