

DOUGHERTY ARTS CENTER

Digital Programming

Practicing Contour Line Drawing with Adrienne Hodge

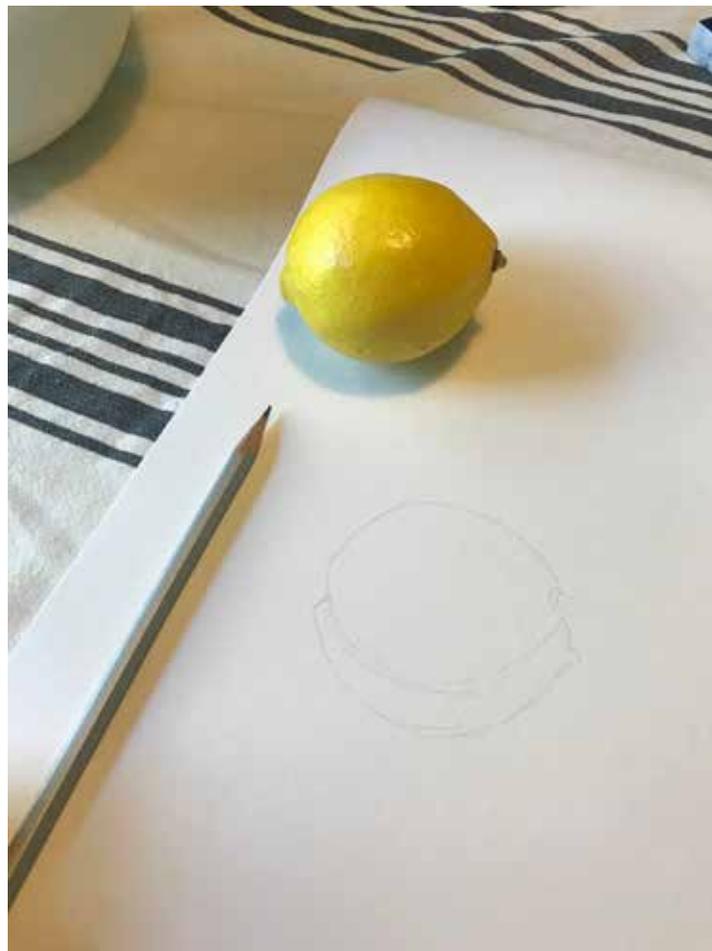


Practicing Contour Line Drawing

Contour Lines: a line which defines a form or an edge. It is, essentially, the outline or silhouette of a given object or figure. Additionally, contour lines can be used to show any dramatic changes of plane within the object or form (like the inner seams within the structure of a shoe, for example). On a map, contour lines refer to the lines that describe two points with equal elevation. Put simply, contour lines describe all of the edges of a form.

Begin by gathering the following supplies:

- Graphite pencils (recommend a 2H or 4H for sketching & a 4B or 6B for adding value)
- Graphite stick (optional)
- Charcoal pencils can be subbed for B pencils.
- A synthetic eraser or gum eraser
- Paper towel or blending stump for blending
- Sketchbook paper
- 2 still life items. Recommend using a round piece of fruit & bowl to match my demo as closely as possible.
- A ribbon or loose chain to observe contours of item.



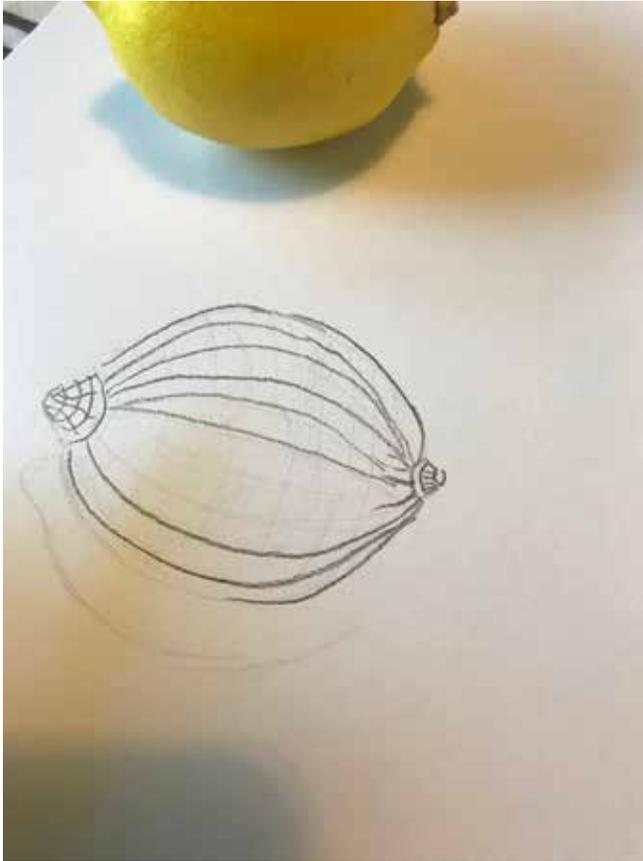
Exercise 1

Step 1: Using one of your H pencils, draw the basic outline and shadow of the fruit.



Step 2: Using your ribbon or loose chain, wrap your round fruit from all directions... turn the fruit around to be viewed from different angles as you do this. Notice how the chain may appear to be a straight vertical or horizontal line when viewed from one specific angle (head on in relationship to the chain at the center of the fruit), but is visibly curved from all other angles...





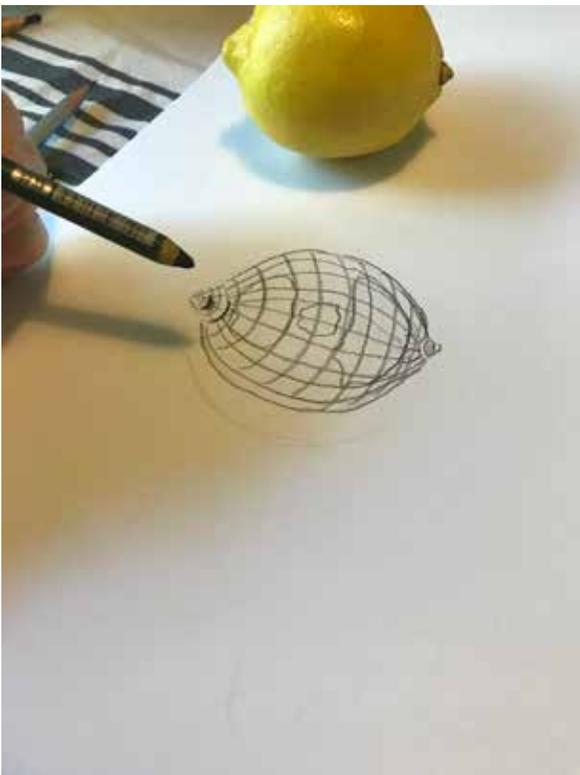
Step 3: Sketch the lemon using these elevational lines. Notice the point where the contour line at the center appears straight, and the lines begin to curve in the opposite direction. You can use a B pencil or charcoal pencil to make them bold/stand out.



Pause to note the shapes of shadows and light that appear on the fruit.



Notice how the shadows/highlights curve or bend with these contour lines.



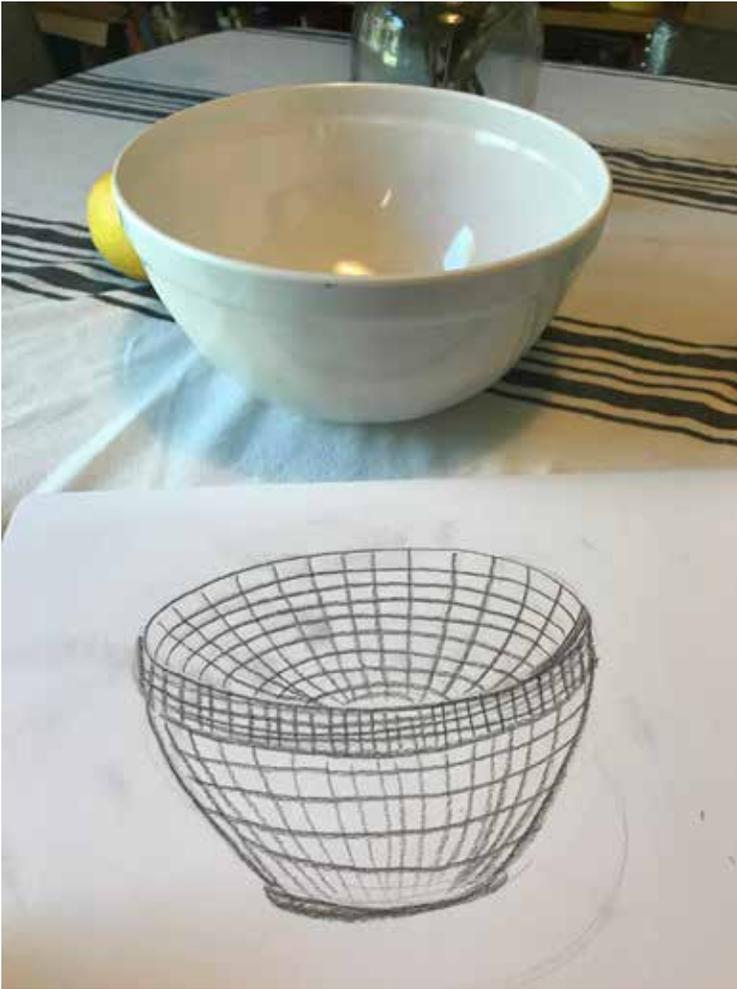
Step 4: Loosely add the empty shapes of observable shadows and light to the elevational line sketch of the fruit.



Step 5: Fill in the shadows, loosely following the curves of the contours as you go. Then, sketch the fruit again using ONLY these value shapes (shapes of shadows and light). You can fill in the shadow underneath the fruit using tonal shading or one directional hatching lines. Shadows follow the contours of the surface they are on, so on a flat surface, the shadow will appear flat.



Step 6: Observe the bowl. Use the ribbon or loose chain to wrap the bowl from various angles and observe how the contours bend in or around depending on the various elevations of the bowl.



Step 7: Make another “elevational line” sketch of the bowl. Don’t worry about perfect proportions. This is about recognizing where the contours curve or appear straight.



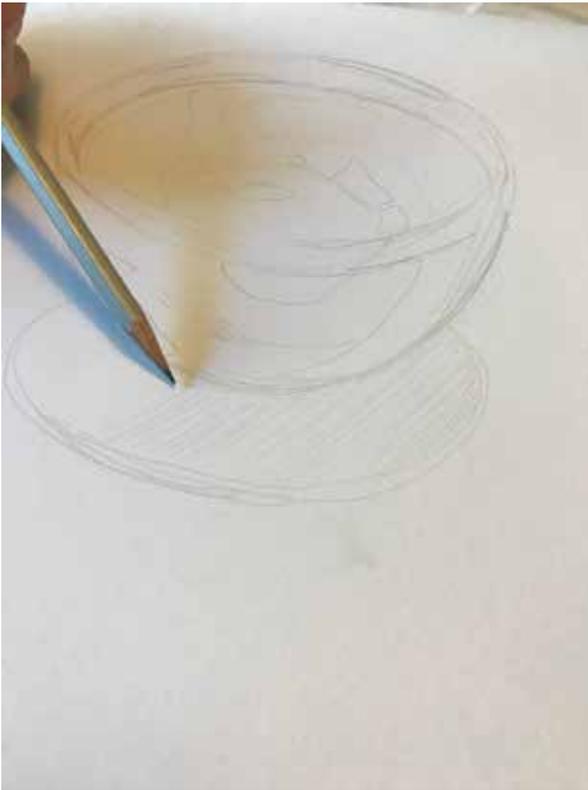
Pause to note where the areas of highlights and shadows appear on the bowl.



Note how the shadows curve with the contours/elevational lines of the bowl.



Step 8: Sketch the bowl again using ONLY these value shapes.



Step 9: Begin to add value, following the contours of the form as you shade--using a B. pencil for darker shadows and H pencil for lighter values.



Step 10: Continue to add value while following contour lines. Add as much value as possible to complete your drawing.



Exercise 2

Step 1: create a tone on your paper using a very sharp B pencil or the side of a graphite stick. A tone is an even surface created by a continuous application of value.



Step 2: Using your synthetic or gum eraser, begin to erase out the highlighted areas you observe on your still life fruit object.



Step 3: Using mostly your B pencil, add the shapes of shadows back in, taking turns working both additive and subtractive with your pencil and eraser. Always keep in mind the contours/elevational lines of the form while adding value.



Step 4: Use a blending stump or rolled up paper towel to blend areas of continuous value.



Step 5: Continue to add shading while observing the fruit.



Step 6: Add value to the background area around your still life fruit to help the 3D form of the fruit come forward.

That's it for assignment #1! Looking forward to seeing your work!!
-Adrienne