OLD TREE

Brenda Hoddinott



V-06 ADVANCED: NATURE AND STILL LIFE

Squirkling works perfectly for rendering diverse highly realistic drawing subjects, including many found in nature as well as several made by humans.

In this heavily illustrated lesson, you render a detailed drawing of an old weathered tree with a focus on textures and forms. Contrasting values define the many overlapping branches according to the lights and darks created by the dominant light source.

This project is divided into two sections:

- **OUTLINING OVERLAPPING BRANCHES:** You lightly sketch the outlines of the major branches of the tree, and refine the sketch by adding detailed branches that overlap others. The goal is to prepare a contour drawing to serve as a guideline for adding shading.
- **SHADING WITH SQUIRKLES:** Squirkling lends itself perfectly to a broad range of textures and diverse subjects. The shading of this tree is rendered with squirkles of various sizes from very large to tiny.

You need 2H, HB, and 2B pencils, good quality drawing paper, and erasers. If you plan to use regular wood pencils instead of mechanical, you also need a pencil sharpener and a sandpaper block.

This lesson is recommended for artists with a lot of patience and/or strong drawing skills, as well as students of home schooling, academic and recreational fine art educators.

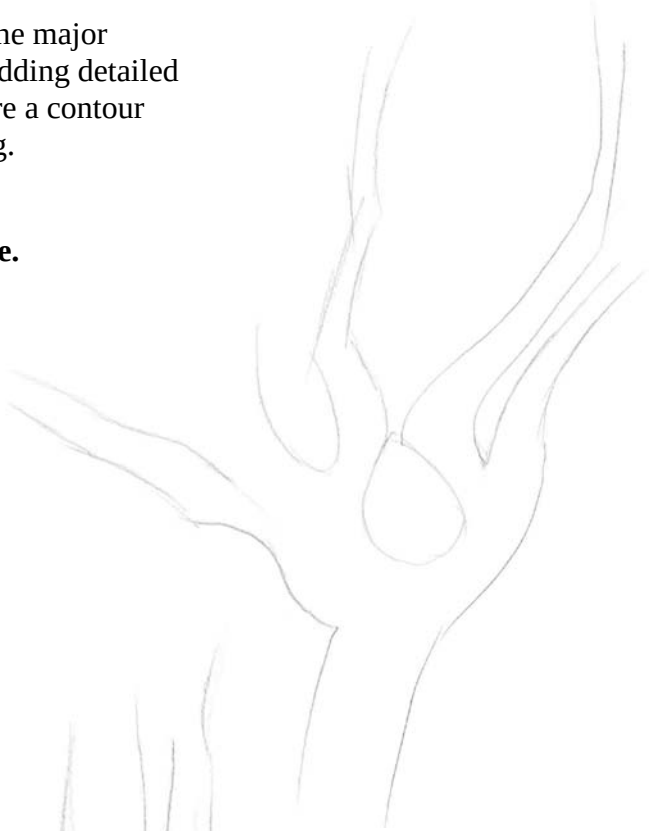
13 PAGES – 39 ILLUSTRATIONS

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OUTLINING OVERLAPPING BRANCHES

Figure 601



In this section, you lightly sketch the outlines of the major branches of an old tree, and refine the sketch by adding detailed branches that overlap others. The goal is to prepare a contour drawing to serve as a guideline for adding shading.

1. Use a 2H pencil to sketch the largest branches that make up the core of the tree.

Refer to Figures 601 and 602. Press very lightly with your pencil. My sketches are much lighter than they appear here. I have darkened them in Photoshop so you can see them clearly.

Figure 602



2. Take your time and outline the various parts of the tree with neat lines.

Refer to Figures 603 to 614. I used a 2H mechanical pencil and again, kept my lines very light.

The branches of this very old tree are bumpy and uneven. Make sure your outlines illustrate this quality.

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Figure 603



Several illustrations in this section show close up views of the most intricate parts of the tree.

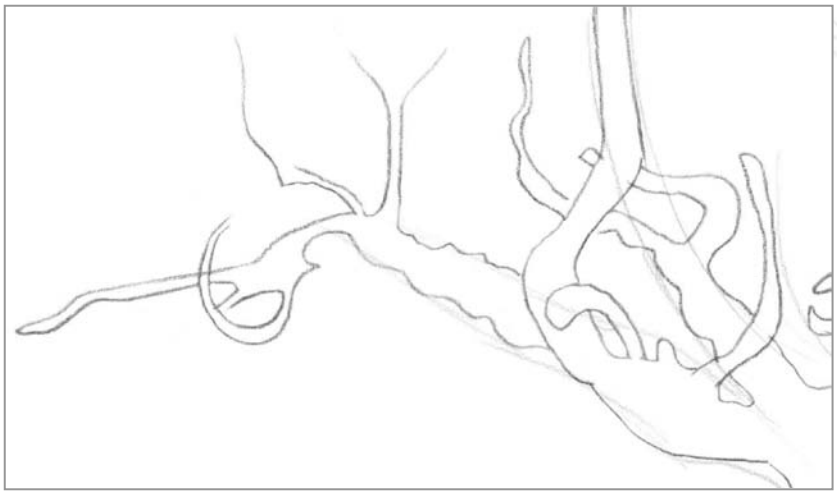
Figure 604



Figure 605



Figure 606



Naked branches of many old trees tend reveal a beautiful skeleton that curves and twists in many different directions.

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Figure 607



The gnarled, twisted and weather-beaten branches of this contorted old tree capture a glimpse into an often underappreciated, but exquisite phenomenon of nature.

Figure 608



Figure 609

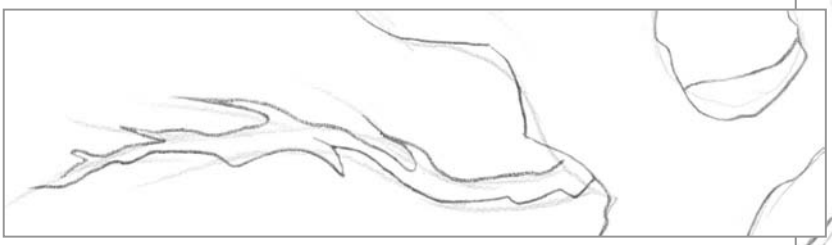
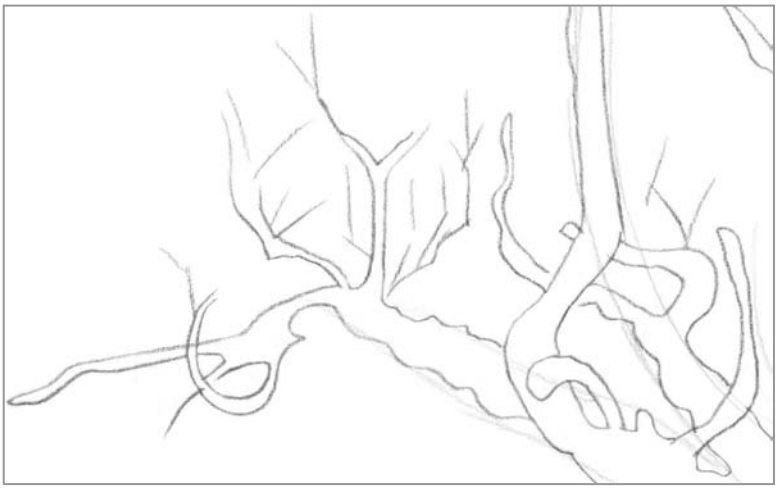


Figure 610



To the dull mind, nature is leaden; to the illumined mind the whole world burns and sparkles with light.
>Ralph Waldo Emerson<

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Figure 611

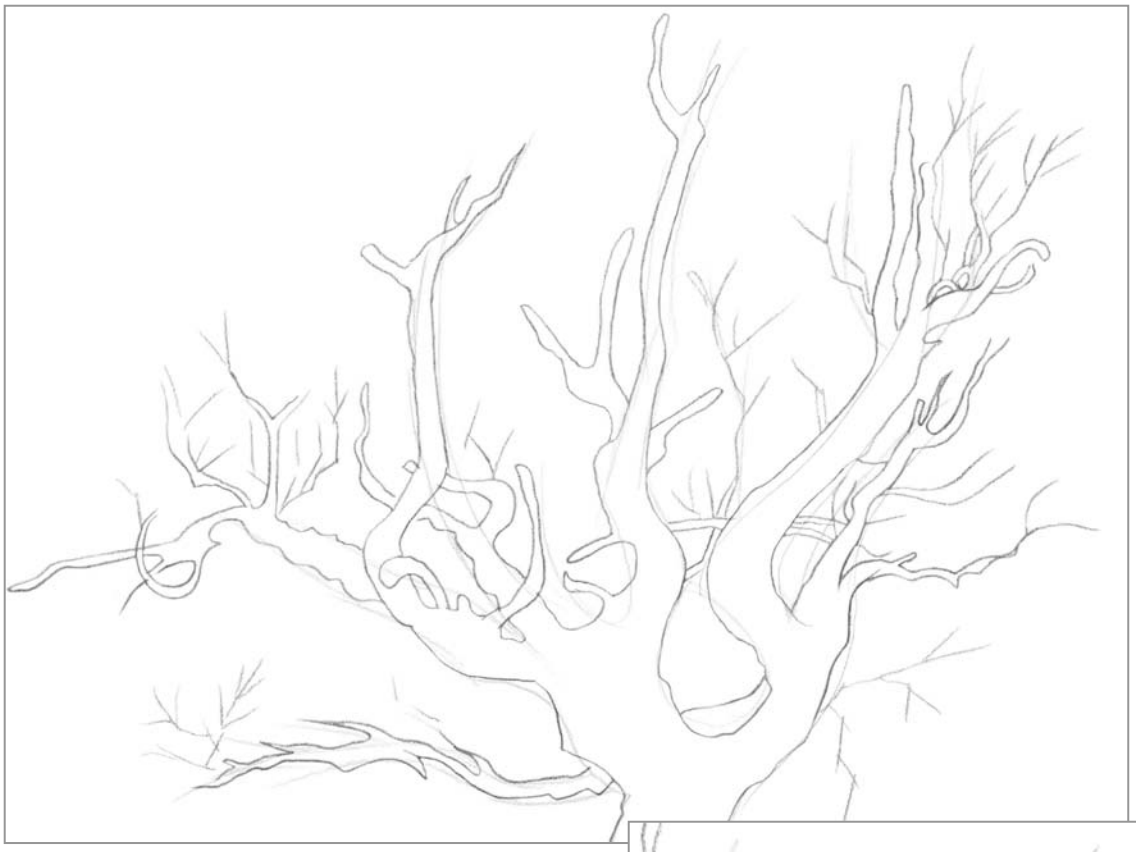


Figure 612



Figure 613

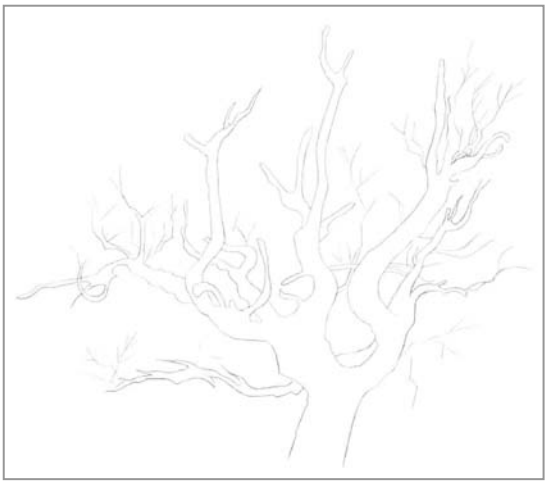


Figure 614



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Figure 615



3. **Use your kneaded eraser to lighten your drawing until the lines are very faint.**

   Refer to figure 615. This image is barely visible digitally and may not show up well when printed.

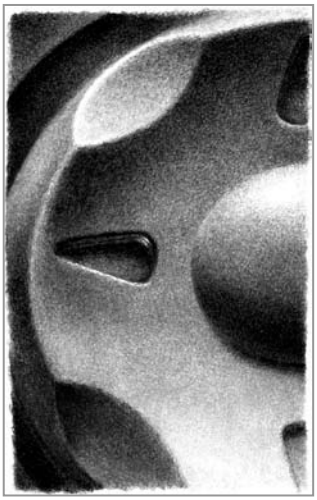
SHADING WITH SQUIRKLES

Squirkling lends itself perfectly to a broad range of textures and diverse subjects. For example, compare the loosely rendered sketch of a tree in Figure 616 to the photorealistic close up section of a portable telephone in Figure 617. Both drawings are rendered with squirkles.

Figure 616



Figure 617



My drawing is rendered with mechanical pencils. 2H (very good for light values), HB (great for middle values), and 2B (works well for dark values) pencils can create a full range of values when you vary the size and density of the squirkling lines and the pressure used in holding the pencils.

Figure 618



I began on the left, and for the most part, worked my way toward the right. Figure 618 shows the tiny section on the far left where I began adding shading. (Figure 619 shows a close-up of this section.)

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4. Use squirkling to add light, medium, and dark values to the old tree.

Refer to Figures 619 to 639. The light source is from the upper left; hence the overall values are darker on the right and lower right.

By varying the density (drawing the lines either far apart or close together) of the lines, you can achieve many different textures.

Figure 619

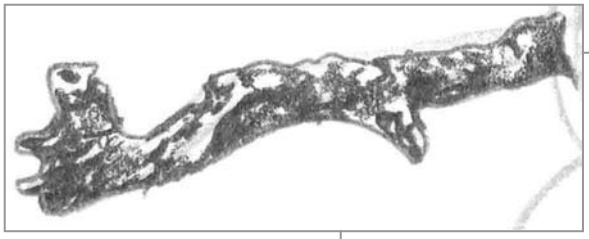
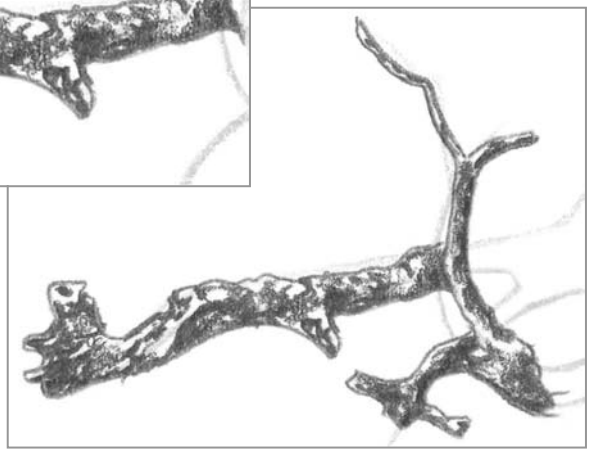
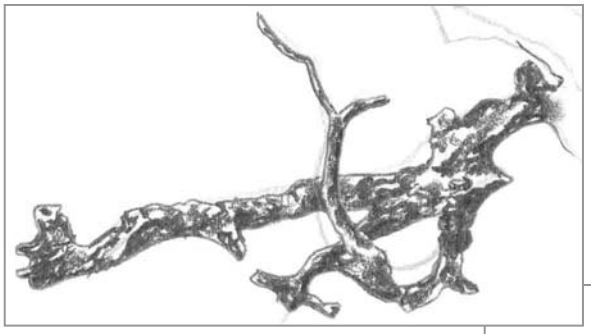


Figure 620



Light values with squirkles tend to have noticeable curved lines with lots of white space showing.

Figure 621



In darker values, the lines are drawn more closely together, filling in most of the paper with the texture of squirkles.

Figure 622

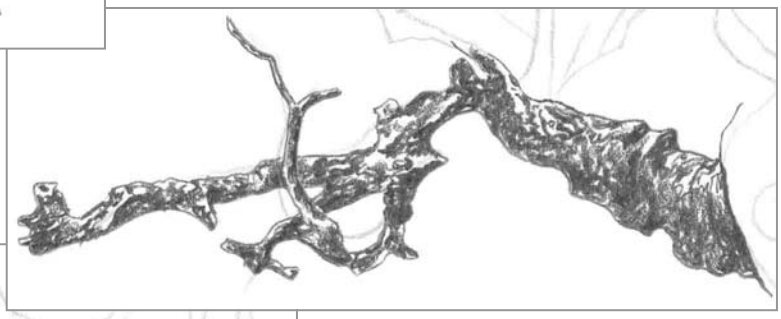


Figure 623



Remember, the less pressure you apply to the pencil, the lighter the values become.

In my lightest shading, only the weight of the pencil itself makes the very faint values.

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Figure 624

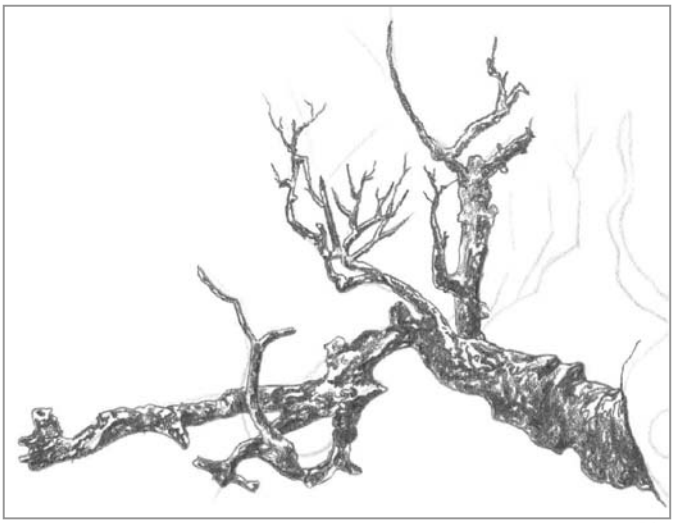


Figure 625

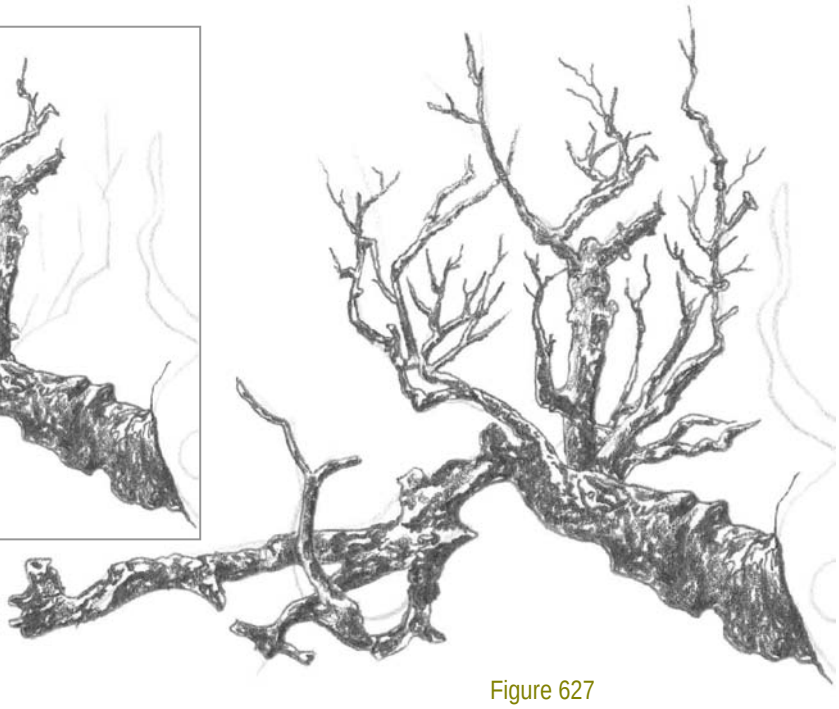


Figure 626



Figure 627



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It is not so much for its beauty that the forest makes a claim upon men's hearts, as for that subtle something, that quality of air that emanates from old trees, that so wonderfully changes and renews a weary spirit.
>Robert Louis Stevenson<

Figure 628

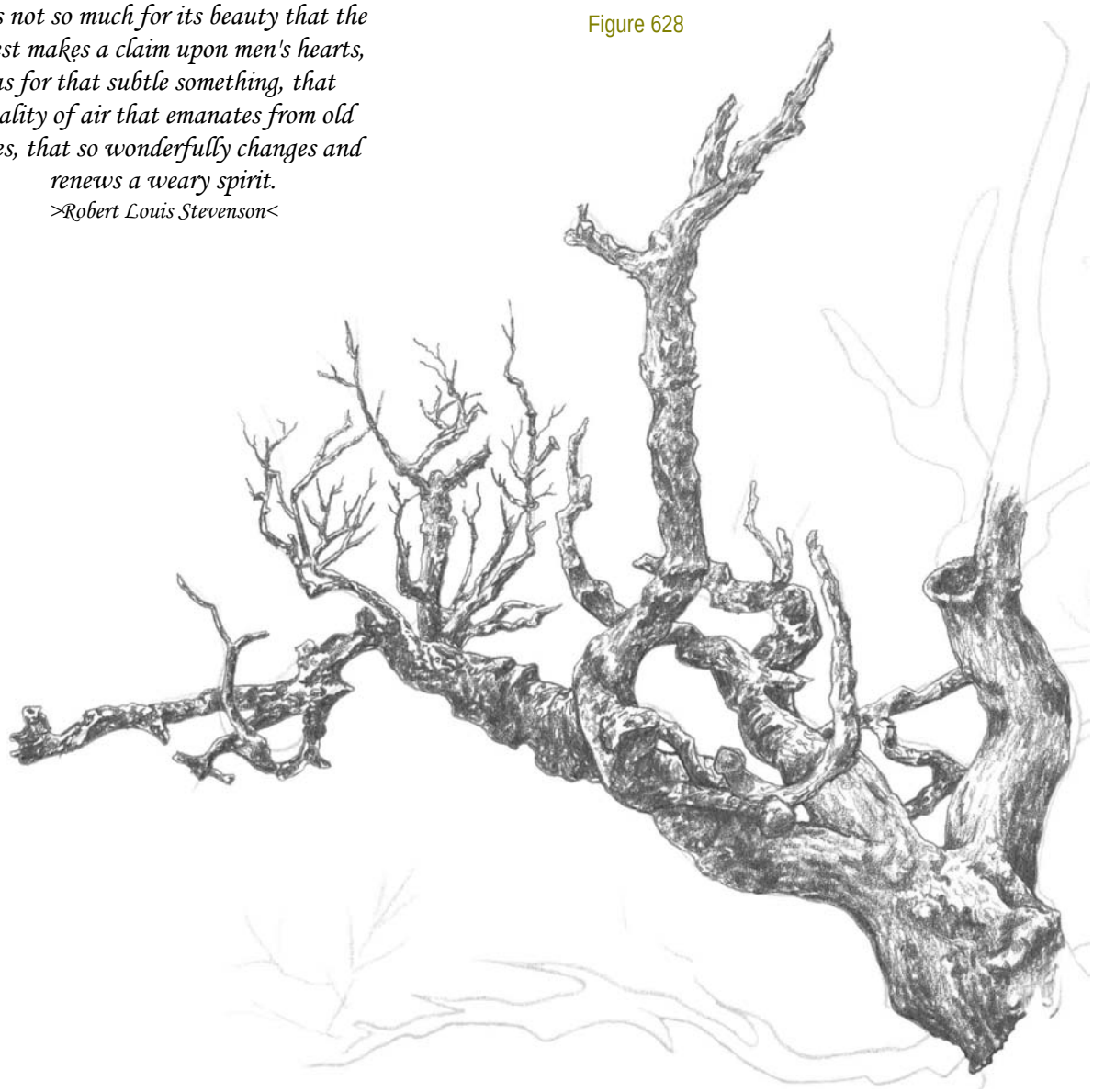


Figure 629



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As you complete each section, continuously go back over your drawing and adjust the values and check for branches you may have missed.

Human subtlety will never devise an invention more beautiful, more simple, or more direct than does Nature, because in her inventions, nothing is lacking and nothing is superfluous.
>Leonardo da Vinci<

Figure 630

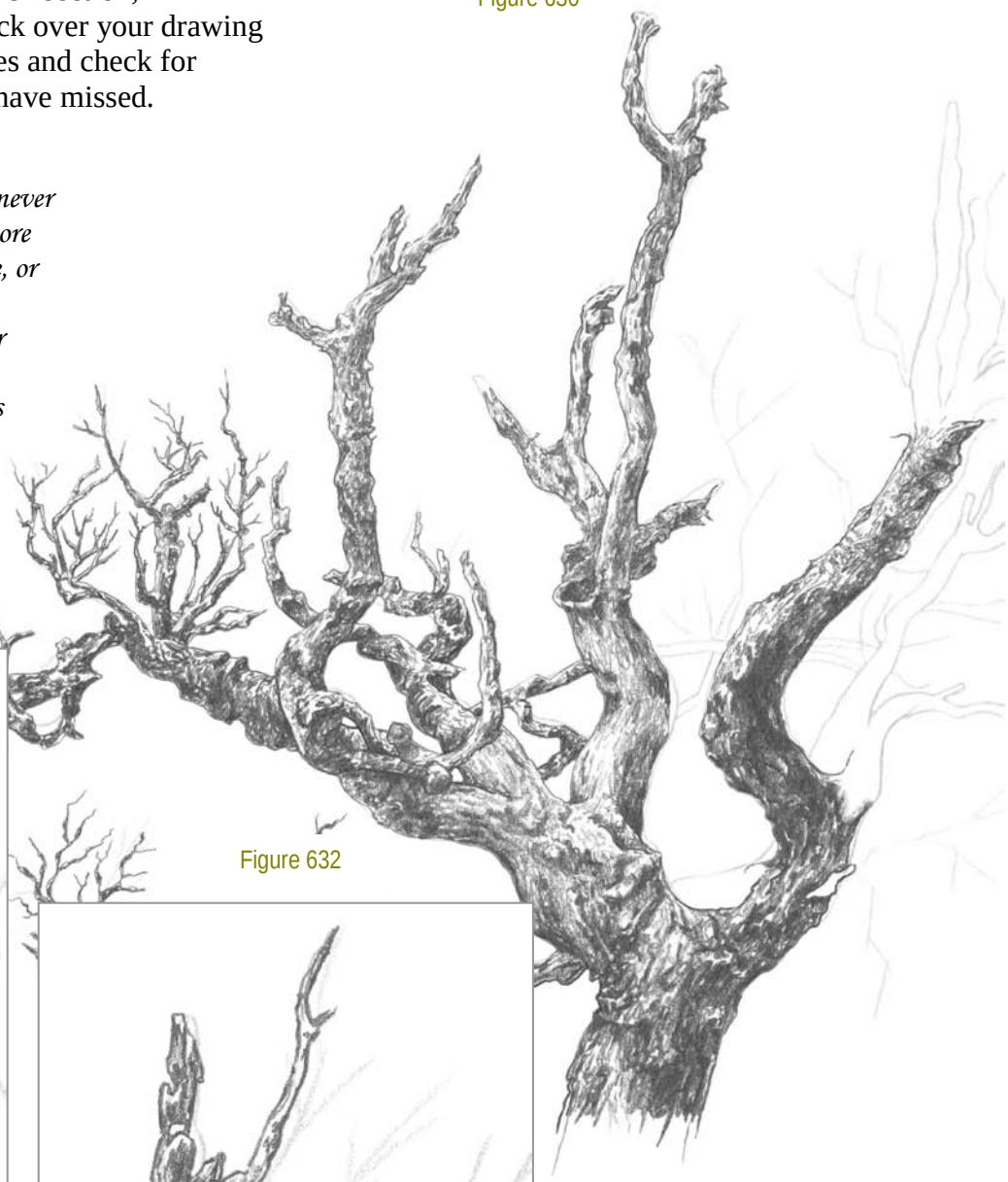
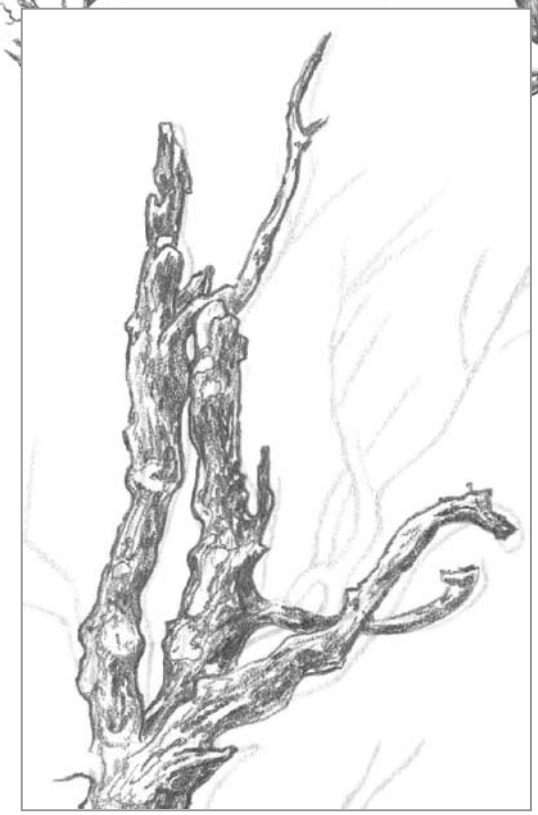


Figure 631



Figure 632



The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way. Some see nature all ridicule and deformity . . . and some scarce see nature at all. But to the eyes of the man of imagination, nature is imagination itself.
>William Blake<

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Figure 633



Figure 634

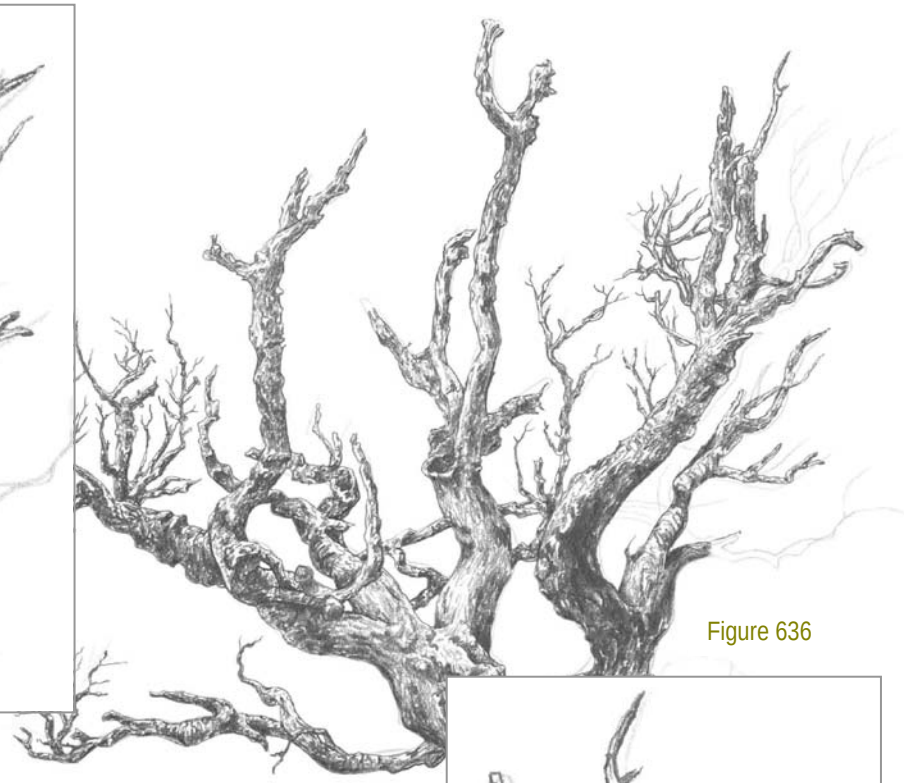


Figure 635



Figure 636



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Figure 637



The final branch added to this tree is alive and thriving with healthy leaves. Refer to Figure 639.

Figure 638

Figure 639



Complete the shading of the tree. Check over your drawing carefully and adjust the values as needed.

CHALLENGE

Bring a camera with you the next time you are in a heavily wooded area. Take pictures of old trees from different angles – some close-up and some from a distance. Use your photos as references to render a detailed drawing of an old tree, using the drawing processes and techniques used in this project.

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BRENDA HODDINOTT - BIOGRAPHY

As a self-educated teacher, visual artist, portraitist, forensic artist, and illustrator, Brenda Hoddinott utilizes diverse art media including graphite, technical pen, colored pencil, chalk pastel, charcoal, conté crayon, and oil paints.

My philosophy on teaching art is to focus primarily on the enjoyment aspects while gently introducing the technical and academic. Hence, in creating a passion for the subject matter, the quest for knowledge also becomes enjoyable.

>Brenda Hoddinott<

Born in St. John's, Newfoundland, Brenda grew up in the small town of Corner Brook. She developed strong technical competencies with a personal commitment to self directed learning, and the aid of assorted "Learn to Draw" books. During Brenda's twenty-five year career as a self-educated civilian forensic artist, numerous criminal investigation departments have employed Brenda's skills, including Royal Canadian Mounted Police and municipal police departments. In 1992, Brenda was honored with a commendation from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and in 1994, she was awarded a Certificate of Membership from "Forensic Artists International".

Her home-based art career included graphic design, and teaching recreational drawing and painting classes. As supervisor of her community's recreational art department, Brenda hired and trained teachers, and designed curriculum for several children's art programs. In 1998, Brenda chose to end her eighteen-year career as an art educator in order to devote more time to writing, drawing, painting, and developing her websites.

Drawspace http://www.drawspace.com incorporates her unique style and innovative approach to curriculum development. This site offers downloadable and printable drawing classes for students of all abilities from the age of eight through adult. Students of all ages, levels and abilities have praised the simple step-by-step instructional approach. This site is respected as a resource for fine art educators, home schooling programs, and educational facilities throughout the world.

LEARN-TO-DRAW BOOKS BY BRENDA HODDINOTT

- **Drawing for Dummies:** Wiley Publishing, Inc., New, York, NY, this 336 page book is available on various websites and in major bookstores internationally.
- **The Complete Idiot's Guide to Drawing People:** Winner of the Alpha-Penguin Book of the Year Award 2004, Alpha - Pearson Education – Macmillan, Indianapolis, IN, this 360 page book is available on various websites and in major bookstores internationally.

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