MARK TENNANT

RED BOOK

Carles Comila
MENORCA PULSAR

WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO ME?

You see, when I sit in front of my library I think it would take two lives to digest it. But let's not fool ourselves, just by concentrating my efforts on two or three well-chosen books, it would be enough. And the most disturbing thing is that, in the depths of my heart, I understand that **I should not read so much about painting, but paint**.

Aha! There the short circuit starts. Having a good library is essential, but it also fosters a poor retention of ideas and a terrible dispersion when trying to apply them. A large library can encourage your insecurities.

Studying painting without painting is like preparing for years a trip that you will never do. Well, it's time to take that plane. It is better to implement one single idea than to study one hundred.

Imagine that you prepare yourself for a marathon and go to a program where, every day, they teach you a different training. At the end, you will have a general idea about which training exists and a

paper that certifies that you are perfectly prepared to go to a marathon; but the real world will beat you hard.

Many schools foment this confusion and lack of criteria, relativizing the procedures so much that all of them are valid, while none of them is valid at all. All this leads to a great waste of money to get a useless title and a huge frustration.

Young artists have too much ego to acknowledge that their studies were not an intelligent decision and do not even think about being wrong. They're content thinking that it's the world which is wrong. In that sense, **schools that were once providers of knowledge are now providers of titles and confusion**.

No one who leaves a school is prepared for the truth. Nobody wants to hear that being good takes years of hard work and constant study. Being an artist requires a titanic sacrifice and few people take it seriously.

Having no concentration, patience or discipline, they do not have a roadmap either. The students do not know where to start and they drown in an ocean of methods, ending up fearing their own brushes when they should love them.

And why do I explain all this to you?

Because in artistic formation we need a little more good judgment and common sense.

We need a Mark Tennant. Mark is a rational, patient and judicious guy. He is the King of Good

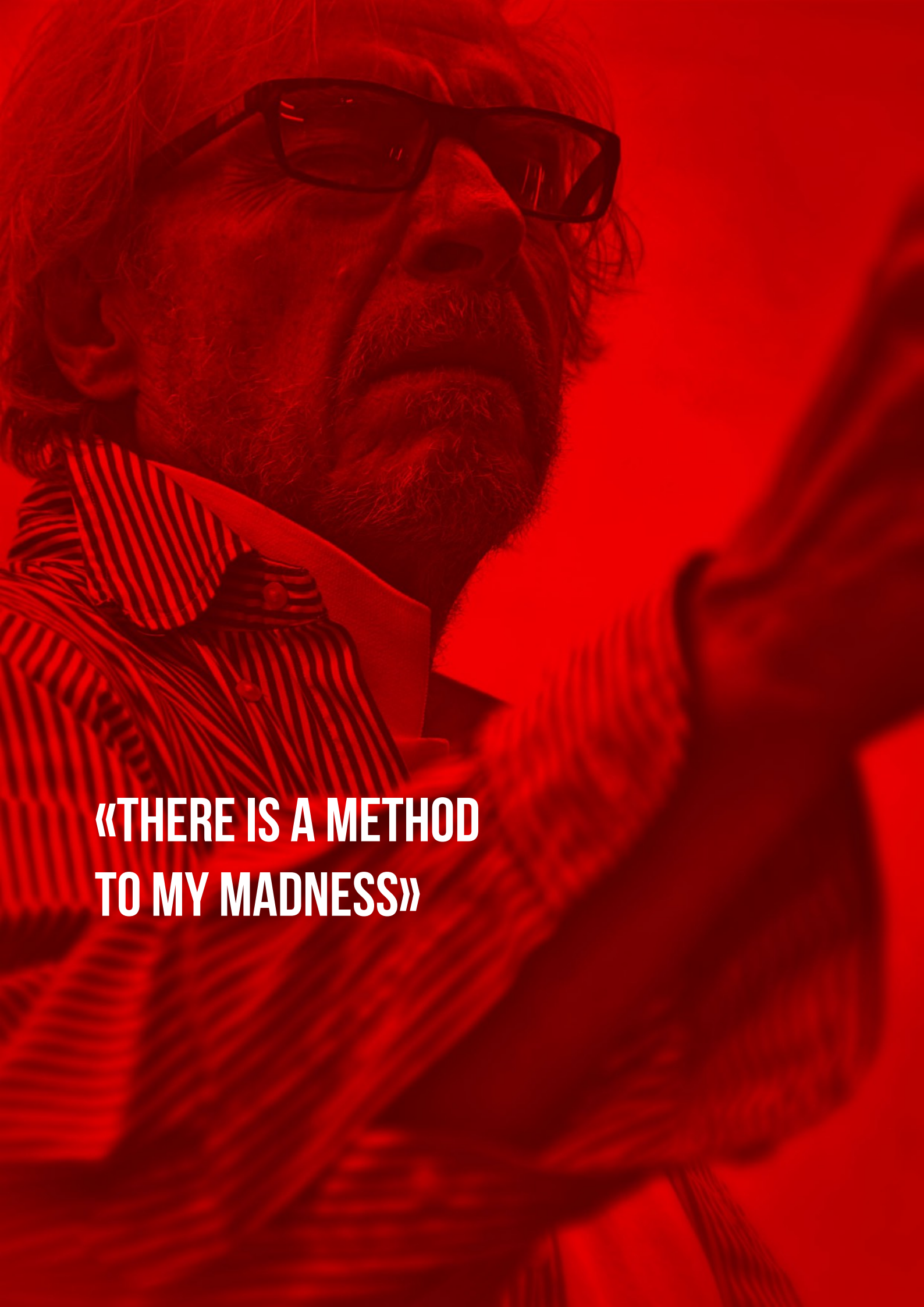
Judgement. Look at him, he even has a prudent face 😌

Mark explained a tangible method based on references that many of us already knew, but we were not aware of how important they are.

The outcome is that I learned more in five days at his workshop than in a year on my own and the reason why I wrote this little book is to put order into a lot of notes I took, some stained with oil and many others with wine. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

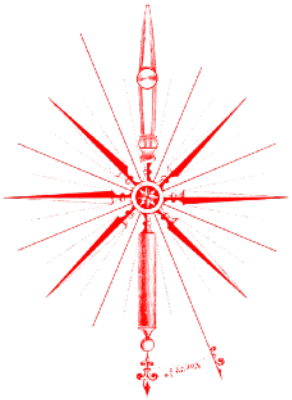


Thanks for everything, Mark
Carles Gomila


«THERE IS A METHOD
TO MY MADNESS»

I.

MARK TENNANT'S PHILOSOPHY



Mark is one of those free and happy artists who does not set a difference between personal life and professional life. He has been painting since he was 18 and oil painting is as much a part of him as his gray matter is. 'Nobody said this was easy, not every day is glorious and I must work hard to get the best out of myself' — says this veteran.

With more than 30 years of experience as a teacher, he takes the challenge of transforming his students very seriously and understands teaching as a creative engine. He thinks of his students as a method essaying team. **This philosophy forces him to audit, rethink, compress and refine his artistic processes so that the progress of the students empirically validates the fact that his method works**.

Students feed his art and his art feeds the students in a virtuous circle where everyone wins. When he observes his students progressing, he receives a kick of motivation that pushes him to the easel with renewed energy and the conviction that his creative process really works. And you bet it does! 💪🏻

Andrew Loomis said that 'An artist who knows his art thoroughly has no reason to wrap his knowledge in a mantle of mystery'. This is Mark; so generous, so clear.

A TREMENDOUS TEACHER

Mark's students overcame all kinds of troubles so they can attend his workshops. They came from all over the world! Some traveled for a whole day and arrived exhausted, but their faces lit up when they met him. They admire him deeply as an artist and do not want to miss the opportunity of him leaving a mark on themselves.

Mark says that **being a teacher is like being a consultant**. Students need good advice from someone with experience, a mentor.

That's what he does. And you should see how much energy he puts into it.

Mark pushes them to bring out the best of themselves, while he is an open book full of priceless advice for those who want to perfect their art. He stands up for hard work and respect for the old masters' legacy, with whom he establishes a very clear connection with modernity.

Talk given by Mark in the **Menorca Pulsar** studio.

Photography de Heather Millenaar



He says he is not sure where the genius comes from, but he does know about hard work. Is genius the product of trial and error? Is it the result of a flow of accurate intuitions from an extraordinary person? Probably both are true.

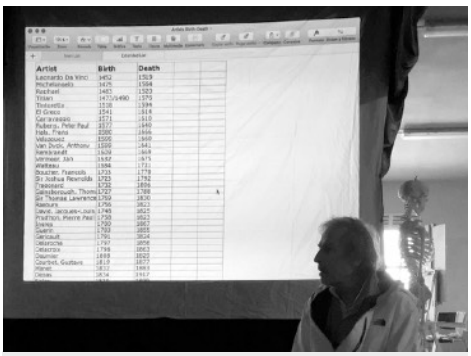
Geniuses challenge preconceived ideas, bringing a fresh and renewed vision while turning the darn complex into deliciously easy. The combinations and solutions that they have used throughout history are fascinating and always work when you recreate them.

Let's learn from geniuses!

Any requirement? No. But you better have a good dose of humility and discipline 😘

You see, **in order to paint well you have to paint very badly for years and, when you think you're not doing it wrong, convince yourself that you are**. Only this way you will improve: learning to learn.

Mark makes it clear from the beginning: making art is an impossible task but, quoting Frank



"It is fascinating to discover the artistic lineage of modern artists and see where their teachers come from, and where their teachers came from"

DOWNLOAD Mark Tennant's artists list.

Benson, '**the only possible fun in life is trying to do something that can't be achieved**'. There is no real fun in accomplishing something definitive and predetermined. What a bore, right?

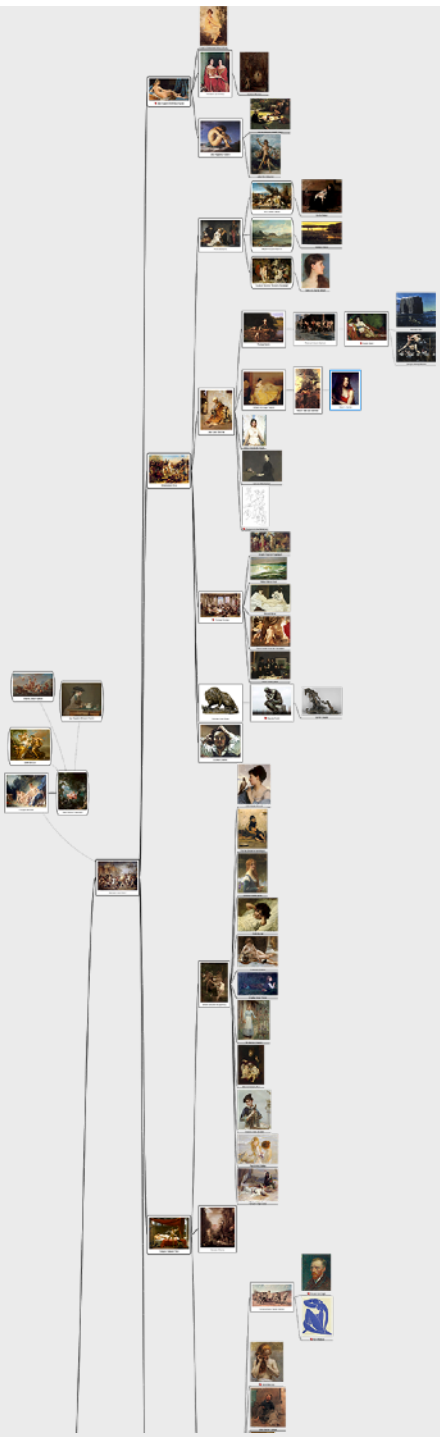
This is not easy and that's why we love it. There is no witchcraft that makes the road shorter. Art is a science that has to be studied and worked throughout life. That's the point. When you start you have nothing but a huge desire to do so and the more you have this unbridled appetite, the more you will learn.

Thanks to the questions from his students, he questions himself as an artist. Their questions are daring, disconcerting, deep and devastating, which make him rethink many things and push him towards a better understanding of painting.

'When you teach you are under a microscope: they watch you closely', he says. When he teaches the principles of drawing and painting in class, he must be a model to follow. He can't think of teaching one thing and doing another and that pressure, to do the right thing under the scrupulous eyes of the students, helps him to refine his process. Hence the profound connection between his art and teaching.

He conveys a very deep idea in which he believes blindly, that **work is a vital need of man**. He is convinced that we are here to work, to do things. But in reality, painting is not hard work when you enjoy it and he enjoys it with his whole being, transmitting his natural passion for work.

Mark changes the rules of the game and opens the doors for his students to unleash their full



I have elaborated an extensive map of relations between teachers and disciples so that you can consult it at a glance 😘

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potential. It is true that you have to work hard because without work there is no progress. However, observing small advances every day is fascinating and hopeful. And **to feel how you improve every day is a thousand f***ing miles from being boring**.

Another thing that Mark does is convey a huge enthusiasm for Art History. While recognizing that anything is possible, he does not see the way an artist could stand out ignoring what has been done before him.

To know how an artist came to be who he was, it is vital that you know who his teachers were and what they taught him. You must know the connections that existed between artists to know how this great brain called Art History works and what your spot in there is, as a neuron.

Do you love cars? If so, no doubt you will also be fascinated to know the name of each part of the engine. Or if you love football, surely you'll know the life and work of coaches and players. The same goes for the human figure and the study of anatomy, or artistic creation and the study of Art History.

And if you're not interested in any of that, maybe you're not as interested in Art as you think 🤔

TEACHER'S TEACHERS

Mark absorbs like a sponge any type of Art inside or outside museums, whether figurative or not. **The only —and non-negotiable— condition is that it be excellent and tickles your brain**.

The truth is that he is a highly permeable guy. He opens his mind and invites geniuses who have nothing to do with painting into his universe, such as Elon Musk, Jony Ive or Lee Clow. He thinks all creative and intelligent people are tremendously stimulating, coming or not from Arts. He just admires great minds. They are his references.

He is inspired by many artists throughout history, but he especially admires French artists from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, because he sees in them the perfect balance between tradition and modernity, between academic rigor and subjective expressivity.

Mark has copied a lot of artists. He's amazed by the Spanish artists and their artistic tradition that had a brutal influence on French artists of the nineteenth century. **Ribera and Murillo leave**



How could it be otherwise? Mark loves Francis Bacon's philosophy: *he is one of the real ones*, he says.

At the workshop he recommended watching his interview by David Sylvester in 1966 on the BBC.

TAKE A LOOK, it's priceless.

him speechless and especially the world stops turning when he talks about Velázquez.

What the hell, every artist after Velázquez is overwhelmed by his greatness. This guy did not make paintings, he made life. 'There's Velázquez, and the rest is a bunch of good guys' said Carlos Nine. Perhaps it is true that all painters feel somehow overwhelmed by Velázquez, in the same way, that the musicians are left in tatters when they listen to Bach.

Great masters are always great, but we all have our favorites. Mark recognizes finding in Rembrandt, Chardin or Corot a richness and depth that he does not see in Sargent. Maybe he was not very deep, but his technique is so fabulous that he is forgiven (almost) everything. Mark steals a bit from here and another one from there, conveniently, because not all teachers teach him the same things.

Each one solved the puzzle that is art in their own way but, without exception, they had something in common: **an accurate intuition to know when something was right**. Everyone knew what they were doing, and you can bet it's not easy to know when you are right.

Mark loves Manet and his teacher, Thomas Couture. His drawing evokes the virtue of the old masters, but without their academic stiffness. He adores Theodule Ribot, Hans Makart, Sargent and his teacher Carolus-Duran and reserves a special applause for the soft and beautiful work by Jean-Jacques Henner.

He also seeks beauty in sources of inspiration as different as Edwin Dickinson, George Bellows, Joseph Christian Leyendecker, Fairfield Porter, Daumier or Adrian Ghenie. He enjoys both the surrealism of the first sculptures by Alberto Giacometti and the complex and stimulating lyrics by Rosalind E. Krauss. Hell, I would give anything to have a time machine and see Frans Hals painting a head!

Seeking the root of beauty, he's influenced by non-figurative artists, especially the German abstract expressionists. Of course he loves Kooning, Mark Rothko, and Robert Motherwell. He keeps an open mind and **feels flattered when someone tells him that his painting can recall abstract expressionism in some way**.

He also has references to great living masters such as Edward Schmidt, Steven Assael, and **Alex Kanevsky**, among many others. His list of sources is endless because he does not discriminate any field: he loves advertisements, illustration, advertising graphics, digital art, literature, music, cinema...

Mark wanders and digs all the time, curious, hungry and open-minded, as real artists do.

DEANE G. KELLER



You have a lot of lessons from Deane G. Keller on Youtube

Use this great resource!

Deane was one of the most important people Mark met in his life, as he was for **Hollis Dunlap**. He was a great teacher, someone really extraordinary, who made a difference. Deane taught him all the fundamental principles in a unique way and with an overwhelming energy.

Over the years he met Keller in museums and he always praised the copies he made. He was also a good writer and Mark still keeps his letters like a treasure.

Deane had a great intelligence which he knew how to use in order to teach the students everything he knew in the best possible way, influencing them more than any other teacher. It is not easy to have such a good teacher and Mark feels fortunate he's had the opportunity to meet such an extraordinary person personally and professionally.

This is our little tribute to an exceptional teacher, who started a lineage of exceptional teachers.

FORGET THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Like any good teacher, Mark is concerned about the direction of the educational system in general and the artistic one in particular. **The relativistic bias, the ego and the desire to obtain results overcome the hunger to learn and discipline**. Art studies and universities are not serious, nor do they correspond to any market demand. They are a very expensive private club that go their own way, as if they did not live on this planet.

Every form of art means expression, true; but not every form of expression means art. **Drawing is, above all, discovering and making decisions**. Do these art schools consider this?

A plastic artist must be like a musician: first, student and then interpreter. No music apprentice makes records in his first days of solfege, but it seems that in plastic arts there is that impatience for personal expression before mastering the tools that allow you to express yourself without making a fool of yourself.



The 21st century is wonderful. Now you do not even need to be inside museums in order to study them. Thanks to **Google Arts & Culture** you can study a piece almost better than in front of the original one, since sometimes museums make it difficult with long queues, crowds, barriers and glass.

Get the most out of technology !

One of the biggest problems with the books we study is that we do not remember what we learned since we can only remember with repetition and constant exercise. Because the artist does not write his work, he paints it. **You must know that art is not really *studied*, but learned from experience**.

Knowledge only consolidates by practicing and repeating. There is no other way.

Understanding painting from books is not the same as doing on canvas inside a studio. **Learn to paint by copying**. Copying is used to find out how something works and to get to the point, we should copy the best ones in the first place.

The current educational system does not teach students how to earn a living out there. Mark, like the other artists that **Menorca Pulsar** has interviewed, fully agrees that there is an urgent need to introduce subjects on professionalization in art schools. **Students must be prepared to make art and to deal with the difficulties they will encounter in the real world to make a living out of it.**

What you are going to find out there is an arid sector of which you know absolutely nothing, where mistakes are expensive. In the real world, you must show how good you are, not your degree. No title arouses any interest to galleries, collectors or museums. It just does not work like that.

How to deal with galleries, billing, paying taxes, financial education, negotiation, productivity, etc.



«There's nothing like copying the great masters. To stand in front of a Van Dyck or a Rubens and spend hours and hours in a silent conversation with these works will open your eyes like no other experience. After copying a master, you go back to your studio as a renewed person.»

Mark Tennant

Mark recommends copying the Old Master's drawings, so I've arranged a folder with all the recommended stuff.

DOWNLOAD THE PACK

None of that is taught to the student ... and they should do it! 🙄

So this is the message: **school is important, but everything is inside museums**. Mark learned to paint by copying the masters because he gets all the answers from them. He says that if you ask the right questions, they always answer you.

Let's imagine a young Mark at the Maryland Institute in the 60s, with a certain mayhem scenario at the classrooms. Did he learn anything at school? Yes and no. Although he admits that part of this training was useful, he openly rejects the rest. **He received a lot of completely erroneous information from professors with no vocation or artistic interest, so he learned to appreciate *real* painting by visiting museums.**

He copied the great masters in about 11 museums in different countries. That is a wonderful experience that is being lost today, for several reasons. Now museums make it more difficult for copyists to assist and schools are increasingly reluctant to recognize that true knowledge is outside their classrooms.

In the French academic tradition, students' first paintings were copies. Along with the human figure of nature study, copy was the core of their programme but that, sadly, has gone out of fashion. What the eighteenth-century academy did extraordinarily well was to embody the values of hard work and discipline. Take a look at the works by art students from that time and see yourselves the effectiveness of their learning method.



Drawing by Pierre Paul Prud'hon. Available in high resolution.

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The success of your painting depends entirely on you. On how you think, on how much work you dedicate to it and above all, on how you process your failures. **If you can't overcome an obstacle, visit a museum and learn how the best ones did it.**

And whenever you copy the masters, do not copy their results, but their decisions. When you work accumulating brush strokes to achieve a result, you are a slave to the process of the artists in whom you are inspired. This way you get what they got by pursuing their result, but you do not get to think like them.

Do not copy, tune in. The composition of their brains is more important than the composition of their palettes.

Pierre Paul Prud'hon said that when he copied Rafael, he had silent conversations about grace and beauty 😍 ...And that's the spirit, folks.

«WRONG IS RIGHT»

Quoting Frank Benson again, 'Painting well does not have much to do with talent but with work and the desire for constant improvement'. Copying the best, visually devouring your teachers' demonstrations and being very, very constant is key.

Aha, but...

While it is true that hard work leads to great satisfaction, it also leads to ... great frustration! You see, the artist does not have a fixed idea of what is right and what is wrong, as a lawyer or a surgeon does. **You're never 100% sure that what you do is the right thing to do and that anguishes you**. In spite of everything, let's be frank and accept that all that friction has its own magic and painting is a wonderful activity with which to assert the days of your life.

If perfection does not exist in art, we are headed to making mistakes. There is no glory in the

failure of an airplane pilot and his mistake is always unfortunate. But there is greatness in the well-orchestrated error in a painting. So to speak, the secret lies in *making the right mistakes*.

Keep the lucky accident and do not try to retouch it. Keep these unforeseen opportunities intact and treasure them. You must be patient. Sooner or later the *perfect accident* will show up as if by magic, but you must not force it.



The great Thelonious Monk.

Mark illustrates this by quoting Thelonious Monk, an American jazz pianist, and composer who saw himself as a *perfectly imperfect* musician. Thelonious said that the perfect musician was John Coltrane, but this very same perfection in execution repressed him to express himself freely. Coltrane was looking for new ideas in exotic places to overcome this blockage, while Thelonious did not have to look for anything outside because his inspiration came from his own imperfection. It was so true for him that he even came to claim that *wrong is right* (the wrong thing is the right thing).

Another good example of this is *The Köln Concert* by Keith Jarrett, who made history in 1975 in Cologne. For this show, he played an old *Bösendorfer* piano —the only one available on the scene— that was manifestly inoperative. Jarrett could never play that piano properly. It went out of tune, the pedals were stuck and the high notes had a metal timbre. So good old Jarrett improvised with what he had.

In order to overcome the poor resonance, he played bass riffs and in order to raise the volume, he played standing up, pushing the keys hard and



The Köln Concert, by Keith Jarrett.

injecting the piece with an intensity unknown until now. Jarrett gave up looking for perfection and let himself go, enjoying the pleasure of making *perfect mistakes* that led him to create a unique work of art.

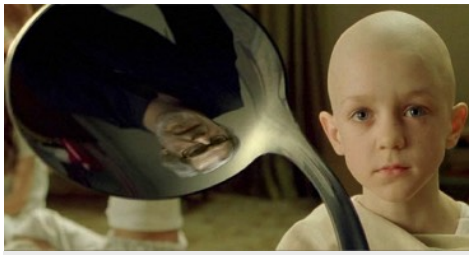
Of course, renouncing perfection is not enough. To achieve something like that, you must have a great security built by years of discipline, though not too much self-confidence. Genius is reaffirmed by the quest for this balance.

Back to painting, Camille Pissarro also said that **it's absurd to seek perfection** and centuries before him, Michelangelo stated that a true work of art is nothing but a shadow of divine perfection. No less platonic, Mark said in **our interview** that there is no perfection and that there is only one perfection: the Creator. We are imperfect.

Briefly: ideas are perfect, and their execution is imperfect. Oh, but we can be *perfectly imperfect* and recreate life with our art because the core is in the unique character of its imperfection.

Painting is much more than faithfully representing something on a surface, it is a vital test. How does it feel? Do you still want to be perfect?

«THERE IS NO SPOON»



The Matrix (1999), by Wachowski brothers.

If you have watched *The Matrix*, you will remember this scene. The same thing happens with a drawing: do not think about things, their names, their identities or their labels. Visual thinking is light years away from verbal thinking and has its own rules. Use its rules by not thinking about them with verbal language. Draw them! Build shapes!

When you draw a spoon, do not draw *a spoon*. **Draw the idea of a spoon and grant your audience the pleasure of seeing *their* spoon**. Do not be afraid to draw it wrong because, in the first place, there is no such *spoon*. The plastic language deals with representing volumes, not words.

You just have to be afraid to draw the idea of a mediocre spoon. Be afraid of not being poetic; of not being dramatic; but never fear *a spoon*.

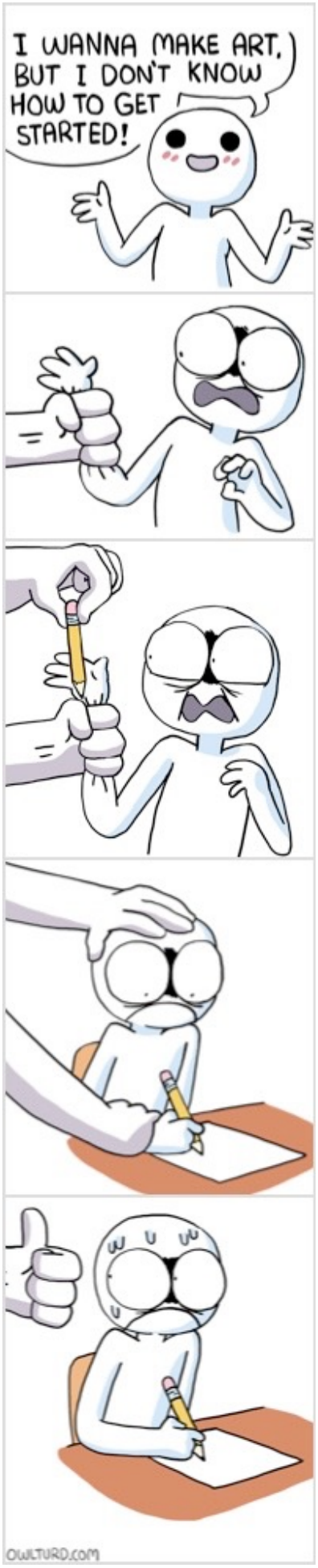
FEAR COMFORT

Mark explains that his process is painful and that he fights hard to get to paint one piece. Veteran artists —unlike students— feel an irresistible fascination for discomfort and permanent crisis.

Discomfort is the only state in which Mark can remain unpredictable and fresh. He does not want to fit in any place or get bored with the monotony of easy recipes, nor get bored with his painting. Art is life, life is change and he thinks that artists must be prepared to love change.

A painting must be exciting or not even be. The tedium and monotony that comes with comfort destroy the soul of any painting, however, well it’s made. And if you're not interesting... why do you paint?

If you are boring, take a look at yourself and ask yourself with brutal honesty why you don’t get to be memorable or spark any other people.



The best medicine for not being boring is always to go further and change, take risks and bet on being unique. Great artists never imitate themselves and take great risks and explore new directions that will take them a little further each day.

Staying inside our *comfort zone* is tempting, but it carries a curse: resign ourselves to not being sexy. **The radical acceptance of movement and discomfort leads an artist to positive changes**.

There are two forces that nullify any possibility of change in an artist: rejection and adherence. **Whether you refuse to change or you have too much adherence to the present time, you are dead**. You will need a good cocktail of courage and humility to overcome this defect, always disguised as fear of the unknown.

...And fear's best allies are excuses. But what's the price you are paying for defending them?

Zero tolerance for excuses!

Perhaps you have perfectly reasonable arguments to justify that you are not progressing as an artist, but they are nothing other than self-deception. Discipline and tenacity are the highest expressions of self-esteem, so pull your socks up, don't lower your guard and do not kick back and coast. Only then will the doors to excellence be opened to you.

← Cartoon by **Owlturd Comix** 😂

By the way, you will read in many books that to be a good artist or to get anything else, you just have to be yourself. Do not pay any attention to that recommendation. If you don't pay close attention it even may seem like good advice, but there are many students who close their doors to heaven claiming *I am like this*, and that's where any development opportunity ends. **Being yourself forever is an invitation to remain eternally in mediocrity**.

You must aspire to something more than to be *yourself*. You should love to be someone better than who you are today.

Oh, and there are also mental blocks. You can count on them. They always show up...

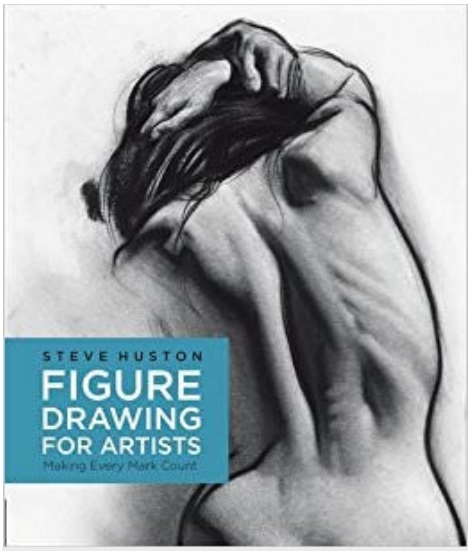
The cheap advice is that, when there are difficulties, you should take a deep breath and deal them very calmly. This is great advice, but Mark recognizes that sometimes there is no way for anything to work properly and he feels like he knows nothing about painting. There always comes that moment when a big dark cloud takes over your head and you end up sabotaging your work so hard that there is nowhere to continue.

Whenever that happens —because sooner or later, it happens— the best thing is to stop touching everything and pay attention to Sargent's recommendation: rest the painting against the wall. Stop thinking about it and give yourself a truce. You have a right to let the supernova of doubts be consumed and start over with a fresh mind. Get away, go for a walk, read or do anything other than think about that damn painting for a while.

Briefly: **provoke and love change**. Give it a warm welcome. Stop being *the usual one* in order to make way for a better artist: your painting will only improve if you improve. And when those blocks arrive, just go for some fresh air.

Capicci?

BEHIND EVERY GOOD PARTY, THERE IS ALWAYS A GOOD ORGANIZATION



To get deeper into these ideas, I recommend you study thoroughly the principles that Steve Huston exposes in his book **Figure Drawing for Astists**.

Life behaves in a certain way and it's predictable, so if you use geometrical logic you can expect your drawing to be consistent by simplifying the complex. If you make a gradation you will have a curve, and if you do not do it you will have an angle. Always, without exception.

Maybe as an artist, you are all passion but your brain comes first. I do not want to spoil your party, but you should know that an outburst of artistic frenzy, without good planning, almost always degenerates into anxiety and frustration. Expression is the icing on the cake. Would you serve a good topping without a good cake underneath? What a dumb thing!

Hold on to certainties and base your drawing on them. It doesn't matter which medium you use, there is always a fundamental truth in the structure, in the way we represent what we see.

Then there is the way we are going to do it, the gesture, what we do not see: the way in which

your ideas will relate to each other, showing your decisions and consequently, your style.

Your topping.

YOUR STYLE COMES FROM YOUR BRAIN, NOT FROM YOUR HORMONES

Yeah, but... What the hell is style?

Style is the unique and personal way you make decisions about graphic and conceptual elements. Gesture can happen with any element: drawing, color, ideas...

There are artists who make decisions intuitively, unconsciously copying others artists' solutions. That's right when you are a student and you copy the great masters in order to try to understand the very essence of visual language, but it's only a first step. Think critically and avoid automatic decisions, Express yourself using your own voice! ✊

Besides admiring other minds, you must stand for your own one. If the decisions you make intuitively are the reflection of others artists' decisions, if you want to have creative control, you must make decisions being very aware, being critical, having a specific intention and being above your impulses. Critical thinking is the way to have your own voice and style. Art is visual philosophy and being a **visual freethinker** is

being aware of your sources, so you can make firm and intelligent decisions that lead you to **rethink life visually**.

Anyone can be passionate about anything, it's the most comfortable thing in the world: we just have to let ourselves be carried away by something that amazes us and that’s where emotions appear automatically.

You do not need a brain to get excited, but you need it to communicate what you feel. Make a difference by showing that you have a brain and you know how to use it ... not everyone can do that!

Give the world your vision by making unique, difficult, risky decisions. Decisions that you —and only you— can take.

Be proactive, not reactive! ⚡

II.

MATERIALS

LEAVE NOTHING TO CHANCE

There are endless ways to use your tools, but there are very few combinations that give an optimal result without distracting or causing irreparable damage.

A common mistake among students is to yield to desire of experimenting, using techniques that do not work well when mixed, hindering the execution —for example, it’s very common to mix graphite and charcoal, which do not get along at all.

When you have to work seriously, you can’t be experimenting. The medium should simplify your way instead of making things more complicated than they already are.

PAINTING

BRUSHES



This is the selection of brushes that Mark bought in Paris.

Mark arrived with a paper bag full of brand new brushes purchased at *Isabey-Pinceaux d'artistes* in Paris. You could tell he had enjoyed choosing them and there was a good mix of brands, hair types, qualities and prices: *Myartscape*, *Daler Rowney*, *Royal & Langnickel*, *Raphael*, *SIGNFT*, *Robert Simmons*, etc. Some fan-shaped, a handful of bristle filberts and many flat nylon ones.

He does not use special or expensive brushes, but he takes good care of them and chooses the ones that do the best performance regardless of their price. **He likes cheap brushes that work well a lot because they are good enough to paint and cheap enough to renew frequently.**

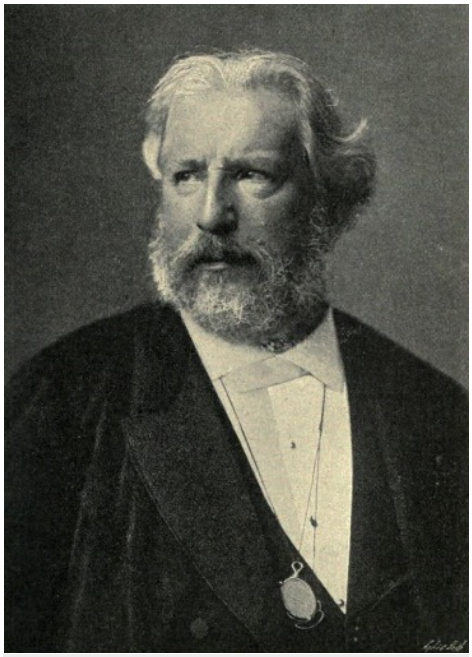


Mark held brushes forming a fan, as well as a cotton rag.

Mark recommended Royal & Langnickel brushes, a brand of artistic and cosmetics mid-range brushes because they have a good quality/price ratio, but he does not really have any fetish brand.

Exceptionally, he uses more sophisticated brushes, such as a fan-shaped mongoose hair one for soft blending. His only —and non-negotiable— condition is them being new, or as good as new.

USE NEW BRUSHES WHENEVER YOU CAN



Portrait of William-Adolphe Bouguereau by Pierre Petit.

Wikimedia Commons

They say that Bouguereau used a new set of brushes for each painting because he needed his tools not to bother him. Think about this: **if a bad brush could bring Bouguereau down, imagine what it could do to you.**

Artists tend to neglect their tools and to even think that the bigger the mess, the more of an artist they are, but actually they are just more childish. Every artist needs his materials, whether expensive or cheap, to be always ready and not cause him any further problems.

Use new brushes whenever you can and take good care of the ones you already have. You do not have to buy the most expensive ones, but the ones that work best for you.

DON'T SOAK YOUR BRUSHES IN SOLVENT



Brushes are an extension of your hand and you should keep them in good shape by washing them with the same care you wash yourself with. **Do not spoil them by soaking them in solvent. Take good care of them and wash them with great care.**

Do not use solvent because it spoils brushes, especially thin ones. Just use a little medium — **Liquin Original** by *Winsor & Newton*— at the end of the session to soften them and then use soap and warm water to clean them well. Use a normal soap bar, wiping the hair against the palm of your hand. Do it gently and without crushing its fibers.

Your brushes should always be ready and perfect. You should not deal with them, but with the paint. When a brush is contaminated, it should not be rinsed with solvent, but put it away and use a new one. Cleaning the brush is a thoughtless tic, the brush set should be planned in the same way that you plan your palette and the previous sketch.

Mark occasionally uses latex gloves to clean the brushes, but not to paint. In fact, he does not get his hands or clothes dirty at all: the paint moves from the palette to the canvas using the brushes, not even touching the fingers. Methodical, clean and tidy.

SOLVENT

OIL ARTISTS IMPORTANT INFORMATION ! We do not recommend using Gamsol Mineral Spirit (Mfc Gamblin) with our 'Ivory' or 'Classic' line of oil brushes. More info online www.rosemaryandco.com

This is the warning that comes with *Rosemary & CO* brush orders.

Mark does not recommend using solvent in any way, neither to clean the brushes nor to thin oil paint.

But hey, if you still insist on using solvent, it's better to use it only for cleaning at the end of each session and not to paint. And without a doubt, the most recommended one is **Gamsol, by Gamblin colors**.

MEDIUM



For thinning the paint while helping to dry faster, you must use something that contains a binder. At class, we used **Liquin Original from Winsor & Newton**.

How much medium do we need? There is no fixed amount, but there is a philosophy —Mark says that *Liquin* **is like salt in meals**: you don't empty half a shaker at once, you first use a little bit and then, if the meal still needs more, you add another bit.

OIL PAINT

He used *Winsor & Newton* oils, but any professional quality oil brand is good.

DRAWING

PENCILS



Mark sharpens his pencils until they look like needles. He holds them firmly between his thumb and forefinger and uses the gesture of the entire arm to draw. It is all drawn and painted from the shoulder, not just fingers and wrists. Precision is an accurate movement, not a mechanical skill and to favor the gesture, we should use our whole arm.

For this reason, it is convenient to work with **extensions and pencil extenders**, not because we want to make the most of each pencil, but because we want to take advantage of all the movement and the gesture of the hand.

The charcoal pencils, always **General's brand**. Mark recommends this brand because it is the most economical and at the same time, the best quality one: their lead is consistent, even in softest pencils.

For the initial sketch, as well as first strokes, he used a *General's* charcoal pencil of a hardness between HB and 2H and later changed to a 2B to fine-tune the work already done with charcoal.

THE TAO OF SHARPENING A PENCIL



The pencil is sharpened by using a blade, with a soft but firm hand. 'Strong and gentle' Mark repeated, as if it were a mantra.

Optionally, the tip can be refined by gently rubbing it against **a board with a sandpaper attached to it**.

Sharpening the pencil like a needle is an important ritual before you start, but it is a waste of time while you are drawing. That's why you have to have a bunch of already sharpened pencils on hand to avoid losing time or concentration while the model is posing.

CHARCOAL



Winsor & Newton or **Coates willow charcoals** are good. He likes willow charcoal because it covers a lot with little friction and the dust can be easily wiped off with a chamois.

PAPER



He uses 70-pound white paper pads and his favorite brands are *Utrecht* and **Strathmore**.

He does not recommend using a bare table to draw on. It's better to put several sheets underneath as a mattress because the hardness of the wood, in direct contact with the paper, produces permanent marks. We must avoid at all times making paper suffer and making irreversible strokes.

'VALUE STICK'



Essential.

It is a wooden stick where we will paint a scale of nine values. I'll dedicate a whole chapter to it later.

PLUMB LINE



A **plumb line** is the combination of a rope, a medium heavy object and the force of gravity. There are those who use a kneaded eraser ball. Everything goes while it serves our purpose, but it is always advisable to use a small piece of lead, such as those sold in fishing stores.



Improvised plumb line with a string and a stone.

The plumb line has the virtue of being the meeting point between the world of ideas and the real world, between geometric abstraction and the organic world. In the real world, there are no straight lines, but we can create them with the help of the plumb line and use them to find a vertical axis with precision.

The straight line is a comparison and checking tool. And if we also make knots or marks on the rope forming thirds, we will have a powerful measuring tool.

SUEDE, THE SOFTER AND DIRTIER THE BETTER



For erasing we must use the most gentle tool for the paper. Suede is less aggressive than a kneaded eraser and it's less aggressive than a friction eraser.

The **chamois** serves to shake the coal dust and the best is the one that has a long resume in your drawing box. A chamois sueded and unwashed for years is the most suitable for your work and should never be washed because it could scratch the drawing if it gets stiff.





KNEADED ERASER

These rubbers are molded with the fingers and are used without friction on the paper, capturing the charcoal particles.

Being malleable, we will use it according to the shape we want to give it: sharp tip, pad, ball...

It is a versatile tool but you should not abuse it at the risk of greasing paper too much, especially at the beginning of the drawing where it is always more advisable to use the suede to open light areas.



1. *General's* charcoal pencils, with extenders
2. Pencil sharpening blade
3. Spare blades
4. Willow charcoals
5. Kneaded eraser
6. Value stick
7. Plumb line
8. Suede, dirty as hell
9. Cushioning Polyexpan piece


«THESE PEOPLE NEED
TO BUY SOME NEW BRUSHES!»

III.

EXECUTION

HOW TO OBSERVE

LIGHT REVEALS SHAPE



Mark does not teach us to paint but to observe and be patient.

Mark told us about the enormous importance of shredding big problems into small problems that intimidate us less.

It really makes sense, right?

He also talked about how anxiety restricts our ability to concentrate 100% on what we are doing. **Best tip for advancing at a good pace from the beginning is *seeing the model wrongly***. There are many ways to do it, but the most rudimentary one is to squint so that the eyelashes prevent us from *seeing well*.

Squinting discriminates around 80% of the information, exposing large light areas and



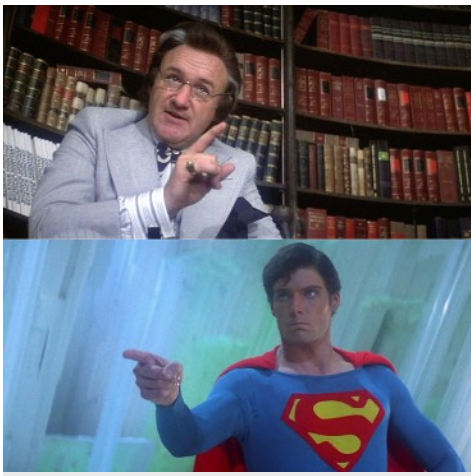
compressing shadow values, which greatly simplifies things.

When we open our eyes we differentiate beautiful reflections, colors, and modulations in each area, but we will not worry about that until the drawing is perfectly constructed with the minimum of necessary information.

Discriminating equals thinking.

PLANNING

PLAN AS A VILLAIN, EXECUTE AS A HERO



Planning VS action.

Imagine how much energy is wasted in dealing with these two approaches, while they are complementary.

Villains are very organized people, no doubt about that. Superheroes, on the other hand, are action people. Great executors who trust in their abilities. Imagine Lex Luthor's *Google Calendar* and compare it to Superman's agenda. Luthor's organization wins by far.

A good artist must have both facets well developed: **planning his painting as if he committed the perfect crime while his hand runs with audacity, without thinking too much**.

I know what you think: *what you're telling me is very difficult* —I know, that's why you have to learn from the best ones, observe how they deal with it and find a balance. They are our inspiration.

IF IT'S WORTH BEING DRAWN, IT'S WORTH BEING PLANNED

Maybe there is no plan to make good art, but that does not mean that it is not planned.

Yes, of course you need a plan.

Although you may be sure about something, **the anxiety that comes from not rehearsing how our drawing will look like will always result in a loss of concentration**. Drawing well is extremely difficult and we will need 100% of our brain running at full throttle, so we will shred big problems into small targets that we can more easily deal with.

All the preparations, systems and use of tools recommended by Mark are based on enhancing, optimizing and maintaining our concentration.

It's not that complicated. We just have to make a very simple —but correct— rehearsal so we can have a good start and not spoil our concentration and energy in the uncertainty that comes with improvisation. Commonly, a test diagram is made in a corner, where the pose sketch is clearly set.

That will be our plan.

PROPORTIONS

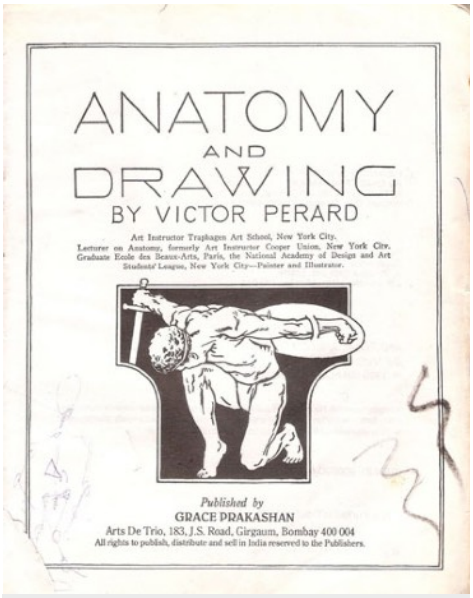
While proportion is composition's most tangible part, it's also true that it is one of the most creative ones. A good method for observing an object's proportions is to block it in, using a plumb line, a good eye educating tool.

Mark measures and checks CONSTANTLY. He is systematic, patient and very careful. He uses value stick and plumb line as a help all the time, forming angles and measurements which he translates to the drawing.

THE SUPER SECRET YOU ALREADY KNOW

At the beginning of the day, we always talked a lot about proportions and do you know what the secret to always keep them in mind while you draw is? You won't believe it: **proportions should be memorized** 😮

That's it.



Anatomy and Drawing by Victor Perard

This is the reference book Mark used to explain proportions.

There are no excuses for this. The sooner you memorize them, the sooner you can draw correctly.

But it’s not a big deal, you're perfectly capable of memorizing it. Print Perard’s proportions chart we provide and place it in the most visible place of your study. Check it out all the time and whenever you’re bored, stop watching kitten videos and spend some time memorizing it. It is extremely important that you take this seriously because it’s the starting point for everything else.

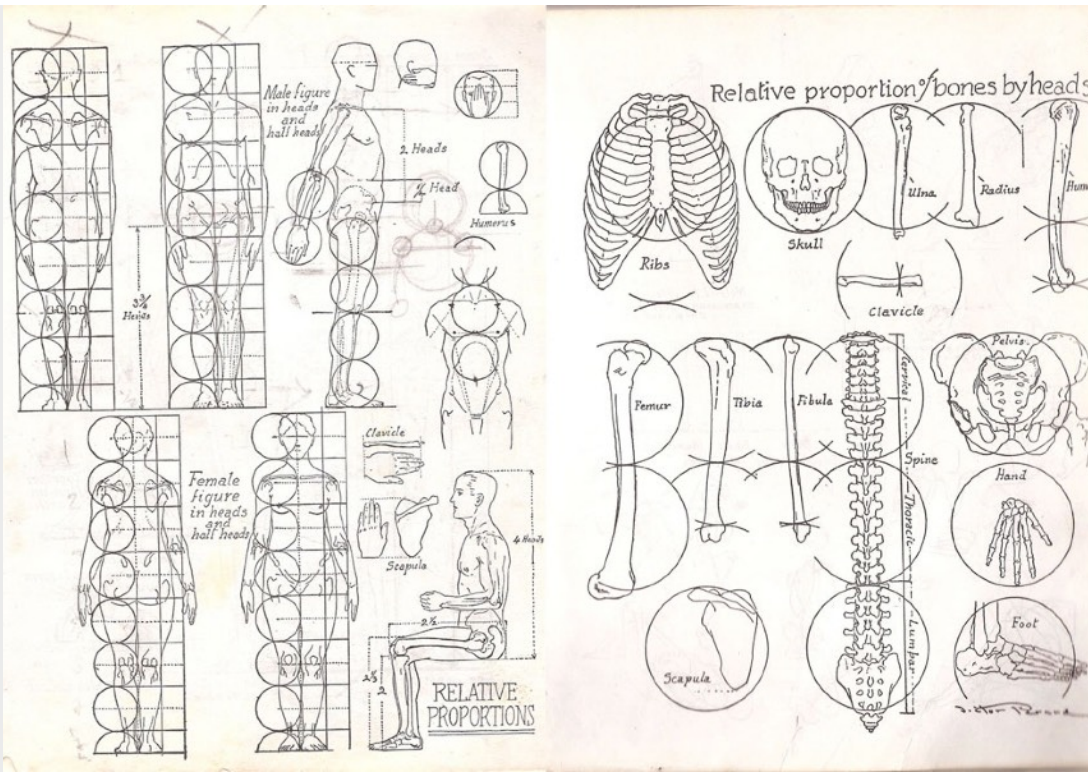
You can’t draw human figure without keeping this chart in your mind. You may think you can, but Mark knows you cannot. The best way to memorize proportions faithfully is by drawing them. Copy this table over and over again until your mind is engraved with them. Do not be lazy and train well before playing sports because, if you do not do it, then injuries come.

On the next page, you'll find proportions chart used by Mark in his workshops, from the book **Anatomy and Drawing by Victor Perard**. **You’d better assume that you should memorize it as soon as possible**. Every time you see a kitten on Facebook, feel guilty for not dedicating that time to study this chart which will make you draw better.

DOWNLOADS

Here you can download a couple of original pages from the book by Victor Perard in high resolution. Print them well and place them in a visible place in your studio.

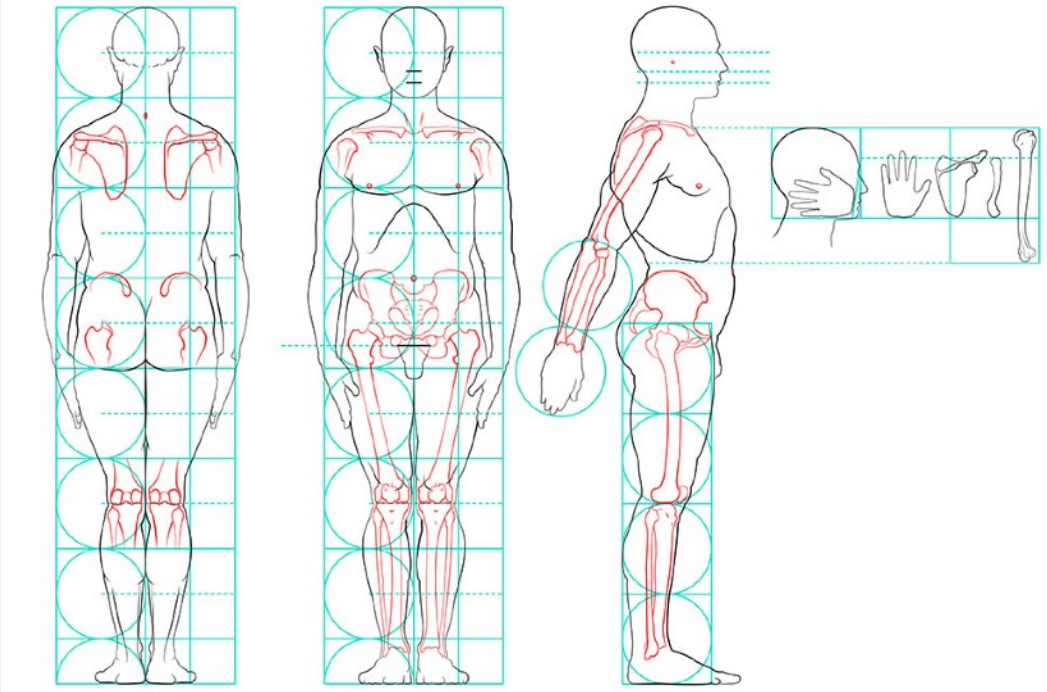
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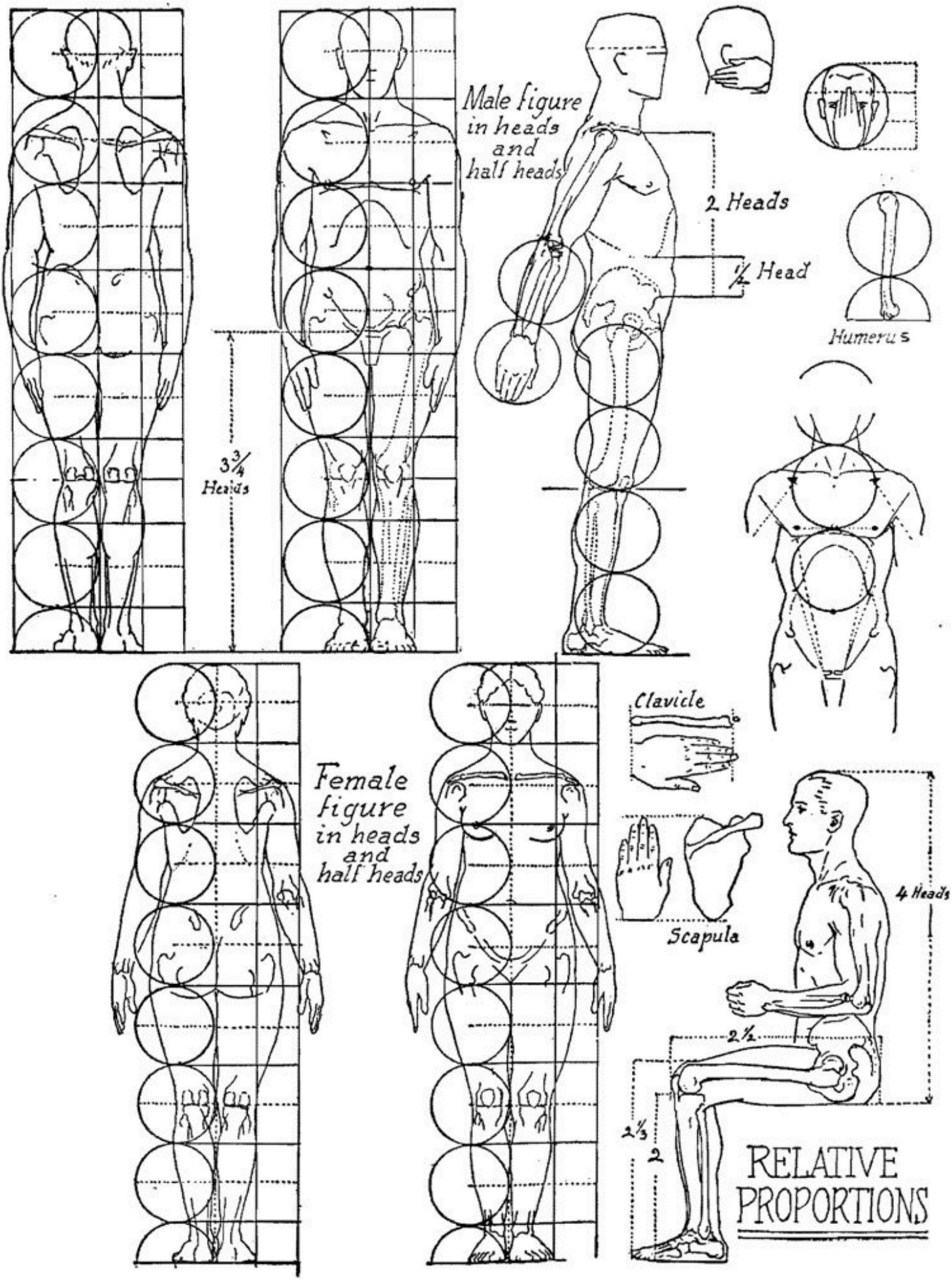


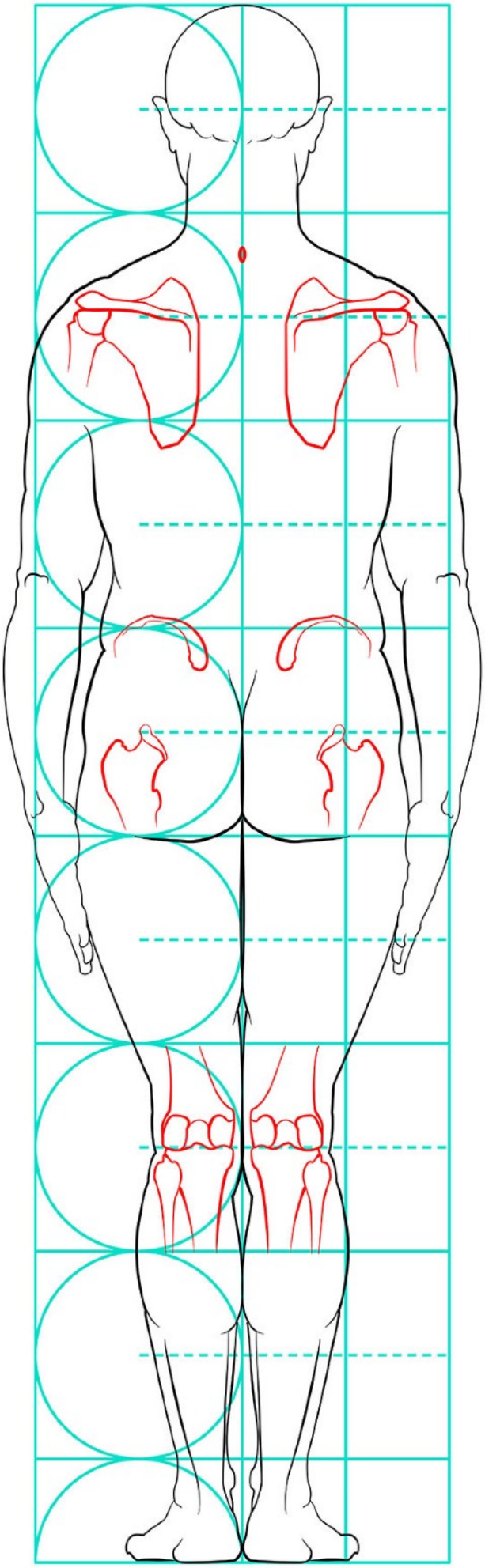
So that you see that I care about you, I have redrawn the chart condensing the most important proportions.

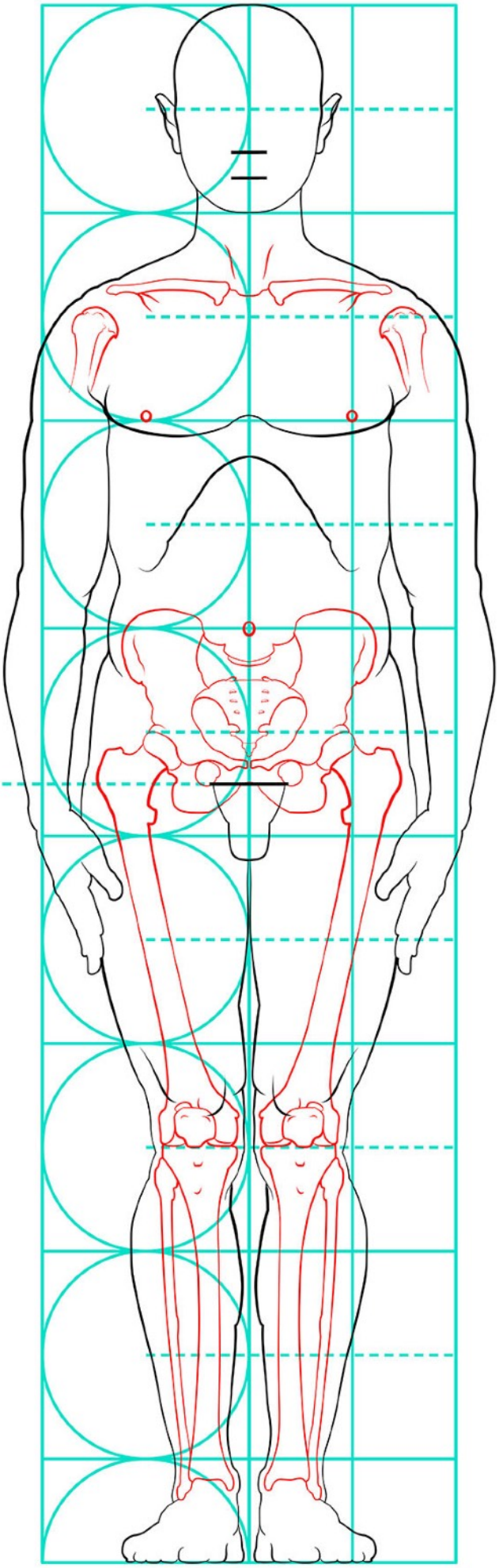
Download the chart in absurd quality, print it big and give it a shot in your studio 😘

DOWNLOAD




Male figure in heads and half heads
2 Heads
½ Head
3¾ Heads
Humerus
Clavicle
Female figure in heads and half heads
Scapula
4 Heads
2½
2⅓
2
RELATIVE PROPORTIONS





COMPOSITION

DO NOT IMPOSE YOUR VISION, SUGGEST IT



Suggestion



Imposition

Don’t give it all.

The moment you break the magic and want to force your audience to think something in particular, the door just closes. **They want to read your story themselves, not you reading it**.

When you plan your composition, give something to think about. Leave something for the viewer, respect their intelligence and allow them to participate in your drawing.

If your work was a triangle, you should not draw it as such, drawing three points in the correct position would be enough. The viewer will connect the points and visualize the triangle. *His* triangle, not yours. This is the magic that you should not break in your art.

CHOOSE YOUR COMPOSITION WELL



Dressed for the occasion

When you think about your composition, think of your drawing as if it were to be framed in a gallery, that is, respecting empty spaces and without fitting the figure on the edge of the paper. You must leave enough space for it to breathe.

What is the purpose of your composition? Was it conceived to convey an emotion? Always ask yourself this question:

If I could stop the time, which moment would I choose?

Think about it deeply, because that fraction of a second will determine the rest of your decisions. Once you decide which kind of composition you are going to work on, you should be consistent with it until the end.

Observe your model: Who is that person? What's the story behind him? ...and most importantly, who do I want him to turn into?

Observe his body language and how it reflects an attitude and emotion. Dramatize that gesture in your drawing so he has a more solid presence. Improve his story by making decisions.

Never stop watching, both inside and outside the studio.

COMPOSING IS PUTTING EMOTIONS IN ORDER

Love is an emotional relationship between two people, not a still life of a man next to a woman. Unless you're Géricault, do not make still lifes of people. You'd better deal with their relationships.

Always keep in mind emotions, not facts. Which is the emotion that you will highlight? Where should the eye be in order to dramatize this emotion?

A good composition is nothing else than a visual route and the clue is keeping attention on the subject as long as possible. We can give it an entrance and an exit, or create a looping tour, like a toy train. There are no absolute rules for ordering details and it depends entirely on the artist's imagination.

Attention focuses on the main element, and should not be divided. Having different focuses competing one with each other is only justified when that's our purpose for the composition; like in a fight scene. We will achieve better compositions if we first observe the emotional impact that the subject produces. In this way we discriminate or highlight resources based on the main idea; for example, serenity or agitation.

YOU CAN'T SAY YOU HAVE NO RESOURCES

Drawing is defined by the model himself, not by his pose. A model is a starting point. Use elements that help you communicate your opinion about his character: shape, design, texture, value, line quality, attention to clothing details, accessories, environment, facial features, etc.

Nothing in art moves faster than a straight line. The line is a direct vector for the eye. The "S"

shaped lines are an artifice that suggests at the same time beauty, grace and rhythmic movement that flows smoothly, focusing on the path it makes in a more organic way...

Use every resource you have in order to build those flows that lead the eye and make it focus on the place where action and main emotion are.

STILL LOST?



«Take a breath and concentrate. Do not look for a result. Get deeper, no hurry, searching for the truth»

Mark Tennant

If we do not know what we are going to do, the most useful tip is always to start from the center and expand towards the sides filling the space.

Another useful tip is to **let the great masters think for us**. If we look at the classic portraits in museums, we will notice that in most compositions the chin is always slightly above the center or, at most, it starts from the center. Almost all portraits in museums follow this rule. It's just an example of the endless starting points you'll find in museums.

So whenever you have any doubt or need a road map, always observe how those same problems were solved in the past.

COMPOSITION AND HARMONY



«What is the use of learning to write if you have nothing to say? Writing correctly will not make you write good stories. The purpose of making art is not to tell a story, but to provoke it in the viewer

After rigor, there comes a time when you can trust your instincts and your imagination.

Do not get distracted, concentrate deeply, as much as you can. You do not have to change the world or reinvent the wheel.

Just connect: you have much in common with your viewer; give him your personal vision as a reward».

Mark Tennant.

Harmony is a very important element in composition. For a painting to be good it has to be consistent with itself, that kind of harmony that we can always find in nature. Every painting must be concordant in its style; abstract painting must be consequently abstract and realism must be consequently truthful about life.

However, **a completely orthodox painting is monotonous and ordinary**. For increasing artistic interest and taking the subject beyond trivial things, a certain degree of freedom and spontaneity is required.

Another kind of harmony is linked to how the subject is addressed. A common mistake is, for example, to build a head with relief, popping out of perfectly flat clothes. In this case, we no longer talk about artistic license, but of inconsistency.

When a subject is devised too rigidly, it's at risk of becoming static. This is where the accident provides a nice contrast. Accidental effects can also be planned, for example by leaving some areas of the painting unfinished. **The lack of finishing increases the interest on the finished areas**, creating a powerful focus. In a portrait, there is no need to give the same finish to the clothes as to the head, and the same thing happens with an unfinished background behind a finished figure. These contrasts have an important place in painting but we must be careful not to break unity.

Also, when value in an area is correct and colors harmonize, we can afford working carelessly,

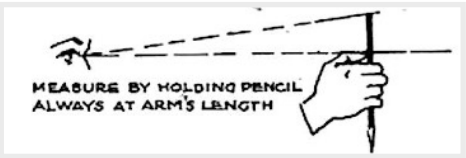
though in a calculated way. That is, supervising the carelessness of the brushstroke. The more perverse you are playing with this idea, the more interesting your painting will be.

In order not to give shape a complete finishing, simple areas should be made first, and then keep on working the subject as a whole instead of completely solving piece after piece. **If each part is finished separately the painting will lose its life, unity, and spontaneity**. As far as possible, we must contemplate the painting as a whole, and consider each part according to the place it occupies within the composition.

There is a tendency to give an exact finish to each part of the subject, giving everything the very same importance and denying an interest hierarchy. Every painting needs a focus on arranging composition. Do highlight a point, a plane, a color, a shape... and leave everything else subordinated. If other areas are too obvious, remove lights and accents, compress values, blur edges or lower value and chroma.

Be that as it may, make intelligent decisions and be consistent with them until the end. Mark confesses that the most fascinating thing he has learned lately is that it's very easy to surrender to an idea. It's like a test. And when you decide that you're not going to give up on that idea and you're going to go for it until the very end, the door opens wide.

HOW TO MEASURE



«Do not measure hastily. All measurements should contribute to expressiveness in modeling»

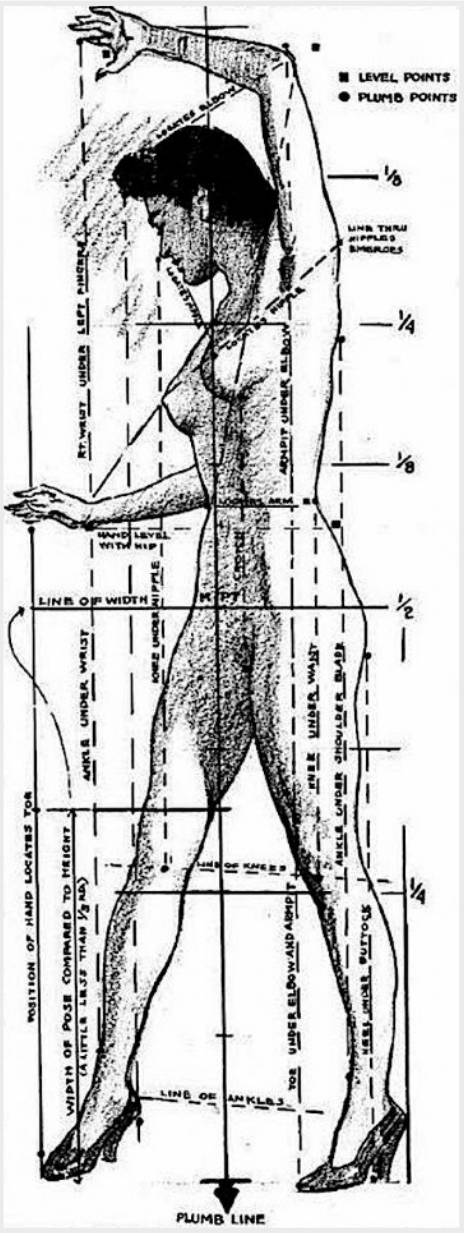


All measurements should be made with the arm extended, so that each time you take a measurement the distance between the pencil and the eye must always be the same, avoiding errors.

All shapes are carefully measured by comparison of length and width. Also, the fixed points of the scene are useful anchors, like the corners of furniture and windows.

Although Mark always advocates taking measures as accurately as possible, he warns that artists should know when free themselves from the academic procedure. **There must be a balance between rigor and expressivity, which are complementary values, not opposite**. When the process is too mechanical and methodical, your drawing looks robotic, right?

We need that structure in order to have a solid foundation, and at the same time, we must cultivate the virtue of knowing how to stop in time. A drawing is not a demonstration of technical skills but the evidence of research.



This illustration and the following come from the book **Figure Drawing for All it's Worth by Andrew Loomis.**

100% recommended! 😍

HOW TO MEASURE FIGURE

I. Set two points on your paper to fit the figure on your paper (usually head and feet). Then draw a perpendicular line between them to fix the central axis of the figure.

II. Find the middle point of the figure. Now, holding the pencil with your arm extended, look for the midpoint of the figure you see. From the midpoint, you can deduct the fourth parts of the figure on your paper.

III. Measure the largest width of your figure, and locate the midpoint.

IV. Now you have a point where two lines cross on your paper. Locate that point in your model and take it as a reference center. **Keep this point in mind all the time, it will be your strongest anchor.**

V. Preferably with the help of a plumb line, locate all the important points that occur in cascade along the reference cross.
Think that any surrounding element serves to measure and fit the figure (a chair, a window, a corner, etc.).

VI. Start by blocking-in the head and torso. Starting from the head, deduce the rest of the figure.

VII. As for the angles, be sure to find the relative position of the axes of the figure in relation to the reference anchor, the center point.

VIII. Check and compare constantly all the reference points. Those on the opposite side, those below. Pay close attention to how they relate to each other. After previously establishing the limits of the width and height of the figure, your drawing will be accurate and its foundations well established. Consequently, your figure will be solid and you will not have the anxiety of suspecting that something is not working because now you certainly know that it is okay because its structure is correct and has been revised with a systematic and rational process.

BRIEFLY:

I. Figure height

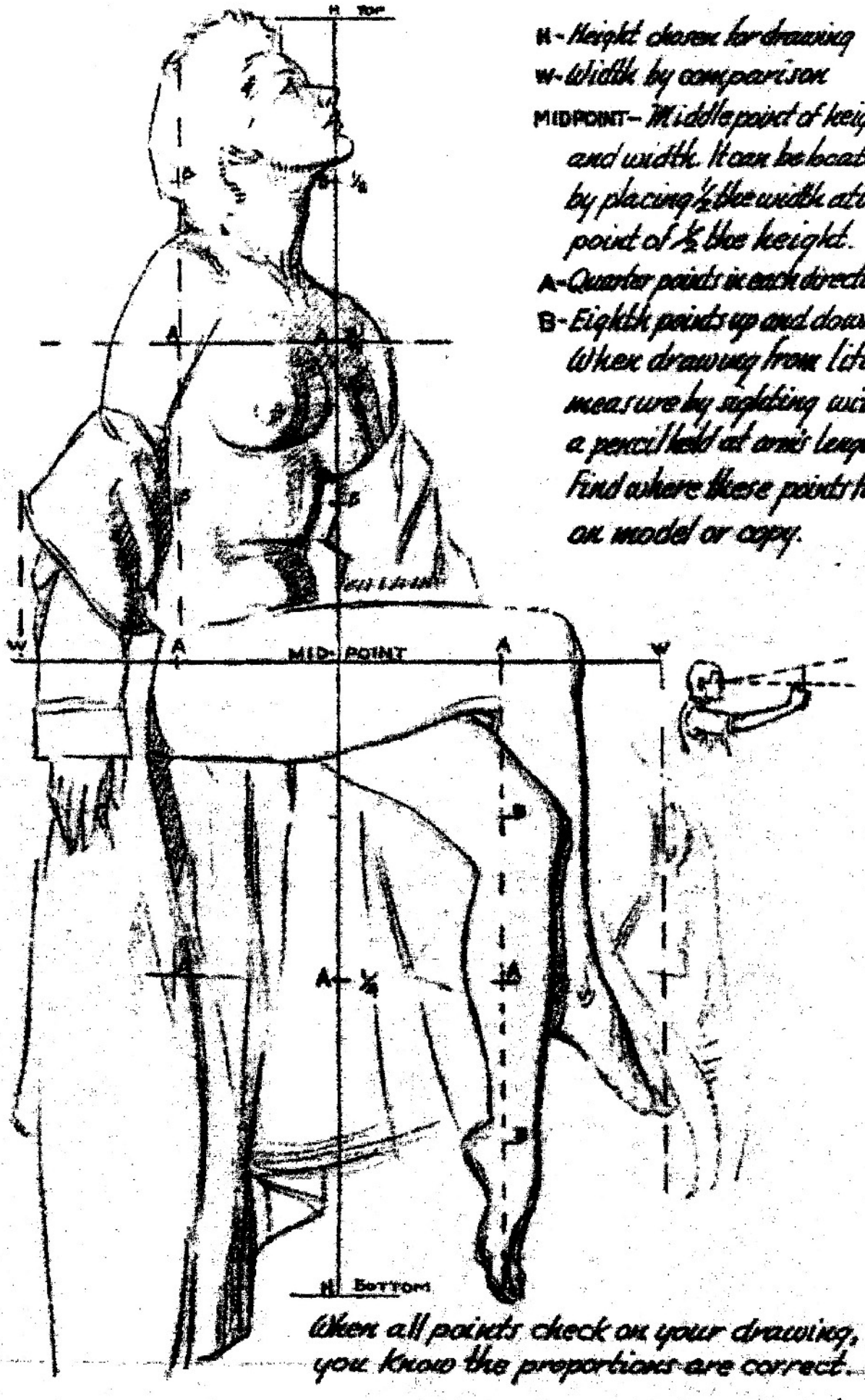
II. Figure width

III. Midpoint

IV. Fourths

V. Eighths

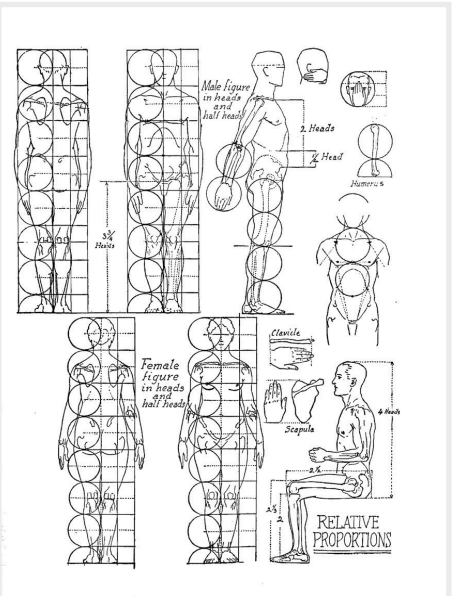
EVERY DRAWING IS A PROBLEM OF DIMENSIONS



H - Height chosen for drawing
W - Width by comparison
MIDPOINT - Middle point of height and width. It can be located by placing ½ the width at the point of ½ the height.
A - Quarter points in each direction
B - Eighth points up and down.
When drawing from life, measure by sighting with a pencil held at arm's length. Find where these points fall on model or copy.

When all points check on your drawing, you know the proportions are correct.

FIRST OF ALL, USE YOUR HEAD



Proportions chart from the book **Anatomy and Drawing by Victor Perard**.

DOWNLOAD

ALWAYS START BY THE HEAD

The size of the head is key and we will take the academic reference of 7 ½ heads. **The measurement of the head should be made as accurately as possible since it is the cornerstone of all subsequent measurements.**

Mark started the class by waving a proportions chart and ensuring that, until we memorized it, we would not move forward. 'Hey, I know that chart' I thought, 'It's from the book **Anatomy and Drawing by Victor Perard**'. Aha, and there goes the #1 problem of every student: their knowledge still lies inside books, not inside their heads.

In this drawing of Michelangelo, you can read notes about proportions based on the head measurement.

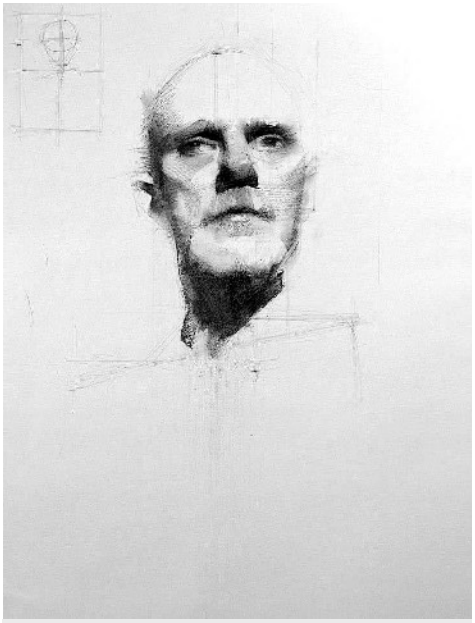
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What we know VS what we see

Mark's insistence that we must memorize proportions has a very powerful reason for being: what we know is always our starting point.

The balance between what we know and what we see consists of adjusting the proportions we know in advance to those we observe in the living model. The balance between knowledge and observation will make your drawing the living image of a deliciously imperfect and deeply human person.





A finished drawing often lets all this construction scaffold made out of lines and underlying measurements breathe from underneath.

Mark deliberately allows this, he likes to see the construction lines and does not want them to disappear in the process of refining the drawing.

The head is our construction tool, the cornerstone of the architecture of the human body and correcting its measurements is the best possible start. Inaccuracy at the beginning of a drawing ensures that it crumbles and worsens as we add more strokes over the first mistake. **Any work we do over an unsolved mistake will keep projecting new mistakes, more and more evident.**

On the contrary, all the work we do over a success will keep projecting new successes, more and more evident. You know it now: impatience in the beginning is very expensive and the opportunity to make an excellent drawing is sacrificed.

We must memorize well head proportions and measure systems because this is the master key for all the rest. So let's use our head at the beginning and build a good structure, accurately and systematically checking. These checks are made in three ways:

I. Regarding the universal proportions chart.

II. Regarding live observation.

III. Regarding the differences between both models.



Do not search a result. It will arrive for itself

Sargent explained that the most important thing is not the search for a result but the intellectual challenge that exists in the construction process.

When we start a drawing and assume that the head is the basis for building the rest of it, we should not understand that the head should be finished first.

What we must understand is that from the solid construction of the head we can extend the architecture of relationships and measurements to the rest of the figure, linking successful decisions.

READ LESS AND PRACTICE MORE

What a thing to read in a book! 😅

...But this is the truth: the only useful knowledge is the applicable one. It is easy to understand something from a book's pages, but then it's not so easy to apply it on the canvas. Studying art books is not enough. You have to abuse them to really internalize them. Copy them, use them, question them and test them in the studio.

Do not study painting, study by painting and learn by practicing. You need more experience, not more knowledge and you need to understand that every mistake is an opportunity to be better.

PORTRAIT

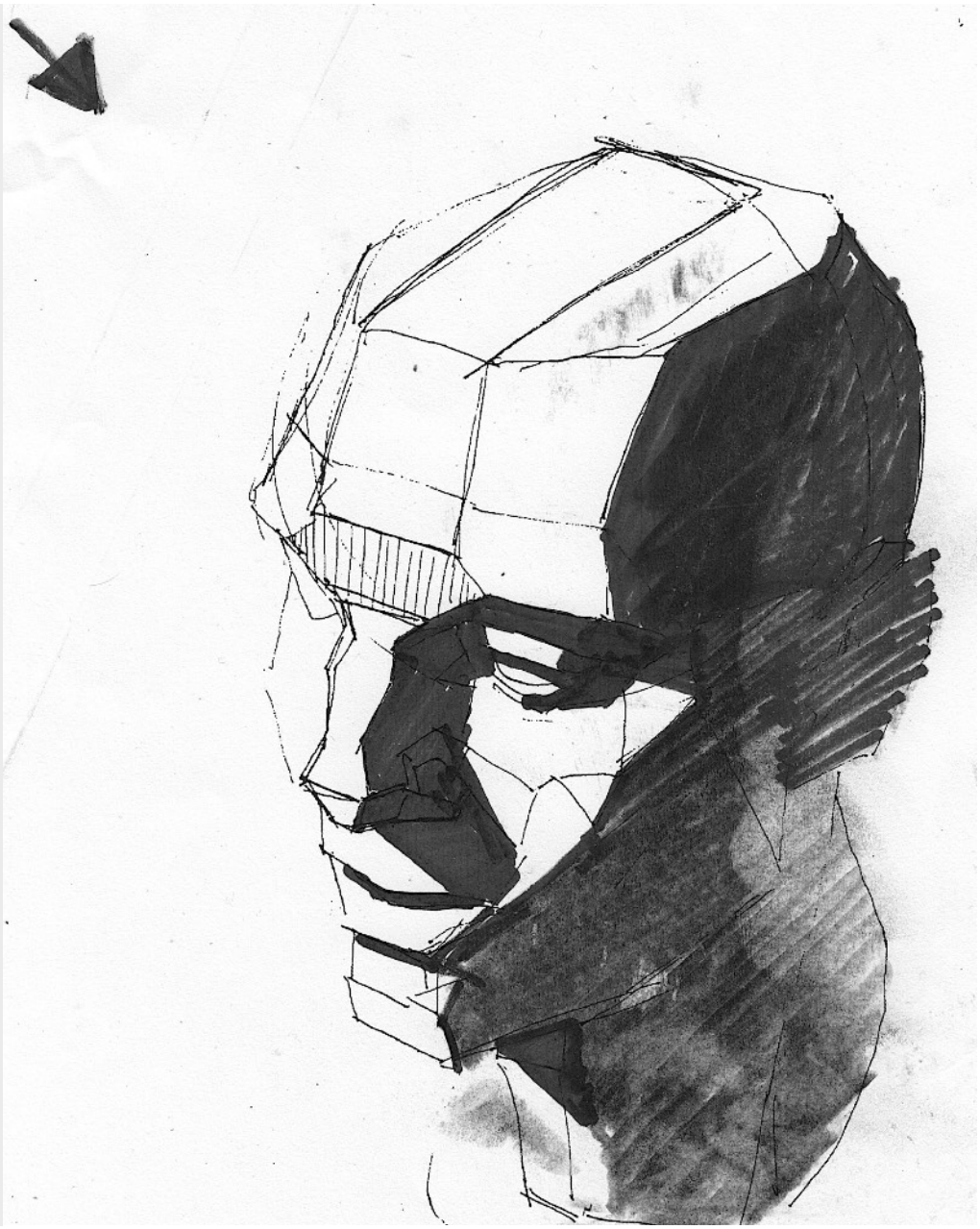
The eye is to head what the head is to body. In order to build a good portrait, we must place the eyes first and then move forward with the rest of it in relation to these. **Placing the head well is very important for the figure and placing the eye well is very important for the portrait**.

The central axis in relation to the tear duct point will give us the key to perspective and how to block in. Then it can be adjusted in relation to the internal ear. That's where the sternocleidomastoid muscle arrives from the point where clavicles and sternum meet, in order to connect the head with the torso.

Demonstration

Mark explained in his workshop how to segment the head in simple planes in order to understand more easily how light behaves on them.

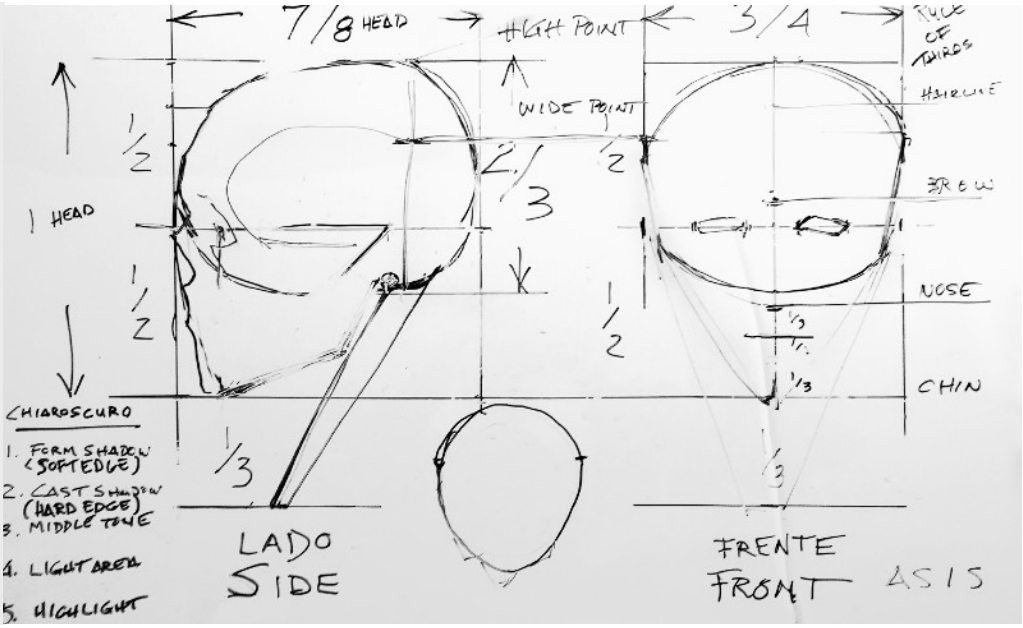
DOWNLOAD IMAGE

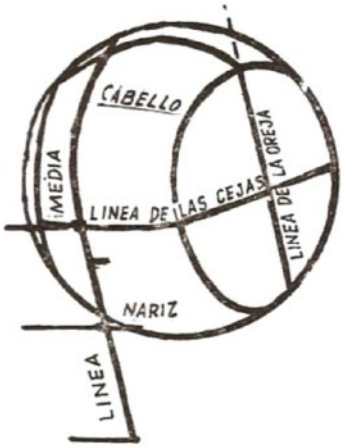


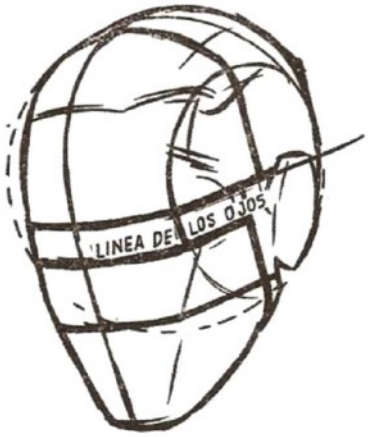
Demonstration

Explanations about head proportions on our studio whiteboard.

DOWNLOAD IMAGE











HOW TO BUILD A HEAD

Strictly progress from general to particular, starting with large planes and fragmenting them progressively into smaller planes. Details have the great defect of being alive and going their own way, so you must keep them in a container that groups them in some way.

The most elementary planes must be memorized in order to have a solid memory reference about how basically light behaves on a head. Ideally, this elementary base should always be running in our head's background.

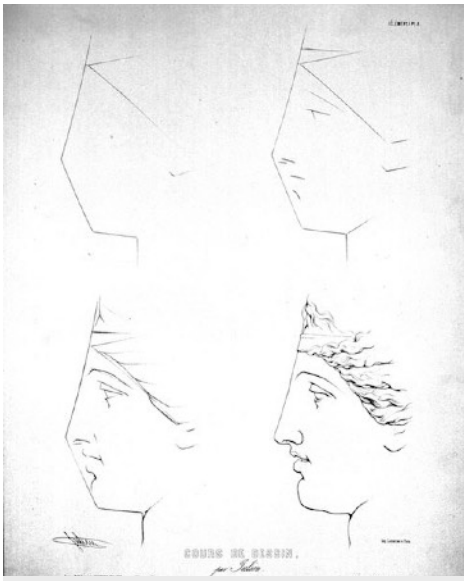
These images were taken from the book **Fun with a Pencil by Andrew Loomis.**

PROCEDURE

I. Draw a sphere.

II. Divide it into sections: central and longitudinal axes, and frontal thirds.

III. Establish the optical limits of the figure with very soft strokes; this drawing is a scaffold and should not be permanent. It is a kind of optical envelope that establishes the imaginary geometric shape that encloses the limits of the figure.



This illustration of Julien's *Cours de Dessin* illustrates how to fit in a simple geometric envelope.

DOWNLOAD IMAGE

Keep this three steps in mind

1. Build the figure using the ideal proportions.

2. Observe where they do not look like the model and distort what you know in favor of what you see.

3. Recognize these differences as opportunities to express the unique characteristics of your model's personality.

IV. From the top of the head to the bottom of the chin, draw a vertical and establish the vertical axis.

V. Draw the horizontal axis, at the height of the tear ducts.

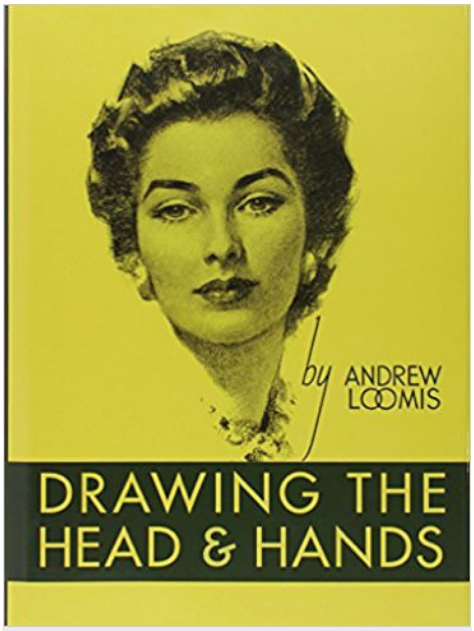
VI. Now set the cranial volume at the same time you indicate the hairline, eyebrows, nose, and mouth.

VII. **Keep in mind that the ideal proportions of the head are based on thirds, but you will see that there are differences between the ideal proportions and the proportions that you observe in your model. Locate those differences and correct the idealized model.**
This is the moment when we begin to express the unique characteristics of the person. What makes an expression unique is what differs from the ideal.

VIII. Use parallel horizontal straight lines in order to measure widths. Remember the golden rule: **the head is less wide than deep and less deep than tall**.

IX. Observe the distance between the eyebrows and the eyes.

X. Observe the distance from the bottom of the nose to the bottom of the chin. Draw a line between those two points and set the mouth in the center. If the mouth of your model differs from the ideal, express that difference clearly so you can get its character.



On the next page you'll see a composition of clippings from the book **Drawing the Head & Hands by Andrew Loomis.**

An essential book that you should have in your library ☝

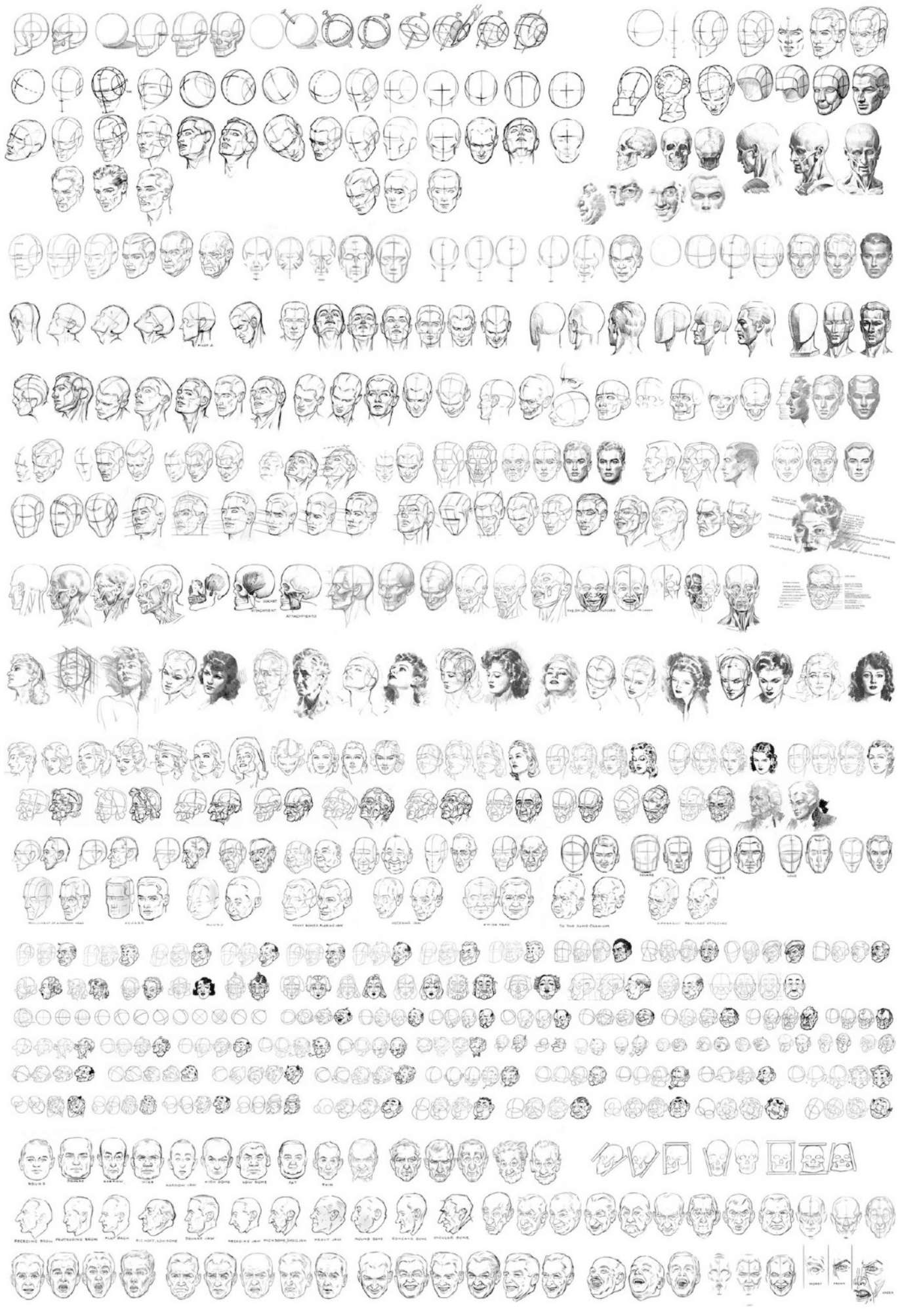
XI. Observe the distance between the highest point of the head and the hairline.

XII. After establishing these general anchors, observe the thickness of the eyebrows, upper and lower lips, and compare within the drawing whether the distance between mouth and chin and the highest point of the head correspond to the model's dimensions.

XIII. All head widths must be deeply checked before proceeding to represent the most characteristic features of the head. **If details do not fit into your scaffold, do not try to adjust the height and width markings to make everything fit**. That's cheating! You can't start drawing details or features until they do fit perfectly.

XIV. When you start drawing features, do start from general and advance towards particular. **Large and simple shapes first, complex shapes later, fitting perfectly into their containers**. It's always better to correct a simple shape than a perfectly finished eye.

XV. Good finishing and refining are much easier when built on a solid structure.



BRIEFLY

BLOCKING THE HEAD IN

- Central Axis
- Anchor # 1 — tear ducts
- Anchor # 2 — internal ears
- Anchor #3.1, if the pose is frontal
  Point where clavicles and sternum meet → connection with the torso
- Anchor #3.2, if the pose is from back
  Seventh cervical vertebra → connection with the torso

FRONTAL DIVISIONS

- 1/2 eyes
- 1/3 ciliary arch–base of the nose
- 1/3 nose-chin


«LESS WIDE THAN DEEP,
LESS DEEP THAN TALL»

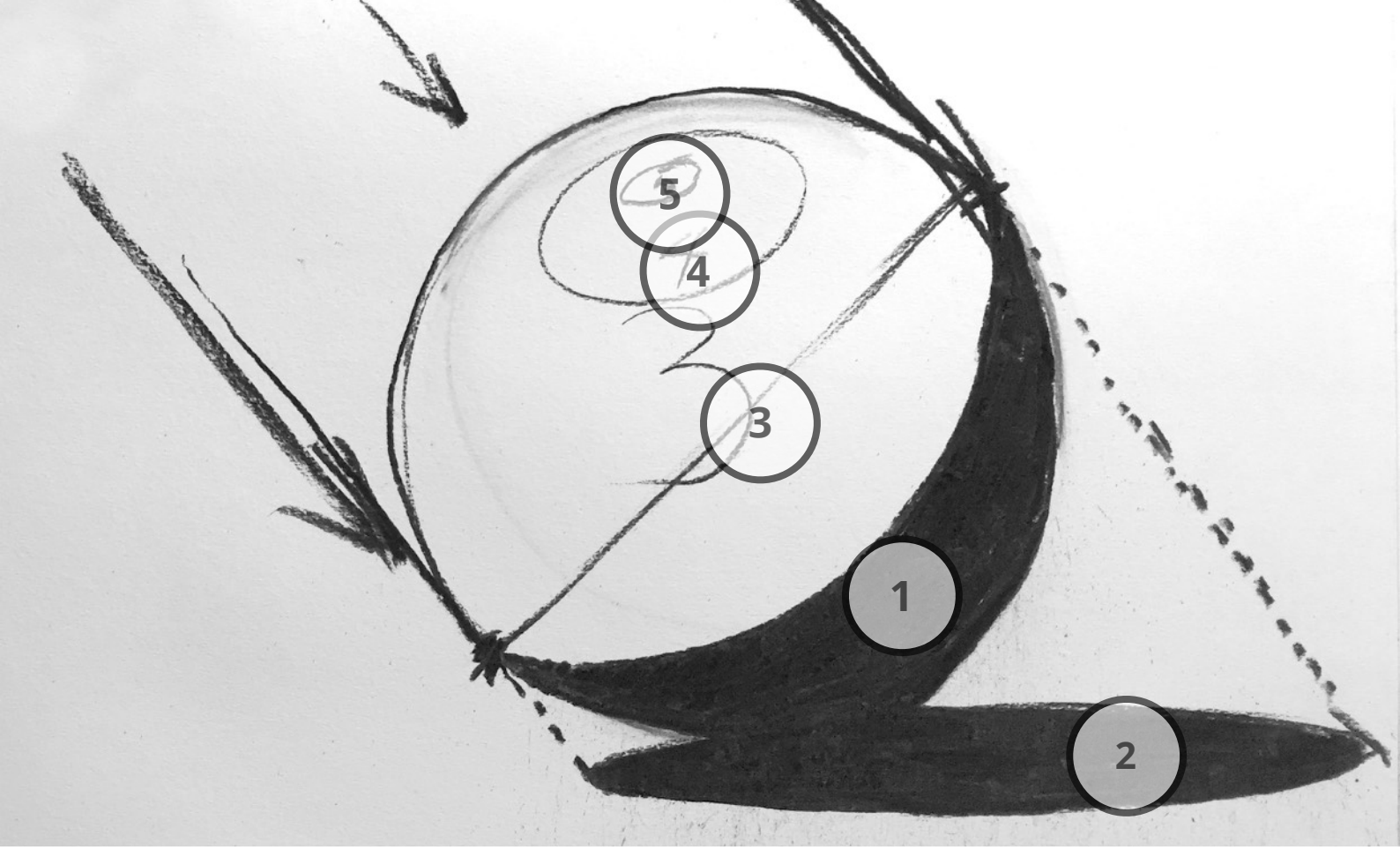
IV.

DEMONSTRATIONS

DRAWING

GELIAH





CHIAROSCURO BASICS

A couple of tips:

- ✓ Use a value scale to observe and judge values.
- ✓ Place a very dark shadow in the composition so you're able to read the value scale correctly and have an anchor of the lowest possible grade.

With a single 3/4 light source, we must observe and clearly delineate these five areas:

1. *Form shadow*. It always has soft boundaries, forming transition grays.
2. *Cast shadow*. Sharper and more defined, its density is higher the closer it is to the nearest object that projects the shadow.
3. *Middle tone*.
4. *Light area*. It's the dessert 🥧
5. *Highlight*. It's dessert's topping 🍒

DRAWING THE GESTURE

Expression VS accuracy

Set proportions from the very beginning, and never lose them. Establish large masses and their relationships before developing small shapes.

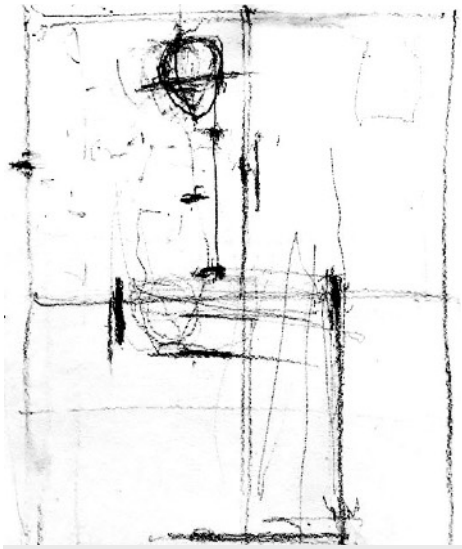
These proportions provided they are right, should express the particular physical nature of the model.

But one thing is the observation of the model, and another one is the imagination that enriches it.

So never be afraid of exaggerating as long as your exaggeration expresses beautifully the character of the model.

- The gesture is the action or rhythm of the pose. **It is not how the model looks, but what he is doing**.
- Find the *action line* that represents the movement: the feeling of the primary movement.
- You should always be aware of the spine curve and the relationship between shoulders axis and hips axis.
- Study the figure as a whole, not as an assembly of parts and look for the general vision in order to understand the relationship between parts.
- Subordinate details to this first general view.
- At the beginning, work on the rhythms of the whole figure. **Do not stop the pencil, let it flow.**
- Study the model more than you study the drawing.
- Draw lines smoothly, identifying the anatomical reference points that indicate the construction anchors of the figure.

DIAGRAM



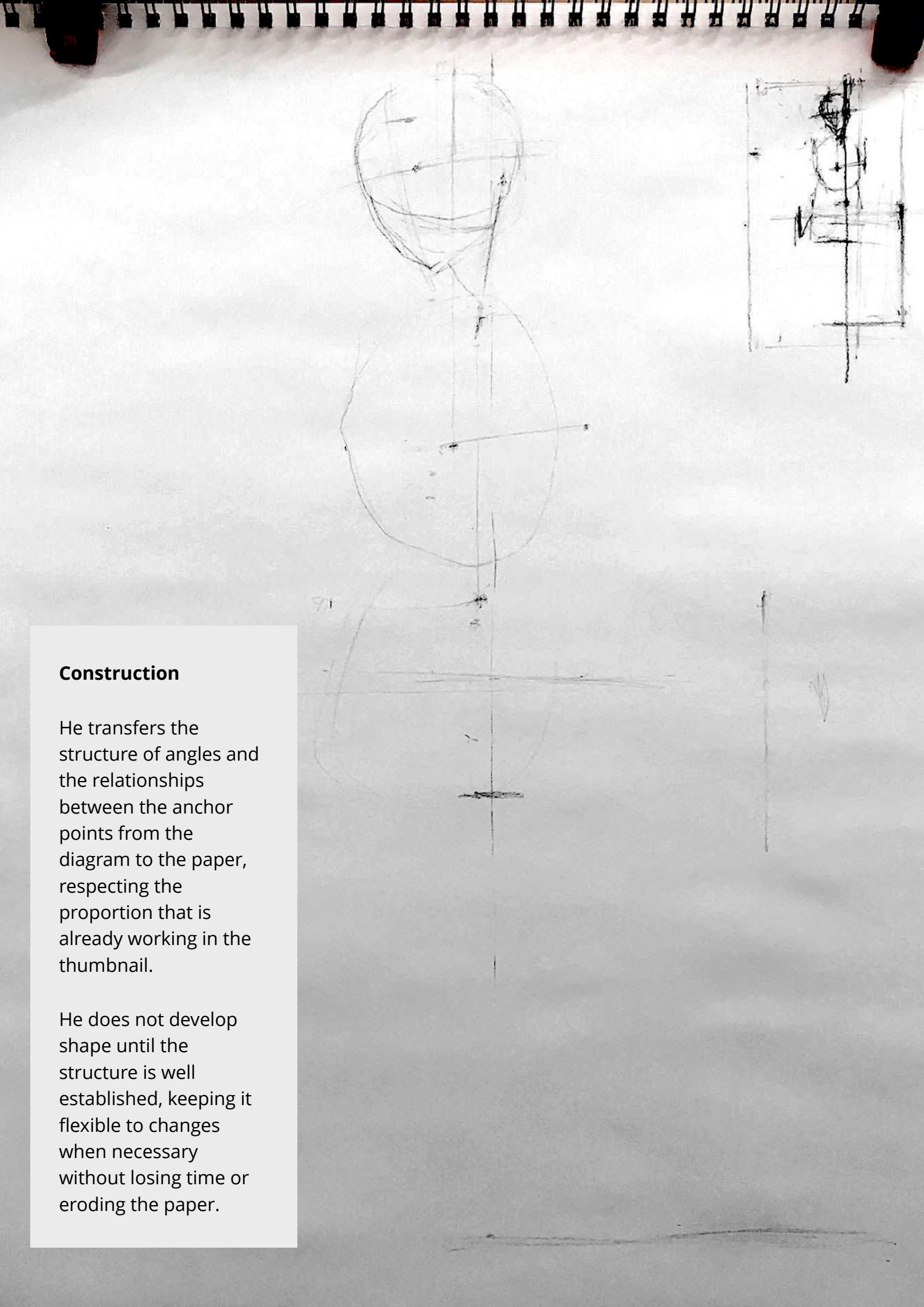
«Think three minutes
for each one you draw»

Start by drawing a preliminary diagram so you can test balance, proportion, and position. Mark compares this sketch with a map and places it in a corner of his paper, where it does not get in the way. Sometimes he does not erase the map and it ends up being part of the land, as a testimony of the process. But as he himself recognizes, it's not always like this and he simply *forgot to erase it* 😅

This thumbnail is a previous rehearsal which eliminates the anxiety that invades us when we suspect that our drawing is not right after working on it for a while. If the thumbnail works, the drawing will work.

If you want to have an idea about timing, a correct drawing by Mark takes about six hours, although he recognizes that he can do it in three with a simpler approach. In any case, it's perfectly normal to take between 20 and 40 minutes just to consolidate the diagram.

For this first phase of the drawing, he uses a G*eneral's* charcoal pencil, HB hardness. By sharpening it like a needle he gets fine strokes like those of a pencil.



Construction

He transfers the structure of angles and the relationships between the anchor points from the diagram to the paper, respecting the proportion that is already working in the thumbnail.

He does not develop shape until the structure is well established, keeping it flexible to changes when necessary without losing time or eroding the paper.

STRUCTURE



Ease

Ease does not depend on the artist's expertise or hand. It's the result of conviction when executing the stroke.

This is achieved with a very well established structure, where there is no margin of error for the stroke.

Rehearsal is in the structure, not in the stroke.

At the beginning he only works on structure, points, and relationships, giving great importance to the axes and angles to faithfully express the position of reference points in space.

Every angle should be calibrated in relation to the vertical using the plumb line. Doing it freehand means an unacceptable margin of error.

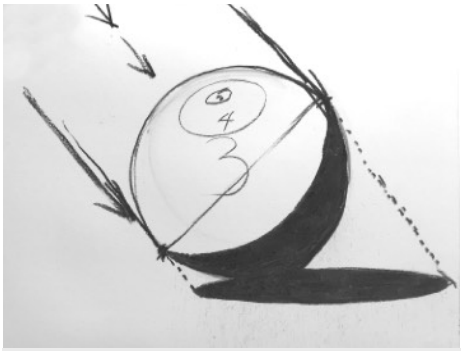
That's why he uses the plumb line in combination with the value stick all the time, fitting angles in relation to the vertical. He uses tools wisely, noting on them measures and divisions which he constantly consults, such as the size of the head and its thirds.

He observes, measures and thinks three times more time than he dedicates to execute.
Execution is a conclusion, not a trial.

Mark is stubborn about his work and asks himself relevant questions about his drawing as he goes through different stages. He studies the relationships within the parts, between them and in relation to the whole.

The drawing is a demanding task that requires a permanent audit.

SHADING



Shading golden rules:

I. The closer the values of the masses are, the more discreet and calm the theme will be.

II. The higher the contrasts are in a subject, the more extensive the planes must be.

The charcoal is previously eroded on a piece of paper in order to form a bevel that allows covering large areas and at the same time drawing accurate lines where shadows end.

Mark observes shadows' shapes by squinting and fills them with pure black using a willow charcoal, clearly separating light and shadow without going through any gray. He designs his composition with patterns of light and shadow that communicate a mood and a movement speed that lead the eye to the focal point.

A composition is more effective when halftones do not have much prominence. **The large flat tones are those that enhance the vigor and simplicity of a drawing, while too many grays soften it**. The more contrast, the more intense and dramatic the effect is, as long as we maintain the highest possible simplicity. If we put down much information and too many middle values we will easily lose the dramatic effect of light and the veracity of modeling.

Form shadows and cast shadows must be conceived at the same time, then they will separate.

ABOUT LIGHT AND SHADOW

- ✓ The more delicate the transition, the more in depth we must study it to find the exact tone without softening the drawing.

- ✓ Draw the things you see as sharply as possible and let the *invisible* things merge into adjacent tones.

- ✓ Due to the fact that light can reveal or hide shape, explain it or distort it. It's essential to understand how it works.

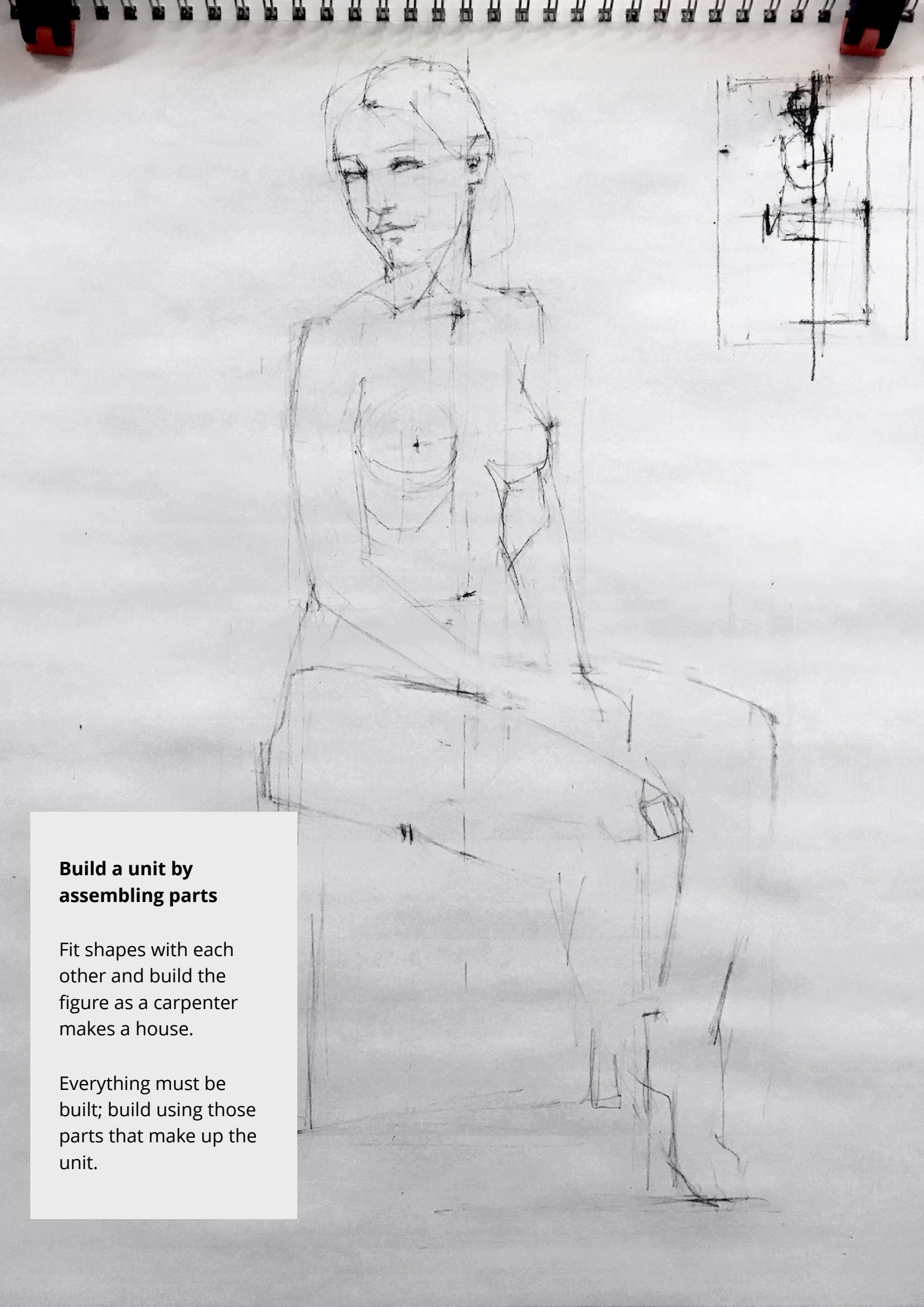
- ✓ Light and shadow are fundamental as dramatic expressive force, as well as in descriptive force. **We must compose with light, not with lines**.

- ✓ We must make decisions about the interpretation of light to better express volume and space. **A good light and values management creates visual weight, capturing attention and creating meaning**.

- ✓ Light helps create visual diversity and serves as a unifying agent.

MODELING

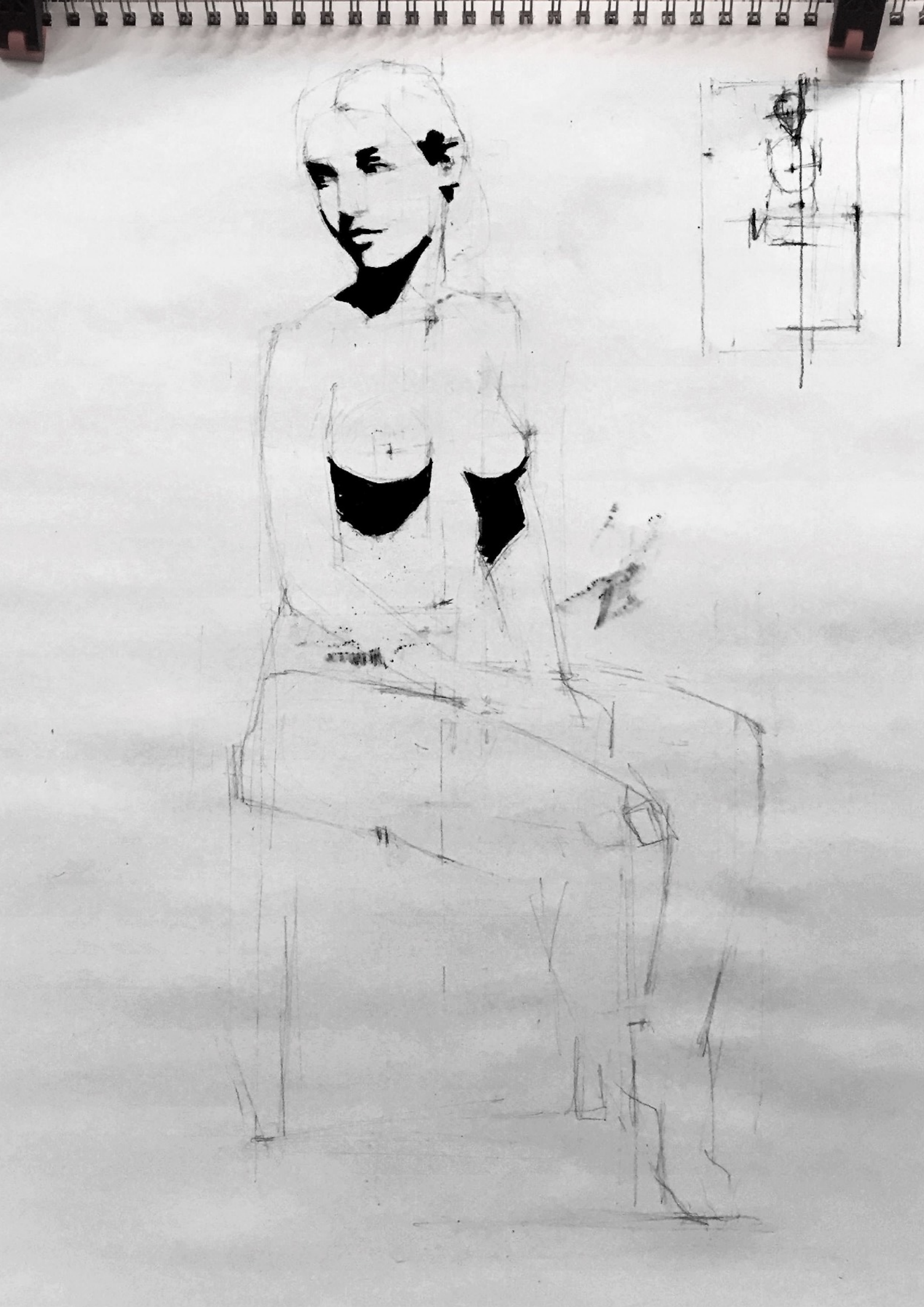
- ✓ Start modeling only when you have a well-established structure.
- ✓ **Do not stain directly, you must first draw the shadow shape.**
- ✓ Since light reveals shape, we express what's illuminated by delimiting what's in shadow.
- ✓ Study alternatives to mediocrity: **there is no room for an *almost good* while there is a correct solution at your fingertips.**
- ✓ You must understand that the construction of the drawing is a prerequisite to move towards modeling shape, refining line quality, etc.
- ✓ Shape modeling depends on light characteristics, which inform us about what treatment we are going to give the shadows.
- ✓ Squint to *see better* the shadow shape, filling it with a single value. We should end this phase with a single well-defined value, showing the maximum possible contrast.



Build a unit by assembling parts

Fit shapes with each other and build the figure as a carpenter makes a house.

Everything must be built; build using those parts that make up the unit.



BLENDING

Do not use blending stumps

Mark does not recommend blending stumps because the friction exerted causes the charcoal to penetrate too much into the paper fibers.

When that happens it's very difficult to rectify, producing dirty whites instead of defined grays.

Then the next step is usually to use the eraser to clean the area, getting nothing but grease on the paper and a worse situation.

Unless you know what you're doing, do not use paper blending stumps. You'd better use a soft makeup brush.

After firmly establishing shadows while maintaining the highest possible simplicity, he introduces transitions to enrich the sense of shape and achieve a more volumetric effect.

He does it in a way that seems very easy: **blending with the back of the hand and the finger knuckles, dragging with conviction and without insisting, in a very clear direction and without pressing**. He literally caresses the paper with the back of the finger, not with the fingertip, to avoid greasing the drawing.

Then he makes brief retouches using the charcoal pencil in order to adjust the effect, correct it or highlight it. Both blending and retouching are done without insisting, previously meditating whether each intervention will add or subtract value to the drawing.

At the end —and only at the end— Mark allows himself to use a kneaded eraser to open small gaps and set a few light accents as if they were the icing on the cake.

He gives the eraser a wedge shape with his fingers and traps charcoal dust by pressing with the bezel, without friction, without insisting more than necessary so as not to spoil the drawing at the last moment.



THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- ✓ **Each line must have a function and correspond to a decision.**
- ✓ Contrast always takes shape forward and leads the eye to the focal point.
- ✓ Use long lines for relating the most important structural points, those which determine model's shape and proportion.
- ✓ KISS — *Keep It Simple, Stupid.*
- ✓ **Consider variations in the outline that lead you to better communicate shape.**
- ✓ Clearly separate light and shadow into two perfectly defined values. Separate them conceptually. Observe value relationships between positive and negative shapes.
- ✓ **A curve has more character if contrasting with a straight line**. If you round it all you will lose all the strength in your drawing, do not refine your work obsessively, you can end up making it too soft. If that happens, take distance and establish a new order where the truly essential things and their relationships are well expressed.



PAINTING I

JULIETA — DAY 1, GRISAILLE

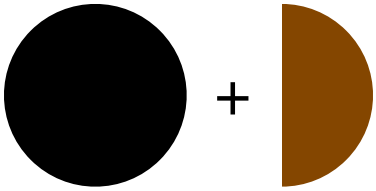




CREATING A VALUE CHART

Get yourself a wooden stick and use white acrylic gesso. Apply several layers if necessary to achieve total opacity. The stick that Mark uses is a paint shaker found in hardware stores.

I. Divide the stick length into nine spaces of the same size.



II. In order to make neutral grays mixes, you will first need a generous mixture of half a part of Ivory Black with half a part of Raw Umber. This warm black will be mixed with white to get different values of gray. The Raw Umber is used to counteract the bluish dominance of Ivory Black.



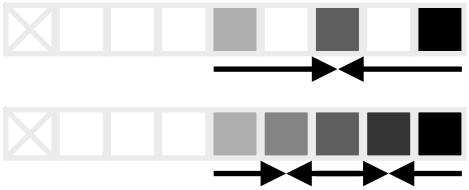
III. Paint the #1 square with the mixture of black and umber, with no white.



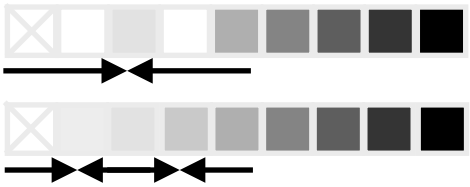
IV. Leave the #9 square empty. That will be the whitest white, the lightest value in the chart.



V. Mix on the palette #5 value using the mixture of black and umber and adding white. You have to be especially careful with this mix because it will determine the accuracy of the rest of the values. Use a reliable reference to find this mid value.



VI. Find the intermediate value between #1 and #5, obtaining #3, from which you will deduct the intermediates between #1 and #3, and #3 and #5. Do not progress linearly, but find the intermediate gray between two values (*bracketing*).



VII. Now follow the same procedure for light grays, getting# 6, #7 and #8

CHECK YOUR GRADATIONS



This chart will be your guide for preparing grays on your palette in an accurate way. So you can work on your painting with a reliable reference for controlling value.

- Always check the gray value with a reliable value chart, never with a photocopy or homemade printed paper. You need a calibrated and professional scale, like the value checker that we give to our students at **Menorca Pulsar**.
- Gradation should be optically smooth, without sudden jumps between values.
- Boundaries must be the same on the whole chart. They can be smooth or sharp, but the same on the whole chart.

«If you begin with the middle-tone and work up from it toward the darks so that you deal last with your highest lights and darkest darks, you avoid false accents.»

John Singer Sargent

PREPARING CANVAS/BOARD

Previously, Mark set a primer coat with a neutral gray made with a mixture of white gesso and acrylic Ivory Black.

In the same way that we deduced from our value stick the intermediate values from a central gray, in our painting we will start from a neutral gray in order to find the intermediate values, as recommended by Sargent.

PREPARING PALETTE



Your palette shows your visual thinking in real time, so if it looks messy, that's what definitely is inside your head: a mess. The good news is that palette is a magic tool that also works the other way around. The order at the palette is projected into your head, and it orders your ideas.

The palette is also a preview of the painting, a kind of free zone where you can test the mixtures before putting them firmly on the canvas. So it is convenient that it’s properly arranged so you can start your painting correctly. If you do not arrange your palette, it will be impossible to arrange your painting. **The palette is to painting what the diagram to the drawing, an accurate test of what we want to paint**.

For grisaille, we will use raw umber and the value scale we’ve made with the help of the *value stick*, displayed on the palette.

DIAGRAM



Mark starts using Raw Umber and a little *Liquin*, using a nylon *sable* brush. He draws using the whole arm, holding the brush from its end. He takes distance and makes the gesture start from the shoulder as if practicing fencing.

He starts in a very simple way, with a stick figure, looking for the relation of the head with the point where sternum and clavicles meet and the navel, setting torso's position. Then he continues with legs and arms. After completing the diagram, he sets the vertical and horizontal axes and starts transferring it all to the canvas.

TRANSFERRING DRAWING

Start with the head, the unit of measurement for the whole figure, proceeding in the same way as with the diagram, but in large scale:

I. **Head as measurement unit —** Start by sketching it with a sphere and a triangle and establish the central axes.

II. **Reference points —** Locate tear ducts and ear holes.

III. **Thorax, legs and finally arms —** Connect head with the point where sternum and clavicles meet, and set, in a triangular way, this relationship: nipples and navel, navel and iliac crest.



Measurements are relative

We must be flexible with the models, they are alive, they move ...

Measurements should be set as relationships between points, not copying outlines. Outlines change; structure and relationships don't.

After transferring the sketch, Mark erases the unnecessary construction lines with a rag and a little Liquin. **Whenever he wants to erase more accurately, he uses the handle of the brush wrapped in a rag**, forming a tip that works like a pencil eraser.

PAINTING SHADOWS

He continues drawing the shadow shapes, merging form and cast shadows into large areas, which work as containers.

Mark deals here with the shadows in the opposite way to how he does in the drawing, keeping shadows transparent and lights opaque, as we can see in artists like Rembrandt or Rubens. **The volume illusion is produced by keeping the contrast between opaque and clean transparent**. If he contaminated shadows with white, even if it were only a little bit, he would lose the effect, becoming flat and monotonous.

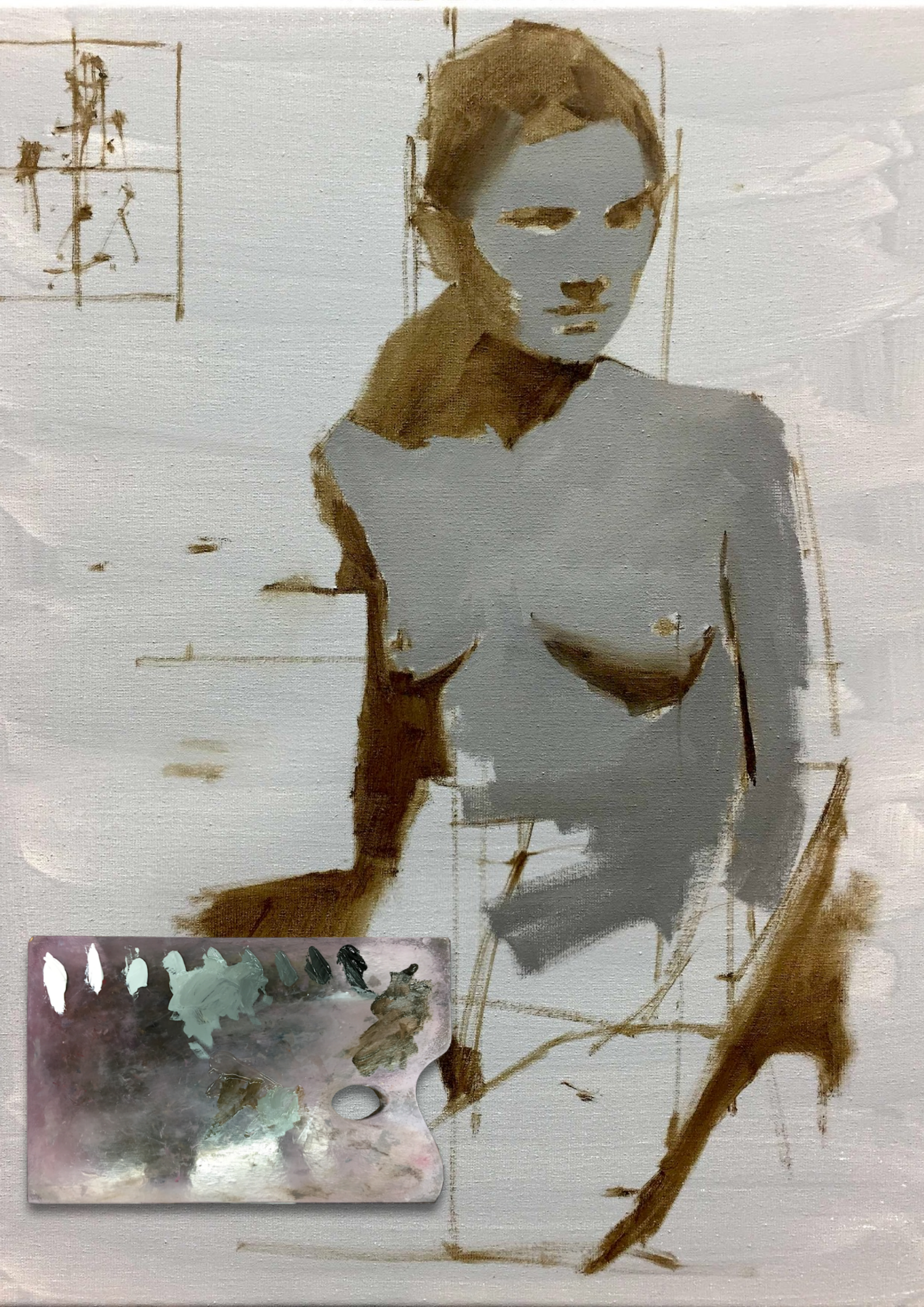
Every canvas is a battlefield where only the balance between light and shadow wins, and everything is ruined if we spoil its unique nature. Rubens was right when he said that white was poison for shadows.

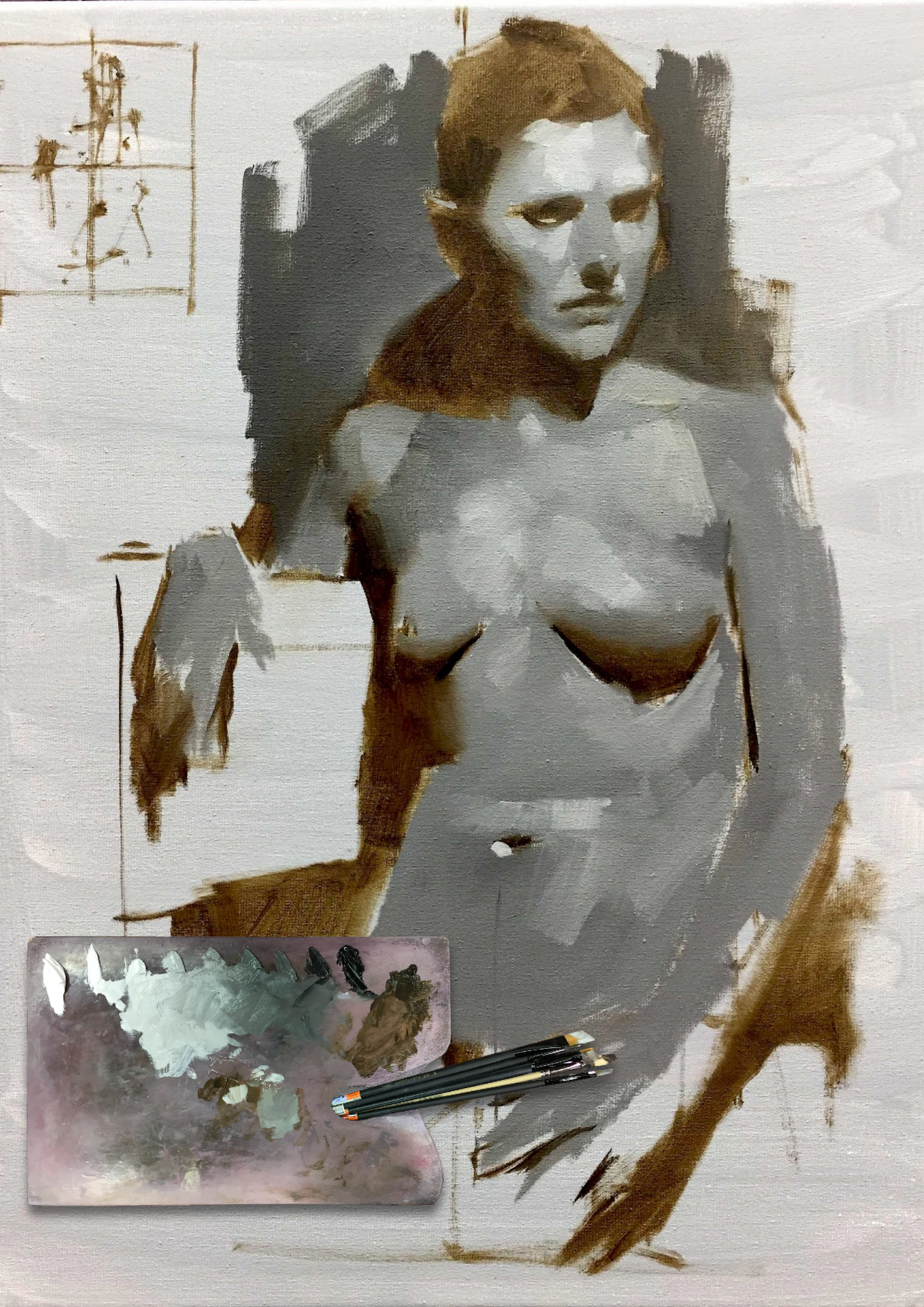




After filling shadows he starts by applying a medium value (nº5 on the value stick) with a flat brush.

Mark insists that it is extremely important that this mid tone does not mix with transparent shadows because the painting would get dirty, losing its magic, its three-dimensional look and its qualities.





Separate your brushes in two groups

It's transparency that creates the illusion of a shadow, so Mark keeps a very scrupulous edge control so as not to destroy the chiaroscuro effect. For this reason, the brush he uses for shadows is never contaminated with white.

There is no turning back after contaminating a transparent shadow, so he's very careful reserving the brushes only for this purpose. Mark is very strict respecting this habit.

Mark puts a lot of emphasis on the colors and brushes being well organized so as not to offer any distraction or waste time. All the concentration must be on the execution of our painting, not outside it.

KEEP AN EYE ON FORM SHADOWS

Cast shadow, although it has a denser nature and sharper edges than form shadow, should not be contaminated with white in order to create the volume effect. But it's not the same with form shadows.

Form shadows are necessarily mixed with white, and controlling edges here is very important and an *accurate brush* is needed.

A SHADOW HAS TWO FACETS

Every shadow has a soft and a sharp facet, and we must recognize this pattern and interpret it correctly so we can communicate shapes. Then, at the end, we can decide if we want to put accents and dramatize a plane or an expression.

After setting the mid value, Mark adds more values and pays more attention to the edges. At the beginning, he divides very clearly —as if it were a photographic posterize filter— opaque light areas and transparent shadows. **At this point, modeling is very sharp, but he'll later decide where to soften shape and where to keep contrast**. For softening, he just slightly *breaks* shadows' transparency contaminating them with white. That *contamination* builds shape, creating the volume illusion without having to use highlights, those Highlights will complete shape by the end of the painting.

DO NOT LIGHT UP SHAPES. REVEAL THEM WITH A LIGHT BATH.

Light works especially well when it's drastically and hierarchically organized and when it's consistent with its source.

Imagine that you shower the figure with light and in the same way that there is more concentration of water the closer the showerhead is, the more intensity of light there is the closer we get to its source.

Shadows are particularly vulnerable. When a painting is not convincing, shadows are the first thing that denotes a disorderly, hasty and unnecessary detail. The simpler they are, the better. **Shadows work well when they are an echo of the model. Presence and detail belong to the kingdom of light.**

BRIEFLY:

1. Transparent shadows (no white)

2. Midtone (with white)

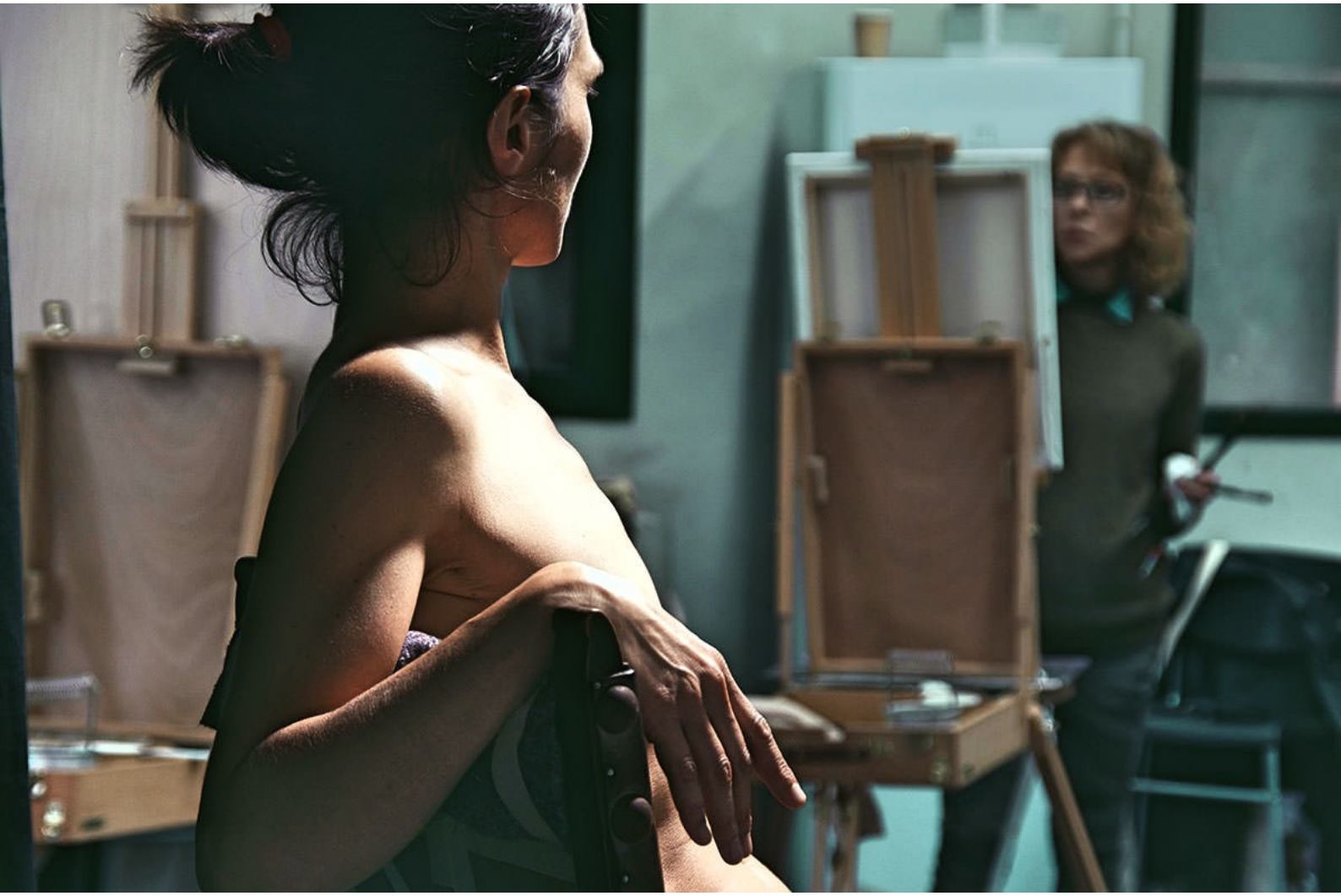
3. Dark values are added gradually, while more white is added in the light area.

4. Lighter values are added — the dessert 🍰

5. Highlights are added — the topping 🍒

PINTURA I

JULIETA — DAY 2, COLOR





THE BUTTERFLY PALETTE



Two basic rules

I. Cool colors make things go further

II. Warm colors make things come closer

The palette is now divided in two creating a butterfly effect, chroma on the left and values on the right. *Liquin* at the center.

Organized, neat and methodical. Consequently, his thought and his work are organized, neat and methodical.

These are the colors added to the palette:

- ✓ Alizarin Crimson (cool red)
- ✓ Cadmium Red (warm red)
- ✓ Yellow Ochre
- ✓ Titanium White

Values and three-dimensional look

I. Mark classifies values according to their importance, merging them in order to synthesize shape.

II. Lightest and darkest values should not be *squashed together* within outlines creating high contrasts.

III. The lightest values must move away from shape outlines in order to achieve a roundness and fullness illusion.

KEEP AN EYE ON BEAUTIFUL STARTS

Mark warns us that a good start is just a starting point, but we should not fall in love with a beautiful start.

Quoting Matisse, Mark makes it clear that we must detach ourselves from the result and focus on the certainty of the process, especially in the beginning. **A beautiful start is just a beginning, a transit point, not a shelter.**

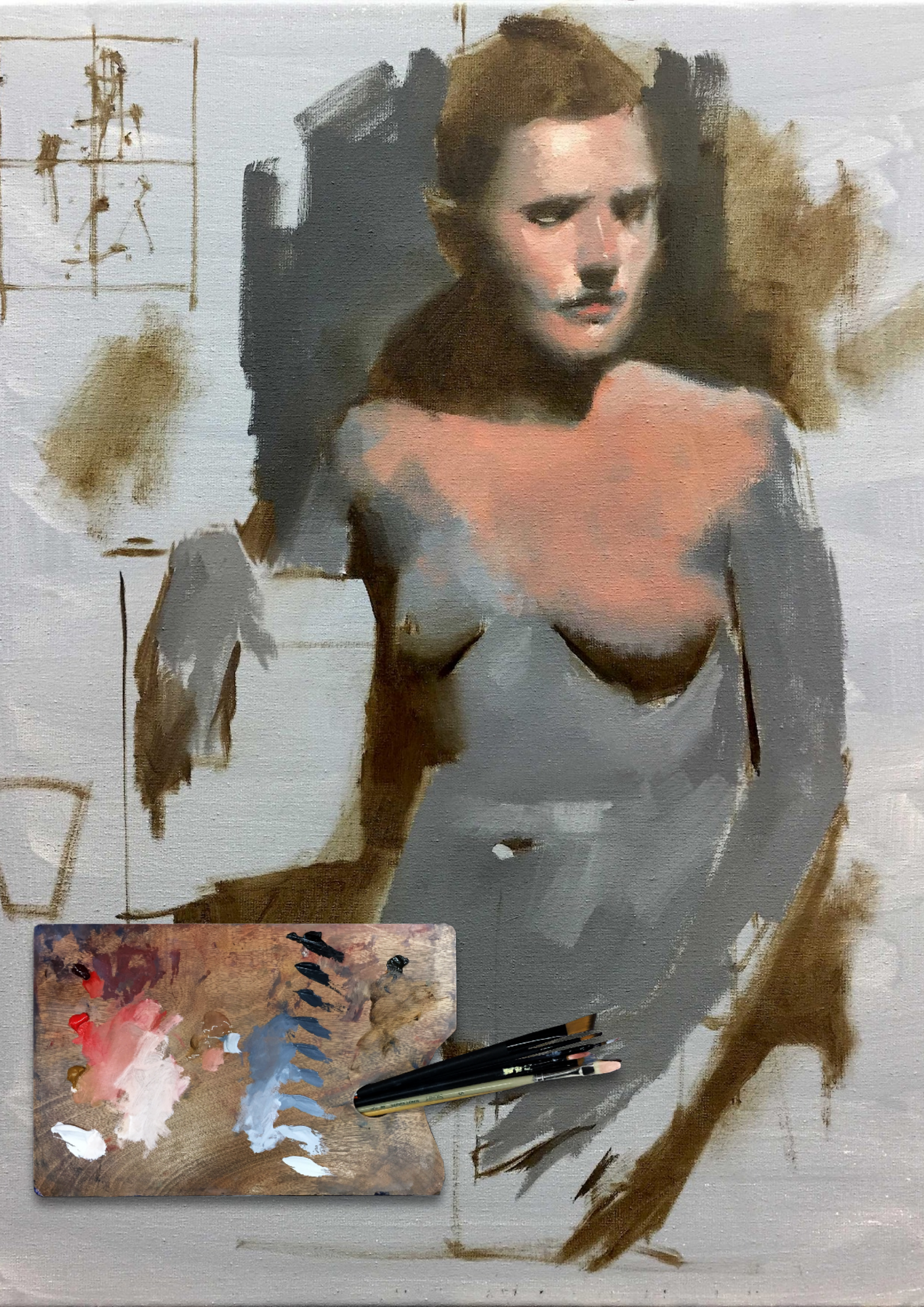
ADDING COLOR

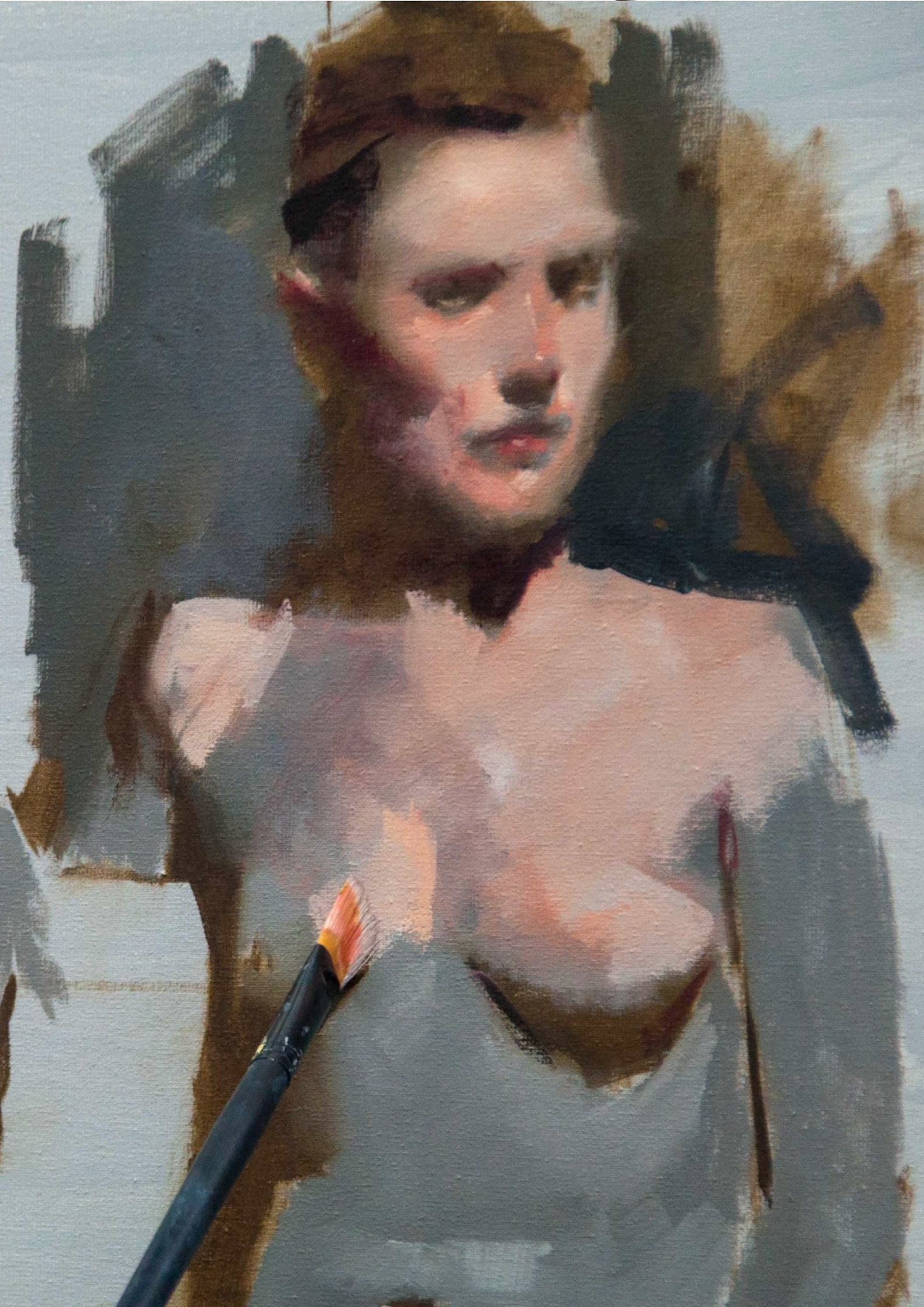
First, he adds a little *Liquin* to the dry paint from the previous session, wetting the surface so that the paint flows better.

Then he mixes some Cadmium Red with Yellow Ocher and Titanium White, getting a pink. Fill all the areas closest to you with this warm pink, always keeping shadows transparent. For taking shape further away from you, cool mixes with a little Ivory Black.

The color layer should not be superimposed, but blended (physically, not optically) with the next color, so that it works well and the transition is soft.

Every time you add paint do refine shape a little more, patiently, studying value and chroma relationships. Large shapes first, small shapes in the end, if they are needed.







Alizarin Crimson

Alizarin Crimson is a cool red that is used for *refreshing* cool shadows with a warm color which, at the same time, is cooler than the red used for the closest areas.

Mark usually uses it to accentuate deep shadows nearby, folds, etc.

You must be careful with this color, since it's highly dyeing and could spoil your mixtures very easily if too much is used.

AFTER VELÁZQUEZ

Mark's palette is a modern interpretation of Velázquez's palette. That is, **he also mixes paint on the canvas by direct manipulation**. He deduces that Velázquez did it because of the size of his palette in his self-portrait at Las Meninas, a huge artwork.

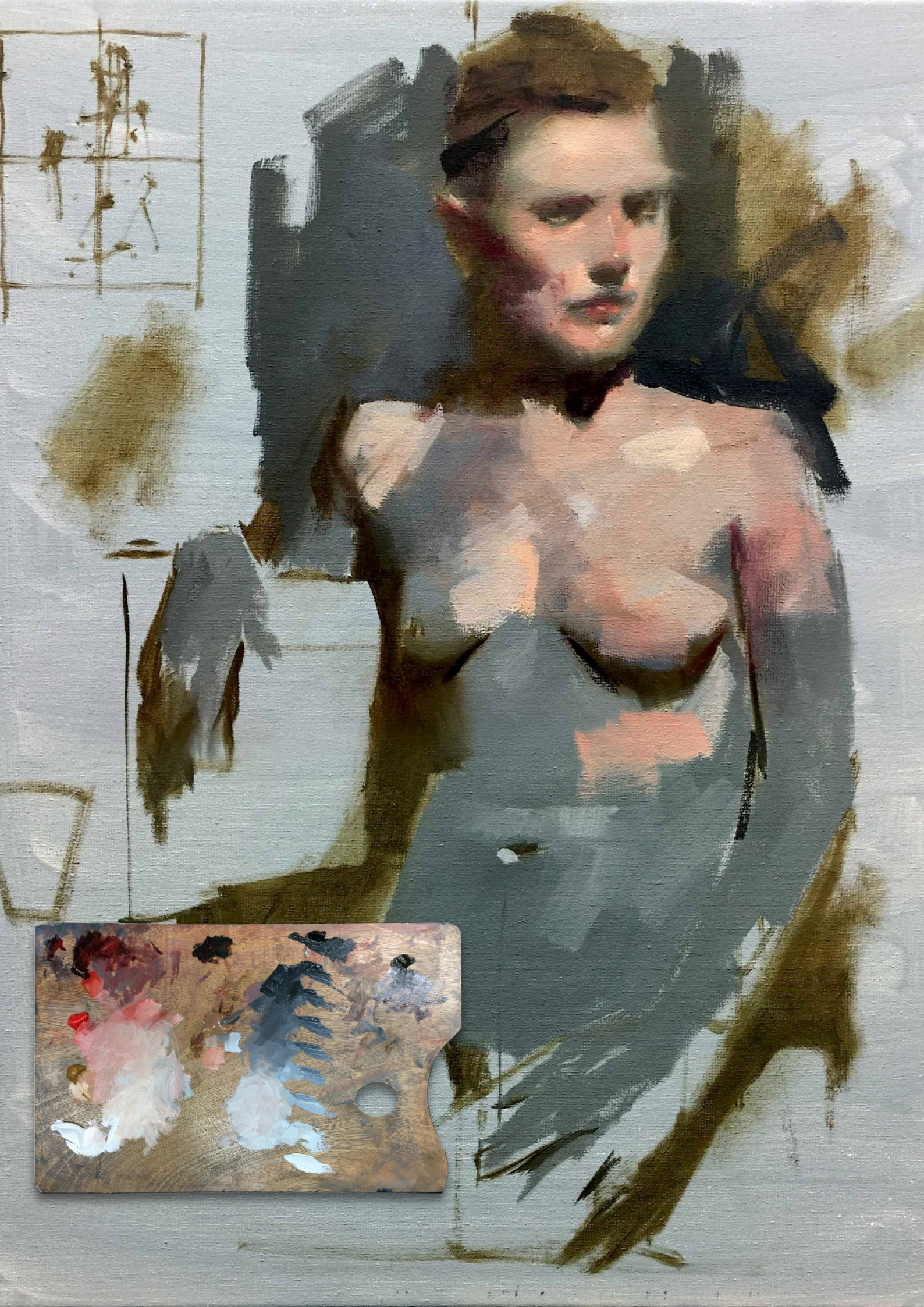
Mark tests mixtures on the palette, but he reserves *surface mixing* for moving small planes away, cooling them by manipulation on the canvas.

That's why he starts adding high chroma color and gradually softens it, cooling mixtures with Ivory Black and/or Alizarin Crimson.

'FLESH COLOR' DOES NOT EXIST

Mark does not copy the model's own color. He interprets value and chroma relationships so he can build a figure with volume. In the same way that, when he copies a great master, he does not copy result but the process.

Colors are not absolute values and Mark does not try in any way to emulate flesh color; they are relative, interpretations. He does not look for reproducing the exact color you see in the model, but the **correct relationship and balance between values and temperatures**.



Clean and unpolluted

- ✓ A brush reserved for each color temperature, uncontaminated.
- ✓ Cool colors without polluting of warm colors.
- ✓ Warm colors without polluting of cool colors.
- ✓ Shadows uncontaminated by white, either cool or warm.

MISTAKES

Mark paints by superimposing tones, achieving shape fullness gradually, with perseverance and control.

But it's not just about control! **Mark reserves some room for taking advantage of those opportunities born out of mistakes. He celebrates the *right mistakes* and corrects those that do not work**. He discriminates or keeps accidents under constructive criteria.

TRUST THE PROCESS AND DETACH YOURSELF FROM THE RESULT

Overwhelmed by the moment, in front of the model, it's easy to lose focus and pictorial requirements in favor of fascination for the real object.

The panic feeling that invades us when starting a painting makes us deviate from a descriptive economy and try to achieve resemblance too early, **copying details messily in search of a more *real* appearance**. Unfortunately, when details and optical effects are arbitrarily stacked, the result is flat and unconvincing.

Impatience is a symptom of distrust in the process. **We must strive to detach ourselves from the result**. We must wish for it, but not need it at any cost.

Final Tips

I. Use the largest possible brushes, and only shift to smaller ones when strictly necessary.

II. Do not fall short and put plenty of color on the palette

ACCENTS

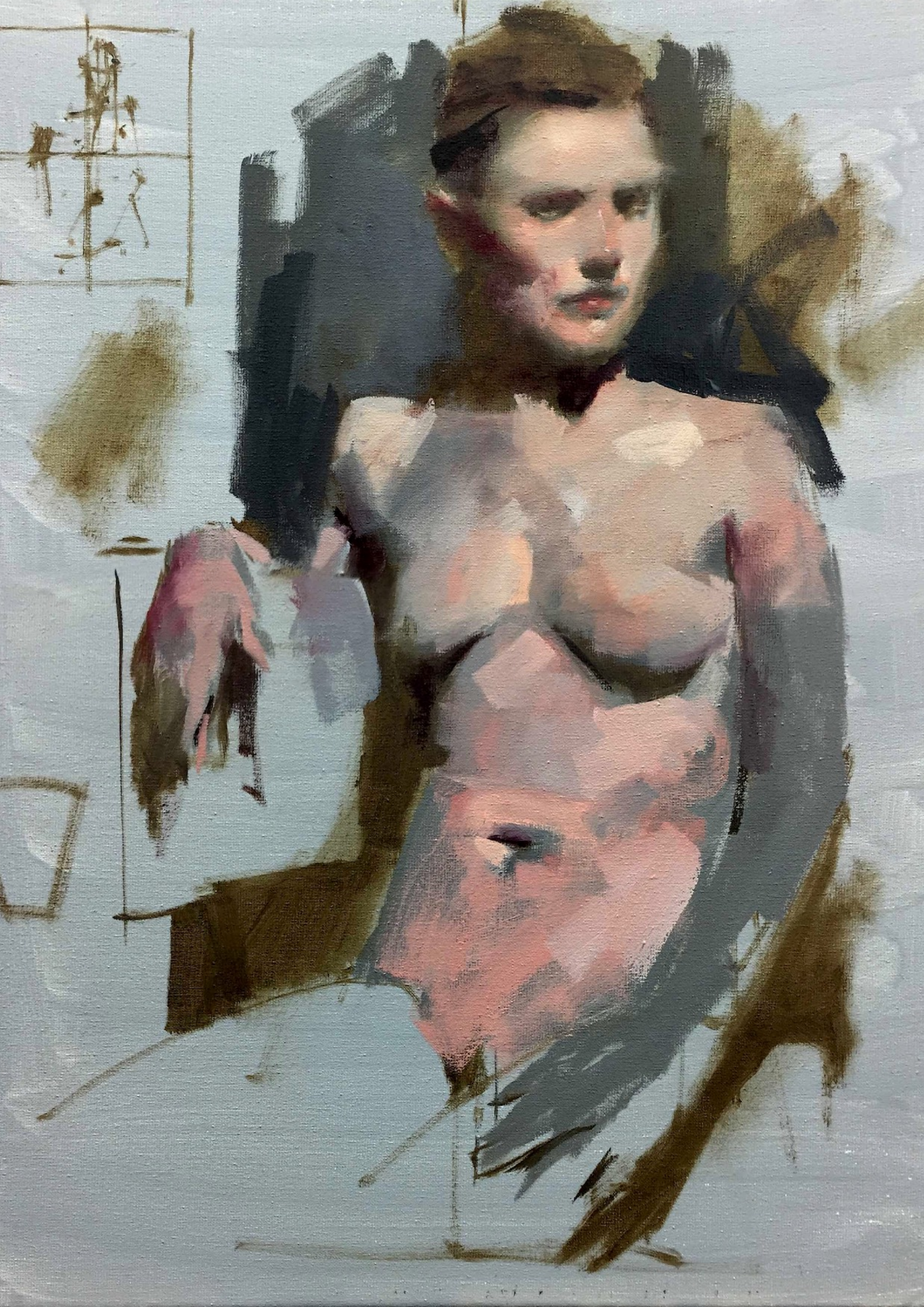
Accents are key; and keys are, by definition, limited. **We can't spill light accents all around, no matter how fun it is —**we all know it really is. You must be patient and evaluate if they really help improving volume or, on the contrary, disperse it.

BLENDING

Blenders are very useful brushes and work well both by drag and by pressure.

But do not abuse them! **You should not soften every brushstroke you make, it's a bad habit**. since that is a decision that you should make very consciously only in the end.

Equally, softening every brushstroke is a thoughtless tic that you must get rid of as soon as possible. **Each brushstroke must correspond to a decision, not a habit**.





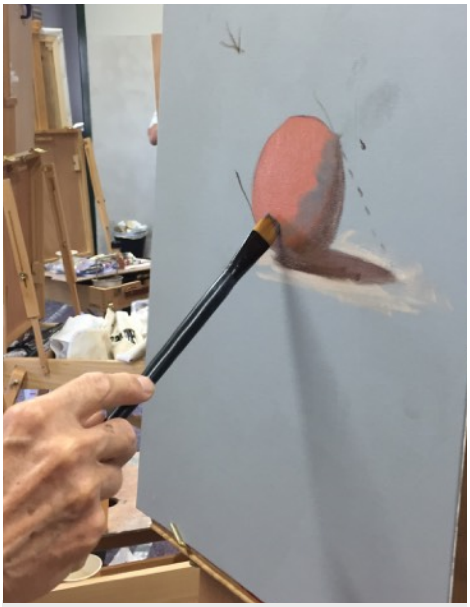


COLOR LESSON

TEMPERATURE SHIFT



COOL, WARM, COOL, WARM...



The formula

Cool + warm = flat

Warm + cool + warm = volume

Color is never decorative and it's part of the construction, complementing the study of value.

Temperature changes must be alternated sequentially for creating volume illusion. If we only work on transitions without alternating a chromatic contrast, we will not achieve the three-dimensional effect.

During the workshop, the student Marcello Michele asked Mark to develop this idea further and to explain more deeply how cool and warm color sequences work for creating volume illusion.

After the demonstration, he recommended studying Rubens and his pupil Van Dyck, who, as we will see below, systematically implemented these simultaneous contrast sequences for creating volume effect.



Left: Mark Tennant's demonstration on the color temperature sequence for creating volume effect.

Below: Diagram from student's notebook, Marcello Michele, breaking down the sequence.

The following pages show examples of works by Peter Paul Rubens and Anton van Dyck.

ANTON VAN DYCK



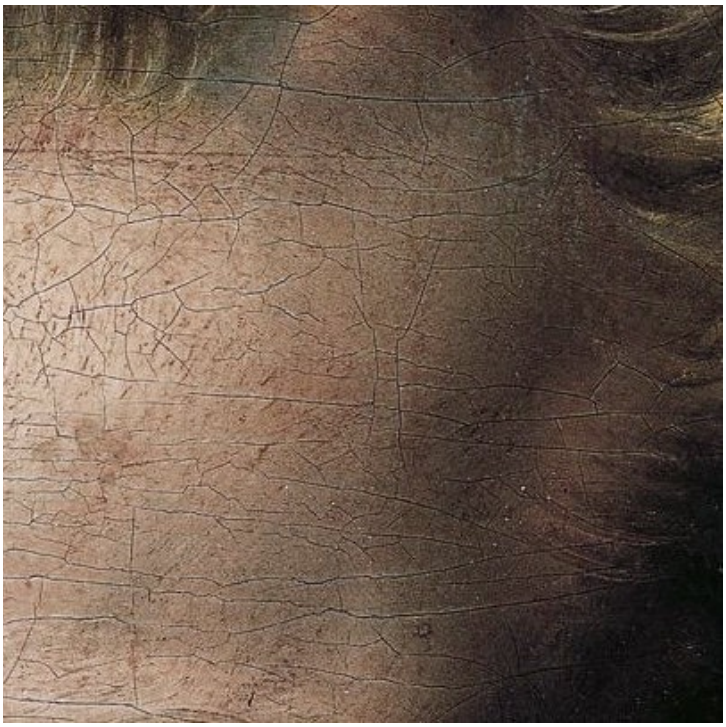






PETER PAUL RUBENS











«KEEP IT FUNNY,
WARM AND COOL»

PAINTING II
OIL SKETCH

JULIETA



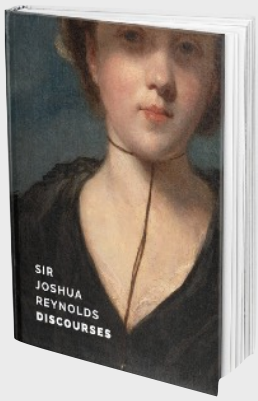







«COLOR IS OVERRATED
AS WELL AS HOME COOKING IS»

HOW TO FINISH A PAINTING



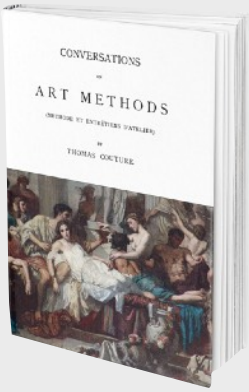
Discourses, by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

DOWNLOAD THE BOOK

Mark remembers when his mother cooked marbled cakes. When she stirred the dough a little, it became beautifully mottled, but if she stirred it too much it turned gray and it became dull. To finish a painting is to know how to stop at the moment in which the marbling of the cake is at its best.

Mark thinks that no painting should be *too finished* because it has a negative effect. According to Joshua Reynolds, **nine out of ten times working more on a painting does not produce a better result**. Leonardo da Vinci, more drastic, said that a painting is never finished, but abandoned.

Thomas Couture said that a painting never ended, and he used to tell a joke to his students saying that a painting is finished whenever we simply say that it is —*Call it finished!*— Or maybe he was not joking?



Conversations on Art Methods, by Thomas Couture.

DOWNLOAD BOOK

Execute less and think more

Your brush does not have to be moving all the time you are working, you can spend a little time thinking and then execute as efficiently as possible.

For example two minutes thinking for each minute you are executing.

Think of each movement carefully, you do not have to be marking the surface continuously.

The truth is that each artist has his own thoughts about this and there are many who agree that there is a moment when, if we do not stop, we are one step away from ruining everything. This has surely happened to you and it's the most frustrating sensation that a painter can experience: **just when your work is at its best, you spoil it.**

We know there is a time when we have to stop, but we do not know when it is, so we almost always step too far: *I should have left it as it was...* 😥

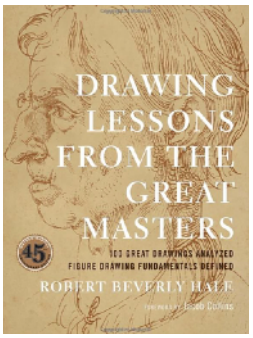
The challenge is to end a painting while it's interesting to us. But that's very difficult because we naturally tend to delay that interest until exhausting last details.

But do not be discouraged, there's something like a rule: **if you do not start from a clearly defined target, you will not have a clearly defined end**. Knowing when to stop depends on knowing what the target of your painting is.

So this is the next thing you're going to do: before you start, ask yourself how you want your painting to be and **your painting will be finished when no new contribution brings you closer to your goal**.

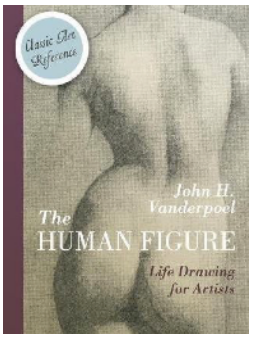
BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY MARK TENNANT

Mark recommended studying lots of books. Here are some of them, and how to get them.



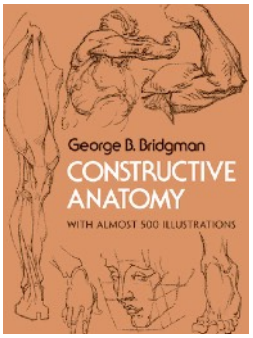
Drawing Lessons From the Great Masters
Robert Beverly Hale

Amazon



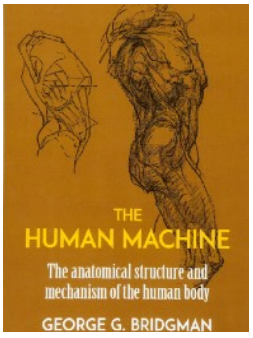
The Human Figure
John H. Vanderpoel

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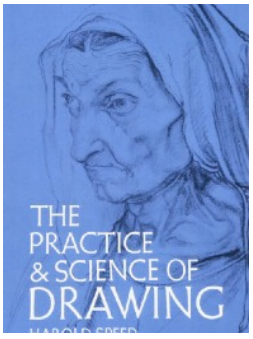
Constructive Anatomy
George G. Bridgman

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The Human Machine
George G. Bridgman

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The practice and science of drawing
Harold Speed

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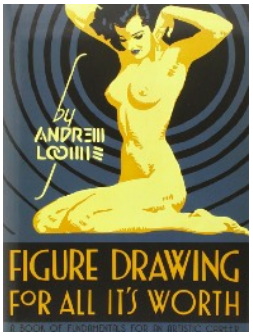
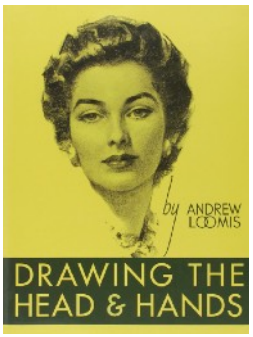


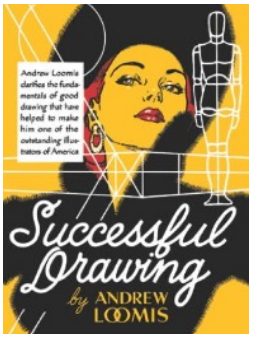
Figure Drawing for all it's worth
Andrew Loomis

Amazon



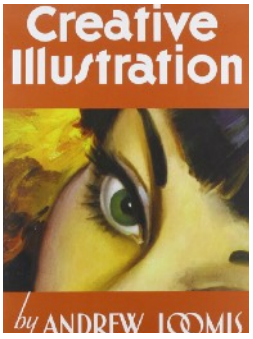
Drawing the Heads & Hands
Andrew Loomis

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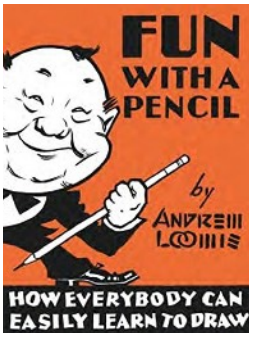
Successful Drawing
Andrew Loomis

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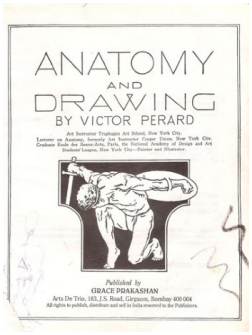
Creative Illustration
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Fun with a pencil
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Victor Perard

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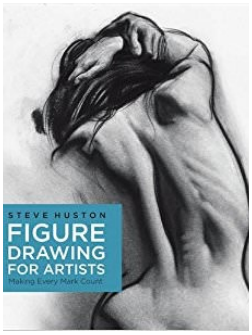
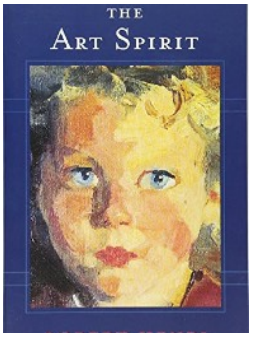


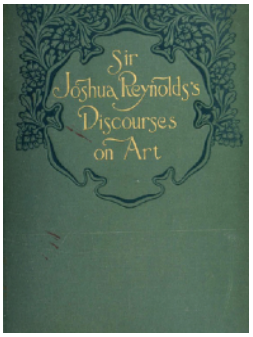
Figure Drawing for Artists
Steve Huston

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The Art Spirit
Robert Henri

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Discourses on Art
Sir Joshua Reynolds

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Conversations on Art Methods
Thomas Couture

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EXERCISES RECOMMENDED BY MARK TENNANT



STUDY AND COPY.zip

Pack with images and instructions to study and copy the Old Masters.

DOWNLOAD PACK

ABOUT THIS WORKSHOP



Take a look at Mark Tennant's Workshop video, 'Human Figure From Life'.

ATTENDANTS



Andrew Peycha
Carlos Ochando
Catalina Rodríguez
Fernando Vicente
Heather Millenaar
Katie Sturges
Ken Cosgrove
Marcello Michele

Laura Haughey
Leonardo Stuckert
Lea Bou Habib
Pedro de Villota
Rita Preller
Ron Combs
Suzy Davis

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Geliah Peralta
Julieta Oriola
Ònia Torrent

Organization
Carles Gomila
Jorge Fernández Alday

ABOUT MARK TENNANT



100% NOIR Pulsar Podcast INTERVIEWS

You can know Mark deeper at this super interview we recorded.

April 7 to 13, 2025 → Lazaretto Quarantine Island, Menorca (Spain)

