

The line is a human invention

Lines don't exist in nature. We are surrounded by pools of shadow, pools of light, and reflections that, by creating an interplay among themselves, lend shape and structure to volumes. There is nothing else.

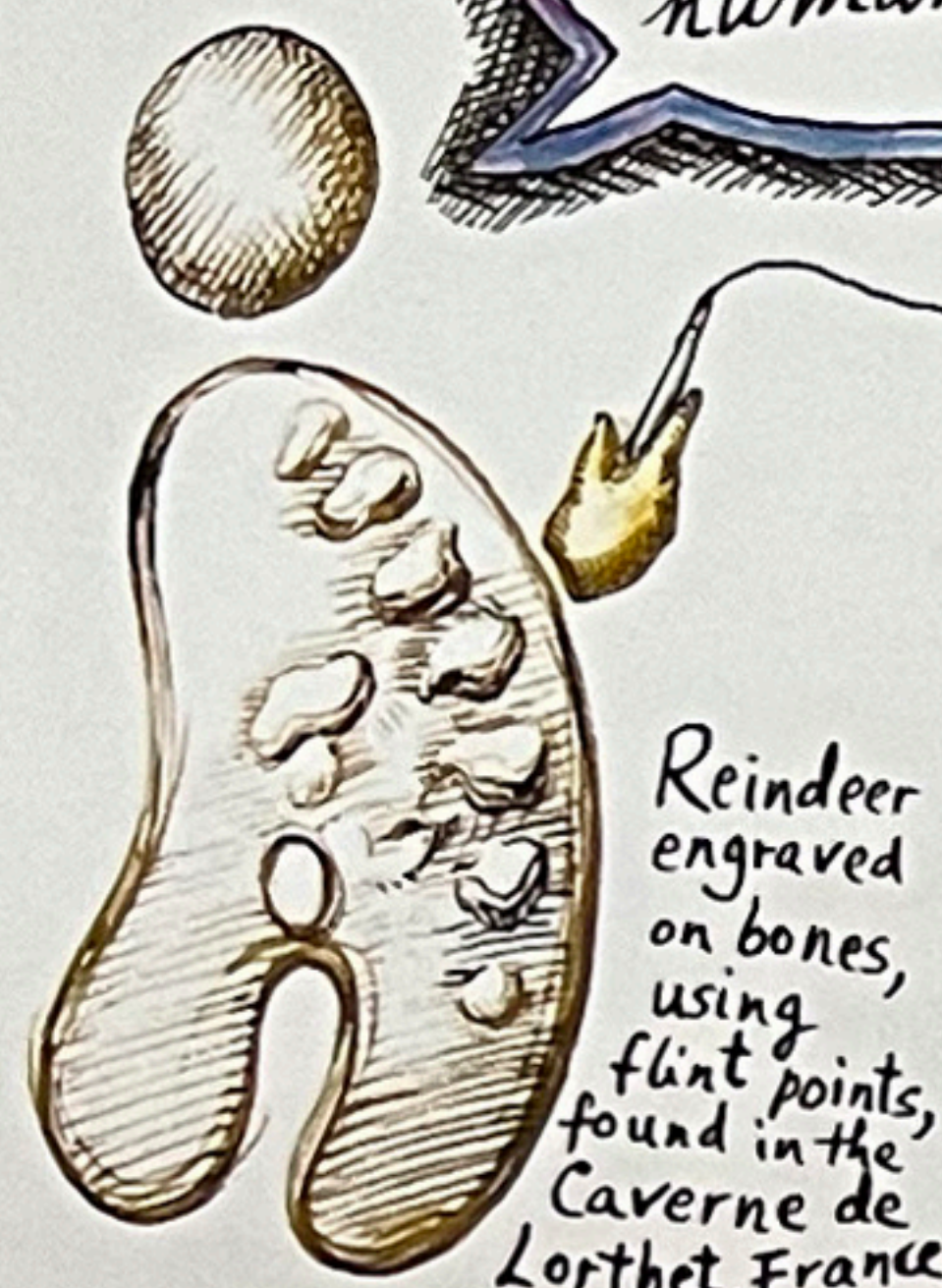
The friendly line, every draftsman's inseparable companion, may be defined as a simple contour that can be enhanced by effects of color or depth to give an effect of relief. When illusion is added to a contour, the line tends to disappear.

were made with the burnt ends of sticks (charcoal drawings) or incised into soft surfaces with pointed flintstones or metal chisels (engravings).

The drawing is the first script of human thought, the basis for all other plastic arts.

Leonardo da Vinci thought that the first drawing was done by a man who saw his own shadow thrown against a rock surface and traced its contours with charcoal.

Chinese ink consists of oily carbon derived from trees, vegetable oils, and fats, dissolved in glue. Sepia ink comes from the stomach sacs of cuttlefish. The use of such fluids opened the door to fresh notions of drawing and painting.

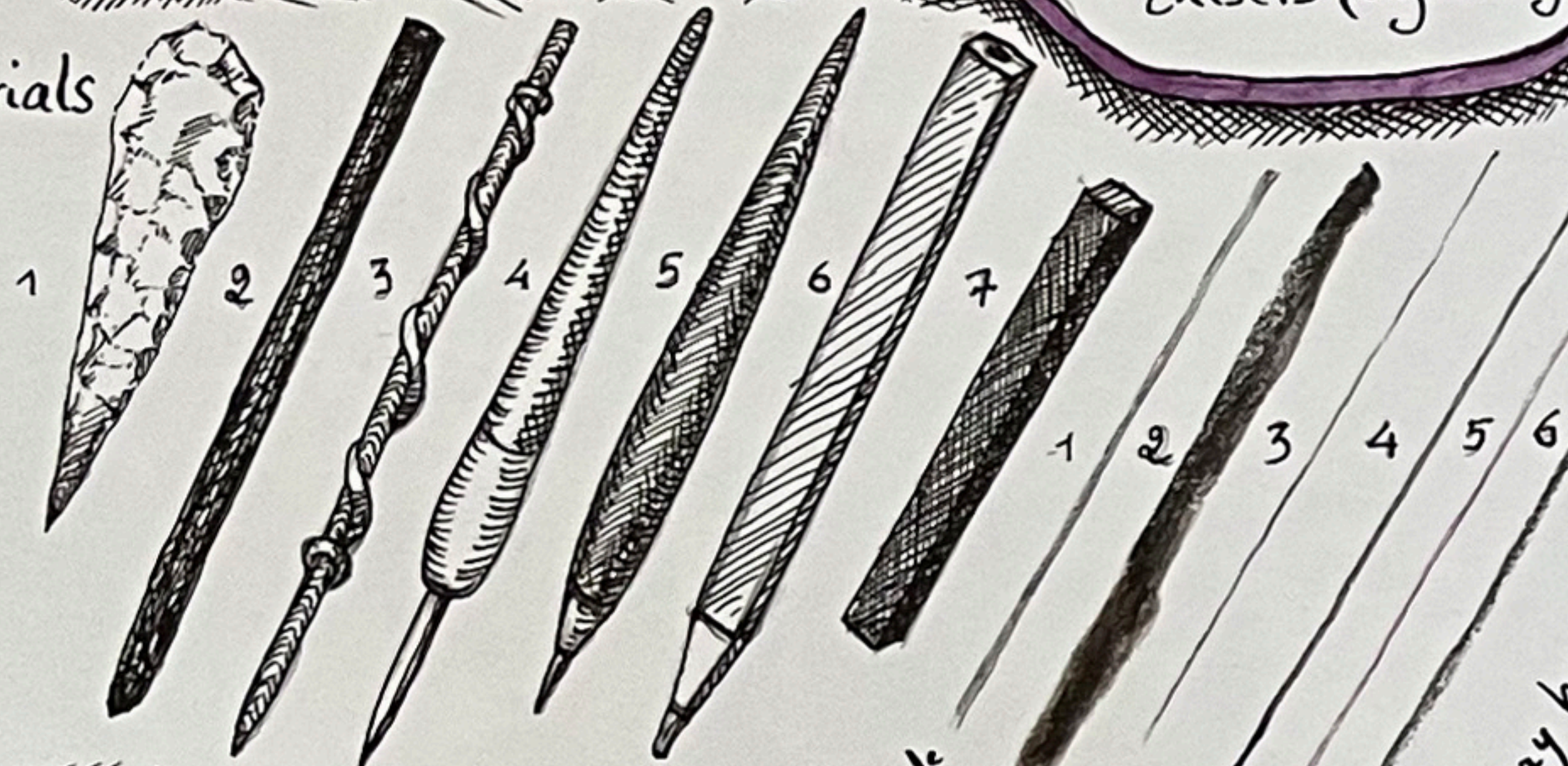


Reindeer engraved on bones, using flint points, found in the Caverne de Lorhet, France



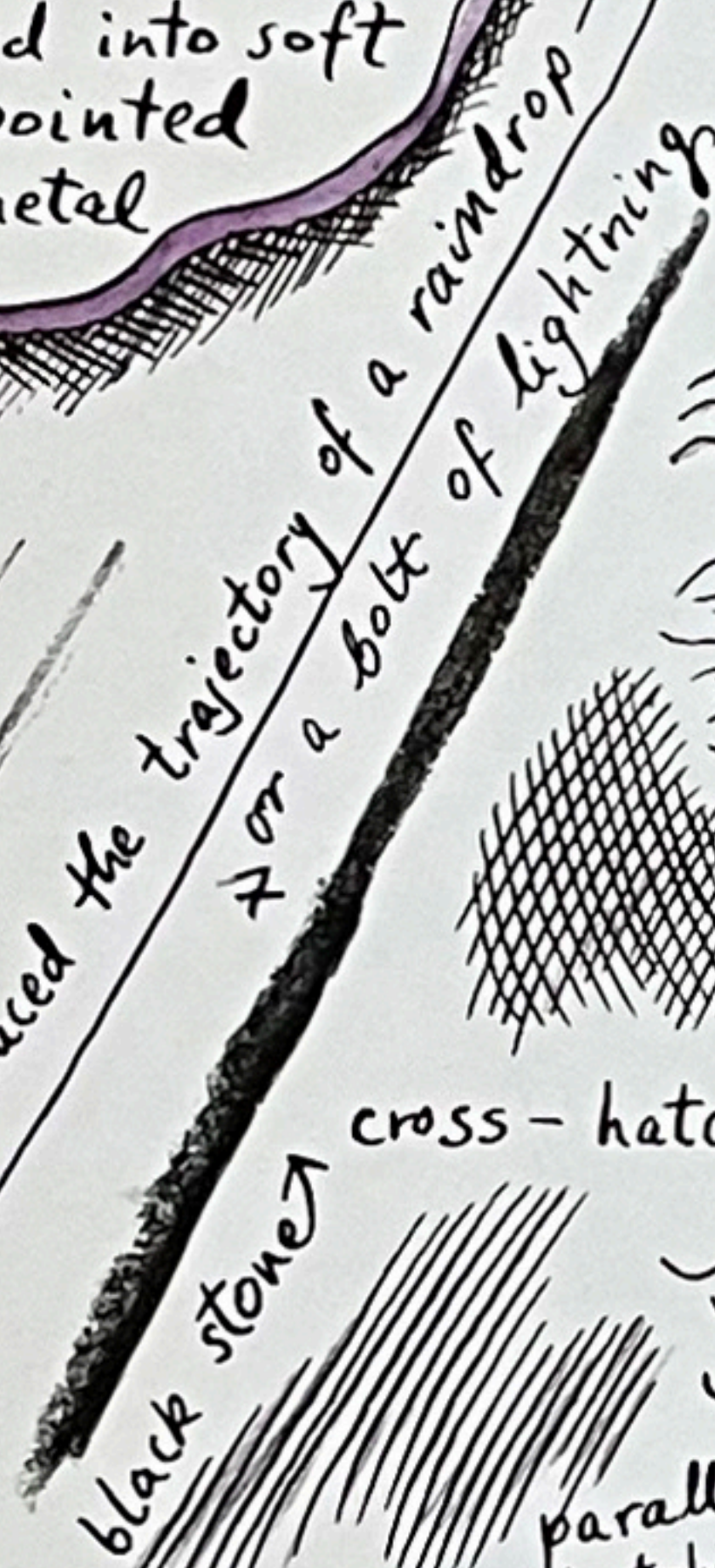
The first lines...

dry materials



groove made by flint → charcoal line → groove made by metal stylus → silver point → pencil →

the first line may have traced the trajectory of a raindrop → or a bolt of lightning →



cross-hatching  
parallel hatching



Plumes and Pens  
Tools for use with fluids  
By the end of the 18th century, Terry of Birmingham, England, was manufacturing steel-nibbed pens

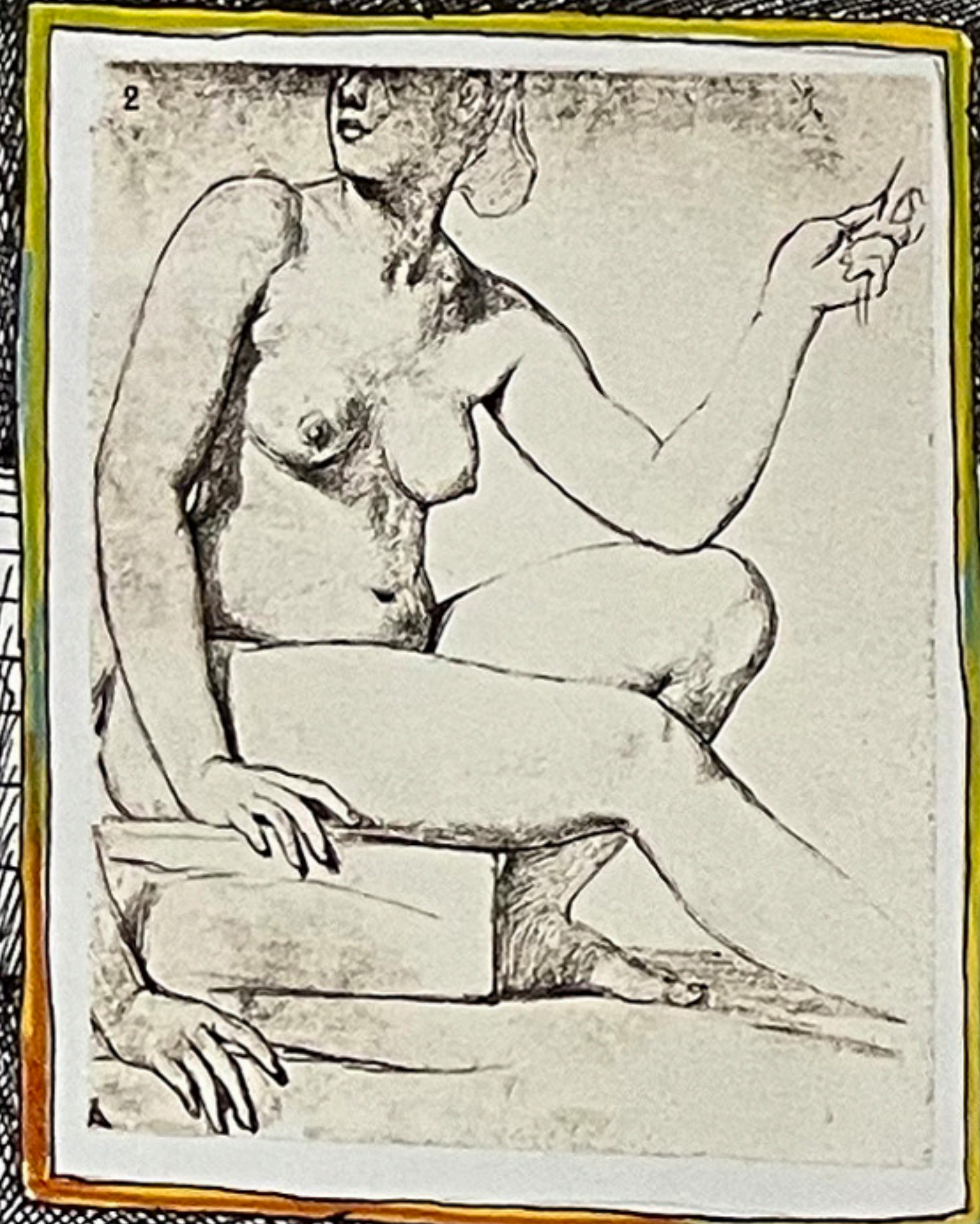
When, by order of a court of justice, Rembrandt's collections were put up for sale, it was found they included engravings of all the works of Michelangelo and three volumes of prints copied from Raphael.



Hercules Segers 1589-1638 Mountain Landscape etching

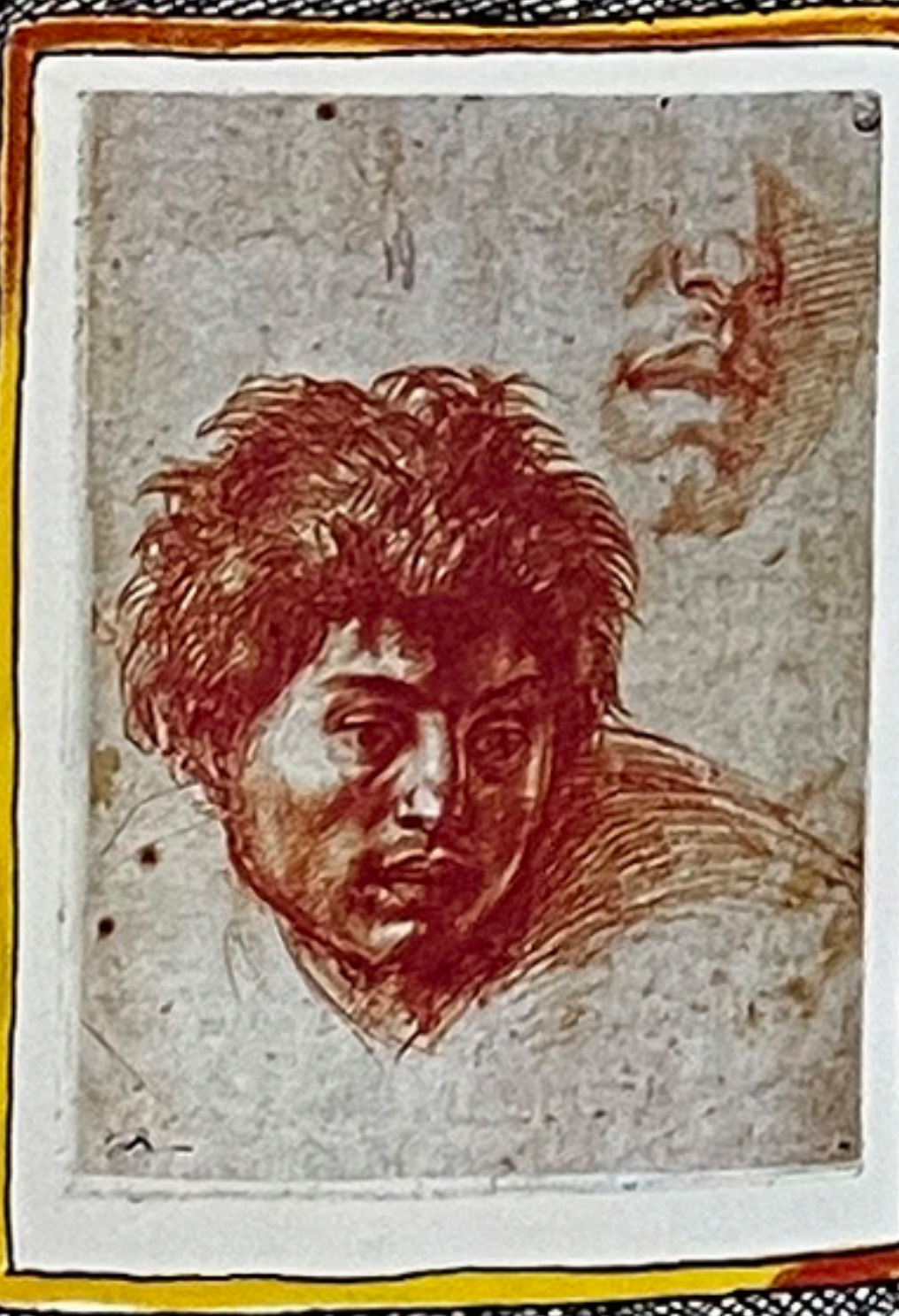
Rembrandt van Rijn 1606-1669 Rembrandt, Wild-eyed

A "line drawing" is a drawing in which no line is shaded

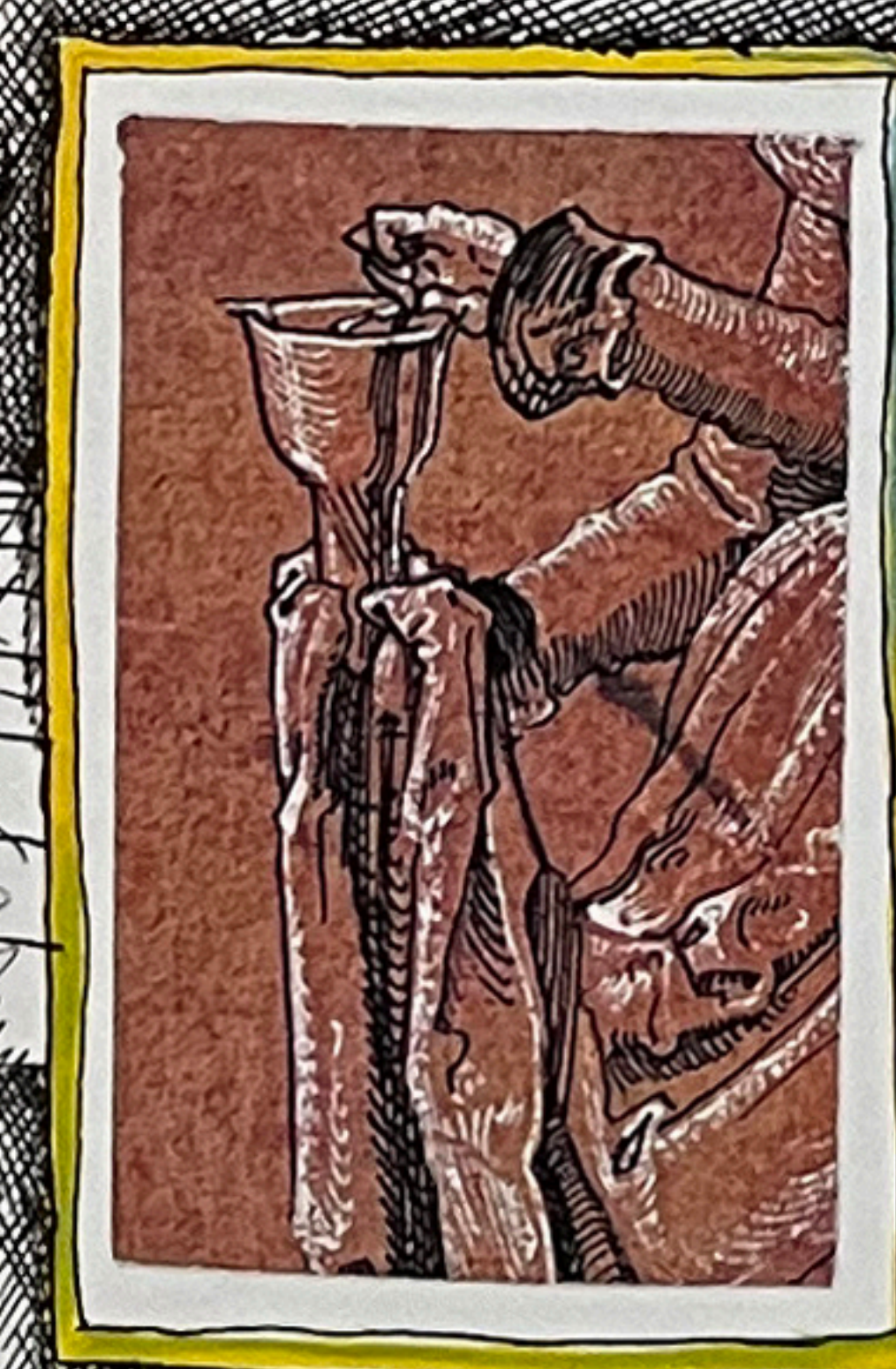


Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, 1780-1867 Nude Woman Sitting with an Elbow on Her Knee Graphite Drawing

Graphite, which eventually replaced the metal point technique, was discovered in 1560. The first graphite was mined at Barrowdale in Cumberland, England. To counter its extreme fragility the producers mixed it with glue or resin. The hardened mixture was then molded into thin cylinders (leads) which were fixed for protection between two slivers of cedar wood. The pencil was invented.



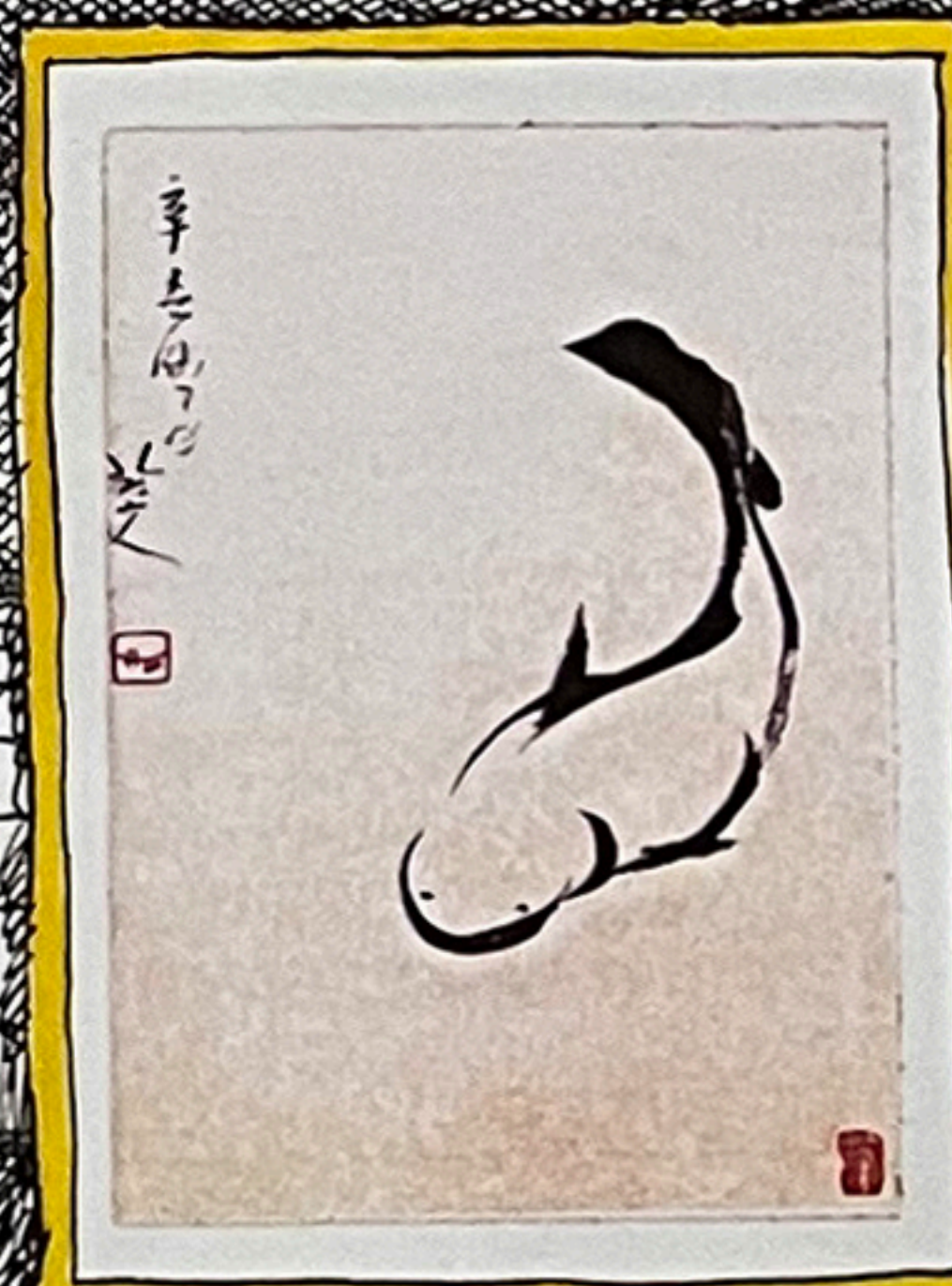
Andrea del Sarto, 1486-1530 Head of a man, c. 1520 Red pencil



Niklaus Manuel Deutsch 1484-1530 Wise Virgin, detail 1510-1520



Reginald Marsh 1898-1954 Sidewalk Chinese ink



Chu Ta 1626-1705 A Player in the Waves