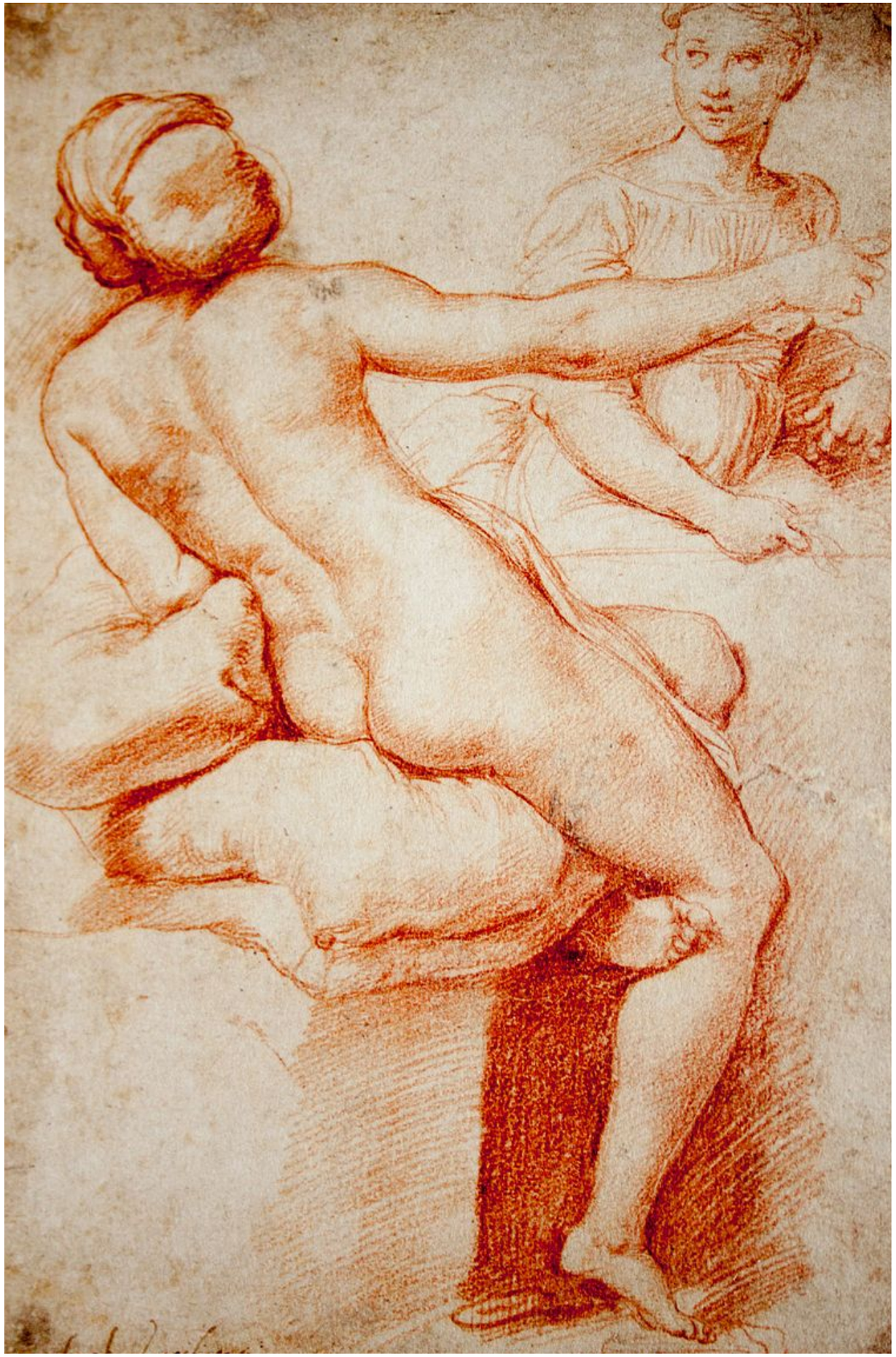
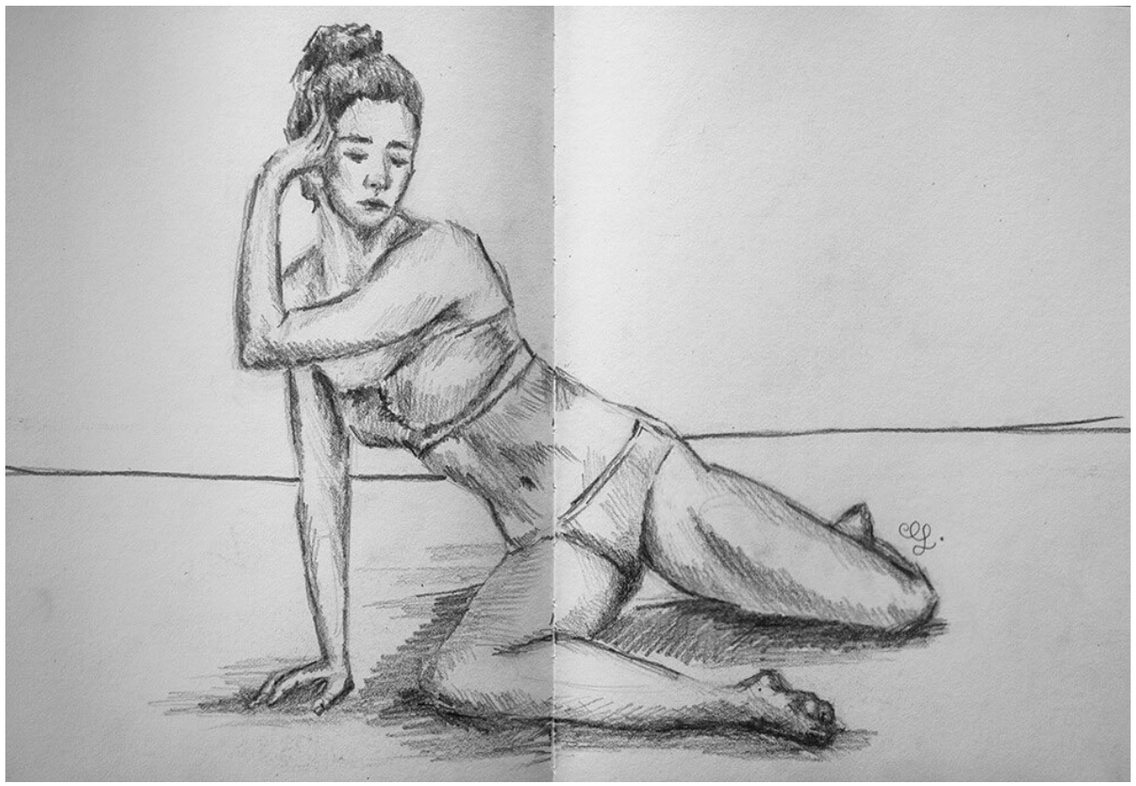
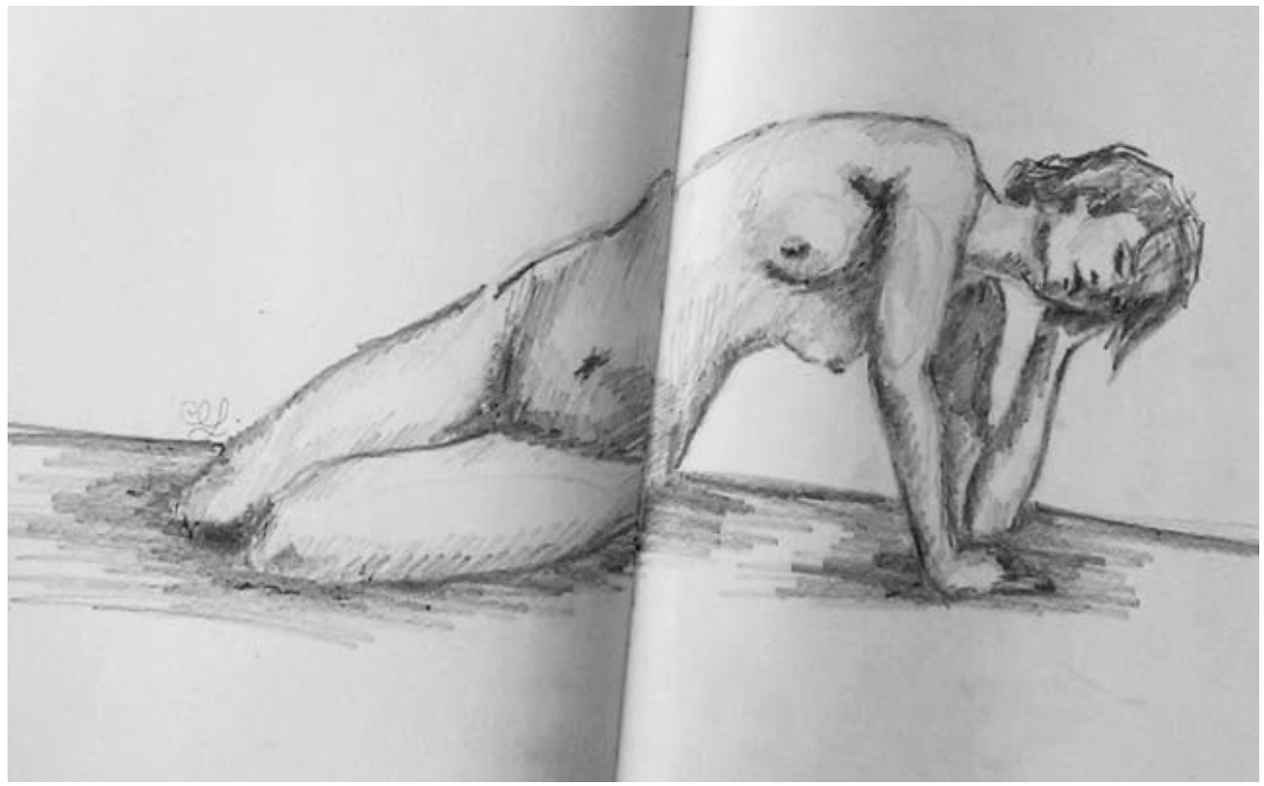


# ART ASSIGNMENT #26

*Figure Drawing- Sitting & Reclining Poses*

Raffaello Sanzio, *Study for Two Female Figures,* c.1518





In our past classes on drawing the human figure we've covered:

- **Basic body proportions and using the head as a measuring unit**
- **Why it's essential to understand *3D form* and *perspective* in order to draw the human figure freehand in a believable way**
- **How to simplify the body into main masses and creating *armatures***
- **Why understanding the underlying structure of the body (the skeleton) is key**
- **How to draw simple standing poses that show effective proportions freehand**
- **Why using reference photos and observing people in real life will help your drawings improve**
- **How to draw dynamic standing poses and key points to have in mind to stay away from stiff-looking figures**
- **Today, we'll be talking about the challenges presented in sitting and reclining poses, I'll be sharing my approach which enables me to draw these kinds of poses freehand effectively, and key things to have in mind that'll make you're drawings more successful**
- **In our next class, we'll be jumping into quicker, gestural sketching of figures!**

# WHY SITTING/RECLINING POSES PRESENT A DIFFERENT CHALLENGE

- **Drawing sitting or reclining figures can be challenging, as certain body parts are *foreshortened* and there's usually *lots* overlapping going on which doesn't allow us to see sections of the body/limbs.**

- **This is why it's *essential* to have at least a basic understanding of anatomy, perspective and 3D form, as there's *lots* of intuitive work that has to happen on the artist's part.**

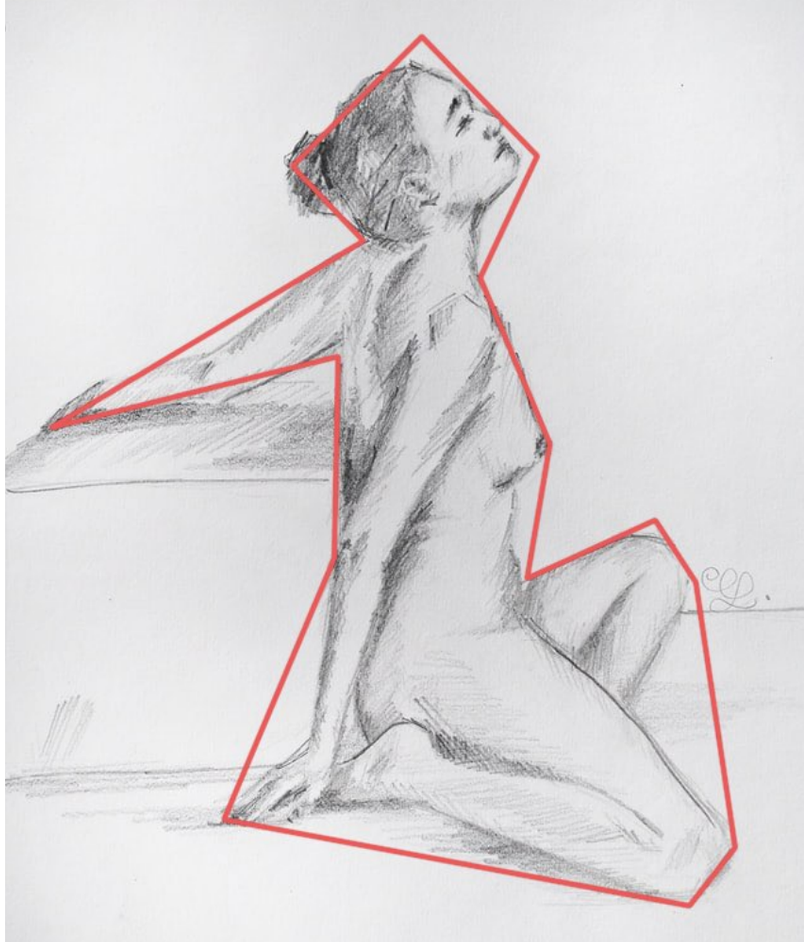
- **There's a combination of knowledge of (and practice with) the aforementioned Art Fundamentals, along with taking in information visually. It's not one or the other, but a combo of both, that the artist is working with.**

- As shared before, once the artist has a good amount of knowledge on these fundamentals, as well as practice (using references), it's *a lot* easier to draw believable figures from imagination and/or alter positions you see in references if that's your goal.



# THE ENVELOPE METHOD

- **I like starting sitting/reclining poses (in which there's usually compression of certain body parts and lots of *foreshortening* going on), with creating a simple shape or *envelope*. Instead of starting with a long *flow line* like I do with standing and action poses, I visualize a shape that the entire body fits into.**



- **I pay attention to proportions and major angles created by different body parts in the given pose and start by drawing a simple, blocky shape. Imagine you're a sculptor with a big block of marble and you'll be chiseling away excess material to reveal the figure underneath.**

- For my initial envelope, I usually like using straighter lines and I refine them into curves later on, once my angles and proportions look right. However, you can go in with curves in certain sections if it's helpful for you.



# USING THE HEAD AS A MEASURING UNIT

- **Once my envelope has been created, I use the height and width of the head, as it appears in the pose, as a measuring unit. This helps me arrive at effective proportions in that envelope, before moving on to anything else.**

- I take time comparing my reference to my drawing and make any changes in my envelope if needed.

- **Ask yourself: *How many times does the length/width of the head (as I see it here) fit into the entire pose? *Create tick marks lightly as needed.***

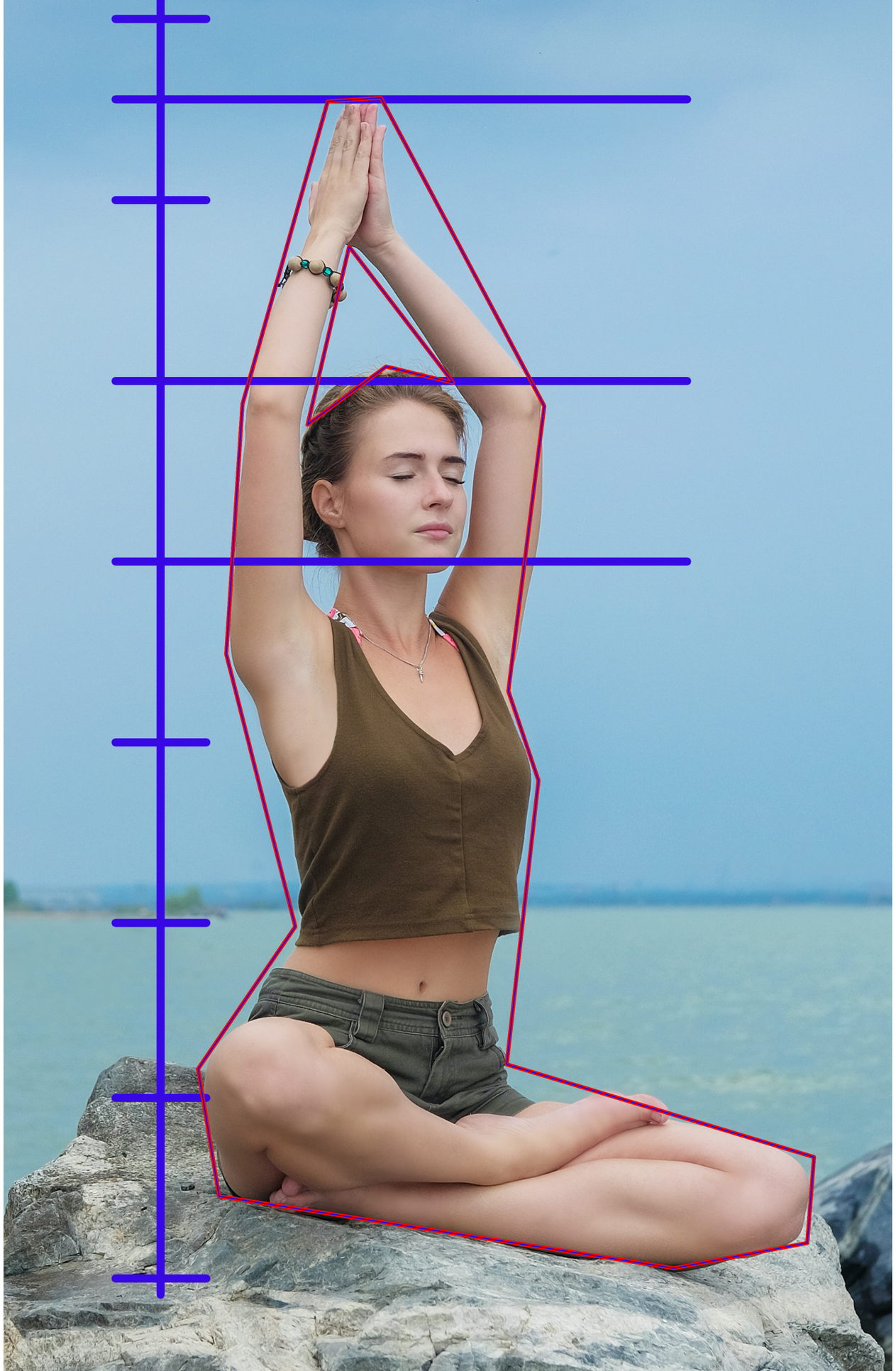




**The width of the head can also be used to determine/check the total width of your envelope.**

In this pose, the width of the head fits 3 and 1/3 times into the total width of the envelope.

*If it’s helpful to you for measuring purposes, draw a square or rectangle with straight horizontal/vertical lines around the initial envelope.



In certain poses, the head *is not* going to be at the top of the envelope!

**It can still be used as a measuring unit to get the total height (and also width) of the envelope right.**

# MUSCLE AND FAT COMPRESSION

- **In our last class, I mentioned how it's important to discern between *muscle*, *fat* and *bone*, as well as to practice communicating the differences between each in your drawing using curved vs. straighter/ angular lines. This can communicate a lot and bring tons of interest into even the simplest of sketches.**

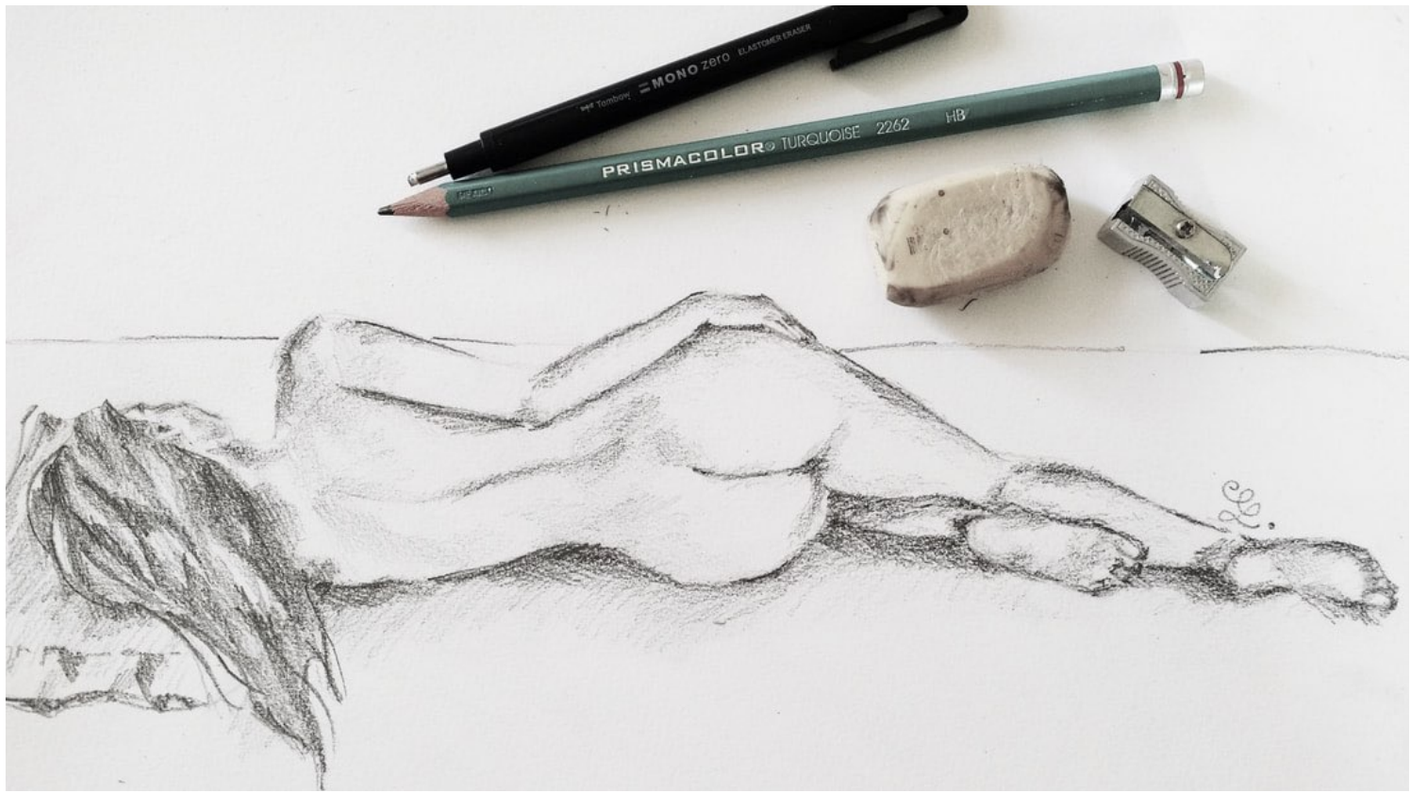
- **Related to this, in sitting poses we see a lot of compressed and "smooshed" body parts, which change the way we see fat and muscle when compared to a standing body in which body parts are not falling on each other and the body is not against a flat/hard surface.**

- For example, notice the difference between the look of the calf muscles in the picture on the right. If she were standing up straight, they would look almost identical, but since there's compression going on here, they look different.

- Also, notice how muscles and fat that are in direct contact with the seat/ground get smooshed because of weight and gravity. Make sure you're adding these details to your drawings. Otherwise, the figure can look like it's floating!



# KEY POINTS TO HAVE IN MIND FOR SUCCESSFUL DRAWINGS




Even though the approaches used for standing vs. sitting poses are different, all of the key points that we've been talking about in our past classes on drawing the figure, and even drawing tutorials I've shared on other subjects, *all still apply.*

- **Simplify and work from general and make your way towards specifics (see full picture/the "whole" first)**
- **Visualize the subject as a simple shape or combo of simple shapes for those initial phases of your preliminary sketch, but acknowledge everything as being three-dimensional and having mass/volume**
- **Draw *lightly*, especially in the beginning stages (this is *key* when drawing/sketching freehand), so that you can erase mistakes and refine along the way**

# KEY POINTS TO HAVE IN MIND FOR SUCCESSFUL DRAWINGS

The following are all key points to make out when you're getting started with any new figure drawing (whether its a standing pose or a sitting pose) and things to have deciphered pretty soon into the process in order to avoid mistakes. I *would not* get started with "fleshing out" a drawing until I've worked on these things first. **They do not have to be in this exact order though!*

**1. Add in the simplified head shape (acknowledge any tilting and/or rotating)**

**2. Determine the action line or the location of the spine**

**3. Understand the body's *center of gravity* and leg/limbs supporting the majority of the body's weight (if any)**

**4. Add in the shoulder line and hip line (they are almost *never* straight/horizontal and/or parallel to each other)**

**5. Placement of the feet (helps you decipher total length of the body)**

# BRING IN A BIT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND THE FIGURE

- **When drawing a sitting or reclining pose, it's very helpful to bring in at least a hint of the environment around the figure. Otherwise, the pose will maybe not make sense or the person will look like she/he is floating in space.**




- The smallest line or development of values/shadows can ground the figure and situate it in place.



- Refer to the old master drawings (Da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, etc.) for ideas on integrating a figure into the environment around it.

# LET'S DRAW FIGURES!

- Next, I'll be taking you step-by-step through how I draw one sitting and one reclining pose using reference photos.

**Here are the main steps:**

1) **Draw your envelope using straight lines, focusing on main angles**
2) **Add in a your simplified head**
3) **Use the head as a measuring unit to check on envelope height and width, and overall proportions**
4) **Mark the location of the crotch within your envelope shape to discern between the upper body and the lower body**
5) **Mark your shoulder and waist lines**
6) **Draw simplified largest body masses**
7) **Add in landmarks (shoulders, elbows, wrists, knees, ankles and feet)**
8) **Flesh out your figure noticing shapes and curves throughout the body**

# LET'S DRAW SOME FIGURES!





# ART ASSIGNMENT #26:

- **Using reference photos, create quick sketches of at least two figures (one sitting + one reclining), using the envelope method.**

  ***Links to my own reference photos will be left along with this class but you can also look for full body photos of people (preferably with tight fitting clothes which will allow you to see the form of their bodies).***

  **Here are some helpful resources with tons of poses:**

- **line-of-action.com**
- **unsplash.com, pixabay.com, pexels.com**
- **Pinterest (look for "gesture photo pose", "references for figure drawing", etc. boards)**
- **New Master's Academy YouTube channel**
- **Croquis Cafe YouTube channel**