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Drawing for Seeing and Understanding: The Human Figure Mini-Elective Spring 2017

Course Dates: January 12, 19, February 2, 9, 16, 23
Thursdays, 1:00—3:00 PM

Class Year: MS1

Maximum Students: 15

Course Director: Marilyn Russell
Director of Education
Carnegie Museum of Art

Paul O'Brien
Studio Programs Coordinator
The Andy Warhol Museum

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Description:

The ability to draw depends in large measure on the ability to see. Enhanced skills in observation, in turn, strengthen the capacity to analyze, interpret, and make meaning from information presented visually, skills that relate to examining both patients and works of art. This enhanced capacity for seeing through the core act of drawing, rather than developing artistic talent, is the theme of the course.

Students will engage in thoughtful and trained observation of works of art and live models focusing on the relationship between the eye, the mind, and the hand in depicting the three dimensional human form on the two-dimensional surface of the paper. Instructors will lead students in observation-based gallery discussions and gallery sketching and in studio drawing exercises from the undraped model. While emphasis is on drawing, discussion topics complement drawing practice and range from the factors that influence what we see and how we interpret it, to the ability to synthesize one's personal observations with prior knowledge, and collaborative thinking of the group. Instructors will describe and demonstrate drawing techniques (such as gesture drawing, contour drawing, and effective use of light and shadow) and guide students in application of these and other techniques using a variety of drawing materials. Previous drawing experience is not required; all materials are provided. All classes take place in the galleries and studio at Carnegie Museum of Art.

Objectives:

- To practice the basic skills of life drawing
- To enhance participants' abilities for careful observation and interpretation of visual information.

Requirements:

Actively participate in all six course sessions.

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Director and Instructor:

Marilyn Russell
Director of Education
Carnegie Museum of Art

Paul O'Brien—Drawing Instructor
Studio Programs Coordinator
The Andy Warhol Museum

Presented By: Carnegie Museum of Art and The Andy Warhol Museum

Location: Carnegie Museum of Art, Oakland galleries and studio. Class meets in front of the admission desk at the beginning of each session.

Session One: January 12, 2017

Focus will be on proportion and its relationship to posture, balance, and gesture. Students work on gesture drawings with conte crayon and pencil working from life-size sculpture and paintings in the galleries to identify and capture directional lines. They study proportion and distortions of proportion to depict realistic and expressive forms and begin to consider interpretation.

Session Two: January 19, 2017

Focus in this session moves from contour to mass. Working from the live model, students study how muscle overlays the skeleton to create form. They practice shading with a variety of mark making materials to create the illusion of volume and three-dimensionality.

Session Three: February, 2, 2017

Having developed some comfort with representation of broad forms, students refine their ability for close observation and depiction of detail. Gallery exercises employ timed looking and description of works of art, comparisons of figures in paintings and sculpture, and various sketching techniques. Students practice using observations as evidence to support interpretations related to developing diagnostic skills.

Sessions Four and Five: February, 9 and 16, 2017

Working from the live model, students continue to refine the relationship between observation and representation in both whole figure and detail studies with emphasis on volume and three-dimensionality. Light is introduced as another "tool" to reveal mass and volume. Students will learn to create a reduction drawing, a process of removing pigment (erasing darkness) to create volume. This exercise trains the eye to recognize where light falls and how it wraps around an object in shades of gray. Gesture drawings in short poses as well as longer poses of the live model complement discussion and observation exercises of works of art in the galleries.

Session Six: February 23, 2017

The last session will explore how artists create tension, physicality, and drama in portrayals of the human form. Students will combine many of the skills learned in previous sessions to create figurative works in a variety of drawing media.