

# Christine Pilkinton Fine Art

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*To send light into the darkness of men's hearts  
- such is the duty of the artist. Schumann*

## THE FIGURE

[http://drawsketch.about.com/od/figuredrawing/Figure\\_Drawing\\_Life\\_Drawing\\_Tips\\_and\\_Lessons.htm](http://drawsketch.about.com/od/figuredrawing/Figure_Drawing_Life_Drawing_Tips_and_Lessons.htm)

Figure drawing is the traditional cornerstone art training. The human figure offers every challenge one could require - line and tone, perspective and composition.

**The proportions used in figure drawing are:** - An **average person**, is generally 7-and-a-half heads tall (including the head). - An **ideal figure**, used when aiming for an impression of nobility or grace, is drawn at 8 heads tall. - An **heroic figure**, used in the heroic for the depiction of gods and superheroes, is eight-and-a-half heads tall (beware of creating a 'pinhead!') Most of the additional length comes from a bigger chest and longer legs.

## QUOTES on DRAWING

Drawing is the 'bones' of art. You have to be able to walk before you can run.

([Dion Archibald](#))

What do drawings mean to me? I really don't know. The activity absorbs me. I forget everything else in a way that I don't think happens with any other activity...

([John Berger](#))

Draw, as much and as often as you can. When drawing lies fallow, the skill diminishes. ([Gene Black](#))

A pencil is quiet, clean, odorless, inexpensive, and lightweight. I can slip it in my pocket and take it with me everywhere - my secret friend. ([Sherry Camby](#))  
on Leonardo da Vinci... It is often said that Leonardo drew so well because he knew about things; it is truer to say that he knew about things because he drew so well.

([Sir Kenneth Clark](#))

Drawing is the backbone. It is no good having a lovely sense of light and color if there isn't the firm foundation underneath. ([Alexander Creswell](#))

Drawing is the honesty of the art. There is no possibility of cheating. It is either good or bad. ([Salvador Dali](#))

Without good drawing, the foundation of a painting will collapse. ([Ken Danby](#))

Drawing is the discipline by which I constantly discover the world. ([Frederick Franck](#))

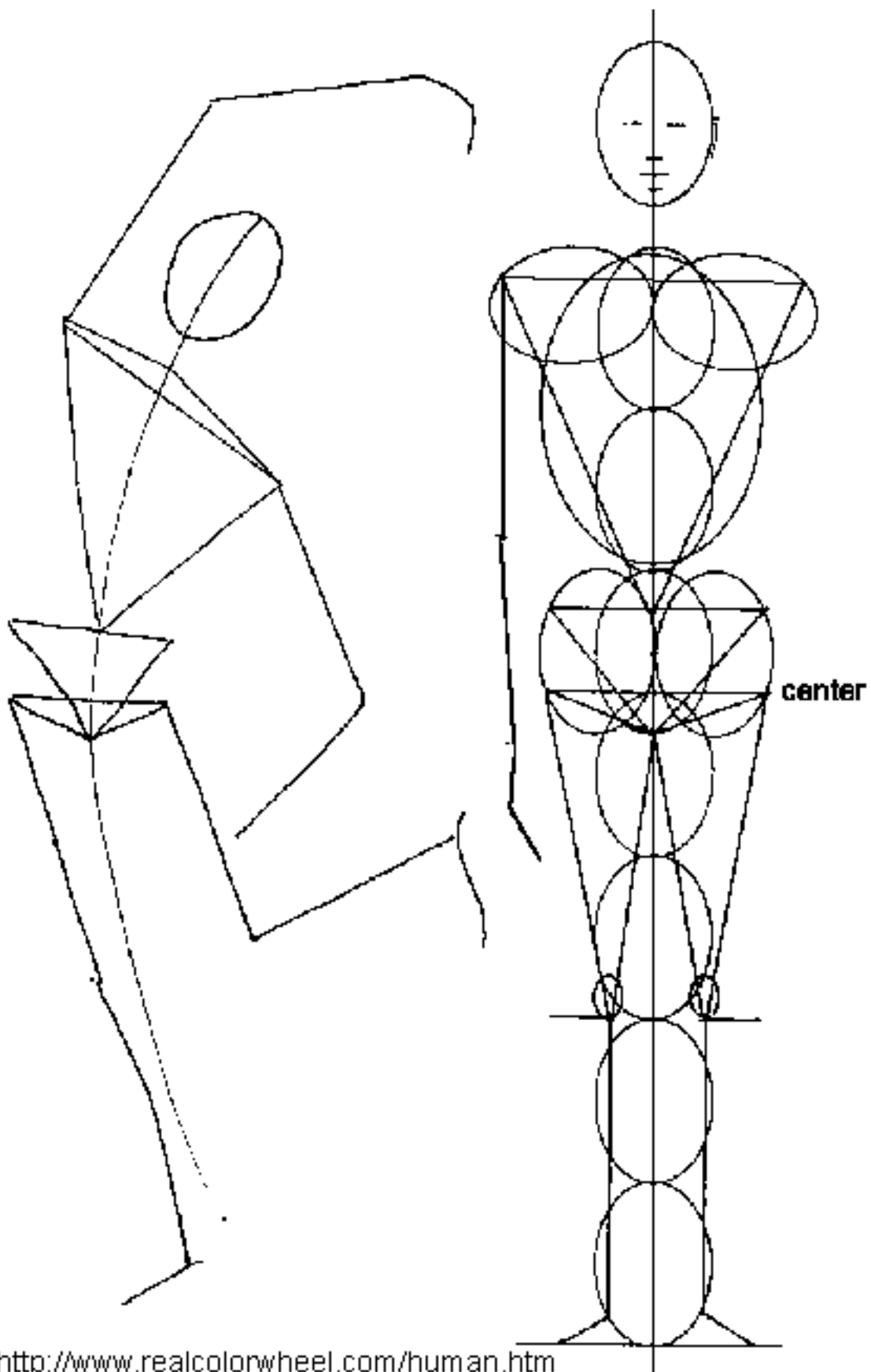
From time to time I like to leave my pencil lines visible in the paint, whether acrylic or oil, just to remind the viewer that it all starts with a drawing. ([Sandra Taylor Hedges](#))

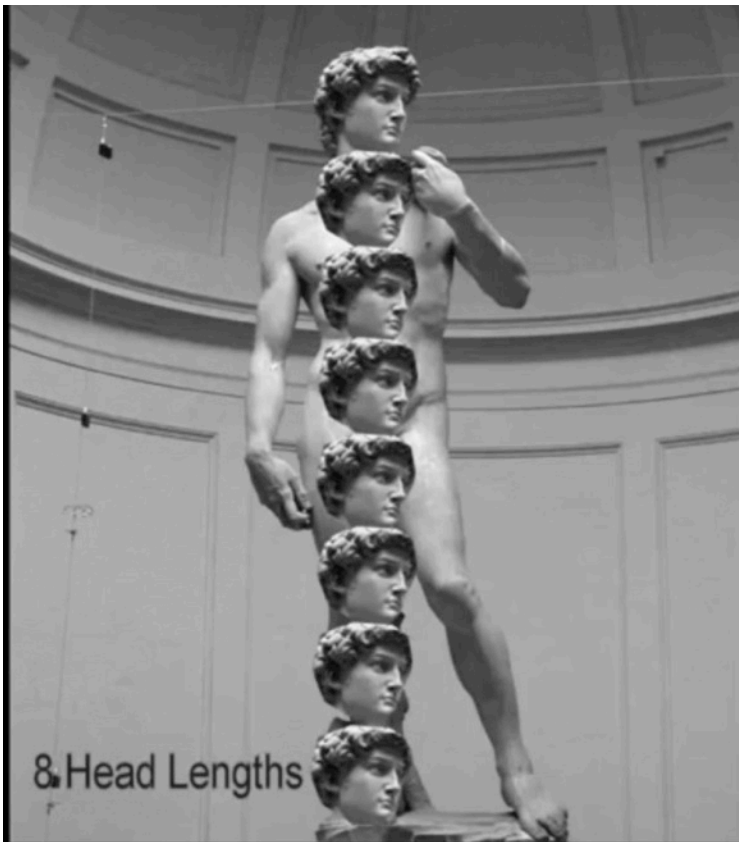
Drawing is still the bottom line. ([Robert Genn](#))

Draw, Antonio, draw - draw and don't waste time! ([Michelangelo](#))

When you draw, hold your sketchbook upright... Attempting to draw your subject with your sketchbook flat on the table results in distortion. ([Hilary Page](#))

The important thing is to keep on drawing when you start to paint. Never graduate from drawing. ([John Sloan](#))





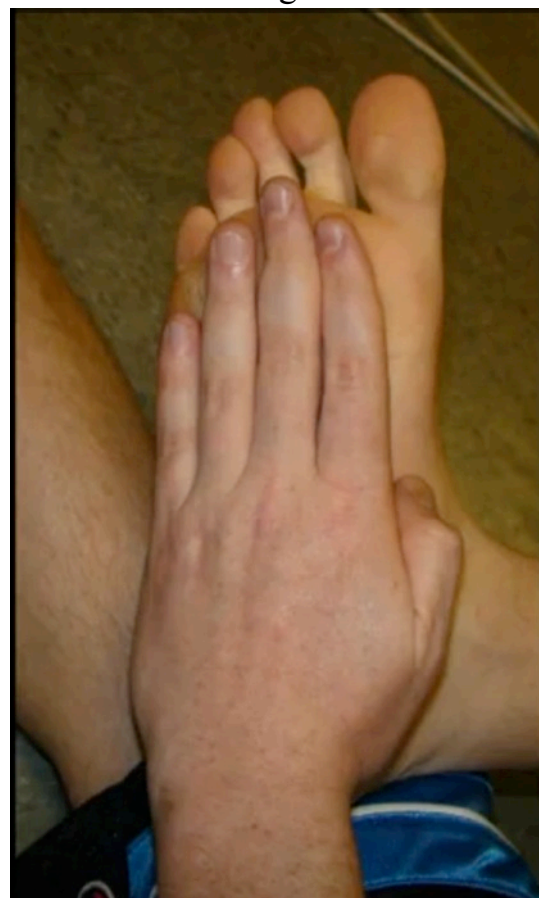
**Ideal Figure 8 heads tall ---**

**Average figure 7 1/2 heads tall - Always check**



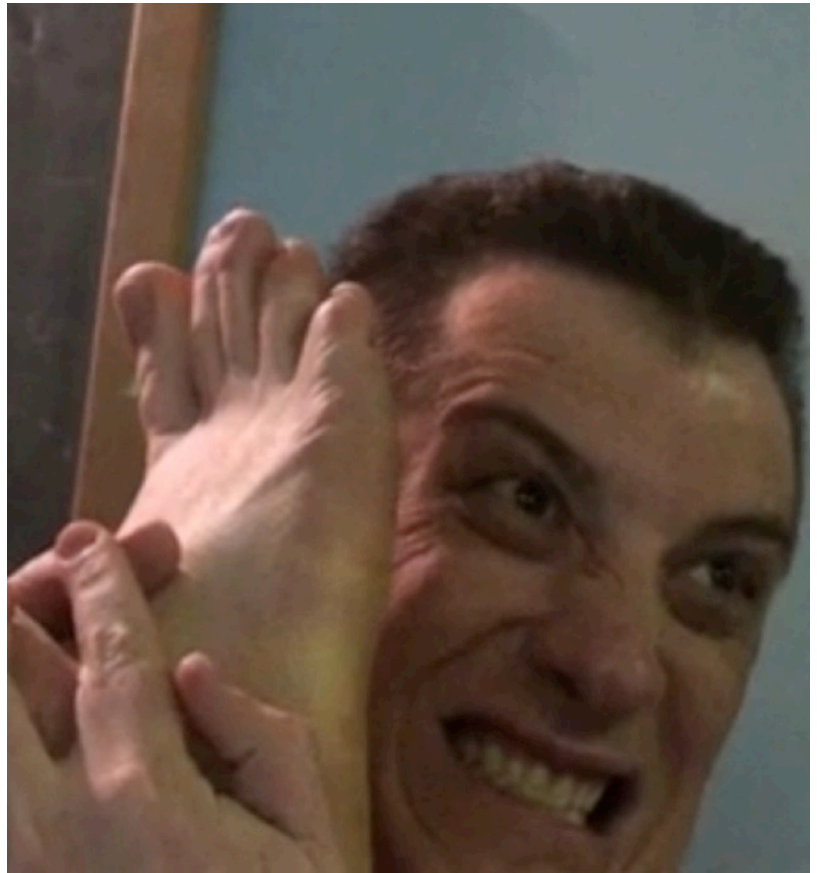


Span of both arms is often the same as the height.

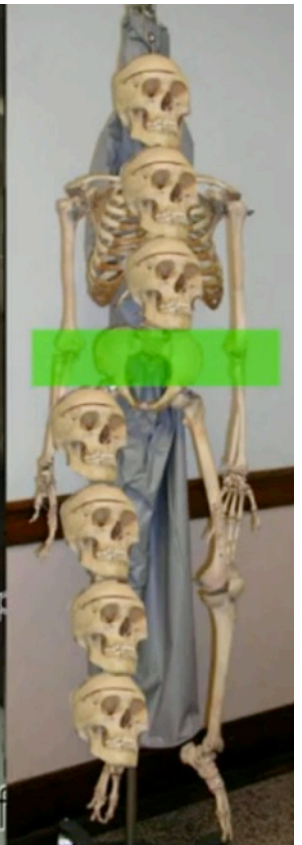
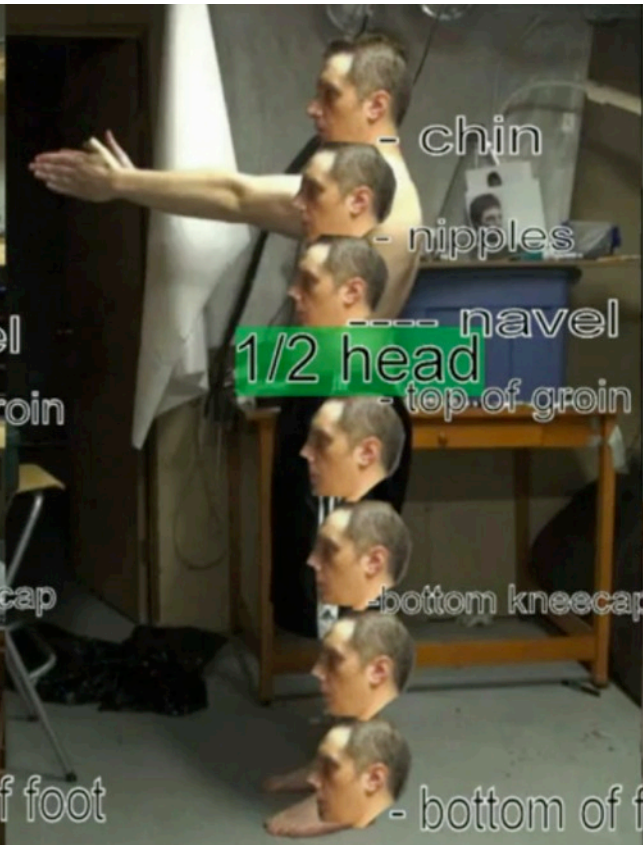


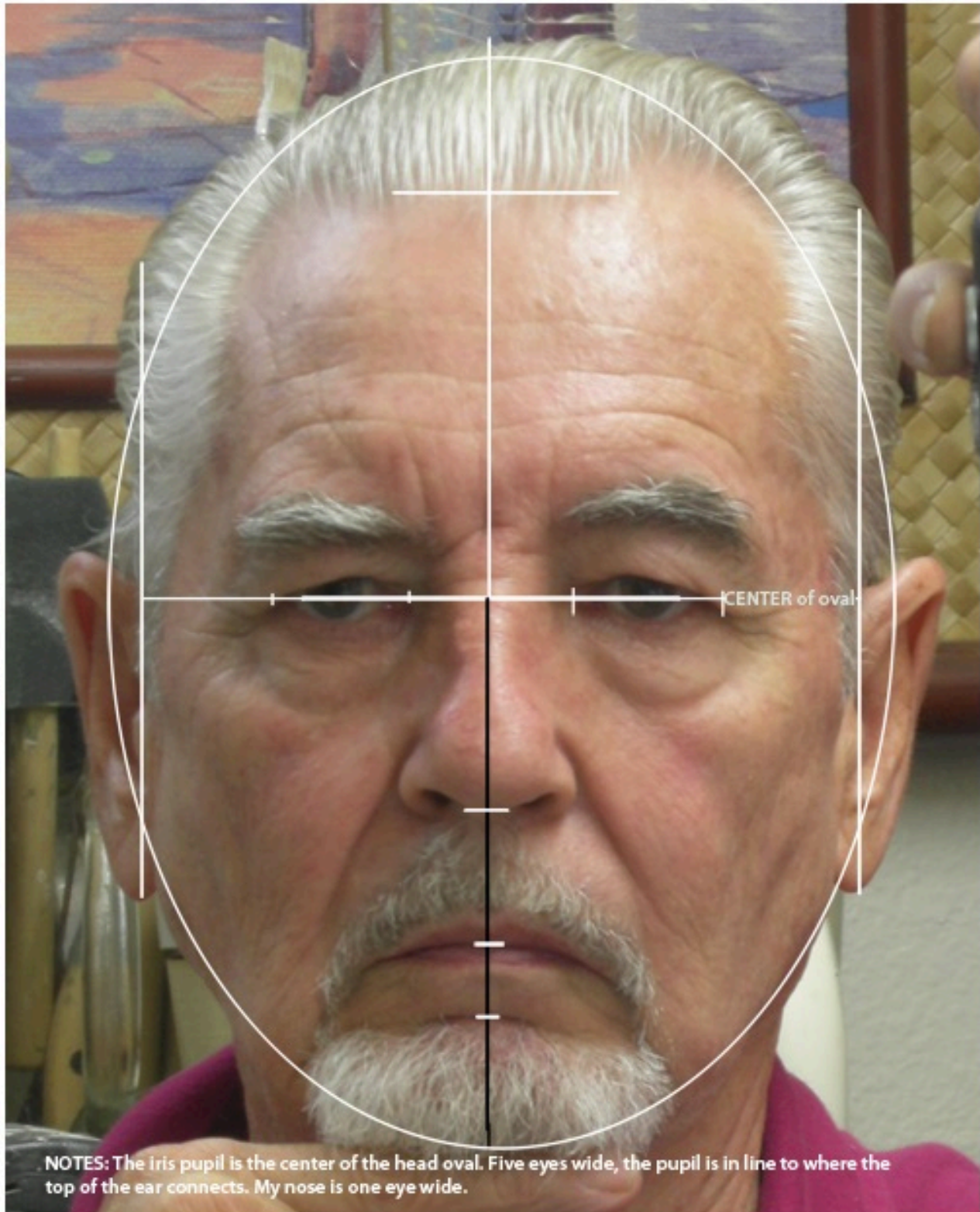


Hand is usually size of face & the same as the foot without the toes



Foot is often same size as the head

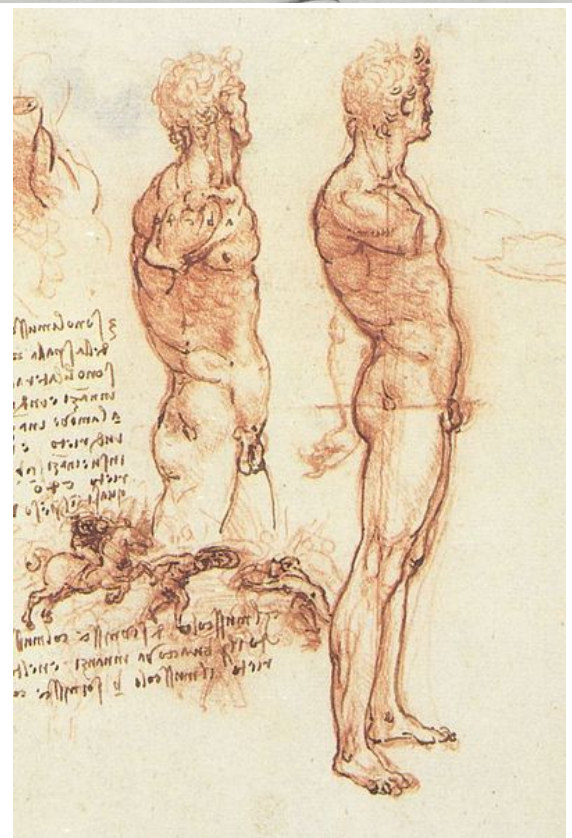








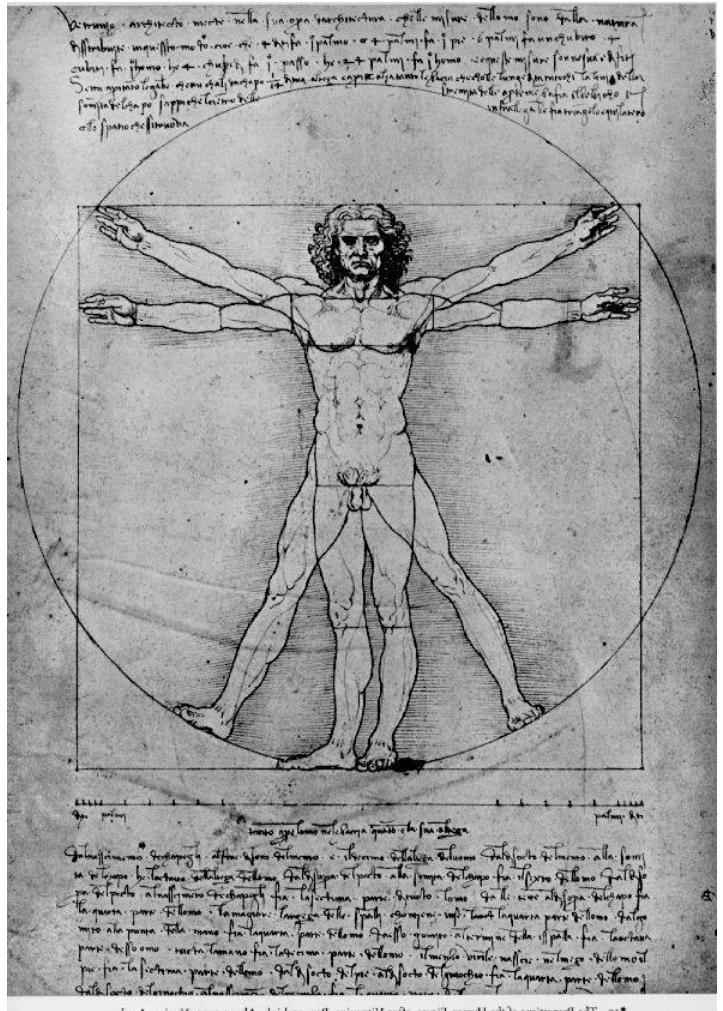
REMBRANDT Figure



Davinci's Anatomy of a Male Nude...



Michelangelo Figure Drawing



Davinci's Vitruvian Man

The **Vitruvian Man** is a [drawing](#) created by [Leonardo da Vinci](#) circa 1490.[1] It is accompanied by notes based on the work of the architect [Vitruvius](#). The drawing, which is in pen and ink on paper, depicts a male figure in two superimposed positions with his arms and legs apart and simultaneously inscribed in a circle and square. The drawing and text are sometimes called the **Canon of Proportions** or, less often, **Proportions of Man**. It is stored in the [Gallerie dell'Accademia](#) in [Venice](#), Italy, and, like most works on paper, is displayed only occasionally.[2][3]

The drawing is based on the correlations of ideal [human proportions](#) with geometry described by the ancient Roman architect [Vitruvius](#) in Book III of his treatise [De Architectura](#). Vitruvius described the human figure as being the principal source of proportion among the [Classical orders](#) of architecture. Vitruvius determined that the ideal body should be eight heads high.

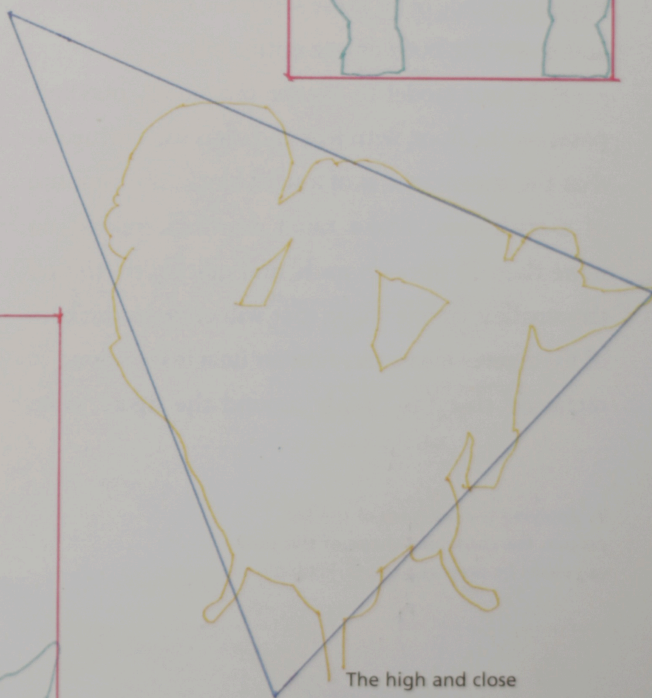
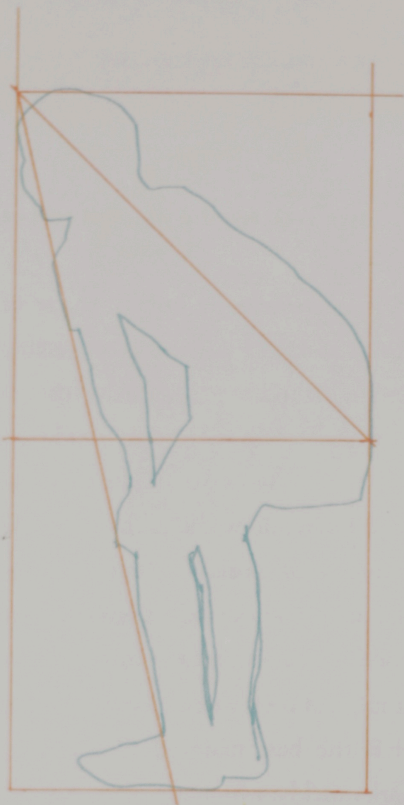
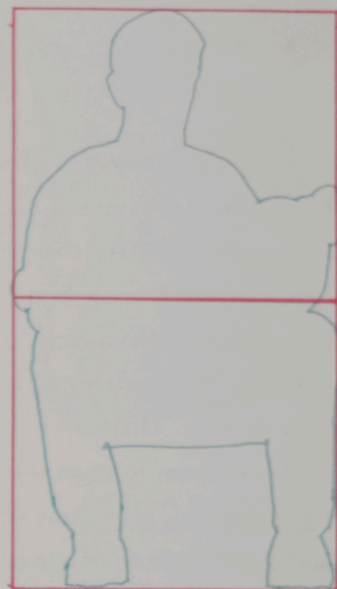
Leonardo's drawing is traditionally named in honor of the architect.



## BUILDING THE FIGURE

*The drawings on these pages are all different ways of representing the simplest overall shape of a figure, as it appears to you. Notice that however complicated the figure seems to be, it can still be contained by a simple shape.*

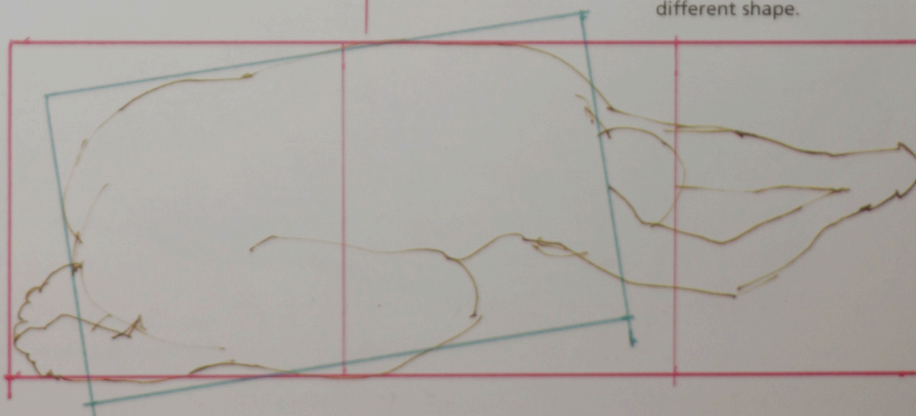
This shape is contained by a rectangle of two squares; also you can indicate the direction of the figure, by means of lines drawn through it.



The high and close viewpoint makes this shape into a triangle; just a slight change in the viewpoint would result in an entirely different shape.

Drawing the entire rectangle in this case can help you to see more clearly the proportion of the triangle which contains the bulk of the figure.

If you see major shapes that don't seem to fit together, note them anyway. Here the smaller rectangle makes sense of the angle at which the model is lying.



Take a few minutes and practice drawing spirals before you start sketching.

1. **Use a spiral (or circular) motion with your pencil to capture the three-dimensional forms of your subject.**

Choose a section at the top or one end of your subject to begin your spiral sketching. Pretend you are simply wrapping a very long, thin ribbon around and around each section of your subject. Use smaller spirals for the small areas, such as hands, and larger ones for the bigger sections, such as the torso.

2. **Add a few more spiral or C-shaped lines, to darken the values in areas that are in shadow.**



Figure 1711: Spiral lines are great for creating the illusion of three dimensions in this sketch of a figure

### Sketch with shading

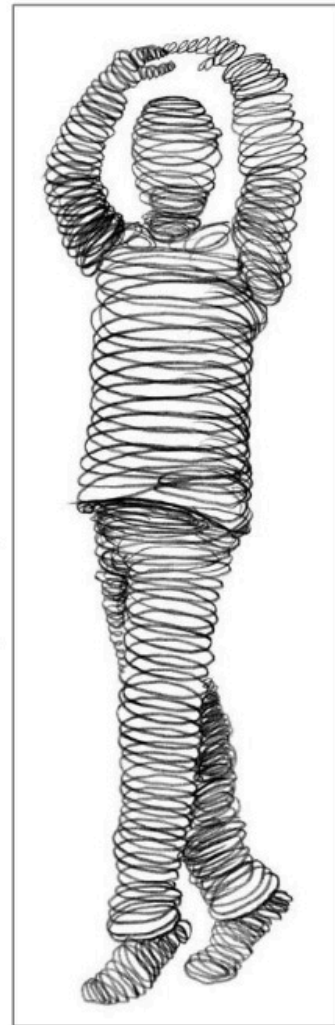
Some artists, who like to sketch with only values, find that sticks of charcoal or conté are much more efficient, and faster to work with than pencils. The wide ends and sides of sticks can define a great deal of information with a single stroke.

Find a subject with a strong light source, so you see lots of light and dark values. Use a stick of charcoal (or conté) to try your hand at sketching with shading. Squint your eyes to help see the different values.

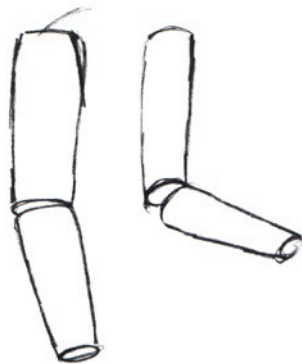
Figure 1712: A softly rendered sketch of a figure is defined by a strong contrast between the light sections and shadows, rather than lines

1. **Lightly block in the shape of your subject with the side of a stick of charcoal (or conté).**

This shading represents your middle values, and defines the overall shape and size of your subject, as well as its position within your drawing space.



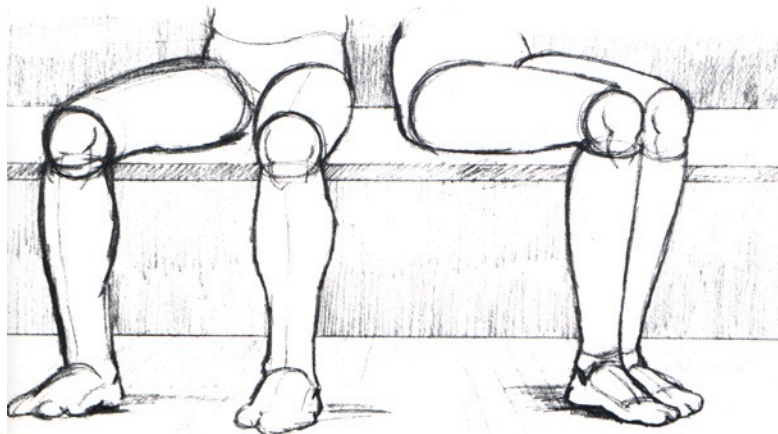
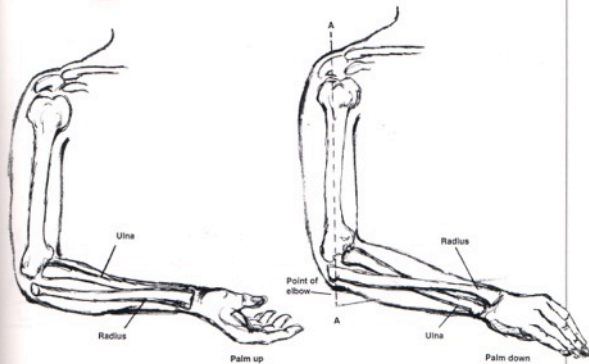




### Drawing the Arms

The most natural way to construct the arm is to block it in as two cylinders of approximately the same length: one for the upper arm, from the top of the shoulder to elbow; and one for the forearm, from the elbow to the wrist.

Observe the varying arm positions of the three girls in the portrait on page 145. Because these figures are painted in a nearly flat frontal light, I had to seek variety in the poses so the painting would not be boring. Even though the sleeves partially obscure the arms, careful attention must be given to the anatomy underneath.



### Looking for the Plumb Line

Try drawing ten figures like these incorporating these ideas for blocking in and your knowledge of the plumb line.<sup>1</sup> Just six inches high is enough to show the principle. Look at figures in magazines or at people around you for poses.

Incidentally, you will know when you are drawing these shoulder and hip construction lines incorrectly. If both pairs are slanted in the same direction the figure looks as if it were about to fall over!

The sketch figures here are constructed to emphasize that flexibility in the torso exists only in the area between the shoulder-rib cage mass and the pelvic mass, which are simplified here to squared straight-line forms. The principle of the plumb line from the pit of the neck to the inside of weight-bearing ankle holds true no



1. When the figure stands straight with shoulder line and hip line level and weight distributed equally on both feet, as above, the plumb line from the pit of the neck drops to a point centered between the feet.
2. If the figure is half-seated on the edge of a desk, left shoulder lowered, left hip raised, the plumb line doesn't apply because the body weight rests on the pelvis, not the feet.

matter which view of the figure is portrayed: back, front, or side. The center back and center front lines are lightly indicated on the figures on this page to show that they are independent of the plumb line.

If you practice sketching small figures like these for fifteen minutes three times a week, soon you'll be able to sketch people anywhere—in a bus station, at a party, at the beach—wherever people are standing about, waiting, or conversing. You will be able to sketch convincing figures from your imagination as well. Then when you have a new portrait client, you can do several quick sketches suggesting possible poses as a logical first step in the development of the portrait. Remember, you gain confidence as you gain facility.



3. When the figure is standing (seen from the back, above) with weight on the left leg and foot, the plumb line runs from the pit of the neck in front to inside the left ankle. The left shoulder is dropped and left hip raised.

When the standing figure is slightly turned, with weight on the right leg and foot, the plumb line falls from the pit of the neck to inside the right ankle. The right shoulder is dropped, the right hip raised.

