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ArtKnows

**Transforming yourself and the world you live in through art.
A Prisoner Express publication exploring the world of art.**



Diary of Discoveries by Vladimir Kush, famous Surrealist artist

Dear Art Program Participants,

I hope you enjoy this newest edition of Treacy's ArtKnows column. Her exploration of figurative sculpture is a great introduction into the mind of an artist. I encourage you to read it more than once as, I found many of the ideas she shares deep and require much thought and attention for me to grasp.

There is a second section to this art packet put together by Danielle, a new PE volunteer. She explores the world of Surrealism, and offers a number of drawing instruction in this genre. Please note Danielle is asking for your art submissions using some of the drawing techniques she shares. We will be having a public art show in Spring 17 and your art submissions will be considered for exhibition for the PE Art Show on the Cornell Campus. Please send us feedback on the packets— both Treacy and Danielle are interested in hearing your reactions to their contribution to this mailing.

We at PE wish you a happy holiday. Even though you may be isolated, you are not alone and we wish you the very best.

Figurative Sculpture

Whenever an artist starts something new – either a new particular work of art or an entirely new medium, it's not uncommon to want to talk about it. This is the case for me in creating sculpture. Most of my life as an artist – the past 25 years – has been as printmaker and a painter.

My paintings of landscapes and interiors never actually depicted people or creatures. Instead, I suggested the presence of people through incorporating objects of daily living; chairs, boats, and so on. I never gave too much of the story to distract from the viewer's own story about the painting, wanting the viewer to imagine the inhabitants – who lived there, what did they look like, how would they relate to one another, were the inhabitants long gone or were they about to arrive?

I constructed the paintings with the same elements that demand my visual attention – a dark door, a reflection upon water; a house hidden by bushes. Even though I didn't present people in my paintings, I wasn't interested in landscape that lacked human presence of what once was or is about to be - places of human activity without the humans.



Then something happened. I moved away from landscape paintings to the making of sculpture, albeit animal figures; specifically, birds. Creating a *being* became important to me. I figure some of this is the result of going into prisons. In my artist statement I write:

My bronze sculptures have been influenced by my involvement in prisons. Although birds are usually experienced as a metaphor for freedom, these bronze birds are not free but exist within the symbiotic relationship between space and being: if being cannot exist without space; space cannot exist without being.

I work in the medium of bronze. It has an obdurate nature not malleable to anything but extreme fire and heat. Therefore, bronze is the antithesis of flight emphasizing the space-bound element of the birds.

But recently someone on Instagram asked what meaning do the birds have for me, and I realized there is a dimension beyond the above association with prison that was forcing me to create the bird sculptures.

I own birds – parrots; Bela and Vera - and yet, I know owning birds does not compel me to create bird sculptures. After all, I have two toy poodles and do not see myself making sculptures of poodles. Rather, it is the mysterious gap between the birds and me that I find haunting; a gnawing gap that I carry over to my other relationships; less than adequate

mother sometimes I feel; the indifferent wife, less than worthy friend; and so on. I don't really think that I am totally inadequate in these roles, but I do experience the gap between expectations (of others and myself) and who I am. This is what I see looking into Bela's face; obviously placing my own emotions upon Bela. But, it is Bela's face on every sculpture I do.

I don't know why other artists create figurative sculpture; are they projections of the self? In this issue, I want to explore figurative sculpture: What defines figurative sculpture, what is its history, who are the noted artists? I then want to introduce you to the feelings and thoughts by the contemporary figurative sculptor, Stephen Layne, discussing why he is a sculptor and what influences him.



*Bronze bird:
"In the pursuit of the naïve"*



*Bronze bird head:
"The other"*



*Clay work in progress
(will be cast into bronze)*

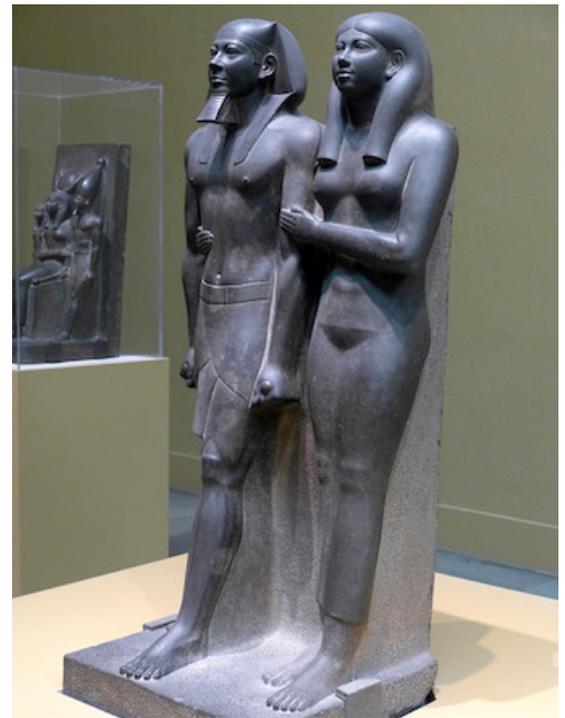
History of Figurative sculpture

Figurative sculpture, sometimes written as **figurativism**, describes artwork that is clearly derived from real object sources, and therefore, defined as representational. Figurative is often defined in contrast to abstract art. This applies to both paintings and sculpture but because this issue is focusing upon sculpture, I will only refer to sculpture.

Egyptian sculpture:

One of the oldest forms of figurative sculpture is Egyptian (There are several other early civilizations that created figures. For instance, the Venus de Willendorf – primitive female stone figures found in Austria dating from 20,00-280,00 BC) Egyptian stone figurative sculpture depended upon idealism which means it was art dependent upon one's mental picture of something in a sense of perfect state rather than what it may actually look like in reality. Depicting the figure – portrait or body – as it really looks is referred to as **realism** or **naturalism**.

A **ka** statute (3000-500 B.C.) is a type of Egyptian statute intended to provide a resting place for the "ka" (life-force or spirit) of the person after death. The ancient Egyptians believed the "ka" along with the physical body, name, the "ba" (personality or soul), and the "swt" (shadow) made up the five aspects of a person.



*Egyptian
Old Kingdom, Dynasty 4, reign of Menkaura
2490-2472 B.C.*

Ancient Greek Sculpture (615-480 B.C.)



A **kouros** (Ancient Greek: *κοῦρος*, plural **kouroi**) is the modern term given to free-standing ancient Greek sculptures representing nude male youths. In Ancient Greek *kouros* means "youth, boy, especially of actual people". Such statues are found across the Greek-speaking world; the preponderance of these were found in sanctuaries of Apollo with more than one hundred from the sanctuary of Apollo Ptoios, Boeotia, alone. These sculptures were typically **marble**, but the form is also rendered in limestone, wood, bronze, ivory and terracotta. They are typically life-sized, though early colossal examples are up to 3 meters tall.

The female sculptural counterpart of the *kouros* is the *kore*. Like the ka figures of Egypt, the figure is idealized. It isn't until the Classical Greek period that realism was emphasized in sculpture.

[left] *Calf Bearer*, ca. 560 B.C.

[right] *Peplos Kore*, ca. 530 B.C.

Classical Greek Sculpture (480-323 B.C.)

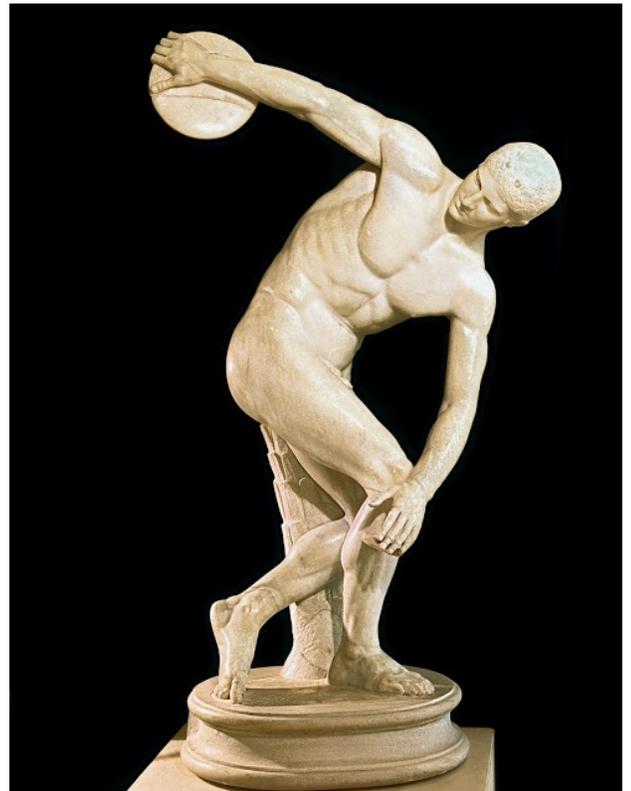
The Classical period saw changes in both the style and function of sculpture. Poses became more naturalistic and the technical skill of Greek sculptors in depicting the human form in a variety of poses greatly increased. From about 500 BC statues began to depict real people. The statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton set up in Athens to mark the overthrow of the tyranny were said to be the first public monuments to actual people.

As Greek artists began to study human movement and anatomy, they discovered that living humans tend to display a "weight shift" or contrapposto when standing.

The first Greek statue to exhibit **contrapposto** is the famed Kritios Boy, dating circa 480 BC. Contrapposto soon became a defining element of Greek sculptural technique, culminating in the Canon of the **Doryphoros** ("spear-bearer"), which adopted extremely dynamic and sophisticated contrapposto in its cross-balance of rigid and loose limbs.

Most of the sculptures made at this time were created to show appreciation to the gods for showing them good fortune, to help bring good fortune in the future, and to gain favor from the gods. Greek temples were specially made to fit the large cult statues. They believed that placing shrines around the areas that were said to be holy would please the gods. Because Greek gods were mostly myths based on real people's lives, more man-like sculptures were created. Most sculptures created can be understood to represent myth, archetype or purpose in life.

The Discobolus of Myron ("discus thrower" is a Greek sculpture that was completed toward the end of the Severe period, circa 460–450 BC.



During the classical period sculptors were not only creating works for temples, but also mortuary statues to show tribute to deceased loved ones. The sculptures would often show the deceased person in a relaxed pose. Successful athletes and rich families would commission statues of themselves for temples to show respect to the gods. In the 5th century BC portraits became popular and busts featuring generals, philosophers and political leaders appeared.

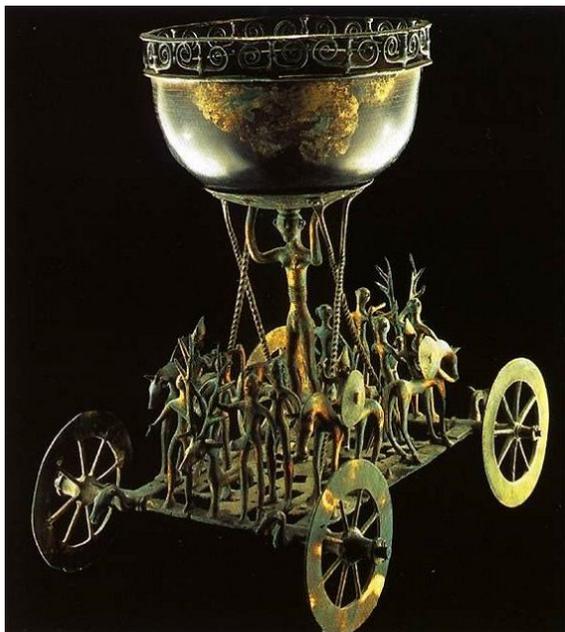
The high quality of Greek work attracted Italian interest, and greatly influenced both Etruscan, and later, Roman art. The enthusiasm with which Rome greeted Greek art has prove important not merely because of the transmission of classical Greek style, but also because most of the extant classical Greek works survive mainly in the form of Roman marble copies of Greek bronze originals. As bronze has always been a valuable metal, most of the originals were likely long ago melted down, and the few genuine survivals have been found mostly in the context of shipwrecks. However, Greeks did carve marble, and a number of classical Greek marbles have survived; the famed **Parthenon Marbles** (also known as the Elgin Marbles), lasted *in situ* until the beginning of the 19th Century. In fact, many of the surviving classical Greek marbles are from an architectural context.

Celtic Sculpture (500BC-1100 AD)

Given their preference for abstract or stylized forms, it is scarcely surprising that the Celts should have left comparatively few images of their gods. Most of the finest examples of Celtic sculpture involve disciplines like metalwork and jewelry, as well as stone carving. Of the stoneworks, many of the finest surviving examples were placed in or near important burial sites.

Figures of animals and humans do appear, especially in works with a religious element. Among the most spectacular objects are "cult wagons" in bronze, which are large wheeled trolleys containing crowded groups of standing figures, sometimes with a large bowl mounted on a shaft at the center of the platform, probably for offerings to gods; a few examples have been found in graves. The figures are relatively simply modeled, without much success in detailed anatomical naturalism compared to cultures further south, but often achieving an impressive effect. There are also a number of single stone figures, often with a "leaf crown" — two flattish rounded projections, "resembling a pair of bloated commas", rising behind and to the side of the head, probably a sign of divinity.

Human heads alone, without bodies, are far more common, frequently appearing in relief on all sorts of objects. In the La Tène period faces often (along with bird's heads) emerge from decoration that at first looks abstract, or plant-based. Games are played with faces that change when they are viewed from different directions. In figures showing the whole body, the head is often over-large. There is evidence that the human head had a special importance in Celtic religious beliefs.



[left]
Irish cult wagon
Found in burial sites,
from 400BC.

[right]
Manchan Shrine from
the La Tène period,
1130 AD Ireland

Gothic sculpture: 1150-1280 AD



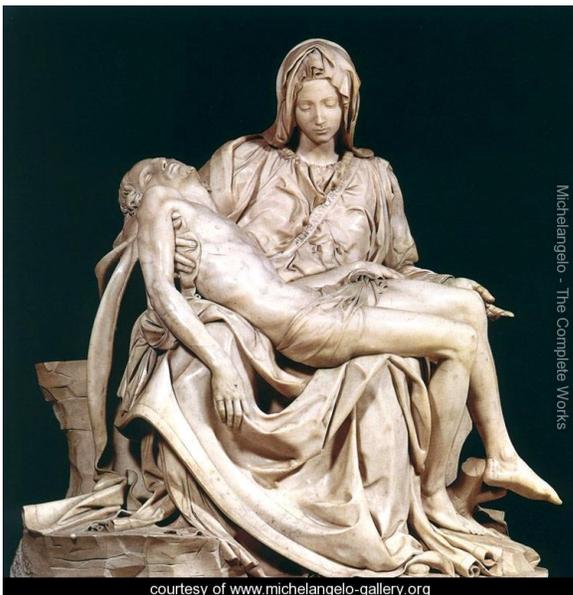
While the Greek art showed a curiosity about the human body, the Gothic period showed a curiosity of the spirit. It has been said that Greek curiosity was more scientist and the Gothic curiosity was more lover of the spirit. It was an affectionate curiosity, full of little whimsies and extravagances. Instead of limiting itself to humanity it could range playfully and capriciously across the whole of creation, picking out details; a monstrous form here, a charming turn of the wrist there. Greece had developed in the direction of greater breadth and simplicity: Gothic developed in the direction of complexity and preciousness, and gaily mingled the grotesque with the elegant.

Example of Gothic sculpture on a church

Gargoyle is a carved or formed grotesque with a spout designed to convey water from a roof and away from the side of a building. They are usually elongated imaginary animals. Most people at this time were illiterate, and therefore images were very important to convey ideas. Many early gargoyles depicted some version of a dragon, especially in France. In addition to serving as spouts for water, the gaping mouths of these gargoyles evoked the fearsome destructiveness of these legendary beasts, reminding the people of the need for the church's protection.

Renaissance sculpture (14th-17 Centuries - Europe)

Renaissance, the period immediately following the Middle Ages in Europe, saw a great revival of interest in the classical learning and values of ancient Greece and Rome. And many of the sculpture created at this time were directly influenced by the sculpture created in Classical Greece. Against a backdrop of political stability and growing prosperity, the development of new technologies—including the printing press, a new system of astronomy and the discovery and exploration of new continents—was accompanied by a flowering of philosophy, literature and especially art. The style of painting, sculpture and decorative arts identified with the Renaissance emerged in Italy in the late 14th century; it reached its zenith in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, in the work of Italian masters such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael. In addition to its expression of classical Greco-Roman traditions, Renaissance art sought to capture the experience of the individual and the beauty and mystery of the natural world.



[left]
Michelangelo's Pietà
1498 AD

[right]
Donatello's Mary Magdalena
1454 AD

19th Century Sculpture

A major artist of the 19th Century is the French sculptor Auguste Rodin. In the 1860's when Rodin began making sculpture, art was deeply rooted in the past – telling stories from religion, history and myth; and it told these stories as if the artist had been a witness to the events. However, Rodin transformed sculpture into something that we today called modern; it is sculpture speaking to the artist's and viewer's emotions and imaginations; telling stories that are both internal and conceptual; and telling stories for which there are no right or wrong way of interpreting them. Even more importantly, Rodin believed that the quality of the sculpture surface and contours of the piece could provide additional emotional content to the piece.



Rodin, The Thinker (1902)

20th century



Fernando Botero Angulo (born 19 April 1932) is a **figurative artist** and sculptor from **Medellín, Colombia**. His signature style, also known as "Boterismo", depicts people and figures in large, exaggerated volume, which can represent political criticism or humor, depending on the piece. He is considered the most recognized and quoted living artist from **Latin America** and his art can be found in highly visible places around the world;

Fernando Botero, Female nude with cigarette

INTO the 21st century.

If the experience of my husband, Gary Weisman, who teaches sculpture at the oldest art college in United States (Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts) is relevant, figurative sculpture is not as popular as it has been in the past. There are fewer art students than ever interested in learning how to sculpt the figure. I am not sure why this is happening. It may be that art such as installations is much more trendy. Or, it may be the very simple reason that it is so difficult to master the human art form. This takes hours of drawing and studying form. There is no short cut in learning the figure as an art form.

Bronze sculpture by Gary Weisman (2012)



Stephen Layne – 21 Century American sculptor known for his sculpture of Joe Frazier at XFINITY LIVE in the South Philadelphia Sports Complex,



[Steve Layne in his studio working on the clay sculpture of Joe Frazier before it is cast into bronze. In the background is the smaller version of Joe Frazier, "Philadelphia."]

I first heard about Steve when he gave a talk at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. I was struck by his understanding of the art process – understanding art not as something one learns but something one lives. This art-as-a-means-of-living (not as a means of **making** a living – as one thinks economically; but art situated in one's blood) is evident in his work. I asked Steve if he would write something for this newsletter:

"Often, I've felt delayed or stopped in work and was forced to take side roads from the art I've tried to do. However, looking back I understand these obstacles now as learning experiences - whether I accepted them at the time or not. The obstacles to work showed me things that I was probably too stubborn to see at the time. In the midst of work, it can be hard deciphering what is stubbornness, what is character, what is true and so on.

I work in wood sculpture. In these pieces, I work to represent children as vessels of mental and emotional intensity without illustrating a specific expression and without physical power. The joints of the shoulders are constructed with a tight or limited range of motion. The figures' hands are balled into fists, holding an energy that they do not or cannot release. They are self containing. I usually avoid gesture or movement

in sculpture, as these seem to distract from and dissipate the kind of intensity and focus that I am working to build in them. My giving illustrative expression to the figures leaches intensity. Instead I am interested in the energy contained in unleashed energy – like the tension of a drawn bow.

The piece titled "Iron Child" was inspired by books I read on the 1960s Chinese cultural revolution which resonated for me. Rarely, have I read books specifically on art that held as much interest for me. That's just me. Somehow I always found more inspiration in art forms that aren't readily thought of as "fine art." For example there's the art of psychology, philosophy, or the art of people that lived a kind of life that made them artists of human interaction or social change. Years ago, I read a book entitled "The Inner Game of Tennis." by Timothy Gallwey. While I don't play tennis at all, the author describes the most remarkable approach to learning that can be applied to the learning of anything. I return to this book again and again. Another book I read many times is "Freedom from the Known" by Jiddu Krishnamurti, the great Indian philosopher. This book caused me to look at art and my life much differently. Reading about Michelangelo or Da Vinci just doesn't move me, but reading peripheral subjects really do.

"Iron Child" is a character in the specific book "Red Sorghum", about the Chinese revolution. During the Chinese revolution there was mass starvation due to the government's enforcement that farmers had to leave their farms and work in the iron industry. Their farms were burned, abandoned and the masses starved. The author, Mo Yan, who grew up in the middle of it, wrote a book where the mythical character "Iron Child" adapts to his environment by learning to live on eating the iron itself.

[Ironchild, wood]



I took this content and wed it with my experience of working with a theater that produced plays involving Japanese Bunraku puppets. These aren't puppets on strings, but are full-bodied wooden pieces articulated at the joints and covered in kimonos. One puppet (which is often about 4 feet tall) is operated by several performers who are all dressed in black to hide their appearance onstage. One performer operates the head, for example, while others operate the limbs. I found this psychologically fascinating as it relates to inner conflict or harmony and how that translates to physical action.



[Bunraku puppets]

The philosophy of Bunraku is quite unique as an art form. Reading from the Internet:

“Bunraku is unique among other theatrical forms in that it does not attempt to express life, but rather to capture or embody it and to make the puppets come to life. Consequently, the tayu (narrator) does not just recite the lines as a substitute for the silent puppet, nor does the shamisen (three-stringed spike lute) simply accompany the singing and narration.”

An important aspect of these puppets is in the 'non expression' or the non-localized, blank expression of the faces. The Japanese call these “Noh” masks, and the effectiveness of these masks on stage is mesmerizing. When the characters and content of the play is introduced, suddenly they seem to come alive. One explanation for this is that when the viewer is not directed by an expression on the face of the piece, they supplement their own emotional content and imagine they are actually seeing that expression on the mask. It essentially mirrors the audience back to themselves, experiencing their own imagination, and their own array of emotions.

My pieces in wood have been influenced by these bunraku concepts. During gallery exhibitions of my art, I've watched people have strong but highly varied responses to them. It suggests to me that people often experience themselves, their own thoughts, memories and conclusions, often much more than they experience each other or the world around them; they see the world through the filters of their own eyes.

Process of the medium:

Why wood? Bronze is an expensive process and one where I didn't feel I would have my hands on the work in the way I wanted. I searched for other possibilities: Stone didn't feel right either; plaster is a fragile and impermanent material and is something usually poured instead of built. I wanted to build, not pour. Wood felt right. While having spent years on and off as a carpenter did not give me fine woodworking skills, it helped a lot. Wood started to feel like the right material for me.

When I make a piece, people will sometimes ask me why is it not in clay or bronze? To me, every aspect of a piece of work should reflect its intention; it's content. Bronze lends itself well to certain forms, structures and modes of expression. Fired clay lends itself well to a different sensibility or intention. And, I've seen amazing sculptural forms made with paper because the artist was sensitive to what paper does best - how it best represents form and content. But to me, wood is the right feel for much of the work I've made. It is easily worked, strong, sturdy and structural, but can be bruised or broken. I like that dichotomy.

Wood is a living thing. Depending on the approach, working with wood can make the artist's process (how it was made) uncommonly evident and accessible to the audience. I like to make that process simple and obvious. I don't care for work that is so sophisticated that it puts the artist in a realm that cannot really be understood simply by the viewer.

Carving has been a long journey for me. Learning how to sharpen chisels is an art form in itself. My collection of tools, such as Japanese saws and files, has slowly grown over the years. When I started out, I thought power tools would speed up the

work but with practice I've found that for most aspects, the hand tools are just as good and a lot more rewarding – enabling me a closer relationship to the material.

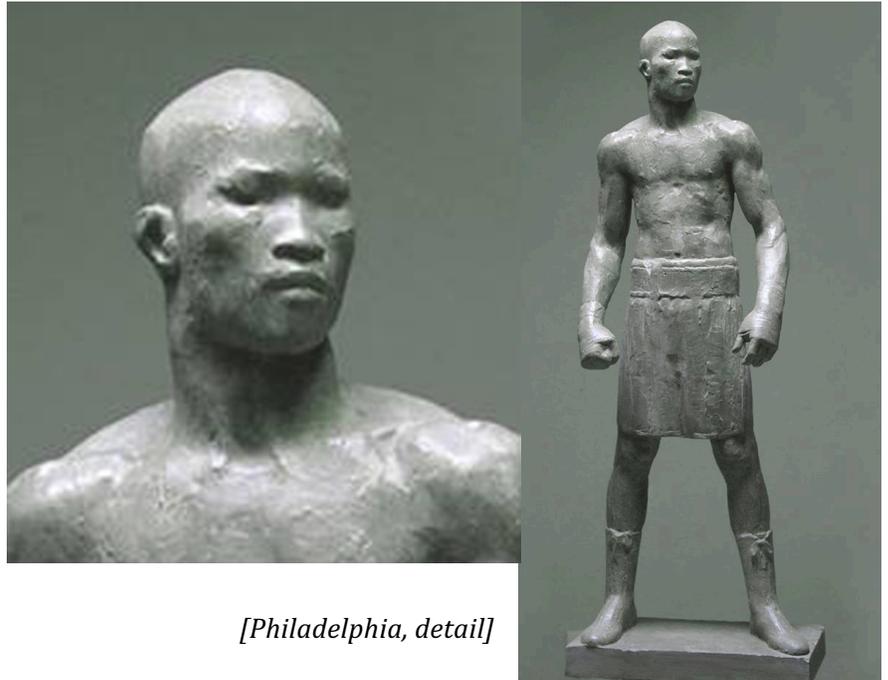
Choosing wood that will cut well is another consideration. Basswood is easy to cut but has a bland appearance and is quite soft. Walnut, cherry, oak and other species can be quite hard. My favorite carving wood is a lighter and softer version of walnut called butternut, aka white Walnut. It is hard enough in that it makes a crisp cut but provides a subtle and appealing grain pattern. This makes it ideal for applying translucent layers of gesso or milk paint as a finish.

Some artists will take a long strip of bark and just begin to carve away. My approach is different. It involves a lot of planning demanding that I make drawings so specific that they appear as blueprints. When I got out of high school I went to a tech school for mechanical drawing on an “old school” drafting board. Later I decided I didn't want to do that with my life and felt I wasted my time. I now see learning to make specific drawings helps me plan. It forced me to think three-dimensionally about everything I do.

I can do fairly complex things in wood. And yet, I find that keeping things simple is a better way to go for me. The slots and pegs and assemblage in the figures are things I want the viewer to understand rather than amazed. I find doing things complicated is too easy a trap to fall into – a parlor trick. Creating simple, mostly unembellished form is the hardest thing to do – there is nothing to hide behind.

The Joe Frazier sculpture at the Philadelphia Stadium:

The “Philadelphia” sculpture is seemingly far different than my wood pieces. But to me, the intention and the content is basically the same. I worked to make this brutal figure of a young bull, as a lean, hungry boxer. But at the same time, it's a multi-layered expression. His hard stance is in response to his experience. But this hardness is a front; there is a deeper experience underneath. His approach is both aggressive and flinching while his upturned head suggests that he is neither of these conflicted states of mind; something beyond them, something outside of them.



[Philadelphia, detail]

In working on “Philadelphia” I found inspiration from reading the work of intelligent people like Jiddu Krishnamurti or Viktor Frankl. Like the Japanese inspired wood pieces, there is only the faintest suggestion of the eyes on the sculpture. This is to allow the viewer the space and freedom to engage their own experience.

Initially I wanted to carve the sculpture in wood. But wood didn't seem like the right material. It seemed clear as I worked on it in clay, that the piece belonged in bronze. In working the clay, I handled it differently. I wanted to create more of an impressionistic effect rather a classical effect where the light shines softly and evenly over form. Instead of the classical modeling of clay, I worked to create a rougher and more faceted surface, for harder reflections of light.

I didn't do the “Philadelphia” piece for any reason other than I was moved to do it. But it drew the attention of the City and I was appointed to create the Joe Frazier monument. This was a great honor and a great challenge. It had to be physically dynamic and a strong design from all angles, which is one of the biggest challenges in three-dimensional art. The pose needed to feel very active. Movement in figurative sculpture is often explained as happening in three stages: where the

subject was; where they are and; where they are going. Movement in terms of time; past, presence; future. Actors keep this sequence in mind when performing in theater orienting them as to where they are in the story. Combining these three states in one gesture helps to generate a sense of movement in what is an otherwise a static, bronze object. In the Joe sculpture, past, present and future are as follows: I set Joe's legs and feet in a position of where his strength came from, his upper body and arms were set to his moment of present action, and his eyes are just a bit up and away, in realization that he had just achieved his victory looking to the future.

I spent about eight intense months sculpting this work in clay and it took about six additional months to cast in bronze. In crouched position Joe is about 9' tall. If he stood straight up, Joe would be 11' 4". I had not worked that large before and all of my past skills came into play. When a monumental size piece is cast in bronze, it has to be cut into parts. The parts are cast in bronze separately and then welded back together. The total weight is around ½ ton of bronze. A hoist brought the work onto a truck that transported it to the installation site. Long metal rods, welded to the bottom of the feet are inserted into holes drilled into the concrete pedestal. Industrial adhesive fastens the piece to the pedestal. A huge crowd of family, friends, fans and city officials attended the unveiling. A documentary done on the work can be found on YouTube, titled: The Left Hook Legacy Documentary. It documents a lot of the process.

I asked Steve about what he wrote:

TZ: Do you mind sharing some of the obstacles that you had to encounter? I think most prisoners feels intensively involved with obstacles.

SL: Well, some obstacles are internal and some external. Often the internal ones are far more important to face. Being around alcoholism, mental illness and living in cars in extreme poverty as a child has a way of psychologically living on into adulthood. It can create such a small and confining perspective with such limited views of possibility. As I grew up I took on this perspective and have found that shedding these perceptions, these obstacles, has been the most important thing to do. For me, to know what you value, what you believe in, and to act on it, is the way through.

TZ: Could you comment on how it was for you in the process of making Joe Frazier fighting as it suggests more action that you seem to have in the standing figure of Joe; in light of your statement that you don't want gesture or movement in your work. (This is not a criticism – but I know that there must have been something you felt adding this dimension that I am assuming may have been a struggle.)

SL: It's very interesting to me. I deeply resonate with another's physical actions, and putting them in clay comes naturally. Joe Frazier was all about physical action. "Get the job done" was kind of his mantra. So, I wanted to serve that in an inspired way. But I consider all of this action as a side effect of something more fundamental, or perhaps more primal. The element of potential itself is what is most fascinating to me, while the action it plays out is secondary.

TZ: You mention *intention*. In the sentence, "To me, every aspect of a piece of work should reflect it's intention; it's content," how are you using the idea of intention. Some prisoners might think of intention as in "My intention in this work of art is to....." I get the feeling that you are using the word intention very differently more in the line of "allowing that which is to be reveal will be reveal." But I don't want to put words into your mouth

SL: Wow, that's a tough question. The intention of the work for me is always the same. It is that the energy, the life of it, transcend it's physical, static form. I once read that the intention of good technique is that it go unnoticed. When I look at Brancusi for example, I'm no longer looking at the object, but that which the object intends. This is why material matters. Scale, form, all of it matters as it is all in service of going beyond it's physical boundaries. My intention is to generate a sense of intensity and pressure within that vessel. The vessel only exists to assist that intention, and hopefully get out of the way in the process.

TZ: Did you feel the bronze process was out of your hands because the actual process of casting the bronze was given to another person – or did you cast your own bronze and not like the process?

SL: I did do some of my own bronze casting and have had others do castings for me. I suppose it really does come down to building instead of pouring. In other words it comes down to the evidence of building something. Bronze to me feels more like the clean and polished result of something. This is a great effect in it's own way, but I suppose it just isn't my temperament.

TZ: Would you say that a medium, be it wood carving, bronze, clay modeling, etc, calls you to it rather than it being a decision on your part? How do you see personal decision in the act of creativity?

SL: Yes, I do feel that artists are drawn to certain mediums and I feel it has to do with things beyond decision. Personal decision is a very interesting and important topic to me. There is a vast difference between inventing something and discovering something. I feel often that personal decision falls into the category of inventing something. Invention is important, but I feel it is limited. It is based on reforming things we already know. Discovery on the other hand is about awareness, studying something without bias or conclusion, and waiting on it's answers. To me this is a bigger world than inventions and decisions.

TZ: Why didn't stone feel right for you?

SL: It is too far from the physical body for me. Too cold and hard. Of the Egyptian pieces I love, the stone pieces are amazing, but the wood pieces, I just feel them. I can really experience them.

TZ: Have you considered concrete? Some prisoners have worked as concrete workers before prison and this may be an expertise for them to explore as an art form.

SL: I have considered concrete more than once and still see it as a possibility. Again, the form and meaning of the piece should belong to concrete. Maybe the work is about the city. Maybe it is about the roughness or hardness of it. Maybe it is polished and about a more sublime content. I am still considering it's possibilities.

TZ: Can you give an example of how the process of working in wood is seen by the audience?

SL: I've often told my clay modeling students (who get caught up trying to make an expressive surface on the clay) that an expressive surface is a side effect of an intelligent process. I've often told drawing students that a drawing is, in essence, evidence of human intelligence, that shouldn't be polished away. So, in wood, anything I can leave as evidence of the discovery of the form of the piece, I will. To leave chisel marks, to cut clean slots or fasten with simple pegs, I feel engages the viewer and brings them into the tangible act of creating a piece of work.

If you have a question for Steve, please forward them to me at Prisoner Express.

Conclusion:

Obviously there is no conclusion to figurative sculpture: It will continue until there are no more people. Obvious also, is that there are thousands and thousands of figurative sculpture that have been created – and taking one of two images from any one period does not do justice.

Assignment:

Do a couple of drawings from life; draw figures that you see and then try to create a sculpture you'd like to do of that figure. Remember, that the sculpture is three-dimensional and several drawings will be required to get all the perspective

Thanks,
Treacy



"Although the dream is a very strange phenomenon and an inexplicable mystery, far more inexplicable is the mystery and aspect our minds confer on certain objects and aspects of life."

SURREALISM

Surrealism was an art movement that began in 1924 and ended in 1966. It was a response to Dadaism, a radical art movement that reflected much of the societal chaos that constituted the Great War and post-great war periods in the early 1900s. While often still holding on to bizarre imagery and scenery, the chaos was more internal and stemmed from personal experiences and thoughts that reached the unconscious level of the mind. André Breton, known as the founder of surrealism, described it as "psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express - verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner - the actual functioning of thought." Its influential artists such as Salvador Dali, Max Ernst, Giorgio de Chirico and André Masson helped to transform what started as a literary movement into an art movement. The emphasis on the personal imagination caused much artwork to consist of the signature qualities that belonged to Romanticism, a movement that romanticized nature and was denoted by impressionist landscape artwork. However, the work aims to achieve a higher or deeper level of reality instead of distorting or beautifying reality. They called this "surreality". The work of Sigmund Freud, a neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis, which emphasized the truth that can be uncovered from penetrating and analyzing the unconscious, caused many surrealist artists to become infatuated with personal dreams and imagination. Elements of realism were integrated in the recognition of how the mind deals with ordinary experiences of every-day objects and life

The commonalities that describe surrealist imagery tend to be elusive. The themes are often outlandish, perplexing, and sometimes uncanny in the sense that it made it difficult for the viewer to resort to comforting assumptions.

Pertinent Themes...

Psychoanalysis: Method of analyzing psychic phenomena and treating emotional disorders by encouraging spoken thought on past experiences, past trauma, childhood memories, and re-occurring or vivid dreams in the sense of emotion and/ or imagery.

Inter-war movement: Between World War I and World War II

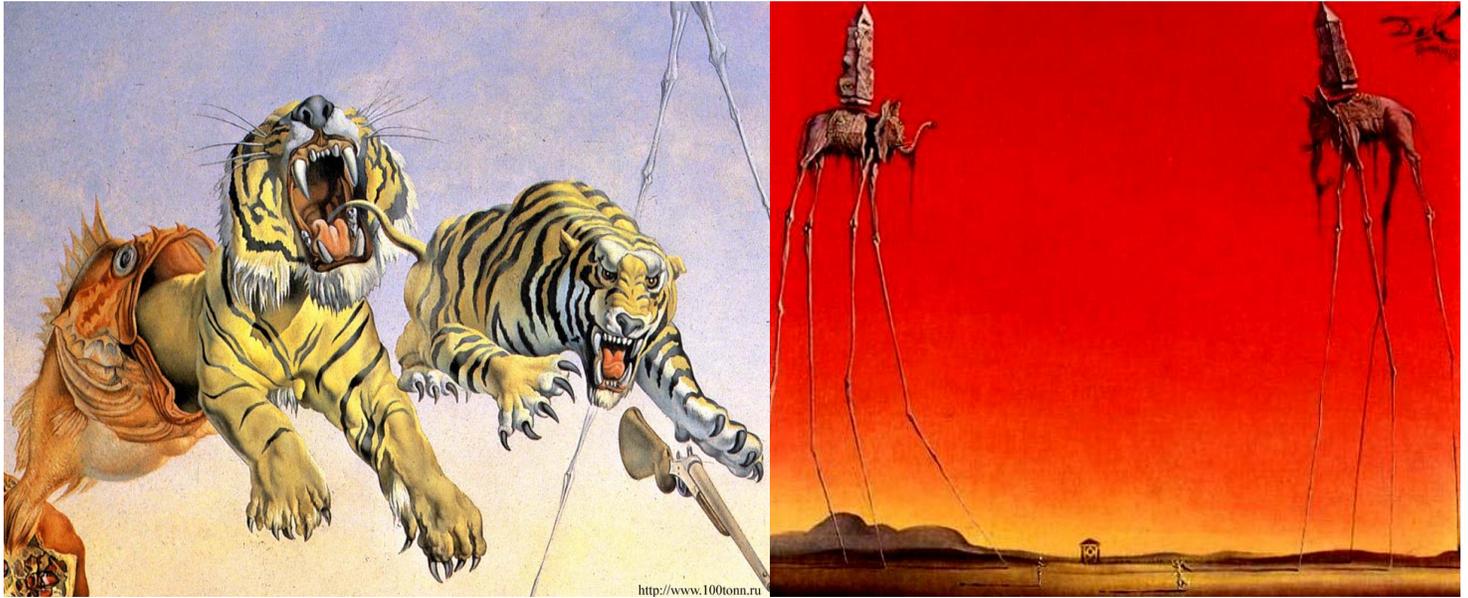
Surrealist Automatism: The belief in the intelligence of the unconscious that directs the hand to make meaningful and automatic art

Naturalism: Thoughts based on natural instincts and desires

Biomorphism: Abstract shapes or patterns derived from biological animals or functional devices

Juxtaposition: Two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect

SALVADOR DALI



Salvador Dali (1904 - 1989) is perhaps the most well known surrealist painter. Influenced by Sigmund Freud, he was particularly interested in the nature of paranoia and a person can see one thing but “irrationally” interpret it to be something entirely different. It was though to say that human interpretations or misinterpretations are informed and shaped by real experiences and biases, especially ones that are not easily accessible to the conscious part of the mind. It is through this lens that such an interpretation can be deemed as rational. He indulged in the human ability to self induce a paranoiac state - causing one to be able to take illusionistic double take. This was portrayed throughout his work by creating believable images within unlikely scenarios; his goal to convince his viewers of the reality of the unconscious world of dreams.

A common attribute of Dali’s work stemmed from Sigmund Freud’s belief that the re-occurrence of objects or animals that come up in self-expression or dreams are not random, but symbolic of some phenomenon that is pervading the unconscious mind. These symbols were a means to understand and make sense of one’s unconscious self. Elephants are a reoccurring image throughout Dali’s work and this inspired him with profound emotion. In the painting to the right he specifically depicts elephants with large bodies holding a lot of weight, therefore emphasizing their strength. The long thin legs upholding all this weight are meant to evoke weightlessness. It is up for question how much purposefulness was used to create such imagery or if it was more accurately derived from his dreams, perhaps shedding light onto his very personal desires.

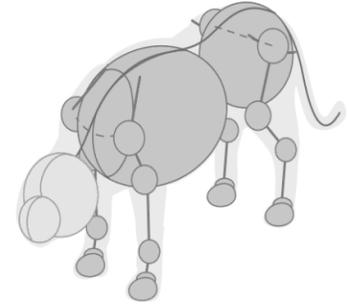
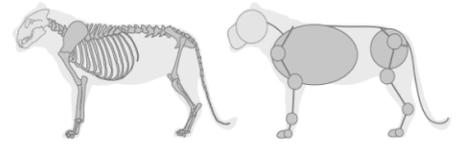
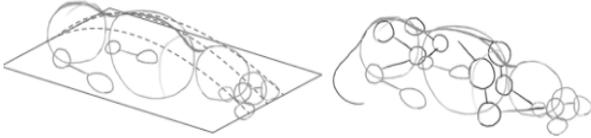
Prompts

1. According to many proponents of the surrealist movements, dream exploration can be revealing. One way to make dreams more vivid is to keep a dream journal and write down every detail that happens in your dreams as soon as you awake from them. **Try painting or drawing a scene or combination of scenes derived from your dreams and feels particularly significant.**
2. If dreams seem uninteresting to you, think of animals or objects that have seemed weirdly familiar or significant to you while growing up. **Try painting or drawing these animals or objects in the context of your imagination.** Perhaps distorting their shape or creating patterns may help to implement the artistic effects of surrealism.

Drawing a Basic Animal

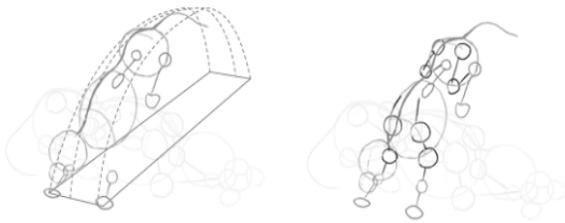
Step 1

Determine the pose and position of the animal. It can be 2D or it can be 3D by positioning the animal towards or away from the viewer. Examples of these two options are depicted in the right image. Determine the spatial plane that orients your animal by lightly sketching a rhombus shape like in the image below.



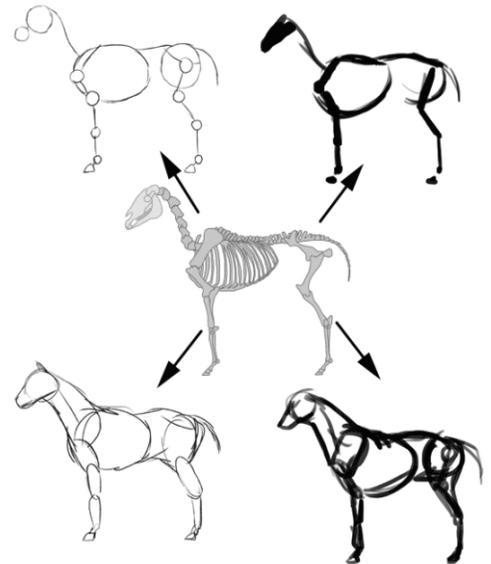
Step 2

The spine creates a general line for the silhouette. It's embedded in the skull (in the back for four-legged animals and in the bottom for humans), then it runs between the scapulae, crosses the hips and ends on the tip of the tail. Establishing the spine will help you to fill in the rest of the basic skeleton.



Step 3

Then outline the pose using a very basic skeleton drawing. The basic joints, bones and muscle masses can be depicted in this first stage. Bones can be depicted by lines while joints can be depicted by circles and muscles or main components of the body can be depicted using shapely circles of the appropriate size. The main components of a pose include the skull, chest, hips, limbs, and joints. Again these components can be simply denoted by lines and circles. It helps to use a pencil with an eraser during this step so that the shapes can constantly be readjusted making sure each part is proportional to the rest of its body.



Step 4

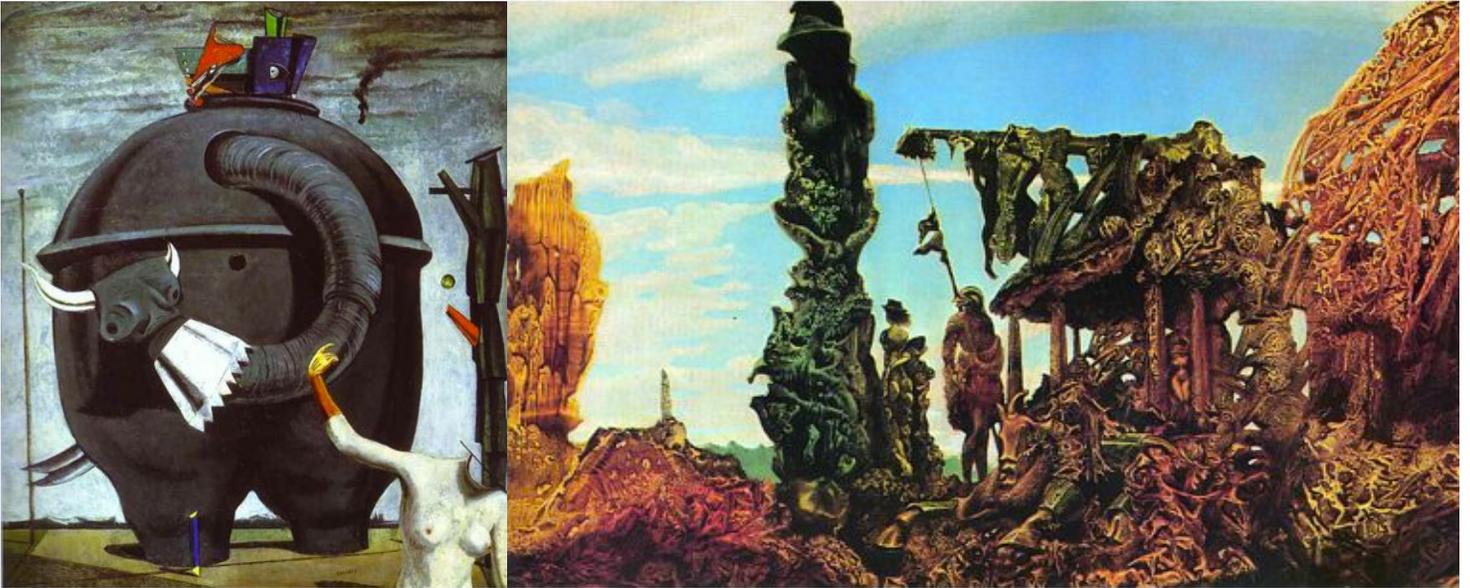
Add body to surround the bones to create the neck, limbs and torso. Begin to connect parts of the circles so that the shape of the animal becomes more present.



Step 5

Cover the skeleton and basic muscles masses and with fur or scales while making beginning to erase the circle and line sketches that took place in step 2. Use the roundness of each circle to help with shading. Some shading techniques will be talked about later on.

MAX ERNST



Max Ernst (1891-1976) dealt with the exploration of many different surrealist techniques. Most techniques dealt with texture

Frottage: Rubbing from a textured surface. For example, taking a coin and placing it underneath the sheet of paper that is being worked on and rubbing a pencil over it to create a new texture.

Grattage: Scraping paint from a wet surface after the drawing or painting is laid out.

Decalcomania: Pressing fluids or paints between two sheets to reveal a mixture of textures and colors.

He used these techniques as an imaginative tool to uncover the sorts of animals or objects that may lay within the texture. He took pauses throughout his work to discover what kind of form the texture began to take on, similar to making up animals in the clouds. In the painting to the right (titled Europe after the Rain II), he used decalcomania and again searched through the complicated mass of texture for familiar shapes. These sorts of techniques were used to facilitate an "automatic response" much in the same way that a psychologist would use the "Rorschach ink blot" test to generate an immediate response from the patient. These types of response were believed to be revealing an ulterior layer of thought stemming from the unconscious mind. Once these familiar shapes were decided on he would enhance their details. He would also carve out negative space to form the sky in order to liberate or detangle the unconscious image. The result was feelings of devastation and futility that veiled the aftermath of World War one.

Juxtapositioning unrelated images that provokes a subconscious response was another technique used by Ernst and specifically in his painting to the left, titled The Elephant Celebes. Pierre Reverdy, a French poet wrote, "The more the relationship between the two juxtaposed realities is distant and true, the stronger the image will be -- the greater its emotional power and poetic reality."

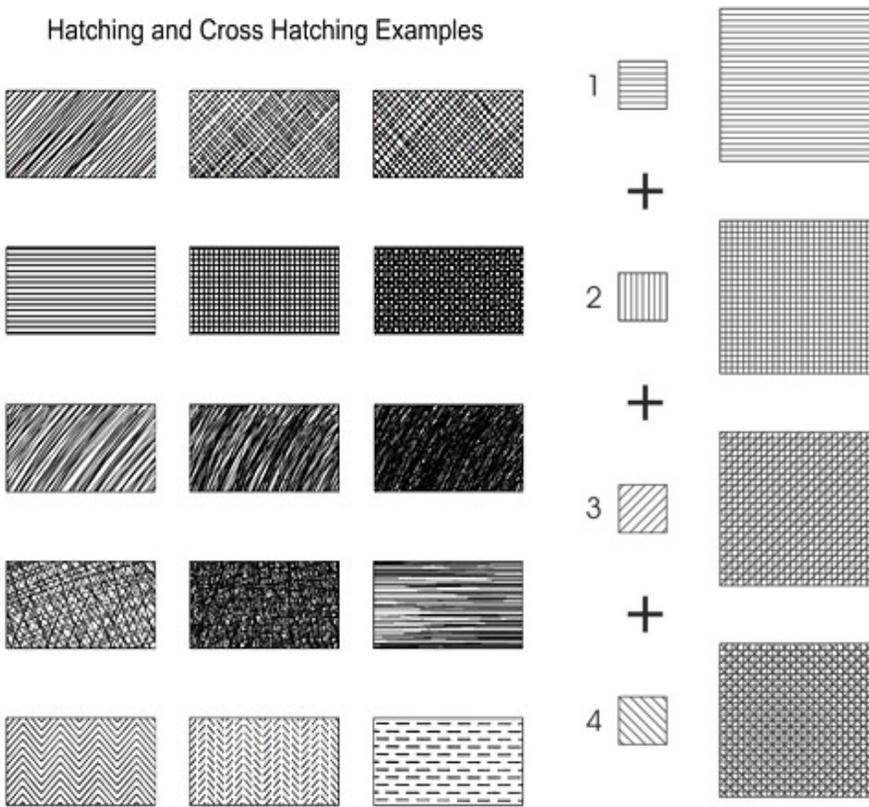
Prompts

3. Try imitating one of the three techniques that were commonly used by Ernst mentioned above. Allow the beginning stages of formation of texture to guide your imagination.

4. Try using juxtaposition to create unlikely scenes but so that subconscious connections can be made. This can be incorporated with the prompts that involve the depiction of dreams or familiar animals /objects.

Hatching Techniques

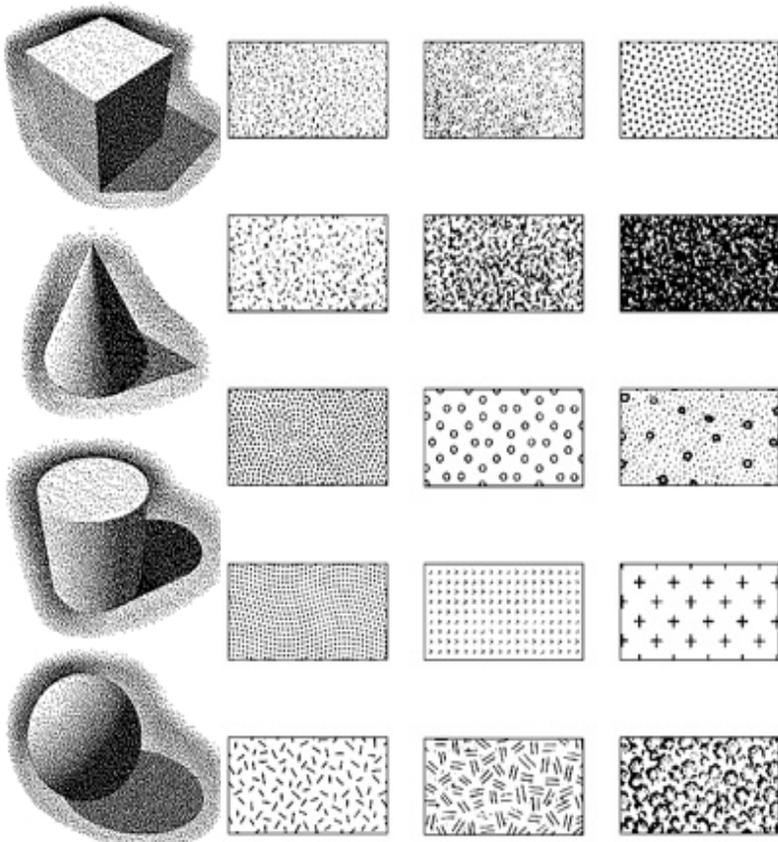
Hatching and Cross Hatching Examples



Hatching is an ink drawing technique where you apply tone and texture in rows of parallel lines. Cross Hatching is where you crisscross several layers of Hatching in order to darken your tones. An easier way to change the angle of your lines is to move the paper instead of your body position in order to maintain a comfortable and fixed drawing position. To the left are different hatching techniques that range from rigid mechanical renderings to more free hand approaches.

Stippling Techniques

Stippling Examples



Stippling is an ink drawing technique where you apply tone and texture in small dots. You can adjust the depth of tone and the roughness of texture by varying the density and distribution of the dots. The technique is commonly used along side of hatching in order to enhance its effects.

In the surrealist drawing above by Max Ernst there is an intricate level of detail in texture created by the combination of hatching and stippling. It is used to depict many different elements including the shadows, the draped tablecloth and the fancy wallpaper and carpet.



GIORGIO DI CHIRICO



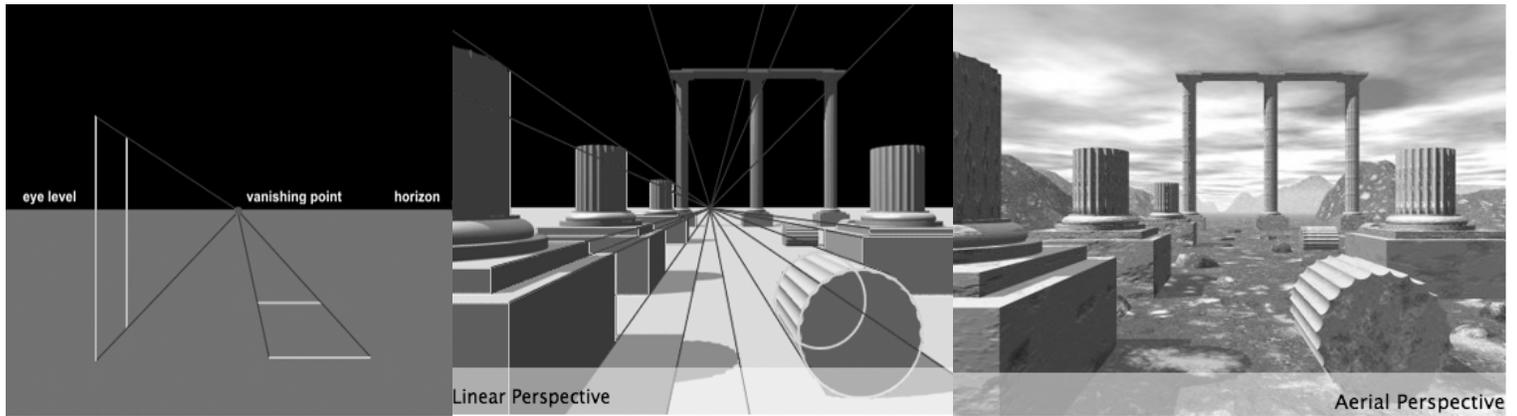
Giorgio De Chirico (1888-1978) was an immediate forerunner of surrealism. Encapsulated in his work was Metaphysical Art - the word metaphysical referring to the philosophy that questioned the fundamental nature of being within the world that encompasses it. Most of this art depicted common squares in Italian cities that in reality are populated and flourished with liveliness but are depicted as being empty and irksomely silent. Again the theme of juxtaposition arises as commoners are replaced by still mannequins and seemingly random objects. This type of metaphysical art is meant to purpose as a doorway to a world beyond the reality of space and time. Chirico's use of perspective, creating long shadows and stretching of space is intended to dramatize the dreamlike qualities of mystery and enigma.

The painting to the left, titled 'The Disquieting Muses' is set outside of a medieval palace in Ferrara. The cobblestones of the piazza are boarded up by what appears to be a stage floor. There are two muses in the form of mannequins; the one on the left is the muse of tragedy while the one on the right is the muse of comedy, drawing awareness to the presence of human spirit. The positioning of objects is particularly unusual creating an awareness of light and order.

Prompts

5. It is believed that Giorgio De Chirico favored metaphysical art due to the nostalgia he felt when he moved away his hometown in Italy to Paris in 1910. It was said that it was his homesickness that cause these gloomy and dreamlike cityscapes to pervade his work. **Try painting or drawing a childhood memory, scene or location that your free thought tends to indulge in from time to time.** It does not have to be an actual home but a memory or scene that resembles feelings of familiarity and homeliness. Maybe it unearths feelings of security, comfort or innocence.

Perspective Drawing

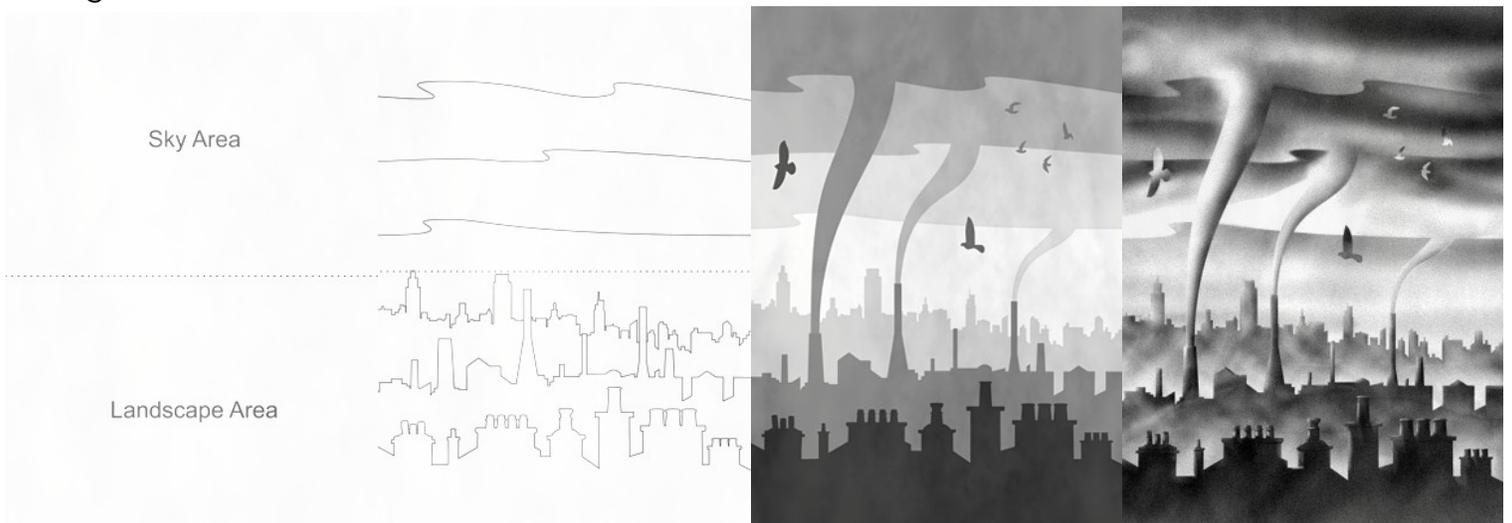


Linear perspective drawing involves 3 important aspects.

1) A **Vanishing point** is usually towards the center of the page and marks where horizontal or vertical lines disappear. It is a point that is on the horizon, the horizon dividing the landscape into what is sky area and landscape area.

2) **Orthogonal lines** stem out from the vanishing point and spread out towards the viewer. They are meant to be parallel to the ground. They help to guide the decrease of size and location of objects, as they get farther away from the viewer and closer to the vanishing point.

3) **Transversal lines** are horizontal or vertical lines that run parallel to the picture plane. They form the nearest and furthest edges of a rectangle as it recedes from view. These are applied to wherever there is an object. In the final picture only the horizon and objects should be kept while the guiding orthogonal lines can be erased.



Aerial Perspective is the effect that the atmosphere has on the color and tone of a landscape when it is viewed over a distance. It is similar to linear perspective in the sense that objects become smaller the further they are from the viewer. However, there are 3 additional rules:

- 1) The level of detail decreases as the object is further away from the viewer.
- 2) The tones of objects weaken the further they are from the viewer.
- 3) The colors of objects begin to fade the further they are from the viewer.

The overall differentiating layers of tones and colors help to maintain the illusion of depth and distance. You can take it to the next level by applying this technique to the individual objects themselves - similar to how the building in the 4th picture above come to life with additional tones and shading.

ANDRÉ MASSON



Sigmund Freud spoke on the importance of “free association” which deals with drawing upon the patient’s ability to speak for themselves without receiving environmental cues or the analyst’s suggestions, whether implicit or explicit. Breton later adopted this concept of free association upon transforming the therapy into a creative device. He called it “pure psychic automatism”. The idea was to empty the mind of conscious thought and respond to what was left with rigorous and spontaneous drawing. It was another technique to reveal the hidden depths of the human psyche and it often left “random” configurations and markings on the page. It was sometimes meant to be the foundation on which a more considered image could be realized from rather than being the finished product.

Automatic art was pioneered by André Masson, refined by Max Ernst and then later transformed into what became Abstract impressionism by Jackson Pollack. André Masson (1896-1987) would begin his work with no preconceived image or planning in mind. He tried to abandon conscious control. It was said that his raw mark making provoked a sensation of “a free hand that was in love with its own movement, but not with itself”, for chaos and disorder were the results of such freedom. The phantom spirit of a French poet named Benjamin Péret was “accidentally” channeled through the medium in his automatic drawing to the right, titled Benjamin Péret. The horrors of war was a common theme for artists that engaged in automatism and frantic signature characteristics were taken on by Jackson Pollack to create what became “action painting”.

Prompts

6. Try to begin a painting or drawing without any preconceived ideas as to what it should look like. It might help to begin by drawing under a table or doing it in a way where you can keep yourself from seeing what is being drawn. Wait until there is at least some foundation of the drawing until you begin welcoming back the “conscious” mind. After this you may begin to realize shapes, objects, faces or forms and elaborate on them accordingly.

FINAL PROJECT

We would like to collect your own rendition of surrealist work to include in Prisoner Express’ Annual Art Exhibition. Choose one or more from any of the 6 prompts listed this packet. We encourage you to also incorporate any skills you’ve learned from the technical lessons. Please send no later than March 1, 2017