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www.omed.pitt.edu

412.648.8714

Drawing for Seeing and Understanding: The Human Figure Mini-Elective Spring 2020

Course Dates: January 9, 23, 30, February 6, 20, 27
Thursdays, 1:00—3:00 PM

Class Year: MS1

Maximum Students: 15

Course Director: Marilyn Russell
Director of Education
Carnegie Museum of Art
412-353-4705
russellm@cmoa.org

Drawing Instructor: Paul O'Brien
Studio Programs Coordinator
The Andy Warhol Museum
412-237-8357
obrienp@warhol.org

Registration: Betsy Nero, Office of Medical Education
betsy@medschool.pitt.edu

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 construct meaning from information presented visually. These are skills relevant to examining both patients and works of art. This enhanced capacity for seeing and understanding through the core act of drawing, rather than developing artistic talent, is the theme of the course.

Students will engage in thoughtful guided observation and drawing of works painting and sculpture and drawing from the live model in studio sessions. Focus is on the relationship between the eye, the mind, and the hand to build the capacity to depict 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. While emphasis is on drawing, discussion topics complement drawing practice.

Discussions range from the factors that influence what we see and how we interpret it, to the ability to synthesize one's observations with prior personal knowledge, and effective 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; enhance participants' abilities for careful observation and critical thinking; strengthening verbal skills and the ability to articulate observations with clarity and precision; practicing listening, collaborating, and enhanced capacity for empathy.

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 the Carnegie Museum of Art Lobby before each session.

Session One: January 9, 2020

Focus will be on proportion and the development of a relational proportions. Students with pencil from life-size sculpture and paintings in the galleries to gain understanding of proportion, contour, masses of light and dark, and negative space.

Session Two: January 23, 2020

Focus in this session is the introduction of the live model. Quick gesture drawings as well as longer poses allow the students synthesize the vocabulary covered in the previous class.

Session Three: January 30, 2020

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 6 and 20, 2020

Working from the live model, students continue to refine the relationship between observation and representation. 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.

Session Six: February 27, 2020

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.