

Adaptations – drawing from Dioramas

Stage 5: **Weeks 13-14:** The diorama and space

Make a total of 10 or more experimental drawings from your diorama over these 2 weeks

You can use any materials you like for these drawings. You can experiment with scale, narrative, symbolism, different types of materials or processes, abstraction, small and large-scale drawings, and even animation. There is no right or wrong to this, let your imagination play.

- We are moving into the realm of General Drawing here, which you can think of as developing **skills in judgement, decision-making and experimentation**, in which you can decide to use your Observational Drawing skills sometimes, and invent other ways of drawing at other times, as appropriate; In General Drawing it is important to work out what pleases you, because that will take you in the direction that pleases us.

- Also think of **experimentation** as trying out ideas without knowing where they will take you, then deciding where to go from there.

WEEK 13: For today's experimental drawing, we want you to use drawing to **imagine and explore how your diorama is inhabited**. Imagine your diorama as a place that can be occupied, and produce 5 drawings of how that might happen.

Examples are given to prompt your own choices. Select the one that inspires you or best suits your particular diorama, or let them help you find your own way of inhabiting it.

The 5 drawings you make today can be on paper separate from the diorama, or they can be made on to the surface of the diorama itself, or even an alteration of the diorama in some way, or they can be something else you invent.

Example 1: how do **light and shadow** occupy your diorama?

Example 2: How does your diorama's **scale or size** effect how it might be occupied?

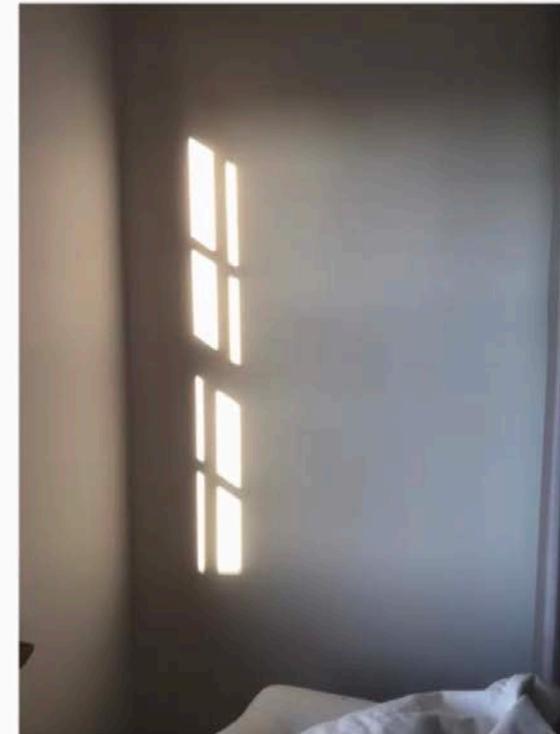
Example 1: How can you draw **Light and Shadow** occupying your diorama?

The first step is to experiment with lighting to see what looks most interesting

- use the ‘found’ light already in the room, sunlight, torch, the moon
- move the diorama around in this light to see what shapes or effects appear within the diorama;
- Or move a torch around, above and below your diorama, or hide lights within it.
- Use more than one light to see how double shadows interact
- explore the effect of sharp or soft light, experiment with theatrical light to create mood, or hide lights within the diorama to suggest another space
- Explore movement of light by tying a torch to the top of a moving fan (away from the blades), or hang it from something—but don’t use naked flame for safety reasons.

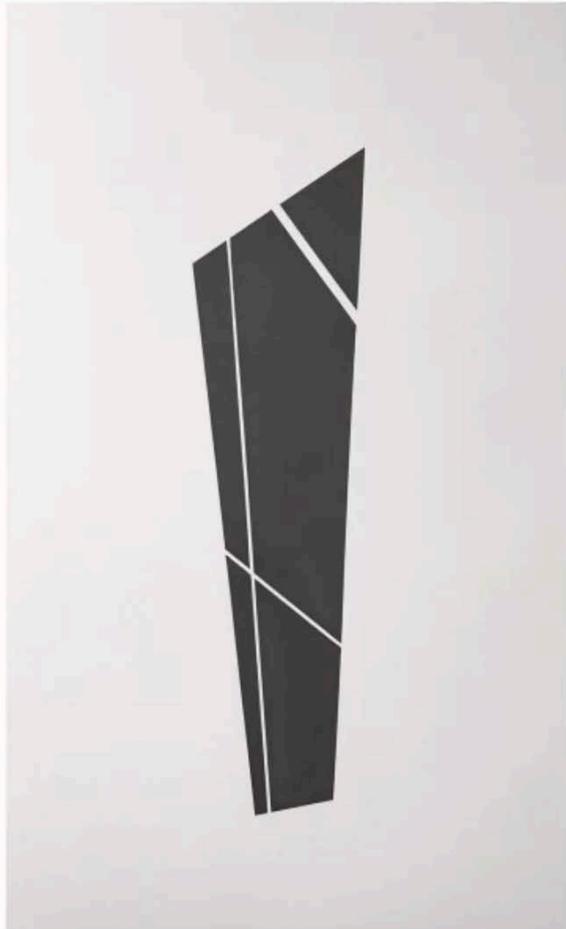
The second step is to work out a way to make drawings from this light and the shadows it makes.

One option is to try isolating these shapes from their surroundings and treating them as abstract shapes, to see what they look like then. You could do this by using observational drawing techniques to get a likeness of the shapes you select: use your eye to estimate relative widths, lengths and angles. Then look at what you have to decide what to do with them.



Stephanie Houghton, NAS MFA student 2020

Stephanie Houghton, NAS MFA student 2020



Graphite on 345gsm Aches hp watercolour paper

130 x 65 cm

Stephanie said she decided to turn the drawing around because that made it look less like something, and more open and ambiguous. She also plans to draw other light projections to go with it.



If this was your diorama you could draw a shadow you select, move the diorama until another appears that you like, and so on.

Sometimes the same shadow from 2 angles may be interesting. Do this until you have 5 drawings, then decide what you can do with them.

One option is to cut them out at a size that makes sense for your diorama, and install them as abstract shapes on the walls or floor of your diorama as if it is a gallery – expecting that they would make some sense there because that is where they originated.



Wilma Vissers *Structure Games*

Some artists install their artworks on walls and floors as shaped paintings or drawings – other artists who do this are Lynne Eastaway, Ellsworth Kelly, Richard Serra and Richard van der Aa.

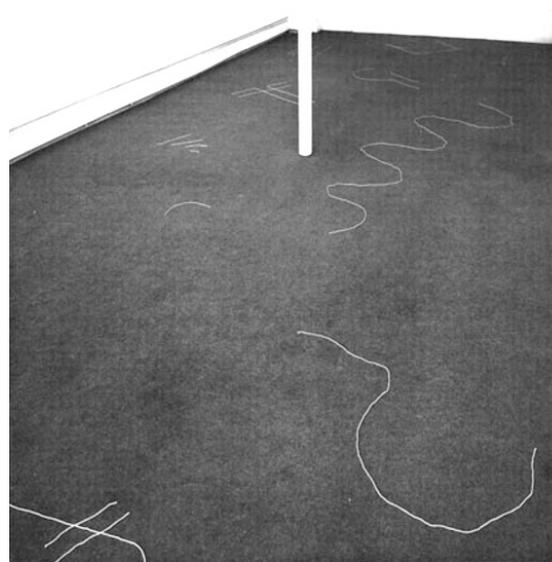
Example 2: How might scale effect how your diorama is inhabited?

- You could contrast the scale of your diorama with your own body—what does your hand look like resting inside your diorama? If you like it, try using your observational drawing skills to draw it, or you could trace just the parts that touch the surface of the diorama, or you could draw the outline of your hand as an abstract shape like the shadows I just spoke of earlier. If you like how that turned out, try doing the same with a glove or the book you are reading or something else for the 2nd and 3rd drawing and so on.
- Or think of things the same scale that move inside your diorama, like insects or blowing leaves or feathers, or you could try using your own drawing materials by hanging a pencil or charcoal and turning a fan on. Invent your own ways to copy and use these lines, or draw them onto the diorama surface.



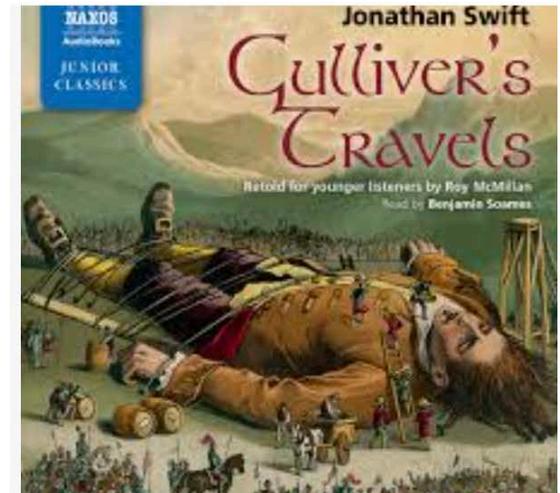
L: lines made by
the spruce
beetle

Right:
Richard Tuttle
*Ten kinds of
memory*
1973



Eg You could trace the lines of Richard Tuttle's dropped cotton threads by placing paper over them, rubbing the line with graphite on your fingers, then you could cut the paper in half along that line, then join the paper on their straight edges, to see what you get.

- Or you could imagine your own **alter ego or avatar** as a set of new eyes through which to see your diorama. You may have been thinking about someone living in it as you made it. If so, then now is your chance to take that idea further, and use drawing to bring them more into the world.
- In working out how to do this, think about how others have invented characters for places, and even use them for your drawing if you prefer.
- You could imagine that your diorama is like **Lilliput**, the island where people 6 inches tall live, invented by writer Jonathan Swift in 1725 for his story 'Gulliver's Travels'. Lilliput resembles your diorama because of its scale in relation to you and Gulliver. You could imagine **Gulliver** himself visits, which you can get an idea of from the many book covers on the internet, but which you could invent your own way of drawing and your own way of representing. You could think of a situation from the story that is not normally represented eg draw things Gulliver left behind when he leaves – his tooth brush, a coat button, a sock etc—all scaled up to show the relative size of your diorama. Again, they could be cut into their shape.





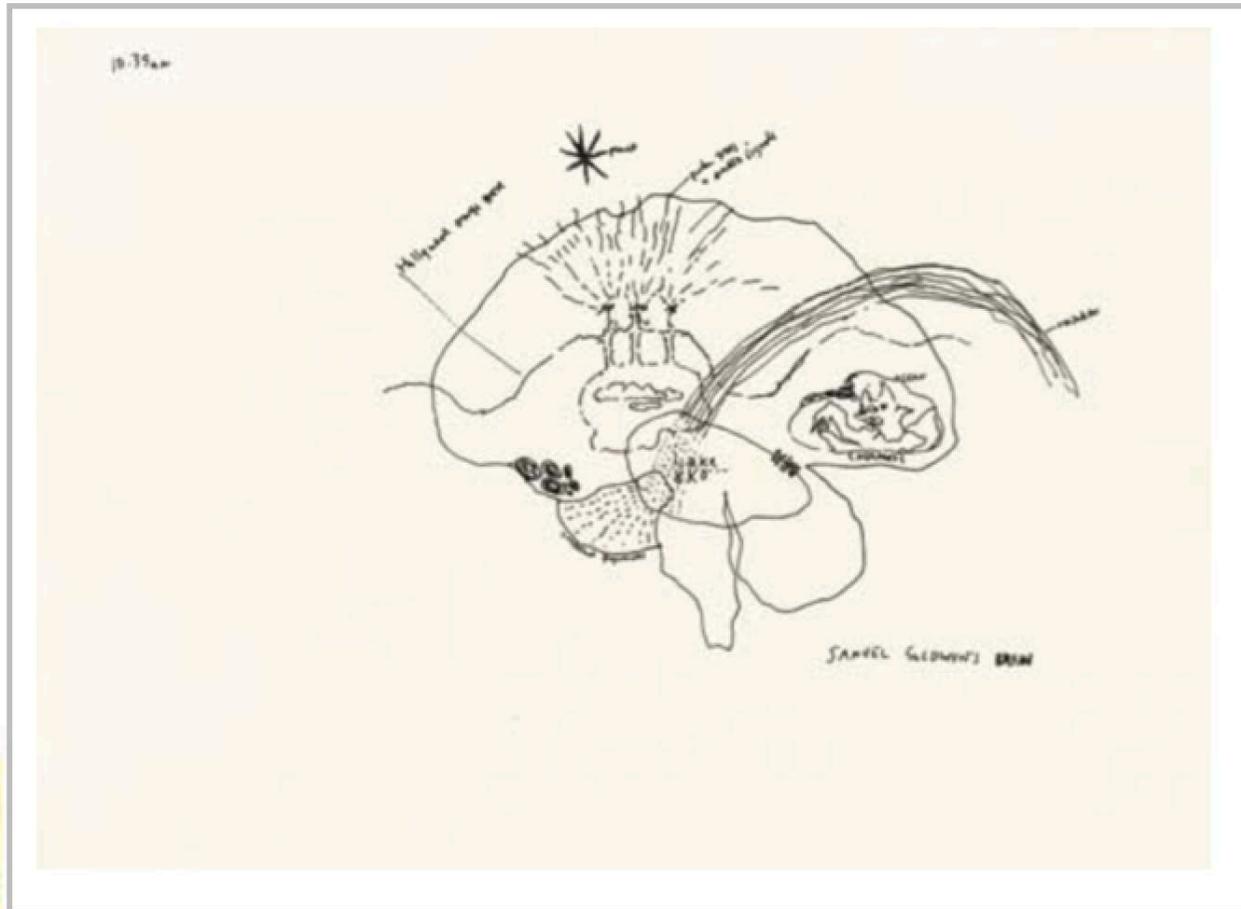
Or your visitor could be **Rosalind Brodsky**, the time traveller invented by artist Suzanne Treister, as a alter ego that enables her to make whatever artwork she feels like on the day. You could imagine **Rosalind Brodsky** visits your diorama accidentally while looking for Lilliput, because as well as being a time travel researcher and an artist, she is prone to making mistakes, enabling her to make accidental discoveries. You could imagine that she has re-sized herself so as to visit Lilliput, or not, as you choose.

You could make the drawings that Rosalind makes while resting in your diorama, using her wide-ranging art practice of watercolour landscapes, stamp design, line drawing, collage, designing costumes and equipment for her time travels, and so on.



Left: Rosalind Brodsky, *Design for Soviet-Bondi Beach, Sydney postcards 2016/1996* from *Delusional Time Travelling Watercolors 1995-2058*
<http://www.suzannetreister.net/suzyWWW/watercolpages/Watercolours.html>

- One option is to make more of her **postcards of watercolour landscapes** while resting in your diorama. If she is the same scale as the diorama, what would the immediate environment look like to her – could you turn her view of the sink, your bedroom curtains, your backpack in the corner etc into landscape watercolours for her?
- She also does **Remote Viewing Drawings** looking into the minds of historical figures, such as this one that she calls the *Remote Viewing Drawing of the Brain of Samuel Goldwyn*, of the American Goldwyn Mayer Film Studio fame. You could add to her collection—eg If you have 5



people in your household, you have your 5 subjects for your drawings, not as you might see them through observational drawing of their face and head, but as you might imagine what their mind looks like. Or use Rosalind’s distant viewing capability to see the minds of people who you can’t literally see

Left: Rosalind Brodsky *Remote Viewing Drawing of Samuel Goldwyn’s Brain*, from HEXEL2039, one of her Time Travel Research Projects

http://ensemble.va.com.au/tableau/suzy/TT_ResearchProjects/Hexen2039/Goldw/Goldw.html

- Once you decide how you want your diorama to be inhabited, divide your time so that you plan to do
- one drawing every 30 minutes,
- or give yourself one hour to think and plan, then 20 mins for each drawing,
- or an hour or so sketching and trying out things in 4 exploratory drawings, then another hour or so on one longer drawing,
- or something else.