

LOOKING AT ART

Gesture Drawing

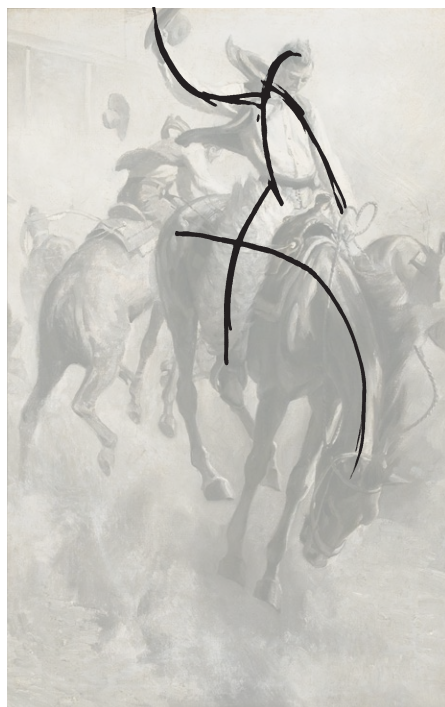
A gesture drawing is a loose drawing that captures movement, basic shapes, and the weight of an object or figure. When creating a gesture drawing, the artist works quickly, focusing on the general shape of their subject and trying to show any motion occurring in the work. The artist starts by drawing lightly and then goes over those lines with darker marks to show weight. No erasing or shading is done in a gesture drawing, and very few details are included.

Before you begin, look closely at the overall shape of the work you are viewing. Do not focus on the outline: instead, look at the angles, curves, and weight of your subject.



W. Herbert Dunton, *Illustration for The Fair in the Cow Country*, 1914, oil on canvas, 50 × 60 in. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. D.J. Oden, 1953 (1.23P).

Gesture Drawing



1 Start with the most prominent line (or two). In what direction(s) are they going? Are they light and delicate or heavy and bold?



2 Next, look for shapes. What shapes can you find that define the image? With a loose quick line, draw them. Use very light lines. Here they have been traced so you can see what to look for.



3 Finally, look over your drawing. You can make the lines that are in shadow darker and the ones in the light can remain lighter.

L.L. Gorian, *Gesture drawing of Rodeo*, 2021. © L.L. Gorian.

Gesture Drawing



Gerald Cassidy, *Spanish Dance Scene (Mural for the Santa Fe Country Club)*, 1920, oil on canvas, 58.625 × 94.375 in. Gift of Colonel Norman J. and Gwendolyn E. Riebe, 1977 (3643.23P).

What to look for:

- What do you notice in the painting?
- What do you notice about the people?
- What do you think they are doing?
- How are the arms and legs moving?
- What else do you see that shows movement?
How can you tell it is moving?

Choose the figure you want to draw. Look for the most prominent lines and shapes. Always begin with light lines and then increase darkness as it progresses. Remember: no erasing, no details, and no shading.



L.L. Gorian, *Gesture drawing of Dancer*, 2021. © L.L. Gorian.