

WELCOME BACK TO

Summer of Drawing



class no.11: SILVERPOINT

Silverpoint

A silverpoint drawing is made by dragging a silver rod or wire across a surface, often prepared with gesso or primer.

Silverpoint is one of several types of metalpoint used by scribes, craftsmen and artists since ancient times. Metalpoint styli were used for writing on soft surfaces (wax or bark), ruling and underdrawing on parchment, and drawing on prepared paper and panel supports.

For drawing purposes, the essential metals used were lead, tin and silver.

Goldsmiths also used metalpoint drawings to prepare their detailed, meticulous designs.

Design for statuette, Hans Holbein the Elder (1460-1524)



In the late Gothic/early Renaissance era, silverpoint emerged as a fine line drawing technique. Not blunting as easily as lead or tin, and rendering precise detail, silverpoint was especially favored in Florentine and Flemish workshops.

Silverpoint drawings of this era include model books and preparatory sheets for paintings.

Artists who worked in silverpoint include Jan van Eyck, Leonardo da Vinci, Albrecht Dürer and Raphael.

A Bear Walking c. 1482-85

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)



Drawing styles changed at the end of the 16th century, resulting in a decline for metalpoint. The discovery of graphite deposits at Seathwaite in Borrowdale, Cumbria, England in the early 1500s, and its increasing availability to artists in a pure, soft (and erasable) form hastened silverpoint's eclipse.

Artists sought more gestural qualities, for which graphite, red and black chalk were better suited. Ink and wash drawings are also prevalent in the period.

Portrait Study of Dorothea Meyer
Hans Holbein the Younger, 1516.

Silverpoint, red chalk, and traces
of black pencil on white-coated
paper.





Dutch artists Hendrik Goltzius (1558-1617) and Rembrandt (1606-1669) maintained the silverpoint tradition into the 17th century.

Rembrandt made several silverpoints on prepared vellum.

Botanical artists and architects continued to use metalpoint because of its exact lines.

However, artists who continued this tradition of fine line drawing, such as J. A. D. Ingres, turned to graphite, which gradually improved in quality and availability throughout Europe since the 17th century.

Silverpoint was for practical purposes rendered obsolete by the 18th century.

There has however been a contemporary art revival among European and American artists and academies.

- Wikipedia

Materials

- A support (paper, board, medium to heavy weight)
- A ground (a wet solution which is painted or sprayed on a support, and creates a surface that abrades the stylus, leaving traces of the metal)
- A stylus: some sort of holder with a silver wire (or other metals) either already attached, or a holder that can be adapted to different wires and sizes
- An eraser, preferably white polymer or similar





Grounds

Traditional grounds used common bones calcified in a hot fire, then ground further and mixed with a glue medium of whatever type was available.

Modern grounds include:

- Gesso
- Flat acrylic wall paint
- Commercially prepared silverpoint grounds
- Commercially prepared traditional mixtures in powdered form
- Gouache with or without Gum Arabic





SILVER



Copper wire

Copper wire



make it



red
pink
blue

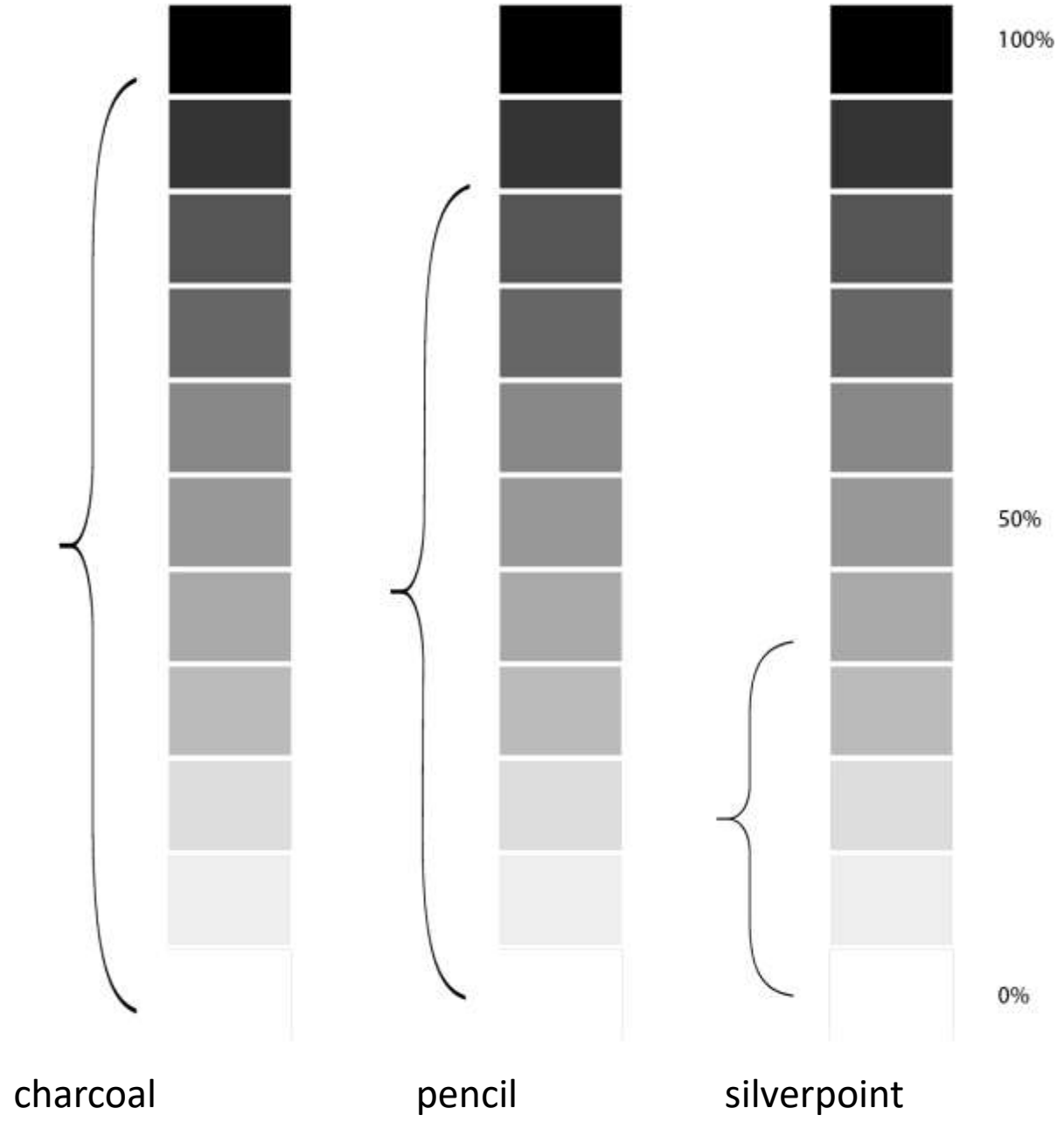


white
yellow brass

Silver
over
copper

Silver Fuchs





charcoal

pencil

silverpoint



Artist's Wife, Edith Holman Hunt

William Holman Hunt (1827-1910)
(a founding member of the
Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood)

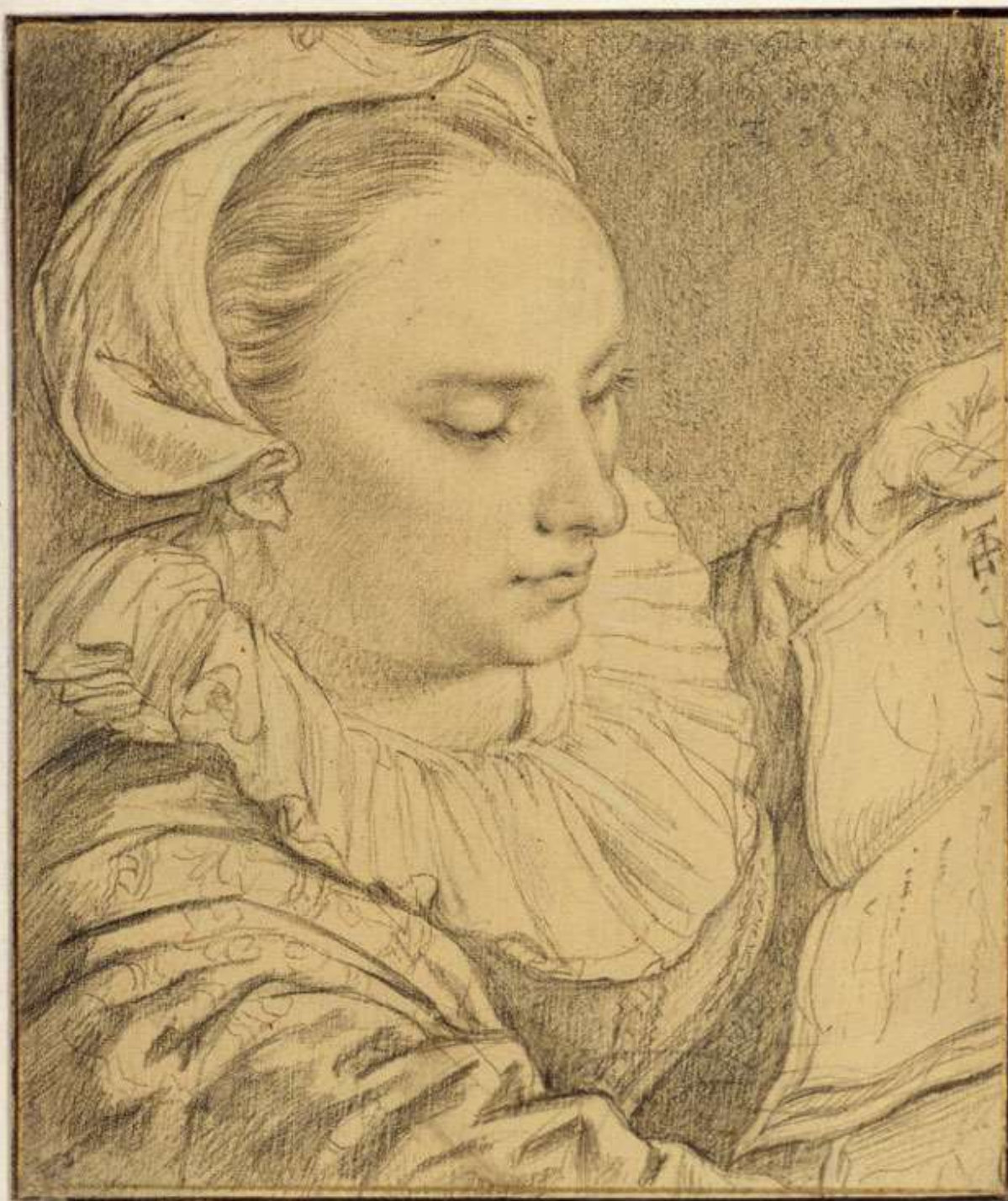
Birmingham Museum of Art.



A Dog Resting, 1520

Albrecht Dürer

silverpoint over traces of
carbon black on prepared
paper



Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617)

Young Woman Reading a Book (Portrait of Sophia Goltzius, Sister of the Artist?), Seen from Above, 1591

metalpoint (probably silverpoint) on prepared paper or parchment



Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669)

Five Studies of Heads, c. 1633

silverpoint on prepared vellum

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen,
Rotterdam



Joseph Edward Southall, *Head of a Girl*, 1899, metalpoint (probably silverpoint) with scratching on prepared paper