
Drawing the Figure

Degas Ballet dancers - great to draw!

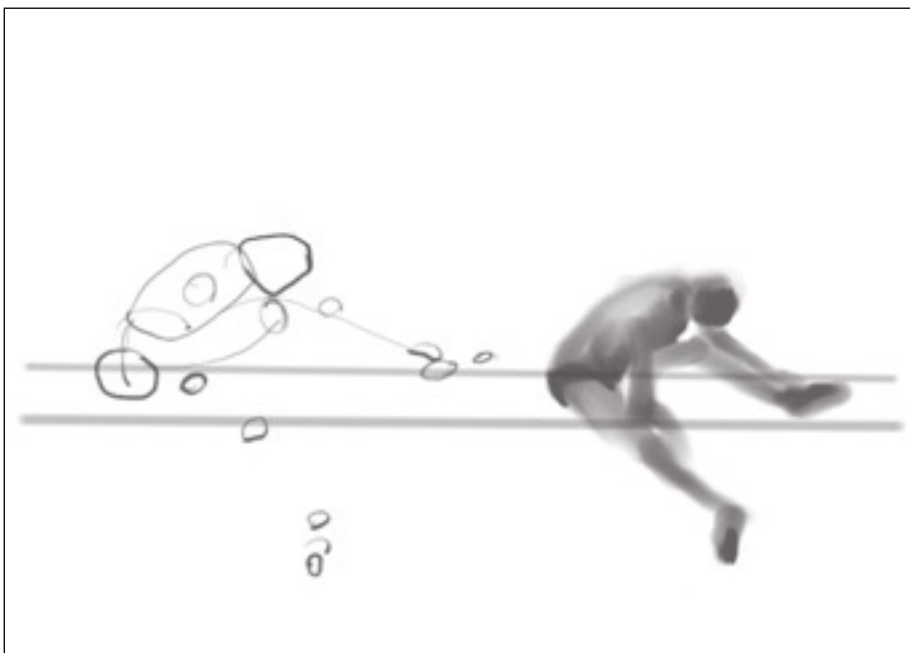
How to get proportion and why weight is important in drawing - 16 September 2015

Degas ballet dancers are much loved around the world and inspiring to draw.

If you would like to draw the figure, where do you start?

Things to aim for:

- Forget detail until much later
- Think about the **pose**
- What **shape** does the figure make?
- How is the figure connected to the floor?



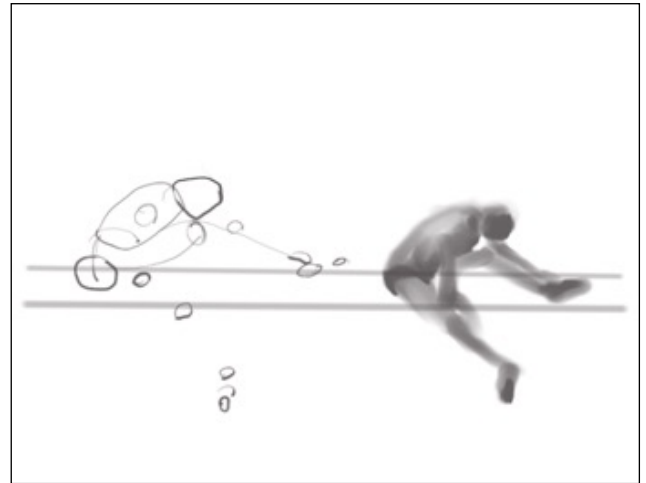
The dancers above are sitting on a long bench. These lines of the bench are essential so draw them in. We will focus on the dancer on the **right** hand side

Next: see the overall shape of the dancer on the right (forget about the tutu) imagine you can see all of the figure and how she is sitting. What would it feel like if you were sitting like this?

My drawing of two stick like figures demonstrates how to plan the pose of the figure. This is also known as 'gesture'. It is done simply, without detail but gives a clear idea of how the dancer was sitting.

The drawing on the right takes the idea of the gesture a little further. It shows where the 'weight' of the figure is. The dark areas denote where the most weight would fall if sitting in this manner. So the front of the head (face), hip, elbow and ankles as well as the front of the body would have the body's weight.

Note: Dancers are masters of illusion, they make it look as if there is no weight in the body



PRACTICE!

- Take sheets of cheaper paper and a pencil, try to figure out the pose of people, family. Sit and observe you can even try this from the television. Be quick!
- Then take some stick charcoal (use the side of the charcoal and not the point by holding each end with thumb and middle finger, push across the paper) Try drawing with the charcoal in broad strokes but this time find where the weight is. Again be quick and decisive
- Lastly, take 2 colours on a brush and do the same for the weight drawing.
- Avoid details! That is another exercise..... :)