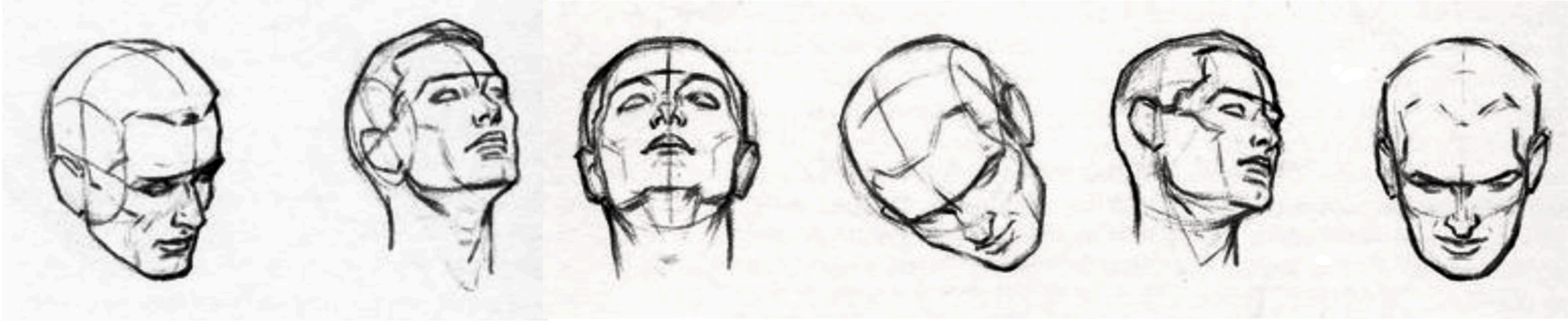


ART ASSIGNMENT #17

Drawing Heads at Extreme Angles & Using the Loomis Method Intuitively

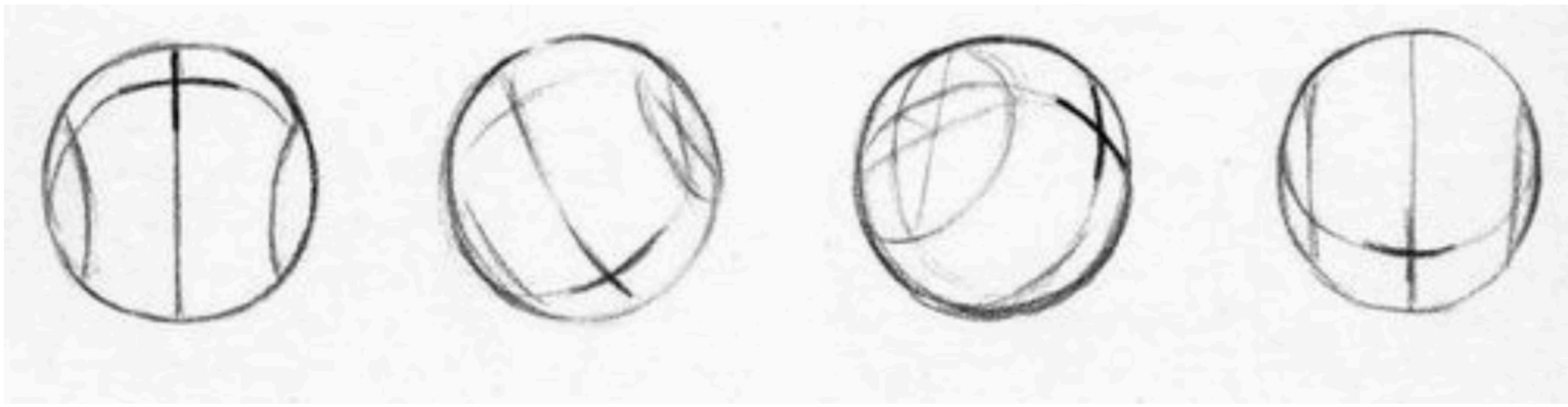
Nicolas Régnier, *Penitent Mary Magdalene* (17th century).

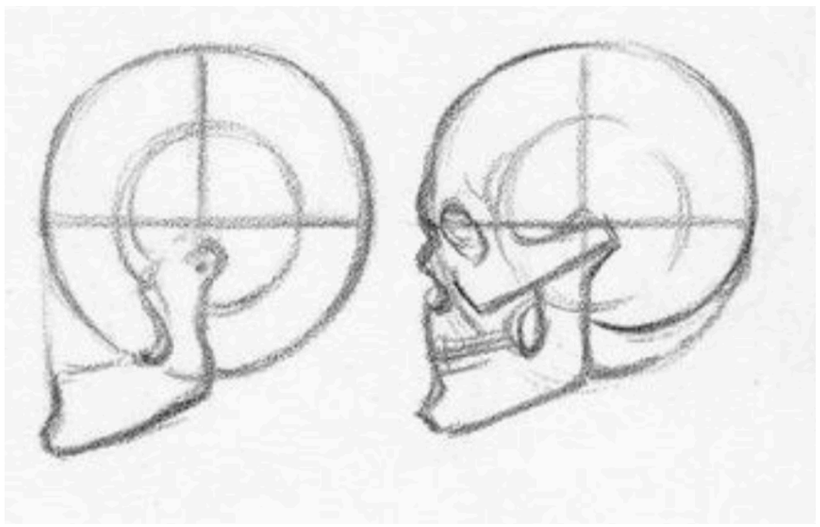
WHAT ARE "EXTREME ANGLES"?



- In our past two classes, we've covered the flat/forwards-facing head, as well as the profile and the 3/4's views, which are the basic angles that portrait artists must know about.
- **Extreme angles are frequently ignored by artists, but practicing these will help us understand Loomis's method more and will help us draw the basic ones with much more confidence and ease.**
- This said, extreme angles are *way* more challenging, as they involve us using our knowledge of perspective and modifying the shape of the face and facial features, as as well as make sense of how the guidelines wrap around the head depending on the angle/perspective we're seeing.
- **With extreme angles, there's basically a lot of *foreshortening* happening, which means that a certain part of the face/head is closer to us as the viewer than the other end. There are, of course, an infinite amount of degrees to which this happens. **Please watch class on foreshortening if you haven't already!***

THINGS TO NOTICE



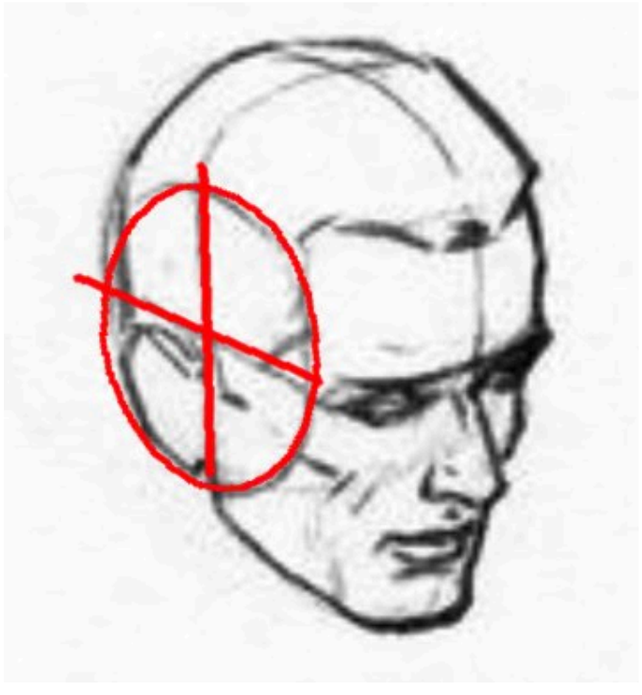


- **In our last classes, we talked about how Loomis simplifies the head structure into the cranium (represented by a sphere) and the mandible.**
- The side planes of the head are created by removing two sections of the sphere (cranium) on either side. These side planes show as a circle or ellipse inside of the larger circle, with a cross inside it. These perpendicular lines are *very* important!
- **As we saw in our last class, when drawing heads at angles, this ellipse is one of the first things that has to get added in.**

THINGS TO NOTICE



- **Notice how this ellipse moves within the sphere and how it flattens and turns more into an oval or circle, depending on the the tilt and direction of the head.**
- If it moves downwards within the sphere, more of the top of the head is revealed. If it moves upwards, more of the bottom of the head is revealed.
- Notice how the guidelines that stand for the bridge of the nose, as well as the browline are at an angle and not perfectly vertical and horizontal.







VISUALIZING THE HEAD AS A BOX

- **A lot of artists like visualizing their heads as a simple box shape, as it helps with understanding perspective.**

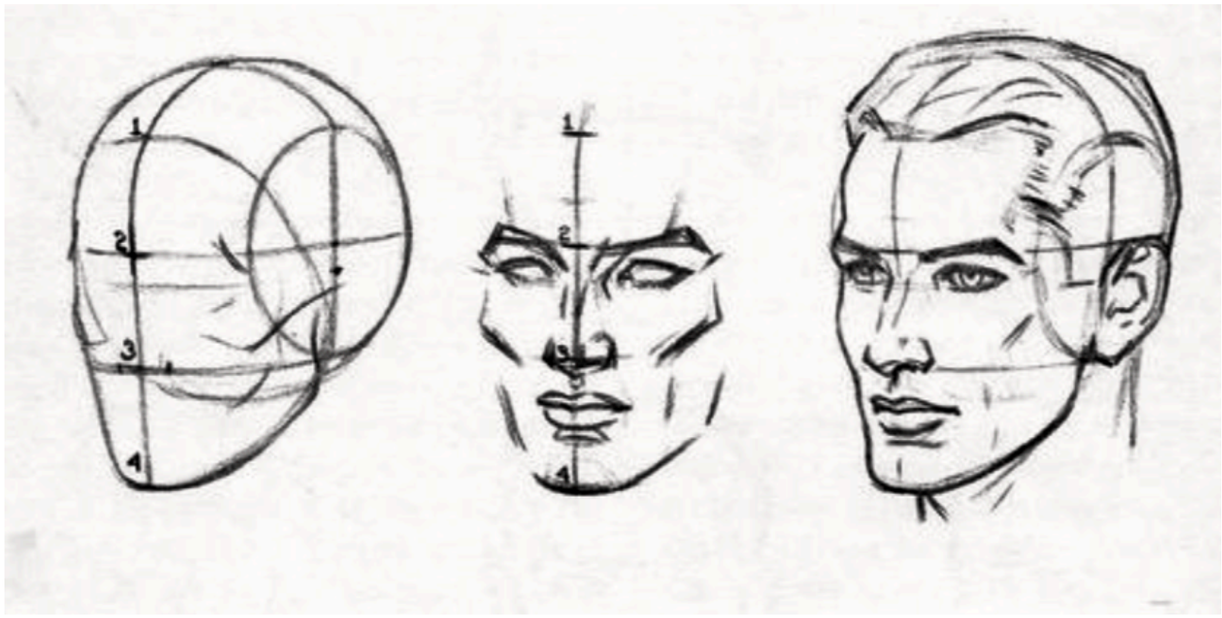


- Simple forms are always going to be easier to understand than a complex form such as the head structure.

- **You can imagine the guidelines for the hairline, eyebrow line, eye line, nose line, mouth line, etc. wrapping around a box and its flat planes.**

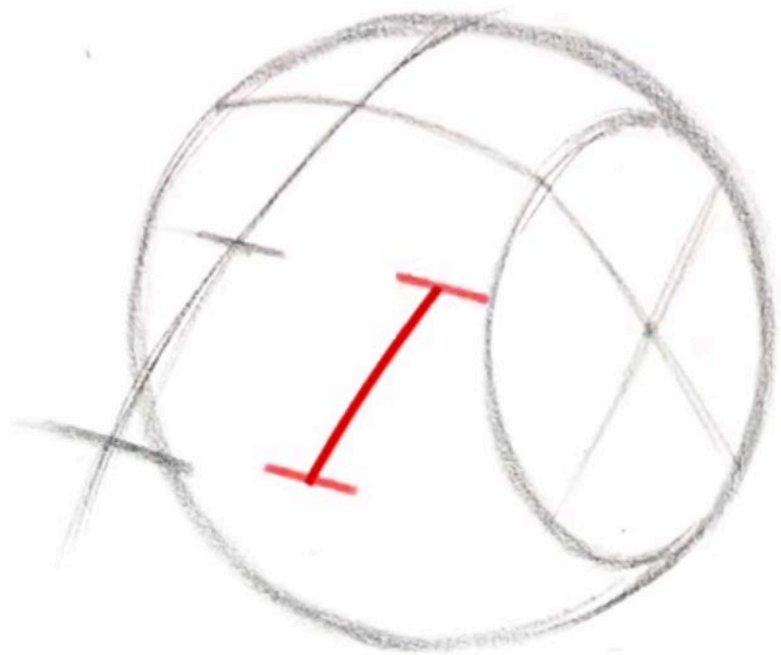
THINGS TO NOTICE

- **When we have foreshortening going on, like when a person is looking either up or down, the main "thirds" we learned about in the last class get shifted. We have to *really* observe and, oftentimes, use our intuition to place them appropriately!**



- If the person is looking up, the thirds are going to get larger as they go down, making the section from the bottom of the nose to the tip of the chin the largest of all.

- If the person is looking down, the thirds are going to get smaller as they go down, making the section from the hairline to the eyebrow line the largest of all.



BE CAREFUL WITH SLIGHT TILTS!

- **Our brains automatically want to simplify what we're seeing as straight horizontals and verticals.**

- **Oftentimes, even after succeeding at drawing the head shape at a tilted angle, beginners draw their facial features as if the head was completely leveled.**

- Make sure you're really practicing your observation and place those guidelines appropriately! That's what they're for.

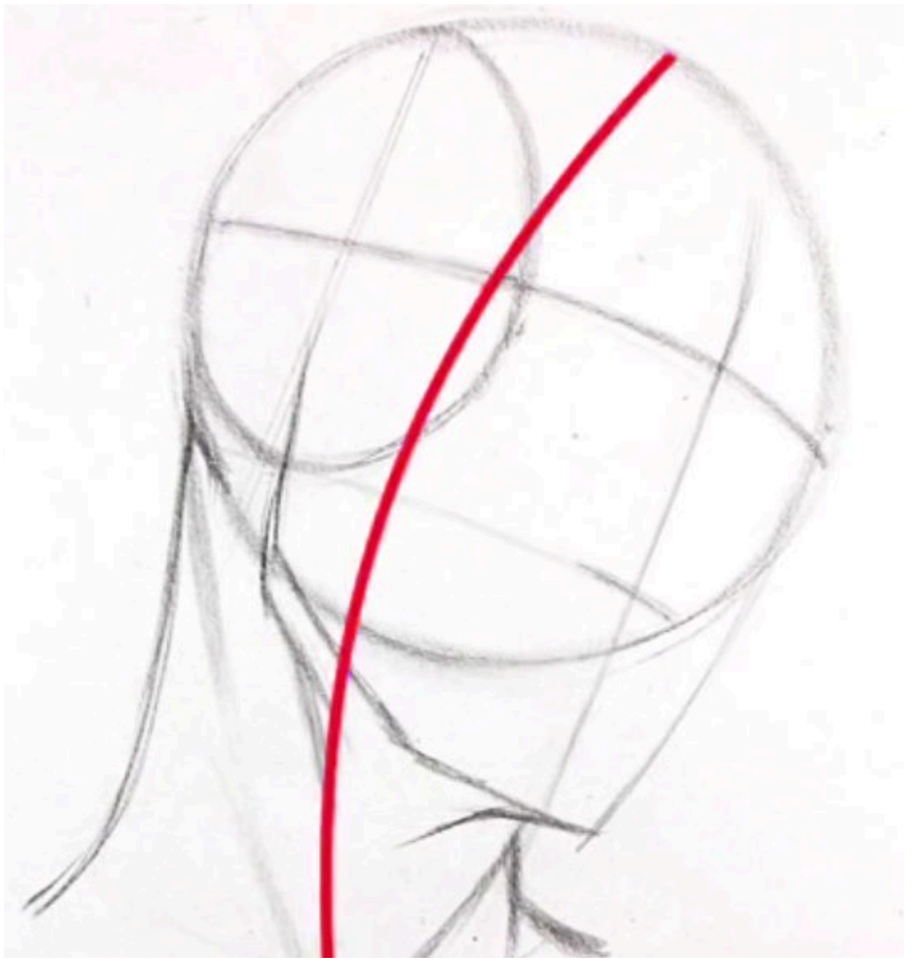


MIND THE NECK!

- **Also keep in mind that, when the head is in different angles and twisting in certain ways, there is a “pinch and stretch” happening in the neck.**

- Observe your references and notice how the neck’s cylindrical shape changes so you can transmit that in your drawing.

- Stay away from lollipop necks!

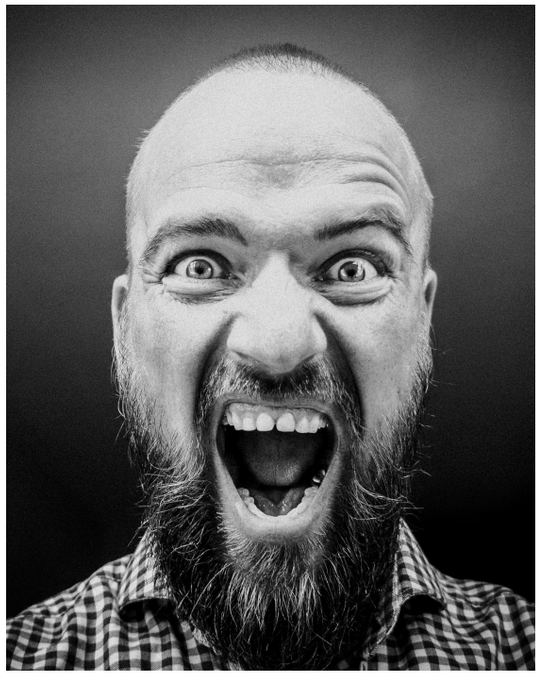


USING THE LOOMIS METHOD INTUITIVELY

- In the past classes, we went over how the Loomis method isn't a "cut and dry" approach, and how there's room to alter the positions of our guidelines if we're looking to draw a person with specific characteristics.



- **In the same way, if we're looking to draw a portrait of someone who is showing an open mouth, or with specific expressions, we can also alter these guidelines and the overall shape of the head.**



- Remember that, no matter what head angle we're drawing, we always start with a sphere for the cranium and a separate part for the mandible. These are the two main parts of the head that Loomis uses as a foundation.

LET'S TRY SOME EXTREME HEADS!







Let's try drawing some simple heads at extreme angles!

CREATIVE ASSIGNMENT #17:

- Create quick sketches of heads at, at least, 3 different extreme angles following Loomis's method.
- You can decide whether to use specific reference photos as loose inspiration, but focus on achieving effective shapes and proportions more than likeness. Don't worry too much about facial features because we'll be getting into them in our next classes. :)

Recommended Resources:

- Andrew Loomis- *Drawing the Head and Hands*
- Andrew Loomis- *Fun with a Pencil*
- **Link to free downloadable books will be left within this Patreon post.*