

DRAW!

Welcome to Draw!

This pdf. has been designed to accompany the Draw! online resource which can be found at www.accessart.org.uk.

The ideas within this resource are based upon teaching which took place in four venues in Cambridge: Museum of Classical Archaeology, Kettle's Yard, The Fitzwilliam Museum and Cambridge University Department of Architecture.

The ideas are directed at adult learners but can easily be adapted to all ages. The resource splits the act of drawing into two distinct parts which are explored as follows:

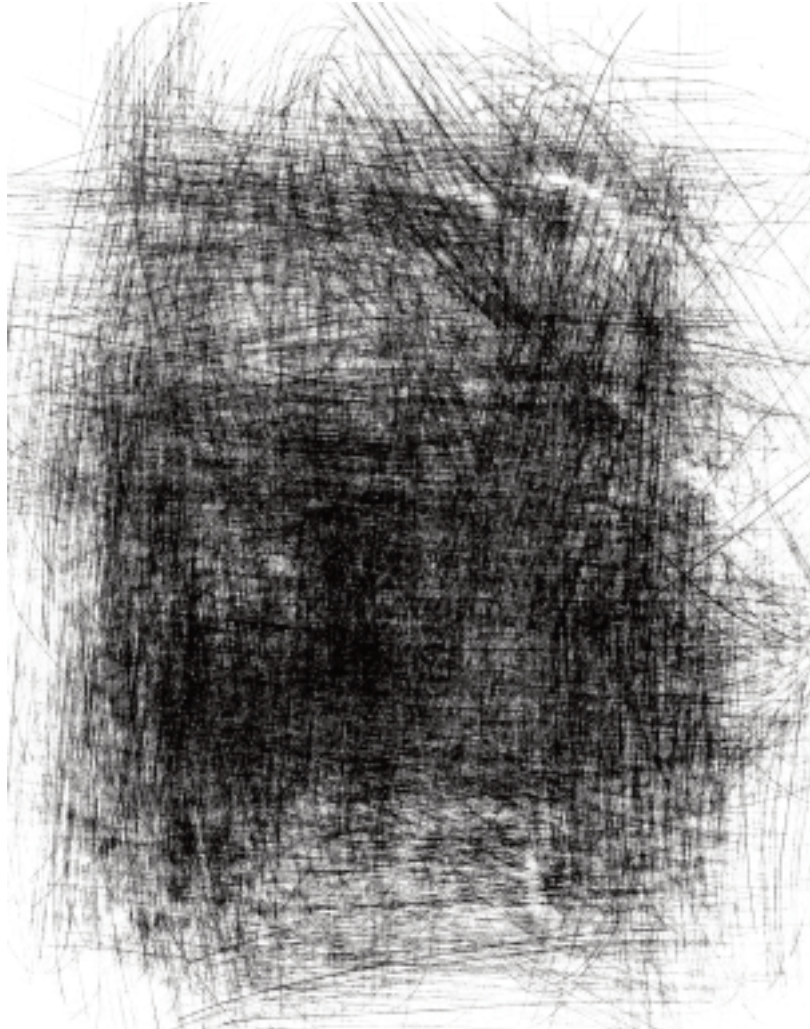
Part One; Seeing, thinking and being inspired:

1. *What is a drawing?*
2. *Believing what you see*
3. *The speed of the drawing*
4. *Learning to see the outline*
5. *Appreciating solidity*
6. *Learning to see space*
7. *Learning to see relationships*
8. *Learning to see planes*
9. *Appreciating surfaces*
10. *Remembering to walk*

Part Two; Making the drawing:

1. *Warming up*
2. *Being quick*
3. *Be noisy before you are quiet*
4. *Explode your drawing*
5. *What size is a drawing?*
6. *What shape is a drawing?*
7. *Making mistakes work for you*





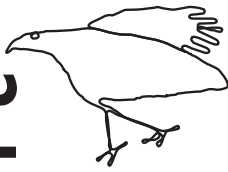
**Part One;
Seeing, thinking and being inspired**

1. What is a drawing?

At its most basic, a drawing is nothing more than a series of marks made on a surface by one human being, which another human being can understand.

We can all draw - we do so naturally. When we are children, we make marks before we can write. It's equally instinctive for us to try and understand marks made by others. Drawing can take a number of forms, no form more "correct" or "artistic" than another. As we get older, and come to drawing for a second time, it's easy to forget how simple and pleasurable drawing can be.

Take a moment to think about what the word "drawing" means to you. Maybe you can allow yourself to "stretch" the meaning of the word drawing: how loose might marks on a page be for you to still define it as a "drawing"?



2. Believing what you see



Drawing is about forgetting what you think you know, and believing what you see. Never assume you know what the object you are drawing looks like. Take your time before you begin to draw, and make sure you are really looking - try seeing the object as if for the first time.

Exercise: Find an object you are really familiar with. Put the object in front of you, then close your eyes, and imagine the object in your minds' eye. Try and see its colour, form, texture, scale... Then open your eyes and look at the object in front of you. How does it look? Try and spend two minutes (or longer) just looking at the object, examining it in great detail. Two minutes might seem like a long time, but don't cheat. Then close your eyes, and imagine the object in your minds eye again, this time in much greater detail.

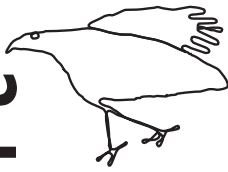
3. The speed of the drawing

Speed might not be a word which you associate with drawing. But infact when you become frustrated with your drawing, it might be because the speed with which you are looking at the object, and the speed with which you are drawing, are not well matched. Your hand might be moving to draw before your eye has even seen.

Exercise: Practise slowing down the speed at which you look. When you think you've slowed your looking down, slow it down still further. It should be painstakingly slow! Then, pick up a pencil and start drawing at exactly the same speed as you are looking. Your pencil should move across the paper at the same speed as your eye moves over the object.

Don't worry about what the drawing looks like - concentrate more on how it feels to match the speed of drawing and speed of looking. The end result of the drawing is less important than bringing together drawing and looking as one continuous action, and acknowledging what this feels like. You won't have to draw like this all the time, but try this exercise whenever you feel frustrated about your drawing. Slowing down is good for you!

Tip: Make sure you are near enough to the object which you are drawing. This will enable you to look really closely and slowly.



4. Learning to see the outline

Simplify what you are seeing - learn to flatten the object you are looking at, in your mind's eye, by just seeing outlines. An outline is a place where one object stops and another starts.

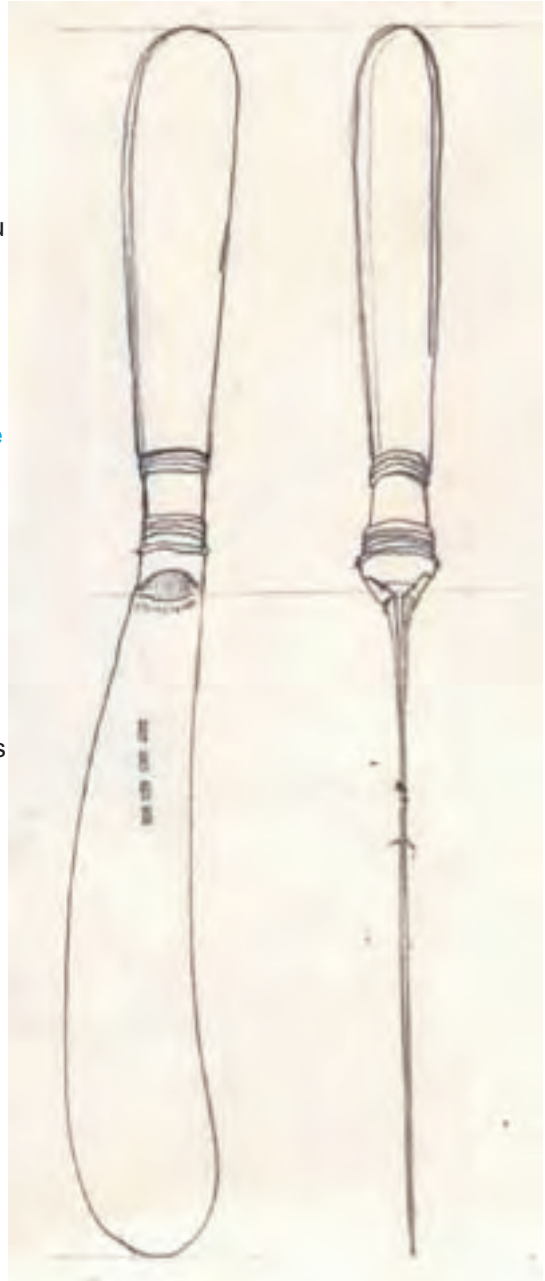
Exercise: Make a drawing with a heavy pencil or piece of charcoal, in which you draw only outlines. Let your eye rove round the outline of the object, and let your pencil feel its way around the paper. Really think about how the marks you are making are helping to define the object.

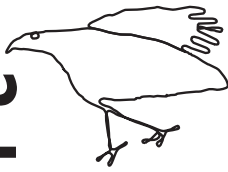
5. Appreciating solidity

When you are drawing, think about the structure which lies beneath the surface of the object. Think also about the weight of the object, and make yourself aware that gravity is acting upon the object you draw.

Exercise: Make a drawing which is about the structure, weight and gravity of the object. Think in terms of forces and tensions. Imagine the force of gravity pulling the object down, and tension within the ground/table which is pushing back against the object. Think about why the object stands, and doesn't collapse like a bowl of jelly. Try and show these thoughts in your drawing.

Tip: For the first drawing, choose an object which is obviously heavy (like a brick, a boulder, or a piece of metal sculpture). Then try drawing a much lighter object like a feather at rest - which is still acting under gravity.





6. Learning to see space

When we look around us, we tend to see recognisable objects, rather than the unrecognisable space between the objects.

It's useful to learn to see the space around an object (artists call it negative space). We can train ourselves to see the negative space as easily and instinctively as we see the object itself.

Exercise: Flatten the object again in your mind's eye and allow yourself to really focus upon the object. Then, make yourself focus instead upon the negative space around the object.

Once you have become used to seeing things in two ways (as solid objects, and as objects bound by negative space), make a drawing whereby instead of drawing the object, you draw the negative space around the object.

Drawing the negative space will make you really look at what you are drawing. Because the shapes the negative space makes are less recognisable, you really have to look carefully to see them - you can't second guess them, and draw what you think is there.

Use this technique whenever you feel you are struggling with drawing something the way it looks. Switch your mind to seeing the negative space, and try drawing that instead.

Tip: To help you see the negative space you can make a viewfinder (a piece of card with a window cut into it of the same proportions as your drawing paper). Hold the viewfinder in front of your eye, and frame the thing you are drawing. Use the frame of the viewfinder to create a boundary for the negative space.

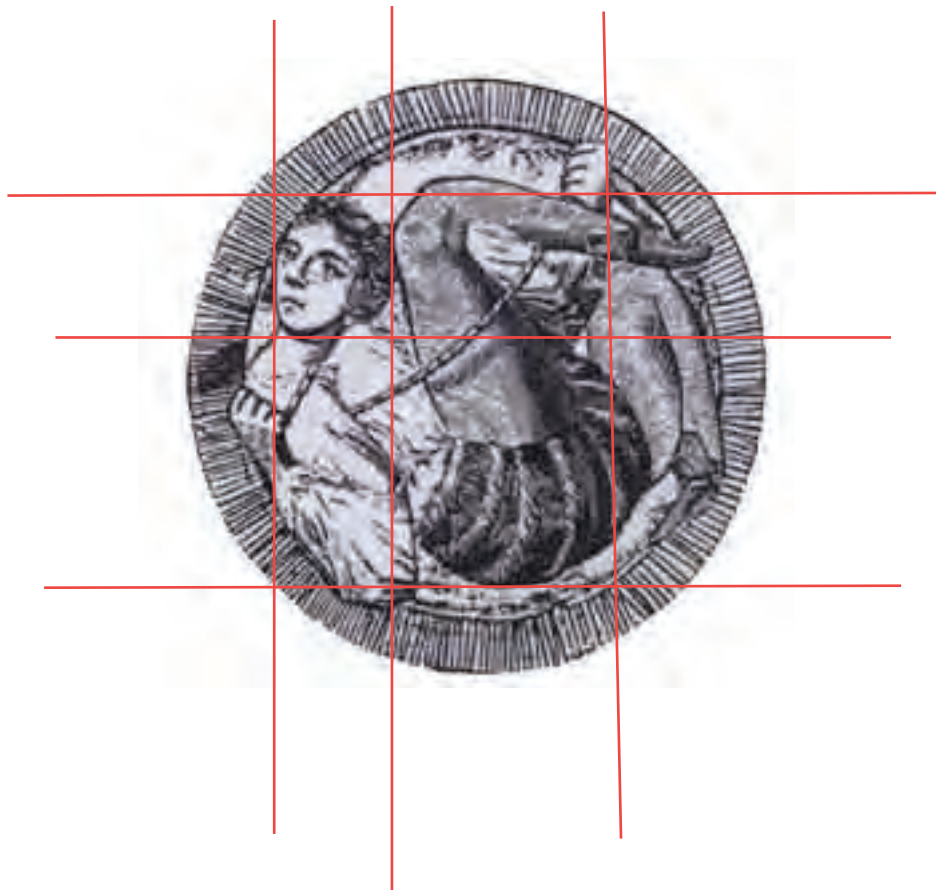


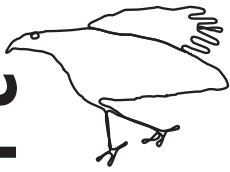


7. Learning to see relationships

Remember as you make your drawing to see both the thing you are drawing, and the drawing itself, as a whole. Seeing the object or drawing as a whole will enable you to see the relationships between the parts.

Exercise: Hold a pencil or stick in a horizontal or vertical position. Line the pencil up with a chosen element within the object you are drawing. Check to see where other elements of the drawing fall in relation to the horizontal or vertical line. Repeat a number of times to build an understanding of the position of different elements within the object/drawing.





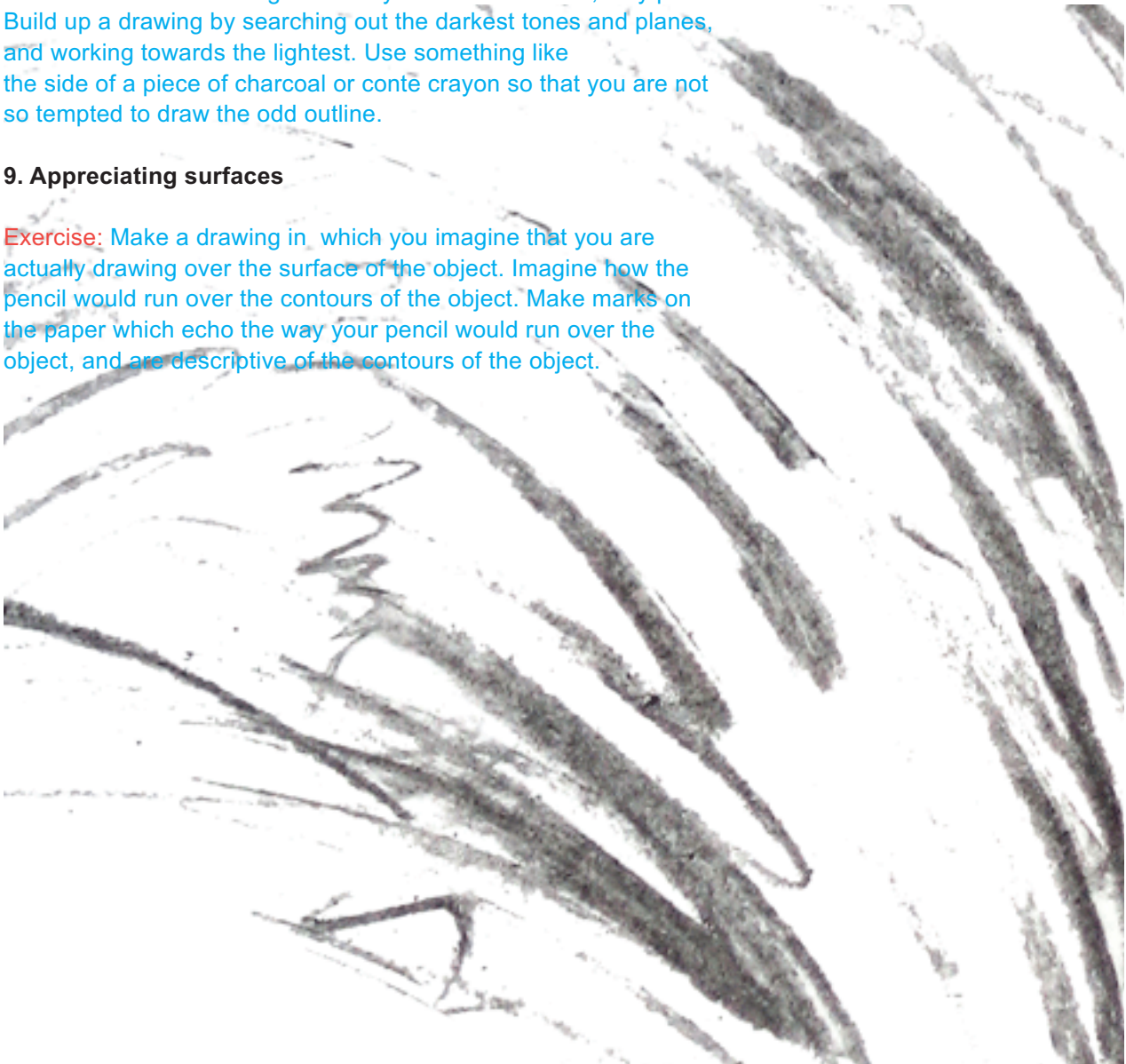
8. Learning to see planes

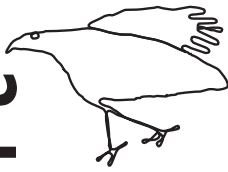
Squint at the object which you are drawing (half close your eyes). As the forms flatten themselves, pick out the lightest tone. Try seeing that colour as an abstract shape: a plane. Then squint again and try to see the next lightest tone...continue through to the darkest.

Exercise: Make a drawing in which you use no outlines, only planes. Build up a drawing by searching out the darkest tones and planes, and working towards the lightest. Use something like the side of a piece of charcoal or conté crayon so that you are not so tempted to draw the odd outline.

9. Appreciating surfaces

Exercise: Make a drawing in which you imagine that you are actually drawing over the surface of the object. Imagine how the pencil would run over the contours of the object. Make marks on the paper which echo the way your pencil would run over the object, and are descriptive of the contours of the object.

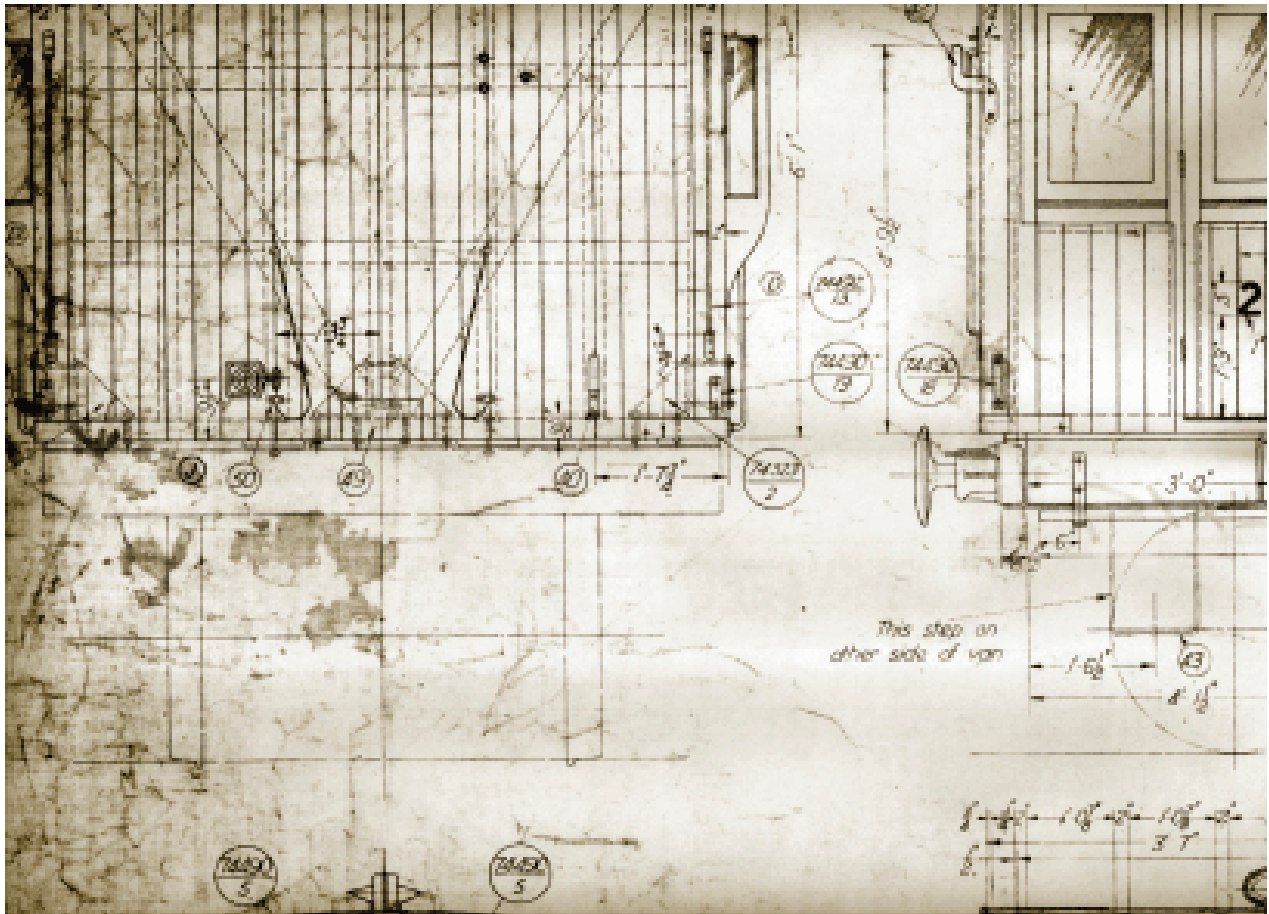


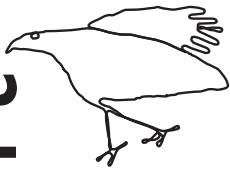


10. Remembering to walk

Don't take it for granted that your first view of an object is the best one to draw. And can you really draw one side of an object if you don't know what is happening round the back of the object? Make informed choices.

Exercise: Make quick drawings of the same object from different viewpoints. Move round just a few degrees each time. Then settle and make an informed drawing of your chosen viewpoint.



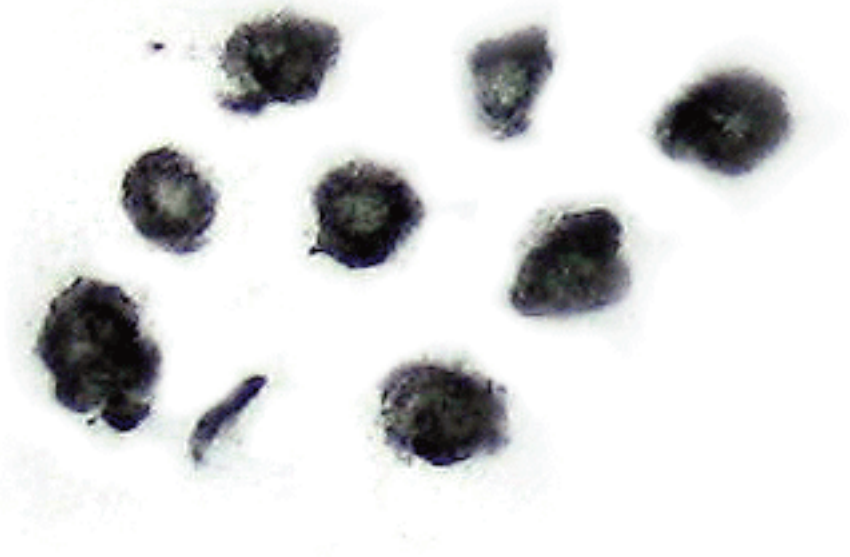


Part Two - Making a Drawing

1. Warming Up

Don't allow yourself to be intimidated by the empty white page, and don't be afraid of making mistakes.

Exercise: To get around the worry of the white page, give yourself something else to think about. Set some restrictions about your drawing. Make a number of drawings of the same object using different restrictions, i.e. "I'll only make calm marks" "I'll only use angry marks", "I'll only use four lines". Work with extremes!



2. Being quick

Don't take too much time over your drawings when you are feeling tense.

Exercise: Give yourself a strict time limit. Start with 5 minutes, and then make shorter and shorter drawings until you are down to 10 seconds.



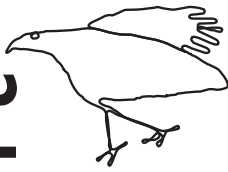


3. Be noisy before you are quiet

Exercise: Make drawings in pairs which express opposite adjectives. For example, make a drawing which is noisy in as many ways as possible - your pencil should make a lot of noise as it vigorously scribbles and scratches across the page, and the finished drawing should be noisy in the way in which it communicates.

Then take a breath and make a very quiet drawing. Your pencil should hardly touch the paper (imagine it's the tip of a feather). Hold your pencil far away from the drawing end so you cannot apply too much pressure. Hush your pencil as you draw, and let the end result be a very shy drawing.

Really enjoy the differences between the two drawings - let your ideas bounce off each other. Push yourself to extremes of noisy and quiet.



4. Explode your drawing

Drawing can be about tearing apart as well as building up. Drawing can also be a physical, active activity - if you let it. This is a good exercise for when you are feeling uptight and uninspired.

Exercise: Make a drawing which consists of a number of elements scattered across the paper. They might be individual objects, or a landscape split into distinct elements, or just marks on the paper. Draw to the size and scale which you normally work to.

Next, tear up your drawing so that each element is now on its own piece of paper. Now work on the wall or the floor. Allow yourself plenty of room (at least twice as big as your original drawing). Scatter the elements around, and then experiment with changing the composition and with creating new distances between the elements. Turn some of the elements upside down, or rip them in half...Think about new meanings which might be created, and forget your original drawing, think about how the new drawing might be interpreted. As you re-order the elements, begin drawing new elements and shapes in between the old ones to create a new drawing.

5. What size is a drawing?

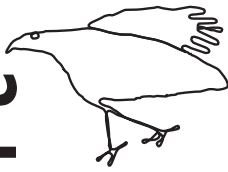
Don't assume that your drawing is A1 in size and will be displayed at head height.

Exercise: Think how you can make size and placement work for you. Consider how you could create tiny landscapes placed at eye height, and how they would differ from a wall-sized landscape which surrounds the viewer.

And why should the drawing go on a wall? Have you ever seen a drawing on a ceiling, or on the floor?

Think about what you want the effect to be on the viewer before you start the drawing, and let size and placement influence the way you work.





6. What shape is a drawing?

Should a drawing be flat?

Can a drawing go round a corner?

Can a drawing go up the stairs?

Can a drawing surround you?

Can a drawing be completely three-dimensional?

Does a drawing always have edges?

Exercise: Line a place or object of your choice with paper. Then make a drawing, on this paper, about the environment its in.

7. Make mistakes work for you

If you are unhappy with part of your drawing, put a scrap of blank paper over the part of the drawing you are unsure about. This gives you the chance to re-see the object/your drawing. Have another go at re-drawing the area.

Working this way rather than erasing mistakes allows you to compare how you've seen and drawn the object second time round. It's often quite surprising to see how differently you see things second or third time round. It also enables you to see more freshly - often when you erase part of your drawing and try and redraw on the same paper you are still influenced by your old lines.

