

Drawing Art, Learning Drawing Techniques

A lesson based on the works of art in

From Michelangelo to Annibale Carracci: A Century of Italian Drawings from the Prado

At the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University

www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu

January 23 – April 5, 2009

Age Level: Middle School/High School

Estimated Time: 180 minutes – Lessons can be broken up into 3-4 class periods.

Specific Topic: Creating three drawings using the methods of *gesture drawing*, *contour drawing*, and *shading* while applying the *elements* of *line* and *value* – Understanding the characteristics of Italian Renaissance drawings.

***** Vocabulary words that are italicized are defined either in the immediate sentence in which the word is used or towards the end of this lesson in the Lesson Glossary.**

This lesson is based on the drawings of Italian artists on display at the Block Museum of Art during the Winter 2009 quarter. This exhibition of 70 drawings explores the working methods of the most important artists active in Italy during a time of unprecedented artistic patronage. Focusing on the period from 1520 to 1620, the exhibition features detailed studies for commissioned work as well as intimate *primi pensieri* — quick sketches that captured the "heat" of a creative moment. This exhibition marks the first time that many of these extraordinary drawings have traveled outside of Spain's Prado Museum and includes works by artists such as Giulio Romano, Paolo Veronese, Giorgio Vasari, and Andrea del Sarto, as well as two recently discovered figural studies for Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*.

The works in this exhibition explore the various ways artists used drawing as a preparatory exercise for larger works, giving the viewer a glimpse into the artistic process. Drawings in this exhibition range from quick sketches to fully developed drawings rich with details. Though many of these finished drawings were in fact preparatory pieces for larger works and painting, they also demonstrate the authenticity of drawing as an artistic medium in its own right. Looking at these works, we can see the techniques, materials, and creativity of these artists explored. The work in this exhibition is ideal for students studying drawing or painting. Historically, this work coincides with the European Renaissance, which started in Italy.

This lesson may be used as an art project to practice different methods of drawing. Students will practice drawing methods such as *gesture drawing*, *contour drawing*, and *shading* through studying objects and people. Additionally, students will learn about the elements of *line* and *value* through practice exercises and the actual project. Through this lesson, students will also learn art vocabulary and experience the process of analyzing works of art by studying the drawings in the exhibition *From Michelangelo to Annibale Carracci: A Century of Italian Drawings from the Prado*. For instructors, this lesson includes informational resources about this artistic period and assessment strategies for this project.

Goals of this Lesson:

1. To create drawings through the methods of gesture drawing, contour drawing, and shading.
2. To apply the elements of line and value in drawings.
3. To distinguish the drawings styles of the Italian *Renaissance*.

Illinois Learning Standards Fulfilled:

Fine Arts

- State Goal 25.A: Understand the sensory elements, organizational principles and expressive qualities of the arts.
- State Goal 26.B: Apply skills and knowledge necessary to create and perform in one or more of the arts.
- State Goal 27.B.4a: Analyze and classify the distinguishing characteristics of historical and contemporary art works by style, period, and culture.

Suggestions for Student Assessment:

Evaluate student work using the following criteria. It is advisable to share the criteria with your class before asking students to begin the assignment. Does the student's work:

1. Appropriately demonstrate gesture drawing, contour drawing, and shading?
 2. Show an understanding of creating a work of art utilizing the elements of line and value?
- The instructor may also use the Value Worksheet to evaluate the students' understanding of creating a value gradation. Additionally, the Drawing Quiz may be used to evaluate their ability to distinguish characteristics of Italian Renaissance drawing. Both the Value Worksheet and the Drawing Quiz are included on the last two pages of this lesson plan.

Teaching Resources Necessary to Support this Lesson:

- Artworks from the *From Michelangelo to Annibale Carracci: A Century of Italian Drawings from the Prado* exhibition or drawings created by other artists during this specific period of art history.
- Examples of various styles of drawing (so that students can compare and contrast the differences between Italian Renaissance drawings and other styles).

**Access to these resources and more are included in the Resource section of this lesson.

Supply List:

- 1 sheet of 8½" x 11" white drawing paper
- 3 sheets of 18"x 24" white drawing paper
- charcoal/charcoal pencil
- eraser
- desk lamp
- objects to create an interesting *still-life*
- ball/sphere-shaped object

*** **Note:** If you do not have access to 18”x 24” paper, you may use 8 ½” x 11” white drawing paper. Also, if you do not have access to charcoal, you may use pencil.

Lesson Plan:

INTRODUCTION

- I. If you are working with students who have little art background, it would be helpful to create and discuss an art vocabulary dictionary with terms that apply to this lesson. An example can be found at the end of this lesson in the Lesson Glossary section. You may also want to discuss characteristics of the Italian Renaissance with the students. Information about this artistic period can be found in the Resources section towards the end of this lesson. **[10 minutes]**

- II. **Discussion:** In order to develop art vocabulary, learn the skills necessary to analyze works of art and help introduce the goals of this lesson, show, explain, and discuss works of art from the Block Museum’s exhibition *From Michelangelo to Annibale Carracci: A Century of Italian Drawings from the Prado*. Show and explain to the students how the artists use line, shading, and different drawing media to make their works of art. Also show other styles of drawings so that students can learn to distinguish drawings from the Italian Renaissance. Discuss some of the artworks from the exhibition individually and ask the following questions **[20 minutes]**:
 - Does this drawing look like a quick *sketch* or does it look like it has been completed?
 - How can you tell?
 - Describe the qualities of the lines that the artist used in this work of art.
 - *i.e.* dark, light, quick, straight, curvy, thick, thin, etc...
 - What methods or media did the artist use to shade/create value in this work of art?
 - Discuss the common characteristics of Italian Renaissance drawings by viewing 2 images from this time period.
 - Hold up an Italian Renaissance drawing and a drawing from another period and ask what similarities and differences the students notice about these works of art.
 - **Tip:** Review the information learned with students each day that you work on this lesson. Then, after the students complete their projects, you may choose to give them the Drawing Quiz included towards the end of this lesson with answers to the quiz shown in the Resources section of this lesson.

- III. **Drawing Exercise 1:** To help students understand how to create value in drawings, do these practice exercises. Included in the last page of this lesson plan is a Value Worksheet that students can fill in to practice creating value gradations using different drawing media. **[15 minutes]**
 - On the first row of the worksheet, fill in the squares using charcoal from left to right starting off as dark as possible, then working to an empty white square all the way to the right.

- The value gradation can be created by pressing the charcoal very hard in the first square and gradually decreasing the pressure of the charcoal as you move to the next square to the right.
- In the second row, continue the previous steps for additional practice in creating value.

IV. **Drawing Exercise 2:** This exercise will help students develop their skills in creating value and shading. **[15 minutes]**

- In a central area, place the ball on a table and shine the lamp on it so that it creates a highlighted area on the ball and casts a shadow on the table.
- Before drawing, use the charcoal to shade in the whole sheet of 8½” x 11” paper.
 - **Tip:** Make sure the shade is a medium tone and not very dark so that darker shadows can be added later.
- Then, with an eraser, remove the areas where light hits the ball to create highlights.
- Go back in with the charcoal to outline the sphere and to fill in darker areas and any shadows that can be seen.
- Students can practice shading the sphere 3-4 times on the same sheet of paper.

PROJECT

V. Prior to beginning the project, set multiple objects up in a central location to create a still-life. Direct the light of the lamp on the objects to create highlights and shadows. The still life should be simple enough so that it can be set up the same way and in the same position for students to draw in multiple class periods.

[5 minutes]

VI. On 1 sheet of the 18”x 24” paper, use the gesture drawing method to create the first drawing of the still-life. Do not spend too much time on the gesture drawing as it is meant to be a quicker style of drawing. **[10-20 minutes]**

- Another approach to gesture drawings is to draw within a time limit or various time limits. For instance, you can have the students create gesture drawings of the same still-life in a span of 10 minutes, then another one in 5 minutes, and a final one in 2 minutes. You can adjust the time intervals as you see fit. Also, students may use the same sheet of paper to create multiple gesture drawings.

VII. Now use the contour line drawing method to create an outline drawing of the still-life on another sheet of 18”x 24” paper. **[45 minutes]**

- You may ask students to create multiple contour line drawings varying the type/quality of the lines. They may use the same sheet of paper to create these drawings.

VIII. For the final 18”x 24” drawing, use a mixture of the drawing methods learned including shading to create a complete and final drawing of the still-life. **[45-60 minutes]**

Lesson Glossary:

This glossary contains vocabulary about the medium of drawing and art in general. These terms may be used when discussing and creating drawings.

* These definitions were retrieved from www.artlex.com

Composition – The plan, placement or arrangement of the elements of art in a work. The design of a composition should either be pleasing or it should be in some other way *expressive*. Artists "design" their works to varying degrees by controlling and ordering the elements of art. Considering the elements of art is especially useful in analyzing ways in which a work is pleasing in formal ways.

Contour Drawing – A simple line drawing that follows the visible edges of a shape.

Drawing – The depiction of shapes and forms on a surface chiefly by means of lines. Color and shading may be included. A major fine art technique in itself, drawing is the basis of all pictorial representation, and an early step in most art activities.

Elements of Art – The basic components used by the artist when producing works of art. Those elements are color, value, line, shape, form, texture, and space.

Expressive – A quality of inner experience; the emotions of the artist (expressive qualities) communicated through emphasis and distortion.

Gesture Drawing – A form of expressive mark-making that emphasizes a quick, energetic and tactile approach to creating drawings of objects/people.

Line – A mark with length and direction(s). An *element of art* which refers to the continuous mark made on some surface by a moving point.

Medium/Media (plural) – The material or technique used by an artist to produce a work of art.

Negative Space – The empty space around and between objects and/or designs; a void.

Positive Space – Space that is filled with an object or a design; the opposite of negative space.

Renaissance – A revival or rebirth of cultural awareness and learning that took place during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, particularly in Italy, but also in Germany and other European countries. The period was characterized by a renewed interest in ancient Greek and Roman art and design and included an emphasis on human beings, their environment, science, and philosophy.

Shading – Showing change from light to dark or dark to light in a picture by darkening areas that would be shadowed and leaving other areas light. Shading is often used to produce illusions of dimension and depth.

Sketch – A quick drawing that loosely captures the appearance or action of a place or situation. Sketches are often done in preparation for larger, more detailed works of art.

Still-life – A picture of inanimate objects. Common still-life subjects include vessels, food, flowers, books, clothing.

Value – An *element of art* that refers to the lightness or darkness of a color

- **Local Value** – the light and dark of a surface seen in the objective world that is independent of any effect created by the degree of light falling on it.

Resources

Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art

- <http://www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu/exhibitions/future/prado.html> - This is the web page for the *From Michelangelo to Annibale Carracci: A Century of Italian Drawings from the Prado* exhibit at the museum. On this link you will find images from the exhibit to use in class discussions and information regarding museum programming.

Renaissance Drawing

- http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/drwg/hd_drwg.htm - This is a webpage from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; it discusses the material and function of drawing during the Renaissance and provides examples of drawings from the time period.
- http://www.artic.edu/artaccess/AA_RenBar/index.html - This site from the Art Institute of Chicago gives a brief description about the art of the Renaissance and Baroque periods and shows images of paintings from these 2 time periods.
- <http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/fogg/drawingglossary.html> - This webpage is from the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University and lists vocabulary words with definitions commonly associated with drawing. The vocabulary also consists of explanation of drawing materials that artists use when drawing.

Gesture Drawing

- <http://www.wonderhowto.com/how-to/video/how-to-use-gesture-drawing-to-improve-your-technique-5956/> - This site gives a quick video demonstration about gesture drawing.

Other Drawing Styles

- <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/prints> - This is the site of the Prints and Drawings collection at the Art Institute of Chicago. In the keyword search box, you can type in “drawings” and find images of various styles of drawing outside of the 1520-1620 time period covered in the Block Museum’s exhibition *From Michelangelo to Annibale Carracci: A Century of Italian Drawings from the Prado* to show to students during the discussion section of the lesson plan.

*** Drawing Quiz Answers: C, D, F

- If you would like to make the Quiz more challenging for older student, you may add a short answer section asking the students to describe characteristics and uses of Italian Renaissance drawings.

Drawing Quiz

Instructions: Circle the letter next to the images that are drawings from the Italian Renaissance period.

A.



B.



C.



D.



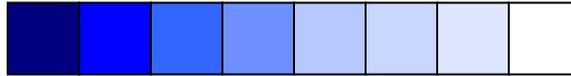
E.



F.



VALUE WORKSHEET



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