

# Visual Language

Spring 2007

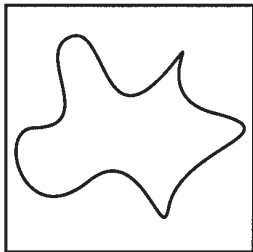
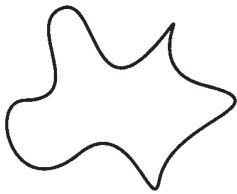
## Exercise 1

### Materials

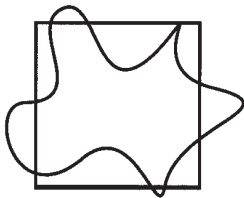
Sketch Book  
Drawing Tools

### contour

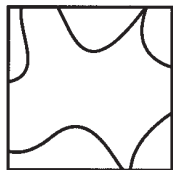
an outline esp. of a curving or irregular figure; shape:  
also: the line representing this outline



Incorrect



Correct



### Between and Around

People spend most of their "conscious time" identifying things. When we recognize a person or an object we identify them or it with a word. We are wired, and we learn, to name things as soon as we see them. We are also wired, and we learn, to explain whatever we see, or to make sense of visual data. Words and thoughts mediate experience. This makes our world more manageable and stable. Our explanations make the world comprehensible, and chaos becomes order.

Yet sometimes we are compelled to "look again" more closely at a person's clothes, gate, expression; or the texture, scale, or color of an object. Sometimes something stops us "in our tracks," and we do a "double take." This is when we realize that events, people, and objects are not always what they seem. In fact, we may not have the words to describe what we see—we are mystified. Too often we walk away without recognizing how marvelous this state of mind really is, or how we have encountered something new. Artists, like scientists, stop, observe and think when they are taken off guard.

As an artist you will spend a large part of your life looking for things you have failed to see. This, in turn, feeds new thoughts and makes life more exciting. As a student in this course we hope you "look again" and show your classmates and instructors new ways of seeing.

To get you started we are going to have you do a visual warm-up by looking at form in a new way. You are to make contour line sketches in your sketch books, but you're not going to sketch things. Instead you are to look at the space around things and between things. The places that are hard to describe verbally, but places you can definitely see.

When creating a drawing you not only represent something, you also make a composition. Compositions are the result of the careful consideration of many visual elements, and in this case, on a two dimensional plane. So to make an interesting picture you must consider the entire page or two dimensional space in which you are going to make that picture. You must also consider how much of the subject you are going to reveal to the viewer, how large the image will be on the page, and, of course, where it will be located. Elegant compositions contain what most viewers don't see—the space around and between things. These areas are very important because all space in a picture is visible space! A balanced composition includes what the viewer doesn't necessarily think about, yet senses.

### Sketch Book Exercise

In your sketch books create 10 contour drawings, using assorted drawing tools, for the next class on Monday. The drawings are to be of the space between and around the following kinds of objects or places:

- 5 of different Natural environments or objects
- 5 of different Man made environments or objects

Each drawing should *fill* an entire right-hand page of your sketch book and the lines in your drawings should continue off the edge of the pages (see examples at left). Be sure to experiment with different drawing tools and different ways of making marks with those tools.

- 10 drawings due for discussion Monday, February 5