

## Wallach Sketch Session

Drawing Inspired by Augusta Savage  
Instructor: Zatarra McIntyre

Hello, my name is Zatarra McIntyre, I'm an artist and educator, and today we're going to draw *The Harp* or *Lift Every Voice And Sing* by August Savage.

For this drawing I'm going to use a soft graphite, the 9B and 8B and 4B and 6B pencils. That's going to give me more of a velvety tone, but you can obviously use a HB #2 pencil and it works just as well.

I'll be using a kneaded eraser to lift graphite throughout the drawing, and this is just useful for me because I want to achieve a more realistic illusion of a three-dimensional object. As you can see here, I'm using it on my darkest values and either dotting or just adding pressure to the kneaded eraser to lift the graphite, and that helps me get all the way to my lightest value or just lift out graphite and get maybe a shade lighter. I can also use my normal eraser to achieve those effects, or a #2 pencil – again, I'm just using the end, the eraser, to lift out graphite either by adding pressure or just dotting.

For this drawing I want to create the illusion of a 3D form, in this case the Augusta Savage sculpture, so I'm going to use value drawing or value shading. In the chart you see here, I'm basically adjusting the amount of pressure applied to my pencil to achieve my darkest values all the way to the lightest values. And as I begin, I'm adding a lot of pressure to the side of the pencil to get as close to black as possible. As I progress, I'll lessen the pressure to achieve a lighter gradation of value. This a great foundation to drawing, and as you see, once you begin to work in color, it's basically the foundation of how you understand how to achieve either the illusion of a 3D object, or just create contrast in your drawing if you're just working in black and white.

On the bottom chart you can see how I achieve softer gradations of shading with a paper stump. Now again, you can use a #2 pencil to achieve these values, although you'll likely have to add a bit more pressure to achieve the darker values. You can also use either your finger for smudging, or you can use just like a napkin or tissue just to soften out the values in the shading.

Side by side you can see two techniques for value shading. On the top, I used the side of the pencil and it's more uneven in recording the grooves and pressure of the pencil, whereas the bottom is smoother and more uniform.

A technique in drawing a three-dimensional object is understanding how light hits an object. A great exercise that you can do is to take a 3D object, like a ball or a square, and putting it under one source of light to draw from direct observation. The location of the values tell the viewer about where the light is coming from and the texture of the form. So if it's smooth, you assume that the object is smooth. We'll use this logic as we draw Augusta Savage's work, and we try to get the illusion of a bronze sculpture.

On a 3D object you have highlights, mid tones, core shadows, and cast shadows. So as you can see here, I'm starting with the core shadows - that's the part of the object that isn't hitting direct light. And then moving up to the mid tones, and I'm going to leave the highlight bare – that's the part of the object that has direct light. And then I'm ending with the cast shadow on the very bottom.

Here I've used the values that I achieved in the chart to the left to render a three-dimensional object. You can see my darkest values in the shadow of the ball, and then the mid tones on the side, and then eventually where the light hits the ball. So this is going to help me as I draw Augusta Savage's sculpture and making a 3D object.

In this drawing I'll be working whole to part. In *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, the figures come together to form the shape of a harp. I'll be focusing on that abstracted shape for my initial sketch. For the beginning of my drawing, I'm only really concerned with the following: composition and determining where everything needs to go on the page. Immediately getting detailed in your work will not serve the drawing, and you'll be so focused on accuracy with a very small portion that I find that you're not willing to make changes that need to happen in your drawing, or to let things go.

Just as I did with my value chart, I'm starting with my darkest values. If you look at August Savage's sculpture you can see that the core shadows, or where the light does not hit, are around the necks and heads of her subjects. I'm going to start there, and then focus on the mid tones and lastly the highlights.

I'll use shading with the side of the pencil and then go in with the paper stump or a blending tool to achieve a smoother shadow, and either leave the white of the page bare or lift graphite with my kneaded eraser for the highlights.

This and the following close-up are good examples of the two shading techniques I use for this drawing. Using the side of pencil, using a blending tool, or even my paper stump to get a range of values that appear relatively smooth.

At this point, I'm going to go in and just start fixing anything that I wanted to adjust and working on the details in the face.

This is my final drawing side by side with the original and my chart. I'm pointing out the darkest values that I saw in Augusta Savage's sculpture, and also the ones I was able to achieve through my value shading chart and my three-dimensional object. I then used that as a guide to get the darkest values in my final drawing. As you can see, I focused on the upper body and the arm to achieve those dark values. And then I just either used an eraser or the bare paper to get the highlights that you can see in the original and in my final work.

I found this to be a fun exercise to practice value shading and drawing three-dimensional objects. From this exercise I'd encourage you to explore other objects in your home or surroundings, and think about the values you see in your day to day objects and try to capture them.