

Reigning Cats & Dogs @the Woodson Art Museum

Sculptor Gwynn Murrill's big cats and two dogs have found a temporary "playground" in the Margaret Woodson Fisher Sculpture Garden. You can identify these sculptures as large cats and dogs from a distance because the artist has perfectly captured each animal's shape and pose in an abstract style.

Understanding Animal Shapes

To draw or sculpt an animal, you need to know how it moves, how it sleeps, how it plays and eats. A relaxed cougar, for example, exhibits a different posture than when it is about to pounce on its prey. Think about how a cat looks when it pounces; its muscles are prominent and its legs are extended.



Cougar III, 2006

Act It Out

Try posing like a cat or dog. How are a cat's moves different than a dog's? How does a dog sit? How about a cat?

Lay down on the grass next to Gwynn Murrill's saluki and try a similar pose and different ones. Which pose is your favorite? Why?



Sitting Cheetah, 2001



Upside-Down Dog/Saluki, 2005

Draw Your Impressions

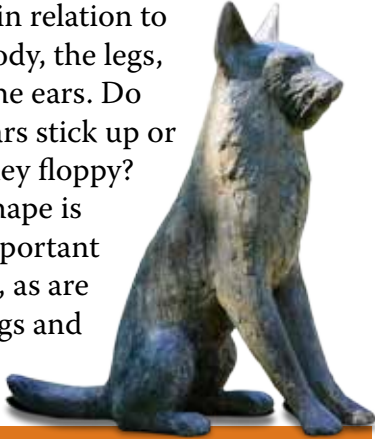
Before putting pencil to paper, look carefully at your subject. Study the basic “masses” that form the animal; these are the head, body, and legs.

A trick to use when learning how to draw animals is to half-close your eyes – or squint – so the details are eliminated and you see only the masses.

Draw a Dog

Dog Drawing Tips

Think about a dog’s features: the size of its head in relation to the body, the legs, and the ears. Do the ears stick up or are they floppy? Ear shape is an important detail, as are the legs and tail.



What shapes or masses tell you that “Elmo” is a dog?

Elmo, 2005

Draw a Cat

Cat Drawing Tips

Focus on the size and shape of the cat’s body compared to its head and legs. Whether you draw a small housecat or a cougar, these felines share the same anatomy. A cat’s body is almost twice as long as it is high. Cats vary in the shape of their heads and tails.



Cougar III, 2006

Also check out Gwynn Murrill’s small sculptures – called “maquettes” – on view inside the Museum.