THE MARK THAT RECORDS THE MOVEMENT of the artist’s implement, a two-dimensional movement in space, is the most basic feature of drawing. In addition to this spatial notation, drawings evoke a time response—the time required to make the movement that creates the mark. Time is also involved in seeing and in scanning objects in space. Think of the movement of your eyes as they dart back and forth, focusing and refocusing on different objects at different times as you glance about the room. So movement and time are two of the most essential features in making and looking at a drawing.

We are so accustomed to seeing reproductions of art, reduced in size and reproduced by mechanical means, that we often miss the handmade quality so valued in one-of-a-kind drawings. This handmade quality is called facture, a term that refers to the process or manner of making something. In art, and especially in drawing, facture is of prime importance. The kinds of marks artists make hold clues to unraveling the meaning of the drawing. We will discuss this further in the succeeding chapters as we look at specific works.
of art, but for now it is important to focus attention on the marks that go into the making of a drawing. Note what kinds of media are used and what kinds of tools made the marks. You will learn to build a descriptive vocabulary to discuss the quality and purpose of the marks, becoming aware of the speed or slowness with which they were made, registering their physical characteristics, and tracing the signs of facture in the drawing. (For example, the crosshatched line, the scribble, the faint, trailing line, the boldly stated, ripping mark—all are signs of facture.)

In the drawing by Joel Shapiro (Figure 2.1) facture is self-evident. The surface is built up of multiple overlaid marks that are scribbled over the entire surface. The expressive, loosely controlled marks point out the properties of the media—grease and graphite. This greasy substance is pushed to the edge of each mark; the center of the mark remains clean and white, thus giving dimension to each line—every line appears outlined. Row after row of overlapping marks create a unified field.

Viewers are left to make their own associations: a grassy field, a scribbled-out letter, a woven textile are some of the associations that come to mind. The ambiguity of what the marks could mean is an enticing part of this piece, but the real subject of the work is the act of mark-making itself. The randomness and rapid gestural marks affirm the hand of the artist and point to the artist's interest in the process, in what goes into the making of a work of art. Shapiro is classified as a Minimalist artist; Minimalism defines itself through the materials used, without allusion or illusions outside the work itself. It does not intend to represent a subject or an object in the real world; it is a drawing made for drawing's sake. We find many later twentieth-century artists like Shapiro whose subject is a philosophical investigation into what goes into the making of art.
Drawing takes into consideration intellectual awareness, somatic or body responses, consciousness at all levels. It is accessible to everyone; it is literally at the tips of your fingers.

Drawing plays a central role in the evolution of an artist's work, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the evolution of figurative work. Drawing provides a format for the development of formal ideas (as we have just seen in Shapiro's work, where the form takes precedence over other considerations), for iconographic ideas (iconography deals with the symbols used in a work of art), and for expressive possibilities. Not only does drawing offer a fresh point of view, it is truly the place where a maturation of ideas and forms takes place.

Whether an artist chooses to work abstractly or figuratively, learning to draw directly from the model and still life is essential.

We talked about time in our discussion of mark-making; another important aspect of time as it relates to drawing is memory. Both making and looking at drawings develop memory. (Your visual experience is enriched by learning to see through the practice of drawing.)

The two basic approaches to drawing both involve time. The first approach, called gesture, is a quick, all-encompassing overview of forms in their wholeness. The second, called contour is an intense, slow inspection of the subject, a careful examination of its parts. Offshoots of these two basic approaches are continuous-line drawing and organizational-line drawing.

GESTURE DRAWING

In drawings we can detect the movement of the artist's hand, sometimes even the movement of the artist's eyes, because eye-to-hand coordination lies at the very core of drawing.

The formal definition of the word gesture amplifies its special meaning for the artist: the act of moving the limbs or body to show, to express, to direct thought. There is a physicality of motion in drawing that is not always visually evident in other art forms, and as a result of this physical energy, drawings communicate an emotional and intellectual impact. The gestural approach to drawing is actually an exercise in seeing. The hand duplicates the motion of the eyes, making a movement that quickly defines the general characteristics of the subject: placement, shape, proportion, relationship between the parts, a definition of planes and volumes as well as their arrangement in space.

In Kathe Kollwitz's self-portrait (Figure 2.2) the gestural mark connecting the hand and head is a carrier of meaning. Not only is this emphatic, quickly stated line symbolic of the energy that flows between the eye and hand of the artist, it is a manifestation of the movement of the artist's hand making the gestural motion of the zigzag.

Gesture is not unlike the childhood game of finding hidden objects in a picture. Your first glance is a rapid scan of the picture in its entirety; then you begin searching out the hidden parts. In Claes Oldenburg's monument drawing (Figure 2.3) the viewer is first struck by the highly active lines, which give a kinetic effect to the landscape. Our eyes are orchestrated by the movement of the line, weaving through and around the drainpipe building. The
marks are not contained within a form; they search out and quickly describe the entire setting. We can detect the quick wrist movements of the artist, who occasionally transforms the scribbles into written notations.

Gesture is indispensable for establishing unity between drawing and seeing. It is a necessary preliminary step to gaining concentration. We can recognize friends at a glance, and from experience we do not need to look at them further for identification. We perform an eye scan unless something unusual makes us look intently - unusual clothes, a new hairstyle, or the like. For most daily activities, too, a quick, noninvolved way of looking is serviceable. For example, when we cross the street, a glance at the light, to see whether it is green or red, is enough. We may add the precaution of looking in both directions to check on cars; then we proceed.

This casual way of screening information is not enough in making art, however. Even if the glance at the subject is quick, our eyes can be trained to register innumerable facts. In the subject to be drawn, we can train ourselves to see nuances of color, texture, lights and darks, spaces between objects—measurable distances of their height, width, and depth—the materials from which they are made, the properties of each material, and many more things as well.

PART I INTRODUCTION TO DRAWING
In the page of gestural drawings by Georg Baselitz (Figure 2.4), we see examples of such observation. What appear to be meaningless scribbles turn into landscape studies (with one seated figure) when turned upside down. Baselitz's identifying style, his signature, is his upside-down images. His interest in abstract work and his desire to energize traditional subject matter gave impetus to this novel approach.

Through gesture artists translate much vital, early information into drawings. Gesture is the essential starting point.

Gesture is more than seeing and organizing; it is a metaphor for the energy and vitality of both the artist and the subject, a good example of which can be seen in the energized, electric work by Suthat Pinruethai (Figure 2.5). The marks pulsate back and forth across the five-unit grid; the scribbled, gestural lines not only move across the various units but seem to vibrate from front to back. Some lines seem to be in focus; others are blurred and shadowlike. The last lines that were drawn are the white ones, and it is through them the units are tied together. What can be the meaning of the missing module and of the one, much simpler, composition? Could the drawing be visually akin to the sound of some complex syncopated beat?

Another powerful example of the gestural marks serving as a means of communicating an idea is in Mario Merz's crudely drawn beast (Figure 2.6). Note the massive scale of the drawing which reinforces the metaphor for our brute nature. His use of animal imagery looks back to another fertile twentieth-century art period, German Expressionism, and like many of the artists in that movement, Merz sees the artist as a modern primitive, as a "vagabond" or "nomad." Note that this animale teribile has no eyes. Merz asserts illogic, disorder, chance, and change in his work, and what better means than the gestural approach to convey this anti-techno-scientific message? The artist has obviously not found this beast in the real, tangible world; rather it comes from the world of his imagination.

Artists throughout history have used the gestural approach to enliven and organize their work. The eighteenth-century artist Gaetano Gandolfi used this technique in establishing his composition (Figure 2.7). He translated the three-dimensional forms of the architectural setting and the groups of figures onto the two-dimensional arched frame of the paper, thereby establishing scale and proportion quickly. The drawing thus becomes a blueprint for further development. Gandolfi uses a progression from darker forms in the foreground to lighter ones in the background; by this means he both symbolically and literally highlights Christ, the main character in the drama. Although the front and sides of the figures and the recesses of the complex architectural stage are not explicitly developed, they are certainly indicated in such a way that we read this drawing as taking place in space-the illusion is solidly begun.

The sense of space in the drawing by the nineteenth-century Romantic artist Eugene Delacroix (Figure 2.8) is more limited than in the previous drawing. Here the focus is on movement; the forceful application of the swirling, dynamic marks is economically accomplished. We see how fitting the gestural technique is for quick brush-and-wash drawings. The ink wash has dissolved some of the underlying black chalk marks, thereby producing interesting tonal and textural changes. A sense of drama is the result of the contrast between light and dark. The title, The Constable of Bourbon Pursued by His Conscience, reveals Delacroix's narrative intent; the constable's conscience,
2.4. GEORG BASELITZ. Sachsische Motive 1971-75 (6 from a series of 54). Watercolor, 9 X 6' ¼ " (23 X 16 cm). Michael Werner Gallery.
a pale, airy form, seems to have taken little hold on him. Technique and content are perfectly welded.

Honore Daumier is classified as a nineteenth-century Realist whose major contribution as a draftsman is unparalleled. He documented the social ferment in the period following the French Revolution. In his hands gesture is a forceful tool for relaying a sense of movement, speed, and the agitation of the times (Figure 2.9). We see how adaptable gesture is for caricature. Daumier's satirical visual criticism of the period is a novel approach. His use of angle and confrontational close-up could be a precursor of the news camera.

Artists in contemporary times continue to be attracted to gesture as an aid to seeing, but the real attraction of gesture for the artist is the energized mark-making gesture provides. In Jody Pinto's gestural notation of her Native American landscape (Figure 2.10), the marks themselves take priority over the subject. The drawing is infused with a vitality and immediacy that make a connection between the artist and the Blackfoot hills. The vigorously stated marks organize the picture plane while indicating the weight of the hills. With a few deft marks a strong and dramatic sense of light and shadow is suggested. The spontaneously weighted lines are created by a pressure change on the drawing implement, a technique which helps define the spatial relationships between the near and far hills.

In all these drawings the strokes convey an immediacy and directness that give us an insight into the artist's vision. Gesture trains the eye and the hand, and it opens the door most effectively to unexplored abilities.
2.6. MARIO MERZ. Animale Terrible. 1979. Mixed media on canvas, 7' 5 3/4" x 15' 6" (2.3 x 4.75 m).

Before Beginning to Draw

Some general instructions are in order before you begin. Now is the time to consult Guide A, "Materials," which is found in the back of the book and which contains a comprehensive list of materials for completing all the problems given in this text. Before beginning drawing from the figure or still life...

2.7. GAETANO GANDOLFI. The Marriage Feast at Cana. Late eighteenth century. Pen and ink with wash, 9 3/4 x 8 1/2" (25 X 21 cm). The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.
experiment with the media in your drawing kit: pencils, graphite sticks, pen and ink, brushes and ink, charcoal, crayons, and chalks. Remember the discussion on facture at the beginning of the chapter? Fill several pages in your sketchbook with some media experiments using the full range of implements. On each page group lines, changing the weight and pressure on your drawing implement. Vary the marks from long to short, from heavy to thin. After you have gotten the feel of each medium, noting their inherent character, make a unified field drawing, one in which the marks continue from side to side and cover the page from bottom to top. Refer to the Shapiro drawing in Figure 2.1. After you have made several pages of marks, lay the
drawings out side by side and make a list of words that describe the various line qualities you have made. Note which characteristics are a result of the medium itself and which characteristics are created by the hand that made them.

Now hold several pencils, or markers of any kind, in your hand at once, each implement in tandem with the others. Make broad gestural marks on your 18 X 24" pad as in the drawing by Alan Saret (Figure 2.11). Saret is a sculptor whose three-dimensional work is like a gesture drawing in space, linear, multiple, grouped lines that are suspended in midair. It has been noted that Saret's work looks like sounds sound: percussive, soft, loud, rolling, crescendos with staccato accents. In fact, it is a good idea to make gesture drawings while listening to music. The music not only helps you relax, it encourages a rhythmic response.

As you have seen from your short introduction to gestural notations, gesture drawing can be done in any medium, but for making figurative drawings (drawings of the model, still life, or landscape) compressed stick charcoal, vine charcoal, or ink (with 1-inch or 2-inch [2.5 or 5 cm] varnish brush or a number 6 Japanese bamboo-handled brush) are recommended in the beginning. After you have learned the technique of gesture, begin drawing and experimenting with a full complement of drawing implements. Changes in media make for exciting results.

Gesture drawing involves large arm movements, so the paper should be no smaller than 18 inches by 24 inches (46 X 61 cm). Until you have fully mastered the technique of gesture, it is essential that you stand (not sit) at an easel. Stand at arm's length from your paper, placing the easel so that you can keep your eyes on the still life or model at all times. Make a conscious effort to keep the drawing tool in contact with the paper for the entire drawing; in other words, make continuous marks.

In the initial stage while you are becoming acquainted with the limits of the paper and with placement and other compositional options, you should
fill the paper with one drawing. Later several gesture drawings can be placed on a page.

The drawings should be timed. They should alternate between 15- and 30-second gestures; then the time can be gradually extended to three minutes. Spend no more than three minutes on each drawing; the value of gesture is lost if you take more time.

When you draw from a model, the model should change poses every 30 seconds for a new drawing. Later the pose is increased to one, then to two, then to three minutes. The poses should be energetic and active. Different poses should be related by a natural flow of the model's movement. The goal is to see quickly and with greater comprehension. Immediacy is the key. Spend at least fifteen minutes at the beginning of each drawing session on these exercises.

Types of Gesture Drawing

You will be working with five types of gesture drawing in this chapter—mass, line, mass and line, scribbled line, and sustained gesture (Figures 2.12-2.21). The distinctions among the five, along with a fuller discussion of each of the types, follow.

MASS GESTURE EXERCISES

Mass gesture, so called because the drawing medium is used to make broad marks, creates mass rather than line.

Use the broad side of a piece of compressed charcoal broken to the length of 11/2 inches (4 cm), or use wet medium applied with a brush. Once
you begin, keep the marks continuous. Do not lose contact with the paper. Look for the longest line in the subject. Is it a curve, a diagonal, a horizontal, or a vertical line? Allow your eyes to move through the still life, connecting the forms. Do not follow the edge or outline of the forms. Coordinate the motion of your hand with the movement of your eyes.

In gesture you are not concerned with copying what the subject looks like. You are describing the subject’s location in space along with the relationships between the forms. Keep your eyes and hand working together. Your eyes should remain on the subject, only occasionally referring to your
paper. This procedure will be uncomfortable at first, but soon you will learn the limits of the page and the location of the marks on it without looking away from the subject.

As you draw from the model, avoid a stick-figure approach. Begin your marks in the center of the forms, in the interior of the body, and move outward to the edges. Note the angles of the various body masses—upper and lower torso, upper and lower legs, angles of arms and head. Indicate the most obvious directions and general shapes first. Go from the large to the small. Begin at the core of the subject rather than at its outer edge.
Remember to keep the marks wide, the width of the charcoal stick or the brush. Try to create shapes as opposed to lines.

If you are drawing from a still life, place the several objects to provide intervals of empty spaces between the various parts. (A tricycle or tree branch, for example, might serve the same purpose, affording intervals of empty spaces between the parts.) In some of your mass gestures, draw in these blank negative spaces first. Emphasize the negative shapes in your drawing. You can use a figure for this exercise as well, but keep your focus on the negative shapes surrounding the figure and on the enclosed shapes (shapes formed between arms and body, for example).

In Henry Moore’s Sheep Drawing 40 (Figure 2.22), the densely scribbled marks in the background or negative space seem to press down along the sheep’s back, defining its outside edge. A reversal takes place in the lower part of the animal’s body; the negative space is white and empty, while the curving gestural lines describe the sheep’s bulging contours. Marks in the foreground negative space indicate grass and shadow and become more dispersed at the bottom edge of the picture plane. Moore uses a tighter network of lines to describe the face; the marks are more controlled, and they change their directions to indicate the facial structure. So convincing is Moore’s spatial description that it is difficult to realize that the white positive space of the wool is literally on the same level as the white negative space surrounding the legs. Note the variety in the size of the marks, loops, and scribbles. In the areas of greatest weight and gravity, and in those of deepest space, the lines are more densely grouped; they become lighter and more spread apart as the forms project toward the viewer.

After you have become comfortable with the idea of looking at the shape of the negative spaces between the objects, note the depth between
them. You might make an arrangement of variously sized objects, arranging them in deep space. Early in the drawing note the base line of each object. The base line is the imagined line on which each object sits. Noting the base line will help you locate forms in their proper spatial relationship to one another.

In drawing it is easier to indicate height and width measurements of objects than it is to suggest the third dimension, depth. You are drawing on a surface that has height and width, so lateral and vertical indications are relatively simple. The paper has no depth, so you must find a way of indicating this important measurement. The use of diagonals, of angles penetrating space, is of prime importance.

Establish the gesture by pressing harder on the drawing implement when you draw the objects farther away; lighten the pressure for those objects nearer to you. By this means you will have indicated a spatial change; the darks appear to be farther back, the lights nearer.

In addition to the important spatial differentiation that mass gesture introduces into the drawing, mass gesture gives an early indication of lights and darks in the composition. These lights and darks unify the drawing. Rhythm and movement are suggested by the placement of the various gray and black shapes.

As you can see, mass gesture helps you translate important general information from the subject onto your paper - information dealing with spatial arrangement, measurement, relationships between the forms, and most importantly, your personal response to the subject.

**LINE GESTURE EXERCISES**

Related to mass gesture is line gesture. Like mass gesture, it describes interior forms, following the movement of your eyes as you examine the subject. Unlike mass gesture, it uses lines; these may be thick, thin, wide, narrow, heavy, or light.

Jasper Johns's pencil drawing of a flag (Figure 2.23) could be an inventory of gestural line quality. The lines range widely from thick to thin, light to dark, tightly grouped to more openly extended. Johns leads the eye of the viewer over the surface of the flag by use of lights and darks. If you squint your eyes while looking at the composition, you will see how the distribution of darks creates an implied movement and how stability is achieved by a concentration of heavier marks at the bottom of the drawing.

In line gesture the lines are tangled and overlapped, spontaneously and energetically stated. They may look like a scribble, but not a meaningless one.

The pressure you apply to the drawing tool is important; vary heavy, dark lines with lighter, looser ones. The darker lines might be used to emphasize those areas where you feel tension, where the heaviest weight, the most pressure, the most exaggerated shape, or the most obvious change in line direction exists.

As in mass gesture, the tool is kept in constant contact with the paper. Draw each object in its entirety even though the objects overlap and you cannot see the whole form. The same is true when drawing the figure; draw to the back side of the figure; draw the forms as if they were transparent.
It is a challenge for the artist to relay the effect of motion, and gesture is particularly effective in capturing the idea of motion. Have the model rotate on the model stand, making a quarter turn every 30 seconds. Unify the four poses in one drawing. Walter Piehl's rotating figure in figure 2.24 depicts a cowboy with his lasso. A feeling of movement is especially pronounced in the areas of hat, hands, and boots.
Another exercise especially appropriate for gesture drawing is one that has as its subject a continuous linear movement as in Park Yooah's series of seven quick poses of a figure in motion (Figure 2.25). They could be taken from a cinematic strip; each pose smoothly moves into the next as in a choreographed dance. The Korean artist has captured the time sequence in an economical way using deft strokes related to oriental calligraphy. The means are extremely reduced yet the model's movement has been lyrically recorded.

Experimentation with linear media is encouraged. Any implement that flows freely is recommended. Both found implements and traditional ones are appropriate.

Try to avoid centrally placed shapes "every time. Lead the viewer's eyes to another part of the page by different kinds of placement or by a concentration of darks in an area away from the center. Experiment with activating the entire surface of your paper by making the composition run off the page on three or four sides.

A good subject for gesture is fabric. Through a network of a variety of lines, try to convey the idea of folds, pleats, and creases using loose, slashing, gestural marks. Keep in mind the volume of the fabric as it rises and sinks, and try to indicate an idea of the form under the fabric that gives it shape. You may drape the fabric over a chair or some pillows, or you may draw a draped model.

MASS AND LINE GESTURE EXERCISES

This exercise combines mass gesture and line gesture. The masses or lines may be stated with charcoal or wet media with a wide brush. Begin with either mass or line, and then alternate between the two. Define the more important areas with sharp, incisive lines. Michael Hurson has used mass and line in his Room Drawing (Overturned Chair) (Figure 2.26). The corners of the drawing are activated by the broad, gesturally stated triangles. The base lines of the chairs reinforce this angularity. The furniture is sketchily noted; the white central shape emphasizes the room's emptiness.

Indicating the forms as though they were transparent, restate the drawing; correct and amplify your initial image. You may wish to change the position or placement of the forms or to enlarge or decrease the scale of certain parts. Keep the drawing flexible, capable of change.

Try to fill the entire space, and do not neglect the empty or negative space. Begin laying the wash areas in the negative space, and then add the
positive shapes. Let the wash areas or the mass gesture marks cross over both positive and negative space.

SCRIBBLED LINE GESTURE EXERCISES

The scribbled line gesture consists of a tighter network of lines than was used in the preceding exercises. The sculptor Alberto Giacometti's triple-head drawing (Figure 2.27) is a good example of this technique. The free-flowing ballpoint pen builds volume: The multiple, overlapping lines create a dense mass in the interior of the heads. The scribbles begin at the imagined center of the subject; the lines build on one another, moving from the interior to the outside edge of the form. This technique has a parallel in sculpture: the use of an armature or framework to support a volumetric mass of clay or plaster the sculptor is modeling. It is appropriate that Giacometti would use this scribbled line gesture for his head studies, since he was a sculptor. Drawing was also a major concentration of Giacometti. In his drawings we see the same concerns that occupied him as a sculptor, the ideas of weight and weightlessness and the ideas of spatial location and penetration.

In a scribbled line gesture, the outside of the form will be somewhat fuzzy, indefinitely stated. The darkest, most compact lines will be in the core of the form. The outer edges remain flexible, not pinned down to an exact line. As in the other gesture exercises, the drawing tool remains in constant contact with the paper. The scribbles should vary between tight rotation and broader, more sweeping motions.

Negative space is an appropriate place to begin a scribbled line gesture. The marks will slow down and be somewhat more precise as they reach the edge of the positive shapes. In Mac Adams's Study for Three-Part
Poison (Figure 2.28), the gestural marks in the bottom of the drawing are concentrated in the negative space surrounding the table and chairs. The lower half of the drawing is far less precisely stated than the upper section with its more refined and precisely drawn chandelier. This precision is counterbalanced by the swiftly drawn gestural marks that emerge from the darkness surrounding the light fixture. Without the gestural drawing in the negative space the objects would be static and inert. It is the activation of the negative space that enlivens the drawing and attracts our attention. By changing the pressure on the drawing tool, Adams creates a weighty, dominant mass on either side of the table and behind the chandelier. This concentrated mass of lines behind and around the chandelier is in contrast to the delicacy of line and shape in the lamp itself. For Adams the chandelier is a symbol of luxury and, therefore, is an inherent danger. He uses this image frequently in his work as a metaphor for art—the danger that lies in seeing art as mere luxury. In this drawing the focal point is clearly the chandelier. In order that the viewer not miss the point, Adams draws a precise arrow directing our eye to the lower left, to a schematically drawn bowl—the container of the poison?

If most of your drawings have begun in the center or top of the page, try to change your compositional approach and consider a different kind of placement, one that emphasizes the edges, sides, or bottom. You can develop a focal point by being more precise in one particular area of the drawing.

By varying the amount of pressure on the drawing tool and by controlling the denseness of the scribbles, you can create a range from white to black.
SUSTAINED GESTURE EXERCISES

The use of sustained gesture combines a description of what the object is doing with what it actually looks like. Verisimilitude was not a primary concern in the earlier exercises. Sustained gesture begins in the same spirit as before, with a quick notation of the entire subject. After this notation however, an analysis and examination of both the subject and the drawing take place. At this point you make corrections, accurately establishing scale and proportion between the parts. In addition to drawing through the forms you define some precise edges. The result is that the sustained gesture drawing actually begins to look like the object being drawn.

In Sandro Chia's Man Seated at Table (Figure 2.29), the gestural underpinning of the drawing is apparent throughout. The drawing offers the viewer a real insight into the artist's decision-making process. Faint traces of earlier figures, the altered scale of the head of the seated figure, a shift in the placement of the feet and table base—all are faint memories of various stages of the drawing. Chia has maintained the gestural approach throughout the drawing. In the final stage some edges have been strengthened by a darker contour line. The extended gestural approach reinforces the drawing's implied meaning: The shifting figure, the skull, and spiral indicate that change is its primary subject.
Before drawing a still life, think of a verbal description of what it is doing. If you speak of a drooping flower, an immediate visual image comes to mind. This is a good way to approach sustained gesture. Look at the subject. Is the bottle thrusting upward into space? Is the cloth languishing on the table? Find descriptive terms for the subject and try to infuse your drawing with a feeling that is commensurate with the verbal description.

If you are drawing a figure, take the pose of the model yourself. Hold the pose for three minutes. Where do you feel the stress? Where is the most tension, the heaviest weight in the pose? Emphasize those areas in your drawing by using a darker line. Lighten the marks where there is less weight. Thinking of the attitude of the model and empathizing with the figure’s pose will add variety and interest to the exercises and will help infuse the drawing with an expressive quality.

Quick gestures take from 30 seconds to 3 minutes. The sustained gesture takes longer—5, to, even 15 minutes, as long as the spirit of spontaneity can be sustained.

In a sustained gesture you may begin lightly and darken your marks only after you have settled on a more definitely corrected shape. Draw quickly and energetically for the first two minutes; then stop and analyze your drawing in relation to the subject. Have you stated the correct proportion and scale among the parts? Is the drawing well related to the page? Redraw, making corrections. Alternate drawing with a careful observation of the subject. Avoid making slow, constricted marks. Do not change the style of the marks you have already made. Give consideration to the placement of the subject.
on the page, to the distribution of lights and darks; look for repeating shapes; try to avoid overcrowding at the bottom or sides of the paper. Look for a center of interest and by a more precise line or by a sharper contrast between lights and darks in a particular area, create a focal point.

In this exercise, and in those to follow, it is imperative that you stand back and look at your drawing from time to time as you work. Drawings change with viewing distance, and many times a drawing will tell you what it needs when you look at it from a few feet away.

Of all the exercises discussed, you will find sustained gesture the most open-ended for developing a drawing.

Try to keep these nine important points in mind as you work on gesture exercises.

GUIDELINES FOR GESTURE EXERCISES

1. Stand while drawing.
2. Use paper at least 18 X 24 inches (46 X 61 cm).
3. Use any medium. Charcoal or ink is recommended.
4. Use large arm movements.
5. Scan the subject in its entirety before beginning to draw.
6. Be aware that the hand duplicates the motion of the eye.
7. Keep your drawing tool in contact with the paper throughout the drawing.
8. Keep your eye on the subject being drawn, only occasionally referring to your paper.
9. Avoid outlines. Draw through the forms.

OTHER BEGINNING APPROACHES

Other approaches that are helpful to the beginning student are continuous line drawing, organizational-line drawing, and blind contour. Like gesture, these approaches emphasize coordination between eye and hand. They help translate information about three-dimensional objects onto a two-dimensional surface. They have in common with gesture the goal of seeing forms in their wholeness and of seeing relationships among the parts.

CONTINUOUS LINE DRAWING EXERCISES

The line in a continuous line drawing is unbroken from the beginning to the end. The drawing implement stays in uninterrupted contact with the surface of the paper during the entire length of the drawing. Jasper Johns's charcoal drawing 0 through 9 (Figure 2.30) is an example of this technique. The numbers are layered, stacked one on top of the other, all sharing the same outer edges. The numbers are transparent and slightly unintelligible, and the
overlapping intersecting lines create shapes independent of the numbers themselves.

Once you make contact with the paper (you may begin anywhere: top, bottom, side), you are to keep the line flowing. The completed drawing gives the effect that it could be unwound or unraveled. Rather than using multiple lines, you use a single line; however, as in gesture, you draw through the forms as if they were transparent. The line connects forms, bridging spaces between objects. Not only are outside edges described, internal shapes are also drawn. A continuous, overlapping line drawing has a unified look that comes from the number of enclosed, repeated shapes that naturally occur in the drawing. The resulting composition is made up of large and small related shapes.

Again, as in gesture, try to fill the entire surface of your paper. This, too, will ensure compositional unity. Let the shapes go off the page on at least three sides. Vary the weight of the line, pressing harder in those areas where you perceive a heavier weight or a shadow, or where you see the form turning into space, or in those areas of abrupt change in line direction (Figure 2.31)

Felt-tip pens, brush, pen and ink, and pencil are suggested media for continuous line drawing. Any implement that permits a free-flowing line is appropriate. The following box highlights some important points to keep in mind when doing continuous line drawing.
GUIDELINES FOR CONTINUOUS LINE DRAWING

1. Use an implement that permits a free-flowing line.
2. Use an unbroken line for the entire drawing.
3. Keep your drawing implement constantly in contact with the paper.
4. Draw through the forms as if they were transparent.
5. Describe both outside/edges and internal shapes.
6. Fill the entire surface of your paper, encompassing positive and negative shapes.
7. Vary the weight of the line.
8. Use continuous, overlapping lines.

ORGANIZATIONAL LINE DRAWING EXERCISES

Organizational line provides the framework for a drawing. This framework can be compared with the armature upon which a sculptor molds clay or to the scaffolding of a building.

Organizational lines take measure; they extend into space. Like gestural lines and continuous, overlapping lines, they are not confined by the outside limits of objects. They, too, are transparent; they cut through forms.

Organizational lines relate background shapes to objects; they organize the composition. They take measurement of height, width, and depth of the objects and the space they occupy. And like gesture, organizational lines are grouped; they are stated multiple times.
To use organizational line choose a still life with several objects; include background space and shapes such as the architectural features of the room ceiling, juncture of walls, doors, and windows. Begin with horizontal and vertical lines, establishing heights and widths of each object and of the background shapes.

Note Giacometti’s use of organizational line in Figure 2.32. His searching lines extend into space beyond the confines of the objects to the edge of the picture plane. The objects themselves seem transparent; they are penetrated by groups of measurement lines. Multiple lines are clustered at the edges of forms, so the outer edge is never exactly stated; the edge lies somewhere within the cluster.

In your organizational line drawing, continue to correct the basic shapes, checking on proportion between the parts, on relative heights and widths. Look for diagonals in the composition; state the diagonal lines in relation to the corrected horizontal and vertical lines. Continue to refine the drawing, registering information about scale and space.

By closing one eye (to diminish depth perception) and holding a pencil at arm’s length from you, you can measure the height and width of each object and make comparisons between objects. This is called sighting and is an important device in training yourself to quickly register proper proportion.
It is an indispensable aid for learning to translate three-dimensional objects onto a two-dimensional surface.

In addition to helping you establish correct proportion and placement between the parts, the buildup of multiple, corrected lines creates a sense of volume, of weight and depth in your drawing. After you have drawn for ten minutes or longer, and when you have finally accurately established proper proportion between the parts, you can then darken some of the forms, firmly establishing their exact shape. By this means you will have created a focal point; you will have directed the viewer to look for certain priorities that you wish to be noticed. You can direct the viewer’s eyes through the drawing by means of these darker lines and more precise shapes.

Many artists use this analytical approach in the beginning stages of a drawing. The armature may not be readily apparent; it may be disguised under the completed work. Here are some important points to keep in mind when doing organizational line drawings.

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZATIONAL LINE DRAWING

1. Begin with horizontal and vertical lines, both actual and implied; add diagonal lines last.
2. Establish heights and widths of all objects and background shapes.
3. Allow lines to penetrate through objects, establishing relationships between objects.
4. Correct basic shapes.
5. Check on proportion and relative heights and widths.
6. Extend lines through objects and into negative space.
7. When you have established proportions, darken some of the forms, establishing their exact shapes.

BLIND CONTOUR EXERCISES

In contrast to the immediacy of the gestural approach, which sees forms in their wholeness, the contour approach is a slower, more intense inspection of the parts. A contour line is a single, clean, incisive line, which defines edges. It is, however, unlike outline, which states only the outside edge of an object. An outline differentiates between positive and negative edges. A contour line is more spatially descriptive; it can define an interior complexity of planes and shapes. Outline is flat; contour is plastic, that is, it emphasizes the three-dimensional appearance of a form.

A quick way to understand the difference between contour and outline can be found in the Benny Andrews drawing Yeah, Yeah (Figure 2.33). The artist has combined outline and contour to good effect in a single drawing. The figure is primarily outline; the exceptions are the left hand and features of the face, which, along with the guitar, are delineated in contour line. These three areas create a pyramidal focal area which supports the theme of the drawing, the intensity and single-minded focus which the musician applies to his playing. The “empty” figure sets up a sense of melancholy which is
similar to the feeling in music which the blues project. Simple means can produce powerful results.

Another effective way to distinguish between contour and outline is to imagine the difference in the outline of a pencil and the lines which make up its contours. If you were drawing a pencil using contour line, you would draw a line at the edge of every shift in plane. The ridges along the length of the pencil, the juncture of the metal holder of the eraser with the wood, the insertion of the eraser into its metal shaft, all are planar changes that would be indicated by contour line.

In addition to structural, or planar, edges, contour line can indicate the edge of value, or shadow, the edge of texture, and the edge of color.

There are a number of types of contour, several of which are discussed in Chapter 5, Line, but this chapter will concentrate on working with blind contour, an exercise that involves not looking at your paper.

Some general instructions are applicable for all types of contour drawing. In the beginning use a sharp-pointed implement (such as a 2B pencil or pen and ink). This will promote a feeling of precision, of exactness. Contour drawing demands a single, incisive line. Do not retrace over already stated lines, and do not erase for correction.

In blind contour, keep your eyes on the subject you are drawing. Imagine that the point of your drawing tool is in actual contact with the subject.
Do not let your eyes move more quickly than you can draw. Keep your implement in constant contact with paper until you come to the end of a form. It is imperative to keep eye and hand coordinated. You may begin at the outside edge of your subject, but when you see that line turn inward, follow it to its end. In a figure drawing, for example, this technique may lead you to draw the interior features and bone structure without completing the outside contour. Remember to vary the pressure on the drawing tool to indicate weight and space, to imply shadow, and to articulate forms.

Draw only where there is an actual, structural plane shift or where there is a change in value, texture, or color. Do not enter the interior form and aimlessly draw nonexistent planes or make meaningless, decorative lines. (In this regard, contour drawing is unlike a continuous, overlapping-line drawing, where you can arbitrarily cross over shapes and negative space.) When you have drawn to the end of an interior shape, you may wish to return to the outside edge. At that time you may look down and realign your drawing implement with the previously stated edge. With only a glance for realignment, continue to draw, keeping your eyes on the subject. Do not worry about distortion or inaccurate proportions; proportions will improve after a number of sessions dedicated to contour.

For this exercise choose a complex subject; in the beginning a single object or figure is appropriate, such as a bicycle, typewriter, or skull. Distortion and misalignment are a part of the exercise. Do not, however, intentionally exaggerate or distort. Try to draw exactly as you see. If you have a tendency to peep at your paper too often, try placing a second sheet of paper on top of your drawing hand, thereby obscuring your view of your progress.

Blind contour drawing should be done frequently and with a wide range of subjects-room interiors, landscapes, figures, still lifes (Figures 2.34 and 2.35). Here are some important points to keep in mind when doing blind contour exercises:

GUIDELINES FOR BLIND CONTOUR DRAWING

1. Use a well-sharpened pencil or pen and ink. Later, felt-tip markers and grease pencils can be used, but in the beginning use a sharp pointed implement.
2. Keep your eyes on the subject.
3. Imagine that your drawing tool is in actual contact with the subject.
4. Keep eyes and hand coordinated. Do not let your eyes move more quickly than your hand.
5. Draw only where there is an actual structural plane shift, or where there is a change in value, texture, or color.
6. Draw only existent planes. Do not make meaningless lines.
7. Do not retrace over already stated lines.
8. Do not erase for correction.
9. Remember that contour line is a single, incisive line.
10. Vary the weight of the line to relay information about space and weight and to offer contrast.
SUMMARY

THE BENEFITS OF GESTURE, CONTINUOUS LINE, ORGANIZATIONAL LINE, AND BLIND CONTOUR DRAWING

Gesture drawing is a manifestation of the energy that goes into making marks. It is a record that makes a visual connection between the artist and the subject drawn, whether that subject be from the real world or from the world of the imagination. It can take place in the initial stages of a drawing and can serve as a means of early thinking about one’s subject; it is an idea generator. Gestural marks can be the subject of the drawing or the carrier of an idea in the drawing. Gesture drawing, then, encourages empathy between artist and subject. The gestural approach gives the drawing vitality and immediacy. It is a fast, direct route to that part of us that has immediate recognition, that sees, composes, and organizes in a split second. Through gesture drawing we bring what we know and feel intuitively to the conscious self, and this is its prime benefit.

These basic approaches—gesture, continuous line, and organizational line drawing—train us to search out underlying structure. They are a quick means of noting planes and volumes and locating them in space. They help us to digest the whole before going to the parts, to concentrate in an intense and sustained way. The three approaches furnish a blueprint for a more sustained drawing and provide a compositional unity early in the drawing.

Contour drawing, on the other hand, offers a means to a slow, intense inspection of the parts. It refines our seeing and leads us to a more detailed understanding of how the parts relate to the whole.

These beginning approaches introduce some ways of translating three-dimensional forms onto a two-dimensional surface. We are made aware of the limits of the page without our having to refer constantly to it. These approaches offer a means of establishing unity in the drawing, placing shapes and volumes in their proper scale and proportion; they introduce lights and darks as well as a sense of space into the drawing; they suggest areas for focal development, and they provide rhythm and movement.

Finally, these beginning approaches provide a flexible and correctable beginning for a more extended drawing. They give options for developing the work and extending the drawing over a longer period of time. They point to a route to a finished drawing.

SKETCHBOOK PROJECTS

At the conclusion of each chapter you will find recommendations for sketchbook projects to be done in tandem with the studio problems. Each and every one of these beginning projects is ideal for sketchbook work.
Before you begin, read the first two Practical Guides at the end of the book, those on materials and keeping a sketchbook.

Since the steps for each beginning technique have been thoroughly discussed in this chapter, it should be sufficient here to offer you some ideas appropriate for each project; then you are on your way to an exciting career in drawing.

**PROJECT 1**

**Gesture Drawings**

One major change from the instructions that were given previously in regard to gesture drawing involves scale. Since the sketchbook is so much smaller than your drawing pad, and since you will be drawing while seated rather than standing at an easel, you must remember that the gestural movement will be more limited. Your shoulder should still be relaxed and the wrist kept loose. It is recommended that you not hold the drawing implement in the same way you hold it for writing as this produces a constricted line. You want the impetus for the movement to come from the arm and wrist, even though the motions are scaled down, so experiment with a loose handling of the drawing tool, holding it in the middle of the shaft or at the opposite end of the marker.

Here are some suggestions for subject matter for gesture drawings in your sketchbook:

- Animals, your own pet or animals in a zoo
- People in a shopping mall
- Musicians
- Sports events
- Children in parks or playgrounds
- Cafe scenes
- People dancing
- People waiting for buses
- Landscapes (parks, waterscapes, city scenes)
- Family members or roommates performing daily chores
- Interior scenes, such as classrooms or dormitory rooms
- Clothing hung in closets, draped on chairs, thrown on floor
- Draped fabric

These are only a few suggestions for getting started; you will come up with your own personal list of favorite subjects in no time. It is daily dedication to gesture that will give a secure underpinning to your drawing skills. Devote at least fifteen minutes a day to gesture drawing outside the class.

**PROJECT 2**

**Continuous Line and Organizational Line Drawings**

Continuous line and organizational line drawings can be done with more static subject matter than gesture drawings. For more effective results you should choose subjects that are arranged in spatial relationships, such as a group of objects on a table, a room setting that involves a grouping of furniture, or a landscape scene. Keep in mind the idea of transparency; make the lines cut through forms and through space. It is the relationship between...
the forms that should be foremost in your mind. Choose subjects that vary in size, height, width, and depth, and try accurately to relate them to each other. Proportion and scale will become second nature to you after a while.

PROJECT 3
Blind Contour Drawings

Literally anything and everything make appropriate subjects for contour drawings. Making contour drawings is a form of meditation. You can spend five minutes or an hour on a single drawing depending on your time and mood. You probably have played that childhood game of repeating a word so many times it lost its referential meaning and became pure sound. This could be an analogy for what happens in the process of a slow contour drawing. You are looking so intently at the object that you forget the name of the object being drawn. This is an ideal state in contour when you are so absorbed in looking that the object becomes pure form.

Here is a starter list for blind contour subject matter:

- Hands
- Feet
- Gloves
- Articles of clothing
- Contents of drawers
- Fruit or vegetables
- Plants
- Tools
- Drawing implements
- Desktop articles
- Vehicles such as bicycles, motorcycles, automobiles, trucks
- Toys
- Friends-sleeping, reading, working, playing
- Animals
- Self portraits
- Contents of a refrigerator or a cabinet

With dedication and commitment to keeping a sketchbook you will be amazed at the progress you will make, at how skillful you become in drawing. Blind contour is a technique that pays off in a hurry. Note your improvement after the first 50 drawings, then after the first hundred. You will be amazed at how keen your observation has become and how much control you have gained in drawing.

Many artists have made the claim that drawings are closer to the bone than any other art form; that being so, your sketchbook should be a real anatomical volume.