

Evelyn Adams
2020

Hammer in Charcoal

In class, a few tools were hung on a wall for students to draw with charcoal. To create this piece, I first chose one of the tools to draw – which was the hammer – and sketched a simple outline of the item with vine charcoal. Then, I blocked out the heaviest shadows, completing my rough sketch for the piece. I moved on to filling in the lighter shadows by putting down some marks and smearing compressed charcoal with my hand. I built up from those lighter marks to the darker areas until the image of the hammer was mostly colored in. Finally, I erased areas to show highlights and texture, then added smaller marks for detail. I finished the drawing by adding rough details to the background.

This piece has its share of strengths and weaknesses. To begin, I believe the range of value in this piece is good, especially considering that charcoal was used. There are areas where the value could be more varied, however, especially on the hammer head. I also find some of the detailing of the hammer to be effective, in the sense that it's more interesting to look at. I really enjoy the highlight on the lower part of the hammer head, as well as the detail on the upper part of the head. One major weakness of this piece is the 'anatomy' of the hammer being somewhat shaky. You can see, the right end of the head is lopsided in a dissatisfying way. I also feel like this piece would be more interesting if the hammer wasn't in the very center of the frame, laying perfectly upright.

Even though this drawing was a typical class assignment, it stands out to me as one of the most satisfying pieces I've completed this school year. In drawing classes, things are challenging for me to draw just because I can't get the measurements right, or there is a lot of repetition in an image. For this drawing, though, the challenge came from the medium I had to use. It was very rewarding when I finished this piece and felt like I finally had a grasp on how to properly use charcoal. As some may have noticed, this drawing is inspired from the famous artist Jim Dine. Our instructor showed us some of his works in class before the assignment, focusing mostly on his charcoal sketches of tools. Dine is a contemporary artist who is well known for his use of a variety of mediums, and the aesthetic of his art overall. I believe the requirement to mimic Dine's sketches helped me understand charcoal better, looking at examples to see how charcoal can be applied and utilized, and trying to mirror that. In summary, this piece is meaningful to me because it challenged my artistic capabilities in a unique and helpful way.

A-S 130 Drawing
Robert Shay