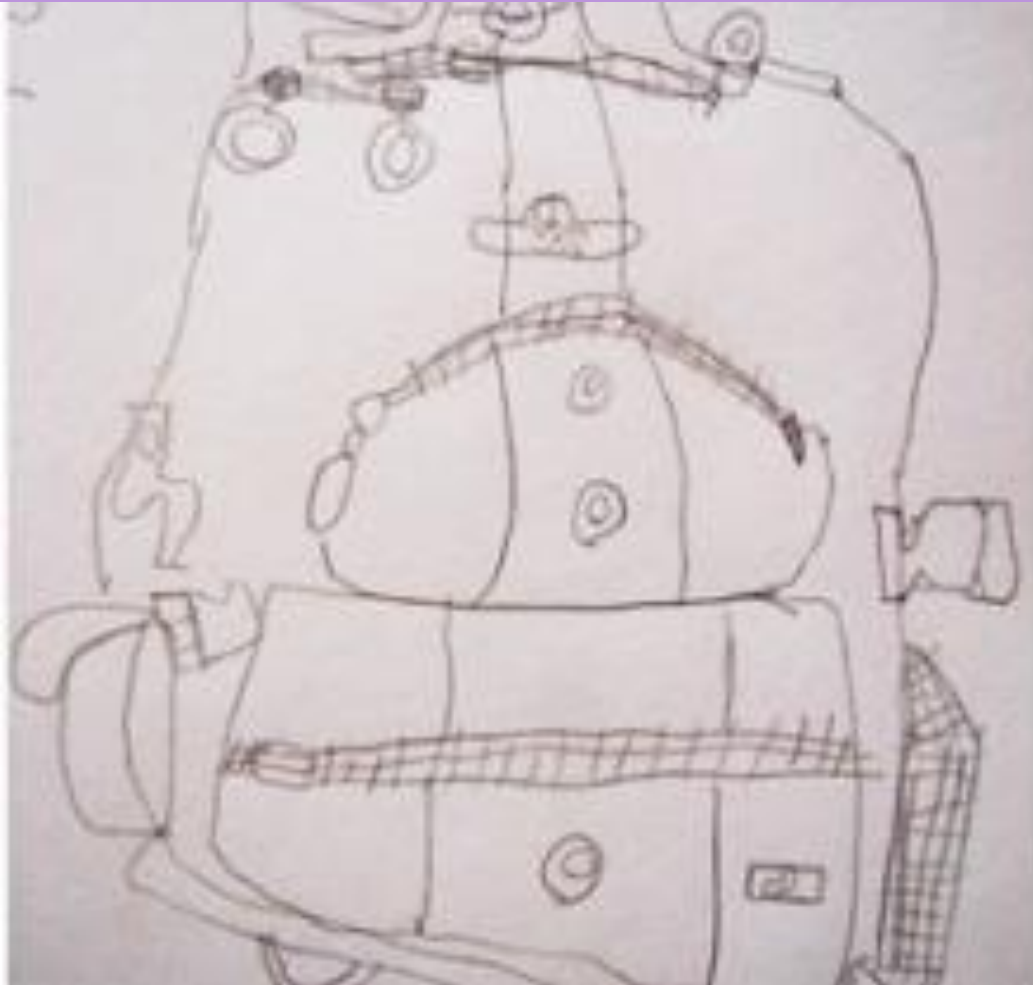


# Grade 5 – Blind Contour Drawing



Shape

# What do you see?



Rodeo Rider, 1981, William Cumming

# Artistic Focus: Shape



Rodeo Rider, 1981, William Cumming

**SHAPE** is a closed space made when a line connects to itself.

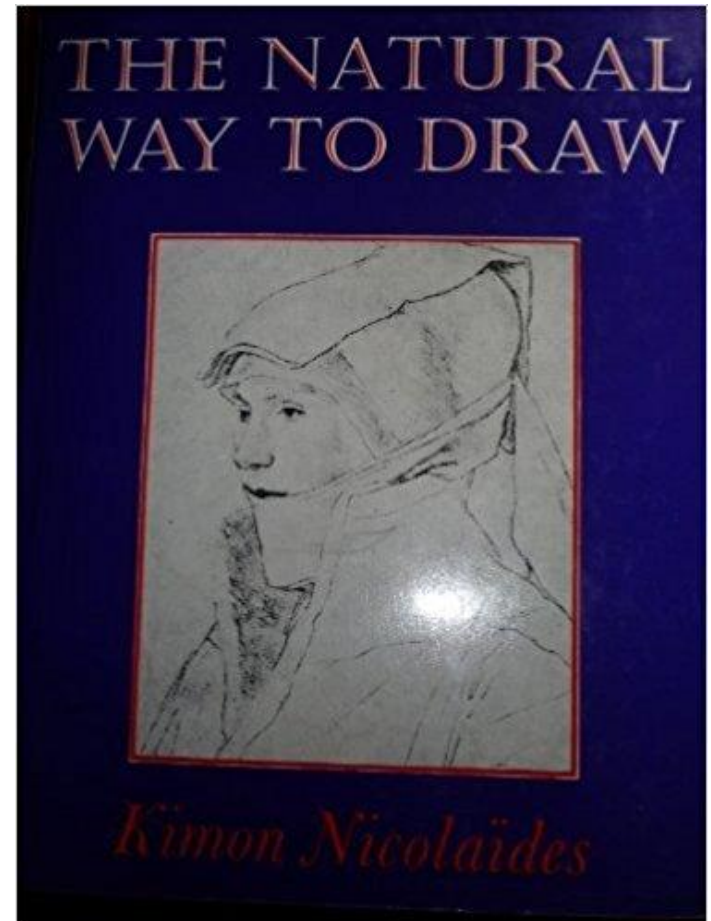
**Today's objective:**

1. To use a modified blind contour technique to accurately draw shapes.

**WA State Visual Arts Standard**  
Experiment and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches through practice. (VA: Cr2.1.5)

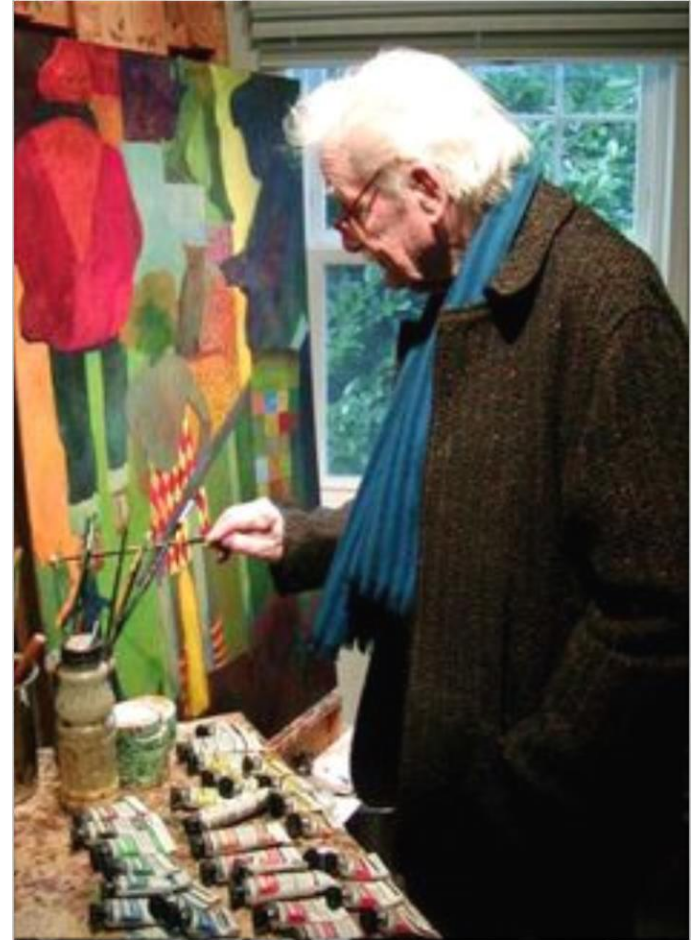
# Introduction to Blind Contour Drawing

- Blind contour is a drawing exercise in which an artist draws the contour of a subject without looking at the paper.
- The artistic technique was first introduced by art teacher Kimon Nicolaïdes in his book The Natural Way to Draw, published in 1941, after his death, with the help of his student Mamie Harmon.
- Blind contour is a difficult technique to master, but it effectively trains the artist to draw what he or she sees accurately.
- Partial blind contour and continuous line drawing are variations of this technique.



# William Cumming

- March 24, 1917 – November 22, 2010
- Born in Kalispell, Montana and grew up in Tukwila, Washington
- Member of the Northwest School and taught at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle
- Drew and painted people in motion – fascinated by the human body in motion
- Liked to make quick sketches of a brief moment in time
- Concentrated on drawing the outline of a figure first – contour drawing



# Artwork



Line drawings, 1978, William Cumming

# Artwork



Stepping, 2003, William Cumming



Skier, 2009, William Cumming

# Materials

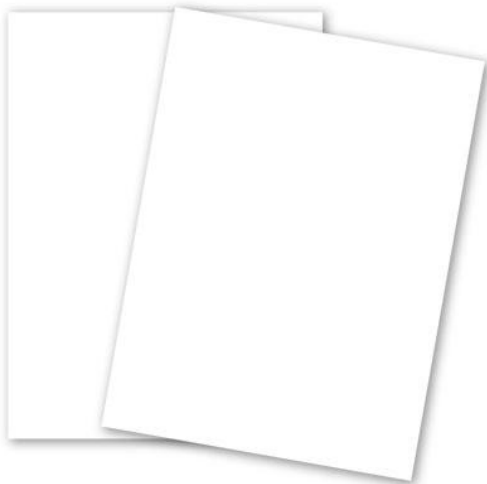
Newsprint or drawing paper for practice



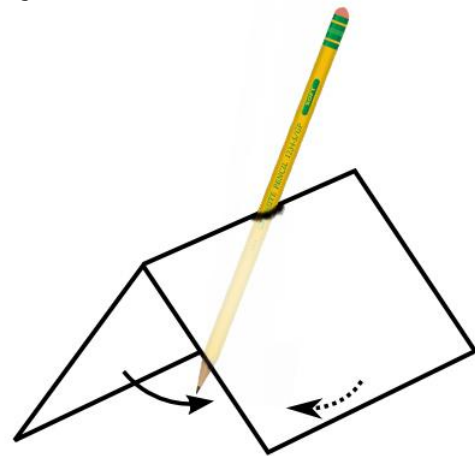
Pencil



60# white sulphite drawing paper

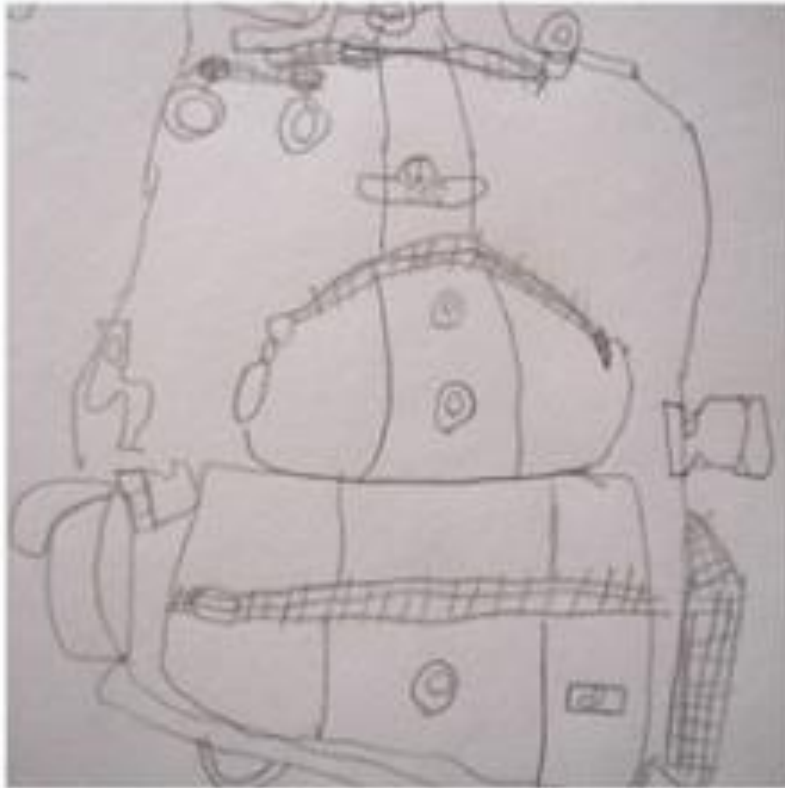


Paper tent to hide your work as you draw





# Example of Today's Project



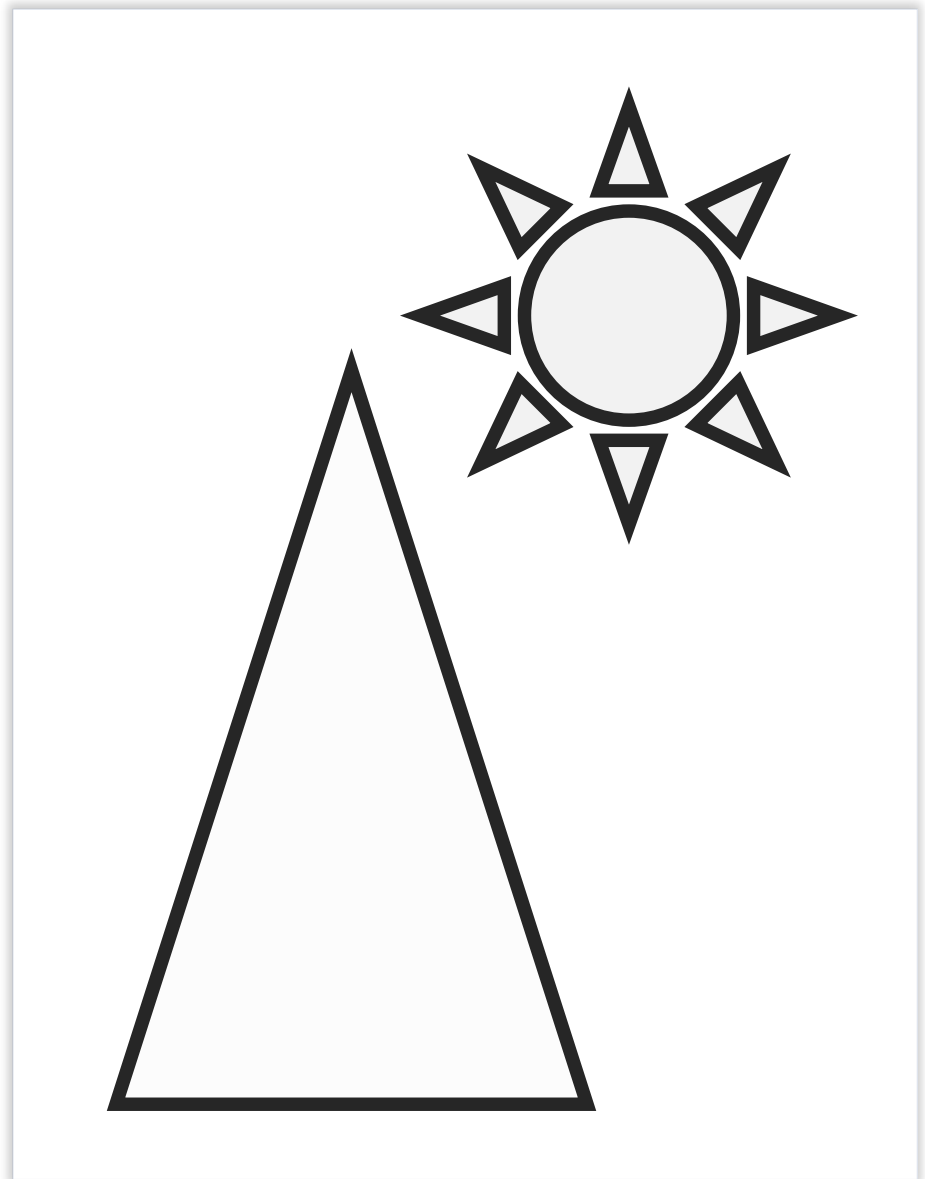
# Before You Begin

1. Write your **name** in pencil on your paper.
2. **Roll up your sleeves!**



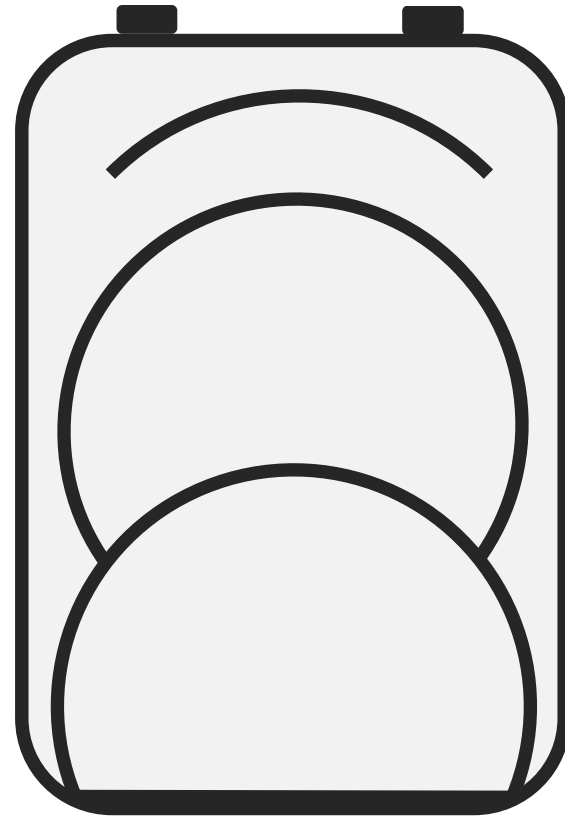
# Blind Contour Drawing Practice

- Place your tent on your pencil to hide your paper.
- Slow down and keep your eyes on this collection of shapes.
- Make steady, continuous lines to create each shape.
- Draw without lifting the pencil.
- Draw without looking at your paper.
- Draw only the contour, no shading or filling in the shape.
- You may be surprised by what you see when you look at your drawing when you are done.



# Blind Contour Drawing Practice

- Once again, keep your tent on your pencil to hide your paper.
- Slow down and keep your eyes on this collection of shapes.
- Make steady, continuous lines to create each shape.
- Draw without lifting the pencil.
- Draw without looking at your paper.
- Draw only the contour, no shading or filling in.
- When you finish, look down. Do you recognize the outlines of the shapes?



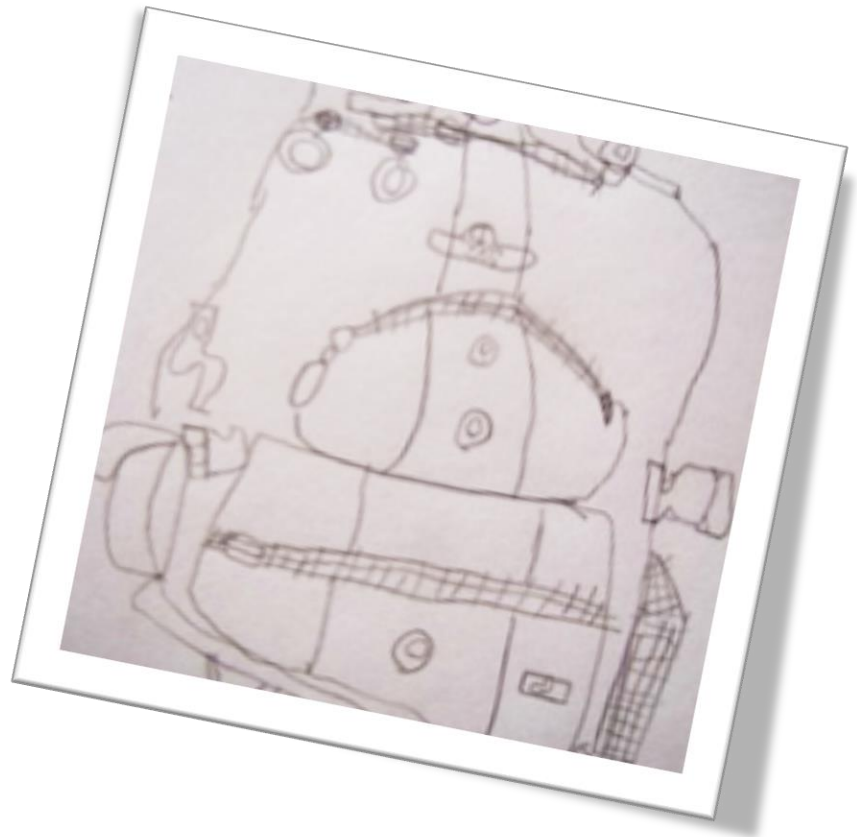
# Blind Contour Drawing

- Use your backpack (or another object comprised of complex shapes) for your contour drawing.
- Remove the tent from your pencil, but try to glance at your paper infrequently.
- Make steady, continuous lines to create each shape.
- Draw only the contour, no shading or filling in.
- If you have time, feel free to do another contour drawing.



# Reflection

- What was it like to draw contour lines without looking at your paper?
- Do you recognize the shapes you drew?
- Artists use the blind contour drawing technique to learn how to draw shapes quickly. Do you think that it will get easier to draw this way the more you practice? Why?
- What was your favorite part of this lesson?
- Would anyone like to share their art?



# Credits

1. About Blind Contour drawing  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blind\\_contour\\_drawing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blind_contour_drawing)
2. *Nicolaïdes, Kimon (1941). The Natural Way to Draw: A Working Plan for Art Study. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.*
3. About William Cumming  
<http://www.woodsidebrasethgallery.com/artists/william-cumming/>
4. More information [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Cumming\\_%28artist%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Cumming_%28artist%29)
5. Definition [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blind\\_contour\\_drawing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blind_contour_drawing)
6. Original LWSD art sample, used with permission.



The development of this Lake Washington School District art docent lesson was made possible by a grant from the Lake Washington Schools Foundation.

