Class Advanced Art: 3-4 Project: Figure Drawing

Time Line:3 weeks

Goal:  
The most important skill is the ability to draw what is in front of them.   The ability to draw what you see is the basis for all other forms of art.  Once you can do this well, you will be more successful in every area of art.

The idea is to prepare you for studying art at the next level–whether it be the next art level, community college, a university, an art school, or otherwise.  Anywhere students go, they will likely be drawing models when they begin their drawing classes.  Allowing you to develop figure drawing skills, experience the routine of gesture drawing/figure drawing, and learn how to be successful with these drawings gives you an advantage over many of your future classmates as you move on.

Skills Developed:  
1. Power of Observation: Building on the concept of observation, the best way to get better at drawing is by practicing drawing and gesture drawing which is a way to apply what you see quickly to your page.

2. Media Techniques: This project also gives you the opportunity to work with different materials. If you spend two days with conte crayons, two days with charcoal, two days with oil pastels, and two days with chalk pastels, you feel more comfortable with a variety of media and have added a lot to your skill repertoire.  Comfort leads to confidence, and confidence leads to better drawing, irrespective of material.

3. Decision Making: A lot of students are used to working from photographs they’ve taken, and figure drawing flips the script for them a little.  All of the necessary visual information is still there, but perhaps the “right” answer is not. Students need to make the decisions themselves about what they are seeing and how to depict it.  There is not a reference from which they can work–it would be the equivalent of not having answers in the back of the book. When students make those decisions, they have to look, they have to think, they have to learn to see.  Figure drawing is a great way for you, as students, to begin to develop these abilities.

**Daily Figure Drawing Schedule:**  
Scaffolding: Quick drawings

1. I will begin class with students watching a video where the artist documents the steps he takes to draw a figure. Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3QzApLXI4I

and <https://www.lovelifedrawing.com/lines-of-movement-and-the-newspaper-exercise> (day 2)

2. Sketchbook research:

Page 1: History of figure Drawing with photos from books. (daVinci, Matisse, Manet, Michaelangelo, Durer, Egon Schiele)

Page 2: Notes from videos, handouts, media trials

Page 3-4: Glue in gestures drawings with notes Page 5: Keep for final/ Critique

3. Drawing: Begin with gesture drawings–Practice, practice, practice….then move to a summative drawing once the students are comfortable with the process- this will be during the second week.

Daily Example:

* Quick poses, 5-6 about 60 seconds each.
* Short poses–2 drawings, 5 minutes each,
* Medium pose-1 drawing 10 minute.
* Long pose- 1- 20 minutes

Summative Drawing- Final: take 3 of your best longer drawings and finish them. Remember use light and tone/value to capture form.

**The 3 Week Schedule:**  
We will try to have a different model every day or use <https://line-of-action.com/practice-tools/figure-drawing>

In addition, we try out new materials every day. For example, if you do two drawings each day during the week, a different material for each drawing:  
Monday: Vine Charcoal and Conte Crayon (3 60 second drawings, 2 10 minute)  
Tuesday: Graphite and pressed charcoal  
Wednesday: Chalk Pastel and Oil Pastel  
Friday: Watercolor and India Ink  
Summative Final: Choice of Materials

See examples: https://www.lovelifedrawing.com/first-steps-mini-course/

An important point about experiencing that success: NOT EVERY DRAWING HAS TO BE SPECTACULAR**.**  It’s fine if your first 20 drawings are terrible.  Sometime, in the course of two weeks, I just need 3 good drawings.  The bad drawings are part of the learning process–there is no pressure to make everything great.  Sometimes it takes 7 or 8 days to really get the hang of it, and that’s fine.  We just simplify–zoom in, focus on fewer details, concentrate mostly on composition–and eventually, with enough practice and enough help, the success follows.

**Finishing the Process**

After two weeks of drawing, choose your best 3 10-20 minute drawings–you then have 3 days to work on their own to touch up, refine, and do what is needed to make them look like completed pieces. We will then run a two-day class critique that highlights the work of each student, including your sketchbook presentation.

For juniors and seniors, this is a great way to add to their developing portfolio–5 new drawings in 3 weeks is not something that they can usually accomplish otherwise–and show their observational drawing skills. Figure drawing is an important part of the skill development process.

Teacher’s note: Preparation

Depending on the class size have two or three students posing at any one time, just so the entirety of the class’s attention is not on one person.  This allows for a little bit more of a comfort level for those who are posing, and a variety for those drawing–they may not like the pose of one model, so there are other opportunities for subject matter.  Our class is small so we will have one model. For long poses, encourage the model to get into a comfortable position with a pole so they will not have to move–it’s important to stay still through the entire drawing time.

Switching each day allows students to experience all of the materials, helping them to determine with which they will be most successful.  They develop their skills with those materials a little more on Friday, then they will be confident going into the next week.  During that next week, they can keep working with those same materials or continue their explorations with different media.  Students’ goals will determine exactly where they go and what they do with their supplies, but the variety generally allows them to experience some success.