

Old Master Study

Please read in The Natural Way to Draw sections 15, 18, 20 and 21. Also read up to and including the chapter on Mass in Drawing Lessons from the Great Masters. After reading these sections:

Please choose an Old Master drawing, preferably Leonardo, Michelangelo, Pontormo, Raphael, Rubens, Tiepolo, Titian, Tintoretto, Rembrandt, Caracci, del Sarto, Cambiaso, etc. From the Hale book you might choose:

- Tintoretto page 85....better to draw two. gesture, wash, composition, markmaking and light
- Michelangelo page 101....can't be done in under six hours, but a great teacher
- Titian page 117....amazing study of gesture using charcoal
- Rubens page 119....line quality, movement of masses, gesture
- Raphael page 190....ten hours, use compressed charcoal pencil, vine charcoal and eraser--good luck
- Rubens page 195....good to digest contour hatching and mass as well as line traveling over form

Xerox the drawing which you will have to find either in your Hale book or the library. Grid out the drawing as you did with the Cambiaso study. Work on Arches Cover buff paper at least 29" x 41", or 30" x 42" using the tools the master used (try to choose a drawing done with charcoal or chalk). Blow the grid up onto your drawing paper. Then using the Form and Visual Measurement of Angles method lightly lay in the drawing working from the Xerox. Once you have done this, you will be free to study the master's marks (from the reproduction, not the Xerox). How did Leonardo's hand move? Did the wrist turn? Did the pressure vary? Become Leonardo, pick his brain -- was it a series of gesture strokes, did he change the speed of line? Did he traverse the form finding it's repeating and opposing rhythms? How does the line travel over the form? I want you to use the same materials the "master" worked with, and become the old master: what was he seeing? **You are studying from the master, not tracing or merely copying**, but trying to understand his sense of line quality, of mass conception -- his feeling for the life of the pose.

What I want you to get out of this assignment is the ability to really observe something. Here you observe the markmaking and the line quality of the artist. Here you have the opportunity to feel what Leonardo felt five hundred years ago, try to imagine what he had for breakfast, how his hand moved, which hand? at what speed, with what feeling? Time travel in a strange "back to the future" sense of the term. How did he create an illusion of form while staying true to the physicality of the mark. How does he "see"?

Leonardo da Vinci said: "To draw is to learn to see". How can relating your sense of touch (contour) and studying the masters help you to "see"?



Drawing by Gilbert Guerrero