

# AMERICAN ARTIST

OCTOBER 2003 \$3.95 U.S./\$5.95 CAN. PIXEL8 '88

## SPECIAL REPORT ON DRAWING

6 Marketing  
Success Stories

Experts Give  
Advice on Oil  
Painting

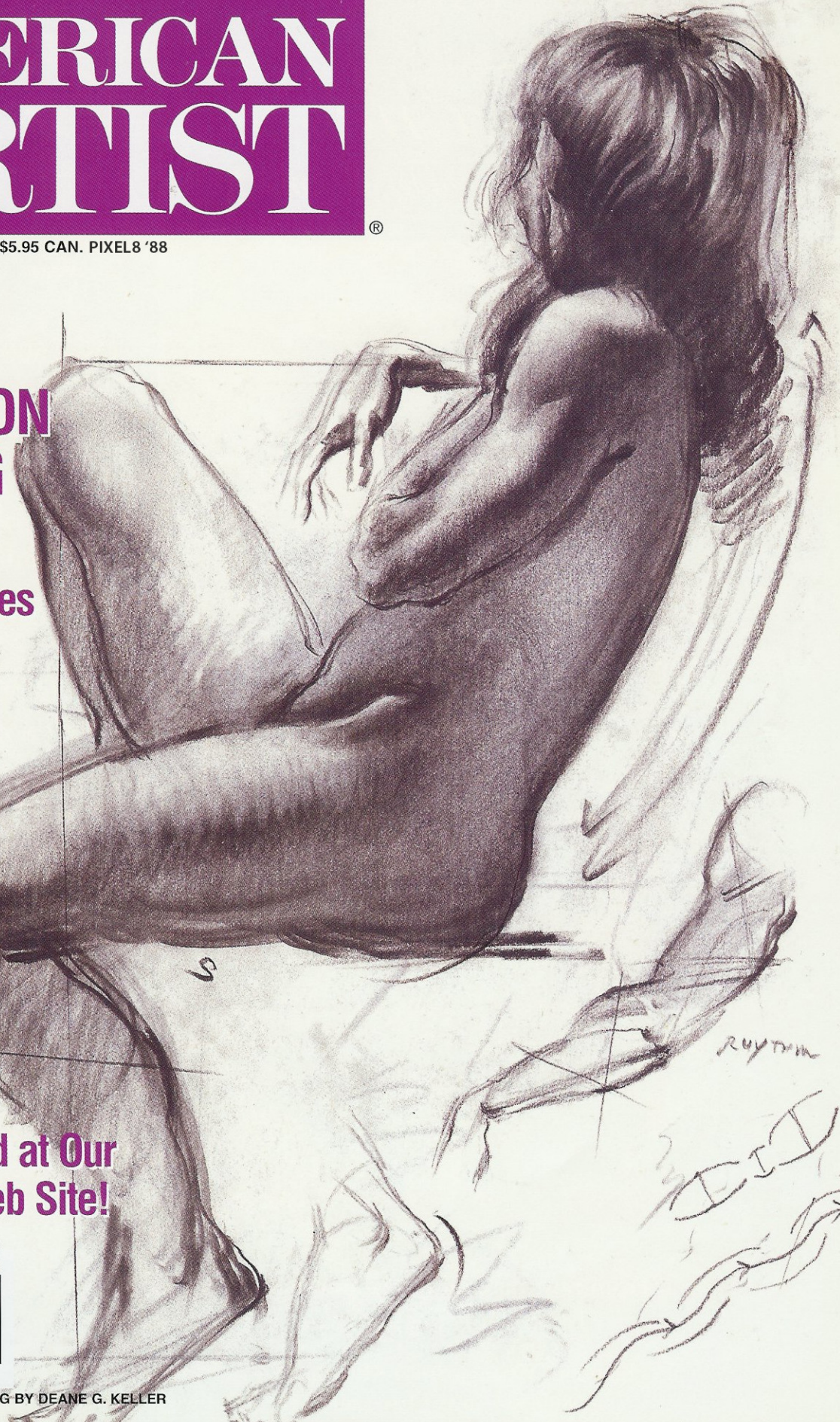
Preview Our  
8th Annual  
Art Methods  
& Materials  
Show

Stay Informed at Our  
Expanded Web Site!

[www.myamericanartist.com](http://www.myamericanartist.com)



COVER: CLASSROOM DRAWING BY DEANE G. KELLER

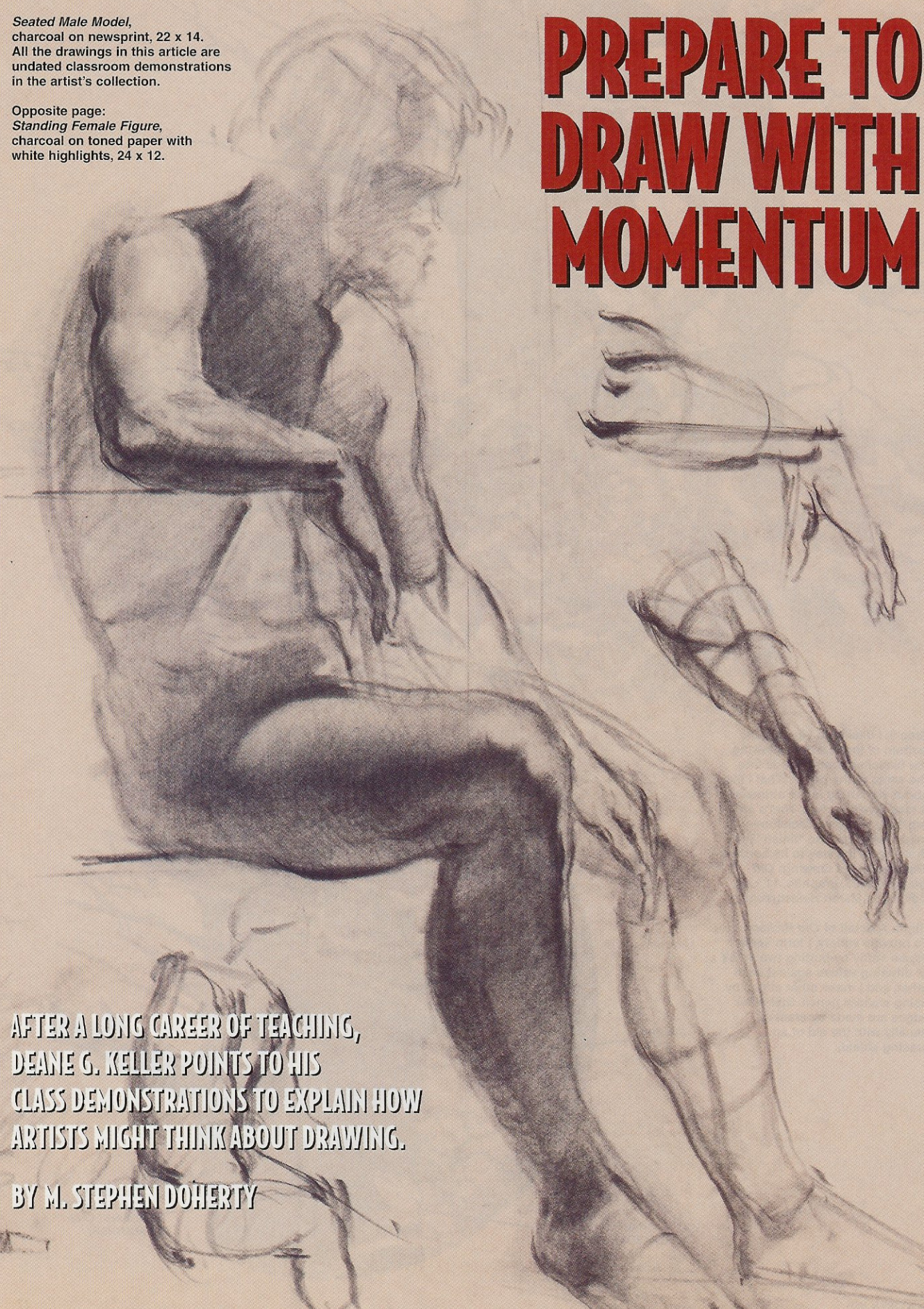




*Seated Male Model,*  
charcoal on newsprint, 22 x 14.  
All the drawings in this article are  
undated classroom demonstrations  
in the artist's collection.

Opposite page:  
*Standing Female Figure,*  
charcoal on toned paper with  
white highlights, 24 x 12.

# PREPARE TO DRAW WITH MOMENTUM



AFTER A LONG CAREER OF TEACHING,  
DEANE G. KELLER POINTS TO HIS  
CLASS DEMONSTRATIONS TO EXPLAIN HOW  
ARTISTS MIGHT THINK ABOUT DRAWING.

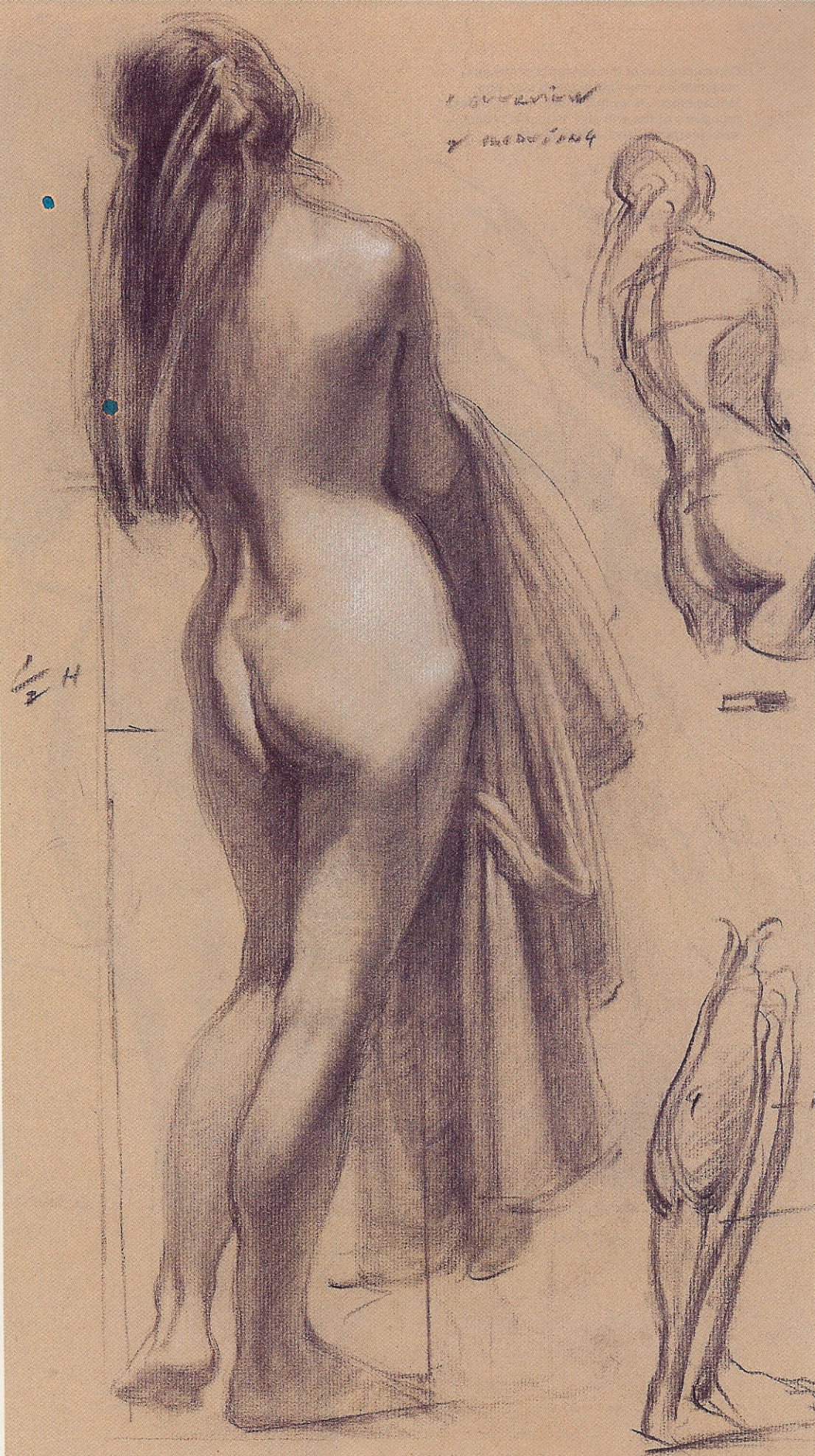
BY M. STEPHEN DOHERTY



In a sense, Connecticut artist Deane G. Keller brings almost 75 years of experience to his drawing classes, offering the benefits of his own experience as well as that of his father, Deane Keller (1901-1992). "While I was his student at Yale University, my father filled me with a conviction about figurative art," he reminisces. "He gave all his students as much intensity and direction as they could take while they drew the figure for eight hours a day, six days a week. We learned how to take drawing from its beginnings, when to stop and make an appraisal, and how to get some sense of our progress. Students today aren't as fortunate as we were to receive such exhaustive training. That's why I feel obligated to share what I learned."

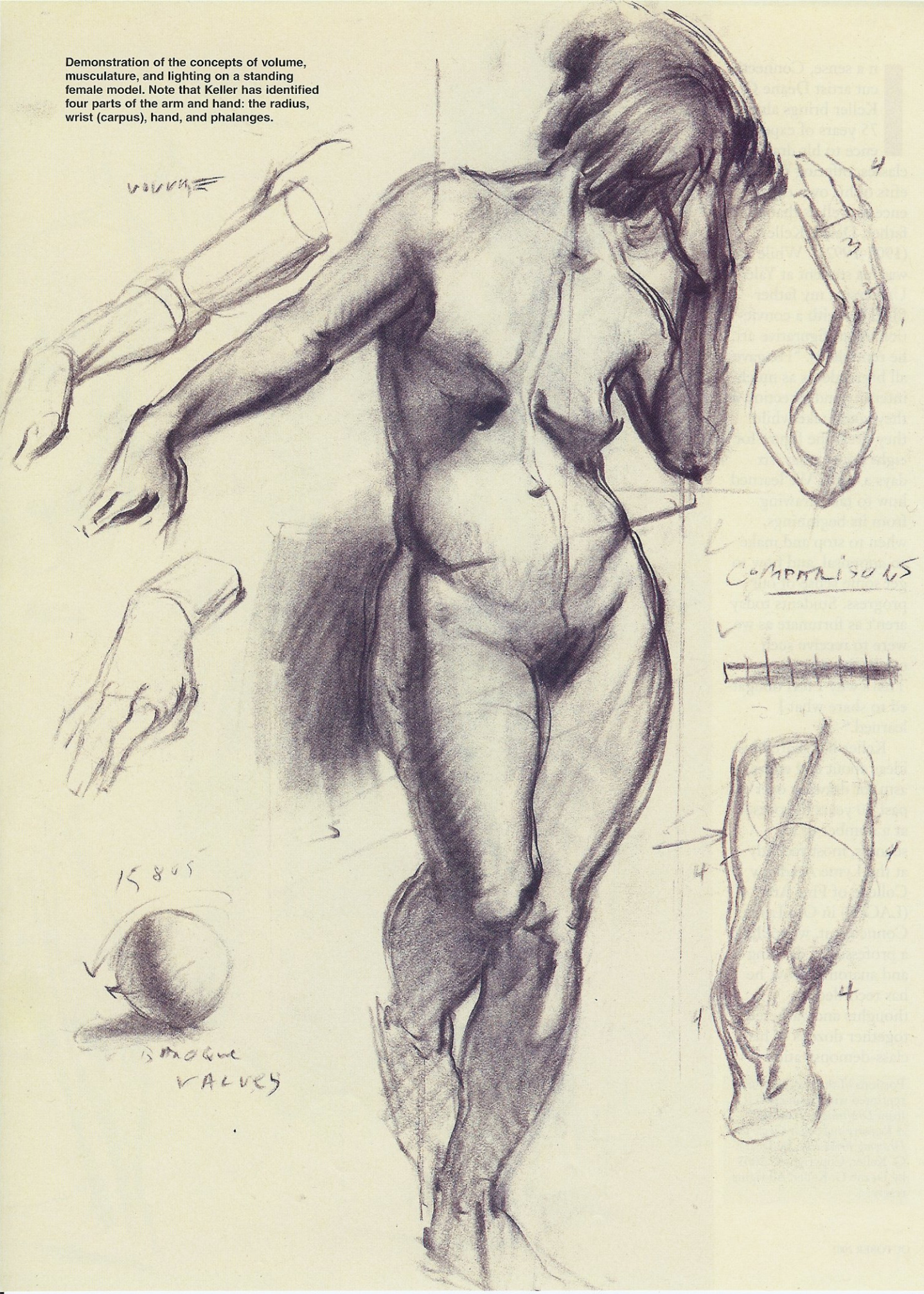
Keller has shared his ideas about and enthusiasm for drawing over the past 40 years in courses at a number of art schools, most recently at the Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts (LACFA) in Old Lyme, Connecticut, where he is a professor of drawing and anatomy. Now, he has recorded his thoughts and gathered together dozens of his class-demonstration

Portions of the text have been reprinted with permission from *Draftsman's Handbook: A Resource and Study Guide for Drawing From Life*, by Deane G. Keller. Copyright © 2003 by Deane G. Keller. All rights reserved.





Demonstration of the concepts of volume, musculature, and lighting on a standing female model. Note that Keller has identified four parts of the arm and hand: the radius, wrist (carpus), hand, and phalanges.



WORK

COMPARISONS

15805

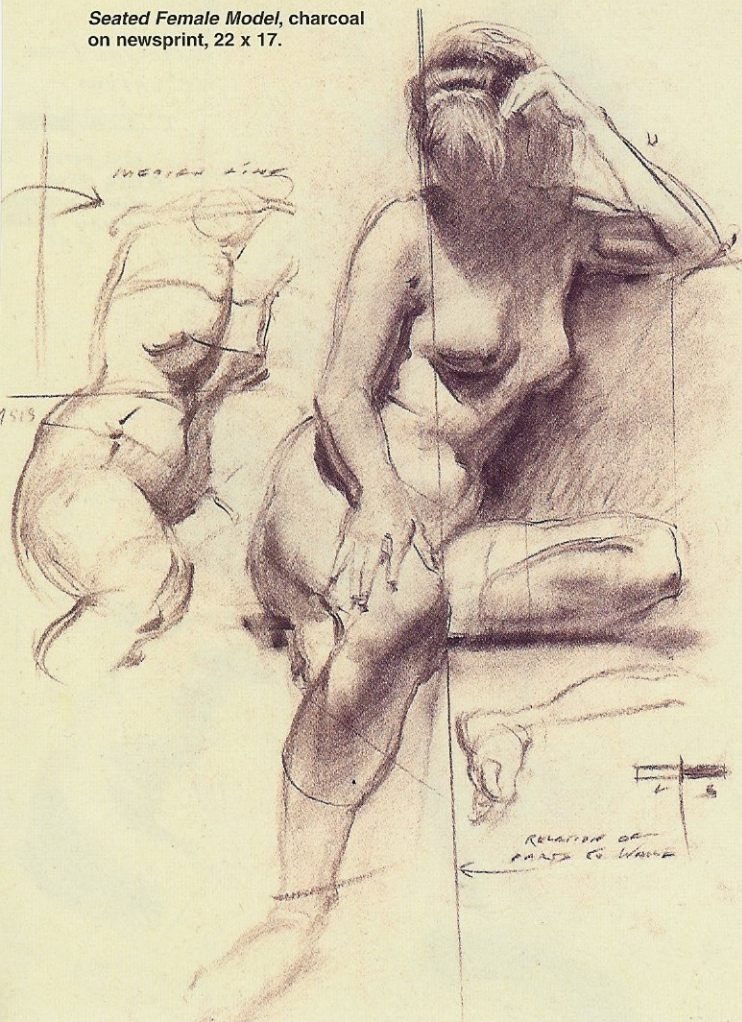
BASIC  
VALUES



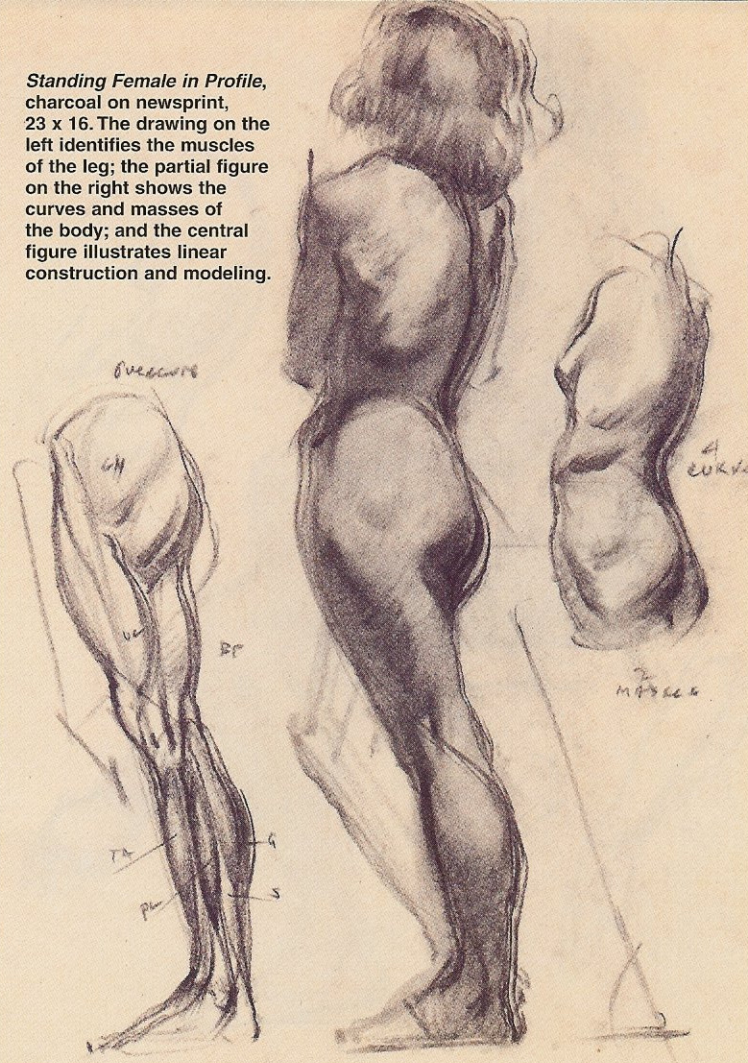
drawings in a handbook published by LACFA. The *Draftsman's Handbook: A Resource and Study Guide for Drawing From Life* is a simple, spiral-bound book intended for use in the studio as a guide, not a manual. "This is not a how-to book of formulas," he emphasizes. "It's a discussion of strategies and a collection of ideas on drawing that will hopefully prepare the artist to approach the subject with real momentum. It's for people who have basic drawing skills who want to learn approaches to and thoughts about recording the human form." In addition to the exercises described here, the handbook contains information on drawing drapery and learning from the Old Masters.

Keller recommends that artists hold their charcoal or graphite drawing tools with a specific grip and posture. The tool should be held between the end of the thumb and the index finger with the arm fully extended as if one were pointing with the charcoal. The fifth finger steadies the hand as it glides along the paper. "Draw with an open hand," he says. "The advantages are too significant to ignore. Let the fifth finger rest on the paper along with, sometimes, the fourth and third fingers. These points of support allow one to draw from the shoulder instead of 'writing' the drawing by holding the charcoal or pencil as one would a pen. Among the reasons for this suggestion are range of motion, line quality, movement, viewing the drawing, appraisal of the

*Seated Female Model, charcoal on newsprint, 22 x 17.*



*Standing Female in Profile, charcoal on newsprint, 23 x 16. The drawing on the left identifies the muscles of the leg; the partial figure on the right shows the curves and masses of the body; and the central figure illustrates linear construction and modeling.*

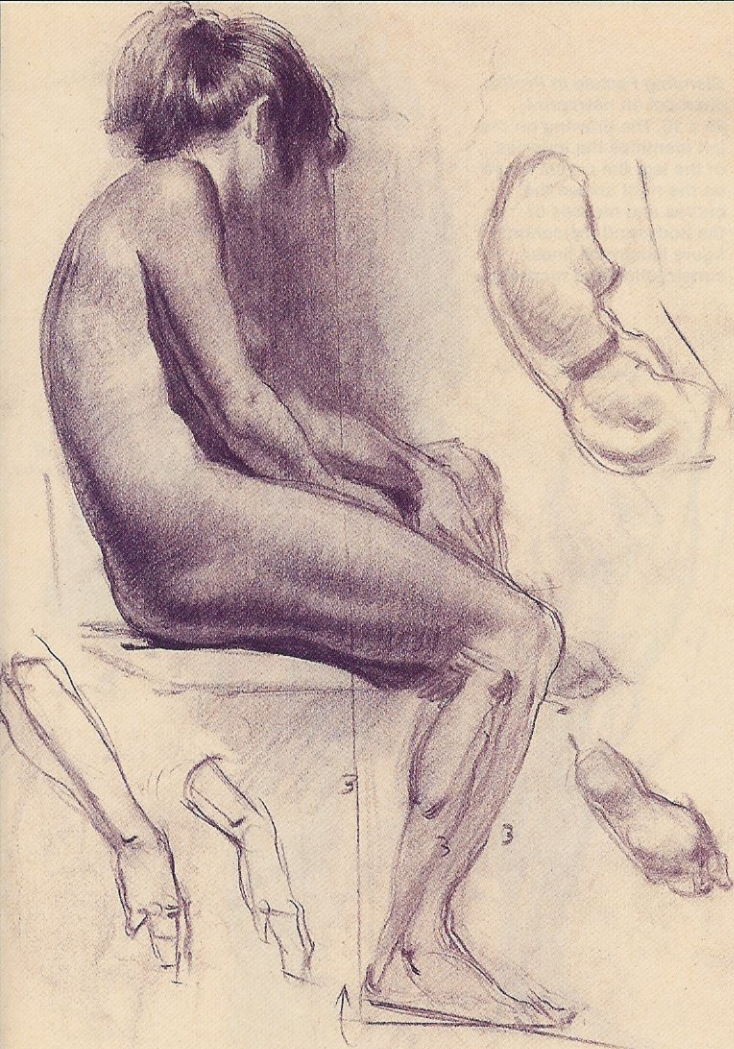


drawing, and monitoring the overview."

A drawing should progress through six stages, according to Keller, beginning with an abbreviated linear overview that describes the action and proportions with a combination of straight and curving lines. In the second stage, the light contour and shape of the form is drawn; and an appraisal is made in the third stage by comparing and revising landmarks at the joints (knees, elbows, ankles, and the like) and across the vertical and horizontal alignments of the body.

It is only in the fourth stage of the drawing process that Keller recommends considering the shadow pattern, and he suggests that students first define the linear shape of the dominant shadows created by a single light source before filling in those shapes. That filling in of shadows is then accomplished by first blocking in a two-value light-and-shadow separation and then, for the final step, advancing the modeling by using a complete five-value plan to ensure the light-and-shadow separations as well as the tonal transitions. Those five values are (1) the highlights, (2) the light halftones, (3) the dark halftones, (4) the transition to shadow edge and reflected light, and (5) the shadow edge and cast shadow. Several of the drawings reproduced here include small horizontal boxes off to the side that are divided by either two or five ver-





tical lines. Keller frequently uses those boxes to demonstrate the relative values in the two- and five-value systems.

“Constructing a drawing well is the precondition to advancing the drawing, modeling the forms, refining the line quality, and so on,” Keller cautions. Appraisal of drawing for action and proportion is a vital step at this time since adjustments in the drawing may be made—even revision of the entire drawing—with less disruption than later on.

“Advance the drawing into the modeling of the form; harmonizing line and modeling are stages that are heavily dependent on the merit of the basic construction,” he continues. “Revisions of the drawing may be made at any time but it is better to catch errors—the major ones—as soon as possible, and certainly before the drawing has advanced into modeling.”

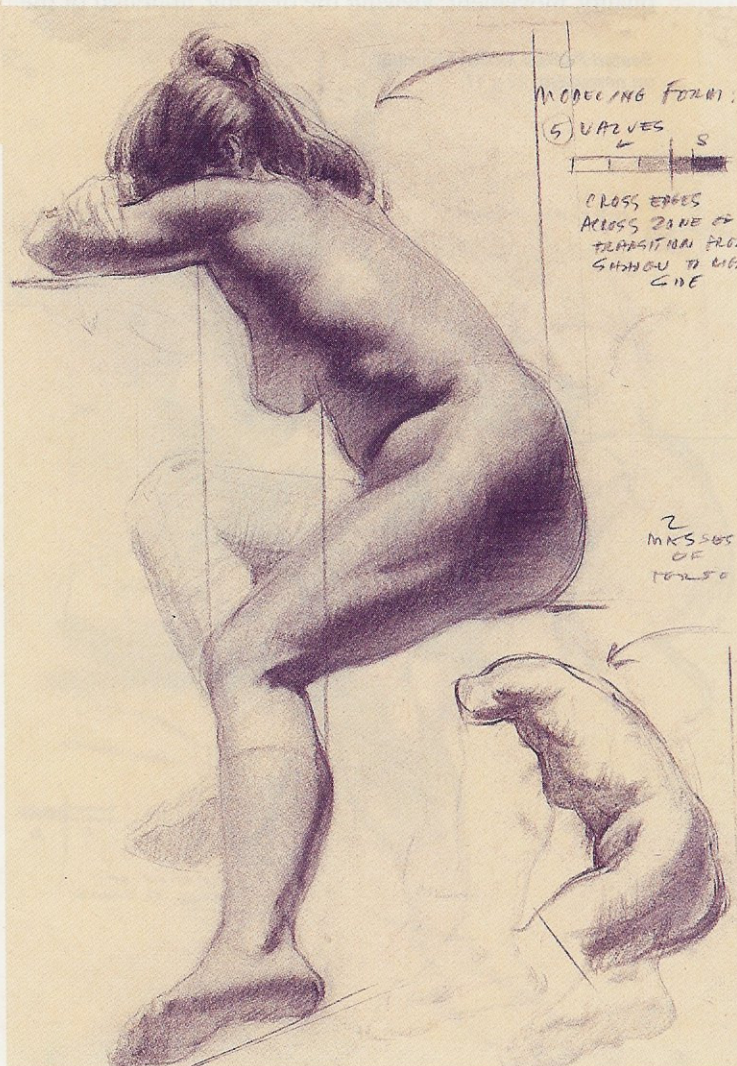
When teaching drawing, Keller often draws hands, legs, curving spines, or other corrected details on his students’ papers. “For years I took home student drawings and redrew portions of them to point out inaccuracies or to suggest better ways of handling a form,” he explains. “Art students learn more from looking than they do listening, so I tried to give them as many visual lessons as I could.”

In addition to teaching freehand drawing, Keller takes his students into museums to draw the exhibited sculpture and paintings; and he regularly lectures on anatomy. “It’s important for art students to understand how the bones and muscles work as a system and affect the physical appearance of the human figure,” he explains. “I want students to see and understand the dynamics of the body—not because they might become surgeons, but because the information will help them identify important landmarks on the body, whether a model is nude or clothed.

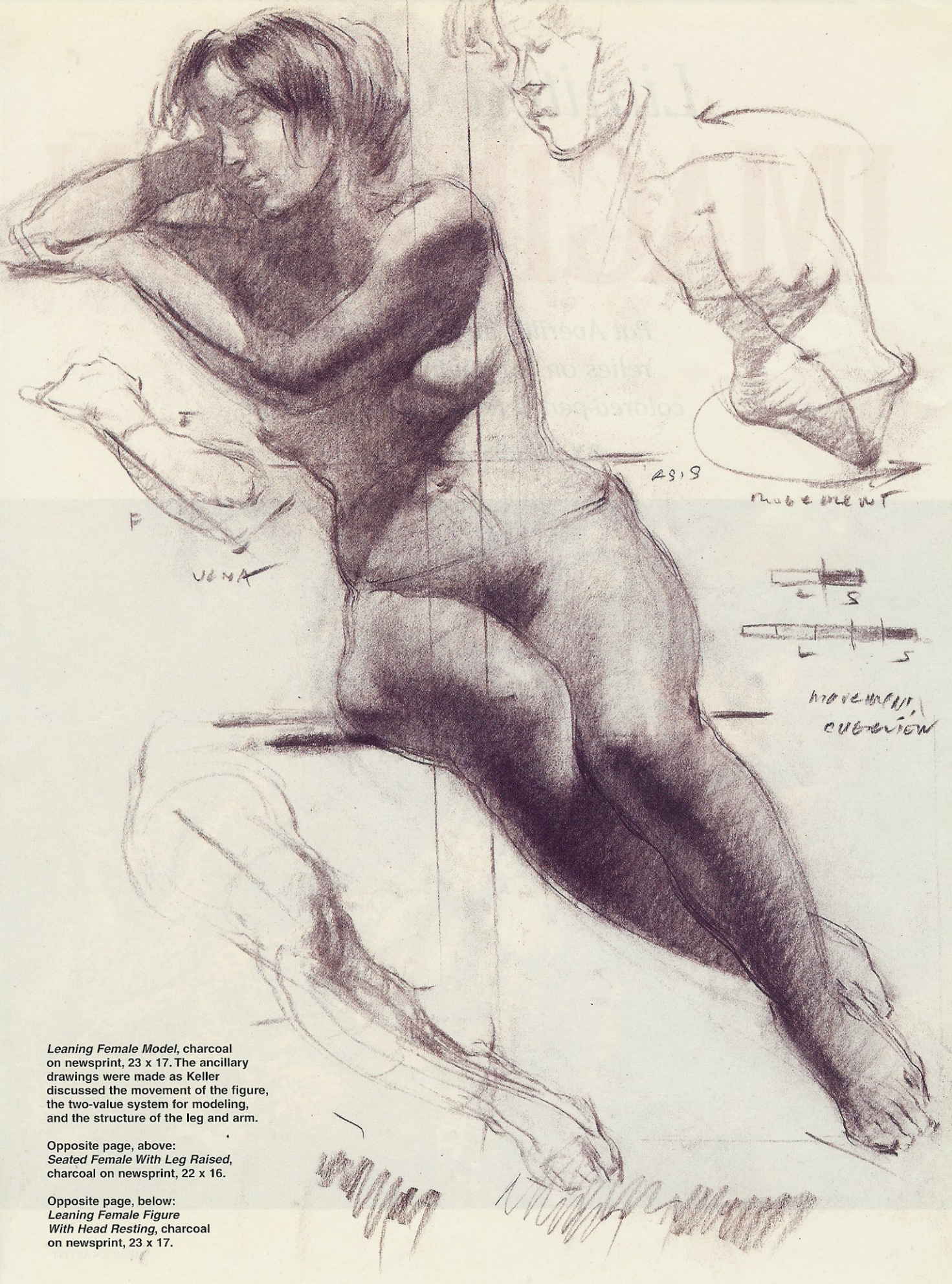
“One of my main goals as a teacher, and the point of writing this handbook, is to recommend ways of thinking about drawing,” Keller concludes. “I want students to bring their own experience, aspirations, assets, and problems to the process and not just work from formulas. They should make progress in accordance with the time they have to invest in the process.”

*Draftsman’s Handbook: A Resource and Study Guide for Drawing From Life* was published by the Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts with support from the Charlotte Danly Jackson Fund. Copies are available for \$20 (plus shipping and handling) from the Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts at (860) 434-5232. ■

*M. Stephen Doherty is the editor-in-chief of American Artist.*







*Leaning Female Model*, charcoal on newsprint, 23 x 17. The ancillary drawings were made as Keller discussed the movement of the figure, the two-value system for modeling, and the structure of the leg and arm.

Opposite page, above:  
*Seated Female With Leg Raised*, charcoal on newsprint, 22 x 16.

Opposite page, below:  
*Leaning Female Figure With Head Resting*, charcoal on newsprint, 23 x 17.