

Passionate



Painter

SKETCHBOOK PROMPTS

Caroline

SKETCHBOOK PROMPTS



The sketch book prompts here are intended to help you become stronger at drawing and seeing design fundamentals, so you can become a stronger painter. That said, this is a bonus from the course, “The Portrait Code,” which focuses on portraiture. So, while the suggestions on the following pages will help you become a better artist in general, if you have received this bonus from one of the smaller courses, such as **Design and Composition Fundamentals**, you’ll find

many suggestions geared toward practicing drawing people for portraiture and figurative work.

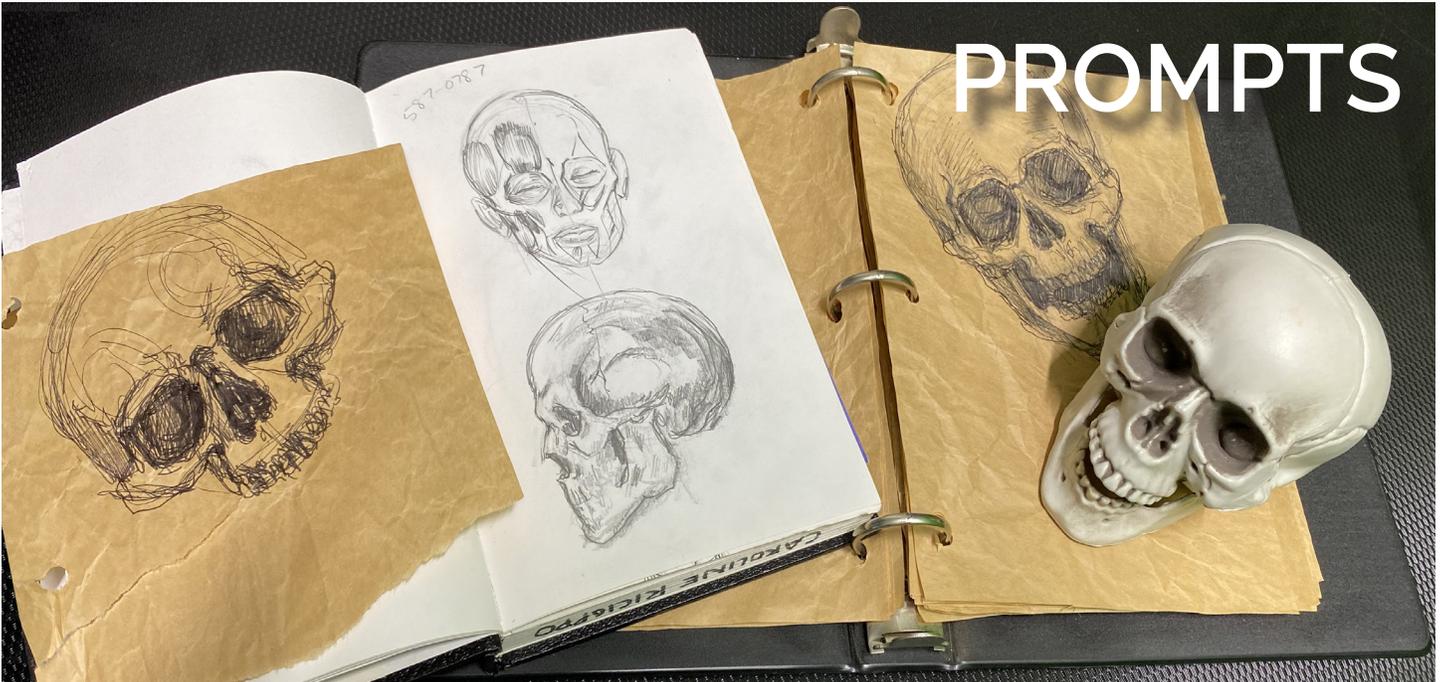
If you are not interested in working with the human figure, you can disregard the suggestions to purchase a skull, travel skull, and mannequins – you get the idea. There are a number of suggestions in this eBook that will help you no matter which area of painting you are interested in, so check them out. Specifically included for the design and composition fundamentals work is the section on “Photos for Composition Practice.” This section will help you compose any painting, including, landscapes and abstracts, as it brings your mind back to simplifying and considering the elements of design and the armatures of design.

I will be adding to this eBook as I think of additional ideas that may help you on your journey and upload them to your course when I make an update.

As always, let me know if you have a question by sending me a comment from within the course, or emailing me at caroline@passioantepainteracademy.com



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The less intimidating, the better. Remember, your sketch "book" can be a used binder with roughly ripped-down pages in it – I like these best!

This resource is NOT your homework. It's my best attempt at making suggestions to help you utilize your sketchbook to advance your skills in both drawing and painting.

This means the best way to use it is however best serves YOU. This is all about YOU, my friend. A sketchbook is only helpful to the degree you put it to use.

That said, here are some of my suggested "Dos and Don'ts" to keep you moving.

Dos and Don'ts

You don't need an expensively bound book with expensive white paper. In fact, if a pristine acid-free paper is going to intimidate you away from opening your sketchbook, make a scrap sketchbook instead.

What I do is keep a small three-ring binder, along with a three-hole punch for that binder in my studio.

I have a trimmed piece of thick cardboard I use as a page size template that I can lay right over the scrap paper to trim it.

I also keep a clear plastic ruler with the clear plastic cardboard "template." When I find an interestingly textured or colored scrap paper, I lay the template over it, hold the clear plastic ruler along the edge along each side as I RIIP the paper down to the correct size. Finish by hole-punching and

inserting it into your binder.

That's it.

I know we often talk about using long lasting materials, like acid-free paper, but if using scrap is going to get me drawing, I USE SCRAP. My current "Sketchbook" is filled with crinkled brown scrap paper. It's thin and has a super cool feel. Draw on what you like.

If you love to doodle on napkins DO THAT. Just keep a stick of craft glue in the designated spot you are keeping the cardboard template for your page size, the clear ruler, and the hole-punch.

Yep, set aside a "sacred" spot for your sketchbook tools.

And hey, if you want a matching hardbound set of pristine saddle-stitched sketchbooks, DO THAT.

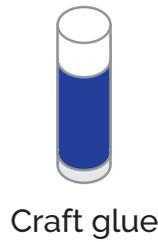
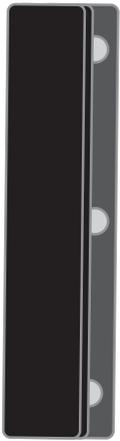
But don't start there if you aren't using them. Start with napkins and scrap paper.

As for drawing implements, HAVE FUN! I like to go for all kinds of pencils, pastels, and black ink pens. I don't go by fancy brands or permanent ink – I go by FEEL. I like smooth pens; even ballpoints. Right now I'm loving Pilot Precise Rolling Ball V7 fine points.

Remember, you can also PLAY and paint on canvas paper, then paste it or hole-punch it into your book.



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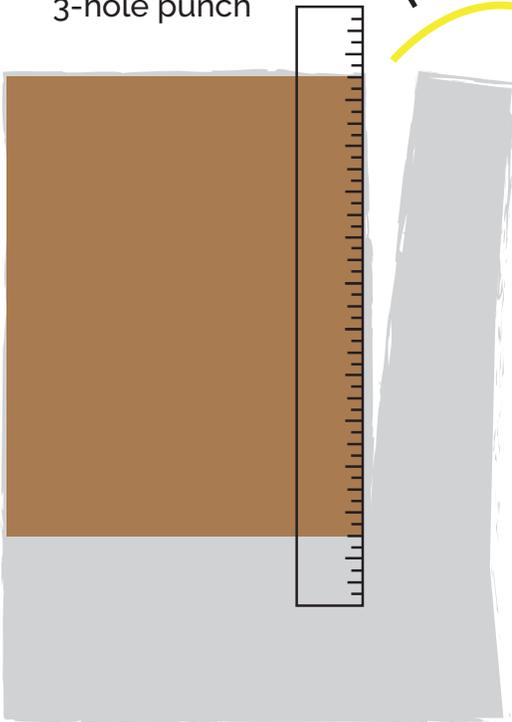


Clear plastic ruler



Let'er RRRRIP!

3-hole punch



As you may have guessed, the idea here is immediacy. You want to train yourself to see your sketchbooks as a repository for a fast-flowing river of ideas.

Use the craft glue to paste in clippings that inspire you, scraps of paper you draw on, photos, etc...

You can make it as formal and permanent as you want, but chances are, if you find you're not filling it it's because you've assigned it "sacred status" that's getting in your way.

THIS BOOK IS YOUR SECRET WEAPON. It's going to help you develop your skills and generate lots and lots of ideas for your work!

And remember, if you're self-conscious:

- A) No one has to see it
- B) The more you use it, the more proud of it you're likely to get, and the more you may even find yourself sharing it!



SKETCHBOOK PROMPTS

ONE sketchbook caveat. While you don't have to spend a lot to develop your sketchbook skills (and I recommend you save whenever you can), I DO recommend three purchases, when you can do it:



1. A life-size resin skull to practice drawing over and over, and for painting practice, too! [You can click here for the link to the one I have](#), or just google it. I went to Amazon and searched "resin skulls" and made sure I purchased one that was life-sized and within my budget.

I absolutely LOVE my "Yorick." It's a well-crafted, accurate skull that costs less than \$40 as of the date of this publishing (before shipping) on Amazon. It also comes with a detailed anatomy chart.

2. A "Travel Size" skull

I don't use a resin skull here, though you can purchase a smaller version of Yorick if you like. I happen to have found an accurate enough plastic one during the Halloween season one year. If you keep your eye out for well-proportioned plastic skulls, you'll probably find one eventually that will be very cheap. I love mine and I often take it with me when I travel.



3. At least one wooden mannequin. You can get a male and a female, if you want, but I've found they are so general, there isn't a huge difference. I recommend at least one well-proportioned mannequin to practice drawing. This will probably mean not a 'mini,' but one that is about 12" tall (on the small wooden and wire stand).



SKETCHBOOK PROMPTS

Before you get started, I recommend practicing making a grayscale ladder. Park the eye-roll for me and please do this at least once, but I recommend you do it until you're good at getting 8 definitive steps of value between the white of the paper and black.

You can print and fill in the handy ladders below for practice. Do not skip this unless you are confident about your ability to differentiate values from each other and control them the way you want to. I know it's boring, but think of it as therapeutic instead. You know I love you.

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SKETCHBOOK PROMPTS

The rest of this book is going to be prompts and exercises as I think of them. The list is in no particular order.

1 Draw a skull, preferably from a real model (resin or plastic, but 3-D) at first. Draw it at different angles, with a dedicated light source (like a flashlight to accentuate the form).

2 Draw the hand you aren't using to hold your drawing instrument. It's best if you practice drawing your hand holding something, to accentuate both how the hand works as well as its three-dimensionality.

3 Look in the mirror and draw your face. Be sure to set up a dedicated light source, and make sure there's some dim (reflected) light on the non-lit side of the face to maintain a sense of volume.

4 Look in the mirror and draw your eyes. Be sure to set up a dedicated light source, and make sure there's some dim (reflected) light on the non-lit side of the face to maintain a sense of volume.

5 Draw your feet. Be sure to set up a dedicated light source, and make sure there's some dim (reflected) light on the non-lit side of the face to maintain a sense of volume.

6 Draw someone else's face. Be sure to set up a dedicated light source, and make sure there's some dim (reflected) light on the non-lit side of the face to maintain a sense of volume.

7 Draw a pet. If they are moving around, stay loose and gestural with your movements, drawing from your shoulder, not your finger muscles. Move your whole hand.

8 Draw a tree, focusing on the way the branches actually branch. Don't worry about detail, look at the structure.

9 Draw your face while looking in the mirror and trying not to lift your pen from the paper.

10 Draw a bird in the wild, just focusing on how its movement FEELS. Is it swooping? Darting? Hopping? Being very still, like an egret fishing? Think about the weight distribution as the bird balances.

11 Draw yourself-portrait using only two complementary colored markers (yellow and purple orange and blue, or green and red). Try not to blend the two except where your features are in their darkest shadow. Assign the warm color to the areas in light and the cool color to the shadows.

12 Repeat assignment 12, but assign the cool color to the areas in light and the warm color to the areas in shadow.

13 Use quick, smooth strokes to make gesture drawings of people around you from a distance (such as across an outdoor plaza. Try to indicate architecture with simple, quick lines, from a compositional frame of mind. How does a doorway frame a figure, for example? Or a tree's curving branches contrast with the right angles of a wall beside it?

14 Go to a zoo. Draw animals of varying mass and speed, being conscious of emphasizing how they carry their weight and how they move. Do this live rather than with stock images if you can, to connect with the three-dimensional FEEL of the subjects.

15 GRID PLAY: MICROCOSM - Fold a sketchbook-sized piece of paper in half horizontally and in half a couple times vertically to make 8 boxes (they don't have to be squares).

Make nine simplified compositions of zoomed-in and cropped areas of the world around you, focusing on composition. When you're done, paste it into your book.

16 Draw three transparent objects arranged together using ONE type of drawing instrument. Limit your time to half an hour. Think about how you **use** your drawing instrument to convey transparency.

17 Listen to music. Draw the tempo in an abstract way using one type of drawing instrument in one color, such as a ballpoint pen. Convey tempo with lines, line-weight, and shading only.



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18 Repeat assignment 18, but use as many different types of mark-making tools as you like, including color.

19 Have access to horses? Draw them. Do this live rather than with stock images if you can, to connect with the three-dimensional FEEL of the subject. Think about how they carry their weight and the space they take up.

20 Use pastels to draw the temperature outside. Try it in an abstract, by simplifying a scene, focusing on trying to make it feel warm or cool.

21 Draw your favorite fruit, simplifying it into an abstract, focusing on how that fruit tastes Use color, line, and pattern to convey the taste but don't worry about it being visually accurate.

22 GRID PLAY: Fold a sketchbook-sized piece of paper three times down and three times across. In each box, draw a cropped area of something zoomed in really close to make an abstract in that box.

23 Draw your favorite place from memory. Try to use color, line-weight, and movement to express how you feel when you are there. Do you feel light? Do you feel bouncy? What colors come to mind? Bright yellow sunlight? Red excitement? PLAY

24 Draw your non-drawing hand holding something heavy.

25 Draw your non-drawing hand holding something light.

26 Draw your non-drawing hand holding something delicate.

27 Draw your eyes looking happy. Pay attention to which muscles are engaged. NOTE: if you're worried about wrinkles, take a photo, but check it out in the mirror first and really try to FEEL which muscles are involved!

28 Draw your eyes looking sad. NOTE: if you're worried about wrinkles, take a photo, but check it out in the mirror first and really try to FEEL which muscles are involved!

29 Draw your eyes looking angry. NOTE: if you're worried about wrinkles, take a photo, but check it out in the mirror first and really try to FEEL which muscles are involved!

30 Draw your mouth frowning. NOTE: if you're worried about wrinkles, take a photo, but check it out in the mirror first and really try to FEEL which muscles are involved!

31 Draw water in a clear glass. Add a light source and draw the shadow of the glass on the table.

32 Draw while listening to your favorite music. Use color and try to express how the music makes you feel. See how many other elements of design you can use to express this music, such as line, movement, shape, emphasis, balance, and hierarchy.

33 Draw in abstract shape, line, form (design elements) what each day of the week feels like.

34 Draw in abstract shape, line, form (design elements) what each month of the year feels like.



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35 Paste half a photo of a face in your sketchbook. Draw the other side by copying what you see on the photo half.

36 Look in the mirror and draw your face. Be sure to set up a dedicated light source, and make sure there's some dim (reflected) light on the non-lit side of the face to maintain a sense of volume.

37 Draw a sketch of your face from memory (no mirror this time). Try to remember the proportions of the face in general as you go. Compare the result to the face you drew from the mirror.

38 Pretend you're a police sketch artist. Draw a someone you know from memory. Try to remember the proportions of the face in general as you go. Use line weight to help describe this person's looks. Do they have a heavy jawline? A delicate nose? Think about all the aspects of their appearance that makes them look like them.

40 Draw a cat in very simple strokes. Try to use line weight to emphasize where it's putting its weight when it's balanced.

41 Draw the hand you aren't using to hold your drawing instrument.

It's best if you practice drawing your hand holding something, to accentuate both how the hand works as well as it's three-dimensionality.

42 GRID PLAY: LINE WORK - Fold a sketchbook-sized piece of paper in half horizontally and in half a couple times vertically to make 8 boxes (they don't have to be squares).

Fill one box with rows of freehand horizontal lines (no rulers!), the next with diagonal, then vertical, then wavy lines, then a variety of these combinations in different line weights and pencil leads. See how the lines look using soft B pencils compared to the harder H pencils.

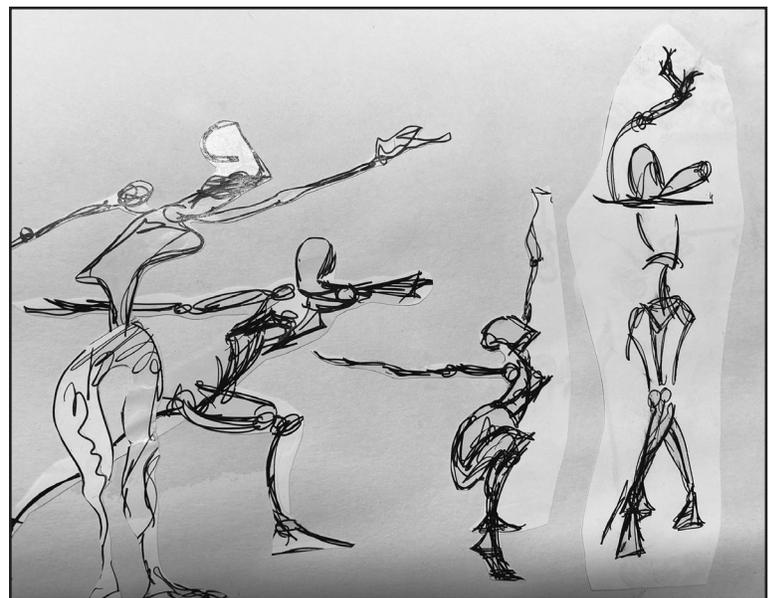
43 Carry your travel skull, sketchbook, and some pencils with you and sketch your mini-skull in all kinds of settings. If you like, keep a separate sketchbook just for your mini-skull as a travel journal!

44 Sketch the anatomy pages in this eBook showing front and back of the figure, half in skeleton view and half in muscle view. Do this as often as you can until you are familiar with the general anatomy of the human figure.

45 GESTURE DRAWING: Set a timer and do a very loose sketch of a figure near you. Drawing from life is best, as is moving from your shoulder and involving your whole arm to stay loose while scribbling very loosely. This is gesture drawing. The idea is not to be worried about accuracy as you go. The more you practice this, the better you'll get at drawing accurate proportions. You can make erasures and corrections if you want, but it's meant to be loose and free to warm you up before a longer project. Try doing 5 second, 10 second, and 30 second gesture drawings with a timer. You may want to do a handful of these on a single page of a big cheap sketchbook, like a newsprint book. Then you can pick your favorites and paste them into your sketchbook.

You can try this using pen as well, as the idea again is not to erase and get fussy, but rather to indicate the thrust and volume of the figure.

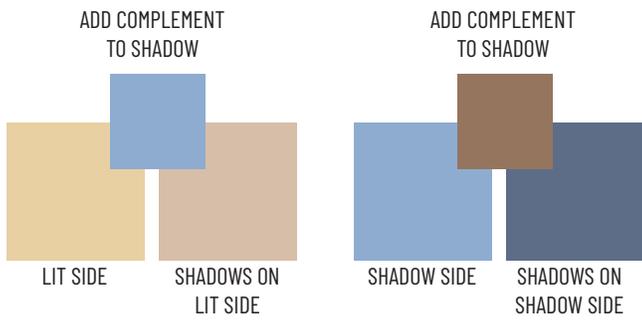
Think about the weight of the figure as you are sketching and make the lines where the figure bears its weight heavier (thicker) and darker if you can.



Example of gesture drawing



SKETCHBOOK PROMPTS



46 Draw a white folded pillow case in pencil with a definitive light source. Focus on the folds and plane changes of fabric. Use the white or bare paper for your lightest light. You can try drawing these examples or making your own.

Make sure you have a light source that makes it clear where the light is coming from.

Make sure you have reflected light for the shadows, so they aren't just "holes," but have a variety of values in the folds.

47 Do this exercise using color. Use only a light yellow marker and a light purple marker to block in where the light and shadow are in a simple 2-color sketch with no shadows.

48 Repeat exercise 35 but **layer** a light purple marker over the shadows on the lit side and medium-to-dark tan (a yellow) marker over the purple on the shadow side to create a darker shadow.

49 Repeat exercise 37 using layers of watercolor paint. Start with making the lit side light yellow and the shadow side light purple, then layer in some light purple on the shadows on the lit side and layer in some medium-to-dark tan (a yellow) on the purple shadow side to darken the darkest shadows.

50 After you've done this exercise in watercolor a few times and are comfortable playing with temperatures (warm color in light and cool for shadow side, each darkened by the opposite), try it in acrylic or oils. Keep these SIMPLE. The point of doing these is to become adept at using complementary colors to create dimension.

REFER TO THE COLOR WHEEL ON THE NEXT PAGE OF THIS EBOOK for reminders of which colors and paint colors complement (are opposite) the others.

KEEP IT LOOSE AND HAVE FUN!



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Photos for Composition Practice

Take photos with your phone while out on errands — from the passenger seat of course, unless you are pulled to the side of the road or parked — don't do this while driving. I do this while out on errands when my husband is driving so I have some images to sketch from.

GRID PLAY: Fold a sketchbook-sized piece of paper in half horizontally and in half a couple times vertically to make 8 boxes (they don't have to be squares).

You can do these however you want. You can do 3 across and 4 down, or 3 and 3, etc... And they don't have to be squares. But try to look at photos of things around you and simplify them into compositions using the elements of design:

LINE, VALUE, SHAPE, BALANCE, EMPHASIS, MOVEMENT, AND HIERARCHY.

Fill each box with just a 3-color notan sketch: the bare paper for the lightest areas, middle gray, and black. The goal is to force yourself to see in terms of simplifying compositions. It's a lot easier to figure out where you're placing your emphasis when you're considering your darkest dark is black.

An alternative way to do this exercise is to go ahead and print a photo grid and then lay tracing paper over it and make your quick notan from that to just plan the composition from a basic layout level. I always recommend practicing your drawing skills, but you can do this by quickly tracing each photo in very broad strokes if you prefer.

It's best to get a set of markers with a middle tone gray included to make these simple sketches, but you can use cross-hatching lines to make a middle gray if all you've got is a pencil.

Simplify the scene you are drawing down to only three shades. CROP the scene to fill the proportions of the grid rectangle it is in. When you're done, paste it into your book.

This is a helpful exercise, as the more you do it, the more you'll find yourself thinking in compositions as you look around you.

Look for patterns

Look for thirds and diagonals (see armatures of composition, or print them out and draw on them at whatever size you want each box to be).

Look for balance and energy

Turn the page to see my notes on my sketching snapshots. These are not intended for you to draw from (though you are welcome to if you want to sketch). These are intended for you to see how I used my phone and thought about composition in looking at the world around me.

Have fun and try some of your own! **See examples on the following pages.**



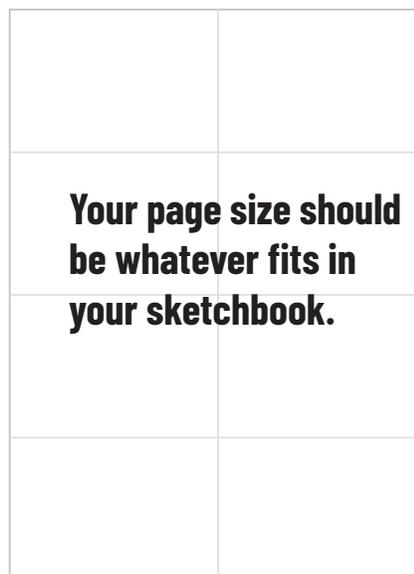
White of paper



Gray marker



Black marker

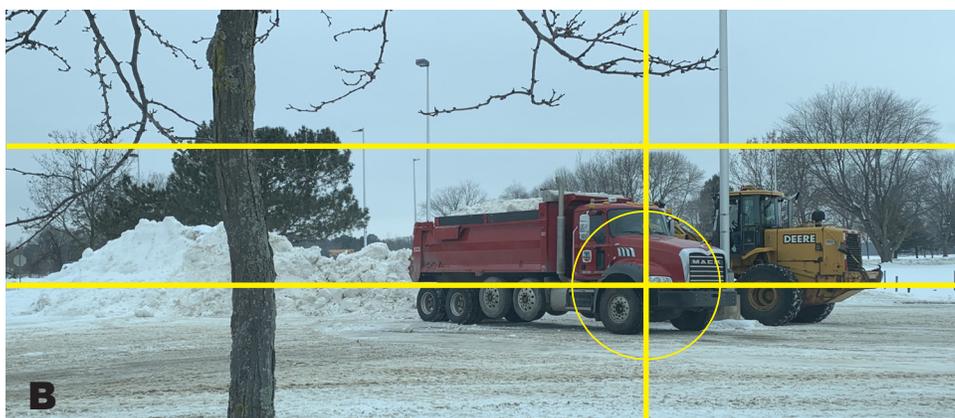


Example using one black marker (I didn't have a gray handy). You can cross-hatch the gray areas like this if you must. But it's easier with a gray marker and a black marker.





A) This one is not a square or almost-square you might see in a sketchbook page filled with eight or so square drawings in a grid, but it's a good example of how I used cropping to strengthen the composition.



B) Here's the same photo broken down into thirds and showing the center of interest where two of the grid lines intersect. Think about establishing your center of interest at intersection points when you design your work.

C) Here's the same image broken down into its simplest Notan of 3 shades, including black, white, and one gray. In your sketchbook, you'd just do this as a quick, loose sketch. Here you see the photo showing the breakdown in thirds, showing you the distribution of elements. You can see in the circle that this is the place the eye is likely drawn to, at the intersection of two of the thirds.

The tree trunk on the left nicely balances the weight of the vehicles on the right. Squint at each square and try to see on an abstract level the design elements that work together in each box of the grid. Each one could be an abstract painting in itself, and together, they make a strong, balanced composition.



D) Here's the same image broken down in a little more detail, into 5 values: 3 grays and white. After you do your most general 3-shade notan (C), you can get as specific as you want with a value study, whether in a drawing or as an underpainting.

And, if you have access to editing software, you may want to play with the elements to eliminate or flip things. I might try flipping the trucks to face back into the center of the painting.

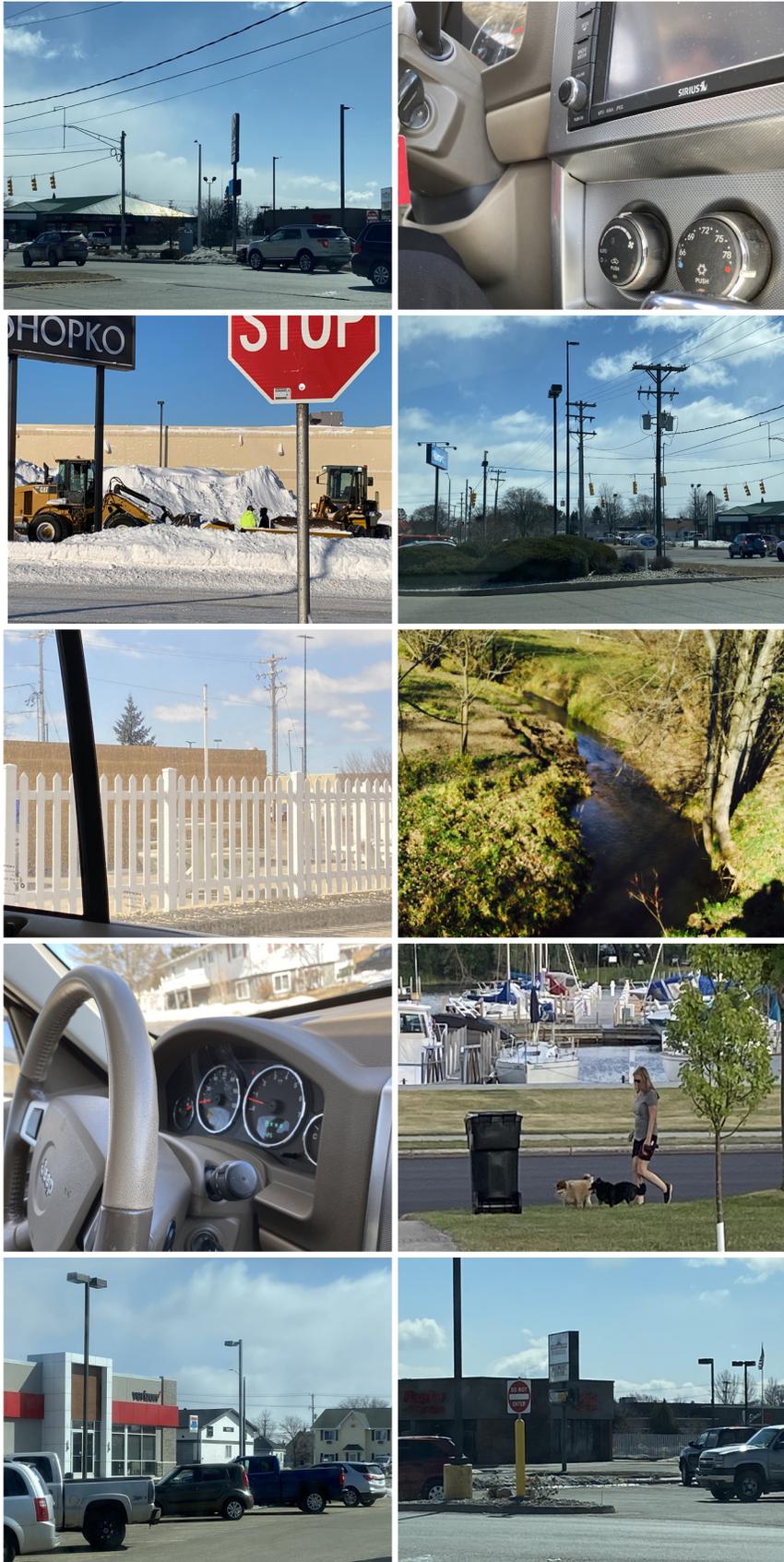


Exercise: Take some photos and make simple value Notan sketches of them using black, white, and one gray. Look for how you can organize your sketch into one of the armatures of composition (like the thirds you see here). Try printing out the armatures and adjusting your cropping to work with one and draw right on it.

After you get comfortable with a 3 value sketch, try one with a few more values. Let me know how it goes!



SKETCHBOOK PROMPTS



This is an example of photos you might sketch from for one of the composition grid exercises. You don't have to print them like this – I'm showing you how you might mentally crop each of these and make a quick sketch in a 10 grid page.

And remember, you can move things and edit! YOU are the artist.

FOR EXAMPLE, in the photo of the woman walking dogs, I'd take out the trash can and move the dogs to where the can is so the woman is about 1/3 into the layout. Or, I'd flip her around and have her walking into the frame. Play with variations – you can do so easily because you're making very quick, simple sketches here.

You can also do this sketch by drawing on site instead of from a photo. If you do, just be mindful to crop a specific area, so you're not creating a whole involved page. At least for this exercise. Think about the basic elements. This is training for mapping out your drawings and paintings.



SKETCHBOOK PROMPTS



The Color Wheel for Painters

To darken or dull a color, use the complementary (opposite) on the color wheel. You will see various paint pigments that fall within each color wedge. You can also try one of the colors on either side of the complementary instead of its direct opposite to darken or dull a pigment.

If you're darkening or dulling a mixture, make a mixture of your color's individual complementaries to darken or dull that mixture.

