

Drawing from life



Why study and practise life drawing?

Drawing from life makes you better at drawing and recording the world around you. Capturing people, their figures and gestures is an incredibly fascinating subject matter.

Universities & Colleges love to see life drawing as part of a student's portfolio too!

Spending time looking at your living subject is important.

Study the shapes they make and the space around them.

For the tasks for this life drawing section, use clothed models and observe while they are in front of you.



Norman Cornish



Norman Cornish's sketches and paintings are fascinating. He documents his experiences of the pit and pit village life in Spennymoor perfectly. His sketches of his family life are captured beautifully too.

Work through the slides on this powerpoint and then use life drawing exercises to document the people living in your house during lockdown.

Perhaps, they are sitting in the garden, reading peacefully, snoozing in a chair, watching the news. Give each sketch a title.



Norman Cornish

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPnmAhmuNds> Norman Cornish.

[Look at how his sketches of his family life and time down the pits bring his subject to life. Notice the way he has used shape and line to create the gesture.](#)

<https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-lifestyle-the-shapes-of-cornish-1976-online?fbclid=IwAR3oUXqjNRGFWH5sPETLMrqn1xqvo3Szb9oKJ3KdCRttxdC2VRH5VJpCLA> The Shapes of Cornish

Watch this to see how simply Norman Cornish starts with a line, shapes followed by blocking in.

The Shapes of Cornish



Task

Work through the slides on this powerpoint and use the life drawing to document the people living in your house during lockdown.

Perhaps, they are sitting in the garden, reading peacefully, snoozing in a chair, watching the news. Give each sketch a title.

Each slide will give you a suggestion of how to use the materials, but you could choose to simply sketch with a pencil or brush.



Other Materials suggestions

Charcoal

White emulsion & large brushes

Soil & water

White chalk & charcoal

Watered down paint

Marker pens

Colour chalk pastel & water

Work on large paper if you have it, newspaper, cardboard boxes, sketchbooks are for great for smaller studies.

Warm up Task

- Just focusing on the **silhouette shape** of your sitter **in pencil**. You are aiming to **completely simply the shape of the poses**.
- **Make 5 outline drawings of your sitter as they move pose, only using a single line.**

Drawing 1 at 10 minutes

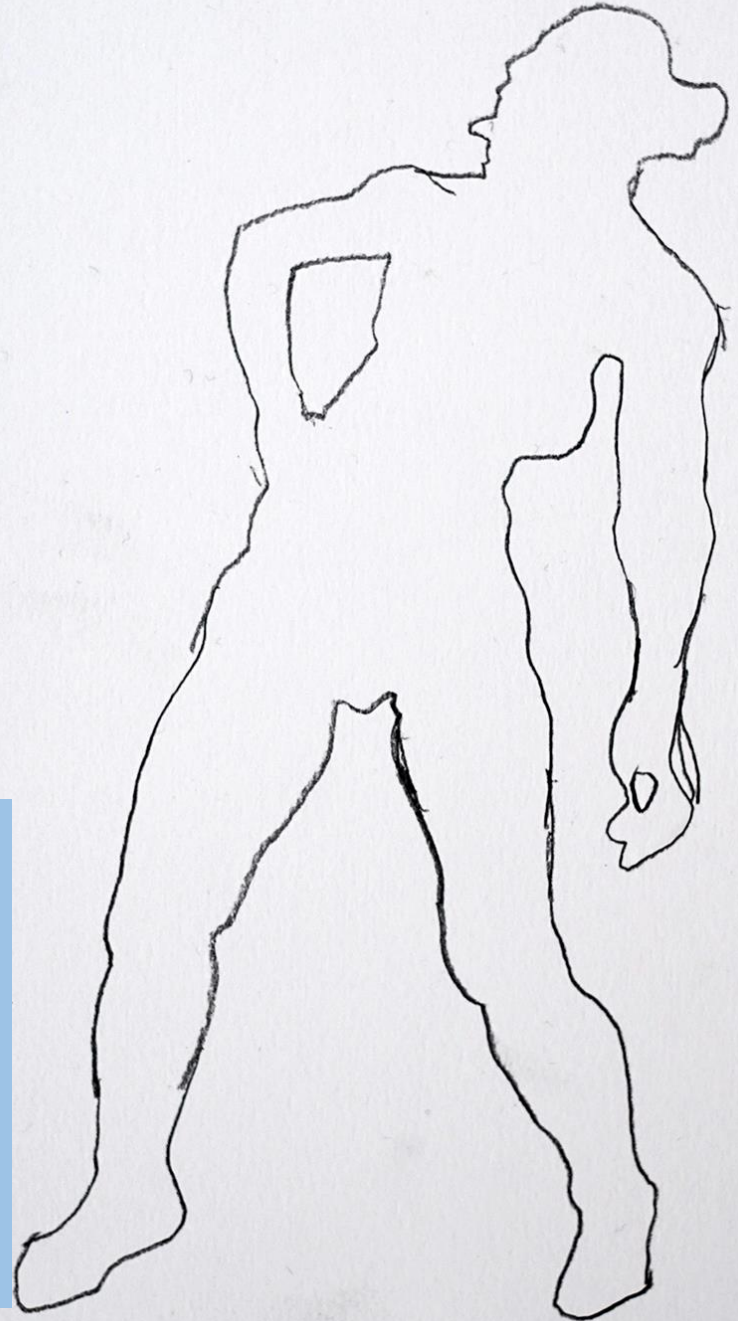
Drawing 2 at 5 minutes

Drawing 3 at 3 minutes

Drawing 4 & 5 at 1 minute

TOP TIP

To draw or sketch the wrist must be loose and active. Look less at your paper/hand and more at your sitter. This exercise helps to improve hand-eye coordination.



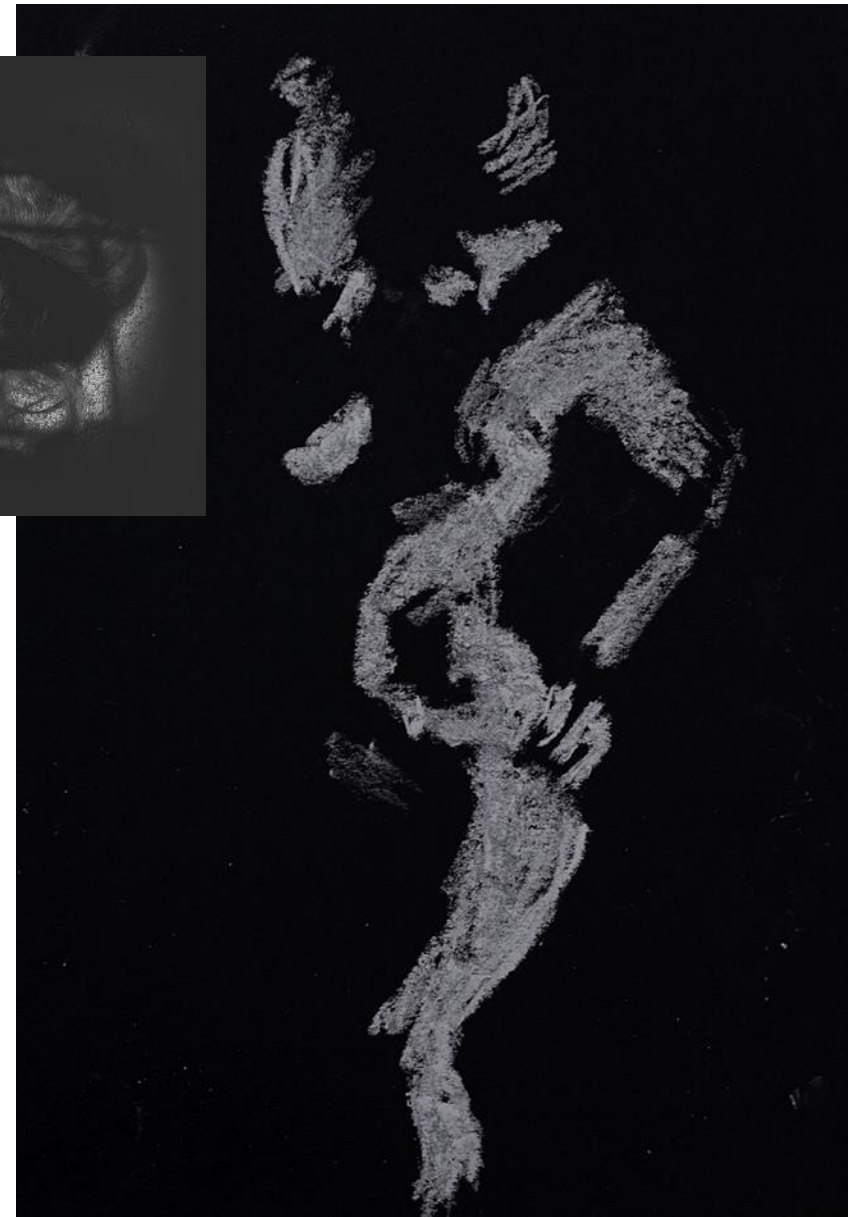
Task 1

10 minute (chalks/Pastels)

Now, create a simple impression using **tone only**. Rather than starting with an outline, instead notice where the light falls onto the figure and the clothing.

Think about the tones behind the figure too. Look for the lightest tone first.

Using a lamp could make this a little easier or just rely on light from the sun.

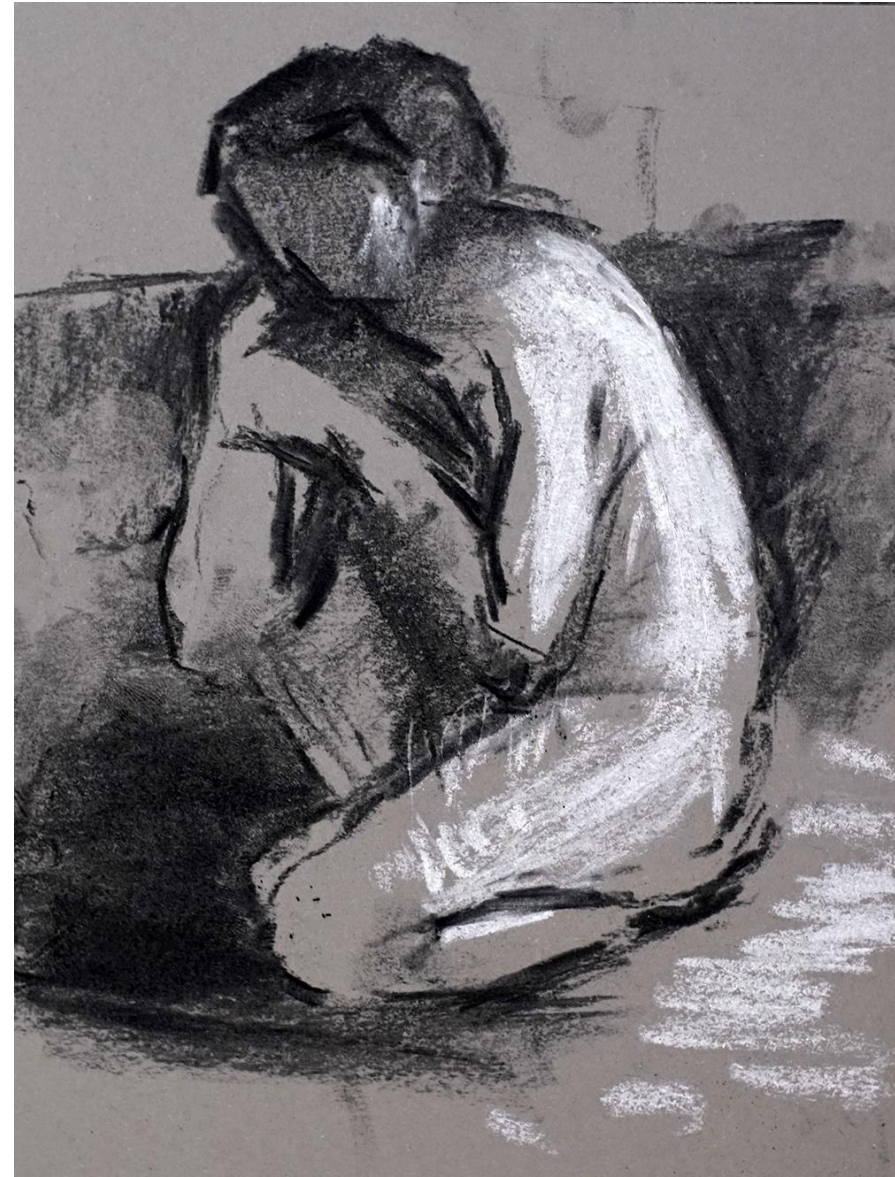


Task 2

15 -30 minutes approx. (charcoal & chalk or alternative from the list)

Now look at dark and light areas of your sitter and include a tone for your background.

There should be more detail with this figure and spend longer plotting proportions.



Lightest and darkest tones

Task 3

Create a long drawing in a new material. This time think more about the types of marks you put down on the paper.

- Other Materials suggestions
- Charcoal
- White emulsion & large brushes
- Paints
- Soil & water
- White chalk & charcoal
- Watered down paint
- Marker pens
- Colour chalk pastel & water



Watered down paint and pen with a dramatic background.



Marker Pens/ felt tips





Norman Cornish fantastic at capturing mood!