

# Christine Pilkinton Fine Art

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*To send light into the darkness of men's hearts  
- such is the duty of the artist. Schumann*

## Drawing Session Two: Using Line and Mass

- Worksheets are from Andrew Loomis' book 'Creative Illustration'
- Slideshow of examples of tonal drawings & contour drawings
- *Exercise: Draw without using line. Draw without using mass.*

"All art is but dirtying the paper delicately."

— John Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing*

Even when you paint, you never stop drawing. ([Igor Babailov](#))

One must always draw, draw with the eyes, when one cannot draw with a pencil. ([Balthus](#))

Value drawings are one of the artist's best friends. ([Harley Brown](#))

A pencil is quiet, clean, odorless, inexpensive, and lightweight. I can slip it in my pocket and take it with me everywhere - my secret friend. ([Sherry Camby](#))

As technology advances at an alarming pace, the place of drawing remains as valid as ever in the creation of art and architecture. ([Prince Charles](#))

Drawing is the backbone. It is no good having a lovely sense of light and color if there isn't the firm foundation underneath. ([Alexander Creswell](#))

DRAWING, ABOVE ALL ELSE, PUTS YOU OVER



I HAVE LEFT THIS DRAWING INCOMPLETE SO IT WILL SHOW THE PROCEDURE. GET RID OF "DRAWING CRUTCHES" AND MAKE YOURSELF DO IT ALL. THE ONLY WAY ONE CAN DRAW IS TO DRAW CONTINUALLY. WHEN YOU DO IT, YOU GAIN MOMENTUM. IF YOU CHEAT AT IT— YOU LOSE.

# DRAWING PROCEDURE



GET GOOD COPY, BUT-  
DON'T SLAVISHLY COPY IT!

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO DRAW-  
DRAW YOUR WAY, BUT MAKE IT  
A LOGICAL PROCEDURE- DON'T  
TRY TO DO EVERYTHING AT THE  
SAME TIME. ALL DRAWING IS  
PROPORTION- IT IS EITHER JUST  
LINE OR THE RENDERING OF  
LIGHT ON FORM. EVERY AREA  
HAS ITS OWN PROPERTY OF BEING  
EITHER IN LIGHT, HALFTONE OR  
SHADOW. YOU MUST DECIDE WHICH-



FOURTH STAGE  
ADDITION OF THE  
HIGHLIGHTS AND  
ACCENTS

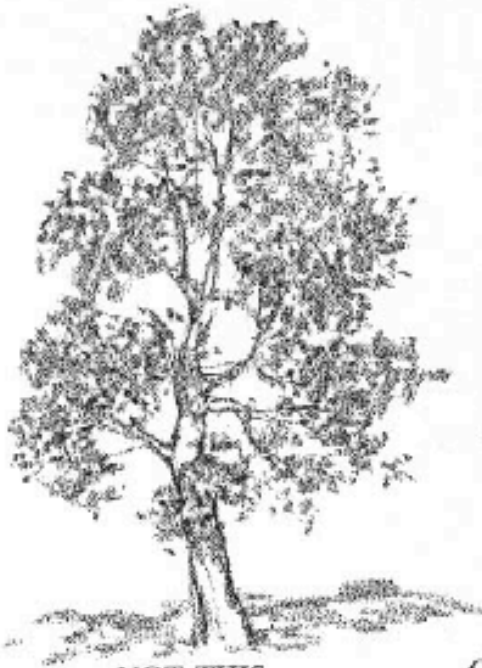
THIRD STAGE  
MODELING OF  
PLANES

SECOND STAGE  
SEPARATION OF  
LIGHT AND SHADOW

FIRST STAGE  
OUTLINE

MATERIALS- COQUILLE #3 - PRISMACOLOR BLACK

## FORM



NOT THIS



ORGANIZE THE SHAPES



LOOK FOR BLOCK FORMS



NOR THIS



GET FULL RANGE OF VALUES



TRY TO SEE THE MASSES

### TRAINING THE EYE TO SEE THE FORM WITHIN CONTOURS

The difference between good and bad drawing or painting is not always in contour and detail, as many think, but in the way the subject has been seen. If one looks only at contours and detail, the drawing may come out like the tree and the head shown at left of the above illustration. We must learn to look for the masses and values that define the form—light, halftone, and shadow as they occur on form. Sometimes we must go even further and attempt to group, design, or organize what we see into even simpler planes and masses. Simple outline is better than outline accompanied by unrelated and misunderstood values.

## THE SOFT APPROACH

This is a delightful way to paint. It is closely allied with the "big tone" approach. However, instead of painting the large tones in to a sharp edge and softening them later, the large tones are set in and immediately softened. The surface detail is added then to the soft tones in overpainting while the paint is wet. The edges are defined where needed, leaving the general softness as desired. This is one of the best ways to combat hardness or tightness in painting. Tightness comes from small forms, too much precision, and everything filled in to a sharply defined edge everywhere.

I believe this approach will come as a revelation to many young painters who have not tried it or do not know about it. It results in a feeling of much more quality, and at the same time adds a three-dimensional effect to one's work if it has been persistently sticking to the front, or picture, plane. It eliminates much of the "pasted on" effect of the units of your picture. Try to hold as much of the softness as possible. A few dexterous strokes may add all the finish you want. I feel quite certain this must have been the approach of both Sargent and Anders Zorn, whose paintings reflect the kind of quality this approach gives. It applies to solidly painted pictures better than others, but can be effectively used in sketches, vignettes, and almost any type of illustration.

It will be well worth your while to make some experiments along this line. I never believed in confining one's approach to a single method. I love to experiment with everything I can think of, or that may be suggested to me wherever I see it. I like to use a method or medium as much in tune with the subject as I can. Some things seem to call for "brittle" treatment, while others call for "delicate and soft." While you are learning, learn to express yourself widely. There is not so much danger then in "burning out" your ap-

proach or making it grow tiresome to your public.

You will note that in the first stage of this head a fairly careful charcoal drawing was made. Then the large tones were laid in over the fixed charcoal. Even in the first statement there is a feeling of the light and form. This is heightened in the next stage by only a few strokes laid over. With the detail of the features and some more light and dark accents, it becomes completed. In order to show you the stages I had to make four separate subjects. With you it would be but one. But by making the four, the last one was painted in a very short time, since I had had the experience of the others. This approach is quite direct, and if possible should be completed while the paint is wet. By adding some poppy oil to your turpentine when painting in oil, you can slow down the drying.

This approach would apply better to opaque water color than to transparent. It is quite a trick to keep it wet long enough to get the softness, but it can be done. Crayon and charcoal are admirable for this approach, or any medium that can be rubbed, then picked out with an eraser.

So many students hope to watch a professional to learn technique. Technique is your own. Method or approach is always a matter of knowledge. There is no reason for any artist who has the good of his craft at heart to keep such things a mystery. Technique cannot be learned by watching, only by doing. If an artist can tell you how it is done, it is so much better than watching him, or even than copying his efforts.

Try out the soft approach if you like it. If you do not like the effects in it, then pass it up. However, it is a very, very good way to beat old man camera, or projector. We can't trace fuzzy images. Maybe you can fuzzy up the hard ones and then bring them back. I don't know. I do it with eyes, hands, and (I hope) thinking.





## THE BRITTLE APPROACH

When things are in a sharp strong light, or when the subject itself seems to call for a certain crisp or brittle quality, I want you to be able to think in these terms. Usually this sharpness would be in subjects of good contrast, using plenty of good lights and darks.

Here we have a brunette in a black-and-white striped dress. The dress is "perky" and the stripes give it "snap." I just can't see this subject painted in mystery and softness. So we put the black hair against practically a white, carry the crispness into the background and all through the dress. Because the dress is busy in pattern it seems to ask for simplicity elsewhere. So we do not fill up the picture with too much other pattern.

Almost all edges are defined here, though if the dress were a single tone the edge would be too hard. But the stripes break up the area, pulling the eye within the contours rather than making one conscious of them. This was overpainted quite a lot on dry paint, a method which is the opposite of the preceding soft approach, and which adds the very quality of brittleness which we tried to avoid in the other instance.

Most young artists paint rather to the hard than to the soft anyway, so this will not need much explanation. About all you can do with this approach is to paint up to your edges, and stop—which most of you do. But it is not without value and charm when incorporated into the right sort of subject.

Light and shadow really looks brittle out in the bright sunlight, and there is no reason for not

painting it so. There are many subjects where crispness is the aim. So experiment. The most crisp effects can be obtained by painting light over a dark but dry undertone. Sometimes an old canvas is perfect for this type of approach. Or you can stain a new canvas with a tone and thin turpentine and let it dry. Opaque water color is excellent for a brittle or crisp effect. One well-known artist works his opaque right over regular beaver board, painting in all the white later with opaque.

Pastel has some of the crisp brittle quality when used over toned papers or boards and not rubbed. It can be done very beautifully and with charming effect. The more rubbing you do with pastel, the more softness, so it is open to either approach. However, pastel being a grainy or chalky medium to start with, most of its charm lies in leaving the pastel pretty much as it goes down without rubbing. It can get so smoothed out that it loses its character entirely and ends up as a more or less unidentifiable medium after reproduction. Any medium should retain some of its own character. It should not look like something else.

Remember, crispness seems to apply mostly to bright light. Remember, too, that crispness and softness combine beautifully together, are better combined than either by itself. So do not decide to go all to the hard, ever, because that is right back where you started. We all start out "the hard way."

Note that this painting is not entirely without softness. It needs the few soft edges to establish crispness by contrast.





A few great DRAWING WEBSITES...

<http://www.learning-to-see.co.uk/still-life-drawings>



# Learning to See

A practical, no nonsense guide to better drawing and painting

This page will show you a series of still life drawings in charcoal, pastel and conte are exercises in tone, and are drawn without the use of line. It's become apparent to me that getting the tones right in a drawing goes a long way to capturing the feeling of the light. Obvious, really, but this should apply to painting too.

I'm hoping that, through this series, I'll be able to investigate further whether this is a matter of getting the tones right as they appear to my eye, or whether it's mainly getting the relationships between the main tone blocks right that matters most, regardless of whether the drawing is done in a low or a high key.

Website <http://www.jdhillberry.com> ALSO Subscribe to his videos on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/jdhillberryvideos> For realistic drawing techniques

