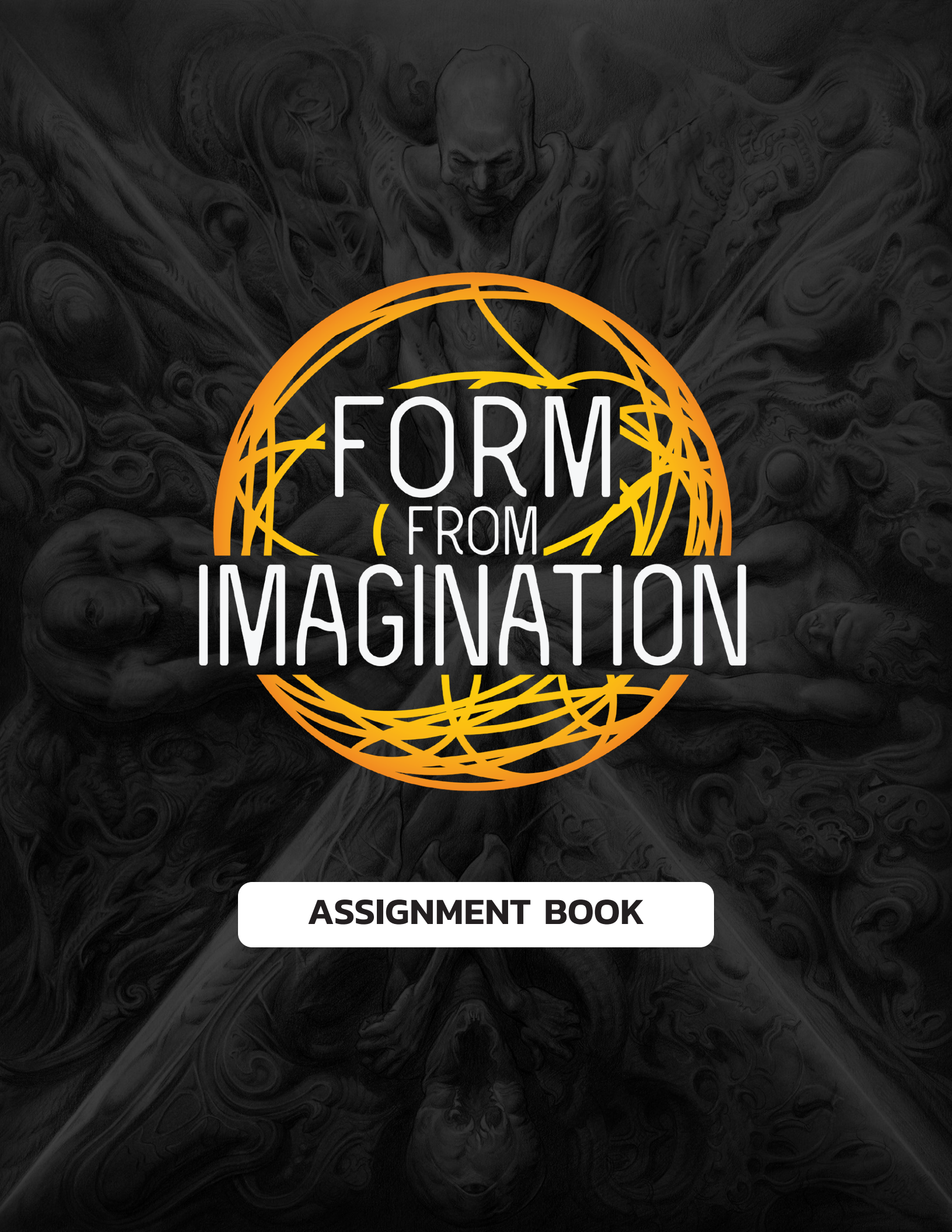

FORM
FROM
IMAGINATION
ASSIGNMENT BOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THIS ASSIGNMENT BOOK

This assignment book will guide you through the curriculum of this course. For every assignment there is an accompanying video that further explains the specific concepts and techniques to be explored in each assignment–be sure to return to these videos if you ever find yourself confused. The "Learning Objectives" will prompt you on key things to practice as you carry out your assignments. If you choose to do these assignments in digital, reference the "Adaptation for Digital" section at the bottom of each assignment page.

One important note about time management: I do not think you should spend more than half of your drawing time doing the exercises in this course. This may sound strange, but it is part of your discipline to exercise your creativity and not fall back on hard skills. It is all too easy to fill your drawing time with prescribed tasks from others and avoid the hard work of crafting your own ideas. You cannot let that happen. Split your drawing time between doing assignments and being purely creative on a day-to-day basis.

Another note: Take your time with the exercises. In the early demonstrations, I make sure to note my final times for executing each drawing. Rendering a simple sphere still takes me a solid hour if I have any hope of it being good. Anything more complex than a sphere will scale accordingly, time-wise. One of the most common issues for artists who train themselves online is that they have no real conception of how long it actually takes to execute a drawing. They simply have never had the chance to silently loiter around a professional artist for the many hours it takes to do even the smallest of things.

I think six months is a reasonable time frame for getting through these assignments. If your schedule is very aggressive, I think you could do them in three months, but anything less than that probably means that you are not taking your time, which means you are cheating yourself out of understanding form.

One last note: Once you reach the section on "Combined Geometric Forms," it is important that you find ways to make that and all subsequent assignments your own. The base geometric forms are good to practice in a cut-and-dry manner, but as things become more complicated, you should keep yourself interested by bending the assignments to be as close as possible to the kinds of things you are interested in drawing. Say you like fantasy art–there is no reason the "Compound Block" or "Compound Forms - Creative" exercises can't be done as castles.

And that's it! Get to drawing and have fun!

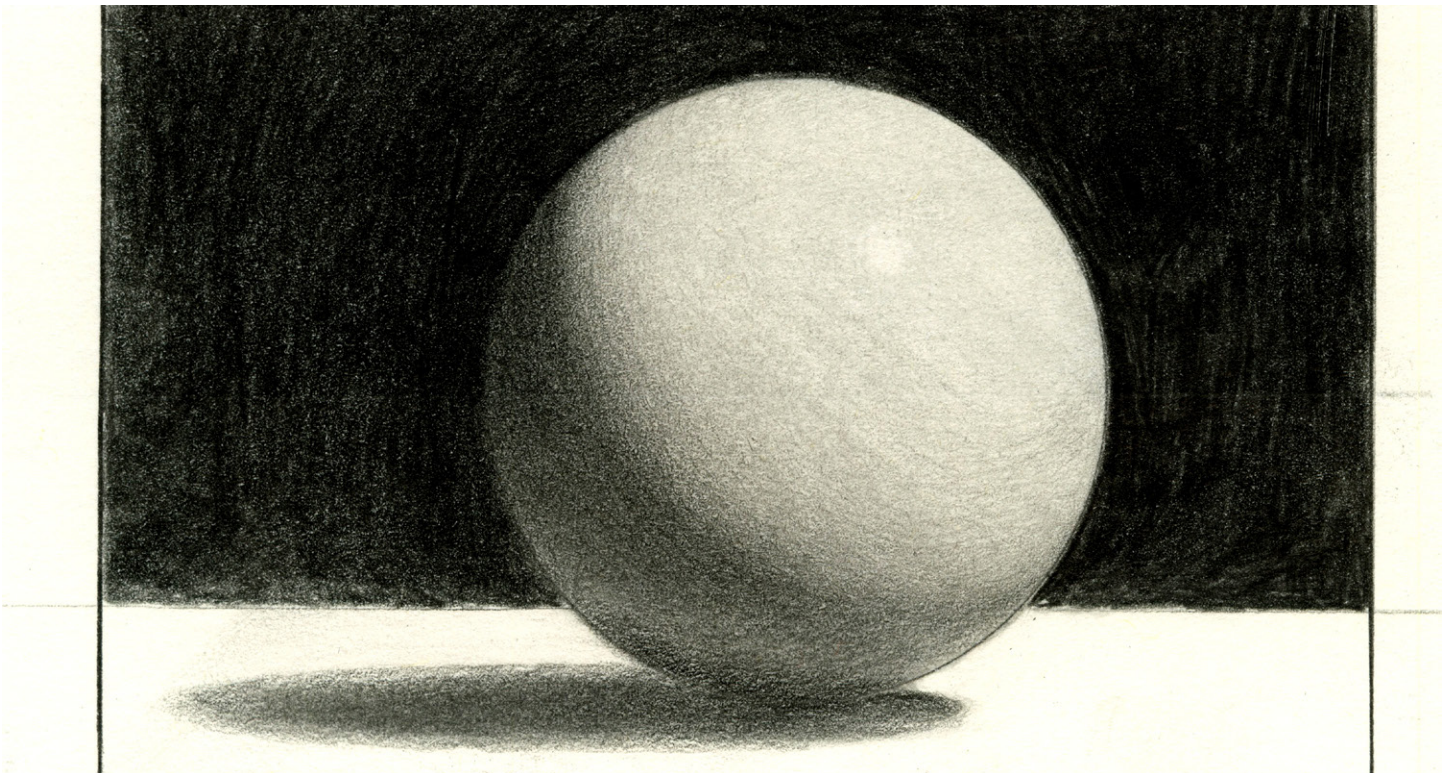
SPHERE – FRONT-LIT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate all 12 modeling factors.
- Create a clear form light and form shadow.
- Vary your hand pressure to achieve a full value range.
- Use the blending stump sparingly and efficiently.
- Render the sphere from shadow to light.
- Render the shadows by progressively darkening them.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render one sphere in frontal lighting. Place the light off to one side, but not so far that it becomes a true side light. Be sure to include a background of some sort. It should take you over an hour to complete this assignment.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Render three spheres in three unique compositions in front light. Include a background. Change the angle of the light in each drawing. Each render should take less than 15 mins.

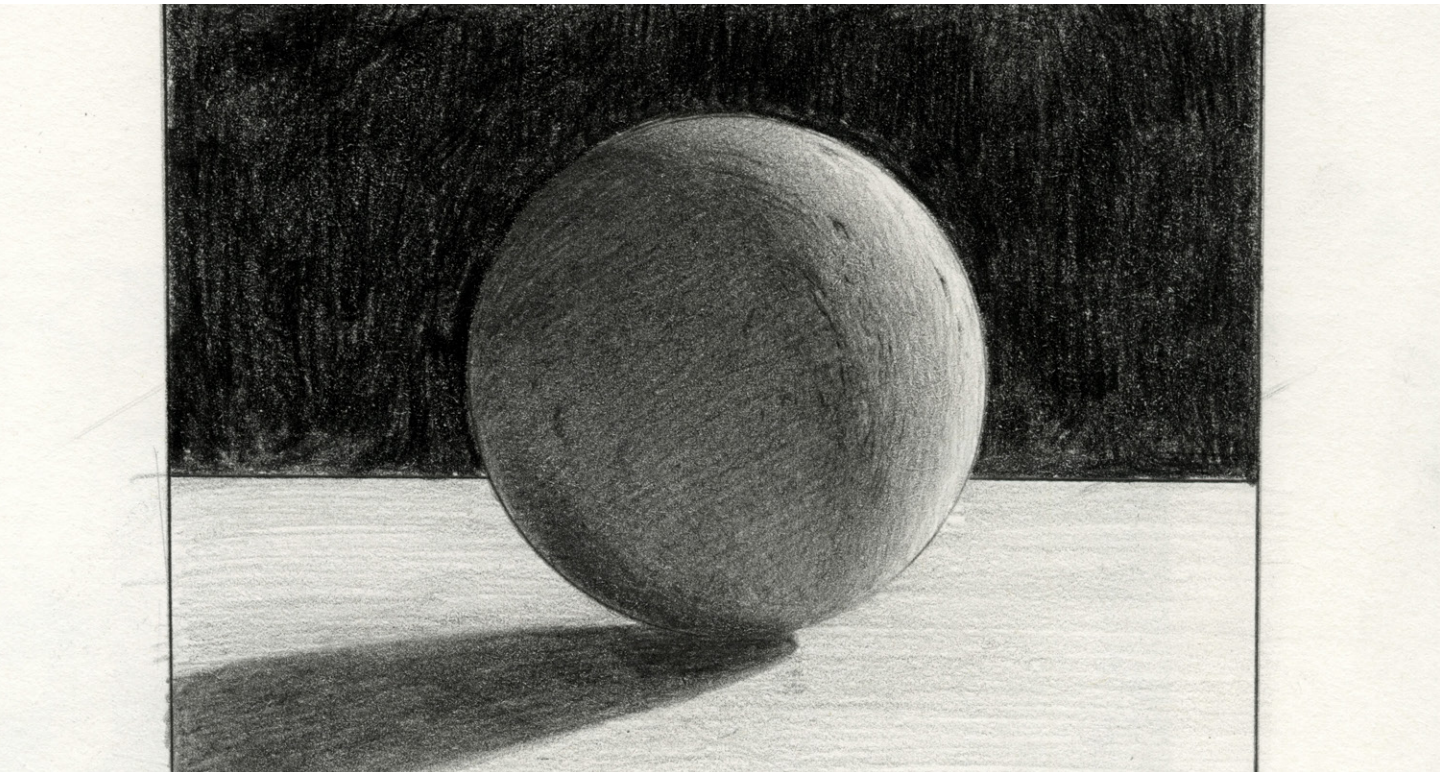
SPHERE – BACK-LIT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Indicate a cast shadow that is coming towards the viewer.
- Lighten the form light all the way to the contour edge.
- Introduce some texture to the form.
- Achieve a solid rendering in the shadow.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render one sphere in back light. Place the light off to one side. The goal here is to get a “good drawing” even though you mostly only have shadows to work with. This develops the confidence to obscure things in compositions without losing quality. Be sure to include a background of some sort. This assignment should take you over an hour to complete.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Render three back-lit spheres on a background in three unique compositions. Make the light shape smaller with each successive drawing to practice achieving a solid render when most of the surface area of the sphere is in shadow. Each render should take 15 mins.

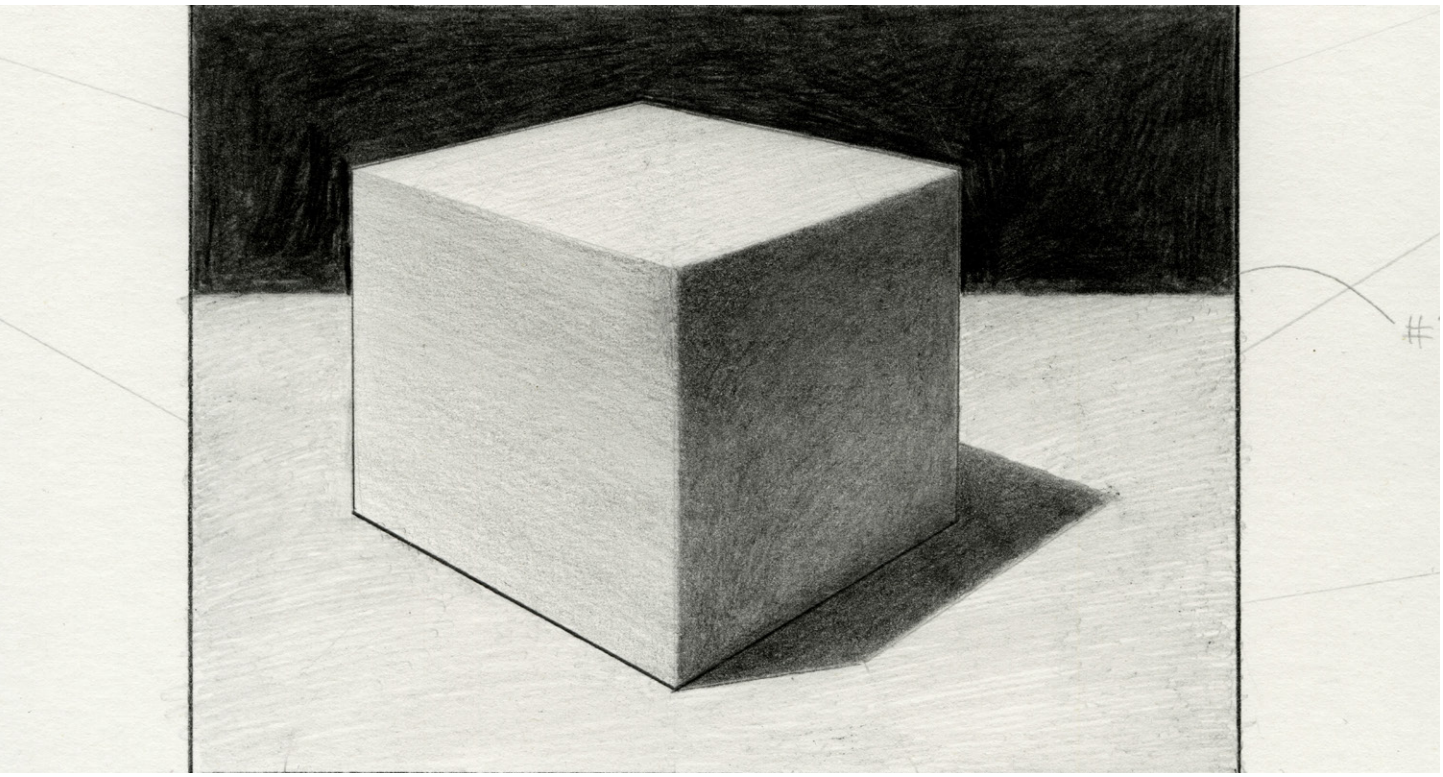
CUBE – FRONT-LIT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Achieve a 1-2-3 read on the cube.
- Render each flat plane with a slight gradient.
- Ensure that cast shadow edges recede to vanishing points.
- Avoid internal lines at cube edges.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render one cube in frontal lighting. Seek a 1-2-3 read with the top plane as the 1 plane. Don't let the length of the cast shadow conflict with the 1-2-3 read- if the top plane is the 1 plane, the cast shadow should be short. Be sure to include a background of some sort. This assignment should take you over an hour to complete.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Render three cubes. Vary the arrangement of the 1-2-3 read with each cube. For the cube with the 1 plane on the front, make sure the length of the cast shadow reinforces the position of the 1 plane. Each render should take 15 mins.

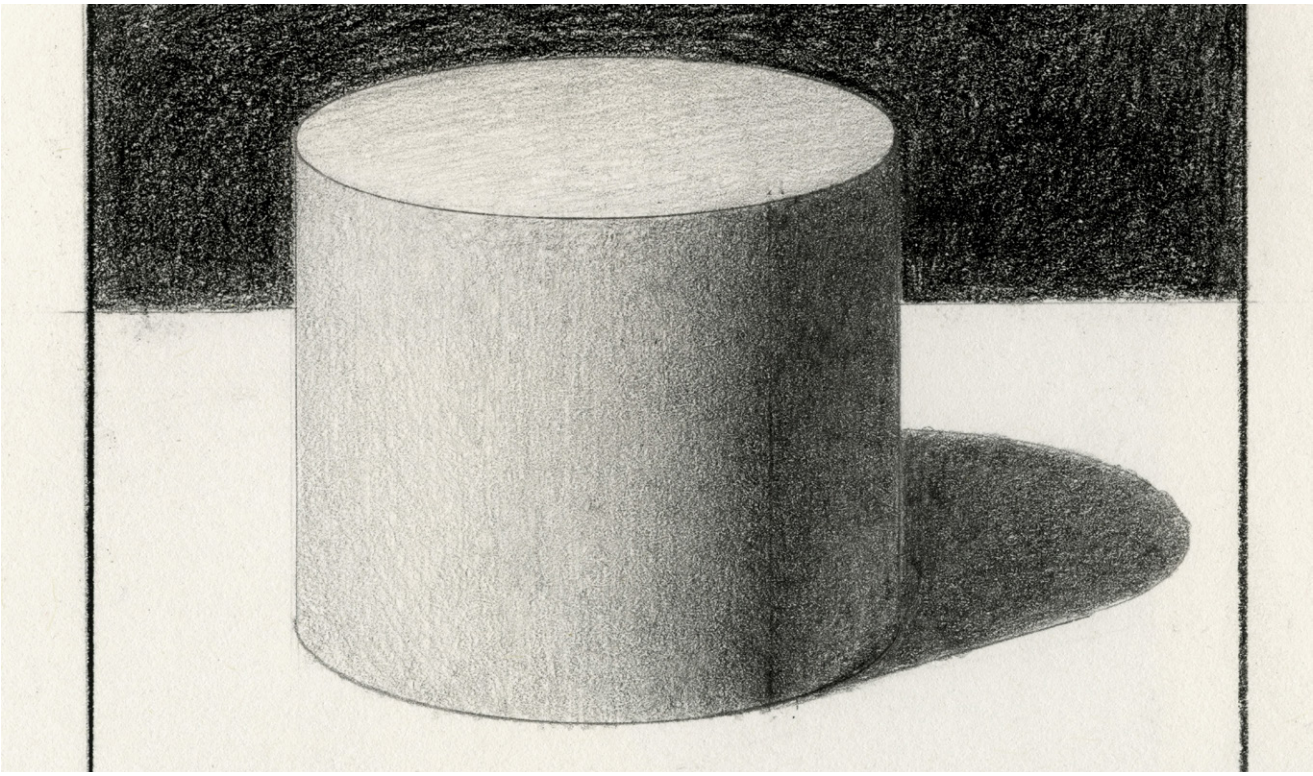
CYLINDER – FRONT-LIT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Produce a consistent gradient across the side of a cylinder.
- Make each vertical band of the cylinder's side gradient a uniform value.
- Make the entire curved side darker than the top plane.
- Use the blending stump sparingly and efficiently.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render one cylinder in frontal lighting. Make the top plane the 1 plane. Keep the whole curved area darker than the top plane. Be sure to include a background of some sort. This assignment should take you over an hour to complete.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Render three cylinders. For one of them, reverse the typical arrangement and make the curving portion lighter than the flat top plane of the cylinder. Each render should take 15 mins.

TEXTURED SPHERE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Apply heavy texture while maintaining spherical rendering.
- Control dark accents that cross a light shape.
- Incorporate dramatic hatching.
- Use texture to explain form.
- Catch highlights on texture to break up flat areas.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render one textured sphere. Make sure the texture is very dramatic and heavily modulates the silhouette of the sphere. Use your hatching to help explain the texture and reinforce the form. This assignment should take you over an hour to complete.

ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Render three textured spheres. Use a different texture for each sphere. With strong textures like this, your renders may take just as long as a pencil drawing.

TEXTURED CYLINDER

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Apply heavy texture while maintaining spherical rendering.
- Keep the curving plane darker than the top plane.
- Incorporate dramatic hatching.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render one composition that contains two textured cylinders. Make sure the texture modulates the silhouettes of the cylinders. Put one cylinder on its side. It should take you one to two hours to complete this assignment.

ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Render six cylinders that fulfill all of the above criteria. They can be in one composition or in three compositions with two each.

CREATIVE SPHERE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Express creative ideas while respecting spherical form.
- Use the blending stump to create light forms.
- Design rhythms that emphasize the spherical form.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render a spherical study using the kinds of forms that interest you the most. It can be a robot, a flesh ball, a monster head, whatever. Surprise yourself! You're an artist, ain't yah? Get creative. Look for dramatic forms you can add to the form while respecting the base primary shape. Things like spines, teeth, wings etc. Don't just "add forms", design some negative cuts into the sphere as well to get dark accents.

ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Depending on the complexity of what you choose to make, you might not need to up the volume. If you find you finished quickly, do three renders. Never rush.

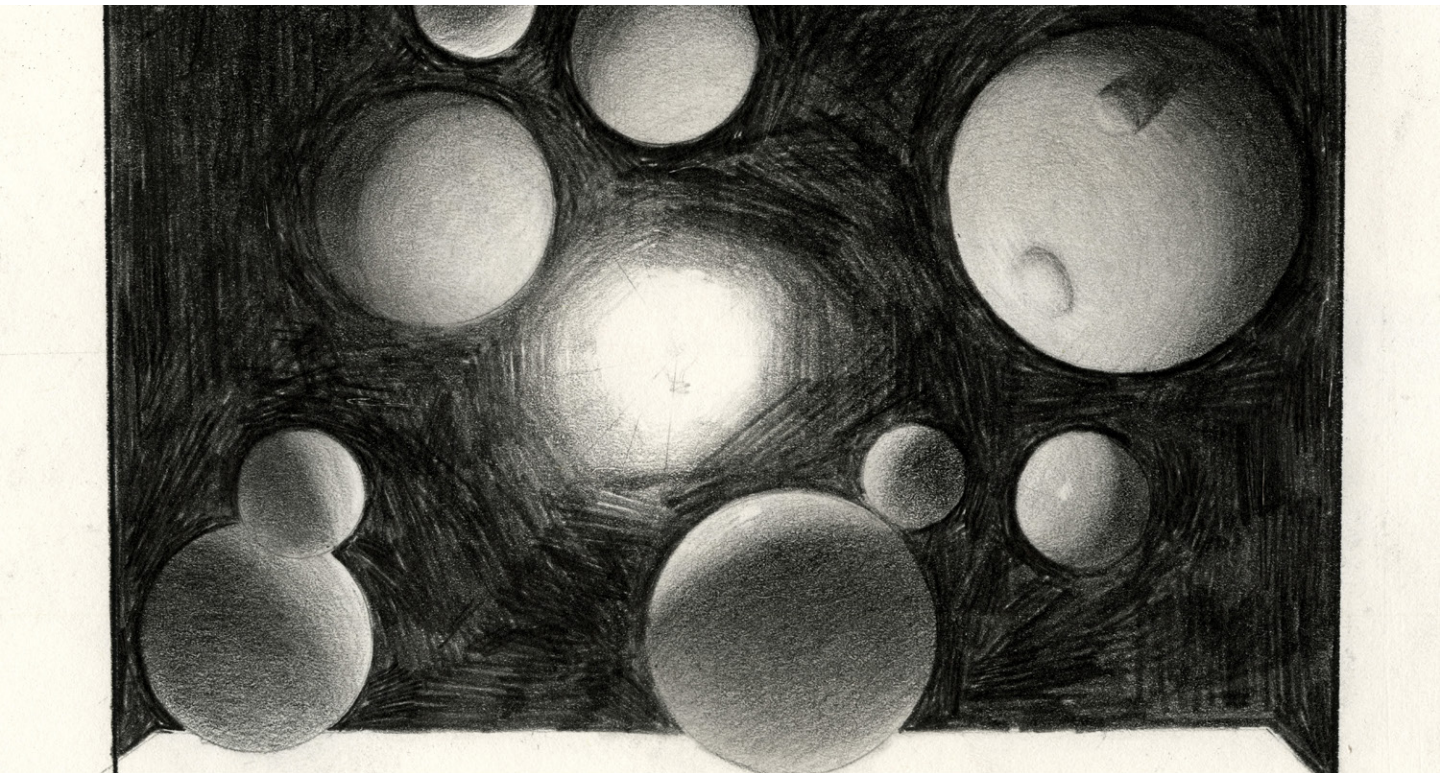
SPHERE GROUP

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Draw numerous objects that respect a small, local light source.
- Introduce cast shadows from one object onto others.
- Vary back-lit and front-lit objects to emphasize the light.

THE ASSIGNMENT

In your sketchbook, draw a composition of several circles that interact and some that overlap. Place a light source at the center of the group. Render the objects. Decide which spheres are front-lit and which are back-lit.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Use only one set of circles, but do three versions with the light in different positions (with one being at the center and the other two being elsewhere).

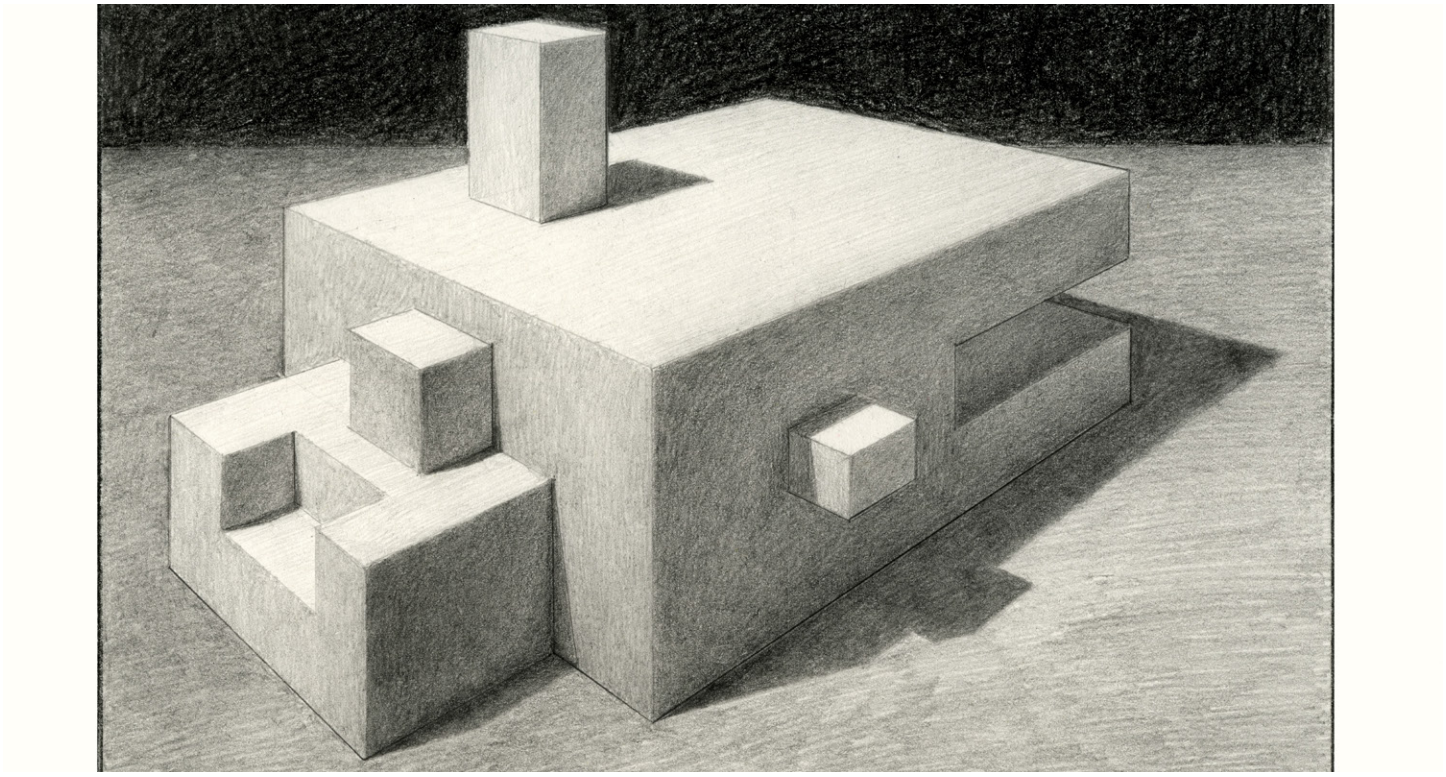
COMPOUND FORMS – COMPOUND BLOCK

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Practice casting shadows from one object onto another.
- Draw a view that imagines what the light source “sees.”
- Draw a view that imagines the back of an object not in view.
- Integrate negative space into a form.
- Apply similar values to all planes in the same orientation.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render a compound cube with various extrusions and cutouts. Be patient when constructing your perspective grid. Be sure to include a “chimney” structure that casts a shadow onto the top plane of your cube. Also include at least two cutouts and an area where one block rests directly against the side of another block. This assignment should take you over two hours to complete.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Render three separate compositions with different structures that fulfill all of the above criteria.

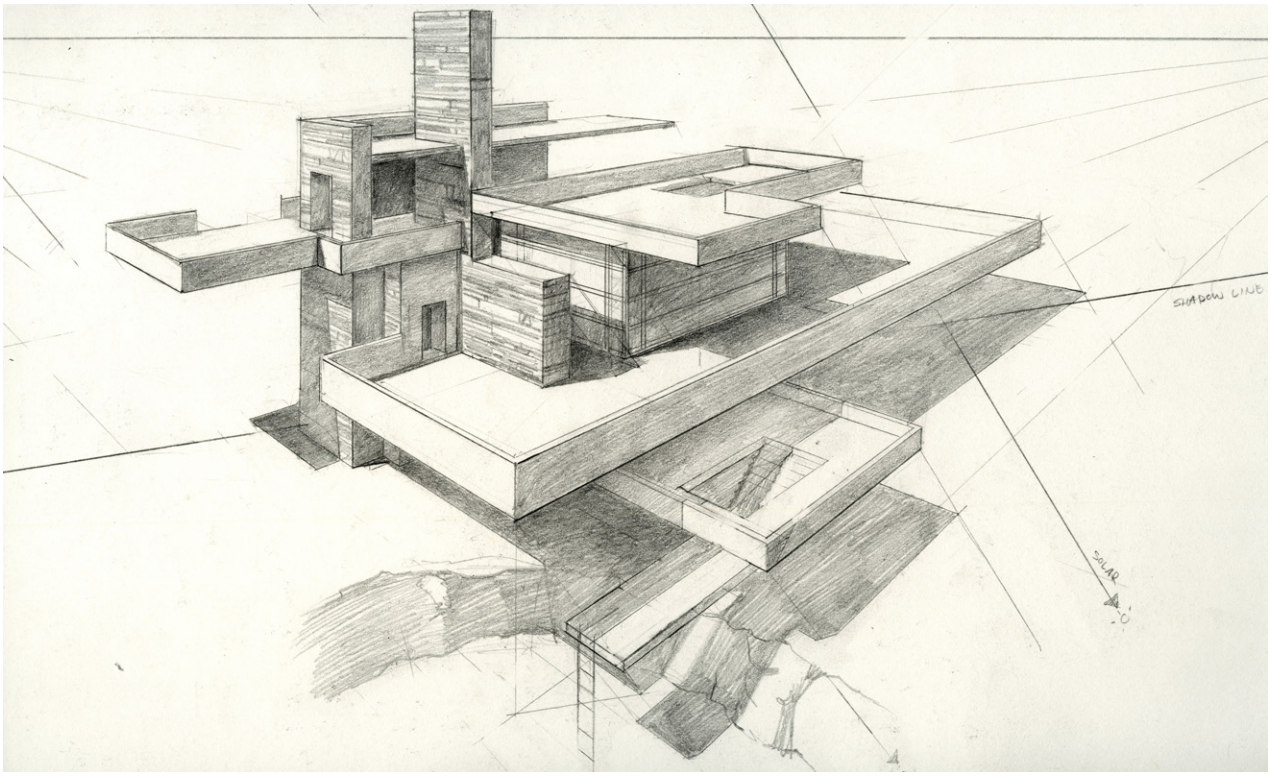
COMPOUND FORMS – CREATIVE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Practice arranging simple forms into pleasing arrangements.
- Keep perspective simple for complex forms.
- Estimate shadows in complex environments.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Draw (no need to fully render) a modernist house made of simple forms. Keep the individual forms very simple, but try to arrange them in an interesting way. Next, use shadows to further break up the monotony of the rectilinear forms. Finally, add some indications of different textures like brick to add contrast to the composition.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Draw one house but render it once designed.

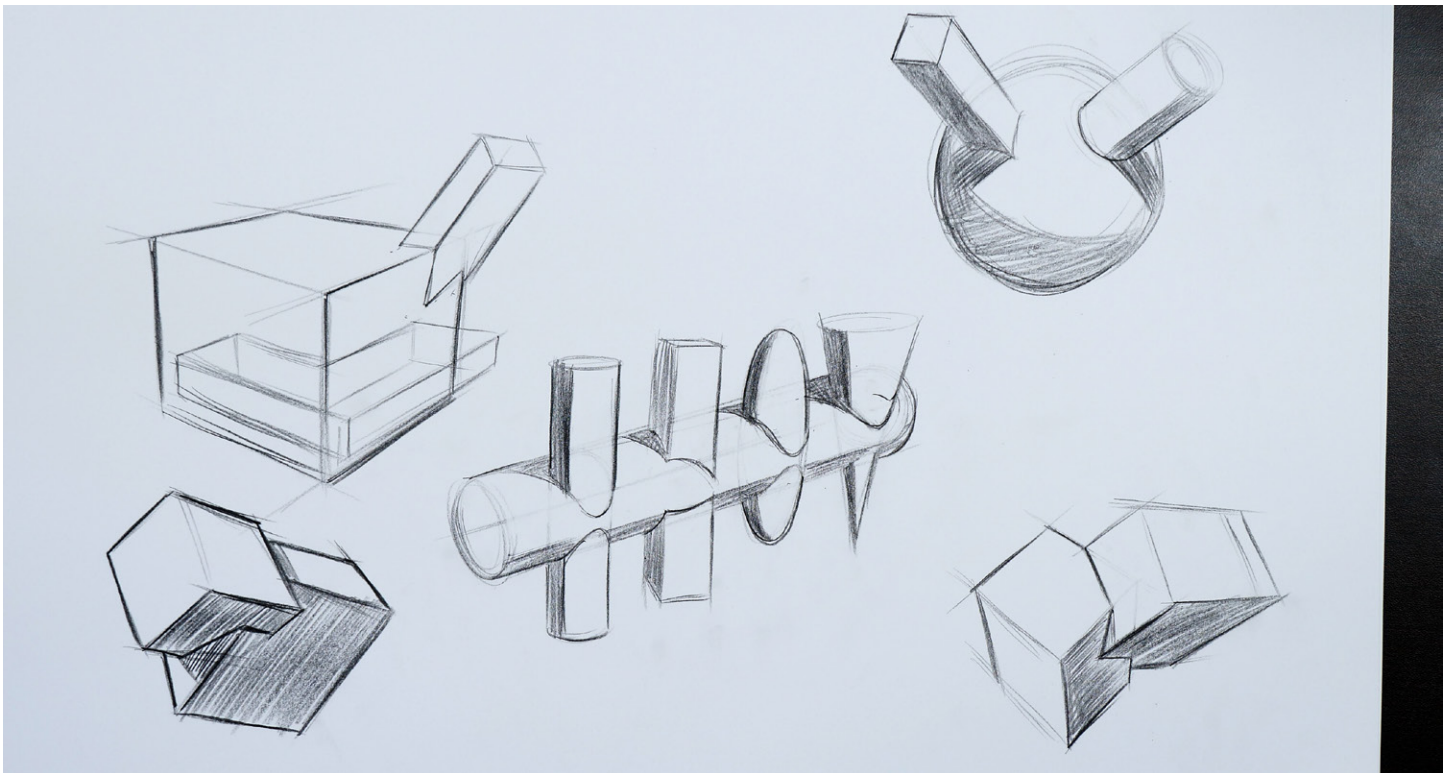
COMBINED GEOMETRY – QUICK SKETCHING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Practice improvising intersections between different types of geo forms.
- Use the line of intersection to reinforce the shape of individual objects.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Fill six sketchbook pages with quick sketches of various intersecting geo forms. Make sure the lines of intersection speak to the nature of both forms.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Draw about thirty sketches total.

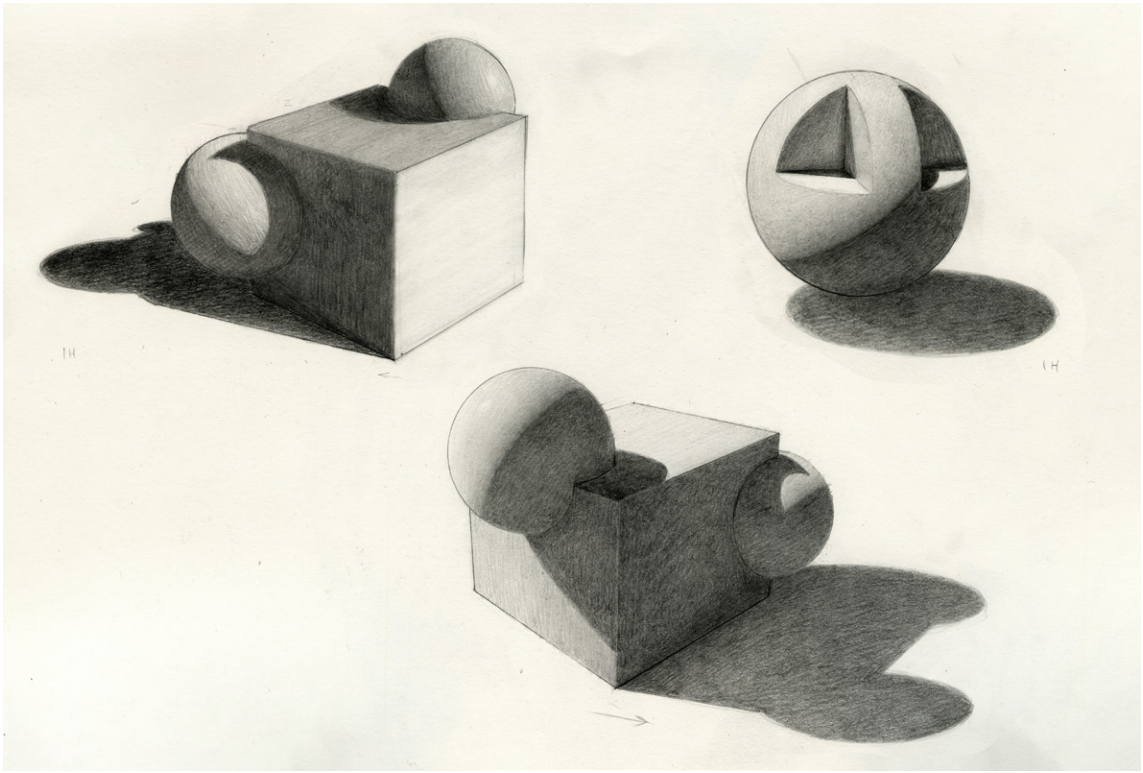
COMBINED GEOMETRY – RENDERING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Practice drawing intersecting geo forms situated under a single light source.
- Apply similar values to all planes in the same orientation.
- Get comfortable with getting yourself into trouble.
- Break complex shadows into simpler parts.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render one complex form that is composed of at least three intersecting forms. Use a variety of forms for the construction (cubes, spheres, cones, etc.). This assignment should take you one to two hours to complete.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Render three separate compositions with different structures that fulfill all of the above criteria.

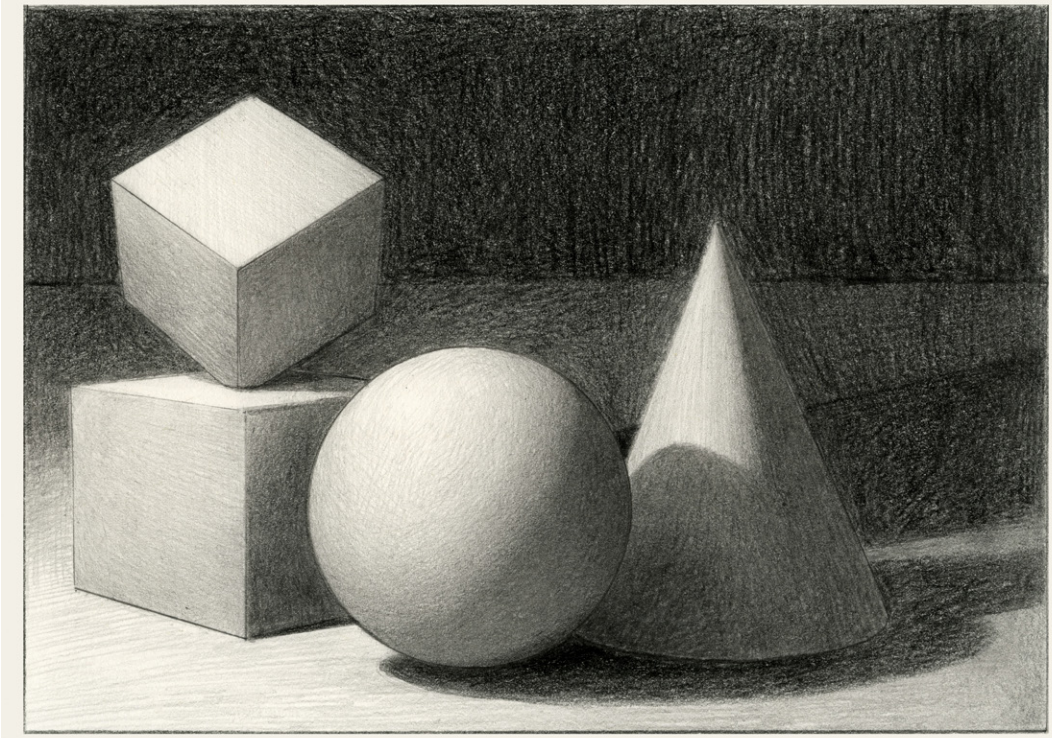
STILL LIFE – GEO FORMS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Render multiple discrete geo forms in one scene.
- Practice designing large shadows that interact with multiple objects.
- Compose values across subject, scene, and background.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render one composition with at least four separate geo forms. Use at least three different types of geo forms. Make sure there are at least two moments where a form casts its shadow onto another form. Include a background. This assignment should take you several hours to complete.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Use one base drawing but render the scene three times with different light positions.

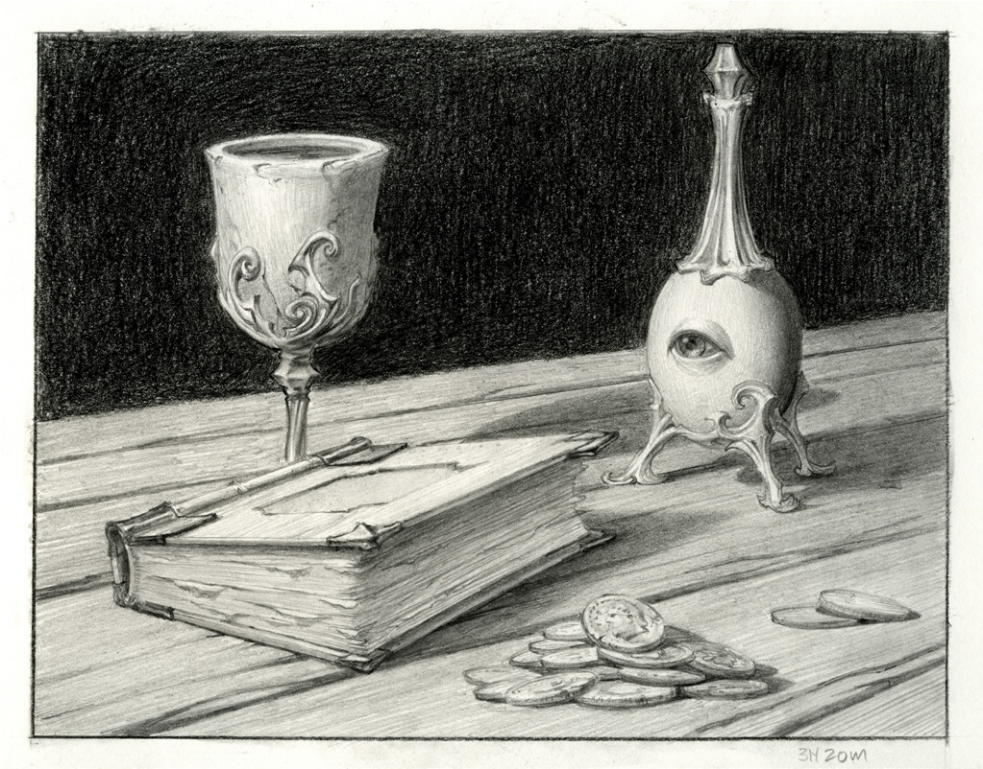
STILL LIFE – CREATIVE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Experience fun.
- Feel joy.
- Understand happiness in a cold, clinical capacity.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Draw a still life in the genre of your interest. It can include contemporary objects, fantasy objects, sci-fi objects, or anything else you like. Try to tell a story with the objects. Remain aware of how the objects relate to the geo forms we have been studying in this course. Books are like cubes, cups are like cylinders, etc. This assignment should take several hours to complete.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

No change for digital, just scale your ambitions to match the flexibility you have in digital.

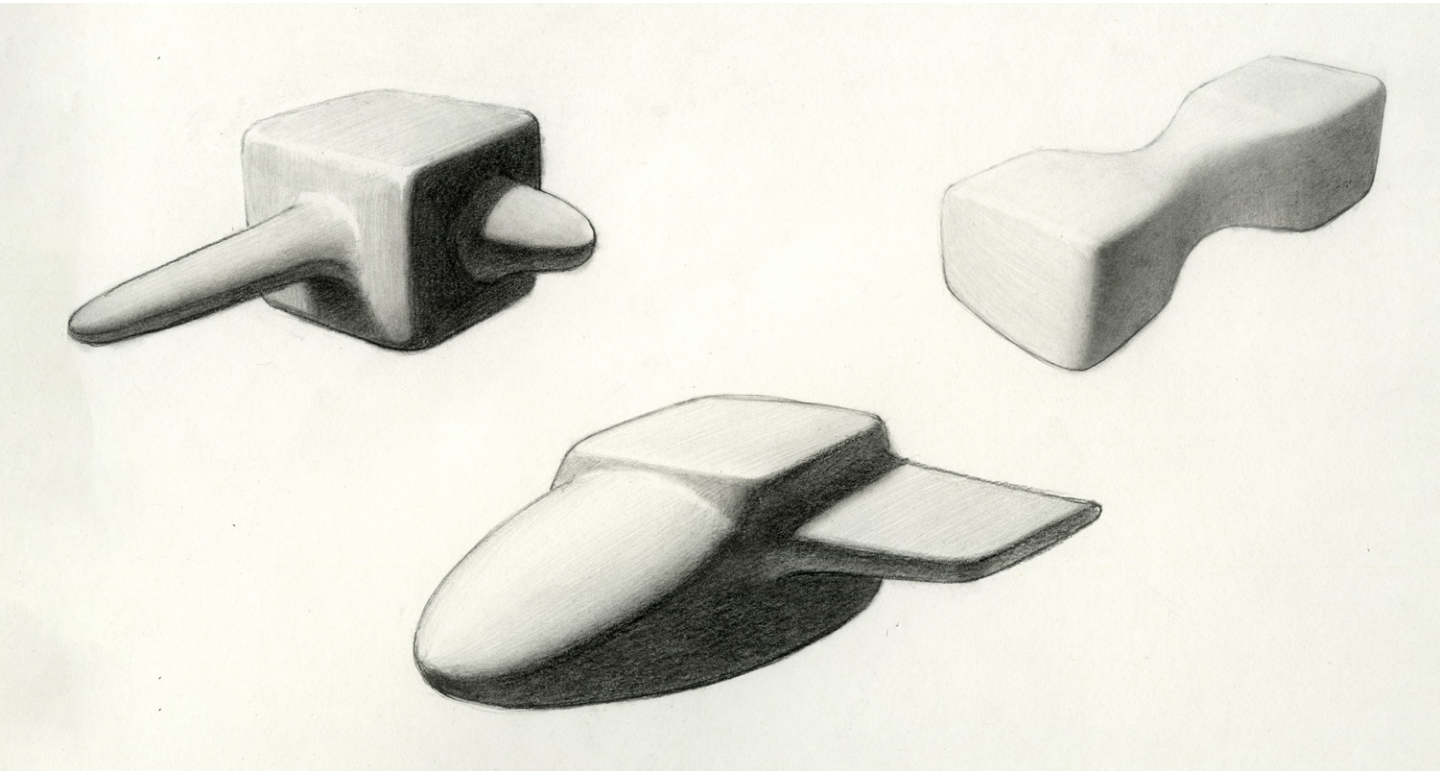
Combined Geometry – Rounded Geo

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Soften transitions between intersecting geo forms.
- Practice transitioning from sharp to soft rolls on single forms.
- Place specular reflections at “hills” and “valleys.”

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render three forms that are composed of a combination of shapes and cutouts. Be careful to soften all extrusions. Each form should take you about a half-hour to complete.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Render six forms that fulfill all of the above criteria.

ORGANIC FORMS – ABSTRACT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Illustrate completely organic forms.
- Seek variety in degrees of curvature and shape.
- Allow recognizable organic structures to arise from abstractions.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render three abstract organic forms. Focus on understanding the shapes you are bending in space. See how long you can keep things abstract before it concretizes into something recognizable.

ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Render six abstract forms that fulfill all of the above criteria.

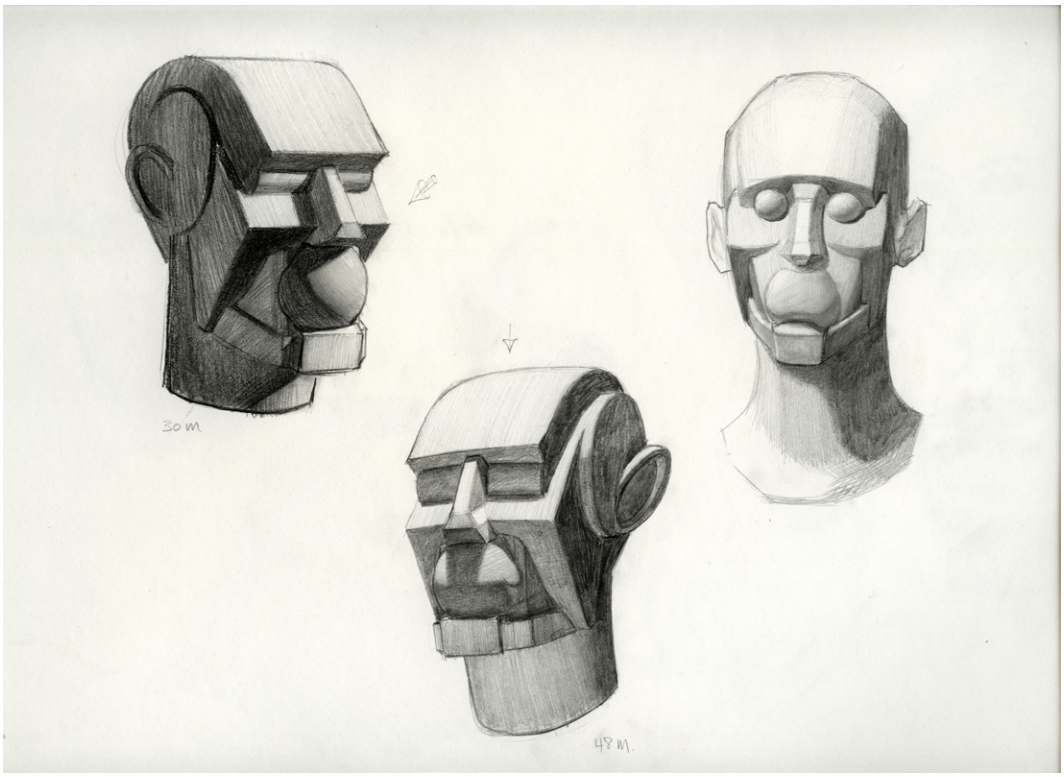
BLOCK HEAD - INTRODUCTION AND RENDER

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Simplify complex organic forms into simple geo forms.
- Create large light and shadow shapes on complex forms.
- Focus on plane breaks.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Fill three sketchbook pages with quick sketches of simplified heads. Render three or more that came out well. Look for different combinations of head angle and light direction. Do some heads that are mostly shadow and some heads that are mostly light.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Draw at least twenty five sketches that fulfill all of the above criteria. Render the six most successful of those sketches.

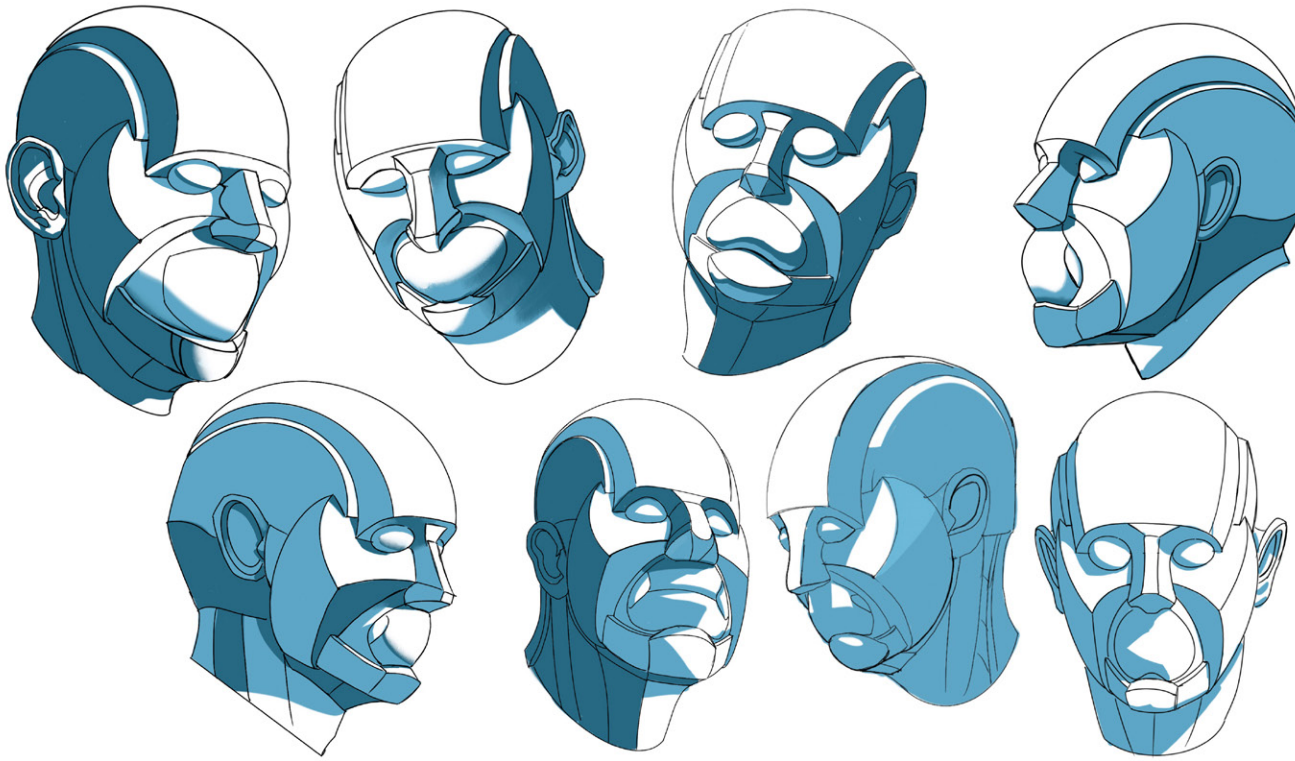
BLOCK HEAD – CELEBRITIES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Trace or freehand the blockhead onto images of celebrities.
- Become familiar with modifying the simplified head to resemble particular head structures and expressions.
- Invent lighting effects to compensate for flat photos.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Draw at least eight overlays of celebrities or people with whom you are familiar. Do not use references of strangers or unfamiliar models–you need to really know these faces so that you can recognize if your simplified blockhead has captured something of their character.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

No change.

BLOCK HEADS – PORTRAITS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Use the block head as a base for drawing full portraits.
- Become comfortable with improvising and losing the schematic base.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Draw at least eight portraits using the block head as your base. Continue to develop each portrait to your liking. If you need inspiration for extreme facial types check out @earthsworld on Instagram.

ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

No change.

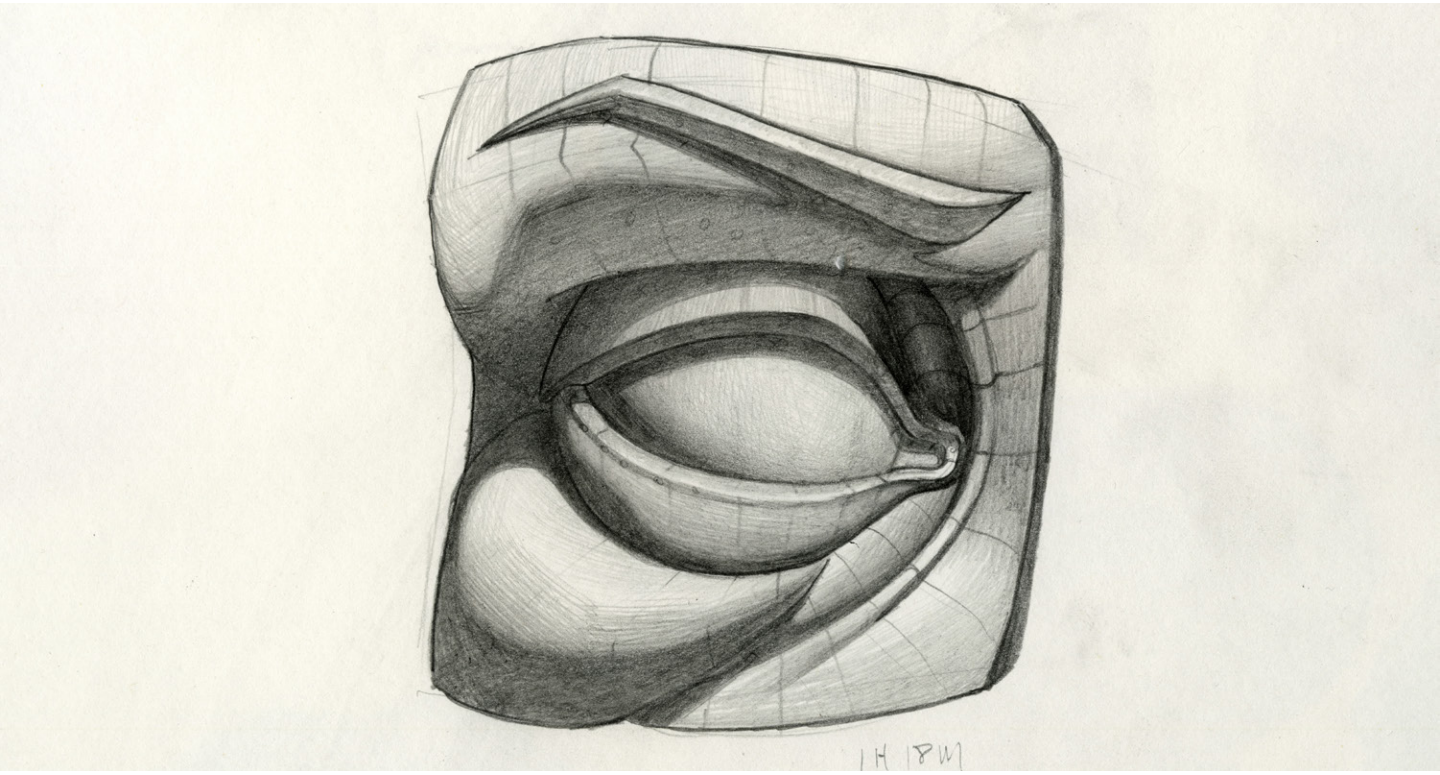
ORGANIC FORMS – DETAILS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Apply modeling factors and form conception to small forms.
- Understand how small forms relate to the larger forms they sit on.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Pick one feature of the face (eye, nose, lips, ear, etc.). Do an initial sketch and then draw contour lines that capture the topology of the form. Place graphic shadow shapes and then use “X”s and “O”s to indicate to yourself what is cast shadow and what is form shadow. Render the feature respecting the contour lines and the choices you made about cast and form shadow.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Draw two features that fulfill all of the above criteria. Heck, why not do all the features?

TV HEADS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Practice drawing from imagination according to very specific criteria.
- Draw intuitively and let the foundations we have practiced come through.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Pick a TV show that you know very well. On one sheet of paper, draw four characters from that show, entirely from imagination. Do not worry about needing to make your drawings look like their referenced characters. Work to your intutive knowledge of the characters and let that guide your imagination.

ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

No change.

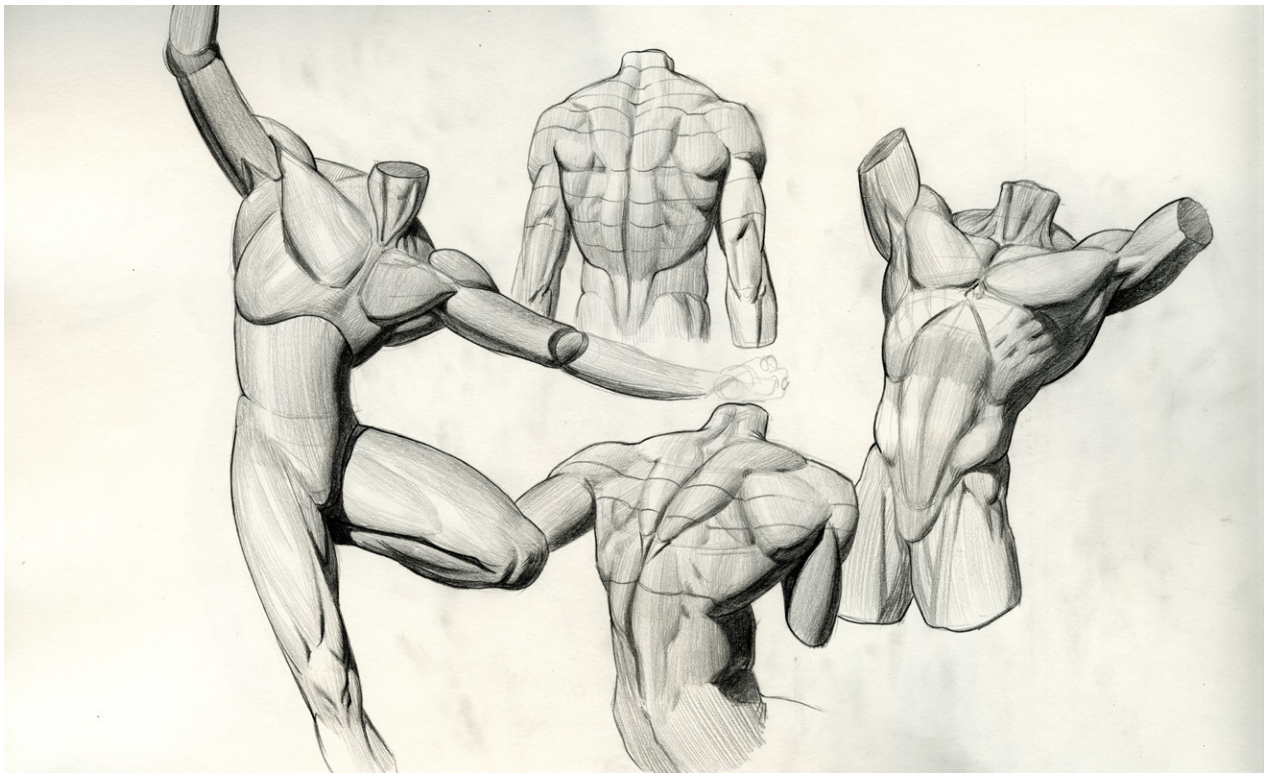
PRIMARY SHAPES – INTRODUCTION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Envision the body as a combination of primary shapes.
- Understand that details are very subtle changes in primary and/or secondary shapes.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Fill three sketchbook pages with quick sketches of the body–think of the primary geometric form that aligns with each part of the body instead of the surface details.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Do at least twenty sketches that fulfill all of the above criteria.

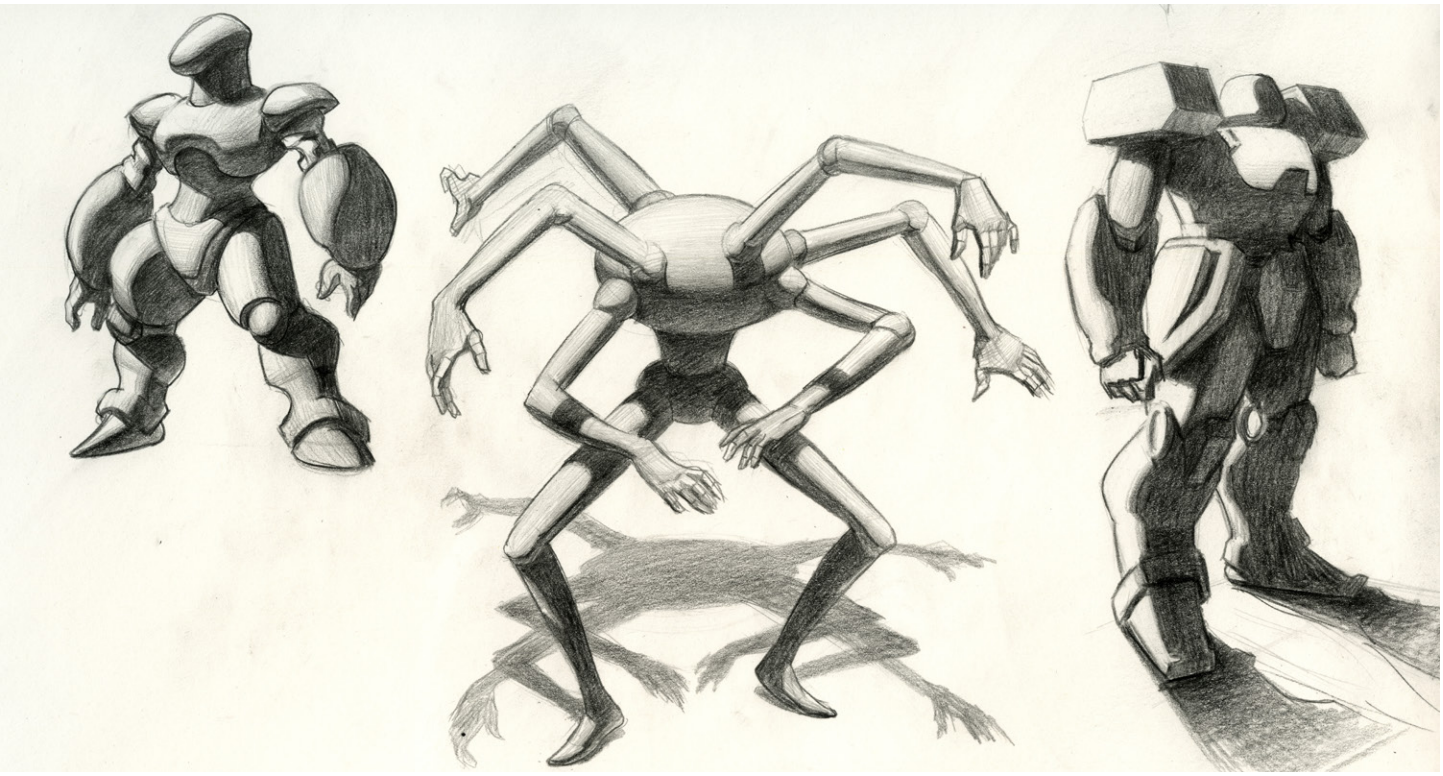
PRIMARY SHAPES – TOY CHARACTERS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explore adding characterization to simple primary forms.
- Design characters with clear silhouettes and consistent shapes.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Design and render three very different “toy” characters. Make their silhouettes noticeably distinct and give them a theme–make one more “angular” and another more “spindly,” etc. Take your time.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Do five characters that fulfill all of the above criteria.

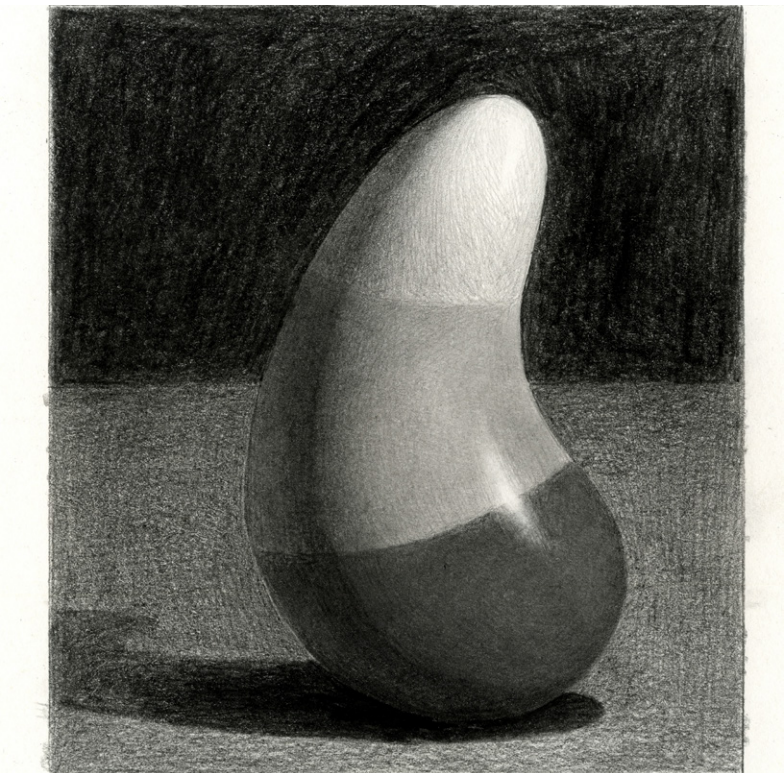
LOCAL VALUES – INTRODUCTION AND BEAN

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand local value variations on forms.
- Create a relationship between the shadow of one tone and the light of another.
- Practice designing a background to frame multiple values.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render one organic form that has white, grey, and black areas. Have a form shadow run through all three areas and create a cohesive value system across them.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Render three organic forms. Experiment with rendering the whole form as a white form and then creating the grey and black areas using adjustment layers.

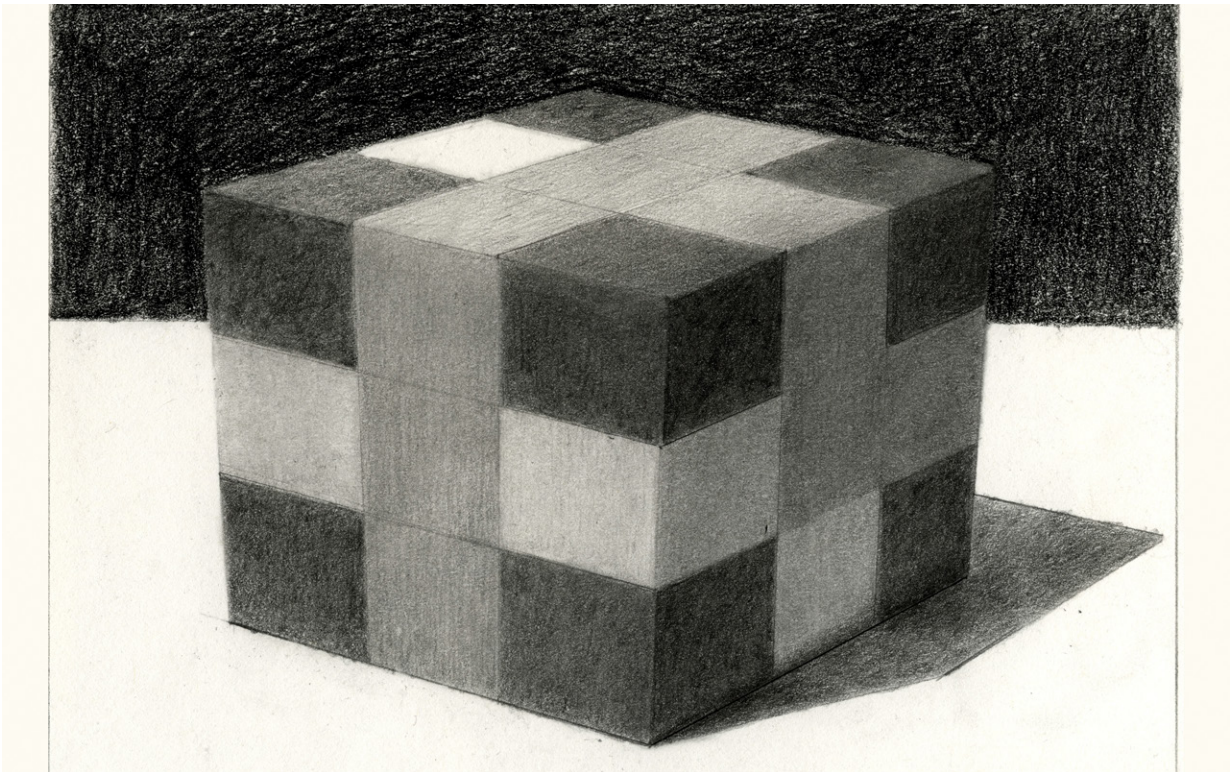
LOCAL VALUES – CUBE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Control local value changes on flat forms.
- Devise clever ways to answer value problems.
- Maintain a 1-2-3 read of the cube even when local values change.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Render one cube that has a random pattern of white, grey, and black squares. Begin by rendering the cube as if it were a white cube (or use a previous white cube rendering) and then darken it further to achieve the grey and black squares. This assignment should take you over an hour to complete.



ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Render three multi-value cubes in the same scene, under one light source.

LOCAL VALUES – PORTRAIT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Integrate dark accents into various value groups.
- Understand local value relationships on complex organic forms.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Pick a reference of a face and divide it into white, grey, and black sections. Make the shape of each section interesting and wrap it around the form. Stay away from a progression from white to grey to black–consider using black to white to grey. Remember that forms of any local value still have dark accents in areas of strong ambient occlusion. This assignment should take several hours to complete.

ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Do two different portraits–one where you manually render the different value groups and another where you render the form as a base white value (no matter the skin tone of the reference) and then use adjustment layers to produce the grey and black sections. You will likely need to correct the adjusted value zones further by hand.

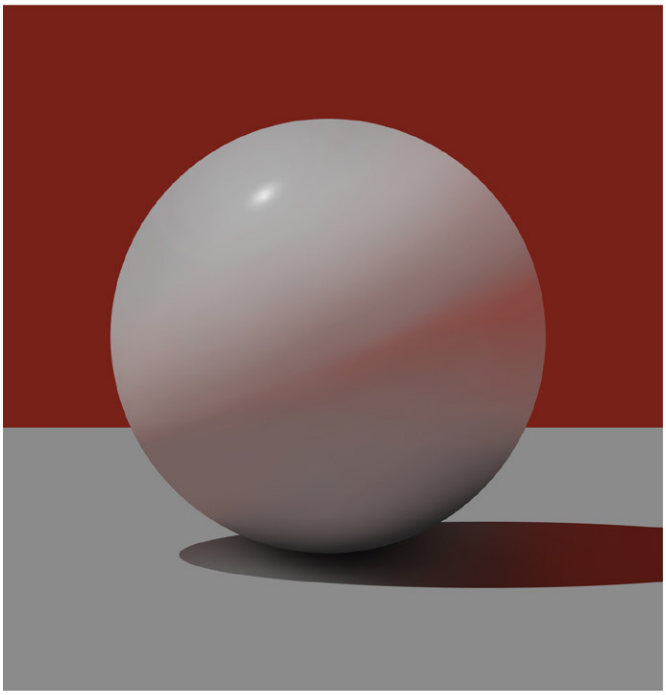
TRANSITION TO COLOR

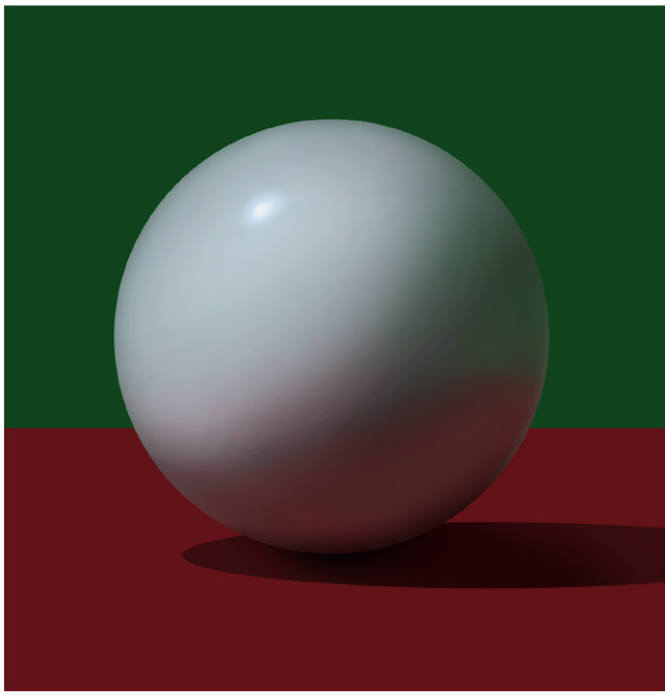
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Practice introducing color to form without sacrificing value structures.
- Incorporate the color of direct light, reflected light, and ambient light.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Watch “Transition to Color” in the “Designing Form” module. Render one white sphere in color, in a medium of your choosing, where you address (simply) the color of direct light, reflected light, and ambient light, all while maintaining your controlled handling of the modeling factors.





ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

No change.

BE CREATIVE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Draw stuff you think is cool for the rest of your life.
- Make progress forever.
- Garner incredible rewards and inner peace.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Regularly draw stuff that you think is awesome and makes you go “Woah, hell yes!”

ADAPTATION FOR DIGITAL

Same thing! Just three times as often, I guess.