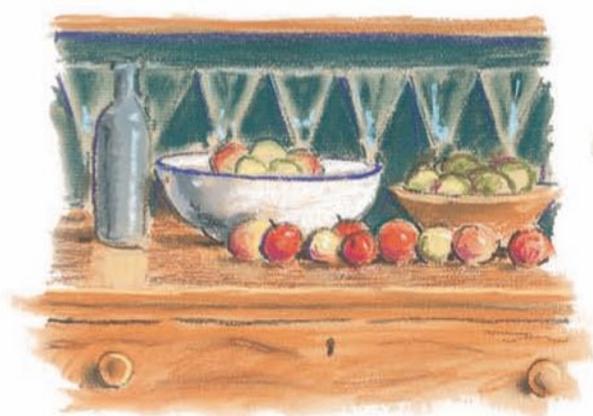
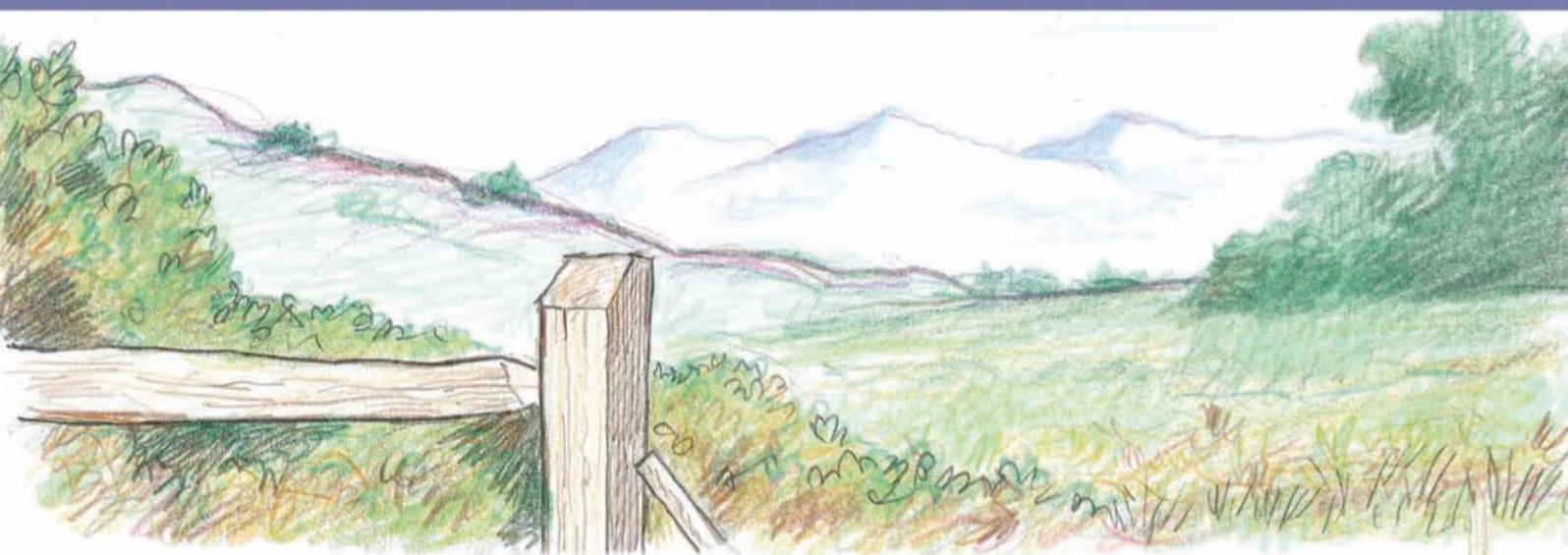


*The Fundamentals of*  
**DRAWING**  
*in* **COLOUR**



*A complete professional course for artists*

**BARRINGTON BARBER**



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**Capella**



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# Introduction

‘Drawing in colour’ is a slightly unusual title, because the obvious comment is, ‘How does that differ from painting?’ Well, in this book I examine no fewer than four methods of drawing in various colour mediums, only one of which is connected with painting. I will be showing examples – and how to go about them – of drawing in coloured pencil, pastel or crayon, coloured inks and watercolour painting, which can be heavily conditioned by drawing.

It is very easy to get confused by the many techniques of introducing colour into the already complex area of drawing in tone, line and texture. I believe the solution is to approach it as though learning to draw afresh. Understanding colour is quite a complex affair, and the book begins by assuming that readers will benefit from an introduction to the basics of colour theory. This need not delay you, however, because even if it is not wholly grasped at once, the simple practice of applying colour in your drawings will provide you with valuable experience, leading you to work out tonal values to your own satisfaction. And please don’t believe that there is only one correct way; try out every variation that occurs to you while working, and you may discover yet more interesting ways of manipulating colour schemes.

I have set as many exercises in the use of colour as seemed practical, and have tried to include all the really essential methods. You will find it useful to look at the work of other artists, both living and dead, and to observe how they worked out the chromatic schemes in their own pictures. Some are exponents of very subtle and restrained values, while others are far more vibrant or strident in the way they use their pigments. The key always seems to come down to two things: first, harmony; and second, contrast. Of course, all artists have used both at some time in their careers, but they often have a tendency to favour one or the other. In this book I have tried to show the effects of both approaches.

The addition of colour to your drawing can increase the enjoyment both to yourself in creating it and, afterwards, to your viewers. The power of colour to enhance a subject is most evident when you compare a black and white reproduction of a painting with the same picture in colour. Not only that, the natural symbolism of colour, or at least the type of symbolism that we attach to the colour of an object, brings further meaning to the subject matter.

The different mediums that you experiment with should add further to your enjoyment. Don't worry if, at first, you might make rather a mess of the exercises; no one ever became any good at art without making lots of mistakes to start with. As long as you consider carefully everything you've done, no matter how unsatisfactory or disappointing it might be, you will soon learn not to repeat your mistakes too many times. Experimentation is the way that art evolves; it is not just the preserve of scientists. So, prepare to have a good – if occasionally difficult – time with the exercises in this book; with my heartfelt good wishes on the expansion of your artistic ability.

Barrington Barber, 2006



# Getting started

To start drawing in colour is to take a step into the area of painting, although in this volume we will mainly be looking at colour as an adjunct to drawing. There are various methods and media to explore, beginning with the materials and how to get used to them through a series of exercises. We will be concerned mostly with drawing in coloured pencil, pastels, coloured inks and watercolour.

So we start with a list of the materials that will be useful to your work. You may not want to use them all but it is a good idea to try them out, if only in a limited way. Then your choice of which medium to use will be based on knowledge and experience rather than mere guesswork. This is a much more practical way of ensuring that you have some control over your medium.

Go through all the exercises shown here because they will familiarize you with a range of mediums and also provide you with practice, which every artist needs. You may even find you can invent a few exercises of your own, which is a sign that you are engaging with the medium in depth. It is also more fun for you when you play around with different mediums. Most of the exercises are simple enough but don't be misled into thinking that therefore they are not worth trying out. In fact, simple repetition of straightforward technical practices is the bedrock of all artistic expertise. When you see a young artist doodling with patterns and repetitive marks on a sheet of paper, he or she is in the process of learning the manual dexterity that is so important for any artist.

Drawing is always drawing, whether in colour or not. So do not be put off if you know nothing or little about it. The way to learn is by experimentation and experiencing both success and failure. When you are drawing easily without any problems, it is only because previously you have overcome difficulties of some sort. And remember, when you appear to be having difficulties, that is when you are learning most. It will become easier if you persevere.



# Materials and mediums

Here is a selection of the materials required for drawing in colour. I have chosen those most easily obtained from art or stationery shops. As an artist you will always want to use the best, but occasionally less specialized materials can be just as good.

**1. Coloured pencils** – don't concern yourself too much with the brand, although some are better than others. Go for as many variations in colour as you can find. Thinner pencils can be of superior quality but not always. Try them out and make your own judgement. Watercolour crayons are similar to ordinary coloured pencils but you can use a brush with water to spread their colour over larger areas. There are several brands available.

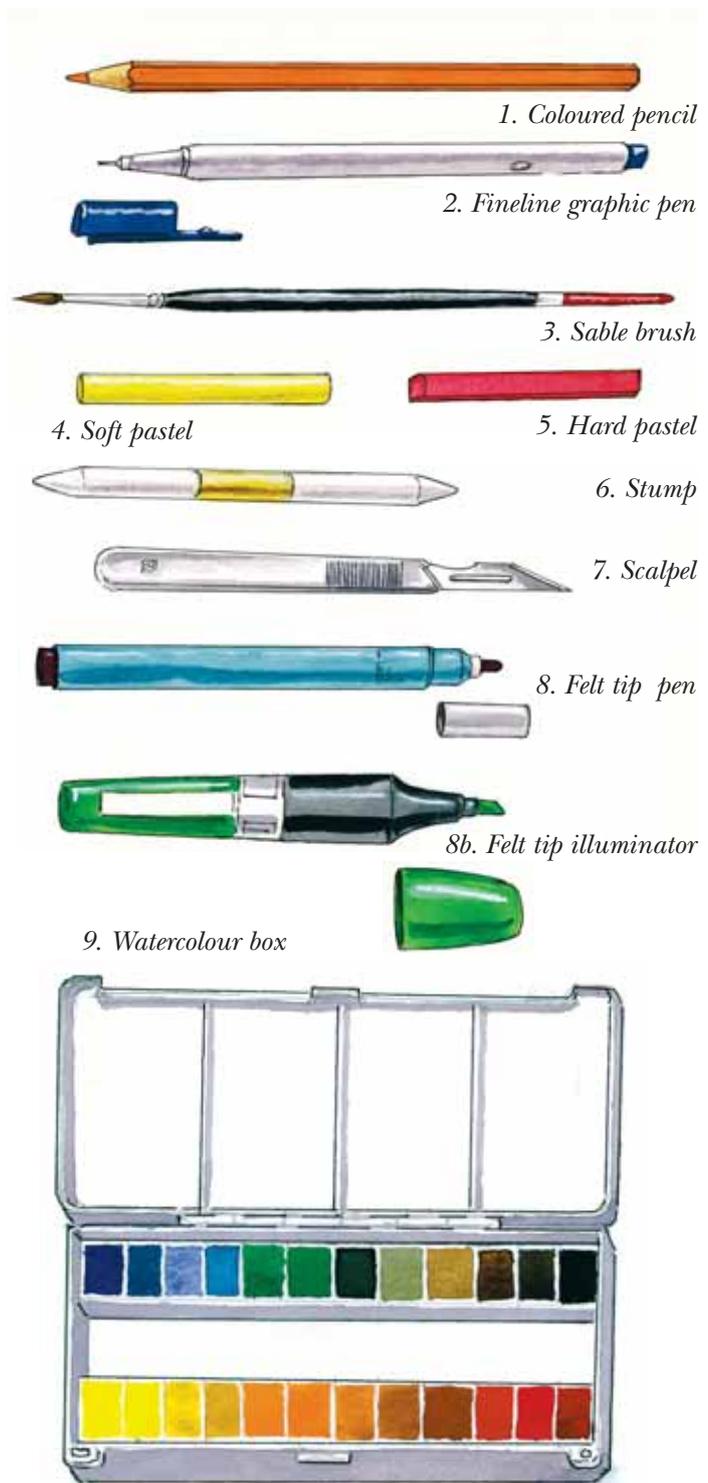
**2. Finesline graphic pens** – these pens are good for drawing and behave similarly to a coloured pencil but with a more intense colour value.

**3. Brushes** – the best are sable but there are many varieties of hair and synthetic fibre. You will only need two or three brushes, especially if they come to a fine point. A size 0, one 3 and perhaps one 7 or 8 would be sufficient. For extending pastels you might need a hog hair or some other stiff brush.

**4. Soft pastels** – these tend to be expensive. They come in a wide range of colours but get used up quickly. However, for some work they can be essential.

**5. Hard pastels** – also known as conté crayons, these are essentially the same material as the soft ones but bound together in a compressed form. Hard pastels are square in section whereas the soft ones are round. The range of colours is again enormous, they last longer and are easier to manipulate.

**6. Stumps** – these are just rolls of paper in a compressed form, pointed at both ends and very useful for extending the tones of your pastels. They come in several sizes, but



usually you will only want two, a large fat one and a thin one.

**7. Scalpel** – the best knife for sharpening pencils, crayons, pastels or anything, but they are extremely sharp and not advisable for students under 16 years. A craft knife is almost as good and safer to use.

**8. Felt tip pens and illuminators** – these pens allow thicker, more solid areas of colour to be put on quickly and are useful for larger drawings.

**9. Watercolour box** – watercolours are easiest to use from a box but they can be bought in small tubes as well.

**10. Fine nib push or dip pens** – these provide variable line and pen strokes, from very fine to fairly thick depending on the pressure applied. Some nibs are more flexible than others.

**11. Liquid water colour (concentrated)** – these colours are just like ink but may be diluted with water. They can be used with a pen or a brush.

**12. Indian ink** – a more permanent ink, available in many colours. Perfect for pen work but can be used with a brush.

#### **Paper:**

**Watercolour paper** – ideal for anything where water is the main solution. It takes the colour well and helps to stop it going patchy.

**Ingres paper** – very good for pastel drawing, and it comes in many shades. You will find it easier to draw in pastel on toned paper because white paper gives a rather too stark contrast.

**Cartridge paper** – this comes in various weights (gsm = grams per square metre), so you will have to try different types to suit your piece of work. Generally speaking, a smooth surface is better for pen and ink and rough is better for pencil work.



10. Fine nib push or dip pens



11. Concentrated liquid water colour



12. Indian ink

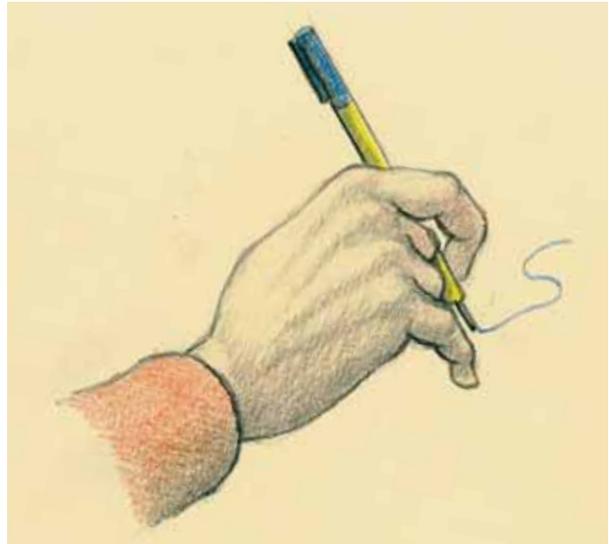
# Holding the tools

Holding your pen, brush, chalk or pencil doesn't always have to be the same as you would hold a fountain pen. Sometimes you get better, freer results by holding them as you would hold a stick or a house-painting brush. The only one that you will have to hold the same way as a fountain pen is the dip pen with ink because it is very difficult to manipulate any other way. We show here the variety of ways of holding these implements. You may need to practise these different ways to become good at them.

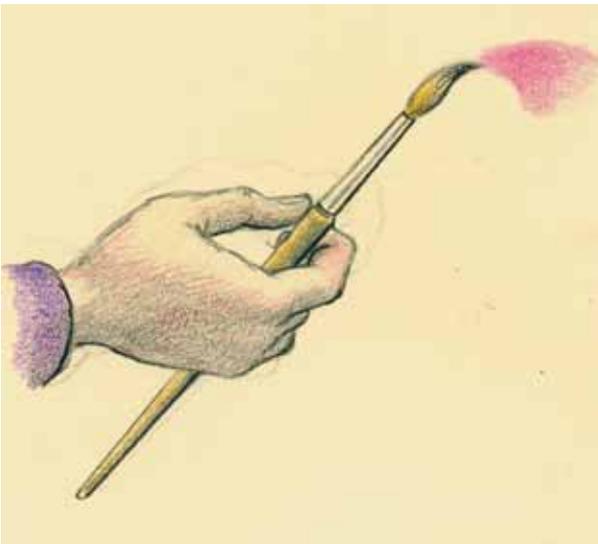
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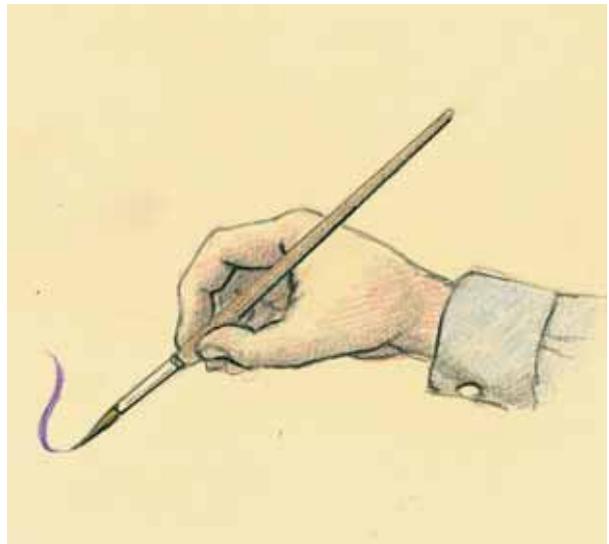
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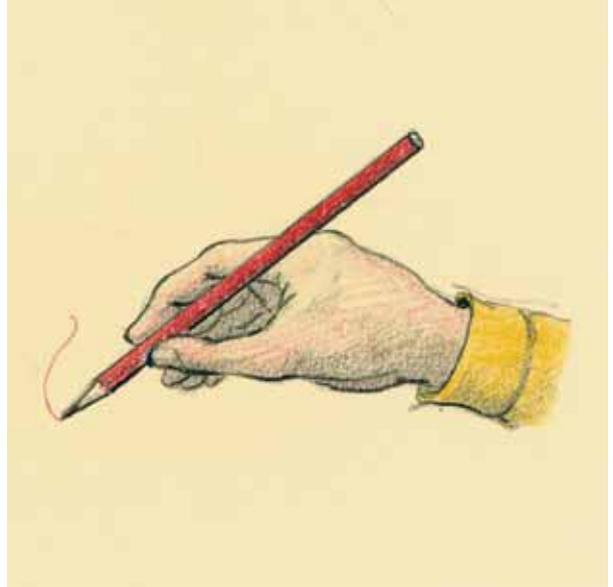
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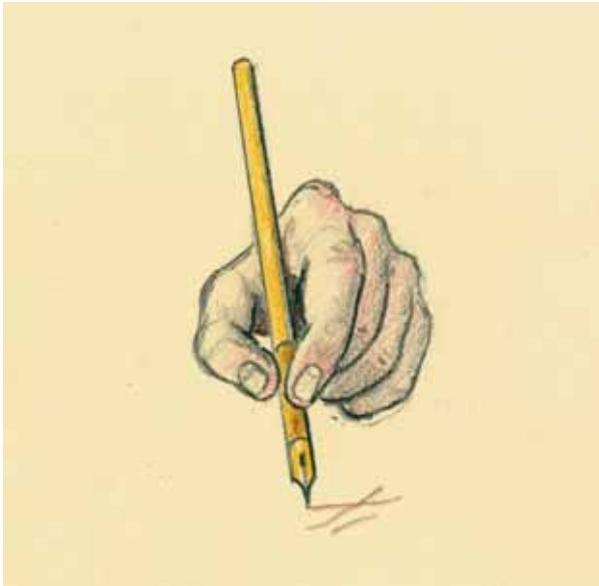
5.



6.



7.



1. *Hold the pastel loosely*
2. *Fineline pen held conventionally but with your little finger supporting it*
3. *Large sable brush held like a wand*
4. *Small brush held like a pen*
- 5 and 6. *Pencil can be held either like a wand or more conventionally*
7. *Push or dip pen held normally*

## MASTERSTROKES

A pen line doesn't have to be firm and precise anymore than a pencil line or a pastel stroke has to be: a rather wobbly and meandering pen line often looks more convincing than a smooth, hard-edged line. The main thing in holding an implement for drawing is not to grip it too tightly. Your grip should be as light as is possible without losing control of the tool.

# Drawing positions

In order to draw well, make sure that you are comfortably positioned – try different positions to find the one most suited to you. It is nearly always best to have your drawing supported on a sloping board. This is particularly useful when using watercolours because it allows the water to run down the paper and makes it easier to control the intensity of your colour. But a sloping surface is just as useful when using chalk, pastel, pencil or pen. For most drawing, except with pen and ink, I prefer to stand up using an easel, but sometimes it is not convenient nor does it always give the best results. When working with pen and ink, you should keep your paper surface less upright, otherwise the ink does not flow properly to the nib, and the same is true to a certain extent with brushwork in watercolour. But having the paper absolutely flat is not a good idea because you tend to view it too much from one angle, which can give rise to distortion.

1. *Standing at an easel*



2. *Sitting down with the board supported by the back of another chair*



3. Drawing with pastels on a board propped up on a table

4. Standing up with a sketchpad



5. Probably the best position for drawing in pen and ink

# The colour wheel

## Colour control

16

GETTING STARTED

**This simple device is very useful for demonstrating the relationships between the different colours of the spectrum and holds true for any of the mediums that you will be using.**

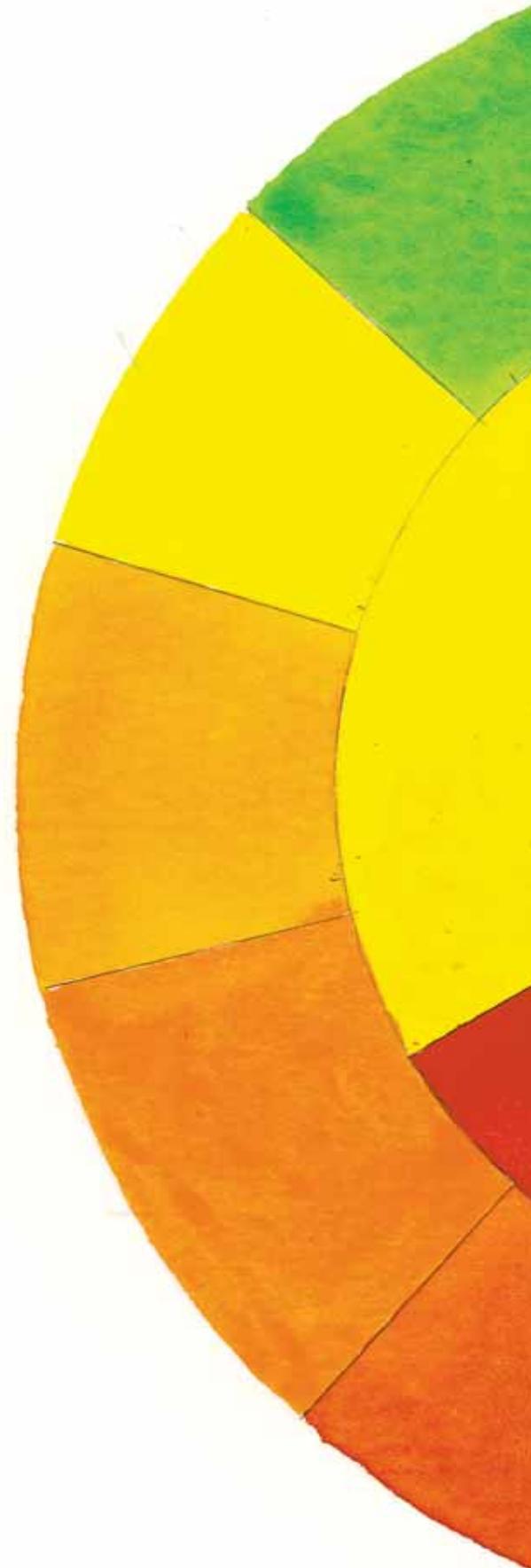
The diagram shows an inner circle of colour containing the three primaries, red, yellow and blue. 'Primary' means you cannot break them down into any components. They are the three basic colours from which all others are made.

In the outer circle we have a number of secondary colours which combine two of the primary colours, and also the gradations of the spectrum in between. Starting at the top and moving in a clockwise direction the colours are: green, blue-green (turquoise), the primary blue, violet, purple, crimson, the primary red, vermilion, orange, deep yellow, the primary yellow, yellow-green, and then back to the first colour, green.

Note that the results of mixing each of the secondary colours (two primaries mixed) yield strong red and weak blue in crimson; strong blue and weak red in violet; strong blue and weak yellow in turquoise; strong yellow and weak blue in yellow-green; strong yellow and weak red in deep yellow and strong red and weak yellow in vermilion.

Now have a look at the colours on the wheel that are opposite one another. They 'complement' each other as they render the greatest contrast between themselves and, as a result, have the most impact when placed next to each other in, for example, a picture.

Tertiary colours are mixtures of all three primaries, which make darker, subtler or more neutral colours, such as brown, beige, grey and variations on green and purple.





# Coloured pencil

Coloured pencils are one form of colour that almost everybody has had some experience of using, from quite an early age. You will need a good range of colours, and different brands produce slightly different ranges, so sometimes a mixture of brands can be to your advantage. Make sure all your pencils are well sharpened before you start, because you get a better texture for the colour intensity if you do. Have several of each colour ready so that you can just change pencils when one gets too blunt. This saves time.

**1** To start with, give yourself an idea of the relative colour power of the different pencils by making a chart, drawing a patch of colour, as shown, as strongly as you can without breaking the lead. As you will see, there is a limitation on the intensity of these colours com-

pared with paints or pastels. This means that when you are drawing pictures in this medium you will be producing a rather soft and gentle colour impact. The best results will be from careful and delicate drawing.

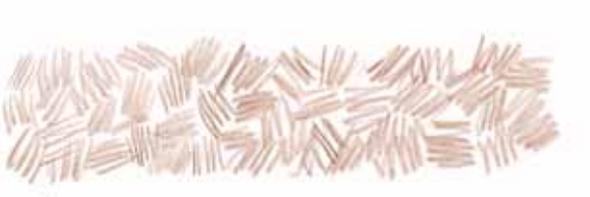


Having made your chart, next try drawing with fairly gentle strokes all in one direction, like shading with an ordinary pencil. Keep the

strokes as close together as you can in order to produce a uniform effect.



**2** Then make a series of short marks in various directions, producing an overall texture that looks a bit like wood. I've used brown here.



**4** The next series of marks are almost dots and you can decide whether you prefer a scattering of dots or very short marks. Cover the area as uniformly as you can.



**3** Now try different ways of covering a surface, as shown; first a wandering line which doubles back on itself to produce a sort of scribble area. I've used green, but try several colours yourself.



**5** Lastly, try the exercise of taking closely marked straight lines alongside and across each other to build up a rather denser texture.



**6** Now you can attempt overlaying one colour with another. To keep it simple, I have just done strokes all in one direction for the first colour and in a contrary direction for the second. My combinations are yellow-green then green, green then brown, yellow then red, and yellow then blue. But any combination is worth trying, so do experiment.



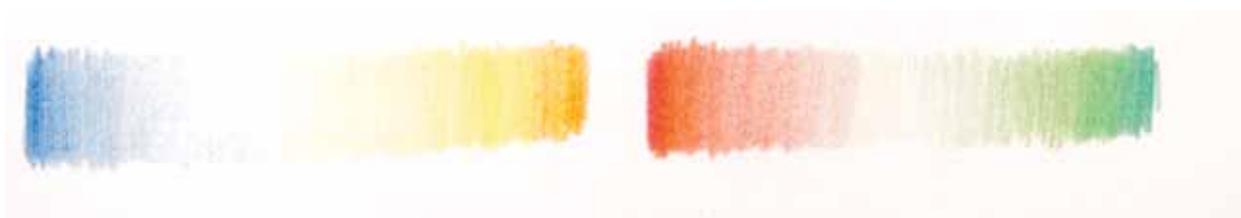
Yellow-green then green

Green then brown

Yellow then red

Yellow then blue

**7** Finally, practise controlling your pencil by starting with a hard stroke that softens off. Then select another colour; its complementary contrast (the pairs of colours that lie opposite each other on the colour wheel – see page 16) would be best. Start off gently with this one before making the stroke, and colour, stronger towards the end.



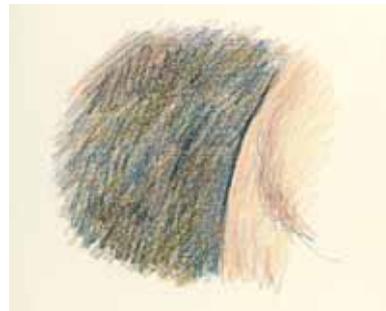
# Pencil work in greater detail

These sketches show different ways of producing texture with coloured pencils and give some idea of both their possibilities and limitations. Because pencils are easy to control, they are frequent favourites among beginners. Later on, of course, one realizes that the control doesn't come from mental determination but purely from constant practice. Then you can let go of all the controls and allow the eye to direct the hand without effort.

**1** First of all, just a simple patch of colour where the pencils have been scribbled in all directions to produce a texture. The three colours used were brown, then pink and then ultramarine blue. The blue was put on more heavily than the other two. This produces a smoky texture, which can be built up quite easily.



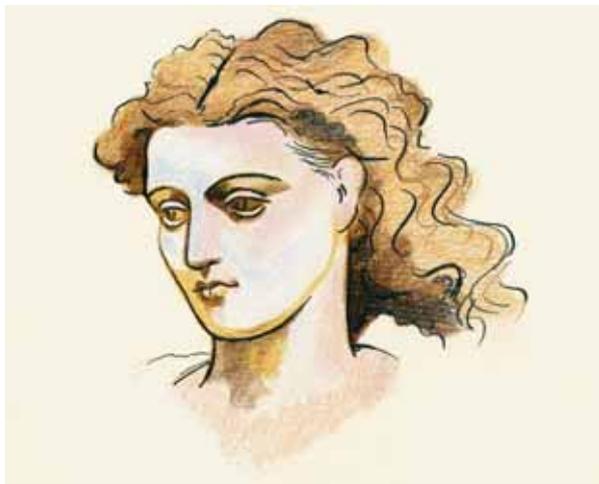
**2** Now we take two areas of colour, a dark background behind a lighter piece of cloth. The cloth is drawn with loose strokes in red, yellow and a touch of blue. There is no attempt to build up a strong colour. For the background, a closely shaded dark blue was first applied, followed by brown and red, and then even heavier strokes of violet. The build-up here is stronger, to create a dark space.



**3** Next, we have two parts of a drawing by Mary Cassatt, the American Impressionist. The first part is a leg-of-mutton sleeve of the period, drawn with rapid light strokes of the pencil. The sleeve itself is in green, yellow ochre, brown, blue and violet, in that order. Some areas are more closely covered, others less so, to give change of tone. The background is a heavily drawn-on texture of red and yellow, with some violet in the shadows. Having worked up the colours to the desired intensity, they are given added strength by the black outlining of the sleeve shape and deepening of the shadows in the space behind.



The second Mary Cassatt drawing is of a small child held in its mother's arms. First, a light layer of yellow ochre was smoothed on, then pinker areas around the thigh, stomach, chest and shoulder. When that is done, areas of light and dark blue help to bring out the shaded parts, with a little added green. The background areas are on one side dark blue and violet, and on the other side greenish-yellow. To finish, once again a black pencil has been used to define the rounded edges of the figure.



**4** An example based on a Picasso drawing of 1923.

Here the two tones of pink and blue help to provide the dimensional aspects of the head, while the yellow ochre and a brown give shadowy areas on both head and hair. Again, a few black lines sharpen up the image.

**5** The Toulouse-Lautrec figure in the fur-trimmed evening coat is done with far less texture, keeping everything very spare and lightly drawn. This creates a sort of delicacy which is quite elegant.

Coloured pencils are best used where you would rather create soft or delicate images.



## MASTERSTROKES

One way of making a distinction between the different effects of light falling on both sides of the face or figure is to make one side of the face a warm, bright colour – a pink or light yellow; and the other side, a cool blue or green colour. This effect of warm and cool colours on the edge of a form helps to create an effect of roundness.

# Coloured ink

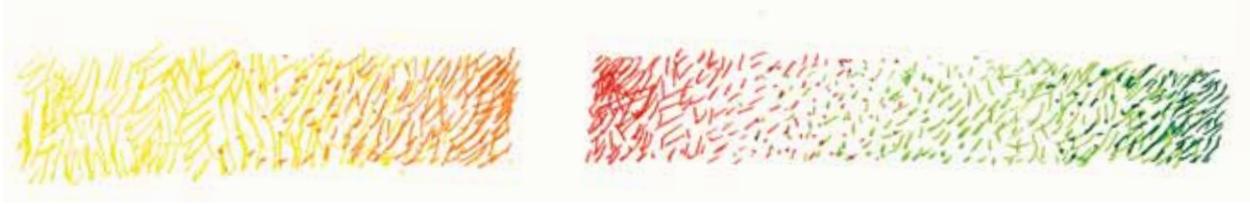
Fineline fibre-tipped pens in a range of colours represent coloured ink in its simplest commercial form. You can buy them separately or in packs of a complete colour range. The other option is to use a fine dip pen and nib and bottles of either coloured Indian ink or concentrated liquid watercolours that also come in bottles. These work just as well as fibre tips and last much longer.

- 1 The first task is to test their effect by scribbling a patch of colour with each individual pen. Lay them alongside each other to see how they contrast or harmonize. With this type of ink, the colours are usually quite sharp and strong so that the only problem is how to soften them and combine them.



**2** One way of pulling two colours together is by making very small marks of colour starting heavily on the left and gradually dispersing them more widely as you move to the right. Then do the same thing with another colour from the right towards the left. If one

colour is a lot stronger or darker than the other you may have to fade it out more quickly. In my examples, I've done from yellow to red and from red to green. Note that the yellow-green was helped a bit towards its stronger end by another deeper green.



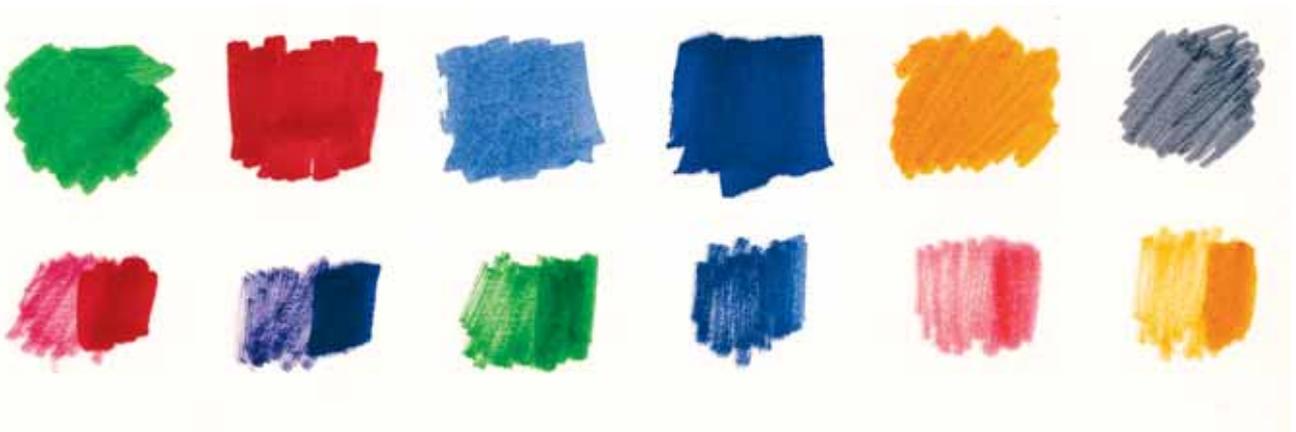
**3** Next, try overlaying strokes of two different colours with the strokes of one colour opposed by strokes of another at almost right angles over the top. I show blue over green, blue over pink, brown over grey and brown over red.



**4** In order to get a gentler variety of tone in your colour, do the outlines in ink lines and then use another medium to produce areas of tone within the outlined shapes. I have used coloured pencils inside the square outline of ink. This can work quite well.



**5** Lastly, I show a set of marks made by thicker felt-tipped markers which, as you can see, will strengthen any colours where you feel you need a more powerful emphasis.



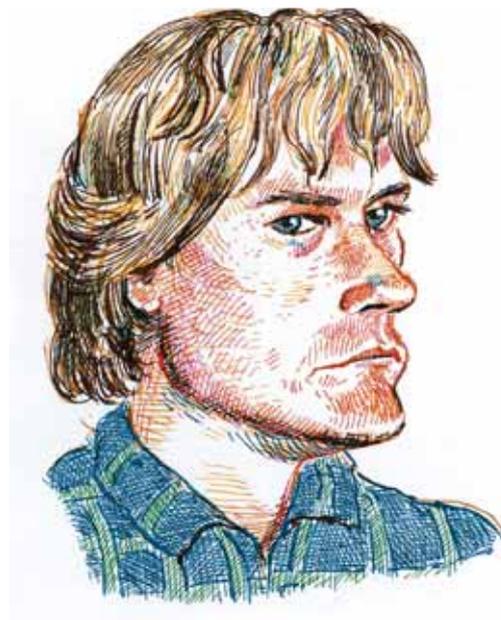
# Pen and ink in greater detail

24

GETTING STARTED

The problem with drawing in colour in pen and ink is rather similar to the situation with coloured pencils. Large areas take so many strokes of the nib to fill them that inevitably there is a large amount of white paper left showing through, and this tends to produce more of a tint than a solid colour. Other problems are building up tones sufficiently densely to hold the form and taking care that marks aren't so strong they dominate. Pen and ink drawings are never quick to produce although this does have the advantage of allowing you to be more careful in building up your picture. Some people love the medium while others try it only once. See how you get on.

In these two drawings – one in pencil and the other in paint – I have used David Hockney as my inspiration. Here, the multitude of overlaid reddish tones give some idea of the man's strong rubicund complexion. The hair and the shirt are not too difficult, although the shirt in the original is much stronger in colour. Hundreds of pen strokes are needed to build the colour, so you will need patience. You will also need a fair amount of confidence, because it is impossible to remove the pen strokes once they have been made.



The face of the girl was harder to get right tonally because the pink complexion of the original was quite delicate. This version looks both stronger and deeper in tone. The small broken strokes are better for reproducing a less intense colour but even then, as you can see, it remains quite strong.





In this study of Florence, based on a work by Oskar Kokoschka, the tones and colours are built up by a mixture of small and large strokes, many of them packed quite closely to give an effect of solid roofs and walls. You will have to overlay your marks several times in order to get the tonal qualities you need, and each time you do that, try to vary the direction of your strokes.

Based on an impasto brush painting by Frank Auerbach, of Mornington Crescent in London, this example will test your patience. The less solid medium of pen and ink will force you to build up the areas more gradually. This is where your talent in mixing colours becomes important, because each layer of pen strokes changes the colour of the area being drawn. You will have to decide how many layers of marks you give each area. I made the sky with one layer, which helps the buildings to look more dense and solid.



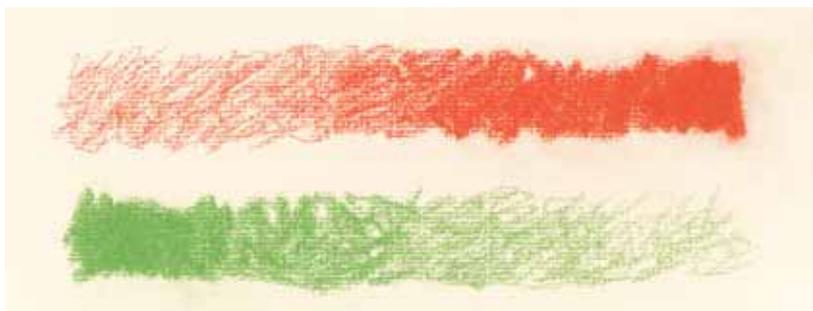
# Coloured pastels and chalk

The most expressive way of drawing in colour, as opposed to painting, is by using artists' pastels or chalk, which are made of the same pigments as paints, but held in the form of a stick. Most artists will use both the hard and the soft variety of pastel, depending on the effects they are after, but if you are an absolute beginner at this medium, the hard pastels are easier to start with. They are often also called conté crayons.



**1** When using pastels or conté crayons, work on tinted stock such as Ingres paper, testing your colours by selecting a creamy-beige toned paper and a darker brown-grey. On the lighter paper, first make a sort of chart with one stroke of each colour using the thickness of the pastel. This will give you some idea of the density of tone and brightness of colour for each crayon.

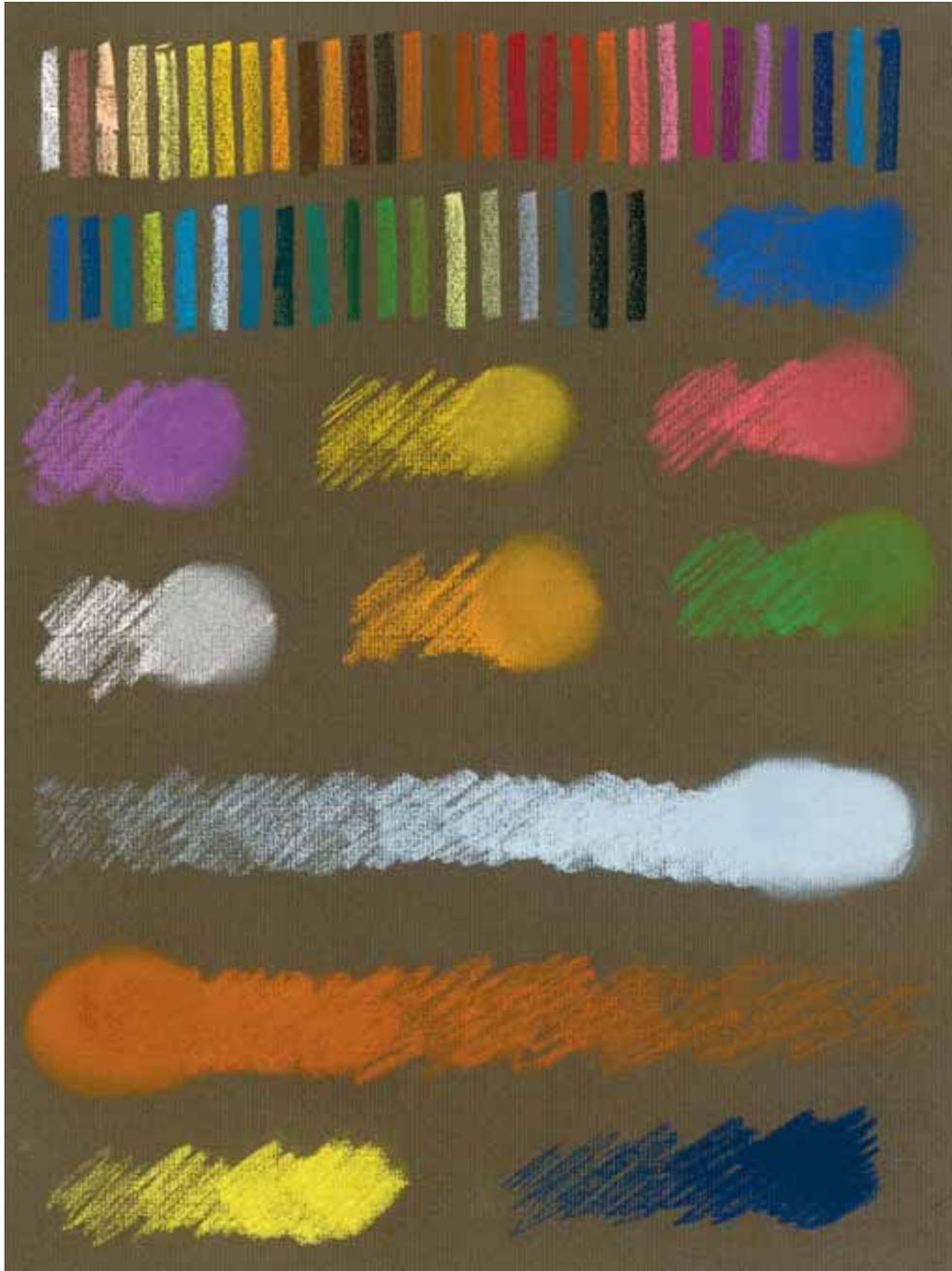
**2** Now make a patch of colour, scribbling chalk back and forth over a small area. Then with your finger or thumb, smudge about half of it along the bottom section to see what happens when the colour is worked over. You will not need to treat every colour like this, but do enough to give you an idea of how it looks.



**3** Next, make an overall scribble of tone starting lightly and getting heavier and heavier – without crushing the crayon – but getting the most solid colour value from each one. This will show how the colour can be varied in intensity.

**4** Now have a go at doing the same thing on the darker of the two papers. Note how different colours stand out in different ways. A red that looks quite dark and strong on the beige paper, looks vibrant and glowing on the dark brown. Notice how the dark tones look heavier on the light paper and more subdued on the dark paper. See how the tonal variation

also applies to the smudging exercise. Smudging the colours allows you to produce a larger mass of smoother colour if you require it. Most artists tend to use a mid- to dark tone for working in this medium, but some eighteenth-century artists working on whitish paper produced pictures that looked, from a distance, like oil paintings.



This is a medium favoured by professional artists because it is like dry painting: easier to transport and with much the same possibilities as watercolours or oil paint. However, you will have to invest in a good spray-on fixative to hold loose particles of chalk and prevent your picture fading away. Some artists don't like fixing their work because it sometimes affects the colour

values, especially when the pastel is overlaid thickly, one colour over another. Instead, they shake off the excess pastel by tapping it gently, and keep putting on and tapping off until they get the result that they desire. Nevertheless, to keep it safe, the work will have to be overlaid with a sheet of acid-free tissue paper or put immediately under framed glass.

# Pastels in greater detail

Drawing with pastels, you have a greater colour range at your disposal than for anything else, except paint. You will find it most advantageous to work on toned or coloured paper, and there are many kinds available, from cheap sugar paper to more expensive stock, such as Canson or Ingres papers. Any art shop carries a variety of pads or sheets and it is worth trying out several different types until you find the one that suits you best. One pastel artist I know of draws straight onto thick board and I have many times worked on ordinary brown or grey cardboard.

- 1 Put a patch of some light tone onto brown paper and then smudge it with your finger until it looks like smoke or a cloud. Work over the top of this with strokes in lighter and darker tones to see how they can blend in with the soft background.



Do different textural exercises just to get the hang of working with them. Remember, if you are using soft pastels be much gentler in your handling.

- 2 Then try making various marks in a fairly random manner, building up darker colours onto the dark brown paper. Don't smudge this, just note how dark colours still show up against the dark background.

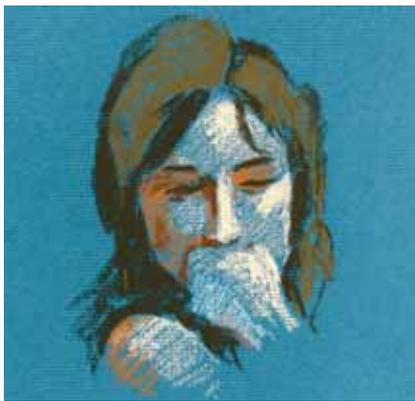
- 3 Next, try stroking on the colours in one direction only, starting with a light colour. Don't smudge this either, but work over it with something darker in a slightly different direction. Add other dark colours to deepen the tone one side of the patch.





**4** Look at this highly simplified copy of a Renoir nude, drawn in pastel on a dark brown paper. First of all, the outline shape was lightly sketched in with a warm pink. Then strokes of a light pink and a light yellow ochre were drawn across the lighter parts of the figure, to build up the rounded shapes of the limbs and torso. Then darker, redder colours were put in around the shadowed sides, increasing the three-dimensional effect. Darker colours were further added for the hair, the dark outlines and deeply shadowed areas. I used purple, blue, brown, carmine and a touch of green. Finally, the dark background was put in with various colours, finished by all the very lightest areas, such as the towel and the flesh highlights in white, sometimes tempered with a little yellow. Note how the pastels tend to follow the contours of the figure, so there is no single way to put on your strokes of colour.

**5** Three simple exercises where the aim is to keep everything to a minimum; with pastels this can be very effective. I used a deep blue paper and for the plant drawing used a light green, a dark green, and then put in a background across the top, finishing with a dark brown touch on the stalks and the fence behind.



**6** The girl's head in the second drawing was outlined first in a dark brown. The pale pink followed in gentle strokes over the lightest areas of the face and hand. Next, a richer, warmer reddish tone was used for the shadows on the face and shoulder and, after that, yellow and pink to pick up the highlights. I put a touch of light blue on the back of the hand where the light was reflected.

**7** In drawing the final head, I simply scribbled light pink and yellow marks to suggest hair and face, not too precisely. After that, I used a touch of dark pink for shadows on the face and darker ochre for shadows on the hair – note that none of these marks is very heavy. Lastly, I added a bit of red for the mouth, a little black or dark brown for the eyes, nostrils and chin, and a couple of highlights in white on the nose and cheekbones. I also added a light blue reflected light on the dark side of the face. A relatively acceptable head has been produced without too much work.



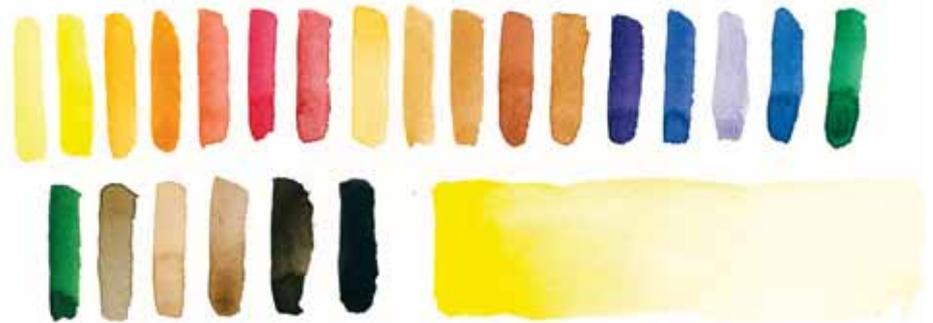
# Watercolour

30

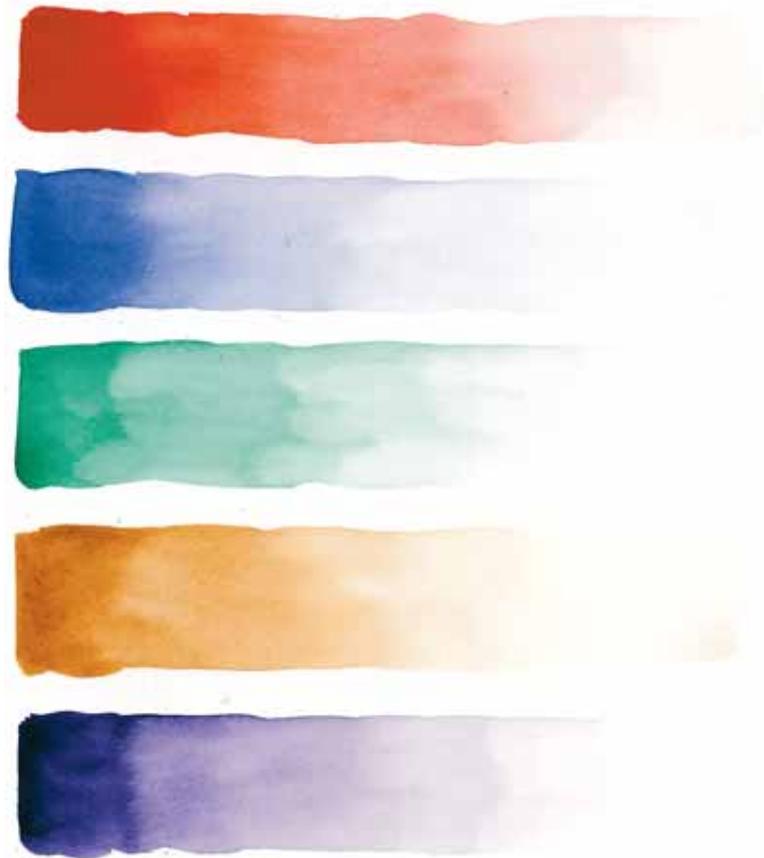
GETTING STARTED

When you come to use watercolour, first familiarize yourself with the quality of the paint and its covering power. Watercolour is a very flexible medium and can produce brilliant results in the hands of a practised painter. But even with a beginner, the results can often be quite marvellous because, some of the time, you rely on what are called 'happy accidents'. That is when you get an interesting result even though you didn't know how it came about.

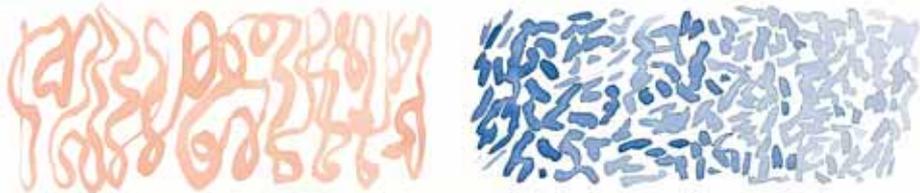
**1** Take a large soft brush (a size 7 sable would be ideal) and wet it, then take the strongest tone you can on your brush and lay strokes of each colour next to one another so that you get a clear idea of their relative power. Do this exercise on a piece of white watercolour paper for the best results. Thin paper will only cockle and go wavy.



**2** Having made a patch for each colour in your paintbox, find out how the intensity can be reduced by adding water to it. Starting with a solid patch (I started with yellow), brush out from left to right, add more and more water until the colour has almost faded to nothing. Try to do it as evenly as you can. You will improve with practice but, as you can see from my examples of red, blue, viridian, brown and purple, some have come out much patchier than others. However, this only shows that a patchy quality is sometimes quite acceptable.



- 3** Get accustomed to the idea of drawing with the brush. As you can see from the next set of exercises, coloured shapes have been formed by pulling the tip of the brush across the paper with various twists and turns that are sometimes thicker and sometimes thinner. Try the same method with the brush, making short strokes and small blobs.



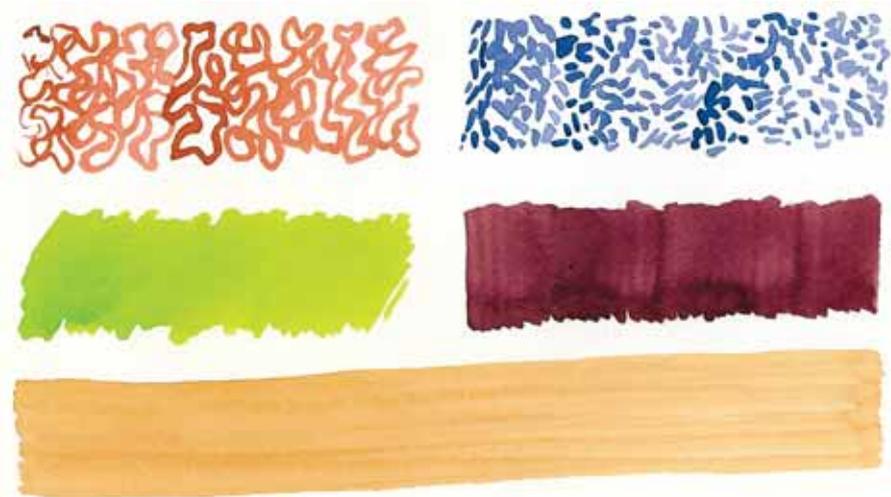
- 4** Using two colours, make downward strokes where each stroke floods into the next one, producing an all-over patch of colour. Try it with the strokes going up and down alternately.



- 5** Drag the loaded brush across the paper horizontally, allowing each stroke to flood into the one above. Do all this with your paper attached to a sloping board. This allows the water to run smoothly down the paper. Whatever you do, try to avoid the mistake of going back over the painted areas because this always produces patchy colour effects.



Having done all this, repeat the exercise with a size 2 brush, which has a narrower point.



# Watercolour in greater detail (1)

## A garden scene

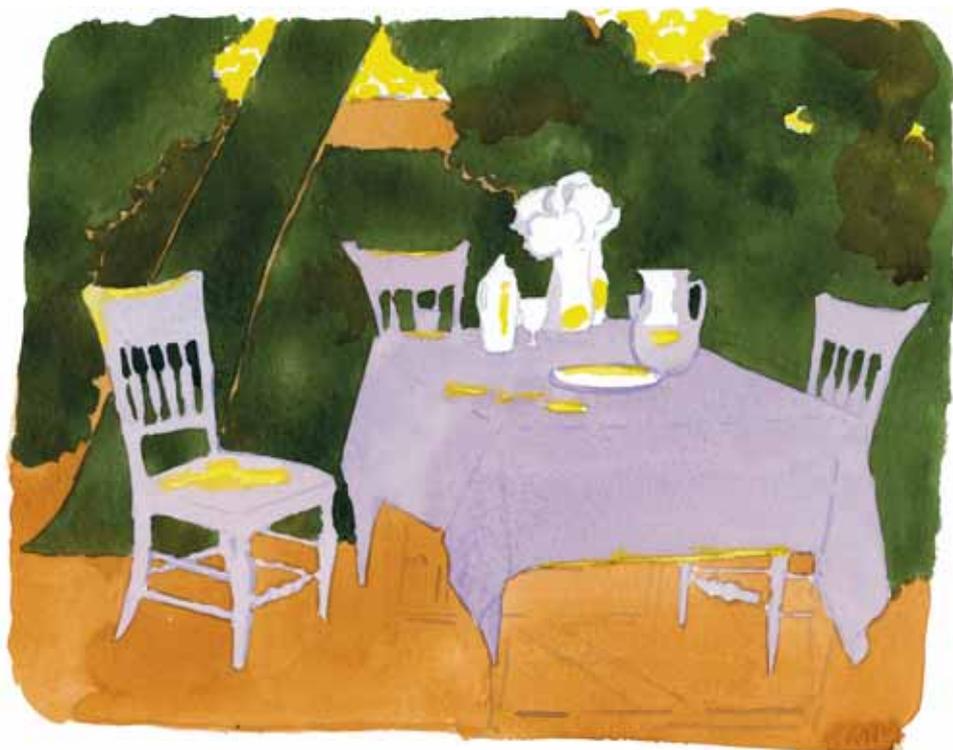
32

GETTING STARTED

Here are two fairly straightforward exercises. Don't hurry, and try to be precise. The garden table picture needs a soft-edged approach and the Venetian buildings (over the page) need a more sharp-edged resolution. Both will produce highly effective pictures with a bit of practice.

**1** First lay out the scene simply but with a degree of accuracy. Draw with a brush (size 2 sable) using a light greenish-brown or greenish-grey to give a clear, almost diagrammatic outline. Simple outlines are best, leaving large areas to flood with colour.

**2** Next put in the basic tones and colours. The light lies beyond the shade of the trees and bushes, so nothing will be strongly lit except where the sun filters through. Spot in some yellow, as shown. The tablecloth may be white in reality, but in the shadow of the trees looks more purple-mauve. Go over the tablecloth, the chairs and parts of the jugs, outlining the shadows. Now use warm red-brown for the ground, the section of wall at the back and some of the foliage. Take it right up to the edge of the



lighter mauve tablecloth and chairs but wait until the former is dry before you lay in this sienna tone.

The last colour base is the dark olive green of the background vegetation and the tree trunk. This needs to be a tone or two darker than the ruddy tone of the ground. Where you have put patches of brown on the vegetation, just paint straight over it. Again, do this after the red-brown has dried. Flood the green over the vegetation and along the tree trunk, leaving a sliver of the brownish colour to indicate the edge. Outline the chair shapes, including the spaces between back rungs and the legs. With equal care, go around the objects that project beyond the far edge of the table. Notice how the unpainted parts of the objects on the table really stand out, and the table and chairs now look quite light.



**3** Over the entire dark-green background splash in leaves in a deeper green or a dark brown. Some splashes of blue will also help to liven the density of the foliage. The chairs and table should now be defined more with overlays of purple or blue. The tablecloth should consist of blue and pink tones, with the edge defined in a darker blue. The chairs can have a bit of green mixed in with the tones over them; they need to look slightly darker than the table top.

Splash browns and greens over the ground in flickering shapes so almost covering the original red-brown with these darker tones. Notice how

the brushwork hints at the ground's unevenness and the dappled light through the leaves.

For the objects on top of the table, leave the roses almost untouched, except for a splash of pink on one bloom. Blue and purple tones for the vase will help to give the impression of glass. The bottle and coffee pot should be done in browns, greens and blues. Don't be too exact about the shapes. A loose, wobbly edge helps in this sort of picture. The big jug in the foreground should be treated the same way, but don't totally cover the splashes of yellow that were put on at the beginning.

# Watercolour in greater detail (2)

## Venetian scene

34

GETTING STARTED

As with the garden scene, this picture is begun by drawing with a brush. Select a size 2 sable with a good point. Use watercolour paper, the thicker the better, to avoid the paper buckling.

To start, mix up your watercolours in three basic tones. The colour should be watery but reasonably strong in order to get sufficient contrast between the paint and the white paper, some of which will be left showing at the end of your picture.

**1** Start with the outline. The colour could be ultramarine but a fairly watery mix. Then define all the blocks of architecture and the line of the base of the buildings where they meet the water. Indicate their reflections in the canal. Keep it all relatively simple, only putting in a few of the most obvious features. You will end up with a drawing as shown, which gives you quite enough information to start on the next stage.



**2** Now you can do the sky. Use a size 7 brush with a good point. Turn the outline drawing upside down, resting it on a sloping board or desk. This helps you to flood the watercolour on easily and, after each stroke, the colour runs down to the place where you will make your next one. Start carefully, putting in the sky along the lines of the rooftops, allowing the watery colour to run down towards what will be the top of the paper. As the colour washes down towards the edge of the paper it gathers more of the pigment so that when you have finished, the strongest part of the colour is nearer the edge of the paper.



Now reverse the process. This time you will be doing the water of the canal, so mix up a good deep blue with a slightly green tinge to it. Start at the point where the base of the buildings meet the water; you won't have much trouble getting nice smooth horizontal strokes of colour across the paper. As the watercolour floods down to the bottom edge of the picture, be aware that the colour will again be stronger towards the bottom edge.

**3** Mix up an ultramarine blue with a bit of purple in it and paint in the areas of the buildings that are in shadow. Leave a few strokes of white paper where anything catches the light. A few fine lines of shadow can be placed towards the left edge of the domes. Don't forget the shadows of the chimney pots cast onto the rooftops.

**4** With a good Naples yellow, paint in the sunlit side of the buildings that are closest to the water, but leave the church and the Custom House building (on the left) as the unpainted white of the paper.

Some of this colour should also go over the shadowed faces of the buildings, allowing for a toning down of the purple. Then with a warmer brown tone, you can mark in some of the darker windows and roofs and the front façade of the buildings.

**5** Lastly, the domes have to be put in, using a very light warm grey. That means it will have a little yellow in it. Don't forget the boat hulls. As you can see, the colours and tones are building up steadily, giving more depth and interest to the details of the buildings.

Cover the areas of distant vegetation with a green tone. Then with a much deeper version of the original colour of the canal, put in the reflection of the buildings over the water area, with a broken edge to simulate the ripples. Make a few tiny strokes outside the edge of the mass of reflection to give a flickering impression of wavelets on the surface. Now, with an even darker brown, touch in a few special effects like the windows in the houses and the shadowed sides of the boats.



# One-point perspective

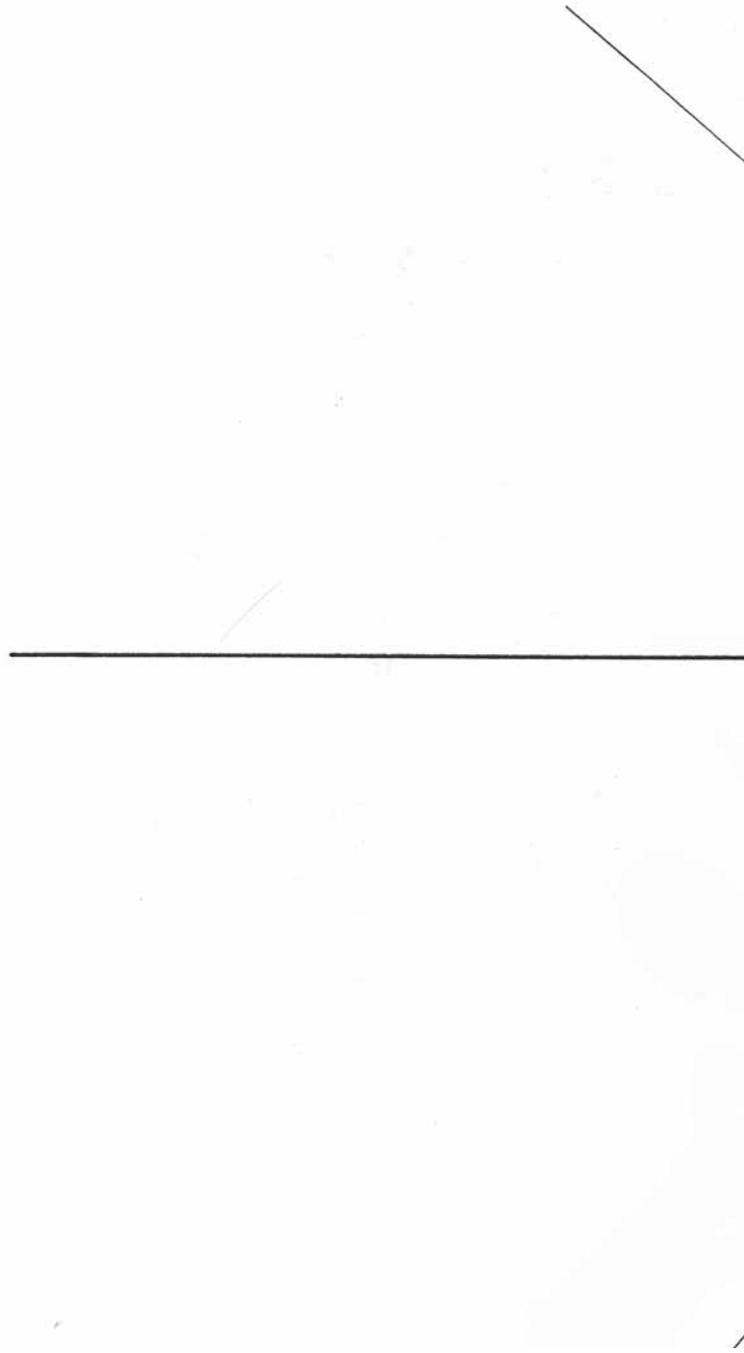
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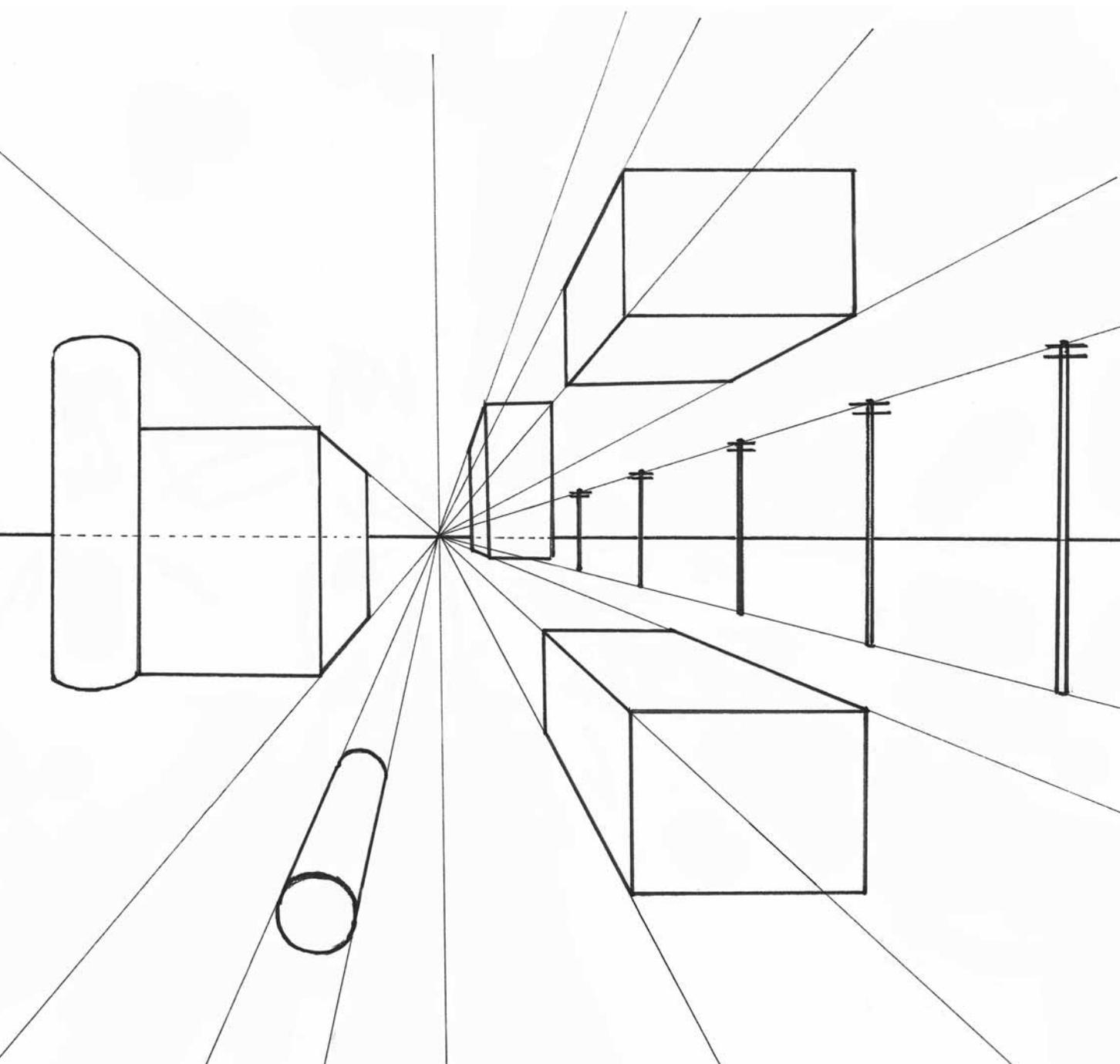
GETTING STARTED

**Your skills as an artist should include the technique of constructing a drawing to give the appearance of spatial dimension on a two-dimensional plane.**

Perspective theory attempts to regulate the appearance of the natural world with a constructive formula that makes it easier to draw. Linear perspective was developed in the Renaissance by such great artists as Brunelleschi, Masaccio, Donatello and Uccello. To the human eye, all lines appear to converge on a vanishing point at the horizon, and we see distant objects as much smaller than things that are close to. We know, for example, that a row of telegraph poles stretching away from us along a road are all the same height, yet, from our point of view, those closest to us appear larger than those further away. If our view is distant enough, the poles eventually seem to disappear altogether on the horizon. Here, and overleaf, are two of the basic systems of perspective for you to look at.

One-point perspective shows the apparent objects (blocks on the ground or in the air, and cylinders placed vertically or lying on the ground) with all the vertical poles diminishing in size as they proceed along the limiting lines of perspective towards a central vanishing point lying in the centre of the horizon. This creates an illusion, on the flat surface of a picture, of objects shrinking uniformly in scale as they recede in space and helps to convince us that we are looking at a genuine three-dimensional situation. Of course, these objects would have to be expertly drawn or painted to appear as convincing of their reality as a photograph.



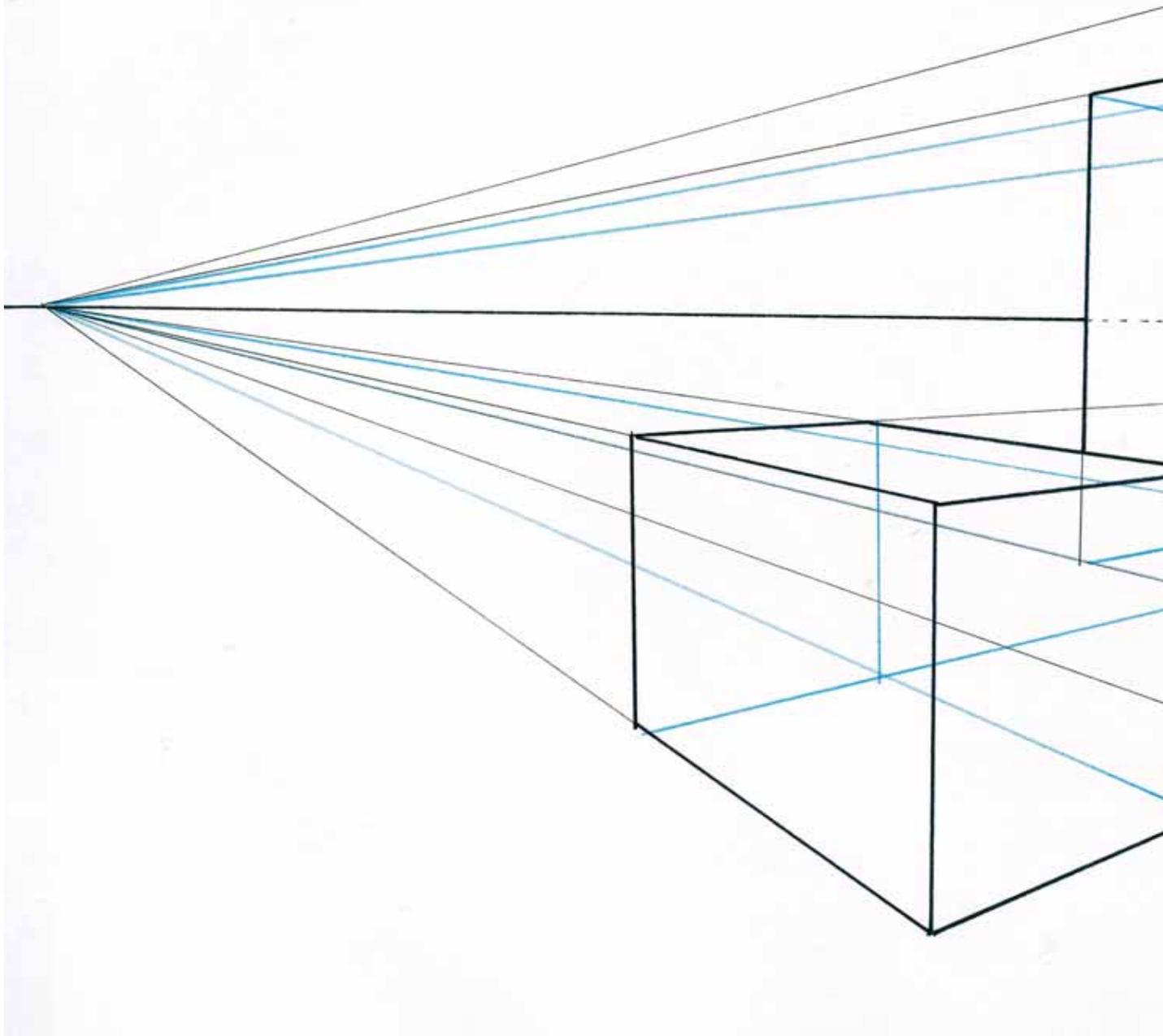


# Two-point perspective

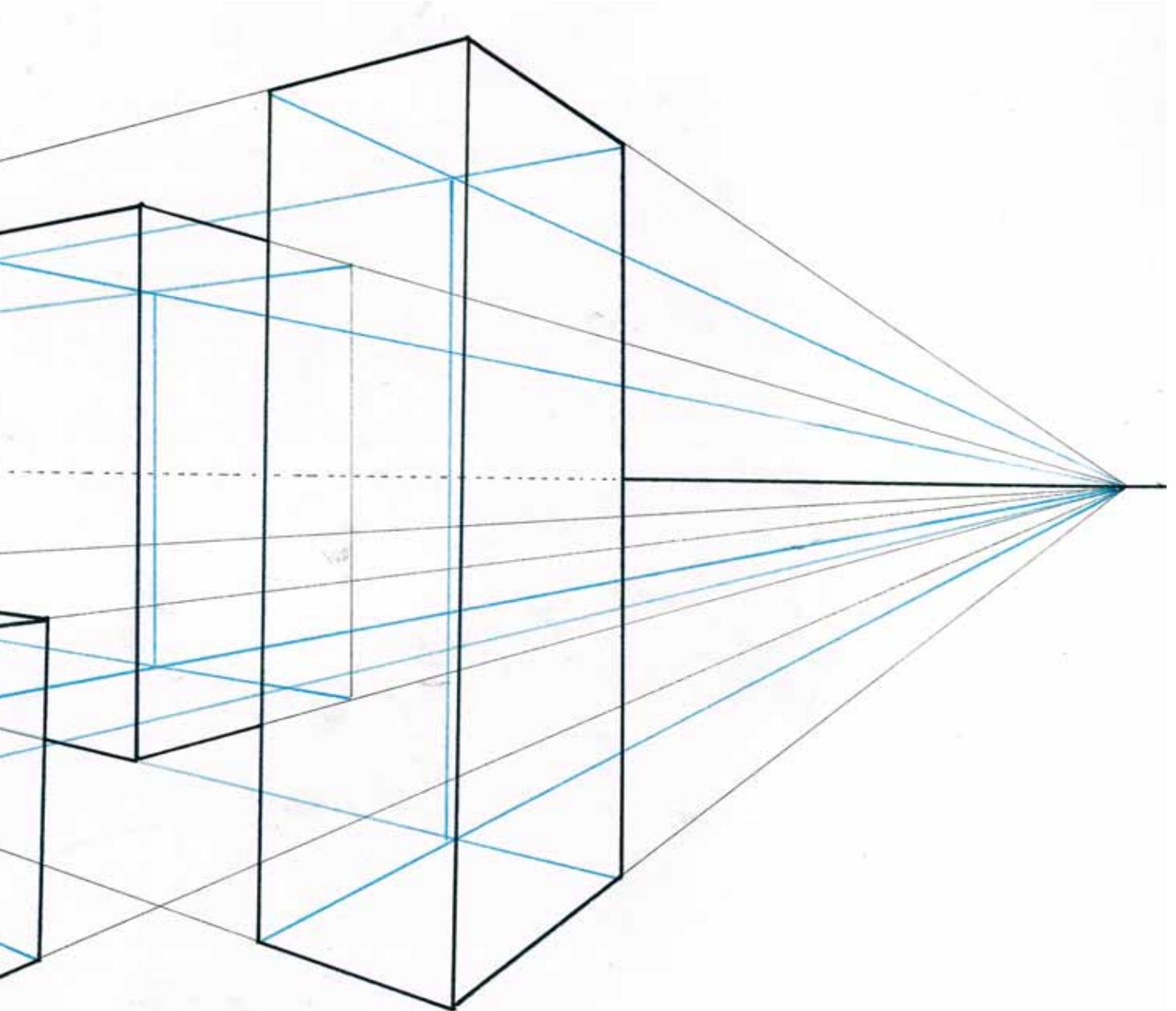
38

GETTING STARTED

The second diagram shows two-point perspective to be more complex, because now we have a vanishing point at each end of the horizon line, with the pair as far apart as our paper will allow. This produces a good impression of three-dimensional objects in space, and I have placed three blocks or buildings on the ground (the area below the horizon line). They appear to occupy space exactly as we would see a similar series of buildings in real life. The blue construction lines indicate the areas of the blocks that would be hidden if they were truly solid. Note how that includes all the overlapping areas.



This system is more complicated to construct than the first diagram, but also more convincing in its illusion of depth and solidity. When you come to draw buildings, these technical devices will be helpful. There are other even more complex diagrams for depicting three-dimensional objects but these two are sufficient for most ordinary drawing purposes.



# Aerial perspective

40

GETTING STARTED

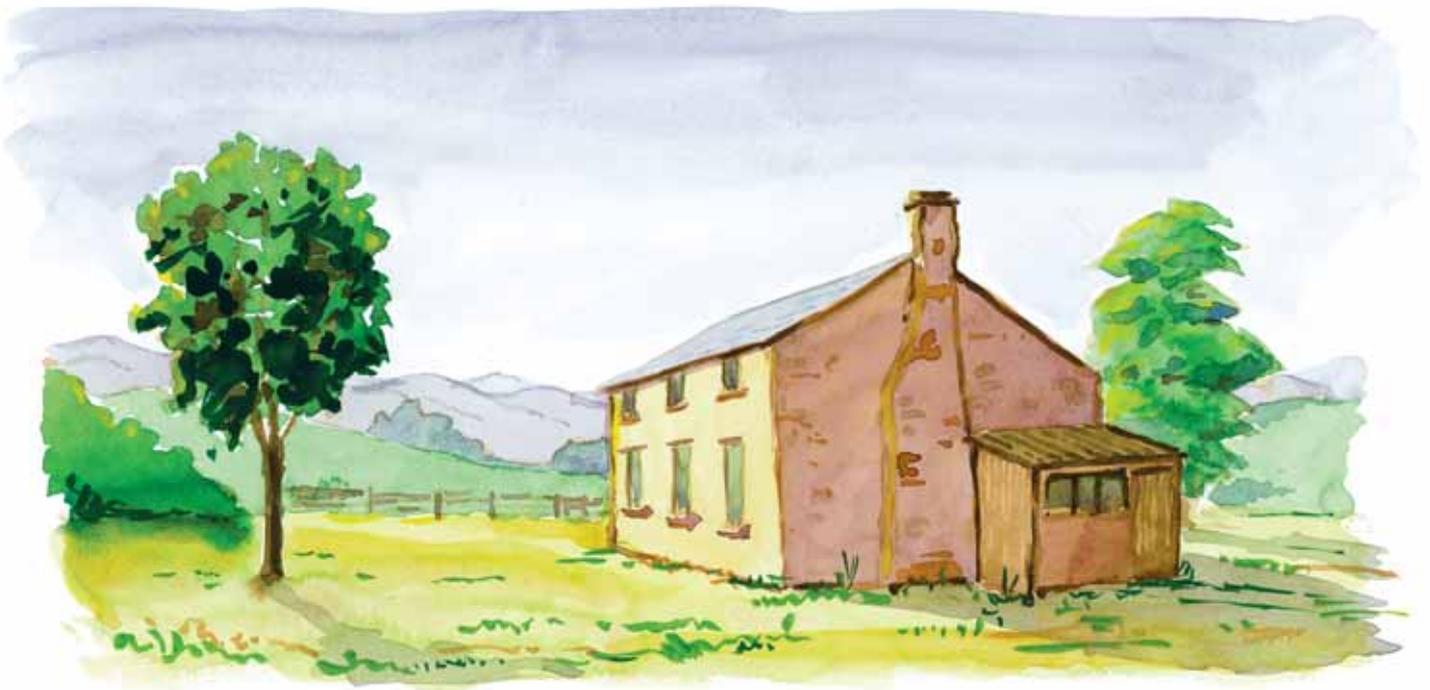
This is the name given to perspective as seen through tone and colour. The principle is that if an object is closer to you it will appear more distinct, more textured and with more intense colour than if separated by distance. Technically, the volume of air, with its accompanying moisture, between you and the object of perception creates a mist of refracted light, and produces the effect that you notice when looking at distant mountains: they always appear more blue than elements of the landscape closer to you. Not only that, their texture is smoothed out and the edges of objects seem less distinct.

So when you produce a landscape, like the two examples here, you can give a greater effect of distance by varying the intensity of the colour and the clarity of the outline.



In the first example, the distant mountains are drawn in blue without very much detail on the surface of the rock. As the eye travels towards the foreground, it notices more intense and warmer colour and more distinct detail, as in the fence post and the close-up grass and bushes.

In the second example, a similar effect is produced and this time it is much clearer that the colours of the landscape and building close to the observer are not only more distinct and detailed in texture, but their colours are generally much warmer in tone, using yellows and reds to give a more immediate effect to their position in space. Blue shades, which are cool, tend to recede and red shades, which are warm, tend to advance – or, at least, give the impression of doing so. You can observe this effect for yourself when looking at a large landscape, especially on a damp day. So when you think of perspective, don't forget that colour usage will also enhance the effects of distance and proximity in your picture. Include lots of detail and warmer colours in the foreground, and less detail and cooler colours for the middle and background. Put in the farthest distance features only in blues and greys.



## MASTERSTROKES

The effect of the source of light on the appearance of distance is also key. If your source of light is behind your main features it has the effect of showing them in silhouette, which tends to make them look closer than they are. So if you wish to retain the effect of distance, make sure that the shadowed parts of your objects are shown in as much tonal detail as possible, to ensure that they don't become a silhouette.

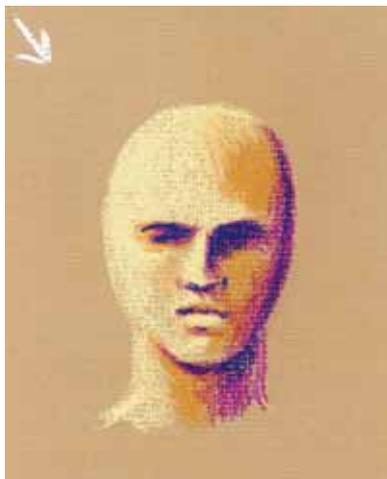
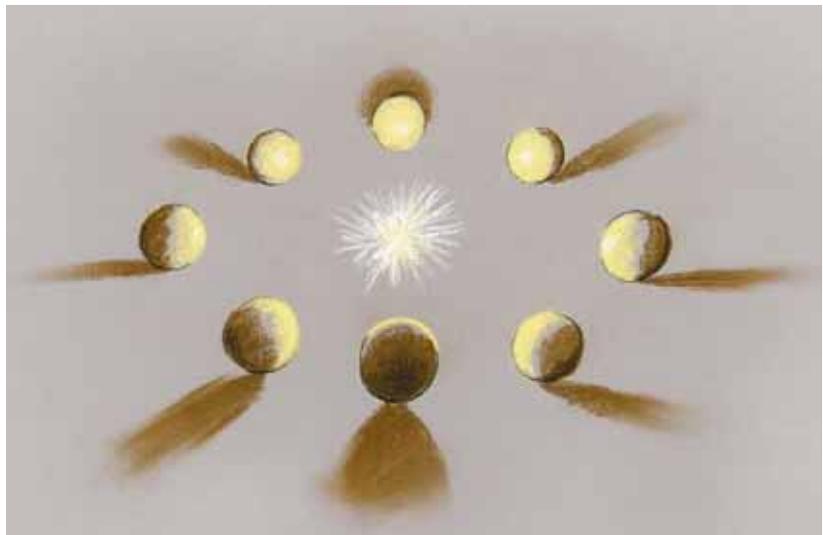
# Lighting

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GETTING STARTED

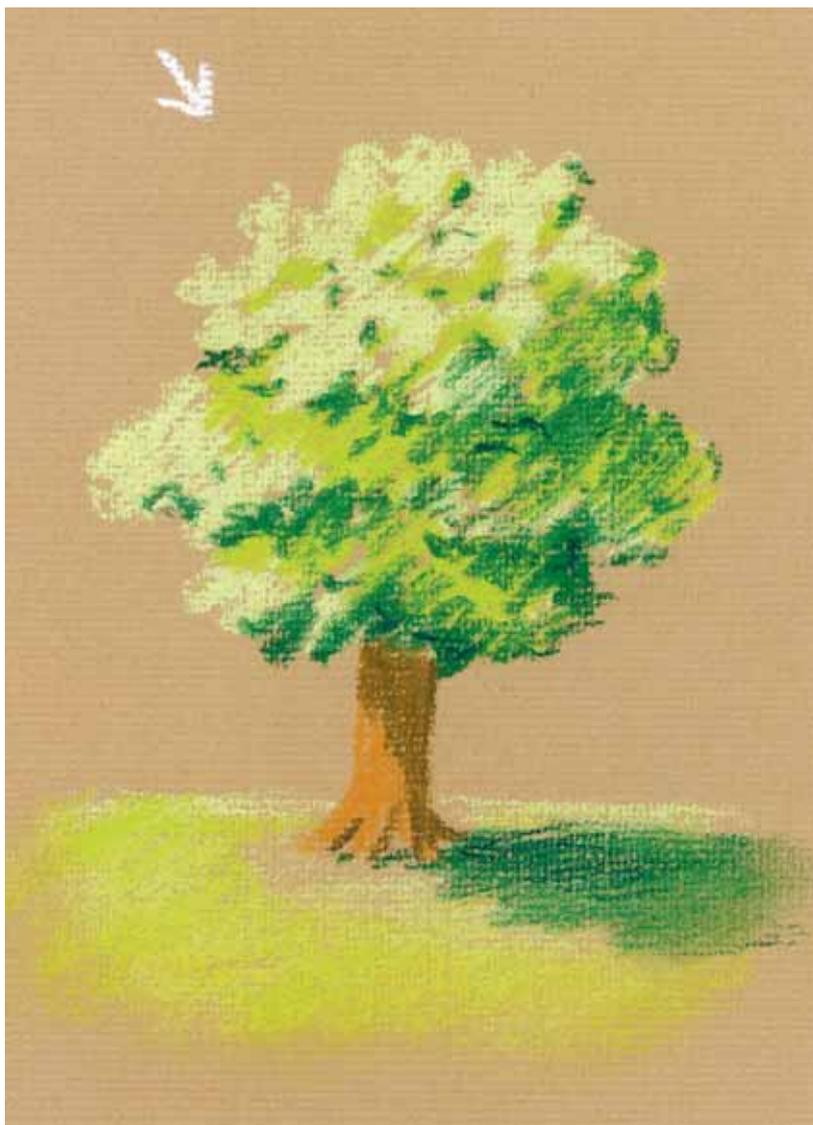
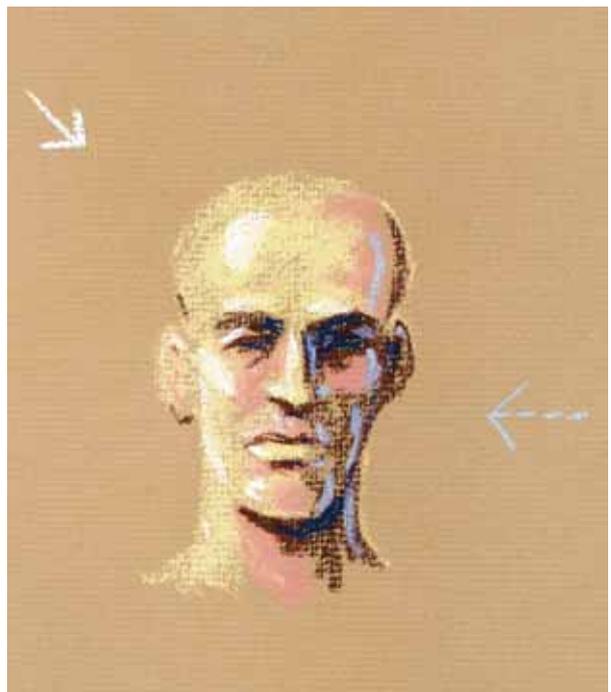
This image shows a central light surrounded by spheres or globes and how this illuminates one side of each sphere, causing a shadow on the opposite side. The sphere placed on the ground will also cast a shadow, stretching away from the light source. Notice that when the sphere is lit directly from the front or behind, it tends to lose a good deal of its three-dimensional qualities in the stark contrast between the surface that is lit and the other that is all in darkness. The maximum three-dimensional effect is obtained by lighting an object from one side or the other at ninety degrees to the observer's line of vision.

The artist usually encounters a straightforward situation of light illuminating the drawing subject from one main source. With artificial light, it may be more complicated, but for most purposes you are dependent upon a single, directional light source, which helps – as perspective helps – to produce a convincing illusion of the solidity of objects.



The second image shows how the appearance of different objects is influenced by the direction of the light. Coming from the top left, the first schematic head is lit on the top, down one side of the face, one side of the nose, the upper edge of the upper lip, the lower lip and the top of the chin. The eyes are both in shadow, the right one more so, as are the right side of the nose, underneath the nose, the upper lip and under the chin and down the right side of the head and neck.

The second head is far less simple than the first, with rugged features, including ears. A strong light shines down from the same angle and once again hits the top and left side of the head and all the features. Even the eyelid catches some of it and, where the bone structure juts out most prominently, you get highlights on the forehead, cheekbone, nose, lower lip and chin. However, added subtlety is obtained from reflected light, which often bounces back from a pale surface (like a white wall), to 'fill out' the shadowy side of the head. Reflected light will be colder (blue here) and much smaller in area than the main light falling on the left. Again, it tends to catch the bony edges of the head. This can give even more conviction to your drawing, so remember to look for it when you are drawing from life; and if you draw from memory, don't forget it may help give greater dimension to your picture.



Looking at the tree drawing, note how the lighter parts occur at the top and the left side, but are broken up slightly by shadows, where the leaves overlie each other in large clumps. All down the right side and under the branches is in shadow, except where the side of the trunk catches the light. The tree will also cast a large shadow to the right.

# Still-life groups (1)

44

GETTING STARTED

**When drawing several objects together, you must make sure the same methods apply across the picture or else the final drawing will not hang together as a unit. Here we have three groups in different mediums, which will give you some idea of how to go about your task.**

The first subject – drawn in coloured pencil – is a wooden bowl with three pears in it, which is lit slightly from behind and from the left. To keep it simple, I have not included any cast shadow, which would be to the right of the bowl, nor any background at all.

The first stage is to draw out the image in one colour. I have chosen a yellow ochre which is not too strong for the yellow pears or the well-lit wooden bowl. Once you have got the shape of the bowl and the outline of the pears, put in the basic shadow, also in the ochre.



When that is complete, put in yellow over the pears except for the highlights. Then add a warm reddish brown for the deeper tones and colour, followed by green, particularly for the fruit. The shadows on the bowl will also need a touch of green. The method of shading should be with short strokes in many directions. The last colours you will use are blue for the deeper shadows, particularly on the bowl, and black to define some of the edges and where the shadow is really deep.



# Still-life groups (2)

46

GETTING STARTED

The next picture – in coloured pastels – is also of a bowl of fruit, apples and bananas in a large, painted earthenware bowl. So you will need a range of pastels and a good medium-toned brown or grey paper. Sugar paper or Ingres paper is best for this.

The first stage requires a fairly loose brown line drawing on the grey-brown paper and then filling in some of the more obvious shadow areas, including, this time, the cast shadow on the table. Keep the strokes loose and light in touch.





You can now begin on the other colours. I put in the blue edge to the bowl and then the basic yellow of the bananas and the yellow and green of the apples. Next, I drew the pattern on the plate and also the very light areas on it. I then deepened the shadows on the bananas and apples with blue and green. The red strokes were added to the apples and touches of highlights. Next, using purple, I put in all the darker shadows in the bowl around the fruit, and also the cast shadow. Lastly, I put in a light green for the tablecloth in the background, with some darker green over the cast shadow. It was much quicker to do than the coloured pencil drawing and quite strong and effective.

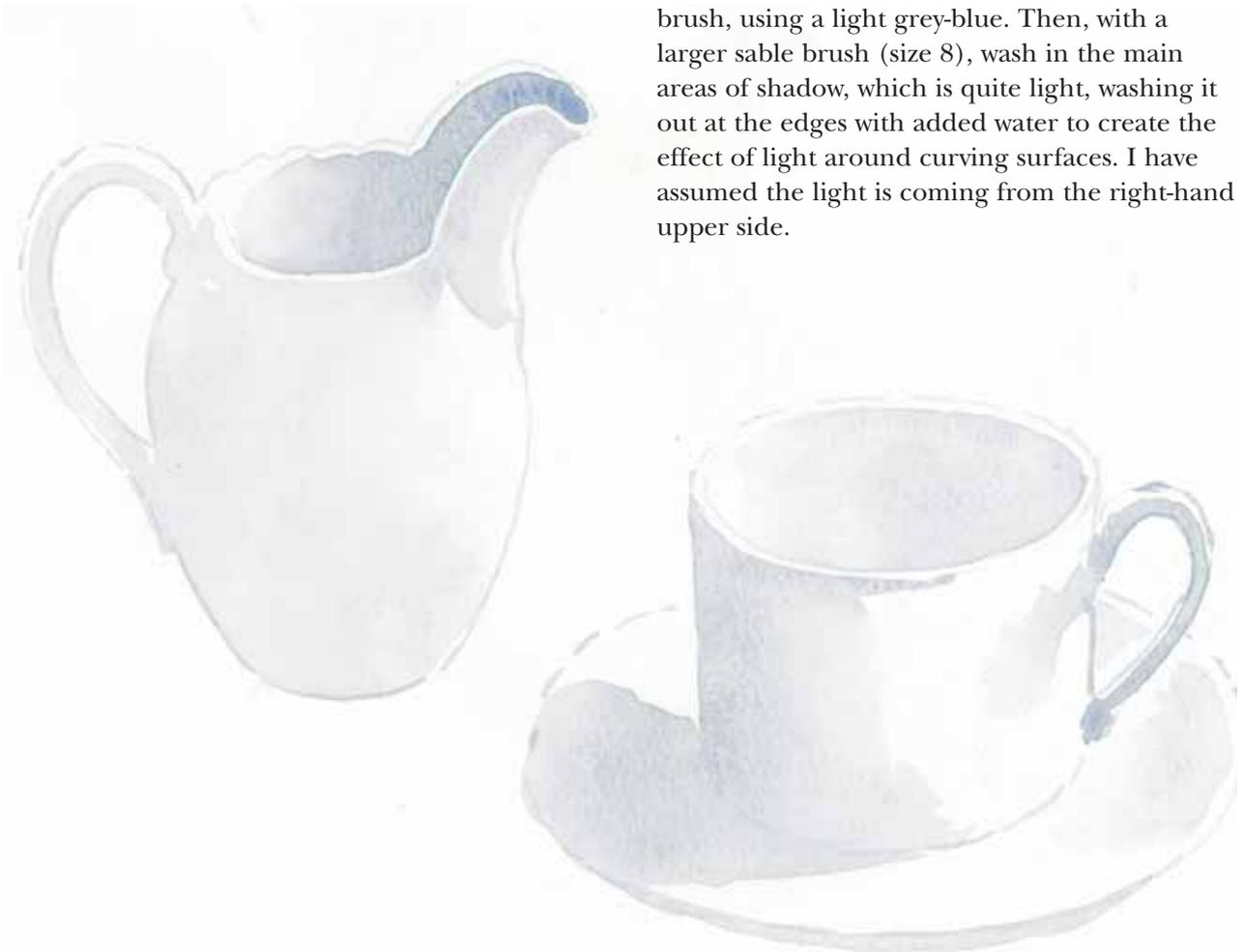
# Still-life groups (3)

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GETTING STARTED

The last picture is of a jug and a cup and saucer, drawn in watercolour. For this you will need two brushes (sable if possible), one large and one smaller. But make sure that they both will come to a point when wet. Then you will need watercolour paper or board, the thicker the better, but try any weight. Have two pots for water, one to wash the brush and one to use as fresh liquid for a new colour.

Begin by drawing the outline with a size 2 sable brush, using a light grey-blue. Then, with a larger sable brush (size 8), wash in the main areas of shadow, which is quite light, washing it out at the edges with added water to create the effect of light around curving surfaces. I have assumed the light is coming from the right-hand upper side.



## MASTERSTROKES

A good way of getting your colours to flow easily in watercolour is to wet the whole area of the paper before you start. This allows you to flood on colours quite easily without leaving any edges or stains in the middle of your wash. Be sure to let it dry fully before you start putting in the more detailed colours.

Having established the forms fairly clearly, put in the blue pattern on the jug quite loosely and then the red roses and green leaves on the cup and saucer. Wait until everything is dry before you add a bit more brown to the shadows on the objects, to prevent it all from looking too cold. The next step is to put in a brownish tone across the background behind the top part of the jug. It is important when you do this that the outline of the jug is very carefully defined with a touch

of white left at edges where the light would creep around the shadows. Then add a light green for the tablecloth, floated on around the lower part of the jug and the whole of the cup and saucer, being careful again not to go past the edge of the cup. This must be done when the previous colours are dry. However, while this area is still a little wet you can put in the dark green cast shadows to the left of the objects. These should be slightly blended at their outer edges.



Again, this is a fairly fast way of drawing in colour, as long as you allow for the drying time. You may find at first you have not enough control over your brush technique to produce the sort of effect you would like, but don't give

up. Keep practising and soon your brush handling will become more sure and your picture more convincing. Watercolour drawing is not too difficult but does require time and repeated practice.

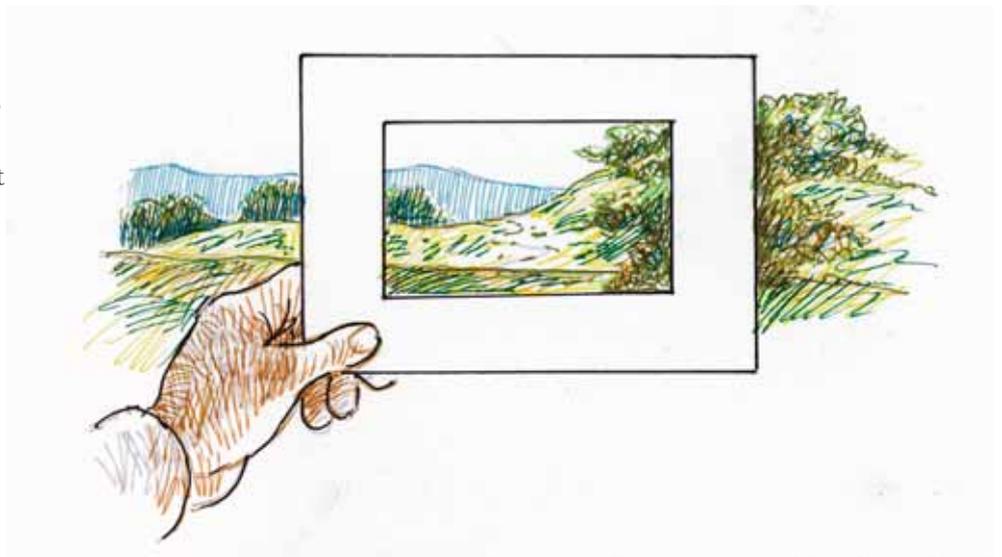
# Landscape

50

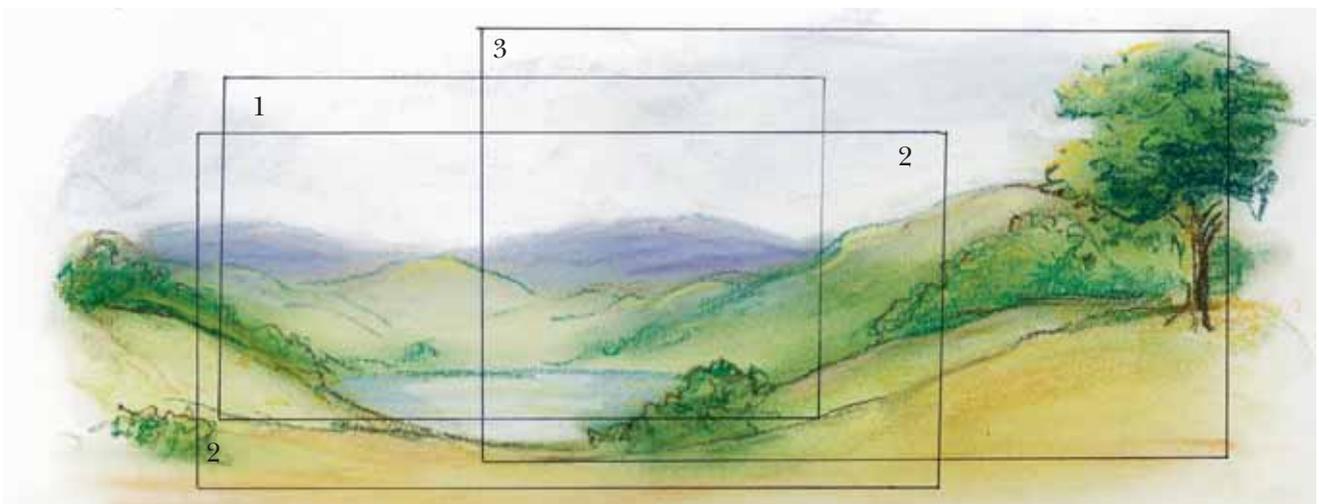
GETTING STARTED

A landscape frame comes in very handy. Not the sort that finished artworks are placed in, but a piece of card with a window cut out of it, which corresponds to the shape of the picture you wish to produce.

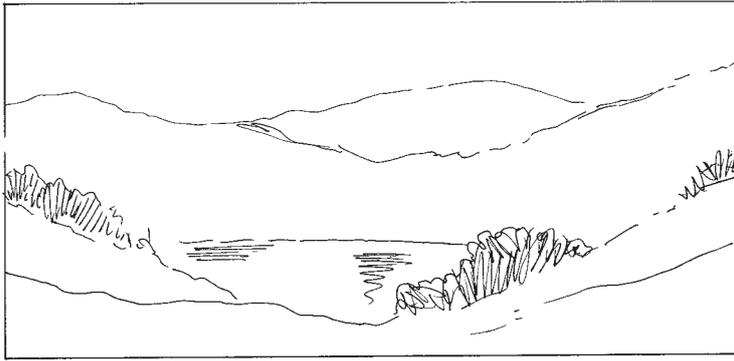
Hold up the frame in front of the landscape you are about to draw, in order to decide which part of the view you really want to work on. You always need some way of limiting the parameters, so that the final picture doesn't become too broad for your drawing base.



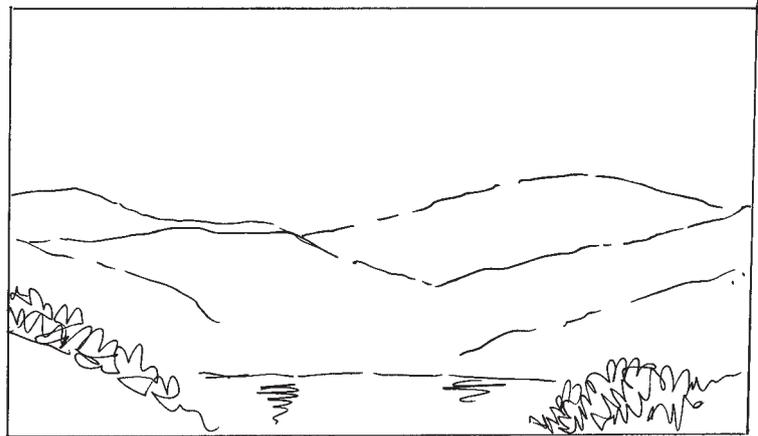
In the large picture below, there are three outlines superimposed on the general landscape, and you might decide to use one, two or three in your final composition. Each has possibilities but you can choose for yourself the one that is most satisfying to your aesthetic sense.



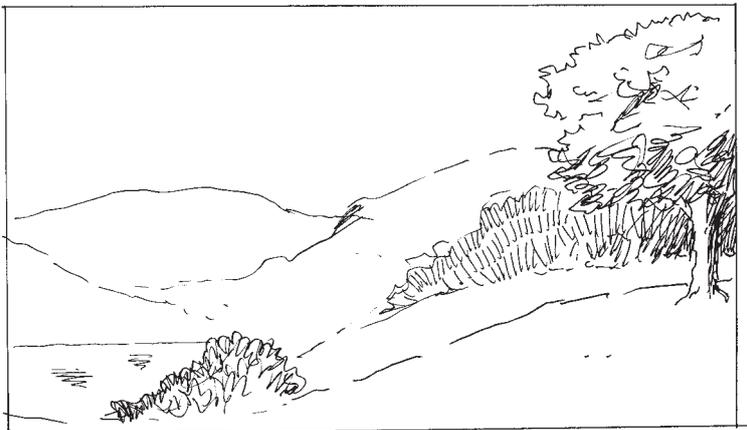
1. *The lake in the hills*



2. *A more concentrated version*



3. *A view to bring in closer trees, etc*



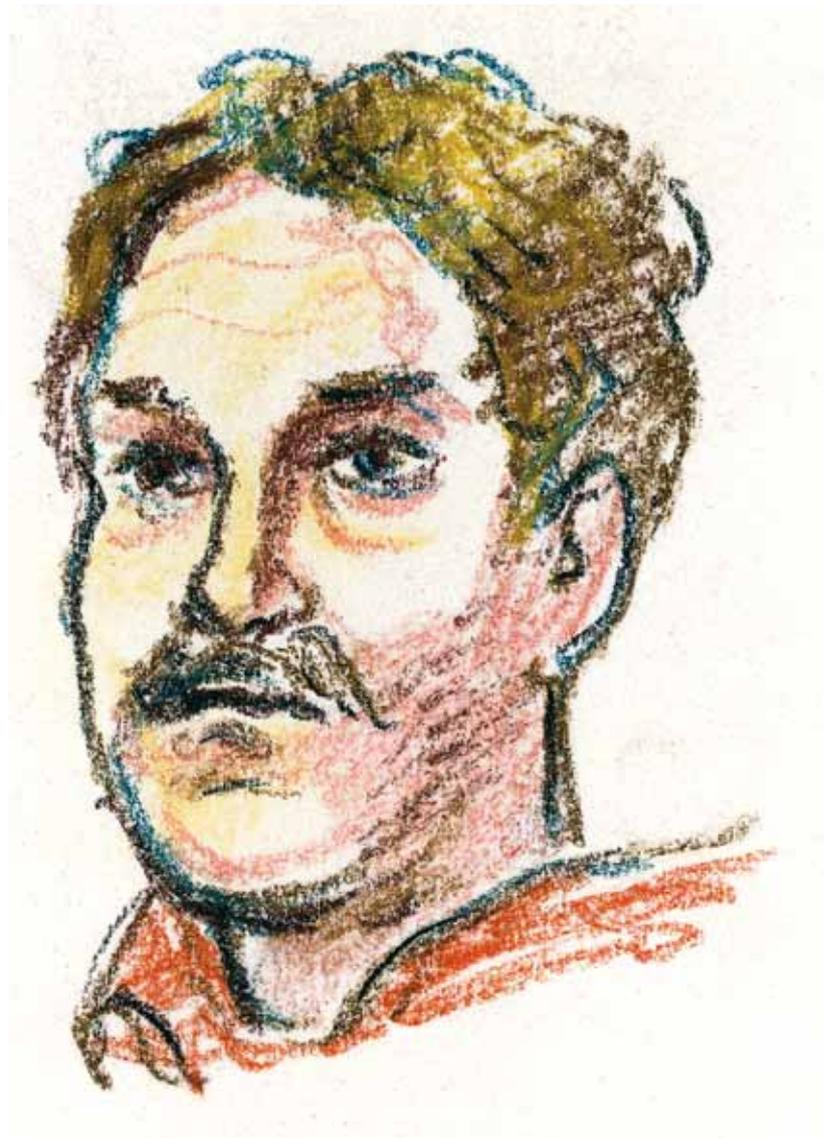
# Figures and faces

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GETTING STARTED

With figures and faces you are presented with your biggest challenge. They are, at one and the same time, both the most satisfying and the most difficult things that you will have to draw. So take some time before you start to consider exactly how you will approach this piece of work. As you can see from these examples, there is no set way of doing this: perhaps decide what you can do and then try to go a little beyond that. Don't worry if it doesn't always work – that is how you learn to draw well, by making mistakes and then attempting to correct them. If it becomes a mess, stop and start again.

The example here gives you some idea of getting a face to look convincing without too much overworking. The head, done in pastel, is simple and sparsely worked, but still comes across as an obvious male head.



Let us take a quick look at how well the human figure can also be drawn with just a little colour and form. The fluid drawing of the nymph Psyche leaning over (Cupid) with her lamp, contains not too much construction and yet enough to show how the figure works. The colour is muted and limited to showing the figure of Psyche glowing in the yellow torch light. This loose, fluid type of drawing is very attractive and you can achieve good results whilst still a beginner.



This pair of figures, based on a drawing by Picasso, shows how an undulating pen line, plus a touch of watercolour to give depth and solidity, can very quickly give an impression of the two bodies in space, lit rather softly. The solidity of the figures is not emphasised but they both look alive and breathing, which is a good start. This fairly unmeasured figure drawing is very useful if you can achieve it, although it may take a fair amount of practice.



# Animals

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GETTING STARTED

As an example of the animal world, these two drawings reproduce the particular texture of the animals chosen. Selecting the animal and a suitable medium together helps to get this across.

The rabbit has been drawn in pastel, and the soft smudgy shapes go very well with the furry pelt of the animal. Pastel lends a textural quality, which emphasizes the way that this animal is perceived by touch as well as by sight.





The crab is smoother and harder than the rabbit, and connected with water, so watercolour here seems to be a good idea. Don't forget to let the first colour dry if you want sharp edges to any subsequent colour.

# Drawing still life in colour

Still life is in many respects the foundation of drawing practice because it is the one discipline where you can control your drawing set-up, and are able to return to it again and again, as long as you need to.

The great thing is to learn to love your subject matter. Don't choose objects that don't arouse your interest in some way. Consider carefully before you choose your subject, especially as we are dealing in colour; the combination of colour values should be a strong part of your composition's attraction.

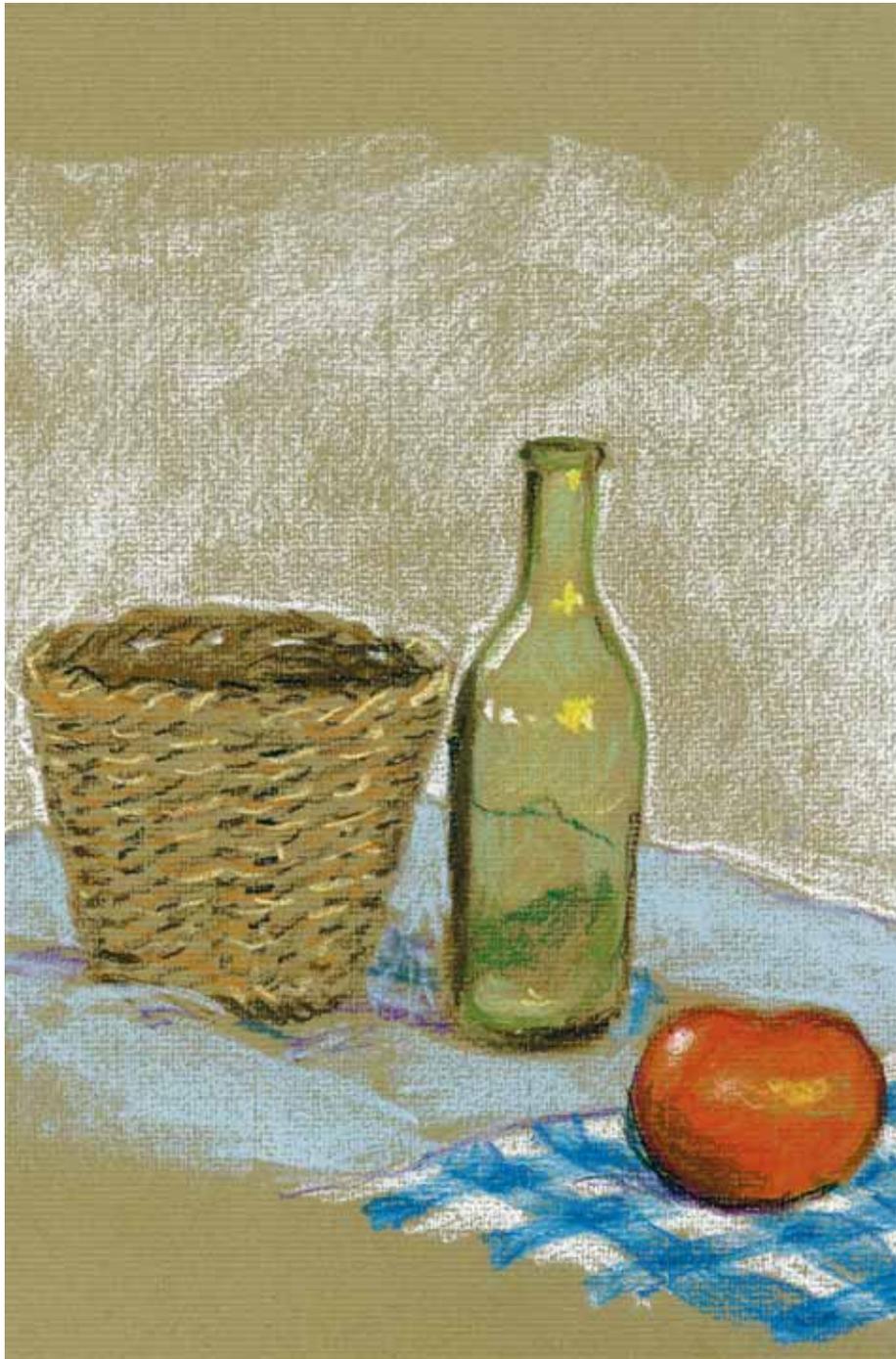
Alternatively, you could set up several still-life compositions that consist of one colour only; for example, a red vase on a red cloth with some strawberries or cherries and a glass of red wine.

These experiments will not only be interesting, but will also teach you the qualities that colours can give a picture. It is a good way to understand the symbolism of colour, and also the way colours work together – notice how the colours contrast or harmonize with each other and how they look against their background.

The actual material of the objects can produce interesting results too, so that you might show five objects, all similar in size or shape, but made of different substances. Also, the contrast between soft and hard edges is always a good point to work on; try placing a soft, draped cloth against a shiny, metallic object or a clean-cut piece of glassware.

When composing a still life, always bear in mind whether one object placed against another gives an interesting dynamic to the picture. Try moving the objects around until you create the maximum aesthetic interest between them – and that includes the spaces between them. Sometimes, simply tipping an item on its side gives a whole new set of shapes and a movement to the setting. Note the reflections in the surfaces of glass, pottery or metal things, or introduce a mirror into the arrangement, because these change the feeling of the composition significantly.

Having a theme is always a good idea, so for a picture that might hang in a kitchen or dining room, you could show a collection of food, cutlery and dishes, which are effectively the preparations for a meal. Alternatively, you could arrange luggage, clothing and travel items that suggest a trip to an exotic destination; or a whole set of tools, to denote interest in woodwork and other practical tasks. There are many ways to work at still life, and your sole limit is the bounds of your own imagination.



# Simple objects

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DRAWING STILL LIFE IN COLOUR

The examples chosen here are fairly straightforward and easily available. Often, when beginning to draw, people forget to include any background to an object. However, with colour work it is better to put in the immediate surroundings because they have an effect on the colour of the object itself.



This first example, a pair of spectacles, is drawn in coloured inks, and is a nice, easy exercise because the pen and ink line complements the linear construction of the glasses. The only really dimensional effect is the shadow cast upon the surface they are lying on, and the effects of dark and light in the frames.



This second example, of an enamel jug in coloured pencil, is a simple shape; a cone cut off at the top with handle and spout added. The colour is white, so all you have to consider is the shadow colour and that of the background. The reason that this jug stands out so boldly is that the background colours are all stronger and darker than the jug – the feeling of it existing in three-dimensional space is due to the effect of the background colour, as much as the jug itself. The cast shadow across the table-top helps to

anchor the object to the surface that it stands on. Notice how the lines of the background shapes are made softer and less distinct than the lines on the jug. This technique also helps to define the space around it.

Remember that the materials and techniques you use can be fitted to the particular objects in your picture. Some things are quite difficult to achieve in pen and ink, whereas others, like the spectacles, lend themselves perfectly to the process.

# Single and grouped objects

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DRAWING STILL LIFE IN COLOUR

This example, in pastel and chalk on toned paper, is of a glass jar on a white table-top against a darker background. The glass catches the light, so you can use a lot of white chalk here but, where there are dark tones, put them in boldly. This contrast emphasizes the transparency and materiality of the object.

## MASTERSTROKES

The trick with this type of drawing is to remember the adage, 'less is more'. Don't overdo the initial stages of the drawing – simplify as much as possible and the drawing will maintain its freshness. Make sure that your deepest tones and your highlights are put in simply but boldly. You have to take chances in art, but if they don't work, don't give up trying. It is all part of the fun.





To demonstrate what happens when you put several objects together, here are some jugs and bottles placed at eye-level along a table-top. This is a watercolour on a toned paper, which tends to make the whole composition rather subdued in colour: when you put in a few white highlights, they jump out of the prevailing tone and give a very solid look to what would otherwise be a series of flat, coloured shapes.

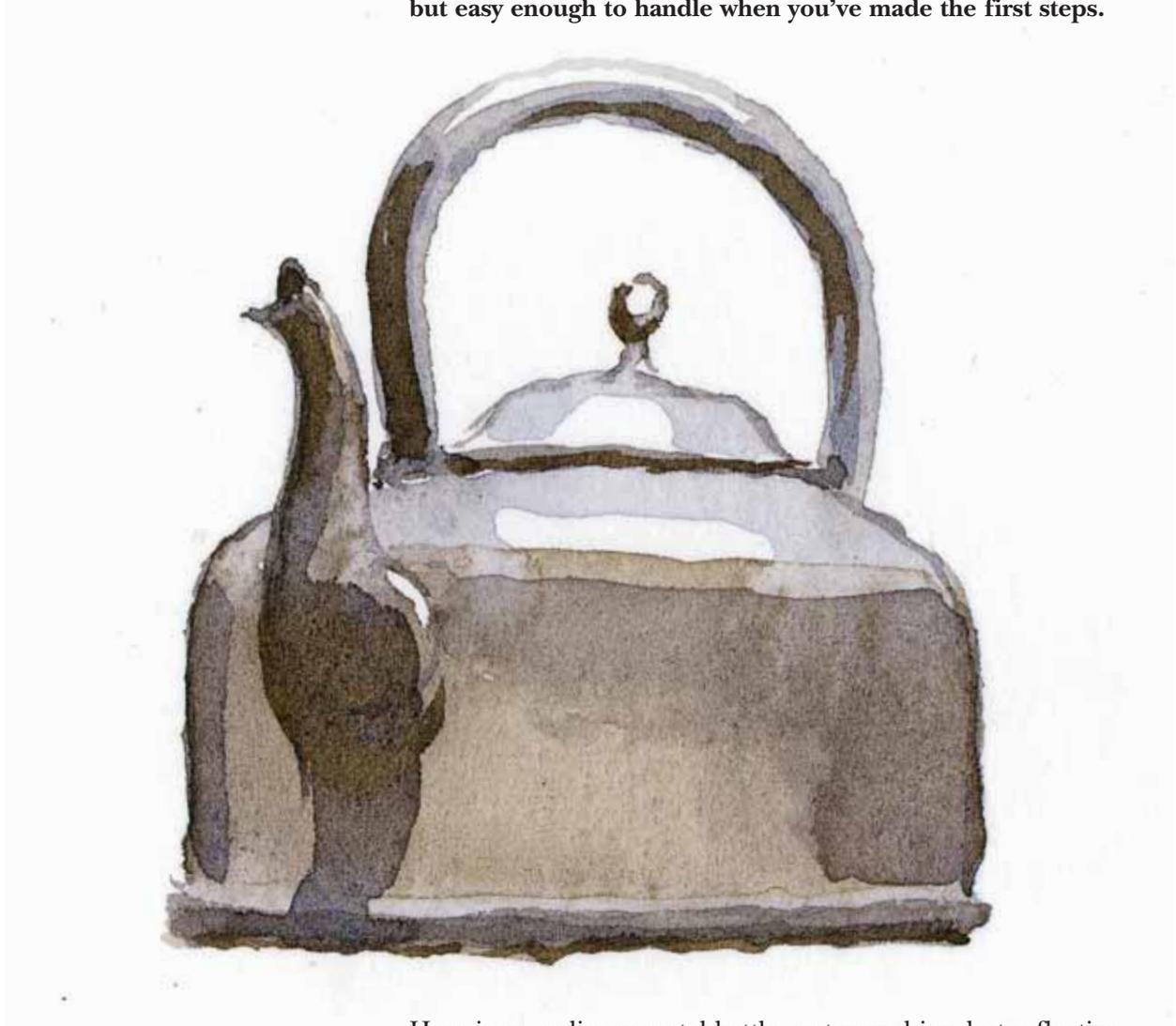
But before you try a group, choose objects of a relatively similar type, so that you don't have too many drawing problems all at once. Just paint in the simple shapes in one go; as silhouettes of colour; then the background colour; and only then, put in darker shadows and last of all, the highlights. Keep it all very simple. The effect always works much better than you might expect.

# Materiality

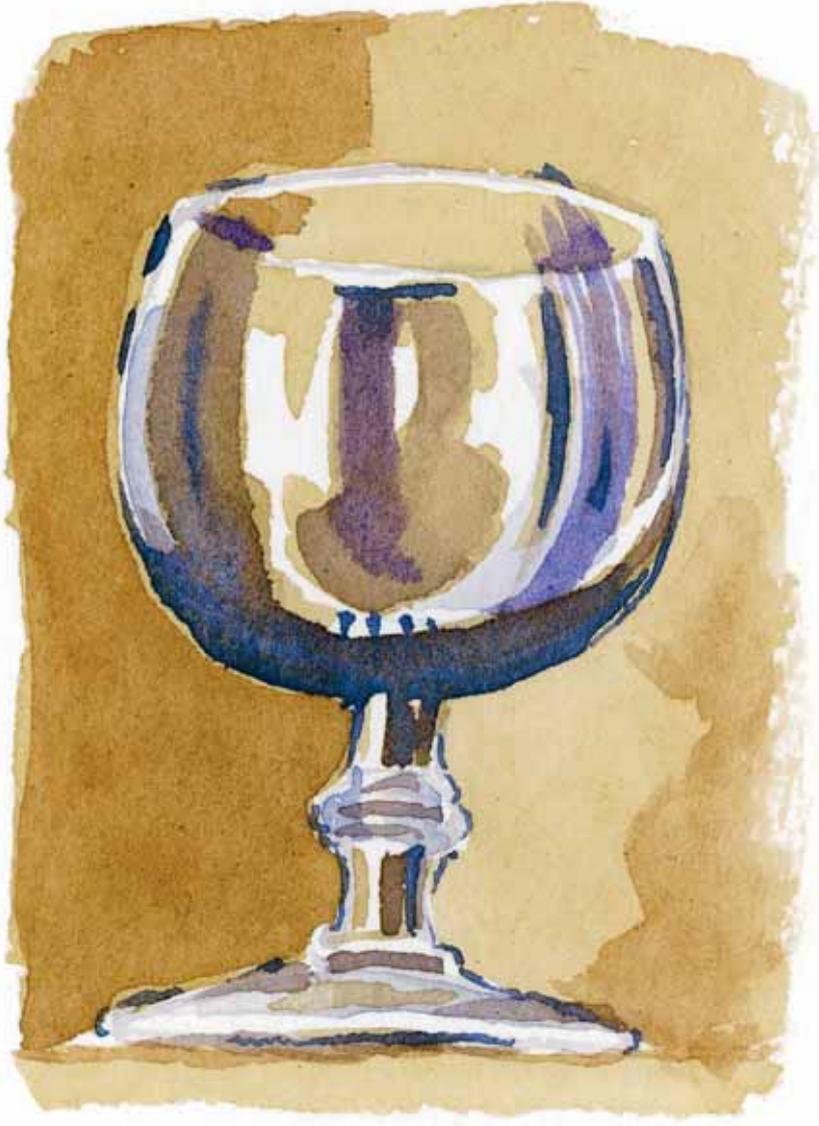
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DRAWING STILL LIFE IN COLOUR

This exercise can go on forever because you will always come across objects that you have rarely drawn before, and there is always more to learn. However, try to find something made of metal, something made of glass, and something natural, like fruit or plants. The examples here are produced in watercolour because it is a very flexible medium, rather difficult to start with, but easy enough to handle when you've made the first steps.



Here is an ordinary metal kettle, not very shiny, but reflective enough. First, outline the shape with the brush, using a grey colour. When that is dry, flood the main light areas at the top of the kettle in a cool light blue-grey and a warmer brown-grey for the lower parts. Don't forget to leave little areas of white paper unpainted to indicate the highlights on the handle, lid and spout. When the first colour is dry, put in a dark neutral grey on the lower part to give darker shadows, but wash it off to one side of the main body of the kettle, so that the surface appears curved. Then, sparingly, put in darker tones on the handle and lid.



The next example is of a glass; you have already attempted this in pastel, so you know the problems involved. You must include the background here because glass is defined by the fact that the background colour will show through. Again, you have to leave areas of unpainted white paper around the edges of the glass and across its broader facets, to mimic the reflected light that convinces the eye that this is indeed a glass object. Once you have put in the background and the brightest, lightest areas, you can put in the dark ones. This contrast between dark and light is the standard way of showing reflective surfaces. Parts of the outline can be very dark, and some left white.

When you come to fruit, which I have chosen here, the method is similar but the contrast between dark and light is not so great. The purple grapes are painted smoothly round with most of the colour towards the edges of the fruit and, occasionally, across more of the surface. Leave one small area of white paper on each grape completely untouched to achieve the effect of the tiny highlight that occurs on glossy objects like grapes. The edges can be darkened as much as you like and any spaces between the grapes can be filled in very dark indeed. Put in a bit of background tone also, to 'anchor' the grapes in place.



# Simple arrangements

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DRAWING STILL LIFE IN COLOUR

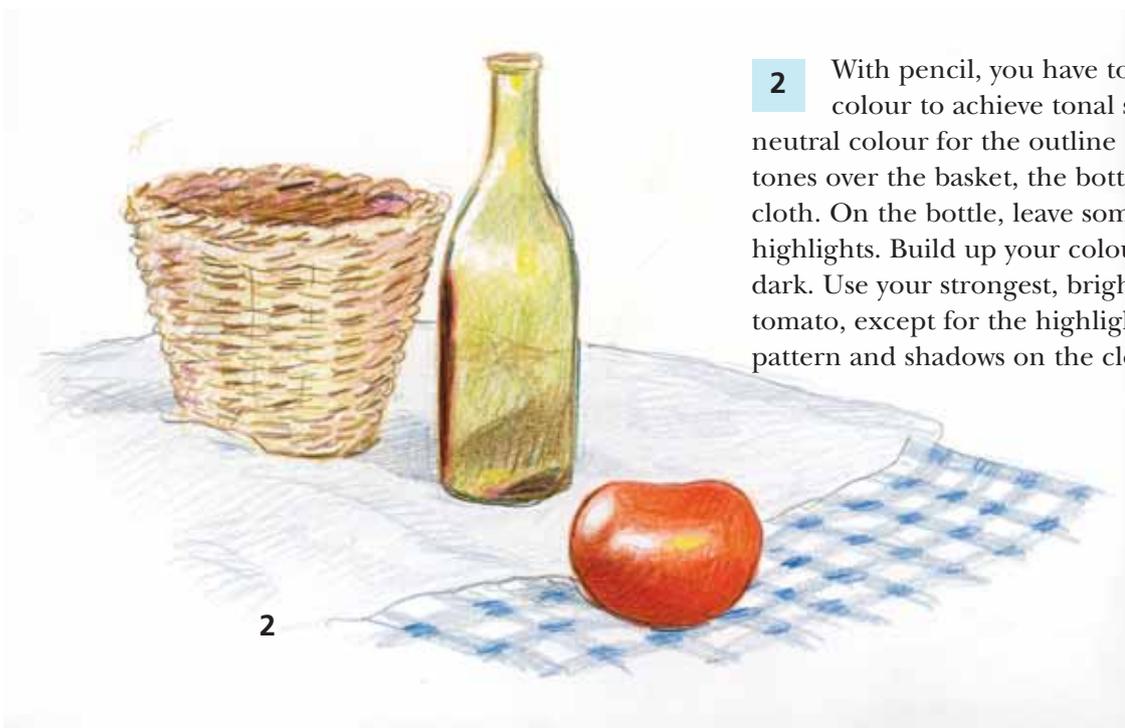
This exercise is to get you drawing still life in as many different ways as you can, using the different colour systems. I have chosen a simple set of objects: a basket, a glass bottle and a tomato, on some blue cloth. One of the cloths has a chequered pattern, but if you feel this makes it too difficult, leave it out.

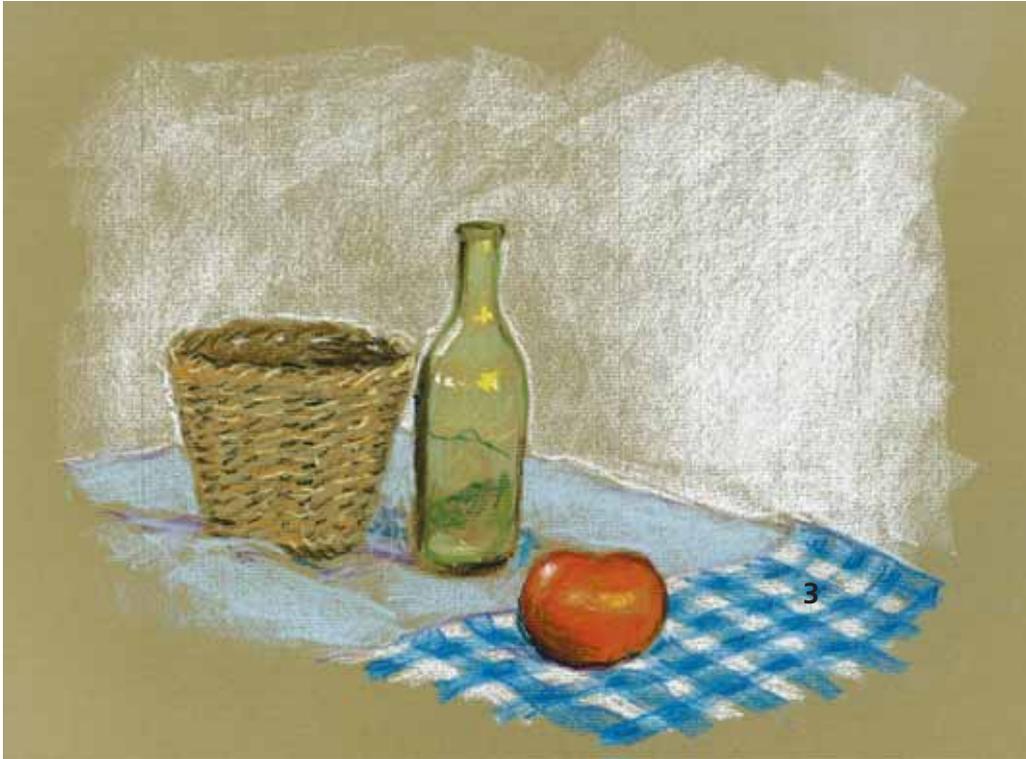
**1** When drawing in ink, less can be more, so don't overwork the subject. To begin, draw in an outline with neutral colour; I used brown, but with a grey ink for both cloth and background. Now decide what texture you will use on each of the objects to make them look convincing. Don't over-elaborate in the case of the basket. A scribble effect will help to give dimension where the shadows are. For the bottle keep the transparent look by leaving areas of white paper showing and indicate the background through the glass shape. The tomato needs a more solid colour – use your brightest red all over, except for the highlight; I put in the front highlight with a yellowy orange, to tone it down a bit. The darker areas I put in with a purple, but sparingly. The cloth can be



the least drawn over, the light blue kept fairly open in texture so it doesn't dominate the picture. Lastly, the wall behind can be washed in lightly in pale grey.

**2** With pencil, you have to build up the colour to achieve tonal strength. Use a neutral colour for the outline then layer lighter tones over the basket, the bottle and the blue cloth. On the bottle, leave some white areas for highlights. Build up your colours from light to dark. Use your strongest, brightest red for the tomato, except for the highlights. Leave the pattern and shadows on the cloth until last.



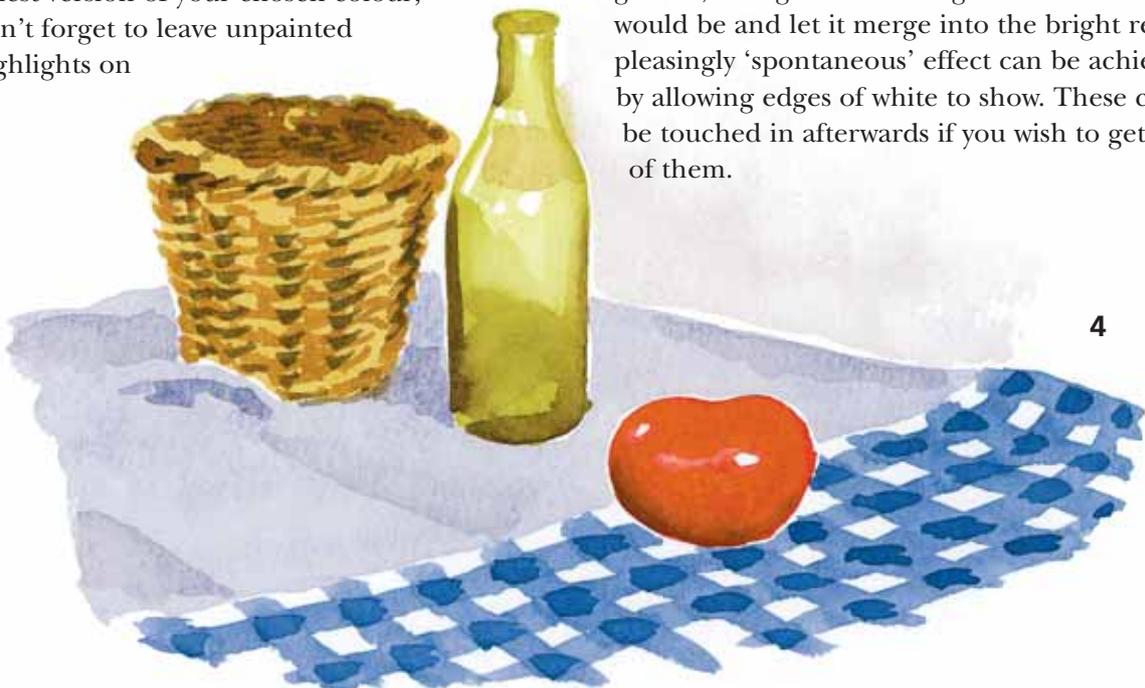


**3** This pastel version is drawn on a warm, khaki-coloured paper, on which both strong and light colours register well. Again, sketch out the shapes. Put in the colours on the basket; keep the marks of the weave to a minimum. For the bottle, work in some dull greens, dark brown and a few touches of bright yellow for the highlights. Block in the light blue cloth and the light background wall with varying texture but enough strength to outline the

shapes of the foreground objects. The tomato can be worked last as it is the most powerful colour; a strong vermilion plus crimson to give it solidity, and yellow and white spots of highlight. If some of the highlights or shadows appear too weak, strengthen them. Try not to draw over your first marks, but here and there you may need to emphasize an edge. Don't try to be too precise, and thus lose the soft-edge charm of the medium.

**4** Lastly, try watercolour. Draw the outline in a light brown tone using a thin brush with a good point. Leave a tiny edge of white paper between each colour wash, to ensure that two wet colours don't flood into each other. Block in the basket, bottle and cloth with the palest version of your chosen colour; don't forget to leave unpainted highlights on

the bottle. As before, use your most powerful red for the tomato, except for the highlights. When the washes are dry, put in all the dark tones on the basket and bottle and the shadows on the cloth. While the tomato is still wet, just drop a touch of purple (not too much or it will go dull) along the lower edge where the shadow would be and let it merge into the bright red. A pleasingly 'spontaneous' effect can be achieved by allowing edges of white to show. These can be touched in afterwards if you wish to get rid of them.



# Composition (1)

## More complex groups

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DRAWING STILL LIFE IN COLOUR

Now let's look at what happens when the group of objects is more complex in form. For this it is important to be systematic and follow a sequence so that you don't leave bits out – this will make the work easier for you. There is no value in difficulty for its own sake. Method helps to reduce the most complex picture to a manageable scheme.



The watercolour above, based on Cézanne's still lifes, shows some familiar objects on a wooden sideboard, plus a rather sketchy large orange object to one side. Drawing with a brush, use a light brown for all the main shapes, including the edge of the sideboard. Taking a larger brush, wash a yellow-brown colour over everything except the objects. Then, put in the yellow on the apples, the orange area to the right and the deep blue of the bottle. With green, brown and purple, put in the texture on the background areas and the surface of the sideboard. Now for the reds and greens of the

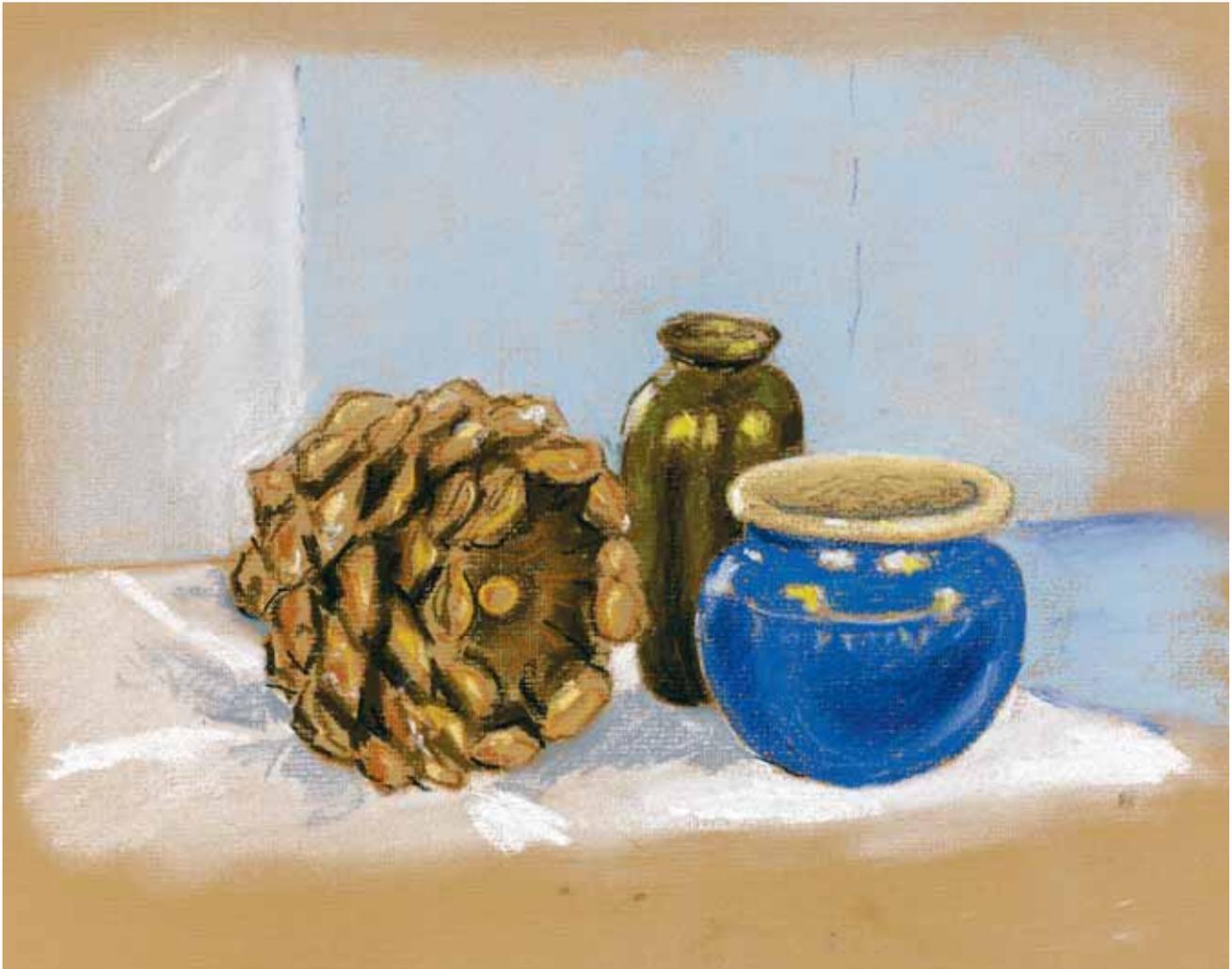
apples; allow the reds to wash off into lighter and darker shades. Put in the green on the bottle and the pattern and shadows on the china pot. Leave plenty of white paper showing on the pot and as little highlights on the bottle. The fruit bowl can be treated in a similar way to the china pot. Finally, emphasize some edges with extra dark colours, as shown. Put in a dark line along the wavy edge of the sideboard. If they don't look strong enough, splash in any really bright colours like the orange, red and yellow areas. Notice how well this works without it being a super-realist type of picture.

Here we present only three objects, but each one requires quite a bit of thought and care when tackling it. The pine cone has a particular texture and aspect, which is very different from the shiny metal bottle and the earthenware pot. First put down a pale outline of the three shapes in a very light tone on the mid-toned paper. My paper is a rich buff colour.

Once the shapes are there in essence, block in the background colour, in this case blue with some white. A good bit of work on the pine

cone should be the next stage, rendering all the basic shapes of the scales in a warm brown outline. This will enable you to put in the projecting edges afterwards with a very light yellow-buff, and to use a dark brown for the deep shadows in between the scales. Play around with several versions of red-brown, yellow-brown and dark brown, to get the feel of this richly textured object.

By contrast, the earthenware pot is much simpler in its strong ultramarine and cobalt blue



with a creamy edge, but make sure that the shadows and highlights have the right intensity. With a pot like this, the dark shadows are less obvious than the highlights. The metallic bottle, which is a sort of bronze, can be given quite

dark shadows on the overall green-brown colour. I used an olive brown, and the highlights in yellow give it the appropriate bronze look. Lastly, the cloth should be put in quite strongly in light blue, white and grey, conveying some idea of cast shadows.

# Composition (2)

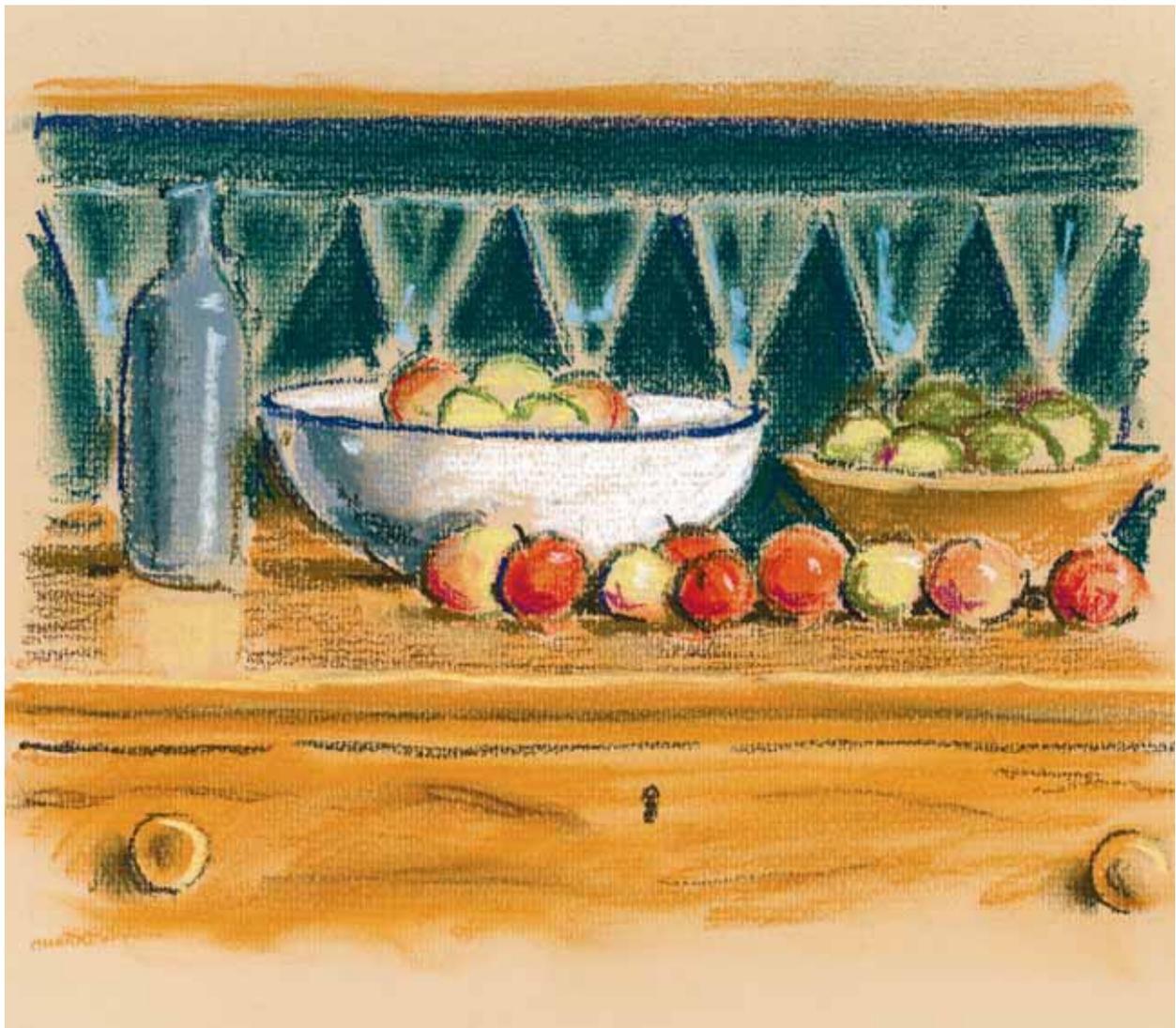
## More complex groups

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DRAWING STILL LIFE IN COLOUR

The arrangement below demonstrates once more the problem of many different objects spread over a large surface. On toned paper, use a brown for the outline that is not too different from the colour of the paper, so that it doesn't become dominant. Block in the top shelf after the dark green background, leaving an indication of the row of wine glasses. Smudge all this a little with your finger tip. Now, block in the light grey of the earthenware bottle, the yellow-green of the apples, the white of the china bowl and the brown of the wooden bowl. Lastly, block in the colours of the front and top of the sideboard.

Now put in dark blues and purple in the background around the glasses, and use blue and brown for the shadows around the bottle and the bowls. Next, paint in all the bright red apples and then with olive green, purple and brown, make shadows and outlines to define the fruit. Use brown to indicate the edges of all the wood. Finally, put in the very brightest and whitest touches, like the light blue highlights on the glasses; also the highlights on the bottle, bowls and apples and the front edge of the sideboard and edges of the handles. Remember not to overdo the detail here – that soft-edged look to the pastel drawing helps to give it conviction.



An even more abstract still life can be achieved by using pastel, as demonstrated in my next example. Based on a painting by William Brooker, who worked to simplify and emphasize the essential qualities of still-life arrangements, the effort to capture the effects of space and substance was undertaken quickly; rather like the Zen masters who contemplated for several months and would then produce their pictures in a matter of minutes.



This example was drawn in pastel from the painting, working on a dark brown paper. After drawing an outline in a beige, the background red was put in all over. All the light colours were added quite simply like wedges of yellow, cream and light blue; then the dark colours similarly. After blocking in the tabletop and its leading edge, the marks indicating the edges of the blue pots, the lamp and the dark spaces between

some of the shapes were all put in. Touches of extra colour went on top of existing colours, either to tone them down or lighten them up. The resulting still life looks good because there is no detail to speak of and the basic shapes do all the work. It shows how well the artist could perceive the essence of the scene and put it down with simplicity and power. It takes prolonged practise to become as good as this.

# Settings

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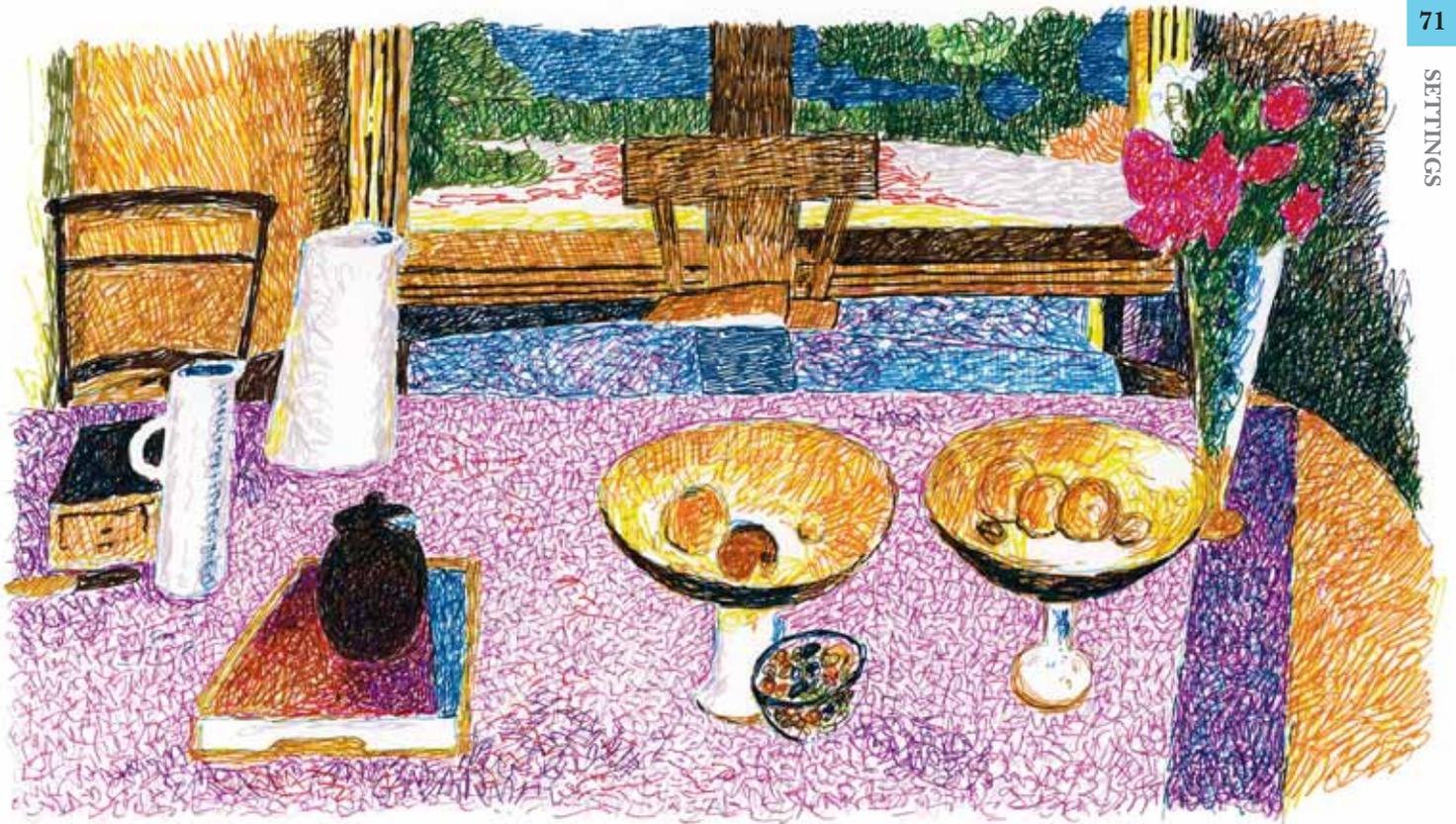
DRAWING STILL LIFE IN COLOUR

This is predominantly a neutral setting to which you could add your 'props', such as tea-time things on the table, or drinks and cocktails. Maybe you could arrange a small fork and trowel, gardening gloves, bulbs and a sun hat, as if carelessly strewn across the tabletop. The setting itself then suggests some story or ongoing action which your choice of objects could reinforce with some success.

The setting of a still-life scene is important if you intend to establish a theme or some narrative background for the objects that you draw. Here are three examples of settings in which you could display your talents.



This scene is set out for you, this time using coloured pencil to suit the lightness in tone. I haven't illustrated anything beyond the conservatory windows, but you could easily show a bit of the garden. The setting is fairly natural, although it actually took time and care to arrange. You could choose different objects and so change the scene's narrative.



I have attempted to produce the lighter colours by making marks that don't totally obscure the white paper underneath, and where I require deeper colours I have scribbled away to build up denser tones. As long as you can maintain the contrast between the darker more solid colours and the lighter broken colours, then this method can work quite well. But it does take time to put in all these small marks, so don't embark on this sort of task without giving yourself plenty of time to complete it. The brilliance of the coloured inks suits Bonnard's strong colour range and the lunch-table setting is a very good vehicle for a still-life composition.

### MASTERSTROKES

One trick I sometimes use for setting up a still life is to ask someone else to do it for me. You can adjust it to suit your own ideas, but the mere fact of someone else doing it brings a certain element of surprise to your first view of the composition. I often find that my wife has placed objects down and they have fallen into just the kind of arrangement that works well as a still life.

# Large objects

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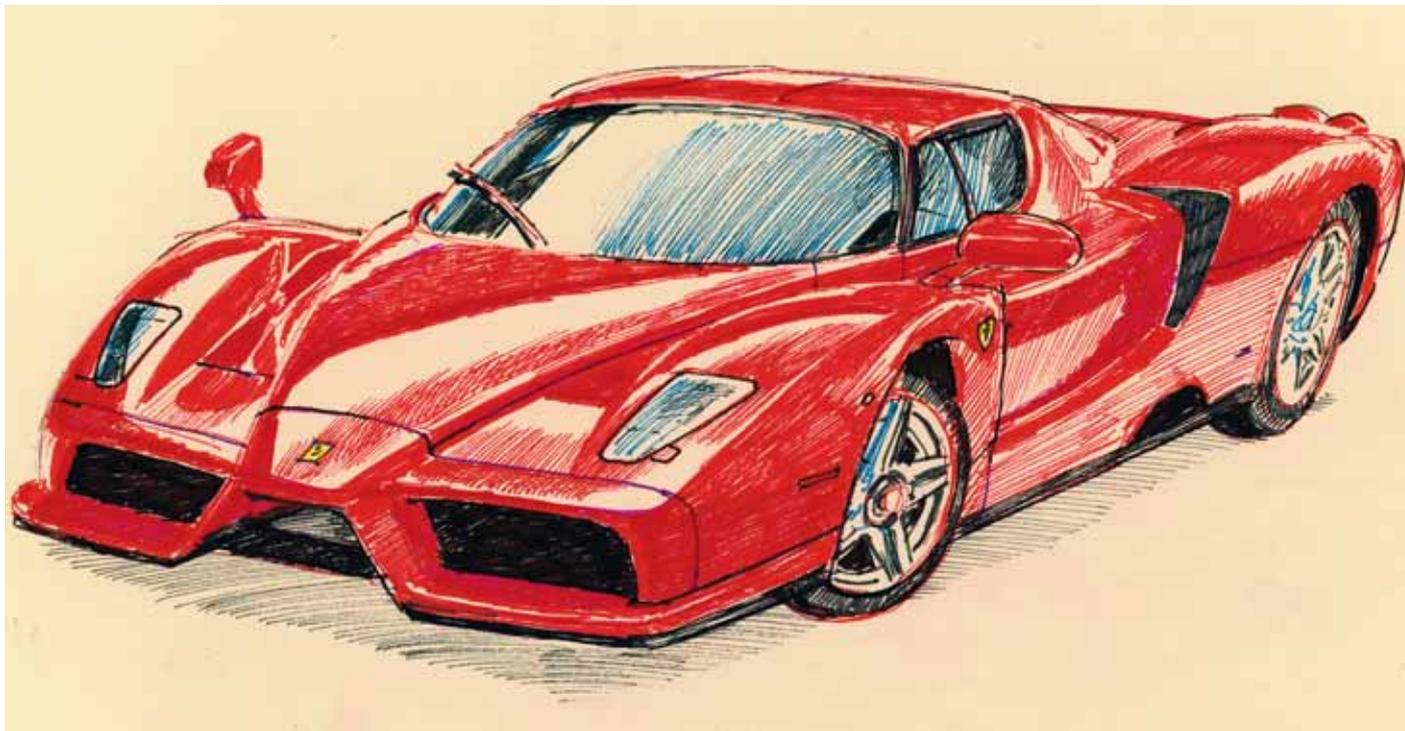
DRAWING STILL LIFE IN COLOUR

Still life usually comes in small sizes which can be arranged on a table top, but if you are feeling ambitious there are larger objects that you might like to contemplate. These would require a different setting, of course, but that is an essential part of their interest.

The first object is a child's brightly coloured bicycle complete with stabilisers. Using a buff paper for the pastels, I sketched the whole frame of the bicycle in the red first, and then added greys and yellows for the handlebars, crossbars, pedals, seat and tyres. I increased the intensity of the main colour and then put in the white wheel spokes and hubs, and the black edges to the wheels, pedals, seat and brake. Lastly, I dragged some dark red around the frame to give more substance to the structure. It was all kept very sketchy and done quite swiftly. The background was approximately the right tone for the setting, so I didn't even put in shadows.



The car is one of the largest items of still life to be found around you. Either your own, or those vehicles that line the streets, are good models for a large still life. I used coloured inks for this effort but any medium would be as good. For the very dark areas around the wheels and at the shadowed front of the car, I used a thick felt-tipped marker to give a bit more solidity to the whole effect. It is good artistic exercise trying to capture the reflections on the shiny surface of the car.



Large objects are always tricky. You will find that they take up a lot of space on the page and so need a bit more planning – something that may make you tend to leave them and choose something else. However, if you can rise to the challenge and bring in some other objects into the picture, you again have the chance at hinting at some kind of story for your picture. The child's bicycle might have a helmet or pump to go with it and the car might have some luggage or a petrol pump behind it. And you don't have to draw all the objects at the same time. Just add them when you can and be sure to maintain the correct proportions.

# Step by step still life

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DRAWING STILL LIFE IN COLOUR



**1** This pot has vertical sides and is a simple shape. Because it is light in colour, the interior will not look too dark.



**2** The conical pot with the green interior is the only splash of colour in the composition but, as it is mainly in shadow, it is not too dominant.

To produce a still-life picture you have first of all to decide what effect you want your picture to have. When I produced the original of this still-life composition, I collected together a number of pots that I felt would make an interesting composition against the backlight of a window. I chose large metal and pottery objects, which were all fairly light in colour. As they were all circular in shape, I decided that I would play on this feature by choosing the perspective of looking down on them when they were close to me, so that the deeper shadows in the interiors of the pots gave a sort of repeat motif and were very dominant in the picture.

As all the items were lit from behind, the main light was diffused and helped to even out the colour values. I decided that I didn't want many strong colours, making this a rather muted piece of work.



**3** The large white enamelled jug is a good sturdy shape and will have a darker interior due to the half guard around the top. The enamel is slightly chipped.



# Step by step still life

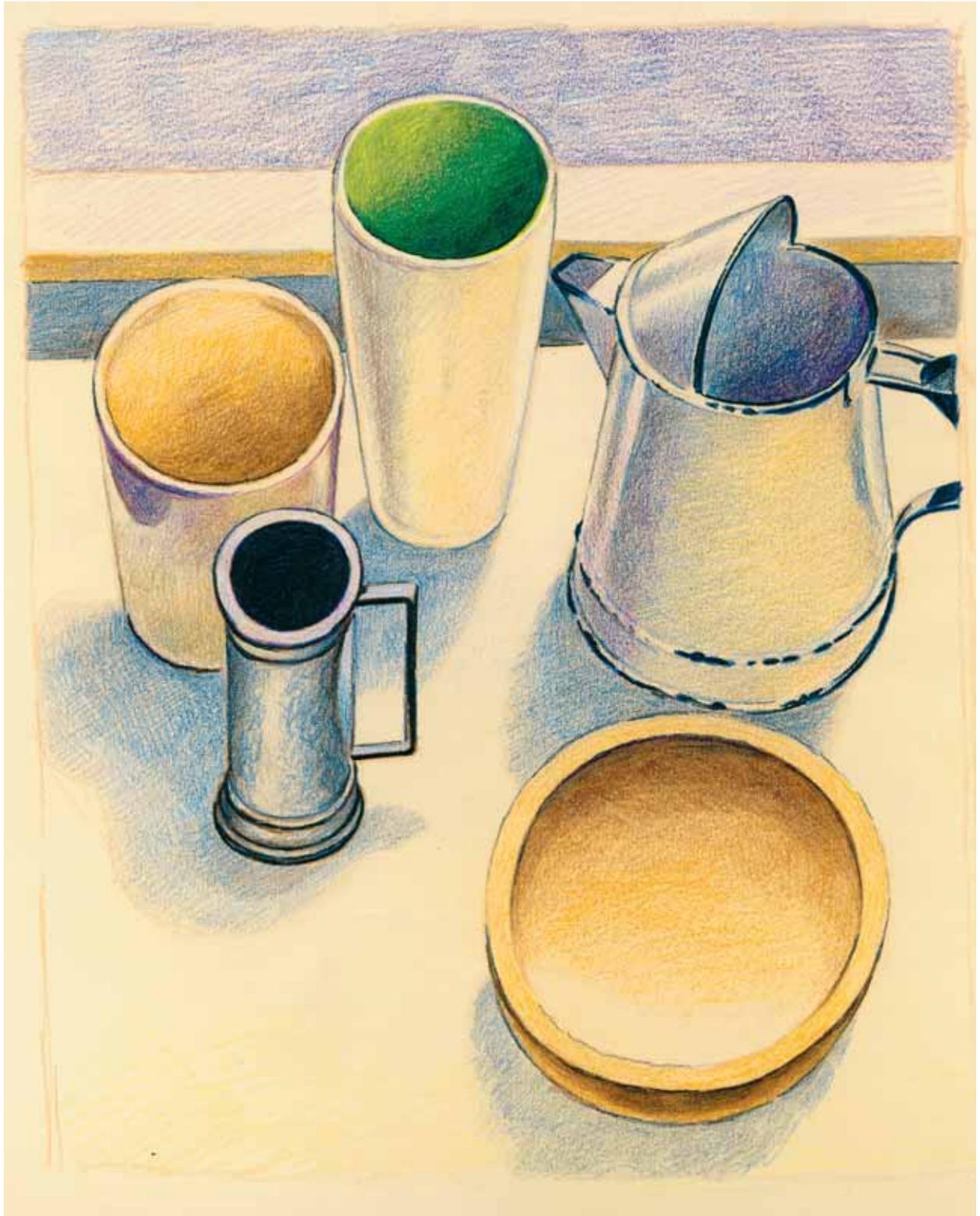
continued

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DRAWING STILL LIFE IN COLOUR

- 6** Placing these objects close together, well below my eye-level, I get a repeated pattern of circular, cylindrical shapes, with the light behind them bouncing off the light surface they are standing on. Notice the arrows showing the direction of the light which means that all the shadows are facing the viewer. Draw a sketchy outline of your arrangement before starting on your finished drawing.





**7** When you begin to draw these, you will realize that the light colour of each of the objects, and the light background, are assets when using coloured pencil. Because with pencil you can be quite precise in your outline, take your time to get the shapes exactly right in relation to each other. Remember that the space between the objects is as important as the shapes of the objects themselves. Don't get too heavy with your shading or tone – only the tankard and the jug call for strong, dark colours. Notice that the darkest part of this pale still life is the interiors of the pots.

# Landscape

Actively searching for a landscape to draw may seem a rather artificial approach – there are landscapes everywhere we look – but you need an area with qualities that you find attractive. Before you start rushing around in search of a good view, consider the area you are working in and adapt your ideas to make the most of a particular environment.

The first and most essential step is to compose your picture. As shown earlier in the book, this can be done with the use of a framing device made from a piece of card, so you will not be overwhelmed by the immensity of a landscape.

When you survey a landscape full of trees, bushes and grass, take time to look at each area of vegetation carefully and note the immense variety of green that exists in just one view. Distant areas will appear more blue-green, with some greys – cool hues that help to push those parts of the picture right back to the horizon. Urban landscapes have an entirely different range of colour but, even so, some of the same rules apply.

Most important is the effect of distance on colour and tonality; so watch for their effects right at the start of your picture. The ideal arrangement for the light is from the left or right of your position, so that the objects in the landscape are lit up in a way that shows their dimensions.

Ideally, you should be able to see enough of the foreground features to show scale and texture. A large middle-ground area, where trees, rocks, streams, buildings and other features stand closer or further from your viewpoint, will give an impression of depth. Hills, mountains and large expanses of water in the background, when diminished in the cool distance, also give a very good sense of scale and depth to the picture.

So, before choosing your landscape, decide how much detail you want to include and how much of a feeling of space you wish to give it. Adjust your viewpoint to achieve this, by lowering it to get closer, or lifting it to get a greater sense of distance.

Enjoy the qualities of the natural world when you are drawing in the countryside, and likewise the drama and interest of the man-made world in a cityscape, with all its verticals and mass of buildings. Don't worry if the piece doesn't always go right. The fun is in finding out how to do it in practice and, eventually, you reach the stage where you just draw the whole thing by eye and forget the science.



# Stepping out

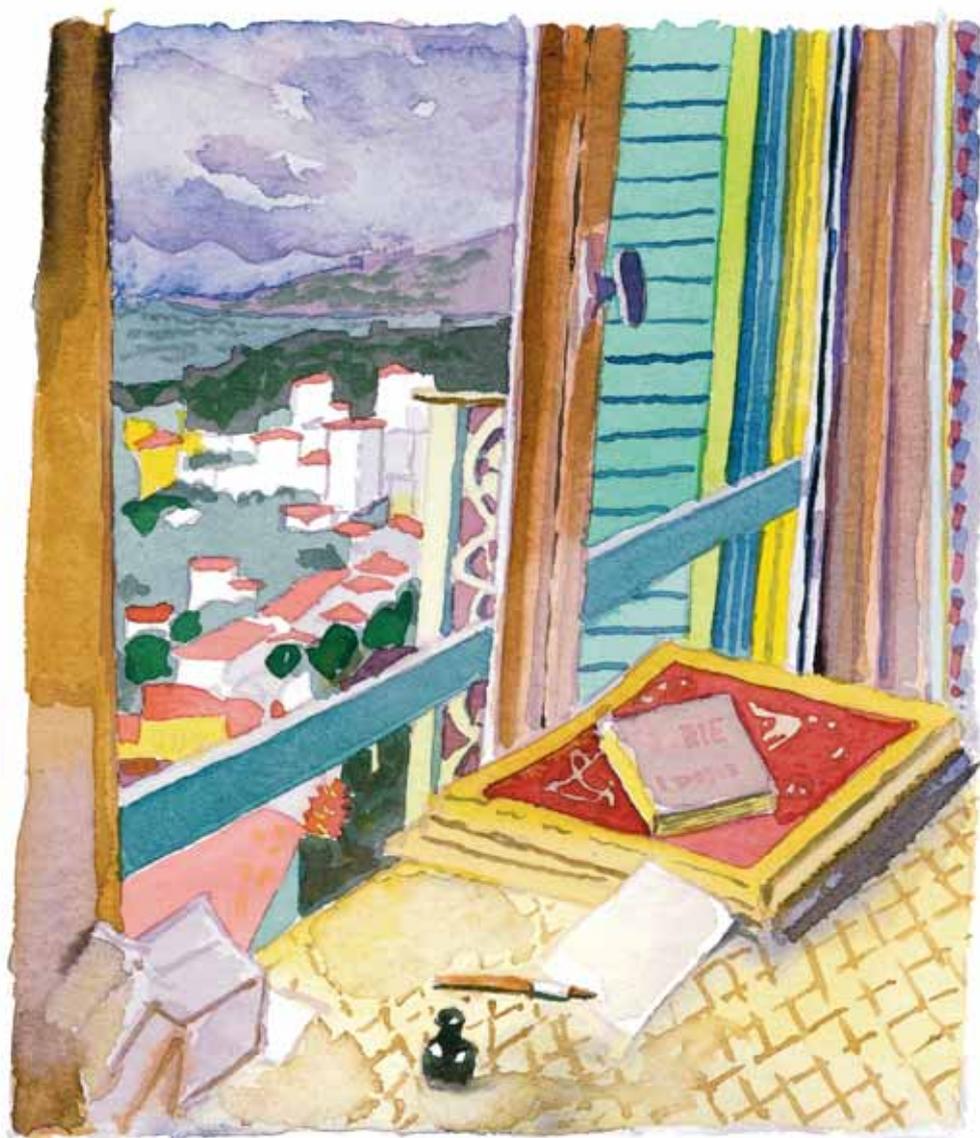
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LANDSCAPE

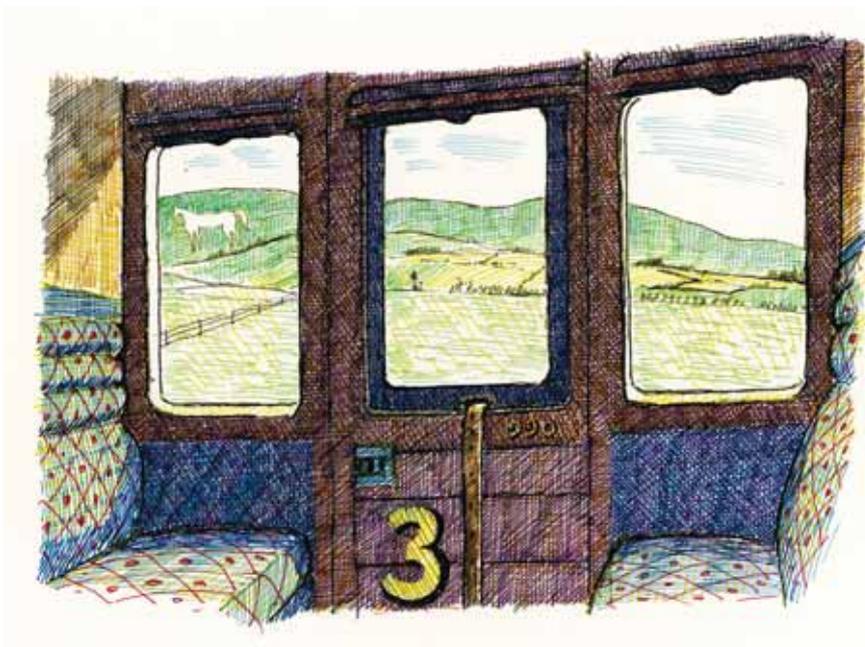
Your first landscape can be the view out of your window or a rendering of your own garden. Here are three very close viewpoints which take advantage of your view being restricted by the window frame, or the limits of your garden fence. So don't try to run before you can walk – try out the easiest view that you can find. It is a good test of your ability to make an adequate picture from a limited viewpoint.

This is a slightly simplified, redrawn version of a view from a window by Bonnard, which I've rendered in watercolour. The view is of darkening skies filled with rain clouds, with red-roofed, white-stuccoed houses in the middle ground. Beyond these are indistinct

tree-covered hills. On the table in the foreground, there is a pile of books, an ink bottle and a pen and paper. The interest is in the transition from interior to exterior, suggesting space beyond the cluttered foreground.



A more difficult version of this theme is taken from Eric Ravilious's *Train Landscape* (1940), here recreated in coloured inks. Beyond the homely interior of an old railway carriage is glimpsed the panorama of a Wiltshire landscape with its famed white horse cut out of the chalk downs. Any train journey allows you to draw a changing landscape. You have to be quick to get enough down so that when you get home you have an accurate reminder to work up into a finished drawing.



This view – drawn in coloured pencils – is from a position on the raised decking immediately outside my own back door. We can see a bit of the Mediterranean pine and fig tree in one corner, my studio/summerhouse and the potting

shed. I put the garden chairs on the lawn just to give the scene a point of focus. Your garden or backyard doesn't have to be particularly interesting or shown when the weather is good to make a worthwhile drawing or painting.

# Larger spaces

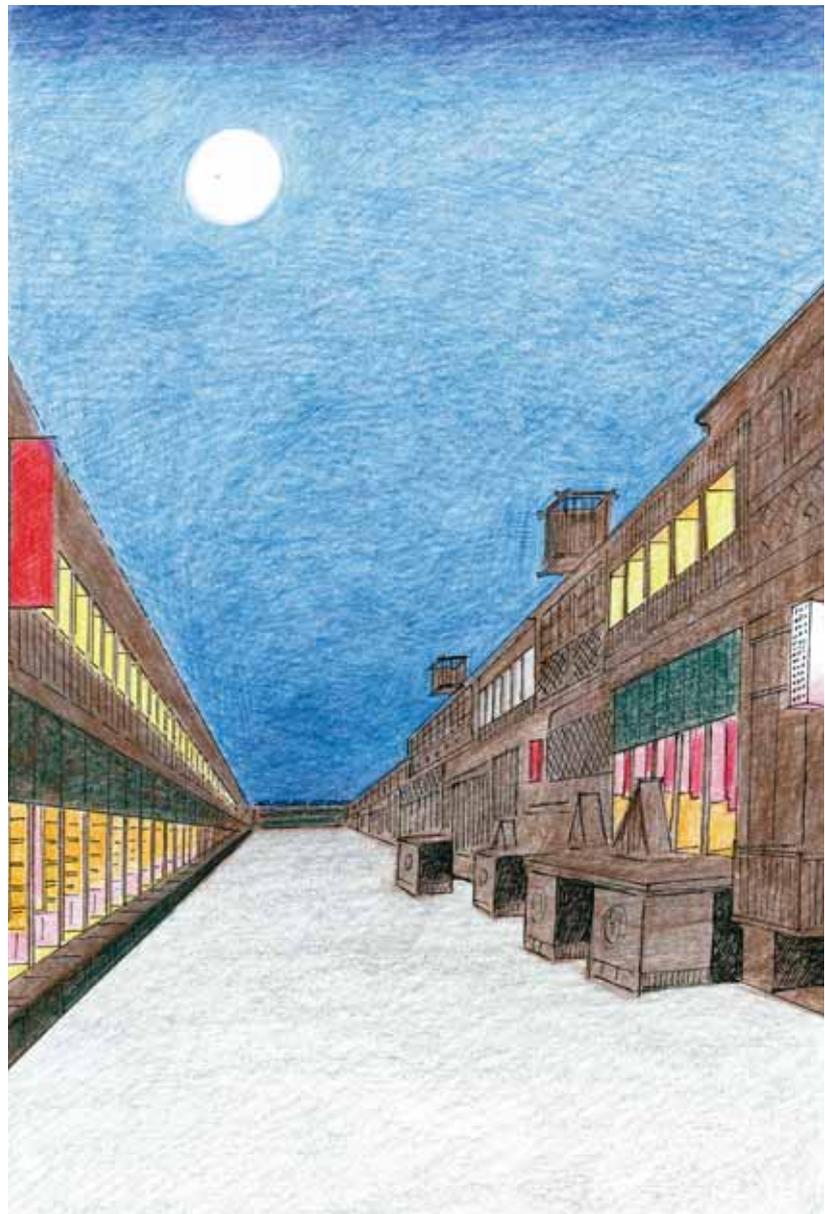
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LANDSCAPE

What you will see rather depends on where you are living, but I've chosen to rework a street scene by Hiroshige, the famous Japanese master of the nineteenth-century woodcut, where he depicts a very ordinary Japanese street that has no remarkable architectural features, rather like any suburban high street or a plain terraced street in a medium-sized town.

I have eliminated all the figures of passing people in order to show an absolutely simple view of the street and, with the exotic touch of a full moon, it becomes a very effective picture. The lit-up windows help, something that ordinarily you might not notice, but I am sure Hiroshige could have created just as brilliant a piece of art with any suburban road at midday. This example was done in coloured pencil and a few lines of ink.

**The really daring step comes next, which is to venture out of the front door and into the street. Most people are a little shy of drawing in public but, if you want to get going, it is something you will have to conquer.**



Somewhere near your home will be some sort of open space such as a recreation ground, a field, a park or even a common. This will take a little more planning than you have so far required but, as it is local, carrying your drawing equipment and a portable stool should not create too many problems and you can easily retire if the weather turns against you. Also, because of its proximity, you can easily go back and look again if your first efforts don't satisfy.

There is a common near Guildford, in Surrey, where my sister lives. This is an ink-drawn version of one of the painted sketches I did during a morning expedition there with her. It is essentially a very simple view, looking across the common to houses on the other side, with a row of large trees to the left and a park bench immediately in front of me. When you can show things simply but drawn well, you have gone further into the learning process towards tackling more complex situations.

## MASTERSTROKES

In the instance of a familiar landscape, you need to remember one of the key points about drawing: make sure you choose an area that holds some interest for you, or else you risk becoming bored with your efforts. As this always leads to a less interesting work, take a little time to choose your scene and you will be rewarded with more attractive pictures.



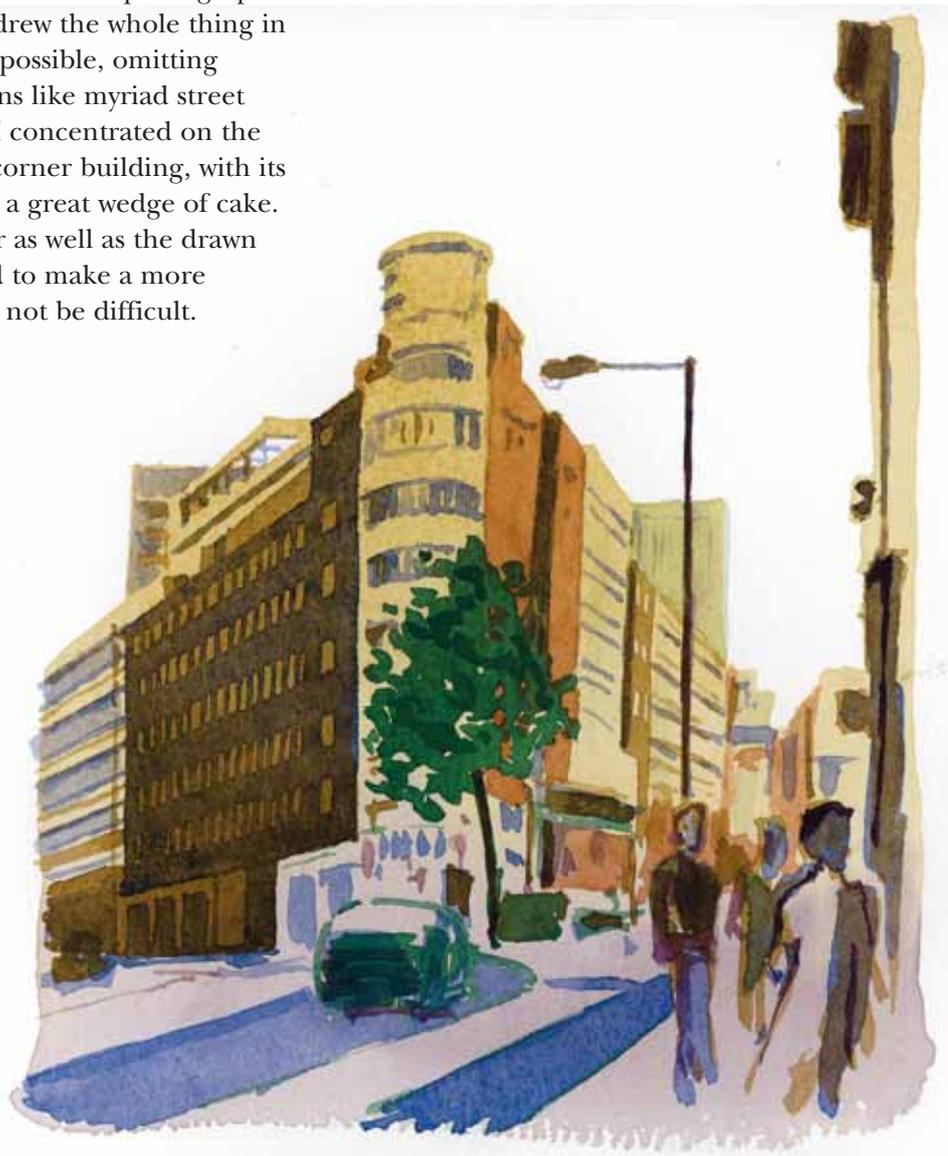
# Townscape and holiday scene

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LANDSCAPE

Having got out of the house, you might head next to a nearby town where there is some dramatic architecture. Most places have at least one or two buildings that stand out from the rest, and which could make a good subject for a piece of perspective architectural drawing. I am spoiled for choice, being close enough to London to get there within twenty minutes by public transport, and where there are plenty of extremely dramatic and even eccentric buildings.

This view, which I have drawn in watercolour, was originally sketched by me in ink and then photographed one day near the British Museum. Later, I got out both the photograph and the drawing and re-drew the whole thing in watercolour as simply as possible, omitting unnecessary complications like myriad street signs and all the traffic. I concentrated on the drama of the tower-like corner building, with its two sides swept back like a great wedge of cake. I've simplified the colour as well as the drawn details, but if you wanted to make a more detailed version it would not be difficult.





It is worth considering exotic locations and taking drawing equipment on holiday with you. Here is a typical seaside scene on the Greek Peloponnese in the middle of summer, with boats and umbrellas or sunshades set up. The rocky island opposite the resort is covered in light scrub, the sun is bright and the sea is blue. It is all rather haphazard as I drew this originally

in coloured pencil, but although I've changed things slightly as I reworked it in watercolour, the basic ingredients are the same and the look is as I remember it. The splashy technique of putting in the colours with a medium-sized brush, keeping lots of the white paper showing, helps to emphasize the bright sunlight and the easy atmosphere.



# Leaves, flowers and trees

Once you move out into the countryside, all that vegetation will suddenly loom large so it is advisable at this stage to practise your plant drawing. Here are two examples.

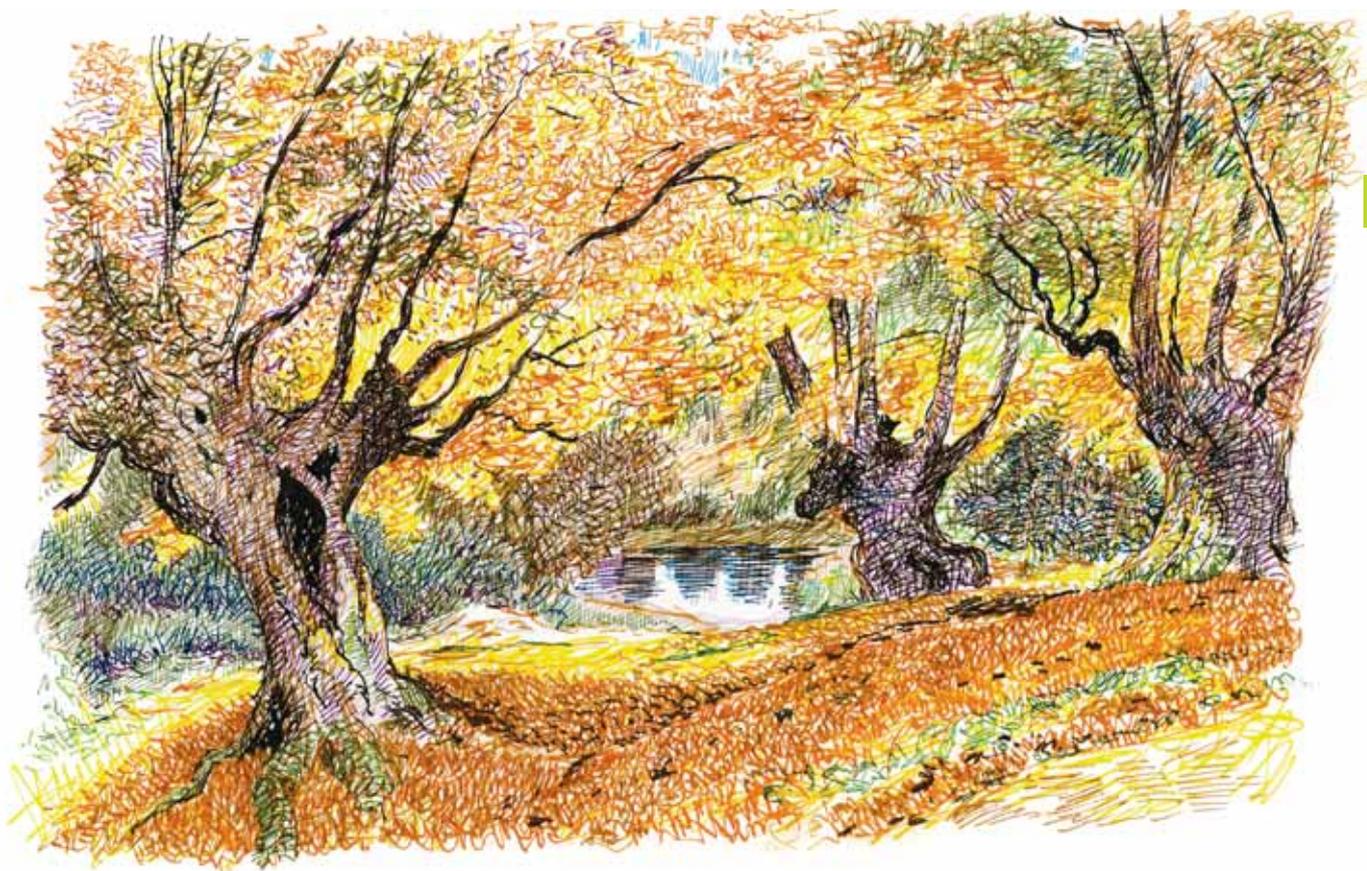


First, we have leaves simply outlined in ink, using three colours. Observe how leaves grow in clusters and bunches, so that you begin to see the patterns they make.

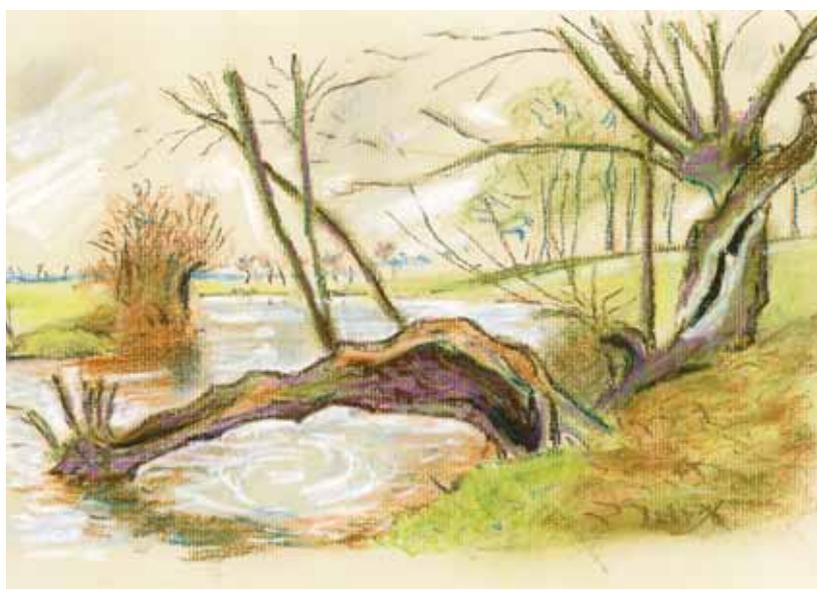
The second example is of flowers, based on Emil Nolde's painting of a poppy in 1930. The watercolour I have produced is a fairly rough copy of the brilliant red flower, contrasted with the dark green of the leaves and the yellow blooms beside. A little bit of background colour helps to anchor the blossoms together.



A logical step is taken from plants and flowers to trees, and here are two examples of trees in different locations in the British Isles.



The first, drawn in coloured ink, is from Myles Birkett Foster's *Burnham Beeches*, painted in 1860. These huge old trees with their wildly spreading branches were painted in the autumn with all the brilliance of yellow, orange, green and brown leaves, filtering the sunlight. The trees themselves appear remarkably dramatic at that time of year; the gnarled, twisted and split trunks, the interweaving branches and the brilliant foliage create a really extraordinary woodland scene.



The second scene, by another Victorian painter, A.F. Garden, is of willows on the River Ouse, painted in 1880. I've recreated it in pastels on a beige paper. Again the drama of the twisted and split willow trunks, one of which grows downward into the stream, suggests living beings rather than trees. The wintry or early spring scene sets the bare branches like a network against the sky.

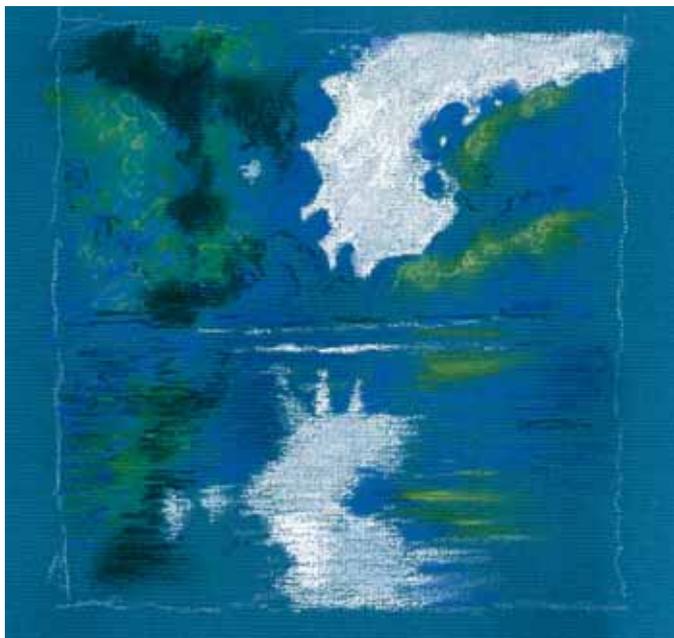
# Water

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LANDSCAPE

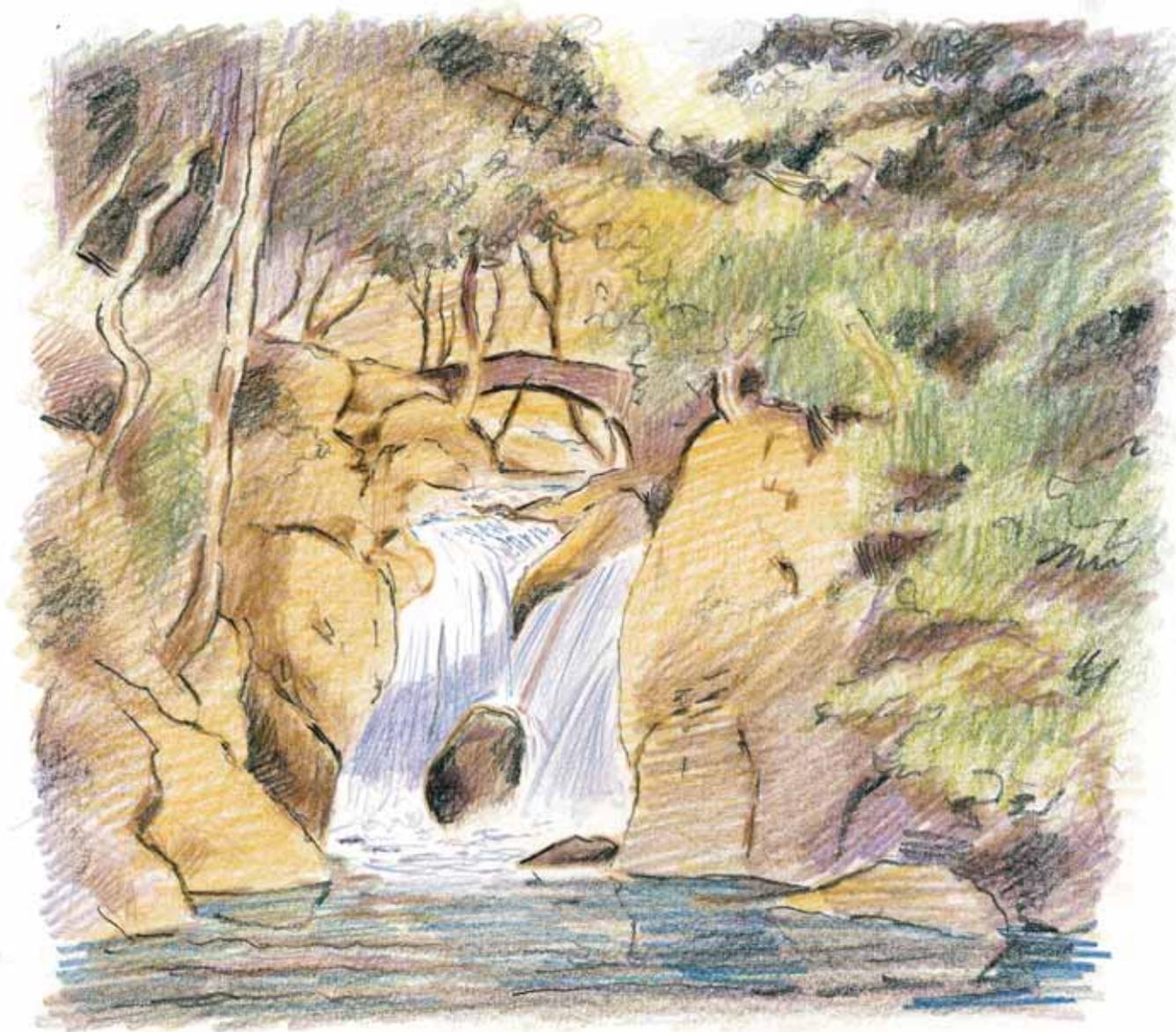
Now let us look more closely at trees reflected in water. I have chosen Gustav Fjaestad's snowy scene *Winter Evening by a River* (1907) where the water reflects the trunks of the adjacent trees in dark and light swirls. Broken reflections in running water is a difficult but very interesting effect to attempt to draw and you can try it in any season.

In a landscape, the presence of water really gives a new liveliness to the scene, both in its reflection of the sky and the vegetation, and in its mobile, rippling surface, which is rarely still. Even a still lake or stream has a twinkling effect as the light bounces off the surface. The three images selected here are marvellous evocations of watery scenes by master artists.



A rather more summery scene of trees reflected in water is this simplified version of Monet's *Seine at Giverny* (1897), which he produced in a range of blues, greens and whites. Our version gives a dramatic effect with the almost monochrome range of strong blues and whites, executed in pastels, which can look very similar to oil paints. The bright gap of white sky seen through the heavily shaded trees is reflected rather less sharply in the water. The greens and blues of the trees are also reflected there, less defined in a more generalized colour splash. It is a very rich and dramatic picture, although tranquil at the same time.

Now for a scene with running water taken from Joseph Wright of Derby's version of Rydal Lower Falls in 1795. Although the scene has hardly changed to this day, our re-creation of it in coloured pencil probably doesn't have quite the power of his, which is partly due to the medium. It is a good medium for gradation and variety in colour, but not so punchy in effect as other media.



### *MASTERSTROKES*

The thing to remember about water is the intense contrast between the lit parts and the darker, shadowed areas. This contrast is part of water's charm and always lends a sparkle to a landscape. You will need to study moving water quite carefully, and the use of a camera is a great asset here. But don't just slavishly copy the camera version – it always helps if you have spent some time carefully studying moving water and getting a feel for the way it looks.

# Different angles

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LANDSCAPE

These pictures show how to adopt a certain viewpoint to lend drama to the scene. Drama and space are two important features of a large landscape, and you can take advantage of this when you are faced with drawing them. The examples here show one with a man-made feature which helps to define the space dramatically. The other is totally natural, with vast size and energy, the sheer spectacle of this force of nature inspiring us with awe.

The first is from Monet's *Railway Bridge at Argenteuil* (1874) in which his viewpoint is down near the level of the river, with the bridge and the nearby trees and bushes looming above. The puffing, rolling steam from the railway engine pours off the bridge, the broad piers of which appear almost too big for the minimal construction it supports. The reflections also help to emphasize the height of the bridge over the rest of the scene.





The higher your viewpoint, the larger and grander the landscape you can encompass. This picture, after the painting of the Niagara Falls by Heinrich Fuseli in 1776, is possibly one of the largest and grandest landscapes you could ever draw. I have used a mixture of watercolour and coloured inks to recreate it. First, float on some flat areas of watercolour and then draw in a few details in coloured inks to define the scene

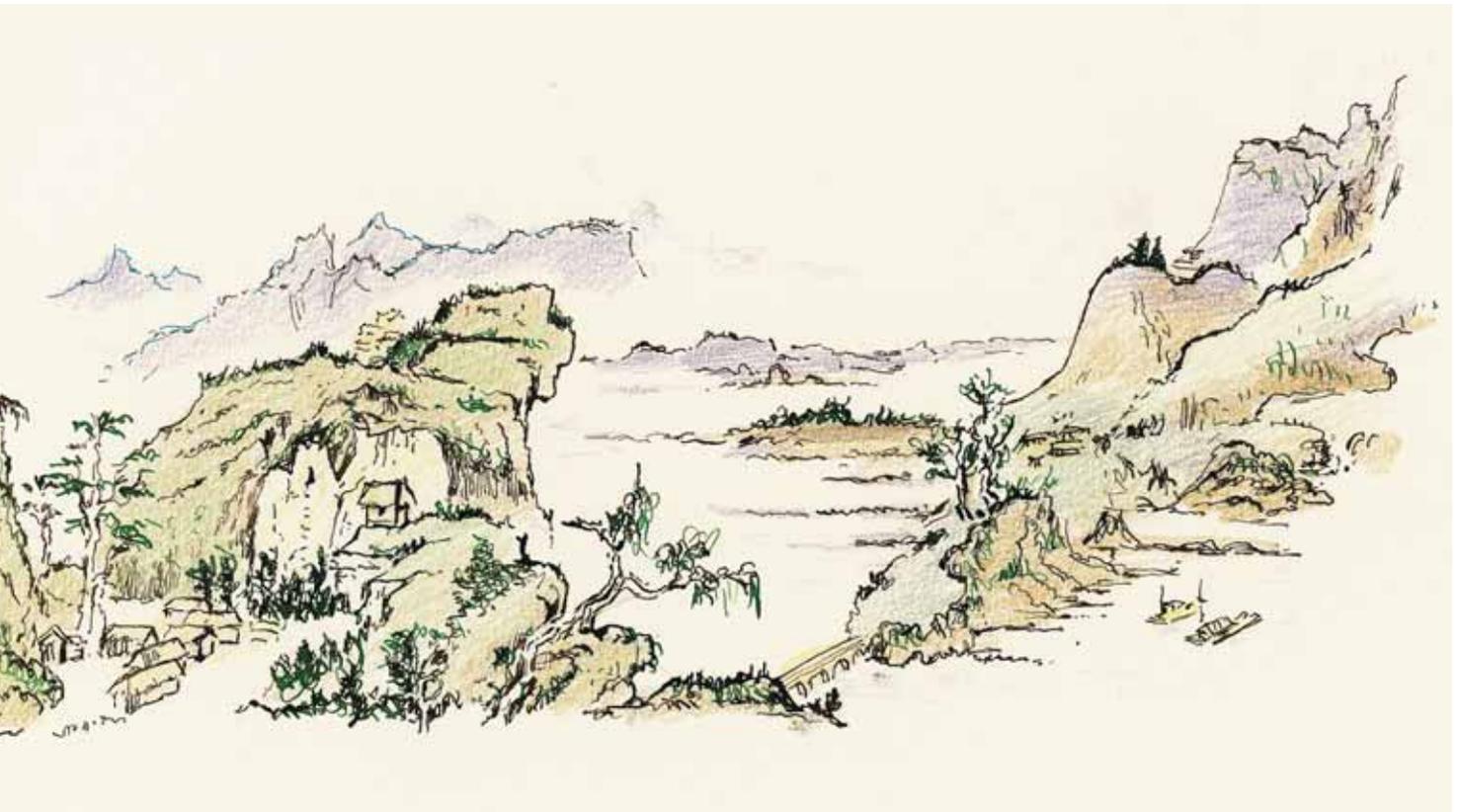
more clearly. The position of the artist was high enough to observe the whole sweep of Niagara, plus the distant landscape with the river winding its way towards the Falls from the Great Lakes. In the original, Fuseli had the figure of a Native American standing in the foreground to give some idea of scale, but the tall pine trees on the lower bank give a decent sense of scale as well.

# Range of mediums

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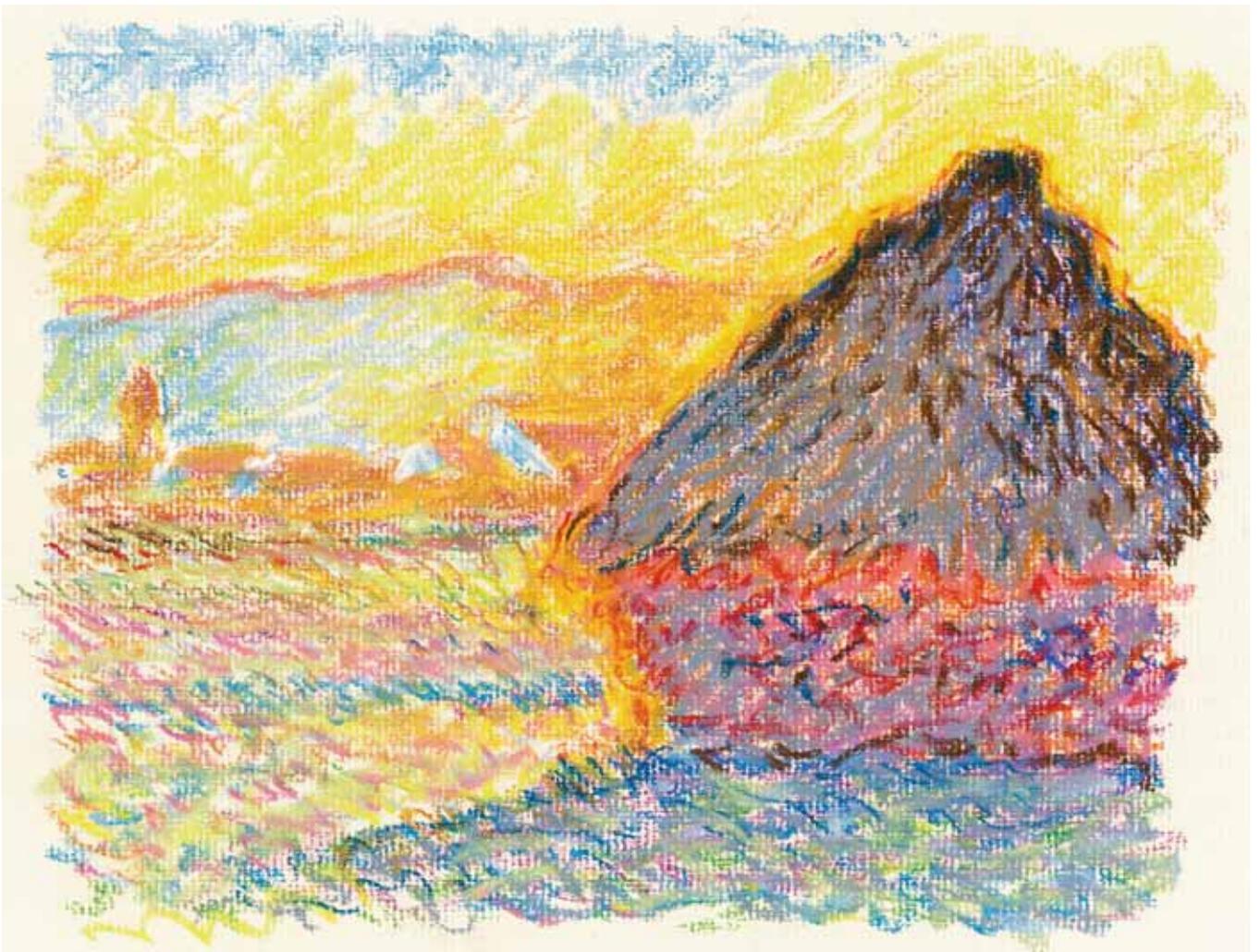
LANDSCAPE

The choice of medium can sometimes be particularly appropriate to the type of landscape you are working on. 'The medium is the message' said Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s and, in drawing, this is no exception. Here are two landscapes that give quite different effects, and the mediums seem particularly suited to the type of scene being shown. One seems to be glowing with energy and fiery, while the other is cool and gentle in effect.



This first example is an antique Chinese landscape from c. 1685 by K'un Ts'an, with melting mountain ranges and sketchy trees. This was done first with sepia ink and then green ink, carefully portraying the intricate details of the rocky hills and twisted trees. After this, keeping very subdued like the original, came softly applied layers of coloured pencil, using the edge of a well-sharpened point in violet, brown, green and blue.

The second example shows a pastel version of one of Monet's Haystack paintings (a series of at least 25 variations), which glows with golden light and gives the impression of the haystack almost burning up. The original was done with oil paints, but can be effectively imitated by pastel in the same way as Monet worked his paint. These impressionistic strokes of brilliant colour allow you to show the dazzling effects of hot sun when it is low in the sky.



### *MASTERSTROKES*

The charm of painting landscapes is often in the pleasant experience of sitting out in the open. Sometimes you have to add bits to your work after you have returned home, but this won't hurt the main effect of your outdoor efforts. It is, of course, possible just to take a photograph of the scene and then start your painting when you return home. But this is not quite the same exercise and you will find that the results are quite different.

# Step by step landscape

To perform the exercise of producing a landscape, you really need to go out somewhere and draw from life. If you can't manage this, find some good photographs of interesting parts of a landscape that you can put together.

**1** First, you need studies of trees to get some idea of what you want your landscape to look like. Here (right) I have made studies of groups of trees and bushes and also a staked wire fence (below). These give me an idea of the sort of scene I'm interested in.



## MASTERSTROKES

The practice of composing a landscape is partly done for you by the area you happen to be painting in, and partly a matter for your own taste and discrimination in what effect you want your landscape to have. It is possible to adjust the landscape that you see in front of you, by moving your position a little or by leaving out parts of the scene, or even moving them around a little. Many artists do this, but you have to be careful that the results will all hang together.



- 2 What I really need is an impressive tree that could be an item by itself. So having found one and made sketches (left and far left) and the drawing (below), I now have to decide how all these elements are going to fit together.



# Step by step landscape

continued

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LANDSCAPE

- 3** A quick design gives me an idea of how I shall allow the eye to be led up to the main tree by the line of the fence. This helps to give depth in the picture and acts as a natural indicator to the big tree.





- 4** Now all I have to do is to go ahead and produce my scene, giving it a summery look with a blue sky, and making sure the dry, yellow grasses play their part in bringing the attention to the main tree. All the other trees should be much more distant or otherwise insignificant.

# Animals

When drawing animals, the biggest problem is that they won't oblige you by staying still, so drawing them from life is quite difficult. It is really easiest to photograph them and then to work from the snaps you have taken.

The best place to start is with the insect world because the creatures are relatively small and not too complicated in shape. Usually, when it comes to insects, museums hold dozens of drawerfuls of them, and it is not too difficult to make quite careful drawings on the spot.

Probably the next easiest is the sea world, with fish of all sorts and sizes. Again, they have simpler shapes than land animals and are quite wide-ranging in colour and pattern. A local aquarium, or someone you know who keeps fish in a tank, can be good for first-hand reference material and, of course, all that swimming around makes the creatures more vivid than using a photographic reference.

When you progress to animals on land, there are reptiles, mammals and birds in multifarious shapes, colours and sizes. Observe how the various species have similarities as well as differences, and this should make it easier.

As an artist you will probably want to try your hand sooner or later at a really large creature such as an elephant or rhinoceros. If you cannot reach a zoo easily, then a visit to your local natural history museum can be very instructive. Take your sketch book and draw the stuffed or reconstituted animals on show. Their bird collections are frequently comprehensive too.

Once familiar with the shapes of your chosen animals, the next task is to convey some semblance of movement. Several famous artists are renowned for their animal pictures and it's helpful to examine their work.

You can experiment right from the start with techniques for getting the animals to appear more convincing; a drawing doesn't have to be precise in order to create the feeling of an animal in action. An expressionist technique is more likely to conjure up the essence of the animal than a careful, detailed drawing. But whatever you draw from the immense range of animal life, have fun experimenting with various ideas and effects.



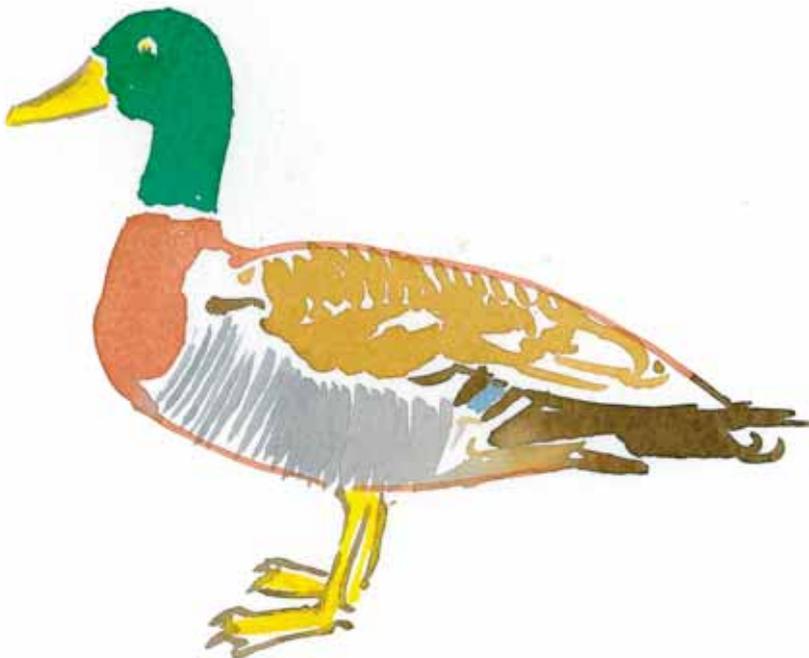
# Shape and colour

100

ANIMALS

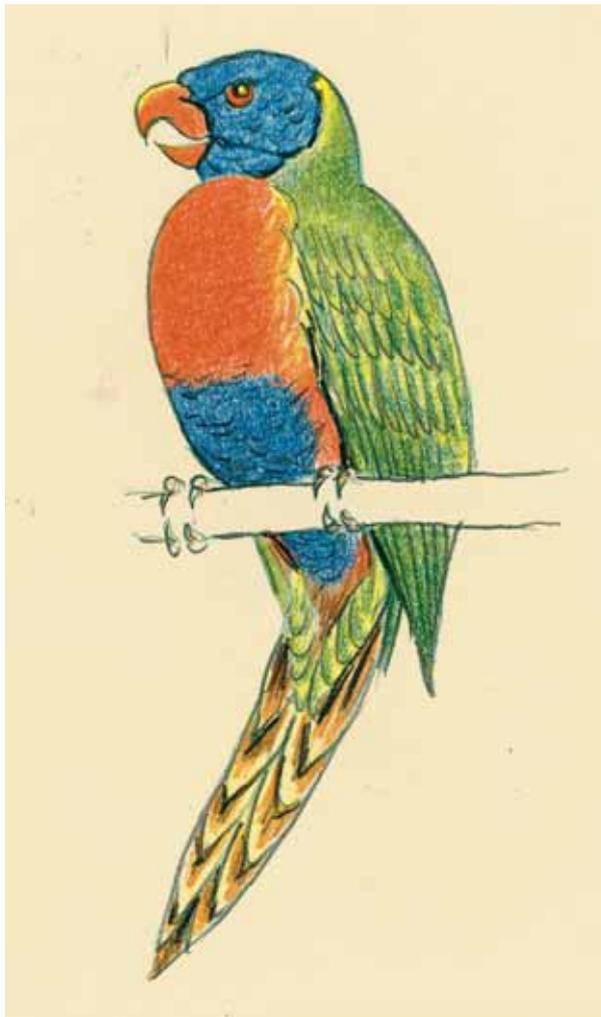
Animals and colour are interesting, because many animals have such extremely strong colour combinations that you can really start to enjoy yourself in representing them accurately. Of course in northern climates you get a lot of rather subdued colour, but in more tropical zones, colour is often quite extravagant. So look around for the most interesting animals that you can find and learn to put in your colour with confidence and enjoyment.

If you have access to a natural history display, find a range of mounted moths and butterflies to draw at your leisure. The example shown here is a Monarch butterfly, which I have produced by first laying down an area of yellow-orange watercolour and then drawing over the top of it in black ink. Because the shape presents itself with a flat surface, there is no problem of representing depth, which gives you an easier start.



The next example is from the bird kingdom, showing the characteristic shape of the drake mallard. It can be kept as a silhouette without any need to show depth. The patches of colour are well defined and the whole drawing has a very clear pattern and decorative feel to it. You simply draw in each area of colour with the brush and fit them together like a neatly slotting puzzle.

Now we look at two more bird drawings – done in coloured pencil – of a goldfinch and a rainbow parakeet. Once again, thanks to their colour patterning, you do not need to pay much attention to the solidity of the creatures. Keep the areas of colour fairly flat and the combination of brilliant colour and design will be sufficient to give a very attractive impression of the types of bird that you have drawn.



### MASTERSTROKES

When painting or drawing in colour where the colour is flat and unmodulated, it is often best to outline the shape first and then fill in the colour. Do the outline in the same medium that the main colour is put in, or outline in very light pencil, which you can afterwards rub out. You can also draw the outline in pencil or ink on a separate piece of paper, and then put it with another on a light box or on a window and trace the shape through in the main colour.

# Larger animals

102

ANIMALS

When you come to draw larger animals, it is necessary to give a more substantial impression of their bulk and range of movement. This is not so easy and, for the best results, it is a good idea to put in some time studying the animal you intend to draw, before you actually start.

My first choice is the common cat. Try drawing it at rest first of all, just as I have done here, using only one colour to produce a reasonably structured drawing. Note how this cat is lying comfortably, although his head is raised and he may move at any time. Once you have produced a couple of preliminary sketches like this, you will feel confident in trying something more complex. Here is where a decent photograph of your cat in action could go a long way towards making your next attempt quite realistic. Using the photograph for reference, and with the animal still around where you can see him, you can start on an authentic representation of



your cat on the prowl. Mine is done in coloured inks because the texture of the fur lends itself to this multi-stroke technique. So using grey, brown, green, yellow and black you, too, can build up a convincing effect.



This second drawing is my own version of George Stubbs' famous painting of a great horse, *Whistlejacket* (1762). I've used pastel here and kept it fairly loose in style so that the marvellously lively horse doesn't become too stilted. The shine on the animal's coat and the ripple of the light-coloured tail and mane give some idea of the beautiful original, which of course is very large and kept in the National Gallery in London.



### MASTERSTROKES

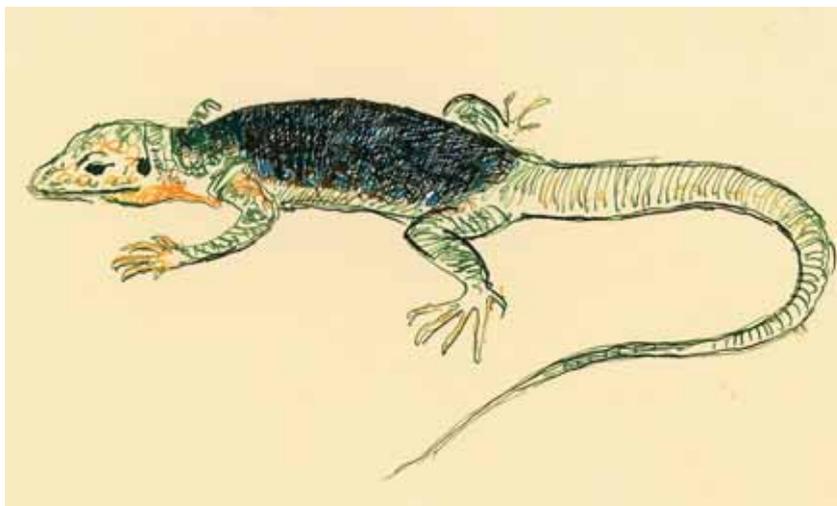
If you have animals at home, this sort of drawing becomes easier because you will have observed, even when not drawing, how the animal moves and what its fur or 'covering' feels like, which will really help improve the quality of the drawing. You should also make the effort to visit a zoo or park where you can spend a bit of time studying and drawing animals. It all helps to produce a more convincing picture.

# Animals in motion

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ANIMALS

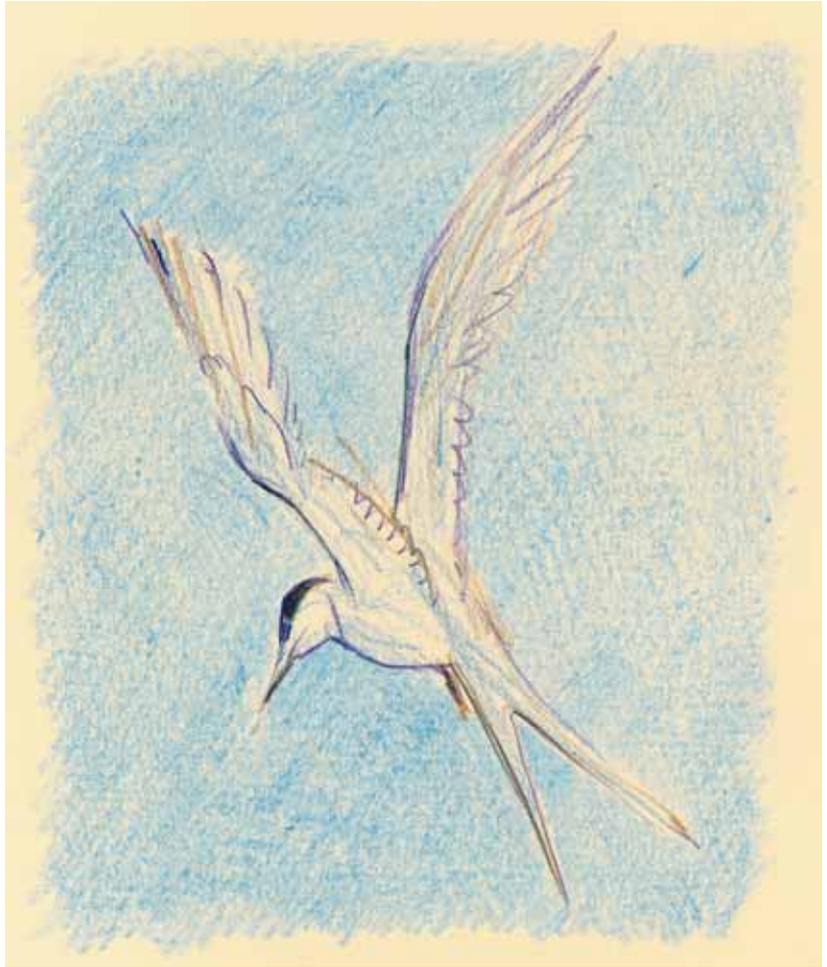
Here is a frog drawn poised to hop, his shape looking somewhat jerky and awkward in comparison with the graceful lines of the horse on page 103. However, you can approach a subject like this in exactly the same way as you would the horse, keeping the style simple and loosely-drawn, in order to give some semblance of movement to the finished product.



Next I show a lizard in mid-scramper. It has a straight-forward shape and, as long as the texture of the skin looks scaly enough, there are no great drawing problems here either. The colour can be kept to a minimum, with just enough to hint at the green, sinuous body.

The following drawings continue with the notion of movement and how to reproduce it, but this time I have used coloured pencils in an effort to gain the right effect.

The arctic tern is contrasted against the pure blue sky and this use of a plain background colour certainly helps to set off the movement of the bird in flight. The tern itself is put in very sketchily with no clear details, just as you would see it if it were to fly past you suddenly.



In the next picture, I have a leopard running forward to pounce on its prey. The drawing is similar in style to the bird, in that the lines defining the animal are loosely drawn to give some idea of the powerful muscular activity of the beast. I decided not to represent the leopard's spots very accurately but merely suggested the arrangement of their pattern as this all helps to give an impression of the animal moving at speed.



## Animals in motion (2)

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ANIMALS



The next picture is of an American bald eagle, which is the emblem of the USA. I have drawn this one with a brush, in watercolour, and tried to keep it straightforward in style, with all the emphasis on the outspread wings and the arrow-like body. Only two colours were used but you could play around with blacks and browns and other tints, as long as you don't lose the active effect of the flying bird.

Another animal is on the move in the next picture – this time it is a fox loping across the meadows by moonlight. I have splashed in the foxy red of his coat without attempting too distinct a shape, putting dark patches of colour on the feet, nose and ears, and leaving quite a bit of white showing around the muzzle and on the tip of the tail. You will have to be a little more careful when it comes to putting in the green pasture and the night sky, making sure you stay clear of the fox's outline, so there is no danger of the colours running.



As our final example, we have a dolphin leaping out of the water in a shining arc. The movement here is suggested by the very curve of the creature. The effect of the waves below it and the wet shine on the body help to convince the viewer that the incident is drawn from live observation.



# Animals in settings

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ANIMALS

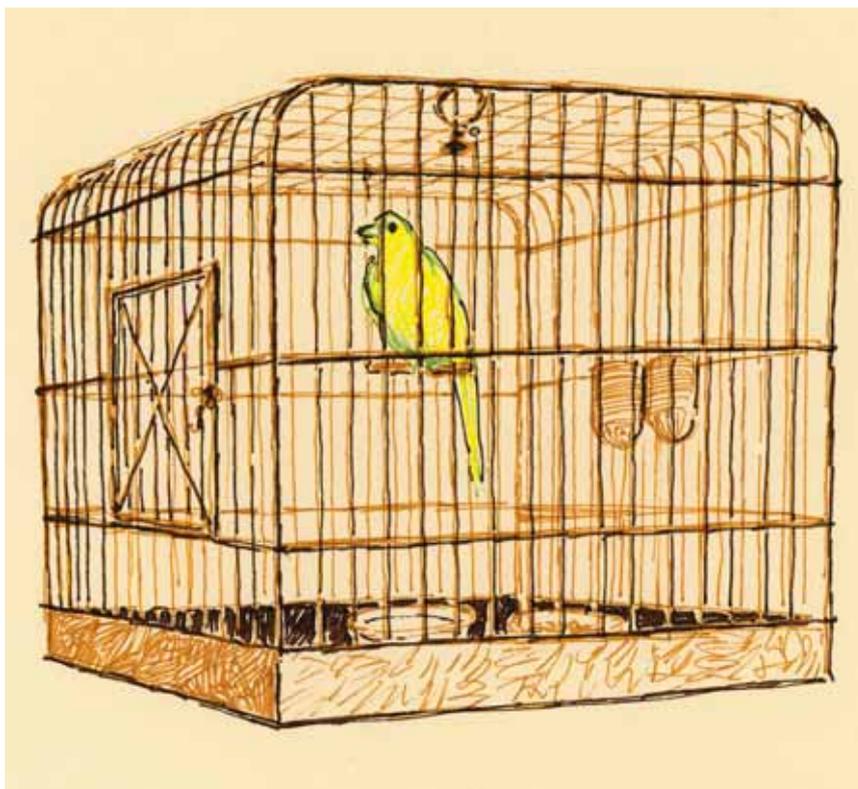
For an added semblance of reality to your animal drawings, try fitting your subjects into the type of landscape that they might normally inhabit. This means that you need some pictorial references to draw upon. Alternatively, do what the famous French painter Henri 'Le Douanier' Rousseau did, which was to create a magical jungle habitat that never existed in real life but was a product of his sketching sessions amid the lush greenery of the *Jardin des Plantes* in Paris – the equivalent of Kew Gardens in London.

Drawing a dog in its basket is fine while it sleeps, although they often move in their sleep. So draw the dog in first and the shape of the basket after, as the dog may wake up and invariably move off.





Fish in an aquarium are a colourful and fairly easy exercise, because they continually repeat their movements across the glass tank. Their colours can be very vivid and as their shape is so streamlined they are not too difficult to draw. The difficulty is to make them appear to be in the water.



This image demands that the cage is drawn with care and precision, while the bird itself is just a colourful shape inside the wire structure.

# Step by step animal drawing

(after 'Le Douanier' Rousseau)

110

ANIMALS

In composing a step by step animal picture I have taken my inspiration from 'Le Douanier' Rousseau because his work is so imaginative. The scene can be set by drawing enlargements of plants that you see around you (plants from your own garden or house plants) or work from photographic reference. The animal needs to be an exotic type, like a tiger, to fit in with Rousseau's fantastical scenes.

- 1 You will need to study plants close up, although you do not need to have access to real jungle plants because quite ordinary ones will do, as long as you make them look much bigger than they actually are. Also, you will need to vary the shapes of leaves a little and make them look more luxuriant.



Having got enough in the way of leaves, you will also need to find some type of flower to be your jungle blossoms. Choose something florid and pink or red.



- 2** You will need to make drawings of a tiger or some other exotic animal. It is probably easiest to work from photographs.



- 3** Having got your plants and wild animal, the only thing left to do is to design your picture, by sketching the main outlines of the scheme. You can produce the details as you go along – it's more fun and probably produces better results in this type of picture. Don't hold back on the colour.



# Step by step animal drawing

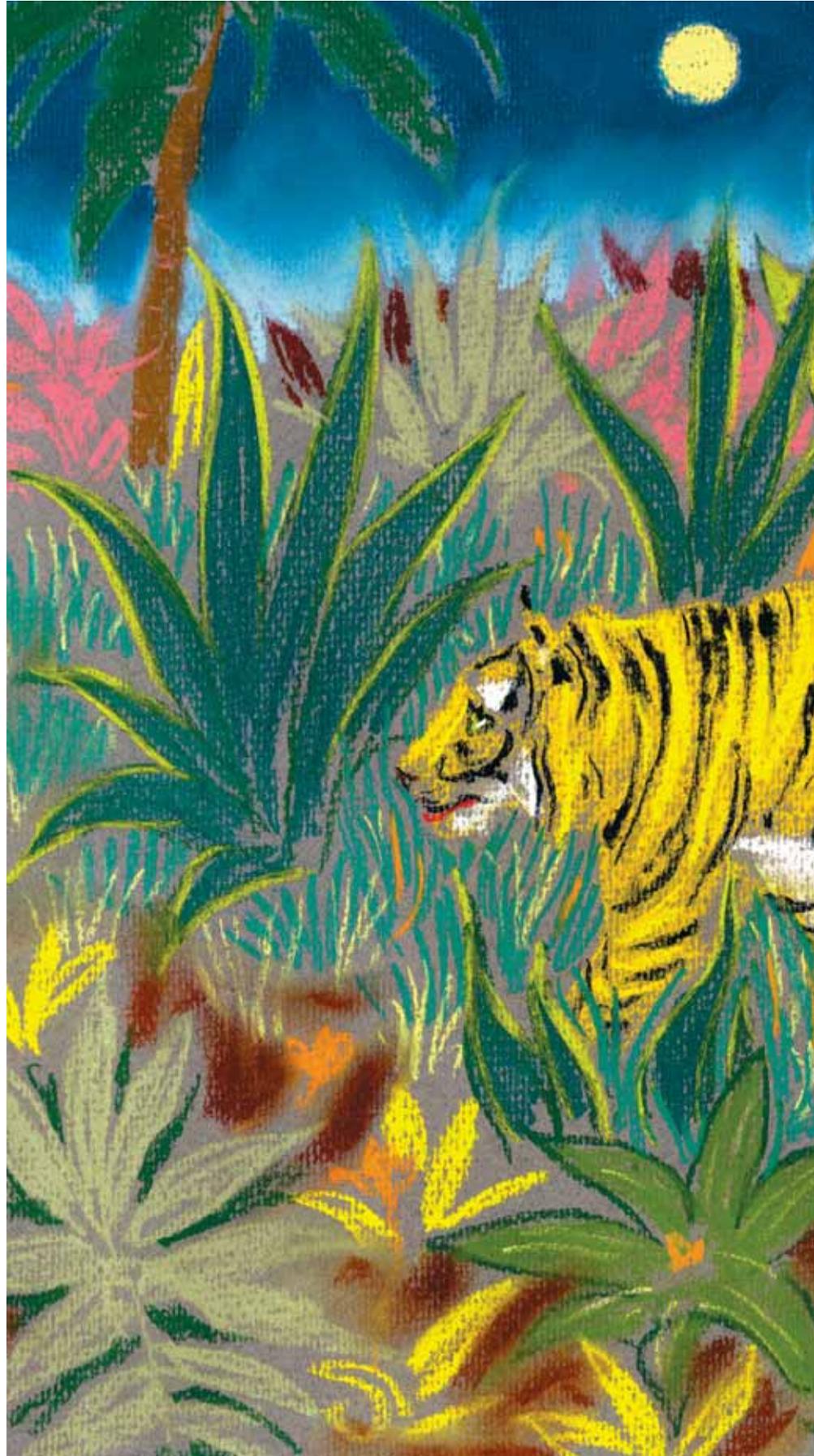
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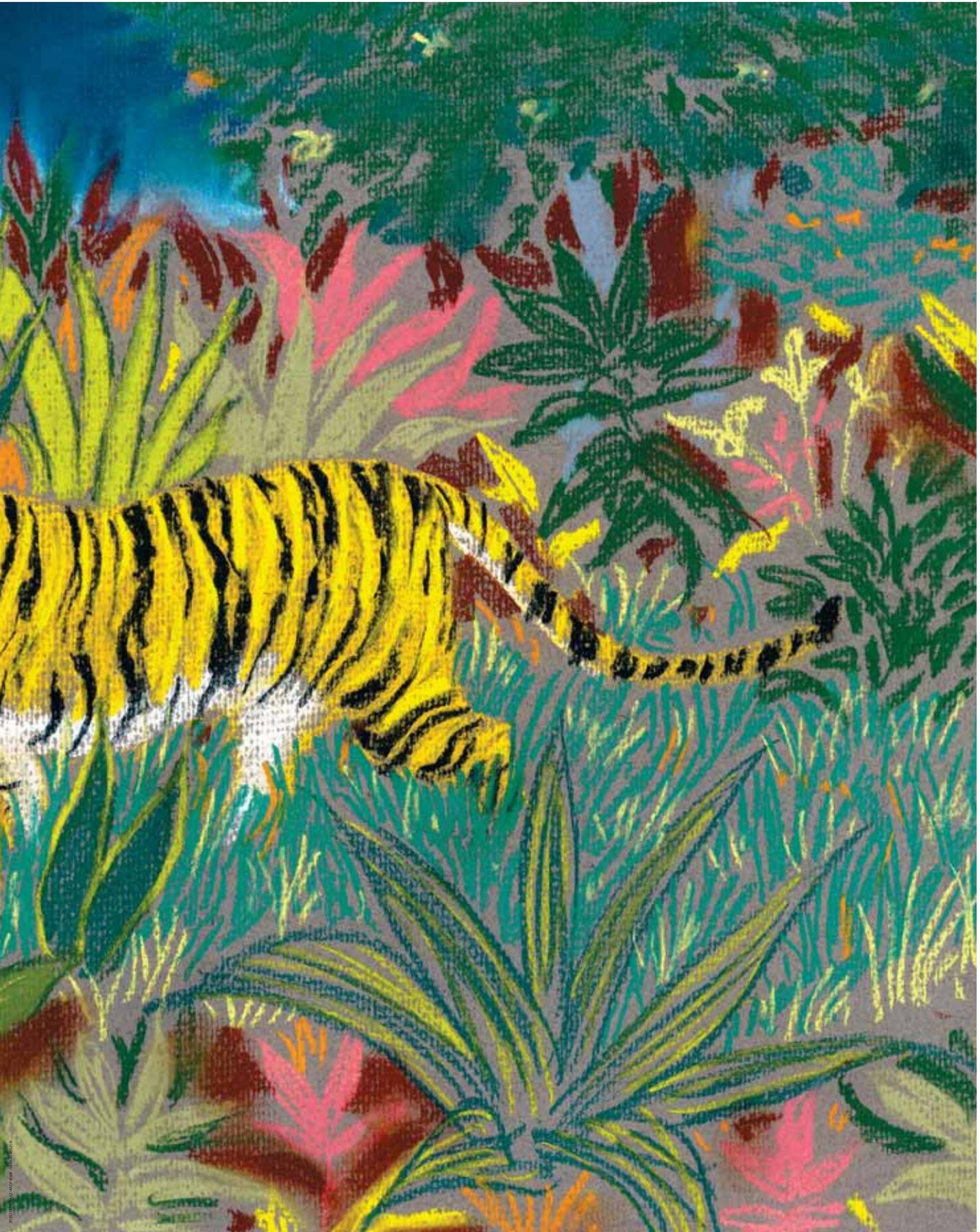
112

ANIMALS

**4** Using a toned paper to draw on, and using pastels for their rich colour values, you can construct a jungle landscape where plant shapes jostle and overlap each other.

**5** Next, show a little bit of sky and a moon or sun glowing brightly in the deep azure space of the sky. Make the most of the decorative values of the plant shapes and the animal's markings – don't try to be too realistic. The whole charm of this type of picture is in its decorative, dream-like richness.





# The human figure

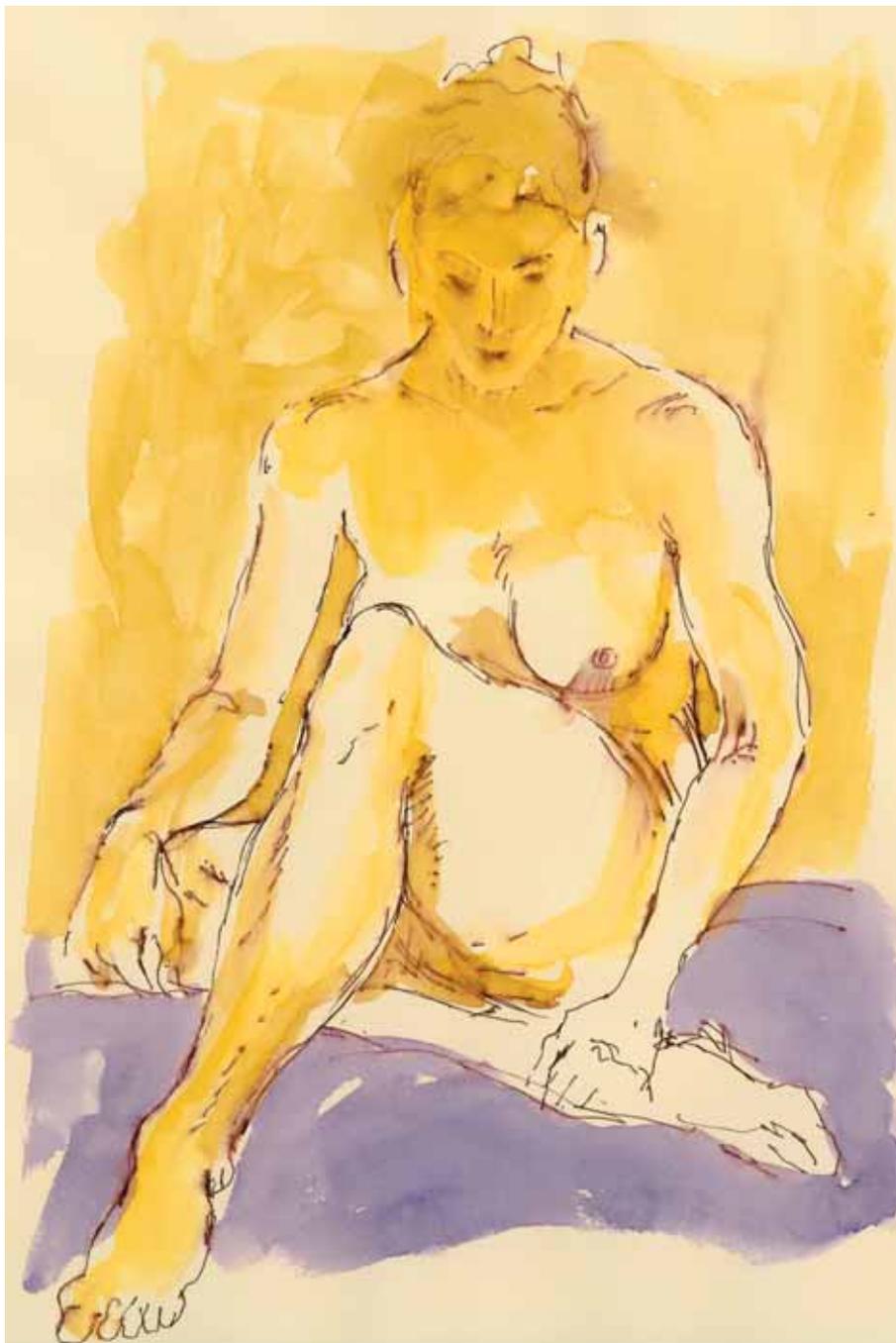
Drawing the human figure in colour provides certain obstacles for you to conquer before you become really proficient. One major fact is that coloration of the human body encompasses a wide spectrum. There are few truly strong colours in the human skin range, but a host of very subtle tones.

Apart from obvious differences in skin colour between various races, the complexion of each human being reflects any number of hues, according to whether you are looking at that particular individual in the cold light of winter in the north or beneath a brilliant summer sun, closer to the equator. Then again, there is another range of tints caused by the effect of electric light. And not only do you have the colour of the skin to consider, but also the colour of your model's clothes and of the background setting, which will affect the appearance of the skin against them.

With people, it is always a case of getting them to co-operate with you in order to draw them effectively. It may not be a question of drawing the whole figure, but sometimes just an arm, or a foot, or the head and neck. And don't just draw the head from the front, but from every possible angle: it all increases your ability to do 'life' well.

Your models will need patience, as it takes time to produce a good representation of the human body. A life class at a local art institute is one of the best ways of learning to draw the human figure and the experience will never be wasted. But even without tuition, you can still prevail upon friends and relations to sit for you. Change the poses frequently – standing up, lying down and positions where the body is extended and curled up in turn all help to increase your range. And remember to look carefully at limbs and torso when they appear foreshortened, in order to see how much the shapes of the body alter when seen from different angles.

Finally, clothing obviously makes a big difference to the appearance of your model. Start by asking them to dress simply, so that you can see the shape of their body clearly. As you improve, you can ask them to wear something thick or heavily draped, and you can test yourself to see if you can work out what is happening beneath the fabric.



# Building the colour scheme

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THE HUMAN FIGURE

**1** With your model in front of you, or a photograph, or even another artist's picture to copy, first make a very simple outline of the figure in a colour that lends itself to the subject-matter.

The first thing to consider is how to build up the colour values on a nude human figure. The following stage-by stage pictures will give you some idea as to how the process works. I did this study in inks and started with the lightest pink colour I could find, which, as you can see, was actually rather strong.

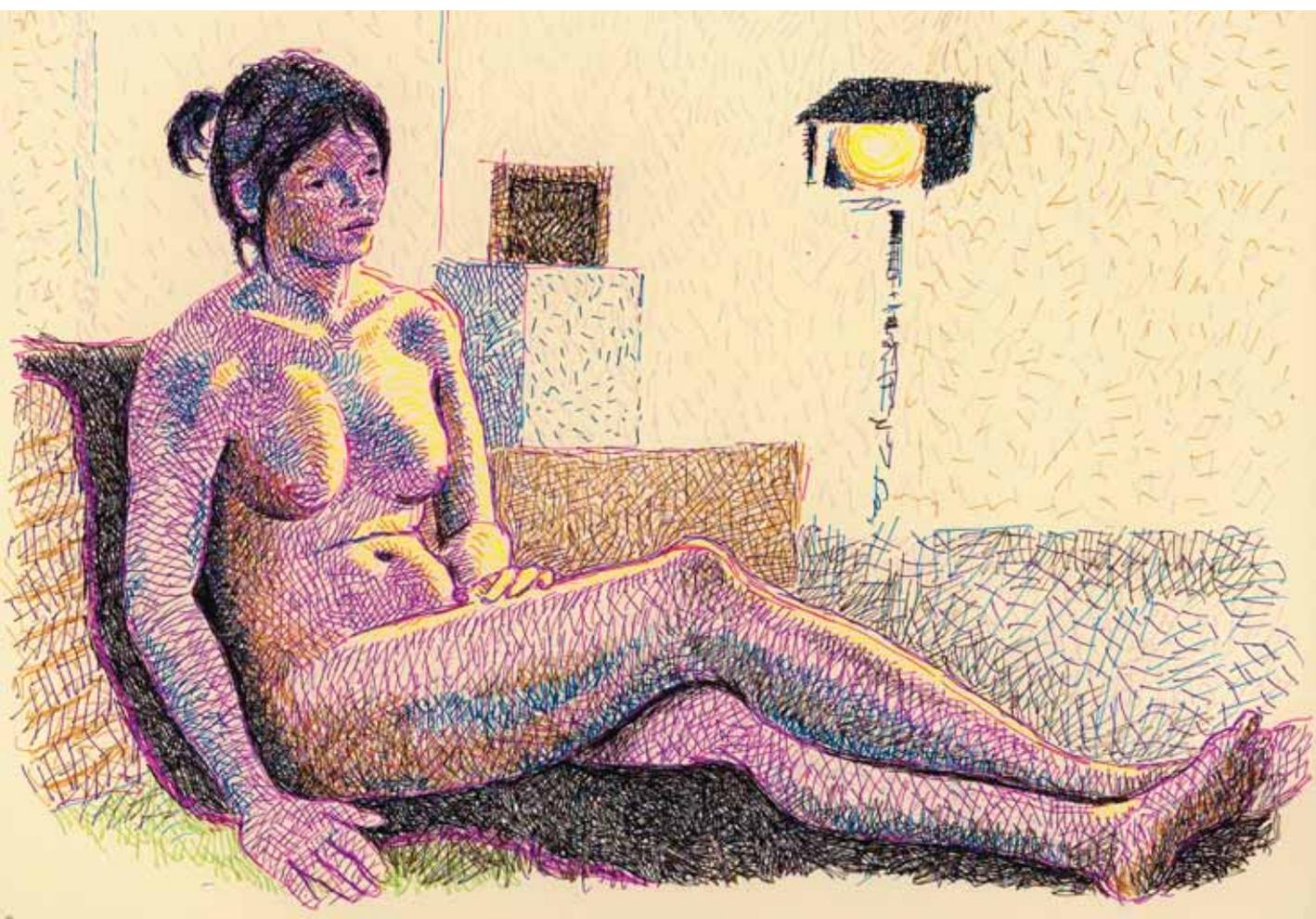


**2** Having set the scene, I then built up a texture with pink strokes going in different directions, following the contours of the figure. Don't put these marks very close together or the figure will look too pink. Leave any areas of light where the spotlight catches the far side of the figure.

Looking hard at it, I noticed some areas of light blue which I put in with my palest blue. Once again, the blue ink is fairly strong, so I keep the marks far enough apart to be 'diluted' by the off-white paper ground.



**3** After this, the whole range of coloured inks comes into play as I build up the darker colours with myriad marks in order to make my earlier lighter tones look less strong in contrast. There is a limit to how far you can take this. Black is the darkest colour and you cannot use it extensively or the picture will become too sombre. The very lightest areas of this figure carry some yellow marks to give an effect of the artificial light.



### MASTERSTROKES

It is a time-honoured exercise to copy a master painter's work and you should not be shy of trying out this method. If you look closely, for example, at the way the artist has handled his colour and how he or she has contrasted the stronger colours with the softer ones, you will learn quite a lot that will help you when you come to work from your own sources.

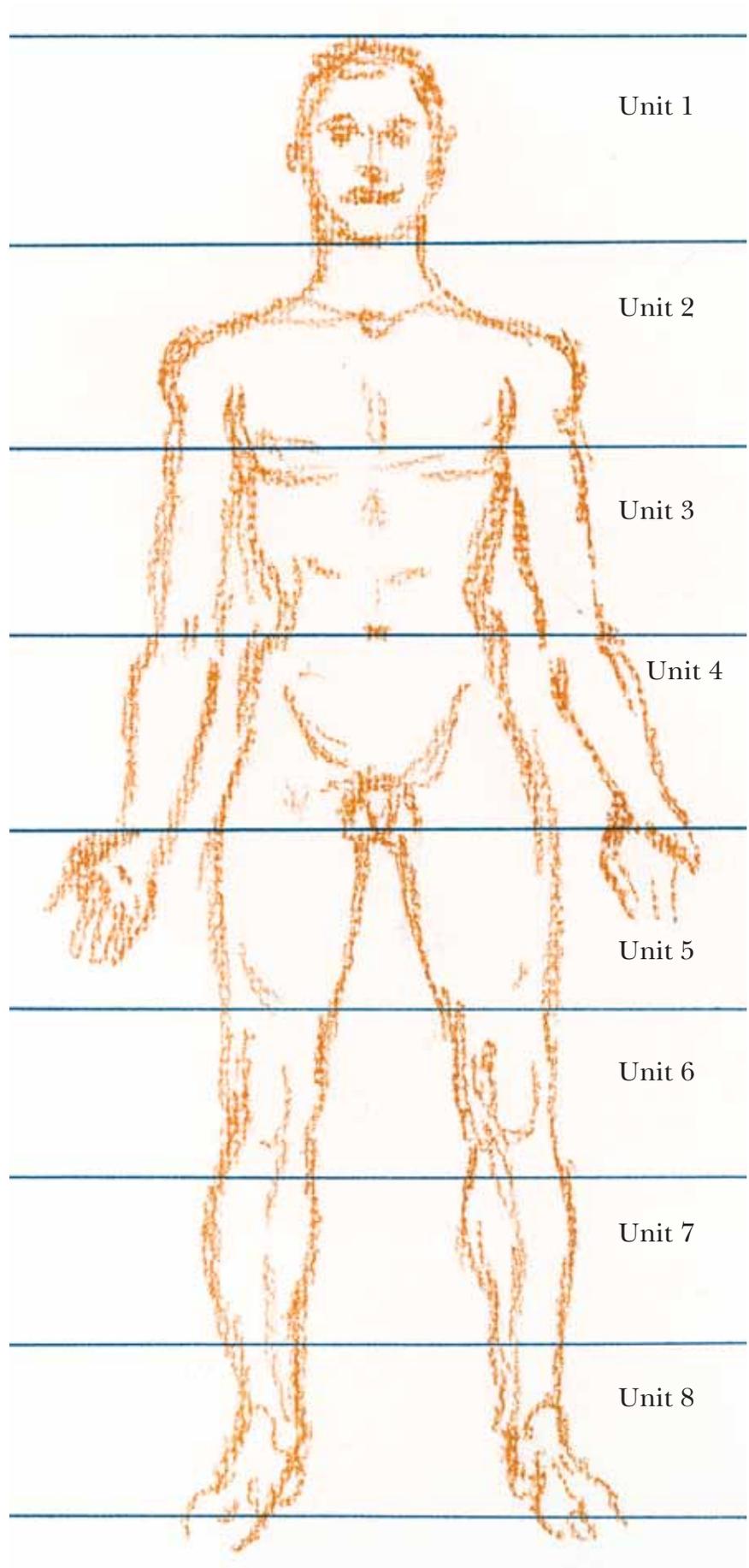
# Proportions in the human figure

118

THE HUMAN FIGURE

Before you leap into your first figure drawing, pause to study the proportions of the human figure so that you have some idea as to how it can be drawn more easily. This diagram gives a very simple view of that complex object, the human body. Viewed from the front, the height of the average adult – male or female – is approximately seven-and-a-half to eight times the length of their own head, measured from top to bottom. Women are generally smaller boned than men but the ratio of head to overall height remains the same.

Notice how the halfway mark of the human figure is the lower end of the torso and the top of the legs. The navel is three units down, as are the elbows with the arms lowered.



Unit 1

Unit 2

Unit 3

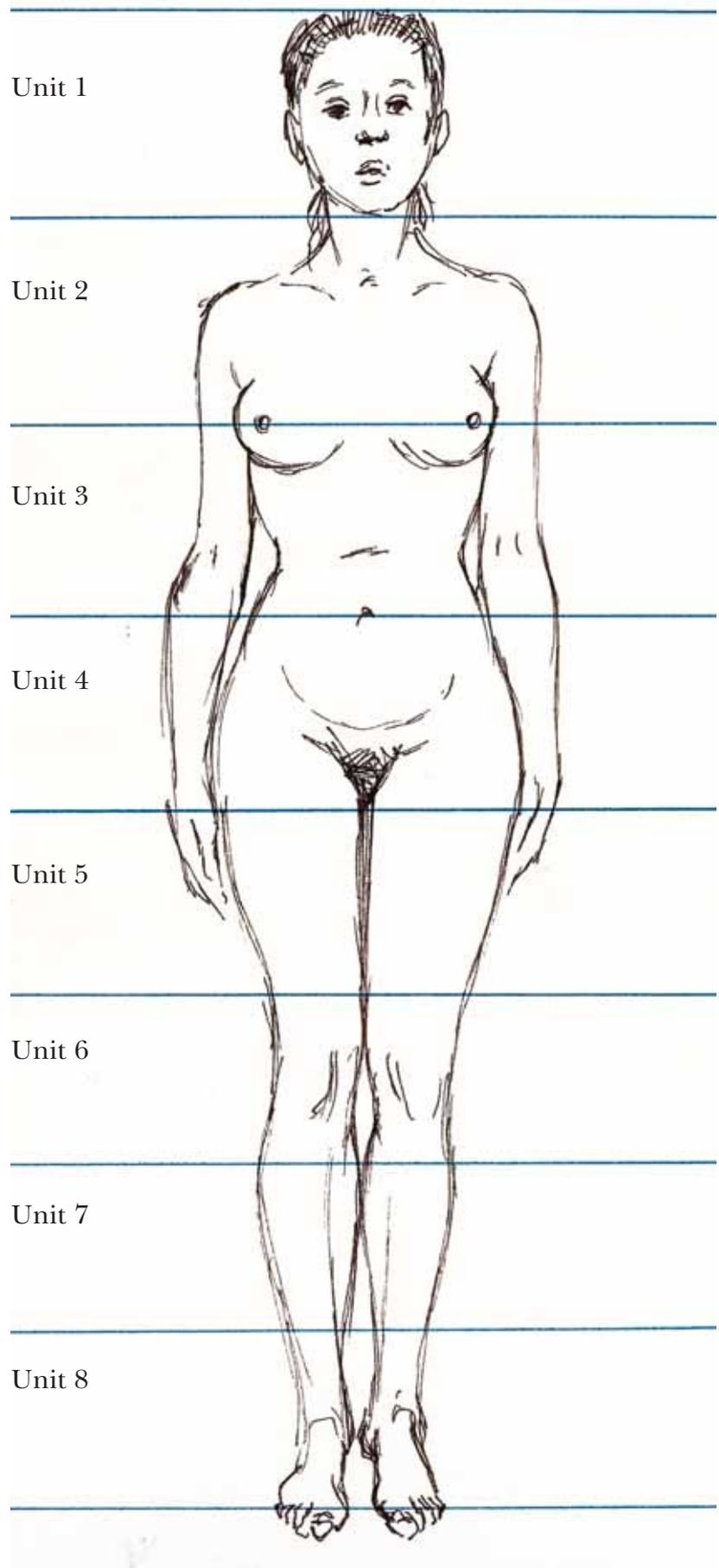
Unit 4

Unit 5

Unit 6

Unit 7

Unit 8



Notice that the second unit down is the level of the nipples of the chest, and the knees come about halfway down Unit 6.

# Light and dark tones

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THE HUMAN FIGURE

Here are a couple of figures, one on a white background and one on black, which demonstrate how to balance out your tonal range. The problem with drawing a figure in colour is the risk that you run of making the final result look too melodramatic. The range of tones on the human body is quite subtle, but they do go from cool or cold colours to warm, rich tones. The sort of light that is used makes a difference – sunlight being so strong that it often washes out contrasts of colour, and artificial light being restricted and therefore changing the natural colour of the body.

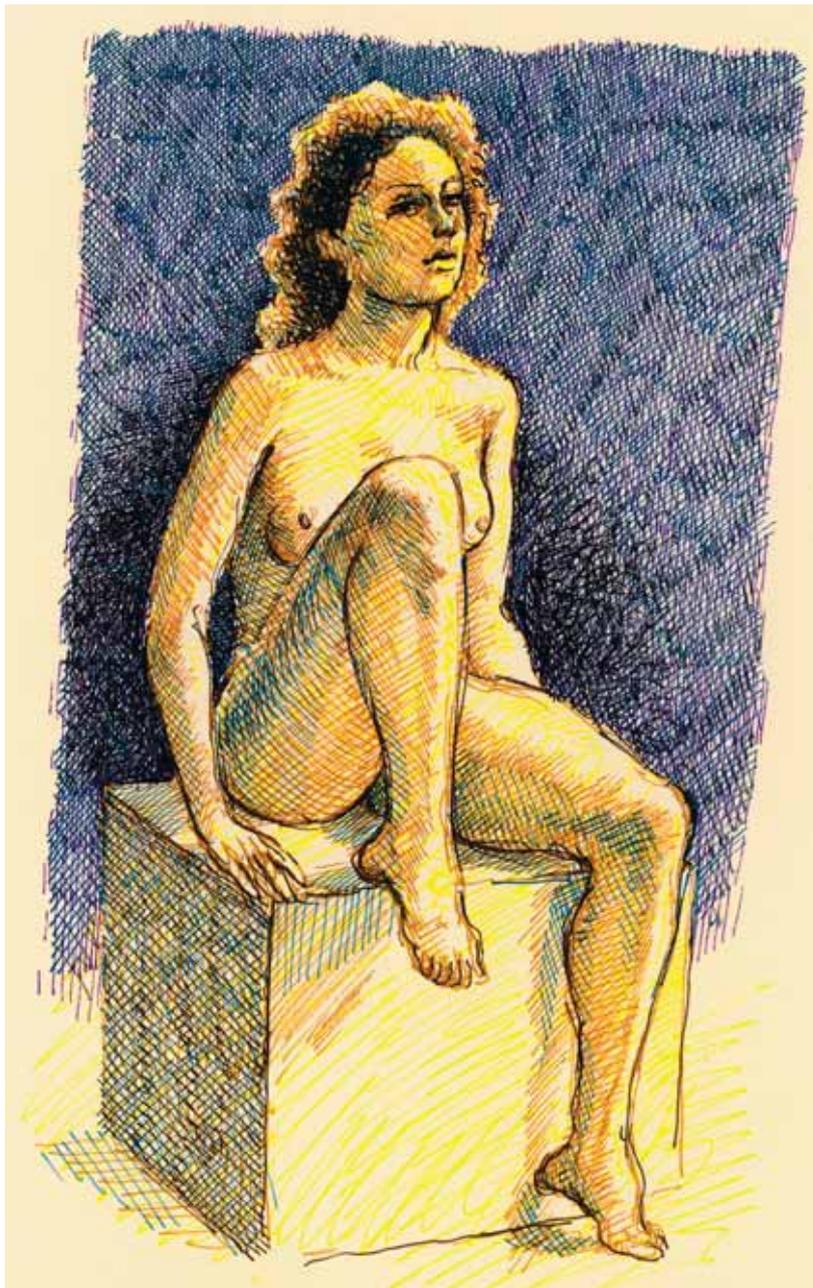
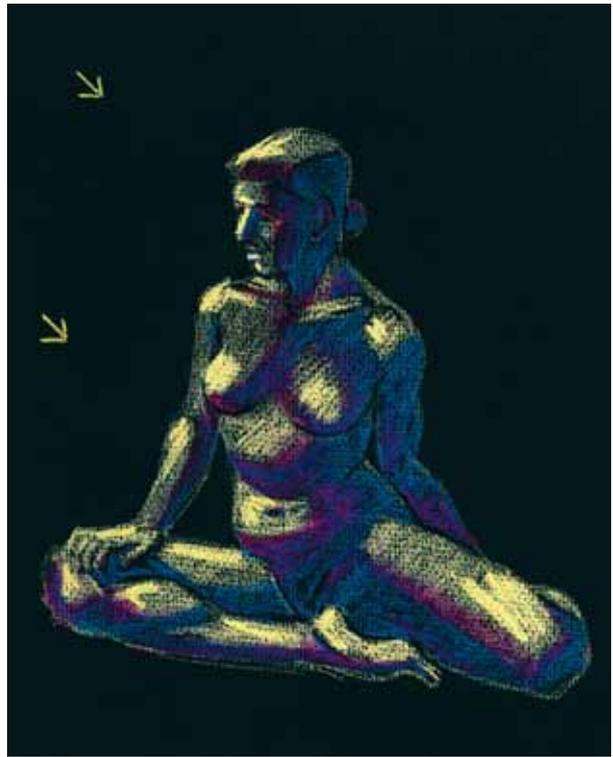


The man is seated, facing the source of light and since he is drawn in coloured pencil, there is no great contrast between the very darkest tone and the very lightest. Note how the shadowed area is mostly in cool blue tones and a warm yellow has been used in the areas where the light is falling on the figure. The numbered patches show the colours used.

## MASTERSTROKES

When drawing the human form, the simple understanding of the geometric shapes and the overall tones are far more important than the details. Without this care in the main shapes and colours, the details won't work to your advantage. So, take immense care with the large, main shapes and colours of the body, and then the details will really take off.

For maximum contrast on the black background, I have used pastels. Note the use of warm and cool colours for the light and dark areas; and to add a touch more warmth to the picture I've put in a rich reddy-purple to prevent the blue from becoming too dominant. When working like this you should do the initial drawing in a single colour first, to establish the overall shape of the figure.



This dark, densely sketched background in deep blues has the effect of throwing the lighter, yellow-toned body forward into relief.

# Colour harmony

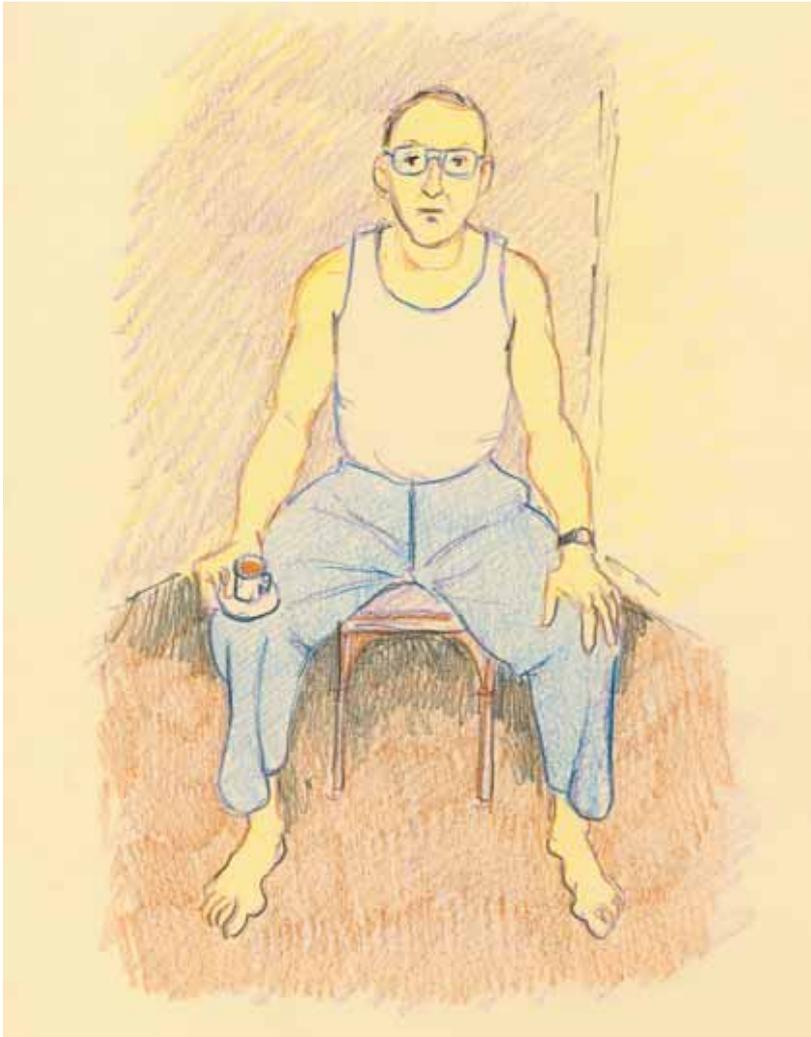
122

THE HUMAN FIGURE

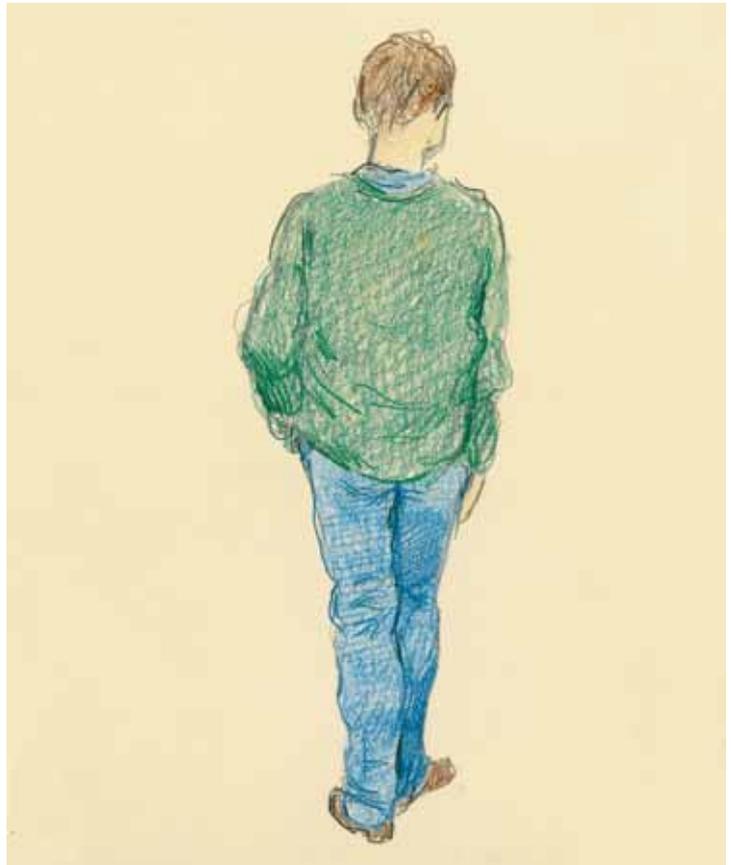
Another way of working out your colours is to keep within the same range, not too diverse from one another. In these pictures we look at colours where there is no great contrast of colour, which produces a rather more subdued effect – one that helps the different colours to harmonize with each other. This effect can give you a rather attractive, low-key picture.

In this example, based on a portrait by James McNeill Whistler, I first flicked in the whole of the figure with a small brush and then, with a large brush, I washed in the entire background in the same colour. When all that had dried, I put in the other colour areas, being careful to avoid too much contrast.





These two figures are done in coloured pencil and, although I've used slightly different techniques in executing them, they are both quite unemphatic in terms of colour tones. The first is drawn in more carefully, using the outlined areas and just filling them with a single tone of colour. The second figure is rather more loosely drawn, and I've thrown on the colour as strongly as I could.



# Limited colour

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THE HUMAN FIGURE

These two drawings do not try to produce any strong colour at all. Quite often you will find that what you draw is subdued in colour naturally, so that in order to make the most of your picture you need to consider the values of tone for creating the same sort of effect as colour.



These two nudes are drawn in different styles but both in the medium of pen and ink. The first is a copy of a Picasso ink drawing and I've tried to follow the method he used, giving a similar emphasis to the line. The second is

drawn more heavily and I've added some colour washes to give a more spatial effect to the figure. The contrast between a simple line drawing and the addition of washes of colour shows how much even limited colour can achieve.



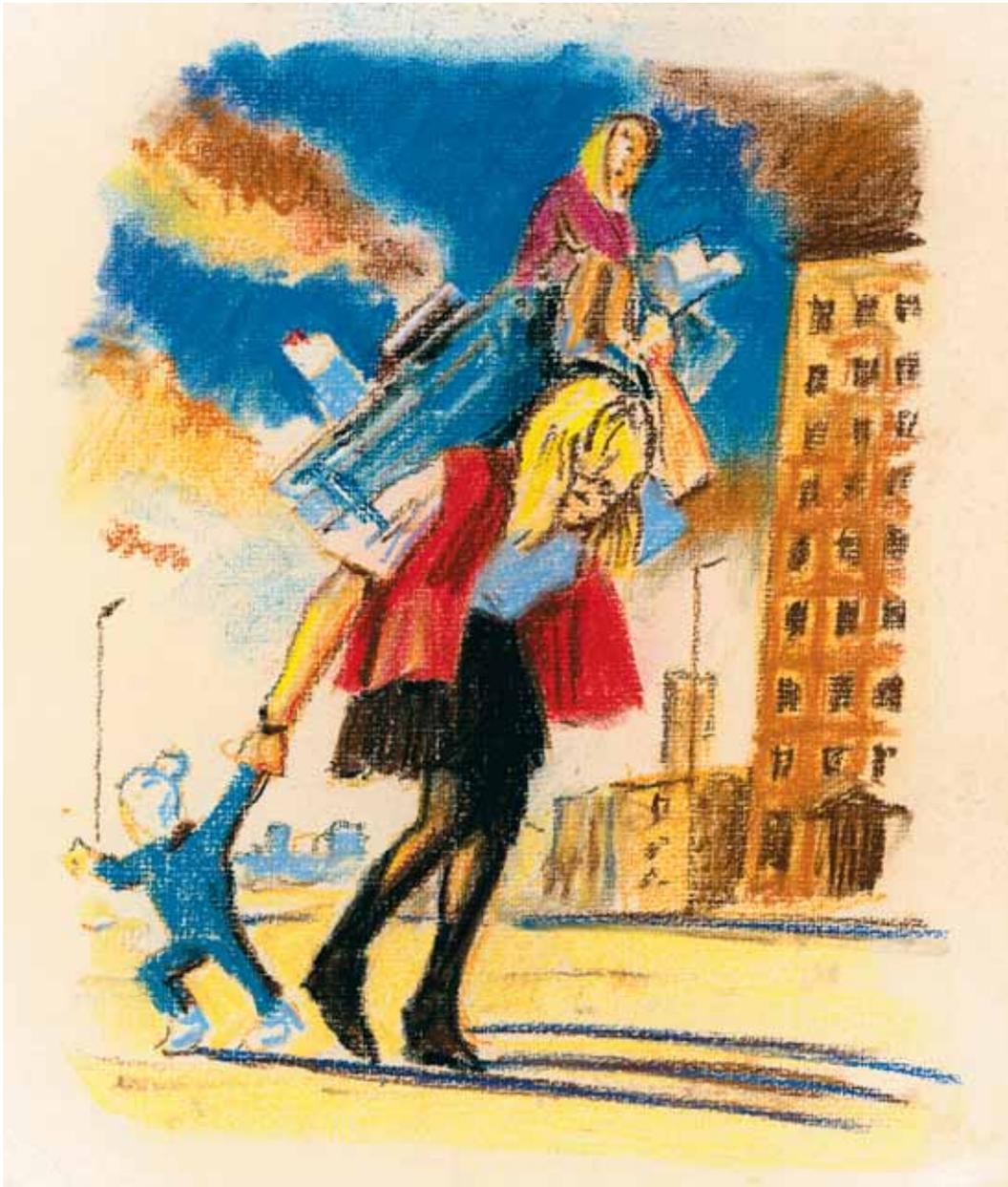
# Colour strength and depth

126

THE HUMAN FIGURE

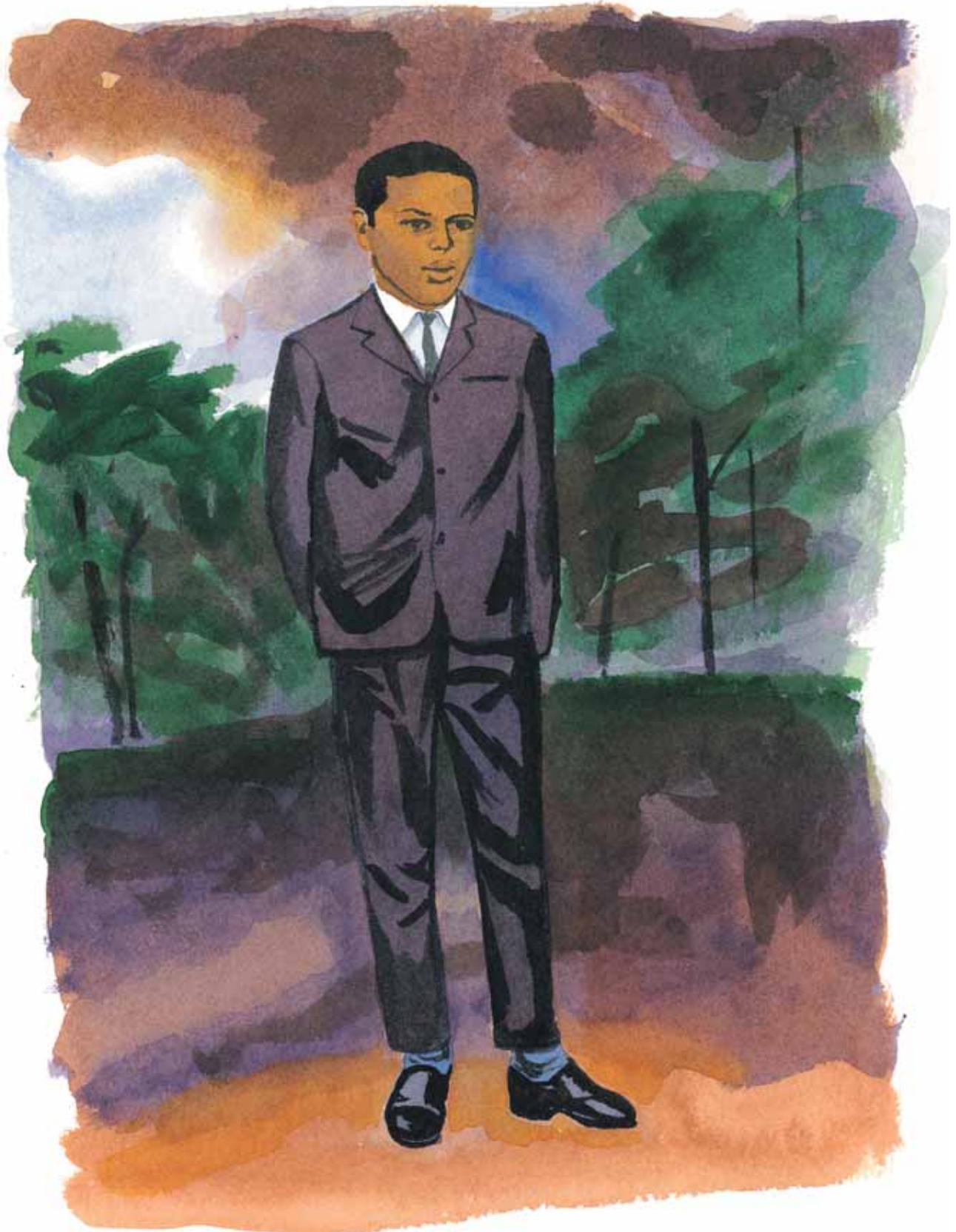
These two drawings show how colour can either jump out of the picture for you or tone into a depth of implied space.

Our first picture is by John Keane, entitled *Fairy Tales of London* (1992) and is a sort of allegory of metropolitan life for a young mother and her family. In my version of the picture, the strong pastel colours are punchy and contrast with each other, making the scene look very hard, sharp and rather unsympathetic. The colours seem somehow to isolate the figures in the urban landscape.



The second drawing shows a young black man wearing a sharp suit and, in a way, he is every bit as urban as the previous figures. However, by placing this dark-suited young man against a dark huddle of trees and a dark ground surface, the contrast is reduced to the sharp patch of his white shirt seen above the high-buttoned jacket.

All the colours work gently together because they build a deep sense of space without isolating the man. The white patch of the shirt is like a small flag calling attention to the elegant figure. This is a painting by the artist Eugene Palmer called *The Brother* (1993), and I have transcribed it fairly freely in watercolour.



# Movement in figures

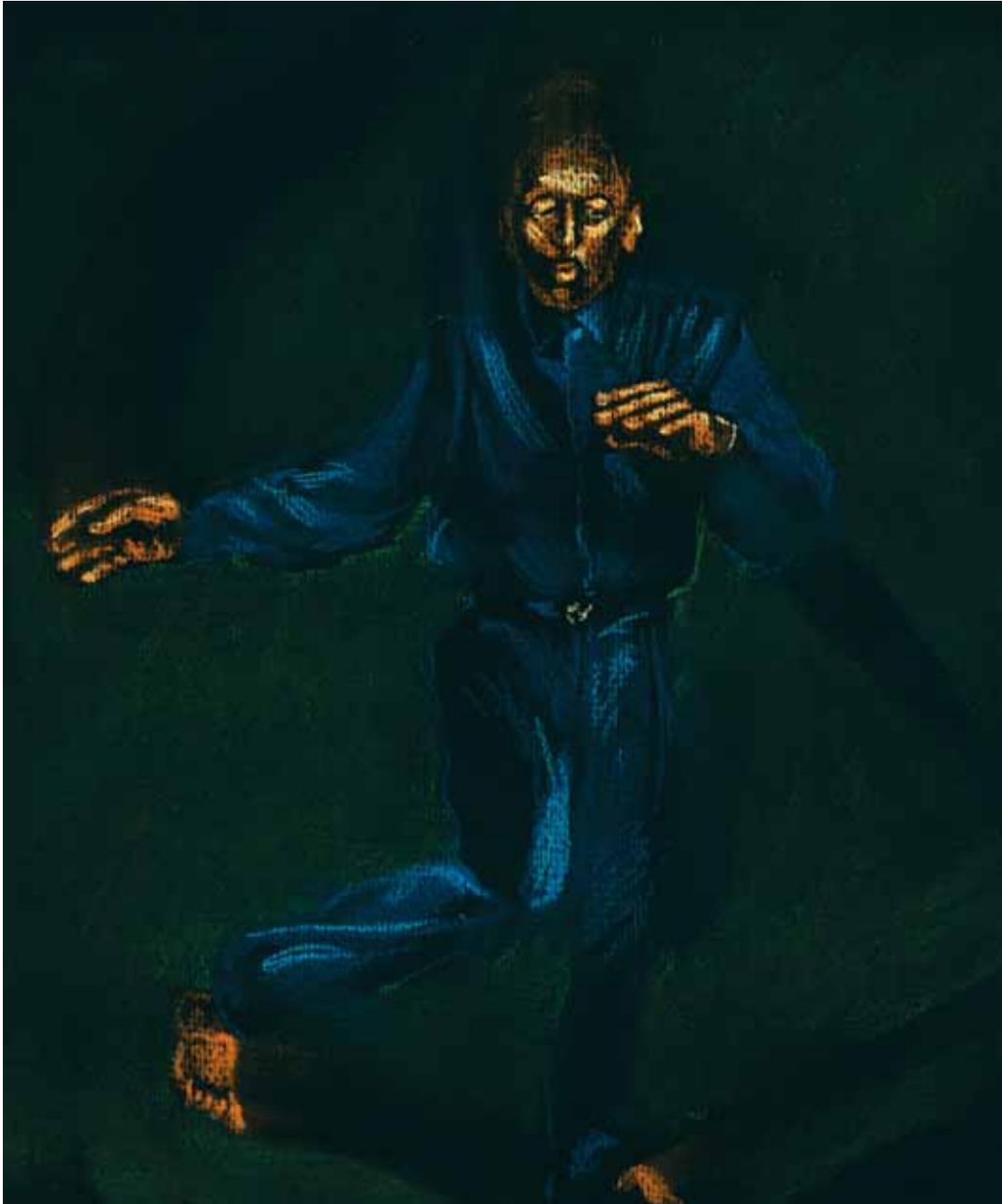
128

THE HUMAN FIGURE

When it comes to reproducing moving figures, there is always the same problem. How much do you show clearly and how much should the drawing be blurred in some way to make it convey movement? The question may be approached in two ways. You can either hope that your drawing is dynamic enough to hold up as a moving image, even if everything in it is crystal sharp and clear, or you can bring in some distortions and fuzzy edges to give an impression of movement, as if you have taken a photograph with a slow shutter speed.

The first picture shows a dancer suspended in mid-air, in the middle of a great leap, and it is obvious enough that this pose could only have been captured by a camera. Clearly the figure is not supported by anything except her own impetus.





The next picture is also a scene captured on film. The movement through the space around the figure can be marked by traces of his hands and feet – blurred by their rapid movements – to show that this is all happening in real time.

So, both solutions work in different ways. Try each of them and decide which one you prefer for use on any particular occasion.

# Foreshortening and perspective with figures

130

THE HUMAN FIGURE

The next two pictures demonstrate what you have to look for when using foreshortening and perspective on the human body. Below are two figures lying down on a surface with their heads towards us and their feet away from us.



The man is lying on his back and his head appears very large in comparison with the rest of his body. Notice how the shoulders, arms and chest are the next biggest part of the body and how the legs appear quite tiny, with the feet sticking up and looking almost too big for the legs.



The second figure – of the girl lying on her front – is similar in proportion but, with her arm stretched out towards the viewer, her hand looks unusually large in comparison with the rest of her body. You will no doubt have noticed that I have used the patterns on their clothes to emphasize the disproportion: the striped pattern on the man's chest and the horizontal stripes on the girl's back are the kind of trick that can help your attempt at this sort of foreshortening.

These next two images demonstrate the same kind of foreshortening, but from the opposite end of the body. Here you see a girl lying on her back with her feet towards you, and subsequently the feet and lower legs appear large, the upper legs and hips less large, and the upper torso and head quite small. The arm extended towards the viewer has a large hand and a much smaller arm in comparison.



The man lying with one knee bent, again seems to have enormous feet, large legs and a reduced upper body and head. Notice how the underside of the chin is prominent in both cases. These drawings were done in ink and wash.



# Details of the body – hands

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THE HUMAN FIGURE

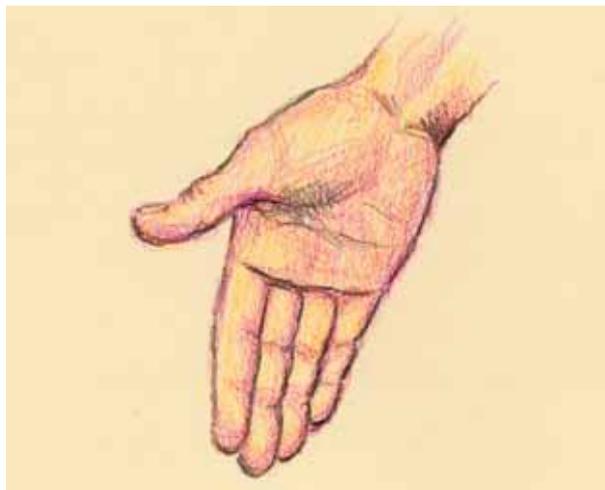
When drawing the figure, it is always necessary at some stage to look at each portion of the body in order to get it really accurate.

Hands are quite complex, and it can take some time before you get proficient enough to be able to draw them easily, but it will come if you persevere.



These two open hands, showing the palm, will be very familiar to us, since they are seen from the viewpoint of the owner. Notice how the movement of the thumb changes the character of the gesture.





1. The open hand with its fingers straightened out looks flat and fin-like.



2. Another fist, obviously masculine, but with the thumb closed around the fingers. When the hand is in a fist, draw the whole shape first, picking out the detail afterwards.



3. Here is a hand in a fist, which has quite a rugged quality about it.



4. This hand is partly closed and partly open, demonstrating the versatility of hands.



5. A gesticulating hand suggests fluidity of movement.



6. A hand extended towards the viewer, relaxed but not totally open. Notice how the outside of the fingers are in shadow and contrast with the palm, which is lit.

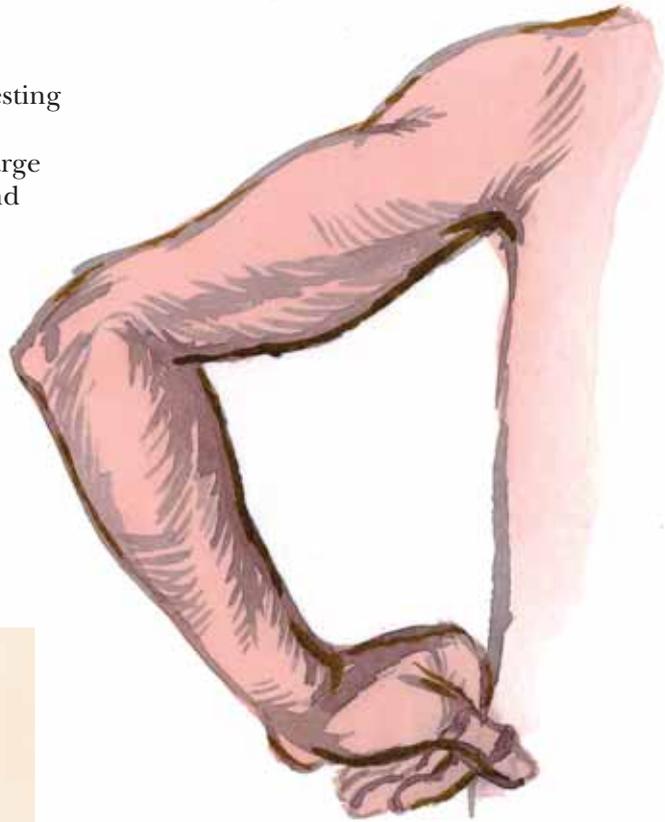
# Details of the body – arms

134

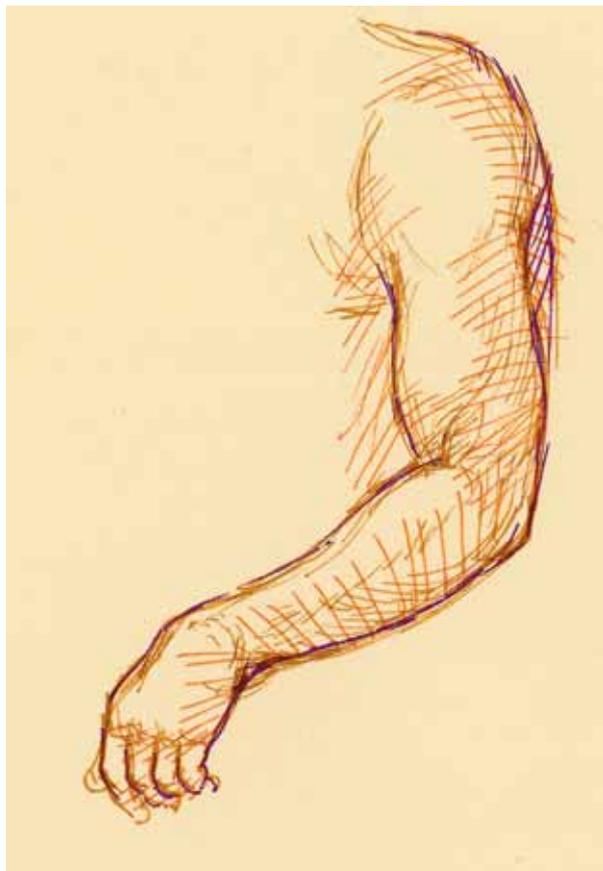
THE HUMAN FIGURE

To draw arms effectively, you need to look at them from every angle. Remember, the arm is larger in section nearer the body and thinner further away, towards the extremities. The only time this appears not to be so is through foreshortening, when a thinner section, such as the wrist, can seem as thick as the bicep, due to the effect of perspective.

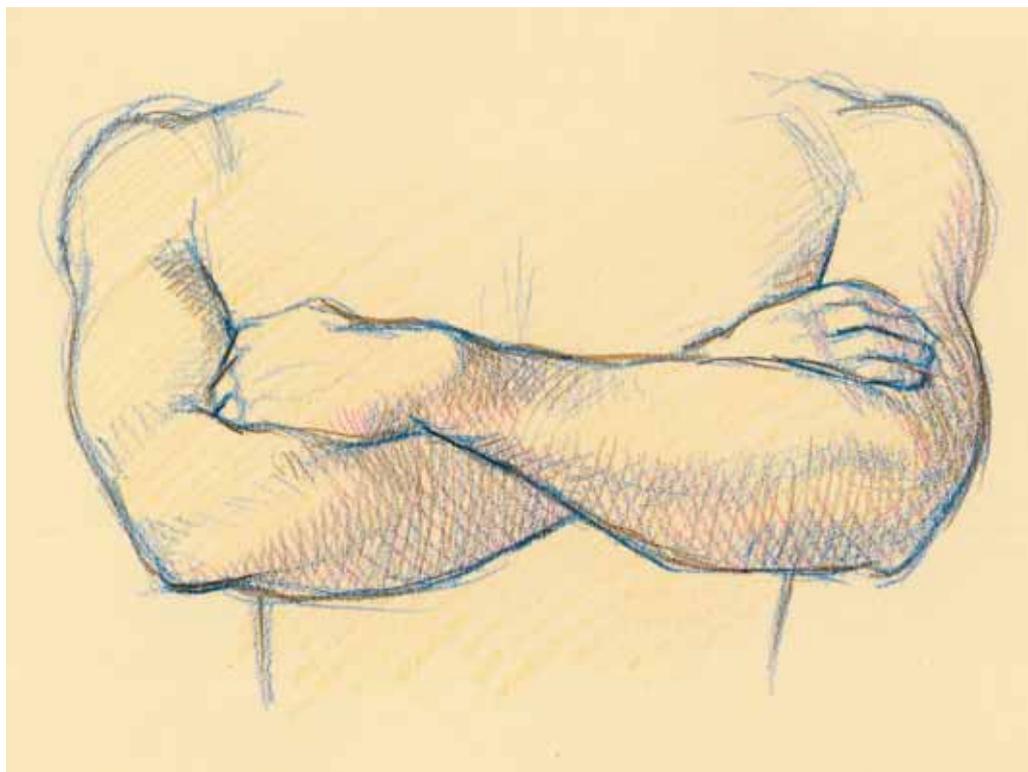
1. This arm with the hand resting on the hip, shows clearly the main shape, including the large muscles in the upper arm and the delicacy of the wrist.



2. With the arm raised and the elbow closer to the viewer, the forearm looks bigger than the upper arm, which is foreshortened.



3. One thing is clear, the arm is larger in section nearer the body and thinner further away, towards the extremities. The only time this appears not to be so is through foreshortening, when a thinner section, such as the wrist, can seem as thick as the bicep, due to the effect of perspective.



4. Study of the joints will help you to create a convincingly lifelike arm. Draw it with a simple outline to start with, then gradually increase the subtle curves to produce the shape of the muscles more accurately.

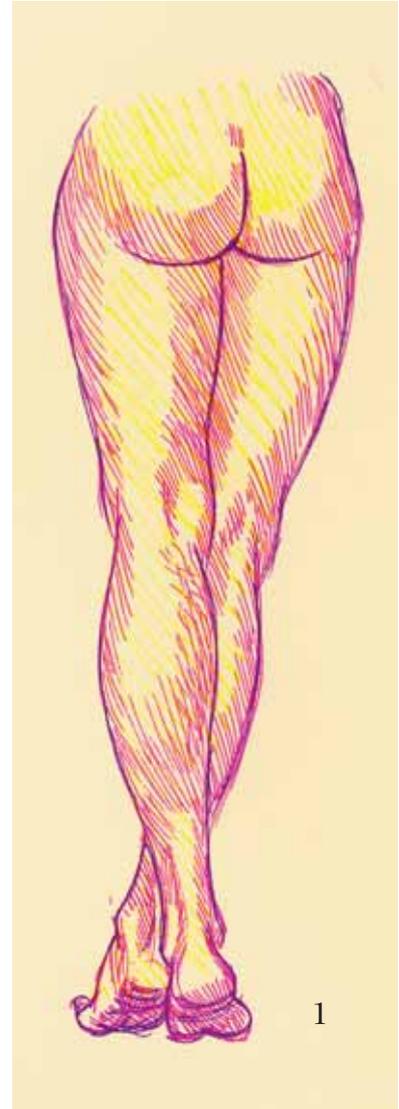
# Details of the body – legs

136

THE HUMAN FIGURE

**These examples of legs in close-up show both the full length view and the legs folded up and bent.**

The back view of a pair of female legs (1), drawn in coloured inks, shows the full stretch of the thigh and calf muscles and gives a good idea of ideal proportions. The other two sets of legs show very clearly the appearance of bent knees – in one case, a large bulky shape (2), and in the other example, the way the two legs curve softly around each other when they are lying across each other (3). Notice how the calf muscle of the upper leg forms itself around the thigh muscle of the one beneath.





3

### *MASTERSTROKES*

Drawing the parts of the human body is never a waste of your artistic time. It will teach you more about drawing than any other kind of drawing that you can think of. It is at one and the same time the most difficult and the most satisfying exercise and will help you to become an efficient draughtsman quicker than any other kind of work.

# Details of the body – feet

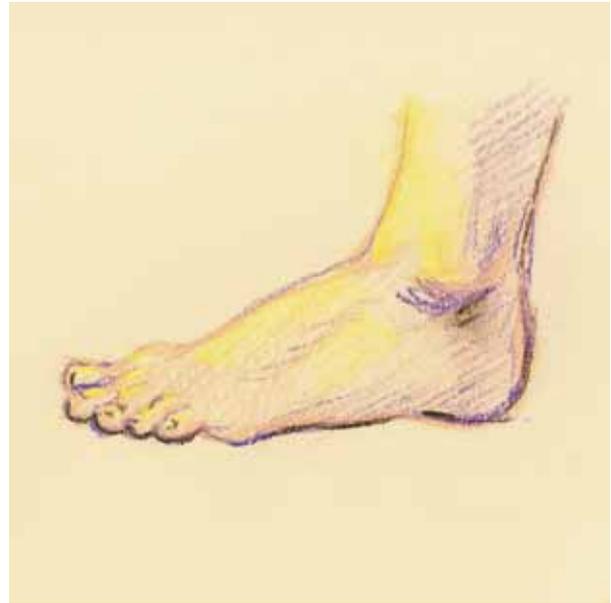
138

THE HUMAN FIGURE

These examples of feet, seen from the front, side, underneath and from three-quarter view, provide a lot of information as to their structure. They have been drawn in pen and ink, in pastel, in coloured pencils and in brush and watercolour. Feet are probably the most simple of all the details of the body and it doesn't take long to familiarize yourself with them. Try drawing your own hands, feet and legs in a mirror or directly; the practice is always valuable.



1. The most difficult view is from the front where everything is foreshortened.



2. A straight side-on view shows the typical foot shape that we all recognize.



3. The foot seen from below is unusual and needs a bit of study to get it right. But it is not too complex.



4. Feet arched and up on their toes are not too difficult except when seen from the front.



5. A foot coming down as if walking, shows how the toes lift up to help the action.



6. The typical shape of the foot of someone standing in front of you is seen here from the three-quarter view. Note how the flatter part of the foot connects with the ankle joint.

# Step by step figure drawing

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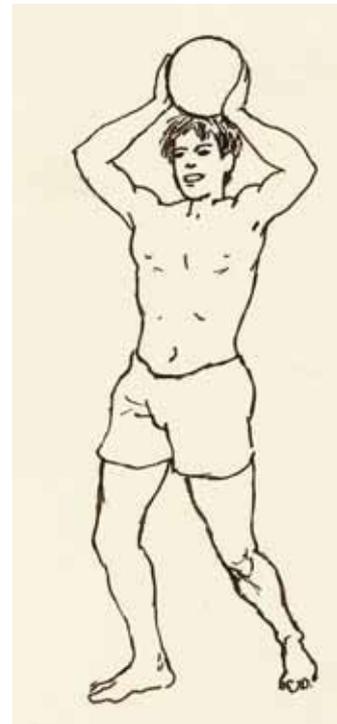
THE HUMAN FIGURE

When you come to produce a picture with a number of figures in it, you will need to have some sort of theme or idea about how they are all going to fit together into the scene. It could be totally abstract in that it would only be a group of figures arranged in a format with no particular reason for being there. But usually there is more fun in choosing a theme to put your figures together in a more natural and narrative way.

**1** I chose as an easy option the perennial holiday beach scene, which most of us have had some experience of, and which shows off the human figure to some advantage. So I drew a young woman sitting as if on the beach, then a male companion lounging with his hand up as if calling to someone.



**2** Then I added the classic bathing beauty, kneeling up and applying sun-tan lotion.



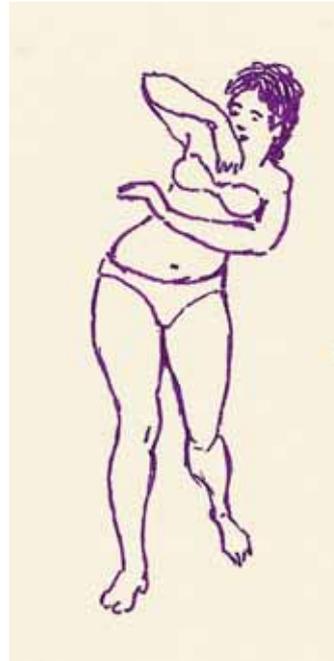
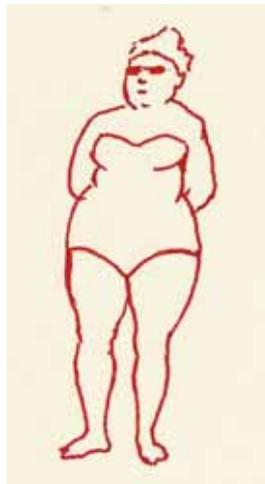
**3** Another character was an older man with a bath towel, looking somewhat uncertain.

**4** I next added a young man with a beach ball, which he appears about to throw.



**5** A youth with a small bucket, from which he is throwing water.

**7** And finally a middle-aged woman with dark glasses, just standing. All these figures are in their swimming costumes so we have a classic scene of bodies almost in their natural state in a familiar situation.



**6** Another girl next, looking as though she is being splashed.

**8** Now you have to set the scene. First the sea, making a nice broad horizon across the middle of the picture. A bit of rocky cliff to one side and then an island and some yachts on the horizon. The beach is divided into a lower part near the sea and a higher part closer to the observer. On the lower part is a deck chair and a large bag. On the higher level are placed two beach towels, one of which has a large umbrella or sunshade planted near it. By the towel without the sunshade are a sunhat and an open book.



# Step by step figure drawing

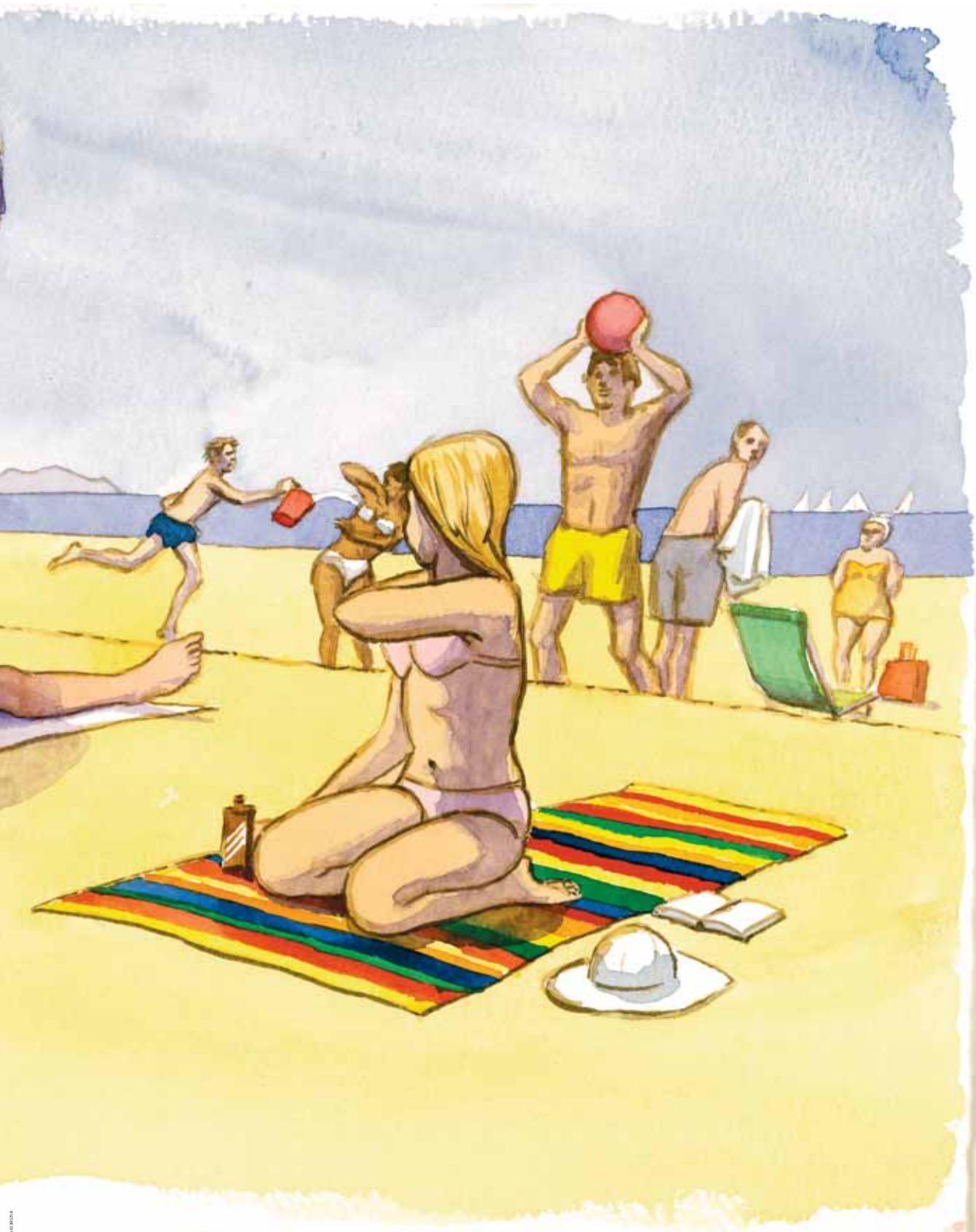
continued

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THE HUMAN FIGURE

**9** Next you have to place the figures into the scene. The first thing was to put the couple together on the towel with the sunshade on the left side of the picture. On the other beach towel, which is strongly coloured, I placed the young woman. She has no need for the shade as she is building up her tan, and she has a sunhat to keep off the hottest sun. Behind her I set the young man with the beach ball so that the lounging man appears to be calling to him. Behind him is the uncertain man wondering what is going on, and the middle-aged woman who is probably waiting for him to move the deckchair closer towards her. In the space between the three in the foreground I put the youth throwing the water and the young woman reacting to that. And so you now have a beach scene with a logical enough story to give it credence that it actually happened. Needless to say, all these figures have been observed by me at some time or another, and it was only a matter of remembering what they had looked like in order to draw them. But if you are contemplating a scene like this it would not go amiss for you to draw some people in that situation first or even take some photographs of such poses.





# Portraits

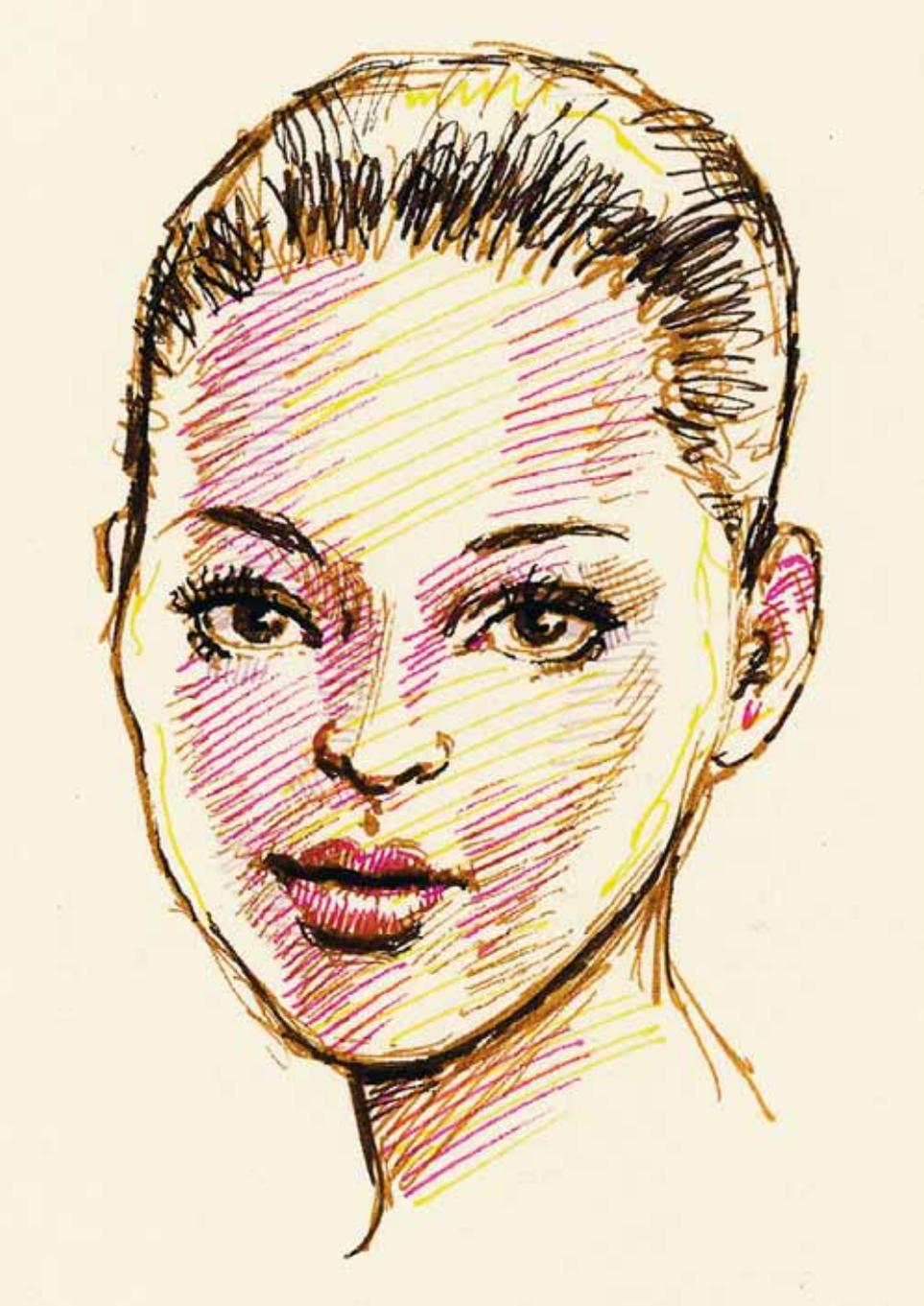
Portrait drawing is frequently the type of drawing that people would most like to be able to do, so that they can make reasonable likenesses of their friends and relatives. The first important thing is to understand the structure of the head. Without attention to its general shape, you will not be able to make a very convincing portrait, or even a caricature. When people start drawing the human head there is a tendency to concentrate on the face of the sitter, and it is often drawn larger in scale than the overall size of the head. This is natural enough, but something you will have to correct for the future.

Start practising either from life, which is the most effective way, or from clear photographs. Gradually you will become accustomed to the relative shape of any head and then, even if you still don't quite capture the likeness, at least you will have a head that looks as though it belongs to a real person.

When it comes to tonal values in the portrait, you may well find that the colour of the human face is not always uniform. If a person has quite dramatic changes of colour in their facial features, you could be tempted to put them in very strongly. However, this could reduce the structural composition, turning it into a caricature of the real person. In order to avoid this, grade your colour gradually from one part of the face to the next and the result will look more natural.

Then, of course, you will need to look at the various features of the face, until you know how to draw them from any angle. What identifies a face as belonging to a specific person is the particular arrangement of the features and their relationship to each other. So, carefully consider the arrangement of your sitter's features, even if you have to measure them to make sure that you have the right proportions. Interestingly, the features of most faces are very similar to each other in terms of measurements. However, there are lots of small distinctions of shape and form that will make all the difference when you come to draw. Our eyes are so accustomed to scanning faces that they discern even the tiniest differences between one face and another.

Don't neglect to study every face that you see. It always stands a portrait artist in good stead.



# Proportions of the head

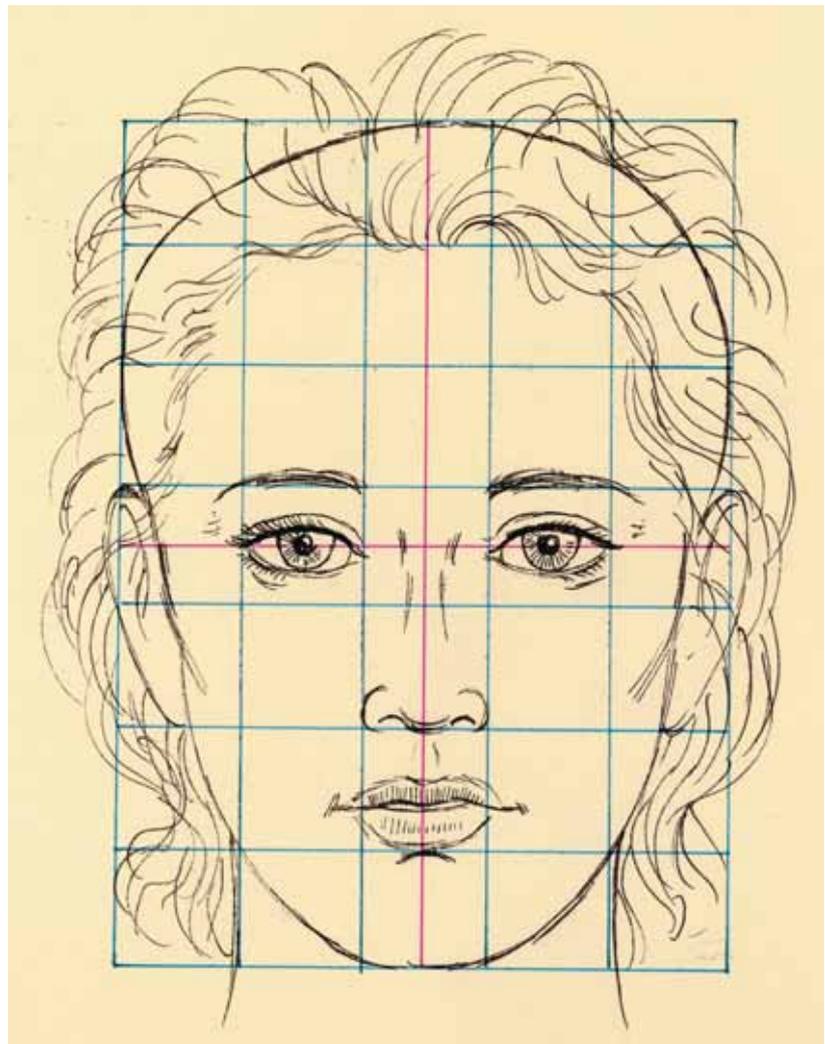
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PORTRAITS

These two diagrams of the average adult human head are to help you become familiar with the general proportions. In the first, I have drawn the female head full on from the front with the head upright and directly facing me. The male head, usually larger-boned, has exactly the same proportions.

Vertical readings of the profile face:

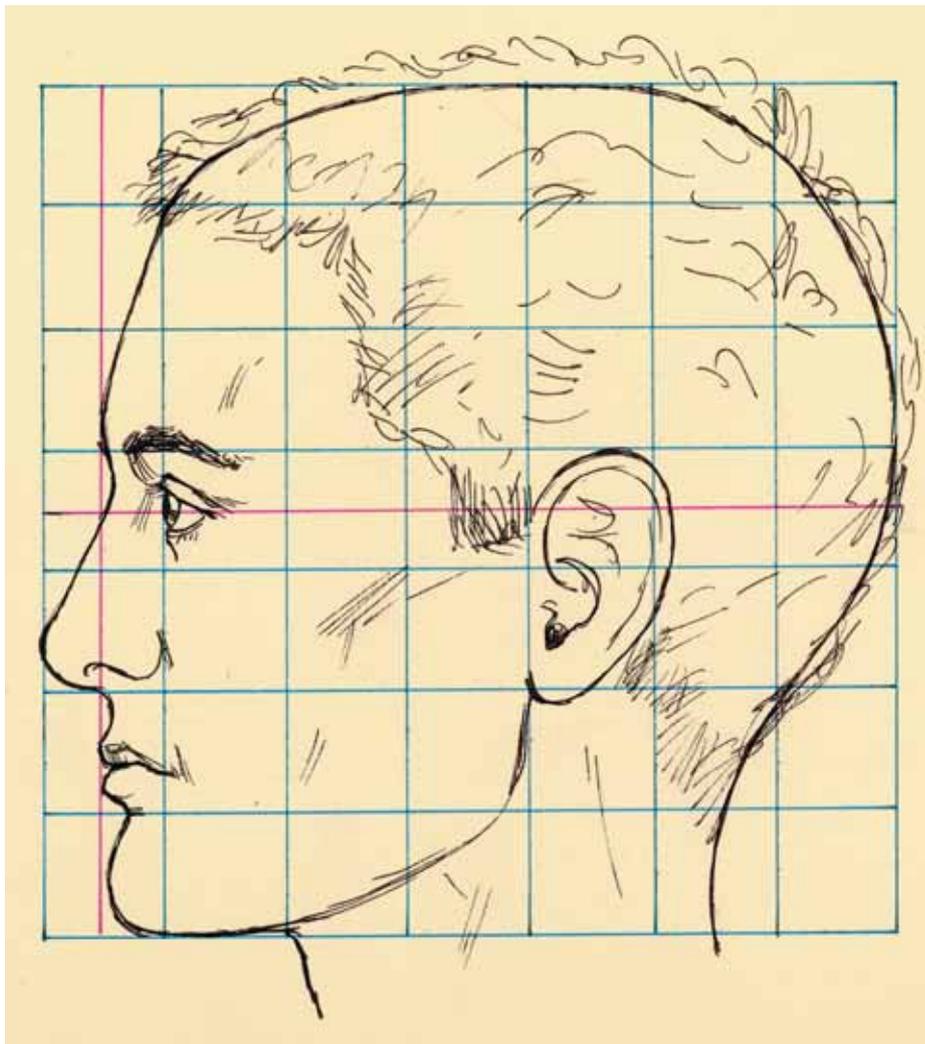
1. The length of the eye from corner to corner is exactly one fifth of the overall width of the face, viewed full on.
2. The space between the eyes is one unit, or the same as the length of the eye from corner to corner.
3. The widest part of the head is about two units from the top of the head.
4. The nose extends over two vertical units, three units from the top of the head and two units from the bottom.
5. The eyes are situated halfway down the head. Nobody believes this at first but it is so – we only see the face and usually ignore the top of the head, which is usually covered in hair.
6. The hairline at the front is one unit down from the top.
7. The nose is one and a half units from eye level to the base of the nostrils.
8. The bottom of the lower lip is one unit up from the base



of the chin. This should help you get the position of the mouth right, because it is not halfway between the base of the nose and the chin.

9. The length of the ears is two units, the tops are level with the eyebrows and the lobes align with the base of the nose.

The basic proportion is five units across the width and seven units down the length of the head. Note the central line running the length of the face, passing between the eyes, straight down the nose, bisecting the mouth and the finally, the chin.



Horizontal readings of the profile face:

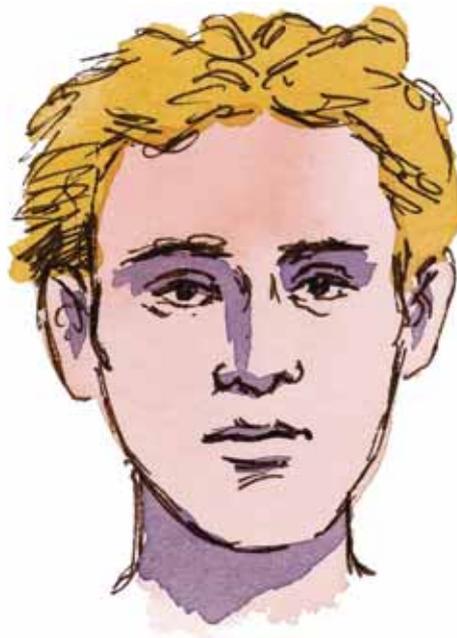
1. In profile, the head is seven units wide and seven units long, including the nose.
2. The front of the eye is one unit in from the point of the nose.
3. The ear is one unit wide and two units in length. Its front edge is four units from the point of the nose or three units from the back of the head.
4. The nose projects half a unit out from the front of the skull.
5. Remember, even if there is a difference in the size of adult heads, there is no significant difference in proportion.
6. Having said that, the proportions of children's heads are different from those of adults and they vary from age to age.

# Heads from all angles

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PORTRAITS

We generally use the frontal view of the face as the easiest way to get a good likeness and it is probably the best view for your first attempt at drawing the head. It shows you the eyes and mouth at their most recognizable, however, it is not the easiest way to draw the nose. Nor is it necessarily the most interesting method for portrait purposes.



The profile is straightforward enough to draw in most parts, although some people have difficulty with the eyes at this angle.



The most favoured viewpoint is from the three-quarter view, where you can draw the shape of the nose more clearly and still see the main area of the full face. However, you do need to look very carefully at the shape of the far eye and also the shape of the far side of the mouth.



There are two other ways that you can portray the face without losing the recognition. The first is from slightly below, as if the head is tilted backwards. This gives a rather cool look to the face and even a rather haughty expression.

With the head tilted forward, the look tends towards quizzical or even defensive. But both of these viewpoints can work if you are confident in getting the likeness.



# Stages of a portrait

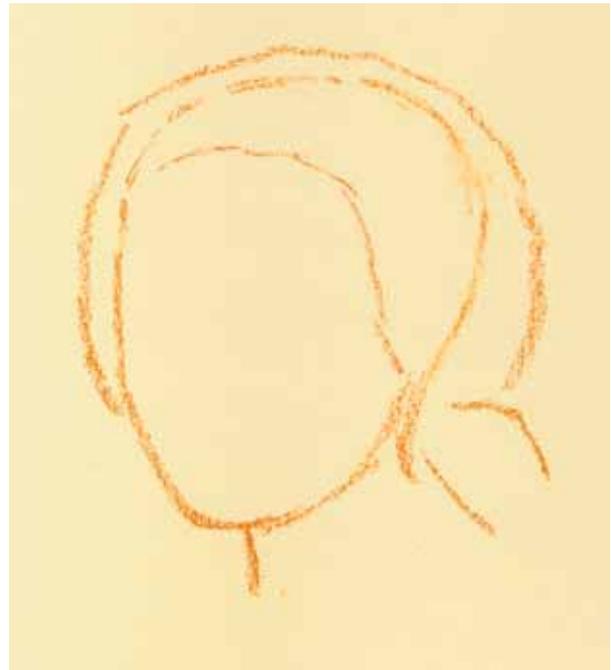
150

PORTRAITS

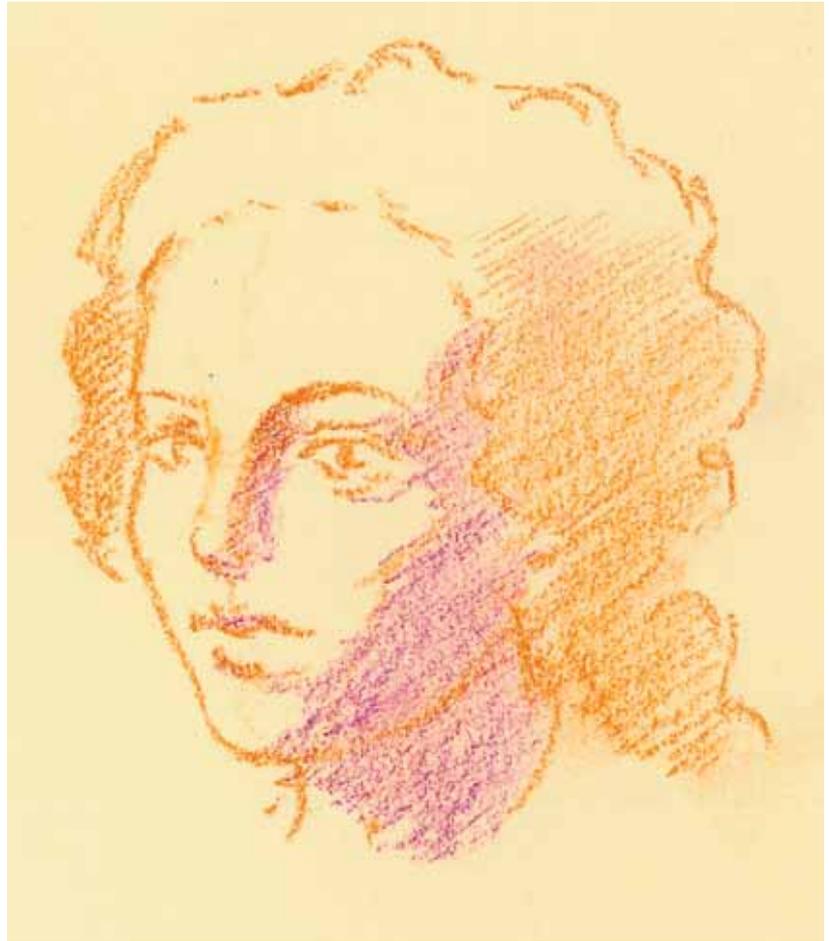
The basic shape of the head is the thing you have to start with in your portrait. Make sure that the skull structure is correct and that it sits on the neck in the right way. Take great care at this stage because it makes your task so much easier later on.

**1** Next, look at the outline of the hair in relation to the head and sketch this in very simply as one shape. This is more important when the hair is long.

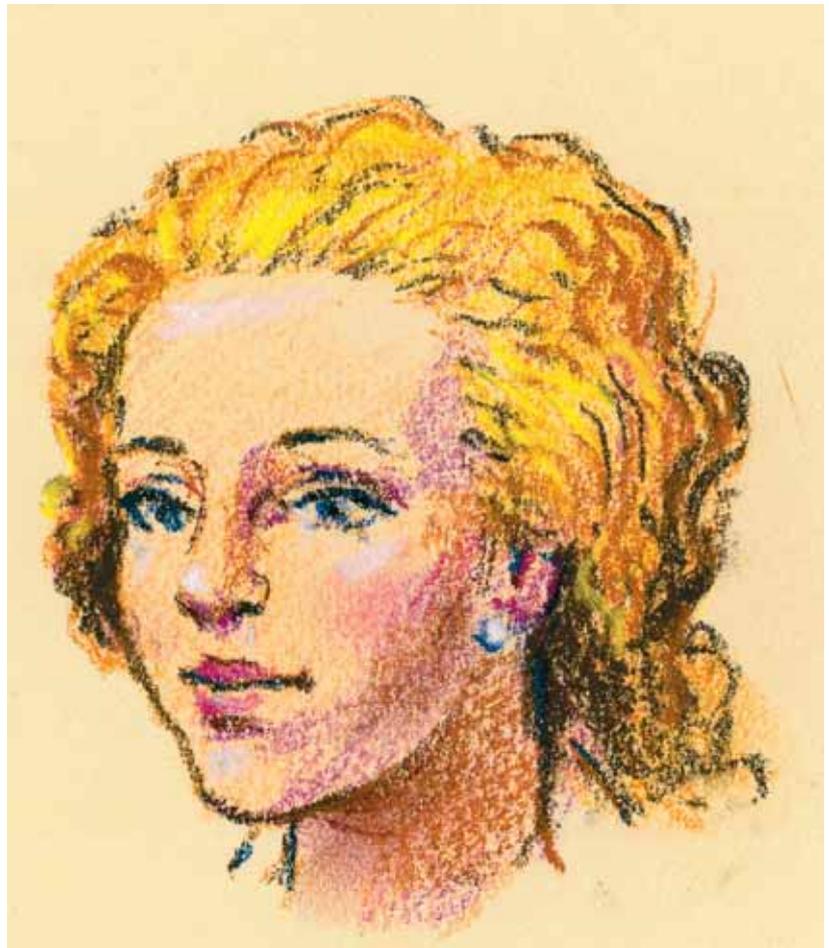
**2** Now mark out the positions of the eyes, the nose and the mouth so that they are in the correct relationship to each other, then draw in the shapes of each of the features, getting their shapes right and their size correct in relation to the rest of the head.



**3** After all this, you will need to start blocking in the colour, beginning with all the areas of shade on the head. Use a neutral colour and maybe a different colour for the hair.



**4** Then block in the rest of the colours, lightest first, followed by the darker ones, until you have gone as dark in tone as you need. Don't use black until right at the end and then only the least you can get away with. It is so strong that you have to be very careful how much you use.

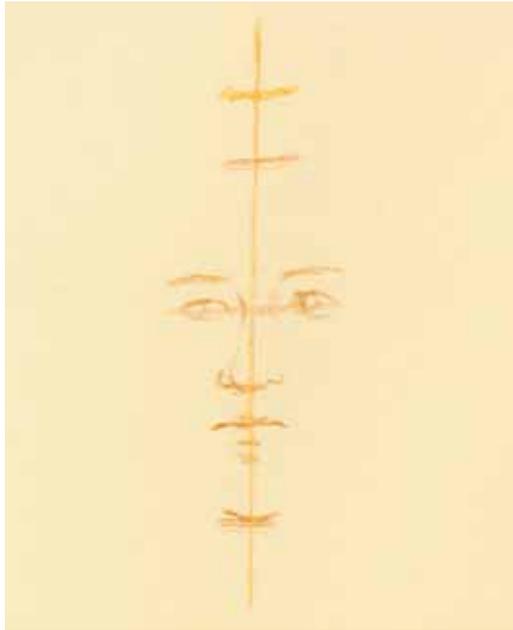


# An alternative approach to drawing the head

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PORTRAITS

This alternative approach to drawing the head is one used by many portrait painters, and it works just as well.



**1** First, you draw a vertical line to represent the length of the head from the top to the chin and then carefully mark on it the positions of the eyes, which should be halfway down.

**2** Draw in – very simply – the shapes of the eyes in their relative positions.

A mark halfway between where the eyes are and the bottom mark, which is the chin, will give you the position of the nose. Draw it in as near as possible to the shape you can see.

The position of the mouth is to be marked in next, and here you will have to be more careful. Do you remember that the lower lip is one seventh of the way from the bottom of the chin? Don't put it halfway between the nose and the chin as it will be too far away from the nose, if you do.

**3** The next part is very important. First draw in the shapes of the eyes and the mouth and the nose very carefully. Notice how, in the three-quarter view, the far eye and the far side of the mouth are slightly shorter in shape than the near side.

Next draw in the eyebrows. Again the far eyebrow is shorter than the nearer one.

When you do the nose, the shadow side can be put in, too, because that helps to define the character of the nose more clearly. It is worth taking the trouble to get all these shapes right.

The next thing is to put in the ear that you can see from this point of view. Lengthwise, it is situated between the eyebrow at the top and the end of the nose at the bottom. Check the distance between the outside edge of the nearest eye and the front edge of the ear, relating its distance to that of the length of the nose. Then draw in the shape.



**4** Now shape the mouth.

The half of the mouth on the far side of the face will be shorter than the half on the near side. The centre of the mouth should be immediately below the centre of the nose.

Then draw in the point of the chin.

Now complete the whole shape of the head, carefully observing the shapes.

**5** Finally, treat all the areas of shading fairly lightly at first and then block

in the other colours, starting with the lightest first and ending with the darkest. If you want the face to look brighter, give it a darker background colour.



# Expressions

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PORTRAITS

When you begin to draw portraits, you may find after a few minutes of posing that people's faces tend to adopt a fixed stare and often a rather bored expression. This is why, in previous times, professional portrait painters used to employ musicians to keep their sitters amused, so that they would not find the business too tedious. Some painters rely on their talent for interesting conversation to keep their sitters lively, but you can see how that might be difficult. So, one thing you can do is to get your sitters to try out various expressions, in order to keep them awake and enjoying the experience of sitting for their portrait.

Facial expressions may be a bit difficult to keep for any length of time, but it is worth trying to get a few down on paper for your own enjoyment, and in order to learn from them.

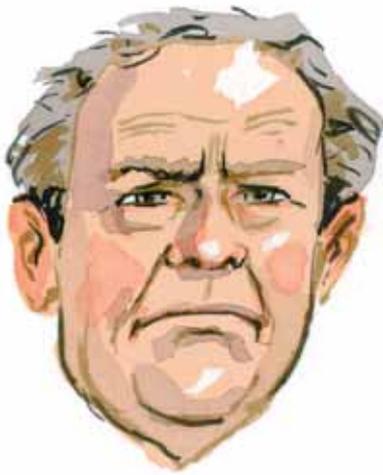
Here I show a range of basic expressions:

The first is laughter or happiness – some people seem to find it quite easy to keep a big smile on their face long enough for you to draw it.



The next is a smile or a look of serenity which might be what Leonardo da Vinci was trying to capture in the portrait of the *Mona Lisa*.





The next is either angry or grumpy, depending a bit on the intensity.



This one should be easy enough – just bore your sitter by telling him feeble jokes or relating in detail how hard it was to park your car.



This one is surprise, although it could become that far-away expression you sometimes fall into when contemplating your next holiday, for instance.



And the last one is a seductive sort of look that works best of course if you look like a filmstar of the more beautiful kind.

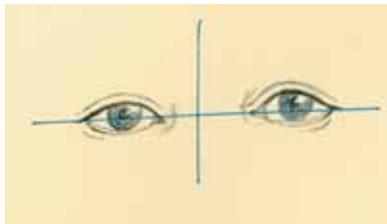
Do try out some more, depending on your sitter's acting ability.

# Facial features

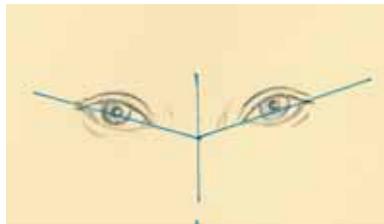
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PORTRAITS

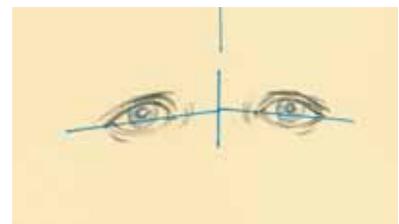
Here are things to look for when you are making a preliminary study of the sitter's face before you start to draw it. It is these little details that are going to make the difference between the portrait looking like the sitter or not.



1. First the eyes, because they are the most dominant part of the human physiognomy. Check whether they are level from corner to corner.

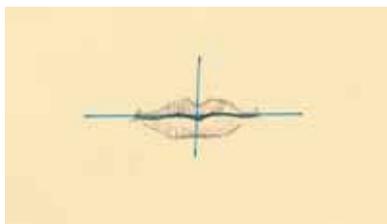
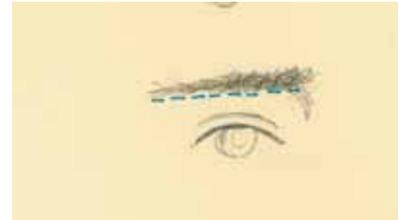


Are they angled so that the outside corners are tilted upwards?

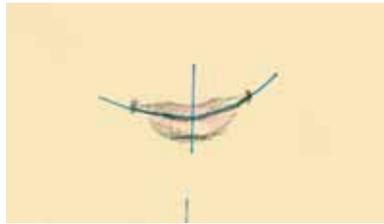


Or are they the opposite, and tilting downwards at the outside corners?

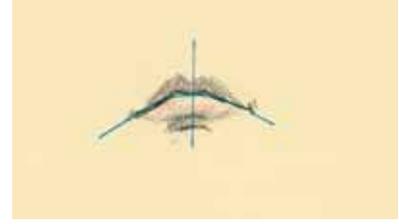
2. Then look at the eyebrows. Are they straight or arched? It makes quite a difference to the look of the face.



3. Now look at the mouth. Mouths can be straight along the line of the join of the lips.

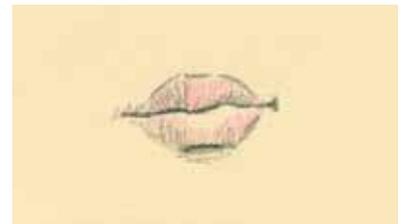


Or they can be curved up at the corners.

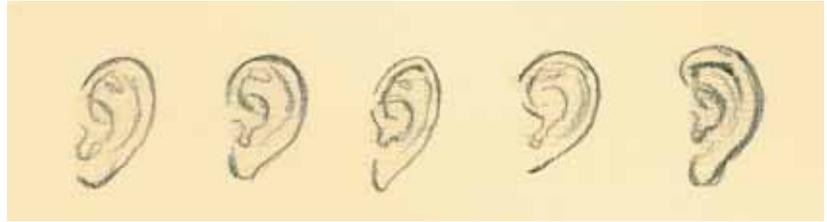


Or they can turn downwards at the corners.

4. Not only that, the lips can be thick or thin and, again, this will affect the look of the face.



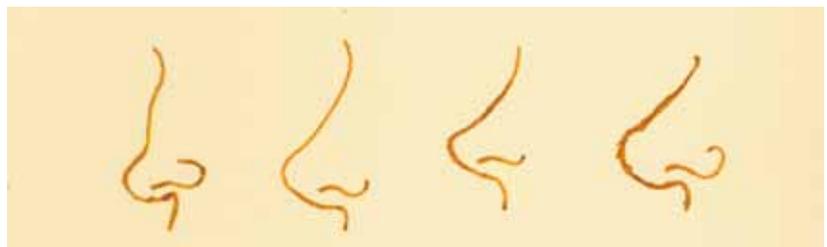
5. Ears are less noticeable unless they stick out very obviously but, as you can see here with our very small collection, ears do vary quite a bit.



6. Then there is the hairline. This can vary too, but the most obvious feature is whether it forms an even line or a wavy one; and a widow's peak is the most distinctive form of all.



7. When it comes to noses, you can see an amazing variety of shapes and sizes. Look carefully and draw well.



# Features in more detail

You will have noticed the formation of the average eye is not quite as you may have imagined before you began drawing the human face. The iris, that is the coloured part, features quite large in the centre of the eye and yet is hardly ever seen completely. Normally, what you see is a part of the iris hidden under the top eyelid, and the bottom edge of the iris just touching the bottom lid.

Now we will look at these features in closer detail and note some of the things you are sure to come across, if you learn to look carefully enough.



1. The lower eyelid shows its thickness, whereas the thickness of the upper lid is usually hidden by the eyelashes.



2. Seen from the side, the shape of the eye changes dramatically, and is more obviously a ball held behind the lids. You can actually see the bulge of the lens on the front of the eyeball.

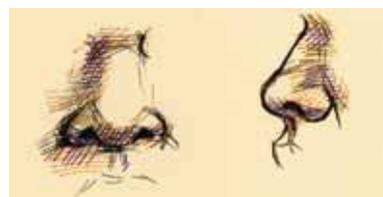
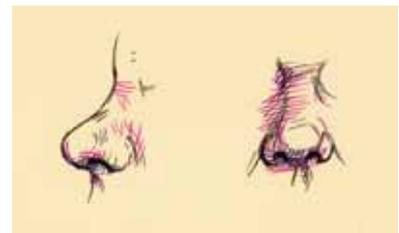


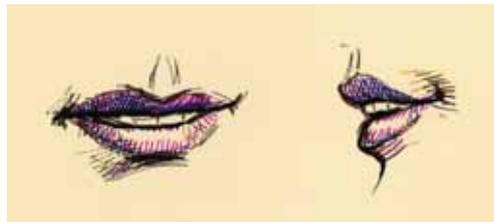
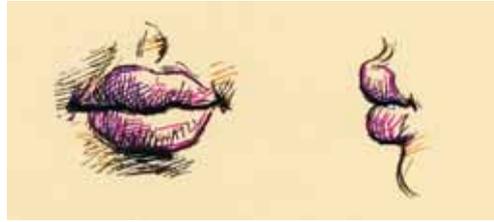
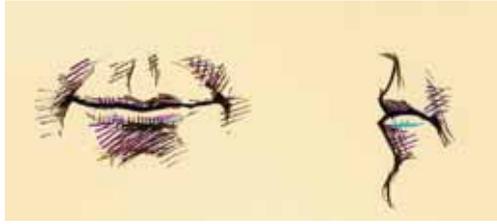
3. Then there are eyes with very heavy or drooping eyelids. In an older person, as here, the iris retreats further under the upper eyelid and does not quite touch the lower one.



4. In Oriental eyes the top lid is obscured altogether, which has the effect of simplifying the shape of the eye and, incidentally, making it smoother to draw.

5. Noses are much easier to draw in profile, as these examples show. When drawing from the front, ascertain the shape by observing the shadows cast by the projection. From these three examples, you will see that because it casts a larger shadow, the beaky or aquiline shape shows more clearly than either the retroussé or the straight nose.

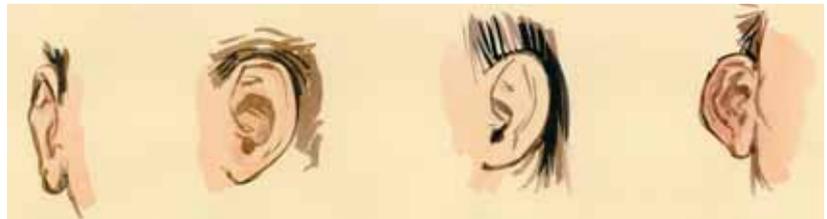




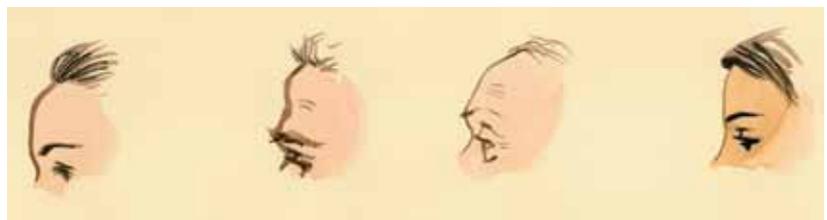
6. With mouths, the difference between the front and the profile view of them is radical. Seen from the front, all these lips are easy enough to draw, but from the side you begin to see that the most important part of the mouth is where it opens. It does mean that when you draw the mouth, that part where the two lips meet is all important for giving the right effect to convince your viewer. With the smiling mouth the real problem is whether you should, or should not, emphasize the teeth. If you overdo it they can look quite grotesque, so go carefully.

Ears, foreheads and chins can show just as much variation as noses, mouths and eyes. Study them carefully and work on building up a good bank of them in your reference sketchbooks.

7. Here are some examples of ears from the front and side.



8. And there are examples of foreheads, too, which as you can see are just as varied, although it's a feature that doesn't immediately grasp your attention.



9. Finally, we have some examples of chins, seen from the side. Most chins are either in line with the forehead or slightly behind it. However, some project further forward than the forehead.



# Poses, or how to place your sitter

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PORTRAITS

There's an infinite variety of poses that can be adopted for portraits, but eventually you have to rely on your sitter being able to adopt the position that you feel would be the best. What I am suggesting are a few poses that might be used, but you will no doubt find many others.

1.



1. The first is the most straightforward, someone sitting upright in a chair directly facing you. It's not very imaginative but may be used to show an uncompromising attitude, which might suit certain sitters.

2. The second is the relaxed pose of someone lying across a settee or sofa. A good horizontal shape that can look both elegant and casual.

2.



3.



3. The third position is difficult to obtain, because you have to be above the sitter and it relies on you having a higher level to work from. However, it is quite distinctive and so could create a lot of interest.

4. Next I show the sort of natural pose that anyone might take up, and these kind of positions do give a natural quality to the portrait.

5. The fifth one is much the easiest pose for the sitter to adopt, as long as you don't expect him or her to keep their arms above their head for too long.



6. This pose is rather stylised, reminiscent of those eighteenth- or nineteenth-century aristocratic figures.

7. This example shows one of the most natural positions for a portrait, where the sitter is dressed in their best clothes and enthroned in a chair. A sort of party piece.



8 a, b and c. You might consider whether you want a rich decorative element to your portrait or, conversely, a very plain, unadorned image. This will depend on your sitter, and you have to try to match the character of their personality with the way you portray them (a). You might decide that you need a little drama in the pose of the sitter, and here I show one in which the

subject of the portrait is reflected in a mirror, standing by a mantelpiece, as in James McNeill Whistler's *Symphony in White, No. 2: The Little White Girl* (b). Or you might want to refer to the particular abilities of your sitter, as in this example, based on the portrait of Charles Dickens at his desk (c).



8 a.

8 b.

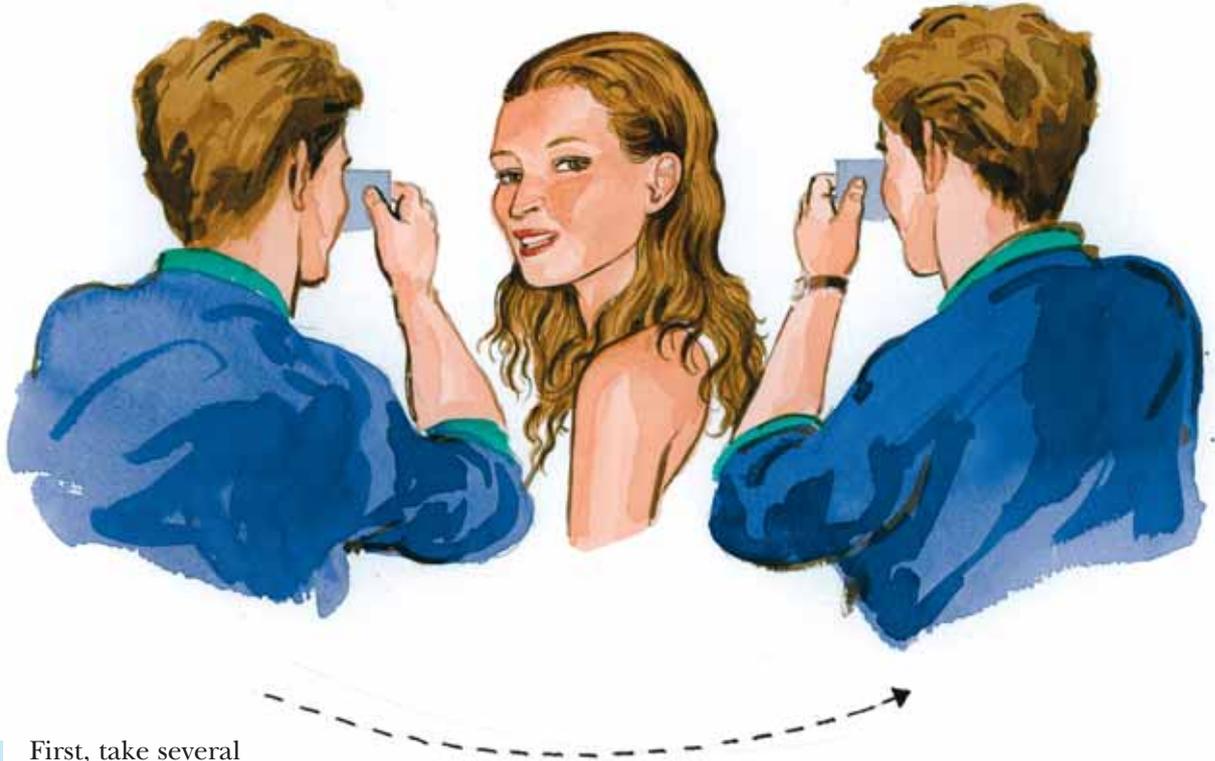
8 c.

# Step by step portrait

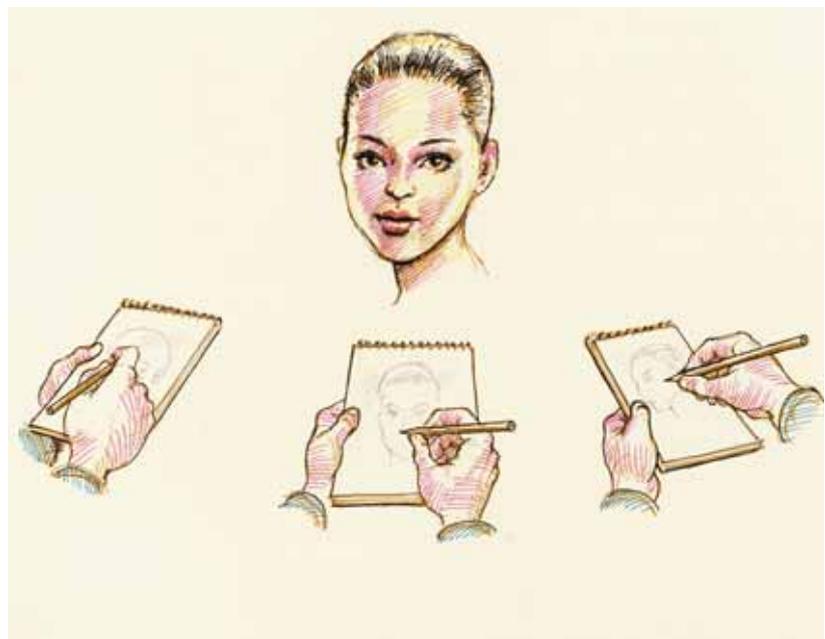
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PORTRAITS

Before you start the portrait, you will need certain information about, and familiarity with, your sitter. When you first contact them, take a camera and your sketchbook with you, in order to make a record of their face.



**1** First, take several photographs of them from as many different angles as you think fit. I usually take a full face shot, a three-quarter left side, a three-quarter right side and then at least one profile. You will also need pictures of them smiling and unsmiling. This should give you quite a lot of information.



**2** You should do at least two preliminary drawings from different angles. If you can do more than two that is all to the good.



**3** Now you have to make a decision about how you want your model to pose. Your sitter, of course, may have strong ideas themselves but don't hesitate to tell them what you think will work best. In these examples, I've placed the same girl in quite different poses (here, in a formal pose, and in a more relaxed pose over the page).



# Step by step portrait

continued

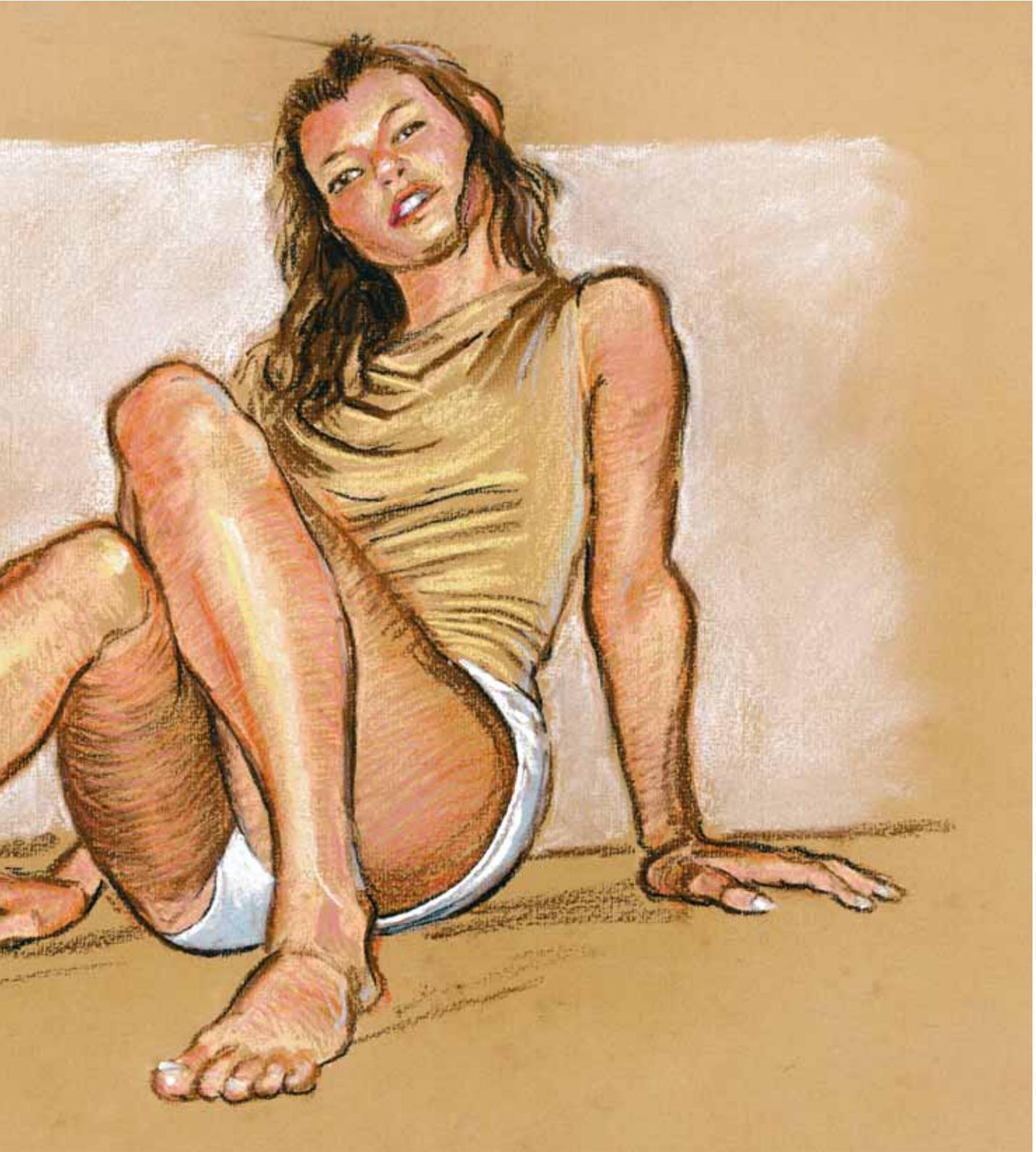
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PORTRAITS



**4** People often don't know how they want to appear until you suggest something. Have confidence in your own vision, but naturally the client has the last word, particularly if they have commissioned you and are paying for the portrait.





# Draperly

Draperly in the artistic sense means cloth, clothing or textiles. We will be looking at fabric used in still-life arrangements; the clothes that people wear in our drawings; and anything else connected with the activity of drawing.

Initially, we have to examine the actual materiality of a piece of cloth. That includes the way it folds, how it hangs and how it drapes around an object. It also includes the sheen or surface texture and whether it reflects the light or absorbs it. When you come to look at the way a piece of cloth drapes or folds around a shape, the fibre from which the cloth is made should be obvious to anyone with very little experience of looking at clothes. If you are lucky enough to wear a well-made piece of clothing made out of the best fabric that money can buy, then it neither feels nor looks like a similar article of clothing made from a cheaper material. Nor does something like pure, natural wool 'handle' the same way as a synthetic textile.

By the same token, a modern version of formal dress will not be the same as an historical piece of formal wear. So we have to do a little research if ever we want to portray anyone from a historical period. And when we look at the old master paintings, we see that they used different ways of representing the same kind of materials, so there is some choice of methods.

One problem with coloured textiles is that the patterns on the cloth can be quite complex. This often means that you have to find a short cut in the way that you draw it, or else you may find yourself engaged in a drawn-out piece of work. So, try suggesting the pattern with marks that are not exact but rather more impressionistic. Emulate the general shapes and don't try to put in every detail. And be sure to note the difference between the colour of the shadows and the highlights on the cloth.

There is a significant difference between the way tailored clothes hug or hide the figure and how less structured clothing hangs on the human body. If you see a man's jacket hanging on the back of a chair, compared with a dressing gown or bathrobe casually discarded, it is immediately obvious that these clothes have very different functions, and their form tells you so. Finally, there is an exercise in which you can use all the knowledge you have gathered to construct a scene in which the clothing of some kind plays a significant role.



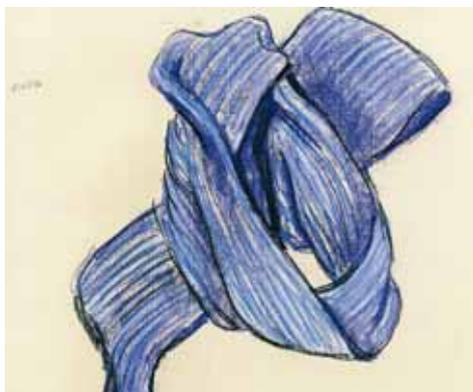
# Materiality

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DRAPERY

First, here are three pieces of cloth made from natural fibres. It is not always easy to tell the substance of a material from a drawing. These three pieces are silk, wool and cotton, in that order, but would you have known that just by looking at the drawings?

A major clue is that silk is so soft that it never forms harsh or ugly folds. In fact, it always folds so nicely that even if it does not have the characteristic silky sheen, it is usually unmistakable.

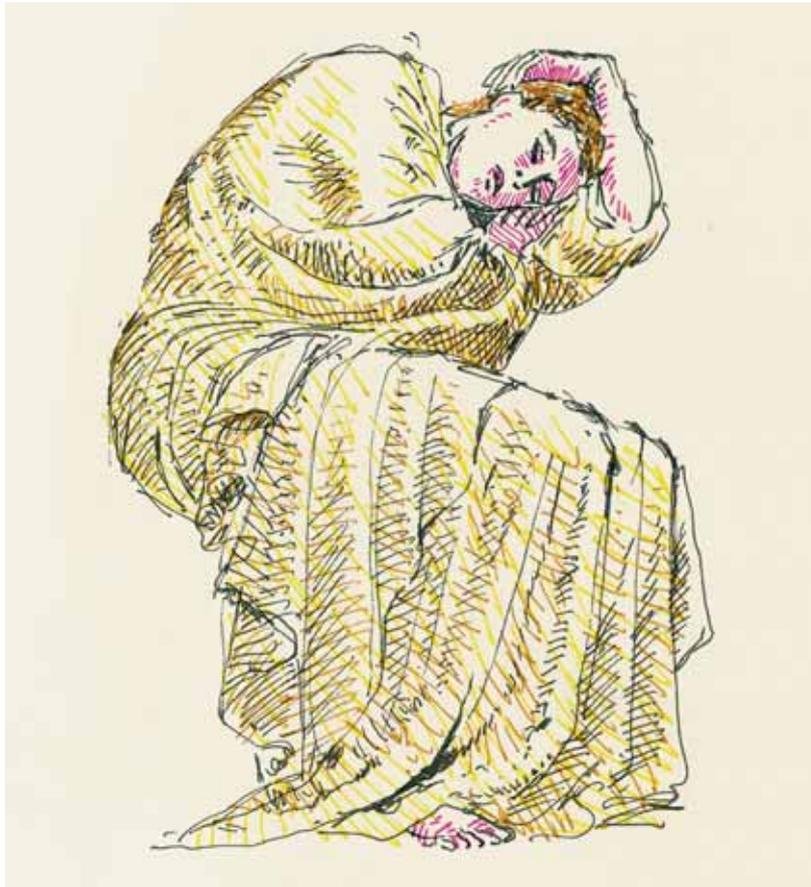


The quality of wool is similar in some ways but it is a much more dense material. The folds tend to be more generous and thicker, and the texture is often chunkier.

With cotton, the look is smoother, with neither the surface reflection of silk nor the heavier texture of wool. It can also be starched and folded to a sharpness that neither wool nor silk can emulate. When cotton fabric is worn and crumpled, it shows much more than the other two.



Now, let us take a look at examples of costumes from the past, as well as some more familiar modern dress.



Here is someone in one of those draped forms of clothing that people wore when garments resembled – to our eyes – nothing more complex than a sheet. This is like a Roman toga, which winds around the body and fits where it touches.



The second figure is from a later date, although the artist who drew her intended to represent a person from the classical era. Nevertheless, we notice immediately that the top of the costume is shaped, and it has a voluminous skirt that doesn't appear to be made from the same fabric. So, we would be correct in dating it well after the pure, draped forms of the classical period and, if our costume history is good enough, we might guess at the Renaissance, which would be right.

# Shapes under cloth

Modern and historic

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DRAPERY

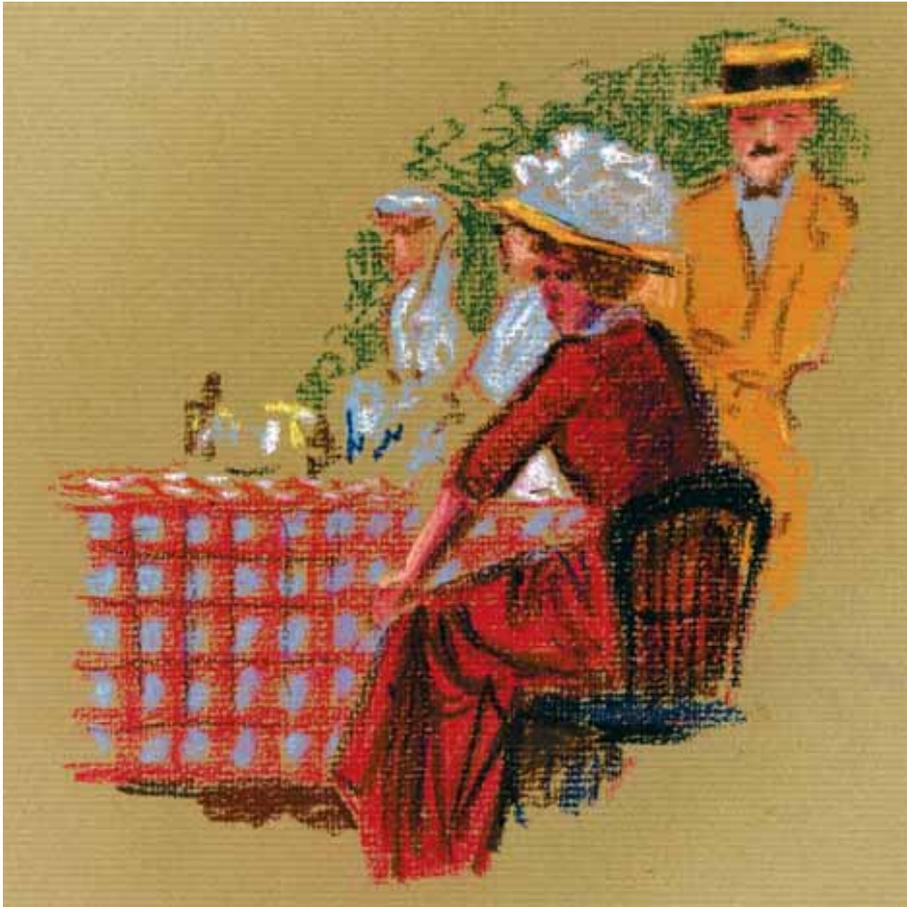


Because of the sophisticated tailoring and the figure-hugging styles, the next two examples could not really be from any time before the twentieth century.

I suggest that men's dress in previous centuries has been closer fitting but, more recently, the male figure has worn a suit of jacket and trousers, which is the least compromising set of garments invented for the human form. It both describes the basic shape and yet hides its curves and bulges.

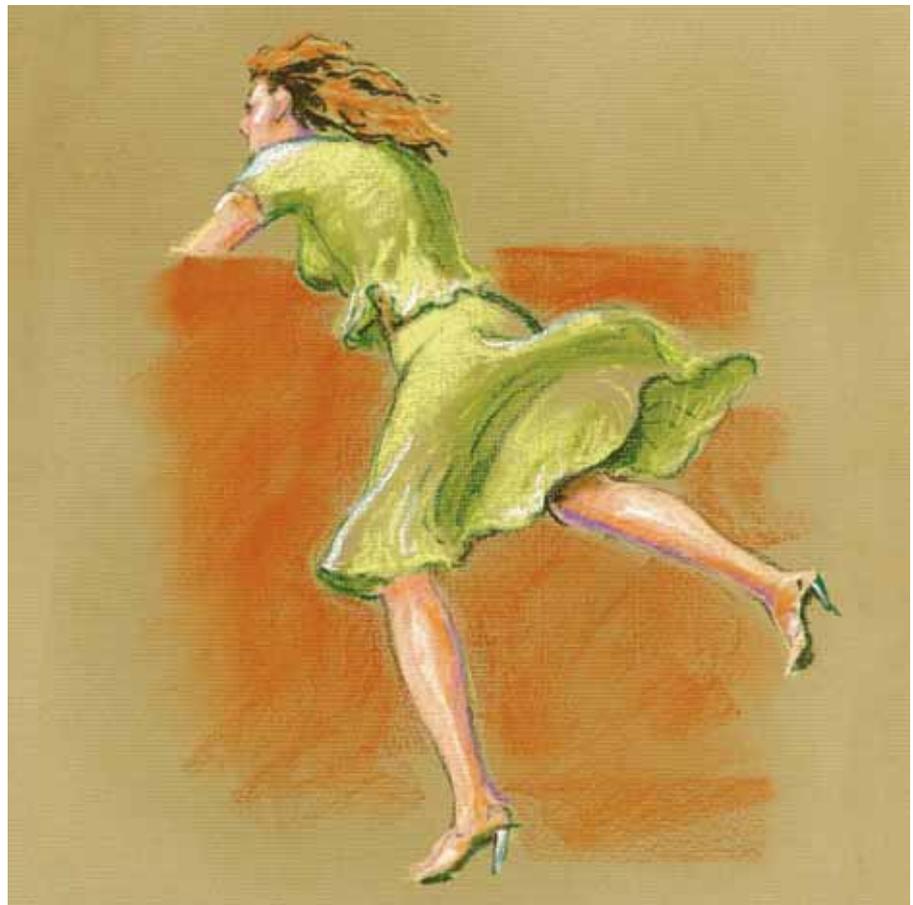


The female's dress is designed to show off a fashionably slender figure, carefully cut and quite comfortable to wear.



The next pair of pictures is also nicely juxtaposed, with two different types of dress that hint at the philosophy behind the tailoring. The lady sitting demurely at the lunch table is wearing a long dress of the nineteenth century, with a large flower-bedecked hat, both of which make it unlikely that in the near future she will get up and start jumping around. She is far more likely to take a gentle stroll in the garden.

However, the more modern girl is wearing a loose, relaxed style of clothing and, although it is obviously party or formal wear, she is dressed to suit the activity that she is engaged in. This dress actually accompanies an active lifestyle.



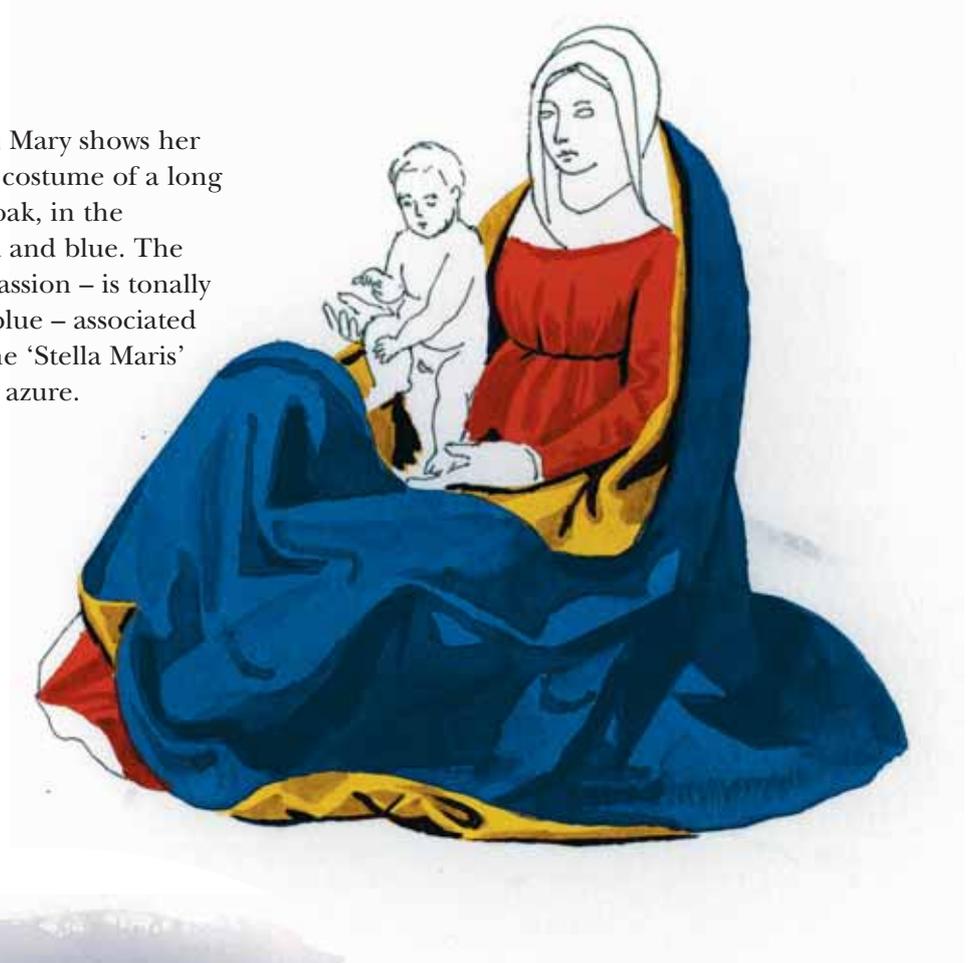
# Drapery in art

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DRAPERY

The next set of clothes suggests the change in lifestyle and fashion ideas brought about by the passage of centuries. This not only shows in the cut of the clothes, but also in the symbolic meaning behind their colours.

The illustration of the Virgin Mary shows her wearing the typical medieval costume of a long dress with a heavy flowing cloak, in the powerful combination of red and blue. The red – representing Christ's Passion – is tonally particularly vibrant and the blue – associated with the Mother of God as the 'Stella Maris' or Star of the Sea – is a deep azure.



The short, closely fitting tunic in this composition (after Tamara de Lempicka) seems to be a device to draw attention to the young woman herself, and the strong colour is part of that message.



This large red drape, hanging over the edge of the support of St John's figure, is emblematic of the martyrdom he will later endure, and hints at his passion and death.

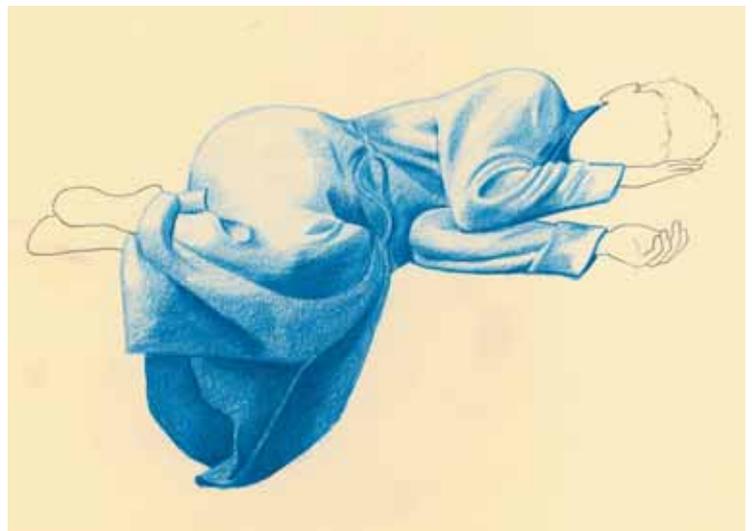


The colour chosen for the dominant figure in Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830) – the female icon of the French revolutionary principle – suggests that she is a beacon for the people to follow through the smoke and fire of battle.



The dress of Mary Magdalene (after Piero della Francesca) signifies in both colour and style the penitence of the reformed courtesan who gave up her worldly life to follow one of sacrifice. The green signifies the rebirth of her soul and the red cloak (now worn as a badge of repentance) tells of her recent worldly career.

The use of drapery here, in a drawing after David Hockney, hints at a sort of protective instinct on the part of the artist, with the bathrobe cosily wrapping round the drowsy young man.



# Step by step to clothed figures

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DRAPERY

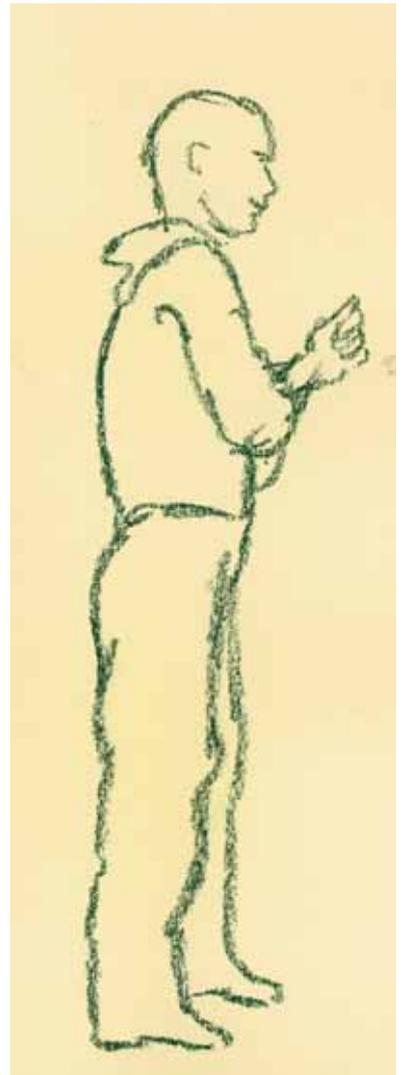
For a composition in which clothing is central to the artist's statement, choose a scene with which you are familiar. I have decided on a jazz version of the dance hall or night club which, as a young man, I found endlessly fascinating, chiefly for the way people revealed themselves in terms of what they wore. This is where people go to dance, show off, have fun and dress up to be seen, all at the same time.

**1** First, you need to decide on the number of figures, and how you want to portray them. I wanted to show three pairs dancing and three other individuals on the sidelines, so to speak. I decided to leave the actual venue rather vague, just a dark space with some strobe lights to suggest the activity.

**2** My main couple, designed to occupy the centre of the picture, are a young man and woman dancing in a jazz club; partly because my own experience was based in clubs like these and partly because my research suggests that jazz is making a comeback in the nightclub world.



**3** My second dancing couple would be dancing closer, and more slowly. Then the third pair would be likewise dancing to jazz, but at some distance and less obtrusively.



**4** Along with these dancers, I decided to include two girls having a drink and chatting to each other and, finally, a young man standing nearby, watching the dancers.

# Step by step to clothed figures

continued

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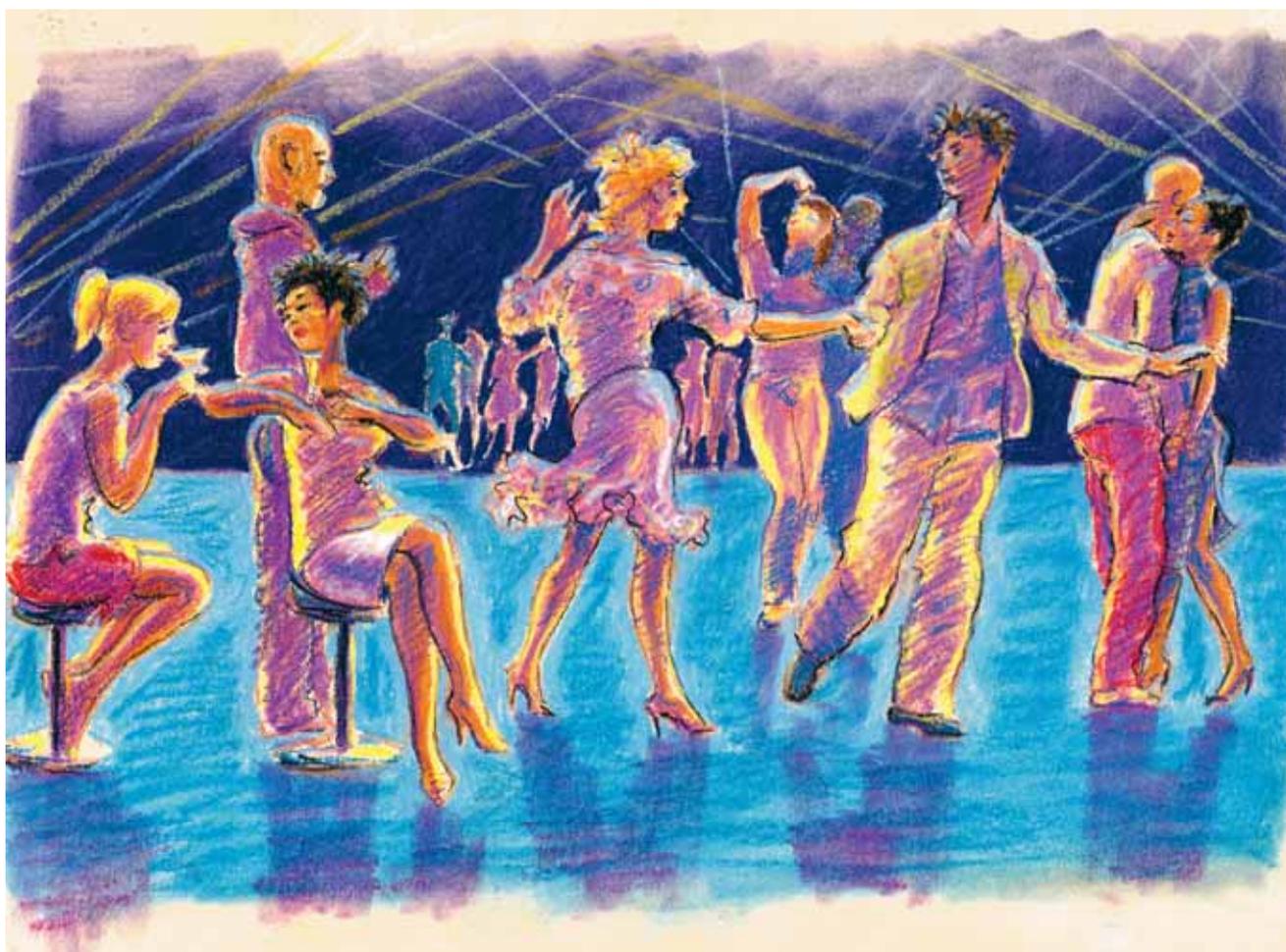
DRAPERY

**5** Having drawn these up, so that I had some idea of what they should look like, I then arranged them across the page, as though they were all in the scene together. I put the two girls in close and at one end. Behind them, I placed the solitary young man. Immediately next to them were the first pair of dancers and they took up most of the centre space. Visible behind them, slightly smaller, were the other two jazz dancers. Finally, I put the slow-dancing couple on the end.



**6** Behind these main figures, I showed silhouettes of people in the far reaches of the club. Of course, if the club was any good it would be very crowded, but the silhouette technique is a form of artistic licence, as my task would be all the harder if I had to put in many more bodies.

**7** My next step was deciding both the medium and the colour to use. I chose pastel as the medium and decided to go for an atmospheric use of colour. So although I sketched in the local colour lightly to begin with, I allowed the tones of light and shade to dictate the colour values to me. In such a venue, anyway, the light would be very low, except for the strobe effects, which would dominate the scene.



**8** I made the whole background dark with a few streaks of white, yellow and red breaking up the tone. On the dancers' figures, I made sure that there were yellow and light blue flicks of light around the edges, to indicate the reflection of the strobe flashes. The foreground figures were significantly lighter than the background. I also indicated some reflection on the floor under their feet, to give the impression of a smooth surface. The floor was a cool blue and the upper background was deep purple. None of the figures were drawn in any great detail because a looser mode of drawing suggests movement better.

# Composition and colour

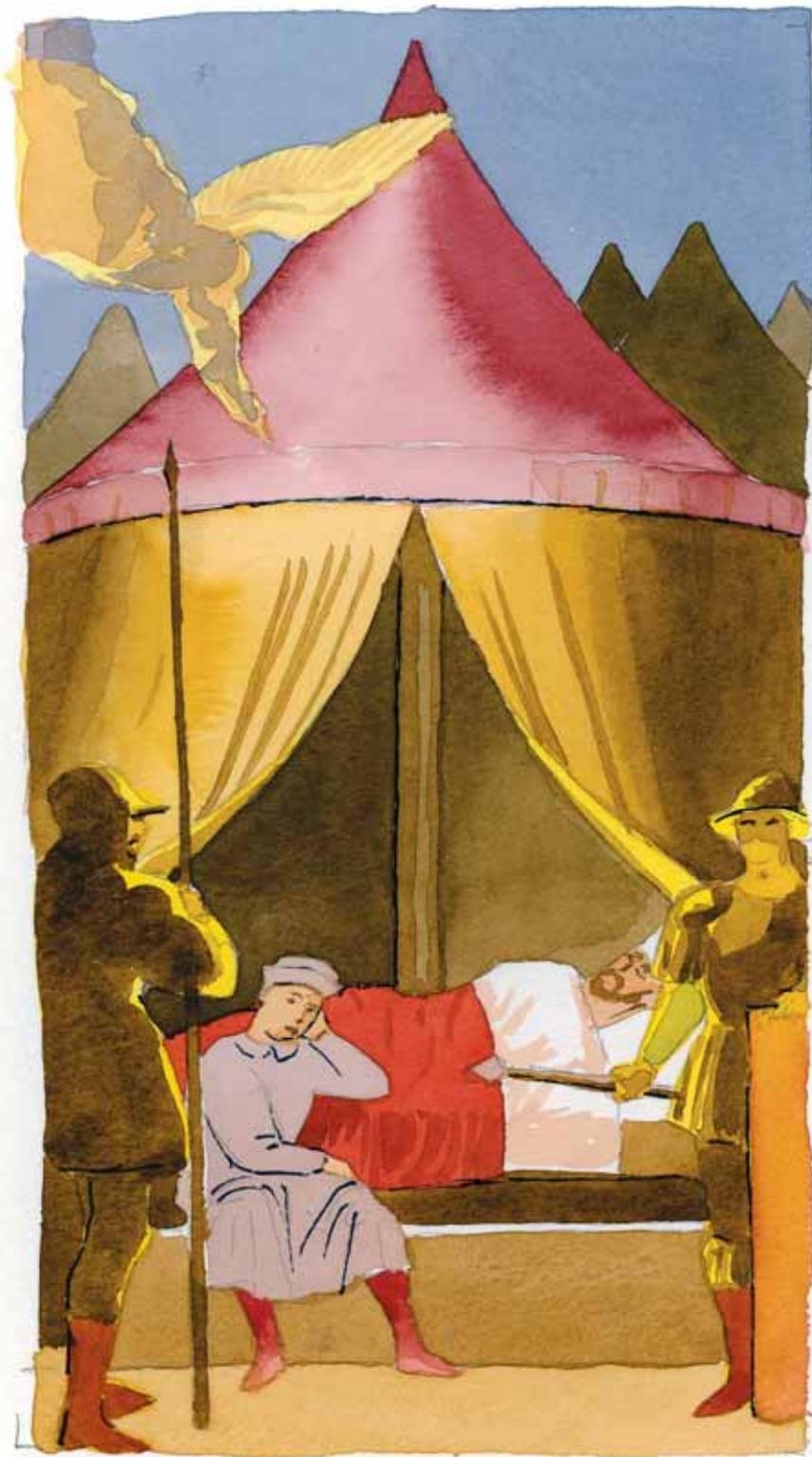
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Composition is always the hardest and yet the most interesting part of picture-making, once you have mastered the basics of drawing everything else. When you are only concerned with form and tone the problem is difficult enough but, when you come to add colour, it introduces a new element that will make a huge difference to your final design. Here some of the things that you will have to take into consideration.

Some artists use colour as a medium in its own right and subject all their composition and drawing to the dictates of colour values. This can work very well in the hands of a master, but does require considerable practice before you achieve the success that you aim for. The abstract qualities of colour can be used to great advantage and can bring new heights of emotion to quite traditional compositions. An artist may even subsume the whole picture into one colour (monochrome), which will then set the emotional drive of the piece. On the other hand, a picture may be so delicately coloured that you can almost see it as a tonal drawing. Or perhaps an artist will dramatize the contrast between light and dark, or the colours themselves, and so strongly that the tone or colour carries the whole message of the picture.

When you contemplate your composition, it is a good idea to produce a small sketch first, to see how the areas of colour balance themselves out across the whole picture. You may find that you have introduced a colour that swamps all the others, then you can either reduce its intensity or strengthen the other colours to balance it out. On the other hand, if you like strong contrasts in your work, the effect of a powerful hue can be very dramatic. But whatever your intention, that preliminary sketch shows what effect your colour scheme might have and is always a sensible start.

Even colourists use geometry to compose their pictures, so I will touch on this as well. The idea of colour as form will also be discussed, and you will soon discover that it not only gives emotional impact to the work but also substance to the forms in the picture. Finally, the drama and meaning behind a composition can also be conveyed by the use of colour.

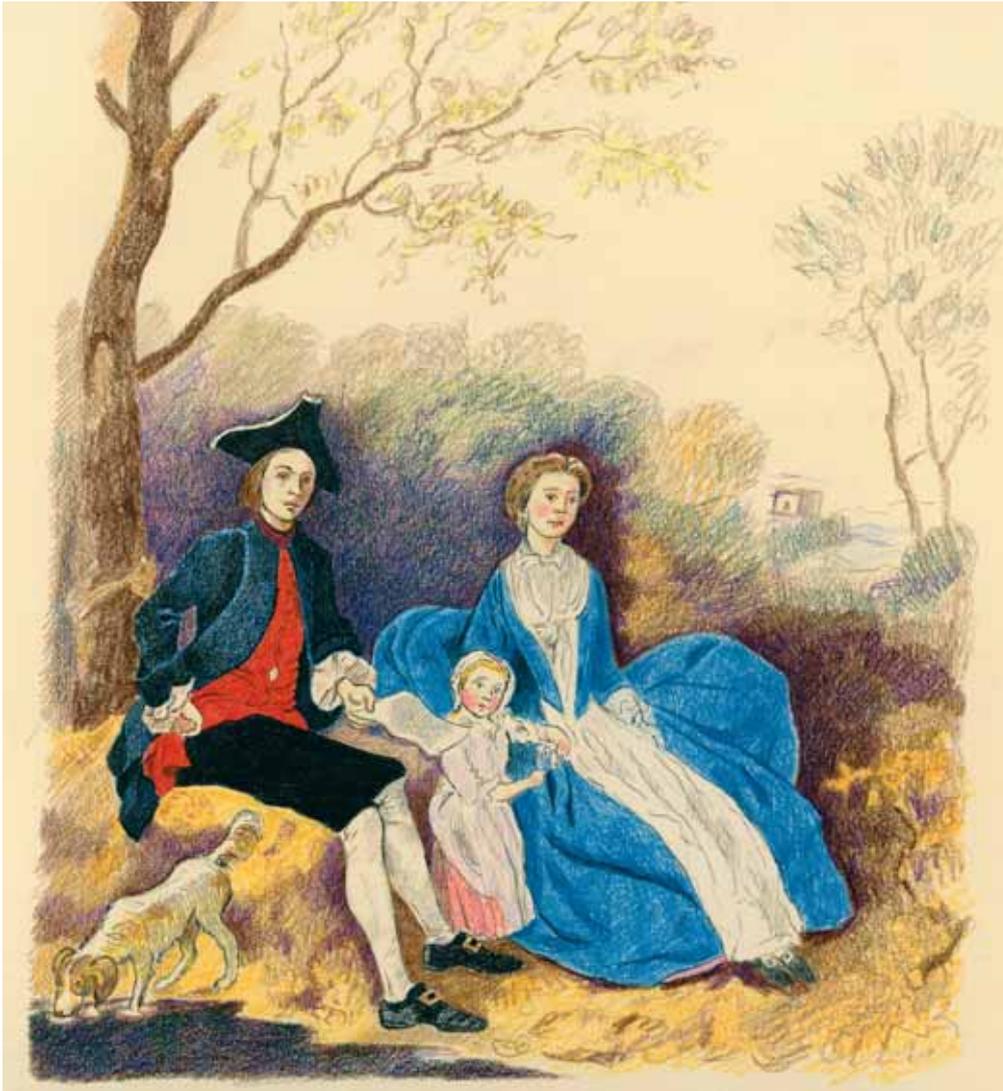


# Various artists and their use of colour

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COMPOSITION AND COLOUR

Here are my versions of some paintings by master artists who knew the value of colour and how to use it to their advantage. Different ideas demand different colour values and you will see several approaches here.



This is a conventionally composed eighteenth-century portrait by Thomas Gainsborough, of himself, his wife and daughter. It may well have been a sample of his work, designed to be shown to prospective clients, demonstrating his expertise in making portraits of people of different sexes and ages – not to mention the dog – and setting them in an attractive landscape. It also shows his remarkable ability to interpret fabrics of all kinds, and the one thing that jumps out of the picture is the

extraordinary brilliance of the artist's waistcoat and his wife's beautiful blue dress. He sets off the red of the waistcoat by surrounding it with dark blue and sombre black. His white stockings also contrast with the black breeches. His wife, in comparison, is all lightness and brightness in her sky-blue dress with white silk and lace trimmings. We can imagine his wealthy clients thinking that Gainsborough must be able to make them appear even more splendid.

*The Allegory of Love: Unfaithfulness* (1570), a picture by Paolo Veronese of three figures engaged in a kind of dance shows how, with the restrained and yet playful use of colour, the sting can be taken out of the most painful love story. This is a portrait of unfaithfulness, but disguised in such a way that at first you are amazed by the brilliance of the draughtsmanship then lulled by the gentle, charming colour scheme. Only gradually do you begin to wonder what this trio is actually doing. Then you notice that the younger man is receiving a love letter from the unfaithful lover or wife, while she reassures the other man with a firm grasp. It is a very adroit use of both design and colour.

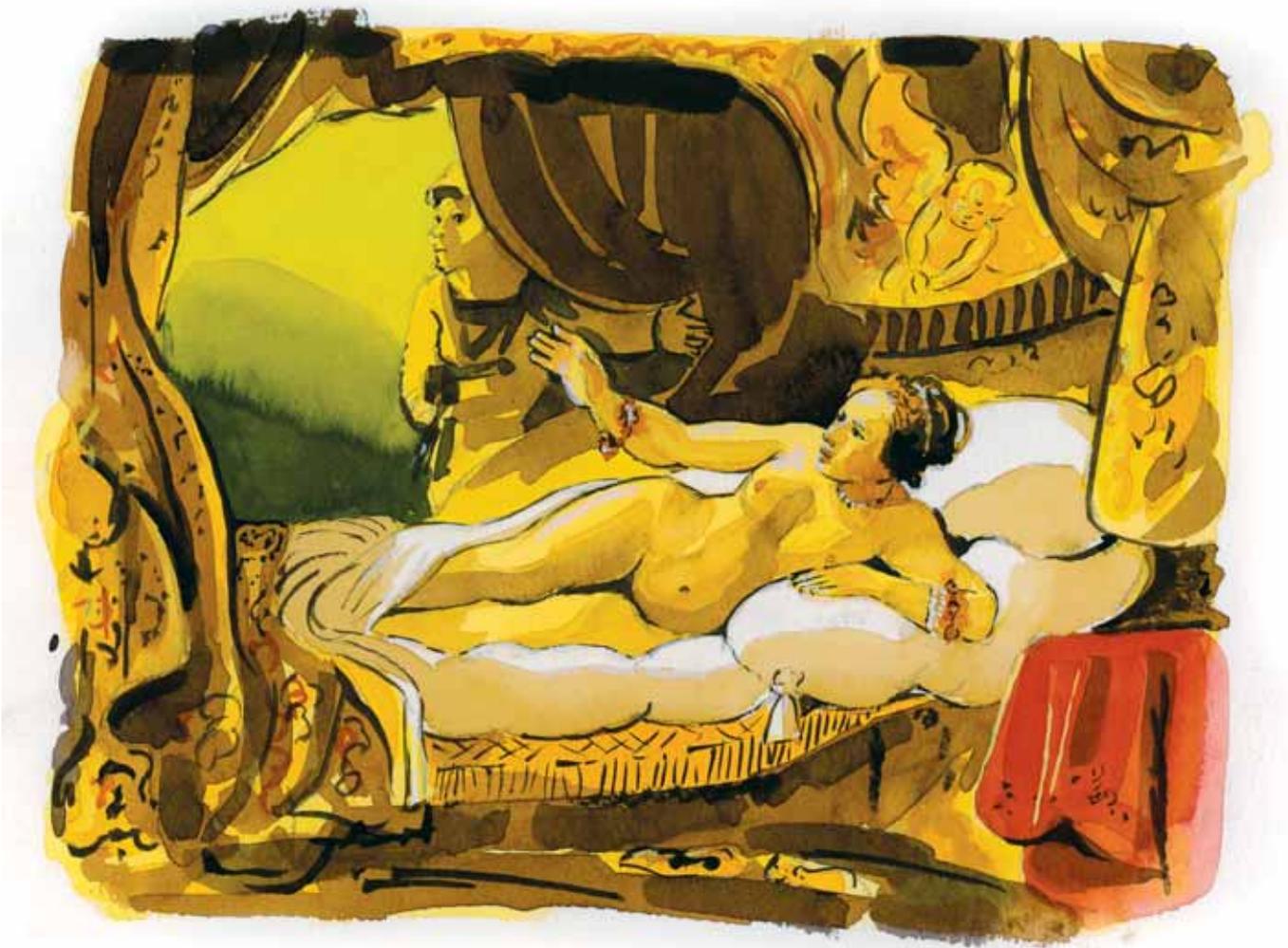


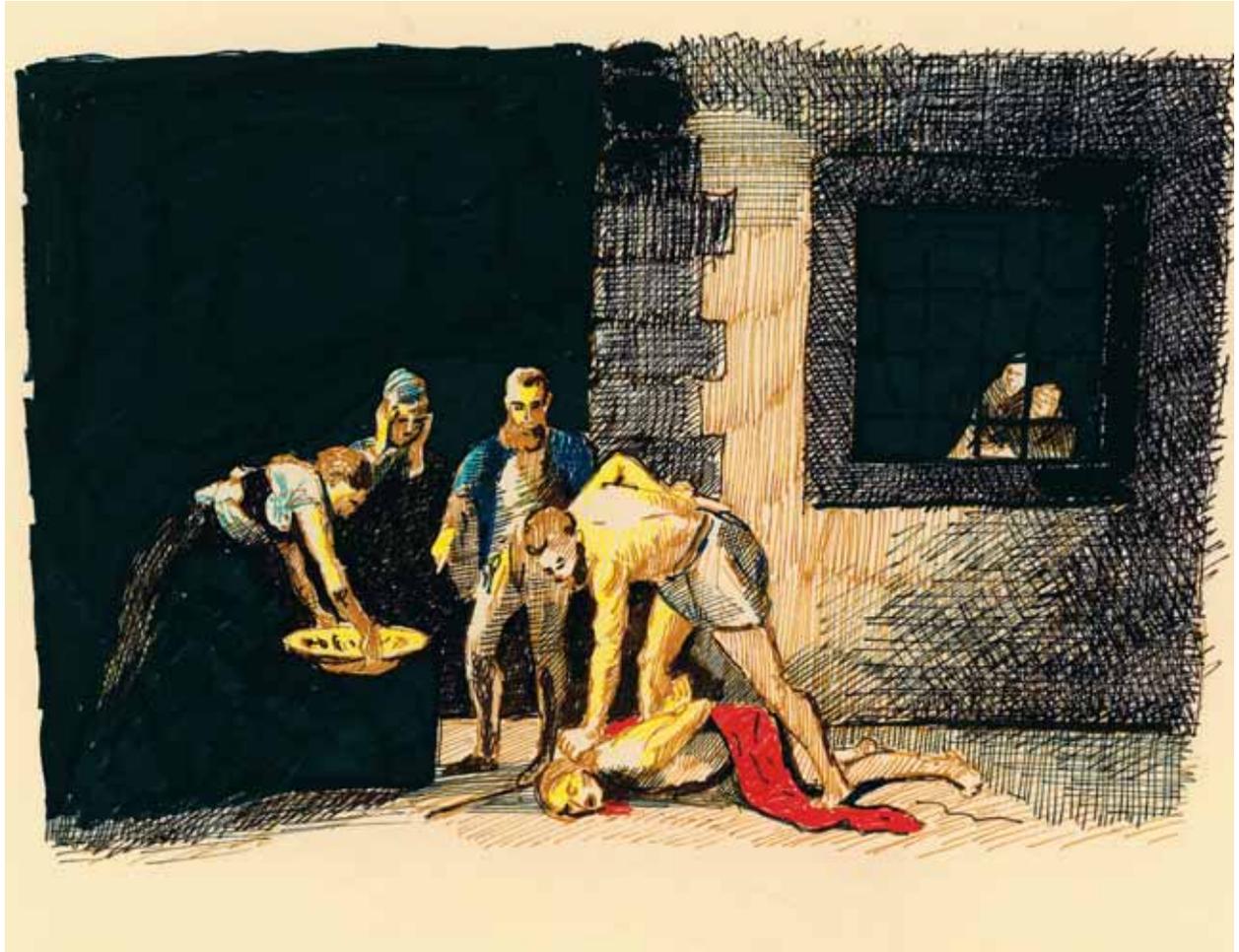
# Use of colour for harmony and drama

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COMPOSITION AND COLOUR

The next picture is *Danae* (1636) by Rembrandt van Rijn, master of master painters, and he has bathed his story in a golden glow of light. To achieve this effect he has created a setting of great richness and splendour. The story is of one of Jupiter's amorous adventures, when he appears to Aegina in the form of fire. The bedroom into which he arrives has a vast golden bed with rich hangings and gilded carvings. The main colour of this scene is gold, as though lit by a brilliant fire that we cannot see. The only other notable colour is a rich red covered table. The cool colour of the pale sheets and pillows on the bed only makes the fiery glow look stronger. A masterful use of colour.





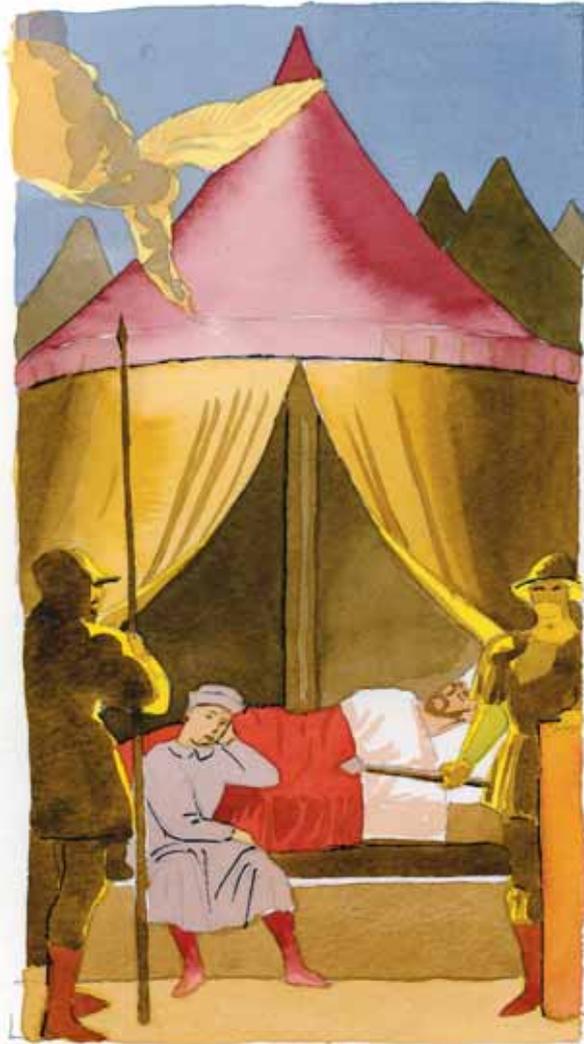
Caravaggio's *Beheading of St John the Baptist* (1607) is the largest painting he ever did, and I was lucky enough to see it soon after its restoration, when it was in the Santa Maria della Carmine, in Florence. It is very dramatic. The picture is divided into one very black half, with the other just a little lighter. The figures appear quite small, with the central characters of St John and the executioner split, in effect. The

predominant colours are variations on brown with a touch of dark blue, except for the flesh tones of the figures. There is one brilliant touch of colour, however, in the red cloak that has fallen to the floor from St John's body and looks like a great pool of blood. It is the only strong colour in the picture – a shocking red accent by the great dramatist of art.

# Geometry of composition

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COMPOSITION AND COLOUR

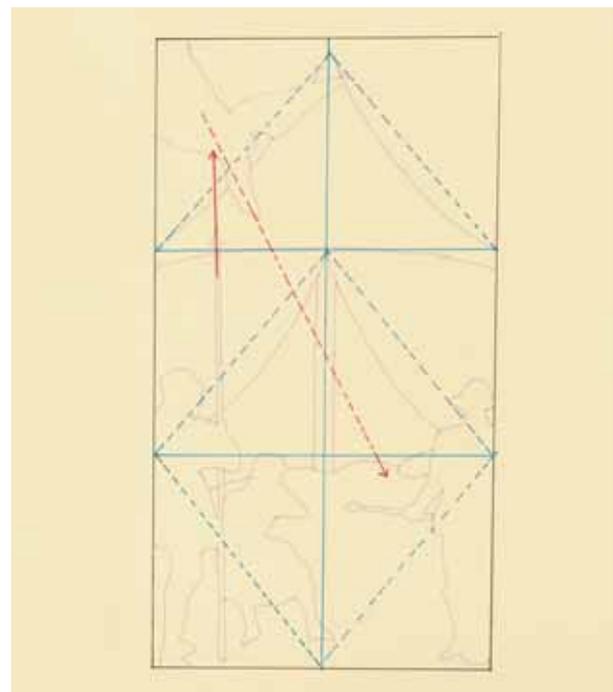


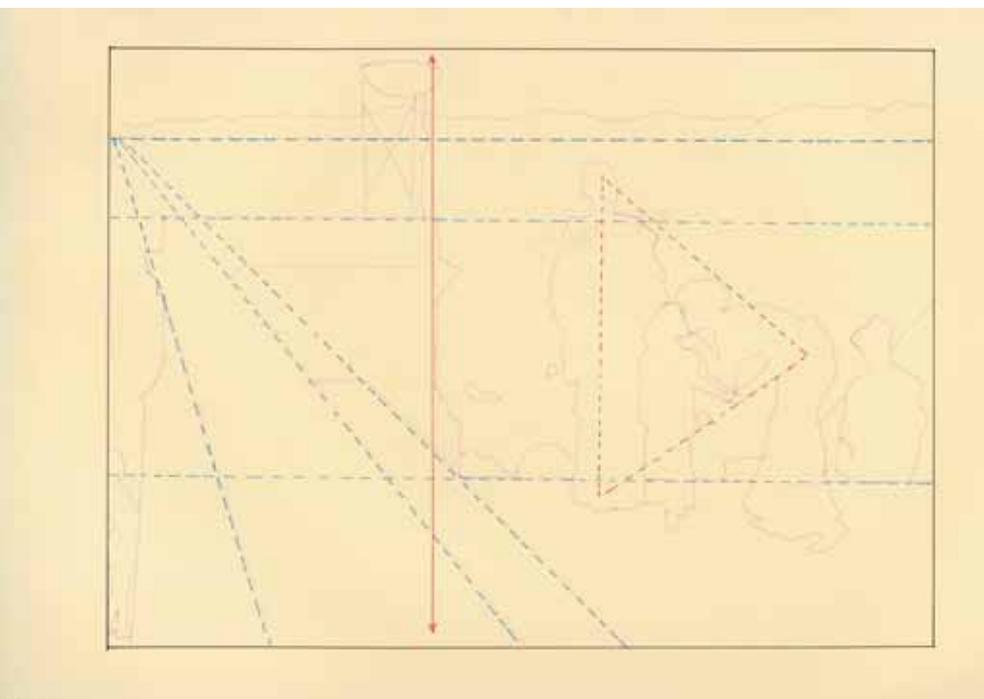
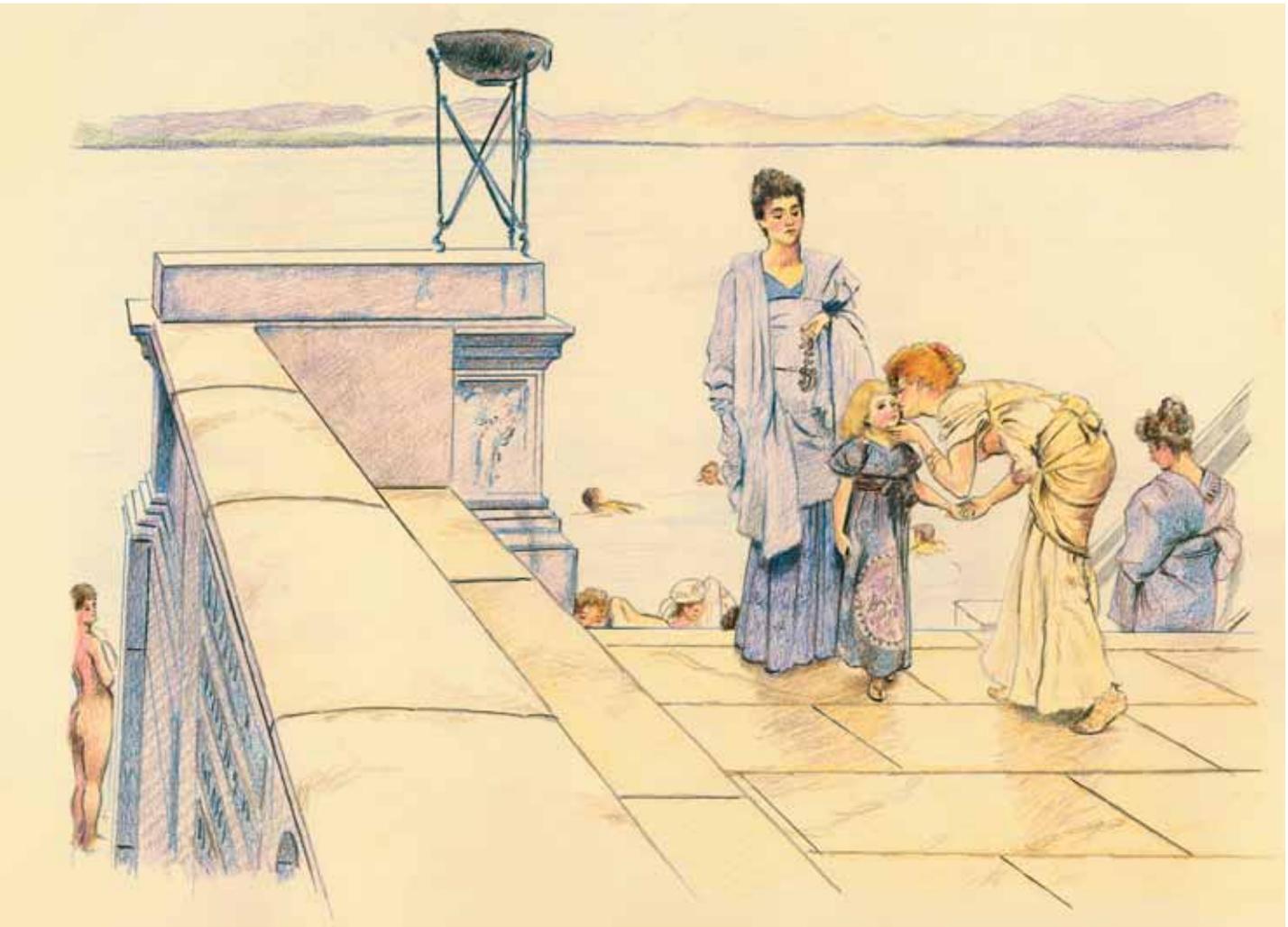
In Piero's geometric plan, the picture is divided horizontally into three equal parts. The angel and the tent roof make up the top third. The lit opening of the tent makes the central part; and the Emperor and his attendants dominate the lower third. The tent top forms a large triangle, repeated below in the central section by that of the tent opening. Because of the strong vertical, running from the point of the tent, down the tent pole towards the foot of the seated attendant, we can infer an inverted triangle in the lower section, although it is not quite so obvious.

Colour can add greatly to the enhancement of many artistic effects – particularly that of geometry. Correct and careful handling of colour and tone shapes can help dramatically in presenting convincing images.

For mastery of the geometry of composition, Piero della Francesca proved himself the great mathematician. He invariably divided up his works in a well-regulated geometric fashion, and he was just as much a master of colour. In this fresco, *Constantine's Dream* (c. 1457–58), all the light is on the sleeping emperor and his attendant, surrounded by the warm colours of the tent and the royal bedclothes. The guards in semi-shadow in the foreground seem unaware that the beautiful glow signifies angelic intrusion into the dream of Constantine the Great.

The picture conforms to a strong geometric design overall. There are two subsidiary thrusts of energy through the picture: a line going from the angel's arm to the chest of the sleeping Emperor; and another line from the vertical spear of the left-hand guard to the centre of the angel above.





Now, we look at a picture, after Alma-Tadema's *The Kiss* (1891), that is less obviously geometrically arranged, but whose spatial qualities are such that I detect a strong sense of geometric design about it.

First it seems that the horizontal divisions of the space are sevenths of the whole depth: the edge of the lake at one seventh; the top of the beacon ledge at two sevenths; and the top of the steps at five sevenths. Then all the lines of the architecture recede towards a vanishing point at the left end of the edge of the lake. These lines to the vanishing point cut across a very strong vertical through the beacon and down along the edge of the carved support. There also seems to be a tight triangle between the three main figures.

# Abstract colour in composition

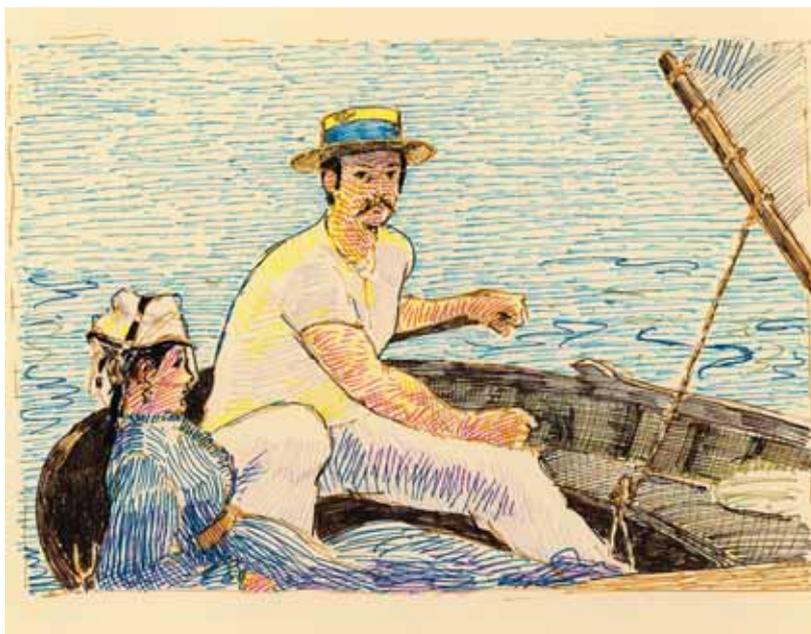
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COMPOSITION AND COLOUR

Paintings can provide a strong effect by their colour and many modern painters have used colour with some power. In all the examples here you can see how the colour really forms the basis of the pictures' impact and has obviously been designed to do so.

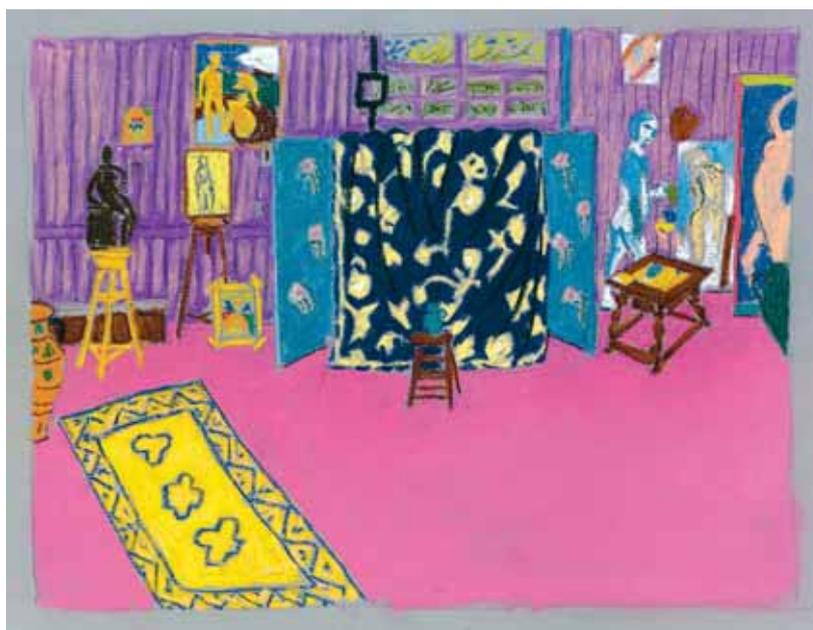
Colour used in an abstract way to give a picture a strong presence is shown on this page by two painters of the Impressionist era.

First Vuillard who, with his amazing eye, produced this extraordinary piece of graphic painting *The Goose* in the 1890s. The white goose in the centre frustrates his hunters – two baffled gentlemen in top hats and cloaks – and two other helpers over on the horizon. The flat expanse of orange-yellow grass or gravel sets off the white shape of the bird, making it look very poised and confident. The deep-blue sky with its white clouds looks very close. The two black-clad figures in the foreground seem isolated by the strong colour of the ground. There is no attempt to portray depth, although the warm colour of the ground does advance strongly in front of the blue.



In this scene, after Manet's *Boating* (1874), the water forms the entire background. We can see only the stern section of the sailing boat. In it are a young man steering by the tiller and, lying back, a young woman in a blue summer dress with a hat and a veil. The man, all in white, is set against the blue of water almost like a cut-out. The use of white and blue to set the scene of a sunny day is very evocative.

Matisse was a supreme colourist, one who made colour work for him. In *The Pink Studio* (1911) he floods the scene with one dominant colour, against which all the other colours have to take their place. The strong pink of the floor space sets the scene. Somewhat surprisingly, the yellow rug reinforces the power of the floor space. The rest of the scene seems muted in comparison, even though some of the objects are quite strong in colour. Oddly enough, the device works very well and you do actually perceive the floor as flat.



Here too, in David Hockney's swimming pool scene *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)* (1971), there is no attempt to create depth in the picture with tonal harmonies or perspective. The colour of the pink jacket brings the young man forward from the green background, the flat colour alone creating the form in space; the modelling is not strong enough to have much effect. The blue patterns of the pool create a sense of volume against the bright creamy white of the poolside with, once again, the colour giving the major clue to the depth.



# Action and drama

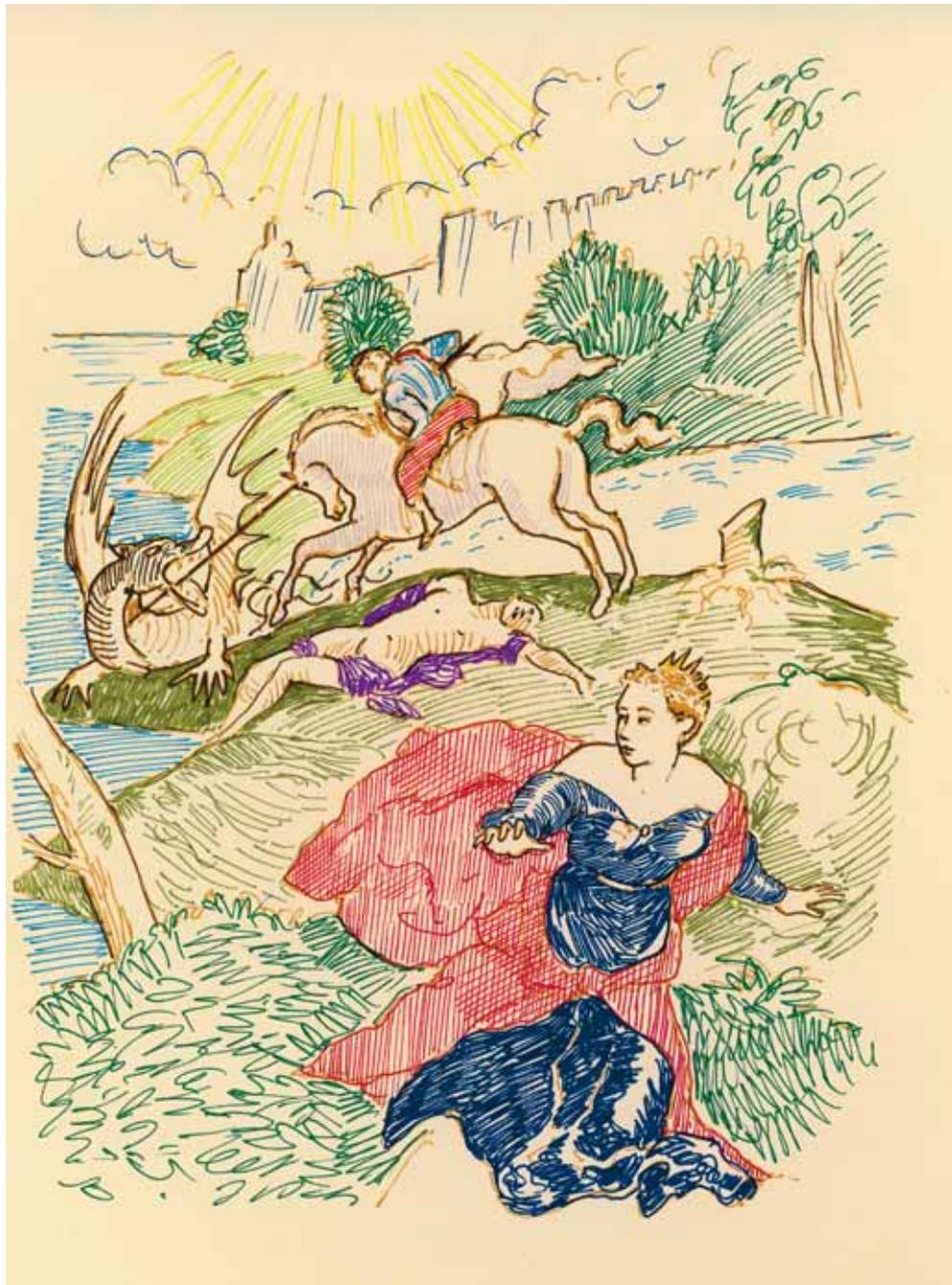
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COMPOSITION AND COLOUR

In *St George and the Dragon* (1555–1558) by Tintoretto, the use of colour is very traditional but extremely successful in getting across the drama of the situation. The foreground is dominated by the frightened princess fleeing from St George's violent conflict with the dragon as she rushes towards the viewer with arms outstretched and cloak flying. To 'advance' her, she is shown in a shimmering deep blue dress, cloaked in a beautiful pinkish red. Her pale face and shoulders emerge from the rich colours of her clothes, hinting at a certain desirability through her apparent defencelessness. In turn, she is surrounded by the rich green swathe of a narrow piece of land.

The scene behind her is also full of action as St George on a white horse, with a white cloak and a red saddle-cloth, lances the scaly dragon who flaps his wings, coils his tail and gapes his jaws. Beyond that again is an inlet, and then another shore with dim grey walls. Above that there is a brilliant, almost white light in which God, looking down from heaven, seems to be urging St George on. The whole colour scheme enhances the drama of the situation well.

Drama and colour often go hand-in-hand, as the power of colour to produce an active, dominant ingredient into the composition of the picture is shown well in these examples. When you want to convey drama through a picture, as you have already seen, it is not too difficult if you use colour cleverly.





Felix Vallotton's *The Lie* (1897) seems to be set in a scene full of deep red danger. The whole room is furnished in strong reds, with pink and yellow striped wallpaper and black and pink flowers in the vase. The embracing man and woman are wearing evening dress, him in deepest black and her in bright, hot red. Who is telling whom the lie? We don't know for sure, but no doubt we each have our own idea of the culprit. The quality of the dominant, obsessive red conveys both a sign of danger and the suggestion of liaisons less than innocent. The colour really does set the scene and we know that no good will come of it. But isn't it attractive, isn't it seductive? What deep waters we are getting into, and all because of a title and a suggestive colour scheme. Strong drama, of the psychological kind.

# Step by step to a dramatic scene in colour

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COMPOSITION AND COLOUR

This exercise is not quite as difficult as it might seem because, discounting high noon, which can be quite sleepy, we have two times of day – sunrise and sunset – during which we are treated to some of the most dramatic scenes to be found; the moments at which the sun actually rises over the horizon and then later, descends out of sight, plunging us into darkness once more.

I am going to choose sunset as my dramatic event, and assume that it is an evening in summer with clear skies. The sea is close at hand as we look westward at the sinking sun.



**1** Let's introduce two people, a woman and a man, and a rocky coastline with the sun sinking slowly into the sea.

First I draw two figures; a girl standing shading her eyes against the sun as she looks westward, and a young man sitting gazing into the sky.

**2** I need a specific setting, so I devise narrow, rocky steps down a sloping cliff, leading to a jetty with a ship moored alongside, and a house or two. I include the sea, and the setting orb of the sun.





**3** I need to do a couple of drawings of sunset colours, showing the reflection of the sun in the water, and the pink clouds and tinted sky with the bright orange glow of the sun, centre stage. I then decide that a yellow sun and a pink sky will give the required effect.

**4** Next I have to compose the picture and gradually I arrive at a scene in which the cleft in the rock is central, cliffs stand at each side and the steps are cut straight out of the rock, as you sometimes find in Cornwall. I place the young woman right in the foreground, as though she has been coming up the steps and has just turned to look at the lowering sun. The man is further back, sitting at the top of one of the cliffs that borders the steps.



# Step by step to a dramatic scene in colour

continued

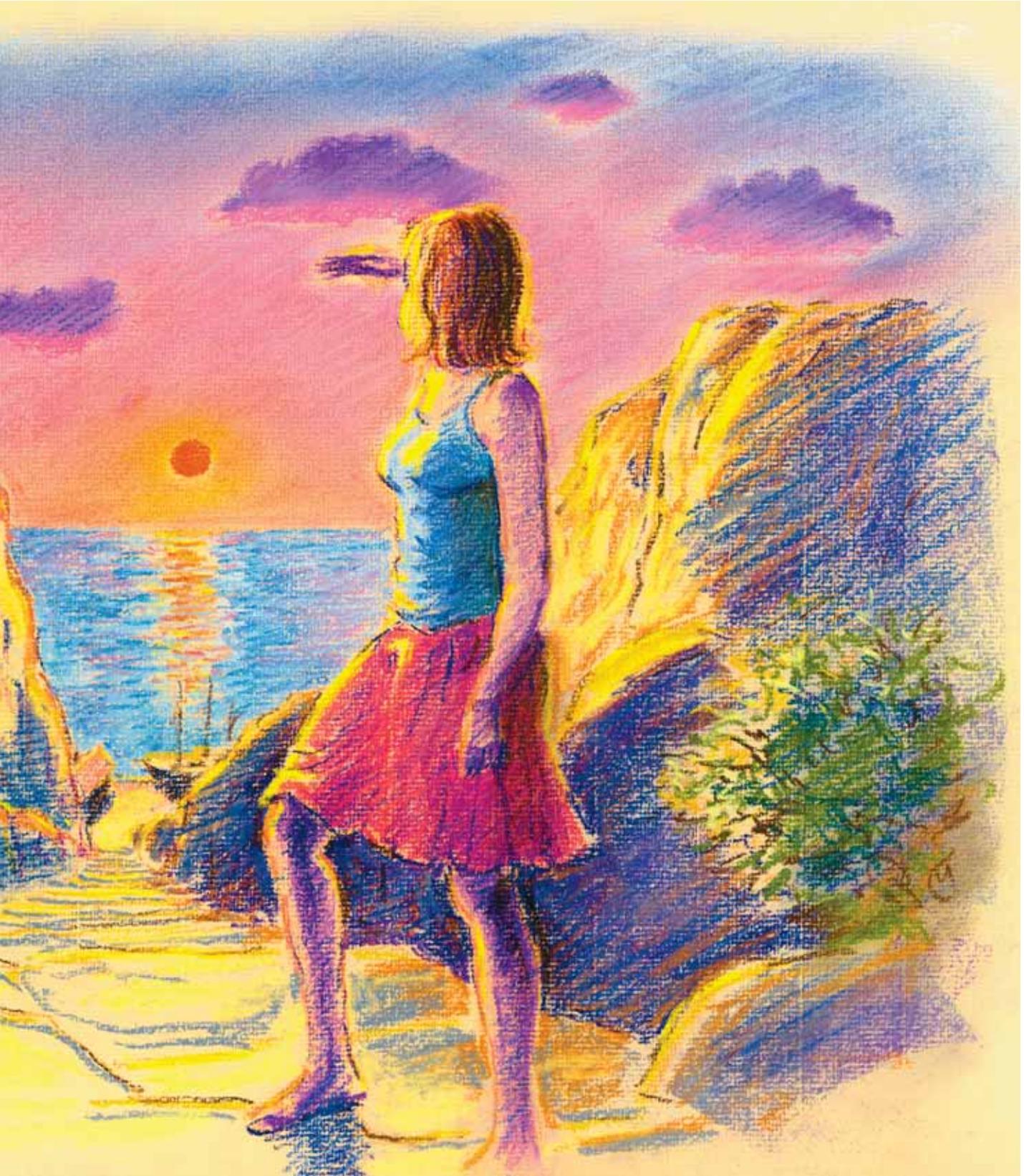
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COMPOSITION AND COLOUR

**5** Now for the final picture. I use pastel because the colour is good and strong and I should be able to reproduce the effect of sunset. I work from the top left downwards, as I am right-handed and do not want to smudge the pastel. I start by getting the sky as true as I can. I decide to make the sun orange, which is not exactly accurate, as it must be the brightest thing in the picture. However, I like the effect of the orange ball and so I carry on.

**6** When it comes to the local colour, I know that I will have to let it be reduced by a certain amount, by the blast of light from the sun. The shadows around the rocks need to be quite dark in contrast, and rather purple in colour. Where the sun hits the cliffs and glances off the edges of things, I put in yellow and gold streaks. Finally I redefine any other element that needs strengthening. Now it's your turn. Remember the drama and let your colour shout.





# Significant colours

Sometimes colour in a picture turns out totally different from the way that you meant it to be. But many great artists work very hard on their colour schemes and don't just arrive at them by accident. It is worth taking a closer look at some of their work before we close, although you have seen quite a number of examples already.

This approach differs from the previous sections, where we have looked at the construction of a particular scene. Here, I will present you with a picture by an artist known for his or her genius with colour or experimentation. I will show how you could adapt the same type of theme for your own benefit, and then produce a new work based on the other artist's ideas. This is an established tradition – art feeds on its own history and produces new versions that illuminate the old.

Be open to experiment. It is good practice for you, for example, to adapt another's work, even if you are only copying. You can learn a huge amount by making as careful a study as possible, but equally you learn quite a lot when you adapt and simplify another's piece. It also helps you to develop your appreciation by examining other artists to see how they have gained their success. Become familiar with the whole range of artistic endeavour and you educate your own sensibilities and begin to refine your taste and understanding. This can only be to your advantage – it sharpens your critical faculties and increases your enjoyment. Instead of idly walking around an art gallery without much idea of what you are seeing there, you will find yourself looking for all the things that you have been engaged in with your own work, and the result is a much more rewarding experience. So enjoy a new look at art.

The following works are interesting because of the particular way that the artist has manipulated colour, and you will find that there is a lot more to it than merely applying green to make grass and blue to represent sky. Local colour is always interesting when you draw from life, but when it comes to an original creative work, you have to decide precisely how you are going to make colour produce the required effects. In this final section, you are going to use all your colour mediums, all your drawing skills and also discover things about your own capabilities that will give you food for thought.



# Radical colour change

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SIGNIFICANT COLOURS

**What would you do if presented with a work of art that you had previously accepted as important, and were told to reduce it both in your own eyes and that of other people? Marcel Duchamp did this famously with Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*. I have given my own versions of this exercise in the two examples below.**

This extraordinary version of Ingres' *Grande Odalisque* (1814) is by Martial Raysse, produced in 1964. The beautiful, languid harem queen has been suffused in a jade green hue. The original was hardly realistic, but the tastes of the time saw it as an iconic sexual adventure. The

simple act of turning her green eclipses her eroticism and suggests that it is a piece of preposterous kitsch. Raysse's version is produced entirely by mechanical means; and the addition of real feathers only goes to make the final statement look artificial.



Colouring up Picasso's black and white anti-war protest *Guernica* with the pinks, soft greens, baby blues and sunny yellows that the artist sometimes used in his portraits of children would surely alter viewers' perceptions.





Through reproductions, Van Gogh's *Still Life: Vase with fifteen sunflowers* (1888) is hard to regard objectively. But the way the artist flooded his canvas with vibrant colour, which has no contrast in the picture with any other range of tones, is quite masterly. The whole picture consists of variations on yellow and green – it makes you wonder why we so often stress the value of a colour by contrast with its opposite. The whole space is subsumed with yellow. Blues and greens are only minimally represented.

So how can we learn from this? Well, first take a really strong colour, like the colour of oranges, and decide how you might increase its power, not by contrast with another but by reinforcing it with variations on its own hue. It could lead to a tasteful harmony of similar tones or it could look bland. Your choice is crucial.



# Colour simplicity

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SIGNIFICANT COLOURS

These pictures show how colour can be used to simplify your message very effectively. The pop-art view (below) flattens out the depth of the picture to concentrate on its coloured shapes to spell out the significance of the subject matter. And size, too, can make a difference, as the O'Keefe picture (opposite) shows.



The American pop artist Tom Wesselmann, produced a series of Great American Nudes in the 1960s. He took a pin-up-type girl and produced anonymous nudes in pure kitsch settings. The lips and breasts were emphasized; the eyes, or in fact any detail that might have made the figure look real, were done away with, and the being was reduced to a grotesque. No one could take a picture like this seriously. And yet it is overtly sensual. So how do you emulate this artist's theme? Not by looking at more pin-up girls. You need to take an 'attractive' idea that you do not agree with, or would not want to be connected with, and rethink it until you get a new theme.

Here I've taken a picture of a US soldier, but refused to make use of the more sombre colours normally associated with soldiers. It is also making a good point about the facelessness of armies, just as Tom Wesselmann did about pin-up girls.

Georgia O'Keeffe was quite an original artist and she produced some very strong images of plants and flowers, drawing them up to a grand scale which made you look much harder at them. In this example she has chosen two blossoms of petunia in a strong purple colour, which floods the area of her picture very effectively. She has painted the fleshiness of the petals so that you can almost touch and smell them.



One thing that you could do here is not necessarily choose flowers to draw up large, but any small object like a coin, a key or a piece of fruit such as a strawberry, for instance. Taking a small thing and producing a very large image of it both tests you as an artist and is extremely enjoyable to do. So have a go and see what you can manage.

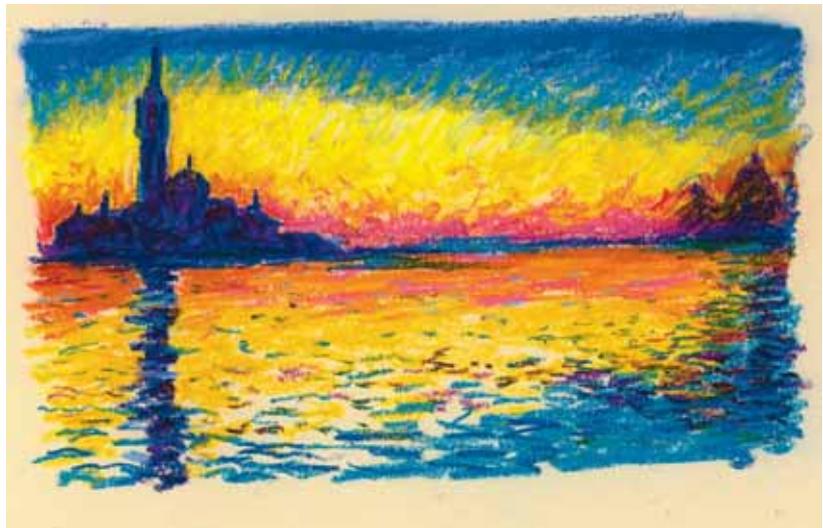
### **MASTERSTROKES**

Using flat areas of colour is a good way to start getting a good feeling for how colour works. One way that you might try is to cut out pieces of coloured paper and make a collage picture to see how you can balance the colours. First try this with coloured paper, and then try painting pieces of paper in colours that you like. It will help your understanding of colour.

# Colour as emphasis

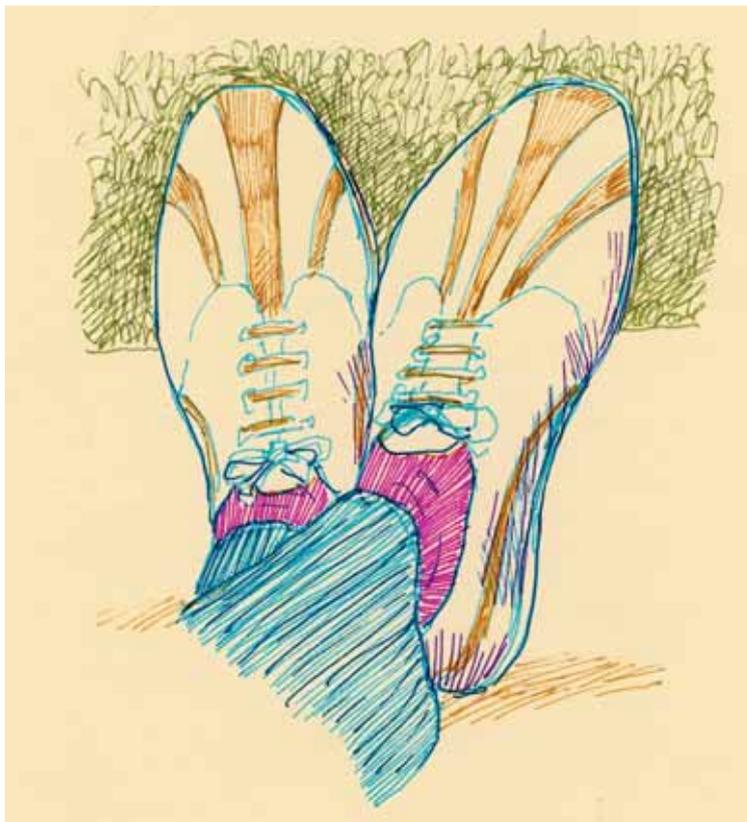
Monet is one of the great colourists of all time and he wasn't afraid to lay on the colour with abandon, producing work such as this sunset over the church of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice. This is a pretty dramatic sight at any time but when it is blazing with the colours of the setting sun it really becomes almost overstated. How can you do your own version of this sort of sight? Well, to start with you don't need to rush off to Venice; you can look around your own area for a building that is reflected in a river or lake, or the sea if you live near it. You will need a view that is towards the west to get the benefit of the next good sunset, so you will need to do a little bit of research of the locality. As an artist this is always valuable, so it is not time wasted.

When a painter wants to make a strong emphasis in his composition, it is often the colour that brings out the point being made. Both these examples use colour to great effect and you can try out your own versions.





The next artist, Tissot, was an Edwardian society painter who was in great demand for his ability to portray beautiful women and handsome men. At any rate, if you were painted by him, you usually came out looking much better than you had ever thought you could. When someone had a marvellous, fashionable dress to show off, it was reasonable to get Tissot to do a painting in which this elegant article was being given an airing. In this picture the brilliant yellow dress obscures everyone else at the ball and what the dress doesn't hide of the competition, the large fan does.



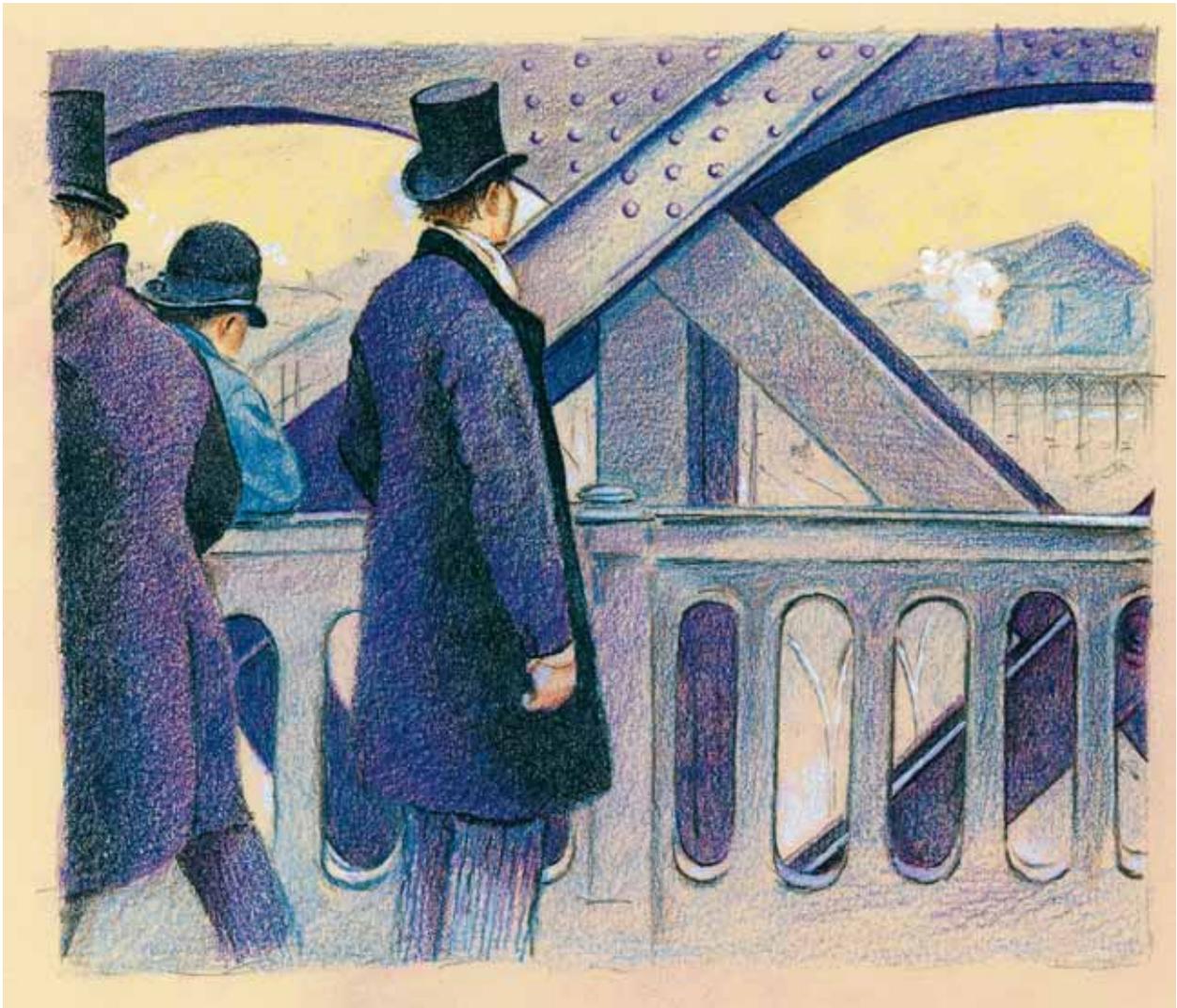
Now what would be the equivalent situation now, in your circle of friends? Maybe a party dress, but it might be something like an interesting pair of shoes, or a new football strip.

# Expressive colour

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SIGNIFICANT COLOURS

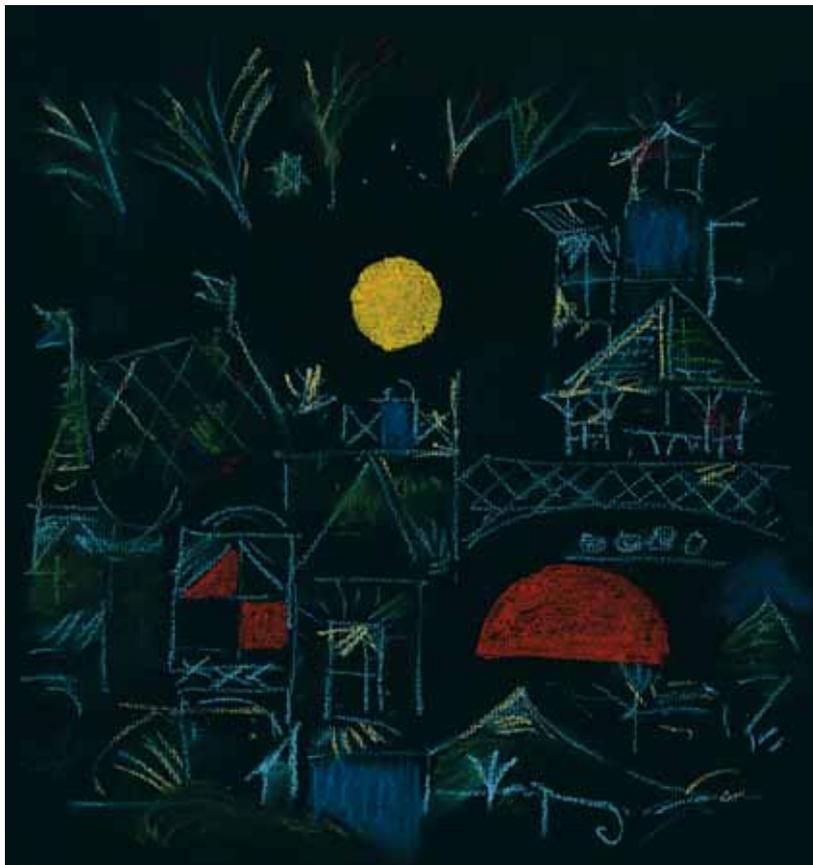
The use of colour always has a reason behind it, which dictates the kind of colour values used. Sometimes the attempt is to produce a new realism or naturalism; sometimes the symbolism of nature is more to the point. This is why, from generation to generation of artists, the colour values keep changing.



Gustave Caillebotte was a friend and artistic companion to several of the Impressionists but, although he was attracted to the same subject matter, he produced it in a very different manner. Most of his works seem to be in a very muted range of colours, with a very deliberate tonal harmony in his colour. This one, of the bridge over the railway in Paris, was painted

several times by him and other artists of the time. This rather abstract arrangement of the girders of the bridge and the men looking on, is typical of the way he saw his subject matter. Everything is in an industrial grey, including the men's coats, which look like a part of the same urban landscape.

What would be the modern equivalent of this approach now? Perhaps an airport is the most likely area for a view of people in transit, or an underground station, with its escalators and travellers. It would be a good thing to try out.



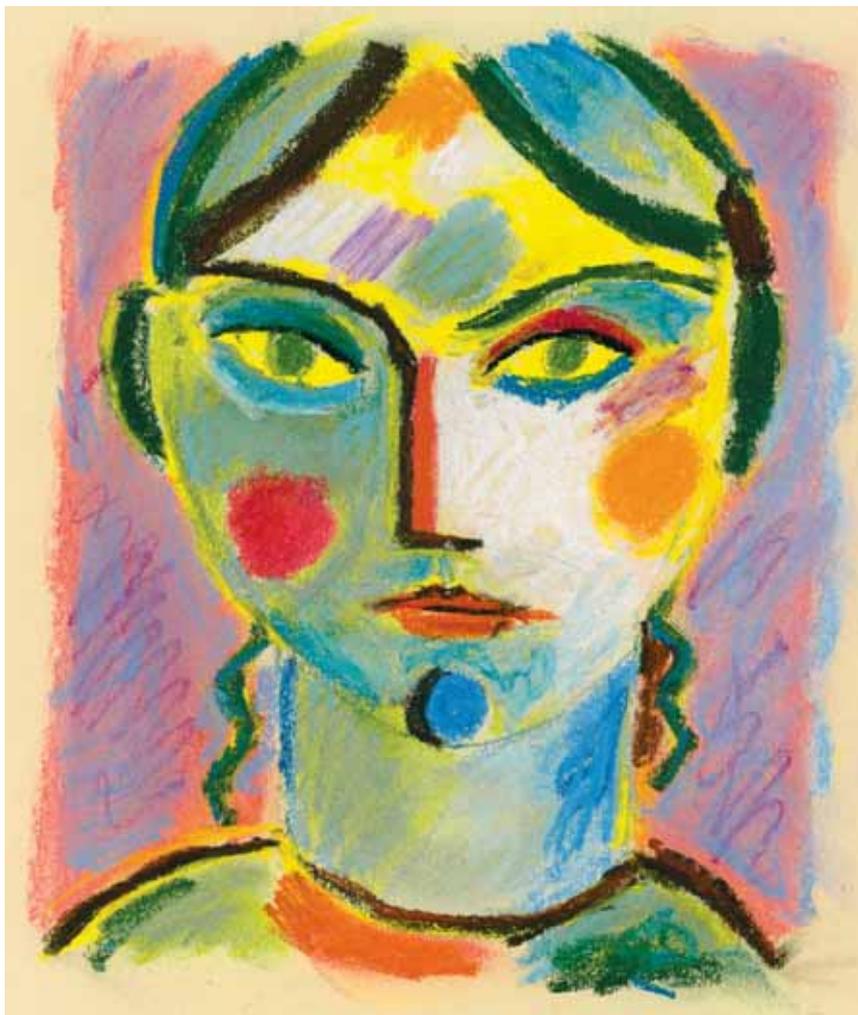
Another good artist to look at for this topic is Paul Klee. When you look at a Klee picture it is not always certain whether you are looking at an abstract painting or something more naturalistic. Here is one of his images called *Moonrise, Sunset* which is one of several that he made with these large dominant celestial shapes surrounded by rather flimsy looking man-made artefacts. In a modern version of this image you would have to find something very powerful to dominate the picture in colour and then show other surrounding life as being much less imposing or necessary.

# Extreme colour

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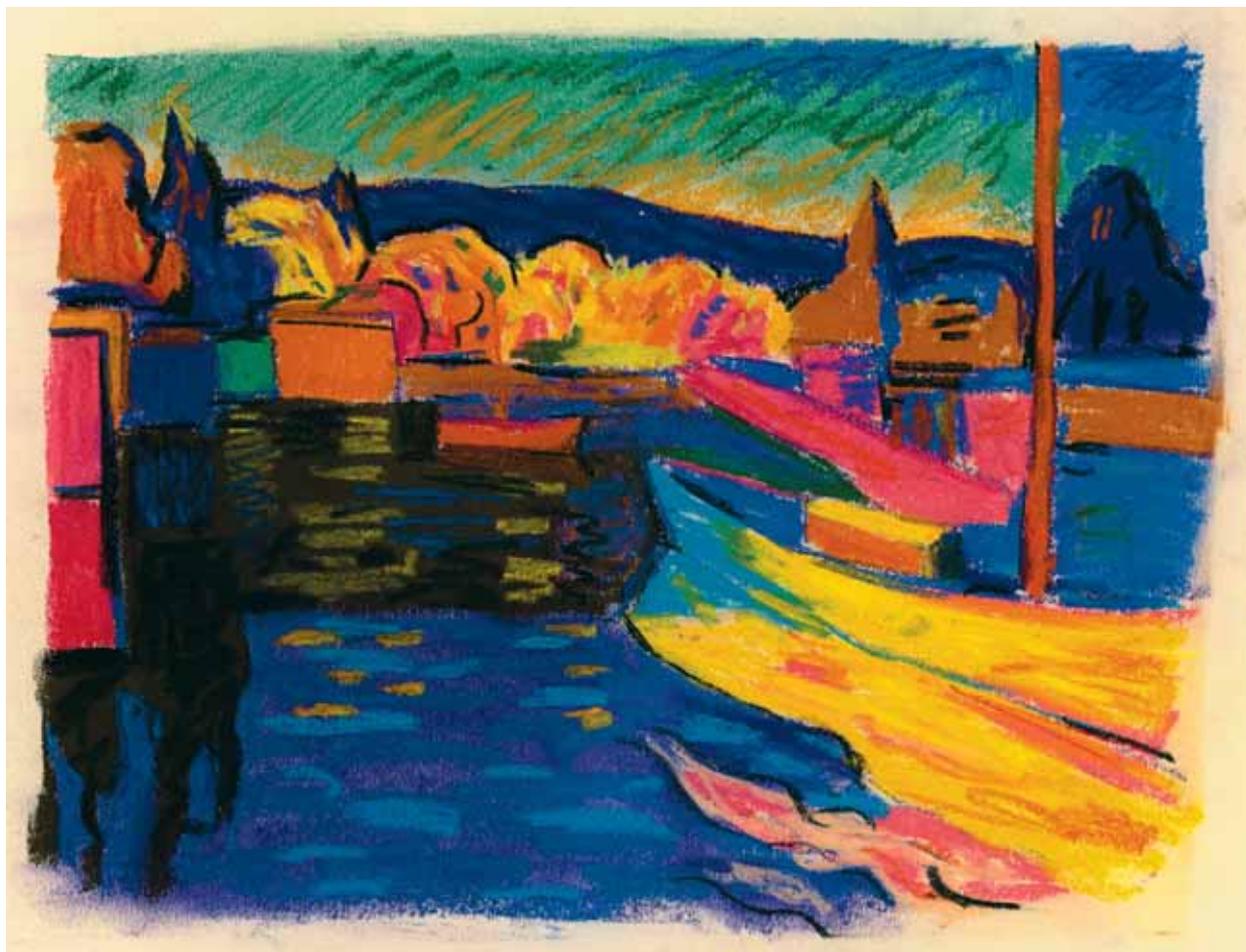
SIGNIFICANT COLOURS

In the first half of the 19th century the colours in most professional works became more and more conventional, until colour almost lost its power in painting. The Impressionists brought back a brilliance of colour into the art world and, from then on, painters began to take colour to its greatest extremes.



When it comes to a portrait of someone in the mode of this Fauve; or the Expressionist, Jawlensky, you could pick anyone whom you think might respond well to being drawn very simplistically and in strong powerful colours. So don't pick someone who is worried about what you will make them look like. The main thing is

to choose a range of colours that will work in terms of form and solidity as in the example here which uses the light green colour as the shadow on the left side of the face while reserving the strong reds or oranges for parts of the face which are more prominent.



Vasily Kandinsky was not only a confirmed colourist but he also wanted to try and produce paintings that, like music, stood alone without a story. This example of a landscape with boats he painted in the autumn of 1908, and he made the most of the colourful show put on by the trees. Not only that, but the light shining on the water and the boats is given its most lurid range of colour possible.

To get this sort of picture you would have to be prepared to throw out any ideas that you might have about tastefulness or restraint in visual terms. You will be able to find these colours in a scene but rarely with this intensity. So you will need to look hard at the possible picture you can get from a scene, picking one that allows you to go to town a bit in terms of colour.

# Abstract and artificial colour

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SIGNIFICANT COLOURS

In the 20th century the move away from figurative art led to many experiments with colour. Some abstract artists evolved a symbolic, semi-naturalistic style of painting in which colour and shape fitted around a flat plane. On the other hand the use of artificial light in the cities gave a new boost to the realistic painters of urban life.



Another semi-abstract painter was the Spanish artist, Joan Miró. He evolved a sort of language, rather like Paul Klee did, that allowed him to show all sorts of activities and objects without being forced to give a realistic treatment of things. This picture, *Hope*, was painted in 1946, and his figures are like wild cartoons which look very animated.

Exactly how you would work out this sort of idea now is not easy to say, but obviously the ability to produce some animated characters would be a great asset.





Finally, I show an example of the American painter Edward Hopper, whose work I find very interesting. Called in the original *Night Windows* (1928), here we see a scene that must be very normal for city living, where the lights in the windows across the road from you or out of the back of your house, are showing you the life of the people who live there. It may appear to be a bit voyeuristic, but it certainly makes for some interesting, abstract scenes. The frame of the window acts rather like the camera and cuts off bits of the scene, which seems to give it a greater detached quality. So, it is not such a difficult picture to emulate, although you might think that an image from a mobile phone camera might be closer to the latest equivalent.

### MASTERSTROKES

Remember colour always helps to give an emotional punch to your picture, so you need to consider carefully how you use it in any form. The power of colour to brighten, enliven or intensify your drawing is amazing, so the more you understand its possibilities, the more impact your drawings will have on viewers of your work.

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