A World of Art 6e Ch09

PART 3

THE FINE ARTS MEDIA

chapter 9

Drawing

Fig. 216 Jan Vermeer, *The Allegory of Painting (The Painter and His Model as Klio)*, 1665–66.

Oil on canvas, 48 × 40 in. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria. Cat. 395, Inv. 9128.

Photo © Erich Lessing. Art Resource, NY.

In Jan Vermeer's *The Allegory of Painting* (**Fig. 216**), a stunning variety of media are depicted. The artist, his back to us, is shown painting his model's crown, but the careful observer can detect, in the lower half of the canvas, below his elbow, the white chalk lines of his preliminary drawing. A tapestry has been pulled back at the left, and a beautifully crafted chandelier hangs from the ceiling. A map on the back wall illustrates the art of cartography. The model herself is posed above a sculpted mask, which lies on the table below her gaze. As the muse of history, she holds a book in one hand, representing writing and literature, and a trumpet, representing music, in the other hand.

Each of the materials in Vermeer's work—painting, drawing, sculpture, tapestry, even the book and the trumpet—represents what we call a **medium**. The history of the various media used to create art is, in essence, the history of the various technologies that artists have employed. These **technologies** have helped artists both to achieve their desired effects more readily and to discover new modes of creation and expression. A technology, literally, is the "word" or "discourse" (from the Greek

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logos) about a "techne" (from the Greek word for art, which in turn comes from the Greek verb *tekein*, "to make, prepare, or fabricate"). A medium is, in this sense, a techne, a means of making art.

In Part 3 we will study all of the various media, but we turn our attention first to drawing, perhaps the most basic medium of all. Drawing has many purposes, but chief mong them is preliminary study. Through drawing, artists can experiment with different approaches to their compositions. They illustrate, for themselves, what they are going to do. And, in fact, illustration is another important purpose of drawing. Before the advent of the camera, illustration was the primary way that we recorded history, and today it provides visual interpretations of written texts, particularly in children's books. Finally, because it is so direct, recording the path of the artist's hand directly on paper, artists also find drawing to be a ready-made means of self-expression. It is as if, in the act of drawing, the soul or spirit of the artist finds its way to paper.

FROM PREPARATORY SKETCH TO WORK OF ART

When Captain Cook first sailed along the eastern coast of Australia in 1770, he encountered an Australian Aboriginal culture that possessed what we now know to be the longest continuously practiced artistic tradition anywhere in the world. In Arnhem Land, in Northern Australia, a great many rock formations and caves are decorated with rock art dating from the earliest periods of human history (40,000–6000 BCE) to works created within living memory (**Fig. 217**). The earliest of these are stick-like figures that represent ancestral spirits, or *mimis*, some of which are visible behind the kangaroo in the photograph below. According to Arnhem legend, *mimis* made the earliest rock art drawings and taught the art to present-day Aborigines, who, in painting such figures themselves, release the power of the *mimis*. Aboriginal artists do not believed that they create or invent their subjects; rather, the *mimis* give them their designs, which they then transmit for others to see. The act of drawing creates a direct link between the present and the past.

The kangaroo in this drawing is rendered in what has become known as the *x-ray style*, where the

Fig. 217 *Mimis* and kangaroo, rock art, Oenpelli, Arnhem Land, Australia. Older paintings before 7000 BCE, kangaroo probably post-contact.
E. Brand / Courtesy of AIATSIS Pictorial Collection.

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Fig. 218 Workshop of Pollaiuolo (?), *Youth Drawing,* late 15th century. Pen and ink with wash on paper, 7⅝ × 4½ in.

skeletal structure, heart, and stomach of an animal are drawn over its silhouetted form as if the viewer is able to see the life force of the animal through its skin. Aboriginal artists still work in this style. In fact, of all the colors used in Aboriginal rock art, white is the most subject to chemical deterioration. This, together with the fact that many layers of art lie beneath it, suggests that the x-ray-style kangaroo was drawn on the wall relatively recently.

The example of Aborigine rock art suggests that drawing is fundamental to human experience. In the case of Aboriginal artists, it seems to possess religious, or at least spiritual, significance. But is also an activity fundamental to the advancement of human knowledge. Artists and scientists have traditionally used drawing as a means of conveying information—from studying human anatomy, to recording the variety of botanical species, to the mapping of the physical world. In nineteenth-century Europe, drawing was considered a necessary skill, and was thus a fundamental part of every European's education.

Today, we think of drawing as an everyday activity that anyone, both artists and ordinary people, might take up at any time. You doodle on a pad; you throw away the marked-up sheet and start again with a fresh one. We think of artists as making dozens of sketches before deciding on the composition of a major work. But people have not always been able or willing to casually toss out marked-up paper and begin again. Before the late fifteenth century, paper was costly. Look closely at an early Renaissance drawing probably from the workshop of Pollaiuolo (**Fig. 218**). The young man is sketching on a wooden tablet that he would sand clean after each drawing. The artist who drew him at work, however, worked in pen and ink on rare, expensive paper. This work thus represents a transition point in Western art—the point at which artists began to draw on paper before they committed their ideas to canvas or plaster.

Paper was not manufactured in the Western world until the thirteenth century in Italy. It was traditionally made out of fiber derived from scraps of cloth—generally hemp, cotton, and linen—and it was less costly than papyrus and parchment, both of which served as the principal writing materials in the West until the arrival of paper. *Papyrus* (from which our word *paper* derives, although they are very different), was the invention of the ancient Egyptians (sometime around 4000 BCE) and was made by pounding and pasting together strips of the papyrus plant, which grew in abundance in the marshes of the Nile River. *Parchment*, popularized by the ancient Romans after the second century BCE, but used around the Mediterranean for many centuries before that, was made from animal skins that had been scraped, soaked and dried, and was thus more widely available than papyrus, since animals are obviously found outside of the Nile River basin, but also more expensive, since valuable animals had to be killed to make it. Paper was cheaper than both.

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Paper arrived in the West through trade with the Muslim world, which in turn had learned of the process from China. Tradition has it that it was invented in 105 CE by Cai Lun, a eunuch who served in the imperial Han court, but archaeologists have found fragments of paper in China that date to before 200 BCE. Papermaking was introduced into the Arabic world sometime in the eighth century CE, where it supported a thriving book trade, centered in Baghdad. It was not until the invention of the printing press by Johann Gutenberg in fifteenth-century Germany, which itself spurred widespread interest in books, especially the Bible, that papermaking began to thrive in the West. Then publishers, which soon proliferated across the continent, vied for the rag supply. At one point in the early Renaissance, the city of Venice banned the export of rags for fear that its own paper industry might be threatened.

Because it required cloth rags in large quantities, paper remained an expensive, relatively luxury commodity (the technology for making paper from wood pulp was not discovered until the middle of the nineteenth century), and because, until the late fifteenth century, drawing was generally considered a student medium, as the Pollaiuolo drawing of a student suggests, it was not often done on paper. Copying a master's work was the means by which a student learned the higher art of painting. Thus, in 1493, the Italian religious zealot Savonarola outlined the ideal relationship between student and master: "What does the pupil look for in the master? I'll tell you. The master draws from his mind an image which his hands trace on paper and it carries the imprint of his idea. The pupil studies the drawing, and tries to imitate it. Little by little, in this way, he appropriates the style of his master. That is how all natural things, and all creatures, have derived from the divine intellect." Savonarola thus describes drawing as both the banal, everyday business of beginners and also as equal in its creativity to God's handiwork in nature. For Savonarola, the master's idea is comparable to "divine intellect." The master is to the student as God is to humanity. Drawing is, furthermore, autographic: It bears the master's imprint, his style.

By the end of the fifteenth century, then, drawing had come into its own. It was seen as embodying, perhaps more clearly than even the finished work, the artist's personality and creative genius. As one watched an artist's ideas develop through a series of preparatory sketches, it became possible to speak knowingly about the creative process itself. By the time Giorgio Vasari wrote his famous *Lives of the Painters* in 1550, the tendency was to see in drawing the foundation of Renaissance painting itself. Vasari had one of the largest collections of fifteenth-century—or so-called *quattrocento*—drawings ever assembled, and he wrote as if these drawings were a dictionary of the styles of the artists who had come before him.

Fig. 219 Leonardo da Vinci, *Madonna and Child with St. Anne and Infant St. John the Baptist,* c. 1505–07. National Gallery, London.
Art Resource, NY.

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In the *Lives* Vasari recalls how, in 1501, crowds rushed to see Leonardo's *Madonna and Child with St. Anne and Infant St. John the Baptist*, a **cartoon** (from the Italian *cartone*, meaning "paper") or drawing done to scale for a painting or a fresco. "The work not only won the astonished admiration of all the artists," Vasari reported, "but when finished for two days it attracted to the room where it was exhibited a crowd of men and women, young and old, who flocked there, as if they were attending a great festival, to gaze in amazement at the marvels he had created." Though this cartoon apparently does not survive, we can get some notion of it from the later cartoon illustrated here (**Fig. 219**). Vasari's account, at any rate, is the earliest recorded example we have of the public actually admiring a drawing.

Leonardo's drawings illustrate why drawing merits serious consideration as an art form in its own right and why they would so influence younger artists such as Raphael, who based so many of his paintings on quickly realized preparatory sketches (see *Works in Progress*, pp. 174–175). In Leonardo's *Study for a Sleeve* (**Fig. 220**), witness the extraordinary fluidity and spontaneity of the master's line. In contrast to the stillness of the resting arm (the hand, which is comparatively crude, was probably added later), the drapery is depicted as if it were a whirlpool or vortex. The directness of the medium, the ability of the artist's hand to move quickly over paper, allows Leonardo to bring out this turbulence. Through the intensity of his line, Leonardo imparts a degree of emotional complexity to the sitter, which is revealed in the part as well as in the whole. But the drawing also reveals the movements of the artist's own mind. It is as if the still sitter were at odds with the turbulence of the artist's imagination, an imagination that will not hold still whatever its object of contemplation. The fact is that in drawings like this one we learn something important not only about Leonardo's technique but also about what drove his imagination. More than any other reason, this was why, in the sixteenth century, drawings began to be preserved by artists and, simultaneously, collected by connoisseurs, experts on and appreciators of fine art.

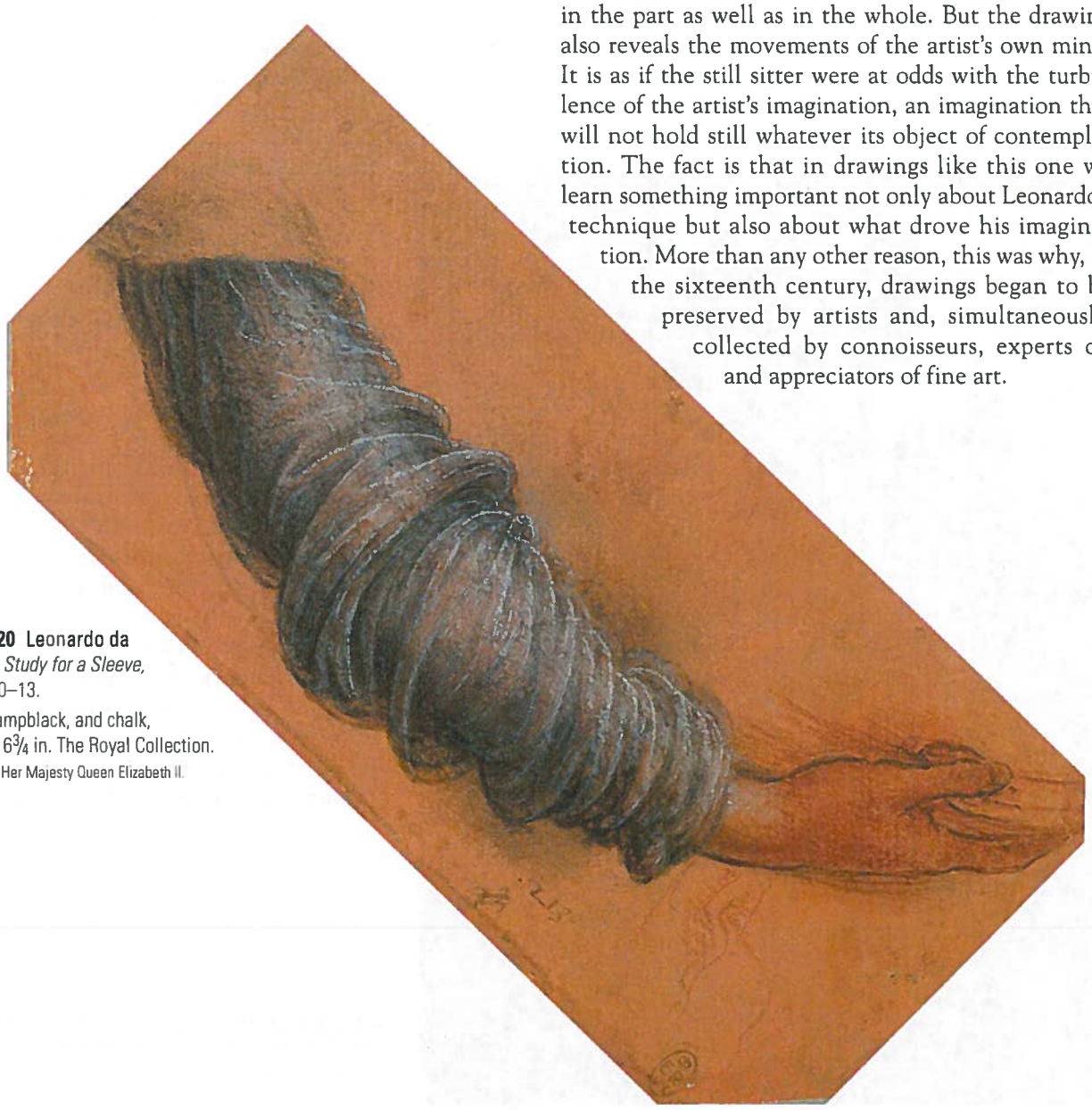

Fig. 220 Leonardo da Vinci, *Study for a Sleeve*, c. 1510–13.
Pen, lampblack, and chalk, 3⅛ × 6¾ in. The Royal Collection.

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Works in Progress

In a series of studies for *The Alba Madonna* (**Fig. 223**), the great Renaissance draughtsman Raphael demonstrates many of the ways that artists use drawings to plan a final work. It is as if Raphael, in these sketches, had been instructed by Leonardo himself. We do know, in fact, that when Raphael arrived in Florence in 1504, he was stunned by the freedom of movement and invention that he discovered in Leonardo's drawings. "Sketch subjects quickly," Leonardo admonished his students. "Rough out the arrangement of the limbs of your figures and first attend to the movements appropriate to the mental state of the creatures that make up your picture rather than to the beauty and perfection of their parts."

In the studies illustrated here, Raphael worked on both sides of a single sheet of paper (**Figs. 221** and **222**). On one side he has drawn a male model from life and posed him as the Madonna. In the sweeping cross-hatching below the figure in the sketch, one can already sense the circular format of the final painting, as these lines rise and turn up the arm and shoulder and around to the model's head. Inside this curve is another, rising from the knee bent under the model up across his chest to his neck and face. Even the folds of the drapery under his extended arm echo this curvilinear structure.

On the other side of the paper, all the figures present in the final composition are included. The major difference between this and the final painting is that

Fig. 221 and 222 **Raphael,** *Studies for* The Alba Madonna *(recto and verso),* c. 1511.
Left: red chalk; right: red chalk and pen and ink, both $16\frac{5}{8} \times 10\frac{3}{4}$ in. Musée des Beaux Arts, Lille, France.
RMN (left); © Bridgeman Art Library / private collection / Giraudon (right)

Raphael's *Alba Madonna*

the infant St. John offers up a bowl of fruit in the drawing and Christ does not yet carry a cross in his hand. But the circular format of the final painting is fully realized in this drawing. A hastily drawn circular frame encircles the group (outside this frame, above it, are first ideas for yet another Madonna and Child, and below it, in the bottom-right corner, an early version of the Christ figure for this one). The speed and fluency of this drawing's execution is readily apparent, and if the complex facial expressions of the final painting are not yet indicated here, the emotional tenor of the body language is. The postures are both tense and relaxed. Christ seems to move away from St. John even as he turns toward him. Mary reaches out, possibly to comfort the young saint, but equally possibly to hold him at bay. Raphael has done precisely as Leonardo directed, attending to the precise movements and gestures that will indicate the mental states of his subjects in the final painting.

Fig. 223 **Raphael,** *The Alba Madonna,* c. 1510.
Oil on panel transferred to canvas, diameter 37¼ in.; framed: 54 × 53½ in. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Andrew W. Mellon Collection.

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DRAWING MATERIALS

Just as the different fine arts media produce different kinds of images, different drawing materials produce different effects as well. Drawing materials are generally divided into two categories—dry media and liquid media. The dry media, which include metalpoint, chalk, charcoal, graphite, and pastel, consist of coloring agents, or **pigments**, that are sometimes ground or mixed with substances that hold the pigment together, called **binders**. Binders, however, are not necessary if the natural pigment—for instance, charcoal made from vine wood heated in a hot kiln until only the carbon charcoal remains—can be applied directly to the surface of the work. In liquid media, pigments are suspended in liquid binders, like the ink in Leonardo's drawing of the hurricane. The liquid ink flows much more easily onto Leonardo's surface than the dry chalk below it.

Dry Media

Metalpoint One of the most common tools used in drawing in late-fifteenth- and early-sixteenth-century Italy was **metalpoint**. A stylus (point) made of gold, silver, or some other metal is applied to a sheet of paper prepared with a mixture of powdered bones (or lead white) and gumwater (when the stylus was silver, as it often was, the medium was called silverpoint). Sometimes, pigments other than white were added to this preparation in order to color the paper. When the metalpoint is applied to this ground, a chemical reaction results, and line is produced.

A metalpoint line, which is pale gray, is very delicate and cannot be widened by increasing pressure upon the point. To make a thicker line, the artist must switch to a thicker point. Often, the same stylus would have a fine point on one end and a blunt one on the other, as does St. Luke's in the van der Weyden painting. Since a line cannot be erased without resurfacing the paper, drawing with metalpoint requires extreme patience and skill. Raphael's metalpoint drawing of *Saint Paul Rending His Garments* (**Fig. 224**) shows this skill. Shadow is rendered here by means of careful hatching. At the same time, a sense of movement and energy is evoked not only by the directional force of these

Fig. 224 Raphael, *Saint Paul Rending His Garments,* c. 1514–15.
Metalpoint heightened with white gouache on lilac-gray prepared paper, $9\frac{1}{16} \times 4\frac{1}{16}$ in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. 84.GG.919.

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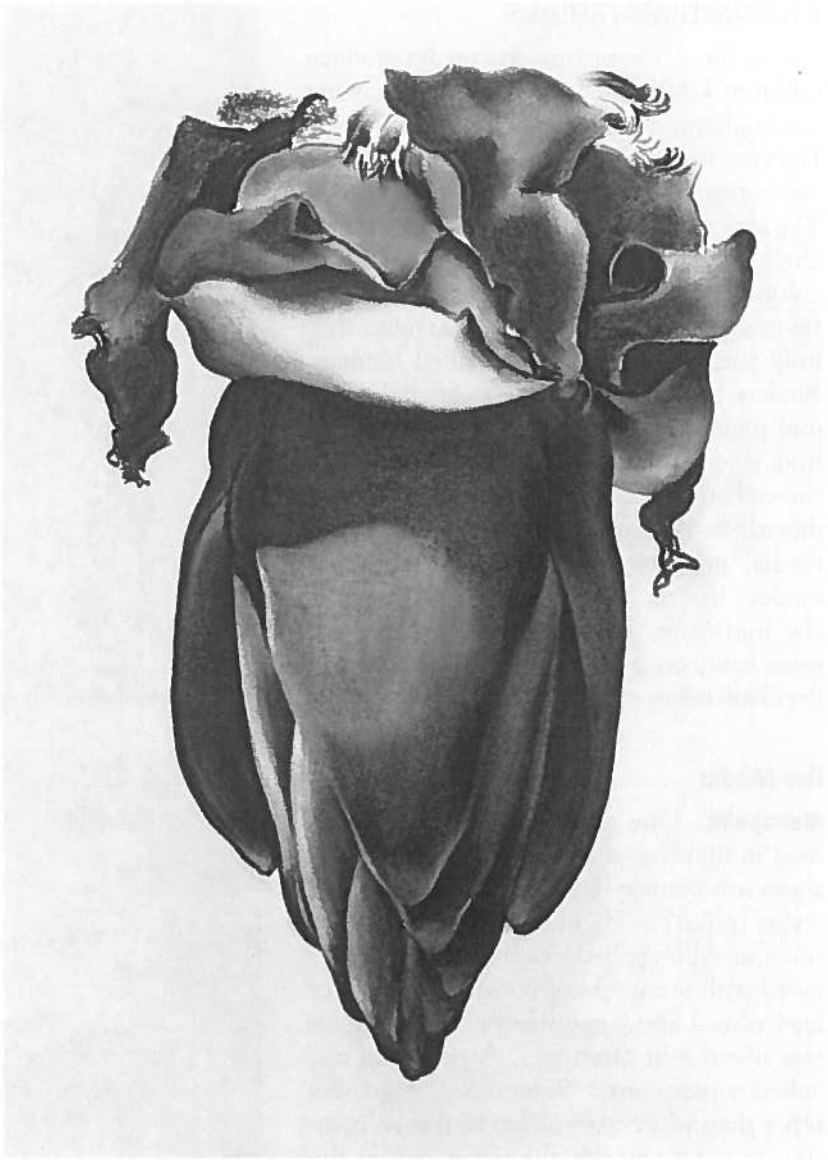

Fig. 225 Georgia O'Keeffe, *Banana Flower,* 1933.

Charcoal and black chalk on paper, 21¾ × 14¾ in. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Given anonymously (by exchange).

parallels, but also by the freedom of Raphael's outline, the looseness of the gesture even in this most demanding of formats. The highlights in the drawing are known as *heightening*, and they are created by applying an opaque white to the design after the metalpoint lines have been drawn.

Chalk and Charcoal Metalpoint is a mode of drawing that is chiefly concerned with **delineation**—that is, with a descriptive representation of the thing, seen through an outline or contour drawing. Effects of light and shadow are essentially "added" to the finished drawing by means of hatching or heightening. With the softer media of chalk and charcoal, however, it is much easier to give a sense of the *volumetric*—that is, of three-dimensional form—through modulations of light and dark. By the middle of the sixteenth century, artists like Raphael used natural chalks, derived from red ocher hematite, white soapstone, and black carbonaceous shale, which were fitted into holders and shaved to a point (see Figs. 221 and 222). With these chalks, it became possible to realize gradual transitions from light to dark, either by adjusting the pressure of one's hand or by merging individual strokes by gently rubbing over a given area with a finger, cloth, or eraser. Charcoal sticks are made from burnt wood, and the best are made from hardwood, especially vines. They can be either hard or soft, sharpened to so precise a point that they draw like a pencil, or held on their sides and dragged in large bold gestures across the surface of the paper.

In her charcoal drawing of a *Banana Flower* (**Fig. 225**), Georgia O'Keeffe achieves a sense of volume and space comparable to that realized by means of chalk. Though she is noted for her stunning oil paintings of flowers, this is a rare example in her work of a colorless flower composition. O'Keeffe's interest here is in creating three-dimensional space with a minimum of means, and the result is a study in light and dark in many ways comparable to a black-and-white photograph.

Because of its tendency to smudge easily, charcoal was not widely used during the Renaissance except in **sinopie**, tracings of the outlines of compositions drawn on the wall before the painting of frescoes. Such *sinopie* have come to light only recently, as the plaster supports for frescoes have been removed for conservation purposes. Drawing with both charcoal and chalk requires a paper with *tooth*—a rough surface to which the media can adhere. Today, charcoal drawings can be kept from smudging by spraying synthetic resin fixatives over the finished work.

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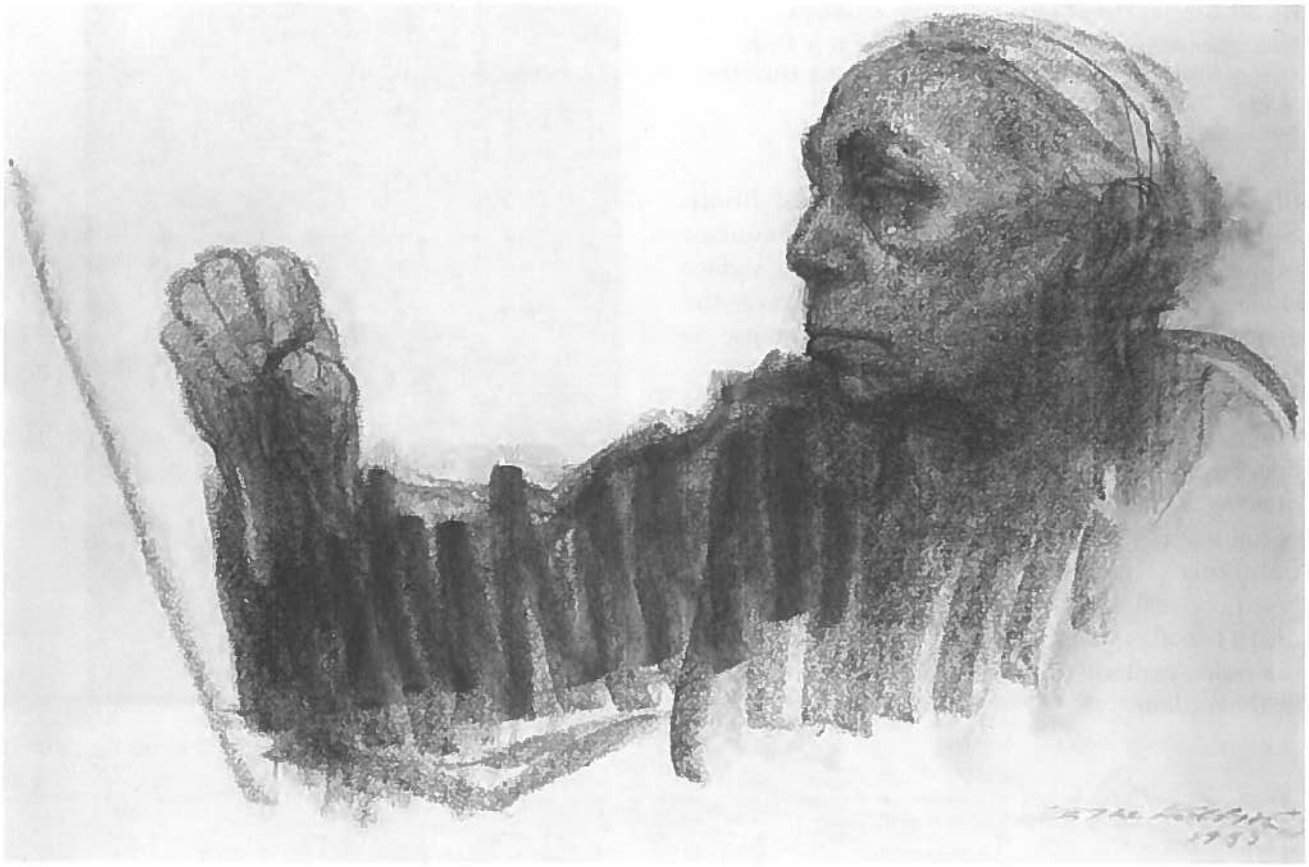

Fig. 226 Käthe Kollwitz, *Self-Portrait, Drawing,* 1933.
Charcoal on brown laid Ingres paper (Nagel 1972 1240), 18¾ × 25 in. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Rosenwald Collection.

In the hands of modern artists, charcoal has become one of the more popular drawing media, in large part because of its expressive directness and immediacy. In her *Self-Portrait, Drawing* (**Fig. 226**), Käthe Kollwitz has revealed the extraordinary expressive capabilities of charcoal as a medium. Much of the figure was realized by dragging the stick up and down in sharp angular gestures along her arm from her chest to her hand. It is as if this line, which mediates between the two much more carefully rendered areas of hand and face, embodies the dynamics of her work. This area of raw drawing literally connects her mind to her hand, her intellectual and spiritual capacity to her technical facility. It embodies the power of the imagination. She seems to hold the very piece of charcoal that has made this mark sideways between her fingers. She has rubbed so hard, and with such fury, that it has almost disappeared.

Graphite Graphite, a soft form of carbon similar to coal, was discovered in 1564 in Borrowdale, England. As good black chalk became more and more difficult to obtain, the lead **pencil**—graphite enclosed in a cylinder of soft wood—increasingly became one of the most common of all drawing tools. It became even more popular during the Napoleonic Wars early in the nineteenth century. Then, because supplies of English graphite were cut off from the continent, the Frenchman Nicholas-Jacques Conté invented, at therequest of Napoleon himself, a substitute for imported pencils that became known as the **Conté crayon** (not to be confused with the so-called Conté crayons marketed today, which are made with chalk). Conté substituted clay for some of the graphite. This technology was quickly adapted to the making of pencils generally. Thus, the relative hardness of the pencil could be controlled—the less graphite, the harder the pencil—and a greater range of lights (hard pencils) and darks (soft pencils, employing more graphite) became available.

Georges Seurat's Conté crayon study (**Fig. 227**) indicates the powerful range of tonal effects afforded by the new medium. As Seurat presses harder, in the lower areas of the composition depicting the shadows of the orchestra pit, the coarsely textured paper is

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Fig. 227 Georges Pierre Seurat, *Café Concert,* c. 1887–88.
Conté crayon with white heightening on Ingres paper, 12 × 9¼ in. Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence. Gift of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth.
Photo: Erik Gould

filled by the crayon. Above, pressing less firmly, Seurat creates a sense of light dancing on the surface of the stage. Where he has not drawn on the surface at all—across the stage and on the singer's dress—the glare of the white paper is almost as intense as light itself.

Vija Celmins's *Untitled (Ocean)* (**Fig. 228**) is an example of a highly developed photorealist graphite drawing. A little larger than a sheet of legal paper, the drawing is an extraordinarily detailed rendering of ocean waves seen from the Venice Pier in Venice, California. This is one of a long series of drawings based on small 3½ × 5-inch photographs. Celmins used a pencil of differing hardness for each drawing in the series, exploring the range of possibilities offered by the medium.

Fig. 228 Vija Celmins, *Untitled (Ocean) (Venice, California),* 1970.
Pencil on paper, 14⅛ × 18⅞ in. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Mrs. Florence M. Schoenborn Fund.
Licensed by Scala / Art Resource, New York. Photo © 2000 Museum of Modern Art.

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Pastel **Pastel** is essentially a chalk medium with colored pigment and a nongreasy binder added to it. Pastels come in sticks the dimension of an index finger and are labeled soft, medium, and hard, depending on how much binder is incorporated into the medium—the more binder, the harder the stick. Since the pigment is, in effect, diluted by increased quantities of binder, the harder the stick, the less intense its color. This is why we tend to associate the word "pastel" with pale, light colors. Although the harder sticks are much easier to use than the softer ones, some of the more interesting effects of the medium can only be achieved with the more intense colors of the softer sticks. The lack of binder in pastels makes them extremely fragile. Before the final drawing is fixed, the marks created by the chalky powder can literally fall off the paper, despite the fact that, since the middle of the eighteenth century, special ribbed and textured papers have been made that help hold the medium to the surface.

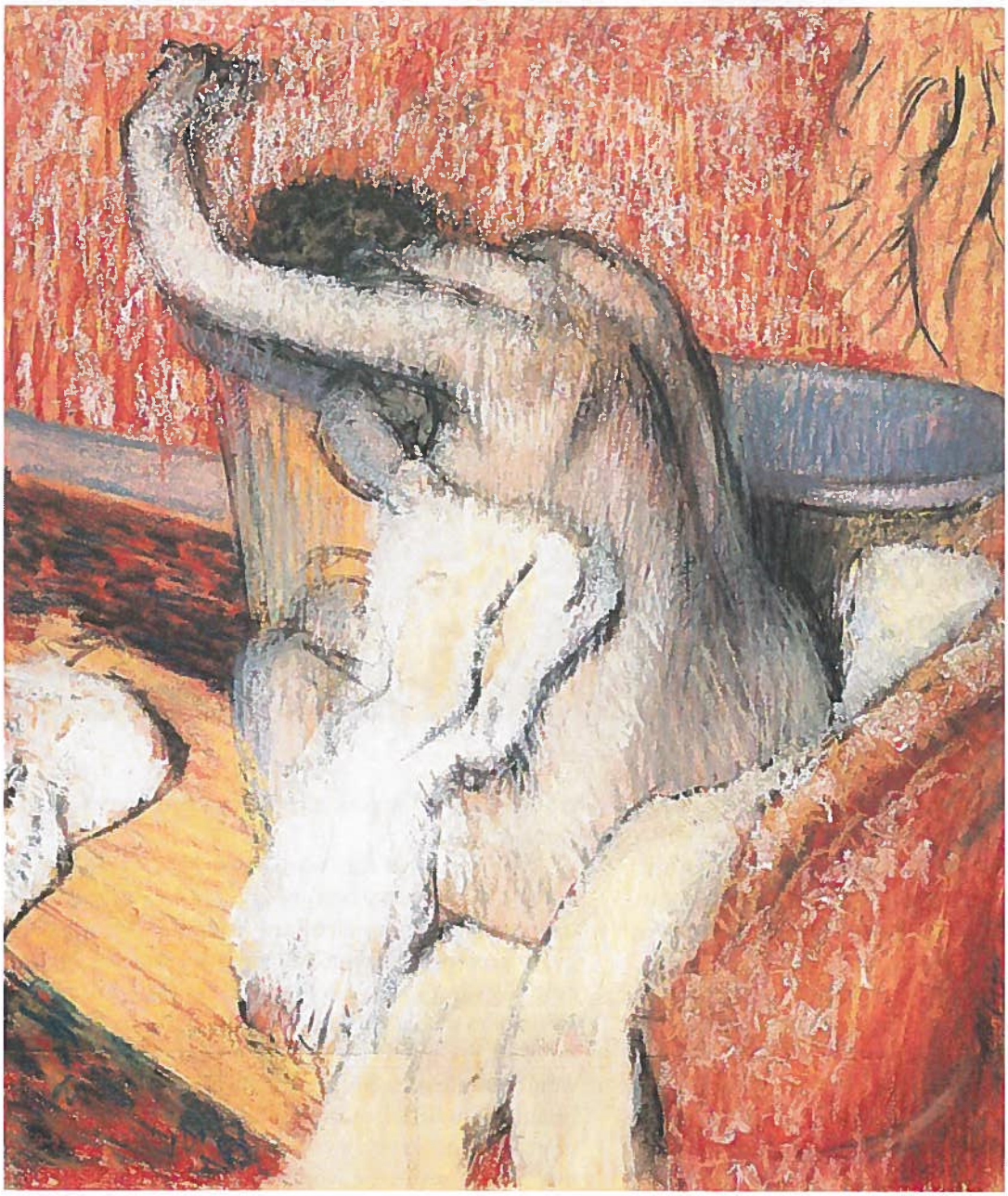

Fig. 229 **Edgar Degas,** *After the Bath, Woman Drying Herself,* c. 1889–90. Pastel on paper, 26⅝ × 22¾ in. Courtauld Institute Galleries, London.

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Fig. 230 Mary Cassatt, *Young Mother, Daughter, and Son,* 1913.
Pastel on paper, 43¼ × 33¼ in.
Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester. Marion Stratten Gould Fund.

Of all artists who have ever used pastel, perhaps Edgar Degas was the most proficient and inventive. He was probably attracted to the medium because it was more direct than painting, and its unfinished quality seemed particularly well-suited to his artistic goal of capturing the reality of the contemporary scene, especially in a series of pastel drawings of women at their bath (**Fig. 229**). Degas's use of his medium is unconventional, incorporating into the "finished" work both improvised gesture and a loose, sketchlike drawing. Degas invented a new way to use pastel, building up the pigments in successive layers. Normally, this would not have been possible because the powdery chalks of the medium would not hold to the surface. But Degas worked with a fixative, the formula for which has been lost, that allowed him to build up layers of pastel without affecting the intensity of their color. Laid on the surface in hatches, these successive layers create an optical mixture of color that shimmers before the eyes in a virtually abstract design.

The American painter Mary Cassatt met Degas in Paris in 1877, and he became her artistic mentor. Known for her pictures of mothers and children, Cassatt learned to use the pastel medium in even bolder terms than Degas. In this drawing of *Young Mother, Daughter, and Son* (**Fig. 230**), one of Cassatt's last works, the gestures of her pastel line again and again exceed the boundaries of the forms that contain them, and loosely drawn, arbitrary blue strokes extend across almost every element of the composition.

The owner of this work, Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, Cassatt's oldest and best friend, saw in works such as this one an almost virtuoso display of "strong line, great freedom of technique and a supreme mastery of color." When Mrs. Havemeyer organized a benefit exhibition of Cassatt's and Degas's works in New York in 1915, its proceeds to be donated to the cause of women's suffrage, she included works such as this one because Cassatt's freedom of line was, to her, the very symbol of the strength of women and their equality to men. Seen beside the works by Degas, it would be evident that the pupil had equaled, and in many ways surpassed, the achievement of Degas himself.

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Fig. 231 Sandy Brooke, *Paestum*, 2009. Oilstick on paper, 22 × 30 in. Courtesy Sandy Brooke.
Photo: Gary Alvis.

Oilstick Oilsticks are oil paint manufactured with enough wax for the paint to be molded into stick form. They allow the painter to draw directly onto a surface without brushes, palettes, paint tubes, or solvents. They are related to the pastel oilsticks used by artists such as Beverly Buchanan (see *Works in Progress*, pp. 184–185). But unlike drawing with pastel oilsticks, which are too soft to permit long and continuous strokes across the surface, the density of oilsticks allows the artist more gestural freedom and a sense of direct engagement with the act of drawing itself. Sandy Brooke's oilstick drawing, *Paestum*, is one of a series of paintings and drawings inspired by the Temples of Hera at Paestum, Italy (see Fig. 459), two of the best preserved examples of Greek Doric architecture in the world. Built around 550 BCE, for centuries they stood in a watery swamp, covered with vines, and forgotten to all but a few local farmers and shepherds. But after archeologists began excavating nearby Pompeii in the mid-eighteenth century, the locals inquired if they might not be interested in the temples as well, and Paestum was quickly recognized as one of the most important archeological sites in the Mediterranean basin. "For me," Brooke says, "the act of looking at the surface of this work is comparable to looking into water. Images behind and above the viewer are reflected off the semi-transparent surface beneath which other forms appear and disappear, fragment and coalesce, depending on the degree of surface turbulence. The water might be rain, falling across our vision, or the swamp below the columns of the temples. As we look down and into the painting, not out and across it, the possibility arises that what we see there, in flow of the current, in the shadow of the storm, is a reflection of ourselves, and a reflection of history itself, half-forgotten like the temples, rising up through the vines of time."

Liquid Media

Pen and Ink During the Renaissance, as paper became more and more widely available, most drawings were made with iron-gall ink, which was made from a mixture of iron salts and an acid obtained from the nut-gall, a swelling on an oak tree caused by disease. The

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Fig. 232 Elisabetta Sirani *The Holy Family with a Kneeling Monastic Saint,* c. 1660.

Pen and brown ink, black chalk, on paper, 10⅜ × 7⅜ in. Private collection.

Photo courtesy of Christie's, New York.

characteristic brown color of most Renaissance pen-and-ink drawings results from the fact that this ink, though black at application, browns with age.

The quill pen used by most Renaissance artists, which was most often made from a goose or swan feather, allows for far greater variation in line and texture than is possible with a metalpoint stylus or even with a pencil. As we can see in this drawing by Elisabetta Sirani (**Fig. 232**), one of the leading artists in Bologna during the seventeenth century, the line can be thickened or thinned, depending on the artist's manipulation of the flexible quill and the absorbency of the paper (the more absorbent the paper, the more freely the ink will flow through its fibers). Diluted to a greater or lesser degree, ink also provides her with a more fluid and expressive means to render light and shadow than the elaborate and tedious hatching that was necessary when using stylus or chalk. Drawing with pen and ink is fast and expressive. Sirani, in fact, displayed such speed and facility in her compositions that, in a story that most women will find familiar, she was forced to work in public in order to demonstrate that her work was her own and not done by a man.

In this example from Jean Dubuffet's series of drawings *Corps de Dame* (**Fig. 233**) ("corps" means both a group of women and the bodies of women), the whorl of line, which ranges from the finest hairline to strokes nearly a half-inch thick, defines a female form, her two small arms raised as if to ward off the violent gestures of the artist's pen itself. Though many see Dubuffet's work as misogynistic—the product of someone who hates women—it can also be read as an attack on academic figure drawing, the pursuit of formal perfection and beauty that has been used traditionally to justify drawing from the nude. Dubuffet does not so much render form as flatten it, and in a gesture that insists on the modern artist's liberation from traditional techniques and values, his use of pen and ink threatens to transform drawing into scribbling, conscious draftsmanship into automatism, that is, unconscious and random automatic marking. In this, his work is very close to surrealist experiments designed to make contact with the unconscious mind.

Fig. 233 Jean Dubuffet, *Corps de Dame,* June–December 1950.

Pen, reed pen, and ink, 10⅝ × 8⅜ in. Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Jean and Lester Avnet Collection.

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Works in Progress

Pastels are an extremely fragile medium, but they can be combined with oil to make pastel oilsticks that not only flow more easily onto the surface of the drawing but also adhere to the surface more readily. Pastel oilstick drawings are central to the art of Beverly Buchanan, whose work is about the makeshift shacks that dot the Southern landscape near her home in Athens, Georgia.

Beginning in the early 1980s, Buchanan started photographing these shacks, an enterprise she has carried on ever since (**Fig. 234**). "At some point," she says, "I had to realize that for me the structure was related to the people who built it. I would look at shacks and the ones that attracted me always had something a little different or odd about them. This evolved into my having to deal with [the fact that] I'm making portraits of a family or person."

Buchanan soon began to make drawings and sculptural models of the shacks. Each of these models tells a story. This legend, for instance, accompanies the sculpture of *Richard's Home* (**Fig. 235**):

> *Some of Richard's friends had already moved north, to freedom, when he got on the bus to New York. Richard had been "free" for fifteen years and homeless now for seven. . . . After eight years as a foreman, he was "let go." He never imagined it would be so hard and cruel to look for something else. Selling his blood barely fed him. At night, dreams took him back to a childhood of good food, hard work, and his Grandmother's yard of flowers and pinestraw and wood. Late one night, his cardboard house collapsed during a heavy rain. Looking down at a soggy heap, he heard a voice, like thunder, roar this message through his brains,* RICHARD GO HOME!

Fig. 234 **Beverly Buchanan**, *Ms. Mary Lou Furcron's House, deserted*, 1989.
Ektacolor print, 16 × 20 in.
Courtesy Steinbaum Krauss Gallery, New York.

Fig. 235 **Beverly Buchanan**, *Richard's Home*, 1993.
Wood, oil crayon, and mixed media, 78 × 16 × 21 in.
Courtesy Steinbaum Krauss Gallery, New York. Collection of Bernice and Harold Steinbaum. Photo: Adam Reich.

Buchanan's sculpture does not represent the collapsed cardboard house in the North, but Richard's new home in the South. It is not just a ramshackle symbol of poverty. Rather, in its improvisational design, in its builder's determination to use whatever materials are available, to make something of nothing, as it were, the shack is a testament to the energy and spirit of its creator. More than just testifying to Richard's will to survive, his shack underscores his creative and aesthetic genius.

Beverly Buchanan's ***Shackworks***

Fig. 236 Beverly Buchanan, *Monroe County House with Yellow Datura*, 1994.
Oil pastel on paper, 60 × 79 in.
Courtesy Steinbaum Krauss Gallery, New York. Collection of Bernice and Harold Steinbaum. Photo: Adam Reich.

Buchanan's pastel oilstick drawings, such as *Monroe County House with Yellow Datura* (**Fig. 236**), are embodiments of this same energy and spirit. In their use of expressive line and color, they are almost abstract, especially in the fields of color that surround the shacks. Their distinctive scribble-like marks are based on the handwriting of Walter Buchanan, Beverly Buchanan's great-uncle and the man who raised her. Late in his life he suffered a series of strokes, and before he died he started writing letters to family members that he considered very important. "Some of the words were legible," Buchanan explains, "and some were in this kind of script that I later tried to imitate. . . . What I thought about in his scribbling was an interior image. It took me a long time to absorb that. . . . And I can also see the relation of his markings to sea grasses, the tall grasses, the marsh grasses that I paint." The pastel oilstick is the perfect tool for this line, the seemingly untutored rawness of its application mirroring the haphazard construction of the shacks. And it results in images of great beauty, as beautiful as the shacks themselves.

WATCH VIDEO Watch Beverly Buchanan as she explores the countryside of her native Georgia and creates both a sculpture and a painting in the *Works in Progress* video series.

Fig. 237 Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, *The Adoration of the Magi,* c. 1740s.
Pen and brown wash over graphite sketch, $11\frac{3}{5} \times 8\frac{1}{5}$ in. Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University. Mortimer C. Leventritt Fund.1950.392.

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Wash and Brush When ink is diluted with water and applied by brush in broad, flat areas, the result is called a *wash*. Tiepolo's *Adoration of the Magi* (**Fig. 237**) is essentially three layers deep. Over a preliminary graphite sketch is a pen and ink drawing, and over both, Tiepolo has laid a brown wash. The wash serves two purposes here: It helps to define volume and form by adding shadow, but it also creates a visual pattern of alternating light and dark elements that helps to make the drawing much more dynamic than it would otherwise be. As we move from right to left across the scene, deeper and deeper into its space, this alternating pattern leads us to a central moment of light, which seems to flood from the upper right, falling on the infant Jesus himself.

Many artists prefer to draw with a brush. It affords them a sense of immediacy and spontaneity, as Rembrandt's brush drawing of *A Sleeping Woman* (**Fig. 238**) makes clear. The work seems so spontaneous, so quick and impetuous, that one can imagine Rembrandt drawing the scene quickly, so as not to wake the woman. And the drawing possesses an equally powerful sense of intimacy. It is as if the ability to draw this rapidly is the result of knowing very well who it is one draws.

Fig. 238 **Rembrandt van Rijn,** *A Sleeping Woman,* c. 1660–69. Brush drawing in brown ink and wash, $9\frac{5}{8} \times 8$ in. The British Museum, London.
Marburg / Art Resource, NY.

Fig. 239 Liang Kai, *The Poet Li Bo Walking and Chanting a Poem, Southern Song Dynasty,* c. 1200. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, $31\frac{3}{4} \times 11\frac{7}{8}$ in. Tokyo National Museum, Japan.

Drawing with a brush is a technique with a long tradition in the East, perhaps because the brush is used there as a writing instrument. Chinese calligraphy requires that each line in a written character begin very thinly, then broaden in the middle and taper again to a point. The soft brushtip allows calligraphers to control the width of their lines. Thus, in the same gesture, a line can move from broad and sweeping to fragile and narrow, and back again. Such ribbons of line are extremely expressive. In his depiction of the Tang poet Li Bo (**Fig. 239**), Liang Kai juxtaposes the quick strokes of diluted ink that form the robe with the fine, detailed brushwork of his face. This opposition contrasts the fleeting materiality of the poet's body—as insubstantial as his chant, which drifts away on the wind—with the enduring permanence of his poetry.

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Innovative Drawing Media

Drawing is by its nature an exploratory medium. It invites experimentation. Taking up a sheet of heavy pre-painted paper, Henri Matisse was often inspired, beginning in the early 1940s, to cut out a shape in the paper with a pair of wide-open scissors, using them like a knife to carve through the paper. He considered working with scissors a kind of drawing. "Scissors," he says, "can acquire more feeling for line than pencil or charcoal." Sketching with the scissors, Matisse discovered what he considered to be the essence of a form. Cut-outs, in fact, dominated Matisse's artistic production from 1951 until his death in 1954. In this *Venus* (**Fig. 240**), the figure of the goddess is revealed in the negative space of the composition. It is as if the goddess of love—and hence love itself—were immaterial. In the blue positive space to the right we discover the profile of a man, as if love springs, fleetingly, from his very breath.

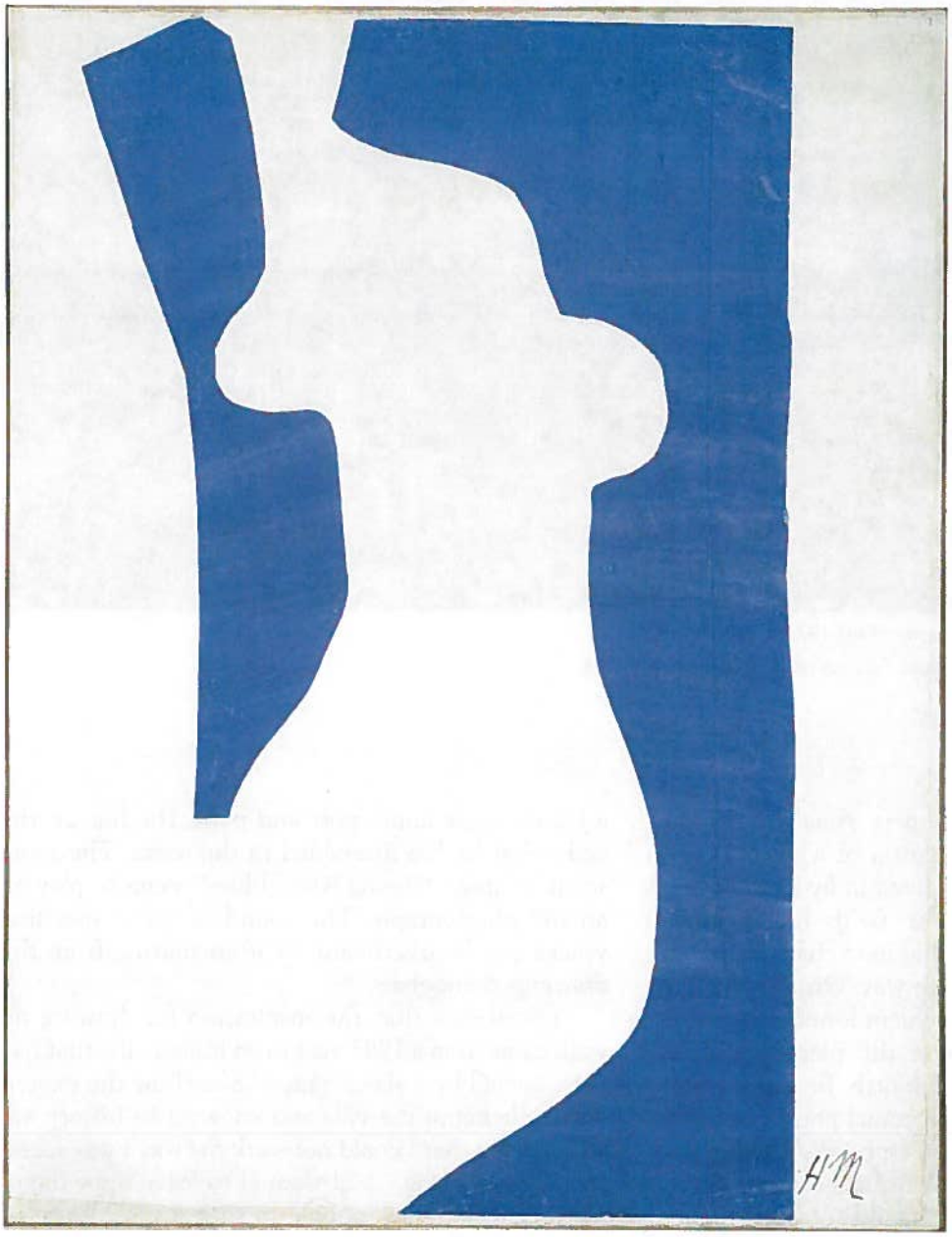

Fig. 240 Henri Matisse, *Venus,* 1952.
Paper collage on canvas, $39\frac{7}{8} \times 30\frac{1}{8}$ in. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund.

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Fig. 241 Whitfield Lovell, *Whispers from the Walls,* 1999.
Mixed-media installation, varying dimensions. Courtesy DC Moore Gallery, New York.

In his installation *Whispers from the Walls* (**Fig. 241**), a full-scale recreation of what a 1920s North Texas one-room house lived in by an African-American family working the fields might have looked like, Whitfield Lovell has used charcoal drawing in a particularly evocative way. On the shack's plank walls—salvaged from abandoned buildings around Denton, Texas, where the piece was first installed at the University of North Texas—he has drawn life-size figures based on actual photographs of the Texas African Americans, especially those who lived in the thriving Denton African-American community in the 1920s. The very fragility of the medium lends the drawings an almost ghost-like presence, an eerie sense of the past rising through and in the collection of period artifacts—blankets, a rag carpet, a trunk, a gas lamp, pots and pans, the hat on the bed—that he has assembled in the room. The room smells of must. "Rising River Blues" seems to play on an old phonograph. The sound of softly speaking voices can be overheard, as if emanating from the drawings themselves.

Lovell says that the inspiration for drawing on walls came from a 1993 visit to an Italian villa that had been owned by a slave trader: "Somehow the experience of being in the villa and knowing its history was so haunting that I could not work the way I was accustomed to working. . . . I wanted to leave some dignified images of black people in that space." *Whispers from the Walls* is, in this sense, Lovell's attempt to restore to contemporary America—and Denton, Texas in particular—the dignity of its lost past.

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Fig. 242 Marjane Satrapi, page from the "Kim Wilde" chapter of the graphic novel *Persepolis,* 2001.
Ink on paper, $16^{9}/_{16} \times 11^{11}/_{16}$ in. Courtesy the artist.

Drawing has always held an important place in popular culture, particularly in the world of the comic book and that version of the comic-book genre generally intended for more mature audiences, the graphic novel. Among the most popular of the latter have been Frank Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* (1986) and Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (1986), a tale recounting his own parents' experience as Polish Jews during World War II, in which Jews are portrayed as mice, Germans as cats, and Americans as dogs. The latter made a lasting impression on Iranian artist Marjane Satrapi, who created her own graphic novel, *Persepolis*, while living in exile in Paris in 2001 (**Fig. 242**). Named after the capital of ancient Persia, in what is now modern-day Iran, *Persepolis* tells the story of Satrapi's own childhood as she grew up in Iran. Born in 1969, she was ten years old when the king of Iran, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, was forced to flee the country as Islamic fundamentalists under the spiritual leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini took over. The page from the novel illustrated here takes place in 1983. Unsympathetic to the revolution, and in some measure proud of their thirteen-year-old daughter's defiance of its dismissal of all things Western as morally corrupt, her parents have smuggled into the country a denim jacket, a pair of Nike tennis shoes, a Michael Jackson button, and posters of the heavy metal band Iron Maiden and pop star Kim Wilde, whose new-wave hit "Kids in America" had reached the top of the rock charts in 1981. Her Satrapi dresses up in her new gear in preparation for heading out into the streets to buy bootleg tapes of Kim Wilde and the English band Camel. But, as she heads home, she is confronted by two "guardians of the revolution," women who patrolled the streets to detain other women not properly veiled, such as the young Satrapi herself. They are offended by her Nikes, which they call "shoes of punk." Satrapi replies, "It was evident that they had never seen anything punk." They accost her about the Michael Jackson button, labeling it a "symbol of decadence." She says, no, "It's Malcolm X, head of the American Black Muslims." She comments in a side bar, "In this era, Michael Jackson was still black." Satrapi's drawing style subtly but effectively supports this narrative. In revolutionary Iran, all is black and white. From the point of view of the guardians of the revolution, there is no moral middle ground, only right and wrong, as plain and simple as Satrapi's drawing itself.

It should come as no surprise that, in 2007, Satrapi turned *Persepolis* into an animated feature film, which was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Animated Feature in 2008. As a form, the graphic novel lends itself to animation. In fact, one of the great drawing innovators of the day is South African artist William Kentridge, who employs his drawings to create his own animated films. These films are built up from single drawings in charcoal and pastel on paper

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that are successively altered through erasure, additions, and re-drawings that are photographed at each stage of evolution. Instead of being constructed, as in normal animation, out of hundreds of separate drawings, Kentridge's films are made of hundreds of photographs of drawings in process. Drawing over a week's time might add up to around 40 seconds of animation.

The process of erasure, and the smudged layering that results, is for Kentridge a kind of metaphor for memory, and it is memory that concerns Kentridge, especially the memory of apartheid in South Africa and by extension the memory of the forces that mark the history of modernity as a whole. The films chronicle the rise and fall of a white Johannesburg businessman, Soho Eckstein. Always dressed in a pin-striped suit, Soho buys land and then mines it, extracting the resources and riches of the land and creating an empire based upon his own exploitation of miners and landscape. He is emotionally the very embodiment of the industrial infrastructure he has helped to create—dark, somber, virtually dehumanized. Over time, as the films have followed his career, he has come to understand the high price that he and his country have paid for his actions.

Reproduced here are four drawings from the seventh film in the Soho Eckstein cycle, *WEIGHING . . . and WANTING* (**Fig. 243**). The first is an image of Soho's brain as he passes through a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) apparatus. It reveals a line of workers heading into the mines. Next, we see the ore in the mine itself imaged in his skull. The scanned brain is then transformed into a rock, which Soho comes across on his evening walk and embraces. Inside it, he can hear his own memories, as if fossilized within the stone.

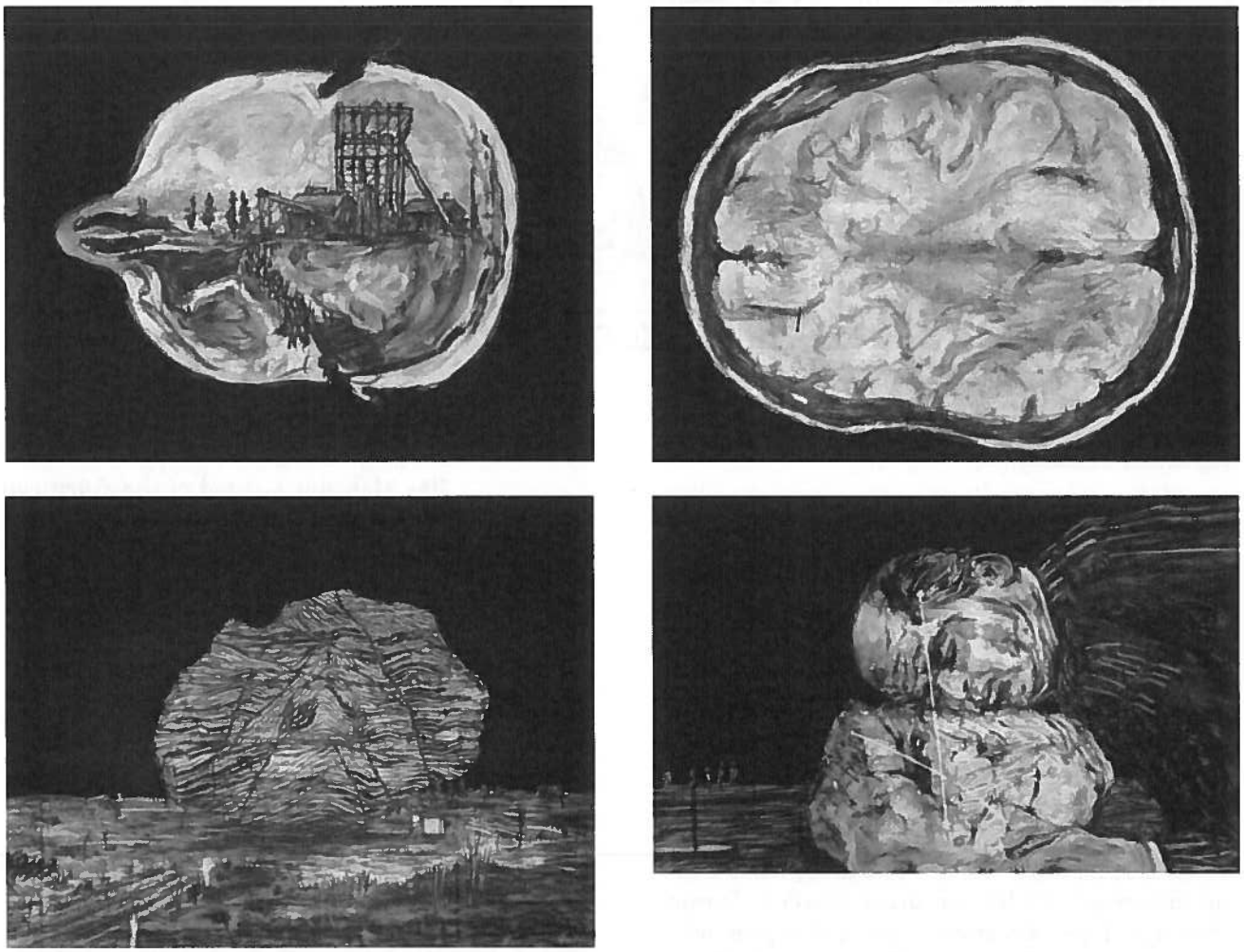

Fig. 243 **William Kentridge,** four drawings from *WEIGHING . . . and WANTING,* 1997–98.
Charcoal, pastel on paper, from left to right, $24\frac{5}{8} \times 30\frac{3}{4}$ in., $24\frac{5}{8} \times 30\frac{3}{4}$ in., $47\frac{1}{4} \times 63$ in., and $47\frac{1}{4} \times 63$ in.

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THE CRITICAL PROCESS

Thinking about Drawing

As we have seen, drawing is one of the most basic and one of the most direct of all media. Initially, drawing was not considered an art in its own right, but only a tool for teaching and preliminary study. By the late Renaissance, it was generally acknowledged that drawing possessed a vitality and immediacy that revealed significant details about the artist's personality and style.

Artists also employ a wide variety of tools and media in drawing. One of the most original is a set of *Basketball Drawings* by African-American artist David Hammons, of which *Out of Bounds* (**Fig. 244**) is an example. Literally drawn by bouncing a dirty basketball on paper, it can be understood as both a celebration of the athleticism and skill so readily apparent on the playgrounds of Hammons's native New York and a tongue-in-cheek critique of his city's "high" art scene, where an abstract painting of a target, resembling this drawing, might sell for thousands of dollars.

Throughout his career, Hammons has chosen both to work outside the art world mainstream and to challenge the values of his own African-American community. Basketball has particularly attracted his attention because he sees so many young people dedicating themselves to perfecting their "game," with little or no chance of the financial success realized by only a very few professional basketball players. In the mid-1980s, he installed 40-foot-high basketball hoops, decorated like African motifs made of bottle caps, in both Brooklyn and Harlem (**Fig. 245**). Called *Higher Goals*, Hammons called them "anti-basketball sculpture." "Basketball," he explained, "has become a problem in the black community because kids aren't getting an education. . . . That's why it's called *Higher Goals*. It means you should have higher goals in life than basketball."

How does the design of *Out of Bounds* reflect this point of view? Traditionally, drawing was thought to reveal significant aspects of the artist's personality. What does this drawing tell you about Hammons? This drawing is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. What do you think Hammons would make of that?

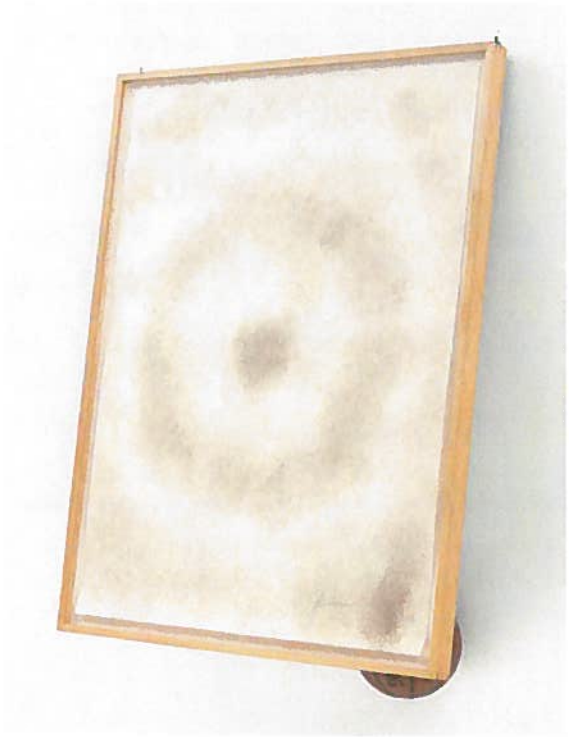

Fig. 244 **David Hammons,** *Out of Bounds,* 1995–96.
Dirt on paper in artist's frame, with basketball, $53\frac{1}{4} \times 41\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Gift of the Friends of Contemporary Drawing, the Friends of Education of The Museum of Modern Art, and Peter and Eileen Norton.

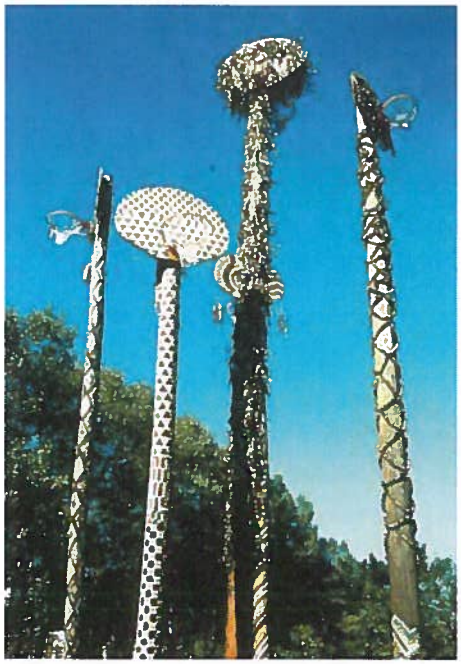

Fig. 245 **David Hammons,** *Higher Goals,* 1982.
Wood poles, basketball hoops, and other objects, height 40 ft. Shown installed in Brooklyn, New York, 1986.
Photograph by Dawoud Bey. © David Hammons.

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