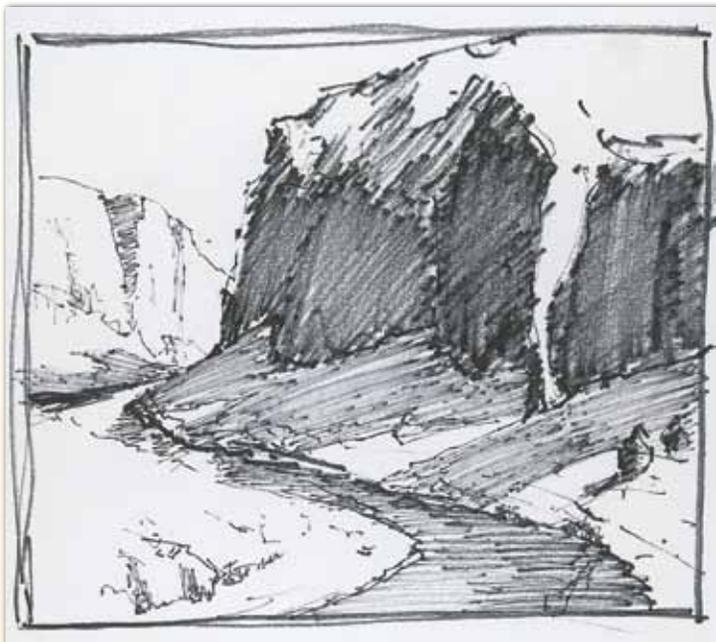


Drawing Sketches

Free Sketching Techniques and Expert Tips



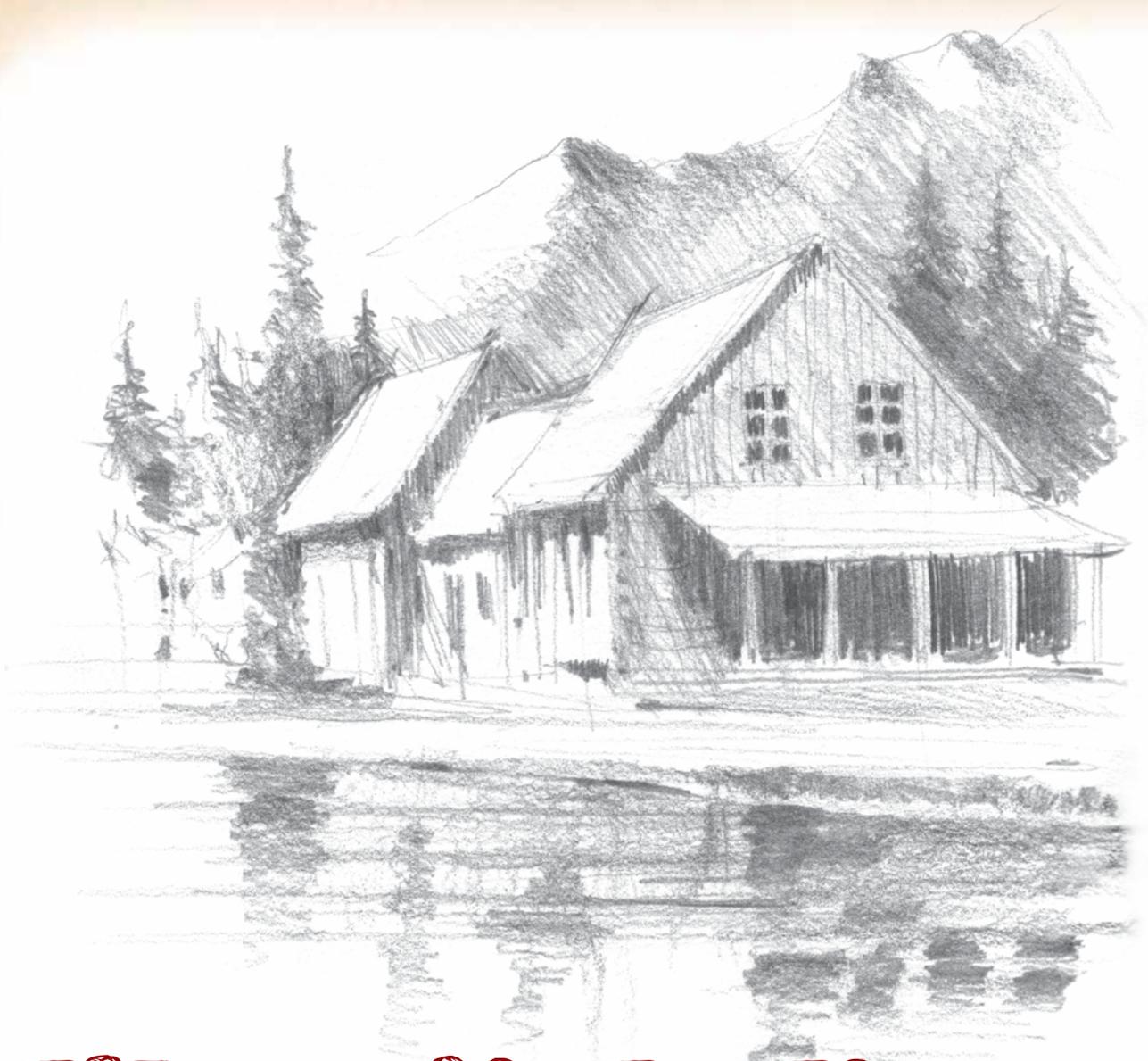


TABLE of CONTENTS

Drawing Sketches: Free Sketching Techniques and Expert Tips

- How to “See” (from *Start Sketching and Drawing Now* by Grant Fuller) 3
- Steps to Gesture Drawing (from *Sketching People: Life Drawing Basics* by Jeff Mellem) 7
- A Look Inside the Sketchbook of Roberto (Bob) Cardinale (from *Sketchbook Confidential*) 10
- A Look Inside the Sketchbook of Kate Sterling (from *Sketchbook Confidential*) 14
- **MORE RESOURCES** **18**

Learn to “See”

Have you ever noticed that although you are able to recognize countless objects at first glance, when you try to draw them from memory, you cannot recall enough information to make a good drawing?

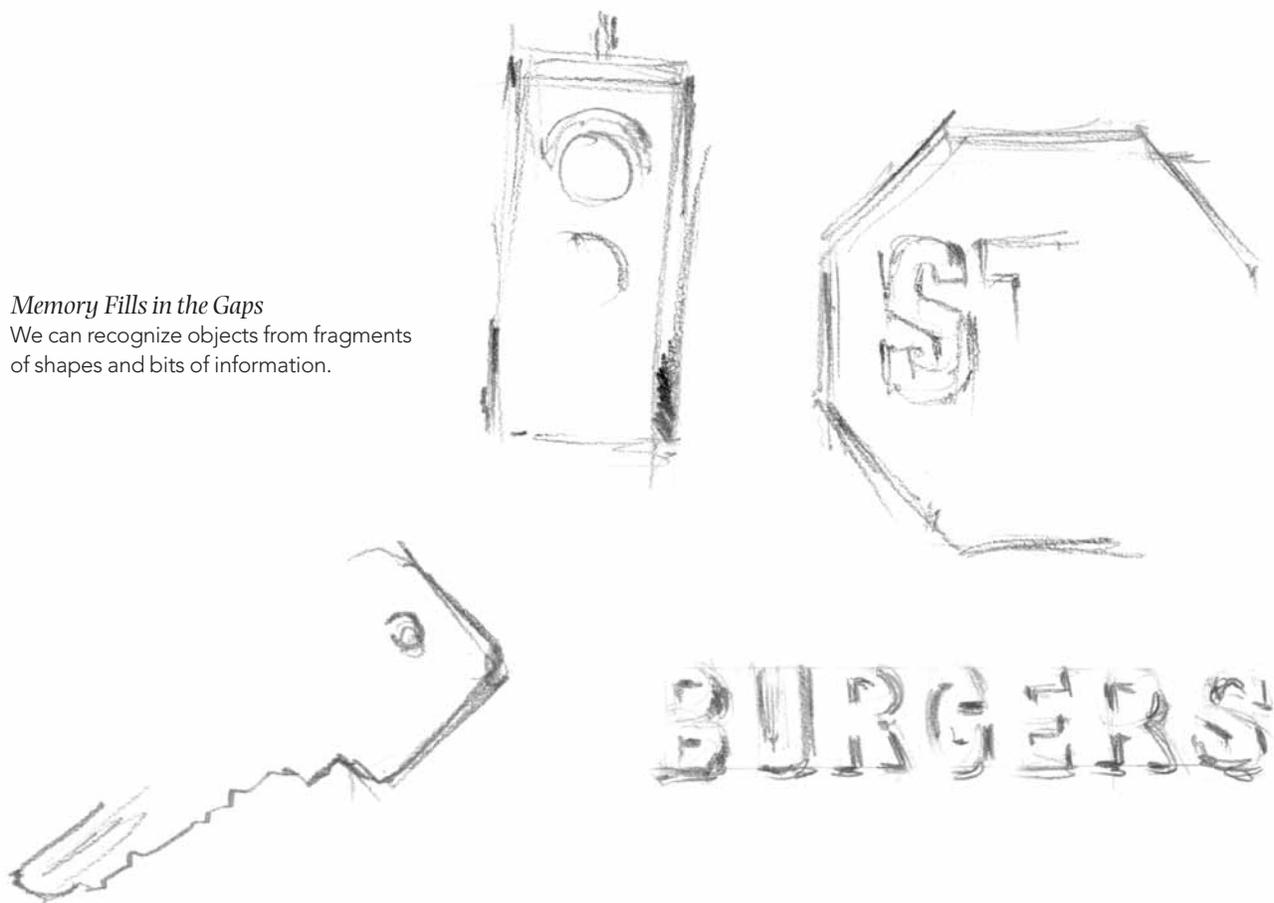
This is because your memory records key pieces of visual information about things as you look around, and your brain feeds back a “shorthand” version of your surroundings. This abbreviated method allows you to quickly identify all the objects around you, spot dangers, avoid collisions and find things.

After you draw an object, your memory has a vastly improved record of that object. After drawing it a few more times, you may find that you can draw it from memory. The down side, however, is that the quality deteriorates because you’ve taken your eyes out of the equation. No matter how good your memory is, it does not compare to what you see by looking at the real thing. Lighting, texture, subtle shapes and contours are all things that fade from memory very quickly.

As an artist, you must learn how to look at things as if you were seeing them for the first time.

Memory Fills in the Gaps

We can recognize objects from fragments of shapes and bits of information.



Upgrade Your Memory

Not only do we recognize fragments of objects, we also have a collection of highly simplified symbols in our memory.

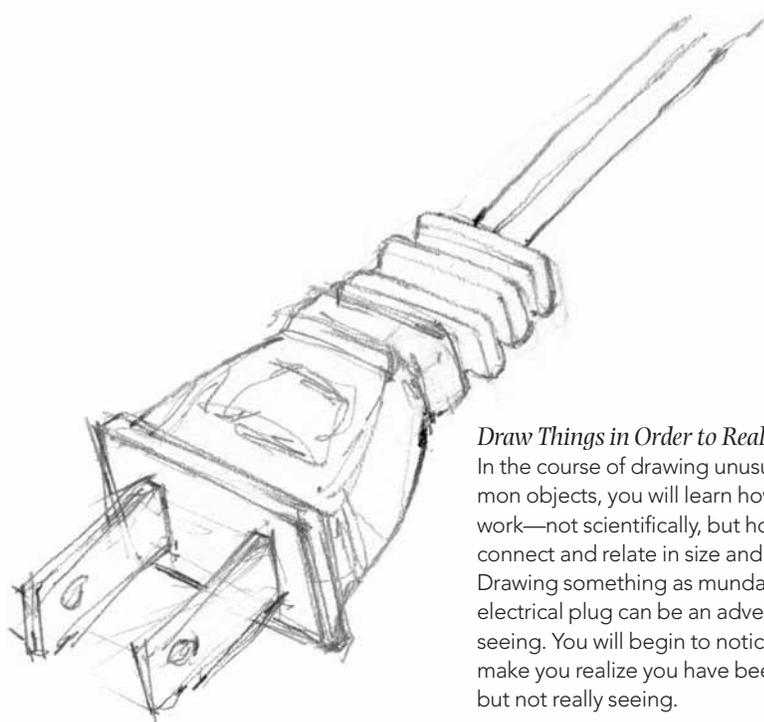
When we draw, we are competing with those symbols. It is important to concentrate on upgrading these images as we draw by committing new information to memory.

Draw a few household objects that are slightly uncommon. Don't select a table spoon or knife—they are so

familiar that you will have symbols in your memory for those objects. However, tools like a can opener, kitchen whisk, egg beater or perhaps workshop tools, which are not likely embedded in your memory are better for this exercise. You'll need to study them as though you were seeing them for the first time.

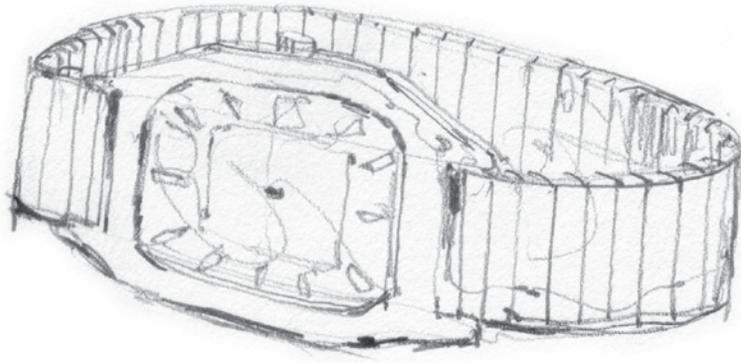
Memory Can Be a Roadblock

Because of the simplified symbols already present in our subconscious, when beginners are asked to draw something from memory the result is often similar to the images you see here. Upgrade your memory!



Draw Things in Order to Really See Them!

In the course of drawing unusually common objects, you will learn how things work—not scientifically, but how the parts connect and relate in size and shape. Drawing something as mundane as an electrical plug can be an adventure in seeing. You will begin to notice things that make you realize you have been looking but not really seeing.



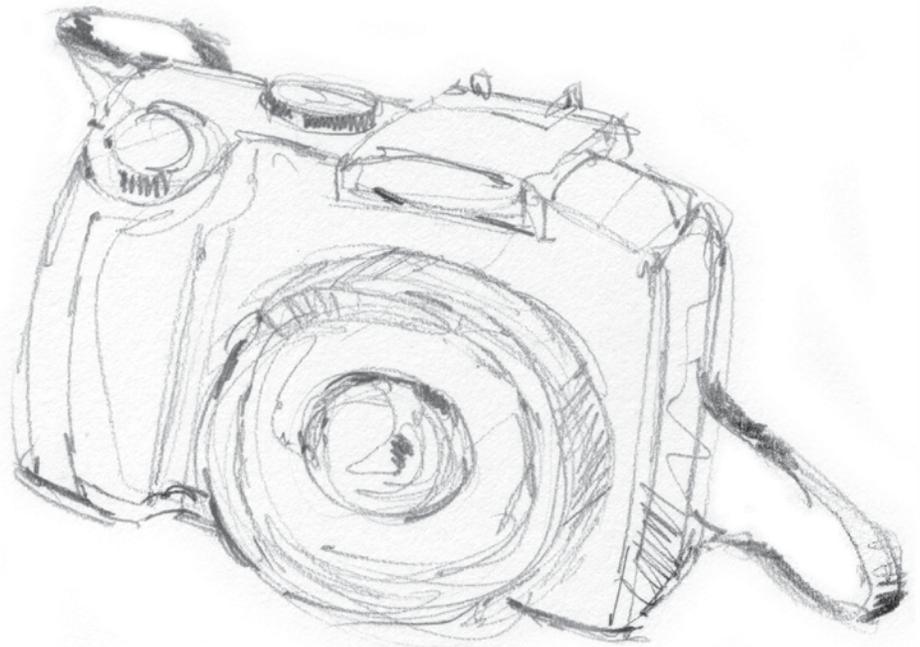
Draw What You See, Not What You Know

Even after only one drawing, you will notice so much more about your surroundings. It becomes a personal challenge to discover new information about things you have seen a thousand times.

Force Yourself to See

Many items that appear complex at first are really made up of simple geometric shapes. A camera is just a few ovals and rectangles, but seeing how they fit together makes the drawing process exciting.

Force yourself to see. You know the camera lens is a circle, but from an angle the circle becomes an oval.



Keep Practicing!

Some objects look easy to draw, but upon closer examination, will present unexpected challenges. Making an object look convincingly real takes practice, so do not be discouraged if you don't get it right the first time.

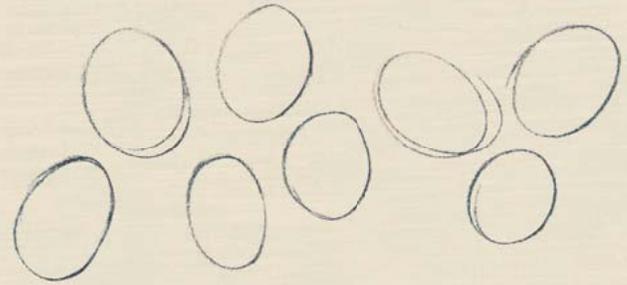


More Practice

Look carefully at this drawing and then close the book. Draw as much as you can remember. Open the book to this page and compare. Modify your drawing but keep trying to hold as much in your memory as possible. You will be able to complete a drawing in fewer stages as your memory develops.

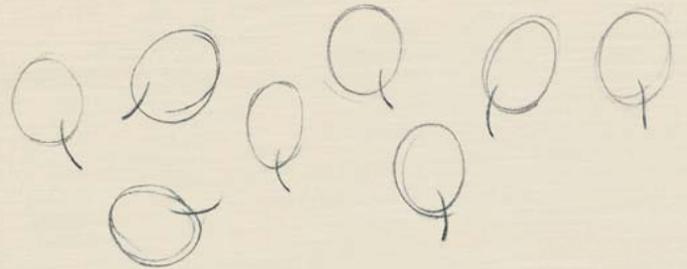
STEPS TO GESTURE DRAWING

Developing a consistent step-by-step approach will help you avoid any hesitation when beginning a drawing. Once you have internalized this artistic process it will free your mind to concentrate on what you're trying to communicate rather than how to draw. That is not to say you can't change the procedure to suit your needs, but as a rule, you will be better off approaching each drawing with a process you are comfortable with.



1| Begin With an Oval for the Head

Keep in mind how the head tilts in space. The head is a good place to start because it establishes a rough proportion for the figure.



2| Draw the Neck as It Pulls From the Head

This line will roughly follow the movement of the spine. You won't necessarily draw the anatomical position of the spine, just its movement in relation to the head.

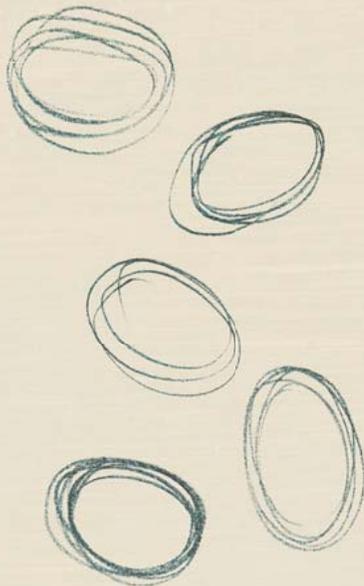


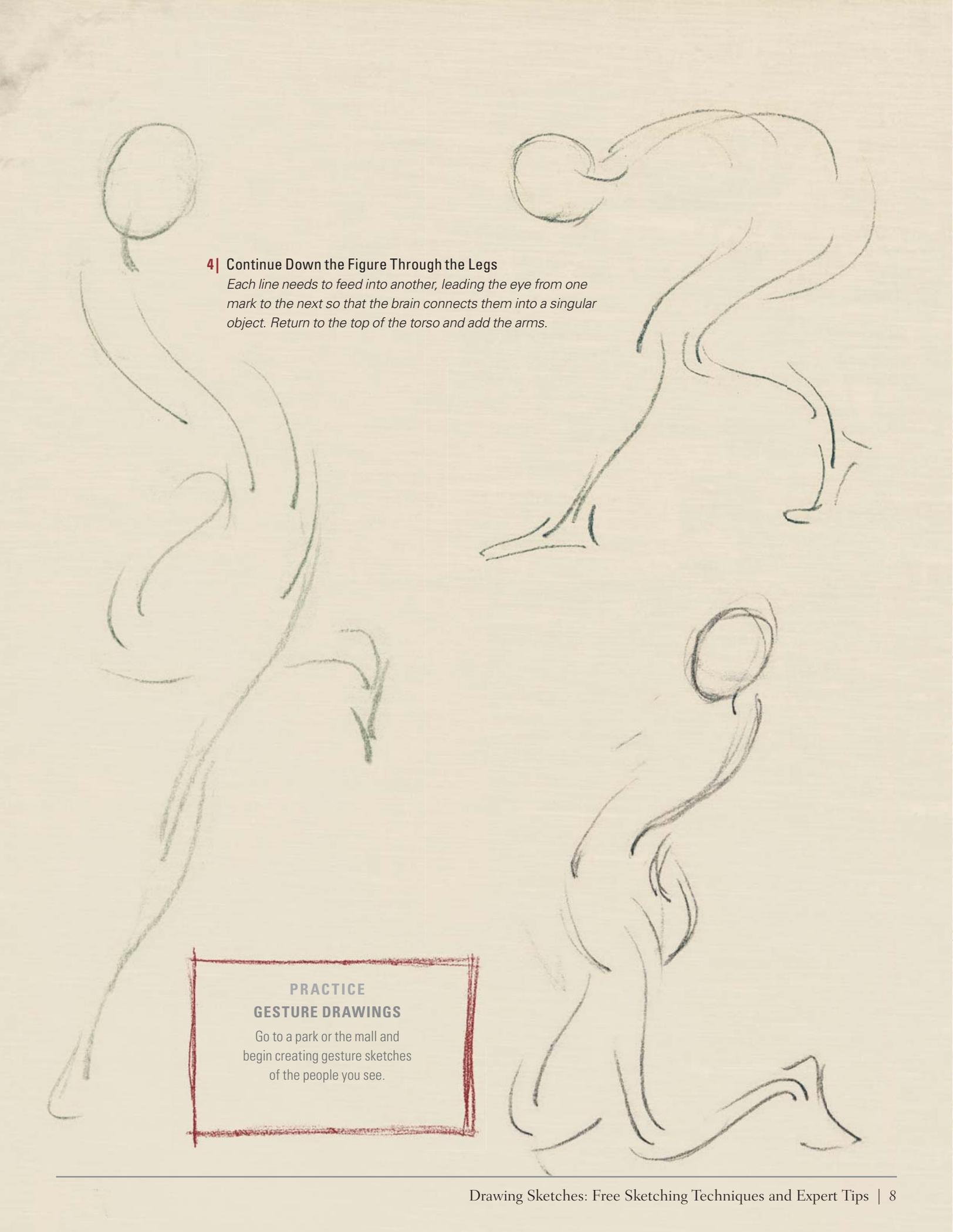
3| Continue Down the Body

Capture the fluid movement of the torso. Notice that the lines are basically single strokes. They're not "hairy" lines; they are short little hatch marks.

JUST GO AROUND ONCE

You don't need to go around and around and around to draw an oval. Draw efficiently, keeping the drawing simple and light. This skill is so fundamental that I still fill up pages practicing circles and other basic forms.





4 | Continue Down the Figure Through the Legs

Each line needs to feed into another, leading the eye from one mark to the next so that the brain connects them into a singular object. Return to the top of the torso and add the arms.

**PRACTICE
GESTURE DRAWINGS**

Go to a park or the mall and begin creating gesture sketches of the people you see.

FINISHED GESTURE DRAWING

This first stage of drawing looks simple when done correctly. It will establish the foundation for everything else. If the drawing is weak at this stage, it will be far more difficult to develop it.

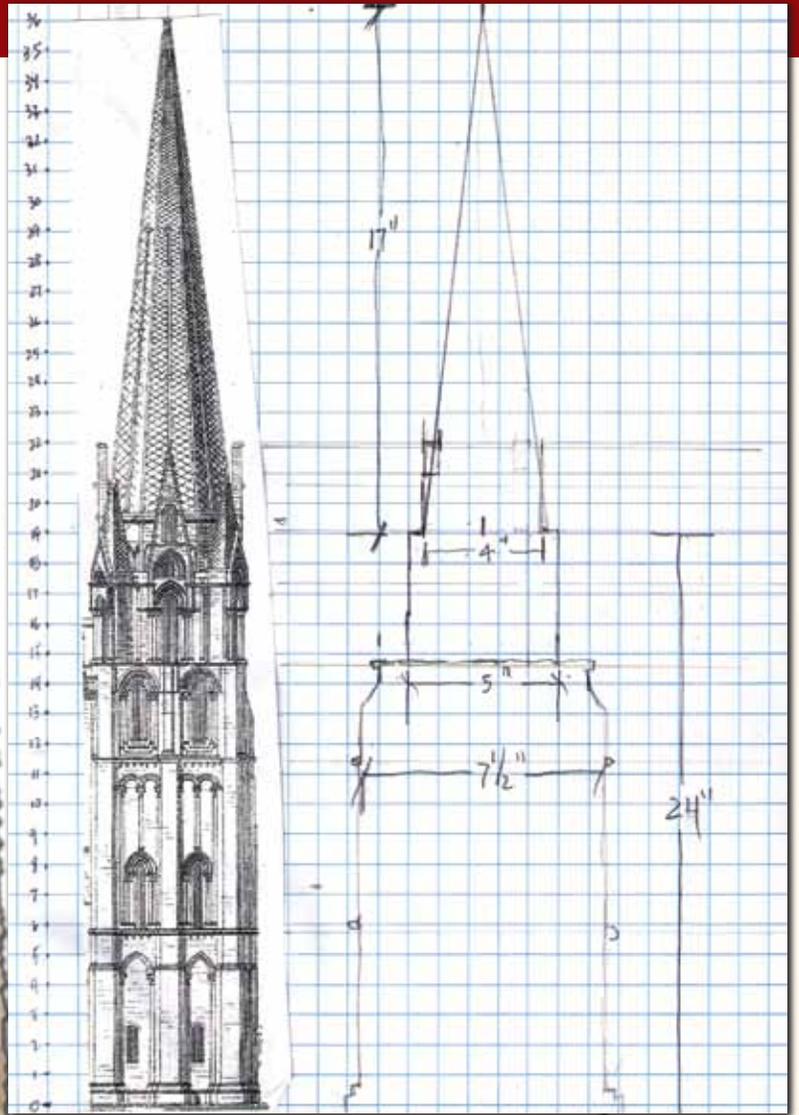


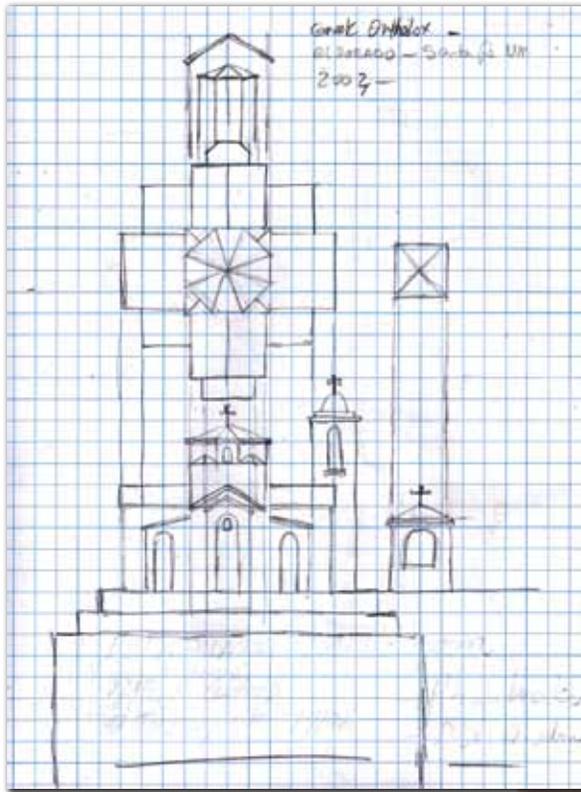
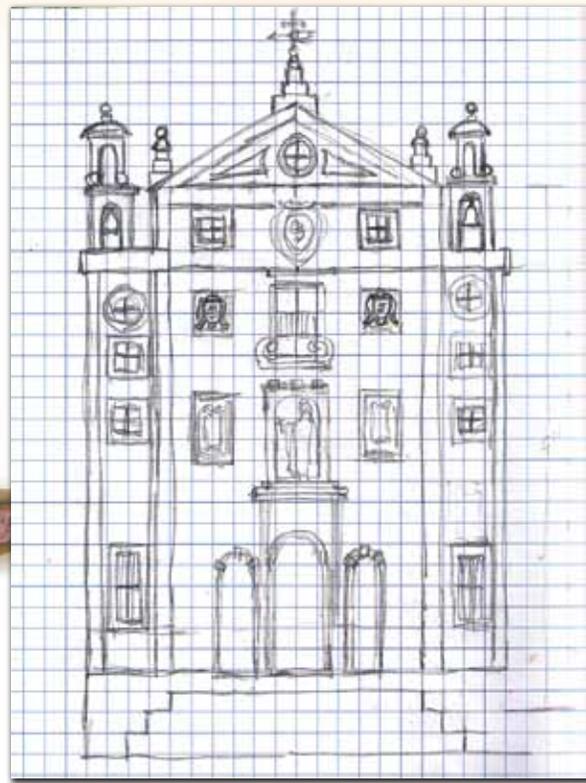
PRACTICE OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS

When you see someone doing something interesting, close your eyes and remember the body position. Where was the left arm? Was he or she leaning forward or away? Which direction was the head tilted? What was he or she wearing? What was the overall demeanor? Now open your eyes. If the person is in the same position, check the accuracy of your memory.

Roberto (Bob) Cardinale

Churches hold a special significance for Cardinale: "The church form speaks to my love of ecclesiastical architecture and springs from my monastic background as a Benedictine monk and my travels." His sculptures of real and imagined churches, towers and synagogues, many of them commissions, are made of pine and richly painted, average about 16 inches (41cm) tall and require 60 to 90 hours each to make. The Santa Fe artist (originally from Colorado) has made over 400 of them, focusing on the churches in New Mexico, Texas, California and Mexico, and many from the Tuscany region in Italy.



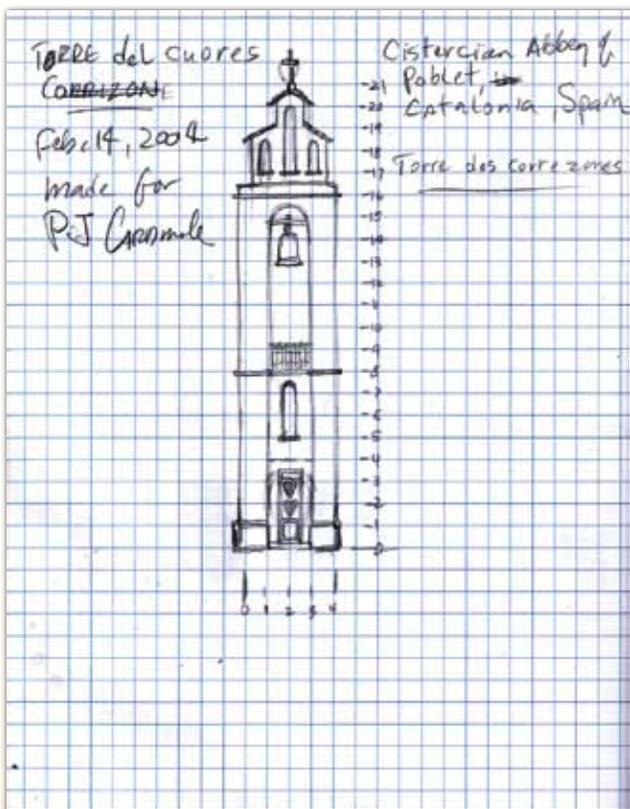
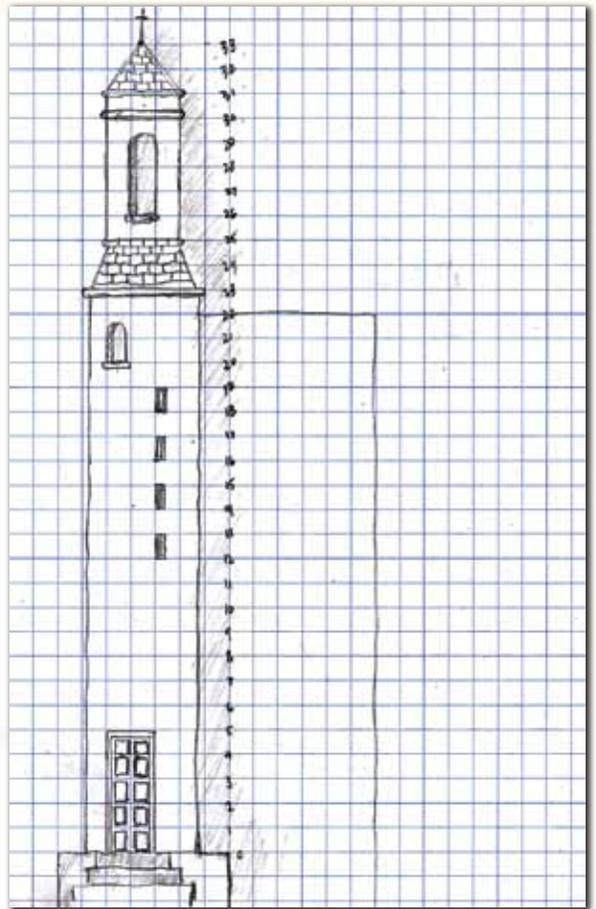


I journal mainly when I travel as a way of capturing some sculptural element of a church or other structure that will remind me of my emotional response when I first saw the building. I sketch mainly to get a feel of the piece that I want to sculpt, and often to work out some problem or way of achieving some detail.

When sketching, I try to be very conscious about the feeling of the piece and what part or parts I have to exaggerate in order to get the feeling that I am after.

Most often, this is in the evening as that is when I spend the most time in my studio, and the distractions of the day are pretty much behind me. I usually use a no. 2 or other soft pencil and often work on grid paper. Many times, I sketch directly onto the wood that I am going to work with.

When I sketch, I feel very open and relaxed, as I am not trying to do a finished or important drawing. It's as if I'm just thinking about a form and not trying to create one. The sketch is free to do what it wants, and I feel no need to exert control over it.



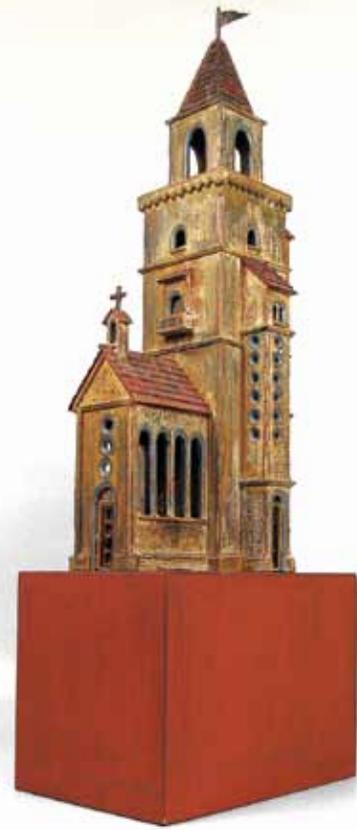
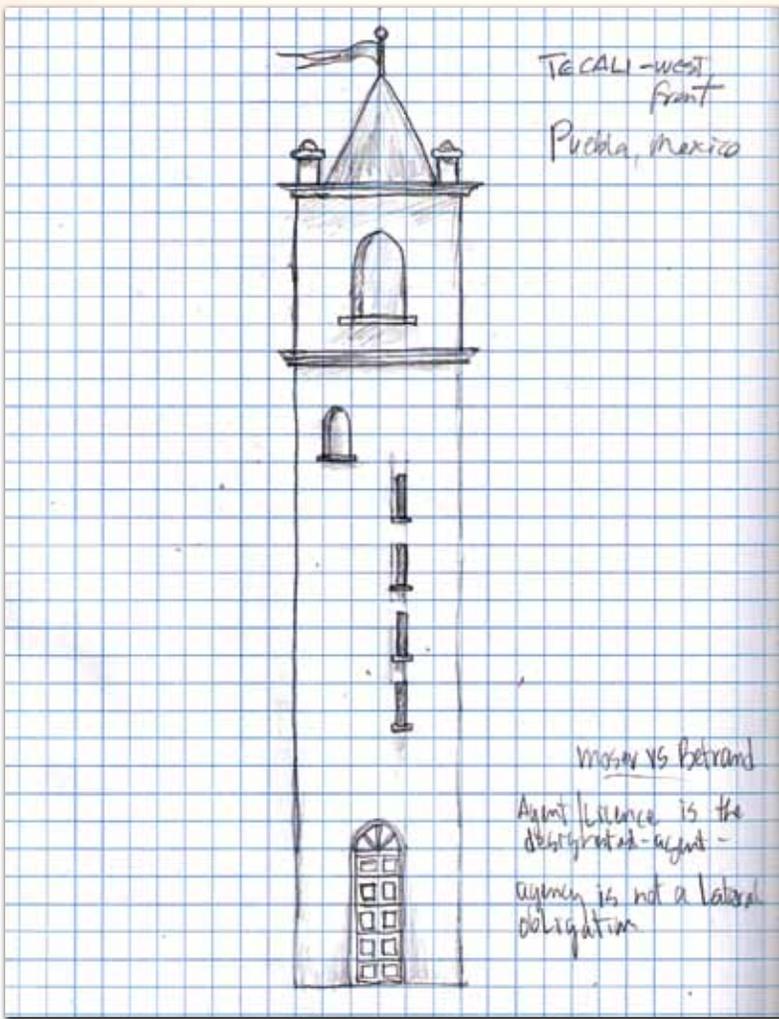
I like the fluidity and freedom of sketching as it allows me to wander through the ideas in my mind. Sketching helps me to think out loud as it were. It is fanciful and doesn't have to go anywhere or be something specific.

Sketching lets me be free of material and process. I don't have to worry about the cost of material or the logistics and tools that come into play in doing a three-dimensional piece.

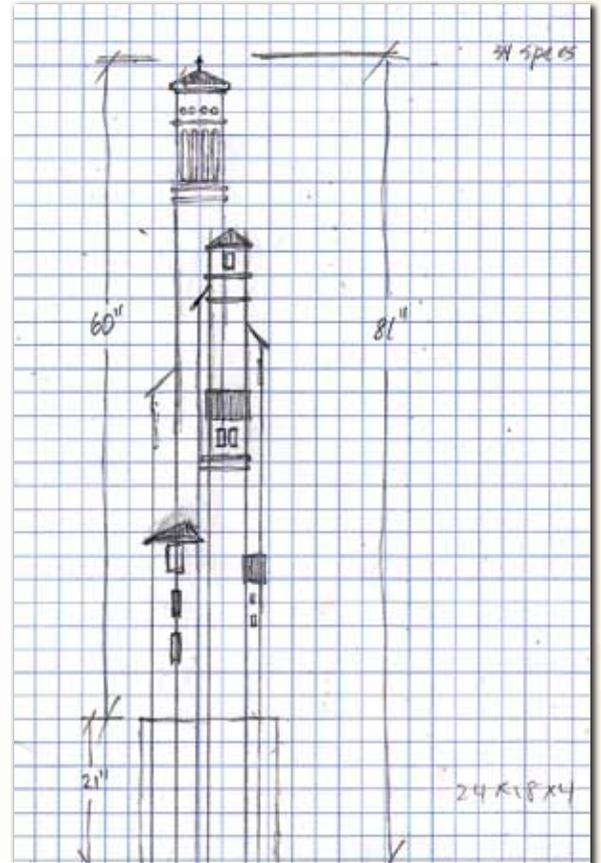
My sketches only suggest the physical work, and often after I sketch some detail of the piece or the overall idea of the piece, I set the sketch aside and get directly to work.

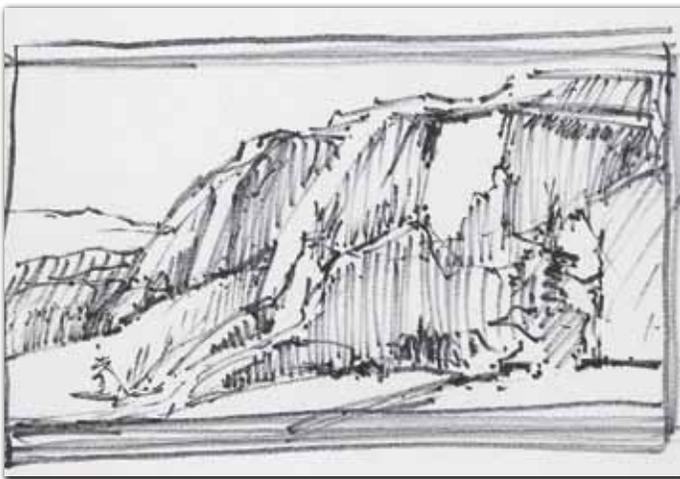
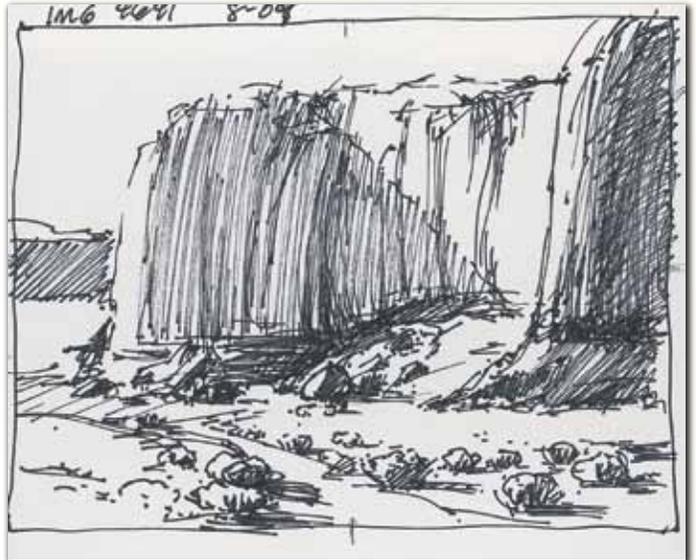
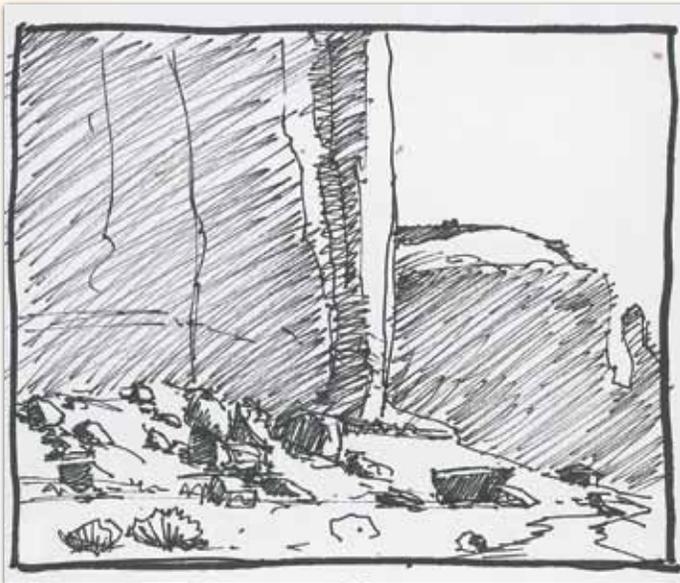
Sketching helps me see detail that my eyes would miss if they were not guided by my pencil.

Pascual Casamile



Sketching helps me to think out loud as it were. It is fanciful and doesn't have to go anywhere or be something specific.



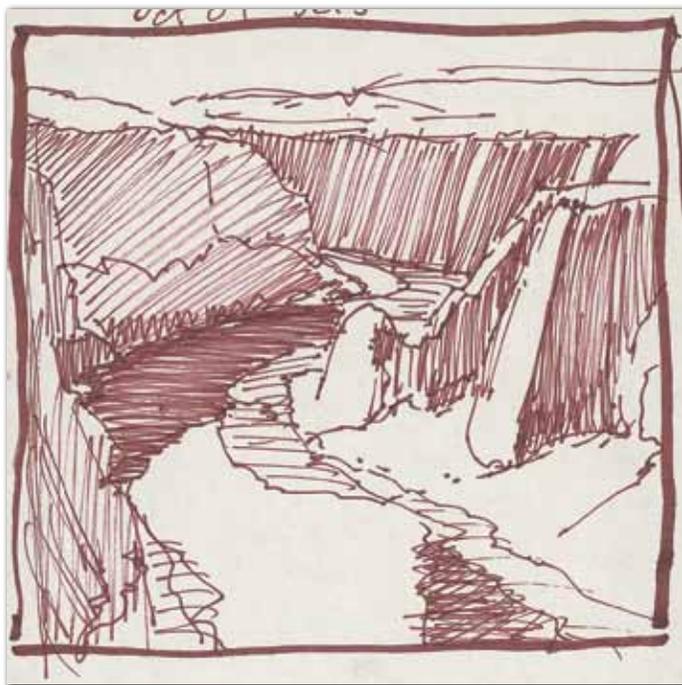
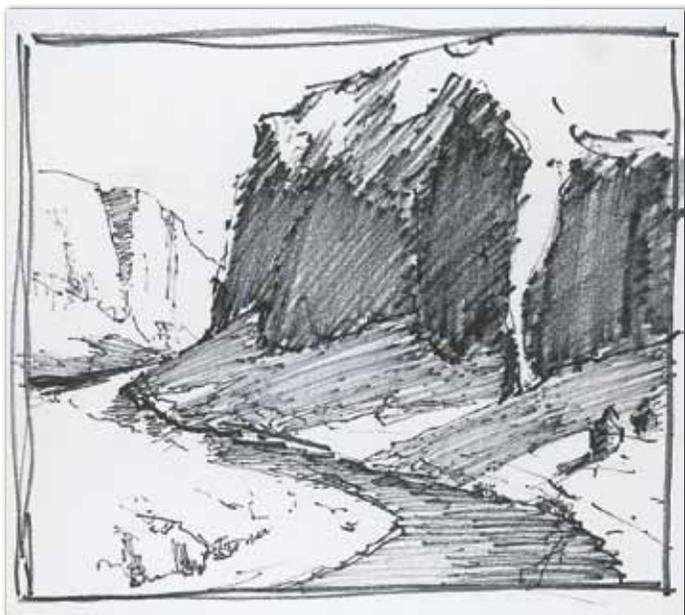
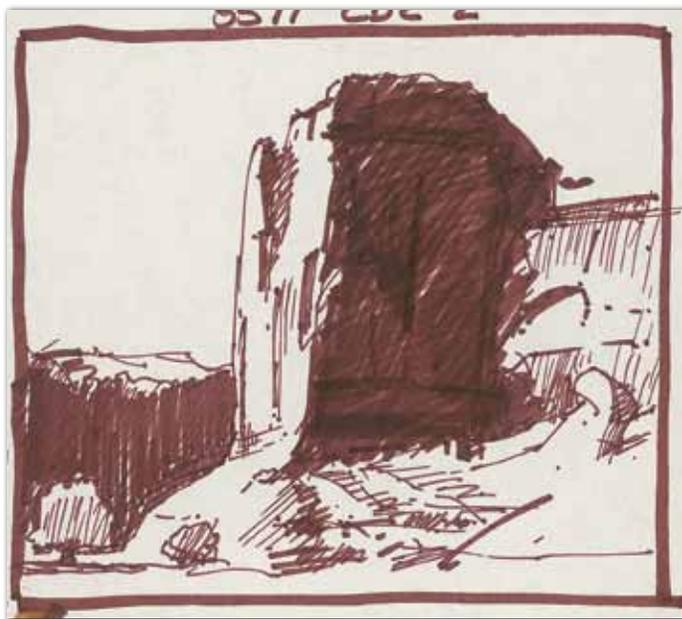


Kate Starling

Starling is an oil painter who lives and works in the canyons of southern Utah. Educated in geology, she spent years working as a geologist and National Park ranger. After formal art training in the 1980s, she devoted her work to painting the landscape. Schooled in the importance of direct painting from life, she has spent years painting outside, learning the way light plays on the land. Now she splits her time between the roadways and trails surrounding her home and the studio. Starling's paintings portray the natural world and focus on communicating a sense of place, atmosphere and dazzling light, retaining the immediacy of the painting experience.

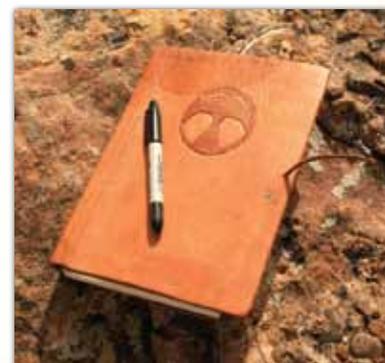
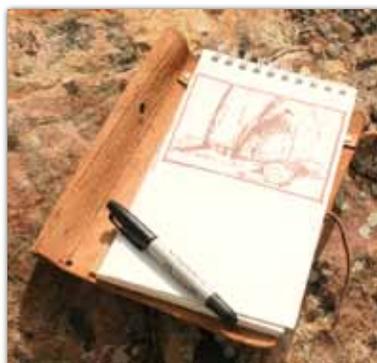
I have heard of artists who start every day with an hour of drawing. I admire their discipline, but my drawing comes at odd times and through necessity.

Aside from sketches preliminary to painting, I draw as I can catch the time. I often sketch while waiting for someone or when caught with a compelling view and no paint box. It can be a way to survive the boredom of idleness or because too much time has passed without the pleasure of making something.



I sketch on a 5" × 8" (13cm × 20cm) ring-bound pad that slips into a leather cover. It is a replica of one that Maynard Dixon was fond of using and was a gift from the Thunderbird Foundation at the Maynard Dixon Country Art Show. For outdoor sketches I draw with a black Sharpie Twin Tip pen.

My sketchbook is a compositional tool that allows me to make sense of the visual stimulus around me.





When I am painting outside, I often find myself starting with the basic question, “What was it that stopped me here?” It is usually one element that must be emphasized in the composition to convey the concept of the painting. If it is the scale of one dominant feature in the landscape or a strong shadow, it can be easy to sketch it out quickly, but it is more likely to be a subtlety of value or color. This requires me to remain conscious of this theme, so I sometimes write a note to remind myself and refer to it later in the painting process.

I always make a composition sketch before I start to paint, and while this started as a discipline to eliminate false starts in painting, I have found that it is a way of focusing my mind to the painting process. By sketching, I calm down and ready myself to concentrate; in a short while I can feel myself click into a different mental state.

One of my cherished activities is a weekly figure drawing session organized by a local artist, and very little will conspire to make me skip. It is a luxury to devote three hours to drawing, and with the human form so exacting, the concentration and discipline benefits my landscape painting. I also teach a beginning drawing class in my small town, and clearly articulating the basics of drawing every week has sharpened my understanding of two-dimensional representation and how the human mind perceives space and form.

As a landscape painter, I take liberties with the placement of objects in space, and the sketchbook is the place where I can experiment and play.

Kate Stirling



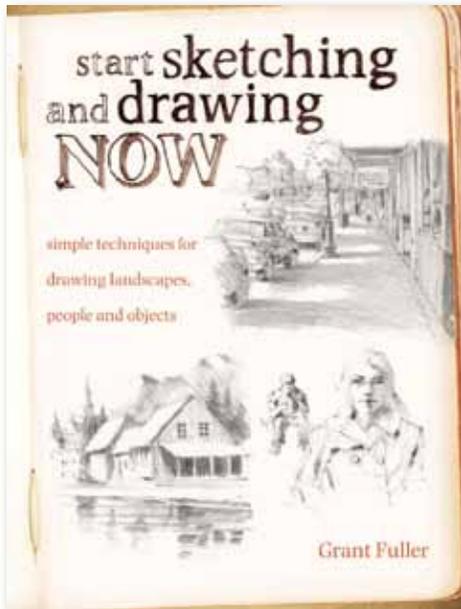
Jump Up Point

Oil on linen (finished painting)
18" x 24" (46cm x 61cm)

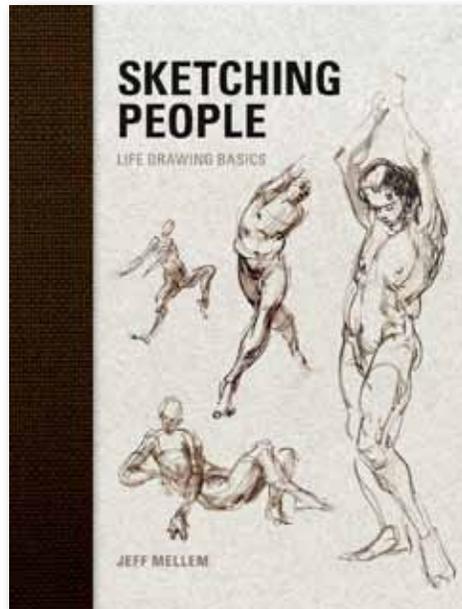
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MORE RESOURCES

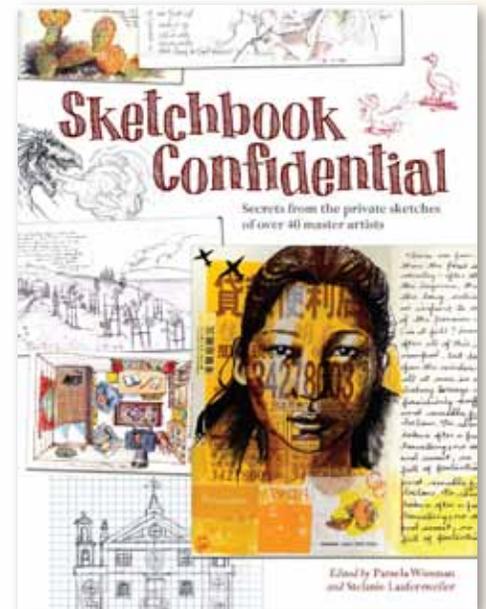
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