



LEFT Kim Maughan
 ABOVE Sarah Harrison
 BELOW Jen Cacioppo

Desert Sojourn

by Geri Greenman

There's something magical, something lyrical, about the beauty of bones. Nature's sculpture. Internal structures, once used, have become monoliths to creatures that share the arid community. Georgia O'Keeffe enlightened us to the natural beauty of bones, helping us to see them as huge obstructions to the sun, yet an entire sculptural geography unto themselves.

Bones have a typography suggestive that their form follows a necessary function created by a master's hand. The concave and convex undulations have served to support and embrace; while they now catch myriad lights and shadows, seemingly more poetic without motion.

Realizing this incredible simplicity, this spare beauty, my beginning drawing students were charged with searching these white shapes that become form, to discover their secrets. Armed with middle-value brown paper and earthen shades of conté, all that was left was their keen observation, and their appreciation of this isolated aesthetic.

Some of the students saw this as a simple still-life; others saw the bones as sculpture; some tried to visually say it all; a few said little visually. The results ranged from fantastic voyages within the passages of form, to others that take on the surface convolutions of Cubism.



Several allowed the sand-colored paper to sift through the conté, alluding to the environment they are a part of, while others richly applied sanguine conté to suggest the more sensuous surface of velvet.

These drawn tributes to the mundane teach us to appreciate the colors, sounds and shapes of the desert, inviting us to see the complex within the simple. Their beauty leads us to believe we can hear the winds of the canyons, squint against the glare of the sun off their bleached white surfaces, while around us the colors of the desert become the earth and we become a part of the desert. ■

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