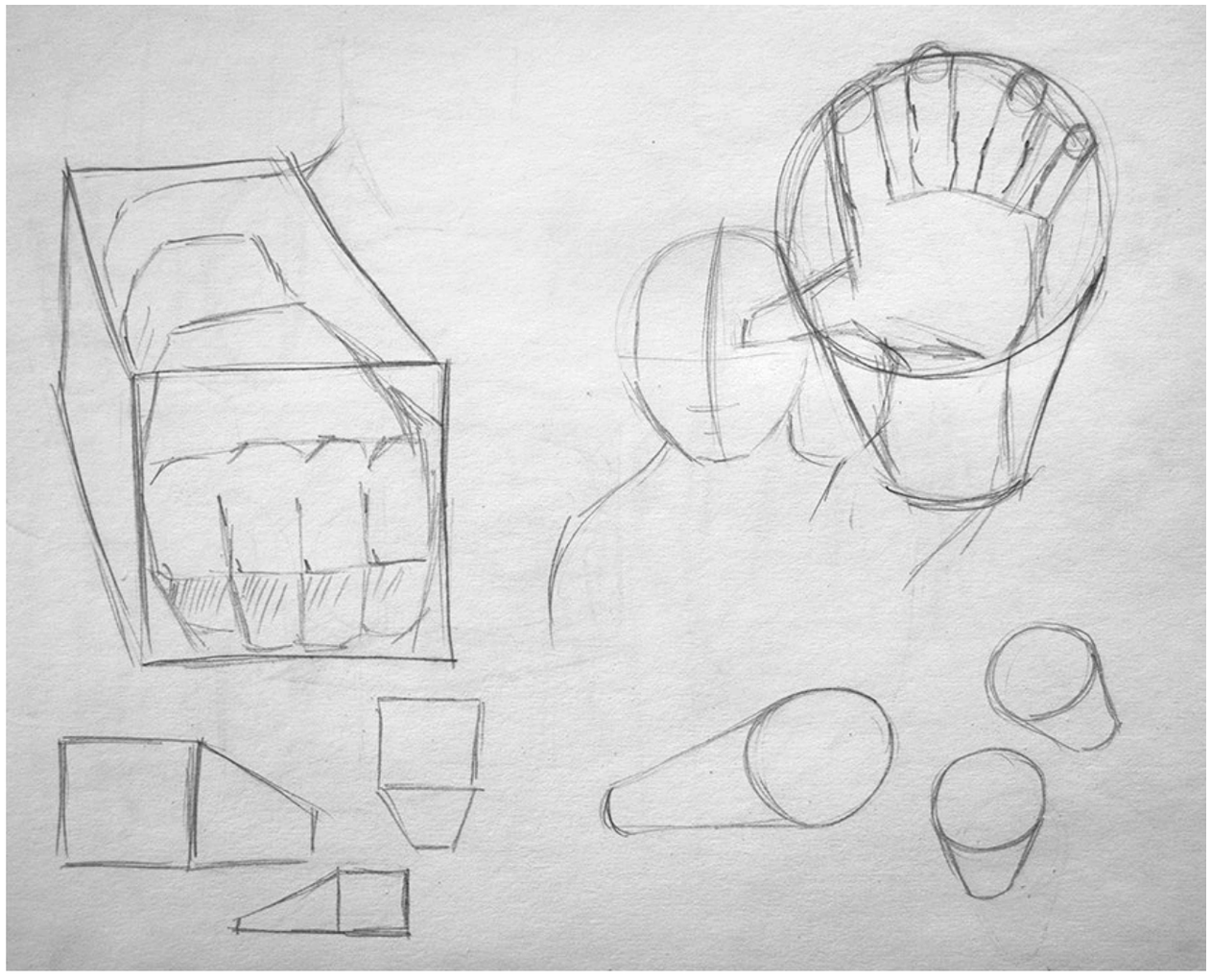



# ART ASSIGNMENT #23

## *Foreshortened Hands*

Leonardo da Vinci, *Study of Hands*, 1474.

# FORESHORTENING REVIEW



- There's a lot that we're not able to easily see and we need to be able to make up for that information we're lacking.

- **Understanding *foreshortening* goes hand in hand with understanding *perspective* and *three-dimensional form*.**
- When we draw an object or even a body part in a completely flat/forwards facing position, it's *a lot* easier than drawing it in different perspectives.
- When a part of the subject is outstretched towards us or when we're simply a lot closer to one end of a person's body than the other end, we have to work a bit more intuitively, bringing in our knowledge of perspective and also overall anatomy.

# FORESHORTENING REVIEW

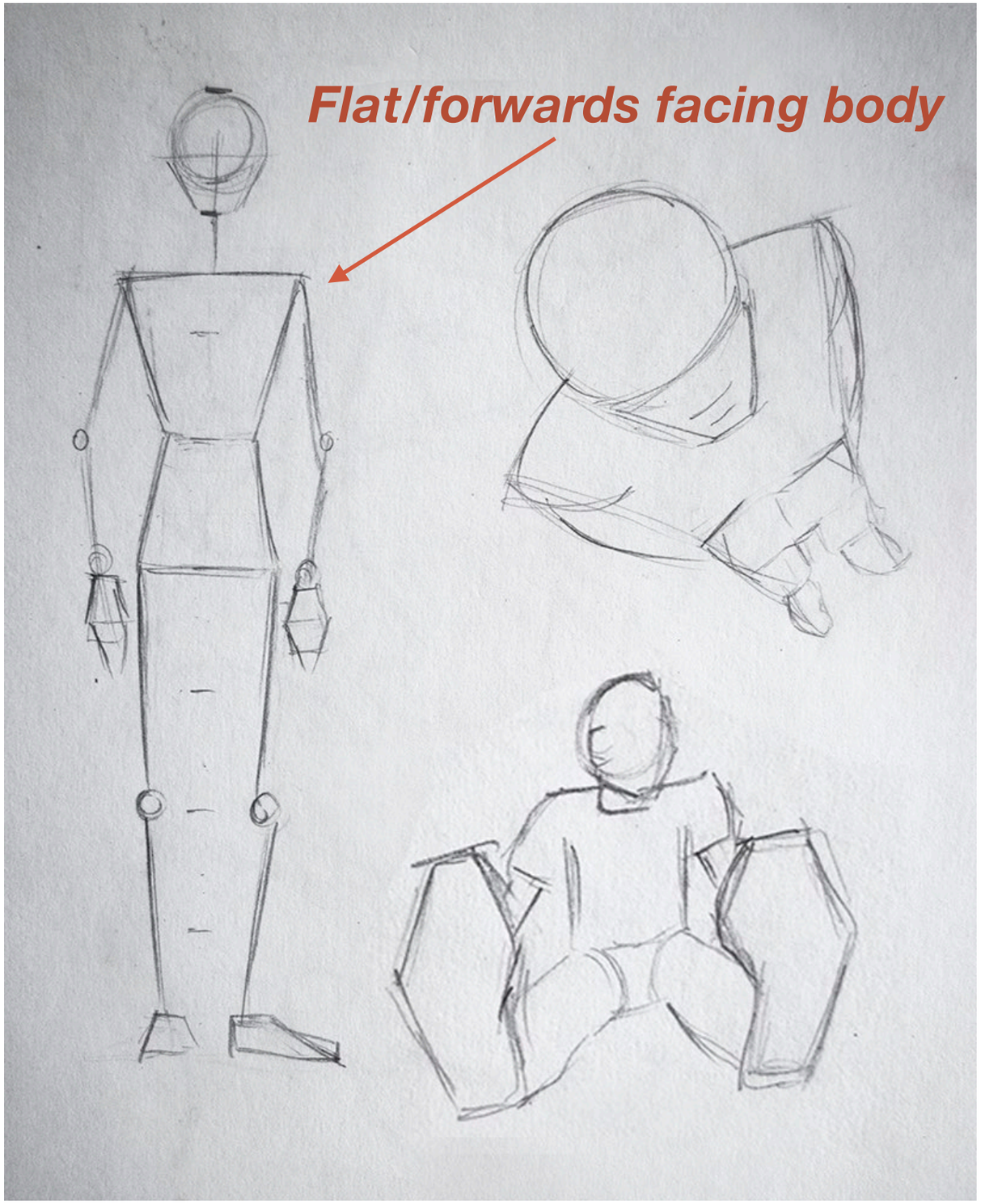


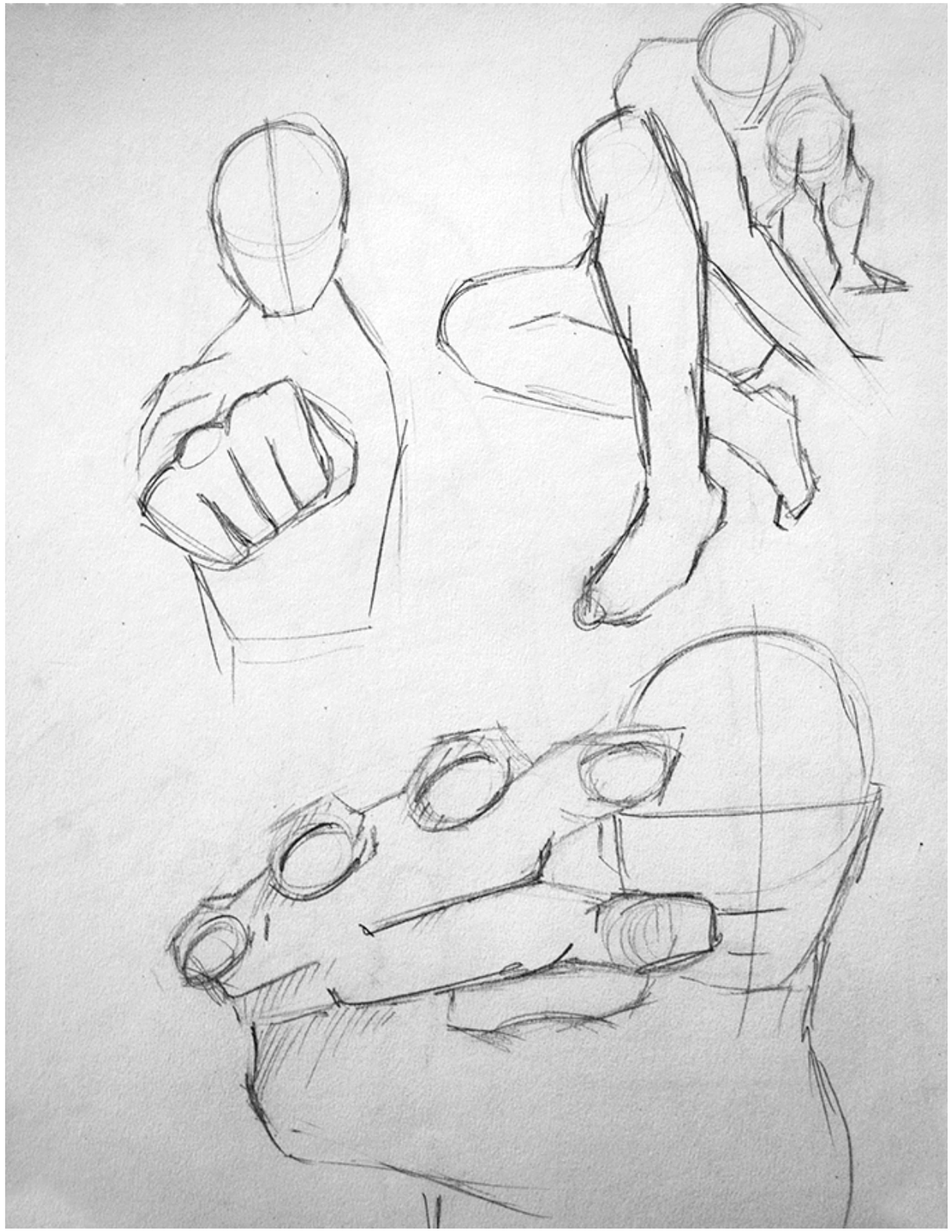




- ***Foreshortening* happens when a part or end of a subject's body (or part of an object) is closer to us as the viewer, than the other end.**
- It creates a ton of impact and depth when used in an artwork!
- **There are different degrees of foreshortening, ranging from very slight to more extreme. Even a 3/4's portrait has a bit of foreshortening in it, as half of the person's face is closer to us than the other half.**
- **There's almost *always* going to be at least some amount of foreshortening in a photo or artwork.**

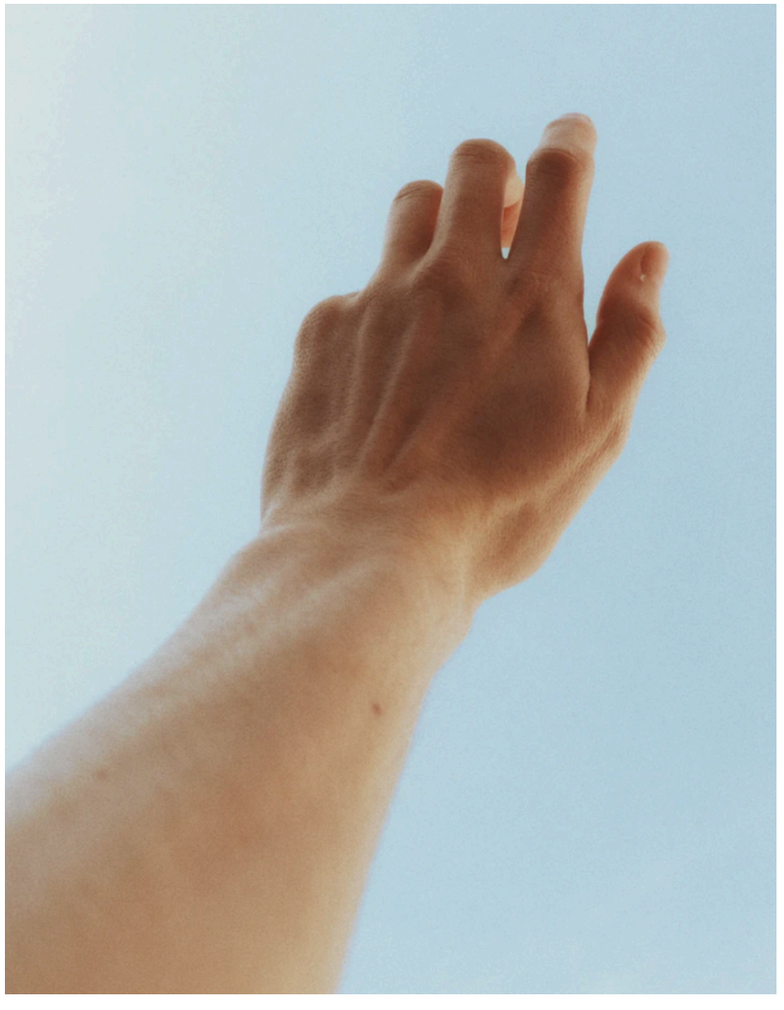
# FREEHAND SKETCHES SHOWING FORESHORTENING



# FORESHORTENING IN HANDS

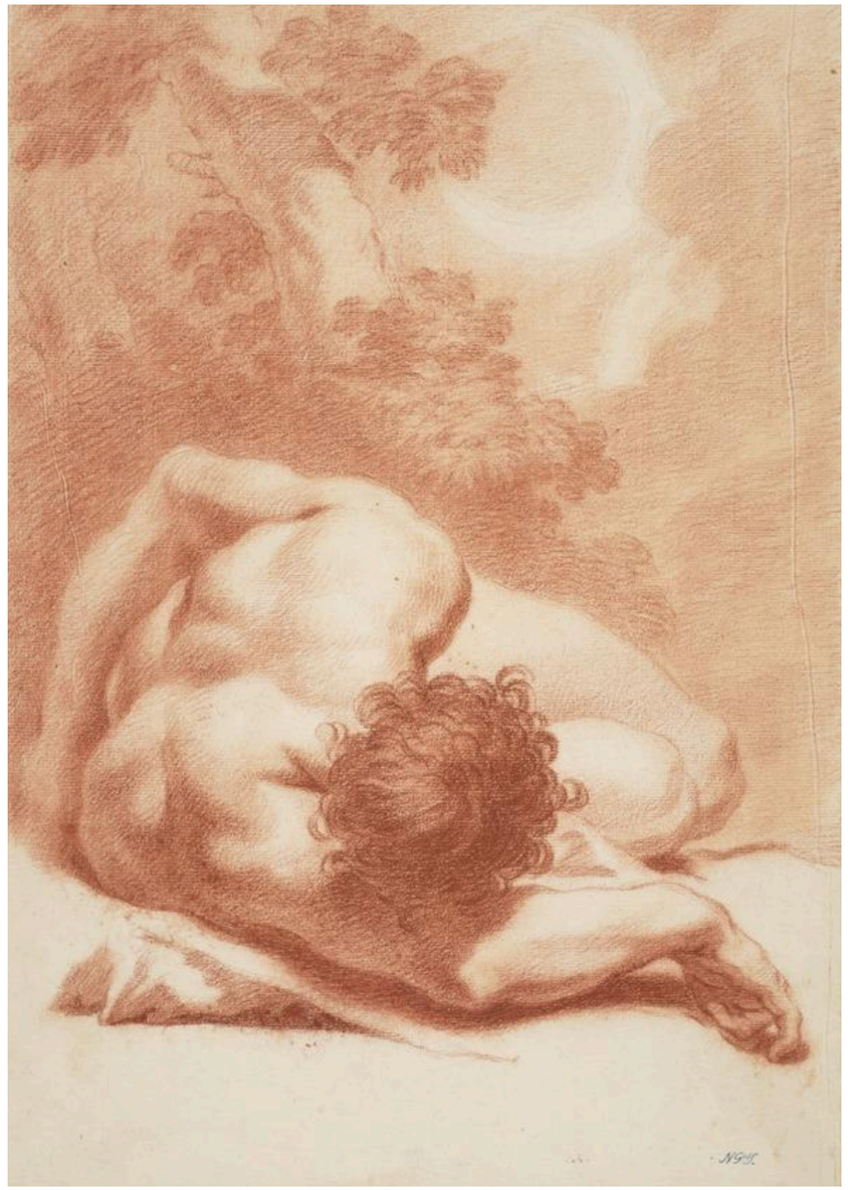




- **Here are a couple of photos showing tons of foreshortening in hands. In the first, the fingertips are *way* closer than the parts nearer to the wrists (foreshortening is also enhanced by the lens of the camera). In the second, we see the opposite, as the forearm is closer to us as the viewer and the fingers are the farthest elements from us.**

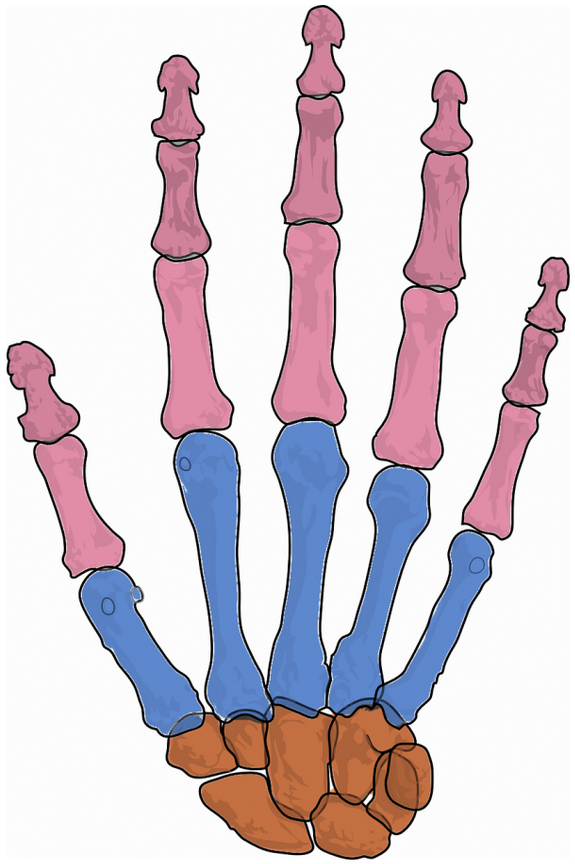
# WHY DRAWING FORESHORTENED THINGS IS MORE DIFFICULT

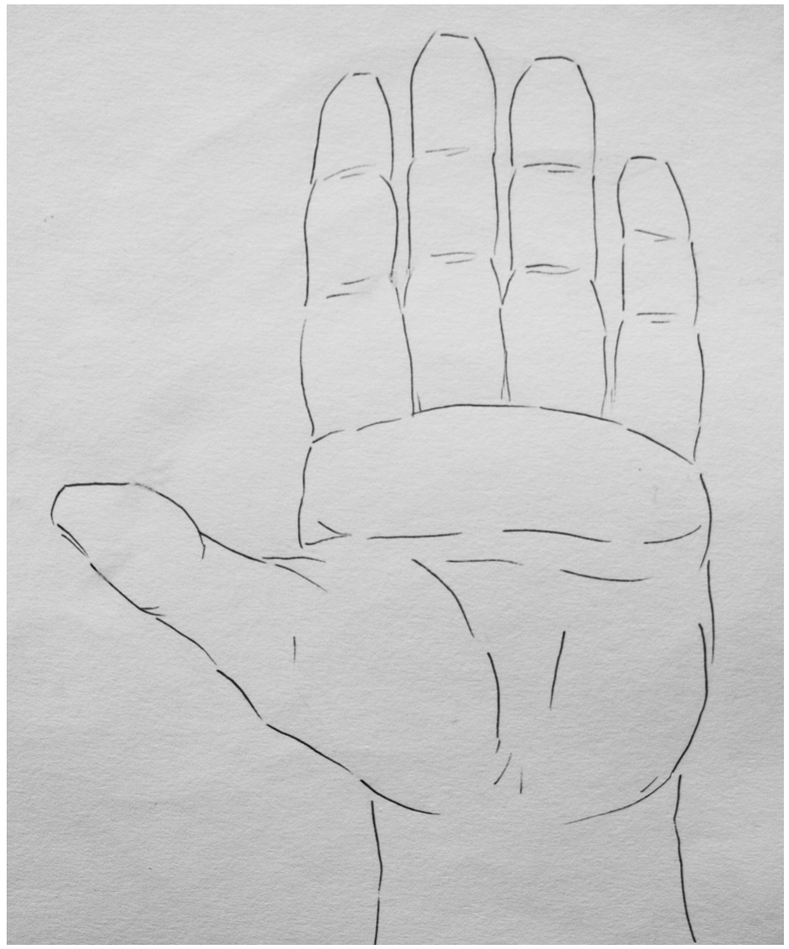
- **Drawing a subject that shows foreshortening is more challenging because there's a lot more to make sense of and we have to tap into our knowledge of the structure of what it is we're seeing, as well as of perspective.**
- Usually there's also at least some amount of overlapping happening, which doesn't allow us to fully see certain parts of the subject (especially with extreme foreshortening).
- The more extreme the foreshortening, the more we have to intuitively distort/ enlarge/shrink shapes.



**Benedetto Luti,**
*Foreshortened View of a Nude Man Against a Landscape Background*, 1754

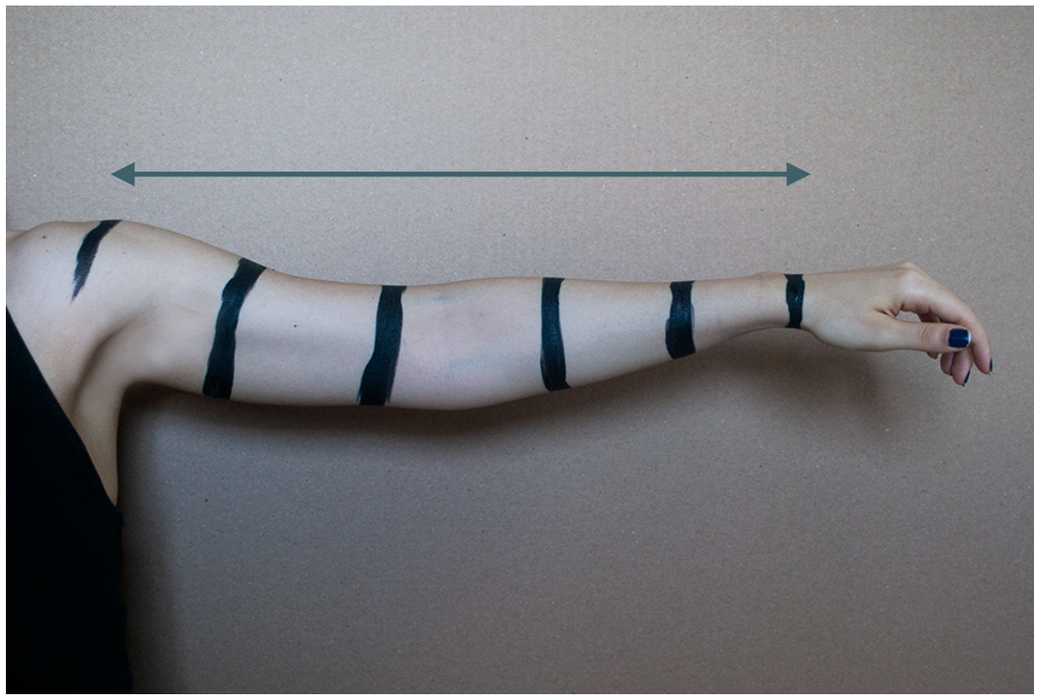
# FLAT HAND





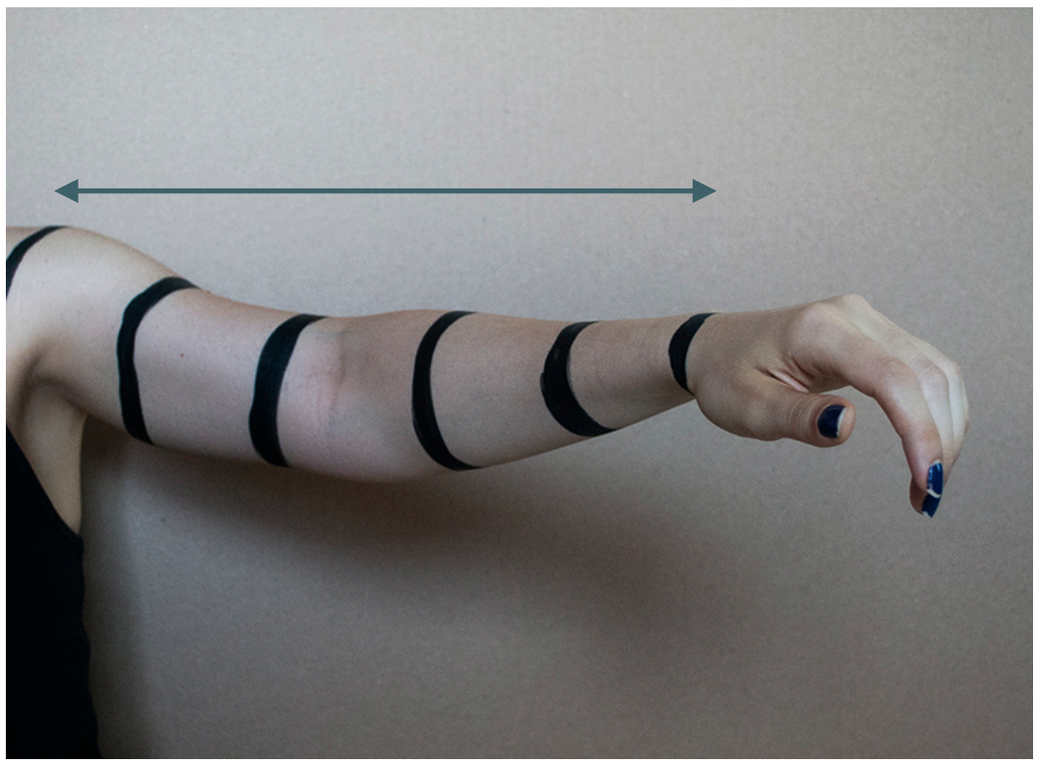
- **It’s important to know what the subject looks like completely flat before attempting to draw it in a foreshortened way. Take time to understand it’s anatomy and structure before moving onto more dynamic perspectives so that you know what to look for and can make up for the information your lacking.**

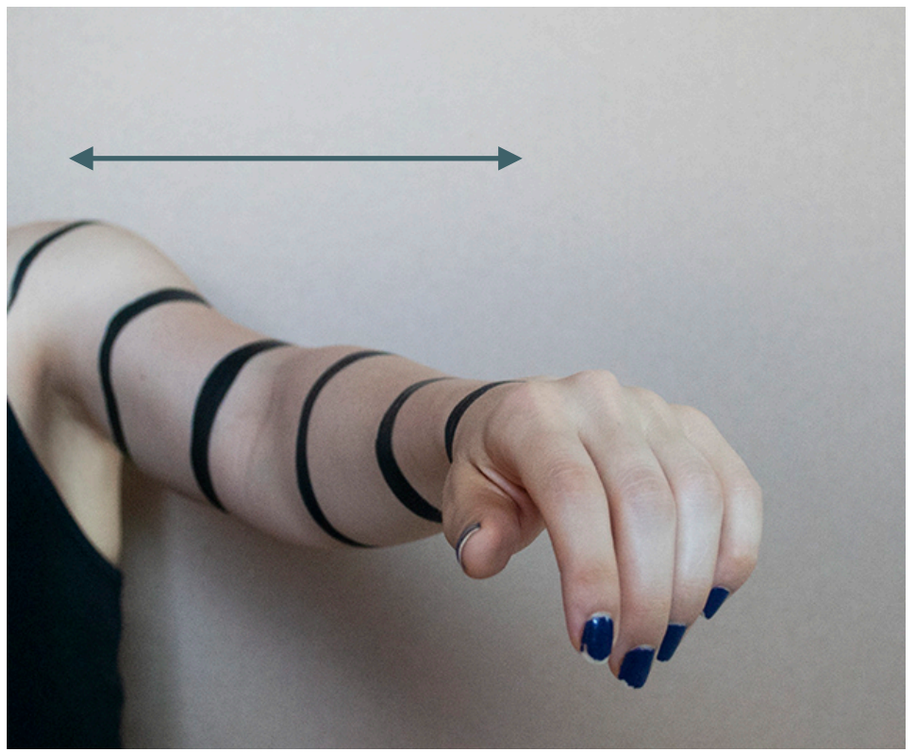
# NOTICING FORESHORTENING IN REAL LIFE



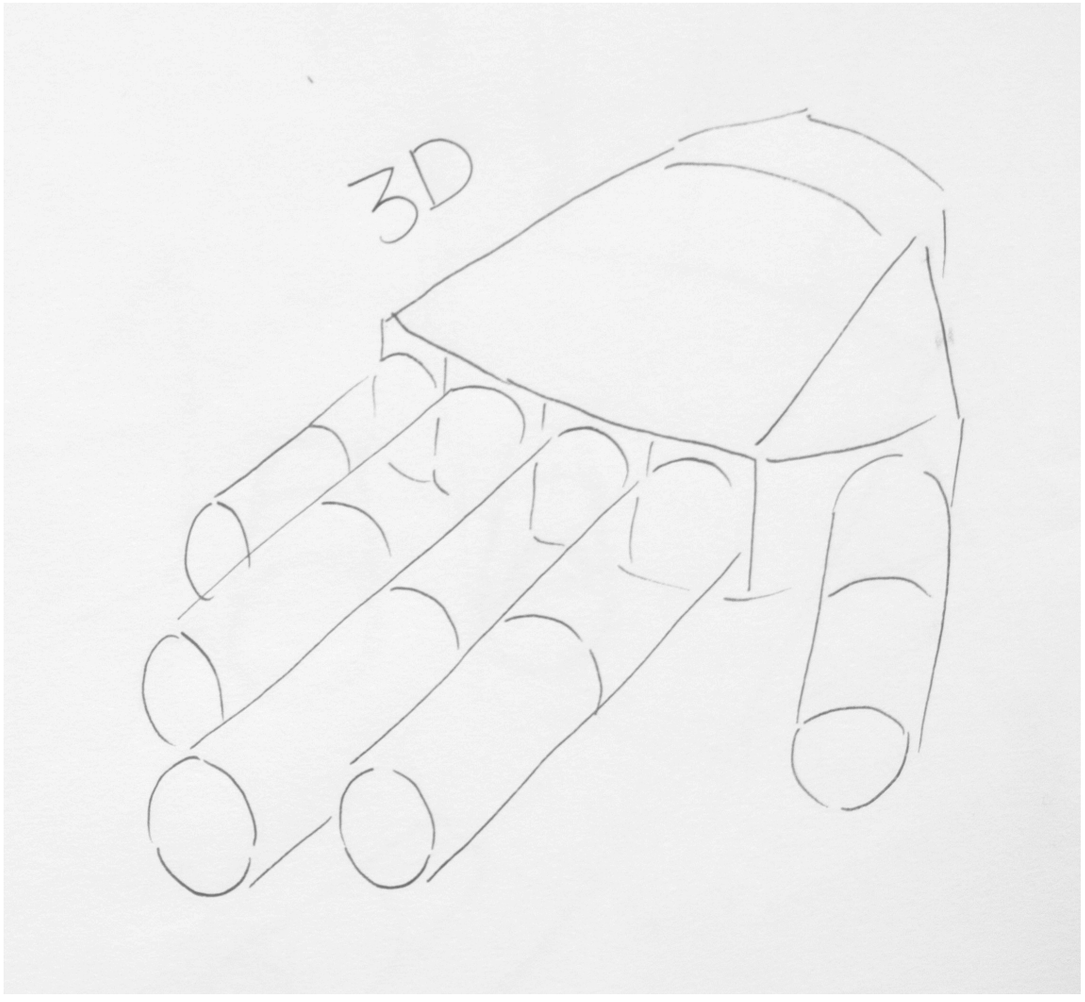
**I drew contour lines on my arm in order to demonstrate how its overall length, as well as the distance between these “rings” gets shorter and shorter, as I move my arm towards the camera.**

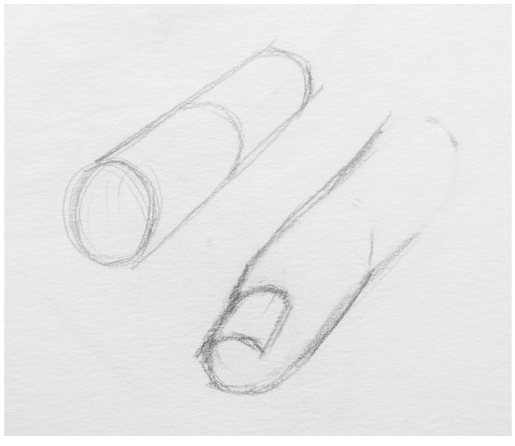
**My arm shows its full length when its parallel to the viewer.**

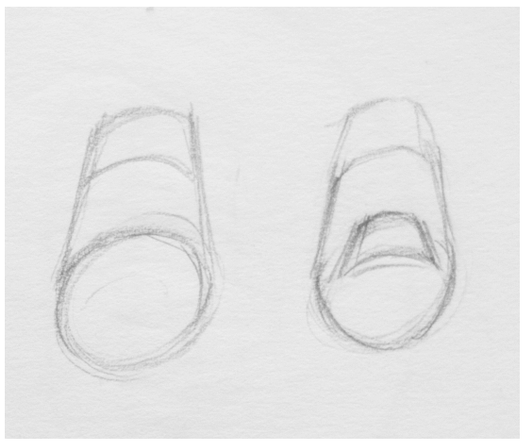




# VISUALIZING THE HAND AS A COMBO OF SIMPLE FORMS





- **If we're not able to understand the subject as having form and volume, we won't be able to achieve effective perspective when drawing.**
- **With hands, I like visualizing fingers as cylinders and the palm of the hand as a 3D trapezoid. The base of the thumb can be visualized as a triangular prism.**
- No shapes or forms are right or wrong, as long as they help you arrive at effective perspective and proportions in that base construction drawing.
- This oversimplification also helps us arrive at effective proportions before moving on to smaller details of the hand.

# FINAL TIPS

- **One of the best things you can do to improve your understanding of perspective and three-dimensional form, is draw *from direct observation.***

- **Make time to observe your subjects in real life in order to fully understand their form and structure. When we're just getting started, even though we may be looking at a photo, our brain is still perceiving the subject as being flat.**

- **When looking to improve our figure drawings (or drawings of any part of the human body), just having a reference photo and even having good observational skills is not enough! *Make time to understand anatomy.* There is almost always something that's not going to be easily visible and it's easy to make mistakes or get stuck when we don't know what to look for. Knowing at least basic anatomy is going to make it easier to decipher what it is we're seeing and we'll be able to make up for the information we're lacking.**

- **If you're goal is to be able to draw figures or body parts from imagination, you'll be able to move onto that and have much more success, if you start by practicing with references and knowledge of anatomy.**

# ART ASSIGNMENT #23:

- **Draw a flat hand that shows effective proportions and overall shapes. **You can use my downloadable sketch as reference.***
- **Create a sketch of a hand that shows foreshortening. **You can use a photo you find online, take one on your own or use one of the photos I'm making available for download.***
- You can decide if you'd like to take it a step forward and work on shading, but what matters more are proportions, perspective and overall form.