

Sketchbook Assignment

You must practice drawing on a regular basis in order to become proficient and confident in your visual communication and presentation skills. Your sketchbook should be your companion through the next eleven weeks, available when you find interesting subjects to sketch or when an idea pops into your head that needs to be visualized. If the size of the sketchbook is an aid to your keeping it with you, then find a size that is convenient enough to carry anywhere.

Learning Objectives

- Increasing observation skills
- Developing technical skills
- Increasing confidence and fluency of visual communication

Work Expectations

Ideally, you should do at least one sketch per day, regardless of whether it is required of you. Good designers sketch regularly as part of an ongoing practice.

I consider one sketch to be an entire sheet of the sketchbook, UNLESS it is one of the 9x14 variety where you may divide the page in two. Sheets may contain – and often are enhanced by having – more than one drawing per page (see example sketch page below), especially where you are drawing related subject matter or exploring details of a single subject.

Generally, it doesn't matter what you draw as long as you draw. But, given the nature of this course and the fact that many students have never been required to maintain a sketchbook, a number of sketch options are listed below. These options are based on techniques and concepts introduced in this course.

Sketch Options

Read Chapter One of *Color Drawing* and focus primarily on the following four subjects:

1. Local Tone
2. Chiaroscuro
3. Gradation
4. Atmospheric Perspective

Keep coming back to these subjects and looking for examples. All of these require observation and rendering of TONAL VALUE. Label these sketches according to the phenomenon illustrated. Begin with black/white. That prepares you for color work by helping you see Color, Value, Composition, and Detail (See examples on page 2 of how to learn from others' work). Then try sketching with color: pencils, marker, pastel, etc.

The following types of sketches should involve direct observation and are a *secondary* focus for you to practice linear drawing techniques. Practice the techniques as demonstrated in class.

1. gesture drawing
2. analytical drawing
3. people / figures, plants, textures, reflections
4. direct perspective (sighting methods)
5. quick perspective (environmental gesture sketch)

Label each sketch with the following information:

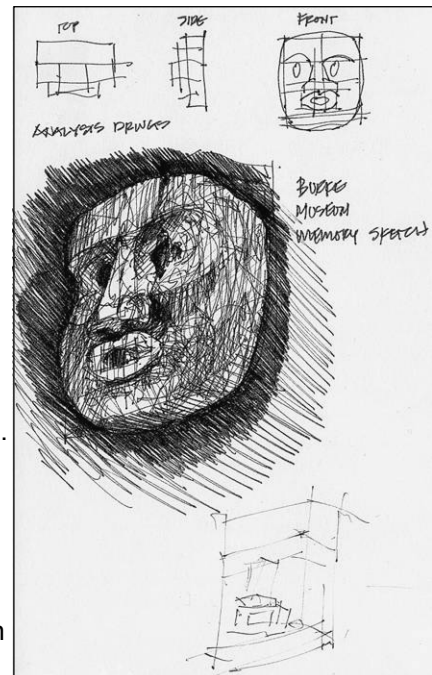
- number pages in sequence (one page of proper practice = one sketch)
- type of sketch / date / elapsed time

Grading Criteria

Number of Sketches: minimum of 25

Rigor of Practice: care and attention in application of techniques and concepts

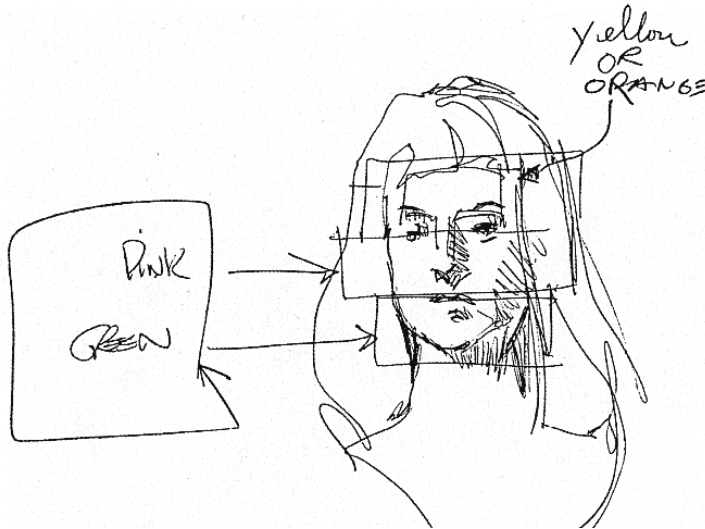
If sketches satisfy *both* criteria above, then: 25 = C 26-35 = B 36 or more = A



SKETCHING FROM OTHERS' WORK

There is a long tradition of drawings based on the work of others, and this is a great way to expand your sketching experience. Visit an art museum or gallery and use the artwork to study various aspects of the work that you are producing for this class. The following suggestions and illustrations show you how you can use the work of others to improve your own.

Excerpts from *Master Class* by Timothy J. Clark. Artist's Sketchbook magazine; October 2003. pp. 39-42.



COLOR

It's awfully hard to work with paint inside a museum, but you don't need to work in color in order to study color. Here's a small sketch I created while viewing a John Singer Sargent exhibition a few years ago. Focusing only on color, I saw how the fleshtones in a portrait shifted from the top of the head to the neck, and over a sketch of the figure's head I made notes about the dominant shades. Later, I hung this drawing in my studio as a reminder of what inspired me.



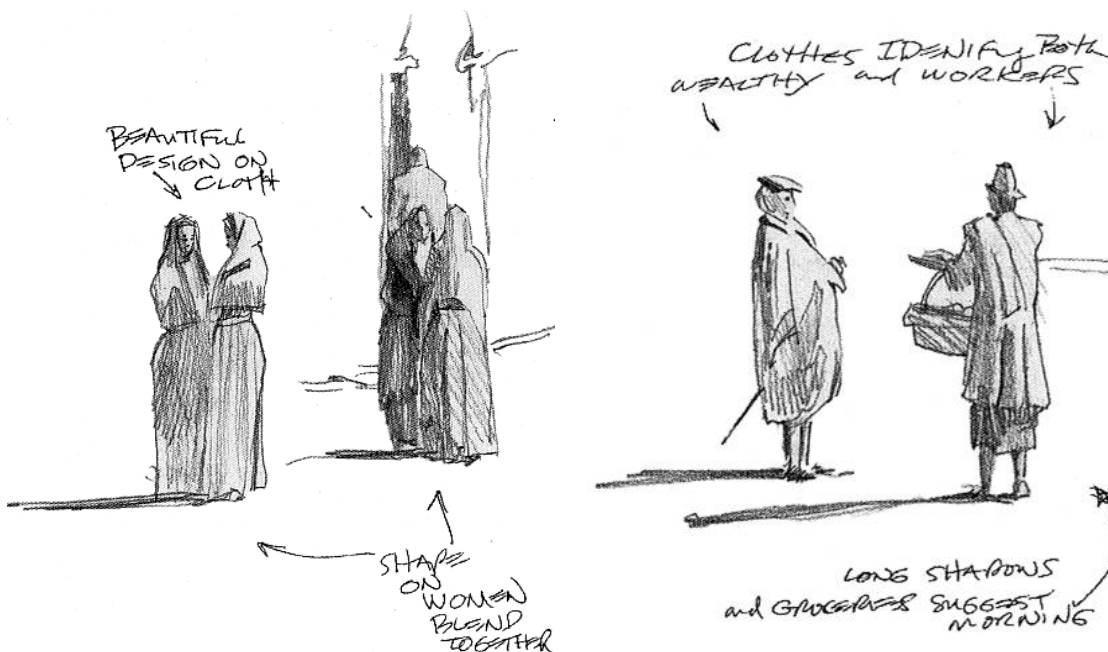
VALUE

In this more detailed sketch of Sargent's *Lady Agnew of Lochnaw* I concentrated on the intricate value contrasts and the play of shadows and light on the subject's face. While values can be well captured in a black-and-white sketch alone, it was even more helpful to add notes about the values I saw in the painting. Because these drawings are only for my own use, they're not really finished or showy. Their purpose is to help me see and remember.



COMPOSITION

Edgar Degas' *Laundresses* (c. 1884-86; oil, 30½ x 32½) is a wonderful example of expertly using the gestures of the subjects to construct a dramatic and dynamic painting. Here the figures are perfect contrasts. In the figure on the right, everything points down: her head, her arms and fingers, and her body movement toward the laundry beneath her. In the figure on the left, everything points up: her head, her arm movement, her posture, her open mouth and even the bottle she holds. In this case, just looking carefully at the painting provides a good lesson, but by drawing the composition as well, your hand will discover even more than your eye, and you'll better identify the visual devices that artists use to hold viewers' attention.



DETAIL

Another focus when copying a master is to look for the handling of a particular passage of a painting. This is a good way to study details in small pieces without having to digest the entire painting at once. From two Canaletto paintings, I created a series of figure compositions. Each figure or group was like a painting within the painting, and each gave insight into the customs, dress and habits of Canaletto's time—and, more important, into how Canaletto interpreted his world.