

## Wallach Sketch Sessions

### Shadow Play Drawing

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Hello, my name is Anastasiya Gutnik and I'm a mixed media artist. I'm very excited to be bringing you today's Wallach Sketch Session drawing exercise that will allow you to play with line and light as we create a shadow drawing!

As we transition from summer to fall, we find the sun's arc peaking high in the sky above us, creating dramatic shadows on everything in its path. This provides a great opportunity for incorporating these shadows into our drawing. Today I will walk you through a prompt that will encourage you to get outside and pay attention to your surroundings throughout your day.

To begin, you'll need a sheet of paper, a pencil, and tape. You are going to set up a simple still-life or select a few objects that have dynamic edges. I chose two vases, and I filled them with feathers and few leaves, and a flower that falls off of the side of our sketchbook. When the sun moves to a different point in the sky, it will pull and distort your image - so selecting a drawing source that's asymmetrical, grotesque, dramatic in some way will create more visual interest on your page. We are going to be using a line drawing without many details to capture these shadows, so only the outside edge of your objects will be captured.

You're going to pick a location that gets direct light from the sun. If you have access to an outdoor space, such as a backyard, an alley, a fire escape where you can leave a piece of paper for a few hours, I would encourage you to do that. Or if you just have a table that's by a window that gets some light, that works too! But you'll want to make sure that only your paper moves if you want it to. So we're going to use our tape to secure this down to our surface, which I did just before this. And we're also going to want to make sure that our objects that we're working from are really securely taped down or weighed down, especially if we're going to leave this out for several hours. So the vases I taped as well to a base - you can use any flat surface you have in your house. And you can play with the thickness of your base so that it gives you the image that you want on your sheet of paper.

So I have experimented with several different frequencies throughout the day, and found that checking your objects every hour or so gives you enough dramatic shadow change that you'll be excited with your drawing. But I encourage you to repeat this exercise at different frequencies to test what you think works best. Choosing your frequency also depends on how often you are able to check on your drawing. You can increase the time you'll be checking, but you'll want to try and be consistent with your intervals.

So I'm going to begin my first shadow capture now at 9am. I've taped down my paper so it's not shifting, and I'm going to focus my drawing line on the outside edges of the shadow. So let's get started. On the left hand side, I'm tracing the outside edge of my vase, and now working into the feather. You'll see that it's a little bit windy here so my feathers are slightly moving, so it's no problem to just kind of have an approximate edge, it will shift on you if you also have some wind where you are. Just do your best. Okay, tracing the outside of that feather... and you really want to get the interior shapes as well, because that will give you some interesting lines on your page.

And you'll notice that I'm moving pretty quickly. You don't have to spend a whole lot more than, you know, a couple minutes on tracing, because you'll see as we continue to evolve the drawing it's going to get pretty messy on your page, which is part of what makes this really interesting.

So I'm going to continue tracing our feather, get really nice edges. I was really excited to see how this feather would look throughout the day in it's shadow. So you get these really dramatic edges over here... I'm going to trace the other side of that vase, move into the other side of the feather.... and continue moving through this feather. And I want to capture, there's some nice little detail in there where the two feathers are separated.

Now I'm moving into the dried flower - the dried leaf of a flower - that's in the second vase. And you can kind of tell (from) the outside edge that it looks like something organic but because of the way the sun is distorting it right now, it's really just kind of creating just an interesting shape. And now we're moving into the stem of the flower, and the outer edge of the second leaf in this vase. Okay, now I'm going to trace the outer edge of this vase. I was really excited to find a vase that had all these curves, because I thought that would be really interesting to observe. So scavenge through your house and see what you have that you think would cast interesting shadows.

So this is our first drawing at 9am. If you want, you're welcome to leave a time right next to that first shadow of when you started. For this exercise I'm not going to be doing that, but you will want to note the time for yourself just so you can come back in an hour, or whatever the designated intervals that you've decided for yourself. So we are going to repeat this process in about an hour, and I will be back to see how the shadows changed.

I am now back at 10am for my next shadow tracing. You'll notice that the light has shifted and that the edges of the shadow extend at a different angle than the one I previously captured. I will draw these new edges and keep a note of what time I finish up tracing. So I'm going to go ahead and trace outside of this feather again, and get the interior detail. And I'm going to go just right over the lines that I previously drew.

Trace those outside edges of this feather, I'm going to continue moving through... get that outside edge of that feather, and get the outer edges of the second feather, continue drawing... again we are still moving quickly. And again you'll see that it's still a little bit windy here, so the shadow might shift a little bit - you can also reinforce your objects if you need to. I kind of lose a little bit of the shadow, so I'm just going to kind of extend the feather over in the right corner.

So you'll see that some areas become more intense as the light shifts on your page, and some of the shadows will lighten up. So we're going to just, to the best of our abilities, capture all of the nuances of how these shadows now lay on our page.

So now I'm working on the outside of the leaf, and the bottom side of the leaf, and our vase in the left corner. Okay, and I'm going to trace the bottom of the other leaf, and move into the edge of the feather... trace the rest of this feather. Okay, and so we have the second record of our shadow and we are going to leave our drawing until the next hour interval.

And now I'm back, an hour later, for my last shadow drawing. My sun has shifted quite a bit so the shadow is almost completely falling off the edge of my page. And you'll notice that after a couple of drawings that your paper is becoming more and more rich with these layered lines. We've got kind of these really beautiful meandering lines and shadows that together have formed a lot of interest on our paper. And our line translates so much about the nature of the objects we've selected, even without being able to see the details. I think you can really get the character of the feathers just by the outlines that we've created.

So at this point, you can use our artistic license to adjust where you want the shadows to fall on the page. You may want to keep your paper in one place for all three of these sessions or you might want to shift it if you feel like a part of your paper could really use a little bit more play. So I'm going to go ahead, I'm really excited to actually see this translation from hour to hour, so I'm going to keep the orientation of the shadows and the paper the same for now.

So let's go ahead and trace the last shadow. I'm going to get a little bit - the edge of one of my feathers, that now looks pretty dramatically different. And it's also still a little bit windy so it's going to keep shifting which is fine. I'm just going to capture the edge as well as we can. And we have these little pieces, frayed pieces of our large feather that I'm going to trace... and the outer edge of that feather extends right off of my page. And the underside, we get this nice interior shape, and the edge of the leaf, that also almost completely falls off our page at this point.

And that's it for what we have of the last shadow drawing. And now that you have completed your composition you have a lot of options of where you can take it from here. You can play with adding more tone to the inside, so that you can really see the distinctions. Or you can color inside to enhance your drawing, watercolor is something that's great. You can really start to see kind of the overlaps when you add color.

I like to lightly shade in everything to the edge, like this... so that each of the shadows starts to stand out, and I'll just kind of work to the edge. And you can do this all over your drawing. Or you leave it empty and turn it into a coloring book. It makes a great gift if you want to make several of these and layer them together and invite somebody else to color.

So at this point, you have a record of time and you've had the opportunity to kind of see how the sun's path shifts your shadows.

So I hope you enjoyed this session, and join us for the next Wallach Sketch Session!