STUDIO IN A SCHOOL
NEW YORK CITY

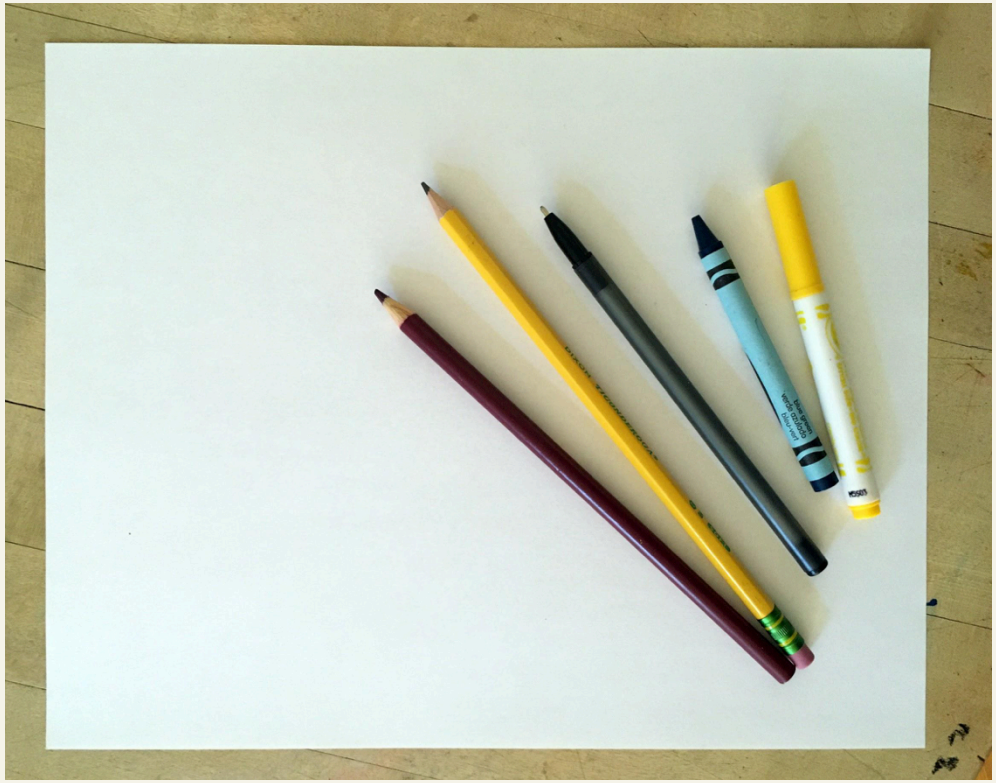
Layering Lines

Inspired by the work of Julie Mehretu

Grade K – 5

NYC Department of Education
OFFICE OF ARTS & SPECIAL PROJECTS
THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST

Layering Lines



In this lesson, you will explore new ways of drawing. You will find connections between your own drawing process and the artwork of Julie Mehretu.

You will need:

A drawing tool: pencil, pen, crayon or marker

A piece of paper (printer paper, construction paper, notebook paper)

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Layering Lines: Drawing with Our Bodies: Step 1

First, we will draw in space without using a drawing tool.

Stand up and raise one arm high up in the air. Using your whole arm, begin by drawing many different large, imaginary lines.

Or, try drawing like this while sitting down.

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Layering Lines: Drawing with Our Bodies: Step 2

Draw reaching above your head. Try drawing straight in front of you.

Bend over and draw on the ground.

Switch to your other hand and arm.

Move as if you were making a large drawing the size of your entire body, in the air.

How does it feel to draw like this?

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Layering Lines: Drawing From Above

Now let's try some of the same techniques to draw on your paper.

You can place your paper on the ground and try drawing from above.

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Layering Lines: Drawing From Above while Sitting

You can also draw on the ground as you sit on a chair.

Using your pencil, pen, marker or crayon, explore drawing different lines and marks on the paper.

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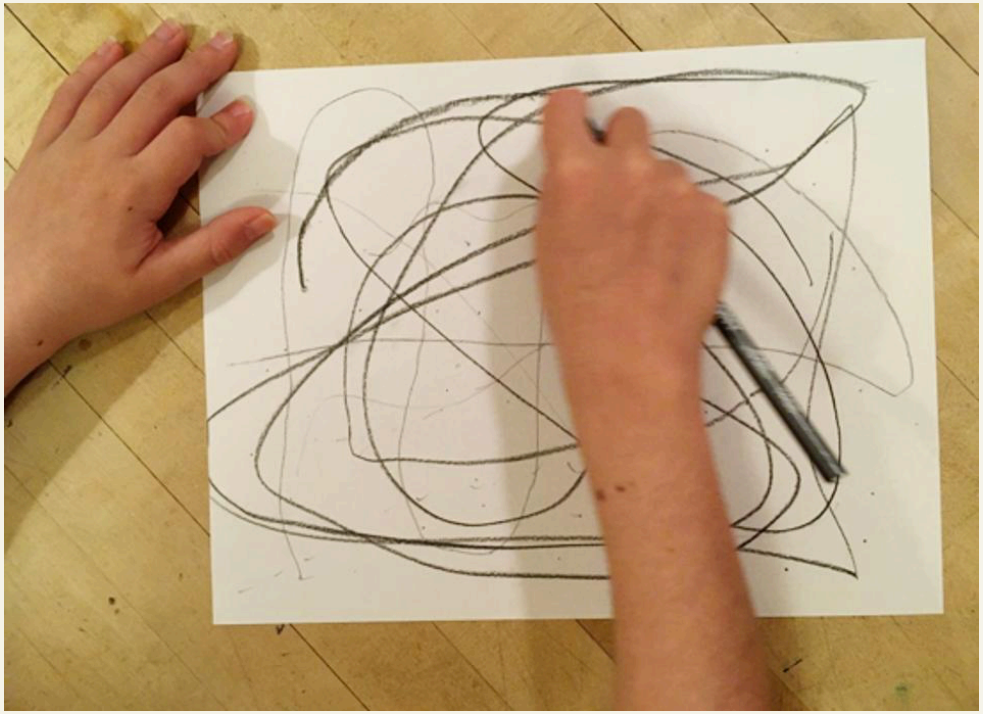
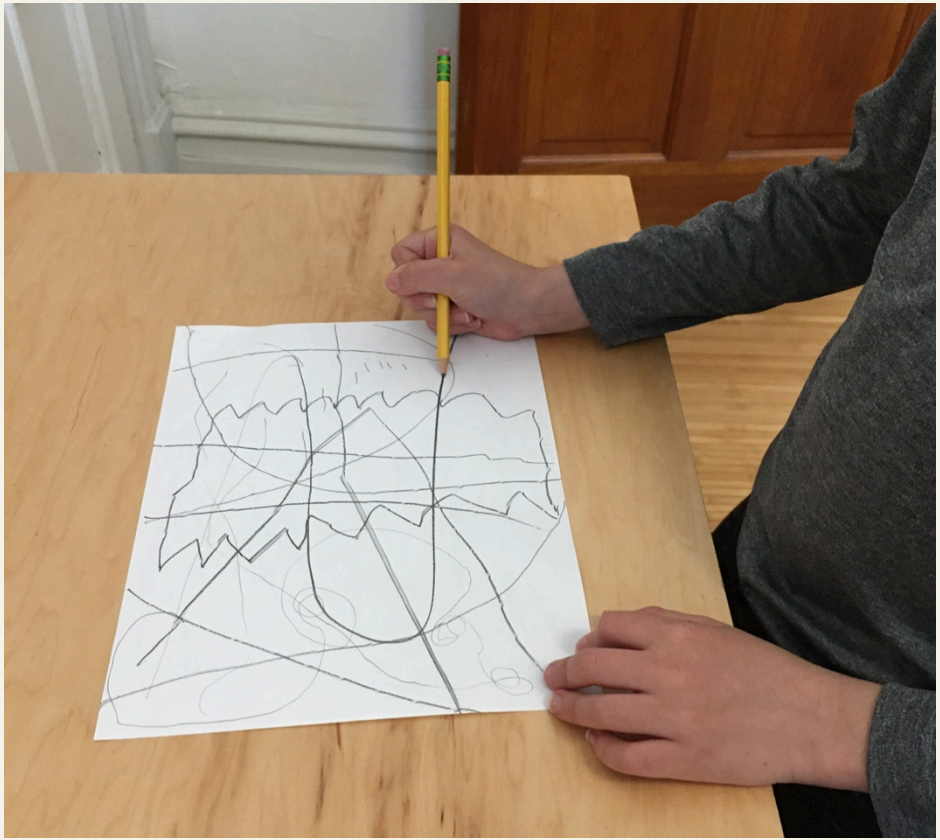


Try drawing with the side of the pencil.

Explore making light marks by pressing gently. Then, press harder and see how your mark changes.

Continue drawing on top of, or crossing over, your lines and marks. This is a technique called layering.

Layering Lines: Drawing at a Table



You may place your paper on a table and stand while you draw.

Remember to use and move your whole arm!

On your paper, experiment and try making all the different kinds of lines that you know. Make straight and curved, dark and light, thick and thin, wavy, zigzag and curly lines all over your paper.

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Layering Lines: Reflection

Look at your drawing.

What kinds of lines did you make?

What words can you use to describe them?

Where did you layer your lines?

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Layering Lines: Close-Looking: Julie Mehretu

Julie Mehretu, *Mind Breath Drawing,* 2012,
Graphite on paper 22 x 30 in. (55.9 x 76.2 cm)
© Julie Mehretu Photo credit: Marc Domage
Marian Goodman Gallery

Now, let's look at a drawing by Julie Mehretu.

What kinds of lines do you see?

Where do you see lines that are layered on top of each other?

Are any of her lines similar to lines you made in your drawing? Which ones?

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Inspired by the Work of Julie Mehretu

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