



## Drawing in Reverse

### ? What are we covering today?

Yesterday, we learned about figurative gesture drawing and explored a simple four-step process for drawing the figure. Although gesture drawing is used most often for the human figure, we can use this approach of drawing quickly to any subject.

Today, we'll explore the concept of reverse drawing. Reverse drawing is not really drawing in reverse, although it will feel like it.

All of us start our drawing journey by making marks on white surfaces with dark drawing material. When we do this, we are adding darker values to the drawing surface. This means that when we start a drawing, we start with the lightest value on the value scale - white - the color of our paper.

As we make marks with darker materials, we gradually broaden the value range, pushing the dark values. So essentially, when we draw, we are used to concentrating on seeing and adding the darker values.

Today, we'll switch our thinking completely. Instead of adding the darker tones, we'll add the lighter ones. We'll work on black paper with white charcoal to do so.

While this may seem like an easy transition, you'll see that it's quite tricky. The main reason for this deals with how we typically handle outlines and contours. We are used to drawing outlines and planning shapes of tone and value with dark marks instead of lighter ones.

With the approach that we'll take today, we must instead focus on the shapes of light values, leaving the black of the paper to create the darker lines and shapes of value.

This will force us to concentrate on the shapes made by the highlights. It's easy to forget the importance of highlights and how they work with the midtones and shades to create an illusion in a drawing. Today, we'll be reminded of their importance.

### ! Today's Mindset

"Drawing in reverse reminds us of the importance of highlights and improves our overall ability to recognize shapes of tone on a subject."

## Today's Drawing Exercise

Today's drawing exercise is challenging. In fact, it's the most challenging exercise in this course. Although the drawing that we create from this exercise can stand on its own as a finished drawing, we must remember that we are training our brains to see and not get discouraged from any inconsistencies that we notice.

We'll limit the approach that we take today to pure observational drawing. In most cases, we're in a position to use any or all of the devices that we've learned thus far to improve accuracy. (We could use the grid technique, mapping and measuring, etc. to lay out the drawing.)

However, today we'll draw based on the shapes of lighter values that we see with only the white charcoal. We'll need to pay special attention to the spacial relationships between the light and dark shapes in order to do this.

We'll use an eraser to make changes if necessary and keep the drawing exercise to under one hour. So let's begin.

We'll begin by drawing a light contour with a white charcoal pencil on black paper. The marks made by the white charcoal are strong, so a light touch is important. We'll pay special attention to the slight changes in direction that the line should take along with the length of line for each section of the face.



After erasing lightly with a kneaded eraser, we can go back and refine the contour line and make any necessary changes. Since we're drawing from pure observation, we'll likely need to make several alterations during the drawing process.

With the contours lightly planned, we can begin adding in shapes of lighter tone. We'll start with the areas where the light is strongest. As we add these highlights, we must remain aware of the darker shapes, erasing them out as necessary with a kneaded eraser or an eraser pencil.



To soften the application and to eliminate some of the texture produced by the tooth of the paper, a blending stump is used. Over the top, we can strengthen the highlights with an unblended application.

We can continue to work the other locations of the subject in the same manner. We'll start with lighter applications, blend them with a blending stump, and then reinforce highlights with unblended applications.



We'll continue working our way down the face, from the top to the bottom. As we add new areas of highlight, we'll continue to make visual comparisons between their shapes and the shapes of darker value.



After addressing the lips and chin, we'll continue working down to the neck. Again, light applications are made initially and blended with the blending stump. Stronger highlights are applied over the top to strengthen the contrast and to address some of the texture.



We'll address the highlight on the right cheek and then turn our attention to the hair. The value is rather dark here, so a light touch is used. We'll use directional stroking as we pull out strokes in the direction that the hair grows.





We'll blend the applications made for the hair with the blending stump, erase out a few darker tones, and lightly strengthen a few highlights.



We can then make our final erasures and strengthen the highlights in areas to complete this challenging drawing exercise.



Today we learned that reverse drawing is a challenging drawing exercise that reminds us of the importance of highlights and their relationships with the darker values. This exercise forces us to see the shapes of tone on a subject that we may encounter to a closer degree which improves our overall drawing skill and ability.

Tomorrow, we'll conclude the course and look at how far you've come.

