

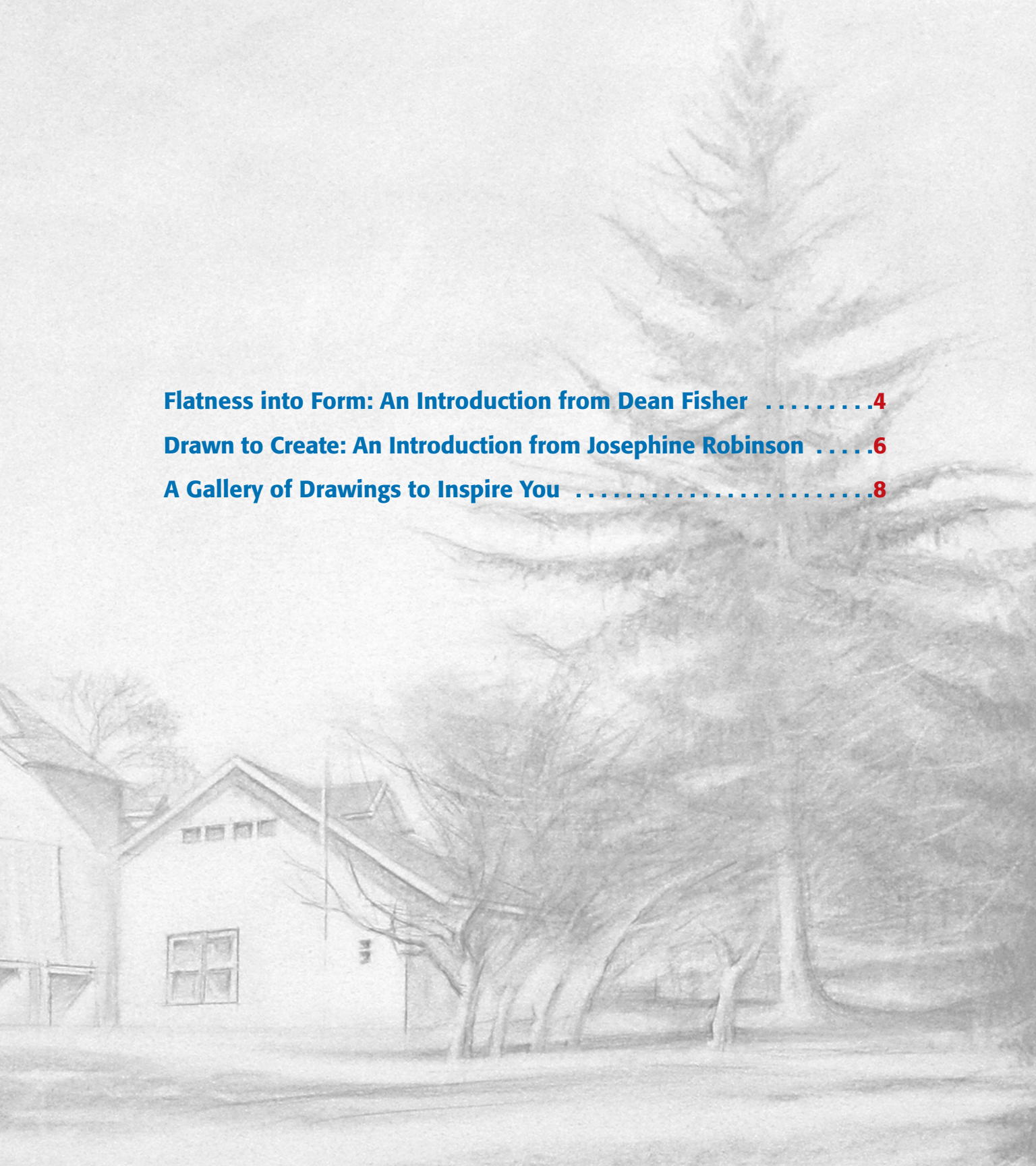
chapter

1

What Is Drawing?

Drawing is a very personal endeavor. Here, in this short introduction, the authors introduce ideas and motivations as to why they are attracted to the art of drawing.





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Flatness into Form: An Introduction from Dean Fisher

The creation of the illusion of reality on a flat, blank surface always has and still fascinates me as an artist. With some good instruction, practice, and basic tools such as a pencil and a piece of paper, one can make images full of life and personality. We're glad you have joined us on this journey into the amazing world of drawing!

A Quest to Become Informed

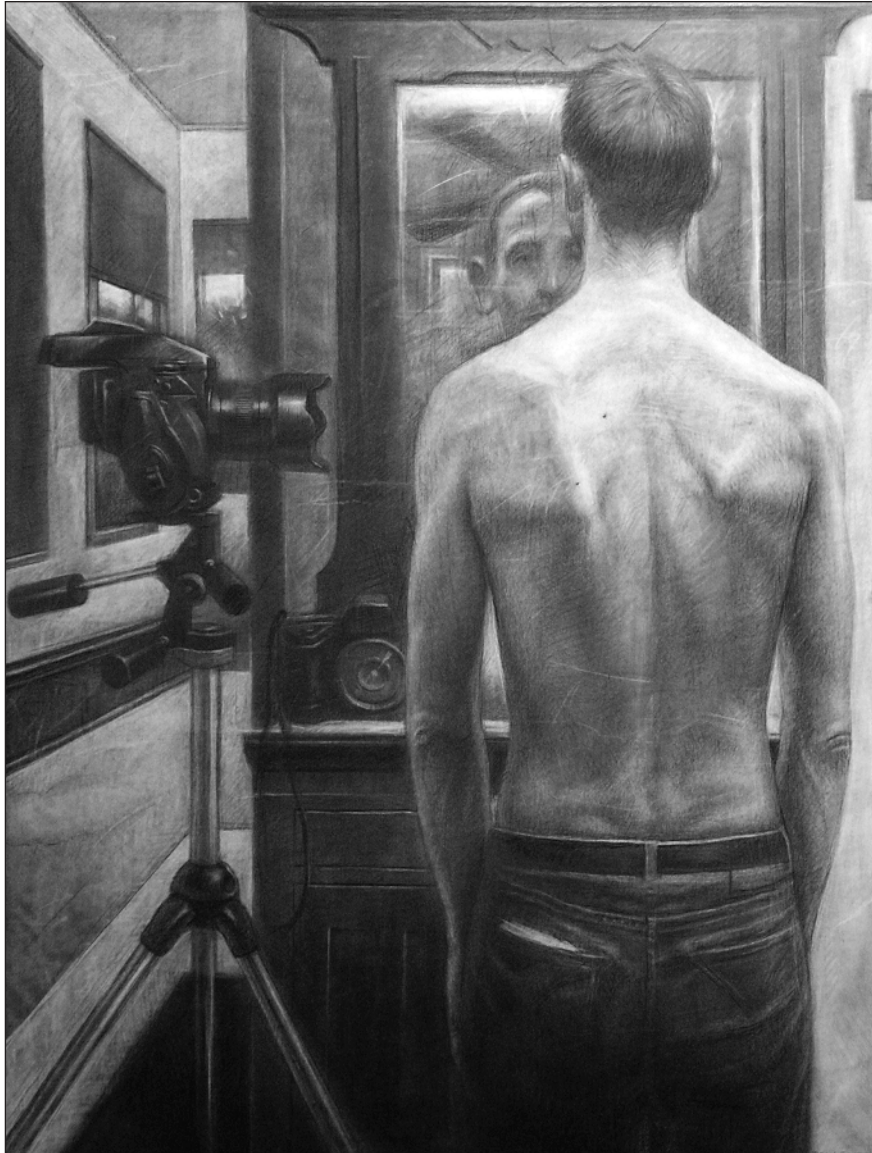
One of the greatest thrills of my childhood was watching my father draw a picture on a blank piece of paper. Within seconds, and with a number of carefully placed lines and a hint of shadow, the image of a face would miraculously appear. It seemed magical that a drawing could be so three-dimensional and full of personality.

To this day some 40 years later, this phenomenon of creating the illusion of reality on a flat, blank surface still fascinates me as an artist; it brings me back to my easel every day. My father's voice is always repeating the same thing in my head: "Draw often, as good drawing skills will be the foundation for any art form you pursue."

Being a representational artist who describes objects and the world around me—in a realistic way as opposed to an abstract way—and who follows my father's advice to continually practice my drawing skills, I'm linked to a long tradition of European art. From the time of our earliest ancestors, humans have felt compelled to record the world around them. Motivated either by practical or aesthetic reasons, the artist has had to cultivate the technical skills of his craft to succinctly convey his impressions to others. Whether it was early humans attempting to capture the power and grace of an animal's leg or a twenty-first-century artist drawing a sleek, modern bridge, a single line drawn by a well-trained draftsman can communicate as much about the subject as pages of the written word.

A drawing can be so many things: It can be a rapid notation of something glimpsed out of the corner of an eye; a means to develop an idea for a painting; a way of exploring the formal properties of the medium employed; or a highly finished, detailed rendering of a subject. All have the potential to be powerful works of art. Nature is full of richness and subtlety. It seems to follow that the artist who has a breadth of skills at his disposal will be better equipped to respond to the great variety of visual stimuli that he encounters and to his emotional responses to them.

We have designed this book to assist those individuals who are interested in exploring the fascinating world of representational drawing. This book will convey what we believe are the fundamental principles behind learning to draw what you see. You will be introduced to the building blocks of recording what is in front of you. We will begin by introducing basic drawing principles using simple subject matter. These ideas will then be developed by using more complicated subjects. Rather than teaching formulas on how to draw, the focus will be on teaching concepts through explanations, exercises, and demonstrations. We believe this will take students much farther in their education, as it will hopefully instill methods of seeing more carefully. The acquisition of these skills will serve as a springboard to the student artist to further explore the technical and creative potential of the various media and techniques introduced in this book.



The Photographer, by Dean Fisher

Drawn to Create: An Introduction from Josephine Robinson

There is no more satisfying experience than to stand back from a piece of work that you alone have succeeded in creating. The sense of accomplishment cannot be equaled. Once experienced, it is impossible not to want to repeat it again and again.

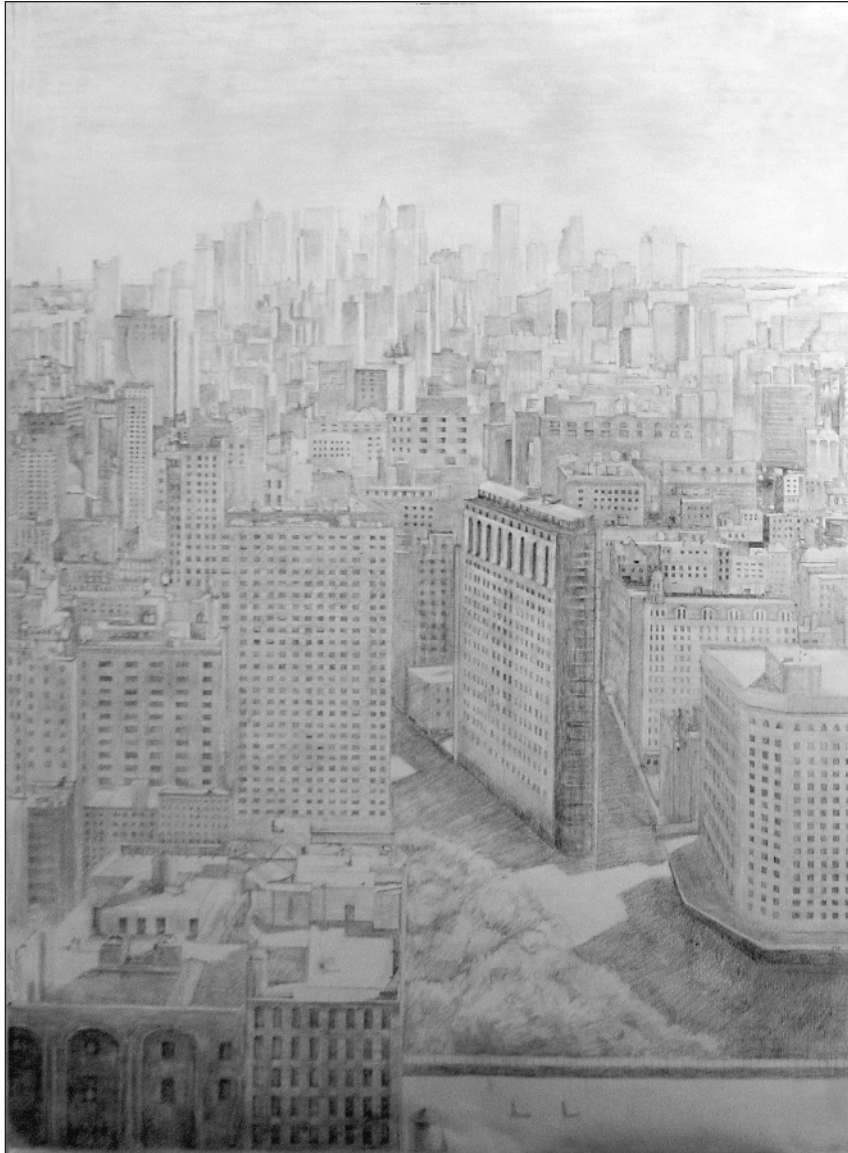
The Visual Language

The visual language of painting and drawing has a rich and complex vocabulary, which artists have created and used to express a whole array of ideas and emotions. Through this language artists have often challenged accepted truths and long-held beliefs. They have done so not only by their ability to use this language as a basis for comment but also by their ability to re-invent the forms of the language itself in order to offer differing viewpoints upon our world.

Seeing art as a language inspires me to experiment in its possibilities of communication. My work as an artist is concerned with the formulation of a personal statement, like most other artists. It is akin to a journey, where the end of the journey is less important than the traveling itself. It is the experimentation, the manipulation of materials, and the exploration of the forms of this language that I find exciting, fascinating, involved, and ultimately inspiring. It is the freedom to form my own vocabulary for this language that makes me return to my easel every day.

I draw in large part on the great artistic culture of past civilizations and societies. These past cultures provide me with a rich and varied source not only to use but to experiment with, invent from, and to learn from. Great art, for me, is art that endures. I am inspired by all art that has the power to cross our linear boundaries of time and speak to us in the present-day world. This sense of endurance is art's most powerful and enduring legacy. It arises as a consequence, in part, of the artist's formation of a language, which is able to transpose their own unique and intimate vision, beyond the personal, to a shared universal human experience.

This visual language of images, even in this twenty-first century, is a vehicle still capable of further exploration and invention. I am grateful to all artists, everywhere, who have taken this journey to make the mundane unusual, to make the personal, universal, and to make the passage of time less baffling. Their inventiveness, exploration, perseverance, and artistry have allowed everyone of us, whether actively or passively, to take part in this conversation. Enjoy it!



Looking Downtown from Midtown, by J. S. Robinson

A Gallery of Drawings to Inspire You

This beautiful portrait by Michelangelo shows a simple elegance in its execution and design. The lines and marks Michelangelo used in this drawing are both economic and precise in terms of draftsmanship and expression. His expertise as an artist enabled him to develop a quality of line and quality of mark, which not only renders a likeness of the young man, but also renders a suggestion of his mood and character.



Portrait of Andrea Quaratesi, by Michelangelo Buonarroti,
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In this phenomenal drawing by contemporary Spanish artist Antonio López García, his acute vision, skills, and patience have enabled him to create this seemingly simple depiction of a real space. While the degree of realism is very high, he has managed to create a breathable space and sense of warmth by sharply focusing only on certain selected objects. This is a scene that is perceived by a human eye, rather than by the lens of a camera.

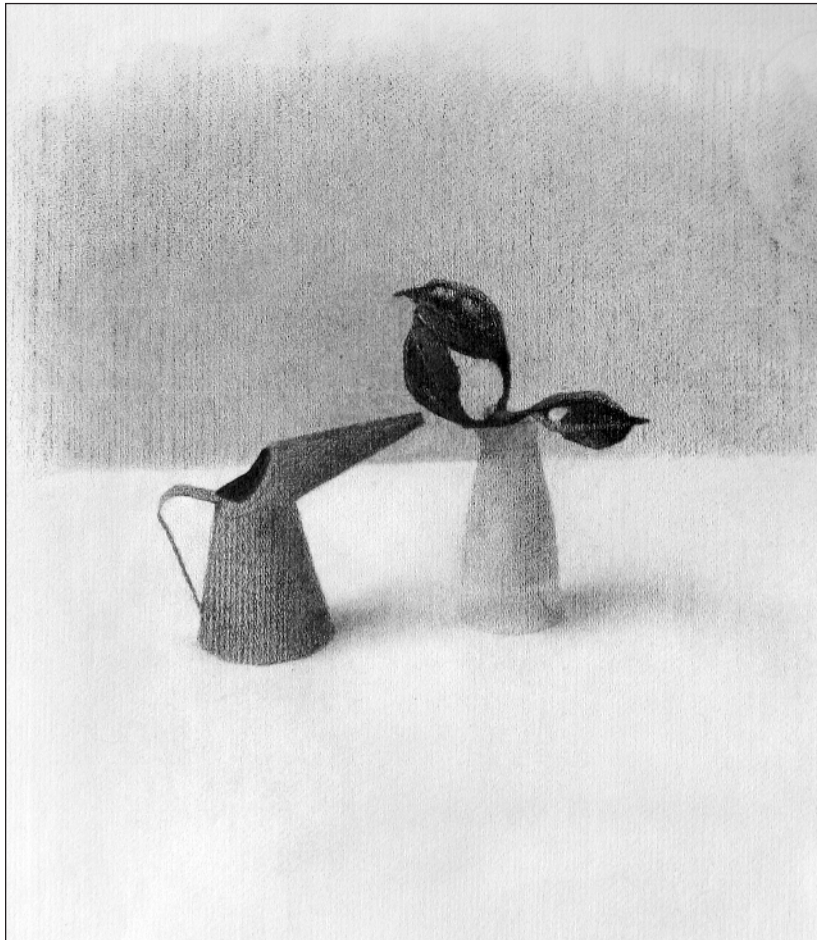


Antonio López Torres' House, by Antonio López García, © VEGAP

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A Gallery of Drawings to Inspire You *(continued)*

The artist has drawn these two objects with a great deal of restraint. She has used the texture of the paper to suggest the surface of both the objects. By her careful use of tone alone, the artist has intriguingly managed to differentiate the material composition of two objects and the surface on which they sit, even though they all share the same texture of the paper. She has beautifully, and delicately, manipulated the most basic drawing tools of pencil and paper.



Roman glass 1, by Rita Natarova, courtesy of the artist

In this elegant line drawing, the artist has used very economic means to depict the model as if she were in motion. The high level of realism comes through the accuracy of the line and, to a large degree, through the careful depiction of a very believable human gesture. The feeling of vitality and movement is also conveyed through the varied thickness of line.



The Russian Girl, by Silviu Krecu, courtesy of the artist

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A Gallery of Drawings to Inspire You *(continued)*

This formal, yet subtle, composition fixes our gaze on two objects that are bathed by a soft directional light. The light is gently portrayed by soft tones of gray. The few dark tones in this drawing, and the rectangle of gray behind the objects, are strategically placed to act as weights to anchor the objects into the composition. The gray tones subtly contrast the light and the half light. This creates a shimmering effect, so that there is a gentle vibration throughout the whole composition.



Still Life, by Constance Lapalombara, courtesy of the artist

In this image, the artist has frozen a moment in time. The tumbling cups have been prevented from falling and are locked in position, defying gravity. It is an illusion created by the artist but made believable by his reference to real objects. There are no strongly differentiated tones in this drawing. Instead there is a gentle progression from the white of the cups to the grays of the cloths to the blacks of the cups. It is this use of measured tones that persuades the viewer to contemplate a seemingly unimportant action.



Cup Still Life, by Roger Van Damme, courtesy of the artist