

Practical exercise: The fold (feeling your way around the form)

Materials: A3 paper, HB graphite pencil, a piece of cloth (white sheet), lighting (optional)

Introduction to exercise: The fold (feeling your way around the form) the student explores blind contour drawing - Contour drawing is creating precise line drawings by drawing the individual, consecutive parts of the form to arrive at the whole form. Blind means without looking at the paper while drawing, with total concentration on the subject of the drawing rather than the drawing itself. This problem is designed to improve visual concentration. The student is expected to reflect upon the Deleuzian concept of 'the fold'.

Exercise synopsis: The student will be drawing a blind contour drawing of a piece of cloth. The student must keep in mind that s/he must draw with a strong, confident line rather than a sketchy one. The student's line must flow with the contours of the piece of cloth, noticing all its folds. The student will represent one of the most difficult forms to draw, a piece of cloth with many folds.

The student will start the drawing by looking at a specific point in the hanging piece of cloth, from which s/he will start the drawing. The student will look at his/her paper and place the pencil on the paper in that position.

The student will now look back at the hanging piece of cloth that s/he is drawing from, beginning to move his/her eyes along the contour of the cloth as s/he moves the pencil on the paper. The student will not look at the paper.

The student moves the pencil on the paper imagining that the pencil's point is actually touching the hanging piece of cloth, tracing this first contour of the piece of cloth in every detail and feeling it as s/he draws. They should be constantly looking at what they are drawing. The student should look at the paper only after they believe they have returned the pencil to its initial position – the position from which the line was begun.

When the student finishes a line s/he looks at the paper and starts a second line by placing the pencil in position to draw it. After placing the pencil at the starting point of the second line s/he looks only at the piece of cloth, again imagining that the pencil follows all the details of that line.

The student draws each succeeding contour with this technique (drawing blind while feeling the form). The student will repeat this process until the exercise is completed. The student shouldn't be concerned about achieving a "good drawing", nor distortion or mistakes in the drawing.

Duration: 40 min, drawing the same piece of cloth.

Objectives and briefing: In this problem, the student begins to understand the importance of being able to be concentrate on what s/he is seeing. This exercise will require a great deal of concentration, however, it is one of the most rewarding exercises in that even the beginner can achieve a good degree of success.

Learning to see through the sense of touch is what contour drawing is all about. Most drawing techniques deal with the overall form and pare it down to its details. Contour drawing is quite the opposite; the aim is to develop the drawing line-by-line, detail-by-detail, until the whole form is created. What is the difference between an outline drawing and a contour drawing? An outline drawing defines only two dimensions - length and width - whereas a contour drawing suggests three dimensions: length, width, and depth.

This exercise takes a great deal of concentration and it is almost impossible to achieve a perfect drawing with this technique. The exercise is designed to help the student begin to see what is actually in front of him/her, and not about what the student thinks they see. It takes so much concentration to do the exercise that the student is expected to feel tired after completing it.

The student is expected to share their experience at the end of the exercise and to compare it with the exercises of the other students. The student will be asked to fill out a questionnaire and to participate, on a critical level, in the class discussion, the higher the level of the student, the higher the level of discussion and reflection will be expected of them in class.

Questionnaire for open discussion:

(To be filled out after the exercise. The student is expected to answer according to his/her level. The student is expected to associate this experience with former experiences. The student can provide a separate answer to each question or s/he can choose to address several questions in the same answer.)

1. Briefly describe the physical and mental impact caused by the exercise.
2. Briefly describe your chain of thoughts while performing the exercise.
3. Briefly describe your level of attention while performing the exercise.
4. Briefly describe your expectations in relation to the final result of the exercise.