

## Animal gestures

Materials: several sheets of 22" x 30" good paper, drawing board, charcoal pencil

Please look at the drawings of Rembrandt, Leonardo da Vinci and Hokusai below. Observe carefully their sense of gesture, the forms they studied through their movement. The quality of Rembrandt and Hokusai, are evident in the way their lines spiral in repeating circles which flow around the forms while simultaneously pulling down to evoke the weight or stress of the pose. There is gesture in a still lake in which a ripple radiates from a single stone thrown. There is gesture in the Rembrandt elephant with the lines stretched over the mass and pulling down with the weight of the animal.

After observing these drawings, choose an animal or animals to work with. Pigeons, dogs, cats, the local zoo, the sea lions at the beach are all good models. Begin a series of gestural studies which capture the essence of the pose. Create a study sheet of several drawings on the page (see Leonardo). Please remember that you are not doing a portrait of your cat, you are studying the laws of movement of this form. You are trying to learn to see the whole form at once. Through its movement. You are drawing what the form is doing, not what it looks like.

The drawings themselves will be very quick studies; however, you should spend at least half an hour observing your animal(s) and following its movements with your hand before you begin to draw. This will give you a better understanding of the animal in action, as well as engage your sense of touch in seeing.



Leonardo da Vinci study of horses and cats.



Rembrandt studies of an elephant and a lion.



Hokusai studies of a horse and ox.



UC Berkeley student Elaine Chin's animal gestures before and after wash



Studies of seals by Minjeong Kim.



Studies of deer by Eleanor Knecht.



Studies of camels by Marc Betinol.