THE #1 WAY
To Improve Your Artwork

Coloured Pencils

Edition

TRANSFORM YOUR COLOURED PENCILS

by discovering the single, most common mistake made by struggling artists.

ArtTutor.com

by *Bob Davies* and
Jane Lazenby

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Bob Davies

Bob has been teaching drawing and painting for more than 20 years. He passionately believes that anyone can create pleasing artwork when they're shown certain fundamental techniques – something that the schooling system sadly fails to do.

Bob is the creator of what is now the number one selling watercolour instruction DVD series in the world, *Watercolour Secrets*, and the accompanying e-book has been downloaded by more than a quarter of a million people worldwide. He's also the co-founder of ArtTutor.com.

You can see an outline of Bob's Watercolour Video course here:
www.arttutor.com/watercolour-painting-foundation-course

Jane Lazenby

Jane is an established, internationally exhibited Equestrian Artist based in Yorkshire. In 1992 she began specialising in painting horses and continues to find it a constant and very enjoyable challenge.

Though her work is largely equestrian, Jane enjoys painting other subjects, including all animals and figures.

Though interested in all media, Jane's main body of work is done in acrylics and coloured pencils.

You can see Jane's Coloured Pencils Foundation Course here

You can find out more about Jane at www.animalfineart.co.uk

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Over many years, I've seen students looking ruefully at their latest painting, wondering why it hasn't turned out as they expected. They've mixed nice colours (not muddy), the perspective has been pretty good and there may have been very little wrong with the composition.

Yet invariably there follows a comment along the lines of:

"...Well, it's OK, but something's missing and I don't know what is or even if I did, how I go about fixing it…"

Now lots of skills and techniques go into making a good painting but there is one that stands out. Most of our art tutors and experienced artists agree it's the number one reason why a piece of art looks poor.

This e-book outlines what that is. More importantly, it shows you how to overcome the problem so you'll never be trapped by it again.

You've probably heard of it already but I'd be willing to suggest that you don't have a real *practical* understanding of how it can affect your paintings and drawings.

Don't under-estimate or dismiss the simplicity of what it is. Without it, your pictures will always remain a tantalizing step away from being the minor masterpieces you strive to achieve.

Read and apply the techniques and exercises in this e-book and you will get to understand:

- Why your pictures lack depth
- Why they look flat, dull and lifeless
- Why an otherwise good composition doesn't seem to work
- Why just using brighter colours seems to have no great effect

And you'll discover:

- How to give your picture punch, vibrancy and impact
- How to create depth and that 3D look that jumps off the page
- Simple ways to plan your picture to avoid problems in the future

This e-book will teach you not just techniques but a state of mind.

So what is this number one mistake?

It's something called tonal or value contrast.

And if your artwork doesn't make proper use of it, it will have no life, no real form or shape, no punch, and certainly no oomph that's going to make you want to eagerly show it off to family and friends.

You can read this e-book from cover-to-cover in under an hour. A lot of people will do just that… and then never actually work through the exercises. Please don't be one of those people! Follow along. Get your pencils and brushes out and work with these techniques. You'll be delighted with the results!

Image 1
This painting has punch! You might think it's the vibrant use of colour and that helps. But more important are the contrasting values and where they've been placed – something you're about to learn all about!

SECTION 1 – IT'S ABOUT CREATING VALUE

1.1 What is value?

You'll often hear professional artists and art tutors use various terms when they talk about producing a painting, terms like: hues, tone, value, shades, tints, chroma. All of these relate to the wider subject of colour theory.

Don't worry, the purpose of this e-book *isn't* to convert you into an expert in colour theory! The goal is to have you producing much more pleasing and impactful artwork by fully understanding a few key principles on a practical level.

Yep, we need to cover a little bit of theory but it won't be heavy going and we'll use plenty of real-world examples and exercises so that it really sinks in.

So let's begin with one of the terms above – '**value**'…

Value refers to the lightness or darkness of a colour. So a dark blue has greater value than a light blue. If you imagine a scale of value, black would be at one end of the extreme and white at the other.

1.2 And what is value contrast?

As you know, artists work on a flat 2-dimensional piece of paper or canvas. They have to use *illusion* in order to make objects in their pictures look 3-dimensional and jump off the surface.

They achieve this, to a large extent, through **value contrast**.

We already know that value refers to how light or dark a colour is, so let's get clear on what 'contrast' means…

Contrast, in the wider sense, simply refers to the difference or similarity between two or more things we compare. High contrast means there's a lot of difference. Low contrast means there's very little difference.

If you've ever played around with the contrast button on your TV set, you'll know the sort of effect it can have…

In your artwork, all that value contrast refers to is the difference in lightness and darkness between various parts of the picture. Look at the two boxes I've drawn below:
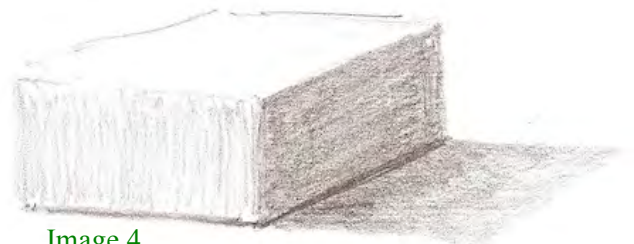

Image 3

Image 4

The top and sides of the box in Image 3 are similar in value (they're about the same darkness or lightness as each other). So we can say that Image 3 has low value contrast overall.

In Image 4, the sides of the box are obviously very different in their value. We can say that this box has high value contrast.

It probably doesn't need me to point it out, but can you see how Image 4 looks much more 3-dimensional and solid? It jumps off the page.

The number one reason why poor-looking artwork looks, well, less than inspiring is because it makes poor use of value contrast. Poor use of value contrast will make an image look flat and 2-dimensional instead of punchy and solid.

1.3 Value contrast applies to colour too

Most newcomers can grasp this concept of value contrast when producing a black and white picture - such as a pencil or charcoal drawing for example. It's obvious that using lighter and darker values is the only way to separate different shapes in a picture that has no colour.

However, in my experience, struggling artists aren't nearly bold enough in the *range* of values they use – their darkest darks aren't dark enough and their lightest lights aren't light enough. The result is often a flat-looking pencil sketch.

We'll address this problem with practical examples and exercises in Section 3 so that it's never an issue in your artwork again.

But to finish this section, I want to briefly address what happens when you add colour into the mix – because that's when I think problems really start to occur.

By now you know that a dark blue has greater value than, say, a light yellow. But (and this is crucial) did you know that two completely different colours that you might *think* will clearly stand out from each other could actually have the same value?

Let's look at an example…

Image 5
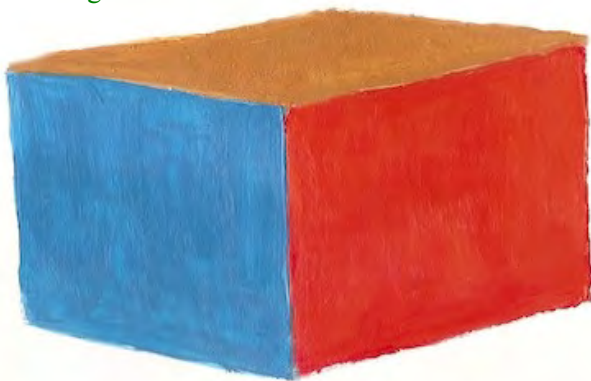
In terms of value, you would say blue is usually darker than red, and red is certainly darker than yellow. The sides of this box in Image 5 are obviously easily distinguishable from one another.

But there seems to be something not quite right here. The colours are bold but despite that, it seems a bit dull and lifeless.

In Image 6, let's strip away the colour to reveal the value in greyscale…

Image 6
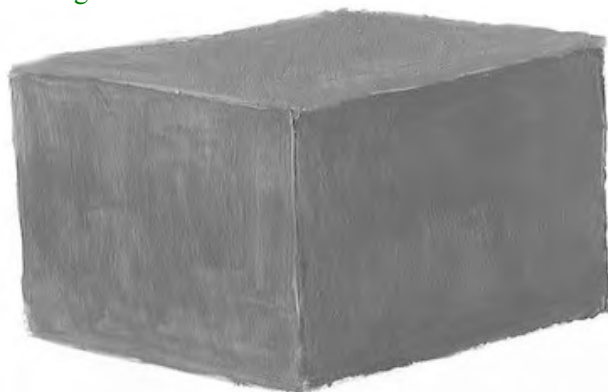
Straight away, you can see the value of the three colours – Cadmium Red, Cerulean Blue and Yellow Ochre in this case – are identical.

The eye can be fooled by a variety of colours being the same, or a very similar, value. Sure, a Pthalo or Ultramarine

Blue is going to be stronger and darker than a Lemon Yellow, no matter how strong you paint the latter…

But when you start mixing your colours on the palette to create new ones or to make them lighter or darker, this is when you need to take into account how their value will fit into the overall picture, rather than merely concentrating on what sort of colour you create.

Let's have another go at our coloured box and the same three colours in Image 7…

Image 7
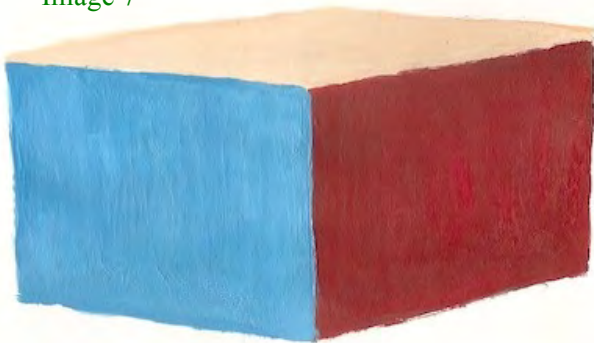
This time I've darkened the red, slightly lightened the blue and significantly lightened the yellow.

Now the shapes look like a box, with form and light and shade, even without any shadow being cast.

You get the impression that strong light is falling on the top, with a bit less light on the blue side and the red side being in deep shadow. This happens irrespective of the colours I've used because I've adjusted their value to 'create' the shape of the box. To confirm this, look at the new box in greyscale in Image 8…

Image 8

Notice how this box looks much more 3-dimensional?

If you don't understand or check the value of the colours you place on your painting (and where you're placing them), the result is likely to be a flat, lifeless image that you won't be inspired to show off to friends or family.

1.4 Form and viewing distance

In our example of a box with high value contrast above, the different values we used for the three sides of the box reflect the light source -

the way light strikes one side of the box and puts the others in relative shadow.

The stronger the light source, the starker the contrast will be between the lights and darks.   Compare these two photos (Images 9 & 10) of a simple white box…
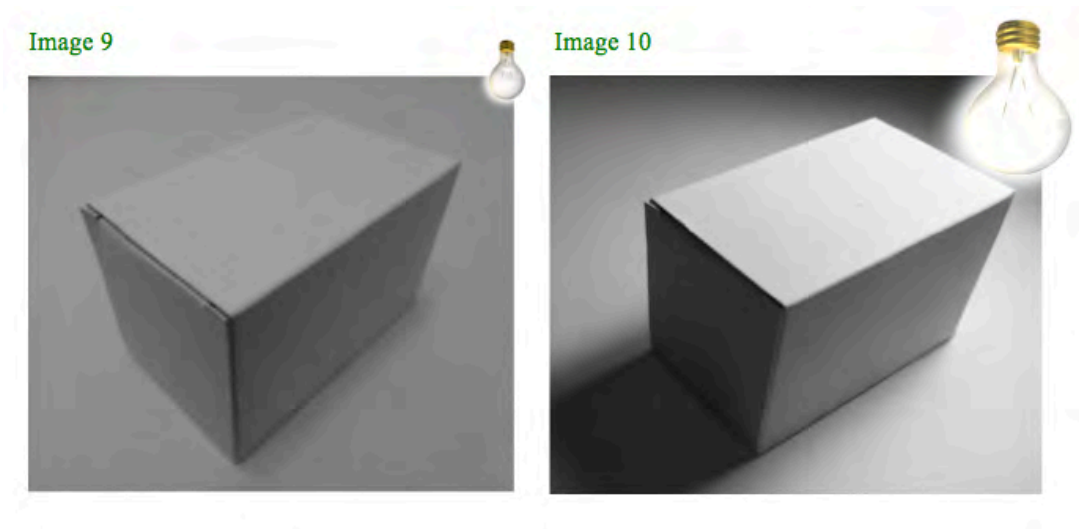
In this sense, we are using value contrast to create form and give an object on a flat piece of paper a 3-dimensional look. Incidentally, a really wide range between the lightest lights and darkest darks, gives the impression of a stronger light source – something we'll look at later on.

Aside from creating form, we also use contrasting values to give an image a sense of **depth and distance**. Landscapes illustrate this point really well…

As an object moves farther into the distance it will have increasingly less value, in other words it becomes lighter. Even a very dark element (like a slate roof on a cottage) will appear relatively light when it's far enough away.

You can show this in a representational form by looking at the following two photos (Images 11 & 12)…

Image 11

Image 12

If you painted a landscape, you'd probably have these three elements of sky, middle distance and foreground. In this case they're represented by streaks of blue, green and brown.

However, they're all a pretty similar value (look at the greyscale version next to it).

Now let's adjust them, in Images 13 and 14, to better represent distant sky, middle distance trees and a foreground field…

Image 13

Image 14

See how the adjustment of the sky and the tree colours has given, even in this abstract example, a much greater degree of depth and distance. It's even more apparent when you compare the two black and white versions.

Moving on to something more realistic, take a look at the two sketch paintings below in Images 15 and 16…

Image 15

Image 16

Image 15 - The values of the near hills are actually lighter compared to the distant hills. It's hard to distinguish between the middle distance hills because they are the same value.

Image 16 - The values become progressively lighter into the distance. The edges of the middle distance hills are darker than the hills behind them to create contrast and separation.

With that bit of theory under our hat, let's look at 3 simple tools you can use to help you see values within a painting much more easily…

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SECTION 2 – TOOLS TO CHECK VALUE

2.1 Squint and defocus your eyes

People often squint slightly when they struggle to read something because it's slightly out of focus for them. Subtle squinting reduces the extraneous light and can make a point of focus sharper and clearer.

However, if you squint a bit harder and let your eyes defocus slightly, you'll notice that your picture of the world becomes less detailed. Stripping out the detail allows you to see masses of colour and value (those light and dark areas) much more easily.

Here's what squinting and defocusing your eyes should make things look like…
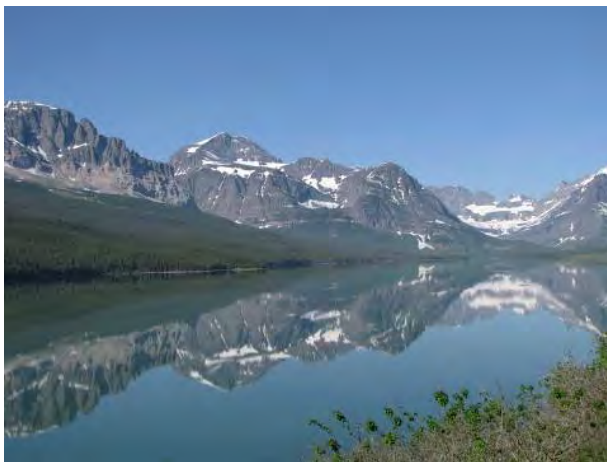

Image 17 – before squinting

Image 18 – after squinting (less detail, darks are darker, lights are lighter)

Squinting and checking for values (both in your own artwork as it progresses and your reference material) is something you should make a habit of. You really can't do too much of it during the painting process.

Let's move on to tool number 2…

2.2 Use a grey scale

If you find squinting / defocusing your eyes doesn't make the various values of an image clear enough for you, you should try using a grey scale.

In fact, even if squinting works well for you, a grey scale is so easy to make and so useful it's well worth having one by your side whenever you paint.

What is a grey scale?

For our purposes, it's simply a strip of card or paper with 5-7 values of grey that range from very light grey to a very dark grey.

I created the one on the left with acrylic paint but you can use any paint medium or a graphite pencil using varying degrees of pressure. It's roughly 8" x 1.5".

We're going to use this grey scale to examine a reference photo of Stalker Castle (Image 19) in Scotland and then create a small sketch of the castle itself.

Image 19

We're not going to work from colour just yet, but I want to draw your attention to a couple of things in the colour photo to the left…

Notice the distant hills, how pale they appear. This occurs quite naturally with dust particles in the atmosphere and makes features paler and less distinct the further away they are.

Notice also how you can clearly see one side of the roof is lighter than the other because of the way the light is hitting the castle.

Exercise: How To Use A Grey Scale

Print this page out and cut out the grey scale. Use a 'good' or 'best' quality print settings rather than 'draft'.
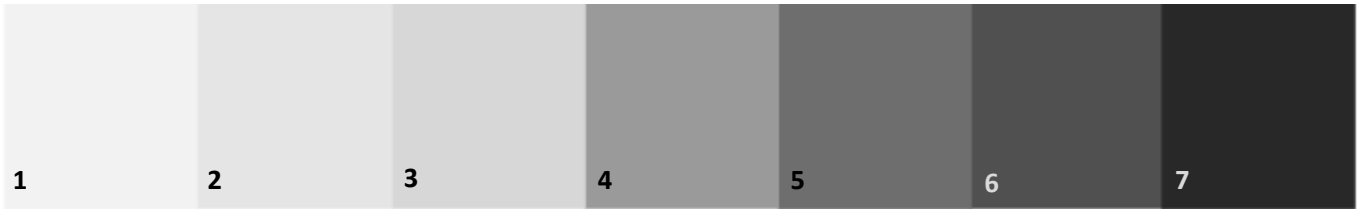
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Instructions

Place your grey scale (Image 20) at the side of the black and white print out of the castle (Image 21). You're not allowed to pick it up yet though.

Look at the black and white photograph, screwing up your eyes to defocus them, and try to gauge which value on your grey scale most closely matches the following parts of the picture:

- The blue patch of sky above the castle
- The distant hills
- The promontory (darker land mass just below the distant hills)
- The main castle walls (both sides)
- The water by the canoeist

- The grassy area to the bottom left of the castle
- The castle doors and windows
- The floating seaweed

You won't get perfect matches – just choose the number on the scale you think looks about right. There are probably about 20 or 30 subtly different values even in this photo but you can simplify them down to the seven on the grey scale.

Once you've tried to gauge the value by eye, pick up your grey scale and hold it next the various elements of the image. Here's my attempt…
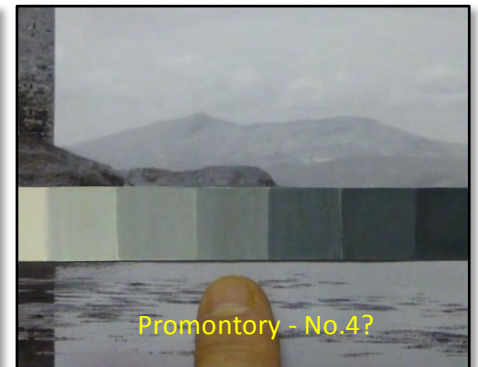
Image 22

Sky - No.2?

Image 23

Distant Mountains - No. 3?

Image 24

Promontory - No.4?

Image 25

Castle Walls - Nos.4 or 5?

Image 26

Water - No.2?

Image 27

Grassy Areas - No.3?

Image 28

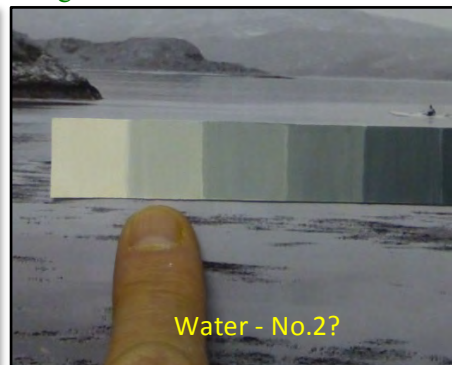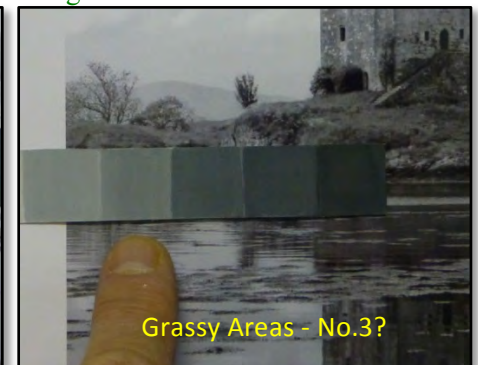Door & Windows - No. 7?

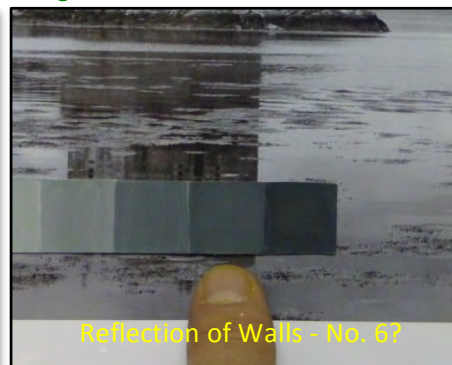Image 29

Reflection of Walls - No. 6?

Image 30

Seaweed - No.4?
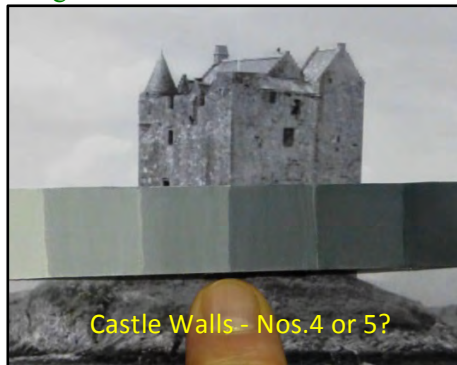
So how did you fare? Were there elements of the picture that you found difficult to gauge until you used the scale? Here's one thing you may have noticed…

Note the castle walls

The two main aspects of the castle walls are quite similar in tone (Image 31). Even when you screw you eyes up, there doesn't appear to be a great deal of difference.

This is where you, as an artist, have a big advantage over a photographer. You have the opportunity to strengthen or lighten one aspect of the castle to create a greater sense of dimension (Image 32).

If it's a bright, summer's scene you want to recreate, you can go to town on this and literally turn on the sunlight. If you're capturing a moodier, more overcast atmosphere you can be more subtle.
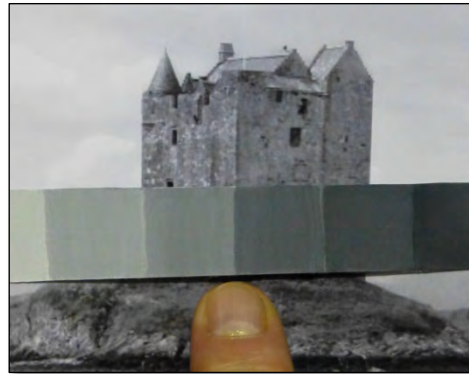
Image 31

Image 32

A grey scale is a very handy little tool to have by your side – whether it's in your studio or out in the field. Keep several of them handy. Use one at every opportunity. Very soon, you'll hone an expert eye for picking out subtle (and stark) differences in value that give your artwork that master quality.

2.3 Make your own 'redeye' filter

Even if you find that squinting and the grey scale allows you to easily see blocks of value, I highly recommend you out try this low-tech tool. I call it my 'redeye filter'.

Image 33

What you need
A piece of red cellophane - the sort of thing you find in a florist or a sheet of red acetate or even a clear, red file cover. You only need a few square inches.

If it's quite sturdy (like a sheet of acetate) it will work as it is. It it's flimsy like cellophane, make a simple frame out of card and tape the red plastic sheet to it.

If you struggle to find anything local, do a Google or Amazon search for 'red cellophane' or 'red acetate'. You'll be able to pick up something for next to nothing.

Image 34

How it works
Hold your Redeye Checker over various parts of a painting or reference photograph. The transparent red will 'lose' most of the colour but will immediately highlight contrast values. Adjacent parts of the picture with similar values will blend into one mass.

This is the equivalent of screwing up your eyes but is easier to check specific parts of your picture. Try it on your existing artwork. If you still have a reference photo you used for a particular piece of art, try it on that too. Is there a difference between the photo and your rendition?

SECTION 3 – MONOCHROME EXERCISES

3.1 Exercise 1 – Castle drawing

In this first exercise, you're going to produce a pencil drawing of the castle photograph we examined earlier.

What we are NOT aiming for is a detailed, life-like drawing. The entire purpose of this exercise is to get you to 'look past' the details and see overall values.

You're going to make meticulous use of both the grey scale and squinting or defocusing your eyes. If you don't I can almost guarantee what will happen (answer at the end of this exercise!).

You won't have to be this meticulous with your grey scale for future drawings or paintings, but I strongly encourage you to take lots of time checking the strength of light and dark areas for this one. Doing so will really help this habit and skill to sink in.

I'll be creating the drawing along with you and I'll provide plenty of guidance along the way. So grab yourself a beverage of choice and let's make a start…

What you'll need:

- A sheet of drawing paper, A5 is big enough. Printer paper is okay, but a heavier weight, smooth drawing paper is better.
- An HB, B and 3B or 4B pencil.
- A putty eraser. Nothing like being optimistic hey!
- A print-out of the next page of this e-book, which contains the line drawing and reference photo.

Line drawing, reference photograph and grey scale

You'll find these on the next page. The line drawing will print on to half a sheet of A4 printer paper. Trace your printed line drawing on to your drawing paper (see my Drawing Foundation Course at ArtTutor for a video lesson on this).

You'll want to then cut out the grey scale strip.

And you're good to go!
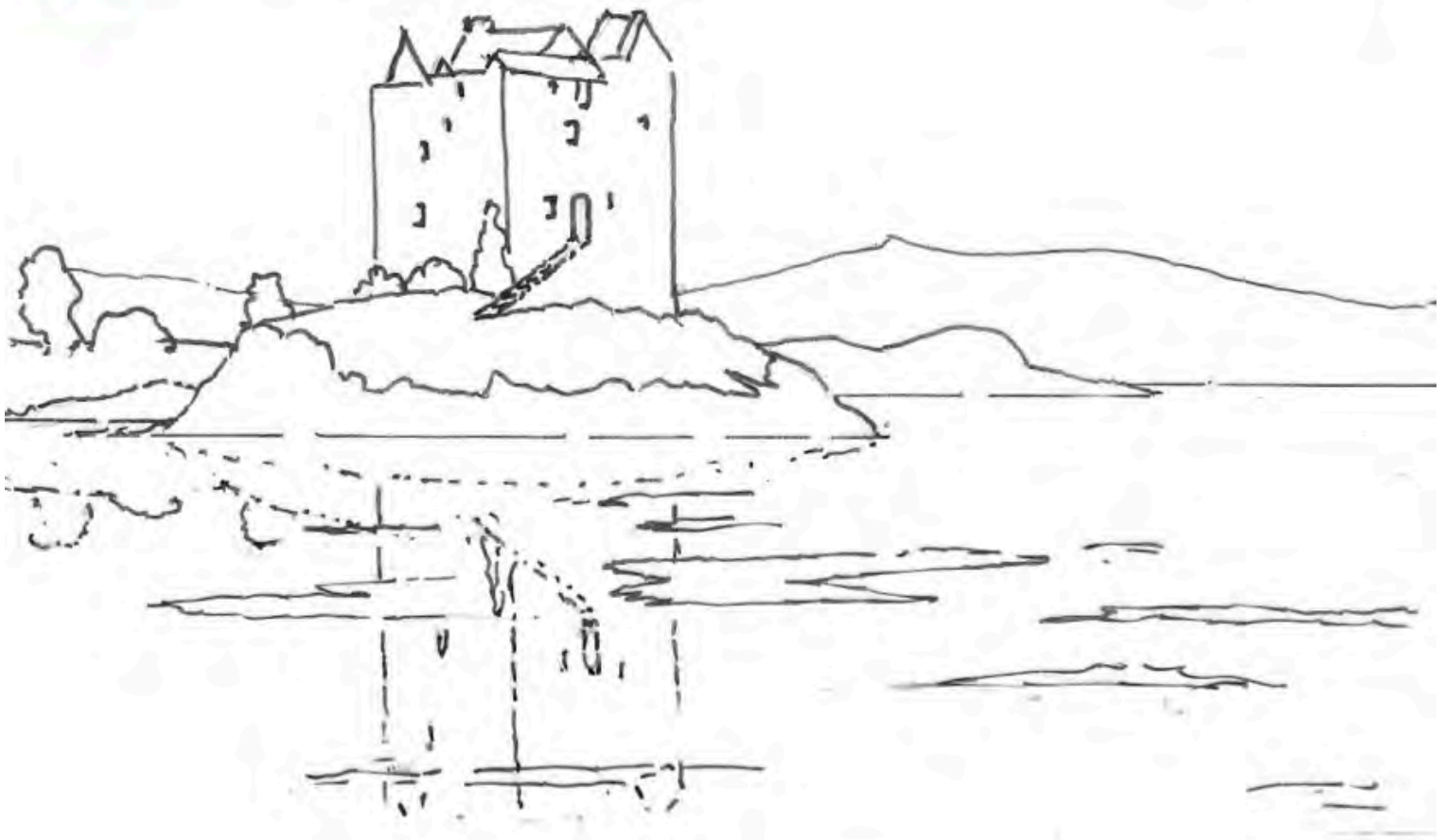
Image 35

Preparation

The first thing I've done is lightened off my line drawing using a putty eraser. It probably won't matter for the castle walls, but the distant mountains will look like they have an outline and this can distort your judgement of the correct value in this area. You'll want to do this whenever you trace a line drawing for a watercolour painting.

Image 36
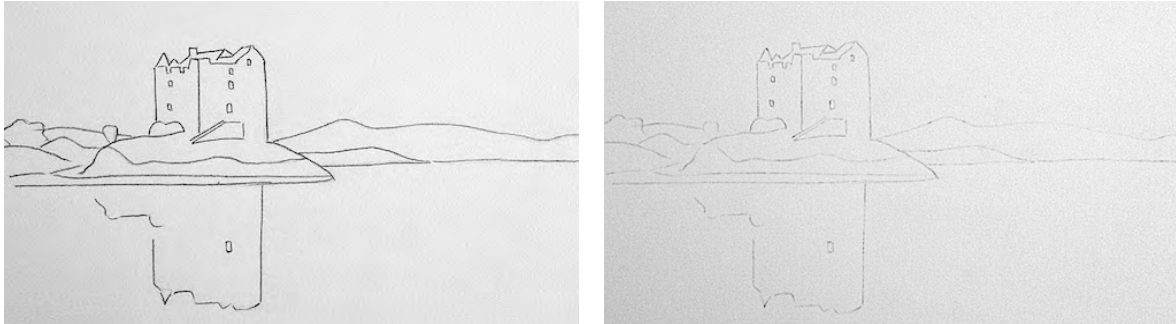
Sky & Water Area

Look at your reference photo and really defocus / squint your eyes. What value on our grey scale would you say the sky is **overall**?

Overall is the key word here – yes there are patches of cloud and darker areas but if you squint enough and step back from the photo, you should be able to choose a single value that roughly represents the entire area.

I'm going to choose a value #2 and using my HB pencil. I'm holding the pencil almost parallel to the paper and using the side edge of the graphite with the lightest of diagonal strokes to lay down the minimum amount of tone I can. I'll do the same for the water using horizontal stokes.
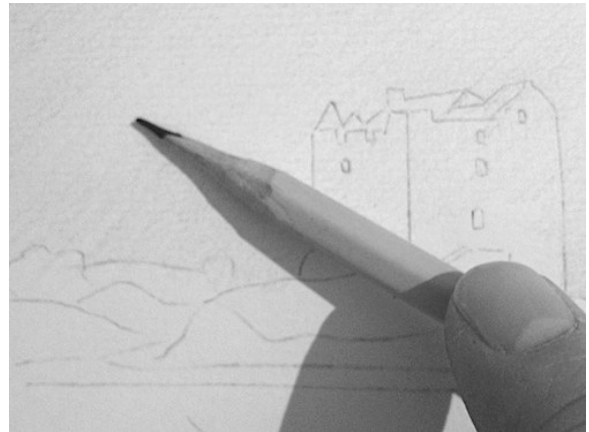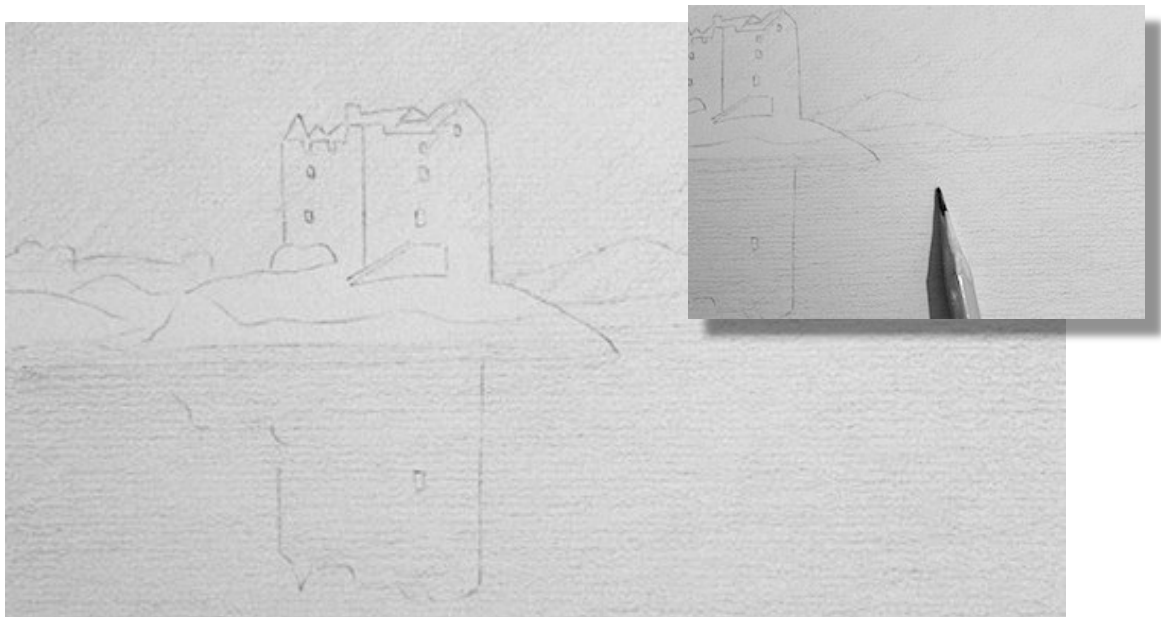
Image 37

Image 38

Notice how the water is a slightly darker value than the sky? Again, ignore the details of the seaweed and ripples and cloud reflections. Stand back from the photo, defocus your eyes and compare the area by the canoeist to the sky above her.

Distant Hills and Promontory

What value would you choose for the distant hills as a whole? They are slightly darker to the right but I'm going for #3 with my HB.
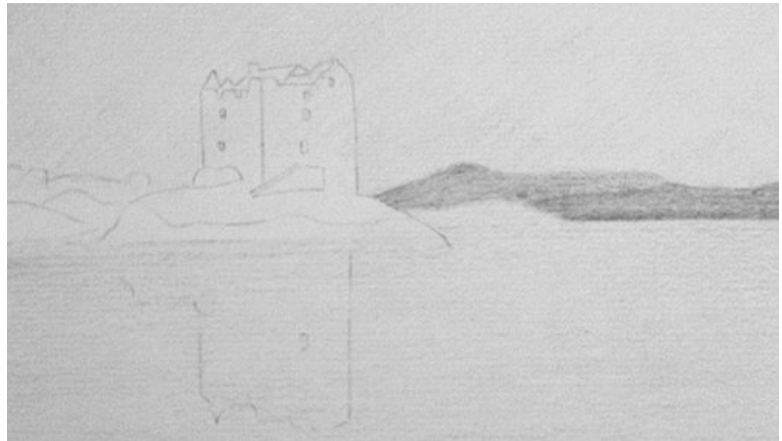
Place your grey scale on a bit of scrap paper and shade a small swatch of graphite directly below the value #3 square. Learn how much pressure and how much graphite you need to apply to create value #3.

Now add this to your distant hills.

For the smaller promontory I'm using value #4. Again, ignore any rocky undulations and details. Just block the area in with your HB. Oh, and while you're doing that make a mental note of whether the promontory is a stronger or weaker value than the grassy bank of the castle.
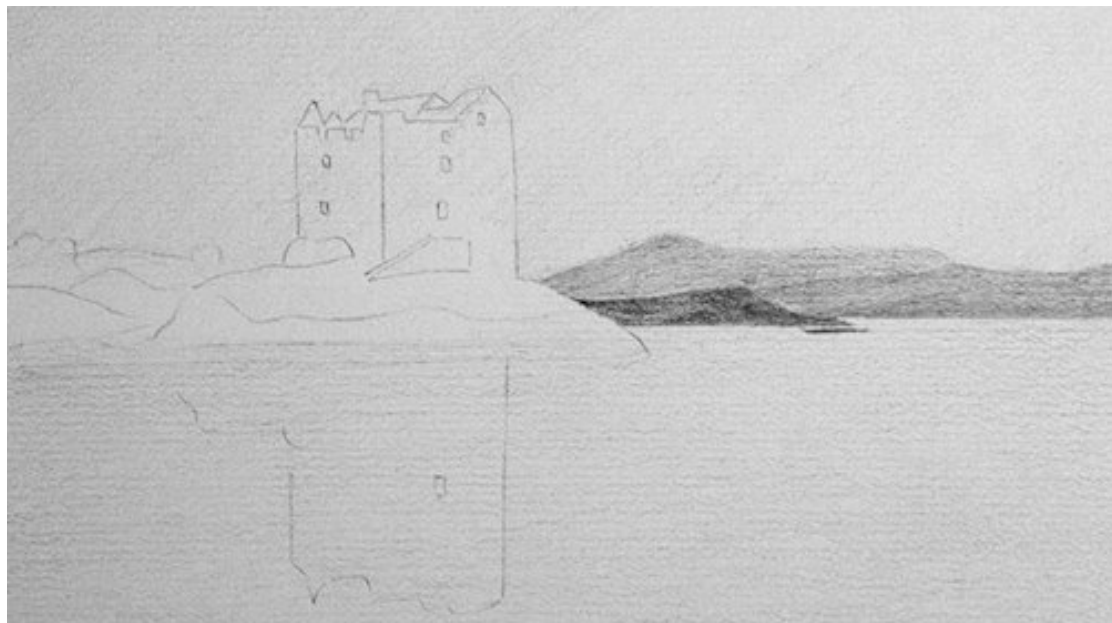
Castle Walls

This is where almost everyone (in fact, everyone) makes the same mistake. Here's what I'd like you to do (and please don't cheat!)…

On a scrap of paper, WITHOUT using your grey scale or squinting your eyes, lay down a block of tone with your pencil that you think is about the correct value for the left hand castle wall.

Image 41
Blur your eyes. Look at the right hand edge of the castle wall in particular. Look at the contrast with the sky. My castle drawing on the top needs to be at least a value darker.

Again, ignore the details of brickwork and weathering and just lay down an overall value on your paper.

Now measure both the wall in the photo and your block of tone with your grey scale (and squint your eyes). Literally everyone sees the wall much lighter than it is. Why?

Because you can't help but seeing the details – the light bricks in particular. But details come later. The overall value for the castle walls is about a #4.5 on my scale.
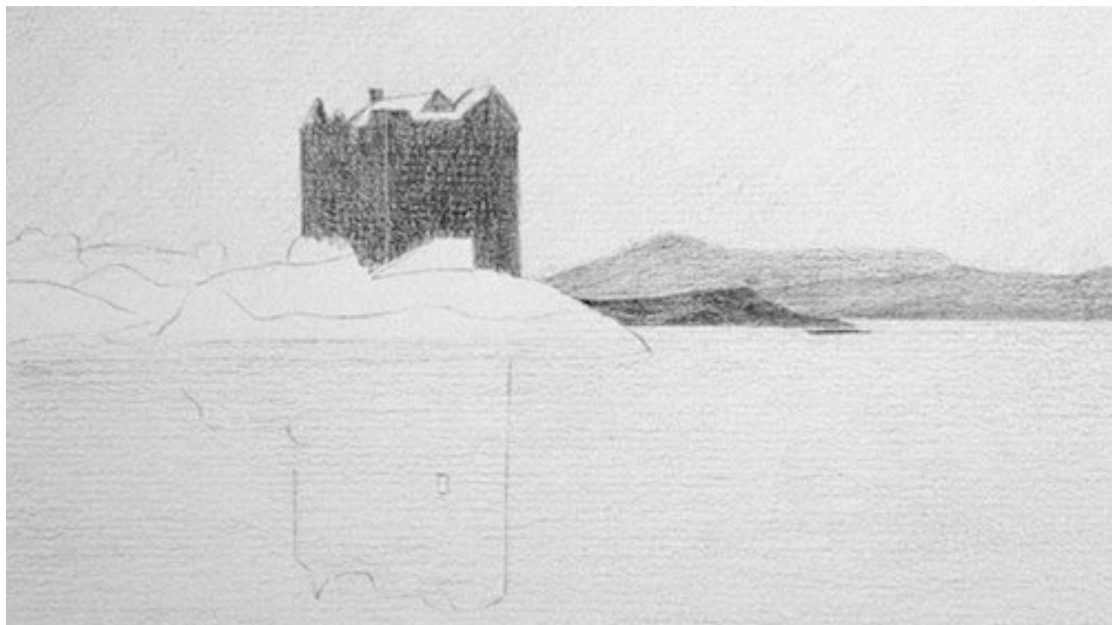

Image 42

Do my walls in Image 42 look too dark to you? I think most people would say so…

You can clearly see here they're not! I used a B pencil for this.

Grassy Banks, Rocky Area and Reflection
By now you should be getting the idea, so I'll move quickly through the next few sections…

The grassy banks are slightly darker than the castle. Let's go with a value #5 using the B pencil. What about the white rocky area just above the water?

This is another area I can see where my students *assume* rather than *observe*. You know they're a chalky white colour in real life so the temptation is to keep them quite light.

Blur your eyes to meld the lights and darks of the rocks into more of a single value. Darker than the sky? Absolutely. Darker than the water beneath the canoeist? Maybe about the same so let's go with value #3. Just block in the area for now – we can pick out lights with our eraser and add in some shadow detail later.

Image 44

For dark area at the bottom of the rocks, I'm pressing very firmly with a B pencil.

The castle reflection is an interesting one. I hope you can see it's a noticeably darker value than the castle itself. Reflections tend to mute value contrast – in other words there is less distinction between lights and darks.

You can see a clear example of this by comparing the very dark doorway. See how it's less distinguishable in the reflection? It's slightly lighter and the brick wall is slightly darker.

Windows & Other Darks

Using the 4B pencil we can now add the darkest darks – value #7.

I actually erased back some of the graphite I'd laid down previously over the window and doorway areas because this allows me to achieve a darker dark with a bit more of a tooth underneath.

Image 45

At this stage the exercise is complete. Not a particularly impressive piece of artwork but it's given me plenty of practice looking for and gauging values.

I'm happy that the values are reasonably accurate and now it's time to have a bit of fun…

Finishing Touches (optional)
Using my putty eraser and moulding it to a point, I'm going to pick out some subtle lights on the distant hills, grassy bank, rocks and castle walls. I'll accentuate these and bring back the overall value by adding some darks.

I'll also knead the eraser into a fine 'strip' (Image 46) and pull out some ripples on the water. Again, I'll define these with some darks and add a few more bits and pieces of interest.

Image 46

And here's the finished drawing in Image 47.

Image 47

One last thing
I chose this photograph because unless you really do squint your eyes and use your grey scale, it will catch you out. However, from an artistic point of view we can improve on the photo…

The two aspects of the castle walls are very similar in value. By adjusting one side darker or lighter we can create greater form and a bit more interest (something that would be difficult for the photographer to do).

Let's see what difference creating some contrast between the two walls makes in Image 48…

Image 48

Please do have a go at this exercise. Remember, it's not about producing a highly refined drawing - it's a practical way for you to train your eye to see values relative to one another.

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YouTube - www.youtube.com/user/ArtTutorOnline

3.2 Exercise 2 – Monochrome painting: Lake Garda

Using graphite pencil is a great way to start honing your eye to really see the various values in an image. All you need to do is increase or decrease the pressure you apply and you have an infinite number of values at your disposal.

Now, let's progress to the next stage and begin to apply this to coloured pencil painting…

Image 49

In the next exercise, you're going to produce a monochrome painting of Lake Garda in Italy (Image 49), demonstrated by one of our ArtTutor instructors, Jane Lazenby. You'll be using just white and black pencils.

Now invariably, students think of monochrome as black and white with various shades of grey in between. However, you could use red, blue, purple, brown, green or any colour, as long as it is capable of giving you several variations of value from dark to light.

The beauty of this process is that, with a little practice, it becomes second nature to select or adjust the values in monochrome and mentally translate them into colours.

In fact, many professional artists will produce a monochromatic painting and use it as a reference when producing their final piece. The painting below (Images 50 & 51) are from one of our ArtTutor video lessons and you can see how instructor Joanne Thomas has used her monochromatic study to great effect!

Image 50   Image 51

What you'll need:
- Hard black and white pencils (such as Verithin, Derwent Artist)
- Soft black and white pencils (such as Derwent Coloursoft)
- Colourless blender
- Putty eraser or plastic eraser, electric eraser, pencil sharpener
- Sheet A4 Canson paper.

Image 52

Line drawing, reference photograph
You'll find these on the next two pages. The line drawing will print on to a sheet of A4 printer paper. Shade over the back of this line drawing and then trace down on to your paper.

Before sharpening the pencils and diving into this tutorial, let's just take a little time to consider the challenge in hand.

Some points to remember are:
- Simplify the range of tones initially to light (white pencil), medium (bare paper) and dark (black pencil).
- By using a hard black pencil for the background, it prevents us from becoming too heavy handed with our darker tones. Only when using the soft black pencil can we get enough depth to represent the darker foreground elements.
- Observe the tonal shifts – there are no linear edges (lines around the different tones).
- Compare one element to another to differentiate between subtle tonal shifts.
- This image will need you to create positive elements (tree highlights, rock textures, fading out skylines) by working with negative space – drawing in shadows or highlights to allow the bare paper colour to show through and act as the mid tone.
- Be patient with your pencil layers: 4 or 5 layers to create the correct tone is more desirable than one heavy layer.
- Be gentle, be delicate, observe closely, don't rush, be patient and enjoy the process…

Monochrome Scale
If you are unfamiliar with working on a coloured ground (paper) take a little time to create your own tonal scale, using your white and black pencil, as show below. Image 53
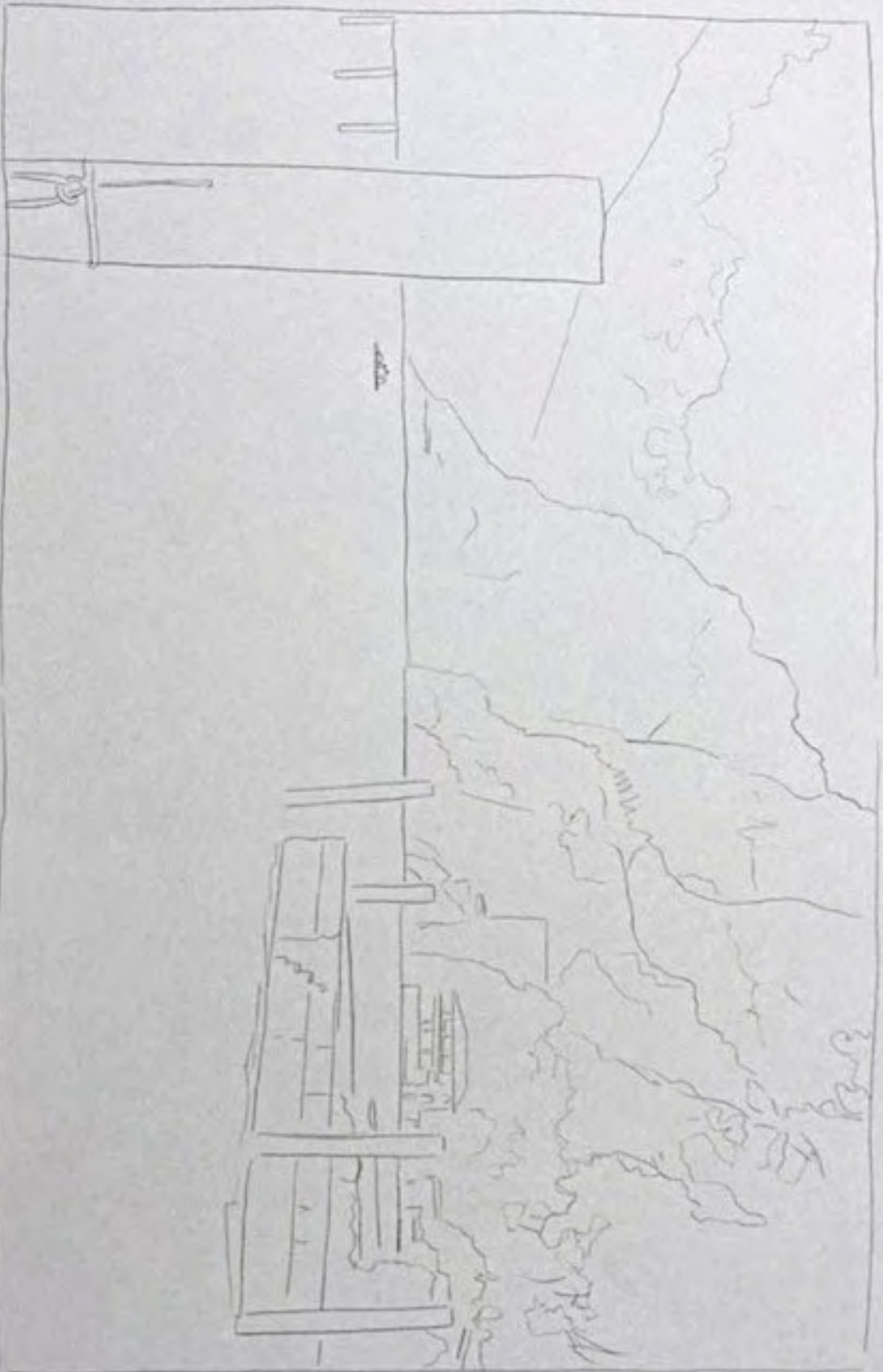
Riva del Garda. Used with kind permission from Geomangio.

1. Drawing Out

Our first stage is getting our line drawing onto our paper. You can do this either by tracing down the printed sketch in Image 54, or if you feel confident enough, have a go at sketching it yourself.

It's important to note that I've created a *structural* line drawing – so that's not just the outline of the shapes that you see but some of the areas where we have changes in value, such as the clouds and the mountains.

If we identify these now, we'll have a better idea of where we're going when we get down to painting.

Don't forget to work lightly with the pencil to avoid causing an indented edge.

Image 56
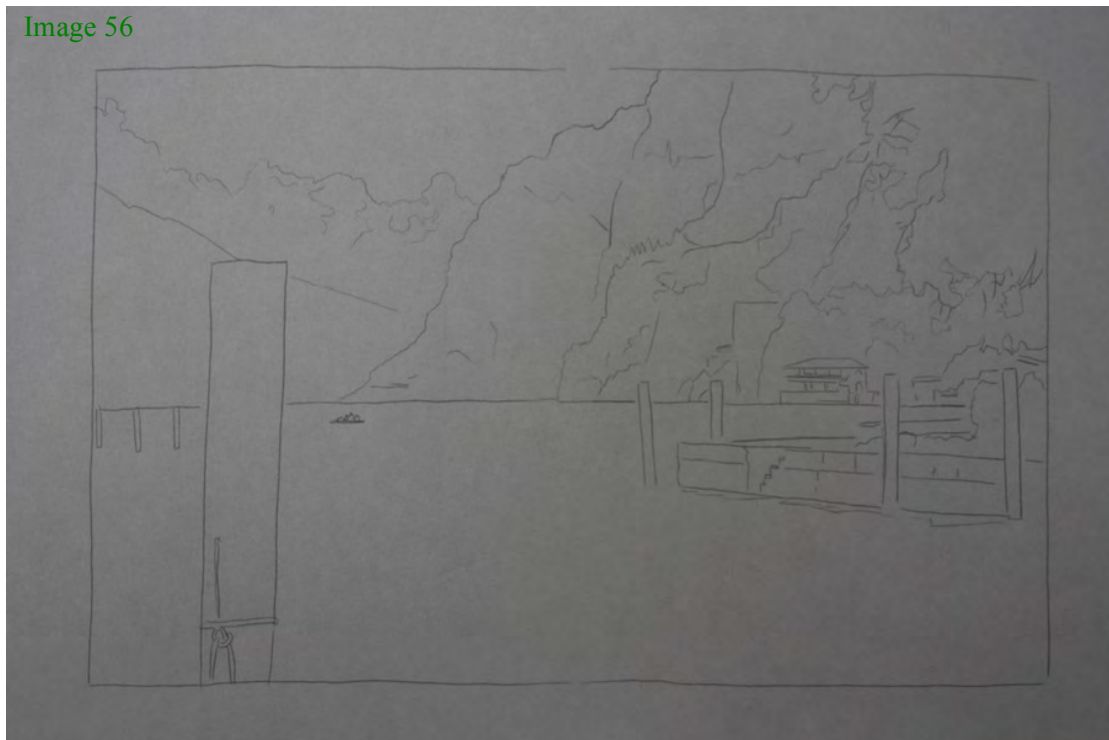
Soften the drawing by rubbing gently with a putty eraser if needed.

Image 57

2. Layering in Sky and Clouds

Let's begin with our lightest values – these are going to be represented by our white pencil. If we press down hard we should get our lightest value, and if we press lightly we allow more of the mid-tone of the paper to show through.

We'll start by layering white pencil into the sky area. Work gently in ovals or circles so that you do not leave any strong lines within the shading. You may need up to 5 or 6 layers to achieve the light tonal values.

Create the edges of the clouds by exerting more pressure and over layering. Don't worry if this isn't as smooth as you'd like at this point, we're going to use a blending pencil later on which will really push the white pencil into the grain of the paper and create more of a lighter, united tone.

Image 58

The harder white pencil gives a good base. You can then move onto the softer pencil, which will allow you to create more intense light values.

You can see what we're aiming for in Image 59.

Image 59
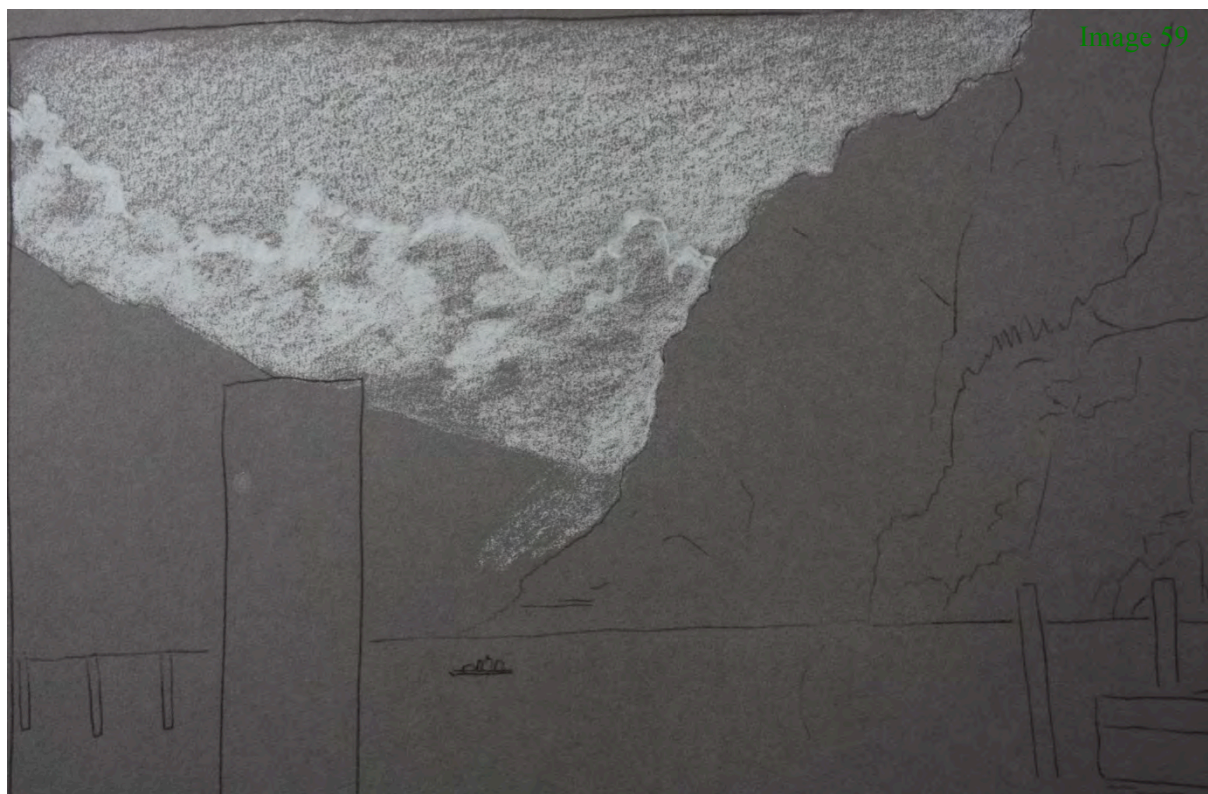
3. Distant Hill and Sky

We're moving forward in our picture, so now we're going to turn our attention to the far distant hill. Make sure you apply fewer layers to the hill than you did with the sky – this will make it appear subtly darker, and this is what will give our image depth.

Image 60

Take care to really observe the reference photograph at this point... The transition between the hill and sky is a *tonal edge*, not a strong linear line or constraining edge.

Image 61
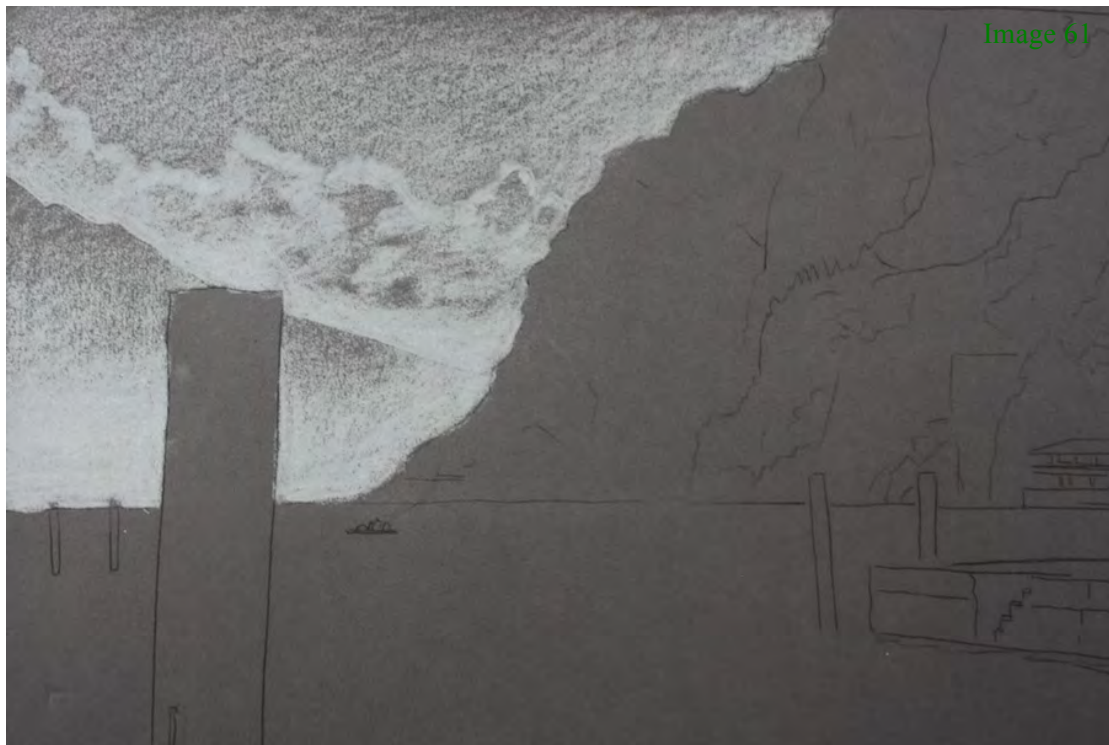
This is what we're aiming for…

4. Cleaning Edges

It's important to clean all your tonal edges clean because it is this, and not a drawn line that will create the form we're looking for.

We'll clean off any untidy white pencil from the edge of the second hill. You can use a putty rubber or an electric eraser.

Image 62

Again, carefully observe the reference photograph... The edge of the hill seems to be much darker where it meets the sky. It is only as we move down the hill towards the water's surface that it becomes lighter.

This is called 'counterchange' (more about that in Section 5) where the contrast in values is greater where the light meets the edge of the hill – and the dark is placed against the bright light value. It is details like this that will create a drawing with realism and depth.

5. Shading the Hills

Image 63

We'll use our hard black pencil now and begin to add shading and detail to the second hill. Don't worry about creating a perfect representation of those hundreds of trees and rock faces, just simplify what you see, work lightly and allow your pencil marks to add textural detail.

As you go along you can always add in some subtle white pencil into the rock structure. Again work lightly – we can always add more white at the end.

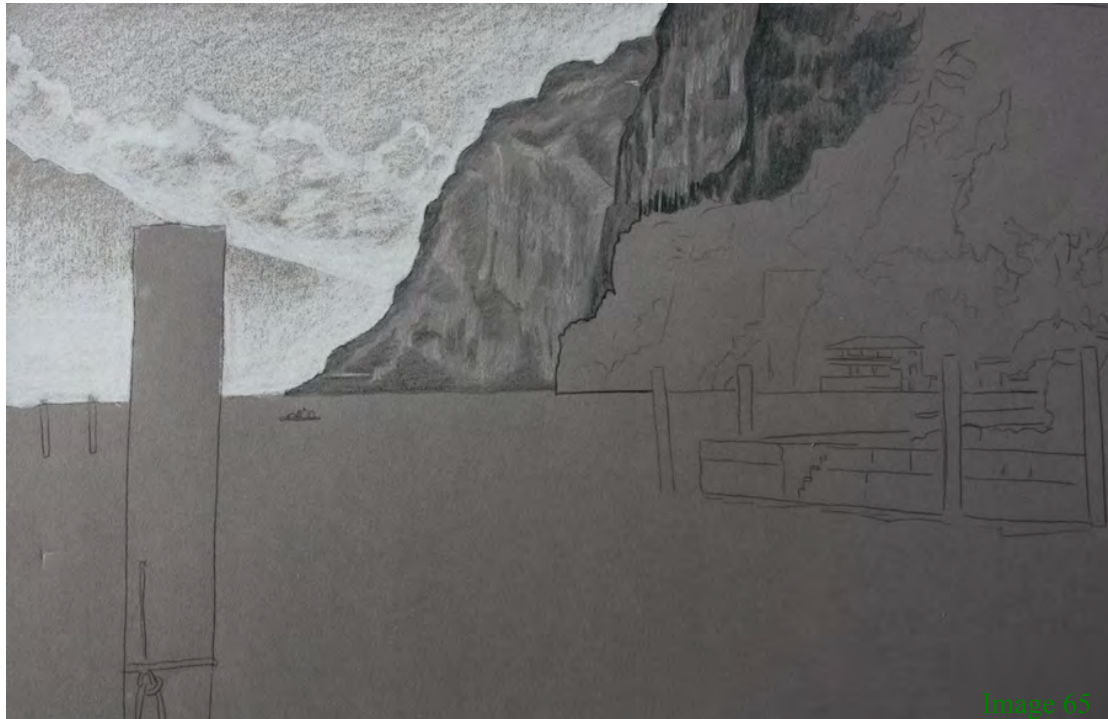Image 64

6. Further Hill Shading

Image 65

Let's move on to the third and fourth hills. Layer more of the hard black pencil, creating a darker edge to the hill so it moves forward away from the hill behind. Again simplify the detail and allow more of the paper colour to show through.

7. Completing the Hills

We're onto our last hill! Begin by using your hard black pencil. Work a little heavier than in the previous hills and remember to leave gaps in the shading that allows the paper to show through, acting as a mid tone.
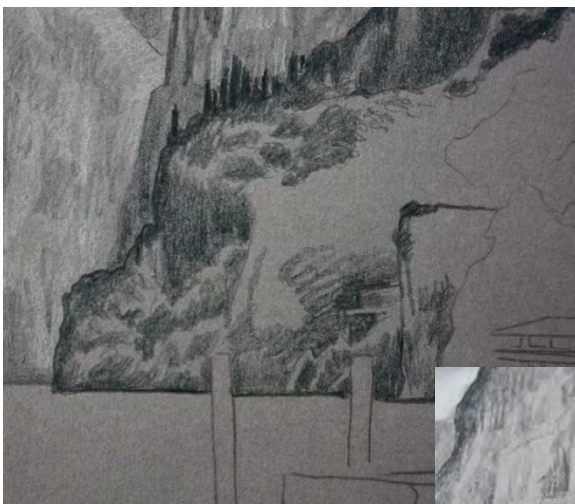
Image 66

Image 67

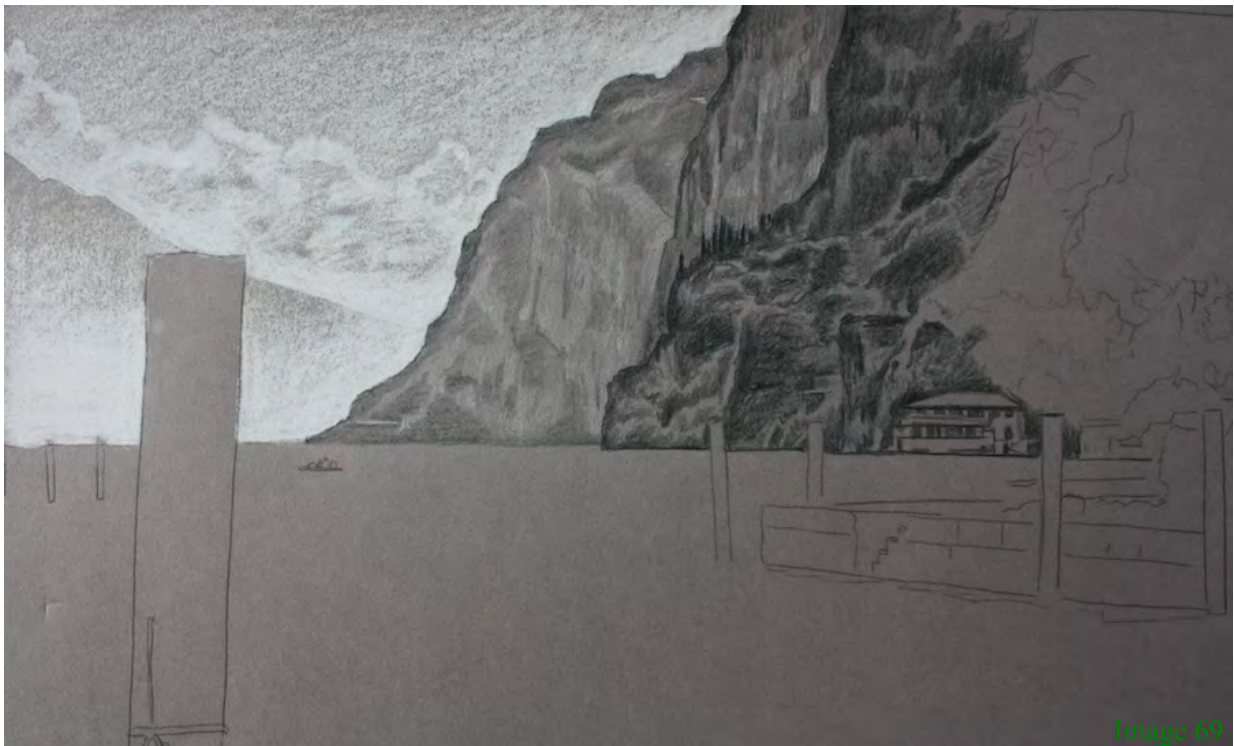Image 68

Let's take a break and see where we're up to…

Image 69

I think you'll agree it's coming on nicely! We can already see the depth appearing as the mountains get darker towards the foreground of the picture.

8. Dark Foreground Tree

We've just about reached the dark foreground tree in the right of our picture. You'll have to work around it as best as you can and we'll fill in the gaps later on. This might mean that you have to work a bit more slowly as you complete the final hill.

Image 70

We're now up to the tree itself! Using your soft white pencil, create small white highlights within the dark tree outline - really make them sparkle!

Next we'll take our soft black pencil and begin to add in the leaf canopy, allowing gaps in our shading to show both the white pencil highlights and areas of the mid toned paper colour.

Image 71

Add a few simple highlights to the lake house while you are here.
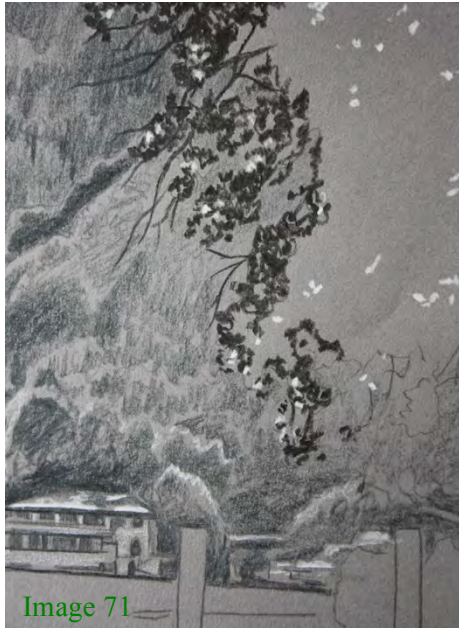
Be really brave with the values here! The soft white pencil really needs to create a punch of light against the strong dark, use it as heavily as you dare.

Image 72

9. Filling in

Once this is done we can do back in and fill in the gaps we left when we were finishing off our final hill.

Use your hard black pencil for this. Be sparing and take your time! In order to make this look realistic, we need to follow the hill structure up and 'behind' the leaves. Make sure you study your reference photograph intently before beginning!

Image 73

10. Rear Water Surface Highlights

The top half of our picture is looking really good now! We've got some great depth and look at how much those highlights really make that top right hand corner zing!

Now we can move onto the bottom half of our image and tackle the water!

Using the hard white pencil with a sharp point, we'll make some linear marks across the water. These will act as highlights on the rear water surface. Be random here, any marks that are too regular or regimented will look artificial.

Image 74
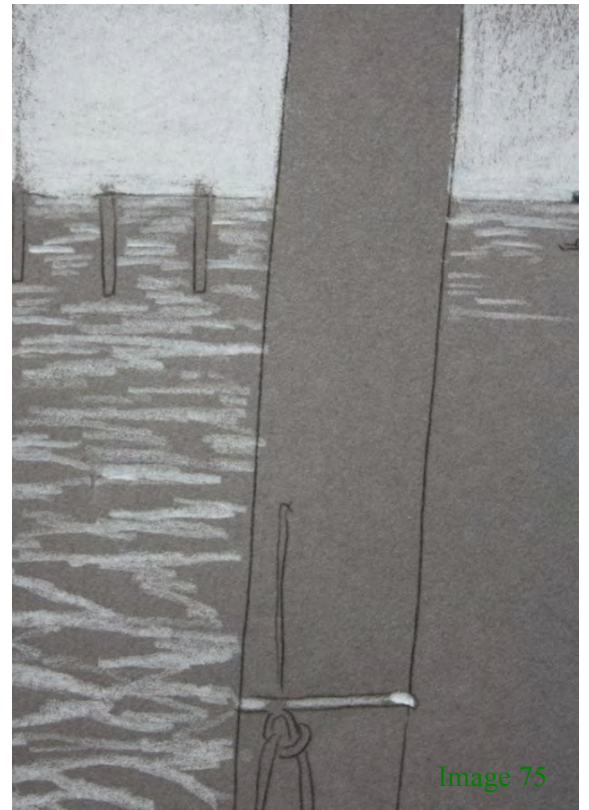
Image 75

Image 75

11. Blocking in the Jetty

Let's block in the jetty. Use your soft black and white pencils and start to work on the tones within the jetty – observe any change in value down the length of the posts.

Don't be too brave layering the darks as yet as our foreground post needs to be the darkest element within the whole composition. Remember we can add more at the end!

Image 77

Image 78

We're starting to get a good idea of the darks within this area so now is a good time to balance that out with some more highlights. Add some strong highlights into the water surface using your soft white pencil; these will really add a sparkle to the ripples so push the brightness and dot and dash in!

12. Jetty Reflections

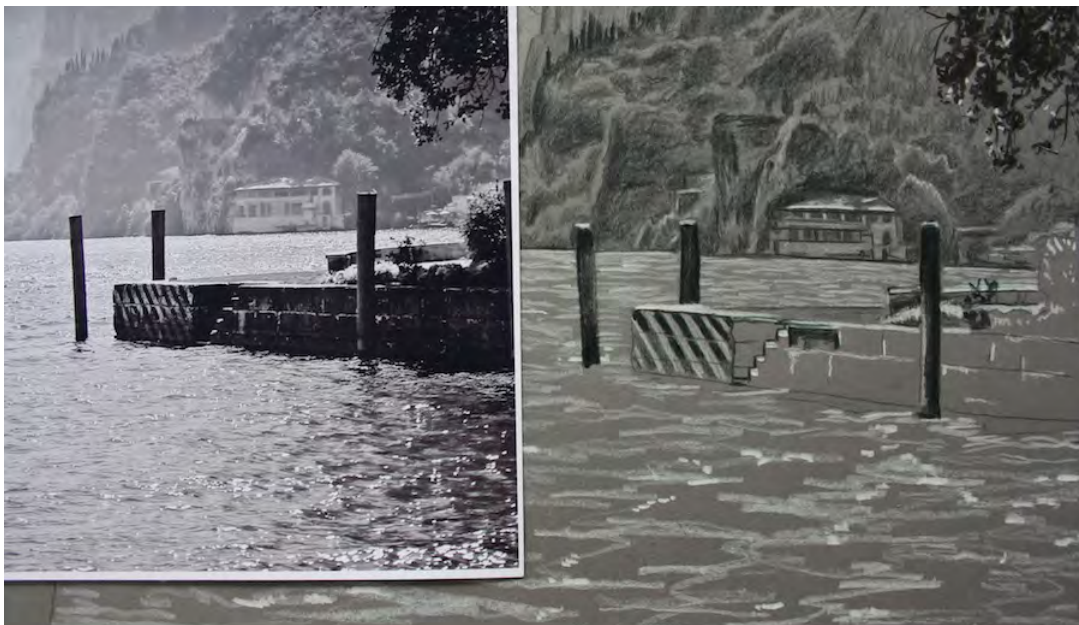Let's have another look at our reference photo. We can see that the jetty reflects into the water just like the castle we drew in the previous exercise had a reflection. What is different here is that the lake water is not still. The question is then – how do we get our reflection to look realistic?

We'll start with our soft black pencil and add fine lines into the area where the jetty meets the water surface. That's as hard as it gets! You need to observe the reference photo really carefully at this point, but as long as you take your time and remember less is more, you'll be just fine!

Image 79

Image 80

13.Water Surface

We're nearly there!

Let's create more movement and depth in our water and add some darker tones to the water surface. Allow flow and rhythm to the marks you make. Simplify the shapes that you see and increase the darker tones towards the bottom right corner.

Image 81

You can see in Image 81 that the light whites (those done with less pressure) give the surface rhythm and the soft heavy highlights give the sparkle.

It is the mid grey tone of the paper that gives the main body colour of the water, and it is the black pencil marks that accentuate the form of the ripples.

14. Adding the Left Hand Posts

Add the posts in the mid-ground, then the foreground post using the soft black pencil. Take care that the rear posts have a slightly lighter value compared to the foreground post.

You will need to add a number of layers to build a really rich and solid dark tone. Observe the different values on the pole: the top looks much darker than the lower half so we'll adjust our drawing accordingly.

Image 82

Image 83

Let's have a look at where that leaves us…

15. Blending

As you can see from Image 84 we're onto the finishing touches. Our image is complete apart from a few tweaks here and there.

It's nice, when painting with coloured pencil, to blend your picture to finish. This will help areas to flatten out, creating a much more unified tone with more subtle colour blends.

Using the clear blending pencil, blend the sky, clouds and rear hill. You can blend more of your picture, but I think the slight paper tooth has added to the rock and vegetation textures and detail.

Image 85 shows us the effect we get from blending our work.

See how smooth the sky and clouds are, but how the unblended surface is ideal to show texture.

If you want to know more about the effects you can get by blending and burnishing why not look at my Coloured Pencils Foundation Course on ArtTutor.

Image 86

Now as well as depth, we've got texture in our painting.

16. Tonal balancing

We're at the end of our painting, but before we head off to the framers, let's reflect a little and consider our efforts…
- Do we need to lighten or darken any areas?
- Do we have enough depth?
- Are the areas of contrasting value as clean and wide as possible?
- Is there any area that lacks detail or form?

Take a while to ponder the above questions. It's good too to take some time away from your piece so you can look at it with fresh eyes. If there's something that doesn't look quite right, your eye will be drawn to it immediately.

With any adjustments that you want to make, go slowly, adding carefully any element you feel is missing. You can gently use the putty eraser to remove any pencil if you have been a little heavy handed.

When you are satisfied, sign with a flourish and give yourself a pat on the back!

Lake Garda by Jane Lazenby

If you've completed this monochrome study by Jane and my Stalker Castle exercise from earlier, you should start to feel really comfortable identifying and reproducing solid value contrast. Just as importantly…

Actually *doing* these exercises will help the concept sink in and become second nature. Reading about it isn't enough; I really encourage you to go through these two exercises before moving on to colour. Which is what we'll look at next...

SECTION 4 – COLOUR EXERCISES

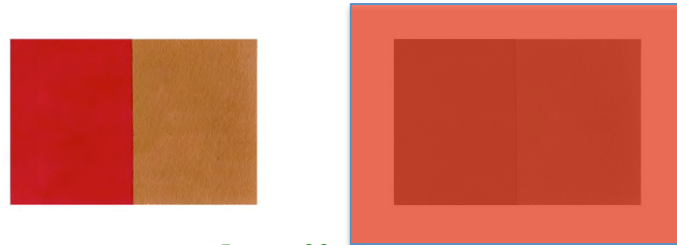Look at this image of a red and yellow square next to each other…

In colour, these two squares are easily distinguished from one another. However, if I hold a red piece of acetate over them (my redeye filter) you can see how they merge into one solid block almost.

You might ask the question *"when would I ever view a painting through a red piece of plastic"* and you wouldn't. But even though an observer's eye might be able to distinguish between the various shapes in your picture, it will look flat and anaemic.

Moreover, standing at even a moderate distance from a painting has an effect of muting the colours and I'll guarantee that a picture made up of similar values will look uninspiring at best, from any sort of viewing distance!

4.1 Exercise 1 – Value match real objects
This is a simple and fun exercise and also very useful at training your eye to see the tonal value in colour.

What you'll need:

- 3 everyday objects. Anything small that you can place on the desk in front of you. In my example I'm using a lemon, a tea cup and a golf tee peg.
- Your chosen painting surface, paints and brush of choice.
- A grey or monochrome scale (a colour scale will provide more of a challenge than a grey scale, so give that a go!)

Image 89

Step 1

- Place one of the objects in front of you.
- Look at the object and squint / defocus your eyes.
- Notice the values of various parts of the object – the shadow areas, any creases or folds, highlights, indentations, details etc.
- Identify in your mind the darkest value and the lightest value.
- Hold your grey / monochrome scale against various parts of the object to confirm the values.
- Repeat this for each of your 3 objects.

Step 2

- Pick the darkest part of one of the objects. For example, I'm looking at the pith at the end of the lemon.
- Mix a colour that you think is the correct value for this darkest area. Don't worry about getting a perfect colour match; your aim is to get an accurate value match.

Image 90
You can see a video version of this exercise in my Watercolour, Acrylics and Oils Foundation courses on ArtTutor.com

- Add a swatch of your mixed colour to your paper or canvas (if you're using watercolours, allows this to dry fully).
- Now use your grey / monochrome scale to see how accurate you were.
- Repeat this for the lightest part of the object.
- Repeat a third time for a mid value.
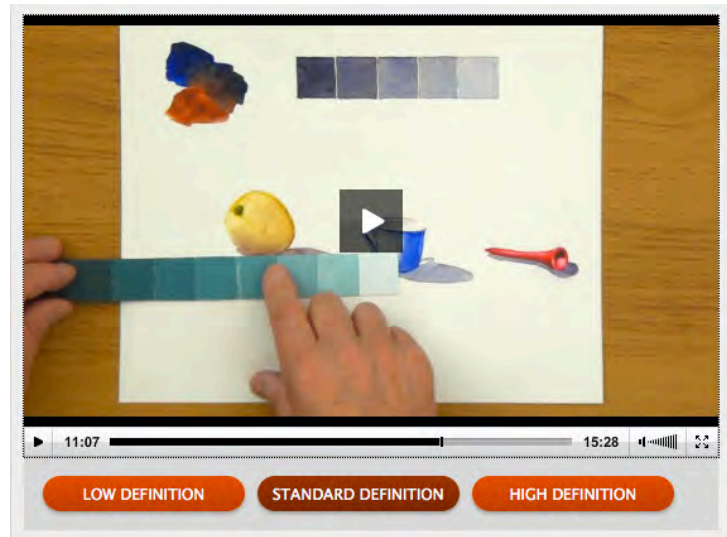- Finally, repeat the process for the remaining two objects.

This is a great exercise for quickly honing your eye to see the strength of value in various colours. Don't paint the objects in full - there's a danger you'll get caught up in the detail and it's time consuming. Just paint 3-4 patches of colour on your painting surface for each object, and measure. This way, you get cram in lots of learning experiences in a short period of time!

4.2 Exercise 2 – Full colour painting: A Portrait of Alice

It's time to move on to a full coloured pencil painting!

If you've diligently followed the exercises so far, this could be one of the most vibrant, striking images you've ever painted.

Image 91
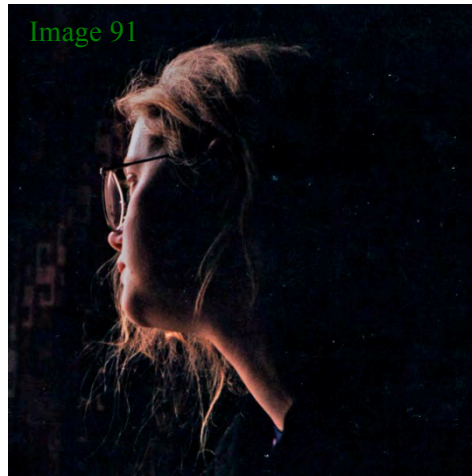
We've deliberately chosen a photograph that gives you plenty of opportunity to use strong value – a portrait of a woman named Alice. We'll be focusing on the contrast between light and dark – something called counterchange (see 'Counterchange' in Section 5). Only by emphasising this are we going to be able to carve out the face and features from the dark background.

So let me hand you over once again to Jane Lazenby who'll take you through this painting step-by-step.

What You'll Need:
- A3 black heavyweight Canson paper
- White carbon tracing paper, A3 computer printer paper, standard graphite pencil
- Selection of pencils (Derwent Artist and/or Coloursoft) Titanium White, Black, Chrome Orange, Pink Lavender, Grey Lavender, Ochre, Deep Fuchsia, Mid Brown, Dark Brown, Indigo
- Kneadable eraser, electric eraser, sharpener

Final painting and reference photograph
The final painting is split over 2 pages and will fit on to an A3 piece of paper. You can trace this on to your paper or use a grid method to scale up or down. We have a video lesson on how to do this within the drawing foundation course at ArtTutor.com

Monochrome Scale
Create your scale on a scrap of paper, which ranges from your white pencil to your dark paper. As before, create the different values by varying pressure.
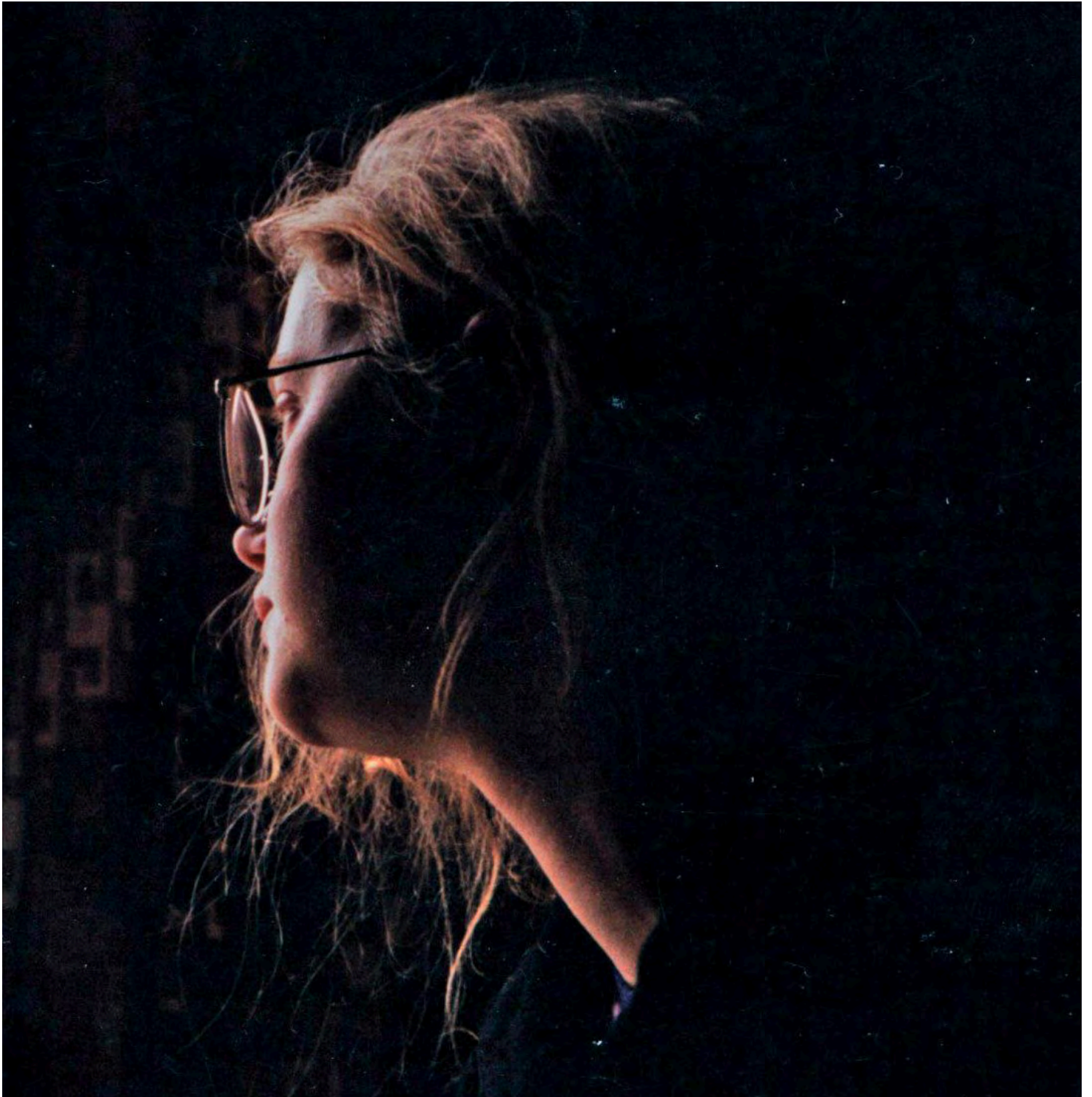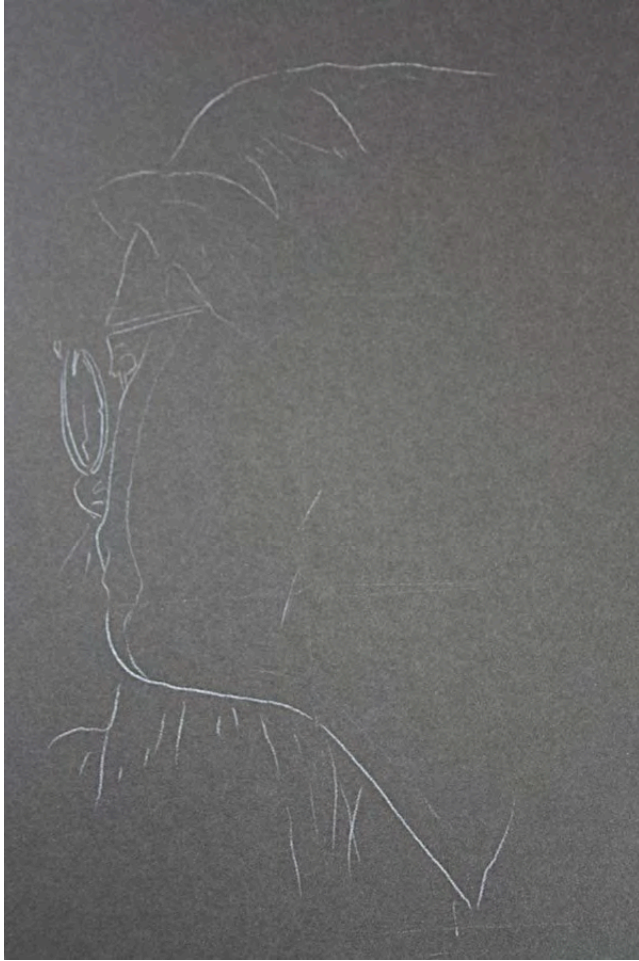
So first things first, let's get the sketch onto our paper. I began by creating a structural line drawing on thin paper. I wanted my black paper to retain a smooth surface to work on with no eraser or indented pencil marks so I decided to trace directly from my pencil sketch using white carbon paper.

The white carbon paper is really important because we want the outlined areas to retain that crisp whiteness and stand out against the black of the paper. If we used black or grey carbon paper, or sketched using a pencil, this would muddy the line and take away from the intense contrast between light and dark. If you don't have any, you can get it in all good art stores.

Place the white carbon paper is placed under the sketch and on top of the black paper, shiny side down. We can now trace the sketch onto the black paper: take care not to exert too much pressure and create an indented line.

Now we have a basic outline to work with, we're going to work light to dark, concentrating first on the highlight areas.

The highlight areas are layered in with the white pencil. Keep your reference photo handy and look for the bright white areas – squint and de-focus your eyes if this helps.
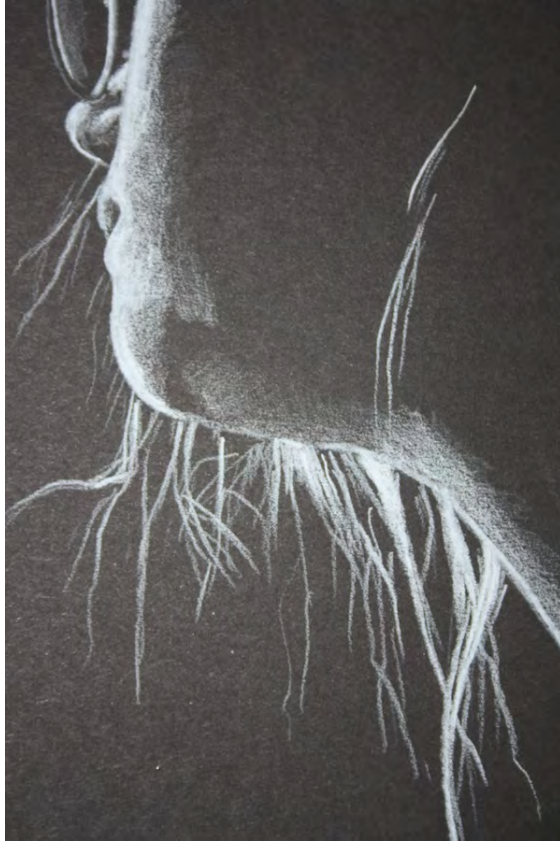
You can work boldly in these areas, and then much softer, using a circular motion to fade out the white areas into the darker shadows.

The areas to the outmost left side of the face are bleached out by the light and need to be as strong as the pencil will allow so that we can create the maximum contrast of our light and dark values.

Image 96

Make sure your pencil is nice really sharp and draw in a range of fine directional marks for the hair. It's really important to keep the point on the pencil as you work.

Be brave and use the pencil with an even pressure.

So let's take a look at what we've done so far.

What we've essentially created is a monochrome image of Alice, emphasising the lightest lights and darkest darks.

Because we have the option of working on a dark paper when we paint with coloured pencils, we have to bear that in mind when we consider value.

Image 97

This is an extreme example because our darkest value is that of the paper: all the areas of the darkest value must be left untouched. If we had used a mid-tone coloured paper, it would appear somewhere in the middle of our scale and for those areas with a middling value we'd leave the paper untouched.

Back to Alice… So we know that all other values we use from now on will fit between the white of the pencil and the black of the paper.

We're still working light to dark with our coloured pencils, so the next step is to move onto the values that are only slightly darker than the white.

If we were working from a photograph where the light was even more intense than we have here, we'd probably leave our picture where it is. But because there are some softer areas of light across the face, we can gradually blend our colours darker into the shadows of her cheek and neck.

Image 98

Our colour palette for this section will be a variety of reds, oranges, lilacs and browns – add the lightest values of these colours first, before moving to a pencil with a darker value.

Use a soft circular motion to prevent lines appearing within the skin area, remember lots of thin layers are better than one heavy layer.
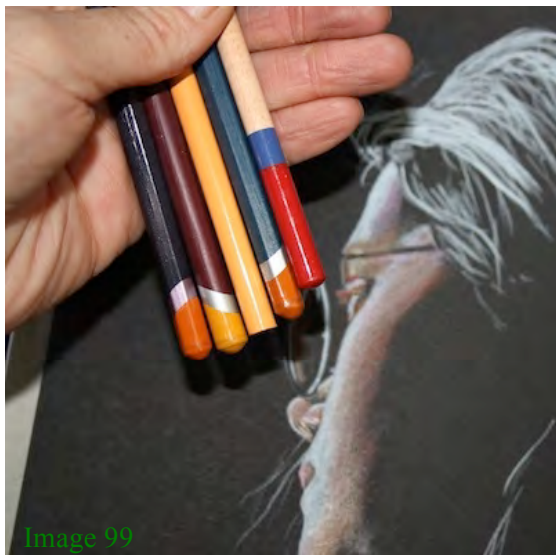
Image 99

Image 100

In Image 98 we can see the lighter values that I'm using, and in Image 99 I've moved onto the same colours, but with darker values.

You can see what we're aiming for in Image 100.

Image 101

Our next step is to add oranges and warm yellows into the hair. Allow your pencils to follow the white pencil already laid down; in addition, create a few locks of hair of mid-value by drawing directly onto the black paper using your coloured pencil with a sharp point.

Image 102

Softly add some darker tones (Dark Fuchsia, Indigo, Mid Brown, Dark Brown) into the hair area where it fades out into the black paper, less is more so don't be heavy handed at this stage. Remember you can always tidy up any dark areas now with a sharp black pencil.
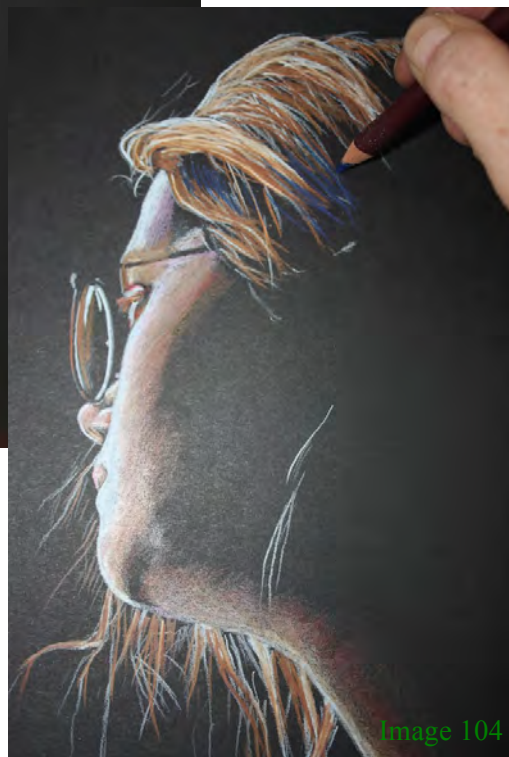

Image 103

Image 104

Image 105

We're nearly there with our portrait of Alice! Look over the drawing and assess if you need to restate any values or crisp up any highlights... Remember! This image is all about counterchange and exaggerating the contrasts in values, but it is the softness of the shading that will really make it come alive for you.

If needed, take back out or soften any pencil areas and unwanted marks on the black paper with a kneadable putty eraser/electric eraser for precision and then we are complete!

There is no need to use a burnisher or a blending pencil on this image if you have applied the pencil shading softly in thin layers with light pressure.
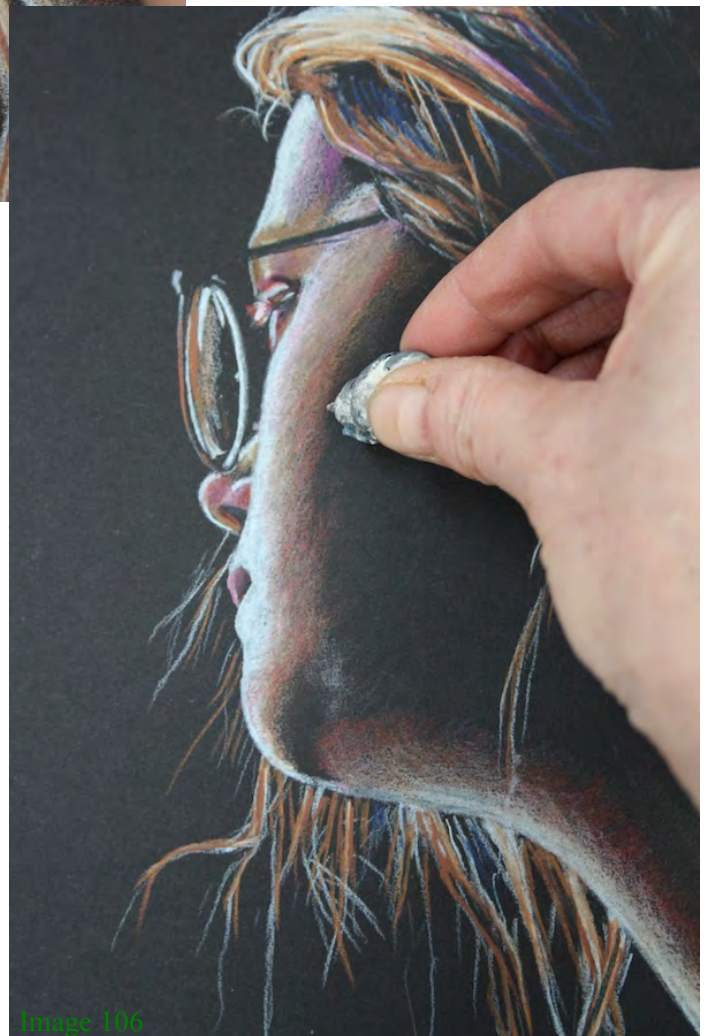
Image 106
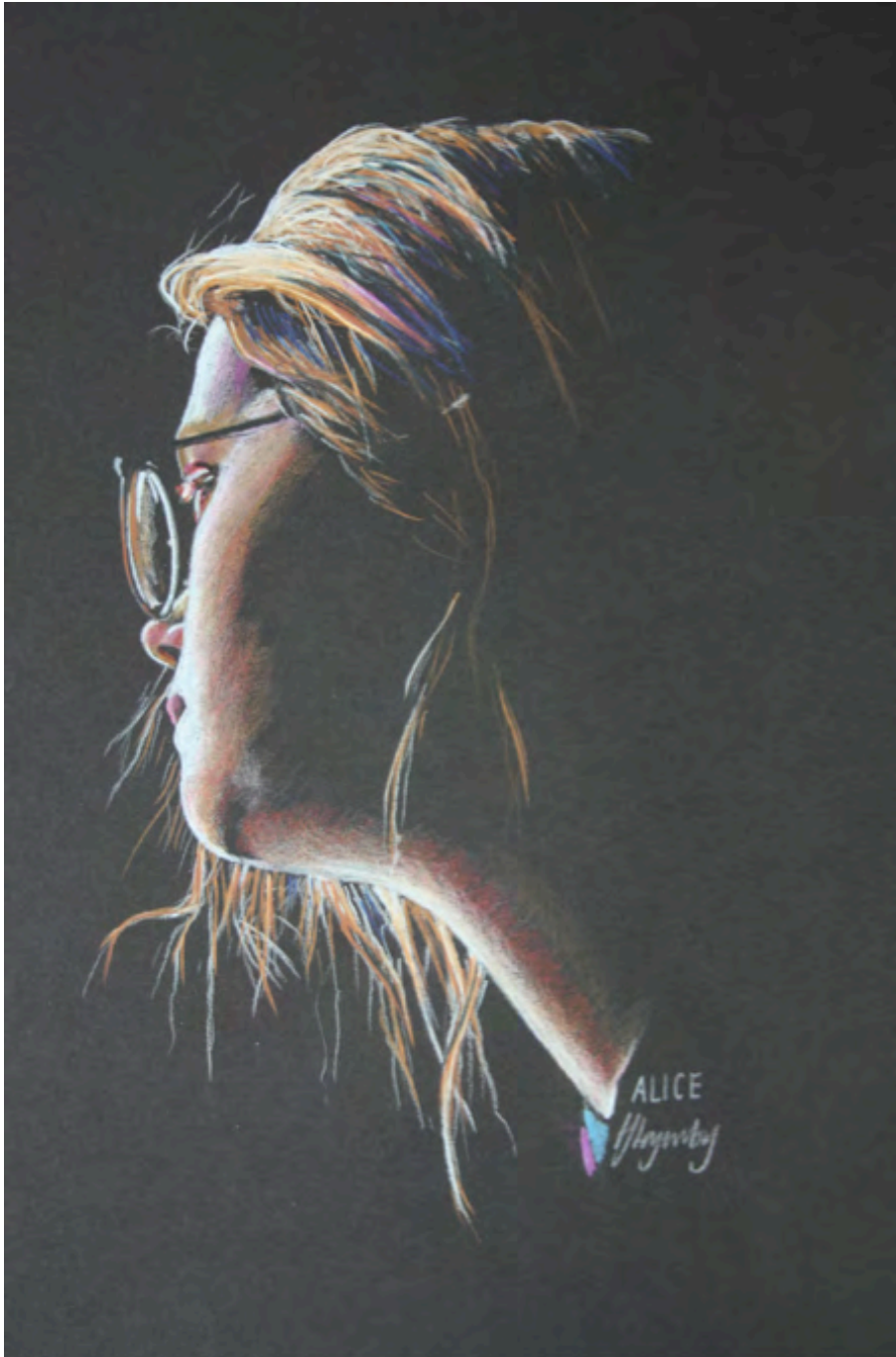
Image 107

A Portrait of Alice by Jane Lazenby

So there you have it. Notice how it's not until the very final application of the darkest darks that the painting comes to life.

Please do give this painting by Jane a go. If you're a member of ArtTutor.com, why not add your attempt to the coloured pencils forum? We'd love to see it and you'll be sure to get plenty of encouraging feedback from like-minded artists who've followed this e-book like you.

SECTION 5 – BONUS VALUE TIPS

If you've read this far (and followed along), you'll have a greater practical understanding of tonal value than 99% of all leisure artists!

There are just a couple of principles remaining that I'd like to cover, to complete your understanding.

5.1 Abrupt and transitional value contrast

Let's go back to our grey scale for a moment…

The range of values is wide – one end is white, the other end is almost black. If we take a square close to one end and place it next to a square close to the other end, the contrast between those two is very strong and abrupt (Image 108). In other words, one value finishes and the other starts.
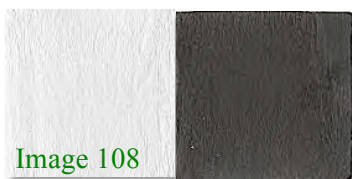
Image 108

This abrupt value contrast is useful for describing angular shapes, with definite sides and strong lines - like a box for example. Stalker Castle in our earlier exercise is a good example.

But not all objects are so angular. Take the obvious example of a ball or sphere.

Image 109

We still need to make good use of contrasting values to make the sphere look 3-dimensional and solid. The underside of the sphere and cast shadow will be quite a strong value, whilst the highlight will be a very light value.

However, you can see that there needs to be a subtle transition from darks to mid-tones to lights. If any of the steps up or down in value are obvious to the eye or abrupt (as they are with a grey scale for example), the effect of a smooth, round object will be lost.

Don't mistake this soft transition for a narrow range of values. The range from darkest dark to lightest light still needs to be adequate to make the object look solid.

Image 110

Spheres aren't the only objects that require a soft transition of values. One of the everyday items I see a lot of hobby artists struggle with is clothing and fabric…

Rendering Fabric

When I see a pencil drawing of fabric that a student isn't happy with, it's either because the folds in the material don't have strong enough lights and darks (good value contrast), or the transition (blending) isn't gradual and subtle enough – it looks like a series of shapes rather than soft folds.

Look at this photo of a coat sleeve (Image 111). Note the subtle transition from lights to darks and how the shadows and the lights in the folds - especially next to the stitching – help to tell the viewer that the material is soft and undulating.

Image 111

Now look at Image 112 of this sleeve. Yes, the general shape and perspective is fine and some lights and darks exist, but limited use of value contrast means the image is insipid and flat looking. The weak attempt at shadows actually looks more like abstract shapes printed on the material than folds in the cloth.
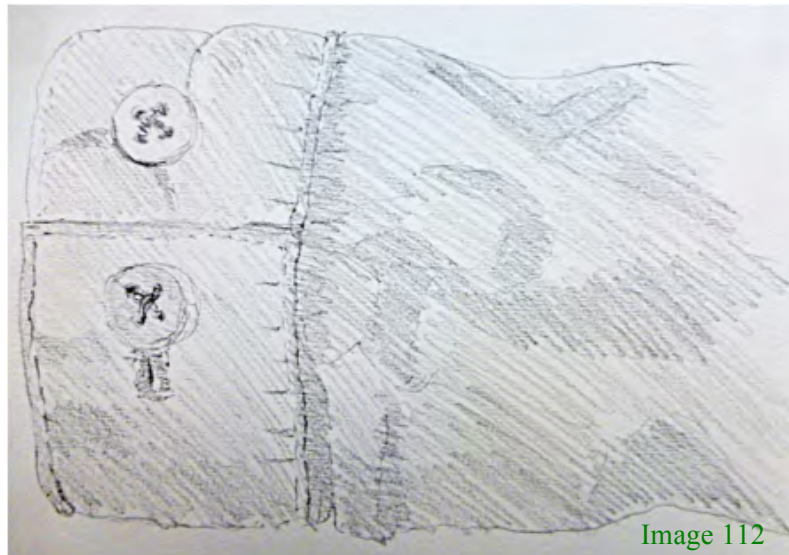
Image 112

Now in Image 113 we have made more use of value contrast with some better light and shade, especially around the cuff and the stitching.

However, we're still left with those abstract, meaningless shapes that are supposed to represent folds in the material, defined by light and shadows. To make the folds and creases in the cloth look believable, the trick is to create a much more subtle and gradual transition from light to dark, which will immediately suggest soft cloth.
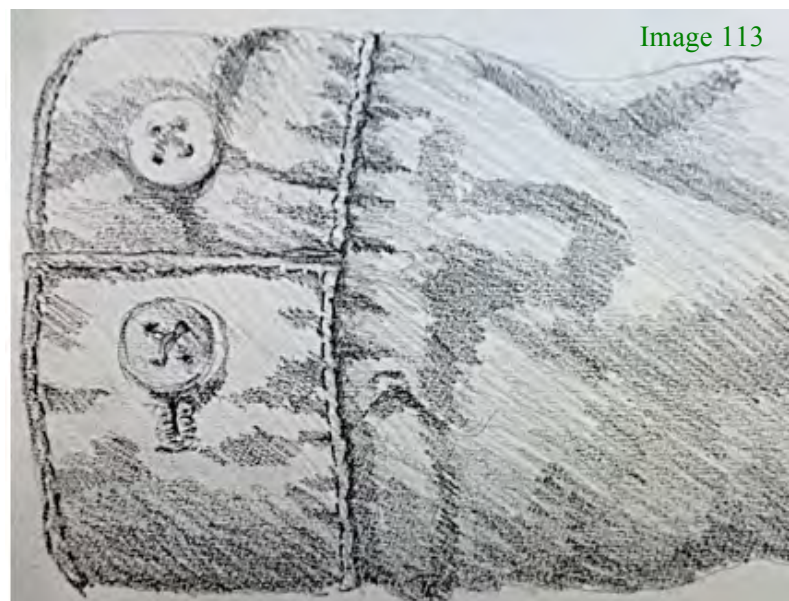
Image 113

In Image 114, I've started to blend those light and dark areas on the top left of the sleeve to achieve the **gentle transitions**, using a putty eraser and a torchon. See how the initial blending of shades and lifting out of highlights has already improved things considerably?

Image 114

If you haven't got a torchon, use a cotton bud or the corner of a folded tissue. You can use any sort of eraser but the putty version allows you to tear small pieces from it and shape them into fine wedges or points.

Remember, the simple rule with value contrast is that, normally, soft transitions mean round and/or soft material. Sharp, well-defined changes from light to dark generally mean angular and/or hard surfaces.

Finally, in Image 115 we've completed this exercise and even though it's a relatively quick example, you can see the difference compared to Images 112 and 113.
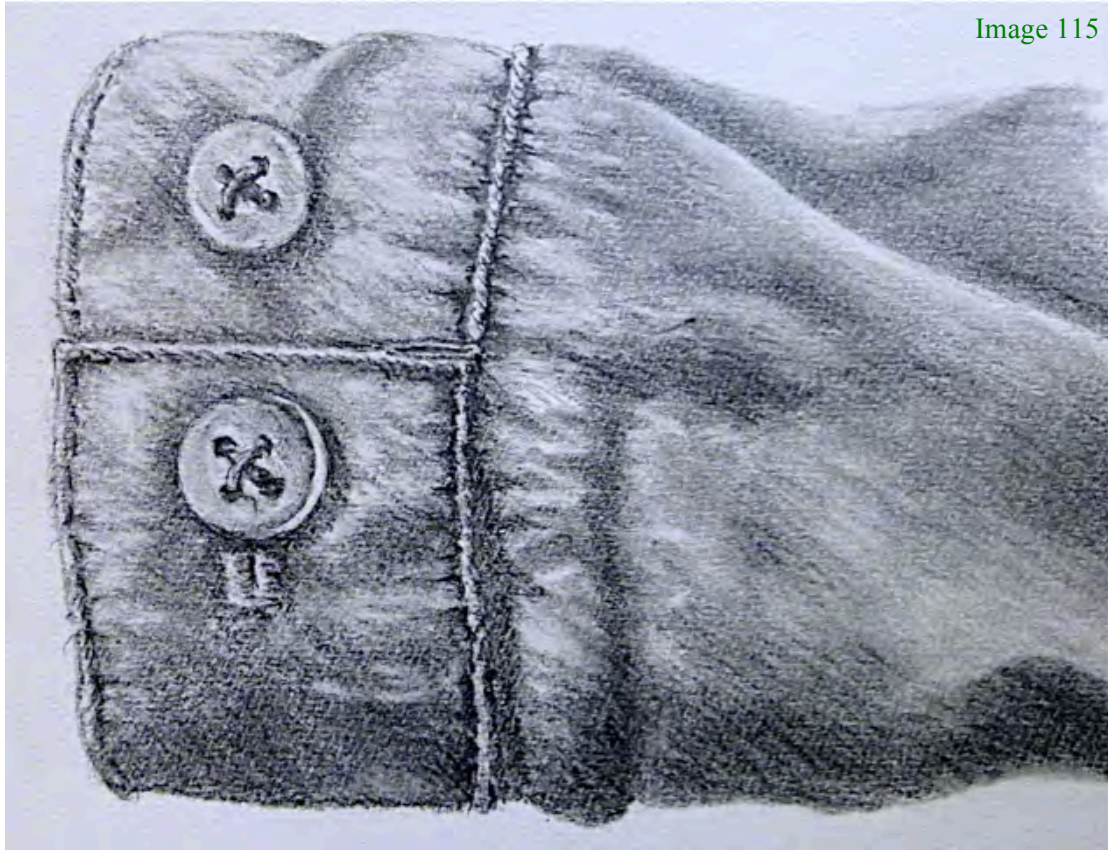
At first it'll probably take you time to create a pleasing blend of lights and darks as you develop the skill in getting these transitions just right. However, do keep going. It's enormously satisfying re-creating even a simple subject like this with all the subtle value changes.

So whatever your chosen medium, think about how either abrupt or transitional value contrast will help to create a believable rendition of the object you're capturing.

Within the vaults of ArtTutor.com we have a number of video lessons on shading and blending using various painting and drawing mediums, which will help you achieve nice transitional values.

5.2 Counter change

Understanding what counterchange is and then how to use it in your picture, really is a significant key to a successful painting or drawing.

Simply put, counterchange in art means placing a dark value object or area next to a lighter one, or vice versa, so that they both stand out against each other.

Look at these photos of Bamburgh Castle in Northumberland, England…

Image 116

In Image 116 above we have a very stark example of counterchange – or dark against light – with the castle in silhouette against a bright evening sky. There's no doubt where the castle ends and the sky starts, is there?

Now look at the Image 117 (below) of the same scene. Still pretty good counterchange between the castle and sky because the light stone is still darker than the sky area.

However, look at the walls and grassy slopes on the left of the castle. Because they're all in shadow, their definition is much less clear and if you screw your eyes up, it's not as easy to see where the walls finish and the slopes begin. This is because the tonal strength of these areas is quite similar, even though they're different colours.

Image 117

If you were painting this picture you may want to adjust the values to the left of the castle, to make sure that the relevant areas stand out where necessary. Or, perhaps not…

You could leave the value strength as it is, if you decide that you want this area of the picture to be less obvious - quieter if you like - to put the focus on the main part of the castle. And that's so important.

Of course, you'll want to paint more than just silhouettes of castles and inevitably, most parts of any picture do not want or need a high contrast throughout. So counterchange needs to be thought of rather like the grey scale. It's light against dark, sure, but it can be subtle or fierce.

Image 118
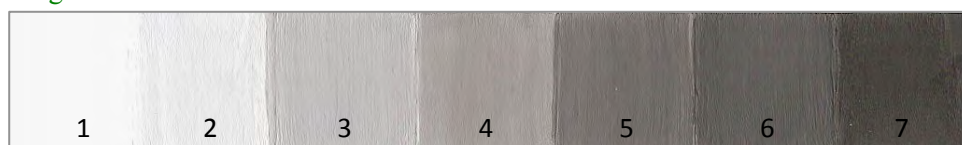
Remember, strong counterchange, i.e. the darkest dark next to the lightest light (say Value 1 next to Value 7 on our grey scale) will immediately draw the viewer's eye to that area and artists over the centuries have used this knowledge to create their focal points with this high contrast technique.

Gentler counterchange (say a Value 2 next to a Value 4) still defines adjacent shapes but might be used near the edge of a picture or anywhere where you don't want high contrast.

Think of a picture as the cast in a theatre. You have the leading man and lady as the focal point and the supporting cast who, whilst not the centre of attention, play a vital role by their relative anonymity, in highlighting the main players. Important as the leading actors are, without that supporting cast, they would make no impact at all.

So in a painting, the high value counterchange (the star of the show) is going to give you a strong focal point with real impact – but only if the supporting cast, i.e. the more mundane, quieter areas of the picture are thought through and in their proper place as well.

Image 119

In Image 119 of a bi-plane, we have both strong and gentle counterchange. The strong, red colour of the plane, broken by the white stripes, gives us intense counterchange - the darkest dark against lightest light - and leaves us in no doubt that it is the star of the show. However, the light but varied colours in the clouds provide a much gentler counterchange, especially when set against the slightly stronger blue sky behind the plane.

Let's look at one or two more examples of simple counterchange...

In Image 120 below, a monochrome watercolour of Cockley Beck in the English Lake District, notice how the tree *trunk* is quite light against the dark background immediately above the bridge…

Image 120

Yet the upper branches have been painted quite dark so they stand out against the moonlit sky. You wouldn't see a tree in nature that has a light bottom half and a dark top half! But until it's pointed out, most viewers won't even notice the change – it *looks* natural. As with the tree, you can do exactly the same with fence posts, telegraph poles, ships masts and so on.

Other areas in this picture worth noting are the snow-covered roof against the darker hillside, the snowy area helping the two walkers to stand out, and the dark stone bridge against the snowy banks. It's also interesting to point out that the bridge, though dark underneath, has a snow covering along the top layer of stones to help define it against the dark trees in the background.

Now what happens when you have adjacent areas where two or more of them are the same value? How do you define them without it looking contrived?

Well, this is where the benefit of being an artist as opposed to a photographer kicks in! As the artist you have the freedom to adjust things to make the picture work, where a photographer might have to resort to filters and other devices to create counterchange.

Image 121

In Image 121 of a stag in the Scottish Highlands, you can see if you screw up your eyes that his coat is, tonally, a similar value to the background hills, especially around the centre of his body. However, I've 'invented' a muted light from the left as an excuse to lighten off the rear end and top of his body, thus making it considerably paler against the distant Glen.

At the same time I've added shadow to his chest so now the front of his body is much darker than the hills, not only defining him against the background, but pushing the hills into their proper place in the distance. More importantly it gives him a foreground impact and clearly, the focal point of the picture.

But do you see that even though the rear, middle and front of his body are very different values, he 'looks' right and the light and shade have given him that vital three-dimensional form.

However, let me re-emphasise the really important bit here…

Using value contrast and counterchange shouldn't be regarded as merely a technique. It's as important to apply value judgments to all areas of your pictures as it is to know what the subject of your painting is going to be before you start.

Applying value judgments to every part of your picture must become second nature to you. Ideally, you will plan this before you pick up the brush, but more often than not, you need to adjust value and counterchange slightly as you progress through the painting.

Without developing this state of mind, your pictures will always lack that impact, that 'punch', that certain 'something' that lifts it from 'OK' to a minor masterpiece you can justifiably be proud of.

Remember, you're the artist. It's your picture and you decide how much emphasis you put on each part of the picture, using as much or as little counterchange - value judgment - light against dark - call it what you will - as you want or need.

It doesn't matter *how* you do it – as long as you do!

If you'd like to learn about a vast rage of other techniques that can help you with your artwork, take a look through some of our courses at ArtTutor.

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ABOUT ARTTUTOR.COM

ArtTutor.com was built on the back of my passion to help more people take more enjoyment and more satisfaction from art…

It gives you 24/7 access to hundreds of TV-quality video tutorials from more than 35 professional art instructors. We cover everything from watercolour landscapes to pastel portraits… and we add new lessons every single week.

What else will find at ArtTutor.com?

STEP-BY-STEP PAINTING FOUNDATION COURSES
Comprehensive video courses that cover all the fundamental techniques in watercolour, acrylics, pastel, oils, coloured pencil and drawing.

SUPER-FRIENDLY MEMBERS-ONLY FORUM
Where you can post your artwork for critiques from other members or ask your art-related questions.

A PLACE TO STORE & SHARE YOUR ARTWORK
Our members-only gallery system allows you to easily add your artwork to ArtTutor, where other members can 'like' it and offer helpful feedback.

MONTHLY PAINTING CHALLENGES WITH PRIZES
A range of challenges to choose from so that all tastes are catered for… and with prizes that are definitely worth winning!

My goal is to make ArtTutor.com the best place for anyone looking to improve their artistic skills and get much more enjoyment from the wonderful past-time of painting and drawing. We'd love to see you there!

Bob Davies

ARTTUTOR COURSES

ArtTutor.com is home to hundreds of DVD-quality video lessons across a range of subject matter and styles. We also have a growing number of courses and series that can be accessed by all members 24/7…

Our courses don't run to a fixed schedule – all the lessons are there permanently for you to dip in and out of whenever it's convenient. Here are a few that might be of interest you...

Watercolour Courses
- Bob Davies' Watercolour Foundation Course
- Siân Dudley's Progressive Watercolour Florals
- Rob Dudley's Watercolour Landscapes
- Joanne Thomas' Expressive Watercolour Landscapes
- Granville D. Clarke's Dynamic Watercolour Skies
- Frank Halliday's Round The World In Watercolours
- Glynis Barnes-Mellish's Watercolour Portraits

Acrylics Courses
- Bob Davies' Acrylic Foundation Course
- Will Kemp's Beginner's Guide To Acrylic Still Life & Landscapes
- Marion Dutton's Acrylic Flowers & Birds
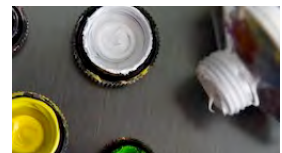
Oils Courses
- Bob Davies' Oils Foundation Course
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- Michael Howley's Pastels Foundation Course
- Rebecca De Medonça's Advanced Pastel Figures
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- Jane Lazenby's Coloured Pencil Foundation Course
- Steve Ormerod's Coloured Pencil Workshops
- Jane Lazenby's Coloured Pencil Animals

Why not join us and start a painting and drawing course today?

REVIEWS FROM ARTTUTOR MEMBERS

We asked all our members for a fair and honest appraisal of how they feel about ArtTutor… and then posted every single response (good and bad) here on the website. **They are 100% unedited.**

As of writing, there are more than 150 appraisals, 3 of which you could consider negative. Here's a small selection from leisure artists like you:

Eleanor - Elsdon, UK

Everyone's kind and also constructively critical and helpful. The tutors, too, act as community and respect everyone else by not skipping ahead in their videos, and not therefore missing out the very bit we needed to know, which is what happens so often online, and some of them even find time to pop in and answer queries and comment on our work.

The core organising group is imaginative and responsive and endlessly innovative. What more could we ask? We just need to bring our brushes, pastels and pencils and have a go – and the great thing is, no one is too novice to be accepted. You can't put a price on that.

Margaret, Queensland, Australia.
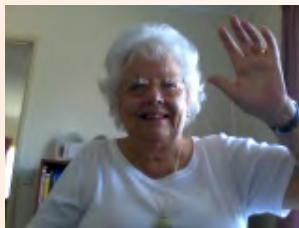
ArtTutor is simply EXCELLENT! All lessons are easy to follow and are inspirational. I, personally, find them a great resource to improving my painting. Since being a member I have painted quite a few paintings and won some prizes in our Annual Show.

I recommend ArtTutor wholeheartedly to beginners and anyone interested in painting whatever medium you wish to follow, be it watercolours, acrylics, oils, coloured pencils, drawing pencils, etc.,

I love to paint both acrylics and watercolours. I paint mainly from photos and mainly landscapes. I think Art Tutor offers brilliant courses for all artists. I love the idea that I can try all mediums if I wish with instruction from qualified artists.

Give it a go, I say. You will not be disappointed.

Yael Shany

This is my honest truth: I love ArtTutor for many reasons I am not so sure be able to mention them all. But some of them are; I truly love the instructors. They are friendly, natural and humble yet extremely good artists and very stimulating to follow as instructors. They give a good feeling "if I can do it, you can do it too" kind of feeling.

The site encourages participation by simplifying the web features for the members. Something in this site so valuable to us artists in its simplicity and friendliness.

Unfortunately - careful this site is addictive. Once I started it became my comfort zone:>)