

CON TORNARE (Latin for "with the turn of the form")

The first assignment in class:

Please draw your right hand with your left hand if you are right handed (reverse it, if you are left handed). Begin by putting the hand to be drawn into an unusual and contorted position. As you gaze at the mountains and valleys of your hand and the intricate road map of lines that traverse over and around its form, try to slow down your "looking" until you begin to see a line over the form of this strange object (your hand) that clearly shows its path to you. Pick up your charcoal pencil with your left hand and lever it as you would a cue stick in pool. Ask your eye and hand to travel at the same speed over the longitudes and latitudes of the form, registering every impression as if they were an ant with ink on its feet traveling over and around your hand. Remember to think through touch, as if you were trying to locate your keys in your pocket. Work with complete conviction of touching over hills and into crevices, perhaps speeding up a little as you travel down hill and go more slowly as you lift up and over a form. You can use line to indicate the path of the eye and the sensation of traveling. In other words, you are tracing the path of activity much like an electrocardiogram traces the activity of the heart.



Leonardo da Vinci

This is an exercise to allow a meeting of two very different ways of seeing. The eye/mind says "finger", but the sense of traveling over it, around the knuckles, back and forth over the creases, in and out of the illusory space, says a wordless swoosh of an inner movement of form, which is a sound. This sound is a line. This line is a tracing of movement, like the sound of the waves traveling over and back and forth simultaneously etching the sand and the cliff. It is a movement with lift and crescendos, and the line that draws it is a tracing of a movement over these forms. That line is simply a tracing of the movement of the registration of touch is an elusive but powerful key to the study of *seeing*.

You are not trying to draw what the hand looks like. In fact, you are drawing with your "wrong" hand, which frees you of the need for accuracy or likeness imposed by your logical mind. *The line you are drawing is an absolute registration of the sensation of touch: not what the form looks like, but what touching the form looks like.*

This hand study has no beginning or end. It is an exercise in *seeing*. As Leonardo said "To draw is to learn how to see!" We are beginning a new adventure in finding a new way of seeing. There is nothing right or wrong in the result. The result is irrelevant. This is a study, which seeks to discover, we are seeking a discovery, not a result. We are asking a question.