Contour Line

Contour means "outline", and presents exterior edges of objects. A plain contour has a clean, connected line, **no shading** and emphasizes an open "shell" of the subject. More complex contours can **imply** shading values through interior outlines.

Pure contour line drawing is the simplest form of linear expression. The line describes visible edges of an object. **Color, shadow and highlight are not included in pure contour drawing**. Draw only clearly defined edges, resisting the temptation to color in shadows.

Contour Drawing using Lineweight and Implied Line

Some edges are clear, with a defined start and finish. But when the edge turns a corner or flattens out (such as along the bridge of a nose), the line is not necessarily drawn, but implied. Sometimes a clear line fades into an implied line. The artist needs to decide where the drawn line ends. The choice shouldn't be arbitrary, but should aim to help the viewer make sense of the form.

Adding detail gives the viewer more information about the form. Varied lineweight - lighter lines - or implied lines, where a line breaks off and resumes - makes it clear that these are not sharply defined contours, but surface details or softer edges.

Take your time with your contour line drawing; this is a slow, observational drawing where your attention is on the subject more than on your paper