

## Wallach Sketch Sessions

An Introduction to Contour Drawing

Instructor: Julia Rooney, visual artist

Hi, my name is Julia Rooney and I'm a visual artist. In this session, I'm going to introduce a drawing exercise which you can do at home with very simple materials. All you'll need is a pen, a piece of paper and an object of your choosing.

To get started, take a walk around your living space and look for an object. It can be something of personal significance or something more common that you use everyday. As an example, I've chosen this scale which I use to weigh mail and determine postage.

Now find a location to place your object. Think about the object's relationship to the architecture and space around it. As you begin to draw, think of your pen as an ant covered in ink that's crawling along the edges of the object, tracing it's perimeter and leaving a trail of ink behind. If you make a mark that you didn't intend to, just keep going. Focus on the outline, rather than the shadows. Spend no more than five minutes.

The finished piece is a contour drawing of a still life: a motionless object placed in space, and drawn only with line.

Here are a few things to keep in mind. Think about how you arrange your marks on the page as you draw. This is called composition. Think about how large or small you choose to draw your object. This is called scale. Finally, think about the angle from which you observe your object and how this affects what you do and don't see. This is called perspective.

Now go for another walk, and find a different location for your object. Think of unexpected places that you rarely pay attention to. An obscure corner, or a shelf high up. Orient the object or yourself so that you focus on a new part of it.

Repeat the drawing exercise three times, finding three more places to put your object. Make sure to save your drawings for Part II of this project, which we'll be working on next week. See you then.