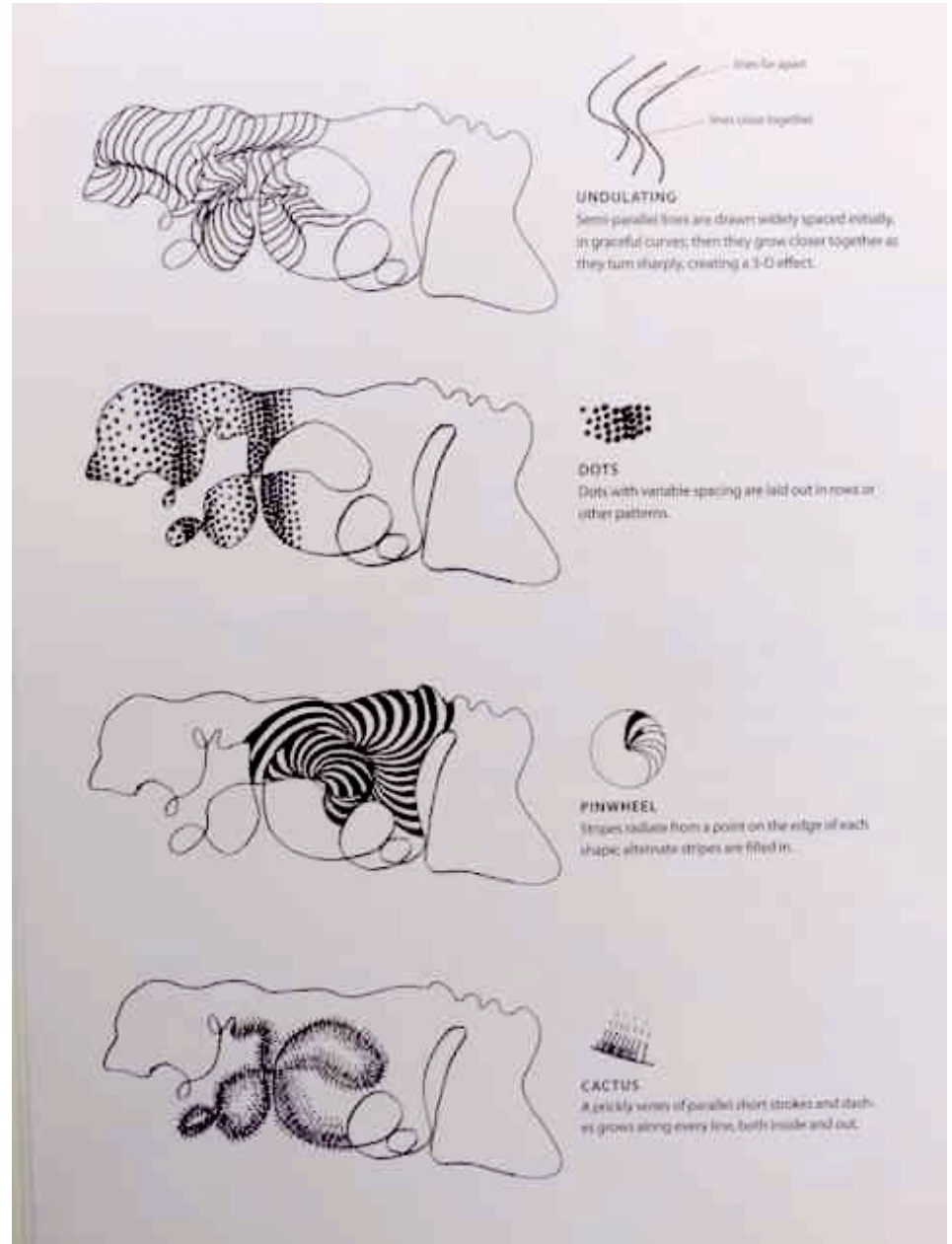
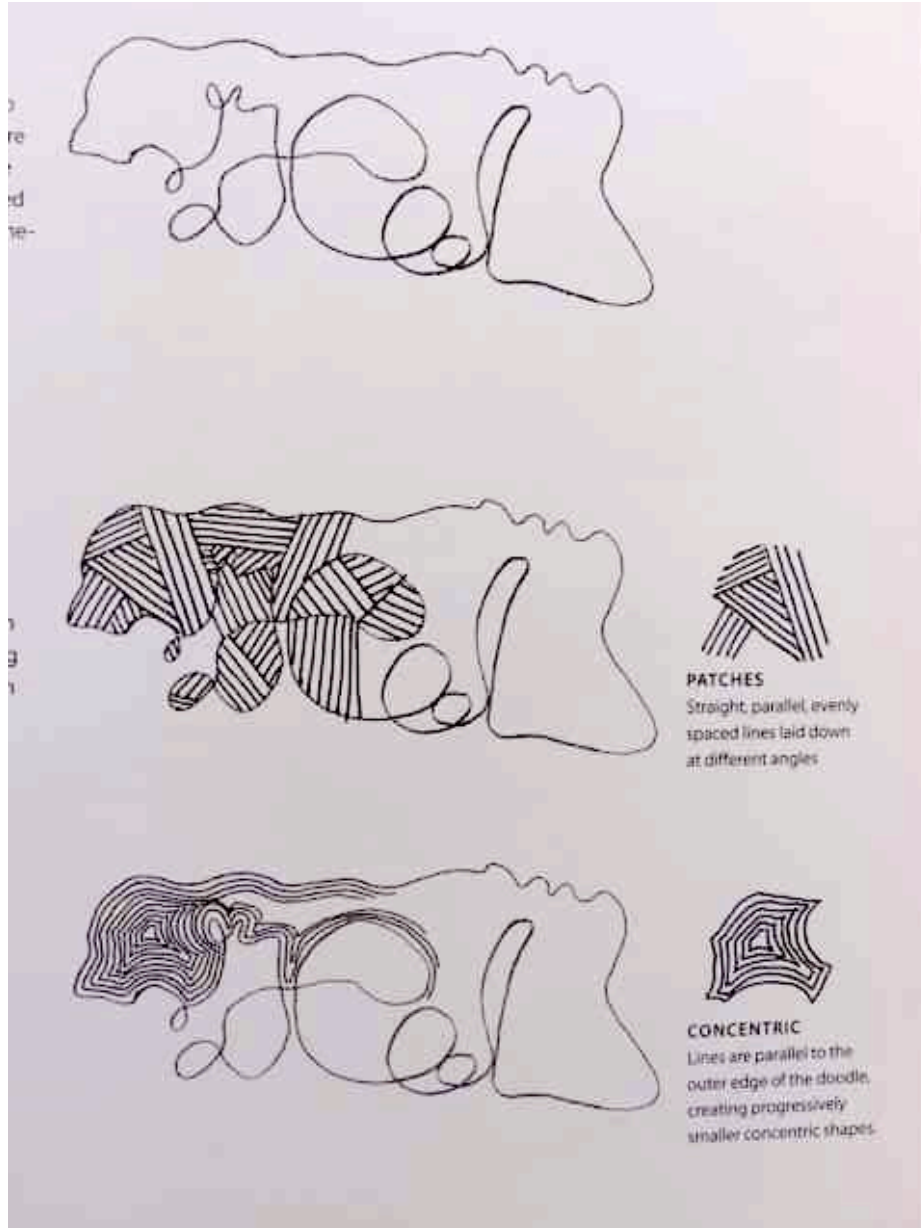


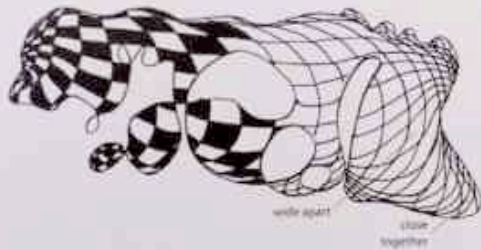
“Keys to Drawing with Imagination” by Bert Dodson





SHADED EDGE

The shape is shaded smoothly from dark to light with a soft black pencil.



STRETCHED CHECKERBOARD

Semiparallel lines (vertical and horizontal) curve in rows; alternate squares are filled in with black.

wide apart
close together



WATER

Irregular shapes, pointed at the ends, become smaller toward the top to create a sense of depth.

exercise 1

Take a Line on a Walk

Do six of these "line on a walk" doodles, making sure that your pencil winds up at the starting place. Then decorate each doodle with a different "noodling" operation. You can try your versions of the examples shown here, or you can invent your own algorithms — completely different from those shown here.

noodling to transform a doodle

The word transformation implies a significant change, a caterpillar into a butterfly kind of change. This is the sort of change to aspire to when noodling. The key here is recognizing the two-step process: You begin with a doodle (the original marks, squiggles, lines or motifs), then come back and add the algorithms, procedures and happy accidents of noodling to transform the doodle into a more developed drawing.



THE DOODLE

Let's call this original doodle—which is all straight lines and angular shapes—Max.



THE NOODLE

Give the shapes some thickness and fill in all the planes on one side to indicate shading. Also add some cast shadows. Now we have Max in the 3-D.

Doodling and noodling are separate functions—doodles are spontaneous and largely mindless, while noodles are deliberate and planned. When you begin doodling, it's not necessary to know how you're going to noodle it; in fact, it's better if you don't know.

CREATING THREE DIMENSIONAL

Here's a sample noodling procedure that transforms two dimensions into three.



Start with a geometric shape.



Draw vertical lines on both sides.



Thicken the vertical lines.



Fill in all the planes on one side.



...and you're done.

noodling ideas: mixing and matching

Creating is, in part, about finding relationships between seemingly unrelated things. It's about putting things together that don't seem to belong with each other—at least not until you do it. The more unexpected and improbable the pairing, the bigger the creative leap.

We will discuss this idea at length in later chapters, but for now let's begin by simply taking an iconic character and combining it with another doodle. For example, we might first trace the character on the left side, and then trace another doodle around it as a background. That was the method I used with *Flowerdancer*.

Sometimes you'll want to integrate the two images in a more intricate way. Notice how in *Lost at Sea* the waves are both behind and in front of the floating people. To do this sort of thing you need to align both original doodles on your light table with a fresh sheet of paper on top. Even then it may take several tries to get it the way you want it.

In the course of combining images, you may see a need to alter them. In *Stone Arch and Archie* I was simply going to place the man's face partly behind the arch. As I drew, it occurred to me to make the face out of stone as well.

MOLECULE MAN



FLOWERDANCER



STONE ARCH AND ARCHIE

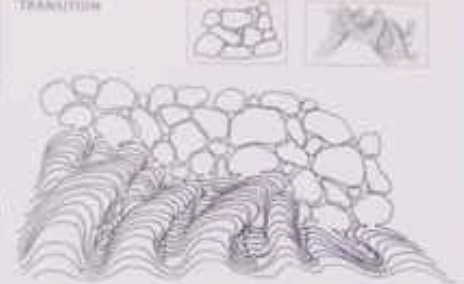


LOST AT SEA

LACON



FRANKLITON



PRISONERS OF LOVE



SOCIAL CLIMBERS



exercise 7

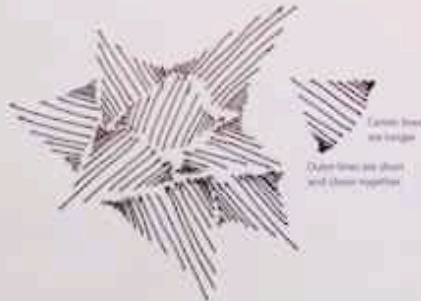
Combining

Pick several of your doodles and trace or look at combine them. The new image may be a simple figure on a background like *Flowerdancer* or on page 52, or a more complex or integrated image, like most of these other examples. You could also merge an altogether different area to put your doodles together.

doodling ideas: geometrics and waves

Even though we've characterized doodles as "mindless," a doodle is often drawn in a sequence of simple steps. Sometimes these steps are so simple they're performed unconsciously. The doodles on this page require a bit of hand control, but after you've done one a few times, you'll be able to do it in your sleep. It's at this point that you're ready to move on to something different, some new variation.

There is a creative sequence here: (1) learn a new doodle, (2) practice it until it's easy, and (3) introduce your own variations. You'll notice that the doodles on these and subsequent pages are grouped in categories: geometrics, waves, tangles, shape clusters, building blocks, etc. Try the ones that appeal to you and even some that don't. Inspiration is often found in the untried and the unfamiliar, and sometimes in the uncomfortable.

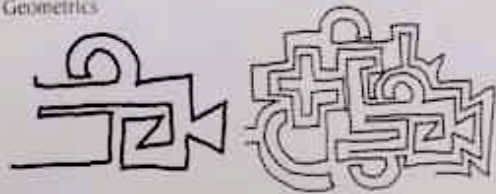


SEEKING THE PATTERN

This doodle, *Starburst*, is executed in a series of triangular patches radiating outward from the center. Each patch is made of straight lines, long in the center and gradually shorter and closer together at the ends. Like many algorithms, it's actually easier to do than it is to describe.

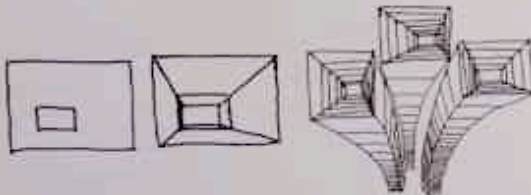
Center lines are longer
Outer lines are short and close together

Geometrics



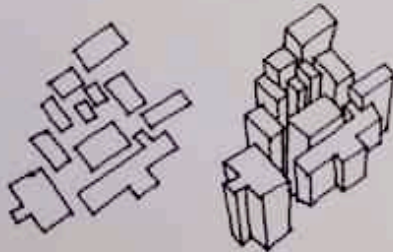
CONTIGUOUS LINE

Without lifting your pencil, make a zigzagging line that attempts to maintain an even spacing between lines.



DUCTWORK

Make parallel lines that grow progressively closer together to suggest depth.

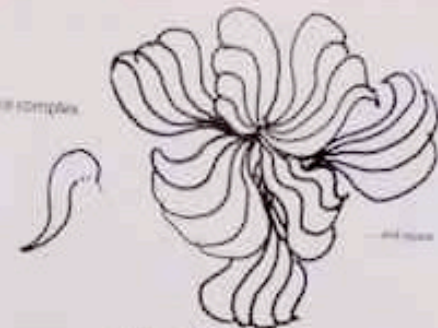


CITYSCAPE

Draw a cluster of closely packed rectangular shapes, then apply the three-dimensional thickness algorithm (see page 14).

Making Complexity Easy

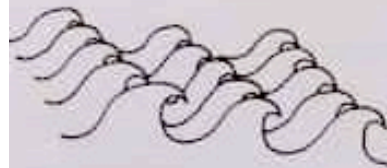
The beauty of algorithms lies in the way they produce complex results by very simple means.



CREATING THE ILLUSION OF COMPLEXITY

This doodle, *Floral*, looks as if it were all planned ahead of time, when in fact it was done by repeating a simple curve in clusters.

Waves



CURLING WAVES

Starting with the first row, draw for evenness and consistency—*but not perfection*. Note how the lines line up.



FOAMY WAVES

Try this variation on the doodle above, giving each wave this foamy treatment.



RHYTHMIC WAVES

Here make the lines regular and the troughs and crests jagged.



ROOTS

Some parallel lines widen across the top and converge along the sides. With practice, you can make the sections branch into smaller forms that grow in new directions.

inventing iconic characters

Doodlers often invent little characters to inhabit their work. I call these characters "iconic" because they're usually simple, stylized and easy to draw. For those of you who feel inhibited about drawing figures from imagination, doodling is the perfect place to challenge that fear. After all, the idea is not accuracy, but simplicity and expressive charm.

Adding a character to a doodled landscape immediately suggests a story of some sort, repeating one over and over allows you to doodle crowd scenes, parades and dances. Once you're able to represent a figure with a few lines, you can branch out—change the action, viewpoint, anything you'd like your characters to do.



THE MUCH-MALIGNED STICK FIGURE

If you're new to drawing and have never drawn a figure in your life, you can always start with stick figures. You can't even go wrong with simple figures like these, since for action and variety.



THE MOONSHAPED STICK FIGURE

Giving the body a little dimension allows more flexibility. These "robust" (and people) have a more naturalistic look than stick figures do.

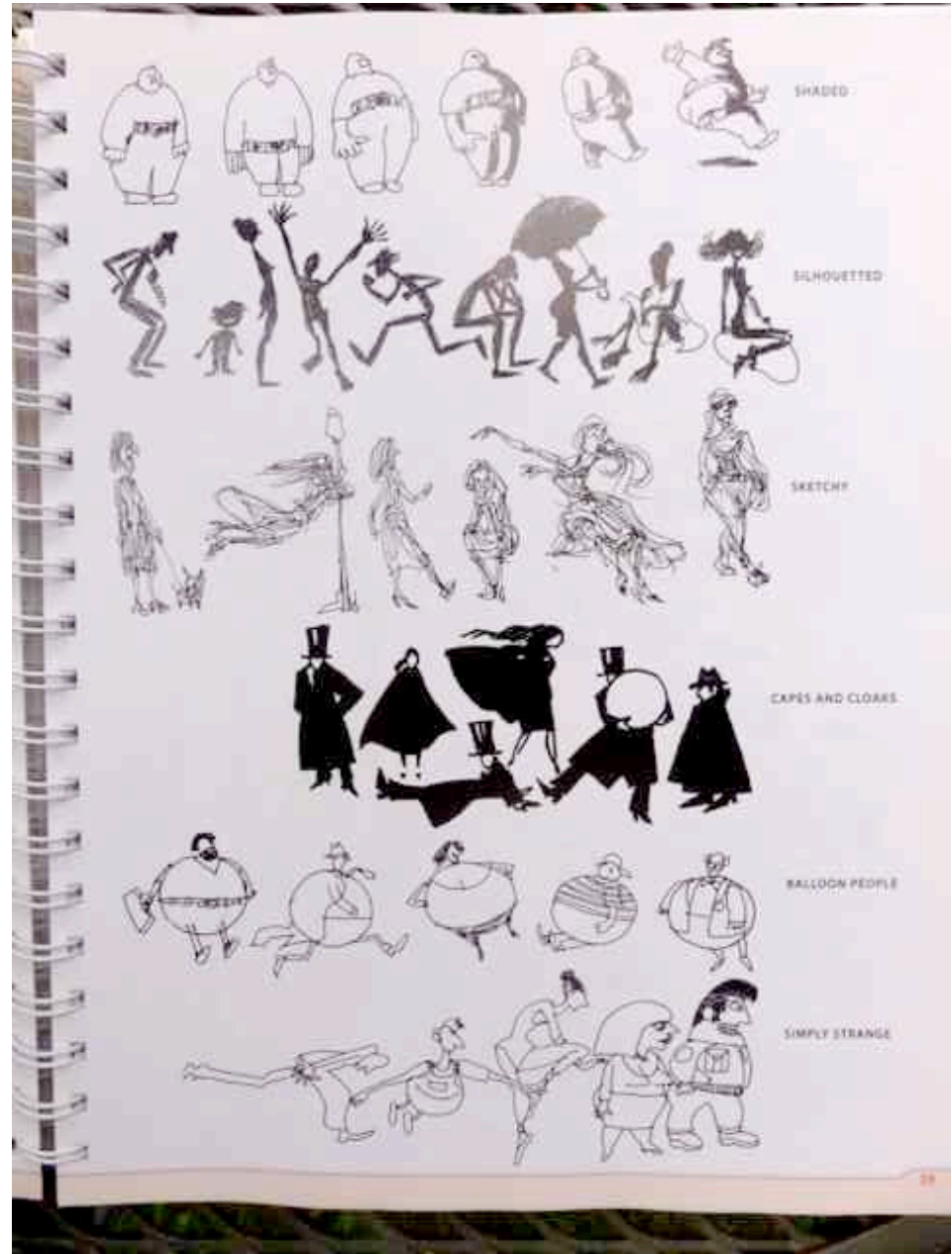


SIMPLIFIED FIGURES IN ACTION

The best way to show a figure in action is to put that action on your stick body, and then combine it with exaggeration.

A CREATIVE SEQUENCE FOR CHARACTERS

1. Develop a shorthand way of doodling a figure.
2. Practice drawing that figure in action until you can do it easily.
3. Move on to another way of representing the figure.



1. Boxes	51. Mythology
2. Alteration	52. Microstructure
3. Anti-gravity	53. Serialization
4. Love	54. Automobiles
5. Light	55. Cityscape
6. Violence	56. Birds
7. Constellations	57. Shadows
8. Dream	58. Fusion
9. Fluids	59. Popcorn
10. Alienation	60. Omelette
11. Imprisonment	61. Birth
12. Penetration	62. Maps
13. Freedom	63. Chain
14. Astrology	64. Plants
15. Identity	65. Coupling
16. Chance	66. Paint
17. Portrait	67. Mickey Mouse
18. Hostility	68. Words
19. Mutation	69. Grid Structure
20. Growth	70. Eyes
21. Conflict	71. Ego
22. Conformity	72. Game
23. Wood	73. Umbrella
24. Compression	74. Mathematics
25. Linking	75. Joke
26. Labels	76. Maze
27. Ritual	77. Slogan
28. Pleasure	78. X-Ray
29. Illusion	79. Glue
30. Symmetry	80. Knots
31. Tubes	81. Clouds
32. War	82. Body Parts
33. Window	83. Rainbows
34. Violation	84. Machines
35. Theft	85. Clusters
36. Calligraphy	86. Time
37. Fingers	87. Bionics
38. Junk	88. Bug
39. Insignia	89. Banners
40. Jail	90. Eating
41. Jars	91. Buildings
42. Headlines	92. Torn Paper
43. Wheels	93. Diary
44. Wings	94. Movie Hero
45. Science Fiction	95. Destruction
46. Trap	96. Bridgeway
47. Scissors	97. Poetry
48. Transparency	98. Anti-Gravity
49. Fuzzle	99. Envelopes
50. Utopia	100. Tower

- Ideas to Explore for your Doodles

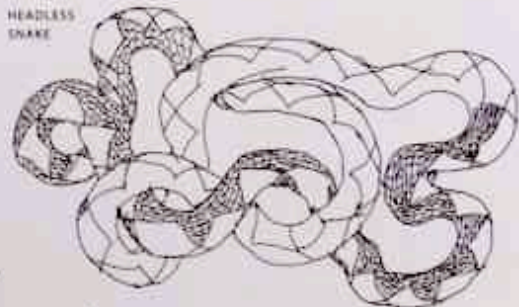
doodling ideas: tangles and shape clusters

knobs, ropes, spaghetti, worms and meandering roads all belong to a class of doodles I call "tangles." The algorithm for producing them involves drawing a small section, stopping, drawing an overlapping section, stopping, etc. The sections should fit and loop in various ways, but the real key is stopping often.

HOPELESS



HEADLESS SNAKE



Shape Clusters

The idea behind "shape clusters" is keeping an even spacing between the shapes you draw. Begin with any kind of shape. Draw the next one as close as you can to the first, and so on. You should end up with a more or less uniform area between the shapes. Each shape you add is influenced by the shapes already there; this can mean you have to twist a shape to get a tight fit.

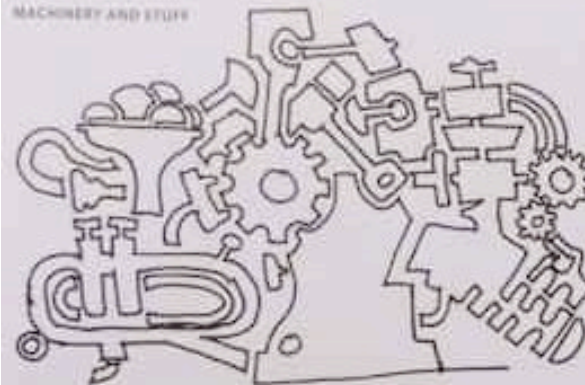
The fit you achieve is not exact, like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle, but more like chocolates in a box with dividers. Doodles like these help your sense of design—they make you aware of the overall pattern.

FLORAL



FLORAL, SHOWING UNIFORM BACKGROUND SPACING (IN GRAY)

MACHINERY AND STUFF



LIMBER PEOPLE



exercise 2

Doodling Algorithms

Pick one of these categories—geometric, waves, tangles or shape clusters—and do a series of six to ten doodles using that algorithm. Make each one different from the others (if only slightly).

Now look at your doodles. Pick the one that seems the most different from the rest. What makes it different? Do a new doodle that emphasizes and exaggerates this difference.

doodling ideas: building blocks

Building shapes out of strokes is both a very simple idea and a good one. It can be as easy as the dot dot dot—and with a little directed luck, an image emerges. It's best to do these without much planning and just let the image appear.

The type of ink you use will affect the look of your shapes. Markers make dots that are crude and funky. As the strokes (or dots) get smaller, the results get more subtle. Stippling can yield incredibly soft effects if you use a very fine nib. When you try this technique, practice gradation—change the strokes seamlessly from densely packed to widely dispersed.



This is a cluster of dots or strokes and luck is how an image appears.

MARKER DOTS

These two doodles were made with the tip of a thick, fat tip marker.



STIPPLE

This was done with short dashes, like whiskers.



STIPPLE

These were built up with repeated pen marks. Spacing is close for the darks and wider apart for lighter areas.



Building With Recognizable Shapes

The building blocks on this page aren't just blocks; they're shapes in their own right: bricks, stones and strips. Fantastic, impossible-but-nearly-believable structures can emerge from this kind of doodle.

When you begin one of these, you may have a vague vision of your complete structure, but you don't need to sketch it all out ahead of time. Just keep adding blocks until you have something. This helps you appreciate a fundamental paradox about creativity: You don't always know what you're doing until you've done it. This is why we place so much emphasis on process.



FALLING BRICKS



BRICK TREE



STONE ARCH



BRICK WALL

Bricks in straight rows are easy, but bricks flowing around curved surfaces take practice.

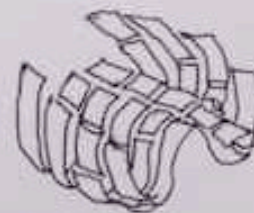


STONE 'S'

A certain precision here makes these structures more interesting.



STONE COLUMN



VERTERRAE



IGLOO

These building blocks of different sizes that bend and curve create an organic, naturalistic feeling.

exercise

3

Building Blocks

1. Make a page or two of building block doodles using each of these techniques: marker dots, stipple and stipple. Try at least some without a final plan. Just start making dots and see where they end.
2. Doodle to see imaginary and improbable structures made of bricks, stones or curve blocks. Again, let at least some of these just happen. Start at the bottom and build as if you were laying actual stones or bricks—but imaginatively.

Creating Three Dimensions

Three rules, one understood, allow you to draw convincing three-dimensional objects with ease. Each of the examples below is accompanied by a little sun and arrow to make the direction of the light clear. You might try in your own drawings to pencil in a similar directional arrow. Once you've established this, you'll know just where to put the shadows.

When filling in the shadow side, make the greatest contrast between dark and light just where the form turns. Also notice how the shadow edge is soft on rounded objects and sharp on objects with an edge.

SOFTLY SHADED TANGLE



Use rounded forms, the shadow edge is soft.

ARCH, EARLY MORNING



Use sharp edges and strong shadows. The light source is low.

"ET" SHADED



Use sharp forms, the shadow edge is sharp.

SHADY GATOR



Use dark shadows just on the top shadow's perimeter of areas.

exercise 5

Shading

Copy or trace the six shadows you made for Exercise 3 on page 27. Add light and shade to them, as well as cast shadows. Be sure to imagine the direction of your light source to indicate it with an arrow.

Make your cast shadows darker than your form shadows. On rounded forms, soften the shadow edge where light meets dark.

noodling ideas: multiplying

A surprising range of creative possibilities opens up when you make multiple copies of an image. I don't mean simply repeating the exact same image over and over, but repetition with variation. Repetition gives an overall pattern, while variation provides individualistic detail. The natural tension between these two opposites will frequently produce satisfying results.



Draw the pushpin from different angles. It allows position of its shadow to vary.

PUSHPINS



In this example, I drew the pins from many different angles.

SHADED PUSHPINS



In this more dramatic version, I added some strong black shadows.

SUSPICION



SUSPICION MULTIPLIED



This image started as a simple character. Between the many objects, I used a space. I began adding more, each progressively smaller. Distributing the size of an object as it goes farther back is a good reason for the illusion of depth.

TOOTHBRUSH AND TOOTHPASTE



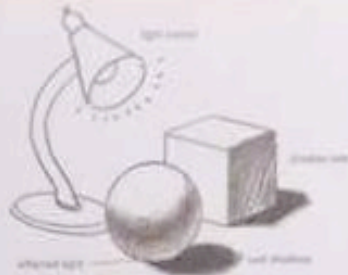
TOOTHBRUSH PROPELLER

I copied the toothbrush, toothpaste tube, and the character's multiple times in a mirrored design. Placing the object in a symmetrical arrangement helps the viewer to see the objects as an overall pattern.

noodling ideas: shading

Nothing imparts a sense of three-dimensionality to a drawing like light and shadow. And after some practice, it's very easy to do. Simply imagine a light source, and logic will tell you where to put the shadows.

An object will have a light side and a shadow side. It will also cast a shadow where the light is blocked. The cast shadow is usually darker than the shadow side. The lower the light source, the longer the cast shadow. It helps to place objects—particularly cubes, cylinders and spheres—under a strong light and observe how the light and shadow fall.



3-D CLOVERLEAF WITH SHADING



NOISE COLUMN AT NOON

The lighting (light from directly above) leaves a thin ridge of light along the upper edge of each stone. Because the stones are rounded, the shadow edges are sometimes soft.



SUNLIT GRAPES

Clusters have the advantage of giving texture the definite light and shadow patterns on the leaves. Try with the same light source, and use the same flat surface texture on the grapes and leaves. When you have depth and texture from the other drawing.



reversing, inverting and mirror imaging

This algorithm is about opposites: if something is white, make it black, if it's right side up, make it upside down—or backward. I know artists who look upside down at their subjects or hold a mirror up to their work to get a fresh view. Creativity begins when we can look at something familiar in an entirely new way.

All of the examples here required retracing the doodle on a light table—in some cases, multiple times. The drawing Ductwork Multiplied involved tracing the original five times, including flipped and upside down.

exercise 6

Multiplying

- Trace multiple copies of a previous doodle, arranging them into a radial or otherwise symmetrical pattern.
- On a mirror image drawing, placing one image right side up and the other, its duplicate, upside down. The two images should touch in the middle.

TREE AND REFLECTION



1 START WITH A CHARACTER
Draw a little character.

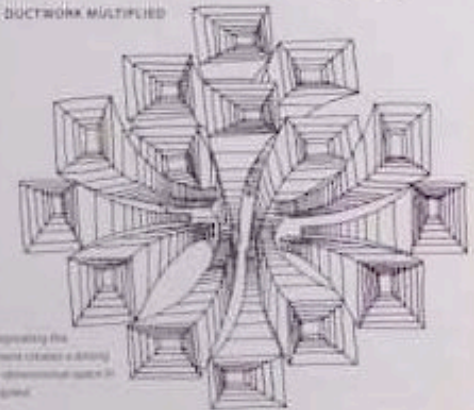


2 TRACE, FLIP AND TRACE AGAIN
Trace it on a light table, then flip it over and retrace it facing the other way.

3 REPEAT AND FILL IN THE BACKGROUND
Turn the pair upside down and trace it again, then place them inside a circle and fill in the background.

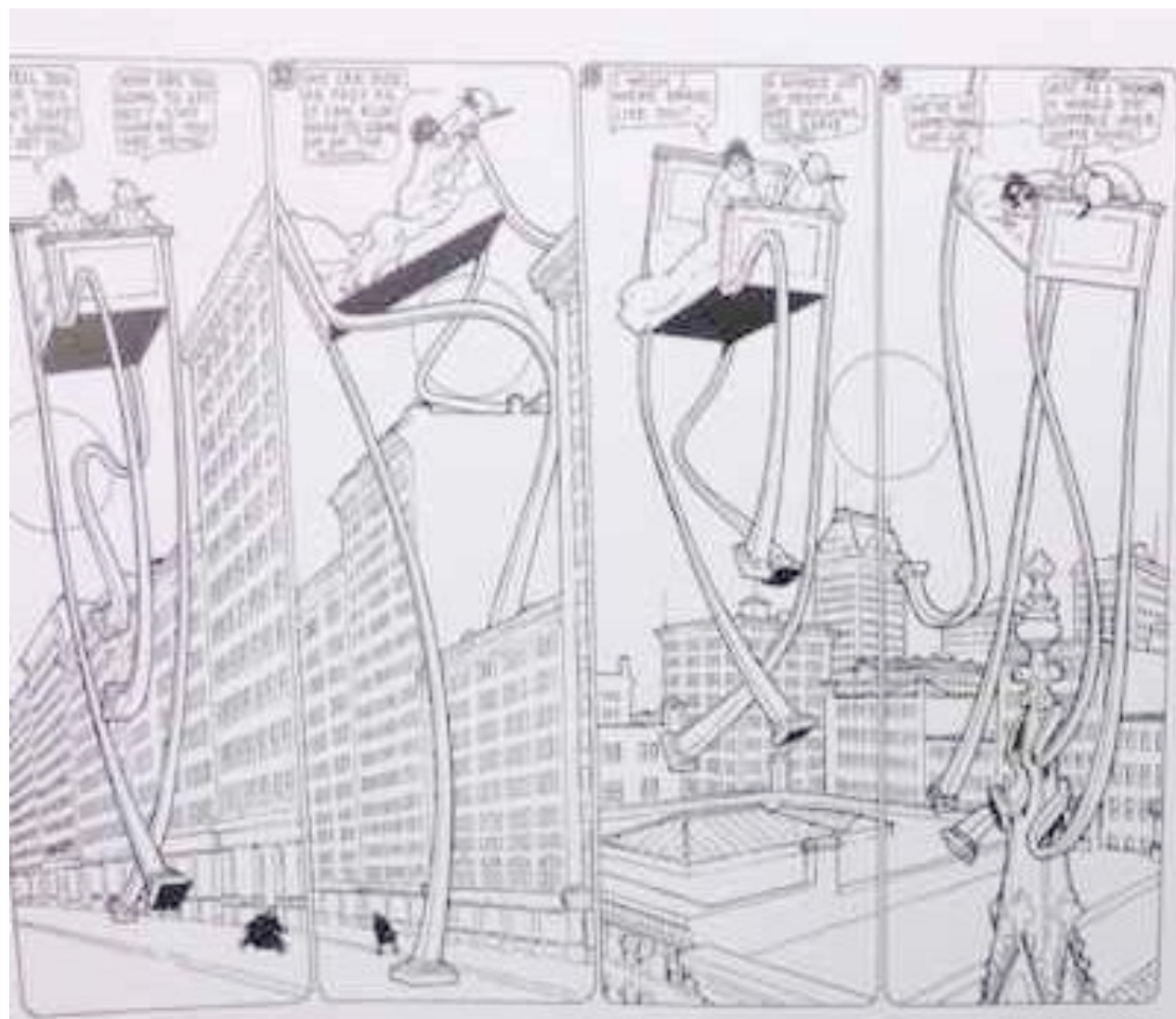


DUCTWORK MULTIPLIED



As well as looking completely different from each other, these black and white trees were drawn on very different ways. The black tree was traced in bold marker strokes, while the upside-down tree was traced with a fine-tipped marker. I then carefully filled in each of the little black shapes between the leaves.

Repeating and repeating the ductwork element creates a dense array of three-dimensional space in Ductwork Multiplied.



Winsor McCay (1867-1934) depicts not just a walking bed, but a bed that ambles, climbs, float and clings. It's a bed with a mind of its own. This graceful sequence comes from McCay's weekly comics feature, *Little Nemo in Slumberland*.

Nemo's Walking Bed Episode

Winsor McCay

From *Winsor McCay—His Life and Art* by John Canemaker,
Abbeyville Press

gets busy again.

The creative storyteller learns to move fluidly from words to images and back again. Each of these two modes presents its own inner vocabulary—different, but overlapping and mutually supportive.



"Some thought the
"Springs" had more
were still victory."



"In all their trips
around the globe
they had never
been this tall."



"It seemed
that all he
had left were
memories."



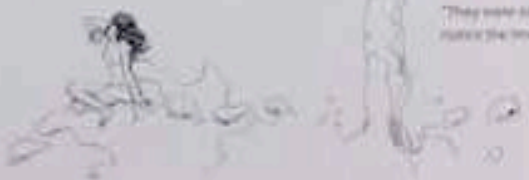
"The last moment
of the few that these
mountains could ever
see wake up again."



"By so he might, he
could not get her
attention."



"They were at last they didn't
notice the image in the mirror."



making it vivid

A picture might tell a story, but rarely can it tell the whole story. In fact, the level of curiosity your drawing raises is one measure of its effectiveness. If your picture provokes the question "What is going on here?" you have actually enlisted your audience in helping tell the story.

To this end, I like to find ways of intensifying the drama. Sometimes I redraw an image just to make it more vivid. This

could mean making any number of alterations and transformations, such as strengthening the image, adding an element of mystery, creating an exotic background or getting more movement in the picture.

A REGULAR WARNING

The little sketchbook drawing is the kind of basic encounter you might find in any number of tales of great lengths.



WIND-BLOWN APPARITION

Here the haggard is changed into a specter—perhaps a message of death. Equally important is the steady wind blowing his hair and garments, set against the knight.



THE GLOWING MESSENGER

A figure of some authority might suggest a spiritual presence, or perhaps someone enlightened. Note how the effect is partly achieved by the strong lighting around the edges of the knight and horse.





THE ENCOUNTER

I began this drawing with the small, not knowing where I was headed, then I added the little cartoon (don't ask me where he came from). Finally, I drew the large head, using a mirror for the hand positions. Although this sketch has no intended meaning, it does seem to convey a little drama—perhaps an encounter on a journey.



THE ENTRANCE

I retraced the image and made some modifications. The hands have become trees and the face more of a concrete structure. The picture's ambiguity is the face a forest gate? A windowed tunnel? A door to another world?



PADDLING ACROSS TIME

There can usually be achieved by doing contrasts. Below, I darkened the canoe near the bow and kept it lighter at the stern, emphasizing in the diagonal of light. This allowed me to play dark against light and light against dark.

Authentic details, drawn from observation, help impart a sense of reality to fantasy scenes. This church steeple is the real I see from my studio window.

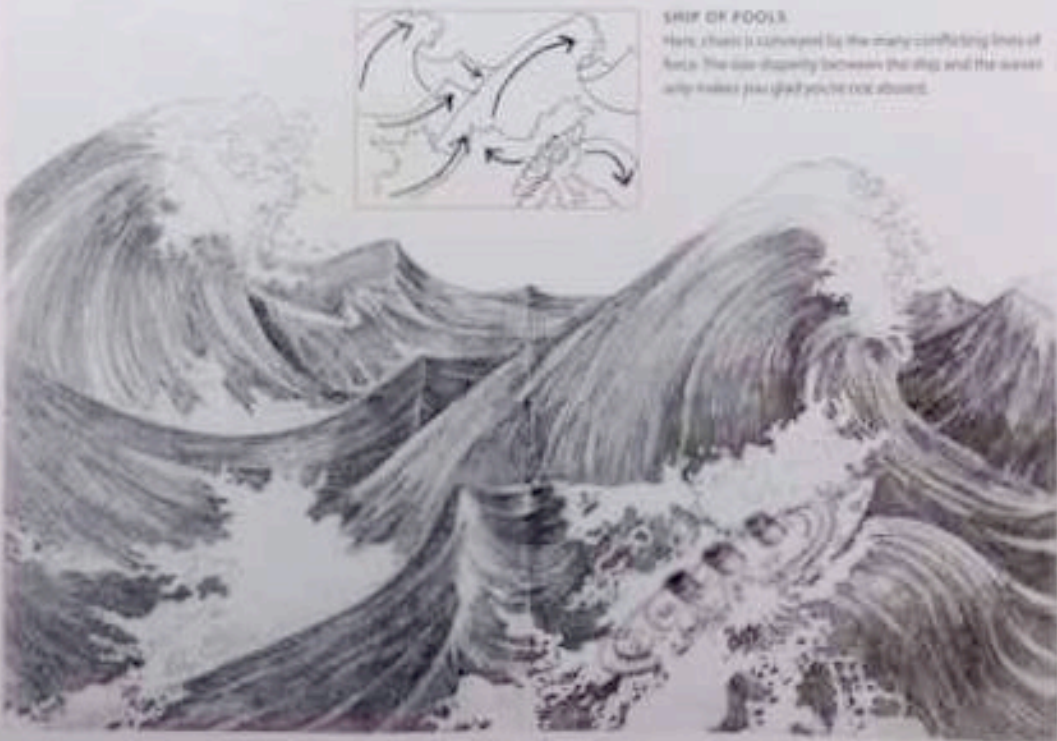


intensifying the action

The way you arrange the shapes in a drawing speaks an abstract language. For example, verticals and horizontals tend to suggest stability, while diagonals generally suggest instability or movement. Likewise, smooth flowing lines suggest tranquility and grace, while sharp angles indicate action and violence.

These connotations are not simply artistic conventions. They take advantage, at a subconscious level, of the way we "hear" the world. Clouds, trees and even buildings can be made to look ominous or cheery simply by the way the shapes are handled. This points to the value of first seeing things in terms of their silhouettes, and only then adding the details.

One other technique in visual storytelling involves the use of shapes to direct the viewer's eye. A shape can point like an arrow, leading the eye along a desired path, or surround, like a frame or altar, giving added importance to some key element. And then there is what we might call the law of contrast—one peaceful shape in a frenzied sea of activity or vice versa, calls attention to the lone dissenter.





THE CHALICE

Here, I drew from the underlit profile of the clay woman and then drew two versions of the clay man, using different angles and light effects. Attention to detail imbues a sense of believability to a scene like this.

recycling your doodles

If you spend enough time doodling, you'll never run out of story ideas. Because I've generated doodles with nothing particular in mind, they often offer the most freedom as story subjects. I go through my doodles periodically and pick out the ones that already look like story ideas. They make no real sense on their own but have some spark of strangeness or clarity that appeals to me. Sometimes I make photocopy blowups and work directly on those. I may also use the doodle as a jumping-off point, perhaps reworking the characters in a totally different context, and sometimes I'll begin a doodling fragment on a larger sheet of paper and add to it a little at a time so that it eventually builds into some sort of story.

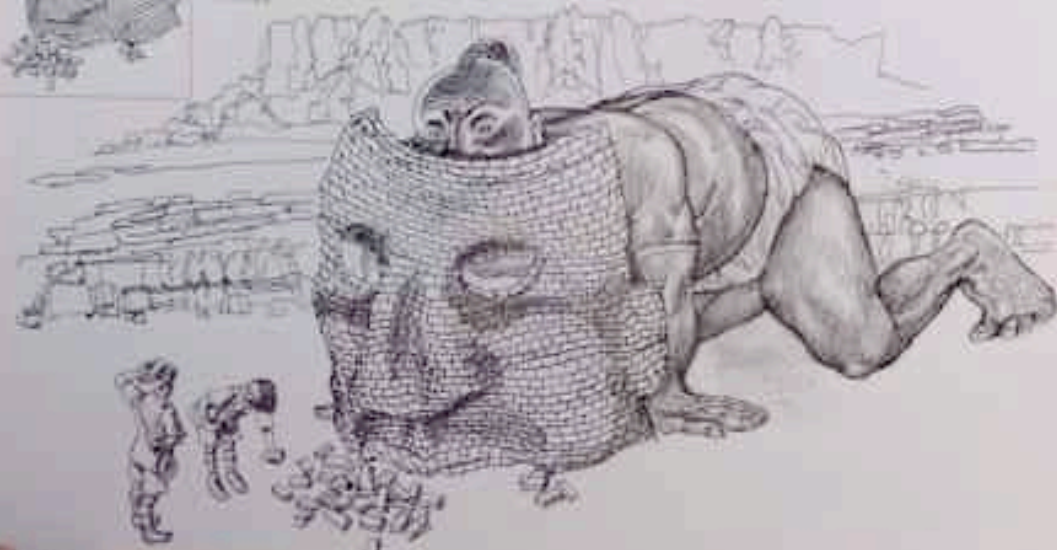
FINDING THE STORY

Some doodles that seem to tell a story and redraw them with a more complete idea in mind.



THE GENIE'S BABA

After making the building block doodle on left, I got the idea of putting someone behind it who looked like the mask. I was thinking of a character somewhat like the genie from an old movie, *The Thief of Baghdad*. I made a photocopy of the doodle and then did the rest of the drawing directly on the copy.



MY OCTOPUS

I did this doodle of men hanging by one arm, intending to have some thing hanging off my arm. When I added the octopus, I drew their hand to hand. As if it was a rescue, it looked so friendly, I began to think of the octopus as a pet and started to imagine a life of these affectionate specimens together.



exercise 28

Making a Story From One of Your Doodles

Go through your doodles and select one— one that seems to tell a story— to serve as a key element in a new picture. The doodle can be used either as the background or a focused subject. If you need a central subject, use one of your Character drawings.

GULLIVER'S MOUSE

When I sketched the four figures at left, I had no idea what they were reacting to. I imagined it was something that provoked curiosity and amazement more than fear. I decided on a giant mouse. Then I began adding crowd members, a few at a time. On a whim, I decided to make each person an individual from different times and different eras.



illustrating dreams

From a creative standpoint, the nice thing about dreams is that they don't bother to explain themselves—they simply present us with a rich stream of images. Psychologically, it may be useful to understand the meaning of these images, but creatively, it's liberating to draw from that stream without any need to understand. For most of us, our waking life is spent sorting things into logical categories. But when we sleep, unlikely, unexpected and uncensored images and combinations of images flow in abundance. We can tap this resource:

So much of dreaming is about mood and feeling. These are elusive qualities, conveyed mostly by suggestion rather than by direct representation. Manipulating contrasts, exaggerating body postures and emphasizing symbolic elements are a few ways of communicating mood in pictorial language.

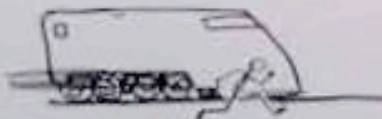
You may have your own reasons for illustrating your dreams, but for me, dreams are simply source material for imaginative pictures. And because dreams often come to us as fragments, we need to assemble them into a unified whole. This means creating a perspective, moving and removing elements, and adding enriching details. You also might need to find reference pictures. In the *Catching a Train* studies on the facing page, I used some old locomotive photos to get a more authentic feel.

For the *Lonely in Paris* drawing, for night, the cats in the window were taken from a sketch I did of my own cats. I always admired and envied their utter bliss when they curled up together in this way, and in a dream I watched them through a window while indifferent, elegantly dressed people passed by.



DREAM DIAGRAMS

I had a dream about driving a sports car down some steep steps. At the bottom were a bunch of trees that would be impossible to walk running over. To remember this dream I made this little diagram in a notepad that I keep by my bed.



CATCHING A TRAIN

BUMF, KUMF, RUMF, SQUISH

I like to get on play with the composition. This sketch suggests some movement, as well as a more dramatic perspective. The biggest visual cue now may be characters in the clouds.



IN PARIS, WISHING I WAS A CAT



CARRIED AWAY WITH REGRET



exercise 29

Illustrating a Dream

Keep a notepad by your bedside so that you can write down your dreams for making dream diagrams the moment you wake up. After you have recorded 20 to 30 of these, choose one to illustrate. Spend some time working out the composition. You might need to make several compositional sketches before settling on the final one.

Make your illustration vivid. Capture the general qualities of the dream. Draw from photographs or actual objects when necessary for details, but draw for an overall dreamlike mood.



sequences

A sequence is a series of drawings linked by time or logic. Each drawing flows from the preceding one and sets the stage for the next. The transition from one drawing to the next can be extremely simple and obvious or subtle and complex.

Sequence drawing is much like storyboarding a movie scene. Break the action down into discrete steps, often employing "movie thinking": zooms, close-ups, pans and the like.

Drawing sequences shift the question of "What shall I draw?" to "What happens next?" In the sequence on the facing page, which I call *Cat and a Ball*, I had no idea where I was going when I did the first drawing. Once I started making the ball bigger, the story began to evolve. I relied on a limited repertoire of film devices and noodling tricks (which are labeled) to move the story along.



SPLOT



ZIP



LOOKALIKES



TRANSFORMATION

exercise 30

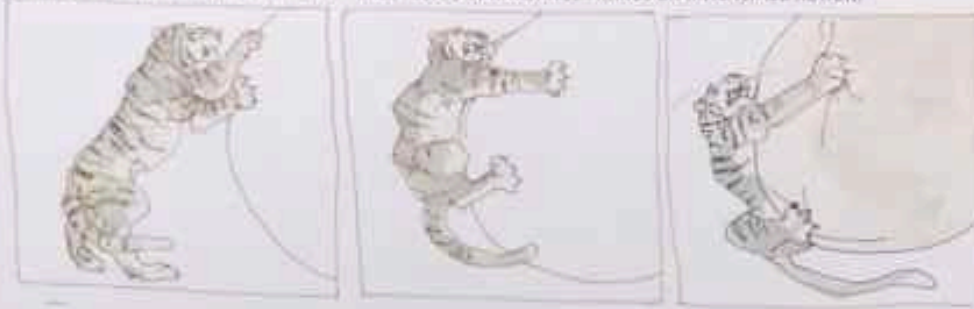
Drawing in Sequence

1. Make a series of four panels about 2 inches (5cm) square. Draw an object or person in the first hole, in the next three panels show some progressive change—make something happen. Here are just a few possibilities: collision, metamorphosis, read-down, transformation, growth. Take to make the changes mainly spaced from panel to panel.
2. Divide a large sheet of paper into four roughly equal panels. Leave a little space between each panel and a margin all around. This is your storyboard. Use it to tell a tale in a sequence of drawings. Think of your story as if it were a movie with the action advancing from frame to frame. Consider using filmmaking techniques as well as the drawing techniques discussed in chapter one.

BALL STARTS GETTING BIGGER (PROGRESSIVE CHANGE)



CAT BECOMES TIGER (TRANSFORMATION) BALL FLOATS UPWARD; TIGER HANGS ON (INTENSIFIED ACTION)



BALL BECOMES MOON (PULL BACK, TRANSFORMATION)



TIGER FALLS...



... AND LANDS IN WATER (INTENSIFIED ACTION)



LICKS WOUNDS



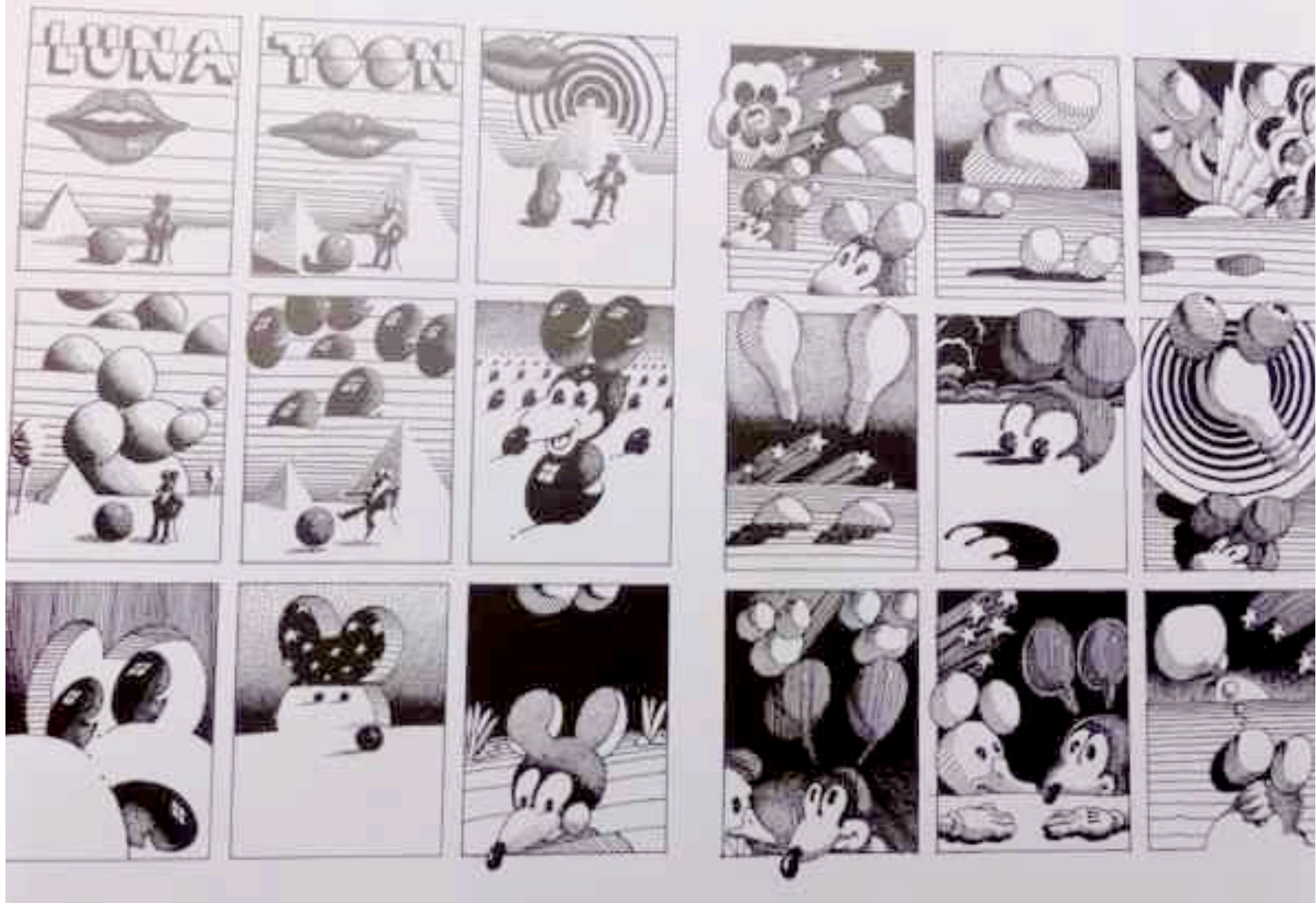
SILHOUETTE, MIRROR IMAGE

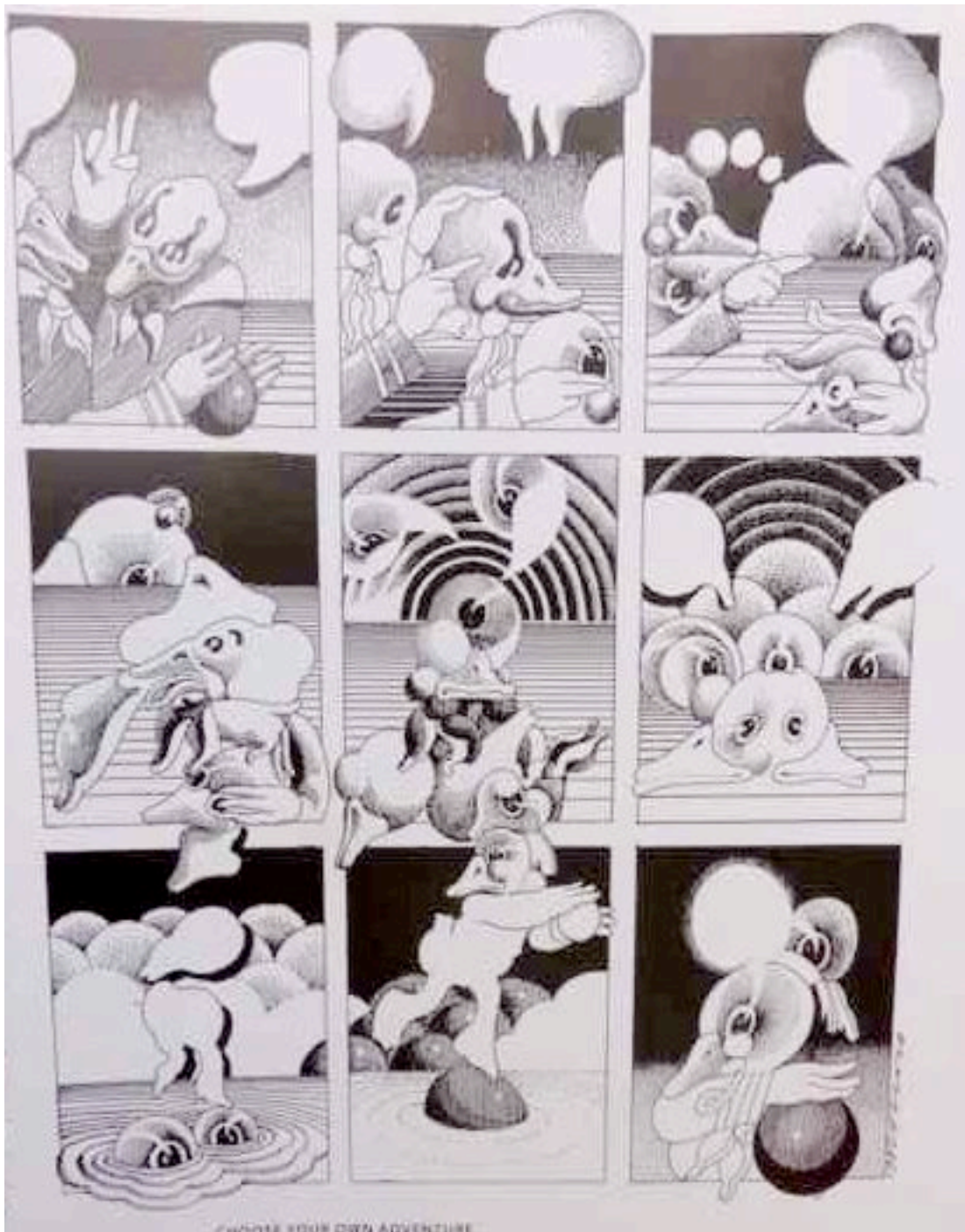


ZOOM IN TO CLOSE-UP



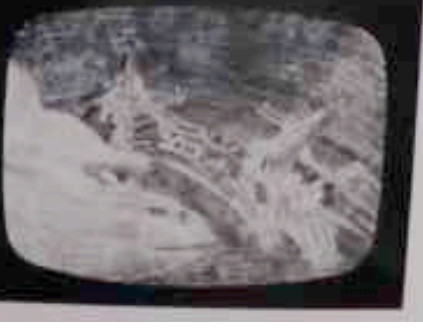
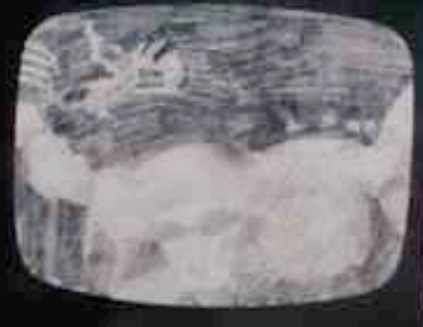
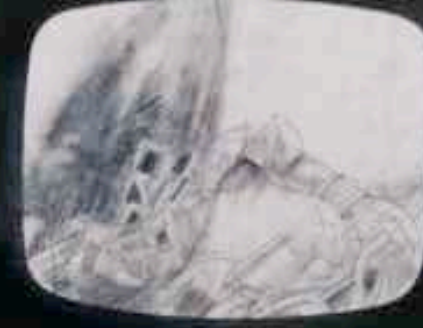
...musonoro's free-associative method is very much in the spirit of the surrealist artists of the last century.





©WOLFE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

L



scene of getting the
 sketches to hand
 by composition
 to work. First the
 scene for the film of
 the Thru and the
 all showing both
 for a film proper
 reader. So down it
 goes the Dark Ages
 scene and takes off
 a film industry taken
 under water and
 by the studio cover

showing a right
 eye that will now
 look. As it has
 and purchase
 my art

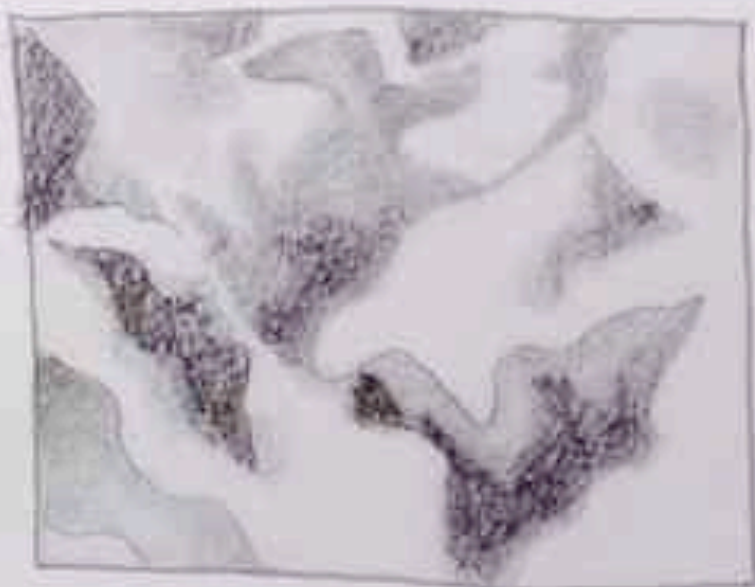


A Gorilla, looking left
 (Illustration by the artist)



VALLEY

The drawing at left was done from a photograph. I just wanted to capture the character of the shapes in black and white. I used a stipple for the intermediate tones.

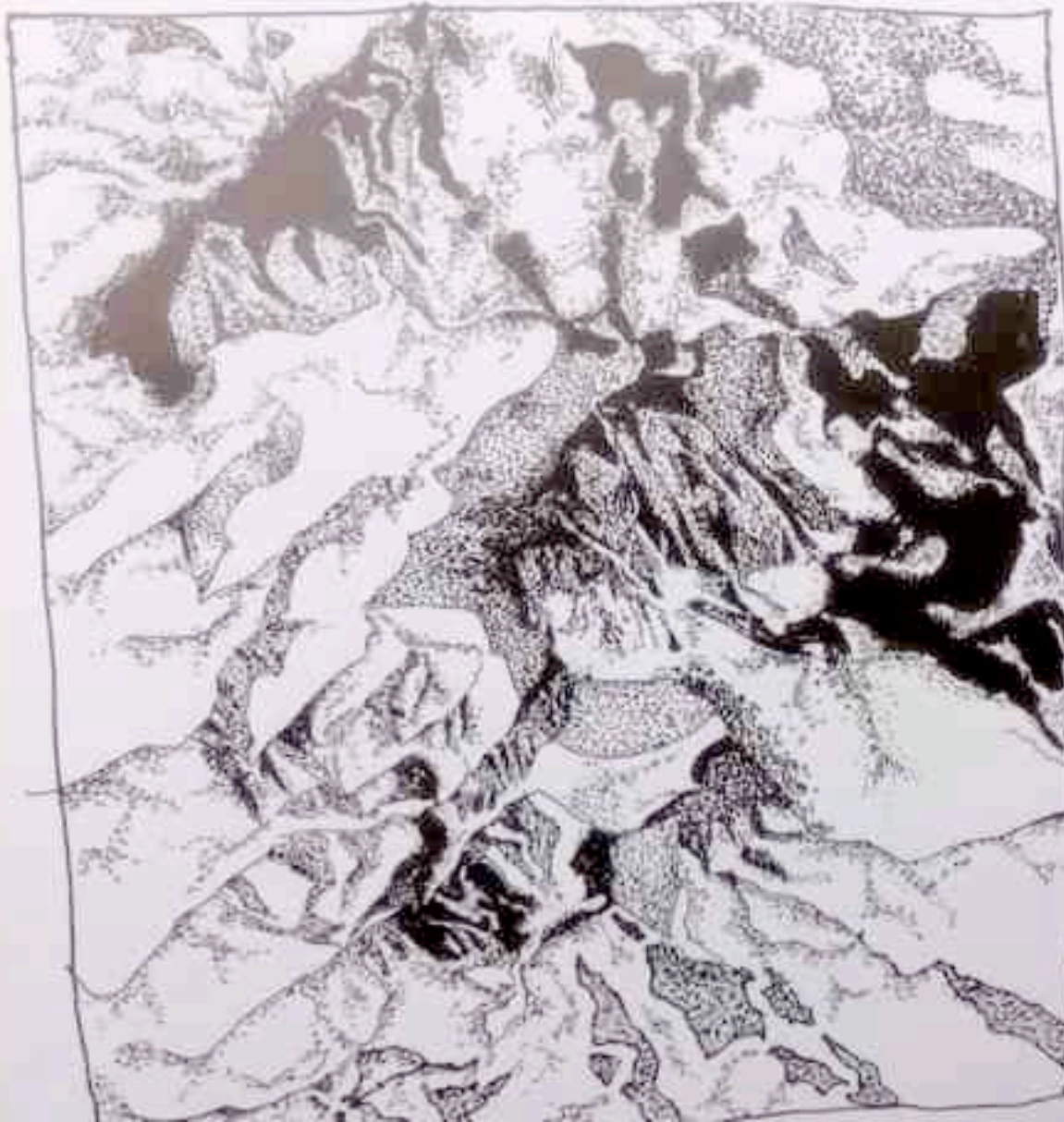


SHAPE STUDY

Here are some of the shapes used in Valley, drawn close up with a 3B pencil. Note how some edges are sharp and others soft. Isolated in this way, they look almost like birds in flight.

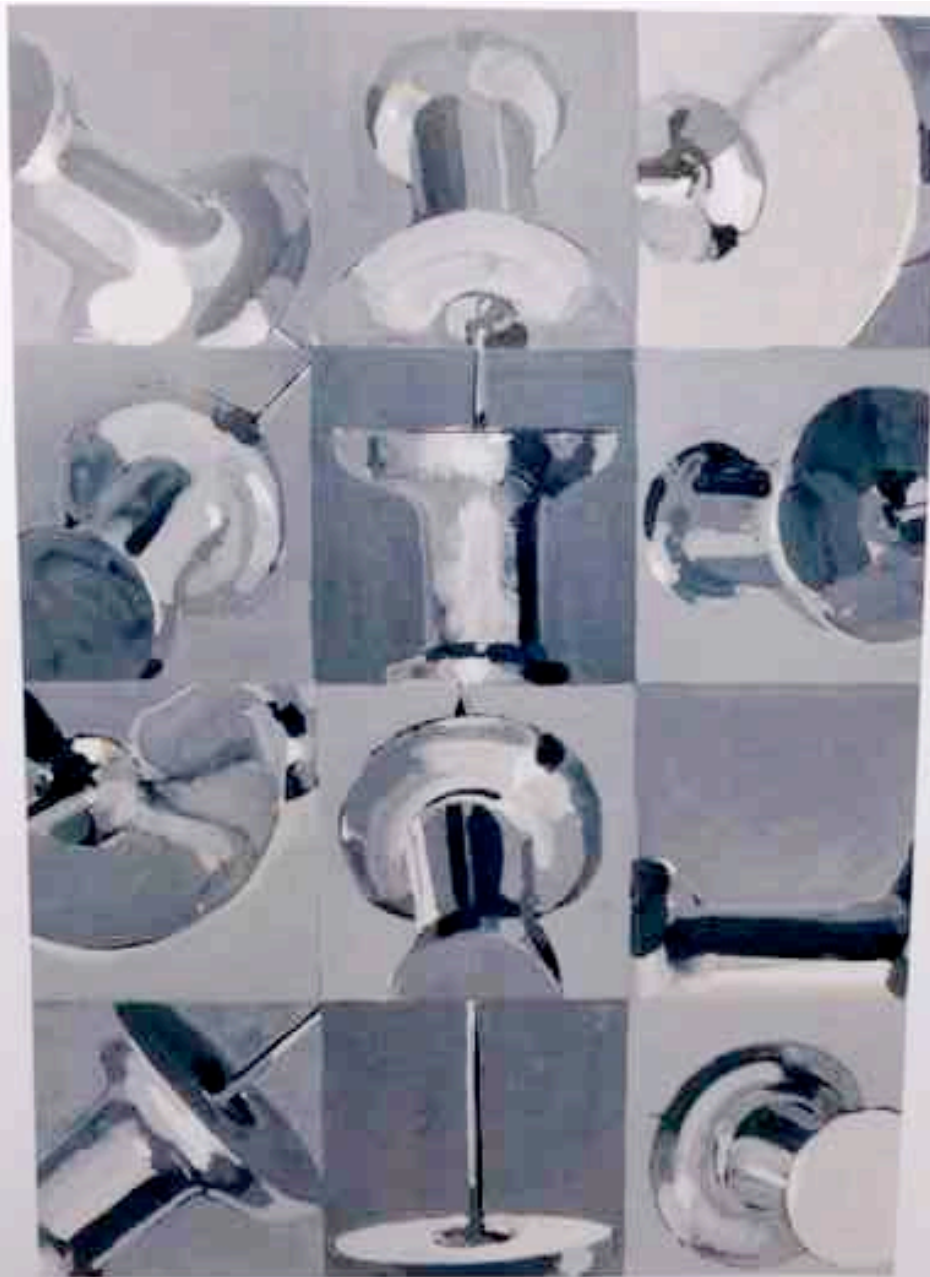


way, they look almost like birds in flight.



MOUNTAINS

Here I have turned Valley upside down and added a lot of enrichment shapes (I'm a great believer in the upside-down method for pattern drawing). As I drew, I was thinking much more about shape than I was about landscape. A surprising feature of this drawing is that, in the inverted state, the valleys become mountains and vice versa.



RC
Im
ent
bea

PUSH PINS

This large piece (18" x 24" [46cm x 61cm]) was done in black, white and gray poster paint. I liked the variety of reflected shapes, especially the bright whites.

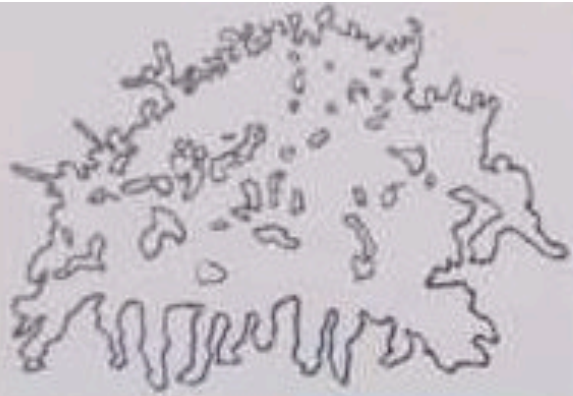




ROOTS

I made this drawing of bean roots from a biology textbook. The pattern is enriched by a contrast of two kinds of forms: the curving tendrils and the bean-shaped nodules.





MASS STRUGGLE

I like to draw seething, turbulent crowd scenes, mostly because of the interesting and varied patterns they make. In this one, the shapes are all merged together into a single, writhing mass.





CELL MACHINERY

This is a fantasy drawing of the inner workings of a cell. There are about seven different kinds of shapes, repeated in different positions.

interpreting nature

When you want to draw a patterned landscape, it's useful to ask yourself questions about the translation from eye to hand. Are the patterns linear or in aggregates? Are they rhythmic or chaotic? What stroke or strokes that will capture the feeling efficiently?

These questions are often answered by trial and error. As you begin to make marks, your hand generally takes over. Your stroke is a little algorithm, repeated many times, with different variations.

Pattern is a bridge for transforming an observational drawing into something different and unexpected. Once you have found a way to express the character of your subject, ask yourself what you can do with it or what next creative step you might take. For such a transformation, you might do well to look, not at your subject, but at your drawing—you're more apt to see new possibilities. Perhaps you can do a spin-off piece where you intensify the stroke, use more pressure or employ a bolder tool. You might turn the work upside down and rework the scene into an abstract. You may see metaphorical possibilities: rocks that look like creatures or clouds, or the branched structure of a river that resembles the veins of a leaf or the back of a hand.



VOLCANIC ROCKS
I liked the texture of these rocks I saw on a beach.



CRAGGY

I drew these rocks with a few vertical strokes and black shadows. Then I turned the drawing and mirrored it as two matching halves. Below, left.



PUZZLER

Without symmetry I usually explore some kind of mosaic. So I did mirror-image just what you did with these rocks in your drawing. This one seems like a brain multiple copy, mirrored vertically.



CRITTERS

I reworked "Volcanic Rocks" top of page with eight smaller stones. Some, they look like horses, animals with almost horizontal bodies.

exercise 31

A Patterned Landscape

Choose an easily visible subject and make several sketches. Pay particular attention to the type of stroke you use to capture the character of the rocks. Now spin off. Choose one of your sketches and take or reduce it to achieve a more dramatic result. Try one or more of the following:

- Turn the drawing upside down or sideways.
- Make a mirror-image drawing.
- Choose a bolder drawing tool.
- Emphasize the relationship of quantity if you can't sketch something containing the mass, a little, bring these qualities out in a new drawing.



SERRATED MOUNTAIN

This drawing of the mountains of Montana was done with a crow quill pen and ink. The mountains were made by putting increased pressure on each stroke of the pen as it moved from left to right.



SURREAL FORMS

This drawing was made the same way, but with a three-point calligraphy pen. I turned the drawing upside down to add the black shadows.



WALNUT

I like drawing walnuts because they look so much like other things — brains, corn, cauliflower. After I drew this one, I noticed that the white recesses looked like water. I decided to make the drawing depicting all but the water area.



ISLAND IN THE STREAM

Here, the walnut is transformed into a strange landscape. As this drawing developed, I began adding little touches like fuzzy patches, reflections, and a horizon.

interpreting nature

Drawing nature requires a kind of shorthand: we need to find ways of working that summarize, and actually stand in for, the overwhelming layers of detail arrayed in front of us. Our strokes need to represent what we see, but in the most economical way.

We do this, as I have suggested, by shifting from drawing things to drawing patterns. Instead of asking "What kind of bark is that?", ask "What are the rhythms here? How do the lines and shapes move, twist and flow?" Answer these sorts of questions not with your head, but with your hand and your kinesthetic sense. Your drawing is apt to become freer and more expressive. And when you choose to spin off or intensify, the fluidity of your strokes can often suggest the new direction.

Trees are a bounty to artists. They offer an endless feast of shape and pattern and can express youth, age, serenity, tenacity, majesty and just about anything else. Anytime you can't think of something to draw, there's always a tree.

These trees, from my sketchbooks, were all made with a conscious shift to drawing shape and pattern.

MIXED MEDIA

Most of the drawing below was done with a heavy black marker. But for the oak bark, I added some little ball-point strokes.



BIRCH AND OAK

When I observe a contrast, I tend to push it further in my drawing. Here, I exaggerated the difference between the smooth birch and grained oak.



JOSHUA TREE

This limb and its branches began to look very oriented to the sun. I made it into a shape study, adding over time connected branches.



Text

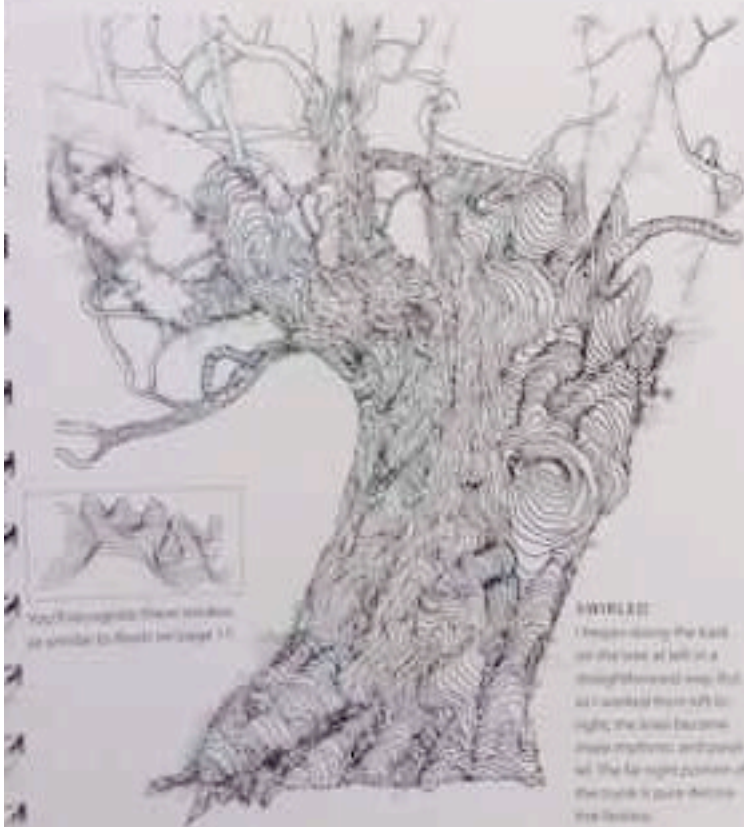
TRINA

I used the combination of rough and soft lines on this subject. Used a fine tip marker for the bark slaps and black Conte crayon for the shadows. Before I added the shadows, I made little indention lines in the paper with the end of a straightened paper clip. The Conte slipped over the ridges, leaving white edges on some of the bark pieces.



MANMADE

The above drawing evolved from an accident. It started while I was drawing and some of the lines from the drawing at left fell onto the next page of my sketchbook. I had already drawn some rocks on the page, so I just continued the pattern over the entire tree.



You'll recognize these swirles as similar to those on page 31.

SWIRLED

I began doing the bark on the tree at left in a straightforward way, but as I worked from left to right, the lines became more rhythmic and playful. The far right portion of the trunk is pure decorative texture.

exercise 32

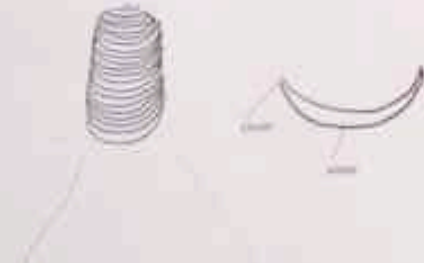
Textural Patterns

Repeat Exercise 31 using a tree trunk or branches as your subject. Make several sketches, emphasizing the character of the stroke. Then make a spin-off drawing that further emphasizes and strengthens the pattern. The spin-off need not look like a tree. Rather, it should embody more abstract qualities like boldness, vigor, rhythm and movement. Strive for a strong difference between the original sketch and the second drawing.

describing form with line

With practice, you can make linear drawings that fool the eye into believing that the image is three-dimensional. Besides being aesthetically interesting, this method of drawing will teach you a lot about form. In directing your line around contours and up and over bumps, you understand form at the neuromuscular level. This technique employs a couple of visual tricks:

1. Draw the lines so that they appear to curve around the object.
2. Make the lines wider apart in some areas and closer together in others.



VARY THE SPACING AND FOLLOW THE FORM

Watch the spacing variations — lines grow closer together as they travel over a bump or around a corner. Also, draw lines so they appear to curve around the contours of an object.



CREATE THREE DIMENSIONS

The illusion of three-dimensional forms can be produced by undulating parallels which are sometimes apart, other times close together.



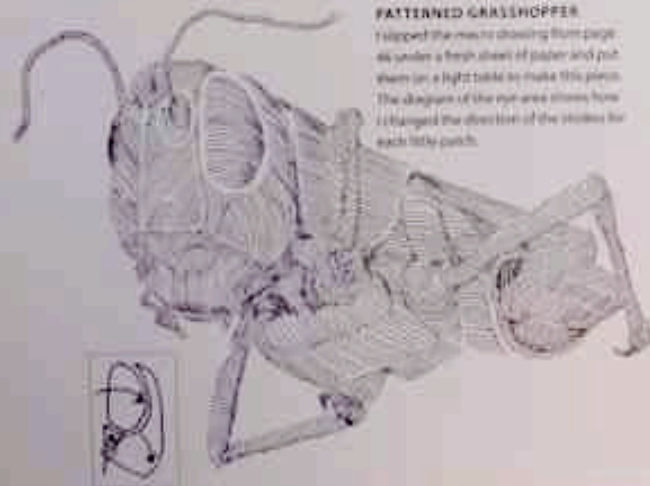
WORK IN PATCHES

Change the direction of your strokes for each separate patch.



AVOID USING OUTLINES

Although it may not look it, these interrelated forms were done entirely without outlines. The illusion is produced by the way the lines change direction or gather together at the edges.



PATTERNED GRASSHOPPER

I slipped the macro drawing from page 46 under a fresh sheet of paper and put them on a light table to make this piece. The diagram of the eye area shows how I changed the direction of the strokes for each little patch.



CRACKED NUT

Here's another example of working in patches, but in contrast to the relatively straight lines of the grasshopper, these lines are more undulating and repetitive.

Finding the Unique in Conformity

There's a tendency to think of drawings like these—or any work employing a controlled technique—as rigidly mechanical, leaving little room for individual creativity. But you cannot help being yourself even when executing a rote algorithm, as evidenced by the drawings below.

Mixed Artichoke
Mixed, asymmetric



Stuffed Artichoke
Eye height



Stuffed Artichoke
Darker shading



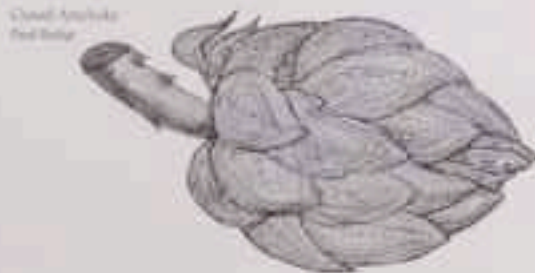
Real Artichoke
and Leaf



Rhythmic Lines

- 1 Take one of your previous drawings and reduce it to rhythmic lines. Do not use outlines, but give turning parallels describe the forms by bending around them. Your lines should converge near the edges and widen apart in the central regions.
- 2 Do a second rhythmic line drawing of an object, but do this one from direct observation.

Closed Artichoke
Red color



Open Artichoke
Star patterns



Open Artichoke
Straight lines



Real Artichoke
John D. Lowe





SELF-PORTRAIT

This drawing was done with ink and white poster paint. As well as a likeness, it's a study of light and dark. The shadow side of the face all but disappears into the background.



BICKER'S TOOLS

A brush, a palette of ink washes and a low pen, made from a reed called "shogoma."



STILL LIFE WITH HOUSEPLANT



TURBULENT PATH



ARTICHOXES, RADISHES AND SQUASH



THE WOODS NEAR
BRADFORD
It is but with a canopy
of oak timber to
convey trees ground
mountains, etc.



Shape Play

In each of these drawings I took a small idea, like shiny surfaces or wobbly shapes, then pushed it to the extreme. This sometimes involved retracing, literally tearing and cutting apart the drawing, redrawing the shapes as geometric patterns or radically cropping to bring out the abstract qualities of the subject.

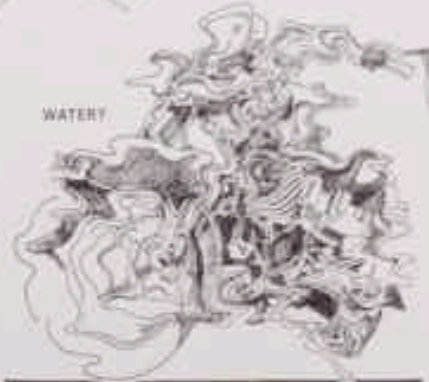
ULTRA SHINY



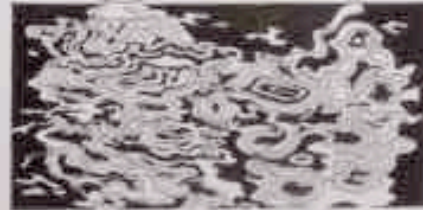
BYZANTINE



WATERY



SHATTERED



WOBBLY



merging shapes

Shapes describe things, but sometimes indirectly. Often an image that seems immediately recognizable is actually made up of surprisingly abstract shapes. Observed up close, the pieces are little shards and blobs, while at a distance they suddenly fuse into a distinguishable picture.

Shape mergers occur when two or more shapes of the same value blend together as a single image. The dancer's black leotard and the black doorway (right) have no separating boundary. In our mind's eye we have little trouble seeing them as distinct, but this visual ambiguity tends to flatten and unify the image. It activates our sense of design.

Consciously creating shape mergers helps you transition from drawing things to drawing shapes. And it helps you make pictures in which the parts all lock together into an integrated whole. This is a pretty good definition of design.

MERGED FIGURE
& BACKGROUND



MERGED ATTIRE

MERGED SHADOWS



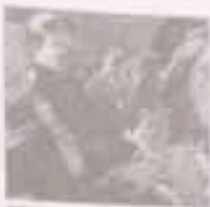
MERGED TEXTILE PATTERNS



MULTIPLE MERGERS



Here's a fine example of the beauty of merging complex shapes in Robert



THE MIND "FILLS IN" WHAT ISN'T THERE
AI Art is a portion of a drawing from an old movie still. The full image, below, clearly shows how little information is needed to make a picture understood by the viewer.



exercise 34

Shape Mergers

1. Do a shape breakdown of a news photo using only black, white and two shades of gray. Merge shapes of the same or similar shade.
2. Set up a still life with a strong, single light source in an otherwise dark room. Make a drawing which emphasizes the pattern. Merge shapes of the same or similar shade/values. Make at least one of these mergers between an object and the background.



PANIC

The drawing above was made from a number of different news photos. I linked the figure together by repeating a 14% algorithm that merges (overlaps) clothing. As you can see from the two details, the patterns are very abstract.



mapping and coloring

I am a strong believer in mapping—making a basic outline of important shapes to guide your drawing. I see it as an effective strategy for analyzing and clarifying what you observe. In fact, it is the best way I know to organize the design of your picture. Maps have unequivocal shapes; the boundaries are clear and distinct.

The reality we observe is not always so clear. Shadows, movement, dim light and other factors tend to fuzz and blur things. It takes imagination to override the ambiguities and map everything in your picture as a defined shape and then—as a further imaginative step—to assign a flat, bright color to each shape and fill it.

There are lots of ways of mapping and coloring. I generally like to keep the colors bright and flat with very little shading. Markers provide the brightest colors, but they sometimes seem a bit too acid or concentrated, so I tone them down by adding colored pencil on top.

You can think of this work as akin to stained glass—work in which your lines are like the leaded mullions. They may or may not correspond to the outlines of the forms, as some of these examples demonstrate.



CIRCUS

I took my sketchbook to the circus, but due to the dim lighting and constant motion of the performers, it was impossible to draw with accuracy. But it didn't matter. I later traced the the crude images I made, above, combined them with some background shapes and colored them as below, with bright watercolor, markers and colored pencils.



PURPLE SHADE

In spite of this title, I was using almost no color at all (most of my soft watercolor) the colors of my darkened TV. I just drew the shapes and then added these bright colors afterward.



HARLEQUIN

I drew this figure with no particular thought in mind. Sometime later—when I had partially colored it in—the idea of a jigsaw puzzle came to me. The color sometimes conforms to the shapes of the image and sometimes to the shapes of the jigsaw pieces.



PHOTO TO FANTASY

These are two colored drawings by Ted Chaffin. Ted likes to work from photographs, but in the process of mapping and coloring, he transforms them to the point where they bear little resemblance to the original. Some become quite abstract. The little girl's eye viewer can be turned on either side and it still looks right side up.

exercise 35

Map and Color

1. Choose one of your previous drawings or doodles and remove it as if it were a map. Enclose every shape and color them with bright and occasionally arbitrary colors.
2. Create a new and more complex map. (This can be from a previous drawing.) Add numerous extraneous shapes (i.e., include interlocking shapes like jigsaw puzzle pieces or sections of a stained glass window). Color in the shapes with bright and occasionally arbitrary colors.

escher tiling

BY MATT COOPER

The object of this technique is to make a drawing that has no background space; every shape is an object that fits into every other shape. I call this Escher tiling, after the Dutch artist M.C. Escher who created complex and beautiful patterns on this theme.

My version is less profound than his was. I simply draw an object, usually from imagination, and then see what other object, person or animal might fit snugly against it. In this way, I build my drawing one shape at a time.



Escher and I
M.C. Escher
© The M.C. Escher Co., 1987

1 Draw an object then study the negative shapes around it. Look for a fit with another object.



DUCK AND PIG



COFFEE AND CAN



2 Draw a second object (the man's head) so that it exactly fits the adjacent space. Continue with a third object.



3 Keep doing this for as long as you have the energy or room on your paper.



THE TIME OF ELEPHANTS
AND PILAH BEERS



ANYTHING GOES!

This kind of work is just a fancy form of doodling and should be treated with the same reverence I like to see given cartoonish figures with semi-realistic eyes, as I did with Connected People (at right). And I'm not a purist about the rules. Early on, when I can't see a RL, I take one object I go beyond pencil. I did this with the upside-down kid in the photo below in Edward Hopper.



CONNECTED PEOPLE

SCHOOL DREAMS



SLIGHTLY SHADED

NATURAL HARMONY

I started this drawing before with a sketch of a giraffe at the zoo. The two large heads were done from photographs, and the rest was made up.



ZELMA LOSEKE

Weaving a Drawing

Some of the most original work comes from self-taught artists. Zelma Loseke wove her first basket when she was making a doll's cradle for her young daughter. This moment inspired her to try larger sculptural pieces in willow using a technique that she developed herself. Today she is a well-established basket maker. When she turned to drawing, Zelma brought a weaver's sensibility along with her. Using ballpoint pen lines instead of willow branches, she patiently builds up images with a regular repeated stroke. Just as with her baskets, she begins with no preconceived idea of how the piece will turn out—she simply draws lines until certain shapes begin to emerge. When this happens, she reinforces the shapes and builds variations of them.

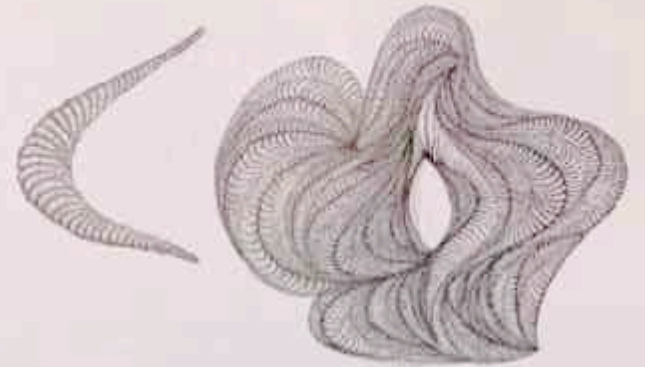


ONE OF ZELMA'S WILLOW-WOVEN BASKETS



NATURE FORM #15

MAKING THE ABSTRACT REALISTIC
Zelma reinforces her simple stroke into the illusion of three-dimensional form—pure abstract patterns begin to look like a piece of nature.



NATURE FORM #17



NATURE FORM #19

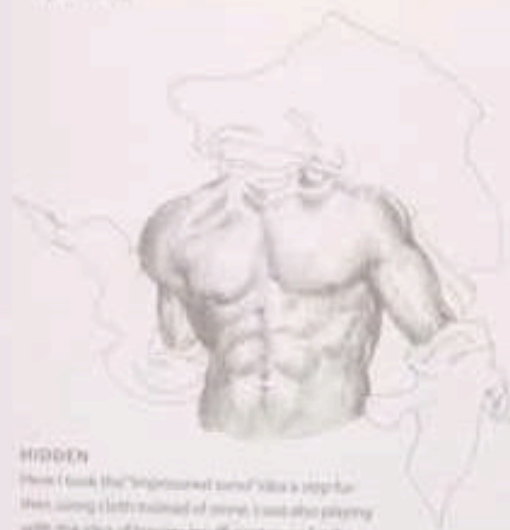


NATURE FORM #23



NATURE FORM #31

Spin-Offs



HIDDEN

When I took the "imprisoned" spin-off as a step further using a little instead of more, I was also playing with the idea of having insufficient room for the head. The torso was drawn from a photograph.



BOUND

To help come over some marble sculptures being prepared for mounting, I was partially covered with ropes, cloth and soft foam. They reminded me of the Captives. This figure grew out of that memory.



TRAPPED

Here's a straightforward spin-off, again pushing the "figures imprisoned in stone" idea, to "figures partly shown." To get a craggy coral-like texture, I copied the rock pattern from page 124.



KILLING

The idea of a figure that turns into cloth grew out of my previous drawing. Added to this is a spin-off of a spin-off. The same homophony spin-offs take you away from the source, and even across unrelated fields.

I'm still intrigued with the writing/party whether or not there is room for a head.

IMAGINARY FOSSILS

The Captives inspired me of the way some fossils look trapped and trapped going. Using an owl right, feathers and imagination spin-offs.

As I remember things, at the right, a fossil from one of the famous fossil beds in the gardens of Bonaria, San Marino. I drew it with added means and to see how it would look.



ROYAL TREATMENT

The elements of his writing mark, reaching, flexing and gripping, act as arrows that point to the hapless king.



exercise 24

Intensifying

Make a drawing of two silhouetted figures in extreme action (running, fighting, dancing, falling, etc.). Make sure that the silhouette of each figure is broken, angular and placed on a diagonal.



MULES ARE STUBBORN

These jagged, angular silhouettes emphasize the violent struggle taking place in this picture. I made this drawing on a plane after watching the movie *Obsession* (Dumbo Drive).



exercise 25

Framing

Make a drawing of a small, central figure surrounded by large background shapes (clouds, trees or man-made structures). Arrange the background shapes so that they either frame or point to the figure.



SPIN OFF

What is called a "spin-off" is a new drawing that uses a previous one as its model. The original is often generated out of straightforward observation. The spin-off transfers facility and confidence with the subject. The spin-off then takes the subject as part of it, in a new and creative direction. The picture looks as if you've been through a process of observation and inspiration, eye and hand's eye.



The central drawing shows pencil and ink studies and watercolor studies. The surrounding "spin-offs" are pencil and ink studies and watercolor studies of the fork, hand and fork.

Drawing a Crowd

1 START WITH ONE
Draw one person.



2 QUICKLY ADD MORE
Add people as they move in and out of your scene. (Sketch quickly.)



3 KEEP ADDING

Keep adding people. The ones you started with will be long gone by the time you finish.

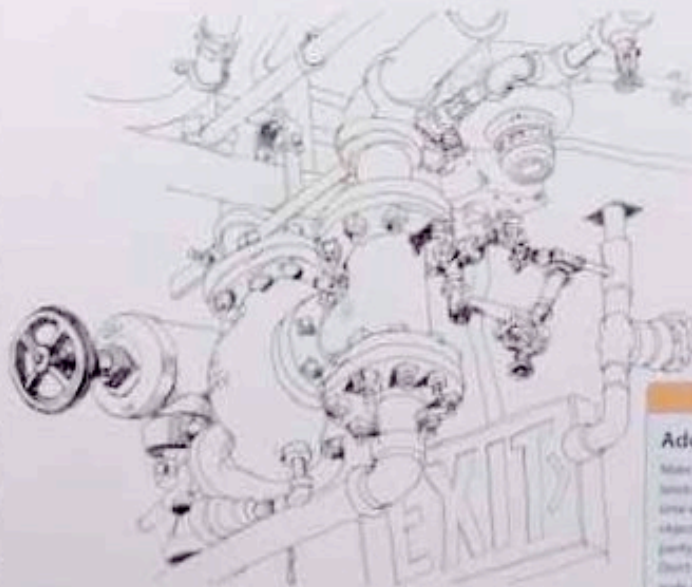


Drawing Plumbing



A year after the first drawing, I added more pipes and valves, this time from a building in Vermont.

I like to draw pipes and plumbing fixtures. It's good training for drawing ellipses and parallel lines in perspective. And it's a natural subject for adding on, since so much actual plumbing is done that way. I drew this one in a building in Seattle.



Some time later, I completed this drawing with additions from yet another building.

exercise 8

Adding On

Make a line drawing of three or more unrelated objects, each drawn at a different time and in a different place. Place the first object in the foreground and the others partly behind it, overlapping by the first. Don't worry about keeping the objects in scale, but draw them accurately. Work in the medium of your choice and allow at least ten minutes per object.

crumpled, dented, crushed

Georges Clemenceau, the President of France during World War I, was once standing motionless on a hill overlooking the great city of Istanbul. After a long silence, one of his aides asked, "What are you thinking, Mr. President?" He replied solemnly, "I was thinking what beautiful ruins this place would make."

Indeed, there is something aesthetically pleasing about the partially destroyed—especially for a draftsman. Jumbled, weathered forms, broken shells and holed hollows all suggest the passages of time and hard use. Things become more abstract

(and often more interesting) as they deteriorate, offering the artist rich opportunities for line, tone and texture and a great opportunity to mastering shapes.

Crumpled paper, put under a strong light, reveals dozens of small planes and edges. You can capture these in a drawing by carefully observing the shapes: first the overall shape of the paper, then the shapes of the creases and folds. Squint often to distinguish the strong from the subtle.

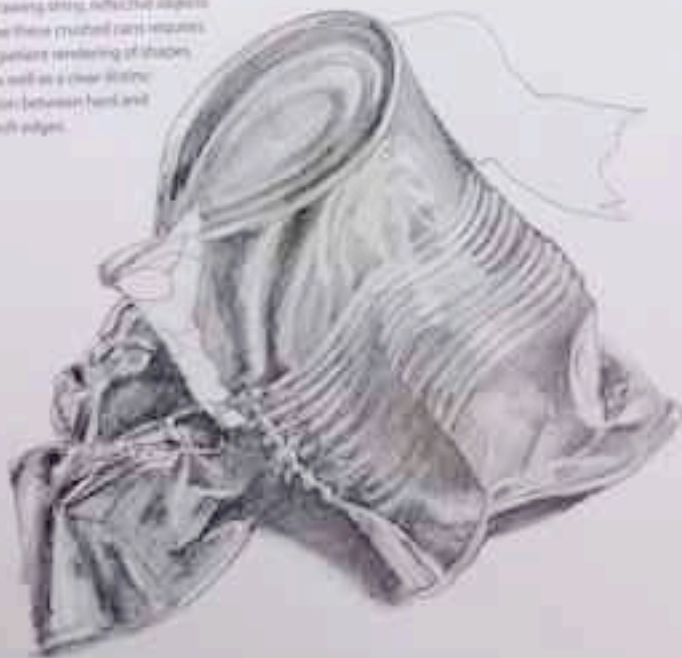


MAPPING YOUR SUBJECT

Mapping the major shapes of your subject is a key first step in drawing complex damaged objects. This makes filling in the unusual planes and shadows a manageable problem.

DENTED METAL

Drawing shiny, reflective objects like these crushed cans requires a patient rendering of shapes, as well as a clear distinction between hard and soft edges.

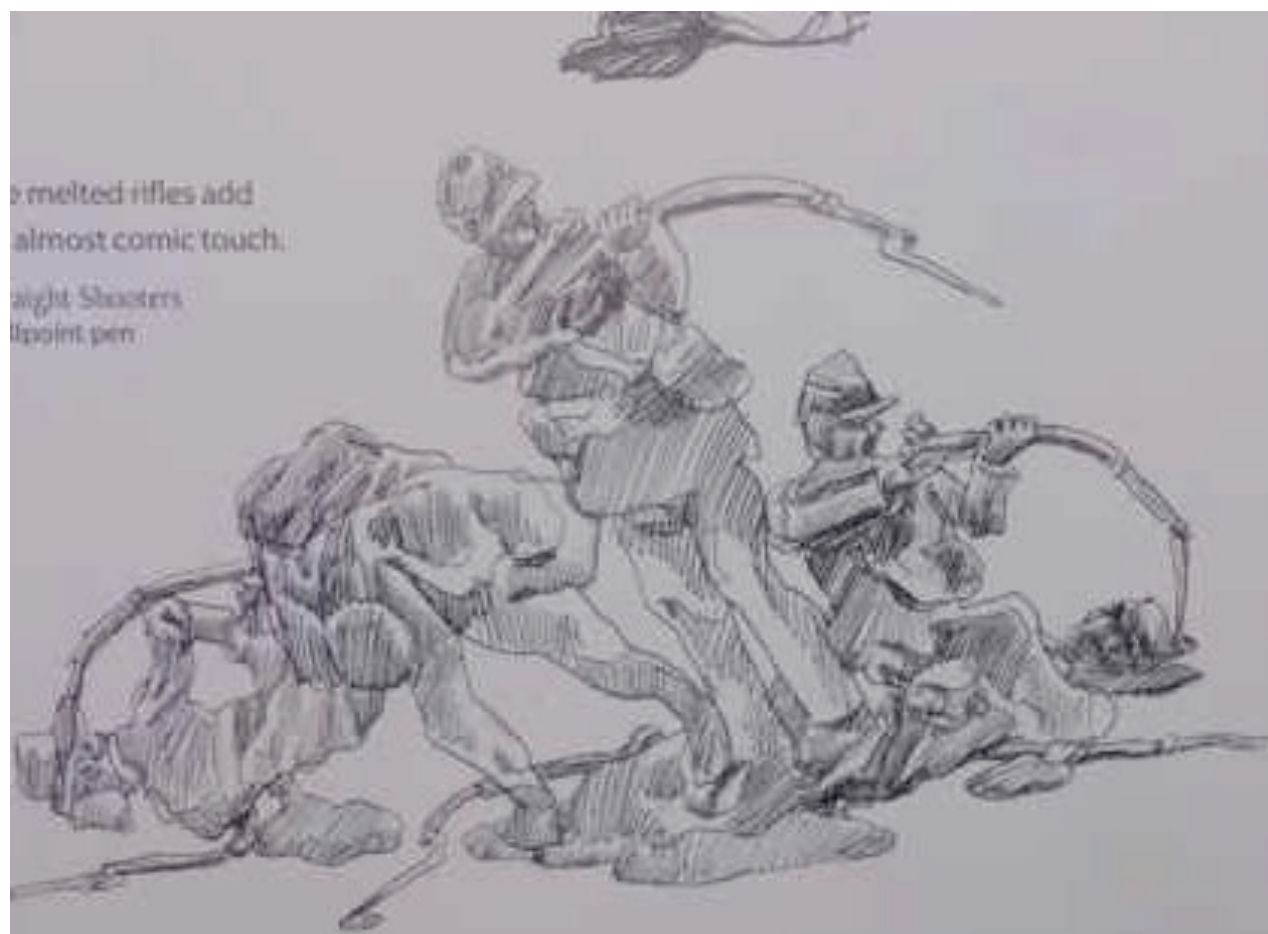


DRAWING A SPIN-OFF

After making a fine crushed metal drawing, you get a feel for the kinds of lines and edges involved. This familiarity allows you to meet your own terms, instead of the drawing's.

o melted rifles add
almost comic touch.

ight Sketchers
llpoint pen



exercise

10

Drawing Melted Plastic

Heat and soften several plastic objects (such as soldiers, toy cars or plastic utensils) and fuse them together. Make a tonal drawing of the aggregate, paying particular attention to the overall shape of the mass. Notice the small, trapped shapes (negative spaces) and draw them accurately. Put a direct light on your subject to create strong light and shadow shapes. Use a 2B pencil and allow one to two hours.

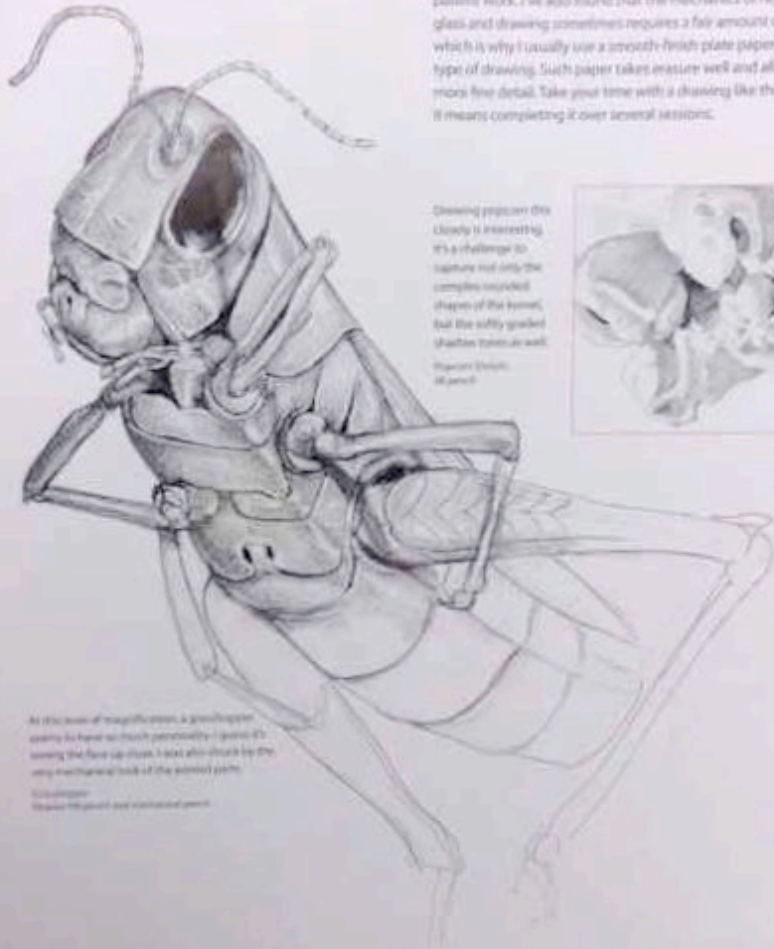
macro drawing

Enlarging an object transforms it. It reveals a level of structure and detail that is otherwise invisible to us. Macro drawing

involves carefully rendering something as you look at it through a magnifying glass. This requires good lighting and careful patient work. I've also found that the mechanics of holding the glass and drawing sometimes requires a fair amount of easing, which is why I usually use a smooth-finish plate paper for this type of drawing. Such paper takes erasure well and allows for more fine detail. Take your time with a drawing like this—even if it means completing it over several sessions.

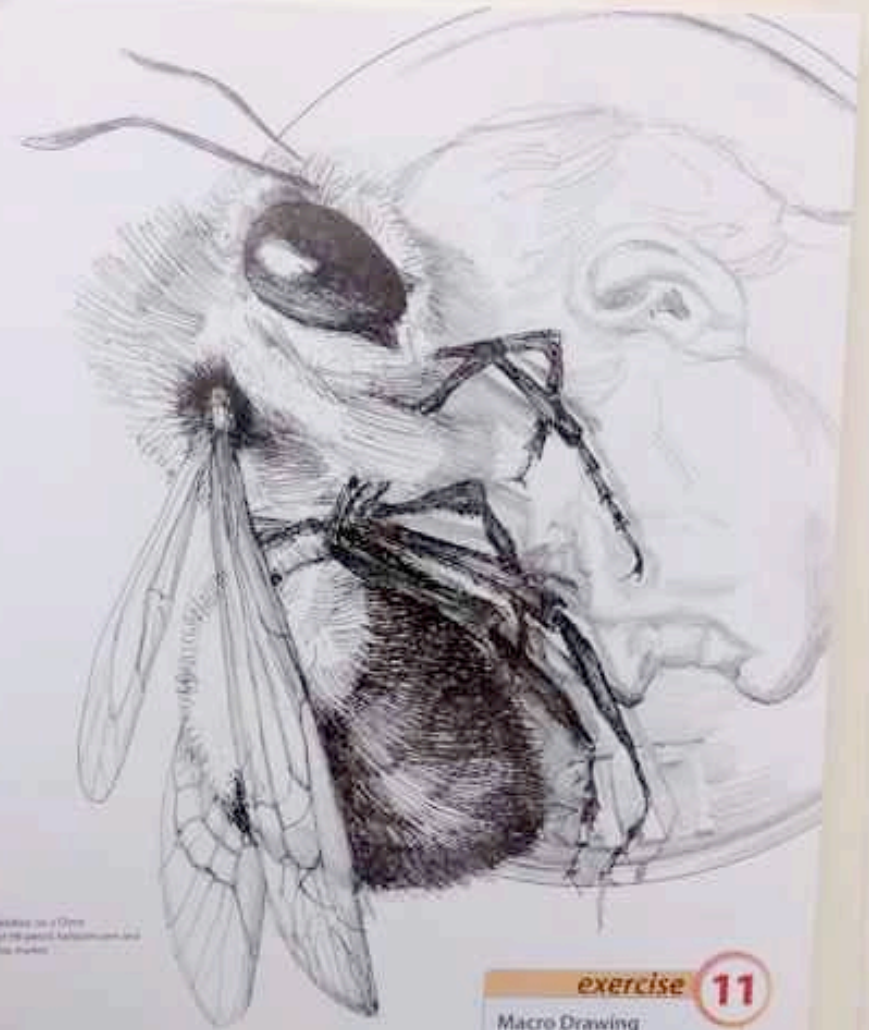
Drawing papers like closely is interesting. It's a challenge to capture not only the complex rounded shapes of the beetle, but the subtle gradations of tone as well.

Harper Doherty
March



At this level of magnification, a grasshopper seems to have so much personality. I spent a lot of time looking at the face-up view. I was also struck by the very mechanical look of the jointed parts.

© Harper
March 2014



Sketching on a 10x magnifying glass. I spent a lot of time looking at the face-up view. I was also struck by the very mechanical look of the jointed parts.

exercise 11

Macro Drawing

Make an enlarged drawing of a very small object or creature. Use a good magnifying glass in a strong light but light and take care not to burn or overexpose. Take as often as needed. A drawing like this is best done over several sessions. Careful studies of the small details, texture, and composition parts, anatomy, volume, shape, color, texture, and perspective.

distorted reflections

All drawing is distorted. The eye/mind/hand process invariably and unconsciously emphasizes some things at the expense of others. Rather than correct such distortions, we, as imaginative artists, should find ways of emphasizing them.

Here's a good way to start: Draw your own reflection in a fun-house mirror. If you can't get a fun-house mirror, a sheet of flexible, mirrored Mylar (available at many art stores) will do. The drawings on these pages were made by bending Mylar in various ways. You'll need to tape or clamp the Mylar so that the desired bend is held in place.

What's interesting about this exercise is that no matter how extreme the distortion, your image is still recognizable. The parts are garbled, sometimes wildly, but the relationships between them are held constant. If you draw the strange reflection accurately, it still looks like you. It's equally interesting that sometimes you can look in a regular mirror and hardly recognize yourself. Well, at least I do that.

A project like this one can make you comfortable with distortion. Once you've done a few of these, you can elongate, compress or otherwise torture any image you see without the help of Mylar or mirrors.



SLIM



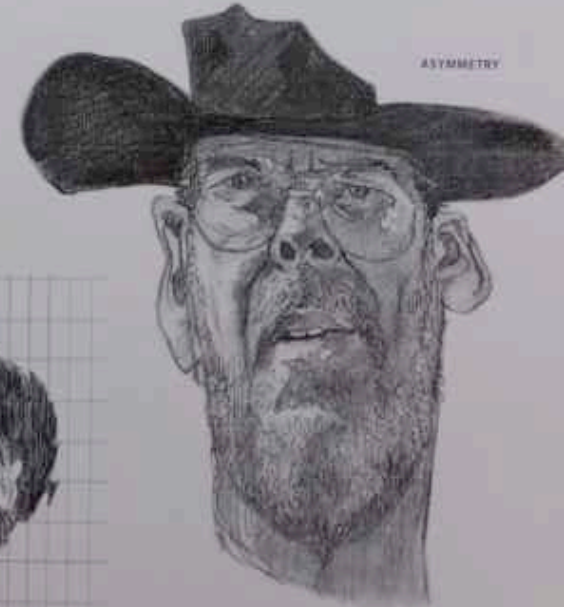
COMPRESSED

OLD HAT

This series of distorted self-portraits was done by looking into a sheet of mirrored Mylar. To do this, you can tape the Mylar so that it bends in various ways—and hold very still as you draw. Most of them were done as one and a compressed drawing with the help of a knacker mirror.



FLAT HAT



ASYMMETRY

MOSAIC COWBOY

The drawing below was done from reflections in a mosaic mirror. It's easy to lose your place and forget which square you're working on in a complex image like this. I put a little dot on the mosaic square that reflected the tip of my nose. I also kept one eye closed most of the time.



mirror imaging

There is something satisfying in symmetry. When you hold a slightly tilted mirror alongside an object or a pen and see the object and its reflection as a single merged shape—a shape

composed of identical halves, your mind shifts to a pattern-making mode. With an ease that borders on magical, symmetry transforms a random fragment into an ordered design.



1 SKETCH

Sketch a subject.

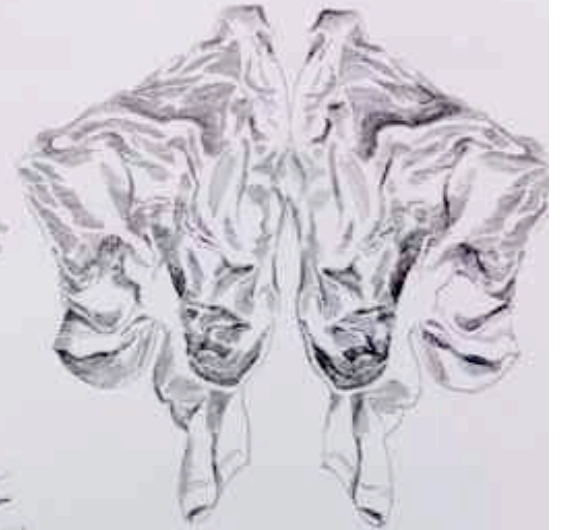
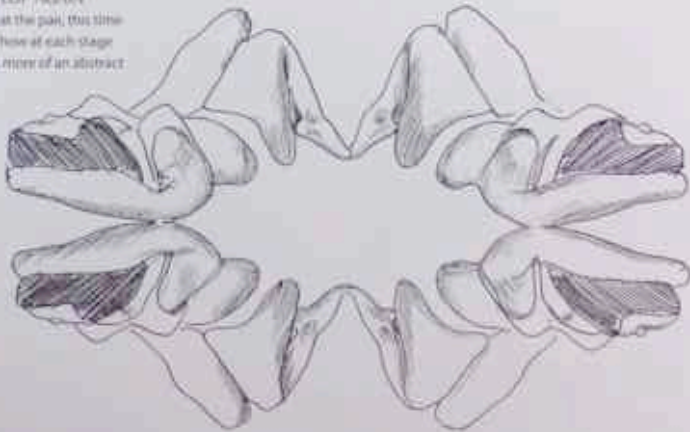


2 COPY AND FLOP

Copy and flop the subject vertically by tracing it on a light table.

3 COPY AND FLOP AGAIN

Copy and repeat the pair, this time horizontally. Notice how at each stage the image becomes more of an abstract design.



SWITCHED SHIRT, BELOW

I take the T-shirt lying on a table and proceed to draw it. I like to do cloth in pen and ink because the complex, swirling folds seem to lend themselves to the pen's, hatching strokes of the pen. (See Chapter 2 for a more detailed version of this technique.)



SYMMETRY, ABOVE

I make a photocopy of the original drawing, flipped it, and slipped under the original on a light table. I then traced the mirror image, more or less stroke for stroke. But if you look closely, you'll see subtle differences between the two halves. Turning one of these images sideways, as I've done here, can radically alter the effect. This almost looks like an optical illusion.



SPIN-OFF

Turned upside down, the shirt looked a little like two animals in conversation, so I added their faces.

exercise 12

Mirror Imaging

On the upper half of a 14" x 17" (36cm x 43cm) sheet of paper, make a detailed drawing of an object that has an irregular or otherwise interesting shape (it could be a used book spine, a piece of wood, or a sea shell). Make a photocopy of the drawing, then place it on a light table with the photocopy underneath. The photocopy should be flipped and mirrored so it looks like a mirror image of the original. If you'd like, flip the original so that the two images are touching. Trace the photocopied image onto the original so that they make a single, symmetrical shape. Use a 2B pencil and allow one hour.

obscuring

In most pictures—just as in real life—the eye quickly settles on the center of interest and relegates everything else to the background. So what happens when you deliberately thwart this convention by placing elements in front of the center of interest to obscure or obstruct it? Challenging convention is often a starting place for imaginative work.

It just so happens that if you choose interesting foreground elements and draw them accurately, you will often create a

tempting frame for your subject. The effect will be one of peering through the foreground. This often makes the subject intriguing, appealing.

You can also obscure your subject with a dramatic light and shadow pattern. Dim light often conveys mystery. Strong cast shadows reveal the forms that they fall on. The shadow side of an object often merges with the dark of the background.



For these drawings I began by sketching a bushy plant, then made photographs of the sketch and drew different people behind the bushy. Peering through an overcast sky does not help if you're doing a sketch like this.

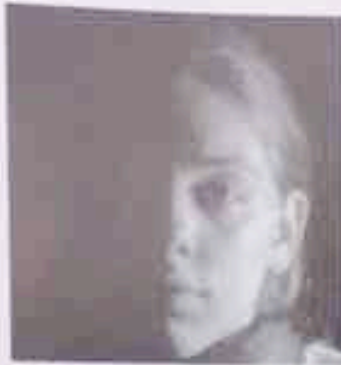


exercise 13

Obscured

Make a line drawing of a large plant or a cluster of flowers. Make three photographs, and on each draw a person, part or whole, behind the plant. Each should have a different subject behind it, and it should be made from observation, not a photograph. Draw and observe for drawing.

obscuring with dramatic light and shadow



1 Take some photographs of your subject under a strong light.



2 Create a simple map by tracing the photo on a light table.



3 Add a second element in front of the face—in this case, a pair of hands.



4 Fill in and darken the tones. Try several variations.



5 Posterior, keep details to a minimum...



6 ...but capture the difference between hard and soft edges.



7 Here's a different effect, using a tangled piece of clothing or rope.



8 ...positioned so as to cast strong shadows on the face.



9 With only selected background shapes filled in, the drawing appears more abstract.

subject under a strong light.



4 Fill in and darken the tones. Try several variations.

photo on a light table.



5 Posterize: keep details to a minimum...

... but capture the difference



6 ... but capture the difference between hard and soft edges.



7 Here's a different effect, using a tangled piece of clothesline rope...



8 ... positioned so as to cast strong shadows on the face.



9 With only selected background shapes filled in, the drawing appears more abstract.

sketching the unusual

Any subject that catches your eye is a good subject for your sketchbook—but it may be time to get bolder in your range of choices. We are trying to build neural bridges between the eye and the mind's eye—perhaps more accurately, between the visual centers of the brain and the visual imagination, which happen to share much of the same equipment. For this work, a good subject is one that jolts you out of your habitual way of seeing. These are subjects that in some way appear compelling, vivid or strange.

Sketching your dental X-rays, a tray of plastic utensils, or a dead fly under a magnifying glass could trigger a shift in your seeing habits. Like the images in your dreams, the "new reality" you draw should include the odd, the illogical, the ambiguous and the absurd.



COMPELLING STRANGENESS

Early Mexican art often combined the grotesque with a wild, Baroque sense of copying work from other cultures. Can be fascinating — you can feel their boldness and difference. This Mexican water-pipe was sketched from a sculpture in Mexico's National Anthropology Museum.



ARRESTING PATTERN

I liked the shape produced by the back of this young woman's hair meeting the back of her shawl.



IMPRISONABLE SOURCES

This was drawn from a photograph of a medical procedure depicting how a baby's head passes through the birth canal. I liked the abstract qualities and the odd, anatomic feeling.



EXTREME FORESHORTENING

And even, especially of people. Sometimes you let go of your ideas about how a person looks and to show only what your eye tells you. This is an ordinary drawing of these plucky warriors in a battle, but I like to show it upside down. It gives the drawing a surreal, as if look.



DRAWINGS OF FOUR DRAWINGS

Occasionally I make little sketches in a grid form of my previous drawings. This makes simplicity of the patterns sometimes gives me new ideas. The two little drawings in the middle are so simple that I no longer remember the original, but I can make something new out of them.



UNEXPECTED COMBINATIONS

I put this rubber frog on a beaded necklace because I liked the reflection. Sometimes it looks like an illustration for a fairy tale.



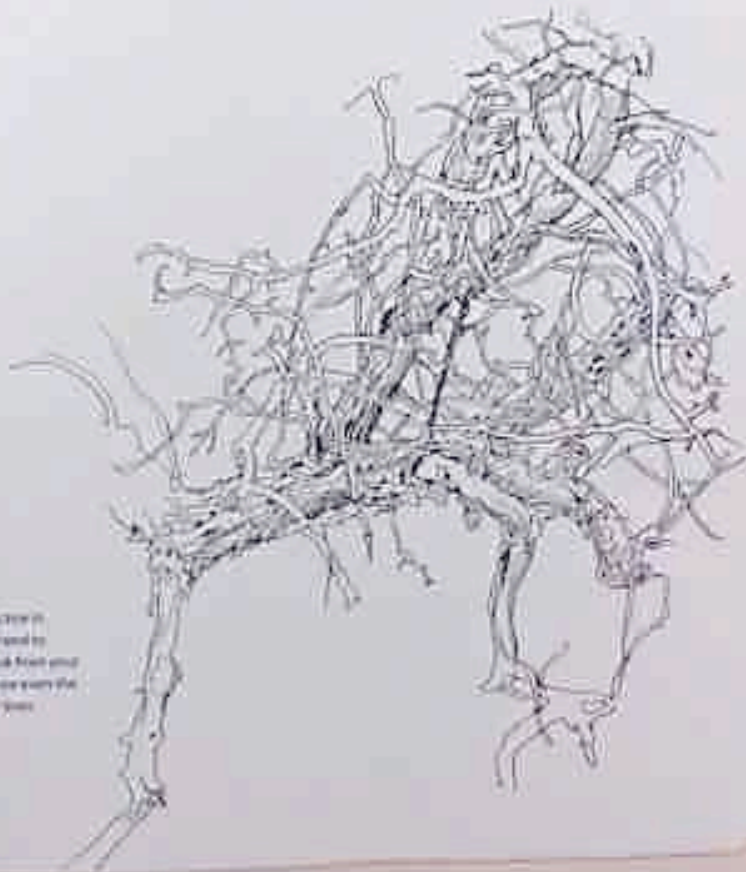
TIME ON YOUR HANDS AND NOTHING TO DRAW

Did this drawing of my feet while on a long plane trip. It became an almost automatic exercise in drawing shapes and textures.



SO UGLY IT'S BEAUTIFUL

It's interesting how people and objects get more attractive when you begin drawing them. This prehistoric fish in London's Museum of Natural History looked awful and lifeless. Initially, I felt sorry for him. But as I drew, I came to appreciate his raggy, handsome face.



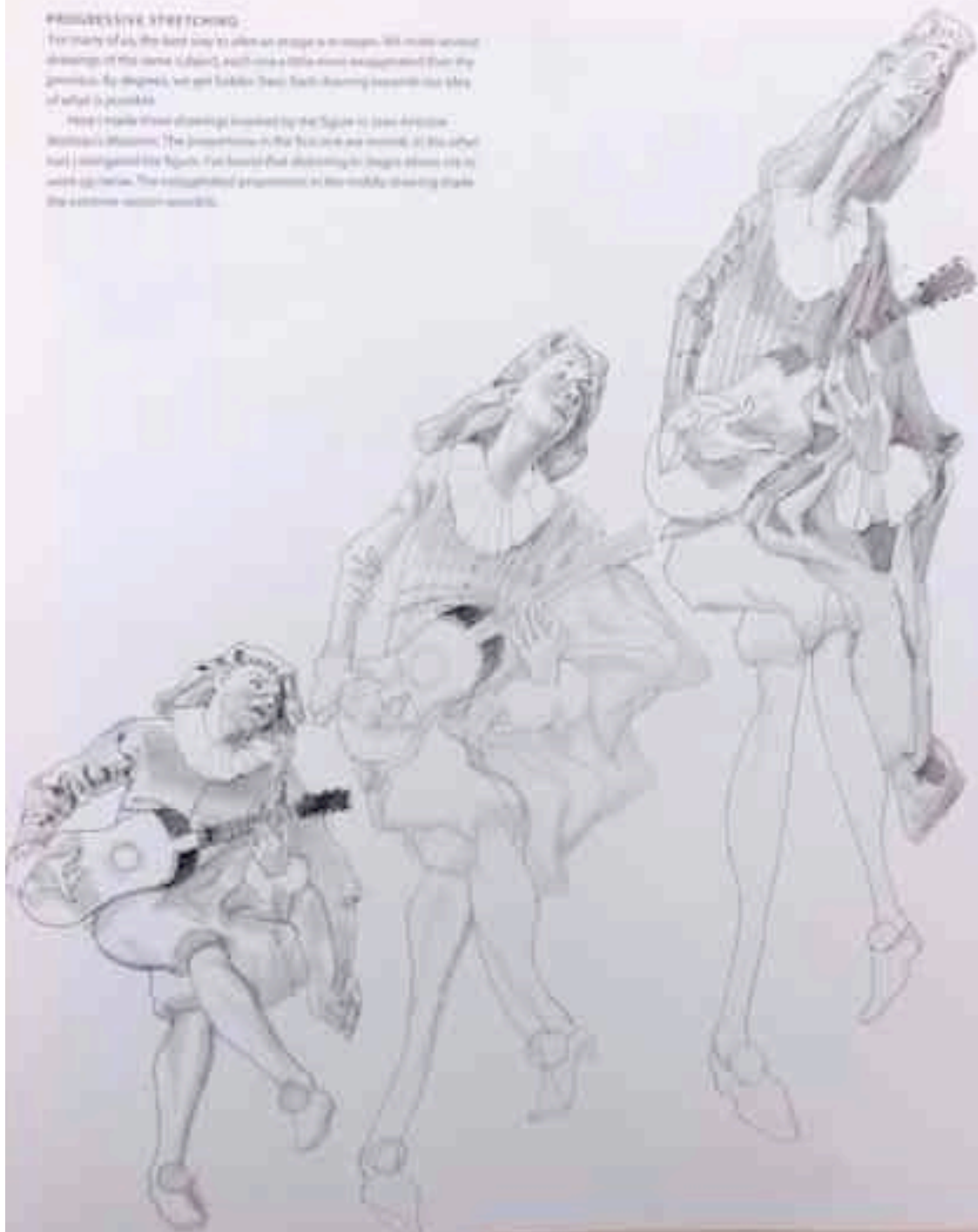
COMPLEX TANGLES

An old apple tree often requires practice in observational drawing because you need to keep finding your point when you look from your point to the subject. I took care to draw every stem and branch as if they, not simply trees.

PROGRESSIVE SKETCHING

For many of us, the best way to learn to draw is to make several drawings of the same subject, each one a little more exaggerated than the previous. As a result, we get better. Each drawing teaches us what is possible.

Here's a series of drawings based on the figure in the previous section. The proportions in the figures are correct, all the other stuff (posture, the figure, the head) that drawing to figure shows us is what's possible. The exaggerated proportions in the middle drawing make the extreme version possible.



PROGRESSIVE CHANGE

Here's another demonstration of how distortion gets easier when you do it in stages. I like to do it in groups of three. Here, the first umpire was drawn from a magazine photograph. The middle stage exaggerated the action and altered the proportions. This emboldened me to make more radical changes in the last drawing.

exaggerating proportions

We recognize differences by comparing and contrasting. If you want to make something look big in your drawing, put it next to something small. If you have only one object, the parts should contrast with each other. Enlarging some parts of your subject while reducing others is a way of intensifying the drawing. It creates an exaggerated emphasis, excessively calling attention

to certain aspects of a person or an animal. The results may be amusing or disturbing, but almost always attention-getting. In the animal drawings on these pages I've simply shrunk or expanded a certain part in relation to the others. Care was taken to represent the parts accurately, though not in proper proportion.

ALL HORN

It's interesting how exaggeration begins to look normal as you draw. By the time I finished this sketch, the outlandish yet animal quite believable to me.



SMALL HEAD, BIG BODY
Reducing the head size usually makes an animal look bigger—more physical.

LONG LEGS, BIG FEET

These creatures look like they were born to run. The dog's small head makes it appear to walk as if his body were immensely long.

STRETCHING AND SQUEEZING THE HORSE

The horse represents ordinary things that you can't control such as, unfortunately, his. Exaggerating different parts brings out different aspects.



emphasizing differences

Difference is informative. We are aware of things because they stand out from their background. We are aware of qualities by contrasting and comparing. One way to make the familiar strange is to emphasize differences. That is, put two elements in a drawing and push the differences between them to extremes.



1



2



3

EXAGGERATING DIFFERENCES

The first drawing is a sketch I made of two guys waiting in an airport. Something about the difference between their poses and body types caught my eye.

Later, I made a second sketch from the original. I exaggerated the differences between these two figures, making the heavier man much larger and the thinner guy more angular and hunched. For some reason they began to look like monuments to me. I imagined them as a stone sculpture in a park.

So I drew them again, this time in pencil. By using soft shading and eliminating details, I attempted to show them as if they were made of granite. And I added pigeons.

exercise 14

Progressive Distortion

Make a series of three drawings (any subject), each more distorted than the last. Draw your original either from life or from a photograph. Then make each of your other two from the previous drawing. I encourage! The last drawing should be greatly exaggerated.

playing with scale

Sometimes it's fun to make a composite drawing from different sources and to wildly exaggerate size differences. Here I've put the artist Gustave Courbet in the driver's seat of 20th-century Gaby Dellys' limousine. The drawing is amusing because it almost takes a moment for the viewer to realize that Courbet is a giant.



Gustave Courbet—*from a photograph*



Gaby Dellys and her limousine—*from a photograph*

exercise 15

Scale Play

Make a composite drawing by combining elements from two different photographs. Make some of the elements out of scale—distort and exaggerate the size differences between them so that small things appear huge and vice versa. In other words, see if you can make the scene convincing and realistic.



forced distortion

Many artists—even experienced professionals—find it difficult to deliberately distort their drawings. Paradoxically, good training in observation can inhibit the ability to draw expressively. Here's a two-step process that can help you break out of that constraint. It almost guarantees a more extreme and often striking image. In the first step, drawing blind, map the basic outlines of your subject with a bold, black marker. As you draw, keep your eyes on the subject (or photograph) and not on your

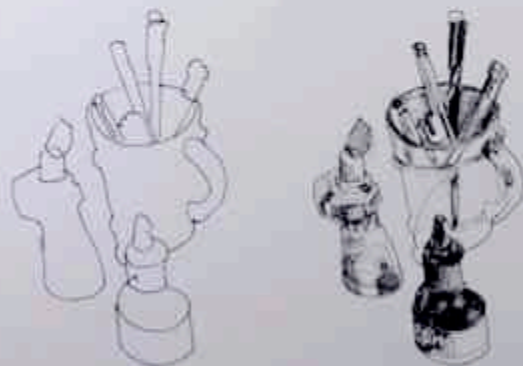
drawing. You may need to cheat a little by glancing at your paper from time to time to keep your place.

When you have completed this contour map, shift to a ballpoint pen and begin carefully filling in shading and details, now freely looking back and forth between subject and paper. The natural distortion that occurs when you draw blindly ensures that no amount of realistic shading will make your drawing look exact.



1 Keeping your eyes on the photo and your paper off to the side, draw the outlines of your subject in bold marker.

2 Move the paper directly in front of you. Add shadows, tones and details with a ballpoint pen.



1 Draw blind with a felt-tip marker.

2 Fill in shading and details with a ballpoint pen.



1 In this blind drawing of singer Frank Sinatra, I did the features as well as the overall contours.



2 Even after filling in, it doesn't look much like Sinatra. But that's OK. I did it my way.



COMBINING AND EXAGGERATING PHOTOS
This drawing was made from two separate photographs. I drew the taller man first, and then added the shorter woman from another photograph behind him, like the exaggerated difference in the sizes of their heads.



THE SLIGHT DISTORTION OF DRAWING BLIND
At first glance, the proportions of this young girl almost look normal. But her arm and feet show the strange distortions of drawing blind.

SKETCHING QUICKLY
Quick studies, like this one of a North African man, can have the same slight, natural distortions as drawing blind.



exercise 16

Forced Distortion

Make a blind contour drawing of a person using a bold felt-tip marker—glance at your paper only occasionally to find your place. Keep your marker in contact with your paper as much as possible. When you have completed the contours, switch to a ballpoint pen and complete the details of the drawing as meticulously as possible, this time looking at your work.

distortion grids

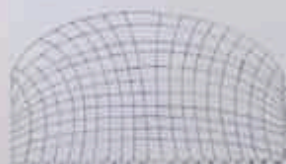
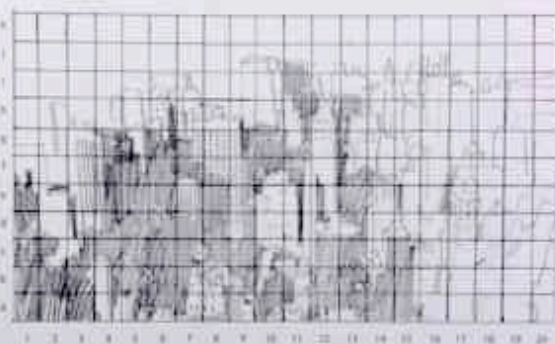
One interesting way of making the familiar strange is using grids. This method involves dividing a photograph or one of your drawings into even squares. Then you make a second, distorted grid (with the same number of squares) to guide you in creating a new drawing.

Make the second grid on tracing paper, then slip it under a fresh sheet of drawing paper and place it on a light table. Make your distorted drawing simply by following the original square for square. For some people this kind of work is too mechanistic, but I find it relaxing, and the results are often surprising.



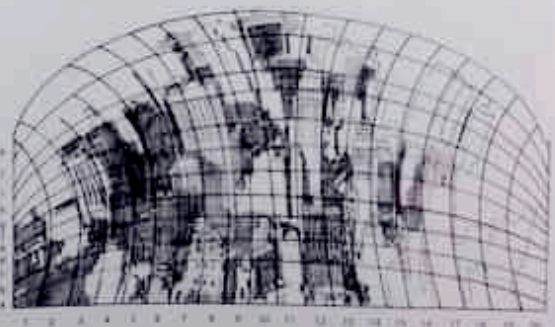
REFERENCE GRID

Reference grids are always rectangular and divided into even squares. Label the horizontal axis 1, 2, 3, etc. and the vertical axis A, B, C, etc.

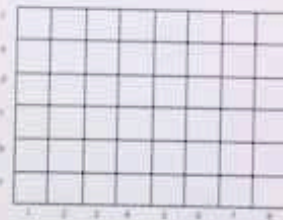


DISTORTED GRID

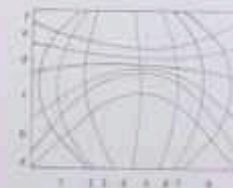
Grids can be distorted in numerous ways, so long as you have the same number of squares and they're numbered in the same way as your reference grid. Do this grid on tracing paper, then slip it under a fresh sheet of paper and place them on a light table to make your distorted drawing. You can reuse the grid for other drawings.



REFERENCE GRID



DISTORTED GRID



DRAWING SHAPES, NOT THINGS

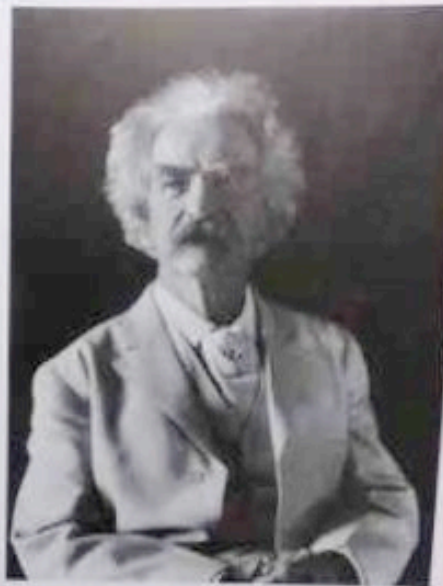
These drawings, made from a single set, illustrate the stretching and bending potential of distorted grids. The image drawings are unpredictable, often amusing ways.

This way of working has a side benefit: it offers a vivid demonstration of the process of drawing shapes rather than things. You merely look out the drawing as a mosaic, one square at a time. You pick a square in the original, find the matching square on the distorted grid and duplicate the lines, shapes and tones of the original. Out of this abstract process, the visual image seems to emerge almost magically.

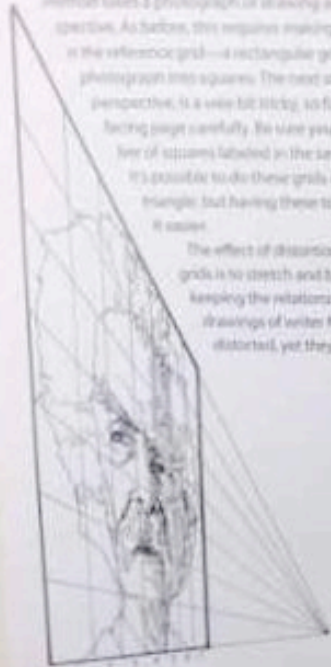
perspective grids

Here's another grid idea that yields interesting results. This method takes a photograph or drawing and puts it into perspective. As before, this requires making two grids. The first is the reference grid—a rectangular grid that divides your photograph into squares. The next step, making a grid in perspective, is a wee bit tricky, so follow the steps on the facing page carefully. Be sure you have the same number of squares labeled in the same way in each grid. It's possible to do these grids without a T-square and triangle, but having these tools sure makes it easier.

The effect of distortion grids and perspective grids is to stretch and bend the image while keeping the relationships constant. These drawings of writer Mark Twain are hugely distorted, yet they're still recognizable.



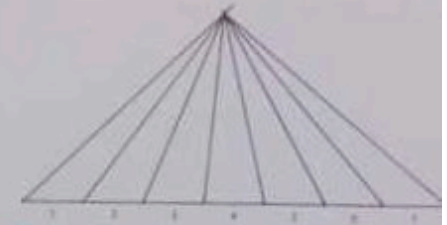
MARK TWAIN
Photo by Franklin Benjamin Schneider



making a perspective grid



1 The reference grid is always rectangular and composed of even squares. Squares are numbered on one axis, lettered on the other. Do this grid on tracing paper and tape it to the photograph.



2 Draw a horizontal baseline. Locate a vanishing point some where over its center. Mark off equal parts on the baseline, the same number as in your reference grid. Label them 1, 2, 3, etc. Draw lines from these points to your vanishing point.

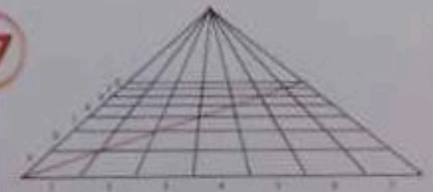


3 Draw a second horizontal line, then a diagonal line (the one shown in red) from the bottom left corner through the next point of intersection, shown circled. Notice that your diagonal intersects each of the other converging lines.

exercise 17

Gridwork

Choose a photograph of a face that's at least 8 1/2" x 11" (22cm x 28cm). Make a reference grid of squares on a piece of tracing paper, numbered across the bottom and lettered along the side. Tape it to the photograph. Then make a distortion grid (also on tracing paper) with an equal number of squares, but with curved lines instead of straight. Number and letter these squares just as before. Tape this grid under a fresh sheet of paper and place them on a light table. Copy the photograph square by square.



4 Draw additional horizontals through each point of intersection. Notice how these horizontals get closer together as they approach the top of the grid. This grid can be done on tracing paper, and then taped to the back of a fresh sheet of paper and placed on a light table for the final drawing.



I took this photo of a towel draped on a chair. The folds and shadows suggested the face of a primate to me, so I made this drawing. Gorilla.



A little shift in perspective can transform the image you see. I altered the photo slightly to reveal a hooded witch.



Further visual tinkering reveals a three-figure composition. Interestingly, the three photos look quite similar at first glance.

Making Metaphors

The game of metaphors is seeing a star in generic images you would never think of drawing. It offers not only unusual subjects, but subjects in unique positions, angles and proportions. It takes you beyond the conventional. There is a kind of accident of art and random quality to it that is often essential in creating something new.



BATHROOM CRUCET

CRUMPLED PAPER



HEAD FROM ABOVE



UNNNNNH



WEARY SOLDIER



MADGED-UP T-SHIRT



BRINDAUR

The coffee stain stain with paper added

inspiration in the clouds

BY ANNE MURPHY FOR THE SCIENCE OF THE ARTS

Subtle, ever-changing and complex, clouds offer the richest possibilities for metaphorical seeing. You can find in them not only strange objects, but unusual combinations of strange objects. Because clouds are in constant motion, I find it best to photograph them first and draw from the photographs.

Pick a sunny day when there are lots of billowy cumulus clouds, and shoot lots of pictures that can be sorted through later. Accept right away that a cloud image will not likely be obvious and obvious. The metaphorical eye works by hits and duds: the image needs to be zoomed in.

When making drawings like these, feel free to depart from the photographs. The actual clouds are a starting point—a useful guide, not a precise template. See if you can capture some of the soft, puffy cloud texture while you develop the metaphorical image. Draw as if you had one foot in the metaphor and one foot in the clouds (or to speak).



A GUIDE, NOT A TEMPLATE

Usually I thought this looked vaguely like an animal's face—but there was just enough detail in the upper area to suggest two figures.



SEARCH FOR THE IMAGE

When I first looked at this cloud formation, I couldn't see anything in it. Now I can't look at the photo without seeing fish.

exercise 18

Metaphoric Drawings

Arrange a group of clouds in various ways under a strong light. With each arrangement, see if you can find a face, figure or animal. If you see one that looks promising, make a sketch of it. After you have made a few sketches, pick one, put it on the light table and make a more complete drawing. Your finished piece should look partly like the cloud and partly like your metaphor.

Take a few photographs of clouds and draw an image you see in one of the formations. Use a soft pencil and a kneaded eraser to pick out light areas, and keep the drawing soft and subtle.

SUN BATHERS

I wanted three two figures to bask and I got it. I copied the light pattern and kept the details to a minimum.



FOODLE AND SQUAWKING PARROT

This one seemed obvious from the start—the parrot's face and the open beak of the parrot were so clearly formed in the clouds, well, so was, arguably.



THE SORCERER AND THE OWL

I don't know what they're doing, but it at least looks rather creepy.



TWO MONKS ON A FROG, CHASING A KNIGHT

This kind of thing is just too obvious to make up without the help of clouds.



odd juxtapositions

Imagine walking down a quiet country road and stumbling upon a huge object standing some thirty feet high. As you stare up at it, you realize you're looking at a high-heeled shoe. What would you do? Laugh? Look around suspiciously? Conclude that you're in a dream? Whatever you do, your first reaction is likely to be disorientation. People need to make sense out of what they see, and when they don't, it provokes a queasy, off-kilter feeling that something's not quite right.

Artists—particularly the surrealists—like to evoke this feeling in their audience and play with it. Drawing things out of scale and putting things together that don't belong are two classic ways of doing this. There are endless possibilities for provocatively combining familiar objects. One secret to achieving the right effect is drawing so carefully that each element looks perfectly normal and conventional, no matter how absurd the whole is.



BUCKLE AND NAILS



DINNERWARE AND SHOE



GLOVES AND BRANCHES



FACE AND ANTS



SPAGHETTI AND GOLF BALLS



MARKER AND WATER



DOG AND POPCORN



TRAIN AND NEWSPAPER



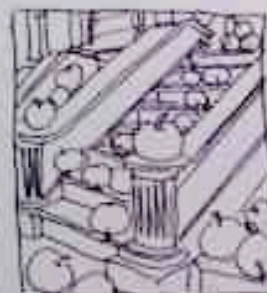
MOUSETRAP AND PHONE




FEET AND TWINE



HAT AND STONES



APPLES AND STOOP



A consistent pattern of light and shadow helps create the illusion that these elements belong together. Be clear about the direction of the light source and where the shadows fall, even if you have to invert these things.

exercise 19

Familiar But Strange

Combine two objects that you don't normally associate with each other into a single drawing. Or, if you choose a more traditional pairing, show them side by side out of scale with each other.

Take your time with this drawing. Work from the outside water at such as possible. Make your objects look convincing using a consistent light source, realistic shadows and appropriate details. Map out your arrangement prior to proceeding to the final drawing.

In this drawing, several juxtapositions were unlikely objects that are often not of scale with each other. Interestingly when you consider this sort of thing in a realistic art context, the scene becomes almost banal. Here I have combined my trucks with peanuts. After making separate sketches of each before making a final drawing, I did a planning sketch so I could see just how things fit together.



This exercise was inspired by a quote by the surrealist poet André Breton: "Anyone who can't imagine a dog galloping across a tomato on a horse is a fool." Maybe not, but I have always made me think of an alternative quote: "Galloping across a tomato on a horse is a tricky business." Visualizing metaphors is one of the most of making the world strange.





I started this drawing with just the airplane and chorus line. Then I added the guy on the trapeze, then the cowboys, then the horse. I might have gone further, but I ran out of paper.

the evolution of an idea

Creating could be summed up as having a plan accompanied by a willingness to depart from it. Most people think that an artist's vision must be clear and fully formed before he or she begins to draw. Not only is this rarely the case, it is actually based on a misunderstanding about how creativity works. Creativity is an open dialogue between you, the artist, and the particular piece you are executing. The lines you put down on paper often tell you what to do next. Each stage feeds the one that follows.

You start with an idea—some sort of thought or vision about what you're going to do. It can be something quite simple. Once you've drawn a few lines, your image begins to speak back to you. You get new ideas. You may begin to modify your original vision, or you may think of a more vivid way to capture it. In

either case, the original concept is only a starting place. You surrender to the process, and therefore you never know exactly what you're going to draw until you draw it.

So what qualifies as an idea? In its broadest meaning, an idea is any thought that gets your pencil moving. Another definition is combining two elements in a novel way. This definition gets to the real power of ideas. Ideas are about creating relationships—about linking things in a fresh way. Your idea can be about anything, but it seems to work best when it's about two things. As the dancer Twyla Tharp puts it, "you don't have a really good idea until you combine two little ideas."

1 I like to start with loose, tangled sketches or little iconic figures. If it's a subject I've drawn a lot, like these monkeys, I make an effort to draw them in some new way—some new angle or position. If I can think of something, I like to add some new element, such as the unicycle.



2 The first sketch leads to a simple idea—a monkey on a bicycle.



3 Continuing to play with the idea, I silhouette the figure.

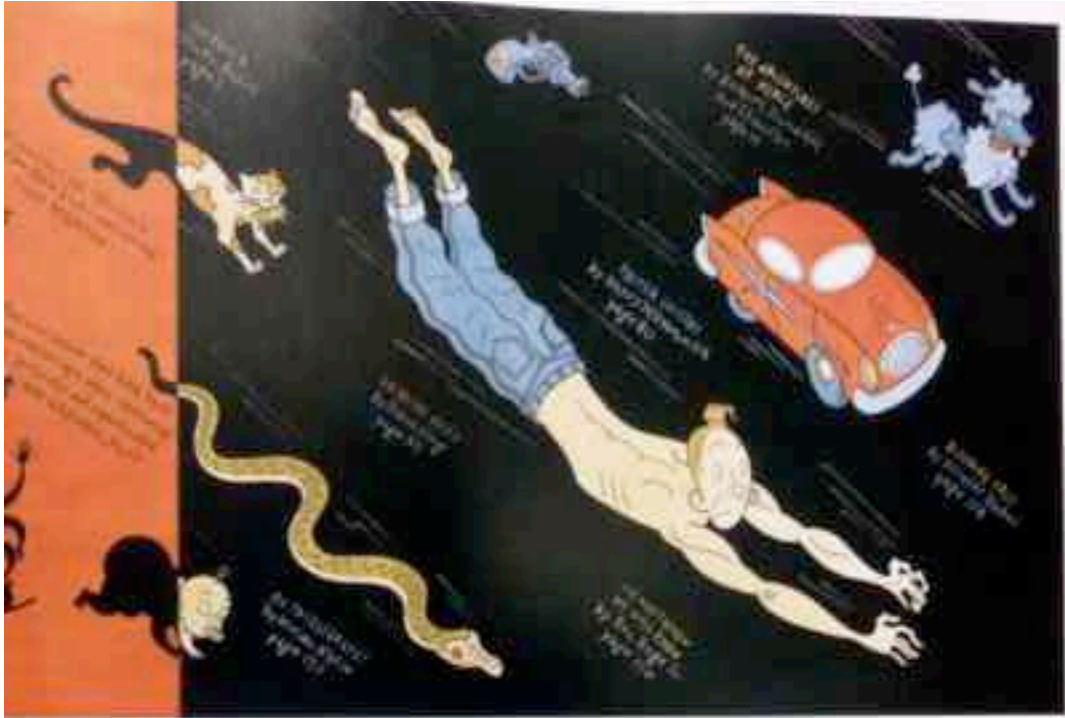


4 Next, I think about adding a background. I place clouds, a road and... perhaps something precarious, like a cliff.



5 I notice that the cliff looks a little bit like fabric hanging on a rack. Neckties? I draw the pointed ends and fill in the patterns.

This is how an image evolves. "A silhouetted monkey on a bicycle, headed for a cliff of decorative neckties" was not my original vision. Such ideas may occur now and then, but they're generally too complex, too elaborate to visualize all at once. More often, drawings like this arrive in stages.



joining two bags

Here's another way to think about connecting different things and building fresh ideas. Imagine that you have one bag containing x , and another containing y . Let's assume that these two items don't really go together at least not in any obvious way. You need to go beyond logic and into the world of strange, creative associations. What if x was huge and y was tiny? What if y was swallowing x ? What if xy were combined into a single shape? What if x was background and y was foreground? Joining two bags is simply a metaphor for evolving an idea out of two things that seem incompatible using experimentation and creative play.



These two different outputs might be labeled "subject" and "fact," but you could also call them "contents" (the subject) and "context" (the framework or environment).



Inside this drawing is a book I co-authored with distinguished biologist Hubert Horgan. Its purpose was to experimentally show that complex living systems are themselves made of simpler living systems (cells) and that everything we know is made of all that's in it.

As a technical drawing, such as this, I like to make the elements discrete. Instead of drawing generic people, I put them in nineteenth-century clothes. The face is the well-known profile of the late Roman hero Alexander the Great.

From *The Mind of the Machine*
David Koehn, *Harvard University*

Making the Familiar New

One of my favorite words is *contrast*. I like it because I can never quite grasp it. It means something like “how the parts fit together to make a whole.” Drawing a strange idea often means presenting familiar content in some new and unsuspected context. That is, the drawing has realistic parts, but they’re put together in an unconventional way. This fresh look stretches the viewer’s imagination.

Unlikely Mixing

Make a list of five objects (including people or animals), such as clock, eggplant, clown, etc. Then make a list of five locations or environments, such as junkyard, ocean, kitchen, etc. Choose one item from each list and combine them into a single drawing in some unusual way. You may want to make several preparatory sketches to work out your idea. Strive for some believability in your final drawing. Make it look convincing, no matter how absurd the combination of elements.

Optional for the adventurous: Make a list of qualities—adjectives such as soft, smooth, melted, etc. Choose one from this list and one each from the other two. Combine all three elements in one drawing (e.g., put three bags).



Here's another unlikely pairing of content and context. Two elegant dancers in the woods may not seem all that strange, but something about this drawing seems like pure fantasy. I think it's the spotlight.





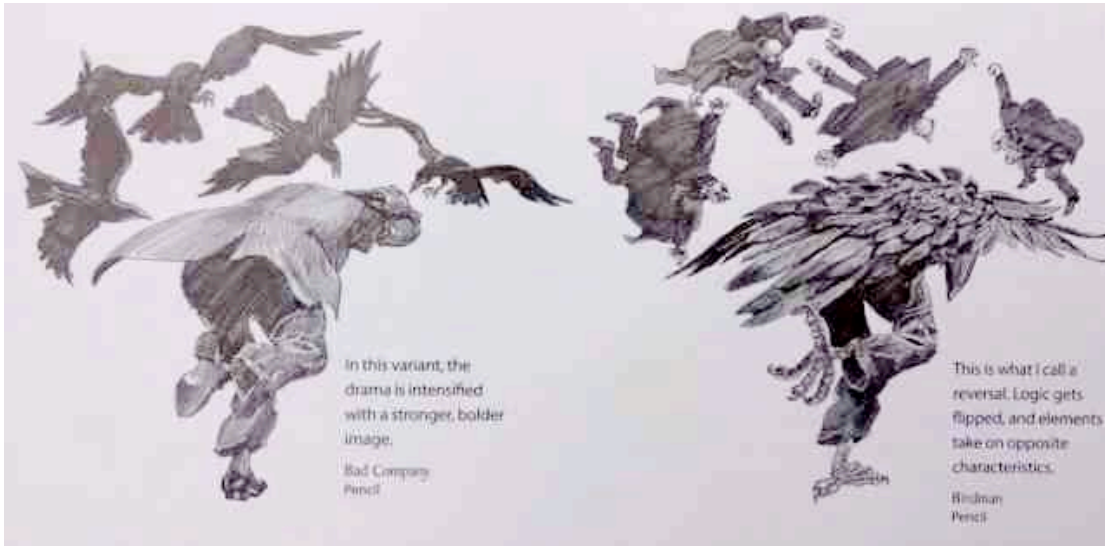
THE ORIGINAL IDEA

This was my original sketch, done years ago. I kept it because I liked its energetic quality, and something appealed to me about birds getting revenge.

CHANGING VIEWPOINTS

A simple way to create a variant is shifting the viewpoint. Picturing how things might look from another viewpoint stretches the imagination.





In this variant, the drama is intensified with a stronger, bolder image.

Bad Company
Pencil

This is what I call a reversal. Logic gets flipped, and elements take on opposite characteristics.

Birdman
Pencil



Radical cropping, reflections and an exotic background combine to suggest an interesting story.

Reflections
Pencil on pebble board



Does the man flee something real, or just his own imagination? The birdlike clouds put this story into a new context.

Killer Clouds
Pencil on pebble board

exercise 21

Variations

Do four different variations of a previous doodle or drawing. As you move from one drawing to the next, consider changing one or more of the following: viewpoint, scale, mood or context. See if you can make each drawing progressively more strange.

GIDON STAFF

Variations on the Face

Gidon Staff draws almost exclusively from his imagination. One of his major themes is the human face—a subject with endless possibilities. He has made hundreds if not thousands of drawings like the ones shown here. While others might see sameness, even repetition, Gidon sees subtle and significant, sometimes even radical differences. True to the spirit of making variations on a theme, he uses each drawing as a springboard to try something new on the next. "I look at one of my face drawings and it gives me ideas, such as a new shading pattern, a stronger expression or even a different kind of hat."

Gidon has a poetic fascination with his theme: "A face has a completeness to it," he says. "It stands by itself, undaunted. When I draw one, I have a feeling of wholeness."



can recognize the transition points where one theme slips into another.

THINGS ON FEET ...



THINGS ON WHEELS ...



YIN/YANG ...



HANDS AS SYMBOLS ...



STRANGE LANDSCAPES ...



THINGS COMING OUT OF THINGS ...



MASKS ...



LIMBER DANCERS ...



DISJOINTED ...



GROUP SHAPES ...



NONCONFORMIST ...



FLIGHT ...



ESCAPE





Eerie, sinister and beautiful, these sci-fi canines were drawn by combining dog images with motorcycle parts.

Mechanical Dogs
RJ Smith

Lighting Effects

Clay modeling helps you appreciate the powerful effects of lighting on the mood of a picture. The photographs below of the head show how different lighting can change a piece from comforting to frightening.

The strongly underlit drawing at right conveys a sense of sorcery and magic. To create the mirror image, I made a tracing of the man's head and then redrew it, flopped, using a light table.

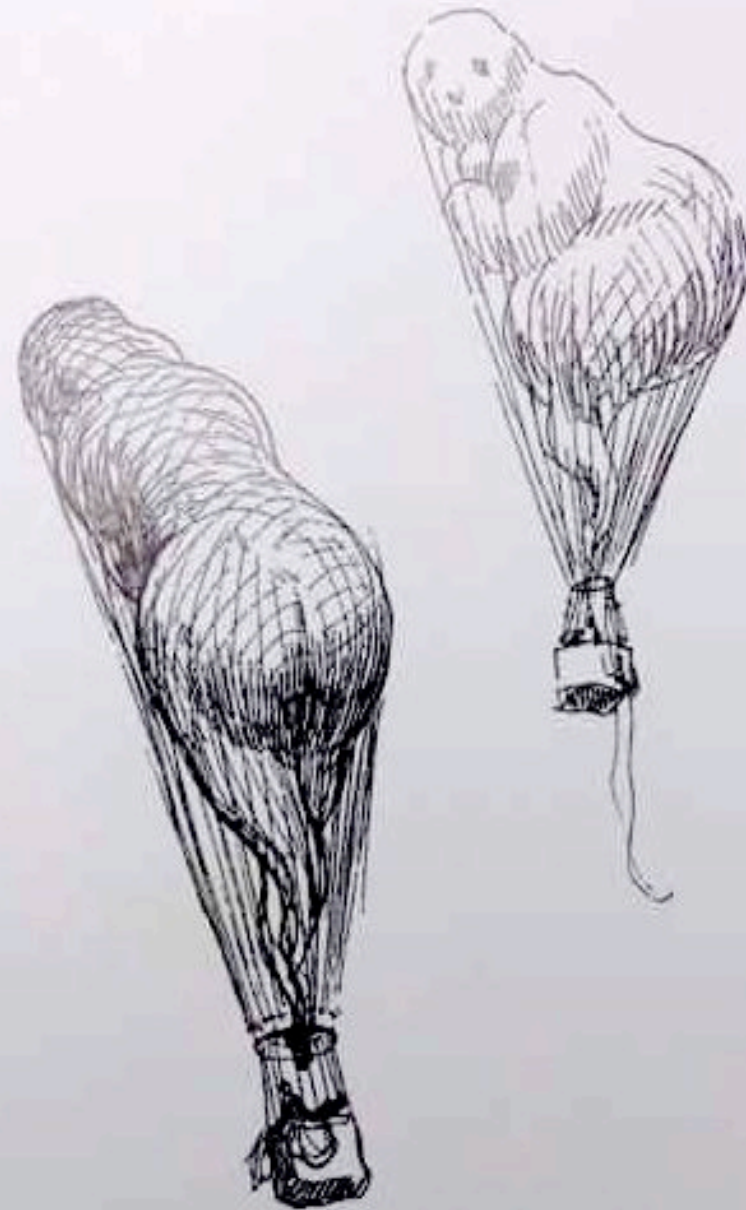






Paradox arises when logic resists what the eye sees. Guy Billout leaves us with a puzzle in this beautifully evocative work. And he adds a sinister touch—a large knife, stuck in the table.

Hein
a ver
of his
A We



Heinrich Kley (1863–1945) combined brilliant and fluid draftsmanship with a very playful spirit. Here, he offers a metaphorical variation on the novelty of his day, hot air balloons.

A Well-Rounded View
Heinrich Kley

stylizing and symbolizing

Symbolizing seems to involve several types of skills—careful observation, understanding the constraints of the materials, and a sense of the essence, to name a few. The ancient Mexicans had a genius for this, especially in their depictions of animals. The lovely creatures of the rainforests and deserts—toads, lizards, tarantulas and, especially, snakes—are all elevated to respected status in this art. The remarkable rattlesnake column, below, right, from Chichen Itza in Mexico, is an inspiring case in point. One normally thinks of snakes as curving forms: undulating, rounded and/or coiled. How can these qualities be conveyed in a stack of rectangular blocks? The Mayans solved this by placing the head on the ground and stacking the blocks directly behind it. Then they balanced an overhanging head (the rattler) on top. My sketch, from a photograph, inspired the fanciful spin-off drawings on the facing page.

When an animal is incorporated into an everyday pot, or a waterpout, it is squashed, stretched or twisted to fit its function, as you can see in these museum sketches of various stylized creatures.



COYOTE

MONKEY JUG



COILED SNAKE



BAT



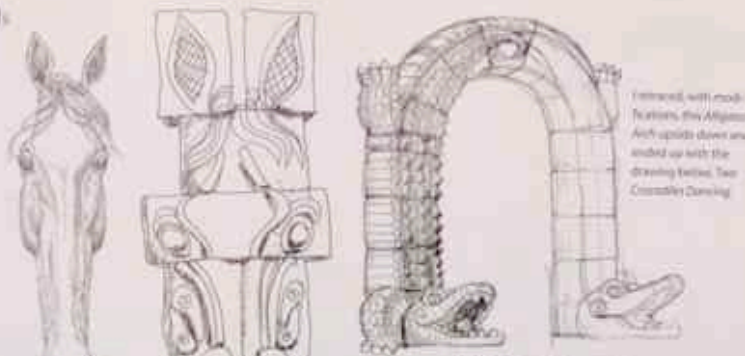
This beautiful rattlesnake column caught the spirit of the creature, although it makes no attempt at real life. I love the rhythmic designs in the blocks.

Somehow, I wish all the Mayan people along the shores of the world on an alligator's back.

Constraints

This work reminds us of the important role that constraints play on creativity. Constraints often dictate structure. They set boundaries for creative play. The Mayans had to work within the sizes and shapes of the stones they used. In your case, it might be the drawing tool, the time available, or certain choices you make regarding what your drawing is about. For example, as I made the spin-off drawings on the facing page, I tried to imagine everything as made of carved stone.

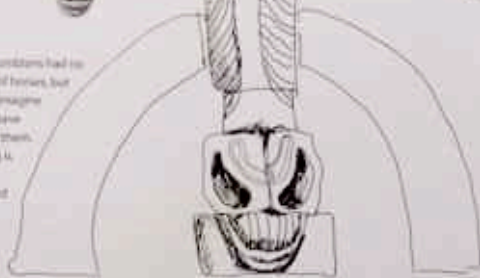
Spin-Offs



I retraced, with modifi-
cations, the Alligator
Arch upside down and
ended up with the
drawing below. Two
Columbian Dancers

EQUUS

The pre-Columbian had no knowledge of horses, but this is how I imagine they might have represented them. This drawing is a spin-off of my elongated horse on page 61.



I like to draw something and then see if I can make it in a new drawing. This practice helps me think in three dimensions.



BUG RIDDLED

A reference to those handy bags of limes.



LIZARD KING

Columbian king in stone with imaginary wall construction.



STONE SCORPION

I copied the pre-Columbian idea of fusing dimensions on the stone. I only need this to be about thirty feet high.

graceful linearity

Artists have always been interested in the graceful curving forms of nature. The artists of the Art Nouveau style in the late 19th century took this interest to new heights. Influenced by Japanese wood block prints, they translated the world around them into flat patterns with fluid, undulating lines and radical cropping. Art Nouveau was a short-lived but richly creative movement that influenced painting, posters, jewelry design, architecture, furniture and typography.

Here I have focused mainly on the linear qualities of the style. When you draw objects in pure line—especially objects that have soft, blurry edges, like clouds, mist, water or fabric—they are transformed into almost abstract designs. This opens up new opportunities for playful inventions.

As before, I start with simple invention sketches, shown below. As I begin to get a feeling for the style, ideas emerge.

"POSTERIZING"

The Nouveau artists found that poster art was a perfect medium for expressing their interest in flat design, sweeping composition and experimental typography.

See a poster by Toulouse-Lautrec



ROMANTIC IMAGES

Art Nouveau focused on the female. Its themes were romantic, and its compositions were sensuous and graceful.

See a poem by Louis-Bédou

STYLIZED LINE

Almost every element is drawn in a controlled, graceful line. Here we see decorative possibilities even in steam.

See an advertisement for coffee by Alphonse Mucha

FROZEN ACTION

The careful, linear qualities of this style tend to make the subjects appear "frozen" in mid-action.

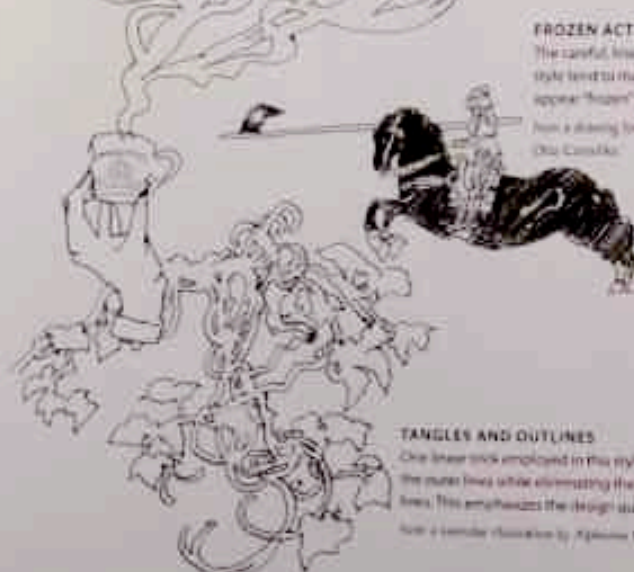
See a drawing for a cigar box by Carl Otto Conziska



NOT-QUITE-SYMMETRY

The Nouveau artists liked to play with symmetry when approaching and then veering away from it.

See a drawing of a chair by Antoni Gaudí



TANGLES AND OUTLINES

One linear trick employed in this style is drawing the outer lines while eliminating the overlapping lines. This emphasizes the design qualities.

See a female illustration by Alphonse Mucha

Spin Offs

LINEAR MOVEMENT

These spins
illustrate how
to work like
human figures,
and I began to play
with this, coming up
with the *Look At*
chapter on right.



NOT-QUITE-SYMMETRY

The previous sequence led me to the idea of making a decorative border. I simply drew the shapes, connecting them as if they were a single piece of cloth. Symmetry has a way of making otherwise chaotic elements look orderly. I used the light table method on paper 8-8 to duplicate the halves, but as you can see, I made the second half slightly different.



EXTREME NOUVEAU

I drew this Art Nouveau doorway, at left, from a photograph. Once again, I drew only half of it and then flipped the drawing for the other half.

Then I decided to make a not quite symmetrical version, at right. Here I introduced differences between the two sides, exaggerating and distorting as I drew. For me, the version captured the runaway expression sometimes found in the Nouveau style.



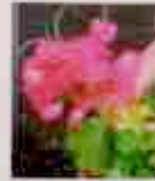
flattening and posterizing

Many of the Nouveau artists liked to adapt their decorative style to drawing flowers and insects. Even though they exercised these subjects in various lines and flat patterns, they probed themselves on careful and accurate observation. This is fertile ground for abduction. Draw things in the natural world accurately, but at the same time, emphasize the abstract design. Draw your flowers and insects as if they were posters. Eliminate or subdue the modeling and shading, keeping your forms within well-defined outlines, then try cropping radically—that is, zoom in close, boldly clipping off important objects in your picture.



Here's an example of radical cropping. We see only the center of the flower. And the butterfly is partially out of the picture. Everything looks suspended in time and space.

Strong black outlines create a "cut-out" effect, as if the flowers were laid down flat. This makes us aware of the background (the "in-between" shapes) as well as the flower shapes.



In the photograph, the background grain is nearly invisible. In the drawing, it almost becomes part of the flowers. This has a flattening effect set against the simple black background.



When you adopt certain features of a style, you can stretch these features over different kinds of subject matter. Try drawing people and animals with these constraints in mind. Then make spin-offs of these drawings. Your results may look nothing like Art Nouveau—which is just as it should be. The style is just a starting point. Creativity then leads on itself. Ideas generate ideas.



FROZEN ACTION

The lines of Art Nouveau tend to curve and flow. The creator immerses by directing the eye around the picture. But this movement is often countered by a precise, almost mechanical line that leads to frozen and frozen the image, as you can see at right in the drawing for *Dev*. Compared with the earlier preliminary sketch, about these cats seem almost glued to the tree. This is partly due to the way the cat and branch shapes are fused together within a single outline (see detail). The effect is like a piece of hand-copied jewelry as if cats and tree were all made of the same stuff.



DETAIL



TANGLES

Here are some spin-off drawings in which I kept the line weight even and refined as much (or less) detail as possible. It's fun to draw—in pure line—all of the Nouveau inspired elements, such as cloth, ribbons, masks, tails and ears. Drawing like these take patience—but to make an action flowing sketch, or art, and then to patiently take it onto a fresh sheet. Some of these took four tries.



pattern, movement, detail

Much of the Nouveau style is about keeping the eye busy. These artists gravitated to subjects that offered graceful, flowing lines and intricate, curvy shapes.

It's fascinating how a change in what you view automatically shifts what you notice in the world. When I began thinking about Art Nouveau, I began noticing decorative railings and ornate architectural details. I paid attention to hair patterns and growing vines. I stopped to pick up dead insects. I've had a studio in an old school building for twenty-five years, and—for the first time—I really looked at the floor grate just inside the entrance, shown at right. I even photographed and then traced it in the small drawing at right, below.



FLOOR GRATE



CLEOPATRA

A critic once described Art Nouveau as "spaghetti hair." I like to do this kind of intricate patterning. Another Nouveau feature is making a distinct contrast between the soft tonality of the face and the linearity of the hair and ornaments. (This face was drawn from the clay model on page 107.)



DECORATIVE HEAD

SWIRLING

This is a phone doodle I was thinking of dragons like water reflections, or possibly flames. It just happened to turn into a face.



DRAGONFLY WING

FADING

This tapered dragonfly wing that I found seemed to fit well with a life drawing I had done years ago. This is another example of not-quite symmetry.



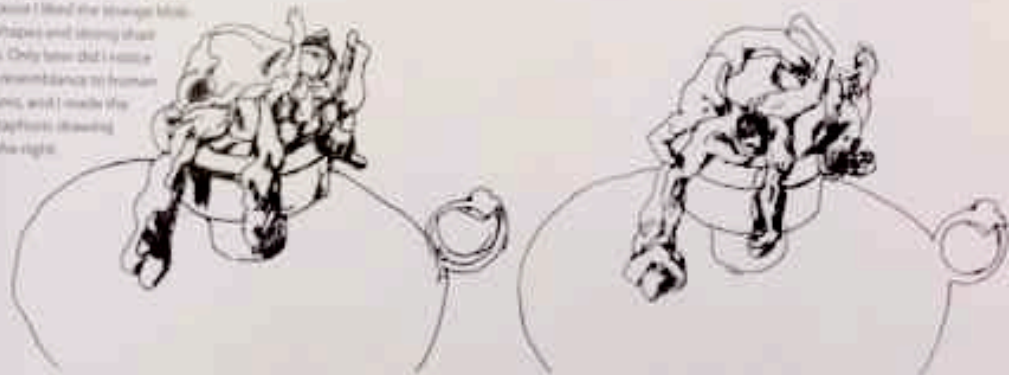


SWIRLING SHAPES

A popular Neoclassical device is to envelop figures with a cape or fabric to enhance the feeling of movement. I did this first drawing to create a feeling of intensity and passion. In the second spin-off drawing, I emphasized the abstract flow and quality of the shapes.

WAXEN FIGURES

I drew this melted wax-like figure because I liked the strange look of shapes and strong sharp lines. Only later did I realize the resemblance to human figures, and I made the metaphorical drawing on the right.



STYLIZING AND DECORATING



FIGURES THAT MOVE

These drawings by Lavinia Strada are about movement. The line is elegant, fluid and dynamic; the figures come toward and stretch. While these were not consciously done in the Neoclassical style, they embody its spirit.

simplifying and abstracting

It is not always clear what inspires us. Sometimes it's something entirely new. Sometimes it's seeing something that has been in the background for many years suddenly come forward, as if you are seeing it for the first time. This happened for me on a trip to Morocco when I happened to visit an oriental rug maker. Here are a few of the ideas I got from that visit:

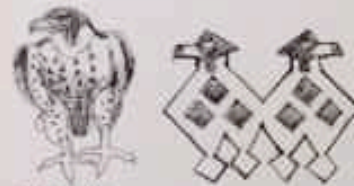
1. Symmetry can be beautiful.
2. What appears to be purely decorative can also be spiritual.
3. Within a somewhat rigid format, a tremendous range of creative solutions can emerge.
4. Symbolic meaning can be hidden inside an abstract design.
5. Over time, designs tend to cross-pollinate. Indigenous motifs migrate from one region to another, like a story passed from one teller to another.
6. By simplifying and making objects geometric, the artist can make them disappear into a larger pattern.

On these pages I illustrate how naturalistic objects can evolve into pure decorative designs.



PERSIAN RUG, LATE 19TH CENTURY

Courtesy Fred Fox Oriental Rugs (Dallas, New Hampshire), and San Francisco, California



REPEATING



MAKING GEOMETRIC



STACKING



PROGRESSIVE STYLIZATION

It's uncertain where this design—called a *baten*—originated. Some claim it came from Kashmir, inspired by the wind-blown cypress tree. Others claim it found its roots in an endless variety of decorative interpretations, and in widely dispersed geographical regions.

REVERSING AND MIRROR-IMAGING



FRAGMENTING

Extracting elements and spreading them apart leads to fabric or design.

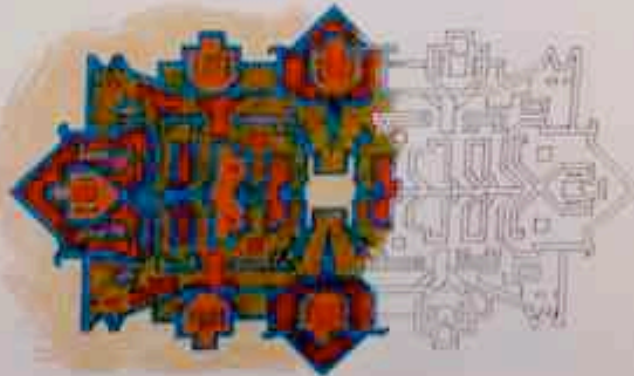


Here I've combined the various "pieces" shown on these pages into a single integrated design. I recommend the sort of playing with pattern. And I especially recommend it for those who prefer working individually. It's a good way to appreciate the role that shape plays in picture organization.

The design was first drawn with a fine-point marker and then filled in with colored pencils.

Rug designers typically introduce some kind of symmetry. Symmetry reinforces the abstract qualities of a design. Here we have symmetry in four directions. Notice how the man on horseback is clearly "lost" in the design.

Much of this kind of work can be done with a computer, but doing it by hand with the aid of a light table is more in the spirit of the carpet weaver. And it's always good to develop those fine motor skills in your drawing hand.



making the familiar strange

Shortly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the tribal weavers of the region began turning out carpets with a new kind of imagery. In the place of floral patterns and abstract designs, they wore armored personnel carriers, tanks and helicopters. The first time I saw one of these, I was amazed. A timeless art form was suddenly converted into a current events medium. Leaving aside the tragedy of this particular war, and of wars in general, the idea that a traditional form might be so freely separated from its roots took me completely out of my box.

The notion that content (the subject of a work of art) and context (in this case, the medium and method of execution) can be detached and remixed in unexpected combinations might challenge our sense of appropriateness. The artist wants to be respectful of venerable traditions. And we also want to create. The Afghan war rugs offer a kind of permission to use the carpet format in experimental ways.

I began making "carpet" drawings, abducting from some of my previous work. I reinvigorate the subjects, but this time using an Oriental rug template. This usually meant creating a center element, called a medallion, adding corner elements, called spandrels, and finishing with a decorative border.



AFGHAN WAR RUG
Country: Oriental Rug
Review: www.rugart.com

CUTTING A RUG

A tribute to the music and dance of the 1930s. That's Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in the medallion.





PANIC IN THE ABSTRACT

I made this design from my drawing *Panic* on page 725. I simply made the shapes geometric and filled them in with flat colors. Adding color is always interesting because you never know just how it will turn out.

These little secondary shapes are drawn geometrically.



This tiny outline section in the border is several planes.



These abstract border shapes are actually stylized figures.



The source of the design below, *Conely Mountain*, is a drawing in Chapter 5, *Scenes of Mountain* (last and page 725). Here is another example of symmetry in four directions.



decorating

Years ago I made a series of drawings illustrating the verses of *The Rubáiyát* by Omar Khayyám, translated by Edward Fitzgerald. While they do not exactly use the carpet format, they are clearly inspired by oriental rugs and other Middle Eastern decorative elements, such as tiles, railings and fabrics. I wanted to retain the patient, ornate quality of carpets or tapestry but with a freer, more spontaneous line. To get the right quality, I found



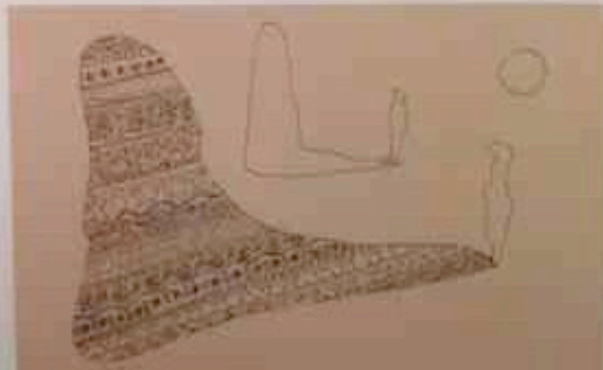
At, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we lie unto the Dust descend;
Dust lies Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
Stern Witne, sees long, some longer
and — some brief.

some turkey leathers which I turned into drawing quills. The ink line seems to almost draw itself. In a little more than a week, I made several dozen of these drawings. I still like to draw this way occasionally—first creating big looser shapes, then patiently filling them with decoration.

I can't say that I fully understand *The Rubáiyát*; but I have always been attracted to its positive affirmation of life and its stoic acceptance of death. It seems a paradox that as we embrace either of these, the other becomes more available to us.



Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring
The White Gown of Repentance Ring;
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly—and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.



Spin and reel, allowe about below,
To weav'ng knit a Magic Shadow show,
Play the Box when Candle is the Sun,
Round which we Pharos's Figure come and go.



To the Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Glory with-Mien for Phantasies,
Wishes and other moods, and whims,
and toys,
And live by over-top in the Great Way.

With them the Secret of Wisdom did I lose,
And with my own hand labour'd it to grow;
And this was all the harvest that I reap'd—
Come the storm, and the Wind I go.



Think, in this butter of Conscience
Where Goodness grows as often with Night and Day,
How Golden when Suffer with his Plunge,
About his Hour or two, you need no say.



exercise 36

Mining Culture

This project has three stages:

1. **Inspection:** Choose a distinct art style or art movement that interests you. Visit, if possible, a museum that has a collection of works in that style. Make a series of sketches of, and notes about, objects that please you.
2. **Spin-Off Sketches:** Make a series of free-association sketches from your museum drawings. These should add something new and different, introducing parts and putting them in other contexts. Make them personal and playful—and increasingly verbal.
3. **Final Drawings:** Take three or four of your spin-off sketches and transform them in a way that gives them a "family resemblance." They should be visually related to each other in subject and style.

Allow yourself weeks or even months to complete this project. Put it aside from time to time and just think about it. Your final drawings need not match like the work that originally inspired them. In fact, the degree of difference is actually a good measure of the project's success.



IFLE THEMES ARE OFTEN THE BEST

rik Betendorf enjoys watching everyday objects and architectural subjects. He organizes his art by inventing themes for himself. Each day for a month, for example, he drew a simple tool or wall from his garage or kitchen. He made the drawings on index cards and mailed them as daily cards to a friend. Each one has a title, such as "The Real Jaw" (pliers) or "Wash Day" (watermop set), along with a note about the drawing medium used and sometimes a literary quotation.

DRAW WHAT INTERESTS YOU

John Jeline indulges two of his central passions, drawing and rock climbing, in his fantasy landscapes. Meticulous and patient, these drawings are rooted in real places, but something about them seems otherworldly. The stones seem cut a little too square, the overhangs are a little too extreme, and the angles are too regular. For most of us rocks are rocks, but Jeline is aware of the subtle differences between granite, schist, gneiss and quartzite conglomerate rock. And he is interested in details.

"I have long been intrigued by the fact that when we look out at a scene—if we use our eyes well—we see not [just] a set of broad, generalized shapes but rather the particulars of a scene with astonishing clarity and in all their overwhelming multiplicity. When we look out from a cliff face at the forest below, we see thousands and thousands of individual trees—not just a few paint-like swatches of color. So in these cliff-fantasy drawings, that aspect of vision is also something I am trying to capture—in a sense going back to an earlier, more Renaissance-like awareness and pictorial approach."



choosing a theme

The best themes are the ones that choose you: you simply draw the things that interest you. This is what the writer Joanne Field refers to as "drawing what the eye likes." There will be some subjects—in no matter how strange or eccentric they may appear to others—that just light you up.

The cartoonist Basil Wolverton (1909–1978) was fascinated by the theme of ugliness. His ghouly, macabre drawings of distorted faces are so grotesque they're almost beautiful. Henry Darger (1892–1973) was a self-taught artist and a recluse. As a result of a painful, institutionalized childhood, Darger devoted most of his life to writing and illustrating a fantasy novel about a war between a group of children and adults. Alone in his room, he wrote over 20,000 pages and made hundreds of intricate drawings and murals.

Sometimes the subject itself is less important than the manner in which it is handled. Think of the drawings of Georges Pierre Seurat, in which the edges are all soft and grainy, or the blown-up faces of Chuck Close, in which the grid he used becomes a tool for abstract exploration.

Some years ago I did an odd, idiosyncratic comic strip featuring a brain on two legs. I was interested in capturing the way various parts of our brain are in dialogue and sometimes in conflict. It was a strange idea, and the results often made little sense, even to me. But I enjoyed it—and I learned something about myself in the process.



image-rich themes

I like themes that offer lots of possibilities for imagery. For many years I have made drawings of technology and its effects. I draw images of laboratories, space, war and medical technology, sometimes combined with psychology. I make lots of drawings of people and machines juxtaposed in tension. Because technology impacts almost every aspect of our lives, I am depicting

a struggle that is not entirely conscious. Nor is it easy to summarize.

I even did some of these in terra cotta (bottom, left). I don't always know what the drawings are about, but the series—the theme—has a certain coherence. When I look at them as a group, they seem to convey a unified idea.





self-portraits

If you think you have no compelling idea to explore, you can never go wrong with self-portraits. There are many reasons why self-portraits make a great theme, not the least of which is that the model is always available. Some of the greatest painters turned to self-portraits when they couldn't afford models. Rembrandt painted himself over fifty times during his career. Van Gogh painted himself bandaged shortly after he mutilated his ear. Velázquez, Rubens, El Greco, Goya and others gave themselves cameo roles in large multi-figure works.

Drawing yourself sometimes brings up awkward feelings. Initially you may feel self-conscious and a little intimidated, but once you set up a mirror and start drawing you'll be amazed at how quickly that self-consciousness disappears. And after you

have drawn yourself over and over—in different ways, in different poses, with different expressions—your face begins to seem less like you. It becomes more like a map upon which you can create, which marks the point when you can get imaginative. How can you stretch and bend this image? Are there costumes, hats or even masks you can wear? What about fantasy backgrounds and exotic settings? How about introducing stark and unusual lighting? What kind of story can you tell about yourself?

And self-portraits can be about more than just your own image. Think of the things that reflect you, like an old car that you have kept for years, your cluttered desk or some objects you have collected.



MAKE UNIQUE BACKGROUNDS

These self-portraits by Alex Pinkerton were made to look like tapestries or Persian Miniatures. The exquisite backgrounds are hand-drawn.

ROMANTICIZE

When George Dugan did these self-portraits, he strongly identified with the hero of Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse-Five*. He depicted himself as Billy Pilgrim, an innocent in a dangerous world.



Self-Portrait as Billy Pilgrim I
1970

Self-Portrait as Billy Pilgrim II
1970

Self-Portrait as Billy Pilgrim III
1970



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EXAGGERATE AND DISTORT

Most of us have strong fears about looking ugly or ridiculous. It's time to challenge those fears by deliberately drawing yourself in ways you fear. This helps you get some separation between yourself and your work. It will free you up and allow you to take risks. Robert Kilo, who has written extensively on reading, makes the strong point that "You are not your work. If you think that you are your work, you can't have a relationship with it. It takes two to have a relationship."

Here I've drawn myself in an exaggeratedly genuine mood, being attacked by rubber-stamped ants, and in a meditative moment.



USE IMAGES FROM YOUR CHILDHOOD

Old photographs of yourself—particularly those taken of you as a child—offer rich possibilities for drawing. The snapshots from my own childhood are often grainy and out of focus. I like to capture this quality in my drawings. I also like to dramatize these photos by turning them into movie posters. I give them titles, using the type faces from the posters of the 1950s and 1960s. In some way this captures the larger-than-life fantasy world that I lived in for much of my childhood. That's me as the robot.



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1983
Jan 27th '84



ELIZABETH LAYTON

Drawing the Self and Describing the World

It would be difficult to find a more inspiring story than Elizabeth Layton's. Having endured a thirty-five year struggle with depression, she took a drawing class at age sixty-eight and learned the technique of blind drawing—drawing without looking at the paper. She credited this process with curing her depression and saving her life. She made over 1,000 self-portraits before she died in the spring of 1993—but they are not ordinary self-portraits. These are statements about life, death, love, fear, hunger, loss, war and the numerous other issues that mattered to her.

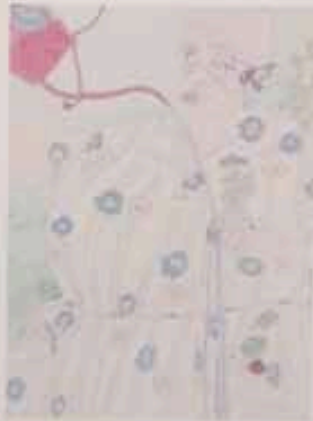


"Her strength is in her principles."

©2004
November 22, 1981

Increasingly, she used her image as a vehicle for expressing these larger themes. As she put it, "The personal is the universal; the universal is the personal. It goes both ways."

In her short fourteen-year career one can trace the complete evolution of the creative artist: discovering a passion, gaining mastery through practice, and then using both mastery and passion to express an ever-expanding vision. Elizabeth Layton's work is in over 200 galleries and museums. Her own words accompany these examples.



"People see you on the street and they're used to you being 'Heh, and one woman came up behind me and said 'You're too fat' and I came home weeping. It really gets to you ... but this drawing is just wearing the flowers."

Ever Which Way
December 14, 1987



"It is told that an old Indian, as his time to die drew near, went out, or was put out, from the teepees to the mercy of the elements. Society tends to overlook the productivity that can continue until a person's death. At the same time, it is the responsibility of the old people to be as productive as they can in whatever ways, for as long as they can. Even a smile is thanks. The rain-bow is color, so the, mean hope. Hope and wisdom go hand-in-hand. Death arrives in on the old people. Not something black and ugly but a sherry crystal softness. The 2200 Indian Pipes, comes from that cluster of herbs, cancer fore-ground, which feed on dead or decaying matter. Each pipe is a ghostlike, waxy white, leafless plant. Each stem bears one bell-shaped flower. The giant looks like the stem and bowl of a clay pipe. They are helpful in that they are nature's way of cleaning up dead or decaying organic matter."

Indian Pipes
April 10, 1988



"I can't
get her
she has
and she
I like to
listen at
her feet
was do
Cutting
July 28,



Suck
Report

68 March

DAVE CREEK

Drawing Wonderland

Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* has inspired a host of visual interpretations. Dave Creek drew these unorthodox versions during an intensive one-month period, as a student at Cal Arts. Working primarily from models, Dave made over 200 drawings of the Alice characters and settings. He wanted to convey the strangeness of the original story, which was darker and spookier than the Disney version he grew up with. These drawings mirror the bizarre dream world that Alice tumbles into.

"My drawing is very spontaneous and improvisational. Although I pay close attention to the model, my work often leans toward the abstract. I incorporate shapes and elements that enrich and extend what I'm observing."



DOWN A STRANGE RABBIT HOLE

This very untypical underground tunnel, complete with stairs and lighting, shows how far the imagination can take an unsuspecting Alice.



FANTASTIC CHAPEAUS!

Only a truly mad hat would do this. The exaggeration of the hat as an object of fascination.





DOWN A STRANGE RABBIT HOLE

This very untypical underground tunnel, complete with stairs and fighting,

ALICE
In a persuasive mood.



THE HOT-5
WHITE RABBIT
Like most of
the time.



THE QUEEN OF HEARTS
Not the loud, screeching type of the John Tenniel
and Disney versions, but a more cunning and
sister type.



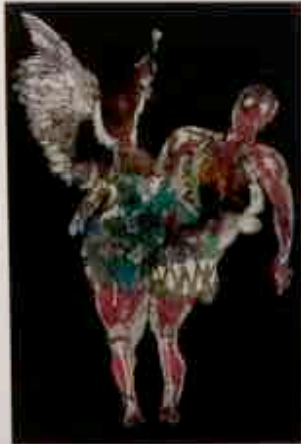
THE ROYAL CHAIR
A throne with barely a
leg to stand on.

DOMAR RUIZ

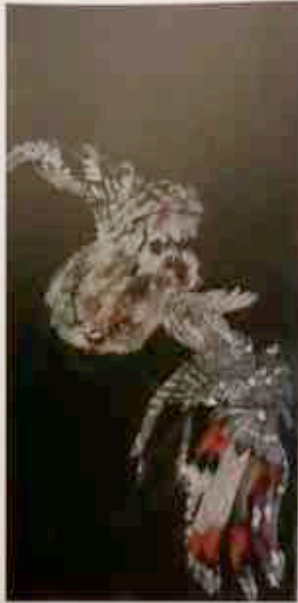
Creatures From Mars

Domar Ruiz sees drawing as an extension of thinking—perhaps even a form of thinking. So when he chose to visualize the creatures for Ray Bradbury's sci-fi collection of stories *The Martian Chronicles*, his first challenge was to eliminate all of his preconceptions about warty, tentacled, bug-eyed Martians and think of something totally new. Fortunately, Bradbury's descriptions are sparse and mostly implied, so Ruiz felt free to create his own visions.

After collecting a good number of animal photos, he started with feathers and feather patterns. From there the creatures just seemed to grow and evolve. He turned the paper frequently, with the result that new fauna appear when many of the drawings are viewed upside down. In the end he made over 300 drawings. They were exhibited at a major Ray Bradbury retrospective in 2005.



CUERPO



AVE



MURCIE



MANTIS

In the book, Bradbury mentions that the Martians used the praying mantis as a form of transportation. He describes these creatures as having crystal-like body plates, which Ruiz captures beautifully with his subtle use of colored chalk.



AZUL



BLINDO

ALAN E. COBER

A Compassionate Witness

Alan E. Cober (1915-1998) was an extraordinary draftsman who won hundreds of awards in both illustration and (he finis art). His distinctive pen-and-ink style was firmly grounded in observation. The drawings on these pages were part of a series he did in old age homes and in the Willowbrook State School for the mentally retarded in New York state. He did them in the 1970s, when people were commonly warehoused in underfunded and sometimes shockingly unsanitary state facilities.

Imagine the level of commitment necessary to take on a project like this—getting permission, establishing trust and rapport with the staff and the residents, overcoming squeamishness about the sights and smells, and, most importantly, sustaining the requisite compassion that allows for truthful work. In portraying his subjects with such unflinching honesty, Cober honored and dignified them. He celebrated them as individuals.

In his drawings of the elderly, Cober often added handwritten commentary or snippets of their dialogue. Some of these are poignant, some amusing. The subject at bottom left says, "... I traveled to many places but when my wife caught me I was stopped. I never traveled again."

On the drawing below, Cober wrote, "This is one of the drawings that comes to life. I love it as I love the old man in it..."

[Handwritten notes in ink, partially illegible]



Cober went to Willowbrook on assignment from *The New York Times*. They needed two drawings he did for them. These drawings were published in a collection called *The Forgotten Series*. Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1977.



STEVE COSENTINO

Making a Big Statement

When New York artist Steve Cosentino was offered studio space in the rooftop apartment of a homeless shelter in exchange for painting some murals in the building, he jumped at the opportunity. He spent several years decorating the building with city street scenes and large portraits of the residents—a total of fifteen murals in all. Cosentino got to know many of the residents personally, teaching some of them to draw and employing others as assistants on his projects. When Cosentino learned that the building was being torn down and the homeless were being evicted, he decided to make a statement.

Cosentino used the grid system to transfer and expand a small portrait image onto the 65' x 35' (20cm x 11m) rooftop. He created a grid of five-foot squares to scale up his original photograph. For his color palette Cosentino collected and sorted hundreds of pieces of discarded clothing from the shelter's clothing room. Then he nailed them in place with roofing nails. What emerged—visible from the taller surrounding buildings in midtown Manhattan—was a massive portrait of a homeless man. He titled it, in large letters, *Human Being*.



USING THE GRID

Steve gridded off the rooftop five-foot squares with chalk; this matched a grid of one-inch (2.5cm) squares that he placed over his drawing.



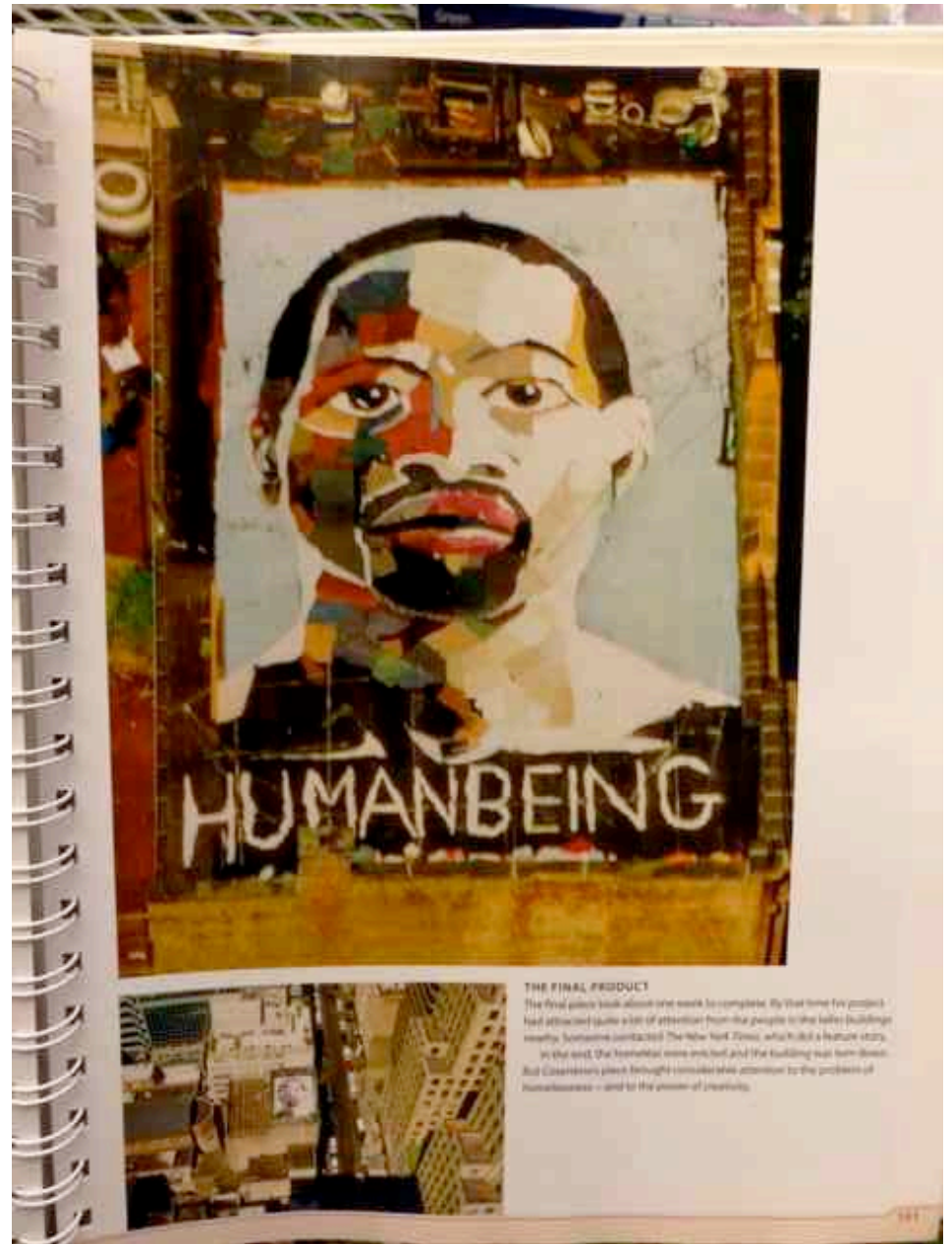
ADDING THE COLOR

Finally he began putting the clothes in place, tacking them down with roofing nails. This was a largely intuitive process, as he had no way of stepping back and looking at his work. Notice how the air conditioning units look so prominent in this view, all but disappear when viewed from above.



TRANSFERRING THE DRAWING

Next he transferred the drawing of the face, square by square, using white wash to fill in the main shapes.



THE FINAL PRODUCT

The final piece took almost one week to complete. By that time the project had attracted quite a bit of attention from the people in the taller buildings nearby. Someone contacted *The New York Times*, which had a feature story. In the end, the homeless were evicted and the building was torn down. But Cosentino's piece brought considerable attention to the problem of homelessness—and to the power of creativity.





THE PACK INSTINCT



THE LIFEGUARD



SUNNY DAY



THE VET EXAM



I LIKE STICKS



DOGS LIKE JOBS



GREETINGS



FRIENDSHIP



BECAUSE THEY CAN

MAYA LIN

Envisioning a Memorial

Maya Lin was a twenty-year-old Yale architecture student when she learned of a competition to design a Vietnam War Memorial to be located in Washington, D.C. She and a small group of graduate students had been studying funeral architecture—monuments erected to honor the dead. So when the competition was announced, she was immersed in the history of the subject. She understood at a deep level the purpose and power of such memorials. Here she describes the moment her conception occurred to her.

"It was while I was at the site that I designed it. I just sort of visualized it. It just popped into my head. Some people were playing Frisbee. It was a beautiful park. I didn't want to destroy a living park. You use the landscape. You don't fight with it. You absorb the landscape. . . . When I looked at the site I just knew I wanted something horizontal that took you in, that made you

feel safe within the park, yet at the same time reminding you of the dead. . . . I thought about what death is, what a loss is. A sharp pain that lessens with time, but can never quite heal over. A scar. The idea occurred to me there on the site. Take a knife and cut open the earth, and with time the grass would heal it. As if you cut open the rock and polished it."

Lin's drawings for the project are as remarkable in their simplicity as the design itself. The shape, widest at the center and tapered at either end, acts as a visual record of the war. Her idea was to display the names of the dead in chronological order, but in her sketches, she makes no attempt to show the inscriptions or any of the trees, people and background elements commonly included in architectural renderings. Just the black shape of the memorial wall, surrounded by the muted color of the pasture—striking, daring and simple.



Photo: The National Park Service



Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Student Presentation
 Pencil on paper, 22 1/2" x 17 1/2" (1985) • Maya
 Located at the Yale Community Art Gallery, Courtyard, Courtyard, Courtyard, Courtyard



Pencil on paper, 22 1/2" x 17 1/2" (1985) • Maya
 Courtesy: Maya Lin Studio



Courtesy: Maya Lin Studio



Pencil on paper, 22 1/2" x 17 1/2" (1985) • Maya
 Courtesy: Maya Lin Studio



A LITERAL AND METAPHORICAL TRINITY

The red clouds are reflected in the black water, joined by some of the 58,000 inscribed names of the American men and women who died or remain missing. The names are arranged chronologically starting with 1950—the year of the first draft. The first name appears at the bottom of the wall and at the top 1970.

Courtesy: Maya Lin Studio

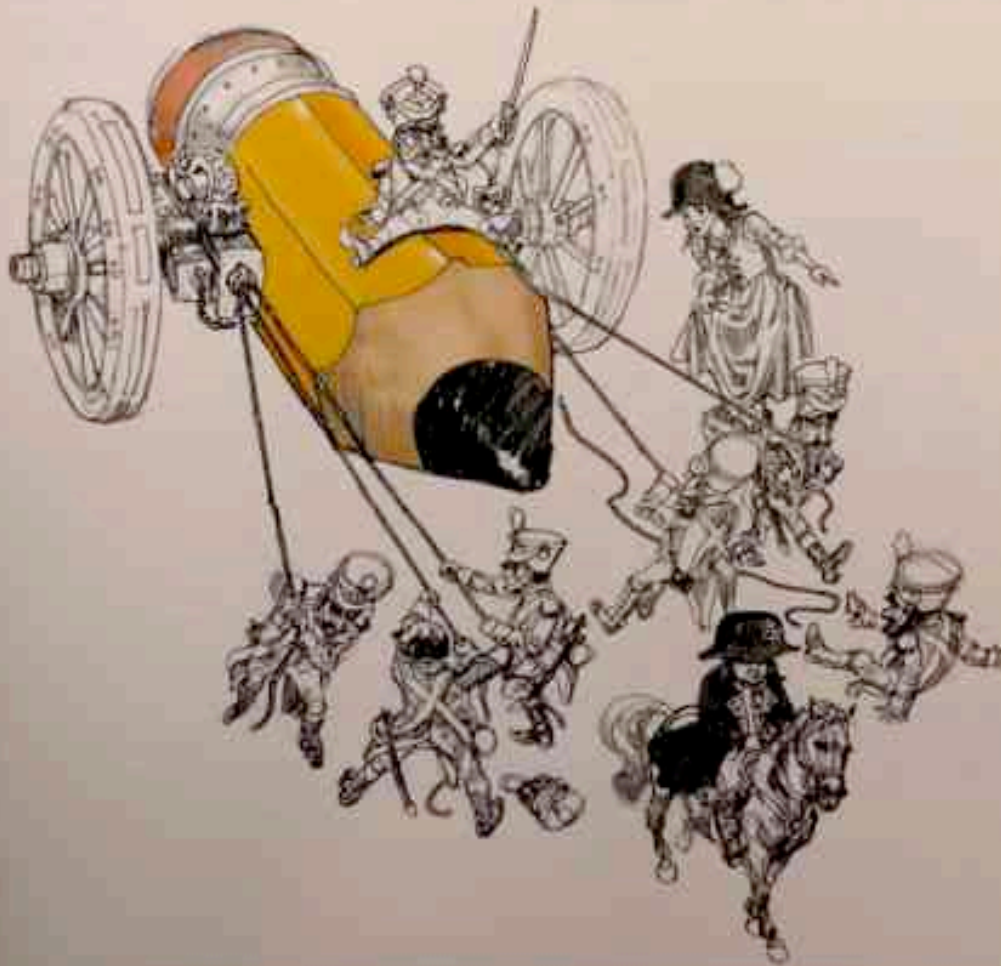
drawing conclusions

According to the poet David Whyte, "At the end of your life, the only thing your soul wants to know is not whether you were good, or successful, but whether the life you led was *your* life. Were the choices you made *your* choices . . . were they *your* failures?" And, we could add, "Were they *your* drawings?"

Who are you? Why are you here? What really matters? If there are answers to such questions, I doubt they are found in language. More likely, the answers will reveal themselves in the experience of being fully engaged. This is when "you" (that is, all

of your ideas about who you are) disappear. This is when you are most yourself, most alive.

This is why you and I love to draw. We discover ourselves this way—by doing things we didn't know we could do, expressing that which we don't fully understand. Begin without knowing the ending. Fail—and exploit the failure. These are the keys to drawing with imagination. And, one suspects, they are also keys to the experience of aliveness.



the power of themes

The examples in this chapter should make clear to you the beautiful, kinetic and reciprocal relationship between the artist and the theme. The artist chooses and evokes the theme. The theme inspires and energizes the artist.

A good theme is heuristic—one drawing gives you ideas that lead to another. When you work in a series, the perennial question "What shall I do next?" has a ready answer: a variation on the last drawing. Make it alike, but different.

As we have seen from the examples in this chapter, everyone has a unique combination of interests—a unique point of view. (You might say that's what we are: a unique point of view.) We bring this point of view to life in the themes we choose and the way we execute them.

exercise 37

Exploring a Theme

Do a series of drawings on a single theme; make them alike visually as well as conceptually. In other words, create a unified look to this work, so that if you displayed the pictures, they would appear to belong together. Choose a theme that you can generate some passion about—something that will hold your interest over time. If after some thought, a theme doesn't occur to you, use the list below to generate the plots. You can take a theme directly from the list, or you can spin off from it. You'll notice that the list contains not only different kinds of subjects (snails, circus, etc.), but also different kinds of approaches and methods (overlays, shape mergers, etc.). These latter are "meta-categories." They would apply just as easily to any subject. Things can get interesting when you combine categories—for example, a subject (musicians) and an approach (puzzle pieces). So as you scan the list, look for possible combinations. As you work, display the drawings, and leave them up a while. You can learn a lot by studying your work over time.

HATCH BOOKS BACKS OF HEADS BOOTS CHARLES KINGS FOUR PEOPLE SLEEPING HIDDEN IMAGES SHADOWS
MYTHOLOGY AIDS PEOPLE SKINNY PORTRAIT EXAGGERATED EXPRESSIONS ROCK PATTERNS DREAMS VIBRANT
WEATHERED BARKS FADING & FADING TURKEYS OBJECTS MUSHROOMS FRICTION ACTION ARTS EYE VIEW CLOUDS
DEPICTED BY MUSIC UNITS HEADS HYBRIDS & CHIMERAS MAPS EXPLOSIONS WAVE SHAPES UNUSUAL
TEARS MIDDLES PEOPLE ON THE BEACH FRIENDSHIP STUCK TOGETHER LIGHTS INFINITE REVERIES MAPS OF CITIES
CROSS SECTIONS & CRANPLAS MIRROR IMAGE SNAIL SENSATIONS REPETITION WITH VARIATION SKULLS & SKELLINGS
BERRY OUTLINES TRANSFORMATIONS CIRCLES CHICKENS DRAWINGS FOR AND SUTURES SYMBOLIC FROM COMPLIMENTS
FIXATING THINGS EXTREME PERSPECTIVE SOCIETY & POOP WOLVES FAMILY CITIES CLAY PATTERNS HILLS & PLACES
FLOWERS TONGUE THINGS COSMETIC ANIMALS (INSPIRED BY LOVE) REPETITION YOUR OLD DRAWINGS ORGAN BLOOD
ARMORED TOYS ISTRINE ZIGZAGS MASCAL TIGERS TRASH BARS & CROWNS CUSTOMER SEQUENCES LADDER
CARICATURES SYMMETRY REFLECTIONS METAL REVEREND NEWS PAPER THE MEXICAN AMERICAN BIRD & TYRUS GAMES
RECORDED DRAPES PRIMITIVE PROGRESSIVELY ABSTRACT THINGS HISTORICAL MOMENTS DELEGATION SINGLETTS
KALEIDOSCOPE STRANGE REFLECTIONS RIDGES HORN SCENES BOOTS RHYTHMIC LINES SHIPIN CONTEXT PORTRAIT
FOURER CHARTS BIRDS NIGHTMARES NOSTALGIC STORY MYSTIC DRAMAS EDGE OF HOPE MOUNTAINS IN DATE
EVENTS FROM CHILDHOOD OTHER THING ALIAS WITH TOKKI & LOST MASCAL GEMMETRY PAPER TRIP LIKE PEOPLE
HUNGRY BEAUTY LOOK THINGS MADE OF SMALL THINGS DANCING OPPORTS WATTLE SCENES WUTHER & CHILD ADD ON
PREDIABLE CIRCLE OPTICAL ILLUSIONS SACRED FIRE & ICE PHASE PUNCH FOUR EXISTING LADDER PER SELF PORTRAITS
EXAGGERATED KNOCKING TOP STEPS JOY SCENES ANCHORAGES DRAPY WHEELS DISORDER (HYPER) EXPRESSIONS
BARBER SHOP BOB TECH ELEGANCE TRAIL SCENES INTERVIEW BIRD & BIRD GAZE FEEL EXTREME FORESHORTING
SINGING MULTIPLE COATLES THIRAL STAR CONTRASTS BEHINDING WITH ASSOCIATION COVER SHOP CHAFFIN
WOODS & WOODS CONSTRUCTION MACHINERY MAPS PATTERNS ARTISTE CARO BILLS & BARS EVOLUTION BOOTS
SYMMETRY NEGATIVE DRAPES UNDERNEATH LADY AIRPLANE WATER & DISORDER ENTWORN MEMORABLE RECALLED
EAR SCULLS LANTERNY SHOWN MIXING CONNECTIONS WANTS ON LIPS FANGLER NOT STRANGE SCAL PLAY MAPS
ILLUSTRATED POETRY (OTHER) IMPROBABLE TEXTURES KAKE FEEL FERAL DESIGN UNUSUAL (JUNGLE) THE HUMAN BODY
MYSTICALEX HIGHWAYMAN MAMMOOTH CONNECTIONS WAVE WOLVES/WEATHER BASKING PEOPLE COLLAGE COMPETITION
WALKING PUPPETS SHARSHEN HAN POTTERS BUCK & BULL PATTERN DRONES UNDER LIFE EXPRESSIONIST SCENES
WORLDWIDE CONNECTIONS SIMPSON'S BEZELING LADYBUTTS KANGAROO DRUPPLE STEWARDI GIBBERISH WICKED PETS W



Medieval Fair



Figure and Ground