

Part 2: weekly 2 hour drawing assignments.

Short Introduction

Each week you will be given a drawing exercise to do. Some weeks I will suggest subjects to draw which may not relate directly to your reportage project. I advise you do the exercises with my suggested subjects and then practice the method on your chosen reportage project in your own time.

These weekly exercises are not about 'copying' they are to encourage you to engage in exploratory visual enquiry and mark making. You can then apply these exercises to the reportage subject you have chosen. Each week will take you on a journey, probably outside of your comfort zone, encouraging you to explore, play, add emotional content and an intensity to your work. This requires courage and the ability to experiment and allow mistakes to occur. Some of these exercises may feel strange and alien but stay with them, persevere each week and put the time in. Through your hard work your drawing will evolve to another level so that it starts to contain an energy and language that expresses you as an individual illustrator/artist.

Week 3 Illusions what do we see?

How much of our perception is an illusion? What is reality and what is vision? In your own time have a look at the pdf document I have sent out with this brief. What we think we perceive is very interesting and illusive and can be fun. But this exercise this week is to get you to concentrate on 'seeing' what is. We often draw what we think we see as opposed to what is actually there.

Blind drawing exercises, drawing what you see.



Leonardo

Hands are so expressive – they say so much – they are used to talk by the deaf. They can be graceful, threatening, they are used in dance, they caress and hold. Some hands are worn from hard, rough work, a child's hands are soft.

Today you are to draw from life – but I want you to do some blind drawings which will encourage you to look with more intensity. These drawings will not be a figurative representation but will contain the essence of a hand and a concentration of perception.

Materials to use today

Paper, tape

Pencils B-2B 3B 4B

Drawing 1 – (drawing hands) 30 minutes

Settle yourself at a table/desk, tape some paper to the table to one side of you so that the sheet won't move, then turn away so you can't see your paper and spend 30 minutes drawing your hand.

- Set up a timer so that you are not distracted by wondering what the time is.

- Make sure your hand you are observing is comfortable and is supported on something, 30 minutes is a long time to keep your hand in one position.
- Make sure it is in a complicated position, i.e.; fingers curled
- When comfortable and with your paper in position, place your pencil on the paper then turn to look at your hand
- Very slowly, creeping a millimetre at a time, move your eyes along the edge of your hand, observing every tiny variation – as your eyes move, move your pencil – record every slight change, the pencil and the eye must be synchronised - you will need to relax into this assignment – DON'T be tempted to look at your drawing until you have finished.

You register what you are seeing at the moment of seeing. DO NOT TURN AROUND and look at your paper. You will become aware of the complexity of the hand, you can draw all parts of the hand, contours, folds, nails etc. If the lines are light, use your pencil lightly, if the lines are dark, make the marks darker.

YOUR DRAWING WON'T look exactly like a hand but will have the characteristics of a hand.

Don't speed up, don't pause but continue at a slow, even pace. When you finish, look at your drawing.



some examples of blind drawings of hands from "drawing on the right side of the brain" by Betty Edwards.

Drawing 2 – (drawing a group of objects of your choice) 30 minutes

Do another thirty-minute blind drawing of a group of objects. (instructions the same as drawing no 1) These can be a group of any objects you wish. Make sure there is a visual complexity to the objects you choose for example shoes, inside of a cut pepper with stalk and seeds, flowers even someone you live with! They could relate to your reportage subject or not. Set them up in an interesting group. Again, draw these objects blind. Do not look at the paper. Be aware as you are looking at your still life of the variety of tones and the definition of the lines. In this drawing try to vary the marks you make. Do not worry about the outcome. Enjoy really looking and making marks. Keep the looking and simultaneous mark making synchronised.

Drawing 3 – (hand holding a complex object) 30 minutes

Next do a semi blind contour drawing of your hand holding something complex (e.g. flower head close to the hand or scissors etc.). Again, tape the paper down and then set your hand down in a complex position. Make sure you are comfortable; your hand and head need to be comfortable for ½ hour. You don't want to move your head or hand.

Look at your hand at any point on the contour, check the angle of what you are drawing to the vertical and horizontal. As your eyes move slowly along the contours, your pencil moves at the same speed, move from contour to contour. Glance at your paper to locate a point or check a relationship. About 90% of your drawing should be concentrated on looking at your hand not on your drawing.

Drawings 4 and 5 – (two drawings of any subject of your choice) 1/4 hour each

Having mastered the technique of drawing blind now do two 15-minute drawings (1/2 hour total) of any subject from life that you choose. These can be blind or semi blind. With these drawings, you can try speeding up a little.

Applying this exercise to your Reportage project.

Use this technique for the rest of the day on your reportage project. Work blind and semi blind. This method of working really sharpens your observation skill and many artists use it as a warm up exercise. As you become more proficient at your eye and hand coordination you will be able to work much faster. Reportage artists use this method when working fast and subjects are moving. You will notice that the line used is precise, minimal and economic. Try experimenting with different materials while working in this way.

Hand in date of main 5 drawings by Sunday 11th Oct Midnight. (you can also send in other studies you are working on for your reportage project if you wish) Please save as a PowerPoint pdf and email them to me. If you do not have PowerPoint, please photograph and send email as pdf's.

Materials to have to hand next week Paper, cardboard box with a hole cut in the top so that you can get your hand into it. Different materials to hand pencils B 2B 3B 4B 6B, charcoal and other materials you might usually work with. Masking tape and two sticks one 30cm long and one 60cm long. It would be a good idea if you have an A2 drawing board so that you can work on larger sheets of paper each week. This will give you a chance to be more expressive. (Bring home paper from college)



Some examples of illustrators/artists using blind and semi blind drawing methods in some of their sketches on location. You can see from the drawings that some of them are drawn very fast.

Top left to right, Joe Munroe, Gary Embury, Jill Gibbon, Charlotte Ager, Richard Burton, Liza Dimpleby