

Drawing on Nature: Index of Drawing Exercises and Techniques

Exercise/technique, description, time limit

Blind contour

Two rules. First, once your pencil is placed on the surface, you may not lift it again. Secondly, you may not look at the paper. In other words, you must try to move your pencil at the same speed as your eyes move over the surface of the contour lines of the object. just draw what you see and don't worry about what it looks like. If you keep doing this, over time your hand-eye coordination will improve immensely and you will begin to be able to draw what you see accurately without even looking.

3-5 min

Modified blind contour

Contour drawing is outline drawing. Similar rules to Blind Contour; but when you feel lost, you may look down and re-position your pencil.

3-5 min

Drawing from observation with your memory

Almost the opposite of Blind Contour. Study image for 3-5 minutes; then without looking at object draw as much as you recall.

8-10 min

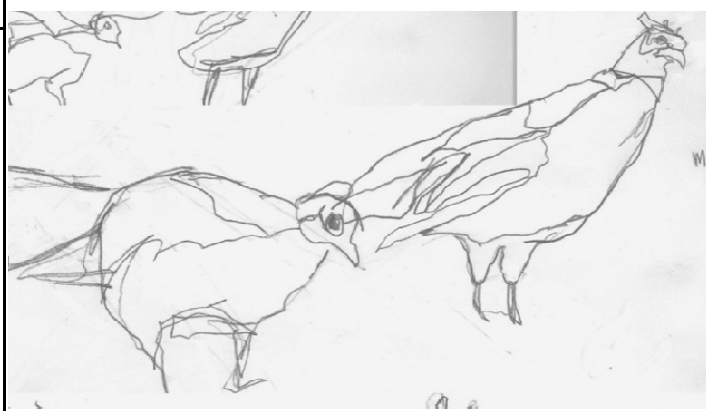
Drawing from observation

"Standard" or "Regular" drawing -- the way we usually draw.

Proceed to this exercise only after completing the previous exercises.

8-10 min

Thumbnail



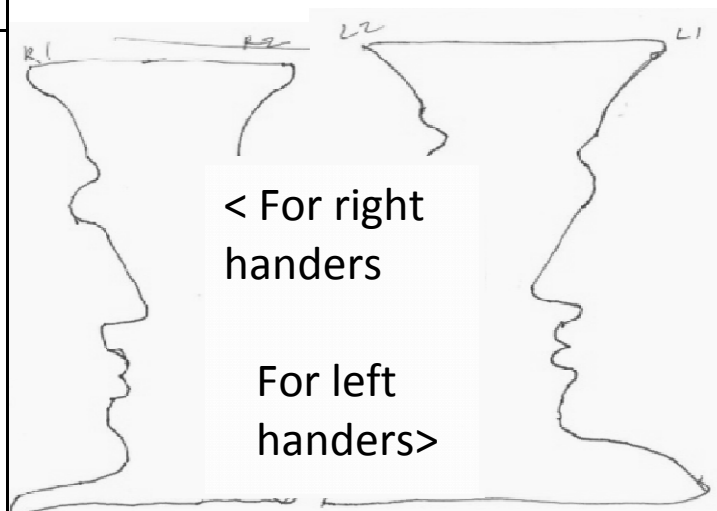
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Thumbnail

Vases/Faces

Complete the other half of the vase. First, go to the other side and start to draw the missing line that will complete the symmetrical vase. Then, on the second vase, draw the lines, naming the parts as you go, like this: "Forehead... nose... upper lip... lower lip... chin and neck." Did you experience conflict or a mental "crunch" while drawing? Naming each facial activates the verbal system of the brain. Drawing the vase profile shifts brain activity to the visual, spatial mode of the brain. Resolving any mental conflict requires that you draw just what you see without naming the parts.



1 min for each profile

Negative space

Don't draw the object -- draw the space around the object. For complicated subjects, or positions where foreshortening is apparent, drawing the negative space may yield a more accurate rendering.

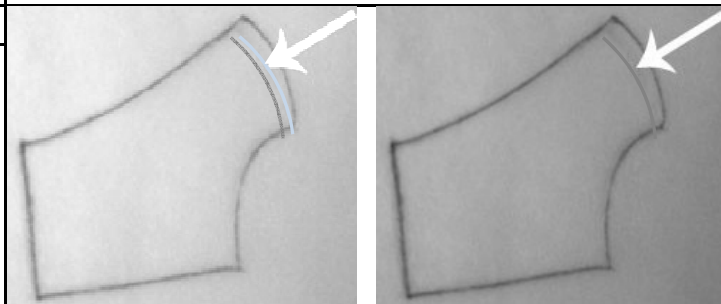


2-20 min

Copied shape

Draw a shape on tracing paper, then overlay the paper over the original shape. Check the copied shape for slight differences. Study the areas in need of change, and redraw shape again. Repeat process until shapes match.

3-5 min



Value drawing and Value Scale



Using a full range of values, render each object plane in a different value compared with adjacent planes. Values can be rendered with a variety of hatching, stippling or blending depending on textures.

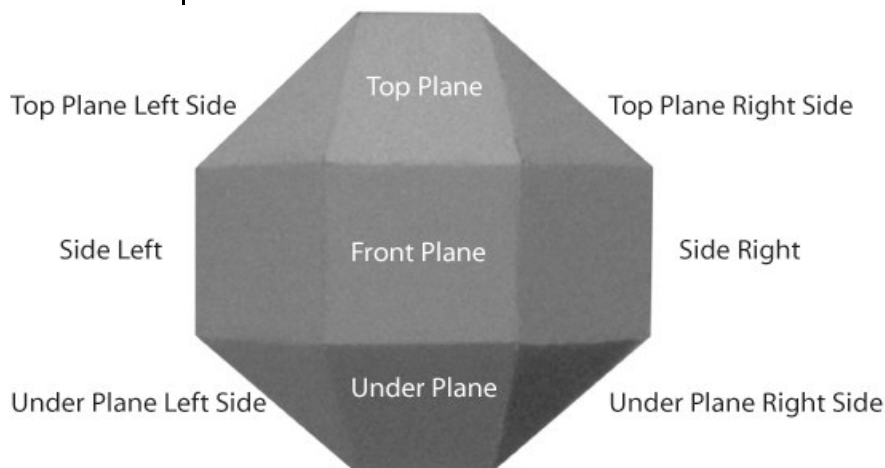


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Using a full range of values, render each object plane in a different value compared with adjacent planes.

Thumbnail



Pay special attention to the interplay of values between an object and its environment.

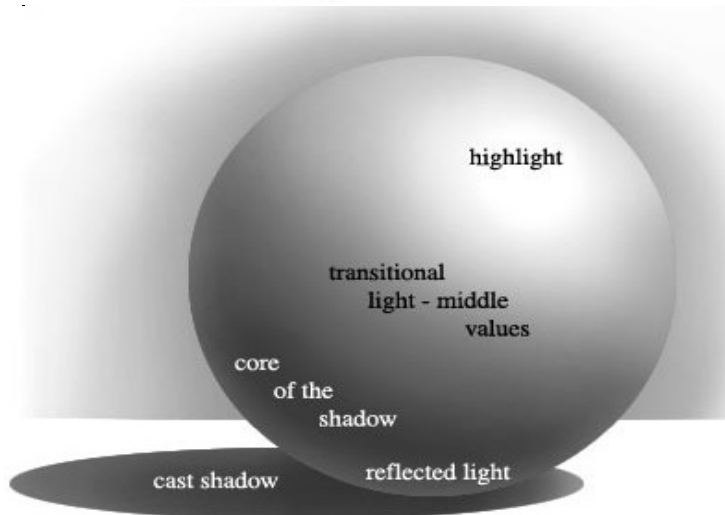
Highlight: brightest spots = white

Middle values: object's actual color

Core of shadow: Shadowed side of object could be vertical or even underneath overhang

Cast shadow: often, but not always, darkest

Reflected light: faint rim of light reflected onto object



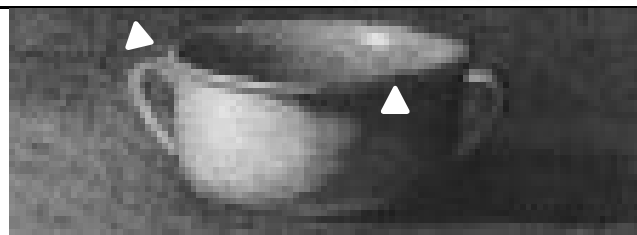
Chiaroscuro

Value changes can be softly blended or rendered in higher contrast (Chiaroscuro) in response to lighting conditions.

5-20 min

Edge effects

Carefully capture areas where values of object and background "trade places" with each other. At the transition, the line appears to dissolve. Some lines/edges are soft; other lines/edges are sharp.



Edge effects - advanced

How the edge between values is rendered helps to define the type of object as well as lighting effects. This is more easily applied with media other than pen and pencil.

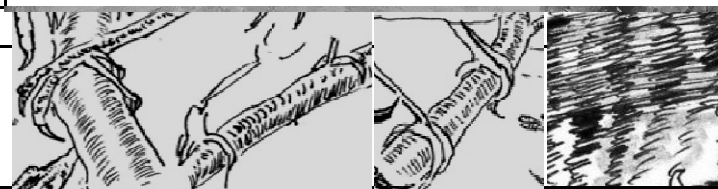


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Special effects with lines



Contour lines wrap around forms to depict curvature.

Wavy lines can depict grainy textures, wood, tree rings, bark, fungus, splits and cracks.



Crisscross lines are placed side by side like contour lines but may cross and overlap. Short, long, straight or curved, these lines may depict hair, moss, grass, or weeds.

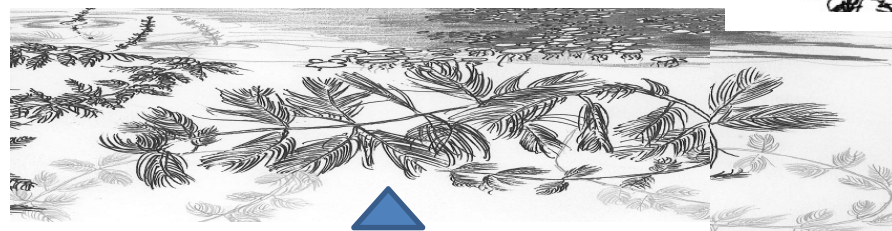


Stippling depicts subjects made of numerous small particles, light and dusty objects. The larger the dots, the more gritty the texture.



Crosshatching depicts shadows, rough tree bark, and foliage clumps.

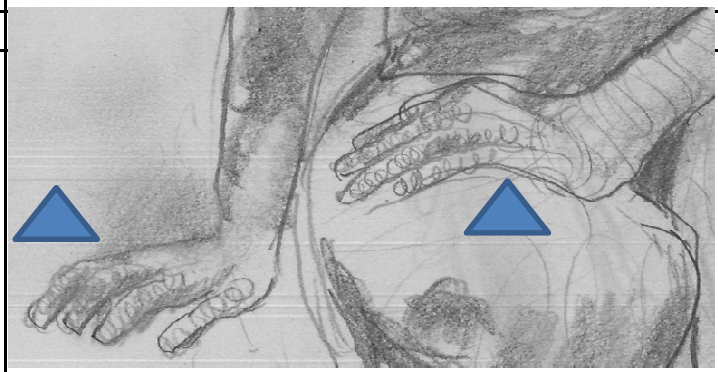
Scribble drawing can depict masses of evergreen needles or deciduous leaves.



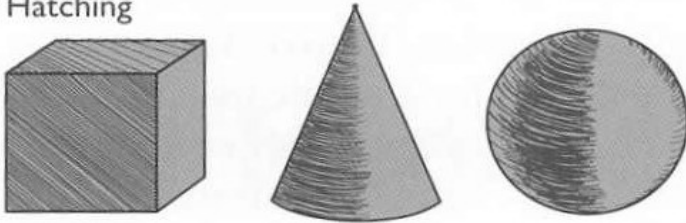
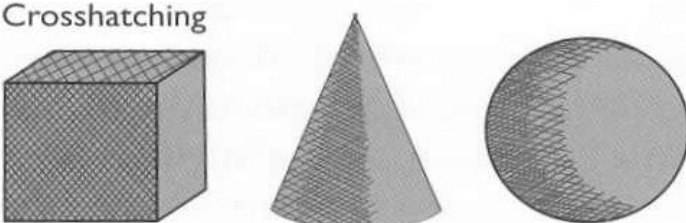

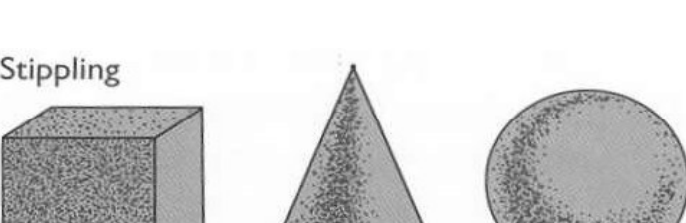

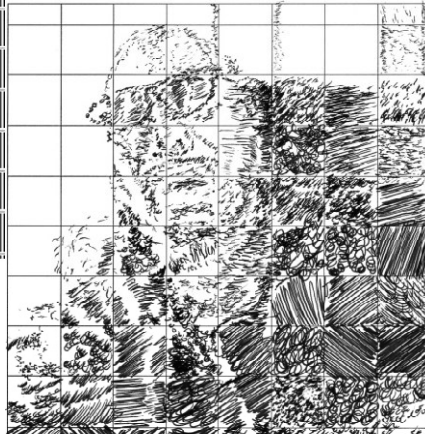
With all techniques, the **WEIGHT** of a line, that is, how dark and thick it is, will make it jump out from the paper (if it is a strong, dark line) or sink into the paper (if it is light or thin). This is useful when you are trying to give the impression of something being closer or further away.

Describing Form

Cross-contour: The line that goes across an object, hinting at the form, is called a cross-contour. These lines don't usually describe an actual edge, and are often broken or 'implied', with a definite line at the start and end but with the pen lifted and re-applied to create a gradual gap in the middle. This suggests the more subtle changes in the surface of the object.



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Exercise/technique, description, time limit	Thumbnail
Hatching	<div>Hatching</div> 
Cross-hatching	<div>Crosshatching</div> 
Blending	<div>Blending</div> 
Stippling	<div>Stippling</div> 
Copying an image using a grid	<div>   </div>

Use a grid to accurately enlarge an image. Divide the original small drawing into equal sections using lightly-ruled lines, and then create the exact same grid in larger proportion on the target surface. Transfer image to the new surface section by section. For a special challenge complete exercise as described on the attachment, varying types of shading for each adjacent square of the grid.

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20 min

Weight - Mass Drawing

Break off a small piece of conte crayon or charcoal; you will be working with the side of the crayon, not the point. 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 on the whole 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 of the crayon in the bulkier areas of the form, where the weight is.

Scribble drawing: Closely related to the Weight-Massing technique is the technique of building the subject's form from light encircling spring-like scribbling. Work from the largest volume out to the extremities, limbs or projections. After the basic form and position is established, draw darker contour lines that contain the initial scribbling. Make corrections as needed, drawing to the inside or outside of light construction lines. The goal is to capture the essence and movement of the subject. This darkening of certain areas will help define the form of the object or figure. You don't want details or individual hands, feet, etc. here - only the sense of form. Employ all your artistic tools: the eyes, mind, heart, soul and hands.

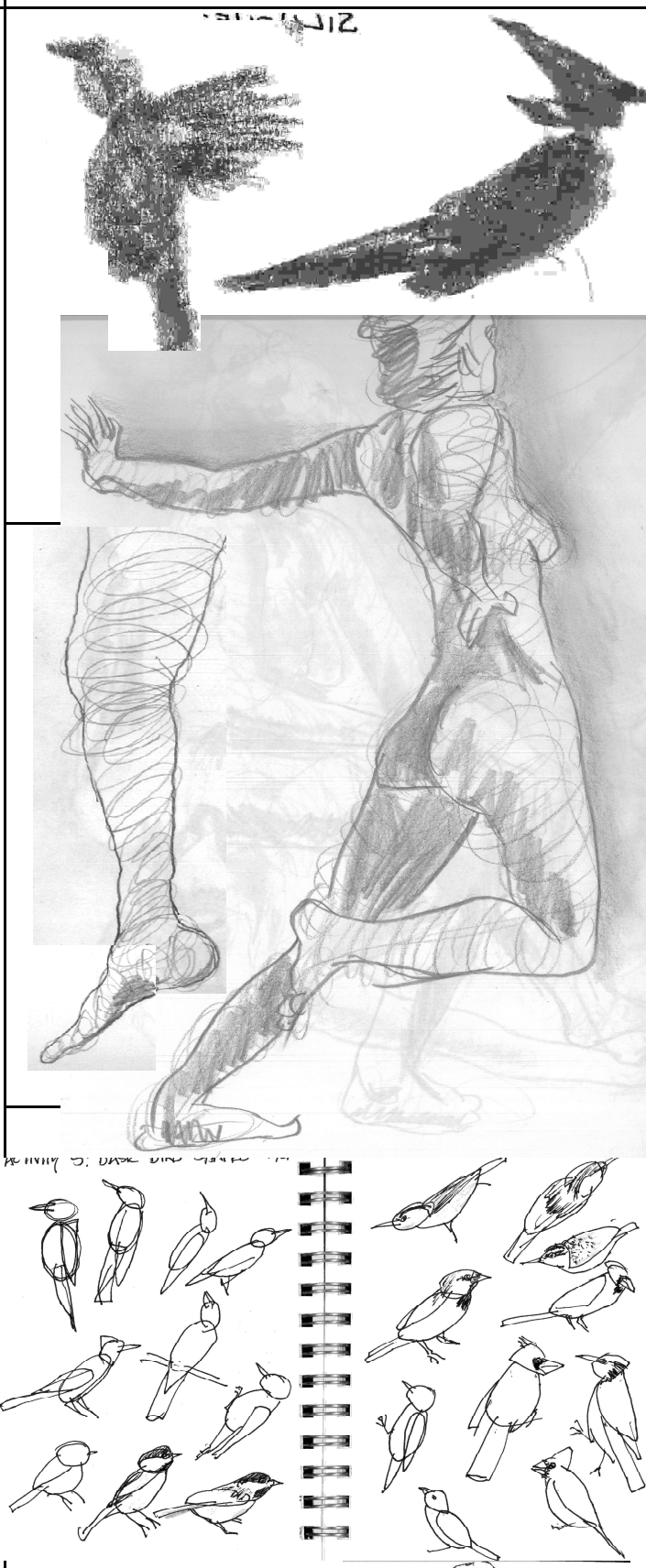
5 to 10 min for either of the above 2 techniques.

Gesture drawing

a very fast sketch--several lines with minimal shading at most--describing the primary motion or position of the body. A series of gesture drawings are usually sketched out in rapid succession as a warm-up prior to the start of a figure drawing class or session.

A gesture drawing does not show the surface details of an object, rather the forces that are contained within that object. Like contour drawing, it involves an almost complete loss of conscious thought and allows you simply to react to what you see.

Thumbnail



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You've got 15 seconds to draw the object in front of you. After the time is up, move the object or get the model to change poses. Repeat a minimum of ten times. Now set your timer to 30 seconds and repeat 5-10 times. Now set it to two minutes and repeat about five-ten times. Note that your drawing speed should NOT CHANGE; when you have 2 minutes you should draw like you have fifteen seconds. Remember that you can practice gesture drawing anywhere: while waiting for food to arrive at table, during a concert or lecture, during a prose or poetry reading! e.g.: Diana Krall during '12 Amp concert>

Burnishing, then rubbing

Use a fingernail, pen cap or similar tool to imprint dents into drawing or sketch paper -- newsprint doesn't hold dents well. Then gently shade with pencil, graphite or charcoal, taking care not to press so hard as to "iron" out the dents. The dents will remain the color of the paper in contrast to the drawing medium used.

Time varies: 2 to 5 minutes

Texture - the Fuzzy, Furry, Fluffy, & Feathered

When drawing fur or feathers:

*Observe closely the direction in which the fur or feathers grow and draw your shading lines to follow these directions.

*Fur and feathers look much more realistic when the shading lines are different lengths and sizes.

*Curved shading lines define the form of a bird or animal.

*Pay special attention to light and shadows, as well as texture, when shading fur or feathers.

Identifying the long and short of fur

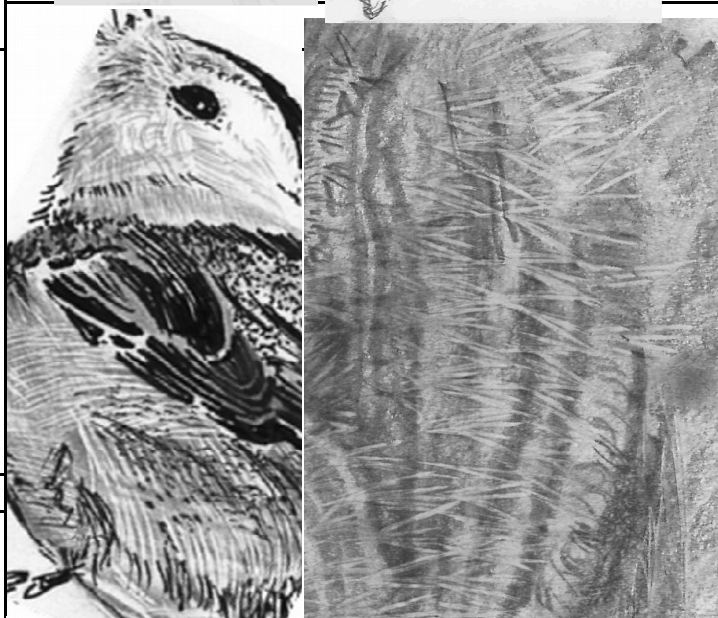
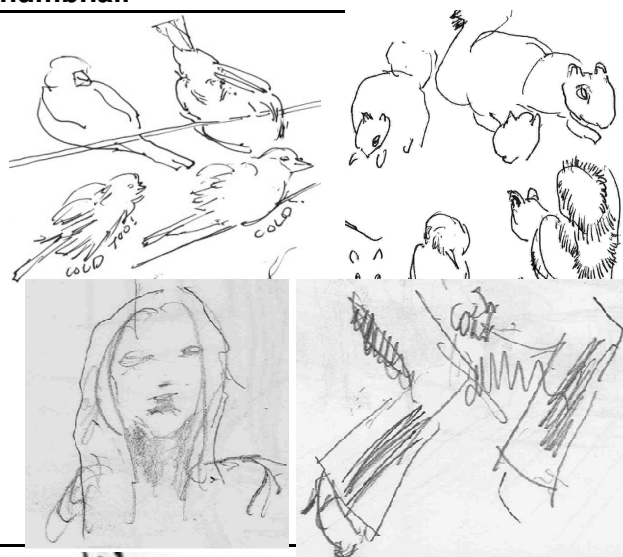
The furry coats of animals can be straight, curly, soft, coarse, shiny, matte, spotted, or striped! long fur:

*To make fur look short, you draw short (mostly curved) hatching lines. Use long, curved hatching lines to create the illusion of long fur.

*Hatching is the perfect shading technique for rendering the texture of most types of fur.

*Bold, thick lines give the illusion of coarse fur, and gentle, thin lines help fur to look soft.

Thumbnail

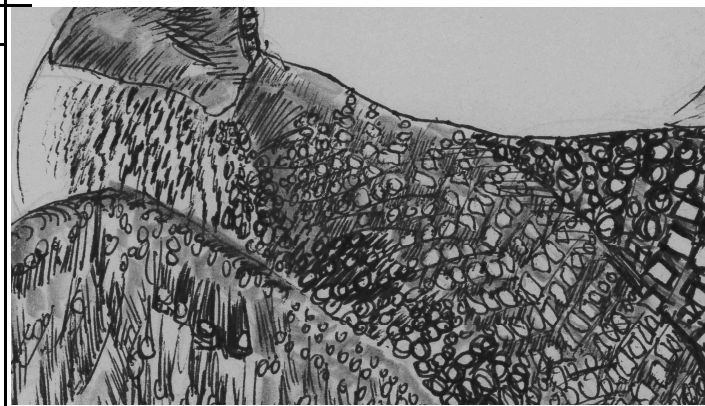


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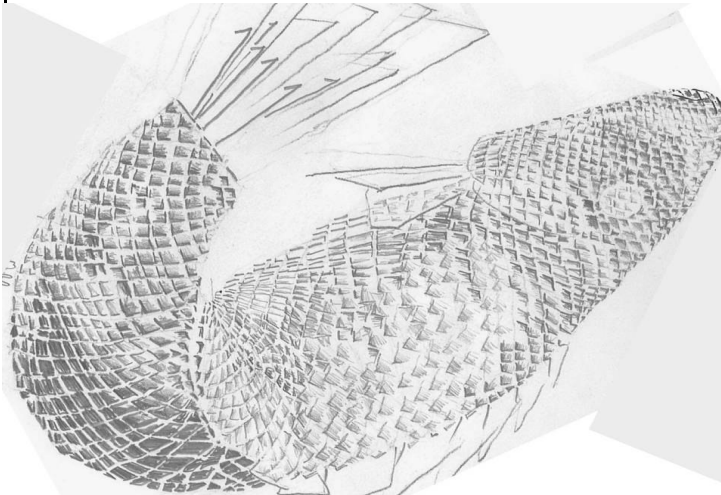
Exercise/technique, description, time limit

Short fur & fins

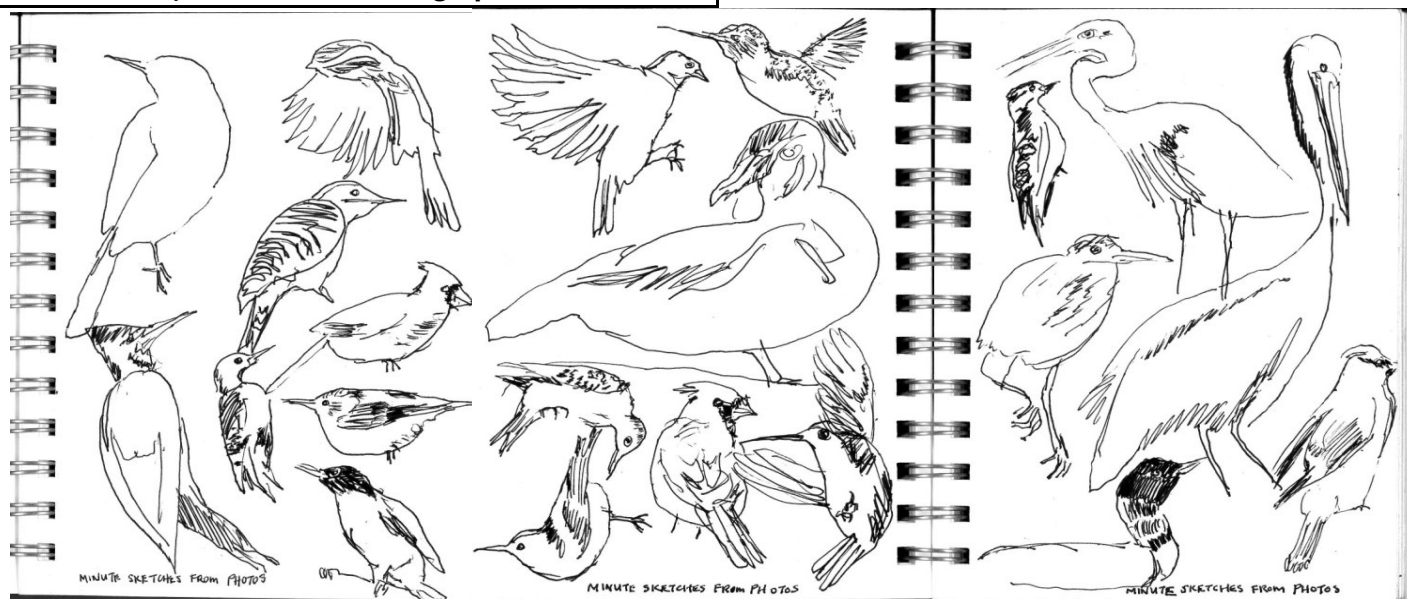
Thumbnail



Chiaroscuro: Usually when drawing we begin sketching the outline of the object we are drawing. In this exercise, do not drawing a single line. Instead, simply shade using your favorite drawing utensil and build the drawing up this way. I suggest using charcoal or something large that will allow you to put your shading down quickly. You can always erase or add white conte if your shading gets too dark. You should still be looking at what you are drawing as much as the drawing itself and do not stop moving your hand when you look up.



Minute sketches of subjects - short time limits (15 sec to 1 min) increases drawing speed!



Drawing vertically: Using an easel or "drawing horse" is a great way to loosen up your line. Focus on drawing with your entire arm and not just your hand. Drawing this way will also allow you to get your line recorded faster. Remember, focus on looking at what you are drawing as much as the drawing itself and do not stop moving your hand when you look up.

Drawing upside-down: If you were drawing a nose upside down and did not know you were drawing a nose, your mental concept of a nose would be suppressed, allowing you to draw more accurately and train yourself to look at the lines and shapes of what you're drawing.