

## The Atelier Tier

Month: June

Project title: Belvedere Torso

Expected hour to complete: 19-25

Materials: Graphite pencils (2H-2B), Stonehenge paper (white/cream), kneaded eraser, mono-zero eraser, paper stumps, .3mm-.5mm mechanical pencils.

Recommended scale of project: 14 inches (35cm) from top to bottom of the drawing. Edges of the paper should be at least 2 (5cm) inches above and below that.

Feedback submission deadline: 16th of June

## Lesson notes

### **Background:**

The Belvedere Torso is, as far as I can tell, the most well known of the Bargue plates. A big part of that notoriety is most likely due to its place in the master copy section of the program- it is the final Bargue plate that we will face before moving into the world of cast drawing. As such it represents an evolution of the ideas that have been introduced in previous Bargues.

Here we will be focused on executing the drawing process we were introduced to in previous lessons in a much more demanding environment. We will have to comb through more complex information in order to simplify our block in. Value shapes will be more difficult to outline early on due to their far more nebulous edges. The gestures of the lines at the contour will have much more nuance and subtlety. The sheer enormity of the subject gives us much more surface area to keep in harmony and progressing at the same level.

You will want to keep in mind that the level of complexity in this drawing will compel you to progress too quickly into detail. I am adding this note here to remind you not do fall into this trap. The story of this drawing for you will be, more than anything, the story of giving respect to the block in stage. I talk a lot about restraint in my teaching and while it is not a quality that we want to have ALWAYS at the forefront of our practice is is a quality we would like to call upon and when needed.

This is a project that will relentlessly test your capacity to triple check your measurements and also to keep your drawing flexible. Can you establish your value shapes in a way that allows them to be continually moved? And your contour lines as well? A light hand is key in this endeavour.

### **Concepts:**

Envelope shape: A simplification of the silhouette of the subject comprised of straight lines and angle breaks.

Shadow shape: The area of the form of a subject not contacted by light from the primary light source. At different stages this will be illustrated in different ways. At first it will be a linear boundary showing a simplification of the shadow shape (this is similar to the way the envelope shape is a simplification of the silhouette of the subject). As the drawing progresses the shadow shape will be filled with value and the shape of the edges will increase in complexity.

**(NEW)** Character of light & shadow: It is one thing to make dark and light values on the paper and another to show the character of shadow and light. Shadow shapes will tend to have continuous edges with a slightly darker concentration of value at the edges. Lights shapes will contain half tone values that do not have concentrated edges and so appear very different from shadow

shapes. Their edges are softer and flow into one another. The boundary between the two is of central importance and leads us to the next concept...

**(NEW)** Core shadows: the core shadow in a plane on the form which is not influenced by either the primary light source or the secondary light source. This makes it the darkest section of the form in a transition from shadow to light.

Light shape: Light (shape): any area on the form that directly receives light from the light source. You can contrast this with reflected light to better understand the nature of the shadow shape.

Half tone: An intermediate value between light and dark (most commonly used to describe gradations within the light shape).

**(NEW)** Dark half tone: Due to the way that light behaves on form we can understand another half-tone concept via the Lambert Scale. A Lambert value scale shows the acceleration of the darkening of value as planes get closer to the definitive shadow edge. This is caused by the form of an object eclipsing different parts of the light source at different points along the form. Once the majority of the light source is eclipsed by the light source this causes an acceleration in the darkening value gradation. (Note: while this phenomenon is better observed when working from a 3D subject it is worth mentioning here just so that we understand it's role.)

Unity: Unity generally refers on the sameness of value. In reference to form it is generally used to indicate the orientation of a plane to the light source. In shadow shape/light shape organisation it generally refers to the grouping, and thus separation, of these two value groups. **(NEW)** In this particular Bargue plate the simplifications haven't been made as easy to spot. In this way it is much like working from life or from a photo of life. You will have to learn to see PAST the detail and available information and into the organisation underneath the superficial appearance. In this way you will become a better designer of value shapes.

Gradation: this refers to a progression of value from light to dark or from dark to light. When drawing form a gradation Weill be the way that we communicate the "turning" of a form, meaning that the form is turning towards or away from the light source.

Line quality: There is a variety of lightness and darkness in the counter lines used here. Also, though to a lesser extent, the breadth of the line changes. This can also be referred to as the "weight" of the line. Accomplishing the control of this variety of such a subtle thing as a line will be very valuable to you as an artist.

### **Process/stages:**

#### **Block-in:**

1. The Belvedere Torso, in particular, puts stress on your block in method. Make sure to double and triple check that you are bringing all sections of the drawing along at the same pace. Remember that each part of the drawing serves as a reference point for the other parts so don't leave anything out.
2. In this project you will have to practice a lot of discipline in how you balance measuring vs. drawing. Make sure to measure well the big proportions and angles. These will be the armature that holds the drawing together. Once you have progressed well into the drawing, keep measuring/observing these distances and angles. Past a certain scale you should be measuring more with your eyes than with mechanical means.
3. Simplification in this project will require you to be quite clever. It is imperative that you remember that there are 2 objectives to satisfy: first is must be as simple as possible and second it must express the subject. Don't simplify so much that you cannot make a good comparison with the source image.

4. In this Bargue in particular there is a need for your block in to introduce 3D elements such as overlaps and indications inside the envelope shape. Much like a portrait block in the story of the Belvedere torso cannot be told through the exterior contour alone.

### **Value & structure**

1. Adding value to your shapes here will require a greater sensitivity to the character of the edges. When adding a value to a shape inevitably it will come to an edge or boundary. Pay close attention to the degree of softness or hardness of the boundary of the shape. In the simplest way possible, refrain from creating a hard value boundary when it should have been soft.
2. We cannot afford here to uniformly unify the shadows. The value of each shadow zone should be carefully observed in relationship to the darkest dark. Comparing other values to this fixed point on the value scale will ensure the accurate organisation of the overall value impression.

### **Refining the Drawing**

1. The scale of the drawing here means that we will benefit from economising with regards to rendering. Bargue has helped us here by utilising mostly the darker halftones to describe the form. Notice, for instance the lack of highlights in the drawing- this means that we will not have to add values all the way up to the highlight or even the center light.
2. Whenever possible remember to hold onto straight lines and angle breaks- especially where the Bargue is begging you to do the opposite. There are especially curvy contour lines in some areas of this drawing and while we want to copy this drawing with a high level of fidelity we also want to learn to control a drawing process. Learning to hold onto straight lines is a great way to ensure that this is achievable. Straight lines and angle breaks mean reference points. These reference points lend you a little bit more control.
3. There are several areas here that will test your understanding of the “soft-but-specific” concept. I can admit that upon the first try I was not particularly successful in this endeavour. Just picture 2 line segments that meet at an angle break, then widen that line. Then picture the many many pixels that make up that thick line segment dispersing a little bit and then a little bit more. This is soft-but-specific design.

