Another Summer of Drawing

class # 7

on the theme of ‘Home’

Beneath the Surface
Concept: Home

Interpretation: ancestry, historical

Gateway into the past, walking paths trodden over hundreds of years

*Spofforth Castle, Yorkshire*
Strong design: select your composition

Look for scenes that already have strong design, or edit/exaggerate to make them strong

Test out your composition with a notan, squint and look for interesting patterns and shapes (light, dark)
Convincing form:
Creating the illusion of dimension

Although we are using a representational approach that relies on values and a variety of pencil strokes to create convincing form, it is absolutely fine to work in only outlines, or ignore the rules of perspective, or break any other rules.

However, the drawing or painting still needs to have its own logic to look cohesive... See Cubists as a prime example.
Fruit Dish and Glass
collage, 1912

Still Life with Tenora
collage, 1913

Georges Braque (1882-1963)
Founder of Cubism
Tells a story:
More interesting than objects or scenes rendered for their own sake

Doesn’t have to be an obvious narrative

Easy enough to make a scene more interesting to draw:
• Come in closer to the subject
• Add a figure or two
• Emphasize or change the weather
• Emphasize or change the lighting
• Add tension (small and large, high and low, etc.)

The viewer is pulled in to the world you are creating with pencil and paper; make them stop and have a look around!
TOOLS

Beveled graphite point – varied pencil hardness, consistent firm pressure

Mechanical pencil or lead holder - varied pencil hardness + varied pencil pressure

Standard graphite point - varied pencil hardness + varied pencil pressure + blending

Academic graphite lead point – varied pencil hardness + consistent movement or hatching

Charcoal lead point – varied pencil hardness + blending

Erasers – kneaded, pencil form, etc.

Blending tools - stumps, rag, cotton swab, etc.
OBSERVATION

What needs to be in the scene:

Some arches
Feeling of arch overhead
Window and passageway
Buildings or scene in distance
Person?

What doesn’t need to be in the scene:
Every last brick and stone

Only show enough to give the general idea
- typically in areas of highest contrast
Notan:
Assess light and dark patterns, adjust as needed for interest.
Step 1:
Using a medium pencil (such as H, HB), carefully sketch the main lines of the scene, starting with the focal point. Keep your lines light.
Step 2:
Squint, and look for the darkest to midtone areas. Draw those in first, using the beveled pencil leads, and following the direction of the stones. Vary the pencil lead hardness as you go.
Step 2b:
Blend *some* of your darks, for example in the foreground and midground, then restate the darkest areas with more (unblended) pencil work.

Draw in *some* texture in the darker midtones.
Step 3:
Add in the lighter midtones, keeping the lightest areas open. Avoid the temptation to put pencil marks everywhere. Indicate some of the bricks in the road, some of the areas of stone in the wall. The faraway scene should be very light.
Step 4:
Use the academic drawing technique (small ovals or careful close hatching) to add more detail and clarity to the foreground. Vary the pencil pressure and lead hardness - squint to assess the relative values.
Step 5:
Time to pull it all together.
Check your notan – is your design still strong?
Do you need to add or take away details?
Add in your person if you haven’t yet – watch that perspective.
After class, I worked an hour or so more on the drawing and got to this stage. It's still a bit of an exploration but the extra time did allow me to get closer to my initial intent of the notan and the overall design of light and dark balance as well as adding some more of the stonework texture as needed.

If I were to take this further I wouldn't work on this drawing again, but would start over at a larger size, incorporating lessons learned here.

- Elizabeth
CONCEPT:
• One good idea will often lead to another! Let your ideas travel where they will.
• Don’t waste time trying to draw something that is problematic (too complicated, not interesting, doesn’t spark joy!)
• Yes, you can edit, change, etc., but avoid fighting with the design from the start.
• Think about the story – is it about the design? vastness/details/beauty/decay etc.? narrative?
• Keep your idea in mind as you draw.
• Don’t forget that notan as your ‘way in’ to strong design and a good composition!

TECHNIQUE:
• When there’s a lot of surface design or texture:
  • It’s useful to SQUINT to remove the confusion from our minds – just see the darks and lights.
  • Get some of those darks and darker mid-tones in first.
  • If blending, use sparingly, not as a substitute for pencil control.
  • Vary the pencil strokes – width, darkness, length of stroke, direction of stroke, speed of stroke, etc.
  • Move to the lights, try not to start coloring everything in.
  • Come back and refine both the lights and the darks, add just enough of the texture (or design) to suggest the surface.

• Put details and contrast where you want attention given (our eyes are drawn to detail and contrast); on areas closer to you (to help give a sense of depth); in the darker midtones (to maintain your overall balance of contrast).
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