HOW TO DRAW WHAT YOU SEE

RUDY DE REYNA

35th ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Structure
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Perspective
Light and Shade
Composition
Values
Still Life
Outdoors
Figure
Hands and Feet
Heads and Faces
Children
Charcoal
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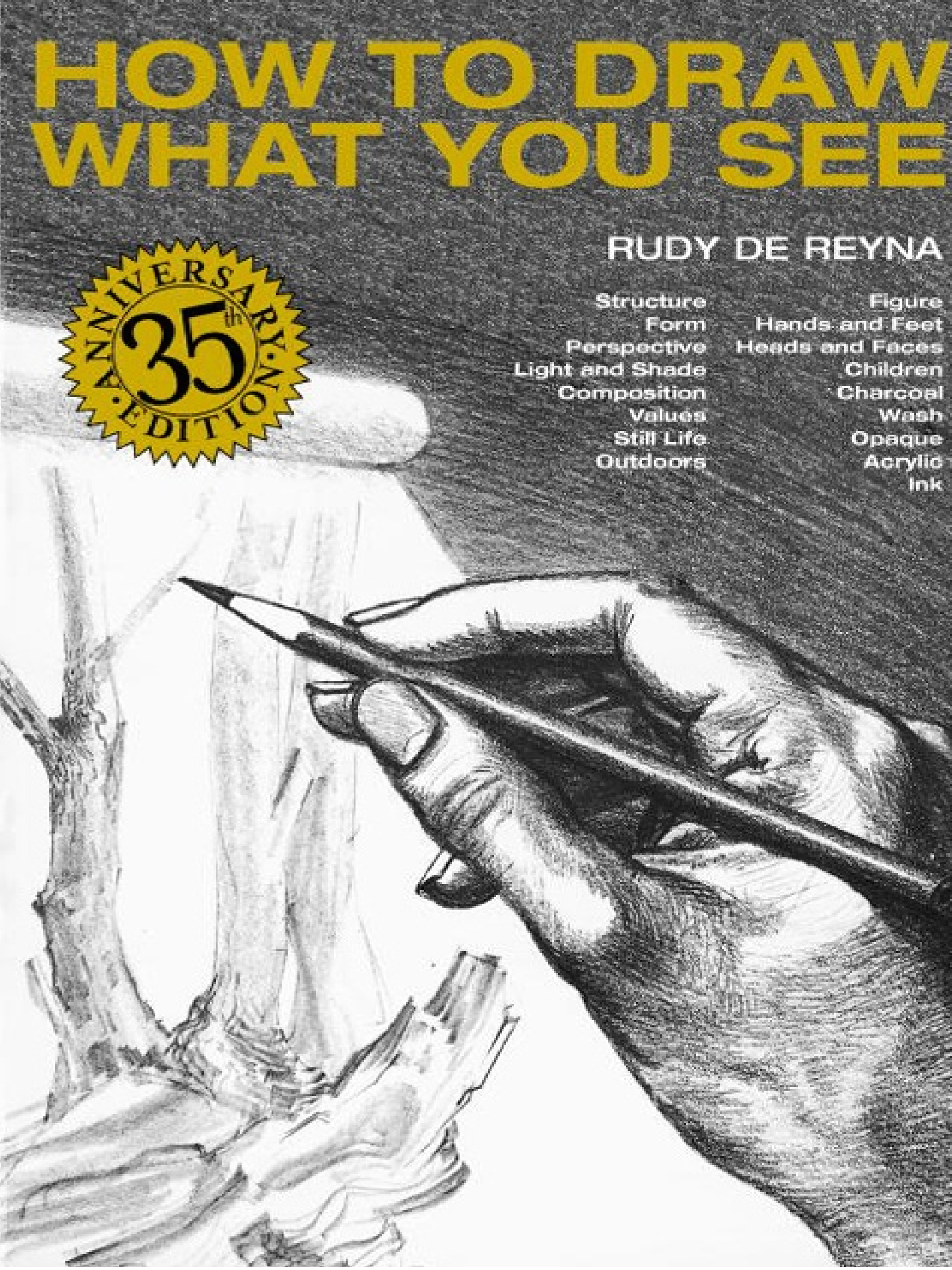

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BY RUDY DE REYNA

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For Marylin

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my appreciation to my editor, Diane Casella Hines, who was m
invaluable “silent partner” in bringing this book to completion. Like a master carpenter, sh
patiently assembled the pictures and text, trimming here and smoothing there, until all th
pieces fit. With an editor’s special gift for putting herself in the reader’s shoes, she scrutinize
and polished each sentence until it was as clear as she could make it. She has accomplishe
this task with ingenuity and dispatch, and I am extremely grateful.

Contents

Part One: Fundamentals of Drawing

I believe that you must learn to draw things *as you see them*—realistically. That is, you mu reproduce the dimensions and proportions of a given subject. To render a faithful, realist drawing, you must be able to *observe* the basic structure of an object, regardless of ho complex and obscured by detail it may be. You must train not only your hands but your ey as well.

However, the ability to depict an object literally doesn't make you an artist. No one ev claimed that the faithful duplication of nature (an impossible task anyway) produces art. B the ability to draw things as you see them is the first step toward becoming an artist.

In other words, throughout this book you'll learn to draw realistically. The objects befo you will dictate what you should do, and the result will be the literal representation of th object. When you've finished the projects in this book, you'll be equipped with the necessa skills to enable you to express yourself as an artist. Having learned the fundamentals, th *craft* of drawing, you'll have a solid point of departure from which to *create*. Then, if yo wish, you can leave the literal imitation of a subject to the students behind you.

PROJECT 1

Basic Structure of Objects

Every object that you see has a structure or form based on either the cube, the cylinder, th cone, or the sphere. Any object may be based on one or a combination of these fou geometric solids. A solid, for our graphic purposes, means an object that has thre dimensions: height, width, and depth.

Basic structure doesn't mean that things are geometrically perfect cubes, cylinders, cones, spheres. (They can be, of course—for example, a square box, a round can, or an ice crea cone.) It means that objects are *based* on these four geometric solids. The shape of the obje is modified in various ways that depart from the strict geometrical form (Figure A).

This principle was a revelation to me. I found that I could concentrate on overa dimensions of an object; then, at my leisure, I could add whatever details I wanted include. In addition, because the four basic geometric forms are solid, i.e., three dimensiona you get a feeling for the bulk and the weight of everything you draw.

In the next three projects, we'll explore the first of these basic forms—the cube. We flatten it down, pull it up, or lengthen it, depending on our needs for representing an actu object (Figures B, C, D, and E). There are so many things that have the cube as their bas shape that it seems logical to begin with it. But before you can draw cubes, you must practic drawing the straight lines that form them.

Drawing Straight Lines

All you need to do the exercises in this project is a standard "office" pencil and a pad drawing paper. I've used a KOH-I-NOOR #555, grade #2 pencil, and a #307 Ad Art layo and visualizing pad made by the Bienfang Company.

The range of pencils and drawing papers is so wide that I won't even attempt to enumera them. Actually, for your first explorations, almost any pencil and any type of paper will d Later you'll be more discriminating.

Drawing Lines Freehand

Since the first objects you're going to draw require primarily straight lines, let's look in ways of making them without any mechanical aids. I want you to draw them freehand; it awkward and impractical to be encumbered with rulers and triangles as you sketc especially outdoors. Besides, there's a certain life and vibrancy to a line drawn freeha when compared to the cold and mechanical line made with a ruler.

Holding the Pencil

Drawing a straight line, despite the old saw about it being awfully difficult, is easy and fun do if you use the right approach (Figure F). Begin this very moment. Don't procrastinate. doesn't matter in the least if the way you hold your pencil isn't the same as mine.

Hold your pencil in the usual writing position or "under the palm", whichever feels mo comfortable (Figures G and H). Swing the straight lines from the elbow, not from the wris Swinging from the wrist will make your stroke too short and your line will be choppy an labored.

Angle and Direction of Lines

By practicing, you'll discover the best angle at which you can draw a straight line. Then, a you have to do is turn the paper to execute a horizontal, a vertical, or a diagonal line. Tr them all. My own personal choice is in a northeasterly direction, beginning at the southwes Your favorite direction may turn out to be the same or it may be a horizontal line that ru from west to east. The direction of the line isn't important. It's the spontaneity and directne of the line that really matters.

Don't be timid and make short stabs at drawing lines. Dash them off with one stroke. N one is going to see or evaluate them. Relax. Let yourself go, and swing away so that you ca limber up your entire arm. If you can draw a straight line in any direction—without turnin the paper—you're to be envied. Find out right now if you're one of the fortunate few.

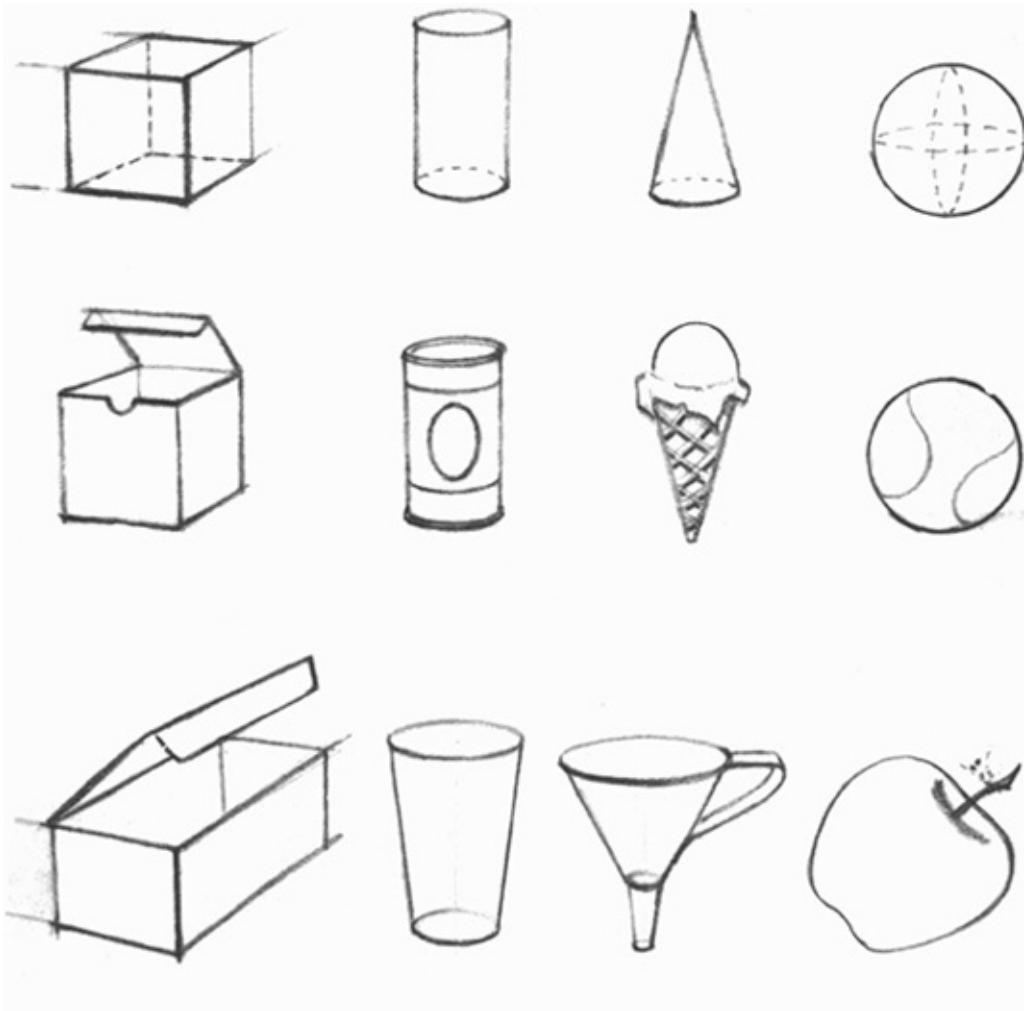

Figure A. *Actual objects can conform rigidly to the four basic forms—cube, cylinder, cone, and sphere—as shown in the top two rows. Usually, however, they're o based on these geometric forms. As shown in the bottom row, the box is elongated but still cubic. In the tumbler, the cylinder form is tapered; in the funnel, the c shape has been truncated; and the apple, despite its bulges and indentations, is still basically spherical.*

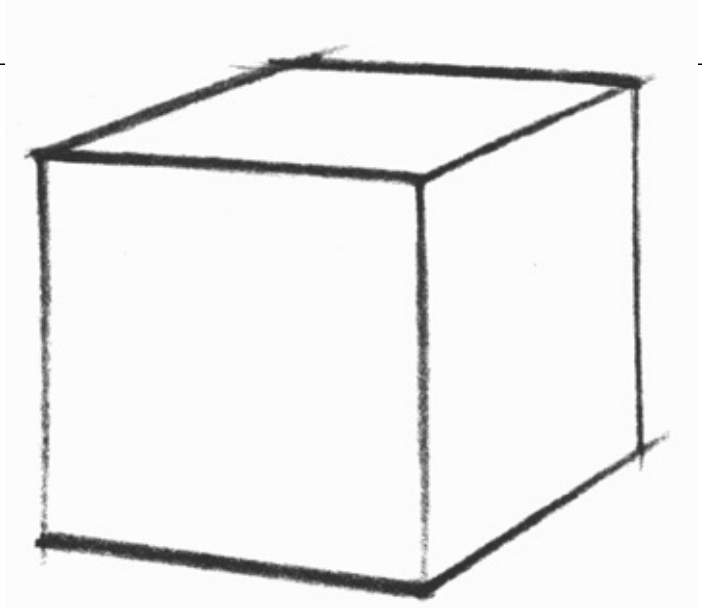

Figure B. *This is the geometric cube, with its six sides all exactly the same size.*

Figure C. *This is a cubic form. It's no longer equilateral, because four of its sides are rectangular and its ends are square, but it's still based on the cube. It's lik quarter pound of butter.*

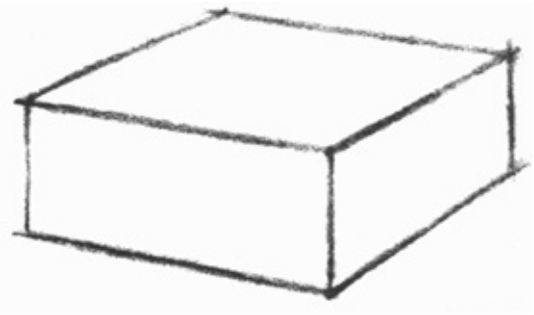

Figure D. *If you were to slice a cube into three sections, this is one of the cubic forms that you'd get.*

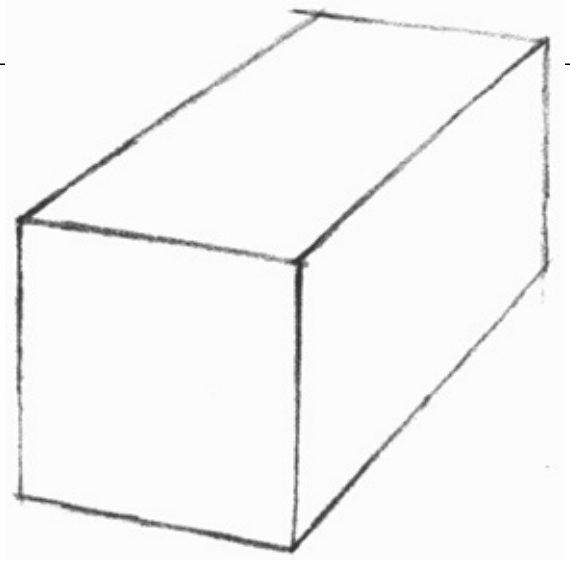

Figure E. *Joining two or three cubes together would give you a cubic form like this—something like a box of crackers. Remember that although Figures C, D, and aren't perfect cubes, they're cubic in character.*

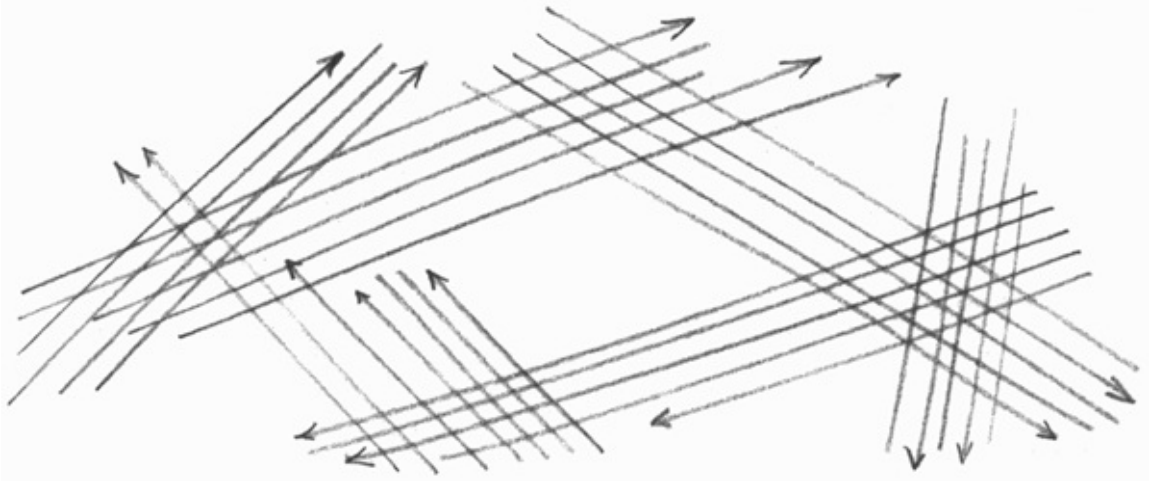

Figure F. *Draw lines freehand with one motion. The arrows indicate that I've drawn all these lines from left to right, obtaining the different angles simply by turning paper. Since there's hardly a drawing that doesn't require some straight lines, it's important to practice drawing them as often as possible.*

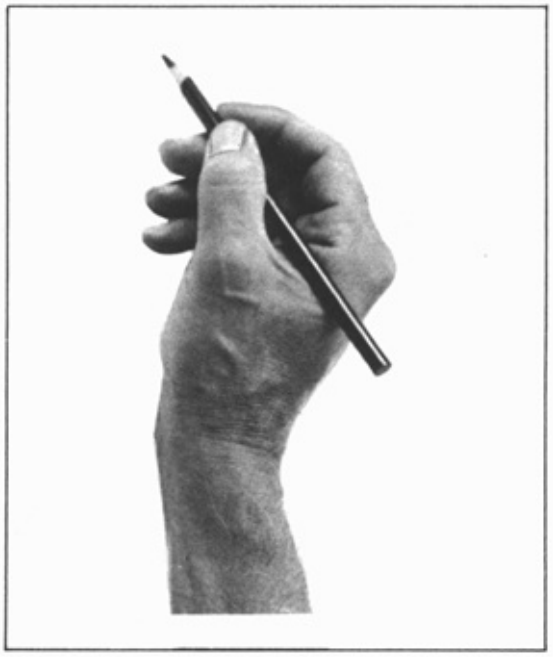

Figure G. *You can hold your pencil in either of two ways, whichever feels the more comfortable. Here I'm holding the pencil in the usual writing position.*

Figure H. *If you prefer, you may hold your pencil as shown here in the "under the palm" position. Both positions work equally well.*

PROJECT 2

Eye Level: Foundation of Perspective

For this project, use the same pencil that you used in Project 1, but once again, any offic pencil will do. As a matter of fact, you'll use a simple pencil through succeeding projects unt I ask you to change to another drawing medium.

It's my firm belief that students fail in their attempts at drawing because they're unawa of *eye level.* Actually, it's such a simple concept, so seemingly obvious, that perhaps it's th very quality that causes it to be overlooked.

Eye level refers to the *height at which your eyes observe an object.* I suggest that you wri this sentence and place it where you can see it often, so that it becomes part of you. It's th important to your development as an artist.

Changing Shapes and Eye Level

To actually demonstrate what I mean by eye level, I'd like you to lie prone on the floo Notice that you see the *bottom*, not the top, of most objects. Now sit up and notice th difference; move to a chair and again observe that as you raise your eye level, the top plan of objects come into view. If you were to climb a ladder to the ceiling, everything below yo would show its top plane. Sounds simple enough, doesn't it? Well it is!

Vanishing Points

The cubic form in Figure A is *seen at eye level*, and shows only two of its six sides. I horizontal lines converge down to and up to their respective *vanishing points.* A vanishin point is an imaginary point on the eye level, or horizon, where the parallel edges of a cub form appear to converge and meet.

Converging lines, eye level, and vanishing points all add up to *perspective.* It's a word Latin origin meaning "to look through." In other words, you view an object as though it we transparent and you could see all its sides—front and back.

Actually all you have to do to draw an object in perspective is to *observe closely.* What's th angle and length of one edge compared to another? What's the length and width of a plane relation to its neighbor? Asking yourself these kinds of questions as you view an object wi help sharpen your powers of observation.

The cubic form in Figure B has all its lines *rising* to the vanishing points because I've place this cube *below* eye level. All the lines of the cube in Figure C go *down* to their vanishin points because I've placed the cubic form *above* the eye level. In short, if the cubic form is eye level, the lines, (that form the sides of the cube) come down from the top edges and g up from the bottom edges to their vanishing points on the horizon. If the cubic form is belo eye level, all converging lines go *up* to vanishing points on the horizon. If the form is abov eye level, all the converging lines come *down* to vanishing points on the horizon.

Cube in Perspective

I've chosen a cubic form as your first subject because it's the easiest to draw, and you can p your straight lines to work. Furthermore, the cube demonstrates clearly the illusion of th three dimensions—height, width, and depth—that you must convey on the flat surface of th paper. If you can portray these dimensions, you'll be able to draw realistically, no matt what the subject.

So from this moment, on, remember the three dimensions inherent in everythin Naturally, each dimension can vary. The height of a cubic object can be greater than i depth, or the width can be the largest dimension of the three. As long as you're aware of the relationship, you'll be amazed at the progress you'll make.

Now take a box from your pantry—any box, regardless of its shape—and hold it at ey level. Turn it so you can see only two of its sides (see Figure A). If the design on the packag proves distracting, tear the paper covering off it and work with the bare box.

Judging Size Relationships

Let me reiterate that drawing realistically means drawing accurately. Whatever proportion your box may have, check the relationship between one side and the other. Notice that in th box I've drawn (Figure D), its length is about twice its width. The three boxes in Figure D a seen at three different eye levels. Draw your box in the three different positions of Figure D You'll be employing the method of drawing straight lines that you learned in Project 1. won't matter at all if your box isn't the same shape as mine. The main thing is for you to b aware of the object's planes as you raise it or lower it above or below your level of vision.

When you're satisfied that you can draw a cubic shape at eye level, continue with views and 3 of Figure D. Refer to the diagrams in Figures A, B, and C. In the boxes you draw b sure that the lines converging to vanishing points 1 and 2 are at the proper slant, even thoug the lines can't extend all the way to their respective vanishing points on the eye level- simply because the paper isn't big enough.

Objects Below Eye Level

Most of the objects you'll draw (at least at the beginning) will be indoors and below ey level, because interiors—furniture, rooms, etc.—are scaled to a size that humans ca manipulate. Therefore, the reason for drawing objects below eye level is quite obvious. Loo around you and notice that even as you sit you can see the tops of tables, chairs, sofas, et When you can see the *top* of an object, it means that it's *below* the eye level or horizon. Sinc most of the work you'll do will be from a sitting or a standing position, I'd like you t observe the appearance of things from that viewpoint.

Practice Exercises

Collect four boxes and draw them at different distances below eye level. You might plac them on top of one another and draw the topmost first; remove it and draw the second, an so on until you've drawn the fourth. Notice that as you come down to the lowest box, you se more of its top plane than you did on the first box (Figures E and F). Compare the top plan

of all four of them when you've finished.

This one and others to follow (Figures G and H) are *practice exercises*, and they' indispensable. They aren't drawings worthy of being hung on a wall, any more than th pianist's exercises would be performed in a concert hall. Yet, as you know, the piani submits to daily practice not only to acquire his technique, but to sharpen and control it, eve after he has mastered the instrument. Flip through the pages of this book, if you haven't don so already, and you'll see that you're going to draw everything, not just boxes. But first yo must find your feet before you can run.

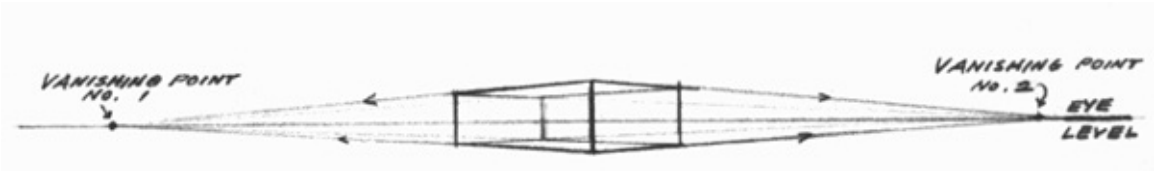

Figure A. *At eye level the converging lines of the sides of the box come down from the top edges and go up from the bottom edges to meet and vanish at imagin points on the horizon (or eye level) called vanishing points.*

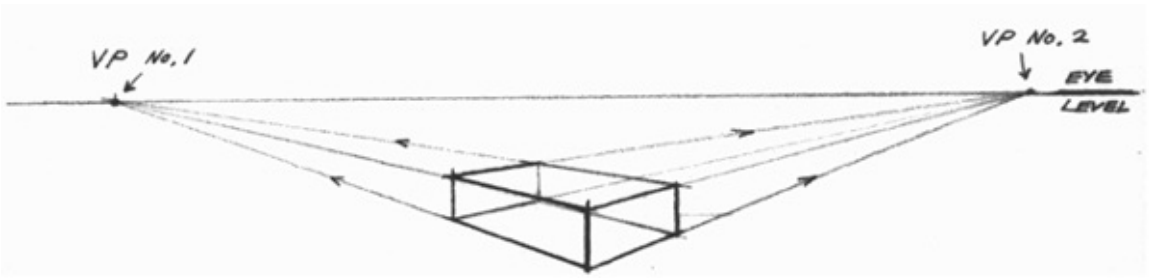

Figure B. *When the cubic object is below eye level, all converging lines go up to their respective vanishing points. The arrows show the direction in which the para lines extend to the eye level.*

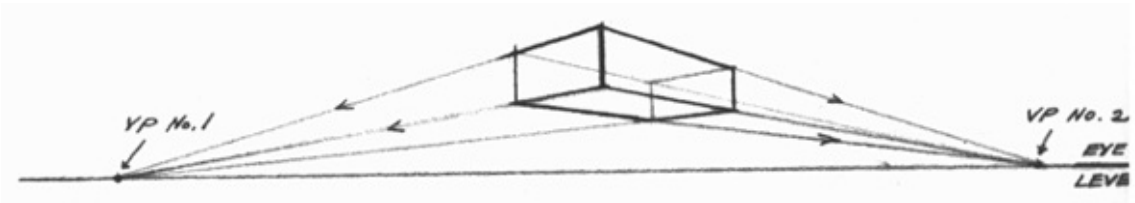

Figure C. *When the cubic object is above eye level, all converging lines come down to their respective vanishing points.*

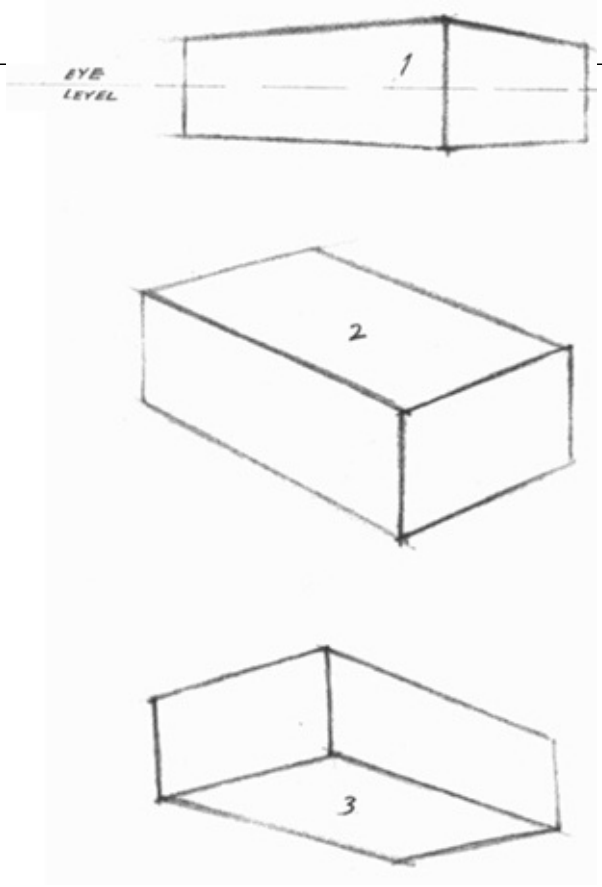

Figure D. *These three boxes are at three different eye levels: in view 1 the box is at eye level; in view 2 the box is below eye level; and in view 3 the box is above level.*

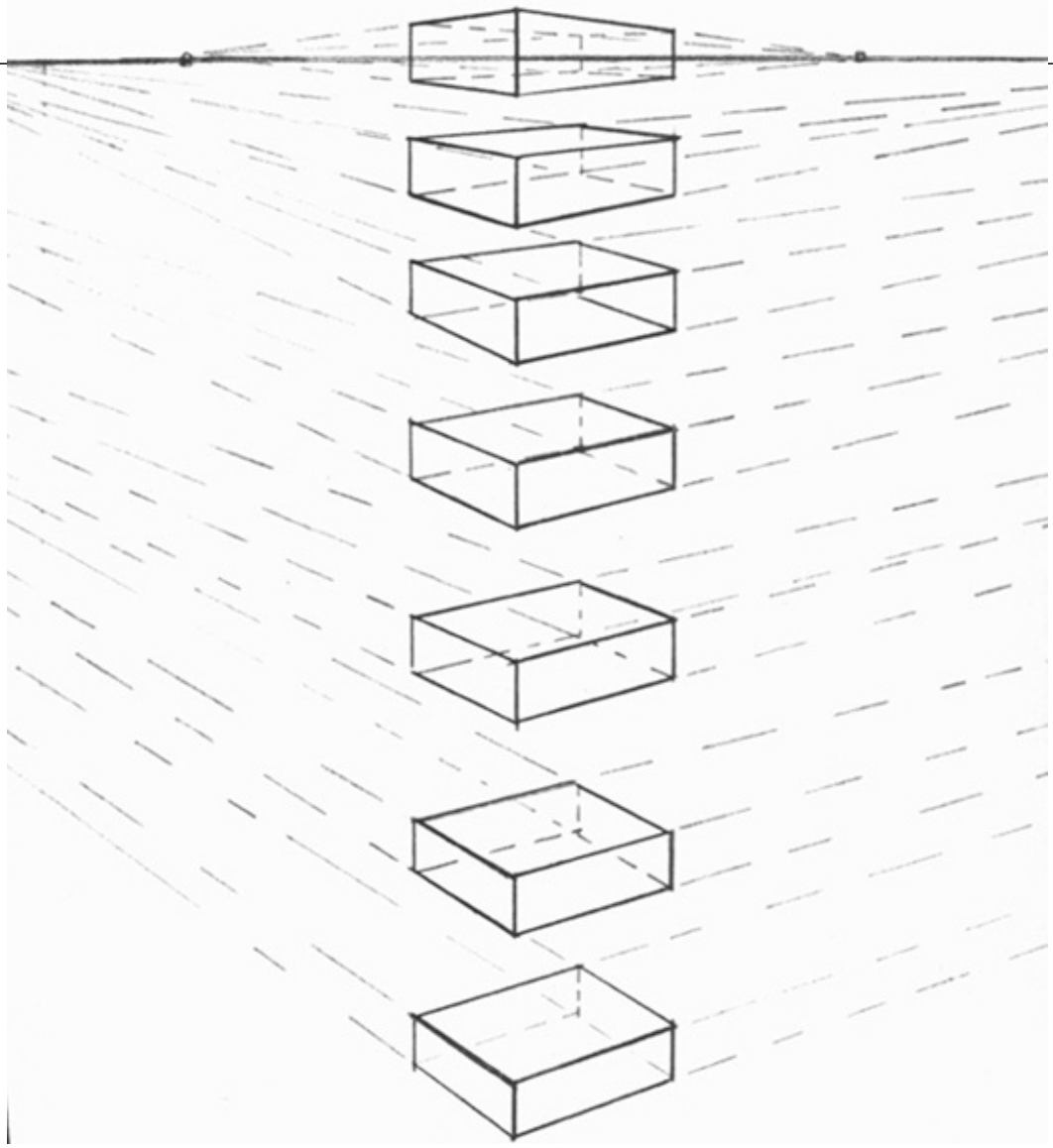

Figure E. *As an object gets farther away from the eye level, its verticals get shorter and its vanishing points get farther away from the object.*

Figure F. *If you were to view this imageupside down, you would see that the same principle applies when you're looking up at the object. In this and the follow projects, the vanishing points will usually be beyond the borders of your paper.*

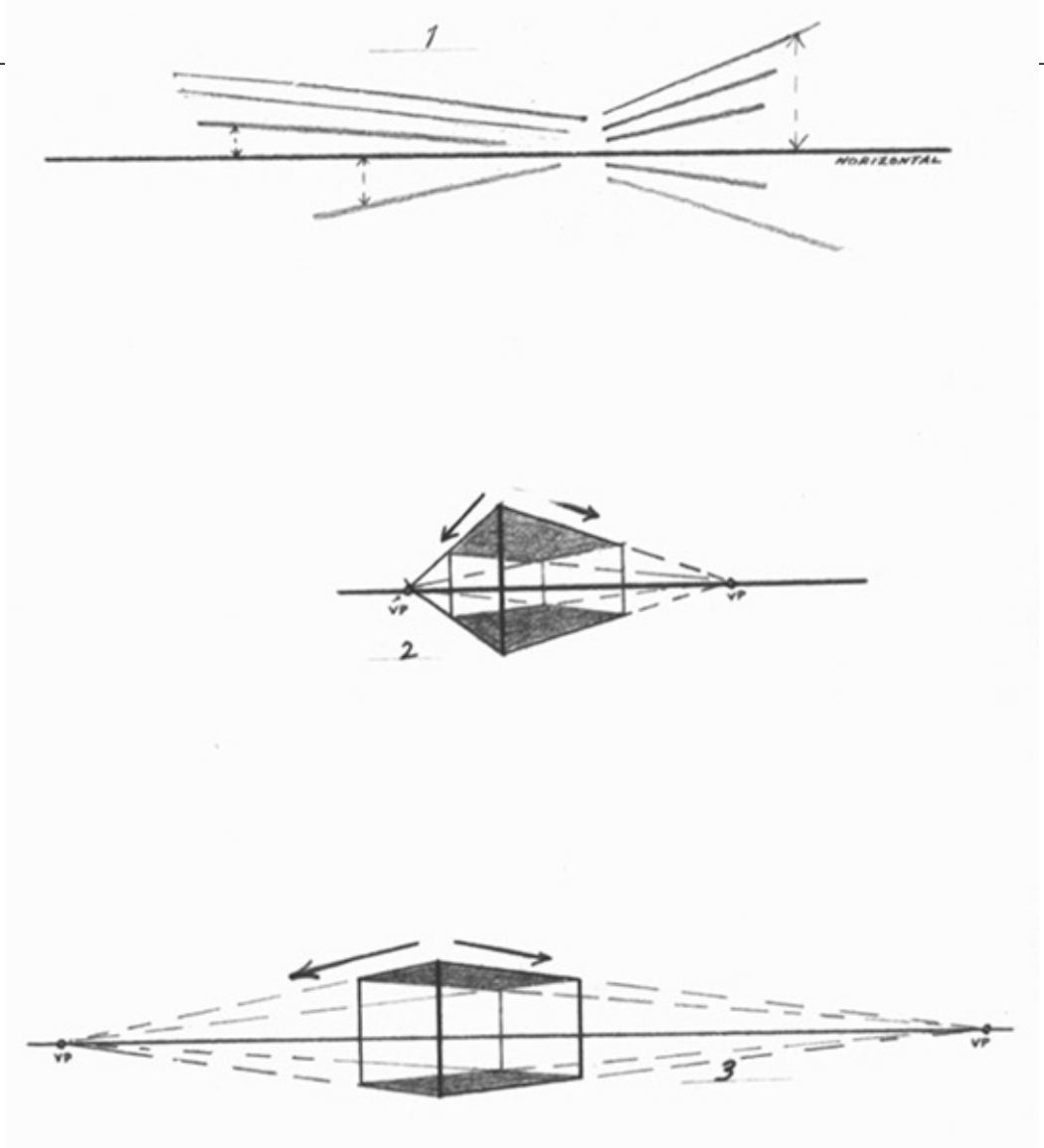

Figure G. *Ask yourself how much the line of an object departs—up or down—from the horizontal, as the diagram shows at view 1. If the diagonals are incorrect, yo get the distortion shown at view 2. Note that the proper angle at view 3 gives you the correct form, because the diagonals run farther out to their vanishing points.*

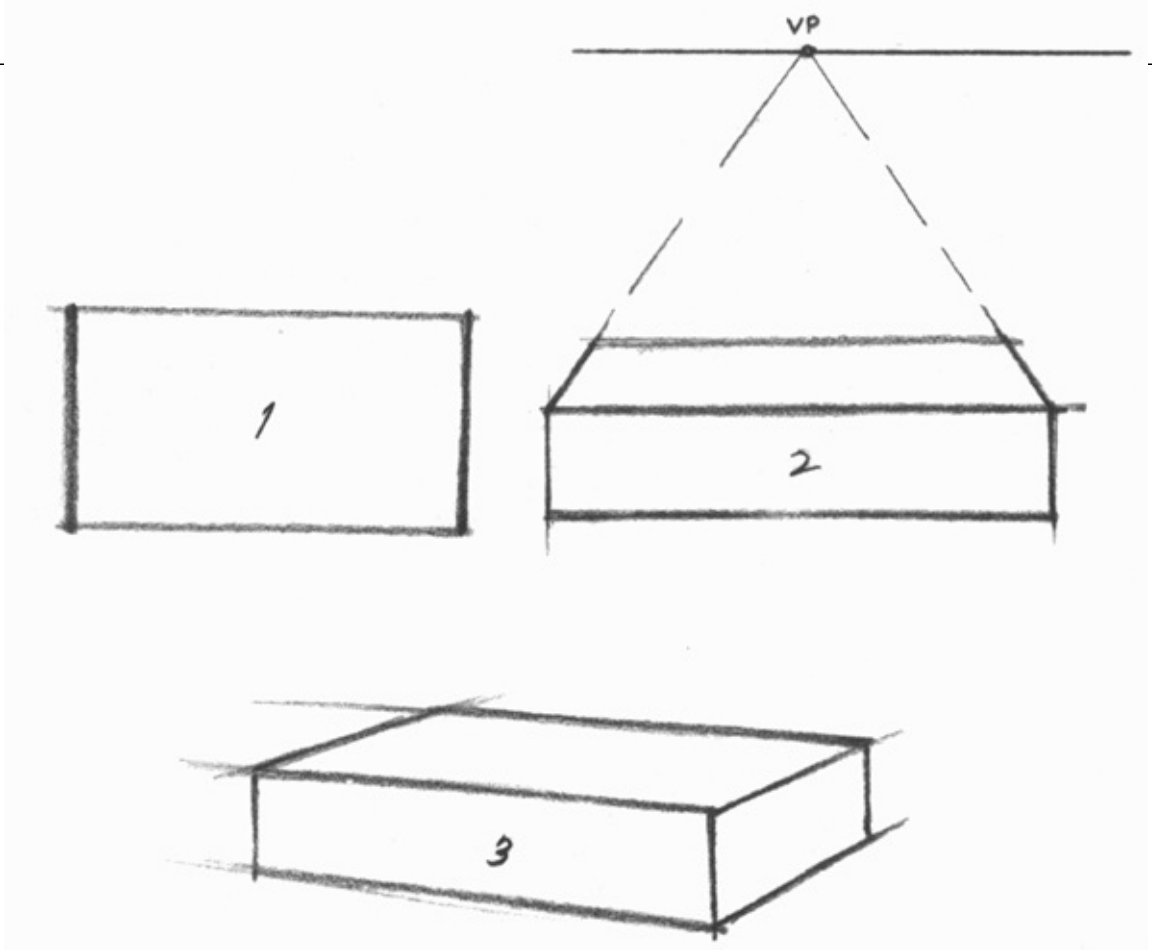

Figure H. *A cubic form presents no problem at all if you place it squarely in front of you with only one side visible, as seen at view 1. The horizontals remain horizon and there's no angle to check. But notice that you lose the cube's sense of solidity and it becomes a flat rectangle. The moment two sides are visible, as in view 2, cube begins to convey a sense of bulk. There's only one vanishing point here; this is called one point perspective. When three sides are shown, as in view 3, the horizon have become diagonals, but there's no question about the cube's volume and the space it occupies.*