

Basics 101: Class 13

Outdoor Still Life

For the next couple of weeks we will be dealing with subjects drawn outdoors. After that we will be moving on to the human figure. If it is too cold for you to go outside for this class consider going out with a regular or digital camera and taking a few shot. You DO NOT have to sit outside and do the entire drawing. The movement of natural light simply would not permit it. I did the majority of my two demonstrations outdoors but came inside to do the final work up—not because of the cold but because three of the dogs down the street kept coming into my yard to play—with me.

Drawing Outdoors

Distractions outdoors are common to anyone who has grabbed an easel and headed out to paint the great plein air masterpiece. It is inevitable that something or someone will interrupt your flow of thought and artistic process.

The demonstrations in this class are from my own back yard. There is a privacy fence that surrounds our pool and attached to that is a long shed. Attached to the shed is a rabbit hutch. Upward from the hutch is a set of broken poles entangled in wire that are the remnants of a structure designed to carry grape vines. These two constructs are the dreams of earlier owners and the victims of unkind weather and neglect.

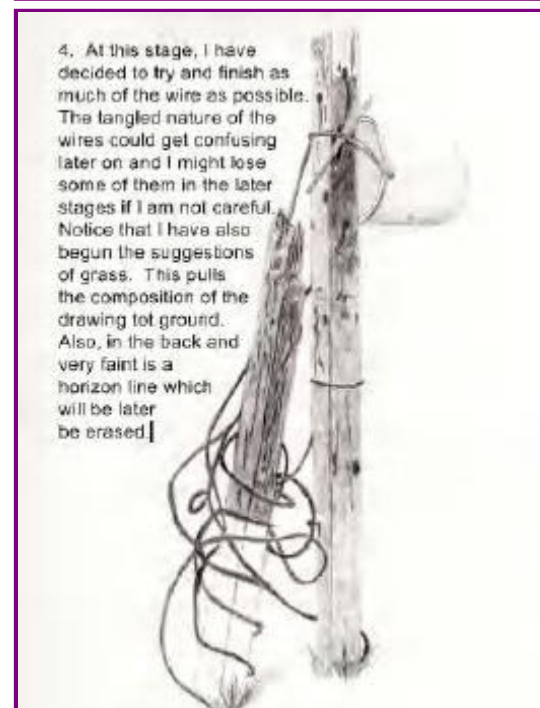
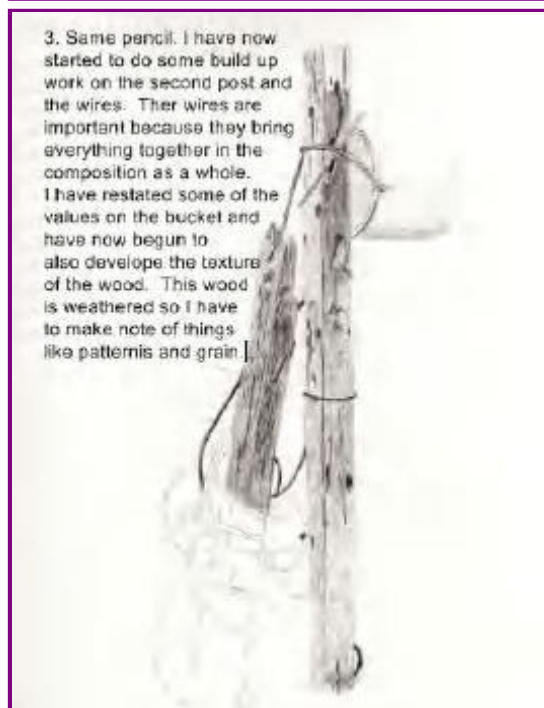
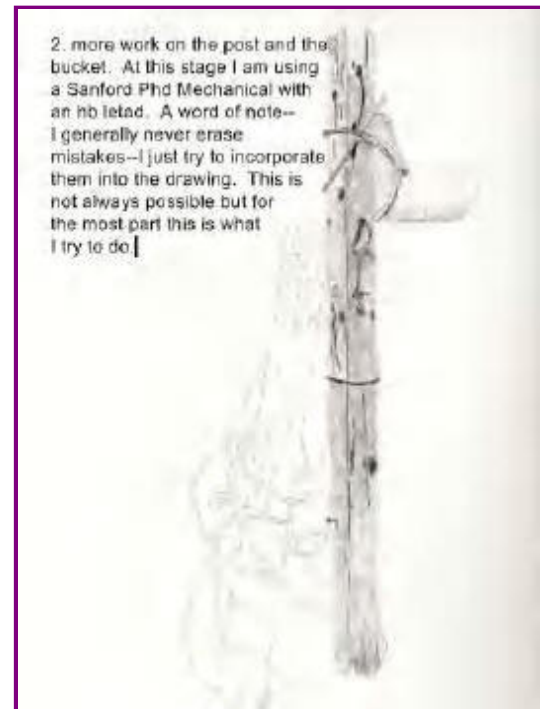
Why a still life outdoors? Well, because still life is a beautiful thing. Indoors you have total control of your light, your color and your compositions. You are the boss. Outdoors you are not the boss. It is that simple. A still life set up outdoors offers you the best of both worlds. You get the fresh air of the great outdoors and the control of the indoor studio setting. For this class you will set up a still life outdoors. Think back to the Wyeth painting that we saw in the last class. Andrew Wyeth's *Bucket Post* is a like a scarecrow facing the elements. There is a message of the challenge of man against nature in these types of works. Man continues to challenge. Nature will always win.

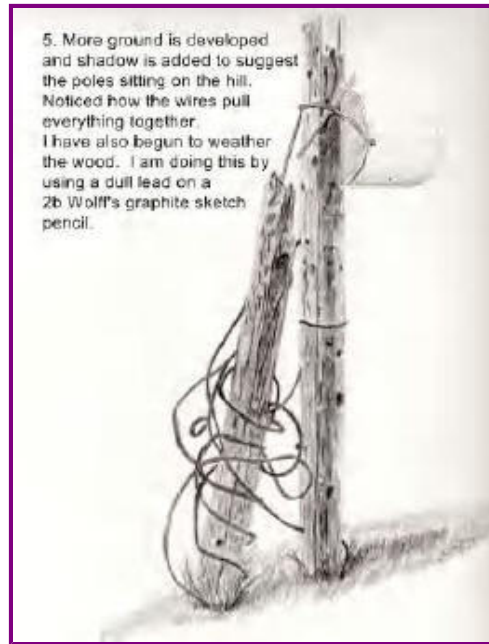
The Demonstrations

1. The first demonstration is of the two poles. Before I sat down to decide what to draw, I did a series of passes with my digital camera, using the screen, as a viewfinder to locate what I thought would be the best compositional position. I took no pictures. If you prefer NOT to run your batteries down using the LCD in your camera, you can just make a simple viewfinder by taking a square piece of paper and cutting out the center so that you have, what amounts to, a picture frame. You can use this viewfinder to determine your composition. Remember that when you draw outside you do not have as much control over your subject as you would inside a sheltered studio location. The always changing light, the weather, creatures of nature, nosy neighbors or passer-byers and bees all bear significant influence on your work environment.

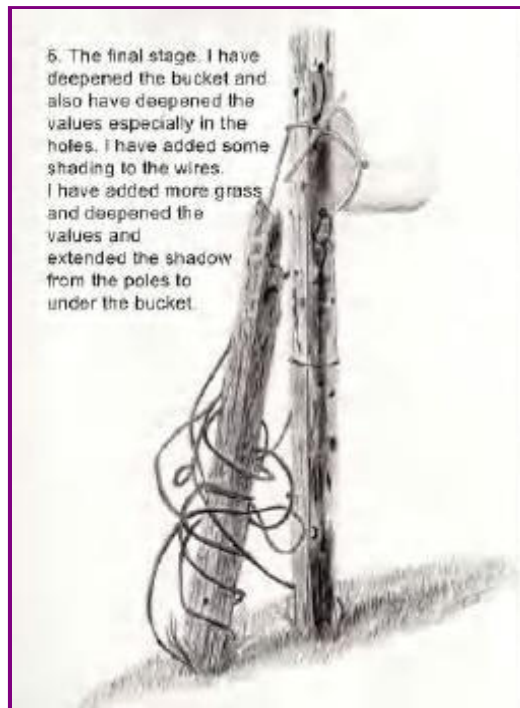
Once I figured out my position, I sat down and took a look at the area around me. There is a long fence—the house of course, a clothesline, a satellite dish and a number of other nonessential items. The first things to get rid of were easy—blip! There goes the dish and the close line and the driveway—all out of the picture. By the time I had finished, I had eliminated all but the grass and the pole—I decided to leave out the sky and just concentrate on the poles and the attached grass.

I started by simply sketching the poles and the grass—more importantly, I focused JUST on the simplest least complex elements and then concentrated on getting the wires right. Lastly, I then did the shadows and quickly so that I would not lose the sun for that morning.





Here is the finished part of demo 1:



2. For the next demonstration I went over to the rabbit hutch and did the same thing—sketched the basic shapes and focused on the lighting that was for this piece a very important element of the drawing. One note of interest: You may have noticed that the box looks slightly off or out of perspective. This problem was because of the fact that I had to deal with a brisk wind and a hutch which was well on its way to falling to pieces. In other words, the hutch was swaying in the wind—a nude model posing with her hand in a light socket would have been more still than the hutch—so I had a decision to make: draw it and correct the perspective making it more picture perfect OR just try to catch the movement and leave it to the eye. I make no apologies for the decision. I felt the out of perspective versions best captured the dilapidated state of the hutch.

Reference Photos:

I am not supplying reference photos this time. The object of this class is for you to come up with an original picture from your own personal experience. It must be a still life and it must be outdoors.

CJ and others who have outdoor subjects—now would be the time to pull out your first drawing and work on those some more or you can do something new or BOTH if you have time.

You may use outdoor photos from your memory book or scrap books or other IN HOUSE sources. You can certainly use digital photo references. **DO NOT USE THE REFERENCE LIBRARY FOR THIS SESSION.**

Field Trip

This weeks featured WC Artist is Larry Seiler. I really think you are going to like this guy.

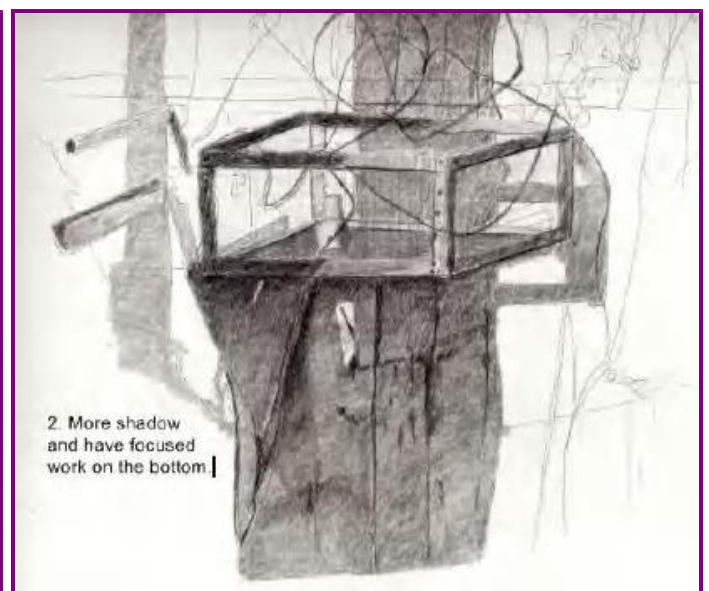
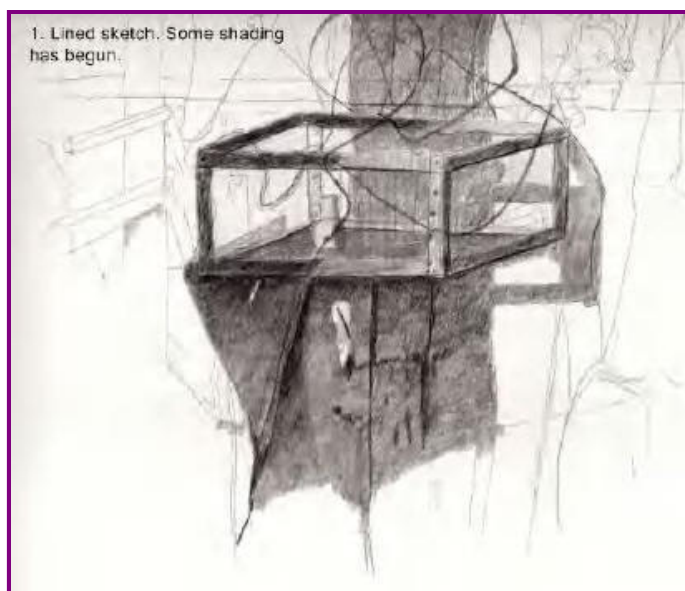
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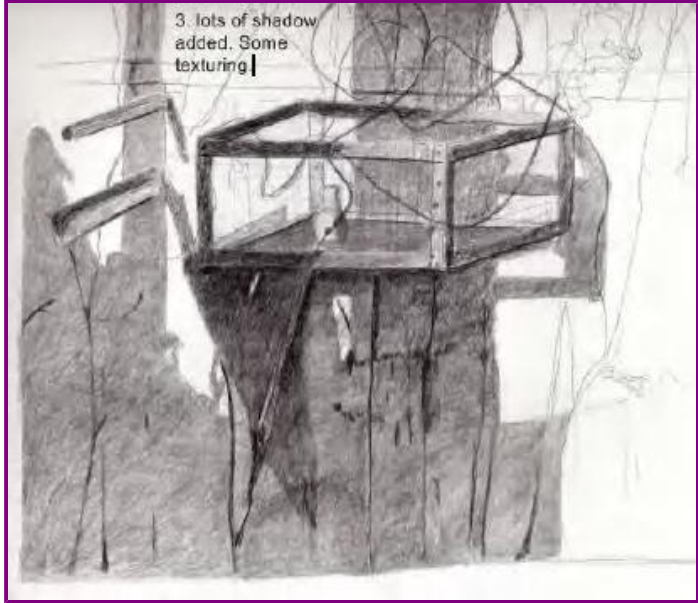
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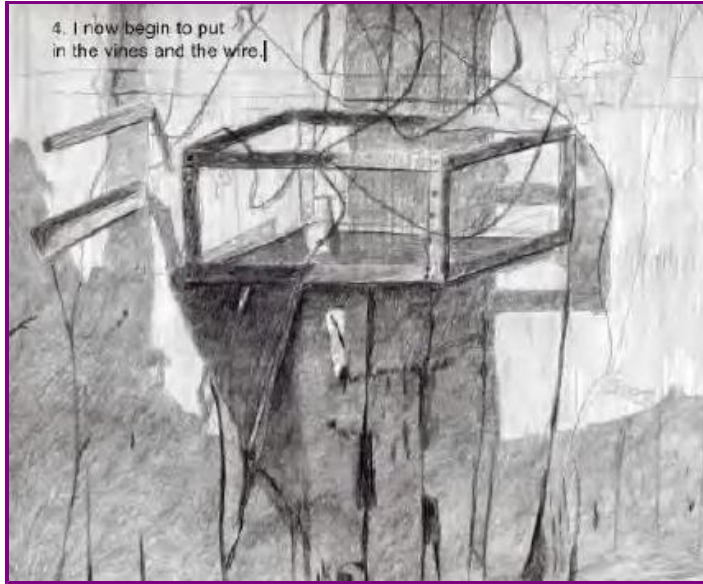
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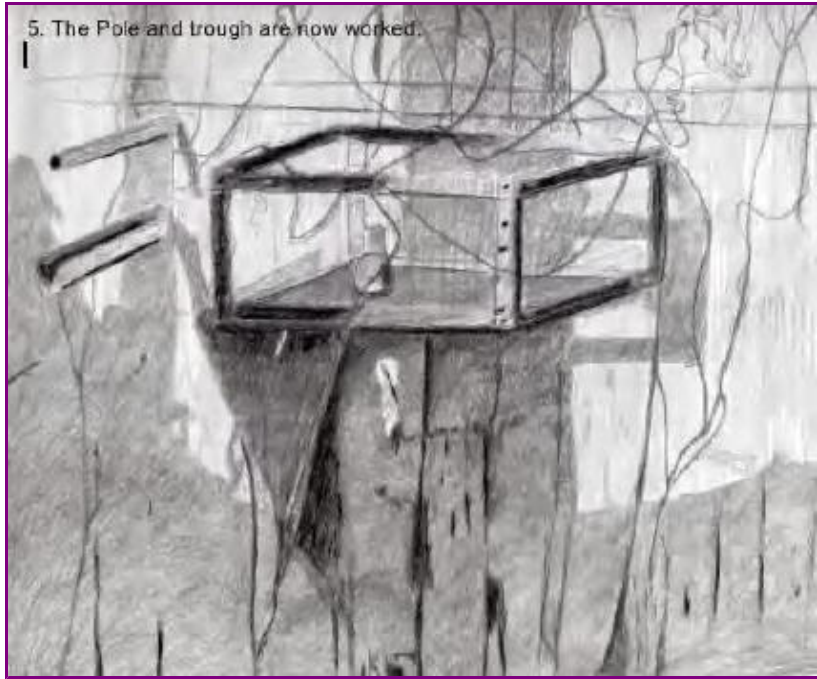
3. lots of shadow added. Some texturing |



4. I now begin to put in the vines and the wire. |



5. The Pole and trough are now worked. |



Here is the final part of the second demo. Enjoy!!! 😊

