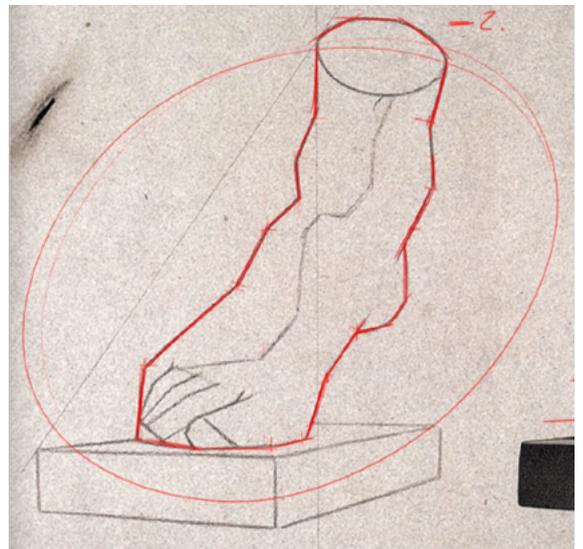
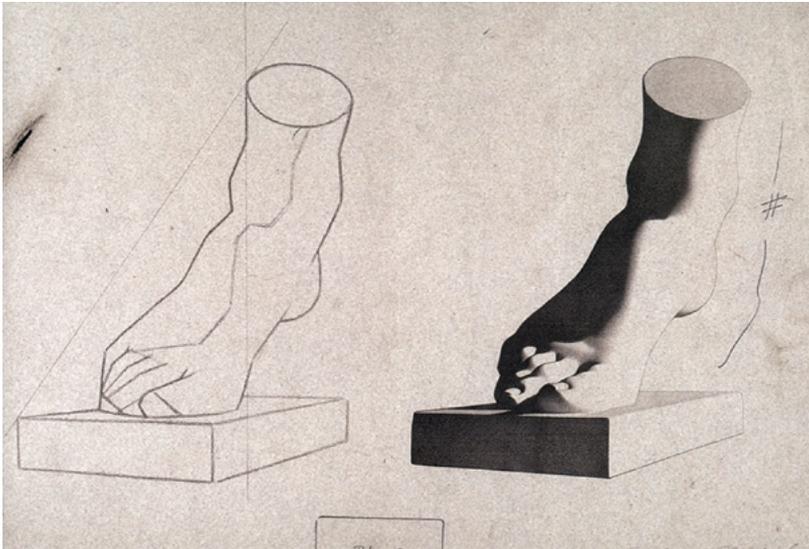


DRAWING ESSENTIALS

Part 1



Drawing Essentials

This lesson will introduce the Charles Bargue Drawing Course, then use drawings from the course to explain foundational ideas for working in the block-in stage of a drawing.

By using an academic method for drawing, we will be able to strengthen our visual memory, and improve our ability to draw with accurate proportion and structure.

● Charles Bargue

History, Bargue Course, Studying Plates

● The Block In

Block In, General to Specific, Types of Observation

● Types of Observation

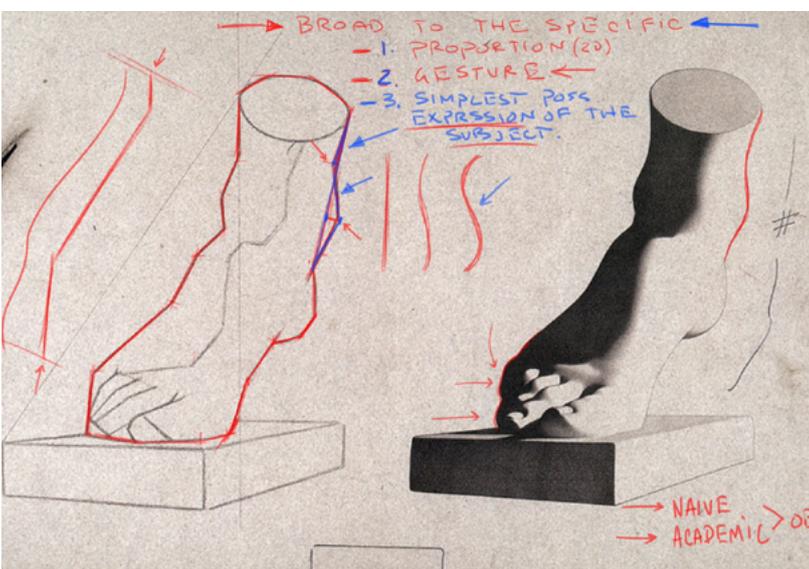
Naive Observation, Visual Memory, Academic Observation

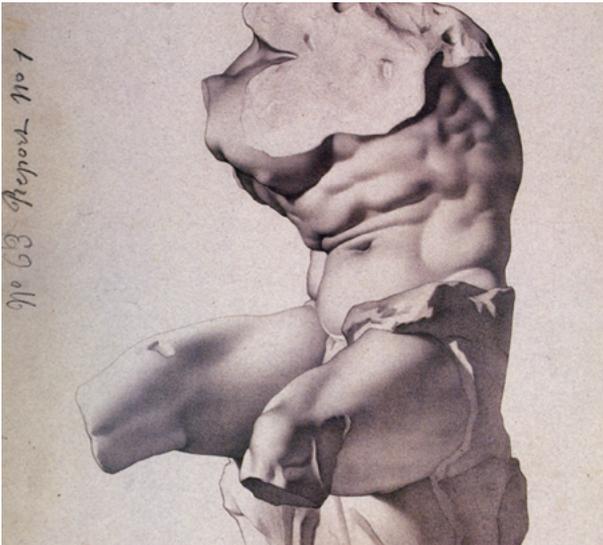
● Line

Seeing Straight Lines, Angle Breaks, Line Quality

● Measurements

Measuring Point to Point, Proportion, Shadow Shape



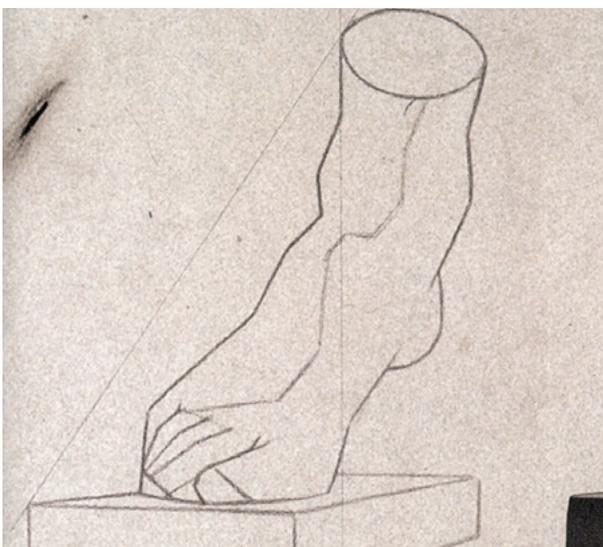
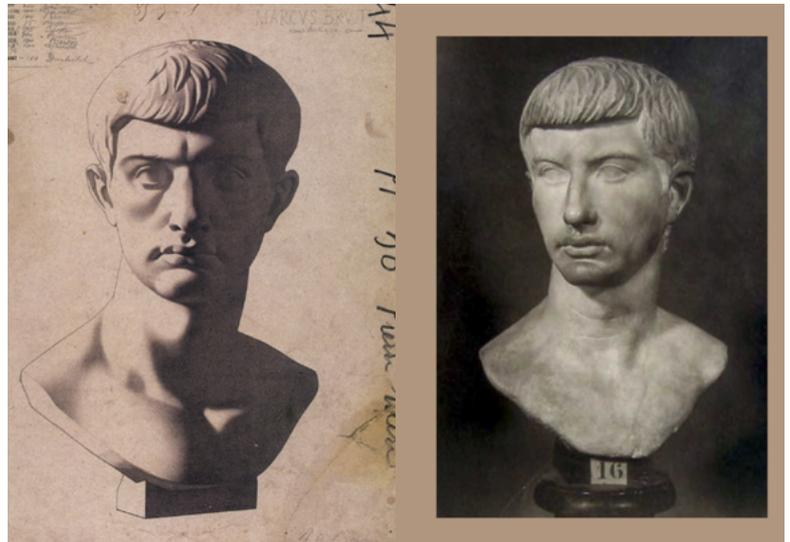


History

- The Barge program was created in the late 1860's-early 1870's for the Académie Julian in Paris, France.
- The course was made by the painter Charles Barge, under the direction of painter and famed instructor Jean-Léon Gérôme.
- Most of the casts are drawn from ancient Greek sculptures, while later plates are drawn from live models.

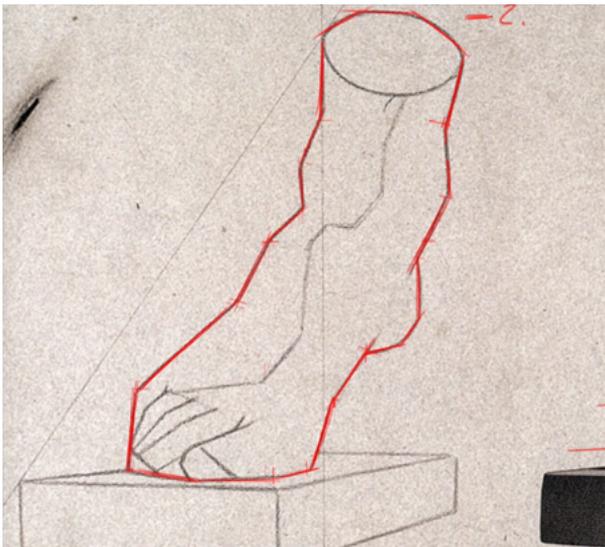
Bargue Course

- The Barge course consists of a series of lithographs (each one called a "plate"), used to prepare students to draw from life.
- The copying of these drawings teaches students how to move through the stages of a drawing, and gives students a way to establish a common visual grammar with their instructors.



Studying Plates

- When working through Barge plates, assimilating essential lessons from the plates is more important than making perfect copies. For this reason we will refer to them as "studies," rather than copies.
- This series of plates are divided into 3 groups: beginner, intermediate, & advanced.
- It is unnecessary (and counterproductive) to work through every plate included in the course. For best results, do only a few, starting with simpler plates.
- Progress to the next level of complexity once you have completed a satisfactory study of the plate you are currently working on.

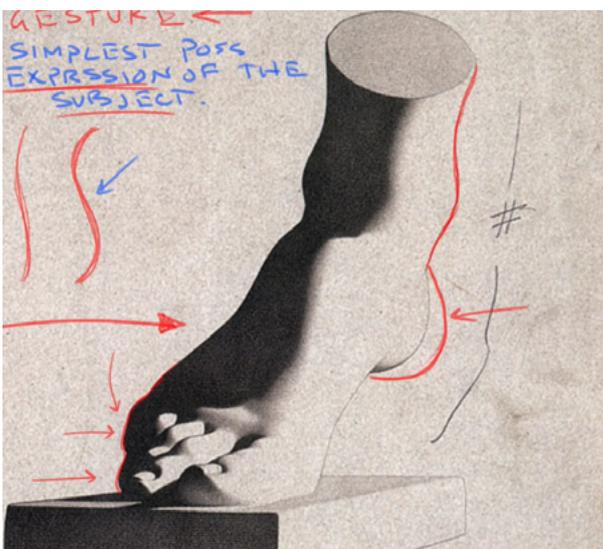
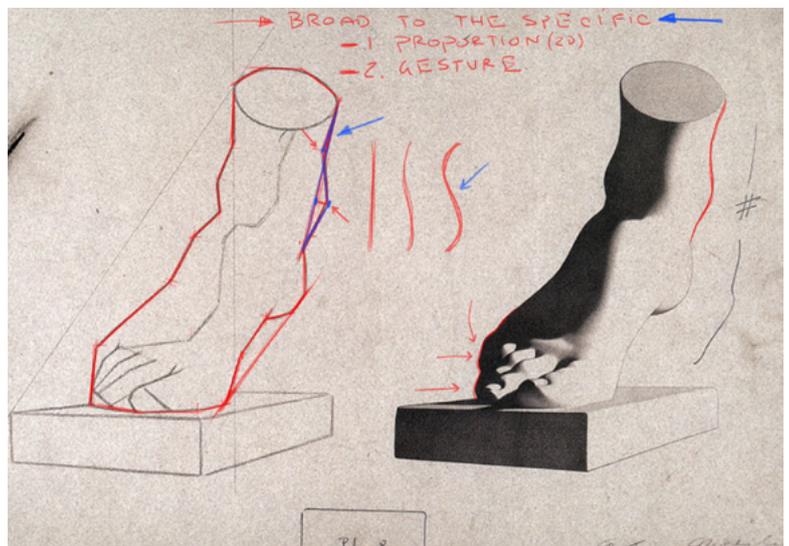


The Block In

- The term “block-in” refers to the initial stage of a drawing in which a foundation is built for the rest of the drawing. In this stage, the goal is to depict the simplest possible expression of the subject.
- The block-in allows the artist to get from a blank page to something which can begin to be compared to the subject.
- In the block-in stage, large problems like broad proportions and placements, are solved without the distraction of detail.

General to Specific

- Attempting to draw every piece of information from the subject at every stage is a recipe for disaster. Progressive stages of simplification are essential.
- This means working from a broad, simplified expression of the subject to a more complex version.
- A drawing should start out in a more “open” place, and then be refined down to the final expression of the piece. In essence: stay flexible for as long as possible.



Types of Observation

- During the Block in, we identify two types of observation: *Naive observation*, and *Academic observation*.
- Distinguishing between naive and academic observation will help compartmentalize the process of seeing a subject.
- Naive Observation is an observation made on a purely visual basis, where eyeballing and approximation are used. Academic Observation is based on a process of measurement and comparison.



Naive Observation

- Rely on our innate ability to remember the appearance of something or someone. If you meet someone face to face one day and see them again the following day, no measurements are necessary to ensure they are the same person.
- In a drawing, our goal is to have blocked in the subject in such a way that these naive comparisons can be made by “eyeballing,” them.

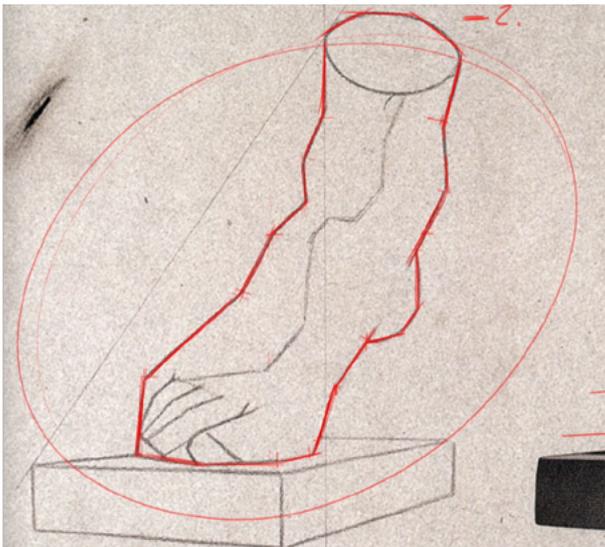
Visual Memory

- Visual memory is finite, to facilitate better visual memory--take large spaces and punctuate them with other pieces of information. This will allow us to be more apt in looking at and comparing/memorizing distances.
- Visual memory is looking and not taking measurements, being able to memorize and transcribe. Drawing 80% of the time and measuring 20% of the time is the place where we want to be as artists.



Academic Observation

- Academic observations are based on concrete empirical measurements, taking us from a blank paper to something that can be naively recognisable.
- The goal in using academic observation is to create something that is useful and comparable to what we are seeing.

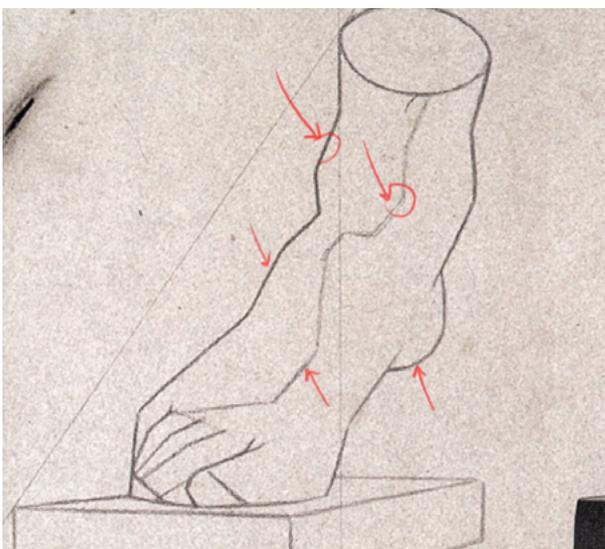
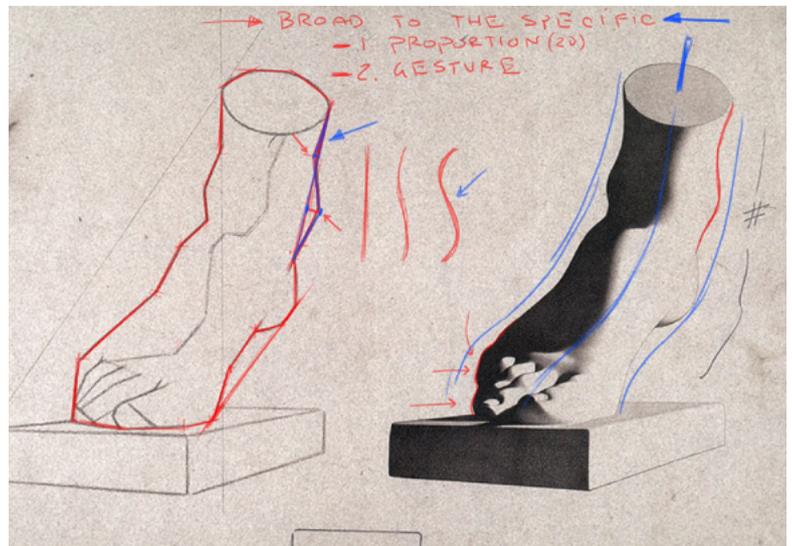


Seeing Straight Lines

- Straight lines can be used to display an analysis of a more complex line segment, like a curve. As such, they do not exist in nature and students must learn to see them. Learning to see and draw in this way is fundamental to everything that comes after.
- Breaking curves down in this manner allows for much more accurate observation of the gesture of a line. Drawing this way lines to be carefully designed to achieve their final expressions.
- Especially in the block in stage, curved lines can weaken the initial structure- meaning that they blur the specific changes of direction which show the basic shape of the features they represent.

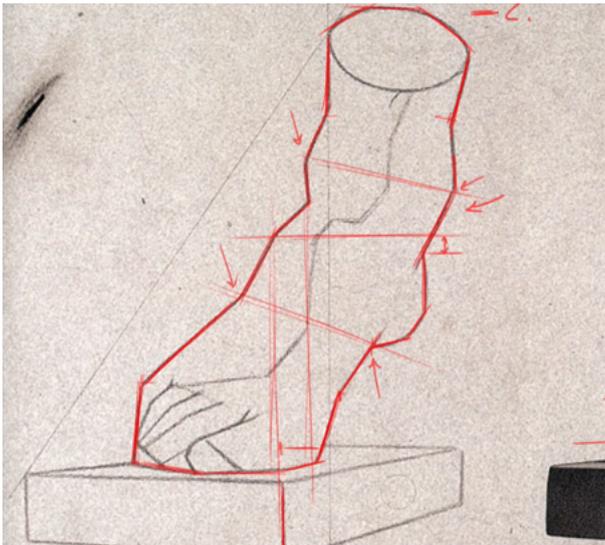
Angle Breaks

- In the earlier stages of a drawing, curved lines should be expressed with long straight lines that best express the position, proportion, and direction of the curved lines.
- It's much easier to track the correlations between disparate parts of a subject (top, bottom, left & right sides) using straight lines and angle breaks than to correctly capture the character of a curved line while making sure everything is in the right place and at the right angle.



Line Quality

- The deliberate use of differing line quality is essential for making a good block-in.
- A line can vary across the spectrum from soft to hard, from dark to light, & from thick to thin.
- The meaning of line quality should be relatively uniform throughout the block-in, so that shadow edges use one type of line, while contour lines use another.
- This strengthens our ability to make naive observations through the blockin stage, and sets up the rest of the drawing to proceed in an organised manner.

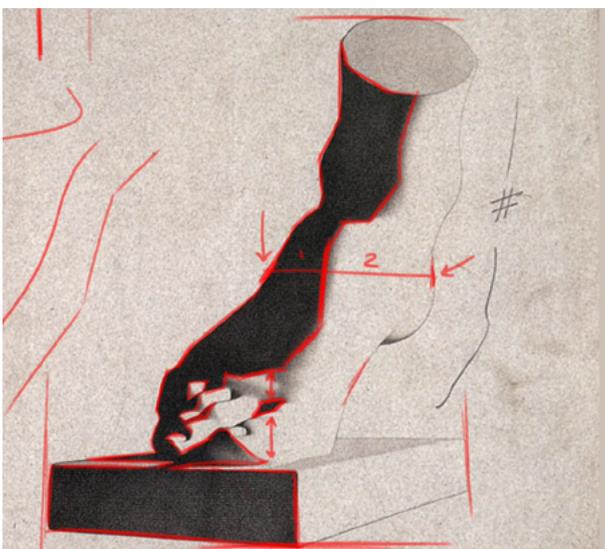
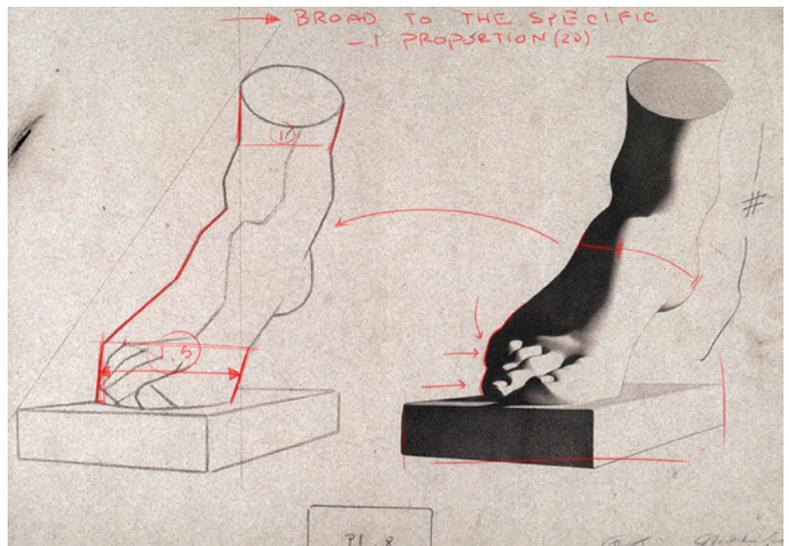


Measuring Point to Point

- The goal with this process isn't to simply create a correct relationship from one point to another, it is to find the correct relationship between every point and every other point in the drawing.
- Drawing a part correctly is only useful if it is also in the correct place relative to the rest of the drawing. This is why it is important to block in the entire drawing to the same level before making the 1st round or comparisons and improvements.

Proportion

- In studying proportion, we hope to improve our visual memory. Smaller distances are easier to memorise than larger ones. The large space can be punctuated by a series of smaller spaces, allowing us to better memorise and compare the spaces.
- Proportion is always based on context. The initial block in will be very simplified and these most basic proportional relationships should be studied well. Each time the drawing advances in complexity the proportions should be reassessed.



Shadow Shape

- Dividing the subject into a shadow shape and light shape is one way to break down a large distance into two smaller shapes that can be motorised and compared more easily.
- Establishing the shadows as flat, unified dark areas allows the details within them to be subordinated in favour of the general shape expressed by their edges.
- Similar to the contour, the edge of the shadow shapes should be designed with a strong sense of straight lines and angle breaks to facilitate comparison with other angle breaks.