



The Art Elements 1

Tone + Form | project brief

Materials + Equipment (when working at home)

A4 pencil, putty rubber, willow and compressed charcoal, white chalk pastel, Soft Graphite (6B), Sketchbook or A2 sized paper (paper should not be heavily textured)
Still-life: White ball/sphere on white paper (part 1), objects from light to dark (part 2).

Project Brief

We use tone (and colour) to create

1. dimensionality in objects / 3D (Steps 1 and 2)
2. sense of depth in space / aerial perspective (Steps 3)

Step 1

Aim: To understand how to manipulate Tone (shading) to create the illusion of dimensionality (3D Form)

- Set up the white sphere on a white piece of paper with a directional light source (window or table lamp)
- Draw the white sphere on a white surface to make it look 3D.
See the [Sphere on my Pinterest](#) board for guidance.

Use a soft pencil and putty rubber and ensure you achieve the following **5 tonal features** (areas of tone) in your drawing.

- Highlight
- Mid tone illumination
- Core / Form shadow area furthest from light source
- Cast shadow on surface or nearby objects
- Reflected (bounced) light area away from light source

This will really help you understand

- How light reveals an object by wrapping itself around an object revealing its shape or form.

TIP: When evaluating the still-life arrangement squint with your eyes narrowly closed as this helps you identify tone more accurately.

Now that you know about the 5 tonal features of a 3D sphere you can

- look out for it when drawing Cubes, Cones and Cylinders, as they will all have the similar Tonal features.



Step 2

Aim: To understand how the use of Chiascuro stretches the tonal range in your drawings to emphasise form (3D), space, drama and intensity.

Chiascuro

The use of Chiascuro reached a peak during the Renaissance era. (Italian for 'Light and dark'). See the images by Leonardo da Vinci, Caravaggio as well as Vermeer on my [Pinterest board](#).

Nowadays many illustrations and graphic images stretch the tonal range in much the same way to create emphasis and drama, rather than be true to the often narrow (dull) tonal range seen in reality.

- Set up a still life of objects with a tonal range ranging from dark to light. Try to have at least 1 object that is very dark and one white object. Leave a bit of space between them in your arrangement.
- Use a view finder to select a very simple composition that includes at least 3 or 4 objects in space.
- Create a Chiaroscuro tonal drawing by lightly drawing the outline shapes with willow charcoal and achieve tones by blending white chalk pastel and compressed charcoal.
- Pay attention to
 - The highlights, shadows, etc. that you learnt in part 1.
 - Not all highlights are the same. The tone of the highlight changes on different objects depending on the underlying (ground) tone of the object.
 - ie: Figure-ground relationship – take any tone (figure) when placed against different grounds will look a different tone even though it is the same.
- Ensure you have the full range of tonal values in your drawing
 - Identify the darkest point in your composition = darkest tone you can draw
 - Identify the lightest highlight = lightest tone you can draw
 - Divide all the mid tones throughout the rest of the composition
- Don't use more than about 6 tones in your drawing

REMEMBER: This method of drawing is different to 'direct observation' drawing of an object– it is about stretching the tonal range in your drawing to dramatise and increase drama or to create a focal point.

Step 3

Aim: To develop your understanding and use of tone to create the illusion of depth in space (aerial perspective).

Step 3 takes inspiration from his series of graphite drawings 'In the Seven Woods' by [Dave Pearson](#), as well as a painting by John Constable. See my [Pinterest board](#) for the images.

Dave Pearson : In the Seven Woods

- Notice how he simplifies shapes to represent landscape objects and people.
- Notice how he gives each shape a very specific tonal value which makes the shape
 - advance to the foreground,
 - sit in the middle ground
 - recede into the distance.
- Notice how
 - Foreground shapes have a high contrast (big change in tonal value between them). They advance or jump out towards you.
 - Distance shapes are much closer tonal relationship to each other so they blend in more. They recede or sink into the background.

John Constable: Branch Hill Pond (Greyscale)

- Notice how
 - Foreground tones
 - Has a higher contrast (bigger difference between light + dark.
 - The highlights here have the highest tonal value in the picture.
 - Middle distance
 - Still uses dark tonal areas.
 - Has shallower tonal range (less distinction between lights and darks)
 - Distance
 - Has a much greyer tonal change (no extreme darks or lights).
 - The highlights and darks are greyer than elsewhere.
 - The tones are much closer together (less contrast)

You are now going to combine what you see in the above two pictures into your own project.



Theme/subject matter: A view from your window or landscape

1. On an A2 paper draw a 5 cm border.
2. Select an area of landscape seen from your window and make a sketch with simplified shapes.
3. Simplify the scene into simple semi-abstract shapes as in the Dave Pearson drawing. Make sure each shape is an enclosed shape so it can be assigned a specific flat or graduated tone. See Dave Pearson's drawing on my [Pinterest board](#)
4. Use your Graphite to shade each shape with a specific tone paying attention to the 'Notice how' points I made earlier with reference to both Dave Pearson and John Constable's use of, and arrangement of tones within their pictures.
5. Once each shape has its base/ground tone you may go back and break down each shape into smaller areas (details) of different tones to include more detail.
6. Don't try to use more than about 6 tones, otherwise organising and arranging the tones will get very complicated.

REMEMBER: squint to help you 'see' the correct tone.



Notes

- If you are working on this project after attending the Art Elements course remember to refer to your notes and remember all that you learnt in class.
- Remember you need to be thinking and applying all that you have learnt about the Principles of Art to help you create a coherent and visually strong 'finished' drawing or painting.
- Use the 'Leave a reply' form on my website to ask me any questions if you are working on this project at home, or sign up to attend the **Art Elements** course if you haven't already.

Good luck and enjoy!

**Please join and share your finished result
on my [Facebook group](#)**

**Visit my website for more [Art projects](#) to keep you creative at
home and to share with your local group.**