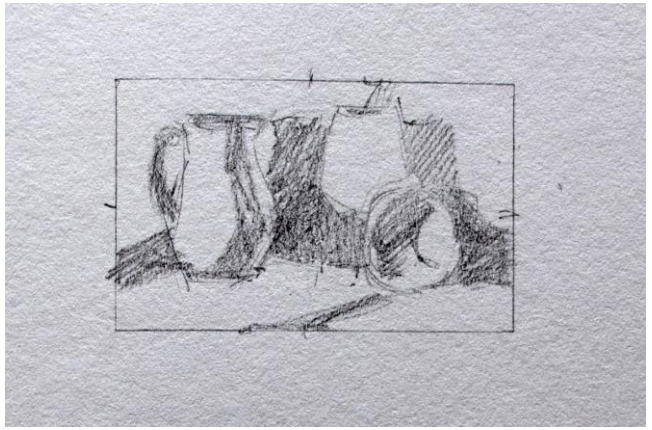
WELCOME BACK TO

Summer of Drawing

class no.6: CHARCOAL STILL LIFE & FIGURES II

Charcoal

- Use a viewfinder to help you select which part of the scene or photo will be in your drawing.
- Draw a little notan to get a sense of the light and dark areas in your chosen composition.
- Using a graphite pencil or a hard charcoal pencil, lightly draw the lines that will guide you when you put down darker charcoal. I typically draw my objects so that the proportions are right, and often also mark out the shadow areas as I know that the charcoal will obscure these lines (or I can erase them.)
- Try not to go too dark too fast! Use harder charcoal or HB, then 2B, 4B, 6B.
- You can mix up blending and line according to how you like to draw. You can leave some charcoal areas unblended so that the texture on the paper is a feature of your drawing, or you can carefully blend all areas.
- Use your eraser liberally! Redraw where needed, pick out highlights, keep areas clean.
- Use a piece of paper or tracing paper under your hand if you lean on your work, and try fixative or hairspray to keep a charcoal drawing from smudging after you finish it (or protect with a sheet of paper.)



A midway point after about 45 minutes of drawing, including notan.

A midway point after about 45 minutes of drawing, including notan.

If you’d like a more challenging still life, try drawing all or part of this still life, to try working with the different shapes and draped fabric.

Squint! Get those dark masses down first, then the middle values, before worrying about small details.

Do a notan first so that you can see the pattern of the darks across the features.

Charcoal: Still Life and Figures

- It doesn't matter what the subject is, or the drawing medium – we can use line and shading to suggest form, detail, dark and light.
- SQUINT! So that you don't get lost in the details.
- Observing where lost edges occur whether in the darks or the lights, will create a more realistic feeling of space and depth.
- The terminator point in a shadow is key to properly defining the 'turn of the form'.
- If you don't see it, don't draw it… unless you are intentionally adding something for artistic reasons.
- You can draw anything by looking for the shadows and the light, and concentrating on these shapes first.
- When selecting still life and images or poses of people, look for good shadows across the forms to help your drawing especially if you are new to drawing.

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