

Drawing the Collection Lesson 5 – Balance and Harmony

Harmony creates a bridge that connects disparate elements through a common attribute, whether its texture, tone, shape, or line.

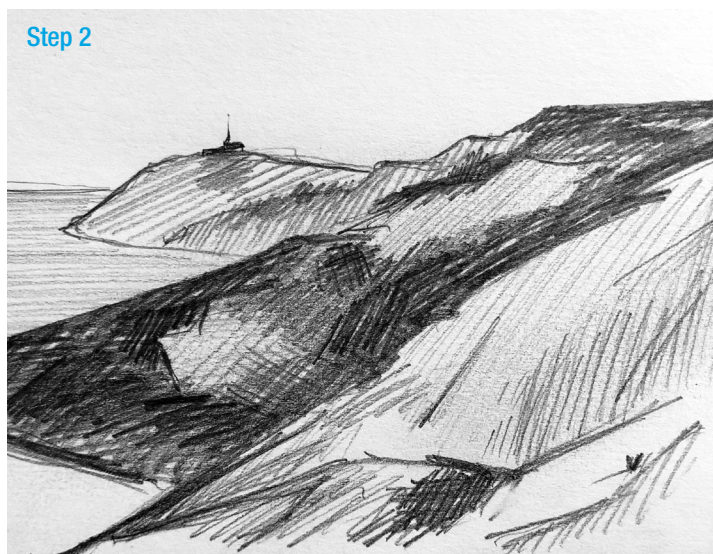
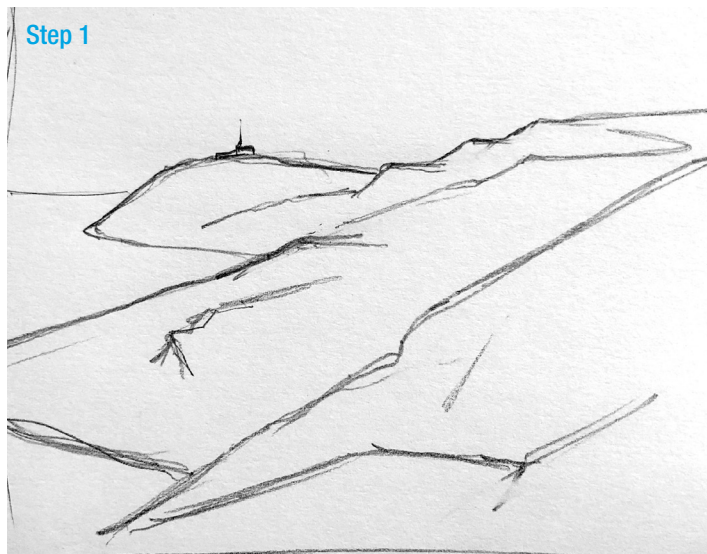
While using the Ralston Thompson charcoal drawing, *Gayhead No. 1*, as an example, we can see how to establish a sense of balance in our sketches. The tonal approach of this graphite study unifies all of the main shapes into a harmonious design.

The focal point is the distant building with the contrast of the light sky. The open edges keep the viewer's eye from leaving the picture by zigzagging along where the water meets the cliffs. While there is a dominant middle-dark value on the cliffside, this is balanced by the lighter value cliff and the open sky.

Try doing some thumbnail sketches at home keeping these design elements in mind. Consider using darks to guide the eye through the work, and create interesting patterns, such as S-curves and zigzags. As you sketch, don't be afraid to draw lines around your shapes to reveal the interplay of balance.



Ralston Thompson | *GAYHEAD NO. 1* | c.1880 charcoal on paper | 20-1/2 x 27-1/2" | unframed | Gift of Mrs. Ralston Thompson



We'd love to see your sketches!
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