

ARTIST:  
Todd Telander



# Blind Contour Drawing

This is a fundamental exercise that I learned from the classic book “Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain” by Betty Edwards. It’s great for learning how to really see things accurately so that you can draw them without preconceptions, labels, or judgements.

## Materials Needed:

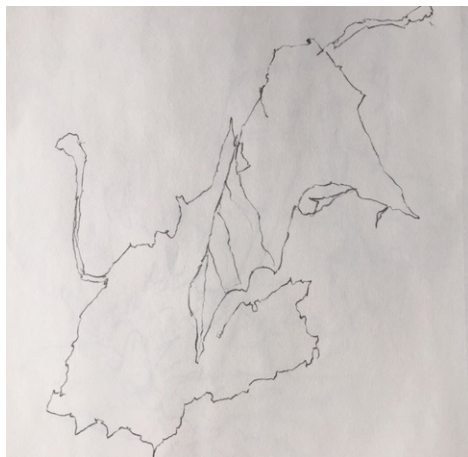
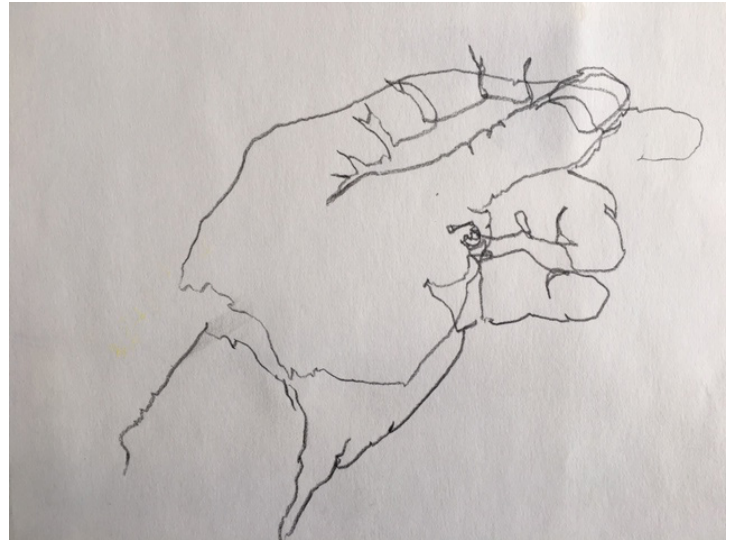
- Pen or Pencil
- Paper

## Instructions:

**Step 1.** (See video) Sit at a table with your drawing paper in front of you. Place your nondrawing hand out to the side on the table so that you can see it clearly.

**Step 2.** Look at this hand only during the exercise. Place your pencil on the paper somewhere and begin to draw your hand, focusing on the outline or contour (edges of the fingers, creases, fingernails, rings, hairs, warts, what have you). Draw very slowly, and visualize that the tip of the pencil is actually travelling across the surface of your hand as you draw. Move at a pace that a small aphid would crawl across your hand if it had to. You are not trying to create a finished drawing, so just draw edges as you see them even if it means redrawing certain spots or not drawing other areas at all. Keep your pencil on the paper at all times, don’t even think about erasing, and remember—no looking at the drawing! If your pencil runs off the side of the paper, just put it back on and keep going. Do this for 10 minutes (set a timer).

**Step 3.** You may now look at your drawing, just for fun. Try not to judge it in any way. It is just the evidence that you spent 10 minutes looking at your hand. If it looks crazy and weird and totally off, that’s great. This is not about the finished product, it’s only about the process.



## Additional Projects:

Do the same exercise with different objects. One of my favorites is a crumpled up paper bag. Also good is a pine cone, sea shell, a dead leaf, a shoe, a pineapple, someone’s face, or an animal. You can do the exercise for any amount of time, but the longer the better.