MODULE 13

25 Days to Better Drawings

Texture Study #2

? What are we covering today?

Yesterday, we learned that texture, one of the seven elements of art, is the way an object feels to the touch or looks as it may feel if it were touched.

We learned that the key to creating the illusion of texture in a drawing is dependent on the use of value and the directional stroking made with the medium. We also saw how the physical surface texture of the drawing paper can influence the texture developed in a drawing.

Today, we'll continue our look at texture with another drawing exercise. We'll see again that creating the illusion of texture is simply a combination of the placement of the values and the directional stroking of the medium. It doesn't matter how difficult the subject may appear. If we get the values right and combine it with intelligent stroking, then any texture can be captured in a drawing.

! Today's Mindset

Our mindset for today's exercise remains the same as yesterday…

"The key to creating the illusion of texture in a drawing is through the use of value and directional stroking."

\ Today's Drawing Exercise

Today, we'll take on another challenging texture and draw a portion of an aging brick wall. We'll zoom in close to the reference and concentrate on a small portion in order to keep the drawing exercise under an hour.

This texture will require us to closely consider our directional stroking as we develop the values.

We'll begin by developing a contour line drawing of the smaller section of bricks that we'll concentrate on. We'll use an H pencil with light lines to do so. We may also draw a few lines to indicate locations where we see strong and sudden changes in value.
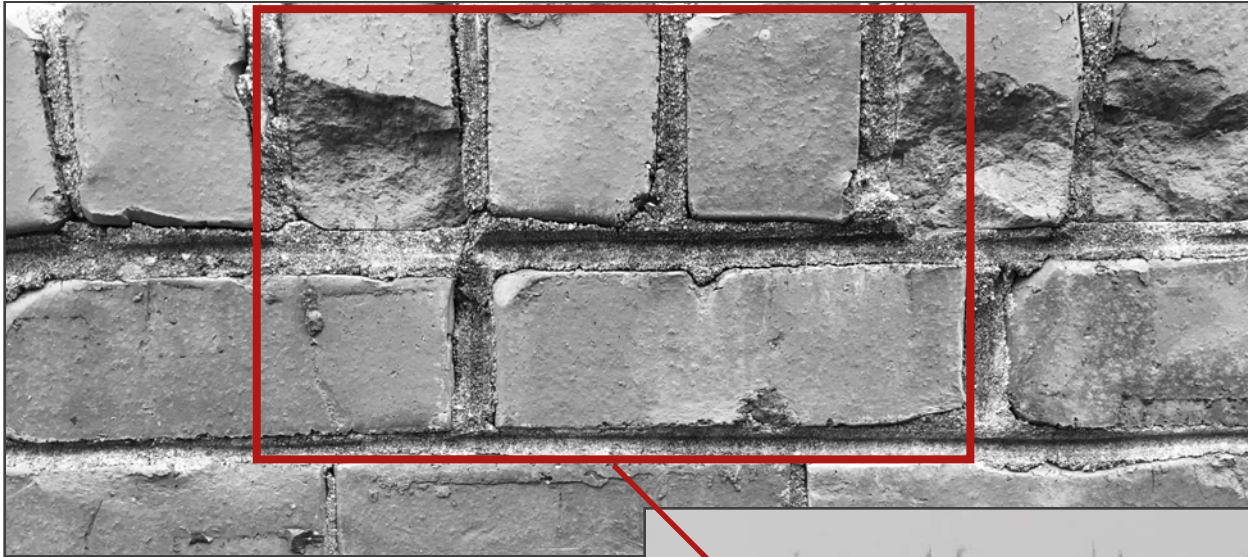

With an H graphite pencil, we'll begin filling in the midtones and shadows. The top portion of the brick is in strong light. For this reason, we'll see a much lighter value. However, this area is not white. A light application of graphite with vertical stroking is applied here. The portion of the brick that is chipped away is in shadow, so the values are much darker. In this section, we'll apply slightly heavier pressure on the pencil, making circular and diagonal strokes. The bottom portion of the brick is receiving more light so the value is lighter. For now, we'll use vertical stroking for this area.

We'll continue layering applications, gradually working the values darker with the H pencil. To make the applications on the top portion of the brick more consistent, we'll use diagonal strokes for our second pass.
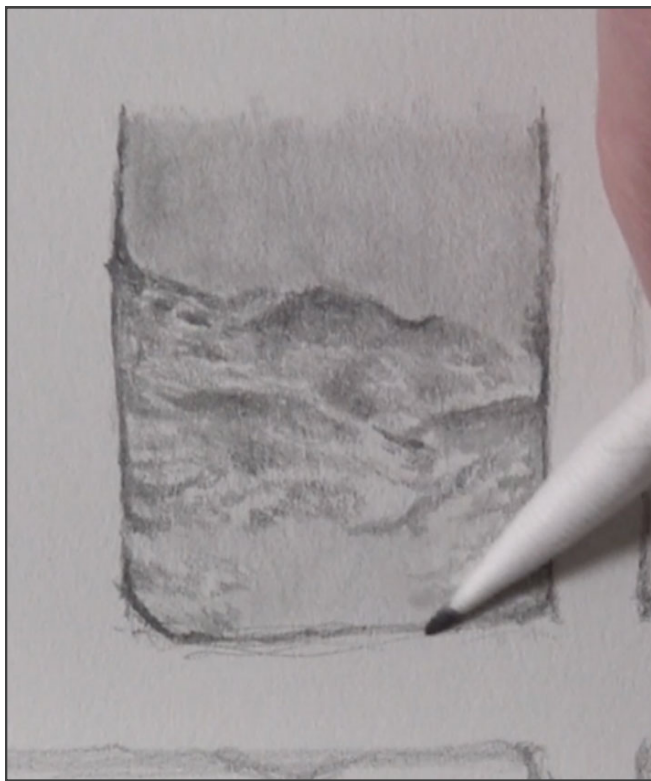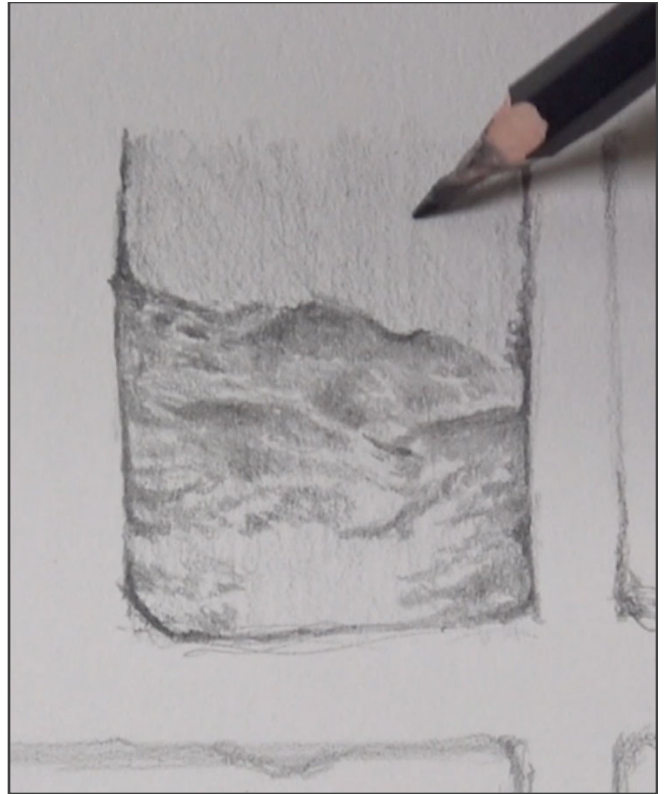
Before moving on to a darker pencil, we'll gently blend the graphite with a blending stump.
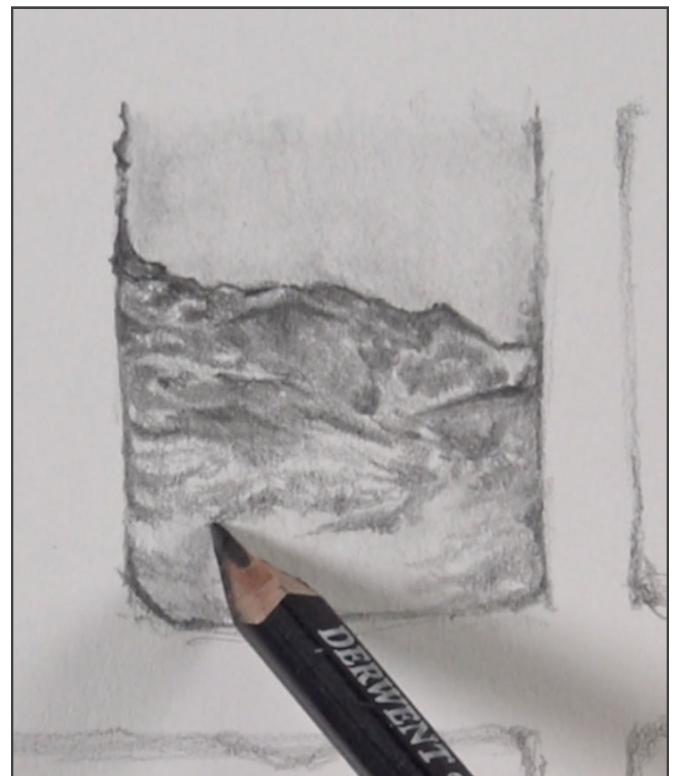
Now we'll begin concentrating on increasing the contrast and broadening the range of value. To do so, we'll switch over to an HB pencil and begin making applications in the areas of darkest tone. These applications are made mainly in the location of shadow within the chipped portion of the brick.

We'll add a few imperfections in the top portion of the brick with the HB pencil before switching to the darker 2B pencil.

With the 2B pencil, we'll continue addressing the darkest locations, increasing the contrast further.

As we go, we're careful to leave portions of lighter value within the darker tones based on observations made from the reference. The contrast this produces helps to recreate the observed texture.

A 4B pencil is used for the darkest areas within the chipped portion of our first brick.
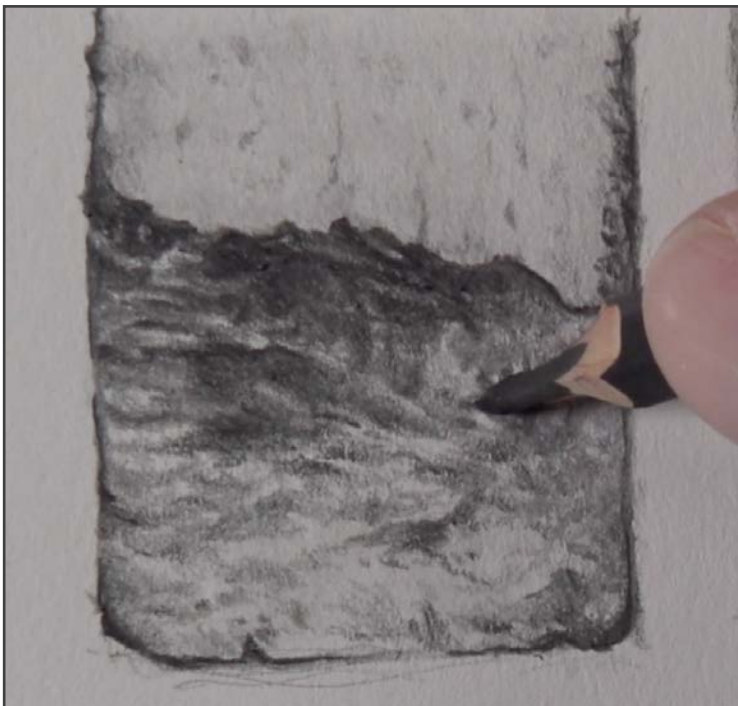
Next, we'll begin moving outward and address the mortar around our first brick. We'll start again with the H pencil, applying the graphite with a light touch. After blending with a blending stump, we'll switch over to the HB pencil. Using a circular stroking pattern, we'll begin creating a few of the medium values in the mortar.

Some portions of the mortar are very dark. To address these areas, the 2B pencil is used. For most of the mortar, a circular stroking pattern is used.

We can see that even though some of the values are similar on the brick and the mortar, we still understand them as different textures, thanks to the contrast produced from the directional stroking.
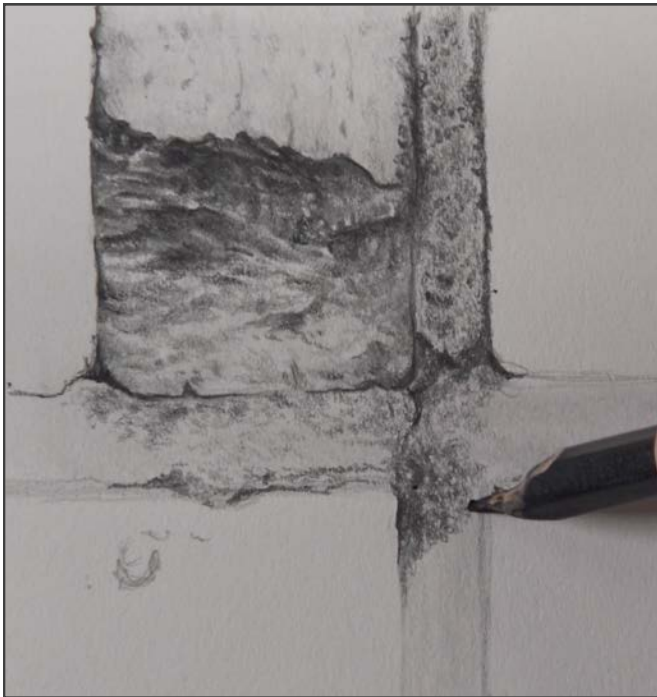
We'll continue working our way down and below our first brick using the same approach.

Once we have a good amount of visual information in place on the mortar, we'll address our second brick. Here again, we'll start with a light application using the H pencil. After blending, we'll slightly darken the value with the HB pencil. We'll be sure to add a slight shadow on the bottom portion of the brick to create the illusion that it protrudes slightly.
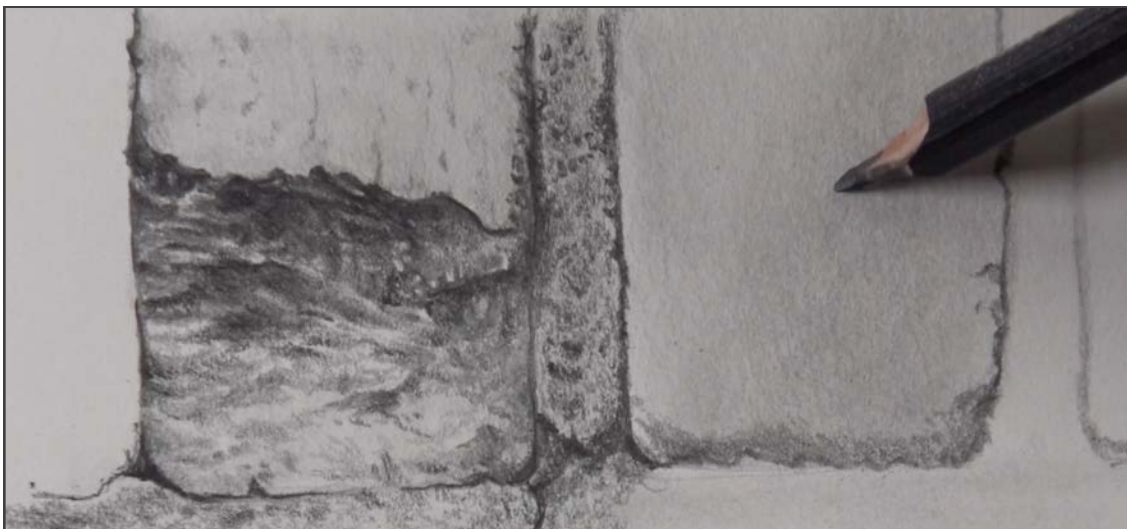
We'll add a few subtle imperfections on the face of the brick with very light applications. These imperfections are simply small shapes of slightly darker tone.

Just as we have before, we'll use the 2B pencil to address the darkest values on the second brick. In this case, most of these dark values exist around the edges.


We'll fill in the texture for the mortar in the same way that we addressed it previously. Over the light, blended application of H graphite, we'll add both HB and 2B graphite using circular stroking. In this portion of the mortar, a darker shape of shadow is observed.
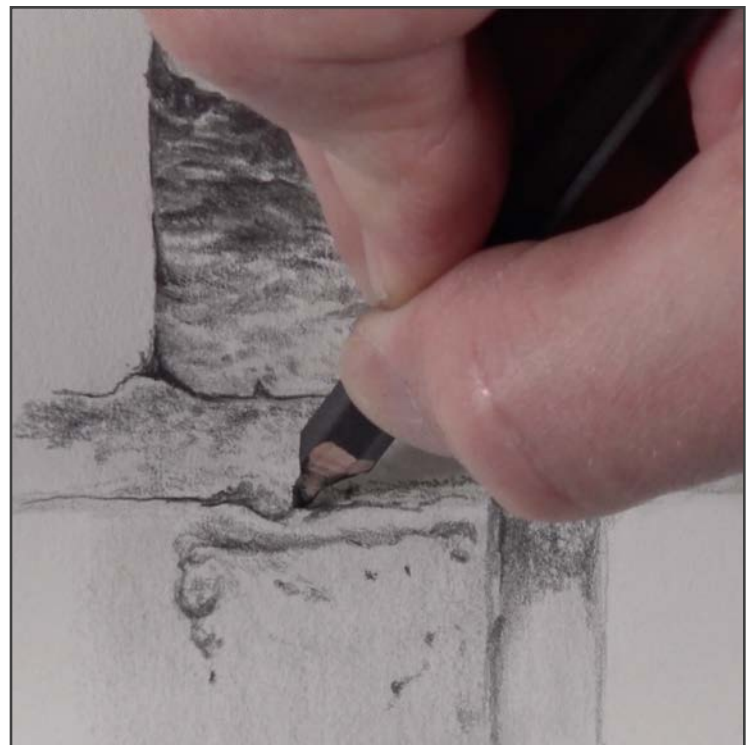
We'll develop a portion of the brick under our first. Again, a light application is made with the H pencil and then blended with the blending stump. Over this application, darker values representing imperfections, are added with an HB or 2B pencil.

As you can see, developing textures can be tedious. But this is a lesson in itself. It's important to recognize that realistic drawings take time and attention to develop. If we were to continue with this drawing, it would closely resemble the texture of the observed bricks. It would simply take time and attention. For many textures that we encounter, patience is important to our success.
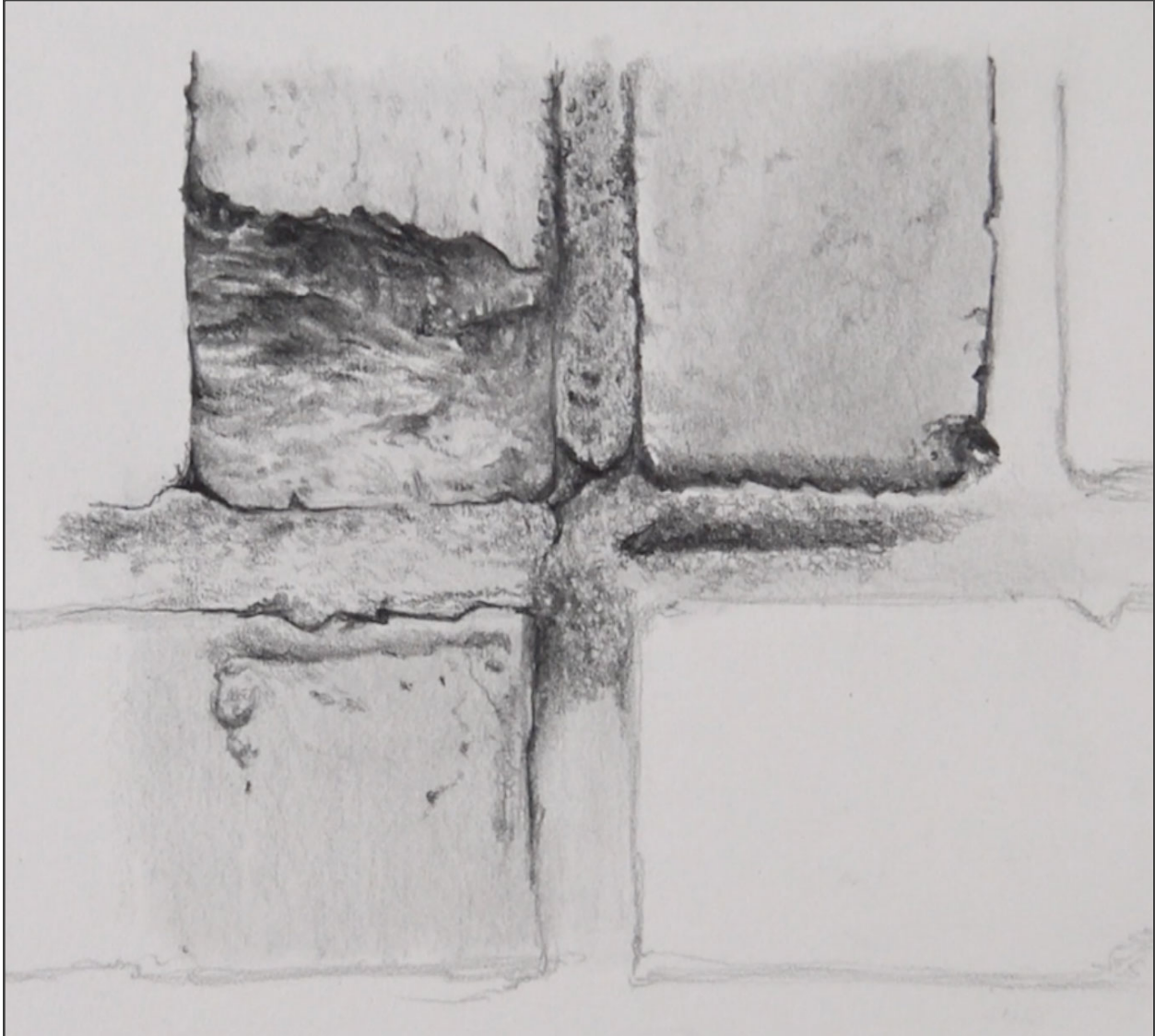
Tomorrow, we'll continue our look at creating textures by exploring strategies for handling reflective surfaces.