

This is

Realistic Drawing Secrets

This is the book that can teach anyone to draw (yes, even you!) If you're not getting the kind of true-to-life results you want in your drawings (or if you can't even draw a straight line), Carrie and Rick Parks can help.

Written by:

Ali

Ahmed

Mohamed

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Book Intro

Written by:

Ali

S

o many times I have heard someone throw down the sword—make that the pencil—and issue this challenge to me:

“Yeah, but you can’t teach ME to draw!” Yes, I can teach you to draw, even if you can’t draw a straight line—or

draw blood with a knife. You’re reading this book, which means you’ve met the only criteria I have: a desire to learn.

Drawing is a very learnable skill. If you haven’t learned to draw, your drawings are weak or some art teacher told you to

take up knitting instead, you just haven’t had the right instruction. I’m not promising that you’ll become Leonardo da Vinci by

the end of this book, but I do believe you will draw better than you have ever hoped. All you must do is apply (and practice!)

the drawing tools taught in this book. You’ll soon discover that learning to draw is less about talent and more about learning

to perceive the world around you differently.

GETTING THERE

My own artistic journey is just colorful enough to make for a good, and hopefully inspirational, story.

I’d always found certain types of art easy. That is, I could look at some things and somehow draw them fairly accurately.

I grew up in a small mining town in northern Idaho where the public school system could barely afford textbooks, let alone an

arts curriculum. My parents did the best they could to encourage my talent, but when I announced that I was going to be a

professional artist, they could barely mask their horror. Art was fine as a hobby, but a career? After much soul-searching,

they bravely sent me off to a nearby community college to study commercial art.

I soon found myself floundering. Lessons consisted of the professors placing a mess of white shapes on a table and having

us draw them. White balls, white shoes, white drapery and, well, more white stuff. I could never figure out the point. What is

so special about white? Then we got to paint. We did paintings of the white stuff in the primary colors of red, blue and

yellow. Egads! I just wanted to draw something that really looked like something.

After a year of not getting it, I changed majors and figured my art career was probably going to become a hobby after all.

I envisioned myself as a gray-haired lady puttingter with bad oil paints on Saturday mornings. For several years I drifted from

college to college and major to major. I became the consummate professional student. Then one day I attended a gallery opening of watercolor paintings. As I wandered around the room studying the paintings,

it hit me: I can do this! I can paint at least this well. So what was the difference between this artist and me? How did she get her own art show and not me? My husband dryly provided the answer: “She did it.” She took the time and effort to actually create enough art for a one-woman show. I made up my mind then and there that I was going to be an artist, too, despite my collegiate setbacks.

THE STORY CONTINUES

After some time as a watercolorist, I found myself developing a fascinating use for my drawing skills: I started working at a crime lab as a forensic artist. Part of my job was sketching crime scenes. I would love to tell you that I was originally hired to work there because I was a brilliant artist with the crime-solving ability of Sherlock Holmes, but that would be stretching it. In 1985, I attended a short course on composite drawing at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia. Composite drawings are the “Wanted” drawings you see of criminal suspects on the nightly news. They are usually created by combining separate facial features that the victim or witness of a crime selects from a book of faces. The composite is used to identify an unknown suspect. I was invited to the course only because the FBI wanted participants from a variety of regions throughout the United States. My face-drawing skills were still dreadful at this point, but I was inspired to improve. I worked hard and paid attention to what it would take to do a good job. I became Carrie Parks, Pencil Sleuth. I loved drawing faces and became addicted to forensic art. I finally finished my college degree with a double major in social science and art—with honors, no less. My motto was, “I have a pencil, and I’m not afraid to use it!” Now my husband and I travel across the nation teaching composite drawing and forensic art courses. We have taught all kinds of people of varying skill levels, from FBI and Secret Service agents to civilian adults and children. We have won awards for our teaching methods, and I’ve even written a book exclusively on drawing faces. And to think, at one point I thought art could only be a hobby!

SO , THE PO INT O F THIS IS ...

You, too, can realize your dream of becoming an artist if you set your mind to it. This book aims to teach you what it takes to

do just that. I'm not going to set a bunch of stuff in front of you and expect miracles. Instead, I'll cover all the essentials, teaching you the secrets of realistic drawing one step at a time. Before you know it, you'll be turning out picturesque landscapes, stellar portraits—any subject that you like!

In my many years of teaching art, I've discovered that there are certain characteristics that define success as an artist.

My short list is as follows:

Desire. Desire doesn't just mean wanting something, but wanting it badly enough that you're willing to try a different

approach to get it. At first, you might not like it, might not do well trying it, or might not find it useful, but still you are

willing to try. This characteristic is what will allow you to grow and improve your artistic skills.

Interest. It's hard to whip up a fascination for drawing Harley-Davidson motorcycles when you love to ride horses. You

need to draw what interests you, and practice your drawing on the things that interest you.

Good instruction. This is my role. Good instruction is not up to the student, it is up to the teacher. If you've ever taken a

class where you were told to draw something in a particular way but were never told why or how, you haven't failed—

your teacher has. If it's meaningless to you, you'll never learn. Art needs to be stepped out, explained and demonstrated.

If it were as simple as just drawing something, you would already be doing it!

Focus. The artists who develop the best drawing skills usually have the best observational skills. This means having an eye

for the details as well as the overall picture. This takes concentration and training but is well worth the effort.

Practice. To be good at anything, you need practice. One of my students was so thrilled by his new skills that he started

drawing everybody, everywhere. I believe he had a sketchbook firmly in hand wherever he went. Of course, he is a

fantastic artist now because he practiced his skill.

Talent. Some artists may have it, but you don't have to have natural talent to draw well.

In my opinion, it takes far more

training and skill development than actual talent to become a successful artist. Anyone can learn to draw by applying her

desire and interest. I'll supply the good instruction if you focus on and practice what you're learning. Everyone will then be convinced that you had talent all along!

Chapter 1

The Right Stuff: Materials and References

Written by:

Ali

The Right Stuff: Materials and References

The Right Stuff: Materials and References

You want to know the first secret to drawing? Find the best tools available! You have to have the right toys. Having the proper pencils, paper, erasers and other tools can make a big difference in your art. I'll show you what I prefer, but I fully expect you to develop an addiction to trying out new drawing supplies on your own. Think of it as the chocolate in your art life. In addition to the right supplies, you need something to draw from. Whether it's a photograph, still life setup, live model or a trip to the great outdoors for some plein air sketching (and maybe a little bug-slapping), the inspiration for your artwork can come in many different forms.

Pencils

Your cheerful yellow No. 2 pencil usually contains an HB lead. It would perform just fine as a drawing pencil, but ask

yourself, is it really cool? No, buying a sparkly version doesn't make it better. You need stuff, remember? There are quite a few pencil choices to consider:

- Mechanical pencils come in a variety of colors and are easily found in most art stores. They usually consist of a plastic

holder and a fine HB lead that advances by clicking on an end or side button. They create consistent lines of equal width.

- Lead holders are available in the drafting section of most office supply stores and come with an HB lead. Various grades

of 2mm lead can be purchased and easily placed into the holder. The main difference between lead holders and

mechanical pencils is that a mechanical pencil cannot be sharpened. Unlike a lead holder, its tip is very small and will break if you apply too much pressure.

- Graphite and charcoal pencils differ in several ways. Graphite pencils, often called lead pencils, consist of ground

graphite mixed with clay and placed in a wooden holder. They are available in many grades, although there is a slight

difference in the darkness among brands. They often create a shine in the drawing as light hits the surface. Charcoal

pencils have more "drag" when you use them, may be more difficult to erase, and create a different appearance in your drawing. They often come in only three or four degrees of darkness.

- Carbon pencils combine the darkness of charcoal with the smoothness of graphite and may be combined with either

graphite or charcoal in a single drawing.

- Ebony pencils are very dark, smooth graphite pencils. Many artists love these pencils, but they may limit your ability to build subtle tones.

- Wash pencils are water-soluble graphite pencils. They may be applied to wet or dry watercolor paper. You can also apply a wash of clean water for different effects.

Pencil Grades

There are about twenty grades of graphite available, ranging from the lightest and hardest at one end of the scale (9H), to

the softest and darkest at the other end (9B). The HB lead in your yellow pencil is medium-grade, workable lead (or,

technically, graphite). Your choice of pencil is determined by your drawing style and paper choice.



Different Pencils, Different Effects

The standard No. 2 pencil works just fine for drawing, but other grades of lead will be needed for some of the effects found in this book. From left to right are wash pencils, ebony, charcoal, graphite, mechanical and basic yellow



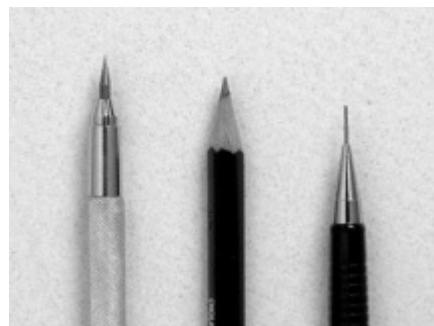
Pencil Grades

Hard pencil grades make lighter lines, while softer grades make darker lines.



Fancy Stuff

Drawing sets are very nice and make wonderful gifts, but they're not necessary for drawing. If you purchase a kit, be sure it looks like you'll try most of its supplies, because some contain pencils you may never use.



Get the Point

Compare the point on a lead holder with the point on a regular drawing pencil and a mechanical pencil.

HOW TO USE LEAD HOLDERS

Lead holders are our choice for drawing because they form a sharp point.



1. Expose the Correct Amount of Lead

The top of the lead pointer has two small holes. Release some of the lead from the holder and place it into one of the holes.



2. Correct Length

The size of the hole is the exact amount of lead you will need to sharpen. Slide the extra lead back into your pencil until the metal tip rests on the sharpener.



3. Ready to Go

You now have the exact amount of graphite exposed.



4. Sharpen

Place the lead holder into the larger opening. Jiggle it so it's correctly positioned. The

entire top will rotate in a circle, sharpening all sides. Don't worry if you don't do well the first time. This takes a bit of practice.



5. Clean Up

Push your sharpened tip into the small white area on your lead pointer filled with soft-rolled paper to clean off the excess graphite.

Erasers

Most people have the idea that erasers are used only for boo-boos. Make a mark, erase it. Make another mark, erase again.

Erasers are far more useful than that. They can lighten areas, create textures and add a variety of different effects to your drawing.

Unlike pencils, erasers are not lined up and clearly labeled for the shopper's convenience, so you'll need to investigate

your options before making a purchase. There is a wide selection of erasers available, each varying in hardness (or firmness)

and messiness (how much eraser residue is left behind). The upside, though, is that with so many options you're guaranteed to find an eraser that suits your needs.

Types of Erasers

- **Pink Pearl** is a common eraser with attitude. It gets into your drawing and really tears up the graphite. But be cautious:

The same aggression this eraser applies to graphite is also applied to your paper. There's a possibility that your paper will be roughened up as well.

- **Kneaded erasers** made from rubber are soft and pliable. You can wad them into a point to lift graphite out of tight places or use them to lighten an area that's too dark by pushing them straight down on the art, then lifting. Clean them by stretching them back on themselves.

- **White plastic** or vinyl erasers are your best choice for general cleanup. They are nonabrasive, tend to be gentle on your work and leave behind no residue.

- **Gum erasers** are useful but terribly messy. They shed worse than a collie in spring.

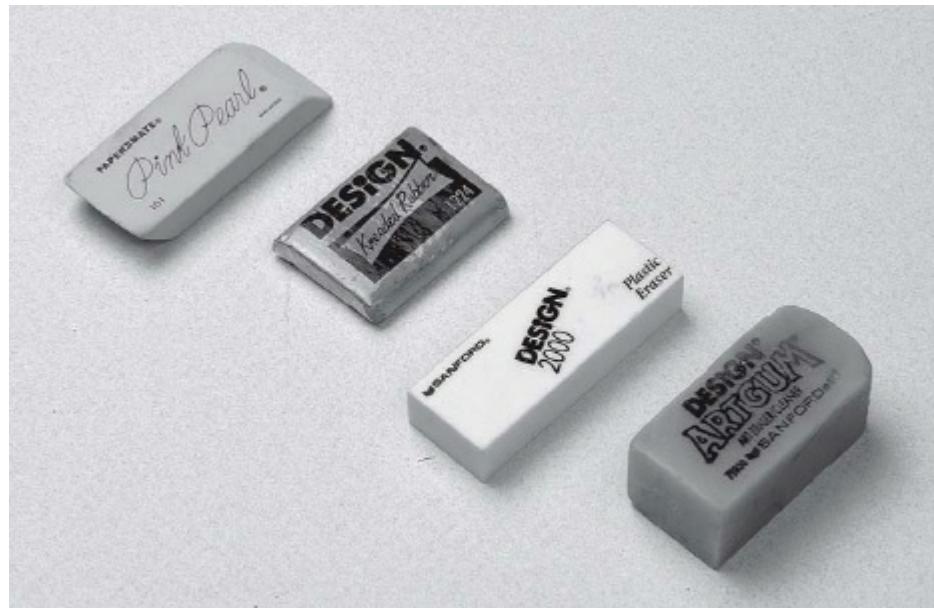
- **Electric erasers** are great, especially the smaller, battery-operated versions.

I use the white plastic and kneaded erasers the most. I like the way the white plastic eraser handles the paper—gently yet efficiently. The kneaded eraser lifts out the graphite without destroying the underlying pencil lines.

• Going Electric

Drawing supplies are inexpensive compared to other mediums. Think about the money you'll save! Because you have all that extra money, you're now going to spend it on your first big purchase: a portable electric eraser.

There are several brands of portable electric erasers on the market, but I find the Sakura brand works best. Some brands spin too fast, grinding into the paper and leaving rough spots. Some brands stop spinning as soon as you touch the paper. The Sakura eraser has the right spin to erase, can be sharpened to a fine point by using a sanding block and is easy to hold.



Rounding Up the Usual Suspects

From left to right are the Pink Pearl, kneaded, white plastic and gum erasers.



My Favorite Electric Eraser

I like the Sakura portable electric because it handles like a pencil and erases cleanly without tearing up the paper.



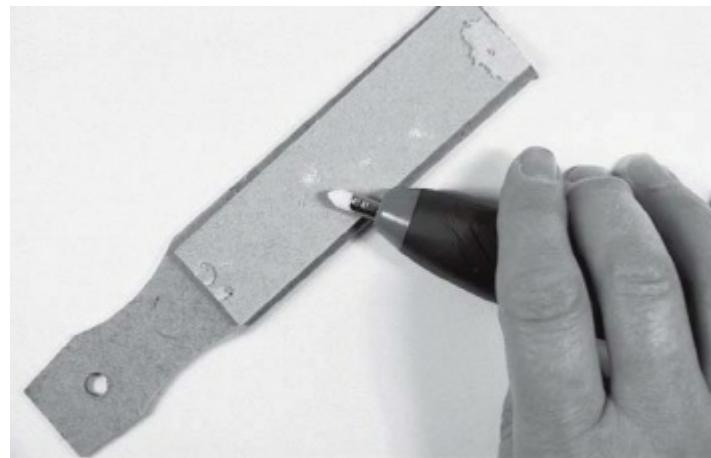
My Favorite Kneaded Erasers

Colored kneaded erasers by Faber-Castell don't stain your work and come in red, yellow and blue. Blue's my favorite; it matches my eyes.



Creating White Lines

You can't draw white lines on white paper, but you can lift them out of your shading using the electric eraser. Practice creating the effect of white hairs, eyebrows or highlights in the eyes and hair.



Sharpening Your Electric Eraser Tip

In order to “draw with white,” that is, make fine lines with your eraser, you’ll need to sharpen the tip. An old piece of sandpaper works fine, as does a sanding block created for artists. Turn on your eraser and angle it so that the spinning eraser forms a sharp point.



Drawing White Lines

An electric eraser with a sharpened tip allows you to accurately draw white lines through your shaded areas.

Other Absolutely Necessary Toys

I once handed my five-year-old nephew a toy catalog and asked him what he wanted for Christmas. He opened the book and studied the first page intently, then said, "everything on this page." He looked at the facing page, waved his hand over it and declared, "everything on this page, too." He went through the entire book like that, asking for everything but the dolls. No, you don't need to buy everything on every page of the art supply catalog, but you do need to add a few more items to your shopping cart.

Ruler

We'll use a ruler for a variety of different projects, and the best one by far is the C-Thru plastic ruler. The C-Thru ruler has a centering section so you can find the middle of anything. The interior lines make it easy to create 90-degree angles (trust me, you'll need that). I prefer the 12" × 2" (30cm × 5cm) version.

Circle Template

Certain things are a given. Chocolates have calories. You'll run into the most people you know at the grocery store when you look your worst. And drawing perfectly round circles is impossible without help. The next item for your drawing kit is a circle template. You can find it in most drafting areas of office supply stores as well as general art stores. You will absolutely need it. Find one with a variety of small holes.

Erasing Shields

Erasing shields are inexpensive tools made of thin metal that you erase over top of to create different effects. You can create a custom template by cutting through a piece of acetate with a hobby knife. The best acetate to use is clear plastic report covers.

Blending Tools

Many artists use their pencils to create shading, smudging and blending without resorting to some form of a blending device.

It can make for a beautiful drawing, but requires skillful handling of the pencil. You may also take the other route and create nice shading with tools.

A short list of blending tools includes a paper stump, tortillon, chamois and a cosmetic sponge. Don't even think of using your finger because the oils will transfer to your paper. The paper stump is used on its side; the tortillon is used on its tip.

Horsehair Brush

My final toy is a horsehair brush to remove the erasing dandruff. A bird feather, soft-complexion brush or soft paint brush also work well. You don't want to use your hand because that will smear the drawing, and if you try to blow the debris off, there's a good chance that you might include some spit. Take it from me, spit doesn't add to your drawing.

Chapter 2

Realistic Drawing Techniques

Written by:

Ali

Realistic Drawing Techniques



Realistic Drawing Techniques

hances are you've already tried to draw your favorite subject on your own. If you didn't get the results you were

Choping for—and you most likely didn’t if you bought this book!—your inaccurate (or incomplete) perception of your subject may not be the only culprit. Your technique of putting pencil to paper may take some of the blame. Maybe

your rendering was close, but not quite right. That’s OK! The first step is to actually get off your duff and give it a try. From there it’s all about practice.

Before ballet dancers start dancing, they practice their positions. Singers go through pre-concert vocal warm-ups. A writer might start the day with some journaling or maybe a cup of coffee. As an artist, you’re in the same boat—you need to warm up before you cut loose. Consider this chapter your pre-drawing warm-up. It’s designed to get you drawing and using your tools correctly. All the tools, techniques, secrets and ideas won’t help you without some practice, so grab your box of drawing goodies and let’s get going.

The ABCs of Drawing

You first learned the alphabet as a series of shapes. You committed to memory the shapes of twenty-six letters (actually, fifty-two when you count both lowercase and uppercase). You memorized the letters and the sounds they made. You might have even learned by placing the alphabet into a song: “A-B-C-D ...” and so on (although the letter “ellameno” took some time to figure out!). Then you combined the letters to form simple words like cat, dog, run and see.

In drawing, there are really only two kinds of shapes to learn: straight and curved. These simple shapes can be combined to form simple, recognizable images. All of us are able to combine straight and curved lines to create the simplest of drawings.

In reading, you eventually progressed to more and bigger words. With each passing day, you acquired more and more words for your memorized dictionary. Then you strung the words together to form sentences. In art, you might have taken a turn at drawing a more complex critter or car.

Here's where the natural artists and the rest of the world part. The natural artists develop a few skills to move on and draw more accurately. Everybody else figures there's no hope and throws down their pencils in disgust.

So what's the problem then? Why can't your drawings progress past this most basic stage? Understanding how your mind works can help you overcome this roadblock.



Mastering the Shapes

Learning how to read demanded that you memorize the shapes that made up each letter. Learning the letter R, for example, required you to learn the series of curved and straight shapes that combined to form the letter.

cat ran see the look

Combining the Shapes

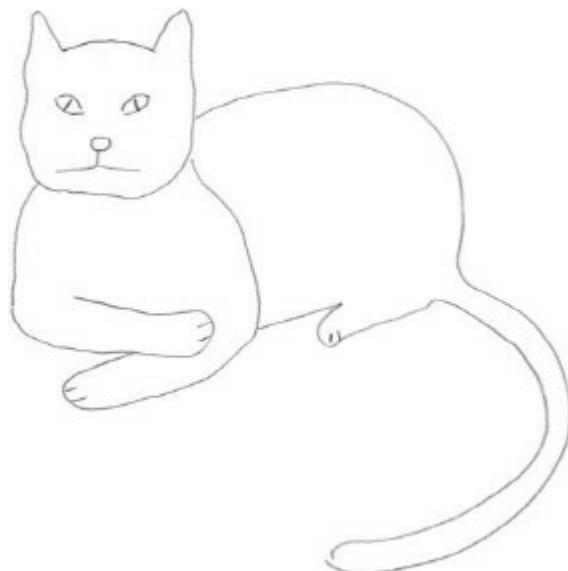
Once you memorized the entire alphabet, you could then combine letters to make words. Likewise in art, you can combine basic straight and curved shapes to form simple drawings like this cat. You've gotten this far in your drawing skills already. The goal is to move forward.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N

O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Duplicating the Shapes.

After a bit of practice, you were able to recognize all letters of the alphabet and the series of curved and straight shapes needed to duplicate or write each letter.



Thinking in Patterns

The human brain is very efficient. It processes information at an astounding rate, then places that information into a memorized pattern so it makes sense to us in the future. For instance, we learn to recognize letters of the alphabet by memorizing their shapes. Once memorized, these shapes are stored in the brain and recalled when necessary. It is this ability to recall information that prevents you from having to relearn the alphabet every time you sit down to read.

The same process applies to objects around us. Your brain records a recognizable pattern for each object and recalls that pattern when necessary. So why doesn't the object in your drawing look like it does in real life? The answer is simple: When you draw, it is the memorized pattern that you usually reproduce on paper, not the reality of the object in front of you.

Anything unique about the object you see may be lost when your brain recalls the pattern on file.

Along with stubbornly adhering to memorized patterns, your brain records only essential visual information, not every single detail. To prove this point, try drawing a one dollar bill without looking at it, and then compare it to the real thing.

Notice any differences? Even though you've seen the dollar bill countless times, your brain hasn't recorded the exact details.

In fact, you've likely only stored enough information to distinguish this piece of currency from any other piece of paper.

This means our mental patterns of most objects we want to draw are missing the details necessary to make the object

appear realistic. You may be wondering, then, how veteran artists are able to crank out realistic drawings without even

breaking a sweat. This is because our brains continually add shapes and images to our dictionary of patterns. For example,

you have learned to read a sentence regardless of the font or handwriting style used.

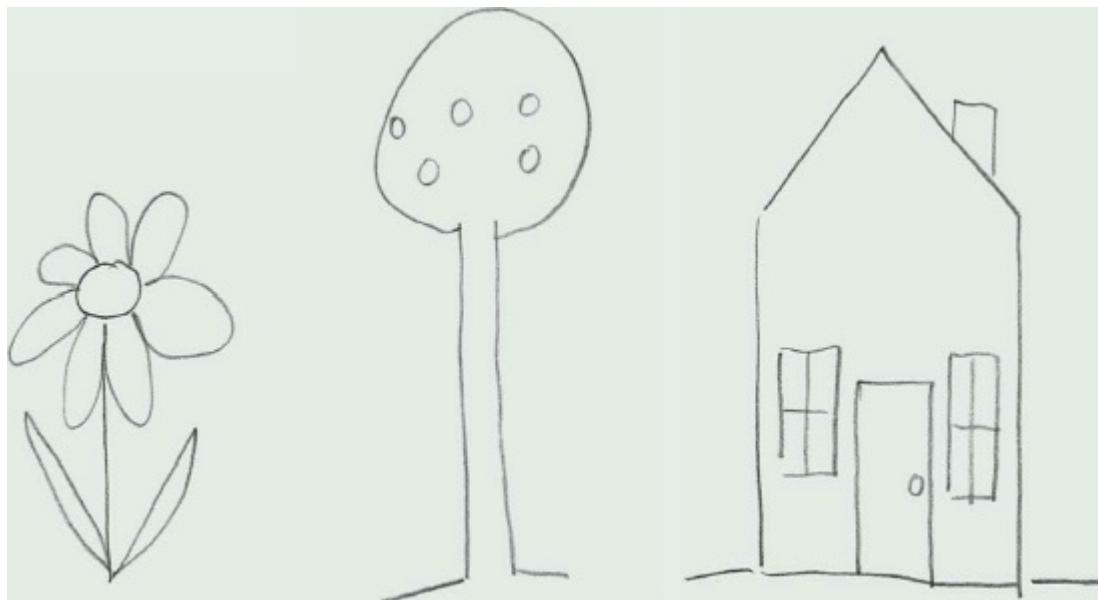
The same happens with drawing:

Artists who have been drawing for some time have a large dictionary of patterns that they have been adding to over time.

They have probably sketched them many times as well.

So how do you build your dictionary of patterns and ultimately improve your drawings?

It's all about understanding perception, which we'll talk about next.



The Problem of Primitive Patterns

When we write, we rely on our memorized shapes to communicate. That's fine for writing but lousy for drawing. Memorized patterns seldom help us create realistic drawings when we're starting out. This is the case with each of the objects pictured here. Sure you can recognize the objects, but they are a far cry from realistic representations. You must expand your mental dictionary of patterns if you want your drawings to improve.

Perception

Seeing as an artist is not about vision, the function of the eyes. It's about perception, the mind's ability to interpret what we see. A good definition of perception is the process by which people gather, process, organize and understand the world through their five senses. With this in mind, there are two important points that every artist should know about perception.

First, each of us has a filter that affects our perceptions. By shaping your filter to meet your interests, you can build upon your dictionary of patterns and develop your artistic skills. However, it can be a challenge to alter your perception without study and practice.

This brings us to the second point: Perceptions are powerful—so powerful that they don't change unless a significant event occurs. In drawing, this significant event is training. The goal is to give you tools to bypass that filter and train your mind.

Filters

Perception filters exist solely to keep us from overloading on too much information. If we didn't have filters in place, we would suffer from sensory surplus. As handy as your filters may be in everyday life, they must be shaped and altered for you to become a proficient artist.

One filter I'd like to bypass right away is edges. I became aware of this when teaching children to paint, and it is the same filter still firmly in place in adulthood. Our perceptions dictate that objects must have strong outlines and defining edges.



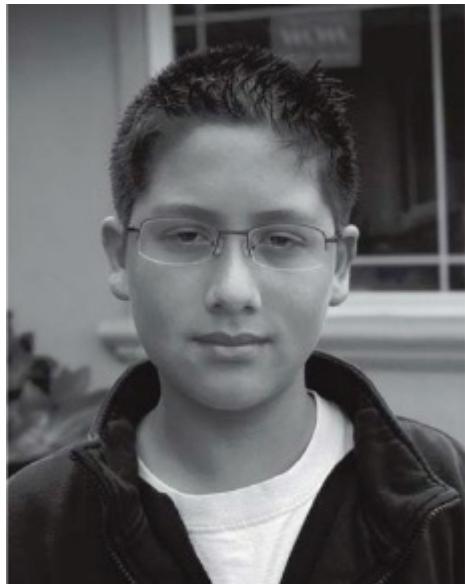
The Reality

When children (and many adults) are shown a subject such as a leaf, all the information they need to draw is present. It has a shape and color.



The Perception

Although all the details are present in the photograph, the filter of perception means the aspiring artist draws what is present in their mind—the outline of the leaf. There are no thick, dark edges present in reality.



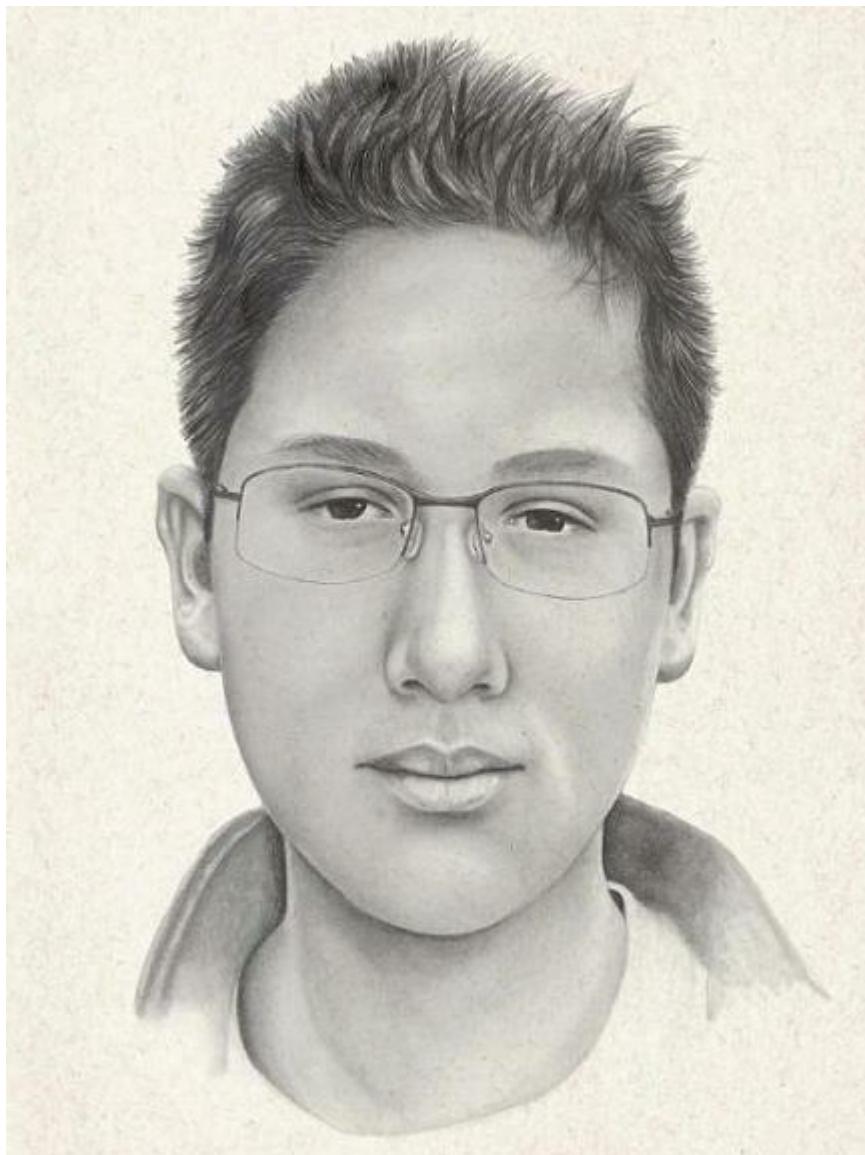
The Reality

The reality of a face is that the nose begins in the forehead and is shorter in length than we tend to see it.



The Perception

We perceive the nose as originating somewhere around the eye area and as longer than in reality. The perception of the nose as overly long is so prevalent that many drawing books have incorrect proportions.



NICHOLAS GONZALES
Graphite pencil on smooth bristol board
16" x 13" (41cm x 33cm)

Capturing a Likeness

Understanding how your filters work, and then turning them off, will allow you to draw what you see, not what you think you see using memorized patterns of facial features.

Contour Drawing Warm-Up

One excellent warm-up practice is to do a contour drawing. There are two kinds of contour drawings: regular and blind.

Both types involve placing your pencil on a piece of paper and not lifting it until the drawing is complete. The idea is that as

your eyes are moving across the subject you have chosen, your pencil is moving across the paper in the same manner.

How do these two types of contour drawings differ? The answer lies in whether or not you look at your hand while in the

process of drawing. In a regular contour drawing you have the freedom to look at both the subject and your drawing as you

work. But a blind contour drawing, as the name suggests, requires that you lock your gaze on the subject entirely, never looking down at your hand as you draw.

Now, contour drawing may sound like a waste of your time, but the point is to train your eye and hand to move together at

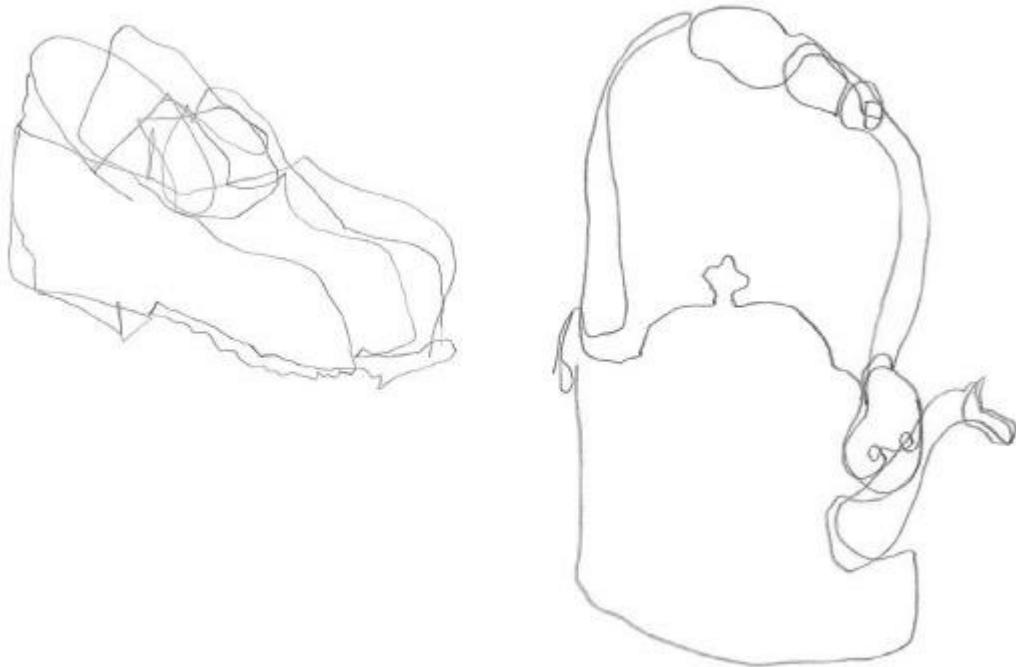
the same time and at the same pace. This ultimately forces your eye to slow down and more carefully observe the object so

your hand can keep up. Just give contour drawing a shot—it'll be fun, I promise!



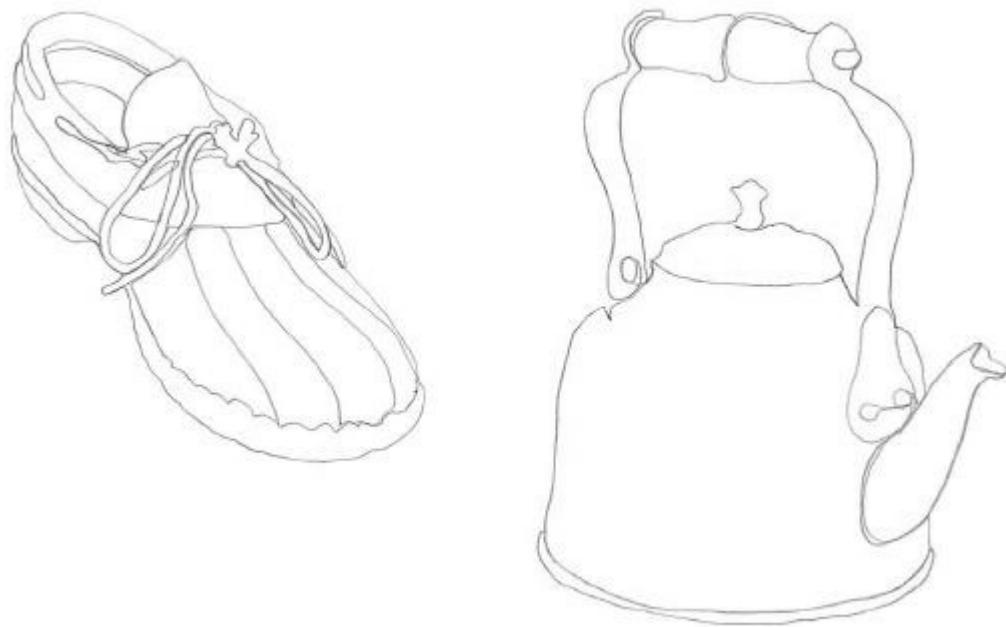
Reference Photos

I used this shoe and copper teakettle to complete the contour drawings on the next page. You can practice contour drawing with just about anything you have laying around the house.



Blind Contour Drawing

Choose a starting point on the object, then place a piece of paper under your drawing hand and put the pencil down on the paper. Turn your body so you can't peek back at your hand. As you start drawing, your eyes and your hand should be in sync. That is, as your eye moves slowly around the object, your hand should record the exact part of the image on which your eyes are focusing at any given time. Let your eye explore each shape and area of the object as your hand does the same. Don't lift your pencil from the paper until the drawing is complete—and no peeking at your paper! When you're finished, you should end up with a scribble that kind of resembles your subject.



Regular Contour Drawing

Begin this drawing in the same way, only don't bother turning your body so that you can't see your hand. This time, you can freely look back and forth from your paper to the subject, but you still can't lift your pencil from the paper until the drawing is complete. No cheating! Your regular contour drawing will more closely resemble the actual subject.

Chapter 3

Drawing Practice

Written by:

Ali

Drawing Practice

Drawing Practice

If you want to produce realistic drawings such as the ones you see in this book, you will need to practice. And practice.

And practice some more. The demonstrations in this chapter will help you do that. Please, however, don't think that

loosely sketched drawings, drawings with exaggerated features or studies in lights and darks are in any way wrong, unacceptable or anything less than wonderful in their own right. You'll need to do many drawings in many styles and under various circumstances to improve as an artist. You're on a journey with lots of side trips.

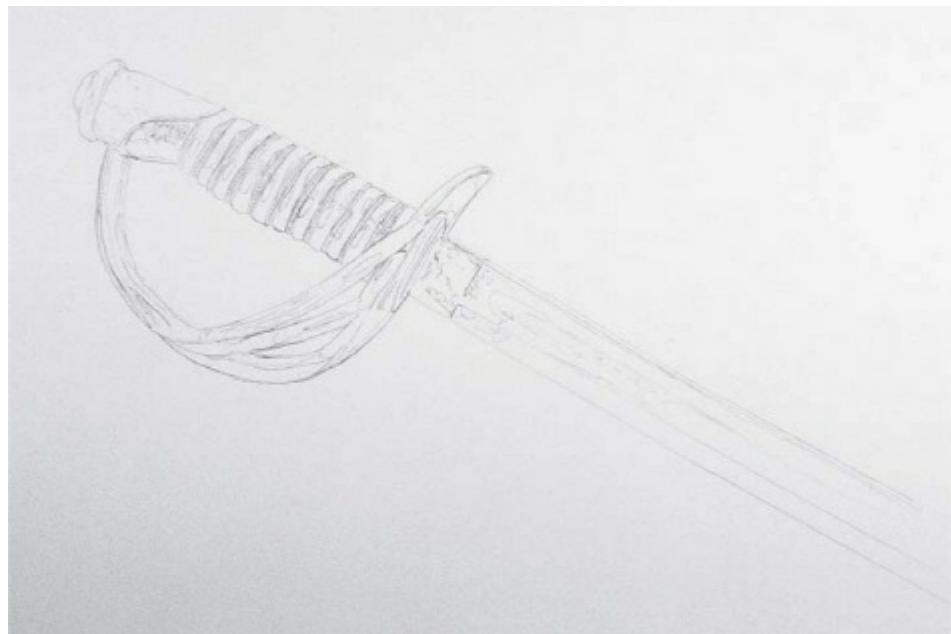
Drawing a Detailed Sword Handle

STEP-BY-STEP DEMONSTRATION

This is an 1864 light cavalry saber with several unique drawing challenges. The man-made shapes need to be rendered with some type of mechanical assistance if the finished drawing is to be realistic. That's not to say it can't be drawn freehand and kept more sketchy, but if you choose to make it as real as possible, French curves and rulers are recommended. The different metallic surfaces, some shiny and some matte finished, are also a challenge and require different pencil strokes.



Reference Photo



1. Make a Line Drawing

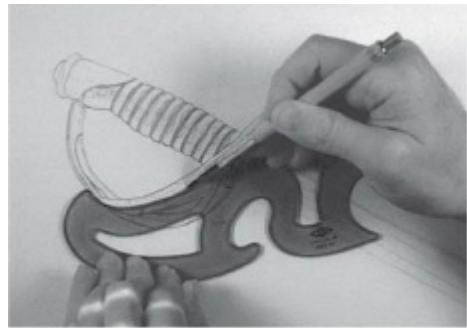
The sword was drawn freehand and the guidelines erased. Copy this drawing. Remember to not push too hard if you're using a harder lead, as those lines will score or gouge your paper. Some of the areas that will later be shaded are outlined or marked.

2. Mechanically Clean Up the Drawing

We learned earlier in the book about the use of mechanical aids. This is a drawing of a mechanical, man-made object, so the use of French curves renders a more precise drawing. Go back over the initial handle and make it more mechanically perfect. Use an HB pencil to darken the links.

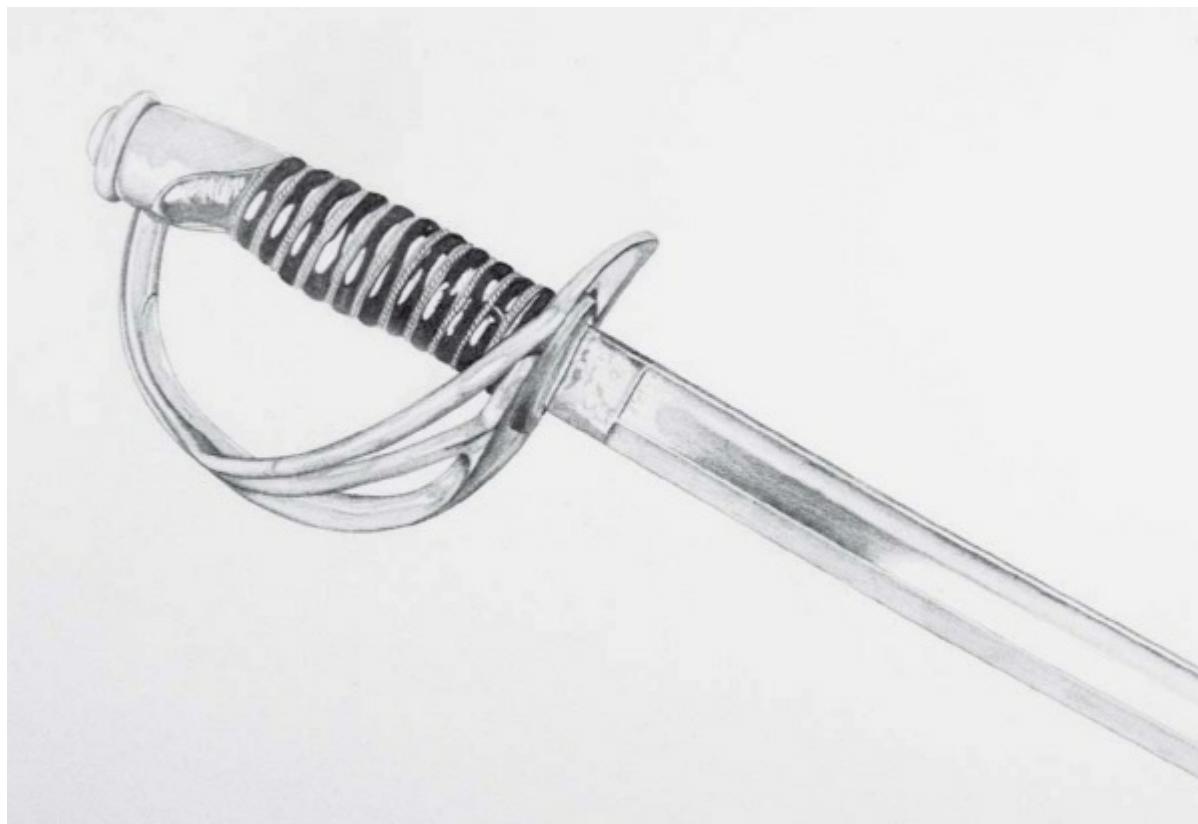
3. Establish the Range of Values

In this first shading, establish the darkest areas, some midtones and the lights. This provides the full range of tones that will be present in the finished drawing. The darkness in the handle should be shaded away from the highlights and to the outlined edge. Darken the details of the chain-like shapes.



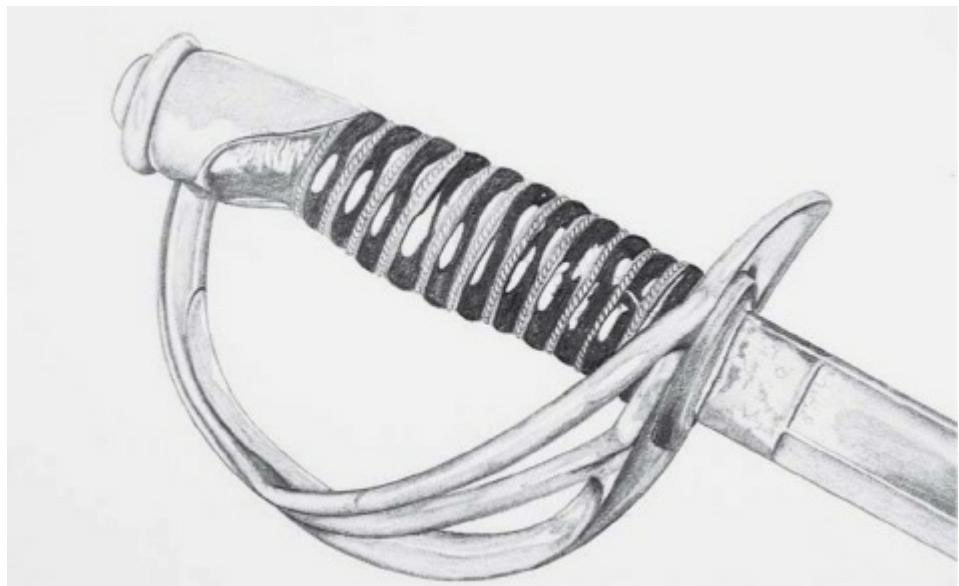
Detail

The French curve allows for greater control and smoother lines when you're drawing the curved handle.



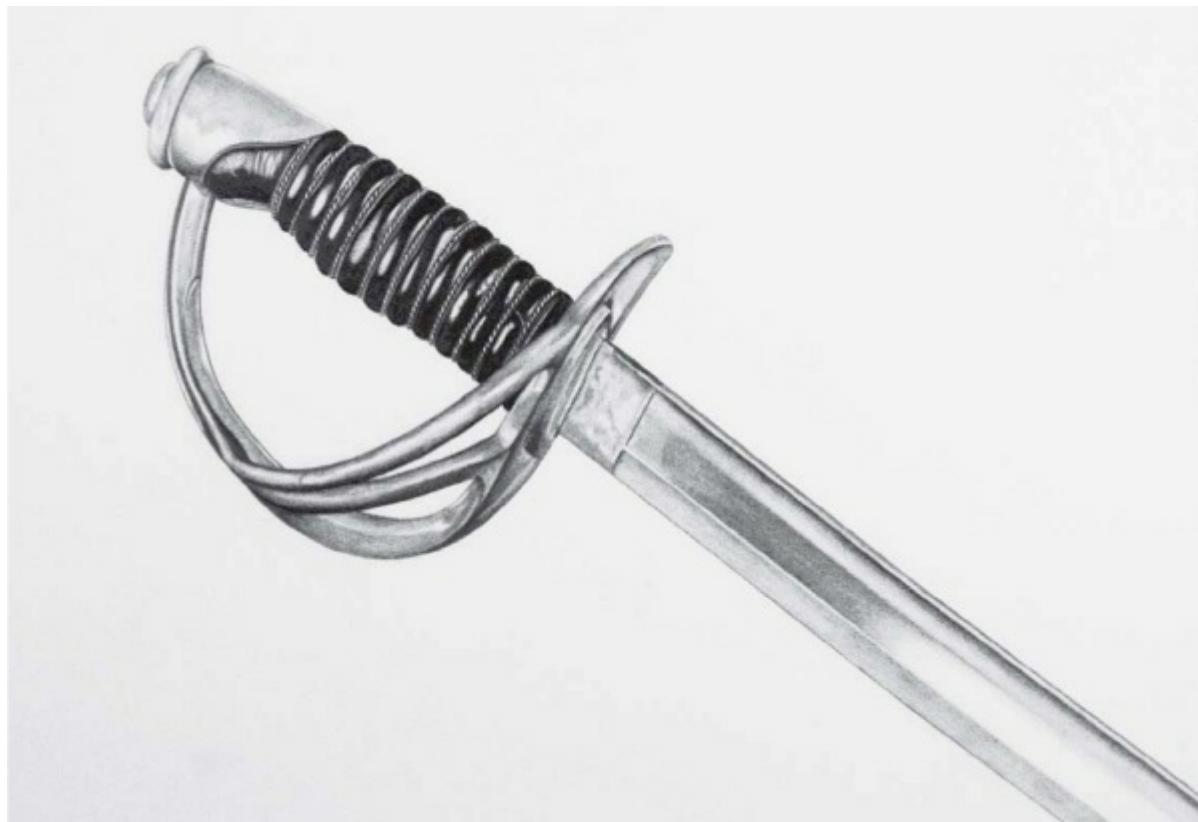
4. Adjust Values and Eliminate Outlines

Using the pencil only—no smudging at this point—adjust the tones of gray (the values) over the entire sword. The goal at this point is to eliminate the lines originally used to sketch the outline of the sword by absorbing them into the various values.



Detail

Notice that the pencil strokes are smooth, even in tone and very close together.



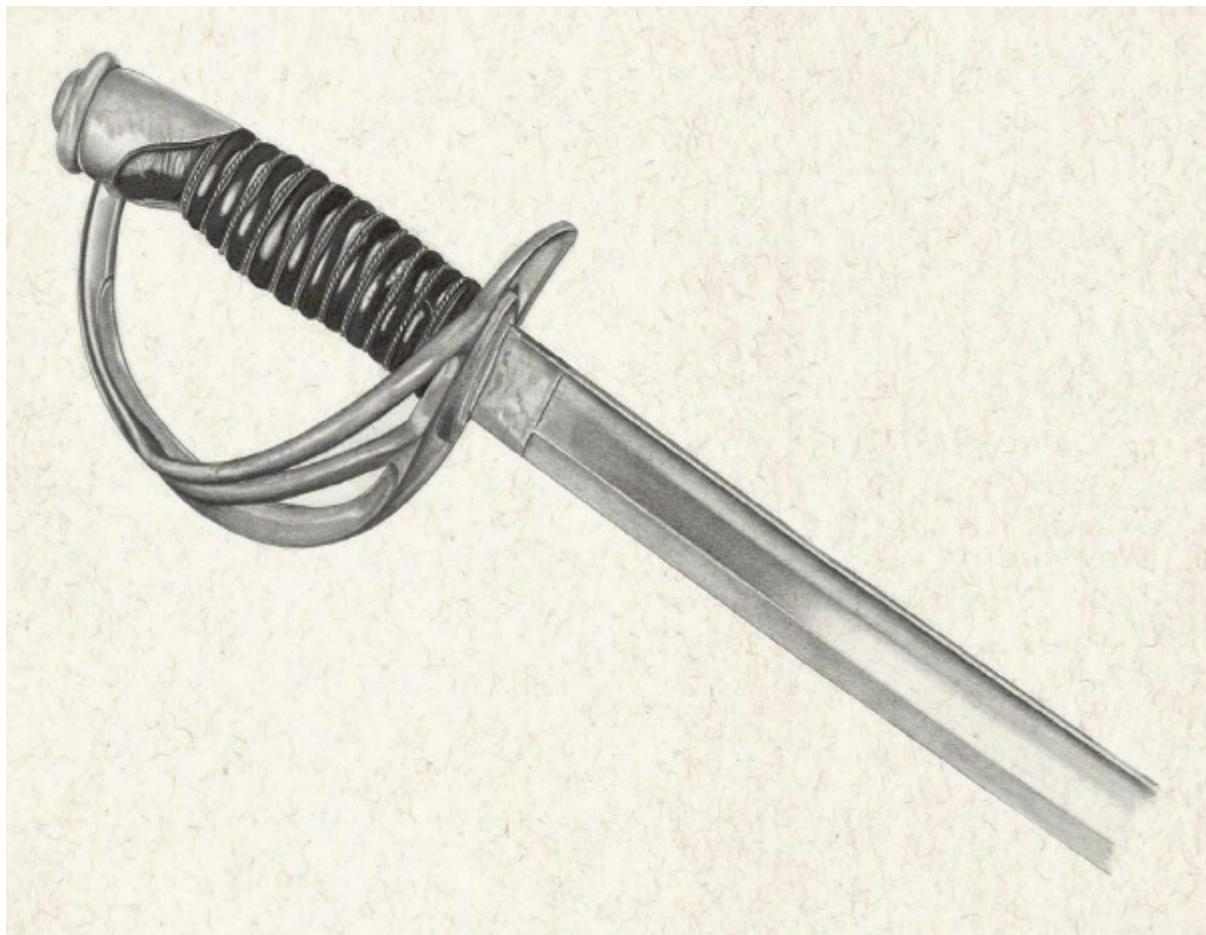
5. Blend

Using a paper stump, blend the strokes together and smudge the highlights.



Detail

Now the handle begins to look truly realistic.



SWORD

Graphite on bristol board

14" x 17" (36cm x 43cm)

6. Erase Highlights

Using an electric eraser, restore the highlights to white. Use a kneaded rubber eraser to add texture by pushing it straight down, then lifting straight up.

Building the Values of a Water Lily

STEP-BY-STEP DEMONSTRATION

Our dear friends Dave and Andrea Kramer have their own personal lake complete with a picturesque corner of water lilies.

I've painted them many times in watercolor, but never drawn them in pencil. There were several challenges in this subject,

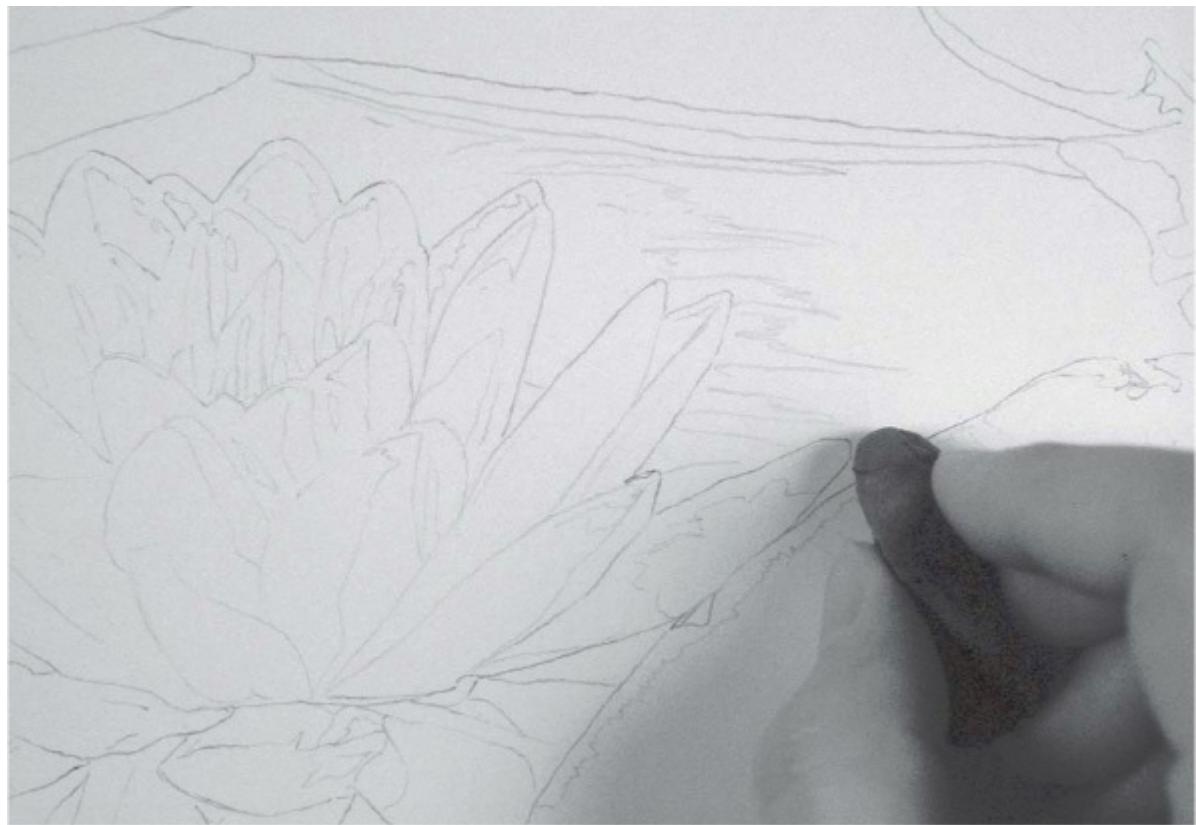
including the numerous values of gray and rendering the petals so they appear to be underwater. I started the drawing

without first creating a black and white version. That was a bad idea. I originally shaded based on color changes, not value

changes.

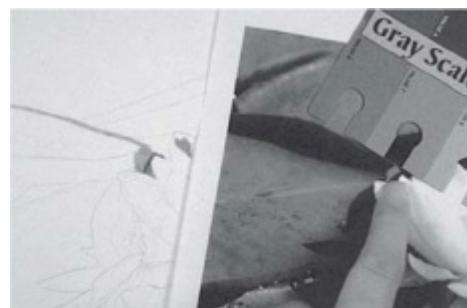


Reference Photo



1. Make a Line Drawing

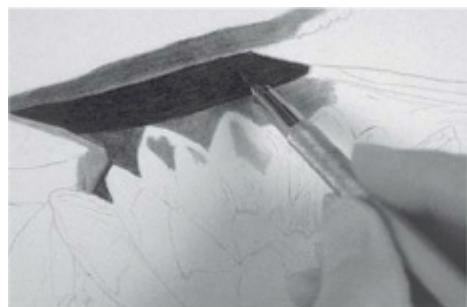
Make a line drawing based on the photo. If you use guidelines or a complete grid, erase them completely before moving on to the shading.





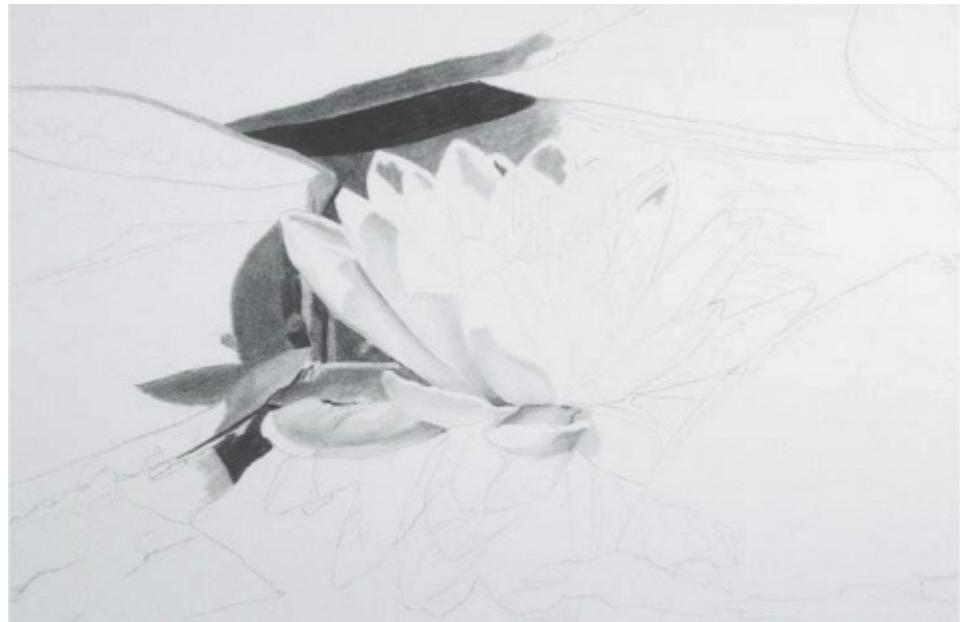
2. Place a Midtone

Find a middle value in the photo and shade that area of your drawing. Check it by using a value scale.



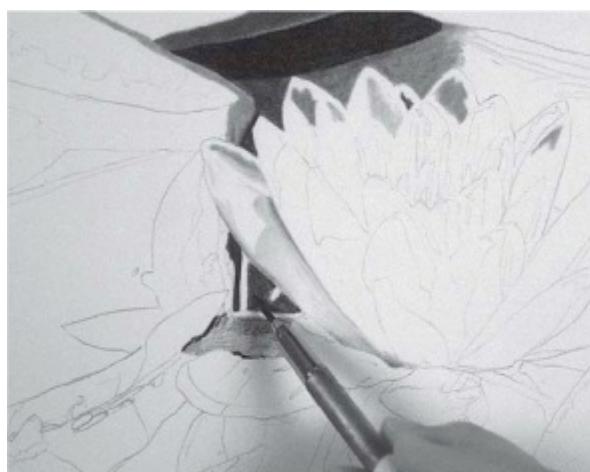
3. Establish a Range

Now find a good dark area and a good light area and establish the range of values that will appear in your drawing. The variations in values may be rather subtle in some places as you develop the rest of the drawing, so check to see that everything isn't ending up looking the same. Keep returning to areas and adding the darks so your eye always has a range of darks in front of it.



4. Think Shapes, Not Stuff

Earlier in the book we talked about how the mind can form a filter and prevent us from drawing well. At this stage in the drawing when you're developing the shading, it's important not to fall into thinking, "Ah, that's a petal! And that's a leaf!" Instead, think, "That's a square of mid-gray under that white thing, with a black line on the one edge." I even put my finger on the spot so I don't lose my place. If it is drawn correctly, the shading will resolve itself.



Details

I originally left a white area between two shaded areas. When I blended the two midtone values on either side, I just ran the blending tool over the white and it formed the proper value with just the graphite on the blending tool.



Detail

Every time you add graphite, you make something darker and a bit rougher. If you blend after adding the pencil, you smooth and lighten. You may go back and forth between shading with your pencil and blending with your paper stump many times.



5. Work Over the Whole

As you continue to shade and adjust and the flower starts to emerge, look more at the overall picture and less at the little puzzle pieces.



6. Place Big Darks Carefully

I usually don't put in a really big dark until I'm well into the drawing, because I might smudge it on the rest of the work. Proceed with caution!



7. Keep Going

Keep building values all over the drawing. Do the leaf shading by using the random built-up graphite on the paper stump and drawing it across the leaf in the direction the shading is indicated.

Take some breaks and check your work after the break. It may look fine when you leave, but you may notice it needs adjustment when you return.



8. Darken, Adjust and Clarify

See? The drawing needed to be darkened some more and the shading smoothed again. The leaf on the left of the flower is further defined with values. Use a sharpened electric eraser to clean up the slivers of white highlight on the flower.



Detail



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